

CITY OF  
**HERMISTON**

2024 City Council Retreat



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# INTRODUCTION

The City of Hermiston Council and management team gathered on January 25-26, 2024, for their annual Council Retreat. This retreat serves as an important opportunity for City leaders to engage in comprehensive discussion aimed at setting realistic goals aligned with community needs and opportunities, Hermiston's 2040 Vision, and the resources and capacities of City staff.

The retreat offers a unique environment conducive to fostering collaboration and open dialogue amongst Council members and staff. It allows the team to step away from the day-to-day responsibilities and engage in substantive conversations focused on the City's long-term vision and the strategic actions required to bring that shared vision to life. Furthermore, the retreat offers the opportunity for Council and staff to engage directly with one another share input and insights to develop a deeper understanding of the challenges and opportunities facing the community and organization. In this way, Council can harness the collective expertise and perspectives to identify realistic goals that are both aspirational and obtainable.

The City hired SSW Consulting, professional strategic planning and facilitation consultants, to guide the process for the retreat and goal setting. In preparation for the retreat, SSW conducted outreach with Council and staff to gather input on challenges and opportunities facing the organization and community. Informed by the results of the outreach, SSW partnered with staff to develop an agenda designed to achieve the following shared outcomes:

- Collectively tell the history of Hermiston to review past successes and challenges in order to harvest learning for the future;
- Develop a shared understanding of the current context of the organization and community to inform the goal refinement process;
- Refine City Council goals and objectives to guide the work of the organization, and;
- Build a strong and unified team among the Council and with staff to advance the goals.

The team engaged in collaborative exercises to develop a thorough assessment of the City's shared history and current environment to identify key learnings from past experiences and develop a shared understanding of the existing community landscape. Using this assessment as a shared foundation, the team discussed how to leverage the City's strengths to achieve future success in serving the Hermiston community for years to come.

The resulting 2024 Council Goals reflect a shared commitment of Council and staff to serve all community members in Hermiston to the best of their ability. As staff works to implement the goals over the coming year, they will provide regular progress updates to Council to support transparency and accountability to the Hermiston community.

# HERMISTON TEAM

## City Council

Mayor Dr. David A. Drotzmann  
Jackie M. Linton, Ward 1  
Roy N. Barron, Ward 2  
Jackie C. Meyers, Ward 3  
David P. McCarthy, Ward 4  
Maria E. Duron, At Large  
Rod S. Hardin, At Large  
Nancy R. Peterson, At Large  
Doug Primmer, At Large, Council President

## City Team

Byron D. Smith, City Manager  
Mark Morgan, Assistant City Manager  
Lilly Alarcon-Strong, City Recorder  
Brandon Artz, Parks + Recreation Director  
Al Davis, EOTEC General Manager  
Jason Edmiston, Police Chief  
Crystal Inners, Human Resource Specialist  
Nate Rivera, Hermiston Energy Services Manager  
Mark Rose, Library Director  
Clint Spencer, Planning Director  
Jordan Standley, IT Director  
Richard Tovey, City Attorney  
Jillian Viles, Court Administrator



Mayor Drotzmann



Councilor Linton  
Ward 1



Councilor Barron  
Ward 2



Councilor Meyers  
Ward 3



Councilor McCarthy  
Ward 4



Councilor Peterson  
At Large



Councilor Primmer  
Council President  
At Large



Councilor Hardin  
At Large



Councilor Duron  
At Large



# HERMISTON 2040 VISION + CORE VALUES

In 2022, the City Council adopted the Hermiston 2040 Vision and Action Plan to guide the City in making strategic decisions and allocating resources to address the current and future needs of the community over the next twenty years. The 2040 Vision is a result of broad engagement with the community and organization to identify priorities and develop specific strategies to achieve shared goals. The 2024 Council goals are designed to align with the 2040 Vision statement, goals areas, and guiding values.

## HERMISTON VISION

A Community where friendliness and opportunity abound.



