

Memorandum



CITY OF DALLAS

DATE August 16, 2024

TO Honorable Mayor and Members of the City Council

SUBJECT **Key Bailey Hutchison Convention Center Dallas (KBHCCD) Master Plan
Component 5 Update – Pioneer Plaza & Cemetery**

This memorandum provides responses to questions asked by members of the Economic Development Committee on Monday, August 5, 2024 regarding funding allocated for and the historical context of Dallas KBHCCD Master Plan Component 5 – Pioneer Plaza & Cemetery.

Funding

Pioneer Park and Cemetery are ranked collectively as the number one visited site in the city of Dallas. The locations were included in the KBHCCD Master Plan both because of their popularity as tourist attractions and their prominent siting at the corner of Young and Griffin Streets. In 2019, prior to inclusion in the plan, Convention and Event Services (CES), the Office of Arts and Culture (OAC) and Park and Recreation (PKR) began exploring the cost of renovation, particularly of the park. At that time, limited engineering examinations were completed which showed significant geotechnical, erosion, and public art restoration needs at the location. Jointly, the departments developed an estimate, later used in the master plan, of \$10 million to complete the repairs. At that time, CES allocated \$5 million in capital funds, generated from a combination of hotel occupancy tax (HOT) and event revenue, for the project, with an understanding that PKR and private partners would provide additional funding for Pioneer Park once renovations were underway.

Pioneer Cemetery became a more prominent part of the renovation discussion as the master plan developed. To appropriately complete future demolition activities, an understanding of the location of gravesites is necessary, so funds were set aside for a survey. Other funding for this project will be garnered through grants and private funding.

Historical Context of Pioneer Cemetery

Pioneer Park was established prior to the Civil War in 1849 on high ground isolated from the original town of Dallas. Historically, it was four separate cemeteries: the Masonic Cemetery, the Odd Fellows' Cemetery, the Jewish Cemetery, and the City Cemetery — created at a time when City officials worked at a distance from the park, and long before the Dallas Memorial Auditorium was built in 1957. Based on data from the Dallas Municipal City Archives, graves of early settlers and civic leaders include Dallas Mayors, War of 1812 Veterans, heroes of the Texas Revolution, both Confederate and Union Civil War Veterans, Peters Colonists, members of the La Reunion French Colony, County Judges, District Judges, notable historical women, a State Senator, a Lieutenant Governor and numerous other City and County officials of the earliest governments of Dallas County.

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Pioneer Cemetery was established separately from the now-removed Confederate monument. The monument was sited near the cemetery from 1961 until 2017. The monument was originally dedicated at Old City Park in 1897, relocated by Dallas Park and Recreation to what became the Kay Bailey Hutchison Cemetery site in 1961, when R.L. Thornton Expressway was built, and was removed by the Office of Arts and Culture in 2017 based on Dallas City Council action.

Should you have any questions, please contact Rosa Fleming, director of Convention and Event Services, at rosa.fleming@dallas.gov or at 214.939.2755.

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