



SAVANNAH CONVENTION CENTER

EXPANSION PROJECT TOOLKIT



www.savconventioncenter.com

EXPANSION PROJECT TOOLKIT

The Expansion Project toolkit provides the background information that will allow you to engage in the conversation to promote this important project successfully. The links below will take you to instructions and sample content for various contributing ways.

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COASTAL GEORGIA'S CROWN JEWEL OF TOURISM WITH STATEWIDE ECONOMIC IMPACT

The Savannah Convention Center is one of the primary economic engines of Coastal Georgia. **With approximately 160 events and conferences annually, this state-of-the-art, world-class facility supports thousands of jobs - both locally and beyond – contributing \$1.4 billion in economic impact to Georgia through tourism and hospitality.**

Built on Hutchinson Island, this 330,000-square-foot waterfront complex features 100,000 square feet of divisible exhibit space and 50,000 square feet of prime meeting space. It includes 13 meeting rooms, four executive board rooms, a Grand Ballroom, and a beautiful 367-seat auditorium.

Since opening in 2000, the Savannah Convention Center has attracted a wide variety of events with its unique ability to accommodate a wide range of customers from the National Association for Healthcare Recruitment to the National Junior and Senior Beta Club Convention and Georgia organizations such as the Georgia Municipal Association, and charity events like “Dancing with the Stars of Coastal Georgia”, and “Jurassic Quest”, the world’s most extensive indoor collection of life-size animatronic dinosaurs.

Over the past two decades, **the Savannah Convention Center has become a “crown jewel” of tourism in Coastal Georgia.** Coupled with our southern hospitality and world-class workforce, it has earned international acclaim. Worth Magazine named Savannah one of the “Top Destination Cities in the U.S.”, and TripAdvisor honored our community with their “Travelers Choice Award.”

This world-renowned facility has generated record-breaking revenue, sparked re-investment in the surrounding area, and increased hotel occupancy rates in the city. The Savannah Convention Center is the anchor of the tourism industry, supporting tens of thousands of Coastal Georgia jobs and economic opportunities throughout our state.





Tourism is a staple of Georgia's economy and workforce, generating \$63 billion in annual economic impact to the state, supporting 460,000 jobs, and over 28,000 alone in the Savannah area. To keep this vital industry growing, we must remain competitive. For tourism to thrive, we must expand one of Georgia's most prized facilities.

In 2017, the Georgia General Assembly approved \$3 million to begin designing the expansion. In 2018, an additional \$6.3 million was for planning. In 2019, \$13.7 million was used to complete the design and pre-construction. In 2020, \$70 million to begin construction. In 2021, \$90 million for major construction. The project is officially underway with Governor Kemp's support and under the leadership of the Savannah-Georgia Convention Center Authority.

The \$271 million-dollar expansion will double the exhibit hall space, add a 58-foot wide hangar door that can accommodate more extensive indoor exhibits and equipment, fund a **40,000 square foot ballroom, 15 meeting rooms, and a 900-space parking garage** built on-site to accommodate conference goers and visitors. Funding the expansion creates an opportunity for Georgia to make an unprecedented return on its investment.

Upon completion, the expanded Savannah Convention Center will make our city, region, and state the ideal place for some of the world's largest and most respected businesses and organizations to visit, invest, or relocate.

This expansion will create an economic effect in our community with more shoppers, diners, customers, and jobs. The economic impact of the Savannah Convention Center cannot be overstated, with more funds created in sales tax revenue for our local schools and public safety increased. investments in tourism, infrastructure projects, and recreation. Every dollar spent will generate more economic opportunity for Coastal Georgia families and all of Georgia. This investment will impact every corner of our great state.

Georgia is the top state for business and a leader in agriculture, aerospace, cybersecurity, and manufacturing. Expanding the Savannah Convention Center can add tourism to that growing list of impactful industries. **With local, regional, and statewide support and collaboration, we can foster growth, generate opportunity, and ensure prosperity for generations to come.**





COASTAL GEORGIA'S CROWN JEWEL OF TOURISM WITH STATEWIDE ECONOMIC IMPACT

The Savannah Convention Center is one of the primary economic engines of Coastal Georgia, hosting more than 160 events and 200,000 visitors annually. **This world-class, state-of-the-art facility** supports tens of thousands of jobs, record-breaking revenue, and an economic impact that affects Georgia's entire state.

