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Subject: Dallas City Hall needs more than \$1B for full repairs over 20 years, new report says
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Dallas City Hall needs more than \$1B for full repairs over 20 years, new report says

The assessment of Dallas' government headquarters will play a key role in whether City Hall stays put or leaves.

The Dallas Morning News

By [Everton Bailey Jr.](#) and [María Ramos Pacheco](#), Staff Writers

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The Dallas City Hall atrium, known as the Great Court, spans 250 feet with a skylit, barrel-vaulted ceiling 100 feet above, photographed on Wednesday, Feb. 4, 2026, in Dallas.

Juan Figueroa / Staff Photographer

Update:

This is a developing story and will be updated.

Years of neglected maintenance at [Dallas City Hall have come due](#), and the bill is steep: more than \$1 billion over 20 years.

Specialists delivered that estimate late Friday, far eclipsing earlier projections and detailing widespread system failures, aging infrastructure and long-deferred capital upgrades.

A 45-page summary of assessment reports compiled by the [Economic Development Corp.](#), a city-affiliated nonprofit, estimates that repairing the building's most urgent problems, like its failing roof, outdated electrical systems and plumbing, would cost \$329 million.

But if the city wants to fully modernize the building and make it functional for employees, the total cost range jumps between \$906 million and \$1.1 billion, including between

\$299 million and \$360 million in financing costs if the city borrows money for the project over 20 years, according to the summary.

The summary says if the city adds operating expenses, the total bill ranges from \$1.1 billion to \$1.4 billion over two decades.

“Fully updating City Hall will cost much more than corrective repairs due to required code and ADA upgrades, temporary relocation, and financing costs,” the summary said. “Building systems such as plumbing, HVAC, electrical are beyond their useful life.”

Developers and business leaders are [pushing for relocation and redevelopment of that prime downtown spot](#), possibly for a new sports arena and other projects.

Preservationists support restoration, saying the [I.M. Pei-designed](#) building represents an irreplaceable piece of Dallas’ architectural legacy.

Even if the city chooses to repair it, the process would not be quick. Phased construction would take at least five years, with employees temporarily displaced and daily operations disrupted, according to the EDC.

Now, with a fuller accounting of the building’s condition, the mayor and council members face a sharper choice: Invest heavily to restore an aging symbol of civic life or use the moment to remake the city’s downtown footprint for decades to come.

“We’ve only had three dedicated City Halls in our history,” said Deputy Mayor Pro Tem Gay Donnell Willis, who has not taken a public position. “That underlines the significance of this event. I can’t wait to discuss the facts about the future of the building so we can determine a smart path forward.”

From the report

The City Hall assessment was [led by the EDC](#) and involved more than 80 engineers, city staff and specialists from eight companies, the summary said.

These included infrastructure consulting firm [AECOM](#), commercial real estate company [CBRE](#), design firm Corgan, accessibility consulting group Access by Design and engineering consulting company Schmidt & Stacy. The team collectively spent thousands of hours on inspections and reviews and more than 15 days inside the building.

The report describes Dallas City Hall as a building where “all systems are past their useful life.” Its mechanical, plumbing, heating, air conditioning and electrical systems can’t meet modern standards, and most repairs so far have only been done in reaction to failures as they happen.



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The report found that leasing, buying or building a new space could give the city more flexibility and cost less than repairing City Hall.

Developers have already offered options like leasing with a path to buy or building a custom space, according to the summary. While the report doesn’t specify buildings or locations, it suggests that moving could save money, combine offices and make better use of the city’s property.

“The real estate market engagement revealed favorable conditions and cost-effective relocation solutions as compared to the renovation cost estimate,” the summary said.

For just the most urgent fixes, the report estimates:

- \$211.4 million to replace the HVAC system, electrical wiring, plumbing, elevators, generators, and other core systems.
- \$61.5 million for structural repairs to the parking garage.
- \$46.9 million to fix the roof, exterior walls, and water leaks.
- \$9.6 million for interior repairs and addressing known environmental issues like asbestos.

But this \$329.4 million estimate doesn’t include the cost of modernizing the space, upgrading technology or temporarily relocating staff for five years while repairs are made.

“Phased repairs are possible but impractical and will lead to longer timelines, increased budget, and will disrupt City Hall business for 5+ years,” the summary said. “Repairs would be invasive due to the building’s age and original cast-in-place concrete

construction, with many systems integrated into the structure.”

Inspectors found widespread water leaks, corroded pipes and deteriorating concrete throughout City Hall and its two-level underground parking garage. Photos in the report show rusted mechanical systems, water-stained ceilings and cracked walls.

Key findings show that almost all of the building’s major systems — emergency power, electrical infrastructure, fire suppression, plumbing, roof, and HVAC — need to be completely replaced if the city wants to keep using the building. Even the lighting systems rely on outdated fixtures and technology.

The report also notes repeated false alarms in the parking garage because of failing fire suppression pipes.

“Too many systemic deficiencies to avoid substantial investment,” the summary said.

Inspectors also found ongoing water leaks in the plaza, garage expansion joints and walls, with moisture seeping into interior spaces. The building’s waterproofing systems and seals are failing, leading to water pooling and uncontrolled leaks.

The report confirms that asbestos is present throughout the building, including in flooring, ceiling tiles and insulation around pipes. There may also be asbestos in areas inspectors couldn’t access, like wall cavities.

“Asbestos disturbed during renovation must be abated,” the summary said. “Left undisturbed, it causes no immediate risk to human health.”

Move and rebuild

Downtown business leaders, former mayors and some elected officials have said that spending hundreds of millions to modernize an aging facility is a bad bet.

Instead, they favor relocating City Hall to unlock one of the most valuable sites in the urban core, potentially tying redevelopment to the [planned overhaul of the Kay Bailey Convention Center](#) and possibly attracting [a new sports arena](#).

That and broader mixed-use growth could expand the tax base, attract private investment and create a more integrated civic and commercial district, they’ve said.

Fix it, don’t flee

Preservation advocates, including a group of prominent local architects, say the [building should be restored, not abandoned](#). They’ve called for reinvesting in the structure that

would stabilize a core government asset without surrendering public land to private redevelopment.

They have pointed to other areas downtown that could accommodate a [new arena in a bid to keep the Dallas Mavericks and Dallas Stars](#) from bolting to the suburbs. They say relocation carries its own hidden costs: leasing, acquiring or constructing new office space and navigating new financing.

Larry Good, a former president and current member of the American Institute of Architects, told *The News* it is too soon to rush to judgment.

“The Ten Presidents will certainly be able to identify the difference between a wild guess and a competent estimate when we see it,” Good said via email. “But we’ll need until next Wednesday or Thursday to review the report and come forward with a statement.”

Some have warned that redevelopment projections and plans remain speculative, while the repair costs, though high, represent a known investment in an existing public asset.

What’s next

The next step is the [City Council’s Finance Committee on Monday](#). Members are expected to question how the estimate was calculated, what assumptions drive the timeline and how much cushion is built into the cost.

Council member Jaime Resendez said he had not had a chance to review the report by late Friday night, but, “Once I do, I’ll take a close look at all the options to make sure we’re making the best decision for our city and its residents.”

The City Council’s Economic Development Committee will meet March 2 for a special called meeting to provide public comments on the assessment of City Hall. The full City Council will be briefed on the findings March 4.

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