




KATHERINE A. KLAUSMEIER
County Executive

D'ANDREA L. WALKER
County Administrative Officer

MEMORANDUM

Date: February 21, 2025

To: Thomas H. Bostwick, Legislative Council/Secretary to County Council

From: D'Andrea L. Walker, County Administrative Officer 

RE: Maryland State Fair Request for Fee Waiver

Pursuant to the requirement of County Council Bill 41-22 "*Notification of Development Fee Waiver for Government-Funded Qualifying Projects*", attached please find background information on the development fee waiver request in connection with the construction of a new Farm and Garden building on the State Fair property.

The Maryland State Fair & Agricultural Society, a 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization, is undertaking a significant redevelopment project at the Maryland State Fairgrounds, located at 2200 York Road, Timonium, Maryland. This project involves the demolition of the existing Farm and Garden Building and the construction of a new 16,000-square-foot multiuse Farm and Garden Building. The new facility will enhance agricultural education opportunities, serve as a valuable community resource, and provide a modernized space for meetings, functions, and events.

The Maryland State Fairgrounds has long served as a vital community asset, providing a space for agricultural education, economic activity, and public engagement. The replacement of the existing Farm and Garden Building with a modern 16,000-square-foot multi-use facility will significantly enhance these contributions, directly benefiting Baltimore County residents, local businesses, and educational institutions.

As mandated by Bill 41-22, we will post the request on the Department of Permits, Approvals and Inspections (PAI) website for the required 45 calendar days. Should the Council have questions or need further information please feel free to contact Pete Gutwald, Director of PAI.

Thank you in advance for your kind assistance with this request.

Attachment

cc: Sameer Sidh, Deputy County Administrative Officer for Economic Development & Infrastructure
C. Pete Gutwald, Director Permits, Approvals & Inspections



MARYLAND STATE FAIR

P.O. BOX 188, TIMONIUM, MARYLAND 21094-0188 410-252-0200 FAX 410-561-5610

February 18, 2025

Dear Ms. D'Andrea L. Walker,

We at the Maryland State Fair are requesting a waiver for the development fees in connection with the construction of a new Farm and Garden building on the State Fair property.

Summary

The Maryland State Fair & Agricultural Society, a 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization, is undertaking a significant redevelopment project at the Maryland State Fairgrounds, located at 2200 York Road, Timonium, Maryland. This project involves the demolition of the existing Farm and Garden Building and the construction of a new 16,000-square-foot multiuse Farm and Garden Building. The new facility will enhance agricultural education opportunities, serve as a valuable community resource, and provide a modernized space for meetings, functions, and events.

The development has been designed with versatility and sustainability in mind, ensuring it meets the needs of both the agricultural community and the general public. The structure will be equipped with adaptable spaces to host educational exhibits, workshops, and interactive programming related to Maryland's rich agricultural heritage. Additionally, it will provide meeting rooms and event spaces available for local organizations, businesses, and community groups.

The Maryland State Fairgrounds is zoned **M.L.-I.M. (Manufacturing, Light - Industrial, Major)**, with the property historically dedicated to agricultural exhibitions, community engagement, and educational initiatives. Surrounded by a mix of commercial, residential, and public-use properties, the fairgrounds serve as a vital hub for Baltimore County and the broader Maryland community. The new Farm and Garden Building will uphold this tradition while offering enhanced functionality and accessibility.

Given the nonprofit nature of the Maryland State Fair & Agricultural Society, the projects support with county and state funds and the project's direct benefit to the community, we are seeking a waiver for the development fees. This fee waiver request aligns with the public service mission of the organization, recognizing the educational, cultural, and economic contributions of the Maryland State Fairgrounds to the region. Additionally, consideration of waiving other associated permit or development fees would further support the project's successful completion, ensuring resources remain dedicated to enhancing public benefit and educational programming.

Justification

The Maryland State Fairgrounds has long served as a vital community asset, providing a space for agricultural education, economic activity, and public engagement. The replacement of the existing Farm and Garden Building with a modern 16,000-square-foot multiuse facility will significantly enhance these contributions, directly benefiting Baltimore County residents, local businesses, and educational institutions.

Community Impact

The new Farm and Garden Building will address a critical need for expanded agricultural education and community programming. As a central feature of the Maryland State Fair, the facility will be used year-round to host hands-on learning experiences, interactive exhibits, and workshops that highlight Maryland's agricultural heritage, sustainability practices, and food production systems. This initiative aligns with the County's broader educational goals by providing unique opportunities for students, Future Farmers of America (FFA) members, and 4-H clubs to engage in experiential learning outside the traditional classroom.

