

CITY AUDITORIUM CCCF FEASIBILITY STUDY

Alma, Nebraska 2021



Miller & Associates
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ARCHITECTURE | DESIGN | PLANNING



CONTENTS

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS 2

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY 3

PROJECT OVERVIEW4

PROJECT NEED 4

SIGNIFICANCE IN COMMUNITY HISTORY 6

PROJECT METHODOLOGY..... 8

COMMUNITY OVERVIEW12

LOCATION 12

SERVICE AREA 14

DEMOGRAPHICS 16

MARKET ORIENTATION 22

PUBLIC SUPPORT26

FIRST PUBLIC INPUT MEETING..... 26

ONLINE PUBLIC INPUT SURVEY 28

SECOND PUBLIC INPUT MEETING 31

CITY AUDITORIUM34

EXISTING CONDITIONS..... 34

OPERATIONAL COSTS 40

POTENTIAL REVENUE..... 40

PROPOSED IMPROVEMENTS 42

IMPLEMENTATION51

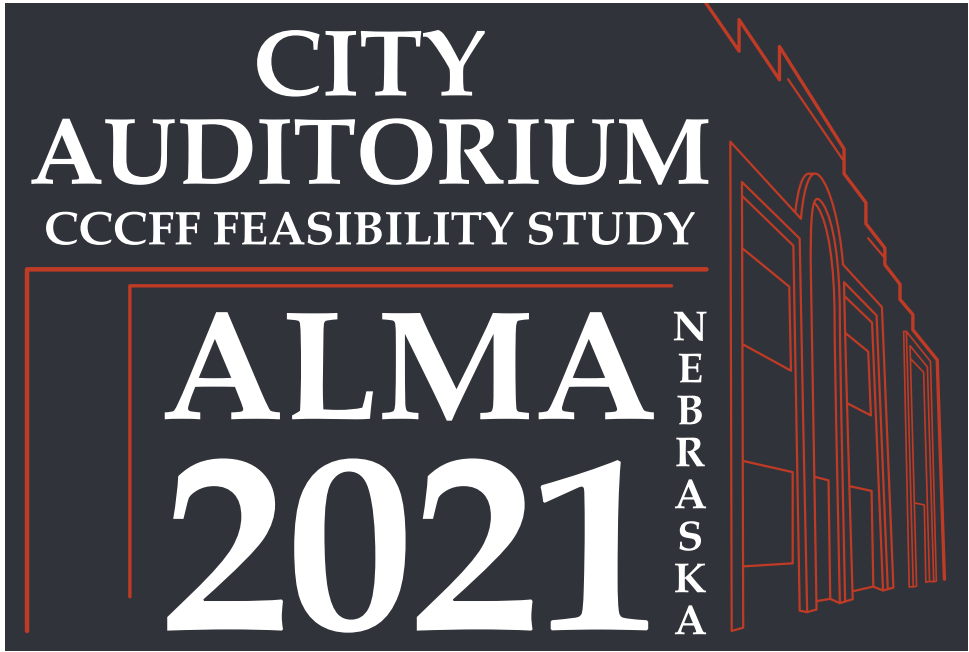
FUNDING OPPORTUNITIES..... 51

RECOMMENDED NEXT STEPS 54

**APPENDIX A: NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
APPLICATION.....55**

APPENDIX B: PUBLIC INPUT MEETING NOTES63

APPENDIX C: PUBLIC INPUT SURVEY RESULTS73



ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

A special thanks to the Community of Alma for the participation and input provided during this planning process.

FUNDING SOURCE

Nebraska Department of Economic Development (NDED) – Civic & Community Center Financing Fund (CCCFF)

CITY COUNCIL

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Tom Moulton, Council President East Ward

Dyann Collins, Councilwoman East Ward

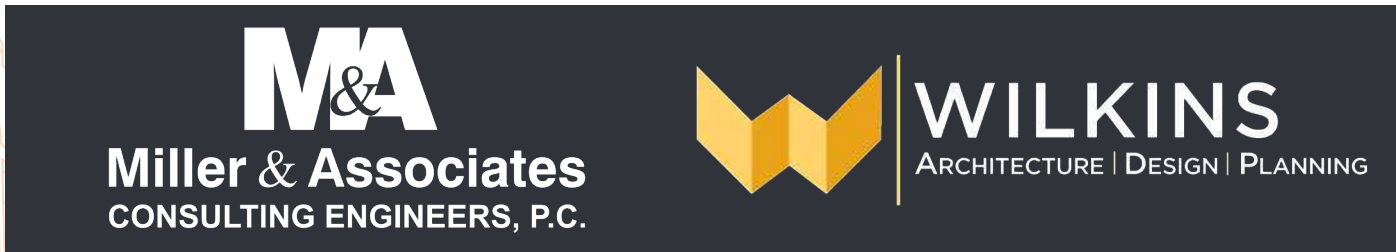
Chris Tripe, Councilman West Ward

CITY STAFF

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The availability of amenities can direct a potential resident to choose one community over another. The City of Alma offers an array of amenities to residents and visitors. Included in these amenities are two facilities available for the public use. The Johnson Center and the City Auditorium provide a space for events, both small and large.

Unfortunately, the City Auditorium is outdated. The last major improvement project for this building was in the 1980s, nearly four decades ago, when the windows and doors were replaced. Additional improvements and updates are needed for the City Auditorium to continue effectively serving Alma, its residents, and its visitors.

This feasibility study was developed to discern and prioritize the improvements needed in the City Auditorium. The planning process relied heavily on public input with multiple town-hall style meetings and public input surveys. During the public meetings, attendees were asked to discuss their past experiences using the City Auditorium along with their visions for the future of the building. Conversations also highlighted renovation concerns and cherished building characteristics.

Originally built in the 1920s, the City Auditorium holds a position in the heart of the community. As an anchor to Alma's Downtown District, the building holds a unique position to set the stage for the rest of the area. It provides added character to the District and could act as a catalyst for future development projects on Main Street.

As a registered building with the National Historic Registry, it is an protected example of the community's history. The City Auditorium is constructed with quality materials and craftsmanship. It was built to last and should be preserved to serve future generations. After a fire destroyed the community's opera house, the City Auditorium was funded primarily through monetary pledges from residents in Alma and the surrounding area.

While the original building was intended to be privately-owned, the City Auditorium exists because of public effort and support. The community continues to show support for the building and its preservation today. The public support for this project proves the building's importance as a historic landmark and a community amenity.



PROJECT OVERVIEW

The Alma City Auditorium and Sale Barn is located on the west end of Alma's Downtown District, which is the heart of the community. The last major improvements to the building were made in the 1980s. Currently, the building shows signs of wear and tear and is in need of improvements. If these improvements are not completed soon, the building condition will continue to degrade. This Study examines the improvements needed for the building to retain historic integrity while increasing functionality.

PROJECT NEED

Improving the City Auditorium will contribute to community betterment efforts in several ways. This community amenity is the only gathering space of its size; the large capacity provides a unique event space for Alma's residents. The building also contributes to the historic character of Downtown Alma and tells a story of the community's roots. Maintaining and improving the City Auditorium will help City leaders provide a high quality of life residents know and appreciate. Public improvement efforts, like this CCCFF Feasibility Study and the resulting improvement projects, can spur additional private investment – leading to higher quality assets and increased revenues in the area.

SPPA DATA

The Survey of Public Participation in the Arts (SPPA) is the nation's largest survey regarding adult participation in the arts. According to the National Endowment for the Arts (www.arts.gov),

“participation [in the arts] has been positively linked with emotional well-being, social and civic activity, and tolerance and receptivity, among other factors”

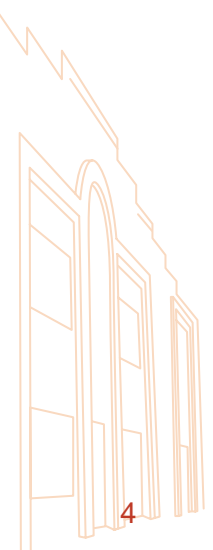
which all contribute to the quality of life experienced by residents in a community. The Alma City Auditorium provides access to the arts for Alma's residents and is therefore an important community amenity. Improvements to this building will allow increased opportunities for community engagement with the arts.

HISTORIC PRESERVATION

Historic preservation serves several functions for a community. According to the National Park Service (www.nps.gov) *“historic preservation is a conversation with our past about our future”* and helps communicate an understanding of the past to future generations. The Alma City Auditorium is a part of the community's roots. The building is almost a century old and has served Alma's residents in many ways. Understanding the City Auditorium's significance and maintaining its place in community development will help encourage community pride.

With the building's location, preserving the historic character of the building will also contribute to the character of the Downtown District. This building helps shape the identity of Alma's Downtown; having a distinctive identity in a downtown helps attract potential visitors to the area. Improvements to the City Auditorium may also catalyze other improvements in the Downtown District. This could, in turn, attract new businesses and increase commerce for the community.

Additionally, buildings built before World War II tend to be comprised of higher quality materials. It would be very expensive to recreate a building with the same quality of materials and level of detail as the City Auditorium. Some of the defining characteristics, like the mezzanine could not be recreated without substantial adjustments to the accessibility of the building. Historic Preservation is also often more environmentally friendly; maintaining the City Auditorium rather than replacing it also helps keep materials out of the landfill and lowers the demand for new materials.



PAST PLANNING PROJECTS

Community members recognize the importance of maintaining quality community amenities in Alma. The City Auditorium and Sale Barn was the result of community-wide effort and funding; the building is a symbol for the strength and resilience of Alma's residents. In more recent years, the community has continued to support the planning process and proven the City Auditorium is still an important amenity in Alma.

2009 Comprehensive Plan

In 2009, Hanna:Keelan Associates, P.C. completed a Comprehensive Plan and Zoning/Subdivision Regulations and Procedural Manual for the City of Alma. The Comprehensive Plan lists general Community Goals for Alma; the following goals were formed through background research, planning meetings, and conversations with community leaders.

The following represent general Community Goals for Alma.

- 1. *Strive to improve the [quality] of life and sense of community for all residents of Alma.*
- 2. *Foster the value of family in Alma. Encourage the development of local action to preserve and strengthen families.*
3. *Implement appropriate community and economic developments to establish a stabilization of jobs and population in Alma.*
4. *Diversify the economic base in Alma to create and expand employment opportunities for existing and future households.*
- 5. *Preserve and improve the physical appearance and character of Alma, with emphases on the Downtown and the Highway 136 and 183 corridors.*
6. *Maintain a modern infrastructure. Future public facilities, utilities and transportation systems will need to be both updated and expanded during the planning period.*
7. *Update and maintain the community land use plan, supported by progressive zoning and subdivision regulations.*

While improvements to the City Auditorium could help achieve many of these goals, the main goals affected are numbers one, two, and five. The Comprehensive Plan also discusses the value of Historic Preservation in the community, which supports this improvement project.

2012 ADA Evaluation

An evaluation of the City Auditorium's compliance with Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) regulations was completed in 2012. There are several portions of the building which are only accessible by stairs and therefore, do not comply with ADA regulations. These areas include the mezzanine area, the stage, and the basement storage area. The 2012 ADA Evaluation also lists other obstacles to accessibility including uneven paving in need of repair and inaccessible bathroom fixtures. As a community amenity, the City Auditorium should comply with ADA regulations when feasible in order to be accessed and enjoyed by all.

SIGNIFICANCE IN COMMUNITY HISTORY

The Alma City Auditorium and Sale Barn is registered with the National Register of Historic Places and has a rich history within the Alma community. The building not only holds significance as a community building, but also served the agricultural, recreational, and entertainment needs of Alma's residents throughout history.

The following paragraphs summarize historic information accessed through the Virtual Nebraska program (<https://casde.unl.edu/history/counties/harlan/alma/>) and the City Auditorium's Registration Form for the National Park Service National Register of Historic Places. The full Registration Form is located in "Appendix A: National Register of Historic Places Application" of this document.



Meeting of Pawnee Chief Bear Claw and the North surveying group, 1879.

Named after the daughter of an early settler, "Alma" was founded in the Spring of 1871, by a group of Union Pacific railroad workers. A few months later, Alma became the county seat of the newly founded Harlan County. A second railroad, the Burlington Railroad, forged a path through Alma in 1880, bringing population growth and economic development to the community. Over the next three decades, Alma gained the Kansas City and Omaha Railroad in 1887, telephone service in 1899, electricity in 1906, and water service in 1907.

After the loss of the city's Opera House to a fire in 1919, a committee was formed to solicit funds for a new auditorium, which would again allow large groups to gather in the community. Individual households in the community were asked to pledge money toward the construction of the new building; subscriptions of \$100 to \$200 were encouraged.



Main Street in Alma, 1910. The bandstand stood at John Street intersection.

Toward the end of construction of the building, the finance committee learned not all pledges of money equaled actual donations. The difficulty in collecting funds was primarily related to the economic decline experienced by farmers in the early to mid-1920s, following World War I. During the War, farmers experienced a boom in prices; they took out loans to buy more land for additional crops. This boom, however, was short-lived and agricultural prices dropped, leaving farmers with debts they were unable to pay. Farmers were not able to pay their promised donations and the committee did not pursue legal action. By 1924, the finances were resolved and construction of the new auditorium was completed.

→ "Since the building was paid for through community fund raising, it was built large enough to house the social, sporting, and theatrical functions that the city often held, but was not so extravagant that it put an undue financial burden on the citizenry. The current appearance of the building preserves much of the original fabric of its original construction."

*National Park Service / National Register of Historic Places
Registration Form: Alma City Auditorium and Sale Barn. United States
Department of the Interior.*



The Alma bicyclers on a Sunday afternoon, 1891. From left: Briggs, Randali, Logan, Everson, Sadler, Mock, and Mitchell.

The Alma bicycles on a Sunday afternoon, 1891. From left: Briggs, Randali, Logan, Everson, Sadler, Mock, and Mitchell.

In 1935, the Republican River flooded and claimed over 100 lives of residents living between McCook and Alma. In response to this devastating flood, the Harlan County Dam was constructed from 1946-52 for approximately \$49 million. This flood mitigation project resulted in the 13,250-acre Harlan County Lake, the second largest body of water in Nebraska. Since 1952, Harlan County Lake continues to help with flood control and provides irrigation to area crops. It is also a major tourist attraction for the region with fishing, hunting, boating, and camping available. Alma City Park, located on the northern edge of Harlan County Lake, is located one-block from Main Street and Alma's Downtown District.



When the rains came, as much as 24 inches fell in 24 hours in some parts of the Republican River valley. Alma's depot pictured on the right, June 1, 1935.

Meanwhile, after continued financial hardships, the City Auditorium switched from a private to public endeavor – becoming county property in 1941 and City property in 1943. By 1944, the Sale Barn portion of the building began service as the town meat locker. This meant additional cinderblock rooms were added to the Sale Barn space to accommodate the meat storage needs. While the heavy refrigerator doors have been removed, the hinges still remain as a ghost of this past use. In 1952, a concrete floor was installed and the lighting and wiring were updated to improve the functionality of the slaughterhouse.

The building continued to serve its community in multiple ways – providing a large event and gathering space with the City Auditorium as well as support for the important livestock-based economy in southwestern Nebraska. From the 1920s through the 1950s, the City Auditorium hosted several traveling bands and performance troupes, making art and culture more accessible for community residents.

The City Auditorium saw major renovation projects in the mid-1980s. With the slaughterhouse facility adjoining the City Auditorium, a community committee chose to swap the original locations of the kitchen and bathrooms, moving the kitchen away from the adjoining use. The exterior doors and windows were also replaced with steel-framed units. While the style of the windows changed from the original six-over-six configuration to a more modern, one-over-one look, the windows were sized to the original openings; this maintained the size and scale of the original openings on the exterior façade.

As the City of Alma has developed over the years, community residents continue to use the City Auditorium and Sale Barn in a variety of ways. The Sale Barn area currently serves as the Harlan County Caring Cupboard, a hybrid thrift store and food pantry operated by community members. The City Auditorium hosts many annual events including the Alma High School Prom, various fundraisers, and craft shows. Alma's residents speak fondly of many past events hosted in the building, which they wish to enjoy again.

PROJECT METHODOLOGY

The project team for this feasibility study is comprised of architectural, community planning, and grant administration professionals. This balance of knowledge helps create feasible improvement goals and strategies for implementation by the City of Alma. During the initial stages of the project, the project team performs an existing conditions analysis of both the City Auditorium and the City of Alma. This analysis is communicated through narrative and visuals in the feasibility study.

To create a successful improvement plan for the City Auditorium, it must be rooted in public input. After the project team has completed the feasibility study, the plan for improvements must be supported by the community itself. The project team facilitates a thorough public input process, shaped with the community's needs in mind.

The City Auditorium and Sale Barn is a direct product of community-driven efforts. The original building was financed and planned by area residents has served the community of Alma in countless ways since the early 1920s. While the original intent was to keep the ownership of the building private, the building was made possible through community-wide investment in the project. Now, the City Auditorium building is owned and operated by the City of Alma, but this improvement project stays true to the building roots by building on a framework of public input.

It is important to gain interest within the community throughout the planning process; this encourages residents to champion the project once the study is completed. To further prepare the City of Alma and its residents for the next phases of improving the City Auditorium, the project team provides conceptual floor plans, computer renderings, and opinions of probable construction costs. While this feasibility study is in preparation for the Capital Construction Phase of the Civic and Community Center Financing Fund, this study also provides alternative funding options to help achieve all improvement goals.

This feasibility study presents a vision for the future development of the City Auditorium along with goals and strategies to achieve that vision.

FUNDING PROGRAM

This Feasibility Study is the result of the planning phase for the Civic and Community Center Financing Fund (CCCFF) program, funded through the Nebraska Department of Economic Development. The Planning Phase establishes short and long-term goals for the funded project. These goals are prioritized and put into feasible development phases to assist City leaders with implementation. The Feasibility Study will be used to guide development and provide recommendations for the use of Capital Construction grant funds through CCCFF.

Following the Planning Phase, the City will apply for Capital Construction funds through the CCCFF program. These funds help the City implement many of the goals outlined in this Study. More detailed information regarding Capital Construction funding through the CCCFF grant program, as well as other funding sources, can be found in the "Grant Funding Opportunities" section of this Study.

The logo for the Nebraska Department of Economic Development features the word "NEBRASKA" in a bold, blue, sans-serif font. A yellow swoosh underline is positioned beneath the letters. To the left of the text, there is a stylized orange outline of a building with arched windows and a lightning bolt above it.

Good Life. Great Opportunity.

DEPT. OF ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

DATA SOURCES

The following paragraphs outline the key data sources utilized during data gathering and analysis. Additional data and local sources were also used during the development of this Study. A portion of the data was accessed through mySidewalk, an online data platform; this data analysis tool brings information together from several data sources into a common platform, allowing for comparisons and strategic analysis. To normalize the data from multiple sources, mySidewalk harmonizes, or recalculates, historic data to fit up-to-date geographical boundaries. Additional data and local sources were also used during the development of this Study.



Decennial Census

Since 1790, every ten years during years ending in zero, the US Census has counted each resident of the country and where they live on April 1st. This mandatory survey determines the number of seats each state has in the House of Representatives. While the decennial census reports basic gender, age, and race data, there is not enough data collected to elaborate on a community's demographic and economic condition. In light of the coronavirus pandemic, the U.S. Census Bureau has adjusted 2020 Census operations and delayed follow-up with nonresponding households; this, in turn, has adjusted the release date of the 2020 Census data. Therefore, this plan uses 2010 data which was reported in 2011.

Environmental Systems Research Institute, Inc. (ESRI)

ESRI reports data similar to the U.S. Census Bureau but also allows each community to enter additional information regarding commercial properties, including vacant lots and buildings. This helps each community and the State of Nebraska market and promote economic development opportunities. ESRI data is reported as estimates utilizing 2010 Census data and marketing forecasts for the associated year. Data in this plan includes 2018 estimates.



American Community Survey (ACS)

Conducted by the U.S. Census Bureau, the ACS supplements the decennial census. This ongoing survey supplies data about the nation and its people on a yearly basis. In contrast to the decennial census, the ACS is only sent to a sample of addresses, about 3.5 million in the 50 states, District of Columbia, and Puerto Rico every year. This survey asks about topics which are not covered in the decennial census including, but not limited to, education, employment, internet access, and transportation. The survey compiles data and reports in 5-year estimates with a margin of error. The estimates produced through this survey help determine the annual distribution of more than \$675 billion in federal and state funds. Data in this study is from the 2015-2019 estimates.

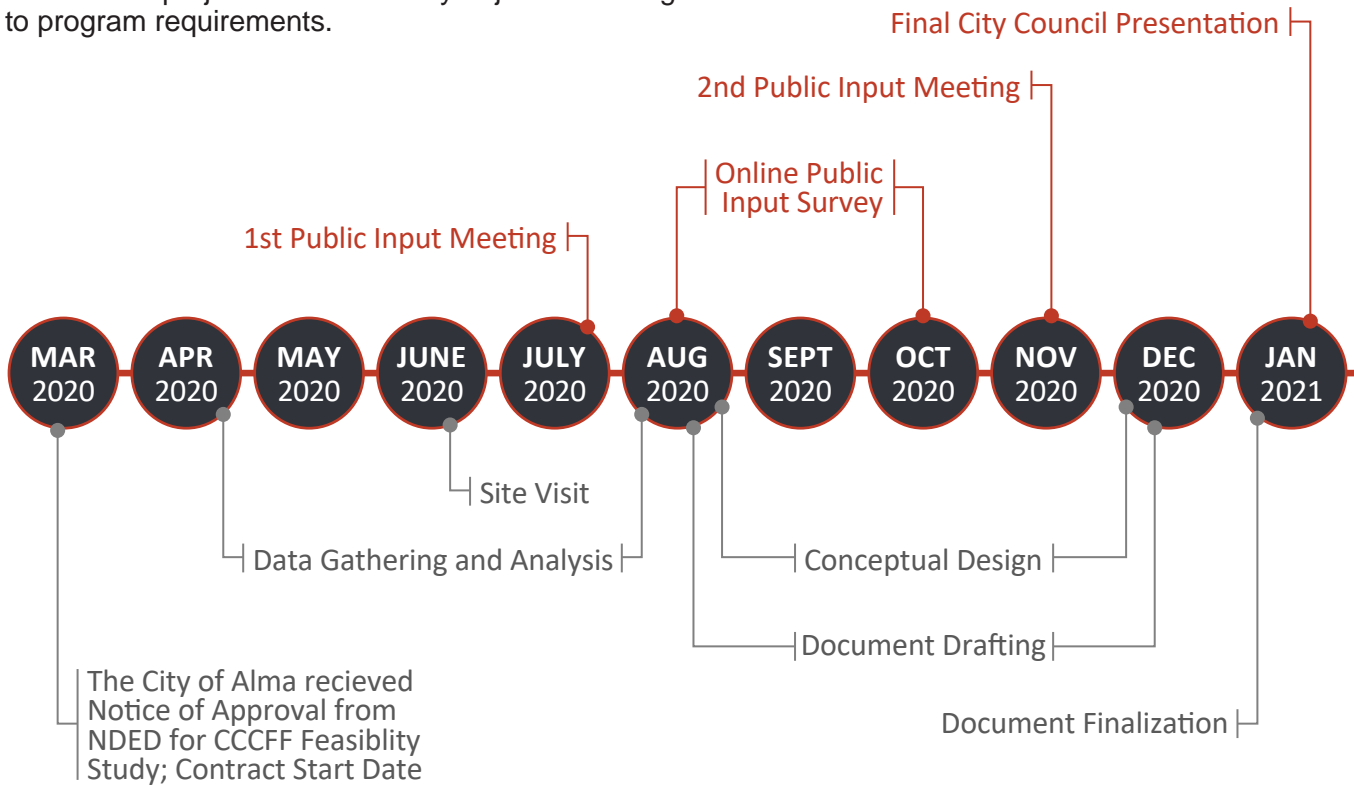
Survey of Public Participation in the Arts (SPPA)

The SPPA is produced jointly by the National Endowment of the Arts' Office of Research and Analysis and the U.S. Census Bureau. The SPPA is conducted approximately every 5 years and features a variety of questions pertaining to participation in the arts. It displays the number and share of U.S. adults who attended performing and visual arts events, read books and literature, and personally performed or created art. The current report spans 2002-2017, reporting from the 2002, 2008, 2012, and 2017 survey years. Information is provided at both the national and state level.

PROJECT TIMELINE

The project timeline below represents both CCCFF grant types - Planning and Construction. Due to the coronavirus pandemic, the 2021 Application Cycle for CCCFF is only awarding planning grants. According to NDED's website, no CCCFF awards were made in 2006-2007 and 2011-2012 because the fund balance could not support new awards.

The project timeline below shows the timeline followed during the development of this feasibility study, with public input highlighted in red. The timeline also shows the next proposed steps for moving forward with the CCCFF Construction grant application process. The timeline assumes the City of Alma will apply for a Construction grant during the 2022 application cycle. The contract term for CCCFF grants is two years from the contract start date with NDED. The projected timeline may adjust according to program requirements.



