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Subject: 'Truly shameful': City of Dallas spends half of what's needed to maintain its buildings
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'Truly shameful': City of Dallas spends half of what's needed to maintain its buildings

Dallas manages more than 500 buildings totaling almost 10 million square feet. The approximate value of these buildings is \$1.5 billion.

The Dallas Morning News

By [María Ramos Pacheco](#), Local government reporter

May 22, 2025, Updated 3:15 p.m. CDT

The city of Dallas is spending half of what it needs [to in order to keep its buildings](#) from deteriorating, according to officials.

City staff briefed the Dallas City Council on Wednesday about the status of its facilities and recommended finding the money for upkeep beyond using proceeds from asset sales.

In the proposed 2025-2026 budget, the city allocates around \$14 million for maintenance and repairs.

But John Johnson, director of the [Facilities and Real Estate Management Department](#), said Dallas is not meeting the recommended 2% to 4% annual investment of total facility replacement value. Based on the industry standard, he said city maintenance requires approximately \$15 million more annually.

Council members emphasized prioritizing maintenance in future budgets to prevent more costly repairs or replacements.

“[When we] look at the benchmarking of how much the city of Dallas is investing in our facilities compared to other cities, it's truly shameful, and it explains why so many facilities are suffering great challenges,” said council member Cara Mendelsohn.

Dallas manages more than 500 buildings totaling almost 10 million square feet. The approximate value of these buildings is \$1.5 billion, and the average structure was built 47 years ago.

But that's not the whole picture. The last inventory was conducted in 2017, and the city only assessed 220 of the more than 500 properties it owns.

Council member Chad West asked how the city would pay for the increased maintenance without a tax increase.

Jack Ireland, the city's chief financial officer, said there is no dedicated funding source for maintenance beyond proceeds from asset sales based on a 1977 resolution.

"It's a great question. It's going to come down to where it falls in our priorities," Ireland said. "And I think we're hearing from several council members that this is a priority for us, but we will have to evaluate through the budget process and make those decisions."

Council members Jesse Moreno and Paul Ridley supported allocating more funding.

Other strategies city staff presented to pay for facility maintenance include developing a clear policy for reinvesting proceeds from real asset sales, analyzing the condition of facilities when prioritizing bond funds, exploring potential revenue generators like naming rights opportunities and considering selling surplus properties.

Ridley said not keeping up with repairs and maintenance is more costly in the long run.

"We've seen this pattern in the Arts District venues, and we end up paying a lot more in our bond program to do the kinds of deferred maintenance that would have cost much less if we had just maintained it on an ongoing basis going forward," Ridley said.

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