

WEST FARGO PUBLIC SCHOOLS

2025 BOND REFERENDUM

MONDAY, FEBRUARY 17 | 7:00AM - 7:00PM

TOTAL COST: up to \$162.7 MILLION

DETERMINATION OF PROJECTS

Following the defeat of the \$147 million referendum vote in 2023, district administration engaged members of the community in 'Facilities Planning 2.0,' a taskforce open to any community member that reviewed the failed package, solicited and analyzed feedback from stakeholders, discussed alternatives to address the district's rapid growth in both the short- and long-term, and provided multiple data sets to the School Board for their review and consideration.

Using the data collected through community open houses and staff presentations, the Board engaged in extensive conversation at their fall workshop before coming to consensus on 13 projects to be included in the upcoming referendum package.

VOTING ON FEBRUARY 17

The special election will take place on Monday, February 17, 2025, from 7:00AM - 7:00PM. All residents of West Fargo Public Schools are eligible to vote. School district boundary lines do not always follow city boundary lines; the West Fargo School District is comprised of the cities of Harwood, Horace, Reile's Acres, West Fargo, and portions of the city of Fargo.

A resident may vote at any of the 14 polling locations available within the district: Harwood Elementary, Westside Elementary, South Elementary, West Fargo High School, Cheney Middle School, Brooks Harbor Elementary, Aurora Elementary, Freedom Elementary, Sheyenne High School, Independence Elementary, Legacy Elementary, Deer Creek Elementary, Horace High School, and Horace Elementary.

Voters must bring proof of birth date and residency with them to the polls; this may include a North Dakota driver's license or ID card, an ID issued by a tribal government, ID issued by the Secretary of State, or a combination of these options.

BALLOT LANGUAGE

Unlike previous special elections, the 2025 ballot will have three questions.

Question 1 will include \$99.7 million in projects needed within the next 1-5 years. The projects included in Question 1 are the completion of Heritage MS, completion of Horace HS, adding multipurpose rooms at West Fargo HS and Horace HS, building an inclusive playground at the Early Childhood Center, special education improvements, adding classroom space for early childhood special education programming, the renovation and expansion of South Elementary School, safety and security upgrades, and restroom renovations.

Question 2 includes an additional \$58 million in projects that are anticipated to be needed in 6-10 years. The projects included in Question 2 are the elementary renovations, a new elementary school, acquisition of land, and a second expansion of space for early childhood special education programming.

Question 3 would authorize the district to be a collaborative partner with the West Fargo Park District and the West Fargo Youth Hockey Association to expand the Veterans Memorial Arena. Question 3 is an additional \$5 million.

This allows each stakeholder to vote based on what they value more - a lower price tag with the understanding that another election will occur in roughly five years, or a higher price tag that should alleviate the need for the district to hold another election in the near future. It is important to note that the passage of each question is contingent on passage of the question(s) before it. For example, if Question 2 is the only question that receives majority approval to pass, nothing will move forward since Question 1 failed.

FINANCIAL IMPACT

For each \$100,000 of a home's value, a taxpayer would pay an additional \$7.29 per month if all three questions passed.

The median home value in West Fargo is \$320,000. If all three questions passed, the estimated tax impact would be about \$0.75 per day.

A tax calculator is available on our website, so stakeholders can determine the tax impact based on their property.

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

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PROJECT OVERVIEW

Completion of Heritage Middle School - \$22.6 Million

- Heritage is expected to exceed its current capacity by the fall of 2027, so completing the building will provide necessary instructional space and supporting auxiliary spaces for middle school learners in the Hawks feeder system.

Completion of Horace High School - \$36 Million

- Horace High School is expected to exceed its current capacity by the fall of 2027, so completing the building will provide necessary instructional space and supporting auxiliary spaces for high school learners in the Hawks feeder system.

High School Multipurpose Rooms - \$3.35 Million

- The addition of multipurpose rooms at West Fargo HS and Horace HS would provide a needed space for activities that are too large for standard classrooms, but too small for event spaces like theatres or gymnasiums that are scheduled during the academic day.

Inclusive Playground at Early Childhood Center - \$550,000

- All learners serviced at the Early Childhood Center are on an IEP, which makes this an ideal location to construct an inclusive playground. Inclusive playgrounds are universally designed, sensory-rich environments that enable all children to develop, physically, socially, and emotionally.

