

## **Museum and Cultural Advisory Board – Meeting Minutes**

The Museum and Cultural Advisory Board met in a regular hybrid meeting via Zoom and at the Mesa Arts Center on Thursday November 20, 2025.

### **Members Present:**

Todd Hanle  
Katelyn Armbruster  
Greg DeSimone  
Jania Davis  
Karen Rolston  
Melvin Van Vorst  
Angela Buer

### **Members Absent:**

Brad Peterson  
Colleen Byron  
Claudia Bloom  
Annalisa Alvrus

### **Staff Present:**

Luis Ruiz  
Illya Riske  
Sarah Goedicke  
Andrew Douglas  
Simon Tipene Adlam  
Kristin McLeod  
Jarrad Bittner  
Randy Vogel  
Kelly Farrow

Greg DeSimone called the meeting to order at 4:02pm.

**Items from citizens present:** There were no citizens present.

### **Introduction of new Director of Arts & Culture Luis Ruiz**

Luis Ruiz introduced himself to the Board.

### **Approval of Minutes from the Regular September 25, 2025 meeting:**

Karen Rolston moved to approve the minutes as written, and Todd Hanle seconded. Board members voted unanimously to approve the minutes from September 25, and they will be posted on the city's website.

### **Discuss: Proposed Fees & Charges Rates – Andrew Douglas, Director of Ticketing, Mesa Arts Center and Jarrad Bittner, Museum Administrator, idea Museum:**

Jarrad Bittner and Andrew Douglas gave a presentation showing staff-proposed changes to fees and charges (**Exhibit A**). Andrew discussed the proposed addition of a ticket insurance add-on option that would have an associated ticket charge. This is widely in use across the live event industry. This will provide both revenue to Mesa Arts Center (MAC) and a service to patrons. This will be handled in-house so MAC has more control over customer service, claims, and revenue. This will initially be offered for Performing Live shows (MAC-presented shows). Staff are recommending a fee range between 2% and 15% of the ticket price with an initial fee set at 8% to start. This fee will match the fees seen in the Valley and across the industry.

Greg DeSimone asked about the benchmarking regarding this service. Andrew explained that staff benchmarked with Scottsdale Arts, Tobin Center, Blumenthal Performing Arts, and Live Nation. Greg then asked what percentage of ticket buyers are estimated to purchase this service and Andrew stated there is a 20% assumption of adoption but Scottsdale Arts sees about 33% adoption rate. Based on this assumption, staff project \$99,150 in gross supplemental revenue for fiscal year 2026-2027. Post-claims, net revenue is projected to be \$89,235.

Greg asked when staff would start this and Andrew stated this would begin in fiscal year 2026-2027. After the Board meeting, staff will bring recommendations to Council. Jania Davis stated managing this gives a lot of control, but she told staff to be mindful of some of the requirements for refunds such as how strict they are, family disruptions versus single ticket claims. Andrew responded that keeping this managed in-house will enable staff to continue offering high quality and nuanced customer service. Melvin stated there could be some confusion if this is rolled out for some shows but not others. Andrew stated staff are cognizant of that and are looking at communication methods.

There were no objections from the Board, and they unanimously endorsed staff recommendations for adding this ticket insurance option.

Jarrad Bittner gave a presentation on proposed admission fee changes (**Exhibition B**). He gave some general information on current admissions, which sits at \$10 for anyone over the age of one. Admission increased from \$9 to \$10 in July 2024, which is at the top of idea Museum's current Council-approved fee range. The museum anticipates approximately \$420K in revenue this fiscal year from admissions. Current market comparisons show idea Museum is far cheaper than other local children's museums and attractions.

True cost per visitor exceeds admission revenue and citywide tax revenues have declined, impacting budgets. Visitation has nearly tripled since 2021, significantly increasing demand on staffing, maintenance, and program resources. Cost of goods have also risen more than 20% over the past five years. Karen Rolston asked if staffing has increased and Jarrad said yes, but not threefold. Staffing expenses have also increased.

Staff propose increasing the approved fee range ceiling to \$15 but only recommend an increase to \$12 for fiscal year 2026-2027. After the completion of the next renovation phase, staff expect to increase admission to \$15. This fee increase would not affect current discount programs. Idea Museum will continue offering reduced admission fee programs.

