

Benton City Revitalization

CPAT ROUNDTABLE FINAL REPORT

A discussion with the
Washington State APA's
(American Planning Association)
Community Planning Assistance
Team (CPAT)
September 2017



American Planning Association
Washington Chapter

Making Great Communities Happen

CPAT

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BENTON CITY CPAT BACKGROUND REPORT

APA Washington Chapter CPAT (Community Assistance Team)

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1. Purpose, Process, and Participants

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- 1.2 Who is CPAT?
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- 1.5 Exploratory Questions
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1. Purpose, Process, and Participants

1.1 Purpose & Study Area

In June 2017, Benton City invited the Washington State's American Planning Association Chapter to bring a CPAT (Community Planning Assistance Team) to help invigorate it. The goal of this exercise was to help Benton City imagine new and better ways to enhance and improve its economic development and planning strategies. Better strategies are needed to revive and reinforce the town's anemic economic condition and reinforce its community.

Although the discussions centered around the town's "Main Street" (defined as 9th Street between Chris and Ellen Avenues), broader considerations included the entire town. The results were expressed in the form of a development framework which could build upon its short, mid, and longer-term recommendations. This strategy framework was organized to be cumulative, and progressively build on each prior stage and accomplishment.

The two-day roundtable considered a range of issues that focused on:

- Strategies to improve 9th Street and its business environment
- An enhanced visitor experience (gateway concepts)
- Better ways to embrace the Yakima River
- New economic synergies and connections with local wineries

The CPAT facilitated dialogue on these issues in the context of the current and expected economic environment, traffic, and overall community needs. Deliberations also covered ongoing, and anticipated local and regional concerns.

Due to time and resource constraints this volunteer team, limited the outcome of this involvement to preliminary recommendations organized within a viable framework. This framework is intended to be a template upon which the citizens of Benton City can further build upon, refine, adopt, and implement a fully developed strategic growth plan in follow-up discussions.



Benton City CPAT study area

1.2 Who is CPAT?

The Washington chapter of the American Planning Association (APA) offers communities (cities, towns, neighborhoods, rural villages) the assistance of professional planners and specialist in articulating visions, solving problems, or resolving issues. This invited CPAT consisted of professional *volunteers* with extensive experience in urban design, urban strategy, planning, economic development, and transportation planning.

1.3 Participants

CPAT Volunteers:

Bob Bengford	Planning (MAKERS, CPAT Co-Chair)
Arun Jain	Urban Design, Urban Strategy (CPAT Co-Chair)
Patrick Lynch	Transportation (Transpo Group)
Erik Rundell	Economics (ECO Northwest)
Bryon George	Community Design, Planner (MAKERS)
Amy Hilland	Planner

This group worked with the Mayor of Benton City Ms. Linda Lehman, and city staff to assemble a core team of varied interests and stakeholders with whom to have focused discussions.

Core Discussion Group

With the Mayor and city staff input, a core group was assembled to help formulate a viable future strategy. This group will consist of:

Linda Lehman	Benton City Mayor
Vanessa Coates	Benton City Councilmember
Teresa Hancock	Port of Benton Commissioner
Len Pavelka	Benton-Franklin Council of Governments Planning Specialist III
Kyle Johnson	Tri-cities Wine Tourism Board and Purple Star Winery owner
Brenda Trammel	Resident & Treasurer for the Revitalization Committee
Cindy	Business owner, works for newspaper
Stephanie Haug	Benton City Clerk-Treasurer
Randy Giles	WSDOT Regional Planning Engineer



Local Red Mountain Vineyards

The discussions with this group occurred in closed sessions and followed “Chatham House Rules.” This method assured that nothing any individual said, or asserted could be attributed directly to them. This is a well-established basis to ensure open and frank discussions throughout the course of the roundtable.

Chatham House Rules

“When a meeting, or part thereof, is held under the Chatham House Rule, participants are free to use the information received, but neither the identity nor the affiliation of the speaker(s), nor that of any other participant, may be revealed.”

Community & Regional Stakeholders

In addition to the above, a larger group of community and regional stakeholders were invited to the event’s opening session. Invited stakeholders included public officials and staff from the City and Benton County, local experts and community leaders in local real estate, business, health, education, environment, transportation, utilities, the local wine industry, recreation, and involved Benton City residents.

After closed door deliberations, town citizens were invited back to an evening open house to be debriefed on the process and results.

1.4 Process and Agenda

Deliberations occurred over two days (August 10 & 11). Events for these two days were structured as follows:

Thursday, August 10

- **Area tour (late afternoon)**
The CPAT members together with the Mayor, her select staff and invited members of the community toured relevant areas, including the local Red Mountain vineyards.
- **Dinner**
The CPAT, city leadership, members of the core discussion group and community representatives attended an informal meet and greet evening.

Friday, August 11

Open Session

- **Community Input** (9:00 to 10:30 am)
This opening session began with introductions, a description of the day's process, and an opportunity for the community to share their concerns and aspirations.

Closed Sessions

- **Opening discussions** (10:15 am to 12:30 pm)
Issues and aspects that would help revitalize Benton City were discussed.
- **Working lunch** (12:30 pm to 1:30 pm)
A working lunch extended the conversation.
- **Strategy Development and Refinement** (1:30 pm to 4:00 pm)
The outline of a pragmatic strategic plan was formulated. This framework was devised to work cumulatively within a series of development milestones.
- **Strategy Refinement** (4:00 pm to 5:00 pm)
A presentation of the findings and framework strategy was prepared.

Open Session

- **Public Debriefing** (5:00 pm to 6:30 pm)
The CPAT Team together with the Mayor, city staff and core group participants shared the day's deliberations. This included suggestions for the next steps for the city and community, necessary conditions for success, and the inherent limitations and unique opportunities of the effort.

Post Event

This report is a summary of the above deliberations. There are obvious limitations on what could be accomplished in such a brief time frame. The intent of this effort is primarily to jump start a good, and viable (focused) ongoing discussion amongst Benton City stakeholders.

It remains up to Benton City and its citizens to further discuss, refine, adopt, and implement these recommendations in a schedule of their own choosing.

1.5 Exploratory Questions

In the weeks leading up to the two-day event, the CPAT gathered background information (included in this report as an appendix). It also formulated the following questions to instigate early thought amongst the Benton City leadership and hosts.

- Benton City has a low bonding capacity. What are the various mechanisms to leverage it and is there political and civic will to do so?
- If no alternative routes are possible, what mitigation measures can help alleviate truck traffic?
- What are the possibilities of making the railroad bridge across the Yakima River pedestrian and bike safe?
- Does the city have a list of priorities that lock its funding down? What are they?
- Does the city have more, or less infrastructure than it can support? What is the right balance?
- What are the assets of the city, and how can they best be leveraged for desired outcomes?
- What are the short and long-term advantages, and concerns with merging or having tighter relationships with the Tri-City Chamber of Commerce, or with Benton County Parks?

These questions remain open points for deliberation within Benton City, and are relevant to discussions relating to the outcomes of this effort. They (and related questions) are key to formulating a complete development strategy for the town.

1.6 Limitations

This report embodies an effort that should not be construed as a complete or viable strategic development plan for Benton City. The purview and constraint of a limited time involvement by CPAT is to provide guidance on how communities in the State of Washington can further their own efforts. It is not able to provide a final, finished outcome.

Consequently, it will be up to Benton City to embrace some, or all of this effort. It is the concerted opinion of the CPAT that Benton City has considerable development potential that can be comprehensively achieved in a pragmatic and cumulative way.

Because of its voluntary nature and limited involvement, CPAT is also unable to assure any success of this process. However, since this CPAT comprised of seasoned planning professionals, its suggested direction should be taken seriously. The effort conveyed in this report will certainly provide initial momentum to any concerted internal and public effort by the community.

2. Community Engagement

- 2.1 Walking Tour
- 2.2 Roundtable Discussions
- 2.3 Assumptions
- 2.4 Discussion Items
- 2.5 Community Observations

2.1 Walking Tour (Day 1, August 10, 2017)

Here is a summary of the walking tour and interactions with the community in the study area.

Study Area Walking Tour

9th Street

The CPAT team met at 2:15 pm and over the next hour toured the “main street” stretch of 9th Avenue. City officials shared their view of conditions, issues and opportunities associated with traffic, streetscape, buildings, and businesses. The following is a record of the walkabout.

- Community members discussed buildings and businesses on the east side of the street, including Tumbleweeds Café, True Value Hardware, Benton City Physical Therapy, Los Toreros Carniceria, the old theatre, and Benton City Hall.
- Visited the pocket plaza improvements adjacent to Benton City Physical Therapy.
- Noted small curb extensions along 9th Street (also a state highway), and found these changes didn’t slow traffic down as intended.
- Heavy truck traffic and general high-speed movement along this corridor were observed.
- City Hall was undergoing a remodel and temporarily located in a strip mall a block away from 9th Street.
- There were not many restaurants located in this downtown stretch and the team was informed that Benton City had too few of them.
- There was evidence of declining businesses. A dentist’s office had a sign stating it was closing.
- Visitors spoke with the owners of “Branches and Vines” and the adjacent glass studio owner. The glass studio was a new occupant who mostly relied on online wholesale of his work but intended to use the front as a studio/gallery. The “Branches and Vines” store operates as a gift shop, local grocer for produce, and as a pharmacy.
- The store known as “Quail Crossing” used to be a flower shop.
- During a short break, participants discussed the possibility of a gateway into downtown.
- Participants then walked over to the long vacant manufacturing building at the south edge of the study area (9th Street). There was broad consensus that the building and site could be repurposed for a future signature use. Since renovations to the existing structure would be expensive, it was acknowledged that the building may have to be torn down and development done on a clean site.



9th Street (“main street”) tour

Old Yakima River Railroad Bridge

The CPAT team examined and discussed the condition and future potential of the old Yakima River railroad bridge, including the possibilities of converting it for low load-bearing use such as a trail and limited emergency vehicles. Barriers to such active uses include: uncertain bridge ownership, a private home (located on a portion of the old right of way) on the eastern side of bridge, as well as the cost and logistics of any physical improvements necessary for conversion. However, it was widely acknowledged that a future trail connection would be highly valued by residents and visitors and be a valuable non-vehicular connection between Benton City and Red Mountain wineries.



Old Yakima River railroad bridge

Following a visit to the bridge site, the team visited two Red Mountain wineries and nearby trails.

Frichette Winery

The CPAT team met with Shae Frichette, owner of Frichette Winery. She also expressed a desire for Benton City improvements.

Hamilton Winery

Stacey Hamilton described her winery's history and approach to quality. The winery was a net zero (self-energy generating) facility and even provided a Tesla super charger as an attraction. Stacey felt Benton City has locational and physical characteristics that can be matured.

Red Mountain Trails

Theresa, owner of Red Mountain Trails, described her business and issues/opportunities associated with Benton City, noting better physical connections across the Yakima River would help. Her business offers popular tours via bike and horse, and dinner rides. It also has agreements with surrounding wineries to conduct tours.

