FINAL PROJECT REPORT

City of Waukon

Waukon, IA 52172

GRONEN
SOLVE. DEVELOP. BUILD.

Prepared For

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November 2, 2026

City of Waukon – Final Project Report
101 Allamakee St NW
Waukon, IA
Gronen Restoration Project No. 0726

Mr. Mayor, City Council, and City Staff:

It is our pleasure to present to you the final report detailing the condition and possible future of the Waukon City Hall. Gronen has been honored to work with your community for the last 6 months, conducting assessments, studies, analysis, and test fits looking at the options for the future.

The following document details the entire process that Gronen and the Core Committee took to give a final recommendation for next steps. The Core Committee recommendation came from hundreds of hours of study and analysis along with conscious care for this community.

The main question asked of this process was "Can City Hall be saved?". We have found no physical evidence as part of this process that City Hall can not be saved and reused for the City's use. The question that now stands is the willingness and support the community has to complete the work necessary to save it. Included in the recommendation are cost estimates associated with the construction scope necessary for each option. It will ultimately be up to the community if the costs are worth the outcome. The support of the community is always the critical piece that drives projects like this one. We highly encourage this recommendation and report is shared so the community can stay educated and informed on the options that lay before them. From what the Gronen team has seen, this community is one that exemplifies engagement and care. It is those qualities that will ensure a successful outcome.

The Gronen team would like to give a special thanks to our project Core Committee members. This Committee was critical behind the scenes, providing data and feedback throughout the 6 months this work was conducted. Thank you all for your participation, feedback, direction, and commitment to making the City of Waukon a thriving community to be proud of.

Arvid Hatlan	City of Waukon
Grayson Rowlet	City of Waukon
Sarah Snitker	City of Waukon
Lana Snitker	City of Waukon
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Sincerely,

