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## **Our Valley convening potential lead partners for 156 projects**

WENATCHEE — Our Valley What's Next/Nuestro Valle Que Sigue is bringing leaders of more than 70 organizations together Thursday morning to introduce them to community projects they've been identified with as potential lead partners.

The projects are part of a long-term vision to sustain and revitalize local communities and to improve the lives of residents.

The Lead Partner Orientation Event will begin at 8 a.m. at the Confluence Technology Center in Wenatchee.

Our Valley has come up with 156 projects or "action items" that are part of a Draft Action Plan. The ideas originated with an extensive community outreach effort in 2015 that included a survey of more than 1,500 residents, interviews of 36 community leaders, feedback received at more than 50 events and meetings, and brainstorming by 100 residents at a summit. The outreach explored community values, strengths, weaknesses and challenges.

From late February through early May of this year, six teams made up of an additional 100 residents reviewed and developed action items and big projects that address the local economy, education, health care, public safety, arts and culture, diversity, land use, transportation and the environment. The work of the six teams included identifying lead partners and timelines.

At Thursday's Lead Partner Orientation Event, each of the 76 organizations will receive a list of projects they've been identified with. The event's purpose is to inform the organizations of their potential roles in seeing projects to completion, and to describe the process through which Our Valley What's Next will work with them. The organizations will be asked to commit to projects by the end of July.

Among the 156 projects are such proposals as further developing the Columbia River waterfront, finding ways to make housing more accessible and affordable, expanding the medical sector, adding more street lighting in neighborhoods, developing Latino cultural districts, creating a regional trails authority, building a third bridge over the Columbia River, and expanding airline service.

A final Our Valley Action Plan — including all the projects, lead partners, supporting partners and timelines — is expected to be released in September.

Thursday's event is one of three that Our Valley What's Next is holding this month. On June 22, it will hold an orientation event for an Our Valley Think Tank, which will review 11 major "game-changer" projects the community has indicated it wants. And on June 28, there will be a public open house at Pybus Public Market for residents to check out and comment on the Draft Action Plan.

An online survey of residents, with questions about the Draft Action Plan, will be conducted in late June.

Our Valley What's Next, formed in 2015, is overseen by a steering committee that includes representatives from the business community, government agencies and nonprofit organizations. The effort is the first time community planning and development has been undertaken across multi-jurisdictional boundaries in Chelan and Douglas counties. The name, Our Valley, was intentionally chosen to reflect this collaborative approach.

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