

URBAN DESIGN COMMITTEE

The Urban Design Committee will hold a meeting on **Tuesday, October 07, 2025**, at **3:00 p.m.** in the County-City Building, 555 S. 10th Street, Lincoln, Nebraska in **City Council Chambers** on the 1st floor. For more information, contact the Planning Department at 402-441-7491.

AGENDA

1. Approval of UDC meeting record of [September 02, 2025](#).

ADVISE

2. [Relocation of Gas Meters at Walgreens – 13th and O St. -UDR25099](#) – *Advisory Review & Final Action*
3. [Tallgrass Development Façade Improvement – University Garage Parking Building -UDR25088](#) – *Advisory Review & Final Action*

Urban Design Committee's agendas may be accessed on the Internet at
<https://www.lincoln.ne.gov/City/Departments/Planning-Department/Boards-and-Commissions/Urban-Design-Committee>

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URBAN DESIGN COMMITTEE MEMO

APPLICATION NUMBER Urban Design Record #UDR25099

APPLICATION TYPE Advisory review & Final Action

ADDRESS/LOCATION Relocation of Gas Meters in front of Walgreens at 13th and O St.

HEARING DATE October 07, 2025

ADDITIONAL MEETINGS -

APPLICANT Kris McCoy, kris.mccoy@blackhillscorp.com

STAFF CONTACT Arvind Gopalakrishnan, 402-441-6361, agopalakrishnan@lincoln.ne.gov

RECOMMENDATION: CONDITIONAL APPROVAL

Black Hills Energy (BHE) is proposing to relocate gas meters currently located inside buildings to the exterior along O Street. Two immediate locations under consideration are:

- In front of Walgreens at 13th and O Street
- In front of Abloom on the south side of O Street (Not submitted at the moment)

The current indoor placement requires BHE to rely on property owners for access, which poses safety concerns during emergencies and complicates timely maintenance. Moving meters outside will ensure quick access and improved safety. BHE anticipates relocating additional Downtown meters, so impacts to urban design and the pedestrian environment will continue across Downtown. Coordinating with the City on this effort is especially important considering the upcoming streetscape improvements as part of **Project O Street**.

Proposed Options for Equipment Placement

BHE has provided three options for equipment on the sidewalks abutting buildings:

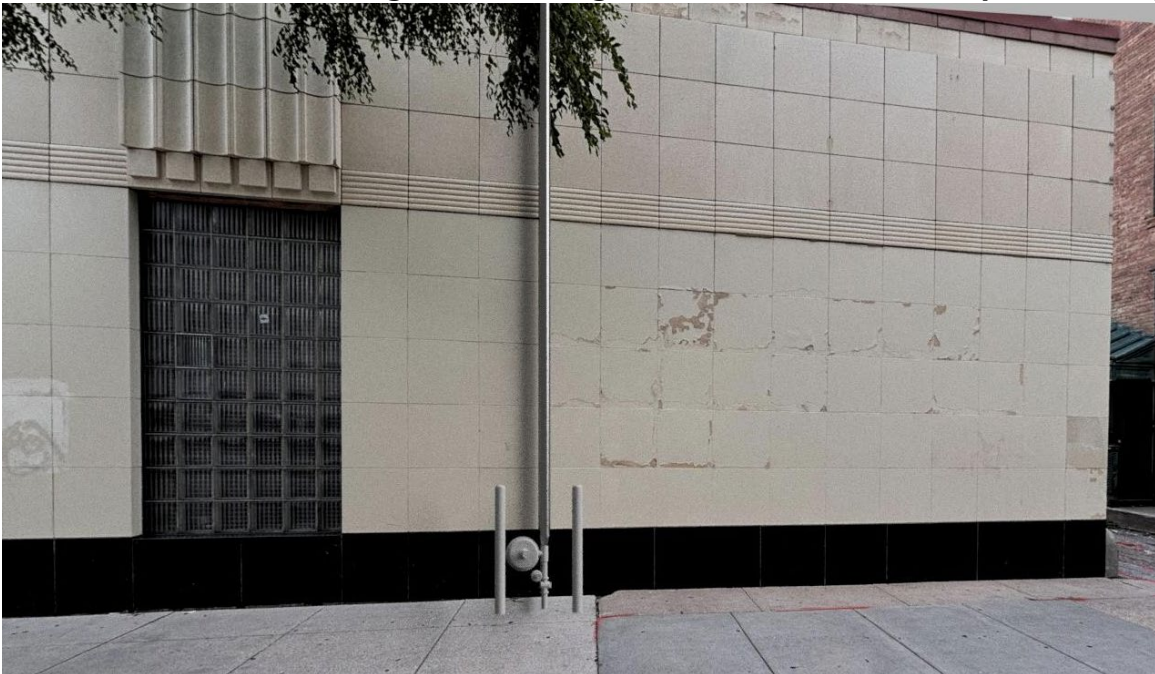
1. **Meters with no screen**



2. **Meters with a perforated screen along the front, open on the sides**



3. **Meters inside the building, with the regulator and riser outside (no covering)**



