

What are the reasons for the writ of election?

In response to concerns expressed by the Southampton Circuit Court at a meeting on November 3, 2015, the Board of Supervisors commissioned a Courthouse Needs Assessment by PMA Architecture which was completed in February 2016.

The Assessment concluded that the cost of renovating the existing facility to meet the long term needs of the Courts was relatively comparable to constructing a totally new facility on a new site.

Considering that the County is faced with a multi-million dollar capital cost under either scenario, it begs the question of which is the more prudent approach—renovating the existing facility or constructing a totally new Courthouse.

If a *county* plans to construct a courthouse at a new location which is *not adjacent to the existing courthouse*, the Code of Virginia §§ 15.2-1644 and 15.2-1646 requires citizen approval through a referendum.

In cases where a courthouse is shared with a city (such as City of Franklin and Southampton County), votes of city voters are treated equally. Once an election has been held on the question of removal of the Courthouse, no other such election may be held within ten (10) years.

For more information, please contact

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Courthouse

WRIT OF ELECTION

Voter Education Brochure

What is the actual ballot question?

The ballot question is specifically prescribed by Section 15.2-1652 of the Code of Virginia:

§ 15.2-1652. Form of ballots for county election on removal and appropriation; certificate of electoral board.

The ballots used in the election required by § 15.2-1644 *shall be* as follows:

"Shall the courthouse be removed to 30100 Camp Parkway, Courtland, VA, and shall the Board of Supervisors be permitted to spend \$26.5 million therefor?

[] Yes

[] No"

What are the deficiencies of the current courthouse?

- No secure parking for Judges or staff.
- No secure interior circulation system for Judges or staff—Judges and staff utilize the same entrances, lobbies, and corridors as the general public.
- Grossly undersized security screening area.
- No CCTV with cameras to monitor pedestrian movements inside and outside the building.
- No intrusion detection system to monitor exterior doors or 1st floor windows.
- No interior or exterior access control system.
- No public address system.
- No emergency generator to provide for orderly shut-down in the event of power loss.
- No fire protection system.
- Egress stairs and corridors in the 1960's addition do not meet codes for emergency evacuation.
- HVAC equipment is 20+ years old, near the end of its useful life and susceptible to breakdowns.
- HVAC controls struggle to constantly maintain a comfortable interior climate, resulting in chronic high humidity and formation of black mold.
- HVAC piping (2-pipe system) requires a manual conversion from heating to cooling that takes ~24 hours.
- Electrical system and boiler located in the basement and prone subject to periodic flooding.
- Building is located in the 100-year floodplain and requires the purchase of annual flood insurance.
- Facility does not fully comply with the Americans with Disabilities Act.
- While currently encapsulated, the existing building still contains some asbestos-containing materials (ACM's).
- Courtrooms lack modern technology.
- Based upon current caseloads, space needs over the next 20 years are anticipated to be approximately 35% more than the space currently occupied by the court functions for Southampton County and the City of Franklin.
 - Current facility in Courtland = ~23,000 s.f., not including the basement
 - Current facility in Franklin = ~9,000 s.f.
 - Future space needs = ~44,000 s.f.

What efficiencies will be gained with a new facility?

- Large site, relatively unconstrained, with more than adequate space for onsite parking and future growth and expansion.
- New site is located entirely outside of the floodplain, mitigating the risk of future flooding of the lower levels of the courthouse and eliminating the need for annual purchase of flood insurance
- New Courts building with modern security features and technological improvements incorporated throughout. Provides an efficient layout affording optimal circulation patterns to effectively separate Judges and Court personnel, in-custody defendants and the general public.

Regardless of the referendum outcome, it is important to note that **approval of the final plan** is ultimately up to the judges. The cost is largely driven by square footage that will:

- Adequately and safely house three (3) courtrooms, the clerks of court for both the City of Franklin and Southampton County
- Provide secure parking for court staff
- Ensure secure transport of inmates
- Incorporate mandated ADA accommodations
- Provide secured public entrances
- Include new technology
- Accommodate future growth over the next 20 years



What does a yes vote mean?

