



OUR VALLEY, OUR FUTURE 2017 REPORT TO THE COMMUNITY Oct. 28, 2017

Executive Summary

In January 2017, *Our Valley, Our Future / Nuestro Valle, Nuestro Futuro* began its five-year Implementation Phase of the 149 actions and seven major game-changer projects — championed by 81 lead partner organizations — that make up the *Our Valley* Action Plan. The Implementation Phase is overseen by the *Our Valley* Core Team and a project coordinator, with assistance and advice from a Leadership Alliance group and five subcommittees. A Work Plan, as well as *Our Valley's* Mission Statement, Core Values and Guiding Principles, have been directing the Action Plan work.

Momentum was building for *Our Valley, Our Future* prior to 2017. The Action Plan was released in November 2016, following 18 months of community outreach, visioning and planning work. During those early phases, more than 5,000 residents offered input, more than 300 had a direct hand in developing Action Plan projects and programs, a total of 4,222 volunteer hours were contributed by residents to the initiative, and about \$175,000 was spent on operations, communications and strategic planning.

The *Our Valley* Core Team is pleased to report progress in 2017 has far exceeded expectations, to the point where the community building initiative began running out of operational bandwidth as it entered the fall months.

Of the seven game-changer projects, one has been completed (Regional Trails Organization) and the other six have witnessed good movement. Of the 149 other projects and programs in the Action Plan, more than 75 percent are underway and another 9 percent have been completed.

With the assistance of the Community Foundation of North Central Washington, *Our Valley* has administered a small grants program for Action Plan lead partner organizations. More than \$40,000 has been awarded to lead partners through October 2017.



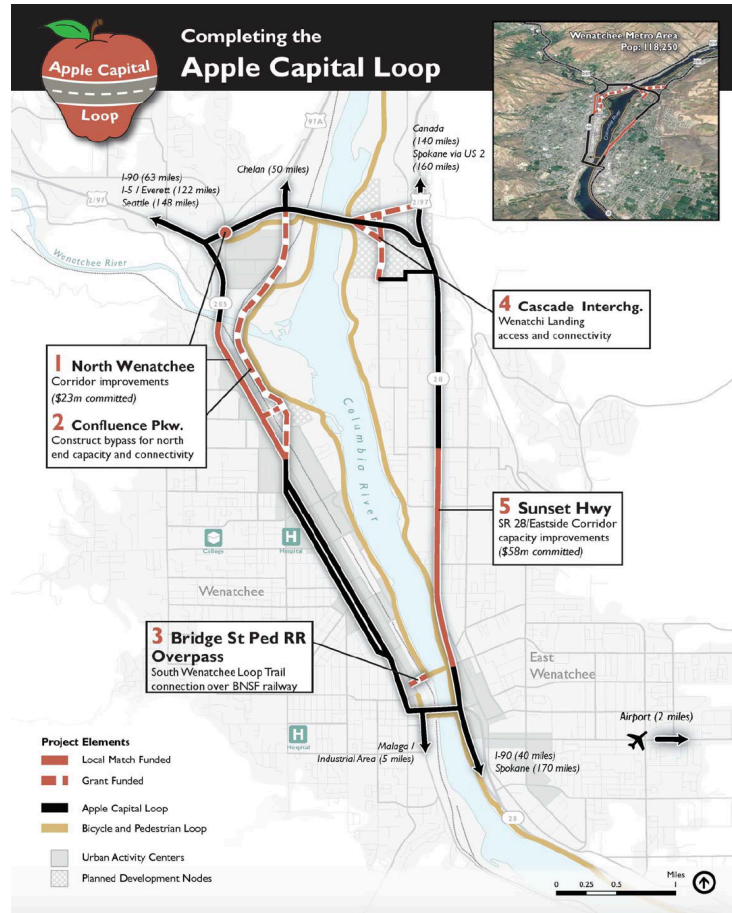
Thanks to the early implementation success, emphasis on collective impact, and its ability to convene thousands of people around issues, *Our Valley* is increasingly viewed as the vehicle to take on big community challenges and push for and facilitate greater communication, collaboration and cooperation in the region. A prime example is *Our Valley's* role as the lead partner on the Regional Housing Approach Game-Changer Project.

Another example is the proposed \$200 million Apple Capital Loop Byway INFRA Transportation Project that spans both sides of the Columbia River in the Wenatchee area. According to local officials, *Our Valley* provided the framework that allowed for collaboration to unfold with this transportation project and it provided the input from residents through its communication work that helped elevate the project to a high priority for the community, and state and federal officials.

Many of *Our Valley, Our Future's* own tasks have centered around regularly communicating and engaging with residents and regional leaders; helping lead partners with facilitation, planning, coordination, communications, marketing, fundraising and troubleshooting; spearheading two major projects, including the Regional Housing Approach game-changer, and 10 action items; and building organizational capacity through fundraising and by transitioning to a formal nonprofit entity.

