AUSTIN

CONVENTION CENTER

LONG-RANGE MASTER PLAN

MARCH 2015

THE COMPETITION

How Does Austin Stack Up?

THE POSSIBILITIES

Visions for the Austin Convention Center's Future

THE PLAN

for Moving Forward

AUSTIN CONVENTION CENTER

LONG-RANGE MASTER PLAN

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FOR THE CITY OF AUSTIN,
AUSTIN CONVENTION CENTER DEPARTMENT

AUSTIN

CONVENTION CENTER

Executive Summary
The Vision

The vision for the future of the Austin Convention Center extends beyond the walls of the facility itself and includes the businesses, residents, public agencies and other stakeholders of Austin's downtown southeast end. The future development and success of the Convention Center cannot be fully realized without the future development and success of the "Convention Center District."

This Long-Range Master Plan illustrates a best-case scenario for the expansion of the Convention Center's facilities, public/private development of the Convention District, and improvements to existing infrastructure.

The impact of the tourism and hospitality industry to the City of Austin is significant. The 2013 economic impact for Austin reported by the State of Texas Office of the Governor, Economic Development and Tourism estimates $5.5 billion in local spending by visitors, approximately 45,000 jobs, and local tax revenues of $121 million. Those local tax revenues include Hotel Occupancy Tax, which supports the Convention Center and Tourism and Marketing efforts, as well as an estimated $25-30 million in sales tax revenues for the City of Austin's General Fund.

The Convention Center's continued success positively impacts the tourism and hospitality industry, which ultimately contributes to building a vibrant, resilient, and diverse economy, as envisioned by the City of Austin's *Imagine Austin* comprehensive plan.

AUSTIN'S TOP TWO PRIORITIES

The Austin Convention Center serves a wide variety of users throughout its annual events calendar including conventions, trade and consumer shows, and a variety of local public events. Professional organizations representing Convention Planners and Meeting Planners select locations based on the total package available within a community. In other words, cities compete on a "destination-basis."

Executive Summary

(continued)

The View North Along Trinity Street

For over three decades, industry surveys have consistently identified the same top five factors in selecting a convention destination:

- Convention Facilities
- Hotel Package
- Destination (Attractions and Activities)
- Transportation
- Safety & Security

Over the past decade, Austin has emerged from being a regional best-kept-secret to a nationally-recognized 'destination city' known for its music, hospitality and lifestyle. During this same period, hotel and residential development in downtown Austin has increased dramatically, creating a 24/7 environment that appeals to both local residents and out-of-town visitors. With the ongoing expansion of Austin's airport, the City has effectively solved for two of the (previously) weakest factors in selection criteria.

While developing the Master Plan, analysis of the Austin Convention Center's current 'package,' as well as that of its competitor cities, identified two key areas in need of improvement for Austin to be competitive in today's market. In priority order, these include: 1) Convention Facilities, and 2) Safety & Security.

CONVENTION FACILITIES: THE #1 PRIORITY

Originally built in 1992, with Phase II expansion completed in 2002, the Austin Convention Center is a well-managed, well-maintained facility. Industry advisors, exhibitors and meeting planners have, during workshops and in surveys, stated that the Austin Convention Center lacks the exhibition and meeting space to be competitive with peer cities for drawing major shows that could be easily accommodated by Austin's existing and proposed hotel room supply.

With 247,050 square feet of exhibition space, the Austin Convention Center is well below the average of 518,000 square feet for its peer cities. Despite substantial hotel room supply, extensive and convenient dining/shopping/entertainment venues and national acclaim as one of "the coolest cities in America," Austin risks losing market share in the highly competitive convention/trade show industry.

After exploring a variety of expansion options, future expansion is best accommodated on the city blocks immediately west of the existing Convention Center. The proposed Phase III expansion will be developed across Trinity Street, connected to the existing Convention Center via pedestrian bridges at the upper level concourse, allowing Trinity Street to remain fully operational.

Phase III is envisioned as a multi-level structure with below-grade levels for visitor parking and loading docks that serve the exhibit halls and convention operations; two levels of exhibition space totaling 200,000 square feet; and an upper level that includes 65,000 square feet of new meeting space plus a 56,700-square-foot ballroom. With the addition of Phase III, the Austin Convention Center would offer a total of 447,050 square feet of exhibition space, 120,800 square feet of meeting space, and 120,600 square feet of ballroom space.

Architecturally, the pedestrian bridges connecting the existing Convention Center with Phase III have the opportunity to frame a newly reimagined plaza on Trinity Street, enhancing the arrival experience. The green

Executive Summary

(continued)

Creating a New Urban Venue for Large Outdoor Events

roof envisioned for Phase III serves as Austin's newest downtown outdoor event space with unprecedented views of Austin's downtown skyline and Capitol Building.

SAFETY AND SECURITY

How a city is perceived by out-of-town visitors is influenced by the part of the city they experience. Many conventioneers and trade show attendees will only experience the part of Austin that exists between and around their hotel and the Convention Center. Ideally, visitors departing the Convention Center District should feel the City of Austin's desired image and character.

As compared to its competitor cities, Austin is a safe destination for local residents, conventioneers and tourists. However, the reality can be overshadowed by the public's perception of personal safety when in the immediate vicinity of the Austin Convention Center due to several factors, including:

- The current lack of pedestrian activity to the east around Waller Creek and Palm Park
- The heavy volume of vehicular traffic and barren streetscape along Cesar Chavez's pedestrian corridor

Clearly articulated pedestrian corridors and wayfinding tools (signage, kiosks, iconic street elements) will promote exploration and discovery by visitors. Improvements to the streetscape on adjacent sidewalks will enhance the pedestrian experience for those traveling between their hotels and the Convention Center. The City of Austin and other stakeholders should also give careful consideration to future plans related to the provision of social services in the area, given the large transient/homeless population seeking assistance just 2-3 blocks north of the Convention Center. A concept like San Antonio's Haven for Hope Transformational Campus, which provides a recovery oriented system of care and comprehensive social services on one site, should be considered by the City and other community agency partners.

The Waller Creek Conservancy's vision for the future transformation of Waller Creek and particularly Palm Park, between the east side of the Convention Center and I-35, will create a shaded outdoor amenity for use by local residents and visitors alike. Increased pedestrian activity will further foster a sense of safety and provide convention goers and hotel guests with direct access to one of Austin's great public assets, Lady Bird Lake. Consideration should also be given to improving Brush Square to the north.

Executive Summary

(continued)

A Mixed Use Approach to the Convention District

THE CONVENTION CENTER DISTRICT

A primary consideration should be given to any and all future development in the vicinity of the Convention Center. Future hotels, residential buildings, office towers and parking garages should be designed to accommodate restaurants, bars and retail shops at the street level. This approach to the creation of a Convention Center District should be aggressively encouraged by the City of Austin when negotiating with developers.

Activating the streets with local residents, downtown workers, conventioneers and visitors attracted by the shops, restaurants and entertainment venues will create a vibrant, safe Convention Center District that appeals to meeting planners and exhibitors.

Creating a "destination district" that is anchored by the Convention Center will attract Austinites and their entertainment dollars, as well as provide a compelling story to convention and meeting planners for booking future events.

CONCLUSION

This master plan's recommended expansion strategy represents Austin's best opportunity to advance its goals for being a leader in the convention and event industry. The proposed Phase III expansion provides the type of flexibility that will allow the Conventoin Center to schedule bigger events as well as concurrent, overlapping events, thereby reducing the 'dead periods' that can occur during the breakdown/setup operations for back-to-back events.

Expansion of the convention facilities is only a part of the bigger solution for enhancing Austin's competitiveness in the convention/trade show industry. Upgrades to the existing Convention Center including improvements to the kitchen and internal circulation are needed. Externally, consideration should be given to streetscape improvements to enhance the pedestrian experience. Palm Park and the section of Waller Creek from 4th Street to Lady Bird Lake should be priority considerations for public space enhancements as part of the Convention District's overall plan.

More and larger conventions and trade shows draw more out-of-town visitors and their dollars to the city and have a positive economic impact on the performance of the area's hotels and local businesses. Increases in the Hotel Occupancy Tax and service industry jobs (taxis, restaurants, hotels, retail) are some of the anticipated direct and indirect outcomes of convention center expansion.

The proposed Phase III expansion "solves for the weakest link" and creates a Convention Center that both leverages and complements the extensive and varied hotel room supply, restaurants and entertainment venues nearby...enhancing Austin's growing reputation as a major destination city. ■

Context

The Austin Convention Center opened in July 1992 on the southeast side of Downtown Austin. The center is owned and operated by the City of Austin and managed by the Austin Convention Center Department. Expansion of the Convention Center was completed in May 2002, doubling its size from 441,000 square feet to 881,400 square feet. Exhibition space was increased for a total of 247,000 square feet of column-free space in five exhibit halls. The expansion increased breakout/meeting spaces for a total of 58,800 square feet.

For over 20 years, the Austin Convention Center has been a destination fixture for conventions, trade shows and other events, playing host to both local and out-of-town attendees. Until recently, new development in the immediate area has been minimal, but as Austin's national reputation as a destination city has grown, so has a renewed emphasis on development downtown. Sites adjacent to and near the Convention Center are now in various phases of construction, including the new JW Marriott and Fairmont Hotels.

REGIONAL

Access to Austin's Central Business District and the Austin Convention Center is relatively convenient due to their proximity to major transportation corridors. The Convention Center is two blocks west of Interstate 35 that connects Dallas, Waco, Austin, San Marcos, San Antonio and South Texas and is a 2 ½ hour drive from Houston. The Austin Convention Center is 10.5 miles from Austin-Bergstrom International Airport (ABIA) located on Austin's southeast side.

LOCAL

Anchoring the southeastern edge of Downtown Austin, the Austin Convention Center fronts along East Cesar Chavez Street and encompasses six city blocks bordered by Red River Street on the east, 4th Street on the north and Trinity Street on the west. Waller Creek, an important public amenity with plans for enhancement, runs immediately adjacent to the southeast edge of the Convention Center facility.

Existing Convention Center Footprint

Context

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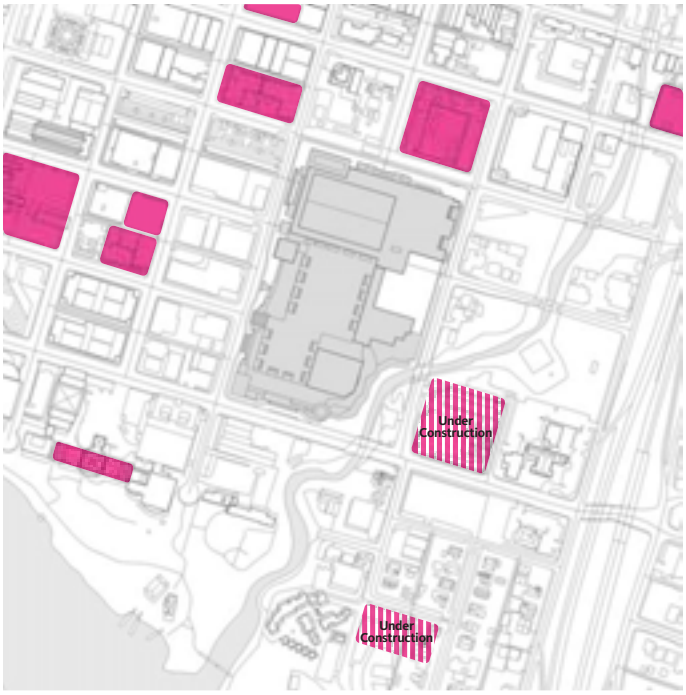
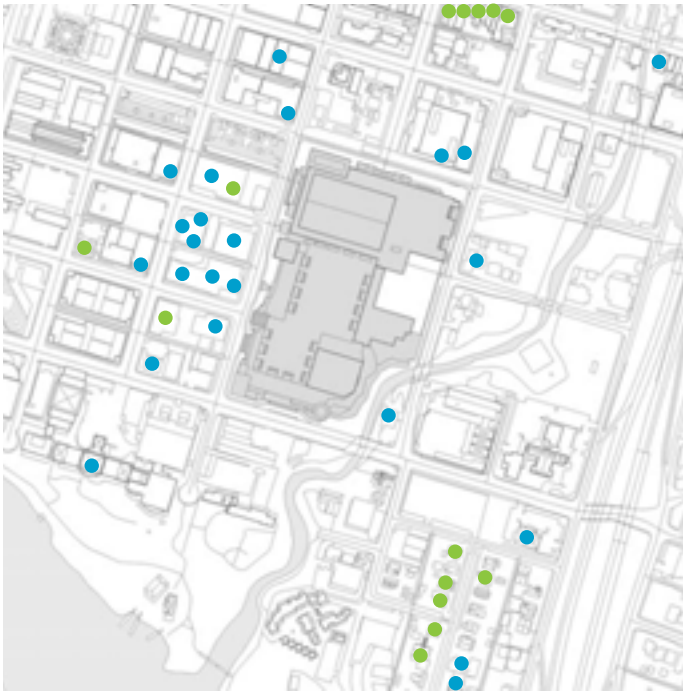
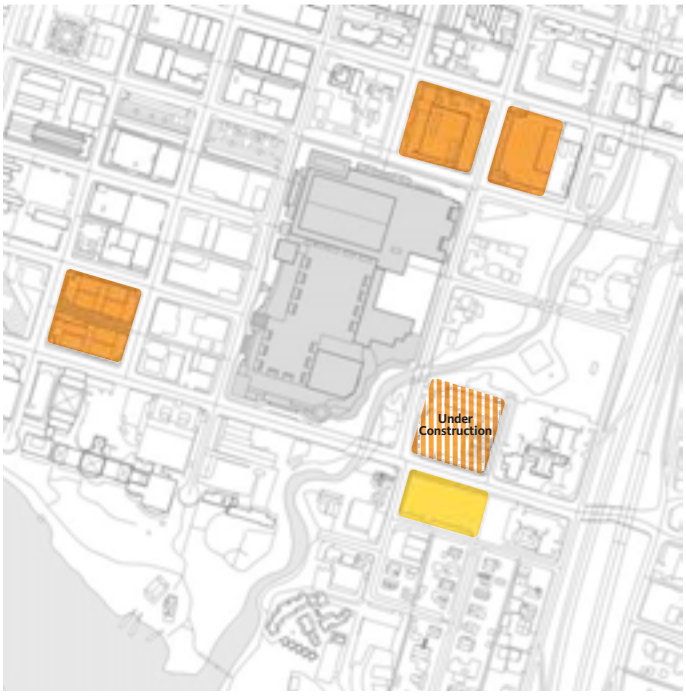


HOTELS



NIGHTLIFE Restaurant Bar/Nightclub

PARKS/GREEN SPACE



PARKING Garage Surface

Context

(continued)

Adjacent development includes a variety of restaurants across Trinity to the west; Brush Square Park and the Hilton Hotel across 4th Street to the north; historically significant buildings (including the Trask House) and Palm Park (bisected by Waller Creek) across Red River to the east, as well as the Fairmont Hotel, to be located on the corner of East Cesar Chavez and Red River Streets, which broke ground in November 2014 with plans for an open-air terrace and pedestrian connector to the Convention Center.

HOTELS

Austin is well positioned to offer a wide range of hotel offerings and attractions within convenient walking distance from the Convention Center. Including hotels currently under construction, there are over 8,150 hotel rooms within a ten-minute walk of the Austin Convention Center, including limited, full-service and luxury accommodations. Hilton Austin, the 800-room, City-owned convention hotel, is located across the street on the Convention Center's north side. The new JW Marriott, with 1,012 rooms, is two blocks west of the Convention Center. The new Fairmont Hotel, adjacent to the Convention Center, will add 1,066 rooms when it opens in the summer of 2017.

Hilton Austin

ATTRACTIONS

The Convention Center is surrounded by Downtown Austin's shopping, dining and entertainment scene. The famous 6th Street Entertainment District, Warehouse District, and 2nd Street District are all within walking distance of the Convention Center. Improvements to the pedestrian infrastructure south of Cesar Chavez Street will enhance convenient access to the restaurants and entertainment venues along Rainey Street. In addition to Brush Square Park to the north and Palm Park to the east, visitors staying in the Convention District are only a few blocks from the 10 miles of hike-and-bike trails along beautiful Lady Bird Lake. Planned improvements to Waller Creek will enable direct pedestrian access to the lake. With a significant increase in downtown residential living, there are more pedestrians on Austin's streets, 24/7, fostering a sense of urban vitality and safety for out-of-town visitors and people attending events at the Convention Center.

PUBLIC PARKING

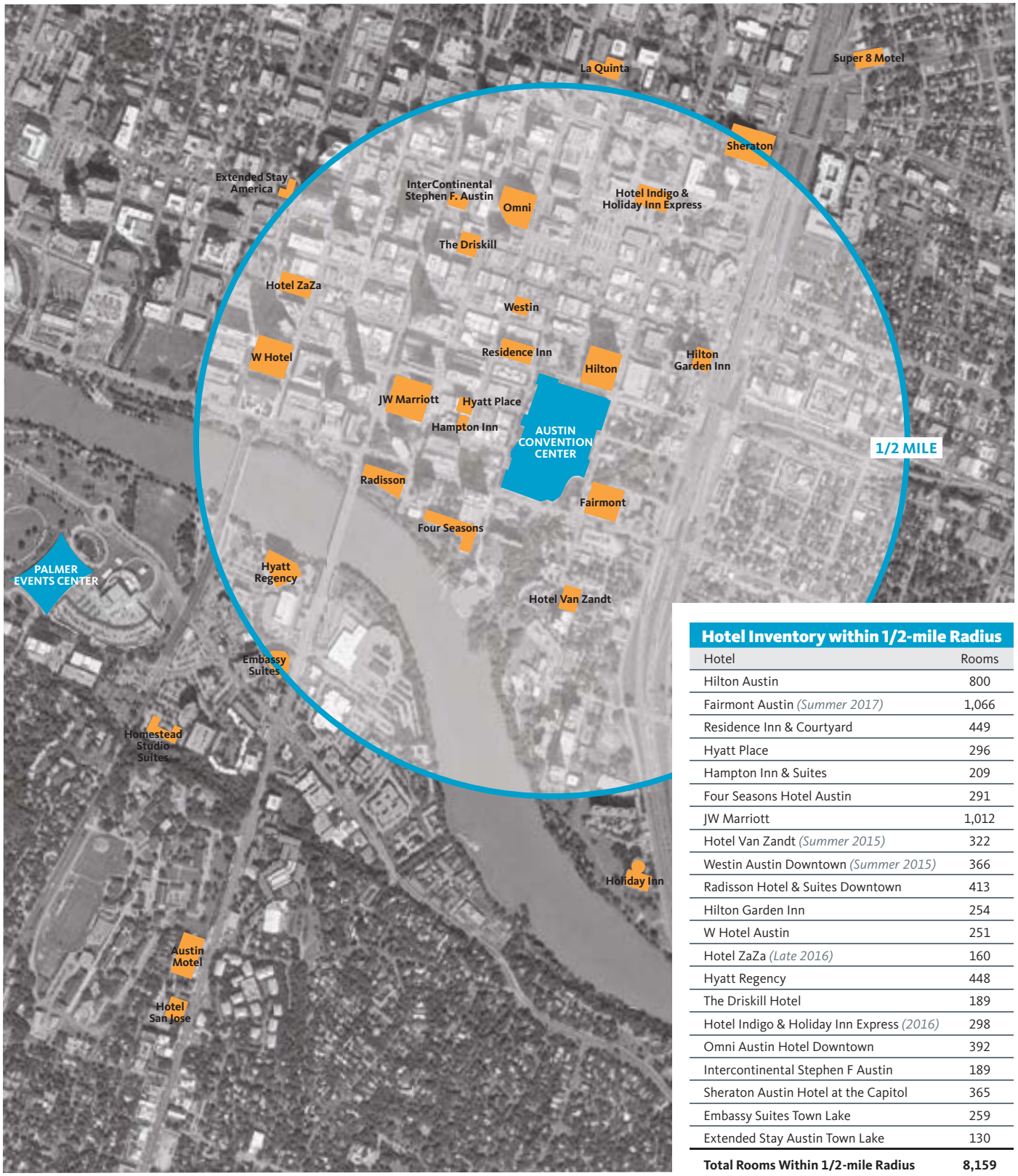
In addition to the parking opportunities at surrounding hotels, streets, and surface lots, the Austin Convention Center Department owns and operates two parking garages convenient to the Convention Center. Parking near the Convention Center is designed for peak events. Any future expansion of the Convention Center should consider the need for additional parking in response to anticipated demand.

CIRCULATION

The Convention Center is bordered on all four sides by city streets. The facility's formal front door and vehicular drop-off are on East Cesar Chavez Street which serves as a primary gateway from I-35 and the airport into the city. The facility's most heavily used entry point and bus drop-off are on Trinity Street, a one-way northbound street. 4th Street, in addition to one-way westbound traffic, serves as the terminal station for a commuter rail line, providing mass transit access immediately outside the north entry doors to the Convention Center. It also provides a corridor for the popular "crosstown" Lance Armstrong Bikeway. Red River Street provides direct access to the Convention Center's loading docks and service yard. ■

Context

(continued)



Hotel Inventory within 1/2-mile Radius

Hotel	Rooms
Hilton Austin	800
Fairmont Austin *(Summer 2017)*	1,066
Residence Inn & Courtyard	449
Hyatt Place	296
Hampton Inn & Suites	209
Four Seasons Hotel Austin	291
JW Marriott	1,012
Hotel Van Zandt *(Summer 2015)*	322
Westin Austin Downtown *(Summer 2015)*	366
Radisson Hotel & Suites Downtown	413
Hilton Garden Inn	254
W Hotel Austin	251
Hotel ZaZa *(Late 2016)*	160
Hyatt Regency	448
The Driskill Hotel	189
Hotel Indigo & Holiday Inn Express *(2016)*	298
Omni Austin Hotel Downtown	392
Intercontinental Stephen F Austin	189
Sheraton Austin Hotel at the Capitol	365
Embassy Suites Town Lake	259
Extended Stay Austin Town Lake	130
Total Rooms Within 1/2-mile Radius	**8,159**

Comparative Analysis

CONVENTION FACILITIES OVERVIEW

Convention centers occupy a unique position within the spectrum of services provided by local and regional governments. Even though these facilities are a key component to regional economic development, their governance structure is typically tied to local governments as a municipal department or division, or as an authority established by the local government. Fiscal woes of the local government are often visited upon convention facilities; even if those facilities have dedicated and secure funding sources in place. The mantra for the local jurisdictions is that all must share in the pain. This strategy has made it difficult for many destinations to compete in an ultra-competitive marketplace.

