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new baseball stadium. The meeting came shortly after the team was sold to an investment group led by George W. Bush.

Now the team has asked season-ticket holders to rate seven possible new stadium sites, including two airport options — one north and one south.

D/FW spokesman Joe Dealey Jr. said airport officials remain willing to consider the stadium idea, as long as it does not interfere with airport operations.

Dealey also said that he was surprised to see the Rangers' survey include more than one airport site.

"The fact that Ranger management is asking Ranger fans to evaluate not one but two D/FW Airport sites leads me to believe that Ranger management is seriously considering D/FW Airport," he added.

Stone insisted that Rangers officials would express no preference of stadium sites while the season-ticket holders are being asked to rate the possible locations.

However, the club president said one of the airport's advantages is that residents already are accustomed to driving there on a regular basis — the same mind-set they have toward Arlington Stadium.

Other choices in the survey are Arlington, Irving (next to Texas Stadium), downtown Dallas, west Dallas and Plano. Stone said he expects the survey results by summer's end.

"You can call it a contest if you like," he said, "as long as it's clearly understood that the fans are the judges."

D/FW has about 12,000 acres of vacant land that is not earmarked for proposed airport expansion, including large tracts regarded as surplus and extending up to three miles from the airport's runways.

For years, the New York Mets baseball team has played close to LaGuardia Airport, with aircraft repeatedly roaring overhead while the stands at Shea Stadium are filled.

Mets spokesman John Samginari said there has never been a hazardous incident involving LaGuardia air traffic. And as for the noise, he said, "You sort of get used to it."

Dealey said the potential environmental effect of a baseball stadium at D/FW is just one of several complex issues that would have to be addressed. He expressed confidence that the issues were manageable.

"I don't see why D/FW Airport couldn't accommodate the Texas Rangers organization," he said.

If the Rangers elected to build a stadium near the airport, their new home could be any one of three communities that share airport property: Grapevine, Euless or Irving.

Officials in the communities yesterday said that they have had no contact with Rangers officials. Grapevine Mayor Bill Tate, however, said that D/FW officials in the past have expressed a desire to see a sports complex developed on the north end of the airport.

A horse-racing track was considered in that area for a short time last year. Tate said he had heard no further discussion of sports-related developments at the airport.

The mayor said he would be willing to consider accommodating the Rangers, but he vowed not to take the initiative and risk the appearance that Grapevine is trying to lure the team away from Arlington.

"We don't want to get into a dispute over something of that magnitude," he said.

Others, however, said that becoming the Rangers' home could boost the economy of the area surrounding D/FW, particularly the hotels, restaurants and retailers.

"I'm not personally a great baseball fan," Euless Mayor Harold Samuels said. "But I could see D/FW being a good central point."

Arlington Mayor Richard Greene, whose community is fighting to keep the Rangers, said that he regards the airport sites as secondary to others listed in the fan survey.

Greene also said Arlington remains the best of all options for the Rangers from a business perspective because of location and other assets.

"Arlington always wins those analyses," he said, "and we're going to win this survey."