

CONSEQUENCES OF THE NOV. 8 VOTE FOR THE CASA GRANDE ELEMENTARY SCHOOLS

As was reported in the summer issue of *Golden Corridor Living Magazine*, the Casa Grande Elementary District Governing Board has called for a \$44.66 million bond election in November. This decision resulted from the recommendations of a 40-member Capital Planning Committee, which met from January to May 2016. To help voters understand the proposed bond and its impact, Make It Better – Casa Grande has assembled the below information outlining the implications of both a “No” vote and a “Yes” vote.

It is important to note that voter approval of the measure will not produce a tax increase. In fact, the average tax rate over the repayment period for new bonds would be 10

cents lower than the current secondary property tax rate of \$0.55 for existing bond debt.

Look for the following question on your November election ballot:

Shall Casa Grande Elementary School District No. 4 of Pinal County, Arizona, be allowed to issue and sell general obligation bonds in the principal amount of not to exceed \$44,660,000?

BOND APPROVAL, YES

BOND APPROVAL, NO

What happens if Voters Say YES

If approved by voters, proceeds from the bonds would be used to:

- Make modifications intended to bring 21st century security to each campus
- Repair and replace facilities throughout the school district
- Construct replacement space for Saguaro Elementary School and Casa Grande Middle School
- Replace older buses in the district’s fleet of 70 buses

With a successful vote, the design of replacement space for Saguaro Elementary and Casa Grande Middle School (“CGMS”) would begin. Construction would be carried out on the grounds of Saguaro and CGMS during the 2017-18 school year. Students would continue to attend Saguaro and CGMS through the construction period, then would begin attending school in the new facilities in the 2018-19 school year. In 2018-19, existing facilities at Saguaro and CGMS that will no longer be used would be razed. However, facilities such as the CGMS auditorium and gymnasium would be kept, as these facilities are of significant benefit to the community.

In addition to the construction of the replacement space described above, other projects that would commence would be the design of security enhancements and renovations elsewhere in the district and the initiation of a schedule of bus replacements.

What happens if Voters Say NO

Casa Grande Elementary School District has experienced \$23 million in state cuts to capital funding over the last eight years. There is little likelihood this funding will be restored. Other than a capital override election (which would also require voter approval and would involve a tax increase), there are very limited resources available to attend to needs such as replacing roofs, repairing parking lots, replacing worn out flooring, replacing buses or fixing air conditioning units.

- A “No” vote would mean that additional security measures, to be funded with approximately \$10 million of the proposed bond funds, would not be implemented. With an 85 percent cut in capital funding allocated by the state, it would require several decades to implement the additional security measures identified by the Capital Planning Committee.
- A “No” vote would mean that aging schools, including Casa Grande Middle School and Saguaro Elementary School, would, in all likelihood, face further decline. A “No” vote would also worsen existing differences between the quality of the facilities in which children in different neighborhoods attend school.
- A “No” vote would mean that buses needing replacement would continue to be on the road. If just one bus could be replaced each year, it would take 70 years to replace the entire fleet of buses serving the elementary and middle schools.
- Importantly, a “No” vote will not result in an end to the challenge of caring for schools and buses. Just as a home requires care and attention, Casa Grande’s elementary and middle schools, which serve over 7,000 students every day, need care and attention as well.