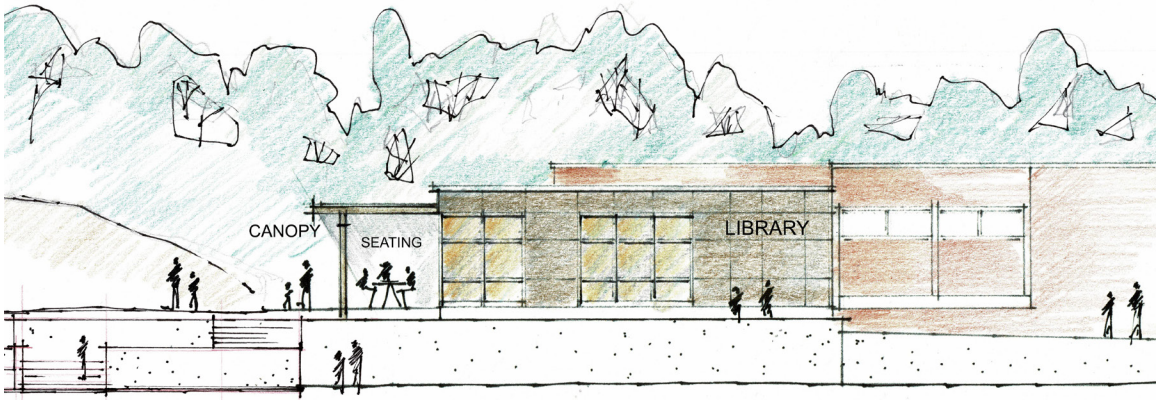




Creating a New Library For Swain County, NC



**A Case for Support for
the Expansion and Renovation
of the Marianna Black Library
Bryson City, NC**

March, 2022

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Dear friends of Marianna Black Library,

Creating a New Library for Swain County is an exciting and bold proposition. For many community members and visitors the status of the Marianna Black Library is a benchmark for assessing the vitality of the County. It is an indicator of health and quality of life, education and literacy, business development, employment and economic growth, public access and friendliness, and technology and connectivity.

There has been a sustained effort to assess the state of our public library and to plan for renovation and much needed additional space to increase services to our community. We believe we have been diligent in moving the library project to the forefront of local priorities.

We are excited to unveil our Case for Support of the expansion and renovation of the current library in downtown Bryson City. This project will give new life to our 52-year-old facility and increase services for Swain County community members and visitors.

We ask that you consider the plans within and how you may play a part in bringing them to life. We would love the opportunity to receive your advice and answer any questions you might have.

Sincerely,

Marianna Black Library Campaign Committee

Introduction

The launch of this campaign to expand much-needed library services in Swain County comes after years of efforts to find a new home – first on land that was donated to us, and then in a vacant facility in Bryson City. We are now pleased to present a creative plan to renovate the current downtown library and increase its size, using the 0.53-acre property to its maximum potential. For a complete timeline of the project, refer to page 15.

About Swain County

Located in Western North Carolina, Swain County encompasses some 541 square miles; however, less than 15% is privately owned.¹ The remainder is primarily tax-exempt federal land, which creates an unusually small tax base for the county. The working budget for the County is only \$19 million. Total population is 14,117,² and the median household income is \$46,075 (\$11,266 less than the NC median).³ Sixteen percent of the population lives below the poverty level.⁴

Our Library – 1929 to 2022

In 1929, Swain County resident Marianna Black initiated library services in the county. Working out of two suitcases, she was dedicated to enriching the lives of community members. By 1938, space was allocated for a small library in the community building in Bryson City. In 1944, the Fontana Regional Library (FRL) was created to operate a bookmobile in Swain, Jackson and Macon Counties; and over the years FRL became the 3-county system's headquarters that coordinates a wide range of public library services for its six member locations including our library.



