

Date: Feb 28, 2022

To: Board, Staff, BUMS and members

From: Hilary Anthony and Lynda Gingerich, co-Treasurers; Sandra Bauer, Board liaison to Budget Committee

Report back on capacity.

In an effort to manage the population growth of OCF's 3-day event, the board approved initial capacity limits of, on average, 35,000 people, per day on site during the event. The number of people per day is a metric we have not used before: all the camping passes, the daily number of day passes, and the average number of paid attendance.

The 35,000 number is based on 2018 numbers. For our 50th anniversary, we had, on average, over 42,000 people a day. At 42,000 people a day, we strained infrastructure and crews. At that level of population, we would need another cycle of growth to meet the recycling, security, water, and other needs.

OCF needs to develop tools to manage growth. We need to develop measurements of capacity—for parking, camping, audience space, path crowding and sanitary services. This first effort focuses on trying to get a measurement of internal and external populations and to identify ways the population grows.

Hilary has spoken to staff, coordinators, elders, path planning, NRTs and the board about identifying our priorities. Our growth has patterns: slow growth from crews and managers to add programs and shifts, occasional event expansions to accommodate event population; and then growth initiated by the need to meet the services of a larger fair. We need to coordinate from an overview perspective with an eye to our capacity, limits and goals. We hope the days are gone when the budget committee and BUMS cater to request for pass increases without having an overall plan and guidance on our capacity limits.

While our 2022 budget is scaled to the 2018 totals—our internal population has grown...we are budgeted to have 17,500 campers, 2500 people/day on day passes, which leaves 15,000 spots for the paying public. **We make most of our revenue from the public, and we are squeezing them out with our pattern of growth.**

Let's look at programs like complementary passes, purchased teen passes for nonfamily, elder's qualifying age, the sale of unclaimed SO passes and the use of trade passes for services not comparable to crew services. For 2022, the crew budgets and SOs were not decreased due to capacity.

There were some small decreases to some comp and trade passes, and a verbal ask that coordinators and booth reps not use purchased teen passes for reasons other than bringing family members.

We are asking that the practice of selling late SO passes, the feeding frenzy, be discontinued. Also asking the BUMS to be aware that the Board, staff and budget committee are grappling with growth issues, and please use a high bar for approving goldenrods for passes. Can we agree on a total number of goldenrods to be available? maybe 100-200 max. Please include the ED in discussions of goldenrods. Based on my accounting training, Hilary recommends that BUMS focus on goldenrods for crews and that the ED be the buck stopper for goldenrods for trades—as the bulk of those passes are under the control of the staff she supervises and best practices uses separation of duties for the roles

of proposing, administering, and allowing exceptions. It becomes a potential a conflict of interest when passes can be increased by the people responsible for requesting and administering them—that is not asserting misuse—it is describing a system design weakness.

With a 20,000 daily internal population, we can sell 15,000 tickets a day to stay within the capacity limits. 2022 continues the theme of unpredictable years; we aren't sure that we can even sell that many tickets. If we can, we will have a demonstration of what a 35,000 cap feels like for population; and that may be very helpful in a year when density and capacity limits could help us to make a safer fair. If we have demand for tickets, we may end up with 15,000 sell outs, on multiple days.

Collect data, developing metrics to assess capacity

Ann Bennet-Rogers and Hilary assisted a Path Planning cartographer, Rosana Costello, in taking measurements of the audience space for stages. This is one step in getting density data, and program data (how many people can even see a show at one time fair-wide?). Let's continue this work to measure path size, open space, and compare our density to industry statistics in order to evaluate safety, quality of experience, and capacity.

Let's gather data for other metrics. What are metrics that are useful? We need to ask about: water, toilets, showers, fire safety, trash, and parking—what else? Even feeding volunteers in main camp has become a capacity issue—how many people can be fed from a kitchen of what size? How many people can move through a service line in what time? What are the measurements we can use to assess the effects of our population? We have used rough measurements for some of these, more sophisticated for others—but we have had wiggle room in the past as we were not facing potential strains on so many systems all at once. What are the age demographics of our membership—how do we plan for the demographic changes that are coming?

Signs of our capacity being strained:

At the February 20, 2022 President's listening session, Thom Barr, recycling coordinator, emphasized that it is the campers who have put the extraordinary strain on recycling crew in the past few years. Thom is concerned about 2022 Recycling is a hard-working crew—most crew members work before, during and after the event... during the Fair, shifts starting at 6am and run to noon. I think we need to change this. I'd prefer that each recycling crew member have at least one event day off (subject to the crews' feedback on how to rearrange their shifts and extra crew)). Are we at a place where we can look at the operational, safety and fairness issues and say that if one crew needs an increase, we will need to cut somewhere else? Meanwhile, we also need campers to leave less trash. Thom mentioned new packaging in particular---those tangles of plastic and cardboard create problems. I expect that Kirsten will work with paid staff to develop messaging addressing this part of the problem. Can the management team engage with recycling about their capacity? How does our aging fleet of trucks hinder them? How is new crew member recruitment and retention going? What operational issues could they use support for?

Up until about 4 years ago, the budget committee allocated vehicle stickers, roughly, one sticker for every 2 camping passes. Then, after crews had a chance to purchase those, crews had the option of additional purchases of up to half the original amount. We have too many camping passes to allow us

to do that. With about 17,500 campers and 6000 onsite stickers, 2000 outer limits stickers, 500 Farside and about 500 service/emergency stickers---we have very little flexibility to accommodate special situations. Parking is a limiting factor for us, and we are straining the capacity. We will feel the strain. As we park more campers farther from the eight, are we doing what we can for shuttles, load-in, 4A access? We are at risk of more and more people working to find individual solutions—when finding organizational solutions can ensure improvements for all.

We had a growth spurt with opening Xavanadu. While it allowed us more public open space, it also was part of a large effort to move campers into Piggy's and the south woods. I think we need to assess the services---toilets, showers, water, fire protection—we are providing. Are our services adequate for safety? Do our services enhance or detract from camper experiences? Are we being fair to our newer campers if they are underserved in comparison to campers with more established camping areas?

Another factor affecting growth is the desire to increase passes for internal population to accommodate the growth of individual families. Here's the example. The original volunteer was one person. They start a family, have a partner, children, partners of children, grandchildren and so on. That one person is now 50 people. While we absolutely have needed internal growth to accommodate an increased footprint for the public event, I believe there are more volunteers than needed on some/many crews, because of the desire to accommodate our personal friends and family growth. I understand this will also be part of having such a large volunteer base. However, I'm hoping that with a Volunteer Coordinator, instead of increasing the number of passes for a crew based on someone wanting to come to fair, we add them to crews that need people, like Recycling for example. I think we can make gains on having more equality of work between the crews by looking at our volunteer base more holistically. This also helps with managing growth. This comes with the added complexity for crews that camp together. But if we at least start thinking about it and put some focus on the issue, I hope we can start identifying ways to make positive change, however small.

And at some point, do we start brainstorming about larger solutions? Becoming a camping event? Creating OCF campgrounds for 3-day pass holders? Town shuttles? Bike paths from Eugene? Stages with higher audience capacity?

Let's focus on understanding and managing capacity

I am guessing we all have examples of our growing pains. Going forward with an eye to assessing our capacity, learning how to manage growth, and ensuring that we are providing a safe and pleasurable experience are important. We need to develop metrics to measure capacity, collect data to allow analysis, and adapt to change. We can no longer talk about growth as an abstract problem but continue to add passes as a solution without considering overall capacity. Let's talk about capacity and our priorities.