

Tabernacle Baptist Church

Facility Management Assessment & Usage Visioning Report

Final Report

November 15, 2023



Prepared by [Carson Dean Consulting, LLC](#)

Introduction

The purpose of this report is to help Tabernacle Baptist Church (TBC) accomplish three objectives:

- **Conduct a facilities management assessment to guide the care and upkeep of the building and grounds;**
- **Consider ways the church building can be more fully utilized; and**
- **Offer suggestions to balance the use of the church building and grounds while maintaining appropriate safety and security protocols.**

This project came about in response to one of the recommendations provided by Mark Tidsworth, Founder & Team Leader of Pinnacle Leadership Associates. During a church-wide meeting on August 13, 2023, Mark provided a series of short-term steps *to stabilize this church in the present and immediate future*, including the need to **Conduct a building assessment, gathering accurate information.**¹ In mid-September, the TAB Weekly announced that after discussions with the Building & Grounds Committee, Carson Dean Consulting, LLC would lead a project (pro-bono) to help TBC address this recommendation.

we strive for deliberate engagement in our core values of mission, discipleship, worship and fellowship

- from TBC's Welcome Statement

A major component of this project was listening to the voices of the people who choose to participate in the life of Tabernacle Baptist Church. These voices - shared through interviews, focus groups, meetings, informal conversations, and a formal church-wide survey - provided a wealth of qualitative data that, when combined with the available quantitative data (reports, documents, photos, etc.) and the consultant's first-hand observations, provide the basis for the recommendations and suggestions offered in this report. Sprinkled throughout this report are comments shared by those voices.²

The resulting report presented here is the culmination of the consultant's engagement with a variety of TBC stakeholders to gather both quantitative and qualitative data that was then synthesized into a report with recommendations that a) reflects church members' comments, prayers, desires, and ideas, b) considers the present physical condition of the church building

¹ The TAB Weekly email newsletter, September 13, 2023.

² Over two dozen people participated in interviews/meetings/focus groups and 26 responses to the church-wide survey were collected.

and grounds; and c) takes into account strategies other churches, faith-based groups, and nonprofits have successfully deployed regarding facility management, use, and upkeep.

Before going any further, a few observations about Tabernacle Baptist Church, as it exists in the fall of 2023, will assist with providing context for this report:

- TBC is engaged in a “season of renewal” centered around intentional conversations, *focused on actions we believe are key to building relationships and trust.*
- TBC is focused on better understanding and communicating the spiritual concept of Abundant Community and engaging in community ministry outreach activities.
- TBC is in a period of fluctuating participation, including Sunday morning worship attendance.
- TBC’s building requires constant attention to cleanliness, order, routine maintenance, preventative care, and repairs.
- Tithes will not cover the costs associated with the upkeep, cleaning, and maintenance of TBC’s building and grounds.

And finally ...

The church needs to determine its mission before deciding what to do with its building.

This was an oft-repeated statement heard from multiple stakeholders during this project. While the sentiment is on-target as it relates to the activities that may take place within the walls of the church, it’s short-sighted in terms of the maintenance, cleaning and repair needs of the physical plant itself. In reality, a building must be maintained regardless of its mission - the roof, plumbing, HVAC, and electrical systems should always be in working condition, even if a space sits empty. A neglected building will quickly deteriorate resulting in higher costs over its life. Unless the intention is to tear down or abandon the building - *neither of which has been voiced by anyone* - a plan is needed to clean, repair, maintain and upgrade; in other words, a plan to take care of the building and grounds is essential.

The people of Israel, including the Levites, are to bring their contributions of wine and olive oil to the storerooms, where the articles for the sanctuary and for the ministering priests, the gatekeepers and the musicians are also kept. “We will not neglect the house of our God.”

- Nehemiah 10:39

Tabernacle Baptist Church: The Building

As with most older churches, TBC has seen multiple additions, renovations, and reconfigurations over the past 100+ years at the corner of Grove and Meadow in Richmond's historic Fan District. Today, the physical presence of TBC consists of the Sanctuary/Main Church Building, Williams Building, row houses, parking lots, and playground. While technically one contiguous building, the "Church" is often referred to by its separate components - Sanctuary - row houses - Williams Building. For this project the entirety of Tabernacle's physical plant and grounds is under consideration. **Take a moment and consider the scale of Tabernacle Baptist Church:**



At approximately 65,000 square feet, TBC is the size of 32.5 family homes³



³ Using 2,000 square feet as an average size family home. The 65k sf estimate comes from available documentation.

⁴ Photo from Baker Roofing Report, 2023.