Marianna Black Library, Bryson City, NC, which opened in 1970

In 1970, a new, 9,291-square-foot facility was opened in its current location and named the Marianna Black Library. It was built using federal assistance provided via the Library Services & Construction Act. Now 52 years old, the county-owned facility can no longer provide the most up-to-date services and programs for community members.

Who Uses the Library?

- **39%** of Swain County's 14,474 population actively uses MBL library cards.
- **2,185 (98%)** of Swain County School System and charter school students can use their school ID as a library card number.
- **3,433** people on average attend programs at the library.⁵
- **1,678** computer guest users on average are issued at the library.⁵

1) Swain County Economic Development. **2)** NCS Dept. of Commerce, 2020 Census. **3)** US Dept. of Commerce, 2019.

4) US Dept. of Commerce Census, 2019. **5)** Marianna Black Library, 2018-2019 (pre-pandemic).

The Plan: A User-Centered, Flexible Design That Best Fits Our Community

Libraries have always been community anchor institutions with a distinctly public mission to provide convenient access to resources for their community's education and enrichment, while aligning with community needs. For some years now, libraries have been evolving into vibrant public gathering places for their communities while continuing to maintain their place as the traditional information center. By actively embracing the digital era, libraries have become interactive platforms that can facilitate people's creation of their own learning and knowledge as well as in collaboration with others.

Our user-centered design approach enables this creativity and growth by focusing on the customers and how they use the library - individually and with others. And a flexible design allows for creative adaptation of spaces when needed.

As a community asset, today's library is both a physical and virtual place, but the physical presence is what anchors it most firmly in the community. In addition to loaning books and other materials for free, and providing access to newspapers and magazines, the library embraces digital sources and the technology required to make them easily accessible. **Unlike commercial providers that charge a fee** for e-books, music, Internet access, e-newspapers, e-magazines and other offerings, publicly supported libraries like ours offer their services for free as an essential benefit to the entire community.

Because of the rural nature of Swain County, many residents in isolated locations do not have Internet access, and many cannot afford to pay commercial providers for the type of service that is available to them. Our library provides **free access to high-speed internet** both inside the building during regular hours and outside the building anytime. People use our library computers to work on resumes, apply for jobs, send emails, print documents, take online tests, and more. People bring their own laptops and phones to the library to use the access (indoors or outside) for many purposes.

People in our community love the downtown location, but they do ask for expanded services, which the current library is unable to provide. They ask for larger spaces for programs, meeting rooms for small groups or quiet study; a larger space for events, group meetings and other activities; a separate space for teens.⁶

Expansion will generate increased services that will spur increased use. Over the past 15 years, the Fontana Regional Library system has built new libraries in Franklin and Sylva and renovated the libraries in Cashiers and Highlands. These new and renovated facilities have attracted more people for increased services and enhanced programming. Swain County can confidently expect similar results when the renovated and expanded library opens in Bryson City.

It's clear that libraries are an essential resource for our county. However, our facility needs have not kept pace with what is needed to enhance opportunities for the well-being, happiness and success of our community members and future generations.

⁶ Sims & Steele Consulting interviews and surveys, 2019.

