

IDAHO CENTER STRATEGIC PLAN

AS APPROVED BY THE IDAHO CENTER BOARD 03/23/11

Mission

The Idaho Center provides the venue and services expected of a top notch events center. Our unique offerings range from world-class concerts to international horse events to national sporting events. Locally, we serve as the community gathering point for large events and as a major economic driver for the local economy.

Vision

The Idaho Center District serves to be the premier entertainment and tourism destination for local, regional, national, and international events.

GOAL 1: Ensure an attractive, customer-friendly and safe facility.

Objective A (arena and amphitheater)

Renovate existing facilities:

The Idaho Center arena was designed in early 1996 originally as an outdoor rodeo venue. Throughout its construction, the concept of the facility changed to a multipurpose enclosed facility, which was partially completed in 1997. After the opening, some additional changes occurred including a concrete floor from a dirt floor, new stadium type seating instead of bench seating, and addition of a new concourse. Because of the Idaho Center's unique history, the venue has developed with limitations which need to be solved in order to become more competitive and become the core of the proposed entertainment district.

The Amphitheater was created by simply putting a stage at the end of the original arena site. Its ability to attract similar amphitheater shows as Red Rocks Amphitheater in Colorado or the Gorge Amphitheater in Washington is limited due to lack of facilities.

Strategy 1

In order to accomplish a more competitive venue, a renovation of the facilities must be considered in each of the following categories:

- 1) Revenue Generating: Develop a capital improvement plan targeted at enhancing revenues. This would include renovations that would help increase bookings, sell more food, beverage and merchandising product, and/or increase sponsorship sales and other types of sales. Some suggested examples are:
 - a. Explore the ability to create more height between the floor and the low steel in the main arena to be more competitive to attract large produced concerts and spectacle shows.
 - b. Create additional space for the sale of F&B and merchandising. Current concourses are congested with sales lines and bathroom lines.

- c. Create additional F&B and merchandising areas (including permanent bathrooms) for access by patrons who are seated on the floor.
- d. Create additional sponsorship and signage space.
- e. Renovate the parking lots. Improvements ideas include addition of a parking structure and institute of a parking fee or an addition to the ticket price.
- f. Renovate the amphitheater to attract more shows.
 - i. Larger stage with more rigging in roof
 - ii. Proper back stage facilities for the artists
 - iii. Partial roof over audience and creation of VIP seating
 - iv. Proper bathroom facilities for audience
 - v. More sponsorship sales areas
 - vi. Permanent lighting
- g. Consideration of other options for the amphitheater property that might create more income to the city. Examples are a convention center hotel or a destination restaurant and retail establishments.

2) Customer Enhancements

- a. Expand arena concourses or add areas to decongest current concourses. This would have to include ideas to lessen sales lines and bathroom lines.
- b. Redesign all arena entrances for a better experience for the customer and create curb appeal for our sponsors and our district.
- c. Create customer and sponsorship social areas such as additional club space and/or party suites.

3) Economic Impact

The Idaho Center arena and amphitheater accounts for approximately \$8M of the \$20M economic impact identified in a 2006 study and updated in 2010. With this in mind, it is understood that \$8m is in part attracted by the “big name” concerts and other massive events that draw people to the Idaho Center from outside the Treasure Valley. Enhancements for economic impact may echo some of the revenue generating ideas that were designed to attract these larger events.

- a. Creation of more height in main arena
- b. Renovate the amphitheater into a venue that can support larger shows. Or, if it is decided to use amphitheater property in another way, convention and/or exhibit facilities in conjunction with the arena will attract events with larger economic impacts.

4) Operational

- a. Additional administration space for part-time staff. Creation of check in offices and uniform issuing areas along with space for the police, medical, and fire marshal staff to work from.

Strategy 2

Identify partners of the district to ensure synergy. Some existing partners and future suggested partners are identified below:

- 1) Snake River Stampede Board
- 2) Horse Park Foundation
- 3) Boise State Athletics

- 4) All media partners
- 5) Sponsor partners
- 6) Future Auditorium District
- 7) State Tourism Board/ State Department of Commerce
- 8) College of Western Idaho
- 9) Simplot
- 10) Neighboring businesses, including the Gateway market district
- 11) County Fair
- 12) Agricultural Museum

Priority: It is recommended that a joint effort between SMG and the ICAC will examine all renovation projects and recommend the priorities to the city based on opportunity, funding, and needs.

Objective B (Horse Park)

From its conception, the Idaho Horse Park has had steady and reasonable growth and improvements have been made that were, in large part, recommended by past event participants that use the facility. Often these improvements have been funded by private organizations and citizens, which include major contributors such as the Snake River Stampede Board and the Horse Park Foundation.

The objective is to have continued and steady growth to reach a level where the HP is handling more large regional and national shows, the ones that contribute the most to Idaho Center revenue and to economic impact.

