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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY FOR THE GAINESVILLE FESTIVAL PARK AND ARTS PARK

For 34 years the City of Gainesville Parks, Recreation and Cultural Affairs Department (PRCA) has fostered the growth of the Hoggetowne Medieval Faire to become one of the region's most successful special events, attracting 40,000 visitors over its traditional 2 (or 3 in 2019) weekend span. The relocation of Alachua County's Fairgrounds to a site which cannot accommodate the space needed for the Faire and its parking has not only prompted the PRCA to search for alternative sites but conceive of how a new site might not only provide a space for the Faire in future years but serve as a revenue-generating location for similar events, a regional destination for thousands and an important economic development tool for the community.

In the most simplistic of terms, and at its most streamlined layout, the Hoggetowne Medieval Faire can be produced on a site that provides access to main arterials and a 60-acre footprint which includes:

- A main Entrance Gate
- 35 acres of surface parking (5,200 cars)
- A gated perimeter of the event space
- 25 acres for event programming and temporary camping space for participants
- Power and water at locations throughout the site

Though initially portables would suffice, ticketing, office, storage and some restroom facilities would provide better customer service and operations infrastructure. As the site became more successful a phased program of further infrastructure development could be pursued.

Programmatically, PRCA envisions continuing to produce the Hoggetowne Medieval Faire at the new site, and adding another similar themed festival to its schedule. In addition, the site would also be marketed to outside event producers who are already producing shows around the world.

A VISION FOR THE GAINESVILLE FESTIVAL AND ARTS PARK

The Gainesville Festival and Arts Park will be the only permanent, revolving event park in the Southeastern US. The grounds will be designed as a festival/events park, not a fairground, which will allow for a, better planned setting for events that are more conducive for the surrounding neighborhood. Parking will be ample and access properly planned to allow for a desirable guest experience.

Gainesville is positioned to be the heart of arts and culture in North Central Florida. With the diversity both within the local community and the University of Florida, Gainesville can provide

a variety of culturally enriching festivals and events that create enjoyable experience for attendees while promoting community morale, providing lifetime learning moments, and enhancing economic development for the area.

Festivals and events have become one of the fastest growing areas of local community tourism and development. In fact, festivals are now a crucial element of the county's tourism business, with an astounding cultural and economic impact. Festivals generate on-site revenue in the form of ticket sales, food beverage, souvenirs and more. They also produce off-site revenue such as local gas stations, shops, restaurants, etc. As such, it is important to identify the major event features that attract visitors, stimulate economic expansion, improve the perception of the community and develop loyal patrons. Features include: easily accessible sites with clear signage, ample parking, clean restrooms, quality entertainment, access to food and beverage, and reasonable admission costs.

HOGGETOWNE MEDIEVAL FAIRE

A staple on Gainesville's festival calendar, the Hoggetowne Medieval Faire (Hoggetowne) has been delighting families and fairgoers for 33 years. For two (or 3 in 2019) weekends a year, the Hoggetowne Medieval Faire open its gates to welcome a plethora of kings and queens, singing minstrels and heroic knights. One of the longest running Florida shows, Hoggetowne provides quality arts and entertainment at a reasonable cost for Alachua and surrounding counties and is a unique and attractive opportunity that residents and tourists look forward to each year.

Hoggetowne started as a one-day event on the grounds of the Thomas Center. After only five years, the event had outgrown the space and it was necessary to relocate to the Alachua County Fairgrounds. Over the years, Hoggetowne has continued to grow and include many of the beloved attractions that inspire people to return year after year, such as the joust and living chessboard. Now with 9 stages of entertainment, over 100 craft and souvenir vendors, and a robust food court, Hoggetowne draws approximately 40,000 people during the current 5 days. "School Day" has been a long-standing tradition at the Hoggetowne Medieval Faire where more than 3,000 attendees from school groups and disability groups enjoy the medieval merriment of the Middle Ages.

HOGGETOWNE MEDIEVAL FAIRE SPACE NEEDS

Note: This is a minimum acreage requirement to duplicate the Faire as we know it and does not allow for growth.