Convention facility demand is tied closely to national and regional economic cycles as demonstrated clearly by research conducted by the Center for Exhibition Industry Research. With that said, the demand for changes in the physical attributes of a facility is driven by the needs of the meeting/convention market. In response to this evolving market, convention facilities have added vast amounts of event space over the past 30 years, improved quality levels of its products and services to match those offered by other hospitality-related venues, and embarked upon technological upgrades to keep pace with client demands and expectations. Austin has generally kept pace with these changes, especially related to its technological capabilities where they may lead the competitive marketplace.

Centers that have not adapted to the new market expectations and improved their facilities over time are now facing a crisis. As a limited amount of capital funds are available, expenditures must be targeted to obtain the greatest strategic impact. With the recent economic downturn, many facilities were mandated to reduce operating deficits. The result for many were inadequate facilities that could not support a value that commands a higher rate, operators were challenged to reduce costs significantly.

A reexamination of the core business of convention centers was helpful in identifying the pathway to recovery. Convention centers continue to provide facilities that support three main missions of its clientele:

1. Bringing goods and services to market
2. Education
3. Providing a venue for local cultural, social and entertainment events

Trade shows are one of the most cost-effective ways for buyers to meet sellers and experience products first hand. Trade shows are the last vestige of face-to-face marketing; personal interactions both on and off of the exhibit floor continue to hold tremendous value. Meetings and conventions provide most of the adult continuing education offered in North America, primarily through "Continuing Education Units" (CEUs) required by most professions and licensing organizations. As the largest meeting and banquet spaces within their respective communities, convention facilities are the natural location for significant public events.

Comparative Analysis

(continued)

The amount of prime exhibition space is still the most common measure of ranking a convention center within the marketplace; however, centers must offer the proper balance of meeting spaces to complement the available exhibition space. Some exhibition halls have evolved into "black box" theaters, where programs are designed to inform and entertain. High capacity data feeds, high voltage theatrical electrical services, accessible rigging points, and flexible lighting scenes are required to support these productions.

While utility and flexibility are keys to success, rooms with permanently set furniture and built in production capabilities are also common, including boardrooms, conference centers, negotiation suites, multifunction ballrooms, and lecture halls. Since the mid-1990s, the multifunction ballroom has been the most significant addition to the spaces provided by a convention center and is now considered to be a standard feature. This type of room is one of the highest revenue generating spaces within a convention center, serving as a meeting, banqueting and presentation venue.

Other recent additions to convention centers include lecture halls (seating from 100-500 people) and presentation theaters (seating up to 5,000 people). Until more of these rooms are developed, meeting planners will be hesitant in requiring this type of space as part of their event prospectus, but as with multifunction ballrooms, these spaces will eventually be requested and required by show producers.

Front-of-house spaces are only half of the story; exceptional service must accompany the facilities offered to convention and trade show planners and a cadre of service and support spaces must be provided to serve properly exhibition and meeting spaces. Great attention has been paid recently to the connectivity and collaboration space needs of our next generation of convention center users: the "millennials."

Full-service production and recording studios, employee processing, locker rooms, workshops, secured storage areas for vendors and contractors, concierge kiosks, enhanced food service outlets and business centers are but a few of the additional areas that must be included in upgrading convention facilities. These support areas are not visible to most users, but the operational efficiency and corresponding increase in service levels resulting from these spaces is unmistakable.

Comparative Analysis

(continued)

COMPARATIVE ANALYSIS

The Consulting Team worked with a number of current users of the Austin Convention Center to identify a list of national facilities for a Comparative Analysis. Dallas, Houston, and San Antonio compete with Austin for in-state events, while San Diego, Denver, and Nashville compete with Austin on a "destination basis."

The list represents locations which were chosen over Austin due to the size limitations of the Austin Convention Center (or due to the fact that this particular group's events rotate among facilities nationally).

Comparative Destinations

Austin Convention Center
Austin, Texas

Henry B. Gonzales Convention Center
San Antonio, Texas

Gaylord Texan
Grapevine, Texas (Dallas)

George R. Brown Convention Center
Houston, Texas

Colorado Convention Center
Denver, Colorado

Music City Center
Nashville, Tennessee

San Diego Convention Center
San Diego, Califronia

Comparative Analysis

(continued)

Austin Convention Center

Austin, Texas

Situated in downtown Austin, the Austin Convention Center covers six city blocks and opened in 1992. It was originally built in response to concerns that Austin was losing convention business due to the inadequate size of the then Palmer Auditorium. Between 1999 and 2011, the facility has undergone various renovations and expansions, bringing the current total space to 881,000 square feet. The Center offers 247,000 square feet of column-free exhibit space divisible into five contiguous halls that can accommodate 1,289 10' X 10' booths. The fifth hall offers retractable riser seating for up to 1,500, making it an ideal location for general sessions, sporting events and concerts. The Center has 63,920 square feet of Ballroom space, and 54 meeting rooms totalling 55,800 square feet.

The Austin Convention Center is owned and operated by the City of Austin, with Hotel Occupancy Tax being the primary funding source.

Convention Facilities	247,000 SF Exhibition 63,920 SF Ballroom 55,800 SF Meeting
Hotels	8,159 rooms within ten-minute walking distance, including hotels currently under construction: the new Westin Austin Downtown (366 rooms), Fairmont Austin (1,066 rooms), Hotel Van Zandt (322 rooms), Hotel ZaZa (160 rooms), and Hotel Indigo & Holiday Inn Express (298) • 1,866 rooms adjacent (Hilton Austin and Fairmont) • 6,293 proximate (within 1/2 mile) including hotels under construction
Transportation	ABIA is a regional hub and ranks #34 in enplanements CapMetro north/south commuter rail service with origination at station located between Convention Center and Hilton Austin Hotel I-35 passes through Austin with State Highway 71 the primary route to Houston
Attractions & Activities	SXSW Music, Film & Interactive Festivals; SXSWedu Festival; SXSWeco Festival; Austin City Limits Music Festival; Republic of Texas Biker Rally; Circuit of the Americas events (Formula 1, MotoGP, ESPN X Games, etc.); Entertainment Districts (Congress Avenue, East 6th, 2nd Street, Red River, Rainey Street, Warehouse, etc.); Texas State Capitol; Austin Marathon & Half Marathon; 3M Half Marathon; Texas Relays; The University of Texas at Austin; St. Edwards University

Comparative Analysis

(continued)

Henry B. Gonzalez Convention Center

San Antonio, Texas

Situated in downtown San Antonio, the 1.3 million square foot Henry B. Gonzalez Convention Center was built in 1968 as part of the HemisFair. Construction of the Convention Center was funded by $11 million of approved City bonds. Since opening, the Center has undergone a $250 million expansion that doubled its size. The expansion was funded through Hotel Occupancy Tax revenues.

The Center is owned and operated by the City of San Antonio, with the broader Convention Center complex also incorporating the 2,521-seat Lila Cockrell Theatre and the San Antonio Alamodome. There are 9,480 hotel rooms within a half-mile of the Convention Center complex. The Center is currently undergoing a $325 million expansion, adding 272,954 square feet of exhibition space to the eastern portion of the facility, which is estimated to be completed in the spring of 2016.

Convention Facilities	513,944 SF Exhibition 94,316 SF Ballroom (54,740 new + 39,576 existing) 114,133 SF Meeting Theater
Hotels	9,480 rooms within ten-minute walking distance • 1,003 rooms attached (Grand Hyatt) • 1,478 rooms adjacent (Hilton, Marriott River Center) • 5,586 proximate (within 1/2 mile)
Transportation	San Antonio International Airport (SAT) is an origination/departure airport and ranks #45 in enplanements I-10, I-35, I-37 pass through San Antonio
Attractions & Activities	Sea World Texas; Six Flags San Antonio; San Antonio River Walk; The Alamo; NBA Spurs; PGA Valero Texas Open; The University of Texas at San Antonio; Trinity University

Comparative Analysis

(continued)

George R. Brown Convention Center

Houston, Texas

The George R. Brown Convention Center (GRBCC) opened in September 1987 on the east side of Downtown Houston. Expansion of the Convention Center was completed in 2003, increasing its size from 1,150,000 square feet to 1,800,000 square feet. Exhibition space was increased for a total of 862,000 square feet and the addition of new meeting rooms increased the total to 101,943 square feet. The GRBCC is located adjacent to the Hilton Americas, and is served by a number of other hotels within two to ten blocks. The recent completion of Discovery Green, located directly in front of the facility, has introduced new dining, recreation and entertainment opportunities in the immediate vicinity of the GRBCC. The facility is operated by Houston First Corporation, a local government corporation that also operates the Wortham Theater Center, Jones Hall for the Performing Arts, Miller Outdoor Theatre, and the city's largest hotel, the Hilton Americas Houston.

Convention Facilities	862,000 SF Exhibition 31,590 SF Ballroom 101,943 SF Meeting Theater
Hotels	3,955 rooms within ten-minute walking distance • 2,200 rooms attached (1,200-room Hilton Americas and 1,000-room Marriott Marquis, under construction) • 1,795 rooms proximate (within 1/2 mile)
Transportation	George Bush Intercontinental Airport (IAH) is a major hub and ranks #12 in enplanements Largest Hub for United Airlines; Hub for Southwest Airlines Houston Hobby (HOU) is an origination/departure airport and ranks #32 in enplanements I-10, I-45 pass through Houston
Attractions & Activities	NASA Johnson Space Center; Galveston Island; Texas Medical Center; Houston Zoo; Houston Theater District; Houston Museum District; The Galleria; St. Arnold's Brewery; Hermann Park; MLB Astros; NBA Rockets; NFL Texans; MLS Dynamo, PGA Shell Houston Open; University of Houston; Rice University

Comparative Analysis

(continued)

Gaylord Texan

Grapevine, Texas

The Gaylord Texan, owned and operated by the Gaylord Entertainment Company (a subsidiary of Marriott), is situated on 150 acres at the southern tip of Lake Grapevine and is within 10 minutes of the Dallas/Fort Worth International Airport and is accessible by I-635. The Gaylord has a total of 300,000 square feet of dedicated facility space, which is comprised of a 180,000-square-foot exhibit hall, two ballrooms with 49,000 square feet and 32,000 square feet respectively, and 49 individual meeting rooms with a total of 42,000 square feet of space. The property has 1,511 rooms that directly support the inventory of exhibit hall, ballroom, and meeting space. Gaylord has several similar hotel and convention properties nationally that all operate under the closed ecosystem concept of event hosting. This concept operates similar to Disney World where all accommodation, meeting space needs, entertainment, dining, and shopping are all offered on a closed campus that is entirely controlled by Gaylord.

Convention Facilities	179,520 SF Exhibition 81,000 SF Ballroom 42,000 SF Meeting
Hotels	1,511 rooms directly attached
Transportation	Dallas/Fort Worth International Airport (DFW) is a major hub and ranks #4 in enplanements Headquarters of American Airlines Dallas Love Field (DAL) is a hub and headquarters for Southwest Airlines I-20, I-35, I-45 pass through Dallas
Attractions & Activities	Grapevine Mills Mall; Lake Grapevine; Historic Grapevine Main Street; Six Flags Arlington; Dallas World Aquarium; Dallas Arboretum; Sixth Floor Museum; Dallas Heritage Village; Dallas Zoo; Public ArtWalk Dallas; MLB Rangers; NBA Mavericks; NFL Cowboys; NHL Stars; MLS FC Dallas; NASCAR Texas Motor Speedway; PGA Byron Nelson Classic; PGA The Colonial; Southern Methodist University; Texas Christian University; The University of Texas at Arlington

Comparative Analysis

(continued)

Colorado Convention Center

Denver, Colorado

The first phase of the Colorado Convention Center opened in 1990, essentially replacing Denver's outdated Currigan Exhibition Hall. The initial phase offered 300,000 SF of exhibition space, 65,000 SF of meeting space and a 35,000 SF ballroom. The latest expansion essentially doubled the size of the facility, bringing the totals to those shown in the table below. A 1,000-car parking structure and the Wells Fargo Theater were also included in the expansion project.

The Colorado Convention Center is located next to the Denver Performing Arts Complex and is accessible by light rail. The East Rail Line is also under construction and will link Denver International Airport to Union Station in Downtown Denver. The Colorado Convention Center is owned by the City and County of Denver and is managed privately by SMG.

Convention Facilities	584,000 SF Exhibition (2) Ballrooms - 50,000 SF and 35,000 SF 100,000 SF Meeting Theater
Hotels	6,852 rooms within ten-minute walking distance • 1,724 rooms adjacent (Hyatt Regency, Embassy Suites, Hilton Garden Inn) • 5,128 rooms proximate (within 1/2 mile)
Transportation	Denver International Airport (DEN) is a hub for Untied Airlines and ranks #5 in enplanements I-26 and I-70 pass through Denver
Attractions & Activities	Colorado State Capitol; Denver Art Museum; U.S. Mint; 16th Street Mall; Larimer Square; LoDo Historic District; Confluence Park; Cherry Creek Shopping District; Denver Botanic Gardens; Red Rocks Amphitheatre; Coors Brewery; Buffalo Bill Museum & Grave; MLB Rockies; NBA Nuggets; NFL Broncos; NHL Avalanche; MLS Rapids; University of Denver; University of Colorado

Comparative Analysis

(continued)

Music City Center

Nashville, Tennessee

Opened in May 2013, the Music City Center is located just south of Broadway in downtown Nashville on a 16-acre site between 5th and 8th Avenues and Demonbreun and Franklin Street, adjacent to both the Bridgestone Arena and Country Music Hall of Fame and Museum. Music City Center is supported by the new Omni Nashville hotel and both the Convention Center and the Omni Hotel are overseen by the Convention Center Authority. Several new hotels are under construction in close proximity to the Convention Center as a result of the Convention Center development.

Convention Facilities	353,140 SF Exhibition 70,250 SF Ballroom 81,350 SF Meeting
Hotels	3,696 rooms within ten-minute walking distance • 800 rooms adjacent (Omni Nashville Hotel) • 2,896 rooms proximate (within 1/2 mile)
Transportation	Served by the Nashville International Airport (BNA) which recently surpassed Austin, Kansas City and Oakland as the 33rd busiest airport in the Country I-65, I-24 and I-40 pass through and around Nashville
Attractions & Activities	Ranked as one of the Top 5 cities to visit by Conde Nast Travler in 2013; Honky Tonk Row; Country Music Hall of Fame and Museum; NHL Predators; NFL Titans; Vanderbilt University

Comparative Analysis

(continued)

San Diego Convention Center

San Diego, California

Located in the Marina District of Downtown San Diego, the facility first opened in 1989 and was most recently expanded in 2001. There have been ongoing efforts since 2008 to expand the Convention Center due to the growth of some of its largest and most important events. The expansion would increase available event space by 33 percent but has been stymied by a series of lawsuits related to the funding approach pursued for the expansion. The center is managed by the San Diego Convention Center Corporation.

Convention Facilities	615,700 SF Exhibition 81,670 SF Ballroom 96,110 SF Meeting
Hotels	7,270 rooms within ten-minute walking distance • 1,360 attached (Marriott Marquis San Diego Marina) • 2,373 adjacent (Hilton Bayfront, Hilton Gaslamp, Hard Rock, Omni) • 3,537 rooms proximate (within 1/2 mile)
Transportation	San Diego International Airport is the busiest single runway airport in the U.S. and is the largest metropolitan area that is not a primary or secondary airline hub. San Diego is accessible by interstates I-5, I-8 and I-15.
Attractions & Activities	Beaches; San Diego Zoo; SeaWorld; Gaslamp Quarter District; Comic Con; MLB Padres; NFL Chargers; San Diego State University

Comparative Analysis

(continued)

QUANTITATIVE ANALYSIS

This section compares the size of exhibition, meeting and ballroom space at the Austin Convention Center with the peer set, and also analyzes the inventory of proximate hotel rooms. The two most important factors in assessing a convention destination are 1) the physical capabilities and amenities of the convention facility and 2) the size and composition of the proximate hotel inventory. For meeting planners, these two factors must be satisfactorily met or an alternative destination is likely to be selected.

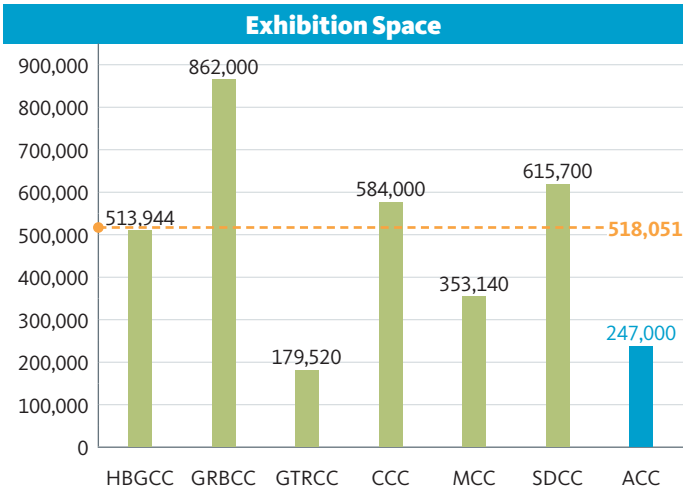
EXHIBITION SPACE

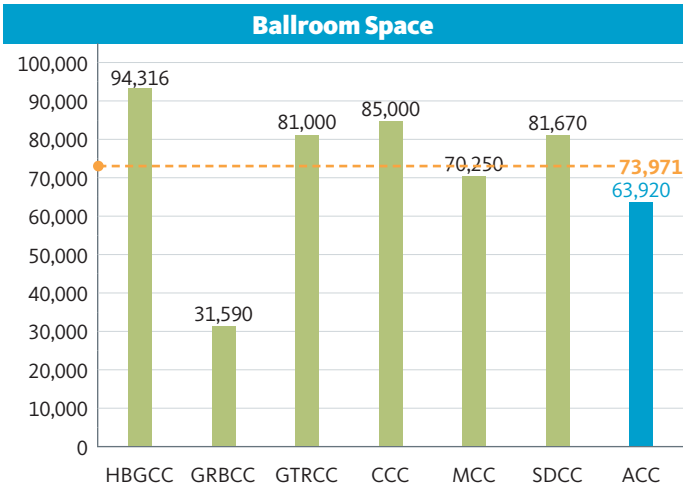
As shown at right, the size of the Austin Convention Center's exhibit space offering (247,000 square feet) is substantially smaller than the average across the peer set (518,051 square feet), and is the second smallest after GTRCC. This provides a basis for comparison of other facility elements.

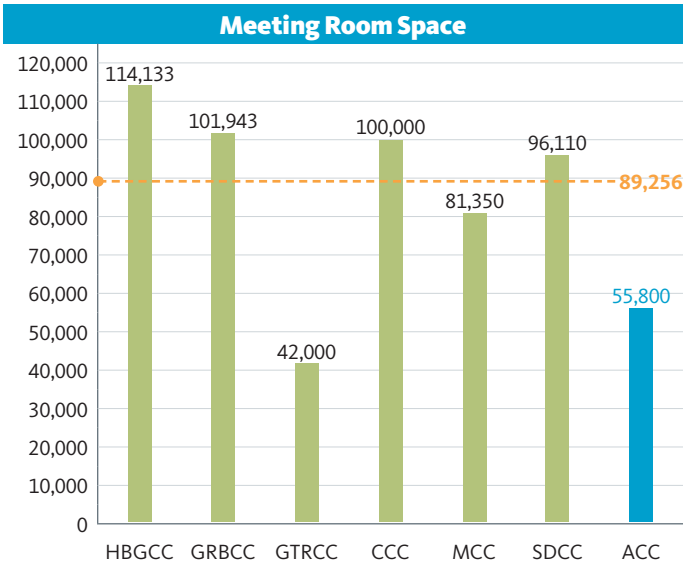
Total exhibition space, ballroom space, and meeting space are areas where the Austin Convention Center falls short against competing convention facilities.

KEY

- **ACC** = Austin Convention Center, Austin, TX
- **HBGCC** = Henry B. Gonzalez Convention Center, San Antonio, TX
- **GRBCC** = George R. Brown Convention Center, Houston, TX
- **GTRCC** = Gaylord Texan Resort & Convention Center, Grapevine, TX
- **CCC** = Colorado Convention Center, Denver, CO
- **MCC** = Music City Center, Nashville, TN
- **SDCC** = San Diego Convention Center, San Diego, CA
- = Average of Competitor Peer Set







Comparative Analysis

(continued)

BALLROOM AND MEETING SPACE

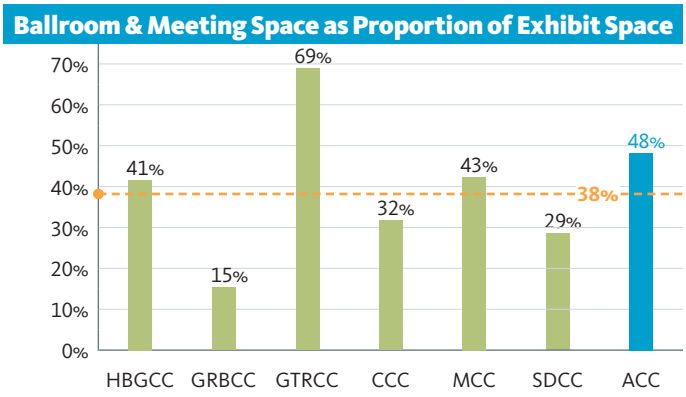
The size of the Austin Convention Center's ballroom space (63,920 square feet) is also smaller than the average across the peer set (73,971 square feet), and is the second smallest ballroom space offering behind GRBCC. Reprogramming of existing spaces may be able to correct some of these deficiencies in the near term. Any expansion outside of the existing footprint provides the opportunity to complete a rebalancing of the programmatic elements.

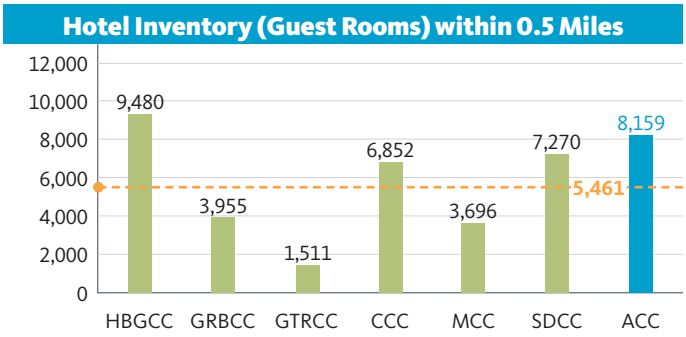
The size of the Austin Convention Center's meeting and breakout space (55,800 square feet) is substantially smaller than the average across the peer set (89,256 square feet), and is the second smallest meeting and breakout room offering behind GTRCC.