ECONOMIC IMPACT

- OE **1.4 BILLION DOLLARS** in economic impact to Georgia in less than 20 years
- OE **13.5 MILLION DOLLARS** raised in state and local tax revenue annually
- OE Supporting **28,000 TOURISM & HOSPITALITY JOBS** in Coastal Georgia

WORLD-CLASS FACILITY IN A WORLD-CLASS CITY

The Savannah Convention Center is strategically located across the river from Historic Downtown Savannah, which has been named by Worth Magazine as one of the **"Top Destination Cities in the U.S."** and awarded the **"Travelers Choice Award"** from Tripadvisor.com. For many years, community leaders have planned an expansion that would double the current facility's size. Spearheaded by the Savannah-Georgia Convention Center Authority, the new development will allow the Savannah Convention Center to contend for some of the nation's most significant events.



SHOVEL READY

THE SAVANNAH CONVENTION CENTER
EXPANSION PROJECT IS READY TO...

PUT GEORGIANS BACK TO WORK

Hiring
more than

30

Georgia based
companies.

Supporting
more than

3,200

jobs in Georgia

Generating
more than

**\$490
MILLION**

in economic impact

Creating

500

direct construction
site jobs

Spurring
the

GROWTH

of new business

BUILDING GEORGIA'S FUTURE



The expansion project will double the current Convention Center's size and capacity, drawing business worldwide. With more space, the Center will have the capability to attract a wider variety of unique meetings and events to Savannah, increasing the number of visitors, driving economic growth, and building a healthier Georgia.

EXPANSION PROJECT TALKING POINTS AND BACKGROUND

- The Savannah Convention Center (SCC) is a key economic driver in Coastal Georgia, providing \$1.4 BILLION in economic impact to Georgia in less than 20 years, \$13.5 MILLION raised in state and local government tax revenue annually, and supports 28,000 tourism and hospitality jobs in the Savannah area.
- Each year, the 330,000-square-foot facility hosts approximately 160 events, attracting more than 200,000 visitors to Savannah.
- The SCC is an economic multiplier for coastal Georgia's tourism industry. Overnight stays, dining, travel, and entertainment industries benefit from the visitors drawn to Savannah by the Convention Center's busy event schedule.
- Annual revenue generated by SCC events impacts the city, coastal Georgia, and the state economy, ultimately contributing to Georgia's long-term economic prosperity.
- In 2017, to remain one of the region's premier event spaces, the SCC began a multi-year, \$271 MILLION expansion, receiving \$3 million in funding from the Georgia General Assembly for the design planning of the expansion project.
- In 2018, the Georgia General Assembly included \$6.3 million to continue work on the design and preconstruction projects.
- In 2019, the legislature provided an additional \$13.7 million in funding, and Governor Brian Kemp appointed the Savannah-Georgia Convention Center Authority Board to oversee the SCC and its expansion. In 2020, the Georgia General Assembly approved \$70 million to begin the first construction phase of the convention center expansion project. The Georgia General Assembly allocated. In 2021 \$90 million in funding was, and the ground was officially broken on the expansion.
- The expansion plan will double the current exhibition space, adding a 58-foot-wide hangar door, a 40,000 square-foot ballroom, 15 meeting rooms, and a 900-parking space garage.
- Increasing the Savannah Convention Center's size opens Savannah up to more events, more visitors, increased revenue, and a significant increase in economic impact in Georgia.
- When the expansion is complete, the SCC will be the 53rd-largest convention center in the county, capable of hosting some of the nation's most significant events.
- We are grateful for the funding and support from Governor Kemp, the General Assembly, and lawmakers across the state.

LOCAL MEDIA ENGAGEMENT: LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Providing a unique perspective will help others understand the incredible impact the Savannah Convention Center and the expansion project has on Savannah, Chatham County, and Georgia. Below are sample Letters to the Editor that can be customized and submitted to your local paper.