Special Education Improvements - \$2.7 Million

- To provide equitable access across the district to meet learners' individualized needs, many schools require the addition of systemic environmental changes like individual learning spaces, proximal bathrooms, and de-escalation spaces.

Expansion of Early Childhood Special Education Services (Phase I) - \$9.2 Million

- One southside district elementary school would be expanded by approximately 35% (8 classrooms) to provide space for ECSE services, whose population has grown nearly 200% in the last decade.

Renovations & Expansion of South Elementary - \$17.85 Million

- The renovation and expansion of South Elementary will align it with the standards in place at other district elementary sites, ensuring the building remains viable in its existing location for the next 40 years. A renovation would be less expensive for taxpayers compared to building a new building.

Safety & Security Upgrades - \$2.55 Million

- Projects included are addressing gaps in coverage in our existing video surveillance system, adding fire suppression systems at the sites that do not have them, and adding interior lockdown doors to bring all buildings up to the new standard.

Restroom Improvements - \$4.95 Million

- This project would provide funding to renovate one set of restrooms at each elementary and middle school and two sets at each high school. The renovations would entail transitioning from multiple stalls within one larger room to single stalls that exit into an open, shared handwashing station. These renovations will provide safe and secure restroom facilities for all learners.

Elementary Renovations - \$2.2 Million

- The funds would ensure that all elementary schools have equitable spaces for things like art, music, health, and conference rooms.

New Elementary - \$41.3 Million

- A new elementary school somewhere south of the interstate will provide space for up to 552 learners. The district is projected to need this space in the next 6-10 years.

Acquisition of Land - \$5 Million

- Upon completion of the FM Diversion, the district is anticipating growth on the north end of the district. Purchasing land now will position the district to have a better selection of land parcels, as well as not pay a premium for newly flood-protected land once the diversion is complete.

Expansion of Early Childhood Special Education Services (Phase II) - \$9.5 Million

- One southside district elementary school would be expanded by approximately 35% (8 classrooms) to provide space for ECSE services, whose population has grown nearly 200% in the last decade.

Veterans Memorial Arena Expansion - \$5 Million

- In collaboration with the West Fargo Youth Hockey Association and the West Fargo Park District, the district would contribute \$5 million toward a \$20 million expansion project at the Veterans Memorial Arena. The expansion project includes an additional sheet of ice and locker rooms.

COMPLETION OF HERITAGE MIDDLE SCHOOL

2025 BOND REFERENDUM

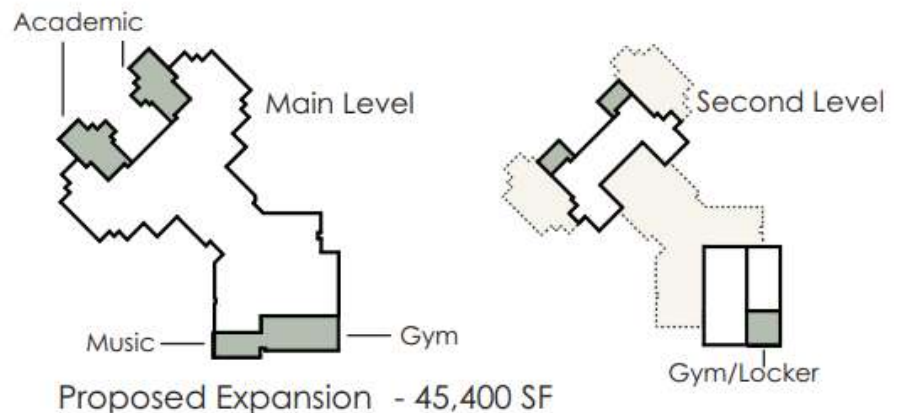
COST: \$22.6 MILLION

Included In: Question 1

Estimated Tax Impact: \$0.99 per month per \$100,000 of home value

PROJECT DETAILS

- In an effort to balance the total cost of the 2018 package with enrollment projections at that time, the district only requested funds for a middle school that would house 900 learners, knowing that we would eventually need the district's standard middle school capacity of 1,200 learners.
- Heritage is expected to exceed its current capacity by the fall of 2027, so completing the building will provide necessary instructional space and supporting auxiliary spaces for middle school learners in the Hawks feeder system.



