PLANNING PROCESS

GOAL 1
To establish a land use policy framework and planning process to be utilized as a basis for all decisions and actions related to land use and to assure that such decisions and actions are based on factual information.

POLICIES
A. When a land use designation or zoning district boundary unintentionally bisects a parcel of record creating two different designations or zones for one parcel, the designation or district that covers the largest portion of the parcel shall apply to the whole parcel.

GOAL 2
Develop a comprehensive plan that implements State planning law, has stakeholder involvement, and includes development regulations.

POLICIES:
A. That zoning and subdivision ordinances, performance standards and related implementation measures shall be used to implement the plan to ensure development and land uses that are compatible with surrounding uses and which do not create traffic, safety or health hazards, undue adverse economic impacts, or unnecessarily restrict the use of private property.
B. That county-wide resource inventories shall be used and maintained to assist in the determination of the suitability and capability of the land and its resources to support future development.
C. That land use decisions shall be consistent with the Comprehensive Plan Land Use Map and with the inherent capability of the land to sustain that use without creating problems that require a publicly funded solution (e.g., flooding, landslides, etc.).
D. That the County’s plans and programs shall be coordinated with those at local, regional and state levels.

GOAL 3
To develop and maintain a comprehensive plan responsive to growth and economic trends and which can be readily adapted to changing conditions.

POLICIES:
A. Amendments to the Plan require a determination of facts, and findings that the amendment responds to a specific public need, is beneficial to the public interest, and is not inconsistent with the vision and goals of the Rural Planning Area within which the amendment is proposed.
B. That the Comprehensive Plan shall undergo a major review every seven years commencing the seventh year after the 2006 state mandated review.
C. An emergency is a declaration by the Board of County Commissioners, based upon circumstances and facts at hand, that there is an eminent or expectant threat to one or more of: life, property, public health and safety, air or water resources, or the realization of regional economic policy objectives identified in the County Comprehensive Plan, and for which immediate action is necessary to end the threat.

CITIZEN INVOLVEMENT

GOAL 4
To continue a citizen involvement program that insures the opportunity for full citizen participation in public decision-making.

POLICIES:
A. That opportunity shall be provided for citizen involvement and input on issues in advance of making land use decisions.
B. That citizens shall be provided with information through the news media to allow a maximum of citizen involvement during the land use decision-making process.

LAND USE

GOAL 5
To provide, consistent with the adopted goals and objectives of each rural community relative to quality of life and lifestyle, a diversity of land uses and an appropriate level of essential public and private sector services, while minimizing conflicts between different land uses to ensure the highest degree of public health, safety, and general welfare, without unduly jeopardizing the rights of the individual.

GOAL 5-1
To avoid, in the application of the County’s land use controls, a reasonable assertion by any land owner that the County is “taking” property, and a court ruling that the County has taken private property without adequate compensation.

POLICIES:
A. That all land uses in the county shall be classified with a land use designation and shown on the comprehensive plan map and that all implementing ordinances shall be in conformance with such map and Plan policies.
B. That compatible mixed uses of urban intensity are appropriate in Urban Growth Areas where community sewer and water are available or provided, and outside of Urban Growth Areas within designated Rural Community Center areas and Commercial zones, and Planned Developments (PD’s) when rural densities are clustered under Ordinance provisions.
Chapter Three - Plan Goals and Policies

C. In order to maximize the opportunities for compatible development, within Land Use Designations there may be a diversity of uses where they serve, and are not incompatible with, the primary purpose and activity within the designation.

D. Pending land use decisions, permitting decisions, and the development and adoption of official land use controls shall be considered for their potential to result in a successful takings action against the County.

URBANIZATION

GOAL 6
To establish Urban Growth Areas adjacent to the incorporated areas, within which an orderly and cost effective transition from rural to urban land uses and authority can be coordinated within the next 10-20 years.

POLICIES:
A. A formal request to the County for inclusion of an area into a UGA shall be accompanied by a general assessment of the gross demands at build-out within the new UGA area for water, sewer, schools, power and circulation (roads), police, fire and safety services, measured against current and future capacity and supply; and also a detailed Capital Facilities Plan that includes funding sources for capital projects necessary to serve new development that would occur within the first six years. Both the general assessment and the six year plan shall be based upon proposed land uses for the area of UGA expansion with minimum average residential density of six dwelling Units per acre.

B. That development within the adopted Urban Growth Area as delineated on the plan map shall conform to city/county joint development standards where applicable, and facilitate the realization of the adopted circulation plans of the Transportation Element(s).

C. That development on unincorporated lands within urban growth areas shall be consistent with the city’s land use designation, and be sited and designed in a manner which does not preempt the ability of the city to realize the designated urban densities and planned municipal infrastructure for the site and general area.

D. That established community councils and known citizen interest groups of unincorporated communities outside of urban growth areas shall be made aware of and be encouraged to comment on significant developments proposed within or adjacent to their communities.

Actions:
1. Determine the interest of County residents within unincorporated communities by establishing planning committees for participating in land use planning and decision-making within their respective areas.
GOAL 7
To concentrate urban development in and adjacent to existing urban areas.

POLICIES:
A. That the urban growth area boundary line and existing incorporated areas is where urban services are available or are anticipated to be provided within the foreseeable future.

B. That new urban development take place within adopted Urban Growth Areas.

RURAL LANDS

GOAL 8
To preserve rural lifestyles while accommodating new population growth.

POLICIES:
A. That overall residential densities within areas designated as Rural Residential shall be low enough to insure the perpetuation of rural lifestyles, which are typically characterized locally by a predominantly open landscape inhabited by households engaged in diverse, second income, and recreational land use activities related to livestock and crop production.

B. Densities, when viewed in connection with a specific parcel, may be greater than that reflected in the rural Lands and Agricultural designations when a land owner wishes to decrease the size of his or her private residential parcel by transferring a portion of his or her property to an abutting land owner. This policy is consistent with the goal of preserving rural lifestyles because it does not allow an increase in the overall density of the area involved.

