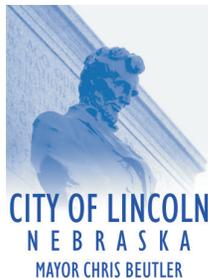
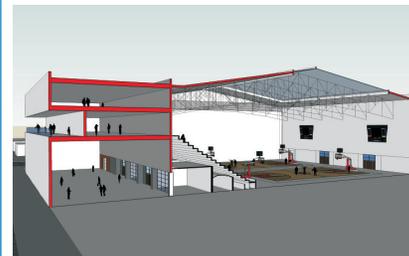
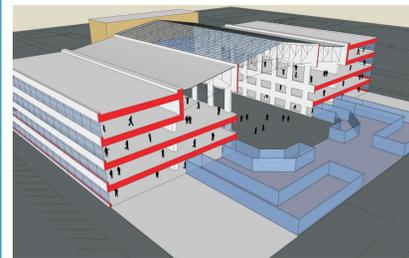
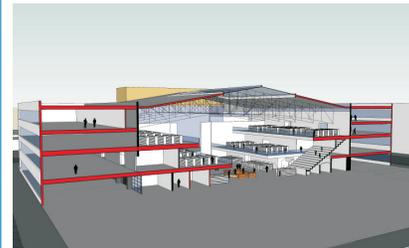
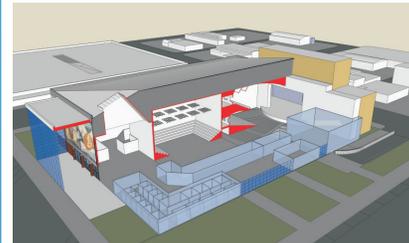
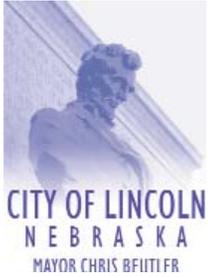


Pershing Adaptive Reuse & Site (PARS) Study



*Presented to
Lincoln Mayor
Chris Beutler
February 2009*



Acknowledgements

Pershing Advisory Board

Tom Ball
David McBride
Mike Stroup
Amy Tipton
Sharon Wherry
Lynn Wilson

Pershing Center Staff

Tom Lorenz
Derek Andersen
Sharon Mandery
Fred McCoy

City of Lincoln Staff

Kent Morgan
Ed Zimmer
Michele Abendroth

Bahr Vermeer Haecker Architects

Dan Worth
Cleve Reeves
Kristin Miles

The Clark Enersen Partners

Dennis Scheer
JoAnne Kissel
TJ Schirmer
Brent Beckman

WRK, LLC

Robert Scott
Devon Seacrest
Jordan Berger

Community Members

Cathy Beecham
Jennifer Brinkman
Jim McKee
Dan Muhleisen
V.J. Nelson
Tom Osborne
Gordon Scholz
Linda Wilson
Kent Wolgamott
Cindy Vandevort

February 2009

Mayor Chris Beutler
City of Lincoln
Lincoln, Nebraska

Mayor Beutler,

As the final report for the Pershing Adaptive Reuse and Site (PARS) Study, this document culminates a multi-month public process designed to gather ideas on the future use of Pershing Center and the site it resides on. The following pages record the thoughts of numerous individuals and organizations from across the community who share a common interest – Pershing Center and its setting as an on-going positive contributor to the City of Lincoln and to the greater region.

The PARS process was not intended to provide a final answer regarding Pershing's future use. Instead PARS is to be viewed as an important first step. It is but the beginning of an extended civic dialogue on how this public asset should move forward into its second generation of community service. PARS has generated an abundance of terrific ideas ranging from commonsense notions to more innovative and futuristic views. All of these ideas were given thoughtful consideration and have been made part of this report.

But the PARS process has also been about winnowing. The multitude of ideas collected in this process have been probed, sifted, and narrowed to those we believe offer the greatest promise. This report does not, however, constitute the end of this winnowing effort. More work and community discussion must occur as events unfold over the coming months.

We wish to thank you and all who participated in the PARS Study. It would be our pleasure to answer any questions you may have on this report or the process in general.

Respectfully submitted,

The PARS Study Team



What will Happen to Pershing?

Introduction

The Pershing Center celebrated its 50th Anniversary on March 10th of 2007. During its five decade long history, Pershing Center has hosted numerous concerts, trade shows, galas, graduations, circuses, sporting events, and more. Elvis Presley performed one of his last live shows at Pershing Center before his death in 1977. Nebraska's own Johnny Carson pleased the Center's assemblage before he became a national celebrity. Sesame Street's Big Bird strutted his stuff on Pershing's stage. The National Roller Skating Association has crowned many a champion on the floor of Pershing Center. And high school students from across the State have played basketball or volleyball within the Center's walls.

Having provided fifty years of wonderful memories to local audiences, Pershing Center is sadly showing its age. The facility is considered by those in the entertainment and event industry to be functionally obsolete in its present condition. Its ability to host most contemporary concerts, sporting events, and other activities is severely limited. And with permanent seating for little more than 4,000 patrons, Pershing Center is unable to attract to Lincoln many of the performers and events the local audiences seeks.

The City of Lincoln, in union with Lincoln's private sector and the University of Nebraska-Lincoln, is working diligently to build a new 16,000 seat civic arena in West Haymarket. This facility could potentially become the home for the University of Nebraska-Lincoln Men's and Women's basketball teams. In addition, the arena would provide a modern venue capable of hosting contemporary concerts, sporting events, and more.





The prospect of a new arena for Lincoln has raised the question throughout the community, “What will happen to Pershing?”

To help address this question, the City has undertaken the following study – the Pershing Adaptive Reuse and Site (PARS) Study. The focal purpose of the PARS Study has not been to arrive at the definitive or final answer on the Center’s future. Rather, the PARS Study has been designed to enumerate realistic options for Pershing Center through a process of community engagement. This summary report explores the process for eliciting ideas for how Pershing Center and the site might be appropriately reused in the future and present the ideas offering the greatest promise.

The balance of this final report for the Pershing Adaptive Reuse and Site Study is divided into the following six sections:

- 2. Historic Narrative.** This section explores the events surrounding the origins of Pershing Center. It looks at the community’s longstanding support for creating a local entertainment and sports venue from local conditions in the late 1920’s until the Center opened its doors in 1957.
- 3. Opportunities and Constraints.** This section examines some of the beneficial possibilities and limitations of the site upon which Pershing Center sits. These serve in part as the foundational attributes for determining the Center’s future.
- 4. Building Conditions.** This section reviews the present physical condition of the Pershing Center structure. The analysis described in this section is based on an inspection of the building completed for the PARS Study.
- 5. Community Engagement.** This section outlines the process used during the PARS Study to reach out to the community for their ideas on Pershing’s future. This section summarizes the steps in the process and key findings from this effort.
- 6. Ideas Process.** This section describes the process the PARS study team went through to narrow the gamut of suggestions generated through the community engagement endeavor and lists the top ideas meriting further public review and dialogue.
- 7. Appendix.**



Historic Narrative

A Decision to Build

Just a few blocks away from the current site of the Pershing Center sat Lincoln's first community playhouse at 13th and M Streets. On April 15, 1928, the playhouse was destroyed by fire.

Eleven years later, in 1939, members of the American Legion initiated the building of a new civic auditorium for the city. The City Council submitted a proposal to the City of Lincoln electorate to levy a \$75,000 property tax for 10 years in order to build the arena and open 15th Street.

Following passage of the proposal by the voters, the "Associated Auditorium Architects" group was created and consisted of representatives from the firms of Fritz Craig, Hazen & Robinson, Schaumberg & Freeman and Davis & Wilson.

On February 13, 1940 the first Auditorium Advisory Committee was appointed consisting of J.W. Kinsinger, Dr. Charles H. Arnold, T.B. Strain, Charles Elce, and Frank H. Woods. John K. Selleck was appointed shortly after.

The site at 15th and M – originally the home to McKinley High School – was sold to the City by the Board of Education in 1941 at a cost of \$46,750. After the site was purchased, plans were submitted for a \$900,000 auditorium. Six months after preliminary plans were submitted, the project was put on hold due to the outbreak of World War II. Interest in the project was renewed when the war ended, although by then the cost of constructing the facility had risen. On May 3, 1949, Lincoln voters approved an additional \$1.5 million in property taxes for the new civic auditorium.



