

City of
Gainesville



Parks, Recreation & Cultural Affairs

Betsy Waite, P.E. | Wild Spaces & Public Places Director

Thelma A. Boltin Center Discussion

The Gainesville Servicemen's Center was dedicated in 1943 and Servicemen from Camp Blanding, the Alachua Army Air Base, the Officer Candidate School and the 62nd College Training Detachment attended events organized by program director Thelma A. Boltin seven days a week from 10am to 11pm that included dances, plays, variety shows, sing-alongs, and much more.



Project History



October 17, 2023 Community Engagement Session



Next Steps



Timeline

1999
Last Renovation



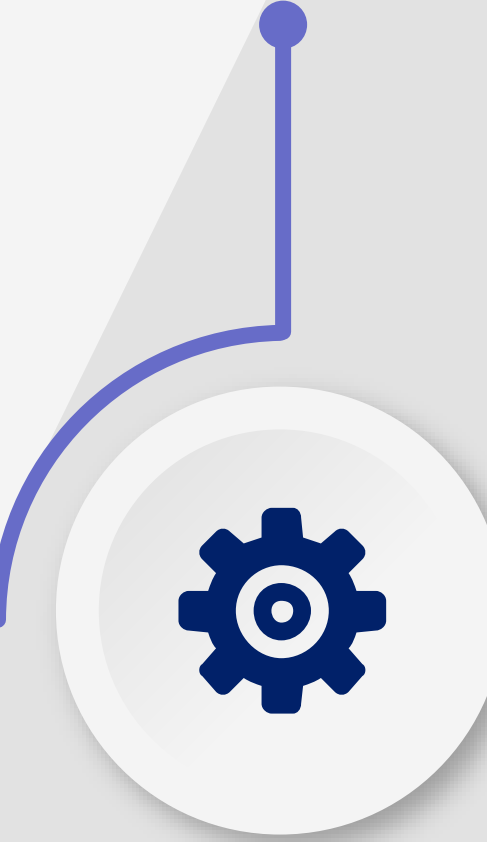
Event 1

Event 2



Jan, 2017
WSPP 1/2 Cent Sales Tax
begins

2019
CIP request for a new
roof is made by City
Facilities. Request is
unfunded.



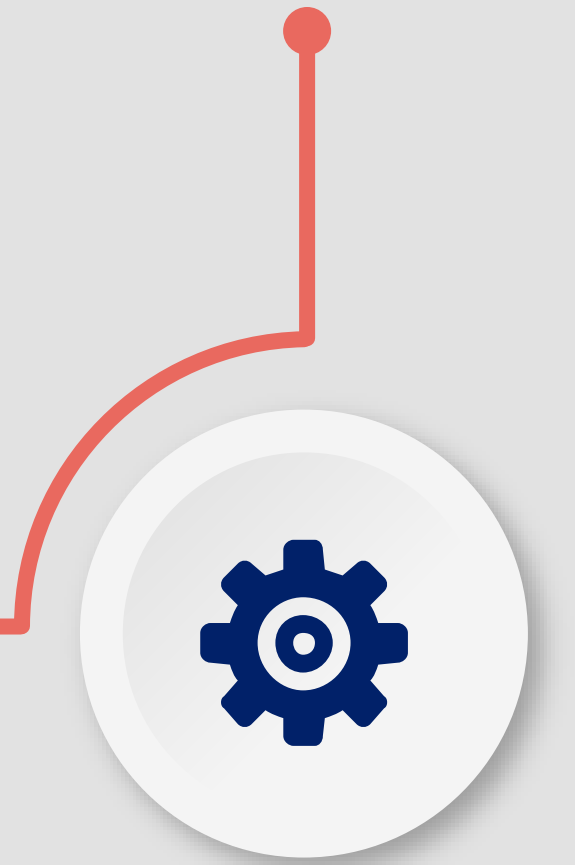
Event 3

Event 4



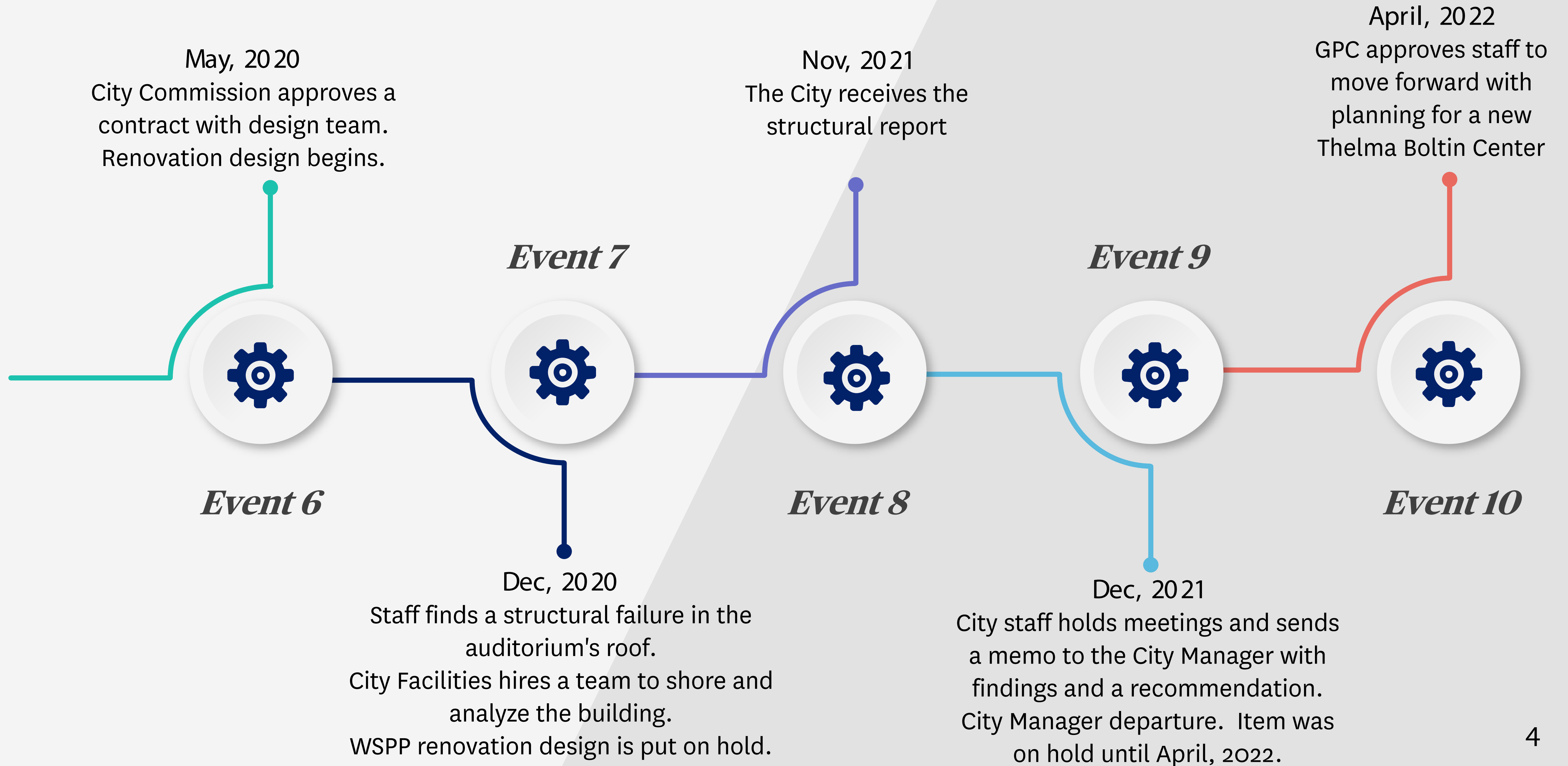
Aug, 2019
GPC approves a
WSPP funded
comprehensive
renovation plan

