

STRATEGIC PLAN

2026-2031

Customer Service | Organizational Excellence | Convening



OREGON
Cascades West
Council of Governments

Making lives and communities better.



VISION

Make lives and communities better.



MISSION

Promote a thriving region through service, connectivity, and innovation.



COMPASSION • COLLABORATION • INTEGRITY • RESPECT • BELONGING

Albany

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Albany, OR 97322
541-967-8630

Corvallis

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Corvallis, OR 97330
541-758-1595

Toledo

203 North Main Street
Toledo, OR 97391
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Next year marks the 60th year Cascades West has served as a Council of Governments in the region. We continue to evolve as an organization, with a commitment to level up our work and effectiveness on behalf of the member governments we represent and the consumers we serve.

As part of this integrated approach, we have rebranded, launched a new website, and continue to add more robust communication and structural supports. Building upon the clarity of our previous strategic plan, I'm excited to introduce our priorities and vision for the next 5 years to create impacts and outcomes that truly matter.

Crafting a strategic roadmap for the future while continuing to execute effectively in the present is a tremendous challenge. To ensure the intention and focus we undertook back in 2023 with our initial strategic plan and priorities, we engaged both internal and external partners, including our member governments, elected officials, board members, and our cherished employees, in the rigor of refreshing our strategic priorities, goals, and action plans over the last several months.

Our vision, **to make lives and communities better**, is at the heart of everything we do at Cascades West. This underscores our mission to promote a thriving region through service, connectivity, and innovation. Our values of compassion, collaboration, integrity, respect, and belonging guide the way we work with one another, respond to community needs, and build stronger connections across our region. These collective ideals express who we are as members of this community and the standard we expect of ourselves as an organization.

Our strategic priorities are centered on **Customer Service, Organizational Excellence, and Convening**. While we hope that much of what you currently experience in service from us is high quality, we are committed to measurable improvements and increased capacity in each of these areas, learning with and from you.

I invite you to learn more about Cascades West through this updated Strategic Plan, newly launched website, or directly from one of our remarkable employees.

As a member of this region, we are helping communities collaborate to solve problems and to connect member governments, businesses, institutions, and individuals with a wide array of services in transportation, aging, economic development, business lending, and regional planning.

Paul Egbert

Paul Egbert
Agency Director





WHO WE ARE

OUR VISION

Make lives and communities better.

OUR MISSION

Promote a thriving region through service, connectivity, and innovation.

OUR VALUES

Compassion — *actively caring for others.*

Collaboration — *working together to achieve shared goals.*

Integrity — *doing the right thing, even when it is difficult.*

Respect — *honoring one another.*

Belonging — *creating a welcoming environment that values our common humanity and embraces differences.*



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OUR PRIORITIES



These three strategic priority areas reflect the core of Cascades West's work and are designed to function together. They are not stand-alone efforts or sequential steps—**progress in one area strengthens progress across all.**

By bringing partners together, delivering responsive service, and investing in how we operate, we create a coordinated approach that improves outcomes for the communities we serve.

The sections that follow outline the goals and progress indicators within each priority area and how they guide this work.



CUSTOMER SERVICE

deliver responsive, high-quality service where all are seen, heard, and valued

PROGRESS INDICATORS

GOAL 01

Incorporate internal and external feedback into decision-making

- Input is actively sought and informs decisions and improvements.
- Insights are collected, shared, and guide actions.
- Data is organized, summarized, and supports alignment across teams.

GOAL 02

Ensure every interaction receives consistent, timely attention

- Service expectations are well-defined, understood, and communicated.
- Trainings, tools, and ongoing support adapt to meet evolving service needs.
- Every interaction reflects consistent, timely, and skillful service.

GOAL 03

Improve access to resources and service delivery pathways

- Barriers to accessing services are identified, documented, and actively addressed.
- Service practices promote equitable access for diverse needs.
- End-users can find, understand, and navigate services with ease.



ORGANIZATIONAL EXCELLENCE

champion a culture of excellence, empowerment, and learning

PROGRESS INDICATORS

GOAL 01

Optimize processes, workflows, and operations to be more effective

- Core processes are documented, digitized, and readily available.
- Workflows are clear, efficient, and easy to follow.
- Operational data improves performance and outcomes.

GOAL 02

Drive innovation and continuous improvement

- Initiatives are identified, tested, and implemented using a consistent, shared approach.
- Teams regularly reflect on what is working and what can be improved.
- Systems sustain efficient, effective daily work.

GOAL 03

Foster opportunities for everyday development and professional growth

- Leadership actively supports coaching, feedback, and development opportunities.
- Belonging and empowerment are strengthened through dialogue and practice.
- Recognition and growth are embedded in everyday work through goal setting and meaningful impact.



CONVENING

cultivate partnerships to identify and align holistic priorities

PROGRESS INDICATORS

GOAL 01

Coordinate data sharing, analysis, and joint decision-making to improve impacts

- Insights deepen learning and build shared understanding.
- Outcomes lead to focused direction, follow-through, and aligned decision-making.
- Plans and priorities reflect integrated expertise and perspectives.

GOAL 02

Contribute to a resilient regional economy through workforce and public service opportunity expansion

- Engagements with academic and workforce pathway partners align with labor market needs.
- Career pathways become more visible and straightforward for prospective candidates.
- Participation in training, internships, and experiential learning opportunities expands awareness and readiness.

GOAL 03

Gather with purpose and center on outcomes that matter

- Intended outcomes determine how and when gatherings occur.
- Participation reflects active engagement and shared ownership.
- Decisions and next steps demonstrate visible progress.

As Cascades West approaches its 60th year, I find myself reflecting on how special this region is. After many years working alongside our member governments, partners, and staff, I continue to be inspired by the way people here show up for one another. That spirit of community is what drew me to this work and continues to ground me in our shared purpose.

In leading our last three-year strategic plan, I saw firsthand how a clear direction can bring people together and turn good ideas into action. Over the past year, we built on that foundation—strengthening systems that support older adults, expanding economic opportunity, improving transportation access, and promoting community well-being. These efforts are not just programs or initiatives; they are commitments to the people who rely on us every day.

As we step into this next strategic planning cycle, I am struck by both the responsibility and the opportunity it brings. We are at a moment when the needs in our region are growing and deeply interconnected. Many of our neighbors are navigating uncertainty—from housing pressures to climate impacts to financial instability—challenges that have real consequences.

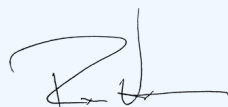
And yet, I see tremendous resilience—communities willing to work together, partners who care deeply, and staff who bring heart and skill to every interaction. **When we listen, adapt, and align our work around what people actually need, meaningful change becomes possible.**

This Strategic Plan reflects months of thoughtful collaboration. Member governments, elected officials, board members, employees, and community partners helped shape our priorities for the next five years, sharpening our focus on excellent service, a strong and healthy organization, and the ability to convene people around shared challenges and opportunities.

Our vision—**to make lives and communities better**—is simple, but it's also deeply personal. It's about the people we serve, the people we partner with, and the future we are building together. Our mission and values give us the compass to stay true to that work, no matter how complex the landscape becomes.

I am truly grateful for the partnerships that make our progress possible. Thank you for walking alongside us. As you read this Strategic Plan, I hope you see not only what Cascades West has achieved, but what we can accomplish together in the years ahead.

We are building a region that is prepared, resilient, and hopeful about its future. And I'm honored to be part of that work with you.



Ryan Vogt

Executive Director

