

CITY OF HERMISTON



2025 CITY COUNCIL GOALS + ACTION PLAN



SSW CONSULTING



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Introduction

The City of Hermiston is pleased to present a summary of its January 2025 Council Retreat.

On January 23-24, 2025, the City Council and leadership team met to gain a deeper understanding of the current community and organizational landscape. The goal was to refine strategic goals that would guide the organization over the next year.

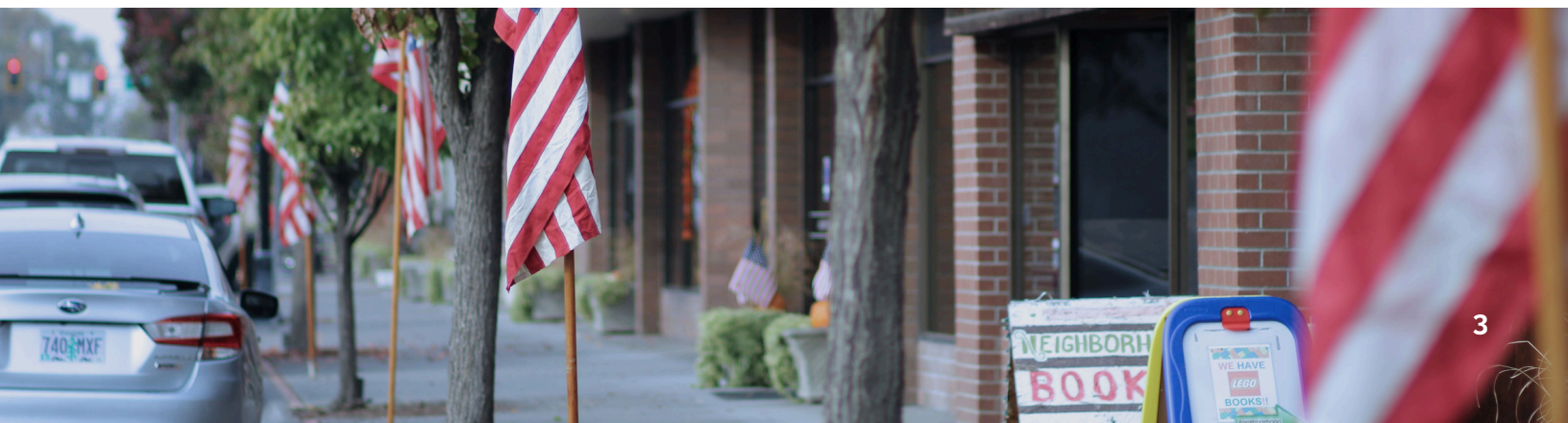
To facilitate this process, the City engaged SSW Consulting, a professional facilitation and strategic planning firm. The retreat aimed to achieve the following:

- Facilitate a team-building experience that fosters a strong and cohesive team among Council and staff
- Review the roles of policymakers and administration in the Council-Manager form of government and discuss expectations/agreements that will strengthen the partnership between staff and Council to advance the goals
- Review the Council's past goals and the community vision, highlight successes we can build on and challenges we can learn from
- Build a shared understanding of the current community/organizational context and the progress status of the Council's current goals to inform the goal refinement
- Develop a refined set of goals for 2025-2026 with clear, measurable outcomes to guide the Council and organization

Before the retreat, SSW Consulting conducted individual outreach interviews with members of City Council, as well as a leadership team survey. This information helped shape the retreat agenda to ensure a productive and engaging experience.

During the retreat, staff and Council members worked to refine last year's goals, considering progress made and emerging priorities. They collaborated to assess the community and organizational context and develop clear and measurable goals.

The City appreciates the engagement and participation of the Council and staff. The team looks forward to working together to advance these goals, aligning them with the community's vision.



Hermiston Team

City Council

Doug Primmer, Mayor

Jackie Linton, Councilor, Ward 1

Roy Barron, Councilor, Ward 2

Jackie Myers, Councilor, Ward 3

David McCarthy, Councilor, Ward 4

Jeff Kelso, Councilor At Large

Maria Duron, Councilor At Large

Josh Roberts, Councilor At Large

Allen Hayward, Councilor At Large

City Team

Byron Smith, City Manager

Mark Morgan, Assistant City Manager

Richard Tovey, City Attorney

Lilly Alarcon-Strong, City Recorder

Al Davis, EOTEC General Manager

Ignacio Palacios, Finance Director

Nate Rivera, Hermiston Energy Services General Manager

Crystal Inners, HR Specialist

Jordan Standley, IT Director

Mark Rose, Library Director

Jillian Viles, Municipal Court Administrator

Brandon Artz, Parks & Recreation Director

Clint Spencer, Planning Director

Jason Edminston, Police Chief



Hermiston 2040 Vision, Values, + Goals

Building on the Hermiston 2040 Vision and Action Plan, adopted in 2022, the 2025 Council goals are strategically aligned with its vision statements, goal areas, and guiding values. The 2040 plan, a product of broad community and organizational engagement, provides a 20-year framework for strategic decision-making and resource allocation, addressing current and future community needs.