While much progress has been made in 2017 by *Our Valley* and successes have been numerous, the community building initiative continues to encounter challenges and obstacles. Some of these are due to *Our Valley* being young in years and not yet formally organized as a nonprofit. Others are tied to fundraising and hesitancy of some potential funders to contribute to implementation work and operations. Still others can be attributed to the region's long history of being divided up into many jurisdictions and the difficulty well-meaning government agencies, nonprofit entities and businesses can sometimes have in working outside their own individual focus areas for the betterment of "one community."

Given the big and pressing issues facing the region — a restructuring economy, high poverty rates, a growing housing crisis, the threat from wildfires, changing demographics — the response from *Our Valley, Our Future* to temporary obstacles is the same today as it was when *Our Valley* first began in late 2014. The community must continue to "kick the ball down the field" — to collaborate, to seek common solutions, to be open to new opportunities — if the region is to truly prosper and thrive. The progress made over the past few years through the *Our Valley* initiative and the work of others is a promising sign.



Introduction

When *Our Valley, Our Future / Nuestro Valle, Nuestro* set out to transform the region into a better place to live, work and play in 2014, the community building initiative committed itself to being accountable to residents. Since then, *Our Valley* has intentionally taken steps that engage people from all walks of life and that honor what community members told us they envision for the region's future.

This report is another way that *Our Valley* is remaining true to that commitment. The report also complies with the *Our Valley* Action Plan, which calls for an annual review and update from the initiative.

In this report, you will be reminded of why *Our Valley, Our Future* came into existence; the grassroots and collaborative push that is integral to all *Our Valley* does and champions; how the initiative is organizationally structured; successes of 2017 as well as challenges encountered; and a look ahead at 2018 and beyond.

Emergence of Our Valley, Our Future

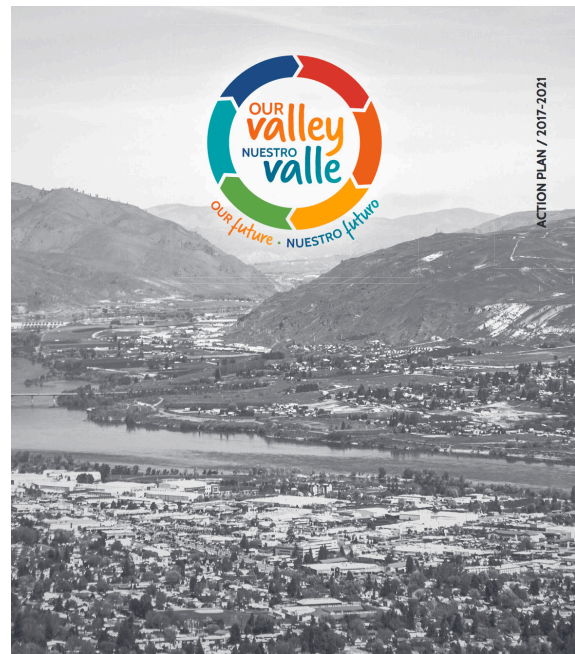
The *Our Valley, Our Future / Nuestro Valle, Nuestro Futuro* community building initiative arose in late 2014 out of a desire to develop an overall vision and strategic action plan for the Wenatchee Valley region, and to improve residents' quality of life by creating a vibrant region while addressing the region's toughest challenges.

Built upon input from more than 5,000 residents and community leaders, this non-partisan initiative is a true grassroots, collaborative, values-based approach to breaking down barriers, finding common ground, combining and leveraging resources, and enhancing the region for years to come.

To date, *Our Valley, Our Future* has completed three phases of the initiative: Outreach (2015-16), Visioning (2015-16), and Planning (2016). *Our Valley's* guiding document is its Action Plan, released in November 2016. The Action Plan features six focus areas, 149 specific actions (projects and programs), seven major 'game-changer' projects, and 81 lead partner organizations.

Contributions from residents and organizations has been key to that success. During 2015-16, volunteer hours totaled 4,222, complementing the 1,600 paid hours. A portion of that volunteer work included the contributions of 310 residents who spent nine months researching, vetting and developing the Action Plan. Local organizations invested \$105,000 in *Our Valley* during this same time period.

Our Valley is overseen by a Core Team, made up of representatives from the public, private and nonprofit sectors. The Core Team is assisted by several subcommittees, as well as a Leadership Alliance that provides advice and advocacy. Funding has come from local governments, nonprofit entities, businesses, and the America's Best Communities competition, sponsored nationally by



Frontier Communications. *Our Valley's* fiscal agent is the United Way of Chelan and Douglas Counties.