Part 1: Building Assessment

Key Areas

- Cleaning & Order
- Repairs & Maintenance
- Safety & Security
- Building & Grounds Committee

Key Recommendations

- Outsource Cleaning
- Fix Hot Water & HVAC in Williams Building
- Maintain a Fully Functioning Boiler System
- Create a Safety & Security Philosophy
- Empower the Building & Grounds Committee

An assessment of the physical condition of the church building was conducted in three steps:

1. Documents Review (reports, spreadsheets, photos, drawings, correspondence);
2. Building & Grounds Committee Engagement, Interviews/Focus Groups/Meetings, Survey; and
3. Comprehensive visual inspection of the interior and exterior of the Church building, including all rooms and systems.⁵

What They Said ...

That we take care of what we have

- Listening Session Participant

Overall, considering its size, age, usage and deferment of maintenance and repairs, **the building was in relatively good condition**. Yes, there are significant items in need of repair, replacement, and preventative maintenance, but there is also much that can be improved with more attention to routine maintenance, cleaning, and proactive measures. Aesthetics aside, there were several “big ticket” items that appeared in good condition including the kitchen, electrical⁶, organ/pipes and restrooms. Work completed to update internet capabilities (cable runs and switch racks) throughout the building was well done. Wear and tear on furnishings, fixtures, carpet, etc., was not surprising. Plans (including accurate cost and funding sources) are needed for updating and replacement throughout the building, but these items remain largely functional, if not appealing. Lack of air conditioning in some spaces, not having hot water on the second and third floors of the Williams Building, and water issues⁷ in the atrium were significant

⁵ Including all spaces within the Sanctuary/Main Church Building and the Williams Building; excluding the interior of the row houses. While a visual inspection of the roof was impractical, comprehensive roof repair and preventative maintenance reports, including current photos, provided by Baker Roofing, were reviewed.

⁶ Based on limited visual inspection by the consultant; follow up by a licensed electrician is advised.

⁷ The water issues in the atrium are a result of a leak or leaks in the roof above.

areas of concern. However, most concerning was not having a fully functioning boiler system in operation. Additionally, there are some serious safety concerns that need to be addressed.

Cleaning & Order

As noted by many people interviewed individually, in focus groups, and through survey responses, the building has a good bit of clutter. Periodic decluttering/organizing events appear to help in the moment, but not have a lasting impact. Addressing storage and otherwise keeping order within the building will go a long way towards improving cleanliness because it's hard to keep spaces clean when they are difficult to access. Cleanliness is another area noted by many church stakeholders. Currently, TBC employs a single individual tasked with cleaning, routine maintenance, building management, and various other "as needed" tasks. Preschool staff are expected to keep their areas of the Williams Building clean. In spite of everyone's best efforts, **TBC is too large for the current approach to cleaning to be effective.**

- **Designate Storage Space.** Identify which spaces are designated for storage and for what purposes (e.g. worship staging, audio/visual, projects, classes, historical records, etc.) and clearly label each space. Establish guidelines for seeking permission to utilize designated storage spaces.
- **Outsource Cleaning.** Utilize a professional company with experience cleaning churches, daycare centers and/or schools. It is preferable to have a cleaning company working after all church activities have ended (i.e. at night). Consider the usage schedule of the building. While the Sanctuary may need attention only on Sunday nights, the preschool portion of the Williams Building will need to be cleaned daily, and other areas will need to be cleaned after usage and/or at least weekly.

What They Said ...

One of the things we have to address is cleaning because that affects hospitality so much.

- Listening Session Participant

Repairs & Maintenance

TBC is struggling to keep up with a growing list of items in need of immediate repair or replacement, routine maintenance, preventative maintenance, and improvements. This is not surprising given the size of the building and grounds, the current size of active church participants, and the costs necessary to accomplish everything that needs attention. Unfortunately, like most churches with large buildings, the simple magnitude of issues requiring attention (including costs) has put the church in reactionary mode to "emergencies" while deferring the majority of the list for "when we can afford to do it."

The Building & Grounds Committee has done a remarkable job documenting the systems, issues, and potential resolutions facing the Church's building. The task now is to put that data to use in developing a **Master Facilities Management Plan** that accomplishes the following:

- ☑ **Establishes one Master Plan document that includes all aspects of the building and grounds that the Committee is charged with maintaining.**
- ☑ **Develops a process for prioritizing needs in a comprehensive manner so appropriate attention is simultaneously given to emergency repairs, routine maintenance, preventative maintenance, replacement, and renovation.**
- ☑ **Creates methods of routinely and accurately communicating the needs of TBC's building and grounds to the church community so that people feel informed, involved, and not caught off guard.**

What They Said ...

I would love to see different groups in the community using the building all the time.

- *Listening Session Participant*

There are several tools being shared for consideration with the Building & Grounds Committee to assist in carrying out the objectives stated above. **Actually, the Committee has already developed and implemented an effective Facility Assessment Tool.** The following recommendations and suggested tools are being provided to the Committee for consideration. The Committee will have to determine their capacity to manage these tools and, ultimately, determine which one(s) best meet TBC's needs.

