

# DOWNTOWN FARGO CONVENTION CENTER

Phase 2 Proposal for Development, Design, Construction, and Operations



*A convention center is not just a building -- it is a signal about where a city believes its future lives. Downtown Fargo is where the community has already chosen to invest, where \$200 million in value has grown into \$1 billion in value through proximity, walkability, and shared experience. It amplifies the businesses that have taken root, impacts over 600 individual property owners, activates the parking the City already owns, and turns every convention into a citywide event.*

The Kilbourne Group team — in partnership with VenuWorks, Folkways, Gensler, EAPC Architects Engineers, KLJ Engineering, Heyer Engineering, McGough Construction Manager, and Confluence Landscape Architects — is honored to advance to Part Two of the Fargo Convention Center process.

**Our team brings together:**

- A world-class architecture firm with convention center expertise
- Local design and engineering leadership with deep Fargo knowledge
- A reputable construction manager with proven budget and schedule performance
- An experienced development partner with four successful Fargo public-private projects

Downtown Fargo delivers an unmatched visitor experience. Attendees step directly into a vibrant district of restaurants, markets, public events, and gathering spaces — all within minutes and in every season — creating energy and connectivity no standalone site can replicate.

We are committed to delivering a project that is financially responsible, operationally sound, and transformative for the community.

**Adaptive Reuse of the Civic Center**

**Symbolic and Cost-Conscious**

This proposal transforms the Civic Center from an aging cost center into a modern, revenue-producing convention facility. It eliminates approximately \$250,000 in annual operating costs and avoids an estimated \$2 million demolition expense, while reinvesting in a public asset for the next generation.

This approach is fiscally responsible and demonstrates Fargo’s commitment to reinvestment and long-term stewardship.

**No Investor Equity = Early Start = Cost Savings**

**Budget Alignment & Early Start**

Our team has developed a regionally iconic design aligned with the City’s budget and delivery goals.

- Design begins immediately upon selection — no fundraising required
- Selective demolition can start Fall 2026
- Construction sequencing supports a Fall 2029 opening

An early start reduces exposure to escalation and increases cost certainty.

**Transparent, Collaborative Delivery**

We view this as a collaborative design and budgeting process:

- Adjust Exhibit Hall and program requirements as needed
- Work closely with the City and FVM throughout design
- Welcome ongoing feedback
- Present options that meet program goals within budget

Our objective is an iconic, functional, and financially responsible facility — delivered with transparency at every stage.

This strategy allows the City to move forward confidently, knowing the project:

- Starts early to reduce cost risk
- Maintains flexibility through alternates
- Aligns design with budget
- Reflects a true public-private partnership

**A Connected Convention District**

**The downtown site delivers a fully connected experience:**

- Two full-service hotels (275 rooms) with skyway access
- Room service, meeting space, and private dining
- Future 70+ room Marriott or Hilton connection
- 50+ local shops and restaurants
- Skyway access to Broadway Square
- New public plaza between City Hall, the Convention Center and Fargo Public Library

*Downtown lots represent*

**\$100M+**

*in potential private investment and*

**\$1.7M+**

*in new annual property taxes — all ready to build on prior city investments.*



### Downtown: Proven Performance

Downtown Fargo is the center of community life and regional activity. Events consistently draw strong attendance and energy that is visible, authentic, and repeatable.

#### In the past year:

5.3 million total visits  
615,000 unique visitors

#### Major events include:

- Red River Market and Downtown Street Fair
- Christkindlmarkt and Seasonal/Civic Parades
- ESPN College GameDay and TEDx Fargo
- Concerts, festivals, and public celebrations

Many single-day events attract attendance comparable to convention sessions, proving downtown's infrastructure, walkability, and cultural momentum.

#### This site provides three key advantages:

1. Immediate operational readiness
2. Built-in energy and authenticity
3. Stronger local economic impact

Downtown has been built for this project over 25 years of public and private investment. It is the only location where a convention center becomes part of a walkable destination rather than a standalone facility.

### City Owned Parking — Ready Revenue Stream

The City already owns surrounding parking garages.

#### A downtown convention center:

- Maximizes existing assets
- Generates new parking revenue
- Eliminates the need for new parking construction

This is a direct fiscal advantage unique to downtown.

### Catalyzing \$100 Million in Infill Development

#### Within two blocks, surface parking lots represent:

- \$100+ million in potential private investment
- \$1.7+ million in new annual property tax revenue

Development will occur in areas already supported by City parking garages, reinforcing prior investments and growing the tax base without new infrastructure costs.

### A Clean, Safe, Walkable Downtown

#### Downtown's Business Improvement District (BID) provides:

- Cleanliness and maintenance
- Safety presence
- Ambassador services
- A welcoming pedestrian environment

This ensures a consistent, positive visitor experience.

### Riverfront TIF Eligibility

The site is within the existing Riverfront TIF district, established four years ago, and is eligible under the current framework — no new district required.

### Downtown's Distinct Advantages

- Immediate start — no fundraising, land acquisition, or new infrastructure
- Eliminates Civic Center operating and maintenance costs and generates parking revenue
- Boosts walkability, visitor spending, and BID district activity
- Catalyzes \$100M+ in private investment and strengthens the tax base

### Iconic Design with Civic Purpose

Designed by Gensler and EAPC Architects/Engineers, with Confluence Landscape Architects, the project will deliver:

- A signature architectural landmark
- Four-season public gathering spaces
- Strong street-level activation
- A facility reflecting Fargo's identity

This is more than a convention center — it is a civic investment in place, people, and long-term prosperity.

### The Smartest Long-Term Investment for Fargo

#### The downtown Fargo Convention Center:

- Delivers an unmatched visitor experience
- Provides a fiscally responsible, proven model
- Preserves 25 years of public and private investment
- Supports local businesses
- Strengthens the tax base
- Maximizes City-owned assets

Most importantly, it represents the smartest long-term investment for the City of Fargo and will sustain a vibrant downtown for decades to come.

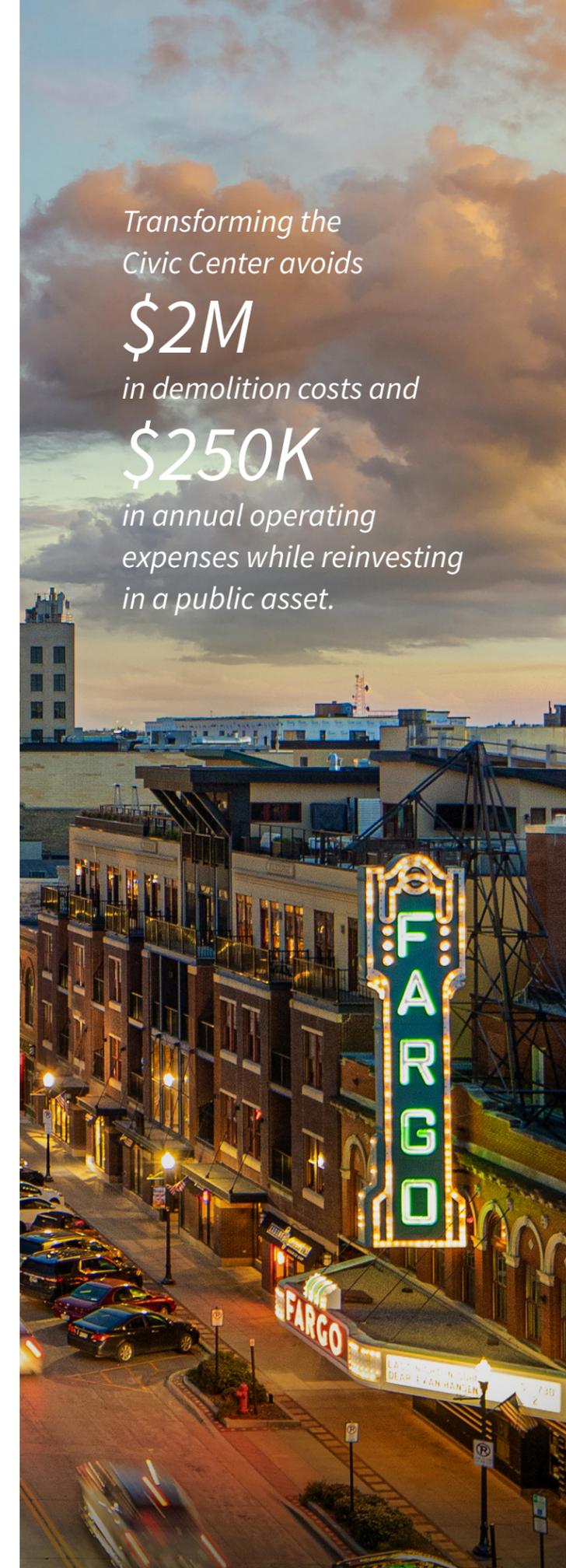
*Transforming the Civic Center avoids*

**\$2M**

*in demolition costs and*

**\$250K**

*in annual operating expenses while reinvesting in a public asset.*





# A CITYWIDE INVESTMENT WITH MEASURABLE RETURNS

*The proposed downtown convention center is projected to generate significant new economic activity, jobs, and tax revenue for the City of Fargo while strengthening downtown businesses and the broader regional economy. See full report in Appendix.*

## ANNUAL ECONOMIC ACTIVITY

- **\$15 million** in direct net new spending each year
- **\$27 million** in total annual economic impact (including multiplier effects)
- **\$600,000+** new revenue to city owned parking
- **103,000** attendance at stabilization

This new spending flows to local restaurants, hotels, retailers, transportation providers, and service businesses across the city.



## NEW VISITORS AND HOTEL DEMAND

- **26,078 net** new overnight visitors annually at stabilization
- **25.5%** of attendees stay overnight

This directly supports:

- Hotel occupancy
- Local restaurants and nightlife
- Retail and entertainment
- Transportation and service providers



## 30-YEAR CITYWIDE IMPACT

- **\$834 million** in total net new spending
- **\$204 million** in earnings for workers
- **125** full-time equivalent jobs supported

These are new dollars coming into Fargo, driven primarily by overnight visitors attending conventions and events.



## TAX REVENUE TO THE CITY OF FARGO

The project generates \$20.9 million in new local tax revenue over 30 years, averaging:

- **\$699,000** per year in new City tax revenue
- **\$10.3 million** in sales tax
- **\$4.6 million** in food & beverage tax
- **\$5.8 million** in hotel tax

This new revenue helps fund city services, infrastructure, and future community investments.





## DEVELOPER

<b>KILBOURNE GROUP</b> 210 Broadway, Suite 300 Fargo, ND 58102 kilbournegroup.com	<b>POINT OF CONTACT</b> Mike Allmendinger President 701.237.2279 mike@kilbournegroup.com
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## OPERATIONS MANAGEMENT

<b>VENUWORKS Inc.</b> 1615 Gold Aspen Dr #107 Ames, IA 50010 venuworks.com	<b>POINT OF CONTACT</b> Thomas "Toby" Peters Chief Development Officer 515.231.3812 tpeters@venuworks.com
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## CONVENTION CENTER ARCHITECT

<b>GENSLER</b> 706 2nd Avenue South Suite 1200 Minneapolis, MN 55402 gensler.com	<b>POINT OF CONTACT</b> Bill Baxley Principal 612.215.6174 bill_baxley@gensler.com
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## HOTEL MANAGEMENT

<b>RADISSON BLU</b> 201 5th Street North Fargo, ND 58102 866.994.6316 kelly@zandercapitalmanagement.com	<b>POINT OF CONTACT</b> Kelly Zander Owner 701.388.5824
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## ARCHITECTS AND ENGINEERS

<b>EAPC Architects Engineers</b> 112 N. ROBERTS Street Suite 300 Fargo, ND 58102 eapc.net	<b>POINT OF CONTACT</b> Alan Dostert President 701.461.7442 alan.dostert@eapc.net
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## CIVIL ENGINEERING

<b>KLJ ENGINEERING</b> 300 23rd Avenue East Suite 100 West Fargo, ND 58078 kljeng.com	<b>POINT OF CONTACT</b> Scott Middaugh Senior Project Manager 701.232.5353 scott.middaugh@klj.com
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## CONSTRUCTION MANAGER

<b>McGOUGH</b> 630 1st Ave North Suite 8 Fargo, ND 58102 701.639.6282	<b>POINT OF CONTACT</b> Rich Slagle Dtr. of Community Development 218.731.8282 rich.slagle@mcgough.com
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## LANDSCAPE ARCHITECT

<b>CONFLUENCE</b> 210 Broadway North Suite 401 Fargo, ND 58102 thinkconfluence.com	<b>POINT OF CONTACT</b> Wm. Christopher Cline Senior Principal Urban Design Lead 701.235.3990 ccline@thinkconfluence.com
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## COMMUNITY BUILDING

<b>FOLKWAYS</b> 210 Broadway North Suite 202 Fargo, ND 58102 folkways.org	<b>POINT OF CONTACT</b> Joe Burgum Principal, Co-Founder 701.371.8208 joe@folkways.org
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## WORKFLOW CONSULTANT

<b>SWAP INTEGRATION</b> 4672 West 99th Pl Westminster, CO 80031 swapintegration.com	<b>POINT OF CONTACT</b> Heather Bemis Founder hbemis@swapintegration.com
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**PREPARED FOR** Strategic Planning & Research  
225 4 Street North  
Fargo, ND 58102

CITY OF FARGO  
FARGO STRATEGIC  
PLANNING & RESEARCH

VENUWORKS  
OPERATIONS MANAGEMENT

McGOUGH  
CONSTRUCTION MANAGEMENT

FOLKWAYS  
PLACEMAKING

KILBOURNE GROUP  
DEVELOPER

RADISSON BLU  
HOTEL MANAGEMENT

DESIGN TEAM  
GENSLER  
CONVENTION CENTER ARCHITECT  
EAPC  
ARCHITECT AND ENGINEERS  
SWAP INTEGRATION  
WORKFLOW CONSULTANT  
KLJ  
CIVIL ENGINEERING  
CONFLUENCE  
LANDSAPE ARCHITECT

# TEAM ORGANIZATION

The Fargo Convention Center is an important project for the entire City - and we have assembled a team to match. The team combines local perspective and experience with national and international expertise in masterplanning, convention center design, and hotel and venue operations. We are grateful for the opportunity and excited for the project's potential!

## TEAM OVERVIEW



venuworks.com

**OPERATING PARTNER UPDATE** – For Phase 2, we have partnered with VenuWorks, a nationally recognized convention center operator, to bring operational excellence and proven management experience to the project. This update ensures that the team reflects the strongest possible mix of expertise to deliver a fully functional, financially responsible, and visitor-focused convention center on day one.

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VenuWorks, founded in 1996 as Compass Facility Management, has grown into a 3,250-employee company managing over 65 venues in 28+ U.S. communities, including arenas, theaters, convention centers, and more. In 2023, VenuWorks became the nation's only employee-owned venue management firm through an ESOP, emphasizing community engagement, innovation, and employee-ownership. Its flexible, locally grounded approach prioritizes the unique needs of each community, building partnerships based on transparency and accountability. VenuWorks' philosophy is that the company succeeds only when the venues succeed, leveraging local connections, sponsorships, and collaboration with convention bureaus and destination marketing organizations to deliver exceptional results.

## KEY TEAM MEMBERS



**STEVE PETERS**  
CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER

Steve Peters, Founder and CEO of VenuWorks, has led the company since 1996, growing it into a top venue management firm with 50+ theaters, arenas, and convention centers across 20+ communities. With decades of experience in venue operations, theatrical production, and sports management, he has earned national recognition, including IAVM's McElravy and Legacy Awards. Peters is known for delivering innovative, community-focused entertainment and event experiences.



**MIKE SILVA**  
CHIEF OPERATING OFFICER

Michael Silva is Chief Operating Officer of VenuWorks, with over 25 years of experience managing arenas, amphitheaters, performing arts centers, and convention centers across the Midwest. Previously, he directed multiple Cedar Rapids venues and led the city's Tourism Office and Convention & Visitors Bureau. As COO, he oversees 20+ operating locations with 50+ facilities, managing all aspects of venue operations, including booking, marketing, guest services, F&B, sales, finance, and ticketing, emphasizing operational excellence and community-focused management.



**TRICIA GONYO**  
CHIEF MARKETING OFFICER

Tricia oversees ticketing, sales, marketing, and the company's concert production division, VenuWorks Presents. She leads strategic marketing initiatives, public relations, digital campaigns, and partnerships to drive revenue and deliver memorable experiences. With prior experience at Ticketmaster and advanced degrees in Sports Administration and Management, Tricia provides executive guidance across 50+ managed venues, ensuring cohesive branding, innovative marketing, and strong stakeholder engagement.



**TIM SULLIVAN**  
CHIEF FINANCIAL OFFICER

Tim Sullivan is responsible for budgeting, financial reporting, and policy implementation across all managed venues. He ensures consistent, accurate financial performance through audits, standardized reporting, and strategic oversight. Tim holds a finance degree from Iowa State University, an MBA from Drake University, and is a Certified Internal Auditor, bringing expertise in financial management, compliance, and operational efficiency.



**THOMAS "TOBY" PETERS**  
CHIEF DEVELOPMENT OFFICER

Thomas "Toby" Peters is Chief Development Officer at VenuWorks, leading business development, brand management, and corporate communications. With a career at VenuWorks dating back to 2007, he has driven new account growth and strengthened the company's industry presence. Toby holds a Theatre Arts degree and an MBA from the University of Iowa, and his leadership emphasizes strategic collaboration, client success, and innovative solutions.



**TOM RICHTER**  
WSTN. REGIONAL VICE PRESIDENT

Tom Richter brings 30+ years of venue management and event programming experience. He provides strategic oversight to multiple venues, ensuring optimized operations, community engagement, and tailored event solutions. Formerly Executive Director of the Swiftel Center in Brookings, SD, Tom holds a bachelor's in agriculture education and a master's in counseling and human resource development from South Dakota State University, where he also coached the rodeo team.



**CHRIS CARLTON**  
VICE PRESIDENT FOOD & BEVERAGE SERVICES

Chris Carlton brings 40 years of culinary and hospitality experience and 16 years with the company. An alumnus of the Culinary Institute of America at Greystone, he leads menu innovation, operations, team development, and guest satisfaction across VenuWorks' venues. Recognized for cooking for U.S. Presidents and major events, Chris has earned multiple culinary awards and is active in education and community initiatives, including food rescue and culinary instruction.

# SUPPORTING DOWNTOWN. STRENGTHENING COMMUNITY.

Downtown business owners recognize the powerful role a convention center can play in driving year-round activity, increasing foot traffic, and supporting local investment. From restaurants and retailers to hotels and service providers, the proposed downtown convention center represents an opportunity to strengthen the local economy while enhancing the vibrancy of the district.

The following testimonials reflect the enthusiasm and optimism of businesses who see this project as a catalyst for growth, collaboration, and long-term community success.

*“I think a convention center would be great down here. Travelers love our downtown, they can walk to eating places, drinking places, shopping places. It would be just a great benefit to have it down here.”*

– Sue, Stabo Scandinavian Imports, Downtown Fargo

*“A convention center downtown would bring alot to the economy from our shops, restaurants, entertainment—but also on the convention center side—walkable is very big for every convention center I've been at. There's so many good restaurants, shops, entertainment spots to come in and enjoying downtown Fargo which would be great for a convention center.”*

– Justin Clark, Rosewild and Jasper Hotel, Downtown Fargo

*“There's so many things downtown that you can do and you can see and participate in. I really believe this is a perfect location for our convention center, we have ice skating, we have water sprinklers, we have concerts, we have community theaters. Theres also comedy clubs, and talk about food we have the best food downtown - plus we have ice cream.”*

– Michelle Pulling, Silver Lining Creamery, Downtown Fargo



Scan the QR codes to follow project updates, view renderings, and see ongoing community engagement surrounding the Downtown Convention Center.



*“If you build a place people want to visit, you build  
a place where people want to live. If you build a place  
where people want to live, you'll build a place  
where people want to work.”*

*– Maura Gast*



# A LIFESTYLE DISTRICT THAT IS UNIQUELY FARGO



## COMMUNITY CONNECTOR

*Providing a unique, authentic sense of place - including the supporting infrastructure to create it - not only adds to creating a sense of place but can inspire curiosity and affect the experience.*

- Parking
- Vehicle Access
- Wayfinding
- Pedestrian Connections
- Infrastructure Needs



## THE VALUE OF THE MIX

*Embrace engagement and diversity.*

- Location of Nearby Amenities and Assets
- Neighborhood Walkability
- Opportunities for Nearby Amenities and Assets
- Expanding the Lifestyle District



## PROGRAMMING FOR EXPERIENCE

*Year-round community engagement.*

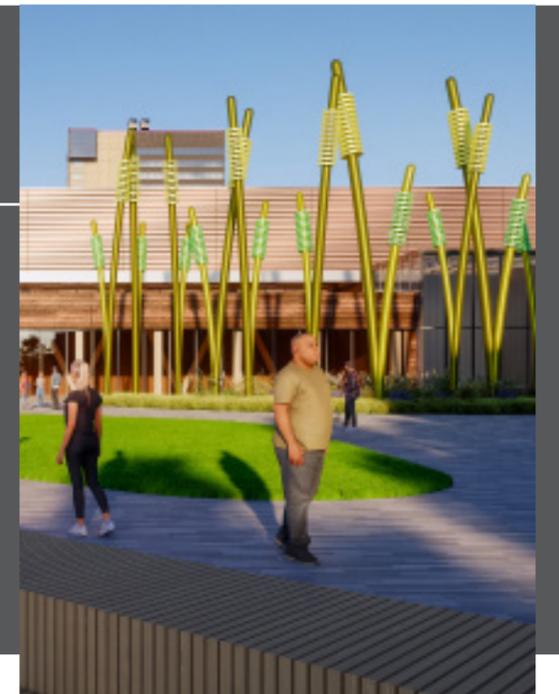
- Landscaping & Public Outdoor Space
- Location of Nearby Entertainment Amenities



## CREATING A NEIGHBORHOOD CATALYST

*A center of gravity for downtown Fargo.*

- Architectural Concept Drawings



## COMMUNITY CONNECTOR

### Parking Lot or Ramp: Maximizing the City's Investment

Parking for the proposed Convention Center will leverage the strong existing infrastructure within the downtown area, minimizing the need for new construction while ensuring convenient access for all visitors. Within a five-minute walk of the site, there are four city-owned parking garages providing a combined total of 1,472 spaces. These garages are well-distributed around the site, allowing attendees to approach the Convention Center from multiple directions and reducing congestion during high-attendance events.

In addition to structured parking, there are public and privately owned surface lots within the same five-minute walking radius that offer approximately 569 additional spaces, creating a balanced parking network that supports both daily operations and large-scale conventions. Street parking is also available throughout downtown, providing short-term options for staff, visitors, and vendors.

To enhance wayfinding and improve user experience, we recommend the development of a Convention Center Parking App. This app would provide real-time parking availability across nearby garages, enabling attendees to identify open spaces before arrival and select the most convenient route. It would also incorporate payment options, accessible route maps, and event-specific traffic updates to streamline the arrival process.

The city retains ownership and management of the parking garages, allowing it to generate ongoing financial revenue from parking fees while minimizing additional capital expenditures. By connecting parking infrastructure with smart technology and intuitive pedestrian paths, this approach provides a sustainable, user-centered mobility system that supports both the Convention Center and the broader downtown economy.

