



CASCADE LOCKS

FISCAL YEAR 2025–2026 CITY COUNCIL GOALS



TABLE OF CONTENTS

Introduction 3

Cascade Locks Team..... 4

Vision, Mission and Values..... 5

Community SWOT..... 6

Organizational SWOT..... 7

Goal Refinement Process..... 9

Fiscal Year 2025-2026 Goals..... 10

Parking Lot..... 12

Conclusion..... 13



INTRODUCTION

The City of Cascade Locks is pleased to present this summary of its February 2025 Council Retreat.

On Saturday February 1st the City Council and Leadership Team met to gain a deeper understanding of the current community and organizational landscape. The focus was on refining council annual goals to align with greater strategic plan and the needs of the community to guide the organization over the next year.

To facilitate this process the City engaged fellow Columbia Gorge City Managers Matthew Klebes (The Dalles) and Abigail Elder (Hood River). The retreat was aimed to achieve the following:

- To work with the City Council and Leadership Team to refine their high-level policy goals and supporting actions and to align these efforts with the City’s recently adopted strategic plan.
- Conduct team building that fosters alignment around the Council’s goals and supports a high-performing team to advance the goals.
- Develop a summary report of the Council goals.

Prior to the retreat Managers Klebes and Elder conducted outreach with each Councilor member and gathered input from the leadership team through questionnaires. This information, along with the Cascade Locks Strategic Plan and community feedback, helped shape the retreat agenda to ensure a productive and engaging experience.

During the retreat, staff and Council members reviewed the goals established last year, considering progress made and emerging priorities. They collaborated to assess the current community and organizational context, taking into consideration; staff capacity, the City’s budget and financial outlook, and community priorities. 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.



CASCADE LOCKS TEAM

City Council

Mayor Brenda Wood
Council President Pete Happy
Councilor Marianne Bump
Councilor Denise Emmerling-Baker
Councilor Eric Keller
Councilor Tiffany Pruitt
Councilor Bernard Seeger

City Staff

City Administrator Jordon Bennett
Finance Director Chantia Clarke
City Recorder Kathy Woosley
Fire Chief John Logan
PW Supervisor Sheldon Price
Groundman Derrick Turkington



VISION, MISSION AND VALUES

VISION: Building a thriving, sustainable, and active community in the Heart of the Gorge.

MISSION: The City of Cascade Locks will provide high quality services to the community and promote integrity, stewardship, and relationship building.

VALUES:

Integrity/Trust

Adhere to moral and ethical principles, ensuring that all actions and decisions are made transparently and honestly

Communication

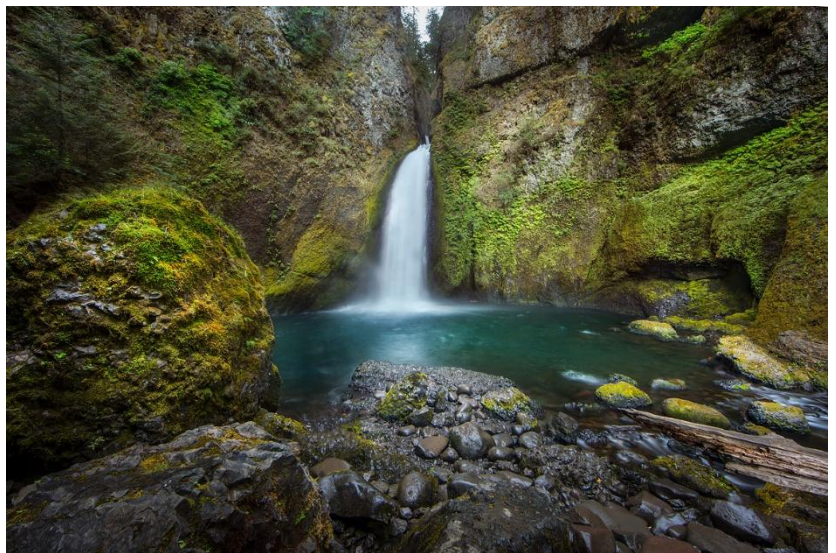
Consistent, relevant and timely distribution of information to residents across several platforms

Respect

Environment where all city employees, councilors, volunteers and residents are treated fairly

Stewardship

Responsible management of the city's resources, including financial, environmental, and human resources



Progress

Continuous improvement and advancement of city services, infrastructure, and overall quality of life for residents

COMMUNITY SWOT

The 2024 Strategic Plan analyzed the Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities and Threats (SWOT) for the Cascade Locks Community as a whole. The Strategic Plan focused heavily on strengths and weaknesses.

With the assistance of the facilitators the Council members and staff completed the community SWOT by reviewing and adding items to the strengths and weaknesses and completed a review of the community's threats and opportunities.