Comments about Issues and Opportunities

Below is a summary of comments regarding issues and opportunities associated with Benton City from the Red Mountain tour:

- There is an absence of adequate quality lodging, and local wine serving restaurants.
- Compatible tourist oriented shops will enhance visitor experience.
- Proximity to compatible experiences would reduce the need for visitors to drink and drive.
- The Yakima riverfront is an unexploited amenity. The City of Woodland's new waterfront was cited as a good example.
- Revitalization efforts could be stimulated by creating a coalition of the motivated and interested. This would foster better dialogue and communication between Red Mountain and Benton City. This might also be accomplished if there was winery owner representation on Benton City Council.
- Better use of social media would also improve business.
- Awareness of the Red Mountain Master Plan despite the absence of any move to implement it.



CPAT team with Red Mountain's Frichette Winery and Red Mountain Trails owners

Purple Star Winery

Winery owner and core discussion group member Kyle Johnson gave the CPAT team a tour of his facility and shared his view of the business opportunities between Benton City and area wineries.

Dinner

The Mayor's office organized a dinner for the CPAT members. Attendees included the next day's invited core discussion group members and stakeholders. Participants informally discussed the next day's roundtable format.

2.2 Roundtable Discussions (Day 2, August 11, 2017)

Day Two consisted of a concentrated mix of discussions by a core group that represented the city, local businesses, stakeholders, and local wineries. The discussions concluded with a strategic framework for Benton City to build upon. The following is a recount of the proceedings.

Welcome, Introductions, Process, and Open-House Engagement

Mayor Linda Lehman welcomed the participants together with introductions. The CPAT team then explained the format and agenda for the day. Invited participants and stakeholders were each given 3 minutes to express their views and concerns. This session shared first impressions:

- Ideas for Benton City's "Main Street" and long-term future
- Benton City's short, medium, and longer term economic and business development prospects
- Traffic routing, traffic calming and streetscape improvements

- The prospects for a formal town entry and gateway
- General community needs and enhancement
- Strategic development opportunities
- The opportunities to leverage locational assets (including Red Mountain and nearby wineries)

Closed session: Roundtable to identify issues and build consensus

In closed session the CPAT team and core discussion group focused on a smaller set of concepts and strategies in detail. The current context helped nuance the discussion on possible 9th street (“main street”) improvements, the catalytic development of select properties, as well as community oriented, and other high value physical improvements.

Working lunch

The deliberations continued.

Closed session: Strategy refinement

Following a short extension of the discussions and summary of them, the dialogue shifted to organize desired outcomes into phased development efforts made up of progressive milestones. Each set of development milestones had expedient target timeframes for completion (i.e. 3, 5 and 7 years). The development package at each milestone was designed to provide both a credible basis to move forward, and recalibrate for it as necessary. The deliverables for each milestone were also designed to ensure that if there was no political will, funding, or need for the next stages; additional efforts could be terminated. The completed work would be a fully useable and satisfactory set of outcomes.

Refinement of the closed session findings

The CPAT and core discussion group created a summary of the proceedings and strategy framework for presentation to an open house of interested citizens and stakeholders.

Public open house

The Mayor, city staff and invited participants joined the CPAT in sharing the day’s findings.

2.3 Assumptions

Every strategic planning exercise embodies a series of initial assumptions. These assumptions contribute to the process better when made explicit. This minimizes hidden agendas. It also ensures their being questioned and refined as the challenging work of developing a strategic plan proceeds.

CPAT provided the hosts with a list of preliminary assumptions. During the Day Two deliberations these assumptions were discussed at length and refined. The following is an agreed upon list that emerged after vetting by the closed session attendees.

Economy

- The City’s tax base is stressed to manage its existing infrastructure, fulfill its community aspirations, and preemptively adapt for future needs.
- The city’s low bonding capacity will require creative financing mechanisms.
- The growth of local manufacturing offers new opportunities.
- The relationship with surrounding wineries and related businesses can be improved.
- The global shift towards shared economies and living can be adapted to Benton City.

Transportation

- Regional truck traffic on 9th street is unlikely to change in the near term, and may even increase.
- Pedestrian use and right of way access across the abandoned Union Pacific line bridge is uncertain.
- The financial set asides for upgrading transportation infrastructure can be coordinated with other related improvements to realize maximum community benefit.

Environmental

- There is no pending environmental pollution (or contamination) barriers to growth (i.e. tourism, investment, etc.).
- Land falling within the 100-year flood area will remain under threat.
- The sewage treatment plant is on prime land and unlikely to relocate, even in the mid-long term.

The Public Realm/Community and Open Space

- The public realm can be integrated, adapted, and made into a coherent efficient system.

Demographics/Employment/Education

- The political and community will to adapt/embrace relevant and new technologies can be fostered.

Fiscal Health

- The current tax base and other revenue sources severely constrain Benton City's ability to invest in itself and the public realm.
- There is an imbalance between community needs and wants and existing infrastructure. While this may not be true in all areas (i.e. education, jobs etc.) areas like (parks, environmental quality etc.) may require greater resources than are currently available.

Strategic

- Despite past issues, the current relationship with the County and regional agencies is good and can be built upon.

Note that the above assumptions are intended to provide guidance on the full range of concerns that should be discussed in a comprehensive and public process.

2.4 Discussion Items (Questions and Observations)

Following the same broad categories of the assumptions above, several questions and observations were posed by the CPAT to attendees. Not all questions had clear responses, but they remain relevant to resolve in a future comprehensive strategic plan development process. The most unequivocal answers are noted next to each question in *italics*.

Economy

- Can the current (or projected) tax base support what is needed or desired? *Long term, the City relies on grants. Normally there isn't enough money for public improvements.*
- What new or enhanced changes could leverage an increase the tax base without overly stressing existing city infrastructure, or the current citizenry?
- Benton City has a low bonding capacity. What are the various mechanisms to leverage it and is there political and civic will to do so?
- What kind of manufacturing is growing and what opportunities do they offer?
- What winery, manufacturing or other opportunities can be exploited?
- What is the potential of a shared economy in Benton City? Airbnb, Uber? Farm equipment, other?

Transportation

- What are the community and economic impacts of BFCOG's long range transportation plan "Transition 2040" and its related upgrades? What is their timeline?
- What mitigation measures can help alleviate truck traffic if no routing alternatives are possible?
- What are the possibilities of making the railroad bridge across the Yakima River pedestrian and bike safe (i.e. function as a viable non-motorized connector)?
- Timeline for 9th Street sidewalk improvements?
- What are the larger more diverse mobility options for Benton City? Uber/Lyft?
- What multi-modal design options will enhance mobility without compromising access to local businesses (i.e. integrated designs for pedestrians, bicycles, public transit, and vehicles)?

Environmental

- Are there any significant environmental issues that need attention and resources?
- What flood mitigation measures are in place for areas under threat?

The Public Realm/Community and Open Space

- Can open space (i.e. school playgrounds, libraries, parking lots/spaces, parks, the community center, sidewalks etc.) be adapted to allow different purposes that will enhance the community (i.e. public markets, festivals, etc.)? *The community does not have enough volunteers that can provide relief to the usual small pool of people who do.*

Demographics/Employment/Education

- Is the median age rising? – Impact on growth? Only 21% of Benton City's resident population works. Is this adequate?
- What would make Benton City more attractive to those that work there? (majority that work live in surrounding cities). Better live-work balance?
- School system a major employer, but how is the number of kids trending?
- Are there any strategies to keep education relevant to future community needs?

Fiscal Health

- What fiscal priorities constrain the city's ability to invest in itself?
- Is Benton City's infrastructure too much or too little? Is it affordable? What is the right balance?

Strategic

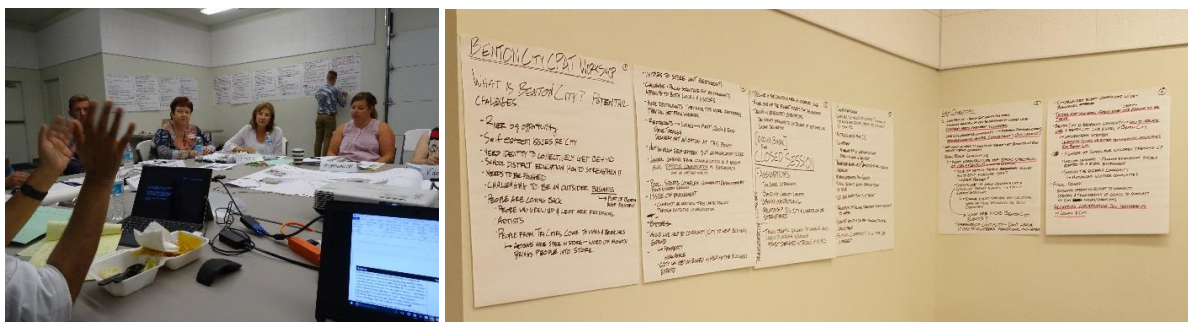
- New strategic alliances with the county, its agencies, and surrounding businesses (local wineries) will be contingent on community vetting and acceptance.
- What are the short and long-term advantages, and concerns with merging or having tighter relationships with the Tri-City Chamber of Commerce, or with Benton County Parks?

2.5 Community Observations

Below are the recorded concerns expressed by the core discussion group and stakeholders during Day Two. This list conveys several ongoing real and perceived consensus issues.

- The Yakima River is an underutilized resource. The challenges of providing adequate and safe access, flood protection, and maintaining environmentally sound areas will need to be addressed.
- Benton City and its residents have a deep self-esteem issue. There is a pervasive feeling that there is not much to do in the town and that it is an ugly cousin to surrounding more prosperous ones.

- School education – needs more attention and teacher/parent involvement.
- It is acknowledged that newcomers are not easily accepted by the community.
- Benton City is seen by its residents to have unrealized potential.
- Most customers (to local businesses) come from the Tri-cities. Without that traffic, local businesses would not survive, or do well.
- The area attracts artists.
- When business owners were asked how their store is found or what attracted customers to them, the mix of responses were: Primary business traffic consists of drive through tourists, year-round service, a diversity of products, and word of mouth popularity. Many felt it was a tough market for their kind of business and that it would help if the AVA was involved.
- There is perceived shortage of eateries, fast food (i.e. no pizza delivery) and restaurants. There also seems to be a net loss of restaurants over time. Businesses countered that it was hard to price appropriately for both locals and visitors since they had different purchasing power. Better restaurants would be able to forge better relationships with surrounding wineries.
- Many felt there was a communication problem with the city and that initiatives made to the city were not treated with a welcoming attitude.
- There is a general despondency amongst citizens. The few that do want to be involved are often discouraged. There is also a pervasive perception that little would be accomplished anyway. Decision and implementation barriers include: an inability to resolve issues, many dead ends, a general attitude of negativity, a reluctance for change, and a failure to translate community aspirations into tangible outcomes.
- A shortage of family oriented activities.
- Not enough safety and security, particularly to address a persistent drug problem.
- There is a high expectation by local businesses that the Port of Benton should invest more in Benton City and support them as they are part of the tax base that supports the Port.
- There are leadership issues in Benton City.
- To expand and grow local businesses, they need to be able to remain competitive, hire more staff, overcome current zoning issues, ensure they can locate in appropriate locations, and maintain a general interest in staying in the town.
- The main commercial and retail stretch of 9th Street continues to decline.
- Local businesses struggle to find a good balance between over or under delivery of goods and services.



