

Dallas Parks Group 2026

Trust for Public Land

Your Voice for Dallas Parks: Community Budget Toolkit

Every year, the City of Dallas adopts a budget that determines funding for the services and spaces residents rely on every day. This includes parks, recreation centers, trails, natural areas, and community programs.

The annual budget process gives residents an opportunity to learn about the City's proposed budget and share their priorities directly with City Council before the budget is adopted.

As a community member of our parks group, we believe parks and recreation are essential to healthy, connected, and thriving communities. Whether you visit a neighborhood park, use a recreation center, volunteer in a green space, or simply care about the future of Dallas, your voice can help inform City leaders as they make budget decisions.

This toolkit will help you:

- Understand the City budget process.
- Learn what's at stake for parks and recreation.
- Find your Budget Town Hall.
- Prepare to share your story.
- Connect with other park advocates throughout the budget season.

You don't need to be an expert on the City budget to participate. The most impactful comments come from residents sharing how parks and recreation have made a difference in their lives and neighborhoods.

Together, we can help ensure parks remain an important part of Dallas' future.

Understanding the Budget Process

What Is the City Budget?

Each year, the City of Dallas develops a budget that determines how public funds will be invested in City services over the next fiscal year. This includes funding for parks and recreation, public safety, libraries, streets, sanitation, and many other services that residents rely on every day.

Before the budget is adopted, the City invites residents to review the City Manager's Recommended Budget and provide input that helps inform City Council's budget discussions and decisions.

What Are Budget Town Halls?

City Council Budget Town Halls are public meetings held in each Council district between August 11 and August 25. These meetings provide residents with an opportunity to:

- Learn more about the City Manager's Recommended Budget.
- Share their input and feedback directly with their City Council Member.
- Raise questions or concerns about community priorities.
- Listen to perspectives from other residents.

Meetings will be offered both in person and virtually, and Spanish interpretation will be available at select locations.

No registration is required. Residents are welcome to attend and share their comments during the public input portion of the meeting.

What Is the Citywide Budget Workshop and Public Hearing?

Following the district town halls, the City will hold a Citywide Budget Workshop and Public Hearing, providing another opportunity for residents to share feedback before the budget is finalized.

If you would like to speak during the public hearing, you must register in advance through the City's website. Residents are also encouraged to attend and listen to the discussion.

Budget Timeline at a Glance

- **City Manager Releases the Recommended Budget**
- **City Council Budget Town Halls (August 11–25)**
Residents learn about the recommended budget and provide input and feedback directly to their City Council Member.
- **Parks Groups Happy Hour (August 19) ([RSVP](#))**
Connect with fellow park advocates, share what you heard at the town halls, and prepare for the next opportunity to engage.
- **Citywide Budget Workshop & Council Briefing (August 26)**
The City Council will hold a citywide briefing and workshop on the proposed FY 2026–27 and FY 2027–28 budgets. Residents can attend to learn more about the proposed budgets and hear the Council's discussion.
- **City Council Budget Deliberations (September 2)**
City Council reviews community feedback and considers changes to the proposed budget. The City Manager may present updates. First reading of the budget takes place.
- **Budget Adoption (September 16)**
City Council holds the final vote to adopt the budget and set the tax rate for the upcoming fiscal year.

Why Parks Matter & How You Can Participate

Why Parks Matter

Parks and recreation are essential to a healthy, connected, and thriving Dallas. They provide places where people of all ages can play, exercise, gather, learn, and enjoy nature. Parks and recreation centers also support community well-being by offering programs, activities, and spaces that bring neighbors together. The annual budget process is an opportunity to share why these places matter to you and your community.

What's at Stake?

The City budget determines how funding is allocated for parks and recreation services across Dallas. Community input helps City Council understand what residents value as they make funding decisions.

Budget decisions can influence:

- Maintenance of parks, trails, and natural areas
- Recreation center programs and services
- Staffing and operating hours at recreation centers
- Youth, senior, and community programming
- Park safety, accessibility, and improvements
- Future park projects and capital investments

When funding is limited, parks and recreation departments may need to make difficult decisions about priorities. This can mean reducing programs, limiting recreation center hours, delaying maintenance or improvements, or postponing future projects.

Your voice can help reinforce that parks and recreation are essential public services that deserve continued investment.