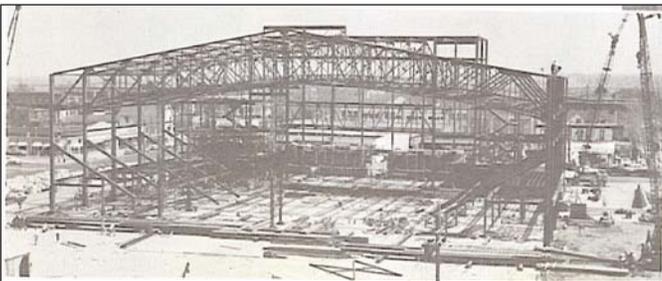
Lincoln's community playhouse at 13th and M. Photo courtesy: Lincoln: Nebraska's Capital City 1867-1923. Lincoln: 1923, Chamber of Commerce.



15th and M, Board of Education owned property sold for the site of Pershing Auditorium. Historic American Building Survey #HABS NEB, 55-LINC, 1-3.



Construction of concrete basement walls.



Raising of steel framework.

In October 1949, petitions began to be circulated by the “Citizens Auditorium Site Committee” concerning the proposed Downtown location of the auditorium. On December 5th petitions with over 4,000 signatures were filed with the District Court asking that a special election be held to keep the auditorium away from the 15th and N Street site. The desire was to move the proposed facility to a site at 33rd and O Street because of inadequate parking near the Downtown location. A special election in early 1950 affirmed the wish to relocate the site to 33rd and O Street.

A lawsuit was then filed challenging the decision to alter the site of the auditorium. On March 3, 1950, District Judge John L Polk ruled that another election could take place to determine the auditorium’s site. By this point three sites were under consideration: the original 15th and N Street site, a tract at 33rd and O and a tract at 23rd and O.

On May 2, 1950, the lawsuit allowing a second election was appealed. Before a second election could be held, the Nebraska State Supreme Court determined that the funds could not be diverted for their originally intended use, which included the location for the auditorium. Thus on July 13, 1950, the Court ruled the auditorium must be built on the 15th and N site as originally approved by the voters. In all, the delay cost the City more than \$456,000 in fees and expenses.

In October of 1950, the low bid of \$2,623,888 exceeded the City’s available funds and the bids were rejected. The City Council proposed another \$750,000 in bonds, but on June 17, 1952, were turned down by the electorate. Adding to this disappointment was a steel shortage lasting until January, 1953.

In February of that year, a new committee was appointed by the City Council. This new committee recommended the City abandon its plans for building a facility with a separate theater and a sports arena. In September of 1954, the architects submitted plans for a single multi-purpose structure as suggested by the committee’s studies.

On March 22, 1955, final plans were adopted by the City Council for Pershing Municipal Auditorium. Contracts for construction were approved in May of that same year totaling \$2,093,689.

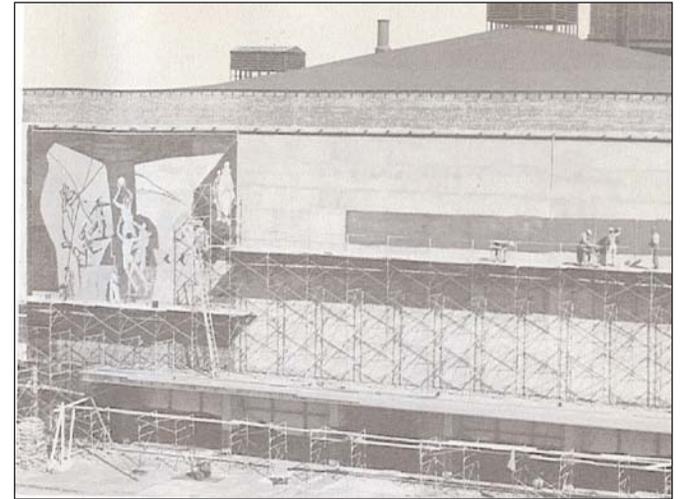
Construction

Equipment arrived at the construction site on May 4, 1955 and the first steps of removing trees and old sidewalks commenced. Excavation of the basement began in June and was followed with the laying of footing for the concrete walls. In early July, the basement walls began going up and were completed mid-August. The next step was basement flooring. Also during this time, plumbing and heating components were installed and the basement was nearly complete by late February 1956.

The structural steel made its way to the site on March 2, 1956. The framework was about halfway completed by April 1, 1956 and all steelwork was complete by the first of May. During this time, the concrete was being laid and platform beams put in place in the arena. Masonry work on the exterior was also underway. Next, the buff colored brick on the stage exterior was put in place.

Monday April 23, 1956 was Auditorium Corner Stone Laying Day, a significant date for Lincoln despite the rainy weather. Speakers included Mayor Clark Jeary and Dr. Charles H. Arnold of the original American Legion Auditorium Committee. At the northwest corner of the auditorium, the red granite cornerstone, weighing 300 pounds with dimensions of 3 feet high and 5 feet wide, was put into place. Behind the cornerstone was placed a copper box containing a picture of the artist's conceptual rendering of the building, building specifications, microfilm reproductions of clippings of the ceremonies and a tape recording of the dedication.

At 140 feet, 8 inches wide and 38 feet, 3 inches tall, the mural on the west facade was the largest work of its kind undertaken in the United States at the time of its construction. Mural designers Leonard Thiessen and William Hammon, both of Omaha, created a design to depict the different activities to take place in the new auditorium. The mural contains more than 763,000 pieces of 1 inch square tile. Three months were spent on the construction of the mural panels. Each panel measured one by two feet and was constructed by Cambridge Tile Company in Cincinnati, Ohio and was shipped to Lincoln. Construction of the mural on site began in early September 1956 and took about one month to complete. The sections were pieced together by numbers on the back and set against a plaster base on metal channels.



Installation of the tile mural on the west facade.



Construction of the arena interior

As winter grew near, the exterior construction was complete and work progressed on the interior. The ice floor was complete in mid-October, and by January the aluminum ceiling and permanent seating trays were complete. The seating was installed in February. Finally, the exhibition hall was painted and the concourse sprayed with Vitro Glaze cement enamel and the tile laid in the lobby.

Dedication

The overall goal of the design of Pershing Auditorium was to create a “warm, theater-like atmosphere”. This was to be created with the light ceiling, pastel green walls, padded seats, and lighting system. The auditorium was built to welcome any activity from road shows to opera to athletic events. Use of these features began with the dedication ceremony on March 10, 1957.

Source (text and photos): Pershing Municipal Auditorium Dedication book. 1957 (exact date unknown). Written by Publication Committee of the Dedication Committee.



Opportunities and Constraints

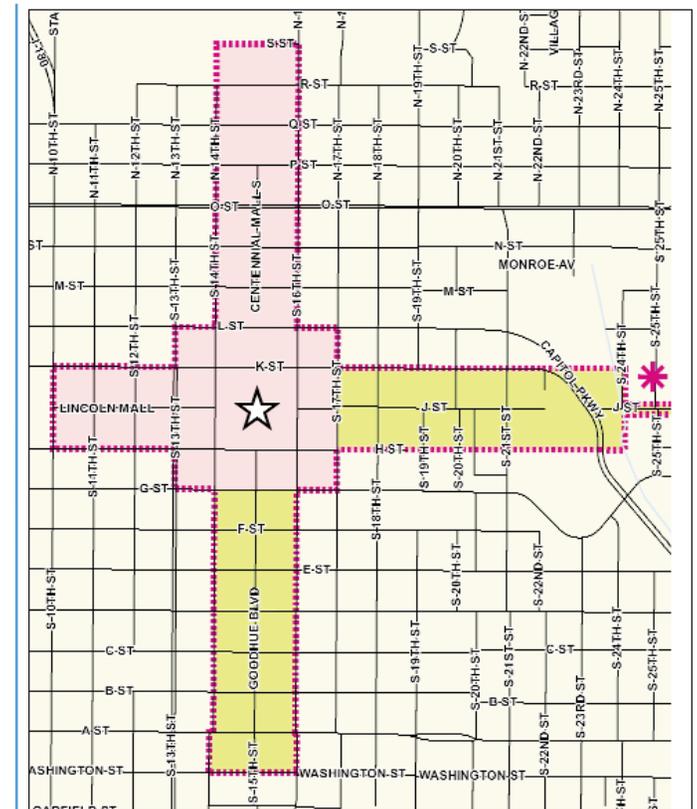
Before analyzing potential new uses, an understanding of the surrounding area, current planning and legal framework that exists around the present building and site is useful. This study analyzed each of the following factors and presented them to the PARS Advisory Board for consideration and understanding. What follows is a general summary of the factors considered throughout the PARS study.