Todd asked if staff had done any research on what the market will bear and Jarrad stated nothing beyond the price benchmarking noted in the presentation. Any increase over 20% (the proposed increase for next fiscal year) would be a financial shock for families. Jania Davis noted that she didn't know why tickets were always more expensive for adults than children and she likes that the price at idea Museum is the same for everyone. Simon Tipene Adlam explained that it is ticket convention and Luis Ruiz explained that charging more for children is a deterrent based on the assumption of one adult and three children, and our community has larger families.

There were no objections from the Board, and they unanimously endorsed staff recommendations for a fee increase to \$12 for fiscal year 2026-2027.

### **Upcoming Events – Volunteer or Participation Opportunities:**

Staff shared upcoming events: Merry Main Street, which has new MAC participation this year; Art After Dark extended hours at Mesa Contemporary Arts Museum on the second Friday and third Thursday of each month; MAC Gala on February 28; ALT Fest at MAC on March 13; and idea Museum's FUNdraiser on April 16. Also in March, MAC will participate in a CLUE walking game, a downtown Mesa event.

### **Discuss projects or presenters of interest and report on events attended:**

Karen Rolston attended Rock on the Rock, which was really fun and loud. She also attended the Dia de los Muertos breakfast Relaxed Hour at Dia de los Muertos, where she heard anecdotal stories from people who really appreciated the event. She also went to the Arts in

Service Open House and had great experiences. She also recently attended the Mesa Historical Museum and had a wonderful experience.

Greg DeSimone also attended Relaxed Hour at Dia de los Muertos and the Arts in Service Open House. Greg said the Mesa Contemporary Arts Museum exhibits are amazing and he liked that there are now images on the price sheets. He also saw Mesa Encore Theatre's production of *Sister Act*, and it was amazing.

Janina Davis said Dia de los Muertos blew her daughter's mind and had a great time volunteering with her. They attended from open to close both days and can't wait to attend next year.

Sarah Goedicke thanked the Board for their volunteerism at Relaxed Hour at Dia de los Muertos, as most of the Board supported the event, and reported that attendance rose from 150 on Sunday in 2024 to over 300 across both Saturday and Sunday this year. Staff look forward to expanding physically across campus next year.

The Board would like to invite the Executive Director of Mesa Historical Museum, Susan Ricci, to a future meeting. Sarah Goedicke will reach out to her to coordinate.

***The next scheduled meeting date is January 22, 2026, and will be a hybrid meeting on Zoom and at Mesa Arts Center South Conference Room, 1 E Main St., Mesa, AZ, 85201.***

Todd Hanle made a motion to end the meeting and Angela Buer seconded. There being no further business, the meeting adjourned at 5:14pm.

Respectfully submitted,

Luis Ruiz  
Director of Arts and Culture

# EXHIBIT A

## MESA ARTS CENTER TICKET REFUND PROTECTION SERVICE FEE

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### PURPOSE: REQUEST APPROVAL FOR NEW TICKET PROTECTION FEE

**Committee Approval Request**

We are requesting the committee's input on introducing a new service fee aimed at enhancing guest experiences.

**Improve Guest Experience**

The proposed service fee is designed to improve the overall guest experience at Mesa Arts Center through enhanced services.

**Cover Additional Costs**

The new service fee will help support increasing costs at Mesa Arts Center

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## RECOMMENDATION: FEE RANGE AND INITIAL SET FEE

### Recommended Fee Range

Establishing a clear fee range for the new service will help set expectations for clients and stakeholders.

