MEMORIAL HALL

REHABILITATION PLAN

04/18/2025

Presented by:

Friends of Memorial Hall



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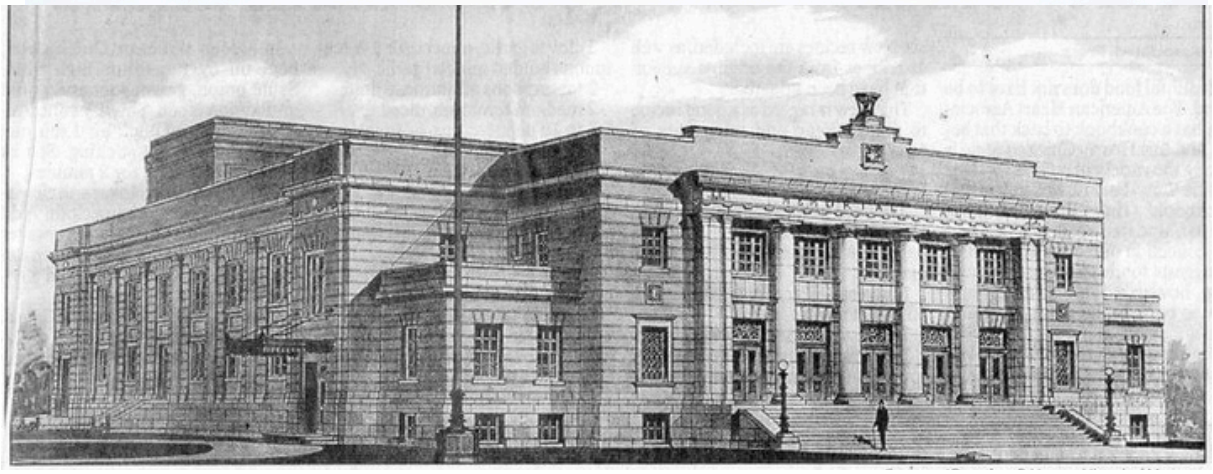
Introduction

Memorial Hall, located at 212 W 8th Street, has played a dynamic role in the community for 100 years. Built as a memorial to honor the men and women who gave their lives for our freedom, this building has been a community centerpiece.

REHABILITATION PLAN



With this plan, the Friends of Memorial Hall propose an alternative to demolition for this community landmark. By evaluating local, state and national incentives, utilizing community support and investment and a public-private partnership, we propose options for rehabilitation and long term sustainability for this community asset.

Our Goals & Objectives

The mission of the Friends of Memorial Hall is to revitalize and preserve our historic Memorial Hall as a thriving community hub that fosters intergenerational engagement, empowers youth, supports veterans, and enriches the lives of all residents and visitors through activities, education, entertainment, and connection.



SFS Rendering from 2021 Report

This report will show the following for the rehabilitation of Memorial Hall

01 Cost of Rehabilitation is significantly less than previous projections.

02 A variety of incentives for redevelopment make investment in the Hall affordable and attainable.

03 Positive economic and quality of life benefit is derived from a revitalized Hall.

04 Public-private partnership creates a lasting collaborative environment that utilizes the passion and expertise of the community with the resources and stability of the City government.

Challenges

Memorial Hall, while a long faithful and well-loved member of the community, has reached a point like many of our 100+ year old downtown buildings and is in need of rehabilitation. Issues with the roof structure, foundation/wall damage related to the elevator and aged general infrastructure require addressing. Cosmetic and operational updates are needed.

Funding for these improvements and a sustainability plan to continue long term maintenance and operations of the facility are required to return this facility to use.



Solution

Public Private Parnership

The Friends of Memorial Hall propose a public-private partnership for the revitalization of the Hall. As a public building and a community asset, a shared responsibility for Memorial Hall will ensure the greatest success.

Through numerous community surveys conducted by City of Joplin consultants, it is clear that the Joplin community and its veterans wish for Memorial Hall to remain as a shared civic space and community hub. In addition, the community has shown up for council meetings and conducted planning sessions to formulate a plan to create a shared responsibility for the rehabilitation of this community asset.

Future programming for Memorial Hall should support and compliment the Cornell Complex, creating a long envisioned synergy between the facilities. Mutual support and collaboration will prove to be the key to the success of both endeavors.

Instead of spending $5-8 million to demolish a structure that has stood as a pillar to the sacrifice of our veterans and a hub of civic activity for over 100 yrs, let's envision repurposing that same investment towards creating a thriving, revenue-generating community asset that benefits all our community for generations to come. This is not just a building; this is an opportunity—a chance to preserve a historical landmark, while building a community-driven, future-focused hub for activities, workforce development, entertainment, enrichment, and economic growth.

City Council Request

To ensure success, we ask for the following:

- Council support of continued development of public-private partnership--This partnership will create a shared vision and shared responsibility for the rehabilitation and overall success of the facility.
- Reallocation of Demolition Funds – Instead of erasing history, invest the proposed $5-8M demolition budget to jumpstart this project and leverage additional grants, sponsorships, and revenue streams.
- City Infrastructure Support – Assistance with items such as site utilities and any zoning adjustments to make the space fully operational.

For generations this building has stood as a witness to our city's evolution and growth as well as a recognition of our veterans. This is an opportunity to include it as a vital part of the future instead of a forgotten "used to be" of the past? This is more than just preservation—it's transformation. Let's provide our youth a space to learn, our seniors a place to gather, our veterans a community home, and our businesses an opportunity to thrive.

Key Elements



Community Demand #1

Need for a dedicated, central facility offering multigenerational programs, meeting space for veterans, affordable community engagement opportunities, and ability to serve as emergency hub in times of disaster.

Economic Impact #2

A revitalized Memorial Hall would generate an economic return through sales tax revenues, while also bringing the community and visitors to shop, dine and stay—versus spending millions on demolition with no return on investment.





Historical and Cultural Asset #3

Cities that protect and revitalize historical landmarks see higher civic pride, increased tourism, and greater economic sustainability. This in turn leads to higher quality of life and improves talent attraction and retention.

