



The Dalles
VISION
2040

The Dalles VISION 2040

The Vision Action Plan 2040 reflects input from hundreds of community members to envision a future that maintains the distinctive identity of The Dalles while striving to continually improve quality of life. Over the course of several months, community members contributed ideas and priorities to help shape a roadmap of actions to achieve that future.

The result is a 2040 update to the Vision Action Plan organized around five community focus areas with supporting priorities and projects. Collectively, these focus areas represent essential elements of The Dalles as a strong, healthy, vibrant community that is a welcoming home and thriving place of business for current and future generations.

Community focus areas:

- Enhancing Education
- Creating Economic Vitality
- Providing Recreation and Open Space
- Strengthening and Sustaining Community Life
- Improving Governance and Infrastructure

To recognize the potential for greatest positive impact, the plan also identifies two watershed projects and a number of collaboration projects involving multiple partner organizations.

Watershed opportunities:

- Modern, state-of-the-art school facilities
- Attainable, affordable housing options

Thank you to the community members and organizations who contributed to this plan by sharing ideas and priorities to help make The Dalles even better. Along with the community, the following organizations are some of the key partners working with the City to help bring this vision to life.

The Dalles Vision 2040 Partner Organizations:



**COLUMBIA GORGE
COMMUNITY COLLEGE**



**Mid-Columbia
Community
Action Council**



PORT of THE DALLES




Vision 2040 Overview

In fall 2021, The Dalles embarked on a community-wide visioning process with the goal of creating a shared vision for The Dalles 2040 and an actionable roadmap to achieve that future. Every 10 years, the Vision Action Plan is updated to reflect current community views and opportunities for the future using input from residents, local businesses, and community organizations.

The three key phases of work are outlined below:

- **Phase 1 Report Card: “What have we accomplished?”**
City staff work session and community stakeholder interviews.
- **Phase 2 Vision: “Where are we going?”**
English and Spanish online community survey, followed by an online community town hall and second online survey.
- **Phase 3 Action Plan: “How do we get there?”**
Partner work session, followed by City Council adoption.

Through this effort, five community focus areas were selected along with supporting priorities and projects described in this plan.





The Dalles Vision 2040 brings the community together to create a shared understanding of where we have been and where we are heading. We need your help to set a vision for 2040 and make The Dalles even better!

Take the Community Survey:
Nov. 8-Dec. 6, 2021

We want to hear from as many local voices as possible. Complete this survey, and your name will be included in a prize drawing for a \$100 Visa gift card.

Take the survey online:
surveymonkey.com/r/TheDallesVision2040





Community Visioning Process



Community Focus Areas



About The Dalles

The Dalles is a welcoming, hard-working community with a rich heritage and collaborative spirit that values ingenuity, diversity, and access to the outdoors. With a population of 16,000, The Dalles is the largest city in Wasco County. The community is within easy access of city, desert, and mountain escapes. Residents and visitors alike enjoy the family-friendly, rural feel of a small-town community and the sunshine and beautiful scenery of the nearby Columbia River.

In thinking about the future, community members imagine The Dalles as the commercial, recreational, and social hub of the Columbia Gorge region—a desirable place to both grow up and age gracefully that draws multi-generational families, young professionals, and visitors. Alongside those dreams, community members recognize there are also near-term needs for community health and wellbeing.

Watershed Opportunities

The visioning work identified two watershed opportunities that offer the greatest potential for positive impact and to help address near-term needs. Like many of the projects identified in this plan, these watershed opportunities are collaborations involving multiple community organizations.

Modern, State-of-the-Art School Facilities

Community members pointed to upgrading current school facilities as critical for youth and families, as well as local businesses.

Potential strategies:

- Support get-out-the-vote for school bond to build modern, state-of-the-art facilities.
- Host community events at school facilities to increase awareness of current needs.
- Explore short-term strategies for current students and interim facilities.

Attainable, Affordable Housing Options

Community members identified attainable and affordable housing for a range of community needs as essential to support the local economy.

Potential strategies:

- Update 2016 housing study to better understand current needs and opportunities.
- Explore west side area plan (e.g., W. 2nd Street redevelopment, Chenoweth Loop development).
- Continue vertical housing program, including redevelopment of downtown upper stories.