Since its start, *Our Valley* has adhered to the collective impact model — the commitment of folks from different sectors and interests coming together around a common vision or goal to solve specific problems.

While the region has benefited for decades from such mainstay industries as agriculture and power generation, many community leaders have told *Our Valley, Our Future* that complacency — in the face of mounting challenges — has become one of the region's biggest enemies.

Jurisdictionally, the Columbia River separates Chelan County from Douglas County, and the City of Wenatchee from the City of East Wenatchee. Within each county and city are a multitude of similar public agencies — such as port districts, public utility districts and school districts. Sometimes, well-meaning public and private entities unwittingly operate in silos, unaware of the needs of the broader community.

Over the past few decades, the Wenatchee Valley has evolved into an ethnically diverse region, with Latinos making up more than 30 percent of the overall population today. This demographic change has created its own set of opportunities and barriers.

Collective impact is built around the notion that no single organization or entity can successfully tackle long-term challenges alone. Many communities have partnerships, networks and joint efforts, but collective impact is different in that it is structured around a common vision and agenda, independent backbone organization, shared measurement, ongoing engagement, and mutually enforcing activities among participants.

For *Our Valley, Our Future*, collective impact can be found through its Action Plan (common vision and agenda), nonpartisan Core Team, Leadership Alliance and staff (independent backbone organization), Community Indicators/Metrics System (shared measurement), frequent communications, surveys and events (continuous engagement), and 81 lead partner organizations (mutually reinforcing activities).



Big Challenges Facing Our Valley

For many years, the region has benefitted from the strong presence of the agricultural industry, in particular the fruit and wheat industries, hydroelectric power generation, medical, retail and tourism sectors. The Wenatchee Metropolitan Statistical Area is home to about 110,000 residents. More broadly, the community serves as a hub for 250,000 people living in mostly rural areas from the Canadian border to Moses Lake, and from the Cascade Crest to Grand Coulee Dam.

At the same time, the region has endured years of high poverty rates, relatively low education and workforce skill levels, low wage structure, and a multitude of jurisdictions that have made decision-making slow and difficult if not impossible at times, impeding growth in the process. In recent years, several challenges have emerged to create added pressure to the economy and well-being of residents. They include:

- **Wildfires**, which previously ravaged Chelan and Douglas counties once every five or six years, have now become an annual occurrence, causing millions of dollars in property and business losses and putting people's lives at risk. One fire alone, Wenatchee's Sleepy Hollow Fire in 2015, burned more than two dozen homes and several tree fruit businesses, causing more than \$100 million in losses. These wildfires do not know boundaries.
- **Alcoa Wenatchee Works** smelter was curtailed in late 2015 in a move that laid off 428 employees. According to Eastern Washington University's Institute for Public Policy & Economic Analysis, the Alcoa workers earned around double the area's average wage. The hit to the local economy from lost wages alone is estimated at \$60 million annually.
- **Housing Availability and Affordability** is severely impacting the region's economy and quality of life. Employers are reporting that they can't fill jobs because housing is not available. Some residents are spending as much as 70 percent of their household income on housing, according to recent regional survey conducted by *Our Valley, Our Future*. The same survey found 46 percent of the 1,700 respondents saying they had considered relocating within the past year due to the high cost of housing combined with a severely limited supply.



Implementation Phase of 2017-21

In January 2017, *Our Valley, Our Future* kicked off its Action Plan's five-year Implementation Phase — with the Core Team overseeing operations and implementation work, and with Steve Maher serving as project coordinator and Steven Ames providing planning services.

A Work Plan for the year was approved in January. *Our Valley's* tasks and roles for 2017 included:

- Serving as the steward and ombudsman of the *Our Valley* Action Plan and overall vision so the wishes of residents, as expressed through community outreach work, are honored
- Assisting lead partners with facilitation, planning, communications and marketing, tracking progress and troubleshooting
- Spearheading two game-changers and 10 action items as the designated lead partner
- Continuing extensive community outreach and engagement and partnership-building
- Designing and setting up a Community Indicators/Metrics System to measure Action Plan progress
- Developing and adopting an organizational sustainability plan for *Our Valley, Our Future*.
- Raising money for *Our Valley* operations and implementation work

To cement the initiative's grassroots, collaborative nature and to prepare for organizational changes in the years to come, the Core Team updated *Our Valley's* mission statement, Core Values and Guiding Principles, as seen below.

Mission Statement: *Our Valley, Our Future / Neustro Valle, Neustro Futuro* is an independent, nonpartisan, community-based organization that engages and collaborates with the people and organizations of Our Valley in working to achieve our region's shared, long-range vision.

