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General News

City Hall offers \$3 million to grocery stores willing to open in southern Dallas 'food desert'

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City Columnist

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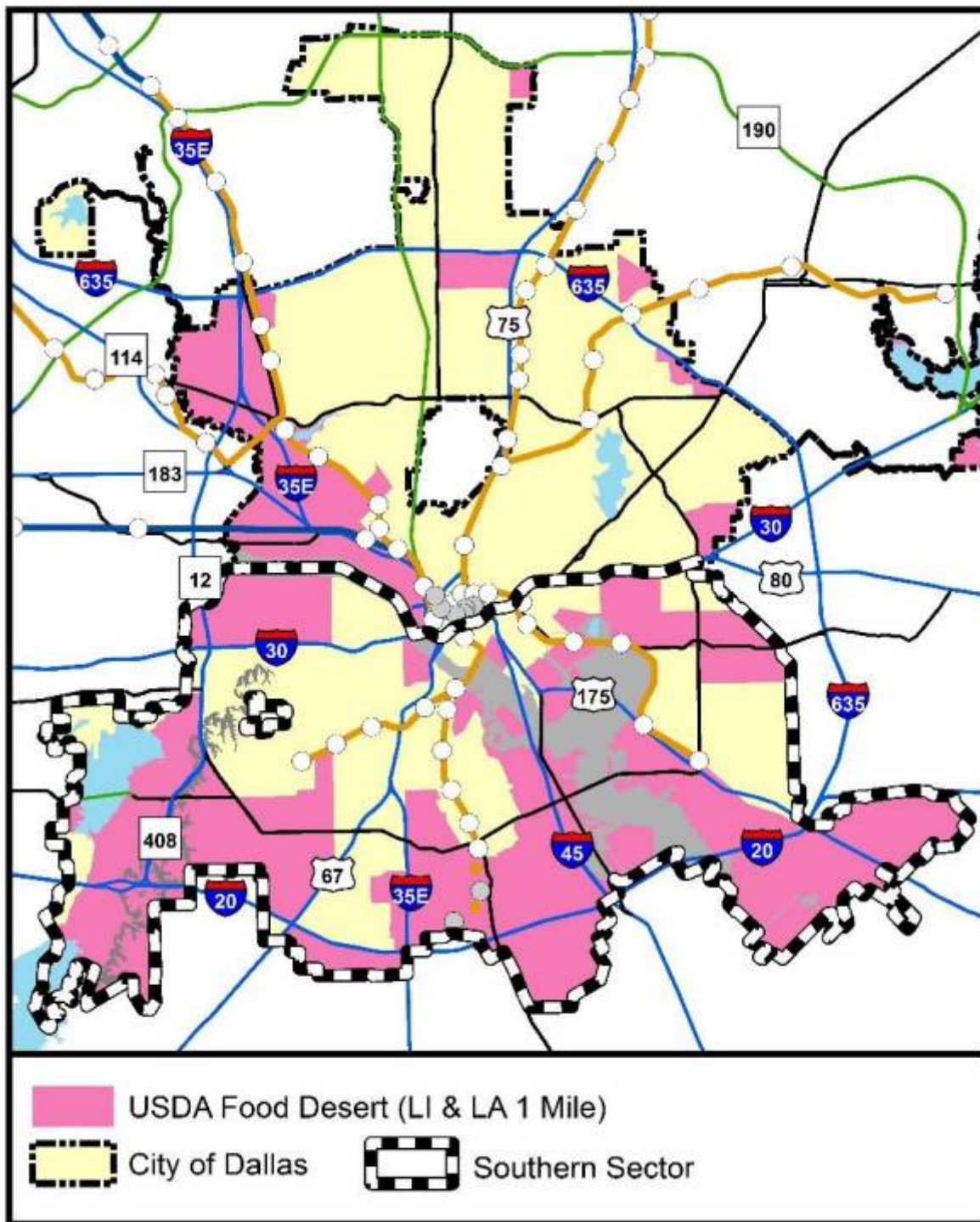
The city of Dallas has officially announced **it has at least \$3 million** available to anyone willing to develop or build "one or more high quality grocery stores" in southern Dallas -- or, more specifically, in a "southern Dallas food desert."

The notice was issued Friday, about a month after the City Council approved setting aside money to lure grocers to parts of the city where fresh, healthy food is hard to find.

And the city is very clear about what it wants: at least one store no smaller than 25,000 square feet, and preferably one that could anchor a larger mixed-use development.

