
TO:	Wes McCart (Director, Planning and Economic Development)	DATE:	July 29, 2026
FROM:	MillieAnne VanDevender Tri-Cities - (509) 380-5883	PROJECT NO.:	224941.34
SUBJECT:	EIS Scoping meeting - Summary	PROJECT NAME:	Franklin County Comprehensive Plan Update - EIS

INTRODUCTION

On July 6, 2026 the Franklin County responsible official issued a SEPA Determination of Significance (DS), announcing the initiate of an EIS process for environmental review under RCW 43.21C.030(2)(c), together with a Scoping notice.

The EIS scoping notice was published on the County's website, the SEPA Register, and sent to Tribes and agencies for comment. Additionally, notice of the DS, and Scoping process was published in the Franklin County Graphic on the following July 2026 dates: 7/9, 7/16, and 7/23 and the Sunday 7/12 edition of the Tri-City Herald. Further, notice was sent to our county distribution list of interested parties.

To initiate the public component of the EIS process, the County held an **EIS scoping meeting on July 14, 2026**, from 6 pm to 8 pm at the Franklin County Courthouse in Pasco. The meeting was supported by AHBL and intended to provide an opportunity for the public to learn about the EIS process and ask questions to staff and consultants while meeting state SEPA requirements.

In this memo we summarize the meeting and provide a written record of the questions asked during the course of the scoping meeting, and the answers provided. The meeting was available for online participants as well, and the recording is included on the County's YouTube account.

MEETING FORMAT

County staff (Wes McCart, Gem Belamour, and Alex Hall) sat at the dais, and Nicole Stickney and MillieAnne VanDevender of AHBL sat at the presenters' tables. Nicole Stickney (AHBL) made a presentation to provide context for the Periodic update process. *That presentation is attached to this memo.*

The presentation covered the following topics:

- Where to find Comprehensive Plan information
- An overview of the EIS Process
- A list of proposed elements to be evaluated in the EIS process:
 1. Land Use
 2. Housing and anti-displacement
 3. Utilities and infrastructure
 4. Transportation
 5. Cultural and historic resources
 6. Water resources
 7. Vegetation and landscape
 8. Biological resources and critical areas
 9. Climate
 10. Environmental justice and health disparities
- The project schedule
- Introduced some key new concepts to be integrated into the Comprehensive Plan: Climate Element; New housing requirements
- County growth projection
- The three alternatives to be examined in the EIS: (1) No Action, (2) Focused Growth; (3) Broad Growth
- How to provide comments

QUESTIONS RECEIVED

During the course of the meeting the attendees asked questions which are recorded in the following table, together with the response given. Not all of the questions are directly related to EIS scoping; many questions were oriented toward the Comprehensive Plan update in general or were broader in nature.

The question and answer portion was of a somewhat conversational nature, with three attendees presenting questions, two of which asked multiple questions.

1	Question
	<u>Frank Scopa</u> : What is the distinction within the 0-30% AMI [area median income] income band between permanent supportive housing (PSH) and non-PSH?
	Response
	<i>Nicole Stickney</i> : This is an indication of what type of accommodations will need to be provided to this income band. All of these living arrangements are permanent housing, but supportive housing will be similar to those provided by government programs, such as housing authorities, although there are various providers. They are generally subsidized housing, but there are additional programming the State wants to see.
2	Question
	<u>Ray Law</u> : Asked about the term "sideboards" as described by Wes McCart at a previous meeting, and how that reflects a desired flexibility in the Comprehensive Plan.
	Response
	<i>Wes McCart</i> : Yes, generally that term refers to parameters for analyzing and processing development applications. For example, if there is a proposed PUD [planned unit development], the required 15% open space set aside would be a "sideboard." McCart further indicated that was a bit outside the scope here.
3	Question
	<u>Ryan Nelson</u> : There was a lawsuit brought by Futurewise in the 2017 Comprehensive Plan. Have those issues has been suitably resolved and will they be adequately addressed in the 2026 Comprehensive Plan update?
	Responses
	<i>Nicole Stickney</i>: The previous Comprehensive Plan, the 2017 plan, was appealed to the Growth Management Hearings Board by Futurewise. The main concern at the time was the proposed extension of Pasco's UGA [urban growth area] on the north side of the city. One of the points of contention raised was whether or not that expansion was intruding on agricultural lands of long term commercial significance (ALLTCS). There was ambiguity in the way the land use designations were defined, but ultimately the County prevailed, and the UGA expansion was allowed. A lot of the debate ultimately centered around soils, and we are not doing any work on mapping or soils at this time. The designations are not changing any further, but we are going to clarify the maps and be very clear with the labeling of those land use designations. <i>Wes McCart</i>: Quincy lands were discussed as part of that lawsuit, and it was determined that it didn't matter if the lands were irrigated or not, those areas were upheld as being ALLTCS. Previously the County had a lot of Agricultural Protection 20 zoning, which did not distinguish between ALLTCS and other rural classifications. For this update, we will be changing some to Rural 20 or Rural 40, which won't change the density, but will clarify the ALLTCS status.