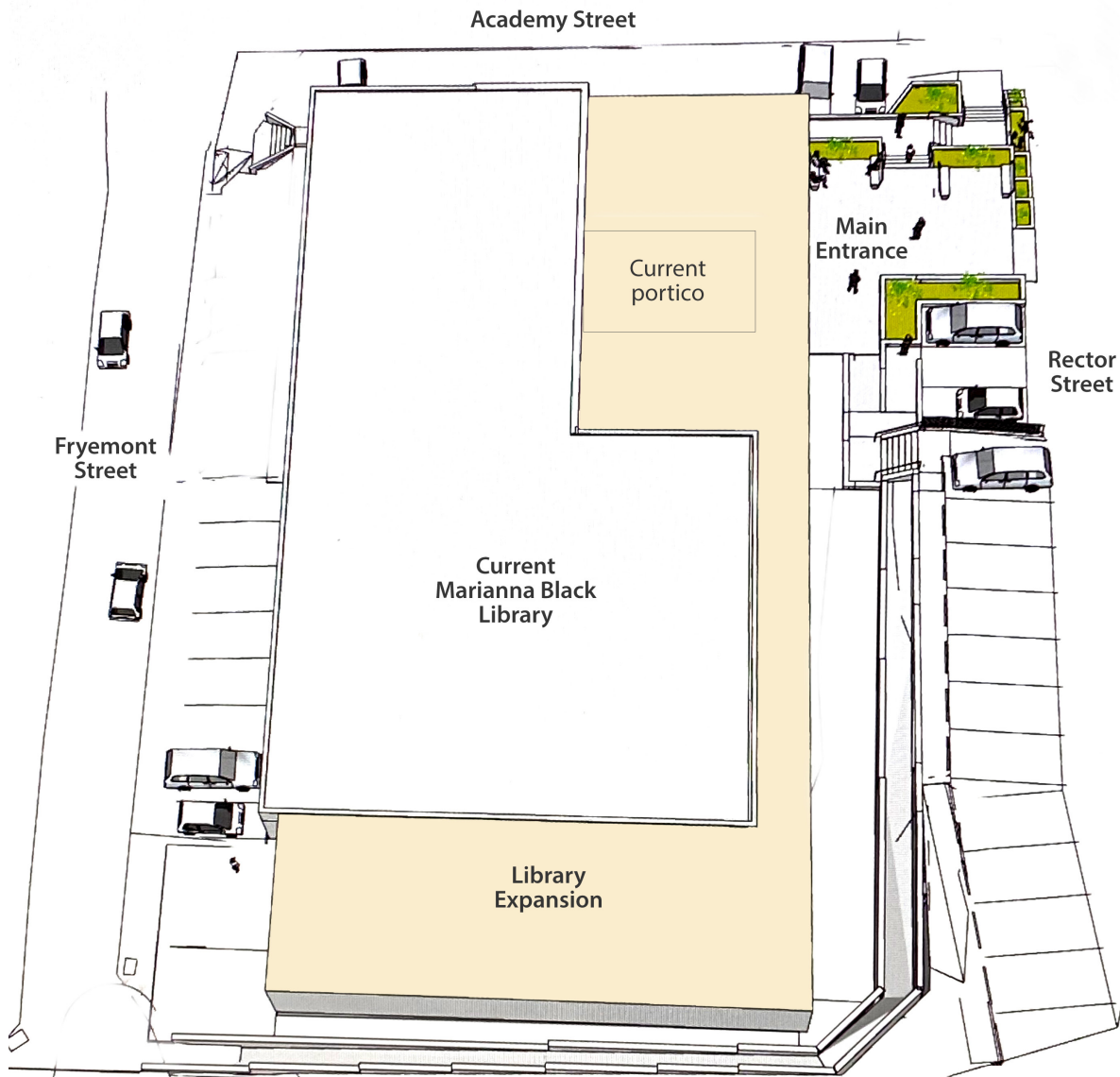
Meeting Community Needs: What You Will See in the 'New' Library

- A **designated space for teens** with their own age-appropriate books, music and video collections, where, they can socialize with their peers, use computers/tablets reserved for them and plug in their own digital devices.
- A separate **Career & Technology Center** for informal computer use and software instruction, as well as robotics, STEM, 3-D printer, music recording, & other maker space projects. The desks and tables will be smaller with more flexibility of arrangement.
- **Small group rooms for meetings**, NC Works career center location, collaborative projects, tutoring, etc.
- A large, **adaptable multi-purpose room** to provide for a variety of programming: guest speakers, workshops, group projects, movies, and space to produce content for e-learning & other virtual programs.
- A **Carolina Room** for reference and study about the area. Also to function as small **meeting room** and quiet study area.
- **Larger children's area** for reading, using tablets and devices; for group activities and programming, as well as a small restroom
- At last, the ability to provide **simultaneous services/programming**, for example –a children's program in their area, a blood drive in the community room, and several gatherings in the group rooms.
- **After-hours access** for groups to community room, restrooms and prep kitchen.
- **More accessible** building design and larger accessible parking area.
- **More computers**
- **More parking spaces**
- **A drive-up book drop**
- Outdoor spaces for **free, after hours internet access** and safe entering & exiting the building.



