

CREATING VIBRANT COMMUNITIES

Mohave County Virtual Community Town Hall

Lake Havasu City – Kingman – Bullhead City

April 15, 2021 – Online via Zoom

COMMUNITY STRENGTHS AND OPPORTUNITIES

Many elements are required to make a community healthy and vibrant. In our communities, we enjoy:

- Excellent parks and recreational opportunities
- Strong local school districts and educational partnerships with our community colleges and state universities
- Robust economic development programs supported by our excellent chambers of commerce and strong partnerships amongst our cities
- A healthcare system that benefits from strong partnerships with our healthcare providers
- Active community support for local non-profit organizations and events
- A shared commitment to volunteerism and working together in a cohesive, collaborative fashion
- A deep sense of pride in our communities and a commitment to friendliness

We can build on these strengths to improve other elements of our communities and overall community health, by:

- Analyzing food insecurity in our communities and developing strategies to improve access to healthy food
- Increasing the supply of affordable housing, including long-term rental units
- Diversifying our economies to reduce our dependence on tourism and improve economic opportunities for our citizens
- Improving access to reliable and affordable high-speed internet
- Working with healthcare partners to expand access to childhood immunizations and “well visits” and improve the ratio of healthcare providers to patients, especially in the area of mental health
- Leveraging our local educational systems and partnerships, including early education programs and our technical schools, to improve our talent pipeline and workforce development

CURRENT EVENTS AND VIBRANT COMMUNITIES

The COVID-19 pandemic has revealed, and in some cases created several challenges that affect the health of our communities. The pandemic itself was politicized in a way that exposed divisions amongst our citizens. That, in turn, has challenged our healthcare system both in the context of treating illness and in supporting the vaccination program.

COVID-19 also highlighted the disparities that exist within our communities in the areas of access to transportation and other types of infrastructure, broadband internet access, educational opportunity, food security, access to healthcare, rates of substance abuse, and economic opportunity. These disparities are even more acute within our minority populations, a significant problem that has become more transparent and widely understood in recent months.

In the education system, teachers have been stretched thin at all levels, but there have also been silver linings. Our educators have adapted and identified new ways to deliver instruction, new models for

reaching marginalized populations, and opportunities to partner with other organizations to support these efforts.

Significant education and encouragement from our leaders is needed to overcome challenges so we can heal the divisions within our communities and make it healthier and more vibrant.

TAKING ACTION

To make our communities healthier and more vibrant:

- Our cities and supporting organizations should:
 - continue to analyze the positions required to support efforts. Compensation levels need to be addressed to attract and retain top talent to fill those positions.
 - pursue available funding through the federal rescue plan and other sources and deploy that funding strategically to support these efforts.
 - engage in and promote long-term strategic planning to ensure that our parks, roads, water and sewer systems, and the equipment needed to support public safety and other core city services meet the needs of our businesses and residents.
- Our education systems should:
 - continue efforts to build the K-12 pipeline for educational attainment goals, including through the free after-school tutoring program.
 - continue to promote the educational opportunities available in Mohave County, from early education to post-secondary programs.
- Our citizens should:
 - take pride in our communities and commit themselves to building a healthier, more vibrant community, including by taking the time to engage in conversations with each other to create better shared understanding.
 - support small businesses and local food sources, including attending farmers markets.
 - attend broadband training sessions.
 - use our individual spheres of influence to promote these efforts.

Recognizing that the power to change the future begins with each individual, participants committed to take personal actions based on their experience and discussions during the Mohave County Virtual Community Town Hall. Below are individual actions that were shared.

I WILL...

- Participate in community clean up and attend/participate in city council meetings. Also, I recently started the Short Creek Running Club and a local farmers market.
- Engage and facilitate conversations with citizens in our community to move forward to address the issues and to implement a vibrant community.
- Attend the farmers market to support the community and contribute my time once a week.
- Continue to inquire and share partnership opportunities to help community members continue their life journey.
- Put the heat on ADOT to protect our roads, including Highway 40 off-ramps and Highway 95.

- Continue to be a strong part of the educational community and a pioneer to Lake Havasu City (tomorrow is my 55th anniversary of joining this great community).
- Strive to help make our county and our city the best it can be.
- Continue working on broadband access, affordable housing, and workforce development both for the county and regionally.