

WISD Bond Questions and Answers

What is Tiger Stadium's purpose and the populations it serves during the year? Tiger Stadium is a multi-purpose facility utilized by Wharton ISD. It primarily serves as an extracurricular venue for football (high school and junior high), track (high school and junior high), soccer, band, and drill team. It also serves as the primary venue, weather permitting, for graduation.

What was included in the bond? The bond passed by the voters in November of 2018 addressed demolition, construction, and/or remodeling of the following areas: Tiger Stadium, Softball Field, Wharton High School, Wharton Junior High School, Wharton Elementary School, Sivells Elementary School, Transportation Department, Agriculture Project Center, and Food Service / Maintenance / ESC. Demolition of Tiger Stadium began in March and the timeline developed for construction has it completed by August 15th. The design of the Softball Field, along with improvements to the Baseball Field which was not a part of the approved bond project, have been released for bid by the district's CMAR (Construction Manager at Risk – Polasek Construction) and a GMP (Guaranteed Maximum Price) has been accepted by the Board. Work on the Softball Field will begin as soon as all construction documents are completed. The Board also approved a design on the Agriculture Project Center and it will be released for bids during the month of July. The Board approved the CMAR method of construction delivery for the remaining projects and the selection of that company will take place in July. The remaining projects will move forward once that company is selected.

Why is the cost of the new Tiger Stadium so much more than the projected \$7.3 million? Hurricane Harvey had a devastating impact on the entire Texas coast including our area. WISD has recovered from the storm but the impacts of Harvey still exist. The storm brought changes to the construction industry along the Texas coast in many ways. The most impactful to our area is the way that we prepare for and plan to handle storm water runoff. In order to provide a facility that is usable during periods of inclement weather, WISD chose to make the playing field artificial turf and the parking areas concrete. Each of these surfaces, approximately 14 acres total, is deemed as impervious and requires that storm water be detained so that it does not exit (runoff) the property any faster than it did prior to construction to insure our neighbors are not flooded as a result of the construction. Land adjacent to the site had to be purchased for construction of a detention pond that met the new storm water requirements. The detention pond is required to be approximately 5 acres in size with a depth of 10 to 15 feet across its entirety. Storm water from the stadium site will be collected and flow through a system of large underground, interconnected pipes that terminate in the detention pond. A pump will then remove this captured storm water at a rate no greater than water previously exited the property. This change in construction criteria greatly impacted the overall cost of the project.

How will the extra costs associated with Tiger Stadium affect the other projects included in the bond? Every effort will be made to insure that the remaining projects come in at or below the budgeted amount and that what the voters approved is delivered at the completion of all the projects. The projected budgets for the remaining projects, however, are just that – projected. Defined costs can only be ascertained when the design and project specifications are complete. One of the benefits of selecting the CMAR method of construction delivery is that a GMP (Guaranteed Maximum Price) must be approved by the Board prior to a Notice to Proceed being issued. Once the GMP is accepted, the CMAR and subcontractors are locked into their bid price. OPC's (Opinion of Probable Costs) are issued by the CMAR as various construction packages are released for bid and submitted by subcontractors. This process often results in savings being found in a variety of areas. The Board could choose to use other methods to cover the overages at the stadium such as using monies in Fund Balance (school savings account) to pay for them. WISD is earning interest on the bonds that have been sold to this point and that money will be deposited in Fund Balance as it becomes available.

Will WISD have to make cuts to other projects to pay for overages? That possibility exists with any construction project but it is hoped that identified overages will be able to be addressed without changing the scope (identified needs) of the project. Excessive overages could result in a redesign of the project if needed or something as simple as Value Engineering to maintain the scope while utilizing less costly methods and materials to complete the project.

Is there a way to ensure that the remaining bond projects will not go over budget? The Board has approved the CMAR (Construction Manager at Risk) method of delivery for the remaining bond projects. A GMP (Guaranteed Maximum Price) will be established and approved by the Board prior to a Notice to Proceed being issued by the district to the contractor.

Why are there no dressing facilities included as part of Tiger Stadium? It became apparent, during Hurricane Harvey, that Wharton needed a safe room to house first responders and those incapable of being evacuated. FEMA has a grant program that allows municipalities to apply for funds to construct a Safe Room. These are commonly referred to as "FEMA Domes" because of the shape and appearance of the completed structure. WISD has partnered with the City of Wharton and applied for funding for the construction of a "FEMA Dome". Its primary purpose is to house first responders during and after an event such as a hurricane, flood, or tornado. It can be used for other purposes when not in use as a Safe Room. WISD plans, if the grant is awarded, to use the structure as a competitive gym for basketball and volleyball and use the locker rooms as dressing facilities for both football and soccer. The FEMA grant covers 75% of the construction cost of the structure. The local entity, in this case WISD, is responsible for the remaining 25% of the construction costs. WISD will also be responsible for any additional costs to the facility to make it usable as a competitive gym and dressing facility. WISD has been in communication and working with both Rebuild Texas and the Texas General Land Office to secure funds to cover the remaining 25% and costs to make it a viable facility for use by the district. Notification of the approval or denial of the application is expected in the near future.

Has the Home and Visitors sides of the stadium changed? Yes. The Home side will now be located nearest to the Boling Highway. The field has also been rotated to make it face in a more north/south and east/west alignment.

Is there a gas line located underneath the stadium? Yes. A natural gas line has run underneath what was previously the Visitors Parking Lot for many years. You will notice, when construction is complete, green areas in the Home Parking Lot. These will be aesthetically pleasing and will not interrupt parking but will serve as access points for the owner of the gas line to service the line if needed without disturbing or destroying portions of the cement parking lot.

Will the detention pond at the stadium always hold water? No. The pond is designed to collect excess storm water during a rain event and will then be pumped out of the detention pond at a rate no greater than water currently exists the site without any improvements.

Will there be Reserve Seating at the new Tiger Stadium? The new Tiger Stadium will roll out a fresh new look with grand stands that hold upwards of 2,000 Tiger fans and 1,500 visitors. Seating is divided into three groups. Those groups are General Admission (student/adult), Reserved (A/B sides), and our deluxe reserved seats are termed Premium (182 seats). Season tickets will go on sale July 22, 2019 through August 23, 2019 (close of business). Prices will be released July 8, 2019 prior to tickets being sold.

How will it be determined who gets which seat? For the inaugural season we will open season ticket sales to the public on July 22, 2019. These season tickets will be selected and sold on a first come first served basis. Stay alert to all district communication venues and do not miss the opportunity to get the tickets of your choice.

Will there be a grand opening or ribbon cutting? On August 21, 2019 at 5:30 pm, we will conduct a Tiger Stadium preview prior to the Meet the Tigers 2019 which will start at 6:30 pm that same night.