



Where Life is Sweet

Mayor and Members of the City Council
STAFF REPORT
For the Meeting of March 23, 2026

Title/Subject

Future of the Carnegie Building Discussion

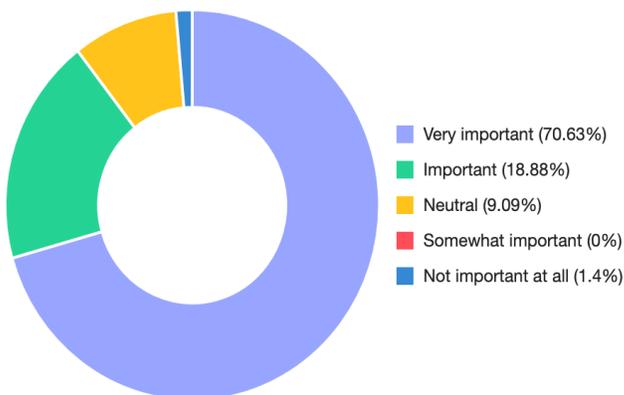
Summary and Background

The Hermiston Carnegie Building was built in 1918 as the first home of the Hermiston Public Library. It was funded by Andrew Carnegie, who built nearly 1,700 libraries across the United States to improve literacy. It served as the community’s library for almost 70 years until the current building was completed in 1986.

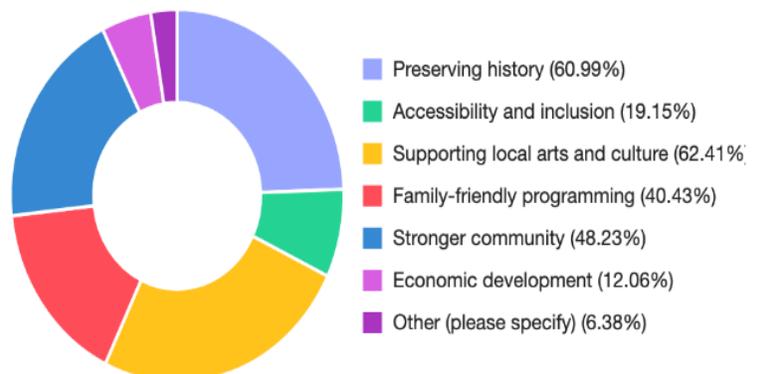
Following that time, the building has been used for various city offices and recently as a temporary library while major renovations took place in the existing library. The City has no planned use of the facility.

From August 2025 to November 2025, the City conducted extensive community outreach to seek feedback and ideas related to potential future uses of the facility. That outreach included presentations and local service clubs, the Harkenrider Senior Center, the Hispanic Advisory Committee and other interested groups. An online and paper survey was also conducted to capture feedback from interested individuals. The results of that survey are below:

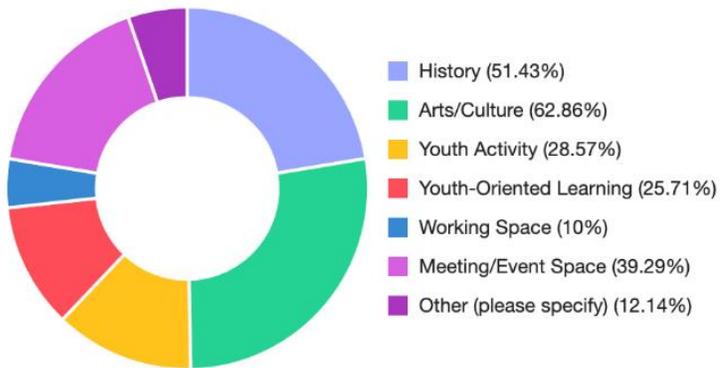
How important is it to you that the Carnegie Library Building is preserved and available for continued public use?



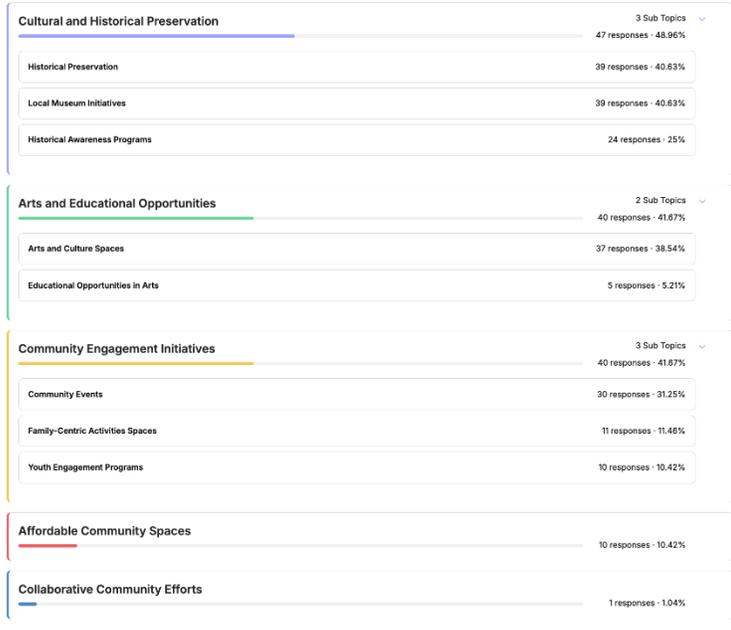
What values should guide the future use of the Carnegie Library Building?



Which future use of the Carnegie Library Building would you most like to see?



In a few words, describe what you would like to see in the Carnegie Library Building.



In addition to this feedback, we received documented interest from specific groups in using the facility.

- One of those groups, the Hermiston Historical and Cultural Society, made a presentation to the city council in February 2023.
- Kim LaPlant, a local artist would like to see it become a community arts center and made a written proposal. (emailed to you)
- Thought Bubblez, a local nonprofit working to create a discovery center to enhance education in the community. (emailed to you)

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 total cost. State Grant of \$1.0 million for project.

Recommendation

There is no recommendation regarding the use of the Carnegie building. A process for selecting the path could be to have each interested group make a presentation at an upcoming work session to give more details on their individual proposals.

A parallel path is to begin a physical evaluation of all the systems of the building to understand what will need to be addressed no matter what the building is used for along with preliminary cost estimates. Things like accessibility, electrical systems, mechanical systems, etc. Also, an evaluation of the process and pros and cons of placing the building on the National Historic Register.

Submitted By:

Byron D. Smith