Public-Private Partnership #4

Instead of spending taxpayer dollars on destruction, repurposing this funding will complement current investments being done to grow the area through infrastructure improvements, beautification efforts and connectivity.

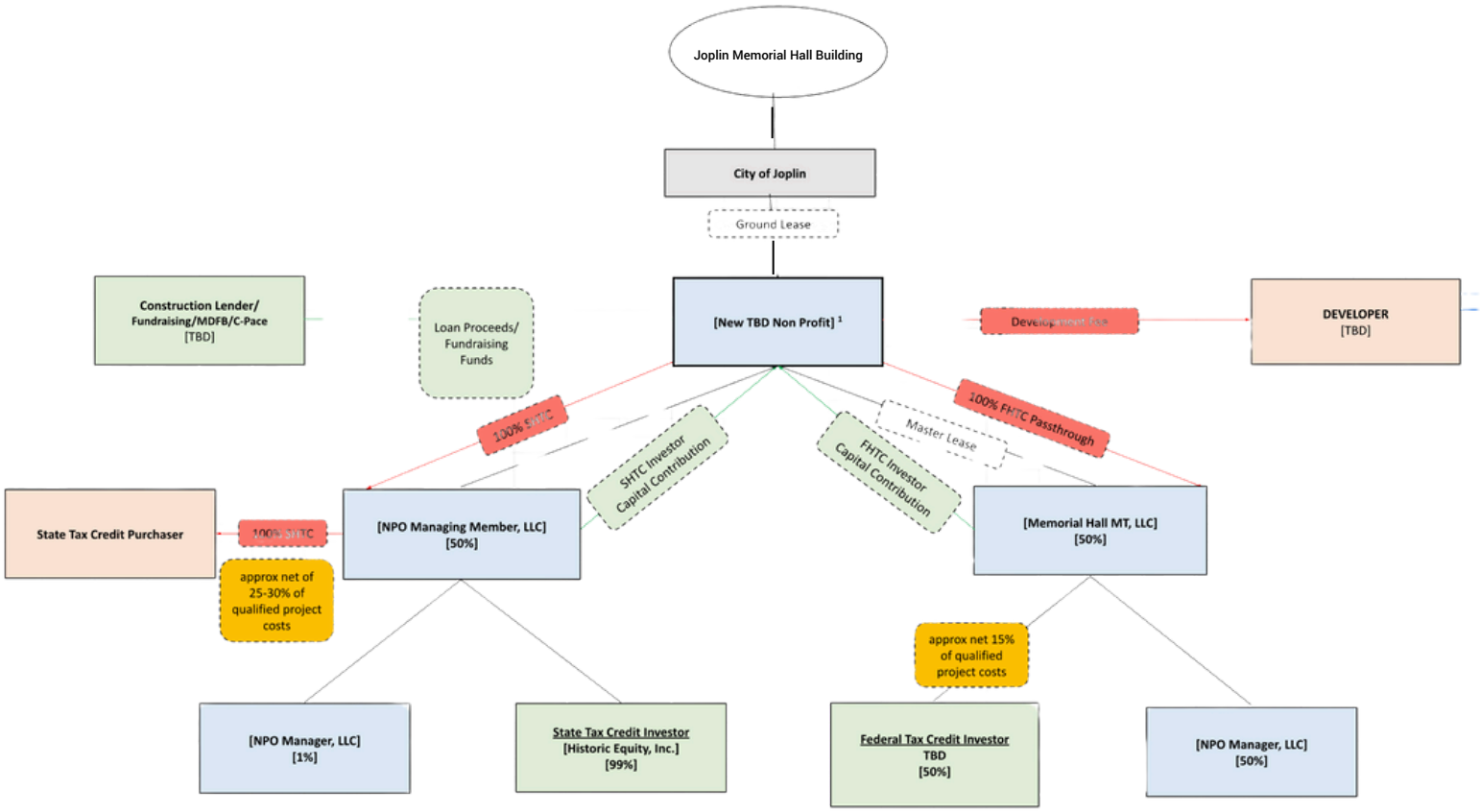


Solution

Public Private Parnership

DESCRIPTION

The recommended public-private partnership for the redevelopment of Memorial Hall is for the City of Joplin to establish a ground lease with a yet-to-be-formed non-profit organization. The NPO would take control of the building itself. The diagram below shows what the organizational structure would look like in order to take advantage of Missouri Historic Tax Credits and Federal Historic Tax Credits.



BENEFITS

- By the city retaining partial control through the ground lease, ongoing support from the city is simplified.
- Facility remains available for city purposes such as emergency disaster services
- Non-profit partnership opens up opportunity for grants and donations
- Positive return on investment over greenspace
- Cost benefits for improvements to be completed by non-profit entity

Solution

Rehabilitation Cost Summary

Rehabilitation to include updated systems, structural repairs, modern seating and theatrical needs to return Memorial Hall to full operations on all levels of facility.

Rehabilitation Scope

- Remove north entry ramp, replacing with stairs and ADA access
- Structural repairs to north east corner
- Mitigate any environmental issues
- New HVAC throughout building
- Dock to accommodate 53' trailers loading/unloading
- Improved ticket booth, concessions, lobby access
- Expanded and updated restrooms
- Kitchen updates
- Reconfigured backstage/dressing rooms
- Over stage fly
- New sound and light equipment
- New Elevator
- Larger fixed seating on mezzanine and balcony and loose chairs on main floor
- Wheelchair access to main floor
- Direct access from stage to floor

Cost Opinion Summary

Project: Memorial Hall Remodel - Joplin, MO
Date: March 13, 2025

Building SF
43,600

CROSSLAND CONSTRUCTION COMPANY, INC.
Basement = 5,200 sf
Main Level = 24,700 sf
Balcony Level = 13,700 sf

