



Real Answers about the proposed new Texas Rangers stadium

Want to know more about the real answers about what Arlington voters are being told by Arlington leaders?

Scroll down to each question's answer.

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[Q1: Do the Rangers get stolen away by Dallas if we vote “NO”?](#)

REAL ANSWER #1:

Bottom line:

The current lease with the Rangers runs until 2024.

The proponents' entire campaign is based on emotion - a fear of losing the Rangers to Dallas. The actual perception of our city's leaders is that, if we don't give \$500M to the Rangers RIGHT NOW, then a combination of Dallas Mayor Rawlings, WFAA, Mark Cuban, or a bunch of smaller suburbs in northern Dallas County are going to snap up the Rangers and poof!, Arlington turns into Richland Hills.

The Details:

This is just a scary tale that might work well with elementary school children around a campfire at night, but adults should have no problem seeing through this ham-handed ghost story.

The current lease with the Rangers lasts until 2024. The bonds will be paid in 2021, assuming current trends continue. It takes about a year to build a new stadium. If voters turn this current deal down, the City could take another couple of months and hold a new election every May, and two general elections in November, and thus could hold SIX more elections and still have a year to build a new stadium before their bonds are paid, and nearly twice that many opportunities to pass an election before their lease runs out.

Even the Arlington Mayor told us that the Rangers have not said they're leaving.

The Arlington Mayor, Jeff Williams, told our SOS team that the Rangers have not said they'll leave if we vote “no”. We caught the mayor at City Hall and he disclosed that the Rangers have never threatened to move.

Here's the WFAA/Brett Shipp segment, highlighting the SOS-captured video:

We find it very odd how much secrecy surrounds all the promotional events and so-called public events.

http://www.wfaa.com/mb/news/local/tarrant-county/divided-over-arlington-stadium/292644073?fb_comment_id=1229075853792955_1229508833749657#f14b318408

The raw video of our interview with Mayor Williams





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Here's the full video of our Save Our Stadium team, who were able to get it confirmed from mayor Williams himself, that the Rangers have never said they'd leave if we vote no. (His pertinent comments start at the 5:00 min mark)

<https://youtu.be/cK6nA1YkjinM>

Anyone saying that we must vote for the new stadium RIGHT NOW is lying or ignorant. It's that simple. No knowledgeable, reasonable person can truthfully say that we'll lose the Rangers if we turn down this deal this time. We simply have way too many opportunities, and way too much time, for someone to get that shrill about the project.

But what about Dallas stealing the Rangers?

Now...can Dallas even touch this project with the kind of money we are talking about? Let's take a trip through history. When the Cowboys were looking for a new host city "to be loyal to" for a price, they first looked at Dallas. Mayor Laura Miller was unable to close the deal, because she could not raise any sales tax to fund it. She was able to put together a package of rental taxes and could put together a deal on Fair Park that was about \$180M. It wasn't because she didn't want to grab them - it was that she didn't have enough money.

For the record, Jerry Jones said that Fair Park just wasn't large enough, after all the analysis. But for all of the statements on that story, everyone agrees that Dallas could not begin to put together a \$300M+ package. And if you don't believe that, you can listen to the Soundcloud interview of Brian Mayes by Wilonsky on this issue. (Mayes was the campaign manager for the Cowboys in the Arlington election, and is running the campaign now for the Rangers.)

Brian Mayes Interview on how the Cowboys landed in Arlington

<https://www.soundcloud.com/robert-wilonsky/how-the-dallas-cowboys-landed>

Dallas tax rate is already going to support DART and Hotels

Of course, nothing has changed since that time. Dallas still has DART using a full penny for mass transit. It has to go to a hotel rent tax county-wide at the highest rates in the country to get to even a \$200M deal.

Similarly, when current Dallas Mayor Rawlings was asked about grabbing the Rangers, he admitted that he could not get where Arlington is, characterizing it as a 'bear hug'.