Challenge and opportunities discussion and notes

3. Development Strategy Framework

- 3.1 Initiating a Framework
- 3.2 3 Development Approaches
- 3.3 Development Strategy
- 3.4 In Conclusion
- 3.5 Participants

3.1 Initiating a Development Framework

As a preamble to framing a future development strategy, a summary consensus of the most prominent development challenges was determined. In addition, a path to initiating the process and a broad understanding of the necessary development considerations were defined.

Consensus Development Challenges

- Benton City has potential, but it seems unable to leverage itself to become more.
- Red Mountain wineries would be better served by local accommodation, easy access to them, high end restaurants, and related activities. They see Benton City as a viable partner if it tries.
- All sides seem to be waiting for the other to do something.
- Benton City residents feel and sense they are poor cousins to their surroundings. This is an ongoing collective self-esteem problem that needs to be overcome.
- The Yakima River remains an unexploited resource.

Suggested First Steps

- Start a regular and ongoing dialogue between related and allied agencies. To ensure positive momentum this dialogue should begin with agencies and individuals who see potential synergies and an acknowledgement of mutual gain from Benton City's development.
- The challenges of creating better physical access, starting catalytic projects and marketing Benton City should occur in parallel, and in cumulative ways.
- Identify and pursue efforts that will contribute to the most desired gains first.
- Take calculated risks to get the right partners to co-investment.



Strategy Development Session

Development Considerations

- Balanced growth requires a tighter relationship between infrastructure (and its costs) and community needs vs. wants.
- Alternative creative financing methods will be necessary to compensate for a low bonding capacity and to overcome or compensate for reluctance by the community to use it.
- The will to adopt a long-term staged development strategy by the community requires considerable vetting and collective agreement.



Strategy Development Session

3.2 Three Development Approaches

To help participants imagine a viable future oriented development strategy, three different and conceptual development tracks were suggested for elaboration. The suggested common process for each approach was:

- A. Determine Benton City's infrastructure "needs" vs its "wants" through a community driven process.
- B. Have the community decide on priorities based on its current ability (and willingness) to raise revenue for these desired outcomes.
- C. If the outcomes are considered worth it, and cannot be leveraged through current means, then explore creative approaches to overcome the real or perceived barriers.

Approach 1 - Improve Benton City's business environment

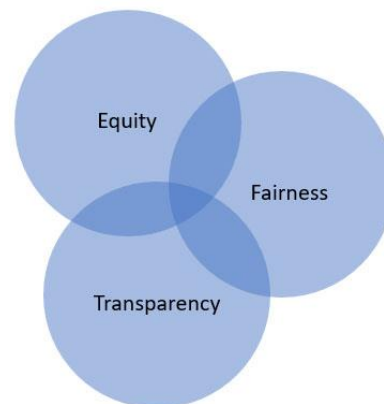
- Explore synergies with local wineries with a view to increasing local spending through tourism and other business synergies.
- Explore reasonable expansion of manufacturing in general and niche sectors (i.e. viticulture?).
- Become more valuable to the County as a venue for commercial activity.

Approach 2 - Look for new sources to attract and retain value

- Become a test site for new rural/suburban learning and education.
- Form better alliances with the County and regional agencies to leverage more funding.
- Improve the ambient quality of life to attract business. This includes improving the quality of the public realm, and a discernable positive change in the overall physical attractiveness of the town. This also includes improving the quality of 9th Street.

Approach 3 - Create a better balance between what the community is, what it aspires to, and what it can support

- Undertake a critical (essential) needs assessment to assure a basic quality of life for all residents. Then identify the shortfall in resources as a basis to pursue appropriate changes and improvements.
- Identify and exploit unique synergies within the community that may allow cost sharing (i.e. mobility, energy, food, education etc.).



Approach 3 Concept

3.3 Development Strategy (Framework)

This is a conceptual framework for a future strategic plan. It is intended to be an example and a template for a more concerted effort by Benton City and its community.

To keep such an effort pragmatic CPAT recommends establishing well defined time bound milestones and outcomes. At the end of each milestone or phase, the city leadership and community should re-evaluate the effectiveness of the effort to determine if the next phase should proceed as planned, or be adjusted to accommodate new and unforeseen changes. Establishing a clear set of deliverables and outcomes for each phase will assure a sense of accomplishment, even if there is a community decision not to pursue any subsequent phase. A good strategic development plan will ensure that the outcomes at the end of each phase are complete and can stand alone (i.e. function) on their own merit with no incomplete and unfunded elements necessary to be used.

Accordingly, CPAT suggests phases of development should frame a future strategic plan. These phases are conceptualized in the first phase being 3 years and the subsequent two phases being of two years each. The following is a suggested concept of how such a plan might look.

Phase 1 - Strategic Plan: Year 0-3 (Completion in 2020)

Open Space & Recreation Development Strategy

- Connect all community assets, including the riverfront, community hall, the library, parks, schools, and trails, plus connections to related business opportunities.
- Develop and complete 2-3 public recreation sites within Benton City during this first phase.

Main Street Development Strategy

- Retention and reinforcement of businesses, and related community events. Clear strategies for economic development. Improved street design and parking.
- Implementation of interim parking consistent with a longer-term parking plan.
- Initiate a storefront and tenancy improvement program.
- Initiate an ongoing dialogue with WSDOT on traffic calming options, and undertake interim implementation pending a fully developed strategy. Explore grant options for funding to develop such a strategy and related plan.
- Complete relevant area traffic & parking studies.
- Instigate 9th Street enhancements consistent with a coherent and phased development strategy. Improvements may include: wider sidewalks (that allow sidewalk cafes), parallel parking (with visible spill over lot parking), enhanced planting and improved signage.



Conceptual 9th Street Enhancements



New Trail on old Yakima River Rail Bridge

Citywide Event Strategy

- Create a citywide “Event Coordination Team” (for event organizing, marketing, and financing)
- Establish and begin periodic high value community centric events (i.e. initiate their organization, marketing, and financing. Organize the most significant and high value events during this phase).

Catalytic Project

- Initiate the necessary discussions for a catalytic development project with a view to reaching an early consensus on a desired outcome (this may be a phased development project).
- Develop an MOU with related agencies and private parties for the agreed upon catalytic project.
- Obtain preliminary financing for the agreed upon catalytic project.
- Formalize a development agreement for a specific site with a development timeline.

Phase 1 Milestones (2020)

- Completion, approval, and initial funding of a comprehensive open space strategic plan.
- Completion of a “Main Street” development strategy.
- Formation of a Citywide “Event Coordination Team” with at least two major city events conducted.
- A development agreement and detailed plan (including preliminary funding) for a catalytic project.

Phase 2 - Strategic Plan: Year 3-5 (Completion in 2022)

Open Space & Recreation Development Strategy

- Connect all community assets, including the riverfront, community hall, the library, parks, schools, and trails, plus connections to related business opportunities.
- 40% completion and implementation of the approved comprehensive open space strategic plan.
- A clear decision on the ability to rehabilitate and use the old Yakima River Railroad Bridge (with agreements, and preliminary funding to do so).

Main Street Development Strategy

- Retention and reinforcement of businesses, and related community events. Clear strategies for economic development. Improved street design and parking.
- Institutionalize city event planning – with more infrastructure installed in key locations, with a streamlined marketing and financing machine.

Citywide Event Strategy

- Complete permanent parking and streetscape improvements, agreements on traffic calming strategies (including standardized wayfinding signage).
- New businesses together with new infill development on 9th Street.
- New signage and storefront standards with first stage implementation.
- First implementation of 9th Street (“main street”) improvements together with a final approved comprehensive urban design and development plan for “main street” (including agreements and funding for economic development as well as, physical and infrastructure improvements).
- Form, fund, initiate, and implement a “Business Improvement District” (BID).



Potential Catalytic Development Site

Catalytic Project

- Determine the final development program and mix of the catalytic project (i.e. wine center, meeting rooms, lodging, brewery, etc.)
- Acquire financing & develop the first phase of the approved catalytic project. Use the undeveloped portion of the project site for interim uses.

Phase 2 Milestones (2022)

- 40% completion and implementation of the approved comprehensive open space strategic plan.
- 50% completion of the “Main Street” development plan with final funding approved.
- The citywide “Event Coordination Team” is well established with two annual well-established events and two new events.
- First phase of the catalytic project completed.
- Final phase of the city development strategy in place with details and operating partnership agreements committed.

Phase 3 - Strategic Plan: Year 5-7 (Completion 2024)

Open Space & Recreation Development Strategy

- Connect all community assets, including the riverfront, community hall, the library, parks, schools, and trails, plus connections to related business opportunities.
- 100% of the open space strategy completed, first phases of implementation complete.
- Committed long-term tie-in and agreements with surrounding wineries

Main Street Development Strategy

- Retention and reinforcement of businesses, and related community events. Clear strategies for economic development. Improved street design and parking.
- 9th Street now a viable active commercial street – complete and functioning as planned.
- An increase in new businesses and infill development.

Citywide Event Strategy

- Citywide annual events well established and financially stable.

Catalytic Project

- Phase 2 completed (75% of total development plan). Phase 2 is adjusted to respond to prevailing economic conditions.

Phase 3 Milestones (2024)

- 100% completion and implementation of the approved comprehensive open space strategic plan.
- 100% completion of the “Main Street” development plan with maintenance funding and mechanisms in place.
- Citywide events in place, financially stable and a regional attraction.
- Phase 2 development of the catalytic project is complete.
- Final development program for the catalytic project in place. Development and operating partnership agreements in place.



Yakima River Crossing

3.4 In Conclusion

It is the CPAT's hope that this short and concentrated exercise will stimulate and inspire Benton City and its citizens to develop the strategic development framework it so desperately needs. All the essential ingredients for it already exist. The community is surrounded by well-established wineries who are waiting for an equal partner. The Port of Benton is already a good investor, and Benton City's citizens are keen to not feel like poor cousins to surrounding communities.

The biggest apparent hurdles are a lack of clarity on how development should occur, and how to leverage it in a sustainable and financially responsible manner. A measured and adaptive development strategy such as the conceptual one laid out here should provide inspiration for a community driven approach that leverages positive change.

3.5 Participants

Bob Bengford AICP Partner, MAKERS architecture and urban design
CPAT Co-Chair



Bob is the Chair of the Washington State American Planning Association's CPAT program and partner at Makers architecture and urban design. He manages a variety of complex community planning and design projects and is an expert in crafting form-based design regulations.

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Arun has more than three decades of US and international experience in practice and academia. His over 90 public and private projects include 20 in Portland, Oregon where he was the city's first Chief Urban Designer. Among them he helped form the Pearl District and South Waterfront neighborhoods, established the urban design for the Transit Mall, and Director Park. Based in Seattle, Arun also serves on the University of Washington's Urban Design, and Planning Professionals Council.

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Appendix A Background Report

History & Geography

Benton City, WA is in Benton County along the Yakima River approximately 17 miles east of the City of Prosser and 9 miles west of the City of West Richland and the area known as the Tri-Cities (Richland, Kennewick, and Pasco). The City of Yakima lies 65 miles to the northwest. Because Benton City is situated within a sharp bend of the Yakima River, the river flows along the city's eastern and southern borders. Benton City has a total area of 2.49 square miles of which .03 square miles are water. Interstate Highway, I-82, and State Highways, WA-224 and WA-225 intersect south of the city, with WA-225 serving as one of the city's main roads.

