

City of Morgantown
2024 Strategic Plan

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Message from the City Manager



On behalf of the City Council and staff, I am pleased to present the 2024 City of Morgantown Strategic Plan. Morgantown is one of West Virginia's fastest-growing cities, known for its arts and culture, abundance of outdoor activities, and strong ties to West Virginia University. Our population is young, diverse, and educated. As an organization, we have always been focused on professional and progressive city operations. We believe in driving positive change and growth. Morgantown is a place where innovation thrives, and new ideas and fresh perspectives are embraced. We envision the City of Morgantown as dynamic, inclusive, and innovative.

The last Strategic Plan was developed in 2020, immediately after the start of the COVID-19 pandemic. Following its adoption, Morgantown's 2020 Strategic Plan helped guide the City through an incredibly challenging and unprecedented time. Looking back over the last four years, Morgantown never wavered from its commitment to excellence and continued to push beyond what we knew was possible. In many ways, these challenges helped us to enhance the services we provide to the community and give us more hope for what we can accomplish moving forward under this new Strategic Plan.

The 2024 Morgantown Strategic Plan sets us on a course for the future, with a five-year road map of ambitious but achievable strategic outcome areas. Maintaining all that is unique and wonderful about our community today, while attracting new growth and development to the City, will require thoughtful, innovative action from our local government, working collaboratively with our residents, business and development community, and our many stakeholders.

The 2024 Morgantown Strategic Plan was designed with the vision and guidance from the Morgantown City Council and crafted with input from key personnel across the City's organization. It is built on five major strategic outcome areas.

- **Compassionate and Engaged**
- **Excellent and Responsible**
- **Connected and Well-Maintained**
- **Vibrant and Prosperous**
- **Safe and Welcoming**

These strategic outcome areas and the accompanying priorities will guide our City's work for the next several years. With numerous capital projects on the horizon and a long list of needs, the City will continue to forecast its revenues, manage its budget, and prioritize projects that are in the best interest of the City and its residents. The Strategic Plan will guide us in making the smartest decisions to achieve our goals.

I wish to thank the Mayor and City Council, as well as the hardworking professionals throughout our City's government, for their participation, input, and insights into the development of this plan. Your engagement in this process is a testament to your commitment to Morgantown's long-term success. We look forward to continuing to work alongside our residents to meet the vision for Morgantown in the years to come.

Sincerely,

A. Kim Haws
City Manager



About the Morgantown Community

The City of Morgantown (City), the county seat of Monongalia County, is located along the Monongahela River near the Pennsylvania border in the north-central region of West Virginia. Its strategic location at the intersection of Interstate 79 and Interstate 68 provides convenient access for visitors and businesses to the greater Morgantown area, making the City a central hub for commerce and travel.

As one of the significant growth areas in West Virginia, Morgantown offers opportunities for business development and expansion. The City continues to grow in the housing, manufacturing, research, and commercial sectors. Investments in facilities such as the Morgantown Municipal Airport are part of the City's strategy to enhance economic vitality and catalyze further growth.

Forbes has ranked the City as one of the "Best Small Places for Business and Careers," reflecting the City's efforts in collaborating with regional partners like Mainstreet Morgantown to retain, attract, and grow small business opportunities in the community. Morgantown is also home to West Virginia University, a significant community partner and the state's largest institution of higher education.

Morgantown, with its population of over 30,000 residents, is organized into seven wards and boasts a robust network of neighborhood associations that foster a strong sense of community. Residents actively engage in local issues and government, helping to shape the City's future through their involvement in volunteer opportunities, including Boards and Commissions, as well as participation in community revitalization and beautification initiatives.

The City supports a wide range of cultural and arts activities and quality recreational services and spaces that inspire community engagement, connection, and appreciation for Morgantown's natural environment. Highlights include the historic Metropolitan Theatre, a summer concert series at the Ruby Amphitheater, the Morgantown History Museum, and initiatives such as public murals. Additionally, the Mon River Rail-Trail, numerous city parks, and the nearby Coopers Rock State Forest offer diverse recreational opportunities for both the community and visitors.

The Strategic Planning Process

The City of Morgantown initiated a comprehensive strategic planning process in 2023 with the goal of updating the 2020 Strategic Plan and charting a course for the City over the next three to five years.

