

# Tri-Cities Governance Study: Phase II



December 2013

WASHINGTON STATE UNIVERSITY

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### Executive Summary

This Report summarizes the results of a study conducted as Phase II of a multi-phase project by researchers affiliated with the William D. Ruckelshaus Center (a joint effort of the University of Washington and Washington State University that fosters collaborative public policy) on the topic of governance in the Tri-Cities. This study was conducted at the request of Tri-Cities Evolution (formerly known as the Tri-Cities Governance Study Task Force) to support the exploration of opportunities for beneficial collaboration across the region. This project builds upon the successful “4Cs project” conducted several years ago by an ad hoc group (the Three Rivers Community Roundtable) which explored mechanisms for enhancing efficiencies and services through multi-jurisdiction or multiple agency activities characterized as “Coordination, Cooperation, Collaboration or Consolidation.”

Building on the 4Cs report, Phase I of this project focused on what could be learned from the experiences of other communities in similar circumstances – especially with regards to the potential of inter-jurisdictional consolidation. The report from that phase, issued in September 2012, provides a detailed discussion of the findings from an in-depth review of examples from across the country. In summary, that review indicated that the outcomes experienced by communities pursuing collaborative approaches to enhanced governance are highly dependent upon the specific circumstances in those places and that the achievement of significant benefits is not a given. That Phase I report suggested that continuation and expansion of the collaborative and cooperative relationships and arrangements already in place in the area (“functional consolidation”) would avoid many of the risks attendant on formal consolidation and would be likely to produce more lasting and beneficial results.

Phase II of the project, summarized in this report, consisted of research focused on the Tri-Cities region through the engagement of knowledgeable stakeholders and opinion leaders. This phase was designed to explore examples of current collaborations and opportunities for continued efforts to improve governance in the Tri-Cities region. The Phase II task order called for research engagement in the communities to assess perspectives and opinions of key actors, opinion leaders and senior officials regarding governance alternatives. The assessment vehicle was a series of by-invitation discussions hosted by Tri-Cities Evolution and facilitated by the Ruckelshaus Center to gather perspectives on a series of questions related to “functional consolidation.”

Nine facilitated and well-attended community leader discussions took place in late spring of 2013. The invited groups included Business and Agriculture, Government, Education, Non-Profit and Healthcare, Young Leaders, and Public Safety and Criminal Justice. Because of the anticipated level of participation, some groups were scheduled for more than one meeting date. No interested participant was excluded from any session, regardless of affiliation. Data gathered from this discussion series has been aggregated and analyzed for this Phase II report to the Tri-Cities Evolution. This project addresses a question that will be considered by more jurisdictions in the future as populations grow and resources remain scarce: Are there innovative approaches or mechanisms that can be used to enhance governance, improve government efficiency, expand regional opportunities and improve quality of life for citizens?

During the time this Phase II project was underway, the region experienced two events which make

even more important the exploration of opportunities for functional consolidation and other joint efforts that can be carried out without the formalities associated with political or jurisdictional consolidation. A regional vote against creation of an aquatics center, and a similar voter disapproval of funding for expansion of the convention center both provide indication that other approaches to joint activity must be further explored. This research confirms that, in the Tri-Cities, there is a large number of existing approaches to achieving the perceived benefits of consolidation: economies of scale, critical mass, enhanced status and support or improve quality of life. And there are significant opportunities to activate more such approaches, to achieve greater efficacy in regional governance. Chief among the areas where such opportunities might be realized are coordinated planning, zoning and regulatory approaches; the enhancement of regional status and competitiveness through development of a common identity; enhancement of quality of life; the extension of equity through the development and management of public facilities such as the regional airport; and the development of an enhanced sense of community and connectedness through establishment of a community core or rallying focal point or image – physical or conceptual.

