

Fair Park Year in Review

**Parks, Trails, and the Environment
Committee**

October 5, 2026

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Dallas Park and Recreation Department



City of Dallas

Presentation Overview



- Purpose
- Background
- Accomplishments to Date & Lookahead
- Next Steps



Purpose



- To provide City Council an update on Fair Park operations and accomplishments since March 2026.



Background



- Dallas Park and Recreation began management of daily operations on September 16, 2025.
- On August 7, 2025, we provided a Transition Update to the Park Board, discussing operational impact, current conditions, deferred maintenance, and the transition
- On October 27, 2025, we briefed the Park Board on Fair Park Operations Model and Revitalization Strategy
- On March 26, 2026, we briefed the Park Board on Fair Park Operations and Revitalization Strategy Updates
- On April 6, 2026, we briefed Parks, Trails, and the Environment Committee on Fair Park Operations and Revitalization Strategy Updates



Facilities Maintenance



- Replaced air handling unit coils in Centennial
- Replaced aging inline duct heating system with energy efficient boilers in Centennial
- Completed additional repairs to HVAC in Museum of Natural History
- Completed installation of a new fire alarm control panel servicing PanAm Arena, Poultry, & DPD Mounted
- Completed repairs to water wheel & fountain at Old Mill Inn
- Installed new emergency lighting in Automobile Building
- Replaced air handler fan with a fan array in African American Museum
- Replaced all lighting with new LED fixtures in African American Museum (TPW Grant)
- Replaced 13,000 sq ft of concrete in front of the Music Hall to remediate slip and trip hazards
- Completed initial preventative maintenance schedule for all buildings at Fair Park
- Pressure washed lower portions of the Automobile & Centennial Buildings



Facilities Maintenance



Before:



**Automobile
Seat Wall**



**Centennial
Seat Wall**



**Music Hall
Concrete
Replacement**

After:



Facilities Maintenance – Lookahead



- Painting: Esplanade seating and retaining walls, Centennial & Automobile Building doors
- Painting: Compiling master list of historical colors for pre-approval by Fair Park Task Force, Office of Preservation, and Texas Historical Commission which will allow for quick approval of routine maintenance projects
- Phase I & Phase II fire panel replacements: Children's Aquarium, Music Hall, Automobile Building, & Livestock Pavilion
- Establishing master agreements for routine services not currently under contract
- Roof assessments, Brimer planning
- Continue updating and refinement of deferred maintenance & critical needs list
 - Deferred Maintenance: \$44,301,210; down from initial \$48,001,210



Grounds Maintenance



- Continued focus on identifying, prioritizing, and addressing irrigation deficiencies throughout property; comprehensive review of system completed
- Began looking beyond immediate repairs toward a long-term modernization of Fair Park's irrigation infrastructure to address overspray & water waste, runoff & pooling, uneven distribution & stress, and safety concerns; overall reduction to water consumption with goal of usage by 30%
- Several high-visibility landscape improvements underway:
 - Women's Building
 - African American Museum Courtyard
 - Music Hall



Grounds Maintenance - Lookahead



- Replanting around the Music Hall including the tree wells
- Continue systematic repairs to irrigation with goal of completion by State Fair of Texas
- Gates 5 & 6 irrigation needs complete redesign, drainage added, & soil changed out; change of plant material to add more color/pop as people enter the park
 - Anticipated completion by State Fair of Texas



Security



- Implementation of 24/7 Software, an incident management system and response platform that tracks all reported incidents, reported times and response times. It maintains a detailed history of all incident records and provides real-time automated alerts and notifications. It also provides live access to all security cameras in Fair Park which will be monitored in our central command center.



Security – Lookahead



- Updates to Standard Operating Procedures (SOP) and guard post orders
- Updating Emergency Action Plan (EAP)
- Establishing standard staffing requirements for all event locations to include police, medical, security, guest services, and parking
- Streamline call types in 24/7 incident management system (IMS) to provide more clarity on activity/incidents in the park
- Deploy full 24/7 IMS capabilities to include timestamps for the following: call received, resource dispatched, resource on-scene, call closed (resolved)
- Finalize incident data categorizations and priority levels for dashboards



Partner Collaboration – Office of Arts and Culture (OAC)



