

89 Capital Facilities Element

8-19.1 Introduction and Purpose

The Capital Facilities element identifies necessary and planned capital improvements, [including transportation and other public facilities](#), improvement schedules, and funding resources that functionally integrate capital facilities into the Comprehensive Plan. For the purposes of this element, capital facilities are defined as the infrastructure the County is responsible for constructing, operating, and maintaining, and which enable the County to provide public services to County residents. This element provides the framework for the County's CIP (Appendix J) and adopts a 6-year CIP list of proposed projects and financing plan. [It also requires coordination with the cities within the County for capital improvements and services within the UGAs.](#)

This element is one of six mandatory planning elements that GMA requires in County's Comprehensive Plan (RCW 36.70A.070 (3)) and must identify specific facilities, include a realistic financing plan, and adjust the plan if funding is inadequate. WAC 365-196-415 provides requirements and recommendations for this element.

8-19.1.1 *Relationship between Land Use and Capital Facilities*

There is a direct relationship between the Capital Facilities and Land Use elements of the Comprehensive Plan. The Land Use element determines where and at what density population and employment growth will be located, [including within the cities' UGAs. The Land Use element updates, including additional draft Industrial and Open Space designations, the draft Energy Overlay and potential for higher density in the Finley and Plymouth Rural Community Centers will all be factored into the updated Capital Facility Plans \(CIP\). The CIP also reflects the latest residential growth projection in the unincorporated County, which is expected to occur at a reduced level compared to the 2018 projection. Recent permitting history also reflects this slowing in overall rural residential growth.](#)

The Capital Facilities element identifies the thresholds of growth, when new and expanded public facilities will be needed, and indicates the County's priority system for constructing the identified public facilities. Although some public facilities are provided by other government agencies or private entities, the County must demonstrate these services are available.

Identified improvements to public facilities that are owned or operated by Benton County shall also be included in the County's annual budget. Any identified public facility improvements that are not owned or operated by the County should be included in the annual budgets and CIPs of the entities which provide those public facilities. State, local government, and district plans that are affected by proposed public facility improvements will be considered prior to inclusion of the improvements in

the CIP. This includes considering a city's comprehensive plan when evaluating proposed improvements that affect that city's UGA.

8.1.29.1.2 *Capital Facilities Element Update Process*

Consistent with established policies in Section 2.10, Any updates to the Capital Facilities element of the Comprehensive Plan will be considered concurrently with other proposed amendments that are included in the annual Comprehensive Plan amendment review and this element and associated capital plans and procedures are reviewed and updated as part of the 10-year Comprehensive Plan update process. Benton County's CIP, adopted by reference, is a dynamic document that will be updated annually to reflect new requirements, cost information, funding information, project list changes, and existing facility updates. The annual updates to the CIP will be done prior to the annual budget process so that CIP projects can be included in the County's annual budget.

8.29.2 **Capital Project Selection and Level of Service Standards**

8.2.19.2.1 *Level of Service*

The County and public facility providers will use established LOS for identifying capital improvements when applicable. For the County, two sets of LOS standards have been established: 1) C standard for County roads, as discussed in Section 7.3.1, and 2) Park standards as described in Section 8.3.2. These LOS standards, along with other factors considered for other County facilities are considered in identifying planned capital improvements. Other factors considered in planning these improvements include identifying projects that:

- Address existing deficiencies
- Preserve existing capacity
- Provide for new development
- Enhance quality of life
- Meet other County needs not related to growth

The County will evaluate whether the County road and park system standards and other identified capital needs are being met when updates to the Comprehensive Plan are performed according to the deadlines in RCW 36.70A.130(1), when UGAs are reviewed according to RCW 36.70A.130(3), and when major changes are made to this element. If these standards are not being met and public facilities are inadequate, the County will consider one or more of the following strategies:

- Reduce public facility demand
- Reduce LOS standards
- Increase revenue
- Reduce the cost of the needed public facilities

- Reallocate or redirect population and employment growth to make better use of existing facilities
- Phase growth or adjust the timing of development, if the lack of public facilities is a short-term issue

The County will also evaluate if proposed development activities would reduce the LOS of public facilities below the adopted standards. If a proposal is expected to impact a transportation facility and cause it to fall below the LOS standard, or if additional parks and recreation facilities are needed to meet the applicable standards, then preliminary development approval would also need to include additional improvements or strategies made concurrent with the development that maintain these standards. All other types of public facilities do not have the specific concurrency requirement that transportation facilities have, but they do require the provision of adequate public facilities as a condition of project approval.

Public facility improvements for maintenance or other needs and not targeted to maintain LOS may include:

- Facility repairs
- Remodels
- Renovation
- Replacement of obsolete or worn out structures
- Improvements that do not reduce financing for other improvements needed to achieve or maintain LOS standards
- Improvements that do not contradict, limit, or substantially change the goals and policies of any element of this Comprehensive Plan

Public facility improvements may also provide capacity in excess of what would be required to achieve or maintain LOS standards (i.e., the minimum capacity of a capital project is larger than the capacity required to provide the LOS). Excess capacity is beneficial if it results in economies of scale making it less expensive than a comparable amount of capacity ~~provided in the future~~~~acquired at a later date~~. However, these projects may be given a lower priority than projects needed to maintain the LOS standard.

