

# City of Walla Walla Strategic Plan



**2024-2028 Update**



# INTRODUCTION

The City of Walla Walla is a full-service city dedicated to enhancing the quality of life for our 34,580 residents, 2,340+ businesses, and many local partners. Located in SE Washington, Walla Walla is known for its world class wine industry and tourism, its rich history, agricultural roots, and engaged community.

Embarking on the city's fourth Strategic Plan, Walla Walla continues to evolve as an organization. With this Strategic Plan update, we refreshed the priorities for the organization identifying several new objectives and initiatives to accomplish the organization's mission and vision. Our Mission, Vision, and Values are the centerpiece of the organization, driving our culture and the service we provide to the community.

The City of Walla Walla is a Council-Manager form of government with the City Manager charged with direct oversight of all City operations and implements the goals and policies of the adopted by the City Council. City Council members are elected by City of Walla Walla voters to four-year terms. The city is divided into four wards: Central, South, East and West with three members elected at-large. The Mayor and Mayor Pro-Tem are selected by the City Council for a two-year term. The Council is the legislative governing body for the city. They set policies, adopt ordinances and the annual budget, levy taxes, approve contracts and appoint city advisory boards, commissions and committees, and the City Manager and City Attorney.

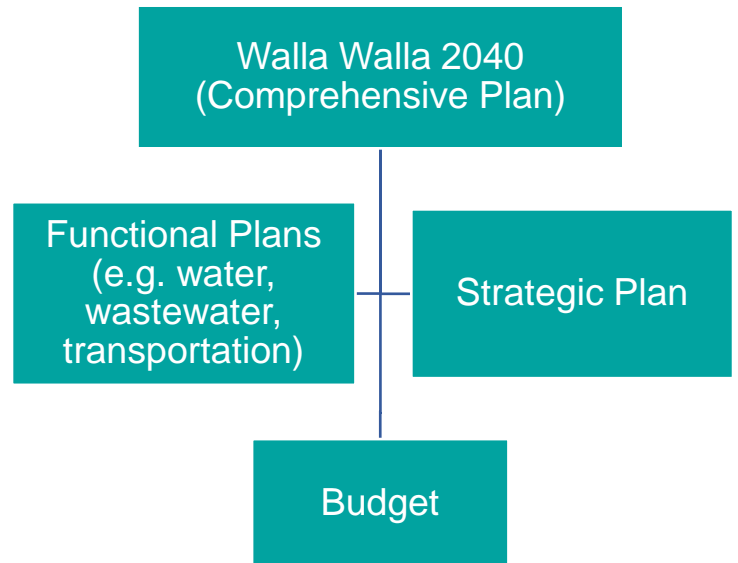
As a full-service city, Walla Walla provides a wide range of services (internal and external):

- Police
- Fire and EMS
- Public Works: Traffic/Transportation, Water, Sewer, Stormwater, Engineering
- Landfill, Compost, Sanitation, Green waste, Recycling
- Parks and Recreation
- Library
- Development Services
- Administration/Support Services: Leadership, Human Resources, Communication, Finance, Legal, Fleet Operations, Technology Services, City Clerk



# HOW DOES THE STRATEGIC PLAN INTEGRATE WITH OTHER CITY PLANS?

Walla Walla 2040, the City’s comprehensive plan, guides the long-term community vision and growth framework for the City of Walla Walla. The strategic plan is consistent with the comprehensive plan and implements the priority goals and policies. Priorities could change with each cycle of Strategic Planning but will be consistent with the framework of the comprehensive plan. Each layer of the hierarchy has shorter planning horizons to implement the goals and policies outlined in the comprehensive plan ultimately working towards operational plans and the City’s two-year budget cycle allocating the necessary resources to accomplish the key objectives outlined in the Strategic Plan.



## LEARNING, RESULTS, & IMPROVEMENT

Resident Survey  
Employee Survey  
Business Survey  
Financial Report

## OPERATIONAL EXECUTION

Develop Action Plans  
Council Agenda Planning  
Evaluations/Goal Setting  
Onboarding

