



**OUR VALLEY OUR FUTURE  
ONE COMMUNITY ROUNDTABLES NO. 2  
OCT. 16, 2019**

**Here are the comments from the roundtables during the OVOF One Community Working Group event on Oct. 16:**

**Q1: No matter your age, this region has changed a lot since each of your earliest memories. How do you think the community will be different in 2050?**

- There will be unprecedented — for this area, at least — population growth. Many people will move here for the region’s recreational opportunities and beauty and services.
- Traveling will become easier. Pangborn Airport will be larger with more connecting flights and increased business travel. A tech hub will be located around the airport. Public transit connections will be improved. More highways will be built.
- There will be more ethnic diversity. But economic inequities among residents will be greater and more prevalent. The stratification of income classes will have grown, leading to less communication between residents.
- More wealthy retirees will migrate to the community. There also will be large number of young people living here, drawn by recreational opportunities and quality of life considerations.
- For quality of life reasons, more remote workers will move to the community. Some of these people will be from cities not that far away — i.e. Seattle and Portland. But others will arrive from cities in California, the south, Midwest, East Coast, even foreign countries.
- There will be a four-year university in the community.
- Future growth will happen on the east side of the Columbia River, and between Wenatchee and Leavenworth in the Wenatchee River Valley.
- There will be many variations in housing types. The ideal of a 3,000-square-foot home will be no more.

- Life will be “more about experiences than stuff.”
- Communities here will be more eco-friendly and sustainable, including when it comes to transportation.
- There will be more leisure time and greater flexibility in one’s life.
- Outdoor recreation opportunities will grow and be more widespread as new trail systems get built out.
- Integrated health care and outpatient services will be the norm.
- Continued shifts in retail will lead to a growth in crafters, artisans and other businesses making and selling their own products here. There will be a shift to more purpose-driven products and decisions.
- The kinds of jobs will be different. There will be more innovation. The use of robots will lead to the elimination of many existing farm jobs, but that change also will create new and, in some cases, higher-paying jobs.
- Population growth will lead to diminishment of the agriculture industry, which is the community’s brand. There will be no more ‘Apple Capital of the World.’ There will be few orchards left between Wenatchee and Leavenworth.
- The brand of the Wenatchee Valley will change and be tied to new technologies, including ag technologies.
- With population growth will come more choices and more amenities.

**Q2: What specific challenges will we face as a region in 2050?**

- Aging retirees will lead to increased demand for health care, adult care facilities, and social services. Many younger people today have grown up looking at and talking to screens. They may lack the empathetic skills necessary to deal with senior citizens and their needs.
- Housing will be a huge challenge. Will it will available for all income levels? Will it remain affordable? Will the housing stock in 2050 fit the new demographic reality?
- As more retirees and younger people call this place home, it will drive up home prices and will force out people who can’t afford the cost of living.
- There will be a strain on our natural resources, particularly water.
- With the agriculture industry becoming dependent on automation and robots, there will

be a need to train the work force to manage, program and maintain that equipment.

- Small businesses will increasingly be squeezed out by online competition.
- The region will face the challenge of staying on top of technological shifts through education and workforce development.
- Anything can be learned online. The local education system needs to be revamped to stay ahead.
- Training for electricians, plumbers, and carpenters needs to be ramped up. Why is there no CDL licensing or training facility in the Wenatchee Valley? Why do high schools currently attach a negative stigma to students going into trades rather than attending a four-year university?
- People facing inequities should be encouraged to offer input about community issues. Walls will need to be broken down. How do we get everyone on board?
- A shared vision is paramount, which is why OVOF events are really important. More people need to be involved.
- There is deep generational poverty present in the region. How do we get the education and training here so people can move into new opportunities?
- There is a big need here for a four-year university so people don't have to go away to get educated and then never come back. The presence of a four-year university also would help address the economic inequities that are present in the community.
- Older people have a tendency to oppose change. Growth is happening in other communities everywhere, and some people will be unhappy no matter what happens. As growth happens, decision-makers need to embrace dialogue with all residents, including older people.
- There will need to be further collaboration. Right now, nonprofits in the Wenatchee Valley and NCW struggle getting involvement from people who aren't in their immediate area. They can't get people to go from Wenatchee to Leavenworth. There's this wall up between Lower Valley and Upper Valley. and we're not crossing it. It's an issue right now.
- Build a good quality of life here by adding more resources, and people will choose North Central Washington.
- Public transit can help immensely. If our transit system could be like what it is in Bellingham right now, and really be flexible, it would help immensely. Right now, it's not convenient and it needs to be. Hopefully we'll have more services.
- All young people need to be supported for what they can be when they grow up. There

needs to be increased mentorship in schools and a shift in focus NOW for supporting every student regardless of background, income, race, etc.