“Yes” means that a new Courthouse, consisting of approximately 44,800 square feet will be constructed on a new site at 30100 Camp Parkway, Courtland. The new site, currently under option by the Board of Supervisors, consists of approximately 59.4 acres and is situated approximately 4.8 miles east of the existing Courthouse. The site is located 0.2 miles east of the Virginia State Police Headquarters on the south side of Camp Parkway.

If the referendum passes, the Board of Supervisors will exercise its option to purchase this property for a lump sum of \$145,000 and construct the new Courthouse thereon. The new Courthouse will be designed with three (3) Courtrooms allowing for separation of the current combined General District and Juvenile and Domestic Relations Courts and facilitating the sharing of both lower courts by the City and County. The total capital cost, including acquisition of the property is limited to \$26.5 million.

Cost estimates for the project include:

Site acquisition	\$145,000
Offsite infrastructure (water, sewer, roadwork, natural gas)	\$2,557,000
Site work (onsite)	\$3,956,000
Wetlands Mitigation	\$487,000
New Courts Building	\$13,500,000
Architectural and Engineering Design	\$1,689,000
Surveys and studies (boundary, topo, geotech and archeological)	\$55,000
Testing and inspections	\$200,000
Data and telecommunications	\$270,000
HVAC commissioning	\$50,000
Furnishings and fixtures	\$1,120,000
Moving expenses	\$20,000
Project contingency	\$2,451,000
	<u>\$26,500,000</u>

What does a no vote mean?

“No” means that the existing Courthouse at 22350 Main Street, Courtland will be enlarged and renovated in order to provide adequate space for the Court's long-term needs, install modern security systems, and generally restore the facility to a state of good repair. The project would be the fifth addition/renovation (1920, 1960, 1996, 2000) made to the original 1834 structure.

The planned scope of work for this alternative will require temporary relocation of the Clerk of the Circuit Court and Commonwealth Attorney's offices in mobile units at a site to be determined. Temporary facilities will be constructed onsite to facilitate phased construction and maintain life safety egress. While renovations are ongoing, Court proceedings will be temporarily removed to the Courthouses in Isle of Wight County and the City of Suffolk, as necessary.

Once all the temporary accommodations are in place, the 1960's addition and the colonnade will be demolished to make room for a new 2-story addition consisting of approximately 33,680 square feet. In addition, the remaining 11,800 square feet (including the original 1834 Courthouse and the 1996 addition) will be extensively renovated. The new, renovated facility will include three (3) Courtrooms allowing for separation of the current combined General District and Juvenile and Domestic Relations Courts and facilitating the sharing of both lower courts by the City and County.

Because of the size constraints of the existing site, much of the patron parking for the new facility will be provided offsite, including 75 spaces on the front lawn of the Southampton County Office Center (formerly occupied by Courtland High School) and 20 additional spaces on the southern periphery of the Office

Center parking lot near the Southampton County Health Department. The walking distance for pedestrians parking in these parking lots ranges from 550 to 1,200 linear feet to the front door of the renovated facility.

The total capital cost for this option is estimated at \$26,227,000.

Cost estimates for this alternative include:

Offsite temporary facilities for Circuit Court Clerk's and Commonwealth Attorney's offices	\$1,360,000
Onsite temporary facilities to facilitate phased construction	\$500,000
Site work (onsite)	\$2,567,000
Floodwall (onsite)	\$250,000
Site Work (offsite parking)	\$475,000
Old building demolition/new addition construction	\$12,453,000
Renovation of remaining portions of old Courthouse	\$2,904,000
Architectural and Engineering Design	\$1,583,000
Surveys and studies (boundary, topo, geotech)	\$60,000
Testing and inspections	\$187,000
Data and telecommunications	\$308,000
HVAC commissioning	\$50,000
Furnishings and fixtures	\$1,140,000
Project contingency	\$2,390,000
	<u>\$26,227,000</u>