Community Engagement

The community engagement process was designed to hear from as many local voices as possible using a “Let’s talk about our future” call to action shared with residents and community partners. The key phases of community engagement are highlighted below to gather initial vision ideas and then refine and prioritize those ideas into the actionable path forward summarized in this plan.

Community Survey: Vision Ideas

Initial outreach included an online community survey in English and Spanish to gather ideas for the future of The Dalles. In November and December 2021, 444 participants shared their ideas to sustain and grow the unique character of The Dalles.

Highlights:

- Appreciate the Columbia River, friendly hometown feeling, and unique history of The Dalles.
- Would like more local shopping, outdoor family-friendly events, and access to paths and trails.
- Would like to improve affordable housing and living-wage work opportunities.



Community Town Hall and Survey: Vision Priorities

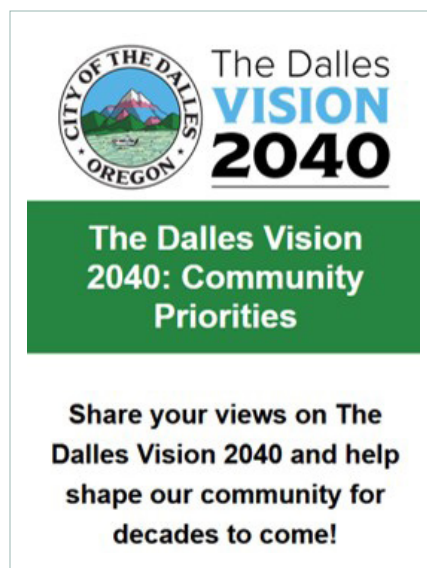
The next phase of outreach included an online community town hall followed by a second online community survey in English and Spanish to refine and prioritize initial vision ideas.

In March 2022, 138 town hall attendees provided input through live polling and facilitated breakout group discussions. Attendees had a chance to hear about initial vision ideas and share what was most important to them.

The community feedback collected during the town hall shaped the second community survey. In April 2022, 601 survey participants shared their input on the most important focus areas and top priorities for the community.

Partner Work Session: Vision Actions

After collecting input from community members, The City of The Dalles hosted a partner organization work session to identify vision actions. In September 2022, representatives from the City and roughly ten community organizations came together to discuss projects and initiatives to help achieve the community priorities.





COMMUNITY FOCUS AREA

Enhancing Education

COMMUNITY PRIORITY

- 1.1 Invest in local school facilities, including outdoor learning spaces and safe ways to bike and walk to school.**
- Projects to achieve priority:
- Partner on safe routes to schools, including safety corridors and off-street school to park connections (e.g., Chenoweth Loop Road/10th Street safety corridor, Mill Creek greenway).
 - Enhance outdoor learning through school and parks partnerships to fund multi-use facilities and through ongoing efforts to improve Mill Creek and Riverfront Park access.
- 1.2 Support internship programs that provide mentorship and hands-on learning with local, small businesses and the technology sector.**
- Projects to achieve priority:
- Support programs at recently completed skills center to promote trade-based careers and connect students with living-wage work locally.
 - Support the Gorge Works Internship program to connect local businesses and students, including opportunities to earn credits and use student housing.
 - Develop a reverse pitch program where students help local businesses create solutions.
 - Revive high school summer carpentry program where students help build a house.

OTHER OPPORTUNITIES

- Consider options for a community childcare center, including potentially re-purposing the high school as a childcare space.
- Collaborate with schools on a bilingual lifeguard and swim instructor training program.
- Support grant funding application for youth programs (e.g., ESD 21st Century grants).



Representative Quotes

"A good school district helps recruit young professionals"

"Good higher education leads to better local business development"

"Take pride in youth and offer quality learning and mentoring"

—Community Feedback



COMMUNITY FOCUS AREA

Creating Economic Vitality

COMMUNITY PRIORITIES

2.1 **Look for funding strategies to make mixed-use development and rehabilitation of downtown historic building spaces more economical.**

Projects to achieve priority:

- Coordinate maintenance and capital improvement projects with urban renewal efforts.
- Continue urban renewal agency efforts.
- Explore energy efficiency programs to reduce operating costs in historic buildings.
- Encourage retail and restaurants in ground floor spaces, including downtown grocery.

2.2 **Raise awareness and add resources to help service workers and small businesses succeed.**

Projects to achieve priority:

- Use recent Wasco County planning efforts to help identify needs for fostering emerging businesses.
- Improve “Open for Business” guide to build awareness of existing resources and make sure process is easy to follow and appealing (e.g., free business license).
- Continue building relationships with current business owners and identify new businesses to recruit to downtown locations.