Our Valley, Our Future upholds **Core Values** that reflect the people, organizations and mission of Our Valley:

- Leadership, Ownership & Stewardship
- Communication, Engagement & Involvement
- All Generations & Voices
- Openness & Transparency
- Collaboration & Partnerships
- Innovation, Creativity & Forward Thinking
- Measureable Results

Our Valley, Our Future adheres to **Guiding Principles** that reflect how we work together in achieving Our Valley's vision:

- Independence — We are an independent, non-partisan community-based organization that works with input from diverse sources on behalf of the entire community.
- Vision & Action — We are dedicated to promoting the achievement of our region's vision through shared strategic action.
- Regional Focus — We focus on our broader region with no specific geographic or jurisdictional boundaries.
- Community Sponsors — We engage the wider community, government, business, civic, and community-based organizations in sponsoring, funding and supporting our work.
- Community Resources — We build on information, data, reports and plans developed by community, government, business and civic organizations across the region.
- Community Partners — We partner with the wider community, government, business, civic and community-based organizations in developing and implementing specific actions.
- Targets & Measures — We link our plan's actions to concrete indicators, targets and measures.
- Easy Wins & Game Changers — We promote the implementation of “easy win” actions, as well as bold “game changer” initiatives that accelerate the overall achievement of our vision.
- Outreach & Engagement — We reach out extensively to the entire community to promote the ongoing engagement of people from across the region.

The Core Team also raised money for operations and action plan implementation tasks in 2017. Financial supporters for the year have included the City of Wenatchee, City of East Wenatchee, Port of Douglas County, Port of Chelan County, Wenatchee Valley Chamber of Commerce, Wenatchee Valley College, Columbia Valley Community Health, Confluence Health, Community Foundation of NCW, Alcoa Foundation, SCJ Alliance, The Trust for Public Land, and Northwest Farm Credit Services.

Game-Changer Progress in 2017

Thanks to the work of lead partner organizations and *Our Valley*, many of the ‘game-changer’ projects in the *Our Valley* Action Plan have witnessed good movement since the Implementation Phase began in January 2017.

These seven ‘game-changer’ projects were designed to “move the needle significantly” by accelerating the community's long-term vision for the region. Implementation of several of these

projects is already well under way, with one game changer completed. Here is a look at the progress made:

Regional Trails Organization: This project, which called for the identification or formation of a nonprofit group to coordinate, advocate and plan for a regional trails network, was completed with the formation of Wenatchee Valley TREAD in early August. The lead partner is the Wenatchee Valley Chamber of Commerce, which is providing administrative support to TREAD as it moves forward. *Our Valley* has agreed to assist TREAD in the future.

Regional Housing Approach: *Our Valley* is the lead partner of this game changer. Three steps in this game changer, which is meant to alleviate a severe housing availability and affordability crunch in the region, have been completed: A Housing Ambassadors Group was formed in June to advise *Our Valley*; a regional housing survey of 1,700 residents was conducted in July and August; and a community housing forum was held in late September. In November, a Housing Solutions Group will begin meeting to research and develop a series of recommendations to policy makers and the overall community. That work is expected to be completed during the first half of 2018. A white paper on home construction cost disparities also is under way and will be utilized by the Housing Solutions Group later in November.

Technology & Innovators Hub: The first steps in this game changer — the Flywheel Conference in spring 2017 and creation of an angel investors network — have occurred. The next step is Flywheel 2018, which will be held at the Numerica PAC in spring 2018 and will include a competition among start-ups for a cash award totaling at least \$100,000. Other steps in the game-changer include developing co-working spaces and tailoring education more closely to the technology sector. GWATA has been the lead on Flywheel and the angel investors network. Other lead partners include Wenatchee Valley Chamber, Port of Douglas County and Port of Chelan County. *Our Valley* is assisting with communications and marketing.

Graduate Research Center: A Graduate Research Center Working Group, being facilitated by *Our Valley*, has been meeting since July and has been in communication with Washington State University officials. In late October, work on a strategic plan began, with completion anticipated in December or January. A new working title for the project — Research & Innovation Center — also emerged. Lead partners on the project include WSU Wenatchee Research & Extension Center, Wenatchee Valley College, Apple STEM Network, and the City of Wenatchee. *Our Valley* has taken a leadership role by overseeing the facilitation, coordination and strategic planning work. Supporting partners include Port of Douglas County, Chelan County PUD, Douglas County PUD, City of East Wenatchee, Confluence Health, Columbia Valley Community Health, and Wenatchee Learns.



Early Childhood Learning: The lead partners on this project are the United Way of Chelan and Douglas Counties, the Eastmont School District and the Wenatchee School District. In mid-2017, Wenatchee School District, Eastmont School District and United Way convened a meeting with Communities In Schools (CIS). The meeting has led to the hiring of three individuals as part of the Community in Schools national program to support Eastmont School District students. The employees serve as a conduit for children and families at three elementary schools for services within the community and the schools, and they help break down barriers and create connections. In addition, United Way continues to serve as the lead with an early-learning coalition of 60 organizations in Chelan, Douglas, Grant and Okanogan counties, as part of the Coalition for Children and Families of NCW. Our Valley is monitoring progress of this game changer and communicating its successes to the broader community.