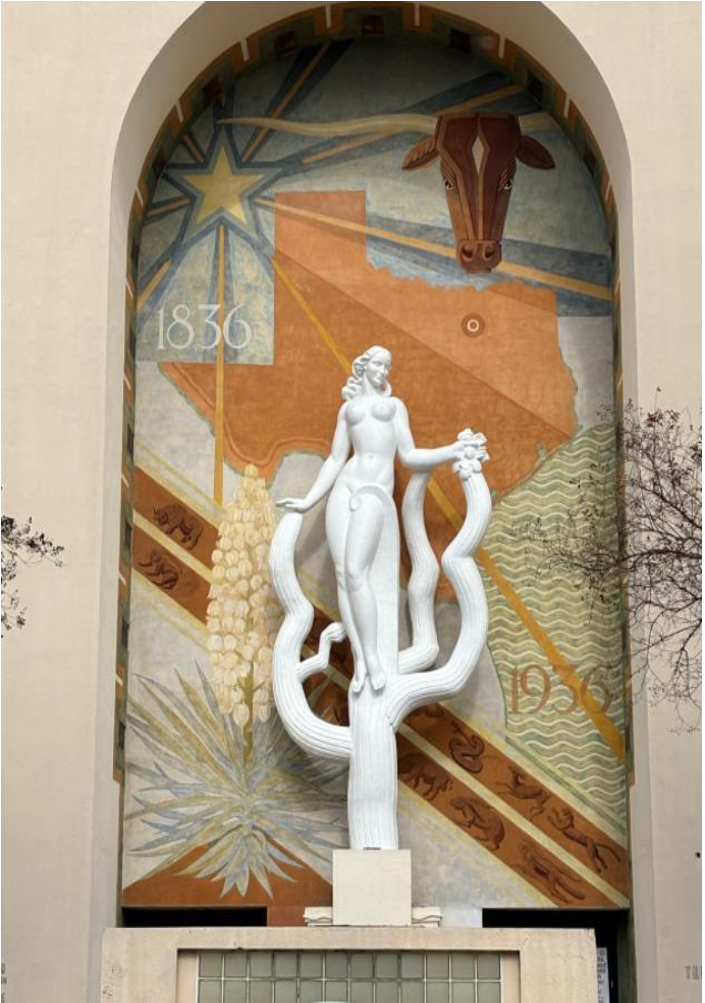
- Spirit of the Centennial
- World is Ours
- Tower Mural Restoration
- African American Museum TPW Grant work
- The Black Academy of Arts and Letters (TBAAL)



Before:



After:



Partner Collaboration – Office of Arts and Culture (OAC)



Before:



After:



Partner Collaboration – Office of Arts and Culture (OAC)



Before Renovation:



After Renovation:



Partner Collaborations – State Fair of Texas



- State Fair of Texas
 - Lot 3E resurfacing & underground electrical & water utility upgrades
 - Painting of Gates 5 & 6 ticket booths: clean & paint exterior, repair exterior damage, repair all roof leaks, refresh overall appearance
 - 1st Avenue leveling near Aquarium
 - New AC units in Creative Arts



Cotton Bowl Stadium



- Increased utilization of newly renovated spaces
- Hosted (6) 2026 FIFA World Cup team trainings for the World Cup champions Spain
- Kicked off new Dallas Trinity FC season on August 15
- Hosted the Stateline Showdown between Southlake Carroll (Texas) and Jenks (Oklahoma)
 - Southlake Carroll:
 - Ranked #4 in the state of Texas; Ranked #39 nationally
 - Has won 8 state championships
 - Jenks:
 - Ranked #3 in the state of Oklahoma
 - One of the winningest programs in Oklahoma history with 18 state championships



Cotton Bowl Stadium - Lookahead



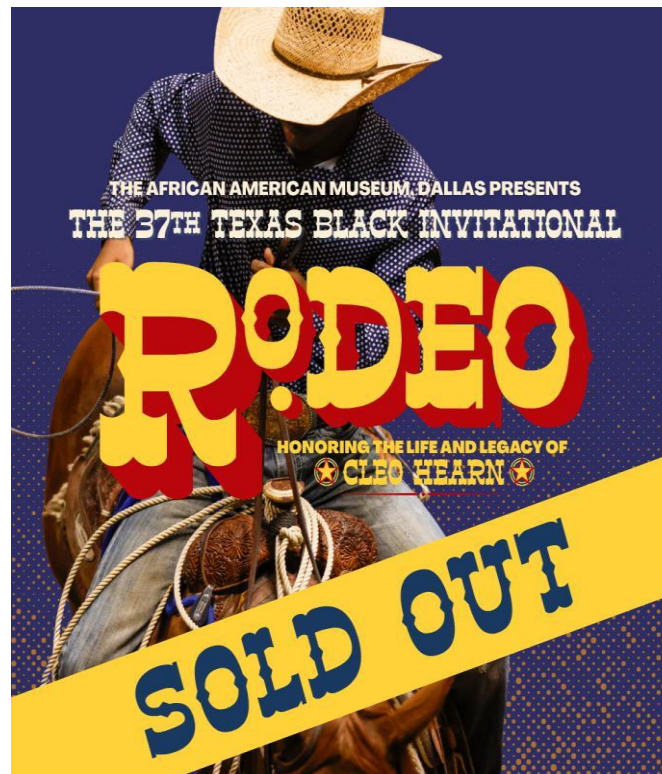
- High School Football: September 12
 - (2) Duncanville vs (4) DeSoto
 - (1) Houston North Shore vs (3) South Oak Cliff
 - In addition to top 4 state rankings, each team is also nationally ranked
 - Houston North Shore (13), Duncanville (15), South Oak Cliff (19), DeSoto (22)
- State Fair Classic: Grambling State vs Prairie View A&M
- Red River Rivalry: Texas vs Oklahoma
- Coming March 2027: Atletico Dallas
- RFCSP for Cotton Bowl Operator



