



City of Grand Island

Tuesday, April 03, 2007

Study Session

Item -2

Downtown Main Street Presentation

Staff Contact:

Council Agenda Memo

From: Cindy Johnson, Chamber of Commerce

Meeting: April 3, 2007

Subject: Downtown Main Street Presentation

Item #'s: 2

Presenter(s): Cindy Johnson & K.C. Hehnke

Background

In its continuing efforts to improve the health of the downtown, the Business Improvement District Board became a "Nebraska Lied Main Street Community", effective January 1, 2007. The Main Street program assists communities to understand the importance of their downtown and to address challenges downtowns may be experiencing with changing business, aging infrastructure, and increased competition from "life style" malls and traditional malls.

The Main Street philosophy encourages a four pronged approach to downtown redevelopment: 1) organization; 2) economic restructuring; 3) design and 4) promotions. A broad based group of volunteers (not just down town business owners) have been involved in addressing issues associated with these categories. It has been exciting to have renewed interest and involvement in revitalizing downtown. A healthy, vibrant downtown is positive for all of Grand Island and, as the heart of the community, is an important community symbol.

Discussion

Two years ago, the downtown undertook an extensive visioning process. This process led to a selection of priorities for the downtown that has been the group's focus. Many discussions have been held and actions taken place, leading to enhanced attention to marketing and promotion. There is one issue, however, that is mentioned each time a new event, activity or plan for redevelopment is discussed. Of course that issue is the train noise.

The Main Street Economic Restructuring Committee is convinced that now is the time to request a quiet zone in the downtown area. It is our understanding the Railroad Corridor Study (completed last summer) recommends a number of quiet zones or directional horns

for several of the crossings in the downtown area. With the railroad upgrading electrical systems on these crossings, the cost for implementing a directional horn has been reduced substantially from when first discussed 10 years ago. We respectfully request a discussion with the City Council on the potential for budgeting funds in the 2007-2008 City Budget for automated horn systems/quiet zones at the crossings in the downtown area.

Conclusion

This item is presented to the City Council in a Study Session to allow for any questions to be answered and to create a greater understanding of the issue at hand.

Grand Island and Nebraska Lied Main Street

BID Committee Structure

VS.

Main Street Four Point Approach™

Current BID Committees	Main Street Four Point Approach™
Physical Improvements Façade Task Force	Design
BID Board	Organization
Promotion	Promotion
Recruitment/Retention	Economic Restructuring

Expectations from Main Street Program:

- Guidelines to create more structure to the committees to make them more productive/effective

Grand Island and Nebraska Lied Main Street

Main Street's Eight Principles

Eight Principles	BID
Comprehensive	One project can not be "the fix"
Incremental	Seem to focus on large projects
	BID Board is working toward progress; mixed messages from community, city government, other downtown business
Self-Initiated Help	Forget to look outside of downtown, city government
Public/Private Partnership	What is "wrong" overshadows what is "right"
Asset Enhancement	Strive for good quality
Quality	Some are reluctant to accept change; those individuals hold back progress
Change	A lot of talk – need to take action
Implementation Oriented	

Grand Island and Nebraska Lied Main Street

- Interest to revitalize Downtown, but not sure where to start without large sums of money
- How do we bring more people to the table – especially those without existing agendas?
- How do we get everyone on the same page and working together to be most effective?
- How do we refocus to the future; yet honor the past?
- How do we encourage new individuals to participate?



Downtown

Grand Island



Downtown

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**Grand Island's Hub for
Historical... Cultural... Entertainment...
Business... Government**

Downtown is home to...

- Local retailing
 - Local & Specialty retailing
 - Arts & Cultural retailing/events
 - Entertainment/restaurants
 - Home/office furnishings and gifts
- Financial services
- Professional offices
- Residential housing
- Government Center



Downtown
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Downtown's 4 Step Action Plan

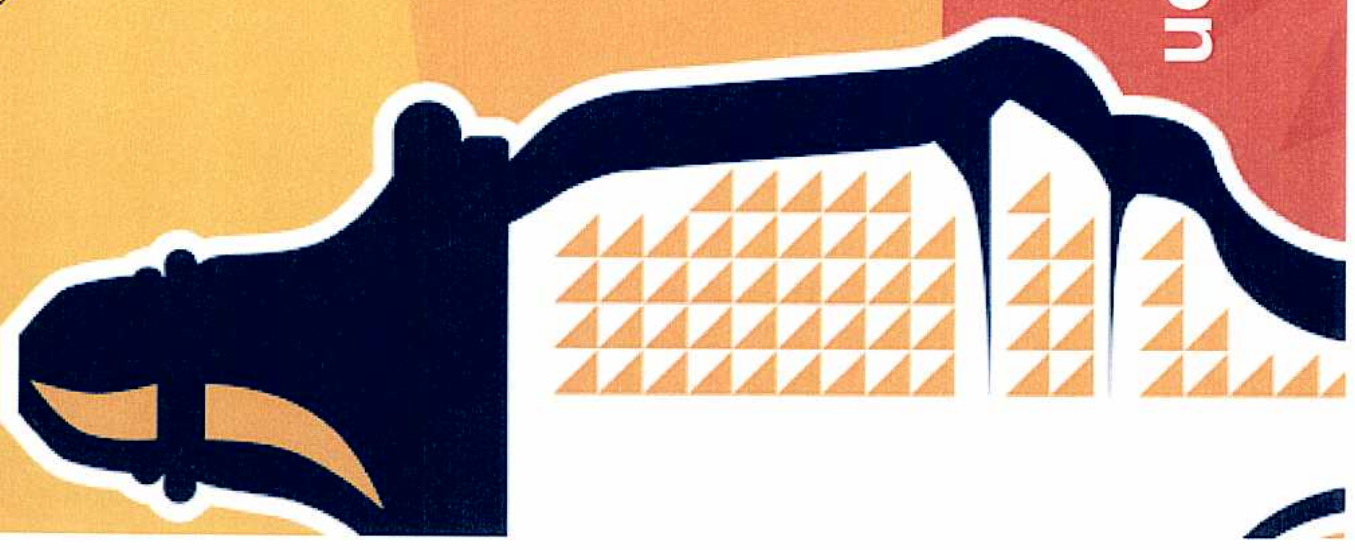
1. Historical building restoration/
upper level housing
2. Parking solutions
3. The physical environment –
streetscape project
4. The Arts & Humanities Center
for Grand Island!