4	Question
	<u>Ryan Nelson</u> : With regard to population projections- where do you suppose that those 6,000 or so people will end up in the unincorporated areas of the County?
	Response
	<i>Wes McCart</i> : Within the LAMIRD [Limited Areas or More Intense Rural Development] areas.
5	Question
	<u>Marla Marvin – SOS</u> : If USACE [US Army Corps of Engineers] lands are reconveyed to Franklin County, wouldn't that be expected to be in the planning document? It's obvious the County is thinking about acquiring these lands- is it required to be included in the plan?
	Response
	<i>Wes McCart</i> : Yes, we should include something about that in the Comprehensive Plan, since it's meant to be planning for a 20 year time span. I believe there is mention of that in our drafts. That does not mean we will have many details to include, but it should be mentioned.
6	Question
	<u>Marla Marvin – SOS</u> : We (at Save our Shoreline) are working with Washington DNR [Dept. of Natural Resources] and a willing seller to acquire a Selph landing boat launch and make that public property. That's at least a year out, but it seems like something worth noting. How might that fit into an EIS related to a comprehensive plan?
	Response
	<i>Nicole Stickney</i>: I talked earlier about the 20 year outlook of a comprehensive plan- they can also be amended once per year. My suggestion is that if you look at the land use designation and the zoning of the land, they can make an application to have that amended accordingly through that process. To your point, I don't think this needs to be included in a comprehensive plan and won't affect the EIS. If it's a substantial amount of land that would be incorporated into the rural County, we may want to characterize it as something conceptual, like putting a placeholder there.
7	Question
	<u>Marla Marvin – SOS</u> : There is a section of land called Richland Bend, currently owned by USACE that is 1 mile of riparian area, and is within the UGA of Pasco. It is coming in right near the development called Broadmoor. Those developers are hoping that becomes a city park. SOS is hoping nothing happens and that the land is later acquired when a family farm across the street decides to sell and then becomes a city park at that point. How do we get that recognized in the context of the EIS?
	Response
	<i>Nicole Stickney</i> : It sounds to me like you would be a proponent for seeing a reduction of the Pasco UGA, but unless you get buy-in from Pasco, they are unlikely to be willing to give up their UGA area. This is probably not something that would be analyzed as a part of the EIS, and off the cuff, I think it would be better to go to Pasco with this issue.
8	Question
	<u>Marla Marvin – SOS</u> : Speaking of Pasco, how does the coordination and collaboration with Pasco work in regard to the Comprehensive plan and the EIS process?
	Response
	We are working with them regularly and share drafts. We drafted the countywide planning policies (CWPPs) to guide how all jurisdictions are going to proceed with their comprehensive plan updates.

	There is a lot of information on the periodic update website, including the CWPPs that you may be interested in.
9	Question
	<u>Marla Marvin – SOS:</u> As regards to the transportation and the climate elements - is it going to mention Ben Franklin Transit? That seems like a big part of how we could reduce GHG [greenhouse gas] emissions?
	Responses
	<i>Wes McCart:</i> Yes, that is mentioned in our transportation element. Not just transit though, which really only functions well in more dense population concentrations, but more broadly how we reduce VMT [vehicle miles traveled] countywide. For example, how far does someone have to go to get to the grocery store?
	<i>Alex Hall:</i> We actually have two other entities that provide transit, especially in the more rural areas- the WSDOT [Washington State Dept. of Transportation] grape line with service to Walla Walla and Spokane, and People for People that serves Connell.
10	Question
	<u>Marla Marvin – SOS:</u> You mention the SMP, which was recently updated. How binding are those changes, which addresses shorelines as related to GMA and this comprehensive plan?
	Response
	<i>Wes McCart:</i> When we do the SMP, one big aspect is to characterize the existing shorelines. We had a proposal up on the Snake River by the Dam, that wanted to expand their operation to other land they owned. But the shorelines characterization would not allow them to do that. We found an alternative where they could stay out of the shorelines without having to change the SMP. To recharacterize the shoreline is a huge undertaking. Not only do we have to amend it, but it has to go through the State's process. So it is really effective at preserving what is currently there.
11	Question
	<u>Marla Marvin – SOS:</u> In both of your alternatives, you mention a major resort. What is happening? Do you know where?
	Response
	<i>Wes McCart:</i> We have an application for a master planned resort connected with the golf course at Levey Park. Master planned resorts are allowed in the GMA. Just like as in the slides, we mention major industrial developments- we don't have an application for one, but we are trying to line up some processes to think ahead- can we do this? Can we make it a more streamlined process should something come up? We have to amend the comprehensive plan to add processes for these types of developments, that's why we want to make sure to include them in the EIS process. Even after that, any individual applications would still need to be approved by the Board of County Commissioners.

