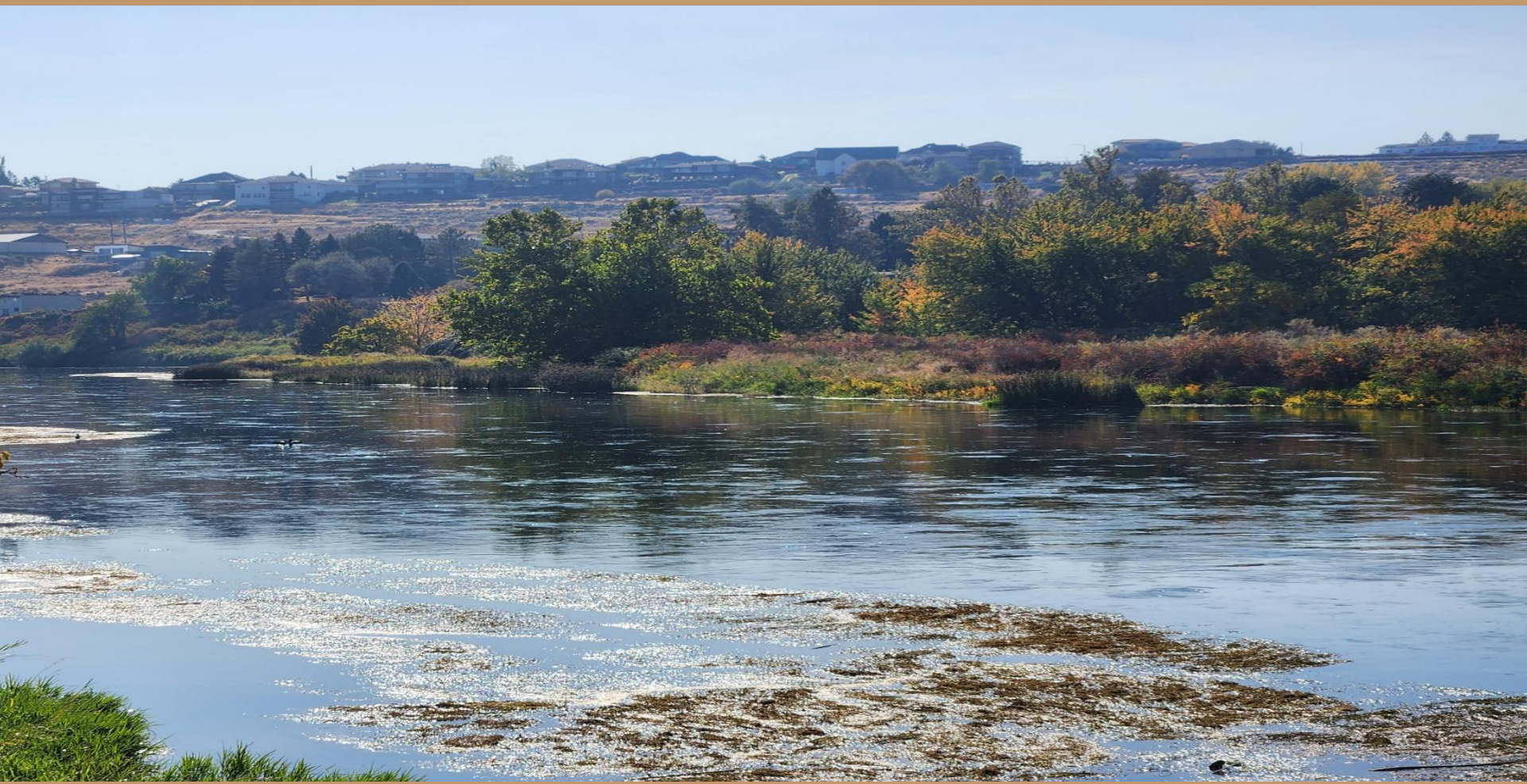


Benton County Planning Commission Comprehensive Plan 2026 Update

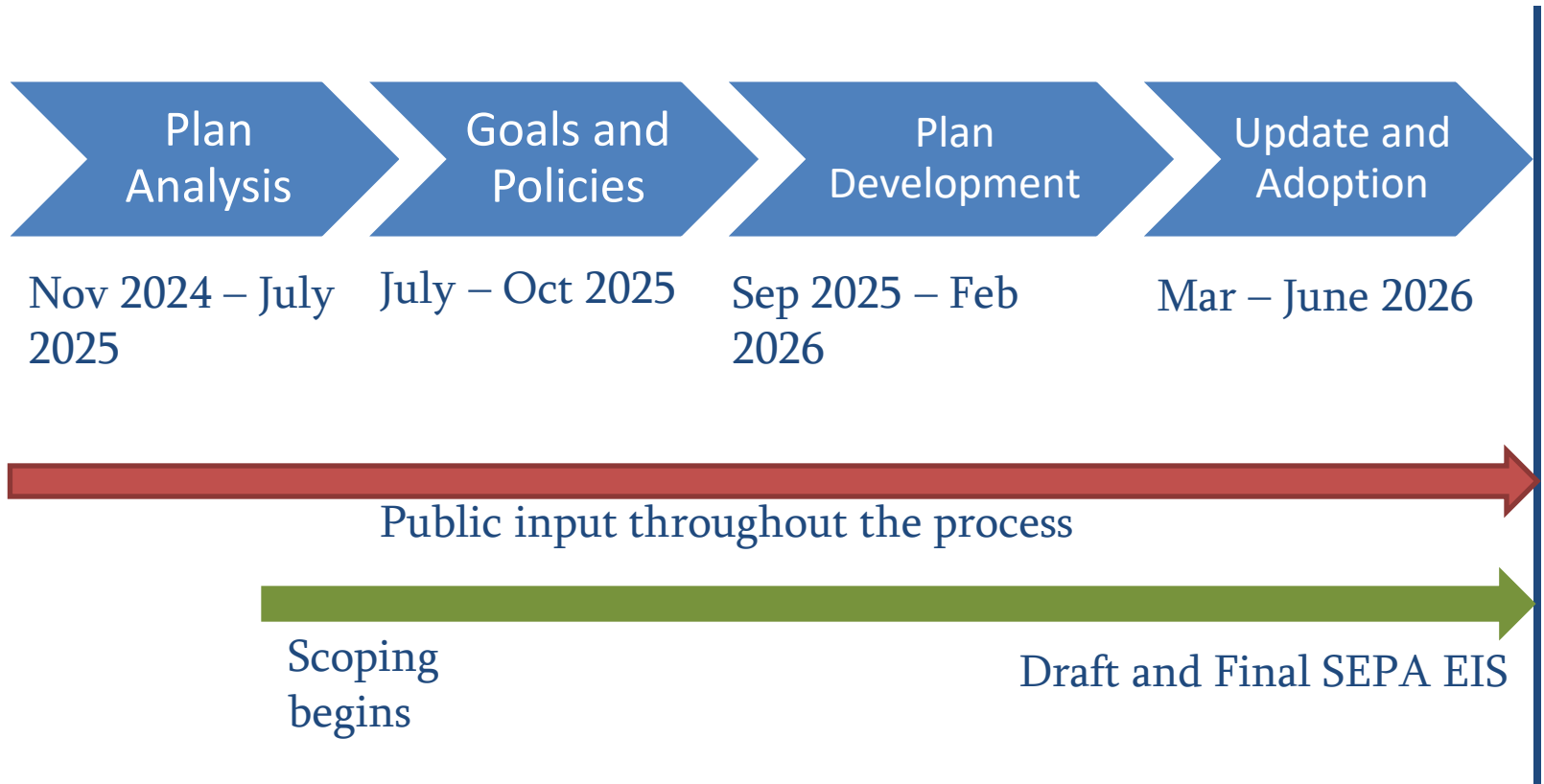


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Public Scoping Meeting Agenda

- Overview
 - Introductions
 - Growth Management Act (GMA) and Comprehensive Plan Update
 - New Requirements
 - Public Input
 - Scoping for EIS
 - Next steps

Timeline



Growth Management Act (GMA)



What is the GMA?