In addition, Rangers owners Ray Davis and Bob Simpson own the land around the existing stadiums and are part of the Texas Live,\$200M development coming soon. Are these guys going to leave in December if they lose in November? The notion is ridiculous.

From the Star-Telegram piece in 2014:

"We like to say this building has good bones. We like to believe we have maintained it well," said Rob Matwick, Rangers executive vice-





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president for business operations. *“There is no reason to believe it can’t last for a long time.”*

While acknowledging that a retractable-roof stadium could enhance the fans’ experience, Matwick said no decisions have been made about what to do when the 30-year lease expires in 2024.*

Note also that when the lease expires in 2024, the Rangers can either buy the ballpark at no cost and begin paying property taxes, ask the city to grant a 10-year lease extension, or come up with an entirely new agreement. Does anyone think that Arlington won't "come up with an entirely new agreement" to keep the Rangers happy?

As a fun note, did everyone see that Mark Cuban purchased his own \$50M property recently for the Mavs recently? He remarked that keeping it where he wanted was important, and he wasn't interested in playing games with Dallas or other cities. It is simply not true that billionaires always want to play games to extract the last dollar from its host city.

To the Arlington City Council and its campaign team - quit trying to use emotionalism and scare tactics to sell this bad deal. Come back next year with a less heinous proposal. In the meantime, read *The Art of the Deal* and work on your self-esteem. Your residents will thank you for it.

*From the Star-Telegram:

Will the Rangers be safe or out at home?

<http://www.star-telegram.com/news/local/community/arlington/article3859248.html>

Q2: IS IT A NEW TAX, OR NOT?

REAL ANSWER #2

Bottom line:

If it weren't a new tax, then we wouldn't have to vote on it!

The Details:

Tax proponents like to whine that the newly proposed sales tax benefiting the owners of the Rangers is not new.

We respond with the simple facts that:

- a) If it was not a new tax, we would not need to vote on it
- b) The ballot won't say, "Arlington should continue giving money to the Cowboys," (since that is where the money is going now)
- c) If we vote “NO”, the 8.25% tax rate will go down to 7.75%.

The lack of ability to answer any of these questions doesn't seem to faze





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proponents, who would support the new subsidy even if it were \$5 billion. The numbers and facts don't matter to them. Then they post things on their totally controlled Facebook wall where relevant and respectful questions are characterized as "disinformation" and "truth is just an option", when their entire campaign is disingenuously portrayed as though the election is about *whether the Rangers should stay or go*, based on this election alone.

But let's try it once more, with a NEW GREAT ANALOGY:

Those living on Social Security expect cost of living increases when the CPI increases. This has been true since 1975. The CPI does not increase every year, but beneficiaries expect their benefits to go up. It went up in 2014 and 2015, but not 2016.

Let's say that Congress passed a law that says that the benefits would not go up in 2018, even if the CPI went up 2%. And let's say that our representatives said to those living on Social Security, "Hey, we're not lowering your benefits - they are exactly the same as they are today."

Would that fly, do you think? I don't think so. Beneficiaries would rise up in serious rebellion, pointing out that their benefits have changed from what they would have been.

Keeping the Cowboys tax that supposed to go away

Proponents of the new sales tax want to get away with this. They want to say that there is no new tax, based on the idea that it's the same level of taxpayer support given to the Cowboys now (that was used to give incentive to get the Cowboys to Arlington), and you should just forget about the fact that the sales tax will go down.

They want to say that, because the city voted once to fund the Cowboys new stadium, a new amenity that we did not have prior, we should never expect to lower the sales tax or even question its use, ever again.

Social Security recipients would not buy that argument if Congress tried to lower their expected rise in benefits, and Arlington's voters should similarly see through this deceptive campaign tactic to fool them here.

New taxes with the New Stadium proposition

The language for the election has been released, which states that there are five taxes that will be used. They include:

- \$3 parking tax
- 10% admissions tax
- 2% hotel tax
- 0.5% sales tax that would have gone away, but now extended (forever?);
- 5% car rental tax.