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COMPLETION OF HORACE HIGH SCHOOL

2025 BOND REFERENDUM

COST: \$36 MILLION

Included In: Question 1

Estimated Tax Impact: \$1.58 per month per \$100,000 of home value

PROJECT DETAILS

- In an effort to balance the total cost of the 2018 package with enrollment projections at that time, the district only requested funds for a high school that would house 1,050 learners, knowing that we would eventually need the district's standard high school capacity of 1,550 learners.
- Horace High School is expected to exceed its current capacity by the fall of 2027, so completing the building will provide necessary instructional space and supporting auxiliary spaces for high school learners in the Hawks feeder system.



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HIGH SCHOOL MULTIPURPOSE ROOMS

2025 BOND REFERENDUM

COST: \$3.35 MILLION

Included In: Question 1

Estimated Tax Impact: \$0.15 per month per \$100,000 of home value

PROJECT DETAILS

- The addition of multipurpose rooms at West Fargo HS and Horace HS would provide a needed space for activities that are too large for standard classrooms, but too small for event spaces like theatres or gymnasiums that are scheduled during the academic day.
- Example utilizations include combined classes, career speakers and job fairs, activities and team meetings, training and collaboration, testing, dual credit registration, outside presentations, conferences and district meetings, staff meetings and professional development, instructional activities, community and district events, and student advisory meetings.



ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

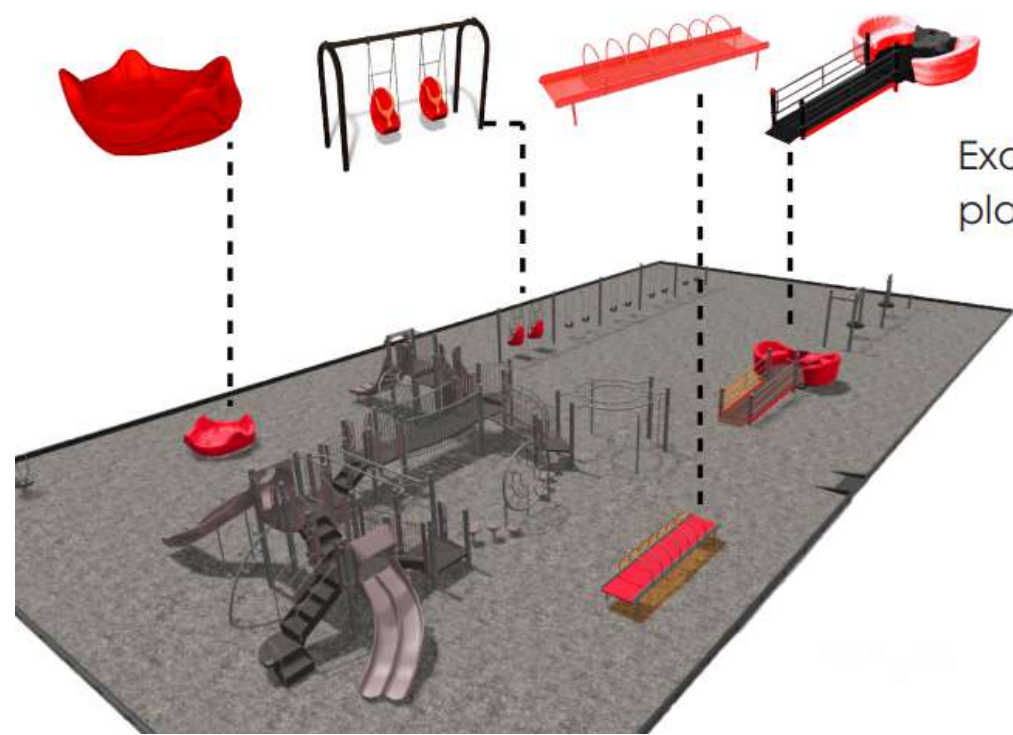
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COST: \$550,000

Estimated Tax Impact: \$0.02 per month per \$100,000 of home value

- All learners serviced at the Early Childhood Center (ECC) are on an Individualized Education Plan (IEP), which makes this an ideal location to construct an inclusive playground. Inclusive playgrounds are universally designed, sensory-rich environments that enable all children to develop, physically, socially, and emotionally.
- The cost includes both the surface and equipment.



Examples of accessible
playground layout and
equipment.