Trade Package #	Trade Package Description	Current $/SF 43,600	Current SD Budget 3/13/2025
02A	Demolition	$ 10.72	$ 467,600
02B	Foundation Stabilization	$ 8.03	$ 350,000
03A	Cast In Place Concrete	$ 12.84	$ 560,000
04A	Masonry	$ 4.59	$ 200,000
05A	Structural Steel	$ 5.73	$ 250,000
05B	Misc. Metals & Railings	$ 3.67	$ 160,000
06A	Architectural Millwork	$ 2.29	$ 100,000
07A	Roofing	$ 5.55	$ 241,800
07B	Joint Sealants & Waterproofing	$ 1.15	$ 50,000
08A	Doors & Hardware	$ 1.72	$ 75,000
08C	Glass & Glazing/Storefront	$ 1.15	$ 50,000
08D	Overhead Doors	$ 0.23	$ 10,000
09A	Gypsum Assemblies	$ 24.00	$ 1,046,400
09B	Flooring & Wall Tile	$ 11.00	$ 479,600
09C	Painting & Wall Coverings	$ 4.25	$ 185,300
09F	Polished Concrete	$ 0.80	$ 34,850
10A	Specialties (Supply & Install)	$ 2.15	$ 93,740
11A	Food Service Equipment	$ 1.15	$ 50,000
11B	Theatrical Equipment	$ 11.47	$ 500,000
11D	Multiple Seating	$ 22.71	$ 990,000
14A	Elevators	$ 3.10	$ 135,000
21A	Fire Suppression	$ 6.00	$ 261,600
22A	Plumbing	$ 11.00	$ 479,600
23A	HVAC	$ 32.00	$ 1,395,200
26A	Electrical	$ 55.28	$ 2,410,000
31A	Earthwork	$ 4.59	$ 200,000
32A	Site Concrete	$ 11.47	$ 500,000
32D	Landscape & Irrigation	$ 1.72	$ 75,000
33A	Site Utilities	$ 1.15	$ 50,000
SUBTOTAL DIRECT COSTS		**$ 261.48**	**$ 11,400,690**
	Gen. Conditions	$ 11.19	$ 487,860
	Project Requirements	$ 5.66	$ 246,660
	Plan Review & Building Permit	$ 1.72	$ 75,000
1.00%	Insurance	$ 3.32	$ 144,903
0.85%	Bonding	$ 2.85	$ 124,400
6.00%	Construction Mgmt. Fee	$ 20.31	$ 885,579
TOTAL ESTIMATED CONSTRUCTION COST		**$ 306.54**	**$ 13,365,092**
7%	Architect & Engineering Fee	$ 25.12	$ 1,095,166
TOTAL ESTIMATED PROJECT COST		**$ 331.66**	**$ 14,460,258**
10.0%	Contractor Contingency	$ 26.15	$ 1,140,069
10.0%	Design/Estimating Contingency	$ 26.15	$ 1,140,069
TOTAL ESTIMATED PROJECT COST w/ CONTINGENCY		**$ 383.95**	**$ 16,740,396**

Above numbers are provided by Crossland Construction in March of 2025.

