

# Council OKs Agreement on Homelessness Project

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Dallas City Hall | Image by Mariusz S. Jurgielewicz/Shutterstock

By **Paul Bryant - Staff Writer** for Dallas Express  
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Nearly four years after acquiring the former Hotel Miramar on Fort Worth Avenue, Dallas City Council members on Wednesday unanimously approved development and loan agreements with St. Jude Inc. to convert the West Dallas property into permanent supportive housing.

“We envision opening perhaps by the first of 2026,” said Joe Dingman of **St. Jude Inc.** “We want to make sure we get control of the culture from the onset. Think in terms of maybe five to 10 move-ins per month over ... six-month period to fill it in 2026. It’ll take us some time to stabilize because when you have a new set of residents, procedures aren’t obvious to [them]. There will be some fallout, and some people won’t be able to stick.”

The property is being redeveloped into **permanent supportive housing** for veterans and disabled seniors experiencing homelessness. Under the **developer agreement**, 65 to 75 units will be leased annually.

“We expect to close on the transfer of the property this year,” Dingman said. “Call it December. We expect the renovation will take approximately a year because you are basically totally rebuilding the property.”

In February, council members agreed to spend \$536,186 in Coronavirus State and Local Fiscal Recovery Fund money to contract Kirksey Architecture to **design** the project. The City of Dallas purchased the property for more than \$3.5 million to house people experiencing homelessness, and officials have faced a “**myriad of challenges**” since that time, according to Consent Agenda documents.

“While the property has remained vacant, the need for Permanent Supportive Housing through the **R.E.A.L. Time Rehousing** Initiative to reach the communitywide goal of significantly reducing unsheltered chronic homelessness continues to increase.”

The nonprofit CitySquare was first **contracted** to operate the facility upon completion, but the organization “opted to cease their partnership with the

City due to the internal changes in their scope of business,” the City said, per *The Dallas Express*.

“I live up the street up from this but on the District 6 side,” Council Member Omar Narvaez said. “I also understand what happened four years ago when folks were very unsure. They were scared. They were nervous. St. Jude has got an excellent reputation. They’re the gold stand for service in this arena, in this community.”

Catholic Housing Initiative counts among its **portfolio** three St. Jude Centers — LBJ Freeway, Vantage Point Drive, and Forest Lane — and seven other multifamily communities across the metroplex.

“You have figured out this model,” Cara Mendelsohn (District 12) said. “You are helping our city greatly. The second thing is: I want to applaud the community. You all have come out and really shown your compassion and values.”

However, she expressed frustration that it has taken Dallas City Hall almost four years to bring an agreement to the council.

“We purchased this property in December of 2020,” she said. “I think that should give pause to the residents of Dallas and to the council members sitting here. It’s unacceptable to buy something in December 2020 and to be moving in our residents in 2026. We have to understand what happened here. We have to make sure we’re not continuing to do it.”

Mendelsohn, like several of her colleagues, commended Chad West (District 1) for his work on the project.

“You have sat there for a long time now — three and half years — and taken this on,” she said. “You have worked very closely with our community ... and I appreciate you. I’m very happy to be voting on this today.”

Jaynie Schultz (District 11) called the “entire endeavor” a “model of perseverance,” and Paul Ridley (District 14) called the redevelopment “a great project.”

“I want to congratulate Chairman West over many obstacles to get to final approval today.”

West thanked St. Jude, the Office of Homeless Solutions, and Housing and Neighborhood Revitalization for their “partnership.”

“We can see a successful ending in sight,” he said.

The 20-year grant agreement with the City of Dallas is for \$2,345,273 in 2017 general obligation bond funding. The 20-year development agreement with forgivable loan and land conveyance is for \$2,444,727 in **HOME Investment Partnerships Program** funding.

*The Dallas Express* polling shows that 75% of Dallas residents think homelessness, **vagrancy**, and aggressive panhandling are “major” problems in the City. Respondents also appeared to support the “one-stop shop” homeless services model used in San Antonio — **Haven for Hope**. The model has been **credited** with a 77% reduction in unsheltered homelessness in San Antonio’s downtown area.