Paying off Cowboys Stadium





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The City wants to claim that these are 'no new taxes' because they are currently employed in the Cowboys deal, but the Rangers do not currently have a 0.5% sales tax - **the 0.5% sales tax currently in place would go away when it finishes paying the Cowboy bonds off.**

And if we vote against the proposal, then the money currently going to pay for Jerry's expenses, it would be unleashed to create NEW jobs in the private sector. But the Rangers have never used a hotel or car tax prior to this, making these taxes NEW in that way too.

The basic deal is this - if the taxes weren't new, we wouldn't have to vote on it.

Q3: Is it true that adding a roof is too expensive?

REAL ANSWER #3:

Bottom Line:

Proponents have stated that a roof would be too expensive. When asked to provide any support for that statement, the party line is that a study was done, and it was concluded to be too expensive.

The Details:

The City has not done its due diligence

The REAL ANSWER is that adding a roof was never seriously considered by the current city and team leadership. It's not that it would be pricey, and it may even be prohibitively expensive, but today, as this proposal is being considered, the City and the team has not done the due diligence to answer the question.

Ask the Architect

Every reasonable person who wanted to consider this question would contact David Schwarz, the world- class architect who designed this stadium (as well as Sundance Square, the Dallas AA Arena, and many others). That's just what an intelligent person would do when considering the matter. But we know from articles and the admissions of the City that no one has contacted Schwarz and simply asked him if he has any ideas regarding cooling the stadium, either by a roof, or shading, or anything else.

That's not been done. If it had been done, then we would get that by asking for it in a request for information, OR if our leadership just wanted to run an open and transparent government, they'd provide that study.

Would construction interfere with the Rangers games?

We have mused that the real answer is that the construction would interfere with game play.





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Again, if that IS the real answer, then the Rangers would have to play somewhere else for two years, *as at least one proponent has asserted*, then:

- 1) How do they know that?
- 2) Who is this *they*?
- 3) Who is more competent than the architect, Schwarz, to answer that question?
- 4) Why not call the guy who knows the project intimately and may have ideas that proponents and other non-world-class experts have on this subject?

AWESOME ANALOGY COMING:

Let's say that you want to add to your house.

- The architect that did the design did a great job, and you are very happy with the work he did
- You want to add a room in one way, and your spouse wants to do it a different way
- She asserts that it would be too expensive to do it your way
- She's a doctor, and has no particular expertise in construction
- However, the architect that did the design was personally mentored by Frank Lloyd Wright, is world-famous, and a personal friend of your family who showcases your home in his presentations to others.
- You know that he'll take your call

Now for the question - how could your wife, "the doctor", say that she's done due diligence on the issue, or claim that it's too expensive, when she has not even bothered to ask the world-class friend of yours about the issue?

No due diligence. No open government. Residents have a right to know that its government isn't making up excuses to support their premeditated decisions. The proponents should produce the economic studies and the produce the 'a roof is too expensive' study, and someone in charge should get a clue and at least call Schwarz. Maybe it is too expensive, and maybe it's not. But no one can say at this point.

Q4: What about the existing office spaces?

The current stadium has a number of really nice office spaces that overlook the field.

REAL ANSWER #4:

The Bottom Line:

These buildings are part of the artist's rendition of the new stadium, leading people to think that the offices will remain.

The Real Answer to that question is that the Master Agreement gives full permission for the Rangers to do what they want, irrespective of





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what any proponent you wish it to say.

The Details:

From the actual Master Agreement document:

ARTICLE VI - GLOBE LIFE PARK IN ARLINGTON

The City and Team agree that reasonable efforts will be used to explore opportunities for repurposing portions of Globe Life Park in Arlington that retain some elements of the ballpark which could include portions of the façade, the underground parking and/or the Centerfield Building; provided, however, that the parties understand that the Team may, in its discretion, ultimately determine that all of Globe Life Park in Arlington should be demolished by the Team at any time subsequent to the Team's relocation to the Ballpark Complex.

