



City Council Report

Date: August 17, 2026
To: City Council
From: Candace Cannistraro, Deputy City Manager
Subject: Approving and Authorizing a Resolution for the City Manager to enter into a contract for Management and Operations Services for the Mesa Convention Center and Mesa Amphitheatre (District 4)

Purpose and Recommendation

The purpose of this report is to recommend that the City Council approve a resolution authorizing the City Manager or designee to enter into a contract for Management and Operations Services, and other necessary deal documents, with Legends Global Convention Center Management, LLC (Legends Global) for the management and operation of the Mesa Convention Center and Mesa Amphitheatre (Facilities).

The proposed initial term is 62 months, consisting of a two-month transition period followed by a five-year management period, with up to three (3) additional five-year renewal terms. The anticipated contract effective date is September 1, 2026, with transition completion targeted for November 1, 2026.

Staff recommend approval of the contract to establish a public-private partnership that transfers day-to-day management and operations of the Facilities to an experienced public assembly facility management company while the City retains ownership of the Facilities.

Background

The City owns and currently manages the Mesa Convention Center and Mesa Amphitheatre, located generally in the vicinity of Center Street and University Drive. The Convention Center opened in 1974 and provides meeting, exhibit, ballroom, theater, and outdoor event space. The Amphitheatre opened in 1979 and is an outdoor performance venue with festival seating capacity of approximately 5,000.

Over time, the City has evaluated alternatives to improve utilization of the Facilities, enhance customer experience, plan and implement facility improvements, and increase revenue opportunities. The City determined that engaging an experienced venue-management company would provide specialized expertise while allowing the City to retain ownership of the Facilities.

The City released Request for Proposals (RFP) No. 2026084 on February 25, 2026. A facility tour was conducted on March 18, 2026, the RFP closed on May 5, 2026, and the two highest-ranked proposers presented on June 10, 2026. A Notice of Intent to Award was issued on June 18, 2026. Following evaluation of the proposals, the City selected Legends Global to provide comprehensive management, operations, and marketing services for the Facilities.

Discussion

The proposed partnership is intended to provide strategic management, daily operations, marketing and advertising, and facility-improvement expertise. Key objectives include maximizing facility utilization; delivering high-quality event experiences; modernizing and planning capital improvements; strengthening the Facilities' economic impact; continuing communication and collaboration with the City, Visit Mesa, local hotels, and the Downtown Mesa Association; and supporting integration with the Downtown Mesa Arts and Innovation District.

Legends Global is the world's largest venue management company and operates more than 450 venues worldwide. Its service model includes operations and security, finance, human resources, live content, revenue generation, sustainability, food and beverage, technology, and marketing. Legends Global also identified regional venue-management experience and resources that can support lead generation, shared business intelligence, event staffing, subject-matter expertise, convention-center sales, and strategic partnerships.

Under the proposed agreement, Legends Global will assume on-site operations, including ticketing and sales, food and beverage, security, information technology, facility maintenance, personnel, finance, and marketing. Current city personnel will have the option to move to Legends Global employment or remain with the city in another capacity. The Parks, Recreation and Community Facilities Director and the city Human Resources Director will work with the impacted employees. City staff will coordinate with the Legends Global General Manager and other site employees for financial reconciliations and City-sponsored events.

Existing contracts for events at the Facilities will proceed without service disruption. While some services may be performed by different sub-contractors or affiliate organizations, all dates and pricing will be honored. The City and Legends Global share the goal of providing seamless customer service.

Legends and the City will work together to identify and prioritize improvements that modernize, enhance, and monetize the Facilities. Planning will address capital scheduling, industry-leading programs, technology, program marketability, and customer experience. Previous facility analysis was completed by CSL, a Legends Global affiliate, allowing the improvement-planning work to continue without interruption.

Alternatives

Council may choose not to approve the resolution. In that event, the City would not proceed with the proposed transfer of management and operations to Legends Global, and staff would need to determine how to continue or otherwise address management and operation of the Facilities.

Fiscal Impact

The proposed compensation and financial terms include the following City costs:

- Monthly base management fee of \$14,000 (\$168,000 annually).
- Food and beverage fee of 4% of gross sales and 8% of net sales.
- Annual performance incentive fee of up to \$50,000, based on key performance indicators.
- Annual quantitative incentive fee equal to 20% of Adjusted Gross Income (AGI) above a benchmark established during the annual budget process.
- Sponsorship commission of 20%.

Legends Global costs and contributions include a one-time \$500,000 capital contribution amortized over 10 years; a \$10,000 annual community contribution for five years (\$50,000 total) to a not-for-profit or community-based organization; and estimated transition costs of \$50,000 to \$75,000 for system setup, travel, and lodging.

Coordinated With

City Manager's Office, Parks, Recreation and Community Facilities, City Attorney's Office, and Business Services.