PROJECT OBJECTIVES

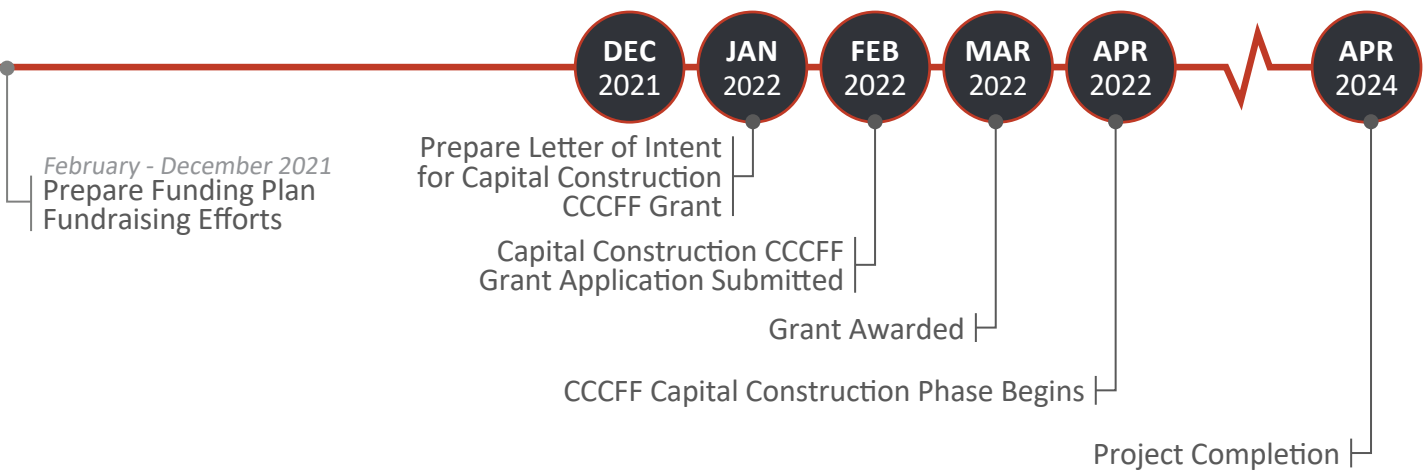
Gather data from primary and secondary sources.

Facilitate two public input meetings to gauge opinions for needs and wants for the City Auditorium, including improvement priorities and desired amenities.

Conduct an online public input survey.

Architectural work to include an evaluation of handicap accessibility, HVAC System, renovation of the kitchen area, fire suppression, and schematic floorplans based on information gathered from public input sessions, data collection, and analysis.

Develop conceptual floorplans and a list of proposed improvements with associated preliminary opinion of probable construction cost.

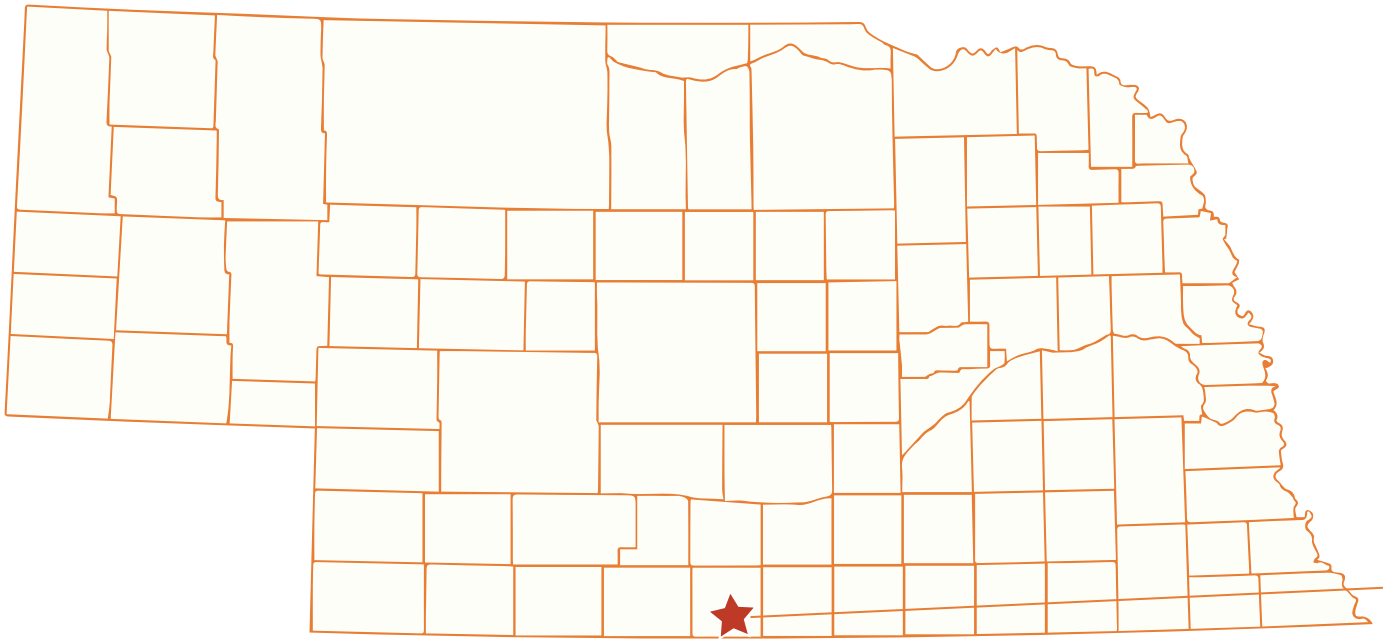


COMMUNITY OVERVIEW

LOCATION

The City of Alma is located at the intersection of Highway 183 and Highway 136 in southcentral Nebraska. As the county seat of Harlan County, Alma hosts several amenities which serve residents from other communities in the County, including Ragan, Huntley, Republican City, Orleans, and Stamford. The City of Alma is also located on the northwestern edge of Harlan County Lake. This lake serves the region as a recreational hot spot in the summer months and provides scenic views year-round.

The Alma City Auditorium is located on Main Street, anchoring the west end of the Downtown District. While the Downtown District is not centrally located within Alma, it still acts as the heart of the community. Nestled on the southern edge of the City, the Downtown District also enjoys scenic views of Harlan County Lake to the South and is accessible to lake traffic.





Not to Scale

PROJECT LOCATION MAP

Alma, Nebraska



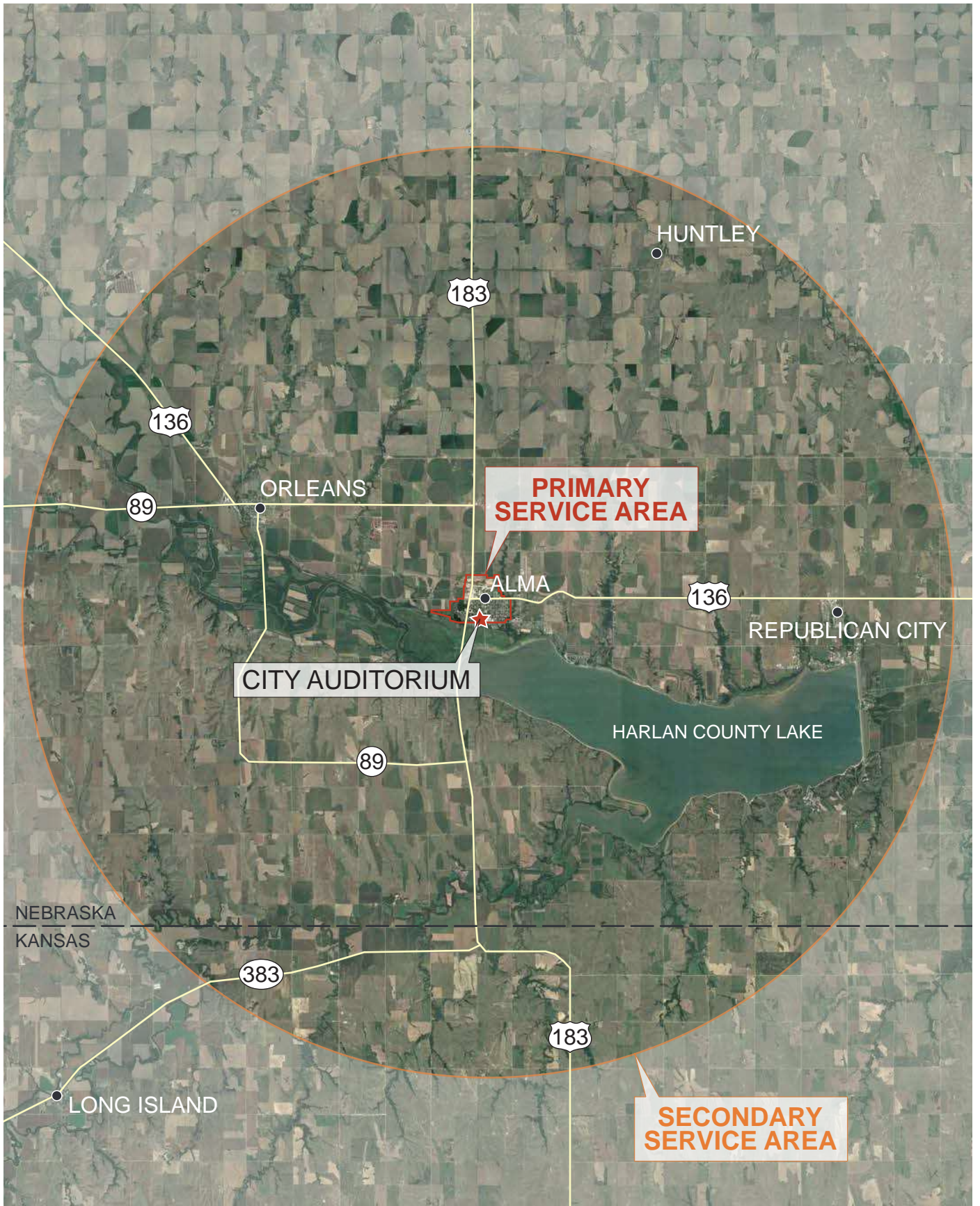
SERVICE AREA

PRIMARY SERVICE AREA

For the purposes of this study, the Primary Service Area is the City of Alma's corporate limits. The City Auditorium and Sale Barn is owned and operated by the City; therefore, the primary decision makers and beneficiaries should be the residents within the corporate limits. According to ACS Estimates, the total population for the City of Alma is approximately 1,293 residents.

SECONDARY SERVICE AREA

The Secondary Service Area is the area located within a 10-mile radius from the City Auditorium; nearly 2,500 people live within this radius. Alma is approximately 25 miles south of Holdrege, a larger community in the area, and less than 10 miles north of the Kansas state line. While there are several smaller communities without the same recreational amenities offered by Alma, people who live farther than 10 miles from Alma may choose to visit a larger community or other regional attractions rather than those discussed in this study.



Not to Scale

SERVICE AREA MAP

Alma, Nebraska

DEMOGRAPHICS

Basic demographic data paints a picture of who is living in Alma, the Primary Service Area for this study. A strong understanding of who is served by the City Auditorium, will help identify and prioritize goals by highlighting which improvements will have the greatest impact.

TAPESTRY SEGMENTATION

Environmental Systems Research Institute, Inc. (ESRI) created the Tapestry Segmentation System which divides U.S. residential areas into sixty-seven distinctive segments based on socioeconomic and demographic characteristics to provide an accurate, detailed description of U.S. neighborhoods. Tapestry Segmentation can help people identify the best markets, find the most profitable consumer types, tailor marketing messages, and define product and service performances. This information is also helpful in identifying what might be the predominant uses for a recreation and community center.

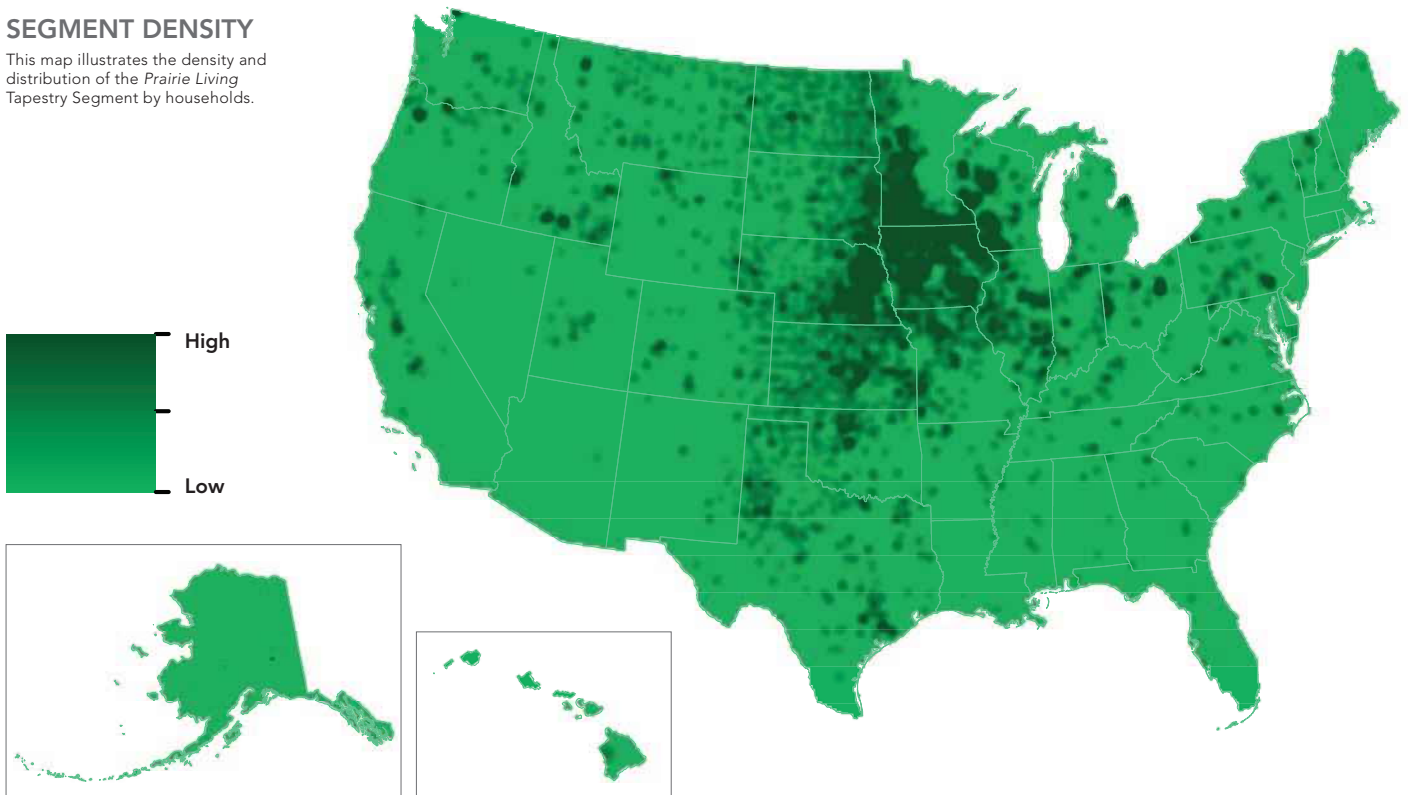
The Primary and Secondary Service Areas, along with most of the surrounding region are all classified under the Prairie Living Segmentation, which is part of the Cozy Country Living Life Mode. The description on the following page depicts the generalities of Alma's citizen group as classified by ESRI. Members of this segmentation are community oriented, supporting local businesses and participating in community activities. People in this segmentation are also likely to utilize recreational amenities and support local events.



**TAPESTRY
SEGMENTATION**
esri.com/tapestry

SEGMENT DENSITY

This map illustrates the density and distribution of the *Prairie Living* Tapestry Segment by households.



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THE
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LifeMode Group: Cozy Country Living
Prairie Living

6D

Households: 1,323,200

Average Household Size: 2.51

Median Age: 44.4

Median Household Income: \$54,300

WHO ARE WE?

Prairie Living is Tapestry Segmentation's most rural market, comprising about 1.2 percent of households, located mainly in the Midwest, with a predominance of self-employed farmers. These agricultural communities are not diverse, dominated by married-couple families that own single-family dwellings and many vehicles. Median household income is similar to the US, and labor force participation is slightly higher. Faith is important to this hardworking market. When they find time to relax, they favor outdoor activities.

OUR NEIGHBORHOOD

- About four-fifths of households are owner occupied.
- Dominant household type is married-couples with no children.
- Most are single-family homes (87%) built before 1980; a higher proportion were built before 1940 (Index 218).
- Higher percentage of vacant housing units is at 16.5% (Index 146).
- Most households own 2 or 3 vehicles; this is the highest ranked market for owning 4 or more vehicles.

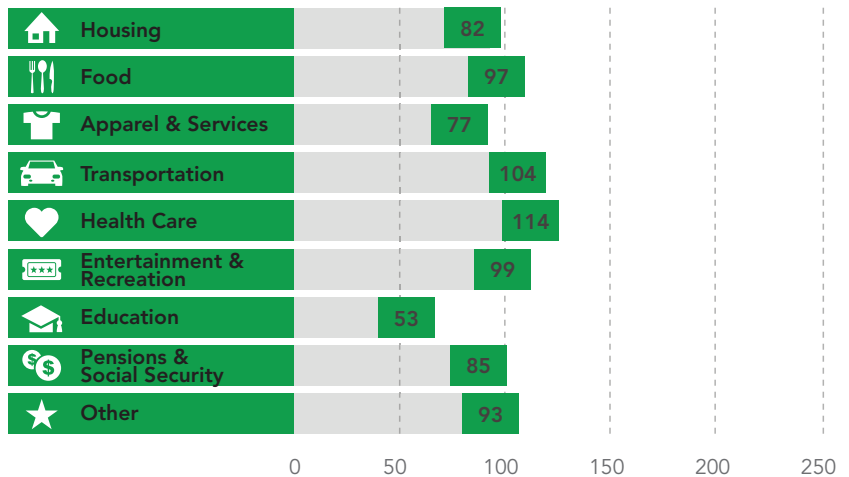
SOCIOECONOMIC TRAITS

- More than half have completed some college education or hold a degree.
- At 2.9%, the unemployment rate is almost less than half the US rate.
- Labor force participation rate slightly higher at 65%.
- Wage and salary income for 72% of households plus self-employment income for 23% (Index 217).
- Faith and religion are important to these residents.
- Tend to buy things when they need them, rather than when they want them or to be trendy.
- Somewhat resistant to new technology.
- Creatures of habit when purchasing food items.

Note: The Index represents the ratio of the segment rate to the US rate multiplied by 100. Consumer preferences are estimated from data by GfK MRI.

AVERAGE HOUSEHOLD BUDGET INDEX

The index compares the average amount spent in this market's household budgets for housing, food, apparel, etc., to the average amount spent by all US households. An index of 100 is average. An index of 120 shows that average spending by consumers in this market is 20 percent above the national average. Consumer expenditures are estimated by Esri.



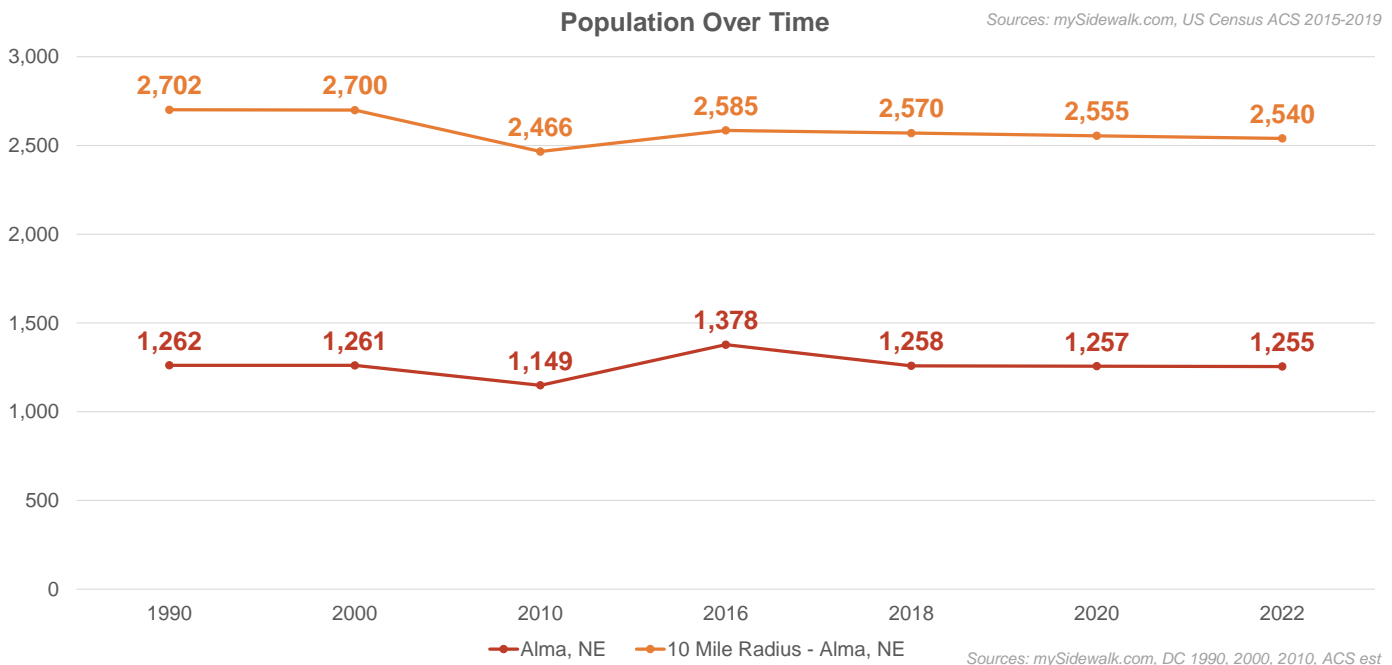
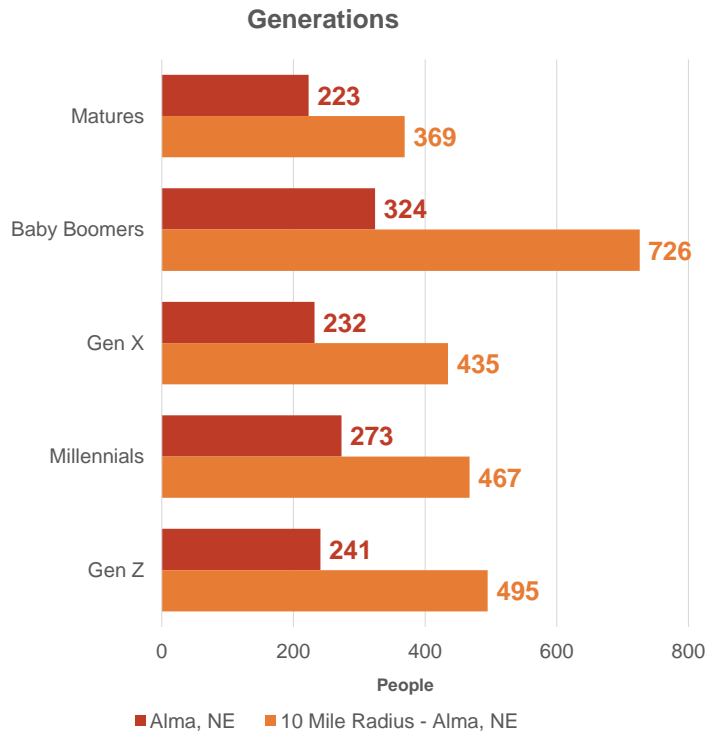
Source: esri.com/tapestry.

