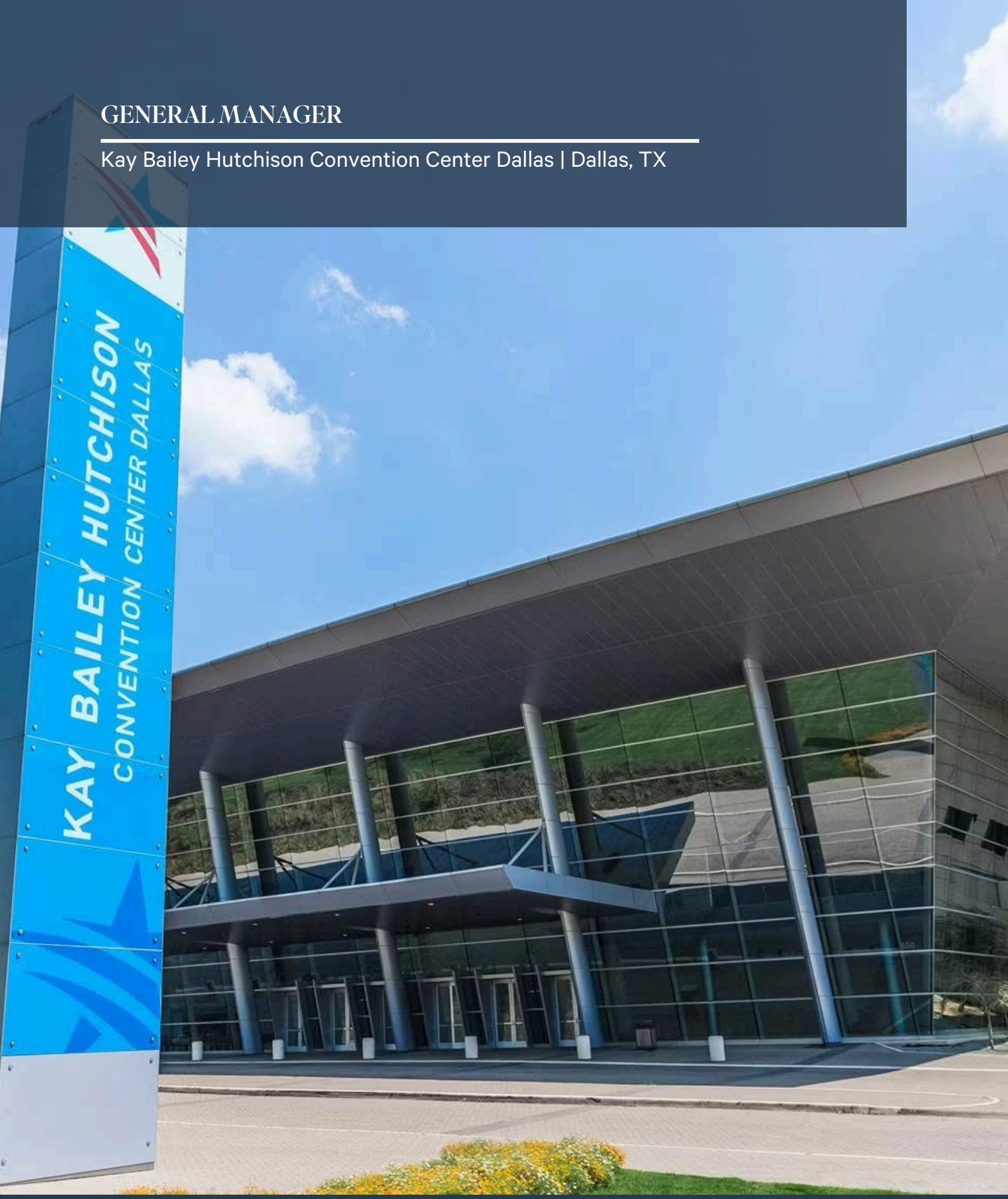
GENERAL MANAGER

Kay Bailey Hutchison Convention Center Dallas | Dallas, TX



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Dallas is entering an exciting new chapter in its evolution as a premier destination for conventions, exhibitions, and major events, and the Kay Bailey Hutchison Convention Center Dallas (KBHCCD) is at the center of that transformation. As one of the city's most significant economic and hospitality assets, KBHCCD plays a vital role in attracting world-class events, generating economic impact, and showcasing Dallas to visitors from around the globe.