Actions:
1. Adopt, administer, and refine a Rural Lands Ordinance which responds to the life style preferences of rural residents as expressed in the Benton County Rural Visioning Survey Report (Spring 1993). The ordinance would respond to the expressed vision(s) of "rural character" through a combination of standards and options relating to density, site design, and development patterns (i.e., plat or clustering within Planned Developments).

2. Adopt new or enforce existing ordinance provisions where necessary to accomplish legitimate objectives identified in the Benton County Rural Visioning Survey Report (Spring 1993).

QUALITY OF LIFE

GOAL 9
Preserve Benton County's rural lifestyle which is characterized by:
Chapter Three - Plan Goals and Policies

- Open-space and elbow room
- Peace and quiet
- Fewer neighbors
- Farm heritage and rural character
- Healthy sense of community
- Natural beauty of rural lands
- Habitation by children, wage earning families, and retired people
- Ability to farm, raise animals and livestock
- Availability of wildlife
- Compatibility of land uses
- Rural freedom, opportunity and property rights and values

Housing

GOAL 10
To provide a variety of dwelling unit types and densities within the County with maximum choice of living environments, considering the needs of the public at all economic levels.

GOAL 11
To provide for a variety of residential uses/densities consistent with rural character and lifestyles.

GOAL 12
To preserve existing, viable, rural residential areas.

GOAL 13
Enable the provision of farm worker housing by and for the agricultural community.

POLICIES:
A. That the rural housing stock include a variety of dwelling unit types and densities.

B. That site-constructed, modular, and factory manufactured housing are needed and functional housing types in all permitted configurations (e.g., single family residential lots, MH Parks, or planned subdivisions).

C. That the county and cities are to work together to provide housing for all economic segments of the population, and shall seek to create the conditions necessary for the construction of affordable housing at appropriate densities within each of the jurisdiction types (i.e., rural and urban).

D. That high, medium and low urban residential densities shall be located exclusively within urban growth boundaries.

E. That consistent with the Land Use Map of the Comprehensive Plan, higher than rural densities are appropriate within the core areas or adjacent to the communities of Finley, Plymouth, Paterson, Whitstran and Kiona.

F. That Plan provisions for the location of rural residential development shall be made in a manner consistent with preserving agricultural lands and maintaining the rural lifestyles of the County while minimizing conflicts with commercial agricultural activities.

G. That existing viable single-family residential areas be protected from incompatible land uses.

H. That outside of existing Community Center Areas, urban densities located outside of urban growth boundaries shall be allowed only pursuant to RCW 36.70A.350, unless they are encompassed by the expansion
of an existing urban growth area.

COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENTS

GOAL 14
To allow for the provision of Planned Communities outside of urban growth areas in agricultural and industrial areas per RCW 36.70A.350.

POLICIES:
A. That in developing agricultural and industrial areas the need for new communities shall be recognized and that upon demonstration of demand and need, appropriate plan designations shall be applied to allow for the development of such communities.

B. That new communities shall be developed on lands that have a marginal or low potential for agricultural production and where negative impacts on adjacent agricultural productivity will not be significant.

NATURAL RESOURCE LANDS

GOAL 15
To conserve and maintain commercially viable farmlands as the locally indigenous natural resource most essential for sustaining the County's agricultural economy.

GOAL 16
Influence the location, site planning, and density of new non-farm development outside of UGAs so that it protects existing agriculture from having to constrain otherwise normal operations in favor of incompatible adjacent land uses.

GOAL 17
To conserve, maintain and manage existing ground and surface water resources, in order to provide a long term dependable supply sufficient to sustain the expansion and evolution of the County's agricultural base.

GOAL 18
To acquire additional water resources.

POLICIES:
A. That areas designated "GMA Agriculture" on the plan map shall be conserved for a broad range of agricultural uses to the maximum extent possible and protected from the encroachment of incompatible uses.

B. In the event of a conflict between residential uses and normal and routine practices of commercial agriculture on lands designated as GMA Agriculture, the County support shall be in favor of the agricultural use where it is evident that the agricultural practice is consistent, with or equivalent to, recognized Best Management Practices.

C. That only uses related or ancillary to, supportive of, complimentary to, and/or not in conflict with agricultural activities, are appropriate in areas designated GMA Agriculture.

D. Proposed non-farm developments on parcels adjacent to lands designated GMA Agriculture, or adjacent to lands being farmed commercially within the Rural Lands 5. Zoning Districts shall be regulated to avoid or reduce
potential impacts associated with "land use incompatibility" to insignificant levels. Responsive site plans and landscape design features including clustered units, setbacks, berms, vegetative screening etc., are appropriate mechanisms to accommodate incompatible land use activities.

E. To sustain the ability of the regional agricultural economy to expand and respond to new market conditions and opportunities, it is appropriate to apply development standards which conserve water resources when reviewing proposed new non-agricultural developments.

F. That only compatible land uses should be established adjacent to areas designated as GMA Agriculture in order to minimize conflicts associated with farm activities such as overspray, underspray, dust, noise, odors, liability, vandalism etc.

Actions:
1. That legal mechanisms should be developed and used to protect productive agricultural lands from urban and suburban growth pressures. Such mechanisms might include performance standards for developments within and adjacent to agricultural lands, zoning restrictions, property tax deferral programs, etc.
2. Develop a public education program and development performance standards that reduce the amount of water used by non-agricultural developments.

GOAL 19
To identify mineral resource lands of commercial significance and protect their exploitation from being significantly compromised by encroaching land uses that are incompatible with mining activity uses.

POLICIES:
A. The ability to exploit mineral and aggregate resources of commercial significance shall be protected from compromise by the application of the County’s Mineral Resources Protective Ordinance where the owner of the resource requests such protection and exploitation of the site has not already been compromised by incompatible adjacent land uses or development.

B. That incompatible uses shall be discouraged from encroaching upon and compromising the exploitation of protected mineral and aggregate resources.