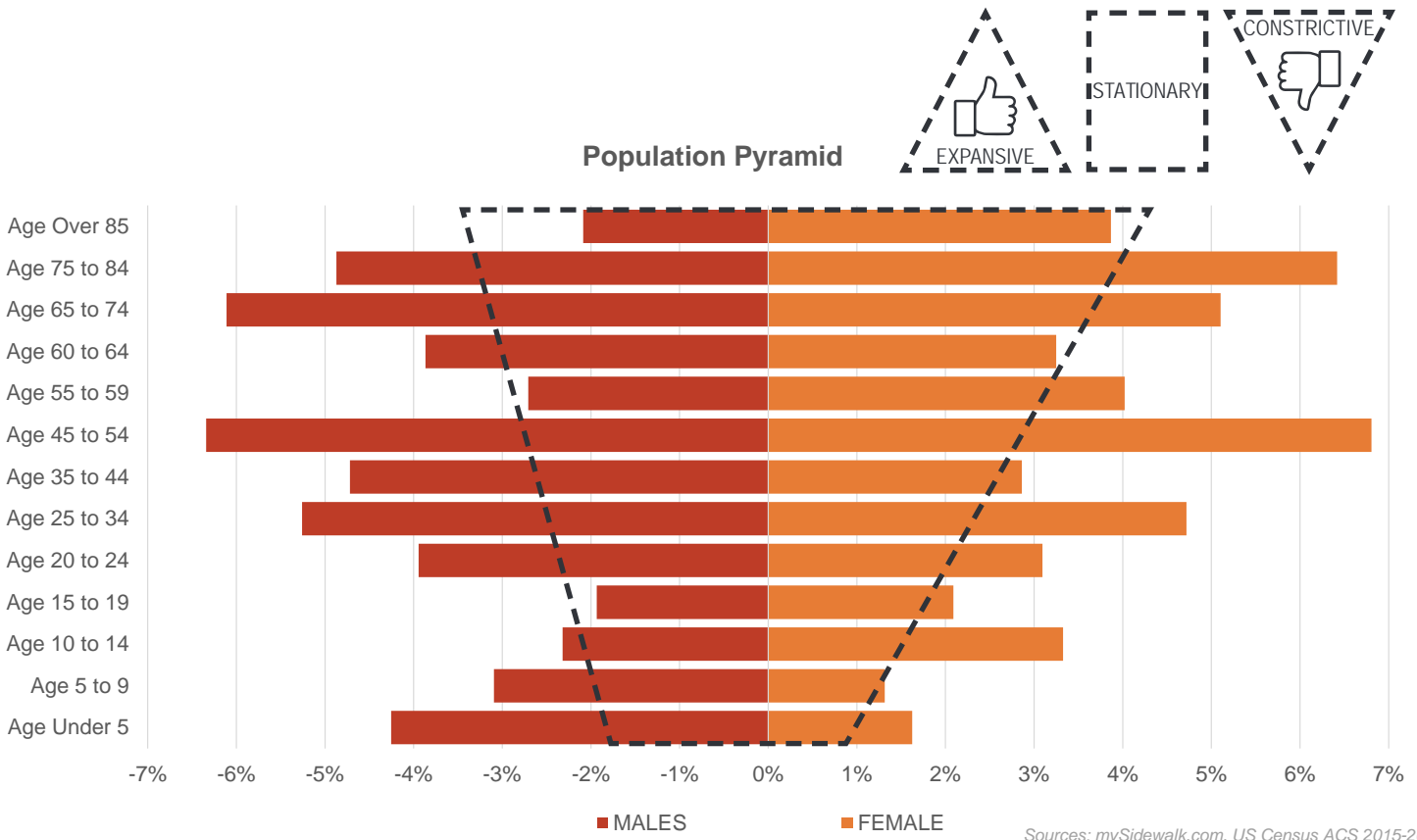
POPULATION

Data from the 1990, 2000, and 2010 decennial censuses and 2015-2019 ACS estimates, harmonized to current corporate boundaries, show the Primary Service Area's total population as approximately 1,262; 1,261; 1,149; and 1,293 residents respectively. This means the total population has remained relatively stable over the past 30 years, while the Secondary Service Area has experienced a slight decline in population. To understand the City's development needs, decision makers should continue to monitor the City's population trends when the 2020 Census data and other data is released in the future.

To effectively maintain and grow the population base, the City should make development decisions based on the needs of its residents. People's needs and expectations from a community change relative to their age and station in life. Understanding the different age groups present in a community along with these groups' general needs will help decision makers prioritize improvement goals. Understanding the age cohorts of the Primary Service Area will also help determine which improvements to the City Auditorium will have the biggest impact.

The largest generational group in both service areas is Baby Boomers. According to the US Census, the Baby Boomer generation includes adults born between 1946 and 1964. The generation earned its name from the dramatic post-WWII birth rate increase which earmarks this age cohort. At an estimated 73 million people, this generation is second only to Millennials, born from 1982 to 2000, in overall population size. By 2030, all members of this generation will be age 65 or older, meaning a large portion of the nation's population will be what is generally accepted as retirement age.





When planning for the City Auditorium’s future, the needs of a retired or semi-retired population should be taken into consideration. According to American Association of Retired Persons (AARP), an interest group focused on adults over the age of fifty, the needs of this age group align well with the younger age groups, which help sustain a population:

The great news is that many of the community characteristics older adults seek are the same ones that attract younger adults and make communities more economically vibrant and successful. Boomers and millennials alike share an affinity for places which offer a shorter commute, proximity to shops and services, a mix of homes, a mix of incomes, and robust public transit options.

While not all of these pull factors are feasible in a community of Alma’s size, it is possible to supplement these services with other attractions like a variety of arts and entertainment options. There are many great resources, including AARP, which help communities prepare and build for people of all ages. Age-based programming for this older generation will encourage high attendance numbers, because the events and activities appeal to a large portion of the population.

A further breakdown of the age cohorts, for male and female residents in the Primary Service Area, is shown in the Population Pyramid. A self-sustaining population will have a large base of children and young adults with a much smaller number of older adults; a stationary population will show a relatively even distribution of all age cohorts; and a constrictive population will appear as an inverted triangle with more older adults than the younger cohorts. Most rural Nebraska communities have a stationary or constrictive population pyramid. It is much easier for a community to grow with a strong base of younger residents because those residents are more likely to stay in the community and add to the population over time.

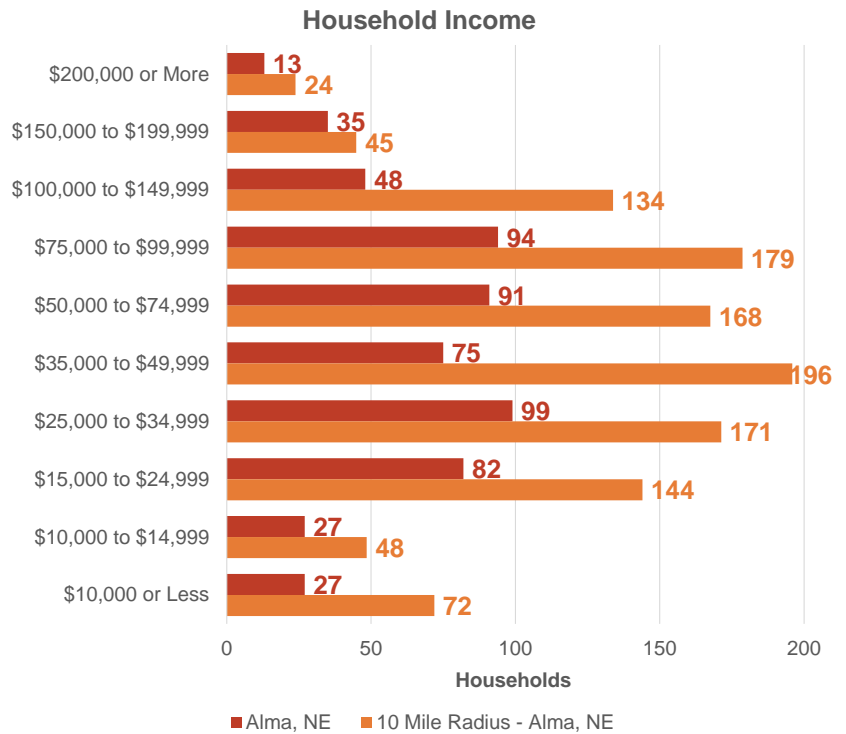
The Population Pyramid for the Primary Service Area shows an overall stationary to constrictive population composition. If this shape is maintained into the future, Alma’s population will most likely experience an overall decline. The community should consider ways to attract young families and grow the base of the Population Pyramid. The City Auditorium improvements should create a space which can successfully host various events – those which attract their largest, older generational group and events aimed at attracting a new, younger population base to the community.

HOUSEHOLD CHARACTERISTICS

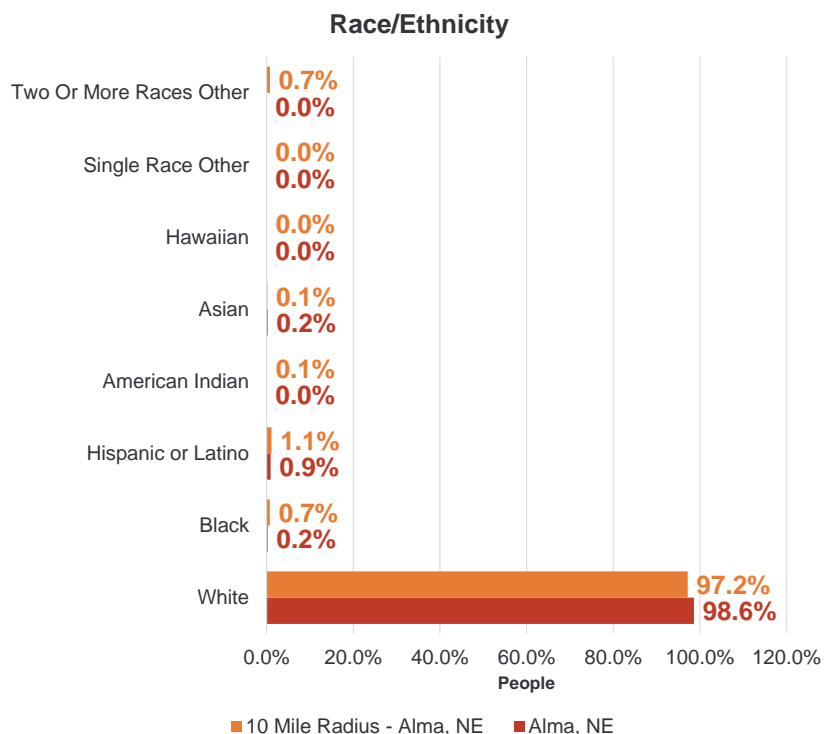
Household income levels can impact residents' access to community amenities. Alma's Median Household Income is \$48,606, which is slightly higher than the Secondary Service Area at \$45,702 and lower than Harlan County at \$49,835. These numbers are over \$10,000 lower than the Nebraska Median Household Income, \$61,439. While the Median Household Incomes in the area are lower than that of the State, 67% of Alma's residents and 68% of residents in the Secondary Service Area have an income over 200% of the poverty level.

Approximately 15% of residents in Alma and 13% of residents in the Secondary Service Area live below the poverty level. When planning for future development, it is important to consider the needs and access of these residents to amenities in the community. Caring Cupboard is currently housed in the portion of the building which was originally the Sale Barn. This is a community service organization aimed at serving residents in the lower income brackets.

Racial/Ethnicity breakdowns can also shape the types of community amenities needed. Different cultures may celebrate events in different ways or enjoy different types of entertainment. The Primary and Secondary Service Areas are both predominately White "(Not Hispanic or Latino)"; all other race/ethnicity totals account for less than 5% of the population in both service areas. While these numbers do not reflect much diversity in Ethnicity and Race, the needs of these minority groups should also be taken into consideration when planning for future development of the City Auditorium.



Sources: mySidewalk.com, US Census ACS 2015-2019

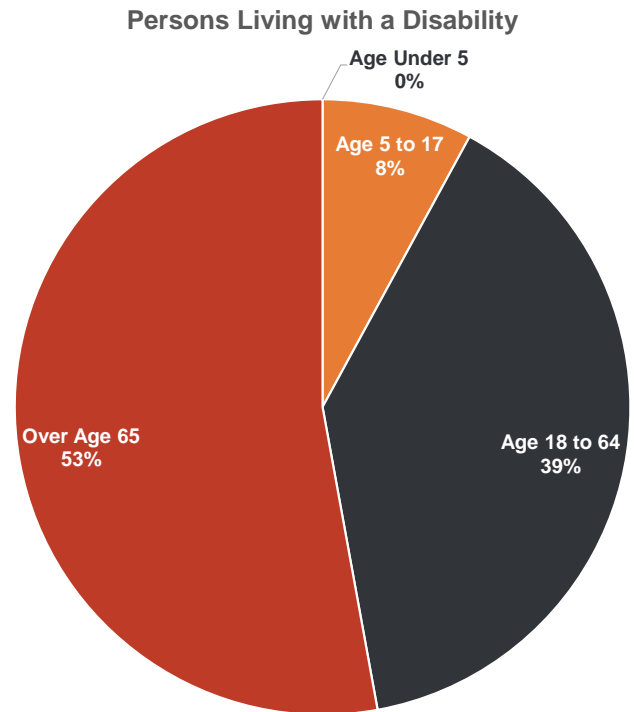


Sources: mySidewalk.com, US Census ACS 2015-2019

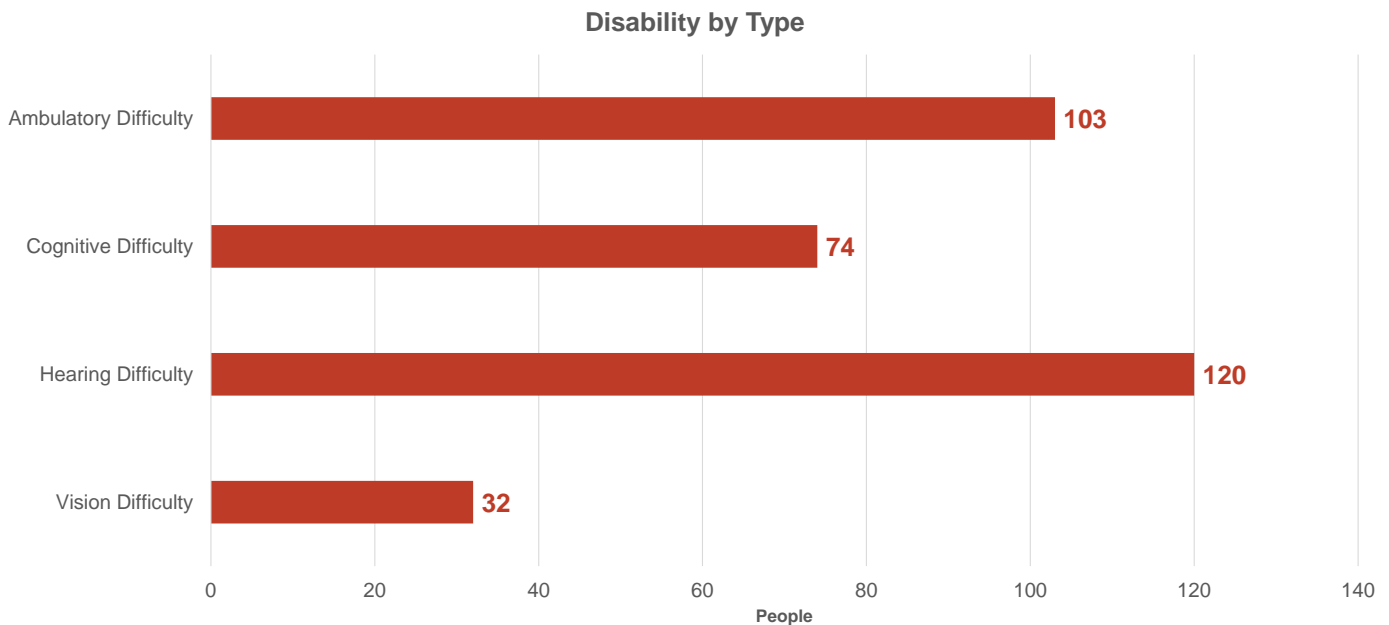
ACCESSIBILITY

According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), 61 million adults in the United States live with a disability; this accounts for 26% of the adult population. These disabilities have far-reaching impacts on the design, development, and maintenance of community amenities. An estimated 227 Alma residents currently live with a disability, with almost 53% of those individuals being older than 65 years.

Over half of the population living with a disability report hearing difficulty. Improvements to the City Auditorium’s sound system and acoustics could increase accessibility of events for this population. Nearly half of the population living with a disability report ambulatory difficulty. This could cause accessibility concerns with the City Auditorium. When financially feasible, accessibility requirements should be followed for improvements made to the City Auditorium.



Sources: mySidewalk.com, US Census ACS 2015-2019



Sources: mySidewalk.com, US Census ACS 2015-2019

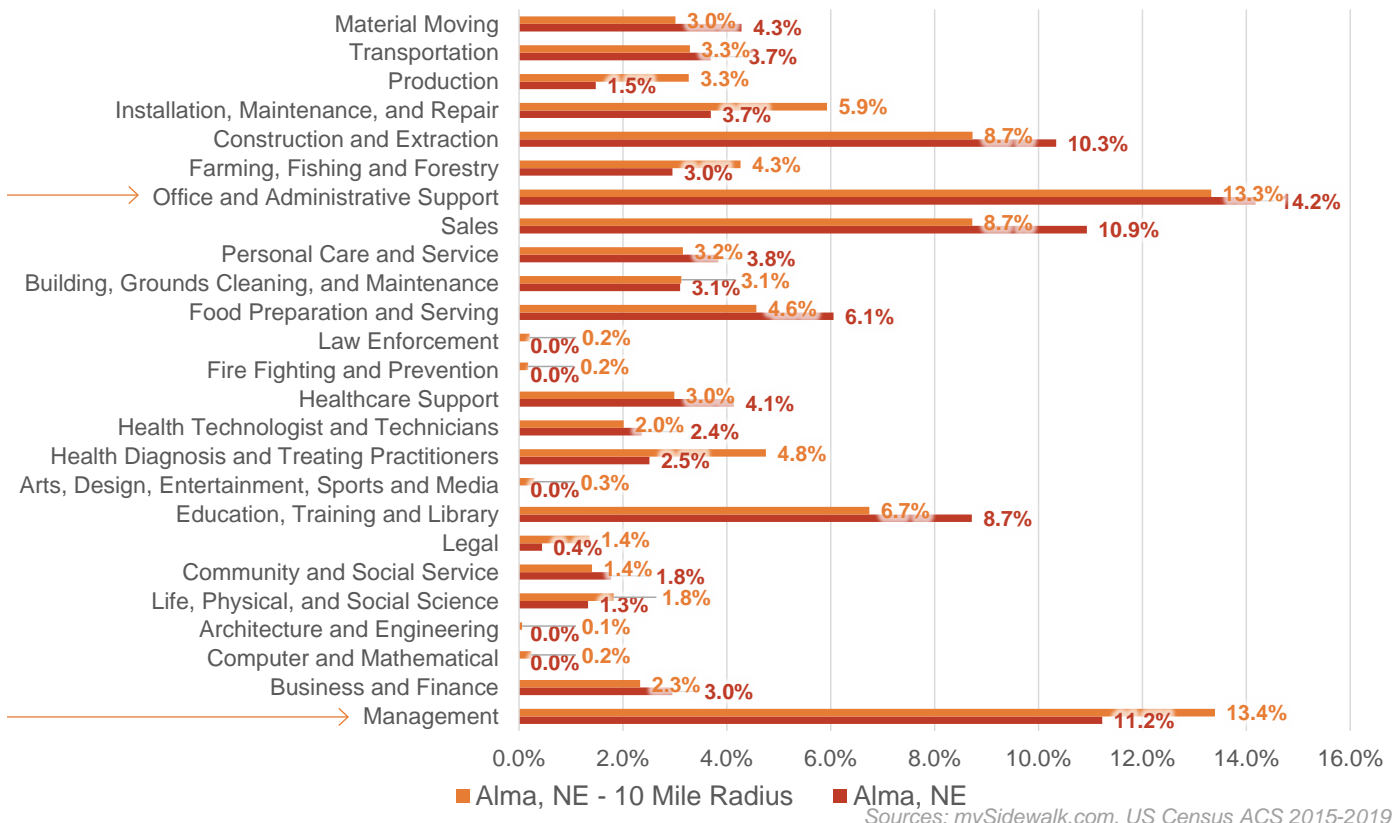
MARKET ORIENTATION

BUSINESS AND EMPLOYMENT

According to ACS data, with a Working Population Age 16 and Over of 659 people, an estimated 677 people are currently employed in the Primary Service Area with no people reporting as unemployed. The Secondary Service Area has a very low unemployment rate of less than 1%, with a total Working Population Age 16 and Over of 1,200 people. These numbers are estimates and may have altered due to the coronavirus pandemic.

The highest occupation categories in both the Primary and Secondary Service Areas are Office and Administrative Support and Management. Generally, these occupation types both follow a traditional, 8am – 5pm schedule. This could affect potential programming at the City Auditorium, with night-time and weekend hours being more flexible for a majority of the population.

Employment by Occupation Type



SUPPORTING SERVICES

Lodging

If the community wants to host large events at the City Auditorium, quality lodging options should be available. With its location near Harlan County Lake, a summer tourist destination, the community has several available options for lodging including the following:

- Arrow Lodge Motel
- Super 8 by Wyndham Alma
- Western Holiday Motel

There are also options for short-term rentals on vacation rental sites like Airbnb and Vrbo. These accommodations can support a large number of visitors in the area for potential programming at the City Auditorium.



LODGING MAP

Alma, Nebraska



Dining and Retail

Sufficient dining and retail opportunities are vital to supporting events which attract visitors to the community. The Retail MarketPlace (RMP) Profile uses 2017 North American Industry Classification System (NAICS) data to measure the balance between retail businesses' generated retail sales (supply) and the retail potential produced by households (demand). The comparisons are split into industry sectors based on the NAICS code for each business. The resulting values, from -100 to +100, represent the Leakage/Surplus Factor for each sector.

The Leakage/Surplus Factor is a simple way to identify business opportunity in a given area. Leakage, indicated by a positive number, represents a condition where demand exceeds supply; retailers outside the market area are fulfilling the demand for market products because the demand is not being fulfilled within the market area. This condition highlights an opportunity for retailers to enter a trade area. A Surplus, indicated by a negative number, means the supply in a certain market area exceeds the area's demand.

The RMP for Alma shows a surplus, or negative number, in the Food Services and Drinking Places category. This means the retail sales reported in this sector are higher than the reported household spending for the same sector. Customers are drawn in from outside of the trade area to spend money on Food Services and Drinking Places. A further breakdown of the sector shows there is opportunity for either new Restaurants/Other Eating Places to open or existing businesses to expand. Expanding these services will also help support the needs of visitors attending certain events at the City Auditorium.

This analysis does not indicate existing retail operations in Alma are inadequate, it simply shows an opportunity for growth and development in the community. Expanding existing businesses and adding new inventory are a few ways existing retail stores could progress to meet more needs of Alma's residents.

RETAIL MARKETPLACE PROFILE

Alma, Nebraska 2017

2017 NAICS INDUSTRY GROUP	DEMAND (RETAIL POTENTIAL)	SUPPLY (RETAIL SALES)	RETAIL GAP	LEAKAGE/ SURPLUS FACTOR
Total Retail Trade and Food & Drink	\$17,614,801	\$17,263,859	\$350,942	1
Total Retail Trade	\$16,266,020	\$15,411,859	\$854,161	2.7
Total Food & Drink	\$1,348,781	\$1,852,000	-\$503,219	-15.7
<i>Motor Vehicle & Parts Dealers</i>	\$3,838,741	\$4,476,007	-\$637,266	-7.7
<i>Automobile Dealers</i>	\$3,233,458	\$3,583,266	-\$349,808	-5.1
<i>Other Motor Vehicle Dealers</i>	\$303,566	\$0	\$303,566	100
<i>Auto Parts, Accessories & Tire Stores</i>	\$301,717	\$892,741	-\$591,024	-49.5
<i>Furniture & Home Furnishing Stores</i>	\$337,514	\$139,217	\$198,297	41.6
<i>Furniture Stores</i>	\$247,581	\$139,217	\$108,364	28
<i>Home Furnishings Stores</i>	\$89,933	\$0	\$89,933	100
<i>Electronics & Appliance Stores</i>	\$517,956	\$0	\$517,956	100
<i>Bldg Materials, Garden Equip. & Supply Stores</i>	\$1,273,546	\$901,021	\$372,525	17.1
<i>Bldg Material & Supplies Dealers</i>	\$1,137,166	\$901,021	\$236,145	11.6
<i>Lawn & Garden Equip & Supply Stores</i>	\$136,380	\$0	\$136,380	100
<i>Food & Beverage Stores</i>	\$2,907,684	\$4,173,769	-\$1,266,085	-17.9
<i>Grocery Stores</i>	\$2,621,958	\$3,428,371	-\$806,413	-13.3
<i>Specialty Food Stores</i>	\$145,422	\$0	\$145,422	100
<i>Beer, Wine & Liquor Stores</i>	\$140,304	\$745,398	-\$605,094	-68.3
<i>Health & Personal Care Stores</i>	\$1,045,572	\$1,201,111	-\$155,539	-6.9
<i>Gasoline Stations</i>	\$1,880,215	\$2,552,072	-\$671,857	-15.2
<i>Clothing & Clothing Accessories Stores</i>	\$448,793	\$373,835	\$74,958	9.1
<i>Clothing Stores</i>	\$302,930	\$373,835	-\$70,905	-10.5
<i>Shoe Stores</i>	\$61,594	\$0	\$61,594	100
<i>Jewelry, Luggage & Leather Goods Stores</i>	\$84,269	\$0	\$84,269	100
<i>Sporting Goods, Hobby, Book & Music Stores</i>	\$540,095	\$0	\$540,095	100
<i>Sporting Goods/Hobby/Musical Instr Stores</i>	\$491,910	\$0	\$491,910	100
<i>Book, Periodical & Music Stores</i>	\$48,185	\$0	\$48,185	100
<i>General Merchandise Stores</i>	\$2,356,909	\$1,332,994	\$1,023,915	27.7
<i>Department Stores Excluding Leased Depts.</i>	\$1,891,729	\$0	\$1,891,729	100
<i>Other General Merchandise Stores</i>	\$465,180	\$1,332,994	-\$867,814	-48.3
<i>Miscellaneous Store Retailers</i>	\$910,819	\$261,833	\$648,986	55.3
<i>Florists</i>	\$26,246	\$124,338	-\$98,092	-65.1
<i>Office Supplies, Stationery & Gift Stores</i>	\$172,758	\$0	\$172,758	100
<i>Used Merchandise Stores</i>	\$65,542	\$137,495	-\$71,953	-35.4
<i>Other Miscellaneous Store Retailers</i>	\$646,273	\$0	\$646,273	100
<i>Nonstore Retailers</i>	\$208,176	\$0	\$208,176	100
<i>Electronic Shopping & Mail-Order Houses</i>	\$136,512	\$0	\$136,512	100
<i>Vending Machine Operators</i>	\$5,883	\$0	\$5,883	100
<i>Direct Selling Establishments</i>	\$65,781	\$0	\$65,781	100
<i>Food Services & Drinking</i>	\$1,348,781	\$1,852,000	-\$503,219	-15.7
<i>Special Food Services</i>	\$42,628	\$0	\$42,628	100
<i>Drinking Places - Alcoholic Beverages</i>	\$105,518	\$0	\$105,518	100
<i>Restaurants/Other Eating Places</i>	\$1,200,635	\$1,852,000	-\$651,365	-21.3

Source: Esri and Infogroup. Esri 2020 Updated Demographics. Esri 2017 Retail MarketPlace. ©2020 Esri. ©2017 Infogroup, Inc. All rights reserved.

