



## PRIORITY CAPITAL PROJECTS

Federal funding for priority capital projects in Benton County (County) is critical to ensure we can meet current needs and promote future growth. Our short-term and near-term federal capital project requests include:

- **Three Rivers Behavioral Health Recovery Center** – This project proposes to build a 50 bed, with the ability to expand, comprehensive behavioral health center to serve persons in mental health crisis or suffering from substance use disorder with or without co-occurring mental health disorders. Total project cost of \$23 million which can be separated into phases.
- **Juvenile Justice at Risk Youth Services Center** – As the population of Benton and Franklin Counties continues to increase, so too does the demand on the juvenile court system. New construction would address the need for increased space, security, and safety for families, volunteers, and staff working in the courts and community programming areas – no longer requiring entrance into a secured detention facility to receive critical services. The total project cost is estimated at \$28 million.
- **Badger Road, Interstate 82 Roundabout and Pathway Project** – Reconstruction of four intersections along Badger Road in unincorporated Benton County south of the County of Kennewick, as well as the construction of a multi-use pathway. The project's goals are to improve safety at the interchange with an interstate highway, improve safety at intersections with a parallel railway, provide multi-use non-motorized access from a rural area to the County limits, and plan for future growth and development in the area.
- **Reata Road Project** – This road is experiencing significant traffic impacts due to residential growth in the area, and two new schools are planned for construction along the roadway. The road structure is not holding up to the current traffic load and Federal appropriation is needed to fund this project because the road budget is already covering necessary annual road maintenance or other projects that are in our 6-year STIP. Total project cost of \$8.5 million.

## LOCAL CONTROL

The County opposes federal policies that undermine local government regulatory authority, impose unfunded mandates, or preempt local government revenues and revenue authorities.

**Local control over public rights-of-way:** The County strongly supports efforts to ensure local control over public rights-of-way to balance community interests with the need for new telecommunications infrastructure. This includes:

- The ability to regulate access to County owned poles and other public facilities;
- Authority for permitting and siting processes that consider community aesthetics and concerns; and
- The ability to negotiate our own franchise agreements with cable companies.

**Onerous, duplicative, and costly environmental requirements:** The County supports protecting the environment, but federal environmental requirements are often incredibly complex, often substantially similar to state environmental regulations, and are very costly. The County encourages the federal government to support efforts to streamline federal environmental requirements that simplify requirements, allow for state permitting determinations to fulfill federal standards when they are the same or substantially similar, and lower costs to County governments.



## COMMUNITY SERVICES

Federal assistance, including federal funding, to help the County address community health issues such as behavioral health and public safety are needed to improve the quality of life for our County's residents and businesses. For these reasons the County supports:

- **Mental Health Funding** – Increased federal funding for mental health services, including but not limited to additional local option tools to best meet community needs.
- **Substance Abuse Programs** – Federal efforts to ensure that funding is appropriated for substance misuse prevention, treatment, and recovery programs must be accessible to the County.
- **Housing** – Increase federal funding and programs that support development of low-income and transitional housing.

## INFRASTRUCTURE NEEDS

The County supports critical federal funding for surface transportation and capital improvement projects and initiatives that reduce congestion, promote freight movement, encourage mobility, and improve the environment.

- **Electric Charging Stations** – the County is interested in Federal funding for public vehicle charging infrastructure as well as electrifying the County's fleet of vehicles. The Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act (IIJA) provides funding through the states, transit agencies, public utilities, and local jurisdictions for charging infrastructure and the deployment of electric vehicles. the County is very interested in pursuing these funding opportunities and would encourage access to federal dollars at the County level.

## ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

Much of the work the County does with the federal government aims to build resiliency and diversification into economy of Benton County and the Mid-Columbia region. The County supports targeted programs and initiatives that aid existing, expanding, and new businesses.

## NATURAL RESOURCE MANAGEMENT

- **Yakima Basin Integrated Plan (YBIP)** – Benton County was a founding member of the YBIP working group and a core participant in the two previous iterations of YBIP's predecessors in the 1980s and 1990s. The County supports what really is an *integrated* approach to water resources management, economic stability, and environmental restoration. Benton County continues to support the full portfolio of YBIP projects and actions.
- **Wildfire** – As a county in the arid West, our residents understand very well the environmental, economic, and health impacts of wildland fires, which seem to grow more intensive, extensive, and numerous with each fire season. Benton County supports measures to improve the ecological health of natural areas; grow, improve, and integrate our wildfire response; and build more resiliency against wildfires into our communities.
- **Payments in Lieu of Taxes (PILT)** – Benton County receives critical PILT funds from the Department of Energy (DOE) that are used to support public schools, public libraries, county roads, a hospital, and a veterans' program. These PILT funds are tied to the DOE's Hanford Site, a Manhattan Project and Cold War superfund site, which constitutes 25% of Benton County's land area. The Office of Management & Budget over the course of successive administrations has tried to cut or eliminate Hanford PILT. We have relied on Congress to remedy this on each occasion and request that continued support.