Jan, 2020
Design Services RFQ
is posted

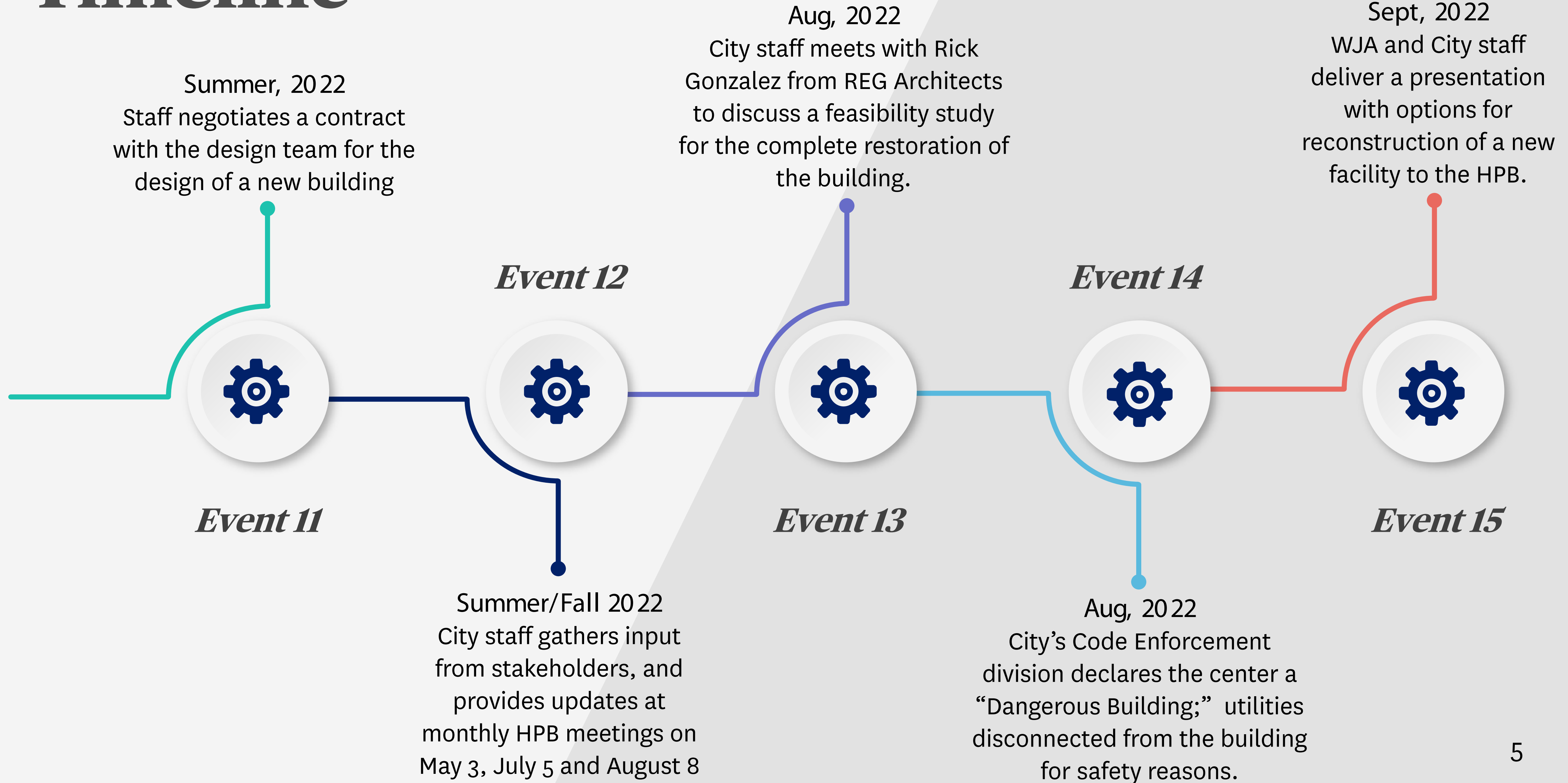


Event 5

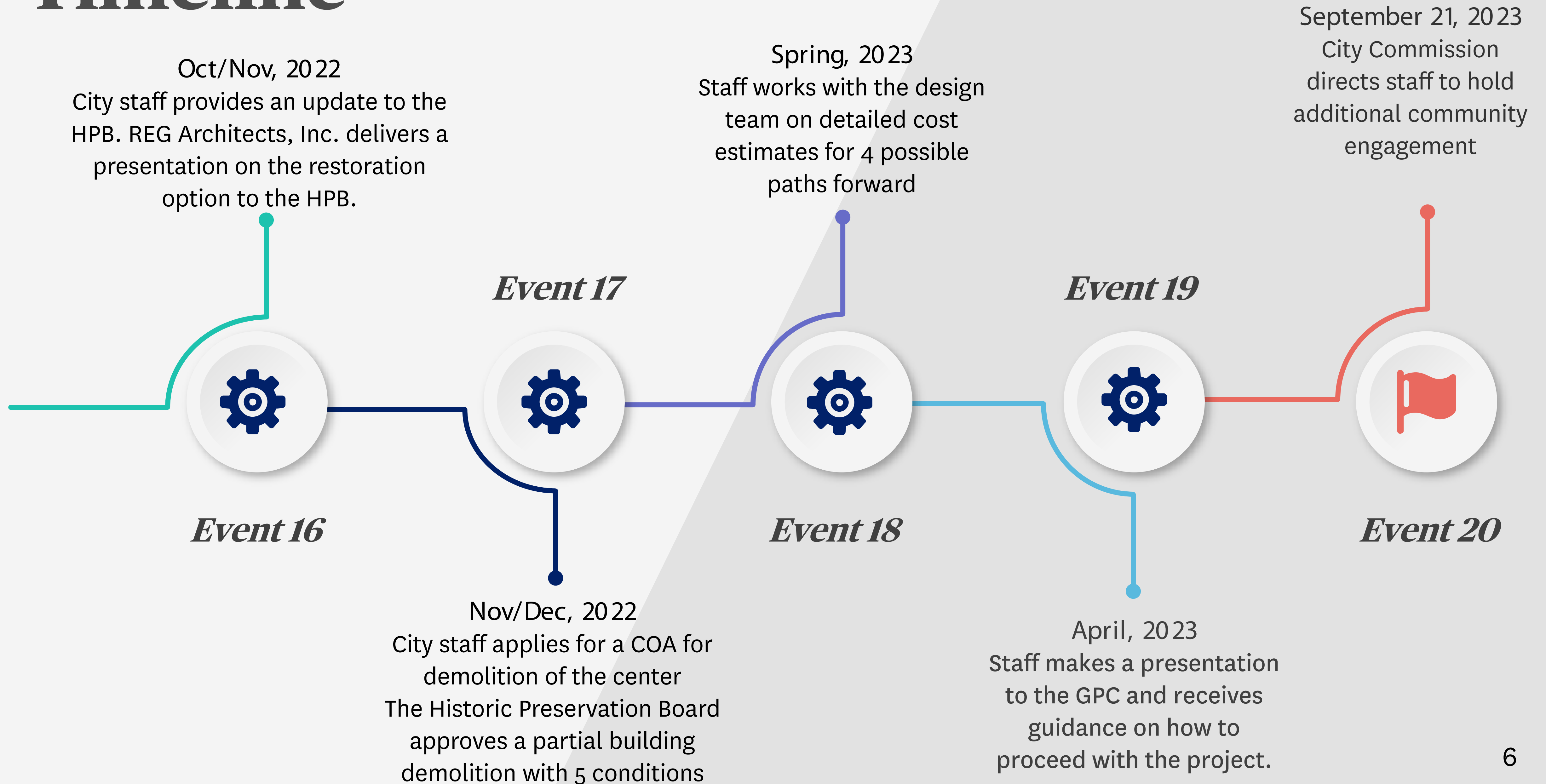
Timeline



Timeline



Timeline



October 17, 2023 Community Engagement Session



Community Engagement Session Format

STATION 1: Welcome Desk

Sign in, pick up an orientation packet and mark where you live on the displayed map.

STATION 2: Programming Opportunities

Please write responses to the following questions on the post-it notes provided

Have you or members of your household/group used the Thelma A. Boltin Center in the past? If so, what activities did you engage in? How often?

What activities or programs would you like to see be offered at the Center.

STATION 3: Existing Floor Plan

Please write responses to the following questions on the post-it notes provided

What improvements at the Thelma A. Boltin Center would better serve your groups' needs?

Please describe the size and type of space that you would like to utilize. Describe needs related to room sizes, rental rates, kitchen usage, audio visual equipment, flooring, lighting, acoustics, technology, etc. Indicate which needs are required to utilize the Thelma A. Boltin Center versus amenities that would be nice to have.

How large is your group? What frequency do you anticipate utilizing the future Center? When would you be interested in utilizing the facility—weekday, weekend, evening or daytime?

STATION 4: Open Comments

Please write any additional ideas or comments on the flip chart.

Where do you live?



←
Hibiscus

VOTING - EVERY ELECTION
IN A VOTATION
CLASSES & LECTURES
PAST

Voting
Community
Planning
Activities

PAST
- Voted
- Aerobics class
- Community meetings
4 events

Yes
Back to
EVENTS FOR
YEARS

I have only
used it in the
past to vote!
And sometimes
my mail is

I would
love to have
yoga there and
youth
programming

you
square dance
occasionally

@Halloween parties
@ classes
@ meetings

Future
- Programs at Thelma
Bolton & the ctr's
Use during WWII
- Go back to voting
here
- Misc classes
- Put up historical
marker again
- Halloween Ball
again!
have it represent
the original
structure, repaired
but not demolished

STAGE 2: Programming Opportunities

Have you...
If s...
Community events
(i.e. Comm. Subcom in
Central Park
PAST
- Neighborhood events
- Music
- Dances
- Karate
- Dance
- Street art