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SPECIAL EDUCATION IMPROVEMENTS

2025 BOND REFERENDUM

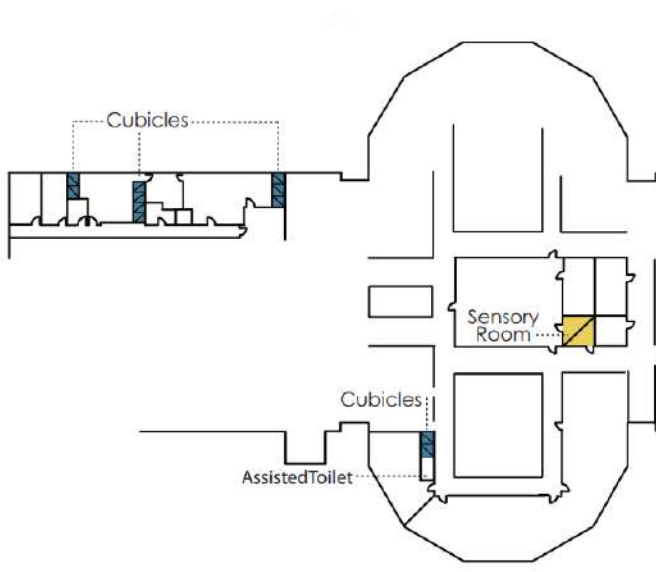
COST: \$2.7 MILLION

Included In: Question 1

Estimated Tax Impact: \$0.12 per month per \$100,000 of home value

PROJECT DETAILS

- To provide equitable access across the district to meet learners' individualized needs, many schools require the addition of systemic environmental changes like:
 - Individual learning spaces (current solution of using furniture to create small spaces fails to keep educators and learners safe)
 - Proximal Bathrooms (provide adequate ADA access and reduce staffing required to cover bathrooming when not close to special education programming)
 - De-escalation space (support continuation of learning and safety of learners)
- Impacted Schools: Aurora, Berger, Freedom, Harwood, Horace, Independence, Legacy, Osgood, South, Westside, Willow Park, Deer Creek, Eastwood, Brooks Harbor, HMS, CMS, LMS, WFHS, Transition, CHS



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EXPANSION OF ECSE SERVICES

2025 BOND REFERENDUM

COST: \$18.7 MILLION

Phase I Included In: Question 1 (\$9.2 million)

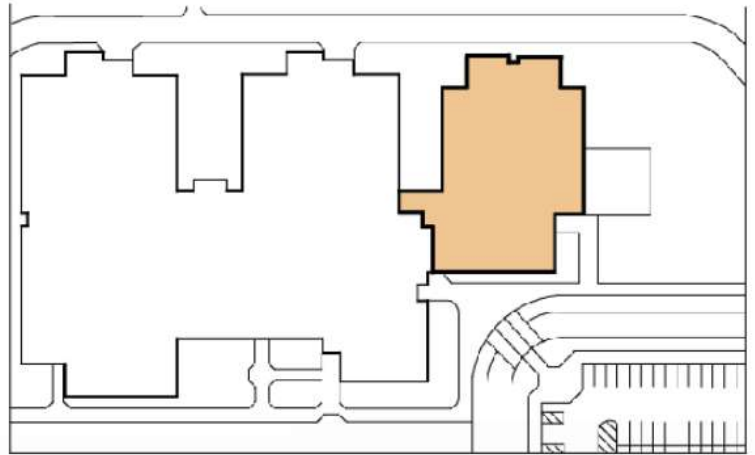
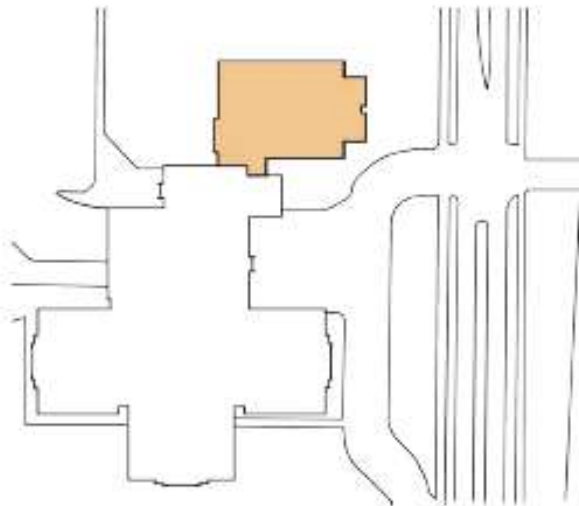
Estimated Tax Impact: \$0.40 per month per \$100,000 of home value

Phase II Included In: Question 2 (\$9.5 million)

Estimated Tax Impact: \$0.44 per month per \$100,000 of home value

PROJECT DETAILS

- The learner population in the district's Early Childhood Special Education (ECSE) preschool has grown nearly 200% in the last decade. On average, the learner population doubles throughout the school year, as learners can begin attending as soon as they turn 3 years old.
- Right now, the only location for these services is on the Clayton Lodoen campus near Main Ave, which means the district transports their youngest and most vulnerable learners a significant distance each day.
- Two southside district elementary schools would be expanded by approximately 35% each (16 classrooms total) to provide space for ECSE services. While a location hasn't been finalized, strong consideration would be given to adding onto Meadowlark and Aurora Elementary Schools. One expansion is part of Question 1 and the second is contained in Question 2.