Zoning

The Pershing site is within a “P” (Public Use) zoning area which runs parallel to Centennial Mall. This area is surrounded by a “B-4” zoning district (Center Business District) to the north, west and east and an “O-1” zoning district (Office District, primarily surrounding City Hall and the Capitol) to the south. The zoning in this general area encourages “build to” development where the entire lot is built out to the property line, which is generally at the sidewalk. High density, multi-story development is encouraged over low density, single story development.

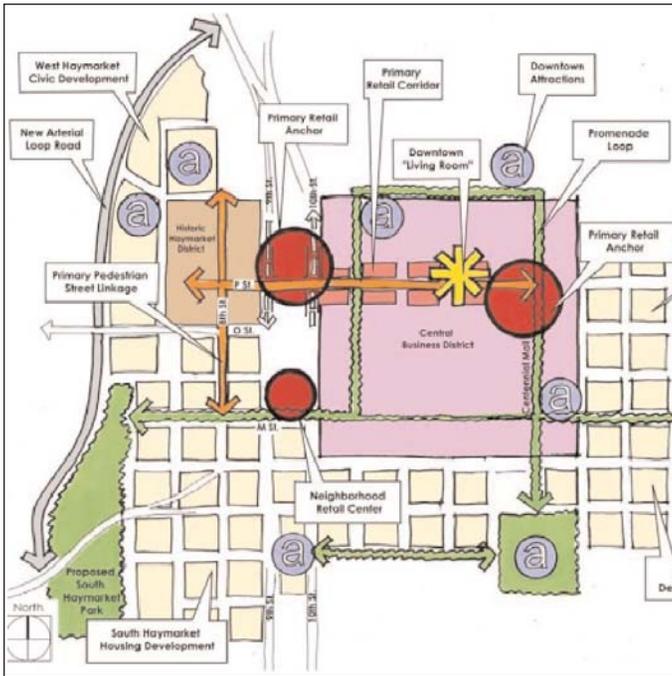
Capitol Environs District

Within the City of Lincoln Zoning Ordinance, special considerations are made for the district immediately surrounding the State Capitol and the corridors along Lincoln Mall and Centennial Mall. The factors that specifically impact the Pershing block for any new construction are:



Capitol Environs District

- * District includes 'J' Street right-of-way to 35th St.
- Pink area denotes 57 foot height restriction.
- Yellow area denotes 45 foot height restriction.



- Minimum Height = 30'-0"
- Maximum Height = 57'-0"
- Richly textured exterior building materials with permanence and durability are encouraged.
- Overall compatibility with surrounding buildings and interrelationships within each setting is encouraged. Factors to consider include: alignment, setback, spaces between buildings, massing and scale, shade and shadow patterns, scale and proportion of openings for doors and windows, ornamentation and detail, cornice heights, landscaping, etc.

The Capitol Environs Commission is the review and enforcement authority. This body reviews conformance for any proposed project and its overall impact.

Downtown Master Plan

The latest Downtown Master Plan, dated September 2005, shows the Pershing block continuing as a "Downtown Attraction" within the Central Business District. Throughout the Master Plan document, the future use of the Pershing building and/or site was noted as a likely candidate for a new Downtown Library. The space to the west of Pershing on Centennial Mall was noted as a candidate for an expanded festival space, where the street could be partially closed at times when needed or converted to a pedestrian mall. The Downtown Master Plan shows future uses surrounding the Pershing block as Office, Government, Retail, Festival/Event Space and high density Residential.

Traffic

Vehicular traffic is currently utilized as follows. Centennial Mall (west) is a two way pair of single lane traffic each way with angled parking on both sides. 'N' Street (north) is a one way street with three lanes of traffic and angle parking on both sides. 16th Street is a one way street with three lanes and parallel parking only on the east side of the street. 'M' Street is a one way street with three lanes and parallel parking on both sides of the street. Access to the Pershing



Highlighted area shows buildable area of the site.

block is generally good with the one way pairs of streets throughout downtown. Several City and State parking garages are nearby which allow for good parking adjacency at most times after hours.

Views

Generally, good visibility from vehicle traffic surrounds the Pershing block. Good views for oncoming traffic are available on every corner with the exception of the southeast corner, where traffic is moving away from the block to the east and south. Overall, the view into downtown from 'O' street, the main east-west arterial, includes good views of the existing building within the framework of the downtown environs.

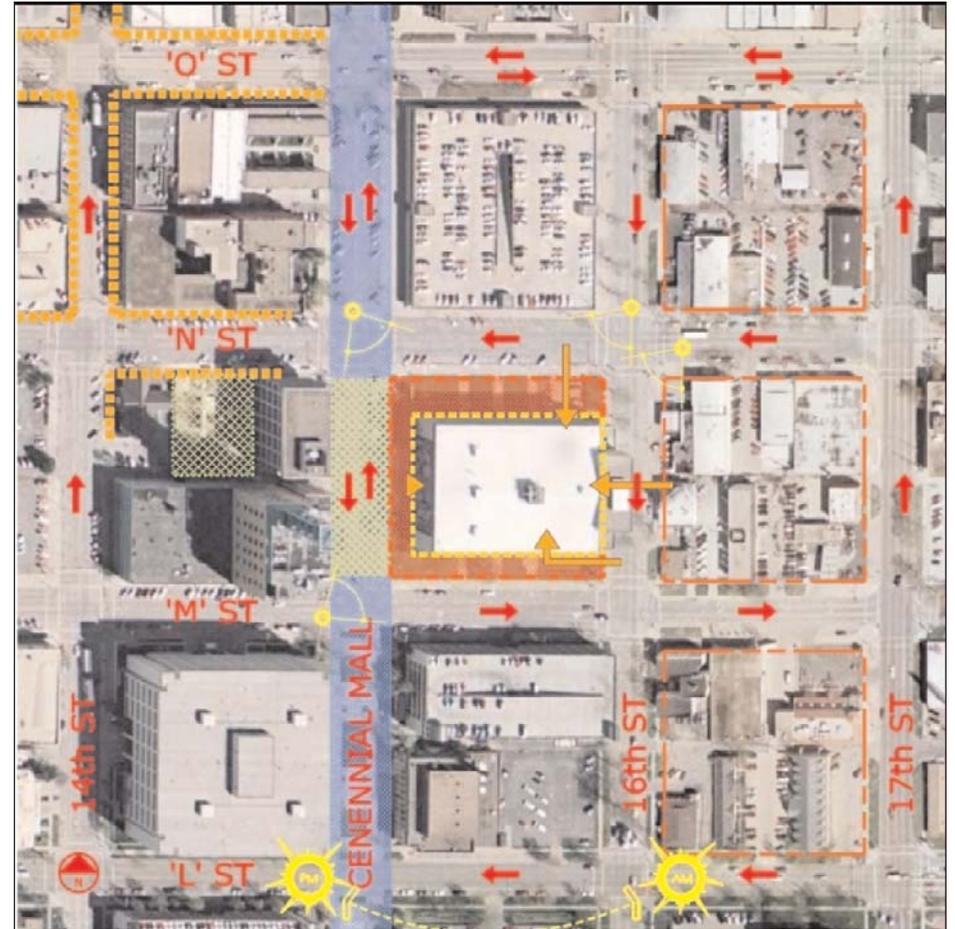
Retail Environs

The Pershing block and its immediate neighbors generally are not a pedestrian/retail environment, unless an event is being held on the streets outside Pershing. However, with a good retail/pedestrian environment on 'O' Street and 'N' Street from 14th to Centennial Mall, it is very feasible to envision the pedestrian corridor extending to the Pershing block if the right use were put in this area.