You can read this yourself at the City's site:

<http://www.arlington-tx.gov/ballparkproject/wp-content/uploads/sites/61/2016/06/Master-Agreement.pdf>

Q5: Do Visitors pay about 50% of Sales Taxes?

(So... No, not even CLOSE to 50%)

REAL ANSWER #5:

Bottom line:

If you accept the numbers and reports from the Arlington Convention and Visitors Bureau and formal reports by the City,
Actual visitors pay about 20% of the sales tax,
leaving residents to pay 80% of it.

The Details:

Proponents of the new tax proposal to impose new taxes of \$500M claim that visitors to Arlington pay half of all taxes, leading to their assertion that we should raise taxes because visitors pay half of all sales taxes. Sales tax proponents base that assertion on unproduced studies which have ludicrous assumptions, such as the idea that any credit card receipt with a customer billing address outside of the City is a non-resident visitor coming to Arlington, or commercial taxable sales of Arlington businesses which are headquartered elsewhere. This assumption ignores UTA's 37,000 student body, known for its international make up.

There are probably 15,000 UTA students with non-Arlington billing address credit cards, but high sales tax proponents want to claim that it's a good thing to take their disposable income, ignoring that their spending is already creating jobs.

But we can use numbers sent out by Arlington sources to compute a more realistic number, as follows:





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"In 2014, the City's 10 million visitors spent \$669 million in Arlington, according to the Arlington Convention and Visitors Bureau. That spending generated more than \$91 million in state and local tax revenue."

That statement comes from

<http://www.arlington-tx.gov/ballparkproject/wp-content/uploads/sites/61/2016/05/Rangers-FAQ.pdf>

Arlington taxes by the numbers

Arlington has an 8% sales tax; Only 1.75% of the 8% stays with Arlington, and the rest goes to the state, so the sales taxes that Arlington keeps from visitor spending, according to its own statements is: $\$91M \times (1.75/8) = \$19,906,250$. Again, that's from their numbers.

Arlington reported in its 2014 Annual Financial Report that it received \$93,127 in sales tax revenue in 2014. (See p. 22.)

<https://www.joomag.com/magazine/popular-annual-financial-report-fy-2014/0156151001426609330?short>

Thus, from their own numbers, visitors pay $19.9/93.1 = 21.4\%$ of sales taxes, not taking into account the college students who have credit cards from outside the city, or taxable commercial spending of Arlington businesses with billable addresses outside Arlington.

Also note that the Texas Comptroller website reports \$4,152,524,843 in taxable sales in 2014. At a tax rate of 1.75% to Arlington, I'd expect sales tax income to be \$72,669,184, which gives us a tourist share of 27.4% of all sales taxes. You can take your pick, but I assume that the City's website giving the actual sales tax income is correct, and there are adjustments in the Comptroller's numbers that are not easy to parse.

Those numbers can be found at:

<https://mycpa.cpa.state.tx.us/allocation/HistSales>

If someone can show us how those numbers paint a different picture, we'd be happy to add more detail - as opposed to the proponents of the new stadium, we are not trying to come to unwarranted crazy claims based on unreplicable secret studies locked away from prying eyes. The data is the data.

CONCLUSION:

Actual visitors pay about 20% of the sales tax, leaving residents to pay 80% of it.*

*Based on the numbers and reports from the Arlington Convention, and Visitors Bureau and formal reports by the City





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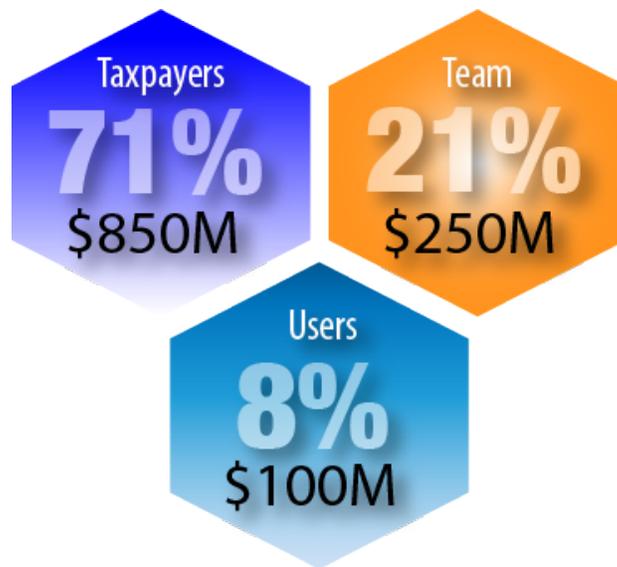
Q6: Is it a 50/50 split with Arlington taxpayers paying for 50% of a new stadium?