### Introduction

In 2007, a taskforce was sponsored by the by the Three Rivers Community Roundtable to examine the various government, private business and non-governmental organizations in the Tri-Cities region and the opportunities –whether already realized or potential – for collective action which might improve efficiencies and effectiveness for governance in the region. These issues have recurred on the public agenda several times, and have sometimes been heated, especially regarding the most controversial of the options—consolidation of Richland, Pasco and Kennewick (and possibly West Richland). That "4Cs Task Force" (Communication, Cooperation, Collaboration and Consolidation) published a report which provided a summary of the formal and informal means already applied, and insight and assessment of those potentially available for governments, business and NGOs in the Tri-Cities region to achieve mutually beneficial outcomes. That report left open for further consideration the topic of formal jurisdictional consolidation, a topic that continued to engender strong public dialogue.

The Task Force report recommended an independent study of the questions, challenges and opportunities across each of the “Cs” which might exist in the region. The goal was to “bring facts and data to the discussion and then create an informed dialogue.” The Task Force (now the Tri-Cities Evolution) approached the William D. Ruckelshaus Center – a joint effort of the University of Washington (UW) and Washington State University (WSU) that fosters collaborative public policy – to conduct that study from a neutral and credible perspective. The original project design includes three contingent phases:

1. Locate examples and identify lessons learned from local government collaboration and consolidation efforts in other parts of the United States;
2. Assess and document the prevailing perceptions of elected officials, opinion leaders and informed interest representatives regarding opportunities for local government communication, collaboration, cooperation and consolidation in the Tri-Cities area.
3. Assess broad citizen perceptions, attitudes, and support for collective governance through surveys and public events to solicit stakeholder input on the question of consolidation (note: this phase is contingent upon a review of the results of Phase II and the preferences of the Tri-Cities Evolution).

The initial phase sought to find appropriate, informative case studies and literature from governance-related efforts across the country and to capture and summarize key lessons and observations which can be applied to the study of governance in the Tri-Cities region. Data were collected primarily from secondary sources to identify examples of governance-enhancing activity, specifically including successful and unsuccessful collaboration/consolidation efforts, in other parts of the country. In September 2012, a project team of faculty and staff from the WSU Division of Governmental Studies and Services (DGSS) and the UW Evans School of Public Affairs presented a well-received Phase I report that identified case studies and literature to an audience of over 400 people at luncheon sponsored by the Joint Chamber of Commerce. The Phase I report recommended that the Tri-Cities region consider pursuing activities and arrangements that provide the benefits of “functional consolidation,” without the risks and costs associated with formal consolidation. It is important to note that the Phase I study does not contain outcome recommendations for governance in the Tri-Cities region.

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The Phase II project was initiated after delivery of that Phase I report, and designed to obtain input from informed stakeholders, policy makers and opinion leaders in the Tri-Cities area to inform assessment of the current level of functional consolidation activities, the potential for additional functional consolidation initiatives, and the level of support among those parties for a stronger shift towards such functional consolidation. The Phase II methodology focused on group sessions to which a cross-section of those informed opinion leaders was invited. A total of nine such evening sessions were held in mid-2013, with participation in excess of 150 individuals. Those sessions were conducted as facilitated conversations, guided by a set of common questions, but allowing participants the opportunity to provide comments and input in a lightly-structured environment. The organizing questions used for each session were as follows:

1. Can you provide examples of existing successful cross-jurisdictional cooperation, joint effort or collaboration that might serve as models for additional future activity in the Tri-Cities region?
2. The Tri-Cities has been one of the fastest growing areas in the country, and is projected to grow significantly in the next decades. To what extent do you believe future growth of the Tri-Cities will affect opportunities for additional collaborative efforts to maintain or improve our quality of life?
3. Do you think there are any particularly ripe opportunities for such coordinated or collaborative activities?
  - a. Would you include regional planning on this list? If so, what elements should be covered in the plan?
  - b. To what extent is a singular identity important for the Tri-Cities region (e.g., Economic Development, Tourism, etc.)?
  - c. The Tri-Cities is faced with a dilemma – the Tri-Cities airport requires a major expansion and remodel of about \$35M and passenger/airport revenues may not be able to cover all of the bonding capacity. What are your thoughts about addressing any differential?
4. How might the Tri-Cities enhance the effectiveness of putting forward a united value proposition in recruiting new businesses and economic development? Same with political and legislative needs?
5. How do you evaluate the quality and cost effectiveness of services and amenities offered by local government to Tri-Cities residents?
  - d. What services and amenities are effectively provided?
  - e. What services and amenities represent the greatest opportunities for improvement, particularly in light of projected growth? Would you include regional facilities on the list?
  - f. Do you see opportunities where more effective and/or lower cost services might be provided to our citizens using a collaborative regional approach versus individual governments or entities (e.g., land use planning, business licensing)