Events



- Notable Events:
 - Monster Truck Wars (6,000 per show)
 - Nations Fest (4,000)
 - Breakaway Music Festival (9,295)
 - Foodieland (46,020)
 - Dallas Cup (10,000)
 - FIFA Fan Festival
 - FIFA World Cup Trophy Tour (20,000)
 - Texas Black Invitational Rodeo (7,000+)
 - Mayor's Back to School (12,000)



Events - Lookahead



- Refining operational and process procedures with Visit Dallas
- TBAAL River Front Jazz Festival 2026 (September 4-6, 2026)
- Updating client documents and marketing materials
- Post-State Fair kicks off with DIY CON, a 3-day celebration of making, creating, building, and bringing ideas to life
- Ring in the New Year with Lights all Night, a 2-day music festival
- Projected event revenues for FY27 quickly outpacing final FY26 estimated revenues



Programming & Community Engagement Events



- Fair Park Farmers Markets (14,355)
- Can Do Spirit Day (200)
- Natural History Museum Reactivation (8,066)
- Sunny South Dallas Food Park Collaboration (300)
- Lone Star Circus, 3-day Activation (250)
- Theta Alpha Chapter of Omega Psi Phi Fraternity, Inc. Dallas STEM Grand Prix (100)
- Texas Turtle Day (300)
- ThaSpotDTX Zydeco Concert (350)
- Nations Fest at the Bandshell (4,000)
- South Dallas Business Readiness Symposium (100)
- Girls Walk (50)
- Afro Air Community Activations (250)
- Fitness Ambassadors Stadium Sweat (535)



Programming & Community Engagement Events – Lookahead



- Fitness Ambassadors - November 15, 2026/January 10, 2026
- A Night at the Museum – October 31, 2026
- Fair Park Movie Nights Fall/Winter Movie Series – 4 Movies
- Halloween Movie Workshop SM – Movie Institute October 9 -10
- 9 Hour Video Race SM Workshop – November 14
- Fair Park Tree Lighting – December 4, 2026
- A Fair Park Holiday - December 5, 2026
- Texas Traditions – March 6, 2027
- The Great Egg Hunt at Fair Park – March 27, 2027
- Fair Park Movie Nights Spring/Summer Movie Series – 4 Movies
- Fair Park 4th – July 4, 2027



Marketing & Branding



- Produced and distributed digital marketing newsletters promoting Fair Park programs, events and visitor opportunities.
- Maintained ongoing website updates and refreshed event information.
- Updated the event inquiry process in coordination with Visit Dallas to support venue sales and lead generation.
- Used social content, reels, partner amplification, influencers, media coverage and City channels to expand visibility.
- Supported promotion of recurring programs and special activations across multiple audiences.

2.9 Million
Social Media
Views

102K
Interactions

37K Profile
Visits

4K Net New
Followers



Administration & Contracts



- After stabilizing operations with several 1-year contracts for key services, the focus has shifted to creating new bid specifications for long-term contracts. These new contracts will allow Fair Park to modernize event packages, streamline services, and increase revenues.
- Contract conversations with campus partners are underway
- Market rate analysis study is nearly in place and anticipated to begin within the next 1-2 months
- Established dashboard and criteria for facility usage rates



Administration & Contracts - Lookahead



- The major focus of FY26 was stabilization: stabilizing operations, facilities, and business operations
- FY27 will now focus on procuring several long-term agreements for key services. These contracts will allow Fair Park to operate with more efficiency, delivery a better customer experience, and enhance revenues. These RFCSPs are anticipated to be sent to Procurement Services within the next 30-45 days. Staff will also continue discussions with potential partners on non-traditional revenue opportunities.
- FY27 will also focus on identifying new tenants for our vacant buildings. We have received multiple offers on multiple facilities. The time to advance these concepts and discussions to reality is now.
- After a year of stabilizing operations, this next year will see Fair Park revamp current and past agreements, secure additional revenue streams, modernize our sales approach with Visit Dallas firmly established and the completion of the market rate analysis, continue facility and grounds improvements, while maintaining fiscal responsibility.



