

# Enhance Hermiston

A Plan to Improve Aesthetic Value and Livability in Hermiston

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## Committee Members

**Dr. David Drotzmann, Mayor**  
**Billie Jean Morris**  
**Phillip Scheuers**  
**Karen Zacharias**

**Jackie Myers, Councilor**  
**Debbie Pedro**  
**Phillip Spicerkuhn**

## **Executive Summary & Purpose**

In 2014, Mayor Drotzmann convened the Community Enhancement Committee to identify various ways to improve the aesthetic value and livability of Hermiston. This document is intended to provide a logical and systematic approach to implementing these improvements.

City officials constantly receive recommendations for various projects to benefit the community, and many of them are excellent ideas. However, most of these projects carry a substantial upfront or ongoing cost to the city taxpayers, especially when the number and scope of similar (potentially competing) projects are unknown. Therefore, the fiscally conservative response from the City has historically been to pass on the various recommendations.

Developing a comprehensive list of potential enhancement projects allows City officials to narrow the possibilities (and associated potential cost) down to a manageable and achievable number. Additionally, developing a list of potential projects prevents a “herky-jerky” approach to project development and allows City staff to take a long-term approach to budgeting for various projects and finding outside funding for them. Finally, having a well thought-out list of projects allows the City to “strike while the iron’s hot” if an opportunity arises, such as a state grant, adjacent property development, etc., because much of the initial leg-work has already been completed.

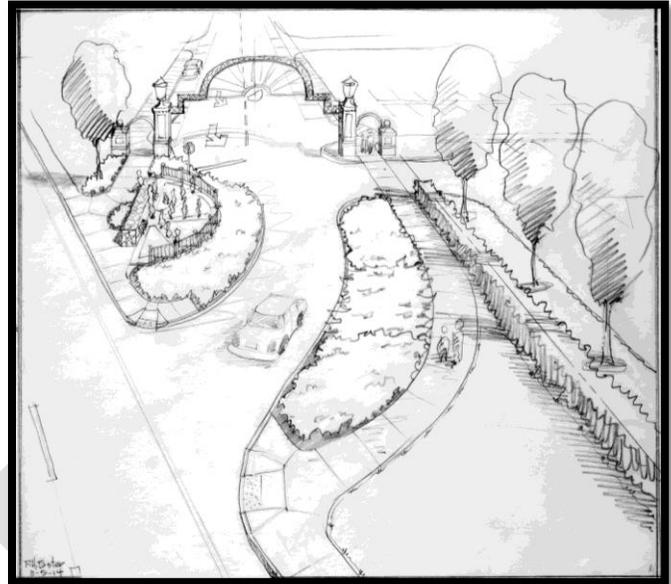
It is important to remember that this list implies no priority-order for the associated projects, because funding opportunities, barriers to development, and willingness of partners all present themselves at different times.

Mark Morgan  
Assistant City Manager

## **2<sup>nd</sup> & 395 Downtown Entryway**

**Project Description:** This project will realign the intersection of SE 2<sup>nd</sup> Street and S. Highway 395 by creating a more acute angle for vehicles turning north off of 395. This project will also close off access to 395 for southbound traffic on 2<sup>nd</sup> street. This project will also add potential visual enhancements to the intersection in the form of landscaping, water features, or public art.

**Project Purpose:** This project is intended to create a defined, aesthetically pleasing, entryway in to the Downtown area with the intention of complimenting future Urban Renewal District projects.



**Project Location:** The project will be within the public street right of way on SE 2<sup>nd</sup> street between Highway 395 and Newport Ave.

**Cost Considerations:** Estimated between \$160,000 and \$200,000.

**Potential Funding Options:** The Oregon Department of Transportation has committed up to \$75,000 of the project costs due to the safety improvements associated with this project.

## Pedestrian Pathways Throughout the City

**Project Description:** Develop and maintain additional pedestrian pathways throughout the city utilizing Hermiston Irrigation District property and various Rights of Way (ROW).

**Project Purpose:** This project is intended to add recreational opportunities in the community, and also increase the aesthetic value of various un-improved ROW stretches throughout the city.

**Project Location:** There are many potential areas throughout the city which would make good connections to a larger pathway network, however these projects will depend heavily upon the property owner or entity which controls the ROW. The top priority locations should be those which will have some or all of the following characteristics:

1. A ready and willing property/ROW owner
2. Good connectivity to existing trail system
3. High visibility

**Project Cost:** This project will happen incrementally. Costs will depend on many factors including ownership of the underlying property and type of construction (asphalt, bark chip, gravel, etc.).

\*\*\*Include estimate range for various types of construction, without land costs\*\*\*



## Rail Crossing Visual Buffers

**Project Description:** Develop low-maintenance visual buffers/screening of Railroad Right of Ways particularly at RR crossings through the city.

**Project Purpose:** The Hinkle-to-Umatilla rail spur which runs through town sits on a wide swath of Right of Way, and is relatively unmaintained. Because this spur runs the length of the city from North to South, there are many high-traffic intersections which cross the tracks. These projects would limit the visual impact of the railroad on surrounding properties.

**Project Location:** There are 8 rail crossings of this spur within the City. Not all locations could, or should, be enhanced at the same time. These projects will be largely located on UPRR Rights of Way. Additionally, some of these areas of ROW may currently be covered by a ground lease by a private party, but remain undeveloped. Priority locations should be those which have a high amount of traffic, can have the highest impact by complimenting existing nearby landscaping, and have a ready and willing lease-holder if a ground lease exists for the property.