## HERMISTON 2040 VISION GOALS

Growing + Prosperous Hermiston

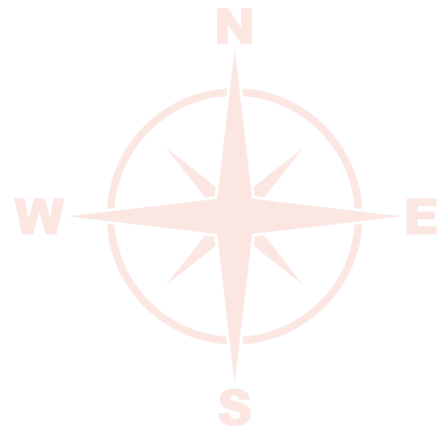
Safe + Healthy Hermiston

Connected + Engaged Hermiston

Sustainable Hermiston

# HERMISTON VALUES

**Values: What guides us,  
the lens through which we work**



## FISCAL PRUDENCE

We are responsible stewards of the City's financial resources and exercise discretion in decision-making.

## ENGAGEMENT

We facilitate constructive relationships between the City and constituents to build trust and support equitable and sustainable decision-making.

## INCLUSIVE

We are committed to building an inclusive environment that values and respects the contributions of all people.

## PARTNERSHIPS

We collaborate with community organizations to leverage expertise and resources to best serve the public.

## LIVABILITY

We promote diverse housing options, convenient and accessible community assets, a healthy environment, and high-quality education.

# ENVIRONMENTAL SCAN

## Graphic History

Given the complex and interconnected landscape of local government, the choices made today have far-reaching implications for the well-being and prosperity of community and residents for years to come. Hermiston has changed significantly over the past thirty years with substantial growth and development, and community members today are beneficiaries of the work and strategic decisions made by previous City leaders. Considering the potentially significant Council transition on the horizon with the coming election, the current Council and management team participated in a graphic history exercise to look back at where the city has been to inform future goals and strategies. Specifically, the exercise aims to document community and organizational changes over time and discuss what factors have contributed to success. As a result, the graphic history builds continuity in institutional knowledge among the team to inform future decisions and strategic planning.

Hermiston has benefited from stability in leadership and a strong organization focused on intentional planning to serve all community members in Hermiston. The team has accomplished a lot over the years and developed a ‘can-do’ culture to create a place where people want to be, as witnessed by Hermiston growing to be the largest city in Eastern Oregon. To close the exercise, the team shared key insights to consider in the goal refinement process to support continued success in providing services to the community, preparing for future growth, and maintaining the spirit of the Hermiston. The following image summarizes the team’s discussion.



# ENVIRONMENTAL SCAN

## **Context Map**

Examining the current context of the organization provides valuable information for strategic decision making in the goal refinement process. A thorough understanding of where the organization is today ensures the resulting goals are responsive to needs in the community and organization to support sustainable growth and the provision of quality city services.

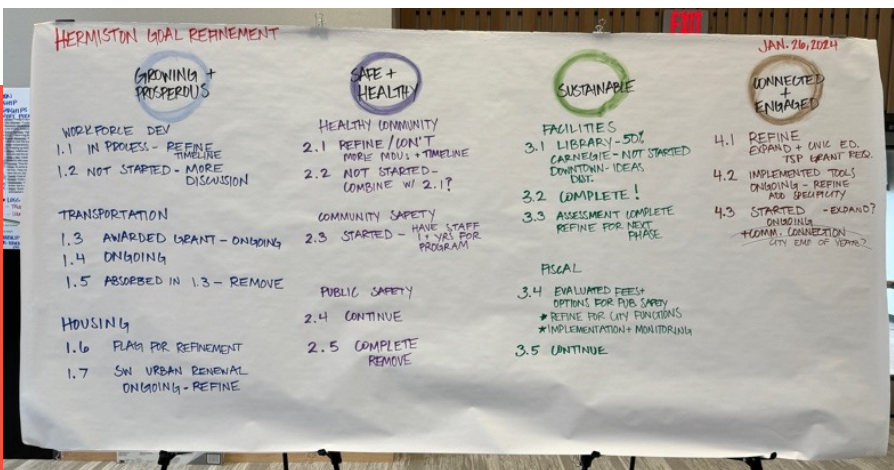
Recognizing and celebrating successes is an important part of the process as it acknowledges the work of staff and sets a positive tone for the team moving forward. Being aware of the various department priorities for the coming year enables Council to stay informed on the breadth and depth of the City's work already underway. This insight supports the development of Council goals that are both realistic and aspirational to move the City forward strategically. Additionally, assessing the challenges and barriers facing the organization enables the team to collaboratively problem solve and prioritize resources to support a high-performing organization equipped to serve the community effectively.