OTHER OPPORTUNITIES

- Support beautification efforts, including new holiday lights, repainting buildings, and improving attractiveness from the freeway.
- Support Columbia Gorge Regional Airport.
- Explore and support efforts to increase average wage in addition to creating jobs.



Representative Quotes

“We need to be able to live AND work in this community”

“Affordable housing is vital to attract and retain employees”

“Need long-term planning to attract visitors and grow businesses”

—Community Feedback



COMMUNITY FOCUS AREA

Providing Recreation & Open Space

COMMUNITY PRIORITIES	
3.1	<p>Invest in shady, well-maintained parks that provide equitable recreation access, including considering a new park on the west side.</p> <p>Projects to achieve priority:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Secure additional funding to complete Sorosis Park rehabilitation project. • Complete skate park expansion and pumptrack project. • Explore Federal Street plaza concept. • Build a community dog park.
3.2	<p>Invest in safe, well-maintained trails and paths to connect the community, including the Riverfront Trail and bike paths downtown.</p> <p>Projects to achieve priority:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Coordinate bus stop with bicycle and pedestrian improvements to help connect parks, schools, downtown, and the riverfront. • Complete Riverfront Trail and Mill Creek greenway projects. • Improve connections between the dock, underpass, Lewis & Clark park, and downtown, including welcome paths and bike hub location.
OTHER OPPORTUNITIES	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Invest additional resources to maintain downtown trees, landscaping, and other amenities. • Look for grant funding to create wayfinding signage, including a west entrance welcome for visitors and cyclists. • Use or develop existing property as a community youth center.



Representative Quotes

“Recreation helps define our community”

“Livability improvements have a large economic impact”

“Outdoor recreation opportunities increase equity and access for all”

—Community Feedback



COMMUNITY FOCUS AREA

Strengthening & Sustaining Community Life

COMMUNITY PRIORITIES	
4.1	<p>Recruit volunteers to promote family-friendly community events such as art walks, farmers markets, movie nights, and concerts in the park.</p> <p>Projects to achieve priority:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Partner with service groups and high schools to recruit event volunteers and potentially offer modest compensation or credits. • Create hubs of activities and events that draw shoppers and more retailers to the downtown core.
4.2	<p>Plan and promote cultural events that celebrate the community's rich heritage and diversity.</p> <p>Projects to achieve priority:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Create an annual community-wide Cultural Day or series of events. • Increase marketing effort for current community calendar to attract residents and visitors.
4.3	<p>Obtain funding to help preserve and tell the story of historic buildings.</p> <p>Projects to achieve priority:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Support Main Street and efforts to get Oregon Main Street funding. • Work with local museums on events to promote The Dalles' history. • Preserve the Gitchell building.
OTHER OPPORTUNITIES	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Offer local leadership or local government academy through the Chamber of Commerce to engage youth and others. • Involve climate resilience committee in ongoing planning efforts. 	



Representative Quotes

"We have nice things here—we need to take care of them"

"Build a place of community for people of all ages"

"Bring people together with art walks, movie nights, music in the park"

—Community Feedback



COMMUNITY FOCUS AREA

Improving Government & Infrastructure

COMMUNITY PRIORITIES	
5.1	<p>Continue working on long-range strategies to attract and retain businesses and diverse retail.</p> <p>Projects to achieve priority:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Support brownfield redevelopment. • Look to diversify industrial base and seek redevelopment opportunities on existing properties. • Support broadband efforts to help businesses and residents (e.g., QLife project). • Collaborate on large-scale infrastructure planning to support continued business growth with timely and correctly sized infrastructure.
5.2	<p>Successfully deliver partnership projects such as the new hospital campus and youth athletic complex.</p> <p>Projects to achieve priority:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Support multi-agency social service programs to help address houselessness (e.g., Navigation Center). • Explore shared grant writer to find and manage funds for priority projects. • Develop strategy for electric vehicle charging (City and North Wasco PUD).
OTHER OPPORTUNITIES	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Continue focusing on infrastructure maintenance, including streets and sidewalks. • Continue supporting the Link and other public transportation.



Representative Quotes

“Local governance working together and making a team effort is important—we’re too small to do it alone”

—Community Feedback



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