



Where Life is Sweet

Mayor and Members of the City Council

STAFF REPORT

For the Meeting of July 27, 2026

Title/Subject

Carnegie Building Process Update

Summary and Background

Building Condition Assessment

On June 10, 2026 the building condition assessment team met at the Carnegie Building and reviewed all of the major systems of the building. On June 24, 2026, the hazardous materials group took samples for testing. The full building condition report is attached for your review. The executive summary in that report gives a good overview. Below is a brief summary:

“Overall, the Carnegie Library is in **good condition** and has been **well maintained** by the City. The recent roof replacement was an important step to keep the building sound and protect it for years to come.”

Areas of Concern/Deficiencies

- Some damaged and missing lath and plaster
- Several areas of the building do not meet current ADA compliance standards
- Wood windows are not currently operable (painted shut)
- Water damage on roof eaves/fascia
- Further investigation needed on attic ventilation
- Further investigation needed into the previous roof leak area to ensure framing is undamaged
- Minor deflection in beam in 1950-60s addition
- Lack of shear wall on north side of 1950-60s addition
- Downspouts do not connect to stormwater drainage
- Asbestos in flooring mastic (glue)
- Asbestos in basement mechanical room plaster finish
- Lead in paint samples throughout building
- Galvanized water/sewer piping subject to further deterioration
- Domestic water supply (3/4") can limit the amount of plumbing fixtures
- Water heater has exceeded the end of its useful life
- Electrical main panelboard is at capacity. System is functional but lacks clarity: reflects multiple generations of additions
- Main floor lighting is fluorescent and not energy efficient, lighting quality varies between spaces
- Lack of dedicated egress lighting

- Lighting control limited to manual wall switches, not compliant with current energy code
- No fire sprinklers
- Fire alarm is operational but obsolete
- IT and security cabling/system is operational but disorganized

National Historic Register Designation

The final piece of the building assessment has to do with the issue of nominating the building for listing on the National Historic Register. The assessment team completed the first step in that process by asking the State Historic Preservation Office (SHPO) if the building would be eligible for register designation. SHPO responded and said it appears to be eligible. There are pluses and minuses that will be discussed in the presentation at the council meeting.

A few items related to this topic that the council should consider. Currently there are no buildings in Hermiston listed on the National Register. However, we do have a local historic ordinance that deems five buildings historic structures worthy of protection. They are as follows:

1. Hermiston Irrigation District Building, 204 E. Hurlburt Avenue
2. Carnegie Building, 213 E. Gladys Avenue
3. Skinner Building, 201 E. Main Street
4. Donovan Bland Building, 201 W. Hermiston Avenue
5. Bliss Building, 106 E. Main Street

Building Use Update

I have met multiple times over the past months with the groups interested in using the Carnegie Building. I asked them to work together on a proposal of how it could be shared. Their response to me was the following:

- The Historical group wants some additional time to organize themselves and feels like the building might not truly be big enough for two groups (Thought Bubblez and the Historical group) to adequately fulfill their individual missions.
 - The two groups together have determined that Thought Bubblez will immediately occupy the building and utilize it for two years. They plan to work in conjunction with the Arts person to incorporate arts programs into their offerings. The goal would be to outgrow the facility and need to move out to another location.
 - After two years, Thought Bubblez would move to a larger space and the Historical group would then move into the Carnegie Building.
 - Finally, the amateur radio club will occupy a room in the lower level and utilize meeting room space upstairs as needed.

Tie-In to Council Goals

- 3.1 Conduct public engagement to identify use scenarios, evaluate all options, and finalize plans for Carnegie Building.

Fiscal Information

Unknown project scope and thus unknown specific total cost. State Grant of \$1.0 million for project still available. Some funds have been used to assist in doing the work to get us to this point.

Decisions/Recommendation

Staff is seeking two decisions related to the Carnegie Building.

1. Should the City work through the nomination process to place the building on the National Register of Historic Places?
2. Should City staff move forward with agreements to formalize the plan for the use of the building?

Staff recommends approval of both items.

Submitted By:

Byron D. Smith