Solution

Financials

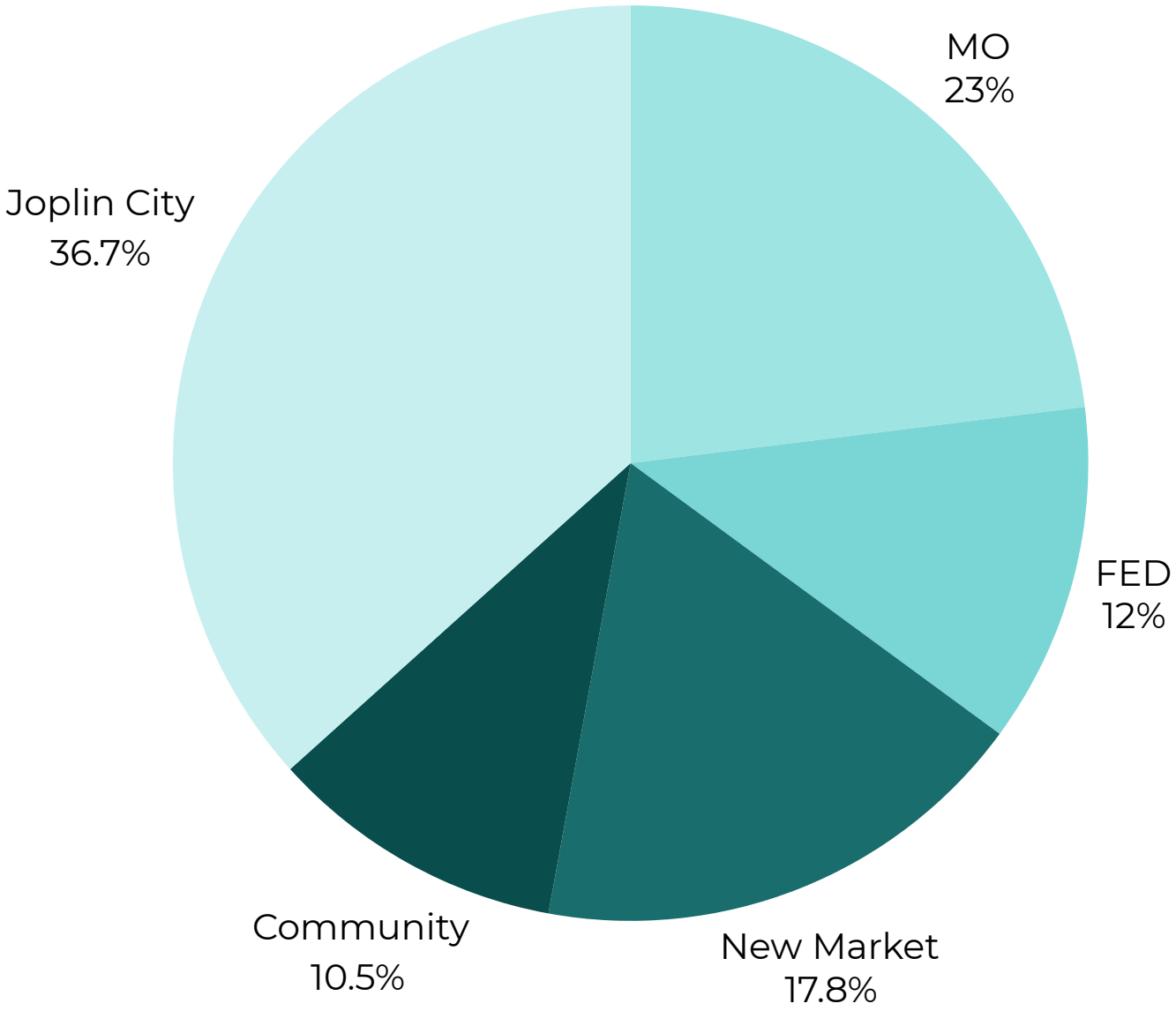
Possible Rehab Cost Scenario

	NOTES	DETAILS	TOTAL
ANTICIPATED CONSTRUCTION COSTS		including construction, soft costs, contingency	16,740,396
STATE HISTORIC TAX CREDIT	Assuming QRE of 15,000,000	35% MO Credit on QRE	4,398,000
FEDERAL HISTORIC TAX CREDIT	Assuming QRE of 15,000,000	20% Federal credit on QRE	2,298,200
NEW MARKET TAX CREDIT		15-20% of total project costs	3,400,000
CITY FUNDS		Funds that would have been used for demo, park, veterans building	7,000,000
TOTAL FUNDS GENERATED			17,096,200
COMMUNITY FUNDRAISING		Funding to be reserved for long term maintenance and sustainability	2,000,000

Solution

Possible Rehab Cost Scenario

Funding Percentages



Solution

Additional Rehabilitation Incentives

Incentive	Description	Benefit	Likelihood
Missouri Historic Tax Credit	State historic tax credits are equal to 35% of qualified renovation expenses.	35%	High
Federal Historic Tax Credit	Federal historic tax credits equal 20% of the qualified renovation expenses.	20%	High
New Market Tax Credit	Managed through the U.S. Department of the Treasury, New Markets Tax Credits (NMTCs) are awarded to CDEs who, in return, deploy the credits to high-impact projects including those that create quality jobs for low-income individuals and provide goods and/or services to low-income communities. The NMTCs can finance up to 20% of a project's total qualifying cost, helping fill a project's capital stack.	Up to 20%	Medium
MDFB Infrastructure Tax Credit	Missouri Development Finance Board provides financial assistance, like loans and tax credits, for public infrastructure projects that benefit local communities. These projects aim to improve local facilities, address health and safety concerns, and support economic development.	Typically $250,000-$500,000	Medium
C-Pace	Commercial property-assessed clean energy (CPACE) is a financing structure in which building owners borrow money for energy efficiency, renewable energy, or other projects and make repayments via an assessment on their property tax bill.	cost of energy efficiency infrastructure improvements	Medium
Brownfield Redmediation Grant	Provides financial incentives for the redevelopment of commercial/ industrial sites that are contaminated with hazardous substances & have been abandoned or underutilized for at least 3 years.	Up to 4 million to remediate environmental issues	Unknown cost/possible funds until Phase 1 and 2 completed
Neighborhood Assistance Tax Credit Program	The Neighborhood Assistance Program (NAP) allows Missouri taxpayers to direct how their taxes are used by donating to state approved charitable organizations. Eligible donors will receive a state tax credit equaling 50%-70% of their gift.	Up to $350,000 in 70% tax credits for donors	Medium
CDBG	From addressing local health and safety concerns to improving local facilities such as senior centers and community centers, CDBG programs are designed to support your community's wellbeing and greater capacity for growth. Grants are available in a variety of categories and can be utilized for a variety of community development initiatives.	Exterior and landscaping improvements may be eligible	Medium
Historic Preservation Fund Grant	Funds of up to $50,000 towards planning documents for rehabilitation; application has already been submitted; $50,000 matching has been committed via DJA EPP fund.	Offset costs of design documents	Medium
National Trust for Historic Preservation	Funding of $5000 towards professional services related to the redevelopment of Memorial Hall	$5000	Awarded

Solution

Operations Projections

Annual ProForma

REVENUE			TOTAL
PROGRAMMING, RENTALS, DONATIONS, CONCESSIONS			360,000
CITY SUPPORT			150,000
TOTAL REVENUE			**510,000**
EXPENSES			
PROGRAMMING			36,000
OPERATING			267,889
STAFFING			203,060
TOTAL EXPENSES			**506,949**
PROFIT			3,051

Revenue Model: Sustaining Vision

- Facility Rentals/Special Events: Weddings, local business retreats, community gatherings, touring exhibits, entertainment
- Paid Programs/Memberships: Classes, wellness programs, youth mentoring, senior activities, skills classes
- Community Support: Sponsorships, naming rights, individual donations
- Entrepreneur/Business Incubation: Supporting start-ups, pop-up markets, conferences and workforce training

Solution

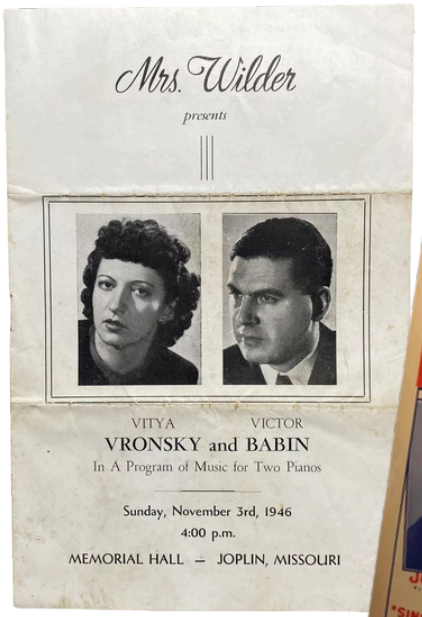
Timeline

Summer 2025

- Meetings with public held to update on progress
- Environmental Assessments Completed

Fall 2025

- Architectural plans begun
- New non-profit organization created along with relevant LLCs, etc.
- Fundraising activities begin







Nov 2025

- Application for Brownfield Remediation Grant submitted if applicable
- Historic Tax Credit Application submitted
- New Market Tax Credit process begin

Spring 2026

- Downtown Master Plan underway; integrate MH operations and functions based on results; Parking study as part of plan
- Finalize funding mechanisms, bridge loans, etc.

