

# WHY SPRINGFIELD NEEDS A *New Convention & Events Center*

## INTRODUCTION

Springfield's visitor economy is a significant driver of local jobs, tax revenue, and overall economic impact. However, the City's primary convention facility, the Expo Center, no longer meets modern industry standards, limiting Springfield's ability to compete for regional and national conventions, meetings, and events.

As peer cities invest in updated convention infrastructure, Springfield faces a clear choice: modernize and compete, or continue losing conventions, visitor spending, and economic opportunity to other markets.

A new Convention and Events Center is proposed as an economic development tool designed to protect and grow the visitor economy, strengthen the tax base, and position Springfield for long-term competitiveness using a visitor-funded model.

### Economic impact and tax base protection

- Tourism generates approximately \$1 billion in annual economic impact in Springfield.
- More than 20,000 local jobs are supported by visitor spending.
- Without tourism revenue, the average Springfield household would need to pay approximately \$671 more in taxes per year to maintain current service levels.
- Protecting and growing the visitor economy helps stabilize the tax base and reduce pressure on local residents.
- A modern Convention and Events Center is a strategy to protect and expand this existing economic engine.

### Springfield is losing conventions and major events

- The existing Expo Center no longer meets modern convention and meeting standards.
- Due to size, configuration, and flexibility limitations, Springfield routinely loses conventions and regional events to peer cities with newer facilities.
- When Springfield loses events, the community loses hotel stays, restaurant revenue, retail sales, and local tax generation.

### Regional competitiveness

- Peer cities have invested in modern convention facilities to compete for regional and national events.
- Event planners prioritize flexible exhibit halls, modern technology infrastructure, large contiguous meeting space, and proximity to hotels and restaurants.
- Without comparable space, Springfield is often not considered for larger events.

For more information, visit: **SPRINGFIELDMO.ORG/INFORM**

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## Projected year-round economic activity

- Approximately 164 events are projected annually.
- Nearly 180,000 attendees are projected each year.
- Approximately 80,000 hotel room nights are projected annually.
- More than \$1.3 billion in projected visitor spending over 30 years.
- Roughly \$125,000 per day in visitor spending that Springfield is currently missing without a modern facility.

This represents sustained, year-round economic activity that supports jobs, small businesses, and ongoing local tax revenue.

## Community-wide benefit

- Visitor spending flows throughout Springfield, not just downtown.
- Hotels, restaurants, retail, transportation providers, suppliers, and service businesses citywide benefit.
- Increased convention activity supports private investment and long-term vibrancy across the community.

## Designed for residents and visitors

- Intended to host conventions, graduations, community events, arts performances, concerts, sporting events, expos, and civic gatherings.
- Creates a shared public facility available for year-round community use.

## Fiscal responsibility and funding safeguards

- Funded through a proposed 3% lodging tax increase paid primarily by overnight visitors.
- Construction budget capped at \$175 million.
- Debt service is supported primarily by lodging tax revenue.
- No General Fund dollars used for construction, debt service, or operations.
- Lodging tax revenue is legally restricted to tourism-related purposes and cannot be redirected to general city services.

## BOTTOM LINE

Springfield already has a strong visitor economy. The issue is whether Springfield will modernize and compete or continue losing economic opportunity to other markets.

A new Convention and Events Center is an economic development tool designed to protect jobs, strengthen the tax base, increase visitor spending, and position Springfield for long-term growth using a visitor-funded model.



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