



# THE BRIDGE

RESEARCH & INNOVATION DISTRICT

*Cultivating connection, creativity and critical thinking in the Wenatchee Valley*

STRATEGIC PLAN

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# EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

For decades, Wenatchee Valley orchardists have stayed ahead of the competition, constantly changing and taking risks to meet market demands, all the while nurturing their next crop of apples, cherries or pears.

Today, the region's fruit industry is highly advanced, developing and implementing some of the best cultivation, handling and storage technologies for fruit in the world.

This same culture of innovation — coupled with our valley's unique natural assets and science and education initiatives — has benefitted other local industries and institutions over the years. These advancements range from the construction of the first hydroelectric dam on the Columbia River to the world-renowned Washington State University Wenatchee Research and Extension Center to leading-edge data analytics being conducted today by Wenatchee medical facilities.

In 2018, the Our Valley Our Future community development initiative realized an opportunity to build on these core assets and competencies by forming the Bridge Research & Innovation District. Unlike other places where research occurs under one roof in one jurisdiction, the Bridge Research & Innovation District is a "community campus" of linked facilities, educational institutions and businesses in the Greater Wenatchee Area on both sides of the Columbia River. This model is seen as uniquely appropriate for the region, given its diverse resources and assets,

entrepreneurial spirit, and a growing spirit of collaboration. The name, Bridge, reflects the connectivity found in the community as well as the fact the region has numerous bridges spanning the Columbia and Wenatchee rivers.

Already, the Research & Innovation District's many partners are engaged in a culture of education and learning, exploration, dialogue, sharing, support and enterprise. Additionally, a host of public gathering places and supporting amenities — such as co-working spaces, urban housing, conference facilities, a craft brewery district, coffee houses, Pybus Public Market, the 10-mile Apple Capital Loop Trail — serve to bolster and connect the District with a range of amenities conducive to a culture of collaboration and innovation.

In this booklet, you will find the Bridge Research & Innovation District's initial Strategic Plan, crafted by researchers, innovators, educators, scientists, community members and economic development officials. The Strategic Plan covers a four-year time frame (2018-2021) and is comprised of a Mission Statement, overarching Vision, four focus areas encompassing 21 strategies, along with desired outcomes and timelines for each of the strategies. The Strategic Plan's overall objective is quite simple: advance research, catalyze innovation, expand education and generate economic opportunity for our region and beyond.

## While still in its early stages, the Research & Innovation District already has much to build upon, including:

- The **WSU Wenatchee Research & Extension Center** is home to world-class tree fruit scientists, post-doctoral and graduate researchers, and technicians. The Research Center, set amid one of the primary fruit producing regions in the world, has a rich legacy and international standing. Today, the world awaits one of its latest innovations, the commercialization of the new Cosmic Crisp® apple brand.
- The **U.S. Department of Agriculture — Agricultural Research Station** is co-located at the WSU Wenatchee Research & Extension Center site and is home to world-class research in physiology and pathology of fruits.
- For nearly two decades, **Wenatchee Valley College** has been home to a thriving undergraduate research and mentoring effort, with students transitioning to and ultimately receiving graduate level credentials at top universities and colleges. Grant-funded expansion of this effort, including Mathematics, Engineering, Science Achievement (MESA) and National Science Foundation grant applications, make this a crucial central component of the region's educational and intellectual development pipeline.
- The Wenatchee Valley is a **community of agriculture-based companies**, known worldwide for the quality of their products, packing and distribution systems, marketing, sensor technologies, and data analytics. Many of these companies have research divisions.
- **North Central Washington Technology Zone** in the Greater Wenatchee Area is one of 14 Innovation Partnership Zones, as identified by the state Department of Commerce, in Washington state. The IPZ's mission is to stimulate the growth of industry clusters, expand research partnerships, and propel commercially viable technology and innovation.
- **'Science in Our Valley'** seminar series provides an opportunity for researchers to gather on a weekly basis to take in a seminar about current research. The series was started to help engage the scientific community. Those participating include employees, students, collaborators at Washington State University, Wenatchee Valley College, U.S. Department of Agriculture labs and other organizations and businesses in the community.
- **Chelan County PUD**, which operates Rocky Reach and Rock Island dams on the Columbia River, is engaged in predictive data analytics to improve efficiencies at its facilities as part of a broader effort to locate a hydroelectric research institute in the community.
- **The Port of Douglas County's** Pangborn Airport Business Park is home to two businesses — Giga Watt and Salcido Enterprises — considered leaders in the blockchain technology sector. The East Wenatchee businesses opened due in part to the region's low power rates.