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RENOVATIONS & EXPANSION OF SOUTH ELEMENTARY

2025 BOND REFERENDUM

COST: \$17.85 MILLION

Included In: Question 1

Estimated Tax Impact: \$0.78 per month per \$100,000 of home value

PROJECT DETAILS

- The renovation and expansion of South Elementary will align it with the standards in place at other district elementary sites, ensuring the building remains viable in its existing location for the next 40 years. A renovation would be less expensive for taxpayers compared to building a new building.



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SAFETY & SECURITY UPGRADES

2025 BOND REFERENDUM

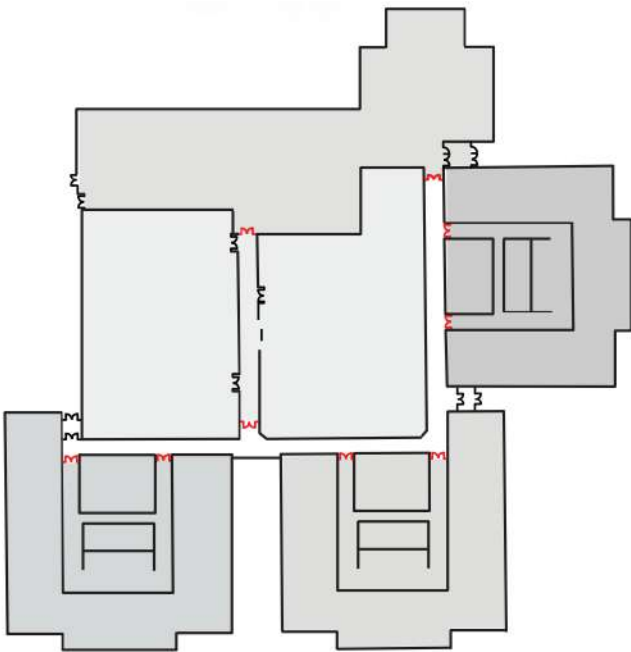
COST: \$2.55 MILLION

Included In: Question 1

Estimated Tax Impact: \$0.11 per month per \$100,000 of home value

PROJECT DETAILS

- Video Surveillance - \$350,000: Funds would add ~60 cameras and move or re-aim another ~60 to address gaps in coverage that currently exist. Some of the most common locations needing to be addressed are stairwells and playgrounds. Every school in the district was evaluated to identify gaps, and every school will benefit from these funds.
- Improved Fire Suppression - \$1.4 Million: Many of our schools were constructed at a time when full building sprinkler systems were not required. Through previous large renovation projects, WFPS has been able to add sprinkler systems to all but three sites: Westside, Eastwood, and South Elementary.
- Interior Lockdown Doors - \$800,000: Funds would add doors in some locations, replace doors and/or hardware in others, and connect/electrify all identified doors to the existing lockdown button. When pressed, the button would then automatically close and lock all exterior doors and these new interior doors at key "pinch points" like academic wings or pods. Heritage MS, Horace HS, and Meadowlark Elementary were built with this feature; all other schools would need to be renovated.