Downtown
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1. Historical Building Restoration & Upper Level Housing

- Proven time and again – renovated historical buildings are successful.
- Examples:
 - Chicken Coop building
 - Downtown Center
 - Historic City Hall
 - 2nd story residential housing



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1. Historical Building Restoration Completed Projects



Downtown Center



Historic City Hall



The Chicken Coop



G.A.R. Building



Martin Building

- Other Projects include Bartenbach Opera House, The Grand Theatre, Multiple second story housing projects



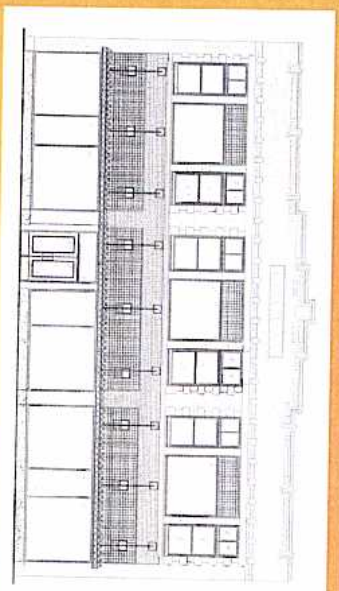
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1. Historical Building Restoration Current Projects



Kaufmann Center

\$230,000 exterior project; \$117,000 CRA Façade Grant



Maudie's Stained Glass

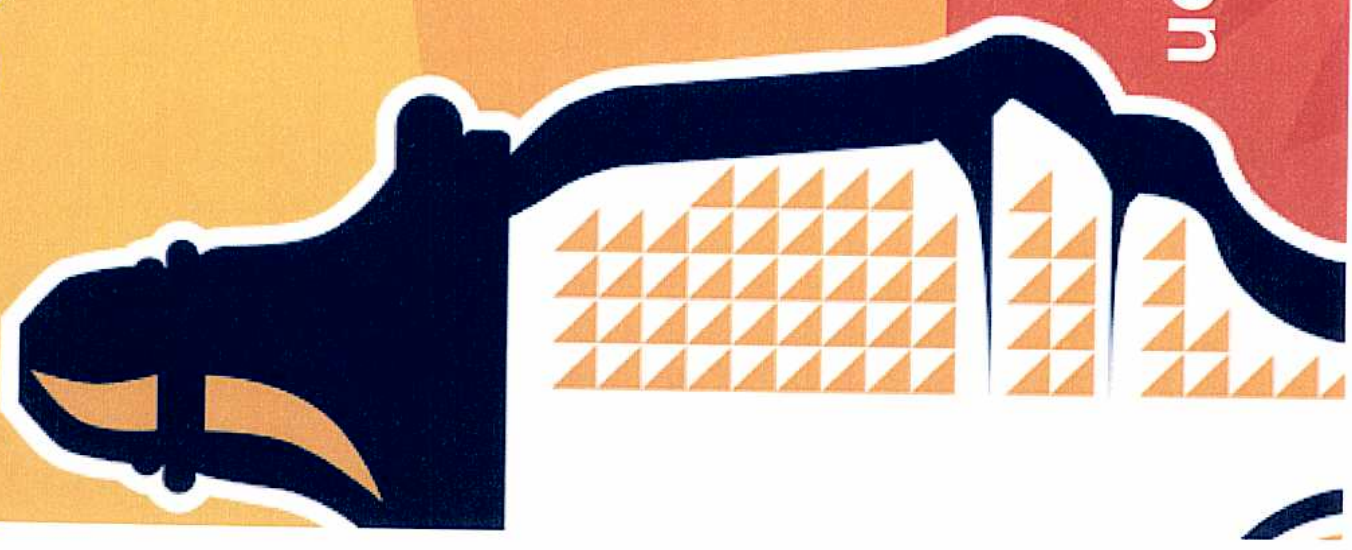
\$158,500 project; \$92,300 CRA Façade Grant



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1. Historical Building Restoration & Upper Level Housing