PRO SAVANNAH

Every year, more than 14 million visitors from across Georgia, the United States, and the world travel to Savannah. These visitors come to our coastal town to dine in our many restaurants, tour our historic streets and architecture, relax at our world-class hotels, and experience some genuine southern hospitality.

While many visitors come to Savannah for family vacations or personal getaways, increasing numbers are coming for business. Many companies, organizations, and event coordinators choose the Savannah Convention Center to host their events.

The Convention Center is a 330,000-square-foot facility that hosts more than 160 events annually and attracts more than 200,000 people to the city annually. Generating more than \$1.4 billion in economic impact in Georgia over the past 20 years, Convention Center activities have significantly impacted our state economy. Each year, an average of \$13.5 million in local and state tax revenue is created while supporting more than 28,000 tourism and hospitality jobs. The size, scope, and impact created by Convention Center activities help keep our workforce employed, provide revenue for our government, and ensure our long-term economic stability.

These current numbers are impressive, but the Convention Center has plans for more. Initial planning and design for an expansion of the facility have been underway since 2017. This project will double the facility's current size, vastly increasing the Convention Center's capacity and ability to host more significant events and events and contribute further to our economy.

With support from the General Assembly and Governor Kemp, we are grateful for our city's investment. Our communities, the city of Savannah and Chatham County, are ready for a more significant, bolder Convention Center. We should all stand behind this project because it is more than an investment in a building. It is an investment in the future.

PRO EXPANSION

The Savannah Convention Center hosts more than 160 conferences, tradeshow, annual meetings, conventions, and events every year, attracting more than 200,000 visitors to Savannah and Chatham County. Visitors are catered to by some of the world's best staff in one of the Southeast's premier convention spaces.

The facility is 330,000 square feet of usable space: 100,000 square feet of exhibit space, 50,000 square feet of meeting space, 13 meeting rooms, four executive board rooms, a grand ballroom, and a 367-seat auditorium. The building sits proudly on Hutchison Island, overlooking the Savannah River and historic downtown Savannah.

From an economic perspective, the Convention Center contributes significantly to Savannah, Chatham County, and Georgia. In the past 20 years, it has generated over \$1.4 billion in statewide economic impact, contributes \$13.5 million in state and local taxes yearly, and supports over 28,000 tourism and hospitality jobs in the city and surrounding area.

During my last visit to Savannah, I noticed how much the city has grown. The historic cobblestone streets filled new businesses, packed restaurants, and bustling crowds. I was left wondering: How can this growth be sustained, and how will Savannah keep up?

The answer is expansion; The Savannah Convention Center must grow. We can build a bigger facility and take those numbers to new and exciting heights. Our Convention Center is a world-class operation; I say it needs a world-class facility to match.

The good news for all of us is that expansion has already begun. Over the past several years, expansion plans have been initiated with support from the Georgia General Assembly and Governor Kemp. As we get closer to construction, we must support these efforts to build on our success so our city can give its best to visitors and the Georgians who call Savannah home.

LOCAL BUSINESS OWNER

There is no doubt that Savannah draws visitors from across the globe. In the years I have been in business, visitors to our city have been vital to my customer base. I succeeded with the millions of guests we host in our city each year.

Many of our businesses rely on the steady flow of visitors for their day-to-day revenue. It is a testament to Savannah's hard work and unmatched hospitality that we enjoy so much success. In our busiest times, the streets are bustling with visitors exploring our historic architecture and world-class cuisine and booking overnight stays at our many hotels.

But being a business owner in a city that thrives on tourism is rewarding and challenging. Businesses impacted directly by the tourism industry understand the changes in high and low seasons. In this unstable environment, we thrive when it's good and survive when it's not. What often goes overlooked are the constants that help keep us going all year round. Of those, there is one standout.

The Savannah Convention Center is a year-round host to more than 160 large events, tradeshow, conventions, meetings, and activities that bring more than 200,000 visitors to the city. Convention Center activities average more than \$13 million in state and local tax revenue and support more than 28,000 tourism and hospitality jobs. There is little doubt that the Convention Center profoundly impacts Savannah and Chatham County.