VALUES: WHAT GUIDES US

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.

Community Vision + Past Goal Discussion

Progress, Challenges, + Reflections

The retreat began with a strategic review of the Hermiston 2040 plan and vision. By reflecting on the past year's successes, challenges, and accomplishments, the team established a clear understanding of the organization's current state. This foundation ensured that subsequent goal-setting would be responsive to community and organizational needs, supporting sustainable growth and the delivery of quality city services. These insights enabled the team to develop realistic yet aspirational Council goals, strategically aligning resources for a high-performing organization.

What has contributed to our success?

- Communication w/ Council + staff
- Great staff - low turnover-consistent
- Perseverance - We keep moving forward
- Seek out grants + rev ops
- Forward-thinking
- Relationships
- Open to the public
- Stable + focused Council + leadership
- Infrastructure-focused + long-term planning
- Positive attitude

What has challenged us?

- Funding
- Unfunded mandates + regulations
- Vocal minority
- Spread of misinformation
- Lack of reliable journalism sources

2024 Accomplishments

What is the update on Hermiston Aquatic and Wellness Center?

- The City met with developers + have been considering different services
- Next: We are going out for public input on services and potential locations
- Late spring the task force will take information and feedback back to the City for further action
- One of the sites we are evaluating is considering merging the new with the old-- do we merge with the existing pool? We won't be able to operate 2 locations.
 - Could the current location be sold to a private entity? Be made into a skate park? Or removed and added back into the parks system?

- Fiscally combining aquatics with fitness is the best option. It may compete with local fitness facilities, but that is a decision to consider down the road based on recommendations from Council.

Updating internal financial policies.

- Working on potential changes with the fresh eyes of Ignacio. Looking at a 5-year projection down the road.
- What was driving this being a goal?
 - It was the issue of having to come to Council for more funding.

Partnership + Communication

Politics + Administration

Given the significant shift in leadership with the recent election of new Councilors and a Mayor, establishing clear roles and expectations was a key priority for this year's retreat. On Day 1, the team engaged in a discussion about the unique responsibilities of Council policy and staff administration. Using the provided graphic as a framework, they collaboratively defined their expectations for each group, aiming to build stronger partnerships and ensure effective governance during this transition.

Expectations of Council:

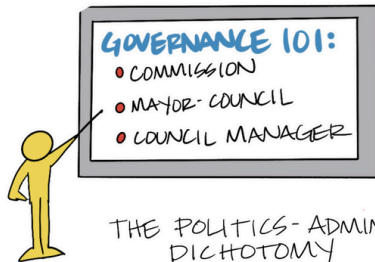
- Make decisions, even when it's uncomfortable; be consistent
- Ask questions, be prepared
- Act as one body
- Partnership with staff
- Follow communication protocols
- Listen to the public
- Be informed
- Honest Feedback
- Be supportive of the team!
- Operate in an ethical manner
- Respect differences + backgrounds
- Communicate the needs
- Be positive

Expectations of Staff:

- Provide professional/technical expertise; be prepared + informed, accurate information
- Neutral advice; be honest + realistic
- High-performing organization; do a lot with a little
- Partnership with Council
- Operate in an ethical manner
- Transparency; fiscally prudent
- Professional, trustworthy, + welcoming
- Work as one team
- Be fair + equitable
- Be realistic
- Communicate the needs
- Be positive

POLITICS + ADMINISTRATION

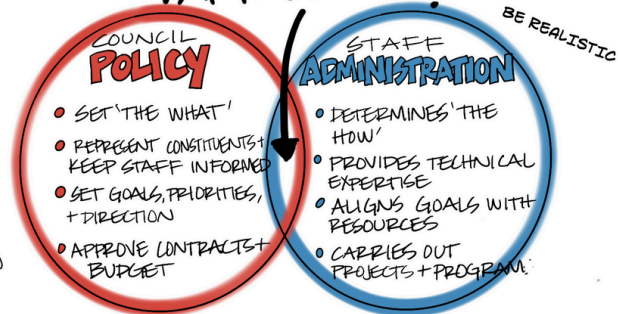
● HOW THE ROLES EVOLVED



THE POLITICS- ADMINISTRATION
DICHOTOMY

THE THEORY THAT CONSTRUCTS THE
BOUNDARIES OF PUBLIC ADMINISTRATION
+ ASSERTS THE NORMATIVE RELATIONSHIPS
BETWEEN ELECTED OFFICIALS + ADMINISTRATORS
IN A DEMOCRATIC SOCIETY

PARTNERSHIP!



