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Edith L. Frierson SIC Meeting
April 9, 2024
Multi-Purpose Room Planning FAQ

This document is intended to provide the Frierson SIC and Friends of Frierson with helpful information to aid in navigating the process of advocating for a "Multi-Purpose Room" from start to finish. In it, we have shared some examples from Early College High School's (ECHS) process, which began in 2019. The examples are shared as ECHS is similar to Frierson in that it, too, is a small school, and one of the primary aims of their project was to add a gym and gathering space for the benefit of their school community.

Q: How do capital projects get funded, generally?
A: Large multi-purpose room projects are funded through the Sales Tax Program or, in rare cases, through the annual Fixed Cost of Ownership (FCO) program (which was finalized by the Board of Trustees in February 2024 for FY25). Funded projects for the 2023-2028 sales tax program have been established.

If revenues for the current Sales Tax Program are higher than projected and funded projects are not in need of additional revenue, other building improvements may be considered. Facilities Management is currently developing a list of potential projects for consideration which will include a multi-purpose room at Frierson.

Q: What is the likelihood that the multi-purpose room project will be funded with FCO funds?
A: There is little likelihood that the FCO will fund the project. The Board of Trustees approved the FY25 FCO project list in February 2024.

The work order cited by the SIC on the FCO FY24 list is an "additional project requested," which means that the district has validated the project need. The project remains of the "additional projects requested" on the FCO FY25, totaling $39 million. Of note is that the largest individual project funded for a school in the FY25 FCO program is $800,000, well below the cost of a multi-purpose room.

Q: When is the next capital program/plan?
A: In the Fall of 2025, the Capital Projects team will hold meetings in each constituent district to gather input for projects. This input will, in turn, be utilized in the next Capital Master Plan, leading to proposed projects for the next Sales Tax Referendum in November 2026.

We currently have projects planned and funded through January 2026.

Q: When is the next sales tax referendum?
A: The next sales tax referendum will be on the ballot in November 2026. It will fund projects through 2035.

Q: How do we get our project listed on the November 2026 ballot?
A: In the Fall of 2025, the Capital Projects team will hold meetings in each constituent district to gather input for projects. This input will, in turn, be utilized in the next Capital Master Plan, leading to proposed projects for the next Sales Tax Referendum in November 2026.

It will be incredibly important to mobilize the Frierson community to attend the meeting held in its region. You can find an example of how the ECHS community received information in 2019 here.

Additionally, the language of the ballot will be presented to and approved by the Board of Trustees, anticipated in July 2026 leading up to that approval; it will be important for members of the Frierson community to communicate to the Board of Trustees its desires.

From a strategic perspective, it may be wise for the Frierson community to consider collaborating with the other seven elementary schools that do not have dedicated multi-purpose spaces, as listing all schools together on the ballot may be most appealing to a large cross-section of voters.

Q: Does the district do any type of advertising for the sales tax referendum?
A: No, the district must maintain neutrality. School communities can mobilize their constituencies. See this September 2020 example from Early College High School.

Q: Are there any other opportunities that we have to get the project funded outside of the Sales Tax Referendum and Fixed Cost of Ownership?
A: No, there are not.

Q: How does this project align with the goals, vision, and efforts of the current school administration?
A: This project aligns with the goals, visions, and efforts of Frierson by addressing the priorities of the administrator. Principal Smalls' priorities are to improve the school's data, increase the current population of the school, and create a positive culture and climate for scholars and staff. The space will meet the needs of the scholars physically, socially, and academically, which will in turn, improve the school's data. Moreover, it will foster a conducive environment for learning, collaboration, and personal growth, enhancing the culture and climate overall and the educational experience for scholars as the population grows.

Q: What bearing does the 2009 "Rural School Covenant" have on this project?
A: From the district's perspective, we read the meeting minutes provided as a commitment to add a Montessori program and to do so: "*Only viable space currently available at Frierson (Program within a school*" (see page 9).