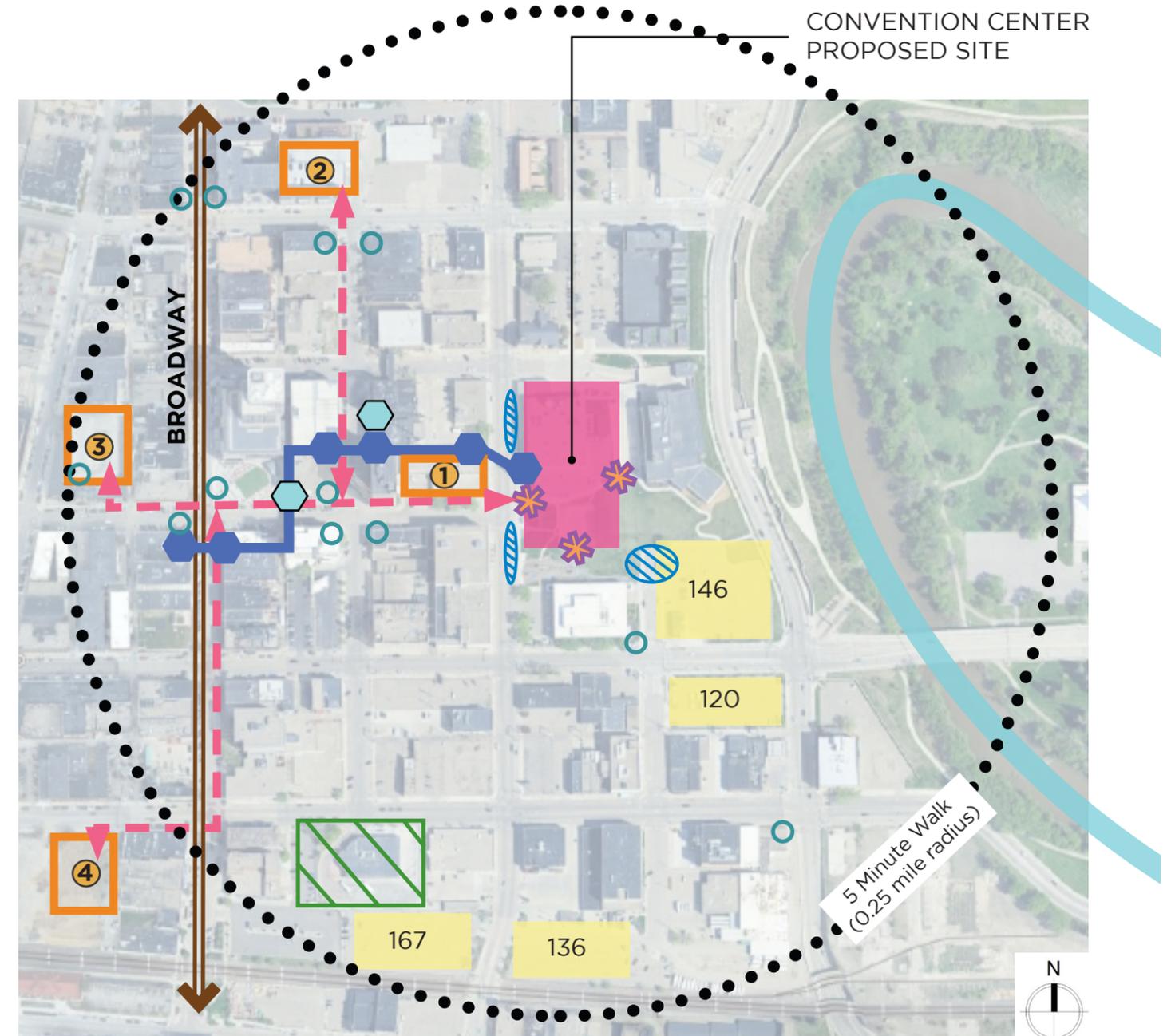
### Vehicle access including truck access and bus drop-off zones

The Convention Center will serve a dynamic mix of users—exhibitors unloading materials, attendees arriving for events, vendors making deliveries, and staff supporting its daily operations. To support these varied needs, the design provides distinct and separate access zones to provide the best experience for each, as well as easy access to the public transportation system.

- Receiving and Loading Zone: North side of building
- Bus Access & Drop-off Zone: West side building and Southeast of building
- Public Transportation: 5 minute walk to Ground Transportation Center and multiple bus stops

## PEDESTRIAN CONNECTIONS & PARKING

2,041 total parking spaces exist in nearby parking ramps and lots. Visitors would be able to check parking availability in the ramps by downloading an app on their phone.



## COMMUNITY CONNECTOR

### Vehicle Access - Receiving and Loading Zone (Truck Access)

The north side of the Convention Center will serve as the receiving area. Inside the building, the existing space that is now the stage will be transformed into a receiving area with storage and staging areas immediately adjacent to it.

The design includes 5 loading access points:

- 3 loading docks at grade, 2 of which will provide for 53'-0" semi trailers
- 1 elevated loading dock
- 1 recessed loading dock that will provide for a 53'-0" semi trailer

The loading area on the north side utilizes the existing dead-end street 3rd Avenue North for maneuvering space with a maneuvering extension added to the east end of the street. This concrete pad extension will not affect access to the existing underground parking or affect the retaining walls at the ramp.

Once the vehicles, including the 53'-0" semi trailers, are in position to unload, they are clear of the drive lanes, allowing unimpeded access to parking. Overall, loading and unloading for the Convention Center will impact parking access for very short periods of time. Garbage collection will also occur along the north side of the building, with several options available.

The design team did meet with City of Fargo Engineering team to review the plan the plan and address questions of maneuverability, parking access, garbage collection, and stormwater management.

### Vehicle Access - Bus Access and Drop-Off Zones

On the east side of Fourth Street, existing on-street parking will be converted to a dedicated bus loading zone using striping and signage, without impacting current street construction. Its proximity to the building's main east entrance creates an organized, welcoming arrival for large groups while supporting smooth traffic flow and safe pedestrian movement to the Convention Center.

To the southeast, the reimagined city-owned parking lot will expand its role as a multi-functional access point, providing bus loading and standard parking. Thoughtful landscaping, clear circulation, and accessible pedestrian routes will seamlessly connect this area to the Convention Center and provide a direct, accessible path to City Hall.

## Wayfinding

Clear and engaging wayfinding will play a vital role in shaping a positive visitor experience, guiding guests effortlessly between the Convention Center and key destinations throughout downtown. In collaboration with the Business Improvement District (BID), and the new Fargo parking manager, PCI, a coordinated signage system will link major pedestrian routes, parking facilities, and public spaces to the Convention Center.

This unified approach will include directional signage at key intersections, markers identifying skyway access points, and clear navigation within the skyway network itself, ensuring that both first-time visitors and returning guests can move confidently through the downtown environment. The consistent design language—reflecting the character and branding of the Convention Center—will make orientation intuitive and reinforce the sense of downtown as a connected, welcoming district

## Pedestrian Connections

The reimagined southeast parking lot will do more than provide vehicle access—it will serve as a key pedestrian link connecting the Convention Center to the Red River Greenway trailhead. This pathway invites visitors to explore Fargo's natural surroundings, offering a seamless transition from downtown activity to the calm riverfront. The trailhead becomes a natural extension of the visitor experience—a place to pause, unwind, and enjoy the outdoors just steps from event spaces.

To the west, 2nd Avenue provides an equally important connection to Broadway Square, Fargo's "Living Room." This vibrant public space offers visitors a lively contrast—an opportunity to experience local culture, attend events, or relax with live music. Together, these connections ensure the Convention Center not only anchors major events but also integrates seamlessly with the city's daily life and character.



City View Prefunction & Entrance



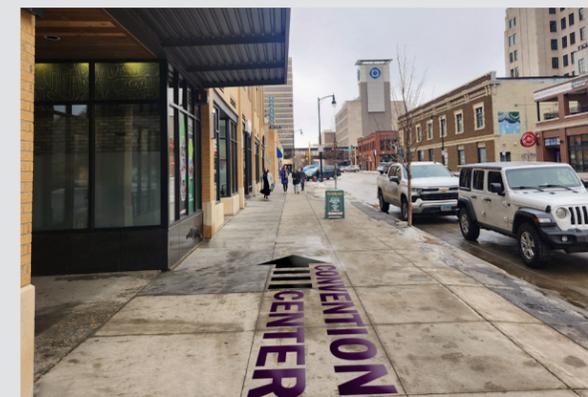
Inside Skywalk



Skywalk Entrance



Sign with Map



Sidewalk Sign

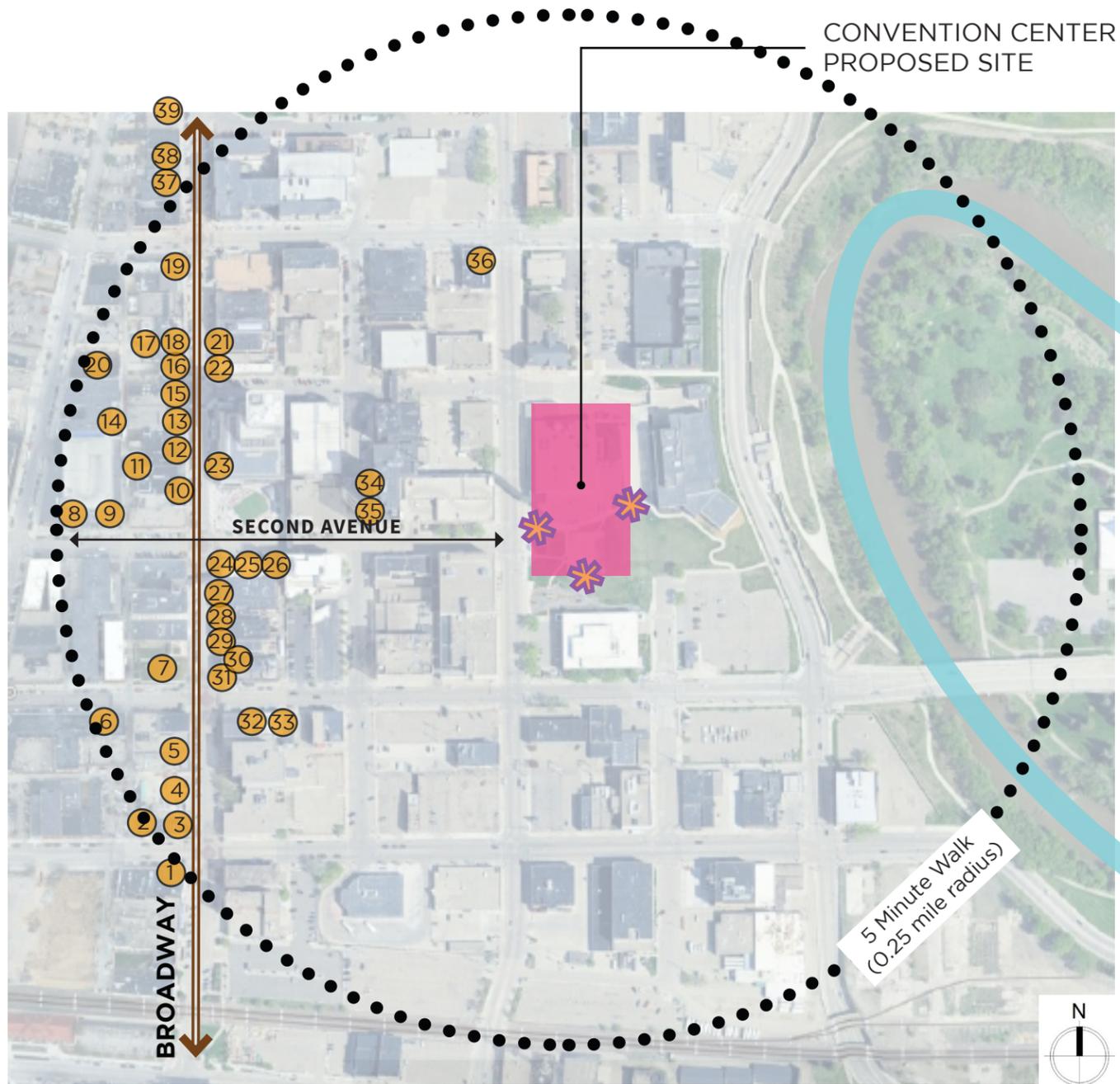


**LEGEND**

- 1 Truck Loading/ Unloading Dock
  - 2 Existing City Hall Parking
  - 3 Bus Drop-off
  - 4 Existing Skyway Connection
  - 5 Existing Plaza & 'Sodbuster' to remain
  - 6 Public Art / Sculpture
  - 7 Event Turf
  - 8 Terraced Seating, ADA Accessible Walk
  - 9 Civic Plaza
  - 10 'City of Fargo' themed Water Feature
  - 11 'Fargo' Letters Sign
  - 12 Flagpoles
  - 13 Re-designed Parking Lot, City Owned
  - 14 Pedestrian Walkway to Plaza
  - 15 Landscape Plantings
  - 16 Existing Utilities
  - 17 Placemaking Sign & Utility Screen
  - 18 Connection to Red River
  - 19 Optional Parking Spaces
  - 20 Additional Parking Lot, Privately Owned
-  Convention Center Entry  
 Circulation Path Between City Hall

## NEARBY AMENITIES- LET'S EAT!

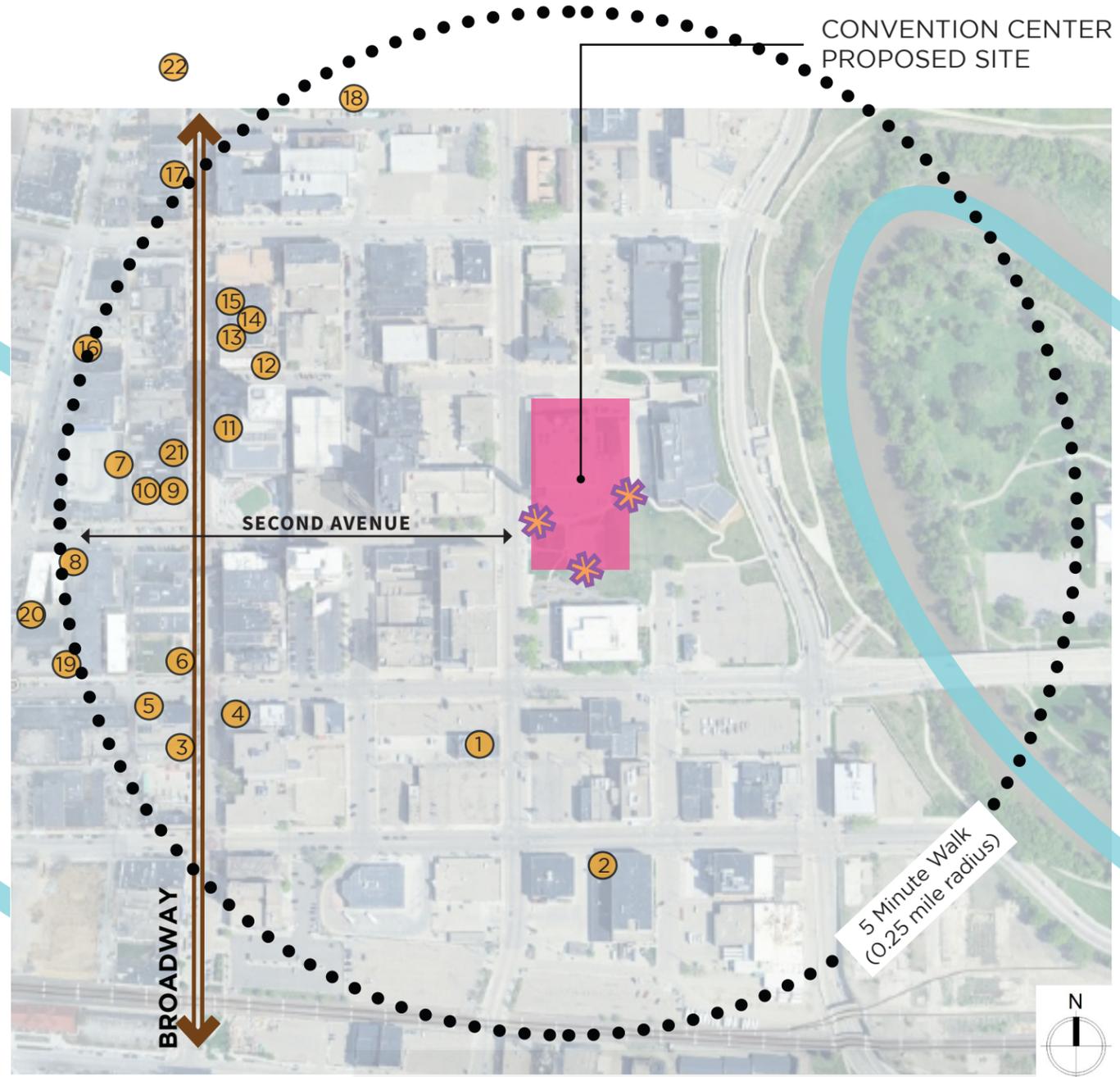
Nearly 40 restaurants, coffee shops, and bars are located within a 5 minute walk of the proposed Convention Center.



- LEGEND**
- Convention Center Entry
- |                        |                      |                        |                      |                       |                       |
|------------------------|----------------------|------------------------|----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|
| 1. Old Broadway        | 5. Tea & Crepe       | 12. Marge's Diner      | 19. Spicy Pie        | 26. Black Waffle Bar  | 33. JL Beers          |
| 2. No Bull Smokehouse  | 6. Wurst Bier Hall   | 13. Atomic Coffee      | 20. Mezzaluna        | 27. Teaberry          | 34. Blu Bar           |
| 3. Las Palmas          | 7. Maria's Mexican   | 14. Beer and Fish Co.  | 21. The Toasted Frog | 28. Little Brother    | 35. Corner Cup Coffee |
| 4. Ishtar Med. Cuisine | 8. Youngblood Coffee | 15. Dempsey's          | 22. Sammy's Pizza    | 29. Moonrise Cafe     | 36. Sidestreet Grill  |
|                        | 9. Little Bodega     | 16. Boss' Pizza        | 23. Rosewild         | 30. Rooters Bar       | 37. Insomnia Cookies  |
|                        | 10. Blackbird Pizza  | 17. Sandy's Donuts     | 24. Silver Lining    | 31. Blarney Stone Pub | 38. Drunken Noodle    |
|                        | 11. Marge's Bar      | 18. Erbert & Gerbert's | 25. Wasabi Sushi     | 32. Vinyl Taco        | 39. Empire Tavern     |

## NEARBY AMENITIES- LET'S SHOP!

Over 20 Retail Businesses are located within a 5 minute walk of the proposed Convention Center.



- LEGEND**
- Convention Center Entry
- |                          |                         |                      |                     |                          |                     |
|--------------------------|-------------------------|----------------------|---------------------|--------------------------|---------------------|
| 1. Little Bodega         | 4. Royal Jewelers       | 8. Magnolia Soap Co. | 12. No Coast Tattoo | 16. Music Emporium       | 19. Revolver        |
| 2. Fargo Stuff Gift Shop | 5. First Ave. Market    | 9. Petite Petals     | 13. Klaudia & Co.   | 17. Stabo                | 20. Gallery 4       |
| 3. Puffs Vape            | 6. Halberstadt's        | 10. Prairie Petals   | 14. Proper          | 18. Great Northern Bikes | 21. Dailey's Market |
|                          | 7. Robert's Alley Shops | 11. The Nines        | 15. O'Day Cache     |                          | 22. Outermost Layer |

## PROGRAMMING FOR EXPERIENCE

### Bridging Between the Urban and Natural Development

The downtown location for the Convention Center bridges the urban and natural environments together - offering options for entertainment and outdoor recreation for guests and residents alike.

The most notable natural feature of Fargo is the Red River - and the proposed Convention Center benefits from its proximity to it. Taking a relaxing walk along the river trail system - or maybe a relaxing float on the river itself - is all within convenient reach. Guests can also enjoy several of Fargo's nearby parks, like the historic Island Park or ice skate in one the newer parks at Broadway Square.

On the urban side, several entertainment and experience options await convention center guests - catch a movie or a performance by the Mighty Wurlitzer at the Fargo Theater, enjoy a play at the new home of the Fargo-Moorhead Community Theater, or admire local artists' work at the Plains Art Museum. All of these options are within a 10 minute walk of the Convention Center.

To add to a true Fargo experience are the many events available within Downtown Fargo, such as Christkindlmarkt, Night Bazaar, Fargo Street Fair, and the Red River Farmer's Market. With all of these amenities and events in place, the Convention Center could serve as another catalyst for even more development, investment, and engagement for guests and residents alike.

Downtown Fargo also offers several options for supplemental meeting and event space. Over **20% of the meeting and event venues** listed online by the Visit Fargo-Moorhead are within a **10 minute walk** of the proposed Fargo Convention Center - offering over **70,000 square feet of supplemental meeting and event space**. All of these venues are available for rent today and can supplement convention activities on day one!



## PROGRAMMING FOR EXPERIENCE

### Landscaping

Nestled between the Convention Center and City Hall, a proposed civic plaza will welcome the community—a space extending the building’s purpose beyond conventions. The plaza includes a spacious event lawn for festivals, markets, and performances, and landscaped green space that celebrates Fargo's location where the prairie meets the river valley. A striking FARGO sign and interactive water feature will celebrate the city’s identity and serve as a popular photo spot. From the building’s pre-function areas, guests will enjoy views of native vegetation and prairie-inspired landscaping, connecting to the region’s natural heritage and reinforcing Fargo’s bond with its landscape.

## THE VALUE OF THE MIX

### Location of Existing Nearby Amenities and Assets

When the Convention Center opens, it will connect to—and enhance—the vibrant downtown network. Visitors can easily walk to restaurants, cafés, boutiques, galleries, and entertainment venues that define Fargo’s character and invite exploration beyond the building.

Conventions and events will boost foot traffic, support local businesses, and reinforce a lively, resilient urban core. The Convention Center becomes more than a venue—it is a catalyst for sustained downtown prosperity and a stronger, more connected Fargo.

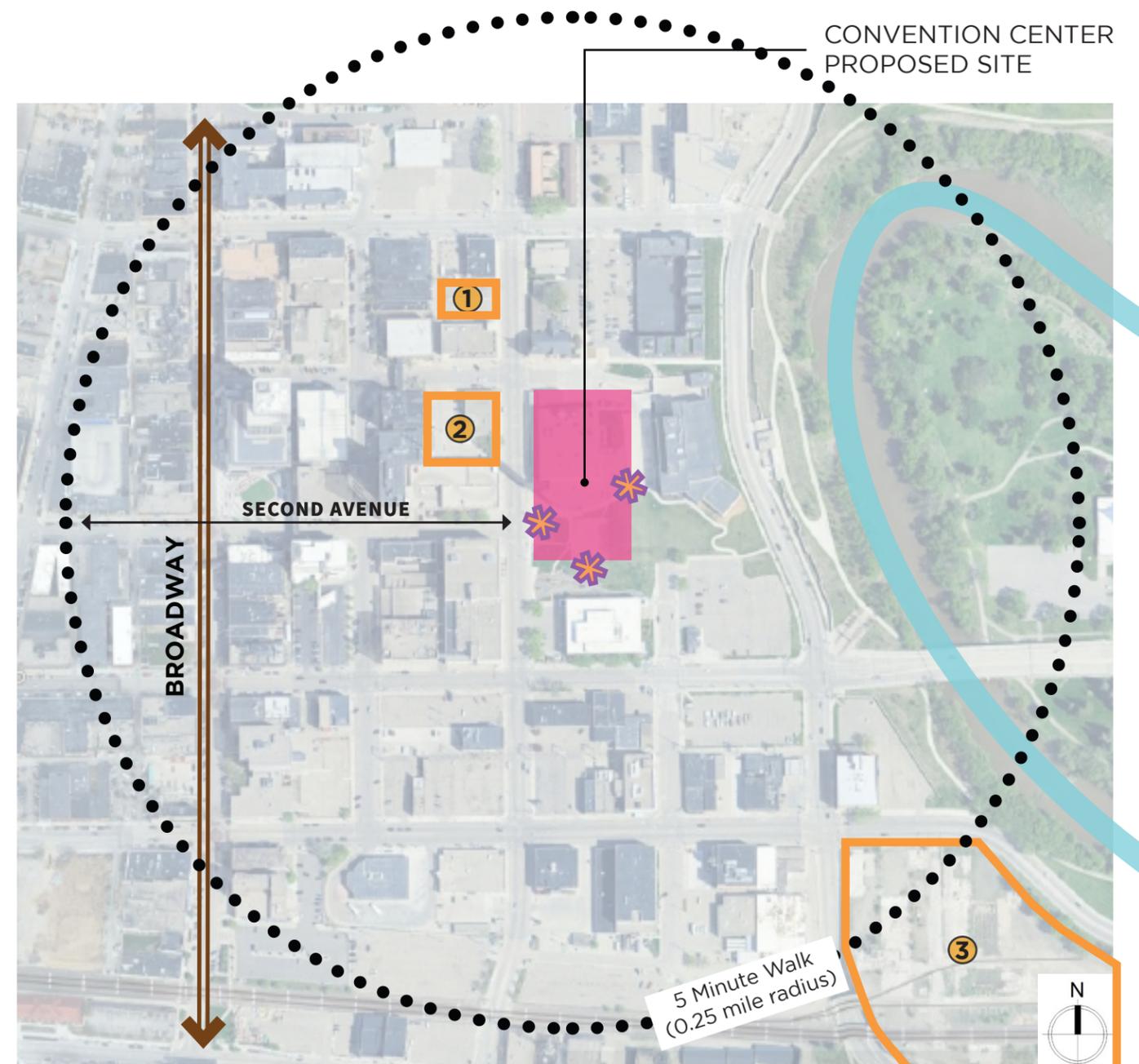
### Opportunities for Nearby Amenities and Assets

The area around the Convention Center offers strong potential for future development. Within a quarter-mile, three prime infill parcels are ideal for restaurants, retail, or mixed-use projects, expanding the downtown experience and creating a more walkable district for visitors and residents. As the Convention Center attracts activity and visibility, these sites can drive urban revitalization, foster public-private partnerships, and strengthen the district as a vibrant, connected hub of business, culture, and community life.

