



Solutions for Shared Regional Problems

Benton-Franklin Council of Governments convenes local governments to collaboratively plan, fund, and administer solutions to shared community needs. BFCOG facilitates the flow of state and federal funds into the region for transportation and economic development through planning activities and administration of related programs.

Benton-Franklin Council of Governments (BFCOG) was established by voluntary association of the local units of government in 1966 with the vision of providing a forum for improved communication, multi-jurisdictional decision-making, regional planning, and lead agency capacity for the provision of multi-jurisdictional programs. The services currently provided to the Member Jurisdictions are outlined by the Interlocal Agreement and can evolve with the needs of the Member Jurisdictions. BFCOG currently fulfills the following designations on behalf of the Benton-Franklin region:

- **Regional Planning Commission** (RCW 36.70.60)
- **Conference of Governments** (RCW 36.64.80)
- **Regional Transportation Planning Organization** (RCW 47.80.20)
- **Metropolitan Planning Organization/Transportation Management Area** (Federal Highway Administration, Federal Transit Administration)
- **Economic Development District** (US Department of Commerce, Economic Development Administration)

*Since 2018, federal and state Transportation (FHWA/FTA/WSDOT) and Economic Development (EDA/EPA) programs have provided **direct project funding** to local jurisdictions of **\$35.7M** compared to the combined local assessment invested of just **\$1.18M**. **That's an average of \$30 direct return for every \$1 of local funds invested in BFCOG!***

Summary of Support for: **Port of Benton**

Transportation Planning & Funding:

- STIP Technical Support produced inclusion in the 2022-2025 STIP for the **White Bluff Rail SR240 Rail Crossing Project** & ongoing TIP technical assistance.
- **Rail Crossing, Tie, and Rail Replacement Project** is a 2023 & 2024 Regional Transportation Priority Project

Economic Development:

- Projects included in the **2023 Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy (CEDS)** document to support the acquisition of future project funding: **Research District Development Building** (Advanced Energy Center); **Horn Rapids Industrial Park North**; **USS Triton Sail Park Visitors Center**; **First Street Extension**; and **Hanford History Project Archival Building**
- **Letters of Support for CDS Funding Requests** to Murray, Cantwell, and Newhouse for **White Bluffs Rail Project** ('22/'24), **White Bluff's STEM Center** ('22/'23), **Commerce Site Development Grant for Horn Rapids Industrial Park Inland Port Yard Project**, **CRISI & RAISE Requests for At Grade Crossings Replacement**.
- Shared specific funding opportunities of interest, including the **Port Infrastructure Development Program** and **EPA's Clean Ports Program**.
- Facilitated **Port of Benton Projects Tour** with EDA District Representative **Laura Ives**.

Fiscal Impact to: **Port of Benton**

2023 Annual Dues Assessment: \$10,648 (Federal Program Matching Only – 4% of Assessment Budget)

2022-2023 BFCOG Highlights

Approved and Ratified **Updated the Interlocal Agreement, Bylaws, and Standing Committee Policies** with all 13 Member Jurisdictions

Fully Staffed Planning Department with 6 Planning Professionals

Obligated **\$12.724M** to Local Transportation Projects

Completed the 2022 and 2023 annual updates to the **2021-2025 Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy** (CEDs), incorporating regional jurisdictional projects and regional economic data

Defederalization of \$847,000 in former EDA Regional Revolving Loan Fund dollars for future economic development use

Received a 3-year **\$600,000 EPA Brownfields Assessment Coalition Grant** and provided environmental assessments or reuse planning to 12 sites to date.

Received **\$400,000** in ARPA Funding to Support Economic Recovery and Resiliency Planning

Adopted **2024-2025 Unified Planning Work Program** (UPWP) for MPO/RTPO with **\$3.16M** Budget for Planning Programs

Provided over **75 Technical Assistance Services** for Regional Jurisdictions

50 Facilitated Congressional Connection Meetings between Jurisdictions and Federal Delegation Staff

Serving as **Record of Information Source** for federal funding opportunities from Senators Murray and Cantwell's Offices

Updated **Regional Traffic Count** Data for **715 + locations**

Updated Travel Demand and Land Use Modeling Data to include Freight Traffic Information

Conducted over **70 Modeling and Mapping Services** for Jurisdictions and Developers

Provide Contracted Administration to the **Tri-City Regional PFD** and **Benton County PFD**

Distributed over **4,000 Regional Bike Maps** (English and Spanish) to date

4 Years of **Clean SAO Audits**

Co-Facilitate the **Benton-Franklin Broadband Action Team** and their Infrastructure, and Digital Equity Sub Committees. Received **\$102,000** in **Broadband Equity, Accessibility & Deployment (BEAD) Planning** funds to conduct planning activities to support future BEAD infrastructure funding applications.

Partnering with TRIDEC, Visit Tri-Cities, and the Regional Chamber to form the **Tri-Cities Strategic Alliance** to intentionally collaborate on regional scale projects, including BFCOG's **Internet for All** initiative.