Alleviating Generational Poverty: The lead partner, United Way of Chelan and Douglas Counties, has formed a Prosperity Coalition that has brought 10 organizations together to collectively address poverty by leveraging and aligning resources. In February 2018, United Way will hold the region's third Opportunity Community Conference. The conference has been expanded to include more partners. *Our Valley* is part of the Prosperity Coalition and is monitoring progress of this game changer and communicating its successes.

One Community: *Our Valley* is the lead partner of this game changer. In February, *Our Valley* organized the first joint meeting of the Wenatchee City Council and the East Wenatchee City Council (who were joined by their respective planning commissions). In August, the Chelan County Commission and Douglas County Commission followed suit.

Action Item Successes in 2017

Our Valley contacted lead partner organizations to learn how the 149 action items (projects and programs in the Action Plan) were progressing. As of late October 2017, 75.6 percent of Our Valley's 149 action items are underway. Just 15.7 percent of the action items have yet to get off the ground. Another 8.7 percent of the action items are completed. Of the completed items, several remain "ongoing" — meaning they are completed based on their descriptions but work on them is considered a constant.

Here are the 13 action items considered completed:

Community Education Initiative

Focus Area: How We Prosper

Lead Partners: Wenatchee Valley College

Description: Expand opportunities for residents to teach non-accredited classes at Wenatchee Valley and to access the WVC Library and other college resources.

Engaging the Private Sector

Focus Area: How We Prosper

Lead Partners: *Our Valley Our Future*, Wenatchee Valley Chamber of Commerce

Description: Engage with and encourage the private sector to become involved in the *Our Valley* vision and action plan, promoting their expanded involvement in the region's economic development.

Innovative Use of Public Power

Focus Area: How We Prosper

Lead Partners: Chelan County PUD, Port of Douglas County

Description: Promote new and expanded business opportunities associated with public power and energy efficiencies.

Outdoor Recreation Economic Impact Study

Focus Area: How We Prosper

Lead Partners: Wenatchee Valley Chamber of Commerce

Description: Conduct a comprehensive analysis of the economic impact of outdoor recreation in Chelan and Douglas counties and of the future economic impact tied to new and improved outdoor recreation facilities.

Legislative Liaison Position

Focus Area: How We Prosper

Lead Partners: Wenatchee Valley Chamber of Commerce

Description: Develop and fill a legislative liaison position to advocate on behalf of *Our Valley's* economic development priorities.

Craft Brewery District

Focus Area: How We Plan and Grow

Lead Partners: Wenatchee Valley Brewing Co., Badger Mountain Brewing Co., Columbia Valley Brewing Co.

Description: Develop, promote and market a craft brewery district in Our Valley that features local brewers and attracts both residents and visitors.

Electric Vehicle Infrastructure

Focus Area: How We Plan and Grow

Lead Partners: NCW Economic Development District, Plug-In NCW

Description: Promote the development of electric vehicle infrastructure and tourism in our communities

Synchronized Traffic Signals

Focus Area: How We Plan and Grow

Lead Partners: City of Wenatchee, City of East Wenatchee, City of Cashmere, City of Leavenworth, Douglas County

Description: Synchronize major traffic signals in the region where feasible and appropriate to promote improved traffic flow and connectivity.

Workforce Needs Assessment

Focus Area: How We Learn and Create

Lead Partners: Express Employment Professionals

Description: Complete a workforce needs assessment with the major employers in Our Valley that will guide our school districts and higher education institutions in developing programs to educate and train students to meet those workforce needs.

Local Business & Classroom Connections

Focus Area: How We Learn and Create

Lead Partners: Wenatchee Learns Connect, Wenatchee School District, Eastmont School District

Description: Foster stronger connections between local businesses and classrooms, creating enriching opportunities for students to experience real world applications of classroom learning.

Tread Lightly Friday

Focus Area: How We Sustain Our Environment

Lead Partners: The Hunter's Wife

Description: Encourage downtown businesses and their employees to adopt environmentally-friendly practices — such as riding a bike to work, utilizing a self-container for take-outs, selling locally sourced foods or composting good waste — every Friday, as part of a larger goal of reducing the community's carbon footprint.

Apple Capital Loop Trail Mile-Marker Project

Focus Area: How We Sustain Our Environment

Lead Partners: RunWenatchee

Description: Install the final eight mile-markers on the Apple Capital Loop Trail as a benefit to locals, visitors and emergency responders.