	Acres	Sq. Feet
Parking	35	1,524,600
Merchant	5	217,800
Food Court	1	43,560
Games/Rides	0.5	21,780
Encampment/Activities	1	43,560
Stages/Performance		
Spaces	5	217,800
Management	0.5	21,780
Temporary Camping		
Space	1.5	65,340
Misc.	0.5	21,780
Outdoor Exhibition		
Space	5	217,800
Public Space/Gardens	5	217,800
	60 Acres	2,613,600 Sq. Feet

Comparable Festival Park Venues

Maggie Valley Festival Park, North Carolina

Governance: Town of Maggie Valley

7 acres fenced

2 acre parking

Covered stage

Concessions/restroom facility

Mercer County Park, Pennington, NJ

Governance: Mercer County Park Commission

Mercer County Park Festival Grounds encompasses over 200,000 square feet of venue space with a 2,200 square foot, state-of-the-art performing arts stage with a wide array of electrical, lighting, sound

Festival Grounds rental fee \$2,500 per day plus equipment rental, security, and labor

Special Event Parking \$5 per car

RFK Stadium, Washington DC

Governance: The Board of Directors of the Washington Convention and Sports Authority (t/a Events DC)

80 acres

Major events held on the grounds include the Rock 'n' Roll USA Marathon, ShamrockFest and the DC101 Chili Cook-Off. The Rock 'n' Roll USA Marathon, the only marathon run entirely in the District of Columbia, features local bands along the course and culminates with a Finish Line

Festival on the festival grounds. ShamrockFest, one of the largest St. Patrick's Day festivals held in the Mid-Atlantic region, features over 50 bands and DJ's on 10 stages plus food, beverages, craft vendors, carnival rides, games and other exciting activities. The DC101 Chili Cook-Off has raised more than \$11 million for the National Kidney Foundation Serving the National Capital Area (NKF/NCA) and features national recording artists and a popular chili competition. New to the Festival Grounds is the DAYGLOW music tour, the premier music and paint party.

Festival of Arts (of Laguna Beach) Grounds

Governance: The Festival of Arts of Laguna Beach® is a 501c3 (founded in 1932)

Irvine Bowl

The Festival of Arts Irvine Bowl is a beautiful outdoor amphitheater, and a good location for concerts, fundraisers, performances and more. The Bowl is the home of the world-renowned Pageant of the Masters.

Seating Capacity: 2,629

Stage Dimensions: 80'W x 40'D.

Forum Theater

The Festival of Arts Forum Theater is an intimate indoor theater. The Forum is a perfect place for performances, movie screenings, workshops, seminars, lectures, and more.

Seating Capacity: 236

Stage Dimensions: 48'W x 23'D

Event Pavilions/Art Exhibit

These open-air, covered pavilions are perfect for a variety of uses, such as art shows, galas, festivals and fundraisers. During the summer, this area is home to the Festival of Arts Fine Art Show.

Capacity: 3,000

Stage and Green

An outdoor elevated stage, perfect for small concerts and fundraisers.

Capacity: 400

Stage Dimensions: Approximately 15' x 20'

Spirit of the Suwannee Music Park

Situated on the banks of the historic Suwannee River, the park consists of over 800 acres (2.4 km²) of camping areas, concert venues, recreational facilities and unspoiled forests. The park hosts numerous major events each year, including Suwannee Hulaween, Suwannee River Jam, the Suwannee Roots Revival, Wane Music Festival, Purple Hatter's Ball, and Suwannee Spring Reunion.

Spirit of the Suwannee Music Park, nestled in Live Oak, Florida, with 3 miles of the Suwannee river bordering the park, hosts over 25 diverse, fun events throughout the year. The park offers multiple stages, miles of trails and over 800 acres (3.2 km²) for camping, hiking, canoe and kayak rentals on the river, horseback riding, a restaurant and country store. Besides a variety of other flora and fauna it includes a large bat house which has become a home to an increasing number of bats.

SNAPSHOT OF CULTURAL AND TICKETED EVENTS IN MARCH 2019

Gainesville is increasingly home to dozens of festivals and events on a monthly basis. Here is a snapshot of some of the cultural and ticketed events held in March 2019, indicating the potential demand for a year-round festival and event venue.

Turkish Food Fair - February (Kanapaha Park)

Fair featuring Turkish food to raise money for Syrian and Yemeni refugees

Where the sidewalk ends: Family Arts Fest – March 9 (Magnolia Park)

The festival includes art vendors, music, food, art activities, art demonstrations, kid's activities, and family-friendly organizations. Produced by Fun4GatorKids and Yopp! Inc.

India Fest – March 16, 2019 (Bo Diddley Plaza)

Indian dances, cuisine, jewelry, arts and crafts, traditional attire, cultural programs. Produced by ICED.

Swampcon – March 16-17, 2019 (UF Reitz Union)

Multi-genre convention featuring a combination of Anime, Gaming, Comic and Sci-Fi themed events. Produced by UF student groups

Jewish Culture Fest – March 17, 2019 (congregation B'nai Israel)

Combining the Jewish Food Festival and the Purim Festival to feature delicious authentic Jewish deli food while celebrating the spirit and festivities of Purim.