- The **U.S. Forest Service** is utilizing North Central Washington as a field lab for its research into risk analysis centering on wildfires. A consortium, based out of the Forest Service's Rocky Mountain Research Station in Missoula, Mont., includes Washington State University, Portland State University, University of Idaho, Montana State University and University of Florida.
- Wenatchee-based **Confluence Health** and **Columbia Valley Community Health** serve a large geographical area and employ more than 3,700 people combined. Both medical institutions are involved in opioid research. Confluence also is engaged in predictive analytics, in particular developing algorithms for machine learning that will improve service and efficiency. Confluence is one of only a handful of organizations in the healthcare industry doing this type of analytics.
- **Lake Chelan Research Institute**, in conjunction with Oregon State University and the Chelan County Natural Resources Department, is studying the movement of the lake's deep cold water.
- A number of K-12 educators have begun regularly connecting students in personalized learning and independent research through the **Apple STEM Network**, which supports youth and educators to cultivate a passion for learning, critical thinking and problem solving. Local educators in communities like Wenatchee, East Wenatchee, Cashmere, Chelan and Quincy are eager to bring the research and innovation culture and relevancy into their classrooms.

The Bridge Research & Innovation District is one of seven 'game-changer' projects in an Action Plan developed by the Our Valley Our Future community development initiative. This game-changer was originally conceived as a 'Graduate Research Center' — a single facility focused on existing and emerging technologies.

The Research & Innovation District expands upon the game-changer's original intent to reflect the amount of research and innovation already occurring in the community, along with existing infrastructure and amenities, and all within a relatively small geographical area.

Planning intentionally for a better tomorrow is one the guiding principles of Our Valley Our Future. Nothing could be closer to that ideal than the formation of the Bridge Research & Innovation District.

## OUR MISSION

The Bridge Research & Innovation District is a collaborative network of organizations and individuals building on our region's rich assets and core competencies to advance leading-edge research, catalyze innovation, and generate economic opportunity for our region and beyond.

## OUR OVERARCHING VISION

Over the next decade, the Bridge Research & Innovation District will build upon its existing strengths and assets and be recognized as the nation's premier community campus for research and innovation, a unique, collaborative, place-based network linking our region's research facilities, educational institutions and research and innovation environments with innovators, entrepreneurs and investors to foster a culture of learning, exploration and enterprise.





## FOCUS AREA

# TELLING OUR STORY

*Bridge Research & Innovation District*

*Marketing, Communications, Promotion & Community Engagement*

## VISION

Over the next decade, the Bridge Research & Innovation District will be an integral part of the region's culture and vernacular, reflecting a decade of effective regional and national marketing, communications and messaging that inform and inspire people about its extended network and community campus, unique ideas and assets, growth and positive community impacts.

## 2021 GOAL

To inform our communities and every stakeholder about the foundational assets and leading-edge advances of the Bridge Research & Innovation District in our region, inspiring and activating individuals, organizations and businesses to engage with the RID and share its story regionally and beyond.

## 1.1 Bridge Research & Innovation District Story.

Develop the Research & Innovation District “story” – including the history and evolution of its extended network and community campus, facilities and locations, assets and activities, partnerships, opportunities and potentials – for presentation to the overall community as a way to build support and leverage research and investment in the community.