EXPECTATIONS:

- COMMUNICATE THE NEEDS
- BE POSITIVE

- MAKE DECISIONS
 - EVEN WHEN ITS UNCOMFORTABLE
 - BE CONFIDENT
- ASK QUESTIONS
 - BE PREPARED
- ACT AS ONE BODY
- PARTNERSHIP WITH STAFF
- FOLLOW COMMUNICATION PROTOCOLS
- LISTEN TO THE PUBLIC
- BE INFORMED
- HONEST FEEDBACK
- BE SUPPORTIVE OF THE TEAM!
- OPERATE IN AN ETHICAL MANNER
- RESPECT DIFFERENCES + BACKGROUNDS
- PROVIDE PROFESSIONAL/ TECHNICAL EXPERTISE
 - BE PREPARED + INFORMED
 - ACCURATE INFORMATION
- NEUTRAL ADVICE
 - BE HONEST + REALISTIC
- HIGH- PERFORMING ORGANIZATION
 - DO A LOT WITH A LITTLE
- PARTNERSHIP WITH COUNCIL
- OPERATE IN AN ETHICAL MANNER
- TRANSPARENCY
 - FISCALLY PRUDENT
- PROFESSIONAL, TRUSTWORTHY + WELCOMING
- WORK AS ONE TEAM
- BE FAIR + EQUITABLE

How We Communicate

Council and staff also participated in a communication styles exercise designed to build better understanding and collaboration. Participants explored four broad communication styles: Outspoken + Direct, Quiet + Reserved, Thoughtful + Analytical, and Friendly + Unassuming.

The group discussed the characteristics of each style, how individuals with different styles can effectively interact, common misunderstandings associated with each style, and direct messages each style group wanted to convey to the others. The goal of the exercise was to improve communication and ensure that intentions are clearly understood by considering the various communication preferences within the council and staff.

OUTSPOKEN + DIRECT

What are some of the characteristics of your group's communications style?

- No wandering about our thoughts
- Direct

How could others who have different communications styles deal more effectively with you?

- Get to the point - tell us what you really think

In what ways is your communications style sometimes misunderstood by others?

- Rude
- Condescending
- Loud
- Abrupt
- Obnoxious
- Mean
- No patience

What would you like to tell the other communications styles about your style?

- Get to the point - tell us what you really think

• Jackie L, Jackie H. David, Doug + Lilly

QUIET + RESERVED

What are some of the characteristics of your group's communications style?

- Indirect - no small talk/ purpose
- Written over verbal communication

How could others who have different communications styles deal more effectively with you?

- Give us information upfront
- Work towards compromise

In what ways is your communications style sometimes misunderstood by others?

- Not viewed as social
- Uncomfortable
- Ineffective

What would you like to tell the other communications styles about your style?

- Not always saying what we are thinking
- We are filtered
- We are thoughtful

• Clint, Jordan, Maria

What are some of the characteristics of your group's communications style?

- Time
- 2 ears + 1 mouth
- Questions + research

How could others who have different communications styles deal more effectively with you?

- We need time to process
- Don't expect an immediate response
- Don't beat a dead horse

In what ways is your communications style sometimes misunderstood by others?

- No opinion
- Not engaged
- Indecisive
- Not understanding
- Knit-picky

What would you like to tell the other communications styles about your style?

- Benefits of time
- Better decisions are made with more time to process

• Bryon, Allen, Mark, Mark, Jason, Roy, Jillian, Jeff, Ignacio

What are some of the characteristics of your group's communications style?

- Positivity + end on a positive note
- Humor
- Listen 1st
- Agreeable + passive
- Human connection
- Empathetic
- Adverse to conflict

How could others who have different communications styles deal more effectively with you?

- Soft start to conversations

In what ways is your communications style sometimes misunderstood by others?

- Don't mistake friendliness for weakness

What would you like to tell the other communications styles about your style?

- Positivity + end on a positive note
- Humor
- Listen 1st
- Agreeable + passive
- Human connection
- Empathetic
- Adverse to conflict

• Rich, John, Crystal, Brandon, Nate, Josh, Al

THOUGHTFUL + ANALYTICAL

FRIENDLY + UNASSUMING

Goal Refinement Process

Hermiston City Council and staff meet annually to refine the Council goals, providing policy direction for the next year. These goals serve as a foundation for the City's budget and department work plans, ensuring alignment of resources and staff capacity.

During the retreat, the team collaboratively reviewed the 2024 goals and supporting actions. Drawing on insights from the past year of progress and their context mapping exercise, the team worked in small groups to update the refinement-needed actions. These updates reflected the work accomplished in 2024 and incorporated opportunities for the next year.