But at this point, something is better than nothing.

"The City of Dallas' goal is to promote sustainable neighborhoods, enhanced quality of life, economic development and job creation by providing access to healthy food options," says the notice, "including fresh fruits and vegetables, for our citizens through the development of high quality grocery stores in the city's most underserved areas."



The \$3 million will come from the city's Public/Private Partnership Program, which collects its money from Dallas residents' water bills. And the figure was no accident: **That's the same amount given to Costco in May to open its first-ever Dallas store**, along Coit Road near North Central Expressway and LBJ Freeway. Dallas City Council member

Mark Clayton added the food desert amendment much to the delight of some southern Dallas council members who were learning toward voting against the Costco grant.

Hammond Perot, second-in-command in the city's Office of Economic Development, said the notice will be put in grocery-store trade magazines and sent to developers. It's a landmark moment: Perot said it's the first time his office has ever issued such a notice for any project.

But, he said, the circumstances are special. The notice , Perot said, "expresses the intent of the council to advocate for a particular project in a particular part of the city."

It's a part of the city where, according to the notice, "a significant number of residents " live more than a mile from a grocery store, **one of the U.S. Department of Agriculture's main "food desert" criteria**. It's a part of the city considered low-income. And it's a part of the city where, **according to a 2007 study**, residents buy most of their food from convenience stores peddling "high concentrations of unhealthy fats, carbohydrates, and additives, which contribute to health problems such as obesity, diabetes, and heart disease."



Deputy Mayor Pro Tem Erik Wilson, who represents Dallas' southernmost council district, told his colleagues in May that "grocery stores are like unicorns -- we know they exist, but we just haven't seen one."

He said Friday that the notice of the \$3 million isn't the "silver bullet" that will fill southern Dallas' empty stomachs. Far from it. But, he said, "It's a good start. It's a good effort."

But it's not the only one.

Perot said Friday that the city has long talked to grocery stores about opening in southern Dallas. He said his office

works the phones and attends trade shows in the hopes of getting someone to bite. But stores offer myriad issues for steering clear, among them: They can't assemble enough real estate to make a project work; there's not enough density to justify a full-service grocery; or the infrastructure's not there to support one.

"Every store, while they may be similar, they have their own specific criteria," Perot said. "It could be residents' income, education levels, the values of homes. It varies with each company. They have different reasons why they do or don't go to a market."

Wilson, whose district encompasses Oak Cliff and Pleasant Grove and Kleberg-Rylie, said the city needs to work harder to erase those excuses.

No one will take the cash, said the council member, "unless we come up with good development plans that support it. We need to deal with housing and infrastructure. My prayer is that it will be the catalyst that will begin to grow the southern sector and dispel the myths that things can't happen here. We've got to grow our city as whole, not as a section. This is just one peg in the process."



City of Dallas
Notice of Funding Availability (NOFA)
For Southern Dallas Food Desert
Grocery Store Development

Issued July 2016

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Douglas H Darter from Facebook

1 day ago

And our police officers are leaving for better pay at neighboring departments. The City Council should be ashamed of themselves. Deeds speak loader than words Mr Mayor.

Like Reply



Mike Harr from Facebook

1 day ago

There's a reason none want to build there...

Like Reply



Tonja B. Martin from Facebook

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Is this big DADDY ON PINE AND COLONIAL

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I will like to i love my people in south side druge around store i want. Let happen.. Get them what they need. Will do. Dope fine Love them too. Ineed guide to this.

Like Reply



Gray A Andre from Facebook

1 day ago

That's not enough \$. Clubs cost more than that.

Like Reply



Janice Brooks from Facebook

1 day ago

They need a HEB!!!

Like Reply



Ramirez Ricardo from Facebook

1 day ago

Big daddy's! Some good chicken in there! Love their chicken salad as well!!!!

Like Reply

Ricky Harper from Facebook

2 days ago



You cant throw money at and wish the crime away in South Dallas. Only the people that live there can do that. Never going to happen. They will rob their Grandma for a quarter.

[Like](#) [Reply](#)



Alexander Troup from Facebook

2 days ago

I live by there and it is not a safe place.....

[Like](#) [Reply](#)



Ronald Kaim from Facebook

2 days ago

What we need is to stop having south Dallas segregated and make it safe for all races, rich poor and in between to build and live in the neighborhood and trust blacks would welcome that especially the nation of islam, new black Panthers and huey p newton gun club.