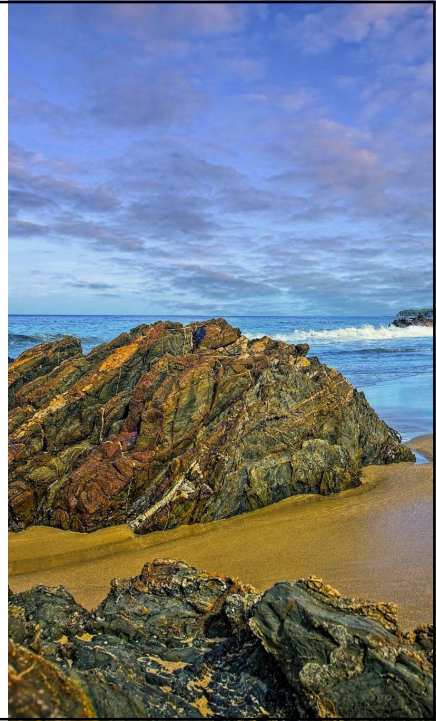
*Recommended range: 2% to 15%*

### Initial Set Fee

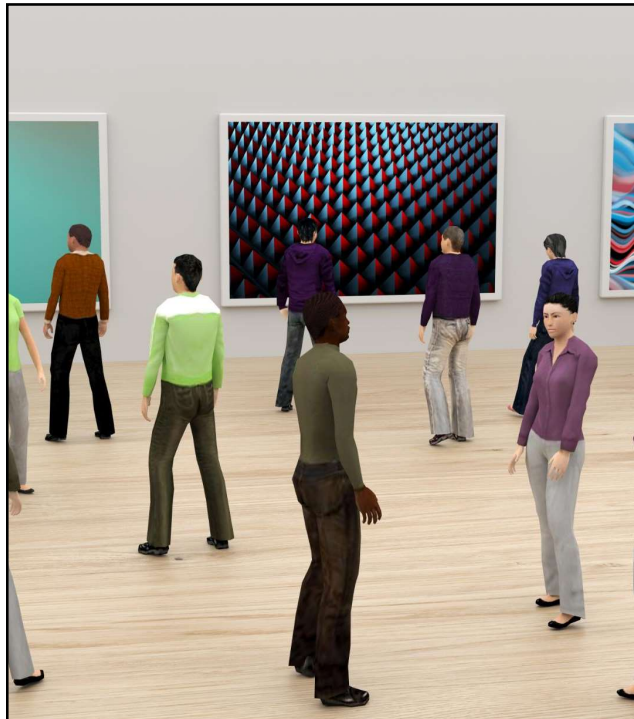
An initial set fee will provide a starting point for clients, fostering transparency in service pricing.

*Recommended fee: 8%*

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## MESA ARTS CENTER (MAC): COMMITMENT TO GUEST EXPERIENCE

### Enhancing Guest Experience

The Mesa Arts Center prioritizes guest satisfaction and strives to create memorable experiences for all visitors.

### New Service Fee Proposal

The proposal for a new service fee aims to provide additional support and enhance services offered to guests.

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# INDUSTRY STANDARDS: ADOPTION OF REFUND PROTECTION SERVICES

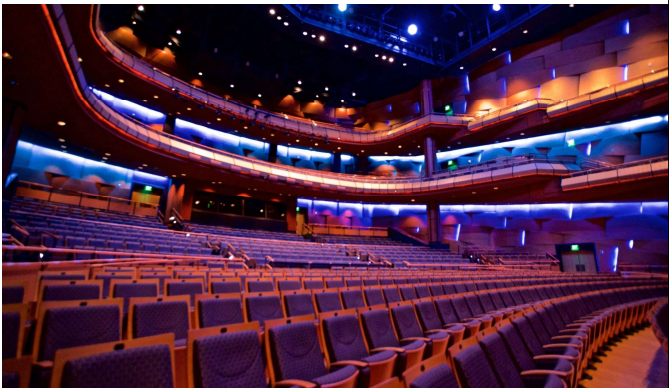
## Increasing Trend in Refund Protection

Many arts and culture organizations are adopting refund protection services to enhance customer satisfaction and trust.

## Understanding Guest Expectations

This trend showcases the industry's growing awareness of guest needs and the desire to meet their expectations.

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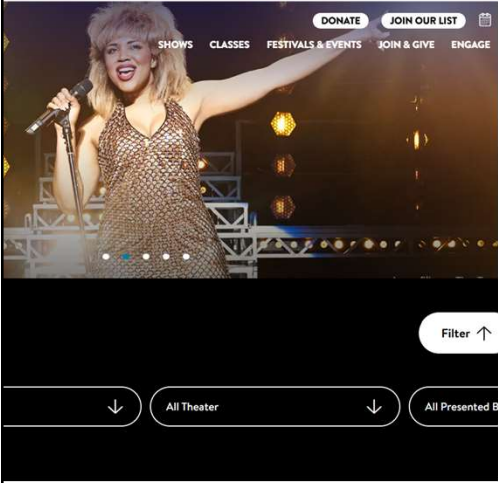


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# BENCHMARKING

Venue / Provider	Fee Range	Fee Charged	Coverage Provider / Notes
Live Nation / Ticketmaster	2% – 18%	7.5%	Optional add-on at checkout
Scottsdale Arts	2%- 15%	8%	Applies to select events - Optional add-on at Check-out
Mesa Arts Center (Proposed)	2% – 15%	8%	Optional add-on at checkout

