



2024 – 2026

# STRATEGIC PLAN

AUGUST 2023





RAPP CONSULTING GROUP

RE: 2024-2026 Strategic Plan – City of Richland

Dear Mayor Christensen,

On behalf of the Rapp Consulting Group team, I am pleased to present the 2024-2026 Strategic Plan and Summary Report to the City of Richland. The plan reflects the organization's priorities, commitment to measurable results and the delivery of quality services.

It has been a pleasure assisting the City of Richland with this important project. The City Council displayed clear thinking, dedication, and focused effort.

We particularly wish to thank City Manager Jon Amundson and Assistant City Manager Drew Florence for their help and support during the process.

Yours truly,

Craig R. Rapp  
President



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# EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

From June 2022 through July 2023, the City of Richland engaged in a strategic planning process. The process yielded a strategic plan covering 2024-2026.

The plan consists of five **strategic priorities** — the issues of greatest importance to the City of Richland over the next three years. Associated with each priority is a set of **desired outcomes, key outcome indicators, and performance targets**, describing expected results and how the results will be measured. The plan also includes **strategic initiatives** that will be undertaken to achieve the targeted outcomes.

The planning effort began with an examination of the operating environment, consisting of an environmental scan, a community survey, an internal stakeholder survey, a set of focus groups, City Council interviews, a SWOT analysis, and an effective governance session.

On March 24, 2023, the City’s leadership team held a full day strategic planning session. They developed a set of priorities, key outcomes, performance targets, and reviewed the organization’s vision, mission, and values.

Based upon those priorities, the City’s management team met on April 27, 2023 to identify a set of strategic initiatives and develop detailed action plans. The strategic priorities, key outcome indicators, performance targets and strategic initiatives are summarized here and on the following page.



The Plan

## Five Strategic Priorities

- 1 HIGH-PERFORMANCE GOVERNMENT
- 2 FINANCIAL SUSTAINABILITY
- 3 FOCUSED DEVELOPMENT
- 4 QUALITY OF LIFE
- 5 ENGAGED WORKFORCE