As local businesses, we must support the Convention Center's efforts and staff for what they bring to our city. They provide us with millions of dollars in local revenue, a consistent flow of visitors, and an unmatched reputation for hospitality. As we approach the end of the year, I think it's vital to remind everyone how much the Convention Center has brought to our city. I look forward to another year of growth and economic success in Savannah in 2020.

COMMUNITY LEADER EXPANSION TALK

River Street, Market Square, and historic downtown are often seen as Savannah's most significant economic drivers. Yet, one of our largest financial contributors sits just across the river. The Savannah Convention Center plays a vital role in our local economy. I want to tell our community just how impactful it is.

The Convention Center is 330,000 square feet of event space comprised of 100,000 square feet of exhibit space, 50,000 square feet of meeting space, 13 meeting rooms, four executive board rooms, a grand ballroom, and a 367-seat state-of-the-art auditorium. The facility can accommodate events of all sizes and all needs, including world-class dining services, high-end production, and the latest tech-based presentations.

Each year, the Convention Center hosts more than 160 events attracting more than 200,000 visitors to the city. While in Savannah, these visitors stay at our hotels, dine at our restaurants, peruse our shops, walk our historic streets, and experience all the hospitality that makes us “the Hostess City of the South.” We wouldn’t be the same without the Convention Center.

In sheer economics, the Convention Center has contributed \$1.4 billion in economic benefit to Georgia over the last 20 years, generates \$13.5 million annually in state and local taxes, and supports over 28,000 jobs in and around Savannah in the tourism industry. The profound economic impact keeps our citizens employed and our local government funded, and remains a catalyst for stability in a business community. We should be proud of these numbers, but we can do more.

The Savannah Convention Center has begun the process of expansion. With support from the Georgia General Assembly and Governor Kemp, initial funding has been appropriated, and the new Savannah-Georgia Convention Center board has been appointed to oversee the project. While we are in the initial stages, Savannah’s incredible opportunity and investment for Peach State are excellent.

With a more significant and versatile facility, we open Savannah to a whole new tier of success. This community should be looking forward to great things coming from Hutchison Island.



Annual revenue generated by Savannah Convention Center events impacts more than just Savannah. Chatham County, coastal Georgia, and the state economy benefit from the jobs created by activity at the Convention Center. 28,000 tourism and hospitality jobs are supported by the events and visitors they draw to the city. With expansion plans underway, I cannot wait to see the positive impact on our community.



Have you seen the Savannah Convention Center expansion plans? The expansion will double the current exhibition space, add a 58-foot-wide hangar door, a 40,000 square foot ballroom, 15 meeting rooms, and 900 parking space garage. A larger facility will open up Savannah to more events, more visitors, increased revenue, and a significant increase in economic impact in Georgia. Check out more about the project here!



Savannah, Chatham County, and Coastal Georgia are grateful for the support we have received from Governor Kemp, the Georgia General Assembly, and lawmakers across the state to help get the expansion of the Savannah Convention Center project moving. This is a fantastic opportunity for Savannah and an incredible investment in the future of our event and tourism industry.

OFFICIAL LAUNCH AND EXPANSION PROJECT UPDATE VIDEOS

Below is a short video that showcases the history behind the Savannah Convention Center and plans for the expansion project. You can copy and paste the video link directly into your social media accounts to share the video. Sharing the video will help showcase the profound economic impact the Convention Center, and the planned expansion have on Savannah, Chatham County, and the state of Georgia.

OFFICIAL LAUNCH VIDEO



EXPANSION PROJECT UPDATE VIDEO



SHOVEL READY



NEWS AND PRESS RELEASES

Share these stories and press releases on social media to promote the Savannah Convention Center expansion project.

GOVERNOR KEMP CELEBRATES THE GROUNDBREAKING FOR SAVANNAH CONVENTION CENTER

March 17, 2021

SAVANNAH, GA – Today, Governor Brian P. Kemp joined local leaders at the official groundbreaking of the Savannah Convention Center expansion project.

