



Lewis and Clark Ranch Subarea Plan and Planned Action

May 2022 | Scoping Summary

Introduction

In March, the City of West Richland conducted scoping for the Lewis and Clark Ranch planning project. This document summarizes the scoping activities and comments received from the public, tribes, and agency stakeholders. This document also provides an overview of the Lewis and Clark Ranch planning project.

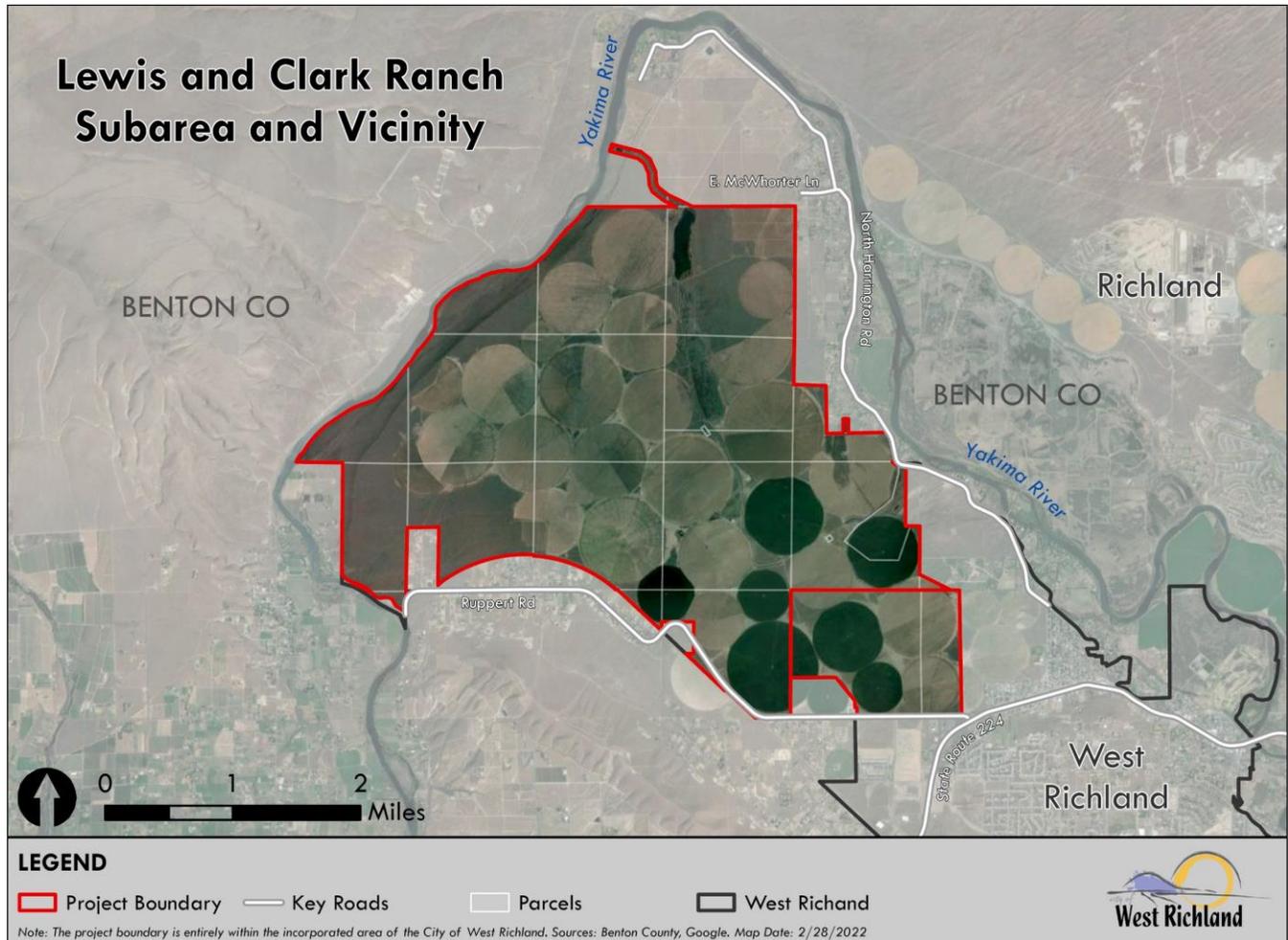
Project Overview

A major landowner has submitted applications to the City of West Richland for amendments to the Comprehensive Plan and Zoning Map to update land use and zoning designations for the Lewis and Clark Ranch. The ranch is owned by a single landowner and over 7,000 acres of its area are within the city limits. This area is primarily used for agriculture and has not been developed with urban uses. It is a unique circumstance to have extensive undeveloped lands within the incorporated limits of a city. The majority of the ranch area inside the city is designated Urban Transition (UT), meaning it is intended to transition from agriculture to urban uses over time as the City evaluates future growth needs. Some of the ranch area inside the city is already designated for urban uses including residential and commercial development.

