

**To the Mayor and Members of the City Council****July 21, 2015**

Page 1 of 2

SUBJECT: FORT WORTH CONVENTION CENTER ARENA SEAT REHABILITATION PROJECT

This Informal Report is to provide information regarding the rehabilitation and/or the replacement of the permanent seats in the Fort Worth Convention Center Arena.

The Fort Worth Convention Center (FWCC) opened in 1968 and featured the existing arena, 100,000 square feet of exhibit space and a full performing arts theatre. The expansion and renovations that were completed in 2003 added 81,000 square feet of exhibit space, upgraded the existing 100,000 square feet of exhibit space, added a 29,000 square foot ballroom and 35,000 square feet of additional meeting space. Although millions of dollars have been invested in improvements at the FWCC, the interior of the arena has not been renovated, with the exception of some previous seat renovations and minor cosmetic improvements. The FWCC arena shows the wear and tear of the millions of guests who have visited the facility to attend conventions, sporting events, enjoy concerts, attend motivational rallies, watch children graduate from high school or experience the thrill of the Circus.

The long range plans call for the arena to be removed in a future Phase III FWCC expansion estimated to be in or around 2022- 2025, depending upon availability of future funding. In the meantime, the arena will be experienced by many guests visiting Fort Worth. The current condition of a great many of the arena seats, especially in the upper bowl can only be described as deplorable. Our guests come out of beautifully renovated spaces to a session in the arena, and experience seating that does not reflect well on the venue or the city. The arena has 10,490 permanent seats.

In 2014, there were 10 conventions that used the arena as their primary general session space. Economic impact from the conventions as reported by the Fort Worth Convention and Visitors Bureau was \$46.9 million, and total spending as a result of the conventions was in excess of \$80 million. (FWCC Arena Economic Impact as calculated by DMAI Economic Impact Calculator.)

Over the period of 2015 through 2020, there are approximately 50+ conventions holding space at the Convention Center that will use the arena for meeting and event space. The economic impact of these events, many that have already confirmed, exceeds \$200 million with total spending in excess of \$363 million. In addition to the conventions scheduled in the arena, there are many graduations and other important events that will utilize the arena seating each year.

The cost to rehabilitate and or replace all of the permanent seats in the arena is estimated at \$950,000. This includes replacement of the upholstery, cushion and rehabilitation of the seat infrastructure, or perhaps replacement of the seats completely, whichever is most cost effective. The average economic impact from conventions that utilized the arena in 2014 was approximately \$4.7 million. The cost for the rehabilitation project is less than one-fourth of the impact from one of the conventions to the community.

To the Mayor and Members of the City Council

July 21, 2015

Page 2 of 2



SUBJECT: FORT WORTH CONVENTION CENTER ARENA SEAT REHABILITATION PROJECT

The staffs of the Public Events Department and the Fort Worth Convention and Visitors Bureau agree that the rehabilitation of the arena seating is important in delivering an outstanding guest experience. The investment in the FWCC Arena seats is imperative to continuation of operations until a time in the future when another FWCC expansion is funded.

It is anticipated that the bids will be issued around July 27, 2015 with the item to appear on the City Council agenda in the time frame of September 15, 2015. Funding for the project will be allocated from unused project funds and funds allocated for improvements in the Culture and Tourism Fund.

If you have any questions, please contact Kirk Slaughter, Director of Facilities and Public Events at 817-392-2501.

**David Cooke
City Manager**