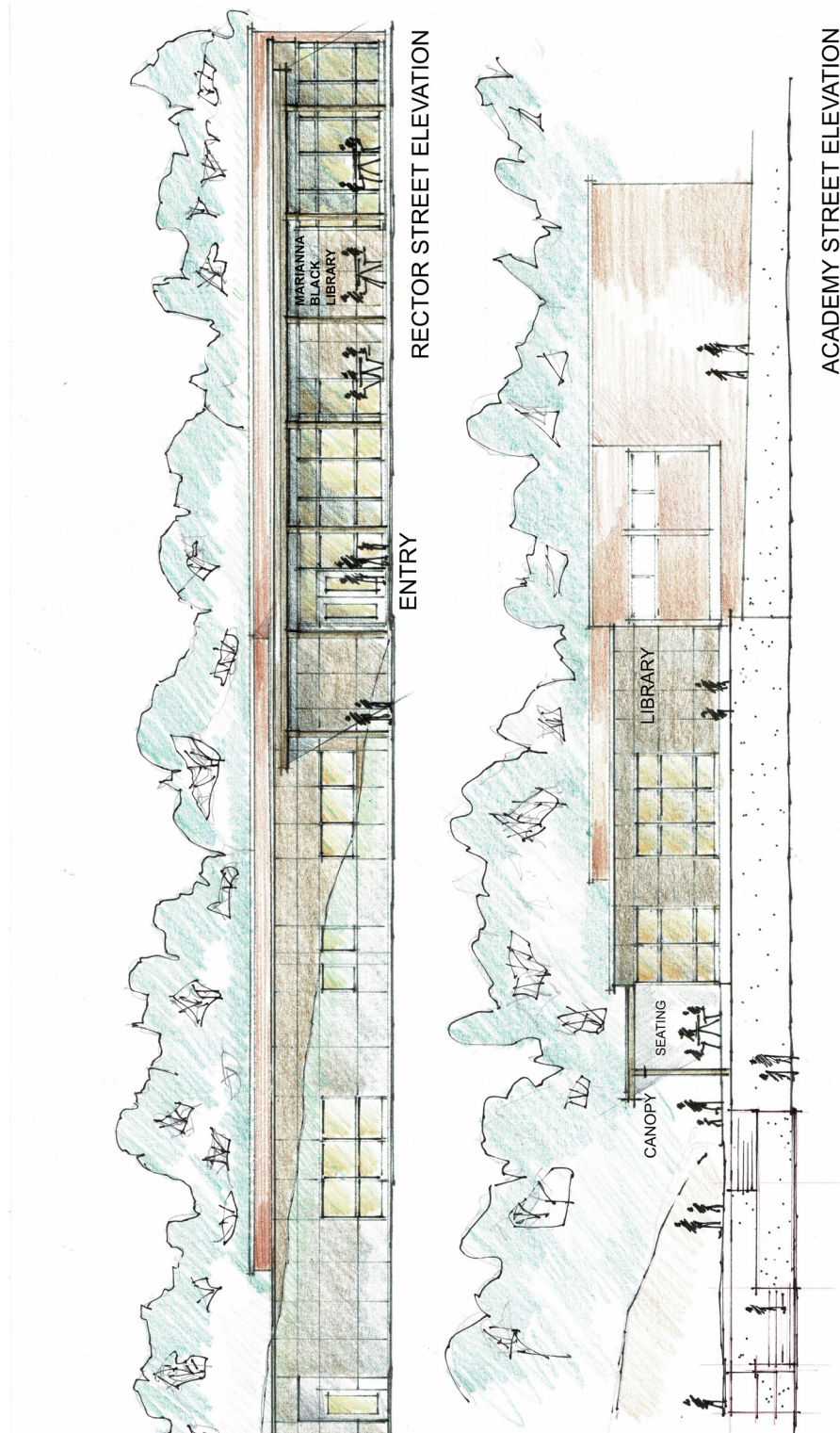
Aerial Showing Current Footprint & Space for Expansion