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PART 1

CORE COMMITTEE RECOMMENDATION

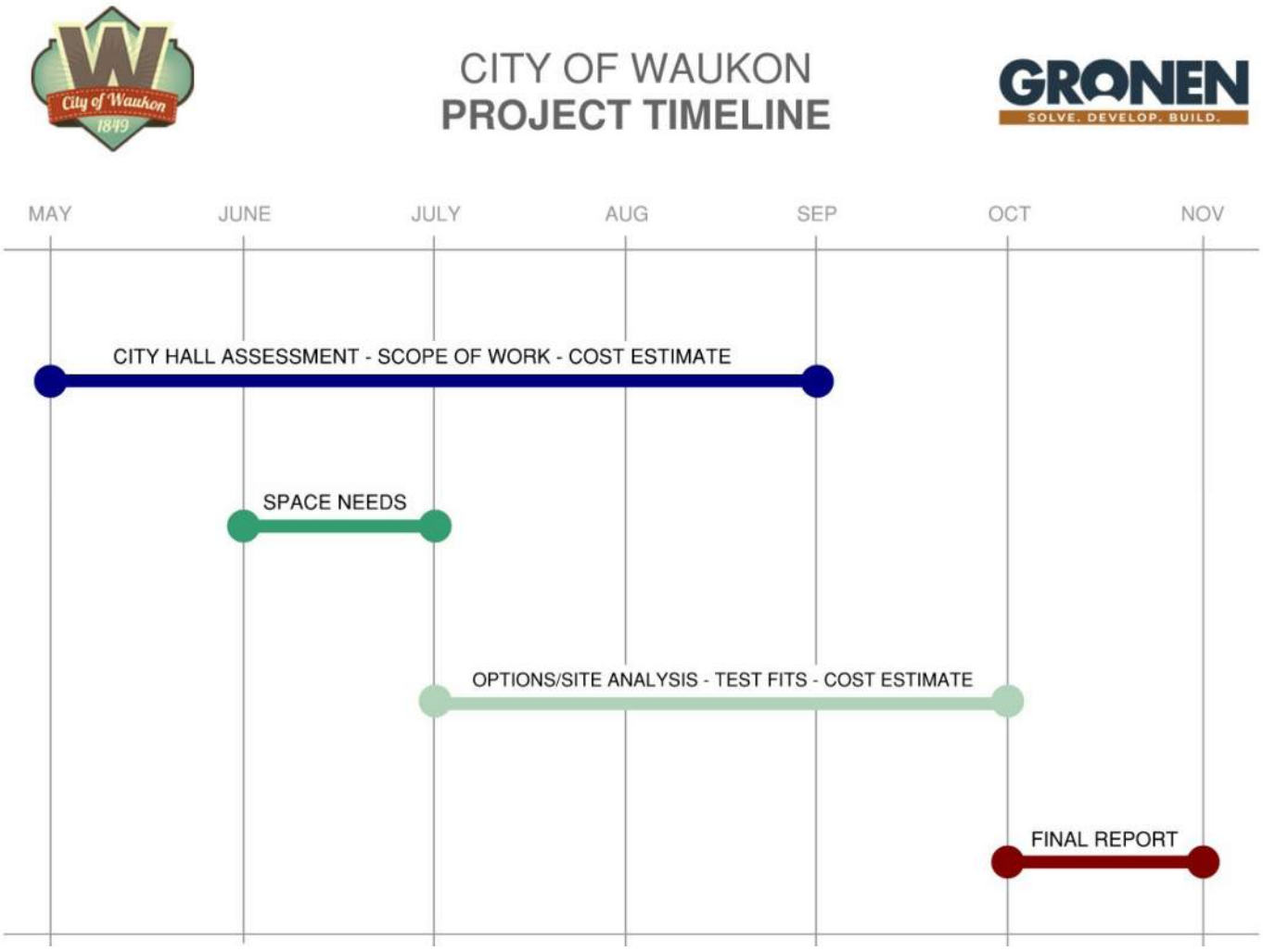
1.1 BACKGROUND

The Waukon City Council hired Gronen in February of 2026 to complete a series of analysis and studies relating to the City Hall building, as well as the City Hall, Streets, and Parks & Rec departments. The goal of this project was to determine the future of City Hall and the best future space and location for the three departments studied.

The Core Committee was formed with key City employees, elected officials, and partners to act as the working group throughout this process. Updates and meetings were held with this group at least twice a month for the entirety of the project.

The Core Committee has been tasked with providing guidance to City Council on the best path forward following this work's completion. The Core Committee has been intimately involved in the work of the last 6 months and has become very familiar with all aspects of this report.

At our October 5th 2026 meeting, the Core Committee agreed to make the recommendation to City Council outlined in the following pages.



1.2 PROCESS

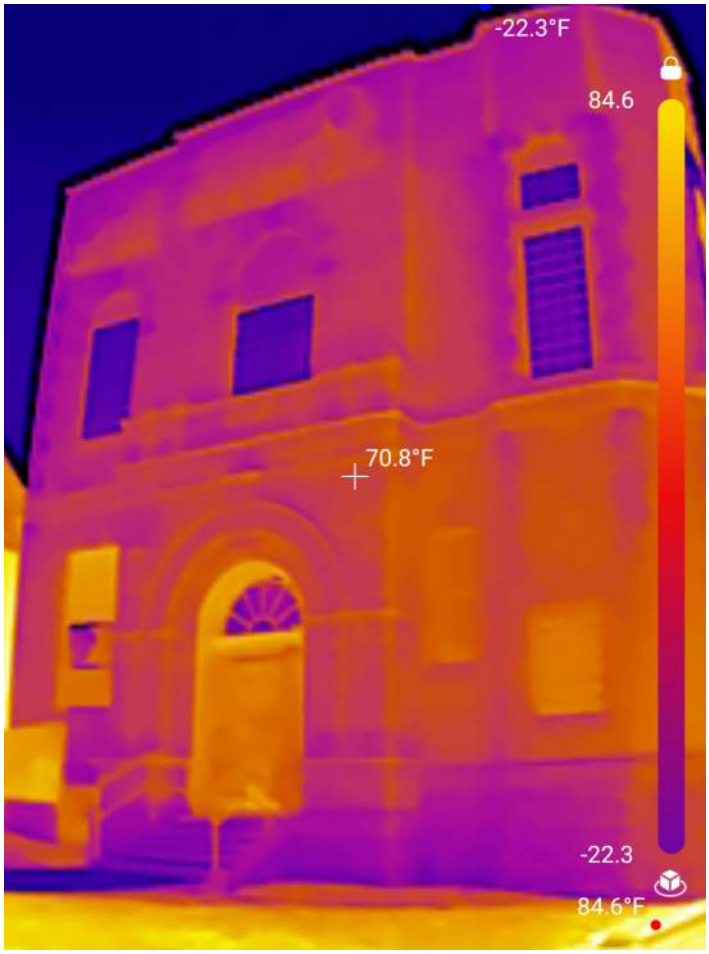
Gronen conducted multiple site visits in which visual inspections, LiDAR scanning, and selective demolition was employed to determine the conditions of the building. After the assessment was complete, a scope of work was created outlining the work necessary to bring the existing building back to a safe, usable, and modern facility. Multiple options for reuse of the existing building were studied. Cost estimating followed, utilizing the assessment and scope of work.

In tandem with the existing City Hall studies, the project team also analyzed other sites in the City to house the City Hall, Streets, and Parks & Rec departments. All options studied were also estimated based on the test fit drawings created.