The applicant proposes revisions to land use and zoning designations for nearly all of the ranch area within the city. Exhibit 1 shows the area proposed for revised designations. Future development is anticipated to need infrastructure investments such as roads, sewer, and water, as well as new sites for public facilities such as parks and schools. Future development is expected to occur in phases, with the first phase likely being an area of about 750 acres in the southeast corner of the site.

The applicant's proposal prompts the City to develop an overall vision for future growth for the site and how this would fit with the City's Comprehensive Plan goals. The City seeks to develop a Subarea Plan and Planned Action Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) as well as related amendments to the Comprehensive Plan. The Subarea Plan itself would be adopted as part of the Comprehensive Plan. The City anticipates the Subarea Plan will be an opportunity to support mixed uses and create a city hub as well as provide housing opportunities. The Planned Action prepared under RCW 43.21c.440 would apply to about 750 acres of an early phase. The City is inviting community members, tribes, and agency stakeholders to participate in the planning process.

Exhibit 1. Lewis and Clark Ranch Subarea and Vicinity



Source: BERK, 2022

What is an Environmental Impact Statement?

An Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) is an informational document that provides the City, agencies, and the public with information about the natural and built environment to be considered in the planning and decision-making process. The EIS process also allows the public and government agencies to comment on proposals and alternatives. An EIS describes:

- Proposed actions and alternatives
- Existing conditions of the study area
- Impacts that may occur if alternatives were to be implemented
- Mitigation measures to reduce or eliminate adverse impacts
- Potential significant, unavoidable, and adverse impacts

The EIS will also identify potential beneficial outcomes, for instance where alternatives incorporate existing environmental features in a sustainable manner, or where alternatives support City and regional goals for economic development and housing needs.

What is a Planned Action?

The City is proposing to designate all or some of the Lewis and Clark Subarea as a Planned Action, pursuant to the State Environmental Policy Act (“SEPA”; see RCW 43.21c.440 and WAC 197-11-164 to 172). A planned action provides detailed environmental analysis during an areawide planning stage rather than at the project permit review stage. Designating a planned action streamlines environmental review for development proposals. Planned actions would be allowed if they meet or exceed proposed land use and environmental performance standards in the planned action ordinance. A diagram of the Planned Action process is included below.

Planned Action Process



EIS Process

Scoping is the first step in the EIS process and was conducted by the City in March. It provided an opportunity for community members, tribes, and agencies to provide input on which environmental impacts associated with the project should be studied in the EIS, as directed by the State Environmental Protection Act (SEPA).

The EIS process will include additional opportunities to provide input, including a charrette planned for early May that will help inform the Reasonable Alternative studied in the EIS, as well as during the comment period for the Draft EIS.

Visit the City’s project website for more information and to learn about upcoming opportunities for participation: westrichland.org/274/Lewis-Clark-Ranch.

Scoping Comment Period

The City began scoping by issuing a Determination of Significance (DS) and scoping notification on March 4, 2022. A copy of the DS is provided in Appendix I. The scoping comment period ran from March 4 to March 25, during which the public, tribes, and agencies were invited to submit written comments to the City as well as participate in the meetings described below.

Community Scoping Meeting, March 17, 2022

The West Richland Planning Commission invited the public to a community meeting to learn about the project and to share ideas and questions. Fifty-three attendees participated in-person at the meeting, which was held in the Police Station Community Room. Comments were provided on a wide range of topics. Groundwater impacts to wells were a key area of concern for many participants, as well as impacts to traffic and public services.

Stakeholder Drop-In Session, March 24, 2022

Agencies and tribes on the City's SEPA contact list were given the opportunity to participate in a virtual drop-in session to learn more about the project, ask questions, and provide scoping input. Participants included representatives from Basin Disposal, Benton County Fire District 4, Benton Franklin Health District, Confederated Tribes of Warm Springs, Kennewick Irrigation District, Washington State Department of Ecology, and West Richland Chamber of Commerce.

Written Comments

During the scoping comment period the City received 14 written comments from the community members, tribes, and agencies listed below.

