

EDUCATION

# A new play for Farrington Field? Fort Worth ISD hopes city scores with tax district

by Matthew Sgroi and Bob Francis  
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Farrington Field, 1501 University Drive, Fort Worth, on June 4, 2025. (Mary Abby Goss | Fort Worth Report)

Fort Worth ISD still plays football games at Farrington Field — though the stadium's future has remained uncertain for years.

Now, school leaders see a new path forward.

With a proposed city-led tax financing district on the table, school officials say the century-old stadium might finally get the modernization it needs — without pulling funds from the classroom.

“It means giving us the ability to renovate Farrington Field, which is a historical stadium and landmark within the city of Fort Worth,” Kellie Spencer, deputy superintendent of operations, told the Fort Worth Report. “Otherwise, at this point in time, we don’t have any path to do that.”

The proposal is headed to Fort Worth City Council for a vote June 10.

If approved, the zone would collect a portion of future property tax revenue growth from a stretch west of downtown, reinvesting it into stormwater fixes, road improvements and a \$55 million overhaul of the aging stadium.

Along with the stadium, the proceeds from the tax district would be used for other new development in an area that stretches from University Drive to the west and Woolery Street to the east, Shamrock Avenue on the north and to the south where University Drive connects to Trail Drive.

Fort Worth ISD would contribute up to \$25 million over 20 years — a 35% participation rate — in exchange for a dedicated funding stream to help preserve and adapt its most iconic athletic facility.

## Flood control and Farrington Field top \$261M in proposed westside projects

Planned improvements for Fort Worth’s proposed taxing district. Amounts shown in millions.

Stormwater and Flood Control Improvements	\$150,000,000
Road and Streetscape Improvements	\$30,000,000
Public Safety Improvements	\$10,000,000
Parking Improvements	\$10,000,000
Farrington Field	\$55,000,000
Other Public Improvements and TIF Administration	\$6,000,000

## Fort Worth projected to contribute \$151M to taxing district over 20 years

Estimated tax revenue contributions based on participation rates (50% for Fort Worth, 35% for others). Figures represent total through fiscal year 2046. Fort Worth ISD would be capped at \$25 million.

City of Fort Worth	\$151,000,000
Tarrant County	\$41,000,000
Tarrant County College District	\$24,000,000
Tarrant Regional Water District	\$6,000,000
Fort Worth ISD	\$39,000,000

Chart: (Matthew Sgroi | Fort Worth Report) • Source: City of Fort Worth • [Get the data](#) • [Embed](#) • Created with [Datawrapper](#)

While the school board has not formally approved the deal, Spencer said trustees gave staff the green light to explore the partnership. A vote is expected in July, Spencer said.

Fort Worth ISD is especially interested because it wouldn't touch current academic or operations funding, she said.

“So we’re committing funds that will not have an impact on our current, general operating budget,” she said. “That’s very important because we want to make sure that we keep our budget focused on the things that we need to focus on right now, **specifically our strategic plan.**”

## A new play for a historic stadium



The historic Farrington Field features a football player carved into the stone facade, as photographed on June 4, 2025. (Mary Abby Goss | Fort Worth Report)

Farrington Field has long been a symbol of Fort Worth ISD's legacy.

The stadium, which opened in 1939, requires at least \$20 million in basic upgrades, including Americans with Disability Act compliance, elevators, locker room renovations and safety improvements, according to the city and Fort Worth ISD.

Fort Worth ISD included upgrades to smaller neighborhood stadiums in a 2021 bond proposition that voters rejected. Farrington wasn't included in that proposal.

Without a bond, Fort Worth ISD has no viable way to renovate the site, which has been placed on Fort Worth's list of endangered historic landmarks seven of the last 17 years, **most recently in 2025**.

The stadium's use has dwindled in recent years. Fort Worth's minor league soccer team, Vaqueros FC, made Farrington its home for a time, but now plays at Castleberry ISD's W.O. Barnes Stadium. Farrington's history remains of value to alumni, parents and coaches for whom it is a nostalgic touchstone. Others see its worth in future redevelopment possibilities.

"Farrington Field is such a wonderful melting pot of whoever attended Fort Worth ISD, and we are so fortunate that some positive signs are coming out for its future — which is what we want," Jerre Tracy, executive director of Historic Fort Worth, told the Report.

The stadium sits on a key piece of land just west of downtown. In 2019, **Fort Worth ISD announced a broader proposal to consolidate properties and relocate central administration** to the Farrington site.

Under that plan, the school district wanted to preserve the frieze and columns, build a new leadership center and work with private developers to add green space and compatible mixed-use construction.

That vision eventually stalled.

## City says taxing district can unlock development



Clouds hang over the Farrington Field bleachers on June 4, 2025. (Mary Abby Goss | Fort Worth Report)

City officials say the infrastructure needs in the area are holding back growth.

Much of the proposed taxing district boundary is plagued by stormwater and flooding issues that prevent development, said council member Elizabeth Beck, who represents the area.

The updated plan would direct \$150 million to flood mitigation, \$30 million to road and streetscape work, and \$10 million each to parking and public safety upgrades.

The taxing district boundaries include the West 7th area just east of the Cultural District which had some **public safety issues** in recent years.

By capturing new tax revenue and reinvesting it, city staff say the taxing district could generate \$260.8 million in project funds and more than \$1 billion in retained revenue over two decades if all five taxing

entities agree to participate: the city, Tarrant County, Tarrant County College District, the Tarrant Regional Water District and Fort Worth ISD.

Fort Worth ISD leaders said the terms make financial sense.

“We will reap direct benefits,” Spencer said.

Under the proposal, Fort Worth ISD would retain ownership of Farrington Field.

The plan includes approximately \$350 million in adjacent mixed-use development, which is expected to generate the tax increment necessary to fund \$55 million in stadium improvements, Michael Hennig, economic development manager of Fort Worth’s Economic Development Department, told City Council.

Specific arrangements regarding the development of adjacent parcels are yet to be detailed.

The school district is watching as the city prepares to vote, Spencer said. If council approves the taxing district June 10, a new board overseeing the project would be created in the summer, including a representative from Fort Worth ISD.

The school board would then vote on its own participation — likely in July, Spencer said.

Fort Worth ISD is optimistic, she said.

“We’re very excited about the opportunity,” Spencer said. “Not only to bring it up to compliance standards — but also to modernize it. We obviously need that stadium to continue playing Friday Night Lights.”



Clouds hang over Farrington Field on June 4, 2025. (Mary Abby Goss | Fort Worth Report)

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