

Citizen's Guide to the May 9, 2015 Bond Election



Voter Information: The Bond Election will be held on Saturday, May 9, 2015. Voting polls open at 7 a.m. and will close at 7 p.m. Early voting will be April 27 - May 5. For polling places and early voting locations call the City Secretary's Office at 325-676-6202.

2015 City of Abilene Bond Election Project Information: In June 2014, the Abilene City Council appointed a 17-member citizens advisory committee to study the needs of our community. This Abilene Bond Election Advisory Committee met 10 times, studied the issues, held public hearings to receive input from other citizens, and took field trips to personally review areas of need. The result of the committee's research and review and City Council's review and approval was a recommendation to put before Abilene voters community projects that together total \$80.69 million. If approved by City voters, the cost of implementing these projects will be financed by selling Bonds. The debt services on the Bonds will be paid by Abilene citizens, which will cause an estimated property tax increase that will peak over five years at 16.94 cents per \$100 valuation. After the fifth year, the tax rate for the bond projects is estimated to decrease. Taylor County, Abilene ISD or Wylie ISD tax rates will not be affected by these projects.

Project	Amount
Street and Road Improvements	\$45,975,000
Civic Center Improvements	\$2,810,000
Sidewalks	\$3,820,000
Fire and Police Facilities	\$12,865,000
Zoo Improvements	\$1,030,000
Aquatics at Rose Park	\$6,000,000
Splash Pads	\$2,500,000
Facilities along Cedar Creek Waterway & Lytle Creek	\$1,490,000
Airport Improvements	\$4,200,000
TOTAL	\$80,690,000

Proposition #1: Street and Road Improvements

The largest proposed project, at approximately \$45.9 million and representing nearly 57 percent of the entire Bond Election total, is earmarked for Streets and Road Improvements. Approximately 130 lane miles of roadway improvements are proposed, and are prioritized based on their condition and traffic volume.

The projects will primarily provide improvements to existing streets by rehabilitating existing travel lanes, replacing and upgrading drainage facilities and curb and gutter, reconstruction of intersections, creation of new travel lanes, reconstruction of existing driveways and sidewalks where needed, and upgrading existing signal infrastructure with improved technology.

Thoroughfare streets proposed for reconstruction include:

- Ambler Blvd. (Danville Dr. to Treadaway Blvd.)
- Catclaw Dr. (Rebecca Ln. to Curry Ln.)
- West Lake Rd. (Ambler Ave. to Anson Ave.)
- N. Willis St. (N. 1st St. to Vogel Ave.)
- S. Willis St. (S. 32nd St. to S. 14th St.)
- N. 6th St. / Leggett Dr. (N. 1st St. to Grape St.)
- S. 20th St. (Sayles Blvd. to Treadaway Blvd.)
- Antilley Rd. (Buffalo Gap Rd. to Directors Pkwy.)
- N. 1st St. (RR tracks west of Wall St. to Pioneer Dr.)
- Hardwick Rd. (Beltway S. to Antilley Rd.)
- Judge Ely Blvd. (E. Hwy 80 to Ambler Blvd.)
- N. 3rd St. (Willis St. to Hickory St.)
- Butternut St. (Treadaway Blvd. to S. 1st St.)
- T&P Ln. (E.S. 11th St. to Sandy St.)
- Old Anson Rd. (Ambler Ave. to W. Stamford St.)
- Texas Ave. (Dub Wright to Hwy 277 S.)
- Corsicana Ave. (Texas Ave. to Benbrook St.)
- Pioneer Dr. (S. 14th St. to S. 7th St.)
- Vogel St. (Danville Dr. to Grape St.)
- Leggett Dr. (S. 7th St. to S. 1st St.)
- Hartford St. (Veterans Blvd. to Clack St.)
- Industrial Blvd. (Treadaway Blvd. to Maple St.)

Proposition #2: Civic Center Improvements

Municipal facilities improvements make up \$2.8 million of the \$80.69 million dollar bond. The improvements include renovations to the Civic Center including updates to the exhibit hall and kitchen.

The proposed Civic Center renovations would remove ceiling tiles in the exhibit hall, paint the ceiling black, upgrade lighting features, and stain the concrete floors. If this proposition is approved a service alley and upgrades to the kitchen would also be constructed.

The Civic Center Improvements proposal also includes an automated fly system for the Civic Center auditorium area. The auditorium fly system is currently a counter-weight fly system and is used to move curtains, lights and set pieces for theater set up. The counter-weight fly system is currently 44 years old and requires man power to operate. The proposed automated fly system would be computer controlled, eliminating the need to manually operate.

Proposition #3: Sidewalks

Sidewalk Improvements, priced at \$3,820,000 is 4.7 percent of the Bond Election total. This proposition would include construction of approximately 10-12 miles of public sidewalks, with the potential of using some of this as matching funds to build additional miles by joining with other public and private organizations willing to partner with the City.

