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Santa Clara Launches National Search for Convention Center Operator

City initiates robust business engagement to inform the selection process

SANTA CLARA, Calif. – At the heart of the Silicon Valley, a rare opportunity is now available for the operations of the [Santa Clara Convention Center](#). On Wednesday, Oct. 17, 2018, the City of Santa Clara issued a [Request for Proposals](#) (RFP) for the operation and management of the Convention Center and tourism/visitor services. Proposals are due by Dec. 3, 2018, with the intent of having an operator in place, under a new contract, by mid-March 2019.

“At the center of the Silicon Valley, adjacent to Levi’s® Stadium, California’s Great America, multiple hotels and the future site of the CityPlace development project, the opportunity to operate a convention center uniquely surrounded by entertainment venues makes this venture highly desirable,” stated Mayor Lisa M. Gillmor. “The City Council’s goal is to work with our business community to make sure that their economic impact goals are used to select the next operator and that we begin a community discussion on strengthening the relationship between the convention center and local business community.”

To respond to the local interest in the publicly-owned facility and economic impact potential, the City Council directed a special workshop to discuss governance and a preferred business model for the Convention Center. The City will engage with the business community and other stakeholders about the selection of a Convention Center operator on topics of interest, which include:

- Governance structure for the City of Santa Clara and selected operator for the Convention Center;
- Community benefits;
- Leveraging or synergistic opportunities to promote Santa Clara’s local businesses; and
- Ideas for strengthening the relationship between local businesses and Convention Center activity, given its geographically strategic location in the Silicon Valley.

In the coming weeks, businesses can provide their input through various methods including an online questionnaire, a letter to local businesses including a postcard that they can mail back with their comments, or attend a workshop held Thursday, Nov. 15, from 5-8 p.m., at the Convention Center. Input received online, in writing, or at the workshop will be made available to the City Council, the panel selected to review proposals, and shared with potential proposers.

The RFP panel, made up of City and industry experts, will review responsive proposals for the Convention Center management and operations. The panel will include highly qualified individuals who are knowledgeable of the convention and tourism industry, and managing public assets. More details about the panel will be released at the appropriate time during the procurement process.

The objectives of this procurement for a new operator are: (1) Seek highly qualified proposals for (1) combined Convention Center management and tourism/visitor services OR (2) only

Convention Center management services from reputable companies; (2) Ensure open and fair competition including adherence to procurement process integrity and conflict of interest guidelines; and, (3) Comply with the City's [Worker Retention Ordinance](#). The goals of the RFP include awarding a contract for an initial five-year period with two five-year options for renewal at the City's sole discretion, eliminating or minimizing any City subsidy while optimizing economic performance, making capital investments in the Convention Center, enhancing transparency and contractor accountability, and establishing the use of key performance benchmarks.

The Convention Center operations and tourism/visitor services contract became available following an [independent performance audit](#) that found financial and operational mismanagement by the current operator, the Santa Clara Chamber of Commerce.

During the Sept. 18, 2018 meeting, the City Council approved the issuance of a 180-day termination notice to the Chamber for its Convention Center management contract which has been in effect since 1984. The Council also gave direction to seek competitive proposals to manage and operate the City facility under a new contract with much stronger reporting and oversight provisions.

For more information, go to the [City website](#).

About the Santa Clara Convention Center

The Santa Clara Convention Center is uniquely located at the center of the Silicon Valley, surrounded by Levi's Stadium California Great America, global Silicon Valley businesses, premier hotels and the future of the CityPlace development which plans to break ground in 2019 bringing nearly 10 million square feet of mixed-use, high quality venues to the region. Located at 5001 Great America Parkway, the Santa Clara Convention Center has over 262,000 square feet of flexible meeting spaces. It is considered Silicon Valley's premier convention space due to its centralized location and easy access to some of the world's top companies. The high-tech facility can accommodate a range of events including conventions, trade shows, conferences, corporate meetings, weddings and receptions, and other types of special occasions. For more information, visit santaclaraconventioncenter.org/.

About the City of Santa Clara

Located at the heart of Silicon Valley about 45 miles south of San Francisco, the City of Santa Clara truly is "The Center of What's Possible." Incorporated in 1852, Santa Clara covers an area of 19.3 square miles with a population of 120,000. Santa Clara is home to an extraordinary array of high-tech companies, including Applied Materials, Hewlett-Packard, Intel, Nvidia, Oracle, and Ericsson. The City of Santa Clara is also home to Santa Clara University, California's Great America Theme Park, and Levi's® Stadium, home of the San Francisco 49ers and Super Bowl 50. For more information, go to www.SantaClaraCA.gov.

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