City Staff Preference

City staff supports **Option 3** as the preferred approach, as it limits visual impact on the streetscape by only requiring the regulator and the riser to be outside, rather than multiple

exposed meters. However, staff are requesting additional design input from UDC members with considerations given to ways that the visual impact can be minimized.

Considerations for Input from the Urban Design Committee.

- **Urban Design & Streetscape Impact:** Utility equipment in front of buildings will have a significant physical and visual effect on mixed-use and commercial districts.
- **Absence of Standards:** There are currently no specific regulations addressing utilities at the street level in these districts. The UDC's input is therefore critical in developing consistent approaches and making practical and meaningful design choices.
- **Alternative Placements:** Not all meters will be placed in front of the buildings. In some cases, they may be placed in the alleys for safety and to avoid interference with pedestrian movement.
- **Mitigation Measures:** Where meters are located on the sidewalks in front of the buildings, staff recommends:
 - Reducing the amount of exposed equipment.
 - Painting equipment to match the building façade.
 - Exploring public art treatments to integrate equipment visually and add interest to the pedestrian environment.
 - Considering screening treatment when equipment is on the main façade of a building versus the side or other location.
 - Historic districts and Capitol Environs areas should require greater screening or concealing standards.

Next Steps

BHE is working across Downtown and other mixed-use and older commercial districts, and similar situations concerning exposed gas meters will continue to arise. City staff have so far been coordinating with BHE on ways to review and plan for the screening of equipment in other sensitive areas. Planning staff have provided BHE with GIS shapefiles of sensitive areas requiring additional review and are also receiving notice when BHE requests permits for work done on a yearly basis. While each case may require a tailored solution, staff requests the committee's advice on:

- Appropriateness of Option 3 adjacent to Walgreens;
- Consideration of general standards moving forward; and,
- Additional strategies for mitigating the visual and functional impacts of utility equipment in high pedestrian-traffic areas.

URBAN DESIGN COMMITTEE

APPLICATION NUMBER	Urban Design Record #UDR25088
APPLICATION TYPE	Advisory review
ADDRESS/LOCATION	Tallgrass Development Façade Improvements (101 N 14 th St)
HEARING DATE	October 07, 2025
ADDITIONAL MEETINGS	-
APPLICANT	Gill Peace, gill@peacestudioarch.com
STAFF CONTACT	Arvind Gopalakrishnan, 402-441-6361, agopalakrishnan@lincoln.ne.gov

RECOMMENDATION: CONDITIONAL APPROVAL

Background

This project represents a distinctive urban infill development on the footprint of a former bank drive-thru, located on the street level of the University Parking Garage on the west side of 14th St, between O St and P St. It aims to transform an inactive sidewalk and streetscape into a pedestrian-oriented environment through the introduction of a storefront building designed to support outdoor dining and window shopping.

The 4,600-square-foot development will contribute to the growing vibrancy of the downtown music district along 14th Street between O and P Streets, an area anchored by the landmark Zoo Bar. Situated in the heart of Downtown Lincoln and in proximity to the UNL campus, the project is envisioned as a modern, welcoming addition that enhances the character and liveliness of the urban environment.

The University Garage includes five parcels on the first floor of the building fronting 14th Street, in addition to the entry and exit driveways into the parking garage. City staff are working closely with all property owners and their design teams to ensure that all proposed façade improvements result in a cohesive and unified building appearance.

Summary of Tallgrass Request

At this time, Tallgrass has come forward with a façade improvement proposal and is seeking input on materials, color palette, and its overall interaction with the streetscape. The visuals included in this report do not reflect the most recent plans for 14th Street streetscape improvements; those updates will be incorporated in future presentations.



The purpose of today’s proposal is to **obtain preliminary feedback** on design elements—specifically materials, colors, and extent of improvements. At the same time, the applicant is requesting final approval on the addition of a façade, with some flexibility for refinement. This approach will allow Tallgrass sufficient time to prepare construction drawings and coordinate foundation work in alignment with the Music District’s construction schedule in March 2026.