8.2.29.2.2 *Analysis of Future Development*

The County will estimate the type and amount of public facilities needed to accommodate future growth by evaluating previously issued development permits and determining future growth patterns. Future development will be required to pay its fair share of the capital improvements needed to address the impact of such development and the portion of the cost of the replacement

of obsolete or worn out facilities. The different methods of payment allowed for these capital improvements include:

- Voluntary contributions for the benefit of any public facility
- SEPA mitigation payments
- Dedications of land
- Provision of public facilities

Future development will not be required to pay fees for needed public facilities to reduce or eliminate existing deficiencies. The growth forecasts, to be used for planning purposes and the specific growth targets for each UGA, are developed using the Benton County population projections established by the OFM, as summarized in Section 3.7.

8.2.39.2.3 *Siting Public Facilities*

There are types of public facilities that cannot be located in rural areas of the County, but must remain in cities or UGAs. These include new municipal urban public facilities for residential development such as sewage collection and treatment, urban street infrastructure, and storm water collection facilities. The County does not currently provide, nor does it plan to provide in the foreseeable future, sewer, water, or utility services. Accordingly, its capital facilities do not include processing or production plants and the distribution/collection systems typically associated with such services. The only exception to this general condition occurs when a private water or disposal system fails, whereupon if placed in "receivership" under state law the County must assume responsibility as an interim condition.

The County may coordinate planning and development of public facilities in UGAs with municipalities and public facility providers by entering into interlocal/joint planning agreements, contracts, memorandums of understanding, or joint ordinances. Capital facilities and utilities may be constructed and operated by outside public service providers on rural properties if they are within the boundaries of a MPR, or a Rural Community Center pursuant to County Comprehensive Plan policies and development regulations. Electric and natural gas transmission and distribution facilities may be sited throughout Benton County both inside and outside of municipal boundaries, UGAs, MPRs, and Rural Community Centers. The County will coordinate with the BFCG and/or municipalities within the County when siting regional and community facilities. This coordination may include developing an inventory of essential facilities, determining a fair share allocation of essential facilities, conducting public involvement strategies, and assuring protections for the environment, public health, and public safety.

8.2.49.2.4 *Improvements to Public Facilities Identified in Other Plans*

Various plans-prepared by other public agencies have been reviewed by the County as part of this periodic Comprehensive Plan review and update that identify potential. A summary of capital facilities forecasted for the next six years, along with the six-year financing plan, for these non-County operated facilities is provided in Table 9-1. This non-County operated facilities forecast and financing plan, combined with the County CIP for County-owned facilities comprise the County's forecast of future needed public facilities and financing plan for the next 6 years, to support implementation of the Comprehensive Plan, including services within the UGAs. The County will review and revise this forecast and financing plan, as applicable, during plan implementation.

Regarding firefighting capabilities, in addition to the capital improvements identified in Table 9-1, the County has conducted an analysis of the adequacy of the firefighting capabilities for those districts that serve on the borders of the UGA and within rural areas of the County. This includes reviewing and incorporating into this plan by reference the Benton County 2018 Community Wildfire Protection Plan, and also interviews conducted with fire district personnel. A discussion of the findings from this analysis is provided in narrative following Table 9-1.

Table 9-1
Six-Year Capital Improvements Plan for Non-County Operated Facilities

<u>Capital Facility Type</u>	<u>Providers (Location)</u>	<u>Existing Condition</u>	<u>Planned Improvements (Capacity)</u>	<u>Funding Source(s)</u>	<u>Estimated Cost/Date</u>
<u>School Districts</u>	<u>Kennewick School District</u>	<u>Aging facilities need updates. Capacity to meet school enrollment is adequate for several years.</u>	<u>Planned new or remodeled schools that are priority when funding becomes available:</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <u>Highlands Middle School</u> • <u>Washington Elementary School</u> • <u>Hawthorne Elementary School</u> • <u>Park Middle School</u> • <u>Vista Elementary School</u> • <u>Edison Elementary School</u> • <u>Horse Heaven Hills Middle School</u> • <u>Support and plan for state-fund core modernization project for Tri-Tech Skills Center to begin in 2025.</u> 	<u>Potential bond</u>	<u>2027 or 2028</u>
	<u>Richland School District</u>	<u>Aging facilities need updates. Capacity to meet school enrollment is adequate for several years.</u>	<u>No planned improvements at this time but when they get funding Chief Jo and Carmichael middle schools and River's Edge high school are critical needs.</u>	<u>Hoping levies pass February 2026 then they will know the path forward. No plans to run a bond</u>	