The 276-million-dollar expansion project will double the current exhibit hall space to 200,000 square feet, add 58-foot-wide glass hangar doors, construct a 40,000 square-foot ballroom, add 15 additional meeting rooms, and a 900-space on-site parking garage. Once completed, the Savannah Convention Center will be the 53rd-largest convention center in the country.

“One of my administration’s top priorities has been to spur job creation and economic prosperity not just in metro Atlanta but across the Peach State,” said Governor Kemp. “Savannah and Coastal Georgia are known worldwide as a hub for tourism and economic development, and this convention center expansion will only strengthen that first-class reputation. Working with the General Assembly, we prioritized this project because of its importance to the region and our state. I greatly appreciate the legislature’s hard work and the hard-working Savannah-area delegation in getting this critical project funded.”

To date, the Georgia General Assembly has allocated \$93 million in funding toward the project, beginning in 2017, with \$3 million for planning and design. In 2019, Governor Kemp established the Savannah-Georgia Convention Center Authority with \$20 million in funding for the final design and pre-construction. In 2020, the General Assembly included \$70 million in the FY2021 state budget to begin initial construction. This year, Governor Kemp’s proposed budget includes \$90 million for the project.

“This groundbreaking is another great day for the Savannah area and our state as a whole,” said Lt. Governor Geoff Duncan. “It is great to see such a large investment being made outside of the Metro-Atlanta area, which is evidence of our confidence in Savannah’s continued success as a tourism hub. This state-of-the-art convention center expansion will create long-term employment opportunities and play an integral role in attracting new events to Georgia.”

NEWS AND PRESS RELEASES (CONT.)

SAVANNAH CONVENTION CENTER EXPANSION ON TRACK FOR SUMMER GROUNDBREAKING

Savannah Morning News Katie Nussbaum July 17th, 2020

Crews could begin moving dirt for the expansion of the Savannah Convention Center in the late summer after Gov. Brian Kemp recommended \$70 million in bond funding for the project in his Governor's Budget Report, released Thursday, Jan. 16.

Plans for the expansion have been in the works for about 15 months and would double the current 100,000-square-foot exhibit hall space, add a 60-foot-wide hangar door, a new entrance, outdoor space, a 40,000-square-foot ballroom, 15 meeting rooms, and a 900-space parking garage. There are plans to construct a Convention Center hotel with private funds just west of the center.

Mark Smith, chairman of the Savannah-Georgia Convention Center Authority, estimates the project would take about two and a half years to complete.

"We're ecstatic. It's the culmination of a four-year effort, and we're so deeply grateful to Gov. Brian Kemp for his confidence in our project and for investing in Savannah," Smith said of the \$275 million project,

"We're committed to bringing the project in on time and under budget."

The \$70 million will cover construction from the groundbreaking through June 30, 2021. Appropriations from the 2021 session would start on July 1, 2021, and a final allocation from the 2022 session would complete the project.

The General Assembly initially approved \$3 million in funding in 2017 to start designing the expansion. It began working with Thompson, Ventulett, Stainback & Associates of Atlanta, and Hansen Architects of Savannah, who created that designed the original building.

In 2018, the assembly approved an additional \$6.3 million to continue the design and engineering process. The board accepted the schematic and development methods, and the Georgia State Financing and Investing Commission hired Clark Construction.

Last year Gov. Kemp allocated \$20 million in bond funding for the project.

For Immediate Release

March 8, 2023

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Savannah Convention Center Celebrates Construction Milestone

On Wednesday, March 8, the Savannah Convention Center held a "Topping Out" ceremony, a tradition to celebrate the last beam being placed for a project. Representatives from the Savannah-Georgia Convention Center Authority Board, Visit Savannah, and elected officials signed the steel beam and celebrated the milestone.

"The topping out ceremony is a way of recognizing and appreciating the hard work of the construction teams working on the Savannah Convention Center expansion project," said Joseph Marinelli, president of Visit Savannah and Vice-Chairman of the SGCCA Board. "It is a time-honored tradition that celebrates the completion of the highest point of a structure and marks the progress of the project. This milestone also sends our customers and prospects a message that this project is progressing as planned and will be open in January 2024."