I would like the
price to be low enough
that people can reach
it for family reunions
weddings, etc.
Many people enjoyed
out of experience and
large wedding venues
I believe this could be
fringed with the current
buildings.

the future
- meetings
- education
- dances
- performances

more recently I
attended swearing in
of city officials
there
I performed w/ Amabile
community orchestra in
March 2019 along w/
Carly & sharing learning
Center, Young Artists Center
L Star Theater. The room
was fully stage was
used in 1940s with

The Zumba was
truly a community!
we grew to love
and support one
another. It was
so much more than
a fitness class.

@yoga
@more gardening
+ gardening
classes
@ kids classes

I attended a
contra dance. It was
so charming I could
a very special space
it should be maintained
with the feeling of the
past and give a
through historical culture

30 years. Please
give us our hall
back.

its original form
where we have enjoyed
cultural, and art
events. We want our
familiar historic
events + club events

A. Yes, only for voting.
The prior programming
offered was not very
relevant (eg. zumba)
B. I would love to see more
classes/events opportunities
for shows or music. Possibly
lessons (eg. guitar) and even
live family movie, etc.
B (continued)
- Maintain + grow
community garden
- Opportunities for summer
camps or programs for
children
- diversified health offerings
- Community organization
meeting space.

Past uses
- voting
- exercise classes
- dances

For dancing
More dance programs

Music
Activities
Dancing
Music events
of local groups
and students.

Contra Dancing
Swing Dancing

would like
to keep buildings
repaired w/
renovate wing
to make more
usable for events
and classes.

Voting
Programs on Crafting,
Gardening,
Movies w/popcorn

always voting
neighborhood
get together
yoga

Yes we have been to the
center.
The whole family has voted
here.
We used to have a Halloween
party there for the whole
neighborhood adults + kids
would love to see
Dances maybe with
recreators for other
voting other comm
classes other comm

Past:
Voting &
concerts
Future - botanical
park (native plants)
Open pavilion for
weddings/dancing meetings
Commemorative/History Intro
Storm Water management

As a poll wkr
I was stationed
at TB for many years
I also voted there.
The room was large
enough for a smooth
flow of voters.