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RESTROOM IMPROVEMENTS

2025 BOND REFERENDUM

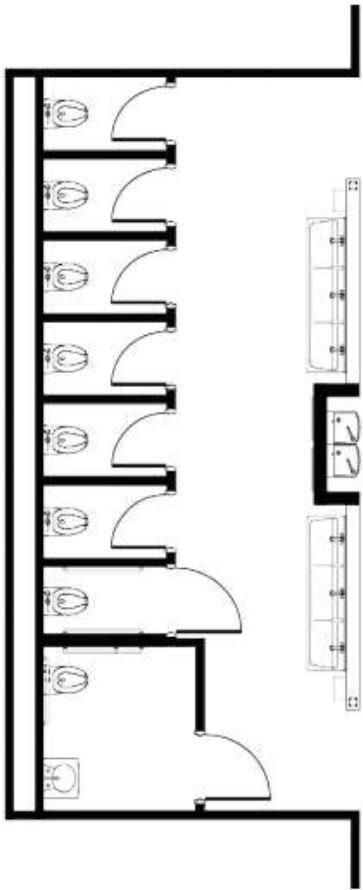
COST: \$4.95 MILLION

Included In: Question 1

Estimated Tax Impact: \$0.22 per month per \$100,000 of home value

PROJECT DETAILS

- This project would provide funding to renovate one set of restrooms at each elementary and middle school and two sets at each high school. The renovations would entail transitioning from multiple stalls within one larger room to single stalls that exit into an open, shared handwashing station. These renovations will provide safe and secure restroom facilities for all learners.
- Impacted Schools: Aurora, Berger, Freedom, Legacy, Brooks Harbor, Deer Creek, Lodoen, Freedom, Independence, Willow Park, CMS, LMS, SHS, WFHS



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ELEMENTARY RENOVATIONS

2025 BOND REFERENDUM

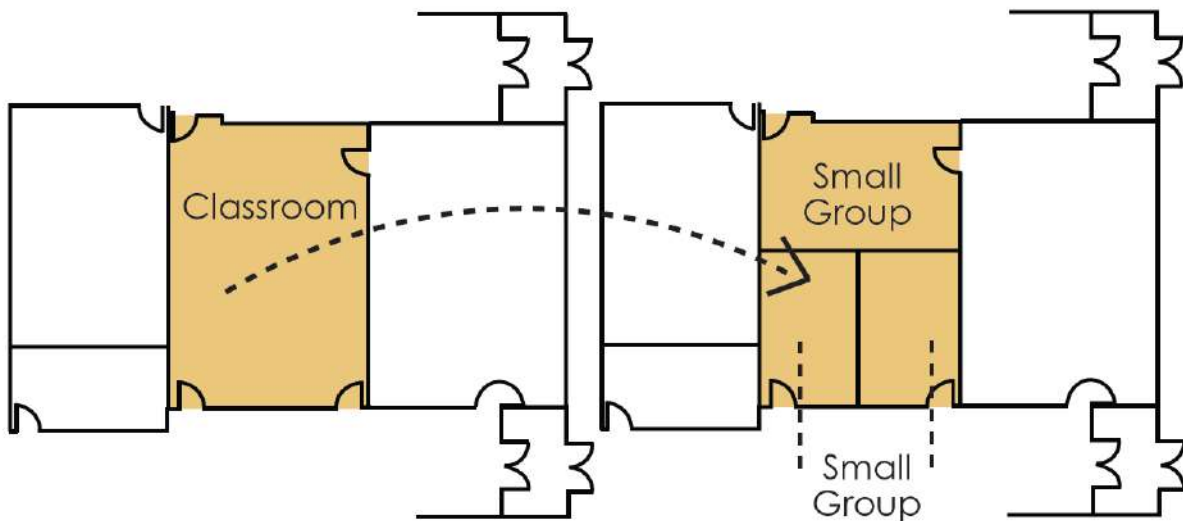
COST: \$2.2 MILLION

Included In: Question 2

Estimated Tax Impact: \$0.10 per month per \$100,000 of home value

PROJECT DETAILS

- The funds would ensure that all elementary schools have equitable spaces for things like art, music, health, and conference rooms.
- Impacted Schools:
 - Eastwood - Remodel larger rooms to create more small group rooms and add breakout spaces.
 - Berger - Remodel existing spaces to create breakout spaces.
 - South - Remodel large rooms to create more small group rooms and add breakout spaces.
 - Westside - Remodel existing spaces to create breakout spaces.
 - Osgood - Add on to the existing school to create more small group rooms and use existing spaces to create breakout spaces.



