

DATE: June 2-3, 2015
TO: City of Wenatchee
FROM: ECONorthwest
SUBJECT: SOUTH WENATCHEE AGENCIES AND COMMISSIONS MEETING NOTES

Education and Skill Agencies Session

What are education and skills providers doing in South Wenatchee?

- Accessed federal grants for after-school programs (Mission View and Columbia ES), extended learning activities. Focusing on STEM
- Safe routes to schools/bus stops are being continuously evaluated in neighborhoods and conversations with City and County regarding these is an ongoing conversation

Successes or Opportunities

- Wenatchee Valley College (WVC) has basic skills/professional development classes on campus. Link bus is provided for free to students (this is underutilized, however)
- The community center is still providing a more limited set of community service classes, as is a “maker’s” space program
- Museum is working on becoming a “maker’s” space and an after school program setting. South Wenatchee
- More and more students from South Wenatchee are recent high school grads. There are adult education classes for them. Day and evening classes are provided but could be increased.
- These provide more flexibility in attending, which is necessary for workers.
- Access is an issue. Classes are not always accessible to all (regardless of cost)
- Often they are not advertised well to the oral culture that’s prevalent in South Wenatchee
- The school district’s (SD) Wenatchee Connects program
- There is a bond plan for high school
 - This is intended to gain funding to alleviate over crowding and an expand a STEM program
- Career Tech Ed (CTE) program is underutilized
- Some schools on south end have after school programs with homework support
- There is a HS mentor program to help kids. An AVID program, too
- There is also a career “cruising” program at middle schools to help kids explore potential professions

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- There is a big opportunity to better utilize the community center
 - Tech Center offers a bus to get residents to come in
 - Also offers equivalencies to help meet requirement and earn credits
 - What are the most effective means of communication? SD already issues newsletters in two languages and radio ads. How to better reach people or make them comfortable to participate?
 - There are grant and scholarship opportunities for post-high school education
 - These run into the same problem of the public not being made aware of the opportunities
 - SD has approved new Math and English teacher

Challenges or Barriers

- **Need to maximize the existing programs and opportunities**
 - WVC was delivering basic skills at the community center, but with budget cuts could not pay their rent at the community center
 - There aren't enough after school education or recreation programs available to children, meaning a lot of them are left alone after school because their parents have to work.
 - Question: are the programs in place and simply not advertised well enough?
 - Technology opportunities needed (hotspots, etc).
 - Wenatchee Learns highlighted the importance of this
 - Parents are being left behind. Not much email, internet available in homes
- **Better communication with schools and parents and community is vital**
 - Parents in neighborhood have limited ability/language skills to help their kids with schoolwork. Kids are discouraged and not encouraged by the system to advance
 - Parents don't know what they can do or role
 - Comment that the high school is over populated. Need smaller class sizes? More school counselors?
 - Kids don't have opportunities to deal with mental health issues/suicide issues. Help needed for kids that are mentally and academically struggling to graduate and get to college
 - Question of whether access to low cost health and dental care available?
- **Safe Routes to Schools**
 - Stevens Streets is a feeder to Middle and High Schools, opportunities to make improvements

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- Between Mission and Chelan there are a lot of kids boarding school buses. School district does evaluate placement of stops and routes
 - Often young kids have to walk some distance to Mission View
 - Conditions of the sidewalk still an issue even if stop relocated (lots of gravel). Lighting at alley bus stops is not good
 - Mission and Terminal is a dangerous crossing in need of a light. Crossing at Crawford (busy street and intersection) and Methow, too. Crossing guard currently not at the intersection
 - Events in the park also create potential issues with safe crossings (kids, elderly, etc)
 - Lots of children are travelling to the park alone, so this might be a priority
 - Safe bikeways are something to consider, too. There are some bike routes around town but no designated lanes

Public Safety Agencies Session

What are public safety providers doing in South Wenatchee?