STRENGTHS

- Support for downtown and tourism
- Owning electrical utility
- Community that comes together
- Access to Hood River Valley High School
- Partnership with Port of Cascade Locks
- Water assets
- Developable land

WEAKNESSES

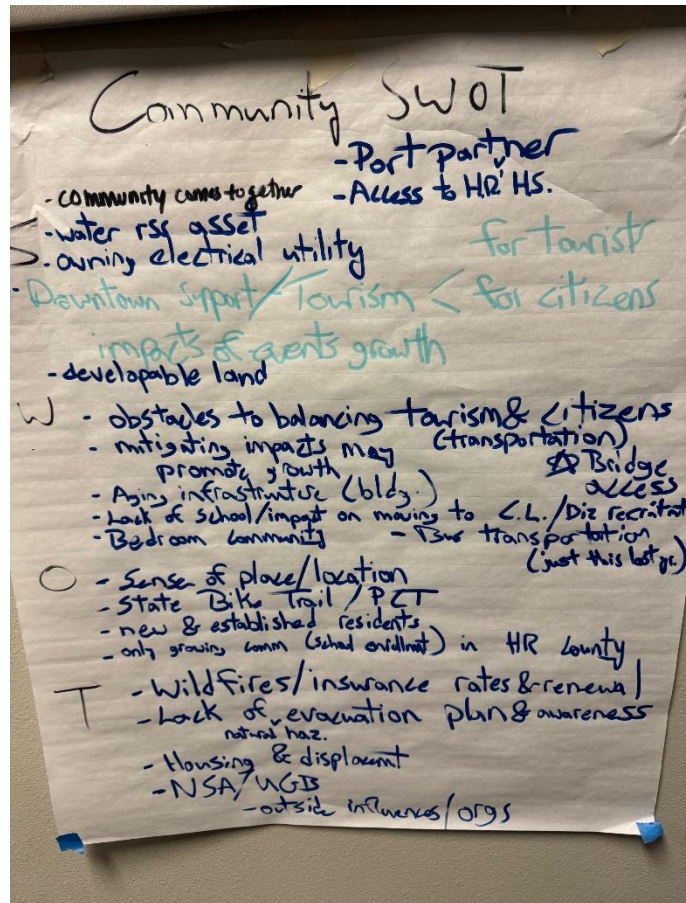
- Obstacles to balancing tourist vs residents (transportation and bridge access)
- Mitigating impacts may promote growth
- Aging infrastructure (Buildings)
- Lack of local school – bussing required
- Bedroom community

OPPORTUNITIES

- Sense of place
- State bike trail and PCT
- New and established residents
- Only growing community (based on school enrollment) in Hood River County

THREATS

- Wildfires and insurance rate increases or lack of renewals
- Lack of evacuation plan and awareness of plan
- Lack of housing and displacement
- National Scenic Area vs Urban Growth Boundary
- Outside influences



ORGANIZATIONAL SWOT

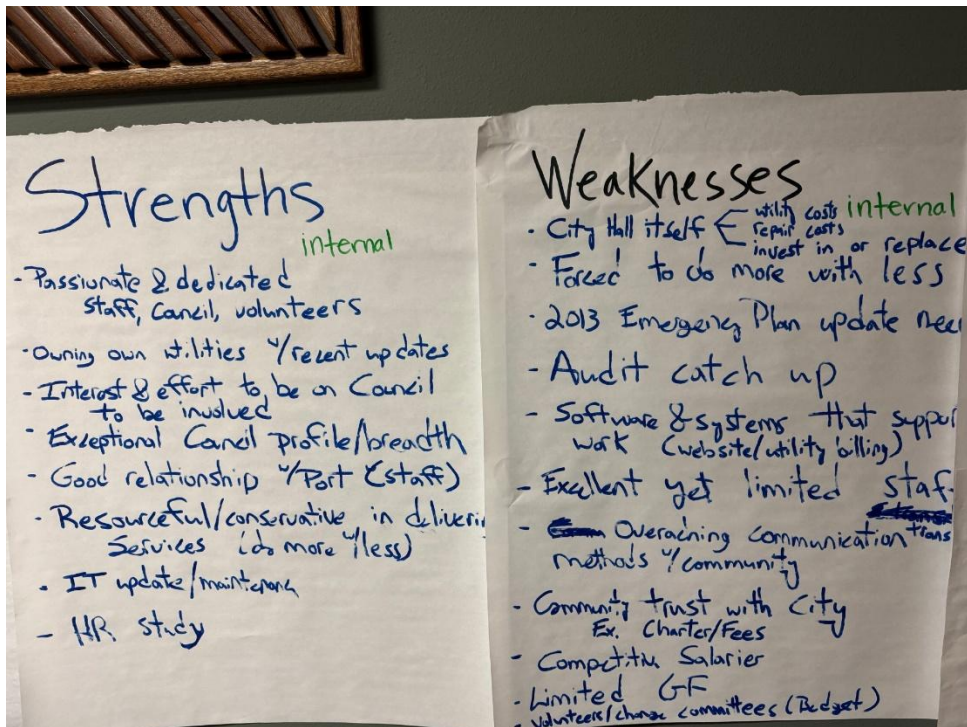
City Council and staff then switched gears to focus on a SWOT analysis for the City as an organization.

