



North Plains continues to be the fastest growing community in Washington County, and among the most rapidly developing in the Metro area. Thoughtful growth requires smart planning. The City Council held a goal retreat in 2022 and developed a vision and set of streamlined goals and outcomes to keep us focused on serving and growing our community in a healthy and sustainable manner. Although we have accomplished a lot, much work remains to meet the Council's vision for a complete community. I'll provide a brief recap of progress in 2023 here, as well as a look ahead.

### 2022 - 2024 CITY COUNCIL GOALS

**VISION: North Plains, the crossing of community, economic opportunity, and a destination experience.**

**Goal 1: Community engagement that brings people together.**

*Outcome: A social infrastructure that fosters involvement, community pride, and volunteerism. Create a pipeline of engaged community members.*

*Progress in 2023:* The City partnered with the North Plains Events Association to hold ten regular community events, with continued high attendance. In particular, the Elephant Garlic Festival again hosted tens of thousands of visitors in the middle of the community, and the Oodles and Doodles events and the Holiday Jingle were also quite attractive. One of the jewels of the event season in 2023 was the City's 60<sup>th</sup> anniversary event that co-opted the usual ice cream social, a very fun downtown event that featured a popular musical act. The City hosted two groundbreaking for public projects (Jessie Mays playground and public works facility), as well as a late-year holiday mixer to recognize our board volunteers. The City supported the re-start of the Community Food Bank in the North Plains Senior Center. The City conducted outreach and community meetings on UGB expansion and the May 2023 Local Option Levy. Our library continued its splendid patron engagement by conducting a satisfaction survey in the fall, making over 50 school classroom visits to promote summer reading, and promoting various cultural and community programs throughout the year. In the final quarter of the year, the City Council adopted an updated communications plan that will focus much of our engagement work in 2024.





*Ahead for 2024:* The RARE Coordinator is hoping to re-start a Thursday night farmers market in downtown North Plains. We will look to expand on the regular ice cream social to make it a “Summer Social” downtown, to kick off summer and provide music and entertainment. We plan to hold a goals refinement retreat with Council to focus on strategy and a mission/vision/values discussion that will guide City work. The newly adopted communications plan will kick into gear to further our engagement opportunities. Key tactics to connect with residents and businesses include the launch of a revamped website in the first quarter, a City podcast, and a civic academy later in the year. The City will participate in two elections in 2024 and our staff will ensure the community has access to and confidence in our election system. Continued American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) investments in various community projects that promote engagement and livability. The NP Library will conduct new and inventive programming to extend our outreach and inclusivity with a Diwali celebration, evening storytimes, and artist receptions, while continuing several thematic months that celebrate the community’s culture and diversity.



**Goal 2: Intentional and managed growth.**

*Outcome: Attract targeted growth that supports economic opportunity, fiscal sustainability, a distinct community identity, a vibrant downtown, and overall community livability.*

*Progress in 2023:* After many years of work, resources spent, and community meetings, the City Council adopted a UGB expansion ordinance that set the community on a growth path for the next 20+ years. That ordinance was subsequently challenged with a repeal petition, and the referendum will be on the May 2024 ballot. The Economic Development Committee expanded its membership and became a standing body through ordinance. The EDC was also renamed the Economic Development Commission and will take on a larger role in community development in North Plains. The Planning Commission and City Council adopted

the downtown plan with a full implementation strategy, including code recommendations that should help stimulate growth and opportunity downtown. A local option levy to increase police service and bring fiscal stability to the City finances was rejected by the voters but introduced new topics for financial sustainability for the Council and community to consider. The Urban Renewal Agency purchased a strategic piece of property downtown to accommodate a future civic center, opening further downtown redevelopment opportunities for housing choice and commercial space. Despite inflationary pressures and

lending rates, homebuilding (and selling) pace continued unabated at Brynhill as residents find North Plains a desirable place to live.

*Ahead for 2024:* The City will continue to work on educating residents and business about the proposed UGB expansion, both before and after the May vote. The City will work closely with agency partners and targeted industry development on concept planning the expansion areas using the State grant dollars awarded in 2022. The URA will leverage Brownfield funding to perform pre-development site preparation (including



clearing/grubbing and hazmat abatement) for the Glencoe Opportunity Area grocery center. Year 3 of the RARE program will continue coordination on a new downtown association to convene businesses focusing on downtown improvement. Staff will begin the process of a URA plan amendment once the details of the UGB areas are sorted. Planning department will launch Washington County's first ready-made/pre-approved ADU plans that will lower the cost barrier and shorten the time frame to promote additional housing types. The URA will replace the pole banners along Glencoe and Commercial Street. The corner entrance to downtown at West Union/Commercial and Glencoe will receive a makeover with new signage and improved landscaping once the new sidewalk is installed.

**Goal 3: City services aligned with community growth.**

*Outcome: Increase the level of City services to align with growth projections, improving health and safety services, and providing shared community spaces.*

*Progress in 2023:* Continued work on the capital improvement plan, including the final design and new construction of a public works facility and bids for waterline, pavement, and sidewalk work. We used ARPA funding to conduct phase II of the broadband feasibility study, including a financial analysis and business plan. We made some organizational changes and welcomed a new information services contractor to the team that will now act as the City's IT manager/department, with a renewed focus on cybersecurity and digital efficiency. A grant from the Metropolitan Area Communications Commission (MACC) is helping to pay for the functions. We were awarded a State Water Resources grant to study feasibility of an Aquifer Storage Recovery (ASR) system. City Council adopted a new water



rate design system that resulted in no new rate increase for this fiscal year (no increases since 2013), but with some minor escalation starting in FY2025 to accommodate inflation and system capital improvements and future growth.

*Ahead for 2024:* Capital improvement projects include new infill sidewalks downtown and finished design and bidding for Pacific Street pedestrian improvements. The ASR study will wrap up in late 2024 to determine if a project is feasible. The City will study water security and supply options to accommodate future growth and seismic resilience. The Public Works facility/Emergency Operations Center will open for occupancy in the fourth quarter. The City Council and community will further study civic center concepts in downtown North Plains, leading to schematic design. Staff intend to pursue Congressionally Directed Spending (Federal earmark) opportunities for design and pre-development costs. A new police chief will be sworn in to lead the North Plains Police Department. The Library will use grant dollars and continue its investments in community accessibility in the public computer lab and in the children's area. The City's concept planning will investigate opportunities for future industrial lands readiness as well as new parks and trails. New master plans will determine future parks and other infrastructure needs.