- ➔ **Inventory - Facility Assessment Tool.** A complete inventory of mechanical systems (e.g. HVAC, boiler, plumbing, electrical, roof), major equipment (e.g. kitchen appliances, audio/visual), and spaces (classrooms, sanctuary, meeting spaces, restrooms) will provide a comprehensive accounting for all that needs to be maintained on an ongoing basis. The Building & Grounds Committee possesses much of this information, so completing the inventory, using the tool they already developed, is not an onerous task.
- ➔ **[Master Facilities Upkeep Plan - Prioritization Worksheet](#).** The Building & Grounds Committee can utilize this planning tool to prioritize which items will need to be addressed and when. Each item is broken down into a mini project complete with

description, budget and time frame. Everything that needs to be addressed by the Building & Grounds Committee - repairs, preventative maintenance, replacements, renovations, etc. - should be included in the tool. Notes are included below the chart in order to keep all information in one place for easy reference. (See Appendix)

- ◆ [Decision Making Tool](#). This tool is used with the Master Facilities Upkeep Plan and is designed to help in the prioritization decision-making process. It allows the Committee to clearly think through each issue to support the rationale for how that issue is prioritized. (See Appendix)
- ◆ [Facilities Ministry Impact Chart](#). Another tool used with the Master Facilities Upkeep Plan, the Impact Chart helps the Committee consider the effect their decisions will have on the ministries of TBC. This tool is useful in communicating the decisions of the Committee because it helps the church connect the physical space to areas of ministry. (See Appendix)

What They Said ...

What's needed to keep [the building] safe while creating a lively space for people to thrive?

- *Listening Session Participant*

While the above action steps are considered and implemented, there are a few repair and maintenance recommendations that should be addressed immediately:

- **Hot Water & HVAC in the Williams Building.** Currently there is no hot water available in the restrooms on the 2nd and 3rd floors of the Williams Building. This is problematic because those spaces are occupied by the Tabernacle Child Care Center and ExCell. From a basic sanitation standpoint, hot water in restrooms is critical. To house partners in spaces without hot water is problematic. In addition, the 3rd floor of the Williams Building, housing TBC's community partner ExCell, has an inoperable HVAC unit. While portable window units have been utilized in the summer months, the space still becomes uncomfortable.
- **Fully Functioning Boiler System.** TBC's boiler system relies on three boilers, two alternating and a back up. While this may sound redundant, it's actually how such systems are designed for maximum efficiency and longevity. When one component of the system is inoperable, especially for long periods of time, the remaining system functions less efficiently and the life of all components is shortened. Ultimately, the cost of operating (and constantly repairing) a patchwork boiler system is more expensive than ensuring that the system is fully functional with all components in good working order.

Let's Consider ...

Why isn't the roof and the atrium on the Key Recommendations list?

Most of the recent roof issues have been resolved and the Building & Grounds Committee has a good plan to address the remaining items. Additionally, the Committee has an active monitoring agreement in place with Baker Roofing with the latest status report provided in 2023. The Committee has also been actively working on a solution to the water issues in the atrium, including having drawings in hand for structural remedies.

Safety & Security

Like it or not, the reality today is that all churches must consider the safety and security of their spaces. This should be approached from several lenses including the potential for harm intentionally caused by others, the potential for harm caused by inattention or neglect, and liability. Not surprisingly, in conversations and focus groups there were various attitudes and ideas related to this topic, especially pertaining to physical safety from harm by others. While physical security is very important, of equal importance should be maintaining spaces that are safe from harm caused by inattention or neglect. While adequate liability insurance is a must, insurance only works in tandem with plans and protocols that mitigate negligence.

→ **Safety & Security Assessment.** A logical next step would be for the Building & Grounds Committee to conduct a safety and security assessment.

The purpose of this assessment is to take a complete inventory of the building and grounds considering the following:

- Obstructions that impede egress and line of sight;
- Hazards that can lead to falls and fires;
- Emergency lighting, equipment (e.g. AEDs, fire extinguishers, first aid kits), gathering spaces, and communications (signage and verbal/text);
- Potential access points for someone intent on causing harm (physical or structural); and
- Plans for fire evacuation, natural disaster, building emergencies (power outage, gas leak, etc.), and security protocols (alone in building, intruder, mental health crisis, active shooter).

No recommendations are formed or decisions made during this information gathering process. Those activities will follow the completion of a comprehensive Safety & Security Assessment.

Let's Consider ...