PUBLIC SUPPORT

Public input and support are key aspects of any community-based improvement project. The public input process transforms community members from spectators to invested creators. The public input meeting provides a forum for community members to voice their concerns, provide ideas, and discuss goals and objectives. It is important for the community to take ownership of the issues and goals highlighted during this process.

The planning process for this Feasibility Study heavily emphasizes the public input process to gain champions within the community for the ongoing maintenance and development of the City Auditorium. The public input meetings during this planning process are the spine of this Study, informing the types of improvements proposed, the goals developed, and the priorities for the City Auditorium. Because the community helps shape this Study, people should view the meetings as a tool, not a mere formality or requirement. Additional notes from the public input meetings are provided in “Appendix B: Public Input Meeting Notes”.

FIRST PUBLIC INPUT MEETING

The First Public Input Meeting was a town hall-style meeting held in the Alma City Auditorium on July 28th, 2020. The purpose of this meeting was to act as an introduction between community members and the project team. The meeting began with a brief presentation outlining the general scope of the project. The presentation included the following topics – Introductions, Grant Basics, Project Approach, Community Profile, Project Significance, City Auditorium.

At the end of the presentation, attendees participated in a question-and-answer discussion. Initially, the project team asked questions about the City Auditorium and project scope, which were answered by the audience. When asked about the Auditorium’s best characteristics, the unique mezzanine, historic look and feel of the building, beautiful tin ceilings, and presence of a kitchen were all mentioned as strengths. These characteristics should be preserved and enhanced as the community moves forward with improvement projects.

DISCUSSION TOPICS

Past Events

Next, discussion centered around successful events at the Auditorium in the past and future events the space should accommodate. The list of successful past and ongoing events included:

- Annual/Semi-Annual Events
 - Alma High School Prom
 - Chamber of Commerce Fundraisers
 - Pheasants Forever and Ducks Unlimited Fundraisers
- On-going/Scheduled Events
 - Roller Skating
 - Wedding Receptions
- Past Events (They would like to see return)
 - Family Christmas Concert
 - Other Music and Theater Shows
 - Exercise Classes

New Events

During this discussion, it was reiterated that this is the only venue in town large enough to host many of the large community events. Residents understand the value of the City Auditorium to their quality of life and want to keep this amenity in the community. Attendees also mentioned several ideas for additional events and programming at the City Auditorium:

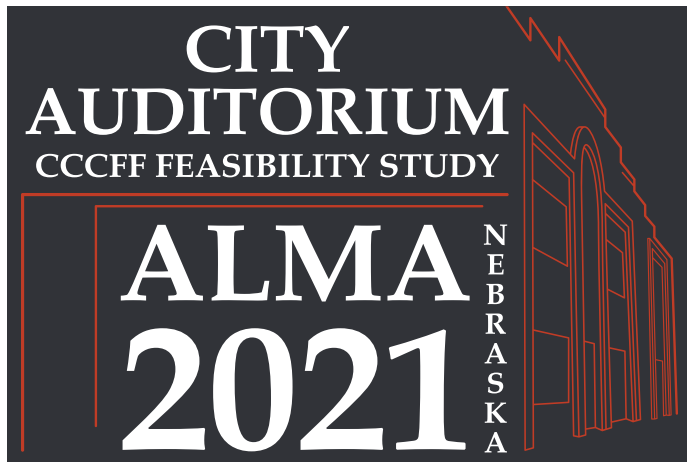
- Flea Market
- Auction Events
- Youth Sports
- Community Programs
- Family Reunions
- Music and Theater Events

PUBLIC INPUT MEETING

July 28th | 6:00 pm
at the City Auditorium

Discussion Topics:

CCCFF Feasibility Study Process
Community Vision
Desired Amenities & Potential Improvements



This meeting is hosted by the City of Alma, Miller & Associates, and Wilkins ADP.

Improvement Wish List

As improvement projects are planned, the specific logistical needs of these events should be considered. Planning for existing and future uses will help encourage continued use of the City Auditorium. Additionally, attendees brainstormed the following improvements for the building:

- Kitchen & Bathrooms
- Sound System
- Electrical
- Stage Lighting
- Storage Space for Table and Chairs
- Retractable Basketball Hoops
- General Maintenance (i.e. Brick Tuckpointing)
- Clean and Useable Basement
- Addition of Dressing Rooms and Lockers
- A Smaller Meeting Space on Stage

While not all of these improvements may be feasible financially, functionally, or spatially, it is important to develop a wish list of ideas. This helps the public talk through and understand why certain ideas may not happen. For instance, when the idea to clean up the basement was mentioned, another attendee responded that the area is currently being used as Christmas storage for the City. If use of the basement area was planned for something else, everything in storage would need a new home.

Following the brainstorming session, discussion covered various topics including the architectural process, historic preservation, and if the bat problem had been resolved. Then, the project team walked through the next steps in the planning process and encouraged attendees to take the online public input survey.

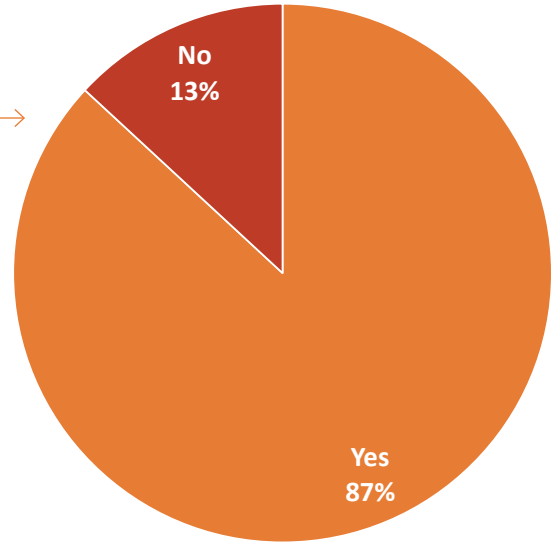
ONLINE PUBLIC INPUT SURVEY

An online survey was conducted mid-August to mid-October of 2020, as part of the planning process for this feasibility study. Hard copies of the survey were also available at the City Office to increase accessibility for residents. Flyers were used to market the survey in prominent locations around Alma and on the City’s website. A total of 71 respondents participated in the public input survey, accounting for over 5% of the Primary Service Area’s total population. The survey logged the following results:

SURVEY RESULTS

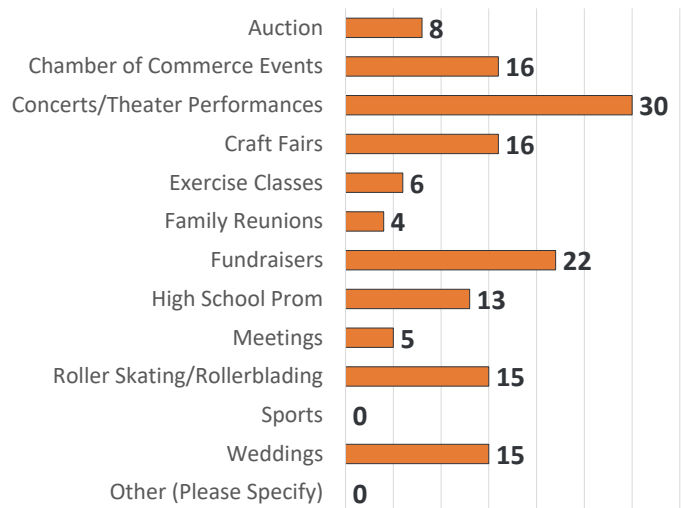
Have you attended an event at the City Auditorium in the past year?

A majority (87%) of respondents attended an event at the City Auditorium in the past year. This shows the Auditorium is well-used, which means improvements will directly benefit members of the community. It also most likely increases the residents’ understanding of the building’s improvement needs. If people have attended recent events in the space, they have first-hand experience of how the building functions and its current condition.



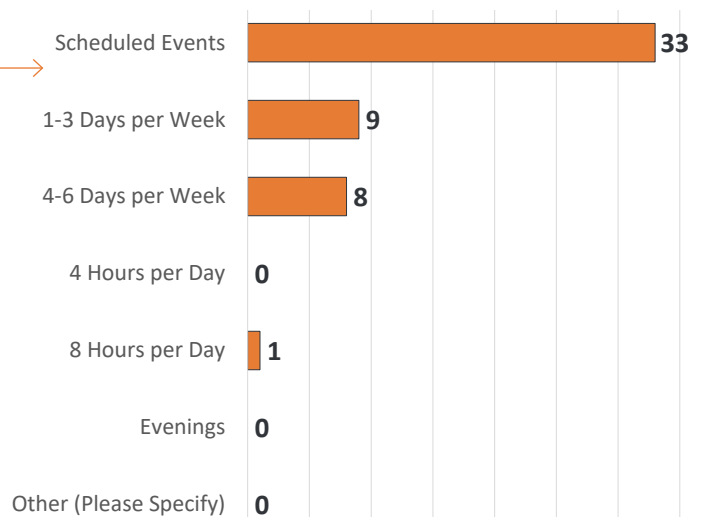
What are the 3 most successful events held at the City Auditorium that you would like to see hosted there in the future?

Concerts/Theater Performances is the highest-ranking event category which residents would like to see hosted at the City Auditorium in the future, followed by Fundraisers. While both of these are scheduled events, they may require the City Auditorium to function very differently. For example, a fundraiser may need a flexible gathering space for tables with chairs and a large kitchen area for serving meals. A theater performance requires better acoustics and the potential for stage lighting. The City Auditorium will need to be designed with flexible programming for a variety of uses.



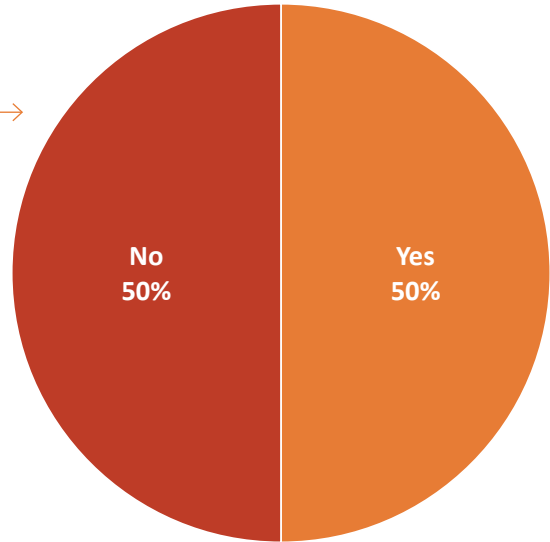
With staffing in mind, when should the City Auditorium be available to the Public?

Nearly two-thirds of respondents believe the building should only be open for scheduled events. Currently, the City Clerk is responsible for the administration of the Alma City Auditorium and the Johnson Center; both spaces are open for scheduled events only. A majority of respondents want the hours of operation to continue functioning this way. Other top-selected responses were “1-6 Days per Week” and “4-6 Days per Week”, respectively. These two options would most likely require additional staffing for the facility.



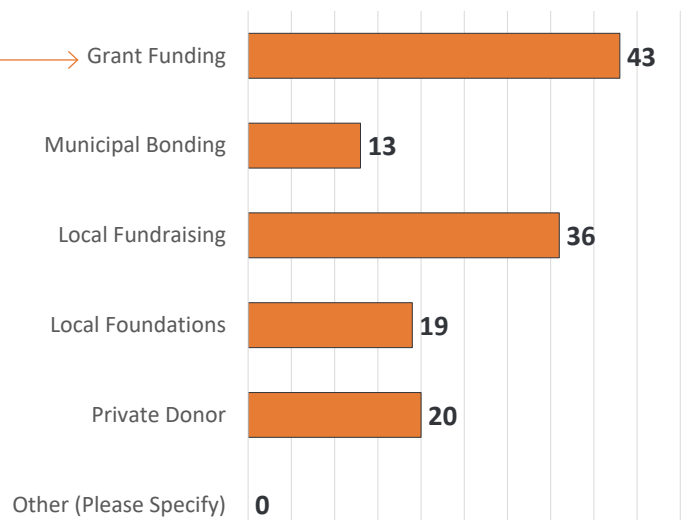
Would you support a minor tax increase to fund on-going facility costs?

While this response was split directly in half, the result shows people are not completely against a tax increase. If needed, this may be a funding option for the City to explore in the future.



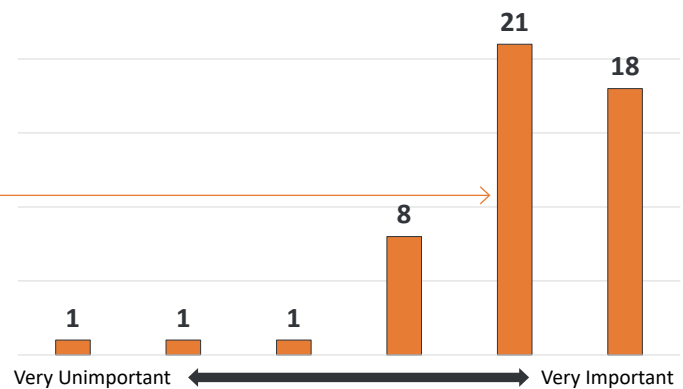
Which funding opportunities are you most willing to support? Please check all that apply.

This Study is the result of the City of Alma seeking grant funds to improve the City Auditorium; the City is already fulfilling the top response for this question, to seek “Grant Funding”. The Construction grant through the CCCFF program requires a 50% local match. The second highest response, “Local Fundraising”, could be a viable solution for a portion of the matching funds. This response shows a sense of pride in the community and a belief that community members will come together to support the project. It also points to the roots of the City Auditorium since the original building was substantially funded with monetary pledges from Alma’s residents.



With a 200-chair capacity, the City Auditorium is the largest venue available for public rental on a regular basis in Alma. How important is this event space to the quality of life for Alma’s residents?

Respondents ranked having a large event space as very important to the quality of life in Alma. The City Auditorium must be maintained and improved to continue serving the community in this manner.

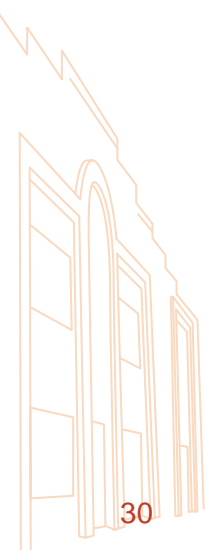
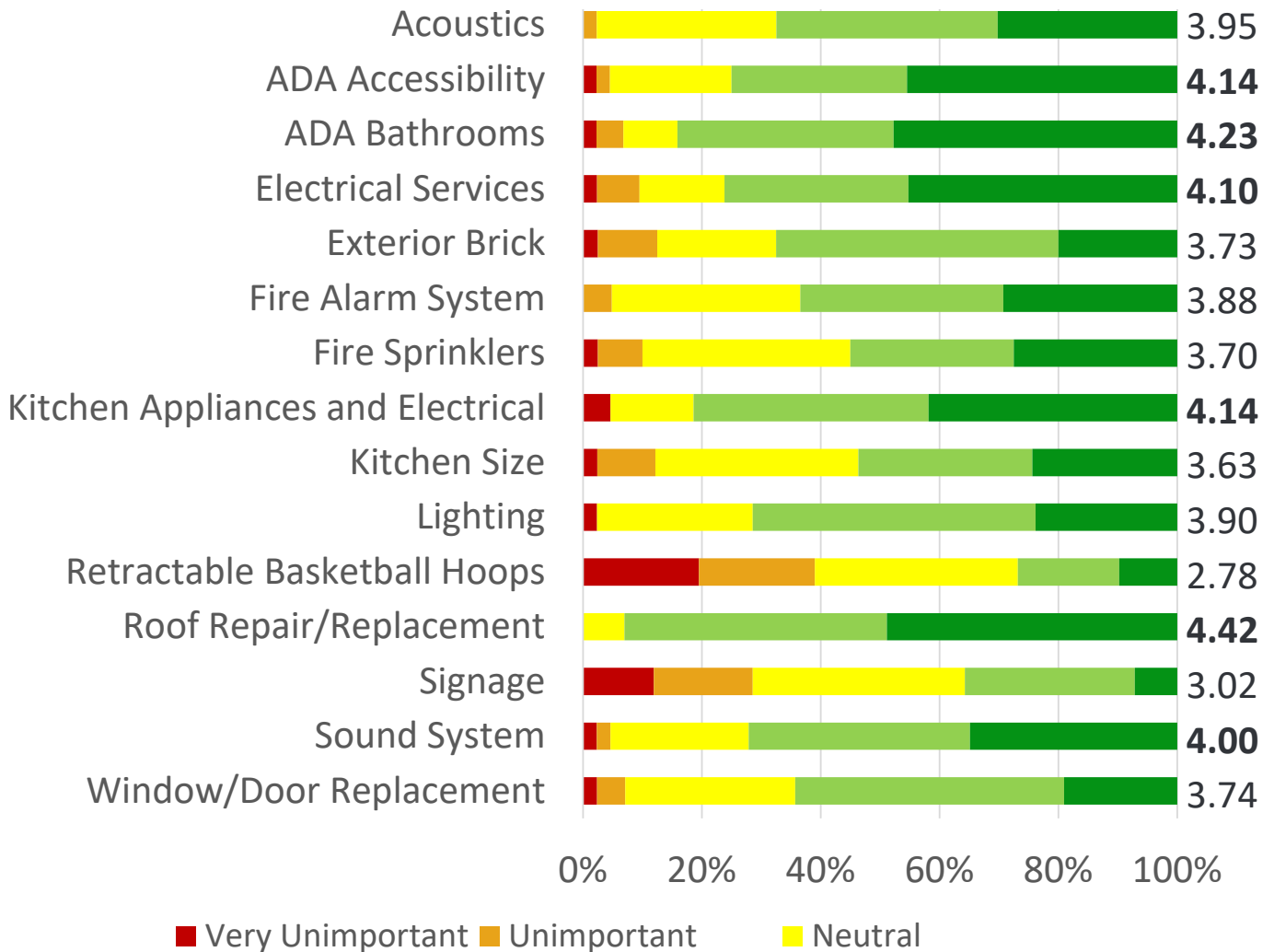


Please rate the importance of the following improvements in the City Auditorium.

According to responses, the highest priority improvements are Roof Repair/ Replacement, ADA Bathrooms, ADA Accessibility, Kitchen Appliances and Electrical, Electrical Services, and the Sound System. These are all very logical and realistic improvements for the City Auditorium. They show a desire to improve the function of the building while also ensuring general maintenance is performed.

Do you have any additional comments regarding improvements to Alma's City Auditorium?

Many comments in this section focus on the importance of maintaining the building for both its historic significance and the future of Alma. A few other comments highlight the importance of this being a community-based project and keeping rent affordable. Additional, specific amenities and improvements are outlined in this section. A full listing of survey responses is located in "Appendix C: Public Input Survey Results".



SECOND PUBLIC INPUT MEETING

The Second Public Input meeting was held on November 17th, 2020. To ensure everyone was on the same page, the project team started the meeting by providing a brief recap of the First Public Input Meeting and presented results from the Online Public Input Survey. Attendees confirmed the survey results supported their priorities for the City Auditorium. Next, the project team presented proposed improvements for the building based on the existing conditions analysis and public input findings. The Opinion of Probable Cost was presented with discussion following.

To increase public access, the presentation was shared on the City’s website after the meeting. A survey link was also provided to gain additional input from attendees and residents who were not present at the meeting.

DISCUSSION TOPICS

Kitchen/Storage

The proposed floor plan shown later in this study, relocates the kitchen to its original location near the stage; this area is currently occupied by bathrooms and a storage room. To provide appropriate space for the kitchen and storage, the proposed storage area is located in a space which is currently being used as storage for the Caring Cupboard’s seasonal items. A concern for the Caring Cupboard losing this storage space was voiced during the input meeting. The group discussed adding mezzanine storage accessible from the Caring Cupboard side of the building, above the City Auditorium’s proposed storage room.



PUBLIC INPUT MEETING

November 17th | 6:00 pm
at the City Auditorium

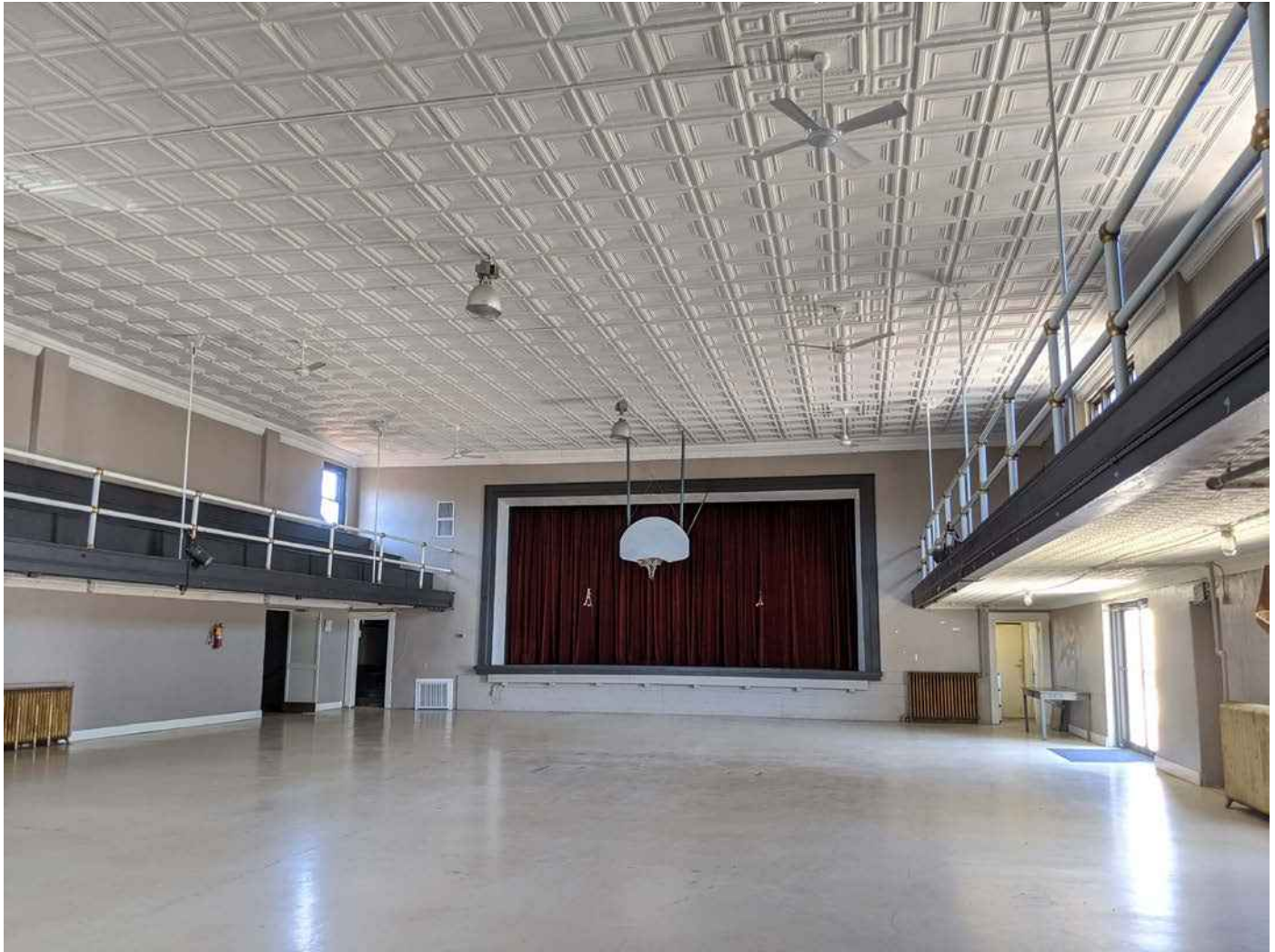
Discussion Topics:
Online Survey Results
Prioritized Improvements
Schematic Floor Plans

CITY AUDITORIUM CCCCF FEASIBILITY STUDY

ALMA NEBRASKA 2021

This meeting is hosted by the City of Alma, Miller & Associates, and Wilkins ADP.





