

AGENDA



Recommendation for Council Action

Austin City Council	Item ID	50329	Agenda Number	48.
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Meeting Date:	10/15/2015	Department:	Austin Convention Center
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Subject

Approve the Austin Convention Center’s Long-Range Master Plan regarding Convention Center facilities.

Amount and Source of Funding

Funding the recommendations in the Long-Range Master Plan will be through a financing plan approved through future Council actions.

Fiscal Note

A fiscal note is not required.

Purchasing Language:	
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Prior Council Action:	Request for Council Action 20140327-018 was approved by Council on March 27, 2014, authorizing a consulting services contract with M. Arthur Gensler, Jr. & Associates, Inc. (DBA Gensler) to develop a long-range master plan for the Austin Convention Center Department. Council Resolution 20141211-218 on December 11, 2014, directed the City Manager to work with the Urban Land Institute so that a Technical Assistance Panel (TAP) can provide expert recommendations on the proposed expansion of the Convention Center, including options for increasing the size of the space through expansion of the footprint as well as options within its current footprint. The resolution also directed the City Manager to report back to Council.
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For More Information:	Mark Tester, Director, Austin Convention Center Department 512-404-4040; Carla Steffen, Assistant Director, Austin Convention Center Department 512-404-4014.
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Council Committee, Boards and Commission Action:	A briefing to report on Urban Land Institute’s TAP regarding the proposed expansion of the Austin Convention Center and update on ACCD’s Long-Range Master Plan was presented to the Economic Opportunity Committee at its August 24, 2015 meeting, with the item appearing before that committee for consideration and recommendation to Council at its October 12, 2015 meeting.
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MBE / WBE:	
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Related Items:	
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Additional Backup Information

The City is experiencing considerable positive growth within the hospitality market. With over 8,000 hotel rooms, including those currently under construction, within a ten-minute walk of the Austin Convention Center, Austin will have the necessary hotel space to accommodate larger events and is poised to compete with many top convention destinations. Currently, the City is losing event business and associated positive economic impact to the City, due to lack of availability and facility limitations. Engagement of a long-range consultant was needed to provide a framework for future Austin Convention Center Department (ACCD) facility utilization.

PURPOSE OF THE PLAN

The purpose of the plan was to create a long-range plan resulting in an analysis of the market, industry trends, and supply/demand within the market. The plan was to provide an assessment of the current ACCD facilities; make recommendations for future utilization; perform a financial analysis of current and projected revenue, debt, and Expenses; and provide an implementation strategy for potential future expansion of ACCD facilities.

PLAN DEVELOPMENT

In March 2014, Council approved the hiring of a consultant, M. Arthur Gensler, Jr. & Associates, Inc. (DBA Gensler), to develop a Long-Range Master Plan ("Plan") for ACCD. Gensler rounded out the consulting team with Conventional Wisdom Corp and C.H. Johnson Consulting, Inc. The Plan was developed through a deliberate process spanning over seven months. The Gensler team employed a process involving stakeholder input and analysis and held multiple planning sessions and workshops with key stakeholder interest groups. The process involved conducting vision sessions, in-person interviews, and a web-based survey. The stakeholder group included hoteliers, key Austin Convention Center customers, industry stakeholders, and City executive leaders and staff. The Gensler team conducted in-depth facility, market, and financial analyses to arrive at its final recommendation for expansion options.

In December 2014, Council directed the City Manager to work with the Urban Land Institute (ULI) so that a technical assistance panel could provide expert recommendations related to proposed expansion. The ULI report, completed in April 2015, concurred with the Gensler report recommendation. Staff also provided a briefing of the plan to the Economic Opportunity Committee on August 24, 2015.

STAFF RECOMMENDATION

Staff recommends Council adopt the Austin Convention Center Long-Range Master Plan.