



Transylvania County Courthouse Project
Frequently Asked Questions

Why do we need a major courthouse project?

For many years now, Transylvania County Government and the State of North Carolina judicial branch have struggled to keep the Transylvania County Courthouse serving as the center of the judicial functions of government in our community. The base structure of the Transylvania County Courthouse was constructed almost one hundred and forty years ago, with a few structural expansions along the way. Beginning in 2005, the Transylvania County Board of Commissioners began to study this issue and along the way they have identified and evaluated a variety of plans and options.

What were the options?

- A.) Do nothing to address the key issues
- B.) Expand on the current site by constructing a new building next to the existing Courthouse at a cost of \$22.3 million with a 300-car parking deck (note: *\$22.3 million does not include land acquisition costs necessary to provide a solution to the parking issue that would be created by an on-site expansion*)
- C.) Build a new court facility on Morris Road near to the Public Safety Facility at a total cost of \$25.9 million.
- D.) Build a new court facility on Morris Road near to the Public Safety Facility with a third floor shell for future expansion at a total cost of \$31.1 million.

Why choose a project that costs \$31,000,000?

The project's \$31,000,000 budget would be a complete budget for a "turnkey" project – a building completely finished and furnished ready for use on day one. The new project involves the construction of a new two story Courthouse facility, preparation of a third story shell to provide for future expansion, appropriate levels of stormwater mitigation and retention and sufficient parking for employees and visitors as well as some adjustments to the nearby Public Safety Facility. This new building would be expected to last longer than 50 years, while architects have estimated a renovation to the downtown courthouse would last only 15. The downtown expansion option with a parking deck had an estimated cost of \$22 million but that did not include the cost of the land acquisition necessary to the parking deck that would be necessary with that option.

The County has explored land acquisitions over the years in downtown to make a downtown courthouse location viable, but land suitable for parking deck construction could only be acquired through a possible lease structure. The Board of County Commissioners view constructing a structure with a life span of over fifty years on leased property an irresponsible use of public funds.

Why not spend the \$31,000,000 on ...

- Public Schools? The Board of County Commissioners has always adopted a policy of supporting public education in Transylvania County to the best of the community's ability, especially when considering changes in federal and state funding. [For more information about the County's support of Transylvania County Schools, please see this presentation from its November 27th, 2017 meeting. \(The presentation begins at 35:20\) or you can view the slides from the presentation here.](#)
- Roads? A County Government's ability to spend property tax monies on road maintenance and construction is constrained by [NC G.S. 153A-149](#) and [NC G.S. 153A-301](#). No roads in Transylvania County provide access to lots in service districts near to or adjacent to protected mountain ranges, and therefore the County cannot spend public funds on road maintenance and repair. The City of Brevard or the North Carolina Department of Transportation are responsible for road maintenance and repair in Transylvania County, depending on the location of the road.
- Water and Sewer? The Town of Rosman and City of Brevard both own and operate water and sewer systems for the citizens of Transylvania County. The County continues to work with those providers to explore ways to leverage those already existing investments made on behalf of taxpayers to improve access to that critical infrastructure now and in the future.
- Economic Development? The Board of County Commissioners has committed funding in the past and currently to economic development. A great example is the investment the county has made in the Ecusta Road project alongside the Transylvania Economic Alliance and City of Brevard to create a mid-sized industrial facility. Lease payments made by occupants of that facility will go to help continue to invest in economic development in Transylvania County.

How much public input went into this decision?

The Transylvania County Board of Commissioners appointed two citizen committees in 2008 to study the issue, and at all of their following meetings on the Courthouse have had at least two periods of public comment which were recorded in their minutes. The three architectural studies undertaken by Moseley Architects in 2008, 2013 and 2015 have all incorporated public comment and stakeholder interviews.

The Board of County Commissioners has also engaged with the Brevard City Council on multiple occasions during the many years leading up to this decision, most recently in joint meetings during the 2015 Moseley Architects study. During that same study, the Transylvania County Government held an open comment period wherein the public could submit comments and ideas about what options would be a best fit for the courthouse.

What is going to happen to the 1881 Courthouse in Downtown Brevard?

Transylvania County Government will begin the process of developing a plan for the future use of the courthouse property so that it can continue to be a vibrant part of downtown when the court function moves out towards the end of 2020. It will be an inclusive process designed to best develop downtown Brevard and preserve the historic courthouse's role in our community as a center of civic activity.