REAL ANSWER #6:

Bottom line:

NO, it is NOT 50/50!

It's more like 70%/30% to Arlington's detriment, assuming you give them credit for the user fees for no good reason. Assuming 20-year payment, the split is closer to 850/100/250 for city/users/team, and even that is being unreasonably charitable to the team owners, who have so many income streams paying their bills that their out-of-pocket expense is maybe just the initial cost of \$50M.



SUMMARY:

The team gives up an initial \$50M while the deal gets moving, but then gets help in the way of:

- The sale of seat builder licenses (\$100M+)
- The new admission and parking taxes (\$90M+)
- Naming rights (\$100M+)
- Excess sales taxes (\$300M+) which together will generate easily more than the project will need.
- The City is also not getting credit for the \$50M that we are giving to TexasLive (and the Texas taxpayers are kicking in another \$50M for that project).

Thus, the \$500M that the team is supposed to be paying really comes down to the initial \$50M and little else. Everything else is paid by other people of





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Arlington.

If we assign costs rationally, it's \$850M Arlington, \$90M user fees, \$250M Rangers (giving them credit for initial costs, seat licenses, and naming rights).

DETAIL:

The team pays up to \$50M (called the "Initial Team Contribution") in initial construction costs to get things going before the city's bonds get sold.

The city sells bonds that net \$500M. Actual cost to procure these bonds is more than \$500M, but we don't get credit for those costs, or any interest we pay along the way.

These are the 5 taxes used to pay the debt



Of these five taxes

- the first three are slated to end in the next three years, as they pay off the bonds used to construct the Cowboys' stadium
- The latter two taxes are new to the Rangers. These taxes exist on the current Cowboys' lots and tickets. You can call them new or not, but they would all go away in three years if we didn't have this election.

This explanation assumes that we'll pay this off in 20 years, based on the observation that we are paying the \$325M in Cowboys bonds in about 14 years. A rundown on where these taxes go and how much they will raise follows:

- Sales Taxes - This year's 2016 Arlington budget includes an assumed \$33.6M raised by our current half-cent sales tax going to pay the Cowboy bonds. Over the next 20+ years, it is very conservative to use





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\$35M-\$40M/year average. The half-cent sales tax will raise about \$750M in 20 years. (People will argue about how much of that is paid by non-residents, but this analysis is examining the proponents claim that this is a 50/50 split between taxpayers and the Rangers, which doesn't talk about that issue, so I won't do that here either.)

- Hotel Occupancy Tax (HOT) - Arlington charges a 9% HOT, of which 6% goes to the state, 1% to Arlington, and 2% of that goes to payment of the city's portion of the bonds, currently the Cowboys, and then transferred to the Rangers under the proposed agreement. In 2015, Arlington had hotel income of \$2.24M. It goes up at more than 5% a year, but assuming only 5% growth, over twenty years, this exceeds \$60M easily. Obviously, most of the hotel revenue comes from non-residents, but we can use that money for just about anything tourist-related, so it could go for zoo, the costs of the Christmas Market, the Scottish Games, or an international chess exhibition using martial artists to perform each player's move, using katanas to commit hari kari on sacrificial moves. (Okay, that's just to keep you awake.) [This paragraph was edited to reflect state restrictions on what the HOT can be used to fund. It can't go for general expenditures, but it's pretty wide.]
- Car Rental Tax (5%) – In 2015, Arlington collected \$710k, and it grows at about 4% a year, conservatively. Over 20 years, this will be at least 16M. This goes to the City to pay its contribution.