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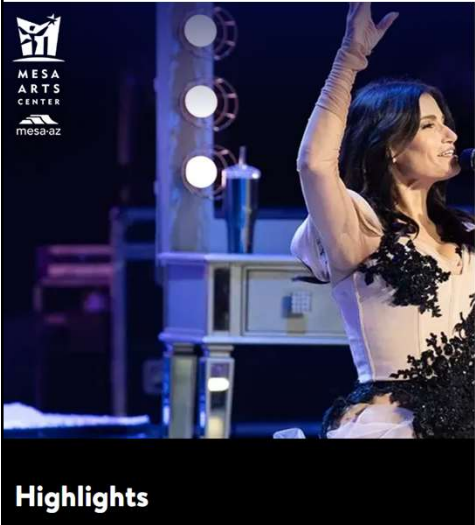
## SERVICE DETAILS: OPTIONAL ADD-ON DURING TICKET PURCHASE

**Optional Service Fee**  
The new service fee provides guests with an optional add-on during ticket purchase, enhancing their ticket protection.

**Flexibility for Guests**  
Guests have the flexibility to choose whether they want the additional protection for their tickets, personalizing their experience.

**Enhancing Ticket Protection**  
This add-on allows guests to enhance their ticket protection, providing peace of mind when making purchases.

7



## CLAIM PROCESS: ONLINE FILING THROUGH MAC WEBSITE

**Seamless Online Filing**  
Guests can file claims easily through the MAC website, providing a convenient online option for all users.

**Streamlined Claim Process**  
The online claim process is designed to streamline submissions, making it faster and more efficient for guests.

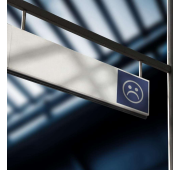
**Enhanced Customer Satisfaction**  
This user-friendly experience improves guest satisfaction by making the claims process straightforward and accessible.

**Highlights**

8

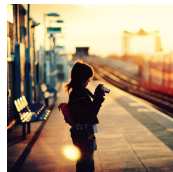


## COVERED CIRCUMSTANCES: VARIOUS UNFORESEEN EVENTS



### Scope of Coverage

The service ensures coverage for a range of unforeseen events affecting ticket holders, providing essential protection.



### Peace of Mind

By covering incidents beyond guests' control, the service offers peace of mind for travelers, allowing them to enjoy their experience.



### Guest Protection

The coverage aims to protect guests from the financial impact of unforeseen circumstances affecting their travel plans.

9



## EXAMPLE: PUBLIC TRANSPORT DISRUPTION

### Definition of Disruption

Public transport disruption refers to unexpected issues that prevent passengers from reaching their destinations on time.

### Eligibility for Claims

Guests affected by public transport disruption may be eligible for claims if they cannot access the venue as planned.

10






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## EXAMPLE: INJURY OR ILLNESS

### **Ticket Refund Policy**

Guests can claim refunds for tickets if injury or illness prevents them from attending, ensuring financial safety.

### **Financial Protection**

This policy protects guests from financial loss due to unforeseen personal issues like illness or injury.

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11




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## EXAMPLE: VEHICLE BREAKDOWN OR ADVERSE WEATHER

### **Protection Against Vehicle Breakdowns**

Our service provides coverage for guests in the event of vehicle breakdowns, ensuring they can still attend the event.

### **Adverse Weather Conditions**

Adverse weather conditions like storms or heavy rain can impact travel plans, and our service addresses these disruptions.

### **Enhancing Guest Experience**

By covering these unforeseen circumstances, we enhance the overall experience for our guests.

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12

## EXAMPLE: DOCTOR'S REPORT OR DEATH CERTIFICATE



### Importance of Documentation

Documentation like a doctor's report is crucial for verifying claims related to health issues or serious incidents.



### Death Certificate Requirement

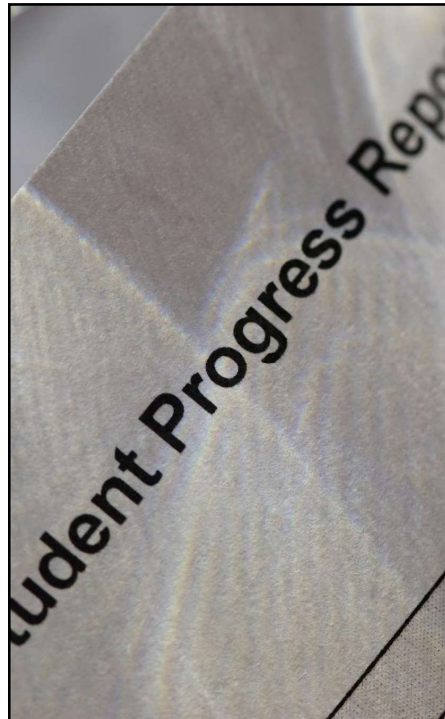
A death certificate may be necessary to support claims that arise from serious personal issues.



