

# Wasco County Strategic Plan



*Pioneering pathways to prosperity*

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# Summary



The Wasco County Strategic Plan provides a blueprint for how County Government will serve our citizens, working as a unified county service provider.

# Key results

- Developed a new and inspiring vision and mission
- Identified the core values that will guide everyday efforts
- Created the framework for a robust culture built on providing exceptional service
- Identified the key pathways to build a prosperous county
- Created a roll-out plan and detailed step-by-step process for implementing the new processes
- **Build a Wasco County team with renewed energy, excitement and focused alignment about what's possible for serving Wasco County in the years to come.**

# Section 1

Setting the stage to go from  
good to great

# Re-envisioning County Government

*Imagine a re-envisioned Wasco County Government.  
What is possible for our County and the people we serve,  
working as a unified county service provider?*

- Efficiency
- One county – not divided
- Trust
- Fun
- Collaboration
- Transparent
- Leaders
- Accountable
- Being Heard/Understood
- Innovative

# Perceptions, beliefs and assumptions

*A shoe factory sends two marketing scouts to a region of Africa to study the prospects for expanding business. One sends back a telegram saying,*

SITUATION HOPELESS STOP NO ONE WEARS SHOES

*The other writes back triumphantly,*

GLORIOUS BUSINESS OPPORTUNITY STOP  
THEY HAVE NO SHOES

# External stereotypes

*What does our team believe the stereotypes are (good or bad) that citizens have about Wasco County as a service provider?*

- ❑ Lots of \$\$\$, why don't we fix stuff
- ❑ No is our preferred answer/bare minimum, don't want to help
- ❑ Government can't manage \$\$ and are wasteful because we've never had to run a business
- ❑ County employees work less than private sector
- ❑ County is not user-friendly
- ❑ County has lots of in-fighting
- ❑ County is a barrier rather than helpful
- ❑ Lazy and incompetent
- ❑ Small truths get blown into a big lie (this happens with citizens)

# External stereotypes

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*What one stereotype would we like to change about Wasco County Government in the next year?*

Shift the external perception from where it is today to  
**The county is here to fairly serve the citizens with honest presentation.**

# Internal stereotypes

*What does our team believe the internal stereotypes are (good or bad) that employees have about Wasco County as an organization?*

- ❑ Family feeling is gone
- ❑ Badly paid employees
- ❑ Silos – courthouse vs. other departments
- ❑ Long-time employees aren't valued
- ❑ If I make a mistake, I'll get punished, end up in the paper or get sued
- ❑ Harbor feelings about past negative experiences

# Internal stereotypes

*What internal stereotype would we like to change and move toward in the next year?*

## **Culture shift to 100% LOVE –**

Management values all employees which includes actions in addition to words; employee contributions make all the difference in the county; honest presentation; “It’s not just about the money” and appreciation beyond the money is shown.

*The 100% Love Culture Guide outlines our cultural goals in more detail*

# 100% Love Culture Guide



## 100% Love:

Building the culture of Wasco County to re-energize how we serve our citizens and each other

In January of 2016, most of the senior management team spent three intense days at Washington Family Ranch for a strategic leadership session. The purpose of the planning session was:

*To create the time and space for county leaders and managers to re-envision how county government can serve the citizens of Wasco County. The Wasco County team is poised to work together in ways that were previously not possible, giving us the opportunity to truly rethink our vision, policies and practices in serving the broad spectrum of people who live here, and in the process reshape how they view Wasco County Government.*

The retreat had three key intentions: *Create a Compelling Vision, Develop a Clear Strategy, and the most important in terms of culture, Commit to Thrive.*

*Commit to Thrive - Recognize that each person on the county team has unique skills to contribute to the success of our efforts. Create excitement for stepping fully into our roles and responsibilities, and build a culture where employees, vendors and constituents become partners in building a prosperous Wasco County.*

After much debate, discussion, questions, arguments, agreements, laughter, tears and yes – even hugs, the team came to consensus on the culture we'd like to consciously build at Wasco County. Many of our departments have already been doing pieces of the culture outlined on the following pages. This document is an acknowledgement of the positive efforts already happening, as well as a challenge to build culture mindfully. One that we believe will retain and attract the best and brightest talent from the county and beyond, energized by what's possible in serving the citizens today, a culture that will leave the legacy of a prosperous Wasco County tomorrow. What makes this discussion special is that this culture was born out of the ashes of controversy and disagreement.

## 100% Love: The Big Picture

The County values all employees, employees value each other, and we all serve citizens to the best of our abilities whether our actions are fully appreciated or not.

