





The Dallas Morning News

VOTER GUIDE



Dallas City Council - District 1

Select candidates from the list below to compare their answers to our questionnaire:

-  **Sylvana Alonzo**
-  **Jeremy Boss**
-  **Giovanni Valderas**
-  **Chad West**

Age and contact information



Chad West

Age: 42

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Social media

Chad West





Twitter: @ChadWestPLLC

Facebook: www.facebook.com/chadwestdallas/

Occupation/main source of income:



Chad West

Attorney

Education (include all degrees):



Chad West

JD - Texas Tech School of Law

MBA - Webster University

BSA - Washington University in St. Louis

Highlights of current civic involvement/accomplishment:



Chad West

I recently stepped off of the Dallas City Plan Commission to run for City Council. But I continue to advocate for neighborhood-oriented zoning protections and for walkability by meeting with City Council members and neighborhood leaders. In addition to my City-related work, I have been a neighborhood organizer and activist since first moving to Oak Cliff:

Creekside Neighborhood Association. In 2017-18, I led the charge in creating a neighborhood assoc. for a crime-ridden, underrepresented sector of District 4, south of Christ for the Nations and empowering neighbors to engage with City Hall. Officer elections took place in 8/2018, and neighborhood leaders are doing great!

Dash for the Beads 5K & 10K. I co-founded this charity race, which reached its 10th year in 2019. The race draws thousands of people to Oak Cliff yearly and has raised over \$250,000 for local schools (for health, fitness, and nutrition- activities).

Last Bag Standing. I co-founded this two-year-running corn hole (beanbag toss) competition and fundraiser for PTO programs at Hogg, Peeler, Botello, and Bowie Elementary Schools, Garcia Middle, and Adamson H.S. In two years, we raised the capital needed to kick off four of these start-up PTO programs.

Halloween Costume and Bucket Drive for Kids. For 7 years, my law firm has collected Halloween costumes and buckets for Oak Cliff kids in need. Thanks to the incredible generosity of our neighbors, we collect around 750 masks and costumes each year that we give out on Halloween.

School Supply Drive. My firm collects school supplies for teachers at Hogg and Peeler Elementary schools (3 years running for Hogg, and 1 year for Peeler).

Leadership Committee Co-Chair, Lambda Legal – Dallas (2010 – 2014). As Co-Chair, I created the Landmark Dinner, an annual fundraising gala that raised over \$200,000 in its first two years.

Toast to Life Co-Chair. Fundraising gala for Resource Center Dallas, which raised over \$225,000 (2011).

Highlights of past civic involvement/accomplishment:



Chad West

City of Dallas Experience

Dallas City Plan Commission (CPC) (2017 – 2018)

Protected Neighborhoods. I led the fight to deny four super-block plats in Oak Cliff, which would have destroyed the block patterns of single family neighborhoods.

Spurred Economic Development & Walkability. Inspired by Patrick Kennedy's article in D Magazine's New Urbanism issue from the Summer of 2018, I created Little Villages, three zoning cases that give property owners and neighborhoods the power to put zoning in place to protect their neighborhoods and properties and to create walkable uses that neighbors want.

Addressed City-Wide Housing Shortage. I played key roles in advocating and drafting ordinances for Live-Work, Accessory Dwelling Units (ADUs, or Granny Flats), and Inclusionary Zoning, all of which are being used by the City of Dallas to create more rooftops for people of all incomes.

Bond Task Force, District 1 Representative (2012 and 2017).

Fought to secure bond funds for streets, Kidd Springs Park renovations, and trail expansions. I continue to work on expanding Coombs Creek Trail across Hampton, over to Davis, via Plymouth, with plans to eventually connect to Martin Weiss Rec Center.

Oak Cliff Chamber of Commerce, Board Member (2010 – 2014)

As a member of the Executive Board from 2012 – 2014, I served as Membership Services Co-Chair and was responsible for the Chamber's annual Gala, Golf Tournament, and Membership Drive.

North Oak Cliff Greenspace (2017 – 2018)

Advocated and raised funds for improvements to Stevens Park Golf Course and for the expansion of Coombs Creek Trail across Hampton Road to encompass the El Tivoli neighborhood.