Immigrant Citizenship

Focus Area: How We Participate and Decide

Lead Partners: Hand-In-Hand Immigration Services

Description: Support and promote the pursuit of U.S. citizenship among immigrants in the region, encouraging their pursuit of civic education and active participation in local democracy.

Assisting Lead Partners

Our Valley, Our Future has assisted several lead partner organizations with facilitation, planning, communications and marketing, tracking progress and troubleshooting. Here are some examples of that work:

Craft Brewery District: *Our Valley* facilitated a dozen meetings between the owners of three craft breweries between March and September 2017, which led to formation of the Wenatchee Brewers Row district. *Our Valley* also assisted the brewery owners with fundraising, planning, design and marketing work.

Tread Lightly Friday: *Our Valley* assisted lead partner The Hunter's Wife heath food bar with planning, marketing and graphic design work to get this environmentally friendly weekly activity off the ground.

Workforce Needs Assessment Report: *Our Valley* edited, distributed and publicized the report developed by lead partner Express Employment Professionals and eight supporting agencies.

Boys and Girls Club in Malaga: *Our Valley* provided free legal services to lead partner Boys and Girls Club of Brewster. After a lease agreement was signed in August paving the way for a Boys and Girls Club in Malaga, *Our Valley* communicated the news by writing and distributing a press release and by posting on Facebook.

**Small Grants to Lead Partners**

Several of the projects and programs in the *Our Valley* Action Plan have been supported with grants from a \$130,000 program co-administered by *Our Valley* and the Community Foundation of NCW. The funding came via Philanthropy Northwest and originated with The Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation.

Through October 2017, \$41,200 had been awarded to lead partners for their projects:

Wenatchee Valley Museum & Cultural Center

Action item: Major Resign of the Wenatchee Valley Museum & Cultural Center

Grant amount: \$5,000

Funds to be spent on: A part-time coordinator who will provide administrative and logistical support during the public phase of the museum redesign \$6.5 million capital campaign.

Apple STEM Network

Action item: STEM Programs

Grant amount: \$1,500

Funds to be spent on: Training in computer science for teachers in the Wenatchee, Eastmont and Cashmere school districts.

The Hunter's Wife

Action item: Tread Lightly Friday

Grant amount: \$700

Funds to be spent on: A logo and window stickers to further promote and brand this environmentally friendly activity and to recognize participating businesses.

Evergreen Mountain Bike Alliance

Action item: Squilchuck State Park Trails

Grant amount: \$5,000

Funds to be spent on: Trail building machine operating costs, building materials, and operator time that will complete the remaining three miles of Squilchuck State Park's seven-mile trail system.

Wenatchee Valley Brewing Co.

Action item: Craft Brewery District

Grant amount: \$2,000

Funds to be spent on: The new brewery district's logo, map, postcard, and photos.

Regional Bicycle Advisory Committee

Action item: Bicycle Amenities & Information

Grant amount: \$500

Funds to be spent on: Printing of 2,000 Wenatchee Valley bicycle maps that will be distributed to residents and visitors. It's the first time a detailed map showing local bike routes and trails has been published.

Eastmont Metropolitan Parks District

Action item: Eastmont Community Park Playground

Grant amount: \$5,000

Funds to be spent on: Design of the Eastmont Community Park playground project.

Our Valley, Our Future

Game Changer: Regional Housing Approach

Grant amount: \$4,000

Funds to be spent on: Hiring an outside third-party to research and write a technical white paper, identifying reasons behind housing cost disparities in Our Valley compared to other similar communities in Eastern Washington.

Cascadia Conservation District

Action items: Long-Term Wildfire Recovery Initiative and Healthy Forests & Wildland-Urban Interface

Grant amount: \$5,000

Funds to be spent on: Supporting new and existing Firewise Communities through education, outreach, risk assessments and technical assistance; and to communicate to the wider community the benefits of reducing risks.

WenatcheeOutdoors

Action item: Outdoor Recreation Clubs

Grant amount: \$2,500

Funds to be spent on: Facilitating and helping organize new outdoor clubs in the region, with a particular focus on outdoor clubs for Latino youth.

WSU Wenatchee Research & Extension Center

Game Changer: Graduate Research Center

Grant amount: \$10,000

Funds to be spent on: Strategic planning for a Graduate Research Center and organizing and holding a 'Science in Our Valley' seminar series to engage and broaden collaboration among the regional scientific community.

Our Valley's Own Action Items

Here is the status of the 10 action items that *Our Valley* itself is the lead partner on:

Our Valley Economic Framework

Description: Encourage and support economic development groups to incorporate the *Our Valley* vision and action plan as an overarching framework for local and regional economic plans and activities in order to achieve a 'collective impact.'

Status: Underway

Engaging the Private Sector

Description: Engage with and encourage the private sector to become involved in the *Our Valley* vision and action plan, promoting their expanded involvement in the region's economic development.