C. That sites used for the extraction of mineral and aggregate resources shall be reclaimed in a manner consistent with applicable laws and ordinances.

TRANSPORTATION

GOAL 20
To provide safe, convenient, economic, and multi-modal transportation networks with new construction and other County public works projects designed to be compatible with the rural character and serve the transportation demands of the Land Use Element, at designated levels of service, and consistent with all other relevant provisions of the Comprehensive Plan.
GOAL 21
To provide adequate roads that safely handle anticipated traffic and serve a diversified area of industrial, agricultural, and residential uses.

GOAL 22
To provide County road right-of-ways wide enough for off-road walking, jogging, and horseback riding, from one area to another safely.

GOAL 23
Improve the cost effectiveness of capital spending by coordinating new road construction with all jurisdictions and service districts/providers.

GOAL 24
Minimize the segmentation, loss, and compromising of agricultural lands and productivity resulting from new road construction.

GOAL 25
To provide for the means to expand the existing road system so it will accommodate future growth in farm to market and industrial transport, and overall traffic.

GOAL 26
Provide an integrated network of trails and paths for non-vehicular recreation and travel throughout the rural areas and connecting to urban trails and paths, as part of an overall County/city trails system.

GOAL 27
To provide safe pedestrian ways and bicycle routes, separate from vehicle roadways where feasible.

GOAL 27-1
To protect public safety and property by establishing development regulations that discourage the siting of incompatible uses and airspace obstructions adjacent to general aviation airports that serve the public.

POLICIES:
A. Preserve, maintain, and develop air, barge, and railway transportation facilities which serve the Land Use Plan.
B. That transportation planning and projects shall:
   (1) Conform with and serve the Land Use Element of the Comprehensive Plan;
   (2) Facilitate the flow of people, goods, local products, and services so as to strengthen and assist the expansion of the local and regional economy;
   (3) Enable the conservation of energy.
C. Avoid and/or minimize adverse social, economic and environmental impacts and costs;
D. Avoid or mitigate conflicts and adverse impacts to rural character and planning objectives as those are identified in the Comprehensive Plan.
E. Include local resident needs for pedestrian, bicycle and equestrian travel and recreational travel when those needs are identified in the Comprehensive Plan.
F. That points of access onto major arterials shall be minimized where the primary function is through-traffic movement. "Reverse frontage" development may be required on arterial roads.
Chapter Three - Plan Goals and Policies

Benton County Comprehensive Plan Page 3-9

G. That expansion of transportation capacity shall, where practical and feasible be planned to utilize existing facilities and rights-of-way within the County.

H. That for public safety: the number of railroad crossings be minimized through such means as reverse frontage, installation of underpasses, or signalization.

I. That an integrated network of safe pedestrian ways and/or bicycle routes shall be made along but not limited to arterial roadways.

J. That before acquiring rights-of-way and funding the construction of pedestrian ways and bicycle routes, the following factors shall be considered:
   (1) Inclusion of the proposed way or route on the circulation plan map;
   (2) public safety;
   (3) the cost of such facilities as compared to the need or probable use.

K. That construction of pedestrian ways and bicycle routes should be in conformance with the uniform design standards for trails and paths as described in the Washington State Department of Transportation Design Manual, or standards developed and adopted by Benton County.

L. New development shall be reviewed under the County’s Environmental Policy (SEPA) ordinance for impacts to the designated LOS on County owned roads. If upon review for its impacts on LOS a project is shown to cause the exceedance of a designated LOS, then the project shall not be approved unless one of the following occurs:
   a) The volume of trips is mitigated (i.e., reduced, or re-allocated spatially or temporally), so that LOS is not exceeded,
   b) Transportation improvements to expand road capacity and regain LOS “C” are made concurrently with construction of the new development,
   c) A financial commitment is in place to complete the improvements that will regain the LOS of “C” within six (6) years of the date of project approval, and the necessary road improvements and funding mechanisms are amended to the next Six Year Road Program.

Actions:
1. Periodically update guidelines for road design and construction in conformance with applicable federal and state laws and new technology.
2. Prepare and implement a comprehensive pedestrian/bicycle plan.
3. Include pedestrian/bicycle ways in the design and construction of new bridges and replacements of existing bridges where feasible and appropriate.
4. Include pedestrian/bicycle ways in the design and construction of new railroad crossings and reconstruction of existing crossings where feasible and appropriate.

5. Where appropriate pursue the acquisition of abandoned railroad and irrigation canal rights-of-way for use of pedestrian/bicycle and/or equestrian routes.

CRITICAL RESOURCE LANDS

GOAL 28
To protect life and property and minimize the unnecessary expenditure of public revenues through the application of development standards which avoid inappropriate developments in areas susceptible to natural disasters and hazards.

POLICIES:
A. That developments subject to damage or that could result in loss of life shall not be located in areas of known natural disasters and hazards (e.g. areas potentially subject to flooding, flash flooding, saturated soils or high groundwater, subbing, landsliding, creeping, eroding, rock fall, etc.) unless it can be demonstrated by the project proponent that the development is sited, designed and engineered for long term structural integrity, and that life and property on and off-site are not subject to increased hazards as a result of the development.

B. That floodways and inherently unstable slopes are not suitable for development.

C. That lands subject to natural disasters and hazards be designated for uses which avoid or minimize exposure of life and property to hazards. Suitable designations are: agricultural, recreational, lowest density Rural Residential, and water dependent uses or other uses that will not fall costly victim to natural processes recognized as potentially hazardous.

Actions:
1. The planning department shall continue to work with other County departments and local, regional and state entities to identify and map hazardous areas as part of the ongoing construction of a Geographic Information System (GIS) database.

GOAL 29
To assure residents will live within areas that are clean, quiet, and non-polluted.

GOAL 30
Achieve sustain-ability of resource functions and values.

GOAL 31
Protect, and where necessary, apply planning and land use measures to
improve the quality and productivity of the County’s environmental resources (air, ground and surface waters, and indigenous biology).

