

Fiscal Highlights

Variety of Options for the State Fairpark Explored in a Land Use Study - Ivan D. Djambov

The Utah state fair was established in 1902 and is currently run by the Utah State Fair Corporation, an independent public nonprofit corporation ([UCA 63H-6-103](#)). The state leases over 65 acres of Fairpark property to the corporation for \$10 per year.

The management of the Fairpark was privatized in 1995, with directive to find a way to become self-sufficient. The legislation also allowed the new corporation to receive annual appropriations from the state until it could become self-sufficient.

Since 1995 the corporation has attempted various ways to increase revenues and become self-sustaining. These include having private groups build a science center, aquarium, amphitheater, and bonding to construct a large multipurpose arena and sports facility. For various reasons these proposals have all fallen through.

In FY 2014, the corporation experienced serious financial problems. The Department of Administrative Services hired CRSA to analyze the Fairpark conditions, research peer institutions, appraise land use values, and develop long-term options for the state fair and the Fairground property.

CRSA issued their final report on July 3, 2014 titled "UTAH STATE FAIRPARK & WHITE BALLPARK LAND USE STUDY" (https://www.dropbox.com/sh/xc9f2qxh6upvuts/AABrCzxeQYal_pA4U8RK5TtCa/Final%20Report/Final%20Report_2014.07.03.pdf).

Some of the key findings of the report include:

- Maintaining and upgrading the Fairground facilities and the infrastructure could cost more than \$33 million over the next 20 years.
- Constructing new commercial facilities, including rodeo grounds and arena, retail venues, convention center, and multi-sports arena could cost additional \$47 million.
- Several options for relocating the Fairpark were explored, ranging from rebuilding the same structures at a new location (\$160 million) to creating a traveling fair partnering with county fairs (\$380,000).