Summer 2026

- HTC application approved, construction begins

Spring 2028

- Construction Complete
- Host a fantastic concert to welcome the community back to the revitalized MH
- File Final Report on HTC, other funding

Fall 2028

- Receive HTC proceeds

About the Friends of Memorial Hall



The Friends of Memorial Hall consist of a group of concerned citizens representing a cross section of community members and organizations who believe that rehabilitation of Joplin's Memorial Hall to be in the best interest of the community and the City of Joplin.

We present to Joplin City Council a proposed path for a public-private partnership that will rehabilitate the Hall into an economic driver and quality of life asset for Joplin.

Thank you for your consideration and your commitment to our community.

CONTACT

Lori Haun
417-529-3888
lori@downtownjoplin.com

Melodee Colbert Kean
417-437-8141
melocolbert@yahoo.com

Committee Member Bios



Lori Haun is the Executive Director of Downtown Joplin Alliance. This organization is focused on economic vitality for Downtown Joplin through historic preservation. As an accredited Main Street program, DJA advocates and educates and works to create a thriving downtown. In addition to her work with DJA , Lori has personally redeveloped three award winning downtown mixed use historic buildings. Lori believes that your place is what you make it and that the actions of involved citizens can truly make a difference in the community.

Melodee Colbert Kean is a dynamic leader, strategist, and community advocate with a proven track record of service and impact. With over 14 years as a Joplin MO council member and as the Joplin MO Mayor helping guide tornado recovery efforts, Melodee has demonstrated unwavering leadership in times of crisis and growth.



Beyond public service, Melodee has owned and operated MEs Place Soulfood Kitchen for over 10 yrs and has been a licensed MO Realtor since 2002. She has held influential roles across multiple sectors, serving as board president and member for organizations such as a national park, a cultural center, a credit union, the youth enrichment program, and a college business advisory board to list a few. Her commitment to economic and community development is further reflected in her service with the Downtown Joplin Alliance and the local Chamber of Commerce.

With over 20 years of experience in customer service, negotiations, and strategic relationship-building, Melodee has excelled in leadership roles, including President of National League of Cities and as Assistant Manager of a major shopping mall. Her expertise in establishing connections, fostering engagement, and driving fundraising efforts has made a lasting impact in the nonprofit sector, where she serves as a director, championing initiatives that empower communities.

As a state and federal recognized leader and inspirational speaker, Melodee is an experienced resource in governance, business advisory, and community revitalization. Her ability to navigate complex challenges, inspire action, and drive meaningful change continues to shape the organizations and individuals she serves.

Committee Member Bios



Sharon Beshore has been a citizen of Joplin for 45 years. She has served as a member of the statewide Missouri Arts Council since 2005 and served as chairman of the Missouri Arts Council since 2017. She continues to serve the State of Missouri. She brings considerable additional experience as a board member, trustee, community leader, and advocate for the arts. Her leadership helped create Connect2Culture in 2009 to lead a grassroots initiative to build a new home for the arts in Joplin, and in 2013 to develop Connect2Culture as a community arts agency. She served as Connect2Culture's president from 2009 to 2015 and as its chair since 2018. In 2019, she was elected board president of the Harry M. Cornell Arts & Entertainment Complex, the new visual and performing arts center in downtown Joplin that opened in November 2022.

She has served as a Trustee for George A. Spiva Center for the Arts since 2007 and served for nearly 20 years as a Spiva board member. She has served as a founding board member for the Joplin Rotary Sculpture Garden since 2017 and has been a board member of the statewide Mid-America Arts Alliance since 2017. She was the project manager of two community-based murals in Joplin in 2011 and 2016. She has also served on the boards of Stephens College, Thomas Jefferson Independent Day School, the Friends of the Missouri Governor's Mansion, and Missouri Citizens for the Arts.

Clifford Wert is a Joplin native and a current Webb City resident.He obtained his Business Administration degree from Missouri Southern State University in May 1975. He retired in July of 2013 as the Joplin Region President of U.S. Bank after nearly 40 years with the Bank. Past community Board service includes the Joplin Regional Prosperity Initiative, Joplin Area Chamber of Commerce, Joseph Newman Innovation Center, Joplin Capital Corporation, Victory Ministry and Sports Complex, and the MSSU Alumni Association. He served from December 2016 through May 2017 as the Voluntary Chair of the citizen-driven Vision Joplin 2022. He was part of the leadership group that successfully raised more than $19.5 million from Joplin and area individuals, businesses, organizations and foundations for the construction of the Harry M. Cornell Arts & Entertainment Complex.



Present community service includes President and CFO of Connect2Culture, Treasurer of the Cornell Complex, and Trustee and Board Vice Chair of Ozark Christian College, Joplin, Missouri. During the tornado recovery, Wert served as co-chair of the Infrastructure and Environment Sector of the Joplin Citizens Advisory Recovery Team. In 2013, he was named Joplin Area Chamber of Commerce's Citizen of the Year. In October 2023 he was recognized as a Distinguished Alumnus of Missouri Southern State University. He and his wife, Pam, who is also a 1975 Elementary Education degree graduate of MSSU and retired from the Webb City Schools after a 32-year teaching career, have two married daughters and five grandchildren.

Committee Member Bios



As the Co-Owner of Neal Group Construction and four other sister companies, Carolina's mission intertwines sustainability with restoring historic properties. She has been at the forefront of eco-sustainable development. Her award-winning companies have transformed the face of Joplin, MO, turning century-old buildings into vibrant hubs for business and community growth. She is a Costa Rican Lawyer with a Master's in Global Affairs from the Fletcher School of Law and Diplomacy at Tufts University in Boston and is proud to call Joplin her home.

