

Memorandum



CITY OF DALLAS

DATE February 20, 2026

TO Honorable Mayor and Members of the Dallas City Council

SUBJECT **Southern Gateway Foundation Update**

The purpose of this memorandum is to provide an update from April Allen, President & CEO of Southern Gateway Public Green Foundation. Attachment A has a full update.

Thank you,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, reading "John Jenkins".

John Jenkins
Director, Dallas Park and Recreation

c: Kimberly Bizer Tolbert, City Manager
Tammy Palomino, City Attorney
Mark Swann, City Auditor
Biliera Johnson, City Secretary
Preston Robinson, Administrative Judge
Baron Eliason, Inspector General (I)
Dominique Artis, Chief of Public Safety

M. Elizabeth (Liz) Cedillo-Pereira, Assistant City Manager
Dev Rastogi, Assistant City Manager
Alina Ciocan, Assistant City Manager
Donzell Gipson, Assistant City Manager
Robin Bentley, Assistant City Manager
Jack Ireland, Chief Financial Officer
Ahmad Goree, Chief of Staff to the City Manager
Directors and Assistant Directors

Attachment A: Halperin Park Update



February 20, 2026

Kimberly Bizer Tolbert
City Manager
Dallas City Hall
1500 Marilla St. Room 4EN
Dallas, Texas 75201

Dear Ms. Tolbert:

I am pleased to provide this update on Halperin Park's progress for your information:

Phase I

- Construction will be substantially complete by the end of the first quarter.
- Estimated Opening Date remains Spring 2026 (we are working to finalize a date soon)
- Deck Infrastructure Cost was \$47 Million
 - \$40 Million – NCTCOG funds
 - \$7 Million – City of Dallas 2017 Bond Funds
- Total Park Amenities Cost of \$75M
 - Over \$62 Million Raised by Southern Gateway Public Green Foundation (SGPGF) for Phase I
- SGPGF is also raising a \$10M operating reserve

Phase II

- Phase II Deck Infrastructure – up to \$87M in funding commitments secured
 - \$27 Million – NCTCOG
 - \$25 Million – USDOT Reconnecting Communities Grant
 - \$15 Million – City of Dallas 2024 Bond Funds
 - Up to \$20 Million – State of Texas via federal funds administered by TxDOT
- Phase II Construction Timeline (tentative):
 - 2026 – Begin Design and Engineering
 - TxDOT has engaged an engineering firm; work should begin very soon
 - 2027/8 – Begin deck construction
 - 2029 – Deck construction complete
 - 2029/30 – Begin park amenities construction
- Phase II Park Amenities
 - Estimated Construction cost of \$79 Million
 - \$14M Committed

Transition to Operations

As we prepare for Halperin Park's Spring 2026 opening, SGPGF is transitioning from a primarily fundraising and planning organization to an active park operations organization. To support this shift, we have expanded to a team of six staff members, including a Chief Operating Officer and a Director of Programming, and we are currently recruiting for a Director of Facilities and a Director of Security.

Our vision for Halperin Park is to be a safe, inclusive, and first-class destination for all visitors. To achieve that standard, we are planning to provide key services in-house—including security, sanitation, and horticulture—so we can directly train staff, maintain consistent expectations, and ensure a high level of customer service and daily operations. In advance of opening, we anticipate hiring additional employees to support these on-site functions.

In addition, we are actively working to confirm a food-and-beverage partner for the park's multiuse pavilion. This space will be open and accessible to the public for indoor seating, planned activities and public restrooms. It will also offer food options available for purchase. The selected partner will also provide catering support for park events.

Other SGPGF Efforts:

Implementation of Community First Plan

Our Community First Plan focuses our community efforts in 6 key areas (History and Culture, Health and Wellness, Education, Economic Opportunities, Diverse Housing, and Safe and Stable Neighborhoods). Examples of efforts in a few of those areas are below.

- History and Culture
 - The "Oak Cliff Walk of Fame", on the park's main pedestrian pathway, will honor individuals and organizations who have had a positive impact on Oak Cliff and its formation. We recently opened this process to the public and solicited additional names for inclusion on our list of nominees. You can read more about the list and the process [here](#).
 - Park programming will reflect the culture of Oak Cliff in every aspect from music and dance to film and theater.
- Economic Opportunities
 - The General Contractor is a Joint Venture between McCarthy Construction and EJ Smith Construction (local, African-American owned firm).
 - MWBE Participation on HP Construction will exceed the city's 32% requirement.
- Diverse Housing
 - SGPGF advocates for mixed income housing in any new development



- We are working with nearby organizations including Golden Seeds and Behind Every Door to create a property tax assistance program to educate Park neighbors on how to reduce their property taxes through filing for exemptions and protests. The program is inspired by and in partnership with Wesley Rankin and their assistance for their West Dallas neighbors.
- In 2025, SGPGF hosted two property tax information sessions to help nearby residents learn how to reduce and protest their property taxes in partnership with UNT Dallas College of Law.

Community Outreach

- SGPGF hosts Community Meetings to update residents on park progress and provide resources on various topics.
- We also attended or presented to over 50 community events and meetings in 2025.

We are excited to have come this far and to be so close to opening this beautiful park to the public. Please do not hesitate to let us know if you have any questions or concerns. This is an effort that required support from every corner, and we appreciate your help!

Gratefully,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads 'April Allen'.

April Allen
President & CEO
Southern Gateway Public Green Foundation