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Contact: Steve Maher, Our Valley What's Next project coordinator, (509) 630-2090, info@ourvalleywhatsnext.org

Our Valley launches surveys to help prioritize community projects

WENATCHEE — Following a successful open house attended by more than 100 residents Tuesday evening, Our Valley What's Next/Nuestro Valle Que Sigue launched a series of online surveys today to further collect information from the community on which Our Valley projects should be prioritized.

All six surveys can be found at www.ourvalleywhatsnext.com.

The surveys list the projects, also known as action items, and are divided up by focus area — How We Prosper, How We Plan and Grow, How We Sustain Our Environment, How We Live and Care For One Another, How We Learn and Create, and How We Participate and Decide. In each survey, respondents are asked to check four action items that will have the greatest impact in advancing Our Valley over the next five years. They also can offer new ideas to improve the region's quality of life. Residents can take one of the surveys or all six.

The 156 total action items originated from extensive community outreach that Our Valley What's Next conducted last fall. The action items address the local economy and jobs, education, health care, public safety, arts and culture, land use, transportation, outdoor recreation, the environment, and governance.

The online surveys will remain live until July 29. The results will then be combined from the "voting" on action items that took place at Tuesday evening's open house at Pybus Market. About 100 residents selected projects they consider to be high priority at that event.

The community response from the open house and online surveys will help determine which action items ultimately are part of the Our Valley Action Plan when it is released this fall.

Earlier this month, Our Valley held a Lead Partner Orientation. A total of 76 agencies and organizations have been identified as potential lead partners for the 156 action items being sought by the community. The potential lead partners have until the end of July to commit to leading the implementation of the action items.

Our Valley also has appointed a 23-member Think Tank to vet, amend and develop major “game-changer” projects. The Think Tank will have until the end of August to deliver a final report

Last year, Our Valley What’s Next surveyed more than 1,500 residents (including 23 percent who self-identified as being Hispanic), interviewed 36 community leaders, received feedback at 50 meetings and events, and brought together more than 100 residents at a summit to brainstorm initial project ideas. The outreach explored community values, strengths, weaknesses, challenges and vision ideas. Reports on the findings from the community outreach can be found at www.ourvalleywhatsnext.com.

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 have 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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