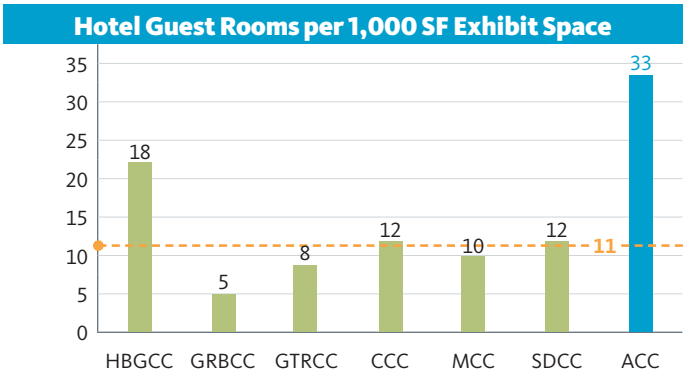
The amount of ballroom and meeting space as a proportion of exhibit space at the Austin Convention Center (48 percent) exceeds the average across the peer set (38 percent), and is the second highest behind GTRCC.

PROXIMATE HOTEL INVENTORY

The hotel inventory (8,159 rooms) within a 10-minute walk of the Austin Convention Center is among the highest of its competitor cities. More impressively, the ratio of hotel rooms to exhibition space at the Austin Convention Center (33 hotel rooms per 1,000 square feet) is the highest among its peer set, **suggesting ample capacity to support expansion of the Convention Center.** Austin is a national leader in downtown hotel offerings and would benefit from the increased business associated with expanded convention facilities. ■







Planning Process

Developing a long range master plan for a major civic asset like the Austin Convention Center demands a highly collaborative process, requiring a significant time commitment and input from a variety of constituent groups. Allowing each stakeholder to discuss and define its needs, anticipate market demand and growth, and come to a consensus is the only way to ensure the master plan achieves a balance of interests for all parties.

Gensler's approach to development of the Austin Convention Center Master Plan Report promoted a spirit of inclusion through Client meetings, Advisory Group work sessions, on-site charrettes and multiple stakeholder meetings.

ESTABLISHING KEY OBJECTIVES

The Austin Convention Center Department began its planning process with Gensler in mid-April 2014 with a goal-setting session with key representatives of the Austin Convention Center Department Steering Committee. At that time, the assembled group identified key objectives for the planning report and a strategy for engaging industry leaders to supplement the expertise of the Gensler consultant team.

VISION SESSION

Three weeks later, on May 5, 2014, the Austin Convention Center Department hosted an all-day Vision Session facilitated by Gensler with civic, business and industry leaders including event specialists, meeting planners and exhibitors from across the nation.

During the session, the industry leaders and customers shared their knowledge of industry trends related to Show Demands, Facilities and Space Needs that reflect show types, attendee demographics, and entertainment and technology. Given the convention industry attendees' first-hand experience with convention center facilities nationwide, their observations and recommendations were extremely important to meeting the Austin Convention Center's objective of enhancing its competitiveness and increasing its market share of exhibitions, trade shows and other events.

Planning Process

(continued)

Key questions and discussion points of the Vision Session included:

- Competitor cities/venues average more than 500,000 square feet of exhibit space; the Austin Convention Center currently has 247,000 square feet of exhibit space.
- Will its current customers outgrow the Austin Convention Center?
- Should the Austin Convention Center and the City of Austin consider acquisition of adjacent properties to support needed growth?
- How can the Austin Convention Center best leverage the City's popularity, abundant hotel room supply, and surrounding attractions/amenities to support its growth and financial viability?

Civic leaders shared their insights of ongoing and planned transportation and development initiatives that could impact future expansion. Following a walking tour of the facilities and surrounding neighborhood, the group shared their observations and made recommendations for future expansion and/or upgrades to the Convention Center and for continued development and improvements to the surrounding neighborhood.

May 5, 2014 Vision Session Participants

Kathleen Nowell – *City of Austin, City Manager's Office*

Robert Watson – *Hilton Austin*

Debbie Farnum – *Texas Association of School Boards*

Kristy Breaux – *Texas Computer Education Association*

Liz Lathan – *Dell*

Rod Siebels – *National Instruments*

Tom Stacy – *CapRidge Partners*

Tom Cindric – *Hanley Wood (now Informa)*

Todd Drackley – *Freeman AV Services*

Traci Boyer – *Freeman Exhibition Services*

ACCD Steering Committee:

Mark Tester – Director
Austin Convention Center Department

Darin Upchurch – Assistant Director
Austin Convention Center Department

Paul Barnes – Assistant Director, Sales, Marketing and Events
Austin Convention Center Department

Carla Steffen – Assistant Director, Financial Operations
Austin Convention Center Department

Bob Lander – President & CEO
Austin Convention & Visitor's Bureau

Rocio Peña – Sales Manager
Austin Convention Center Department

Steve Genovesi – Sr. Vice President of Sales
Austin Convention & Visitor's Bureau

Planning Process

(continued)

PLANNING WORKSHOP #1

On June 9, 2014, a planning workshop was conducted on-site in a meeting room at the Convention Center. Participants included key representatives of the Austin Convention Center, the City Manager's Office, Downtown Austin Alliance, local business leaders and select group of key stakeholders, Gensler and its consultant team.

The workshop began with participants identifying their objectives and desired outcomes for the workshop, followed by an analysis of the Convention Center and site elements (adjacent land use; road systems; open space; etc.) that influence the operations and competitiveness of the Austin Convention Center. For the remainder of the workshop, the Gensler team presented a wide range of expansion scenarios for the Convention Center.

The scenarios included:

1. ***No Expansion:*** *Maximize Current Facility*
2. ***East Expansion:*** *Across/Over Red River Street*
3. ***West Expansion:*** *Across/Over Trinity Street*
4. ***South Expansion:*** *Across East Cesar Chavez Street*
5. ***New Location:*** *Relocation to a New Site outside CBD*

June 9, 2014 Planning Workshop Participants

Robert Watson – General Manager
Hilton Austin

Allen Alderman – Director of Sales & Marketing
Hilton Austin

Charlie Betts – Executive Director
Downtown Austin Alliance

Anthony J. Snipes – Assistant City Manager
City of Austin

Bert Lumbreras – Assistant City Manager
City of Austin

Rey Arellano – Assistant City Manager
City of Austin

Kathleen Nowell – *City of Austin, City Manager's Office*

Hayden Migl – *City of Austin, Mayor's Office*

Gloria Aguilar – *City of Austin, Office of Real Estate*

Gordon Derr – *City of Austin, Transportation*

Mike Trimble – *City of Austin, Capital Planning Officer*

Keri Burchard-Juarez – *City of Austin, Public Works*

Jorge Rousselin – *City of Austin, Urban Design*

ACCD Steering Committee:

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Austin Convention & Visitor's Bureau

Planning Process

(continued)

Each expansion option was discussed in detail, the opportunities and constraints for each identified and documented. As feedback was received, some options were eliminated and others retained for further refinement and consideration.

"We need to be proactive... we're not the only ones making plans for this real estate."

The workshop concluded with Johnson Consulting presenting its analysis of local and comparable destinations. Following that, a number of action items and direction from the client team were identified for moving forward with the planning study.

Key conclusions of Workshop 1 included:

- The Plan needs to support the vision for proactive public sector involvement.
- It is crucial that the plan creates the right atmosphere for activating the Convention Center District by the kind of development proposed by this team.
- The main goal of the report is to convey where the Austin Convention Center stands currently and to illustrate a plan for where it can be in 5, 10 and 15 years...assuming the City and private development support the vision.

AUSTIN CONVENTION & VISITORS BUREAU (ACVB) CUSTOMER ADVISORY BOARD MEETING

On June 17, 2014, a presentation was made to the ACVB Customer Advisory Board (CAB) during their annual meeting at the Four Seasons Hotel in Austin. Attendees included major customers, event specialists, meeting planners and exhibitors from across the nation.

The attendees were provided an overview of the outcomes from the vision session and planning workshop including the five expansion scenarios under consideration. The CAB provided considerable feedback on the pros-and-cons of each scenario from their perspective as industry experts. In turn, the attendees offered their assessment of the Austin Convention Center in terms of how they stack up with other cities that compete for the same convention and trade show business.

Feedback from the CAB echoed many of the comments heard in previous stakeholder meetings and workshops including:

- The Austin Convention Center is viewed as a key to Austin's future, playing a major role in how Austin is perceived by out-of-town visitors, conventioneers and trade show attendees.
- The Austin Convention Center lacks sufficient meeting and breakout space.
- The facility's current layout is disjointed and confusing.
- If contiguous exhibition space isn't part of the expansion strategy, then larger shows shouldn't be considered as potential business opportunities.

"The Austin Convention Center is undersized to host the types of events and shows that could be supported by current and future hotel room supply."

Planning Process

(continued)

CITY MANAGER OFFICE PRESENTATION

On August 8, 2014, a presentation was made to the City Manager and his executive team by the Austin Convention Center Department and Gensler. The presentation included an overview of the progress to-date, the expansion scenarios under consideration, and the feedback/direction received from stakeholders in the previous vision session, meetings and workshops.

Since several representatives from the City Manager's office were active participants in the previous stakeholder meetings, much of the discussion focused on parallel initiatives that could impact the project, fiscal and political considerations of the expansion options, and next steps in the process. The primary direction received from the City Manager was for the planning team to pursue and develop the expansion scenario that best positions the City of Austin to be a leader in the future marketplace.

PLANNING WORKSHOP #2

On September 5, 2014, a second planning workshop was conducted at the Convention Center. While many of the attendees had participated in the earlier stakeholder sessions, several new participants were included to provide a fresh perspective to the ideas and discussion regarding the Austin Convention Center's future growth.

Attendees reviewed the five original expansion scenarios, both as a benefit to the first time participants, as well as an opportunity to refresh everyone's thinking about the discussions that took place in the June workshop. Following that, refinements and variations on the two preferred scenarios (east expansion across Red River; west expansion across Trinity) were presented for discussion and feedback.

The workshop concluded with a presentation by Johnson Consulting of their findings regarding supply/demand generators, possible new markets, and a detailed summary of competing cities/facilities.

Sept. 5, 2014 Planning Workshop Participants

Robert Watson – General Manager
Hilton Austin

Melissa Berry – *Downtown Austin Alliance*

Javier Arguello – *Capital Metro*

Kathleen Nowell – *City of Austin, City Manager's Office*

Gordon Derr – *City of Austin, Transportation*

Tom Stacy – *CapRidge Partners*

Rod Siebels – *National Instruments*

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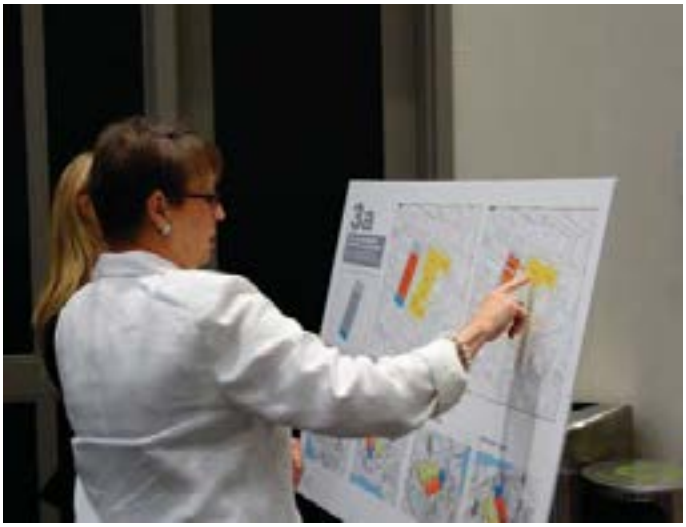
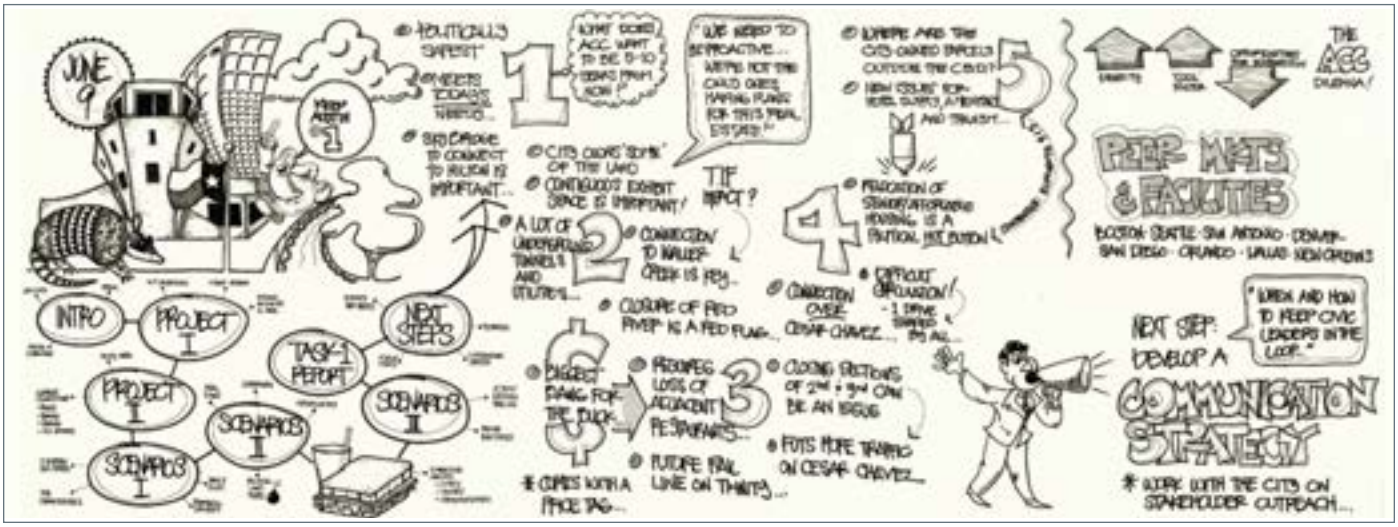
Planning Process

(continued)



STAKEHOLDER ENGAGEMENT

Over the course of six months, meetings were conducted with over 100 stakeholders representing the City, the business sector, industry leaders and professional organizations. Surveys were conducted to cast a wider net of input for the information needed to understand the market and economic drivers that influence the need for future growth. As each of the six primary tasks representing this study's scope of work were completed, a review meeting with the Department's Steering Committee was conducted for input and direction prior to initiating the next task. The findings and recommendations in this master plan reflect the ideas, insights, feedback and direction of a diverse cross section of Austin and the convention and hospitality industry. ■



Key Drivers
Overview

KEY DRIVERS INTRODUCTION

Convention facilities serve a wide variety of users throughout their annual events calendar. A well balanced facility meets the program needs of conventions, trade and consumer shows, and a variety of local public events. In many cases, however, the stated mission for most convention centers is to provide local economic impact and employment through expenditures by visitors from outside of the community. This is the case for the Austin Convention Center, which relies heavily on Hotel Occupancy Tax (HOT).

A large number of professional meetings and trade shows are not tied to a single city, but move the site of their convention around the country to provide "geographic fairness" to their membership. For this group of users, convention and exhibition sites are selected on the basis of the total package available within a community; cities compete on a "destination-basis" rather than a "facility-basis".

The factors that comprise a viable convention destination include the convention venue, hotel package, transportation infrastructure and the attractions available within the community to draw visitors. Meeting planners must be assured that exhibition, meeting, and lodging requirements are met for their event.

Communities, on the other hand, assess these elements and try to improve upon them in a continual process of "fixing the weakest link". For convention destinations, the local government can provide solutions for facilities and transportation; it can become a partner in delivering accommodation and support policies that encourage the private sector to develop the balance of hospitality infrastructure.

DESTINATION SELECTION CRITERIA

A number of professional organizations include as members the persons responsible for selecting meeting and convention destinations. These organizations include, among others, the American Society of Association Executives (ASAE) representing primarily association professionals; Professional Convention Management Association (PCMA) focusing on medical meeting planners and educational programming; International Association of Exhibitions and Events (IAEE) supporting exhibition management; Religious Convention Management Association (RCMA) consisting of religious conference planners; and Meeting Professionals International (MPI) whose members produce smaller meetings that have minimal exhibition needs.

For almost three decades, ASAE has surveyed regularly their membership to determine the most important factors in selecting a convention destination. Throughout the history of this effort, the top five selection criteria have remained unchanged for the most part. These criteria include:

- **Convention Facilities**
- **Hotel Package**
- **Transportation**
- **Attractions & Activities**
- **Safety & Security**

From the list above, convention center capacity and hotel room availability establish the first threshold for selection; if a destination is lacking in either of these factors, no further consideration will be given to the city by the meeting planner.

Adequate convention facilities and hotel capacity are the most critical factors when event planners are selecting a venue... to be successful, you must solve for the weakest link.

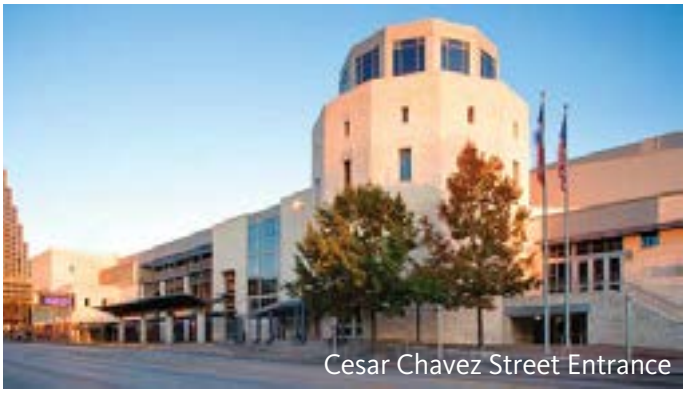
Key Drivers
Convention Facilities

ARRIVAL/DEPARTURE EXPERIENCE

The arrival sequence for the Austin Convention Center has evolved with the expansion of the facility, but is not clear to guests dropped off by taxi or private vehicle. The original phase of the Center includes a drop-off lane on the south side of the facility accessed from westbound Cesar Chavez Street. This drop-off lane is hidden somewhat by the rotunda and appears quite suddenly to those moving in traffic.

When the Center was expanded, an additional arrival zone was created along the west side of the facility on northbound Trinity Avenue. The pace of traffic is reduced greatly on Trinity and allows time to make important lane and drop-off choices.

With the addition of the Hilton Hotel, a functional arrival point occurs on the north side of the facility on 4th Street. The terminus of the commuter rail system that travels eastbound from the site occupies that street and does not allow the addition of vehicular traffic to that locale.


Cesar Chavez Street Entrance

Trinity Street Entrance

As described in greater detail later in this report, the coordination and function of the arrival zones differs in each of the proposed expansion options:

Option 1 leaves the existing conditions basically in place.

Option 2 would require another arrival zone be developed on 4th Street east of Red River and to the south of the parking facility that houses the ACVB's Visitors Center. The commuter rail tracks could create a safety issue for patrons needing to cross 4th Street.

Option 3a provides the opportunity to establish a consolidated arrival zone along the southern edge of the site, removed from Cesar Chavez that serves the Convention Center, additional parking and a possible new hotel site. The existing drop-off along Cesar Chavez could be de-emphasized and its function reassigned.

Option 3b could also consolidate the arrival zone function on Trinity Street, serving the buildings on both sides of the street. Again, the existing drop-off along Cesar Chavez could be deemphasized and its function reassigned.

Like Option 2, **Option 4** would require the development of an additional arrival zone separate, and somewhat remote, from the rest of the facility.

With an entirely new facility, **Option 5** would permit the design of an ideal arrival zone from a functional relationship perspective.

With the proximate location of a substantial and diverse hotel room supply, the primary arrival sequence to the facilities will be on foot, rather than via vehicle. Patron vehicles will be housed at the hotels and drive-in traffic will be placed in nearby parking structures. Shuttle busses will be required only for the very largest events. Signage should reinforce clear, safe and convenient pathways to the Convention Center from the hotels and parking facilities.

Active electronic signage can direct patrons to the proper entrance for the various events scheduled in the complex. The reverse side of the signage should confirm pathways to dining, entertainment, hotels and parking.

Key Drivers
Convention Facilities *(continued)*

CONFIGURATION OF EXPANSION ALTERNATIVES

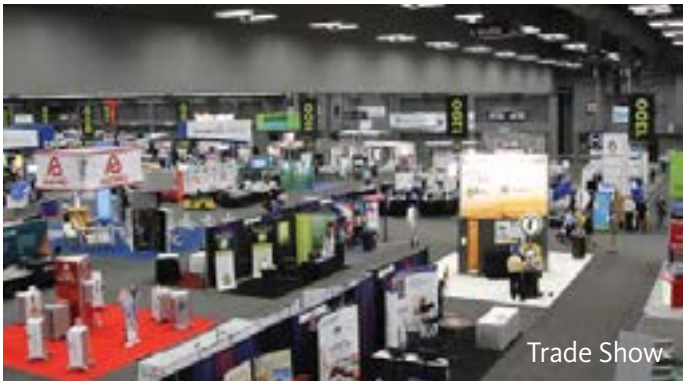
For many years, the consulting team supported the orthodoxy of contiguous, column-free, at-grade exhibition space as the preferred solution for all convention facilities. Time and industry practices and fiscal realities have softened these perceived requirements over the years. Column-free space was required initially to support large plenary sessions or presentations in the exhibit halls. Those event activities are now hosted in large, multifunction ballrooms that did not exist in most convention centers prior to 1990. Exhibits today are accommodated without structural conflict in exhibition halls with column grids of 60', 90' or 120' on center. The added columns reduce costs and permit multiple-level solutions to be developed.

The initial advantage for the Austin Convention Center has disappeared with regard to these features; its column-free design does not have the capacity to receive an expansion on top of the existing facility.

More recently, "vertical" facilities have been developed successfully in downtown locales and have been embraced as "urban friendly" in dense environments. These facilities tout reduced travel distances as mechanical devices (read "escalators and elevators") provide vertical transportation. The execution of the first vertical facilities (Boston's Hynes Convention Center and Seattle's Washington State Convention Center) have been improved significantly by modern interpretations at San Francisco's Moscone Center, DC's Washington Convention Center and the new Phoenix Convention Center.

The latter two facilities mentioned above also have exhibition halls that are located both above- and below-grade. Along with the new Cleveland Convention Center, these convention centers allow the massive structure to be penetrated at grade by street traffic and pedestrian pathways that do not interrupt the large floor plate of the exhibition halls above/below. These facilities also use the area beneath the streets to expand their effective footprints beyond the site limits at grade.

The following pages illustrate the Convention Center's current layout and provide detailed specifications of meeting, ballroom, and exhibit space.