Community Members

- March 14: Rosemary Thomas
- March 17: Terri Hansen
- March 17: Garth & Alissa Hatch
- March 22: Patrick Grengs
- March 24: Rod Skeen
- March 24: Eric & Jennifer Corwin
- March 24: Kathy Blanchard
- March 25: Rob & Christina Palmer

Tribes and Agencies

- March 14: Washington State Department of Archaeology and Historic Preservation, Sydney Hanson
- March 16: Yakima Nation, Casey Barney
- March 21: Benton-Franklin Health District, Rick Dawson
- March 23: Washington Department of Ecology, Gwen Clear
- March 25: Benton County Public Works, Douglas D'Hondt
- March 25: Washington State Department of Transportation, Paul Gonseth

Scoping Comment Summary

Exhibit 2 summarizes themes from the scoping comments the City received, including written comments and verbal comments provided during the community scoping meeting and stakeholder drop-in session.

Exhibit 2 also explains how the City plans to address the comment themes in the EIS. In general, the EIS will provide more detailed analysis of the Phase 1 area that will be covered by the future proposed Planned Action Ordinance, because following adoption the Phase 1 area will have streamlined permitting and be intended for near-term development. The EIS will provide higher-level analysis for the rest of the

7,000-acre subarea, since additional environmental review would be necessary prior to development in this area, and it is envisioned for longer-term development.

Exhibit 2. Comment Themes and How the EIS Will Address Them

Topic	Comment Theme	How EIS will Address This
Wetlands	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ How will wetlands be addressed? ▪ The Department of Ecology requests a formal wetland delineation of the area and submittal of a wetland delineation report. ▪ Best practices should be implemented to minimize construction impacts on wetlands. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ The applicant has hired a consultant to conduct field work to determine the presence of wetlands in the Phase 1 area that will be covered by the Planned Action. The consultant is also planning to conduct a desktop analysis for the remaining subarea. Available information will be incorporated in the EIS. ▪ The EIS will describe existing policies and standards in place to minimize impacts on wetlands, and may identify additional mitigation measures based on findings from impact analysis.
Fish and Wildlife	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Consider impact on Lower Yakima River shoreline. ▪ Preserve bird habitat such as the canal lake. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ The applicant has hired a consultant to conduct a study of priority habitat in the subarea. Available information will be incorporated in the EIS. ▪ The EIS will describe existing policies and standards in place to protect fish and wildlife, and may identify additional mitigation measures based on findings from impact analysis.
Groundwater	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Changes in the development pattern of this area may both affect groundwater quality and quantity in the ranch and nearby areas. ▪ There is limited water supply in the region and this in turn limits development. The Yakima Basin is over-appropriated. ▪ Concern about impacts to aquifers and nearby residential wells and irrigation sources. ▪ There are existing groundwater quality and quantity problems in the Red Mountain area. Desire for a thorough assessment of water issues and impacts to county residents with wells in this area. ▪ Interest in use of xeriscaping and other types of landscaping that use less water 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ The City has hired a consultant to update its Water System Plan and analyze how much additional development can be served by municipal water. The City will consider possible options for increasing municipal water capacity in a manner consistent with regional water supply issues and applicable regulations. This information will be incorporated in the EIS. No study of the Red Mountain area is planned at this time. ▪ The City will request the applicant’s plans for irrigation water as development occurs over time and incorporate available information in the EIS.

Topic	Comment Theme	How EIS will Address This
Land Use	<p>and are consistent with scrub steppe environment.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Set aside sites for public services like fire stations and schools. ▪ Development should include conveniently located neighborhood services like healthcare and grocery stores. ▪ Development should increase housing supply, including a mix of housing types. Interest in keep housing costs affordable and ensuring regulations do not drive up costs. ▪ Support for more dense development without strip malls and that is walkable and bikeable. ▪ Opposition to urban mixed-use development. ▪ Concern the project will lead to sprawl and detract from existing downtown. ▪ Desire for low density development that will generate less traffic. ▪ Create greenbelt as a buffer between new development from existing houses. ▪ Interest in farmland preservation and agricultural conservation easements. ▪ Support for private property rights. ▪ Conduct a land capacity analysis for each alternative. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ The EIS will describe existing policies and standards in place to protect groundwater, and may identify additional mitigation measures based on findings from impact analysis. ▪ The EIS will document existing land use conditions including relevant plans, policies, and standards. ▪ The alternatives studied in the EIS may propose different land uses for the subarea, and the impacts of each will be studied as well as appropriate mitigation. ▪ The City’s vision for future growth will inform the alternatives, as well as community and stakeholder input provided during the planning process.
Cultural Resources	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Conduct a cultural resources review. ▪ Archaeological sites and traditional resources significant to Tribes may be present in the project area. Conduct an archaeological survey prior to construction. ▪ Evaluate any historic buildings or structures within the project area for eligibility for listing in the National Register of Historic Places. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ The applicant has hired a consultant to prepare a cultural resources report for the Phase 1 area covered by the Planned Action, and also to provide a desktop study for the remaining subarea. Available information will be incorporated in the EIS. ▪ The EIS will describe existing policies and standards governing development impacts on cultural resources, and may identify additional mitigation measures based on findings from impact analysis.

