



DESOTO DEVELOPMENT CORPORATION  
REGULAR BOARD MEETING MINUTES  
Thursday, August 14, 2025

The Board of Directors of the DeSoto Development Corporation (DDC) met on **Thursday, August 14, 2025, at 6:00 p.m.** in the Council Conference Room located in City Hall at the DeSoto Town Center, 211 East Pleasant Run Road, DeSoto, Texas 75115. The meeting was streamed live on Facebook and archived on the website.

As authorized by Section 551.071(2) of the Texas Government Code, this meeting may be convened into a closed Executive Session to seek confidential legal advice from the Corporation's attorney on any agenda item listed herein.

**“Pursuant to Texas Government Code Sec. 551.127, on a regular, non-emergency basis, members may attend and participate in the meeting remotely by video conference. Should that occur, a quorum of members, including the presiding officer, will be physically present at the location noted on this Agenda.”**

**REGULAR SESSION** - THE MEETING WAS CALLED TO ORDER  
by Michael Baldwin, Board President at 6:00 p.m.

**Present:**

Michael Baldwin, Board President  
Felicia Pierson, Secretary/Treasurer  
Mark Jones, Director  
James Pruitt, Director  
Akilah Wallace, Director

**Absent:**

Dr. Micaela Herndon, Director  
Dr. Ahmad Garrett-Price, Director

**Staff Present:**

Matt Carlson – DDC Chief Executive Officer  
Soledad Garcia – Economic Development Project Coordinator  
Melba Hill – Economic Development Specialist  
Councilman Andre’ Byrd – City Council Liaison  
Adriana Castaneda- Deputy City Manager

**Also Present:**

Victoria Thomas, Attorney

Director Mark Jones offered the invocation.



**REGULAR AGENDA— NEW BUSINESS**— Items for discussion and/or possible action:

**1. Finance Status Report –  
Lakeita Sutton, Interim Director of Financial Services**

- June 2025 Statement

Revenue expectations for June 2025 were met. Sales tax revenue makes up 60.5% of the budget, down from 67.1% at the same time last year. Interest revenue is 101% of the budget compared to 246% in the previous year. The difference is due to overall market rate decreases. Our overall total revenue, as a percentage of budget, currently stands at 46.9% and is in line with our performance from the previous year.

Expenditures are well under budget, expending 23.8% of the budgeted amount year-to-date.

- July 2025 Statement

Revenue expectations for July 2025 were met. Sales tax revenue makes up 70% of the budget, down from 75% at the same time last year. Interest revenue is 129% of the budget compared to 371% in the previous year. The difference is due to overall market rate decreases. Our overall total revenue, as a percentage of budget, currently stands at 75.4% and is in line with our performance from the previous year.

Expenditures are well under budget, expending 50.6% of the budgeted amount year-to-date.

Additional discussion included:

- Data Reporting and Industry Segmentation  
Addressed limitations with sales tax reporting software and ability to report data below the aggregate level: aggregated data doesn't clearly separate consumer goods and other industry sectors, despite consumer goods constituting about 90% of total revenue. It was noted that while trend setters and new companies are monitored with like Chick-fil-A, Dutch Brothers and Starbucks, detailed industry breakdown remains challenging.
- Impact of Large Investments and External Economic Factors on Sales Taxes  
Discussion touched on sales tax spikes from large investments (e.g., a \$20 million investment by Solar Turbines) and the effects of industrial procurement. Broader economic issues were mentioned such as declines in tourism, tariffs and resulting drops in consumer spending.



- Financial Reporting Improvements  
Discussed the potential of incorporating additional data columns (e.g., current month totals, trend lines) for more refined analysis that might enhance decision-making regarding economic performance and future budget adjustments.

