



Community Council

2016 Annual Report

This Annual Report marks the eighth year of Community Council's community-building – bringing citizens together to learn from one another, identify shared priorities, address common challenges, and advocate for positive change. This year, Community Council's impact has grown significantly both in terms of programmatic development and community engagement. In 2016 we concluded a community study, sustained and extended current implementation work, launched a new regional visioning project, and continued to develop a set of regional indicators. We greatly expanded our outreach efforts and made our workshops and meetings more inclusive by working with community partners to engage new segments of our population, and by providing Spanish translation and interpretation, childcare, and refreshments. Not only did those efforts enable more community members to participate and have their voices heard, expanded engagement also leveraged the strength of our region's diversity. Our programs and outreach expanded exponentially in 2016, but our development work did not. We expect our development work to catch up to our programming in 2017.

COMMUNITY CONVERSATIONS

In 2016 Community Council engaged in a collaborative effort with Blue Mountain Community Foundation, Sherwood Trust, and United Way of Walla Walla County to support a series of Community Conversations. The Community Conversations project was designed to engage community members in a dialogue about our region's future and the goal was to identify a set of regional priorities that could guide action. A number of outreach strategies were deployed to hear from as many residents of our region as possible. The collection of Community Treasures identified shared values and highlighted the region's many strengths. Large community workshops held in Walla Walla, Dayton, Waitsburg, and Milton-Freewater provided opportunities for community members to hear each other's ideas for the future. In addition to working with community organizers to reach a broader audience, we made those meetings more inclusive and accessible by providing refreshments, child care, and simultaneous Spanish interpretation. A smaller workshop that specifically sought input from Spanish-speaking Latino residents was held at the Carrie Street Community Center in Spanish, and provided a unique opportunity to hear from a part of our community whose voice is often left out of planning efforts. In addition, roundtable discussions, hosted by United Way of Walla Walla County, engaged service clubs, youth centers, and areas businesses in conversations about challenges and possibilities. Finally, visioning documents from regional jurisdictions and organizations brought additional issues and opportunities into the conversation.

All told, over 800 ideas were gathered, and in September a number of prioritizing workshops were convened where the list of ideas was winnowed down and community members identified their top goals. The top priorities (Access to Education, Strong and Diverse Economy, Health and Wellbeing, Care for Nature, and Safety, in that order) were revealed at a final celebration in December, which was attended by over 250 community members.

COMMUNITY INDICATORS PROJECT

Community Council continues to work towards the development of a set of indicators to support on-going efforts and identify new challenges. In January, we hosted a second “data walk” in collaboration with the Washington State Budget and Policy Center. This second data walk built upon what we had heard at the first data walk in December 2015: that Latinos and young families were not well-represented at the meeting. To make the second data walk more accessible to those groups, we provided Spanish versions of all data and analysis, simultaneous Spanish interpretation during the meeting, childcare, and refreshments. We also expanded the geographic scope of the data to include the entire region, not just Walla Walla as was done in 2015. Making the meeting more inclusive and broadening the scope of the data allowed more community members to engage in substantive conversations about the state of our region’s population, economy, environment, and schools. The data brought to light important issues that many people were not aware of, and established a shared vocabulary for thoughtful discussion. The data and a summary of what was learned from the data walks has been compiled in a report, *Building a Better Blue Mountain Region*, which can be found on our website: <http://www.wvcommunitycouncil.org/indicators.aspx>.

STUDY PROCESS COMMITTEES: STUDY AND IMPLEMENTATION

Study Committee: *Education as a Path to Economic Growth*

The Study Committee met weekly from early September 2015 through mid-April 2016 to address the question, “How can we strategically invest in education as a way to drive economic growth in the region?” The committee examined many topics central to this question, including: the relationship between economic development and education, the regional labor market, inequities among educational outcomes, early learning, workforce education and trauma-informed learning. Speakers included employers, college presidents, school administrators, educators and economic development experts. Based on their study, the committee developed a series of recommendations that seek to increase student and employee engagement, address equity in educational outcomes, foster the development of 21st century skills, increase educational attainment throughout the region, and support student exposure to the workplace. The release of their report was celebrated at Community Council’s annual luncheon in June, which was attended by over 400 people.

Led by Jan Foster, the Study Committee members were:

Katherine Boehm	Kathy Jansen	Kimberly Rolfe
Brian Burns	Bill Jordan	Joshua Slepín
Glenn Carter	Julie Mae Longgood	Michael Smith*
Dick Cook	Becky Martin	Darlene Snider
Chris Crowder	Dennis Matson	Barbara Stubblefield
Mike Denny	Brad McMasters	Danielle Swan-Froese
Jock Edwards*	Trish Niemi	Nick Velluzzi
Jessica Gilmore	Steve Owens	Jessalyn Waring
Jim Gilmore	Jim Peterson	Andrea Weckmueller-Behringer
Steve Hudson	Pete Peterson	Kristi Wellington-Baker
Mark James*	Beth Powers*	Tracy Williams
Randy James	Arleen Rice	

*Member of the Study Management Team

Implementation Task Force: *Education as a Path to Economic Growth*

The Implementation Task Force took the recommendations from the Study Report and developed an implementation action plan, which was approved by the Board in November. As we learned through Community Conversations, Access to Education is our region’s top priority, and there is a significant amount of interest in working towards that goal. At the final Community Conversation meeting in December, over 45 individuals signed up to help support efforts to improve Access to Education. Because those goals align with the recommendations developed in the *Education as a Path to Economic Growth* study, those individuals will be invited to join the Task Force. Including more community members will create a more diverse and inclusive Task Force and will broaden advocacy efforts. The Task Force will continue their advocacy for implementation of the recommendations through the fall of 2018.