Additionally, the facility will serve as a resource for community meetings, public forums, and nonprofit organizations, providing much-needed event space in a location easily accessible to residents throughout Baltimore County. The building's flexible design will accommodate a wide range of community functions, from small business development workshops to emergency preparedness training, reinforcing its role as a multipurpose public asset.

Economic Development Impact

The Maryland State Fairgrounds is a key economic driver for the region, hosting year-round events that attract millions of visitors and generate significant local revenue. The construction of the new Farm and Garden Building will further enhance this economic impact by creating an improved venue for agricultural exhibitions, trade shows, and agribusiness networking events. This will increase visitor spending at local businesses, hotels, and restaurants, thereby contributing to Baltimore County's economic growth.

Moreover, the project corrects existing deficiencies in the current infrastructure. The outdated Farm and Garden Building lacks modern amenities, limiting its functionality and deterring potential users. By constructing a state-of-the-art facility, the Maryland State Fairgrounds will be better positioned to attract larger-scale events and educational programming, increasing year-round activity and revenue generation for the county.

Justification for Fee Waiver

Given the Maryland State Fair & Agricultural Society's nonprofit status and its demonstrated commitment to community engagement and education, the requested waiver of the development fees is a reasonable and justified request. The project will deliver substantial public benefits by enhancing agricultural literacy, expanding community access to educational programming, and supporting local economic activity.

Furthermore, waiving this fee will allow more financial resources to be allocated toward the facility's educational programming and community initiatives, maximizing its long-term value to the County. Given the far-reaching positive impact of the new Farm and Garden Building, we respectfully request consideration for a waiver of the development fees and any other applicable development or permit fees that would otherwise divert funds from this critical community project.

Reason for the request

The Maryland State Fair & Agricultural Society is requesting a waiver of the development fees to ensure that the maximum possible funding is allocated directly to the construction and operation of the new Farm and Garden Building. This project is being funded through a combination of private, state, and county resources, demonstrating broad public and institutional support. However, given the nonprofit nature of the Maryland State Fairgrounds and its commitment to serving the public interest, any additional financial burden—such as development fees—reduces the funds available for educational programming and community use.

Public Funding and Partnerships

The redevelopment of the Farm and Garden Building is made possible through a partnership between the Maryland State Fair & Agricultural Society, the State of Maryland, and Baltimore County. The funding sources include:

- **State of Maryland Paygo, Capital Grants and LBI:** \$3,050,000 awarded to support the demolition and reconstruction of the facility.
- **Baltimore County Grant:** \$1,750,000 provided to enhance community access and improve infrastructure.
- **Maryland State Fair & Agricultural Society Contribution:** The Fair is leveraging private donations and organizational funds to cover the remaining costs of the project, ensuring its completion without additional taxpayer burden. Estimated \$500,000.

These funds are allocated specifically for construction, infrastructure, and development. However, any additional expenses, including development fees, place strain on the project's budget and could divert resources from the facility's intended educational and community-focused initiatives.

Negative Impact if Waiver is Not Granted

If the fee waiver is not granted, the Maryland State Fair & Agricultural Society will be forced to redirect funds away from critical project elements, potentially limiting the scope of the facility's educational programming and reducing its accessibility to community organizations. The surcharge represents a direct reduction in funds available for agricultural exhibits, interactive learning experiences, and public programming, all of which serve Baltimore County residents.

Furthermore, without financial relief, the Fair may have to delay or scale back aspects of the project to accommodate the added expense. This could impact the facility's ability to serve as a

fully functional venue for community meetings, youth agricultural education, and local business development initiatives.

Given that this project directly benefits Baltimore County's residents, enhances educational opportunities, and supports the region's economic growth, we respectfully request a waiver of the development fees. This waiver will allow the Maryland State Fairgrounds to remain a valuable public resource, ensuring that the new Farm and Garden Building reaches its full potential as a hub for agricultural education and community engagement.

Thank you for your consideration of the development fees. Please reach out should you have any additional questions. We look forward to your response.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to read "D. Andrew Cashman".

D. Andrew Cashman
General Manager
The Maryland State Fair & Agricultural Society, Inc.

Cc: C. Pete Gutwald, Director Permits, Approvals and Inspections