Have not used but
enjoy looking at
the garden on walks.
Would like
activities for kids/parents
fitness classes
lectures
meet-ups

Historical
lectures by
Friends group.

Dance
Concerts
Grap meetings
Kids summer pgms
(theater)

Yes. VOTING
AND CITY PLAN
BORED ELECTION PARTY

Yes!
Art festival
Holiday sale
Voting
like to see: plays,
performances

Future -
Community garden
Connect with path
from Matheson
Center - with
appropriate crosswalk
of University Ave.

I gave heart
classes to semi
citizens at TB.
They were organized
by Cym Chokrut
who also worked at
Shands

Keep all of
original building
make into II
museum for
Hudson to see
+ learn
we don't need
other space

art programs
dance community
music
addressing underserved

Yes - post-yoga, zumba
Future - more fitness programs,
community talks,
programming for seniors
(things etc.)
Stop or duck pond tours

Drawing classes
In Auditorium
only
public
meeting

YES, BEEN TO BUILDING
TO VOTE AND FOR
SCHOOL EVENTS
WIFE DEM BROTHER
TO GO DOWN
OUR MEETING, DANCING
WIFE'S PM EVENTS
LOCAL CLUB.

I grew up going
to dance classes as
a girl; performing
in recitals (violin);
ballroom dancing with
my level in 6th grade
& attending Teen Time
dances on Friday nights
with older brother/sister
and too.

complete
restoration
and
preservation
No destruction

There are many
mgt classes in
space & nearby
- St. Fe College
- Blank St. Hotels,
Library, Matheson
Museum, The main
etc. No enlargement
Redesign interior

Future:
Zumba fitness classes,
dance classes + events,
yoga; community
events like art &
craft show, small
business networking

- OUTDOOR ACTIVITIES
- NEIGHBORHOOD PARTY
- VOTING
- COMMUNITY EDUCATION
- MOVIE NIGHTS

LEAVE
EXISTING
STRUC
OPEN SO
FOR CO
USE

Open Bolton
ASAP for
dance community
use.

- Zumba fitness
classes
Every year for
years
- other dance events
like swing dance

Improved Kitchen, rest rooms

Fix the Roof
Keep the footprint
Get a specialist historic preservation give

done floor, stage, functional building

Overhead FANS for Dancers Comfort
Sprung Dance Floor

More accessible storage space
2) Green Room for plays
3) ADA Accessibility

Sprung Dance Floors!

FIX WHAT NEEDS TO BE FIXED AND LEAVE EVERYTHING INTACT AS MUCH AS POSSIBLE

Retain the historic stage auditorium
Create terrace
area of former wing, with perloous dancers

Better Dance Floor Area
Updated look

Historic info can be on exterior panels around the terrace
Artifacts displayed inside, or found at schedule of Friends group.

open up office area for better usage, keep the auditorium stage. Get more input in usage of existing space

WE WOULD LIKE TO HOST NEIGHBORHOOD PHOTOS (20-50 PHOTOS) WORKSHOP/LEAD

ABILITY TO OPEN UP FACILITY TO VARIOUS SIZES OF GROUPS, AT SAME TIME. OPEN TO RE-USE AS PRIVATE CAMP

THE OUTDOOR SPACE AROUND BUILDING FEELS UNPLANNED / UNDESIGNED - NEED OUTDOOR AMENITIES!

MODERNIZE THE INTERIOR AND UPDATE WAY BUILDING ADDRESSES

All New LIGHTING AND MATERIAL PALETTE INTERIORS

MEETING ROOMS FOR 10-20 PEOPLE FOR 50+ PEOPLE. ALL FOR ROOMS (UP/DOWN)

FIX THE ROOF STABILIZE THE BUILDING

What improvements at the Thelma A. Boltin Center would address groups' needs? Please describe the size and type of space that you would like to utilize. Describe needs related to room sizes, rental rates, kitchen usage, audio visual equipment, flooring, lighting, acoustics, technology, etc. Indicate which needs are required to utilize the Thelma A. Boltin Center versus amenities that would be nice to have.

Keep the building authentic & do a full restoration

Use the concrete from any ~~digging~~ digging to build a bike trail. Can NC has a trail built of recycled materials.

More MUSIC & DANCE EVENTS WOULD BE NICE. KITCHEN WOULD BE NICE TO HELP WITH RENTAL FOR EVENTS

How often is your group? What frequency do you anticipate utilizing the future Center? When are you interested in utilizing the facility—weekday, weekend, evening or daytime?

JUST RESTORE THE EXISTING BUILDING. IT'S THE RIGHT SIZE!

EXISTING WING CAN BE RENOVATED TO ALLOW MORE OPEN SPACES AND MAYBE A COUPLE OF LARGER ROOMS FOR GROUPS

A) Adding a backstage space to make the stage more useful. Repurposing the add on wing to have spaces that include tech for meetings, possibly lessons, etc. a functional space that promotes different uses.