Neal Group Constructions' dedication to reusing and recycling nationally registered historic properties has contributed to the economic revitalization of Route 66 and preserved its unique character. In collaboration with her team, she has successfully created spaces where new entrepreneurs can thrive and new neighbors can meet each other, all while honoring our commitment to the planet and our community heritage.

Carolina was a founding member of the Creative Learning Alliance, a local 501 (c) (3) organization dedicated to establishing a new STEAM destination in the downtown district. Her leadership facilitated the acquisition of the old Joplin Library as the permanent site for this new attraction.

Her civic leadership supports initiatives such as the Joplin Regional Commission for Homelessness, the Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion workgroup, and the BOLD Women Leadership Summit from the Joplin Area Chamber of Commerce. For over a decade, she has been a member of DJA's Economic Vitality Committee.



Jeff Neal has spent 20 years helping revitalize Joplin's Historic Downtown. He and his wife/business partner, Carolina, received the first City of Joplin Façade Grant in 2005 and have since led one of the region's most experienced historic renovation companies.
The Neal's, working as both the general contractor and developer, have demonstrated that "the greenest building is usually the one already built" (C. Elefante). Working in conjunction with talented craftsmen, they strive to give 100-year-old buildings a better next century.

Jeff is a graduate of the U.S. Air Force Academy (13-year veteran) and has a Master's Degree from the Fletcher School of Law and Diplomacy at Tufts University. He uses his extensive knowledge of how government works to his clients' advantage, garnering over $19 million in State Historic Tax Credits, over $14 million in Federal Tax Credits, over $2 million in Brownfield Environmental Tax Credits, and $500,000 in Community Development Block Grant funds.

As an active speaker and a past-president of the Downtown Joplin Alliance, Jeff promotes economic revitalization through historic preservation. He encourages audiences to assemble the right mix of Historic Tax Credits, property tax abatement, and other government programs combined with private investment to bring downtowns back to life. His and Carolina's work has won many awards. Most recently, their work on the Pennington Drug Company Building was recognized by awards from both Missouri Preservation and Historic Revitalization for Missouri.

Committee Member Bios



Luke Gibson is a Commercial Real Estate Broker with Glenn Gibson Commercial Real Estate, bringing over 10 years of experience in the industry. He currently serves as Board President for the Downtown Joplin Alliance and actively contributes through the Organization Committee and the Endangered Properties Program, and currently serves as Outgoing Chair for the Joplin Area Chamber of Commerce Young Professionals Network, being named the 2022 Young Professional of the Year. Luke is deeply invested in the preservation of Joplin's history as well as its growth into the future, and is proud to call Joplin his home.



Todd Patterson is the CEO of Patterson Collaborative based in Joplin and the President of Public Progress based in Kansas City. Patterson Collaborative spearheads neighborhood redevelopment by restoring and renovating both residential and commercial structures. Established in 2020, Patterson Collaborative has successfully completed 26 projects in ten distinct Joplin neighborhoods. Public Progress builds government relations programs and spearheads ballot initiatives for organizations that are committed to generating new revenue for our nation's cities and towns. In the last 17 years, Public Progress has spearheaded efforts across the country that have generated a combined $2.7 billion in new local revenue. Prior to founding Public Progress, Patterson served in various capacities on Capitol Hill.

He worked closely with the Obama Administration in developing and securing resources for the Office of Adolescent Health. Earlier, he served as Chief of Staff for Congressman Russ Carnahan and special assistant to Chairman Dale Bumpers of Arkansas on the U.S. Senate Committee on Small Business. In Missouri, he was part of the Carnahan Administration team where he served as a consultant for several political action committees. As a student at Brown University, Todd Patterson concluded his academic tenure as a research assistant at the Brookings Institution in Washington, D.C., in compiling The New Urban Reality, a book that delves into the evolving relationships between technology, labor, and race. He is a native of Joplin and currently resides in the East Town neighborhood with his dog Sarge.



Robert Harrington - a retired Director of Facilities, brings 50 years of construction and maintenance management experience to the Board, having set up and managed the maintenance departments in multiple hospitals, universities and hotels. Experience includes the management responsibility for $150M in construction at Missouri Southern State University and $180M at St. Johns Regional Medical Center, in Joplin.

He is actively involved in the Joplin community, serving in various leadership roles, including on the City Council and as a member and President of local organizations and boards.

Bob is also a 20-year member of the American Legion, where he has served as Post Commander of Joplin Post 13 for the past four years. Post 13 was instrumental in raising the funds to originally build Memorial Hall in 1923 and Memorial Hall has been the Post's home for the past 100+ years.

Community Support

Along with the attached letters of support from organizations and stakeholders in the community, the following support has already been shown.

- Estimated 300 volunteer hours to date with a value of $10,200
- Crossland time investment of cost summary, value of $5960
- DJA committed cost for professional legal and financial services up to $10,000.
- DJA willing to provide match for the HPF grant up to $50,000 for design and planning services if awarded
- National Trust grant of $5000 awarded for planning services

Please find letters of support from the following:

- Post 13 American Legion
- Connect2Culture
- Cornell Complex
- Chamber of Commerce
- Downtown Joplin Alliance
- Joplin Commons

ROBERT S. THURMAN
AMERICAN LEGION POST 13

April 14, 2025

Joplin City Council
602 S. Main Street
Joplin, MO 64801

Dear Joplin City Council,

As a tribute to Memorial Hall in its centennial year, we are proud to support a public-private partnership for the renovation and resurrection of Memorial Hall as a public center of entertainment and commerce, and it is vital to the vibrancy of downtown and the greater Joplin community.

The preservation of this community center not only presents new opportunities but also preserves its storied past for generations to come. As a veteran's memorial, the building recognizes the sacrifice by the men and women of the community. As one of the most prolific hosts of the premier performers of the 20th century, its historic wealth is abundant. As Joplin continues to grow, the role of Memorial Hall as a hub for public events in its next 100 years is sure to rival its first 100.

