

Frequently Asked Questions About COBO CENTER

1. When will construction begin and end?

Although the Legislature granted the Authority \$279 million to expand Cobo Center, no specific concept, design or strategic plan were mandated, leaving those responsibilities to the Authority. Therefore, it is premature to set a delivery schedule on an as-yet-undefined expansion project. However, the Authority has developed a Request for Qualifications and Proposals for the engineering and design of an expanded Cobo Center. Once the Authority evaluates the proposals and selects a firm, the members will be better able to provide the public with a construction schedule.

2. How will the construction affect groups that book their conventions at Cobo?

The Authority is sensitive to the fact that it must manage the expansion of an operational convention center. Therefore, its priority is ensuring that each customer enjoys the best experience possible as we transform Cobo Center into a world-class center. The Authority already has performed \$3 million in significant upgrades to the facility while still hosting successful events. In many cases, our clients had no idea that the upgrades were even taking place.

3. Will groups who have booked conventions still get the space they contracted?

There are currently no renovation plans for any of Cobo's major exhibit halls; therefore, the Authority intends to honor all existing contracts. Of course, specific answers to space questions can only be answered on a case-by-case basis.

4. What type of inconvenience will this cause my convention? Will the changes affect the building's current layout, and will my program still work if the space changes?

The Authority plans to take a phased approach to performing any major upgrades and/or expansion, making it possible to host successful events as those changes occur. The Authority is committed to ensuring all customers know exactly what to expect from the facility as they make their decisions. The Authority certainly understands apprehension regarding selecting a conference site that is undergoing a significant transformation. However, none of our major exhibit halls are slated for major upgrades and the Authority is very confident in Cobo's continued ability to host successful events. The Authority's members are committed to having direct personal contact and open dialogue with every potential customer to alleviate any concerns they may have. The renovation of Cobo Center is a very positive process. Customer satisfaction is paramount for the Authority and we will never lose sight of responding to our customers' needs.

5. Will there be new labor agreements?

Every aspect of the facility's operation is subject to change under the Authority, including labor arrangements. In the short term, by law the Authority had to accept all existing labor agreements; however, it is the Authority's intent to renegotiate all contracts at the appropriate time. However, the Authority does not believe that past cost issues and other problems were labor-driven. Rather, inefficient facility conditions likely have been most responsible for past labor complaints. Facility malfunctions have added time and manpower to an otherwise simple workflow. The Authority is confident that significant cost savings are inevitable through Cobo Center's upgrades and expansion, making Cobo an efficient facility.

6. Will exhibitors still have to work with exclusive contractors?

In the past, Cobo Center held agreements with "exclusive" service providers who were familiar with the facility. Those agreements left no other option for exhibitors, and no incentive for competitive pricing among the exclusive service providers. In the short-term, the Authority was legally mandated to maintain its current contractual relationships. However, the Authority recognizes the need to foster a more competitive environment among its service providers that results in competitive pricing for our customers. The intent is to provide a pool of qualified and experienced service providers that will competitively bid for customers' business.