

MEMORANDUM

To: IPE 2004
From: Michigan State Fairground Park Advocates
Ke Guo, Abbey True Harris, Tetsuya Hirata, and Chris Reinstadtler
Date: January 8, 2004
Re: Lobbying Strategy

The most important asset that the Fairgrounds can offer is its unique geographic location. As our site is the most easily accessible to the surrounding region, our overall strategy should be to target the suburban commissioners and stakeholders. Representatives of Wayne County and Detroit will undoubtedly benefit from any of the park sites and will be barraged with lobbyists from other sites – we could get lost and forgotten in the confusion. Therefore, it would be most efficient and effective to spend our time lobbying those regions that will not be greatly lobbied as they will not reap many benefits from the other three park sites.

Commissioners

These regions are physically very close to the Fairgrounds and thus have the most to gain from our development proposal. This includes Commissioners representing bordering regions:

- Oakland County
- Macolm County

This also includes Commissioners whose constituents are geographically closer to the Fairgrounds than to the other park sites:

- Washtenaw County
- Livingston County

Further, we believe that the Fairgrounds would attract more statewide visitors than the other park plans because of its unique amenities. And, the Fairgrounds have served as a source of pride for Michiganders for nearly a century. Therefore, we should also spend time discussing our proposal with Commissioners representing:

- Southeast Michigan
- State of Michigan

Stakeholders

Here, we should also make it a point to target suburban interest group representatives because they have little to gain from other development sites.

Environmentalists/Agriculture

Our primary focus should be on the Michigan Farm Bureau as we are the only site that currently promotes agriculture. We can continue to do so through education programs at the park. The other groups will likely be heavily lobbied by other park sites, but we can try to speak briefly with the other groups.

Health/Medical/Seniors

Our strongest supporter should be the Governor's Council on Physical Fitness as the Fairgrounds proposal includes many outdoor activities and sports. If time allows, we should speak with AARP and Family Elder Network about the many amenities for older residents.

Youth/Education

We should try to speak with everyone in this area. Our proposal has very strong plans for educational opportunities in the nature center and through livestock programs. It can also easily accommodate large groups of youth. However, our park is unique in that it offers fun activities, such as a waterpark, sports, and other outdoor amenities, that are very attractive to kids – it offers a blend of fun and educational activities.

Tourism/Entertainment/Recreation

We should also try to speak with everyone in this area. There are historic parks and nature trails everywhere – there are not free waterparks, skate parks, sports court, and entertainment pavilions everywhere. We firmly believe that this will draw many tourists from outside the Detroit area, and due to the location of the Fairgrounds, businesses in both Detroit and the surrounding regions will benefit.

Our time would not be best spent lobbying stakeholders that focus on Business/Developers or Social Services/Non-Profit Housing. We are faced with limited time and have stronger connections with the other stakeholders.

Detroit Commissioners

As our main strategy is to lobby suburban interest groups and commissioners, we should not spend much time talking with Detroit Commissioners. However, we could mention that in the Detroit session on Wednesday afternoon, the State Fairgrounds were the second most popular site, closely behind the Riverfront. Clearly, there would be support in Detroit for our proposal . . . but our time would be more effectively spent lobbying suburban interests that have little to gain from other parks but would benefit greatly from an improved State Fairgrounds site.