A prime example of a safety and security issue at TBC is the constant presence of an extension ladder providing access to the attic above the sanctuary. Not only does this ladder create an impediment in a stairwell, it is also immediately accessible to anyone who wants to climb (or play). While removing the ladder when not in use is very difficult, its presence creates an opportunity for harm whether by a child falling from it, or someone using it to access the attic to create damage, or simply by a visitor walking into it unaware of its presence. The liability incurred by TBC for having this ladder left unattended and unsecured in a stairwell could be catastrophic.

- **Safety & Security Philosophy.** Addressing all aspects of safety and security is a daunting, time consuming and potentially expensive undertaking. Too often, churches want to implement solutions without taking the time to identify the potential issues and how the church wants to respond. Once an assessment is complete and before implementing any new measures,

Let's Consider ...

*What is a **Safety & Security Philosophy**? Simply put, it's a written statement of consensus for how the church will approach issues related to safety and security.*

TBC must define in writing its Safety & Security Philosophy.

Here are a few prompts for consideration:

- Where is TBC on the spectrum from wanting the church to be literally open to all at all times, to keeping the building locked at all times with controlled access?
- What is TBC's stated position on weapons on church property?
- How could technology benefit TBC's desire to be a safe and secure place and what might be unintended consequences of deploying such technology?

This Statement of Safety & Security Philosophy will provide guidance to the Building & Grounds Committee as it determines protocols and makes investments to address the safety and security of the church building, grounds, people, and community.

Building & Grounds Committee

When it comes to decision-making regarding the use, upkeep, and improvement of a church's building and grounds, it's critically important to share accurate information, offer avenues for voices to be heard, and balance all of the seemingly competing needs. Like many churches, TBC has an unintentionally complex decision-making and information dissemination infrastructure. For example, a relatively straightforward expenditure to repair a critical piece of equipment at a nominal cost often requires multiple conversations involving several committees. Not only is this an inefficient use of everyone's time, it also lends itself to miscommunication and additional expenses when delays contribute to further deterioration that then costs more to address. Simplification is actually the answer in this situation. Streamlining how TBC provides good stewardship over the facilities and grounds will allow for greater attention given to the physical needs of TBC's spaces, improve the flow of information and opportunities for input, and position TBC to proactively implement facility usage visioning decisions (see Part 2) as that plan comes into focus.

TBC should consider the following recommendations to **Empower the Building & Grounds Committee**:

- **Committee Structure.** Restructure the design and portfolio of the Building & Grounds Committee to be charged with all-inclusive oversight (Charts A & B).
- **Fiduciary Responsibility.** Provide the Committee with an annual operating budget and authorize the Committee to make spending decisions within their budget and without the need for additional approvals. If an expenditure exceeds the Committee's budget then the Committee would seek approval from the Administrative Board.
- **Supervision.** Incorporate a dual-supervision approach to facilities staffing into the responsibilities of the Building & Grounds Committee (Chart C).

What They Said ...

TBC's building is a symbol of hope to the community ... a symbol of God's presence.

- *Listening Session Participant*

Chart A: Recommended Design & Portfolio of the B & G Committee

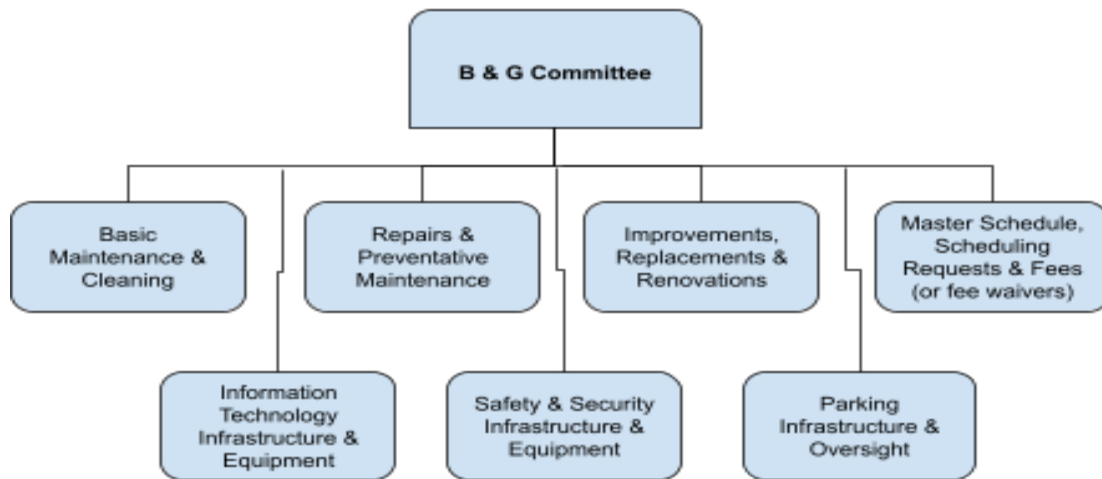
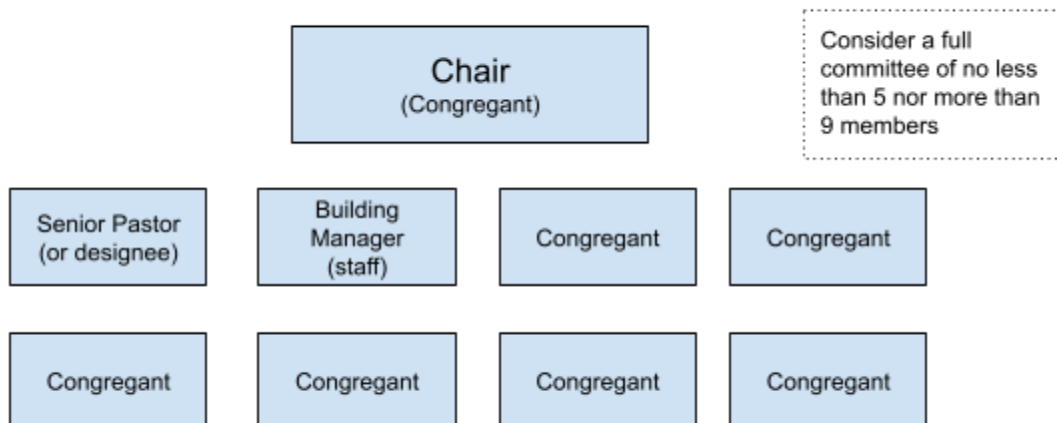