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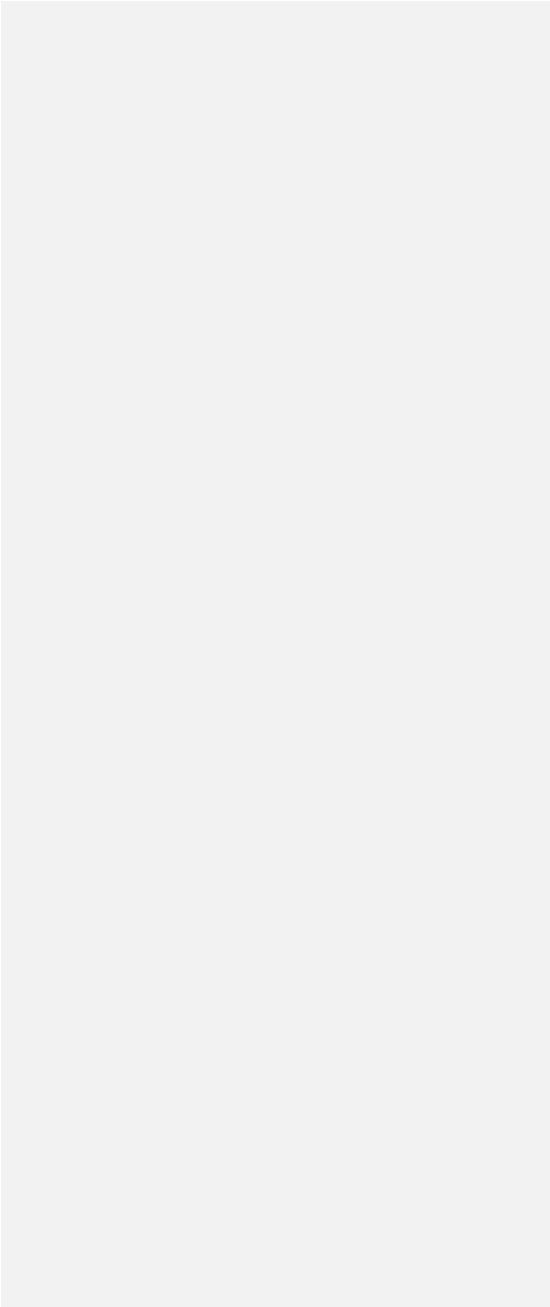
<u>Capital Facility Type</u>	<u>Providers (Location)</u>	<u>Existing Condition</u>	<u>Planned Improvements (Capacity)</u>	<u>Funding Source(s)</u>	<u>Estimated Cost/Date</u>
	<u>Prosser School District</u>	<u>Aging facilities need updates. Capacity to meet school enrollment is adequate for several years.</u>	<u>No planned improvements at this time. Hope to remodel House Middle school over the next 10 years but have not had any community discussion yet.</u>	<u>yet and their last bond failed. SCAP WA State Funding. Local Bond, etc.</u>	
	<u>Ki-Be School District</u>	<u>Aging facilities need updates. 2023 study and survey done to assess needs through OSPI and another one will be done in 2030</u>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <u>Middle school circulation improvements</u> <u>Replacement or addition/modernization of elementary school</u> <u>High school CTE classroom addition</u> <u>Middle school facility improvements</u> 	<u>General fund/capital levy</u> <u>Bond issue</u> <u>Grant/general funds</u> <u>Bond issue</u>	<u>2024-2025</u> <u>2025-2030</u> <u>2025-2030</u> <u>2030 - 2033</u> <u>2025</u>
	<u>Finley School District</u>	<u>Old elementary school needs demolished but don't have the funds until bond expires in 2035-2036 and hope to pass another at that time.</u>	<u>Making water and HVAC system updates</u>	<u>Leftover bond money from 2018</u>	
	<u>Paterson School District</u>	<u>Existing facilities adequate</u>	<u>None</u>	<u>Not applicable</u>	<u>Not applicable</u>
	<u>Grandview School District</u>	<u>Existing facilities within Benton County adequate</u>	<u>None</u>	<u>Not applicable</u>	<u>Not applicable</u>
<u>Water and Sewer</u>	<u>Cities and Towns in Benton County</u>	<u>Existing system plans with facilities inventories and capacities adopted by reference</u>	<u>6-year water system and sewer plans</u>	<u>Rates and development charges, grants and loans. Existing revenues and</u>	<u>See system plans, incorporated by reference, for these details</u>