- RCW 36.70A / WAC 365-196
- Mandatory elements, but based on local conditions
- Framework to plan for 6 and 20-year growth
- Update by June 30, 2026

Growth Management Act

15 Planning Goals:

- Urban Growth
- Reduce Sprawl
- Transportation
- Housing
- Economic Development
- Property Rights
- Permits
- Natural Resources
- Open Space and Recreation
- Environment
- Citizen Participation
- Public Facilities and Services
- Historic Preservation
- Climate Resiliency
- Shoreline Master Program



New State Requirements

- Climate Change/Climate Resiliency as a new plan element (different consultant)
 - Regional effort
- Updated Housing requirements
 - Plan for housing by income band
 - Provide housing capacity for emergency housing, emergency shelters, permanent supportive housing



New State Requirements

- Updated Housing requirements continued:
 - Implement policies and regulations to address and begin to undo racially disparate impacts, displacement, and exclusion in housing caused by local policies, plans and actions
 - Close coordination with cities
- Tribal participation/coordination - Yakama Nation and CTUIR

Additional Local Priorities

- Energy overlay
- Shrub steppe habitat protection and mitigation program
- Industrial lands review and update
- Refined Capital Improvement planning process
- More targeted outreach strategies/Spanish translation services



Comprehensive Plan

Comprehensive Plan Update

- Plan update - not a wholesale re-write of the existing Plan. Extend planning horizon and recognize changes to:
 - State laws/case law since the last update
- Development regulations
 - Updates to state law/requirements
 - Best Available Science (BAS) for incorporation into critical areas regulations



Why We Plan

- To reflect community values and input on the future
- To accommodate future growth
- To determine where new housing, shopping, jobs and infrastructure will be located over the next 6 and 20 years
- To identify how to deliver services compatible with growth