Status: Completed/Ongoing

Our Valley Vision & Action Plan

Description: Encourage local political and community leaders to promote achievement of the region's long-term vision and action plan as developed by *Our Valley*.

Status: Underway

Regional Leaders Education on Our Valley

Description: Provide continuing outreach about *Our Valley* to regional leaders through a variety of communication methods.

Status: Underway

Formalized Our Valley Organization

Description: Formalize *Our Valley* as its own entity and explore options for its organizational sustainability.

Status: Underway

Our Valley Annual Reviews & Updates

Description: Utilizing a variety of communication vehicles and languages, clearly articulate the progress being made on implementing the *Our Valley* Action Plan, including presentations of clear and concise metrics.

Status: Underway

Forum for Civic Engagement & Civil Dialogue

Description: Create an ongoing civic forum to promote increased civil discourse and participation in the region, where citizens can explore and discuss important issues confronting the community, decision makers can receive information and training in effective leadership, new or minority residents can find their civic voice, and youth can become more involved in community and public affairs.

Status: Not underway

Town Hall Series

Description: Develop a Town Hall Series that brings authors, experts and innovators to our region, stretches our minds and imaginations around new ideas and information, and discusses different structures and systems that could be relevant to regional challenges and opportunities.

Status: Partially underway

Our Valley Commitment

Description: Demonstrate and market *Our Valley's* commitment to achieving its vision.

Status: Underway

Our Valley Continued Outreach

Description: Conduct more outreach and greater participation among citizens.

Status: Underway

Cooperation, Collaboration and Communication

Working to achieve the region's shared, long-range vision involves more than encouraging and seeing the individual projects in the Action Plan to fruition. Over the past year, by utilizing the collective impact model, *Our Valley, Our Future* has brought organizations and individuals together to work and find common solutions; engaged and *listened* to all segments of the community; focused on a region defined by no geographic or jurisdictional boundaries; communicated extensively with lead partner organizations; remained committed to the grassroots, non-partisan and third-party nature of the initiative; and pushed for strategic action when necessary.

Through that work, *Our Valley, Our Future* has:

- Become *the* vehicle to take on big challenges and to push for greater communication, collaboration and cooperation in the region.
- Shown the ability, through its extensive communication network and engagement work, to convene thousands of people around community issues.
- Nurtured ground-level and top-level community building and economic development.



While local governments cooperated with each other before, they are now increasingly collaborating. A prime example is the proposed \$200 million Apple Capital Loop Byway INFRA Transportation Project that spans both sides of the Columbia River in the Wenatchee area. According to local officials, *Our Valley* provided the framework that allowed for collaboration to unfold with this transportation project and it provided the input from residents through its communication work that helped elevate the project to a high priority for the community, and state and federal officials. The project itself is an outgrowth of the Confluence Parkway action item in the *Our Valley* Plan.

Our Valley's collective impact work also has included breaking down cultural barriers. During its outreach work in 2015-16, *Our Valley, Our Future* intentionally sought out Latino community

members to learn what they valued most about living in the region and what challenges they believe needed to be taken on. A community survey (print and online versions) asking those questions was translated into Spanish. Of the 2,100 residents who completed the survey, 23 percent self-identified as Latino. This outreach occurred again with the 2017 Our Valley Regional Housing Survey. The survey was translated into Spanish again (print and online). Of the 1,700 respondents, 13 percent self-identified as Latino. Another 6 percent choose not to list their ethnicity, although upon review of those respondents, many possessed Spanish surnames.

Throughout 2017, *Our Valley* has communicated regularly with all lead partners, via a bi-monthly e-newsletter and numerous follow-up conversations.

The broader community has been informed of initiative developments through *Our Valley's* own e-newsletter (1,200 subscribers) and Facebook page (780 followers) and through numerous articles in *The Wenatchee World* and *Wenatchee Business Journal* and segments on NCW Life TV, KOHO Radio and KPQ Radio.

Between January and May 2017, *Our Valley* did formal presentations before 27 agencies and nonprofit organizations in the region.

Community Indicators/Metrics System

The Core Team, with the help of consultant Aimee White, has identified 21 measurable terms from the Action Plan that will form the basis of a Community Indicators/Metrics System. The next step is to connect those terms with data so *Our Valley's* long-term progress can be tracked and reported to the community. Eastern Washington University has been contacted to determine which indicators it is currently tracking that could be used to measure the *Our Valley* terms. Plans also call for an online dashboard that can be utilized by *Our Valley's* staff, lead partners, key community stakeholders and others.

Funding to get the Community Indicators/Metrics System up and running is included in *Our Valley's* 2018 budget.

Capacity Building

In May 2017, *Our Valley* began studying whether to shift from an informal structure to one that is more formal while keeping qualities — such as frankness, collaboration, forward-thinking — that have made *Our Valley* so successful.