# STRATEGIC PLAN SUMMARY 2024–2026

## City of Richland

Strategic Priority	Desired Outcome	Key Outcome Indicator	Target	Strategic Initiatives
<b>High-Performance Government</b> <i>Operations that support reliable service delivery</i>	Enhanced community engagement	- Increased public trust - Well-informed stakeholders - Input received on significant city issues	- 5% increase in overall confidence in the City 2023-2026 - 5% increase in residents feeling informed on issues by 2026 - New Communications Plan implemented by 2026 - 5% increase in the feeling that the City is open and transparent by 2026	a) Redesign website b) Develop a city-wide Communications Plan c) Implement a Community Meeting Program d) Develop and implement organizational key performance indicators (KPIs) e) Create a Legislative Advocacy Program f) Upgrade utility billing portal
	Improved operational performance	- Improvement in key process performance	- 100% of departmental KPI's established by 2025 - 5% increase in quality of utility billing rating before 2026	
	Strengthened partnerships	- New partnerships formed - Amended partnership agreements - # of legislative trips	- Complete 3 legislative trips (2 state, 1 federal) annually between 2024-2026 - One new major joint venture project achieved by 2026	
<b>Financial Sustainability</b> <i>A fiscally responsible community</i>	Ability to finance infrastructure and capital needs	- Funding-to-need ratio - % of capital needs funded - Rolling average	- A comprehensive Asset Management Plan in place by 2026	a) Implement the Asset Management and Work Order system
	A diverse revenue base	- # of new revenue sources	- TBD grant applications submitted during FY 2025 - TBD new development incentives by 2026	b) Establish a long-term revenue and reserve forecasting model c) Develop and maintain robust financial policies d) Actively seek grant opportunities
	Well-managed resources	- Budget-to-actual ratio - Year-end fund balance/surplus - # of financial policies published	- Maintain or improve reserves - all operating funds - 100% of best practices identified and subsequent policies published by year end 2024	e) Create a commercial tax initiative strategy
<b>Focused Development</b> <i>Development that meets community needs</i>	Increased housing availability	- # of new attainable units	- 4% increase of new housing units by 2026 - 5% of new attainable housing units by 2026	a) Create and implement infill and redevelopment strategies in the CBD
	A vibrant downtown	- # of new housing units - CBD public realm investments	- 5% annual growth of new housing units in the CBD 2024-2026 - Increase \$ spent in CBD by 10% by 2026 - Increase in cumulative event attendance by 10% by 2026	b) Create a plan to enhance public investment in the CBD c) Develop an attainable housing strategy d) Develop a plan to recruit targeted energy industries
	Northwest Advanced Clean Energy Park initiated	- # of requests of information	- Increase number of requests for information (RFI) by 5% by 2026	e) Focused recruitment strategy for clean energy jobs
<b>Quality of Life</b> <i>Maintain / enhance quality of life</i>	Increased feeling of safety in the community	- % of community reporting feeling safe - Change in crime rate	- 5% increase in overall safety by 2026 - Crime #'s at or below state average annually	a) Develop an integrated Community Safety Plan b) Advance implementation of the Complete Streets Policy as codified in RMC12.06
	Improved pedestrian and bicycle mobility	- Ease of walking and travel by bicycle rating	- Increase rating for ease of walking and travel by bicycle by 5% by 2026 - 3% increase in quality of the parks, facilities, paths, and walking trails by 2026	c) Develop a park, trail, and public facilities strategy
	Enhanced recreational opportunities	- # of signature events	- Increase signature events by 3 from 2024-2026	d) Create an enhanced Community Event and Entertainment Program
<b>Engaged Workforce</b> <i>A capable, dedicated workforce</i>	A well-trained workforce	- Training goals met - Training completed	- 100% of employees completing required/core training by 2026	a) Develop and implement a Workforce Development Plan b) Implement COR Leadership Development Program
	Staff capacity to meet service demands	- Authorized strength - Retention rate	- Maintain => authorized strength	c) Develop an Employee Engagement Plan
	Improved leadership capabilities	- Internal hiring rate management	- => 75% of all management hires are from within organization	d) Create an Employee Recruitment and Retention Program



## OUR VISION

Richland, a dynamic city built on a foundation of leading technology, extensive natural resources, diverse recreational amenities, and a supportive business climate. The City is safe, vibrant, and family-friendly. The community you'll want to call home.



## OUR MISSION

The City of Richland is responsible for furnishing cost-effective services and well-maintained facilities, safeguarding the public and property, enhancing the community's favorable quality of life, protecting Richland's natural environment, and sustaining a healthy, growing economy.



## OUR VALUES

### Teamwork

We will work together, demonstrating collaboration through mutual reliability, openness, and flexibility to accomplish our goals.

### Integrity

We will demonstrate an uncompromising allegiance to the core values of honesty, respect for others, loyalty, consistency, accountability, and sincerity.

### Excellence

We will deliver a superior level of commitment, responsiveness, performance, and provision of services to all, with the attitude that everything is worth our best effort.

# Reviewing the Environment, Setting Strategic Priorities

An important part of the strategic planning process is a review of the current operating environment and an evaluation of the challenges confronting the community. This was accomplished via a SWOT analysis—a process that examines the organization’s internal strengths and weaknesses, as well as the opportunities and threats in the external environment. To facilitate this, a SWOT questionnaire was distributed to the City Council and senior staff in advance of the planning session. Using the SWOT data, a small group review process revealed the most frequently mentioned characteristics in each area.