- There is a new fire station being developed and construction will start soon, but no more annexing of the district can happen until it is done (it will be done no later than mid-2016)
- A lot of firefighters go door to door and do surveys, and a lot of their volunteers are Hispanic. The firefighters are better received than law enforcement in this respect.
 - Officials are best received when not wearing a badge
 - Could the new station be a location for a community outlet that improves relations?
 - Also could possibly be paired with other law enforcement efforts
- People have seen more patrols in the neighborhood, which is good
 - Adding more would be a relatively expensive solution

Successes or Opportunities

- Rental licensing program? Provides program where landlords get email if an emergency responder call is made to their property
 - Voluntary or mandatory?
- Diversion programs: testimonials from formerly prosecuted residents with guidance on what kids could do different (these aren't nearly prevalent enough)
 - There is a need for a multilateral approach (previously none) within the justice system to help prevent the buildup of criminal records in the community while supplying a potential workforce that could help undertake community causes
 - Previous grant efforts have not succeeded in establishing these programs

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- Police could teach classes to students or have town meetings in the community.
 - Used to have first period class of each day to build relationships with kids
 - This was exceptionally valuable to both parties involved
 - Faith-based organizations do work in prison
 - These organizations are an important part of people's lives in the community and offer programs for kids
 - Youth groups and social community organizations with adult supervision during the summer months and evening hours are vital to keeping kids safe
 - Fire District has program where they pay for tuition (fire science at WVC, which is recent was at Spokane CC) and room and board as part of training program. Not necessarily with FD1 but potentially other departments. Have about 6 each year
 - More community events could be effective, because law enforcement needs to build trustful and comfortable relationships with children *at a young age*.
 - There used to be a police substation in South Wenatchee that was more effective in community engagement (budget issues closed it)
 - Kids would hang out there at night. There were games and computers.
 - Holding public meetings in the neighborhood and organizing community events could go a long way towards establishing better public safety relationships in South Wenatchee

Challenges or Barriers

- A major issue that community members have brought up is lighting. It not only makes the street more safe but also more welcoming/comfortable
 - People use the dark alleys a lot
- Another concern is children walking on the streets or in alleys because there are not many sidewalks
 - Many walkways and alleys are graveled, which means that cars spit up rocks, which can hit people.
 - They also have trouble stopping on the gravel without skidding
- Need to identify what things specifically make people feel unsafe in South Wenatchee
- No established programs for courts to offer diversion options for offenders
- Need to deliberately establish reassurance that when police attend a home it's not necessarily for a bad reason
- School resource officer: only one for high school of 2,200.
- **The city has grown a lot in recent years**

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- Mostly all of the growth was in South Wenatchee (Even though there has been little to no construction in the area)
 - Access is challenging with narrow alleys, roads and driveways.
 - Lots of cars
 - Poorly marked street signs and addresses on houses
 - Lots of code violations
 - Too many people are living in many of these small houses (and some are even living in sheds in backyards)
 - There needs to be more fire protection and code enforcement (smoke detectors, etc.)
 - Fire losses are much larger in the south end than other places
 - This issue is based upon communication difficulties and socio-economic factors
 - Marketing law enforcement agencies to community. Working with school district and events such as national night out so residents are comfortable
 - Law enforcement and other safety programs could maybe undertake outreach campaigns could complete the installation of smoke detectors so they might better connect with community members

Takeaways

- South Wenatchee needs some concerted effort to do things differently than elsewhere
 - How to do this with budget issues
 - Can't be vertically integrated in this approach (Example: linking education system)

Social Services Agencies Session

What are social services providers doing in South Wenatchee?