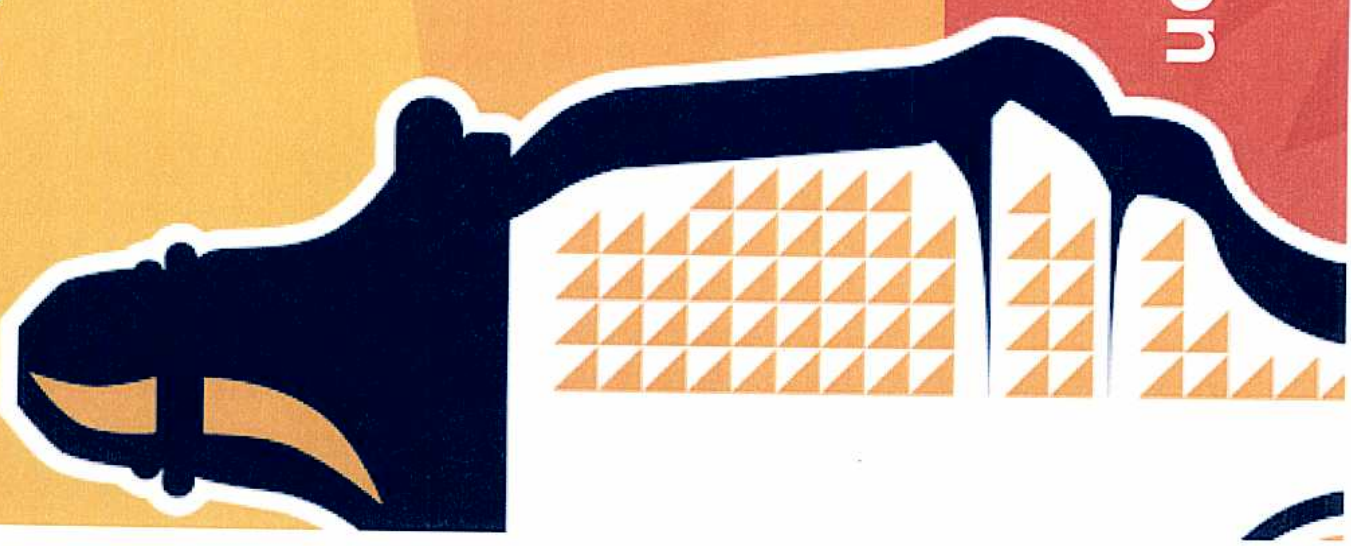
- Continue façade and building restoration projects through public/private investment.
- With proper funding assistance, upper level housing development can be the nucleus for historical building and facade restoration.
- Façade restoration alone is not sufficient; must be part of a building renovation.
- Housing and building restoration are critical factors for success in Downtown.



1. Historical Building Restoration & Upper Level Housing

Plan:

- BID to identify potential sites.
- Brochure/Web site is to be developed to assist with education, ideas, funding sources for property owners.
- Possible educational seminars to encourage continued private investment in Downtown.
- Upper level housing and restoration of historical structures can be costly.
- Financial incentives will be crucial to make projects cash-flow.

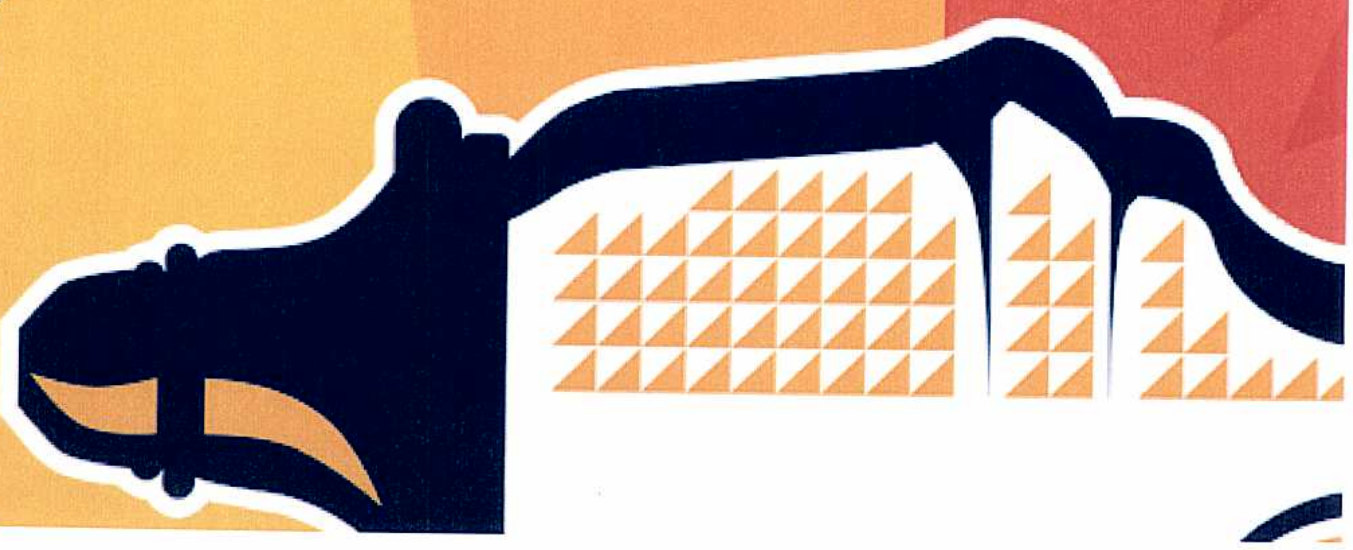


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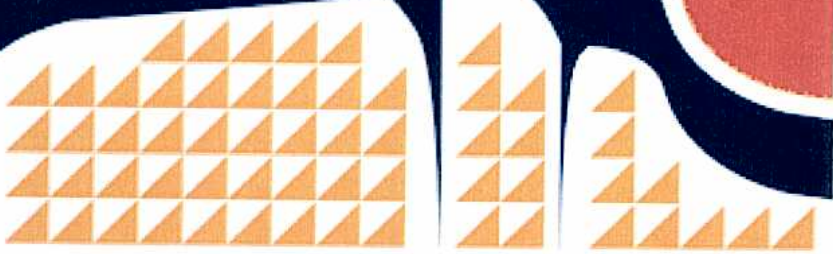
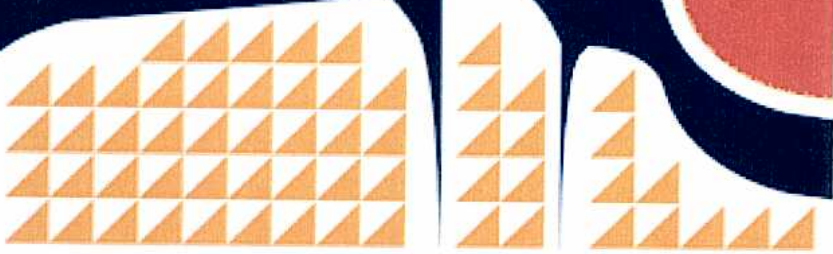
2. Parking Solutions

- Need smaller, more strategically located surface parking lots.
- Several key buildings are isolated from parking, impeding development.
 - Masonic Temple Building
 - Walnut Street Center
 - Others to be identified

Funding assistance is needed to complete these core projects. Community Redevelopment Authority is willing to work with investors, but not willing to provide parking solutions before an investor is committed.

