



Agenda
Planning Commission Meeting
Wednesday, March 25, 2026
Richland City Hall ~ Council Chambers
625 Swift Boulevard

Regular Meeting - 6:00 p.m.

Welcome and Roll Call

Approval of Agenda: (Approved by Motion)

Approval of Minutes: (Approved by Motion)

1. Approval of the January 28, 2026 Planning Commission Meeting Minutes, and the March 11, 2026 Planning Commission Workshop Meeting Minutes

Public Comments:

New Business - Public Hearing:

New Business - Other

2. Comprehensive Plan Update - Introduction and Community Vision and Climate Element Discussion
- Nicole Stickney, AHBL

Communications:

Adjournment

This meeting will be broadcast live on [CityView Channel 192 on the City's website](#)

Richland City Hall is ADA accessible. Requests for sign interpreters, audio equipment, and/or other special services must be received 48 hours prior to the meeting by calling the City Clerk's Office at 509-942-7389.



PLANNING COMMISSION AGENDA ITEM COVERSHEET

Meeting Date: 3/25/2026

Agenda Category: Approval of Minutes

Prepared By: Shairra Rahseparian, Administrative Assistant II

Subject

Approval of the January 28, 2026 Planning Commission Meeting Minutes, and the March 11, 2026 Planning Commission Workshop Meeting Minutes

Strategic Priority

Strategic Priority I - High Performance Government

Recommended Motion

Approve the minutes of the Planning Commission meeting held on January 28, 2026 and the Planning Commission Workshop Meeting held on March 11, 2026

Summary

Draft meeting minutes for the January 28, 2026 Planning Commission Meeting and the March 11, 2026 Planning Commission Workshop Meeting are attached for review and consideration.

No quorum was present for the February 11, 2026 Planning Commission workshop meeting, and the February 25, 2026 Planning Commission meeting, so no minutes are available for approval. A notice to this effect has been published on the City's website.

Attachments

1. Draft January 28, 2026 Planning Commission Meeting Minutes
2. Draft March 11, 2026 Planning Commission Meeting Workshop Minutes



MINUTES
PLANNING COMMISSION MEETING
WEDNESDAY, JANUARY 28, 2026
Richland City Hall – Council Chambers
625 Swift Boulevard

Planning Commission Regular Meeting - 6:00 p.m.

Chair Richardson called the meeting to order at 6:00 p.m.

Attendance: Chair Richardson	Present
Vice-Chair Nicholson	Present
Member Anderson	Present
Member Hernandez	Absent
Member Lambert	Present
Member Leonard	Present
Member Samuel	Present

Also present were Development Services Director Rizzitiello, Planning Manager Stevens, Senior Planner Ballard, Senior Planner Nelson, and Administrative Assistant II Kirkpatrick.

Approval of Agenda:

COMMISSION MEMBER SAMUEL MOVED AND COMMISSION MEMBER NICHOLSON SECONDED THE MOTION TO APPROVE THE AGENDA AS PUBLISHED. MOTION CARRIED 6-0.

Election of Officers:

1. Selection of Chair for 2026 – 2027

Chair Richardson opened the floor for nominations for the office of Chair.

- Member Lambert nominated Chair Richardson.
- Chair Richardson nominated Member Lambert.

A motion to elect Member Lambert as Chair was made and voted upon. The motion failed by a vote of 1–5.

A motion to elect Chair Richardson as Chair for the 2026–2027 term was then considered. The motion carried unanimously, 6–0, and Chair Richardson was re-elected.

2. Selection of Vice-Chair for 2026 – 2027

Chair Richardson opened the floor for nominations for the office of Vice-Chair.

- Chair Richardson nominated Commission Member Lambert.

No further nominations were made.

A motion to elect Commission Member Lambert as Vice-Chair for the 2026 – 2027 term was made and voted upon. The motion carried unanimously, 6–0, and Commission Member Lambert was elected Vice-Chair.

Approval of Minutes:

1. Meeting Minutes for December 10, 2025 Planning Commission Special Meeting and January 14, 2026, Planning Commission Workshop.

COMMISSION MEMBER SAMUEL MOVED, AND VICE-CHAIR LAMBERT SECONDED, TO APPROVE THE DECEMBER 10, 2025, PLANNING COMMISSION SPECIAL MEETING MINUTES, AND JANUARY 14, 2026, PLANNING COMMISSION WORKSHOP MINUTES AS PRESENTED. THE MOTION PASSED 6–0.

Public Comments:

None.

Agenda Item:

1. PLN-T2-2025-00018 888 Swift Blvd. Central Business District Alternate Design Review for Kadlec Hospital

Chair Richardson recognized Senior Planner Ballard for her staff report, and review of the application.

The project site consists of approximately 7.61 acres, with an estimated 526 feet of frontage along Swift Boulevard. The proposed project consists of a 9,113 square foot exterior addition to the existing Kadlec Regional Medical Center surgical suite. The addition would be located along Swift Boulevard and include exterior facades facing west, south, and east. The addition would accommodate two operating rooms, one procedure room, staff locker rooms, support spaces, and an exterior mechanical yard.

Staff reviewed applicable Richland Municipal Code (RMC) design standards for buildings facing public streets. The Code allows for alternative design deviations, subject to Planning Commission review and approval, provided the proposal demonstrates equivalent or superior site design, fulfills the intent of the standards, and is compatible with the surrounding area.

Applicant Kyle Gray, with Providence, gave a brief explanation of the major deviation and answered questions from the Commission.

COMMISSION MEMBER NICHOLSON MOVED, AND COMMISSION MEMBER SAMUEL SECONDED, APPROVING PLN-T2-2025-00018 AUTHORIZING DEVIATION FROM DESIGN STANDARDS FOR PROPERTIES ZONED CENTRAL BUSINESS DISTRICT (CBD) PER RICHLAND MUNICIPAL CODE SECTION 23.22.020.E TO CONSTRUCT A 9,113 SQUARE FOOT ADDITION TO THE KADLEC REGIONAL MEDICAL CENTER. THE MOTION PASSED 6-0.

2. Comprehensive Plan Update - Capital Facilities Element and Utilities Element Discussion

Chair Richardson recognized Nicole Stickney, Associate Principle with AHBL.

Ms. Stickney spoke regarding a display related to the Future in Focus initiative that has been set up in the library with assistance from the City of Richland Parks and Facilities crew. The display consists of two scale Alphabet Homes and a gallery of art boards addressing housing and housing-related concerns. The display will remain on view through Wednesday, February 4, 2026.

Ms. Stickney then presented the proposed update to the Comprehensive Plan regarding Capital Facilities and Utilities Elements, explaining Growth Management Act requirements and how these elements support land use, infrastructure, and service delivery. The presentation highlighted public engagement results, which identified infrastructure, utilities, transit, and pedestrian and bicycle safety as key priorities.

Updates to the Capital Facilities Element include streamlined content, updated inventories, new facility categories, revised goals and policies, and alignment with the City's Strategic Plan.

Updates to the Utilities Element include expanded system descriptions, updated mapping, revised goals and policies addressing capacity, environmental protection, sustainability, coordination with other providers, and long-term system maintenance.

Next steps include continued public engagement and development of additional Comprehensive Plan elements, including the Climate Element.

Communications:

Planning Manager Stevens went over new hires that are expected to begin in the upcoming months, including a Senior Planner, Permit Technician and Administrative Assistant II for Development Services.

Development Services Director Rizzitiello reported that the Washington State Department of Commerce awarded the city a \$900,000 grant for clean energy planning. The grant will

fund approximately two years of work focused on a master plan for Horn Rapids, the Northwest Clean Energy Park, and the Richland Innovation Center.

Chair Richardson congratulated Commission Member Samuel on his next endeavor and thanked him for his service on the Planning Commission.

Adjournment:

Chair Richardson adjourned the meeting at 7:42 P.M.

PREPARED BY: _____
Carly Kirkpatrick, Administrative Assistant II

APPROVED BY: _____
Jet Richardson, Chair

DRAFT



MINUTES
PLANNING COMMISSION WORKSHOP
WEDNESDAY, March 11, 2026
Richland City Hall – Council Chambers
625 Swift Boulevard

Planning Commission Regular Workshop - 6:00 p.m.

Chair Richardson called the meeting to order at 6:00 p.m.

Welcome and Roll Call:

Attendance: Chair Richardson	Present
Vice-Chair Nicholson	Present
Member Anderson	Present
Member Hernandez	Present
Member Lambert	Present
Member Leonard	Present
Member Samuel	Present

Also present were Council Liaison Samuel, Planning Manager Stevens, Senior Planner Ballard, Senior Planner Nelson, Planner Reed, and Administrative Assistant II Rahseparian.

Agenda Item:

1. Comprehensive Plan Update - Middle Housing - AHBL

Chair Richardson introduced Nicole Stickney.

Nicole Stickney, Associate Principle with AHBL, Inc. gave a presentation to discuss Middle Housing and other new housing legislation and responded to questions from the Commission members.

Commission questions and discussions included:

- Why we are talking about Middle Housing and other new housing legislation
- If there were incentives to help specific Area Median Income earners
- If the City is planning on addressing ADU's as short-term rentals
- ADU regulations regarding easements
- Development regulations and State requirement updates and deadlines
- Defining what is and is not considered Middle Housing
- Allowed uses
- Unit Density requirements

- Requirements of the City adopting a Unit Lot Subdivision Process
- Dimensional Standards
- Updates to on-site parking requirements in the code
- Process and standards Richland may use

2. Discussion of Washington State Co-Living Housing Regulations

Senior Planner Ballard gave a presentation to discuss Washington State Co-Living Housing Regulations.

Discussion included:

- What Co-living Housing is, how it helped in the past, and why it is an option to provide affordable housing
- Legislation requirements
- Richland Municipal Code updates
- General Provisions and Special Conditions

3. Washington State Department of Commerce Short Course on Local Planning

Senior Planner Ballard informed Commission members of short courses that are recommended for Boards and provided dates and times for the upcoming courses.

Planning Manager Stevens mentioned that we had upcoming interviews for the open Commission positions.

Adjournment:

Chair Richardson adjourned the meeting at 7:38 P.M.

PREPARED BY: _____
Shairra Rahseparian, Administrative Assistant II

APPROVED BY: _____
Jet Richardson, Chair



PLANNING COMMISSION AGENDA ITEM COVERSHEET

Meeting Date: 3/25/2026

Agenda Category: New Business - Other

Prepared By: Nicole Stickney
AHBL

Subject

Comprehensive Plan Update - Introduction and Community Vision and Climate Element Discussion

Strategic Priority

Strategic Priority 3 - Focused Development

Strategic Priority 4 - Quality of Life

Recommended Motion

None.

Summary

Nicole Stickney, Associate Principal with AHBL, will present to the Planning Commission the 2026 Comprehensive Plan Update Draft Introduction and Community Vision and Draft Climate Element for review and discussion.

Attachments

1. Memo and Draft Introduction and Community Vision Overview
2. Draft Climate Element
3. Intro & Climate PowerPoint Presentation by AHBL

PROJECT MEMO



TO: Mike Stevens, City of Richland
FROM: Nicole Stickney
Pasco - (509) 380-5883
DATE: February 10, 2026
PROJECT NO.: 2240885.30
PROJECT NAME: Richland 2026 Comprehensive Plan Update
SUBJECT: Comprehensive Plan Introduction Chapter (Draft dated Feb. 10, 2026)

As a part of the Draft Comprehensive Plan Update effort, the AHBL consultant team has worked to update the Introduction and Community Vision parts of the Comprehensive Plan, following guidance and requirements from the Growth Management Act and the Department of Commerce.

The city's current Comprehensive Plan (from 2017 and as amended) contains an **Introduction** chapter and a separate **Community Vision** and we propose to merge those parts, in an effort to streamline the document.

We have re-tooled these chapters and sections, providing more extensive detail regarding the purposes, elements and city history included in this section as compared to the current document. Many parts are re-sorted, for smoother reading comprehension.

