

**CITY OF HERMISTON
2026 CITY
COUNCIL GOALS +
ACTION PLAN**

2026





INTRODUCTION

The City of Hermiston is pleased to present a summary of its January 2026 Council Retreat.

On January 22–23, 2026, 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:

- Ground everyone in shared context and realities
- Build trust, alignment, and working norms
- Create space for hard conversations without letting them dominate
- Produce clear, fiscally grounded priorities the Council can stand behind together

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.

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TEAM

HERMISTON CITY COUNCIL



Doug Primmer
Mayor



Jackie Linton
Ward 1



Roy Barron
Ward 2



Jackie Myers
Ward 3



David McCarthy
Ward 4



Jeff Kelso
At Large



Maria Duron
At Large



Josh Roberts
At Large



Allen Hayward
At Large

HERMISTON LEADERSHIP TEAM

Byron Smith, City Manager
Mark Morgan, Assistant City Manager
Richard Tovey, City Attorney
Lilly Alarcon-Strong, City Recorder
Ignacio Palacios, Finance Director
Al Davis, EOTEC General Manager
Nate Rivera, HES
Crystal Inners, HR Specialist

Jordan Standley, IT Director
Mark Rose, Library Director
Jillian Viles, Municipal Court
Brandon Artz, Parks + Recreation Director
Clint Spencer, Planning Director
Jason Edmiston, Police Chief
Cameron Meade, Street & Capital
Improvement Projects Manager

HERMISTON 2040

VISION, VALUES + GOALS

Building on the Hermiston 2040 Vision and Action Plan, adopted in 2022, the 2026 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.



HERMISTON 2040 GOAL AREAS

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 REFLECTION

The Hermiston 2040 Community Vision continues to serve as the foundation for Council and staff decision-making, guiding priorities, resource allocation, and long-term planning. During the 2026 goal-refinement process, the team intentionally grounded discussions in the community vision, ensuring that annual priorities remain aligned with the 2040 goals

- Growing + Prosperous Hermiston**
- Safe + Healthy Hermiston**
- Connected + Engaged Hermiston**
- Sustainable Hermiston**

Throughout 2025, Council and staff advanced initiatives that continue to reflect the community values: People, Inclusion, and Partnership.

2025 WINS

1.1 The City expanded the urban growth boundary and city limits by 823 acres to support future heavy industrial development, positioning Hermiston for long-term job growth and economic opportunity. This milestone was made possible through strong coordination across City administration, planning, engineering, water, sewer, and street teams, along with regional partners including Umatilla County, DLCD, and ODOT.

1.5 Council advanced mobility efforts by re-advertising contracts for subsidized Senior/Disabled and workforce taxi services while evaluating future rideshare opportunities. Staff, leadership, and the review committee recommended continued local service delivery while allowing rideshare markets to mature for future consideration.

3.2 The completion of the Hermiston Library renovation represents a significant investment in lifelong learning, accessibility, and community connection. Library staff, facilities, leadership, and project partners worked collaboratively to deliver an updated space that supports a connected and engaged Hermiston.

3.5 While operating from multiple temporary locations during a facility renovation, the Police Department navigated significant staffing transitions and expanded services through a new partnership with Good Shepherd Health Care System.

3.6 Council reviewed the Transient Room Tax formula during the budget process and recommended maintaining the current structure while expanding collaboration with the Greater Hermiston Chamber of Commerce and the Hermiston Senior Center Board. Finance staff, leadership, and community partners worked together to explore new ways to strengthen services and partnerships.

4.4 Council led a comprehensive review of City boards, committees, and commissions engaging advisory group chairs about their roles and impact. Supported by staff, this process resulted in the creation of a new Council-only committee, and improved understanding of advisory group contributions.

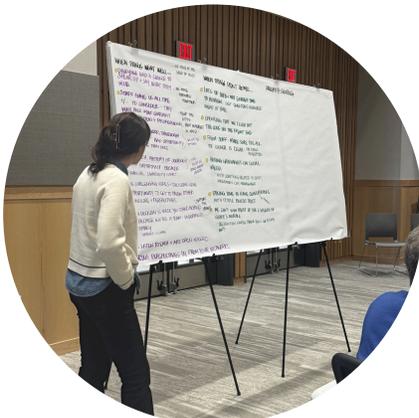
2026 COUNCIL RETREAT

RETREAT DAY 1

Day 1 of the City of Hermiston's 2026 Council Goals Retreat focused on building shared understanding, grounding the conversation in fiscal realities, and setting the stage for deeper priority-setting on Day 2.

The evening began with a welcome and agenda review, followed by a community and organizational context briefing designed to get everyone on the same page. Council and staff established shared working norms emphasizing openness, collaboration, honesty, and respectful dialogue, with a clear commitment to speaking as one body and focusing on consensus-driven priorities.

Staff then provided a high-level financial overview to frame the Council's work. This briefing included an initial look at franchise fee revenue projections, enterprise zone insights, and other key revenue considerations, along with discussion of broader fiscal pressures such as housing and homelessness demands, service expectations, state and federal uncertainty, and unfunded mandates. The Council acknowledged both challenges and opportunities and noted the need for continued, more detailed financial review as part of the overall goal-setting process.