Openings

Attendees also discussed the benefits of replacing windows and doors throughout the building as well as adding a few doors to improve access in the building. A door between the Caring Cupboard and Auditorium space was requested; volunteers already use the Auditorium space throughout the year, but they are currently required to walk around the exterior of the building to get from space to space. An exterior door to the kitchen was also mentioned as beneficial, especially for large events. People would have the ability to load and unload directly from vehicles to the kitchen area instead of having to access the kitchen from the main entry.

Auditorium

Many details about the auditorium space were also discussed. Logistical concerns about food service flow were resolved with the assumption that people would form a line along the south wall. To maintain the aesthetics of the auditorium, attendees preferred portable basketball hoops and to avoid permanent court lines on the floor. Finally, a new sound system was highlighted as a priority. The necessity of a mobile sound system for all public input meetings held in the auditorium during the planning process was proof of this need.



Other Items

The proposed improvements did not include ADA access to the mezzanine level; attendees questioned if this should be added to the scope. While the current proposed improvements are not substantial enough to require increased accessibility, it was discussed as a possibility to add it to the scope. The monetary and spatial requirements for ADA access to the second level deterred this addition to the project scope.

Opinion of Probable Cost

A cost estimate of building a new building in lieu of improving the City Auditorium was requested and is included later in this document. The inability to build a new building exactly the same as the existing was noted as cost would increase due to fire suppression and accessibility requirements. Attendees also expressed support for the location, character, and history of the existing building.

Attendees questioned phasing the project and discussed the potential of applying for CCCFF capital construction funds multiple times. While it is possible for a single facility to receive multiple construction grants as long as the two-year periods do not overlap, the competitive nature of the grant makes this highly improbable. According to grant guidelines, there is a statutory priority for communities which have not received a prior award in the last ten years for the same project.

CITY AUDITORIUM

The City Auditorium has approximately 110 feet of frontage on Main Street in Alma's Downtown District. The auditorium portion of the building is 110 feet wide by 50 feet deep. The area of the building which was built as the sale barn and now hosts the Caring Cupboard, is attached to the south side of the auditorium and is approximately 60 feet by 60 feet. The Caring Cupboard is accessed through the alley and does not currently have an interior connection to the City Auditorium.

EXISTING CONDITIONS

The project team performed an initial site visit of the City Auditorium building on June 23rd, 2020. During this visit, professionals from both Miller & Associates and Wilkins Architecture Design Planning met with City Staff to discuss the upcoming project and concerns with the City Auditorium. The following perceived deficiencies and existing floor plan were created in response to this visit:

PERCEIVED DEFICIENCIES

Acoustics

The auditorium space is primarily made up of hard, reflective surfaces; this is not conducive to quality acoustics. The excessive ambient noise is an obstacle for public meetings, performances, and even banquet-style events. If not controlled, background noise acts as a form of noise pollution or interference, making it more difficult to hear the primary sound.



ADA Accessibility

When the City Auditorium was built, accessibility was not a huge aspect of design. There are many accessibility deficiencies throughout the City Auditorium. The current restrooms are not in compliance with ADA guidelines. There are also entire areas of the building which are only accessible by stairs, including the stage and mezzanine areas. Access to these areas could prove challenging as ramps require a large amount of space and would change the aesthetic of the stage area.



Code Compliance

Guardrails can be a variety of styles as long as there are no openings large enough to pass a 4-inch diameter sphere through. This is not the case for the existing guardrails on the mezzanine level, which presents a safety concern. Additional concerns on the mezzanine level are the stairs and the fixed, bleacher-style seating.



Electric Services

The electric services are antiquated and therefore inadequate for functionality needs. There are also limited outlets around the perimeter of the auditorium. This has been an obstacle for several events in the Auditorium; for example, craft fairs with individual booths needing electricity.



Fire Safety

There is not currently a fire alarm system or a fire sprinkler system in the building.

Kitchen

The kitchen area is outdated and provides limited services for events. The overall size of the kitchen lowers functionality. The appliances are also outdated and undersized. A larger refrigerator, or a second refrigerator and bigger sinks would improve this space for future events. The need for storage is relatively low, as the City provides only occasional use items and does not stock service wear.





Lighting

The lighting in the building is mostly original, comprised of old incandescent and some fluorescent technology. The quality of light provided by these technologies is less desirable than newer technologies. These lighting types can also require a large amount of electricity and more maintenance because the individual bulbs do not have as long of a life as newer technologies.



Openings

The exterior windows and doors were replaced in the mid-1980s and show signs of age. Some windows are broken, while others are leaking and/or thermally broken. These openings to the outside elements are not efficient, causing extra energy usage for heating and cooling.



Radiators

Several radiators line the perimeter of the auditorium space. The radiators and associated piping are no longer used; this means the radiators are currently taking floor space which could be available for other functions.





Restrooms

There is currently an insufficient amount of plumbing fixtures for the City Auditorium's capacity. The exterior-access restrooms are outdated and are usually locked to prevent vandalism.



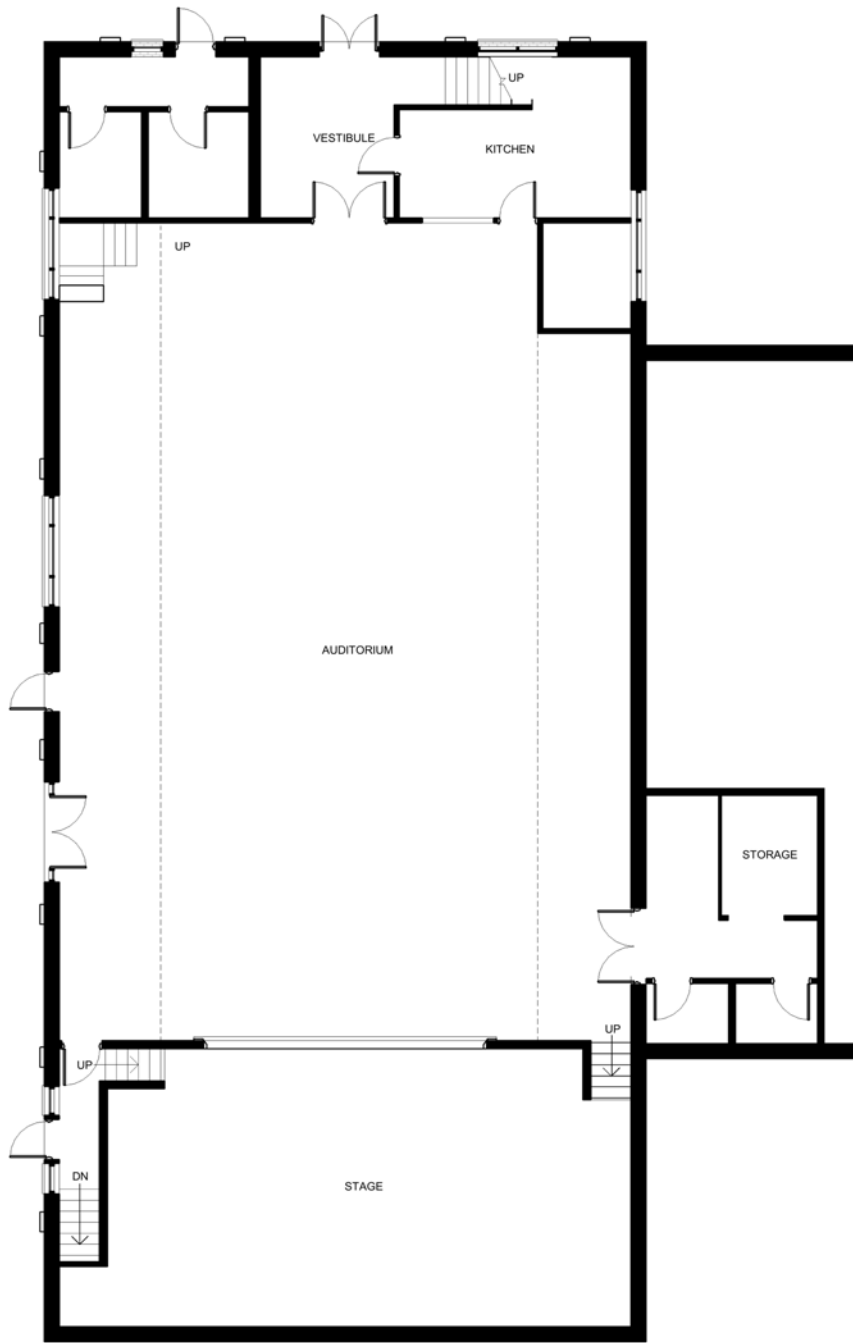
Roof

There are signs of minor roof leaks. These could affect the integrity of the roof structure, accelerate the aging process of the roof, allow mold and mildew growth, or cause damage to the existing stamped ceiling.

Signage

There is a lack of signage on the front of the auditorium building. This makes the building more difficult for potential visitors to identify. It also limits onsite advertising for upcoming events.





EXISTING PLAN-GROUND FLOOR

SCALE: 1/16" = 1'-0"



EXISTING PLAN-SECOND FLOOR

SCALE: 1/16" = 1'-0"

OPERATIONAL COSTS

The City Auditorium is a passive use facility. This means people do not pay memberships or class fees to use the space. Instead, the primary revenue potential is from building rental fees. To minimize operational costs, the building is managed by City Staff and only open as needed for scheduled events. This practice does not require the facility to be regularly staffed.

If the needs for the facility change in the future, the City will need to consider the cost of staffing the City Auditorium during the adjust hours of operation. For instance, being open from 8:00 am to 8:00 pm would require 1 full-time and 1 part-time employee covering 4 hours a day; a 6:00 am to 10:00 pm timeframe would require 2 full-time employees. The City may also need to consider employee benefits if the hours of operation change for the City Auditorium.

POTENTIAL REVENUE

The City of Alma has two main event spaces available for rent. Rent is kept relatively low to encourage use of these community amenities. The smaller of the two spaces, with a 200-person capacity, is the Johnson Center. The facility is newer than the City Auditorium, but still outdated. It offers a full kitchen, restrooms, and a banquet room. Rent is \$75 per day. The City Auditorium has a capacity of 400 people and offers a full kitchen, restrooms, a mezzanine, and a stage. Rent is \$35 per day for the first two days with the third day free-of-charge; Tuesday and Wednesday rental fees are half-price. Rollerblading is also available in the auditorium with an additional \$50 charge for incidentals.

The following is an overview of approximate rental fees for similar community centers in the region; additional rental guidelines and requirements may apply to some centers. When only an hourly rate was provided, the daily rate was calculated using an eight hour day. For complete information, please visit the websites provided for each gathering space.

RENTAL FEE SCHEDULE: SIMILAR PASSIVE FACILITIES Nebraska

BUILDING NAME	DESCRIPTION	SQ FT	TABLES & CHAIRS CAPACITY	DEPOSIT	HOURLY RATE	DAILY RATE
<i>City Auditorium Alma, Nebraska</i>	Whole Facility	6,600	200			\$35
<i>Johnson Center Alma, Nebraska</i>	Banquet Room	3,000	115			\$75
<i>Brady Community Center Brady, Nebraska www.villageofbrady.org</i>	Whole Facility	6,000	-	\$150	-	\$100
	Wortman Room	-	-	-	-	\$100
<i>Bremer Community Center Aurora, Nebraska www.bremercenter.com</i>	South Room	-	-	-	-	\$125
	North Room	-	-	-	-	\$50
	Whole Facility	-	-	-	-	\$400
<i>Environmentat Resource Center at Yanney Park, Kearney, Nebraska cityofkearney.org</i>	Whole Facility	2,300	75	\$100	\$25	\$200
	Community Room 1 or 2	1,500	92	\$100	\$25	\$200
<i>Harmon Park Activity Center Kearney, Nebraska cityofkearney.org</i>	Both Community Rooms	3,000	184	\$20	\$25	\$200
	Kitchen	-	-	-	\$20	\$50 (CR2)
	Conference Room	-	12	\$100	\$15	\$120
<i>Humphrey Community Center Humphrey, Nebraska www.cityofhumphrey.com</i>	Big Room	-	550	-	-	\$550
	Small Room	-	200	-	\$50	\$250
	Both Rooms	-	750	-	-	\$700
<i>Louisville Community Center Louisville, Nebraska louisvillenebraska.com</i>	Main Hall	-	-	-	-	\$75
	Office Meeting Room	-	-	-	-	\$25
	Event Hall	5,500	400	-	-	\$825
<i>Pender Community Center Pender, Nebraska www.pendercommunitycenter.com</i>	Multipurpose Room	10,000	832	-	\$50	\$500
	Community Room A or B	735	58	-	-	\$105
	Both Community Rooms	1470	112	-	-	\$180

PROPOSED IMPROVEMENTS

The proposed improvements for Alma's City Auditorium preserve historic character while also increasing functionality of the building. The conceptual renderings included in this study represent the desired amenities, program, and aesthetic identified through public input. They will encourage continued community support and fundraising efforts for the improvement project by providing a vision for the future of the City Auditorium.

Building programming determines how specific areas of a building, as well as the building as a whole, will function. The conceptual floor plans for Alma's City Auditorium show the proposed improvements resulting from this Feasibility Study. The design is based on information gathered during site visits, existing conditions analysis, discussions with City staff, and the public input process. Compiling this information to inform the final layout and design helps ensure public use and support of the building in the future. The proposed improvements for Alma's City Auditorium are outlined below and in the Architect's Opinion of Probable Construction Cost:

IMPROVEMENT RECOMMENDATIONS

Acoustics

The main auditorium space is comprised mostly of hard surfaces. This causes sound to bounce around and reverberate throughout the space. Installing an acoustic treatment on the interior walls of the main auditorium space could help minimize the extra noise produced by these hard surfaces.

ADA Accessibility

The biggest ADA compliance issues in the auditorium are the restrooms and access to the stage and mezzanine areas. Moving the restrooms to the north end of the building and consolidating spaces will allow for a restroom design which complies with ADA guidelines.

It is also recommended to install a lift or a ramp to access the stage area. Not only will this increase compliance with ADA, it will also allow for the backstage area to be used as storage for mobile basketball hoops or other large items. Due to spatial constraints in the auditorium, the installation of a lift is preferred over constructing a ramp.

Currently, there are not enough changes being proposed for the mezzanine area to warrant the expense of providing ADA access. If increased use of this area is proposed in the future, accessibility options should be reassessed.

Brick Tuckpointing

Brick tuckpointing is recommended for the exterior facade of the City Auditorium. This will improve the appearance and increase the life of the building's exterior.



Conceptual rendering produced by Wilkins ADP.



Code Compliance

There are a few recommended improvements to increase code compliance and overall safety on the mezzanine level. Installing a transparent barrier like plexiglass to the guardrail on the mezzanine level would increase safety by preventing objects from passing through the rail. Additionally, adding retrofit stairs to the fixed seating on the mezzanine would increase safety while using the fixed seating.

Electric Services

The installation of a new, 400 amp electric service is recommended for the City Auditorium.

Fire Safety

Due to the scope of the proposed improvement projects and financial implications, a new fire system is not recommended at this time.

Kitchen

Relocating the kitchen to its original location by the stage will allocate more space for the kitchen and allow for exterior access from the drive in the alley. The addition of an exterior door will provide direct access to the kitchen while loading and unloading for events. Updating the kitchen appliances is also a priority to make the area more user friendly during events. Storage is not a major concern in the kitchen as the City stocks a limited number of supplies.

Lighting

The current lighting is a mix of incandescent and fluorescent technology. Replacing this outdated technology with LED lighting would improve both the lighting quality and the energy efficiency in the auditorium.

Openings

The current windows and doors in the City Auditorium are from an improvement project completed in the 1980s. Some of these openings are broken or leaking. Replacing all windows and doors would improve the thermal envelope of the building, increasing its energy efficiency. Replacing the broken windows could also help limit access to the building from outside forces.

Radiators

The radiators along the perimeter of the auditorium are no longer in use. It is recommended to remove the radiators along with the associated piping to increase functional space in the auditorium.





Conceptual rendering produced by Wilkins ADP.

Restrooms

Constructing new restrooms on the north end of the building will allow for improved restrooms with more fixtures. The City Auditorium is currently under-served by the number of restroom stalls. An increased number of stalls in one location will improve access and efficiency during events. It will also allow for compliance with ADA guidelines.

Roof

There are signs of leakage on the ceiling of the auditorium. Replacing the roof of the building would stop leaks and make it possible to repair these areas.

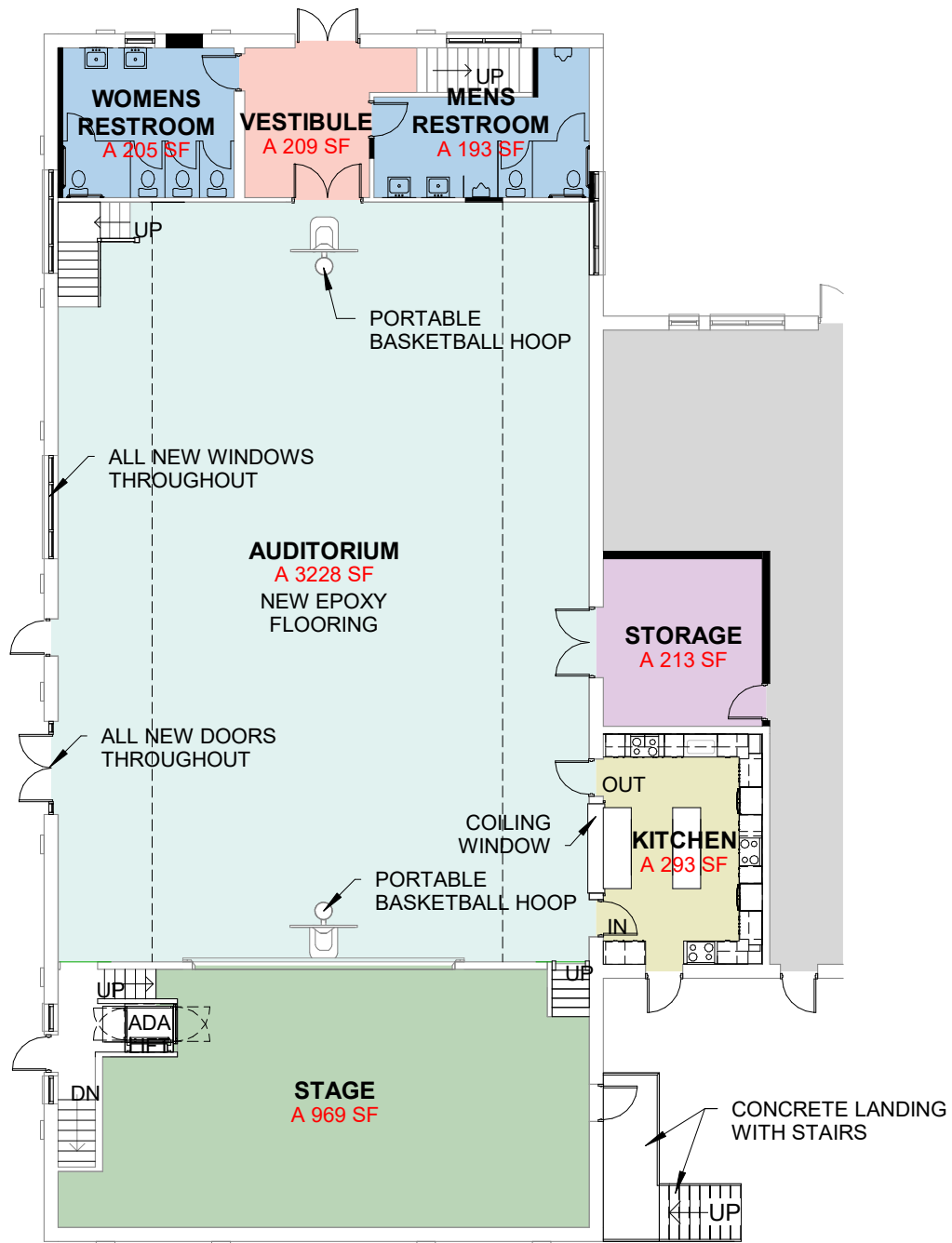
Signage

Welcome signage would help visitors identify the City Auditorium. It could also give the City a place to advertise upcoming events.

Conceptual renderings produced by Wilkins ADP.





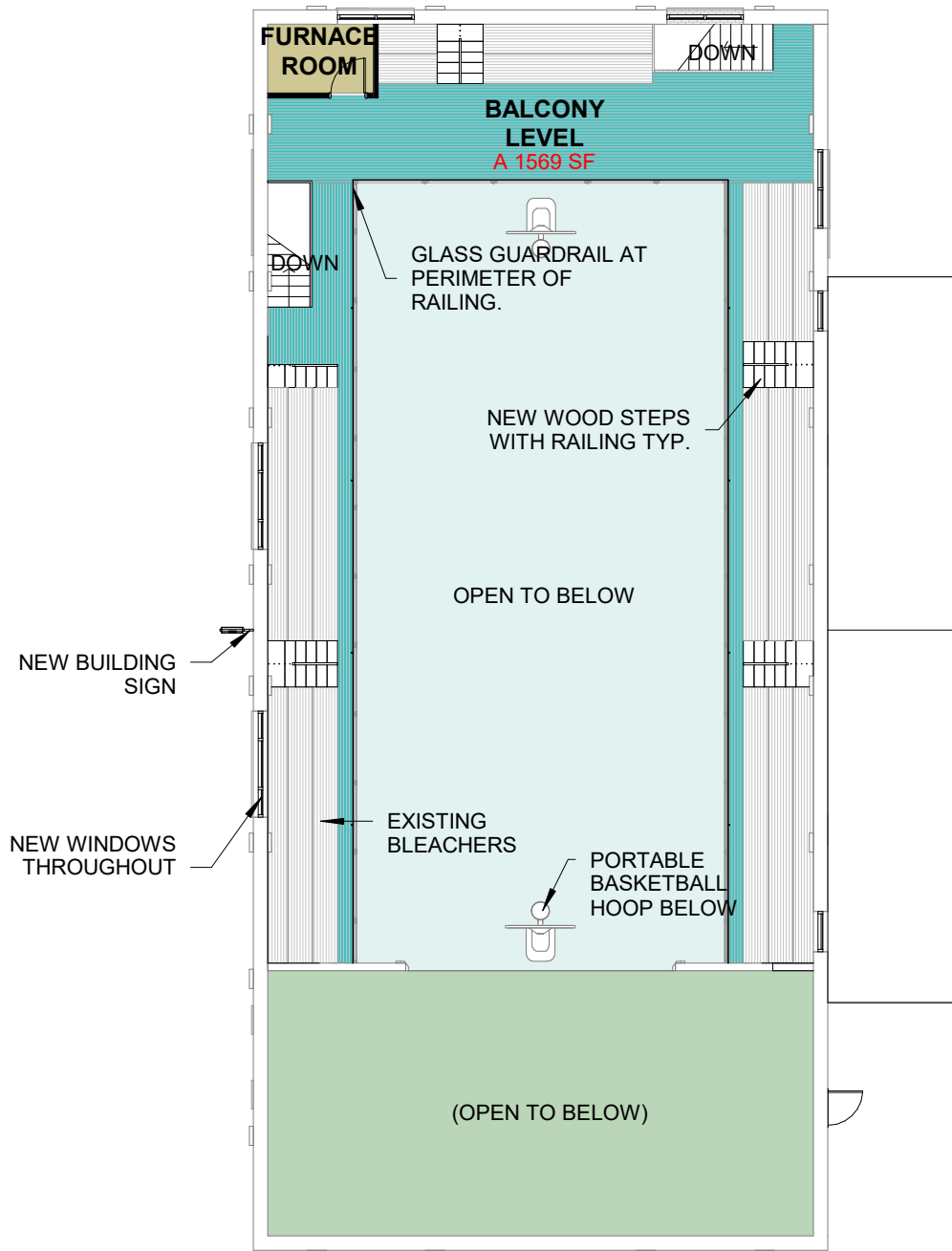


1
P8

GROUND FLOOR -SCHEMATIC PLAN

SCALE: 1/16" = 1'-0"





1
P7

SECOND FLOOR - SCHEMATIC PLAN

SCALE: 1/16" = 1'-0"

ESTIMATED PROJECT COST

The Architect's Opinion of Probable Construction Cost is based on the proposed improvements outlined in this feasibility study. These improvements were shaped directly from public input and analysis of the existing building. Based on current construction costs, the Architect's Opinion of Probable Construction Cost is approximately \$1.1 million. With 7,815 total square feet, this equates to around \$139.99 per square foot. The addition of 4.03% to Construction Costs is recommended for each year that passes, to adjust for inflation.