Trade Show

Trade Show

General Session

General Session

AUSTIN CONVENTION CENTER

EXHIBIT HALLS, BALLROOMS AND MEETING ROOMS

1

Level 1

Exhibit Halls, Ballrooms and Meeting Rooms

	Dimensions	GSF	Theatre	Classroom 30" Tables	Classroom 18" Tables	Banquet 66" Rounds	Ceiling Height Footage	Booths 10' x 10'
Exhibit Halls								
Exhibit Hall 1	210' x 210'	44,100	4,032	1,728	2,464	(As drawn)	31	225
Exhibit Hall 2	120' x 272'	32,640	3,024	1,300	1,600	(As drawn)	31	179
Exhibit Hall 3	181' x 272'	49,232	4,392	2,052	2,568	(As drawn)	31	280
Exhibit Hall 4	260' x 305'	79,525	5,285	3,954	4,838	(As drawn)	31	410
Exhibit Hall 5	183' x 227'	41,555	3,600	1,982	2,402	(As drawn)	31	195
Totals (1–5)		**247,052**	**20,333**	**11,016**	**13,872**			**1,289**
Ballrooms Level 1		**Sq. Footage**						
Ballroom A	104' x 147'	15,288	1,432	724	766	994	35	
Ballroom B	53' x 73'	3,896	373	164	176	224	35	
Ballroom C	58' x 73'	4,234	396	184	200	254	35	
Totals (A,B,C)		**23,418**	**2,291**	**1,012**	**1,135**	**1,644**		
Meeting Rooms Level 1								
1	29' x 31'	996	83	47	54	64	9	
2	28' x 38'	1,121	112	62	64	64	18	
3	34' x 45'	1,576	157	76	89	104	18	

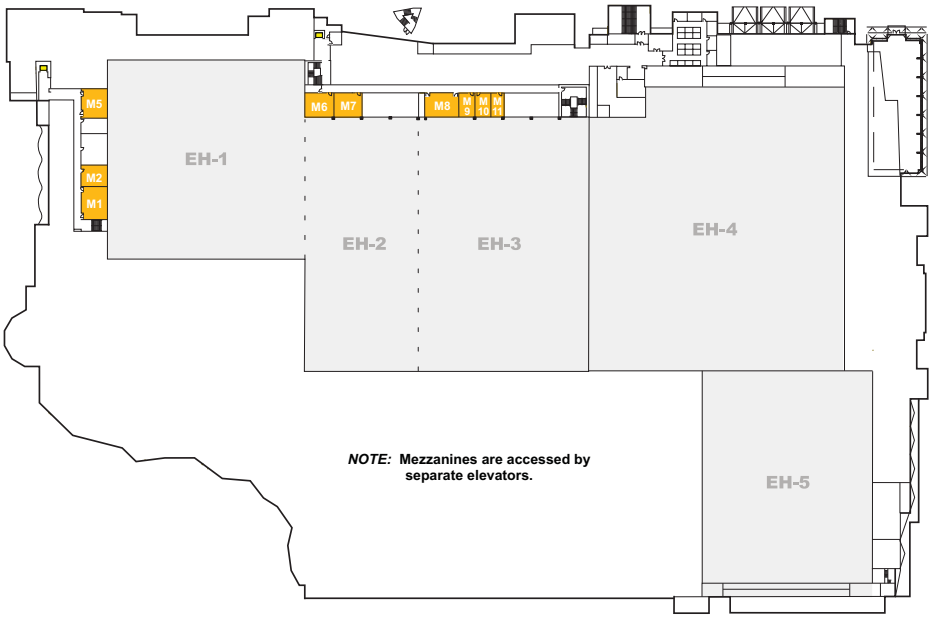
Room dimensions are based on usable space. They do not include alcoves, angled walls or entry ways; therefore, the dimensions may be less than the gross square footage.

Source: Austin Convention Center Department

AUSTIN CONVENTION CENTER

MEZZANINE LEVEL SHOW OFFICES

2



Level 2

Mezzanine Level Show Offices

Show Offices	Dimensions	GSF
ML Show Office 1	27' x 35'	950
ML Show Office 2	21' x 27'	586
ML Show Office 5	27' x 30'	850
ML Show Office 6	26' x 28'	928
ML Show Office 7	26' x 30'	880
ML Show Office 8	22' x 36'	826
ML Show Office 9	16' x 24'	399
ML Show Office 10	16' x 25'	500
ML Show Office 11	13' x 24'	375

Source: Austin Convention Center Department

Level 3

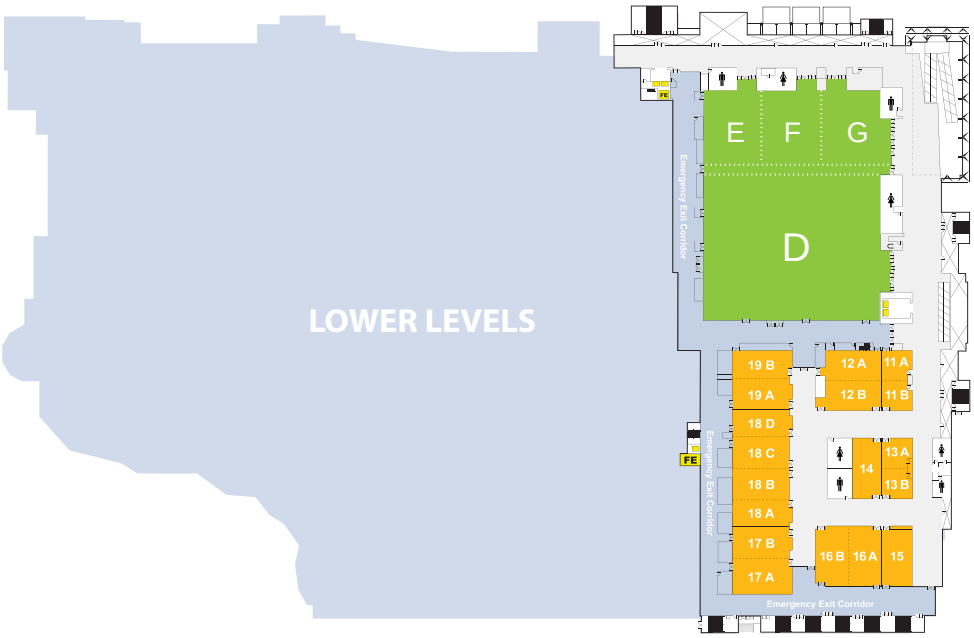
Austin Suite, Meeting Rooms and Show Offices

	Dimensions	GSF	Theatre	Classroom 30" Tables	Classroom 18" Tables	Banquet 66" Rounds	Ceiling Height Footage
4A	26' x 29'	770	84	34	41	44	17
4B	17' x 26'	442	48	22	25	24	17
4C	21' x 28'	595	68	28	32	34	17
4 (A, B, C)		**1,807**	**184**	**79**	**100**	**104**	17
5A	22' x 35'	770	78	36	36	44	17
5B	23' x 29'	840	68	32	31	44	17
5C	25' x 29'	875	69	27	31	44	17
5 (A, B, C)		**2,485**	**225**	**88**	**104**	**124**	17
6A	42' x 38'	1,806	177	88	95	114	17
6B	35' x 37'	1,512	144	74	74	94	17
6 (A, B)		**3,318**	**331**	**158**	**193**	**204**	17
7	28' x 38'	**1,287**	**120**	**64**	62	**64**	17
8A	26' x 38'	1,014	95	37	40	44	17
8B	20' x 31'	780	61	25	28	44	17
8C	34' x 31'	1365	113	53	57	64	17
8 (A, B, C)		**3,159**	**298**	**114**	**144**	**174**	17
9A	26' x 42'	1,274	125	54	64	64	17
9B	30' x 42'	1,470	147	67	76	64	17
9C	49' x 42'	2,401	272	106	118	124	17
9 (A, B, C)		**5,145**	**504**	**229**	**289**	**324**	17
10A	30' x 37'	1,318	130	56	69	84	17
10B	45' x 42'	1,913	188	83	101	104	17
10 (A, B)		**3,231**	**319**	**144**	**172**	**184**	17
10C	29' x 46'	1,350	**131**	56	76	74	12
Austin Suite	37' x 43'		Permanent seating for 24 with full AV/IT capabilities				
Show Office 12	19.5' x 28'	546					
Show Office 13	20' x 28'	560					
Show Office 14	20' x 27'	540					
Show Office 15	19.5' x 21'	409.5					
Show Office 16	19.5' x 21'	409.5					

Source: Austin Convention Center Department

AUSTIN CONVENTION CENTER

GRAND BALLROOM, MEETING ROOMS 4



Level 4

Grand Ballroom and Meeting Rooms

	Dimensions	GSF	Theatre	Classroom 30" Tables	Classroom 18" Tables	Banquet 66" Rounds	Ceiling Height Footage
Ballroom D	148' x 178'	26,540	2,408	1,236	1,516	1,824	26
Ballroom E	72' x 59'	4,470	471	212	274	274	26
Ballroom F	72' x 59'	4,570	481	243	293	274	26
Ballroom G	72' x 68'	4,930	452	194	235	274	26
Totals (D-G)		**40,510**	**3,940**	**2,172**	**2,488**	**3,084**	26
Meeting Rooms Level 4							
11A	24' x 30'	827	70	34	41	44	15
11B	27' x 24'	770	70	33	40	44	15
11 (A, B)		**1,597**	**160**	**72**	**94**	**104**	15
12A	30' x 54'	1,690	200	88	109	114	15
12B	31' x 54'	1,750	190	93	105	114	15
12 (A, B)		**3,440**	**393**	**172**	**211**	**244**	15
13A	23' x 29'	815	67	37	47	44	15
13B	23' x 26'	754	67	33	40	44	15
13 (A, B)		**1,569**	**152**	**79**	**94**	**104**	15
14	55' x 28'	**1,650**	**207**	**104**	**128**	**94**	15
15	28' x 57'	**1,617**	**207**	**104**	**128**	**94**	15
16A	32' x 57'	1,859	202	115	124	124	15
16B	33' x 59'	1,952	230	123	137	124	15
16 (A, B)		**3,811**	**424**	**207**	**257**	**244**	15
17A	56' x 36'	2,103	257	124	156	144	15
17B	56' x 31'	1,790	219	102	128	134	15
17 (A, B)		**3,893**	**488**	**211**	**273**	**254**	15
18A	56' x 26'	1,516	181	88	110	94	15
18B	56' x 32'	1,803	222	110	138	124	15
18C	56' x 32'	1,803	222	108	136	124	15
18D	56' x 26'	1,503	182	85	107	94	15
18 (A, B, C, D)		**6,625**	**820**	**378**	**466**	**504**	15
19A	56' x 30'	1,790	212	102	128	124	15
19B	56' x 28'	1,610	184	94	118	94	15
19 (A, B)		**3,400**	**424**	**185**	**235**	**274**	15

Source: Austin Convention Center Department

Key Drivers
Hotels Package

HOTELS PACKAGE OVERVIEW

Conventions and large trade shows draw thousands of attendees from out of town. Cities compete to host these events and, in turn, benefit from the large number of visitors and the dollars they spend in local restaurants, shops and entertainment venues. Hotels adjacent to, or near, the convention center are the primary beneficiaries of big shows. The availability and quality of hotels near the convention center and the amenities available to visitors are key considerations for those responsible for selecting the city to host their event.

Planners will check the size of available room blocks in, and proximity to, the headquarter hotel(s) for the convention center. Larger events prefer to secure in excess of 1,000 rooms in the headquarter property and wish to avoid the expense of shuttle bussing from remote hotels. An "attached" headquarter hotel is preferred to "adjacent" locations (across a street, not climate controlled) or "proximate" locations (a short walk). Planners prefer dealing with fewer hotels that are located nearby to meet their room inventory requirements.

An "attached" convention center hotel is preferred to "adjacent" locations or "proximate" locations.

Hilton Austin

Downtown Austin already possesses several things that are considered positive draws for its competitor cities, including a growing proximate and likely-to-be attached hotel room supply.

CURRENT ACCOMMODATIONS

Including hotels currently under construction, there are over 8,000 hotel rooms within a 10-minute walk of the Convention Center that include limited, full-service and luxury accommodations. Hilton Austin, the 800-room convention hotel, is located across the street to the north. The new JW Marriott, with 1,012 rooms, is two blocks to the west. The new 1,066-room Fairmont Hotel, adjacent to the Convention Center, broke ground in November 2014 and is scheduled to open in the summer of 2017.

Fairmont Austin

Key Drivers
Hotels Package *(continued)*

ROOM OCCUPANCY SOURCES

Hotels near a convention center are dependent on non-convention business to fill rooms between events. Proximity to business centers, sports and entertainment venues draw out-of-town guests. Ballrooms and meeting room packages promote opportunities for both local and out-of-town groups. It is the combination of business, leisure, meeting and convention activities that provide a balanced economic model for convention center hotels. The following cities have attributes worth evaluating for comparison to Austin's room occupancy sources:

Atlanta's Omni hotel is located in the CNN Center and does a considerable amount of business and leisure occupancy in addition to its adjacent location to the Georgia World Congress Center. The Hilton and Marriott offer considerable internal meeting packages.

With the opening of the attached Omni Hotel, the first hurdle in Dallas' lack of convention hotel space is cleared. The Hyatt Regency, although geographically close, is viewed as somewhat remote due to multiple rail lines that create a barrier across the front of the property; the pedestrian pathway to the Center from this hotel is "unfriendly." Bussing is required to assemble a significant hotel room block for larger groups.

Denver has a concentration of convention, business and leisure activities in its city center, bolstered by the downtown location of its government center, professional sports stadiums and robust shopping areas. Several other large hotels (Westin, Ritz Carlton) are located in this core area slightly farther from the Convention Center.

Indianapolis' convention hotels are adjacent to the State Capitol building and near Lucas Oil Stadium, providing a large amount of business and some leisure occupancy. Also, there are many small hotel properties located throughout the downtown area.

New Orleans' Hilton Riverfront is adjacent to Harrah's Casino; the New Orleans Marriott and Sheraton New Orleans market themselves as a joint meetings venue and are adjacent to the French Quarter. With over 20,000 rooms available in and around the Vieux Carre, many are used during large meetings and conventions.

Orlando's convention hotels are located 12 miles from the central business district and have minimal business travel occupancy. Due to their proximate location to Sea World Florida, Universal Studios and the shopping/dining opportunities along International Drive, the convention hotels generate sufficient leisure occupancy during non-convention peak seasons.

Even with the recent opening of the city-supported Sheraton Hotel, Phoenix remains deficient in its downtown hotel supply. Demand from business travelers is not particularly large in downtown and downtown hotels garner almost no occupancy from leisure travelers other than the transient occupancy achieved by the Holiday Inn Express.

Similar to Orlando, San Antonio's main convention hotels also rely upon leisure travel to supplement their meetings-related occupancy. Many smaller hotel properties are located near the Riverwalk and the Alamo.

The Hilton Americas Hotel, connected to the GRBCC by a pedestrian bridge, is the primary hotel for convention business in Houston. Additionally, it serves local business and civic organizations for large meetings. Other nearby hotels include the Four Seasons (4 blocks away), Holiday Inn Express (3 blocks away) and the new Embassy Suites (2 blocks away). While the variety of downtown hotels provide a mix of price points attractive to a diverse convention crowd, the inconvenience of distance and lack of amenities along the pedestrian route detract from the overall experience.

Meeting Planners prefer dealing with fewer (and larger) hotels that are located nearby to meet their inventory needs.

Key Drivers
Transportation

TRANSPORTATION OVERVIEW

Transportation needs fall into two categories, macro and micro, and depend on the profile of the attendees. On the macro-level, air lift capacity is critical for events with a large national or international audience. Dense urban settings or coastal cities better support fly-in attendance; commuter rail is practical in the Northeast corridor. For regional events, drive-in access becomes a more prominent concern for the meeting planner.

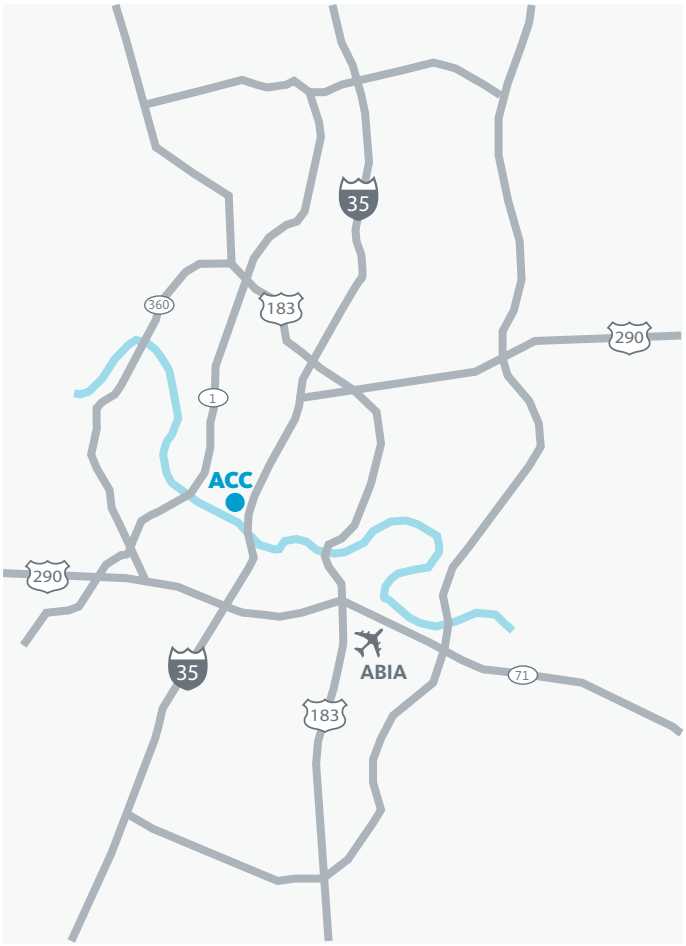
Most cities are served by multiple interstate highways and regional attendees are used to driving to these destinations. On the micro level, local transportation infrastructure is considered in moving crowds between the hotels, convention center and area attractions and activities. Meeting planners consider all types of transportation: taxis, shuttles, busses, trams, subways and even the walkability are evaluated.

AIR TRAVEL

The Convention Center is about 10.5 miles from the Austin-Bergstrom International Airport (ABIA) via US Highway 183 or East Riverside Drive, approximately 15-25 minutes by car or bus depending on route and traffic. ABIA is currently undergoing major renovations and an expansion that will add 8 gates, increasing capacity by 5 million passengers per year and enhancing the passenger experience, for more international travelers, in particular.

HIGHWAY SYSTEM

The major highways connecting Austin to the rest of the region both run north-south: Interstate 35 to the east of Downtown and "MoPac Expressway" (Texas Loop 1) to the west. US Highway 183 runs from northwest to southeast, and State Highway 71 crosses the southern part of the city from east to west, completing a rough "box" around central and north-central Austin.



Key Drivers
Transportation *(continued)*

SURROUNDING ROAD CAPACITY

The Convention Center is strategically located on the eastern edge of Downtown, bounded by E 4th, Cesar Chavez, Red River, and Trinity Streets, on the north, south, east, and west, respectively. It is served by the downtown street grid and has nearby access to Interstate 35.

In addition to significant hotel development already underway and proposed on blocks nearby and adjacent to the Convention Center, both the Rainey Street District immediately to the south, as well as East Austin just on the other side of IH-35, are seeing considerable new development. The remaining surface parking lots in the immediate area are all potentially subject to future development, which would lead to significant additional pedestrian and vehicular traffic in the years ahead. These facts make it important to preserve capacity on streets in this area to accommodate traffic patterns.

PUBLIC TRANSPORTATION

The Capital Metropolitan Transportation Authority, or CapMetro, provides public transportation to the city, primarily by bus. CapMetro has recently changed some routes to "Rapid Lines" featuring 60-foot-long, train-like, high-tech buses, to help reduce congestion.

The Red Line, CapMetro's first and only rail line which opened in March 2010, connects Downtown Austin with Austin's northern suburbs. The line operates on 32 miles of existing freight tracks, and serves nine stations, with a south terminus directly between the Convention Center and the Hilton Austin, and a north terminus at Leander Station. The system serves downtown Austin, East Austin, North Central Austin, and Northwest Austin; however, future expansion could include a line to Manor and another line to Round Rock.

MetroRail Downtown Station

Key Drivers
Transportation *(continued)*

Another proposed line includes a potential Commuter Rail line to Austin-Bergstrom International Airport (ABIA). This route would then continue on to four more stations, terminating in Elgin.

CapMetro also has plans to implement a light rail system to connect most of Downtown, The University of Texas at Austin, and the Mueller Development, which would help connect the MetroRail line to key destinations in Central Austin.

Austin Convention Center expansion options considered during the planning process evaluated the potentiality of a new proposed rail stop on the Trinity Street side of the existing Convention Center facility. However, Austin voters did not pass the $1 billion rail bond proposal on the November 4, 2014 ballot.

PARKING

The Austin Convention Center has two Parking Garages. The 2nd Street Garage is a 10-story, 1,000-space garage located at 201 East 2nd Street, two blocks west of facility, between Cesar Chavez and 2nd Street. Entrances are on Brazos and San Jacinto streets. The 2nd Street Parking Garage elevators are being modernized. The 2nd Street Garage is the most convenient parking for events scheduled in Exhibit Halls 1, 2 and 3, and meeting rooms 1-10.

The 5th Street Garage is a 5-story, 685-space garage located at 601 E. 5th Street, the northeast corner of the Convention Center at Red River and 4th Street, with the entrance on 5th Street. The 5th Street Garage is the most convenient parking for events scheduled in Exhibit Halls 3, 4 and 5 and Level 4 meeting rooms 11-19.

Alternative Fuel Vehicle Parking and Mobility Impaired Parking are also available. There are 124 bicycle racks secured to the sidewalks or pavements around the exterior of the Convention Center. In addition, the Austin B-cycle (shared, on-demand bike rental) program implemented in 2014 includes parking stations at the Convention Center on 4th Street and Trinity Street.

5th Street Garage

SERVICE ACCESS TO THE CONVENTION CENTER

Service to the site is mostly on the east side of the building at the intersection of 3rd and Red River Streets. Most large trucks and smaller service vehicles reach the service area of the building via Cesar Chavez and Red River Streets. East expansion options must consider the impact on the service yard access.

Austin Convention Center Service Yard

WAYFINDING

The Austin Convention Center website (http://www.austinconventioncenter.com/directions/directions.htm) has detailed information for visitors arriving from all directions. The City of Austin is currently implementing a wayfinding improvement project based on a Downtown Wayfinding Master Plan adopted in 2013.