The City of Dallas is making a $3.1B transformative investment in the future of the convention center, reimagining the facility and its surrounding district to create a more dynamic, connected, and competitive destination. With an expanded, state-of-the-art convention center planned to debut in 2031, this is an extraordinary opportunity for a proven hospitality and venue executive to help shape what comes next.

A Convention Center Reimagined

Dallas is reimagining most of its convention center with a new, approximately $3.1 billion facility, targeted to open in 2031, while the existing halls stay in service.

Feature	Plan
Total size	2.1 million sq ft, adding about 500,000 sq ft of new event space
Exhibit space	750,000 sq ft
Meeting rooms	180,000 sq ft
Ballroom	105,000 sq ft grand ballroom
Also included	Renovated arena and theater, outdoor event terraces, entry lobby built for activations
Sustainability	Designed to LEED Gold, with solar array and geothermal pile system

Construction Timeline

- June 2024: ground broken on the project.
- February 2026: major demolition begins on Halls D, E, and F. Halls A, B, and C stay active, and the center serves as the FIFA World Cup 2026 International Broadcast Center through August 2026.
- June 2026: City Council affirms the current design, with completion expected in 2030.
- End of 2026: demolition expected to be substantially complete.
- 2030: new convention center completed.
- January 2031: KBHCCD debuts hosting first group in the new facility.

The working center during construction. Halls D, E, and F are decommissioned. Halls A, B, and C remain open, offering about 304,000 sq ft of exhibit space (Halls A and B at about 100,000 sq ft each, Hall C at about 104,000), roughly 46,000 sq ft of ballroom space, and roughly 53,000 sq ft of meeting rooms, about 403,000 sq ft in total.

Why Dallas, Why Now

KBHCCD welcomes over one million visitors a year. Voters backed a hotel occupancy tax increase to fund its rebirth, and the City of Dallas has positioned the project as a catalyst for downtown and for connections to The Cedars and southern Dallas.

POSITION SUMMARY

The City of Dallas and Visit Dallas are seeking a General Manager who will lead the performance of the convention center during the phased construction and prepare for the grand reopening in 2031.

Reporting to the President & CEO of Visit Dallas and partnering closely with the City of Dallas, ownership, industry partners, and the broader hospitality community, the General Manager will lead a high-performing team, champion operational excellence, and help position KBHCCD for its next era of growth and success.

This is more than an opportunity to lead a convention center. It is an opportunity to help shape a landmark destination, contribute to the economic vitality of Dallas, and leave a lasting impact on one of the most exciting convention center transformations in the country.

The next General Manager will:

- Operate a live venue in phases, with active halls beside a major construction site.
- Build the team, systems, and service model for a new facility with 750,000 sq ft of exhibit space, a 105,000 sq ft ballroom, and 180,000 sq ft of meeting rooms.
- Work alongside the City of Dallas, Visit Dallas, and the construction and design teams.
- Hold the client relationships that fill the new building.
- Provide the leadership, vision, and operational expertise to elevate the center's performance, strengthen its market position, and deliver an exceptional experience for clients, exhibitors, attendees, and community stakeholders.