**GOAL 32**  
Realize opportunities to integrate unbuildable hazardous areas, publicly owned lands, and biologically sensitive natural areas such as rivers, creeks, ridges and slopes, into a linked and contiguous pattern of open lands to serve multiple open space functions including: agriculture, buffers between incompatible uses, visual resources, recreation and wildlife habitat/corridors.

**GOAL 33**  
To improve the water quality of the Yakima River and preserve surface and groundwater for the beneficial use of the rural area’s citizens and wildlife.

**POLICIES:**  
A. Land use decision-making and development review shall protect the functions and values of Critical Resources within the County.

B. The functions and values of Critical Resources shall be protected from adverse impacts of new agriculture in previously unfarmed riparian corridors and regulated wetlands and their buffers. The county also recognizes that new agriculture of all kinds in previously unfarmed lands within critical resource areas outside of regulated wetlands and riparian corridors may have an adverse impact; therefore, within these areas the county will apply and integrate its land use authority with technical, financial and program capabilities of federal and state agencies involved in protecting those critical resources.

C. Developments which have the potential for significant individual or cumulative impacts on ground and surface water quality shall be prohibited, or sited and designed to avoid or mitigate such impacts.

D. Natural drainage areas within the County should be identified and protected wherever appropriate.

E. That air quality be protected as a resource essential to public health, safety and welfare, and economic growth and prosperity.

F. That surface and groundwater quality be protected as a resource essential to the public health, safety and welfare, and economic growth and prosperity.

G. That noise levels should be restricted to those determined suitable for permitted land uses and activities using the Washington State Noise Abatement Regulations as minimum guidelines.

H. Review and consider goals and policies of the Tri-County Water Resource Plan for adoption and inclusion in the County’s Comprehensive Plan.

**Actions:**  
1. Require the filing of air pollution control plans with the Benton County Clean Air Authority for development activities that have the potential for significant adverse impacts on air
quality.

2. Encourage the establishment and use of adequate waste management systems to prevent disposal of solid and liquid waste in areas other than approved disposal sites.

3. Identify natural drainage areas within the County and through the application of development performance standards and monitoring, prevent their erosion or obstruction to the detriment of downstream interests.

4. Encourage public acquisition of significant natural wetlands.

5. The County will work with other agencies to define and map existing aquifers and recharge areas and to characterize their condition and level of function.

6. County staff will field check and update its wetlands database with the objective to classify wetlands according to the classification system in the Critical Areas Ordinance.

GOAL 34
To avoid conflict between beneficial cultivation of economic growth and prosperity, and support for the state and federal protection of threatened and endangered species, the County will strive to achieve balance among potential competing economic development and wildlife protection objectives in interactions with state, federal and local agencies and other County stakeholders regarding Endangered Species Act issues.

GOAL 35
To apply land use designations in a manner that avoids the fragmentation of areas identified through best available science and designated by the County, after public hearings, as important for the protection of regional bio-diversity. Actions to protect biodiversity shall not interfere with the continued use, in the accustomed manner and in accordance with best management practices, of lands historically used for the production of food, agricultural products, grazing of livestock, or for the extraction of minerals.

For issues involving the need for "best available science", it is the responsibility of the Planning Department to identify “best available” and recommend alternative actions based upon it. For science to be "best available" it must also be practical and cost effective to apply it to the issue at hand.

GOAL 36
To sustain a diverse, productive, and high quality natural environment for the use, health, and enjoyment of County residents.

POLICIES:
A. That public agency acquisition of natural areas of scientific, research and educational significance shall be encouraged.

GOAL 37
To identify and protect critical fish and wildlife habitat from destruction or encroachment of incompatible uses.

GOAL 38
To preserve natural wetlands (marshes, sloughs, shorelines, etc.) that are important wildlife and game habitat or recreational areas, provided that such areas are not a detriment to public health.
Chapter Three - Plan Goals and Policies

POLICIES:
A. That public acquisition of critical fish and wildlife habitats and lands essential to the protection of the functions and values of those resources shall be encouraged as the action preferable to applying regulations onerous to private use of property.

B. Using Best Available Science the functions and values (Table 2.0) of designated Fish and Wildlife conservation areas shall be protected for the public health, safety and welfare.

C. Unless specifically prohibited by state law, or County ordinance for reasons of public safety, the activities of hunting and fishing for game species during legal seasons and consistent with State and Federal game laws, are historic cultural activities that are protected on lands where such are allowed by any of the following: permission, public designation, public right of access, ownership, contract (e.g., conservation easement), treaty rights.

PARKS, RECREATION, OPEN SPACE, AND HISTORIC PRESERVATION

GOAL 39
To develop and maintain a park system for Benton County residents and visitors which provides a variety of recreational opportunities including: regional and local parks and trail systems for bicycle, hiking and equestrian use.

GOAL 40
Jointly, with cities and agencies owning public property, adopt 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.

GOAL 40-1
To conserve as undeveloped and unmarked for posterity, the visually prominent naturally vegetated steep slopes and elevated ridges that define the Columbia Basin landscape and are uniquely a product of the ice Age Floods.

POLICIES:
A. That the Benton County Comprehensive Parks and Recreation Plan shall be the Plan for developing and maintaining a regional park and trail system integrated with city recreational resources.

B. That the development of a system of bicycling, hiking and equestrian trails in the County shall be encouraged and coordinated with existing and/or proposed city systems.

C. That developers of low density, large lot subdivisions and plats shall be encouraged to provide access easements for bicycle and horse riding both within the development and between contiguous developments, connecting where possible to regional trails, and to establish a means of maintaining such
easements through coordination between the County, developer and homeowners.

D. That historically significant structures and sites shall be identified and should be preserved whenever feasible.

G. That archaeologically significant sites be preserved by siting and designing development to avoid impacts, or by mitigating impacts.