Key Drivers
Attractions & Activities

ATTRACTIONS AND ACTIVITIES

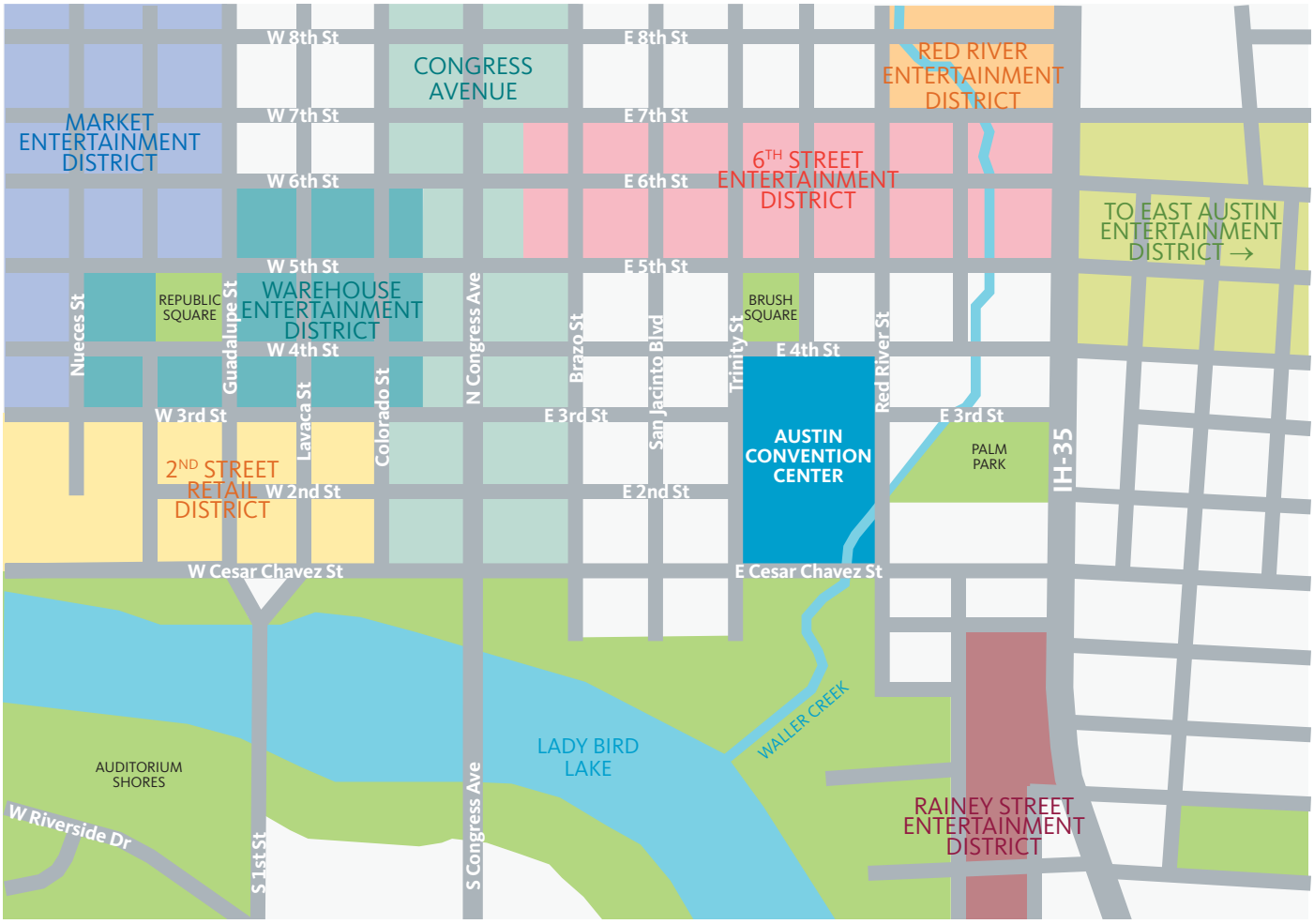
Attendees and their guests look for shopping, dining, entertainment and other activities at some point during their stay in a community. Many destinations have branded themselves as "family friendly" or "stay and play" and attracted visitors who stay longer (either pre- or post-convention). Boston, Nashville, Orlando, San Antonio, and San Diego have excelled in this approach. The advent of the Gaylord Convention Center properties, such as the Gaylord Texan in Grapevine, provide meeting and exhibition facilities within a resort setting.

The City of Austin is continually emerging as a cultural and entertainment destination, not only within Texas but nationally. 2014 data from the Downtown Austin Alliance indicates that downtown Austin attracts more than 19 million visitors annually.

ENTERTAINMENT DISTRICTS

There are currently a number of well-established entertainment districts throughout downtown Austin, including: Congress Avenue, East 6th Street, 2nd Street, Red River, Rainey Street, Warehouse District, West 6th Street/Market District, and East Austin. Current redevelopment will better connect Downtown to the emerging Seaholm District at the west end of 2nd Street.

Among the most notable of these districts is the 6th Street Entertainment District, which extends between Congress Avenue and I-35, and is home to numerous bars and music venues within short walking distance from the Convention Center. In addition, 2nd Street, Rainey Street, Red River, and East Austin are also within close proximity to the Convention Center.



Key Drivers
Attractions & Activities *(continued)*

ANNUAL FESTIVALS & EVENTS

Austin hosts a number of annual festivals and events that attract people from all over the world, most notably the South by Southwest and Austin City Limits Festivals, detailed below.

SXSW

South by Southwest (SXSW) is an annual film, interactive, and music festival and conferences that takes place annually in mid-March. It began in 1987, and has continued to grow in both scope and size, attracting more than 200,000 visitors annually. SXSW is run by SXSW, Inc. In addition to the three main South by Southwest festivals, the company runs three other conferences, also in Austin: SXSWedu, a conference on educational innovation, and SXSW Eco, an environmental conference, and one in Las Vegas: SXSW V2V, a conference focused on innovative startups. The Austin Convention Center is the official host of the SXSW Music, Film and Interactive Trade Shows; Registration; Conference events like sessions, interviews, and mentor sessions; Music Gear Expo; Music, Film and Interactive Keynotes; Music Radio Day Stage; SXSW Film Screenings, and more. SXSW is the highest revenue-producing event for the Austin economy, with an estimated economic impact of $218 million in 2013 alone, which saw 60,458 room nights booked in 71 official hotels, and 13,990 individual reservations booked.

Austin City Limits Music Festival

The Austin City Limits (ACL) Music Festival is an annual music festival held in Zilker Park in Austin over two consecutive 3-day weekends. Inspired by the PBS concert series of the same name, the festival is produced by Austin-based company C3 Presents, which also produces Lollapalooza, held annually in Chicago. Approximately 75,000 people attend the festival each day. In addition to the music performances, there are food and drinks, an art market, a kids area for families, and other activities for attendees. Founded in 2002, the festival began as a one-weekend event and remained as such through 2012. In 2012, Austin City Council members voted unanimously to allow the ACL Music Festival to expand to two consecutive weekends beginning in 2013.

East 6th Street

SXSW

Rainey Street

Austin City Limits Music Festival

Key Drivers
Attractions & Activities *(continued)*

Other major events drawing thousands of visitors at a time to Austin include the Republic of Texas Biker Rally, Pecan Street Festival, Fun Fun Fun Fest, as well as the Texas Relays and several marathon and triathlon events, such as the Austin Marathon and the 3M Half Marathon. The University of Texas at Austin also draws a number of visitors annually for NCAA Division I sporting events. It is estimated that university home football games alone create an economic impact of $99 million through visitor spending at hotels, restaurants, retail and transportation.

Ann W. Richards Congress Avenue Bridge Bats

Lady Bird Lake Hike-and-Bike Trail

Circuit of the Americas (COTA)

OTHER ATTRACTIONS

Congress Avenue Bats
About 1.5 million bats (the largest urban colony of Mexican Free-Tailed Bats in the U.S.) depart nightly, at sunset, beneath the Ann W. Richards Congress Avenue Bridge.

South Congress Avenue
"South Congress" is a neighborhood located on South Congress Avenue in Austin that is nationally known as a shopping and cultural district famous for its many eclectic small retailers, restaurants, music and art venues and, more recently, food trucks.

Texas State Capitol
Built between 1882 and 1888, the Capitol was added to the National Register of Historic Places in 1970 and recognized as a National Historic Landmark in 1986. Free, self-guided tours are available to the public.

Bullock Texas State History Museum
Opened in 2001, the Museum attracts approximately 400,000 visitors annually.

Lady Bird Lake Hike-and-Bike Trail
Austin boasts a complete circuit of scenic trails around Lady Bird Lake, including a new Boardwalk Trail that opened in 2014. The trail is the longest trail designed for non-motorized traffic maintained by the City of Austin Parks and Recreation Department and watched after by a local non-profit named The Trail Foundation. 3,000 to 15,000 people use the trail every day of the year.

Circuit of the Americas
Outside of downtown, approximately 14 miles to the southeast, the Circuit of the Americas (COTA) opened in 2012 and hosted the inaugural U.S. Formula One Grand Prix, attracting more than 100,000 spectators. The venue also hosts a number of major motorcycle, V8 Supercars, and other sports car events each year. Additionally, COTA is the new North American home for the summer edition of ESPN's X Games. COTA also features a 251-foot obvservation tower and is home to the Austin360 Amphitheater, which can accommodate up to 14,000 people, with 5,240 permanent reserved seats and hosts major music acts throughout the year.

Key Drivers
Safety & Security

SAFETY AND SECURITY OVERVIEW

Throughout the history of the American Society of Association Executives' surveys, safety and security are a prime consideration for meeting planners. Protecting visitors is a prime directive for a successful convention destination and, in many places, perception differs from statistical reality. Some convention destinations are perceived as safe, but score comparatively high in property theft and other crimes.

Compared to its competitor cities, Austin is a safe destination for local residents, conventioneers and tourists. However, that reality can be overshadowed by the public's perception of personal safety when in the immediate vicinity of the Austin Convention Center due to several factors, including:

- The current lack of pedestrian activity to the east around Waller Creek and Palm Park
- The heavy volume of vehicular traffic and barren streetscape along Cesar Chavez's pedestrian corridor
- The large numbers of transients/homeless people seeking assistance 2-3 blocks to the north of the Convention Center

Human nature and the demographics of conventioneers (where they live, age, etc.) are key considerations for understanding their perceptions of a place. Out-of-town visitors, unfamiliar with the area, will be hesitant to venture far in search of food, shopping and entertainment. Clearly articulated pedestrian corridors and wayfinding tools (signage, kiosks, iconic street elements) will promote exploration and discovery by visitors.

The concentration of Austin's social service providers are located one block from 6th Street, the heart of the entertainment district. The population served by these agencies may find more success with facilities away from the temptation of the entertainment district. As the City of Austin makes future plans, a campus concept, such as San Antonio's Haven for Hope Transformational Campus, should be considered. That campus, located away from San Antonio's downtown core, provides for a recovery oriented system of care and comprehensive social services offered on-site by diverse community agency partners, many of which are located on the multi-acre campus.

Waller Creek

Palm Park

Austin is well ahead of many of its competitor cities with regard to offering a wide variety of dining, shopping and entertainment venues conveniently located near the Convention Center. In addition to existing hotels and the neighborhood residential population, the completion of the new JW Marriott and Fairmont Austin hotels will increase the pedestrian activity on nearby streets, enhancing an already high level of perceived safety in this part of downtown.

Improvements to the streetscape on adjacent sidewalks will enhance the pedestrian experience for those traveling between their hotels and the Convention Center. Additionally, the Waller Creek Conservancy's planned redevelopment of Waller Creek and Palm Park will promote higher utilization by local residents and visitors, activating the nearby outdoor public spaces.

Methodology

Planning for urban civic projects differs from the long-range strategies for universities and corporations which are generally less dependent on the decisions, actions and timelines of other entities outside of their control. Universities and civic entities may share similar challenges related to funding and the allocation of resources, but a university controls the streets, infrastructure, building adjacencies and project timelines for the entire campus. Corporations and civic entities may also share similarities in the complexity of their organizational structure, but corporations are self-funded and less reliant on the actions of off-campus stakeholders.

During the development of the Austin Convention Center Long-Range Master Plan, it became apparent that the future success of the Convention Center is heavily reliant upon the decisions and actions of others outside of the Convention Center's control. Any future expansion of the Convention Center facilities, or realization of a long-range strategy, is dependent on considerable and meaningful support by the City of Austin with regards to land acquisition and infrastructure improvements.

PLANNING METHODOLOGY

The master plan takes a long-range outlook at the opportunities for growing Austin's market position in a very competitive convention/trade show industry. While this report is written from the perspective of the Austin Convention Center with a focus on the various options for expansion of the convention facilities, many of the key drivers influencing the future and success of the Austin Convention Center are external to its physical boundaries and its Department's authority. The City's leadership, in strategic collaboration with local business leaders, will play the primary role in executing its vision for an expanded Convention Center District.

An important part of the planning process was to ensure that every possible option be explored regardless of the practicality or number of obstacles in its path.

Methodology

(continued)

PLANNING SCENARIOS

The scenarios in this report represent a distillation of ideas from multiple concepts developed in the early stages of the project and fall into one of five categories:

- *No Expansion: Maximize Current Facility*
- *East Expansion: Over/Across Red River Street*
- *West Expansion: Over/Across Trinity Street*
- *South Expansion: Across Cesar Chavez Street*
- *New Location: Relocation to New Site*

An important part of the planning process was to ensure that ***every* possible option be explored** regardless of the practicality or number of obstacles in its path. In order for the Austin Convention Center and the City of Austin to commit their collective resources to promote future growth in the Convention Center District, **assurance was needed that all ideas had been considered and that a balance of interests for all stakeholders was a priority when evaluating the viability of each option.**

Ideas that were explored and eventually dropped for various reasons include the following:

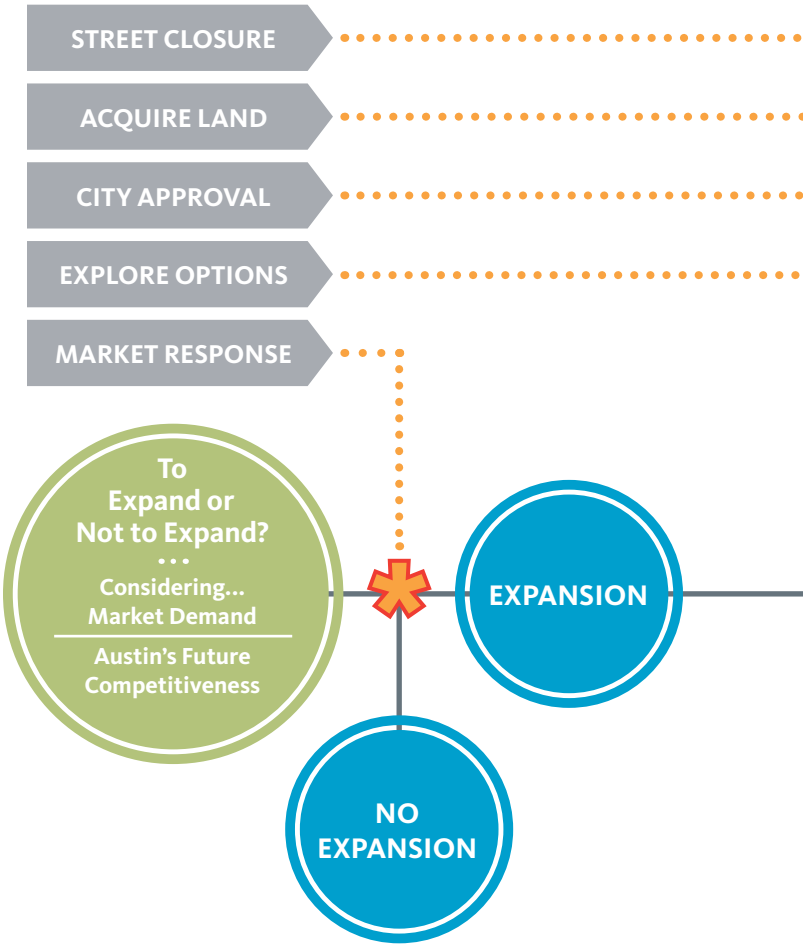
- Expanding the facility vertically within the current footprint making the current roof the next level for needed spaces. The structural systems for Phases I and II were not designed to accommodate the load demands of exhibition halls overhead. The demolition and redesign of the facility's structure would be expensive in both construction costs and economic impact by the need to shut down the facility's operations in phases for an estimated 6-8 years.

- Relocation of the Convention Center to a new site. This solution would have the least disruption to the current operation but would separate the Convention Center from the amenities, services and hotel room supply that make the current location so attractive to meeting planners and visitors.

- South expansion across Cesar Chavez. Available parcels would not support the vehicular circulation required for guest, event, service and emergency vehicles. Additionally, this scenario resulted in the greatest distance between existing and future exhibition and meeting spaces.

Each option shown has its merits with varying degrees of opportunities and constraints. Some options were found to have more champions than others after meeting with various stakeholders and interested parties over a five-month study period. Regularly scheduled workshops and meetings provided valuable feedback to the team. Workshops and meeting participants included:

- Austin Convention Center Department Leadership
- Industry Leaders, Meeting Planners and Major Austin Convention Center Customers
- Local Developers and Business Leaders with Unique Perspectives for New Development in Downtown Austin
- Representatives of the City Manager's Office
- City Department Directors/Assistant Directors
- Downtown Austin Alliance



Methodology

(continued)

Coordination with concurrent building and planning projects by others, together with the input from stakeholders, were key considerations in the development of the long-range scenarios found in this report.

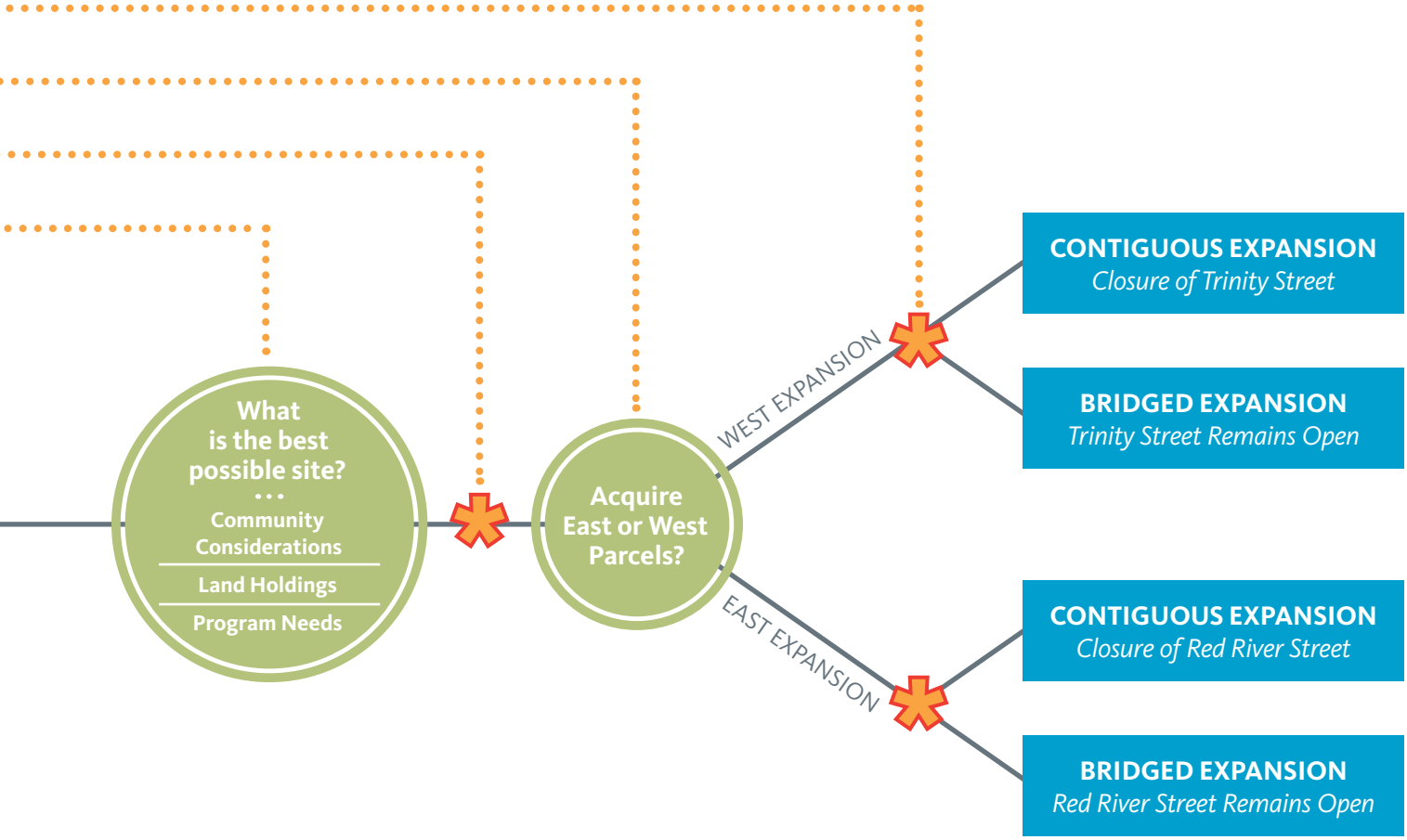
DECISION/ACTION TIMELINE

Below is a timeline of actions and decision points that would guide the Austin Convention Center on its path to one of several possible end-states for expansion. In simple terms, the timeline illustrates:

- If certain actions are completed and objectives achieved, the following end-states are possible, or...
- If certain actions are not completed nor objectives achieved, the following end-states are possible.

At the first decision point, two possible scenario tracks occur: (1) no expansion, business-as-usual; and (2) strategic positioning for facility expansion. The decisions at that time will determine the Austin Convention Center's strategic options for going forward. Assuming expansion is the desired path, several decision points follow that will determine the approach/location for expansion, the extent of expansion, and the impact on adjacent streets and properties. For example, in the expansion options for the Convention Center, land acquisition is required. Whether or not the City of Austin acquires the needed land in the near term will influence the decisions made and the direction taken by the Austin Convention Center regarding future expansion.

Depending on shifts in the economy or market demand, the actual timeframe for these decisions and actions could be accelerated or delayed. ■



Expansion Options

Future Development Scenarios

Option 1
No Expansion

The Big Idea behind Option 1 is to maximize the amount of meeting space within the site of the existing Convention Center. This option does not expand the current 247,000 square feet of exhibition space but can add 20,000 square feet of meeting space and 40,000 square feet of new ballroom space. The additional space does not satisfy the projected needs identified in analysis by industry leaders and consultants, but does provide a better balance of meeting to exhibition space especially in the original phase of the current facility.

The additional meeting space in Option 1 would result in some minor disruption to operations during construction in the areas immediately adjacent to the new space. The proposed addition of a second ballroom would, however, significantly impact the operations of the loading dock and service yard during its construction.