Following a short break, the Council conducted a Council Priority Review. Existing goals were reviewed, with time dedicated to celebrating completed actions and recent wins. Councilors also identified goals and topics that require further discussion, clarification, or refinement, flagging them for deeper exploration on Day 2. Emerging context themes included communication challenges, balancing growth with amenities, and considering the long-term impacts of today's decisions.

The evening concluded with a wrap-up discussion and preview of the Day 2 agenda. By the end of Day 1, the Council had established a shared foundation of fiscal context, reaffirmed working norms, and clearly identified focus areas to advance into more detailed prioritization and decision-making during the next session.



RETREAT DAY 2

Day 2 of the City of Hermiston's 2026 Council Goals Retreat focused on strengthening team dynamics, finalizing priorities, and establishing clearer decision-making norms.

The morning began with a substantive discussion on team dynamics and decision-making norms. Council members reflected on what's working well—including open dialogue, thorough staff preparation, listening to diverse perspectives, and standing united behind decisions. Areas for improvement centered on information flow and timing, with Council noting the need to receive materials earlier, clarify staff asks before public meetings, and ensure pros and cons are thoroughly vetted on the front end. The group also addressed the importance of maintaining appropriate boundaries with City management and avoiding social media conflicts, emphasizing that building community trust shouldn't come at the expense of staff morale. Key themes emerged: "We move at the speed of trust" and "Leaders bring the weather."

Following the break, the Council worked to confirm their 2026 Priority Framework, reviewing goals across all four strategic focus areas and determining which items should move forward, which require further discussion, and which should be removed or modified. This priority refinement continued after lunch.

The afternoon included discussion on decision-making, information flow, and Council process, establishing clearer protocols for future collaboration. The retreat concluded with a wrap-up and next steps discussion.

By the end of Day 2, the Council had refined their 2026 goals, strengthened internal working agreements, clarified communication expectations, and reaffirmed their commitment to moving forward as a unified body with clear, fiscally responsible priorities.



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 2025 goals and supporting actions. Drawing on insights from the past year of progress, fiscal context briefings, and community challenges identified through their discussions, the Council evaluated each goal to determine what should move forward, what required further discussion, and what could be removed or celebrated as complete. These updates reflected the work accomplished in 2025 and incorporated new opportunities and partnerships for 2026.

The team then worked to finalize their 2026 Priority Framework, ensuring goals were fiscally grounded and aligned with the Council's commitment to moving forward together with clear, achievable priorities the entire body could stand behind.

2026 GOALS



Growing + Prosperous



Safe + Healthy



Sustainable



Connected + Engaged





GOAL AREA | 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

OBJECTIVE | Economic Development: Expand, strengthen, and diversify the local economy

ACTION		PROJECT LEAD	TIMELINE
1.1	Update downtown Urban Renewal Plan to improve downtown core	Planning	1-2 years
1.2	Pursue additional retail investments and educate on retail efforts and processes	Planning/City Manager's Office	1-2 years
1.3	Explore/ evaluate strategies to increase tourism and entertainment in Hermiston	City Manager's Office	1-2 years
1.4	Partner with Chamber to evaluate how the City can support a workforce pipeline	City Manager's Office	1-2 years

OBJECTIVE | Transportation: Improve mobility and transportation

ACTION		PROJECT LEAD	TIMELINE
1.5	Complete Transportation System Plan Update (will include sidewalks)	Planning/City Manager's Office	1-2 years
1.6	Update the City's sidewalk plan and prioritize student travel	City Manager's Office	1-2 years
1.7	Continue to pursue safe streets grant	Planning/City Manager's Office	1-2 years
1.8	Work with regional partners to improve transportation access and circulation	Planning/City Manager's Office	3-4 years

OBJECTIVE | Housing: Increase senior, workforce, and affordable housing, market rate rentals, and prevent people from becoming unhoused

ACTION		PROJECT LEAD	TIMELINE
1.9	Attract market-rate rental housing developments to increase middle housing inventory	Planning/City Manager's Office	Ongoing
1.10	Continue to fund infrastructure improvements to support new housing and other developments	Planning/City Manager's Office	Ongoing
1.11	Evaluate a commercial/retail incentive opportunities	City Manager's Office	Ongoing



GOAL AREA | 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

OBJECTIVE | Wellness: a healthy community

ACTION		PROJECT LEAD	TIMELINE
2.1	Complete the feasibility analysis of the HAWC + determine next steps with partnerships and securing land	Parks and Recreation/City Manager's Office	1-2 years

OBJECTIVE | Public Safety: Improve traffic safety and align public safety resources with community needs

ACTION		PROJECT LEAD	TIMELINE
2.2	Complete street light study	Planning/City Manager's Office	1-2 years
2.3	Develop a security plan for parks + trails (cameras, lighting, etc.)	Parks and Recreation/City Manager's Office	1-2 years
2.4	Implement red light photo enforcements along Hwy 395	Police/City Attorney	1-2 years



GOAL AREA | 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

OBJECTIVE | City Facilities: Public facilities that meet the community needs of today and the future