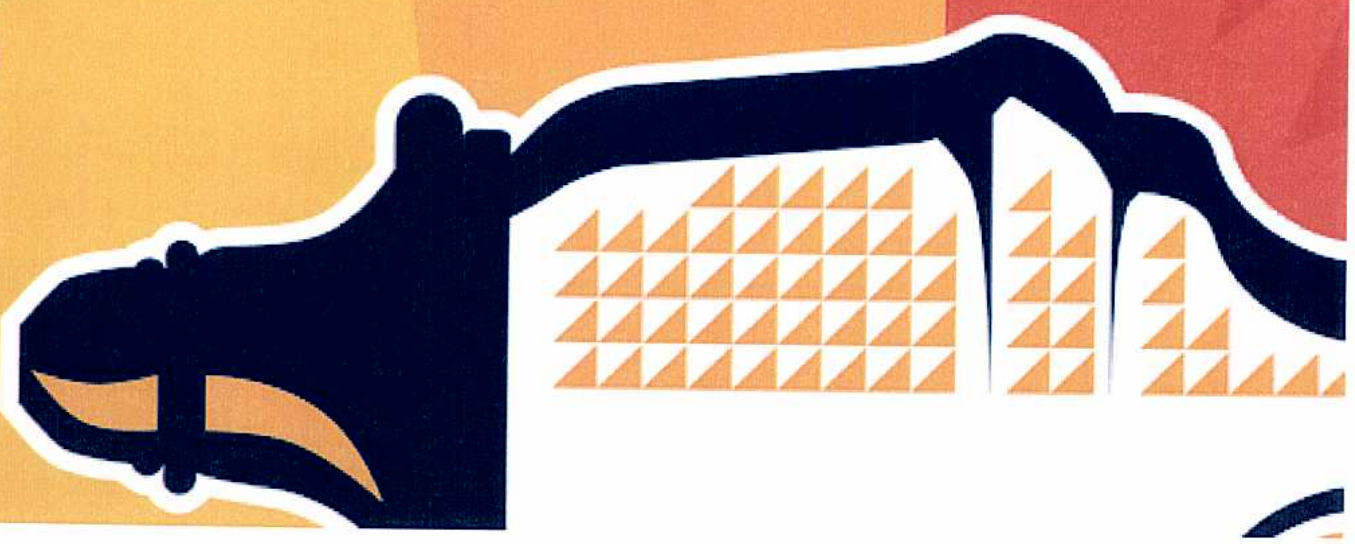


Downtown
Speed, Sound



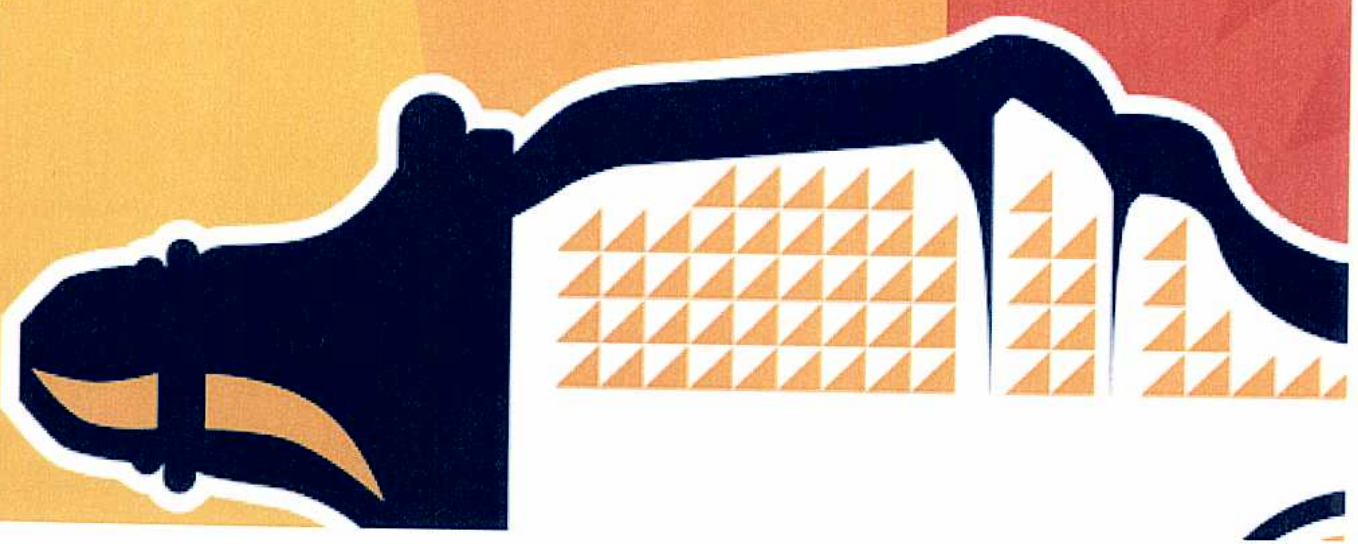
3. Physical Environment & Streetscape

- New logo
- Entrance signs
- Downtown banners
- Major streetscaping project with trees and landscaping
- New benches & trash containers
- New pocket park (funded by Sprint)