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NEW ELEMENTARY SCHOOL

2025 BOND REFERENDUM

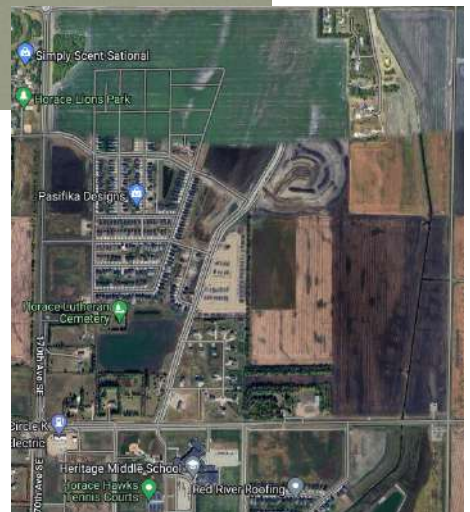
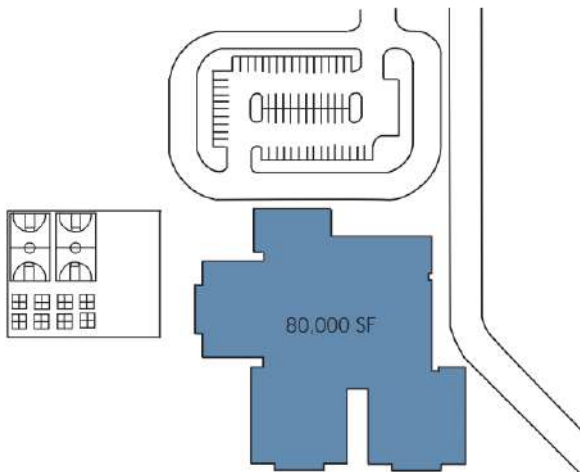
COST: \$41.3 MILLION

Included In: Question 2

Estimated Tax Impact: \$1.91 per month per \$100,000 of home value

PROJECT DETAILS

- West Fargo Public Schools is growing at a rate of nearly 300 learners per year. Based on the enrollment projections provided by demographer RSP & Associates, the district is projected to run out of space for K-5 learners in the next 6-10 years.
- The new elementary school would be built to provide space for up to 552 learners. This equates to a four-track school, meaning there are four classrooms of each grade level in the building.
- The district owns land off 64th Avenue South, north of Heritage Middle School; the elementary school would likely be built on that property.



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ACQUISITION OF LAND

2025 BOND REFERENDUM

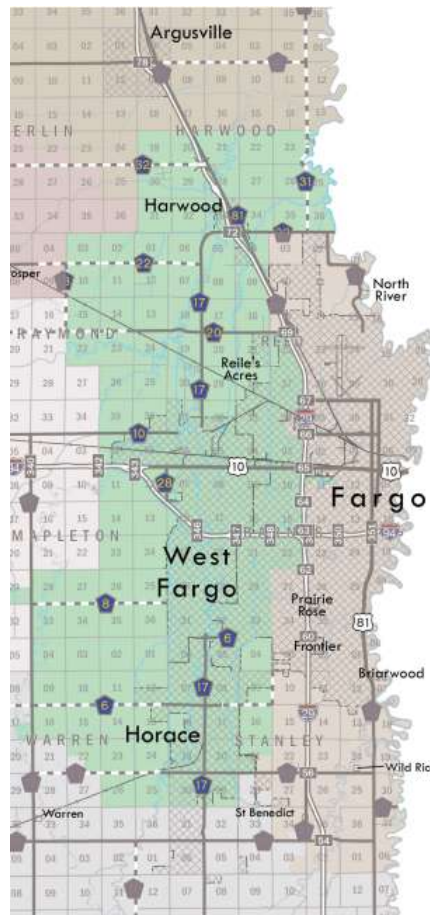
COST: \$5 MILLION

Included In: Question 2

Estimated Tax Impact: \$0.23 per month per \$100,000 of home value

PROJECT DETAILS

- Upon completion of the FM Diversion, the district is anticipating growth on the north end of the district. Purchasing land now will position the district to have a better selection of land parcels, as well as not pay a premium for newly flood-protected land once the diversion is complete.



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VETERANS MEMORIAL ARENA EXPANSION

2025 BOND REFERENDUM

COST: \$5 MILLION

Included In: Question 3

Estimated Tax Impact: \$0.24 per month per \$100,000 of home value

PROJECT DETAILS

- As the district looks to end co-ops between high school hockey teams, additional ice will be needed to ensure all teams have equitable access to practice and competition time.
- Through the exploration of various options, a collaboration with the West Fargo Youth Hockey Association and the West Fargo Park District was deemed the most cost-effective way for WFPS to gain access to a third sheet of ice.
- The district would contribute \$5 million to the \$20 million expansion project, which includes an additional sheet of ice and locker rooms at the Veteran's Memorial Arena.
- The district's financial contribution would guarantee priority access to one sheet of ice per high school.



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