Current footprint includes the covered portico, which will be removed to make room for the expansion. Shown are the two retaining walls (with setback between) and minimum 10 feet from the building, the new head-in parking with sidewalk, and the two accessible parking spaces with ramp. There will be no expansion on Fryemont Street due to major utilities location & loss of parking.



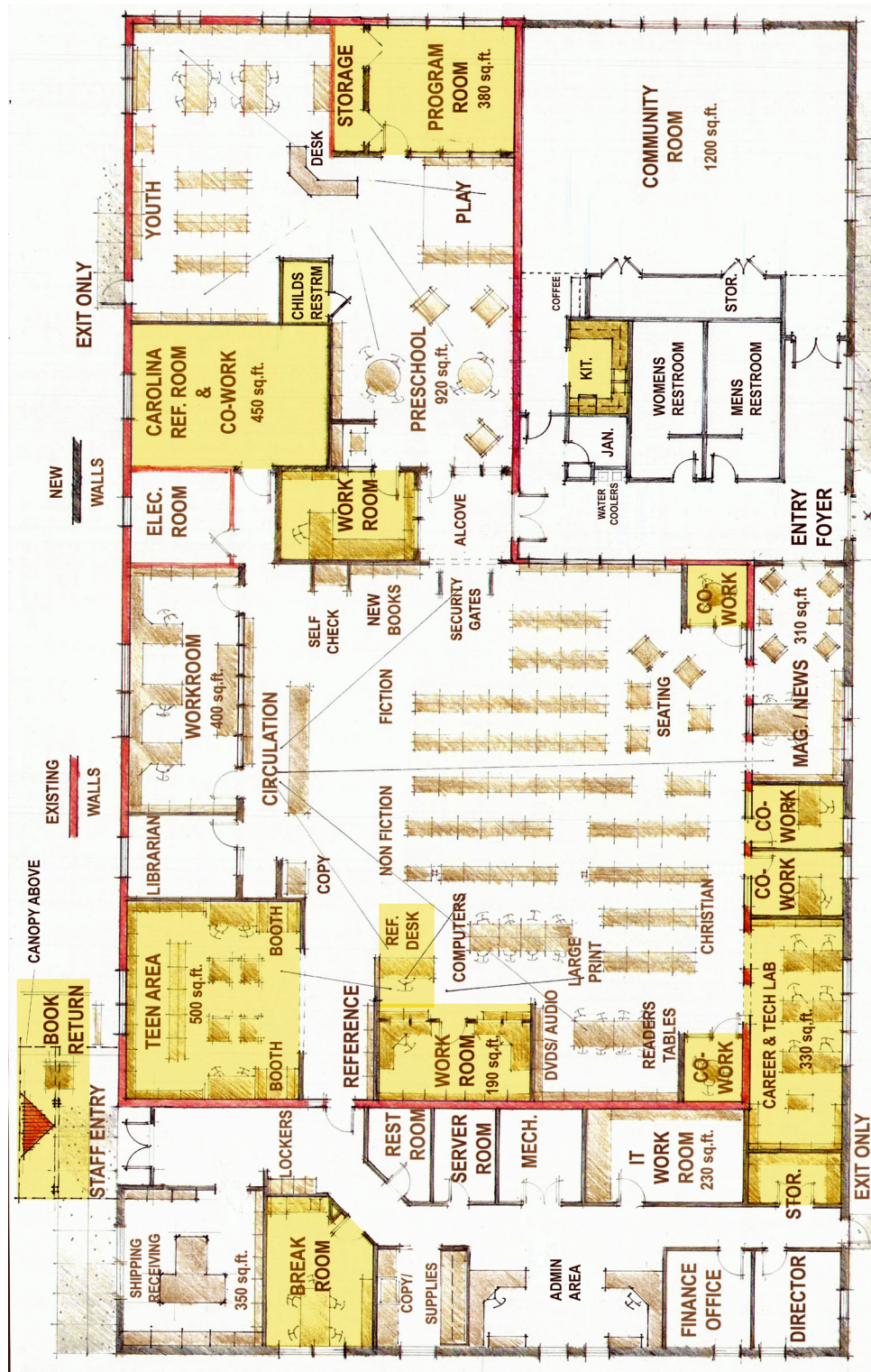
A Welcoming Entrance with a Large Plaza & Covered Seating Area for Socializing and Use of the Internet