Previous public offices sought or held:



Chad West

None.

How much funding have you raised for your campaign?



Chad West

Approximately \$85,000.

Who are your top three contributors?



Chad West

As of 3/25/19, 40 people have donated the maximum amount. Three random donors from this group include:

Ellie Hajek

J. Fernando Gonzalez

Steve Rudner

Have you ever been arrested on any misdemeanor or felony charge or otherwise involved in any criminal proceedings? If so, please explain and include the outcome of the case:



Chad West

No.

Have you ever been involved in any civil lawsuits or declared personal or professional bankruptcy? If so, please explain and include the outcome of the lawsuit or bankruptcy filing.



Chad West

As an attorney, I have been involved in multiple civil lawsuits. Personally, I have only been involved in one lawsuit in which my car was t-boned by a negligent driver who ran a stoplight. The case settled before trial.

Why are you running for this office, and why should voters choose you over your opponent(s)?



Chad West

I'm running because I love Oak Cliff. I'm a homeowner and small business owner in Oak Cliff. My family bought our first home south of the Trinity River over a decade ago, and we are proud to call Oak Cliff home. I love every single quirky, fun thing about our neighborhoods. I especially love that we're a tight community - a small town - in the heart of a world class city.

For the last eight years, Oak Cliff has had a Councilmember who fought for accountability and transparency at City Hall and who, at every step, has protected the fabric of our great neighborhoods. I'm running for City Council because I want to continue these traditions. I want to give residents and entrepreneurs the tools they need to succeed, ensure that our diverse neighborhoods and historic structures are protected and cherished, and ensure that opportunities, education, and city services are top notch and available to everyone.

My experience and tenacity set me apart from my opponents. I'm ready to hit the ground running on day one.

What is the district's greatest single need? How would you act to provide for that need?





Chad West

The City must provide chances for all residents, regardless of background, race, gender, and income level to succeed. This includes providing equitable city services, parks and recreation facilities, education, job opportunities, and housing across the City. As a former Bond Task Force representative for District 1, District 1's former City Plan Commissioner, and as a community activist and organizer, I have fought for bond funds, drafted zoning-related code amendments, and actively spoke up and lobbied for equitable resources over the last ten years and will continue to do so as District 1's next Councilmember.

What is your district's single greatest asset? How would you promote and preserve it?



Chad West

ur wonderful cultural diversity and beautiful, historic neighborhoods and architecture. These are the reasons many of us (including me) moved to Oak Cliff.

Displacement of individuals due to rising housing costs is a serious problem. To reduce and hopefully eliminate displacement, we must bring more rooftops to Oak Cliff and provide more economic opportunities (jobs and entrepreneur resources). While on the City Plan Commission, I played key roles in drafting the live-work and incentive zoning ordinances, both of which are tools recommended by the Comprehensive Housing Policy (the "Policy") to increase the number of affordable units available. We must aggressively promote and enact the remainder of the Policy to continue to bridge the gap. We also must look at opportunities in areas next to transit for additional housing, such as the dozens of vacant acres next to the DART train station at Westmoreland and Illinois.

The heart of Dallas is comprised of our single-family neighborhoods, and we must cherish them at all costs. I have never and will never support a project that involves tearing down single-family homes and upzoning the lots. To protect our beautiful commercial/retail structures that exist along our former streetcar lines and stops, we must give property owners incentives to keep them intact; by working with neighborhood associations, preservationists, and property owners, I have already begun this work through my "Little Villages" concept, and I will expand this work as District 1's next Councilperson.

How would you assess Mayor Mike Rawlings' tenure?



Chad West

I assess Dallas' mayors based on their ability to set out and complete vision plans. This includes setting agendas and accomplishing tasks and using strong leadership to bring together fourteen (14) very different councilmembers with very different district-specific goals and challenges.

Mayor Rawlings' growSouth plan really disappointed me. The plan never really grew legs, as it was too broad and overreaching. Targeting smaller segments of South Dallas for economic growth would have been wiser and likely more successful. I also thought he took the wrong position on the Exxotica case, and I could smell the oncoming lawsuit from the very beginning.

On the other hand, I respect the position that Mayor Rawlings took on opposing Trump's travel ban, and I believe he has done much to promote downtown parks and to support historic preservation, and he should certainly be commended for these accomplishments.

