

MINUTES
IRVING CONVENTION AND VISITORS BUREAU
DESTINATION DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE
IRVING CONVENTION CENTER – FIRST FLOOR BOARD ROOM
TUESDAY, FEBRUARY 10, 2026

Those in attendance were Committee Chair Anthony Buttafuoco, Committee Vice Chair Julia Kang, Board Chair Sam Reed, Dallas Burke, Colvin Gibson, Richard Stewart Jr., John Tancabel, and Kyle Taylor – Committee members; Carol Boyer, Lori Fojtasek, Maura Gast, Brenda Lopez, Susan Rose, Matt Tungett – ICVB staff; Tom Meehan, and Kayla Perez – ICC staff; Fire Chief Victor Conley, Fire Marshal Haley Harsha, and Assistant Fire Chief Chris Maguire – City of Irving Fire Department; General Manager Eric Albert – Toyota Music Factory.

Committee Chair Anthony Buttafuoco called the meeting to order at 11:30 a.m. There were no citizen comments.

Buttafuoco asked for a motion to approve the Destination Development Committee meeting minutes of August 12, 2025. On a motion from Board member Colvin Gibson, and a second from Board member Richard Stewart Jr., the motion passed unanimously.

IRVING FIRE DEPARTMENT INTRODUCTIONS AND UPDATE

Fire Chief Victor Conley introduced members of the City of Irving Fire Department, including Assistant Chief Chris Maguire and Fire Marshal Haley Harsha. Conley provided an overview of safety concerns related to Electric Vehicle (EV) charging stations and lithium-ion batteries, highlighting associated fire hazards. The City of Irving is considering a policy change regarding these moving forward, but it will not be retroactive once implemented.

Maguire gave a quick overview of lithium-ion batteries and the associated fire risks. He added that research on how to manage lithium-ion fires is still ongoing and fire service is continuing to adapt. The Irving Fire Department's approach is to be defensive when no life safety risk is present and there is no additional fire spread potential.

Maguire added there are three categories of fire hazard: automobiles, mobility, and energy storage systems. Mobility devices, particularly those using after-market batteries, were identified as a primary concern. Enforcement remains challenging due to unpermitted installations.

In response to a question from Gibson, Maguire noted that existing EV charging stations at City facilities will remain in place, however, may be moved. Future placement should consider distance from building entrances to enhance safety. Lithium-ion fires also pose risks to firefighting equipment and personnel due to hazardous chemical exposure.

The Department emphasized its focus on life safety and property conservation and the importance of educating the community on the potential risks and concerns.

Fire Marshal Haley Harsha was introduced and recognized for her coordination with ICC staff on event safety. Harsha recently was promoted to the role of Fire Marshal and serves as the main point of contact for the ICC with large scale events.

Executive Director Maura Gast thanked the Fire Department team for their presentation and all the work they do for the community.

TOYOTA MUSIC FACTORY UPDATE

Toyota Music Factory General Manager Eric Albert presented a 2025 recap and 2026 outlook for the Toyota Music Factory. He reported continued investment in the property, including tenant improvements, capital improvements, LED board repairs and replacements, and planning for improved guest experience and traffic flow.

Albert reported that 2025 activity included approximately 80 Live Nation events at The Pavilion with approximately 38,000 tickets sold, 150 plaza events, and approximately 1.6 million visitors. Placer.AI data showed Toyota Music Factory performing competitively with comparable area entertainment districts. While 2025 was relatively flat, the opening of Punch Line Comedy Club and the reopening of the Plaza helped drive traffic.

Albert reviewed the 2025 leasing efforts, noting a focus on local tenants, continued support of core tenants, six new tenant openings, and two new leases signed, which includes Roots Chicken Shak from noted chef Tiffany Derry.

The early 2026 trends are cautiously optimistic, with increased business traffic due to the opening of the Wells Fargo campus. Albert added that Hospitality Alliance, who also managed the Plaza, closed its doors in December. The Toyota Music Factory will be responsible for selling the Plaza for private events until further notice. There will be a future meeting with the ICVB, ICC and the Toyota Music Factory team to discuss coordination of the Plaza operations.

On a question from Gibson, Albert responded that The Rayleigh Underground did great in 2025. They changed their business model and are focusing on private sales and ticketed events. They are happy with their tenancy.

The programming plans for 2026 include Taste of Irving, Oktoberfest, Cinco de Mayo, Second Saturday live music, post-concert events, watch parties, summer programming, and seasonal markets.

DCURD WATER ACTIVITIES UPDATE

DCURD General Manager Dallas Burke reported that water activities on Lake Carolyn continue to perform well.

Gast asked if Gondola Adventures has the exclusive rights to rental activities at Lake Carolyn. Burke confirmed that existing operators maintain exclusive rights to rental activities, limiting additional competition.