Going forward, I'll add the above three taxes together and assume \$40M/year. This is a conservatively low number over 20 years.

- Parking Tax (\$3 each) - I couldn't find a good number on this, but to be conservative, I will assume 5000 cars for 100 events at the facility a year, for \$1.5M year, or \$30M over the 20 years. In the proposed agreement, it goes to help the Rangers pay its portion, but those taxes could have been assigned to the city. One can say that it is venue-connected, and call it a user fee.
- Admissions Tax (10%) – Hard to predict this one too, but assuming 100 events a year, and an average \$10 ticket, with 30,000 attending, we get \$3M/year, or \$60M for the 20 years. In the proposed agreement, it goes to help the Rangers pay its portion, but again, those taxes could have been assigned to the city. One can say that it is venue-connected, and call it a user fee.

Note that the parking/admissions taxes are paid by all people using the ballpark for any reason; a non-baseball event that pays to use the ballpark winds up having attendees that pay parking and admissions – this money goes to the team's contribution.





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Besides the above, all naming rights belong to the Rangers. (This is different from the current Cowboy deal, where they are sharing.) The current Globe Life naming deal is supposed to be about \$5M/year, so we can just go with \$100M as a conservative number, all of which goes to the Rangers. We do get the \$2M/year lease, but really, it's peanuts.

Okay, now the fun begins...for the team owners.

The half-cent sales tax, hotel occupancy tax, and car rental taxes are put in a Tax Receipts account, which pays the bond servicing. The \$40M/year collected on the three taxes is far more than is necessary to service and defease the bonds.

Let's assume that \$25M is the necessary amount to handle the bond obligations each year. (In 2015, we paid about \$18.5M for debt service on Cowboy bonds.) That leaves \$15M of the \$40M or so each year – which goes into a Reimbursement Account (see definitions in Master Agreement). Income from the sale of Stadium Builder Licenses (aka seat licenses) which the City sells also goes into this fund. NOTE: These extra taxes and seat license sale proceeds that go into the Reimbursement Account do NOT count as part of Arlington's cut.

And now for the beauty - the team can use funds in this account for "Operations and Maintenance Costs, Capital Improvement Costs or Initial Construction Costs of the Ballpark Complex." (This is from the definition of the Reimbursement Account, in the accurately named Master Agreement.) Simplifying, the \$40M that the city's residents pay with sales, hotel, and car rental taxes goes into two buckets. The first is the money that services the debt of the \$500M in bonds, but the second bucket is just ignored in the calculation. It's just money that the team gets to use for various things, including construction of the stadium, reimbursements for utilities, and capital improvement costs. (Yes, the team is responsible for utilities, BUT they can get reimbursed through this fund.)

The deal is structured to create a façade of \$500M in city contributions, but the real contribution from taxpayers through the three taxes is going to be actually something closer to \$40M x 20 years, or \$800M, plus the \$50M we are giving directly with TexasLive (which is discussed in the Master Agreement). And we aren't counting the state incentives that give another \$50M to the deal. That's just free money that alleviates \$50M from the required Team Contribution.

But what about the team – is its contribution of \$500M correct?
Of course not.

The Master Agreement says that the Team Contribution is the amount needed to pay the project costs, estimated at \$908M (because TexasLive is counted as \$100M, see Exhibit C), less the City Contribution (\$500M) and the seat builder licenses (assuming a very conservative \$100M). So the Team Contribution is **NOT, NOT, NOT** \$500M, but \$308M. And that's assuming





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everything the way that the proponents want to do it.

But wait! There's more. The \$30M in admission taxes and \$60M in ticket taxes are paid by the stadium's users, but accredited to the Rangers. The Rangers receive \$100M for naming rights and need not share that income with Arlington.