STRENGTHS

- Passionate and dedicated staff, council and volunteers
- Owning own electrical utilities with recent updates (water and sewer)
- Strong council with a breath of skills and knowledge
- Resourceful yet conservative in delivering services (do more with less)
- Newly updated IT system and maintenance program
- Recently completed job description review, pay equity study, market analysis and pay structure development

WEAKNESSES

- Forced to do more with less
- City hall (building) is inadequate and failing
- Outdated emergency plan
- Behind on audits
- Limited staff capacity
- Lack of coherent communication system with residents
- Lack of trust between community and city
- Uncompetitive Salaries
- Limited General Fund revenue
- Lack of volunteer bench

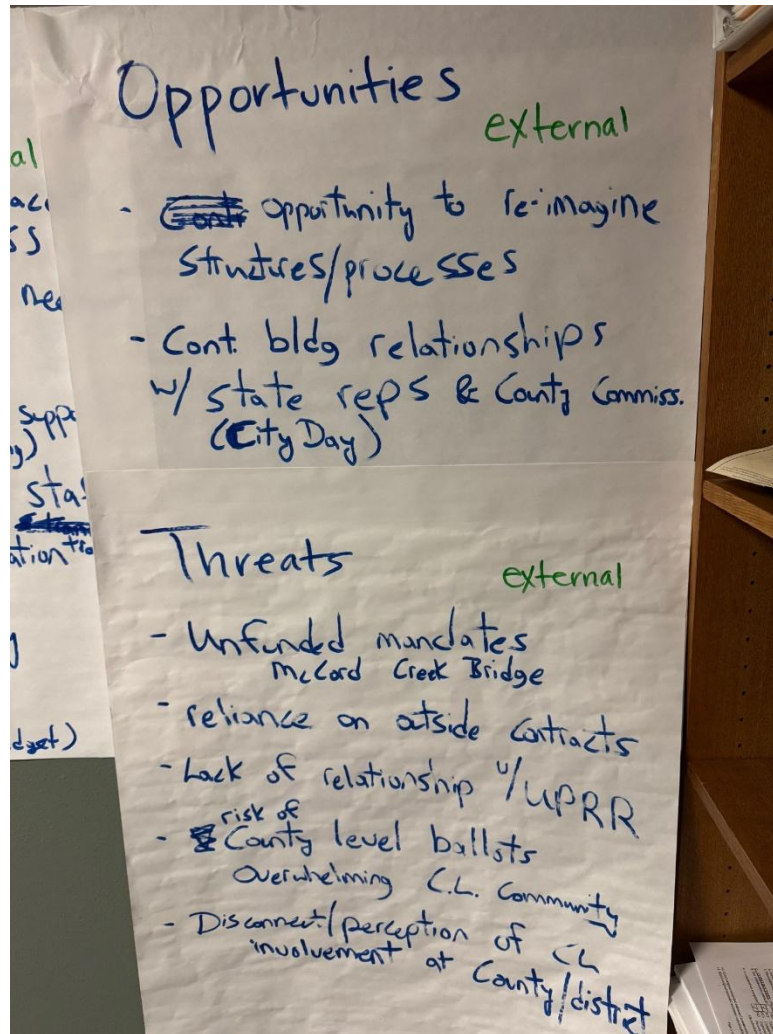


ORGANIZATIONAL SWOT (cont.)

OPPORTUNITIES

Chance to reimagine structure/processes

Continue building relationships with partners (legislators, county commission)



THREATS

Unfunded mandates (e.g. McCord Creek Bridge)

Reliance on outside contracts

Lack of relationship with Union Pacific Railroad

County wide ballots can overwhelm local representation and opinion

Disconnect/perception of Cascade Locks at/with county

GOAL REFINEMENT PROCESS

The City Council and staff meet annually to review and refine the Council goals and, provide policy direction for the upcoming fiscal 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 2024-2025 fiscal year goals and supporting actions. They assessed the completion status of each action, identifying those that were complete or ongoing. Drawing on those insights, the council worked in two small groups to review and discuss action items within their assigned goals from the Cascade Locks Strategic Plan. One group reviewed and discussed Code Improvement/Implementation and Public Services. The other group reviewed and discussed Communication and Housing.