Benton City lies within the Yakima Valley, a region rich in agricultural land producing crops such as apples, cherries, peaches, and grapes. In 1983, the Yakima Valley became the first American Viticulture Area (AVA) in Washington State. Today, the Yakima Valley is home to five additional AVA's including the Red Mountain AVA, located east of Benton City across the Yakima River, and Horse Heaven Hills AVA, located to the south. Benton and Yakima counties produce half of the wine production in Washington State. Benton County ranks first in the state in grape production.



Benton City Limits

Until the late 1850's, the area of Benton City was home to many Native American tribes including the Yakama, Umatilla, Klickitat, and the Walla Walla tribes who relied on the Columbia River and its tributaries. Wars and treaties between Native Americans and the American government resulted in the relocation of tribes to reservations located in Washington and Oregon.

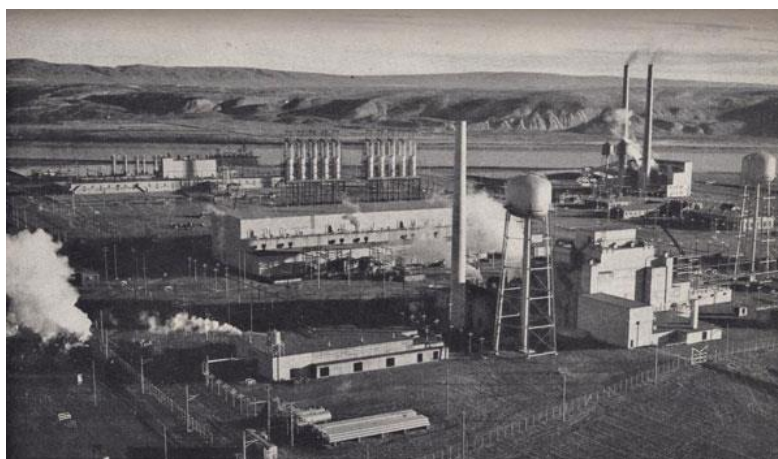
Benton City was founded in 1909 by F. L. Pitman who served as an engineer for the Oregon-Washington Railroad and Navigation Company (OWR&N Co.). With the hope of Benton City becoming a major railway location for freight and passenger travel, the city encouraged many to move to the area resulting in the construction of a railway station. In 1915, the Washington Irrigation Company extended the Sunnyside Canal allowing Benton City access to irrigation. Although the rail line in Benton City served as a successful junction for the Walla Walla and Yakima lines until 1918, the rail failed to meet expectations due to lack of growth and difficulty in competing with a booming agricultural industry. Land intended for development became the responsibility of the Spokane and Eastern Trust and soon afterward, Stephen J. Harrison founded the Benton Land Company to manage the land. Today, the railway station still remains and serves as one of the city's historic places.



Railroad Depot, 1911

At the time Benton County had been established in 1907, Prosser, WA was designated as the county seat. Due to its expected growth from the rail line at that time, Benton City sparked a competition with Prosser, WA and Kennewick, WA to become the county seat in the 1912 elections, despite the fact that it was an unincorporated city. Despite Benton City's offer to donate land for the location of a new courthouse, Prosser retained its title. The debate had become so contentious that it caused the state senate to pass a bill that denied any change of the county seat until 1920, after which the debate continued into the 1922 elections. Today, Prosser continues to serve as the county seat.

In 1943, during World War II, the region experienced an increase of 60,000 in population with the construction of the Hanford nuclear plant located north of Richland. The plant's production of plutonium would be used in both WWII and the Cold War. The most advanced nuclear reactor, the "N", attracted the attention of John F. Kennedy who visited the site in 1963. The plant remained in operation until 1987. In 1989, the site had been determined as a risk to the public and the environment resulting in the creation of the Tri-Party Agreement to clean the site. Unfortunately, Benton City had very high levels of plutonium contamination. Although clean-up efforts continue today, the Hanford site offers tours to the public of the clean-up efforts and the history of the site.



Hanford Site, 1945

Today, the region thrives on agricultural production and tourism due to the number of wineries in the area. Over the last decade, Benton City has looked to revitalize its downtown and economic development by taking advantage of its unique location within the region.



Events & Attractions

Annual Events

- Spring Opener Car & Bike Show
- City Wide Yard Sale
- 4th of July Flag Raising and Celebration
- Benton City Daze
- Children's Easter Egg Hunt and Community Easter Sunrise Service
- All School Reunion Picnic
- National Night Out
- Downtown Trick or Treat
- Winterfest
- Light up the City in December

Attractions

The City owns a total of 7.5 acres of park property, of which approximately 3.7 acres are developed for recreational use.

- **City Park:** Amenities at the park include restrooms, playground equipment, a stage, and a kitchen and picnic area.
- **Benton City Community Center:** is located at the south end of City Park and serves as the location for community meetings, activities, and events.
- **Legion Heights Park:** includes playground equipment, basketball court, horseshoe pits, and picnic area.
- **Archie Borden Park:** includes two tennis courts, volleyball courts, a skate park and a parking area. It is also known as Prospect Park.
- **Skatepark:** located in Archie Borden Park, it attracts hundreds of skate board enthusiasts to competitive events held once or twice a year with assistance and support from the Benton City Economic Development Council and Chamber of Commerce.
- **Sportsman Park:** includes a concrete boat ramp, two picnic areas, gravel parking, and an information kiosk. It is also known as Yakima River Access Park.
- **Field of Dreams Park:** is owned by the Lion's Club and includes a playground, ball field and basketball hoops.
- **Walking/Bike Trail:** Constructed in 2008, the paved trail stretches 2.0 miles traveling east from 14th Avenue near Chris Avenue to Dinah Lane before traveling northward toward the vicinity of Hope Lane. Benches, trash cans and doggy stations are located along the path.



Benton City Daze



Sportsman Park



Winterfest



Downtown Trick or Treat

Demographics

Benton City is the smallest incorporated city in Benton County. In 2016, the Office of Financial Management (OFM) estimated the population as 3,325. This would indicate an increase of almost 10% from the 2010 Census and an increase of 27% from the 2000

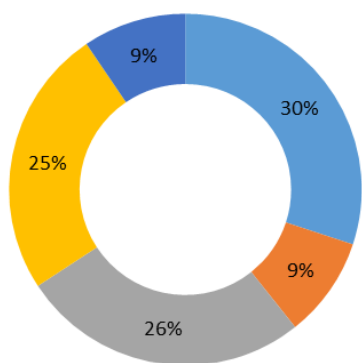
Census. Benton County estimates also indicate an increase of 23% from 2000 to 2010. The increase in population can be attributed to the agriculture production attracting both job seekers and tourists to the region.

According to the 2010 Census, the population is relatively evenly distributed for age groups under 18, between 25 and 44, and between 45 and 66. Those between 18 and 24 years and 65 years and over make up a smaller percentage of the population. The median age is 32.8 and the gender makeup of the city is 50.6% male and 49.4% female.

The ethnic make-up shows that 78.6% of the population is white and the second largest group is Hispanic with 28.5%. Additional groups include American Indian and Alaska Native, Asian, Black, and Native Hawaiian and other Pacific Islander representing 1% or less of the total population. Those categorized as other or two or more races make up 16.3% and 3.2% of the population, respectively.

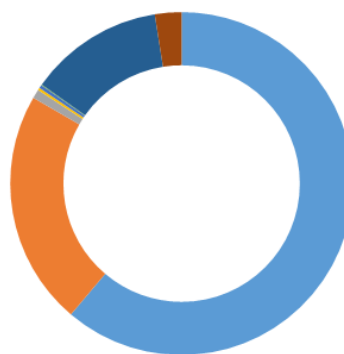
According to the 2010 Census, there were 1,086 households in Benton City, of which 68% were family households with 35% living with own children under 18. Out of the family households, 47.1% were married couples living together, 6.2% were male householders with no wife present, and 14.7% were female householders with no husband present. Nonfamily households make up 32% of all households with 24.8% living alone. Households living with individuals 65 years and older made up 20.1%. The average household size was 2.8 and the average family size was 3.38. Out of the 1,162 total housing units available in 2010, data for housing occupancy shows a low vacancy rate of 6.5 percent. The rate of occupied housing units was 93.5% with 71.9% owned and 28.1% rented.

Age Distribution, 2010



- Under 18
- Between 18 to 24 years
- 25 to 44 years
- 45 to 64 years
- 65 years and over

Ethnicity, 2010



- White (78.6%)
- Hispanic (28.5%)
- American Indian and Alaska Native (1.1%)
- Asian (0.3%)
- Black (0.4%)
- Native Hawaiian and other Pacific Islander (0.1%)
- Other race (16.3%)
- Two or more races (3.2%)

Economy

The local economy is growing based on the increase in jobs and population. In Benton City, the local economy is based on providing services to the local residents and workers. Regionally, the tourism and the wine industry are growing in Benton County.

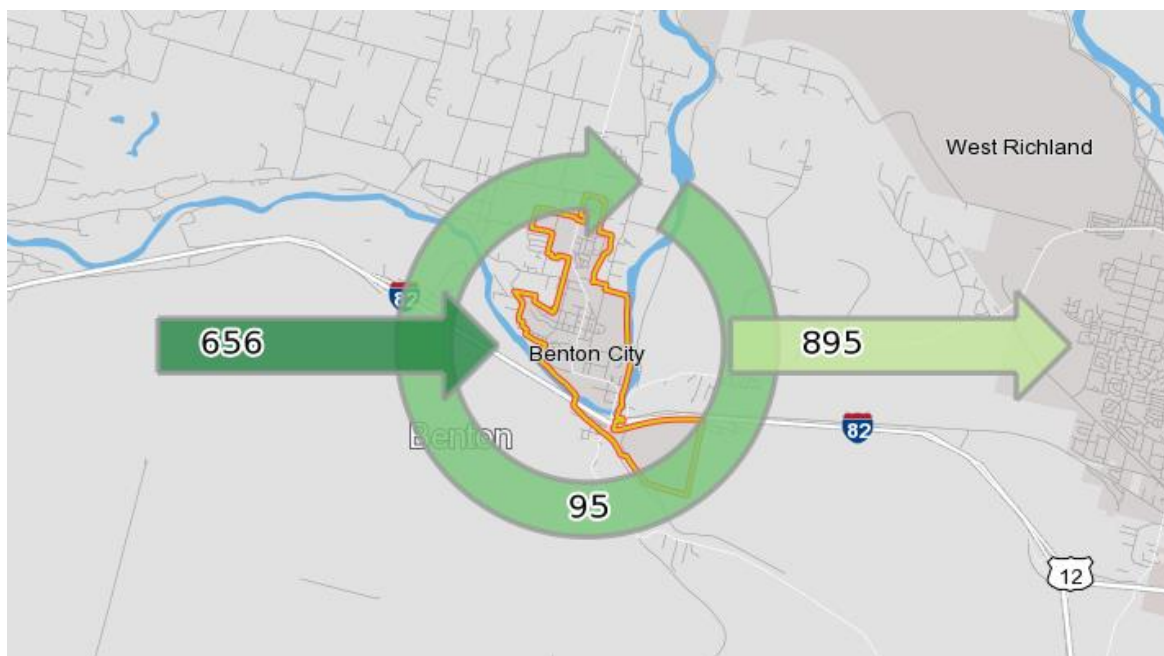
Employment

The total number of jobs in Benton City is relatively small with an estimated 710 jobs in 2014. However, employment has increased substantially due to the addition of manufacturing and to a lesser extent health care sector jobs between 2010 and 2014. The school system is also one of the largest and most stable sources of jobs in the community.