### Neighborhood Walkability

The Convention Center site has a **Walk Score of 90—a “Walker’s Paradise.”** Attendees can easily move between the Convention Center, hotels, restaurants, cafés, and shops without traffic or parking concerns. This walkable downtown setting encourages exploration, casual meals, evening events, and spontaneous gatherings, creating memorable experiences beyond the convention itself.

## DEVELOPMENT OPPORTUNITIES



### LEGEND

Convention Center Entry

- Public Health Building  
*(Future Infill/Land Sale)*
- Former Police Station  
*(Future Infill/Land Sale)*
- Mid-America Steel  
*(Future Infill/Land Sale)*



## BUILDING DESIGN OVERVIEW



Images courtesy of Clay County Historical Society and NDSU Archives

The location of Fargo was established with the construction of the first railroad bridge spanning the Red River in 1871-72. Since then, the railroad crossing has seen several iterations of bridge structures, changing with the needs of a growing city.

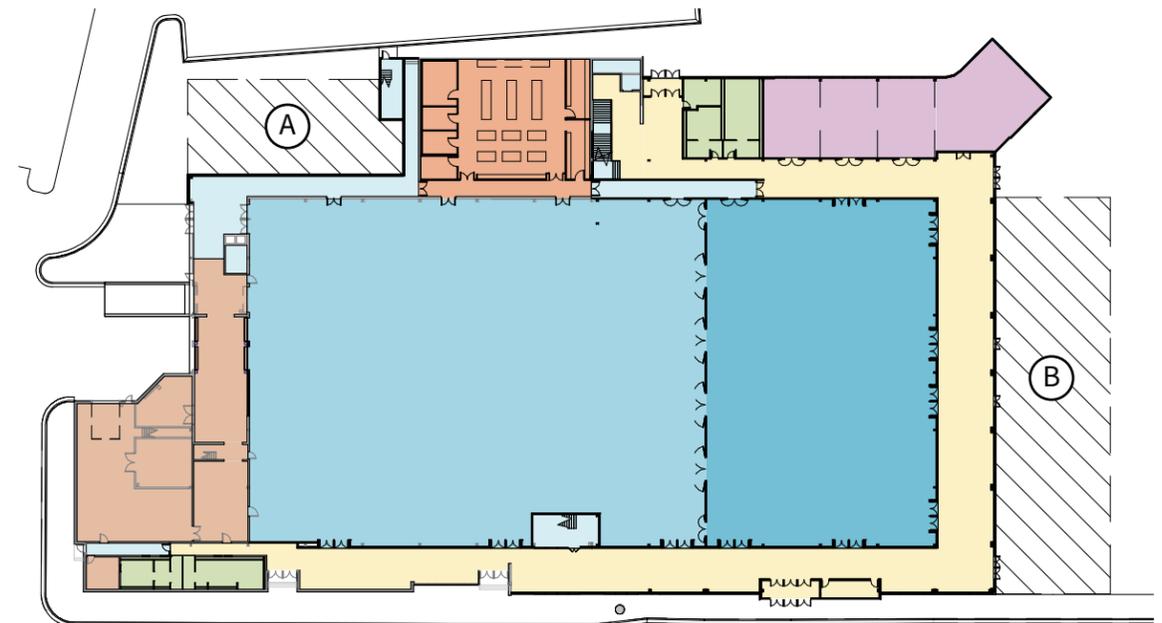
The design of the Convention Center connects to the past by borrowing structural patterns and materiality from those early railroad bridges and the x-bracing structure within the existing Civic Center - using wood and steel to create a welcoming space for both guests and residents. The Convention Center will serve as the bridge between the urban environment of Downtwon and the natural environments of the Red River - providing that link for all to enjoy two of the most recognizable and defining areas of Fargo.



## OVERALL BUILDING FLOOR AREA

	LOWER LEVEL	FIRST LEVEL	SECOND LEVEL
EXHIBIT & BALLROOM SPACE TOTAL	--	45,000 SF	--
PREFUNCTION SPACE TOTAL	2,960 SF	13,180 SF	1,600 SF
MEETING ROOM TOTAL	--	4,200 SF	3,800 SF
KITCHEN	--	4,400 SF	--
CIRCULATION	1,300 SF	3,750 SF	1,200 SF
BACK-OF-HOUSE	9,800 SF	6,225 SF	370 SF
BUILDING SYSTEMS	2,000 SF	--	360 SF
RESTROOMS & BUILDING SERVICES	1,325 SF	2,085 SF	--
<b>SUBTOTAL</b>	<b>17,385 SF</b>	<b>78,840 SF</b>	<b>7,330 SF</b>
<b>PROPOSED BUILDING AREA</b>		<b>86,170 SF</b>	
PROPOSED BUILDING AREA WITH LOWER LEVEL	103,555 SF		

## EXPANSION OPPORTUNITIES



POTENTIAL EXPANSION		LONG-TERM PLANNING EXPANSION	
(A)	ADDITION FOOTPRINT 3,700 SF	SOUTHEAST EXPANSION SITE FOOTPRINT	50,000 - 80,000 SF
(B)	ADDITION FOOTPRINT 8,650 SF	FORMER POLICE STATION SITE FOOTPRINT	24,500 SF

# FIRST LEVEL OVERALL FLOOR PLAN

## LEGEND

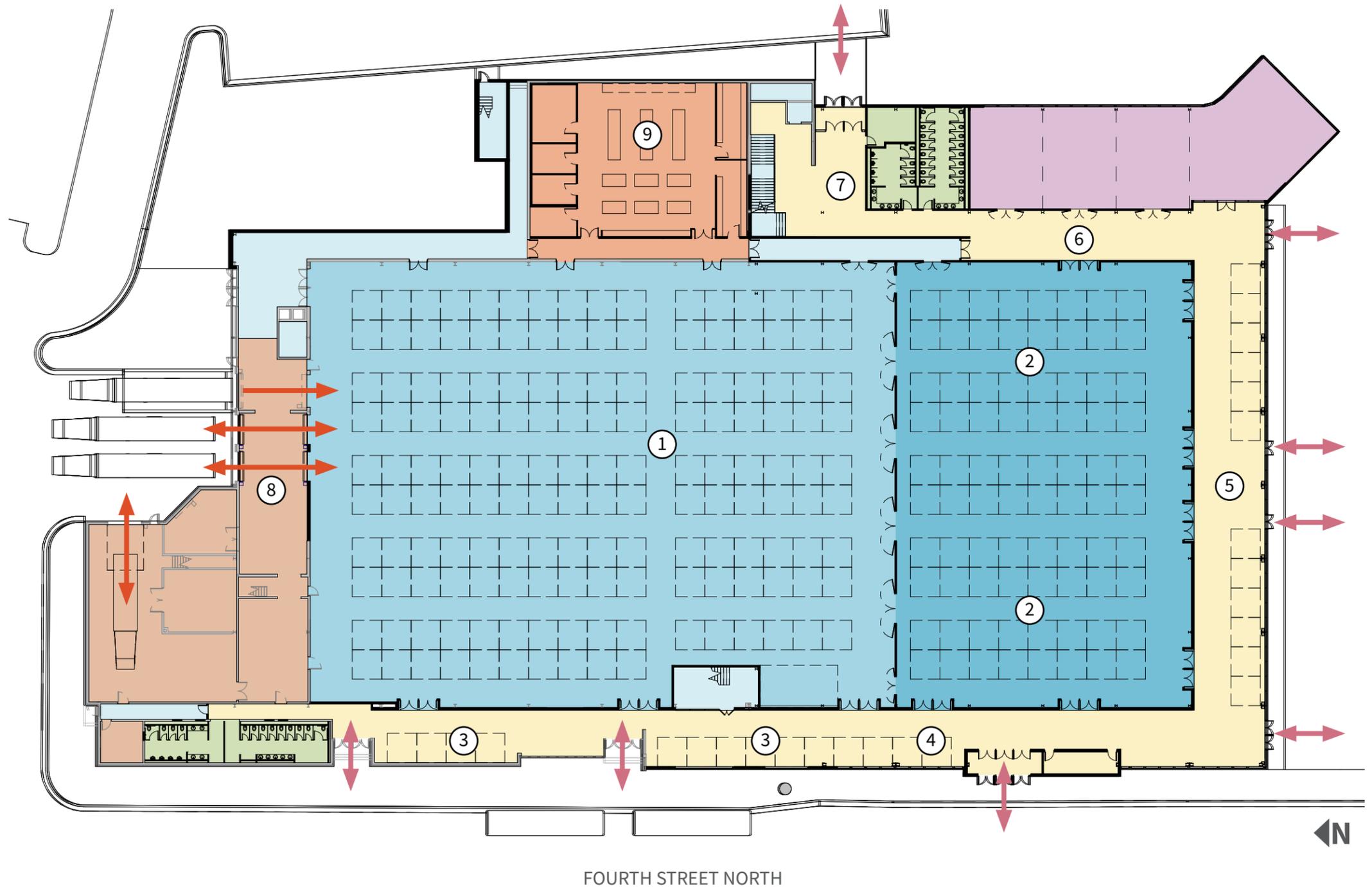
- EXHIBIT SPACE TOTAL 45,000 SF
- 1 EXHIBIT HALL 30,000 SF  
200'-0" x 150'-0"
- 2 BALLROOM 15,000 SF  
BALLROOM A (100'-0" x 75'-0")  
BALLROOM B (100'-0" x 75'-0")
- PREFUNCTION SPACE TOTAL 13,180 SF
- 3 CITY VIEW PREFUNCTION
- 4 CITY VIEW ENTRANCE
- 5 PLAZA VIEW PREFUNCTION
- 6 RIVERSIDE PREFUNCTION
- 7 RIVERSIDE ENTRANCE
- MEETING ROOM TOTAL 4,200 SF
- 7 MEETING ROOMS 2,625 SF  
75'-0" x 35'-0"  
MEETING ROOM A,B, & C (25'-0" x 35'-0")
- 8 LARGE MEETING ROOM 1,575 SF
- BACK-OF-HOUSE TOTAL 6,225 SF
- 10 LOADING & RECEIVING 1,770 SF
- 11 STAGING & STORAGE 4,225 SF
- 12 GREEN ROOM OR STAFF SUITE 200 SF
- 13 KITCHEN 4,400 SF
- 14 SERVICE CORRIDOR
- 15 STAIR TO SKYWAY
- 16 RESTROOMS & BUILDING SERVICES
- ↔ GUEST CIRCULATION
- ➔ LOADING & RECEIVING ACCESS



# FIRST LEVEL OVERALL FLOOR PLAN - CONVENTION LAYOUT

## LEGEND

- **EXHIBIT SPACE TOTAL**      **45,000 SF**  
 300'-0" x 150'-0"  
 234 BOOTHS (10'-0" x 10'-0") SHOWN
- 1 **EXHIBIT HALL**      **30,000 SF**  
 200'-0" x 150'-0"  
 154 BOOTHS (10'-0" x 10'-0") SHOWN  
 ALSO PROVIDES FOR 5 COMPETITION VOLLEYBALL COURTS
- 2 **BALLROOM**      **15,000 SF**  
 100'-0" x 150'-0"  
 80 BOOTHS (10'-0" x 10'-0") SHOWN
- **PREFUNCTION SPACE TOTAL**      **13,180 SF**
- 3 **CITY VIEW PREFUNCTION**
- 4 **CITY VIEW ENTRANCE**
- 5 **PLAZA VIEW PREFUNCTION**
- 6 **RIVERSIDE PREFUNCTION**
- 7 **RIVERSIDE ENTRANCE**  
 THE MAJOR PREFUNCTION SPACES CAN SERVE A SUPPORTING ROLE TO A CONVENTION OR SERVE AS THEIR OWN SEPARATE EVENT SPACE.  
  
 THEY ARE DEFINED SPACES FROM ONE ANOTHER AND COULD HOST MULTIPLE CLIENTS AND EVENTS SIMULTANEOUSLY.
- 8 **LOADING & RECEIVING**  
↔ DIRECT ACCESS FROM LOADING & RECEIVING TO THE EXHIBIT FLOOR IS PROVIDED - ALL ON THE CONVENTION FLOOR LEVEL. OVERHEAD DOORS WILL BE SIZED TO ALLOW SO DELIVERY TRUCKS CAN ENTER THE EXHIBIT HALL FLOOR. DRAYAGE WOULD BE STORED WITHIN ONE OF THE BAYS IN THE LOADING AREA.
- 9 **KITCHEN**  
 THE CENTRALLY LOCATED KITCHEN IS POSITIONED TO EASILY SERVE THE EXHIBIT HALL, BALLROOM, AND MEETING ROOMS.  
  
 THE KITCHEN PLAN INCLUDES SPACE FOR FOOD PRODUCTION AND MEAL SERVICE, MULTIPLE FOOD STORAGE COOLERS AND FREEZERS, DRY STORAGE, DISHWASHING, & ADMINISTRATIVE SPACE.
- ↔ **OPPORTUNITY TO STEP OUTSIDE**  
 THE DESIGN PROVIDES GUESTS OPPORTUNITIES TO STEP OUTSIDE AND RELAX.



# FIRST LEVEL OVERALL FLOOR PLAN - BANQUET LAYOUT

## LEGEND

- EXHIBIT SPACE TOTAL 45,000 SF  
300'-0" x 150'-0"
- ① EXHIBIT HALL 30,000 SF  
200'-0" x 150'-0"  
154 BOOTHS (10'-0" x 10'-0") SHOWN
- ② BALLROOM 15,000 SF  
100'-0" x 150'-0"  
LAYOUT SHOWN:  
- 6'-0" ROUND TABLES; 96 SHOWN  
- 8 SEATS PER TABLE; 768 SEATS SHOWN  
  
TABLE AND SEATING LAYOUTS WILL VARY.  
THE BALLROOM COULD HOST BANQUET OR GALA EVENTS  
WITH 1,000-1,500 ATTENDEES.

### ACOUSTIC SEPARATION & NOISE CONTROL

Ballroom, meeting rooms, and exhibit spaces are designed with enhanced acoustic separation to support concurrent events. Full-height operable partitions, acoustically rated wall assemblies, and isolated mechanical systems minimize sound transfer between divisible spaces. The layout supports simultaneous banquets, keynote sessions, breakouts, and exhibitions without operational interference.

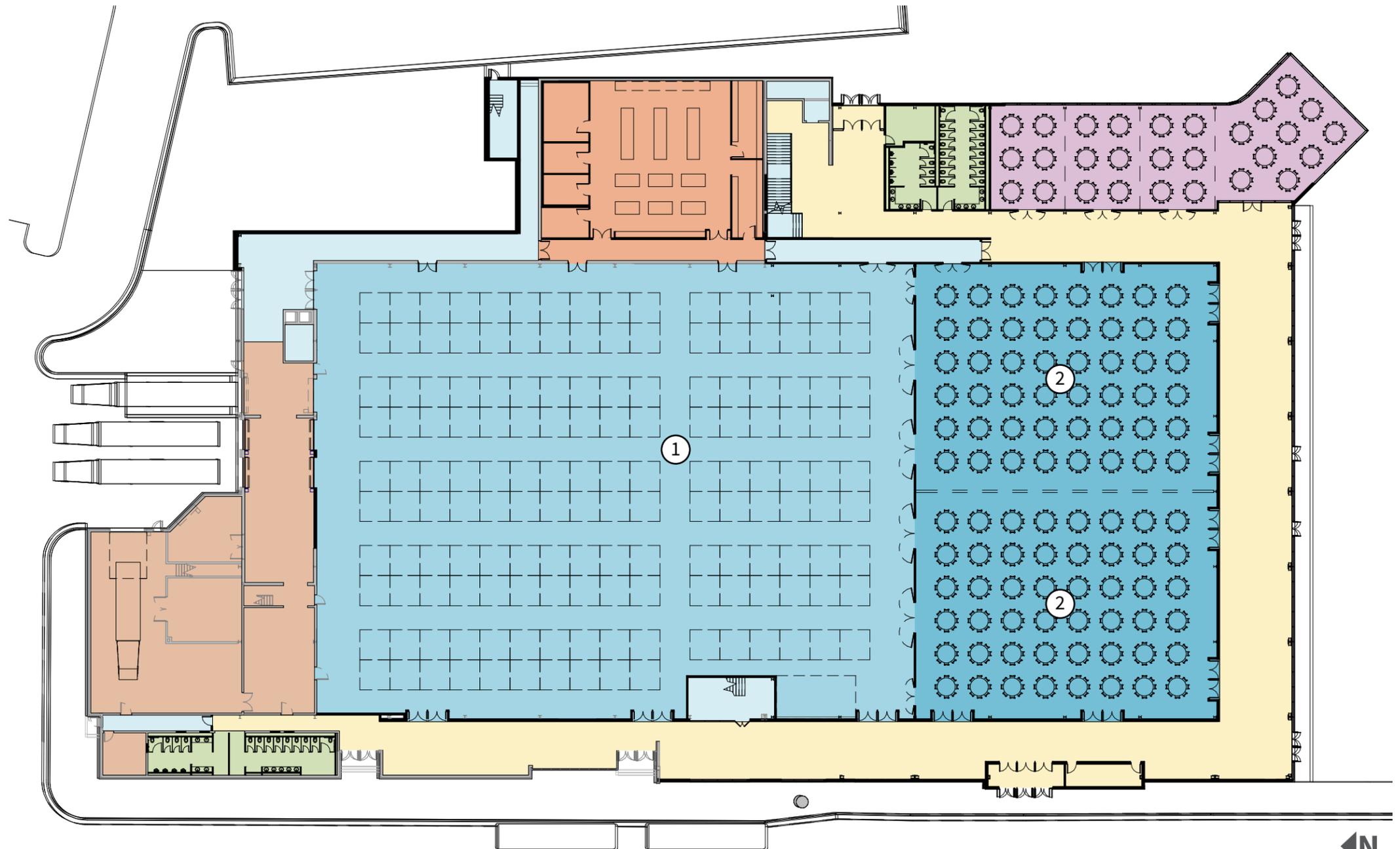
### A/V / TECHNOLOGY INFRASTRUCTURE

The facility is designed with fully integrated, high-capacity broadband and distributed AV infrastructure to support hybrid meetings, live streaming, e-sports, broadcast events, and multi-room conferencing. Dedicated telecom rooms, robust fiber backbone, redundant service pathways, and ceiling-integrated rigging grids ensure maximum flexibility for evolving event technology. All meeting spaces, ballroom configurations, and exhibit areas are designed to accommodate seamless digital connectivity and hybrid event production.

### ROOM DIVISIBILITY & FLEXIBILITY

The ballroom and meeting rooms are fully divisible with operable partition systems to allow multiple concurrent events, scalable breakout configurations, and flexible banquet layouts. This design maximizes booking versatility and revenue potential across varying event sizes.

The Exhibit Hall is designed with structural and mechanical infrastructure to allow future subdivision through operable partitions. Final implementation of full-height divisibility will align with available project funding and market demand, ensuring long-term flexibility without compromising initial operational performance.



FOURTH STREET NORTH



# SECOND LEVEL OVERALL FLOOR PLAN

## LEGEND

● PREFUNCTION SPACE TOTAL 1,600 SF

① SKYWAY LOBBY

② SECOND LEVEL PREFUNCTION

*THE FORMER COMMISSION ROOM IS TRANSFORMED INTO NEW MEETING AND PREFUNCTION SPACES.*

*PROPOSED WINDOWS AT THIS LEVEL WILL ALLOW NATURAL LIGHT IN THE PREFUNCTION SPACE.*

● MEETING ROOM TOTAL 3,800 SF

③ MEETING ROOMS 3,000 SF

60'-0" x 50'-0"  
MEETING ROOM E & F (30'-0" x 50'-0")  
*THE FORMER COMMISSION ROOM IS TRANSFORMED INTO NEW MEETING AND PREFUNCTION SPACES.*

*THE CLOSE PROXIMITY TO CITY HALL COULD MAKE IT A GREAT OPTION FOR STAFF TRAINING OR SEMINARS.*

④ BOARD ROOM 800 SF

*THIS EXISTING PREFUNCTION SPACE IS CAPTURED TO CREATE A FORMAL BOARD ROOM FOR THE FARGO CONVENTION CENTER.*

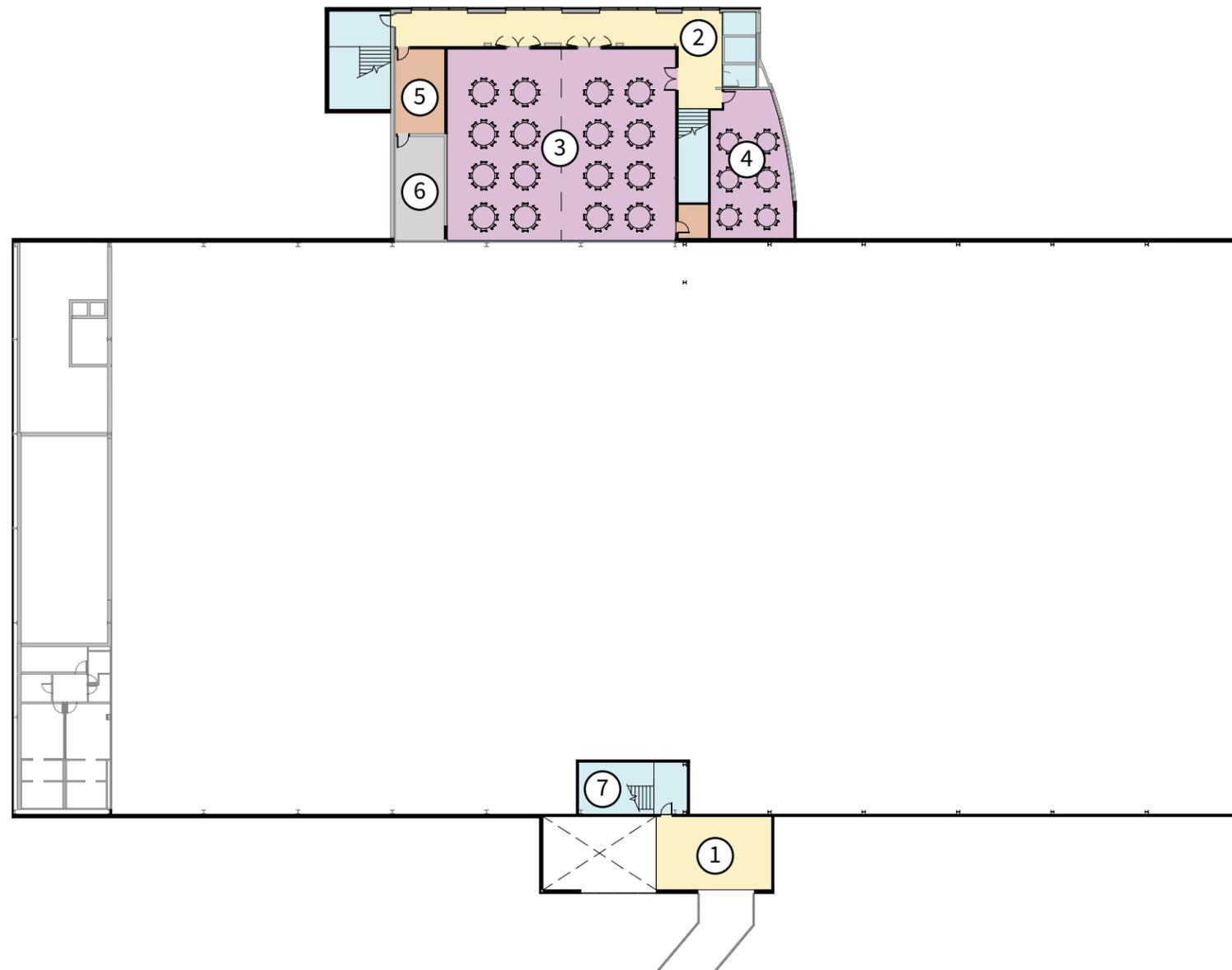
● BUILDING SERVICES

⑤ STORAGE - OR - RESTROOMS

*THIS EXISTING SPACE SERVES AS A STORAGE ROOM, BUT COULD BE RENOVATED TO BE INDIVIDUAL OCCUPANCY RESTROOMS TO PROVIDE A CONVENIENT OPTION FOR GUESTS.*