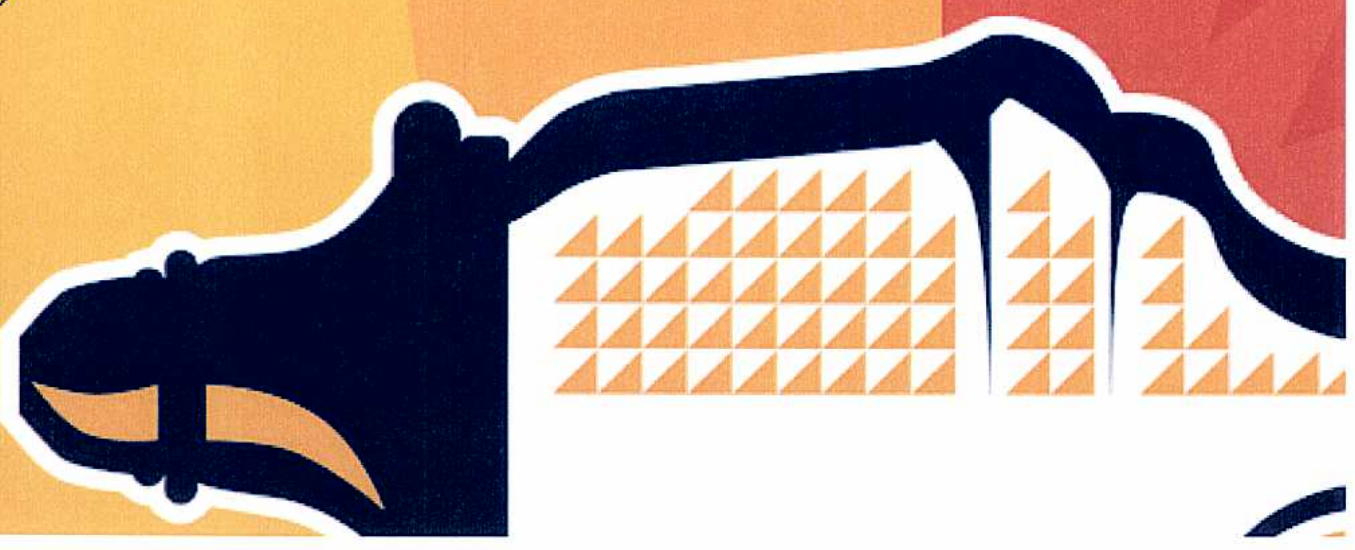
3. Streetscape Completed Alley Way Project

- Buried unsafe and unsightly power lines
- New concrete alleyways
- New sewer drainage for water runoff
- New historical lighting for enhanced safety
- New alley entrance bollards and crosswalks
- Completed through a combination of public and private investment



3. Streetscape Parking Lot Enhancements

- Multiple tree and landscaping projects
- New historical lighting
- New parking lot on-premise signs



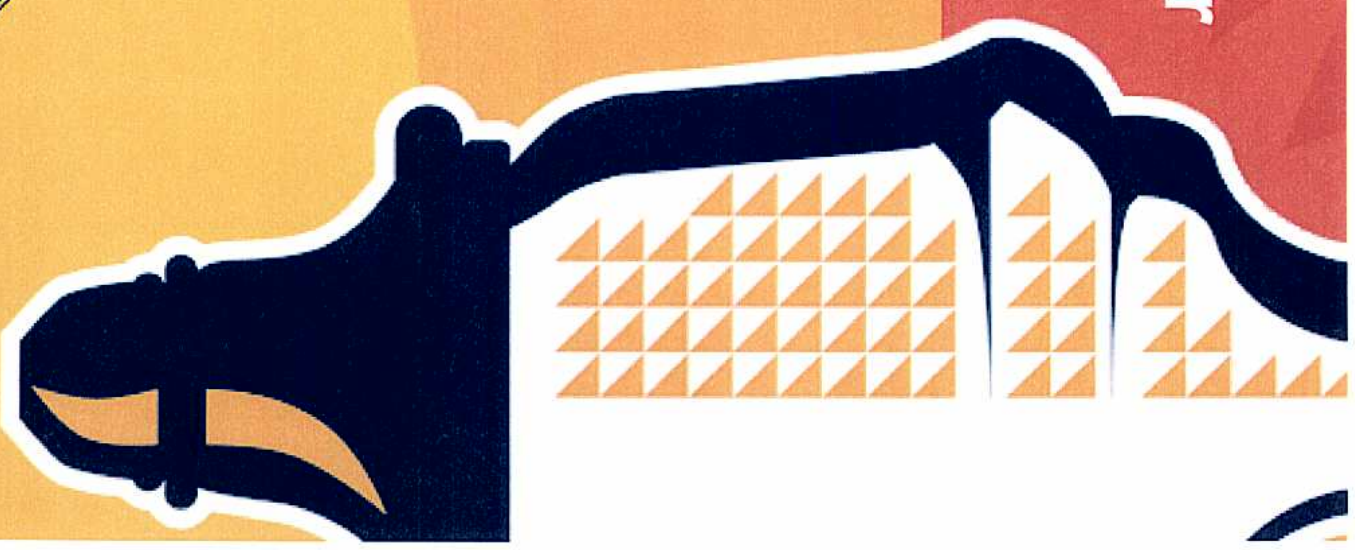
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4. The Arts & Humanities Center of Grand Island

Our Vision:

Activities=People=Traffic=Business

Downtown is the logical place for Grand Island to embrace and show support for the arts.