6. If additional services or amenities are deemed advantageous how would you suggest they be funded (e.g., user fees, sales tax, B&O tax, property tax).

Discussion at each of the sessions was engaged and lively, with participation from individuals who provided significant insight into the questions posed, discussed the evolving situation in the Tri-Cities, provided examples of successful collaboration and functional consolidation already occurring in the area, and identified a number of opportunities for enhanced governance activities in the region.

### Question-by-Question Summary Analysis:

As a beginning point for analyzing the many comments and responses received during the nine listening sessions, this report will first organize summaries and key points in accordance with the standard questions used for each session. Following this question-level summary will be a more robust discussion of common points, trends and observations from this project as a whole. Summaries of what was heard at each individual session may be found in Appendix 1.

1. *Can you provide examples of existing successful cross-jurisdictional cooperation, joint effort or collaboration that might serve as models for additional future activity in the Tri-Cities region?*

Despite having the 4Cs Taskforce report as a reference, having performed a basic assessment of the communities before beginning this project, and having participated in Phase One activities, the researchers on this phase of the project were frankly surprised by the sheer number and variety of positive examples of collaborative or joint activities in the region that were presented during these sessions. The most commonly-cited examples of cross-jurisdictional cooperation and collaboration were Delta High School, Benton/Franklin Transit, TRIDEC, WSU Tri-Cities & Columbia Basin College, Metro Drug Task Force, fire and EMS services, and the Tri-Cities Cancer Center. These examples were all cited in more than half of the meetings. Delta High School was cited in every meeting, while Benton/Franklin Transit was cited in six of the meetings.

2. *The Tri-Cities has been one of the fastest growing areas in the country, and is projected to grow significantly in the next decades. To what extent do you believe future growth of the Tri-Cities will affect opportunities for additional collaborative efforts to maintain or improve our quality of life?*

Groups were unanimous in voicing their belief that projected growth in the Tri-Cities would create new opportunities for collaborative efforts and new challenges which might best be addressed by collaborative efforts. While the extent and areas identified as potential sectors for such collaborative activity varied between groups, there was a definite consensus that there would be additional opportunities for the Tri-Cities to practice collaboration – whether driven by common need or pursuit of common benefit. There were related concerns about how expansion in the Tri-Cities may be impacted by infrastructure limitations. One of the overall concerns was funding for infrastructure. The focus groups discussed how voter initiatives have resulted in capped tax increases and voiced concern about how a combination of growth rate and growth distribution could lead to infrastructure demands outpacing the available tax revenue. Major priorities were identified as directly related to the outcome of the projected growth. One priority is to maintain the “small-town

feel” of the cities, even as the Tri-Cities MSA continues to grow. The other concerns are the need to balance economic development with support for the superior agricultural character of the region, the potential for agri-tourism, and the desire to attract additional retail chains while protecting existing businesses in the Tri-Cities area.