⑥ BUILDING SYSTEMS SPACE

⑦ STAIR TO SKYWAY



# LOWER LEVEL FLOOR PLAN

## LEGEND

● PREFUNCTION SPACE TOTAL 2,960 SF

① PREFUNCTION

③ RIVERSIDE ENTRANCE LOBBY

● BACK-OF-HOUSE TOTAL 9,790 SF

③ STAGING, STORAGE, & BUILDING SUPPORT

④ BONUS SPACE 5,345 SF

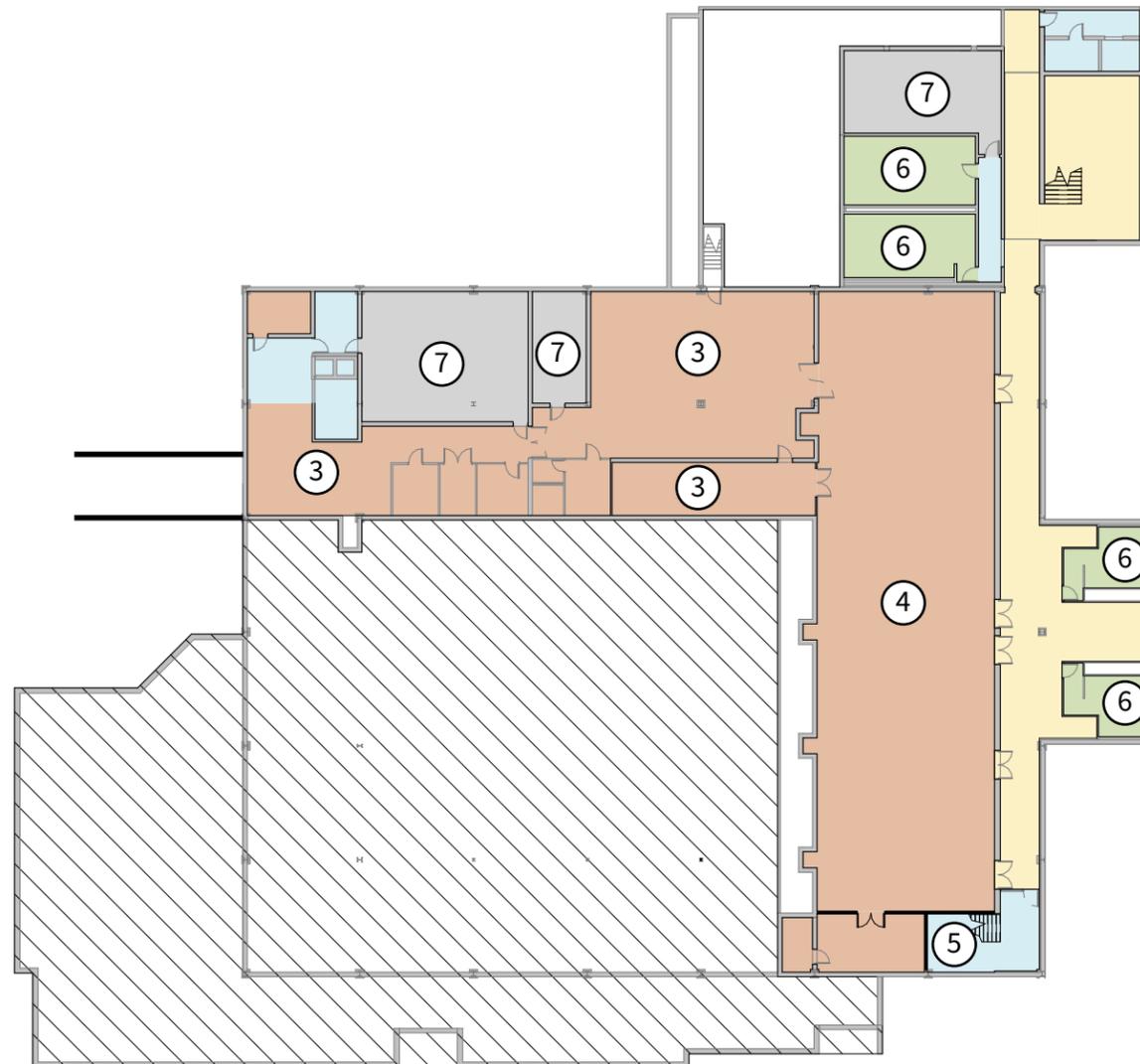
*THIS EXISTING SPACE SERVED AS MEETING ROOMS FOR THE CIVIC CENTER. IT IS SHOWN IN THIS PLAN AS ADDITIONAL STORAGE SPACE, BUT THERE ARE OTHER USES THAT COULD BE FURTHER EXPLORED, SUCH AS SUPPLEMENTAL MEETING OR TRAINING ROOMS.*

● CIRCULATION

⑤ STAIR TO SKYWAY

⑥ RESTROOMS & BUILDING SERVICES

⑦ BUILDING SYSTEMS SPACE



# CONNECTED HOTELS

The downtown convention center site is uniquely supported by two existing, full-service, upper-upscale hotels — the Radisson Blu (150 rooms) and Jasper Hotel (125 rooms) — totaling 275 rooms connected directly to the convention center by skyway. This existing, walkable hotel package delivers a level of integration, quality, and immediate functionality that no other site in Fargo can match.

We respectfully request that the RFP hotel scoring recognize these two existing hotels as part of the convention center hotel inventory, as they provide the required rooms, amenities, and meeting space necessary for convention operations on day one.

## RADISSON BLU – 150 ROOMS

The Radisson Blu is Fargo’s premier full-service convention hotel and already operates as the primary headquarters hotel for downtown events.

### Key Features

- Direct skyway connection to the future convention center
- Full-service restaurant and lounge
- Private dining rooms and catering capability
- Multiple meeting rooms and ballroom space
- Room service
- Executive suite rooms
- Fitness center and sauna
- Attached structured parking
- Rooftop patio / outdoor event space

### Convention Benefits

- Immediate headquarters hotel functionality
- Integrated catering and banquet support
- Walkable, climate-controlled access for attendees
- Proven ability to handle group blocks and event operations



## JASPER HOTEL – 125 ROOMS

The Jasper provides a modern, upper-upscale boutique experience that complements the Radisson Blu and enhances attendee choice.

### Key Features

- Direct skyway connection to the convention center and Radisson Blu
- Full-service restaurant and private dining rooms
- Meeting rooms and event space
- Room service
- Executive suites
- Fitness center
- Attached parking access
- Outdoor event and gathering spaces

### Convention Benefits

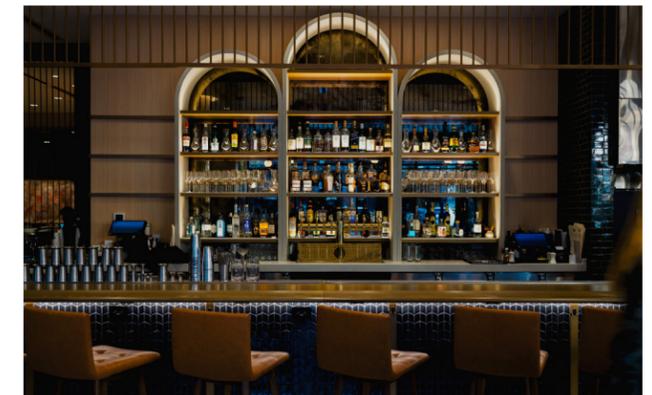
- Adds lifestyle hotel inventory attractive to smaller groups and VIP attendees
- Provides additional meeting space independent of the convention center
- Enhances overall room block flexibility and pricing tiers

## COMBINED HOTEL ADVANTAGES

Together, the Radisson Blu and Jasper provide:

- 275 upper-upscale rooms
- Two full-service restaurants and catering kitchens
- 10,000+ square feet of multiple meeting rooms and private dining spaces
- Executive suites for VIP and speaker use
- Skyway-connected, climate-controlled access
- Attached structured parking

This integrated hotel package delivers the walkability, amenities, and quality required by the RFP on opening day, without requiring new hotel fundraising risk.



## FUTURE HOTEL EXPANSION COMMITMENT

The Radisson Blu ownership has committed to expanding the downtown hotel inventory by an additional 70 rooms, with two feasible paths.

**Path 1:** Vertical expansion within the Radisson Blu building  
(subject to acquisition of upper floors)

–OR–

**Path 2:** Development of a new limited-service Marriott or Hilton hotel building on the former Police Station site (purchase price: \$500,000), attached to the skyway system.

This additional hotel will:

- Strengthen room block capacity
- Provide a second price tier for group bookings
- Maintain direct skyway connectivity

We will complete a market demand study and work with the Convention Center Committee to determine the optimal timing and brand positioning. If the study concludes that delaying new hotel construction better supports the Fargo lodging market and convention performance, we will align with that recommendation.

## MEETING SPACE AND FUNCTIONAL INTEGRATION

Both hotels provide function space independent of the convention center, allowing:

- Breakout meetings
- Board meetings and VIP sessions
- Private receptions and sponsor events

This distributed meeting capacity enhances operational flexibility and reduces pressure on convention center breakout rooms.



## QUALITY AND BRAND POSITIONING

The combined hotel offering meets the RFP’s “upscale to upper-upscale” chain scale requirement through:

- A full-service national convention hotel (Radisson Blu)
- A modern lifestyle upper-upscale hotel (Jasper)
- Potential Marriott/Hilton limited-service product for price-tier diversity

This multi-brand mix supports a wide range of group budgets and booking strategies.

## PEDESTRIAN CONNECTIVITY AND VISITOR EXPERIENCE

The downtown hotel package provides:

- Direct skyway access to the convention center
- Climate-controlled movement in winter
- Walkable access to 50+ restaurants, retail, and Broadway Square
- Safe, BID-supported pedestrian environment

This creates a seamless “headquarters hotel” experience that improves attendee satisfaction and booking competitiveness.

## OPERATIONAL ADVANTAGES

The proximity and connectivity of the hotels enable:

- Efficient room block management
- Simplified event logistics
- Shared catering and F&B coordination
- Reduced transportation costs for event organizers

This directly supports the RFP’s visitor experience and operating plan scoring categories.



## CONCLUSION

The downtown site already delivers a fully integrated, skyway-connected, upper-upscale hotel package with:

- **275 rooms on opening day, plus 70 new Hotel Rooms with skyway access to the Convention Center**
- **Full-service amenities and meeting space**
- **Structured parking and climate-controlled access**
- **Immediate headquarters hotel functionality**
- **70 Additional Hotel Rooms Committed**

With a committed pathway to an additional 70 rooms, this hotel plan meets and exceeds the RFP criteria while minimizing development risk and supporting the long-term health of Fargo’s lodging market.

We respectfully request that the Convention Center Committee evaluate the hotel scoring based on this existing and committed hotel inventory, which provides a stronger and more operationally ready solution than speculative new construction.

# FINANCIAL FRAMEWORK & PROJECT INVESTMENT

## CONSTRUCTION COST SUMMARY

This table summarizes the estimated hard construction costs for the Fargo Convention Center, including building systems, structural components, interiors, and associated site work. The estimate reflects current market conditions and regional pricing benchmarks, informed by comparable civic and convention facilities.

The construction budget has been developed in alignment with the proposed scope and delivery schedule, ensuring consistency between design intent and financial planning. Allowances for escalation, insurance, contingencies, and supply chain considerations are incorporated to proactively manage risk and maintain budget discipline.

Ongoing cost validation at each design milestone will ensure continued alignment between scope, schedule, and budget, providing the City with confidence in both the estimate and the delivery strategy.

Description	Quantity	Unit	Unit Cost	Totals
<b>Construction Costs</b>				
1 Building Earthwork	93,494	GSF	4.75	\$444,000
2 Substructure	39,152	SF	18.90	\$740,000
3 Structure	93,494	GSF	35.35	\$3,305,000
4 Exterior Enclosure	20,959	SF	159.74	\$3,348,000
5 Roofing	39,152	SF	42.91	\$1,680,000
6 Interiors	93,494	GSF	58.74	\$5,492,000
7 Building Equipment	93,494	GSF	9.63	\$900,000
8 Conveying Systems	93,494	GSF	2.60	\$243,000
9 Fire Protection	93,494	GSF	3.51	\$328,000
10 Mechanical	93,494	GSF	74.10	\$6,928,000
11 Electrical	93,494	GSF	42.00	\$3,927,000
12 Low Voltage Electrical Systems	93,494	GSF	10.80	\$1,010,000
13 General Conditions	93,494	GSF	19.71	\$1,843,000
14 Site Services	93,494	GSF	6.06	\$567,000
15 Weather Conditions	93,494	GSF	2.28	\$213,000
16 Hoisting	18	MO	18,944.44	\$341,000
<b>Subtotal of Construction Costs</b>	<b>93,494</b>	<b>GSF</b>	<b>334.88</b>	<b>\$31,309,000</b>
<b>Miscellaneous Costs</b>				
17 Escalation & Supply Chain Management	5.000	%		\$1,566,000
18 Permit Fees	0.500	%		\$157,000
19 Preconstruction Services	0.100	%		\$32,000
21 Subcontractor Default Insurance	1.200	%		\$376,000
22 Builders Risk Insurance Premium	1.000	%		\$314,000
23 Performance Bond	0.650	%		\$204,000
24 Estimating & Design Contingency	3.700	%		\$1,370,093
25 Construction Contingency	3.000	%		\$940,000
26 General Liability Insurance	0.950	%		\$298,000
27 Construction Overhead & Profit	3.000	%		\$940,000
<b>Total Construction Costs</b>	<b>93,494</b>	<b>GSF</b>	<b>401.16</b>	<b>\$37,506,093</b>

# FROM CONSTRUCTION TO COMMISSIONING

## The Full Investment Picture.

### TOTAL PROJECT INVESTMENT

The total project budget represents the complete investment required to deliver the Fargo Convention Center—from construction and demolition to professional services, site work, contingencies, furnishings and equipment, and all owner-related expenses necessary to bring the facility fully online.

This comprehensive financial framework provides the City with a clear, transparent understanding of both the core construction investment and the additional components required for successful delivery, commissioning, and long-term operation. Every major cost category is identified and accounted for, ensuring there are no hidden gaps between groundbreaking and opening day.

By presenting the full scope of investment, the City can evaluate the project with confidence—knowing the budget reflects not only what it costs to build the facility, but what it takes to operate it responsibly and sustainably. This disciplined approach supports informed decision-making, protects public resources, and aligns with Fargo’s long-term financial goals.

More than a construction estimate, this is a fully developed delivery framework designed to minimize risk, maintain fiscal accountability, and position the Convention Center for long-term operational success.

*A budget that reflects the full cost to deliver, commission, and responsibly operate the Fargo Convention Center—providing clarity, accountability, and long-term sustainability.*

	CONVENTION CENTER CONSTRUCTION	SITE AND CIVIL CONSTRUCTION
<b>1. ADMINISTRATIVE &amp; LEGAL EXPENSES</b>	\$ 35,000.00	\$ -
Plan Review Fee, Bid Advertisement	\$ 35,000.00	\$ -
<b>2. SITE/LAND PURCHASE</b>	Not Applicable	Not Applicable
<b>3. RELOCATION EXPENSES &amp; PAYMENTS</b>	Not Applicable	Not Applicable
<b>4. PROJECT SERVICES</b>	\$ 3,430,567.00	\$ 84,340.00
Design Services, Site Survey, Soil Testing, Third Party Commissioning Agent		
<b>5. PROJECT INSPECTION</b>	\$ 150,000.00	\$ 20,000.00
<b>6. SITEWORK</b>	\$ -	\$ 898,000.00
Sidewalks, Site Utilities, Loading Dock Southeast Parking Modifications & Plaza Space are not included.		
<b>7. DEMOLITION AND REMOVAL</b>	\$ 1,875,655.00	\$ -
Asbestos Abatement Allowance & Partial Demolition Existing Building		
<b>8. BUILDING CONSTRUCTION</b>	\$ 37,506,093.00	\$ -
<b>9. FURNITURE, FIXTURES, &amp; EQUIPMENT (FF&amp;E) BUDGET</b>	\$ 2,000,000.00	\$ -
<b>10. SUBTOTAL</b>	\$ 44,997,315.00	\$ 1,002,340.00
<b>11. TOTAL PROJECT BUDGET</b>		\$ 45,999,655.00

# FULLY FUNDED. READY TO START.

The downtown convention center financing strategy is designed to be transparent, flexible, and aligned with the City of Fargo’s voter-approved funding framework.

Our recommended project delivers a regionally iconic, fully integrated convention center with adaptive reuse of the Civic Center and enhanced public spaces at a total project cost of \$46 million, including \$5 million supported by the existing Riverfront TIF.

**This recommended approach allows the City to:**

- Deliver an enhanced architectural and public realm experience
- Upgrade Civic Center systems and infrastructure
- Provide modern prefunction and meeting space aligned with long-term convention demand

This approach reflects our team’s track record of delivering four public-private partnerships with the City of Fargo on budget and our commitment to disciplined financial planning.

## BUDGET FLEXIBILITY AND PROGRAM ASSURANCE

If the City Commission elects not to utilize the \$5 million in Riverfront TIF, our team can still deliver a convention center that meets the required program and operational needs within the \$41 million funded by the voter-approved lodging tax.

**This base program would be achieved through:**

- Constructing prefunction space using traditional convention center architectural standards rather than the enhanced design elements included in the recommended plan
- Upgrading and reusing the existing Civic Center meeting rooms instead of constructing new meeting rooms directly adjacent to the exhibit hall



**This approach maintains:**

- Required exhibit, ballroom, and meeting room functionality
- Operational efficiency for conventions and events
- Compliance with the program goals established in Phase One

## STRATEGIC VALUE

**This tiered structure provides the City with:**

- A fully funded base convention center at \$41 million
- A recommended enhanced project at \$46 million utilizing an existing TIF district
- Clear, transparent scope options that align with budget priorities

It ensures that the convention center can proceed under multiple funding scenarios while maintaining fiscal responsibility and program performance.

## PRIMARY FUNDING SOURCES



### VOTER APPROVED 3% HOTEL TAX - \$41 MILLION

Our financing plan assumes the upper range of \$41 million, allowing the City to:

- Fully fund the base convention center program
- Deliver enhanced architectural and public-realm elements
- Maintain adequate reserves for operations and capital planning

### TIF-ELIGIBLE USES

The TIF funding will be applied to eligible public infrastructure and reinvestment components. This targeted use ensures TIF dollars are applied to public infrastructure and adaptive reuse.

- ✓ Partial demolition costs associated with Civic Center reuse
- ✓ Upgrades to existing Civic Center mechanical systems
- ✓ Site infrastructure improvements



### EXISTING RIVERFRONT TIF - \$5 MILLION TOTAL SUPPORT

The project is located within the existing Riverfront TIF district, established four years ago, and is eligible for participation without creating a new district. We propose allocating \$5 million in TIF-eligible costs.

- Current TIF District generates \$1 million per year and soon \$1.5 million per year
- Project will increase the value of the TIF district significantly for future City priorities



## OPTIONAL AND ALTERNATIVE FUNDING TOOLS

### **A** ADDITIONAL RIVERFRONT TIF FOR PUBLIC PLAZA & PARKING

An additional \$2,000,000 in Riverfront TIF could be utilized — at the City’s discretion — to fund:

- City Hall Plaza improvements
- Public parking lot buildout

These improvements benefit multiple public assets, including:

- City Hall
- The Convention Center
- The Main Library
- The broader civic quad

This is presented as an optional enhancement, not a requirement for project feasibility.

### **B** NEW MARKET TAX CREDITS (NMTC)

The downtown site qualifies for New Market Tax Credit (NMTC) allocation, which are awarded in late fall 2026.

#### Potential Benefit

- \$2–\$3 million in additional project funding

#### Considerations

- Competitive allocation process
- Transaction complexity
- Timing coordination with bond issuance

Because of these factors, NMTC is presented as an opportunistic funding source, not a dependency for project delivery.

If awarded, NMTC proceeds would be applied to:

- Public-serving spaces
- Technology infrastructure
- Community-access areas

This would further reduce the City’s capital burden.

## FINANCIAL STRENGTHS OF THE DOWNTOWN FINANCING PLAN

This structure ensures the convention center is fully funded, fiscally responsible, and no private fundraising risks.

- ✓ Uses voter-approved dedicated revenue
- ✓ Leverages an existing TIF district (no new TIF required)
- ✓ Funds infrastructure and adaptive reuse with TIF-eligible costs
- ✓ Provides optional enhancements without increasing risk
- ✓ Maintains flexibility for NMTC upside

## SOURCES & USES SUMMARY TABLE

SOURCE	AMOUNT	STATUS
3% Hotel Tax Bonds	<b>\$41,000,000</b>	Voter Approved
Riverfront TIF (annual \$400K)	<b>\$5,000,000</b>	Existing District
<b>Subtotal – Base Funding</b>	<b>\$46,000,000</b>	Fully Funded

## OPTIONAL / ALTERNATE SOURCES

SOURCE	AMOUNT	STATUS
Additional Riverfront TIF (plaza/parking)	<b>\$2,000,000 (est.)</b>	City Option
New Market Tax Credits	<b>\$2,000,000 - \$3,000,000</b>	Competitive Allocation

## USES OF TIF FUNDING (Eligible Public Costs)

USE CATEGORY	PURPOSE
Partial Civic Center Demolition	Adaptive Reuse Preparation
Mechanical System Upgrades	Public Building Reinvestment
Site Infrastructure	Utilities, Access, Public Realm



## CONCLUSION

The downtown convention center financing plan:

- No contingencies; design and construction can begin immediately
- Fully funds and exceeds base program requirements
- Uses existing, approved public funding tools
- Minimizes risk while maximizing flexibility
- Leverages adaptive reuse and existing infrastructure
- Provides optional upside without reliance
- Keeps hotel equity separate, ensuring 100% City control and long-term flexibility

This approach represents a disciplined, transparent, and fiscally responsible financing strategy aligned with the City of Fargo’s long-term financial goals.

# FINANCIAL AND OPERATIONAL FRAMEWORK

Detailed financial tables, usage fee schedules, operating expense definitions, and policy procedures are provided in the Appendix.

The City of Fargo will finance the new Convention Center. The projected operating subsidy is estimated at \$470,400 in Year One, declining to \$149,149 by Year Five, outperforming the HVS feasibility projections. We are keeping this forecasted subsidy in the budget for cash flow planning and to ensure no future need for City's General Fund subsidy.

## MANAGEMENT PROPOSAL

**Proposed Operator:** VenuWorks

**Contract Term:** Five (5) years with two (2) five-year renewal options, subject to mutual approval.

## COMPENSATION STRUCTURE

- Pre-opening services: \$6,000 per month
- Base management fee: \$10,000 per month (CPI-adjusted annually)
- 5% commission on gross food and beverage revenue
- 8% commission on sponsorship and advertising revenue generated

All revenues and operating expenses will be administered through the City's operating account

## SCOPE OF SERVICES

- VenuWorks will provide comprehensive management services including:
- Financial administration, reporting, and HR
- Event booking, programming, and scheduling
- Marketing, sponsorship, and branding
- Food & beverage and concessions (in-house model)
- Event services and ticketing coordination
- Facility operations, maintenance, and housekeeping

The in-house food and beverage model enhances revenue potential, accountability, and flexibility in structuring event agreements.

### SHOW MINIMUM OF FIRST 5 YEARS OF ANTICIPATED OPERATING REVENUE AND EXPENSES

	YEAR ONE	YEAR TWO	YEAR THREE	YEAR FOUR	YEAR FIVE
Annual Number of Events	174	193	215	219	224
Estimated Attendance	78,600	89,500	102,400	104,448	106,537
				<b>STABILIZED</b>	
Revenue	ANNUAL	ANNUAL	ANNUAL	ANNUAL	ANNUAL
Building Rent	579,500	643,500	722,500	744,175	766,500
Ticketing Fees	7,000	10,500	14,000	14,420	14,853
Concessions and Catering	2,102,000	2,333,000	2,753,000	2,835,590	2,920,658
Reimbursed Event Services	144,000	163,000	185,000	190,550	196,267
Naming Rights	100,000	103,000	106,090	109,273	112,551
Contractually Obligated Income	45,000	46,350	47,741	49,173	50,648
<b>Total Revenue</b>	<b>2,977,500</b>	<b>3,299,350</b>	<b>3,828,331</b>	<b>3,943,180</b>	<b>4,061,476</b>
Cost of Goods/Labor - F&B	973,000	1,082,500	1,280,500	1,318,915	1,358,482
Personnel Services Expense	1,434,125	1,578,785	1,600,335	1,632,341	1,664,988
General & Administrative Expense	122,500	124,650	111,843	115,198	118,654
Occupancy Expense	467,500	478,850	490,627	505,346	520,506
Services & Operations	314,700	331,608	358,180	368,926	379,993
Event Expense	28,800	32,600	37,000	38,110	39,253
Food & Beverage Other Expense	77,500	80,150	83,073	85,565	88,132
Capital Maintenance Reserve (1%)	29,775	32,994	38,283	39,432	40,615
<b>Total Operating Expense</b>	<b>3,447,900</b>	<b>3,742,136</b>	<b>3,999,841</b>	<b>4,103,833</b>	<b>4,210,625</b>
<b>Gross Operating Profit</b>	<b>(470,400)</b>	<b>(442,786)</b>	<b>(171,511)</b>	<b>(160,653)</b>	<b>(149,149)</b>
TRANSFERS IN	470,400	442,786	171,511	160,653	149,149
<b>Net Operating Income</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>

## FIVE-YEAR OPERATING PROJECTIONS

The facility is projected to host:

- 174 events in Year One, increasing to 224 events by Year Five
- Attendance growth from approximately 78,600 to 106,500 annually
- Total revenue growth from \$2.98M to \$4.06M over five years

Operating performance improves steadily as event volume increases and the facility reaches stabilization.

