

Nashville Civic Design Center  
[www.civicdesigncenter.org](http://www.civicdesigncenter.org)

Summary of compiled group discussion results from public meeting on the location, design, use and need for the proposed new convention center, hotel, and garage.

May 30, 2006 at the Nashville Public Library (91 in attendance)

**From a location or design standpoint, what is the best convention center with hotel that you have ever experienced, or could imagine, and why?**

Specific Convention Centers that were mentioned:

San Diego, CA (7)  
Pittsburgh, PA (4)  
Washington, DC (4)  
Atlanta, GA (3)  
Indianapolis, IN (2)  
Phoenix, AZ (2)  
Louisville, KY (2)  
Orlando, FL (2)  
Chicago, IL (2)  
New Orleans, LA  
Memphis, TN  
Austin, TX  
Seattle, WA  
Philadelphia, PA  
San Francisco, CA  
Chattanooga, TN  
Long Beach, CA  
Kansas City, KS  
St. Louis, MO  
Tampa, FL  
San Jose, CA  
*As Bad Examples*  
Montreal  
Chicago

## Site Considerations for Nashville

- Convention Center should be in close, walkable proximity to entertainment, shopping, dining and other attractions. It should be, in general, a focal point from which visitors can experience the city. (16)
- Site could serve as a future hub for public transit, possibly including light rail. This would provide the necessary ease of airport access and would help the new Convention Center to serve as a gateway to downtown. (12)
- Site selection must take into account the urban street grid. (12)
- Use convention center as a catalyst for new economic development and a means to revitalize underdeveloped areas, taking the broad view and allowing for future growth and expansion and adaptive re-use. (12)
- Site should be easily accessible for both vehicles and pedestrians, and should take traffic concerns into account. (10)
- Site should encourage an integrated mix of uses, such as housing and retail, which involve locals as well as conventioners and make it an “everyday” facility. (8)
- Hotel and adequate, underground parking should be connected at the door of the Convention Center. (6)
- Convention Center should be in close proximity to other hotel rooms. (3)
- Site selection should take into consideration the safety of visitors. (3)
- Consult the Plan of Nashville for site selection. (2)
- Site should work within existing infrastructure and developed areas.
- Financial analyses of different sites should be conducted in terms of property taxes and loss/gain of revenue for city in terms of other potential development.
- 2 groups explicitly approved of the proposed SoBro site

- Some objections to the proposed site were voiced:
  - The SoBro site presents (design) challenge of maintaining street grid.
  - The Gulch site would solve street grid issues.
  - The proposed footprint eliminates a great deal of parking for other events.
  - The proposed SoBro site is prime real estate for local residents.

## **Design Considerations for Nashville**

- The design should maintain a pedestrian scale and avoid creating a blank walled “big box” by activating the streetscape with liner buildings and retail. This mix of uses should take into account the current neighborhood and attract local residents as well as visitors. (20)
- The design should be both innovative and contextual. It should embrace the specific energy, culture and history of our city while remaining “downtown” in its scale, mass and material. (12)
- While the design should be “of the city” and embrace Nashville’s “Music City” brand, it must not be another Neo-classical symphony hall, guitar shaped icon, or Space Age arena. (12)
- The Convention Center should be a green, sustainable, LEED certified building. (7)
- The design should produce an attractive, light filled building with an iconic presence. (7)
- Verticality should figure prominently into the design process. By placing key elements of the convention center above and/or below ground, a smaller footprint, greater walkability, and greater mix of uses can be achieved. (5)
- The Convention Center should include green and public spaces, possibly an outdoor amphitheater or public art, to engage local residents as well as visitors. (5)
- The design should provide for ease of internal circulation, including lots of convenient but hidden loading docks. (5)

- The design should allow for expansion, adaptability and re-use. (4)
- The design should incorporate technology and wireless internet access. (3)
- The design should maintain the street grid, possibly with streets running through the building. (3)

### **Additional Comments**

- Facility large enough to attract 70% of largest convention customers, allowing Nashville to out-compete other cities, and larger conventions mean a larger economic impact. (6)
- Affordability and public buy-in—must be cost effective from a tax basis. If interest rates and costs go up, the formula might not work and taxpayers would have to pay the deficit. (3)
- Retail should feature a good mix of local and national, sit down and dine and dash restaurants. (2)
- The need is there since Nashville is falling behind in the convention business. (2)
- Have a design competition.
- Keep considering other sites without turning it into a 5 year debate.