




C I T Y O F  
**RENO**  
Memorandum

---

**DATE:** March 17, 2026

**TO:** Mayor and City Council

**THROUGH:** Jackie Bryant, City Manager 

**FROM:** Megan Berner, Arts & Culture Manager

**DEPT:** Public Works

**SUBJECT:** Update on Lear Community Meeting and Survey

---

### **Background**

In September 2025, Council directed staff to work with the Historical Resources Commission (HRC) and Dr. Alicia Barber to conduct community outreach regarding the Lear property and return with recommendations on next steps.

### **Community Engagement**

- **Community Meeting:** January 10, 2026 at McKinley Arts & Culture Center, led by Dr. Alicia Barber, Councilmember Naomi Duerr (Ward 2 and Council Liaison to the HRC), and Arts & Culture staff.
- **Attendance:** 125 in person; 55 online via Zoom. The meeting was recorded and posted on the City's website.
- **Content:** Property history, Historic Structure Report (HSR) findings, stabilization needs, and two conceptual use options.
- **Survey:** January 10–31, 2026; 441 responses, reflecting strong community interest.
- **Community Priorities:** Supporting local arts and culture; preserving historic architectural character; creating a public gathering space; inclusive programming; performing arts.
- **Public Commission Review:** Following the community meeting, public feedback was agendaized and discussed at the January 15, 2026 HRC meeting, providing a second publicly noticed forum for engagement and deliberation.

### **HRC Advisory Recommendations**

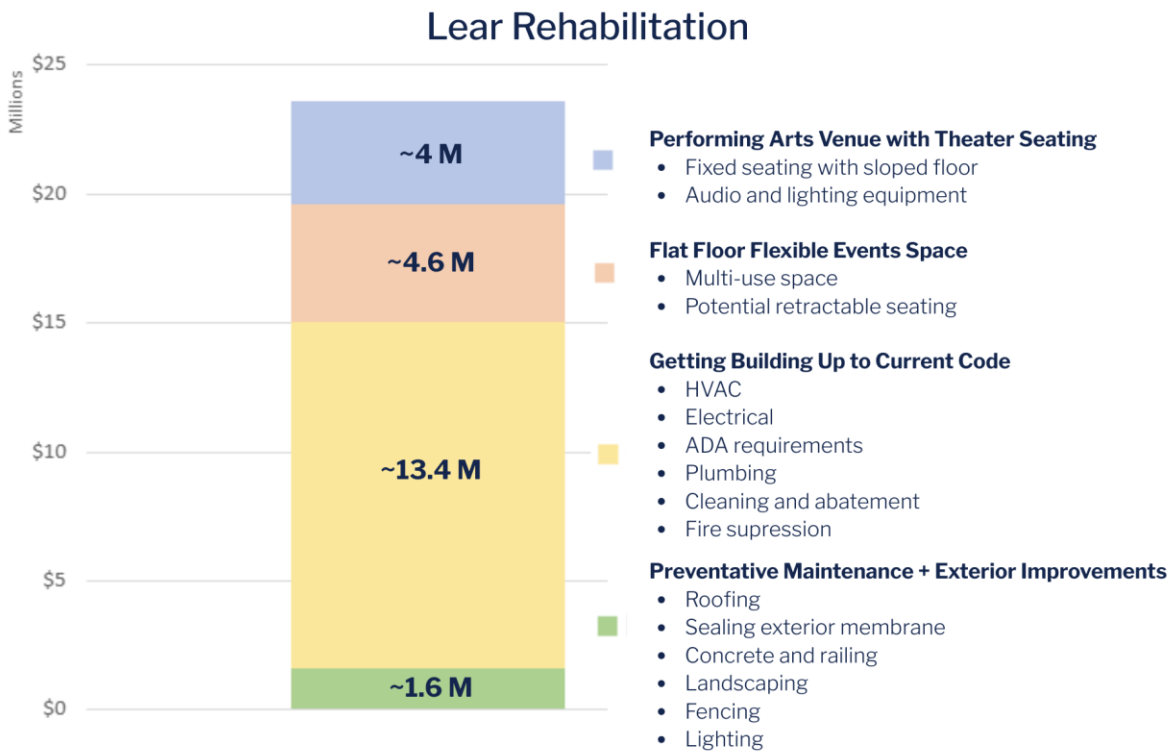
Based on community input and commission discussion, the HRC voted to forward the following advisory recommendations to Council:

1. Prioritize building stabilization and security, including fencing and exterior lighting.
2. Conduct a feasibility study addressing potential uses, market demand, operational and management models, and financing strategies.
3. Support fundraising efforts and allocate funding for stabilization, including potential Redevelopment Agency participation through the budget process.
4. Establish an HRC advisory board or subcommittee for the Lear.
5. Continue community meetings to support ongoing public involvement.

### Preliminary Cost Context (Planning-Level Only)

Provided for scale and context; not funding requests:

- Performing arts venue (theater seating): ~\$22 million
- Flat-floor, flexible events space: ~\$18 million
- Bringing the building open and up to current code: ~\$15 million
- Near-term stabilization and exterior improvements: ~\$1.6 million, including short-term preventative maintenance (~\$600,000), exterior concrete and railing repairs (~\$600,000), fencing (~\$200,000), and landscaping (~\$200,000).



A feasibility study is recommended to refine costs, phasing, funding strategies, and operational models.

### **Risks & Considerations**

- Delaying stabilization may accelerate deterioration, increase long-term costs, and raise safety and liability concerns.
- Historic designation and covenants will guide and limit allowable modifications.
- Long-term operations are anticipated to require partnerships with nonprofit, community, and cultural organizations, to be evaluated through the feasibility study.

### **Next Steps / Council Action**

- April 8, 2026: Council consideration of (1) authorization for near-term stabilization and security improvements, (2) approval to proceed with a feasibility study, and (3) establishment of an HRC advisory board or subcommittee.
- Staff will continue community engagement and provide updates.