The dance community misses the Boltin and dancing! This history of dance is documented! Please keep! The history!

THATTA - GREEN ROOM
DRESS ROOM
LARGE OFFICE
LIVING AREA
KITCHEN
BATH
DANCE FLOOR
STORAGE ROOMS
REPAIRS
CLEANING

I WOULD LOVE TO SEE A MODERNIZED APPROACH BUILDING THAT PRESERVES THE BEST OF BOTH WINGS OF THE BUILDING & THE SYNERGY BETWEEN THEM. EVERYTHING ELSE SHOULD BE REDUCED TO MAKE A BETTER MODERNIZED VERSION

Please consider removing later-added walls from the wing to open it up and allow it to be used for medium-sized classes

Fix the Building as it is with modest remodel, e.g. stage, for greater utility. But do not demolish any of it. It has great significance for people in town who used it in their use and heard about

You could use a Green Room for dance performers to dress.
Lightweight but comfortable chairs for dancers to rest.
Tables to surround the edges of the dance floor.
Anytime Tampa Dance Group regularly has 20-50 dancers, once or twice a month for a hour dancers on Saturday or Friday nights.
It possibly could use a Sunday after noon possibly a weekly night for 2 hour classes at a small theater ahead Sun-Litler

outdoor playground for kids
better kitchen & bigger restrooms
dressing rooms
back stage

renovate accurately like Thomas Center & Old Post Office
If serves my group the way it is - fabulous space is - please preserve it with its special features intact (see other charts I ran out of time)

Save The Historic Thelma Boltin Recreation Center
Dear Gainesville City Commissioners and Staff:
The Gainesville Women's Club appreciates the Gainesville City Commissioner's vote September 21 meeting to table the contract and to receive more community input. That this vote will be a step towards preserving the building.
The Gainesville Women's Club continues to appreciate the City of Gainesville preserve the historic Thelma Boltin Recreation Center in its entirety, as follows:
1) We request that the city rescind the "Partial Restoration" plan that would demolish two walls.
2) We ask that the city repair the existing facility or do a full restoration or repair the facility plus remove newer portions from the wing. Either of these options will as support.
3) We ask that all consultants have a background in historic preservation.
Many of our historic buildings were saved in part because elected officials were respectful of our history. For example, the Thelma Boltin Center was saved from demolition in 2009 by the City Commission's decision to preserve it.
Please vote to save the historic building. We have included information below from our prior letter.
Historic buildings give our community an anchor and a sense of place. They are part of our history and they are part of our identity. We have included information below from our prior letter.
Historic buildings give our community an anchor and a sense of place. They are part of our history and they are part of our identity. We have included information below from our prior letter.

McNiece, Peter R
From: Peter R. McNiece
To: City Council
Cc: [EXTERNAL]
Subject: Thelma A. Boltin Center renovation recommendations
Dear Mr. McNiece,
I would like to recommend the following actions:
1. The City can all renovation construction costs.
2. Functionality of the old building was reduced at best. I feel it is important in terms of generating revenue from events and public programs to include a commercial kitchen, such as at the Cotton Club and Senior Center, in the planning. This would be better for the congregation meal site as well as revenue producing events such as receptions, reunions and dance events. Additionally, seating in the old needs vast improvement.
3. In the future, routine maintenance (cleaning, lighting, minor repairs) should be borne by the City, typical of most of our public buildings. Future major structural upgrades/updates would be borne by public/private partnership. Friends could be invited to create an endowment or fund. The City could pitch in with grant writing.
Sincerely,
Isabel Burdett Counts
Accordian and concertina for dance

B. Large space with various sized rooms and spaces equipped with technology for multiple purposes - consider sound system and make use

C. I think there are multiple groups who will use it - from the DWA, for general and board meetings to activities like family dance or more

Please don't tear down historic paper

renovate & keep the exterior as is - historic

do not tear down - it is an office historic paper

I like the patch-it-up option. And use it as a multi-purpose community center.

Station #4

Choices! By using the low-cost roof fix on Thelma Bolton, other PR projects can be funded with the \$4M saved!

- No destruction, only restoration & preservation
No vandalism funded by public money!
- This state heritage site must be preserved in full.
It is an asset the community in that it preserves military history, women's history + rock musician history.

SAVE entire original building ~~Do not demolish~~ Do not demolish this unique bldg.

Do NOT ENLARGE THE FOOTPRINT OF THE EXISTING BUILDING
IT IS IN BALANCE WITH THE COMMUNITY AND THE SWEETWATER BRANCH GREENWAY

Green Room for preferences!

Bigger kitchen so can be used by caterers when rented

Please consider some green features as this can - solar panels, low flow toilets, etc.

The building cannot be left empty to encourage restore the exterior and maintain the interior. The community loves this space!

I attended many events at Thelma Bolton. This was more the way it was. Loved the shape in particular.

Donald E. Stephens I went with him to Dine w/ Bethell of the City Bd's.

T.B. is a beautiful bldg. If it is with the neighborhood it has history.