Desired Outcome: The District Story

IMPLEMENTATION TIMELINE: YEARS 1-4 (2018-2021)

## 1.2 Comprehensive Communications Plan and Campaign.

Develop a comprehensive communications plan and messaging strategy, and align Research & Innovation District organizations and partners around this strategy. Utilize diverse communication platforms that engage and support the region’s research and innovation community and inform the wider community and beyond about the Research & Innovation District story, its research and innovation assets, core competencies, partnerships, successes and future potential.

Desired Outcome: Comprehensive communications plan and strategy, followed by implementation

IMPLEMENTATION TIMELINE: YEARS 1-2 (2018-19)

## 1.3 Brand Identity.

Create a brand identity for the Bridge Research & Innovation District that is attuned to the local research and innovation network and its potentials, emphasizing the concept that this is a place where great research occurs, the potential for new innovation is limitless, and the culture is robust, intellectual, sustainable, humane and aligned with the community’s quality of life.

Desired Outcome: Research & Innovation District brand identity

IMPLEMENTATION TIMELINE: YEAR 1-2 (2018-19)





## FOCUS AREA

# BUILDING THE ORGANIZATION

*Bridge Research & Innovation District  
Structure, Development, Resources & Support*

## VISION

Over the next decade, the Bridge Research & Innovation District will be guided by an inclusive, connected, well-funded organizational entity, backed by strong partnerships, extensive resources, and broad community support.

## 2021 GOAL

To utilize available research, exemplary models and best practices in developing a robust framework, organizational structure and scope, funding and community support for the Research & Innovation District.

## 2.1 Framework & Scope.

Building on its initial environmental scan and other available research, define the framework and scope of the Research & Innovation District organization, identifying and analyzing key challenges and opportunities, best practices, available resources, potential partners and their commitments, and related information and data.

Desired Outcome: Identified framework and scope for the Research & Innovation District to guide its structure and organizational development

IMPLEMENTATION TIMELINE: YEAR 1 (2018)

## 2.2 Organizational Structure, Business Plan & Work Program.

Develop an effective organizational structure, policies and practices for the Research & Innovation District that are aligned with its mission and vision, and consistent with its strategic plan. Develop a Research & Innovation District business plan, preliminary work program and timeline, and sustainable funding model to carry out its mission.

Desired Outcome: Preferred organizational structure, policies and practices for the Research & Innovation District, including business plan, work program and timeline, and sustainable funding model

IMPLEMENTATION TIMELINE: YEAR 1 (2018)

## 2.3 Community Leaders Engagement & Support.

Promote widespread engagement and support of community leaders for the emerging Research & Innovation District, its organizational structure, mission and vision, goals, strategies, policies and practices, involving key stakeholders, potential institutional partners, and the public-at-large.

Desired Outcome: Support of community leaders for the Research & Innovation District, including key stakeholders, potential institutional partners, and the public

IMPLEMENTATION TIMELINE: YEARS 1-4 (2018-2021)

## 2.4 Key Performance Indicators & Metrics.

Develop Research & Innovation District key performance indicators and metrics and align them with the overall Our Valley Our Future Action Plan and its community indicators and metrics, linking the Research & Innovation District with the community's overall vision and goals.

Desired Outcome: Set of Research & Innovation District key performance indicators and metrics aligned to the Our Valley Our Future Action Plan

IMPLEMENTATION TIMELINE: YEARS 2-4 (2019-2021)



## FOCUS AREA

# FOSTERING RESEARCH & INNOVATION

*Bridge Research & Innovation District  
Targeted Research, Networks & Partnerships*

## VISION

Over the next decade, the Bridge Research & Innovation District will build upon its existing strengths and assets and be known for its globally-relevant research and innovation network focused on targeted research areas, as well as for its robust public/private partnerships, education and commercialization opportunities, best practice planning and communication methods, and unique utilization of physical space that lay the cultural foundation for its success.

## 2021 GOAL

To foster and facilitate the Research & Innovation District's targeted research areas based on existing and evolving community assets, research networks and collaborative partnerships, commercialization opportunities, career development for researchers and innovators, and education system involvement in the region.