## STRENGTHS

- Service delivery
- Parks
- Special events

## WEAKNESSES

- Communications/education (AMI, permits, consistent, multi-channel citizen communications)
- More diverse, enhanced events
- Customer service
- Tools to enable inter-departmental collaboration for consistent, comprehensive engagement

SWOT  
Analysis

- Citizen engagement
- Promote diverse economic development
- Provide more services
- Recruit and retain top talent
- Enhance and further develop City brand

## OPPORTUNITIES

- Affordable housing
- Support for public safety (community education)
- Managing development & re-development
- Cost escalation/funding
- Tax implications

## THREATS

# STAKEHOLDER FEEDBACK

The strategic planning process included stakeholder feedback, both internally and community-based. This was done to collect information on community needs and expectations on a variety of issues, as well as organizational issues that impact service delivery. This provided useful information to the City Council, helping them make informed choices.

Stakeholder engagement included:

- A survey of internal stakeholders, including employees
- A community-wide survey conducted by the National Research Center at POLCO
- A series of focus groups, representing a cross section of the community, including Richland Board/Committee/Commission members

## Internal Survey Results

A survey of internal stakeholders was conducted in November and December of 2022.

### KEY TAKEAWAYS

- The majority of the respondents were full-time non-supervisory staff (65%), followed by full time supervisory staff (28%) and part time, seasonal, or temporary staff (6%).
- 91% identified the quality of services in Richland as Excellent or Good, and 90% identified the overall quality of life in Richland as Excellent or Good.
- Respondents identified high and medium priorities for Richland for the next three years. Responses included public safety (97%), financial sustainability (94%), infrastructure (92%), economic development (87%), recruiting of city staff (84%), and affordability/cost of living (82%).
- Respondents were very positive about working for the City of Richland. Respondents strongly or somewhat agreed with the following statements:
  - I am likely to stay with Richland for another year (88%).
  - I would apply to this position again (86%).
  - I would recommend working at Richland to friends (83%).





## National Community Survey Results

A community-wide survey was conducted May 2 to July 8, 2022, as part of the strategic planning process. POLCO, a nationally recognized community engagement firm, was hired to deploy their National Community Survey®, a survey used in cities throughout the United States. The survey questions explored the quality of city services, quality of life in Richland, opportunities for improvement, and priorities for the future.

### KEY TAKEAWAYS

- Richland's economy is a strong community feature. The majority of respondents indicated Richland's overall economic health either Good or Excellent (77%), and 74% indicated there are quality businesses and establishments.
- Many aspects of Richland's community design received positive reviews, but residents identify some potential areas of opportunity for the City. 8 in 10 residents identified their neighborhood as a good or excellent place to live. 6 in 10 residents positively rated the overall design and appearance of Richland. The land use, planning, zoning, code enforcement, lack of affordable housing were identified as areas of opportunity.
- Most residents feel a strong sense of safety in Richland. 73% of residents positively rated the overall feeling of safety. Additionally:
  - 93% feel safe in their neighborhood during the day.
  - 90% feel safe in Richland's downtown/commercial area.
  - 72% feel safe from violent crime and 63% feel safe from property crime.
- Residents appreciate Richland's natural environment and recreational opportunities. 8 in 10 residents gave Good or Excellent ratings to city parks, availability of walking paths and trails, fitness opportunities and the overall quality of parks and recreation.



## Focus Group Results

Focus groups were conducted on November 7, 2022 by the Rapp Consulting Group (RCG). Participants included residents from several groups including: the business community, newer residents, long-term residents, boards, commissions, and committee chairs, and those able to speak to quality of life in Richland.

These Focus Groups were used to gather in-depth information about the community's thoughts and opinions about a designated topic. The interactions enabled participants to ask questions of each other, as well as to re-evaluate and reconsider their own understandings of their specific experiences.

As the facilitator, the RCG gathered information in an impartial and confidential manner, managed the pace of the discussion, and ensured that everyone had a chance to participate.

