

Dallas Parks Department & Fair Park First Unveil Initial Plans to Renovate Fair Park

Comprehensive Upgrades Slated for Cotton Bowl, Community Park Complex and Music Hall



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DALLAS (October 6, 2023) — With a long-term vision of strategic stewardship, Fair Park partners will transform Dallas' beloved 277-acre fairgrounds, ensuring year-round activations benefit the region. Planned renovations focus on Cotton Bowl Stadium, a privately funded Community Park Complex and the Music Hall at Fair Park. The venue projects will be funded by the Brimer Bill as part of last year's Proposition A referendum.

"This is the first cog in the wheel of a greater mechanism, providing funding for the future of the campus," said Darren L. James, [Fair Park First](#) President of the Board. "Unlike previous renovations, which centered around increasing capacity, this project amplifies the fan experience for everyone who visits Fair Park. We are committed to steward this project collectively, creating a catalyst to the Fairground's future economic impact on the surrounding neighborhood and region."

Leading the planned renovations is the legendary Cotton Bowl Stadium. Known for attracting the top names in entertainment and hosting world-class events, the historic venue will undergo the most comprehensive amenity upgrades since 1948. Fair Park First and Dallas Parks and Recreation join [Overland Partners](#), OVG360, and AECOM in unveiling plans for transformative enhancements to the renowned stadium, as it approaches its second century. The \$140 million, two-year project honors the Cotton Bowl's celebrated legacy and distinctive architecture with sweeping enhancements to the visitor experience and modernizations to ensure all fans will enjoy an elevated experience for decades.

Functional improvements include widening concourses, tripling the current square footage per guest in key areas, and adding escalators, boosting circulation, and increasing fans' comfort level while traversing the stadium. Planned upgrades strengthening the fan experience include improving the in-stadium Wi-Fi signal and increasing the number of hospitality areas and premium environments. Enhancing the speed of service for fans proves a project priority, with much-anticipated renovations to concessions and restrooms throughout the venue. Visit Dallas and the Dallas Sports Commission project improvements to Cotton Bowl Stadium will assist in attracting future large-scale concerts and sporting events, thus driving significant economic impact for the City of Dallas.

"We are committed to steward this project collectively to ensure these refurbishments will continue to bring people of different backgrounds together and strengthen Fair Park," said John Jenkins, Director Dallas Parks and Recreation. "The upgrades will keep the Cotton Bowl and other venues competitive, recruiting global events."

The Cotton Bowl renovations are part of the biggest financial investment in Fair Park in the 137-year history of the fairgrounds. The project spotlights the partnership between Dallas Parks and Recreation and Fair Park First in preserving the legacy and heritage of the landmark stadium, while establishing its future as the incomparable outdoor venue in Texas.

These renovations will secure the continuation of existing events, while catalyzing a self-sustaining model for future development and innovations across Fair Parks' diverse venues to attract new opportunities and programming. Through the broad support from civic leaders and the Dallas voters, realization of Fair Park as the pre-eminent outdoor cultural, entertainment, and sports destination is coming to fruition commencing with renovations to the Cotton Bowl.

"Overland is honored to work with an outstanding team of visionaries and stewards with the shared commitment of securing a bright, sustainable future for Fair Park starting with the renovations to the Cotton Bowl," said [Bryan Trubey](#), FAIA, Project Principal, Overland Partners. "The Cotton Bowl harnesses our unique understanding of civic and cultural work, sports and entertainment venues, guest experience and placemaking to reimagine one of Dallas', and our nation's, most important and iconic venues."

The legendary stadium in Fair Park's storied history includes hosting an NFL Championship game (1967), six World Cup games (1994), an NHL game (2020). Since 1930, the Cotton Bowl has determined College Football National Champions, and has been home for one of the most storied rivalries in sports: the Red River Showdown between the University of Texas and the University of Oklahoma. The stadium's rich history extends beyond sports, as the Cotton Bowl stands as one of the most storied entertainment venues in the country, hosting concerts by some of music's most influential acts including Elvis Presley, the Rolling Stones, Bruce Springsteen, U2, and Coldplay. Most recently, approximately 69,000 fans filled the sold-out Cotton Bowl Stadium to enjoy the Karol G concert.

"The partnership between Parks and Recreation and Fair Park First is working," said City Councilman for District 7 Adam Bazaldua. "Their innovative funding strategies are bringing forward the biggest investments and improvements in Fair Park's history, without leaning on the general fund. That these projects can move forward without competing with other critical needs of the City is incredibly positive for the City of Dallas and this community."

The two-year restoration will be conducted in two phases, allowing the stadium to host annual events without interruption during the 2024 State Fair of Texas. The project is anticipated to be funded with proceeds from the 2022 Proposition A referendum and additional sources. Other priority projects for Fair Park include the Music Hall, The African American Museum, and a privately funded community park.

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