The fun part is that the team may use income from ANY source except the seat builder licenses to pay its contribution (though they get credit already in the calculation of their contribution, which means that funds from the Reimbursement Account, which are mostly extra sales taxes, can go to pay the team's contribution. See 3.8(f) of the Master Agreement. Any state or federal grants that the Ballpark Complex can get is attributed to the team side. Yes, really. See 3.8(b).

The Rangers will use the admissions taxes, the ticket taxes, and the excess sales/hotel/car rental taxes for 20 years, which will generate \$300M, the admission and ticket taxes which generates at least \$90M, and the naming rights of \$100M, which means that, after the seat licenses are sold, they will be making plenty of money to pay itself back the initial costs of up to \$50M and the paltry \$2M/year in rent. (Note that they could actually raise enough money out of seat licenses to pay their entire side. The Dallas Cowboys built their Irving stadium using mostly seat licenses, raising \$500M+ in 1969. The Falcons will raise \$100M+. Again, we're being generously conservative here.)

The reality is that the Rangers actually make money during this deal when you count their actual expenditures and costs. There are other elements that I'm not going over, such as the minor leases, incremental funding, etc., but this is the gist. They put in the \$50M, and then the city's \$500M come in, so the construction gets \$550M pretty quick, and then the income streams given to their side pays their entire side over time out of cash flow. They never have to actually borrow money, or even come up with it.

Be wary of any proponent who tells you that the admissions and parking taxes are not a sure thing; those people are selling snake oil. While not a legal certainty, there is a reason why they are included on the ballot, and the council has passed those taxes for the Cowboys, who are using them, and why would they not? Who wants to pay their own bills, when they can get some sucker to do it for them?

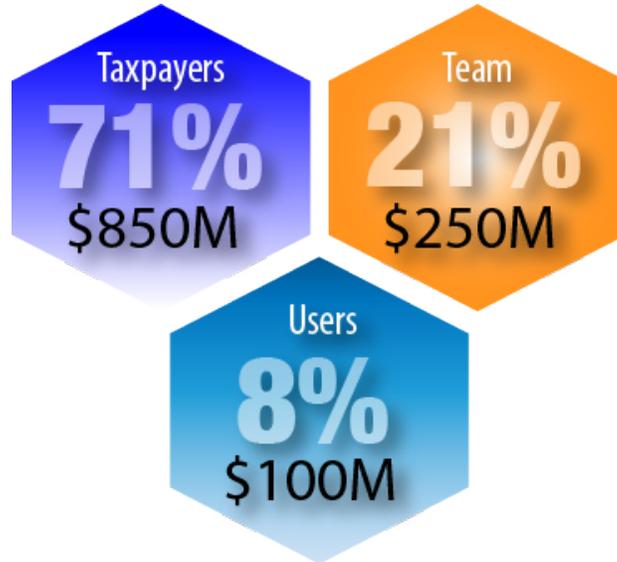
Conclusion:

The Rangers out-of-pocket costs won't exceed \$50M. But to be generous, even if we give the naming rights and seat builder license income as Ranger-centric, its full amount is \$50M + \$100M + \$100M, or \$250M. (The parking/admissions are not Ranger-centric, as they apply to all events at the venue.)





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This deal is not 50% Arlington and 50% Rangers. A proper conclusion is that, assuming we get the bonds paid in 20 years, and rounding for convenience, as these numbers could be up or down quite a bit to make it much worse, the city's residents pay about \$850M, users pay about \$100M, and the Rangers pay maybe \$250M (only \$50M out of pocket). That includes reasonable assumptions, and while any of these numbers could be much worse, the correct ratios are 850/100/250 for city/users/team, or 71%/8%/21%.

If you want to argue that the user fees exist only because of the Rangers, I'll go ahead and add that 8% to the 21%, just because it doesn't matter much. The point is that the citizens are paying 70%+ of this deal in the most generous analysis, and the team is paying peanuts for a free stadium.

Lastly – these numbers are supposed to be conservative. I think I've been too conservative throughout. But if someone can show me a reason to fix this, or where I'm wrong, just show me facts in support of the number that you think is wrong.