H. The County encourages the public and/or private acquisition of the prominent ridges within unincorporated Benton County as Natural Open Space, in order to preserve views, protect native habitat, and provide for public access and recreation associated with these landscapes.

I. In concert with citizen initiative the County should pursue and be open to the application of a variety of means and mechanisms such as the preparation of specific and area plans, conservation easements, clustered developments, land acquisitions and trades, statutory requirements etc., that result in the protection of the natural landform and vegetative cover of the Rattlesnake uplift formation, notably Rattlesnake, Red, Candy and Badger Mountains, at or above elevation 900 ft.

Actions:

1. Coordinate County parks and recreation programs with those of the cities to avoid duplicative efforts.

2. Coordinate County Planning Department and the County Parks Department planning activities to maximize compatibility.

3. Within the County's subdivision ordinance, consider a provision for the dedication of parkland or fees in lieu of land by developers of new subdivisions within the County. Consider reservation of lands prior to issuing occupancy permits.

4. Consider that excess County land should be traded or sold to acquire additional parklands in locations where such parks are needed.

5. Consider locating neighborhood parks and playgrounds so as to provide safe and convenient access to their service areas.

6. Prior to the sale of land owned by the County, consider keeping the land reserved for use as public open space.

7. Study the need and possibility of establishing a nature trail on the north face of the Horse Heaven Hills.

CAPITAL FACILITIES AND PUBLIC SERVICES

GOAL 41
Based upon the Land Use Element, anticipate the need and location of public facilities and services, and plan for their timely and cost effective provision.

GOAL 42
Consistent with rural land use designations and maintaining the rural character and objectives of rural residents as expressed in the adopted Comprehensive Plan, expand and diversify the rural economy and employment base through the construction of public facilities
capacities to serve as a framework and incentive for rural development.

GOAL 43
Realize locally the inherent economic opportunities and benefits associated with transition of the Hanford lands, infrastructure and resources from a military to a peacetime mission.

GOAL 43-1
Within appropriate land use zones in Benton County, provide for the location of "Essential Public Facilities" using siting criteria that are consistent with statutory requirements applicable to these facilities.

POLICIES:
A. That plan provisions shall be made for the location and/or protection of anticipated and/or existing public uses such as parks, playgrounds, schools, essential public facilities, and other public, state or federal activities or facilities owned and operated for the benefit of the general public.

B. That for each facility, eliminating existing deficiencies in a Level(s) of Service has priority over the expenditure of capital funds for new uses.

C. That publicly funded capital projects be those necessary to accommodate the existing and projected demands of the Land Use Element of the Comprehensive Plan.

D. That to sustain and improve the well being of unincorporated County residents, the priority recipients of capital facilities planning and expenditures are projects which accomplish one or more of the following:
1. Are essential for public health, safety and welfare;
2. Address and/or improve the quality and level of regional government services;
3. Maintain designated transportation Levels of Service;
4. Improve public and private sector productivity; and,
5. Facilitate the maintenance and growth of the rural/agricultural economy.

E. That relative to the public facilities/infrastructure, and resource needs of the residents of Benton County, land use and planning options, which utilize Hanford site resources, and which transcend the fed/local boundary at Hanford shall be continuously explored.

F. That future development of land adjacent to existing and proposed school and other public facilities shall be located and designed to be compatible with such uses.

Actions:
1. Integrate the Hanford site with Hanford off-site capital facilities planning where possible. Integration of water and transportation (including rail) systems is a priority.
2. Identify the current and future capital facilities and resource relationships, needs, opportunities, and constraints associated with the Hanford site.
3. Team up with the port districts and the agricultural community to identify and implement planning and
project efforts which improve agricultural advancement: strengthen and conserve the resource base (soils, water, labor, farm to market transport, support industries), expand the agricultural economy, diversify the rural lands economic base without negatively impacting agricultural productivity and options.

4. Initiate or contract a study to determine the marketability of a major water oriented “Destination Resort” within the unincorporated area of Benton County. If such a facility is marketable, analyze alternative sites for public facilities and service needs and costs.

5. Devise and implement a schedule for phased construction of the Master Plan for Horn Rapids Regional Park, consistent with the Park site’s designated role and function as a focal point in the Tapteal Greenway Plan.

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

GOAL 44
Plan for a diversity of living and working situations that will provide residents with an opportunity to make economic and lifestyle choices.

GOAL 45
To strengthen and diversify the County’s economic base: create a stable balanced community economic situation by promoting industries that are diverse, agriculturally based and that process what we sell.

GOAL 46
To identify and apply land use planning and development standards which influence a sustainable use of the natural resources base.

GOAL 47
To facilitate economic growth and prosperity while preserving the existing rural quality of life and character, as it is defined by rural residents.

GOAL 48
To promote and protect tourism related to viticulture and other agricultural activities.

GOAL 49
To provide adequate, accessible commercial areas while minimizing impact on surrounding uses.

GOAL 50
Expand employment opportunities.

POLICIES:
A. That economic growth and diversification in the County shall be planned for and encouraged.

B. That the agricultural economic base of Benton County shall be maintained and protected.

C. That locations for commercial retail and service activities serving urban and regional markets shall be made exclusively within Urban Growth Areas. Commercial development serving rural communities is appropriate on commercially designated lands within or adjacent to the communities of Finley, Plymouth, Paterson, Whitstran, and Kiona. Highway commercial development is appropriate for areas designated for such at highway interchanges. Master planned resorts and tourist-oriented visitor destinations are appropriate county-wide.
Chapter Three - Plan Goals and Policies

D. That commercial activities develop in “nodes” or clusters as opposed to strip-type configurations.

E. That where practical, commercial development utilize a frontage road or a circulation system that will prevent the occurrence of numerous driveways opening onto arterial roadways.

F. That uses locating within areas designated "Interchange Commercial" be those which serve interstate freeway traffic.

G. That commercial developments be planned, constructed and landscaped so as to be visually and physically compatible with surrounding areas and uses.

Actions:
1. Establish parking standards that provide adequate off-street parking for all commercial developments.