### KEY TAKEAWAYS

- Public safety was a major theme for the focus groups. Although many participants feel that they are safe now, there are concerns that this will change as the City grows. Neighboring cities are seeing more crime and there is concern that it may come to Richland. Panhandling is more visible and now there are people outside of all the major stores. Overall response times are good (although the ability to recruit police officers was a concern), and public safety personnel are seen as friendly and helpful. Speeding was an issue discussed at length in several groups.
- Economic development and the “Downtown” were discussed by several groups, with different perspectives. Some identified The Parkway as being downtown-ish and wanted more of an emphasis on development in the central/core Richland area. Many wanted to create a mixed-use development with retail, restaurants and housing that would have a downtown-like appeal. Many participants saw the need to retain younger residents tied to an urban environment with amenities within walking distance. Zoning requirements are seen as out of date, especially parking requirements, and those that impact the affordability of infill development.





## KEY TAKEAWAYS CONTINUED

- The importance of good schools was mentioned by all groups. The schools are good, and the kids tend to have very educated and involved parents, according to all the groups. Participants noted that it's also an advantage to have WSU Tri-Cities in the area, but some noted that there should be more trade schools available in the area to support different career paths. There was also concern about whether the schools would be able to keep up with growth.
- Housing is a concern as home prices continue to rise, which impacts recruitment for area companies. A diversity of housing to accommodate more than wealthy residents was discussed repeatedly as a need. Zoning should allow more creative housing solutions and is seen as exclusionary at times.
- Infrastructure was seen as needing improvement. While some were aware of the five-year improvement plan, there was a desire to prioritize improvements now and not just in the future. Participants also noted inconsistency in road conditions, sidewalks, etc., depending on what part of Richland you are in. The lack of sidewalks on both sides of the street was seen as an important safety concern, especially for children walking to school and residents with disabilities.
- Strengths mentioned were city services on one bill, parks, area amenities including the river, the library, area medical care, and community events.
- Opportunities for improvement plowing of snow, siloed city departments, and the need for more rental housing. Residents would like more amenities, such as Bend, OR or Yakima, and encouraged collaboration between the Tri-Cities to explore options.



# STRATEGIC PRIORITY 1

## High-Performance Government



### Outcome

Enhanced community engagement

### Key outcome indicator

Increase public trust; well-informed stakeholders; input received on significant city issues

### Target

5 % increase in overall confidence in the city 2023-2026; 5 % increase in residents feeling informed on issues by 2026; New communications plan implemented by 2026; 5 % increase in the feeling that the City is open and transparent by 2026

### Outcome

Improved operational performance

### Key outcome indicator

Improvement in key process performance

### Target

100% of departmental KPI's established by 2025; 5 % increase in utility billing rating before 2026

### Outcome

Strengthened partnerships

### Key outcome indicator

New partnerships formed; amended partnership agreements; # of legislative trips

### Target

Complete 3 legislative trips (2 state, 1 federal) annually between 2024-2026; one new major joint venture project achieved by 2026

## STRATEGIC INITIATIVES

- a. Redesign website
- b. Develop a city-wide Communications Plan
- c. Implement a Community Meeting Program

- d. Develop and implement organizational key performance indicators (KPIs)
- e. Create a Legislative Advocacy Program
- f. Upgrade utility billing portal



## STRATEGIC PRIORITY 2

# Financial Sustainability



### Outcome

Ability to finance infrastructure and capital needs

### Key outcome indicator

Funding-to-need ratio; % of capital needs funded; rolling average

### Target

A comprehensive Asset Management Plan in place by 2026

### Outcome

A diverse revenue base

### Key outcome indicator

# of new revenue sources

### Target

TBD grant applications submitted during FY 2025; TBD new development incentives by 2026

### Outcome

Well-managed resources

### Key outcome indicator

Budget to actual ratio; year-end fund balance/surplus; # of financial policies published

### Target

Maintain or improve reserves – all operating funds; 100% of best practices identified and subsequent policies published by year end 2024

## STRATEGIC INITIATIVES

- a. Implement the Asset Management and Work Order system
- b. Establish a long-term revenue and reserve forecasting model

- c. Develop and maintain robust financial policies
- d. Actively seek grant opportunities
- e. Create a commercial tax initiative strategy