- YWCA: Homeless housing and job training
- Women's Resource Center: serve families, transitional housing and permanent supported housing, and scattered housing sites (HUD subsidized, including S Wenatchee)
- Columbia Valley Community Health (CVCH): Ranging from primary care to behavioral help, dental, WIC
 - Transportation is an issue to access
- Lighthouse Christian Ministries: Homeless services, soup kitchen, food bank
 - Also has an emergency medical clinic across the river
- Aging and Adult Care Center: Has difficulties reaching people in South Wenatchee
- Housing Authority (HA): low income rental housing, farmworker housing,

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- About 500 total units in Chelan/Douglas counties
 - ~45 units for year round farmworkers in South Wenatchee, Section 8
 - Built 18-20 homes in South Wenatchee for first time home buyers
 - United Way: early learning collaborative (Head Start, pre-schools), Youth United to get kids to volunteer, generational poverty support – provide families with support to guide way out of poverty, Get United program
 - Acts as a liaison for agencies that want to volunteer in/assist the community
 - Currently targeting a few families to provide with an individual counselor to help navigate their way out of poverty

Successes or Opportunities

- Code enforcement could be a better strategy than rental licensing program.
 - Need to get landlords involved
- Lighthouse working with police on preventative measures. Refuse services if they cause problems in the neighborhood
 - Has partnerships with businesses in neighborhood so the neighborhood is “respected”. Trying to be an asset to the businesses and neighboring properties
- The housing authority has done work on engaging seasonal workers to help them find housing
- United Way’s generational poverty program is an opportunity to connect people.
 - Provide families with “navigators”
- There is a need to improve collaboration between agencies (lots of people agree with this)
 - This is the first time they’ve all met together
 - Working together could help improve every agency’s access to previously missed families and populations
- There is a general consensus among the providers that their services are well known in the community and there isn’t a major communication issue (**but community members might not fully agree with this...**)
- United Way is having a Nov. 14 event for 30-40 families in poverty to conduct a workshop that assists them

Challenges or Barriers

- Harder to recruit for ‘Girls on the Run’ for after school programs because they often have to take care of siblings at home

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- For Section 8, many rental housing don't pass minimum quality standards. Limited buildings. HA has trouble finding sites for affordable housing development in the City; S Wenatchee could be one area the HA could afford now?
 - Need for landlord liaison program to engage? Help people with records or difficulties in get housing to rent a place.
 - Landlords sometimes screen out low-income families
 - Need for affordable housing outside of South Wenatchee
 - Access to healthy food within South Wenatchee is an issue, ability to manage diabetes, etc...
 - There are no grocery stores in South Wenatchee (only markets)
 - Access for exercising (example of access to Loop Trail) also not there or known
 - Challenges in walking and feelings of safety in the neighborhood, especially kids getting to school, getting to the Loop Trail on the river, better access to ped bridge across railroad tracks (as a result trespassing, and receive tickets that people often can't afford)
 - Issues in navigating the bus system. United Way working with people to set up ambassadors
 - CVCH: If patients miss three appointments in a year, they cannot come back for a year – back to transportation issues
 - South Wenatchee is often the only place social service providers can afford to be.
 - Need for restarting annual social service fair where all providers are available and people and come and learn/sign up for services
 - Often people can't read so trying to provide information that is more graphic that can go up on a fridge for example
 - Lack of housing and increasing housing costs are increasingly a problem. 1% vacancy rates.
 - Vouchers often don't cover housing needs
 - Steve sees a hope issue in Wenatchee, and people at the meeting agreed that a housing first model could help combat this
 - **General needs cited:**
 - Housing
 - Education
 - Health outcomes
 - Better sense of institutional trust from the South End
 - Collaboration

Infrastructure/Transportation Agencies Session

What are infrastructure/transportation providers doing in South Wenatchee?