This proposal seeks to maximize available resources, public participation, and promise as it develops and implements a plan for renovation and rejuvenation. The committee that has developed it includes local leaders in the financial, business, development and government sectors who have all worked together to devise a balanced, feasible approach for Memorial Hall's future. We hope you will join us in this once-in-a-generation opportunity to generate the investment that Memorial Hall and our community deserves.

Sincerely,

Robert L. Harrington
Commander
American Legion Post 13

PO BOX 2883
Joplin, Missouri 64801

Harry M. Cornell Arts & Entertainment Complex

April 12, 2025

Joplin City Council
602 S. Main Street
Joplin, MO 64801

Dear Members of the Joplin City Council,

As a 45-year resident of Joplin and President of the Harry M. Cornell Arts & Entertainment Complex, I am writing on behalf of the Cornell Complex board to express our strong support for the preservation, renovation, and revitalization of Joplin's historic Memorial Hall. As proud members of this community, we believe that this 100-year-old building is an irreplaceable gem, holding immense value for our residents, our history, and our future. Its legacy deserves to be preserved, and with thoughtful investment, it can continue to serve as a cornerstone of our downtown area and a place for shared community experiences.

Memorial Hall was built to honor veterans and has long served as a central gathering place for our community. It is not just a building but a symbol of Joplin's strength, resilience, and pride. Demolishing such a historic and meaningful landmark would be a disservice to the generations that have come before us and to those that will come after us.

Rather than tearing down Memorial Hall, we see a bright future for it—one where it becomes a thriving hub for the community. With careful renovation and revitalization, Memorial Hall has the potential to foster intergenerational engagement, empower our youth, support our veterans, and enrich the lives of all who live in and visit Joplin. This space can be transformed into a multi-purpose venue that blends activities, education, entertainment, and connection, offering a place for all members of the community to gather, learn, and grow together.

Through the preservation of Memorial Hall, we can honor our history while creating a dynamic space that serves modern needs. It can become a home for cultural and educational programming, events that support veterans, youth activities, and a place for community celebrations and gatherings. This vision aligns with the values we hold dear as a community: inclusivity, empowerment, and connection.

Memorial Hall can be the next major catalyst for change to establish Joplin as a vibrant and growing city. Cornell Complex board members see the potential for a revitalized Memorial Hall to complement the recently constructed Harry M. Cornell Arts & Entertainment Complex, which is its neighbor. While the Cornell Complex offers a smaller venue for intimate performances with 434 seats inside the Beshore Performance Hall and up to 1,500 in the outdoor Leggett & Platt Green, a revitalized Memorial Hall will have a seating capacity of 2,000 plus and can serve as a dynamic counterpart for much larger events, meetings, performances, and festivals in Joplin. The synergy between these two spaces would create a

Board of Directors: Sharon Beshore (President), Clifford Wert (Treasurer), Annette Thurston (Secretary), Anne Curchin, Laurie Delano, Steve Graddy, Ron Lankford, Matt McConnell, Michael Sanders

Harry M. Cornell Arts & Entertainment Complex

cultural, artistic, and community ecosystem, enriching Joplin's vibrant downtown area and offering diverse programming for all ages and interests.

No other space in Joplin fulfills the need for a community center. It can be the next major catalyst for positive change in "the heart of downtown Joplin." A recent evaluation of its structure establishes that it has good bones but needs renovation to make it a 21st-century building providing 21st-century opportunities. We need to give it some tender loving care and renovate it so we can be proud of it, and it can stand as a jewel in our community once again.

We strongly urge you to support citizen efforts to preserve and revitalize Memorial Hall, not only for its historical significance but to provide spaces like Memorial Hall that bring our community together while adapting them to meet the needs of today's citizens and contributing to the future of Joplin. Its citizens have the vision, leadership, and commitment to make it happen. We ask for your support in ensuring that it remains an enduring symbol of Joplin's history and future.

Thank you for your time and thoughtful consideration.

Sincerely,

Sharon Beshore

Sharon Beshore
President, Harry M. Cornell Arts & Entertainment Complex
scbeshore@gmail.com
417-437-1772 (cell)

Board of Directors: Sharon Beshore (President), Clifford Wert (Treasurer), Annette Thurston (Secretary), Anne Curchin, Laurie Delano, Steve Graddy, Ron Lankford, Matt McConnell, Michael Sanders

Travis Stephens

April 16, 2025

Joplin City Council

RE: Support for Preservation and Restoration of Memorial Hall

Dear Members of the Joplin City Council,

I am writing as a resident and supporter of Joplin's cultural and historical legacy to ask you to delay any plans of demolition of Memorial Hall and to give the group, Friends of Memorial Hall, a little more time to explore a public-private partnership option to renovate and resurrect this once great community asset.

Memorial Hall is more than just a building, it's a cornerstone of our city's identity. For decades, it served as Joplin's premier performance venue, hosting concerts, community events, veterans' gatherings, and countless shared moments in the city's history. It stands as both a memorial and a cultural asset, woven into the collective memory of generations of Joplin residents.

I understand the city has spent considerable time weighing the costs of both razing and redeveloping the site versus restoring and renovating. And that the difference could be considered marginal. Given this, I strongly believe that preservation offers a far greater long-term return for our city, both financially and socially.

The Friends of Memorial Hall's proposal seeks to maximize available resources, public participation, and promise as it develops and implements a plan for renovation and rejuvenation. The plan is backed by local leaders in the financial, business, development and government sectors who have all worked together to devise a balanced, feasible approach for Memorial Hall's future.

We have a rare opportunity to transform a storied past into a bold and inclusive future. Let's seize that opportunity and honor the spirit of Memorial Hall—not by erasing it, but by investing in what it still has to offer. Please extend a little more time to consider all alternatives before passing the point of no return on giving new life to this historic treasure. Thank you for your leadership, your service, and your consideration.

Sincerely,

Travis Stephens

BOARD OF DIRECTORS

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Tyler Evans
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Hope Bethel
Box Office & Volunteer

April 11, 2025

Joplin City Council
602 S. Main Street
Joplin, MO 64801

Dear Joplin City Council,

On behalf of Connect2Culture and our Board of Directors, I am writing to express our support for the restoration and revitalization of Memorial Hall.