<u>Capital Facility Type</u>	<u>Providers (Location)</u>	<u>Existing Condition</u>	<u>Planned Improvements (Capacity)</u>	<u>Funding Source(s)</u>	<u>Estimated Cost/Date</u>
<u>Plymouth Water District</u>		<u>Current capacity to serve 10 service connections and working with the state to serve 50 or more</u>	<u>New reservoir and two water lines planned</u>	<u>planned rate increases will support system improvements, with growth paying for growth</u>	<u>Over the next couple of years – one of the water lines over the next year</u>
<u>Power</u>	<u>Benton County PUD</u>	<u>Existing system plans with facility inventories adopted by reference</u>	<u>Transportation improvements</u>	<u>Rates and development charges. Existing financial plans support system improvements, with growth paying for growth</u>	<u>See system plans, incorporated by reference, for these details</u>
<u>Transportation and Stormwater</u>	<u>Benton County, and Cities and Towns</u>	<u>Existing inventories adopted by reference</u>	<u>6-year transportation (including stormwater) improvement plans adopted by reference</u>	<u>County road fund, city revenue sources, grant and loans</u>	<u>See 6-year plans, incorporated by reference, for details</u>
<u>Fire Districts (see also associated narrative that follows for additional information on adequacy)</u>	<u>District 1</u>	<u>Aging fire stations need replaced – Capital Facilities Plan will be updated later this year and shared</u>	<u>Plans to replace aging fire stations</u>		<u>Timeframe currently unknown</u>
	<u>District 2</u>	<u>Main fire station is old and needs remodeled but do not have the funding due to low tax revenue.</u>	<u>Purchase of two new fire engines</u> <u>None at this time</u>	<u>Levy/Bond funds</u>	<u>\$760,000/August 2025</u>

<u>Capital Facility Type of firefighting capabilities)</u>	<u>Providers (Location)</u>	<u>Existing Condition</u>	<u>Planned Improvements (Capacity)</u>	<u>Funding Source(s)</u>	<u>Estimated Cost/Date</u>
	<u>West Benton Fire Rescue</u>		<u>Asphalt repair at two stations</u>	<u>State loan</u>	<u>\$420,000 cost for all the improvements in 2025. Will wait 5 years until receiving another loan to make any other improvements.</u>
			<u>Purchase of two command vehicles</u>		
			<u>Adding ventilation system at main station</u>		
	<u>District 4</u>	<u>Left multiple messages to get information in June without response yet</u>	<u>Adding self-contained breathing apparatus at station 310 in Prosser</u>		
	<u>District 5</u>		<u>Submitted request by form email with no response yet and no phone number listed</u>		
	<u>District 6</u>				
			<u>Planned new fire station in Plymouth on 5 acres. After 3 years, got WDOT access to Highway 14. Land is being deeded to the fire district.</u>	<u>Current and future donations – .5 million donated so far with \$1.5 million estimate needed. A farm was donated worth \$450,000 plus a PM to run it</u>	<u>Within two years</u>
			<u>Increased staff to 7</u>	<u>Hope for EMS levy to increase paid staff</u>	
			<u>Started paid on call program to help with staffing at times</u>		

Notes:
ADA – American Disabilities Act

[EMS – Emergency Management System](#)
[FEMA – Federal Emergency Management Agency](#)
[USDA – U.S. Department of Agriculture](#)



Analysis of the Adequacy of Firefighting Capabilities in UGAs and Rural Benton County

Fire District 1

- **Capacity needs or deficiencies for addressing fire risks** - County code for property owners for defensible space and Firewise mitigations would be helpful as the district continues to go into the outreaching interface areas. Continue to deal with fireworks fires annually with lack of enforcement for regulations.
- **Wildland Urban Interface and Residential Growth** - The District has no current hazard fuel reduction program within the annual operating budget due to budget priorities. An increase in available grant funds would be beneficial to target some of the high hazard fuels reductions areas identified in the Benton County Community Wildfire Protection Plan (2018).
- **Fire Breaks:** Changes in the Conservation Reserve Program rules that would allow fire breaks down to the dirt without a negative financial impact to the property owner would be beneficial.
- **Rural Water Supplies:** Continue to seek and develop water supply systems in our rural areas for assistance in fire suppression.
- **Residential and Agricultural Burning:** Provide education to County residents on the process of conducting and/or requesting permits for the four types of fires permitted within the County; recreational burns, agricultural burns, tumbleweeds, barbeques and woodstoves. Provide education to agricultural producers on Washington State Department of Ecology regulations and permit requirements required to safely conduct agricultural burns within Benton County.
- **Communications** - Although the SECOMM system has gone through a major equipment update and fine tuning, the service area due to topography continues to have areas where radio communications between Dispatch and Fire/EMS responders is not always reliable or serviceable in some areas.
- **Other:** As with most volunteer agencies, The District continues to seek ways to improve its ability to recruit and retain more firefighters and EMS personnel.

Fire District 2:

- **Capacity needs or deficiencies for addressing fire risks** - Current and largest risk is not having enough personnel. Small tax base with relatively low-income taxpayers does not produce much in tax revenue. Calls for service have increased dramatically over the years and continue to see a growth in large fires threatening our community.