Topic	Comment Theme	How EIS will Address This
Aesthetics and Urban Design	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ An existing resident does not want to see houses from their backyard. ■ Concern about light pollution and noise. ■ Encroaching development will impact enjoyability of rural home and land and small town feel. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ The EIS will document existing aesthetic and urban design conditions including relevant policies and standards. ■ The alternatives studied in the EIS may have different approaches to aesthetics and urban design. The impacts of each will be studied as well as appropriate mitigation. ■ The City's vision for future growth will inform the alternatives, as well as community and stakeholder input provided during the planning process.
Transportation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ General concerns over traffic impacts to intersections and roads and a desire to understand these and mitigate for them. ■ The current transportation corridors seem ill equipped to manage additional population. ■ Benton County requests a comprehensive traffic study be completed evaluating capacity needs on area roadways. In locations where improvement projects are projected to be needed, the developer should help fund these. ■ Consider impacts to the state transportation system which includes Interstates 182, Interstate 82, and State Routes 224/Van Giesen, SR 225 and SR 240 in the vicinity. The EIS traffic analysis should not include any improvements to the state system without agreement from WSDOT. ■ Development will impact level of service on key East-West corridors: SR 240, SR 224, Keene Rd corridor. ■ Ensure there is road access to the area from station at Keene and Van Geisen/62nd, and a road from Keene to Harrington. ■ Evaluate potential new connections to area highways and principal arterials. Consider projects identified during prior planning efforts such as potential north-south connections (Red Mountain I/C). 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ The applicant has hired a consultant to conduct transportation modeling to understand existing conditions and impacts of their proposal. The City's EIS consultants will also conduct transportation modeling to understand impacts of a reasonable alternative to the proposal. The findings of the analysis will be incorporated in the EIS and will inform mitigation. ■ Existing transportation plans, policies, and standards will inform the alternatives' transportation networks and inform mitigation, as will community and stakeholder input.

Topic	Comment Theme	How EIS will Address This
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Consider new Yakima River bridge crossing(s) and potential impacts. ▪ Development must follow West Richland’s plan for increasing number of solid waste trucks. ▪ Consider walkability, including sidewalks and trails, to support active lifestyles and access to neighborhood destinations. ▪ The transportation system design should be multimodal, including bike facilities. ▪ Concern about potential eminent domain takings when roads are expanded to accommodate traffic growth. ▪ Desire for transportation mitigation projects to occur up front before development. 	
Public Services	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Development will lead to need for another fire station ▪ Development should include sites for neighborhood parks and green spaces. ▪ Set aside sites for future schools to accommodate population growth. ▪ Concern over costs for new public services associated with development, and how these will be paid for. Desire for developer to cover costs and avoid tax burden to citizens. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ The EIS will document existing public services and their current capacity, level of service standards, scheduled improvements, and relevant plans, policies, and standards. ▪ The EIS will analyze impacts on public services and may recommend mitigation measures based on the findings.
Utilities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Consider design of sewer systems, and ensure adequate water supply for development. ▪ The proposal includes development of sewer to serve the area, current capacity is insufficient. Is there a plan for further development? Does this include moving to a higher level of treatment that most likely will be required based on the expanded design flow? ▪ The expansion of the domestic water system will most likely require additional water rights to accommodate growth. Is there a plan to acquire rights from the existing property owner or will the city seek new water rights from Ecology? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ The City has hired a consultant to update its Sewer System Plan and Water System Plan and to analyze how much additional development can be served by municipal sewer and water. This information will be incorporated in the EIS. ▪ The EIS will analyze impacts on utilities and may recommend mitigation measures based on the findings.
Other	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Development should be consistent with Benton County Countywide Planning Policies (CPPs) related to urban growth, 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ The EIS will document existing policies that guide development including the Benton County CPPs.