Retail and food service jobs are a relatively small share of total employment in the city and they have decreased since 2005. The large majority of residents of Benton City work outside of the city. Conversely, the large majority of those that work in Benton City also live elsewhere and commute to Benton City.

Employment by Sector			
Sector	2005	2010	2014
Manufacturing	27	6	305
Education	230	250	217
Construction	66	4	64
Health Care	8	9	59
Retail Food Service	26	37	26
Retail	42	27	23
WTU	4	4	8
Services	0	0	8
Other	25	0	0
Total	428	337	710

Source: US Census, Longitudinal Employee-Household Dynamics

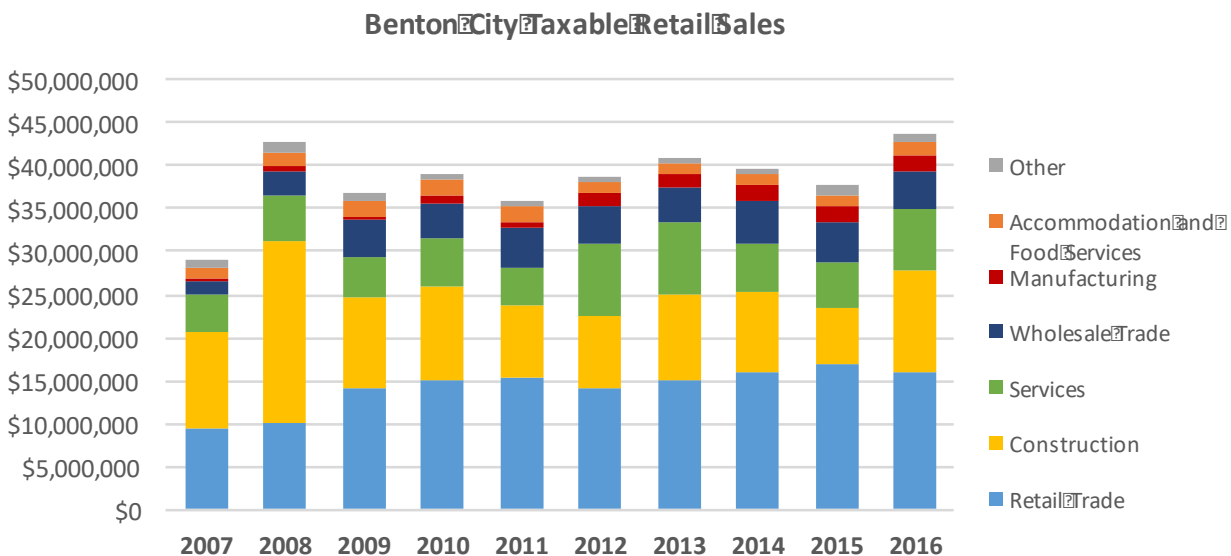


Commute Inflow-Outflow

Source: US Census, Longitudinal Employee-Household Dynamics

Taxable Retail Sales

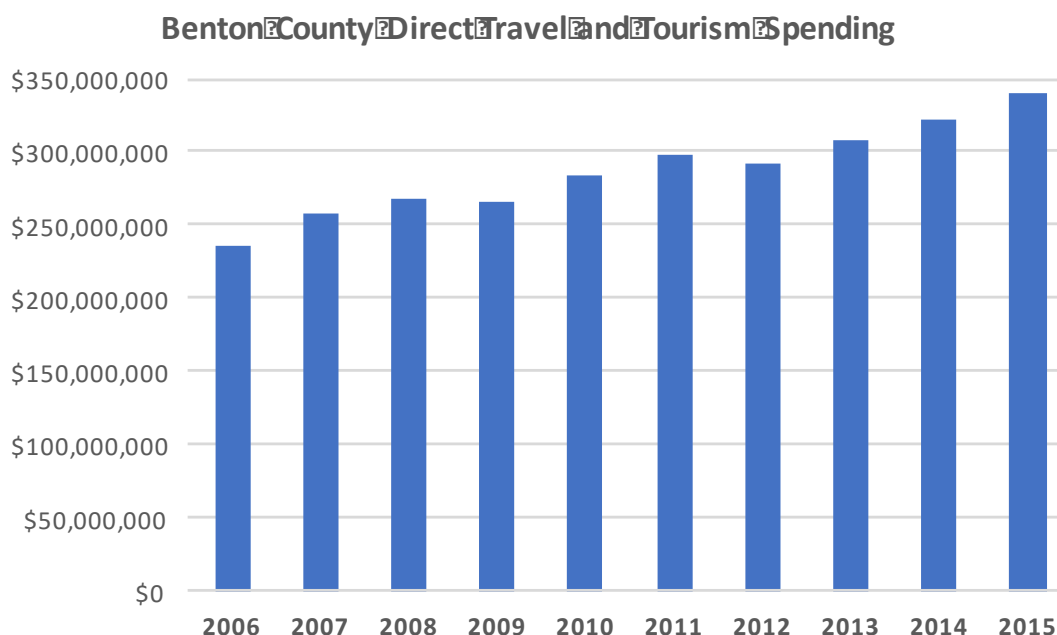
Total taxable retail sales in the city (adjusted for inflation) have increased by over \$14.5 million in the last ten years. Taxable retail sales in 2016 reach \$43.5 million, the highest since 2008. However, taxable retail sales have varied year to year, particularly due to the amount of taxable retail sales generated by construction activity in the city. Retail sector sales have been stable since 2009 at around \$15 million in sales per year.



Source: Washington State Department of Revenue

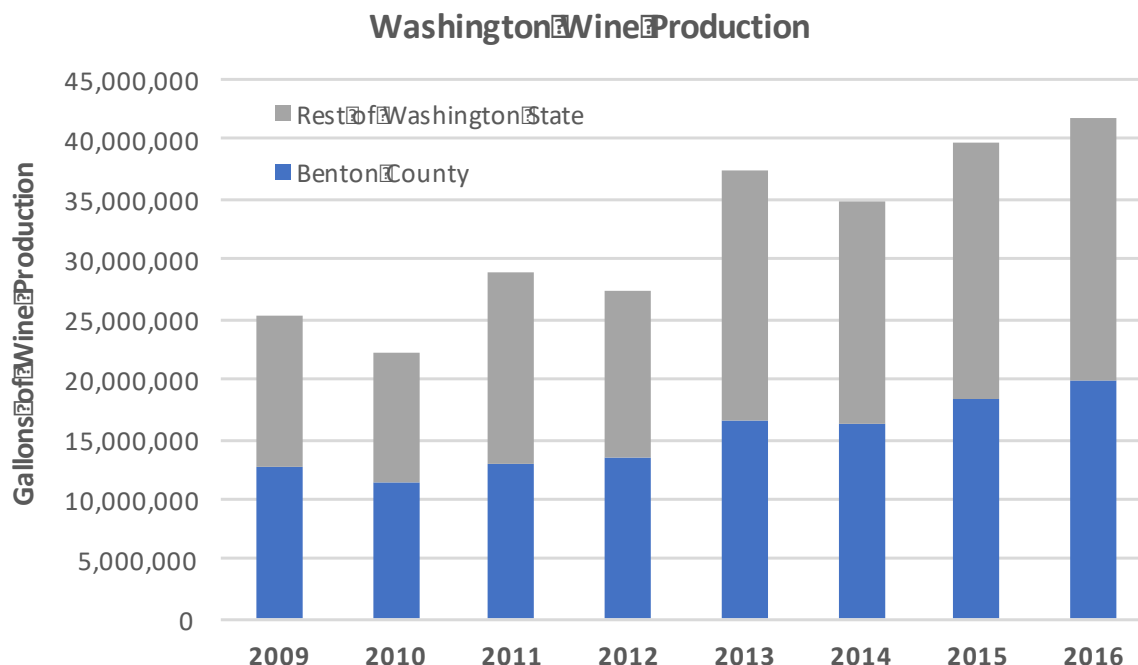
Spending and Tourism

Direct spending on travel and tourism related activities has increased in the region since 2006. Spending declined a bit with the recession starting in 2008, but spending has increased to almost \$350 million a year, the most recent year with available data.



Source: TRIDEC, Benton-Franklin Trends

The wine industry in Washington State and Benton County has also grown. Total production of wine has increased since 2009 to over 41 million gallons statewide. Benton County is a sizable share of the wine production in the state accounting for almost half (47 percent) of wine production in the state in 2016.



Source: TRIDEC, Benton-Franklin Trends

The Red Mountain American Viticultural Area (AVA), which just east of Benton City, is one of the three wine producing AVAs in the county. In 2012, the Red Mountain AVA Master Site Plan was updated to develop a vision for the future growth of the AVA and manage growth to maintain existing qualities that make the area desirable for the wine industry and visitors. An estimated 25,000 visitors visited the Red Mountain AVA in 2007. The plan projects a wide range of future visitors by 2025 depending on a variety of factors. Through population growth, with all other factors the same as today, the number of visitors would reach 33,000 by 2025. On the high end, there may be potential for over 300,000 visitors through the addition of new wineries, tourist infrastructure improvements, and other market factors.

The vision for the area includes the addition of new facilities to support tourism including a Wine Village and educational and interpretive experiences. These additions will likely generate demand for dining and lodging opportunities nearby. However, the ultimate location of the proposed Wine Village and uses included could either support or limit the opportunities for those uses in nearby locations. For example, the inclusion of retail and food service uses in the Wine Village may limit the need for visitors to visit locations such as Benton City for similar uses and services.

Education

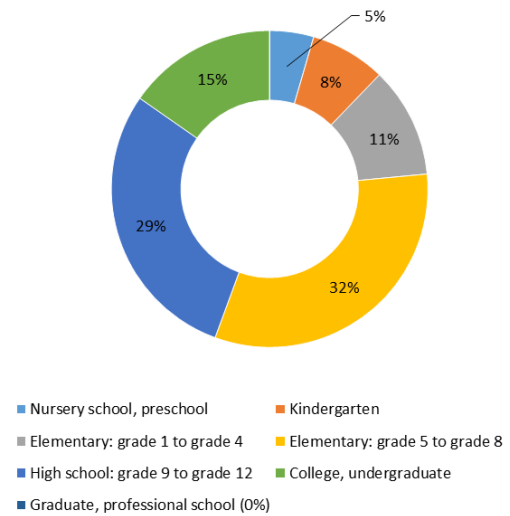
The Kiona-Benton Public School District manages one high school, one middle school, one elementary school, and one intermediate school within the city. There is also a Columbia Basin College Running Start and a Tri-Tech Skills Center.

According to the American Community Survey's 2015 estimations the largest percentage of school enrollment was for grades 5 through 8 with 32%. The second largest enrollment rate was high school grades 9 through 12. The rate for college, undergraduate degrees was 15%.