- **Wildland Urban Interface Defensible Space** - Our Fire District for the last two years has instituted and developed a Firewise program to district residents. This has proven to offer some reduction to our wildfire-related calls; however, it does not get much participation to the high majority of our community despite public campaigns and strong community push. Plan to continue to use this program and maximize the use of our staff time to meet with property owners and educate them on the value of defensible space. Funding for staff time is a need to enhance this program; completing structural assessments every two years has proven difficult.
- **Fire Breaks** - The costs associated with maintaining established fire breaks costs our small fire department thousands of dollars annually and cannot be sustained without some type of financial assistance.
- **Rural Water Supplies** - Continue to seek and develop water supply systems in our rural areas for assistance in fire suppression. Very few areas exist for drawing water in the rural areas due to remoteness and lack of developed water systems.
- **Residential and Agricultural Burning** - All open burning within the County is subject to guidelines concerning, size, time, location and permit requirements from Benton County Clean Air Authority (BCCAA). Moreover, the BCCAA and the local cities have banned back yard burning except for blown in tumbleweeds. This is a two-fold problem. The first is that getting rid of some of the fuel loads reduces the fire potential to sustain burning. The other issue is that burning incorrectly causes numerous out of control fires.
- **Communications** - The SECOMM system has some limitations to cover the entire two counties due to topography despite the multiple channels and repeater sites.
- **Other** - As with most volunteer agencies, the District continues to seek ways to improve its ability to recruit and retain good firefighters and emergency response personnel.

West Benton Fire Rescue:

- **Capacity needs or deficiencies for addressing fire risks** - Always need more volunteer firefighter staffing. The career positions will not take away anything from the current volunteer force and are only being hired to supplement the response of volunteers. Need to maintain a robust roster of fulltime and volunteer staff to combat large incidents in the jurisdiction.
- **Personnel** - Response model relies heavily on Volunteer Firefighters, which make up 85 percent of response force. Due to a societal decline in volunteerism and the ever-increasing requirements to be a firefighter, it is difficult to increase the depth of the Volunteer ranks. In

addition, it is difficult to expand specialized services such as technical rescue and hazardous materials response when so heavily reliant on volunteer firefighters.

- **Rural Property Development** - Response area continues to see development of new single-family residential structures into the Intermix/Interface areas comprised of heavy grass/brush fuels. Many times, fires in the interface/intermix require an extensive amount of resources to provide structure protection as well as being actively engaged in fire suppression. This can cause a large drain on regionally available apparatus.
- **Communications** - With the recent addition of Franklin County and Walla Walla Fire District 5 to dispatching, radio traffic has been extremely busy. Though local repeaters and tactical frequencies used to command individual incidents are plentiful, both the availability of simulcast frequencies to communicate with the dispatcher and dispatch center capability to listen to and respond to multiple frequencies is lacking.
- **Vegetation Management** - Invasive plant species make managing a 5-acre rural residential parcel difficult. Many rural property owners fail to control invasive species which leads to insufficient or non-existent defensible space. The lack of a State Vegetation Management Program has allowed the cheatgrass and invasive species to grow right up the end edge of Interstate and State Highway road surfaces. Vegetation that has grown up to the edge of a roadway becomes critically dry in the summer months and is easily ignited by discarded smoking material, mechanical problems or traffic accidents and creates traffic hazards due to fire, smoke and responding fire apparatus in the roadway. It is a challenge to protect thousands of acres of lands that abut under-maintained roadways; spend a considerable amount of time dealing with wildland fires started from roadside ignitions.
- **Burn Permits** - Burning is limited within the City Limits of Prosser, and surrounding UGA to tumbleweeds. In the rural areas of the response area, Benton County Clean Air Agency sets burning regulations and sets the daily burn decision regarding outdoor burning. Many times, people are unaware about the daily burn decision or the presence of a burn ban.
- **Fire Inspections** - Prosser is home to a vibrant downtown core comprised of 100-year-old multistory buildings that house restaurants, assembly occupancies, mercantiles, offices and residential units. Fire and Life Safety Inspections came under the authority and responsibility of the City of Prosser in 2015. Proper fire and life safety inspections must be maintained to minimize the occurrences of devastating downtown fire losses.
- **Other** - Relying primarily on Volunteer Firefighters, it can be a struggle to mount an effective initial response force to incidents, and a large/complex natural cover fire or structure always requires the assistance from neighboring agencies to mitigate. To augment daytime

response in during the summer months, seasonal employees help with station tasks and incident responses.

The two fire stations are not staffed around the ~~clock, and~~clock and calls that occur at night or over the weekend are staffed with personnel responding from home. Continue to identify ways to decrease “turnout time” to incidents, which includes identifying funding to house responders at the headquarters fires station.

Identifying and installing fuel breaks with heavy equipment. Continue to build private landowner relationships and identify areas where fuel breaks will have a positive impact.