## PRE-OPENING & COMMISSIONING

VenuWorks brings experience in opening more than 50 public assembly facilities nationwide. Pre-opening services include design review, FF&E procurement, staffing and training, systems implementation, and operational readiness planning. A coordinated soft opening and community-driven grand opening strategy will ensure strong initial market positioning.

## MAINTENANCE & CAPITAL RESPONSIBILITY

Daily housekeeping, maintenance, event turnover, and long-term capital planning will be managed by a dedicated operations team. Through a coordinated, all-department approach, the facility will operate efficiently, remain competitive in the market, and align with industry best practices for long-term performance and asset stewardship.

# A GRAND OPENING TO REMEMBER

## SIGNATURE LAUNCH EVENTS

- Develop high-impact grand openings that generate regional excitement and sponsorship support.
- Leverage headline entertainment and local partnerships to create a strong first impression.
- *Example: Reopening of the renovated 1,700-seat Paramount Theatre featuring Harry Connick Jr., supported by local philanthropy.*



## STRATEGIC SOFT OPENING

- Host exclusive preview events for stakeholders and partners.
- Recognize project supporters and build early ambassadors.
- Ensure operational readiness before public launch

## COMMUNITY-DRIVEN CELEBRATION

- Form a grand opening committee reflecting local identity.
- Partner with schools, universities, and arts organizations.
- Create inclusive participation that builds civic pride.

## DEMONSTRATION & PREVIEW EVENTS

- Host invitation-only previews for key stakeholders and partners.
- Showcase facility capabilities before the public debut.
- Build early momentum and market confidence.

## MULTI-WEEK OPENING SERIES

- Begin with a public ceremony and ribbon-cutting.
- Extend the celebration through a multi-week event series.
- Highlight the venue's versatility and broad appeal.



# PROPOSED INTEGRATION WITH VISIT FARGO-MOORHEAD SALES TEAM

See Appendix for detailed market segmentation strategies, booking policies, incentive schedules, marketing tactics, and full operational procedures.

## INTEGRATED SALES PARTNERSHIP

The Fargo Convention Center will partner closely with Visit Fargo-Moorhead, local hotels, and community stakeholders to drive tourism and economic impact. VenuWorks brings extensive DMO experience and a ‘Ready Response’ approach for fast lead follow-up, competitive bids, and coordinated sales.”

### Key strategies include:

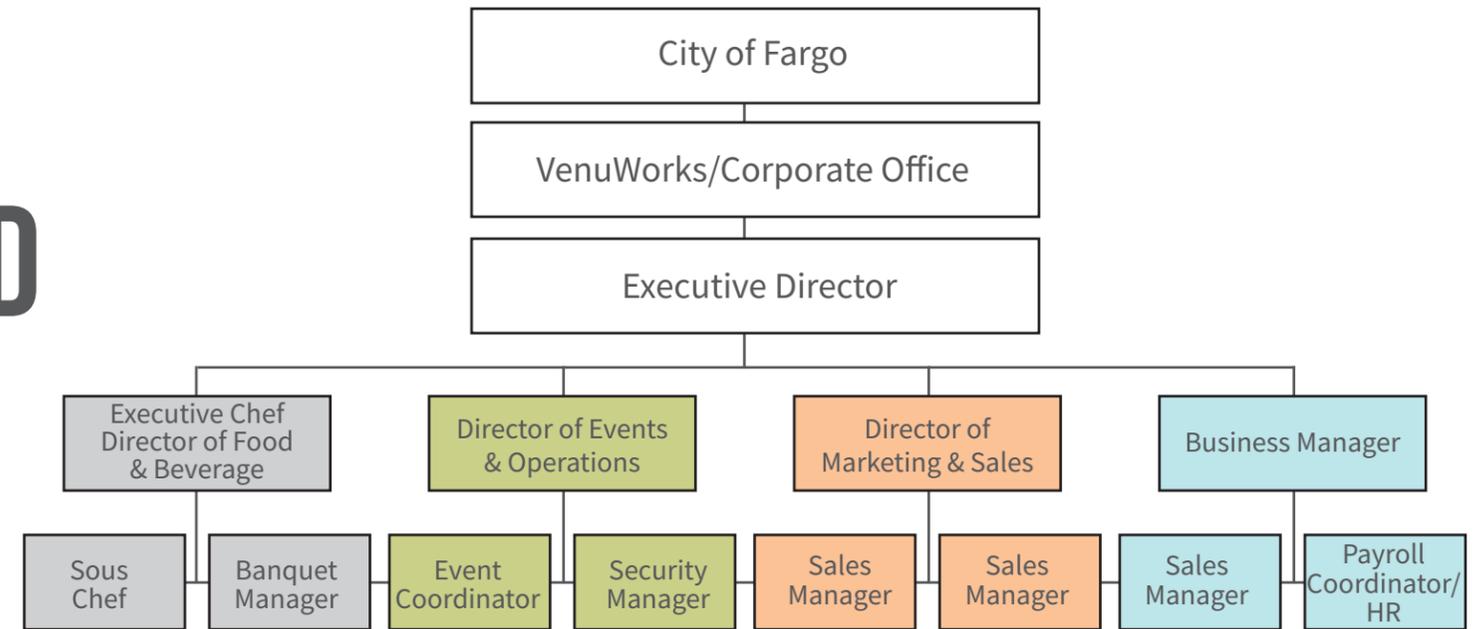
- Shared lead generation and joint sales missions
- Coordinated hotel room block management
- Regular strategy meetings with tourism partners
- One-stop destination selling of both the venue and Fargo-Moorhead

## STAFFING & LEADERSHIP

The on-site management team will include:

- Executive Director (facility leadership & City liaison)
- Director of Marketing & Sales
- Director of Events & Operations
- Executive Chef / Director of Food & Beverage
- Business Manager (finance & ticketing oversight)

The facility will report to a VenuWorks Regional Vice President, with full corporate support resources available.



## SALES & MARKETING STRATEGY

A collaborative marketing plan will be developed with stakeholders and tracked using clear performance metrics (KPIs).

### Core components include:

- Targeted convention and trade show recruitment
- Small and mid-size meeting development
- Public/consumer show growth
- Banquets and social event sales expansion
- Youth/amateur sports and competition recruitment

## DEVELOPMENT OF IN-HOUSE AND ANNUAL SIGNATURE EVENTS

### Marketing efforts will include:

- Brand development and awareness campaigns
- Website, digital, social, SEO, and email marketing
- Public and media relations
- Trade show participation and sales missions
- Sales materials (brochures, videos, datasheets)

## BOOKING POLICY FRAMEWORK

Events will be classified into two categories:

- Gold Events (Conventions, Trade Shows, Corporate Meetings)
- Competitive bid or regional/national draw
- 25+ hotel room nights for two or more nights
- Coordinated with Visit Fargo-Moorhead
- Eligible for rental and food & beverage incentives

Premium Events (Local Events)

- Primarily local attendance
- Limited hotel room generation
- Booked within defined advance timeframes

This structure prioritizes events that generate the greatest economic impact while maintaining access for local users.

## ECONOMIC IMPACT INCENTIVES

Gold Events generating significant hotel room nights qualify for tiered rental discounts and food & beverage incentives, aligning venue pricing with measurable community impact.

## PRE-OPENING SALES STRATEGY

Sales and marketing efforts begin well before opening and include:

- Industry advertising and awareness campaigns
- Media outreach and milestone announcements
- Trade show attendance and direct sales calls
- Development of marketing materials and booking calendar
- Grand opening promotion and community engagement

A comprehensive media and publicity strategy will build anticipation and position the Convention Center as a premier regional destination from day one.

## DMO EXPERIENCE IN ACTION

VenuWorks partners closely with DMOs in midsize markets like Fargo. As operator of the Cedar Rapids Tourism Office, we bring firsthand DMO leadership experience and a “Ready Response” approach that ensures timely, competitive bids and coordinated lead follow-up.



### THREE RIVERS CAMPUS KENNEWICK, WA

Our campus includes the Three Rivers Convention Center, Toyota Center, and Toyota Arena. We partner closely with the Tri-Cities Visitor & Convention Bureau on lead response, RFPs, and sales presentations, providing detailed cost estimates and tastings for planners. This collaboration helped drive the addition of an attached hotel—partially funded by VenuWorks—and a recently approved \$71 million convention center expansion (June 2024).



### CHESAPEAKE CONFERENCE CENTER CHESAPEAKE, VA

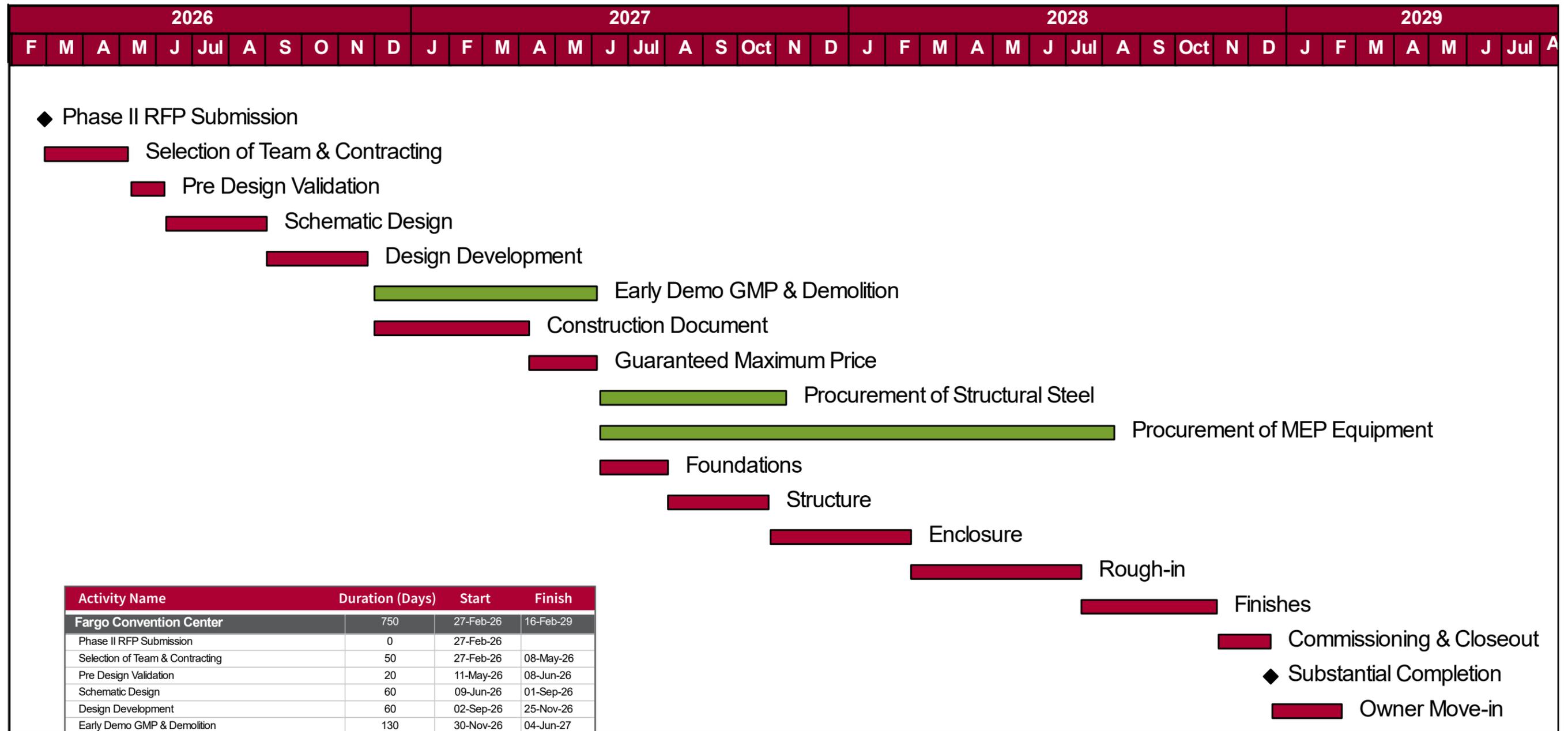
In Chesapeake, we align with the Parks, Recreation & Tourism Division (CVB) to provide one-stop shopping. We collaborate on incentive packages, multi-year commitments, trade show participation, and regular strategy meetings with CVB and hotel partners. Together, we position the Conference Center as the heart of the destination experience—selling the venue and destination as one.



### CEDAR RAPIDS TOURISM OFFICE CREVENTSLIVE

VenuWorks has partnered with the City of Cedar Rapids for over 20 years, managing the Alliant Energy PowerHouse, ImOn Ice Arena, Paramount Theatre, and McGrath Amphitheater. After the former CVB faced financial collapse in 2018, the City engaged VenuWorks to assume operations and rebrand it as the Cedar Rapids Tourism Office, where we now provide DMO services in our seventh year.

**SCHEDULE**



Activity Name	Duration (Days)	Start	Finish
<b>Fargo Convention Center</b>	750	27-Feb-26	16-Feb-29
Phase II RFP Submission	0	27-Feb-26	
Selection of Team & Contracting	50	27-Feb-26	08-May-26
Pre Design Validation	20	11-May-26	08-Jun-26
Schematic Design	60	09-Jun-26	01-Sep-26
Design Development	60	02-Sep-26	25-Nov-26
Early Demo GMP & Demolition	130	30-Nov-26	04-Jun-27
Construction Document	90	30-Nov-26	08-Apr-27
Guaranteed Maximum Price	40	09-Apr-27	04-Jun-27
Procurement of Structural Steel	110	07-Jun-27	09-Nov-27
Procurement of MEP Equipment	300	07-Jun-27	10-Aug-28
Foundations	40	07-Jun-27	02-Aug-27
Structure	60	03-Aug-27	26-Oct-27
Enclosure	80	27-Oct-27	22-Feb-28
Rough-in	100	23-Feb-28	13-Jul-28
Finishes	80	14-Jul-28	03-Nov-28
Commissioning & Closeout	30	06-Nov-28	19-Dec-28
Substantial Completion	0		19-Dec-28
Owner Move-in	40	20-Dec-28	16-Feb-29

## SAFETY AND SECURITY

The team at EAPC features a team of certified Crime Prevention Through Environmental Design (CPTED) professionals who will apply proactive design strategies to promote a safe and secure Convention Center.

CPTED is based on 5 overlapping strategies:

1. **Natural Surveillance:** Increasing visibility reduces likelihood of incidents.
2. **Territorial Reinforcement:** Use of physical attributes to express Ownership.
3. **Natural Access Control:** Controlling access and providing clear guides through a space.
4. **Activity Support:** Promotion of positive activities within the space.
5. **Maintenance:** Maintaining sight lines, building elements, and a clean, functional environment.

Fire safety access will be maintained. This is a benefit by reusing an existing building as fire access is in place. The project design will be reviewed with the Fargo Fire Department to ensure acceptance.

## CREATING A CIVIC CAMPUS

The Fargo Public Library will maintain its existing vehicular and guest access, while proposed parking improvements to the southeast lot will provide additional guest parking and pedestrian access to the library's east entrance. The landscaping plan will expand on the existing Sodbuster Plaza, keeping the current plaza in place while relocating and replanting select trees within the Civic Campus. Access to City Hall's main entrance will also be enhanced with reshaped pedestrian circulation, creating an accessible path and a direct connection to the Convention Center.

Another potential improvement is the addition of training or large meeting space for City of Fargo use within the Convention Center. This space could be located in the lower-level rooms, with an entrance directly opposite City Hall, providing convenient and integrated access for city functions.

## STORMWATER MANAGEMENT AND UTILITIES

The project design and cost estimate anticipates the need for underground storage of stormwater. There project will require the relocation of an existing sanitary sewer line that currently runs eastward from the intersection of Fourth Street and Second Avenue North. The location will occur within the boundaries of the civic campus and will have minimal impact on the existing street construction. Site utilities specifically for the pumping station will not be impacted. Access to the pump station will be maintained.



# WALKABLE AND DISTINCTLY FARGO

The downtown Fargo convention center delivers a visitor experience that is authentic, flexible, local and distinguishable from other geographies. This is not a theoretical event district — it is a place where thousands of people already gather year-round for major community events including Christkindl Market, the Downtown Street Fair, Red River Market, seasonal parades, concerts, and civic celebrations. These events routinely attract attendance that meets or exceeds a typical single-day convention session, demonstrating that visitors already understand how to park, navigate, and enjoy downtown in all seasons.

## ARRIVAL AND FIRST IMPRESSIONS

Visitors will arrive to an iconic civic building that reflects Fargo's identity through high-quality architecture, a welcoming public plaza, and transparent street-level activity. The front door experience is designed for:

- Clear sightlines and intuitive entry
- ADA-accessible routes connecting City Hall and the civic campus
- Convenient bus drop-off on 4th Street directly at the main entrance and allows traffic to continue to flow thru the city
- Direct Access to Civic Parking Garage
- Short, well-marked pedestrian routes from parking and hotels

This creates a strong first impression and supports marketing, branding, and repeat bookings.

## PARKING AND ACCESS

Downtown Fargo already supports large events with a well-established parking system, including city-owned garages, surface lots, and on-street options. For the convention center, this infrastructure will be enhanced with modern parking technology, offering real-time space availability, pre-paid parking, and mobile wayfinding to garages and skyways. These improvements ensure a smooth and convenient arrival experience for out-of-town guests, regional attendees, and local visitors alike.



## CLIMATE-CONTROLLED CONNECTIVITY

A defining advantage of the downtown site is its existing skyway-connected convention district, providing:

- Direct indoor access to 275 full-service hotel rooms
- Climate-controlled movement in adverse weather conditions
- Easy and convenient connections to restaurants, meeting rooms, and gathering spaces

This allows attendees to move comfortably between the convention center, hotels, and dining options in all weather conditions.

## SIMPLE AND INTUITIVE WAYFINDING

The convention center will feature:

- Clear internal circulation and signage
- Distinct attendee, exhibitor, and service routes
- A consistent wayfinding system extending from streets to skyways to interior spaces

This reduces confusion, improves event flow, and enhances accessibility for all users.

## FLEXIBILITY FOR ALL EVENT TYPES

The downtown location supports a wide range of users:

### Out-of-Town Convention Guests

- Headquarters hotel connectivity
- Walkable entertainment and dining
- Authentic Fargo experience

### Regional and Day Visitors

- Easy parking access
- Ability to attend events and return home the same day
- Convenient access to other areas of Fargo for additional lodging or activities

# A DAY IN THE LIFE OF A VISITOR

ALL WITHOUT NEEDING A CAR!



## MORNING

- Park once and walk 3–5 minutes to the convention center
- Or arrive via skyway from a connected hotel
- Grab coffee from a nearby locally owned café



## MIDDAY

- Attend sessions in modern and flexible, technology-enabled meeting rooms
- Step outside to the public plaza, walk to Broadway Square or stroll along the pathway along the Red River
- Meet colleagues for lunch at one of 50+ nearby restaurants, most of which are unique to Fargo



## AFTERNOON

- Participate in breakout meetings
- Host a private dining event in a connected hotel or other nearby local events space like Sanctuary Event Center or Sinclair.
- Explore local retail and cultural spaces within a short walk



## EVENING

- Enjoy the heart of the “North of Normal” neighborhood
- Choose from multiple local dining options via skyway or short walk
- Attend a downtown event, concert, movie, or market
- Gather in hotel lounges, rooftop patios, or outdoor public spaces

## FAMILY AND COMMUNITY EVENTS

- Proximity to Broadway Square programming includes ice skating in the winter and continual activity in the summer. Summer programming is filled with live outdoor music events, cultural festivals, the Red River Market and Night Bazaars. The water fountains bring the space to life in the summer where people can participate in a number of outdoor games, there is ample outdoor seating, and for small children specifically, blue blocks are set out each morning for them to play on.
- Safe, walkable streets
- Access to public spaces and local attractions, including The Plains Art Museum, Fargo Theater and the newly built FMCT.

## PROVEN EVENT CULTURE

Downtown Fargo has a demonstrated ability to host large, successful events across all seasons. The community:

- Knows how to navigate downtown
- Actively participates in public events
- Knows downtown parking

This existing behavior reduces the learning curve for convention attendees and creates an immediate sense of energy and authenticity.

## LOCAL BUSINESS INTEGRATION

Local businesses are enthusiastic about welcoming convention guests and provide:

- Diverse dining options
- Private event spaces
- Retail and entertainment experiences
- Extended hours during major events

This keeps visitor spending local and creates a vibrant, memorable experience.



## TECHNOLOGY AND OPERATIONS

In partnership with Venue Works, the visitor experience will be supported by:

- High-speed broadband and AV infrastructure
- Digital event scheduling and navigation tools
- Integrated hotel and room-block coordination
- Streamlined registration and entry flow

This ensures a modern, efficient convention environment.

## CONCLUSION

The downtown Fargo convention center delivers a visitor experience that is:

- Walkable and intuitive
- Climate-controlled and connected
- Authentic to Fargo's identity
- Supported by proven event participation
- Flexible for conventions, regional events, and community use

From arrival to evening gathering, visitors will have multiple options, short walking distances, and seamless connectivity, creating an experience that is both memorable and operationally efficient.

This is not just a convention center — it is a fully integrated convention district that already works today and will perform on day one.





# APPENDIX



**ESTIMATES OF THE AMOUNT AND SOURCE OF CITY OPERATING SUPPORT**

The City of Fargo will finance the new Fargo Convention Center. The anticipated subsidy required from the City of Fargo will be \$470,400 in year one, decreasing to \$149,149 by year five. The HVS Feasibility Study had the year one subsidy at \$480,000 and the year five subsidy at \$289,000.

A key financial advantage of our proposed location is the strategic reallocation of funds previously designated for the Fargo Civic Center. By repurposing the existing Civic Center, the City can redirect these resources to support the ongoing success and operations of the Fargo Convention Center. This approach not only reduces the financial burden of maintaining a less active facility but also ensures a more impactful and sustainable investment in a vibrant, revenue-generating community asset.

**LEASE/MANAGEMENT PROPOSAL**

**VENUE MANAGEMENT COMPENSATION AND CONTRACT TERMS**

**SCOPE OF SERVICES:** VenuWorks proposes to provide comprehensive management services, including financial administration, human resources, programming, marketing, operational and food/beverage services for the Fargo Convention Center.

**TERM OF CONTRACT PROPOSED:** VenuWorks proposes a contract for a term of five years, with the option for two five-year renewal terms, subject to mutual approval of both parties.

**PROGRAMMING POLICY:** VenuWorks will work with the City and stakeholders to develop a mutually acceptable programming policy.

**REVENUES:** All revenues will accrue to the bottom line of the City through the venue’s operating account.

**OPERATING EXPENSES:** All operating expenses will be borne by the City through the operating account of the Fieldhouse.

**TICKETING:** VenuWorks will coordinate the execution of a separate Licensed User Agreement between Ticketmaster and the City, allowing the venue to utilize the preferred terms available through the VenuWorks’ national agreement with Ticketmaster. VenuWorks, with Ticketmaster, will provide free hardware, free software updates, and free access to TM marketing tools and analytics. VenuWorks will create and manage a separate box office account for all ticketed events.

**PRE-OPENING FEE:** VenuWorks proposes a monthly fee of \$6,000 to provide pre-opening services for the Fargo Convention Center. This begins with contract initiation date and ends the months prior to opening.

**BASE MANAGEMENT FEE:** VenuWorks proposes collecting a monthly fee of \$10,000 to provide ongoing venue management services for the Fargo Convention Center. This begins the month of opening and running for five years. The management services fee will be increased in subsequent years by a percentage equal to the annual percentage increase in the Consumer Price Index.

**COMMISSIONS and INCENTIVES:** VenuWorks proposes to receive the following commissions:

- VenuWorks will receive commission equal to 5% of food and beverage gross sales revenue.
- VenuWorks will receive a commission equal to 8% of gross revenues realized from sponsorships and display advertising that is created by VenuWorks.

