

**Item Title:** Award Construction Contract for Marbles Kids Museum West Courtyard Enclosure & Expansion Project and Authorization to Amend Related Funding Agreement

**Specific Action Requested:**  
**That the Board of Commissioners:**

- 1. Awards a construction contract to Barnhill Building Group, LLC of Raleigh North Carolina in the amount of \$4,731,949 for the Marbles West Courtyard Enclosure and Expansion Project; and**
- 2. Authorizes the County Manager to execute a Construction Contract subject to conditions acceptable to the County Attorney; and**
- 3. Authorizes the County Manager to enter into an Amendment to the Funding Agreement for this project between Wake County and Marbles Kids Museum subject to the terms and conditions acceptable to the County Attorney; and**
- 4. Accepts and appropriates \$1,427,420 of funding from Marbles Kids Museum to complete additional renovation costs.**

**Item Summary:**

**Purpose:** NC State Statutes require the Board of Commissioners to approve all public bid construction projects greater than \$500,000.

**Background:** Marbles Kids Museum is a private 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization and operates a museum complex located at 201 East Hargett Street under a long-term lease with Wake County. The main museum facility was constructed in 1999 and the IMAX Theater was completed in 2001.

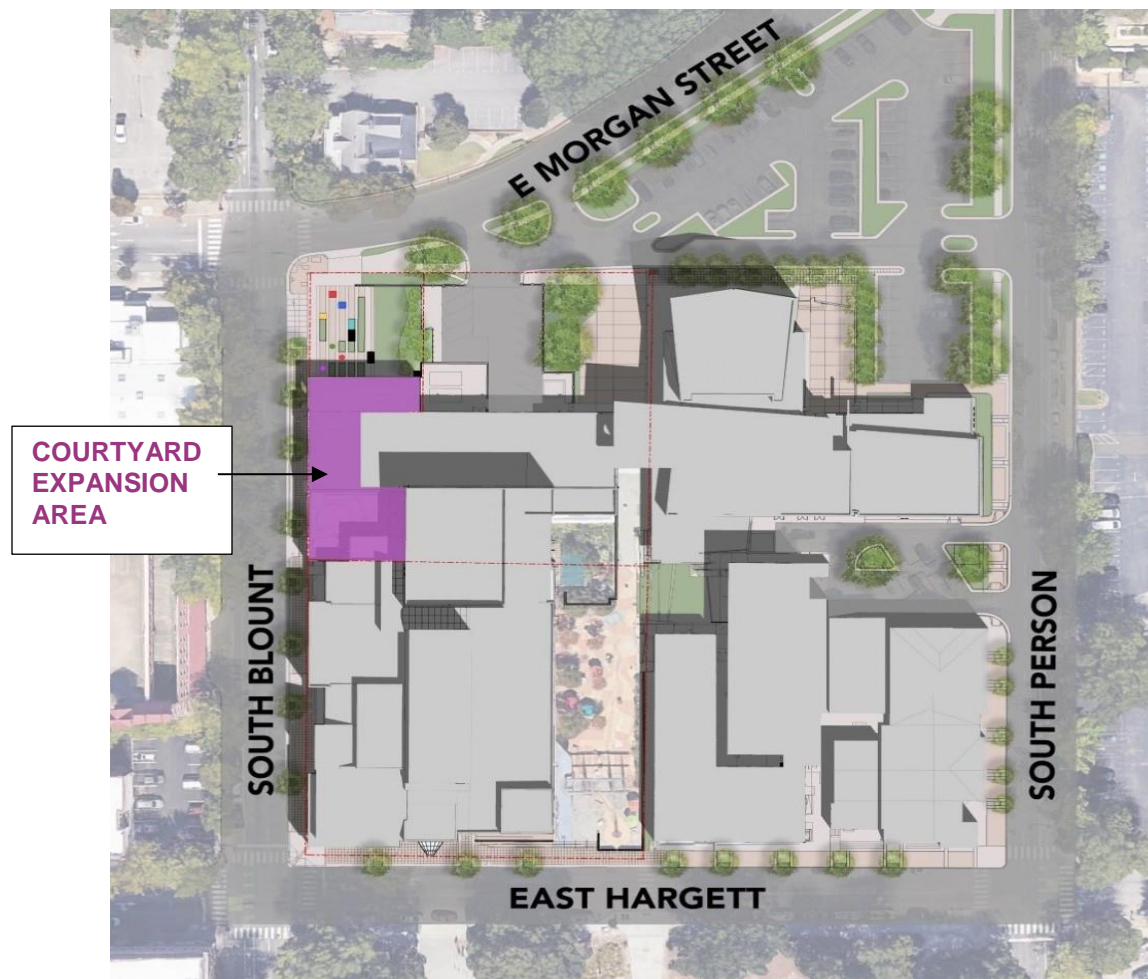
On November 21, 2022, the Wake County Board of Commissioners awarded appropriations to fund various expansion projects for planned capacity improvements proposed by Marbles Kids Museum. Included in the award was a new exhibit and program space subsequently named the Marbles Kids Museum West Courtyard Enclosure and Expansion project.