2. **Projects, attraction efforts, site visits, and general operations report**  
**Matt Carlson – Chief Executive Officer**

Mr. Carlson provided updates on the business plan goals, department goals, and staff personal and professional development plans, which are summarized in the attached report. Specific discussion items included:

- Industry Focus and Economic Diversification  
Examined a variety of targeted industries including aerospace, aviation, biomanufacturing, advanced manufacturing, life sciences, cybersecurity, and retail. Emphasis was placed on shifting focus away from transportation and logistics and better utilizing industrial lands.
- Zoning and Incentive Agreement Challenges  
Discussion highlighted that many developer conversations fail due to zoning issues, preventing the utilization of existing incentive agreements. The inability to zone properties has been identified as the primary barrier to moving projects forward.
- Developer Engagement and Meetings  
Reviewed the engagement efforts with developers, noting that 205 meetings have been conducted this year. Concerns were raised about how many of these projects have advanced to proper zoning status.
- Outbound Events and Public Engagement  
Outlined upcoming external events: Fabtech on advanced manufacturing, Retail Live in Austin, and IC3 Life Sciences for bio life sciences. The speaker will present at the Southern Dallas Planning Commission at Dallas College on 2025-08-15 and participate in panel discussions with Forney and Lancaster. Additionally, TEDC events are scheduled in Detroit (September 2025) and San Antonio (October 2025).
- Dashboard and Data Tracking  
Presented progress on the development of an economic development dashboard using CRM/ project management software. The dashboard will integrate overall project tracking and progress bars (Gantt chart style) for individual projects, as well as tracking activity levels by major function.



- Incentive Policy Consolidation  
Staff has created a consolidation of the City and DDC's existing incentive programs into a single document covering all Chap 380 and 403b incentive programs. A specific restaurant incentive program is also included in the draft.

The draft has been reviewed by the Deputy City Manager and will be presented at the September meeting for adoption by the Board.

- Workforce Development & School Programs  
Discussion highlighted workforce initiatives including the appointment of Dr. Darden as the new principal at DeSoto High School. The discussion covered existing projects like E-Sports and Bio/Pharma-training, and introduced plans for an EMT training program in conjunction with DeSoto Fire training academy and other industry based initiatives.
- Zoning and Infrastructure Barriers  
Discussion emphasized the crucial role of zoning in project viability. Issues such as delays due to lack of zoning were discussed, along with proposals to address infrastructure challenges like creating regional drainage solutions.
- Advanced Manufacturing Recruitment  
Discussed targeting advanced manufacturing, especially biomanufacturing, given the limited 21 1/2 square miles of available land. Comparisons were made regarding wage levels (\$17, \$18, per hour) and capital requirements, noting a recent 35-acre site opportunity valued at \$1.0 billion and contrasting it with a potential \$50 million investment for a large logistics company.
- Community Policing and Business Connectivity  
The meeting discussed an initiative with Captain Kirkland and the police department, where community policing officers will visit businesses, leave informational cards, and enhance connectivity between law enforcement and the local business community.
- Dallas Startup Week Success  
The event was reported as a success with a strong presence over three days, highlighting engagement from several small businesses who participated, learned from the events, and shared encouraging feedback.
- Franchise Development and Infrastructure Barriers  
The discussion turned to franchising efforts in DeSoto and surrounding areas, with emphasis on collaboration with stakeholders such as Carlos White, UNT, and Dallas College. A major barrier identified was the shortage of available and suitable buildings for franchise operations.



- **Alignment of Goals, Strategic Planning, Project Eligibility and Recruitment Limitations**  
Following a review of progress on City and Departmental goals, substantial discussion was held regarding how departmental goals are established, how they support the City's Annual Business Plan and the City's strategic plan.

Questions were raised regarding the tracking of new investment and job creation figures and a request was made to emphasize goal-setting for the upcoming fiscal year as part of the upcoming Board retreat.

Clarification was also provided by corporate counsel regarding the scope of Development Corporation projects and the organizations inability to expend DDC time and money on retail recruiting due to statutory limitations, and that projects must fall within the allowed charter. Promotional efforts such as facade grants for small businesses and infrastructure grants for projects were discussed as acceptable alternatives.

**3. Discussion on Next Steps for the Healthy DeSoto Initiative**

Next steps include a presentation of the Healthy DeSoto project at the City Council retreat on September 12th. The presentation involves CIG experts and subcommittee members. The goal is to review the program of work, answer questions from the Council and seek approval of the project. Ongoing discussions with our CIG partners continue to focus on how to move forward. The main objective is to identify a path to establishing a road map to creating a "Healthy DeSoto" by proactively shaping the built environment, the programs of the City and health care providers and actively monitoring and measuring the impact with critical metrics.