Fiscal Update & Lookahead



- As of today, Fair Park is on track to meet our \$18.7 million budget despite challenges.
- While we were able to reduce the initial deferred maintenance list by \$3.7M, there remains over \$44M of deferred maintenance in addition to the day-to-day maintenance obligations.
- Additionally, the FY26 budget was supported by some additional cash streams:
 - 2017 Bond Funds
 - 2024 Bond Funds
 - ADA Funds
 - The transfer of (3) Fair Park Multiyear (MY) Funds into the Fair Park Fund. The transfer of these MY Funds were vital to accomplish critical HVAC repairs & replacements throughout the park.



Fair Park Community Park



- Continue supporting and working in partnership with Fair Park First to complete the Community Park and deliver the project for residents and visitors.



A look Ahead - Fair Park Development



- Staff will be seeking concepts for the development of approximately 40 acres at Fair Park
- Exploring opportunities for a multipurpose entertainment venue/facility, restaurants, retail, lodging/hotel, and structured parking
- Staff will continue to keep the City Council, Park Board, and community engaged and informed throughout the development process



Continuing on Progress



- Continue to build and nurture relationship with Visit Dallas to maximize potential of Fair Park
- Continue working with existing partners to maximize their impact and expand the work they're already doing.
- Continue discussions with potential partners for vacant buildings
- Provide Procurement Services bid specifications for key services
- Host and attract multicultural and international events at Fair Park
- Seeking concepts for 40 acres development of Fair Park



Fair Park Management Group





City of Dallas

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Appendix



- Accomplishment slides from March 26, 2026, Park Board briefing: Fair Park Operations Model and Revitalization Strategy Update



FY26 Accomplishments – Facilities Maintenance



- Completed repairs to Esplanade Fountain, Twin Fountains, and Woofus
- Replaced chiller in African American Museum
- Replaced chiller in Automobile Building
- Replaced chiller in Visitors Center
- Completed major HVAC repairs at Hall of Religion
- Repaired and reclaimed previously unusable office space in Cattle Barn Offices to create sufficient operating space for facilities staff, including a workshop
- Extensive HVAC repairs in Centennial: retired aging gas fired inline heaters & decommissioned all faulty radiant heater loops; providing constant heat to the building for 20+ years
- Extensive HVAC repairs in Coliseum: rebuilt (2) 300-ton chillers that were filled with debris
- Reallocated one boiler from Automobile Building to Women's Museum to allow reheat for TBAAL operations
- Completed assessment of deferred maintenance list with contractor
- Established a preventative maintenance plan and schedule



FY26 Accomplishments – Grounds Maintenance



- Completed perimeter replanting at the Cotton Bowl Stadium following recent construction
- Installed a new specialized plant bed at the African American Museum (AAM) and replanted the high-visibility Entry Wagon Wheel
- Added a new plant bed at The Music Hall, removed dead trees, and raised the canopy of surrounding trees
- Finalized all fall plantings for Gates 3, 5, and 6, ensuring all main entries and display beds are visually optimized
- Coordinated with DWU to improve drainage along 1st Avenue, mitigating standing water and enhancing visitor safety
- Conducted a comprehensive clearing of all parking lots and remediated soil erosion at the Auto Building to maintain full ADA compliance
- Executed major irrigation system upgrade
- Updated all irrigation timers and centralized control for improved efficiency



FY26 Accomplishments - Security



- Finalized agreement with Andy Frain to provide campuswide security services
 - Coverage includes overnight security and substantial increases to daily coverage compared to previous operator
 - Established weekly meetings to ensure communication of all campus activities, address issues, and reinforce expectations
- Finalizing implementation of 24/7 Software, an incident management system and response platform that tracks all reported incidents, reported times and response times. It maintains a detailed history of all incident records and provides real-time automated alerts and notifications. It also provides live access to all security cameras in Fair Park which will be monitored in our central command center.



FY26 Accomplishments – Administration & Events



- Adoption of Org Chart and transition from 7-person Transition Team
 - Onboarded 28 staff members, with 5 more scheduled by end of March
 - Fair Park org includes operating units for events, business operations, grounds maintenance, facilities maintenance, security, community programming and outreach, and Cotton Bowl stadium operations
- Budget development and benchmarking
- Secured key contracts for security, parking, food & beverage, custodial services, Cotton Bowl A/V services, and Visit Dallas
- Created operating procedures for work units
- Initiated or completed the assumption process for 13 contracts
- Initiated procurement for Event Services contract
- Updated all Fair Park website material
- Launched digital marketing with newsletters and event campaigns
- Continued commitment to community outreach
- Finalized 26 event agreements after previous operator informed them of cancelations; finalized an additional 14 event agreements for FY26
- Reintroduced High School football the Cotton Bowl
- Launched weekly Farmers Market
- Finalized Fair Park Business Plan
- Established reoccurring meetings with key departments to collaborate on plans outside the gates
 - Transportation
 - Economic Development
 - City Manager's Office