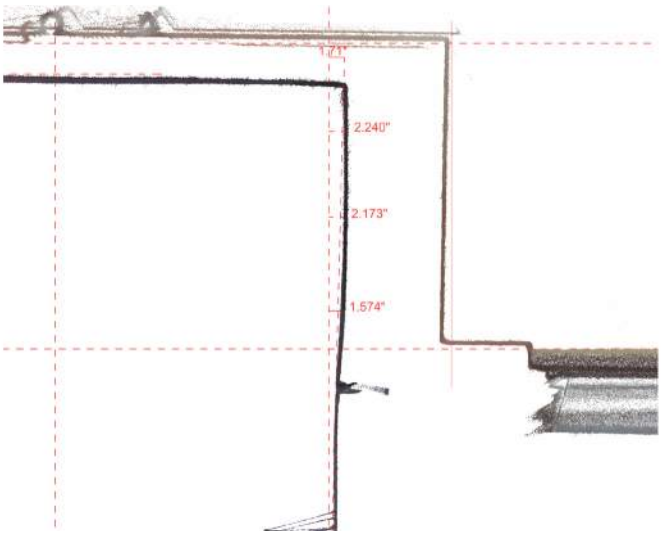
Following the cost estimate process on the existing City Hall building, Gronen's internal development team discussed options regarding sale and private development of the building. Under private or non-profit ownership, there are clear paths towards applying for outside funding sources, including historic tax credits.

In our analysis, the cost per square foot and future reuse scenarios for a private development would not be financially feasible. Included in this analysis was the donation or sale for $1 of the existing building to a theoretical reuse entity. After sharing this information with the Core Committee, it was determined that the sale of the existing City Hall building or land would not be recommended. Multiple Committee members reiterated "City Hall should stay at City Hall".

Ultimately the Core Committee reviewed the options in tandem with the costs and have come to two recommendations for City Council to consider.



▲ *Example of the thermal imaging taken of the existing City Hall building.*



▼ *Example of the LiDAR scanning technology used to analyze the crack and twist of the shaft on the south side of the building.*

1.3 OPTION 1: RESTORATION

Multiple restoration options were studied, but the Committee chose an option that best suited the use of the City Hall department and maximizes the historic integrity of the existing 1902 building.

This option includes the full restoration of the 1902 building which would, in turn, house the office space for the City Hall department as well as City Council chambers in its previous location. The office spaces would be split between the financial department, including utility billing and payroll, located in the lower level, and the City Manager's, City Clerk's, and Finance Director's offices on the 2nd floor.

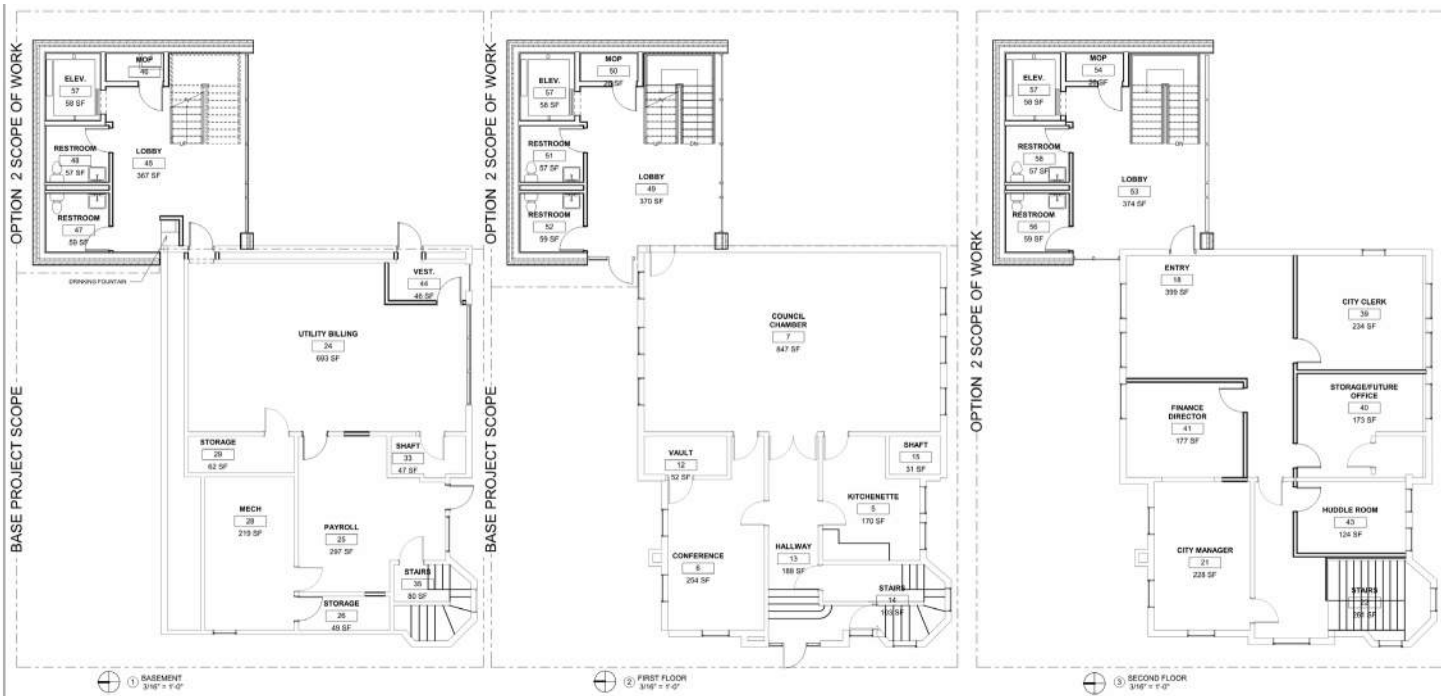
This plan also includes the deconstruction of the 1970s addition to the east of the 1902 building. With the restoration of the 1902, building space was no longer necessary in the 1970s addition, therefore creating both an operations and capital burden on the project maintaining the full footprint of the existing addition.