**Strategic Plan:** This action supports Inclusive Prosperity Goal 3: By 2029, nine out of ten residents asked will share that they can find and enjoy enriching experiences that support our community's high quality of life; and Lifelong Learning Goal 4: By 2029, three out of four residents asked will share that Wake County has high-quality education-based facilities, including schools, libraries, and other educational resources.

**Fiscal Impact:** Details of the full project cost are outlined in the attached Project Cost Summary. The planned County commitment of \$2,720,000 is appropriated in the FY 2025 budget. Additional funding of \$213,850 proposed by Wake County and described below, is appropriated and available in the project budget. Previously, \$1,620,000 was accepted and appropriated from Marbles Kids Museum into the County Building Element of the County Capital Fund for construction costs. This item accepts and appropriates an additional \$1,427,429 from Marbles to fully fund additional renovation costs.

**Additional Information:**

The Marbles West Courtyard Enclosure and Expansion project is a renovation and addition along the facility's South Blount Street boundary. The ground floor work includes infilling an existing courtyard with 2,895 square feet of new interior exhibit space and renovating adjacent existing multipurpose space.

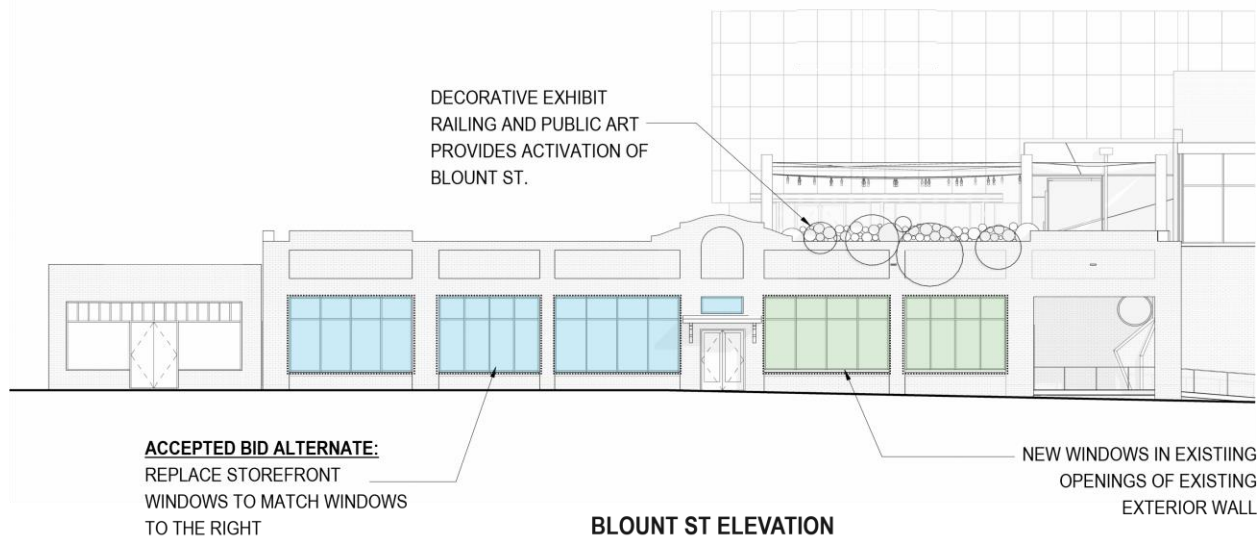


Second floor work includes an additional 2,986 square feet, providing a new stair enclosure and a new rooftop courtyard for play and events. The stair enclosure will be activated to enhance the proposed exhibit and will serve the purpose of improving connectivity between existing areas of the museum while integrating access to both floors of the new addition.

As part of the project, Marbles is developing a new interactive and immersive exhibit. The project design will respond to and enhance the exhibits planned within the space. In addition, exterior improvements will be added to activate the Blount Street face of the property and will include new graphic façade treatments to help connect and identify the Marbles Campus.

Also included in the project are renovations to the existing First and Second Floor Restrooms and construction of an additional small restroom near the new exhibit space.

Finally, funding is reserved for Public Art at this facility and is included in the activation of the Blount Street exterior of the new addition and will extend along the existing west elevations of the museum as shown in the Vignette Rendering here, and Elevation below:



On October 22, 2025, bid proposals for the project were received from seven qualified licensed general contractors, in accordance with the NC General Statutes. The lowest bid exceeded the original designated budget for the project. Therefore, the Design Team, together with County Staff selected items resulting in additional savings of \$99,156.00 which are described in the attached Post Bid Addendum No 1.