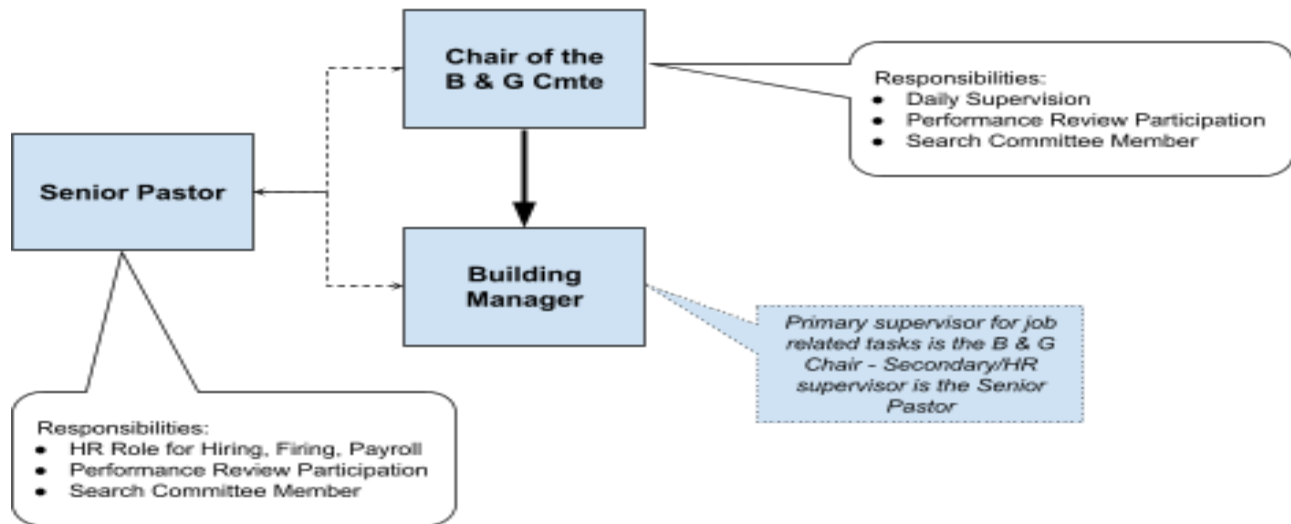
Chart B: Recommended Building & Grounds Committee Structure



- Senior Pastor (or designee) and Building Manager are *ex-officio* voting members and, therefore, not elected by the church body or subject to term limits for as long as they serve in their official staff role
- Committee members from the congregation elected to serve three-year terms and can be elected for two consecutive terms before rolling off the committee for a minimum of one year
- The Chair should be elected to a three year term and can be elected to serve two consecutive terms as chair or a combination of chair and member. Should the final year as Chair coincide with the final year under term limits then the Chair would be allowed to serve one additional year as Past Chair (non-voting) for continuity of leadership
- Keep current practice of the Committee Chair serving on the Admin Board

The Committee will form, as needed, work groups utilizing volunteers with key skills to tackle special issues or projects (e.g. IT or security related projects).

Chart C: How Dual-Supervision of Facilities Staff May Work



For a Dual Supervision approach to work requires regular and open communication between the B & G Chair and the Senior Pastor. The employee's written job description should describe the relationship and steps the employee should take when supervision instructions are contradictory.