### Claims Processing

Proper documentation aids in the smooth processing of claims related to illness or personal loss.

13



## EXAMPLE: POLICE REPORTS OR TRANSPORT NOTICES

### Importance of Documentation

Official documents like police reports and transport notices are essential for validating claims during transport disruptions.

### Validity of Claims

These documents help ensure that the circumstances were beyond the guest's control, protecting their rights.

### Transport Disruptions

Understanding transport disruptions and having the necessary documentation is crucial for travelers in emergencies.

14




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## PROJECTED REVENUE: GROSS SUPPLEMENTAL REVENUE FOR FY26–27

### Introduction of Service Fee

The new service fee is expected to enhance our revenue streams, contributing to our overall financial stability.

### Revenue Projections

We project \$99,150 in gross supplemental revenue for the fiscal year 2026-2027, positively impacting our financial outlook.

### Financial Health Improvement

Expected revenue growth will contribute positively to our financial health and sustainability in the long term.

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15




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## NET REVENUE: AFTER ESTIMATED CLAIMS

### Positive Financial Impact

Post-claims, net revenue is projected to contribute positively to our financial resources and stability and is projected to be \$89,235 in FY26-27.

### Sustainability Assurance

The expected net revenue supports the long-term sustainability of the Mesa Arts Center, enabling future projects and programs.

### Resource Allocation

Net revenue allows for effective allocation of resources towards enhancing community programs and facilities.

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16

# CONCLUSION

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**Alignment with Industry Standards**

The proposed service fee is in line with the current industry standards, ensuring competitiveness and fairness.

**Improved Guest Experience**

Implementing the new service fee will greatly enhance the guest experience, providing better services and amenities.

**Self-Sustaining Revenue Stream**

The new fee structure introduces a self-sustaining revenue model that will support ongoing operations and initiatives.

**Community Support**

The revenue generated will enhance our ability to serve the community and offer diverse programs.

# EXHIBIT B



## idea Museum Admission Fees November 2025



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## General Information

- The current non-discounted general admission rate for anyone over the age of one is \$10 at the idea Museum.
- The fee increased from \$9 to \$10 in July of 2024, which is the top of our fee range
- No prior increases have occurred since before the pandemic
- We anticipate approximately \$420,000 in revenue this FY through admissions



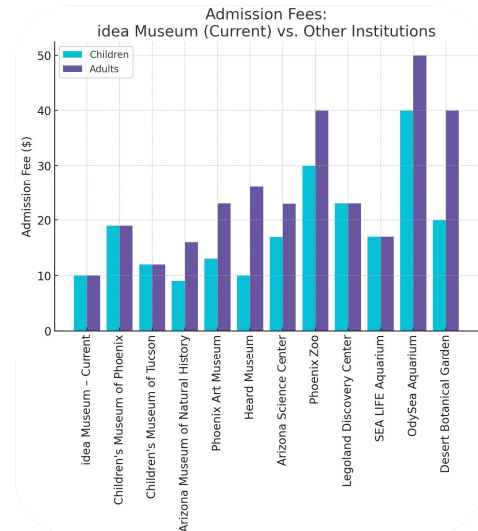


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## Current Market Comparison

- Children's Museum of Phoenix: \$19
- Children's Museum Tucson: \$12
- Arizona Science Center: \$16.95(C) \$22.95 (A)
- Arizona Museum of Natural History: \$9 (C) \$16 (A)
- Legoland Discovery Center: \$22.99



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## Understanding Need

- The true cost per visitor exceeds admission revenue, in line with museum industry norms, requiring diversified funding and thoughtful fee adjustments to narrow the gap
- Citywide tax revenues have declined, impacting budgets
- Visitation has nearly tripled — from 55,000 in 2021 to over 150,000 this year, significantly increasing demand on staffing, maintenance, and program resources
- Cost of goods has risen more than 20% over the past five years, compounded with intentional investments in higher-quality learning experiences, expanded access focus, deeper visitor engagement, and enhanced cleaning expectations