NLS/avc

c: Alex Hall, Gem Belamour – Franklin County
MillieAnne VanDevender - AHBL

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July 14, 2026

Scoping Meeting Photos:



FRANKLIN COUNTY COMPREHENSIVE PLAN UPDATE 2026 - 2046

ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT STATEMENT

July 14, 2026
Public Scoping Meeting



AHBL



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WELCOME!

At this scoping meeting, you can:

- Learn more about the project proposal and the Franklin County Comprehensive Plan environmental review process.
- Learn about applicable review procedures.
- Learn where to view project materials and how to provide formal scoping comments.
- Ask questions about the EIS and/or project at the end of the presentation.
- » The WA Department of Commerce climate planning grant is supported with funding from Washington's Climate Commitment Act. The CCA supports Washington's climate action efforts by putting cap-and-invest dollars to work reducing climate pollution, creating jobs, and improving public health. Information about the CCA is available at www.climate.wa.gov



AHBL



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ACRONYMS/ DEFINITIONS

- » **Growth Management Act** (GMA): Statewide law for local and regional planning practices in Washington
- » **Environmental Impact Statement** (EIS): Assessment of the adverse impacts a planning project may have on the environment
- » **EIS Alternative**: A proposed planning action or scenario created as a part of an EIS (not necessarily what will happen)
- » **Urban Growth Area** (UGA): Area where urban level development should occur

EIS PROCEDURES OVERVIEW

An EIS is a tool to identify and analyze probable environmental impacts, reasonable alternatives, and possible mitigation.

» EIS Milestones

- Scoping
- Draft EIS
- Final EIS

- » Proposed EIS Elements of the Environment
 - Land Use
 - Housing and Anti-Displacement
 - Utilities and Infrastructure
 - Transportation
 - Cultural and Historic Resources
 - Water Resources
 - Vegetation and Landscape
 - Biological Resources and Critical Areas
 - Climate
 - Environmental Justice and Health Disparities

EIS PROCESS STEPS

Scoping

- Invites comments on a proposal's alternatives, impacts, and potential mitigation measures to be analyzed

Draft EIS Preparation

- Analyzes the probable impacts and reasonable alternatives

Draft EIS Issuance for review and comment

- Invites comments

Final EIS Preparation

- Analyzes and responds to all comments received

Final EIS Issuance

- Uses the information in decision-making

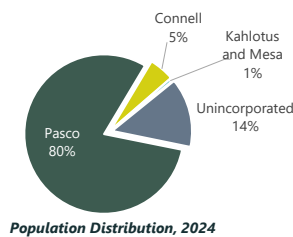
PRELIMINARY EIS SCHEDULE*

PHASE	TIMING*	ACTIVITY
Scoping	July 6, 2026	Issue Determination of Significance and Request for Comments on Scope of EIS
	July 14, 2026	Public/Agency Public Scoping meeting
	August 5, 2026	Public/Agency comments on EIS Scope due
	Summer 2026	EIS Scoping Report / EIS Alternative and Environmental Elements Confirmed
Draft EIS	Late Summer 2026	Issue Draft EIS
	Fall 2026	Draft EIS Public Open House
	Late Fall 2026	Public/Agency Draft EIS Comments Due
Final EIS	Late 4th Quarter 2026	Final EIS Issued

*SUBJECT TO CHANGE

PROPOSAL OVERVIEW

- » Review and update the 2018 Comprehensive Plan based on changing conditions, new laws, and to extend the planning horizon to 2046 as required by GMA.