The strategic planning process was designed to:

- Articulate a unified vision for the future of Morgantown
- Establish shared City Council priorities that contribute to the City's vision
- Ensure the Strategic Plan is implementable, considers the current capabilities, resources, and constraints of city staff, and allows for adjustments as progress is made and circumstances change
- Encourage ownership and support collaboration among cross-departmental strategic outcome teams responsible for operationalizing the plan, tracking its progress, and communicating updates

To achieve these outcomes, Morgantown's strategic planning process included:

Kick-Off Meeting

Convened the City's project team to understand the objectives for the strategic planning process.

Online Survey

Gathered insights from city department heads and each City Council member on the City's strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, challenges, and future goals.

Strategic Planning Workshop

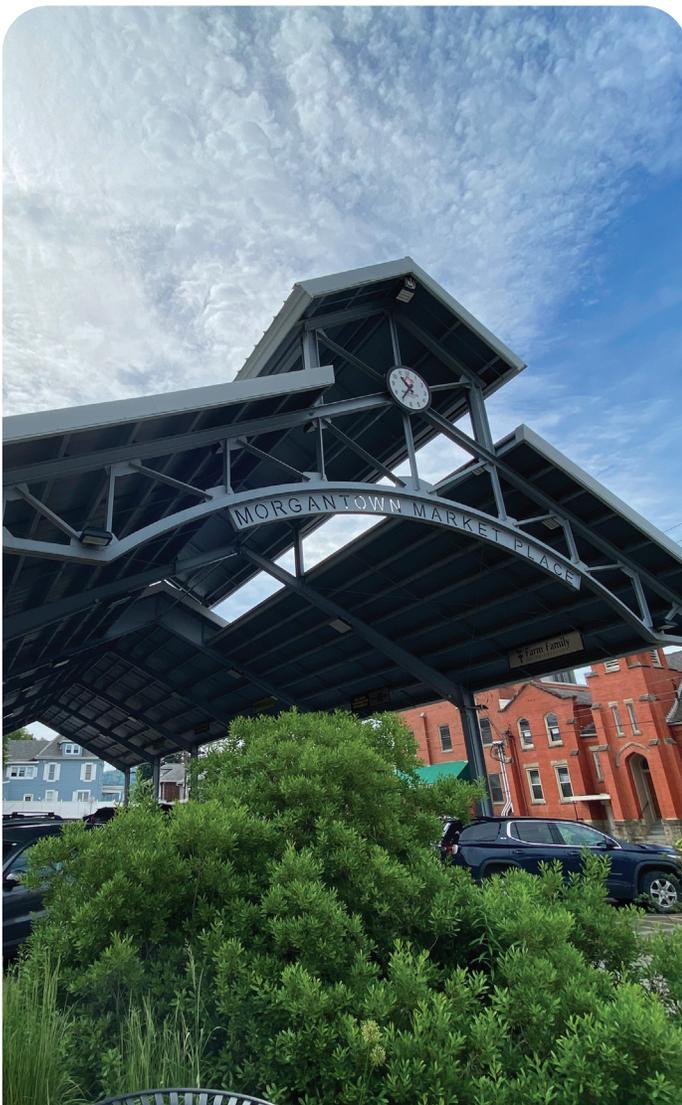
Brought together City Council and key city staff to establish strategic outcome areas and shared City Council priorities in support of the vision for Morgantown.

Follow-Up Survey

Captured additional input from City Council members on their individual priorities moving forward.

Implementation Workshop

Cross-departmental teams of city staff were assembled to support each strategic outcome area in the Strategic Plan. These teams developed a preliminary work plan to operationalize the Strategic Plan by identifying existing programs and initiatives that align with each strategic outcome area and determining where new initiatives will be needed to support the Strategic Plan. These initiatives and programs were organized into a set of priorities within each strategic outcome area. Each outcome team identified the tactics and resources required to accomplish these priorities and developed key performance indicators (KPIs) to track and monitor the plan's progress.



A Roadmap for Morgantown's Future

A clear strategic direction is essential for the success of any organization, providing a roadmap that aligns efforts and resources with long-term goals. This Strategic Plan will set a strategic direction for the City, guiding decision-making and establishing a framework for periodic reviews to assess progress. By ensuring that strategic outcome areas, priorities, and associated key performance indicators remain relevant over time, the plan will help the City of Morgantown move steadily toward its vision for the future.



Strategic Outcome Areas

Strategic outcome areas represent what must go well for the City of Morgantown to achieve its vision for the future. They serve as a guide for setting priorities and directing resources to ensure the City moves toward achieving its long-term goals.



Compassionate and Engaged

Morgantown facilitates communication, engages with residents, and cultivates empathetic dialogue with our community. The City respectfully considers different perspectives as we collaboratively pursue a better Morgantown.



