

## Frequently Asked Questions about Project City Hall

**1. Do we need a new city hall?**

A. In a word, yes. The current city hall has deteriorated to a point where it is unhealthy for employees and likely unsafe to work in. There are areas of the building that are structurally failing, and other areas where water is seeping into work areas.

**2. What are the city's options?**

A. The city can renovate its current structure, renovate an existing structure, or build a new structure. All three options have been considered, and the option that best fits the city's needs is the renovation of the Navarro College campus.

**3. Why not renovate the current city hall?**

A. Renovation and repair may work in the short term, but the footprint of city hall is at its limit. There is little room to expand, and the water in the area runs towards city hall, creating an issue for drainage and diversion of water. Also, when work begins, there might be larger issues found by contractors.

**4. Why not tear down the current city hall and build a new one in the same area?**

A. Once again, the issue of where to put City Hall operations arises. Also, the issue of a smaller footprint with the current city hall property also arises.

**5. What about renovating another building within the city?**

A. The committee considered that option, and looked at available options within the city, including available retail space. There were few areas available that have the square footage of the Navarro campus in the city.

**6. What about building a new city hall closer to downtown?**

A. If money was not an issue, the city could definitely do that. Other city hall projects have cost upwards of \$200 to \$300 a square foot, not including the cost of land. However, with the purchase of land and costs of building new, renovating the Navarro college campus is more cost effective.

**7. I heard that someone wants to donate land for a new city hall. Is that true?**

A. Currently, there has not been an offer to donate any land for a new city hall. We have heard offers of land for sale, and current buildings for sale, but there has not been an offer to donate land.

**8. What about the retail space where Fred's is? I heard they are going out of business.**

A. While it is sad to hear that one of our retailers is leaving Fairfield, the space is leased by Fred's. The city would rather prefer to own the property that will hold city hall.

**9. How much will the Navarro campus cost?**

A. Navarro College has offered to sell the city the property for \$500,000. The property includes six buildings and would add 5 acres to the city park. It is also adjacent to the Fairfield ISD campus.

**10. Aren't the Navarro campus buildings older as well?**

A. The main structure of the building, the administration building, was built in 1961. However, Navarro has spent more than \$220,000 renovating the structure. The buildings are structurally sound as well.

**11. Don't these buildings have asbestos in them?**

A. No. Navarro performed asbestos abatement on the buildings the city will renovate. The only building that does have asbestos will be abated by the city, approximately \$20,000, and when abated, it will be used for storage.

**12. How much will this renovation cost?**

- A. Based on estimates, the city believes the cost of renovation of the main administration building and two of the three auxiliary buildings will be close to \$960,000. The total renovation cost with purchasing the property will be \$1.4 million. For the 23,000 square feet gained, this project will cost approximately \$61 a square foot.

**13. Who will have offices in the new city hall?**

- A. Currently, the administration, along with municipal court, public works administration, utility billing, and city council chambers, is planned for the main administration building. Further, the city will put its visitor's center in the administration building. The police department will use Buildings Two and Three. In those buildings, the department will have much needed office and workspace, along with two interview rooms. In addition, there will be an interview room and classroom space for the department. Building 4 will be used for storage, along with Building 5.

**14. What will happen to the welding shop?**

- A. The city is in discussions with interested parties for the welding shop to continue its mission of providing vocational instruction.

**15. Are there plans to expand?**

- A. While the main project will be renovating and moving city hall, there is room for expansion on the Navarro campus. Expansion in other scenarios would prove difficult and costly.

**16. I don't like city hall being on one side of town. Can we build something near the center of the city?**

- A. Although being in the center of the city would be ideal, the availability of land plus the cost of construction are barriers that are difficult to overcome considering the city can be better stewards of tax dollars by renovating the Navarro campus.

**17. Where will the money come from?**

- A. The city will secure certificates of obligation (CO) for the project. The city council has three options to consider for not only funding for the city hall project, but other projects in the city. Projects being considered are streets, water tower rehabilitation, and drainage projects.

**18. Will the city hall project raise my taxes?**

- A. No. Earlier this year, the city placed \$245,000 into an escrow defeasance account, paying off one of the city's two certificates of obligation. Putting that money into escrow is, in essence, pays off that CO and there is only one CO the city is currently paying. The three options the council is considering are all options that will not raise the property tax debt rate beyond current rates. Therefore, the financing for these projects will not raise property taxes by themselves. However, the council can consider raising the property tax rate for maintenance and operations for the upcoming fiscal year.

**19. How long will the City Hall renovation take?**

- A. The entire project is projected to take 280 days from approval by the council to moving in to the new area.

**20. Has a designer and contractor been selected?**

- A. Although the city has received some help by the SLI Group, a Design/Build firm has not formally been selected. Once approved by the council, the city will have to issue a Request for Qualifications for a Design/Build project. The city will also have to secure an engineer to serve as the city's representative for the project.