[Like](#) [Reply](#)



Laine Ford from Facebook

2 days ago

If you live in the south than you already manyards is high ad hell , good ideal and he'll no don't body want damn El rancho they expensive to

[Like](#) [Reply](#)



Jessie Clair Collins-Scott from Facebook

3 days ago

They need a grocery store in the Joppe area. People there haa to cross the tracks to get gorceries ans gas. This area is going to be big again because of all the habitat houses being built. So I think this area really need the grocery store. The closest store is about 2 miles away.

[Like](#) [Reply](#)



Ruth Guten from Facebook

3 days ago

In the meantime, they could have a few food trucks that sell fruits and veggies make scheduled stops in those neighborhoods.

[Like](#) [Reply](#)



Jack Bassett from Facebook

3 days ago

Yes lord definitely

[Like](#) [Reply](#)



Helen Johnson from Facebook

3 days ago

Jack Bassett you need to check in to this !!

[Like](#) [Reply](#)



Carol Mazzola from Facebook

3 days ago

I think its great what the city is trying to do.. Just looks what they did for parts of West Dallas along the Sylvan bridge... Great Ideal trying to rebuild these areas.. Keep it up..

[Like](#) [Reply](#)



Brandee Touma from Facebook

3 days ago

Use that money to help build up those areas, take care of the stray dogs and animal dumping issues, etc., and these stores won't have to be bribed to build there.

[Like](#) [Reply](#)



Rusty E. Allen from Facebook

3 days ago

Bonton Farms is certainly trying.

[Like](#) [Reply](#)



Mark Blain from Facebook

4 days ago

How about the city of Dallas take that 3 million and invest in neighborhood gardens. Help others help themselves and not bribe business. Fresh food from a local garden tended to by the local residents is a great way for government to help communities not asking Walmart or Kroger to build. Just my opinion.

[Like](#) [Reply](#)



Steve Steele from Facebook

3 days ago

Why spend \$3 Million? Seeds are cheap. They have empty lots.

[Like](#) [Reply](#)



Gwen Dixon from Facebook

4 days ago

Aldi would be an excellent option. Low prices. The best freshest produce.

[Like](#) [Reply](#)



Ronda Renfrow from Facebook

4 days ago

3 million should get high security

[Like](#) [Reply](#)



Temerario Temo from Facebook

4 days ago

They'll lose 10 million in theft and robberies the first week they open ..lol

[Like](#) [Reply](#)



Travis Parker from Facebook

4 days ago

Pine and Colonial

[Like](#) [Reply](#)



Lynne Fillmore from Facebook

4 days ago

It's about time.

[Like](#) [Reply](#)



Levi Grimm from Facebook

4 days ago

J.J. Salomon open one up with Armani.

[Like](#) [Reply](#)



Kametric Burley from Facebook

4 days ago

I grew up in this area. I remember this grocery store. It will serve the community well. Afterall, times change and people change. The neighborhood is now renewed with modernized townhomes and condos. Go for it.

[Like](#) [Reply](#)



Doc Jennings from Facebook

4 days ago

and i would be killed the first night for the money i collected.

[Like](#) [Reply](#)



Rennie Reneau from Facebook

4 days ago

They had several at one time,now we can't even keep sacred and save,Fiesta is good,Walmart neighborhoods next to it,but hec we use to have ,Tom thumb and El

Chico I never had to go anywhere

[Like](#) [Reply](#)



Kay Wilkinson from Facebook

4 days ago

Let us get a great grocery store opened!!!!

[Like](#) [Reply](#)



Curt Seale Jr. from Facebook

4 days ago

Hahahahaha, no thanks. I value my life, more than 3 million dollars!!!!

[Like](#) [Reply](#)



Chris Prescott from Facebook

5 days ago

There is a reason there are no shops there

[Like](#) [Reply](#)



Jeff Sprinkle from Facebook

5 days ago

I live in southeast Dallas... Everyone on my street takes care of their yards and homes. You don't know what TF you are taking about.

1 [Like](#) [Reply](#)



DallasLive

4 days ago

Amen!

[Like](#) [Reply](#)



Sheri Wade Hendershott from Facebook

5 days ago

Hold a town hall meeting in that neighborhood, under a tent if needed, and ask the community what they need. Get their agreement and maybe it could even provide jobs. Put a WinCo in that area. Employees take great pride in the business because they become shareholders. Winco has great prices

[Like](#) [Reply](#)



Nick Bristow from Facebook

5 days ago