How to Participate

- **Step 1: Find Your City Council District**
 - Locate your City Council District to find the correct Budget Town Hall.
 - Resource: [Find My District](#), [City of Dallas GIS Service](#) (need to create account)
- **Step 2: Attend Your District's Budget Town Hall**
 - Budget Town Halls will take place **August 11–25** and are open to everyone.
 - Attend in person or virtually.
 - No registration is required.
 - Share your feedback with your City Council Member if you'd like to speak.
 - Resource: [Budget Town Hall Schedule](#)
- **Step 3: Join the Parks Group Happy Hour ([RSVP](#))**
 - Join fellow park advocates between the district meetings to connect, share experiences, and prepare for the next phase of the budget process.
 - **Date:** Wednesday, August 19, 2026
 - **Time:** 4:00-6:00 PM
 - **Location:** [Community Beer Co. Taproom & Restaurant](#), [3110 Commonwealth Dr, Dallas, TX 75247](#)

Speak Up and Stay Engaged

Your Voice Matters

You don't need to be an expert on the City budget to make a difference. Whether you speak at your Budget Town Hall or email your Council Member, sharing your own experience helps City leaders understand why parks and recreation matter to communities across Dallas.

Speak at Your Budget Town Hall

If you attend your district's Budget Town Hall, consider sharing a brief comment about what parks and recreation mean to you and your community. You can also ask a question about the City's budget priorities, funding decisions, or plans for parks and recreation in your neighborhood.

Before you speak:

- Introduce yourself and, if you're comfortable, share your neighborhood or City Council District.
- Keep your comments or questions brief
- Focus on one or two key messages or ask one clear question.
- Speak from your own experience. Your story is powerful.
- Be respectful and specific about what you value, what you want to see continued, or what you want City leaders to address.
- If you ask a question, listen for the response and consider following up if it is not answered during the meeting.

What Can I Talk About?

Choose one or two topics that are meaningful to you.

- Parks strengthen communities.
 - Parks are places where families gather, children play, neighbors connect, and communities grow stronger.
- Recreation centers make a difference.
 - Recreation centers provide programs and activities for children, teens, adults, and older adults. They are important community spaces that serve residents year-round.
- Parks improve health and well-being.
 - Parks encourage physical activity, support mental health, provide access to nature, and create opportunities to enjoy the outdoors.
- Continued investment matters.
 - Funding supports park maintenance, recreation programs, staffing, operating hours, and future improvements that benefit communities across Dallas.
- Every neighborhood deserves quality parks.
 - Everyone should have access to safe, clean, welcoming parks and recreation opportunities close to home.

Share Your Story

Personal stories help bring the budget to life. Consider sharing:

- What park, trail, or recreation center do you use most often?
- How have parks or recreation programs benefited you or your family?
- Why are parks important to your neighborhood?
- What would your community miss if park services, programs, or recreation center hours were reduced?
- Why should parks continue to be a priority in the City budget?

Email Your Council Member

You can also make your voice heard by contacting your City Council Member directly through the City of Dallas contact form (links below). A short, personal message can help reinforce why parks and recreation matter to residents and why continued investment should remain a priority.

You can copy and paste the sample email below as-is, personalize it with your own experience, or write your own message. The more personal your message is the better. Tell your Council Member what parks, trails, recreation centers, or programs mean to you and your community.

Sample Email

Subject: Support Parks and Recreation in the City Budget

Dear Council Member [Last Name],

My name is [Name], and I live in [neighborhood/District]. I'm writing to share how important parks and recreation are to me and my community.

I value [park, trail, recreation center, program, or greenspace] because [brief personal experience or reason]. These spaces provide important opportunities for our community to [gather, exercise, enjoy nature, participate in programs, connect with neighbors, etc.].

I encourage you to continue making parks and recreation a priority in the City of Dallas budget. Continued investment helps ensure our parks are maintained, recreation centers remain available to residents, and communities across Dallas have access to quality parks and recreation opportunities.

Thank you for your service to our community and for considering my perspective as you make decisions about the City budget.

Sincerely,

[Name]

[Neighborhood or District]

[District 1: Chad West](#)

[District 2: Jesse Moreno](#)

[District 3: Zarib D. Gracey](#)

[District 4: Maxie Johnson](#)

[District 5: Jaime Resendez](#)

[District 6: Laura Cadena](#)

[District 7: Adam Bazaldua](#)

[District 8: Lori Blair](#)

[District 9: Paula Blackmon](#)

[District 10: Kathy Stewart](#)

[District 11: William Roth](#)

[District 12: Cara Mendelsohn](#)

[District 13: Gay Donnell Willis](#)

[District 14: Paul E. Ridley](#)