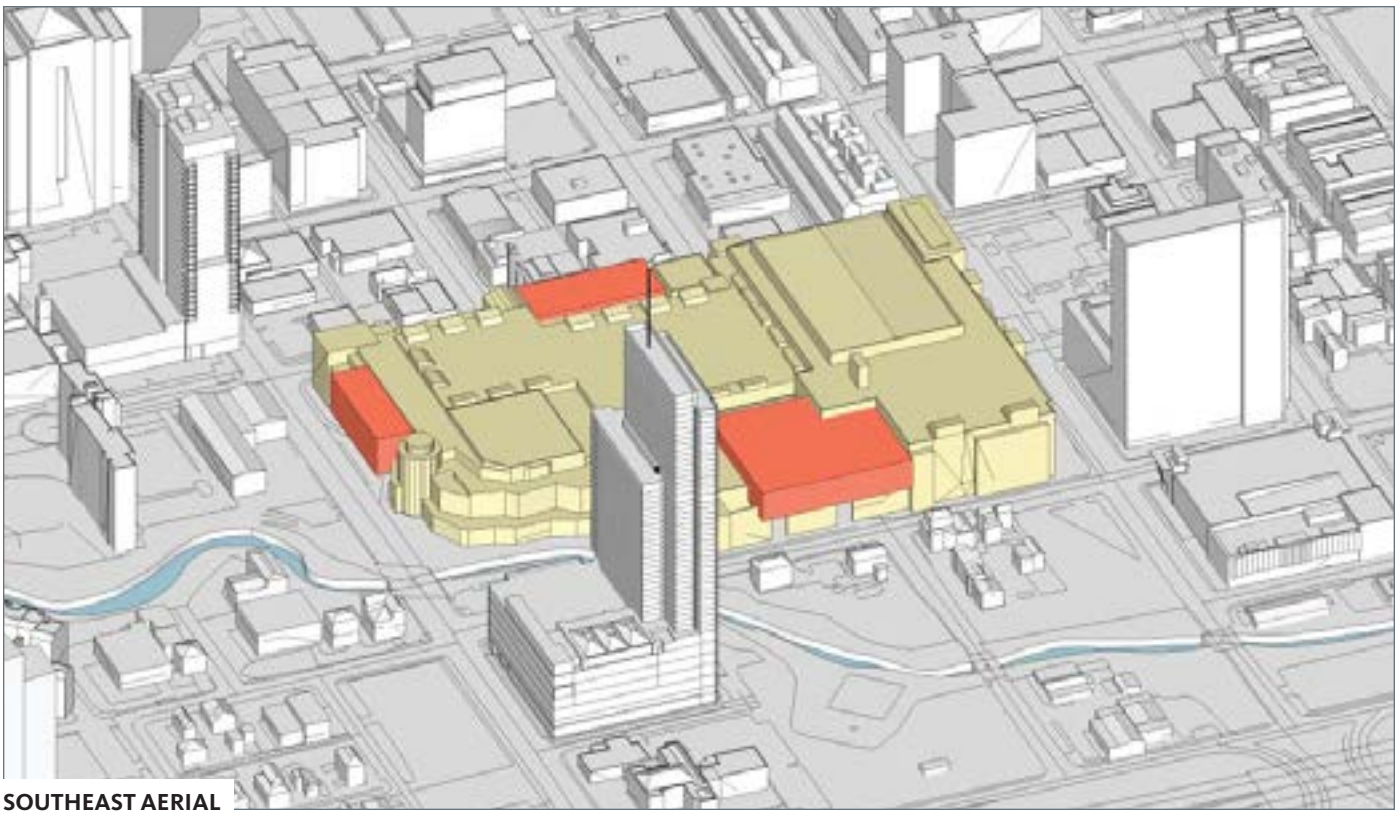
This option represents a no-growth position that fails to respond to the current and future need for expanding and enhancing its convention/trade show facilities. The business associated with the Convention Center is an integral piece of the City's brand and economic development. Opportunities to physically expand its operations in the current location will continue to diminish as private sector development and downtown density increase over time. As a strategic end-state, this option is not recommended.

Key Considerations

- Maximizes Existing Facility
- Adds 20,000 sf of Meeting Space
- Adds 40,000 sf of Ballroom Space
- No Increase in Exhibition Space
- Disruption to Loading Dock Services
- Lack of Response to Competitive Market

Total Once Completed

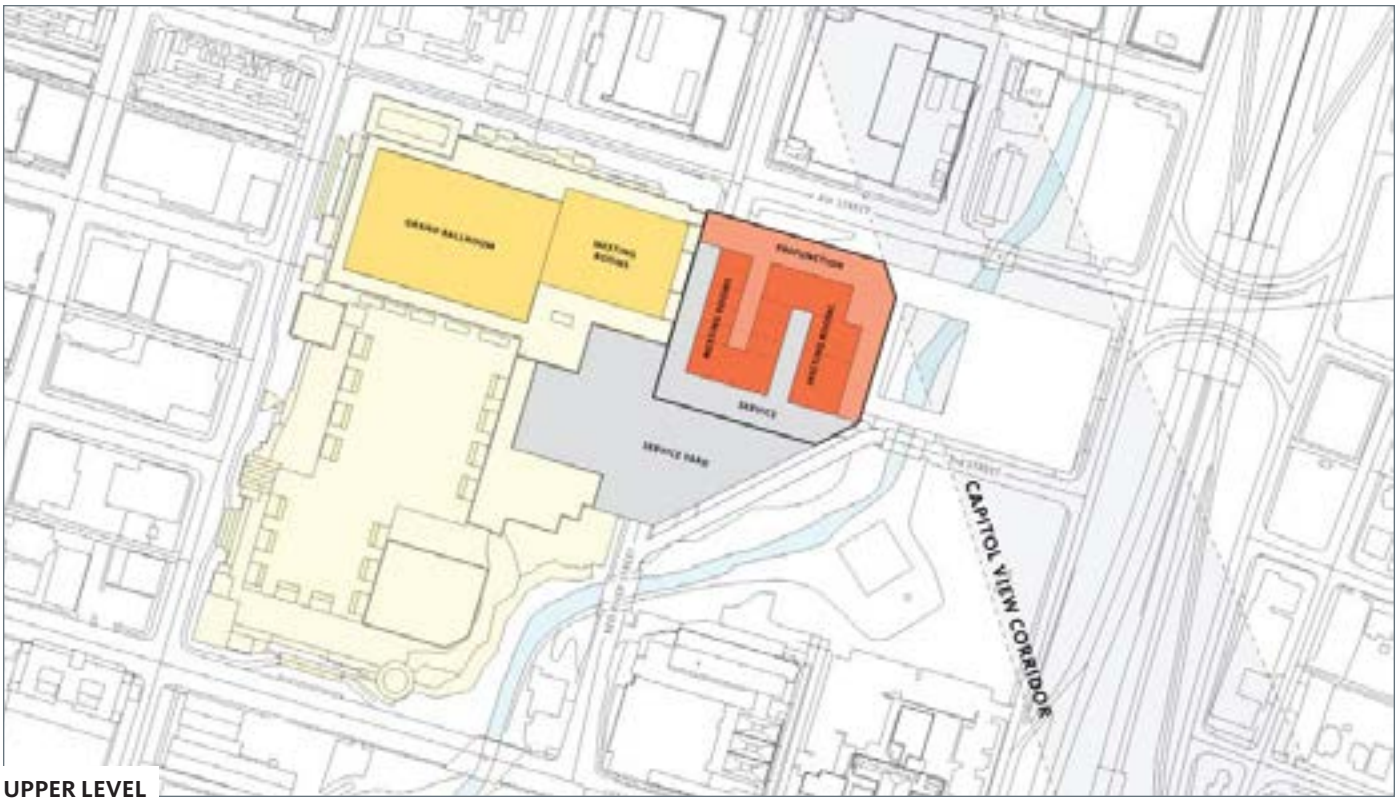
- Exhibition Space: 247,000 sf
- Ballroom Space: 104,900 sf
- Meeting Space: 75,800 sf



SOUTHEAST AERIAL

Expansion Options
Future Development Scenarios *(continued)*

STREET LEVEL



UPPER LEVEL

Option 2

East Expansion: Over/Across Red River Street

The Big Idea behind Option 2 is the contiguous expansion of the existing Convention Center footprint, creating opportunities for attracting larger shows and events that have gone to cities with more exhibition space. Meeting planners, customer groups and industry consultants have stated in this study's vision sessions, workshops and other stakeholder meetings that large, contiguous exhibition space is preferable...and often the differentiator in selecting a city for future events.

Option 2 would increase the exhibition space by 102,600 square feet for a total of 349,600 square feet of contiguous exhibition space. Being contiguous, the expanded exhibition halls would continue to use the same loading docks with an expanded service yard to support the additional volume of activity. This plan also increases the meeting space by 45,900 square feet for a total of 101,700 square feet. The increases in exhibition and meeting space are a direct response to the needs expressed by the Convention Center's stakeholders as well as to the facility offerings of Austin's main competitors for trade shows and events. This option would require the closure of Red River Street between 3rd and 4th Streets. In turn, 3rd Street would be realigned to maintain its connection to Red River. Option 2 would elevate the presence of the Convention Center from I-35 while respecting the height limitations of the Capitol View Corridor.

Option 2 illustrates an acknowledgement of the City's vision for development of the Waller Creek corridor. This concept bridges over the creek and opens the building footprint to allow daylight for pedestrians walking along the creek, creating design opportunities for both the Convention Center and Waller Creek.

This option requires the land acquisition of parcels bordered by Red River, 3rd and 4th Streets, and the I-35 feeder road as well as the relocation of existing historic buildings that front Red River Street, directly across from the Convention Center's loading docks and service yard.

Key Considerations

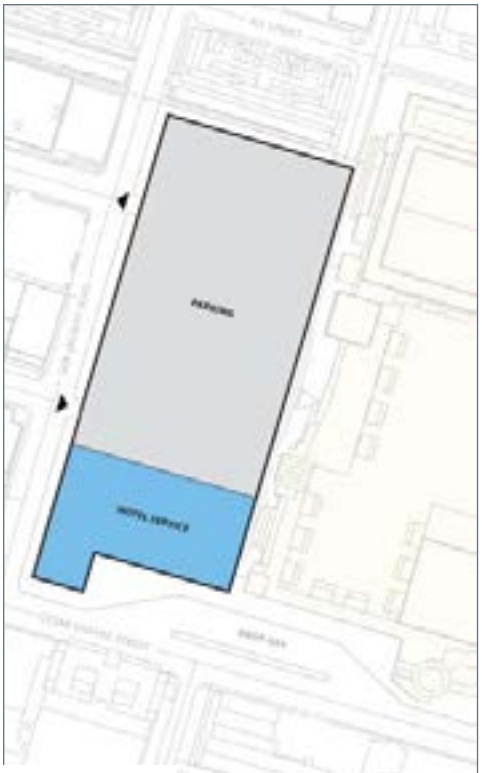
- Integrated Expansion Solution
- Adds 102,600 sf of Contiguous Exhibition Space
- Adds 45,900 sf of Meeting Space
- Realignment of 3rd Street
- Closure of Portion of Red River St.
- Impacted by height restrictions due to Capitol View Corridor
- Acquisition of Privately-Owned Parcels
- Relocation of Existing Buildings, including historical structures
- Significant Collaboration with Waller Creek Conservancy to Ensure Expansion is Consistent with Vision for Waller Creek

Total Once Completed

- Exhibition Space: 349,600 sf
- Ballroom Space: 63,900 sf
- Meeting Space: 101,700 sf

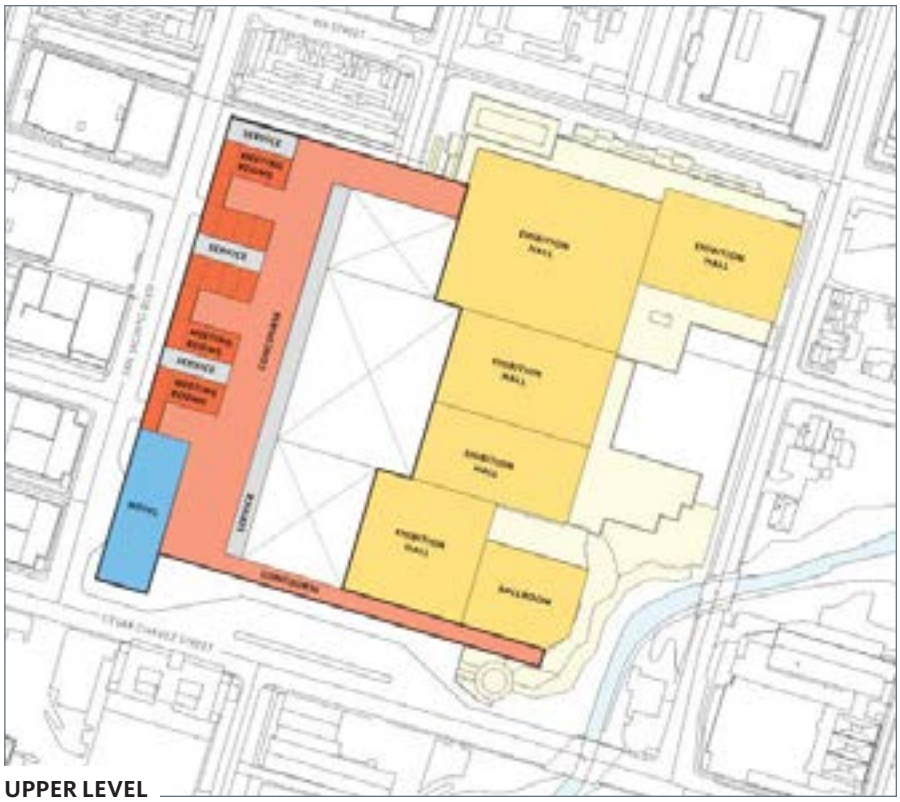
SOUTHEAST AERIAL

Expansion Options
Future Development Scenarios *(continued)*



BELOW GRADE

STREET LEVEL



UPPER LEVEL

Option 3a

West Expansion: Contiguous Across Trinity Street

The Big Idea behind Option 3a is the contiguous expansion of the existing facility footprint, creating opportunities for attracting larger shows and events that have, in the past, opted instead for cities with more substantial facilities. Meeting planners, customer groups and industry consultants have stated in this study's vision sessions, workshops, and other stakeholder meetings that large, contiguous exhibition space is preferable and often the differentiator in selecting a city for future events.

Option 3a would increase the exhibition space by 179,400 square feet for a total of 426,400 square feet of contiguous space. The expanded halls would continue to use the existing service yard on Red River. This scheme increases meeting space from 82,800 to a total of 138,600 square feet. The increases in exhibition and meeting space are a direct response to the needs expressed by the Convention Center's stakeholders as well as to the facility offerings of Austin's main competitors.

This option would require the closure of Trinity between Cesar Chavez and 4th Street. The facility's main front door drop-off would be along the highly visible Cesar Chavez. Entry/exit to two levels of below grade parking would be on San Jacinto, increasing the amount of revenue-generating parking convenient to the Convention Center and adjacent hotels.

Option 3a illustrates the potential for a hotel, attached to the Convention Center and fronting on San Jacinto. Additionally, this option has the capacity to include restaurants and other amenities within the building's footprint on the east side of San Jacinto. This option requires the land acquisition of parcels bordered by Trinity, Cesar Chavez, San Jacinto and 4th Streets. It does not include acquisition of the Railyard Condominiums property. This option provides the opportunity to incorporate displaced retail/restaurants into the footprint of the expansion and at the street level of the proposed hotel, dependent upon the method of land acquisition used.

This option would be one of the most complex, costly and disruptive options, as phased execution would be required. For a period of years during construction, the facility would have to operate with less exhibition/meeting space than in the current facility. Construction activity would occur adjacent to the operating facility. The market benefits of contiguous space come at a considerable cost to existing business during that period.

Key Considerations

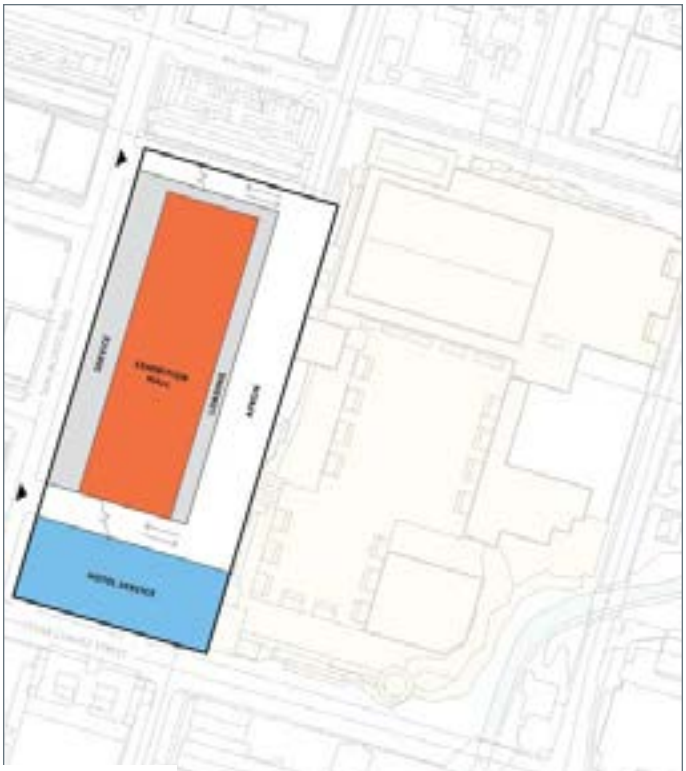
- Enhances High Profile Front Door Statement on Cesar Chavez
- Provides Market-Desired Contiguous Exhibition Space
- Acquisition of Privately-Owned Parcels
- Provides for Retail/Food & Beverage Space Along San Jacinto
- Requires Closure of Trinity Street from Cesar Chavez to 4th Street
- Hotels on San Jacinto are Now Adjacent to Convention Center
- Proposes Attached Hotel Incorporated into Phase III Footprint
- Below-grade Parking Levels

Total Once Completed

- Exhibition Space: 426,400 sf
- Ballroom Space: 63,900 sf
- Meeting Space: 138,600 sf

SOUTHEAST AERIAL

Expansion Options
Future Development Scenarios *(continued)*



BELOW GRADE

STREET LEVEL

UPPER LEVEL MEETING

UPPER LEVEL EXHIBITION

Option 3b

West Expansion: Non-Contiguous Across Trinity Street

The Big Idea behind Option 3b is the development of a stand-alone expansion to the adjacent Convention Center, connected at the second level via pedestrian bridges. Located directly across Trinity Street, the new building would include two levels of exhibition space, increasing the total exhibition space for Austin Convention Center from 247,000 to 447,000 square feet.

Option 3b also increases the meeting space by 65,000 square feet for a total of 120,800 square feet. A new 56,700 square feet ballroom is included in this option. These increases in exhibition and meeting space are a direct response to the needs expressed by the Convention Center's stakeholders as well as to the facility offerings of Austin's main competitors for trade shows and events.

This option allows Trinity Street to remain open. The Convention Center's front door on Cesar Chavez and primary drop-off on Trinity Street would function as it does today. The stand-alone building would require its own loading docks. Option 3b includes below-grade parking levels and loading docks to service the new exhibition halls and reduce the overall height of the facility. Entry/exit to the below-grade parking would be on San Jacinto Street, increasing the amount of revenue-generating parking convenient to the Convention Center and adjacent hotels.

Option 3b illustrates the potential for a hotel, attached to the Convention Center and fronting on Cesar Chavez. This option requires the land acquisition of parcels bordered by Trinity, Cesar Chavez, San Jacinto and 4th Streets, although it does not include acquisition of the Railyard Condominium property.

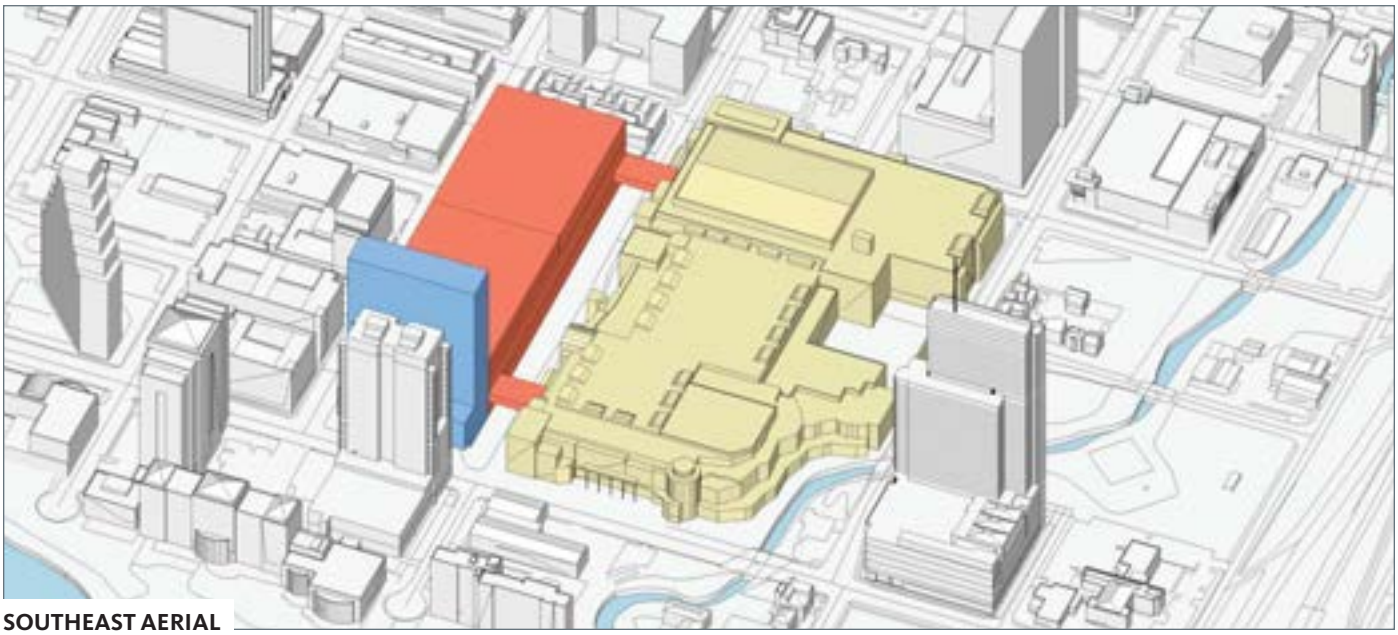
This option would pose minimal disruption to activities in the existing facility during its execution. The primary points of disruption would be (1) the underground excavation along Trinity Street to accommodate the new below-grade loading docks and parking levels, and (2) the construction of the pedestrian bridges that would connect the Phase III expansion to the existing Convention Center. Option 3b would be quite efficient and cost-effective to deliver.

Key Considerations

- Competitive Response to Market
- Vertical Development; Two-Level Exhibition Space
- Below-grade Parking and Loading
- Acquisition of Privately-Owned Parcels
- Provides for Retail/Food & Beverage Space Along San Jacinto
- Proposes Attached Hotel Incorporated into Phase III Footprint
- Hotels on San Jacinto are Now Adjacent to Convention Center
- Trinity Street Remains Open
- Closure of Small Sections of 2nd and 3rd Streets

Total Once Completed

- Exhibition Space: 447,000 sf
- Ballroom Space: 120,600 sf
- Meeting Space: 120,800 sf



SOUTHEAST AERIAL

Expansion Options
Future Development Scenarios *(continued)*

STREET LEVEL

UPPER LEVEL - OPTION A (MEETING)

UPPER LEVEL - OPTION B (BALLROOM)

Option 4

South Expansion: Across Cesar Chavez Street

The Big Idea behind Option 4 is the expansion of the facility to the south of Cesar Chavez Street. The expansion, a stand-alone building, is connected to the existing Convention Center via a pedestrian bridge that runs north-south over Cesar Chavez.