In place of the existing addition, a circulation addition would be added as a new construction element of this plan. Included in this space are restrooms, an elevator, and a new staircase to comply with modern codes and accessibility requirements. Parking off the street would also be added and allow residents to directly access the utility billing and payroll offices on the lower level.

Restoration of the 1902 building would include removing the existing low-slope roof and the brick additions on the north, west, and south elevations. A new roof would be constructed to match the building's historic appearance, as shown in early photographs, while improving the structural stability of the existing interior and exterior walls.

Ultimately this option was more financially feasible than an option that fully restored the existing building as is. The Committee felt that this was the best of the restoration options and submits it here for the City Council and community review.

The total construction estimate for this option is $3,737,000



▲ *Conceptual floor plans of the existing City Hall building (plan South) and new circulation addition (plan North)*

1.4 OPTION 2: DECONSTRUCTION

It was important to the Core Committee that City Hall be located in the current location of City Hall. Though other options were explored this was a clear recommendation from the Core Committee.

As an alternative to restoring the existing building, deconstruction offers an opportunity to preserve and reuse materials from the historic structure in new construction. Unlike traditional demolition, which typically sends building materials to a landfill or waste facility, deconstruction involves carefully removing, cleaning, and storing materials for potential reuse.

While deconstruction requires more labor than traditional demolition, salvaged materials may help offset some new construction costs. Reusing materials from the original building also provides a meaningful connection to Waukon's history, allowing elements of the existing City Hall to become part of its next chapter.

The second option chosen by the Core Committee explores what a new construction City Hall department looks like on the existing City Hall site after a deconstruction process of the existing building. This option allows for a more modern, efficient, and safe layout for the City Hall department, as well as reducing costs for the project.

All of the City Hall functions would be on a single story without the need for stairs or an elevator. The site allows for potential mechanical space or storage space below the main floor on the east side of the building. Aesthetically, the building can be designed to complement the existing buildings surrounding, while also paying homage to the historic building through its material use and detailing.

Though this does not save the existing 1902 building, it was chosen by the Core Committee to be an acceptable alternative for consideration to City Council and the community at large.

The total construction estimate for this option is $1,958,750 - $2,233,640.

▲ *Conceptual site plan showing a new construction floor plan on the existing City Hall site*

1.5 STREETS AND PARKS & REC DEPARTMENT RECOMMENDATION

After studying the possibility and efficiency of a joint facility with the Streets and Parks & Rec departments, it was determined that moving City Hall to a site, like that of the site to the east of the fire station, would not be ideal.

The Core Committee is recommending further study of these departments and their needs in order to find a clearer path forward. It is recommended that this subject be tabled until after the City Hall project has been decided. In the intermittent time, it is also recommended that on-going expenses related to travel time, rents, and any on going or recurring expenses be tracked to better understand the cost/benefit of a new facility.

1.6 NEXT STEPS

The Core Committee felt it was critical to present both options in its recommendation, allowing the City Council and community to make a fully informed decision. While many Committee members have heard significant support for preserving City Hall, the financial implications must also be carefully considered. Ultimately, the Committee believes the final decision should rest with the community.

It is recommended by the Core Committee that an open public survey be released to gauge the support for the two options recommended above with full transparency regarding how these options were recommended. Information regarding tax implications to the community should also be included in the survey content.

It is the Core Committee's understanding that it is likely this project will need a public referendum in order to have the funding necessary to support the work. It is for this reason the Committee felt it was critical to engage the community to determine the best path forward.