Led by Andrea Weckmueller-Behringer, current Task Force members are:

Samantha Bowen	Steve Owens	Kim Rolfe
Dick Cook	Deborah Peters	Darlene Snider
Chris Crowder	Jim Peterson	Nick Velluzzi
Jess Gilmore	Beth Powers	Jessalyn Waring

Implementation Task Force: *Enhancing Outdoor Recreation Opportunities*

The Task Force continues to champion the recommendations set forth in the *Enhancing Outdoor Recreation Opportunities* study. Significantly, in November, the region’s cities, ports, counties, health departments, and other entities were awarded a technical support grant from the National Park Service – Rivers, Trails, and Conservation Assistance Program for the development of a region-wide non-motorized trail and transportation network. This collaborative effort pulls together over 30 local, state, regional, and federal agencies who will work together over the next 16 months to develop a trails and transportation blueprint for our region. In the long term, by unlocking federal and state grant opportunities, this planning effort will increase outdoor recreation opportunities, enhance health and mobility, and promote a higher quality of life in the region. The Task Force continues to support the development of this project through participation on the steering committee and community outreach. In addition, building on the recent designation of Walla Walla as a Bike Friendly City (Bronze level), the Task Force seeks ways to support other communities in the region pursue Bike Friendly status. The Task Force has also been working to support efforts to promote outdoor and environmental education. The Task Force will continue its work until fall 2017.

Led by Kate Bobrow-Strain and Kevin Mills, the task force members are:

Greg Brown	Holly Howard	Lauren Platman
Jon Campbell	Kyle McFarley	Gary Robertson
Mike Denny	Amy Molitor	Jonathan Thompson
David Hampson	Tim Parker	

Implementation Task Force: *Improving Food Security*

Implementation of the *Improving Food Security* recommendations has been extended several months in order to take advantage of new opportunities that directly align with the report’s recommendations, and build upon work done to date. Notably, there is an opportunity to move forward on supporting the development of a scratch cooking program in local schools. In addition, two community health surveys,

which were recommended by the Study Committee, have recently been completed and the data will be relevant to other recommendations in the study report. Due to the extension of the implementation phase, the Task Force’s work will likely be celebrated in 2017, rather than fall 2016 as had been anticipated.

Led by Genie Crowe, the Task Force members are:

Susann Bassham	Janet Ockerman	David Shannon
Casey Burns	Beth Powers	Beth Thiel
Allison Davis-Gingell	Donald Priest	Dan Thiessen
Dewight Hall	Mari Prieto	Jessalyn Waring
Jeff Mathias		

BOARD of DIRECTORS

Officers for Community Council’s Board of Directors in 2016 were:

Roger Esparza, President	Jan Corn, Secretary
Brian Anderson, President-elect**	Jeff Reynolds, Treasurer

**Moved out of the region in March and was not replaced.

Directors serving, with the officers, during 2016 were:

Kate Bobrow-Strain	Bill Erickson	Sergio Hernandez
Katherine Boehm	Alex Ewoniuk	Randy James
Ben Currin	Jessica Gilmore	Chris Kontos
Mike Denny	Dewight Hall	Mari Prieto
Katie DePonty	Cheri Heafy	
Debbie Dumont		

STAFF

Mary Campbell served as Executive Director. Catherine Veninga served as the Study Coordinator. Rachael Rapp, a Whitman Fellow intern, served as the part-time Assistant Study Coordinator for the *Education as a Path to Economic Growth* Study Committee through the spring, when she graduated from Whitman College. Elise Frank, a Whitman intern, served as the Assistant Study Coordinator in the fall.

2016 COMMUNITY SUPPORT

Our generous volunteers, donors, grantors, and sponsors allow us to continue to engage our citizens in building a more vital and resilient region.

Community Council
Statements of Financial Position
Unrestricted and Temporarily Restricted Funds Combined
December 31, 2016 and 2015

	2016	2015
ASSETS		
Cash and Equivalents	\$ 101,713.44	\$ 184,283.18
Grant & Accounts Receivable	3,500.00	1,020.00
Equipment-Net of Depreciation	1,736.72	855.94
TOTAL ASSETS	\$ 106,950.16	\$ 186,159.12
LIABILITIES		
Accounts Payable	\$ 586.07	\$ 124.46
Other Current Liabilities	3,461.08	2,537.29
TOTAL LIABILITIES	4,047.15	2,661.75
NET ASSETS	102,903.01	183,497.37
TOTAL NET ASSETS AND LIABILITIES	\$ 106,950.16	\$ 186,159.12

Statements of Activities
Unrestricted and Temporarily Restricted Funds Combined
Years Ended December 31, 2016 and 2015

STATEMENT OF ACTIVITIES		
External Support (Contributions & grants)		
Contributions & Grants	\$ 110,179.00	\$ 73,217.62
Special Events	9,300.00	8,370.00
Sponsorships	11,750.00	14,250.00
In-Kind Donations	44,518.87	40,617.19
Total External Support	175,747.87	136,454.81
Revenues		
Interest Income	73.84	204.85
Total Revenues	73.84	204.85
Total External Support & Revenues	175,821.71	136,659.66
Expenses		
Personnel	134,412.69	118,787.95
Occupancy	7,216.18	5,962.78
General & Administrative	16,540.90	15,749.03
Marketing & Promotion	8,326.42	9,425.34
Program Materials & Other Costs	89,919.88	41,607.90
Total Expenses	256,416.07	191,533.00
Change in Net Assets	\$ (80,594.36)	\$ (54,873.34)