Part 1: Key Recommendations Summary

The following recommendations are listed in no particular order; however, all are considered to be urgent.

- ★ **Outsource Cleaning.** Utilize a professional company with experience cleaning churches, daycare centers and/or schools.
- ★ **Fix Hot Water & HVAC in the Williams Building.** Currently there is no hot water available in the restrooms on the 2nd and 3rd floors of the Williams Building. In addition, the 3rd floor of the Williams Building has an inoperable HVAC unit.
- ★ **Maintain a Fully Functioning Boiler System.** TBC's boiler system is not fully functioning. When one component of the system is inoperable, especially for long periods of time, the remaining system functions less efficiently and the life of all components is shortened.
- ★ **Create a Safety & Security Philosophy.** This written statement of consensus for how the church will approach issues related to safety and security will guide the development of protocols and investments.
- ★ **Empower Building & Grounds Committee.** Consider the Building & Grounds Committee as the primary church-appointed steward of its physical spaces by consolidating associated activities under the Committee, authorizing the Committee to accomplish its work, and charging the Committee with keeping the church duly informed.

Part 2: Building Usage Visioning

Key Areas

- **Defining Purpose**
- **Sacred Space**
- **Current Occupancy**
- **Available Space**

Key Recommendations

- Define the Building's Purpose
- Create a Space Usage Map
- Consider Ideas for Available Space

What They Said ...

The building isn't the church but how we maintain and present it is a reflection of who we are.

- Listening Session Participant

Defining Purpose

What is the purpose of the building and grounds located at the corner of Grove and Meadow? Easier asked than answered. This is where TBC will need to have some intentional conversations, not for the sake of conversation, but to come to a consensus around the purpose of the building. During the listening phase of this project, there was no emerging consensus. Thoughts, ideas, and perspectives - some incredibly strong, some not so much - were all over the map. In fact, comments ranged from *leave it as it is* to *sell it and go elsewhere*. Most people, however, were somewhere closer to the middle, voicing perspectives that the building should serve God's purpose for the community.

- **Define the Building's Purpose.** TBC will need to discern God's purpose for the spaces it has been gifted. Getting to consensus on this question is beyond the scope of this report. As TBC is currently in a "season of renewal" with the assistance of Mark Tidsworth of Pinnacle Leadership Associates, the church is in good hands discerning how to answer this question. In the meantime, some practical recommendations were sought during this project to begin thinking about usage of TBC's building and grounds.

Sacred Space

As interviews, focus groups, and a survey were conducted, the concept of TBC's sacred spaces surfaced repeatedly. For the purpose of visioning different ways the building could be used, this is a good place to start.

- **Sacred Spaces.** What are the sacred spaces within TBC? In other words, what spaces should be reserved only for the use of TBC and/or only for spiritual purposes that align

with TBC's mission (as currently articulated in TBC's Welcome Statement). Once those spaces are named, then some effort should be put towards defining the parameters around which TBC would allow others to use its facilities. There should be no concern, at this point, regarding paid versus unpaid use of space, only for what purposes would TBC consider allowing its space to be used. For example, only for religious purposes that aligns with TBC's Baptist faith? Nonprofit groups but not for profit activities? Groups seeking to contribute to the vibrancy of the neighborhood - city - state - world? The answer doesn't have to be overly definitive but there does need to be consensus as to what should be considered and/or what should not be considered.

What They Said ...

I loved the idea of having some space for temporary housing or being able to welcome groups to stay and serve the community.

- Listening Session Participant

Current Occupancy

Also of interest during the listening segment of this project (collection of qualitative data) was a perception that there is a lot of unused space at TBC. Often, however, this perspective was shared in comparison with the activity levels of the church years ago. Upon observation by walking the building with members of the Building & Grounds Committee, it was apparent that much of the space is used. For example, between TCCC and ExCell most of the space in the Williams Building is occupied. Keep in mind that occupied and used are not the same thing. TBC occupies the sanctuary even if it is primarily used only on Sundays for a few hours. Matching perceptions to reality is an important step that needs to be undertaken.

- **Create a Space Usage Map.** A Space Usage Map should be created to inventory all spaces within the church. Using a basic building floor plan outline (which the Building & Grounds Committee possesses) provides a great starting point. The final map can be as comprehensive and aesthetically pleasing as desired; however, the final map should include the following:

Space Usage Map Components:

- **Building Map.** Floor plan outlining all spaces within the Main Church/Sanctuary Building and the Williams Building.
- **Room Numbers.** All spaces on the building map, including storage closets, restrooms, electrical closets, and custodial closets should be numbered using a

numbering system that is easily understood (for example, rooms on the first floor start with 1).