After adding design estimated fees and equipment costs, the total estimate project cost is approximately \$1.2 million for the proposed improvements to the City Auditorium. A breakdown of the estimated costs is included below and in the table:

Total Project Cost: \$1.2 Million

- New Roof
- New Windows and Doors
- Tuckpointing of All Masonry
- New Lighting
- New 400 Amp Service
- New Kitchen and New Appliances
- Restrooms
- New Flooring
- Wheelchair Lift to Stage
- New Signage
- Design and Engineering
- 5% Contingency

During the public input process, residents requested the cost of designing and constructing a new, community building instead of improving the existing City Auditorium. While this building could not be exactly the same, given current accessibility, code, and fire safety requirements, a new building serving the same size and type of events is estimated to cost between \$2.2 and \$2.3 million dollars. This cost estimate does not include site acquisition nor the asbestos abatement and demolition of the existing City Auditorium.

OPINION OF PROBABLE COST SUMMARY FROM CONCEPTUAL DESIGN Alma City Auditorium Improvements, 2021	
DESCRIPTION	TOTAL
General Conditions	see below
Existing Conditions	\$50,000
Concrete	\$11,590
Masonry	\$155,484
Metals	\$45,985
Wood	\$0
Thermal & Moisture	\$241,400
Openings	\$81,450
Finishes	\$74,718
Specialties	\$22,470
Equipment	\$36,200
Furnishings	\$13,000
Special Construction	N/A
Elevator	w/ equipment
Fire Suppression	\$0
Plumbing	\$15,800
HVAC	\$19,500
Electrical	\$114,100
Safety & Security	w/ electrical
Communications	w/ electrical
Earthwork	\$0
Site Improvements	\$0
Site Utilities	\$0
Subtotal	\$881,697
Overhead	\$88,170 10%
Subtotal	\$969,866
Profit	\$48,493 5%
Subtotal	\$1,017,359
Builder's Risk	\$8,147 0.8%
Subtotal	\$1,026,506
Bond	\$15,398 1.5%
Subtotal	\$1,041,904
Contingency	\$52,095 5%
OPINION OF PROBABLE CONSTRUCTION COST	\$1,093,999
\$ per SF	\$139.99
Professional Design Services (7% of Construction Costs)	\$76,579.93
Reimbursables (2% of Construction Costs)	\$21,879.98
Moveable Fixtures, Furnishings & Equipment (other than listed above)	\$15,000.00
Design & Construction Contingency	already included
PROJECT TOTAL	\$1,207,459

Source: Wilkins ADP, 2021

IMPLEMENTATION

FUNDING OPPORTUNITIES

The following is a list of specialized funding sources related to Alma's City Auditorium improvement project. Many of these funding sources have applicability requirements as well as guidelines for the types of projects. The funding sources and techniques found on the following pages are different options available to the City for community facility improvement projects. Pairing different funding sources may be necessary to meet the City's goals. Not all of these options will fit the current City Auditorium project; therefore, funding sources should be analyzed to determine feasibility for the project and for the City.

GRANT FUNDING OPPORTUNITIES

CCCFF

The Civic and Community Center Financing Fund (CCCFF) is awarded to municipalities in Nebraska and administered by the Nebraska Department of Economic Development (NDED). The competitive, CCCFF grants are awarded annually to help communities improve the quality of life for the residents they serve. Applicable projects must be available for the public and located within the official boundaries of the community. Community facilities including libraries, recreation and wellness centers, gathering spaces, convention centers, town squares, and cultural centers may be constructed or improved with CCCFF funds.

Nebraska municipalities must own at least fifty percent of the facility and may apply for one of two grant types in a single program year – Planning or Construction. CCCFF grant funds cannot account for more than fifty percent of the total project costs. The Planning grant is available for \$3,000 to \$15,000. The planning process includes data gathering and analysis, a building evaluation, citizen participation, concept development, and short- and long-term goals. It helps municipalities determine how the funds will be spent.

Construction grants are available for a minimum \$15,000 with a grant maximum varying by year. According to current regulations, the grant maximum for Alma is either \$375,000 (Schedule A) or \$562,000 (Schedule B). The CCCFF Program is funded through "turnback taxes" associated with large arenas and convention centers in Omaha, Lincoln, and Ralston. Due to the decreased revenue caused by the coronavirus pandemic, the CCCFF program will not award Construction grants during the upcoming 2021 grant cycle.

A municipality may only receive one of each grant type in a two-year period. Given the competitive nature of the CCCFF program, a municipality can apply for the Construction grant more than once for a single project, but may not be awarded both times.

CDA

The Community Development Assistance Act (CDA) is a state tax credit program administered through NDED. CDA makes a forty percent tax credit available to businesses, corporations, insurance firms, financial institutions, and individuals who contribute cash or provide services and materials to an approved community betterment project. This includes employment training; human and medical services; physical facility and neighborhood development services; recreational and educational activities; and crime prevention projects.

Municipalities, Counties, Tribal Authorities, or Non-Profit Organizations are eligible to apply for CDA tax credits through NDED. Upon approval, the organization can notify donors about the available tax credits. A maximum of \$50,000 in state tax credits can be approved per approved project, per fiscal year. This program may apply to future improvement project associated with the City Auditorium.

Historic Preservation

The Historic Tax Credit Program through the State Historic Preservation Office (SHPO), provides tax credits to encourage maintaining the historic character of buildings with historic significance. There are three different tax credit programs available through SHPO:

- Nebraska Historic Tax Credit (NHTC)
- Federal Historic Tax Credit (FHTC)
- Valuation Incentive Program (VIP)

The programs are similar and more than one may be used for the same project. Municipal buildings are applicable for the NHTC. As a municipality, Alma has the option to sell the credit to a third party to receive cash on hand. More information regarding the tax credit programs available through SHPO can be found at <https://history.nebraska.gov/>.

PRIVATE AND FOUNDATION PHILANTHROPY

There are many financial resources available throughout the State of Nebraska. The following list highlights foundations which may relate to the City Auditorium Improvement Project. For additional information, such as contact information and application requirements, refer to the Foundation Resource Directory available at <https://opportunity.nebraska.gov/grow-your-community/resources/>.

Community Development

The Abel Foundation, Bennington Community Foundation, Blair Area Community Foundation, Campbell Soup Foundation, Ford Foundation, Gardner Foundation, Grand Island Community Foundation, Hamilton Community Foundation Inc., Imperial Community Foundation, Iowa West Foundation, Greater Kansas City Community Foundation, Kearney Area Community Foundation, John D. and Catherine T. MacArthur Foundation, MetLife Foundation, Midlands Community Foundation, Mid-Nebraska Community Foundation Inc., Mutual of Omaha Foundation, O'Neill Community Foundation, Oregon Trail Community Foundation, Phelps County Community Foundation, DuPont Pioneer, Public Welfare Foundation, Edgar and Frances Reynolds Foundation Inc., Rural School and Community Trust, Sowers Club of Nebraska Foundation, Union Pacific Foundation, The UPS Foundation, The Valmont Foundation, West Point Community Foundation, Woods Charitable Fund Inc., York Community Foundation, M. Eighthmy Foundation, Frank M. and Alice M. Farr Trust, May L. Flanagan Foundation Inc., Albert G. and Bernice F. Hansen Charitable Foundation, Richard Kalvelage Gift Trust, Gallagher Foundation, Larue Coffee Charitable Foundation, Linder Family Foundation, Karl H. & Wealtha H. Nelson Family Foundation, Donald E. Nielson Foundation Inc., Virginia Smith Charitable Trust, Sterns Charitable Foundation Inc., Harold W. & Lois D. Struve Foundation, Margaret & Martha Thomas Foundation, Nebraska Library Commission, Burlington Capital, Equitable Bank Charitable Foundation

Culture

Ameritas Charitable Foundation, Baer Foundation, Cooper Foundation, Ford Foundation, Fremont Area Community Foundation, Ike & Roz Friedman Foundation, Grand Island Community Foundation, Hamilton Community Foundation Inc., The Heart Foundations, The Hirschfeld Family Foundation Inc., Gilbert M. and Martha H. Hitchcock Foundation, Peter Kiewit Foundation, Lincoln Community Foundation, MetLife Foundation, MidAmerican Energy Foundation, Midlands Community Foundation, Mid-Nebraska Community Foundation Inc., Omaha Community Foundation, Phelps County Community Foundation, Suzanne & Walter Scott Foundation, The Scoular Foundation, The Valmont Foundation, Woods Charitable Fund Inc., York Community Foundation, Frank M. and Alice M. Farr Trust, Robert B. Daugherty Foundation

Economically Disadvantaged

Ethel S. Abbott Charitable Foundation, Legal Services Population, The Lozier Foundation, Public Welfare Foundation, Sowers Club of Nebraska Foundation, Harold W. & Lois D. Struve Foundation

Economic Development

Ford Foundation, Iowa West Foundation, Kearney Area Community Foundation, Peter Kiewit Foundation, Lincoln Community Foundation, MidAmerican Energy Foundation, Midlands Community Foundation, Oregon Trail Community Foundation, M. Eighthmy Foundation, Frank M. and Alice M. Farr Trust, May L. Flanagan Foundation Inc., Albert G. and Bernice F. Hansen Charitable Foundation, InternNE Grant Fund, Richard Kalvelage Gift Trust, Larue Coffee Charitable Foundation, Virginia Smith Charitable Trust

Family Services

Burlington Capital Foundation, Lincoln Community Foundation, The Valmont Foundation, The Kind World Foundation, The Sherwood Foundation, Woods Charitable Fund Inc., Rupert Dunklau Foundation Inc., Karl H. & Wealtha H. Nelson Family Foundation, Pegler Family Foundation, Slosburg Family Charitable Trust, Milton & Miriam Waldbaum Family Foundation, Wirth Foundation, La Vista Community Foundation

Historic Preservation and Conservation

American Express Philanthropic Program, Ike & Roz Friedman Foundation, Quivey-Bay State Foundation

Media

Ford Foundation, John D. and Catherine T. MacArthur Foundation, Linder Family Foundation, Harold W. & Lois D. Struve Foundation, Milton & Miriam Waldbaum Family Foundation

Performing Arts

Gardner Foundation, William and Flora Hewlett Foundation, The King World Foundation, The Holland Foundation, Slosburg Family Charitable Trust

Recreation

Hamilton Community Foundation Inc., Imperial Community Foundation, Kearney Area Community Foundation, Mutual of Omaha Foundation, Oregon Trail Community Foundation, Phelps County Community Foundation, West Point Community Foundation, York Community Foundation, Hollis and Helen Baright Foundation, Elmer E. Hester - Dundy Public Schools Foundation, Elmer E. Hester - Dundy Public Schools Foundation, Heuermann Family Charitable Trust, The Myrl S. and Bessie Evans Mather Foundation, Donald E. Nielson Foundation Inc., La Vista Community Foundation

Senior Citizens (Aging, Elderly)

Burlington Capital Foundation, Gardner Foundation, Hastings Community Foundation Inc., Bernard K. & Norma F. Heuermann Foundation, The Hirschfeld Family Foundation Inc., Lincoln Community Foundation, Oregon Trail Community Foundation, Public Welfare Foundation Inc., Sowers Club of Nebraska Foundation, American Charitable Foundation, Giger Foundation, Irene & Joseph Malek Charitable Trust, Harold W. & Lois D. Struve Foundation, Burlington Capital

Wellness Programs

Ethel S. Abbott Charitable Foundation, Campbell Soup Foundation, Coca-Cola Foundation, Peter Kiewit Foundation, Mutual of Omaha Foundation

LOCAL SUPPORT

For a community amenity to be successful, it must have local support. Reaching out to community organizations and residents for financial support will help give the project strength within the community. If members of the community have buy-in with the project, they may be more motivated in the future to use and maintain the City Auditorium. This Feasibility Study provides a vision for the future of the Alma City Auditorium. It should be used to help the project gain momentum and funding.

Potential funding sources include annual appropriations, grants, partnerships, and long-term public financing. Other funding options may include fundraising, private donations, and the possibility of a sales tax increase made specifically for improvements to the City Auditorium.

During the public input survey, respondents were asked which funding opportunities they were most willing to support. Grant funding and local fundraising had the two highest response rates, followed by private donors and local foundations. A program could be implemented by the City to receive private donations for the project. With the use of an online "Gift Catalog", interested parties could make a general donation to the project or choose which improvements they would like to help fund.

When asked if they would support a minor tax increase to fund on-going facility costs, respondents answers were split exactly in half. If a tax increase is needed in the future to help support City Auditorium improvements, this may be worth revisiting.

The City Auditorium is a direct product of residents in Alma working together to address a common need. The building was originally financed through community-wide donations and support. It is fitting for the City of Alma to continue this tradition of community support.

RECOMMENDED NEXT STEPS

After reviewing the content of this feasibility study, community leaders should review the future growth and development goals found in the City of Alma Comprehensive Plan to help drive any decisions. This improvement project would fill a need which has been identified in numerous plans and public input sessions. The City Auditorium is a unique historic landmark in Alma; maintaining this community amenity can help retain residents and attract new families to the City.

This feasibility study proves the ongoing use of the City Auditorium and the public support for improving this facility. The Construction grant through CCCFF can help make the improvements proposed in this study a reality. However, the grant does require a one-to-one match. If the City chooses to apply for the full amount available, the local matching funds will need to be in place before the application is submitted; this can be in the form of pledges if necessary.

This feasibility study estimates the total project budget for City Auditorium Improvements to be approximately \$1.2 million dollars. The maximum Construction grant amount through CCCFF is \$562,000 (Schedule B); combining this funding with a one-to-one local match accommodates for the estimated project budget.

While it is possible to apply for the Construction grant multiple times for the same project, as long as the applications are not within the same two-year cycle, the competitive nature of the program makes the award of multiple CCCFF Construction grants for the same project highly unlikely. If possible, it is recommended to complete the proposed City Auditorium Improvement project, outlined in this feasibility study, in one phase to maximize on outside funding sources.

**APPENDIX A:
NATIONAL REGISTER
OF HISTORIC PLACES
APPLICATION**



National Register of Historic Places Registration Form

This form is for use in nominating or requesting determinations for individual properties and districts. See instructions in National Register Bulletin, NPSR to Complete the National Register of Historic Places Registration Form. If any item does not apply to the property being documented, enter "N/A" for "not applicable." For functions, architectural classification, materials, and areas of significance, enter only categories and subcategories from the instructions.

1. Name of Property

Historic name Alma City Auditorium and Sale Barn
Other names/site number HN01-102
Name of related multiple property listing
(Enter "N/A" if property is not part of a multiple property listing)

2. Location

Street & Number 614 Main Street
City or town Alma State Nebraska County Harlan
Not for publication Vicinity

3. State/Federal Agency Certification

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act, as amended, I hereby certify that this nomination request for determination of eligibility meets the documentation standards for registering properties in the National Register of Historic Places and meets the procedural and professional requirements set forth in 36 CFR Part 60. In my opinion, the property meets does not meet the National Register Criteria. I recommend that this property be considered significant at the following level(s) of significance: national statewide local

Applicable National Register Criteria: A B C D

Michael J. ... SHPO/Director 05-28-2014
Signature of certifying official/Title: Date
Nebraska State Historical Society
State or Federal agency/bureau or Tribal Government

In my opinion, the property meets does not meet the National Register criteria.

Signature of Commenting Official Date
Title State of Federal agency/bureau or Tribal Government

4. National Park Service Certification

I, hereby certify that this property is:

- entered in the National Register.
- determined eligible for the National Register.
- determined not eligible for the National Register.
- removed from the National Register.
- other, (explain):

Joe ... 7-11-2014
Signature of Keeper Date of Action

Alma City Auditorium and Sale Barn Harlan County, Nebraska
Name of Property County and State

5. Classification

Ownership of Property (Check as many boxes as apply)

- Private
- Public-local
- Public-state
- Public-federal

Category of Property (Check only one box)

- Building(s)
- District
- Site
- Structure
- Object

Number of Resources within Property (Do not include previously listed resources in the count.)

Contributing	Noncontributing	
1	0	Buildings
		Sites
		Structures
		Objects
1	0	Total

Number of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register N/A

6. Function or Use

Historic Functions (Enter categories from instructions.)

RECREATION AND CULTURE/auditorium
RECREATION AND CULTURE/sporting facility
RECREATION AND CULTURE/music facility
AGRICULTURE/animal facility
AGRICULTURE/processing

Current Functions (Enter categories from instructions.)

RECREATION AND CULTURE/auditorium
COMMERCE AND TRADE/store

7. Description

Architectural Classification (Enter categories from instructions.)

Other

Materials (enter categories from instructions.)

Principal exterior materials of the property: brick

Alma City Auditorium and Sale Barn Harlan County, Nebraska
Name of Property County and State

Description

Summary Paragraph (Briefly describe the general characteristics of the property, such as its location, type, style, method of construction, setting, size, and significant features. Indicate whether the property has historic integrity.)

The Alma City Auditorium and Sale Barn is located just west of the two-block long central business district of Alma, which is the county seat of Harlan County, Nebraska. At its height in 1950, the community's population was 1,768 according to census records, however the community numbers closer to 1,100 as of the 2010 census. It is difficult to define this building as being of a particular style because it is a relatively simple brick building with stepped parapets and some decorative brickwork. Since the building was paid for through community fund raising, it was built large enough to house the social, sporting and theatrical functions that the city often held, but was not so extravagant that it put an undue financial burden on the citizenry. The current appearance of the building preserves much of the original fabric of its original construction.

Narrative Description (Describe the historic and current physical appearance and condition of the property. Describe contributing and noncontributing resources if applicable.)

The Alma City Auditorium and Sale Barn is a large rectangular shaped building with a contemporaneously built rectangular addition that projects off of the south side of the building toward the rear of the lot lines. The auditorium is a lofty one story building with balcony seating around the north, east and south walls off the auditorium space. From the outside, it appears to be a two story building. The roof is cross gabled with stepped parapet walls capped in cast concrete caps. The building is has a brick foundation and brick walls. The walls contain decorative brickwork that breaks up the uniformity of the long brick walls. Central on the north facade is arched decorative brickwork flanked by rectangular decorative brick sections that give an appearance similar to a Palladian window, but on a much larger scale encompassing all of the windows and doors. On the east façade, decorative brickwork creates projecting tall rectangular shapes, which are repeated on the ends of the long north side, and break up the large expanses of brick.

There are two equally prominent facades on the building. The main entrance appears to be on the east end of the building through a vestibule entry. The windows and doors were replaced in the mid-1980s with bronze, steel-framed units, but the openings remain the same size and general shape as the originals. The modern steel and glass double doors are centrally located, with a two pairs of window or door configurations symmetrically placed on either side of the door. Three pairs of double hung steel replacement windows are located on this elevation, with an additional door and original glass block window combination on the northwest corner.

The long north elevation of the building is in some ways more prominent as it faces Main Street; however the doors located on this side lead directly into the auditorium space. All of the windows on this side of the building are tripartite double hung replacement units that mimic the original configurations of the windows in that the center window was wider than the two that flanked it. While there are four window and/or door bays on this long side at street level, the upper story only has windows within the central Palladian-shaped brickwork. To maintain the symmetry of the façade, decorative brickwork gives the shape and general impression of windows on the second floor where there are none. The west end of the building is not visible as it abuts the building next door, and the south is dominated by the sale barn extension.

Upon entering the vestibule entry on the east, there is a pair of original five-panel doors that leads to stairs to the balcony as well as seating above. Straight ahead is a pair of wooden doors and a small window that looks into the auditorium space which may have served as a ticket window. The floor is poured concrete. Moving further into the building into the auditorium space itself, there is an additional original stair up to the mezzanine or balcony seating. Bench seating is available in a boxed bleacher configuration. An iron rail runs along the circumference of the mezzanine to prevent falls, but is also tied into the ceiling to provide additional support. The original steam radiators are present along the sides of the main floor at intervals. The west end of the building has a large stage with velvet curtains and a simple squared proscenium. Basketball hoops hang from the ceiling, and although there are no painted boundary lines on the floor, the auditorium used to host the high school basketball games. All of the ceilings, including the vestibule and underside of the mezzanine, are covered in pressed tin ceilings of various designs, and all of them are in excellent condition.

3

Alma City Auditorium and Sale Barn Harlan County, Nebraska
Name of Property County and State

On the east of the building, accessible from an additional door in the vestibule entry and a doorway and pass-through window in the auditorium space, is a kitchen. Originally this was the site of the bathrooms while the original kitchen was located where the bathrooms are now on the southwest end of the building by the stage. It was determined the kitchen was too near the slaughtering facilities to be sanitary, even though they merely share a brick wall and there is no doorway between them, and they were switched around in the 1980s.

The auditorium also contains a very small basement that sits under the stage area. It originally served as dressing rooms and/or locker rooms for games depending on the need, but is currently used mostly for storage. The stairs to the basement are lined with beadboard wainscoting, and the interior doors in this portion of the building appear to be original. Steps up to the stage share the beadboard wainscoting.

The sale barn was built at the same time as the auditorium, however their uses were never intended to overlap, and therefore no doorways between the attached buildings were ever built. The sale barn is a rectangular building that juts perpendicularly south from the auditorium building. It has a hipped roof, with a slightly raised portion toward the center of the building. It is difficult to determine if the raised portion contained some clerestory windows for light or if additional height was simply required. The walls and foundation are brick, and its original windows have also been replaced. Originally, the space had wooden planked floors and walls, and served as a large space for people to participate in livestock auctions and view the animals up for sale. In 1944, when it became the town meat locker and eventually the slaughterhouse, some concrete block rooms were created that could be kept cold for the storage of the meat. The heavy refrigerator doors are gone, but the large hinges remain and give an impression of the heavy duty doors that used to be there. Additionally, doors and ceilings bear evidence of the rails from which the sides of beef and pork were suspended. The sale barn has become the home of the Harlan County Caring Cupboard, a combination thrift store and food pantry operated by members of the community.

Historic Integrity:

The Alma City Auditorium and Sale Barn has very good historic integrity. There have been changes in materials and workmanship over the years, most significantly in the mid-1980s when a community committee raised money to replace the windows and doors. While the materials are no longer wood and the lite configuration is now one-over-over versus the six-over-six windows that were in place before, they did not change the window openings by putting in smaller windows or by bricking them up in some permanent way. In addition, they chose windows that matched the size and scale of the historic windows. The modern glass and steel doors are very different from what had been there historically; however, the originals were simple flat wooden doors. The committee also changed the bathroom and kitchen spaces around due to concerns about the kitchen being too near the slaughterhouse facility in the adjoining sale barn. As minor spaces, these changes do not cause great concern.

4

Alma City Auditorium and Sale Barn Harlan County, Nebraska
Name of Property County and State

8. Statement of Significance

Applicable National Register Criteria

(Mark "X" in one or more boxes for the criteria qualifying the property for National Register listing.)

- A** Property is associated with events that have made a significant contribution to the broad patterns of our history.
- B** Property is associated with the lives of persons significant in our past.
- C** Property embodies the distinctive characteristics of a type, period, or method of construction or represents the work of a master, or possesses high artistic values, or represents a significant and distinguishable entity whose components lack individual distinction.
- D** Property has yielded, or is likely to yield information important in prehistory or history.

Criteria Considerations

(Mark "X" in all the boxes that apply.)

Property is:

- A** Owned by a religious institution or used for religious purposes.
- B** Removed from its original location.
- C** A birthplace or a grave.
- D** A cemetery.
- A reconstructed building, object, or structure.
- F** A commemorative property.
- G** Less than 50 years of age or achieved significance within the past 50 years.

Areas of Significance

(Enter categories from instructions.)

ENTERTAINMENT/RECREATION
AGRICULTURE

Period of Significance

1923-1964

Significant Dates

1923 – construction completed
1944 – sale barn converted to meat locker

Significant Person

(Complete if Criterion B is marked above.)

Cultural Affiliation

Architect/Builder

R. M. Liberty, builder

5

Alma City Auditorium and Sale Barn Harlan County, Nebraska
Name of Property County and State

Statement of Significance Summary Paragraph (Provide a summary paragraph that includes level of significance, applicable criteria, justification for the period of significance, and any applicable criteria considerations.)

The Alma City Auditorium and Sale Barn was built between 1922 and 1923, in Harlan County in southwest Nebraska. The building is eligible for listing in the National Register of Historic Places at the local level for its significance under Criterion A: Entertainment/Recreation and Agriculture. In terms of entertainment and recreation, the building was the site of many community activities, from concerts by well-known traveling orchestras and dances, to school basketball games and other school activities, and even roller skating. The attached, yet separate, sale barn initially served as a place for local stockmen to sell their prize animals, but was eventually converted into a community owned meat locker, where meat was processed and prepared for sale. While many communities may boast of an auditorium, and a few may have had a meat locker, the Nebraska State Historic Preservation Office is not aware of another municipal building that combined such disparate uses.

Narrative Statement of Significance (Provide at least one paragraph for each area of significance.)

Alma, Nebraska, located in Harlan County on the southwest part of the state, was founded in the spring of 1871 by a group of Union Pacific railroad workers. The county was formed in June 1871, and Alma was made the county seat one month later. In early 1880, the Burlington Railroad came to Alma, which aided in the small city's economic development. The town developed rather quickly thereafter, with the Kansas City and Omaha Railroad arriving in 1887, telephone service in 1899, and electricity and water service in 1906 and 1907 respectively.

