

## 1. Who is on the evaluation team for Project Grace?

The evaluation team for Project Grace includes a team of 18 experts with diverse perspectives, representing the following disciplines: county management, library management, museum management, county legal, county finance, county planning, county property management, county strategy, county communications, City of Wilmington planning, and leadership from Wilmington Downtown, Inc. This team is working on evaluating the proposal in order to make a recommendation to Commissioners, who are the ultimate decision-makers for the project.

## 2. What will happen to the existing Cape Fear Museum if Project Grace moves forward?

If Project Grace were to move forward, the existing museum building would remain, along with the museum park. From community input, it became clear that this building and greenspace are assets to the community. So the county will be able to make small renovations to the building and use it as a research campus that supports the exhibits at the proposed downtown museum. A detailed space needs analysis was conducted and the building is suited for this use. The analysis also showed that the current museum building, which has been adaptively reused, is not suitable for the needs of the museum and additional space will be needed to accommodate future exhibits.

## 3. Is the proposed Museum and Library large enough for future growth?

Yes, a space needs analysis was conducted for the Museum and Library with the future in mind. Combined, the two spaces would be approximately 82,000 square feet. This is ample space for both the library and museum to thrive.

## 4. Would the downtown library have to be closed for a period of time? If so, what is the projected time?

No, the downtown library will remain open throughout construction. Phase one of the project would be completed on the opposite side of the block, allowing library services to remain open. Once phase one is complete, library services would move to the new building and provide continuity of services throughout the project.

## 5. Can the Story Park infrastructure be repurposed and will there be street-level greenspace incorporated?

Greenspace is a priority for the project, and Zimmer's development team is currently reexamining the possibility of including street-level greenspace on the block. It's important to note that Story Park will remain on the site for several years until the third phase of redevelopment occurs, which would be driven by market demand. If phase three moves forward, the development team will be able to reuse many aspects of the park.

## 6. Would all of the demolished building materials be put in the landfill or would they be recycled?

Zimmer's development team is committed to reusing materials from the block, like exterior brick, and incorporating it into the proposed development. They would also recycle many elements from inside buildings, including ceiling tiles, carpet, sheetrock, and roofing material. In addition, 98% of the exterior elements can be recycled, including concrete, block walls, copper wire, electrical conduit, brick, structural steel, and metal studs. This will keep as much material out of the landfill as possible.

## 7. Will proposed apartments be affordable and, if not, what is the county doing to ensure affordable housing?

The proposed housing on the block is planned to be market rate, however the county is in active conversations with Zimmer's development team to include affordable housing as part of Project Grace. New Hanover County is committed to improving workforce housing through strategic initiatives, including partnerships with Habitat for Humanity and other affordable housing advocates, updating our development codes, and streamlining our permitting processes – all of which are important steps to ensure workforce housing.

## 8. How will the county be able to prioritize amenities/facilities?

The priorities of the project were established by the Board of Commissioners prior to the developer solicitation (you can view a full list of those priorities at [www.NHCgov.com/Project-Grace](http://www.NHCgov.com/Project-Grace)). Many of the priorities were based on the public's input as well as feedback from the Library Advisory Board and the Museum Advisory Board.

**9. Will the county own or lease the library?**

This has not been determined yet. The developer has offered lease and purchase options as a point of negotiation. If the County Commissioners determine to move forward with negotiations, this will be considered at that time. It's important to note that even if the county leases from the developer, the development agreement would include that a library and museum must, at all times, be included on the block as long as the county is operating those entities.

**10. If Project Grace doesn't happen, will the museum still have to move?**

Through a detailed space needs analysis, we have discovered that the Cape Fear Museum is undersized for the service it provides, water intrusion in the basement is in need of a permanent solution, and additional storage space is required to house the museum's collection. Preliminary cost estimates to renovate the existing museum and provide additional space are in the \$26-\$30 million range. This would also require an expansion of the building's footprint, which could impact museum park. A policy decision by the Board of Commissioners will need to be made on how to provide museum services for the future if Project Grace does not happen.

*Please note: a cost estimate for the proposed redevelopment of the library and museum has not been finalized and would have to be negotiated. The figure noted above is directly related to renovating the museum in the absence of Project Grace.*

**11. Was adaptive reuse of the buildings on the downtown block explored?**

Adaptive reuse was a consideration outlined in the county's nation-wide Request for Proposals (RFP) process, but a proposal including adaptive reuse was not submitted. The Historic Wilmington Foundation worked with the State Historic Preservation Office to secure a historic designation for the former Belk Building, which would create tax advantages for a developer to adaptively reuse the space. However, the State Historic Preservation Office determined the building did not meet the qualifications for a historic designation.

**12. Will there be enough parking on the block to accommodate Project Grace?**

A parking analysis was conducted on the existing parking deck and the current occupancy level is approximately 61%, which indicates that there is additional capacity within the existing parking deck. This particular deck is among the largest in downtown Wilmington with 620 spaces currently. The parking analysis also showed that, through restriping the lower level loading zone and the entrance ramp, an additional 40 spaces could be gained – totaling 660 parking spaces.

**13. How is the county sharing information to stakeholders? What are ways to provide input?**

We have several communications mediums that we share information about Project Grace, including media updates, email updates, social media, and a dedicated website for the project ([NHCgov.com/Project-Grace](http://NHCgov.com/Project-Grace)). The Project Grace website is a thorough look into the project, including timelines, the development and proposal information, and presentations that have been given since the start of the project. Residents are encouraged to provide input through the online form on the Project Grace website and in writing at public meetings, and residents can also sign up for email alerts about Project Grace through the website. We are committed to being transparent through this process and we hope you will share your thoughts and suggestions to ensure the project's success.

**14. What community organizations or groups are a part of the discussions?**

The county has established a small stakeholders group to get input from key organizations within the community. This group includes local downtown groups and businesses, historical organizations, and neighborhood groups.

**15. How much oversight would the private company chosen as a partner have into the planning of public spaces?**

New Hanover County would be the primary decision maker for the public spaces on the site. The proposal outlines a plan for the private development company to construct the library, museum, and public facilities to the public specifications that are agreed upon in a development agreement.

**16. Will the project be Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design (LEED) certified?**

At this time, it is too early to know if the project will receive the LEED certification; however, the county is committed to ensuring the project is a high-quality development.