Plan Relationship with Other Documents

Growth Management Act

RCW 36.70A, 36.70B; WAC 365-195 to 199

Comprehensive Plan

Vision, goals and policies, analysis, environmental review

Development Regulations

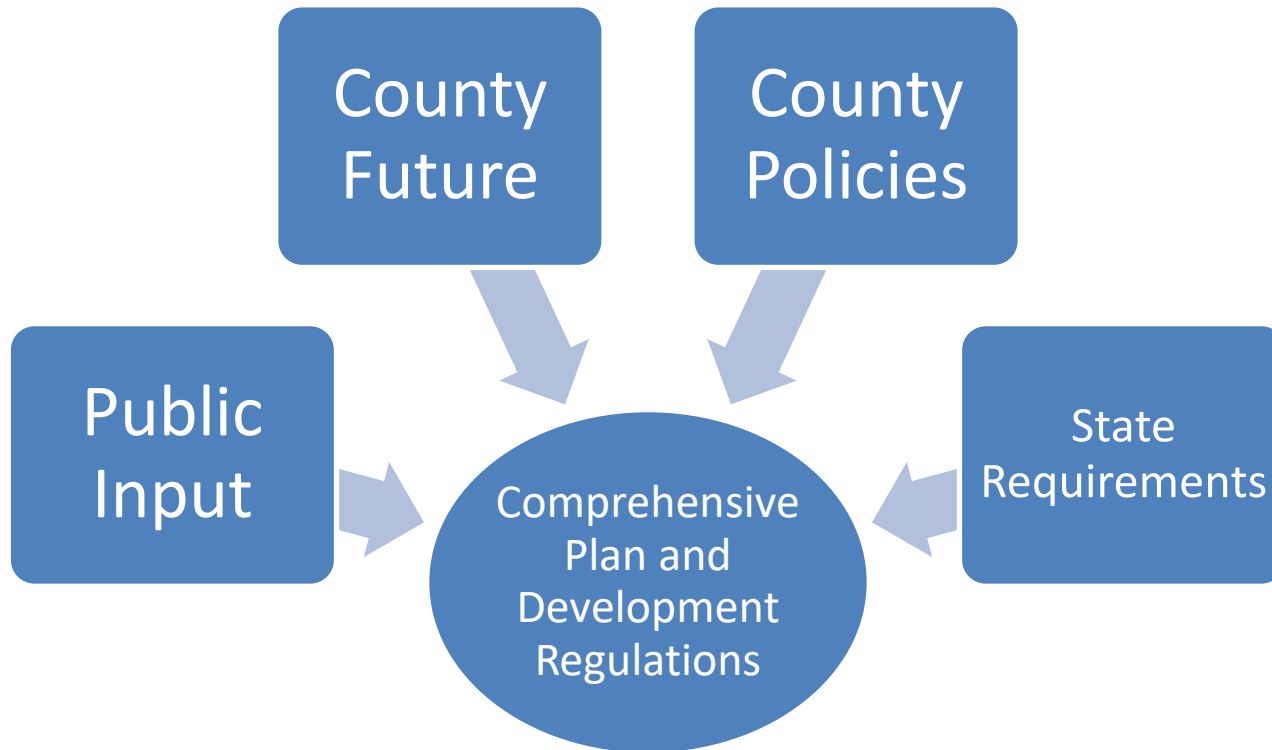
County Codes

Implementation

Permits, action plans, budget, CIP, administrative provisions



Plan Relationship with Other Documents