Building on the discussion of the graphic history exercise, the team discussed the current environment facing the organization. As part of the outreach with staff, SSW gathered a list of accomplishments from 2023, priorities for 2024, and any barriers and challenges that threaten progress of department's work. At the retreat, participants reviewed and discussed the information together and made any additions for the team to consider in the goal refinement process. Additionally, City Manager Byron Smith offered an update on the City's financial position and forecast for the coming year.



# GOAL REFINEMENT PROCESS

City Council and staff meet on an annual basis to refine the Council goals to provide policy direction to the organization for the coming year. The Council goals guide the development of the City's budget and department work plans to align resources and staff capacity accordingly. The team worked collaboratively to review the 2023 goals and supporting actions to determine which actions were complete, ongoing, or needing refinement. Building on the information and insights shared during the environmental scan, the team worked in small groups to discuss how the actions needing refinement should be updated to reflect the work completed in 2023 as well as opportunities on the horizon for 2024 and beyond. Additionally, the small groups discussed ideas for any new proposals for Council to consider adding to the 2024 goals. Following the small group exercise, the team reconvened to map the resulting proposals for refined and new actions. For each action, the team discussed the desired outcomes to ensure the actions are aligned with the Hermiston 2040 Vision. The following images summarize the results of the goal refinement process.



# GROWING + PROSPEROUS

HERMISTON IS CULTIVATING A VIBRANT COMMUNITY WITH A THRIVING ECONOMY, ASSORTMENT OF HOUSING OPPORTUNITIES, HIGH-QUALITY EDUCATION, AND SUPPORT SERVICES TO PRESERVE THE SMALL-TOWN FEEL.

ACTION	LEAD	TIMELINE
<b>ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT: EXPAND, STRENGTHEN, AND DIVERSIFY THE LOCAL ECONOMY</b>		
<b>1.1</b> Examine the expansion of the Urban Growth Boundary (UGB) for commercial and industrial lands	Planning + City Manager's Office	2 years
<b>1.2</b> Foster collaborative partnerships for workforce training and development	Planning + City Manager's Office	2 years
<b>1.3</b> Evaluate retail business mix and pursue areas of need	Planning + City Manager's Office	2 years
<b>TRANSPORTATION: IMPROVE MOBILITY AND TRANSPORTATION</b>		
<b>1.4</b> Complete Transportation System Plan Update (will include sidewalks)	Planning + City Manager's Office	1-2 years
<b>1.5</b> Develop Safe Streets for All comprehensive safety action plan	Planning + City Manager's Office	1-2 years
<b>HOUSING: INCREASE SENIOR, WORKFORCE, AND AFFORDABLE HOUSING, MARKET RATE RENTALS, AND PREVENT PEOPLE FROM BECOMING UNHOUSED</b>		
<b>1.6</b> Attract market-rate rental housing developments to increase middle housing inventory	Planning + City Manager's Office	1-2 years
<b>1.7</b> Continue to fund infrastructure improvements to support new housing and enhance livability	Planning + City Manager's Office	Ongoing

# SAFE + HEALTHY

HERMISTON ENSURES A HEALTHY AND SAFE ENVIRONMENT FOR ALL THROUGH ABUNDANT RECREATION AND WELLNESS OPPORTUNITIES, HIGH-QUALITY HEALTH CARE, COLLABORATION WITH COMMUNITY PARTNERS, AND A HEALTHY AND ATTRACTIVE BUILT ENVIRONMENT.

ACTION	LEAD	TIMELINE
<b>WELLNESS: A HEALTHY COMMUNITY</b>		
<b>2.1</b> Update feasibility analysis of a Health, Wellness, and Aquatic Center	Parks and Recreation + City Manager	1 year
<b>2.2</b> Finalize memorandums of understanding (MOUs) to solidify partnerships for a Health, Wellness, and Aquatic Center	Parks and Recreation + City Manager	1 year
<b>2.3</b> Identify and secure land for a health, wellness and aquatic center	Parks and Recreation + City Manager	1 year
<b>PUBLIC SAFETY: IMPROVE TRAFFIC SAFETY AND ALIGN PUBLIC SAFETY RESOURCES WITH COMMUNITY NEEDS</b>		
<b>2.4</b> Evaluate and possibly implement red light photo enforcements along Hwy 395	Police + City Attorney	1 year
<b>2.5</b> Develop plan to increase police officer staffing	Police	1 year

# SUSTAINABLE

HERMISTON RESPONSIBLY PLANS AND INVESTS IN COMMUNITY INFRASTRUCTURE AND THE BUILT ENVIRONMENT TO SUPPORT THE CRITICAL NEEDS OF DAILY LIFE AND SUSTAINABLE GROWTH FOR THE FUTURE.

