

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

What is a bond election?

A bond election gives voters within the COM taxing district – Dickinson, Hitchcock, Santa Fe and Texas City school districts – to vote on paying for the designated projects on the COM campus.

Who gets to vote in the Nov. 6 bond election?

Only registered voters within the Dickinson, Hitchcock, Santa Fe and Texas City schools can vote on the bond issue. La Marque residents can vote on the bond issue since they are part of the Texas City school district. Voters that live in League City but are part of the Dickinson school district also can vote on this issue.

Why can't all voters in north Galveston County, like League City, Kemah and Friendswood residents, vote in the COM Bond Election on Nov. 6?

All registered voters in League City, Kemah and Friendswood are not eligible to vote on the COM proposition because these communities are not part of the COM taxing district. In order to become part of the COM taxing district these communities would have to call an election and approve joining the COM taxing district.

How was the COM 2018 Bond developed?

The 2018 College of the Mainland Bond Referendum is a result of quality community input and careful weighing of options. The bond package was pulled together by COM leadership, with the support of architects, engineers, and demographers, and vetted over the course of 10 weeks by the 2018 Bond Advisory Committee made up of over 40 community leaders, parents, business owners, and COM staff representing a cross section of the college taxing district. The committee presented their bond recommendation to the COM Board of Trustees on June 25, 2018. Immediately following the presentation, the Board unanimously approved the committee's recommendation and called for a bond election.

What will the \$162.5 million go toward?

Bond monies will go toward the construction of a STEAM (Science, Technology, Engineering, Arts and Mathematics)/Allied Health building, Industrial Careers building and a Student Success Center which will house all student enrollment offices such as admissions, financial aid and advising. All COM programs offered in League City will be moved to the main campus. The bond proposal also calls for additions and renovations to the campus fine arts building as well as expansion of the college's physical plant and technology upgrades. Aside from the administration and enrollment center, the bond program will see the demolition of the police station (to be relocated) and the technical vocational building. All 2018 Bond funds will be spent on COM's main campus.

If the bond proposition is approved, how much will my taxes go up?

If the bond is approved, the college's Interest and Sinking tax rate, which currently is zero because the college has no debt, would increase to .1172 per \$100 valuation.

The tax increase is dependent on the value on your home. The average cost of home within taxing district is \$120,809. The chart to the right shows the average taxable home value, annual impact and monthly impact by school district. Tuition for students will not increase if the bond referendum is approved.

School District	Average Taxable Home Value	Annual Impact	Monthly Impact
Dickinson ISD	\$130,955	\$153.44	\$12.79
Hitchcock ISD	\$126,679	\$148.43	\$12.37
Santa Fe ISD	\$162,860	\$190.83	\$15.90
Texas City ISD	\$73,597	\$86.24	\$7.19
Taxing District (average)	\$120,809	\$141.55	\$11.80

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Would the proposed tax increase be effective immediately?

No. Homeowners will see an increase in their taxes only when COM sells the bond. The college does not intend to sell \$162.5 million in bonds at one time. The bonds will be sold as the money is needed for the construction projects. Currently, the plan calls for approximately \$50 million in bonds sold during the first phase of the construction project. The earliest COM taxpayers will see an increase to their taxes will be the 2019 tax year.

What is the difference between Maintenance & Operations and Interest and Sinking budgets?

The maintenance and operations (M&O) budget is for keeping the college operational and includes salaries and maintenance of buildings. The Interest and Sinking (I&S) budget goes toward repaying any debt.

What is COM's tax rate?

The tax rate for 2018-2019 academic school year (which runs Sept. 1 through Aug. 31) currently is .2084 per \$100 valuation. This is for Maintenance and Operation of the college. The Interest and Sinking rate is zero since the college has no debt. The tax rate is applied after any homestead exemptions or tax exemption "freezes" for senior citizens.

I am a senior citizen in the COM taxing district. Will my taxes go up?

Taxes should not go up for senior citizens aged 65 and over who have filed for the appropriate homestead exemption.

Do homestead exemptions apply to multiple properties?

No. Texas Law requires school districts to offer a \$25,000 exemption on residence homesteads. The owner has an ownership interest in the property and uses the property as the owner's PRINCIPAL residence. The applicant is required to state that the applicant does not claim an exemption on another residence homestead in or outside of Texas.

Texas Tax Code Section 11.13

Does the 65+ exemption apply to multiple properties?