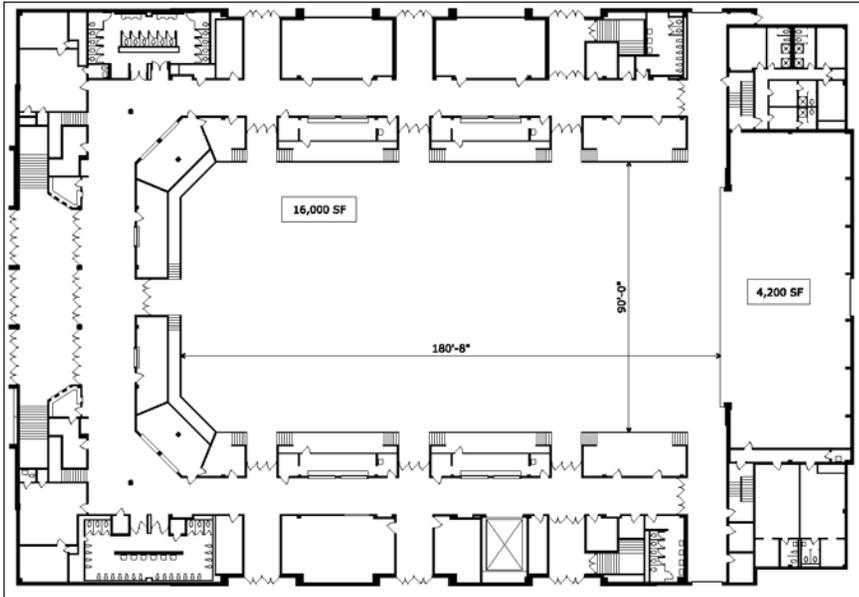
Density of Uses and Building Masses

While the blocks to the west and south are well developed in terms of density of uses and building massing, the Federal Parking Garage to the north and the blocks to the east of the Pershing block are generally under-developed in terms of what would be hoped for in terms of downtown uses and massing. The blocks to the east specifically are an assortment of uses and building scales that are generally inconsistent with the goals of a cohesive, dense central business district.

Overall Characteristics



Red arrows denote traffic direction. Orange arrows denote access to the building. Main views of the building are shown in yellow around the site. Sun patterns are shown at the bottom of the image.



Floor plan of main concourse level (Not to scale)

The Pershing building and site have characteristics that lend themselves well toward certain future uses and possibilities. With a majority of the surrounding uses being predominantly government and office uses, it would stand to reason that these uses would fit the bill nicely for the future of the Pershing block. With the Pershing Center's long lifespan, and the Community Playhouse and McKinley School preceding the Pershing Center on this site and nearby, the district has a long history of public service and entertainment. With the Antelope Valley Project under construction at the time of this report, the termination of the new Antelope Valley roadway and green spaces 4 blocks to the east will certainly have an impact on the future of the district between Pershing and this area. Several studies of Centennial Mall have also revealed distinct possibilities for public uses along its length and specifically at the Pershing site.

Current Building and Site Data

- Property Area: 330' x 315' = 104,000 SF (approximately 2.4 Acres)
- Floor Plate: 50,000 SF
- 4,526 Permanent Seats + 2,000 moveable seats
- Arena Floor: 16,000 SF
- Stage Floor: 4,200 SF
- Auditorium Parapet Height: 58'-6"
- Fly loft Parapet height: 75'-0"
- Open Areas surrounding Pershing Center:
 - North: 60'-0"
 - West: 23'-0"
 - East: 26'-6"
 - South: 62'-0"
- Unused Buildable Area: 50,200 SF



Building Conditions

In October 2008, an on-site inspection of Pershing Center was conducted to assess the condition of the site, exterior and interior materials and spaces, structure, mechanical and electrical systems, and code compliance. Listed are some of the findings from the tour.

Exterior

Overall, the exterior of Pershing Event Center is in good condition. The structure is sound and the majority of materials have held up over time. There are localized areas of deterioration on the facade as well as the site. None of these exterior conditions jeopardize the structural stability of the building. Site access is limited making loading and unloading a challenge for touring performers. Outdoor festivals, such as Ribfest, create challenges for electrical and other services which were not envisioned when the Pershing Event Center was built.

Shell Closure

The majority of Pershing's facade is made up of 7½" thick Indiana Limestone. Just below this is a combination of Ruby Red and Grey Granite panels that are 2½" thick. Above the limestone are aluminum panels that cap the structure. On the east side of Pershing, the fly and side stage consist of a buff-colored brick masonry exterior.



Algae Growth



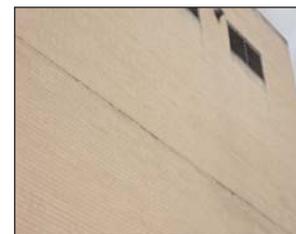
Cracking on west Facade



Calcium staining



Dislodged granite panel



Cracking above arena roof



Typical door/window assembly



Lack of adequate maintenance funding



EPDM roof stretching toward end of life



Missing tiles



Failing expansion joints



Cracking in sidewalk



Exposed reinforcing steel

Limestone Walls

The tuck pointing of the limestone walls are generally solid and in good condition. There is an area of large cracking at the west facade at the north and south corners. There are also isolated areas of stone deterioration. On the north and south facades are evidence of algae growth.

Granite Panels

The Red and Grey panels are fixed over CMU backing. Some panels are dislodged at random locations and at corners of the building. The granite mortar joints are deteriorated and there are large areas of calcium staining due to the lawn irrigation system.

Brick Masonry Walls

On the east side of the building, the stage exterior consists of buff-colored brick masonry walls with a CMU backup. The mortar joints are generally solid and in good condition. There is evidence of deteriorated brick at the ledge angle at the northeast corner and there are cracks in the brick at the west wall above the arena roof.

Windows and Doors

The windows and doors on the north and south facades are hollow metal steel doors and window frames. There are currently no thermal breaks and there is rusting and deterioration. The single glazing of the windows is energy inefficient. On the west facade are newer aluminum entry door systems. The overhead doors that exist for equipment are not insulated.

Roofing System

There is a fully adhered EPDM roofing system on the auditorium roof that is toward the end of its life but is generally in fair condition. The rock ballasted EPDM system at the fly and stage roofs are in poor condition. Some of the parapet joints are opened and deteriorated.

Mosaic Panel

The most recognizable feature of Pershing is the mosaic located on the west facade. What can't be seen from the street level is the 'fair' to 'poor' condition of the mosaic. The mosaic consists of 1 inch ceramic mosaic tiles over a 1½ inch concrete grout setting bed inside a steel channel frame. In between panels of tile are expansion joints that are deteriorated and failing. Along the bottom of the mosaic, the flashing closure material is missing which is exposing the setting bed. These joints allow water to enter the wall construction, which causes further deterioration.

Site Features

Around the structure, the sidewalks exhibit extensive cracking and movement. The bridge on the south side as well as the recessed loading dock contain severely deteriorated concrete and have exposed reinforcing steel. Overall there is a lack of parking as well as staging areas, specifically on the north staging area as well as the east loading dock.

Interior

The interior of the building is in fair to poor condition for the uses it serves. The spaces are small and become cramped with large numbers of people. The service areas do not adequately support the numbers of people per contemporary standards. Many finish materials are either deteriorating or contain asbestos and make removal or replacement difficult. The mechanical and electrical systems are mostly antiquated and past due to be replaced. Systems efficiency would be expected to be greatly enhanced with major cost savings if these were to be replaced.

Lower Level

The lower level, or exhibit hall, suffers from an extreme lack of storage as well as a low ceiling height. This makes arranging events on that level difficult. There is restricted accessibility to the lower level, mostly due to the lack of a passenger elevator. The freight elevator that does exist is in poor condition. The entrance ramp on the south side is also deteriorating. There is asbestos present on the lower level, specifically around the mechanical equipment and piping.



Low ceiling height



Abandoned ice equipment



Narrow concourse width



Poor condition of ceiling in concourse



Limited staging space



Unused space under seating



Cramped dressing rooms



Catwalk



Water tank above trusses

Lower Level Exhibit Hall

The exhibit hall is dated but is durable. Finishes and systems are in fair condition. The space has a low ceiling height that make some functions difficult. The majority of the space is large and doesn't contain many walls, but the column system interrupts the space. The combination of the ceiling height and columns create a sense of restriction in the space.