Gainesville Seafood Fest – March 21, 2020

A family friendly event bringing together lovers of seafood. Produced by Go Party Entertainment, Orlando, FL

Hogtown Craft Beer Fest – March 23, 2019 (Alachua County Fairgrounds)

Over 300 craft beer, mead, and ciders will be available from local, regional and national breweries for you to sample! Enjoy the comradery, beer/food pairings, homebrew demos, and more. Plus all this benefits the local community by helping charity partners. Produced by Hogtown Brewers.

Gainesville Native American Festival – March 29-31 (Alachua County Fairgrounds)

A celebration of Native American Art, Culture & History. Produced by Paul DeLuna

Jest Fest – March 31, 2019 (Thomas Center)

“The Greatest Show in Gainesville” Hilarity, hijinks, and feats of derring-do will thrill and amaze the entire family. The legendary Flying Wallendas star with their famous daredevil high-wire act, along with a revolving cast of circus stars, clowns, puppets, musicians and a fabulous food court!

POTENTIAL FUTURE FESTIVALS

In researching the other potential uses for the space we looked at a number of currently touring entertainment festivals and events that would be prospects for facility rentals. These are suggested events only and the promoters have not been approached.

Lantern Festivals

Lantern festivals have been popular in Asia for thousands of years. Until recently, these types of festivals have not been seen in the United States. Massive sets made of a steel framework, internally lit and covered with a wide array of colored silk will decorate the park (15 sets in all) to inspire visitors.

“One Earth for All” will highlight the importance that plants and animals play in the world around us. Organic market fresh food and beverages will be offered. Sustainable crafts will be sold and environmental groups will be allowed to educate and tout their causes.



Robotic Dinosaurs

The Gainesville Festival Park would become the forest primeval, propelling visitors back in time when an array of robotic dinosaurs will fill the grounds accompanied by related educational opportunities to engage audience members, young and old alike.



Autumn Festival/Octoberfest/Halloween/Dia de los Muertos

The Autumn Festival would incorporate many of the beloved American traditions, as well as showcase other cultural celebrations that are recognized around the world. Kid's crafts and activities will be offered. Fall entertainment will occur on various stages.

The event would also echo the spirit of Volksfest, which is a large event in Germany which usually combines a beer festival or wine festival and a travelling funfair. Attractions may include amusement rides, games of chance and skill, and food and merchandise vendors.

The Festival would provide a community venue for Halloween, where costumed visitors can enjoy traditional activities such as a haunted house, purchase their pumpkins, enjoy s'mores over a fire, drink warm cider and hot chocolate, enjoy horse drawn hay rides and visit stations for sweet treats.

And finally the festival would culminate with the Day of the Dead, or Dia de los Muertos, which is a Mexican holiday celebrated throughout Mexico as well as in the Mexican diaspora from October 31 to November 2.



Holiday Light Festival

This festival would provide a gathering place for the community and visitors to celebrate the season with a brilliant array of light installations and family friendly activities.





Afri Fest - A Celebration of African Culture

Gainesville is a very diverse community and with a population of over 28,000 African Americans, it would be a great location to host an event that showcases the African culture.

Following the model of Houston's AFRIFEST which illuminates the diverse cultures through "a tour of country" arts and crafts, ethnic cuisines, vibrant and colorful fashions, music, and more, this festival would invite everyone to celebrate Africa's unique and diverse culture from a various different regions.

“It’s one thing to read in books or online, but being able to see, touch, feel and taste representations of culture here in America is so important.”

Features:

- Live music and performances
- Fashion shows
- Cultural dance
- Drummers
- Food vendors – ethnic food
- Folklore tales from the motherland, Nigerian stories, South African stories
- Face painting; African tribal face makeup
- Arts and crafts stations for children (painting, jewelry making)

Possible Partners/Resources within Gainesville

- Gainesville Black Professionals
- NKwanda Jah: executive director of Cultural Art Coalition
- Ayoka Gifts International African Cultural Center Inc
- Alachua County Public Schools
- Center for African Studies @ UF
- Zeta Phi Beta – first African-American sorority to be chartered
- Kappa Alpha Psi
- Iota Phi Theta – nation’s 5th largest predominately African-American social service fraternity

OTHER POSSIBLE TICKETED EVENTS

Blues, Brews and BBQs - featuring blues bands performing on multiple stages, a variety of BBQ food trucks and local breweries.

Shakespeare Festival – featuring performances of different plays on various stages. Possible partners: Sid Homan, We the People, Acrosstown Repertory Theater, local high school drama and English departments.

International Festival - a temporary mini “Epcot” that would feature cuisine and cultural performances from several countries which could be rotated out each year.

Food and Wine Festival – featuring a variety of food booths and wine carts along with music performances.