



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
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City of San Diego Seeking to Rehabilitate and Reopen Starlight Bowl

PROPOSALS NOW BEING ACCEPTED FOR LEASE AND RENOVATION OF BALBOA PARK'S NEARLY 90-YEAR-OLD AMPHITHEATER

SAN DIEGO – The City of San Diego is looking for organizations or individuals interested in bringing the historic and famed Starlight Bowl in Balboa Park back to life.

Today, the City of San Diego issued a [Request for Proposals](#) for the lease and renovation of the open-air amphitheater, which saw its last production in 2010. In their proposals, interested parties must show how they will renovate, rehabilitate, operate, finance and maintain the property.

The City is asking the lessee to reestablish the 3,600-seat amphitheater for community events, outdoor performances and presentations.

“Many longtime San Diegans have cherished memories of the Starlight Bowl and have wanted to see it restored,” said Mayor Todd Gloria. **“We are excited to invite proposals that will breathe new life into this iconic venue. Revitalizing the Starlight Bowl not only honors our past but also helps build a more dynamic future for Balboa Park.”**

Since taking office the Gloria Administration has pursued opportunities to reactivate the venue. In 2022, the City received \$500,000 in federal Community Project funding, secured by U.S. Rep. Sara Jacobs, to rehabilitate existing bathroom facilities, as well as make Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) enhancements throughout the venue.

Originally called the Ford Bowl, the Starlight Bowl was constructed in 1935 by the Ford Motor Company as a showcase for Ford vehicles during the 1935-1936 California Pacific International Exposition.

In 1945, the San Diego Civic Light Opera was founded and began operating the Starlight Bowl with musical performances, choirs and symphonies for over 50 years. In 2018, the City entered into an agreement with the nonprofit organization Save Starlight to manage the amphitheater.

The Starlight Bowl is characterized by the large plaster-clad shell that defines the stage area and contains the dressing rooms and storage areas. It also houses a box office, concessions and offices. The City is asking for proposals to include innovative ideas to better incorporate the property's physical structures into the

overall architectural design of Balboa Park.

“From theater productions to large entertainment acts, the Starlight Bowl has served as a memorable place for families and friends to enjoy outdoor events for decades,” said Economic Development Director Christina Bibler. “We look forward to working with an organization or individual to revive the amphitheater so we can continue offering those experiences, create good-paying jobs and provide cultural opportunities and experiences for San Diegans and visitors.”

The [Balboa Park Central Mesa Precise Plan](#) serves as a guide for renovations and improvements within the park. Review of any proposed renovations will include the City’s Parks and Recreation Department, the Balboa Park Committee and the Balboa Park Historic Resources staff.

When selecting a lessee, the City will consider the proposer’s experience and qualifications to operate an open-air amphitheater, their financial capability, a detailed operating plan and proposed renovations, an oral presentation and an interview. The exact terms of the lease will be negotiated after a proposal is selected.

The [Request for Proposals](#) can be accessed through the City’s website. Proposals must be submitted by 4 p.m. on Nov. 14.

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