- Port of Chelan: Funds infrastructure improvements for economic development, undertakes land acquisition for seasonal housing
 - Looking for partners in economic development and for action items
 - Want to be more engaged
- Water District: Owns the pedestrian bridge. Need to protect general area/properties for their future projects, too. Trying to understand how they would fit within the strategy
 - Have future art projects and a dog park in their plans
 - Think they could develop another pedestrian walkway
 - Open to possibility of improving irrigation in concurrence with city improvement projects
- City Public Works: Safe route for school funding in conjunction with County, made street sign improvements, secured funding for pedestrian signal at Mission Street. Funded George Sellar Bridge improvements (overpass of Wenatchee Ave and ped improvements). Surface transportation program improvements on Wenatchee Ave to add sidewalks on both sides and lighting. Worked with County on street improvements through development (using fee in-lieu as matching funds)
 - Working with PUD on lighting (attaching lighting to PUD poles and replacing other lights with LEDs, which saves money – contingent on grant opportunities)
 - Trying to accommodate needs with funding opportunity issuers
- WSDOT: Responsible for SR 285. Made Sellar Bridge improvements. Doing a paving project on 285 to replace pavement and add fiber
 - Will be doing similar improvements to Mission and Chelan (eventually).
 - See need for a connection over the railroad tracks
- Chelan County Public Works: Much of their work in South Wenatchee is preservation of storm/sewer and pavement (chip-seals). Their needs are increasing faster than revenues
 - Malaga highway important connection
 - Flood control in area: going through comp planning process now
- Link Transit: Six transit routes, one that is free, that serve S Wenatchee. Added three bus shelters in neighborhood recently (including solar lighting, purchased with grant funds). Columbia Station is hub for transfers, but has some loitering issues.
 - 4,000 boardings per month on route 1. Free route across river has 5,000 per month

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- Wenatchee Valley Transportation Council: What regional projects impact South Wenatchee that aren't actually in the neighborhood? Potential for vanpool awareness provided Grant Transit. Updating plan for region now, sidewalks was a regional priority in surveys but State and Federal government don't typically pay for those. Conducted an inventory of street in South Wenatchee. Stewards of Federal funds (which includes environmental justice evaluation and creates WVTC obligations to South Wenatchee)
 - Parks: Locamoda, Lincoln, and Methow exist. Three new parks in the works (Hale Park on river, Cashmere Street, and Okanagon Street). How people get to parks is important.
 - Again, access to Hale across railroad tracks an issue

Successes or Opportunities

- Link transit has an employer participation program where they buy passes for employees (hospital, WVC, Crunch Pac, possibly Stemilt, too)
 - Looking to expand service on weekends and in evenings
 - Has a fare program for family (with kids under 12) for a single price
- See above summaries for other notable successes

Challenges or Barriers

- Chelan Street/SR 285 is an issue with traffic and pedestrian crossing
- Installing sidewalks means you have to install drainage solutions. These costs are large so the going is slow in developing walkways
- Traffic congestion issues and intersection upgrades needed
- Buildings often go to edge of roadway, would need to acquire right of way for sidewalk and drainage, which add costs and time, to make (Boodry St.) sidewalk improvements
- Need to work with Douglas County because traffic often is just going through region and South Wenatchee (specifically via SR 285)
- Mission and Peachey intersection, Lewis has traffic but no sidewalks and cars park where people could walk. Mission and Terminal an issue, too
- A lot of transportation dollars come from the Federal or State government, and completing sidewalks is not a funding priority that will be addressed from these sources
 - County believes that it will cost tens of millions of dollars to develop sidewalks throughout the area, and that this funding will have to come from the city/county

Economic Development Agencies Session

What are economic development agencies doing in South Wenatchee?

- Port of Chelan: Invested in community center 15 years ago. Looking for ideas and strategy they can help on. Helped fund Pybus Market.
- Port of Douglas: Looking at regional efforts for economic development, role of human capital (training, education). Participating in Opportunities Communities effort to bring people out of poverty.
 - “Maker’s” spaces opportunities.
 - Using technology to educate is very important to them
- Chelan PUD: Launched initiative for strategic plan and want to know if they captured all community voices in the process they are conducting. Currently working to do a better job of this. Wide array of issues: billing, educating, weatherization,
 - Will have a report finished by late September that they want to share (re: what can we be doing better to engage the community and heed their input)
- Economic Development District: Want to help out in any way
 - Have a new director that will start their job soon
- Wenatchee Valley College (Center for Entrepreneurship): Little activity in South Wenatchee that she knows of, helping people who work from home,
 - Have state grant money to support maker/incubator space development, workforce training and seminars, but not many people are taking advantage of this training.
- Chamber of Commerce: members in South Wenatchee, Mission Ridge a major tourist destination. Interested in affordable housing issues/helping by any means possible.
 - Want to help open a business development area