Fire District 4:

- **Wildland Urban Interface Defensible Space** - Funding for additional staff time is needed by the fire District to enhance the Firewise program and complete structural assessments every two years and deliver educational materials to potential participants as the population continues to grow and change. There are additional areas that abut City of West Richland property (specifically the sewer treatment plant) as well as many private homes that have never had a significant fire resulting in large buildup of fuel. The area also has extremely limited access and does pose a significant hazard if wildfire does gain access to the area. Efforts are needed to coordinate fuel reduction or defensible space around this area. This will be challenging, as there are wetlands in the area as well as being adjacent to the Yakima River and associated fish habitat.
- **Rural Water Supplies** - Continue to seek and develop water supply systems in rural areas for assistance in fire suppression. The District has worked with some of the vineyards to establish water supply points at irrigation ponds, but these are not always a reliable source of water depending upon the time of year and required water use for the vineyards. The District has also worked with the Barker Ranch to identify water supply access points to be developed as the ranch makes improvements to the irrigation and wetland management program. These water supplies allow access to water supplies closer to the threat of wildland fires as identified by landowners, users and the District.
- **Communications** - SECOMM has a rather sophisticated, intricate, and reliable – repeater simulcast microwave system. The system has some limitations to cover the entire two counties due to topography despite the multiple channels and repeater sites.
- **Residential and Agricultural Burning** - The District continues to see a high number of controlled burning activities that are not allowed under the current Benton County Clean Air Authority rules. The types of allowed burning depend upon the urban growth boundaries as well as agricultural use of lands. Many of the residents who have lived in the area for longer,

still conduct burning of natural vegetation even though they are inside the urban growth boundary, where this type of burning is not allowed. Efforts to educate the public on the rules continues to be a challenge based on the perceived rural nature of large portions of the District.

- **Cooperative Agreements** - The District is part of an automatic and mutual aid agreement system with Three counties; Benton, Franklin and Walla Walla. We have developed a dispatch matrix that allows us to put a large amount of resources on an incident in a relatively short period of time in the urban areas, but the rural areas take much longer to deploy resources due to the remote areas.
- **Other** - As with most combination career/volunteer agencies, the District continues to seek ways to improve its ability to recruit and retain reliable personnel to assist with the variety of responses and other administrative activities that must occur to be a progressive and successful organization.

Fire District 5:

- **Residential Growth** – The District has not seen significant population growth. However, there is growth in the suburban areas on the outer district lines, with housing development expanding into the district.
- **Communications** – The District is part of a Bi-County dispatch center (SECOMM) that is responsible for dispatching all fire, ems and police, as well as one fire agency from a third county, Walla Walla County. SECOMM has a VHF simulcast and microwave system utilized by fire agencies, and law enforcement agencies operate on an 800MHz radio system. The VHF radio system is outdated and will require a major overhaul within the next 2 to 5 years as parts are no longer available. The merger to one dispatch center was recent. With the addition of Franklin County Fire agencies, Pasco Fire Department and Walla Walla Fire District #5, radio traffic has increased. It seems that the number of dispatch staff needs to be increased to handle the increased radio traffic and calls.
- **Other** – The District is reliant on neighboring fire agencies for structure fires as well as for ALS services. There is a need to have access to Water Tenders and Type 1 Engines.
- **Cooperative Agreements** – The District has mutual aid agreements with neighboring fire agencies. The District will implement or renew needed mutual aid agreements.

Fire District 6:

- **Capacity needs or deficiencies for addressing fire risks** - Need more volunteers and paid staff. Have six seasoned responders that are near retirement age. However, these few

volunteers respond to a majority of the calls for service. These precious few members are the “backbone” of our organization and are vital to our continued operation. New volunteers have recently joined our ranks but will require several years of training to be able to take on medical and fire responsibilities.

The District does not enjoy a large donating population. Fundraisers in our economically depressed area do not produce the donations needed to purchase equipment. The tax base and a small amount of ambulance income are all that is available to operate on.

The remaining budget priorities are placed on personal protective equipment, maintenance, ensuring apparatus are safe, training firefighters and training EMT’s. Several fire stations owned by the District are thirty-five years old and require major repair.

- **Other** - Need weed abatement along the state, federal highways and railways. The overgrowth and close proximity of combustible vegetation causes multiple large fires every year. With our rural location, this can be detrimental to the person in need if we do not have the responders to help. Additional training would also be helpful. Due to rural location it is difficult to get outreach training for firefighter 1, wildland firefighter and Emergency Medical Technician.

8.2.59.2.5 *Prioritizing Public Facility Projects*

Prioritization of projects and programs can be difficult, so the County has established the following general guidance in prioritizing public facility projects, from highest to lowest priorities they include:

- 6.1. Repair existing public facilities to achieve or maintain LOS
- 7.2. Construct new or expanded public facilities to achieve or maintain LOS
- 8.3. Repair existing public facilities or construct new public facilities to eliminate hazards
- 9.4. Construct new or expanded public facilities to achieve or maintain LOS and other needs as forecasted during the next 6-years
- 10.5. Repair existing public facilities or construct new public facilities to reduce the operating cost of providing a public service or facility
- 11.6. Construct new facilities to provide excess capacity that will be needed beyond the next 6 years
- 12.7. All other facilities the County is obligated to complete that do not meet the criteria above

8.2.69.2.6 *Other Considerations*

County strategic goals, key objectives, and financial policies provide the broad parameters for development of the annual CIP. Additional considerations include the following:

- Does a project support the County Commissioners’ strategic goals?
- Does a project qualify as a capital project as defined in the County Budget Policy and have an expected useful life of at least 5 years?