Jurisdiction	% Share of Countywide Population Growth	2020 Population	2020-2046 Projected Population Growth	2046 Projected Population
City of Pasco	86%	77,108	+40,405	117,513
City of Connell	1%	5,441	+470	5,911
City of Kahlottus	0%	147	-	147
City of Mesa	0%	385	-	385
Unincorporated Franklin County	13%	13,668	+ 6,108	19,776

NEW REQUIREMENTS

- » Climate Change / Climate Resiliency as a new plan element
- » Plan for and accommodate emergency and affordable housing

HOUSING FOR ALL

Area Median Income

Franklin County's AMI is based on the Tri-Cities metropolitan statistical area (MSA), and in the year 2025 was measured by HUD to be \$105,600 per household.

	Permanent Housing Needs by Income Level (% of Area Median Income)							TOTAL NEW HOUSING	
	0-30% Non PSH*	0-30% PSH*	>30- 50%	>50- 80%	>80- 100%	>100- 120%	>120%	Housing Units (Permanent)	Emergency Units (Temporary "beds")
Connell^	21	21	29	40	21	18	70	220	2
Kahlotus	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Mesa	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Pasco^	1,821	1,821	2,511	3,511	1,824	1,618	6,133	19,269	153
Rural	0	0	0	439	228	202	1,540	2,409	0

^ Entire UGA

* PSH means "Permanent Supportive Housing"

CLIMATE CHANGE AND RESILIENCE ELEMENT (NEW)

- » The **Climate Element** outlines the County's efforts to bolster resilience to climate-related hazards and comply with state mandates on greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions reduction.
 - The **Resilience Sub-Element** presents concepts to strengthen local resilience to climate hazards such as drought, extreme heat, flooding, and wildfire while protecting community assets.
 - The **GHG Reduction Sub-Element** sets out implementation measures to reduce GHG emissions and to reduce vehicle miles traveled (VMT).

EIS GROWTH ALTERNATIVES*

Alternative 1 – Focused Growth Alternative

Existing UGAs, establishment of a Master Planned Resort, & shrubsteppe conservation with cluster development options

Alternative 2 – Broad Growth Alternative

Expanded Pasco UGA for industrial land, establishment of a Master Planned Resort, adoption of Major Industrial Development standards, & providing a variety of densities including reducing some zones' minimum lot size to a one-acre base density

Alternative 3 – No Action Alternative

This is a Benchmark for comparison. Based on 2018 Comprehensive Plan & existing uses on the site.

*Subject to change or refinement

7/14/2026

Franklin County Comprehensive Plan | Environmental Impact Statement

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HOW TO COMMENT

Scoping comments will be accepted until August 5, 2026 at 5:00 pm.

The public, tribes, and agencies are invited to review and comment on the scope of the EIS, including alternatives, probable significant adverse impacts, mitigation measures, and licenses or other approvals that may be required for the proposals.

Comments can be submitted via email or by mail:



ATTN: Alex Hall
Franklin County Planning and Economic Development
502 W. Boeing St.
Pasco WA 99301



Plan2026@franklincountywa.gov

7/14/2026

Franklin County Comprehensive Plan | Environmental Impact Statement

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PROJECT CONTACTS

» Project Contact

Alex Hall, Long Range/ Natural Resource Planner

Franklin County Planning and Economic Development

(509)545-3521

ahall@franklincountywa.gov

» Project webpage

Updates, documents, and important notices

<https://engage.ahbl.com/Franklin2046>



Franklin County Comprehensive Plan

Periodic Update Project | 2026-2046

Did you know?

The population in Franklin County, Washington now exceeds 100,000 and continues to grow!

Franklin County is in the process of updating the County's Comprehensive Plan for 2026-2046. Much of the work to update the Comprehensive Plan will focus on housing and infrastructure, as required by the state of Washington's Growth Management Act.

Public participation is a key part of the Comprehensive Plan update process. The County will hold a series of meetings to engage stakeholders and to reach out to the public. To help the public understand the Comprehensive Plan update process, the



Want to stay updated?

• Bookmark this Franklin County Comprehensive Plan 2026-2046 website to visit this often. It's often the fastest way to stay updated.

SUMMARY

» Questions?

» How to Comment:

Comments can be submitted via email or by mail:

Email: Plan2026@franklincountywa.gov

Mail:

ATTN: Alex Hall

Franklin County Planning and Economic Development

502 Boeing St.

Pasco WA 99301

» Comments will be accepted until August 5, 2026 at 5 pm.

» Project website: <https://engage.ahbl.com/Franklin2046>