Successes or Opportunities

- Pybus Market: what are similar projects that can happen in South Wenatchee?
- Historical buildings could perhaps be repurposed? Parkside example could work
 - They think that the historical culture in the area could generally be accentuated
- Improving housing that is already there through grants to owners/renters, support for maintenance of lawns and property (water rates are high).
 - Through use in property taxes setup? Landlord vs. homeowner strategies?
- Ways to connect to parks for resident travel
- **Business development**
 - Mobile maker space

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- Cross-generational training
 - Creating mentor/mentee support
 - Home-based employment
 - They think that more private partners could be essential for future development
 - Institutions have responded positively to partners that have emerged in the past
 - Manuel thinks that there could be incentive programs in the area that give owners reimbursements for improvements to homes that are run down (either on the outside or in their yards).
 - He thinks he could help with a test case in some of the worst areas to see how development could happen.
 - Identifying opportunities for public entities to get grant support

Challenges or Barriers

- Port of Chelan sees a need for industrial building space to attract new businesses
 - Also wants an employment report for the area (what types of jobs do people in South Wenatchee currently have or are qualified for/what types of jobs do they want).
 - General demographic information
- Need for good private partners to leverage opportunities and public support
- There is a widespread concern regarding gentrification/housing supply concerns
- Challenge of lower pay for professional jobs and opportunities for better paying jobs regionally.
- Code enforcement issues
- How to provide effective incentives for home upkeep/redevelopment
- How to empower the community to identify/address some of its own needs
- Concerns about lack of local work ethic, lack of motivation, lack of hope (Donna Beegle's "Communication Across Barriers")
- "Broken rungs" on the career ladder.
 - Dead-end low wage jobs
 - What more can we do to foster healthy, home-based businesses?

Commissions and Boards Meeting Session

Values to focus on in South Wenatchee

- Family-oriented activities that also bring together the community
 - It is a family-heavy area

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- Safety for all ages at all times of the day
 - Cultural values are prominent and should be accentuated.
 - Steve's repeated message: Let's make South Wenatchee the proud place it should be

Successes or Opportunities

- **Harnessing community pride** (softening the edges at the same time)
 - This could be in the form of art or murals on blank walls, etc.
 - There are also educational opportunities to teach about the community's history
 - Refurbishing old homes in South Wenatchee.
 - Creating first-time home ownership opportunities (a lot of South Wenatchee is rented)
 - Involving residents in developing communal spaces so they have a pride and stake in their surroundings.
 - More trees that can make the neighborhood more beautiful
- More social events that can bring together the community and involve kids in the community even when their parents might be at work or out.
 - Creating better places for these events, too
 - It would be most effective to consider the communities input into where they want these spots
 - This gives them a valuable opportunity to add their voice to development discussions
- Pathways, sidewalks, bikeways that connect pedestrian destinations

Needs/Challenges/Barriers

- Addressing crime issues, homelessness, and drug use
- Creating safer bus stops for city transit and public school transit
- Adapt Wenatchee's code to be more flexible for the lower income area
 - This can bump up against safety issues and are very hard to adapt
 - There is a mix of industrial, commercial, and residential zones
- Extracurricular educational opportunities for children (especially adolescents who are in need of guidance)
- Access to health services for low-income families in the community
- The South Wenatchee area is very linear, so it might be effective to try to integrate the eastern portion of the area closer to the western portion.
- There are social barriers, language barriers, economic barriers, and the general barrier of government vs. citizens who might resist the system

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- Making sure that what we're doing will be received well by the community and that they want these new developments is very important (Andrés spoke to his role in ensuring this).
 - Prioritization of capital improvements with a limited budget