**OPERATING EXPENSES**

The term “Operating Expenses” shall mean the following and shall be, in all cases, subject to the Annual Budget:

- On-the-job payroll cost, including wages paid to employees and the cost of paid holidays, vacations, severance benefits, sick leave and other compensation and benefits; cost of training; payroll processing costs.
- Employer contribution costs in relation to employees carried on the on-the-job payroll mentioned in the foregoing clause (a), of every nature whatsoever, including but not limited to, social security, reemployment insurance, benefits for:
  - Medical and hospital care, disability, death, termination, retirement or pension, or insurance or annuity contracts to provide any of the foregoing and all payments, other than those referred to in the foregoing clause (a), required under any collective bargaining agreement to which VenuWorks is a party, or under any state or federal law or any regulations promulgated thereunder.
- Cost of medical and security examination for employees on the on-the-job payroll.
- Cost of purchasing, renting, maintaining and cleaning uniforms.
- Cost of equipment, materials and supplies, including the cost of installation thereof.
- Cost of insurance, required bonding, permits, licenses and fees.
- Cost of property, business, privilege, sales and all taxes.
- Cost of marketing, promotions, advertising, and employee travel & training.
- Cost of necessary outside professional services, upon prior written approval by the CITY.
- Cost of the commodities, (i.e. foodstuffs purchased for resale to the public).
- Cost of utilities.
- Litigation expenses, including attorneys’ fees, incurred on behalf of the facility.
- Base management fees.

## OPERATING PLAN

- Cost of installation of additional equipment and replacements thereof.
- Cost of ordinary maintenance, facility repairs, equipment replacement, and housekeeping.
- All costs related to VenuWorks corporate staff travel, lodging, and supply costs incurred in connection with servicing the CITY's needs at location.

### FACILITY RENTAL

Conventions Event Days	\$7,500 (before discounts or rebates)
Tradeshows Event Days	\$7,500.00 (before discounts or rebates)
Consumer Shows Event Days	\$10,000.00 (before discounts or rebates)
Conferences Event Days	\$5,000.00 (before discounts or rebates)
Meetings Event Days	\$1,000.00 (before discounts or rebates)
Banquets Event Days	\$3,000.00 (before discounts or rebates)
Assemblies Event Days	\$2,500.00 (before discounts or rebates)

### REIMBURSED LABOR AND EQUIPMENT FEES

The reimbursed labor and equipment fees are based on the RiverCenter in Davenport:

#### IN-HOUSE AV

##### Audio

Speakers (set of 2)	\$250.00 per set
Includes 1 microphone & podium	\$100.00 per additional day
Microphone	\$50.00 each
Wireless Handheld	\$25.00 per additional day (8 Available)
Podium w/ Mics	\$75.00 each (3 Available); \$35.00 per additional day

##### Visual

5000 Lumens (Ultra Short Throw)	\$350.00 each (2 Available); \$100.00 per additional day
75" Flat Screen Smart TV	\$250.00 each (3 Available); \$50.00 per additional day
Ideal for breakouts – No projector required (computer hooks right up to TV)	
Screen 6' x 8' Front or rear projection	\$250.00 each (2 Available); \$100.00 per additional day
Screen 10' x 17' Front projection	\$500.00 each (2 Available); \$100.00 per additional day
Labor \$50.00 per hour (current rate) billed for setup, event & tear down hours (3 hour min.)	
Daily Clean Up (flat fee)	\$250.00 per day
Utility Charge (per day)	4% of Rent

### Equipment and Decorative Furnishings:

Staging:	4' x 8' section	\$50.00
Dance Floor:	4' x 4' Panel	\$10.00 per pane
Cloth/Skirt:	Table Linen	\$5.00
	Table Skirt	\$8.00

Wireless Internet Included

Hard Line/Phone Line		Quote
Pipe/Drape:	3' tall	\$3.00
Billed per foot	8'-10' tall	\$5.00
	12' tall	\$10.00

### Booth Package:

8' x 10' or 10' x 10' booth \$70.00  
includes one 6ft or 8ft. table clothed and skirted, 2 – 3ft sides and an 8ft back, and 2 chairs.

### Booth Electrical:

20A/120v (standard outlet)	\$90.00 each
120" Round Linen any color:	\$20.00 each
132" Round Linen:	\$30.00 each
Chair Covers:	\$3.50 each (Black or White)
	(includes placement and removal)
Drapes:	\$3.00 per foot (Black or White)
Cake Cutting (Buffet):	\$150.00 flat fee
	(includes disposable plates and forks)

### Catering & Bar Service rates through the RiverCenter:

Deposit of \$500.00 is required with signed contract  
(A valid credit/debit card is required to be on file)

Rates are subject to change.

Depending on the event, there may be additional charges not listed above.

A pre-event estimate will be provided prior to the event.

### PLANS FOR IN-HOUSE VERSUS THIRD PARTY OPERATIONS WITH EXCLUSIVITY OF CATERINGS, LIQUOR, LICENSING, AV ETC. (I.E. HYBRID VS PREFERRED LIST)

VenuWorks provides clients with the assurance of well-prepared, quality foods presented with imagination and flair, with excellent service that is unequalled. We are proud of the superior quality our concession and catering services provide in the venues we manage.

**QUALITY IS PRICELESS**

VenuWorks understands that the food service experience is a critical component of a venue's overall reputation. Guests' impressions of quality, presentation, and service directly influence how they perceive the facility as a whole. Quality control is central to everything we do in food and beverage services, ensuring consistency, safety, and excellence at every event. This focus is especially important for convention centers, where the catering experience can significantly affect repeat business, client satisfaction, and long-term success. We take pride in offering a wide variety of menu options, thoughtfully crafted to suit each venue, and in delivering unique, customized culinary experiences that enhance every event and create lasting positive impressions.

**Operational Plan – Food and Beverage Controls, Systems and Procedures**

VenuWorks has developed a proprietary Food and Beverage Planning Guide that systematizes the processes and governs our food and beverage business affairs. This manual has helped standardize and streamline food operations, giving our managers a quicker view of pertinent information; and allowing us to plan and forecast more accurately the needs for any client events.

We oversee every aspect of Food and Beverage operations in nearly all the venues we serve, including managing third-party food service and concession providers. This hands-on approach ensures the highest standards of quality control while maximizing profitability for the venue. Unlike our competitors, who often create separate food and beverage subsidiaries, we operate everything under the trusted VenuWorks name, providing seamless accountability and consistency.

**Our in-house operating model has three chief advantages:**

- Financially it provides the most upside potential for the Venue. Significantly improving the net departmental profit earned. There are no subsidiaries requiring their own profit lines resulting in reduced profits.
- Our financial reporting is transparent and our accountability to the client unfettered. We proudly stand behind our service standards.
- The in-house operating model creates the greatest flexibility in negotiating event/convention business terms since no third-party guaranteed percentage influences the financial negotiation.

There are very tangible marketing advantages to our “in-house” food and beverage services as well.

- Our set-up allows event planners a ‘one-stop shopping experience’, in which one management entity controls scheduling, pricing, and food arrangements.

- With the building GM having ultimate control of our activities, we can partner to collectively negotiate total packages to planners that include rental, equipment, and staffing fees along with catering considerations, allowing for all-inclusive pricing.
- Our proven systems provide for ongoing quality control and direct management of menu pricing, inventory management, and financial accountability.

**BRANDED MERCHANDISE**

Branded products have played a significant part by increasing per caps in VenuWorks-managed buildings. These products are capturing an ever-increasing share of the food sales due to:

- Customer preference and loyalty to regional and national brands
- Advertising impact of brand marketing
- Delivery of conveniently high-quality products to consumers

Because each market is different, VenuWorks custom tailors the choice of brands to each facility, thus allowing room for popular local and regional brands.

**LOCAL INITIATIVES**

Community involvement provides our culinary team the opportunity to build relationships and promote the venue. Our food and beverage department will host community Chef events open to the public and quickly become known as “A Place Where Chefs Gather”. Our plans go beyond these gatherings to include:

- An annual Chef's garden that will feature a variety of herbs, vegetables and roots.
- Chef Education Sites in partnership with regional and national educational programs.
- Farmer, Chef, and Craft monthly fresh market site.
- Community Chef involvement that will feature a food rescue partnership, participation in fundraisers and chef communities and associations.

**FOOD AND BEVERAGE AS A MARKETING TOOL**

The patron's experience at a venue can be tremendously impacted by the way in which food and beverage is managed. When the food and beverage experience (encompassing everything of the site, smell and taste of the food, as well as the overall presentation) is on par with what people expect to find in their favorite restaurants, the venue can then use the food and beverage experience as a marketing tool.

**GIVING BACK**

In many communities we cooperate with local Food Pantries to a monthly USDA food distribution site for families in need. Through pandemic many of our venues partnered with local food distributors to provide for those in need.

**POLICY AND PROCEDURE**

VenuWorks takes pride in all service and training aspects to maintain higher standards of service. All specific Food and Beverage processes and procedures are listed in our VenuWorks created F&B manual and are considered mandatory practice for all our managed locations. Site visits are periodically performed whereby corporate staff test actual practices against the procedures and forms as prescribed in the manual. We continually solicit suggestions for additions or revisions from our teams on the front lines. Our mission in support of our Food and Beverage accounts includes:

- Delivering F&B products and services of the highest quality, including menus, portions, and pricing that creates positive and lasting customer relations.
- Implementing internal controls to safeguard inventories; including receipt, storage, and physical count processes.
- Delivering F&B products and services of the highest quality, with menus, portions, and pricing that creates positive and lasting customer relations.
- Direct and open communication from our collective kitchens to our Vice President of Food and Beverage Services, ensuring standards are maintained and all operational concerns are addressed.

**MEMORABLE EXPERIENCES**

Our team will focus on creating delicious food while at the same time creating entertaining and memorable guest experiences. Our plan includes the following:

- Custom interactive event menu planning for all events!
- Tableside Chef preparations on select items including liquid nitrogen ice cream, Steak Diane, dessert flambés
- Autumn Wine Paring Chef Event
- Monthly Outdoor Chef Spring Grille Series featuring open fire pit cooking, hanging slabs of smoked salmon on cedar wood, and smokers for prime rib dinners
- Bluegrass & BBQ Summer Chefs Series
- Grapes & Flambés Fall and Winter Wine and Dessert Series

- Brews, Grills & Fire Pits Winter Chefs Series featuring ice carving demos, lots of fire and flambé cooking
- Weekly Chef's Lunch with Chef Series

**PAID OR FREE PARKING**

Parking for the downtown convention center will be the responsibility of the guest. They can choose street parking, parking lots, or parking ramps. All of this will be handled by pre-existing entities.

**PRE-OPENING SERVICES PLAN**

The VenuWorks team possesses a wealth of experience in opening and operating new venues. Benefits we bring to our design and construction phases include:

- Designing to maximize revenue potential and minimize operating expense: The difference between a successful event center and a proverbial white elephant is most often in the design and conceptualization. We practice the principle that "Every design decision is a marketing decision." For example, poorly placed custodial closets contribute to a dirty building which deters people from attending the facility. Too little back-of-house marshalling area leads to a facility getting a bad name among touring attractions.
- Construction cost savings: From years of experience, we have learned where to spend money wisely in the construction of a facility. Conversely, we know how to look for places to save money without adversely affecting the operational efficiencies of the finished building.
- Get the most from your FF&E budget: We can write specifications, solicit bids and analyze proposals for fixtures, furnishings and equipment. We can get the best value because we are in the marketplace continually purchasing goods and equipment for the facilities we manage.
- We represent you and your future patrons! In the ongoing development and construction of the facility, we represent your interests communicating with our development team to be sure that you get the best building possible. Just as important, we will represent the patrons, promoters and artists' point of view in analyzing and planning for their convenience and enjoyment.

Collectively the members of the VenuWorks team have the combined experience of having participated in the opening of over 50 public assembly facilities and the management of many more. VenuWorks has also participated in the planning and development of seven onsite hotel properties adjacent to client facilities.

## OPERATING PLAN

We bring to the planning of facilities the practicality that can only come from an operator's perspective. We have the demonstrated ability to help you bring your project in on budget and on time.

When we first join your team, here is the outline of the specific services we will provide on your behalf:

- Solicit input from future venue users regarding necessary and desirable design criteria for each category of event activity.
- Review design assumptions and performance parameters.
- Compare design to comparable facilities to help meet or surpass advantages of prime competitor facilities.
- Provide input based on operational analysis of design in a timely way to expedite final design and bid specification process.
- Analyze design regarding operational aspects
  - Tenant & Promoter requirements
  - Requirements of the local community users
  - Patron services and amenities
  - Food, beverage and catering services
  - Parking and bus pick-up and drop-off
  - Security
  - Information technology requirements for events and an in-house business center
  - Event staging, rigging and set – up requirements
  - Requirements of potential equity partners
  - Storage
  - Utility consumption and control
  - Revenue opportunities (i.e. signage, food & beverage, merchandising, parking)
  - Parking and traffic management (with consultants)
  - Operational efficiencies regarding storage, housekeeping, maintenance, traffic flow and especially move-in and move-out access
  - Applicable codes, especially as they relate to user requirements and the maintenance of necessary aisle ways and routes of passage as they affect capacity and public safety
  - Emergency preparedness and evacuation
  - Communication and alarm systems
  - ADA compliance
  - Medical / First Aid Services

- Staffing levels and how they are impacted by design elements
- Perimeter design for efficient ingress/egress with appropriate controls
- TV / Media broadcasting and facility hook – up services

## PROJECT CONSTRUCTION PHASE

Our services continue through construction to advise on critical questions relating to the exact execution of drawings and to have familiarity with the facility from the ground up. Our activities relating to construction would normally include:

- Attend regular progress meetings with design / construction / management team
- Monitor construction progress with regular site visits
- Monitor change order requests & advise client concerning operational impact of changes
- Prepare specifications, oversee contract awards, receive & inventory and administer warranties for FF&E
- Monitor architect / contractor correspondence
- Advise client on acceptance of structure and substantial completion
- Contribute to and monitor contractor's completion of punch list
- Review completion report with client, including full set of as-built drawings
- Coordinate transition from construction project to an operating facility

## FURNITURE, FIXTURES & EQUIPMENT

An important but often overlooked part of facility start-up is the purchasing of the furniture, fixtures & equipment (FF&E). The VenuWorks team specializes in the planning, specifying, purchasing and coordinating of FF&E.

Our FF&E consulting services consist of a four-part process that ensures that the client receives the best and most appropriate equipment for the application at the best price. We have found that this is a very intensive process that is time consuming and difficult to manage if the proper time and effort is not dedicated to it. Together we have the resources to commit to this effort.

### Technical Systems:

The VenuWorks team will provide planning, review, specification preparation, procurement and installation coordination of the following fixed equipment/systems:

- Video Equipment
- Marquee/Advertising Signage
- Sound System
- House Lighting and Exterior Lighting

- Telecommunications System
- Computer Systems/Networks
- Security System
- Parking System

**COMMISSIONING, OPENING, OPERATIONS, AND MANAGEMENT**

Prior to the projected opening date, we will appoint an on-site Executive Director to oversee the preparation and launch of the venue's operations. This Executive Director will play a pivotal local leadership role, spearheading the recruitment and hiring of full-time, part-time, and contractual staff in alignment with an owner-approved organizational chart, budget, and timeline. Throughout this process, the Executive Director will receive comprehensive support from the VenuWorks corporate team, ensuring a seamless and successful transition to full operations.

This staff, along with support from the VenuWorks team, will manage and conduct all facets of the facility operation including:

- Comprehensive venue management
- Programming / scheduling of events
- Co-promotion and in-house promotion of events
- Sales and marketing of advertising, sponsorships, branding and other commercial rights
- Event attendance capacities per building and fire codes
- Marketing communications
- Event management
- Food & beverage service
- Merchandising
- Building operations and maintenance
- Finance and administration (i.e. reporting, budgeting, auditing, purchasing, payroll & HR)
- Crowd management, security and emergency procedures
- Safety, risk management and insurance
- Parking and related vehicle access issues
- Information technology

Besides on-site representatives, VenuWorks has access to specialized expertise throughout its network of managed buildings. Key personnel from these buildings can be temporarily relocated to the new facility during the final stages of pre-opening to assist in completing the last-minute details to the facility, training part-time staff and coordinating

marketing, operational, and management tasks. When we opened the new TDECU Stadium on the University of Houston campus we had a VenuWorks-support team of 16 onsite leading up to and during the opening.

**RESPONSIBILITIES FOR MAINTENANCE AND FUTURE CAPITAL IMPROVEMENTS**

To remain competitive and meet the evolving needs of guests and event planners, the Fargo Convention Center must stay ahead of current technological advancements, environmental considerations, aesthetics, equipment upgrades, and general upkeep. While some events may require minimal cleanup, others demand a more extensive and coordinated effort involving additional staff and time.

At the Fargo Convention Center, our dedicated operations team, led by the Director of Operations, will oversee the maintenance and upkeep of all public areas, ensuring they remain clean, functional, and welcoming. Meanwhile, all maintenance, repairs, and cleaning within food service areas will be expertly managed by our food and beverage team, maintaining the highest standards of hygiene and efficiency.

To uphold industry standards and exceed expectations, we take a collaborative, all-department approach to maintenance and operations. By involving every team, we ensure the Fargo Convention Center consistently delivers an exceptional experience for every guest and event planner, reinforcing its reputation as a premier venue.

Daily Housekeeping in the facility is performed by VenuWorks employees. Housekeeping personnel are staffed and deployed according to the facility layout, anticipated patrons' needs and type of event. The quantity of personnel used for events varies based on factors including anticipated attendance, type of event, type of food and beverage, amount of food and beverage expected to be sold, catered event or concessions and history of the event.

- Comprehensive daily and post-event cleaning of public areas, offices, and support spaces, including hard surface floors, carpets, glass, and entrance mats.
- Provision of all management, supervisory, and custodial personnel, along with required cleaning equipment and supplies.
- Inventory management and restocking of paper products and consumables.
- Waste and recycling collection and proper disposal.

Event-based cleaning schedules adjusted to attendance levels, including special projects as required. VenuWorks prides itself on achieving objectives with professionalism, adhering to industry best practices and all applicable laws. We believe success lies not just in what we do, but how we do it—focusing on purpose, fostering genuine connections with clients and communities, and celebrating diversity. By exceeding expectations, entertaining guests, and understanding people's needs, we create memorable experiences that set us apart.

When patrons attend events at the Fargo Convention Center, they'll experience the vibrant Fargo-Moorhead area in its entirety. Every aspect of the patron experience will highlight the community's unique offerings, showcasing all the wonderful things that make Fargo-Moorhead special. We view our relationship with the City and the Visit Fargo-Moorhead team as a true partnership, working together to maximize success for the entire community. More details on this collaboration can be found in our sales and marketing partnerships plan.

VenuWorks brings extensive experience in collaborating with destination marketing organizations (DMOs), particularly in midsize markets like Fargo. As operators of the DMO for the City of Cedar Rapids, we understand the unique challenges and opportunities these organizations face. In many locations, our executive directors actively serve on DMO boards, ensuring seamless collaboration. With a "Ready Response" approach, we excel in addressing convention inquiries, bid specifications, and leads, delivering exceptional support to drive success.

### **Fargo-Moorhead Approach**

The convention center will have a sales staff that will work closely with the Visit Fargo-Moorhead team. We will share leads, attend conferences, and work together to bring the greatest amount of tourism to the area. Throughout the venue and our website, we will promote Visit Fargo-Moorhead and all that the community has to offer.

### **STAFFING**

The staff for the Fargo Convention Center will not be finalized until the management company has been appointed. Our on-site management team will consist of the following:

#### **Executive Director**

The Executive Director is responsible for the overall management of the facility, providing leadership and direction to all departments and staff. This person serves as the primary liaison between VenuWorks and City of Fargo.

#### **Executive Chef / Director of Food & Beverage**

Responsible for all management of food and refreshments, food quality, service, and sanitation throughout the venue, coordinates activities of and directs training of all food service employees in food preparation, service and sanitation insuring an efficient, timely, and profitable operation by performing duties and responsibilities personally or through subordinate managers and/or supervisors.

#### **Director of Events and Operations**

This position is responsible for the administration, planning, budgeting and direction of the facility operations including front and back of house services, event production, maintenance, engineering, custodial services, security and life safety, emergency preparedness, medical personnel services and equipment inventory control.

#### **Director of Marketing and Sales**

Manages all aspects of marketing and sales for the facility. This includes design and ordering of all promotional and print material, media buying, public relations, event sponsorships and development, signage sales, suite sales, sponsorship packages and other general marketing functions.

#### **Business Manager**

Under the supervision of the Executive Director, the Business Manager is responsible for all financial activity of the building, including financial management and control, accounting and bookkeeping, internal auditing, purchasing, payroll and other general financial duties. This position also manages the overall operation of the ticket office and provides for the ordering, sale, and accounting for all tickets sold for events at the building. This person will develop, install and monitor controls established to safeguard assets and properly record revenues and expenditures according to GAAP.

#### **Reporting Structure / Organizational Chart**

All VenuWorks locations report directly to one of our regional vice presidents. The Fargo Convention Center will report directly to our Western Regional Vice President. Other corporate staff will also come to the venue from various departments to provide support, training, and assistance as needed.

#### **Executive Director Candidates**

VenuWorks will conduct a national search for an Executive Director for the Fargo Convention Center. We will bring in our three finalists to meet with the City to determine the right candidate for the job.

### **SALES & MARKETING PARTNERSHIP PLAN**

The most effective plans are built collaboratively, with stakeholders playing a vital role in shaping strategies from the outset. This approach includes hosting regular sales forums for directors of sales, conducting market research, fostering team-selling opportunities, organizing customer familiarization tours, developing customer evaluation processes, executing sales blitzes, and crafting comprehensive marketing plans. We are on the cutting edge of performance management through our prominent role in developing convention performance standards for the industry and return on investment criteria through the Destination Marketing Association International (DMAI).

One of our first priorities will be to establish a shared understanding among stakeholders of what success looks like for the Fargo destination marketing community. From there, we will implement a system to monitor and report on key performance indicators (KPIs) to track progress toward these shared goals. These performance tracking reports will serve as a critical tool for evaluating success, aligning with the mission statement, and guiding future goal setting. The reports will be shared with key stakeholders, featured in annual reports, and integrated into marketing plans and other communication initiatives to ensure transparency and alignment across all efforts.

The Marketing Plan will feature a comprehensive monthly marketing calendar, listing all major strategies by month, containing:

- Trade shows, conventions, meetings, sales forums, and sales missions (when and by whom)
- Media relations publicity to be produced
- Advertising and direct mail to be placed
- Publications / collateral to be produced
- Major membership/partnership development initiatives
- Digital media and social media strategies
- Community outreach

#### Market the Venue

Effective venue marketing helps us reach the right audience and expand our customer base. In this ever-changing industry, a fresh and comprehensive marketing plan will highlight the strengths of the venue and its team and will include the following areas:

#### Brand Development and Awareness

At VenuWorks, brand development and awareness are integral to our marketing strategy. A strong, recognizable brand not only familiarizes the public with your venue and its events but also differentiates it from competing options. Building and maintaining a positive brand is a multifaceted process that requires time and resources, but when done effectively, it becomes a powerful tool to support sales efforts and drive revenue. To ensure a positive and impactful local brand presence, VenuWorks employs the following strategies:

- Build a Recognizable Brand. We conduct in-depth market research to develop and define a unique brand identity that resonates with the local community. This ensures the brand reflects the venue's values and stands out in the marketplace.
- Tell the Brand's Story. Every brand has a story and sharing that story is essential to building trust and connections. We highlight the brand's narrative through customer experiences, key milestones, and the meaningful work we do every day, creating an emotional connection with the audience.
- Create Shareable Content. In this step we focus on producing engaging, value-driven content that followers are eager to share. While we can't predict viral success, we can craft content that encourages actions like "share," "RSVP," or "tag a friend," amplifying reach with minimal effort. This prioritizes providing value over direct sales pitches.

- Contribute to the Community. Brand-building extends beyond the digital space. We actively engage with the community by sponsoring events, making donations, and supporting employees' involvement in charitable initiatives. These efforts position the venue as a trusted and valued community partner.
- Run Awareness Campaigns. We design targeted brand awareness campaigns to introduce potential customers to the venue, its services, and its events. These campaigns focus on reaching audiences likely to recall and act on the messaging, ensuring maximum impact and return on investment.