New, Rector Street head-in parking with sidewalk, 2 accessible parking spaces with ramp, covered entrance, easier access from lower parking, improved street presence.



Demand-Driven Interior Design

Areas shaded in yellow are the new service areas: teens, meeting/collaborative rooms, career & tech. center, work rooms, Carolina reference room, drive-up book return, etc .



Marianna Black Library Project Budget

Funding Objectives – 16,450 sq. ft. Library & Fontana Regional HQ facility

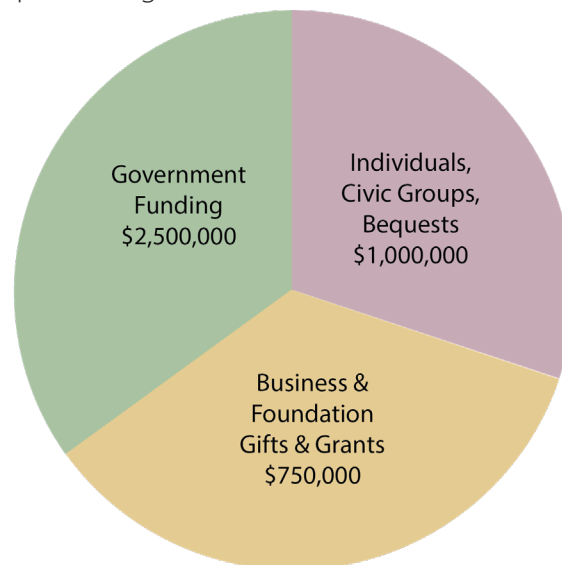
Item	Projected Cost
Library Construction, all site work and permits*	\$3,000,000
Architect / Engineering**	200,000
Furnishing, Fixtures and Equipment (FF&E)***	750,000
Contingency*	300,000
Total Estimated Project Cost	\$4,250,000

* Western Builders of Sylva, 1/2022. ** Keith Hargrove Architect (Asheville), 1/2022

*** Librarian & Regional Director, 1/2022

The Library aims to secure \$4.25MM in projected funding from:

- Individuals, Civic Groups & Bequests, \$1MM
- Business & Foundation Gifts & Grants, \$750M
- Government Funding, \$2.5MM from local, state & federal sources via appropriations, grants and in-kind services.



Ways to Give

- Unrestricted pledges and checks - for the general fund, our highest priority
- Designated pledges and checks - for specific areas or items, with donor recognition; or in memoriam, or as an honorarium
- Gifts of stock or property / real estate
- Matching gifts - businesses and employees; individuals
- Planned giving - wills, bequests and / or estate gifts

Donor Information and Giving Levels

- Donors will receive an acknowledgment letter for tax purposes. All donors at any level will be recognized in the final campaign report, in the media and on the Library website unless they ask to remain anonymous. The identity of anonymous donors will be protected.
- All donors of \$1,000 or more may have their name(s) on a plaque in the library.