2. Apply buffers where necessary to prevent conflicts between incompatible uses.

3. Develop landscaping and design criteria for commercial developments.

4. Establish performance standards to control odor, noise, light and glare, dust, fire and explosive hazards, toxic materials and other potential nuisances within commercial areas.

GOAL 51
To provide areas for the location of light and environmentally acceptable heavy industrial uses, while minimizing impacts on surrounding rural uses.

POLICIES:

A. That established industrial sites in compliance with the Plan and on lands designated for industrial use be protected from being compromised by the encroachment of incompatible uses through the use of performance and/or site design criteria on adjacent lands not designated Industrial.

B. That non-agricultural related industry be located on sites not designated as "GMA agriculture".

C. That map designations be made for the location of a diversity of light and heavy industrial uses consistent with maintaining environmental quality and infilling or building out rural community center areas, or taking advantage of locational opportunities such as shoreline and rail access.

D. That light and heavy industrial uses be encouraged to locate in areas where:

1. Access can be provided by major transportation networks such as road, rail, air and water;

2. Existing development is characterized by and/or compatible with industrial activity;

3. Utilities; including electric, gas, water and sewer, can be adequately provided, either as extensions of municipal facilities (e.g. by service contract) or by on-site facilities.

E. All lands designated heavy industrial be governed by
performance standards set forth within the zoning ordinance and by the following restrictions:

1. Compliance with all State, local and Federal laws and regulations with regard to the disposal of pollutants of any nature into the water or the reservoirs.

2. A maximum decibel level of 65 beyond the boundary of the industrially used property, except where levels exceeding 65 decibels are only occasional and incidental as opposed to constant or frequent.

3. That no activity or use shall be carried on, or permitted, which would generate obnoxious odors, fumes, dust or create other conditions in violation of local, State, or Federal air pollution laws and regulations.

4. No use shall be permitted that will result in the disposal of pollutants of any nature, floatable or nonfloatable, into water courses, watersheds, reservoirs, by stream, floods, or otherwise which could be detrimental to public health, safety, and welfare, including the degradation of the functions and values of natural resources.

5. Service infrastructure and capacities necessary to support such industrial uses shall be limited to those necessary to serve build-out of the industrial designation and shall not permit low density sprawl in rural areas.

Actions:
1. Establish performance standards to limit dust, odor, glare, smoke, noise, gases, traffic and other potential nuisances at levels compatible with surrounding uses.

UTILITIES

GOAL 52
Achieve a household water and sewer system that is affordable yet is not based on densities that change the rural character.

POLICIES:
A. That provisions for adequate fire protection water supplies shall be required in all developing areas.

Actions:
1. Devise, adopt, and implement joint service agreements between special districts and counties and cities for lands within Urban Growth Areas.

2. Develop and adopt joint city/county development standards for lands within Urban Growth Areas, with input and advisement from special districts such as schools, fire, police, transit, and waste collection, as well as development and land owner interests.

3. Satisfy the urgent need for a land-fill site(s) and/or transfer station(s) in the County and enforce illegal dumping and littering laws.

GOAL 53
Facilitate the cost-effective accessibility of utilities in land use and development.

POLICIES:
A. Support development regulations
that are flexible and receptive to innovations and advances in cellular technology and act upon the knowledge that moving information rather than people yields benefits of conservation and cost efficiencies.

**GOAL 54**
Facilitate maintenance and rehabilitation of existing utility systems and facilities and encourage use of existing transmission/distribution corridors.

**GOAL 55**
Encourage multiple uses in utility corridors where practical.

**POLICIES:**
A. Encourage utility providers to make every effort to jointly use existing utility corridors before seeking locations for new rights-of-way.

**Actions:**
1. Review existing and new regulations to ensure there are no unintended or unreasonable constraints on the provision of utilities.
2. Allow for passive recreational use of utility corridors when practical.

**GOAL 56**
Reduce the potential for accidents near liquid gas pipelines.

**POLICIES:**
A. Include pipeline operators in Comprehensive Plan review and amendment processes, and reviews for subdivision and short plat developments when within 500 feet of a potentially hazardous transmission pipeline easement.

**Actions:**
1. For proposed developments that are sensitive receptors (e.g., schools, events facilities, hospitals) in proximity to a high-pressure transmission pipeline, consider the practicality and effectiveness of improving safety conditions by requiring a setback from the pipeline.
2. Influence the selection of new pipeline routes away from developed areas.
3. To maintain public safety, incorporate into the County’s land use planning and permit review systems the establishment of a “consultation zone” extending outward from the easements of pressurized gas transmission lines that carry hazardous materials, and within which any land use activity that would modify terrain elevations, grade or loading, be reviewed and commented upon, by the pipeline operator to the County, so that necessary precautions to maintain pipeline integrity are applied before commencing the activity, or receiving a permit.

**GOAL 57**
Develop and adopt provisions as necessary that streamline and support an efficient and effective transition to electric vehicles.

**POLICIES:**
A. An electric vehicle charging station equipped with slow and medium speed charging equipment shall be permitted outright as an accessory or ancillary use to any principal use in all zoning districts.
Chapter Three - Plan Goals and Policies

B. Electric vehicle “rapid charging stations” shall be an allowed use in all Interchange commercial, Industrial, and agricultural zones with limitations, and excluded in areas identified as critical resource areas.

WATER RESOURCES

GOAL 58
Secure long-term sustainable water supplies and apply effective stewardship of them.

GENERAL POLICIES

A. When requested by municipal governments or other public water systems, Benton County will take such actions as are appropriate to support their efforts to secure long-term, sustainable water supplies that are consistent with the Benton County Comprehensive Land Use Plan or the Comprehensive Land Use Plans of the municipalities within Benton County.

B. Benton County encourages water reuse, conservation and responsible stewardship through the development of voluntary conservation programs, educational outreach and alterations to current water policy that provides incentives for common sense approaches to stewarding water resources.