### 3.1 Research & Innovation Inventory & Gap Analysis.

Develop a comprehensive inventory of existing and emerging research and innovation occurring in the region, focusing on networks and partnerships, as well as community assets and core competencies within the region's industry, education and natural resource sectors. Identify gaps and potential opportunities for research and innovation in the region, including education pipelines, investment and other resources.

Desired Outcome: Comprehensive inventory and gap analysis of research and innovation in the region

IMPLEMENTATION TIMELINE: YEAR 1 (2018)

### 3.2 Targeted Research & Innovation Sectors.

Based on the Research & Innovation Inventory and Gap Analysis, target key research and innovation sectors and potential partners for expansion and recruitment by the Research & Innovation District, including but not limited to agriculture, energy, health care, emerging technologies, environmental science.

Desired Outcome: Official roster of targeted Research & Innovation District research and innovation sectors and potential partners

IMPLEMENTATION TIMELINE: YEAR 2 (2019)

### 3.3 Research & Innovation Network.

Cultivate a comprehensive research and innovation network in the region, linking and creating pathways between existing and emerging research and innovation initiatives, resources, partnerships and facilities, reaching out to bring local educators into the fold, learning from lessons gained in other areas and building a thriving collaborative culture of knowledge and innovation.

Desired Outcome: Evolving research and innovation network and thriving collaborative culture in the region

IMPLEMENTATION TIMELINE: YEARS 2-4 (2018-2021)

### 3.4 Commercialization Opportunities.

Support and promote commercialization opportunities for targeted research and innovation areas where they have been identified as specific outcomes, engaging Research & Innovation District partners, businesses, innovators, entrepreneurs, students and investors in achieving them.

Desired Outcome: Identified commercialization opportunities and outcomes

IMPLEMENTATION TIMELINE: YEARS 2-4 (2019-2021)

### 3.5 Researchers & Innovators Career Development.

Responding proactively to rapidly changing opportunities in the region and beyond, institute best practice methods to make research career pathways discoverable for youth, develop robust partnerships with local educators, to nurture career development for homegrown researchers and innovators from within the community, as well as ways to attract and retain unique talent from outside the region.

Desired Outcome: Increased population of local researchers and innovators

IMPLEMENTATION TIMELINE: YEARS 2-4 (2019-2021)

### 3.6 Education System Resources & Opportunities.

Cultivate and expand communication, networking and partnerships with K-20 educational institutions and initiatives in the region, promoting increased linkages and welcoming their knowledge, resources and facilities as an integral part of the Research & Innovation District network.

Desired Outcome: Expanded communication, networking and partnerships with K-20 educational institutions and initiatives in the region

IMPLEMENTATION TIMELINE: YEARS 2-4 (2019-2021)

## FOCUS AREA

# CREATING A COMMUNITY CAMPUS

*Bridge Research & Innovation District*

*Sites and Facilities, Workspaces, Research Centers & Housing*

## VISION

Over the next decade, the Bridge Research & Innovation District will be recognized as a “community campus” of networked research institutions, innovative firms, creative start-ups, and co-working and gathering spaces – along with a culture of learning, exploration and enterprise, all set in a region distinguished by its strong employment potential, urban “place-making” and mixed-use neighborhoods, available housing, high-quality schools, vibrant commercial areas, and other quality-of-life amenities.

## 2021 GOAL

To develop and enhance a regional network of research facilities, campuses, workspaces, housing, and related urban amenities, creating a “community campus” that is the physical foundation of the Research & Innovation District.



#### 4.1 Sites & Locations Inventory.

Develop a comprehensive inventory of existing and emerging research and innovation facilities, sites and locations, educational campuses, start-ups, co-working and gathering places, supportive infrastructure, and related urban amenities in the region.