- ❑ Actions in addition to words
- ❑ Recognize that employee contributions *make all the difference* in the County
- ❑ Honest presentation of information
- ❑ An attitude of “It’s not just about the money”
- ❑ Show appreciation of staff and respect for citizens

***Building this culture is a journey. It takes time, perseverance and practice!***

# 100% Love Culture Guide

## As an individual

- We provide the extra effort to make sure people walk away from the interaction feeling a little bit better or a bit more satisfied with the service they received. We take the extra step to ensure a positive reaction.

## As a team

- We make sure our teammates are successful. Pitch in to help when struggling or overwhelmed, explain when they don't understand. Hire the right people, with the right traits and right attitude to fit into the culture.

## As an organization

- We support the success of every other department. We make time to help out. We work to cross-train and have cross-functional teams. We seek out partnerships in the community.

## Section 2

“Begin with the end in mind” –  
Creating the vision

# “Giving an A”

## What does a healthy Wasco County look like?

- Room to wander and explore, mentally and physically
- Creativity and innovation associated with our pioneer spirit
- Resiliency
- Family wage jobs
- Recreation
- Diversity
- Safe
- Connection between older and younger generations – wisdom of elders and the energy of youth
- Sense of community (volunteers)
- Collaboration with The Dalles and other organizations
- Potential for prosperity
- Thriving farms and healthy natural resources
- Citizen involvement

# “Giving an A”

## What does a healthy Wasco County team look like?

- Love meeting and working together “Friends”
- Communicate effectively. Communication before action.
- Safe with each other = TRUST
- Believe and live what we’re saying. Walk the talk, genuine.
- Supportive
- Sense of humor with each other, especially in times of stress
- Educated and informed, competent
- Support each other’s success
- Be the premier County management team in the State of Oregon
- Make time for each other
- We know the businesses
- We are comfortable in our own skin with what we’ve launched – unapologetic
- We have the tools to address the questions
- Honesty, truth is heard
- Asking “why”
- Group learning “exercise” each year
- We are the conduit, leading from the “middle”
- We manage the work

# Section 3

Develop a clear strategy

# SWOTT

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Identified key strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, threats and trends

*“Energy and excitement about what we can do for citizens”*

*“Public perception still needs work”*

*“New funding sources through grants, etc.”*

*“No living wage employer in town that doesn’t get its income from this community”*

*“Infrastructure demands are increasing due to aging”*

# Vision, mission, core values



**What is unique about Wasco County – its history, its citizens, and what they need – that feeds our vision of service?**

# Vision statement

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## *Pioneering pathways to prosperity*

*Pioneering:* To invent new things, go into unexplored territory. We will look to find innovative ways to open doors and create opportunities for Wasco County to prosper.

*Pathways:* We are a County of pathways, from past to present. These pathways not only serve as avenues to market, recreation, and agriculture, they are the intangible pathways that allow us to move forward toward an opportunity. We will help citizens find the right path.

*Prosperity:* Travelers on the Oregon Trail headed West in search of prosperity for their families, we follow a similar trail in search of prosperity for Wasco County. We balance where we came from with where we are going.

# Mission statement



***Partner with our citizens to proactively meet their needs and create opportunities.***

We will work with citizens, in an active versus reactive way, to create opportunities that “pioneer pathways to prosperity.”

# Core Values

## **Embody the 100% Love culture**

- Equity and fairness in all things
- Keep an open mind and be open to change
- Kindness and compassion for people who live in our community
- Love what you do and have fun doing it
- Build a strong team
- Excellence in service

## **Relationships are primary**

- Relationships come first, whether individuals or organizations
- Be a good neighbor
- Use honest and active communication
- Say what you mean, with 100% Love

## **Do the right thing, even when no one is watching**

- Provide open access and transparency
- Accountable for actions and decisions
- Be impeccable stewards of our resources
- Strive to be the best performing rural county government

# Pathways: actions and outcomes

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- Technology
- Customer Service
- Infrastructure and Resources
- Communication
- Financial Health
- Safety
- Organizational Development

# Pathway example: Technology

*Strategy Statement:* To use technology to leverage new and existing service delivery methods while creating efficiencies in our work product. To promote the use of technology to better connect and communicate with people.

## Directional Statements:

- The county will work on implementing the use of technology to provide integrated services.
- Through technology, make Wasco County government more transparent.
- Initiate ways of using technology to allow the public to better communicate with the County.
- Promote the services available through Wasco County.

## Key Organizational Actions and Intended Outcomes

Action	Baseline	Intended Outcome	Target for Completion	Related Pathways
Have public records associated with a specific piece of property available through the County GIS map	Web map	Connect existing systems to web map	3 year	2, 4, 7
Website redesign and enhanced information available	Current site	Updated content, enhanced information	1 year	2, 4



Questions?