3. *Do you think there are any particularly ripe opportunities for such coordinated or collaborative activities?*
  - a. *Would you include regional planning on this list? If so, what elements should be covered in the plan?*

All of the sessions identified some component of planning as representing either a need or an opportunity for joint governance activity that would benefit quality of life in the region. River shore planning was identified as a key opportunity area for enhanced collaboration between the Tri-Cities, as were other land-use activities and especially public facilities development. While participants believe that the Benton-Franklin Council of Governments does serve to some extent as a common planning organization for all of the Tri-Cities, some perceived a lack of communication and coordination in land-use policies and regulatory practices between the individual cities. Water rights were cited as a major limiting factor in potential growth of the Tri-Cities. The current “Quad-Cities Water Rights” for Richland, Kennewick, Pasco and West Richland were deemed by stakeholders to be adequate for the current situation, but inadequate for long-term growth. This need might be sufficient to generate some level of collaborative planning independent of other opportunities. The Benton-Franklin Council of Governments already fills the federally-mandated role of “metropolitan planning organization” and works to facilitate cooperative approaches to regional problem-solving, but these roles could be enhanced by the development of a more unified identity. Whatever the motivation or the particular focus, coordinated planning was raised as a beneficial opportunity in every session.

- b. *To what extent is a singular identity important for the Tri-Cities region (e.g., Economic Development, Tourism, etc.)?*

This topic generated considerable discussion, but less uniformity of opinion than other topics. There was a general agreement that a common focus and story were important, but a minority of the participants were satisfied with current efforts. The majority of participants and sessions, however, expressed their opinion that further development of a singular identity, marketing strategy and cohesive story would be critical to future development and advancement. There was general recognition that there are inconsistencies in how people and businesses assessing a visit or move to the region view the Tri-Cities, which limits investment and in-migration, particularly for businesses, and which might be addressed by a more unified image. Stakeholder groups also presented the concept of “coopetition” between the cities of the Tri-Cities when competing to be the “home city” for a major retail establishment, and said it has a mixed but sometimes beneficial impact on development.

- c. *The Tri-Cities is faced with a dilemma – the Tri-Cities airport requires a major expansion and remodel of about \$35M and passenger/ airport revenues may not be able to cover all of the bonding capacity. What are your thoughts about addressing any differential?*

Conversation on this topic soon expanded to include public facilities in general, including the aquatic center, a performing arts center and other such amenities. There was concern about the tax burden that is placed on the “host city” of a regional facility and the uneven distribution of both costs and benefits that result from development at a less than regional scale. A regional facilities taxation district was discussed as a possible solution to the funding issues facing regional facilities in general. When asked about the airport specifically, many groups discussed the existing airport fees and some individuals were not aware that Pasco was responsible for cost overruns. There was a general sense that more traction could be generated on public facility development at the regional level than at the local level, and that the costs and benefits could be more equitably allocated if such facilities could be developed and managed at a regional scale.

4. *How might the Tri-Cities enhance the effectiveness of putting forward a united value proposition in recruiting new businesses and economic development? Same with political and legislative needs?*

This discussion often overlapped with the discussion of a singular identity, with similar trends and themes. There was general support for the benefits of a united value proposition, but more variation on the perceived need for additional activities in that regard. Some participants thought current efforts were sufficient, while others saw a compelling need for more focus on a united approach. One stakeholder recounted how the agricultural lobby organized within the Columbia Basin (a geographic region) and how, after some initial difficulty in developing a united platform, the group became more successful when representing a geographic region instead of a smaller area. This was forwarded as a model and support for the proposition that more such effort should be undertaken in the Tri-Cities. Some stakeholders mentioned that the sizes of metropolitan areas are considered by groups looking to host conventions and make other economic decisions. A regional identity was discussed as a way for the metropolitan area to receive consideration as a single entity on a number of beneficial fronts: Legislature, business recruiting, grantsmanship, and the like.

5. *How do you evaluate the quality and cost effectiveness of services and amenities offered by local government to Tri-Cities residents?*
  - a. *What services and amenities are effectively provided?*

This question received the least attention from session participants. The general standard seemed to be that most services currently offered are generally cost-effective and of sufficient quality. Several meetings brought up collaborative public safety practices as models for future collaboration in the Tri-Cities. Criminal justice and fire/EMS services have both taken steps toward improved cooperation and collaboration, which were seen as enhancing service. Education was also cited as an example of how collaboration could offer benefits such as reduced cost, enhanced service, or heightened quality and opportunity.