Important features of the draft includes:

- A short "Community Profile" section is retained and it is basically focused on where Richland is located. While demographics and census information (with growth projections) could also fit into this section, we intend for the information be located in the individual elements (in particular, data regarding population and housing will be included in the Housing Element and information regarding expected job growth and business activity data would be located in the Economic Development Element).
 - Any Planning Commission members or other individuals who want to review some key demographic information and key indicators now (and note wait), we recommend visiting: <https://city-richland-wa-budget-book.cleargov.com/21216/introduction/demographics>
- The "Community Vision" statement is shown in this version of the draft plan *without any changes*. When this draft is reviewed by the Planning Commission we wish to gather feedback and discuss any potential changes needed for this part.
- The written overview of the City's history and early development patterns language remains largely unchanged from the original "History" subsection description, with additional context regarding Richland's incorporation (in 1958) added. We've added a new section detailing Richland's various annexations between 1958 to the present day, providing some meaningful context and perspective on how where changes have occurred and the pace of development.
 - Table I-2 consolidates these details for easy reference and we also created a map; this information could be moved to an appendix, if desired. We request feedback from the Planning Commission on this.
- The next section details the Growth Management Act and the various requirements that the City of Richland must meet to comply with state law. This discussion has been expanded from two paragraphs in the 2017 Plan to approximately one full page. There are several new GMA goals that the State has included. Following this discussion is an overview of Benton County's Countywide Planning Policies (which will be included as an appendix to the Plan) and mention of the City Council's Strategic Plan. The purpose of describing these aspects is to lay a foundation and explain the basis for many decisions and



parts of the plan. We have also added a section, “What is the role of the Planning Commission?” which is not required to be included in the plan.

- Next, a summary of the 2026 update process will be included, detailing the public engagement process (forthcoming).
- The following section “Amendments” is new and covers how and when amendments to the Plan may be made.
- The last section is also new and covers the permitting process, highlighting public noticing requirements and the SEPA environmental review process. This information is also not required to be in the plan, but could nevertheless be useful information to a wide range of readers.

NS/es

INTRODUCTION & COMMUNITY VISION

Overview

This City of Richland Comprehensive Plan lays out a bold, long-term vision for shaping and managing the community’s natural and built environments. Developed in accordance with Washington State’s Growth Management Act (WAC Chapter 365-196), this Plan serves as a roadmap for thoughtful, sustainable growth in the years to come.

The plan includes policy direction for community and economic development, housing, protection of environmentally sensitive areas, public services, growth, physical design elements, and community character.

Community input played a vital role in shaping this Plan. Developed through a robust public participation process guided by an approved engagement strategy, the Plan reflects the voices of Richland residents, business owners, and community members in defining its vision, goals, and policies.

This plan serves as the “blueprint” for the next twenty years, and replaces the previous Comprehensive Plan adopted in 2017 (with subsequent amendments). This plan may be amended on a yearly basis, but not more than once per year.

The city is required to update its plan periodically to address changing conditions and the next “full” update is expected by 2036.

What is a Comprehensive Plan?

The Comprehensive Plan is a basic foundation for local government planning. Richland’s Comprehensive Plan acts as a guide for the City, reflecting the community’s values, activities, and future growth. It guides the City’s decisions on land use, transportation, infrastructure, housing, economic development, and the environment.

Cities and other government jurisdictions adopt comprehensive plans to serve as guides for future activities. A comprehensive plan does not carry the weight of law. Rather, it is a policy statement that points the way to a future in which the City of Richland thrives and maintains all the qualities its citizens value. The vision, goals, and policies included in this plan are developed through extensive communication with a wide range of groups and individuals.

Further information on the State Growth Management Act and Comprehensive Planning requirements is available at <https://www.commerce.wa.gov/growth-management/>

What is Included in the Plan?

The City uses the policies in a comprehensive plan as a guide for its future activities, particularly the crafting of ordinances that relate to zoning, land use, and development. The plan provides a

consistent framework for legislative and administrative action, always steering the City towards the desired future and away from a patchwork of laws and rules that conflict with the vision or with one another.

Every comprehensive plan must include key pieces to guide future government activities. The following terms have special meanings in comprehensive planning and it's important to understand their meaning and purpose.

Vision Statement: The Vision Statement is the target the City decides to aim for. It is a verbal picture of what Richland will be like at the end of the period covered by a comprehensive plan. An important part of future decision-making should be to ask, "Which of our choices will best help us become like the City described in the vision statement?"

Existing Conditions Inventory: In order to plan for the future, comprehensive plan should have detailed inventories of public amenities such as roads, utility infrastructure, parks and recreation facilities, and more. Sometimes these inventories are further addressed in other city plans; for example, the Citywide Transportation Plan and the Parks & Recreation Master Plan.

Goals: If the Vision Statement defines the target for comprehensive planning, then goals are like individual points on the target. We set as goals the distinct achievements we hope for: maintain adequate and affordable housing; avoid traffic congestion; protect natural resources; ensure economic vitality. We have reached our vision if all our goals are accomplished.

Policies: Goals state what we want to accomplish and policies guide how to accomplish them. For each goal established in a comprehensive plan, one or more policies define the steps to implement the goal.

Elements: State legislation requires cities like Richland to include mandatory "elements" (or chapters). These include land use, housing, capital facilities, utilities, transportation, economic development, parks and recreation, and climate (including a Greenhouse Gas Emissions Reduction Sub-Element and a Resiliency Sub-Element). The Richland Comprehensive Plan now also features a Natural Environment Element, which is considered optional; however, it is also common way cities can address critical areas in addition to their critical areas ordinance.

Goals and policies are included in relevant elements in order to ensure they carry out the vision of the community. There are sub-elements under some of these elements with specific goals and policies.

Planning Time Frame: A comprehensive plan must define time frames for achieving its vision and goals. These time frames are called the planning horizons. In Washington State, comprehensive plans use both a ten-year short-term planning horizon and a 20-year long-term planning horizon. The long-term planning horizon is the full period for achieving the vision in our Vision Statement. The short-term planning horizon is the period for which we can make more concrete plans for specific steps toward our goals.

These are the features that a Comprehensive Plan needs to include in order to act as our yardstick for the future. The Comprehensive Plan must apply these features to specific aspects of the City's life. The parts of a plan addressing each of these are commonly called "elements." Under State law, all Washington city and county comprehensive plans must address at least five specific elements: land use, transportation, utilities, capital facilities, and housing. Each element includes an inventory of existing conditions as well as goals and policies specific to the element. In addition to the required five elements, the City of Richland has chosen to include an optional economic development element in this Comprehensive Plan.

The final feature of comprehensive plans in Washington is a finance plan. This is the proposal for specific capital improvements required over the short-term (six-year) planning horizon. It describes projects to be carried out, their estimated costs, a schedule for completing them, and a plan to pay for them. Financing plans from the City's Capital Improvement Plan (CIP) are included under the Capital Facilities and Utilities Elements.

Community Profile

The City of Richland lies at the confluence of the Yakima and Columbia Rivers, in the geographic region known as the Mid-Columbia Basin. Richland and the nearby communities of Pasco and Kennewick are commonly called the Tri-Cities. This Comprehensive Plan looks at the area in Richland from the Hanford Nuclear Reservation on the north, to Kennewick on the south, and from the Columbia River on the east, to the Yakima River and the City of West Richland on the west. The Yakima River delta has shaped the City's growth into two areas, the north and south sides of the City.

Due to its location, Richland enjoys access to water and other natural resources. The Columbia and Yakima Rivers provide water for irrigation of nearby farmland as well as for domestic use. The rivers also offer a variety of opportunities for the City, such as open spaces, recreation systems, parks, and waterfront developments.

The following graphic is a placeholder (from the City's budget presentation) and will be replaced



Community Vision

In 2016, the City conducted several visioning workshops with the public, Planning Commission, and City Council. An online survey was also conducted with more than 850 respondents participating, offering input on multiple issues. Vision ideas were gathered from a range of people living or doing business in Richland.

This is a placeholder for any discussion about changes (TBD) to the Community Vision - We recommend replacing the word “citizen participation” with “Community participation” which is more inclusive (i.e. business owners and corporate citizens, people who work in Richland but may not live here, etc.) and also avoids the word “Citizen” which may connote a relationship to the USA and is not intended here; we wish to have Planning Commission input please.

Richland is a progressive, safe, and family-friendly community that welcomes diversity. It is noted for excellence in technology, medicine, education, recreation, tourism, and citizen participation. This dynamic city, situated on two rivers, actively supports opportunities for economic development that are in harmony with the area’s unique natural resources.

Key components of the community’s vision are summarized into values listed in Table I-1.

Table I-1: Community Values

TOPIC	DISCUSSION
<i>Community and Neighborhood Character</i>	Richland is a vibrant, progressive, safe, diverse, and family-friendly community with opportunities for jobs, housing, and recreation.
<i>Public Engagement</i>	Richland communicates with the public in a variety of ways to engage, understand, and address the community preferences, values, and concerns.
<i>Economic Development</i>	Richland uses sound economic development practices to create a diverse and sustainable economy. It is a leader in technology, medical services, and research. Both small and large businesses are vibrant and growing. The City Center is walkable with mixed-use development. The mixed-use waterfront areas offer views, amenities, and recreational opportunities while protecting certain unique natural resources.
<i>Land Use and Growth</i>	Richland manages growth within its urban growth area while revitalizing existing neighborhoods and the City Center. Richland's bustling Central Business District is developed as a mixed-use village with pedestrian amenities, transit access, and bike paths.
<i>Housing</i>	Housing in Richland is available for all income and age groups. There are multiple housing choices such as single-family, multi-family, mixed-use, and assisted living facilities.
<i>Transportation</i>	The City's transportation system is efficient and multi-modal. Richland's neighborhoods are safe and well connected for all modes, including private vehicles, transit, bikes, and pedestrians. Richland also maintains efficient connectivity with neighboring jurisdictions.
<i>Open Space and Natural Areas</i>	The community recognizes that natural resources add value to the quality of life. Richland preserves and protects existing natural resources and critical areas. Uses along the riverfront are regulated by the City's Shoreline Management Plan and zoning regulations.
<i>Urban Design and Culture</i>	Richland is a physically appealing community with a diverse cultural heritage. It is a hub of arts, culture, and education. The community values high quality design in shaping its natural and physical character in building, landscape, and streetscape design. Its urban areas are revitalized with public spaces and pedestrian-friendly features.
<i>Sustainability</i>	Sustainable growth in Richland brings opportunities for mass transit and bike and pedestrian trails. The community practices water conservation, recycling, and natural resource protection.
<i>Parks and Recreation</i>	Richland protects and maintains its highly valued parks and recreation

TOPIC	DISCUSSION
	system. Richland’s park system meets a variety of user needs including sports and other recreational activities in its developed and undeveloped parks.
Public Facilities and Schools	Richland provides quality public facilities for all age and income groups. This includes education, library, medical, municipal, and community facilities. Schools that provide quality education are important for the community. Richland's schools are economically and ethnically diverse, providing neighborhood stability and excellent education outcomes for all students. Richland coordinates with school districts to ensure schools are located appropriately to serve its community.
Utilities	Richland is forward thinking in providing utilities with systems that are sustainable and support the planned growth. Richland highly values public safety and a safe lifestyle. As such the City maintains public safety for all ages and neighborhoods.

History and Early Development Patterns

Native Americans lived at the mouth of the Yakima River, which they called the Tapteal, in an area that is known as Richland today.

Richland falls within the Southern Plateau, part of the larger Columbia Plateau culture area. The Yakima-Columbia confluence has a rich archaeological record, with sites in the area attributed to all of the Southern Plateau cultural phases. The area has been “occupied more or less continuously for the last 10,000 years” (Western Heritage 1983:4). There are many recorded archaeological sites within a mile of the confluence. National Register-listed properties include the Columbia Point area, Bateman Island, and the Tri-Cities Archaeological District (Anchor QEA, 2014).

In 1943, Richland was a small farming town of about 300 residents. In that year, the US Army Corps of Engineers, Manhattan Engineering District purchased most of the area for a massive – and very secret project – to produce plutonium. The federal government planned and built a complete community to serve this project, including schools, housing, and parks. Two years later, Richland residents working at the new Hanford Nuclear Reservation (known as “Hanford Engineer Works”) produced the plutonium fuel for America’s first nuclear detonation and for the second nuclear bomb used in World War II. By the end of World War II, the population in Richland swelled to 21,000 people.

For 15 years, only employees of the Hanford Reservation could live in the town that the federal government built. After several years of discussion at both the local and federal levels, the federal government began the process of turning Richland into a self-governing city. Citizens were able to purchase their government-owned houses and Richland was incorporated as a first-class Washington city in 1958. The federal government began to sell the prefabricated housing erected for Hanford workers, which had been intended to be temporary. Much of that housing was

renovated and remains in use today.

In addition to prefabricated homes, Alphabet Homes were built in Richland between 1943 and 1951. The Alphabet Homes were based on a series of house plans denoted by a letter in the alphabet (an A house, an F house, etc.). These homes were all owned by the federal government, and were even furnished by the federal government.

Richland became its own city on December 10, 1958 after a ballot measure to incorporate as a “first-class city” was successful. This is when the city finally emerged from its previous status as town controlled by the federal government. Every person residing in a government home or apartment had the first option to purchase the property, generally stopping their rent payments and making house payments instead.