Ongoing Planning Services, Data Collection, and Technical Support provided by BFCOG

Metropolitan Planning Organization/Regional Transportation Planning Organization

Call for Projects: Funding Allocation makes available roughly \$5M annually to local jurisdictions for local multi-modal projects through a competitive process in cooperation with WSDOT. This funding is only available to jurisdictions through the regional MPO.

Comprehensive Plan Growth Management Act Certification: Review of the transportation element of local jurisdiction comp plans to ensure consistency with GMA requirements, then issue required GMA certification.

Travel Demand Modeling Data and Land Use Scenarios for developments and comprehensive planning are provided to local jurisdictions and regularly updated on behalf of the region. This service would have to be procured by each individual jurisdiction if not supplied by BFCOG.

Regional Traffic Count Program collects data from over 630 regional locations identified by Jurisdictions, including average daily traffic, vehicle type, peak hour flows, freight data, etc. Local jurisdictions use this information to assess the impact of proposed new developments, among other things.

Transportation Improvement Program (TIP) Assistance is provided to local jurisdictions to ensure projects are entered into the WSDOT project software. Projects not entered are not eligible for state or federal pass-through funds.

Regional Transportation Priorities is an annually compiled list of collaborative transportation projects for the Tri-Cities region highlighting the highest priority projects adopted by the BFCOG. This listing is helpful to local, state, and federal agencies in accomplishing planning tasks and provides information to support the pursuit of projects and funding, including grant applications.

Active Transportation Planning provides comprehensive bicycle and pedestrian planning for the region. The most recent Regional Active Transportation Plan provided a Level of Traffic Stress (LTS) rating for all regional roads and a best practices toolbox section to help implement multimodal improvements.

Federal Functional Classification (FFC) Reclassification requires coordination with local jurisdictions, ensuring that desired roadway reclassification meets regional transportation goals. Without BFCOG, it would fall to each individual jurisdiction to ensure their roadways do not interfere with other local jurisdictions' roadways.

Congestion Management Process (CMP) provides a shared vision, goals, objectives, and strategies for the region to guide future improvements for all forms of transportation. The CMP involves developing objectives and performance measures to support those objectives, data collection and analysis, identifying strategies, and evaluating effective strategy implementation to plan for effective congestion management. As a migratory region with regular commuting between closely located communities, this is an essential regional undertaking.

Human Services Transportation Plan (HSTP) ensures coordinated transportation planning between local agencies, WSDOT, MPO, and the community to improve transportation services for persons with special needs and those who cannot transport themselves due to physical or mental limitations, income, or age. Projects identified in the HSTP are eligible for funding through a statewide selection process known as the Consolidated Grant Program.

Metropolitan Transportation Plan (MTP) is a long-range, multi-modal planning document that identifies the region's mobility needs for 20+ years. It provides a policy framework for investing anticipated federal, state, and local funds based on the projected needs, regional goals, and objectives. Transportation projects not part of the MTP are not eligible for state and federal transportation funding.

Title VI/Equity Plan provides important regional data analysis related to equity and transportation.

Additional services available upon request by local jurisdictions include **Land Use Planning, Land Suitability Analysis, Mapping Services,** and **Equity Data Support.**

Economic Development District

BFCOG produces a **Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy (CEDS)** for the region. The CEDS, which showcases projects and regional economic areas of emphasis, is a requirement of the Economic Development Administration (EDA) to support investment of EDA grant funding in the region. Since 2009 more than \$12M has been invested by the EDA for projects in this region.

Economic Resiliency and Recovery is a new addition to the CEDS. BFCOG coordinates with local jurisdictions and state/federal agencies to evaluate and recommend resiliency and recovery planning to coincide with regional emergency planning. COVID-19 has highlighted nationally how unprepared communities are to affect economic resilience and recovery during and after a disaster.

Funding Technical Assistance is provided to local jurisdictions to facilitate the flow of state and federal funding into the region through grants and ongoing programs. EDA has over \$3.5B available nationally for community-building programs. Each program strongly advocates partnership with the local Economic Development District for consideration. 2021's federal Infrastructure Investments and Jobs Act (IIJA) includes significant funding opportunities, especially in the Transportation sector.

Lead Agency Capability is available for BFCOG to by the applicant and administrator for state or federal programs that allow collaboration and impact to more than one jurisdiction in the region. One such program is the EPA Brownfields Program, which awarded BFCOG a \$600K competitive grant for Brownfields Assessments across the region.

Regional Brownfields Program is an initiative to identify and prioritize brownfield sites to facilitate potential redevelopment or reuse through environmental assessment, remediation, and site-specific planning. An environmental consulting firm has been contracted to support these activities and identify other funding support for related activities.

Equity Analysis/Data Support can be provided including data and third-party analysis to support the new expectations of the WA "HEAL" Act and increasing federal funding requirements.

Multi-Jurisdictional Programs

BFCOG can help two or more local governments partner to their mutual benefit by administering a multi-jurisdictional program or service. **How might this benefit your jurisdiction by reducing duplication of efforts, saving money, or improving collaboration?**