- b. *What services and amenities represent the greatest opportunities for improvement, particularly in light of projected growth? Would you include regional facilities on the list?*
    - c. *Do you see opportunities where more effective and/or lower cost services might be provided to our citizens using a collaborative regional approach versus individual governments or entities (e.g., land use planning, business licensing)*

One of the opportunities discussed was developing a Tri-Cities taxing district to finance regional public facilities such as the airport. A regional government similar to Portland's Metro was discussed by several individuals at multiple sessions. While the Benton-Franklin Council of Governments fills at least a portion of the federally-mandated role for the Tri-Cities as Metro does for Portland, Metro has the ability to levy taxes to fund regional facilities and has been much more successful at demonstrating the advantages of a regional approach. Stakeholders discussed the difficulty for the Council to develop regional policies without being able to make binding decisions on budgets.

6. *If additional services or amenities are deemed advantageous how would you suggest they be funded (e.g., user fees, sales tax, B&O tax, property tax).*

From the outset of the stakeholder meetings, there was a clear expectation that growth in the Tri-Cities would be financed primarily by new sources of revenue – primarily from the outside rather than through taxation. Possibilities offered by the groups included impact fees for new housing developments, user fees for regional facilities, grants from unspecified government agencies, and other “outside money” from private organizations and companies. When asked about how to fund any future collaborative ventures, the session participants consistently expected that outside funding would drive future regional projects in the Tri-Cities region. Benton-Franklin Council of Governments, while currently limited to transportation planning, offers a potential model for how to structure other unified planning groups and funding them. This is an issue which any proposed collaborative effort will need to address, if general support can be expected.

### **Aggregate Analysis of Themes and Common Elements**

Analyzing the input and comments from all nine sessions conducted in March, April and May, 2013 in the aggregate allows for more constructive assessment of the common themes and trends, and the discussion of examples and suggestions in a more coherent fashion. The first observation that must be made is that every session provided a large number of concrete examples of current successes in joint activities, and evinced a general satisfaction with the level of services currently being offered at the city level. In general, the tenor of all sessions was that governance was effective and reasonably efficient, that the region has a history of formal and informal collaboration across all sectors, and that the only real deficits in providing appropriate services and public benefits at this time lie on two vectors: 1) a current gap in capacity to develop, maintain and improve existing public facilities such as the airport and the convention center, and new facilities such as an aquatic center or a performing arts center; 2), a perceived lack of capacity to proactively contend with the stresses and impacts on public infrastructure and public services stemming from forecasted significant population growth. Beyond these articulated needs, the discussions could be characterized as having identified opportunities for improvement, capitalizing on new technologies or concepts, and building on the current solid foundation and experience.

A number of recurring themes were developed from the nine group workshops. Those include: 1) A broadly-recognized need for coordinated planning and permitting at several levels, to reduce the negative impacts of differential regulation, tax bases and population growth; 2) The identification of a long-term need to support the development of public facilities and address issues related to that

development such as allocation of benefits, assessment of costs, and location; 3) The need for a more regional approach to branding, messaging and marketing, AND/OR a more centralized focal point or “core” for the Tri-Cities (whether a geographic focal point like the river, a physical location like a “town center” development, or a conceptual focus on quality of life and the unique attributes of the region); and 4) The joint pursuit of opportunities to enhance existing arrangements such as the Benton/Franklin Council of Governments and Benton/Franklin Transit, or develop additional joint efforts on those models (or on external models such as the Portland Metro model) and extend the benefits demonstrated by such regional arrangements into other sectors. It is also clear that the various individual perspectives, interests and groups did not fully realize the extent of existing engagement in other sectors or carried out by other groups, the large number of collaborative activities that are currently underway, or the commitment and capacity for engagement represented by others. For instance, the private sector (commercial and non-profit) might provide some capacity in terms of access to funding that the governmental sector saw as limiting additional collaborative engagement. Conversely, engaging with government might provide a mechanism for collective action heretofore under-realized by the private sector.