After three months of research, *Our Valley* Core Team decided in September 2017 to set a target date of Jan. 1, 2019, for *Our Valley* to formally transition to a nonprofit organization. To prepare for that transition, The *Our Valley* Core Team approved a 2018-20 Work Plan at the same time.

The OVOF nonprofit board of directors is likely to have up to 30 members, with representation coming from nonprofit entities, government agencies, businesses, educational institutions, and the community at large.

Our Valley is seeking to raise \$120,000 a year over each of the next three years to pay for operations, implementation work, communications and outreach, and the indicators/metrics system.

The Core Team also decided to reconvene the *Our Valley* Think Tank, give it advisory and advocacy roles and rename it the *Our Valley* Leadership Alliance. In early October, the Leadership Alliance held its first meeting.

Obstacles to Overcome

While *Our Valley* has enjoyed much success during 2017, that progress has generated its own set of challenges. *Our Valley* Core Team members and the *Our Valley* project coordinator have found they are having a difficult time keeping up with the momentum generated by the community building initiative.

Additional funding and bandwidth are necessary if *Our Valley's* work and the simultaneous implementation of projects is to continue unabated, big regional issues are to be successfully tackled, and new opportunities are to be seized.

In 2017, *Our Valley* struggled at times to raise money for operations, particularly from the private sector. The financial picture is one reason the Core Team decided to begin transitioning *Our Valley* to a nonprofit organization as some potential funders expressed hesitancy at contributing money to an informal group.

Another obstacle that arose during the year was the lack of collaboration seen with about a dozen action items among co-lead partners. In most cases, the problem was caused by co-leads going separate paths on the same project, or not communicating with each other.

About a half-dozen lead partners also failed to respond to queries from *Our Valley* as the year wore on.



Work Plan for 2018-20

Our Valley, Our Future has plenty on its plate as it looks to continue to implement the Action Plan and to pursue the community's long-term vision.

Here are the tasks in *Our Valley's* 2018-20 Work Plan:

- Implementation of the Regional Housing and One Community game-changer projects for which *Our Valley, Our Future* is the lead partner
- Facilitation and coordination of the Graduate Research Center and Technology & Innovator Hub game-changer projects in conjunction with lead partners
- Implementation of 10 action items for which *Our Valley* is the lead partner
- Facilitation and coordination of more than 100 other action items in conjunction with lead partners
- Monitoring and updating of the overall *Our Valley* Action Plan annually; issuing year-end reports to the community
- Conducting community outreach through additional surveys, presentations and events; communicating regularly to the community; translating all communication into Spanish
- Activating the Community Indicators/Metrics System, training of lead partners on data collection, and creating an online dashboard to share findings
- Administering small grants program for lead partner organizations
- Building organizational capacity and transitioning to a nonprofit organization

Our Valley, Our Future Core Team

Lori Barnett, City of East Wenatchee
Norma Gallegos, Hand-In-Hand Immigration Services
Pat Jones, Port of Chelan County
Steve King, City of Wenatchee
Stacy Luckensmeyer, Wenatchee Valley College
Shayne Magdoff, East Wenatchee resident
Gustavo Montoya, El Mundo newspaper
David Olson, Columbia Valley Community Health
Kevin Overbay, Chelan County
Lisa Parks, Port of Douglas County
Sara Rolfs, The Wildfire Project
Shiloh Schauer, Wenatchee Valley Chamber of Commerce
Gil Sparks, Community Foundation of NCW
Alan Walker, United Way of Chelan and Douglas Counties
Jeff Wilkens, Chelan-Douglas Transportation Council
Allison Williams, City of Wenatchee

Our Valley, Our Future Leadership Alliance

Selina Danko, Wenatchee Valley Museum & Cultural Center
Clay Gatens, Jeffers Danielson law firm
Frank Kuntz, City of Wenatchee
Steve Lacy, City of East Wenatchee
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Jeff Ostenson, North 40 Productions
Lisa Parks, Port of Douglas County
Shiloh Schauer, Wenatchee Valley Chamber of Commerce
Carli Schiffner, Wenatchee Valley College
Galen Sorom, Confluence Health
Beth Stipe, Community Foundation of NCW
Rufus Woods, The Wenatchee World
Steve Wright, Chelan County PUD

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Aimee White, Custom Evaluation Services

2017 Our Valley, Our Future Financial Supporters and In-Kind Partners

Alcoa Foundation
City of East Wenatchee
City of Wenatchee
Columbia Valley Community Health
Community Foundation of NCW
Confluence Health
Northwest Farm Credit Services
Port of Douglas County

Port of Chelan County
SCJ Alliance
The Trust for Public Land
United Way of Chelan and Douglas Counties
Wenatchee Valley Chamber of Commerce
Wenatchee Valley College