The \$276 million expansion project will double the Convention Center's exhibit hall space to 200,000 square feet, add 40,000 square feet of additional ballroom, a new 900-space parking garage, and much more.

"The expansion of the Savannah Convention Center is a welcome development for the city and its citizens, thanks to Governor Kemp," said Mark Smith, Chairman of the Savannah-Georgia Convention Center Authority Board. "Not only will it provide an impressive upgrade to the existing facility, but the project has also created jobs for Georgians with more than 1,168,000 man-hours already logged on the project."

Expansion Project Numbers to Date:

- Opening Q1 2024
- \$276M in funding secured for the expansion project.
- Creating 500 direct construction site jobs
- More than 1,168,000 man-hours logged in construction.
- Currently, there are 34 events booked in new expansion space with approximately \$92M in economic impact.
- \$114M was awarded to first-tier Georgia contractors, including \$64M to Savannah-based firms

Upon completion, the Savannah Convention Center will feature the following:

- 200,000 total sq. ft. of exhibit hall space
- A 25,000 sq. ft. and a new 40,000 sq. ft. ballroom
- 32 customizable breakout rooms
- A new 58 ft. wide hangar door
- A new 900-space parking garage
- Additional outdoor space to enjoy Savannah's beautiful weather.
- New facility entrance with an all-glass façade
- 403 adjacent hotel rooms (Westin), and coming soon, a NEW HQ hotel to be announced (Developer: Brookfield Properties)

NEWS AND PRESS RELEASES (CONT.)

GOV. KEMP SIGNS BILL THAT MEANS NEW NAME, NEW AUTHORITY FOR CONVENTION CENTER IN SAVANNAH

Savannah Convention Center WTOC News April 29, 2019

SAVANNAH, GA- Sunday, Georgia Governor Brian Kemp signed a bill into law that officially gives the convention center on Hutchinson Island a new name.

It also creates a new authority to oversee operations. The new name is the most visible change, with House Bill 525 being signed into law. If you're downtown looking at the side of the building facing the river, you can see the new name: "The Savannah Convention Center."

The general manager of the Savannah Convention Center says many visitors to downtown Savannah don't realize there is a very nice convention center just across the Savannah River. The hope is that a name change and new signage will draw some attention.

"From the other side of the river, people either don't know what this building is or think we're part of the Westin," said Sherrie Spinks, General Manager of Savannah Convention Center. "So we wanted everyone to know we're the Savannah Convention Center and here to host their events."

About \$20 million has already been set aside through state and local efforts to keep the design phase of the convention expansion on track. Space additions include a 100-thousands square foot exhibit hall, 15 new meeting rooms, and more than 900 new parking spaces.

"We expect to complete 100% of design documents by July or August. The construction team is working closely with the design team, and when we have enough money can phase in the construction," Spinks said.

Spinks says construction will take about 27 months, with \$234 million being requested for the whole project. The creation of the Savannah-Georgia Convention Center Authority is the other part of the newly signed law.

"That will allow for funding from the state to expand the convention center now, 100 percent. That means it's much larger than most people think of - as this is a tourism product - so on and so forth. It's far, far bigger than that. In the short term, it means hundreds of construction jobs," said Michael Owens, President/CEO of the Tourism Leadership Council.

OFFICIAL EXPANSION ADVERTISING



iconic. visually striking. unforgettable.

(Forsyth park's not bad, either.)



**INTRODUCING THE NEW, EXPANDED SAVANNAH
CONVENTION CENTER, GROWING TO 200,000
SQARE FEET OF EXHIBIT SPACE IN 2023. THE FIRST
CONVENTION CENTER WORTHY OF SAVANNAH.**

SAVANNAH
EST. 1733

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sav E YOUR SPOT.



growing to 200,000 square feet of exhibit space in one of America's favorite cities, you'll want to reserve your dates soon. the new, expanded savannah convention center.

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EXPANSION PROJECT DESIGN PHOTOS

Below are the artist's renderings and design photos for the expansion project.
These photos can be used as a representation of the finished project.