Main Level-Concourse

The concourse located on the main level is generally too small for the number of people it serves. The concession stands consist of cramped spaces and are inadequate in terms of storage and maneuverability within. Along the perimeter of the concourse are a series of discontinuous office and meeting rooms, all of which are in poor condition. The restrooms on this level are newer, but are still limited and inadequate for the number of people they serve. There is asbestos present on this floor, mostly found in finish materials such as the ceiling material and floor tiles. The number of doors to the exterior provide good egress capacity.

Main Level-Arena

The arena is made up of durable finishes and the systems are in fair condition. The seats have recently been replaced and are still functioning and serviceable. The large space is difficult to subdivide and the trusses offer limited capacity for rigging. There is asbestos present in this space. The ice making equipment for the arena floor is left abandoned in place on the lower level.

Stage Area

The main stage area is large and flexible, but the side stage is limited. The rigging and fixtures are outmoded and outdated. The power and HVAC systems are undersized to support modern events. Loading and staging from the stage is severely limited due to the historic configuration. Asbestos is present in the area, especially the fire curtain.

Upper/Second Level

Under the upper seating bowl are large expanses of unused space. Some of these have previously been used as meeting rooms etc. Both ADA and general access to these spaces is difficult making them less than desirable to use. There exists some localized cracking on the CMU walls.

Dressing/Green Rooms

Both general and ADA access to the dressing rooms is restricted, which are also cramped and spartan in amenities. Most performers use buses they travel on rather than the dressing rooms.

Upper Stage/Fly and Catwalk Levels

The catwalk is in good condition. The water tank located above the trusses poses concerns with both safety and the condition of the tank.

Structure

Overall, the structure appears to be in good condition. No major settlement was found although potential movement in exterior walls was detected. There are no control joints in the veneer masonry. The large open spans offer possibility for the space since they are adaptable for other “infill” construction. Any new columns would need to be coordinated with the existing structure.

Codes/Accessibility

Several issues were found in terms of codes and accessibility requirements. Sprinklers are located in the basement only. There is no passenger elevator. There are small ADA restrooms and general ADA access. There are a limited number of restroom fixtures for the capacity the arena holds. While the material is asbestos, there is an existing stage fire curtain. However, there are some code opportunities. The amount of asbestos in the building is limited, making the space still usable. There exists good egress for the audience limits. The basement could be used for parking but would need an exhaust system and enhanced sprinkler system.



Limited ADA restrooms



Patch over asbestos insulation around piping



Leaking pipes above electrical



Emergency generator

Mechanical/Plumbing

In general, the mechanical system is old, obsolete, and inefficient. The majority of the mechanical HVAC equipment is failing and is well beyond its useful service life. The mechanical equipment is not adequate for proper ventilation and is not capable of automatic temperature control. There is asbestos insulation on the piping in return air paths and on abandoned piping in occupied areas. There are very limited existing fire protection systems.

Electrical

The electrical distribution equipment and emergency systems are nearing their end of life. Failure of the electrical distribution equipment would result in a major power outage. The wiring is aging and in general the stage power is not adequate.



Community Engagement

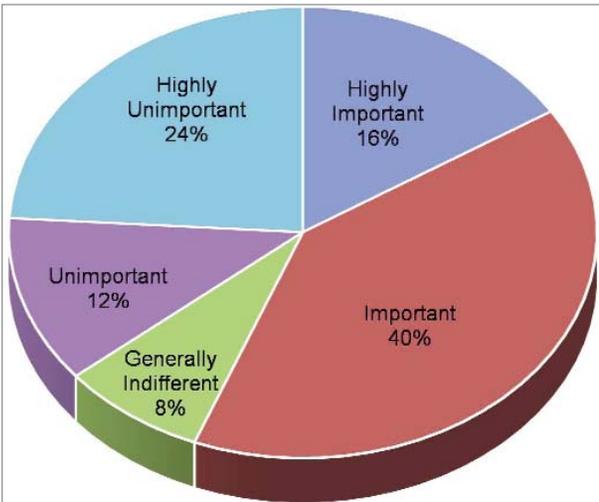
The principle goal for the PARS Study was to actively engage the Lincoln community in a discussion about the future of Pershing Center. This goal was met through a variety of methods occurring over the entire time frame of the Study. This section examines the use of those engagement methods and summarizes the outcomes of each.

PARS Advisory Committee

The Pershing Center Advisory Board served as the main public body overseeing the Study process. This seven member Board met initially on July 22, 2008, to launch the Study. At this meeting, the Advisory Board was provided with background information on the present physical condition of the Center and talked about likely ways in which the building could be adaptively reused. The ideas engendered by the Board at this meeting have served as the inchoate list for the balance of the PARS Study process.

The Advisory Board met again on December 2, 2008 to receive an updated briefing on the various community outreach endeavors completed by staff since their mid-summer meeting. This meeting involved presentations and discussion among the Board on the Stakeholder Interviews, Pershing Center Community Open House, and other materials presented in the balance of this section of the report.





How important is it that Pershing Center remain in a public or community use?

Stakeholder Interviews

As a long standing civic facility located on what is now Centennial Mall, “Pershing Center” – both as a building and as a site – has special merit to many individuals and groups throughout Lincoln. The building and site carries particular interest, however, to certain businesses, institutions and organizations because of their proximity to the facility, their possible involvement in its reuse, or other assumed stakes in the Center.

To enlist their participation in the PARS Study process, one-on-one interviews were held with 26 local “stakeholders” during August and September of 2008. The interviews reflect the thoughts, opinions and ideas of a broad range of interested groups. These stakeholders included representatives from public, private, and not-for-profit organizations. The stakeholders interviewed are involved in fields as diverse as banking, restaurants, insurance, lodging, health and fitness, arts, and communications.

A full listing of the individuals interviewed and the interview results are shown in the “Report on Stakeholder Interviews” prepared as part of the PARS Study.

Potential Adaptive Reuse of Pershing Center

Among the stakeholders interviewed for PARS, there was a general sense (56 percent) that keeping Pershing as a “public or community use” would be preferred, but was not essential if an appropriate reuse for the structure were found. There was an even stronger belief (88 percent) among the stakeholders that the adaptive reuse of the building could embody a mix of uses – that is, the reuse of Pershing Center needn’t be restricted to a single type of use if it could effectively be adapted to allow for a combination of compatible functions.

When queried on the “appropriateness” of ten possible reuse categories, the highest rated uses were:

1. Public/Non-profit Offices (96%)
2. Community Playhouse (92%)
3. Museum (88%)
4. Private Offices (88%)
5. City Library (87%)

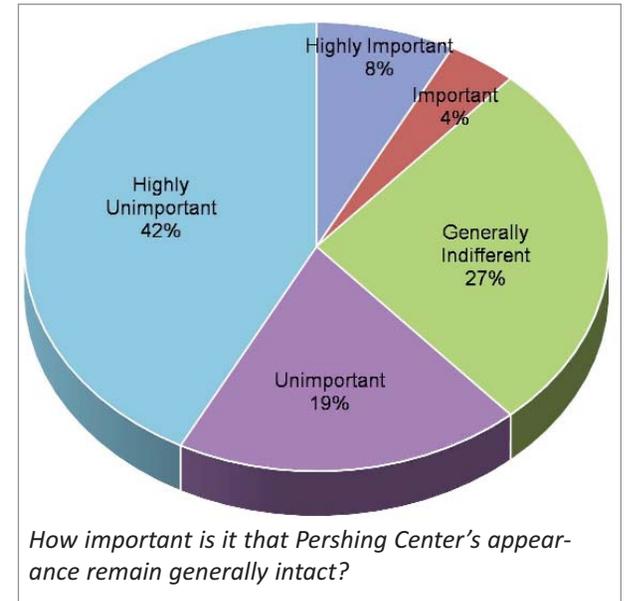
Exterior Appearance of Pershing Center

When asked whether it was important that the exterior appearance of Pershing Center remain “intact,” the stakeholders typically felt it was not important (61 percent) or were “generally indifferent” (27 percent). One stakeholder commented,

“Making suitable alterations to the building’s exterior is not a particular concern. If changing the exterior makes the facility more adaptable to alternative future uses then such alterations should be considered.”

Further underscoring the potential alteration of the Center’s exterior was the overwhelming support (96 percent) for introducing natural light into the building. The facility’s current use as an arena generally argues for a fully controlled interior environment with natural light being a detrimental factor. Conversely, many possible alternative uses for the structure would benefit from having natural lighting as part of the overall redesign of the building.