Discussion was held regarding potential enhancements, such as temporary water coloring for events, which have been used previously and is considered safe pending appropriate testing.

Safety measures were reviewed, including installed signage, safety cables, and ladders, as well as support from the Fire Department's water rescue Team.

ICVB/ICC SALES PIPELINE UPDATE

Assistant Executive Director of Sales and Services Lori Fojtasek reviewed the current sales pipeline, noting that Irving remains a short-term booking destination with continued in-month booking activity. Currently behind pace for 2025–2026, due in part to FIFA World Cup-related impacts, closure of Dallas Convention Center for renovations and the loss of certain groups to other destinations, including approximately 4,500 room nights from a cheer event that has relocated to Houston.

ICC General Manager Tom Meehan reported that, following a strong prior year, the Convention Center is starting to see shifts in events and added that there has been a decline in larger shows this year, which may be related to reduced travel spending. He will continue to monitor trends throughout the year.

Fojtasek added that the benchmark data reflects higher occupancy in May due to FIFA-related room blocks. FIFA released rooms held at the Omni Las Colinas Hotel but are waiting to book at the Westin Irving Convention Center. Buttafuoco added that the Omni Las Colinas Hotel has decided to release the rooms as FIFA may be overcommitted or reassigning where the demand is.

Discussion was held regarding ongoing uncertainty surrounding FIFA demand, with some hotels releasing room blocks or delaying bookings. Non-refundable rate structures are contributing to slower booking decisions. Fojtasek emphasized the importance of continuing to book business as usual to avoid potential gaps in occupancy. Director of Sales Matt Tungett also highlighted challenges for some groups securing hotel rooms during peak periods, although most hotel partners continue working with groups and remain focused on the big picture.

UPDATE ON 2026 FIFA WORLD CUP

Tungett provided an update on planning efforts for the 2026 FIFA World Cup, noting it will be the largest tournament to date. FIFA has reduced initial hotel inventory estimates, due to overestimating demand. Additional ticket releases are expected to drive future demand. Over the next few weeks they will be pushing media, supplies and tickets to fill the 90-day cut-off to properties.

There is an upcoming FIFA operational meeting scheduled for February 19. Gast has sent the information to the City of Irving Police, Fire, Parks and Streets/Traffic departments. Tungett will be in attendance.

Discussion was held regarding hotel bookings and base camp selections, as well as the impact of tax-exempt room blocks on Hotel Occupancy Tax revenue. Tungett noted that future bookings from individual travelers coming in per game will be outside of exempt blocks and thus should generate hotel occupancy tax revenues.

Gast mentioned FIFA will be working with the Restaurant Association to help educate restaurants regarding non-legitimate event promoters. Tungett added there will be official watch parties scheduled at The Ginger Man. They will be requesting approval to set up tents in the open space at Water Street for these events.

CITY COUNCIL REPORT
No City Council Report.

COMMITTEE CHAIR REPORT AND STAFF COMMENTS

Buttafuoco reviewed current Committee goals and emphasized continued focus on destination development initiatives. Further discussion will continue at the May meeting, along with ongoing collaboration with Las Colinas Association, ICC and City partners.

RESIDENT SENTIMENT SURVEY RESULTS

Gast presented the results from the Resident Sentiment Survey conducted by Longwoods International. The insights from this study will help identify opportunities and shared priorities that will help inform the Irving Convention and Visitors Bureau Board of Director's upcoming strategic plan. The study was designed to understand the perceptions of individuals who live and /or work in Irving.

The next steps include:

- Stakeholder Engagement Report will summarize the stakeholder interviews and identify the major themes that emerged across the sessions.
Irving Hotel Market Assessment will provide data-driven guidance on potential city decisions or support for future hotel development and permitting decisions, designed to optimize HOT collections while strengthening Irving's competitive positioning as a destination.

URBAN CENTER PARKING UPDATE

Gast provided an update from the January 29, 2026 City Council Planning & Development Committee meeting regarding Urban Center parking. Options are being evaluated for additional parking near the Westin Irving Convention Center site. A FEMA levee managed by DCURD runs through a vacant site providing some limitations and challenges requiring additional expenses and approvals.

Existing parking facilities south of North O'Connor may be available to support the City's public parking needs on a more regular basis and for guaranteed access on the evenings and weekends.

Discussion also included parking coordination at Water Street and Levy Event Plaza, where event organizers currently have to work directly with individual garages per event. The City is exploring partnership opportunities with private garages to improve coordination and access, similar to existing Urban Towers arrangements.

Gast will be meeting with City staff this afternoon, they will take the lead and will keep the ICVB updated.

The next Committee meeting will be held on May 12, 2026.

With no further discussion, Buttafuoco adjourned the meeting at 1:07 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,



Maura Allen Gast, FDCME

Executive Director