→ **Room Descriptions.** Each space that can accommodate a meeting, activity, office, etc. should be noted with the following:

- ◆ Square footage
- ◆ Amenities - set up, equipment, IT, accessibility, flexibility, etc.
- ◆ Purpose - what purpose does the space routinely serve and/or is allowed
- ◆ Occupancy Limit - how many people can the space safely/functionally accommodate

→ **Availability.** Indicate if the space is occupied and/or unavailable for other use, a flexible use space, available space, or sacred space (see above).

→ **Usage Fees** (if applicable). Include a schedule of fees for each size/category of space. Considerations for developing fees should include:

- ◆ Building-related costs - utilities, water, insurance.
- ◆ Set Up, take down, and cleaning
- ◆ Whether or not supervision is required while in use
- ◆ Building Maintenance Fund - a percentage should be set aside for repairs and preventative maintenance
- ◆ Building Improvement Fund - a percentage should be set aside for future additions, replacements, and renovations

Let's Consider ...

Are both a Building Maintenance Fund and Building Improvement Fund necessary?

Absolutely. These two funds serve distinctly different purposes. Without designating a percentage of fees to both, more immediate issues may be addressed (repair a broken light fixture) while not planning for future needs (replacing worn out carpet).

Let's Consider ...

Can fees be waived or donations accepted instead?

Absolutely ... with caution. There will always be a cost associated with the use of a space, even if only electricity and insurance. When fees are waived or donations accepted that don't cover basic costs, then the Church will ultimately fund the use of that space. So, the Building & Grounds Committee should develop a uniform process to consider waiving fees and/or accepting donations in lieu of charging fees.

Available Space

Once a Space Usage Map has been created, uses for available spaces can be considered. Keep in mind that the Space Usage Map will designate spaces that are completely available, are available for flexible use (shared with others), or available only for certain purposes (e.g. sacred space). During the listening phase of this project, ideas for how church spaces could be used were solicited and responses varied greatly. That said, **two themes consistently recurred**: 1) TBC should consider using its available spaces by outside groups for the benefit of the community and 2) TBC should expand the use of its available spaces for Abundant Community and conducting community ministry activities. When asked to elaborate on what types of outside groups should be considered, the responses, again, greatly varied.

Let's Consider ...

A Sampling of Suggestions

- Groups like AA
- Theatrical and musical groups
- Local nonprofits like ExCell and Re-Establish Richmond
- Additional Ministries/Churches using the Community Room
- Flexible work space for local small businesses/entrepreneurs
- After school, tutoring, mentoring programs
- Expand TCCC

→ **Consider Ideas for Available Space.** Churches around the country are facing realities similar to TBC's - what to do with available space that the church no longer fully utilizes but still has to clean and maintain? In addition to considering the ideas voiced by congregants through interviews, focus groups, and a survey, an environmental scan considering what other churches have attempted provides several recommendations for TBC to explore:

- ◆ **Invitation for Long-Term Tenants** - TBC could identify spaces that are conducive to long-term rental agreements such as office space. Tenants could be local nonprofits needing office space but not activity space, or small businesses without walk-in clients. A Long-Term Tenant could even be another church that is flexible regarding when they hold their services.
- ◆ **Proactively Market One-Time or Recurring Rentals** - TBC has some history with a passive version of this approach when opportunities were brought to the church for consideration. Working proactively, TBC would create a schedule of which spaces were available when and for what fee and then proactively market those spaces to groups looking for occasional space.

- ◆ **Nonprofit and Ministry Incubator** - A significant percentage of non-profit and faith-based start ups cannot afford market-rate rent for office or activity space. TBC could assist these groups with getting started by offering discounted office and/or activity space on a time-limited basis (e.g. two years).⁸
- ◆ **Expansion of Current Partnerships** - Conversations with TCCC and ExCell could result in one or both of those programs expanding their footprint within the building, thereby offsetting occupancy costs currently funded by TBC.

The recommendations above assume that TBC will pursue a strategy that incorporates generating revenue in order to fund the operation and upkeep of the building and grounds. No decision has been made yet regarding a revenue strategy, however the church will need to come to a consensus soon. Additionally, implementing any of these recommendations will incur some preparation costs. For example, in addition

to being kept clean and free of clutter, revenue generating spaces need to have reliable utilities, internet access, a safe and secure environment, and welcoming entrances.

Let's Consider ...

TBC has long relied on its endowment to cover a significant portion of annual operating expenses.

Tithes are not sufficient to meet the present needs of TBC's ministry and building/grounds.

Let's Consider ...

In addition to offsetting cleaning, maintenance and improvement costs, revenue generating activities can free up church funds for further investment in ministries like Abundant Community.