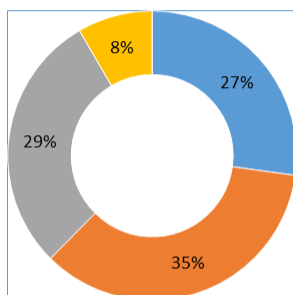
American Community Survey estimates for education attainment are divided into two groups based on US Census data. The first group is ages 18 to 24 years and the second group is 25 years or older.

The estimates for the first group are evenly distributed with 27% having attained less than high school, 35% having graduated high school, and 29% having received some college or an associate's degree. Although estimates show that only 8% have attained a bachelor's degree, many categorized within this group are most likely pursuing a bachelor's and have not yet attained that level of education. In the group 25 years and over, 17% have not graduated high school whereas 30% have graduated high school or equivalent. With regard to college level education, 30% have some college education, 9% have an associate's degree, 12% have a bachelor's degree, and 3% have a graduate or professional degree. Overall, 54% of those 25 years and older have gone to college, with 24% having completed and received a degree.

School Enrollment by Level of School, 2015

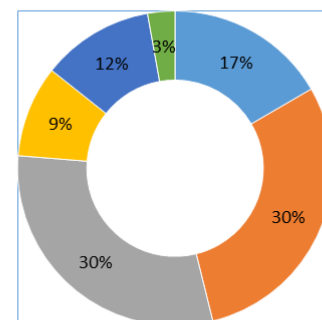


Education Attainment for Population
18 to 24 years, 2015



- Less than high school graduate
- High school graduate (includes equivalency)
- Some college or associate's degree

Education Attainment for Population
25 years and over, 2015



- Less than high school graduate
- High school graduate (includes equivalency)
- Some college, no degree
- Associate's degree
- Bachelor's degree
- Graduate or professional degree

Transportation

Relevant city planning documents

Benton-Franklin Council of Governments (BFCG)

- **2016 Regional Active Transportation Plan**

The purpose of this document is to report on the status of bicycle and pedestrian planning and Implementation in the Tri-Cities Metropolitan Area and in Benton and Franklin Counties. One of the goals of the plan includes the adoption of the Tapteal Greenway Concept Plan, and prepare and facilitate the realization of a Greenway along the riverine corridor of the lower Yakima River from just west of Benton City and extending downstream to Columbia Point and including Bateman Island.

- **Transition2040**

Transition2040 is a long-range, multi-modal planning document that identifies the mobility needs of the region through the year 2040. It provides a policy framework for the investment of anticipated federal, state and local funds, based on the anticipated needs and regional goals and objectives. Corridors that are currently part of the Corridor Sketch Initiative in the BFCG region include SR 224, I-82 Jct. (Benton City) to SR 240 Jct. (Richland) SR 225, SR 224 Jct. (Benton City) to SR 240 Jct.

- **Transportation Improvement Program (TIP)**

The 2017 TIP is a list of proposed, upcoming transportation projects within the Tri-Cities Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO) and the Benton-Franklin Regional Transportation Planning Organization (RTPO). Projects for Benton City include constructing new curbs and sidewalks with ADA ramps, overlay and widening of the streets, and roads reconstruction.

- **Ben Franklin Transit's Transit Development Plan (TDP)**

Ben Franklin Transit's TDP provides a summary of information as well as projected changes over the next six-years. The TDP includes a summary document which shows the size of the fleet, costs, revenue, service revenue hours, revenue miles, expenses, operating characteristics and capital expenditures.

City of Benton

- **City of Benton City Comprehensive Plan**

The Comprehensive Plan is a broad statement of community goals and policies that direct the orderly and coordinated physical development of the City. The City anticipates the following major street projects through the year 2023: Chris Avenue; 8th & Della Sidewalks, curb & gutter; Edith Avenue Completion; 9th Street sidewalk.

- **Benton City Action Plan**

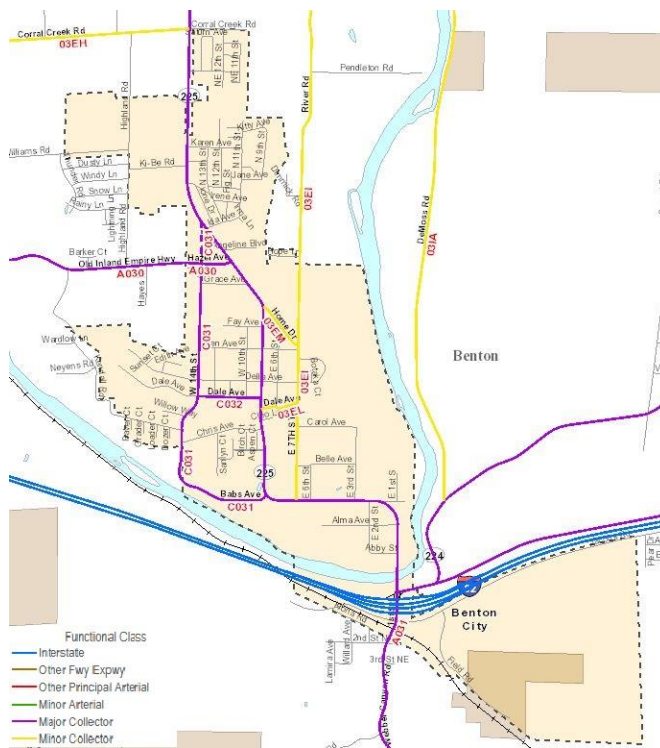
Benton City Action Plan was developed to develop an action plan to improve the appearance of downtown and to revitalize the local economy. The Main Street Program provides a structure and process for revitalization that emphasizes existing cultural and physical assets of downtown such as small businesses

Streets and highways

Benton City is connected to the interstate system (I-82) on the south side of the Yakima River at SR 225/I-82. I-82 provides connection to the Tri-Cities (Richland, Kennewick, and Pasco) to the east and Yakima to the west. The Benton City is divided to the north and south by the Yakima River and I-82, and to the east and west by SR 225 (Horne Road). Hazel Avenue (Old Inland Empire Highway) traverses westerly from SR 225 to Biggam, Whitsran and Prosser adding to the traffic on Horne Road.

Horne Road serves the high school and provides access to the downtown area. The historical area of Kiona is situated south of I-82. All City streets and state highways within the City of Benton City are two lane facilities; there are no traffic signals at intersections.

Some improvements have been made recently at the SR 224/225 intersection by eliminating two stop signs and building a roundabout. The I-82 interchange at Benton City serves most of the city's commercial activity.

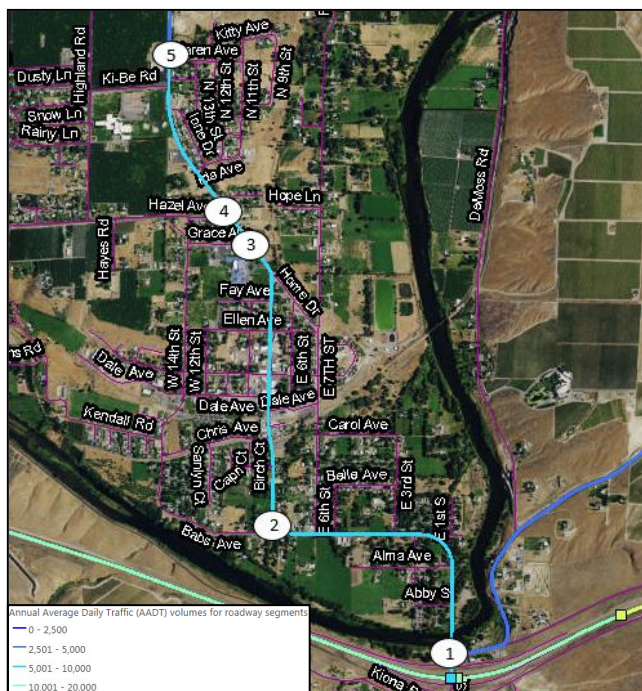


WSDOT Functional Classification Map

Traffic Volumes

SR 225 is the main getaway that connects Benton City with I-82. Hence, it is vital to track the traffic volumes along this corridor.

Historical average daily traffic volumes are shown along SR 225 in Table 1. The traffic volumes shown represent the approximate volumes in both directions of travel. Traffic volumes for all intersections captured along SR 225 increased around 3 – 8% between 2012 and 2015. Traffic volumes steadily decrease (around 66% decrease) heading north along the corridor, with the highest volumes recorded at the intersection of SR 225 & Kennedy Rd, and the lowest volumes recorded at Horne Drive & Karen Avenue, indicating that much of the traffic utilizing this corridor is local.



WSDOT Average Daily Traffic Counts for SR 225

Intersection	Location	2012	2013	2014	2015
1	SR 225 (Kiona Bridge) & Kennedy Rd	9,500	9,800	10,000	10,000
2	Babs Avenue & 9th Street	7,200	7,100	7,400	7,600
3	Horne Drive & Grace Ave	7,100	7,300	7,500	7,700
4	Horne Drive & Hazel Avenue	5,500	5,500	5,700	5,800
5	Horne Drive & Karen Avenue	3,300	3,200	3,300	3,400

Table 1. Average Daily Traffic Counts for SR 225

Source: WSDOT

SR 224 is the corridor that connects Benton City with the developments on the eastern side of Yakima River. Average daily traffic volumes in 2015 along SR 224 are shown in Table 2.

Location	2015
Kennedy Rd	4,900
Kennedy Rd & SR 224	4,900
SR 224 (after the intersection with Kennedy Rd)	3,700

Table 2. Average Daily Traffic Counts for SR 224

Source: WSDOT

Parking

Most of the parking in Benton City is off-street. In the downtown area, it is curbside. Due to the rural character of the community, current parking capacity and configurations are sufficient.