What is your opinion of the work of City Manager TC Broadnax? Police Chief U. Renee Hall?



Chad West

I am optimistic about the restructuring that Broadnax has put into place. Having worked side by side with many highly talented people in Sustainable Development and Construction, as well as the brilliant, Majed Al-Ghafry (who worked with the appointed Bond Task Force members), I know that TC knows how to recognize and keep good talent, and we need leadership like that.

I was disappointed with Hall's handling of the Amber Guyger situation. I understand that she inherited a somewhat demoralized department, however, and I am cautiously optimistic that she will rally as Dallas takes better care of its police officers.

How concerned are you about affordable housing in your district? Do you support the city's new housing policy? Why or why not? What policies would you support or advance as part of a solution?



Chad West

Very.

Affordable housing, and more importantly, the creation of mixed income neighborhoods, is one of the most critical needs for Dallas' long-term success. I support the Comprehensive Housing Policy and have hands-on experience working to enact portions of it. While on the Plan Commission, I assisted in the drafting of the Live-Work ordinance and participated in putting together the Accessory Dwelling Unit (ADU) requirements, although I would have preferred the program to be an "opt out" program rather than an "opt in" program. I also played a key role in drafting language

for incentive zoning, which requires builders to offer a percentage of affordable housing in order to obtain more density and height.

Moving forward, we need to protect neighborhoods by pushing for the tax stabilization overlays that CM Griggs proposed, and which were incorporated into the plan. We also need to aggressively pursue transit-oriented projects in areas that will not harm single family neighborhoods. And we need to open up the 1500 lots sitting in the City's Land Bank for affordable homes for police, fire, teachers, and nurses.

How can the city better support improvement and renewal of aging properties in your district?



Chad West

The market really supports renewal (in lieu of demolition) of aging structures in District 1, but the incentives in the Housing Policy for renewal are important city-wide. And where we do not have zoning in place in commercial corridors to incentivize owners to preserve properties, we need to begin discussions with neighbors and property owners to take action before we lose additional historic structures.

Street conditions are a perpetual concern? What new ideas would you bring to bear on this problem?



Chad West

The City must find way to lower the maintenance burden by demanding higher quality construction and repair, and completion of projects in a more timely manner. I suggest completion bonuses for contractors who finish road projects on or before deadlines. We also need to consolidate our mobility enhancement and repair work. If the City has long term plans for bike lanes, curb bump-outs, bioswale installation, etc, then put those in at the same time that we are resurfacing the road. We already have the crews out there and are already inconveniencing neighbors, so let's do it all at once. Lastly, we need to encourage other forms of transportation and shrink the underused and overbuilt arterial facilities around the City.

Should Dallas be cooperating or competing with its suburbs for corporate relocations and on other matters?



Chad West

On relocations, Dallas competes with the suburbs. And even if Dallas doesn't want the corporation, when our neighbors get one, they immediately demand more highways that further burdens Dallas with traffic and pollution. The COG's Mobility 2040 plan puts more than 80 percent of funding toward automobile travel over the next 20 years when the City of Dallas desperately needs mass transit improvements. That plan is a reaction to suburban demand for subdivision development and support for relocations.

On other issues like water and flood mitigation, we have to work together.

How should the city go about hiring more police officers and retaining those we have?



Chad West

We need to first watch how the recent pay raise impacts numbers. It should improve because we're now competitive on new-hire pay, but I suspect that, at the next meet-and-confer, another raise will be appropriate to be competitive. The City should use a good portion of our 1500 lots sitting in the Land Bank for affordable housing options for police officers, with a goal of keeping them on the force long-term and moving them back into Dallas.

Would you support raising the city's property tax rate to pay for public safety, street improvements or other services?



Chad West

No. It is our duty as elected officials to act fiscally responsible, and we must first seek budget cuts where we can.

What is your position on Gov. Greg Abbott's plan to limit local control over property taxes?



Chad West

100% opposed.

What's your view of the quality of DISD schools in your district and what would you do to support them?