Excellent and Responsible

Morgantown provides top-tier equitable services, fosters collaboration, and is a good steward of community resources. The City values its workforce and aspires to be an employer of choice.



Connected and Well-Maintained

Morgantown's multi-modal transportation system is accessible and well-integrated. Our infrastructure is well-maintained, planned, and designed to meet the needs of our growing community.



Vibrant and Prosperous

Morgantown stimulates economic growth and enhances quality of life through diverse strategies that promote business development, revitalization, cultural enrichment, recreation, and tourism.



Safe and Welcoming

Morgantown is a safe and diverse city where all people feel comfortable participating in community life.



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Priorities

Community Engagement

Active community engagement and meaningful two-way communication will enable Morgantown residents and businesses to learn about the City's efforts, initiatives, and programs, and create opportunities for the City to learn about the community's priorities and concerns. Informing and engaging the public will create opportunities for community members to support and champion the City's work, contributing to a more positive outlook regarding City operations and services.

Social Service Coordination

While the City of Morgantown is not a direct provider of social services, it has an important role in coordinating the efforts for the City's numerous community partners. Coordinating social services prevents the duplication of efforts and reduces silos among service providers. A collaborative network of providers is essential to delivering cohesive support for Morgantown's most vulnerable community members.

Affordable Housing

Affordable housing allows individuals and families with modest incomes to live inside the City, which is particularly important for key employers in Morgantown, such as the university, healthcare system, and the City itself. Without enough affordable housing options, moderate to low-income individuals and families will choose to live outside of the City, and homelessness may become a more significant issue in the community.

Key performance indicators (KPIs)

- Social media engagement analytics (metrics include likes, posts shared, comments, and overall reach on city social media platforms)
 - Percent of households spending more than 30% of their income on housing costs
 - Number of municipality-wide chronically homeless individuals
-

Initiatives already underway or planned

1. Citizen's Academy to help inform and engage community members
2. Information sharing via the city's social media platforms, including information on behalf of city departments and community organizations
3. Directing individuals to existing resources (e.g., the Police Department has a handout on social services and resources available)
4. Supporting access to social services, such as funding the bus line that goes to the social service campus, working on an access pass that offers free bus rides for those in need, and supporting an emergency triage center
5. Facilitating conversations with community partners such as Habitat for Humanity and the Housing Authority regarding the creation and management of housing stock
6. Hiring a Community Development Services Coordinator
7. Fostering partnerships with Monongalia County, Main Street Morgantown, and West Virginia University



Excellent and Responsible

Morgantown provides top-tier equitable services, fosters collaboration, and is a good steward of community resources. The City values its workforce and aspires to be an employer of choice.

Priorities

Fiscal Sustainability

Fiscal sustainability ensures that service delivery remains consistent and reliable, and that the City can meet the needs of residents, businesses, and community partners within its available resources.

Workforce Development and Retention

Providing adequate resources and support helps employees maintain their well-being and stay committed to their positions. Retaining experienced staff ensures consistent service delivery, preserves valuable expertise, reduces recruitment and training expenses, and enhances organizational efficiency.

Efficient and Resilient Services

Efficient and resilient services enable employees and the public to consistently rely on the City, allow the organization to achieve more with limited resources, and support the City's ability to adapt to changing circumstances and future challenges.

Key performance indicators (KPIs)

- Bond rating
 - Annual employee turnover rate
 - Community survey: Percent of residents rating the overall quality of city services as good or excellent
-

Initiatives already underway or planned

1. Improving city facilities for employees and community members
2. Implementing a fleet plan for the Police Department
3. Offering referral and sign-on bonuses for police officers
4. Stabilizing and funding the City's pension plan
5. Improving cross-training opportunities
6. Adjusting paid time off (PTO) policies
7. Regionalizing the City's paving plan
8. Implementation of new software for permitting and licensing to improve efficiencies
9. Installation of software that tracks daily inspections electronically at the airport
10. Continue to establish a new HRIS and payroll system with plans to expand usage to improve employee's access to self-service
11. Implementation of an online payment system with West Virginia Go-Pay
12. Implementation of a streamlined process for onboarding and orientation for Boards and Commissions
13. Implementation of initiatives from the Employee Efficiency Survey



Connected and Well-Maintained

Morgantown's multi-modal transportation system is accessible and well-integrated. Our infrastructure is well-maintained, planned, and designed to meet the needs of our growing community.