## STRATEGIC PRIORITY 3

# Focused Development



### Outcome

Increased housing availability

### Key outcome indicator

# of new attainable units

### Target

4% increase of new housing units by 2026; 5% of new attainable housing units by 2026

### Outcome

A vibrant downtown

### Key outcome indicator

# of new housing units; CBD public realm investments

### Target

5% annual growth of new housing units in the CBD 2024-2026; Increase \$ spent in CBD by 10 % by 2026; Increase in cumulative event attendance by 10% by 2026

### Outcome

Northwest Advanced Clean Energy Park initiated

### Key outcome indicator

# of requests of information

### Target

Increase number of requests for information (RFI) by 5% by 2026

## STRATEGIC INITIATIVES

- a. Create and implement infill and redevelopment strategies in the CBD
- b. Create a plan to enhance public investment in the CBD
- c. Develop an attainable housing strategy
- d. Develop a plan to recruit targeted energy industries
- e. Focused recruitment strategy for clean energy jobs

## STRATEGIC PRIORITY 4

# Quality of Life



### Outcome

Increased feeling of safety in the community

### Key outcome indicator

% of community reporting feeling safe; change in crime rate

### Target

5% increase in overall safety by 2026; crime #'s at or below state average annually

### Outcome

Improved pedestrian and bicycle mobility

### Key outcome indicator

Ease of walking and travel by bicycle rating

### Target

Increase rating for ease of walking and travel by bicycle by 5% by 2026; 3 % increase in quality of the parks, facilities, paths, and walking trails by 2026

### Outcome

Enhanced recreational opportunities

### Key outcome indicator

# of signature events

### Target

Increase signature events by 3 from 2024-2026

## STRATEGIC INITIATIVES

- Develop an integrated Community Safety Plan
- Advance implementation of the Complete Streets Policy as codified in RMC 12.06

- Develop a park, trail, and public facilities strategy
- Create an enhanced Community Event and Entertainment Program

## STRATEGIC PRIORITY 5

# Engaged Workforce



### Outcome

A well-trained workforce

### Key outcome indicator

Training goals met; training completed

### Target

100% of employees completing required/core training by 2026

### Outcome

Staff capacity to meet service demands

### Key outcome indicator

Authorized strength; retention rate

### Target

Maintain  $\geq$  authorized strength

### Outcome

Improved leadership capabilities

### Key outcome indicator

Internal hiring rate management

### Target

$\geq$  75 % of all management hires are from within organization

## STRATEGIC INITIATIVES

- a. Develop and implement a Workforce Development Plan
- b. Implement COR Leadership Development Program

- c. Develop an Employee Engagement Plan
- d. Create an Employee Recruitment and Retention Program



# STRATEGIC PLANNING PARTICIPANTS

The strategic plan was developed with the hard work and dedication of many individuals. The City Council led the way, taking time out of their schedules to commit to long-term thinking. They defined a direction and a set of outcomes that are important to the community stakeholders with whom they partner and serve.

The City's senior staff supported the City Council and offered an operations perspective as well as challenges to conventional thinking.

## City Council

Terry Christensen, Mayor  
Theresa Richardson, Mayor Pro Tem  
Jhoanna Jones  
Sandra Kent  
Ryan Lukson  
Shayne VanDyke  
Ryan Whitten

## Department Heads & Staff

Jon Amundson, City Manager  
Joe Schiessl, Deputy City Manager  
Drew Florence, Assistant City Manager  
Brandon Allen, Finance Director  
Hollie Alexander, Communications & Marketing Manager  
Brigit Clary, Chief of Police  
Laura Hester, Parks & Public Facilities Director  
Tom Huntington, Fire Chief  
Kerwin Jensen, Development Services Director  
Heather Kintzley, City Attorney  
Lacey Paulsen, Human Resources Director  
Pete Rogalsky, Public Works Director  
Clint Whitney, Energy Service Director

## Consultants

Rapp Consulting Group  
Craig Rapp  
Cory Poris Plasch