

Benton County commits to maintain the historic courthouse and will not demolish the building. The Historic Courthouse Advisory Committee (HCAC) seeks information on community values by soliciting public input on suggested new uses for the historic courthouse.



About the Courthouse

Benton County's courthouse, in use since 1889, is the oldest county courthouse in Oregon still being used for its original purpose. The building no longer meets court or county needs. Construction of a new courthouse and District Attorney's office is planned for completion in 2026. Benton County will preserve the historic courthouse as an important community landmark and is committed to giving it a new purpose and use.

The Planning Process

The Historic Courthouse Advisory Committee includes those with expertise in historic preservation and local expertise in economic development, arts and culture, education, and tourism. County staff serve in an advisory role.

The HCAC will recommend reuse ideas within a report given to the Benton County Board of Commissioners.

Your Input Is Important

The HCAC has developed ideas for reusing the historic courthouse and will thoughtfully consider comments from the public before finalizing recommendations.

- **Attend a committee meeting:** January 19, 2024. Meeting details are available online at <https://bit.ly/BentonCoGov-BCHCAC>.
- **Complete the comment form:** Available online and at all county offices through February 15, 2024. Visit https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/hcac_feedback or use the QR code to share your input.



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PROJECT PROCESS

October 2021

- Market analysis completed to determine possible reuse options for historic courthouse.

March 2022

- Historic Courthouse Advisory Committee (HCAC) is formed and begins meeting monthly.

October 2023

- HCAC finalizes ideas for building reuse to share with general public for further input.

January 2024

- Public invited to comment at HCAC meeting or with comment form available online and at county offices.

February 2024

- Community open house at historic courthouse. Public input period ends February 15.

April-May 2024

- HCAC submits report with recommendation to Board of Commissioners.

Next steps

- Benton County will continue with planning and public input activities before making a final decision about the reimagined courthouse.

Reuse Concepts

Benton County is committed to maintaining the historic courthouse and will not consider demolishing or allowing the building to be demolished. Potentially, the county might retain full ownership, sell the building, or create a public/private partnership. The courthouse is approximately 31,000 square feet and is currently maintained for full occupancy at an annual cost of approximately \$300,000.

Reuse options explored by the HCAC but no longer under consideration include lodging, residential, commercial, retail, business and private office uses. The HCAC is seeking public input on the three concepts that it is still evaluating (below).

Concept 1: Government and Civic

Building to be used for specific public programs or services. This scenario may not require a change in the interior layout of the building. Examples include government offices (federal, state, county, city, school district, etc.), public meeting rooms, supportive court functions for long-term community care (diversion programs, restorative justice), and event spaces.

Concept 2: Arts, Culture, & Education

This scenario could operate within the layout of the building but would likely require renovation. Examples include small/medium scale visual/performing arts, children's museum, recreation/game room (serves all ages), wine culture of Benton County/fermentation classes, artist studio with retail function, and OSU/LBCC classes.

Concept 3: Mixed Use

This scenario would combine elements of concepts 1 and 2.



Each reuse concept has advantages and disadvantages and would fulfill a community need, allow access, have the potential for public/private partnerships, provide flexibility and adaptability over time, and maintain the historic integrity of the building. The seismic resilience of the building is an important consideration which involves substantial costs for all potential uses.

The county has not secured funding for construction or renovation costs associated with reuse, and estimations of costs have not been calculated. Project costs and a final decision about courthouse reuse will be made in the future, following additional county planning and public input activities.