The groups came back together to report out and discuss other ideas including the last strategic goal, Downtown Revitalization. The input was captured on sticky notes. The Council then discussed and selected the top five goals for the 2025-2026 fiscal year.



FISCAL YEAR 2025–2026 GOALS

1)AUDITS

At the time of the retreat the city was two audits behind. City staff discussed a time table with its contracted auditors to complete both backlogged audits within this calendar year and complete the fiscal year 2024-2025 by no later than February 28, 2026.

Audit FY	Original Due Date	Proposed Completion Date
22-23	12/31/2023	5/30/2025
23-24	12/31/2024	10/31/2025
24-25	12/31/2025	2/28/2026

2)Public Safety Funding

Like many of our fellow cities Cascade Locks struggles to meet the ever-expanding cost of providing adequate law enforcement and fire protection. Cascade Locks has the added responsibility of funding ambulatory services for the city and 25 miles of the I-84 corridor and trail systems. Staff will explore all options to secure funding for increased law enforcement coverage via the Hood River County Sheriff's Office and stabilizing funding for the Fire and EMS department that does not put undue burden on the residents of Cascade Locks.



3)CODE ENFORCEMENT

The history of the code enforcement program for the City of Cascade Locks has been hit or miss. At times a dedicated staff member held the enforcement responsibility while at other times the City Administrator conducted code enforcement when time allowed. The investigation of code violations has been mainly complaint based or if staff happen to see them. This has resulted in uneven application of the code. Staff will work to develop a code enforcement program for Council consideration that could be properly funded in terms of staff and abatement funds. Staff will also draft updated codes that can easily and uniformly enforced.

FISCAL YEAR 2025-2026 GOALS (cont.)

4) DOWNTOWN VACANT BUILDINGS/LOTS

The Cascade Locks downtown zone is a mix of new and historic buildings, vibrant and derelict buildings, and jam-packed and vacant lots. Staff will work to draft updated ordinances for Council’s consideration to ease the development process and incentivize updating and maintaining of property. The city will work with businesses and partner agencies to identify potential creative funding solutions.



5) EVALUATE AND DECIDE ON THE FUTURE OF CITY HALL BUILDING



The Cascade Locks city hall building, built in 1925 as a school, has been serving as City Hall in 1949. While the facility has served the community well, it is now showing its age. The current building hosts a variety of community activities beyond city hall operations, including community meetings, a food bank, exercise facilities, youth events, and more. Building a new city hall is a once-in-several-generations project. Cascade Locks aims to ensure that the new facility meets the community's needs and is feasible to construct and maintain. City staff will work to acquire funds to conduct a needs assessment, evaluate the feasibility of renovating or building a new city hall, and perform preliminary engineering.

PARKING LOT

During the course of the retreat and during the brainstorming session staff and council brought of numerous items that did not rise to the top five goals but are still relevant goals and objectives for the city to strive for and focus on when time and funding allows. Those goals and ideas have been broken down into three additional tiers based on their rankings.

TIER TWO

Enhance Communication Platform
Initiate City Council led outreach to community

TIER THREE

Encourage Mixed Use Development
Update CDC to encourage ARU's
Encourage building development – assist with utility access and SDC's
Review City Rates, Fees and Charges for updating
Review City Charter Measure that failed in 2024 to determine voters sentiment on the various elements of the measure

TIER FOUR

Address and develop a solution to committee fatigue
Investigate holding joint meetings with Port
Hire a new Wastewater Operator
Seek ways to provide greater/easier public access to Council Meetings
Improve Employee and Council on-boarding process
Evaluate the future of Overlook Park restrooms and how they fit into overall City goals



CONCLUSION

The Fiscal Year 2025-2026 goals for the City of Cascade Locks reflect a comprehensive and strategic approach to addressing the community's needs and advancing the city's vision. Through a collaborative retreat, the City Council and leadership team have refined their goals to ensure alignment with the strategic plan and community priorities. The goals encompass critical areas such as audits, public safety funding, code enforcement, downtown revitalization, and operational infrastructure.

The commitment to completing backlogged audits and securing sustainable funding for public safety demonstrates the city's dedication to financial accountability and community well-being. The development of a robust code enforcement program and the revitalization of downtown areas aim to enhance the quality of life for residents and foster economic growth. Additionally, the focus on the future of city hall prioritizes both staff moral and efficient operations.

The City of Cascade Locks is poised to make significant strides in the coming fiscal year, driven by a passionate and dedicated team. By leveraging the strengths identified in the SWOT analyses and addressing the identified weaknesses and threats, the city is well-positioned to capitalize on opportunities and navigate challenges. The collaborative efforts of the City Council, staff, and community members will be instrumental in achieving these goals and building a thriving, sustainable, and active community in the Heart of the Gorge.

The City of Cascade Locks looks forward to working together to advance these goals and create a brighter future for all residents.