With the prospective redesign, the stakeholders were generally in favor (76 percent) of applying “green technologies” in its reconstruction and reuse. These would include enhanced energy saving measures, material utilization, and construction techniques. As stated during one stakeholder interview, “I am in favor of using green technologies. It is simple good practice.”



Status of Entrance Mural

The mural displayed on the western exterior of Pershing Center is perhaps the most recognizable and well known feature of the building. It is estimated the mural is comprised of about 763,000 individual pieces of tile, each about one square inch in size.

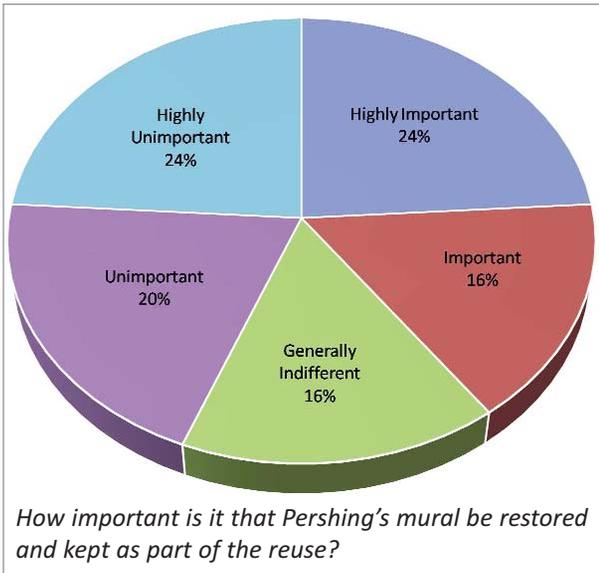
When quizzed about the future of the mural, the stakeholders were appreciably divided – in fact, they were nearly evenly divided over the importance of restoring the mural and keeping it as part of an adaptive reuse project. As the adjoining graph illustrates, those feeling it was “Highly Important” or “Important” to restore the mural comprised 40 percent of the stakeholders, as contrasted with 44 percent who expressed a feeling that it was “Highly Unimportant” or “Unimportant” to do so. The balance of 16 percent were “Generally Indifferent” to the mural’s future status.

On the question of moving the mural to a new location, the stakeholders expressed general indifference (46 percent), with 24 percent supporting such a move and 30 percent opposing it.

Razing of Building and Reuse of Site

Finding an appropriate adaptive reuse for Pershing Center is a primary objective for the PARS Study. However, the Study acknowledges this may not be possible, feasible, or simply reasonable. The potential exists for the razing of Pershing Center and the site itself being redeveloped into an appropriate alternative use.

Stakeholders were asked if it was important to retain the structure even if an appropriate plan were prepared requiring the structure’s removal. The consensus (67 percent) among the stakeholders edged toward not keeping the building. This was followed by 17 percent being “Generally Indifferent” to it remaining, with 16 percent believing it was “Highly Important” or “Important” to keep the building intact regardless of the possible reuse of the site.



Nebraska Capitol Environs Commission

The “Nebraska Capitol Environs Commission” is a seven member citizen group responsible for overseeing the essential vistas, buildings, landmarks, and other features contributing to or detracting from the State’s Capitol. The Commission is specifically charged with reviewing and advising on plans affecting the Capitol, as well as a prescribed area around the building itself termed the “Capitol Environs District.” As a structure lying within the boundaries of this District, the Pershing Center – and the site it sits on – are subject to oversight by the Commission.

On October 23, 2008, PARS Study staff met with the Nebraska Capitol Environs Commission to present background information collected to date and to engage the Commission on their thoughts about the future of the Center and site. The Commission provided a number of observations about the condition of the structure, potential uses, and the need to include sustainability principles in the ultimate outcome of the building’s reapplication.

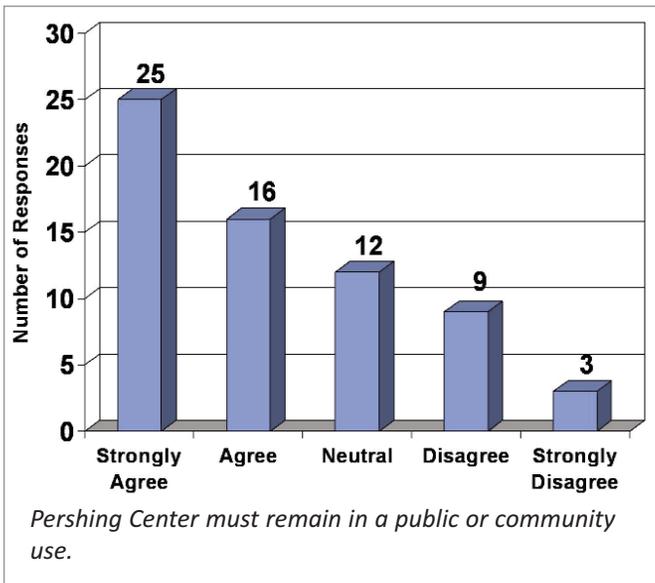
Community Open House

The community was invited to learn more about the PARS Study and specifically to express their ideas at an “Open House” held on October 29, 2008. With more than one hundred and fifty people attending the event, the Open House provided vital insights into the community’s thinking about Pershing Center’s future.

Participants attending the Open House were asked to provide in writing their ideas on how we should go about crafting plans for the on going use of Pershing. In addition to an open-ended survey form and citizen discussion, the attendees were asked their opinions on several specific questions. These questions generally paralleled those asked of the individuals canvassed as part of the stakeholder interview process.

Please note this survey was not drawn from a scientifically selected sample of area residents and therefore should not be viewed as being statistically valid. The results described below only reflect those attending the October Open House and who participated in the survey.

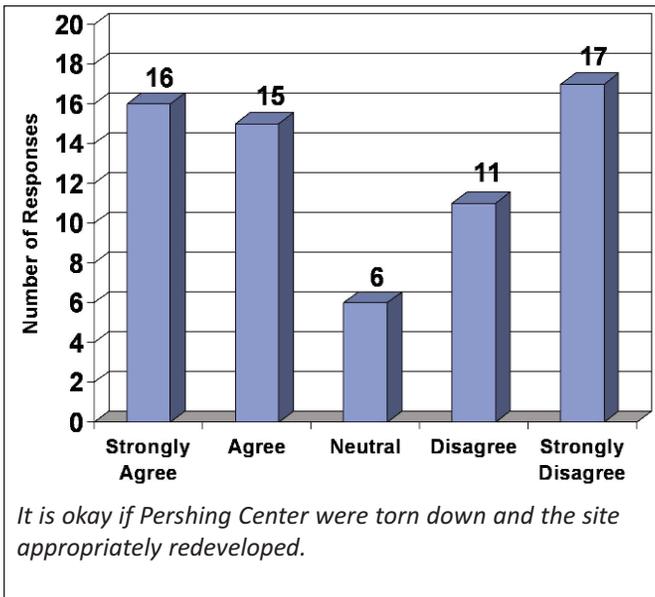




One of the Community Open House questions dealt with the continued use of Pershing Center as a public or community use. Overall, the Open House attendees expressed a belief that it would be preferable to keep Pershing Center in “a public or community use,” with 63 percent indicating support of this notion. Another 19 percent were generally “Neutral” concerning the use of Pershing as a public or community facility.

A second question presented to the participants was the potential altering of the building’s exterior facade. The overwhelming majority (80 percent) indicated they “Strongly Agreed” or “Agreed” with the statement that it is “okay” to allow the exterior to be “altered for an appropriate reuse of the building.” A very small fraction (8 percent) of the respondents were in disagreement with this possibility.

Open House attendees were also queried about the future of the mural over the Center’s west entrance – specifically if the mural “must be restored and kept in place.” The largest single response fell within the “Neutral” category – 35 percent. This could be suggestive of a common uncertainty or even indifference among the people participating in the survey. On either side of this middle point, the larger response (40 percent) was in favor of restoring and keeping the mural in place, with 28 percent in the “Strongly Agree” category and 12 percent in the “Agree” category. Approximately 25 percent disagreed with the need to restore and keep the mural in place.



The potential to tear down the structure for an appropriate redevelopment was also asked of the Open House participants. By a slight plurality of 48 percent to 43 percent, the survey found there was support for razing Pershing Center and reusing the site in an appropriate fashion; with the remaining 9 percent “Neutral.” Those who “Strongly Disagreed” with the removal of the building barely edged out those who “Strongly Agreed” with the building’s removal by 26 percent to 25 percent.