ACTION	LEAD	TIMELINE
<b>CITY FACILITIES: PUBLIC FACILITIES THAT MEET THE COMMUNITY NEEDS OF TODAY AND THE FUTURE</b>		
<b>3.1</b> Conduct public engagement to identify use scenarios, evaluate all options, and finalize plan for Carnegie Building	City Manager's Office	1-2 years
<b>3.2</b> Complete public library renovation	City Manager + Library	1-2 years
<b>3.3</b> Complete public safety center renovation	City Manager + Police	2 years
<b>FISCAL: MAINTAIN SERVICE LEVELS, STRENGTHEN INTERNAL OPERATIONS TO SUPPORT SUSTAINABILITY, ACCOUNTABILITY, AND TRANSPARENCY</b>		
<b>3.4</b> Evaluate and update internal financial policies and procedures	City Manager + Finance	1 year
<b>3.5</b> Develop five-year financial plan to support sustainable staffing and operations	City Manager + Finance	1-2 years
<b>3.6</b> Finalize water allocation for EOTEC	City Manager + EOTEC	1-2 years

# CONNECTED + ENGAGED

HERMISTON PROVIDES OPPORTUNITIES FOR STRONG SOCIAL CONNECTIONS, CELEBRATES DIVERSITY, AND HONORS OUR HISTORIC AND CULTURAL HERITAGE TO FOSTER A WELCOMING AND INCLUSIVE COMMUNITY FOR ALL

ACTION	LEAD	TIMELINE
<b>COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT: IMPROVE ENGAGEMENT AND CONNECTION WITH THE COMMUNITY</b>		
<b>4.1</b> Engage with education partners to develop and implement youth engagement plan to increase understanding of and involvement with City	City Manager	1-2 years
<b>4.2</b> Evaluate and implement communication best practices and tools to improve connection with the community	City Manager	1-2 years
<b>4.3</b> Develop and implement a formalized community service award program to recognize community members and employees	City Manager	1-2 years





# TEAM AGREEMENT

## The Hermiston City Council is committed to...

- **Collaboration for All:** The Council is committed to working together, collaborating for the benefit of all. We approach the work with an open mind, considering all options and listening and valuing the diverse perspectives in our community.
- **Partnership:** The Council is committed to their partnership with City staff, providing clear direction and exercising patience as the team pursues the implementation of community goals and Council priorities. We acknowledge the various factors at play in implementing the goals and we recognize that certain things will be outside of staff's control. Open communication is critical to this partnership and we are committed to proactive and collaborative two-way flow of information.
- **Preparation:** The Council is committed to being prepared and informed to support policy making to serve the shared interests of the Hermiston community. We will work with the City Manager to address any questions and gather additional information needed in advance of Council meetings. We will put aside our personal agendas to serve the larger community. We value the individual strengths and perspectives we bring to the role, and we will work with our team to support the consensus and/or majority position of the team.
- **Focus:** The Council is committed to their shared goals and priorities. We will stay on point in advancing the community's vision and supporting staff in implementing the goals. We will share our positions on "the why" behind the goals, yet be succinct and clear in our communication. We will be intentional with our requests to staff to support organizational efficiency and shared outcomes.

## The Hermiston City Staff is committed to...

- **Partnership:** City staff is committed to their partnership with the City Council. We will be transparent about timelines and priorities in the work plan. We will be direct and clear in our communication to support the Council in their policy making. We will provide all data and options available to Hermiston for City Council's consideration.
- **High-Performing Organization:** City staff is committed to cooperating and collaborating with the Council, community partners, and regional organizations to implement the goals and deliver high quality services to the people of Hermiston. We will speak up to ensure we have the direction needed to continue advancing the goals and community vision. We will respect and offer full support of the direction of the Council.



## CITY OF HERMISTON

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