ANNEXATIONS

Following incorporation of the City in 1958, the city grew according to a series of annexations over the decades, depicted on the map in Figure 1-1. The City’s original Urban Growth Area was established in or around 1996 after passage of the statewide Growth Management Act and the subsequent adoption into the GMA by Benton City. Annexations occurring in 2010 and after are listed in Table 1-.

Table I-2: Annexations 2010-Present

Ordinance number (Year)	Description
Ord. 41-10(2010)	The Badger Mountain South annexation added 1,878 acres to the city (which only included one housing unit at the time)
Ord. 24-12 (2012)	The Queensgate Drive annexation in Badger Heights added 51 acres to the city. All of the area was designated as “Commercial.”
Ord. 16-13 (2013)	The Reata Road annexation added approximately 137 acres to the city (which had no housing units at the time)
Ord. 20-13 (2013)	The Falconcrest annexation added 1 acre to the city to extend a pedestrian trail. The area was designated as “Open Space”
Ord. 26-14 (2014)	The LaPierre annexation added a 4.8 acre parcel north of Reata Road to the city. It was designated as “Low Density Residential” and 15 homes were built in 2016.
Ord. 38-15 (2015)	The Columbia Properties annexation added 15.6 acres to the city. The area was designated as “Low Density Residential,” but has yet to be developed.
Ord. 58-15 (2015)	The Whitfield annexation added 26.3 acres to the city, which was designated as “Low Density Residential” and platted to include 34 lots as part of the Joliana Heights neighborhood.

Ordinance number (Year)	Description
Ord. 68-16 (2016)	The Cowlitz/Dallas Road annexation added 2.3 acres to the city, which was designated as “Low Density Residential,” but has not yet been developed.
Ord. 25-17 (2017)	The Jericho Road annexation added 13.2 acres to the city, in the Badger Heights neighborhood. It was designated “Low Density Residential.” It has been partially developed.
Ord. 34-17 (2017)	The Keene Road annexation added 17.2 acres to the city, on which approximately 48 homes have been built.
Ord. 51-18 (2018)	The Lorayne J annexation added 67 acres to the city. The area was largely existing homes.
Ord. 50-20 (2021)	The Shockley annexation added approximately 8.5 acres, which had formerly been a single residence. It has since been platted into 23 residential lots referred to as Walnut Heights.
Ord 11-21 (2021)	The Allenwhite Drive annexation added approximately 3.63 acres to the city. The proposal was put forward by existing homeowners, and the area has “Low Density Residential” land use designation.
Ord 12-21 (2021)	This ordinance added approximately 76.54 acres to the city at or near 1106 N. Jurupa Road. The area is currently Badger Mountain vineyard. The area is designated part of Badger Mountain South.
Ord. 2022-20 (2022)	The Brantingham annexation added approximately 12 acres, or 8 existing homes of Badger Mountain Estates to the city.
Ord. 2022-21 (2022)	The PNNL annexation added 300 acres of land owned by the U.S. Department of Energy to the city. The land use designation was split between “Business Research Park” and “Natural Open Space” which acknowledges the existing research facility.
Ord. 2023-21 (2023)	The Northwest Advanced Clean Energy Park annexation added 1,641 acres to the city. It has an “Industrial” land use designation.
Ord. 2023-32 (2023)	The Tucker annexation added 1.83 acres to the city near Dallas Rd. and I-182 with one existing home. It has a “Low Density Residential” land use designation.

Source: Office of Financial Management and City of Richland Ordinances

Note: Changes for corporate boundaries for road rights-of-way or other purposes that were not processed as annexations are not included on this list; one example is adjustments between the County / City were made to Reata Road in 2021 via Resolution 139-12

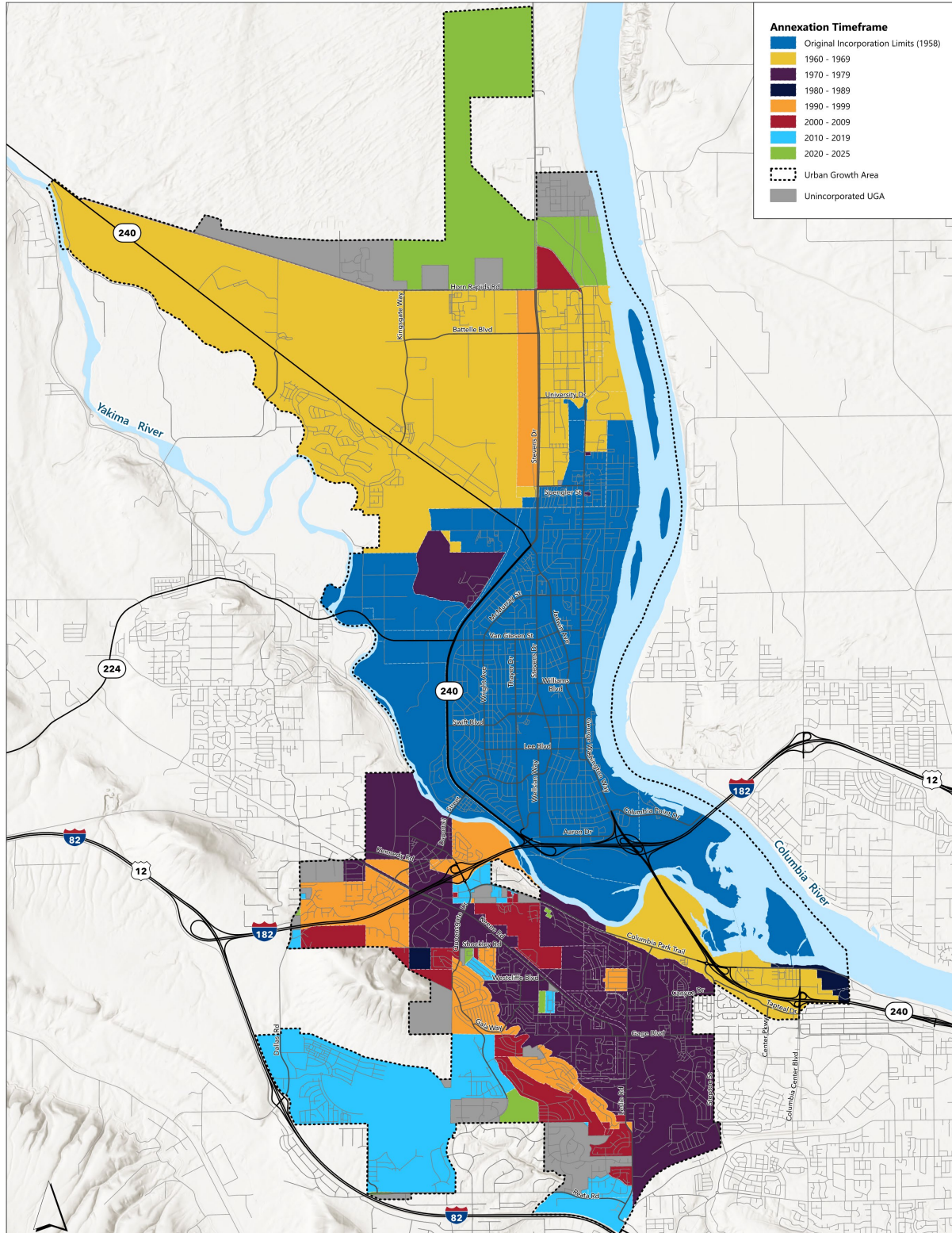


Figure 1-1: City of Richland Annexation Patterns

HOW HAS THE COMMUNITY GROWN OVER THE PAST 20 YEARS?

TBD – This could be a good prompt for a discussion with The Planning Commission and perhaps the Economic Development Committee. This does not need to be an extensive conversation but generally talk about the nature of growth to the north, west (Horn Rapids), south and in the center of town.

Planning Framework

GROWTH MANAGEMENT ACT (GMA)

In 1990, the Washington State Legislature adopted the Growth Management Act (GMA), mandating growth to occur within Urban Growth Areas (UGAs). Richland developed its first Comprehensive Plan under the GMA guidelines in 1998. Since then, the City has amended the plan as needed, and it continues to serve as the foundation for the City's vision, goals, and policies. The GMA now requires Periodic Updates to comprehensive plans every 10 years; however, the planning horizon for comprehensive plans remains 20 years. As the City continues to experience steady population and economic growth, delivering public services is key to maintaining an orderly growth pattern.

State of Washington GMA Goals

Presently, the GMA includes 15 broad goals for comprehensive planning, which local governments must balance to develop an approach consistent with their vision of the future. There are 15 GMA goals, and they are all equally important and significant (there is no ranking or order to which they apply):

1. **Urban Growth** – Encourage development in urban areas where adequate public facilities and services exist or can be provided in an efficient manner.
2. **Reduce Sprawl** – Reduce inappropriate conversion of undeveloped land into sprawling, low-density development.
3. **Transportation** – Encourage efficient multi-modal transportation systems that will reduce greenhouse gas emissions and per capita vehicle miles traveled, and are based on regional priorities and coordinated with county and city comprehensive plans.
4. **Housing** – Plan for and accommodate housing affordable to all economic segments of the population of the state, promote a variety of residential densities and housing types, and encourage preservation of existing housing stock.
5. **Economic Development** – Encourage economic development throughout the state consistent with adopted comprehensive plans, promote economic opportunity for all citizens of the state, especially for the unemployed and the disadvantaged, promote the retention and expansion of existing businesses and recruitment of new businesses, recognize regional differences impacting economic development opportunities, and encourage growth in areas experiencing insufficient economic growth, all within the capacities of the state's natural resources, public services, and public facilities.
6. **Property Rights** – Private property shall not be taken for public use without just compensation. The property rights of landowners shall be protected from arbitrary and

- discriminatory action.
7. **Permits** – Application for both state and local government permits should be processed in a timely and fair manner to ensure predictability.
 8. **Natural Resource Industries** – Maintain and enhance natural resource-based industries, including productive timber, agricultural, and fisheries industries. Encourage the conservation of productive forestlands and productive agricultural lands, and discourage incompatible uses.
 9. **Open Space and Recreation** – Retain open space and green space, enhance recreational opportunities, enhance fish and wildlife habitat, increase access to natural resource lands and water, and develop parks and recreation facilities.
 10. **Environment** – Protect and enhance the environment and enhance the state’s high quality of life, including air and water quality, and the availability of water.
 11. **Citizen Participation and Coordination** – Encourage the involvement of citizens in the planning process, including the participation of vulnerable populations and overburdened communities, and ensure coordination between communities and jurisdictions to reconcile conflicts.
 12. **Public Facilities and Services** – Ensure that public facilities and services necessary to support development are adequate to serve the development at the time the development is available for occupancy and use, without decreasing the current service levels below locally established minimum standards.
 13. **Historic Preservation** – Identify and encourage the preservation of lands, sites, and structures that have historical or archaeological significance.
 14. **Climate Change and Resiliency** – Ensure that comprehensive plans, development regulations, and regional policies, plans, and strategies under RCW 36.70A.210 and chapter 47.80 RCW adapt to and mitigate the effects of a changing climate; support reductions in greenhouse gas emissions and per capita vehicle miles traveled; prepare for climate impact scenarios; foster resiliency to climate impacts and natural hazards; protect and enhance environmental, economic, and human health and safety; and advance environmental justice.
 15. **Shorelines of the State** – For shorelines of the state, the goals and policies of the shoreline management act as set forth in RCW 90.58.020 are considered an element of the county’s or city’s comprehensive plan.

Consistency and Concurrency

GMA requires that the Comprehensive Plan must be internally consistent for objectives, goals, policies, text, and maps. At the same time, the comprehensive plans of adjacent jurisdictions must also be consistent and capital budget decisions must be made in conformance with each jurisdiction’s adopted Comprehensive Plan.

The consistency progresses from the broad goal, through its policies, and then to specific actions. The maps of the Plan augment both the text and even the goals and policies. For example, the land use map included in the Land Use Element is, in essence, a graphic policy statement regarding future land development in Richland. As such, the land use policy serves, and is served by, the transportation, housing, utilities, and capital facilities elements. Based upon the land use designations on the Land Use Map, private and public sector service providers can project future

locational demands for water, sewer, natural gas, electrical power, roads, fire protection, transit, emergency response, communications, and other services

All development regulations within the City of Richland are required to be consistent with each other and with the Comprehensive Plan. These include the zoning and subdivision codes, the Critical Areas Ordinance, the Shoreline Master Program, and any other City regulation as contained in the Richland Municipal Code and other adopted plans such as the Park & Recreation Plan and the Storm Water Management Plan.

The consistency also applies to adjacent unincorporated lands within Benton County and the adjacent cities of West Richland and Kennewick.

GMA defines concurrency to mean that needed improvements for water, sewer, and transportation are in place at the time of development; or in the case of transportation, that a financial commitment exists to complete the improvements within six years.

There must be a baseline standard established to use when evaluating the anticipated impacts of new development to determine if concurrency can be met. The minimum acceptable performance level has been chosen as the baseline, and is defined as the level of service (LOS). Levels of service should be realistic. Setting them too high could result in little or no growth, and would be contrary to GMA. Setting them too low could cause unmanaged growth without optimum service.

BENTON COUNTY COUNTYWIDE PLANNING POLICIES

Managing growth can be ineffective if it is carried out in a patchwork fashion. Therefore, the GMA provides a framework for regional coordination. Counties planning under the GMA should prepare Countywide Planning Policies (CWPPs) and establish urban growth areas (UGAs). Cities and the county are required to be consistent with the CWPPs in their comprehensive planning.

The Benton County Board of Commissioners adopted the “Benton Countywide Planning Policies” in 2016 (Appendix B), also referred to as the Benton County CWPPs. This document establishes policies that the City’s Comprehensive Plan follows in addressing everything from transportation and municipal services to economic development and fiscal considerations.

COUNCIL’S STRATEGIC PLAN; CITY VISION, MISSION, VALUES, AND PRIORITIES

From June 2022 through July 2023, the City of Richland engaged in a strategic planning process that yielded the [2024-2026 Strategic Plan](#). The 13-month planning process began with an examination of the operating environment consisting of an environmental scan (e.g., report on existing conditions); a community survey; an internal stakeholder survey; a set of focus groups; City Council interviews; a strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats (SWOT) analysis; and an effective governance session. On March 24, 2023, the City’s leadership team held a full day strategic planning session. They developed a set of priorities, key outcomes, performance targets, and reviewed the

STRATEGIC PRIORITIES:

High-Performance
Government

Financial Sustainability

Focus Development

Quality of Life

Engaged Workforce

organization's vision, mission, and values.

City Vision (Strategic Plan)

Richland is a dynamic city built on a foundation of leading technology, abundant natural resources, diverse recreational amenities, and a supportive business climate. The City is safe, vibrant, and family-friendly. The community you'll want to call home.

City Mission

The City of Richland is responsible for furnishing cost-effective services and well-maintained facilities, safeguarding the public and property, enhancing the community's favorable quality of life, protecting Richland's natural environment, and sustaining a healthy, growing economy.

City Values

- **Teamwork**
We will work together, demonstrating collaboration through mutual reliability, openness, and flexibility to accomplish our goals.
- **Integrity**
We will demonstrate an uncompromising allegiance to the core values of honesty, respect for others, loyalty, consistency, accountability, and sincerity.
- **Excellence**
We will deliver a superior level of commitment, responsiveness, performance, and provision of services to all, with the attitude that everything is worth our best effort.

Additional information including key outcome indicators, performance targets, and strategic initiatives can be found within the Strategic Plan.

WHAT IS THE ROLE OF THE PLANNING COMMISSION?

The Richland Planning Commission is a citizen advisory group established to guide the city's long-term growth and development. Appointed by the City Council, the seven-member commission reviews land use regulations, zoning proposals, and updates to the city's comprehensive plan. Through public hearings and meetings held throughout the year, the commission actively seeks community input to ensure that the values and priorities of Richland residents are well understood.

Commissioners serve staggered four-year terms and may bring diverse expertise in areas such as urban planning, engineering, architecture, and economic development. Their responsibilities include advising the City Council on land use policies, reviewing housing and environmental strategies, and recommending updates to development regulations.

Helping to shape a vibrant and sustainable future for Richland, the commission evaluates community needs related to transportation, public safety, environmental preservation, and infrastructure. Finally, the Planning Commission also reviews applications for Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) funds and for Tri-Cities HOME Consortium funding awards, and makes recommendations on project funding to the City Council.

The 2026 Update Process

To be prepared later and included here.

PUBLIC ENGAGEMENT AND PARTICIPATION

The City of Richland updated its Public Participation Plan in 2025. Cities and counties planning under the GMA must establish “...procedures providing for early and continuous public participation in the development and amendment of comprehensive land use plans and development regulations implementing such plans.”

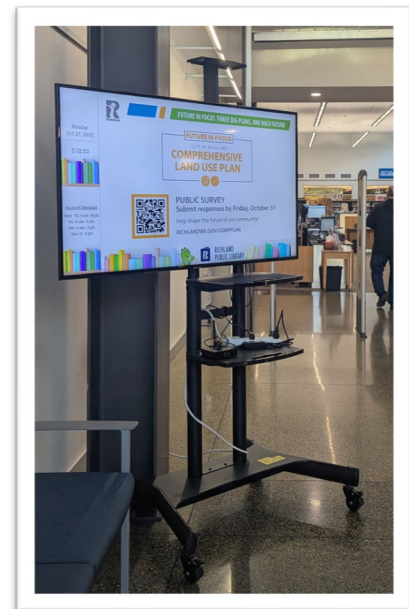
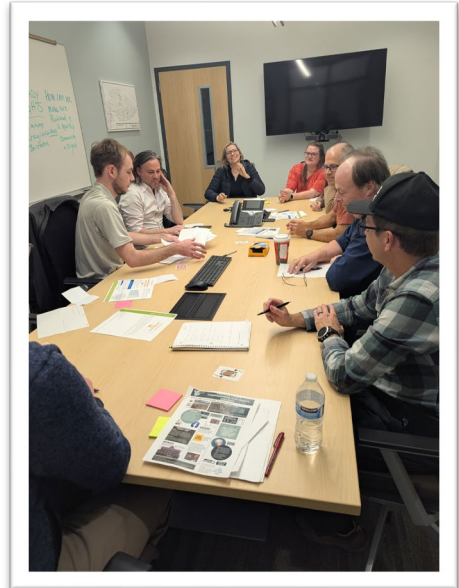
Amendments to this Plan

Amendments to the comprehensive plan are legislative actions requiring City Council approval. Amendments must be approved as prescribed by GMA. With a few exceptions, they cannot be considered more often than once per year and in accordance with specific procedures. Major updates called “periodic updates” must occur a ten-year cycle as established by RCW 36.70A.130 (4)(c).

Amendments can be requested by the City or by private individuals. Multiple applications for amendments will be considered in a single legislative review process in order to evaluate the potential cumulative effect of the requests. All amendment requests require a public hearing with the Planning Commission. They make a recommendation to the City Council. The City Council will approve or deny the amendments in a public hearing. Public involvement with this process is required and encouraged through direction of the Richland Public Participation Plan.

Annual amendments will address the issues of major or minor land use classification changes; changes to the goals, policies, and text of the comprehensive plan; changes to supporting data and implementation; changes to the land use maps; and changes to the inventories and technical documents.

Exceptions to the annual amendment limitation, according to RCW 36.70A.130, include the adoption of a subarea plan; the development of an initial subarea plan for economic development located outside of the one hundred year floodplain in a county that has completed a state-funded pilot project that is based on watershed characterization and local habitat assessment; shoreline master programs; or the amendment of the capital facilities element occurring concurrently with the adoption or amendment of the City’s budget.



Permitting

The permitting process is set out in Title 19 of the Richland Municipal Code (RMC). The City requires that development is permitted in accordance with the city's regulations and procedures so that development across the City is regulated equally based on neighboring land uses, infrastructure capacity, environmental effects, and other factors.

The City uses an all-digital permitting system, allowing online permit submittals and tracking, improving efficiency, transparency and fostering excellent customer service.

Permits in Richland are categorized into different "Types" which require procedures and may also involve public notice requirements. Permit types are organized in ascending order based on how significant the permit is; Type I permits require the lowest level of procedure.

Richland's Building Permit and Inspection office operates as a "one-stop shop" regulating the construction, repair or alteration, demolition and occupancy of all buildings and structures within the city. They handle the bulk of the permits in the City. These processes relate to life safety and quality of life in Richland.

Other types of permits which involve land use review or "entitlement" such as Special Use Permits, Rezoning, Plat (subdivision) review and shoreline permits each have specific requirements for providing public notice of application, notices of public hearing, and other process and procedure requirements. Permit review processes and the approval authority (i.e. Hearing Examiner¹, Planning Commission, administrative staff) can vary, depending on the aspects of the permit and even can vary depending on whether multiple permits are required and instances where procedures are thus combined.

Title 19 of the Richland Municipal Code provides this information, and also sets out information regarding appeals and other matters.

PUBLIC NOTICE

Public notice is required for many permits in the City, so that members of the public may have a chance to speak in favor or against development or regulations that are being proposed. Public Notice is given either before a permit decision is made (Notice of Application), immediately after (Notice of Decision), or both. In addition, public notice is required when a Hearing is to be held.

Public notices include important dates, a proposal description, related permits and environmental documents, public comment period details, information on the hearing (if applicable) and any other information relevant to the proposal. Public notice must also be given through multiple means, including publication in the newspaper, mailing notices and posting signs.

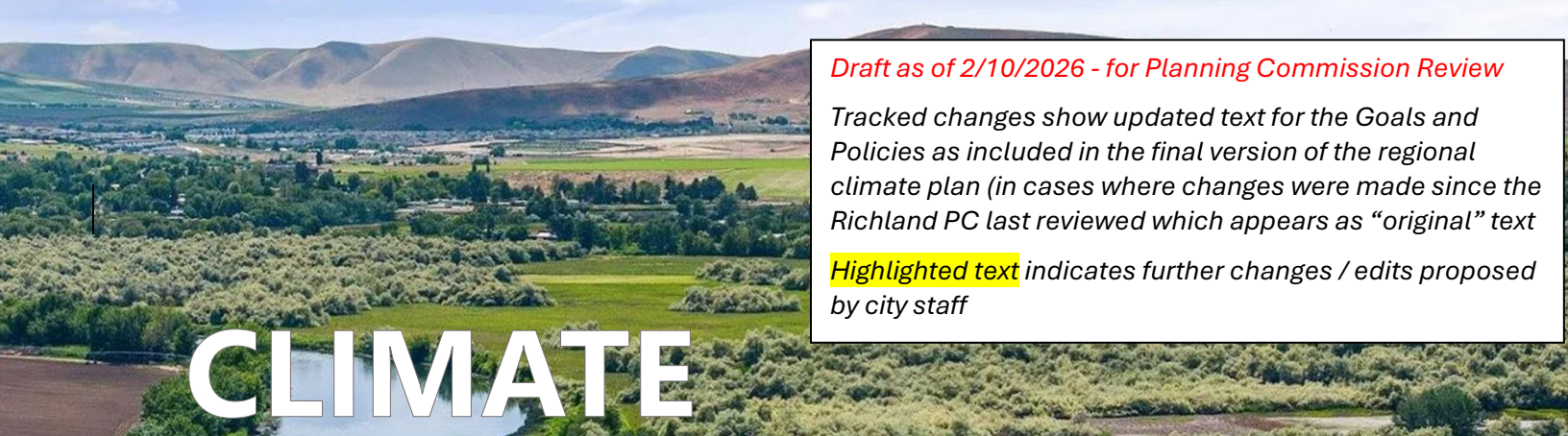
¹ The independent Hearing Examiner conducts hearings to apply general policies and regulations adopted by the City Council to specific proposals or situations. These rules are to help secure the fair and efficient processing of matters subject to the City's administrative hearing and appeal system. The underlying effort is to ensure that the essentials of due process - notice and opportunity to be heard - are an integral part of every hearing conducted by or on behalf of the City. Additional information about the City's Hearing Examiner's role and the hearings procedures visit <https://www.richlandwa.gov/government/advisory-boards-commissions-and-committees/hearing-examiner>

SEPA ENVIRONMENTAL REVIEW

The State Environmental Policy Act (SEPA) governs much of the permitting process, especially when development (“project actions”) is located within or near environmentally critical areas such as shorelines, wetlands and hillsides and/or regulations (“non-project actions”) may impact them. While some proposals don’t require SEPA Environmental Review to get a permit (for example, many times residential development is exempt), most proposals for major changes to a property or to City regulations do require it.

When conducting SEPA Environmental Review, the City (performing as the Lead Agency) must determine whether or not a proposal will result in significant environmental impacts. This “threshold determination” results in the City issuing either a Determination of Non-Significance (DNS) or a Determination of Significance (DS). A Determination of Significance requires a detailed environmental impact statement (EIS) to be issued in less than two years; a DNS does not require this. A DNS can also be issued with specific requirements (“mitigation measures”) if the proposal might still impact the environment – this is sometimes called a Mitigated DNS (MDNS).

In any case, a SEPA threshold determination is typically followed by a comment period of two weeks, in which agencies or members of the public can comment on the City’s Determination by phone, mail or e-mail. Anyone who makes a public comment and was not originally notified about the proposal may be added to a mailing list for all future updates about the permit process. Documents related to SEPA Environmental Review can be found online at the Washington Department of Ecology’s SEPA Register: <https://apps.ecology.wa.gov/separ/Main/SEPA>



Draft as of 2/10/2026 - for Planning Commission Review

Tracked changes show updated text for the Goals and Policies as included in the final version of the regional climate plan (in cases where changes were made since the Richland PC last reviewed which appears as “original” text

Highlighted text indicates further changes / edits proposed by city staff

CLIMATE

Introduction

Rising temperatures, shifting precipitation patterns, periods of drought, and episodes of reduced air quality linked to regional and distant wildfires are among the environmental conditions the city may need to account for when planning ahead. Changes in global climate patterns could influence Richland’s future environmental conditions, making it valuable to consider strategies that strengthen local resilience. In addition, the community can explore local initiatives that may help reduce greenhouse gas emissions. This section focuses on an emerging area of planning: preparing for and adapting to changing climate conditions.

In 2023, House Bill (HB) 1181 amended the Washington Growth Management Act (GMA), requiring jurisdictions to include climate policies in comprehensive plan updates. For Richland, the new law identifies that the climate policies must:

- Support reduced greenhouse gas emissions
- Improve climate resiliency across multiple “sectors” identified by the State.

Process Overview

Climate impacts and trends are certainly not limited by political divisions on a map (i.e. state lines, county boundaries or city incorporation limits). In recognition of this fact and in order to best leverage grant funding and other resources, the City of Richland linked with partners and used a collaborative process to conduct the bulk of the work to create this Climate Element.

The City joined with other local governments in Benton and Franklin County and the Benton Franklin Council of Governments to form a consortium to work through the various requirements and steps required to study existing conditions (such as tree canopy coverage) and identify potential adaptations and strategies to bolster local resilience to potential threats. This effort was supported with technical assistance provided by a consultant team largely funded with pooled money taken from grants from the Department of Commerce relating to Washington’s Climate Commitment Act (CCA). ***The CCA supports Washington’s climate action efforts by putting cap-and-invest dollars to work reducing climate pollution, creating jobs, and improving public health.***

Public Engagement was conducted on a regional basis for the regional “Climate Element” on which this element is based.

Survey Findings:

- Ninety-four percent of survey respondents supported at least one preparedness and resilience strategy listed in the survey.
- Eighty-seven percent of respondents supported at least one emissions reduction strategy listed in the survey.



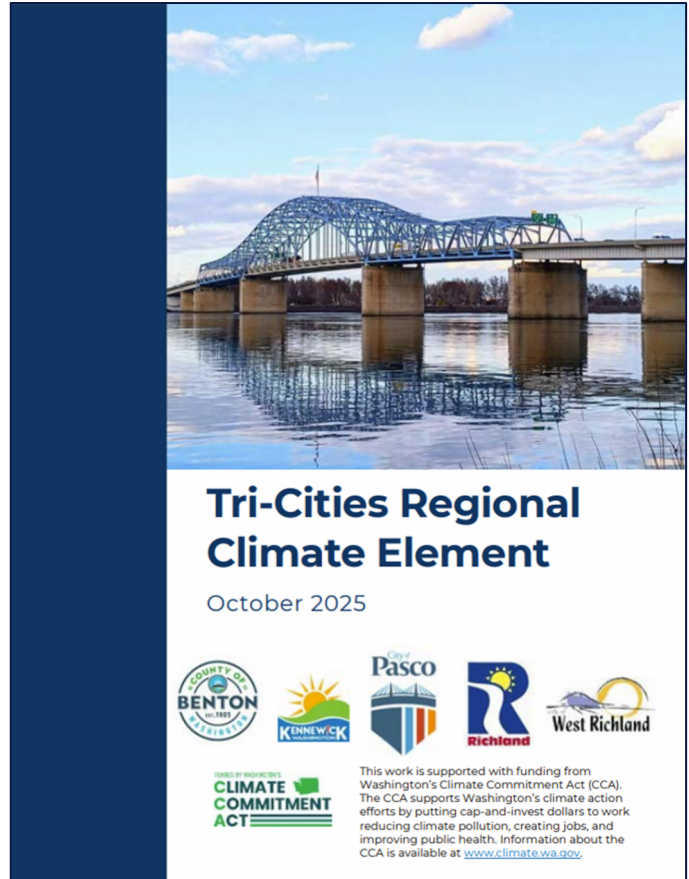
In August 2025, the consortium of governments located in Benton and Franklin Counties published a Climate Impacts Summary document which summarizes regional climate impacts in the Tri-Cities region, specifically Benton County and the cities of Pasco, Kennewick, Richland, and West Richland. The summary was largely informed by three public meetings held in early 2025. These meetings focused on key climate-related topics and issues such as environmental impacts, land use, transportation, and community health. The group also conducted a joint community survey to learn more about the community's experiences with extreme weather. The survey was available in English and Spanish and was designed to help generate and assess potential support for ideas and initiatives to be used to develop a Regional Climate Plan.

The finalized Climate Impacts Summary informs the local comprehensive planning process by assessing climate gaps and opportunities of existing comprehensive plans in the Tri-Cities Region, as well as a climate vulnerability assessment (CVA), which will assess climate risks to communities and infrastructure in the region. The Climate Impacts Summary forms the basis of the Tri-Cities Climate Element, and is therefore directly applicable to Richland's climate element and underlying strategies for climate resiliency.

This effort was also focused on ensuring consideration for vulnerable and over-burdened communities (A geographic area where vulnerable populations face combined, multiple environmental harms and health impacts, and includes, but is not limited to, highly impacted communities as defined by HB11 RCW 19.405.020.1).

A REGIONAL RESPONSIBILITY

The **Tri-Cities Regional Climate Element** was published in October 2025. The document and was informed by a considerable effort of public engagement, data collection and interjurisdictional collaboration. The City of Richland does not formally adopt those documents but instead the materials produced from the effort are important to reference and to refer to in the future. This Climate Element of the Richland Comprehensive Plan is the adopted document to meet the requirements of GMA. The methods and processes used to develop the Regional Climate Element are contained in that document and are not repeated in this Climate Element for Richland. Table



The Regional Document (and Appendices) is available at:

<https://www.bfcog.us/DocumentCenter/View/843/>

Information about the CCA is available at:

www.climate.wa.gov.

CL-1 provides a listing of the body of work produced that corresponds to this local Element and provides a basis for future initiatives as well:

Table CL-1: Tri Cities Regional Climate Element products

DOCUMENT NAME	DESCRIPTION
Climate Technical Advisory Committee Charter	A collaborative agreement between BFCOG and the participating localities: Benton County, the City of Richland, the City of Kennewick, the City of West Richland, and the City of Pasco, to form a working group addressing climate resilience and greenhouse gas emissions on an equitable basis (Publication Date: February 2025)
Appendix A: Implementation Guidance for Comprehensive Plans	The Appendix describes that the goals and policies in the Tri-Cities Regional Climate Element were created to be broad and high-level. Determining how each jurisdiction can implement the policies is an important next step. Considerations and factors that can impact how implementation occurs are listed.
Appendix B: Climate Impacts Summary	<p>The Climate Impacts Summary forms the basis for the Tri-Cities Regional Climate Element, supplying a summary of climate impacts projected to affect the Tri-Cities.</p> <p>The summary informs the local comprehensive planning process by assessing climate gaps and opportunities of existing comprehensive plans in the Tri-Cities Region, together with a climate vulnerability assessment of climate risks to communities and infrastructure in the region.</p>
Appendix C: Climate Vulnerability Assessment	Documentation of the methodology used to create a Climate Vulnerability Index for the region, a summary of the interface of social vulnerability and various climate impacts and community-specific takeaways for climate planning.
Appendix D: Greenhouse Gas Emissions Report	A quantitative summary of emissions generated from residents, businesses and institutions in each of the Benton County cities, as well as Pasco.
Appendix E: Tri-Cities VMT Study	Analysis and market assessment of vehicle miles traveled (VMT) in each of the Benton County cities as well as Pasco.
Appendix F: Regional Climate Change Element Engagement Summary	<p>This document discusses and documents the considerable effort of public engagement, data collection and interjurisdictional collaboration used to develop the regional plan.</p> <p>Richland participants specifically mentioned concerns about vulnerable populations, such as those with asthma and outdoor farm workers being affected by climate impacts.</p>
Appendix H: Tree Canopy Assessment	A detailed overview of changes in tree canopy coverage across the participating cities in Benton County

As described above, the City's Climate Resilience Goals and Policies goals and policies come largely from the regional effort and are now adopted into this Comprehensive Plan.

PART ONE: OVERARCHING CLIMATE GOALS AND POLICIES (CL)

These policies apply to Climate Resilience and Greenhouse Gas Emissions Reduction.

Goal CL.1: Integrate climate resilience and GHG emissions reduction into local and regional planning, resource allocation, and overall strategy to ensure compliance with state guidelines and meaningful alignment with current and future priorities.

- CL.1a:** Develop and maintain staff expertise, skills, and capacity to implement Climate Element policies equitably across the region.
- CL.1b:** Strengthen and invest in regional capacity to track and report on climate resilience and GHG emissions reduction policy implementation across the Tri-Cities area. Develop and maintain shared progress reports, dashboards, and other tools to monitor and communicate progress on climate goals over time.
- CL.1c:** Comprehensive plan policies and implementing development regulations **should shall** be consistent with defensible science.
- CL.1d:** [Pursue state and other funding opportunities to support local implementation of policies supporting resilience to climate hazards and reduction of GHG emissions.](#)

PART TWO: GOALS AND POLICIES FOR CLIMATE RESILIENCE (CR)

[This section outlines the regional resilience goals and policies. Implementation considerations may include expected timeline, priority level, staff effort, key implementers, funding sources, priority communities, monitoring and evaluation plans, and metrics for each policy or action.](#)

[Goals and Policies are not organized by priority level but are divided into the following sections in alignment with Commerce priority sectors:](#)

- [Transportation, buildings, energy, and land use](#)
- [Water resources, ecosystems, agriculture, and food systems](#)
- [Economic development and cultural resources](#)
- [Health and wellbeing and emergency management](#)

CLIMATE RESILIENCE - OVERARCHING GOAL

Goal CR.1: Build a healthier and more resilient region by preparing for the impacts of climate change, protecting vulnerable communities and natural systems, supporting clean economic development, and strengthening agriculture, infrastructure, and emergency response.

TRANSPORTATION, BUILDINGS, ENERGY, AND LAND USE SECTOR

Goal CR.2: Ensure policies and development regulations result in land use patterns and built environments that support resilience to extreme weather and climate-related impacts.

CR.2a: ~~Support retrofitting homes with low-cost cooling solutions that meet current building standards, for example by exploring partnership and funding opportunities for programs to provide HVAC units and installation to residents most vulnerable to extreme temperature events (e.g., low-income seniors). Develop and maintain programs to support retrofitting homes with low-cost cooling solutions such as air conditioning units and heat pumps, prioritizing households with residents most vulnerable to extreme temperature events (e.g., low-income seniors)~~

CR.2b: ~~Develop or modify design standards. Monitor implementation of the state building code and consider whether additional development standards would be helpful~~ to encourage the integration of exterior building features that reduce the impacts of extreme heat, precipitation, ~~such as awnings, cool roofs, passive cooling designs, green infrastructure, and green roofs and fire.~~

CR.2c: ~~Reduce wildfire ignition risks from utility infrastructure.”~~

- ~~• Require all new subdivisions to bury electricity transmission lines and associated infrastructure to reduce the risk of wildfire ignition and storm-related damage.~~
- ~~• Encourage utility providers to implement wildfire mitigation best practices~~

Survey Findings:

- Seventy-five percent of survey respondents selected wildfires and wildfire smoke as a weather and climate concern.

~~such as undergrounding and tree trimming.~~

- ~~• Require all new subdivisions to bury electricity transmission lines and associated infrastructure to reduce the risk of wildfire ignition and storm-related damage.~~
- ~~• Encourage utility providers to implement wildfire mitigation best practices such as undergrounding and tree trimming.~~
- Encourage local utilities and fire departments to implement wildfire mitigation best practices such as undergrounding and vegetation management in fire-prone areas.

CR.2d: Implement the BFCOG Metropolitan Transportation Plan and Active Transportation Plan as well as multimodal transportation plans developed by the cities and counties to enhance the safety and security of the region's transportation system, improve access for ~~motorized and non-motorized users~~ all modes—especially in areas with currently underserved populations—and increase the resilience of the transportation network to climate hazards.

CR.2e: Explore ways to protect transit-users from extreme heat, such as working with Benton Franklin Transit to install shaded bus shelters. Work with Benton Franklin Transit to integrate cooling infrastructure into multimodal developments such as bus shelters with fans, mist, or shade to keep residents cool and protected and enhance community wellbeing and transportation.”

Survey Findings:

- Fifty-seven percent of survey respondents support preserving or expanding natural areas that provide shade or help control flooding.

CR.2f: Coordinate with utility providers and partners, such as TRIDEC Energy Forward Alliance, to encourage the expansion of non-carbon - emitting infrastructure that provides reliable and affordable power, diversifying sources of energy. Encourage development of clean-energy infrastructure that can provide reliable and affordable power, reducing reliance on hydropower sources that may be impacted by lower water levels

CR.2g: Support use of low-impact development (LID) and green infrastructure to address stormwater runoff, and support limited paved areas to mitigate heat impacts.

Survey Findings:

- Fifty-one percent of survey respondents support increasing access to affordable heating and cooling systems.
- Eighty percent of advisory team members reported experiencing increased temperatures and extreme heat.

WATER RESOURCES, ECOSYSTEMS, AGRICULTURE, AND FOOD SYSTEMS SECTOR

Goal CR.3: Protect the viability of the region’s water resources, ecosystems, and agricultural economy by promoting resilience to extreme weather and climate-related hazards, while

balancing regional water needs and ecosystem health.

- CR.3a:** Promote ~~environmentally~~-sustainable water storage, [irrigation](#), and [water farming](#) practices that help agricultural producers adapt to changing conditions ~~and reduce production losses~~ while balancing regional water needs. Consider operational modernization and enhanced water conservation strategies, such as those in the Yakima Basin Integrated Plan, and coordinate with conservation and irrigation districts.
- CR.3b:** Promote innovation, investment, and management [regimes in the agricultural sector](#) that address trends for reduced precipitation and increased extreme heat, drought, smoke, and extreme precipitation. This includes supporting research and partnerships on reducing input costs, energy demand, water demand, and greenhouse gas emissions, as well as plant varieties suited to changing weather conditions.
- CR.3c:** [Encourage carbon sequestration and conservation of agricultural and open space land through existing programs such as the Open Space Taxation Program and Voluntary Stewardship Program, and consider new multijurisdictional tools such as conservation futures, transfers or purchase of development rights, or other strategies.](#) ~~Maximize carbon sequestration through alignment of Open Space Taxation Program strategies, VSP, and other incentives. Consider multijurisdictional tools such as conservation futures, transfers or purchase of development rights, or other strategies to enhance conservation and carbon sequestration and avoid harm to carbon-rich ecosystem~~
- CR.3d:** ~~Identify~~ [Consider](#) compatible urban and institutional lands for renewable energy infrastructure opportunities. Protect long-term viable agricultural lands and environmentally sensitive lands while allowing the least conflict with renewable energy siting.
- CR.3e:** Preserve or expand [natural areas—open spaces with drought-tolerant and low-flammability plant species](#) **(and native species, where appropriate)** that help control flooding and provide shade, prioritizing projects for locations that frequently flood, have high heat conditions, or have community groups that are ~~more likely to be impacted by these hazards~~ [lower income or more sensitive to high heat \(e.g., children, seniors, people with chronic health conditions\)](#).
- CR.3f:** Manage trees and other vegetation in both urban and rural areas to decrease risks from severe wildfires, preserving vegetation where possible and improving ecosystem health and habitat function.
- CR.3g:** Collaborate with partner agencies and groups to protect aquatic ecosystems and increase their resilience to extreme weather and climate-related impacts such as algal blooms and increased threat of invasive species.

Survey Findings:

- Ninety percent of advisory team members reported experiencing wildfires and wildfire smoke.

- CR.3h:** Protect and enhance surface and groundwater quantity and quality, recognizing that water resources are essential to the public health, safety and welfare, economic growth, and prosperity of the Tri-Cities Region and its jurisdictions, [as well as the health of native aquatic species fish.](#)
- CR.3i:** Coordinate with regional, state, federal, [and tribal partners](#) on plans to manage water resources and hydropower generation in the Yakima River Basin and Columbia River Basin. Advocate for long-range planning that considers at least 20 years of projected demand, and needs for increased storage capacity given increasing trends in intense precipitation, reduced snowpack, and severe drought.
- CR.3j:** ~~Ensure Apply~~ development regulations conserve water resources and support the Tri-Cities Region's ability to support a high quality of life and vibrant economy in a semi-arid climate. This includes [implementing, monitoring, and possibly updating](#) development regulations for water-efficient buildings, landscaping, irrigation systems, water systems, and stormwater management.
- CR.3k:** Allow and incentivize [private](#) water management practices that recycle water for uses that require less treatment than drinking water, in coordination with the Department of Ecology to ensure proper protocols are used. This could include reclaiming water used for food processing to irrigate crops or reclaiming greywater to irrigate landscaping or golf courses. [\(greywater is used potable water from sources such as sinks that does not include toilet water\).](#)
- CR.3l:** ~~Work with partners such as Benton Conservation District and the Mid-Columbia Community Forestry Council to develop acceptable drought-tolerant and low-flammability native plant species and mulching practices for new developments and restoration projects to increase resilience and reduce maintenance costs and demand for irrigation water. Also partner to educate property owners about maintenance and value of plantings. Ensure regulations require or incentivize native drought- and pest-resistant trees, shrubs, and grasses in new developments and restoration projects, to increase resilience and reduce maintenance costs and demand for irrigation water."~~
- CR.3m:** [Work with local partners such as utility districts and irrigation districts to](#) provide outreach or incentive programs to promote voluntary water and energy conservation. This could include raising public awareness of best practices such as switching from lawns to drought-tolerant landscaping or exploring demand pricing structures that do not unfairly burden low-income households.
- CR.3n:** ~~Consider developing Develop~~ a comprehensive, local drought resilience strategy that complements state and federal water basin plans, factors in projected climate impacts, and sets action levels for different drought stages. [Include all relevant stakeholders and water managers, including irrigation districts.](#)

Survey Findings:

- Fifty-four percent of survey respondents are concerned about drought, and forty-five percent support conserving water as a resilience strategy.

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT AND CULTURAL RESOURCES

Goal CR.4: Ensure that the local economy, cultural resources, and cultural traditions are resilient to extreme weather and climate-related impacts.

CR.4a: Build on existing coordination with **Tribal tribal** governments to strengthen community resilience and protect cultural resources from climate impacts. This includes supporting tribal efforts to increase knowledge collection and sharing about ways to protect cultural resources and build climate-adaptive systems related to food, health, and the economy.

~~Protect, enhance, and restore ecosystems to meet tribal treaty rights and conserve culturally important consumptive and non-consumptive resources including foods, medicinal plants, and materials that could be adversely impacted by climate change impacts such as extreme heat, flooding, and drought.~~

CR.4b: ~~Collaborate with community partners to explore ways to expand entry level jobs and career development pathways in low-emission industries that align with the needs and strengths of Tri-Cities communities. Potential partners include local schools, labor unions employees, the Tri-City Development Council (TRIDEC), chambers of commerce, community-based organizations, and business leaders in light industrial uses and nuclear, solar, and hydropower energy. Support organizations dedicated to expanding entry level jobs and career development pathways in low-emission industries that align with the needs and strengths of Tri-Cities communities. Coordinate with potential partners such as local schools, labor unions, the Tri-City Development Council (TRIDEC); community-based organizations, and business leaders in light industrial uses and nuclear, solar, and hydropower energy.~~

CR.4c: Ensure regional multijurisdictional hazard mitigation plans for Benton and Franklin counties include information about the impacts of extreme weather and climate-related hazards, and mitigation strategies for preparing for and managing post climate disaster hazards to protect community health, economies, and ecosystems.

HEALTH AND WELLBEING AND EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT

Goal CR.5: Protect community health and well-being and enhance emergency preparedness, response, and recovery from the impacts of climate-related hazards, focusing resources on the people and places most at risk to these hazards.

CR.5a: Ensure critical infrastructure is resilient to natural hazards such as flooding and extreme heat and implement related area-wide and jurisdiction-specific mitigation actions in regional hazard mitigation plans.

Survey Findings:

- Fifty percent of survey respondents support providing community education as a resilience strategy.

CR.5b: Collaborate at the regional, state, and federal levels on updating floodplain maps to reflect best available information and update local development codes as needed to mitigate for impacts related to changes in the floodplain over time. **Encourage updates to the Countywide Hazard Mitigation plan to occur every six years to maintain program eligibility.**

CR.5c: ~~“In partnership with the community, seeks to expand and raise awareness of programs~~ Work with the community and funding partners to raise awareness of and expand programs that provide cooling and warming centers and other types of emergency shelter and resource distribution during extreme weather, focusing on supporting the people who are most at risk.

CR.5d: Continue to mitigate risk of wildfires in the Wildland-Urban Interface (WUI), consistent with regional multijurisdictional hazard mitigation plans for Benton and Franklin counties and the city’s Community Wildfire Protection Plan. This includes public education for private owners and residents and ensuring wildfire risk reduction strategies are incorporated into public land management practices and local development standards. ~~Develop and implement wildfire mitigation actions for the Wildland-Urban Interface (WUI), consistent with the regional multijurisdictional hazard mitigation plans for Benton and Franklin counties. This should include Firewise public education for private owners and residents in WUI areas and ensuring wildfire risk reduction strategies are incorporated into public land management practices and local development standards.~~

Survey Findings:

- Sixty-seven percent of survey respondents support increasing shade structures and tree canopy as a resilience strategy.

CR.5e: Expand community outreach and training programs focused on climate emergency preparedness and response to floods, fire, poor air quality, extreme temperatures, and utility outages, including training for Community Emergency Response Teams (CERT) and Long-Term Recovery Groups (LTRGs).

CR.5f: Strengthen communication with non-English-speaking communities by continuing to build relationships with local groups and exploring the most effective methods for raising awareness of and engagement with climate issues.

CR.5g: Recognize that parks support climate resilience by providing public access to cool places, such as water or shaded areas, and by providing public gathering places where community members can connect and support each other. Promote equitable access to parks, creating inclusive and connected

recreational spaces, and supporting culturally responsive, community-driven park development that reflects local needs and values.

- CR.5h:** Ensure all residents have access to information about climate impacts and an opportunity to participate in public decision-making processes related to plans and the use of public resources to address those impacts.
- 1) Collaborate with community groups to connect local concerns with regional and statewide efforts and help guide policies, programs, and investments.
 - 2) Seek input from populations that are typically the most at-risk to climate impacts such as seniors, children, low-income households, and those with chronic health conditions. [Also seek input from community service providers regarding people who are homeless.](#)
- CR.5i:** Protect the health and well-being of agricultural, construction, recreation, first responders, and other outdoor workers exposed to extreme heat, poor air quality, and other weather-related hazards. Coordinate with the Benton Franklin Health District, the State Department of Labor and Industries, and labor unions to consider strategies such as promoting awareness of worker protection laws and best practices such as scheduling heavy routine outdoor work during cooler times of day and providing breaks and shelter during extreme weather events.

PART THREE: GOALS AND POLICIES FOR GREENHOUSE GAS EMISSIONS REDUCTION (GH)

The following section presents regional GHG emissions reduction goals and policies.

GHG EMISSIONS REDUCTION – OVERARCHING GOAL

Goal GH.1: Support clean growth and climate-smart development in the region by reducing greenhouse gas emissions across all sectors, advancing clean energy, and integrating sustainable land use and transportation strategies.

BUILDINGS AND ENERGY SECTOR

Goal GH.2: Improve building performance and energy resilience

by reducing energy use, supporting cleaner energy choices, and making energy-saving upgrades more accessible and affordable.

Survey Findings:

- Forty-seven percent of survey respondents support expanding safe places for people to go during extreme weather and smoke events.

GH.2a: Follow state building and energy code development and implementation specific to decarbonization. Educate and support building officials, partners, and staff to integrate energy and building codes for new and remodeled buildings that reduce energy use, expand EV charging infrastructure, and support a variety of energy sources, including renewable sources.