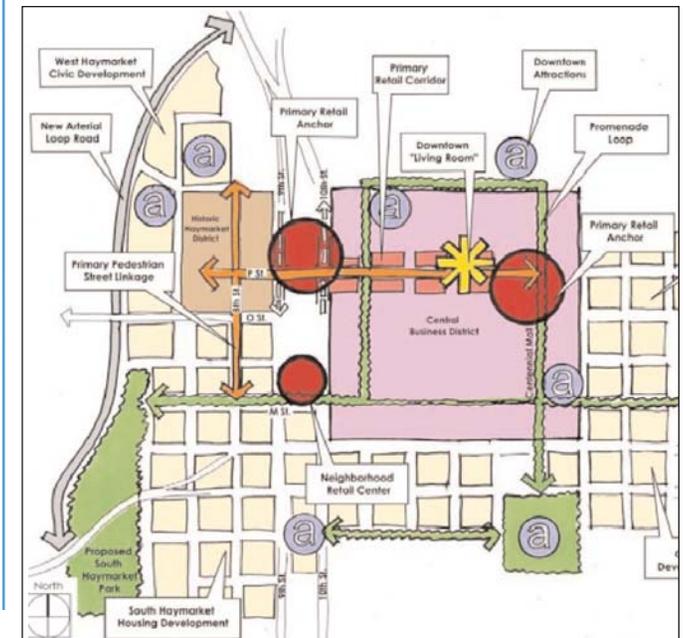
Ideas Process

Generating Ideas

On July 2, 2008, representatives from the Pershing Center Advisory Board and Staff, the City of Lincoln Planning Department, the Urban Development Department, and staff from BVH Architects, Clark Enersen Partners and WRK gathered for a workshop. The Workshop was structured in three parts: (1) an overview of the history of the Pershing Center and site; (2) a review of the existing influences, opportunities and constraints; and finally (3) a brainstorming session to come up with as many possible ideas for how to use both the Pershing Center Building and/or the site the Pershing Center sits on. Over 100 ideas and categories of ideas were recorded over the meeting (see the appendix for the full list of ideas). All options were kept on the table for future study, even those that could have been deemed infeasible. The purpose of this initial session was to expand the ideas available for review, not to narrow the ideas.

Stakeholder Outreach

Throughout the months of July through September, City and Pershing staff members solicited input from various stakeholders throughout the community. A summary of these sessions and specific questions can be found in Chapter 5 of this report. The stakeholders were given the opportunity to comment on the ideas generated in the brainstorming session, and their thoughts were recorded.





Community Open House

On October 29, 2008, a Community Open House was held to let the public at large review the analysis undergone for this study, and provide their thoughts for the future of Pershing and specifically, the ideas generated at the brainstorming session. Both large group and individual conversations were recorded to include comments on the appropriateness, public sentiment, economic impact, funding availability, community planning goals, and aesthetic impact of the various ideas.

Technical Review

In November 2008, the architects and engineers reviewed the ideas and proposed which ideas they believed would have a greater feasibility and those options that were deemed less viable. The analysis reviewed the following factors in discerning their recommendation:

- 1) Site & utilities, including parking, circulation, staging, deliveries, etc.
- 2) Building & environs, including fit for existing building, impact on aesthetics, fit for the site.
- 3) Planning Goals, including fit with Antelope Valley, Capital Environs, Centennial Mall, Downtown Master Plan, etc.
- 4) Economic Impact, including impact on property taxes, city investment, private investment, long term sustainability, funding sources, etc.

Sorting Through the Options

Finally, on December 2, 2008, the Pershing Advisory Board met with the same groups involved in the initial brainstorming session to review the input from the stakeholders, the community open house and the analysis of the architects and engineers on the factors. At this session, the group winnowed the options down to those presented here as feasible use options for the Pershing Center and site. (The full list of options is available in the appendix.) Although the following ideas are presented herein, various factors can change over time making some of these options less feasible, and causing other options not shown here to become more

feasible. The Board clearly did not want to limit the future options to only those shown here, and felt strongly that other options could come up in the future that were not considered in this study.

Ideas List

The following Ideas are those presented by the PARS Board as potential options for the future of the Pershing Building and/or site. These ideas could be considered individually, or as a part of a mixed use facility with multiple uses combined.

Arts Ideas:

Performing Arts Center
Black Box Theatre
Incubator for the Arts
Art Institute/Educational Facility

Business Ideas:

Exhibition Hall
Church/Religious Facility
Trade Showroom
Trade Exchange
Corporate Headquarters
Agricultural Hall/Exposition Center

Education Ideas:

Science Center/Museum
Nebraska State Historical Society
State Museum
Hall of Fame
Museum of Nebraska Sports
Museum of Sustainability

Entertainment Ideas:

Indoor/Outdoor Festival Space
Extreme Sports
IMAX Theater

Public Service Ideas:

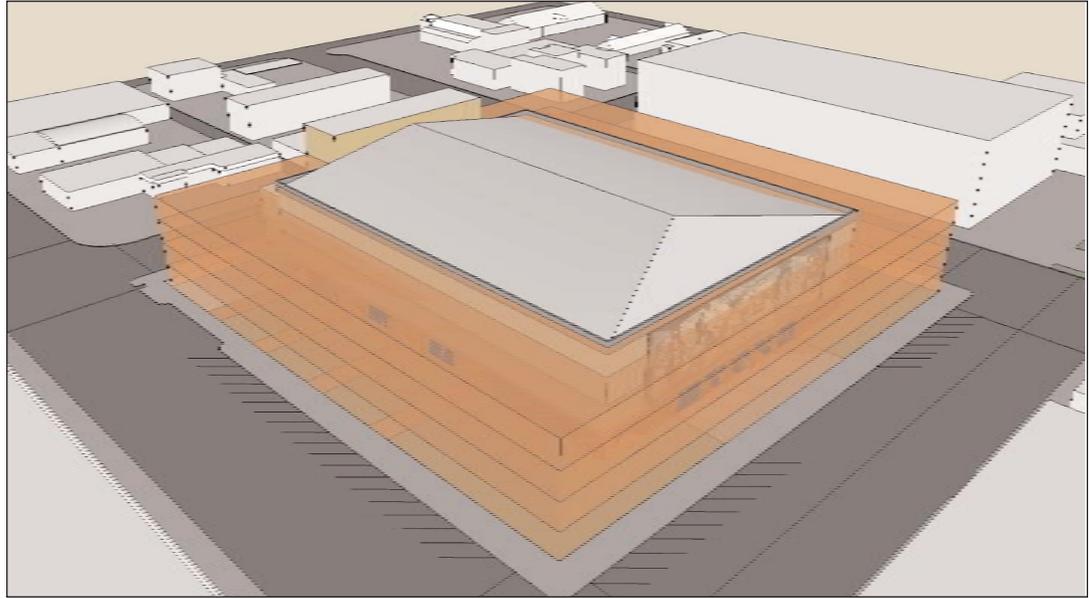
Library
Government Center
Multiple Cultural Centers

Recreation Ideas:

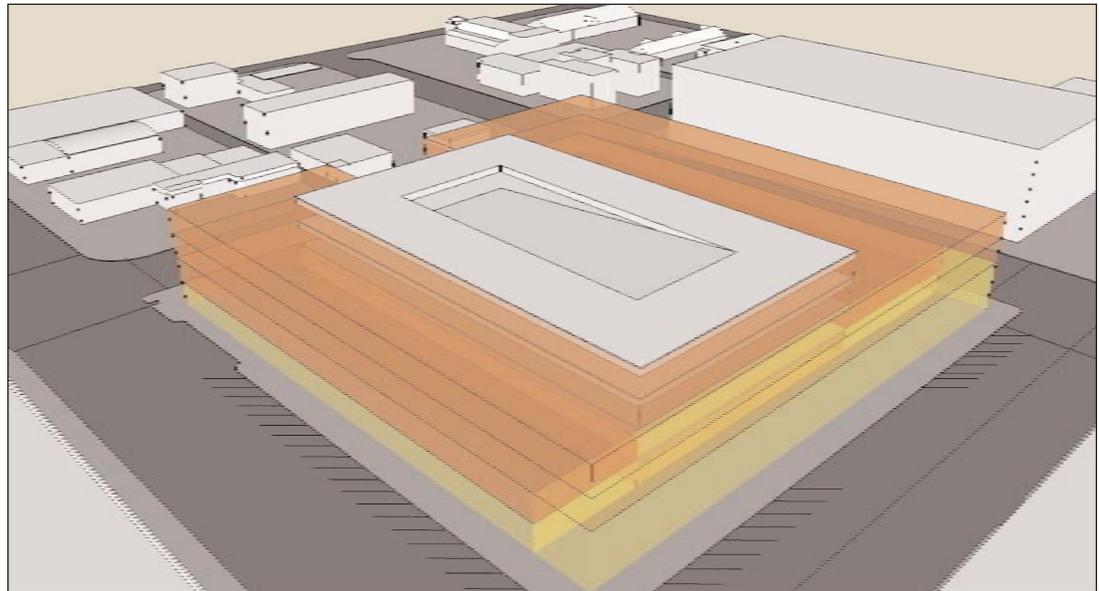
Recreation/Health Center
Volleyball
Gymnastics Center