**Project Cost:** The cost of the projects will depend largely on the amount of area considered.



*Landscaping at Hwy 395 & Orchard provides buffering.*



*There are 15,000 trips per day through 1<sup>st</sup> Pl. & Hermiston Ave.*

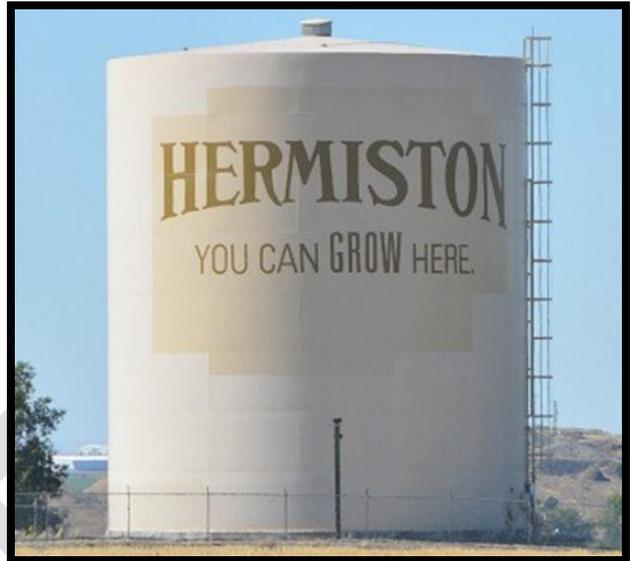
## **Re-Paint South Water Tower**

**Project Description:** Re-Paint the city-owned water tower at 395 and View Drive.

**Project Purpose:** The existing paint job looks incomplete.

**Project Location:** Highway 395 & View Drive.

**Project Cost:** \$40,000



## Directional Signage

**Project Description:** This project will identify general sectors of the city and specific points of interest throughout the community that warrant specific signage to direct residents and visitors to them. This signage should be decorative, and add as much aesthetic value to the area as it does utilitarian value to the user.

Examples of community sectors include areas such as, “Downtown Shopping District,” “Regional Healthcare Hub,” “Higher Education Cluster,” etc. Additionally, examples of points of interest include Kennison Sports Complex, Shockman Sports Complex, Hermiston Family Aquatic Center, and Riverfront Park & Trail.



Example: [www.corbindesign.com](http://www.corbindesign.com)

The signs are not intended to be a complete directory of all locations within the community, but instead direct people to general areas.

**Project Purpose:** The purpose of this project is just as much about establishing a sense of “place” for various areas of the city, as it is about directing travelers around the community. Due to two State Highways intersecting in Hermiston, and its proximity to two Interstate Freeways, there are numerous high-traffic entryways to the City. Placing directional signage at the entrances to the City will not only lead people to the Downtown Shopping District, Higher Education Cluster, and Regional Healthcare Hub, but will also re-inforce the fact that these areas exist.

**Project Location:** The Directional Signage would be located throughout the city, on public rights of way, predominantly on main corridors through the city.

**Cost Considerations:** Initial project cost will be \$100,000 - \$200,000. There will be some long-term maintenance costs borne by the City of Hermiston.

**Potential Funding Options:** The Urban Renewal District has a certain amount of funding budgeted for this purpose, but the funds cannot be spent outside of the District. These funds may be used for initial design of a concept to then be adopted by the city-wide system. Donations by the business community should be explored to assist in funding construction of the city-wide system.



Example: [www.corbindesign.com](http://www.corbindesign.com)

## Take Over Hodge Park Train Display

**Project Description:** Take over the currently privately maintained static train display adjacent to Hodge Park. This project would likely down-size and clean-up the appearance of the existing display by removing several of the trains, removing the existing fencing, and expanding the park footprint by adding more greenspace.

**Project Purpose:** The current care-takers have expressed a desire to turn over control of the site to the City of Hermiston, due to their inability to properly maintain it. The display sits near two high-traffic intersections, and sits along a route to the new Kennison Field Sports Complex, which attracts many out-of-town guests. The current display gives the appearance of abandoned industrial machinery, rather than an inviting historic display.



**Project Location:** Hodge Park.

**Property Considerations:** The current display sits on UPRR Right of Way. The City of Hermiston would have to engage UPRR in a long-term lease, for which UPRR may want substantial financial compensation.

**Cost Considerations:** There will be a considerable cost associated with removal of existing train cars. This cost may be partially off-set through sale as scrap material. Park space development costs will depend upon the size of the area. This will increase ongoing maintenance costs of the park.

## Upgrade & Maintain South Highway 395 Median Plantings

**Project Description:** There is approximately ½ mile of existing planter beds in South Highway 395 over a stretch of approximately 1.5 miles, which are not being watered or maintained. This project would place low-maintenance plantings in these existing locations, and be maintained by the City of Hermiston. These plantings will compliment existing plantings which begin at Feedville Road within the Stanfield UGB.

**Project Purpose:** This is a main entryway to the City from I-84, which gets ~7,000 vehicle trips per day. This project will provide a positive visual impression for travelers entering the city, and take advantage of a public investment which was already built for this purpose.

**Project Location:** South Highway 395 between Kelli Blvd. and Feedville Road.

**Property Considerations:** These facilities already exist for this purpose.

**Cost Considerations:** This will create an ongoing maintenance cost for the City of Hermiston. \*\*\*Identify cost estimate for initial planting of 2,500LF\*\*\*

**Potential Funding Options:** Donations from local civic organizations, the Chamber of Commerce, and private donors may be a possibility to pay for initial planting of permanent landscaping.



*Empty existing planter beds provide no buffer between Hermiston Foods and Denny's/Best Western Hotel and other future commercial land.*



*Existing planter beds maintained North of Stanfield.*