As Joplin's community arts agency and a major presenter of live performance, we recognize the historical and cultural significance of Memorial Hall and its potential to once again serve as a vital civic asset. Connect2Culture has had the privilege of presenting performances at Memorial Hall in the past, and we value the role it has played in fostering community connection through arts and culture.

We strongly believe that any restoration or revitalization effort should be economically viable, fill an unmet community need, and complement existing spaces and services already available within our community, including those at our home, the Harry M. Cornell Arts & Entertainment Complex.

We encourage the City to pursue a thoughtful approach to Memorial Hall's future, ensuring it can continue to serve the public and contribute to the growth and vibrancy of downtown Joplin for generations to come.

Should you require any additional information, please do not hesitate to contact me using the details provided below.

Sincerely,

Emily Frankoski

Emily Frankoski
Executive Director
emily@connect2culture.org
Cell: (417) 529-2925
Office: (417) 621-9820

DOWNTOWN JOPLIN ALLIANCE

Creating a vibrant downtown through historic preservation and creative entrepreneurship.

April 14, 2025

To Whom it May Concern,

As a tribute to Memorial Hall in its centennial year, the Downtown Joplin Alliance board is proud to support the proposal of a public-private partnership for the renovation and resurrection of Memorial Hall as a public center of entertainment and commerce is vital to the vibrancy of downtown and the greater Joplin community.

The preservation of this civic center not only presents new opportunities but also preserves its storied past for generations to come. As a veteran's memorial, the building recognizes the sacrifice by the men and women of the community. As one of the most prolific hosts of the premier performers of the 20th century, its historic wealth is abundant. As Joplin continues to grow, the role of Memorial Hall as a hub for public events in its next 100 years is sure to rival its first 100.

This proposal seeks to maximize available resources, public participation, and promise as it develops and implements a plan for renovation and rejuvenation. The committee that has developed it includes local leaders in the financial, business, development and government sectors who have all worked together to devise a balanced, feasible approach for Memorial Hall's future. We hope you will join us in this once-in-a-generation opportunity to generate the investment that Memorial Hall and our community deserves.

Downtown Joplin Alliance, is a not-for-profit organization dedicated to the revitalization of the downtown community as a thriving, safe, and attractive center of art, history, enterprise, commerce, culture, residence, and entertainment. With historic preservation as a core tenet of our organization, we realize the positive economic and social impacts that could be achieved with a rehabilitated Memorial Hall and are proud to be working to preserve another piece of Joplin's history.

Should you require additional information or documentation, please do not hesitate to contact me at 417-529-3888 or email lori@downtownjoplin.com.

Sincerely,

Lori Haun

Executive Director

DOWNTOWN JOPLIN *It's Happening*

Downtown Joplin Alliance
931 E 4th Street
Joplin, Missouri 64801

417-501-9649
downtownjoplin.com

Joplin Commons
212 S Joplin Ave, Ste 3
Joplin, MO 64801
417.825.5588

Dear City of Joplin,

On behalf of Joplin Commons, a property management company who exclusively represents the buildings that house fifty-six of downtown Joplin's residential tenants and 20 of downtown Joplin's commercial spaces, I am writing to express our strong support for the preservation and revitalization of Memorial Hall. As a member of the downtown business community, we recognize Memorial Hall not only as a historic structure, but as a vital public asset with untapped potential to strengthen and energize our local economy.

Memorial Hall stands as a testament to our city's history, culture, and civic life. But more than that, its thoughtful restoration and reopening as a public space could serve as a cornerstone for a thriving, resilient downtown. According to principles advocated by the Strong Towns movement, strong communities are built through small, incremental investments that prioritize **existing** assets and respond to local needs. Memorial Hall embodies exactly that kind of opportunity.

A functional Memorial Hall could serve as a civic anchor in our community. By hosting public meetings, lectures, performances, and community gatherings, Memorial Hall can restore its place as a hub of democratic engagement and civic pride.

A revitalized Memorial Hall has the potential to become a strong local economic catalyst. Hosting events and programming at the Hall would draw increased foot traffic to the downtown area, providing a meaningful boost to nearby restaurants, retailers, and service-based businesses. This type of place-based, organic economic growth tends to be more sustainable than large-scale, one-off developments.

The success of the Cornell Complex underscores this point. While the Complex has been a valuable addition to Joplin's cultural and economic landscape, it faces inherent limitations—particularly its inability to accommodate large-scale events and productions. As a result, the city is missing opportunities to capture the economic benefits of touring performances and larger gatherings, which are currently flowing to neighboring communities with more suitable infrastructure.

A revitalized Memorial Hall could serve as a catalyst for incremental growth. Rather than relying on large, speculative projects, revitalizing Memorial Hall is a smart investment that **builds on what we already have**. It can spark small-scale

improvements throughout the downtown core, in line with the Strong Towns idea that "little bets" create more resilient cities.

Downtown Joplin is arguably the most walkable area of the Joplin. A revitalized Memorial Hall would create more destinations downtown within walking distance of homes and businesses, aligning with the goal of reducing car dependence, promoting health, and increasing economic activity per square foot.

A revitalized Memorial Hall would serve as a symbol of local identity. The preservation of Memorial Hall reinforces our shared story. It tells residents and visitors alike that we value our past and believe in a strong future built on local character.

At a time when many small cities are struggling with vacant storefronts, declining civic engagement, and fragile local economies, saving Memorial Hall is more than a preservation effort—it's an investment in a stronger, more connected downtown. The success of this initiative would reverberate well beyond the Hall's walls, helping build the kind of prosperous and resilient place that residents, visitors, and businesses all want to be part of.

We urge our fellow businesses, local leaders, and citizens to support this effort, and we look forward to seeing Memorial Hall returned to its rightful place as a living, breathing part of our downtown community.

Sincerely,



Marriah Baker

Joplin Commons,LLC

Property Manager