‘Wrapper’ Development. This graphic shows how the existing building could be retained, remodeled or not, and a new structure could ‘wrap’ the existing. Up to four floors with 14 foot floor heights could be constructed around the existing facility with approximately 50,000 SF added to the structure.



‘Center Loaded’ Development. This graphic shows how if the existing building were demolished the space could be used for a parking garage to support the new spaces surrounding. The garage could be substituted for finished space. The yellow area here highlights where retail space could be inserted at the ground floor. Along Centennial Mall, a raised ceiling retail space would encourage larger scale retail (to the standards of most retailers) to be built along Centennial Mall, where the majority of the retail traffic would initially work best. The lower scale retail along ‘M’ & ‘N’ Streets could be smaller in scale, allowing office/housing/etc. above.



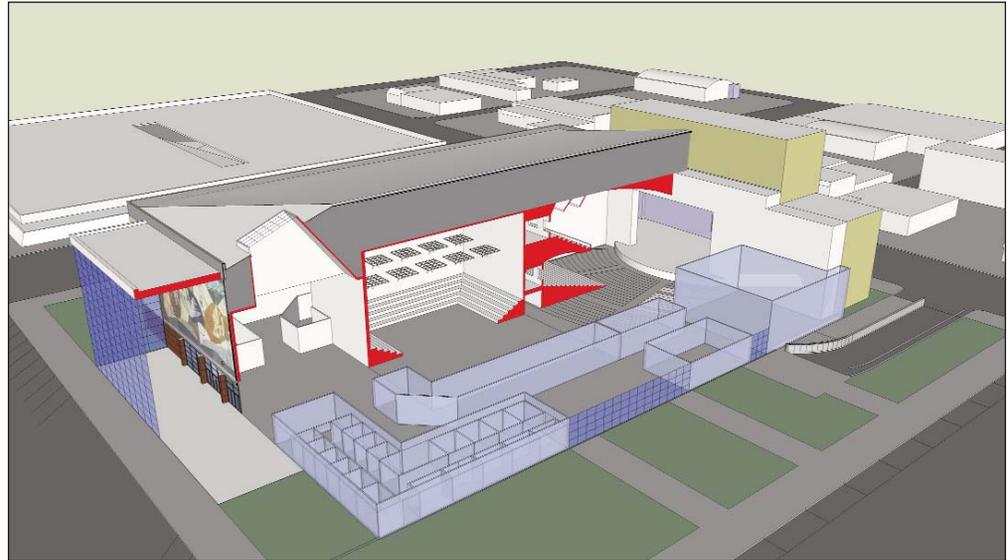


Recreation. This graphic illustrates a way to incorporate new uses with minimal disturbance to the existing structure. By removing the seating pans on one side of the existing arena and leaving them in place on the other side, and by reinforcing the exterior wall, 3 collegiate-sized basketball courts fit into the space, 2 of which are shown in the section. Other activities could also take place in this now larger area. The skylight above optimizes the natural daylight. This particular rendering shows a double height space on the ground level, a new concourse above with a balcony, and a third floor which could remain an athletic facility or become any other use, such as offices, etc.



Library. This particular idea for a library incorporates new floor levels that extend from the new structure into the existing space to create mezzanine levels on the interior. The mezzanines allow for the arena interior to be used and keep the space open. The skylight enhances this open air element. Library circulation is shown to happen in this space. The first and second floors are illustrated to be part of the library and there is circulation between the existing and new spaces. The third and fourth floors could also be library spaces or other uses. To the right of the image, seating pans have been left to show a unique reading area that retains elements of the existing structure. The existing stage has been left and is illustrated with moveable walls to show flexibility as a community space that could open up to the library.

Performing Arts Center. This cut away section illustrates how a Performing Arts Center could be inserted within the existing superstructure of the Pershing Building. An expanded front lobby could be added to create a new entry feature. The inner lobby could be expanded to accommodate large crowds. A flexible, black box style theatre is shown with a traditional, proscenium theater utilizing the existing fly-loft. The areas in the foreground show how the existing concourse and offices could be remodeled to expand patron areas and reconfigure offices and other support spaces.



Mixed Use. This cut away section illustrates how additions to the north and south could extend into the Pershing Building with new floor plates to create additional usable floor space. Skylights could be added in a central courtyard where the existing Pershing bowl is now. This area could be used as a large atrium gathering space, an indoor/outdoor garden, and even perhaps a small event space.





Appendix

Brainstorming Ideas List

The following list was generated at the PARS Committee meeting on July 22, 2008.

Arts Ideas:

- Performing Arts Center
- Black Box Theatre
- Incubator for the Arts
- Art Institute/Educational Facility
- Recording Studio
- Film Studio
- Music Performance Practice Rooms
- TV Studio
- Sound Stage
- Ballroom Space
- Dinner Theater
- Movie Theater
- Vaudeville/Cirque de Soleil Rehearsal
- Independent Film Theater
- Amphitheater





Business Ideas:

- Exhibition Hall
- Church/Religious Facility
- Trade Showroom
- Trade Exchange
- Corporate Headquarters
- Agricultural Hall/Exposition Center
- Think Tank
- Environmental Institute
- Entrepreneur Incubator
- Financial Institution
- Open Air Market/Flea Market
- Training Rental Facility: Leadership
- Retail Office
- Grocery Store
- Research & Development
- Health Facility
- Computer Lab
- Indoor Outlet Mall
- Big Box Retailers
- Warehouse
- Driving School
- Large Animal Veterinary Clinic

Education Ideas

- Science Center/Museum
- Nebraska State Historical Society
- State Museum
- Hall of Fame
- Museum of Nebraska Sports
- Museum of Sustainability
- Continuing Education

Cooking School/Culinary Institute
College Use
After School Facility
School

Entertainment Ideas:

Indoor/Outdoor Festival Space
Extreme Sports
IMAX Theater
Restaurants
Tourism
Outdoor Café
Themed Restaurants (e.g., Rainforest Café)
Aquarium
Amusement Park
Chuck E. Cheese/Dave & Busters
Indoor Zoo
Desert Dome

Public Service Ideas:

Library
Government Center
Multiple Cultural Centers
Day Care Facility
Senior Center
Fire Station
Bus Station
Food Bank
Underground Parking
Parking Structure
Correctional Facility
Mental Health Center
Helicopter Landing Pad
Storage





Recreation Ideas:

- Recreation/Health Center
 - Volleyball
 - Gymnastics Center
 - Indoor Tennis
 - Interactive Sports/Keno/Lasertag
 - Natatorium
 - Indoor Track
 - Sports Practice: Golf/Batting/Youth
 - Rock Wall
 - Water Park
 - Central Park
 - Skate Park
 - Winter Garden
 - Botanical Garden
 - Bowling Alley
 - Park
-

Housing Ideas:

- Hotel
- Apartments/Condominiums
- Student Housing
- Low Income Housing



Additional Information

This Final Report and other PARS study related materials are available for viewing on the Lincoln/ Lancaster County Planning Department webpage at:

lincoln.ne.gov (keyword: pars)

Should you have questions concerning the Pershing Adaptive Reuse and Site (PARS) Study, please feel free to call the Lincoln/ Lancaster County Planning Department at 402-441-7491 or email your questions to plan@lincoln.ne.gov.

