



September, 2017

Dear friend, customer or vendor:

We thank you for your continued support The Fairgrounds Nashville. We would also like to update you on the ongoing investment that Metro Nashville is making in our facility. We are excited about the opportunities ahead, and we also recognize that many of you have questions about how this investment will impact your events or experiences at The Fairgrounds. Please know that we consider you a valued partner, and we want to provide you with a thorough explanation of what we know now and what information is yet to come.

### **Investment in Improvements**

Metro Nashville has committed a budget of \$18 million for improvements to the The Fairgrounds. A budget of \$12 million has been approved for improvement to The Fairgrounds buildings and infrastructure plus another \$6 million has been allocated to Metro Parks for construction of Fair Park. So far we have removed several dilapidated, unsafe, and unused structures. Some unusable equipment has also been removed. A major painting initiative is complete and included the exterior of eight buildings, the interior of one, along with doors, trim and railings. The aesthetic improvement has been significant. The project management team has started planning for improvements to the grandstand and adjoining concourse, the areas that support the speedway as well as the administration offices of The Fairgrounds. Scope and timing of these improvements has yet to be determined.

### **Fair Park**

A detailed design plan for Fair Park has been completed and has been presented in public meetings to the Fair Board, Parks Board, and the Stormwater Management Committee. The park design is based on best practices for stormwater management and includes amenities that are noticeably absent in this service area as referenced in the Metro Parks Master Plan, *Plan to Play*. The goal of the project is threefold: 1) daily activation of underutilized space on the property; 2) do our part to minimize runoff into Brown's Creek and manage the floodway; 3) beautify the property to complement other improvements and support events. There are several design details that need to be worked out, including relocation of the Craighead parking lot/speedway pit area. A Memorandum of Understanding between the Fair Board and Metro Parks Board will be forthcoming for approval by both Boards and details responsibilities for the maintenance, operation, and programming of the park.

### **Speedway RFP**

Metro Procurement is in the final stages of the purchasing process for the operation, maintenance and improvement of the speedway. The Fair Board authorized a Request for Proposals in May that sought a qualified promoter for a multi-year lease. The speedway holds a significant place in The Fairgrounds history and having the stability of a multi-year partnership is vital to the ongoing investment into the property. Next steps include award to the selected vendor pending the approval of the selected vendor by the Fair Board and successful negotiation of a contract.



### **Major League Soccer Stadium**

The Fairgrounds was selected as the preferred location of a new Major League Soccer (MLS) stadium. Renderings of a 30,000-seat stadium were presented to Metro Council on Monday, August 14 and in a joint meeting of the Fair Board and Sports Authority on Thursday, August 17. While we will not know for some time if Nashville is selected for a team, the Fairgrounds' improvement project team is planning improvements around either decision. Timing for Fairgrounds improvements is being considered thoughtfully considering the MLS decision timeline, which could be in 2018.

If the soccer stadium moves forward, the Mayor's Office has stated that additional improvement funds (in addition to the \$12 million appropriated in Fiscal Year 2017) for The Fairgrounds will be Metro's responsibility and is a priority. We know that making these improvements will affect the current operation of The Fairgrounds in the short term. To that end, we are working diligently with the project team to plan a phased approach that will allow us to continue to provide for our customers and guests throughout this journey. We ask for your patience, flexibility and support along the way. The Fairgrounds' improvement priorities include the construction or renovation of buildings that are fully accessible, have the square footage of indoor and outdoor covered space that is currently available, are energy efficient with reliable and modernized controls, and furnished with equipment, technology and furniture that supports events and the needs of our current and future clients and guests.

### **Tennessee State Fair**

The State of Tennessee has indicated that it has begun seeking other possible sites for the Tennessee State Fair. The State now has jurisdiction over the State Fair and contracts with a third party entity, currently the Tennessee State Fair Association (TSFA), to produce it. The Fairgrounds has a 5-year contract with TSFA that expires after the 2018 Fair. We will continue to support them in the production of the State Fair while it is located at The Fairgrounds.

Without a doubt, there are many changes on the horizon and often change is hard. We have been careful to not rush decision-making and make "a la carte" improvements. Careful consideration of the campus as a whole is our goal, while thoughtfully considering past, present and future uses of our treasured community asset. We commit to you our best efforts in our continued stewardship of this historic property so that we may serve the community for generations to come.

Thank you for your support!

Regards,

*Ned Horton*

\_\_\_\_\_  
Ned Horton, Chair  
Board of Fair Commissioners

*Laura Schloesser*

\_\_\_\_\_  
Laura Schloesser  
Executive Director, The Fairgrounds Nashville