

Great Plains MakerSpace STRATEGIC PLAN 2026 - 2030



Great Plains MakerSpace

2308 North 3rd Street

Garden City, KS

www.GreatPlainsMakerSpace.com

Prepared by Matt Allen, January 2026

Great Plains Makerspace: Our History



“If you don’t know where you’ve come from, you don’t know where you’re going.”

- Maya Angelou

2017

Initial idea for a makerspace in SWKS proposed to Finney County Economic Development
Articles of Incorporation established
July 12th - First Board Meeting
Search for a building begins
GPMS attends Fall Fest



2018

501(c)3, non-profit, status approved
Awarded grant from Women of Purpose to start GEAR Robotics program and purchase 3D printers
Large wood shop donation from Don Berge
Partnered with GCCC to use part of their Annex building for GPMS
First classes offered!
First Board Game Jam, held at GCCC



2019

February 27th - First Annual Board Meeting
Awarded grant from Western Kansas Community Foundation (WKCF) for laptops and A/V lab equipment
Donations from USD 457 and Garden City Coop for A/V lab equipment
3rd Street building becomes candidate for GPMS location



2020

3rd Street building renovations begin
SWKS COVID Resource Group forms. Makes and donates over 5000 pieces of PPE to SWKS organizations.
Awarded grant from WKCF for SLA, resin 3D printer and Shaper Origin
Awarded grant from KS Leadership for GlowForge



2021

April 1st - Grand Opening of GPMS at 3rd Street building!
GCCC, USD 457, Western State Bank become first corporate sponsors.
Donation from USD 457 and Patsy Fort for commercial embroidery machines
Awarded grant from KS Leadership for GlowForge
Over 100 events hosted!



2022

Awarded grant for Presentation Cart
Awarded grant from Pioneer Communications.
FCLLN purchases 3rd Street building



2023

Awarded grant from WKCF for Ceramics lab
Partnered with law enforcement for emergency responder training
Donation from A-1 Sign Pro for new GPMS outdoor sign
Pivot Robotics replaces GEAR program
Inaugural Spark in the Park at Art in the Park



2024

Awarded grant from WKCF for Pivot Robotics
Awarded grant from WKCF for xTool
\$10K in endowment funds at WKCF
Shelf space at The Hub is rented for members to sell their creations
Renovated robotics area and started Game Room renovations



2025

Awarded AFAC grant to expand Pivot Robotics
Awarded grant from Women of Purpose for WISE program and 3D printers
Over 500 events hosted!
Renovated new robotics room and completed Game Room renovations
Switched membership software and set up new website



The 2026-2030 Strategic Planning Process

The Great Plains MakerSpace Board of Directors gathered on Friday, January 16, 2026 for a facilitated strategic planning retreat funded by a Western Kansas Community Foundation grant. The Board members represented a mix of long standing board members who could recall the intent and vision of the organization leading up to its inception in 2017, as well as newer board members drawn to the programming and opportunities offered once Great Plains MakerSpace was a reality.

While the Board was diverse in its make-up of interests and history with the organization, the Board was unified in its recognition that Great Plains MakerSpace was at a very important moment in time. The reality of what it might take to sustain its existing facility with all volunteer “staffing” and leadership, combined with the resources and elevated programming scope it may take to accommodate and succeed in a growth model, warranted a strategic discussion. With strong consensus achieved during that strategic planning retreat, this five-year plan was born.

The Great Plains MakerSpace Board is grateful for the members, funders, and strategic partners who have been part of the first decade’s journey and look forward to continuing those partnerships while adding new partners who believe in the vision and strategic steps described herein.

The 2026-2030 Strategic Plan

“If you don’t know where you’re going, you’ll end up someplace else.”

- Yogi Berra

Achieve financial sustainability through membership growth and strategic partnerships.

Great Plains MakerSpace has achieved a level of membership to cover rent, utilities, and basic operational needs. In order to cover equipment replacement needs, more robustly communicate with the community, membership, and donors, and to hire personnel necessary to accommodate a local and regional growth strategy, increases in both membership and critical funding partnerships are necessary.

Secure a facility that accommodates needs and offers cost reliability.

The size of the current Third Street location is a blessing and has enabled Great Plains MakerSpace to offer much more than comparable organizations in Kansas. However, not owning the building creates rent uncertainty and unrealistic financial risks related to the integrity of the structure and its mechanical systems. Whether their future is with the current building or another building, Great Plains MakerSpace needs to pursue a facility solution which provides cost reliability.

Identify and offer solutions to unmet, or “under-met,” needs of the community and region.

Great Plains MakerSpace will engage with existing members, prospective members, and strategic partners to ensure its space is an accessible and preferred location for those with an existing or aspiring DIY spirit to satisfy entrepreneurial and enrichment needs.

Improve communication with current and prospective members, volunteers, strategic partners, and funding partners.

After 9 years of existence, the Board realizes many in Garden City and the surrounding region do not know “who they are” or “what they do.” Improved communication is viewed as a key to addressing many strategic goals as well as improving the experience for current members.

Employ dedicated staffing or professional services to handle the growing needs of the organization.

Great Plains MakerSpace is a growing non-profit organization entering its second decade. It can no longer rely on its volunteer base for the entirety of its governance, administrative, and educational functions.



Great Plains MakerSpace 2026-2030 Strategic Plan with Action Items

Achieve financial sustainability through membership growth and strategic partnerships.

<i>Action Items:</i>	<i>Retreat Ideas with at least one "dot":</i>
Initiatives to retain memberships	
Initiatives to increase memberships	Membership engagement events, hosting community events
Initiatives to increase corporate sponsorships and corporate memberships	Promotion of supporters/corporate partners, of promotional materials
Increase the frequency of classes	Course catalogue, couples nights marketing
Introduce new classes	Knitting with Nana class, Basic skills class
Recruit instructors/facilitators	Teach the teacher/facilitator classes, class design aid
Grow partnerships	Catholic Charities, Senior Center, Kansas Dept. of Commerce, Network Kansas, past and future funding partners
Pursue large grants	
Non-grant fundraising	
Innovation Hub to meet regional needs	

Secure a facility that accommodates needs and offers cost reliability.

<i>Action Items:</i>	<i>Retreat Ideas with at least one "dot":</i>
Entrance security	
Decorative outdoor lighting	
Visit other makerspaces	

Identify and offer solutions to unmet, or "under-met," needs of the community and region.

<i>Action Items:</i>	<i>Retreat Ideas with at least one "dot":</i>
Unmet or replacement equipment needs	CNC machine, welding/metal shop, long arm quilting machine, weather proof kiln, complete screen printing, large format printer
Restore the commercial kitchen for culinary training and incubator	
Innovation Hub to meet regional needs	
Expand robotics	
Visit other makerspaces	
Attend State Summits for like facilities	
Graphic design classes	

Improve communication with current and prospective members, volunteers, strategic partners, and funding partners.

<i>Action Items:</i>	<i>Retreat Ideas with at least one "dot":</i>
Promotion of supporters/corporate partners	
Develop and market merchandise/swag	
Course catalogue	Course pre-requisites flow chart
Couples night marketing	
Update promotion materials	Pamphlet creation and distribution, Business cards
"Show-off" failures	
Online informational resources	Virtual GPMS tour, Website finished
Coordination of commissions	
Long range calendar	
Promote game room	
Studio rental policy	

Employ dedicated staffing or professional services to handle the growing needs of the organization.

<i>Action Items:</i>	<i>Retreat Ideas with at least one "dot":</i>
Create job description(s)	Visit other makerspaces
Lab coordinator for every lab with expectations	