In 1919, a fire cost the city its Opera House, which had been the only place where large groups of people could gather. The community felt its loss immediately, and a committee was formed to solicit funds for the construction of a new auditorium. The committee consisted of T. L. Porter, W. J. Furse, Geo. S. Joyce, and Col. C. S. Gaskill. These four men met with individual households in and around Alma, and solicited pledges of money to be put toward the construction of the new building. Subscriptions of \$100 or \$200 were encouraged. By mid-January, 1922, they had secured promises of \$10,600.00.¹ Within another five weeks, the promised funds had grown to \$18,600.00.² The committee's goal was to raise \$20,000.00 in order to add an "attractive and convenient sale barn" to the auditorium.

On March 2, 1922, a meeting gathered all the subscribers together in order to select a site for the new auditorium and to appoint committees to see to the construction of the building and deal with the finances. Approximately 150 citizens had purchased stock in the new building. Two different sites were considered for the building, but the majority chose the West Main site, which was described as six lots adjoining Pitcher's garage. The site would cost \$1,400, \$800 of which was taken in stock. Work on the site was planned to begin as soon as possible, and plans called for both a large auditorium and a fire-proof sale barn that would measure fifty by sixty feet.³

The end of March found the community continuing to raise the last \$1400 toward their construction goal. The ladies of the "Culture Club" planned a Rummage Sale with the building fund the beneficiary of their efforts. Everyone in town was asked to contribute to the cause: "...Something that is of no value to you...might be of use to someone else..."⁴ In addition to cast off items, the sale also promised home baked pies, cakes, doughnuts, cookies, canned fruit, and fresh butter and eggs. Although the rummage sale was successful in raising some money, the finance committee eliminated seating and lighting from the project in order to align their plans with the funds they had available.⁵

Bids were solicited and received up until July 1, 1922 by the building committee.⁶ On July 8, a meeting of the stockholders was held at the courthouse, and the group selected a bid from local resident, R. M. Liberty. The plans called for the

¹ Harlan County Journal, 13 January 1922, "Auditorium Fund Growing by Leaps."

² Harlan County Journal, 24 February 1922, "Auditorium Fund."

³ Harlan County Journal, 3 March 1922, "Auditorium Goes to West Side."

⁴ Harlan County Journal, 17 March 1922, "Community Rummage Sale."

⁵ Harlan County Journal, 14 July 1922, "Contract Accepted."

⁶ Harlan County Journal, 9 June 1922, "Bids Will Be Received."

6

Alma City Auditorium and Sale Barn Harlan County, Nebraska
Name of Property County and State

auditorium to measure 110 x 60 feet, with a barn attached on the south side measuring 50 x 60 feet. The building would be constructed of pressed brick, and at a cost of \$19,000.00 it would include heating and wiring.

Toward the end of construction of the building, the finance committee learned that promises of subscriptions did not necessarily equal donations. The committee had carefully paid the contractor (and neighbor), R. M. Liberty, as elements of the building were completed, but by January 1923, they were encountering shortfalls in their funds due to unpaid subscriptions. An article in the *Harlan County Journal* pled for subscriptions to be paid so that the auditorium could be enclosed.⁷ Gathering the promised funds would occupy the finance committee for the next seven months, resulting in a "last call" for payment in August, 1923, and promising that they would collect unpaid subscriptions by legal proceedings or otherwise.⁸ Apparently loathe to take legal action, a meeting of all subscribers to the Alma City Auditorium was called on December 17, 1923, to discuss the financial shortfall. The committee estimated that \$4,500.00 would be required to complete the auditorium, part of which was due to the seating and lighting not being included in the original bid. Of this amount, over half had already been promised by would-be subscribers that had fallen through. The committee proposed raising the money through a city bond and selling the building to the city of Alma, but those present wanted it to remain a private rather than public endeavor.⁹ Due to gaps in collections of the *Harlan County Journal*, there are no primary sources that describe specifically how the debt was addressed, but a local history, *Alma: Towards the Year 2000*, indicates that the debt was paid by the end of 1924.¹⁰ Financial difficulties would continue to plague the auditorium committees that followed, with the building becoming county property in 1941, when the group that owned the building failed to pay real estate taxes and special assessments during the Depression. It became city property in 1943, after a county tax sale certificate was assigned to the city for a reimbursement of \$2,229.80.¹¹ One year later, the "barn" became a community owned meat locker. In 1952, a few changes were made to the building that allowed it to be used as a slaughterhouse. A concrete floor was poured in the slaughter area for easier cleaning, and the lighting and wiring were updated.

In 1984, an Auditorium Update Committee was formed to raise money for improvements to the building. They raised sufficient funds to build a new kitchen and buy appliances for the southwest section of the building. New restrooms and a coat room/storage room were placed in the area that had formerly been the kitchen, which had been judged to be too near the livestock facilities to continue to function as a place for food preparation.¹² Additionally, the original 1924 stage curtains were replaced with a new maroon set, ceiling fans were added, and windows were replaced.

AGRICULTURAL SIGNIFICANCE

The finance committee's difficulty in collecting the pledges for the construction of the auditorium is instructive of the economic situation in which farmers found themselves after World War I. During the war, agricultural prices, and wheat prices in particular, soared to heights never before seen. Farmers took out loans to purchase extra land to put into wheat, but their wheat boom was short lived. By the early to mid-1920s, the prices had dropped as drastically as they had risen. Incomes did not keep pace with inflation, and a devaluation in land prices contributed to farmers' financial problems. Farmers were faced with debts that they were unable to pay. It is not surprising that the farmers had trouble living up to their promises of donations, and perhaps not surprising that the committee did not pursue legal action.

Livestock production was and is important to the economy of southwestern Nebraska, and Harlan County in particular. At one time, every farm in the county was typically diversified through the raising of some livestock. If farmers are to raise them, there was a need for a way to sell them. The first livestock sale to occur at the sale barn was held on October 24, 1923. Former Nebraska Governor Ashton C. Shallenberger, a shorthorn cattle breeder and auditorium benefactor, along with Haskins & Ogden of Republican City, NE, offered fifty-five head of cattle for sale at public auction, with twenty-five of them said to be show cattle which had taken premiums at the best state fairs and cattle shows in the country.¹³

⁷ *Harlan County Journal*, 26 January 1923, "To The Sub"
⁸ *Harlan County Journal*, 10 August 1923, "Last Call."
⁹ *Harlan County Journal*, 21 December 1923, "A Rousing Meeting."
¹⁰ *Alma: Towards the Year 2000*, Self-Published: 1992, 82.
¹¹ *Alma: Towards the Year 2000*, Self-Published: 1992, 83.
¹² *Alma: Towards the Year 2000*, Self-Published: 1992, 83.
¹³ *Harlan County Journal*, 12 October 1923, "Everybody Boost."

Alma City Auditorium and Sale Barn Harlan County, Nebraska
Name of Property County and State

10. Geographical Data

Acreeage of property Less than one USGS Quadrangle Alma

UTM References

		NAD 1927	or	X NAD 1983		
1.	Zone	14		Easting	468965.38	Northing
2.	Zone			Easting		Northing
3.	Zone			Easting		Northing
4.	Zone			Easting		Northing

Verbal Boundary Description (Describe the boundaries of the property.)

Lots 4-8 and fcl Lot 9, Block 16, First Addition to Alma, Harlan County, Nebraska.

Boundary Justification (Explain why the boundaries were selected.)

The boundary includes all the land historically associated with the Alma Auditorium and attached Sale Barn.

11. Form Prepared By

name/title Jill Dolberg
organization Nebraska State Historical Society date March 5, 2014
street & number 1500 R Street/Box 82554 telephone (402) 471-4773
city or town Lincoln state Nebraska zip code 68501-2554
email Jill.dolberg@nebraska.gov

Additional Documentation

Submit the following items with the completed form:

- **Maps:** A USGS map or equivalent (7.5 or 15 minute series) indicating the property's location.
- **Sketch map** for historic districts and properties having large acreage or numerous resources. Key all photographs to map.
- **Additional items:** (Check with the SHPO for any additional items.)

Photographs

Submit clear and descriptive photographs. The size of each image must be 1600x1200 pixels (minimum), 3000x2000 preferred, at 300 ppi (pixels per inch) or larger. Key all photographs to the sketch map. Each photograph must be numbered and that number must correspond to the photograph number on the photo log. For simplicity, the name of the photographer, photo date, etc. may be listed once on the photograph log and doesn't need to be labeled on every photograph.

Alma City Auditorium and Sale Barn Harlan County, Nebraska
Name of Property County and State

After this first auction, there seems to have been a gap in the building's use for this purpose. In October 1931, Alma held its first cattle and hog commission sale.¹⁴ Before the first commission sale, both former Governor Shallenberger and W. J. Fulse, who had been on the finance committee for the building, gave speeches that praised the community for building such a facility and the wisdom of bringing buyers and sellers together. The sale sold seventy-five head of cattle and eighty hogs. The auctioneer, Thorvold Jensen, was said to be a "livewire," and his Thursday evening auctions during the 1930s were popular events.

Jensen acquired land on the same block as the sale barn to be used as a corral and staging area for the auctions. It is in place by the time the 1935 Sanborn Fire Insurance maps were published. In 1937, Jensen built a new "permanent" sales pavilion on the south end of Alma, removing the auction from the combination auditorium and sale barn. For a time the barn was used for storage. In 1944, the barn was cleaned out by the Boy Scouts, and the city converted the space for a community meat locker. In 1952, slaughtering facilities were added, and the facility was thus used for almost forty additional years.

ENTERTAINMENT/RECREATIONAL SIGNIFICANCE

After the completion of the auditorium building, the first big entertainment event was planned for December 27, 1923. Harry Lynch, the director of the Orlean band was hired by the Alma Commercial Club to join his band with the bands of Oxford and Long Island to create one large orchestra numbering 80 pieces in all.¹⁵ Future concerts, traveling plays and vaudeville shows would follow, but particularly well remembered were shows put on by the Chick Boys Players of Hebron, Nebraska that traveled throughout the state beginning around 1922 and continuing through the 1950s. Capacity crowds were guaranteed when they came to town. In addition to hosting traveling troupes, the auditorium also held school plays and graduations, dances, and even roller skating. The extant basketball hoops suspended from the ceiling are evidence of the sporting activities that were held in the building. High school basketball games were held in the auditorium until the new school and gym were built, which provided students with a more rule-compliant court.

9. Major Bibliographic References

Bibliography (Insert bibliography here – cite the books, articles and other sources used in preparing this form.)

- Alma: Towards the Year 2000*. Self-Published, 1992.
Harlan County Journal. January 13, 1922 through December 21, 1923.
Perkey, Elton A. *Perkey's Nebraska Place Names*. Lincoln, Nebraska: Nebraska State Historical Society, 1982.

Previous documentation on file (NPS):
 preliminary determination of individual listing (36 CFR 67 has been requested)
 previously listed in the National Register
 previously determined eligible by the National Register
 designated a National Historic Landmark
 recorded by Historic American Buildings Survey #
 recorded by Historic American Engineering Record #
 recorded by Historic American Landscape Survey #

Primary location of additional data:
 State Historic Preservation Office
 Other State agency
 Federal agency
 Local government
 University
 Other (Name of repository)

Historic Resources Survey Number (if assigned):

¹⁴ *Alma: Towards the Year 2000*, Self-Published: 1992, 121.
¹⁵ *Harlan County Journal*, 23 November 1923, "Big Band Concert for Alma."

Alma City Auditorium and Sale Barn Harlan County, Nebraska
Name of Property County and State

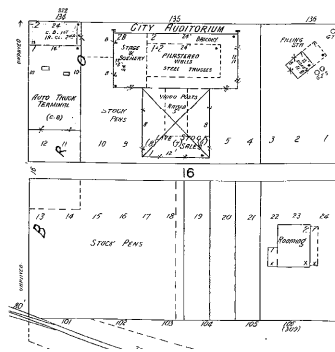
Photo Log

Name of Property Alma City Auditorium and Sale Barn
City or Vicinity Alma County Harlan State Nebraska
Photographer Patrick Haynes Date Photographed February 11, 2014

Description of Photograph(s) and number, include description of view indicating direction of camera.

1. Exterior of Alma City Auditorium, View SW.
2. Exterior of the Sale Barn, View NW.
3. Shared wall of the auditorium and sale barn, View NWW.
4. Exterior of Alma City Auditorium, View SE.
5. Interior toward stage, View SW.
6. View from stage, View E.
7. Stair to balcony, View N.
8. Seating, View W.
9. Interior of sale barn, View SW
10. Offices of sale barn, View N.
11. Interior of locker room, View NW.
12. Ceiling and walls of sale barn, View SW.
- 13.

Excerpt from 1935 Sanborn Map:



Paperwork Reduction Act Statement: This information is being collected for applications to the National Register of Historic Places to nominate properties for listing or determine eligibility for listing, to list properties, and to amend existing listings. Response to this request is required to obtain a benefit in accordance with the National Historic Preservation Act, as amended (16 U.S.C. 460 et seq.).
 Estimated Burden Statement: Public reporting burden for this form is estimated to average 100 hours per response including time for reviewing instructions, gathering and maintaining data, and completing and reviewing the form. Direct comments regarding this burden estimate or any aspect of this form to the Office of Planning and Performance Management, U.S. Dept. of the Interior, 1849 C Street, NW, Washington, DC 20540.

Alma City Auditorium and Sale Barn

Alma, Harlan County, Nebraska

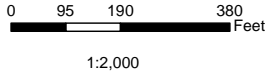
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40.097095, -99.364090

UTM:
Zone 14
East 468965.38
North 4438597.49



Legend

 Property Boundary



Datum: WGS1984

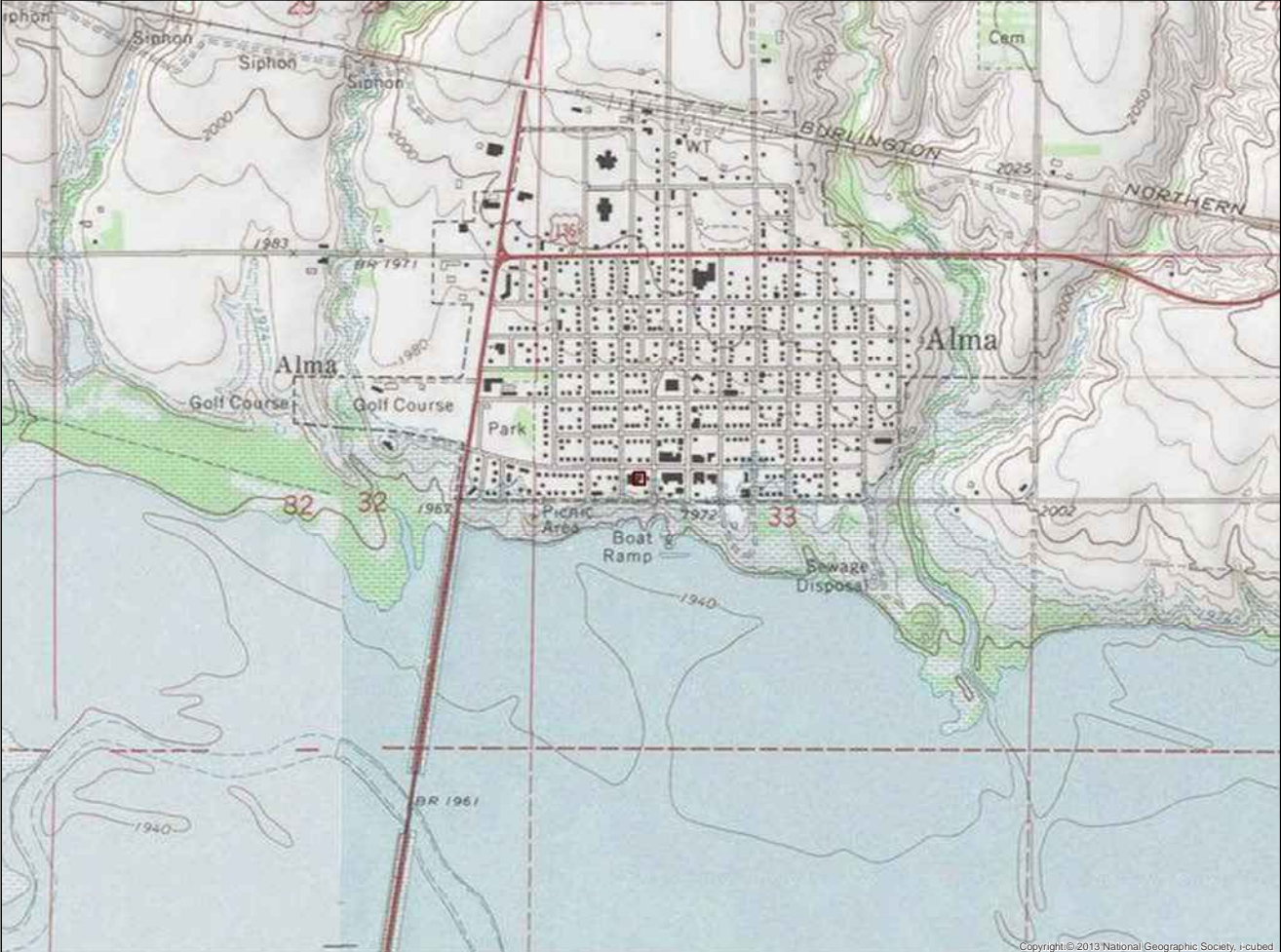
Sources: Esri, DeLorme, NAVTEQ, TomTom, Intermap, increment P Corp., GEBCO, USGS, FAO, NPS, NRCAN, GeoBase, IGN, Kadaster NL, Ordnance Survey, Esri Japan, METI, Esri China (Hong Kong), swisstopo, and the GIS User Community. Copyright © 2013 Esri, DeLorme, NAVTEQ, TomTom, Intermap, increment P Corp., GEBCO, USGS, FAO, NPS, NRCAN, GeoBase, IGN, Kadaster NL, Ordnance Survey, Esri Japan, METI, Esri China (Hong Kong), swisstopo, and the GIS User Community.

Alma City Auditorium and Sale Barn


Alma, Harlan County, Nebraska

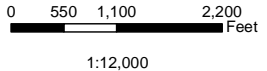
Latitude/Longitude Coordinates:
40.097095, -99.364090

UTM:
Zone 14
East 468965.38
North 4438597.49



Legend

 Property Boundary



Datum: WGS1984

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APPENDIX B: PUBLIC INPUT MEETING NOTES

PUBLIC INPUT MEETING

July 28th | 6:00 pm
at the City Auditorium

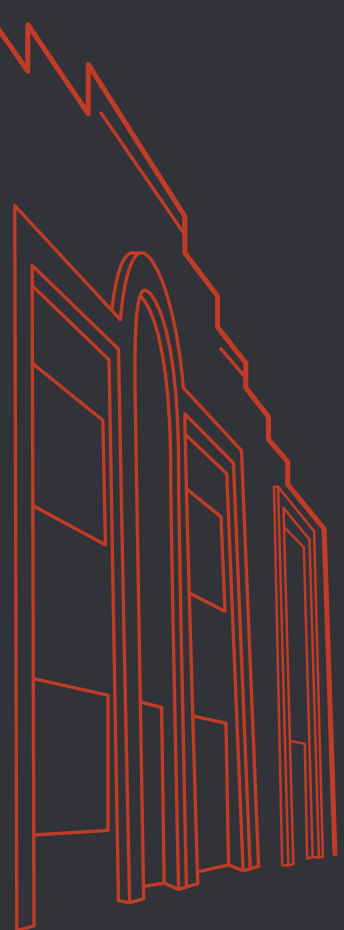
Discussion Topics:

CCCFF Feasibility Study Process
Community Vision
Desired Amenities & Potential Improvements

CITY
AUDITORIUM
CCCFF FEASIBILITY STUDY

ALMA
2021

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1st Public Meeting Notes

Feasibility Study for CCCFF City Auditorium Improvements City of Alma, Nebraska

Date: 7/28/20

Time: 6:00pm – 7:00pm

Location: City Auditorium, Alma, Nebraska

Presenters: Jennie Kozal; Mason Herrman; Jacob Sertich, AIA; Sergei Klein

Attendees: See Attached Sign-in Sheet

Presentation:

- Grant Basics
- Project Approach
- Community Profile
- Project Significance
- City Auditorium

Discussion:

1. What are the Auditorium's best characteristics?

- Mezzanine is very unique. It would be good to update it but keep it.
 - How does this work with the Historic Designations?
 - Don't want to lose the mezzanine
- Historic look and feel of the building.
- Beautiful tin ceilings. If they have to go, can they be reused somewhere else?
- Having a kitchen

2. What past events held at the auditorium did you find particularly successful?

- Prom that is held every year
- Chamber of Commerce holds events every spring and winter.
- People enjoy roller skating and would like to keep that going. (unique activity)
- Winter fest and 60/40 raffle events.
- Pheasants forever and Duck Unlimited fundraisers
- They would like to see music and theater events again
- Wedding receptions
- This is the only venue that is big enough to host most of these events.

3. What future events should the space accommodate?

- Flea market
- Auction events
- Youth sports (there is not enough gym space available)
- Community programs (this will require sound and electrical upgrades)
- Family Reunions
- Music and Theater Events

4. What amenities should be offered? / What main improvements would you like to see through this process?

- Kitchen & Bathrooms
- Sound System
- Electrical
- Stage Lighting

- Storage space for table and chairs
- Retractable hoops
- Clean up basement and make it usable
- Adding dressing rooms and lockers
- It will be important to maintain building viability to keep maintenance low. (i.e. brick tuckpointing)
- A smaller meeting space that could be separate while kids ran around in the gym space

5. What should architectural design focus on first?

- Walkthrough with State Fire marshal would be the first. It will be important to determine what fire safety items will need to be upgraded to determine feasibility and cost of the project.
- This will also determine how much of the project budget be spent on ADA upgrades.
- Restrooms and Kitchen will have top priority.

6. Questions

- Has the bat problem been resolved?
 - Answer: City had a person come in to address the issue. There is still evidence of bats around. May need to check on that again.
- Will there be a hinderance to renovation with the building being historic?
 - Answer: Not really
- Will the team need to submit drawings and documents for historic review?
 - Answer: Yes.
- Where and how will the kitchen be modified?
 - Answer: It would most likely be moved to adjacent building where existing restrooms are to give the kitchen more space. All restrooms would be located together in the east portion of the building.
- Will certain percentage of the building need to remain historic for it to remain on a historic registry and still get a grant?
 - Answer: Renovation will focus on improving the space without changing historic nature of the space.

Action Items from Meeting

- Wilkins
 - Have a walk through with the State Fire Marshal
 - Continue to develop initial design concepts
- M&A
 - Online Survey
 - will also provide paper copies for the City Office
 - Newspaper will advertise survey as well
 - Draft Study
- City of Alma
 - Steering Committee
 - Promote Online Survey

City of Alma
CCCFF Feasibility Study: City Auditorium Improvements
July 28th, 2020

Name

Jessica Miller

Lorri Bantam

Cindy Baeller

Bob SHIPPENY

Ruby Stalder

Hel Hoeker

Richard Lutjeharms

David Coe

Marlene Coe

Jesse Adams

Stephanie Adams

Sally Hanna

Jin Song

Jin Song

Don Wells

Angie Bellware - journal

PUBLIC INPUT MEETING

November 17th | 6:00 pm
at the City Auditorium

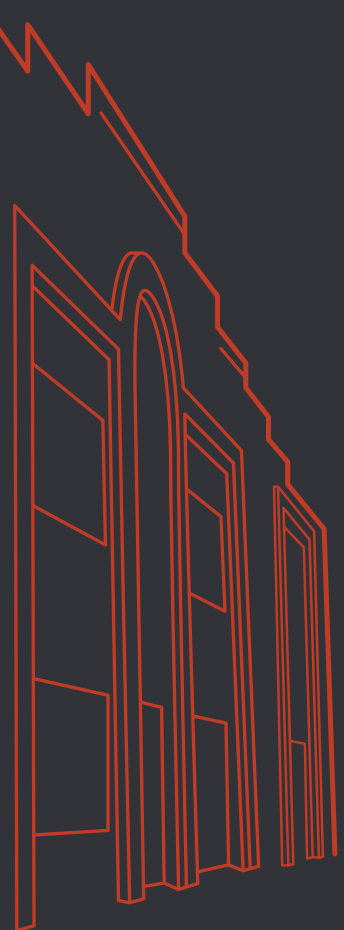
Discussion Topics:

Online Survey Results
Prioritized Improvements
Schematic Floor Plans

CITY
AUDITORIUM
CCCFF FEASIBILITY STUDY

ALMA
2021

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2nd Public Meeting Notes

Feasibility Study for CCCFF City Auditorium Improvements City of Alma, Nebraska

Date: 11/17/20

Time: 6:00pm – 7:00pm

Location: City Auditorium, Alma, Nebraska

Presenters: Jennie Kozal; Jacob Sertich, AIA; Sergei Klein

Attendees: See Attached Sign-in Sheet

Presentation:

- Introductions
- Survey Results
- Proposed Improvements
- Discussion
- Moving Forward

Discussion:

1. Proposed Improvements

Kitchen/Storage

- There needs to still be room in Caring Cupboard's storage room for seasonal items
 - General concern with losing storage space
 - Add storage above proposed storage space, next to the kitchen, that would be used by Caring Cupboards.
- Access door to Auditorium from Caring Cupboard side is important
- Would like exterior access to the kitchen for unloading
- Replace existing locked up door next to the existing restrooms with new one.