Commented [BF88]: County reviewers - this is from 2018; it is good info that should be kept somewhere but not sure we need to carry it forward in the plan with this level of detail. It will serve as starting point for WUI strategy. Are you OK if we delete it here for the 2026 update?

Commented [GW88R2]: Yes- discuss WUI in the Comp Plan, but agreed this can be integrated and used during the WUI analysis/strategy

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- Does a project satisfactorily address all federal, state, and county legal and financial requirements?
- Does a project support the County's favorable investment ratings and financial integrity?
- Does a project support the County's goal of ensuring all geographic areas of the County have comparable quality in the types of services that are defined in the CIP?
- Does a project prevent the deterioration of the County's existing infrastructure and respond to and anticipate future growth in the County?
- Does a project encourage and sustain quality economic development?
- Is a project responsive to the needs of residents and businesses within the constraints of reasonable taxes and fees?
- Does a project leverage funds provided by other units of government where appropriate?

Master plans also help determine which projects should be included in the CIP, along with associated timeframes. Economic forecasts also inform the capital planning process.

8.39.3 Financing

8.3.19.3.1 Funding Sources for Public Facility Projects

Identifying funding sources for public facility projects is critical to the success of the Benton County's CIP. It requires coordination among County Departments and a thorough understanding of the fiscal capacity of the County to finance these facilities. Public facility projects are often very expensive, requiring multi-year commitments of financial resources. It is important to understand that a CIP does not represent a financial commitment or guarantee that the projects will be implemented. County approval does not automatically authorize funding. It does approve the program in concept and provides validity to the planning process. In an attempt to stretch money as far as possible, many different funding sources are considered. The financing of some projects relies on outside grant resources. If grants are not received, the projects may be delayed, removed, or financed with dedicated revenues, general revenues, excess surplus funds, or bond financing.

The County is guided by the following three principles in selecting a funding source for public facility improvements:

Equity. Whenever appropriate, the beneficiaries of a project or service will pay for it. For example, if a project is a general function of government that benefits the entire community, such as a public safety facility, the project will be paid for with general fund revenues or financed with general obligation bonds. If, however, the project benefits specific users, such as a road improvement district, then the revenues will be derived through user fees or charges, targeted taxes, and assessments.

Effectiveness In selecting a source or sources for financing projects, the County will select one or more that effectively funds the total cost of the project. For example, funding a capital project, or the

debt service on a project, with a user fee that does not provide sufficient funds to pay for the project is not an effective means of funding the project.

Efficiency If grants or current revenues are not available to fund a project, the County will select a financing technique that provides for the lowest total cost consistent with acceptable risk factors and principals of equity and effectiveness. These methods currently consist of fixed-rate general obligation or revenue bonds issued by the County, special funding programs funded by state or federal agencies, or special pool financing. When public facility improvements are located both in a City and UGA, the County and City can jointly sponsor the formation of Local Improvement Districts, Road Improvement Districts, and other benefit areas for the construction or reconstruction of infrastructure to a common standard.

In making capital investments, the County will consider equity in the planning process and address any potential displacement impacts, as applicable.

8.3.29.3.2 *When Funding is Unavailable*

When funding is unavailable to meet existing needs and support plan implementation or as County priorities evolve, the capital facilities plan will be revised at the next annual amendment in one or more of the following ways, as applicable:

- Reduce the LOS for one or more public facilities
- Increase the use of other sources of revenue
- Decrease the cost, and therefore the quality of some types of public facilities while retaining the quantity of the facilities that is inherent in the standard for LOS
- Decrease the demand for and subsequent use of public facilities
- Reassess the land use element

8.3.29.3.3 *Maintenance Financing*

The County intends to set aside sufficient revenue to finance ongoing maintenance needs and to provide periodic replacement and renewal of public facilities. This is necessary to keep public facilities in good repair and to maximize their useful life. The County should not provide a public facility or accept the provision of a public facility by others, if the County or other provider is unable to pay for the subsequent annual operating and maintenance costs of the facility.

8.49.4 **Existing Facility Inventory**

Benton County maintains a comprehensive capital facilities inventory to meet insurance requirements that is incorporated by reference into the Comprehensive Plan and available upon

request. The County existing public facility inventory is updated annually. General capital facilities owned and maintained by the County include:

- County administrative office support including auditor, treasurer, assessor, prosecuting attorney, planning and building, coroner, facilities and recreation, and road
- Construction and maintenance of rural and "farm to market" roads
- Law and justice, including the operation and administration of the courts, jail, and sheriff's functions
- Juvenile justice facilities including detention
- Regional parks and recreational facilities
- Bi-county regional health and human services
- Drainage improvement districts for low lying areas along river mainstems
- Waste management
- Regional fairground facilities

8.59.5 Capital Improvement Plan

The CIP is a 6-year list of projects updated at least biannually and used by the County to identify, maintain, and pay for current and future infrastructure needs for services provided by the County. [The CIP includes the County 6-year TIP by reference along with County park improvements per the latest Parks and Recreation plan.](#) The County prepares a comprehensive capital projects list that correlates funding sources to needed improvements and identifies project funding. The CIP is reviewed and updated in conjunction with the County budget process. Each update to the County's CIP is adopted by reference into the Comprehensive Plan. [The County also considers the latest state requirements in preparing and updating its adopted CIP. Per the latest Washington State Department of Commerce GMA Fully Planning Update checklist, this includes:](#)

