

NELSON COUNTY BOARD OF SUPERVISORS PROPERTY ACQUISITION - LOVINGSTON 683 ACRES

KEY MESSAGE

The County purchased this property to preserve options and local control over a strategic asset. Purchasing the property does not determine its future use. Any future decisions will occur through public processes and with citizen input.

WHY THE COUNTY PURCHASED THE PROPERTY

- Opportunities to acquire 683 contiguous acres along the Route 29 corridor are exceptionally rare.
- If the County had not acted, the property likely would have transferred to a private owner without any public influence over future outcomes.
- Ownership gives Nelson County residents a seat at the table in determining the property's future.
- This acquisition is about preserving options, not selecting a specific project.
- The property is located within a corridor that has long been identified as strategically important because of transportation access and proximity to infrastructure.

FISCAL RESPONSIBILITY

- The acquisition was evaluated through the lens of long-term fiscal stewardship.
- The County's financial health remains strong and is not materially impacted by this purchase.
- The Board carefully reviewed the financial implications before moving forward.
- Owning strategic assets can create opportunities that strengthen the County's tax base and reduce pressure on residential taxpayers.
- The Board's responsibility is to think not only about today's needs, but also about opportunities and challenges that may arise over the next 10, 20, and 30 years.

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

- Nelson County must continue to protect its rural character while also ensuring future economic sustainability.
- Economic development is necessary to support schools, public safety, infrastructure, and essential county services.
- Strategic growth allows the County to diversify revenue sources and reduce reliance on residential property taxes.
- The acquisition creates opportunities for future evaluation of economic development, conservation, recreation, infrastructure, or other public purposes.

TRANSPARENCY

The property was acquired through a pre-auction purchase agreement at an all-in cost of \$8,925,000.

- No specific development proposal has been approved.
- No rezoning is being considered as part of this acquisition.
- Future discussions regarding the property will occur in public meetings.
- Citizens will have opportunities to provide input before any significant decisions are made.

THE ROUTE 29 CORRIDOR

- Route 29 is one of Virginia's primary transportation corridors and connects Nelson County to major regional markets.
- Large, contiguous tracts with direct highway access are increasingly difficult to find.
- Strategic locations should be evaluated thoughtfully because they may affect the County's economic future for generations.

Why we bought it

- Rare opportunity.
- Strategic location.
- Preserves local control.
- Protects future options.
- Financially responsible.
- Does not impair the County's debt capacity.

What we have not decided

- Specific uses.
- Development plans.
- Rezoning.
- Infrastructure investments.
- Partnerships with private entities.

What happens next

- Analysis.
- Public engagement.
- Evaluation of alternatives.
- Transparent decision-making.

NELSON COUNTY PROPERTY ACQUISITION FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS (FAQ)

Q: Why did the County purchase this property?

A: The property represents a rare opportunity to acquire approximately 673 contiguous acres along the Route 29 corridor. The Board determined that securing the property preserves future options for Nelson County and ensures that local residents will have a voice in shaping its future.

Q: Does the County already have a plan for the property?

A: No. The acquisition does not commit the County to any specific project or use. Future possibilities will be evaluated through public processes and community input.

Q: Is the County planning to build a data center?

A: No specific use has been selected or approved. Any future proposal would be subject to public discussion and applicable review processes.

Q: Will the property be rezoned?

A: No rezoning action is associated with this purchase. Any future land use changes would require separate public review and approval processes.

Q: How was the purchase funded?

A: The Board evaluated its financing options and determined that the acquisition could be completed without negatively affecting the County's overall financial position.

- An initial cash purchase is planned to meet the seller's closing timeline.
- A near-future financing will reimburse the County's cash and the acquisition will become part of the County's annual debt schedule; paid for with existing funds allocated within the Debt Service Fund.

Q: Will this purchase increase taxes?

A: No tax increase is associated with this acquisition.

Q: Will this purchase negatively affect the County's debt capacity?

A: No. The County's debt capacity is not materially impacted by this acquisition. The Board evaluated the transaction carefully to ensure continued financial flexibility for future priorities.

Q: Why didn't the County wait until a specific use was identified?

A: Properties of this size, location, and strategic importance rarely become available. Waiting could have resulted in the property being acquired by another party, eliminating the County's ability to preserve future options.

Q: Why should the County own land?

A: Local ownership gives the community greater influence over future outcomes than would be possible if the property were owned entirely by private interests.

Q: What happens next?

A: The County will evaluate opportunities, constraints, infrastructure requirements, environmental considerations, and potential public benefits. Citizens will have opportunities to participate in future discussions.

Q: This was done in secret. Why weren't citizens consulted first?

A: The acquisition process involved a competitive transaction where confidentiality was necessary to protect the County's negotiating position and the taxpayers' interests. Now that the acquisition has been completed, future discussions about the property's use will occur publicly.

Q: Why is the County acting like a real estate developer?

A: The County is not acting as a developer. The Board acquired a strategic asset to preserve future options and local control. No development plan has been approved.

Q: Isn't this just a backdoor effort to bring a data center to Nelson County?

A: No. No specific project has been approved or selected. The acquisition should not be confused with any particular future use.

Q: How much risk are taxpayers taking on?

A: The Board carefully evaluated the financial implications before proceeding. The County's financial position remains strong, and the acquisition was undertaken as a long-term strategic investment.

Q: Why spend money on land when we have other needs?

A: The Board's responsibility is to address both current needs and future opportunities. Strategic investments today can help strengthen the County's long-term financial position and provide options that may benefit future generations.

Q: Why not leave it in private hands?

A: Had the property been acquired by a private buyer, future decisions would largely have been outside local control. County ownership ensures that the community will have a voice in determining future outcomes.

Q: What exactly are you planning?

A: At this stage, the Board has acquired the property but has not selected a specific use. The next phase is evaluation, analysis, and public engagement.

Q: Will the County sell the property later?

A: All options remain available. The purpose of the acquisition was to preserve flexibility and allow future Boards and citizens to evaluate opportunities as circumstances evolve.

NELSON COUNTY PROPERTY ACQUISITION

MYTHS VS. FACTS

MYTH #1

"The County bought the property for a secret project." FACT:

The County acquired the property to preserve future options. No specific project has been approved.

MYTH #2

"The Board already knows exactly what will be built there."

FACT:

No future use has been selected. Any significant future decisions would occur through public processes.

MYTH #3

"This purchase will hurt the County financially."

FACT:

The Board evaluated the acquisition carefully. The County's debt capacity remains strong and is not materially affected by the purchase.

MYTH #4

"Taxes are going up because of this purchase."

FACT:

No tax increase is associated with the acquisition. This purchase fits within the existing debt capacity strategy; requiring no new revenue to support its associated debt payments.

MYTH #5

"The County is abandoning its rural character."

FACT:

Protecting Nelson County's rural character remains a core priority. Any future use of the property would be evaluated in the context of the County's long-term vision and values.