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## Proposed Admission Range



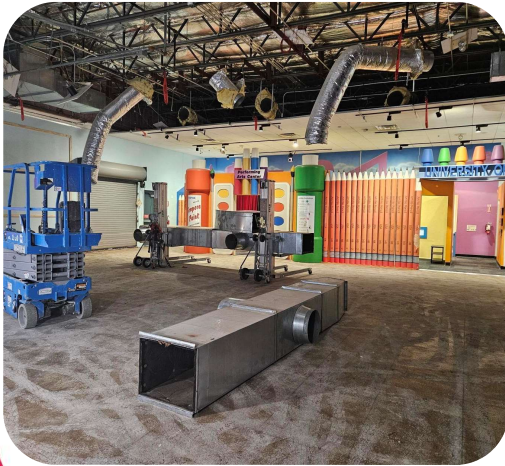
### Expand Range up to \$15

- The proposed range increase provides a gradual, sustainable way to strengthen admission revenue over the next several years.
  - FY26-27: \$12
  - Completion of next renovation phase: \$15
- Aligns fee adjustments with the continued expansion and enhancement of our visitor experiences
- Membership options keep the museum affordable for families who visit frequently.
- Our Access Initiative ensures children and families facing financial challenges continue to enjoy high-quality, arts-based programs and experiences.



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## Phase Two Renovation Update

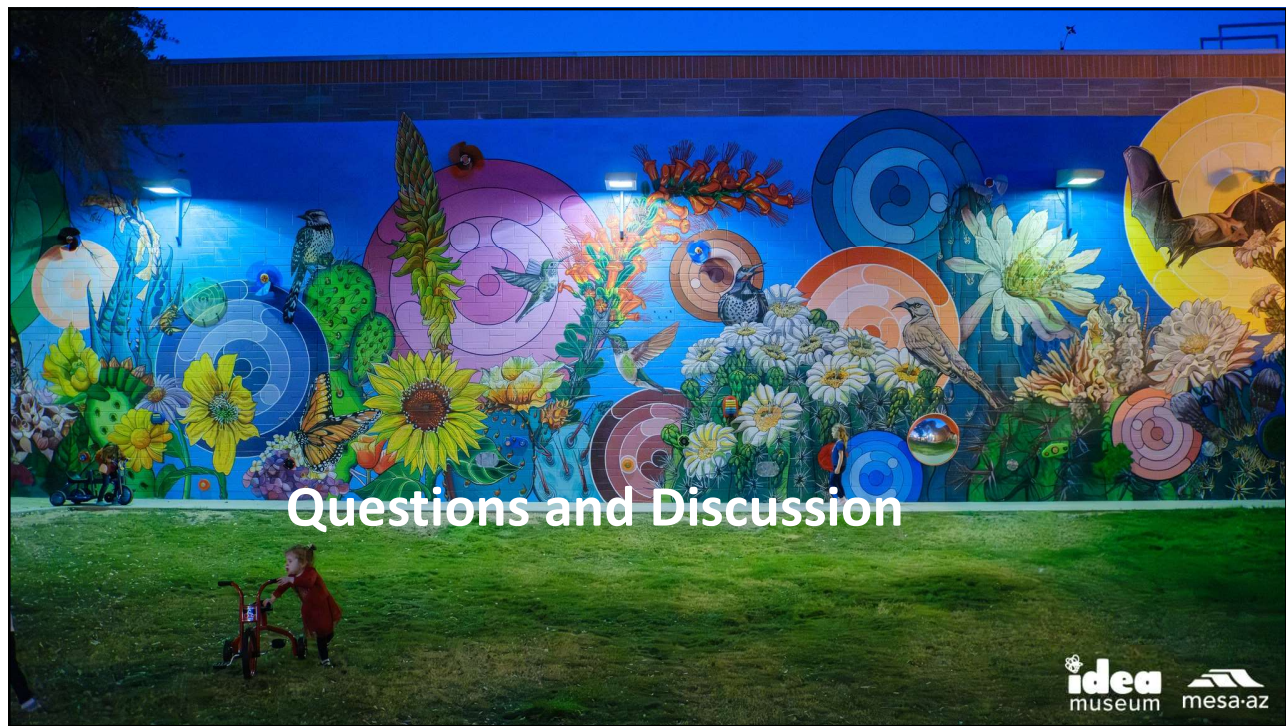


- **Current Timeline**
  - **FY26:** Procurement, community engagement, and scope refinement to best shape the expansion vision
  - **FY27:** Design development, cost estimating, and operational planning to support expanded spaces and increased visitor engagement
  - **FY28:** Construction, fabrication, and installation of new gallery, program, and public spaces
  - **FY29:** Grand reopening and 50-year anniversary celebration
- **Current Budget: ~\$23.5M**  
*Additional operating costs are anticipated as expanded spaces come online.*



6





7