**Q3: Are there other examples of regional thinking, collaboration and inclusion that should be in the One Community matrix?**

- Flywheel Investment Conference
- Apple Blossom Festival (with events on both sides of the river)
- Fiestas Mexicanas
- 'Stand Against Up Racism' event put on by YWCA and WVC
- Homeless Coordinated Entry Program
- Waste Loop and the City of Leavenworth working to reduce the community's waste stream.
- Town Toyota Center collaborating with the NCW Hispanic Chamber and Mariachi Wenatchee to expand programming into the Latino culture.
- The Stemilt Partnership and the Stemilt-Squilchuck Recreation Plan
- LBGTQ Alliance at Wenatchee Valley College
- Team Naturaleza
- Migrant CAMP at Wenatchee Valley College
- CAFE Identity of South Wenatchee
- Alianza, the Latino community fund
- Careers after School (Wenatchee Valley Chamber, WVC, high schools)
- Interagency meetings — nonprofits meet together to support each other

**Q4: Going forward, what opportunities exist for additional regional thinking, collaboration and inclusion?**

- Inclusivity is really missing in your matrix.
- What about the LBGTQ community? Where is their voice? They're currently not being heard much. WVC has an incredible LBGTQ Alliance right now and they do great work

but they are not being amplified to the degree that they should be.

- Fiestas Mexicanas is a phenomenal event but it is so siloed. People who aren't in that community, and aren't experiencing that reality, are not hearing about it. As a result, it is not on their radar.
- Anything to make housing more affordable.
- Better public transportation planning. Link Transit could collaborate and/or partner with major employers to better serve people needing access to workplaces. In addition, there are a dearth of bike- and pedestrian-friendly streets and areas.
- Age — and not just ethnicity or race — can be used to exclude or ignore people, too. We (younger people) want more of a night life and cultural activities than the community currently provides. Relevant social gatherings and events are essential in attracting and retaining younger people in their late-teens, 20s and 30s.
- Adding parks in the East Wenatchee area. There has not been a new park in East Wenatchee in more than 50 years.
- Build on existing assets to turn this place into a recreational paradise.
- There is an opportunity for more collaboration between the school districts and Wenatchee Valley College, including financially.
- Communities and people bond over food. Create a food truck plaza, bigger than Pybus Market, that will bring people together and serve as a central gathering spot like in Spain or Mexico. Mix in music and other cultural offerings.
- The use of artificial intelligence in agriculture and other industries will mean way fewer entry level jobs for high-school and college graduates.
- As technological advances accelerate, the community will need to nurture an ecosystem for start-up companies and job creation via artificial intelligence and blockchain.
- Wenatchee will become more like Chelan and Leavenworth, with more people having second homes in the community. The cities in the region can help each other tackle challenges and seize opportunities as the demographics change.

**Q5: What barriers stand in the way of a more inclusive community?**

- Perspective. The mentality here is really lacking.
- Mindset. Maybe some of the mindset comes down to this (barriers to a more inclusive community) not being a topic here in this community.
- There are walls between those who have lived here a long time and those who have

lived here for less than 15 years.

- You don't hear people talking about inclusivity on the radio or in public areas.
- The conversation is great but getting those people in the same room is critical. This is one of the most diverse rooms I've seen or have been to in a long time. ... Our interests and cultures are not aligning in business. We walk around with the same people, go to meetings with the same people. It's so siloed when you don't get in a room with different people.
- Language
- Technology
- Social media pairs you with people who match your algorithms. Many people are glued to screens today, absorbing social media and other content, and are having fewer and fewer face-to-face conversations with others. This has led to sharp political divisions and an erosion in "community."
- Housing. If the cost of housing gets so high that only certain segments of society can afford to live here, then there will be no inclusive community.
- We need to build-up and embrace our middle class. Housing costs way too much. How do you expect people our age who have jobs to stay here (long term) when we can't even provide for our own basic needs? We aren't doing justice for our middle class. It's a huge barrier.
- We are a small community, but we're growing way beyond what we can keep up with. It's increasing the cost of living, including housing. It's a tough challenge. People will keep flooding in because it's a great place to live.
- Mental health, substance abuse, people living on the streets.
- People don't have the capacity — including not knowing where to begin — to reach across boundaries. Partnerships are critical to getting things done but you only have so much control over folks wanting to be a part of that.
- People being marginalized. This negative action blocks equity, diversity and inclusion across the board.
- Some people don't want to see a more inclusive community.
- We're not educating well. Robust communities are characterized by a strong education system and a strong economy. Can we do better than this? We can connect so many of our topics tonight to education.
- There are jobs here that people don't really know exist. We have to have the pathways

to get students there.

- Public transit needs to become a greater priority in the region and needs to get people where they want to go quicker and more efficiently.
- For some people, the barriers and obstacles of even coming to the table are too great to overcome. How can they talk about a festivity when they are scared of ICE raids? Or don't know where they will be living in the next month? It goes back to perspective and mindset. Sometimes what we ask of someone means far more than when asking that exact same thing of someone else.
- There are not enough resources. We lack low-barrier shelters for the homeless, those who need detox, and for women who need a safe place to stay.
- We need all the tools to get the homeless out of the situation they are in. What is the difference between a homeless person and a drug addict? Other communities have addressed the drug problem and homelessness has decreased.