Desired Outcome: Inventory of existing and emerging research and innovation sites and locations in the region

IMPLEMENTATION TIMELINE: YEAR 1 (2018)

#### 4.2 Sites & Locations Gap Analysis.

Identify the gaps in existing and emerging research and innovation facilities, sites and locations, campuses, facilities, co-working places, and supportive infrastructure in the region, including such elements as educational opportunities, maker spaces, co-working spaces, business accelerators and incubators, fiber optics and other infrastructure, and housing. Identify opportunities for potential new locations, campuses, facilities, co-working places and infrastructure in the region.

Desired Outcome: Gap analysis of existing, emerging and potential new research and innovation locations, campuses, facilities and infrastructure in the region

IMPLEMENTATION TIMELINE: YEAR 2 (2019)

#### 4.3 Community Campus Master Plan.

Building on the existing and emerging research and innovation network, as well as potential new locations, campuses, facilities and infrastructure including bike paths, develop a comprehensive master plan for a community campus of networked facilities and workspaces that catalyzes a physical environment for research and innovation with fluid boundaries and virtual linkages.

Desired Outcome: Master Plan for the Bridge Research & Innovation District community campus

IMPLEMENTATION TIMELINE: YEARS 2-3 (2019-2020)

#### 4.4 Identifying Models for Public/Private R&D Investment.

The Research & Innovation District will identify innovative funding models that can support research and development investment and infrastructure (e.g. opportunity funds in opportunity zones, direct public offerings, community investment cooperatives, other community-based investing opportunities). These funding models are necessary due to the state's prohibition on the gifting of public resources.

Desired Outcome: Funding from a variety of sources identified

IMPLEMENTATION TIMELINE: YEARS 2-4 (2019-2021)

#### 4.5 Research & Innovation Environments.

Leverage the role of workspaces and environments (i.e. co-working spaces, cafes and craft breweries, outdoor recreation amenities, lecture series, networking opportunities) in the research and innovation district, utilizing Research & Innovation District communication/media platforms with those of businesses organizations and the local media to communicate and support these opportunities.

Desired Outcome: Information and support for the critical role of non-traditional research and innovation environments in the evolving Research & Innovation District

IMPLEMENTATION TIMELINE: YEARS 3-4 (2020-2021)

#### 4.6 Research & Innovation Centers.

Investigate, promote and plan for the eventual development of one or more "bricks and mortar" research and innovation centers to serve as the physical hubs of the Research & Innovation District, accommodating those organizations and entities seeking more permanent facilities, specific research amenities, or opportunities to co-locate under one roof.

Desired Outcome: Research & Innovation centers findings, long-range development plan, and promotional strategies

IMPLEMENTATION TIMELINE: YEARS 3-4 (2020-2021)

#### 4.7 Research & Innovation District Workforce/Student Housing.

Promote the planning, development and construction of accessible and affordable housing within the Research & Innovation District, specifically to attract, retain and house the region's growing research and innovation workforce and students.

Desired Outcome: Promotion strategy specifically targeted on accessible and affordable Research & Innovation District workforce and student housing

IMPLEMENTATION TIMELINE: YEARS 3-4 (2020-2021)

#### 4.8 Research & Innovation-Based Business Accelerators.

Recruit and support business "accelerators," spurring the creation of research and innovation-based business start-ups by providing them access to mentors and peers along with space and venture funding.

Desired Outcome: Recruitment strategy for Research & Innovation District -based business accelerators

IMPLEMENTATION TIMELINE: YEARS 3-4 (2020-2021)





“The Wenatchee area’s claim as the ‘Apple Capital of the World’ reflects more than economic value.  
The agricultural practices, technologies and lifestyle are deeply ingrained in the psyche and culture of the people.”

— The Center for the New West

# CREDITS

## *Bridge Research & Innovation District Working Group*

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Community Foundation of North Central Washington

North Central Educational Service District

Confluence Technology Center

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The Bridge Research & Innovation District is one of seven game-changer projects in the Our Valley Our Future Action Plan. For more on the community visioning, planning and development initiative:

**[www.ourvalleyourfuture.org](http://www.ourvalleyourfuture.org).**