- [Funding strategies, public facilities and services to serve UGAs, in coordination with the cities](#)
- [Ensuring capital budget decisions conform with the current Comprehensive Plan](#)
- [Proposed locations and capacities of expanded or new capital facilities](#)
- [Updated inventory of facilities](#)
- [Forecast of capital needs, based on current Comprehensive Plan and adopted levels of service](#)
- [Proposed locations and capacities, as applicable of expanded or new capital, and with consideration of equity and potential displacement impacts, as applicable](#)

- Funding plan for at least the next 6 years

Because the CIP is a working document regularly amended, it is not included in its entirety as a part of the Comprehensive Plan but is incorporated by reference.

8.69.6 Siting of Essential Public Facilities (RCW 36.70A.200)

The GMA requires that the comprehensive plans of each county and city include a process for identifying and siting essential public facilities. Essential public facilities include those facilities that are typically difficult to site, such as airports, state education facilities, state or regional transportation facilities, state and local correctional facilities, solid waste handling facilities, and inpatient facilities including substance abuse facilities, mental health facilities, group homes and secure community transition facilities. The OFM maintains a regional list of such facilities that are required to be built within the next 6 years. Because of their nature, these facilities may have large land parcel requirements and unique siting needs with regard to public services and transportation or produce noise and raise complex public health and safety concerns. These requirements and impacts would be imposed upon those living and working in the surrounding area of such facilities. Benton County shall provide land use zones that are compatible and development regulations that are consistent with the statutory requirements applicable to these facilities. The County uses a review process that allows citizen, city, and state agency input when such facilities are proposed. The siting process is summarized in Table 9-2: Essential Public Facilities Siting Matrix.

Airports and heliports operated for the benefit of the public must be appropriately planned to assure that adjacent land uses are compatible. The Benton County Zoning Ordinance shall provide development regulations that protect life, property, and prevent the establishment of airspace obstructions and other hazards which interfere with safe airport operations.

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**Table 9-2
Essential Public Facilities Siting Matrix**

Use: Essential Statewide Facility	Zone	SEPA	Public Utilities		Reviewing Board		Responsible Jurisdiction (local/ federal/ state)	Benton County Permits	Special Siting Criteria
			Water	Sewer	PC/ BOCC	BOA ¹			
Airport ²	RL 5, GMA-AG, LI, HI	Yes	X	X	A/H Overlay	X	RTPO/FAA/WSDOT/ Ecology	BC-Building	Transportation access public services
State Education	UGAR, RL 5, GMA-AG	Yes	X	X		X	Ecology/DOH	BC-Building	Transportation access public services
State & Regional Transportation	All Zones	Yes				X	Ecology/WSDOT/RTPO	BC-Building Structures only	Public services structures only
State Correctional	HI, GMA-AG	Yes	X	X		X	Ecology/DOH	BC-Building	Transportation access public services
Solid Waste Handling	LI, HI, GMA-AG	Yes	X			X	Ecology	BC-Building	Transportation access public services
In-patient Health ³	UGAR, RL 5	DOS ⁴	X	X		X	Ecology/DOH/DSHS	BC-Building	Transportation access public services
Secure Community Transition ⁵	HI	DOS	X	X		X	Ecology/DOH/DSHS	BC-Building	SCTF's land and cell access, not in close proximity to risk potential activities
Others as listed by OFM ⁶	TBD ⁷	DOS	TBD	TBD	TBD	TBD	TBD	TBD	TBD

Notes:

Source: 2006 Benton County Comprehensive Plan, Appendix 4

3. Conditional Use Permit

4. Airport/Heliports are subject to the provisions of 11A.86

5. Substance abuse, mental health, and group homes

6. Depending on size of facility

7. SCTFs as required by RCW 36.70A.200 & RCW 71.09 (civilly committed sex offender housing)

8. Facilities listed by the OFM required or likely to be built within the next 6 years (RCW36.70A.200)

9. To be determined by Benton County Planning Department as projects are identified

A/H: Airport/Heliports

BC: Benton County

BOA: Board of Adjustment

BOCC: Board of County Commissioners

DOH: Department of Health

DOS: Determination of Significance

DSHS: Department of Social and Health Services

Ecology: Department of Ecology

FAA: Federal Aviation Administration

GMA-AG: Growth Management Act Agriculture

HI: Heavy Industrial

LI: Light Industrial

OFM: Office of Financial Management

PC: Planning Commission

RCW: Revised Code of Washington

RL: Rural Lands

RTPO: Regional Transportation Planning Organization

SCTF: Secure Community Transition Facility

SEPA: State Environmental Policy Act

TBD: To be determined

UGAR: Urban Growth Area Residential

WSDOT: Department of Transportation