Digital Marketing is the fastest-evolving segment of marketing in our industry, often referred to as 'online marketing', 'internet marketing' or 'web marketing'. At VenuWorks, our digital marketing strategy encompasses these key components:

- Venue Website. The venue's website serves as the cornerstone of its brand identity. It must be modern, user-friendly, and visually appealing. We design websites that include engaging elements such as videos, testimonials, high quality images, virtual tours, allowing customers to experience the venue from the convenience of their computers or mobile devices. Our websites feature essential information, including contact details, social media links, event listings, booking opportunities, menus, and more. Recognizing that most web traffic now comes from smartphones, we ensure all sites are fully optimized for mobile devices. Additionally, we follow Google's localization best practices, claim and verify venue listings, and ensure accurate information appears in Google Maps to enhance visibility and accessibility.
- Social Media Marketing. Maintaining an active and engaging social media presence is a vital part of our marketing efforts. We collaborate with venues to select the most effective platforms and develop a dynamic content schedule. By leveraging photos, videos, and live-streaming opportunities, we boost engagement and expand the venue's reach. Creative hashtags (e.g., #CREventsLive) are used to monitor online conversations and amplify the venue's visibility across platforms.
- Search Engine Marketing (SEM). Search engine optimization (SEO) is a critical component of our digital marketing strategy. By optimizing the venue's website and content, we ensure it ranks prominently on the first pages of Google search results, where most users search for relevant information.
- Email Marketing Campaigns. Email marketing remains one of the most cost-effective tools for driving sales. By leveraging our owned email lists, which grow continuously through new ticket purchasers and website sign-ups, we can deliver targeted campaigns that engage audiences and boost revenue.

### Digital Marketing: Beyond the Basics

Our digital marketing efforts include much more than a simple Facebook post or a pretty website. It requires us to adjust traditional methods and understand where our customers come from, what they are doing, and what we can do to improve sales. And which digital marketing tools and platforms will help you to do that.

**Developing Strong Sales Materials.** Our sales materials are designed to persuade customers and guide them through the decision-making process. These tools effectively market the venue, its brand, and its events:

- Website: A well-designed, informative website is the foundation of our marketing efforts. We ensure the site is user-friendly, visually appealing, and aligned with the venue’s overall brand message. It serves as an educational resource for potential customers.
- Venue Brochure: Visually appealing brochures provide detailed information about the venue and its services. These printed materials facilitate in-depth conversations with potential clients and leave a lasting impression.
- Venue Datasheets: Datasheets are essential for communicating technical event details, such as capacities, catering options, and in-house services. They provide quick, clear, and practical information for event planners.
- Videos: Sales videos offer an engaging way to present venue information in a concise and visually compelling format. They provide potential customers with a glimpse of the event experience, sparking excitement and interest.

**Public Relations.** We are hyperattentive to the overall public perception of our venues and their brand. Our Executive Directors work tirelessly to enhance the venue’s credibility and reputation within the industry and the community. Key strategies include:

- Building relationships with local leaders, influencers, and community stakeholders.
- Leveraging social media as a real-time public relations tool to monitor, respond, and shape customer perceptions.
- Engaging in proactive reputation management to ensure the venue is seen as a trusted and respected community asset.

**Media Relations.** Strong relationships with journalists and media professionals are essential for effective media coverage. We don’t rely on sporadic press releases; instead, we cultivate meaningful connections with media contacts. By building trust and rapport, we ensure our story pitches are more likely to be noticed and acted upon, strengthening the venue’s media presence.

**Reputation Management.** The reputation of our venues is invaluable, and we actively work to enhance credibility locally, regionally, and nationally. Our efforts include:

- Active participation in industry professional organizations.
- Presenting at regional and national conferences and trade shows.
- Collaborating with local CVBs and joining professional/business clubs.
- Hosting local committee meetings and offering venue tours and menu tastings.
- Engaging with community organizations and non-profits through partnerships and volunteer efforts.
- Maintaining listings in local, regional, and national business/trade directories.

**Photo Gallery:** A picture is worth a thousand words, and our photo gallery is crafted to showcase the very best of our venues. We capture stunning images during events and in pristine, empty settings to highlight the venue’s versatility and appeal. These visuals are thoughtfully curated to leave a lasting impression and support all marketing efforts, helping potential clients envision their own unique experiences.

**Grassroots Marketing:** Grassroots marketing is a key strategy we use to directly engage targeted audiences and encourage them to share our message organically. By fostering authentic connections and amplifying our visibility, we create a ripple effect that drives brand awareness and growth within the community.

### Conferences, Conventions and Trade Shows

We will promote the facility and local area for small regional and national conferences and trade shows by doing the following:

- Support the cooperative efforts with the CVB in sales missions regionally to attract small business meetings. Networking examples and business opportunities generated to enhance events and programming: Economic Development, Service Club, Sports Clubs, Civic Organizations and Non-Profits
- Align with the CVB sales approach to offer one stop shopping
- Offer multi-year commitments to existing clients
- Attend trade shows/conferences as a partner with the CVB
- Respond quickly to leads and meet regularly with the CVB team and hotel partners to exchange ideas, review the event calendar, booking procedures, processes, current business model challenges, status of outstanding proposals, and booking challenges. Discuss marketing and sales initiatives for the area

- Strategically work with the CVB to sell the local area and the venue together.
- Initiate a program with the CVB to develop off-season small/medium sized meetings
- Develop new booking incentives for events that contribute to the local economy in partnership with the CVB to include flexible pricing for facility rental and ancillary services based on group size, room nights, and other impact factors
- Work with the CVB and key industry partners in the city to promote the City's development
- Direct capital improvements to the venue that will appeal to today's meeting and event planners
- Establish consistent travel to state and regional feeder cities to grow business streams
- Prospect financially strong organizations that have the resources to book significant meetings
- Host open house site visits with our local companies and associations to showcase the venue, emphasizing the flexibility to accommodate small groups of many different types of events

**Small Meetings**

We will build and promoting the Fargo Convention Center's reputation:

- Specifically target high volume producers of small to mid-size meetings
- Target organizations within a local drive market focusing on smaller state-wide and regional meetings, as well as industries most likely to recover quickest
- Book repeat meetings as repeat business
- Work closely with our hotel and other industry partners to offer meeting space when their venue is unable to accommodate and vice versa
- Work with the in-house catering team to design special cost-effective menus to attract groups that have tight budgets
- Offer incentives to annual/repeat clients to rebook on the spot offering discounts, complementary coffee breaks, or complementary ancillary equipment
- Utilize free sales apps (10-times) and websites like The Trade Show Network to research new business. Research what events other venues are hosting and connect with that event organizer to bring the opportunity to the venue.
- Work with third-party meeting planners and referral companies for leads
- Target hot dates to market to meeting groups that can use the facility at non-peak times with discounts and incentives

- Offer employee incentives to bring in new business opportunities. Once actualized the employee receives an incentive based on the pre-determined revenue goal.
- Work with the local Chamber of Commerce on mixer events where the venue can host the event with a cocktail reception for local business owners
- Have open house site visits with our local companies and associations to showcase the facility
- Sales team to spend a few mornings a month visiting local corporations, taking them coffee and freshly baked goodies from our kitchen
- Create meeting packages to target events with room rental only

**Public and Consumer Shows**

Explore new opportunities for shows currently in other markets. These shows typically contract multiple dates within one year and return annually. Some shows are flexible with their dates and space, which allows the venue to book these shows during slow non-peak months. The goal is to book 3-5 new public/consumer shows and grow attendance at existing shows.

- Work with other VenuWorks-managed facilities to share contacts of show producer
- Work with museums on bringing touring/traveling exhibits to our venue and routing throughout the VenuWorks network. Collaborate with local market partners such as museums, schools and other institutions to co-promote these traveling exhibits
- Work with show producers to add a Kid's Corner to draw more families and provide activities for kids while parents engage with the show
- Work with contacts in the business to introduce us to contacts for other shows.
- Identify and book consumer shows that are not currently in the market
- Attend The Society of Independent Show Organizers. SISO members include companies, corporations and other for-profit entities that own, produce or provide full-service management of face-to-face trade shows, consumer shows, expositions, conferences and similar events as a substantial part of their business.
- Attend The National Association of Consumer Shows. The primary purpose of a consumer (public) show is to bring consumers together with the sellers of goods and services. Consumers benefit from the diverse product mix, expert advice, education and entertainment. Sellers benefit by consumer purchases, product and brand awareness, public relations, research and development and product testing. A consumer show or public show is an event that serves specific industries or interests open to the public. They include home shows, car shows, reptile shows, sportsman shows, jewelry shows, computer and technology shows, craft shows, hot tub & spa shows, and many others large and small. This segment is a key focus area for short term revenue generating events.

- Exotic Pets, Guns and Knives Show, Hot Tub & Spa Show, Vintage Trixie Show, Cat Show, Cigars & Cars, Fishing Flea Market, Holiday Crafts, Bridal Expo, Hair Show, Hair & Wellness Expo, Comic Con, Various Job Fairs

**Banquets and Social Functions**

Focus on food and beverage sales with deluxe all-inclusive wedding packages and new event catering menus. Generate an average of 10 social/banquet bookings per month.

- Partner with show promoters like local bridal show producers to grow events and create video shoots and social media posts to highlight the facility as the perfect wedding venue
- Participate in local business-to-business expos (Bridal, Chamber, etc.) creating booth décor and themes, offer food samples, and incentives to book
- Have a cookie sales blitz visiting local companies (research new businesses through the Chamber) targeting holiday and other events
- Sales blitz to local educational institutions targeting school formal events, proms, and reunions
- Spotlight weddings at the venue via social media and email marketing
- Create engaging videos through Canva and Spark Video to increase interest in bookings
- Create incentives based on consumer needs
- Increase pricing (rental, ancillary, food) to compensate for increased food costs while keeping in line with similar venues and their offerings.
- Work with hoteliers on packages to increase sales during down periods. (i.e. include a bridal suite and room discount for family and friends from flagship hotel in all-inclusive packages).
- Utilize social media outlets to share customer experiences.
- Have preferred in-house vendors to provide one-stop-shop services for our Deluxe All-Inclusive package (Decorator, D.J., photo booths, floral, centerpieces, chocolate fountain, etc.)
- Increase catering and operation equipment to meet the needs of multiple events requiring the same setup

**Amateur and Youth Sports/Dance/Cheer Competitions**

Work with the CVB on sports events, and to stimulate growth in the number of visitors participating in and attending these events. Generate 4-8 new site visits each year and book 2-4 new amateur, youth, and dance/cheer events.

- Develop target customer list to prioritize new lead generation for potential target youth sport events such as archery, badminton, bocce, darts, dodgeball, fencing, gymnastics, health and fitness, martial arts, pickleball, and table tennis
- Develop a dance/cheer target customer list to prioritize lead generation for dance and cheer events such as: Target Varsity, which comprises the leading organizations and 32+ brands in the various cheerleading segments, including its educational camps and clinics, competitions, and uniforms
- Solicit local dance/cheer groups
- Focus on partnership with schools in the region to facilitate leads for coach's clinics, banquets, etc.
- Target groups dedicated to producing health and sports supplies to solicit supply or trade shows or other information driven events.
- Work with the CVB to solicit state and regional sporting events that would be a good for the Center.
- Offer rebates and incentives for dance/cheer camps that create room nights.
- Solicit leads for cheer and football banquets.
- Offer complimentary setups and rehearsals.
- Work with the CVB on offers/rebates for new bookings
- Attend the TEAMS conference to solicit sports events organizations.

**Create In-House Events**

Create unique events for the community maximizing the benefits to the region. Special in-house created events have potential for additional revenue streams given the operational expenses of the events are paid for by trade deals, sponsors, and vendors (food & other) offering the community a wide variety of entertainment.

Create successful self-promoted events that will embrace the local culture, provide community engagement, and enhance the economic impact.

- Obtain trade deals, sponsors and vendors to cover the operational costs of the event.
- Incorporate local charities to create a raffle with 100% of the proceeds going to a charity.
- Seek strategic partnerships with area promoters to co-host new events.
- Target media groups who can offer sales support, in-kind media, and other support.
- Canvas current market special event and festival offerings. If not already in the market, consider local food festivals (Wing Fest, Grilled Cheese, Ice Cream).

- Collaborate with meeting planners and promoters to bring ticketed events. (Jazz concerts, comedy, and live entertainment).

### Annual Events

Our focus is to build events and program events that become annual events. Events that happen on an annual basis become engrained into the community and help to mold the venue's identity. Repeat events become what people expect at a certain time of year and plan for and create valuable sponsorship opportunities for the venue. Here is one such event from another VenuWorks community.

#### Three Rivers Tattoo Convention - Kennewick, WA

At the Three Rivers Convention Center we have developed an annual Tattoo Convention that brings tattoo artists and enthusiasts together from all over the region. Created in 2009, the event continues to grow every year

#### Princes Ball - Chesapeake, VA

The Chesapeake Conference Center is transformed into a magical princess castle with four-different themed areas. Real live storybook princesses/characters will be entertaining.

### Community Involvement

While we excel at venue management and marketing, we also recognize the role of the convention center in the daily lives of all who reside in Fargo. We will encourage our VenuWorks team members to become active participating members of various civic and local organizations in Fargo. We community involvement by our VenuWorks' staff members in each of the communities we serve.

In Kennewick, WA VenuWorks Executive Director Corey Pearson, serves as First Chair on the Executive Committee for the Tri-Cities CVB. Additionally, the venue partnered with local agencies to create events including Christian Congregations of Jehovah Witnesses, The Washington Association of Wine Growers, and The Pacific Northwest Potato Growers.

The Vicksburg Convention Center and the Convention & Visitors Bureau are partners in co-hosting a weekly radio show and city TV show. These local fan favorite shows discuss the many local events in and around Vicksburg, MS. They also work together on sales calls several times throughout the month, attend association lunches together, co-host a charmer's luncheon to attract new business, and present at conventions and tradeshow. In addition to providing name tags and visitor bags with brochures for meetings, conventions and conferences, the CVB assisted in the purchase of a 42-passenger motor coach to shuttle convention attendees to and from local hotels.

### EVENT BOOKING POLICIES AND HOTEL ROOM BLOCK COMMITMENTS

The Fargo Convention Center will serve as a premier destination, offering high-quality meeting, convention, and event spaces to accommodate a wide range of functions.

As a cornerstone of Visit Fargo-Moorhead's initiatives, the Convention Center will play a pivotal role in driving Fargo's economic growth and tourism development, solidifying its position as a key community asset.

Funding for the Fargo Convention Center will primarily come from revenue generated through facility rentals, as well as lodging and restaurant tax revenues collected from Fargo establishments, ensuring a sustainable financial foundation for its operations.

### Booking Policy Definitions

Purpose: To establish clear definitions of the types of business or events that utilize the Fargo Convention Center. The following is based on a review of events in a comparable event center over the past four years. There are some very distinct patterns for definition.

#### Event Types

##### Public Show:

- An event that is open to the public and generally sells tickets or has some type of admission requirement.

##### Social Event:

- A gathering of a specific group or organization, usually not open to the public, no exhibiting, etc.

##### Religious Events:

- A gathering of members with exhibits and/or meeting – not open to the public.

##### Corporate Meeting:

- A gathering of employees from a specific corporation – not open to the public, only to corporate employees.

##### Political Event:

- Any event held/sponsored by a political/governmental entity, may or may not be open to the general public, held for political gain.

##### City Meeting:

- A gathering of employees of the City or citizens involved with a City department whose objective is the discussion of and conducting of business for the City of Fargo, including City Council.

### Classification Definitions

Purpose: To establish clear definitions of event classifications and recognize that all of the above event categories will fall into one or the other of the following two classifications. Distinct criteria are also defined for each classification.

### Gold - Convention, Trade Show, or Meetings

- A gathering of the members of an organization, a specific trade, or employees of a specific corporation, in which the following criteria must be met. These events consist of meetings/events:
  - Generally held at sites located in North Dakota or another state on a regularly scheduled basis; and,
  - Site is generally selected by competitive bid; and,
  - Attendees will occupy 25 or more traceable sleeping rooms for 2 or more nights in any one or more hotel, motel, or lodging property located within the corporate limits of the visit Fargo-Moorhead footprint where the public may obtain sleeping accommodations;
  - Visit Fargo-Moorhead staff must have assisted with the blocking or booking of rooms for these events. (This allows FCC staff to monitor and track room pick-ups and usage and provide appropriate levels of service.)

### Premium - Events – Local

- An event sponsored by any group or individual, either non-profit or not, whose audience is identified as the Visit Fargo-Moorhead region and whose publicity and promotion would not encourage attendance beyond the region. These events may generate some overnight rooms in local lodging properties but will generally use fewer than 25 rooms. These events may be annual, regular, or one-time-only events.

### Booking Policy

Purpose: To establish clear definitions for classifications of events that desire to utilize the Fargo Convention Center and the procedure for blocking and contracting space.

#### Gold Events – Convention, Trade Show, or Corporate Meeting

- A gathering of members of an established organization, specific trade, or employees of a corporation. The following criteria must be met:
  - The meeting site is being selected by competitive bid or specific request; and,
  - Attendees will occupy 25 or more traceable sleeping rooms for 2 or more nights in one or more hotel, motel, or lodging property located within the corporate limits of the Visit Fargo-Moorhead footprint; and,
  - Visit Fargo-Moorhead must be assisting the event by soliciting sleeping rooms or working in cooperation with a hotel property.

### Premium Events – Local

- An event sponsored or hosted by a group or individual whose majority attendance is from within the Chesapeake/Hampton Roads metropolitan area. Publicity and promotion of the event would not encourage attendance beyond the local area. These events may generate some overnight rooms; however, formal room blocks will not be established. These events may be annual, regular, or one-time-only events.

### Booking Policies

#### Gold Events

- Gold Events may contract space at the Fargo Convention Center with no time restraints but will be subject to the following guidelines:
  - Meeting Planner or Organizer must block 25 or more traceable sleeping rooms for a 2-night minimum in any one or more lodging properties located within the corporate limits of the Visit Fargo-Moorhead footprint.
  - Visit Fargo-Moorhead sales staff must assist with the blocking and booking of rooms for these events. This allows CVB staff to monitor room pick-ups and usage and provide appropriate levels of services.
- For Gold events that want to become repeat business, contracts may be issued for up to 5 years in advance, with tentative holds allowed for up to 10 years in advance.

#### Premium Events

- Premium Events may book space at the Fargo Convention Center 9 months in advance of the event date. A tentative hold can be placed on dates at any time with the understanding that a Gold Event will take precedence over a Premium Event. A contract will only be issued 9 months before the event commencement date. All Premium Event bookings will be on a first-come, first-served, space-available basis.
- If a sales manager has a Premium Event for which they believe special circumstances should be considered that would give it Gold booking status, they may request a review by VenuWorks.

### Economic Impact Consideration

- Understanding the additional added value a Gold Event brings to the City, the following pricing policy applies:
  - Discount for Hotel Room Nights
  - Groups that fall in the Gold category will receive the following room rental discounts with a 2-night minimum with peak nights of:
    - 151+ Rooms: 75% discount off the rack room rate

- 101–150 Rooms: 50% discount off the rack room rate
- 50–100 Rooms: 25% discount off the rack room rate
- 49 Rooms or less: No discount off the rack room rate

**Discount for Food and Beverage**

The client will also receive a room rental discount of \$1,000 for every \$5,000 in food and beverage purchased from the Fargo Convention Center.

- This discount:
  - Will not exceed the total amount of room rental due
  - Is applied after the room rental discount is applied

**DIVISION OF RESPONSIBILITIES**

As the venue manager, VenuWorks will be responsible for the overall marketing and sales of the Fargo Convention Center. VenuWorks will work with local hoteliers, Visit Fargo-Moorhead, Fargo Moorhead West Fargo Chamber of Commerce, the Fargo Downtown Community Partnership, and other local businesses, to recruit events and promote the community.

**PRE-OPENING STRATEGY AND TIMELINE FOR CONVENTION CENTER AND HOTEL**

As we work on the physical structure, we never lose sight of the need to heavily market the facility from the onset. Below is a representative VenuWorks marketing task list:

- Develop marketing plan for client to approve and for VenuWorks to implement
- Develop materials necessary to support the plan
- Work with the tourism industry and community leaders to execute the plan
- Industry-wide advertising awareness campaign supported by PR & promotional campaigns
- Local market area advertising and PR campaigns
- Survey the competition
- Exploit groundbreaking for maximum public relations value and exposure in the industry, both locally and nationally
- Maintain ongoing community relations and exposure to industry via press releases, speaker’s bureau, paid advertising and direct mail
- Plan Grand Opening to maximize market impact and community relations

- Establish a group ticket sales campaign
- Maintain booking calendar, schedule and contract events
- Create in – house advertising capabilities

The VenuWorks team will leverage every opportunity to generate media awareness and excitement for the new Fargo Convention Center. Through strategic press releases, press conferences, groundbreaking ceremonies, celebrity visits, building tours, and announcements of confirmed events, we will ensure the facility remains in the spotlight.

- **Pitch Letters:** With strong, established relationships in the industry, our team will craft targeted pitch letters for daily and weekly newspaper editors, business writers, community newspapers, arts and entertainment writers, as well as radio and TV producers. These letters will highlight the economic impact of the new facility and the variety of events it will host. Tailored stories will be pitched to community newspapers and cable stations, as well as larger regional publications, to maximize coverage.
- **Media Releases:** We will develop a series of ongoing media releases to announce key milestones, such as construction updates, confirmed events, and operational plans. These releases will keep the public and media informed and engaged throughout the pre-opening, opening, and operational phases.
- **Pre-Opening Materials:** Our team will assist in the design, writing, editing, and production of all pre-opening materials, including brochures, guides, handbooks, and other printed resources essential for the facility’s launch.
- **Photo Opportunities:** We will capitalize on every photo opportunity during the construction and opening phases, including celebrity visits, milestone achievements (e.g., roof truss installation, cement pours, seat installations), ribbon cuttings, and grand opening events. Media advisories will be distributed to local TV and radio stations, major newspapers, and community publications to ensure widespread coverage.
- **Publicity Events:** To build excitement and community engagement, we will organize a series of high-impact publicity events. These will include groundbreaking ceremonies, construction milestones, sign dedications, cornerstone installations, ribbon cuttings, open houses, and community celebrations leading up to the grand opening.

By combining these efforts, the VenuWorks team will create a comprehensive and dynamic media strategy to ensure the Fargo Convention Center becomes a celebrated and highly anticipated addition to the community.

**hunden** partners

DOWNTOWN COMMUNITY  
PARTNERSHIP

# Convention Center Economic Impact Analysis

February 2026



# Who We Are

We are the leading global advisor in place strategy—where tourism development, economic development, and real estate development intersect.

With professionals in Chicago, New York, Dallas, and Minneapolis, Hunden provides a variety of services for all stages of destination development in:

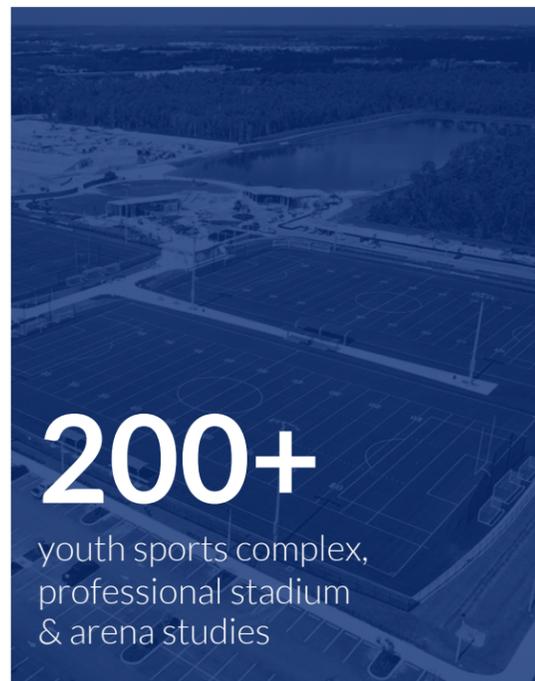


**\$25B**

in projects successfully developed and/or in progress

**>1.2K**

studies & processes. Of these, **over 80%** are for public sector or DMO clients



**200+**

youth sports complex, professional stadium & arena studies



**600+**

conference, convention, event center & hotel studies



# Contents

**01** Project Overview

**02** Demand & Financial Projections

**03** Economic Impact Projections

**04** Downtown Case Study Success Stories



# 01

## Project Overview



## Project Overview

Hunden Partners was engaged by the Downtown Community Partnership to conduct a preliminary economic impact analysis of a proposed convention center in downtown Fargo (Convention Center), located on the existing Civic Quad. Hunden collaborated with the Kilbourne Group and VenuWorks to ensure impact projections are grounded in financial realities. The analysis includes economic, fiscal, and employment impacts of the Project as defined within the Kilbourne Group-led proposal.

Currently, Fargo does not have a traditional convention center whose primary focus is conventions and meetings. The development of this facility would focus on attracting overnight visitors and the economic activity they will bring to Fargo, and most notably, the downtown area.

The proposed facility would also serve the needs of Fargo and surrounding area residents. The current design allows for flexibility and the ability to service the local meetings market.



## Operating Partner

The demand and financial projections for the Convention Center were developed by VenuWorks. VenuWorks is a nationally recognized venue management company specializing in the operation of convention centers, arenas, and public assembly facilities across the United States. With a portfolio of assets in similarly-sized markets and a management philosophy rooted in financial transparency and employee-owner culture, VenuWorks brings decades of hands-on operational experience to their demand and financial modeling.