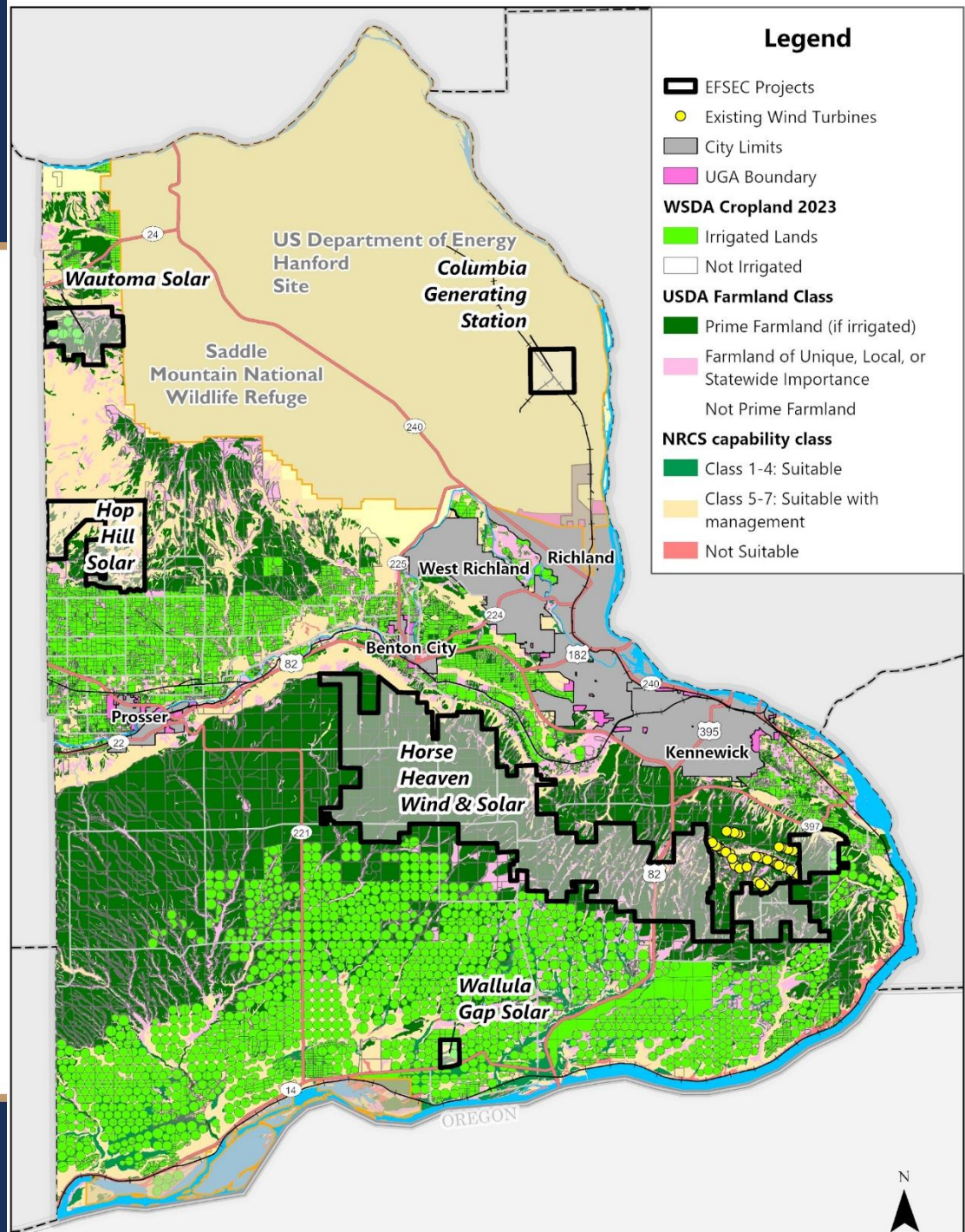


Draft Population Projections

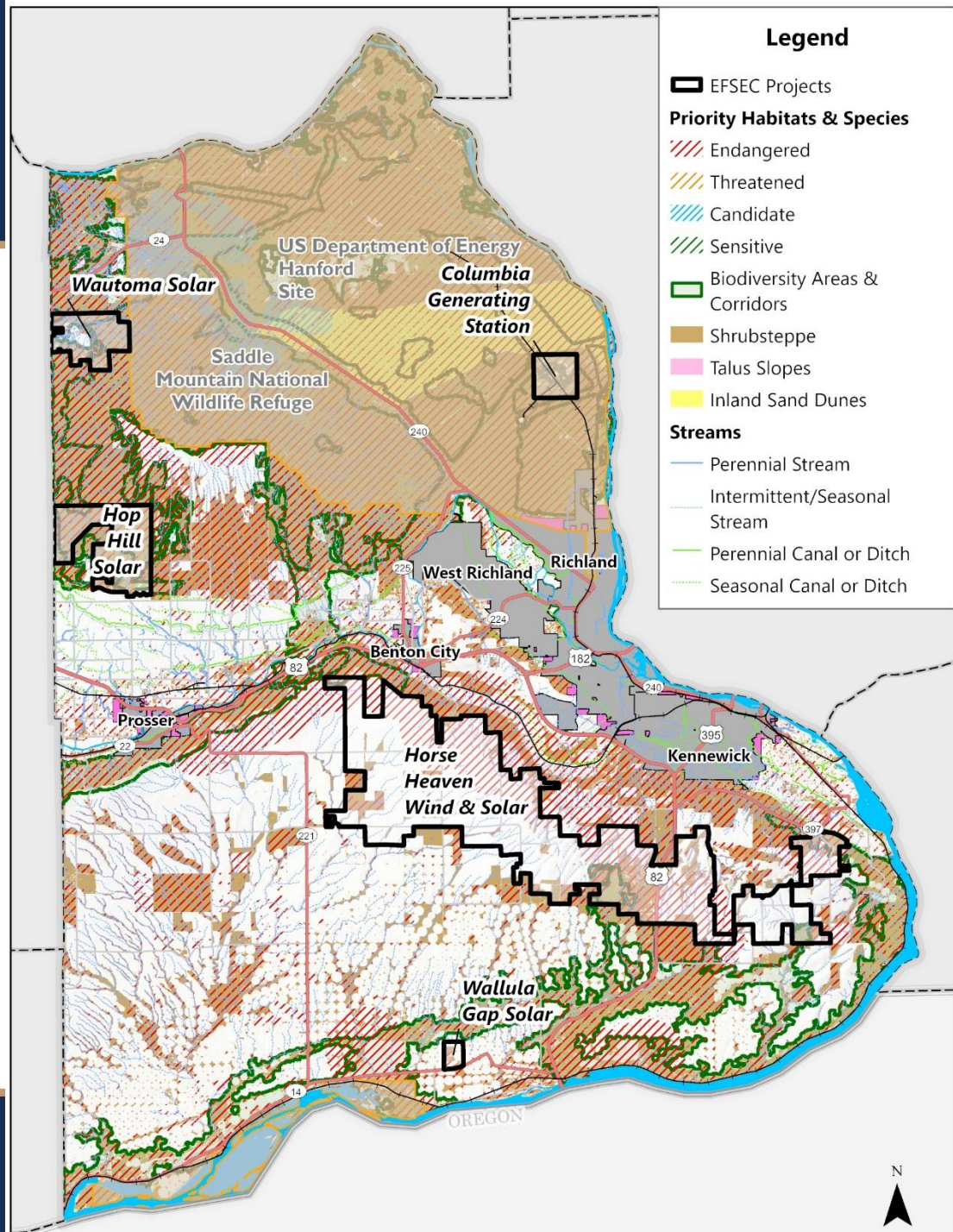
Jurisdiction	2024 Population	2050 Allocation	Projected 2050 Pop
Kennewick	87,120	36%	103,999
Richland	64,190	33%	95,333
County	37,805	14%	40,444
West Richland	18,280	12%	34,666
Prosser	6,610	3%	8,667
Benton City	3,845	2%	5,778
Total	217,850	100%	288,887