SURFACE WATER POLICIES

C. Benton County encourages use of the Columbia River and its reservoirs as a key element in ensuring long-term availability of water supply, barge transportation, power generation and flood control and support for population growth, agricultural production, industry, fisheries and economic development. Pursuant to the US Army Corps of Engineers John Day reservoir drawdown study, the reservoirs should also be maintained to protect wildlife habitat.

D. Benton County fully supports the designation and allocation of reserved water for municipal, commercial, industrial and irrigation use from the John Day and McNary pools as per the authority under the Revised Code of Washington (RCW 90.54) and Washington Administrative Code (WAC 173-531A.040) to allocate Columbia River water resources.

E. Benton County supports continued State primacy and future delegated local authority over any additional water withdrawals from the main-stem of the Columbia River.

F. Benton County supports federal and state agencies in developing reasonable water resource policy decisions based on defensible science to meet the needs of people and wildlife. When appropriate, Benton County may challenge these agencies to defend policies that seem neither reasonable nor scientifically defensible, such as the NMFS “no net loss” water policy.
G. Benton County supports management of the Yakima River consistent with the adjudication process and with the local watershed planning process established by the Tri-County Water Resources Agency. The County will oppose actions within the river basin that attempt to limit or exclude local government involvement over regional planning and decision-making process.

H. Benton County supports the addition of off-stream reservoirs to augment river flows. Off-stream storage is discussed in greater detail under Goal 59.

GROUND WATER POLICY

I. Benton County supports ground water management strategies that permit the responsible development of ground water resources, while protecting the long-term sustainability of aquifers.

J. Benton County supports selective continued issuance of new water rights from groundwater sources. It is the County’s belief that areas and related aquifers exist where new water rights will not create impairments to existing rights or significantly affect aquifer levels. New water rights applications in these areas should be accepted and processed by Washington State Department of Ecology.

WATER USE

GOAL 59
Identify primary water service providers for planning jurisdictions, and reliable supply sources for major land use categories.

WATER USE POLICIES

A. Benton County supports protecting the inchoate portion of existing water rights for municipal growth.

B. Benton County endorses responsible stewardship of municipal water supplies.

C. Benton County encourages the use of irrigation water for non-potable uses in housing units, parks, and other developed lands within municipal boundaries.

D. Municipal governments or the primary water utility in the UGA are the best long-term source for providing water supply services within designated Urban Growth Areas (UGA). In those UGAs where small, non-municipal, public water systems are active, Benton County supports the utilization of Satellite Management Agencies or private water purveyors, via responsible public water purveyors, to meet the domestic water needs of those areas. Domestic water should be provided by the primary utility in the UGA.

RURAL DOMESTIC POLICIES

E. When the need arises for a rural domestic water supplier, Benton County encourages considering service first from existing public or
private water purveyors.

F. Benton County believes that public and private purveyors adequately provide for water needs in rural areas of the County. The County will not seek to become a residential water purveyor except where mandated by the state under RCW 43.70.195.

G. Benton County encourages irrigation districts to consider providing not only water for irrigation purposes but domestic, commercial and industrial supplies as well as a Satellite Management Agency.

INDUSTRIAL POLICY
H. Benton County supports efforts to secure long-term sustainable water supplies sufficient to provide for industrial activity on the Hanford site, in the Finley area and other industrial designated areas.

AGRICULTURE POLICY
I. Benton County encourages efforts to secure long-term water supplies to support the county’s strong and diverse agriculture economy.

J. Benton County supports the withdrawal of additional water from the John Day and McNary pools, under reserved and new water rights, to service additional agricultural needs, including direct irrigation, food processing, and related ag-industrial needs.

K. Benton County encourages the continued development of water transfers and changes to meet changing agricultural production needs.

L. Benton County supports and encourages water reuse strategies that allow for several uses of irrigation water before being returned to the river system.

WATER MANAGEMENT

GOAL 60
Increase total water supply by obtaining additional storage, and reducing demand through the application of water use efficiencies.

WATER STORAGE POLICY
A. Benton County supports increasing water storage by increasing capacity in existing reservoirs, developing new above ground water storage capacity, and the development of storage capacity through enhanced aquifer storage and retrieval.

WATER MANAGEMENT POLICY
B. Benton County encourages water management practices that will allow and provide incentives for reclaiming water resources that retain economic and recreational resources. Such practices include reclaiming waters used for food processing to irrigate crops or reclaiming wastewater to support developed open spaces, such as parks or golf courses.

C. Benton County encourages voluntary conservation of water resources through xeriscape (low water use landscape plantings) and other low water use methods.

D. Benton County will work to identify
opportunities for water conservation on county property and at county facilities.

E. Benton County supports increasing water supply on the Yakima River Basin through pump exchange projects.

WATER RIGHTS TRANSFER POLICY
F. Benton County encourages water marketing, the trading of water rights as commodities, providing there is sufficient controls in place to protect the basic needs of Benton County citizens and industries.

G. Benton County supports the formation and utilization of Water Conservancy Boards to review water rights transfer applications.

REGULATORY ISSUES

GOAL 61
Protect existing water rights and opportunities for future additional rights; manage water resources demand and protect its quality so as to sustain the local economies and fish and wildlife resources.

GENERAL POLICY
A. Where the direct interests of County residents are challenged by a loss of existing water rights or by an arbitrary or unsubstantiated attempt by federal or state agencies to deny County residents access to adequate water resources for future growth and well-being, or regulatory actions create a taking of private property, Benton County may examine engaging in federal and state litigation.

ENDANGERED SPECIES ACT (ESA) POLICY
B. Benton County promotes a balanced response to listings of threatened and endangered species that provides improved conditions for species maintenance and recovery, while maintaining and allowing sustainable development of water resources for economic growth.

C. Benton County believes that equitable application of the ESA requires agencies to establish specific, measurable recovery goals and address human factors, economic costs and opportunity costs, when preparing science-based species recovery and species protection plans.