## COMMUNITY & CITY COUNCIL

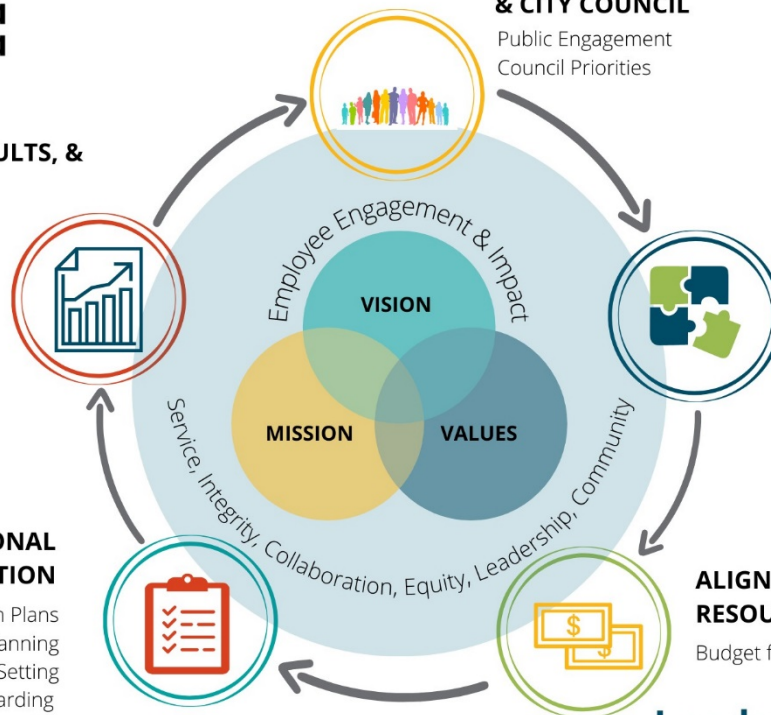
Public Engagement  
Council Priorities

## STRATEGIC PLANNING

Aligned with adopted plans

## ALIGNMENT OF RESOURCES

Budget for priorities



# Leadership System



## VISION, MISSION, & VALUES

The City of Walla Walla adopted a refresh of its Vision, Mission, and Core Values September 2021. The process began with the Leadership Team brainstorming the organization’s core values. We then surveyed the employees to share their thoughts on the organization’s core values. We then asked the City Council. Aligning the inputs, the City Council adopted the organization’s core values. The Leadership Team conducted a similar exercise for Mission and Vision. Employees shared their feedback on proposed mission and vision statements. The feedback received, particularly on the vision statement, was keep the existing vision statement. Each department was then asked what does “best of the best of the Northwest” mean to you and developed context around the vision statement.

**VISION:**

Walla Walla, best of the best of the Northwest.

**MISSION:**

Dedicated to enhancing the quality of life in Walla Walla.

**CORE VALUES:**

- Service
- Integrity
- Collaboration
- Equity
- Leadership
- Community

As an organization, we are driven by our mission to enhance the quality of life in Walla Walla and strive to be the best of the best of the Northwest. We accomplish this through modeling our core values, continuous improvement, and utilizing current technology and data to drive our decision making. The Strategic Plan helps the City understand what to prioritize and invest in. The Strategic Plan reminds the City Council and staff of what’s important to the community.

## STRENGTHS AND CHALLENGES

As part of the City's 2022 Strategic Plan update process, a SWOC (Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, and Challenges) analysis was conducted of the organization. The SWOC analysis results were shared with the City Council for input on the priority strengths, opportunities, weaknesses, and challenges. These strengths/opportunities and weaknesses/challenges remain relevant to this strategic plan update.

### STRENGTHS/OPPORTUNITIES

1. Competent and knowledgeable work force that values service to the community.
2. Teamwork throughout the organization – engaged workforce that collaborates across departments.
3. Communication – strong external communication with an opportunity to strengthen internal communication.
4. Partnerships – collaborative relationships with local (e.g. gov't agencies, non-profits), state, tribal, and federal partners.
5. Fiscal Responsibility – maintain a general fund reserve at 15%, recent voter approved for TBD renewal, utility financial planning.

### WEAKNESSES/CHALLENGES

1. Housing Challenges – cost burdened households, lack of well-paying jobs, housing supply deficit.
2. Formalization of processes within the organization.
3. Organizational succession planning – to maintain delivery of services to the community.
4. Funding to maintain/replace aging infrastructure.
5. Employee Recognition – greatest asset are our employees and need to recognize accomplishments.
6. Lack of childcare availability in the community.



# KEY FOCUS AREAS

To achieve the City’s mission, vision, and model the values, the Strategic Plan has four key focus areas:

- Livability
- Economic Health
- Safe Community
- High Performing Organization

The four key focus areas were determined through the SWOC analysis results; what are the strengths and opportunities for the organization that will aid in accomplishing the strategic plan and what are the weaknesses and challenges to be aware that may prevent accomplishment of the strategic plan. The four key focus areas were refined by the City Council and Leadership Team with the understanding that with each subsequent strategic plan, the focus areas remain the same, but the objectives/priorities identified will likely be modified with each plan update cycle.

Each key focus area includes specific objectives that will transition to action plans for the organization to implement and resource accordingly. The City will begin its next two-year budget (2025-2026) by allocating resources towards initiatives to improve performance in each key focus area.



## LIVABILITY

Livability: what the City of Walla Walla focuses on to execute the organization’s mission of enhancing the quality of life in Walla Walla.



## SAFE COMMUNITY

Organizational readiness around emergency management, infrastructure stability (maintenance/repair/multimodal), and overall community safety.



## ECONOMIC HEALTH

The Economic Health of the community, attracting new businesses and shopping opportunities, and support a strong economy through diverse employment sectors.



## HIGH PERFORMING ORGANIZATION

The City will develop a culture of continuous improvement, collaboration with organizations and partners within the community, financial stability/sustainability, and a well trained and supported work force.