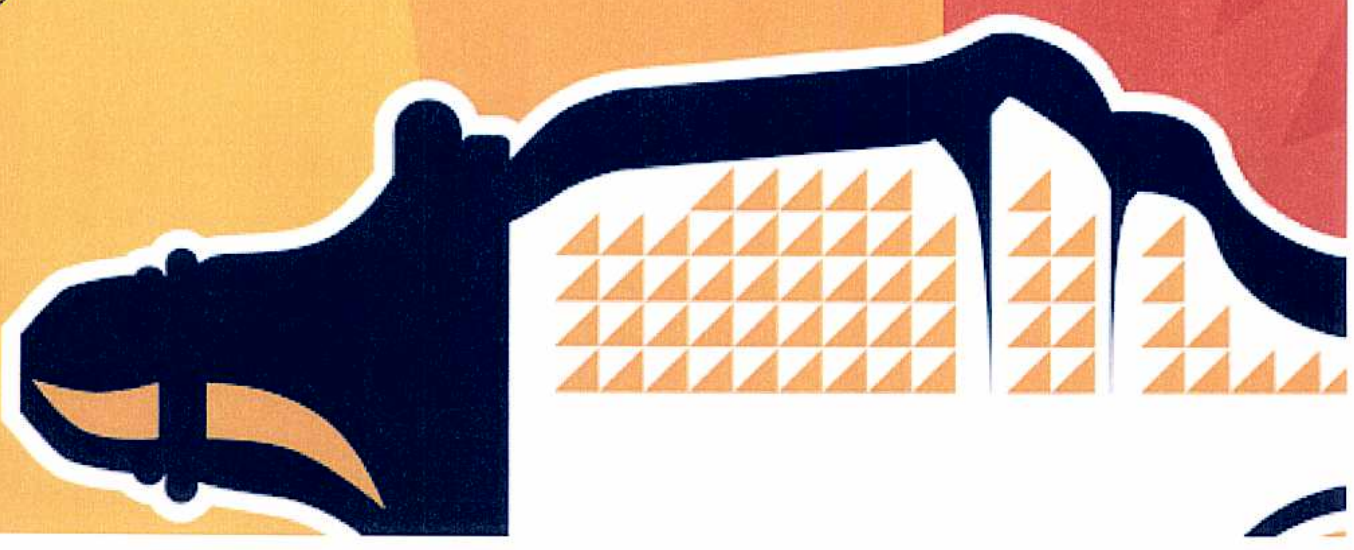


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4a. Arts & Humanities Center: Kaufman-Cummings Park

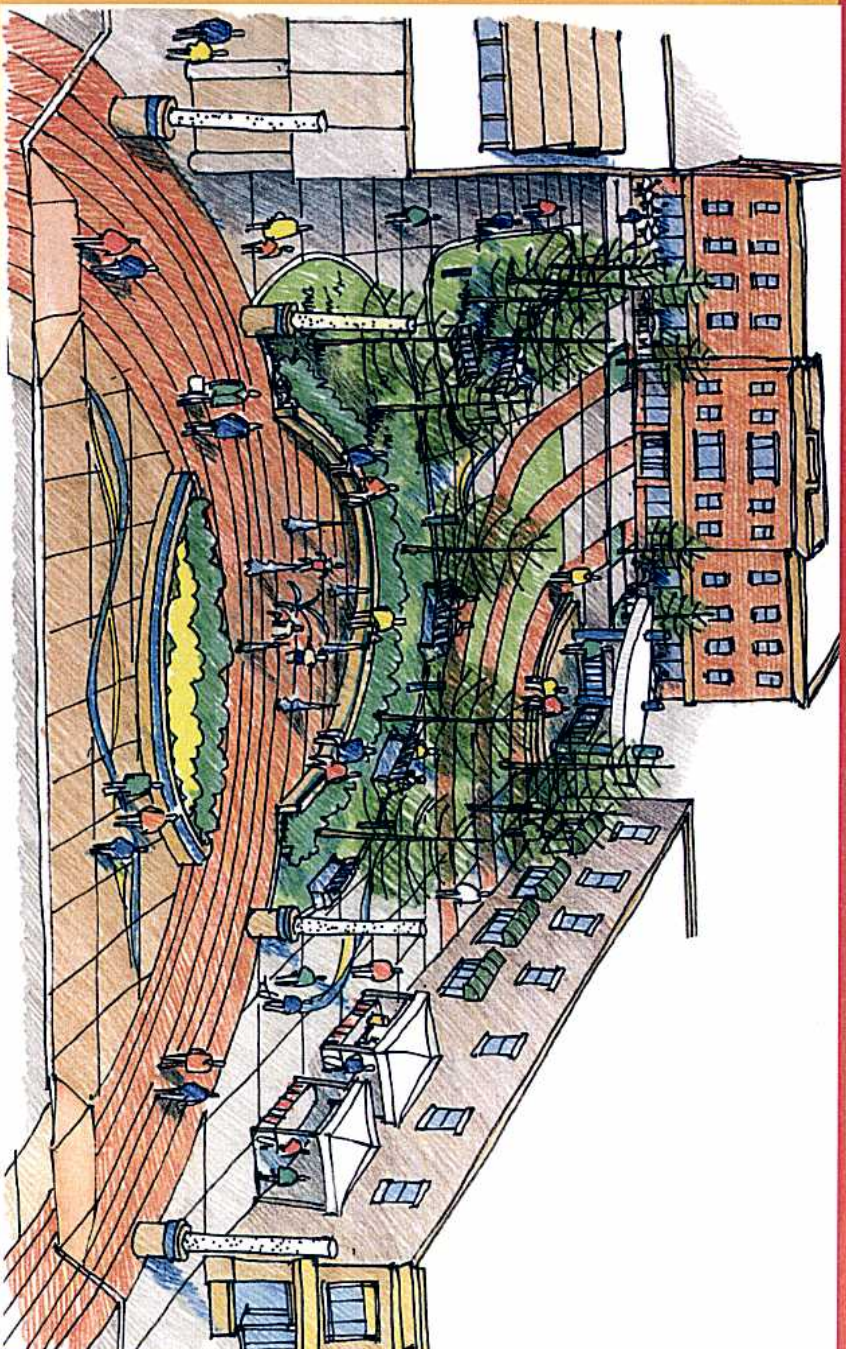
Our Plan:

- Kaufman-Cummings Park needs redevelopment.
- Modest-sized outdoor amphitheatre with performance seating.
- Colorful flags and bollards.
- Add greenspace for Downtown residents and patrons to enjoy.