Topic	Comment Theme	How EIS will Address This
	<p>transportation, property rights, citizen participation, and public services.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Development will likely degrade air quality. What steps will be taken to assist in the control/mitigation of the current ozone issue? ▪ Questions about how citizens can make their voices heard. ▪ Desire for all community members to be kept up to date, including county residents. ▪ Questions about the planning process including concerns about the applicant funding technical analysis and concerns about the City hiring a team of consultants that is not entirely local. ▪ Support for the project and the economic opportunity it will provide. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ The EIS will provide a general discussion of the regional ozone issue and how land use and multimodal transportation systems could affect air quality such as by comparing vehicle miles travelled, compact growth forms, and relative investment in transit, pedestrian, and bicycle networks. ▪ Under SEPA rules adopted by the City, the City is the lead agency for the EIS. The City can request or require studies be prepared by the applicant but they will be peer reviewed by third parties or evaluated by agencies with jurisdiction and expertise. ▪ For questions about the planning process and community engagement, reach out to the project contact listed at the end of this document or visit the project website: westrichland.org/274/Lewis-Clark-Ranch

Source: BERK, May 2022

Project Contact

For questions about the Lewis and Clark Ranch planning project and how the scoping comment summary will inform the process moving forward, contact Eric Mendenhall, Community Development Director, at 509-967-5902 or planner@westrichland.org.

Appendix I

Determination of Significance



Determination of Significance and Request for Comments on Scope of EIS

Lewis and Clark Ranch Subarea Plan and Planned Action

Description of Proposal

A major landowner has submitted applications to the City of West Richland for amendments to the Comprehensive Plan and Zoning Map to update land use and zoning designations for the Lewis and Clark Ranch. The ranch has a single landowner and over 7,000 acres of it are inside the city limits. This area is primarily used for agriculture and has not been developed with urban uses. The majority of the ranch area inside the city is designated Urban Transition (UT), meaning it is intended to transition from agriculture to urban uses over time as the City evaluates future growth needs. Some of the ranch area inside the city is already designed for urban uses including residential and commercial development.

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Proponent

Frank Tiegs LLC
6610 W Court Street, Suite B
Pasco, WA 99301

Lead Agency

City of West Richland

Location of Proposal

The site comprises the western half of the municipal area of the City of West Richland. It is generally located on a peninsula between the Yakima River and Rupert Road. The site is south of the Yakima River, south of East McWhorter Lane, north of Rupert Road, west of North Harrington Road, and west of the intersection of Rupert Road and SR 224. Much of its western border is adjacent to the Yakima River. The site is 7,653 acres in total.

EIS Required

The lead agency has determined this proposal is likely to have a significant adverse impact on the environment. An Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) is required under RCW 43.21C.030 (2)(c) and will be prepared. A scoping document indicating likely environmental impacts can be reviewed at City Municipal Services Building at 3100 Belmont Boulevard Ste 100, West Richland, WA, 99353 or via this link: <https://www.westrichland.org/274/Lewis-Clark-Ranch-Development>

The lead agency has identified the following areas for discussion in the EIS: soils, wetlands, fish and wildlife, surface water, land use, cultural resources, aesthetics, transportation, public services, and utilities. The City will evaluate a No Action Alternative addressing current Comprehensive Plan and zoning regulations for the area, as well as two other alternatives: the Proposal (the applicant's proposal), and a Reasonable Alternative that meets objectives but reduces impacts. The Reasonable Alternative may vary future land use patterns or investments in infrastructure and public facilities. It is anticipated that the Reasonable Alternative will respond to the subarea plan visioning process.

Scoping

Agencies, affected tribes, and members of the public are invited to comment on the scope of the EIS. You may comment on alternatives, mitigation measures, probable significant adverse impacts, and licenses or other approvals that may be required. The method and deadline for giving us your comments is:

Scoping Comment Period: March 4 – March 25, 2022

Provide written comments to the City Contact listed below by 5 pm March 25, 2022. Email comments are preferred.

City Contact:

Eric Mendenhall

Community Development Director, City of West Richland

3100 Belmont Boulevard, Suite 104, West Richland, WA 99353

planner@westrichland.org

Community Scoping Meeting: March 17

The Planning Commission invites you to a community meeting to learn about the project and share ideas and questions. You can attend in-person or virtually.

Community Scoping Meeting

March 17, 2022

6pm

Police Station Community Room, 7920 West Van Giesen Street, West Richland, WA

Responsible Official

Eric Mendenhall
Community Development Director, City of West Richland
3100 Belmont Boulevard, Suite 104, West Richland, WA 99353
509-967-5902, planner@westrichland.org



Signature: _____

Date: March 4, 2022

Appeal Process

You may appeal this determination of significance to the Responsible Official at the contact information listed above no later than March 18, 2022, per WRMC 18.04.260. You should be prepared to make specific factual objections. Contact Eric Mendenhall at 509-967-5902 or planner@westrichland.org to read or ask about the procedures for SEPA appeals.