Tallgrass also owns a mezzanine-level portion of the building above the main floor, corresponding to the three windows visible on the façade. Their proposed gray slate material extends to this level to visually connect both stories.



The City is working with Peace Studio Architects to refine this design; specifically, by exploring lighter upper-level treatments that better complement the parking garage façade and by removing the glass panel above the slate wall. The intent is to achieve a

more cohesive appearance rather than a treatment that is visually contrasting to the overall building composition. Additionally, the proposed glass panel occupies space not owned by Tallgrass.

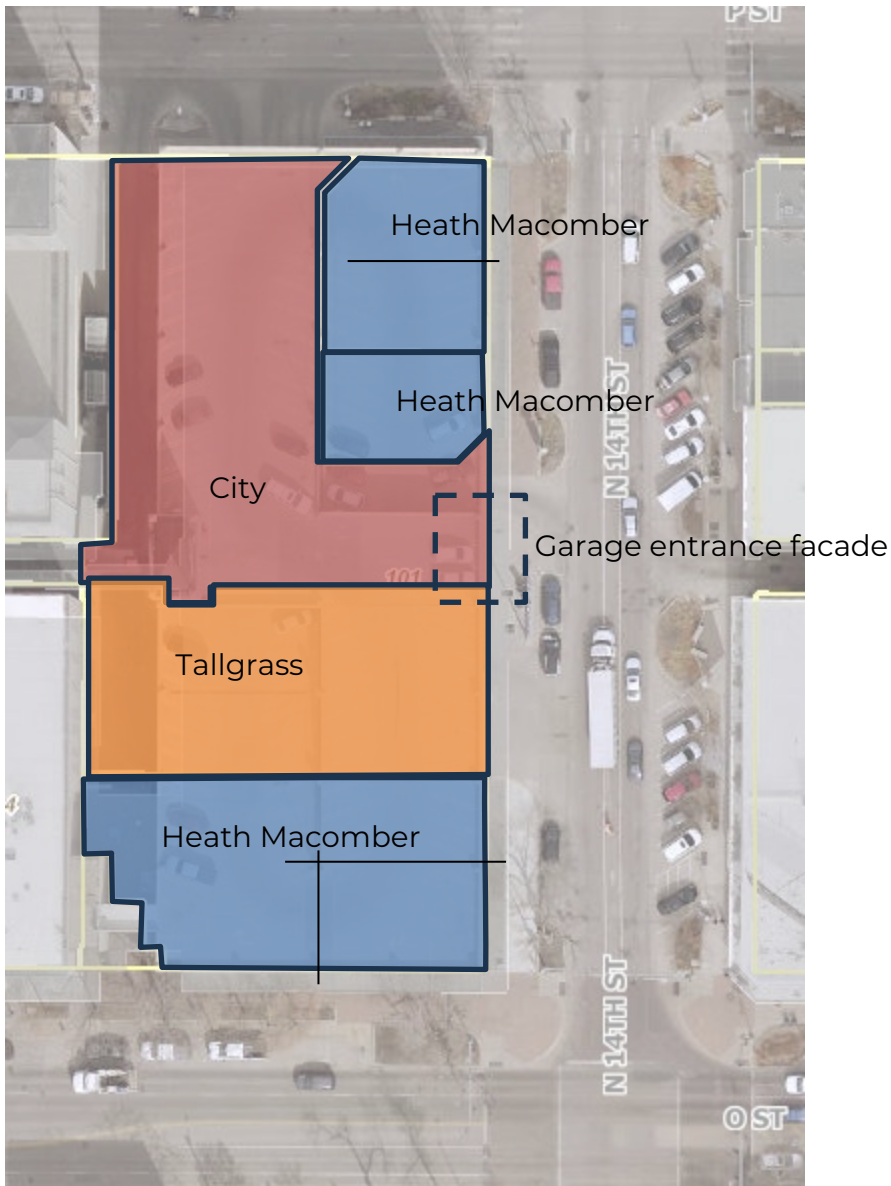


Design Advice on Remaining Storefronts

The City is coordinating material selections across all commercial units within the building to ensure cohesion. This includes consideration of pedestrian and vehicular access to the parking garage, the visual impact of each storefront, and the relationship of the facades with each other and to the overall streetscape. Our collective aim is to balance consistency across the building with thoughtful differentiation, ensuring that the overall design contributes positively to the streetscape.