The scheme would provide a panoramic view of Lady Bird Lake from the proposed 40,000 square feet upper-level ballroom. Option 4 provides an additional 40,000 square feet of meeting space, as well as an additional 73,000 square feet of exhibition space. A below-grade, self-contained parking garage is envisioned for this scheme.

Site constraints include current land use and size. In addition to the acquisition of privately-owned land that fronts Cesar Chavez Street, Option 4 would require the relocation of an existing mid-rise public housing project. The narrow site configuration can only accommodate a single private drive that would be shared by event attendees, staff, service vehicles and heavy-duty transport trucks. Operationally, this would be a significant challenge.

Another consideration is that Option 4 represents the most remote location/distance between exhibition and meeting spaces to the existing Convention Center. This arrangement would be viewed negatively by convention and trade show groups that want to utilize the entire facility. Additional operational and logistical barriers are associated with a site so remote from the existing facilities.

Key Considerations

- Panoramic View of Lady Bird Lake from Proposed Ballroom
- Adds 40,000 sf of Meeting Space
- Adds 73,000 sf of Exhibition Space
- Self-Contained Parking Package
- Shared Entrance for Both Patrons and Service Trucks
- Relocation of Public Housing
- Most Remote of Options for Users
- Acquisition of Privately Owned Parcels

Total Once Completed

- Exhibition Space: 320,000 sf
- Ballroom Space: 103,900 sf
- Meeting Space: 95,800 sf

SOUTHEAST AERIAL

Option 5
Relocation

The Big Idea behind Option 5 represents the most radical option for addressing expansion needs by abandoning the current Convention Center site and building a new facility elsewhere. The reasons why this solution could be an attractive option are numerous. First, this approach would allow the City of Austin to build a Convention Center that resolves many of the operational and functional inefficiencies that exist today in the current two-phase facility. The new facility would be designed to accommodate the growth required today to maintain its competiveness in the convention/trade show industry and be planned for future expansion when needed. Additionally, constructing a new Convention Center on a remote site would have the lowest construction cost and eliminate disruption to the current calendar of events.

However, for a number of reasons, Option 5 is not a viable option. First and foremost, the attributes that make the Austin Convention Center a popular destination – proximate hotel room supply, nearby variety of services, dining, and entertainment venues, Austin's cultural vibe – would be abandoned when relocating outside of the Central Business District. Twenty-five to thirty acres are required to develop a new convention center that accommodates today's space needs; space for future expansion; parking requirements and an adjacent convention center hotel. Physical land needs, accessibility and proximity to support infrastructure are key considerations when evaluating this option.

In addition to the regret costs that would be incurred by taxpayers for their past investment in the current facility, relocation to another part of town would have a significant impact on the operations of the Hilton, JW Marriott, Fairmont and other hotels that are near the Convention Center.

The Convention Center's location in downtown Austin allows it to leverage the success of local businesses that rely on the Convention Center as a revenue generator.

For the reasons cited above, and many others, **this option is not recommended.**

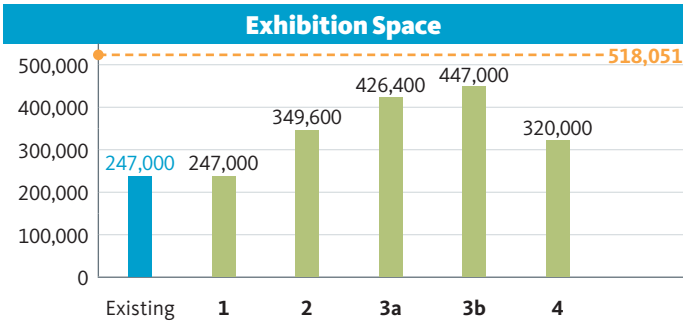
Key Considerations

- Build To Suit
- Operational/Functional Efficiencies
- No Disruption to Current Calendar of Events/Shows
- Requires Acquisition of a 25-30 Acre (min.) Site
- Proximity of Services, Amenities and Infrastructure
- Disregards Attraction of Downtown as a Destination
- Undermines the Pro Forma of the Hilton, JW Marriott and Fairmont, etc.

Expansion Options
Future Development Scenarios *(continued)*

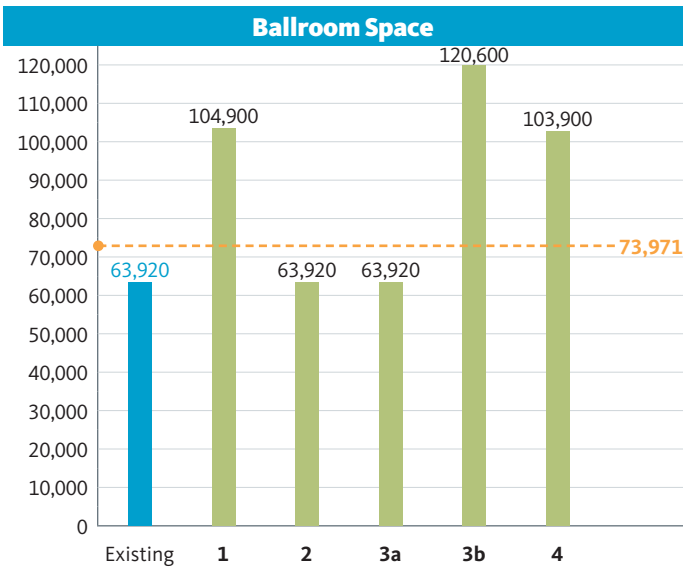
SPACE COMPARISON OF EXPANSION OPTIONS

This section compares the sizes of the current exhibition, meeting, and ballroom spaces at the Austin Convention Center to each of the five expansion scenarios being considered. It also includes the Competitor Peer Set average (orange, horizontal line) for comparison. It does not include a comparison to Option 5 (relocation to a new ground-up facility).



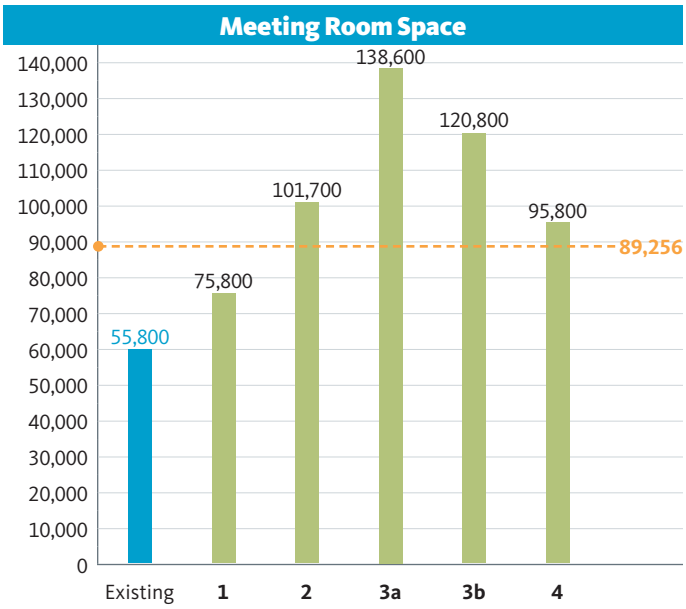
EXHIBITION SPACE

With the exception of Option 1, each of the options considered includes substantially more exhibition space than that which is offered in the current Austin Convention Center (247,000 square feet). Option 3b, which would bring the facility's total exhibition space to 447,000 square feet, represents the greatest increase in exhibition space out of all the options and would bring the facility closest to the competitor peer set average (and surpassing Nashville's Music City Center). See page 21.



BALLROOM SPACE

Options 1, 3b, and 4 would add a minimum of approximately 40,000 square feet of new ballroom space (Options 1 and 4) and as much as 56,700 square feet (Option 3b). Options 2 and 3a do not provide for additional ballroom space.



MEETING ROOM SPACE

All expansion options include additional meeting space, some substantially more than others. On the low end, Option 1 would add approximately 20,000 square feet of meeting space, while on the high end, Option 3a would add approximately 82,800 square feet of meeting space.

KEY

- **Existing** = Current Austin Convention Center
- **Option 1** = No Expansion (additions within existing footprint)
- **Option 2** = East Expansion Over/Across Red River
- **Option 3a** = West Expansion: Contiguous Across Trinity
- **Option 3b** = West Expansion: Non-Contiguous Across Trinity
- **Option 4** = South Expansion Across Cesar Chavez
- = Average of Competitor Peer Set

Market & Financial Analysis
Summary

INTRODUCTION

Austin has much more potential as a convention destination than it is achieving today. In fact, based on this assessment, Austin could obtain more business than could be physically accommodated on the current site. During several workshops with City leaders and stakeholders, relocating the Convention Center is not a viable scenario due to the inability to recreate the support environment that has developed around the current Convention Center site. The hotel supply that has been developed is one of the best in the country, and the growth in the market dictates the need and justification for the Convention Center to expand, to be a greater driver of demand and hotel room night generation. Hence, the challenge is to find an expansion solution that allows for maximum space downtown and positions the venue against its competitors.

Positioning the City and Convention Center against its competitors is key. Austin's competition has changed as its success has grown. While Dallas, Houston, and San Antonio are very relevant as competitors, Austin has moved up to be one of the most attractive Tier 1 cities competing for conventions, conferences and tradeshows. These cities include San Antonio, San Diego, Denver and Nashville. It is this set of cities that Austin is posed to compete against.

MARKET OVERVIEW

Key demographic and socioeconomic characteristics of Austin metro area are indicative of a highly attractive market that is growing rapidly.

- **Strong Population Growth** – Austin has experienced rapid population growth over recent years and is projected to continue growing at a rate that will outpace state and national growth.

- **Diversified Economy** – The population is relatively young, and highly educated, reflecting the presence of prominent universities and new employment opportunities. The employment base is supported by government sectors and is expanding with a focus on high tech industries. The unemployment rate in Greater Austin is falling well below state and national averages.

- **Tourism Infrastructure** – The central location of Austin within the State of Texas creates a solid basis for the tourism industry, enhanced by the abundance of cultural and entertainment opportunities, and support hospitality infrastructure, including a substantial hotel inventory that performs well and is continuing to expand.

All of these factors help to support the Austin Convention Center Department and enhance Austin's ability to attract large meetings and events. There is a substantial inventory of hotel rooms within walking distance of the Convention Center, and with the opening of the JW Marriott and the Westin Austin Downtown, this inventory is among the highest density and quality of its peers. In summary, Austin's demographics, economic base, and desirable destination attributes provide a perfect environment for the Convention Center to prosper with a larger facility.

CURRENT FACILITY CONDITION & UTILIZATION

In Fiscal Year 2013, the Austin Convention Center accommodated 145 events, generating 449,464 attendees. Its utilization level was at 52 percent, largely due to inefficient layout and inability to have multiple events occur at once (maximum practical occupancy for this facility type would be achieved at approximately 65%). The focus of the Convention Center is to serve as a room night generator for City hotels and, as such, the Convention Center receives support from the City's Hotel Occupancy Tax (HOT) to cover its operating deficit.

The following table compares the Austin Convention Center's key characteristics to those of the convention centers in San Antonio, San Diego, Nashville, and Colorado. The Gaylord Texan in Dallas/Fort Worth and the George R. Brown Convention Center in Houston, despite being in-state competitors, are not included in the table, as the Exhibition Space of those two facilities represent outliers of the peer set. The table shows that when compared to the peer cities, the Austin Convention Center and the Austin market are relatively weak with respect to:

- **Facility Attributes –** Austin's facility is the oldest among the peer set, as measured by the most recent renovation. It is also among the smallest, in overall size, as well as exhibit, ballroom, and meeting rooms.

Market & Financial Analysis

Summary *(continued)*

- **Hotel Inventory** – The information in the table represents the hotel room supply within ½ mile, or ten-minute walk, of the Convention Center, which is generally considered to be the limit of acceptable walking distance before shuttles are required to transport hotel guests to the Convention Center.

  The room inventory shown includes the additional hotel rooms that will be added by new projects that are currently under construction. Once these new hotel properties are open in the next 12-24 months, Austin will be able to offer one of the best hotel packages in the country.

- **Demand Schedule –** The Austin Convention Center ranks among the lowest in the peer set with respect to events and attendance. The inefficacy of building design is also a key inhibitor of reaching true demand potential with current facilities.

It is evident that the Convention Center facility's size and mix of event space is inhibiting performance, resulting in under-utilization and lagging behind its peers. The expansion and renovation of the Austin Convention Center presents a real opportunity to increase its competitiveness amongst the peer set and other facilities nationally, and to support continued growth of the market as a whole.

Key Characteristics of National Comparable Facilities and Markets

	Austin Convention Center Austin, TX	Henry B. Gonzalez Convention Center San Antonio, TX	San Diego Convention Center San Diego, CA	Music City Center Nashville, TN	Colorado Convention Center Denver, CO
Demographic Characteristics - MSA (2013)					
Population	1,881,021	2,273,812	3,210,066	1,753,304	2,685,277
Facility Attributes					
Year Built/ Most Recent Expansion	1992/ 2002	1968/ 2016	1989/ 2015	2013	1990/ 2004
Total Leasable Space (SF) [1]	366,720	620,300	793,480	504,740	753,100
Exhibit Hall (SF)	247,000	513,944	615,700	353,140	579,000
Ballroom (SF)	63,920	94,316	81,670	70,250	82,160
Meeting Rooms (SF)	55,800 [2]	114,133	96,110	81,350	91,940
Hotel Inventory					
Hotel Rooms within ½ Mile	8,159	9,480	7,270	3,696	6,594
Demand (Most Recent Year)					
# Events (per annum)	145	450	148	311 [3]	220
Total Attendance (per annum)	449,464	750,000	766,848	438,236 [3]	842,481
Average Attendance (per event)	3,100	1,667	5,181	1,409	3,829
Operating Revenue & Expenses (Most Recent Year) [4]					
Total Revenues	$17,670,000 [5]	$19,811,827 [6]	$35,696,861	$1,534,500 [3]	$15,533,515
Total Expenses	$32,931,000 [5]	$33,209,152 [6]	$36,386,478	$2,029,400 [3]	$14,541,728
Net Operating Income (Deficit)	($15,261,000)	($13,397,325)	($689,617)	($494,900)	$991,787

Notes:

1) Excluding pre-function and outdoor event space.

2) Excluding Show Offices.

3) Based on 2014 operating projections prepared by the facility

4) Operating revenues and expenses only - excludes subsidies, tax revenues and contributions.

5) Relating to Austin Convention Center only; excluding Palmer Events Center.

6) Relating to Convention and Sports Facilities Department, which includes the Convention Center, Alamodome, Theater and Community Cultural Center.

Source: Respective Facilities, DemographicsNow, Johnson Consulting

Market & Financial Analysis
Summary *(continued)*

LOST BUSINESS AND RECAPTURE POTENTIAL

Due to design and space constraints, the Austin Convention Center is losing a significant volume of business. According to its records of lost business from bookings for 2010 through 2022, a total of 966 leads have ended up deciding to not hold an event in Austin during that 13-year booking period, as shown in the table below:

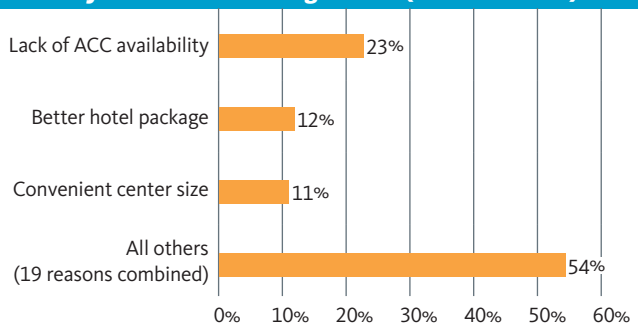
Austin Convention Center
Summary of Lost Convention/ Meeting Business by Year

	Events Lost	Event Days Lost		Room Nights Lost	
		#	Average	#	Average
2010	15	106	7.1	50,971	3,398
2011	81	531	6.6	239,844	2,961
2012	112	813	7.3	378,839	3,382
2013	145	1,067	7.4	496,495	3,424
2014	154	1,152	7.5	635,402	4,126
2015	182	1,441	7.9	900,453	4,948
2016	115	935	8.1	563,887	4,903
2017	80	664	8.3	486,518	6,081
2018	46	412	9.0	340,243	7,397
2019	21	180	8.6	126,478	6,023
2020	9	80	8.9	78,640	8,738
2021	2	20	10.0	21,310	10,655
2022	4	37	9.3	54,773	13,693
Total or Avg.	966	7,438	7.7	4,373,853	4,528

Source: Austin Convention Center

In Fiscal Year (FY) 2013 alone, there were 145 events lost, resulting in loss of over 1,000 event days and nearly 500,000 room nights (which translates to 3,400 room nights per event). This summary does not include events that do not even investigate the market because of knowledge that the facility does not support their event, meaning the number of events a larger facility can attract is much greater. Lack of Austin Convention Center availability and facility size were specifically cited as reasons for a significant number of lost opportunities, accounting for over one-third of lost room nights, as shown on the following chart:

Austin Convention Center
Summary of Lost Convention/ Meeting Business by Reasons
By % of Total Room Nights Lost (2010 thru 2022)



Source: Austin Convention Center

Combined, lack of availability and convention center size issues accounted for 37 lost events, 285 lost event-days, and over 160,000 lost room nights in FY 2013 alone.

These lost events can certainly be recaptured. Expansion to the Austin Convention Center will significantly minimize facility availability and size issues and is among the most strategic initiatives that bring maximum results in recapturing lost business and opening additional categories of event demand to the market.

EXPANSION OPTIONS

This Master Plan presents several expansion options, representing a distillation of ideas from multiple concepts developed in the earlier stages of the project: to the East, West, and South of the existing facility, and to a new location.

A series of workshops have narrowed down options to the following scenarios to be analyzed and compared from a demand and financial perspective. These include:

- *Scenario 1 – No expansion*
- *Scenario 2 – East expansion*
- *Scenario 3a – West contiguous expansion*
- *Scenario 3b – West non-contiguous expansion*

Market & Financial Analysis
Summary *(continued)*

DEMAND PROJECTIONS BY EXPANSION OPTION

An expansion will allow the Convention Center to improve its availability and offer a larger variety of exhibit space. The top table below summarizes and compares the potential increase in Event Demand, Attendance, and Utilization rate among scenarios. (Scenario 1 is not shown, because there will be no changes when no expansion is undertaken.) As shown in the table, among the individual scenarios, Scenario 3b, West Non-Contiguous Expansion, is expected to provide the greatest impact because the size and configuration of the expanded exhibit hall will offer the most flexibility, allowing multiple large events to be held simultaneously when the hall is broken into two or three large sections with their own separate entrances.

Austin Convention Center
Projected Event Demand, Attendance, and Utilization Rate

	Existing	Scenario 2: East Expansion		Scenario 3a: West Contiguous Expansion		Scenario 3b: West Non-Contiguous Expansion	
	FY 2013	Year 8*	Incremental	Year 10*	Incremental	Year 8*	Incremental
Total # of Events	145	178	33	212	67	215	70
Total Attendance	449,464	578,785	129,321	685,203	235,739	702,768	253,304
Utilization Rate	52%	60%	8%	64%	12%	64%	12%

Notes:

*The eighth full year upon expansion completion is assumed to be when the expanded Austin Convention Center reaches stabilized operation (or tenth year, for Scenario 3a).

Source: Austin Convention Center, Johnson Consulting

Austin Convention Center
Projected Operating Revenue and Expenses ($000)

	Existing	Scenario 1: As-Is		Scenario 2: East Expansion		Scenario 3a: West Contiguous Expansion		Scenario 3b: West Non-Contiguous Expansion	
	FY 2013	FY 2029	Incre-mental**	Year 8*	Incre-mental	Year 10*	Incre-mental	Year 8*	Incre-mental
Revenue	$17,670	$27,868	($312)	$39,925	$7,426	$52,510	$13,570	$52,129	$15,260
Expenses	$32,931	$52,601	($156)	$60,871	$5,153	$72,378	$9,872	$69,337	$10,586
Net Operating Income (Loss)	**($15,261)**	**($24,732)**	**($156)**	**($20,946)**	**$2,274**	**($19,868)**	**$3,698**	**($17,207)**	**$4,674**
HOT Revenues									
Hotel Occupancy Tax CC (4.5%)	$29,811	$52,165	$2,777	$61,258	$8,614	$67,049	$9,860	$61,879	$9,013
Hotel Occupancy Tax Venue (2%)* **	13,248	23,182	1,234	27,223	3,828	29,796	4,382	27,499	4,005
Total	$43,059	$75,347	$4,011	$88,481	$12,442	$96,845	$14,242	$89,379	$13,018
NOI After Support from HOT****	$27,798	$50,615	$3,855	$67,535	$14,716	$76,977	$17,940	$72,171	$17,691
		(FY 2029)		(Year 8)		(Year 10)		(Year 8)	

Notes:

* The eighth full year upon expansion completion is assumed to be when the expanded Convention Center reaches stabilized operation (or tenth year, for Scenario 3a).

** Measures the difference between FY 2013 and the stabilized year upon expansion, reflected in 2014 dollars.

*** The 2% portion is related to the current Venue. For modeling purposes, it is assumed that the current Venue will be distinguished early and a new voter-approved Venue would be in place for the recommended expansion.

**** HOT would be pledged for debt service first, so this amount includes funds used first for debt service, even before covering expenses, with remaining amounts for Convention Center capital needs, operating reserves, and other Convention Center-related requirements.

Source: Austin Convention Center, Johnson Consulting

Market & Financial Analysis
Summary *(continued)*

In Scenario 3a West Contiguous expansion, while the size of largest hall would increase by over 70 percent, its construction would be the most impractical, potentially closing half of the hall during construction, and therefore the expanded operation will take longer to ramp-up and cause the greatest disturbance to operations, essentially taking the building out of competition for an extended period of time for some of the most important facility users.

FINANCIAL PROJECTIONS BY EXPANSION OPTION

An expansion, and increased activities associated with it, will allow the Convention Center to improve its operating efficiencies and reduce expenses compared to current operations. For instance, the amount of incremental staff needed to operate the new facility will not be great. The bottom table on page 63 summarizes and compares the Projected Revenue and Expense performance of each scenario. Scenario 1 is not a viable option, because without expanding it is very likely that the facility will lose current customers that will be replaced with less profitable business, resulting in greater operating deficit. Expanding the facility is expected to reduce the operating deficit by $2.3 million to $4.7 million per year, while meeting its objective of increasing new hotel room nights, resulting in increased HOT collections.