Following the small group discussions, the team reconvened to map out the refined and new goals and actions.



Goal 1: 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	PROJECT LEAD	TIMELINE
ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT: EXPAND, STRENGTHEN, AND DIVERSIFY THE LOCAL ECONOMY		
1.1 Examine the expansion of the Urban Growth Boundary (UGB) for commercial and industrial lands	Planning/City Manager's Office	2 years
1.2 Evaluate retail business mix and pursue areas of need	Planning/City Manager's Office	2 years
TRANSPORTATION: IMPROVE MOBILITY AND TRANSPORTATION		
1.3 Complete Transportation System Plan Update (will include sidewalks)	Planning/City Manager's Office	1-2 years
1.4 Prioritize sidewalk installation supporting student/pedestrian travel	City Manager's Office	1 year
1.5 Evaluate personal transportation options	City Manager's Office	1 year
1.6 Implement the grant for safe streets for all	Planning/City Manager's Office	1-2 years
HOUSING: INCREASE SENIOR, WORKFORCE, AND AFFORDABLE HOUSING, MARKET RATE RENTALS, AND PREVENT PEOPLE FROM BECOMING UNHOUSED		
1.7 Attract market-rate rental housing developments to increase middle housing inventory	Planning/City Manager's Office	1-2 years
1.8 Study incentive options for market-rate rental housing	Planning/City Manager's Office	1-2 years
1.9 Continue to fund infrastructure improvements to support new housing and enhance livability	Planning/City Manager's Office	Ongoing

Goal 2: 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	PROJECT LEAD	TIMELINE
WELLNESS: A HEALTHY COMMUNITY		
2.1 Complete the feasibility analysis of the HAWC + determine next steps with partnerships and securing land	Parks and Recreation/City Manager's Office	1 year
PUBLIC SAFETY: IMPROVE TRAFFIC SAFETY AND ALIGN PUBLIC SAFETY RESOURCES WITH COMMUNITY NEEDS		
2.2 Complete street light study	Planning/City Manager's Office	1-2 years
2.3 Evaluate + address security of parks + trails	Parks and Recreation/City Manager's Office	1-2 years
2.4 Evaluate and possibly implement red light photo enforcements along Hwy 395	Police/City Attorney	1 year

Goal 3: 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	PROJECT LEAD	TIMELINE
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CITY FACILITIES: PUBLIC FACILITIES THAT MEET THE COMMUNITY NEEDS OF TODAY AND THE FUTURE

3.1 Conduct public engagement to identify use scenarios, evaluate all options, and finalize plan for Carnegie Building	City Manager's Office	1 -2 years
3.2 Complete Public Library renovation	City Manager/Library	1 -2 years
3.3 Finalize water allocation for EOTEC	City Manager/EOTEC	1-2 years
3.4 Reinitiate broadband infrastructure discussion	City Manager's Office	1 year
3.5 Complete public safety center renovation	City Manager/Police	2 years

FISCAL: MAINTAIN SERVICE LEVELS, STRENGTHEN INTERNAL OPERATIONS TO SUPPORT SUSTAINABILITY, ACCOUNTABILITY, AND TRANSPARENCY

3.6 Evaluate use of Community TRT + harkenrider contribution	City Manager/Finance	1 year
3.7 Develop five-year financial plan to support sustainable staffing and operations	City Manager/Finance	1-2 years
3.8 Evaluate new digital records management/ retention	City Manager's Office	1-2 years

Goal 4: 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	PROJECT LEAD	TIMELINE
COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT: IMPROVE ENGAGEMENT AND CONNECTION WITH THE COMMUNITY		
4.1 Explore expansion of engagement with education partners to develop and implement youth engagement plan to increase understanding of and involvement with City	City Manager's Office	1 -2 years
4.2 Develop a communication and engagement plan identifying goals and metrics	City Manager's Office	1 year
GOOD GOVERNANCE: EVALUATE CORE GOVERNING DOCUMENTS AND PROCESSES		
4.3 Conduct charter review	City Manager's Office	1 year
4.4 Re-examine Council Committees, Boards + Advisory group structure	City Manager's Office	1 year

Implementation + Progress Reporting

The Council and staff have developed the following process to support accountability and transparency in the implementation of the goals and actions.

City staff will present quarterly updates to City Council on the goals and actions. These updates will include any progress to advance the goals, reporting on success measures, challenges to be addressed, and areas needing clarification and/or further direction from Council. Additionally, staff will highlight any goals and actions in relevant staff report. Staff will continue to provide real-time updates to Council on relevant projects and include any pertinent developments in weekly updates to Council.

The team will revisit the goals annually to assess progress, refine existing goals as needed, and develop new goals to reflect community and organization priorities.



Team Agreement



The Hermiston City Council is committed to...

- **Collaboration:** 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.

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