Strategy 1

- 1) Revenue Generating: In the case of the Horse Park, it is often the same events generating the most revenue and, therefore, having the greatest economic impact.
 - a) In order to host larger events, space for extra stalls and RV and rig parking is needed. The purchase of additional land would help with this.
 - b) Purchasing more stalls.
 - c) Creation of more vendor space. Large shows usually have more vendors.
 - d) Creation of more sponsorship signage opportunities.
 - e) Enhance sound system throughout the park.
 - f) Create more platforms inside sports complex for tabled seating, etc... Currently using Idaho Center staging, which is expensive to set up and tear down, is not the right product, and is often not available when event needs staging in the main arena.
- 2) Customer Enhancements:
 - a) Permanent bathrooms throughout the park. Portable toilets are currently being used.
 - b) Creation of separate and dedicated entrance for Horse Park. Horse park attendees often have difficulty in navigating the arena/amphitheater crowds.
 - c) Enhancements to sports complex to make it more attractive...for example: redo entrances, interior walls should be finished with drywall or even more durable product.
- 3) Operational

a) Build barns or other means of storage. Much of the equipment is stored outdoors in the elements and should have more protection.

Strategy 2

Identify partners of the district to include synergy. The partners would include the partners listed in the arena section above plus:

- 1) All national horse organizations
- 2) Farm equipment dealers
- 3) Regional horse enthusiasts

Objective C (Entire Park)

Provide regular and capital maintenance of facilities.

Strategy 1

Scheduling: Investigate the addition of large capital maintenance scheduling to the current SMG program.

As part of the SMG/City of Nampa contract: SMG operates a state of the art maintenance program which includes computer programs, websites, manufacturer partners, and contact list to similar parks around the country. For all of our general operation maintenance, the Idaho Center and Horse Park already works through this program to ensure all general maintenance is being completed.

Large capital maintenance scheduling could also be a part of this program, including maintenance and replacement of roofs, HVAC systems and boilers -- most everything. This would have to include collaboration with the City Engineering Department and possibly manufacturers/contractors to ensure that all of the correct information is installed into the program.

GOAL 2: Based on a well-defined theme and the unique characteristics of the District, attract additional compatible commercial development and opportunities for visitors and locals to make this a destination of choice.

Objective A

Identify what uses currently exist in the area that contribute to the character of the district and establish a theme that represents the unique lifestyle of the Treasure Valley.

Strategy 1

Establish the geographic boundaries of the district

- Boundaries should coincide with those areas surrounding the Idaho Center that are visually apparent from the Center and that have the ability to draw people into the district rather than draw them to other destinations.

Strategy 2

Coordinate with existing businesses to determine uses and appropriate district character.

- Work with impacted and neighboring businesses in a workshop setting to determine what uses will complement the existing character of the district but also enhance the western theme.

Strategy 3

Identify area lifestyles to incorporate within the boundaries of the district.

- Examples include: agriculture (cheese and wine production), railroad, western, whitewater rafting, golf, waterskiing, rock climbing, extreme sports, fishing, hunting, aeronautics.
- Conduct a workshop and/or make personal visits to business owners in the area to get buy-in on the vision and theme.

Strategy 4

Clearly define the theme of the district

- Possibilities include:
 - Mining, cowboys, Native American, old west culture
 - Basque culture – sheep shearing, restaurants, events, etc.
 - Railroad – museum, walking path with informational signage and railroad equipment
 - Equestrian – appearance of buildings, public art, businesses to support the equestrian industry, events
 - Agricultural history

Strategy 5

Identify shared uses and services in partnership with the College of Western Idaho (CWI).

- Possibilities include: parking, events, public transportation, walking paths, jobs for students, incubator services to grow businesses specific to the Idaho Center District, facility management training and experience, college rodeo.

Objective B

Identify opportunities for new development in:

- Retail
- Lodging
- Entertainment

Strategy 1

Idaho Center Advisory Commission to identify targeted businesses, and develop lists of top national and local developers of retail, lodging and entertainment projects compatible with the district.

Strategy 2

The Economic Development Department to identify and map all available developed parcels as well as development properties and identify the appropriate owners, developers or representatives using the City GIS system.

Strategy 3

Idaho Center Advisory Commission, Economic Development Department, and district businesses to identify incentives through research and internal strategies. Quantify existing incentives available for development and strategize creative packages to entice investment.

Objective C

Define, package, and market opportunities to developers, the tourism industry, and locals.

Strategy 1

Idaho Center Advisory Commission to develop marketing materials, including an artist's rendering of the vision. Create printed material and a website highlighting the opportunities of investing in the district at an approximate cost of \$10,000.

Strategy 2

The Economic Development Department to market the Idaho Center to developers, the tourism industry, and locals at the following venues:

- The International Council of Shopping Centers (ICSC) annual ReCon show in Las Vegas, which is the premier meeting location of hotel, restaurant and retail developers.
- Other outreach. Plan direct sales outreach to targeted local and national developers.