The Bolton Center is a historic building for a variety of reasons. It is a structure that contributes to the historic district in which it resides and therefore like the other buildings should be restored to its original appearance. **One history lives through the activities that take place here. One history lives through the way special places - let us continue to maintain and do the necessary rest.**

There should be a pro-sound system for dancing here in some engineer design it so that use suspended speaker hanging from the ceiling and pointed down at the dancers in the center of the floor (not the edges). The speakers and amplifiers should be done C/O's quality/strength. DJ's should be able to plug into the mixer with just a j&j jack with their laptop/record.

REPLACE ALL THIS STRUCTURE WITH A GREAT AUDITORIUM CONVERSION WITH A SMALL CLASSROOM MEETING ROOMS

KEEP WEST FACADE
KEEP SOUTH FACADE

Yes! Keep our historic building looking the same! NOT add big modern additions that are not needed + not wanted by the citizens. Why didn't you ask the citizens before making a deal (or deal) with architects.

Keep the historic building out there + that is my only concern is that the group meeting. The history of this building is a great reason to do with it. I have been to many other buildings, many that are not historic but they are not historic.

PLEASE KEEP AS MUCH OF THE ORIGINAL STRUCTURE AS POSSIBLE. IT WILL BE IMPOSSIBLE TO REPLACE HISTORY.

KEEP THE HISTORIC BUILDING WHAT IT HAS GREAT SIGNIFICANCE TO THE COMMUNITY.

KEEP THE WHOLE BUILDING - I WANT THE LANDSCAPING TO BE NO SMALLER THAN IT IS NOW SO WE CAN HAVE OUR COMMUNITY GARDEN AND GREENWAY VISIBLE.

KEEP CURRENT BUILDING FULL RESTORATION WITH OLD MATERIALS SEE BETTER THAN NEW MATERIALS. KEEP ITS HISTORICAL BUILDING IN PLACE WITH OLD MATERIALS.

We only have a few buildings with such history and culture. Save the feeling - Save the building - Restore.

KEEP THE BUILDING AS MUCH INTACT AS POSSIBLE

No Modern Unrest

- How is the city going to take care of the Bolton Center once it is completed?
- Does it require a famous person in the history of a bldg to make us VALUE ITS HISTORY? Everyday folks (eg. soldiers + city residents) should have their structures preserved, too - and not with disregard for the average (not fancy) building.

we must preserve history. Save the building. We want to dance again!

this was not posted on the City's website - all response is through word of mouth

the proposal under consideration is silly. 2 walls ??? the city is delinquent in its duties to preserve City-owned properties.

PLEASE DON'T DESTROY HISTORY!
ASAP KEEP THIS GEM! WE WANT DANCING BACK IN THIS WONDERFUL BUILDING.

Do not destroy historic building. Only restore and preserve. Building is in good place - enlarging its footprint will not improve preservation.

KEEP THE BUILDING AS MUCH INTACT AS POSSIBLE

Save the Thelma Bolton Center! Don't demolish any of it. Please - it keeps the history. Local history is important.

KEEP THE BUILDING INTACT!! Do NOT enlarge footprint. Keep original historic bldg.