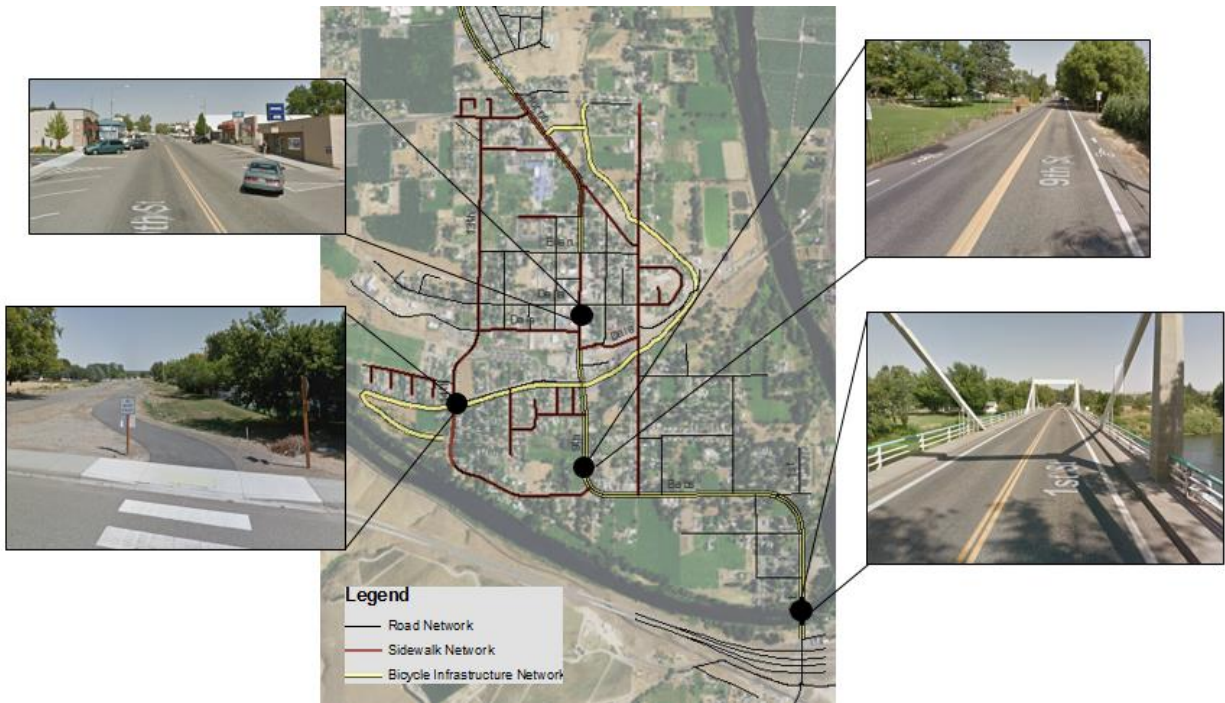
Bicycle/Pedestrian

SR 225 has a Westside diamond lane for bicycles from the Yakima River Bridge to Dale Avenue. On SR 225, beginning at Ellen Avenue, a west side parallel pathway extends northward to Grace Avenue beyond which a diamond lane extends to the north city limits. A multi-use path begins at a trailhead at 14th Street south of Chris Avenue.

The path extends along to the north providing access to the schools and terminates at Hope Lane for a total length of approximately 1.85 miles. This path will eventually connect with the future Tapteal Greenway path system along the Yakima River to Richland.

Sidewalks serve pedestrian movement through the commercial core that is located along 9th Street from Dale Avenue to Ellen Avenue while bicycles are routed around the commercial core from Dale Avenue to Ellen Avenue. Babs Avenue, 14th and 13th Streets extending west from SR 225 then north to Hazel Avenue has sidewalks and is suitable for bicycle use.

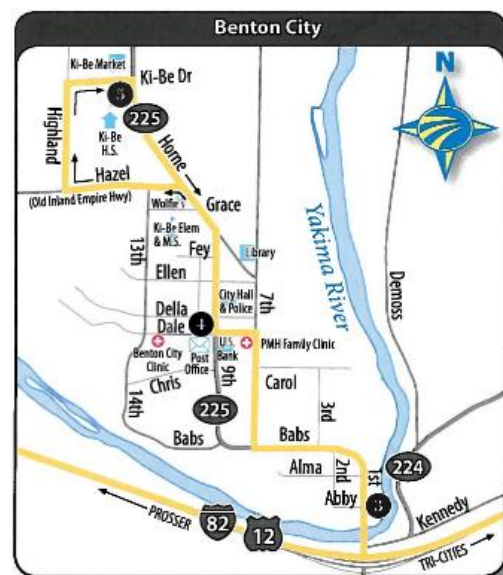
Newer neighborhoods have also been constructed with sidewalks. Sidewalks are infrequent within the City; however, the sidewalk system is developing.



Bicyclist and Pedestrians Facilities
Source: Google Maps

Transit Service

Ben Franklin Transit (BFT) provides community fixed route bus service in Benton City and throughout the Tri-City area. Service in Benton City is provided by Route 170 every two hours in each direction on weekdays from 6:30 AM to 5:30 PM. Two buses run each direction on Saturdays. The fixed route bus system does not operate on Sundays, but evening and Sunday transit service can be obtained through BFT night service. Ben Franklin Transit of the Tri-Cities operates a regional rideshare/vanpool program. A Park and Ride facility is situated southeast of the intersection of SR 225/Dale Avenue. Closest Grey Hound bus stop is in Pasco.



BFT Route 170
Source: BFT

Parking Lot	Capacity	March	June	September	December	2015 Average
Benton City Transit	37	24	24	18	20	22

Table 3. Park & Ride Utilization

Data source Benton Franklin Council of Governments

Aviation Facilities

The Tri-Cities Airport in Pasco is 20.7 miles from Benton City. The Tri-Cities airport is classified as an air carrier airport, and offers direct passenger service to Seattle, Portland, Salt Lake City, San Francisco, Minneapolis/St. Paul, Denver, Los Angeles, Las Vegas and Mesa, Arizona.

Railroads

The Burlington Northern-Santa Fe (BNSF) mainline from Seattle to Chicago passes through Benton City on the south side of the Yakima River. There are currently no railroad connections or stops in Benton City. Closest railroad stop is in Pasco.

Truck Routes

The Washington State Freight and Goods Transportation System (FGTS) is used to classify state highways, county roads, and city streets according to average annual gross truck tonnage they carry as directed by RCW 47.05.021. The FGTS establishes funding eligibility for the Freight Mobility Strategic Investment Board (FMSIB) grants and supports designations of HSS (Highways of Statewide Significance) corridors, pavement upgrades, traffic congestion management, and other state investment decisions.

The Statewide Freight and Goods Transportation System route segments within Benton City are as follows:

	Tonnage Class	Annual Tonnage
I-82	T1	Over 10,000
SR 225	T3	300 to 5,000
Old Inland Empire Highway	T3	300 to 5,000
Corral Creek Road	T4	Seasonal Weight Restrictions

Table 4. Freight and Goods Annual Tonnage

Heavy vehicle percentages along SR 225 and SR 224 are shown in Table 5.

Location	2015		
	Single Truck Unit	Double Truck Unit	Triple Truck Unit
SR 225 (Kiona Bridge) & Kennedy Rd	8.11%	2.03%	0.12%
Horne Drive & Karen Avenue	4.13%	1.45%	0.72%
Kennedy Rd & SR 224	8.54%	2.31%	0.1%
SR 224 (after the intersection with Kennedy Rd)	9.09%	2.53%	0.14%

Table 5. Percentage of Trucks grouped by truck type

Source: WSDOT

Transportation Concerns

Some of the concerns that have been collected at the workshops (documented in Regional Active Transportation Plan and BFCOG Workshop):

- More Signage is needed along bike paths showing where you are and which way to the nearest city or the continuation of the path.
- No sign exists directing traffic to Benton City from the I-82/SR224/225 intersection.
- Signs existing in and around downtown Benton City do not directly or indirectly communicate the culture of Benton City with consistency and clarity.
- High amount of freight traffic going through the downtown area and adversely affect development in downtown Benton City.
- Traffic conditions in the downtown area are hazardous.
- Bike and pedestrian facilities are inadequate.
- Traffic calming facilities are needed in Benton City.
- Commuter traffic need to be discouraged.
- Shoulders along the highway north of Benton City need to be widened.
- Pedestrian facilities on the bridge over the Yakima River are inadequate.
- Bike lane on Van Giesen Street (SR 224) to I-82/SR 224 Interchange (Benton City) with Share the Road signs (bike lane width, missing connection).

Community Facilities

- **Downtown Commercial Core** is an important focal point of the city hosting various events and home to a number of popular businesses and services.
- **Yakima River** and associated riverfront public lands and views are a major character deriving feature of the City. Sportsman Park, located on the north side of the river by the Highway 225 bridge, includes a boat ramp and picnic facilities.
- **City Park** is 1.31 acres in size and is located one block east of Hwy 225 (Division Street) between Dale and Main Street. Amenities at the park include restrooms, playground equipment, a stage, and a kitchen and picnic area.
- **Benton City Community Center** is located at the south end of City Park. The 3200 square-foot center consists of a large meeting room, full kitchen and restrooms. It serves as the location for community meetings, activities and events, and is available to the community for rent for private events.
- **Kiona Benton Public School Facilities** provide additional space such as gyms, soccer fields, tennis courts, baseball & softball fields for the community.
- **The Walking/Bike Trail** is a paved pathway along the Kiona Canal from 14th Avenue from the Yakima River east and north to the vicinity of Hope Lane, a distance of approximately 2.0 miles. Benches, trash cans and doggy stations are located along the path.
- **The Benton City Library** is a social hub for the city offering a wide variety of services to the community and surrounding area.
- **PMH Family Medicine** is the health clinic serving the Benton City community.
- **The Ben Franklin Transit** operates out of the Tri-Cities, but offers an intercity bus route to Benton City complete with a Park and Ride.
- **Addition facilities** include the City Hall, Chamber of Commerce, Senior Center, and Fairgrounds.