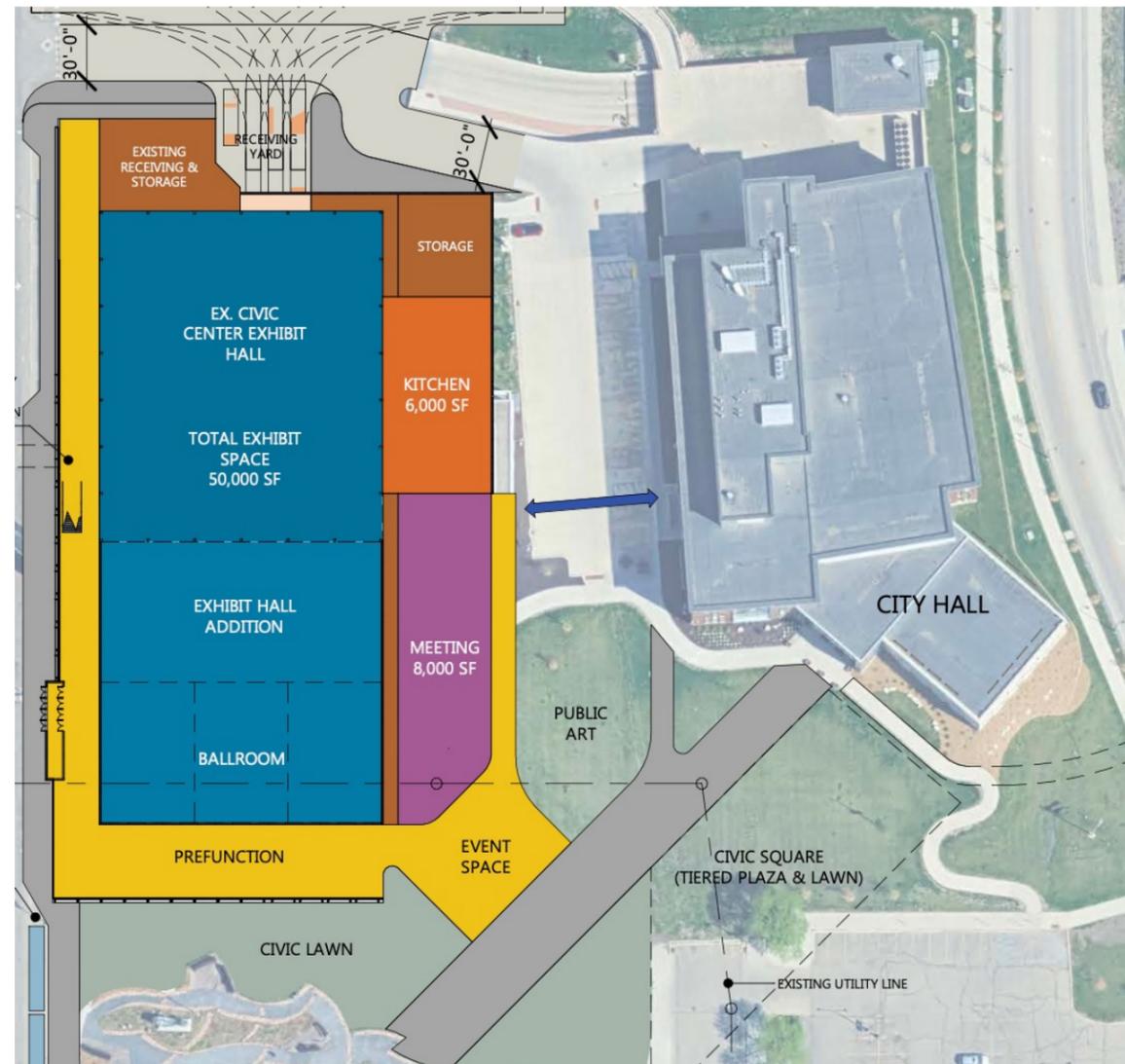
The firm manages the BlueCross Arena in Rochester, NY, the Adler Theatre and RiverCenter Convention Center in Davenport, IA, the Toyota Center and Three Rivers Convention Center in Kennewick, WA, and the Fresno Convention and Entertainment Center in Fresno, CA. By leveraging data from their extensive network of venues, such as the Bridge View Center in Ottumwa, Iowa and the United Wireless Arena in Dodge City, Kansas. VenuWorks ensures the projections of the Fargo project are both ambitious and grounded in proven operational performance.



# Convention Center Planned Space

The proposed Convention Center encompasses approximately 96,250 square feet, complete with 50,000 square feet of divisible exhibit hall and ballroom space, 8,000 square feet of meeting and conference space on the main floor, 5,600 square feet of meeting rooms on the basement level, and a 6,000-square-foot commercial kitchen. The exhibit hall features divisible walls allowing the space to be configured into smaller sizes based on the size of the event. VenuWorks' operating model is based on this proposed building program.

The following slides outline the demand and financial projections developed by VenuWorks.



# 02

## Demand & Financial Projections



# Event Days

Event Days at Stabilization  
(Year 4)

**222**

Fargo Convention Center	Year 1	Year 2	Year 3	Year 4	Year 5	Year 10
<b>Event Days</b>						
Conference	13	14	14	16	16	16
Consumer Shows	8	10	10	10	10	10
Convention	4	4	4	4	4	4
Concerts	4	6	6	8	8	8
Wedding Reception	10	13	13	16	16	16
Sporting	6	8	8	10	10	10
Dance	8	8	8	10	10	10
Sports Practice	12	20	20	24	24	24
Political	1	2	2	4	4	4
Community/Civic	20	20	20	24	24	24
Trade Show	4	4	4	4	4	4
Meetings	60	60	60	60	60	60
Banquets	26	28	28	32	32	32
<b>Total</b>	<b>176</b>	<b>197</b>	<b>197</b>	<b>222</b>	<b>222</b>	<b>222</b>

Source: VenuWorks

# Attendance

Attendance at Stabilization  
(Year 4)

**102,996**

Fargo Convention Center	Year 1	Year 2	Year 3	Year 4	Year 5	Year 10
<b>Attendance</b>						
Conference	3,019	3,814	3,814	4,800	4,800	4,800
Consumer Shows	12,580	17,659	17,659	20,000	20,000	20,000
Convention	3,931	4,415	4,415	5,000	5,000	5,000
Concerts	786	1,324	1,324	2,000	2,000	2,000
Wedding Reception	3,095	4,344	4,344	6,396	6,396	6,396
Sporting	7,076	10,595	10,595	15,000	15,000	15,000
Dance	6,290	7,063	7,063	10,000	10,000	10,000
Sports Practice	1,415	2,649	2,649	3,600	3,600	3,600
Political	157	353	353	800	800	800
Community/Civic	7,863	8,829	8,829	12,000	12,000	12,000
Trade Show	4,718	5,298	5,298	6,000	6,000	6,000
Meetings	2,359	2,649	2,649	3,000	3,000	3,000
Banquets	9,199	11,125	11,125	14,400	14,400	14,400
<b>Total</b>	<b>62,488</b>	<b>80,117</b>	<b>80,117</b>	<b>102,996</b>	<b>102,996</b>	<b>102,996</b>

*Source: VenuWorks*

# Demand Projections

Net New Overnight Visitors  
(Year 4)

**26,078**

Visitors projected to travel to Fargo and stay overnight *specifically* because of a convention center event

**28.5%**

Of total net new visitors

STABILIZATION (YEAR 4)

**222**

Event Days

**65,366**

Net New Daytrips

**102,996**

Total Attendance

**26,078**

Net New Overnights

**154,875**

Total Visitors

**14,666**

Net New Room Nights

Source: VenuWorks, Hunden Partners

# Proforma

Stabilization  
(Year 4)

**\$4.1 M**

Net Revenue

**\$310 K**

Net Revenue to Parking Ramps

**\$2.9 M**

Expenses

**\$1.2 M**

Net Operating Income

Fargo Convention Center (\$000s)	Year 1	Year 2	Year 3	Year 4	Year 5	Year 10
<b>Revenues</b>						
(+) Space Rental	\$ 514	\$ 585	\$ 602	\$ 691	\$ 712	\$ 825
(+) Equipment Rental	\$ 16	\$ 18	\$ 19	\$ 22	\$ 22	\$ 26
(+) Event Services Revenue	\$ 115	\$ 130	\$ 134	\$ 154	\$ 159	\$ 184
(+) Food & Beverage	\$ 1,778	\$ 2,308	\$ 2,377	\$ 3,191	\$ 3,287	\$ 3,810
(+) Advertising	\$ 164	\$ 213	\$ 219	\$ 290	\$ 299	\$ 346
(+) Other Income	\$ 86	\$ 114	\$ 117	\$ 157	\$ 162	\$ 187
(+) Parking, Net	\$ 179	\$ 231	\$ 238	\$ 310	\$ 320	\$ 371
(-) Free Rent + COGS of Direct Sales	\$ (428)	\$ (540)	\$ (556)	\$ (722)	\$ (744)	\$ (862)
<b>Total</b>	<b>\$ 2,425</b>	<b>\$ 3,060</b>	<b>\$ 3,152</b>	<b>\$ 4,093</b>	<b>\$ 4,216</b>	<b>\$ 4,887</b>
<b>Expenses</b>						
(-) Wages & Benefits	\$ 1,095	\$ 1,128	\$ 1,162	\$ 1,197	\$ 1,233	\$ 1,429
(-) Cost of Goods / F&B Labor	\$ 740	\$ 762	\$ 785	\$ 809	\$ 833	\$ 966
(-) Contacted Services	\$ 59	\$ 61	\$ 63	\$ 64	\$ 66	\$ 77
(-) General & Administrative	\$ 84	\$ 87	\$ 90	\$ 92	\$ 95	\$ 110
(-) Service and Operations	\$ 60	\$ 61	\$ 63	\$ 65	\$ 67	\$ 78
(-) Event Expense	\$ 24	\$ 24	\$ 25	\$ 26	\$ 27	\$ 31
(-) Repairs & Maintenance	\$ 44	\$ 46	\$ 47	\$ 48	\$ 50	\$ 58
(-) Supplies	\$ 77	\$ 79	\$ 82	\$ 84	\$ 87	\$ 101
(-) Insurance	\$ 37	\$ 38	\$ 39	\$ 41	\$ 42	\$ 48
(-) Utilities	\$ 204	\$ 210	\$ 217	\$ 223	\$ 230	\$ 266
(-) Management Fees	\$ 180	\$ 185	\$ 191	\$ 196	\$ 202	\$ 234
(-) Other	\$ 56	\$ 57	\$ 59	\$ 61	\$ 63	\$ 73
<b>Total</b>	<b>\$ 2,661</b>	<b>\$ 2,741</b>	<b>\$ 2,823</b>	<b>\$ 2,908</b>	<b>\$ 2,995</b>	<b>\$ 3,472</b>
<b>Net Operating Income</b>	<b>\$ (236)</b>	<b>\$ 319</b>	<b>\$ 329</b>	<b>\$ 1,185</b>	<b>\$ 1,221</b>	<b>\$ 1,415</b>
<b>Operating Margin</b>	<b>-10%</b>	<b>10%</b>	<b>10%</b>	<b>29%</b>	<b>29%</b>	<b>29%</b>

Source: VenuWorks, Hunden Partners

# 03

## Economic Impact Projections



# Impact Overview

Hunden uses the RIMS II (Regional Input-Output Modeling System) multiplier model developed by the U.S. Bureau of Economic Analysis. This model determines the level of additional economic activity generated from initial direct spending. For every dollar of direct new spending, the RIMS II multipliers quantify the secondary and tertiary effects due to that direct spending.

The new and recaptured spending (both onsite and offsite) is considered to be the **Direct Impact**. This represents the immediate economic activity from the Project and visitor expenditures.

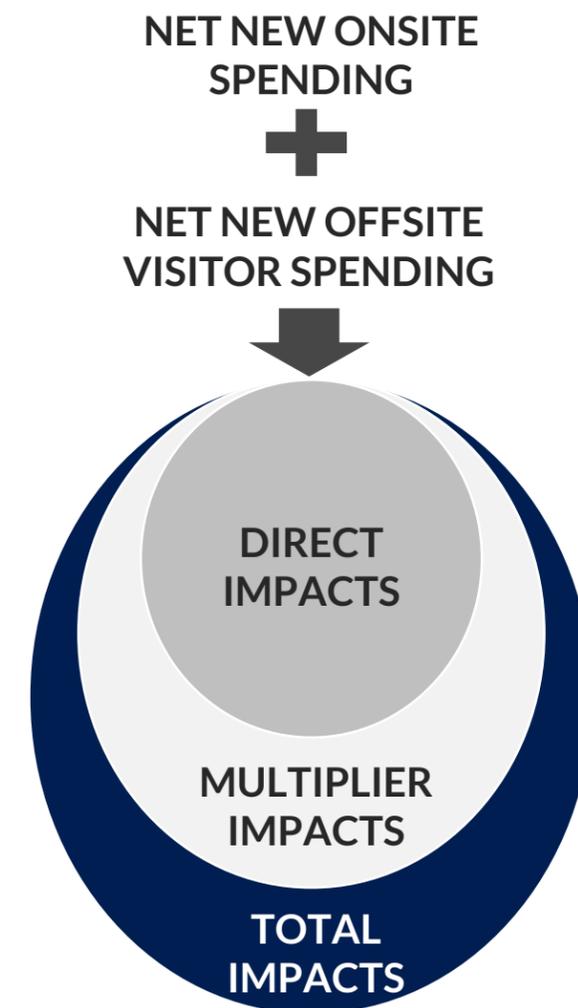
**Multiplier Impacts** capture the secondary and tertiary effects that occur as a result of the direct spending. A couple examples of multiplier impacts are listed below:

- Supply chain effects as businesses purchase goods and services from suppliers
- Household spending effects as employees spend their earnings

**Total Impacts** are calculated by adding the Direct Impacts and Multiplier Impacts together, showing the full economic effect of the Project.

**Employment Impacts** represent the total jobs supported both directly by the Project and indirectly due to the multiplier effects. The analysis shows ongoing jobs supported by the Project and provide the resulting job earnings generated.

**Fiscal Impacts** represent the incremental tax revenue collected due to the net new direct economic activity. The fiscal impact represents the government's share of economic benefits.



# Net New Spending (Excluding Construction)

## Fargo Convention Center

**\$470 Million**

30-Year Direct Net  
New Spending

**\$835 Million**

30-Year Total Net New  
Spending

**\$15.7 Million**

Annual Average Direct  
Net New Spending

**\$27.8 Million**

Annual Average Total  
Net New Spending

Net New Spending   in \$000s Fargo Convention Center										
	Year 1	Year 2	Year 3	Year 4	Year 5	Year 10	Year 20	Year 30	30-Year Total	30-Year Average
<b>Net New Direct Spend</b>										
Food & Beverage	\$ 2,644	\$ 3,474	\$ 3,578	\$ 4,735	\$ 4,877	\$ 5,654	\$ 7,598	\$ 10,212	\$ 202,460	\$ 6,749
Lodging	\$ 1,488	\$ 1,976	\$ 2,035	\$ 2,601	\$ 2,679	\$ 3,106	\$ 4,174	\$ 5,610	\$ 111,399	\$ 3,713
Retail	\$ 433	\$ 583	\$ 600	\$ 772	\$ 795	\$ 922	\$ 1,239	\$ 1,665	\$ 33,047	\$ 1,102
Transportation	\$ 1,189	\$ 1,591	\$ 1,639	\$ 2,112	\$ 2,175	\$ 2,522	\$ 3,313	\$ 4,453	\$ 88,832	\$ 2,961
Parking	\$ 475	\$ 616	\$ 635	\$ 798	\$ 822	\$ 952	\$ 1,280	\$ 1,720	\$ 34,197	\$ 1,140
<b>Total</b>	<b>\$ 6,228</b>	<b>\$ 8,240</b>	<b>\$ 8,487</b>	<b>\$ 11,018</b>	<b>\$ 11,349</b>	<b>\$ 13,156</b>	<b>\$ 17,605</b>	<b>\$ 23,660</b>	<b>\$ 469,935</b>	<b>\$ 15,665</b>
<b>Total New Spend</b>									<i>Total</i>	<i>Average</i>
Direct Spend	\$ 6,228	\$ 8,240	\$ 8,487	\$ 11,018	\$ 11,349	\$ 13,156	\$ 17,605	\$ 23,660	\$ 469,935	\$ 15,665
Net New Multiplier Spend	\$ 4,836	\$ 6,398	\$ 6,590	\$ 8,559	\$ 8,816	\$ 10,220	\$ 13,667	\$ 18,367	\$ 364,859	\$ 12,162
<b>Total</b>	<b>\$ 11,065</b>	<b>\$ 14,638</b>	<b>\$ 15,077</b>	<b>\$ 19,577</b>	<b>\$ 20,164</b>	<b>\$ 23,376</b>	<b>\$ 31,272</b>	<b>\$ 42,026</b>	<b>\$ 834,794</b>	<b>\$ 27,826</b>

Source: Hunden Partners

# Net New Earnings and Jobs

Fargo Convention Center

**\$118 Million**

30-Year Direct Net  
New Earnings

**\$204 Million**

30-Year Total Net New  
Earnings

**\$3.9 Million**

Annual Average Direct  
Net New Earnings

**\$6.8 Million**

Annual Average Total  
Net New Earnings

**125**

Total FTE Jobs  
Supported

Net New Earnings & FTE Jobs   in \$000s Fargo Convention Center										
	Year 1	Year 2	Year 3	Year 4	Year 5	Year 10	Year 20	Year 30	30-Year Total	30-Year Average
<b>Net New Job Earnings</b>										
Direct Job Earnings	\$ 1,570	\$ 2,074	\$ 2,136	\$ 2,774	\$ 2,857	\$ 3,312	\$ 4,435	\$ 5,960	\$ 118,360	\$ 3,945
Multiplier Job Earnings	\$ 1,132	\$ 1,497	\$ 1,542	\$ 2,002	\$ 2,062	\$ 2,391	\$ 3,197	\$ 4,297	\$ 85,360	\$ 2,845
<b>Total</b>	<b>\$ 2,701</b>	<b>\$ 3,571</b>	<b>\$ 3,678</b>	<b>\$ 4,776</b>	<b>\$ 4,919</b>	<b>\$ 5,703</b>	<b>\$ 7,632</b>	<b>\$ 10,257</b>	<b>\$ 203,720</b>	<b>\$ 6,791</b>
<b>Net New FTE Jobs (Actual)</b>									<i>Peak</i>	<i>Average</i>
Direct Jobs	56	72	72	91	91	91	91	91	91	88
Multiplier Jobs	21	27	27	34	34	34	33	33	34	33
<b>Total</b>	<b>77</b>	<b>99</b>	<b>99</b>	<b>125</b>	<b>125</b>	<b>125</b>	<b>124</b>	<b>124</b>	<b>125</b>	<b>121</b>

Source: Hunden Partners

# Net New Taxes

## Fargo Convention Center

### Key Takeaways:

- The proposed Fargo Convention Center is projected to generate \$20.9 million in net new local tax revenue to the City of Fargo over 30 years, averaging \$699,000 annually.
- Of this total, \$10.3 million is projected from Sales Tax, \$4.5 million from Food & Beverage Tax, and \$5.8 million from Hotel Tax.

**\$20.9 Million**

**30-Year Direct Net New  
Local Tax Revenue**

**\$699K**

**Annual Average Net  
New Local Tax Revenue**

Net New Taxes from Direct Net New Spending   in \$000s Fargo Convention Center										
	Year 1	Year 2	Year 3	Year 4	Year 5	Year 10	Year 20	Year 30	30-Year Total	30-Year Average
<b>Local Taxes</b>										
Sales Tax	\$ 140	\$ 185	\$ 191	\$ 248	\$ 255	\$ 296	\$ 396	\$ 532	\$ 10,574	\$ 352
Food & Beverage Tax	\$ 59	\$ 78	\$ 81	\$ 107	\$ 110	\$ 127	\$ 171	\$ 230	\$ 4,555	\$ 152
Hotel Tax	\$ 78	\$ 104	\$ 107	\$ 137	\$ 141	\$ 163	\$ 219	\$ 295	\$ 5,848	\$ 195
<b>Total</b>	<b>\$ 278</b>	<b>\$ 367</b>	<b>\$ 378</b>	<b>\$ 491</b>	<b>\$ 506</b>	<b>\$ 586</b>	<b>\$ 786</b>	<b>\$ 1,057</b>	<b>\$ 20,977</b>	<b>\$ 699</b>

Source: Hunden Partners

# Impact Summary

## Fargo Convention Center

**Net New Spending: \$835 M**

**Net New Earnings: \$204 M**

**Net New FTE Jobs: 125**

**Net New Taxes: \$20.9 M**

Over a 30-year period, the Fargo Convention Center is projected to generate \$470 million in net new on- and off-site direct spending, resulting in an estimated \$835 million in direct and multiplier spending. Total job earnings due to this net new spending are projected at \$204 million over the 30-year period, supporting 125 new full-time equivalent jobs. The Project is also expected to generate \$21 million in local tax revenue including \$10.6 million in sales tax, \$4.5 million in food and beverage tax, and \$5.8 million in hotel tax.



Impact Type	Annual Average Impact	30-Year Total Impact
Direct Spending	\$15.7 M	\$469.9 M
Multiplier Spending	\$12.1 M	\$364.9 M
<b>Total Spending</b>	<b>\$27.8 M</b>	<b>\$834.8 M</b>
Direct Earnings	\$3.9 M	\$118.3 M
Multiplier Earnings	\$2.8 M	\$85.4 M
<b>Total Earnings</b>	<b>\$6.8 M</b>	<b>\$203.7 M</b>
Sales Tax	\$352 K	\$10.6 M
Food & Beverage Tax	\$152 K	\$4.5 M
Hotel Tax	\$195 K	\$5.8 M
<b>Total Tax Revenue</b>	<b>\$699 K</b>	<b>\$20.9 M</b>

Source: Hunden Partners  
\*Numbers subject to Rounding

# 04

## Downtown Case Study Success Stories



# Owensboro Convention Center



**Convention Center**

- Owensboro, KY
  - Population: 60,000
  - River City
  - Regional Hub in Western KY
- The Catalyst
  - \$50M Convention Center opened in Jan 2014
  - 92,000 SF on the Ohio River



**Owensboro Riverfront**

- What Followed:
  - 5 new hotels; 558+ Rooms
  - Bluegrass Music Hall of Fame & Museum Opened
  - Bourbon Distillery opened and joined KY Bourbon Trail
  - Riverfront Dining & Live Music District emerged
  - Record hotel occupancy in 2022 and 2023
  - State estimated that \$250 million were spent in Daviess County with \$31.9 million at local hotels
  - **Convention Center served as an anchor to a cluster of amenities**

Sources: The Lane Report, Visit Owensboro, Greater Owensboro EDC

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# Fox Cities Convention Center



**Fox Cities Convention Center**

- Appleton, WI
- Population: 75,000; Metro: 250,000
  - Fox River Regional Hub in East-Central Wisconsin
- \$32 million convention/exhibition center opened January 2018
- ~47,000 sf indoor space and ~17,000 sf outdoor space
- Connected via skywalk to Hilton Paper Valley



**Appleton's College Avenue**

- What Followed:
  - 4 New Apartment Buildings; 230 new units within ~.3 miles of Fox Cities Convention Center
  - Attached Hilton Appleton Paper Valley underwent a major remodel; now offering 388 guest rooms, four onsite restaurants and a Starbucks
  - Spurred development of the "Fox Commons"
    - \$15 million project, 180k sf of Mixed-Use space with apartments, healthcare facilities, food hall, and shops
  - New farmers market started at Voyageurs Bakehouse on College Ave
  - Convention Center kickstarted strong spillover into Downtown

## RDO Tower, a Fargo Success Story

- 8% property value increase in selected parcels within 0.1 to 0.2 miles of tower\*
- Cascade of investments and spending in the area
  - 375 RDO Employees who are now office workers in the tower
  - Boutique hotel (The Jasper), The Rosewild restaurant, Ground-floor retail, condominiums and the half-acre gathering area that is the Broadway Square Plaza
  - New businesses and facilities located to the area:
    - The Mercantile (405 Broadway), six-story mixed use with 100 apartments, 17k sf commercial space and a parking garage
    - The Kelsler Building (624 2<sup>nd</sup> Ave N), 109 apartments, 9,000 square feet of retail space, Bottle Barn off Liquor store opened there
    - Black Coffee and Waffle Bar, Salt Hill Gallery, and The Nines Clothing Store



Sources: Kilbourne Group, City of Fargo Assessments  
\*Based on data gathered from the City of Fargo Assessor's office

**hunden**  
**partners**

213 W. Institute Place, Suite 707  
Chicago, IL 60610

312.643.2500 | [hunden.com](https://www.hunden.com)

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