The City's Comprehensive Plan, adopted in January 2004, includes the construction of sidewalks in high priority areas throughout the City. Census data indicates approximately 34 percent of Abilene's citizens are over age 65 or under 16, and 7% of households do not own a car. Approximately 75% of streets designated on the City's adopted Safe Routes to School Plan (2010) do not have sidewalks.

Sidewalk installation can be targeted to places where people are more likely to travel by walking. Sidewalks provide an alternate means of transportation, reduce pedestrian risk, provide an addition means of recreational exercise, and can assist the mobility of handicapped and mobility impaired individuals.

Proposition #4: Fire and Police Facilities

At \$12,865,000 Public Safety improvements, the second largest project on the Bond proposal, make up 15.9% of the total. This proposition includes a new fire apparatus maintenance facility, replacement of fire stations #4, #3, and #7, updates to the Fire Training Facility and a new police records building.

The fire apparatus maintenance facility replacement includes multiple apparatus bays, special dedicated areas for equipment, specialized equipment for fire apparatus maintenance, a centralized location in Abilene and customized storage and office space for the equipment and staff at that facility.

Replacement of fire stations #4, #3 and #7 includes enlarged apparatus bays to accommodate new engine and ladder apparatus. All three would also have an enlarged living area for crews living at each station.

The Abilene Fire Department opted to propose the replacement of the fire apparatus maintenance facility and the three fire stations mentioned above because of the major structural modifications that would be needed to update the current facilities. Those modifications, along with age issues, asbestos concerns, cost and a requirement to continue operations, makes replacement the more cost effective option.

Also included on this proposition is the replacement of training field classrooms and offices. The replacement includes a classroom and office area as well as an engine bay to store a reserve engine.

The proposed police records building would be a stand-alone building that would house records, property and evidence.

Proposition #5: Zoo Improvements

The smallest of the proposition budgets in the Bond Election is enhancements to Abilene's Zoo. This proposal is priced at \$1.03 million, or 1.28 percent of the Bond Election package. The bond funds will be used in addition to \$1.2 million, which the Zoo has already raised from private funds. The enhancement package at Abilene Zoological Gardens involves five projects.

A new entry for the Anteater exhibit would be a part of a South American exhibit and would allow the Zoo to exhibit and breed the anteater species.

A new entry for the Flamingo exhibit would feature a colony of African lesser flamingos and would include a shady rest area and gathering spot for visitors.

The proposal includes funds for a new fishing pier, bird rehabilitation facility and jaguar facility. The fishing pier renovations would include shaded cover and guest seating, and would be made available for rent.

The bird rehabilitation facility would be a new facility constructed to replace the approximate 150 square feet that is now allocated for wild bird rehabilitation efforts. The Zoo currently rehabilitates more than 250 birds annually as part of its mission to protect and promote the native species of our region.

The Jaguar facility renovation and expansion project would include off exhibit space for breeding and rearing the highly endangered cat.

Proposition #6: Aquatic and other park and recreation facilities at Rose Park

Aquatic and other park and recreation facilities at Rose Park make up \$6,000,000 of the total Bond Election proposal. This proposal accounts for 7.44 percent of the total and includes a modern water recreation facility at Rose Park.

A full renovation of Rose Park Pool would take place to construct the modern water recreation facility. The modern aquatic recreation facility includes small to mid-sized slides, an aqua play feature, a splash pad area, a zero-entry pool and a lazy river. The facility would also provide a new locker room and shower facilities, a full service snack bar and large shade structures available for rent for parties and events.

Proposition #7: Splash Pads at Municipal Parks

Four new splash pads at \$2,500,000 make up proposition seven on the Bond Election proposal. The splash pads account for 3.1 percent of the total proposal.

The four new splash pads would be placed at various parks throughout the City. Potential splash pad locations include Stevenson Park, Sears Park, Red Bud Park and Scarborough Park.

Proposition #8: Park and Recreation Facilities along Cedar Creek Waterway and Lytle Creek

Parks and Recreation facilities along Cedar Creek Waterway and Lytle Creek will cost approximately \$1.5 million or 1.86 percent of the entire Bond Proposal.

This project would create nature trails along Cedar and Lytle Creeks from E. S. 11th St. to North 10th St.

If approved, this project would become a public-private partnership between non-profit Cedar Creek Waterway and the City of Abilene.

Proposition #9: Airport Improvements

Abilene Regional Airport Improvements is listed at \$4.2 million on the Bond Election proposal. That equates to 5.21 percent of the entire proposal.

The City is responsible to match FAA Airport Improvement Program grants at 10 percent of project costs. The \$4.2 million is the 10 percent local match to the Airport Improvement Program (AIP) Grants from the Federal Aviation Administration over the next 3 to 5 years. The match provides the airport with an expected \$38 million in AIP grants for a total of \$42 million for project costs.

The funding will be used for various capital improvement projects at the airport, including runway, taxiway and aircraft parking ramp improvements.