WATER QUALITY (CLEAN WATER ACT, SAFE DRINKING WATER ACT AND OTHER WATER QUALITY LAWS) POLICY
D. Benton County supports the development and management of County-owned storm water systems that protect surface and ground water quality consistent with local conditions.

E. Benton County supports Benton and Franklin County Health District in development and implementation of septic tank and drain field standards to protect surface and ground water quality, and human health.

F. Benton County encourages educational programs and voluntary efforts of agricultural producers, processors, irrigation districts and municipal users to
responsibly manage return flows to improve surface and ground water quality.

G. Application of state standards must reflect climate differences between various regions of Washington State.

WATER RIGHTS POLICY

H. Benton County supports the extension of inchoate water rights beyond the 5-year “use it or lose it” boundary when the application of those rights is to support planned growth through municipalities and ports.

I. Benton County supports changing the relinquishment and transfer/change statutes to allow effective water management practices.

J. Benton County supports basing perfection on peak-use year, consistent with the quantity allowed under the permit/certificate, during this period.

MASTER PLANNED RESORTS

Goal 62

To provide opportunities for Master Planned Resorts (MPRs), consistent with the provisions of RCW 36.70A.360, and Small-scale Recreational or Tourist (SSRT) uses consistent with RCW 36.70A.(5) (d) (ii).

POLICIES:

A. Development regulations for Master Planned Resorts and Small Scale Recreation or Tourist Use shall be consistent with provisions of the Comprehensive Plan and its regulations.

B. New urban and suburban land uses in the vicinity of a Master Planned Resort and Small Scale Recreation or Tourist Use are precluded, except in areas that are designated for urban growth per to RCW 36.70A.110 or for limited areas of more intense rural development, per RCW 36.70A.070 (5)(d).

C. Master Planned Resorts and Small Scale Recreation or Tourist Use shall have the following:

1. A defined outer boundary and designation on County land use maps;
2. A master site plan that functionally integrates the various land uses with motorized and non-motorized circulation systems that are accessible to public transportation where available, and with open spaces for general public use;
3. A policy set, for guidance during development and post-development phases;
4. A zoning district to assure realization of the purpose and nature of the Master Planned Resort or Small Scale Recreation or Tourist Use;
5. Design standards for building scale, exterior materials, landscaping, signage, lighting, and public spaces. Standards should reside partially within the zoning district and partially within covenants administered by property owners within the Master Planned Resort or Small Scale Recreation or Tourist Use.
6. A capital facilities plan for potable water, fire suppression, waste disposal, power, vehicle circulation, parking, and public open space.
Chapter Three - Plan Goals and Policies

7. An avoidance/ mitigation or "green infrastructure" plan to protect and enhance critical areas and to integrate them as landscape amenities, functional utility assets (e.g., hydrologic and drainage features), paths and trails, into the master plan.

D. The primary purpose of Master Planned Resorts is to provide for carefully planned, self-contained and integrated destination resort facilities and amenities that are centered upon unique and commanding natural resource settings. MPRs may be amended to the Comprehensive Plan as Sub Area Plans.

E. Master Planned Resorts and Small Scale Recreation or Tourist Use shall contain open space and open space amenities (paths, trails, scenic overlooks and viewpoints that are open to the general public).

F. The boundaries of an Master Planned Resort may include lands that are designated as agriculture of long-term significance under RCW 36.70A.170 if: (i) the primary natural resource setting upon which the MPR is centered is the agricultural activity/culture and product that characterizes the predominant use of the acreage within the MPR; and (ii) a GMA agricultural zoning district tailored specifically to the MPR designation requires that:

(1) The purpose of the agricultural district is to protect and sustain the productivity of the agricultural land base within the MPR, consistent with RCW 36.70A.170;

(2) Agriculturally related accessory uses are not permitted on parcels, or contiguous parcels under the same ownership, that do not also have a commercially viable scale of crop production on them;

(3) All non-agricultural commercial accessory uses within an MPR must be clustered on lands that are designated Visitor Serving Commercial;

(4) All land designated as Visitor Serving Commercial must have soils and/or micro-climates that have been expertly certified to be not suitable, or marginally suitable for commercial crop production relative to the average suitability of soils that are used to grow the agricultural product that is the principal resource attraction within the MPR;

(5) Visitor Serving Commercial land use designations must be concentrated in clusters located at junctures within the circulation plan;

(6) On parcels not designated Visitor Serving Commercial within the master plan, only agricultural related accessory uses are permitted, except that within structures principally used for agricultural related accessory uses, there can be limited food service, and over-night accommodations not to exceed five guest rooms.;

(7) The total acreage of the Visitor Serving Commercial (VSC) designation(s) within an Master Planned Resort must be specified on the master plan map. The total acreage so designated within the boundaries of a GMA Agricultural Zoning District shall not exceed one half acre for every 20 acres of land within the District.
Goal 63

To accomplish Master Planned Resorts and Small Scale Recreation or Tourist Use with locations, site design, building scale, lighting, and aesthetic standards that are subordinate to and aesthetically complimentary to the natural landscape.

POLICIES:

A. The location of a Master Planned Resort must be within, or within sight of the resource that is its primary attraction.

B. Master Planned Resorts must not conflict with existing adjacent land uses and rural culture, and shall be separated physically and aesthetically from the nearest existing developed areas. Development Impacts from MPR’s shall be avoided or mitigated.

C. Master Planned Resorts are self-contained fully integrated developments that may constitute urban growth within a circumscribed boundary outside of Urban Growth Areas. The location, capacity, design, and provision of all capital facilities, utilities, and services for an MPR shall be limited to meeting needs within the MPR.

D. The site plan, scale, architecture, exterior colors and lighting of a Master Planned Resort shall be subordinate to its natural setting and landscape.

E. Necessary capital facilities, utilities and services may be provided to a Master Planned Resort by service providers from outside the boundary of the MPR, including municipalities and special service districts, provided that all costs associated with service extensions and capacity increases directly attributable to the MPR are fully borne by the resort.