Ag Lands/ Energy



Habitats/ Energy



Programmatic Environmental Impact Statement (EIS)

- Programmatic EIS Required:
 - Benton County has determined that this proposal is likely to have a significant adverse impact on the environment.
 - A programmatic environmental impact statement (EIS) is required under RCW 43.21C.030 (2)(c) and will be prepared.
- Three (3) draft alternatives have been formulated for evaluation in the draft EIS

Preliminary Draft Alternatives

Alternative 1, No Action/No Change in Current Growth Patterns:

- Maintain the County's existing Comprehensive Plan
- Growth would be expected based on past trends, but no land use changes (densities, designations, etc.) or regulation changes (e.g., zoning) would occur

Alternative 2, Aggressive Growth Target with Emphasis on Affordable Housing, Industry and Energy:

- More multi-family housing/affordable housing in higher density areas and UGAs
- Designation of additional industrial areas
- Several energy projects to potentially develop/energy overlay for County rural areas

Alternative 3, Moderate Growth Target with More Limited Emphasis on Industry and Energy:

- Smaller renewable energy projects with energy overlay
- Add some industrial designated lands (but less than in Alternative 2).

EIS Elements

Consider potential impacts on the following elements of the environment:

- Earth
- Water
- Plants and Animals
- Land Use
- Environmental Health (Land and Air Quality)
- Shoreline Use
- Population, Housing, and Employment
- Parks and Recreation
- Transportation
- Public Services and Utilities
- Heritage Conservation



Next Steps



EIS Scoping Schedule

Benton County will determine the full scope of the EIS, including the range of alternatives to be analyzed by June (after comments are received and reviewed).

- Comments must be postmarked on or before April 25, 2025
- Mailing Address: Benton County Planning Division, 102206 E. Wiser Parkway, Kennewick, WA 99338
- Email Address: Planning.Department@co.benton.wa.us

Future meeting dates, times and locations will be available at <http://tinyurl.com/BCpublicnotice>

Coordination with the Planning Commission

2025 Meetings and Workshops

- April 8 – Scoping for Comprehensive Plan Programmatic EIS
- June/July - Findings from Housing and Energy Overlay analysis, Critical Areas review and SEPA scoping
- Sep/Oct – Public open houses, Updates on alternative land use scenarios, goals/policies
- Dec – Updated, review updates to Land Use and other plan elements



Additional Questions/Comments?



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