Row Houses Recommendation

Continue renting at market rate until all debt has been satisfied plus a designated net amount of revenue has been generated before considering use options other than market-rate rental. There will be ongoing costs associated with ownership, including future repairs and renovations, that must be considered.

One Final Consideration

Prior to getting too far into addressing the comments and recommendations outlined in this section (Part 2), TBC should give some collective consideration to the following questions and come to consensus regarding the entirety of its physical building and grounds:

Should TBC ...

- sell its current property and use the proceeds to move elsewhere?
- maintain ownership and adequately plan for the care for its current property?
- create a nonprofit to own, manage, and care for the property, with TBC as its anchor tenant/partner, freeing TBC to focus on its ministry?

⁸ Including amenities such as internet access, copier access, break room, etc., would be necessary to make this opportunity most appealing.

Part 2: Key Recommendations Summary

The following recommendations are listed in no particular order; however, all are considered to be urgent.

- ★ **Define the Building's Purpose** - What is the purpose of the church's building and grounds? TBC needs to collectively discern God's purpose for the spaces it has been gifted.
- ★ **Create a Space Usage Map** - A Space Usage Map should be created to inventory all spaces within the church.
- ★ **Consider Ideas for Available Space** - Consider long-term tenants, proactive rentals, a nonprofit/ministry incubator, and expanding existing partnerships.

What They Said ...

The core strategy of a church should not be maintaining a building

- *Listening Session Participant*

Immediate Next Steps

Let's Consider ...

Next Steps ...

- The Church family is given time to digest the plan with opportunities to engage with the B & G Committee
- The B & G Committee determines implementation steps and shares with the church
- Implementation of selected recommendations begins
- Routine updates and progress reporting from B & G Committee keeps the church informed
- Celebrate successes and recalibrate setbacks

Summary

Throughout the listening sessions - interviews, focus groups, meetings, and church survey - there was much appreciation voiced for the dedication and work of the Building & Grounds Committee. Good work is underway at Tabernacle Baptist Church in an effort to care for and maintain the historic structure sitting at the corner of Grove and Meadow in the heart of Richmond's Fan District. The building is loved - that is evident from the wear it shows inside and out. Like many churches with smaller congregations and big buildings, keeping up with the cleaning, repairs, routine maintenance, safety and security, and preventative maintenance, while planning for inevitable renovations, is a herculean task. As TBC is in the midst of a "season of renewal" in terms of defining the church's path forward, now is a great time to simultaneously consider how TBC will address the current and future needs of the building and grounds. Part of that discussion should naturally include the use of spaces within the building. While the Building & Grounds Committee has a good grasp on the facility-based issues it's facing, there is little church-wide consensus on how TBC should proceed. Perceptions and suggestions are as varied and colorful as is the church itself. As with enlisting the help of a facilitator to guide TBC through its "season of renewal," the church was wise to accept assistance in thinking through not only the management of its facilities but also a visioning process for ways the church building could be used for the benefit of the structure as well as the church body's calling.

What He Said...

God is constantly revealing and helping us grow into our creative potential. We are clay in The Potter's hands. In these most recent days, I'm reminded that the same is true of the brick and mortar. It's so encouraging to see what God is doing in the reshaping of our hearts and also in the spaces we gather, welcome, serve, and worship together.

- Rev. Sterling Severns,
Pastor

What She Said...

God is among us in our church home, leading the way. Partnering with you to follow his lead, seeing our facilities and how we use them with a new perspective, is both refreshing and inspiring for us. We hope it is for you as well.

- Donna Soyars, B & G
Committee Chair

While this report was constructed by a consultant (providing some input into best practices and ideas shaped by others) the themes, recommendations, ideas, and concerns are reflections of the voices of TBC. This report offers guidance, it's up to the collective church family to make decisions.



Quick Reference Recommendations Checklist

Part 1:

Cleaning & Order - pg 6

- Designate Storage Space
- Outsource Cleaning

Repairs & Maintenance - pg 6

- Inventory - Facility Assessment Tool
- Master Facilities Upkeep Plan - Prioritization Worksheet
- Hot Water & HVAC in the Williams Building
- Fully Functioning Boiler System

Safety & Security - pg 9

- Safety & Security Assessment
- Safety & Security Philosophy

Building & Grounds Committee - pg 11

- Committee Structure
- Fiduciary Responsibility
- Supervision

Part 2:

Defining Purpose - pg 14

- Define the Building's Purpose

Sacred Space - pg 14

- Sacred Spaces

Current Occupancy - pg 15

- Space Usage Map

Available Space - pg 17

- Consider Ideas for Available Space

One Final Consideration - pg 18

Appendix

The following documents associated with this report are attached in the hardcopy version for easy reference:

[Master Facilities Upkeep Plan - Prioritization Worksheet](#)

[Facilities Ministry Impact Chart](#)

[Decision Making Tool](#)

