



Lewis and Clark Ranch Subarea Plan and Planned Action

March 2022 | SEPA Scoping Document

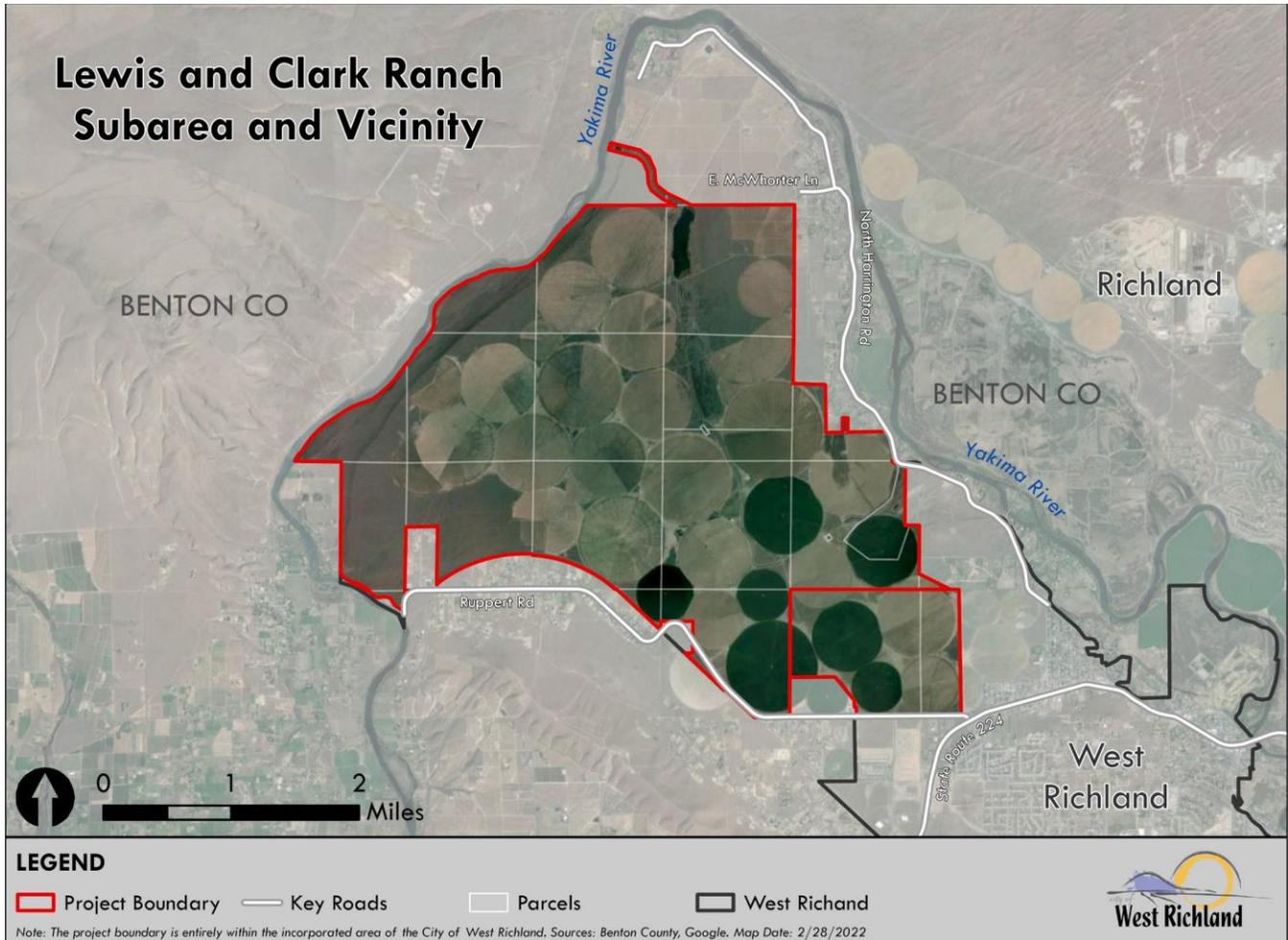
Introduction

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. 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 designed 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

Where is the Lewis and Clark Ranch Subarea?

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, as shown in Exhibit 1. 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.

What is an EIS?

An EIS is an informational document that provides the City, public, and other agencies with environmental information to be considered in the decision-making process. It 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 an alternative were 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



What Topics Would the EIS Cover?

West Richland 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. Existing conditions, potential impacts of each alternative, and mitigation measures would be identified for each topic.