Strategy 3

The Idaho Center Advisory Commission and Mayor Tom Dale to appoint a small group of "Ambassadors" to pursue existing opportunities to put together a high-level group of interested parties to proactively reach out to the following entities:

- Canyon County Fair
- Simplot Agriculture Museum
- Western Idaho Fair

GOAL 3: Establish and maintain a sustainable business model (funding sources)

Objective A

Identify and secure appropriate funding alternatives.

The Idaho Center is currently funded through event revenues and the City of Nampa. The City supplements the event income due to the economic impact of the Center and the public good it provides; however, to enhance the facility and decrease dependence on general fund revenues, alternative sources of funding need to be identified and secured.

Strategy 1

Identify all potential tax based revenue sources (LID/BID/URD/Aud. Dist.)

One potential revenue source for the IC is additional tax based revenues. Optional taxing districts such as Local Improvement Districts, Business Improvement Districts, Urban Renewal Districts and Auditorium Districts for example should be evaluated based on their strengths and weaknesses to support the funding needs of the IC. The process to establish such districts and level of public participation should also be identified.

Strategy 2

Evaluate operational revenue (contracts, rental rates, food/beverage, IC Tickets).

The IC currently receives revenue through contract agreements for rental of the facilities, food and beverage sales, IC Tickets, and advertising sponsorships. All of these revenue sources need to be clearly identified and evaluated on their current return and opportunity for growth. Additional revenue sources that are not currently being utilized should also be identified and evaluated for implementation; for example a parking fee.

Strategy 3

Develop a capital campaign (foundation creation, grants, and corporate partners).

Significant capital projects will not be accomplished through revenue from business operations. After a full capital improvement plan is completed, a capital campaign can be initiated to generate funding for specific projects. The capital campaign should focus on creating revenue from grants, individual donors, and corporate donors. The campaign will need to evaluate the potential need for the creation of a foundation to facilitate the fundraising efforts.

Strategy 4

Develop the appropriate balance for city support and community events.

The Idaho Center is an economic engine for the City. It also serves as a community gathering space for many types of events from high school graduations to the God and Country Rally to sporting events. When the IC is reserved for community events that do not generate revenue equivalent to private events, there is a potential loss of revenue. At the same time, events that produce the most revenue may not have the greatest economic impact. An appropriate balance between booking events for revenue, economic impact, and community needs to be developed.

Objective B

To ensure a sustainable financial business approach and generate revenue, invest in events, internal processes, infrastructure, and marketing.

The Idaho Center competes for events locally, regionally, nationally, and internationally. To be the most competitive, a pragmatic business approach must be taken to generate revenue and meet the needs of the community. The IC should strategically invest resources to secure events, improve internal processes, enhance existing infrastructure, and market the facility.

Strategy 1

Investigate options for paying up-front for promos for events.

To attract events that provide for maximum revenue or economic impact the IC needs to work with promoters to pay for up-front expenses to promote events. A clear strategy needs to be developed to identify opportunities to secure funding for these expenses, and what level of funds should be invested in which types of events.

Strategy 2

Improve key processes.

Evaluate the key operational processes for how the Idaho Center operates for additional efficiencies and opportunities to reduce expenses and enhance revenues.

Strategy 3

Consider providing tiered customer service options, i.e., VIP parking. Identify opportunities to provide tiered customer service amenities to generate additional revenue from existing operations; for example the creation of a VIP parking area or creating opportunities for VIP food concessions. Once the opportunities are identified, the pros and cons for each service and how that service will be perceived by the host of events will need evaluation. Assess partnership opportunities with the Rodeo Club to enhance customer service during events.

Strategy 4

Develop a marketing plan.

The Idaho Center has three customers, the general community, event promoters/coordinators, and the individuals and businesses that contribute to the funding of the center through contributions and sponsorships. A marketing plan for each of these three customers needs to be developed and implemented. This will support the funding efforts identified in Objective A of this goal.

- Community outreach/public relations
- Event attraction/external customer
- Business community/funding sources

Strategy 5

Identify and prioritize regional infrastructure projects that will have an impact on the ability for the IC to attract events. Coordinate the efforts between the Idaho Center and the City to complete projects that will result in the greatest return on investment.

Strategy 6

Identify and develop key business partnerships with the College of Western Idaho and surrounding entities to capitalize on the assets of the Idaho Center. For example, a parking structure could be constructed in partnership with CWI to serve both campuses.

Strategy 7

The Idaho Center has several acres of property that is not being utilized to its highest and best potential. This property is an asset that should be capitalized on to generate revenue for capital improvements. Develop a land-use and development plan to identify and evaluate the value of outlying parcels for long-term land leases or selling to private entities that will enhance the overall viability of the Idaho Center complex and provide funding for major projects. Potential complimentary entities are full service hotel and convention centers, restaurants, and specialty retail shops.