The attached visuals were developed from conceptual designs submitted by:

- **Peace Studio Architects** (Tallgrass façade) – *ownership shown in orange*
- **HDR** (parking garage entrance) – *location shown as a dotted line box*
- **Heath Macomber** (remaining five commercial units) – *ownership shown in blue*



To create a consistent streetscape, staff explored an off-white full-brick façade for the other commercial units (Jimmy John’s, 1867 Bar, Lincoln Jewelry, Beercade Jr., and Jake’s Cigar). Alternatives reviewed included red brick, off-white brick, and a red/off-white combination, with off-white brick appearing to be the most cohesive.

However, staff also recognizes the value of introducing materials within a similar color palette that add some differentiation. Varying materials, textures, and signage between tenant bays could reinforce the identity of the Music District, where creativity and individuality are important. Some examples can be seen across the street, where buildings have clear differentiation, yet maintain an overall visual balance, though at a different scale.



To further highlight the Music District character, additional strategies may include:

- **Neon and illuminated signage**, drawing inspiration from active music destinations such as Broadway Street in Nashville or Bourbon Street in New Orleans.



Broadway Street, Nashville.



- **Public art opportunities** on walls above the canopy to encourage visual interest beyond the ground floor.

Le Mignonisme, Quebec





Clown heads, Boston

- Use of **distinct materials or accents** for individual storefronts, while keeping a complementary palette across the building.



The concepts explored to date are attached below, and staff seeks input on whether to prioritize a more uniform brick treatment or to encourage greater variety, creativity, and artistic expression in the façade and signage design.

Committee input on this recommendation is requested.

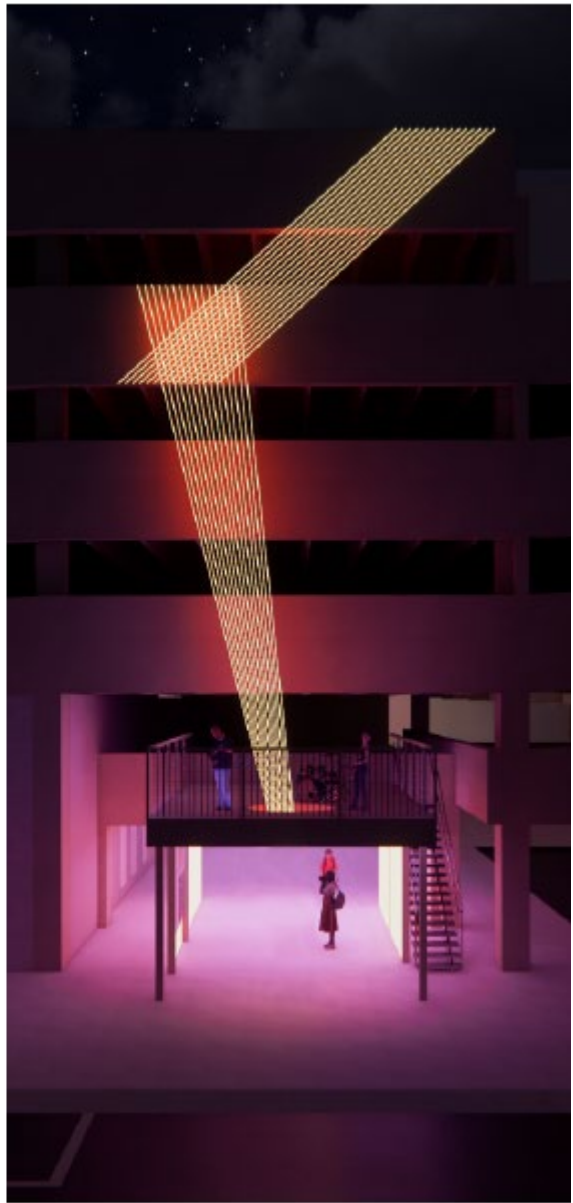




In parallel, City staff are also coordinating with DLA and HDR on enhancements to the University Garage itself. These include the potential addition of

- a mezzanine-level balcony for public use along 14th St,
- tensile elements, and
- exterior-rated string-like LED luminaires extending from the balcony to the building's top to enhance the building's elevation.

These lighting elements provide both general illumination and opportunities for accent color and signage/artwork integration.



In addition to façade improvements, the businesses are open to enhancing signage. As a replacement for the current signage, which is largely obscured by the continuous canopy, staff recommends illuminated blade signs mounted perpendicular to the storefronts. This approach would improve pedestrian visibility while complementing the canopy along the building's south and north ends.