Priorities

Responsible Asset Management

Responsible and proactive asset management ensures the City's existing assets are managed and maintained appropriately, minimizing the costs and risks associated with deferred maintenance. This approach also supports sustainable investment in future assets; and a better understanding of the long-term costs associated with each potential investment.

Enhanced Connectivity

A well-connected Morgantown increases safe routes for individuals throughout the City, supports the use of valued community assets, and makes the City more attractive to residents and tourists.



Key performance indicators (KPIs)

- Overall Pavement Condition Index (PCI)
- Percent change in total miles of bike facilities (bike lanes, protected bike lanes, buffered bike lanes, neighborhood greenways, and off-street pathways)
- Community survey: Percent of residents rating city assets as well maintained

Initiatives already underway or planned

1. 5-year Capital Replacement Plan
2. Using ARPA funds for pedestrian facilities (bike lanes, sidewalks, signage)
3. MPO downtown microsimulation study
4. Looking at the Pedestrian Plan to determine areas of missing sidewalks
5. Moving to LED lighting in the downtown area
6. Improving parking options/facilities
7. Completing the replacement of the Marilla pool
8. Marilla Park upgrades
9. Upgrades to local amenities, including dog parks, neighborhood walking tracks, recreational courts, and playgrounds
10. Enhancements to trail connections
11. Undergoing runway extension project



Vibrant and Prosperous

Morgantown stimulates economic growth and enhances quality of life through diverse strategies that promote business development, revitalization, cultural enrichment, recreation, and tourism.

Priorities

Proactive Economic Development

Proactive economic development encourages growth in the City's core, leading to increased tax revenue and attracting residents, potential employees, and students to Morgantown. This growth fosters a vibrant community, supports local businesses, and enhances the overall quality of life.

Enhanced Community Amenities

Enhanced community amenities improve the overall quality of life in Morgantown while attracting and retaining new visitors, residents, and businesses. Sustainable investment and community partnerships ensure that these amenities are developed and maintained in a way that supports long-term prosperity.

Vibrant Public Spaces

Vibrant public spaces support economic development and community engagement by drawing residents, tourists, and businesses to Morgantown and encouraging people to gather, interact, and engage in community activities.

Key performance indicators (KPIs)

- Business retention rate
 - Percent change in revenue from Business and Occupation Tax
 - Number of city events hosted annually
-

Initiatives already underway or planned

1. Hosting amphitheater events and a summer concert series
2. Partnering with the County and arts groups for cultural activities
3. Working with Mainstreet Morgantown to support a welcome wagon program for new businesses in the downtown and wharf area
4. Development incentives to promote infill
5. Streamlining permit review processes within Cityworks to ensure faster turnaround and more certainty on timelines for businesses
6. Tackling blighted property issues and conducting proactive code enforcement
7. Working with Main Street Morgantown to repurpose empty spaces into art gallery spaces
8. Building more hangars in the airport to support economic development
9. Supporting cultural enrichment with art at the airport
10. Investing in infrastructure upgrades and programmatic elements for the community through BOPARC, including summer camps for 250 children, a community center, gym rentals, an art studio, and a small concert series in the parks



Safe and Welcoming

Morgantown is a safe and diverse city where all people feel comfortable participating in community life.

Priorities

Beautification and Cleanliness

A clean and attractive Morgantown helps to attract economic development, tourism, and visitors to the downtown area. It also fosters community pride and improves the quality of life for community members.

Data-Driven Public Safety

Taking a data-driven approach to public safety supports predictive policing and the efficient use of resources, and it reduces opportunities for crime to occur.



Key performance indicators (KPIs)

- Community survey: Resident satisfaction with the cleanliness of downtown Morgantown
- Number of annual staff and volunteer hours dedicated to city beautification initiatives
- Percent change in overall crime rate

Initiatives already underway or planned

1. The Ambassadors program supports initiatives such as litter pick up and beautification efforts
2. Reviewing building permits for ADA compliance
3. Working with local businesses on storefront maintenance and improvements through the Façade Program
4. Wayfinding initiatives
5. Updating applications for Boards and Commissions based on the DEI plan
6. Improving access to agendas and opportunities for virtual meetings
7. Providing diversity training for election workers in partnership with West Virginia University
8. Providing and maintaining a restroom facility downtown
9. Walking patrols in the downtown area to address homelessness and addiction issues
10. A social worker embedded in the Police Department who actively identifies individuals who need to be connected with services
11. Fire prevention training for youth and seniors



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Compassionate and Engaged



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This plan was facilitated by:

