

Appendix B
Environmental Impact Statement
Addendum



September 2017
Benton County



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Prepared for Benton County

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Prepared for
Benton County
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Fact Sheet

Project Title:

Benton County Comprehensive Plan Environmental Impact Statement Addendum

Project Proponent:

Benton County

Location:

The area represented by this Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) Addendum is Benton County (County). The County is located in southeast Washington and encompasses approximately 1,715 square miles.

Proposed Action:

Benton County is updating their Comprehensive Plan consistent with the Growth Management Act (GMA; Revised Code of Washington 36.70A). The Plan is used to guide decisions about development and growth within the County and in the UGAs. It is also designed to help the County meet its long-term vision for growth. The following two alternatives are being considered:

Alternative 1: No Action Alternative

The No Action Alternative, Alternative 1, would maintain the County's existing land use designations without modifications. This means growth would need to occur within existing land use designations and that modifications to land use, either higher density or lower development, modifications to industrial development or changes in agricultural areas, would occur within existing designated lands. UGAs would remain unchanged.

Alternative 2: Proposed Action Alternative

The Proposed Action Alternative, Alternative 2, allows for changes in the Comprehensive Plan to accommodate future land use changes and population growth within the County. Under this alternative, land use designations would be modified, with additional agricultural lands designated as GMA Agricultural Lands, other lands designated to higher density and others to a lower density through a new designation, Rural Resource, that protects steeper slopes and hilltop areas from higher density development in rural areas of the County. Modifications to UGAs are included for both Prosser and the City of Richland.

This alternative also:

- Incorporates the County's Shoreline Master Program Update (2014)

- Includes planning efforts under the Voluntary Stewardship Program (VSP; RCW 36.70A.700) which is promulgated under the GMA. The County is currently developing a VSP Work Plan to voluntarily protect critical areas on agricultural lands.
- Identifies the need to develop a long-term strategy for addressing permit exempt wells in the Yakima Basin needed to support rural development, consistent with the goals of the Yakima Integrated Plan and to provide domestic water supplies for the future.

Lead Agency:

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Required Permits and/or Approvals:

The following actions would be required for adoption of the Comprehensive Plan Update:

- Final approval of the Comprehensive Plan by the Board of Benton County Commissioners.

Authors and Principal Contributors:

This EIS Addendum was prepared under the direction of Benton County. Research and analysis was provided by:

- Anchor QEA, LLC, Lead Author
- Oneza & Associates, Alternatives Development and Analysis

Date of Final EIS Issuance:

March 1981

Date of Draft EIS Issuance:

August 11, 1980

Date of Draft EIS Comments Due:

September 15, 1980

Public Meetings:

- Visioning workshop September 19, 2016 in Kennewick
- Visioning workshop September 28, 2016 in Prosser

Final Action:

County Commission adoption of the Comprehensive Plan Update is planned for December 2017 (subject to change)

Related Plans and Documents:

- Benton County Draft Comprehensive Plan 2017 (September 11, 2017)

A limited number of CD and hard copy EIS documents are available at the Benton County Planning Department at 1002 Dudley Avenue, Prosser, Washington 99350. The EIS is also available online at:

www.2017cpupdate.com

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ABBREVIATIONS

Addendum	Environmental Impact Assessment Addendum
AVA	American Viticultural Area
County	Benton County
CRP	Conservation Reserve Program
DOE	Department of Energy
GMA	Growth Management Act
OHWM	ordinary high water mark
Plan	Comprehensive Plan
RCW	Revised Code of Washington
SEPA	State Environmental Policy Act
SMP	Shoreline Master Program
UGAs	Urban Growth Areas
VSP	Voluntary Stewardship Program

1 Introduction

Benton County (County) is updating its Comprehensive Plan (Plan) consistent with the Growth Management Act (GMA; Revised Code of Washington [RCW] 36.70A). The Plan consists of goals, policies, and analyses of the following elements: economic, land use, natural resources, economics, housing, transportation, parks and recreation, capital facilities, and utilities. The Plan is used to guide decisions about development and growth within the County and in the Urban Growth Areas (UGAs). It is also designed to help the County meet its long-term vision for growth. The Plan was originally developed in 1985 and comprehensively amended in 1998 and 2006, and now again in 2017. More minor amendments have also occurred throughout this period. Refinements to the Plan have been made consistent with the Plan's vision and to further refine the balance of plan elements consistent with GMA goals.

The purpose and intent of the Plan update is to provide for local needs relating to the use of land and infrastructure, including the protection of property and water rights, and in so doing, to meet the state's minimum planning law requirements. Although the Plan has been substantially updated, the basic land use pattern that was established in 1985 and continued in 1998 and 2006 through 2017 has not changed significantly.

This Environmental Impact Assessment Addendum (Addendum) provides an environmental analysis of two alternatives to support the Plan: a "No Action" alternative and a proposed action alternative. Alternative 1, the "No Action" alternative, calls for keeping the County's existing Plan without modifications. Alternative 2, the Proposed Action alternative, allows for changes in the Plan to accommodate future land uses and population growth expected to occur within the County.

The County has prepared this Addendum to amend the *Benton County Final Environmental Impact Statement* (1981) prepared for the existing Plan and amendments (Benton County 1985). This Addendum is intended to satisfy the requirements of the State Environmental Policy Act (SEPA) pursuant to RCW Chapter 43.21C and Washington Administrative Code 197-11-625. This Addendum evaluates Plan alternatives and impacts that propose a similar policy direction, land use patterns, and environmental impacts that are expected to be associated with the proposed action identified in this Addendum. Therefore, the proposed alternative does not substantially change the analysis of significant impacts and alternatives in the existing environmental document.

1.1 SEPA Requirements

SEPA (RCW 43.21C) requires government officials to consider the environmental consequences of actions they are about to take and seek better or less damaging ways to accomplish those proposed actions. Officials must consider whether the proposed action would have a significant, adverse environmental impact on the following elements of the natural and built environment: earth, air,

water, plants and animals, energy and natural resources, environmental health, land and shoreline use, transportation, and public services and utilities.

SEPA empowers local government to protect environmental quality, and it requires state and local officials to make decisions consistent with the policy set forth in the act. When necessary, SEPA can be used to supplement agencies' authority to address gaps in laws affecting environmental quality. Under SEPA, policies, plans, and regulations adopted per GMA are considered "non-project" actions subject to SEPA review.

1.2 SEPA and GMA Integration

The GMA requires compliance with both SEPA and GMA in the comprehensive planning process. Due to similarities, integration of SEPA with GMA eliminates duplication of effort and assures consistency between them. The procedural and substantive requirements of SEPA and GMA have been integrated at several points in the County's planning process:

Public Participation Both SEPA and GMA recognize public participation and agency coordination as fundamental to the planning process. The public participation process for the Plan began in 1985, extending to 1997 where the SEPA analysis is an integral part of the public draft of the Plan; the initial SEPA scoping meeting for the Plan was held in July 1994; as a continuation of scoping, the Rural Citizen's Planning Committees drafted Alternative Land Use Maps directed at achieving identified visions and goals, and compared the gross impacts of each map prior to selecting the Preferred Alternative. Additional public participation activities occurred in the 2006 update, and for more minor amendments occurring through 2015. In 2016, the County conducted two visioning workshops and a survey to offer input on multiple issues concerning the proposed action alternative and visions and goals for the Plan. Chapters of the Plan and maps were provided at the meetings and comment cards used to capture feedback.

Visioning and Scoping Visioning (for the Plan) and scoping (for the EIS) are the fundamental beginning points of each process. The County conducted multiple visioning workshops and a survey to offer input on multiple issues related to the alternatives. Key topics to address in the Plan were gathered during the outreach process. The format of the visioning workshops was set up with chapters of the Plan and maps for participants to review and comment on. Comment cards were used to capture comments and any edits to the chapters of the Plan. The visioning workshops were advertised using flyers posted around the County, an advertisement published on September 8, 2016, a news brief article published on September 13, 2016, in the *Tri-City Herald*, an article in the Prosser Record-Bulletin published on September 14, 2016, a business brief article in the *Tri-cities Area Journal of Business* published on September 16, 2016, and information posted on Benton County's social media pages. All persons (472 individuals) on the Public Participation Plan mailing list were mailed a postcard notification of the versioning workshops and survey. The visioning

workshops were held on September 19 and 28, 2016, in Kennewick and Prosser, respectively. The survey was posted online and received 54 responses.

Existing Conditions Both SEPA and GMA require collection and analysis of information regarding existing conditions. The draft Plan contains a description of existing conditions for the various planning issues/resources.

Goals and Policies Goals and policies play an important role in the development of the GMA comprehensive plan and the SEPA evaluation of plan alternatives. The policies and goals in the 1985 Plan, as minimally amended to reflect GMA requirements for critical areas, UGAs, rural lands, transportation and capital facilities, are drivers for the Plan, along with the general goals of GMA, and the Countywide Goals adopted by the cities and the County.

Impact Analysis GMA requires collection and analysis of data for natural resource lands, critical areas, the mandatory plan elements (i.e., land use, rural, housing, transportation, utilities, capital facilities elements), UGAs, and the siting of essential public facilities. SEPA requires the analysis of the Plan's significant adverse impacts on elements of the natural and built environment. The Plan contains the data inventories and descriptions of resources to which the required SEPA analysis is applied in this chapter.

Mitigation GMA requires plan and ordinance provisions to reduce the impacts of growth on the natural and built environment (e.g., designate and protect by regulation critical areas, protect water quality). Accordingly, the Plan map, text, goals, and policies along with its implementation mechanisms naturally incorporate SEPA required mitigation.

Documents Both SEPA and GMA require preparation of documents for the public participation and decision-making processes, but each has specific guidelines on the information and analysis that must or should be included. This Addendum contains the requirements of SEPA; this Addendum is an integrated portion of the draft Plan document, which has been prepared to satisfy GMA requirements.

1.3 Location

The County is located in southeast Washington and encompasses approximately 1,715 square miles. Five counties surround the County including Klickitat, Yakima, Grant, Franklin, and Walla Walla counties. The Columbia River bounds the north, east, and south sides of the County; the Yakima River intersects the middle of the County from Prosser to its confluence with the Columbia at Richland. Major cities in the County include Benton City, Kennewick, Prosser, Richland, and West Richland.

1.4 EIS Analysis Areas to Enable Plan Action Approvals

A fundamental objective of the state legislature is to make more efficient and timely the process of project review. This is accomplished by integrating comprehensive planning and environmental review so that review and approval of individual development projects becomes, to the extent practical, simply a logical next step in the implementation of the Plan; projects would become in effect "plan actions."

Once the Plan is adopted, future supplements and addendums of the EIS with information rigorous enough to make projects "planned actions" should be pursued if the objective is to aggressively facilitate Plan implementation to accomplish economic or other objectives. This review is focused on specific geographic areas that in the near- and medium-term would experience development pressure as either a matter of Plan policy, or obvious trend. Such areas include:

- The industrial designations in the Finley Rural Planning Area, which are changing to more residential and agriculture land use designations to accommodate development trends
- The Plymouth Rural Planning Area relative to water and sewer service needs and the emerging interest in commercial land uses associated with the Interstate 82 and State Route 14 travel corridors
- The Badger community, including the industrial designation at the Interstate 82 Badger Road interchange in the Richland/West Richland Rural Planning Area
- Red Mountain and the Red Mountain American Viticultural Area (AVA)
- The Hanford Region, including the Vernita Terrace Planning Areas
- Whitstran/Prosser
- Kiona-Benton City
- Expanding urban areas including West Richland, Richland, and Kennewick
- The Southern Plain

2 Alternatives

The County is proposing two alternatives based on projected future growth patterns. The alternatives and how they were developed are described further below.

2.1 How the Alternatives were Developed

Alternative 1, the No Action Alternative, is required under SEPA and calls for keeping the County's existing Plan without modifications. Alternative 2, the Proposed Action Alternative, was developed based on public input during the visioning process. This alternative was also developed through a review of GMA agricultural lands and other land use designations in the County and how they matched current development patterns and population growth projections. Modifications to the land use designations were made to better reflect the existing and potential land use of GMA agricultural lands (lands of commercial long-term significance). Under this alternative, some lands are being removed from GMA agricultural lands designations based upon several years of farming inactivity, disenrollment from the Farm Service Agency Conservation Reserve Program (CRP), and other factors. Changes in density were also made to reflect desire to protect hillsides and hilltops from higher density development and to provide for smaller acreage farms, including vineyards and orchards on north facing slopes, consistent with recent development trends. Additionally, the County received proposals from the cities of Prosser and Richland for UGA modifications, and these requests were incorporated into Alternative 2.

The scoping topics addressed as part of the visioning process are listed below. These include local planning issues identified by the participants the visioning meetings and survey.

2.1.1 *Locally Identified Issues*

UGAs, Rural Character, and Density:

- Control urbanization and urban encroachment into resource lands and designated critical areas
- Concentrate new development in defined growth areas
- Maintain low rural densities
- Preserve farmlands
- Maintain and provide additional open space, parks, and shoreline access
- Agri-tourism infrastructure

Public Services:

- Maintain road capacity
- Maintain water and sewer systems
- Clean up trash and enforce related ordinances

- Increase Wallula Gap Park access
- Increase bicycle and pedestrian access to amenities

Protection of the Natural Environment:

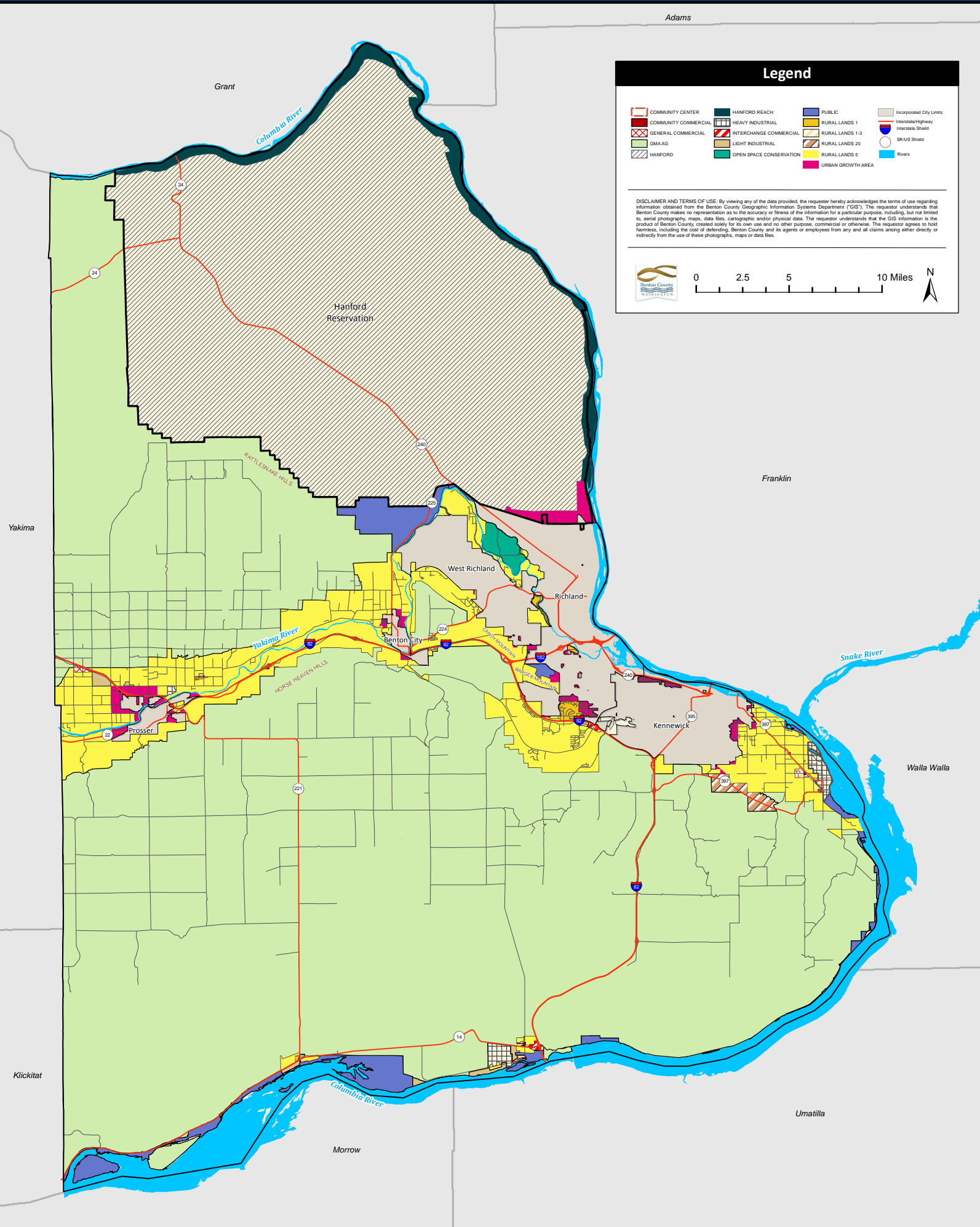
- Protection of the natural environment, specifically fish and wildlife habitat, with an emphasis on riverine and wetland habitats

2.2 Alternatives

2.2.1 Alternative 1: No Action

SEPA requires an EIS study to contain a “No Action” alternative. This alternative would maintain the County’s existing Plan without modifications. This means no land use change would occur to accommodate future growth. The UGAs would remain the same. Limited policy changes may be needed to maintain consistency with the GMA and the Countywide Planning Policies. Figure 2-1 shows the current land use designations in the County. Table 2-1 shows the current distribution of land uses in the County, including city annexation as of 2016.

Figure 2-1: Benton County Current Land Use Designations Map



**Table 2-1
Current Land Use in Benton County**

Land Use Type	Acres	Square Miles	Percent
Cities and Urban Growth Areas	72,245	113	6.58
Hanford	266,351	416	24.27
Hanford Reach	12,443	19	1.13
Unincorporated Area			
GMA Agriculture	647,107	1,011	58.96
Open Space Conservation	2,108	3	0.19
Public	15,163	24	1.38
Rural Lands 1	1,182	2	0.11
Rural Lands 1-3	318	0	0.03
Rural Lands 5	74,039	116	6.75
Rural Lands 20	1,813	3	0.17
Community Center	500	1	0.05
Community Commercial	26	0	0.00
Interchange Commercial	325	1	0.03
General Commercial	202	0	0.02
Light Industrial	1,333	2	0.12
Heavy Industrial	2,344	4	0.21
Total Unincorporated Area	746,460	1,166	68.01
Total County Area	1,097,499	1,715	100

Source: Benton County GIS data

2.2.2 *Alternative 2: Proposed Action Alternative*

Alternative 2, the Proposed Action Alternative, allows for changes in the Plan to accommodate future land uses and population growth within the County. Under this alternative, land use designations would be modified, with additional agricultural lands designated as GMA Agricultural lands, other lands designated to higher density and others to a lower density through a new designation, Rural Resource, that protects steeper slopes and hilltop areas from higher density development in rural areas of the County. For example, Rural Lands 1 and Rural Lands 1-3 are now combined under a Rural Transition land use designation. Rural Lands 5 areas are now designated Rural Remote and Rural Lands 20 as Rural Resource, with some lands previously designated under the No Action Alternative as Rural Lands 5 now designated as Rural Resource with the associated lower density.

Modifications to UGAs are included under this alternative for the cities of Prosser and Richland. The City of Prosser recently de-annexed excess land from the UGA. Based on Prosser’s population projection, a reduction of 483.96 acres of UGA land and an addition of 100.44 acres of land, has been

applied for and is in process. Conversely, the City of Richland added industrial land from 13,641 acres of Hanford land that was transferred from the U. S. Department of Energy (DOE) to the City of Richland, the Port of Benton, and Energy Northwest for industrial use. As a result, 901 acres of Hanford land was added to the Richland UGA.

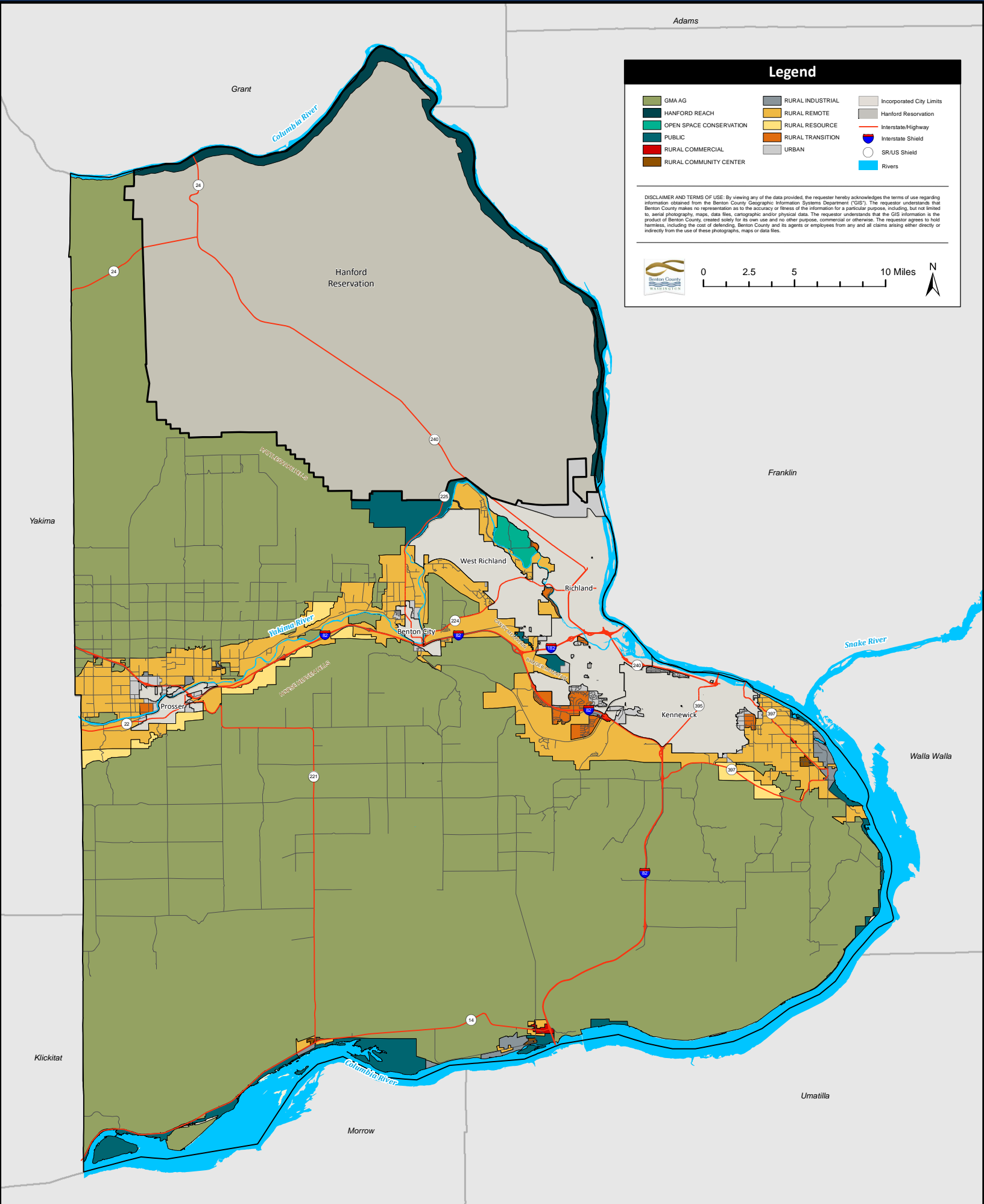
This alternative incorporates the County's Shoreline Master Program (SMP) Update (2014), which is adopted by reference in the Plan. The SMP addresses the Columbia and Yakima rivers, land within 200 feet of the ordinary high water mark (OHWM) of these rivers, their floodways, contiguous 100-year floodplain extending up to 200 feet inland of the floodway, and associated wetlands. The SMP Policy Chapter implements the goals of the state's Shoreline Management Act and is designed to be compatible with the GMA and Plan. This chapter also provides the framework for future decision making and a guide for future development of lands within the County's SMP jurisdiction boundaries.

This alternative also includes planning efforts under the Voluntary Stewardship Program (VSP; RCW 36.70A.700) which is promulgated under the GMA. The County is currently developing a VSP Work Plan to voluntarily protect critical areas on agricultural lands. Implementation of the Work Plan is largely designed to fit within the framework of established programs. The VSP Work Plan is incorporated by reference in the Plan.

Lastly, this alternative identifies the need to develop a long-term strategy for addressing permit exempt wells in the Yakima Basin needed to support rural development, consistent with the goals of the Yakima Integrated Plan and to provide domestic water supplies for the future. This work will include identifying mitigation strategies for providing water for rural development in this part of the County, while avoiding impacts to flows in mainstem reaches and the few Yakima River tributaries that exist in Benton County. The County will complete this work in coordination with the Washington State Department of Ecology, the Yakama Nation, the U.S. Bureau of Reclamation, and stakeholders in the County and Yakima Basin.

Figure 2-2 shows the proposed land use designations for Benton County under the Proposed Action Alternative. Table 2-1 shows the proposed land use designations within Benton County.

Figure 2-2: Benton County Future/Proposed Land Use Designations Map



**Table 2-2
Future/Proposed Land Use in Benton County**

Land Use Type	Acres	Square Miles	Percent
Cities and Urban Growth Areas	72,245	111	6.58
Hanford Site	265,576	415	24.19
Hanford Reach	12,444	19	1.13
Unincorporated Area			
GMA Agricultural	647,223	1,011	58.95
Open Space Conservation	2,169	3	0.20
Public	15,563	24	1.42
Rural Transition	3,140	5	0.29
Rural Remote	68,065	106	6.20
Rural Resource	7,298	11	0.66
Rural Community Center	449	1	0.04
Rural Commercial	426	1	0.04
Rural Industrial	3,312	5	0.30
Total Unincorporated Area	778,218	1,235	
Total County Area	1,115,673	1,782	100

The *Supplement Analysis of the Hanford Comprehensive Land-Use Plan Environmental Impact Statement* was recently published to assess the transition from ongoing site operation and remediation efforts to post-cleanup activities (DOE 2015). As described above, 901 acres of Hanford land was added to the Richland UGA. This and other industrial lands within the cities augment the County's supply of Industrial designated lands.

The Red Mountain Subarea is located within a GMA-designated agricultural district and has also been experiencing significant growth. The area includes the 4,400-acre Red Mountain AVA, a federally-designated grape growing area located on the south slope of the mountain. Future growth and tourism is expected to be managed under the *Red Mountain AVA Master Site Plan* (JTA 2012).

2.3 Similarities and Differences between the Alternative Land Use Maps

Overall, land use in Benton County has several categories: urban, rural, agriculture, industrial, public, and open space lands. Proposed land use designations under each category are discussed in Chapter 3 of the Plan. Generally, the more intense the land use designation and the higher the residential densities allowed, the more adverse the impacts to all systems (e.g., water resources, air quality, capital facilities and infrastructure, public services, indigenous biology, ecology, residential living environments).

Some areas under the Proposed Action Alternative would be added and some removed from the agricultural land designation. Areas proposed to be added include areas that are currently farmed, are irrigated, have a suitable soil type, and are large enough to be commercially viable in the long-term. These areas are generally located on the border of the existing designated agricultural resource land. Areas that would be removed are generally located near population centers and have the potential for more intense use, and are lower productivity agricultural lands that in many cases have been idle for several years, even after disenrollment from CRP.

Land Use Element:

Under the Proposed Action Alternative, future land uses and growth affecting the Land Use Element would be accommodated by changes in land use designations. This alternative would be consistent with site-specific planning efforts in areas experiencing growth such as Hanford and the Red Mountain Subarea.

Natural Resources Element:

The Natural Resources Element would include management of natural resources under site-specific planning efforts. The Proposed Action Alternative would adopt management plans such as the SMP or VSP. Concentrating density to higher density and UGAs would reduce the inappropriate conversion of undeveloped land into developed area.

Economic Element:

The Economic Element synthesizes the various components of Plan that relate to current and emerging land use, growth, and economic issues. Local and regional economic development plans, such as the Economic Development Implementation Plan, would continue to support projected growth of agricultural and non-agricultural economies in the County. Under the Proposed Alternative, the Economic Element would support projected growth of agricultural and non-agricultural economies in the County.

Housing Element:

The Housing Element provides a framework for future planning decisions and outlines goals and objectives the County plans to implement in meeting its housing needs. Housing density would potentially be reduced in some areas that would have a changed designation to Rural Resource while other areas could see higher density, such as less-productive agricultural lands to be designated as Rural Remote.

Transportation Element:

The Transportation Element would continue making preferred improvements in corridors experiencing varying levels of congestion. Efficient transportation links to regional, national, and global markets are essential to the maintenance and growth of the County's economic base. Additionally, the ease with which people can move throughout the County is an important quality of

life factor assessed in the Plan. Peak hour congestion problems would still need to be addressed within urban areas, notably on routes such as State Route 240 and George Washington Way used by Hanford Site commuters, Queensgate Drive, and on Columbia Center Boulevard related to the Columbia Center Commercial Retail complex in Kennewick. Demands on transportation facilities under the Proposed Action Alternative would be more localized by increasing density in urban areas and associated adjacent higher density areas.

Parks and Recreation and Capital Facilities Elements:

The Parks and Recreation and Capital Facilities Elements address facilities that are important to accommodate the County's projected growth. The capital facilities such as parks and recreation would remain largely unchanged. Demands on municipal facilities, fire and emergency services, and police services would be more localized by increasing density in urban areas under the Proposed Action Alternative.

Utilities Element:

The Utilities Element of the Plan addresses utility services within the County. The utility system plans (e.g., water, sewer, stormwater) would continue to serve existing and future developments. Utility service demands would be more localized to urban areas and associated adjacent higher density areas under the Proposed Action Alternative.

3 Affected Environment, Impacts, and Mitigation Measures

3.1 Affected Environment

The physical and human elements of the affected environment are described in the Plan and 1981 EIS. This Addendum is focused on incremental additional impacts and mitigation measures described in the following sections.

3.2 Impacts and Mitigation Measures

The impact analyses for a non-project action such as the Plan are based on the amount of planned growth, areas where growth will occur, land use type and character, and associated adjacent higher density areas. The Plan itself would not result in direct changes to the physical and human environment. However, the Plan provides a policy framework that is intended to guide future development and any impacts to the environment would be indirect. Table 3-1 describes potential impacts to physical and human elements of the environment from the two alternatives described herein.

Mitigation measures are primarily based on regional plans and policies developed to address the impacts of forecast growth. Similarly, improvements to important infrastructure systems needed to accommodate planned growth are identified. Under the Proposed Action Alternative, the Plan references goals and policies intended to address ways to anticipate and mitigate the potential impacts of planned growth on the environment and the County's quality of life. Table 3-1 also includes mitigation measures to address potential impacts from future development.

**Table 3-1
Summary of Impacts and Mitigation Measures by Alternative**

Element	Alternative 1: No Action	Alternative 2: Proposed Action	Mitigation Measures
<i>Physical Environment</i>			
Earth	Earth-related impacts under the No Action Alternative would be related to development, scaling with the intensity of future land uses within the planning areas. Existing land use designations would allow development to continue to move outward from urban centers, including in some areas potentially better suited for agricultural uses. Future development would be subject to environmental review.	The Proposed Action would reduce land use density in resource lands and concentrate density in cities and UGAs with higher density designations. This would reduce the intensity of development within resource lands and concentrate development in higher-intensity use areas. Agricultural practices would be concentrated to resource lands. Changes in density would also protect hillsides and hilltops from higher density development. SMP and VSP adoption would further protect earth resources.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Compact soils at densities appropriate for planned land uses. • Provide vegetative cover or soil cement on exposed surfaces. • For agricultural practices, implement voluntary conservation measures described in the Voluntary Stewardship Program Work Plan (BERK Consulting 2017)
Air	The No Action Alternative is Future development potentially impacting air quality would be subject to environmental review by the Benton Clean Air Agency.	The Proposed Action would not directly impact air quality. Future development potentially impacting air quality would be subject to environmental review by the Benton Clean Air Agency.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Maintain compliance with Benton Clean Air Agency requirements during construction and operation
Water	Water quality impacts could occur from development activities with the potential to cause erosion or increase impervious surfaces that could discharge contaminated or sediment-laden water to nearby surface waters. Water-related impacts under the No Action Alternative would be related to development, scaling with the intensity of future land uses within the planning areas. Water supply impacts would also be scaled with future growth. Rural development within the Yakima River basin would be limited under this alternative.	Water-related impacts under the Proposed Action would also be scaled with development. Reducing the intensity of development within resource lands and concentrating development in higher-intensity use areas may help to control water quality impacts through existing stormwater infrastructure. Water supply impacts would also be scaled with future growth. Mitigation strategies for addressing permit exempt wells would be provided under this alternative to allow rural development within the Yakima River basin.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Comply with critical areas ordinance per BCC Title 15 • Comply with Shoreline Master Program regulations • Comply with Federal NPDES regulations and County stormwater regulations require stormwater quantity and quality controls. The County has adopted the Ecology Stormwater Management Manual for Eastern Washington (Ecology 2004).

Element	Alternative 1: No Action	Alternative 2: Proposed Action	Mitigation Measures
Water (cont.)			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop and implement a long-term strategy for addressing permit exempt wells needed to support rural development to meet the goals of the Yakima Integrated Plan and to provide domestic water supplies for the future.
Fauna and Flora	<p>Development puts pressure on terrestrial and aquatic ecosystems that provide important habitat features. Habitat fragmentation caused by development has the potential to alter habitat connectivity, causing some species to migrate into remaining undeveloped areas. The conversion of undeveloped or underutilized land would continue to occur under the No Action Alternative. Development of these parcels could fragment wildlife habitat. Impacts to flora would scale with the intensity of land uses within the planning areas. Rural areas would be most impacted under this alternative by allowing higher-density development to occur.</p>	<p>Encouraging higher-density development in cities or UGAs as part of the Proposed Action Alternative would potentially relieve development pressure on flora in rural areas. Additionally, approximately 61 more acres would be designated as Open Space Conservation under this alternative. This conservation area would protect habitat area from future development. Approximately 7,300 acres of land would be designated as Rural Resource, which would protect flora in some areas such as rural open space, wildlife habitat, public open space for ridges, slopes, and bluffs; the latter particularly associated with the Yakima River corridor. Some lands would be removed from GMA Agricultural Lands designation due to inactivity or disenrollment from CRP.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Comply with critical areas ordinance per BCC Title 15 for fish and wildlife conservation areas, wetlands, and frequently flooded areas • Provide erosion and stormwater control measures during construction, particularly in areas adjacent to surface waters that provide fish and wildlife habitat • Consider landscaping with native plants to provide vegetation of habitat significance in streetscapes, buffers for stormwater swales, rain gardens, and other habitat features. • Reduce impervious surface area by adopting implementing applicable LID requirements per the Stormwater Management Manual for Eastern Washington (Ecology 2004). • Sponsor or encourage public education about the benefits of native vegetation.

Element	Alternative 1: No Action	Alternative 2: Proposed Action	Mitigation Measures
Noise	Noisy activities associated with future development under the No Action Alternative would be subject to the Benton County Noise Ordinance in BCC 6A.15.	The Proposed Action would reduce land use density in resource lands and concentrate density in cities and UGAs with higher density designations, potentially reducing construction noise activities associated with denser development in rural areas. Noise-generating activities associated with future development and land use activities under the Proposed Action Alternative would be subject to the Benton County Noise Ordinance in BCC 6A.15.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • For construction activities, comply with Benton County Noise Ordinance in BCC 6A.15.
Light and Glare	The generation of light and glare would scale with future development. Under the No Action Alternative, light and glare impacts from development would be more diffuse, particularly in rural areas where higher-density development would continue to occur.	The Proposed Action Alternative would potentially reduce light and glare impacts in rural areas by concentrating higher-density development in cities and UGAs.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Incorporate directional lighting into streetscapes and other development design, as applicable
Land Use	The No Action Alternative would allow development to occur according to existing land use designations. Future growth would be required to meet existing land use designation criteria previously designed to accommodate past trends in the County. This could impact areas that would be designated as Rural Resource under the Proposed Action Alternative. Site-specific planning efforts in areas experiencing growth such as Hanford and the Red Mountain Subarea would also be implemented according to existing zoning designation criteria and would not be accommodated by the proposed land use designation changes under the Proposed Action Alternative.	The Proposed Action would reduce land use density in resource lands and concentrate density in cities and UGAs with higher density designations. This would reduce the intensity of development within resource lands and concentrate development in higher-intensity use areas. Agricultural practices would be concentrated to resource lands. Rural Transition areas would accommodate future population growth within cities and UGAs near Kennewick, Richland, and Prosser. The City of Prosser would decrease its UGA in response to growth projections, whereas Richland would expand its UGA to include Hanford Site industrial area. Approximately 7,300 acres of land as Rural Resource, preserving the County's rural character.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Utilize existing high-density areas for future population and employment growth within the County • Implement rural area protection or preservation measures to maintain the character of rural areas within the County • Meet population growth targets and housing demand through developing existing planned areas and infill developments • Manage land use in expanding areas such as Red Mountain per the <i>Red Mountain AVA Master Site Plan (JTA 2012)</i>

Element	Alternative 1: No Action	Alternative 2: Proposed Action	Mitigation Measures
Land Use (cont.)			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Manage the transition of cleanup activities within the Hanford Site per the <i>Supplement Analysis of the Hanford Comprehensive Land-Use Plan Environmental Impact Statement</i> (DOE 2015)
Natural Resources	<p>Per Section 4 of the Plan, natural resources comprise a variety of resources including climate, soils, agricultural, minerals, water, and critical areas. As described above, impacts too many of these natural resources would be scaled with the intensity of future land uses and population growth. Under the No Action Alternative, development would occur according to existing land use designations. This could impact areas that would be designated as Rural Resource under the Proposed Action Alternative due to the presence of agricultural resources.</p>	<p>As described above, concentrating density in cities and UGAs would potentially reduce impacts to natural resources in rural areas by utilizing existing infrastructure to control stormwater and waste streams. The low intensity use of rural land also provides fish and wildlife habitat, open space, and other environmental benefits. Agricultural resources in rural areas would also be protected from development under this alternative. SMP and VSP adoption would further protect natural resources including shorelines and other critical areas.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Comply with critical areas ordinance per BCC Title 15 • For agricultural practices, implement voluntary conservation measures described in the Voluntary Stewardship Program Work Plan (BERK Consulting 2017) • Protect mineral resources per the provisions of the GMA • Manage mineral resource extraction on the Hanford Site per the <i>Draft Hanford Industrial Mineral Resource Management Plan</i> (2001)
Risk of Explosion or Hazardous Emission	<p>The No Action Alternative is not expected to increase the risk of explosion or hazardous emissions.</p>	<p>The Proposed Action Alternative is not expected to increase the risk of explosion or hazardous emissions.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Manage the risk of explosion or hazardous emissions in accordance with local building and environmental codes
<i>Human Environment</i>			
Population	<p>As described in the Plan, population within the County has continued to grow at a rate of over 20% in recent decades. The No Action Alternative would allow development to occur according to existing land use designations and would accommodate future growth projections within the existing designations. This includes allowing higher density growth to occur within areas designated as Rural 1 through 5.</p>	<p>The Proposed Action Alternative would lower the land use density in resource lands which would further concentrate density in cities and UGAs with higher density designations. Rural Transition areas would accommodate future population growth within cities and UGAs, including areas near Kennewick, Richland, and Prosser, where a significant amount of population growth is expected to occur.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Concentrate development in areas with existing infrastructure and near employment centers • Meet housing demand through developing existing planned areas and infill developments • Consider infill incentives and upzones in cities and UGAs

Element	Alternative 1: No Action	Alternative 2: Proposed Action	Mitigation Measures
Housing	The No Action Alternative would allow development to occur according to existing land use designations. The location and type of housing allowed within these land use designations would not change.	Based on the population estimates, the County will need to add 7,070 new homes in the next 20 years. The Proposed Action Alternative would lower the land use density in resource lands which would further concentrate density in cities and UGAs with higher density designations. The land use designations would be designed to accommodate population growth, and provide housing and employment opportunities in closer proximity to the appropriate zoning and land type. For example, low density residential uses would be allowed in Rural Resources areas	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Consider similar mitigation measures as described in “population” above
Transportation/ Circulation	The No Action Alternative would allow development to occur according to existing land use designations. This could result in increased and more diffuse impacts to transportation facilities from future development in rural areas from higher density development. Maintenance of transportation facilities would also be greater and more widespread rather than focused near cities and GMAs.	Increased density in cities and UGAs under the Proposed Action Alternative would increase demand on transportation facilities and circulation, including trails and paths located throughout the County. Major transportation facilities would be impacted by higher density growth including SR-240 and George Washington Way used by Hanford Site commuters, Queensgate Drive, and on Columbia Center Boulevard. Growth in rural areas would need to be accommodated by updates to the County road system. The <u>Six Year Road Program</u> , which is incorporated by reference in the Plan, identifies capital projects to be carried out in the near term based on tracking and reporting.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Work with development applicants to oversee that appropriate coordination with affected agencies and property owners occurs upon future development • Implement transportation improvements in accordance with the BFCG 2016 Regional Active Transportation Plan for Benton and Franklin Counties and Tri-Cities Urban Area • Cooperate with the Washington State RTPO and BFCG for levels of service • Consider multimodal transportation and alternative transportation opportunities to and from growth areas such as the Red Mountain Subarea.

Element	Alternative 1: No Action	Alternative 2: Proposed Action	Mitigation Measures
Public Services	Future population and employment growth would result in increased demand on public services. The No Action Alternative would potentially increase the service area for public services by allowing higher density development to occur in rural areas.	The Proposed Action Alternative would potentially maintain the service area for public services by concentrating density in cities and UGAs with higher density designations; with significant growth in rural areas still projected and associated public services increases also occurring.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Locate public services in close proximity to high-density areas
Energy	Energy demand would continue to increase with future population growth.	Similar to the No Action Alternative, energy demand would continue to increase with future population growth.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide incentives for businesses and households to supply alternative energy to the grid • Encourage and educate electric utility customers of energy conservation measures
Utilities	Future population and employment growth would result in increased demand on utilities. The No Action Alternative would potentially increase the service area for utilities by allowing higher density development to occur in rural areas.	Similar to the No Action Alternative, future population and employment growth would result in increased demand on utilities. The Plan includes a policy recognizing that municipal governments and other water utilities are the best long-term providers within UGAs. However, significant growth in rural areas would occur and increase demand for utility services outside of urban areas as well.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Implement similar mitigation measures to “Energy” as described above • Employ consistency between city and county land use planning measures for consistency between land use patterns and utility usage • Encourage new development to occur in currently developed areas where utility corridors are located
Human Health	The No Action Alternative would not have any direct impacts on human health. Indirect impacts to human health could occur through impacts to other elements as the environment such as air or water quality from development.	Similar to the No Action Alternative, it is not expected that the Proposed Action Alternative would have direct impact to human health. The Plan includes several goals for protecting human health, including ensuring that land uses are compatible with surrounding uses that maintain public health, safety, and general welfare.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Employ environmental protection measures according to the elements of the environment as described above

Element	Alternative 1: No Action	Alternative 2: Proposed Action	Mitigation Measures
Aesthetics	Continued population and employment growth would increase the potential for changes to the character and visual quality of the County.	The Proposed Action Alternative would concentrate growth in higher density areas and maintain the rural character of rural areas. Changes in density would also protect rural resources such as hillsides and hilltops from higher density development. This action would help to retain existing neighborhood character which would also reduce visual change.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Encourage rural land uses in rural areas and move higher density development to cities and UGAs • Ensure future development is consistent with the aesthetic character of the neighborhood or land use designation in which it is located. • Future development should comply with SMP and VSP to protect and/or enhance shorelines and other critical areas within the County.
Recreation	Demand for recreational areas would continue to increase with population growth under the No Action Alternative.	No direct impacts to recreation are expected to occur under the Proposed Action Alternative. The Plan includes goals and policies to encourage recreational uses where practicable throughout the County.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide for park or recreation opportunities near urban centers through land use designations • Provide shoreline access where feasible consistent with the SMP (Benton County 2014)
Archaeological/ Historical	Future development under the No Action Alternative may result in indirect impacts to archaeological or historical sites.	Adoption of the Plan would not have any direct impacts on archaeological or historical sites. However, indirect impacts may occur from future development. The Plan includes goals and policies for avoiding or mitigating for impacts to archaeological and historical sites from development.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Future development should comply with applicable laws and regulations regarding impacts to cultural resources. Section 106, Executive Order 05-05, and RCW 27.53

Notes:

BCC: Benton County Code

BFCG: Benton-Franklin Council of Government

CRP: Conservation Resource Plan

GMA: Growth Management Act

LID: low-impact development

NPDES: National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System

RCW: Revised Code of Washington

RTPO: Regional Transportation Planning Organization

SMP: Shoreline Master Program

UGA: Urban Growth Area

VSP: Voluntary Stewardship Program

4 Comments and Responses

See Appendix M of the Benton County Comprehensive Plan for public comments received during the review process and associated responses.

5 References

- Benton County Planning Department, 1981. *Final Environmental Impact Statement: Benton County, Washington Preliminary Draft Comprehensive Plan March 1980*. March.
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- DOE, 2015. *Supplement Analysis of the Hanford Comprehensive Land-Use Plan Environmental Impact Statement*. Publication No. DOE/EIS-0222-SA-02. April.
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- JTA (J.T. Atkins Company, PC), 2012. *Red Mountain AVA Master Site Plan, Benton County, Washington*. Updated September 2012.