Downtown core



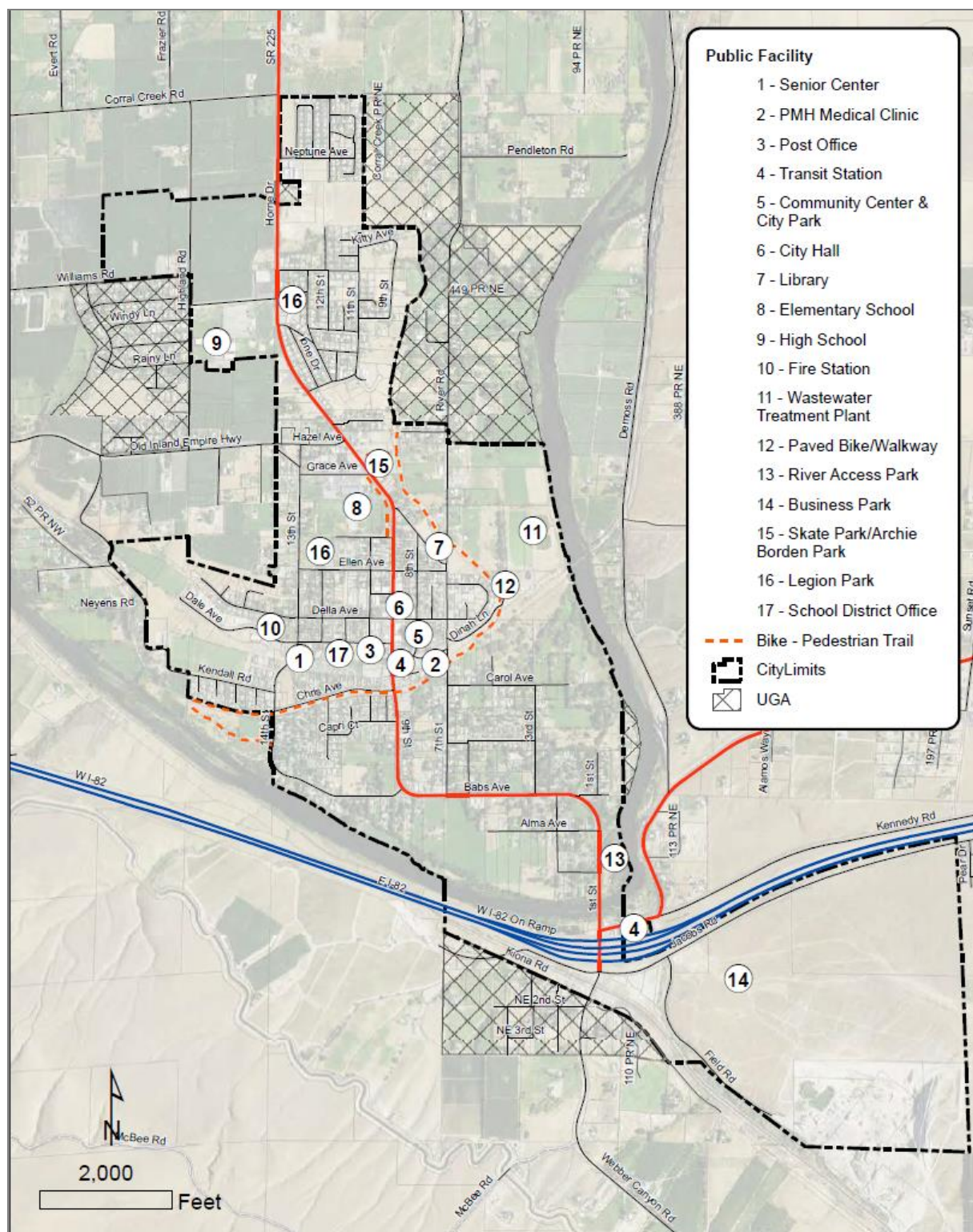
Yakima River



Benton City High School

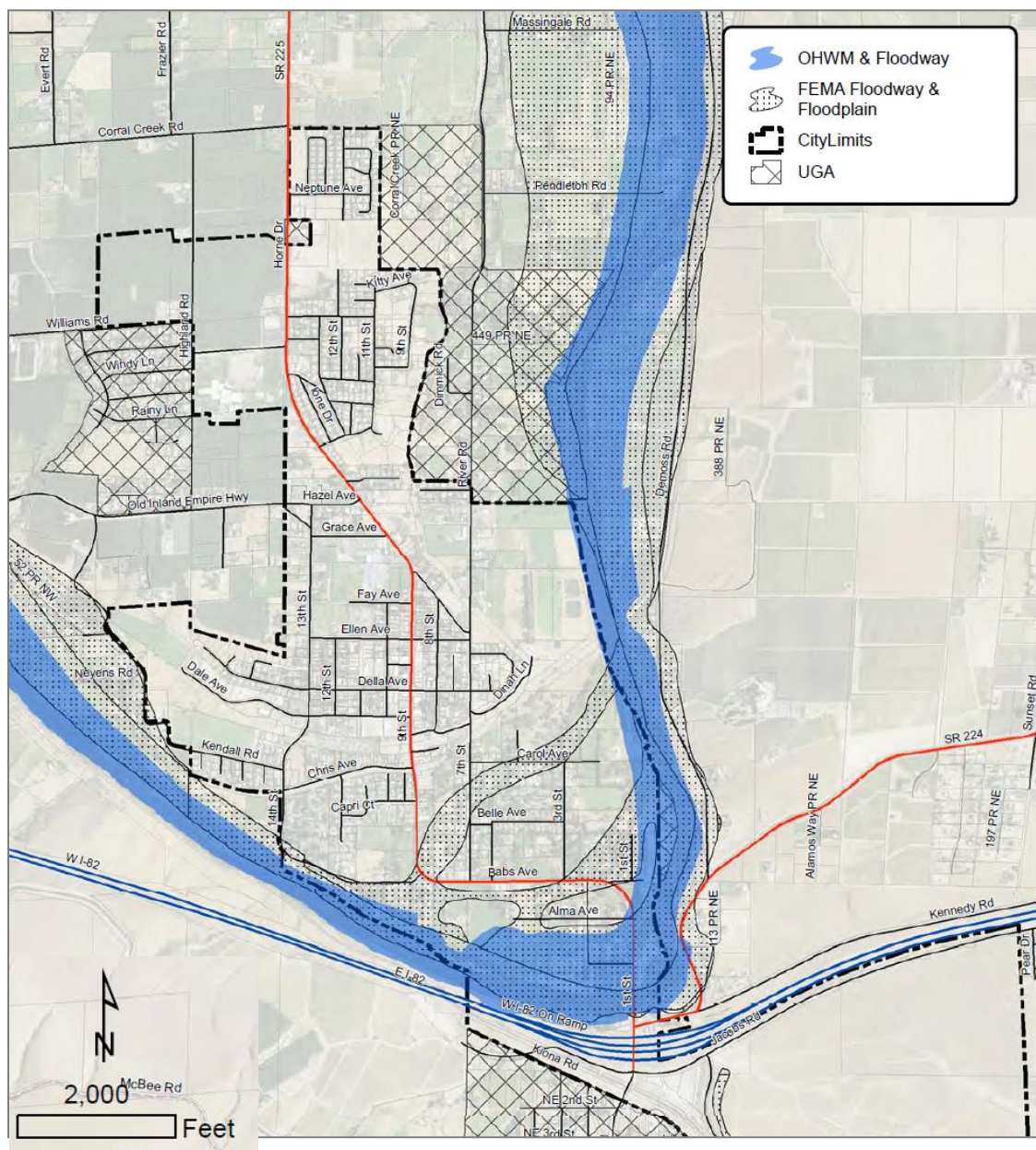


Benton City Library



Floodway & Floodplain

Damage from flooding along the Yakima River has occurred periodically in Benton City. Flood stage for the river is at 13.0 feet and is measured at the Kiona gage near the SR 223 bridge in Benton City. The County has determined that moderate flooding occurs when flows at this gage measure above 14.5 feet and major flooding occurs above 16.0 feet (Benton County Emergency Services 2012). The floodway boundary includes the Yakima River's aquatic area and the adjacent areas that are necessary to discharge a base flood without cumulatively increasing the water surface elevation more than 1 foot.



Floodway and ordinary high water mark map (from the draft 2017 Benton City Comprehensive Plan)

Land Use & Zoning

The Benton City and its UGA contain approximately 2.5 square miles in area. Much of the UGA consists of residential uses on the northeast and northwest sides of the City. As shown in Table 6 below, about 55 percent of the City and UGA land is residential. Approximately nine percent of the total land within the City is designated commercial, and 23 percent is designated industrial.

Land Use	UGA (acre)	City (acre)	Grand Total (acre)	% of Total
Residential	332.3	604.5	936.8	55
Parks		12.4	12.4	1
Commercial	2.4	152.6	155.0	9
Manufacturing/Light Industrial	14.1	375.7	389.8	23
Government		98.7	98.7	6
Agricultural Suburban	6.1	110.2	116.3	7
Grand Total	354.9	1354.1	1709.0	100

Table 6. Land use acreage, 2017 Draft Comprehensive Plan

As part of the comprehensive plan update, the City is examining its ability to meet the projected twenty-year demand for housing and jobs. As a part of this work, the City analyzed the vacant and underutilized parcels within the City limits. Table 7 below illustrates the results, which show that there is plenty of underutilized land in the city limits and UGA to meet future industrial, commercial and residential growth needs.

Land Use	UGA	City	Total
Commercial			
Developed	2.4	41.5	43.9
Underutilized/Vacant		111.1	111.1
Government			
Developed		91.6	91.6
Underutilized/Vacant	0	7.1	7.1
Manufacturing/Light Industrial			
Developed	11.7	97.2	108.9
Underutilized/Vacant	2.4	278.5	280.9
Residential			
Developed	249.9	430.8	680.7
Underutilized/Vacant	82.4	173.7	256.1

*Table 7. Developed and undeveloped land.
2017 Draft Comprehensive Plan*

Concurrent Planning Activities

Today, Benton City is currently updating their Comprehensive Plan for 2017 as required by the periodic update requirement of RCW 36.70A.130(1). The major objectives of the plan include:

- Attract more people in the downtown area with a lively ambience of people sitting in cafes; areas with beautiful storefronts.
- Adopt a downtown revitalization plan.
- Inspire property owners to improve downtown businesses.
- Create a “Third Place” where people interact and recreate outside of home and work.
- Ensure housing opportunities for all income groups.
- Offer services and facilities for aging population.
- Promote outdoor activities.
- Maintain bike and equestrian trails.
- Enhance river accesses, and parks.
- Improve water activities.
- Create a sports complex.
- Offer activities and enjoyments for residents of all age groups.
- Promote future industrial developments in the I-82 Interchange area and the area to the south currently owned by the Department of Natural Resources (DNR).
- Offer a safe environment for residents.
- Implement CPTED (Crime Prevention through Environmental Design) principles, e.g. lighting, fencing, visibility, location of facilities etc.
- Carefully review if annexation is necessary.
- Expand the city limits as needed to protect what is special for the City.
- Work with school district to review their plan for expansion.
- Maintain density within the city limits.

In 2014, an Action Plan for Benton City was provided by Easterner Washington University in conjunction with the Benton City’s Economic Development Center. The plan aided in the identification of issues and opportunities present within the downtown and city.

The Red Mountain AVA completed a Master Site Plan in 2012. The vision includes the creation of a viticulture park and commercial development. Noteworthy details are provided on the following page.

Red Mountain AVA Mast Plan

The Red Mountain American Viticultural Area (AVA) is an approximately 4,600-acre, federally designated grape-growing and wine-producing region on the south-facing slope of Red Mountain. Located within unincorporated Benton County, the Red Mountain AVA is bounded by the Yakima River and Benton City to the west. The site's unique rural beauty combined with topography, soils, and solar aspect have combined to make it a special place to grow grapes and make wine. These qualities have drawn national and international attention. Red Mountain wines consistently are rated at the highest quality: between 1998 and 2004 Red Mountain vineyards and wineries received 23 national and international awards.

In 2005 Benton County, together with an alliance of vineyard and winery operators, local agencies and stakeholders, commissioned the Red Mountain AVA Master Site Plan planning process. The purpose of the planning process was to develop a vision for the Red Mountain AVA that enhances the region's economic opportunities for both the wine and visitor industries, manages the anticipated growth on Red Mountain, and increases the visibility of the Red Mountain AVA. The Master Site Plan presents a vision of a future development pattern for Red Mountain that expands and enriches visitor and resident opportunities while preserving the special qualities of the AVA.

The initial draft site master plan was completed in 2007. An update to the plan was made in 2012.

AVA Vision and Plan Elements

The vision for the AVA builds on the globally competitive wines that the AVA now produces, presents a range of benefits to the vineyard and winery operators, and expands and enriches wine visitors' experiences by providing opportunities for recreation, interpretation and education. The vision for the Red Mountain AVA is that the area become a "viticultural park" that provides visitors with a wide range of recreation and interpretive experiences that complement the vineyard and winery related experiences. Key elements of the vision:

- Expansion of existing vineyard and winery operations
- A number of new vineyards and wineries (20-30)
- A new visitor-oriented facilities including a Wine Village and recreation and interpretive experiences
- Additional development on adjacent areas
- The AVA will remain substantially in agricultural use, with most of the land dedicated to grape growing.
- At least some individual wineries will develop specialized, small- to moderate-scale wine- oriented events and food service capability; small-scale lodging may also be expanded.
- A market will develop for fine dining, lodging, and events serving the AVA.
- Growing traffic to Red Mountain will foster commercial development on adjacent lands, in particular on land adjacent to I-82 and to Benton City, West Richland and the Tri-Cities.

An illustration of the master site plan is on the following page.