Funding Objectives for Individuals, Businesses, Civic Groups, Bequests and Foundation Gifts & Grants Totalling \$1,750,000

The following local landmarks are designations for campaign giving levels:

Clingmans Dome	\$100,000 and over
Andrews Bald	\$50,000-99,000
Fry Mountain	\$25,000-49,000
Kelly Bennett Peak.....	\$10,000-24,999
Big Witch Overlook	\$5,000-9,999
Sharp Top	\$1,000-4,999

Naming / Honoring / Memorial Opportunities

- Donors may designate their gifts in honor of or in memory of individual(s) or organization(s)..
- The following are available for naming/honoring opportunity requests on a first-come first-served basis. These requests must be approved by the Campaign Committee. Donor generosity will be recognized on the main giving plaque and individually in the library.

Area	Amount
Main Entrance	\$250,000
Multipurpose (Community) Room	\$100,000
Teen Area.....	\$100,000
Technology & Career Center	\$100,000
Youth Services Area.....	\$100,000
Carolina Room/Small Meeting Room (4-6).....	\$50,000
Circulation Services Desk	\$50,000
Youth Services Program Room.....	\$50,000
Magazine/Newspaper Area.....	\$50,000
Signage	\$50,000
Collaboration Room #1 (2-3-person).....	\$20,000
Collaboration Room #2 (2-3 person)	\$20,000
Collaboration Room #3 (2-3-person).....	\$20,000
Collaboration Room #4 (2-3 person)	\$20,000
Book Drop.....	\$10,000
Outdoor Gazebo	\$10,000
Shelf Ends (20 opportunities available).....	\$5,000

Gifts have been received from individuals in the amounts of \$100,000, \$145,000, \$10,000 and multiple gifts of \$50,000+. This contributors list will be updated as gifts are received and naming opportunities chosen.

Gift Chart: Individuals, Civic Groups, Bequests and Foundation Grants

Suggested amounts to achieve \$1.75 million

The remaining \$2.5 million will be raised through government funding at the local, state & federal levels via appropriations, grants and in-kind services.

Gift or pledge amount	# of pledges needed at each gift or pledge amount	\$ amount needed at each gift or pledge amount	Cumulative # of gifts or pledges	Cumulative Gift or pledge dollars
\$250,000+	1	\$250,000	1	\$250,000
\$100,000+	4	\$400,000	5	\$650,000
\$50,000+	7	\$350,000	12	\$1,000,000
\$20,000+	12	\$240,000	24	\$1,240,000
\$10,000+	15	\$150,000	39	\$1,390,000
\$5,000+	30	\$150,000	69	\$1,540,000
\$3,000+	40	\$120,000	109	\$1,660,000
\$1,000+	60	\$60,000	169	\$1,720,000
Under \$1,000	Many, Many	\$30,000		\$1,750,000

Frequently Asked Questions

Why do we need a renovation and expansion of the library? The Marianna Black Library facility opened in 1970 when a growing demand for library services made it necessary to have more room for books and magazines. Now, more than 50 years later, in response to increased demands from the public, services have expanded to include access to all kinds of information in print and digital format. And, it's not just information (print or otherwise) that drives the need for more space that is designed for people to create, collaborate, and learn.

Will there be any outdoor spaces available for public use? The library will continue to have some outdoor spaces for programs as well as for customers to use library Internet.

What will the renovation and expansion cost? The updated facility of approximately 16,450 sq. ft., will cost an estimated \$4,250,000. That total includes \$3,000,000 for construction, \$200,000 for architect & engineering fees; plus \$750,000 for furnishings, furniture and equipment (FF&E); and \$300,000 as a contingency.

Where will the money come from? Individuals, civic groups, bequests; business and foundation gifts/grants; and government entities at the local, state and federal level will have the opportunity to contribute.

What happens to donations if more funds are raised than needed, or if the project is unable to be completed? If there are excess funds upon completion of the project, those funds will be placed in a reserve account to be used for general operations of the library. If it is determined that all phases of the renovation and expansion project can not be completed, any remaining funds will be used to renovate the current library and to provide funding for on-going programs and support of the Library.

Will the Library need a larger operating budget with the expansion & renovation?

Of course. Expanded services will mean increased staffing levels and expenditures for collections, resources and supplies.