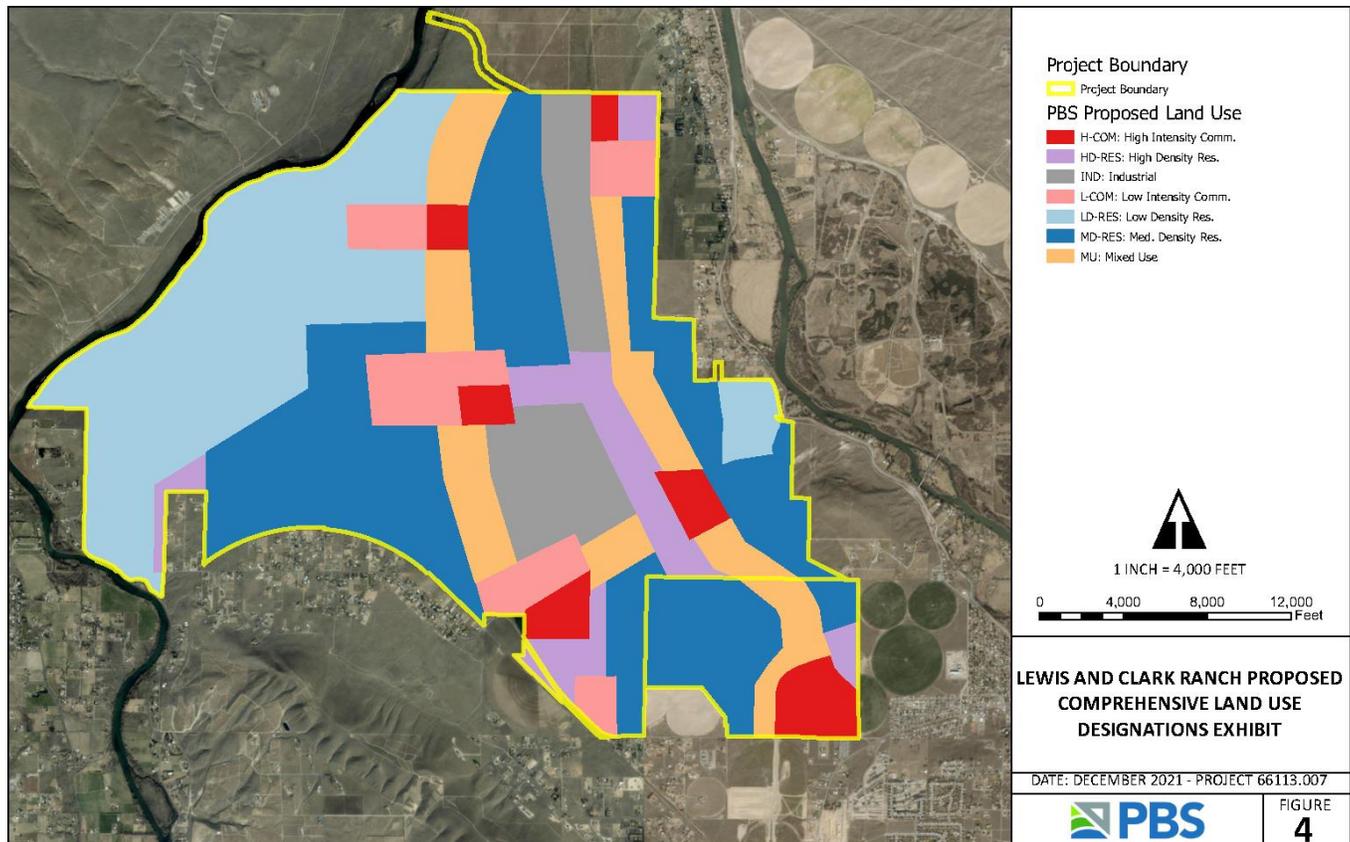
What Alternatives Could be Studied?

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. The alternatives will also be refined for study through the scoping process. The table below compares potential features of the alternatives. Exhibit 2 shows the applicant’s proposed Comprehensive Plan Land Use Map designations for the subarea, which include residential, commercial, industrial, and mixed-use.

Potential Alternative Features

| Features | No Action | Proposal (Applicant’s Proposal) | Reasonable Alternative (Modified Proposal) |
|--|---|--|--|
| Land Use | No changes to current Comprehensive Plan and zoning designations. | Replace current UT designation with residential, commercial, industrial, and mixed-use designations. Modify subarea’s existing urban use designations to allow mixed use and more residential development. | Same as Proposal, with possible differences in how designations are applied. |
| Development Standards | No changes to current standards. | Revisions to Comprehensive Plan Map and Zoning Map, including a new mixed-use designation for the subarea. | Same as Proposal, plus a new overlay for the subarea (Pattern Language, similar to Form Based Code). |
| Infrastructure Investments & Public Facilities | No changes to current capital plans. | New road network for subarea. Evaluate need for infrastructure investments in water and sewer and new public facilities to serve future growth. | Same as Proposal, with possible differences in types and locations. |
| Capacity for Jobs and Housing Growth | No change; growth pending in Comprehensive Plan. | To be determined. | To be determined. |

Exhibit 2. Applicant's Proposed Comprehensive Plan Designations for Subarea



Source: PBS, December 2021

How to Participate and Learn More

Website

You can find information about the Lewis and Clark Subarea planning process at the project website:
<https://www.westrichland.org/274/Lewis-Clark-Ranch-Development>

Contact Person

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

Participate

The City invites you to participate! You can:

- Visit the project website (see link above) to learn about the study area and planning process
- Ask to be added to the project email list (contact planner@westrichland.org)
- Provide written comments

- Attend public meetings and hearings hosted by the City’s Planning Commission or City Council
- Participate in the public visioning charrette for the subarea

Early participation opportunities include a 21-day scoping comment period in March, and a community scoping meeting on March 17 (details below). A public visioning charrette is tentatively scheduled for early May and will help shape the Reasonable Alternative for the Subarea Plan. The City expects to issue a Draft Planned Action EIS with a 30-day comment period in early 2023. Information about events and comment opportunities will be posted at the project website identified above.

Scoping – Happening March 2022!

Participate in the scoping process! Share your ideas for the future of the subarea and what kind of growth you hope to see in this part of the city. You can also comment on what should be considered in the EIS, such as specific environmental information or features of the alternatives. If you have questions about how to comment, reach out to the City Contact listed below. You can also learn more at a community scoping meeting on March 17.

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.

March 17, 2022

6pm

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

Virtual Participation Option: <https://www.westrichland.org/274/Lewis-Clark-Ranch-Development>