### Themes

Common areas of focus and perceived opportunity that arose in all of the sessions to at least some degree are:

- **Experience and Capacity**

The region has many examples of successful joint activities, collaboration, inter-local arrangements and other combined efforts to expand services, improve quality of life and enhance governance. That solid foundation of experience can be the basis for more such activities in the future. Many of these existing efforts are intra-sector, involving joint or collaborative activities between participants from within the business, non-profit, education, government, service or other individual sectors, but generally NOT reflecting full exploitation of cross-sector opportunities, such as possible collaborations between government and the for-profit sector to develop a “downtown core” for the region.

- **Funding**

The difficulties in developing new sources of public revenue within the region came up in every session, as did the general consensus that much future change would be driven by outside money – whether federal funding for Hanford operations, legislative appropriation or business investment. All of these were perceived as more successfully influenced by joint effort than at the level of individual cities. Population growth was seen as more of a stressor on public budgets in the near term than a benefit from long-term growth in tax base. There were also general concerns over the impacts of uncoordinated planning and implementation of taxation. Innovation in identifying new or enhanced funding sources, working together to attract or acquire from those sources, and collaboration on how funding can be most effectively applied are both significant challenges and very significant opportunities in the future.

- **Regional branding/identity**

All the sessions identified some opportunity for more effective regional branding, whether that took the form of developing a singular identity for marketing and lobbying purposes so as to more effectively pursue benefits from the Legislature or Congress, the recruitment of new businesses and investment, or the generation of a more robust tourism industry. The challenges in this effort involve how to balance the strong local identities of the cities with an enhanced regional identity if a positive fashion. Development of a stronger regional identity and focus was also seen as a mechanism for addressing the issue of regional public facilities such as the airport. These issues include funding, location and the uneven distribution of costs and benefits under the current divided structure.

- **The “Core” of the Tri-Cities**

Closely related to the theme of branding and identity is the recognition that there is no well-recognized “core” for the Tri-Cities as a region, and the corollary observation that identification with the existing cities is a continuing phenomenon that must be addressed positively. There was discussion of the potential for identification or development of a physical core – leveraging on the central location of the river and using it as a linking concept for development, or developing a “downtown” area, perhaps in vacated land now occupied by Vista Field. There was also rich discussion of the potential for a conceptual core related to quality of life, amenities or history which might form the nucleus of a core identity. A rich agricultural history and capacity, the region’s amenities for recreation and tourism, and the high-tech capacity of the region were all mentioned as potential conceptual cores for identity, marketing and advancement.

- **Planning and Challenges**

Prompted in part by the organizing questions, each session also identified coordinated or consolidated planning as a key element for future progress. Significant in these discussions was the recognition of significant concerns about stress on infrastructure from future growth, both in the aggregate and in terms of differential impacts across communities that would reduce overall quality of life. Roads, transportation, emergency services, education and public health – especially mental health – were called out as particularly vulnerable to the impacts of population growth. Cooperative planning and regulation (zoning and construction, in particular) were identified as particularly ripe for more coordinated development and administration. The Portland Metro model was raised several times, as were the Benton/Franklin Council of Governments and Benton/Franklin Transit, as examples which might be emulated in the planning sphere. Other issues identified that coordinated planning and land-use management might address were preservation of the “small town feel” of the area, protection of agricultural areas and the river, and natural resource stewardship.

### Conclusion

It would be inappropriate and premature at this time to offer independent recommendations about whether a particular approach to improved governance might be appropriate in the Tri-Cities. That is a topic for further exploration in the region and assessment by the relevant government, business and non-profit sectors. However, our research has led us to conclude that there are a large number of successful functional consolidation activities underway in the region which form a solid foundation and provide numerous models for further activities in that vein. There is clearly a sense that the time is ripe for exploration of more joint activities in the functional consolidation realm, as well.