On November 21, 2022, the Board authorized the County Manager to enter into the original Funding Agreement between Wake County and Marbles Kids Museum. That agreement was executed on June 6, 2023 and amended September 16, 2024. The Funding Agreement originally called for the County to allocate \$2,720,000 and Marbles to allocate \$3,420,000, as well as any cost overruns necessary to complete the project, toward an original total project budget of \$6,140,000, which included costs for exhibits and FF&E, paid for by Marbles, and professional services paid for by the County. The portion of Marbles' original allocation toward design and construction only was \$1,620,000.

As a result of the increased cost of construction, Marbles will allocate an additional \$1,427,420 for the construction cost overruns, and for the additional scope of renovating the first and second floor restrooms. Wake County will allocate additional funding of \$213,850 to fund the Blount Street window replacements (previously described), to add a second-floor restroom, and to install terrazzo flooring as part of the renovations to the first and second floor restrooms that will primarily be funded by Marbles. The attached Project Cost Summary details the updated cost for the project.

The chart below is a summary of the cost allocations. The first two rows represent the original allocations to the design and construction cost of the project. The additional funding allocations are shown in the last two rows:

<b>Cost Allocations For Design &amp; Construction</b>	<b>Wake County</b>	<b>Marbles Kids Museum</b>
Wake County Original Allocation	\$ 2,720,000	
Marbles Original Allocation		\$1,620,000
Wake County Proposed Additional Funding	\$ 213,850	
Marbles Proposed Additional Funding		\$1,427,520
<b>Total Allocations</b>	<b>\$2,934,650</b>	<b>\$ 3,047,520</b>
	<b>\$ 5,982,170</b>	
<b>Total Revised Project Budget (and Allocations)</b>		

The Funding Agreement is being further amended to reflect the additional sources of funding from both entities and to reflect a revised payment schedule for Marbles. Once the updated agreement has been reviewed by both entities and the County Attorney's Office, it will be routed for signature by the County Manager.

Staff recommends that a construction contract be awarded to the lowest, responsive, responsible bidder, Barnhill Building Group, LLC for \$4,731,949. The Contract award incorporates the Base Bid, Post Bid Addendum #1, Add Alternates 01, 02A, 03A, and 05. Construction of the project is anticipated to commence February 2026, and is expected to be completed 10 months later, with Grand Opening projected for late 2026.

**Attachments:**

1. Project Cost Summary
2. Bid Tabulation
3. Post Bid Addendum
4. FY2026 County Buildings CIP Budget Memo