



STAFF REPORT
4/9/2025

TO: Honorable Mayor and City Council Members

FROM: Celina Jimenez, Director of Economic Development

SUBJECT: Authorize an Appropriation in the Amount of \$4,500 to Secure the Venue for the 2025 Coachella Agricultural Summit

STAFF RECOMMENDATION:

Staff recommends that the City Council considers authorizing an appropriation in the amount of \$4,500 to secure the venue location for the 2025 Coachella Agricultural Summit. The venue location is Rancho 51 Date Gardens.



BACKGROUND:

Previously, staff brought the concept of a Coachella Agricultural Summit to the Economic Development and Planning Subcommittee on July 11, 2024. Staff then requested authorization from the City Council on September 11, 2024 to form an Ad-Hoc Committee and appoint a councilmember to the committee. Councilmember Stephanie Virgen was appointed to the committee.

DISCUSSION/ANALYSIS:

Agriculture has long been a cornerstone of Coachella's economy and cultural heritage. The city's agricultural sector plays a vital role in sustaining the local food system, providing employment, and contributing to the city's overall economic health. However, the sector faces various challenges, including water management issues, evolving market demands, and the need for innovative agricultural practices.

To ensure the sustainability and growth of the agricultural industry, it is crucial to bring together all relevant stakeholders to discuss current challenges, share knowledge, and develop strategies to strengthen the local food system. The City of Coachella once convened the 'Ag Summit' in the late 1990s through the early 2000s at Anthony Vineyards and convened farmers, educational institutions, elected officials, and other stakeholders. The proposed Agricultural Summit will serve as a platform for these discussions and will help identify actionable solutions to support the agricultural industry's future success. In collaboration with Coachella Blue Zone efforts, the summit would explore the intersection between agriculture and health, highlighting how local food production can contribute to better health outcomes for residents.

Ad-Hoc Committee

In order to plan this effort, an Ad-Hoc Committee was formed and meets monthly with the following members:

- Councilmember Stephanie Virgen
- Janell Percy, Growing Coachella Valley
- Juan de Lara, former Coachella Mayor and original Ag Summit organizer
- Office of County Supervisor V. Manuel Perez representative
- Hidden Harvest representative, nonprofit
- Temalpakh Farms, Augustine Band of Cahuilla Indians
- Riverside County Office of Nutrition and Health Promotion representative
- Coachella Valley Unified School District representative
- Coachella Valley Water District
- Blue Zones Executive Director and team
- City staff

The Ad-Hoc Committee has been discussing thematic summit track opportunities that include: agricultural issues, agricultural research, food security, farm-to-table initiatives, regenerative and urban agriculture, labor and workforce development, marketing and branding of local produce, and agritourism. Additional topics of discussion include the estimated costs of organizing the Agricultural Summit such as venue costs, logistics, marketing, speakers, sponsorship, registration fees and contributions from local businesses and organizations.

General Plan Consistency

Sustainability and Natural Environment Element

Goal 5 Agricultural Preservation

- Agricultural Economy - Maintain and support a viable agricultural economy within the City that recognizes the community's agricultural heritage.
- Agricultural Preservation and Preservation Tools
- Water-efficient agriculture
- Right to Farm - Support the right of existing farms to continue operations.
- Farmworker Housing

Implementation Actions:

- Agriculture education park (#7)
- Right to Farm Ordinance (# 8)

Community Health and Wellness Element

Goal 5 Local Food System

- Local food production
- Farmer's markets
- Community gardens
- Edible school yards
- Zoning for small scale food production
- Community kitchens

Goal 6 Healthy Food Access

- Healthy food retail
- Food Access
- Elimination of hunger
- Nutrition Education
- School food

Implementation Actions:

- Edible landscapes (#21)
- Community garden and composting education (#22)
- Gardening tools and resources (#23)
- Emergency Food (#24)

FISCAL IMPACT:

Appropriation for this request would come from the General Fund. The venue location cost is \$4,500 for Rancho 51 Date Gardens.

ALTERNATIVES:

1. Authorize an Appropriation in the Amount of \$4,500 to Secure the Venue for the 2025 Coachella Agricultural Summit Venue
2. Not approve.

ATTACHMENT(S):

None.