NOTE: modeled in GHG analysis

GH.2b: Enhance energy resilience and reduce energy consumption in existing buildings by:

- Supporting public programs that incentivize or encourage energy efficiency retrofits for commercial and residential buildings.
- Advancing energy efficiency initiatives across residential, commercial, and municipal sectors, such as weatherization.
- Prioritizing programs that serve low-income, senior, and historically marginalized communities.

NOTE: modeled in GHG analysis

GH.2c: Promote the use of sustainable building materials to improve energy and environmental performance through:

- Incentivized green building certification.
- Building code and other development regulations.

GH.2d: Consider creating a regional resource hub of federal, state, county, and local incentives available to residents interested in building electrification, insulation, and weatherization, to improve energy efficiency, resilience, and affordability. Prioritize low- and no-cost home retrofit packages for low-income and marginalized communities.

GH.2e: Implement the strategies outlined in the **Richland Clean Energy Implementation Plan**, with a focus on supporting overburdened populations through targeted outreach, flexible billing options, and partnerships with community organizations to provide financial and energy-efficiency education¹.

¹ [This is a jurisdiction-specific policy for Richland.](#)

TRANSPORTATION, ZONING AND DEVELOPMENT, AND LAND USE SECTOR

Goal GH.3: Collaborate regionally to promote transportation and land use patterns that support reductions in emissions and Vehicle Miles Traveled (VMT), aiming to promote housing diversity and compact, walkable development near transit and expand safe, reliable, and low-emission transportation options for all residents, with the goal to reduce regional VMT by at least 5% below 2022 levels by 2050².

Survey Findings:

- Sixty-seven percent of survey respondents support increasing options for people to walk, bike, or take transit as an emissions reduction strategy.

GH.3a: Implement complementary, mixed-use land use patterns at the neighborhood scale by integrating housing, retail, parks, and schools to support walkability, daily convenience, and reduce reliance on driving.

GH.3b: Prioritize infill development through zoning and permitting processes, including reducing or removing regulatory burdens.

GH.3c: Foster higher-density, mixed-use development in urban villages and transit corridors by supporting transit-oriented development and aligning zoning and permitting processes to facilitate compact growth near transit and amenities.

NOTE: modeled in GHG analysis

GH.3d: Support shorter commutes and reduced reliance on driving for low-income community members by prioritizing integrating affordable and below market rate housing in developments.

Survey Findings:

- Fifty-seven percent of survey respondents support encouraging energy efficient design as an emissions reduction strategy.

GH.3e: Create a safe, well-connected, and attractive bicycle and pedestrian complete streets transportation network that is protected from extreme heat with adequate shade shelters and snow removal to encourage active transportation and improve street connectivity and walkability. Ensure improvements integrate with transit networks and increase accessibility for people with disabilities and the elderly.

² City actions may focus on promoting dense, mixed-use, multimodal development. County actions may focus on directing urban growth to cities and future annexation areas, on strategic updates to rural transportation systems, and on managing rural lands to support emissions reduction consistent with policies under Goal 3.

NOTE: modeled in GHG analysis

GH.3f: Prioritize, develop, and maintain mobility hubs in transportation-efficient locations, especially in overburdened communities experiencing a scarcity of transportation alternatives. Incorporate mobility choices (including multimodal transportation and rideshares) for people with special transportation needs, including persons with disabilities, the elderly, the young, and low-income populations.

As feasible, identify and implement protections for tenants and low-income residents (such as anti-displacement measures and affordable housing requirements) to ensure that these investments do not lead to displacement or additional cost burdens.

What we heard:

- Advisory team members emphasized that comprehensive planning and the Climate Element provide an opportunity to improve waste management practices across the Tri-Cities Region.
- Advisory team members also highlighted the limited number of facilities for green recycling limits the regions' ability to meet state requirements.

GH.3g: Implement and seek alignment with the following plans to support regional transportation GHG emissions reductions, as required by the state: BFCOG Regional Active Transportation Plan; BFCOG Metropolitan Transportation Plan (Transition 2045); BFCOG Regional Bicycle Plan; BFCOG Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy; other Comprehensive Plan elements.

GH.3h: Support the improvement of transit speed, frequency, coverage, and reliability, including improving the number of desirable destinations reachable by transit.

NOTE: modeled in GHG analysis

GH.3i: Encourage the private sector and other partners to provide subsidies for low-income residents to purchase or lease electric vehicles and bicycles. Encourage these partners to provide EV charging infrastructure, especially in areas that serve low-income populations and renters.

- **Encourage phasing out the use of gas-powered landscaping equipment and other off- or non-road vehicle and equipment types, leading by example through local government practices.**

GH.3j: Encourage (or require when mandated by state building code) EV charging infrastructure in major building remodels and retrofits where feasible.

Survey Findings:

- Forty-seven percent of survey respondents support building denser communities with shorter distances between destinations (e.g., work, home, school, doctor) as an emissions reduction strategy.

GH.3k: Encourage phasing out the use of gas-powered landscaping equipment and other off- or non-road vehicle and equipment types, leading by example through local government practices.

GH.3l: Promote local government leadership by:

- [Converting vehicle fleet vehicles to low-emissions vehicles, where cost and technology allow.](#)
- [Developing and implementing programs that reduce staff commute VMT \(e.g., provide free or subsidized transit passes, encourage ridesharing, explore options for telecommuting\).](#)

GH.3m: [Coordinate regionally to track trends in GHG emissions and VMT for 5-year Comprehensive Plan progress reporting, including coordinating on how to allocate data from unincorporated Urban Growth Areas \(UGAs\).](#)

GH.3n: [Continue conducting joint-planning between county and city governments for unincorporated UGAs. Where possible, develop transportation and utility systems in UGAs to the standards of adjacent cities, and ensure zoning supports higher densities appropriate for future annexation.](#)

WASTE MANAGEMENT SECTOR

Goal GH.4: Ensure that the community can reduce, reuse, and recycle waste materials sustainably.”

GH.4a: Explore opportunities to expand communitywide waste reduction and recycling programs to divert recyclable waste from entering landfills. This could include proactively collaborating with neighboring jurisdictions to invest in new waste management options and provide recycling and composting services consistent with recent state laws including HB 1799, HB 2301, and SB 5284. [Expand communitywide waste reduction and recycling programs to divert 40% of community recyclable waste from entering landfills by 2029](#)



Richland Comprehensive Plan Update

PLANNING COMMISSION MEETING
February 25, 2026

PROPOSED UPDATES TO

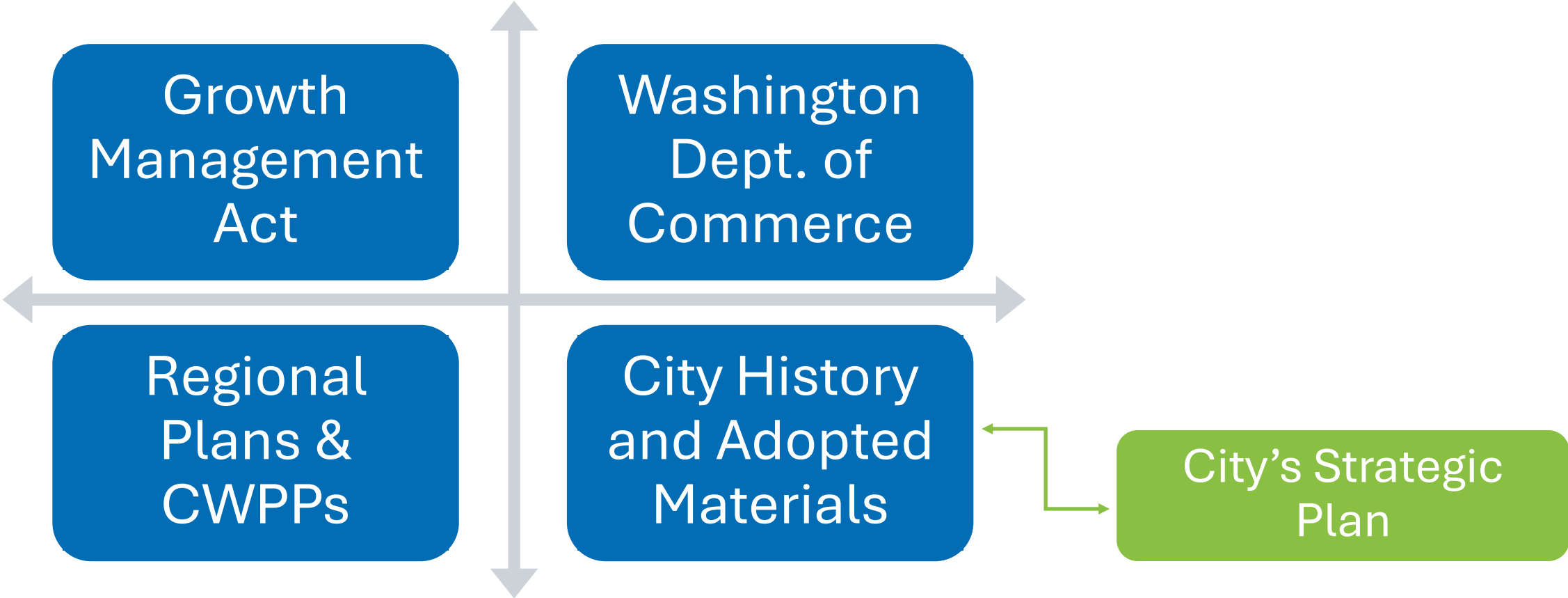


INTRODUCTION CHAPTER



CLIMATE ELEMENT

HOW ARE THESE UPDATES DETERMINED?





INTRODUCTION & COMMUNITY VISION

INTRODUCTION CHAPTER OVERVIEW

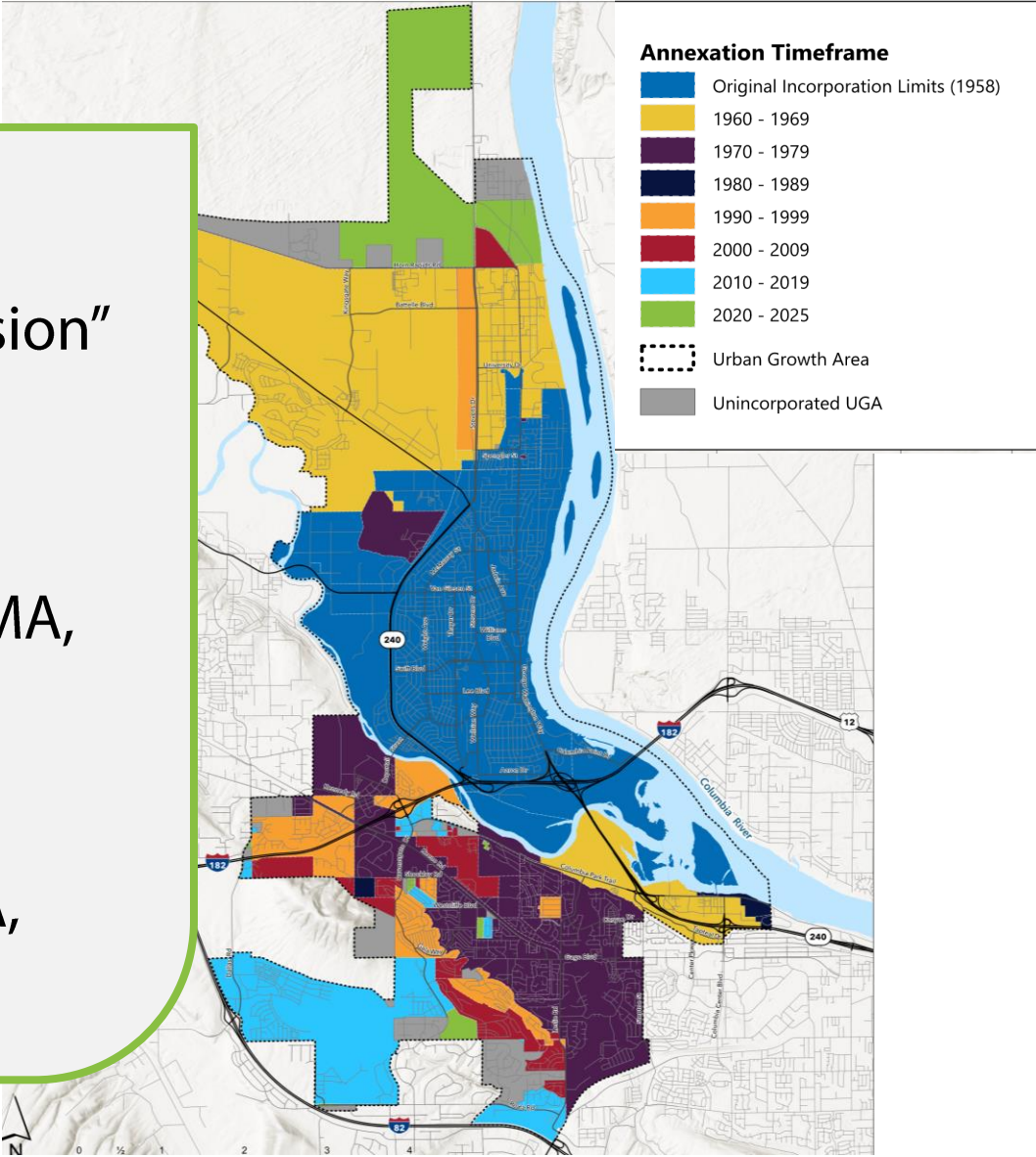
Includes:

- ✓ Community Information
- ✓ Brief History
- ✓ Vision Statement
- ✓ Growth Management Act (GMA) Framework
- ✓ Information about Public Engagement
- ✓ Legislative Requirements



WHAT ARE THE PROPOSED CHANGES?