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4a. Arts & Humanities Center: Harmony Square



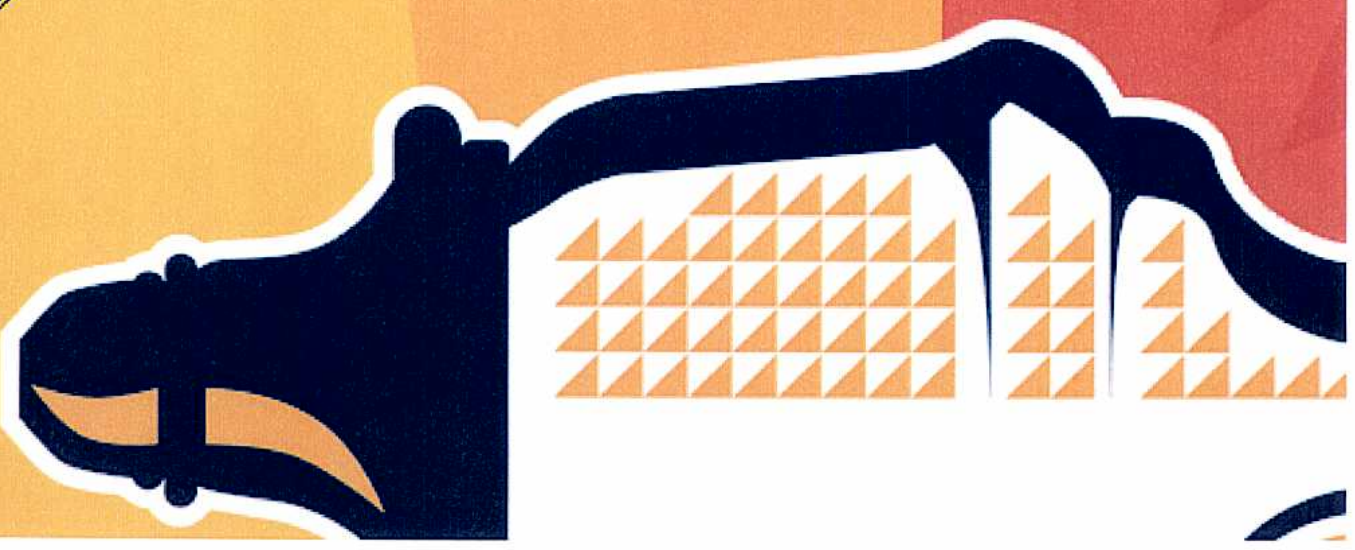
- Proposed Design for Harmony Square
- City not able to provide funding assistance at this time



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4b. Arts & Humanities Center: The Grand Theatre

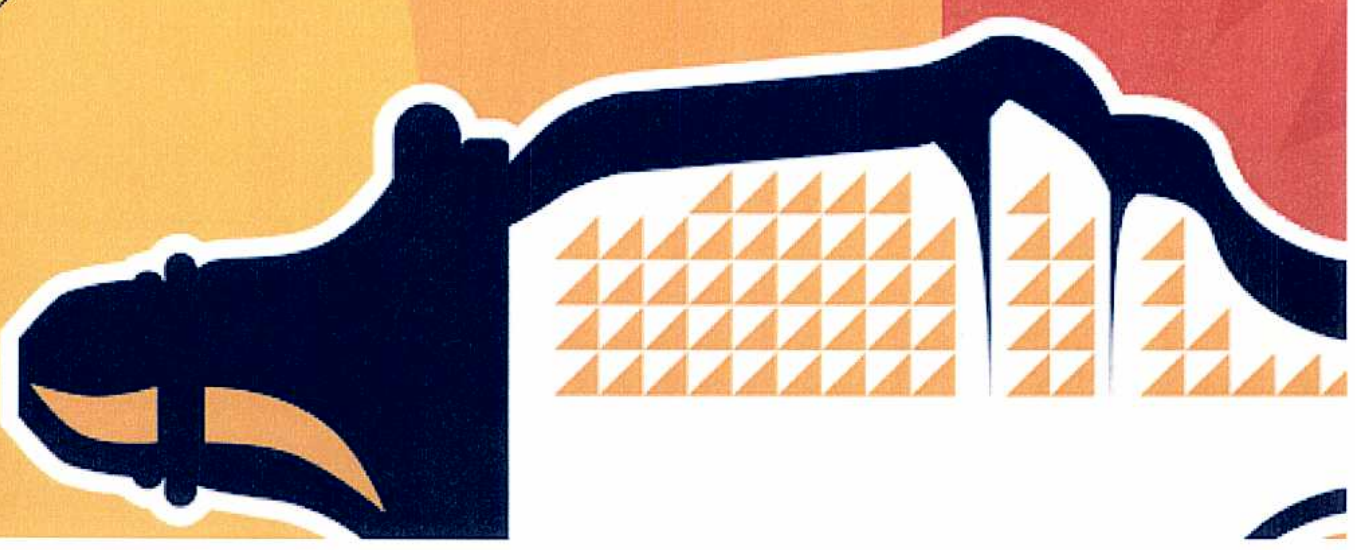
- Re-opened in 1937 as “Nebraska’s Finest & Most Modern Theatre”, The Grand featured the largest neon sign in Grand Island and a façade of colored glass
- 1985 The Grand closed
- 1992-2004 operated by Fridley Theatres
- 2004 The Grand Foundation was formed:
 - Provide arts and entertainment through a variety of programs
 - Preserve the last historical movie palace in Grand Island as a home for film and performing arts
 - 2nd run movies and live entertainment



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4c. Arts & Humanities Center: Prairie Winds Art Center

- A Co-op of 20-24 artists working in a variety of media
- Building was the First National Bank and the first Library in Grand Island
- Building details include birds eye maple flooring and a raised plaster ceiling with 18" cornices
- Features monthly shows, workshops throughout the year,
- Community displays, etc.