Should this project continue into a Phase III, as was contemplated at the outset of this process, topic areas that might be proposed for consideration in a wider forum (e.g. citizen survey and/or public dialogue) should include:

1. Pursuit of some form of region-wide approach to managing select services and amenities to increase the ability to coordinate and collaborate across multiple governmental entities.  
Potential areas for inclusion in region-wide management: regional public facilities, planning, transportation services, public safety.
2. The possibility of a region-wide approach to managing the image and branding of the Tri-Cities and to tourism, economic development and related activities.
3. Consideration of how regional multipurpose entities should be funded.

Our research confirmed a willingness and often enthusiasm to attempt additional collaborative ventures, whether to address potential benefits or to avoid or mitigate risks. This leads us to the conclusion that there are a number of opportunities for enhancement of governance, realization of economies and efficiencies, and enhancing the visibility, reputation and political power of the region. Planning, public facilities and enhanced competitiveness on regional and national scales are chief among these opportunities. More focused discussions on how to decide which opportunities to pursue in moving toward an improved governance structure must be driven by the circumstances and situation in the Tri-Cities, and should include an assessment of citizen support for such initiatives.

### Appendix 1: Session-Level Summaries and Analysis

The discussions at each session were active, wide ranging, and reflected the opinions, perceptions and experiences of participants from a number of perspectives. Common themes from all the sessions included a widely-held concern for the advancement and continued development of the region, broad support for a sustainable approach to governance and economic development, pride in the accomplishments of the area regarding collaborative activities, and a frustration that more had not already been accomplished. Many were particularly concerned about difficulties inherent in the maintenance of existing public facilities such as the regional commercial airport and the development of new public facilities such as aquatic or performing arts centers. There was also a fair amount of uncertainty about the activities already taking place or possible in sectors other than the sector or sectors most familiar to each participant. This relatively narrow personal knowledge base and focus was an interesting element of the group sessions, and the level of optimism and engagement which resulted from the heightened awareness with which individuals left the sessions bodes well for the potential for future collaborative activities. Many individual participants had not met other participants in their session before, expressed pleasant surprise at the level of collaborative activity discussed in their particular session, and espoused a new commitment to work together to help improve the region. This was true even though the invitations for each session had been targeted at individuals representative of a particular set of interests. Moreover, there was a degree of cross-session knowledge gap, in addition to the narrow individual focus observed in each separate session. It is our belief that a more deliberate public education campaign could alleviate this significant lack of knowledge regarding collaborative experience and opportunities and could build at a broader public level the enhanced interest in such activities that we witnessed at the culmination of the interview sessions. Brief summaries of the comments in each session, as well as a combined summary from all sessions, are set forth below:

#### **Session 1 (3/25): Invitation Focus -- Business**

This first session gave the interview team an opportunity to “field-test” the interview questions and interview protocol, which were effective in eliciting input, observations and ideas from the participants. As proved to be the case in most sessions, many participants met some other participants for the first time, heard examples, concerns and ideas with which they were not familiar, and concluded the session with an expressed enthusiasm for future activities. Themes developed during this session included:

Several statements of concerns about the need to be aware of the impact of economic development activities on local business vs. larger chains, and a need to be attentive to the distribution of incentives to foster an appropriate diversification of economic opportunity without fostering competition that would hurt existing local businesses.

An appreciation for the distinction between the benefits which might be realized from development of an enhanced regional identity as opposed to those associated with consolidation. Some participants specifically asked why it was preferable to pursue “only” functional consolidation and not to address all levels of collaboration,

coordination and other mutual efforts. This was the one session where consolidation seemed to be seen in a particularly favorable light.

Participants in this session confirmed that there are a number of successful cooperative measures already underway in the region, but that further collaborative activity might be hampered by the fact that boundaries such as the river and county line divide the area not just physically but in terms of the incentives and opportunities to act cooperatively. For example, these interviewees opined that Richland and Kennewick traditionally work more closely together (and with Benton County) than is the case with Pasco and Franklin County.