Auditorium

- Where would serving line for the kitchen be? There should be plenty of space to line up along south wall.
- Would not want basketball lines painted permanently onto the floor
- Concern about storing basketball goals when not in use. Hoops should be collapsible and can either be stored at the storage next to the kitchen or at the back of the stage.
- Need to look into new sound system

Other Items

- Will there be ADA Access to the Mezzanine?
 - Is there a need for an elevator to the second level?
 - At this point its not proposed but can be added to the scope if desired.
 - The proposed improvements are not substantial enough to require increased accessibility

2. Opinion of Probable Cost

- Cost of building new versus renovation
 - They would like a cost for a new building

- A new building could not be built exactly the same and cost would increase due to fire suppression and accessibility requirements
- People expressed support for the location, character, and history of the existing building

3. Moving Forward

- Phasing the project? Is a municipality able to apply for CCCFF capital construction funds multiple times for the same project?
 - M&A will look into further for most accurate answer -

Action Items from Meeting

- Wilkins
 - Cost estimate for new building compared to improving existing building
- M&A
 - Draft Feasibility Study
 - Determine grant combinations that could help City come up with the funds for the project

City of Alma
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November 17th, 2020

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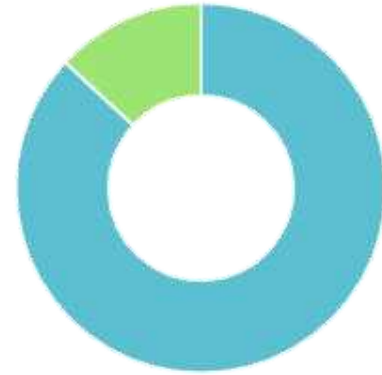


APPENDIX C: PUBLIC INPUT SURVEY RESULTS

Community Facility Input

Please share your ideas about potential improvements to the City Auditorium. The goals for this survey are to prioritize improvement goals, plan for future use, and gauge public support for the project.

1 Have you attended an event at the City Auditorium in the past year?



87% (53)

Yes

13% (8)

No

22.5

Standard Deviation

61

Responses

Event Attendance

Please list the event(s) you have attended in the past year.

Rotary winterfest, skating

Holiday preview

Spring fling

Christmas concert,

Auction

christmas downtown thing

Wedding reception

Christmas with under umbrella singing, walking club, Ehrke singing Christmas, wrapping presents for caring cupboard

pheasants forever, bingo,

Wedding reception, banquet, auction, Ehrke Christmas program, Military band performance, Christmas downtown event, Lutheran church Night in Bethlehem event

I volunteered at the Caring Cupboard

Ehrke Christmas program

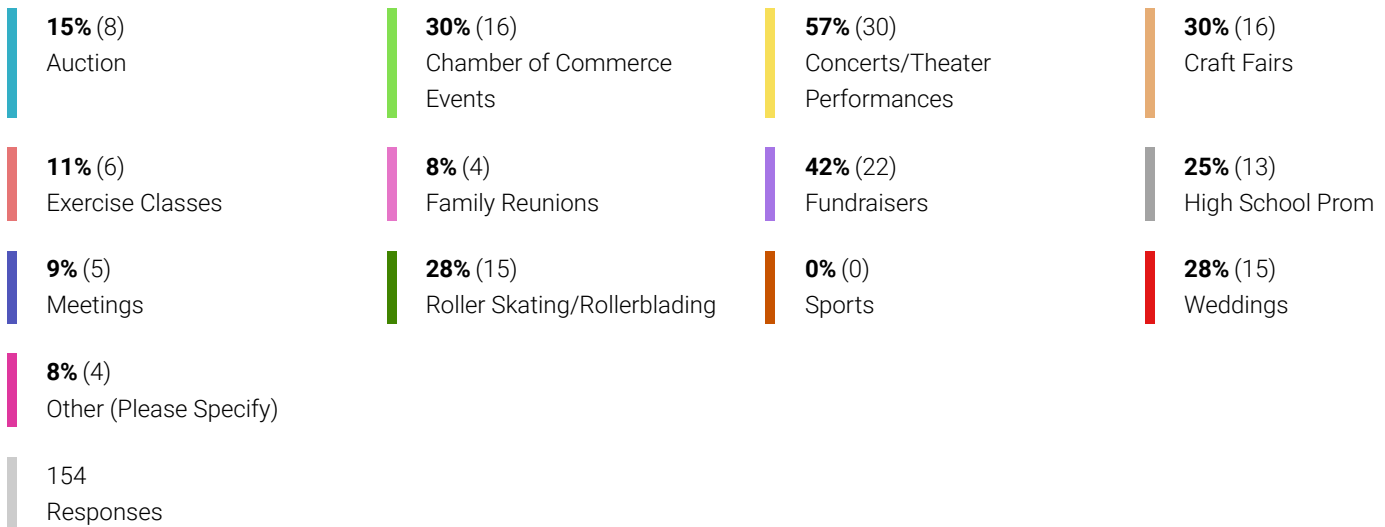
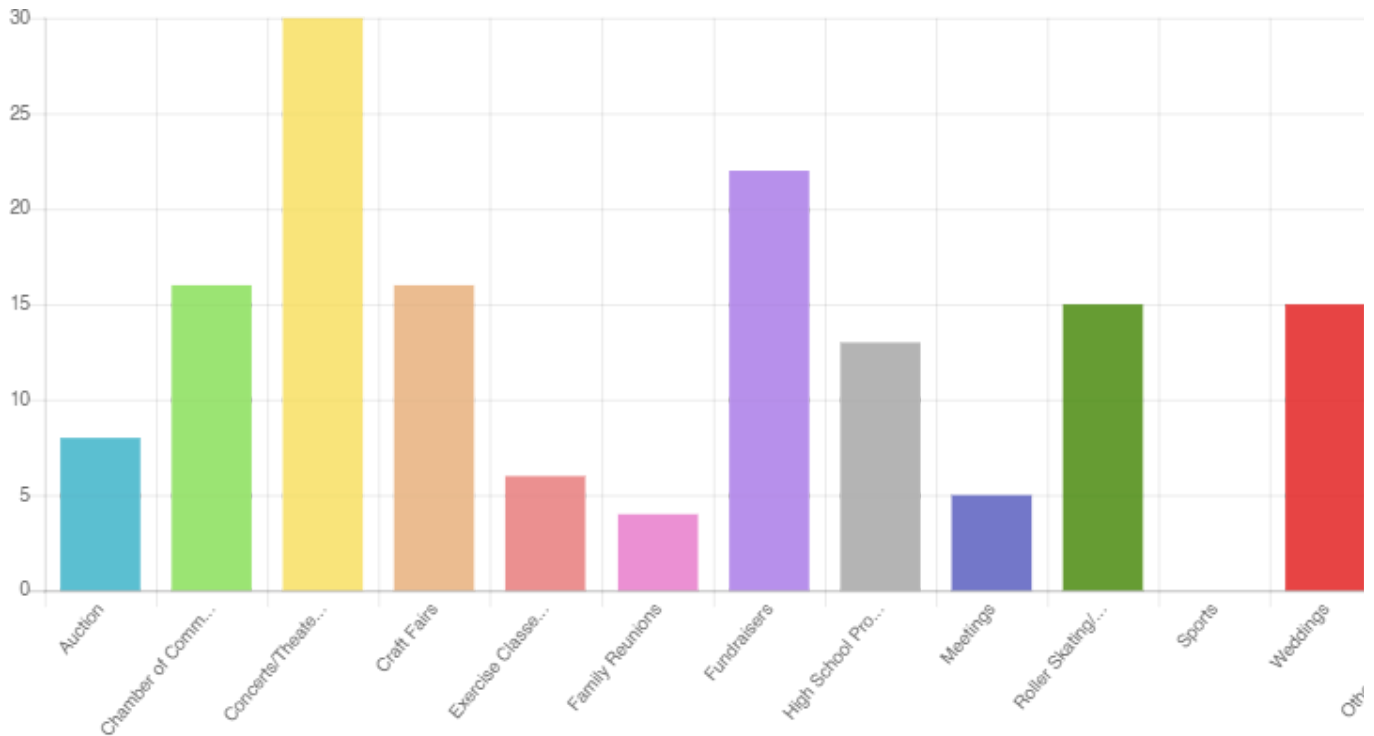
Cancer Fundraiser, Christmas Program, Chamber of Commerce Event, Exercise Classes

Auditorium Improvement meeting, Walking, Ehrke xmas concert, Air Force Band Concert, Crafts fair, Gymnastics, Under Umbrella program, Home improvement booths, Prom, Wedding & others.

Indoor walking, several concerts, gymnastics event, booths, etc.

Facility Use

2 What are the 3 most successful events held at the City Auditorium that you would like to see hosted there in the future?



Walking in the Winter -- Weekdays

Really anything to keep it utilized!

Open for walking in January thru March

I think any of the above events if they can be accommodated and still maintain and preserve the building would be awesome.

3 What additional events, if any, would you like to see at the Auditorium in the future?

Craft fairs, weddings, auctions, concerts

Music entertainment

wedding receptions, craft fairs, wedding receptions, auctions

Exercise classes

All previous events & additional events.

Maybe a community play or event

Roller Skating, Chamber Events, Concert/Theater Performances

Events/weddings, concerts/performances

Several of the above that I couldn't choose

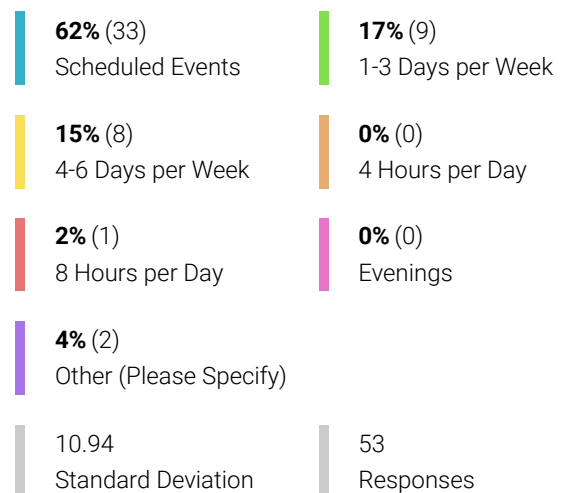
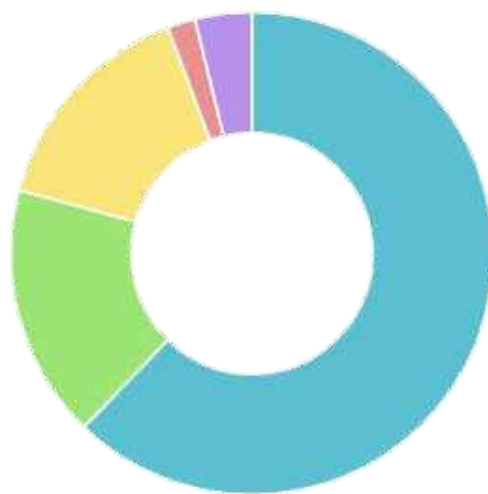
gun show, flea market

event center

I cant think of anymore right now.

Auctions, swap meets

4 With staffing in mind, when should the City Auditorium be available to the Public?

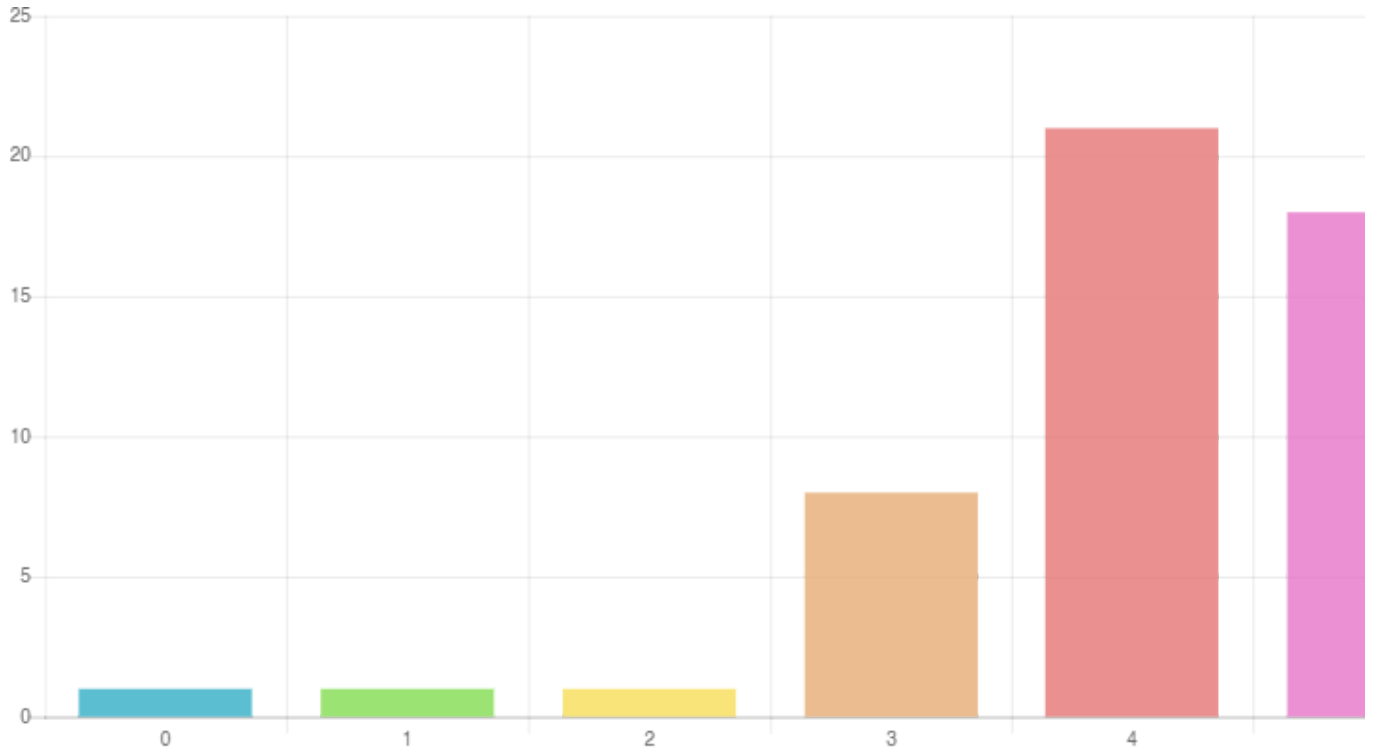


All public & private events.

I would agree with Scheduled events so that they are monitored, but for exercising open times scheduled would be great as well.

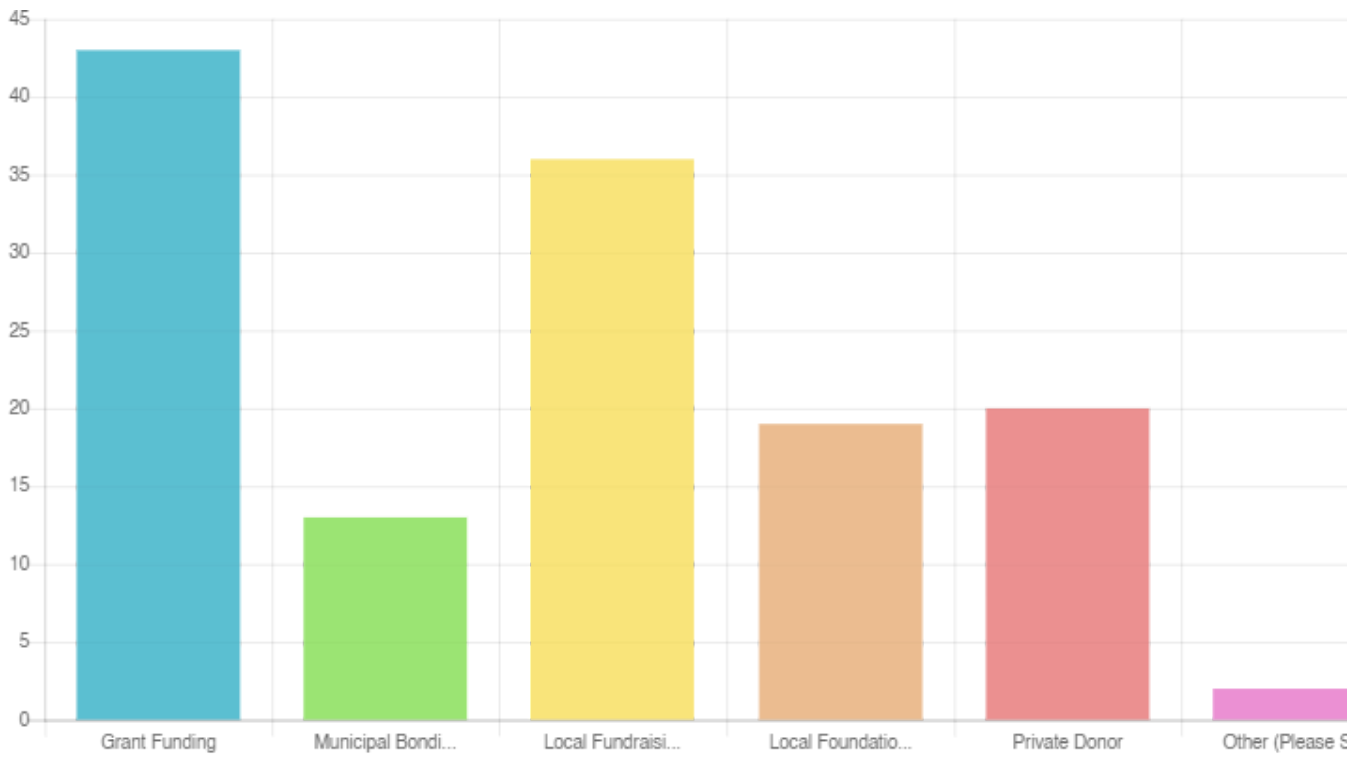
Community Support

5 With a 200-chair capacity, the City Auditorium is the largest venue available for public rental on a regular basis in Alma. How important is this event space to the quality of life for Alma's residents?



	0	1	2	3	4	5	Standard Deviation	Responses	Weighted Average
Very Unimportant - Very Important	1 (2%)	1 (2%)	1 (2%)	8 (16%)	21 (42%)	18 (36%)	8.32	50	4.02 / 5
									4.02 / 5

6 Which funding opportunities are you most willing to support? Please check all that apply.



88% (43)
Grant Funding

27% (13)
Municipal Bonding

73% (36)
Local Fundraising

39% (19)
Local Foundations

41% (20)
Private Donor

4% (2)
Other (Please Specify)

133
Responses

No new taxes

Volunteers.

7 Would you support a minor tax increase to fund on-going facility costs?



50% (25)
Yes

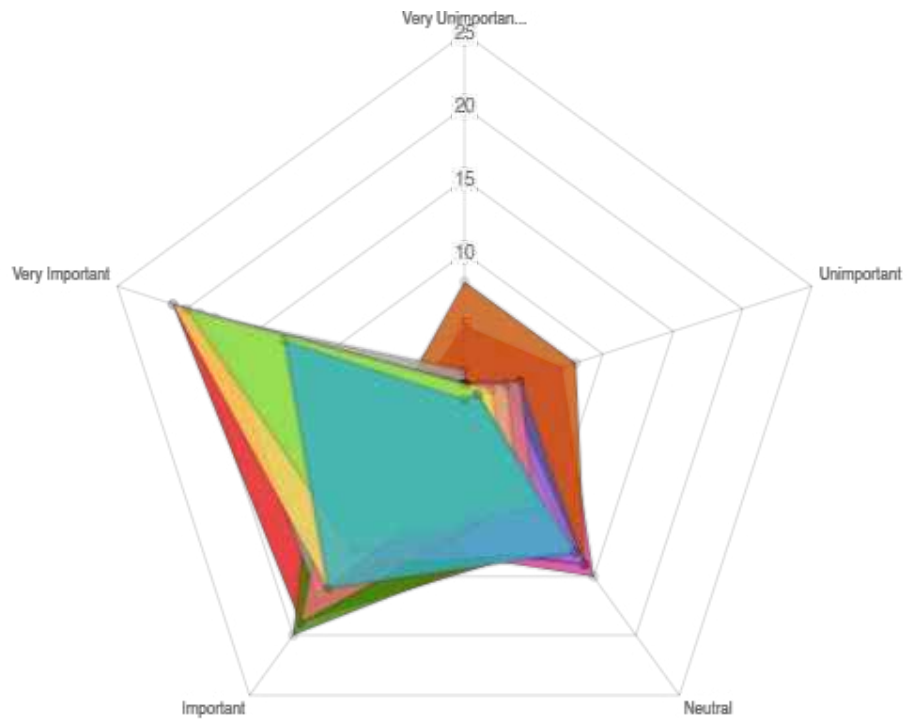
50% (25)
No

0
Standard Deviation

50
Responses

Improvement Priorities

8 Please rate the importance of the following improvements in the City Auditorium.



	Very Unimportant	Unimportant	Neutral	Important	Very Important	Standard Deviation	Responses	Weighted Average
Acoustics	0 (0%)	1 (2%)	13 (30%)	16 (37%)	13 (30%)	6.71	43	3.95 / 5
ADA Accessibility	1 (2%)	1 (2%)	9 (20%)	13 (30%)	20 (45%)	7.28	44	4.14 / 5
ADA Bathrooms	1 (2%)	2 (5%)	4 (9%)	16 (36%)	21 (48%)	8.13	44	4.23 / 5
Electrical Services	1 (2%)	3 (7%)	6 (14%)	13 (31%)	19 (45%)	6.68	42	4.1 / 5
Exterior Brick	1 (3%)	4 (10%)	8 (20%)	19 (48%)	8 (20%)	6.1	40	3.73 / 5
Fire Alarm System	0 (0%)	2 (5%)	13 (32%)	14 (34%)	12 (29%)	5.95	41	3.88 / 5
Fire Sprinklers	1 (3%)	3 (8%)	14 (35%)	11 (28%)	11 (28%)	5.06	40	3.7 / 5
Kitchen Appliances and Electrical	2 (5%)	0 (0%)	6 (14%)	17 (40%)	18 (42%)	7.53	43	4.14 / 5
Kitchen Size	1 (2%)	4 (10%)	14 (34%)	12 (29%)	10 (24%)	4.92	41	3.63 / 5
Lighting	1 (2%)	0 (0%)	11 (26%)	20 (48%)	10 (24%)	7.34	42	3.9 / 5
Retractable Basketball Hoops	8 (20%)	8 (20%)	14 (34%)	7 (17%)	4 (10%)	3.25	41	2.78 / 5
Roof Repair/Replacement	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	3 (7%)	19 (44%)	21 (49%)	9.39	43	4.42 / 5
Signage	5 (12%)	7 (17%)	15 (36%)	12 (29%)	3 (7%)	4.45	42	3.02 / 5
Sound System	1 (2%)	1 (2%)	10 (23%)	16 (37%)	15 (35%)	6.53	43	4 / 5
Window/Door Replacement	1 (2%)	2 (5%)	12 (29%)	19 (45%)	8 (19%)	6.65	42	3.74 / 5
								3.83 / 5

Anything Else?

9 Do you have any additional comments regarding improvements to Alma's City Auditorium?

have it multi-use, have a stage and raised platform on the floor level for speaking to meetings, microphoned at both levels, have lighting able to be adjusted (dimmed) with some spotlighting available (both for stage and platform); kitchen space needs to be blown out to the south and appliances replaced, appliances and electrical (amperage) in the kitchen are a fire hazard; replace folding chairs, some are on the verge of collapsing.

NO PUBLIC [Tax] money should be spent on this project. ALL costs should be from grants and RECEIVED donations (to avoid continuing debt – such as the city has with the slide at the pool)

Keep price to rent reasonable

Need to keep building

Is it possible to make the old dressing rooms useable? It would be an advantage for concerts. I know they are used for storage at this time and understand that storage may not be given up. I was also thinking that if the acoustics and sound system were improved the school might use the stage and dressing rooms for theatre productions. To continue hosting large events, it seems an update of the restroom facilities would be an excellent aspect.

There has been a lot of work done to the Caring Cupboard area already. Please take that into consideration

Community Involvement with volunteers to help defray some of the costs. Make it a community project so everyone can have a part if desired.

Fix or completely close off the basement

I do support a larger kitchen area and updates there and new floor.

Why would 'hours of availability ' be impacted by the 'keeping in mind the need for city staff'?

let's keep this for the future of Alma

it is a land mark

I agree that this is a Historical Building and should be updated and repaired. I think that by preserving it now, it will stand and be used for generations to come. This building will accommodate larger capacity events which is a necessity for the public, organizations and businesses in bringing people into Alma that will support our economy and the change in life styles today. What better way to show your pride than to restore its History if possible.

Need to keep the building and do what is needed to fix it for the future.