Why should I support the expansion and renovation project? The community needs - and deserves - a larger, more modern facility, with updated equipment and greater capabilities, to serve community members and visitors alike. With increased space and the group meeting rooms, we will finally have the capability for simultaneous programming.

How can I help to support the library project? You are welcome to contribute to the Marianna Black Library Fund in your own name, as a family, in honor of a loved one, or for your company. Contributions are tax deductible to the extent permitted by law, and you will receive written acknowledgment for your records. In addition, there will be unique naming opportunities for many spaces. Please tell your friends about these exciting opportunities and ask them to help, too.

Quick Comparison of Current & Updated Library

Problems with the current facility	Solutions with the new facility
50-year-old facility	• Upgrades for safety, accessibility, energy efficiency
Facility is too small for current & future needs	• Larger facility will enable the library to increase services and programming, including simultaneous programs.
All computers are in common areas; no lab for workshops	• A separate Career & Technology Center for both informal computer use and group software training as well as robotics and STEM projects.
The sole meeting room is also a storage area	• Large, adaptable multi-purpose room for community programs, workshops, movies & virtual programming. • Conference room for small programs and meetings
Young adult books are in the common area	• Separate space for teen materials, activities and casual gathering
No areas for quiet study or collaborative projects	• Small rooms for business meetings; tutoring; quiet study; tax prep. assistance; proctoring; collaborative projects; and mobile projects such as robotics, media conversion, and arts & crafts.
Parking is limited and is not safe	• Ample parking and safe, attractive entrances and exits
No designated room for special collections	• Carolina Room to study local history and view artifacts. (also services as additional collaborative room).
Cramped children's area	• Larger area to include programming room
Accessibility is limited for the physically impaired	• Accessible building design and parking for individuals who are physically impaired

Timeline of Marianna Black Library Building Project

2010. Fontana Regional Library applied for the Library Services and Technology Act (LSTA) Planning Grant to conduct a library services needs assessment for Swain County. The report was completed in 2011.

2011- 2012. A team assembled to identify the new library location. Fourteen initial properties were considered; four were identified as “ideal locations” with a site located on Fontana Road one-half mile from downtown topping the list.

2014. The Fontana Road property was purchased and donated by a supportive couple. There was a 7-year time limit on building a library on the property, otherwise the property reverted to the donors.

2015. Swain County Commissioners approved a budget amendment to provide for preliminary engineering work at the new library site. The topographic survey of the new library site was completed. Swain County secured a grant for site clearing and ongoing maintenance at the future library’s home.

2016 - 2017 Several fundraisers for brand awareness were held including dinners, receptions, seed sales, a quilt raffle, and tethered balloon rides.

2017 – Keith Hargrove Architect PC (Asheville) was hired for an architectural review of the topo map and to prepare the architect’s feasibility study with renderings and preliminary budget and operational budget. This study was presented to the Swain County Commissioners in October.

2018-2019 - Sims & Steele, Asheville-based non-profit consultants, was hired for a Funding Feasibility Study that included interviews and surveys to get feedback on our efforts, and to estimate the amount of money we can raise for this project. Wilson Sims estimates the committee can raise \$1.5 million dollars.

2020 - On January 23, a presentation was given to Swain County Commissioners of 3 options for the Library: The Fontana Road property, a rehab of a shopping center location, and expanding and renovating the current library. With the property reversion fast approaching in early 2021, on September 16, the Campaign Committee made the decision to move forward with the renovation and expansion option.

2021 - A topographic survey was completed, a site development plan was created by Davis Civil Solutions, and Keith Hargrove Architect PC prepared a 3-D drawing of the exterior of the library based on the site plan, as well as a schematic of the interior space layout, and exterior facade concept drawings. A budget was developed for the expansion and renovation using an estimate by Western Builders of Sylva, Keith Hargrove, the Swain County Librarian and the Director of Fontana Regional Library.

2022 - A Case For Support presentation was made to the Swain County Commissioners at their workshop on February 24.

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Marianna Black Library

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