The overall intent is to achieve a cohesive façade through consistent material use, while introducing visual interest and vibrancy through lighting and signage.

At this stage, we are asking for a vote only on the Tallgrass façade proposal. However, we also seek committee feedback on the following items:

1. Tallgrass Façade:

Is the proposed design approach generally supported?

Consider and comment on the selection of materials, colors, transparency, and relationship to the street. Approval by UDC is requested in order for Tallgrass to proceed with designing and constructing footings.

2. Other storefronts

- Do the proposed materials and colors create a cohesive streetscape?
- Are there recommendations for alternative materials or colors?
- Do you think the proposed treatments successfully tie into the overall building and streetscape?
- Consider design strategies to ensure all storefront designs feel coordinated, while maintaining appropriate distinction.

3. Canopy and Signage

- Input on replacing the continuous canopy extension with a more contemporary façade treatment for Tallgrass (as proposed by Peace Studio Architects).
- Feedback on the potential use of three-dimensional letter signs mounted directly on the canopy instead of the wall above.
- Feedback on illuminated blade signs (perpendicular to storefronts) to improve pedestrian visibility and coordinate with the canopy.

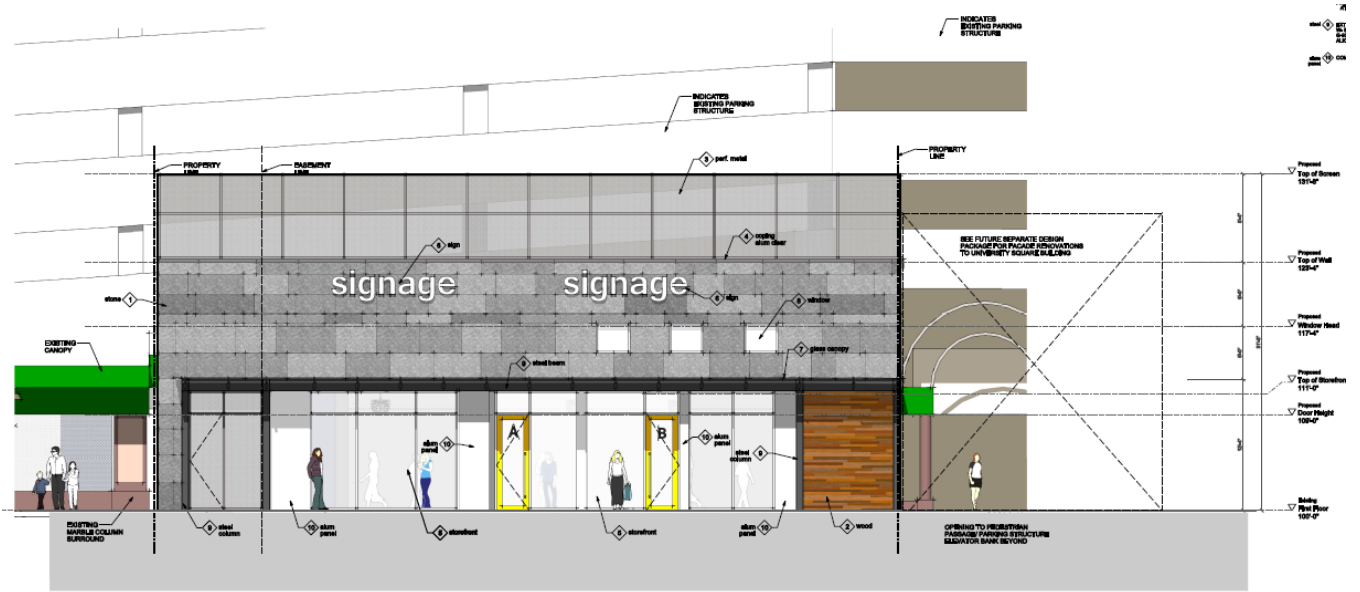
4. Overall

- Broader advice on the use of brick facades, exterior lighting, and illuminated signage to enhance pedestrian interaction and create a unified, exemplary design.

More visuals are included in the attachment for further review.

ATTACHMENT B

Tallgrass proposal – Peace Studio Architects



Parking Garage entrance proposal – HDR





CANOPY: STRUCTURE AND TREATMENT

Complete look of the building – Planning Dept.

Option 1. Red Brick.



Option 2. Off-white Brick.



Option 3. Mixed-Brick.