No, neither the homestead nor the over 65 exemption can be applied to multiple properties other than the principle residence. Texas law requires school districts and community colleges to offer AN ADDITIONAL \$10,000 residence homestead exemption to persons age 65 or older or disabled.

Texas Tax Code Section 11.13

Can bond money go toward salaries or other COM operational costs?

No. COM can legally only spend money from the bond to pay for the construction of the buildings, renovations, additions, demolition, etc. The college cannot use the money for any maintenance and operating expenses such as salaries.

How long does COM have to repay the bond?

Texas law states that no bond can end more than 40 years from the date of sale. Within that limitation, when the Board of Trustees goes to sell bonds, it will choose an appropriate amortization plan, considering an end date that is appropriate for the asset that will be built/purchased by the bond funds, and that best suits the district's situation at the time. A "sweet spot" is typically around 25-30 years for a building, because extending it beyond that time frame will accumulate 10-15 years of additional interest payments (which impacts tax rate).

Did College of the Mainland seek community input before deciding what to include in the bond proposition?

Yes. A Citizens Bond Advisory Committee, which included residents from all the communities within the taxing district, met for months before making a recommendation to the COM Board of Trustees on Monday, June 25. The trustees approved and called for the bond election at their regularly scheduled board meeting on June 25.

When was the last time voters approved a bond election for new buildings on campus?

Aside from the original \$2.85 million bond in December 1966 that included building the administration building, the Learning Resources Center (library), the Technical-Vocational building, the Math and Science building and a central utilities building, only one other bond package has been approved by voters and that was in May 1970. That \$4.75 million bond package covered the cost of building the Fine Arts building, Physical Education complex and Student Center as well as expanding the Technical-Vocational and Math-Science buildings.

Since that time, a 20,000-square-foot expansion of the Technical-Vocational Building was completed in 1985; two Industrial Education Buildings were constructed in 1991 and a 10,000-square-foot Public Service Careers Building came along in 1999. None of these buildings were constructed using bond money.

I am not registered to vote. How do I register? When is the last day I can register to vote in the Nov. 6 election?

In order to vote in the Nov. 6 COM Bond Election, a qualified voter must be registered no later than Tuesday, Oct. 9. A voter registration form may be acquired from the county elections clerk at 409-770-5108 or at www.galvestonvotes.org.

What if I want to vote with a mail ballot? How do I obtain one?

You may request a mail-in ballot by contacting the Galveston County Elections Clerk at 409-770-5108 or at www.galvestonvotes.org.

When is early voting, and where do I vote?

Early voting for the Nov. 6 election is scheduled from Oct. 22 to Nov. 2. The polling locations will be announced by the Galveston County Clerk's office. The voting hours are 8 a.m. to 5 p.m. on Monday, Oct. 22 through Saturday, Oct. 27; from 1 p.m. to 6 p.m. on Sunday, Oct. 28; and from 7 a.m. to 7 p.m. on Monday, Oct. 29 through Friday, Nov 2.

Where do I go to vote on Election Day?

The voting locations on Election Day – Nov. 6 – are determined by the Galveston County Clerk's office. Information on the polling locations and times will be made by the Galveston County Clerk's office and can be found at www.galvestonvotes.org. The polls will be open from 7 a.m. to 7 p.m.

What type of identification do I need in order to vote on Nov. 6?

Registered voters in the COM taxing district are reminded that they must bring a photo I.D. in order to vote in any election held in Galveston County. Listed below are acceptable forms of identification for voters:

- Texas driver license issued by the Texas Department of Public Safety (DPS)
- Texas Election Identification Certificate issued by DPS
- Texas personal identification card issued by DPS
- Texas concealed handgun license issued by DPS
- United States military identification card containing the person's photograph
- United States citizenship certificate containing the person's photograph
- United States passport

Can voters receive more information and ask questions about the bond issue before the election?

Yes. The College of the Mainland representatives will be sharing information about the Bond Election at various community events and meetings throughout the taxing district. COM representatives are available to provide information about the bond proposition to any group, club or church. If you would like a COM representative at your next gathering, please contact Ruth Rendon at rrendonduke@com.edu. Information also is available at www.compass2025.com.

If I have questions concerning the bond issue, who should I contact?

For more information about the COM Bond, visit www.compass2025.com or contact Ruth Rendon at rrendonduke@com.edu.