The City of Walla Walla is committed to developing a Strategic Plan that aligns with the city's core values, input from the community, meeting our mission, and striving to achieve our vision. Several participants and survey results contributed to the development of the objectives and initiatives identified in the plan:

- January 2024: Leadership Team reviews 2023 Resident Satisfaction Survey Results
- January 2024: Leadership Team identify priorities
- January 2024: Council work session – review 2023 Resident Satisfaction Survey Results
- February 2024: Council work session – City Council identify priorities
- February 2024: Leadership Team review 2023 Employee Engagement Survey Results
- March 2024: Council work session – review 2023 Employee Engagement Survey Results
- April 2024: Council Retreat refine and narrow priorities
- May 2024: Council work session review draft Strategic Plan
- May 2024: Share draft Strategic Plan with community through virtual open house
- July 2024: City Council meeting – action on Strategic Plan



## LIVABILITY

Strategic Objectives (What)	Initiatives (Transition to How)	Timeframe (When)
1. Address the housing needs within the community (see needs assessment Regional Housing Action Plan).	• Develop an annexation strategy for the city’s urban growth area.	2024-2025
	• Continued implementation of the Regional Housing Action Plan recommendations.	On-going
	• Collaborate and work with private sector to identify barriers to employment.	2025-2027
	• Ensure infrastructure capacity to meet future growth.	2025-2028
2. Address the gap in youth and teen activities.	• Identify and address the gap and collaborate with youth service providers to expand services.	2025-2026

## ECONOMIC HEALTH

Strategic Objective (What)	Initiatives (Transition to How)	Timeframe (When)
1. Collaborate with local and regional partners to achieve economic resilience in the Walla Walla Valley.	• Adopt and implement the tourism master plan.	2024
	• Identify ways to support activities through allocation of lodging tax revenues.	2024-2026
	• Continued advocacy of Highway 12, Phase 8.	2024-2028
	• Collaborate with Port of Walla Walla and partners on recruitment of family wage jobs/opportunities with a focus on properties within the city limits (linked with housing objective).	2024-2028
	• Support community partners on addressing the childcare shortages through collaborating with licensed providers on creative solutions.	2025-2028
2. Increase shopping opportunities in the Walla Walla Valley.	• Maintain inventory for readiness of commercially zoned land for development potential.	2024-2026

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Actively recruit commercial development.</li> </ul>	On-going
--	--	----------

## SAFE COMMUNITY

Strategic Objective (What)	Initiatives (Transition to How)	Timeframe (When)
1. Strengthen the Community Paramedic Program.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Secure sustainable funding sources.</li> </ul>	On-going
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Expand the program to include mental and social health services.</li> </ul>	2024-2025
2. Identify funding for streets and sidewalks.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Secure funding for Pavement Management Program, address sidewalk and ADA gaps.</li> </ul>	2025-2028

## HIGH PERFORMING ORGANIZATION

Strategic Objective 1 (What)	Initiatives (Transition to How)	Timeframe (When)
1. Address current and long-term projected gap between available revenue and resources, what is required to meet service levels and the objectives of the strategic plan.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Implement REET 2 whether through a legislative fix or place as future ballot measure.</li> </ul>	2025-2026
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>HB 1590 advocacy; .1% sales tax for affordable housing and behavioral health.</li> </ul>	2024-2025
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Explore implementation of a sales tax for E911.</li> </ul>	2025-2027
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Adoption of the additional .1% sales tax for the Transportation Benefit District.</li> </ul>	2025
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Support studies to implement development impact fees (parks and fire).</li> </ul>	2025-2026
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Explore implementation of a Metropolitan Parks District.</li> </ul>	2025-2027
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Fee ordinance (fees for service GF) and a process to routinely update.</li> </ul>	2025
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Levying the banked levy capacity.</li> </ul>	2025-2026 (budget)
2. Support employee wellbeing and mental health.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Develop further resources for first responders for mental health services specific to fire, law enforcement, and dispatch.</li> </ul>	2025-2026

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Identify resources to address burnout and stress management.</li> </ul>	On-going
3. Support how we recruit, develop, and retain diverse talent to serve our community.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Develop a comprehensive Employee Recognition program.</li> </ul>	2025
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Develop an organization staffing plan to identify staffing to sustain current and future levels of service.</li> </ul>	2025-2026
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Support training for managers and supervisors to use the Q12 survey results in the continuation of improving employee engagement.</li> </ul>	2025-2026

## STRATEGIC PLAN IMPLEMENTATION AND NEXT STEPS

This Strategic Plan sets the foundational framework for the City of Walla Walla to deploy its mission of enhancing the quality of life in Walla Walla and vision of being the best of the best in the Northwest.

The Strategic Plan is implemented and inform future efforts as follows:

- Each initiative will have an associated action plan detailing how the objective will be achieved.
- Connecting the Strategic Plan's objectives and initiatives to the City budget and investments. Budget proposals will be examined through the lens of the Strategic Plan.
- Long term development of a community dashboard to demonstrate transparency and ensure City Council and the community can evaluate progress over time.
- Provide periodic updates to the City Council on the progress of the Strategic Plan implementation and provide feedback.
- Utilize the Strategic Plan to determine when new priorities are proposed to determine if a previously identified priority needs to be removed.
- Develop and maintain communications about the Strategic Plan and community awareness of the Strategic Plan.