ACTION		PROJECT LEAD	TIMELINE
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	Finalize water allocation for EOTEC	City Manager/EOTEC	1-2 years
3.3	Finalize data and seek Council direction on next steps related to digital infrastructure	City Manager's Office	1-2 years

OBJECTIVE | Fiscal: Maintain service levels, strengthen internal operations to support sustainability, accountability, and transparency

ACTION		PROJECT LEAD	TIMELINE
3.4	Develop five-year financial plan to support sustainable staffing and operations	City Manager/Finance	1-2 years
3.5	Finalize records digitization	City Manager's Office	1-2 years
3.6	Evaluate Senior Center partnerships to align with the needs of the aging community	Parks and Recreation/City Manager's Office	1-2 years
3.7	Evaluate partnership with the Greater Hermiston Chamber to align with business needs	City Manager's Office	1-2 years
3.8	Study potential general fund projects and funding streams	City Manager's Office/Finance	1-2 years



GOAL AREA | Connected + Engaged

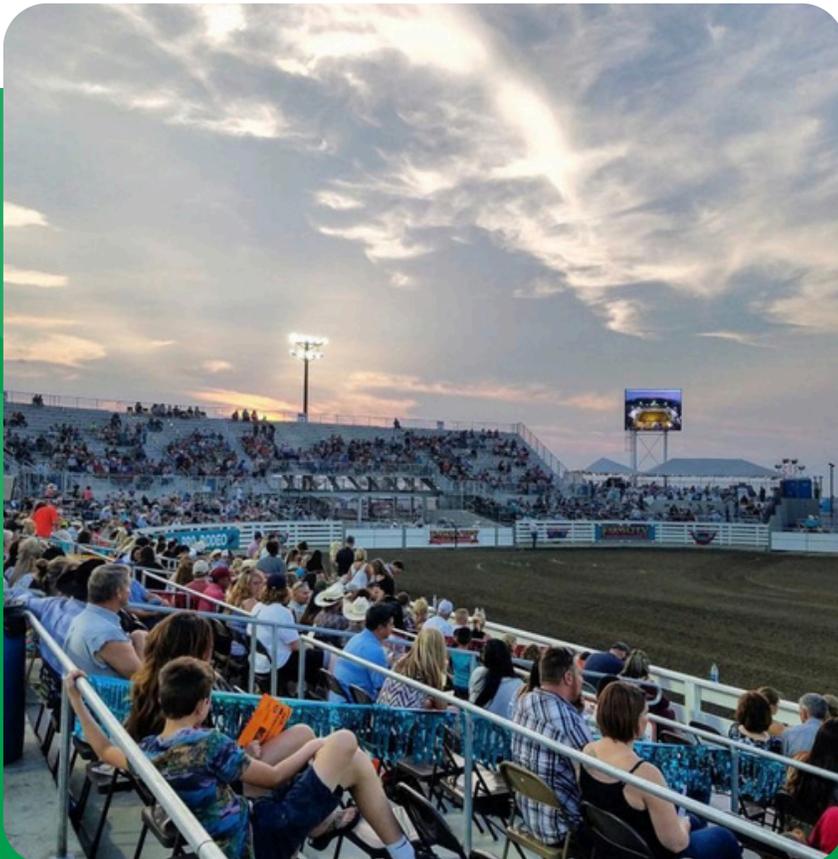
Hermiston provides opportunities for strong social connections, celebrates diversity, and honors our historic and cultural heritage to foster a welcoming and inclusive community for all

OBJECTIVE | Community Engagement: Improve engagement and connection with the community

ACTION		PROJECT LEAD	TIMELINE
4.1	Develop a communication and engagement plan identifying goals and metrics	City Manager's Office	1-2 years

OBJECTIVE | Good governance: Evaluate core governing documents and processes

ACTION		PROJECT LEAD	TIMELINE
4.2	Finalize charter review	City Manager's Office	1-2 years



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 reports. 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.

COUNCIL GROUND RULES

The Hermiston City Council ground rules are our commitments to each other so we can govern effectively in service of the Hermiston community.

1

We Lead as One Body

Once a decision is made—by consensus or majority—Council honors the decision and moves forward as a governing body, even when individual perspectives differ.

2

Respect the role of the City Manager and staff

Council does not manage staff directly or air staff-related concerns publicly. Concerns follow established channels through the City Manager.

3

Do the Work Early for better public decision-making

Council members review materials in advance, ask clarifying questions ahead of meetings when possible, and focus public meetings on decision-making—not discovery.

4

We debate ideas, not people

Disagreement is expected and respected. Critique ideas, impacts, and trade-offs—not motivations or individuals.

5

We don't litigate decisions on social media

Councilors do not relitigate Council decisions or air internal disagreements on social media or other public forums.

6

We value context, history, and community impact

Council decisions are informed by research, historical context, and long-term community impact—not just immediate pressure or reaction.

7

We move at the speed of trust

Councilors commit to direct, respectful communication with one another and invest time in relationship-building beyond formal meetings.

8

Leaders bring the weather

Councilors are mindful that their tone, behavior, and language set the climate for staff, colleagues, and the community.

CITY OF HERMISTON

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