

Lake County proposes new fairgrounds

By [Ryan Lynch](#) – Staff Writer, Orlando Business Journal
Oct 26, 2022

Lake County has started to plan its new fairgrounds to replace its current aging one.

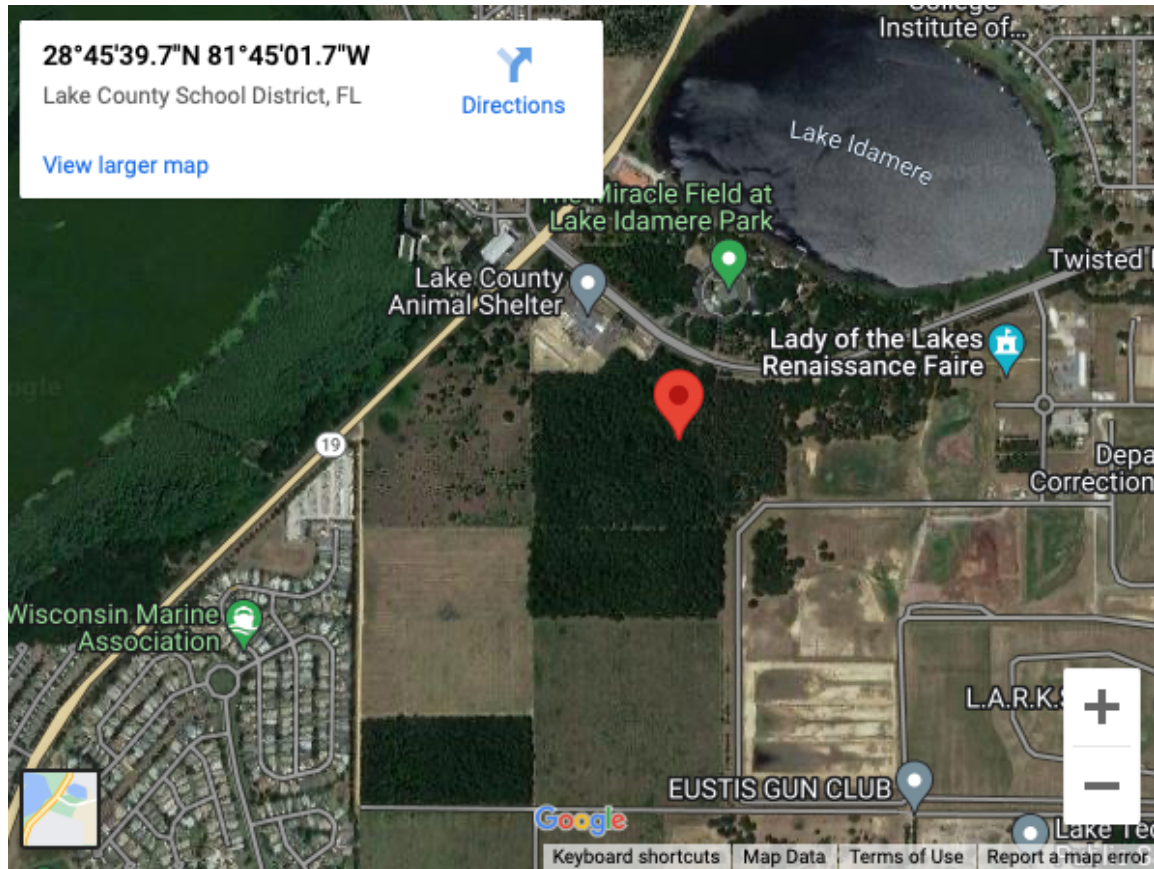
Initial concepts from a group of consultants working on behalf of the county recommend a new 55,000-square-foot events center, a 25,000-square-foot arena building and 15,000-square-foot open air pavilion, along with at least 3,000 parking spaces and open sites for the Lake County Fair.

The county wants to build the new fairgrounds to [replace its aging one in Eustis](#).

Why this matters: A new project has the potential to create new construction opportunities and jobs, as well as future visitation to the county.

Lake County Commissioners on Oct. 25 unanimously voted to allow the consultants — which include lead consultant Rhodes + Brito Architects Inc. — to consider a 27-acre piece of land in addition to 41 acres on County Road 448 and State Road 19 designated for the fair as part of the final master plan, as well as the consideration of a 4.5-acre property tied to the county landfill for overflow parking. The adjacent 27-acre property currently is the home to the Lady of the Lakes Renaissance Faire.

The decision by the commission allows the consultant to do the final master plan for the county. The master plan would consider the renaissance fair's future and multiple scenarios. Already, the conceptual plans have included one option with 3,220 parking spaces and another with 4,670.



Sean Parks, chairman of Lake County Commission, said he wants to make sure any decision would make economic sense and that the fairgrounds are used often. "At the end of the day, this has to be a good revenue model for us. It has to be operated and filled six days a week or honestly I'm not interested if it's going to be used a couple of times a year or for sporadic shows here or there. That's a bigger question that we have to get to, making sure it is filled."

A market analysis from Hunden Strategic Partners — another consultant on the project — in the presentation found that the city of Tavares and Lake County as a whole lacks large event spaces. In addition, the county's current fairgrounds do not meet that need and can't compete with the other supply of more modern event facilities.

Ruffin Rhodes, principal/director of operations with Rhodes + Brito Architects, said during the meeting the location could be a draw for visitation to the county. "I think it will get more [use] than the two or three weeks out of the year for the carnival itself because it has year-round amenities."