Chad West

Oak Cliff has outstanding DISD schools. And I have a history of supporting them. Through the Dash for the Beads, which I founded 10 years ago, several of us have raised over \$250,000 for health, fitness and wellness programs in our local schools and introduced hundreds of children to the joy of physical fitness. And we bring runners, walkers, and families from all over the District together yearly for this community-driven event.

I was a critic of DISD's plan to demolish Hogg, Reagan and Peeler Elementary Schools and consolidate the children into one mega campus. And I am the only candidate running for D1 who spoke out publicly, citing concerns with the loss of community support available in the smaller campuses, reduction in walkability for kids, and increase in traffic for the neighborhood that has to absorb the mega campus.

DISD needs after-school programs at all of its campuses. Last time I spoke with our trustee, only about half of the DISD campuses in my District offered after-school programs. The City should enhance its after-school offerings at our rec centers and libraries to help close the gap.

Many workers in Dallas work full time and are still in poverty. About 30 percent of Dallas children live in poverty. What would you do as a city council member to address this?



Chad West

There are simply not enough living wage jobs available to those living in poverty. The City's Comprehensive Housing Plan and the forthcoming Comprehensive Economic Development Plan should work together to both allow people to live near existing employment centers and move employment centers closer to those who need them most.

Oak Cliff is also fortunate to have Oak Cliff Works, and I propose that the City continue to support this jobs program. I am also proud of having supported living wages for airport workers, and will support paid sick leave.

North Oak Cliff continues to witness fast-paced redevelopment. What is your opinion of the way the district is developing? How can it be improved?



Chad West

North Oak Cliff is starting to see the positive and negative results of the zoning overlays that were put into place 6-10 years ago. Some aspects of the overlays are good and have helped us preserve structures that would otherwise be ripe for demolition. The lack of design standards in other overlays has led to mega-block buildings that are eyesores. As the District's Plan Commissioner, I engaged District 1 neighbors in the zoning and plat process by posting agendas and vote results on social media. Because of widespread community input, I successfully defeated four super-block plats that would've destroyed the fabric of the neighborhoods – in each of those cases, developers were seeking to consolidate entire blocks without discussing their building plans with the community. Now, developers are seeking community input before filing for their plats, and I will encourage our current Plan Commissioner to continue this tradition. We also need design standards across the district.

Do you support construction of a deck park over Interstate 35? If so, what would you do to help ensure it is a high-quality project?



Chad West

Yes, because the park is, in large part, funded by North Central Texas COG and private donations and much of the funding is already in place. From the very beginning, Oak Cliff leaders and the park team knew that this absolutely had to be a community-driven design. And the park team continues to meet with residents, nonprofits and faith leaders to determine how to equitably improve the area without pushing out longtime residents. I support the community-driven efforts of the park team and the current design draft.

What should be done to fix traffic and parking problems in Bishop Arts?



Chad West

This is not a simple fix, or it would've already been accomplished by our local merchants (BADMA) and Bishop Arts NA long ago, as this problem is not new. When Nazerian's construction is finished (south of Bishop Arts), this will open up new parking along the streets and at least one parking garage that will be tucked into the buildings. In the meantime, I propose converting the rest of 7th Street (between N. Adams and Bishop) to a one-way street.

We should add a Pedestrian Refuge Island on Davis where there is no need for a turning lane – this can become a gateway/branding opportunity announcing “Bishop Arts” and will be relatively inexpensive. And at the block on Bishop between Davis and 7th Street, we should consider adding removable bollards for special events and busy evenings to close off this block for cars. This block is so short that it creates a cluster of Ubers, Lyfts, and cars who want to drive right down the middle of Bishop Arts during the busiest moment of the evenings.

Across the District, we also need to make it easier for pedestrians, bicyclists, and scooter-fanatics to get around safely. By adding curb extensions and other traffic calming measures near Bishop Arts, we will better encourage non-vehicular mobility.

Assess the work of incumbent council member Scott Griggs.



Chad West

Rock solid. Scott has always protected our neighborhoods and put the people of our District first. Scott and his team are incredibly responsive and proactive in handling neighborhood issues. He has taken the lead on many difficult, controversial issues (e.g. pension fund) and he isn't afraid to dig in to uncover corruption or mismanagement. Scott sets the example for his fellow Councilmembers on accountability and transparency. And he's a solid leader.

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