

DALLAS - FORT WORTH / LAKE HIGHLANDS - LAKEWOOD / GOVERNMENT

New coalition rallies for \$200M for affordable housing on Dallas 2024 bond



By Cecilia Lenzen | 3:46 PM Sep 20, 2023 CDT
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A demonstrator holds a sign in support of affordable housing. (Cecilia Lenzen/Community Impact)

Dozens of housing advocates rallied outside Dallas City Hall on Sept. 20 to advocate for \$200 million to be allocated for affordable housing purposes on the city's **2024 bond package**.

If included in the bond, advocates want to see the funding used for building and preserving affordable housing across the city.

What happened

The newly formed **Dallas Housing Coalition** along with members of Dallas City Council and state Rep. Carl Sherman, D-DeSoto, gathered with banners and signs in support of affordable housing. The coalition, which officially launched in June, is made up of more than 160 organizations with the goal of making housing more accessible in Dallas.

The early morning rally was held immediately before a **City Council meeting** to adopt the city's fiscal year 2023-24 budget and tax rate.



District 1 Council Member Chad West speaks at a rally for affordable housing Sept. 20 at City Hall. (Cecilia Lenzen/Community Impact)

The background

The city's 2024 capital bond program will allocate \$1 billion to infrastructure and public safety priorities, including streets, transportation, city facilities, cultural arts and economic development.

This year, City Council is expected to consider the addition of a new proposition relating to housing and related housing infrastructure. If approved, the proposition will invest not only in housing developments but also in infrastructure, including streets, traffic and storm drainage improvements to promote housing opportunities in areas of need, according to the [Office of Bond and Construction Management](#).

What they're saying

District 1 Council Member Chad West, whose district includes north Oak Cliff, said during the rally that housing advocates must fight "the NIMBY factor" to push for housing change in Dallas. NIMBY, an acronym for "Not In My Backyard," is a term commonly used when residents of a neighborhood or area oppose a new development in their neighborhood.

"Today's fight is getting more money for the bond. Tomorrow's fight is to push through the NIMBY factor that we face every day in the city of Dallas," West said at the rally.

From City Council, West was joined by members Tennell Atkins, Adam Bazaldua and Jaynie Schultz, who all spoke in favor of the \$200 million allocation for housing. Sherman also supported the funding request.

"We must stand up and do something. We've got to give resources to people—not things," Sherman said at the rally. "If we care about people, we will stand with you and everyone else to ensure that we appropriate resources to homelessness [and] affordable housing. \$200 million is just the start."



State Rep. Carl Sherman, D-Desoto, speaks in favor of an affordable housing allocation in the Dallas 2024 bond Sept. 20 at City Hall. (Cecilia Lenzen/Community Impact)

The context

The city of Dallas is **facing a growing deficit** of nearly 34,000 rental units for households with low incomes, according to a recent report from Dallas-based nonprofit **Child Poverty Action Lab**, which is one of the Dallas Housing Coalition's member organizations. The deficit leaves thousands of Dallas residents paying more than they can afford for housing, with the lowest-income households and families with children particularly vulnerable.

If city officials do not address the housing shortage, it could grow to a deficit of about 83,500 units by 2030, according to the report.



Housing advocates rally outside City Hall in support of affordable housing Sept. 20. (Cecilia Lenzen/Community Impact)

Related highlights

Several other Dallas agencies, departments and organizations are advocating for bond money allocated to specific areas and causes.

Officials with the Dallas Park and Recreation Department are recommending City Council **allocate nearly \$400 million** for the department's use. The funding would allow them to develop and maintain Dallas parks and trails, acquire new land, build new aquatic centers, collaborate with other city departments, and more.

Dallas Animal Services staff are asking city officials to designate \$114 million to **build them a new facility** that could be double the size of the existing shelter. The larger facility would include more kennel space, play and flex areas, and parking, which would help support higher adoption rates from the shelter, staff said.

What's next

Dallas residents can attend an open house with the bond office on Oct. 19 as part of the city's [virtual open house series](#) to discuss the bond program and solicit community feedback.

Feedback from a community survey, which closed Sept. 15, and the open house series will be shared with City Council and the city's Community Bond Task Force, which is made up of 15 council-appointed members. Recommendations based on that feedback will be shared in December, with a bond election expected in May.

Residents can also attend the Community Bond Task Force meetings throughout October and November. A full schedule of the meetings is available on the [city website](#).

By **Cecilia Lenzen** 

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Cecilia joined *Community Impact* in January 2023 as the Lake Highlands/Lakewood reporter. Prior to CI, she worked at The Texas Tribune, The Dallas Morning News, Fort Worth Report and several other Texas news publications. She graduated from the University of Texas at Arlington in 2022 with a degree in journalism.