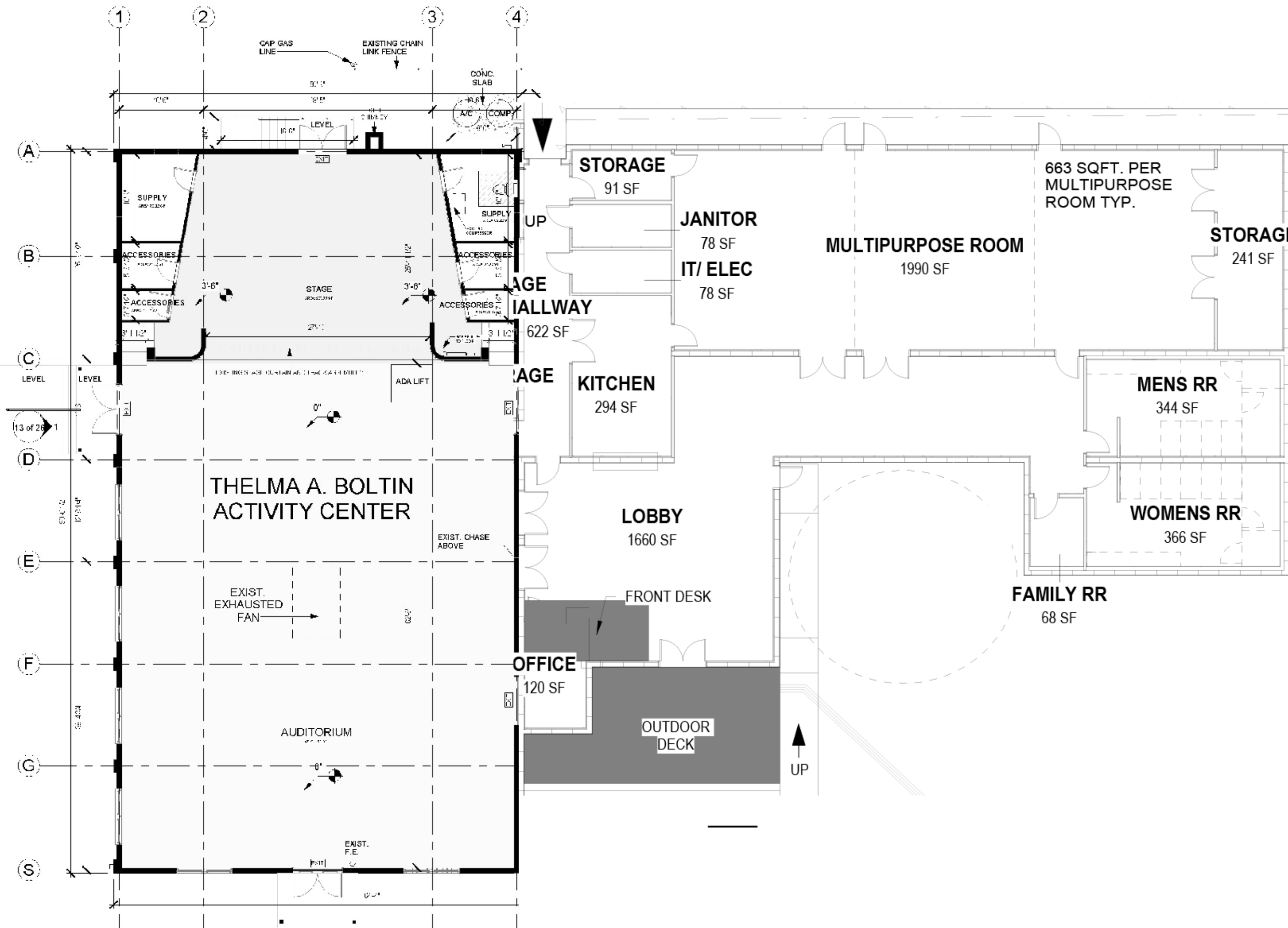
Preserve the building. Save history. See all these comments.

History, once destroyed, can not be rebuilt. That is a replica. Not a historic building.

Partial Restoration



Partial Restoration



The auditorium portion of building will be rehabilitated in accordance to the Secretary of the Interiors Standards for Rehabilitation. The existing wing will be demolished.

Structural deficiencies in the auditorium will be corrected.

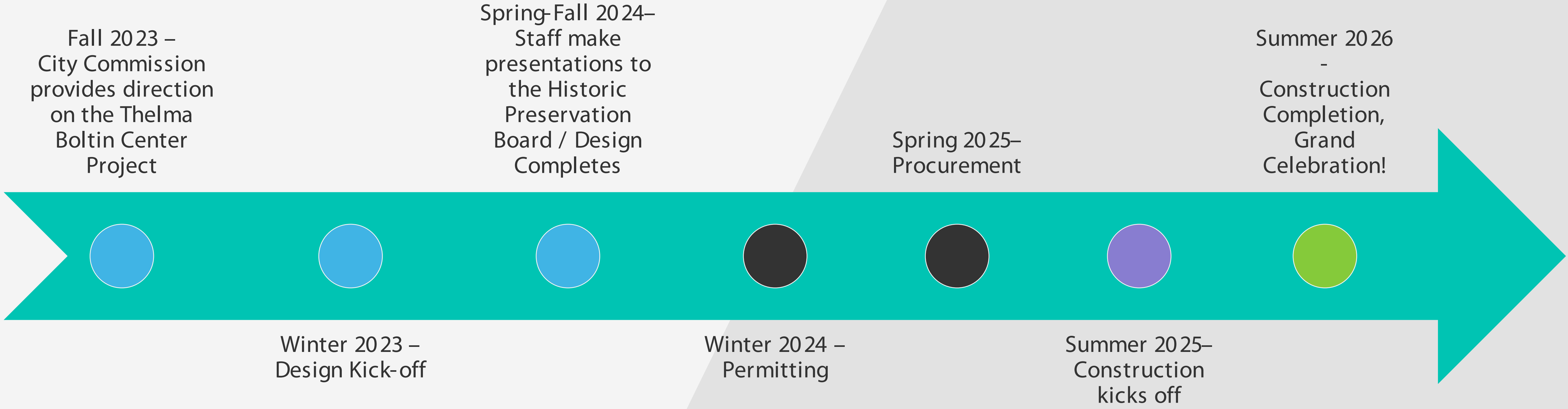
Whenever possible, historic features and design elements shall be preserved, and if preservation of those features is not possible shall be replicated to look like the historic features.

The design of the new wing shall be compatible with the scale and architecture of the existing building.

This partial restoration option received a certificate of appropriateness from the Historic Preservation Board.

The design team shall evaluate adding back of house services within the new support wing to determine if it is feasible to retain the north wall of the auditorium.

Thelma A. Boltin Center - Proposed Next Steps



Questions?