- Streamlined Introduction Language
- Combined “Introduction” and “Community Vision” Parts of the 2017 Plan
- Added Annexation History and Map
- Expanded information about Countywide, GMA, and Federal Requirements
- Added “Amendments” section
- Added discussion of permitting process, SEPA, public noticing




SHOULD THE VISION STATEMENT CHANGE?

Community Vision Statement:


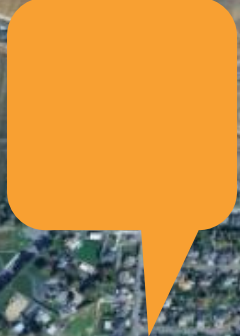
Richland is a progressive, safe, and family-friendly community that welcomes diversity. It is noted for excellence in technology, medicine, education, recreation, tourism, and citizen participation. This dynamic city, situated on two rivers, actively supports opportunities for economic development that are in harmony with the area's unique natural resources.

Let's Discuss!





HOW HAS THE
COMMUNITY GROWN
AND CHANGED
OVER THE PAST TWENTY
YEARS?





CLIMATE ELEMENT

CLIMATE ELEMENT

The GMA was updated in 2023 (HB 1181) to prioritize planning for the effects of climate change and preventing further damages



PART ONE
GHG Emissions Reduction:
Per Capita VMT Reduction
Environmental Justice

A NEW GMA GOAL:
Climate Change and Resiliency



PART TWO
Resiliency:
Natural Areas
Community Resiliency
Natural Hazards

PUBLIC ENGAGEMENT

BFCOG Climate Survey: 2025

The regional consortium, led by the Benton-Franklin Council of Governments hosted a survey to pulse community sentiment when the regional Climate Element was prepared

Takeaways:

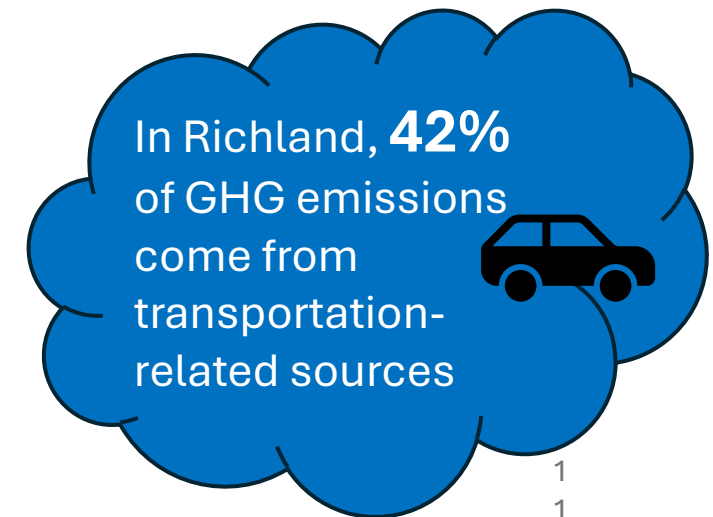
- *Drought* and *fire risk* are most pressing concerns
- *Heat island* effects from surface parking/ lack of tree canopy are a concern
- *Highly Politicized* issue

BFCOG Transportation Surveys: 2020-2025

- 74% of Richland respondents agreed they would use non-car transportation options if destinations were closer
- Poor perceptions of the safety of active transportation can lead to car use

Community Health Assessment Survey: 2025

- Concerns about automobile-centric infrastructure



PUBLIC ENGAGEMENT

Community Survey: Open Sept – Nov. 2025

Please rate the following topics for your level of concern:

- *Wildfires-66% were “very concerned” or “moderately concerned”*
- *Impacts to the environment related to new growth - 70% were “very concerned” or “moderately concerned”*

How do you think Richland should approach & address climate change in the Comprehensive Plan?

Answers diverged wildly- here are some samples:

- *Science-based*
- *No action necessary*
- *Recycling, limit waste*
- *Green energy*
- *Open space vs. hardscapes*
- *Dark sky ordinances*
- *Cost vs. benefit analysis*
- *Water preservation/ drought prevention*
- *Trees*
- *Decrease toxic emissions*



CLIMATE ELEMENT

City joined with BFCOG and regional jurisdictions to produce “Tri-Cities Regional Climate Element”:

- ✓ Document existing conditions:
 - GHG emissions
 - VMT study
 - Tree canopy
 - Vulnerability Index
- ✓ Identify potential adaptations & strategies
- ✓ Supported by grant money and technical assistance from a consultant team



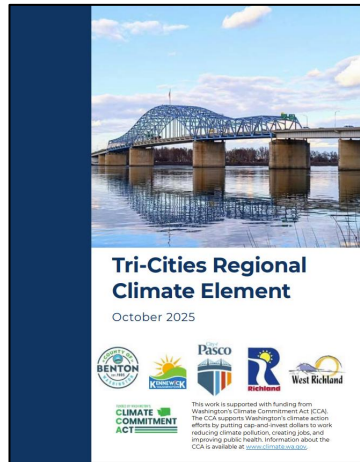
Tri-Cities Regional Climate Element
October 2025

BENTON **KENNEWICK** **PASCO** **RICHLAND** **WEST RICHLAND**

FUNDED BY WASHINGTON'S CLIMATE COMMITMENT ACT

This work is supported with funding from Washington's Climate Commitment Act (CCA). The CCA supports Washington's climate action efforts by putting cap-and-invest dollars to work reducing climate pollution, creating jobs, and improving public health. Information about the CCA is available at www.climate.wa.gov.

CLIMATE ELEMENT



Body of Work / Basis

DOCUMENT NAME	DESCRIPTION
Climate Technical Advisory Committee Charter	A collaborative agreement between BFCOG and the participating localities: Benton County, the City of Richland, the City of Kennewick, the City of West Richland, and the City of Pasco, to form a working group addressing climate resilience and greenhouse gas emissions on an equitable basis (Publication Date: February 2025)
Appendix A: Implementation Guidance for Comprehensive Plans	The Appendix describes that the goals and policies in the Tri-Cities Regional Climate Element were created to be broad and high-level. Determining how each jurisdiction can implement the policies is an important next step. Considerations and factors that can impact how implementation occurs are listed.
Appendix B: Climate Impacts Summary	The Climate Impacts Summary forms the basis for the Tri-Cities Regional Climate Element, supplying a summary of climate impacts projected to affect the Tri-Cities. The summary informs the local comprehensive planning process by assessing climate gaps and opportunities of existing comprehensive plans in the Tri-Cities Region, together with a climate vulnerability assessment of climate risks to communities and infrastructure in the region.
Appendix C: Climate Vulnerability Assessment	Documentation of the methodology used to create a Climate Vulnerability Index for the region, a summary of the interface of social vulnerability and various climate impacts and community-specific takeaways for climate planning.
Appendix D: Greenhouse Gas Emissions Report	A quantitative summary of emissions generated from residents, businesses and institutions in each of the Benton County cities, as well as Pasco.
Appendix E: Tri-Cities VMT Study	Analysis and market assessment of vehicle miles traveled (VMT) in each of the Benton County cities as well as Pasco.
Appendix F: Regional Climate Change Element Engagement Summary	This document discusses and documents the considerable effort of public engagement, data collection and interjurisdictional collaboration used to develop the regional plan. Richland participants specifically mentioned concerns about vulnerable populations, such as those with asthma and outdoor farm workers being affected by climate impacts.
Appendix H: Tree Canopy Assessment	A detailed overview of changes in tree canopy coverage across the participating cities in Benton County

CLIMATE ELEMENT

REGIONAL PLAN VERSION

CITY OF RICHLAND **FUTURE IN FOCUS**

This process also produced regional goals and policies which have been viewed by the Planning Commission, City staff, the public and agencies.

Some goals and policies have been altered/ adapted/ added/ or subtracted based on staff input.



Tri-Cities Regional Climate Element

October 2025



OVERARCHING: GHG EMISSIONS REDUCTION

OVERARCHING GHG EMISSIONS REDUCTION GOAL: SUPPORT CLEAN GROWTH AND CLIMATE-SMART DEVELOPMENT IN THE REGION BY REDUCING GREENHOUSE GAS EMISSIONS ACROSS ALL SECTORS, ADVANCING CLEAN ENERGY, AND INTEGRATING SUSTAINABLE LAND USE AND TRANSPORTATION STRATEGIES.

BUILDINGS AND ENERGY

GOAL CE-6: IMPROVE BUILDING PERFORMANCE AND ENERGY RESILIENCE BY REDUCING ENERGY USE, SUPPORTING CLEANER ENERGY CHOICES, AND MAKING ENERGY-SAVING UPGRADES MORE ACCESSIBLE AND AFFORDABLE.



CE-6.1: Follow state building and energy code development and implementation specific to decarbonization. Educate and support building officials, partners, and staff to integrate energy and building codes for new and remodeled buildings that reduce energy use, expand EV charging infrastructure, and support a variety of energy sources, including renewable sources.

NOTE: modeled in GHG analysis



CE-6.2: Enhance energy resilience and reduce energy consumption in existing buildings by:

- Supporting public programs that incentivize or encourage energy efficiency retrofits for commercial and residential buildings.
- Advancing energy efficiency initiatives across residential, commercial, and municipal sectors, such as weatherization.
- Prioritizing programs that serve low-income, senior, and historically marginalized communities.

NOTE: modeled in GHG analysis

What we heard:

- Fifty-seven percent of survey respondents support encouraging energy efficient design as an emissions reduction strategy.

Goal CR.2: Ensure policies and development regulations result in land use patterns and built environments that support resilience to extreme weather and climate-related impacts.

CHANGED
&
SHORTER

- **Policy CR.2c:** Encourage local utilities and fire departments to implement wildfire mitigation best practices such as undergrounding and vegetation management in fire-prone areas.

CHANGED

- **Policy CR.2f:** Coordinate with utility providers and partners, such as TRIDEC Energy Forward Alliance, to encourage the expansion of non-carbon-emitting infrastructure that provides reliable and affordable power, diversifying the sources of energy.

NEW

- **Policy CR.2g:** Support use of low-impact development (LID) and green infrastructure to address stormwater runoff, and support limited paved areas to mitigate heat impacts.

Goal CR.3: Protect the viability of the region's water resources, ecosystems, and agricultural economy by promoting resilience to extreme weather and climate-related hazards, while balancing regional water needs and ecosystem health.

NEW

- **Policy CR.3I:** Work with partners such as Benton Conservation District and the Mid-Columbia Community Forestry Council to develop acceptable drought-tolerant and low-flammability native plant species and mulching practices for new developments and restoration projects to increase resilience and reduce maintenance costs and demand for irrigation water. Also partner to educate property owners about maintenance and value of plantings.

Goal GH.3: Collaborate regionally to promote transportation and land use patterns that support reductions in VMT, aiming [previous phrase removed] to reduce regional VMT by at least 5% below 2022 levels by 2050.

NEW

- **Policy GH.3m:** Coordinate regionally to track trends in GHG emissions and VMT for 5-year Comprehensive Plan progress reporting, including coordinating on how to allocate data from unincorporated UGAs.

NEW

- **Policy GH.3n:** Continue conducting joint-planning between county and city governments for unincorporated UGAs. Where possible, develop transportation and utility systems in UGAs to the standards of adjacent cities, and ensure zoning supports higher densities appropriate for future annexation.

NEW

Goal GH.4: Ensure that the community can reduce, reuse, and recycle waste materials sustainably.



Next Steps

- Development of other Elements including the Housing Element
- Additional public feedback through ongoing engagement
- Monitor for City actions / further planning efforts

Feedback? Questions?