ESSENTIAL DUTIES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

- Lead the venue. Set vision, culture, and performance goals for a full operations team spanning events, facilities, security, guest services, and finance.
- Set operating standards and procedures through construction. Establish proper SOPs, facility operations, and standing and contract partnerships during construction to ensure optimal performance.
- Deliver exceptional events through construction. Keep clients, exhibitors, and attendees well served while halls, access routes, and loading areas change in phases.
- Provide input and oversight during construction. Have a seat at the table working with the City, Visit Dallas, and construction partners to weigh in on construction implementation, including OAC meetings, Value Engineering, managing FF&E, and protecting operational flow.
- Prepare for opening. Build the operating plan, staffing model, budget, and vendor strategy for the new facility, and contribute an operator's voice to design, commissioning, and transition.
- Champion internal management. Establish and lead the venue management strategy to ensure optimal performance during phased construction while also preparing for the RFP process ahead of the reopening.
- Work with Visit Dallas to drive revenue and client success. Partner with Visit Dallas and the City on sales strategy, bookings, and service partnerships (food and beverage, exhibitor services, technology, parking).
- Manage the financials and reporting. Own the operating budget, capital planning input, and revenue growth, with transparent reporting to City leadership.
- Safeguard safety and security. Maintain strong life-safety, emergency, and risk practices across an active site.
- Engage the community. Represent the venue with civic leaders, industry associations, neighbors, and workforce and supplier-diversity partners.
- Champion sustainability. Carry the project's LEED Gold ambitions into daily operations.

QUALIFICATIONS

- A bachelor's degree in hospitality, business, or a related field (advanced degree or CMP/CFE/CVE preferred)
- 10+ years of proven leadership in convention center, arena, or large venue management, including senior-level oversight of operations, sales, and finance
- Experience leading a venue through expansion, renovation, or a new-build opening is required
- A record of managing large operating budgets and multi-million-dollar revenue streams
- Deep knowledge of exhibitions, conventions, and meetings, and credibility with show organizers, service contractors, and destination marketing organizations
- Experience working in a public-sector or public-private environment, including City Council, procurement, and community stakeholder engagement
- A collaborative, visible leader who builds and develops high-performing teams
- Poise, clear communication, and sound judgment in a high-profile, politically engaged setting

KEY CHARACTERISTICS

- Independent, Self-Directed Leader: Makes sound decisions without a corporate playbook. Thrives with support, not micromanagement.
- Builder Mindset: Enjoys building and standing up an independent operation (SOPs, systems, payroll, contracts) and builds structure with confidence.
- Collaborative Communicator and Public-Sector Navigator: Communicates openly and partners effectively with the Visit Dallas CEO, the City of Dallas, ownership, and community partners. Comfortable reporting to a City-owned structure and working within public-sector processes.
- Customer Experience Champion and Revenue Partner: Protects service levels during transition and construction. Supports Visit Dallas sales and marketing to generate opportunities and confirm business, and drives upselling, rebooking, and on-site revenue.
- Financially Astute: Manages the P&L, cash, payables, and subcontractor contracts independently, with strong budgeting and fiscal discipline.
- Adaptable and Resilient: Stays steady amid shifting hall availability, phased construction, and uncertainty about post-2031 operations.

TOP PRIORITIES (FIRST 6 MONTHS)

- Lead the Transition: Work to move the private venue management operations, including but not limited to transitioning staff, contracts, licenses, and all operations to Visit Dallas / KBHCCD.
- Implement SOPs: Deploy standard operating procedures to ensure all departments at KBHCCD are operating effectively in compliance with the SOPs.
- Work with Visit Dallas HR and Finance: Establish accounting and finance operations cadence with Visit Dallas and Baker Tilly.
- Protect the customer experience: Maintain and improve service levels with team member delivery to ensure optimal customer experience.
- Retain and lead the team: Ensure the existing staff is engaged, stable, and confident in the new structure.
- Manage contracts and vendors: Take over subcontractor agreements and secure third-party support for services.
- Build key partnerships: Align with Visit Dallas CEO and Sales and Marketing, build relationships with Hotel Partners, Key Stakeholders, and establish regular reporting to the City.
- Take a seat at the construction table: Provide operational input on the new center and manage hall availability as plans evolve.
- Deliver exceptional events safely: Ensure the safety and security of guests, staff, and events while operating a live venue alongside active construction.

If interested in learning more about this great opportunity, please send your resume to our SearchWide Global Executive, Andrea Christopherson.



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