EXPANSION COST

The table below shows the estimated project budget and debt service for the expansion scenarios related to both east and west expansion of the Austin Convention Center. The project budget shown is the estimated total project costs that includes professional fees, FF&E, contingencies and site development. It's important to emphasize that the costs-per-square foot-shown are not based on a building design, and represent an average cost for similar recent projects nationwide. The budget does not include site acquisition costs or the costs associated with the proposed hotel as shown in Options 3a and 3b.

The cost differential between the three options reflects the difference in the amount of programmed space for each option. In Options 2 and 3a, it is assumed there will be an additional premium in construction costs associated with the physical connection to the existing Convention Center as well as lost business resulting from disruption to operations during the construction phase. There may also be indirect cost impacts to the City associated with the street closures in Options 2 and 3a.

Based on the assumptions stated in the table, annual debt service payment is estimated to range from approximately $16 million for Scenario 2 to $34 million for Scenario 3b.

Austin Convention Center
Estimated Budget and Debt Service Payments

	Existing	Scenario 2: East Expansion	Scenario 3a: West Contiguous Expansion	Scenario 3b: West Non-Contiguous Expansion
Additional Square Footage				
Exhibit Halls	247,000 sf	102,600 sf	179,400 sf	200,000 sf
Ballrooms/Meeting Rooms	119,720 sf	45,900 sf	82,800 sf	121,700 sf
Total New Function Space	366,720 sf	148,500 sf	262,200 sf	321,700 sf
Est. Circulation, Service and Support		207,900 sf	367,080 sf	450,380 sf
Est. Total New Construction		**356,400 sf**	**629,280 sf**	**772,080 sf**
Estimated Cost				
Est. Project Budget*		$187,110,000	$330,372,000	$405,342,000
Est. Annual Debt Service Payment**		$15,843,000	$27,973,000	$34,321,000

Notes:

*Based on $700 per constructed square footage of function space (exhibit, ballroom, and meeting space) and $400/sf of circulation, service and support space. Does not include land acquisition cost or non-convention development (e.g., hotel or retail).

**Financing assumptions include 7.5% annual interest, 30-year term.

Source: Austin Convention Center, Gensler, Conventional Wisdom, Johnson Consulting

Market & Financial Analysis
Summary *(continued)*

HOTEL OCCUPANCY TAX AS EXPANSION FUNDING SOURCES

The City of Austin currently collects a 9% Hotel Occupancy Tax (HOT). Under the terms of the City of Austin Code, the Austin Convention Center receives two portions of the HOT: a 4.5% portion for the construction, operation, and maintenance of the Austin Convention Center, and a 2% portion, which has been used as the funding source for the voter approved Convention Center/Waller Creek Venue Project (Venue), in accordance with Chapter 334 of the Texas Local Government Code, that funded the Convention Center's 2002 expansion. The 2% portion of the HOT collected by the City is set to expire in 2029 upon the scheduled repayment of the debt issued to finance the construction of the Venue.

The Austin Convention Center's strategy of utilizing the 2% Venue HOT that made the 2002 expansion a reality has been quite successful. Since 2002, Austin's tourism and hospitality industry has flourished. From 2002 to 2014, HOT collections have increased 175%, with the Convention Center's combined HOT portion increasing from $17.9 million in Fiscal Year 2002 to $49.2 million in Fiscal Year 2014.

Austin Convention Center
Projected Incremental Room Nights from Expanded ACC

	Scenario 2: East Expansion	Scenario 3a: West Contiguous Expansion	Scenario 3b: West Non-Contiguous Expansion
Year 1	10,600	15,850	27,620
2	11,630	17,040	28,990
3	14,940	27,470	33,160
4	18,280	31,550	46,570
5	26,890	42,140	62,950
6	30,320	49,200	79,510
7	41,400	62,860	96,240
* 8	52,600	79,550	125,420
9	52,830	101,710	125,770
10	53,060	117,330	126,110
Total	312,550	544,700	752,340

*The expanded Austin Convention Center is assumed to reach stabilized operation in the eighth full year upon expansion (or tenth year, for Scenario 3a).

Source: Johnson Consulting

The Austin Convention Center's next recommended expansion intends to mirror the financing strategy for the 2002 expansion project. This would require paying off the currently outstanding bonds that financed the Venue and obtaining voter approval for the new Venue and the assessment and collection of the 2% HOT. Due to the Austin Convention Center's success and HOT collections, current revenue projections indicate that early retirement of the current Venue debt could take place as soon as 2019, depending on land acquisition methods. Meeting this objective will require the Austin Convention Center to take an aggressive position of accumulating the funds needed to retire the current outstanding Venue revenue bonds without diminishing current operations.

If approved by the voters, the use of a 2% HOT to finance the Austin Convention Center's expansion would occur without impacting its current business model or full service operations, based on current tourism and hospitality activity in the City. Should the election fail, it is likely that one or more of the following approaches will be necessary to accomplish the full expansion that is being recommended: 1) a phased, longer-term expansion project, 2) outsourcing of services currently handled in-house, or 3) changing the Austin Convention Center's current business model.

Going forward, the expansion is expected to generate significant volume of new room nights. The table to the left shows the expected incremental room nights resulting by expansion options. Scenario 2 is expected to generate over 300,000 of incremental room nights in 10 years; Scenario 3b, over 750,000 room nights. (Scenario 1 is not shown, because there will be no incremental room nights when no expansion is undertaken.)

These incremental room nights will add to the lodging activity growth in Austin, resulting in an increased amount of HOT revenue. The following table shows the estimated HOT revenues resulting from expansion scenarios, reflecting the 4.5 cents of the 9.0 cents per dollar of room occupancy fees, as well as the potential 2.0 cents that are anticipated to be available to fund the Austin Convention Center expansion. (For modeling purposes, the construction of Austin Convention Center expansion is assumed to begin in 2019 and is completed in December

Market & Financial Analysis
Summary *(continued)*

2021. Expanded Convention Center operation is assumed to begin in 2022. Similar projections hold true but would shift to actual years once a project timeline determined.)

As shown on the table, each of the expansion scenarios is expected to result in increased HOT revenues. The projections demonstrate sufficient capacity to fund the estimated debt service payments for the expansion, while remaining a substantial funding source for continued operations of the Convention Center in its expanded form, including ongoing related capital needs.

CONCLUSION

From a demand, financial, and operational perspective Option 3b provides the greatest positive impact of the expansion scenarios, while causing the least amount of disruption to operations. This allows the current building to remain open and available for events and not to experience a decline in hotel room night generation during the expansion. ■

Austin, Texas
Hotel Occupancy Tax Revenue Projections ($Million)

	Scenario 2: East Expansion		Scenario 3a: West Contiguous Expansion		Scenario 3b: West Non-Contiguous Expansion	
	@ 4.5% ($M)	@ 2% ($M) (e)	@ 4.5% ($M)	@ 2% ($M) (e)	@ 4.5% ($M)	@ 2% ($M) (e)
	A	B	C	D	E	F
2011 a	$23.4	$10.4	$23.4	$10.4	$23.4	$10.4
2012	$25.5	$11.3	$25.5	$11.3	$25.5	$11.3
2013	$29.8	$13.2	$29.8	$13.2	$29.8	$13.2
2014 b	$32.6	$14.5	$32.6	$14.5	$32.6	$14.5
2015	$34.7	$15.4	$34.7	$15.4	$34.7	$15.4
2016	$36.0	$16.0	$36.0	$16.0	$36.0	$16.0
2017	$37.2	$16.5	$37.2	$16.5	$37.2	$16.5
2018	$38.5	$17.1	$38.5	$17.1	$38.5	$17.1
2019 c	$39.9	$17.7	$39.5	$17.6	$39.9	$17.7
2020	$41.3	$18.4	$41.1	$18.3	$41.3	$18.4
2021	$42.8	$19.0	$42.8	$19.0	$42.8	$19.0
2022 d	$44.7	$19.9	$45.3	$20.1	$45.3	$20.1
2023	$46.8	$20.8	$47.3	$21.0	$47.4	$21.0
2024	$49.0	$21.8	$49.5	$22.0	$49.6	$22.0
2025	$51.5	$22.9	$52.0	$23.1	$52.0	$23.1
2026	$54.2	$24.1	$54.6	$24.3	$54.7	$24.3
2027	$56.7	$25.2	$57.1	$25.4	$57.3	$25.4
2028	$59.1	$26.2	$59.4	$26.4	$59.6	$26.5
2029	$61.3	$27.2	$61.6	$27.4	$61.9	$27.5
2030	$63.9	$28.4	$64.3	$28.6	$64.4	$28.6
2031	$66.6	$29.6	$67.0	$29.8	$67.1	$29.8
Total (2022-2028)	**$553.7**	**$246.1**	**$558.1**	**$248.0**	**$559.3**	**$248.6**

Notes:

a) Hotel Occupancy Tax revenue figures shown from 2011 thru 2013 are historical actuals.
b) Figures shown from 2014 thereafter are projections.
c) For modeling purposes, the construction of Austin Convention Center expansion is assumed to begin in 2019 and is completed in December 2021.
d) For modeling purposes, the expanded Convention Center is assumed to begin operation in 2022. Similar projections hold true but would shift to actual year once determined.
e) The 2% portion is related to the current Venue. For modeling purposes, it is assumed that the current Venue will be distinguished early and a new voter-approved Venue would be in place for the recommended expansion.

Source: ACC, Austin CVB, Smith Travel Research, Johnson Consulting

Long-Range Strategy
Plan Recommendations

INTRODUCTION

The vision for the future of the Austin Convention Center (ACC) extends beyond the walls of the Convention Center and includes hotels, businesses, residents, public agencies and other stakeholders of Austin's downtown southeast edge. The future development and success of the Austin Convention Center cannot be fully realized without the future development and success of the "Convention Center District."

How a city is perceived by out-of-town visitors is influenced by the part of the city they experience. Many conventioneers and trade show attendees will only experience the part of Austin that exists between and around their hotel and the Convention Center. Ideally, visitors departing the Convention Center District should feel the City of Austin's desired image and character.

Characteristics of cities that visitors find desirable include:

- Pedestrian friendly
- Active street life
- Safety and security
- Convenience and variety of dining, shopping and entertainment options
- Ease of wayfinding

These same characteristics should be key considerations for all new development surrounding the Convention Center. Treatment of the streets, sidewalks and ground floor programmed spaces in buildings should promote a vitality that supports both the resident community as well as visitors to our city.

The long range plan fosters the idea of a Convention Center District that respects a thriving resident community and offers amenities that appeal to locals and visitors alike, envisioning ground floor space in future hotels, residential towers and parking garages to accommodate shops, restaurants and other programmed needs that sustain a thriving community.

The Waller Creek Conservancy's vision for the future transformation of Waller Creek and particularly Palm Park, between the east side of the Convention Center and I-35, will create a shaded outdoor amenity for use by local residents and visitors alike. Increased pedestrian activity will further foster a sense of safety and provide convention goers and hotel guests with direct access to one of Austin's great public assets, Lady Bird Lake. Consideration should also be given to improving Brush Square to the north.

Building upon a "destination district" that is anchored by the Convention Center will attract Austonians and their entertainment dollars as well as keep conventioneers and visitors in the area during their stay.

The plan does not infer a one-time all-in development project. It is envisioned and understood that the proposed development, enhancements and expansion will occur in phases over an extended period of time.

As discussed earlier in this report, the timeline for development is fluid and heavily influenced by certain decisions and actions by The City of Austin and the private sector. For example, future expansion of the Convention Center is not a viable consideration until the City of Austin acquires the land where the proposed expansion is planned.

The Convention Center's goal is to acquire land in such a way that allows for mixed-use development that could include a hotel, retail, or other uses on the site as well. Land acquisition using eminent domain is an option, but would limit the allowable uses and restrict development to only actual Convention Center use excluding the mixed-use option; therefore, this is not the method the Convention Center will pursue until all other options have been unsuccessful. The Convention Center has notified certain property owners of that possibility to facilitate transparency.

Long-Range Strategy
Plan Recommendations *(continued)*

LONG RANGE PLAN

Originally built in 1992 with Phase II expansion completed in 2002, the Austin Convention Center is a well-managed, well-maintained facility. In June 2014, the Austin Convention & Visitors Bureau (ACVB) Customer Advisory Board (CAB), comprised of industry experts from across the state and nation, participated in their semi-annual board meeting and shared their observations and made recommendations for the future expansion of the Convention Center and development of the surrounding area related to amenities, character and hotel room supply.

The main conclusion from this group, as well as from participants in the May 2014 vision session, is that the Austin Convention Center lacks the exhibition and meeting space to be competitive with peer cities for drawing major shows that could be easily accommodated by Austin's existing and proposed hotel room supply. More importantly, many events will have to leave the City if the venue is not expanded.

Despite its substantial hotel room supply, extensive and convenient dining-shopping-entertainment venues and national acclaim as 'the coolest city in America', Austin risks losing its market share in the highly competitive convention/trade show industry.

The Long Range Plan illustrates a best-case scenario for the future expansion of the Convention Center, improvements to existing infrastructure, including pedestrian corridors and proposed public/private development of the surrounding area. The overall study's primary focus area is bounded by Interstate 35, Cesar Chavez, San Jacinto and 4th Streets. The plan, however, recognizes the importance of areas outside the focus area like the downtown entertainment/shopping district and addresses the need for connectivity.

After exploring every option ranging from 'no expansion' to 'relocation to another part of the city', the team and stakeholder participants evaluated the pros and cons for each option. In order to address the anticipated need for expanded exhibition and meeting space in a meaningful way, the preferred option places the Austin Convention Center Phase III on land west of the current building.

CONTIGUOUS VS. NON-CONTINUOUS EXPANSION

Accepting the need to expand its current facility to remain competitive and the rationale for expanding west on Trinity Street, the City of Austin must then decide which option represents the best long range solution. In both options, there are pros and cons. Strategic plans often require compromises to achieve a balance of interests.

Option 3a responds to the market's stated preference for large contiguous exhibition space, requiring the closure of Trinity Street. Significant disruption to operations and planned events would occur during construction. Being contiguous, the newer exhibit space would be supported by the existing loading docks/service yard, eliminating the need for new and separate loading docks.

A decision to keep Trinity Street open and operational will result in a stand-alone but fully linked building to achieve the needed expansion as illustrated in Option 3b. Construction of Phase III in this scenario could be completed with minimal disruption to operations and events in the existing facility. Separate below-grade loading docks will be required to serve the new exhibit halls.

Both options, ***through non-eminent domain land acquisition,*** would allow for the reintroduction of shopping and dining venues along the east side of San Jacinto Street.

> ***"If contiguous exhibit space can't be achieved by expansion... and connection by bridge is the only option... go with the development scenario that results in the most square footage."***

Long-Range Strategy
Plan Recommendations *(continued)*

The Phase III Expansion is Envisioned as an Urban Community Asset

Multi-Level Connectivity to Phase III Expansion

Long-Range Strategy
Plan Recommendations *(continued)*

View of Phase III Expansion Looking North Along Trinity Street

Long-Range Strategy
Plan Recommendations *(continued)*

THE PREFERRED OPTION

After careful consideration of all of the factors associated with each option – program/market response; level of disruption to Convention Center operations; impact on downtown mobility; connectivity; land acquisition; external initiatives – Option 3b: Non-Contiguous Expansion represents the best opportunity for the Austin Convention Center to address its current and long term needs. This option keeps the Convention Center in its highly desirable downtown location and fully operational during Phase III construction. This option extends the Convention Center's presence along Cesar Chavez Street without closing Trinity Street, an important northbound corridor.

The acquisition of land parcels bounded by Trinity, Cesar Chavez and San Jacinto Streets would be required and would impact the current businesses, primarily restaurants, located here. This option, if land acquisition method allows, would accommodate commercial space, including restaurants that were displaced, within the Phase III footprint along the east side of San Jacinto Street. The Railyards Condominium, a residential community that fronts along 4th Street, would remain undisturbed in its current location.

Phase III is envisioned as a multi-level structure that includes below-grade levels for visitor parking and loading docks that serve the exhibit halls and convention operations; two levels of exhibition space totaling 200,000 square feet; and an upper level that includes 65,000 square feet of new meeting space plus a 56,700 square feet ballroom. With the addition of Phase III, the Austin Convention Center would offer a total of 447,000 square feet of exhibition space, 120,800 square feet of meeting space, and 120,600 square feet of ballroom space.

Stacking two high bay exhibit hall spaces with a meeting level above them creates a building that would tower above the existing Convention Center. To reduce the new building's profile, the ground floor of the lower exhibit hall is below street level. The Phase III expansion creates an opportunity to enhance the arrival experience and re-imagine the passenger drop-off and building entry points for both the existing and new structures.

The new facility would be connected to the existing Convention Center via pedestrian bridges at the upper level concourse, allowing Trinity Street to remain fully operational.

CONNECTIVITY

Convenience and proximity to the Convention Center are key factors when considering the marketability of a hotel. The City-owned Hilton Austin convention center hotel has plans for an elevated, open-air walkway which will allow direct access to the Convention Center's 4th level. This will eliminate the pedestrian safety concerns of large volumes of people walking across transit rails on 4th Street to enter the Convention Center.

An "attached" convention center hotel is preferred to "adjacent" locations or "proximate" locations.

The Fairmont Hotel has plans for a pedestrian bridge over Red River Street and Waller Creek to provide direct access to the Convention Center. Consideration should be given to improving the streetscape along both Cesar Chavez and 4th Streets to enhance the pedestrian experience for guests from the Fairmont Hotel and JW Marriott, respectively.

Provided that the land acquisition method allows for it, the proposed expansion includes a new hotel integrated into the Phase III footprint on the corner of Cesar Chavez and San Jacinto Streets. This would give the Convention Center a third hotel with direct, physical access to its facilities, strategically located to create a triangle of connected hotels on the Convention Center's east, north and west sides. A new below-grade parking structure is proposed under the Phase III expansion, serving both the new hotel and Convention Center.

Long-Range Strategy
Plan Recommendations *(continued)*

Activating San Jacinto Street with Retail/Restaurant Opportunities

Long-Range Strategy
Plan Recommendations *(continued)*

STREET IMPROVEMENTS

Operationally, the success of the Convention Center is impacted by the streets that provide access to the facility. Logical, easy-to-understand routes are important to visitors unfamiliar with the area. Dedicated pick-up/drop-off zones for bus operators during peak-load events foster a safe, efficient process for accommodating off-site visitors. Separation of service zones from high-volume vehicle and pedestrian traffic areas is preferred for both safety and aesthetic reasons.

The emphasis on street improvements changes depending on the selected development option. Both vehicular and pedestrian flows are key considerations when recommending modifications and improvements to streets impacting the Convention Center. Pedestrian corridors should foster a sense of safety, comfort, visual interest and sense of direction to enhance the pedestrian experience.

Trinity Street plays a major role as the primary arrival point for both the existing Convention Center and Phase III expansion. Improvements should include accommodations for larger shows and larger numbers of buses. While building-to-building connectivity is via upper level pedestrian bridges, streetscape design should anticipate and support pedestrian crossings following drop-off. Another consideration should be the design of the outdoor plazas to allow pedestrians to walk along Trinity Street comfortably while people are bring dropped off by buses and large groups queue up to enter the building for an event.

Cesar Chavez continues to be the ceremonial front door for the Convention Center as well as serve as the front door, drop-off/pick-up for the proposed hotel attached to the Phase III expansion building.

San Jacinto Street plays an important role due to the envisioned retail and dining venues occupying street-side spaces. Wider, tree-lined sidewalks are recommended to support large numbers of pedestrians while complementing those businesses desiring sidewalk tables for customers. Additionally, entry/exit points for the below-grade parking and service/loading docks are located on San Jacinto Street.

Workshops with focus groups and the findings of surveys with meeting planners reveal several advantages of the recommended Option 3b. The adjacent, connected exhibit halls would not be disruptive to the event flow even if a single event uses the whole complex. This option expands opportunities for hosting separate, concurrent events. The vertically stacked exhibit halls in Phase III reduce the distance for patrons, who can go up and down rather than horizontally to see products and get to meeting and ballroom spaces on the upper level.

Maintaining the operational north-south flow of Trinity Street and providing for below-grade service/loading zones minimize the impact to downtown vehicular and pedestrian circulation. The Phase III footprint reinforces the adjacencies/relationships with nearby hotels including the Four Seasons, Hampton Inn and Hyatt Place. Additionally, the expanded frontage along Cesar Chavez increases the Convention Center's physical presence for those arriving into downtown on the south side's main corridor.

Architecturally, the pedestrian bridges connecting the existing Convention Center with Phase III have the opportunity to frame a newly re-imagined plaza on Trinity Street, enhancing the arrival experience. The green roof envisioned for Phase III serves as Austin's newest downtown outdoor event space with unprecedented views of Austin's downtown skyline and Capitol Building.

Long-Range Strategy
Plan Recommendations *(continued)*

View of Urban Park/Event Space atop Phase III Expansion

View of Phase III Expansion Looking South Along Trinity Street

Long-Range Strategy
Plan Recommendations *(continued)*

LAND ACQUISITION

It is recommended that the acquisition of land required for the proposed expansion be a near-term priority for the City. As a key participant in the Planning Workshop, a member of the City Manager's Office stated on June 9, 2014, "We need to be proactive...we're not the only ones making plans for this real estate!" As Austin's downtown continues to densify and land values continue to rise, the window of opportunity for acquiring land parcels adjacent to the Convention Center will continue to diminish.

Acquiring the land through a normal, negotiated transaction is suggested. This approach will give the City more flexibility in how the site is developed, particularly if secondary economic uses such as an attached hotel or restaurants are envisioned on this property. Public/Private partnerships and economic generators are more likely to happen in this project if the land is acquired by purchase rather than condemnation.

MASTER PLAN RECOMMENDATIONS

Infrastructure Improvements

- Enhancing Pedestrian Corridors / Streetscape
  - Cesar Chavez (I-35 to San Jacinto Street)
  - San Jacinto (Cesar Chavez to 6th Street)
  - Trinity (Cesar Chavez to 6th Street)
  - Red River (Cesar Chavez to 6th Street)
- Design Upgrades to Transit Station at Trinity and 4th Streets

District-wide Strategy for Development

- Land Acquisition/Parcel Assemblage
- Non-Contiguous Expansion of the Convention Center Connected Over Trinity Street via Pedestrian Bridges
- Phased Development Strategies
- Public/Private Partnerships for Convention Center Expansion
  - Hotel; retail/restaurants
- Programming for Higher Utilization of Brush Square and Palm Park
- Priority Implementation of the Waller Creek Corridor from 4th Street to Lady Bird Lake

Formal Creation of a Convention District

- Design and Development Guidelines/Policies
- District-Specific Graphics and Signage
- Capital Improvements/Development/Marketing Focus

AUSTIN

CONVENTION CENTER

Gensler