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Grand Island and Nebraska Lied Main Street

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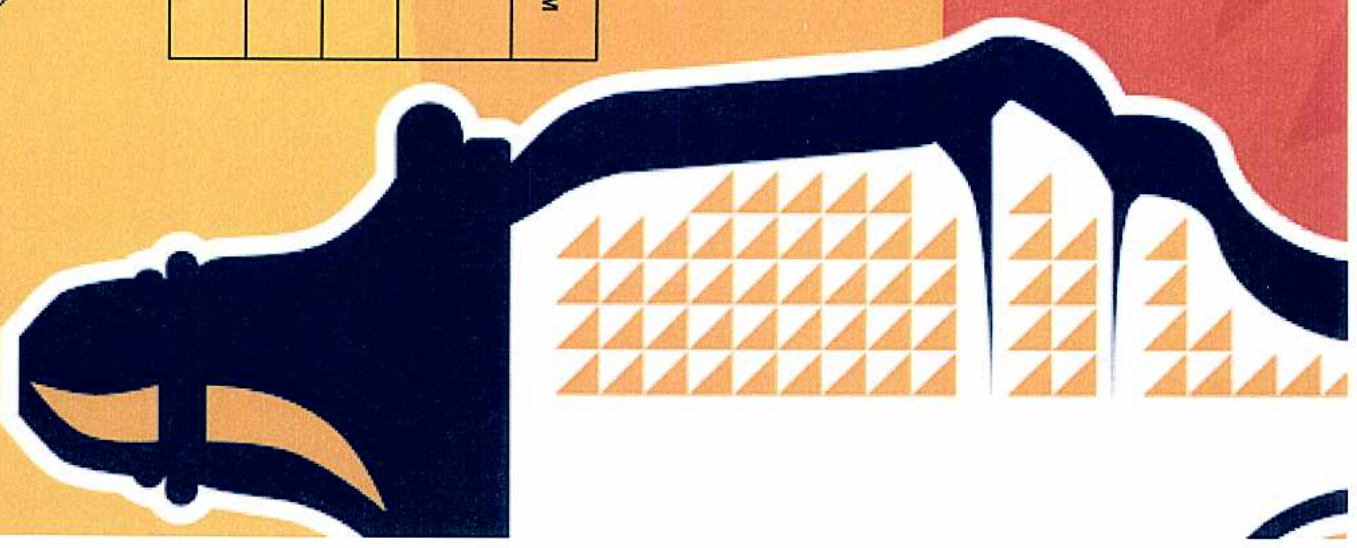
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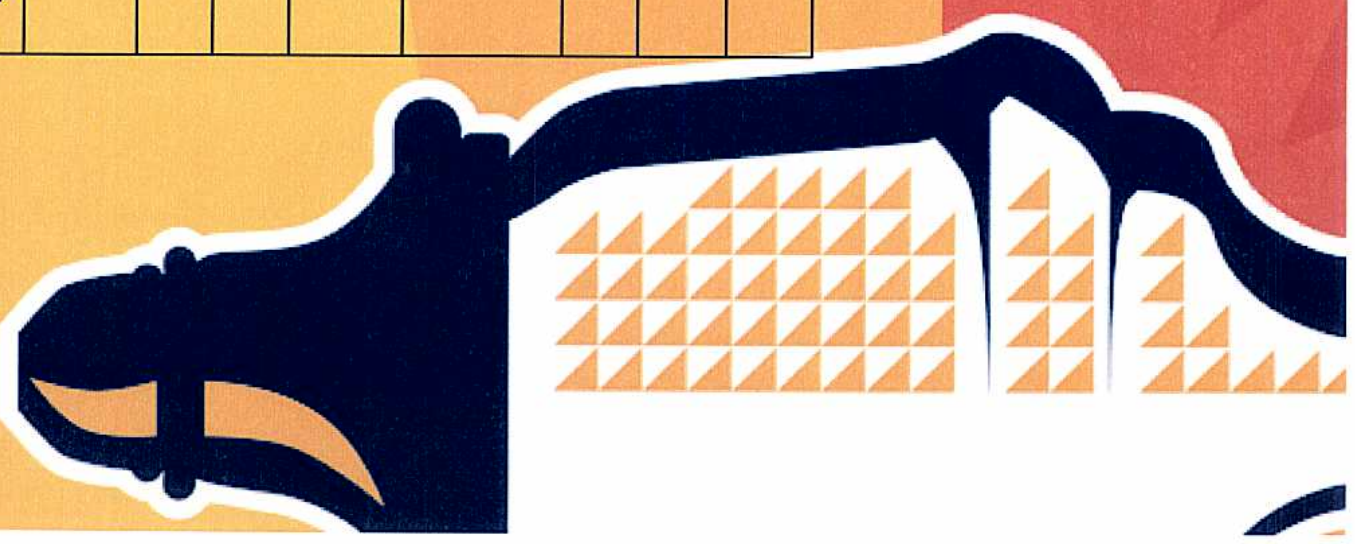
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