**4. Discuss and consider approval of the proposed FY25/26 Budget.**

Mr. Carlson informed the Board that the proposed FY25/26 budget had been submitted for approval to the City Council without revisions or changes. The Board President suggested that the board review the proposed budget and contact Mr. Carlson with any questions before the September 11th board meeting, when the board will approve it. City Council will hold a public hearing to adopt the final budget during the September 16th council meeting.

**5. Nominations and Election of Vice President**

A motion by Director James Pruitt, seconded by Secretary/Treasurer Felicia Pierson, was unanimously approved by the board to postpone the elections until the entire board could be present. The election will now be held at the September board meeting. Director Akilah Wallace asked if the criteria could be sent to her. Staff will resend the new member board packet and bylaws.



## 6. Discussion of Hampton/Beltline RFP Proposal

Discussion on engaging a third party to issue a limited distribution RFP for projects at Hampton and Beltline (West and Northwest Corners). The RFP process is designed to clarify development expectations and incentives,

### **CONSENT AGENDA**

The DDC Chief Executive lists items on the Consent Agenda and recommends them to the DDC Board of Directors for a single vote of approval. At the request of a board director, any item on the Consent Agenda may be removed for a separate vote.

1. Consider approving the minutes of the July 10, 2025, Regular Board Meeting.
2. Consider approving the financial statements for June and July 2025.

**All Consent Agenda items were approved unanimously on a motion by Director James Pruitt, seconded by Director Felicia Pierson.**

### **BOARD AND LIAISON ANNOUNCEMENTS/UPDATES**

1. Councilman Byrd expressed his appreciation to the board for their diligent work on behalf of the Council. He shared that the rezoning of parcels on the Hampton Road Corridor was voted down by Planning and Zoning in a 4 to 3 vote, and he is unsure of the next steps. It could go to the Council, but a supermajority of 6 votes will be needed to pass it.

We are currently in Budget season, and the Budget must be adopted by September 29, 2025. Lakeita Sutton, the interim Director of Finance, is working along with the CMO, to finalize the budget for presentation.

The Councilman also mentioned the hiring of a new Development Services Director, Ahmed Alqaisi, and Mr. Alqasi's desire to implement a "one-stop-shop" approach that is intended to change the narrative of the city being difficult for developers to access.

2. Board President Baldwin made remarks including the following:

- Communication Strategy

Discussion on the need for open and clear communication about ongoing projects. The speaker emphasizes that while work is in progress and the framework is not fully developed, there is a critical need to keep everyone informed about what is happening. The idea of 'greasing the skin' was used metaphorically to indicate starting communication even if the complete picture isn't ready.

- Consent Agenda Approval

The meeting moved to approve the consent agenda. Items included the minutes of July 10th, approval of what was termed as the 'fight in July' along with other



items to be reviewed. A motion was made, seconded, and the consent agenda was unanimously approved.

- **Board Accountability and Legacy**  
Discussion on accountability both at the personal and collective board level. The speaker stressed the importance of holding oneself accountable, ensuring that the board's aspirations form a legacy, and that commitments are backed by accountability.
- **Future Strategic Initiatives and Professional Guidance**  
Mr. Baldwin expressed his desire to engage an external professional to facilitate the upcoming DDC Board retreat. The intent is to further refine dashboard metrics, define success profiles for goals, and ensure that overall strategic initiatives are on track and aligned with the City's Strategic Plan.
- **Sponsorship and Community Engagement**  
Brief discussion on how sponsorships are determined and the decision-making criteria used to support community events, such as securing a table at a golf tournament to support local chambers.
- **Board Recruitment Event**  
Inquiry was made regarding the absence of staff at a recent boards & commissions recruiting event. Staff noted they were informed the recruitment event was optional, and with no current openings on the board staff did not attend.
- **Mr. Carlson informed the directors of the upcoming Board and Commissions Banquet scheduled on September 18<sup>th</sup> at 6:00.**
- **Joint meeting of the City Council, Planning and Zoning and DeSoto Development Corporation has been moved to October 15<sup>th</sup> with more details forth coming.**

**ADJOURNMENT**  
**At 8:45 p.m.**

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**J. Matt Carlson—Chief Executive Officer**