The participants in this first session perceived that there is a high degree of private sector interest in cooperating more closely, perhaps in crafting some sort of formal regional entity.

This first session presaged all subsequent sessions, with a high level of engagement, significant conversation about current successful collaborations and opportunities for more such engagement, and a mixed sense of frustration with current status and guarded optimism about future potential. This session also contained a strong core of speculation about how the private sector might engage in future efforts with government.

### **Session 2 (4/15): Invitation Focus -- Government**

This was the first of three sessions with an invitation list targeted at government representatives. Although city governments were lightly represented, there were enough participants to inform the conversation and obtain good feedback on local government activities and perceptions. Themes developed from this session included:

Significant interest in the development of a singular identity for the region, independent of separate political jurisdictions.

A recognition that incentivization and common economic development efforts are possible if efforts can be made to align priorities in regional sales taxes and in regulation and permitting.

The fact that there is a pressing need to develop one or more funding models for the development and maintenance of public regional facilities which benefit the area rather than a single city. The looming need for improvements to the airport was cited as an example.

A belief that it is unwise to attempt to implement “one-size fits all” models in the Tri-Cities simply because they may work elsewhere or even in one of the jurisdictions.

These participants agreed that there are potential opportunities for cost-effectiveness in:

- The development of a united strategic plan for the region
- Further efforts to build on a regional fire authority
- Collaborative efforts and standards for shoreline planning

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- Building on the excellent collaborative efforts already underway with regards to education

For these participants, as much as for any of the other sessions, functional consolidation was appealing as a mechanism to help with avoiding common calamity while supporting common good. However, this session (as did many others) identified a critical need for accessing new sources of money instead of competing for existing funds in pursuit of collaboration.

This group identified two driving factors for enhancing governance: access to new money and development of critical mass for any new initiatives, and opined that project activity would be possible if interest levels could be expanded through identification of visible incentives – an effort that would likely require public mobilization.

### **Session 3** (4/22): Invitation Focus -- Education

Participants in this session identified a large number of examples of existing governance-enhancing activities, and also developed a number of themes:

This group identified a number of concerns about the need for consistency in business regulations across jurisdictions to reduce forum shopping which sets up competition between the cities and an uneven distribution of costs and benefits.

This group agreed that there is a strong need for regional facilities which cannot be addressed effectively by individual cities, and suggested several possible locations for regional facilities, including the possibility of developing a physical core or rallying center for the cities. However, this group, as others, was skeptical about the ability to garner appropriate funding for such regional facilities, unless progress could be made in looking for opportunities for private/public partnerships to support projects such as new public facility structure construction.

Two significant concerns for this group were the future of transportation – especially public transportation – in the region, and the potential for negative impacts of growth on diversity, along with the implications which this reduction or partitioning of diversity would have for future collaboration from an increased fragmentation in community.

This session also identified a number of critical challenges, including how to provide living wage jobs for new graduates, the physical limits to infrastructure capacity, and the potential for progress through deliberate planning for growth.

Finally, this group expressed the opinion that there are benefits to be had from addressing opportunities for sharing knowledge between organizations, and the pursuit of a unifying identity without losing the unique nature/history/culture of the cities.

### **Session 4** (4/23): Invitation Focus -- Non-profit/Healthcare

This session provided a large number of examples of successful joint activity in the private and non-profit sectors, and held the opinion that these efforts could be expanded and might serve as a catalyst for other efforts more focused on governance. Themes arising from this session included:

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This group saw the Tri-Cities culture as grass-roots, and identified a need for a cultural shift to be more supportive of a common identity and enhanced collaborative governance and less focused on discrete local identity. This was thought by some to be a generational artifact, with demographic changes in the population potentially leading to such a cultural shift organically.

The need to continue developing community engagement at all levels, but the realization that this effort may be made more difficult by the fact that communication is somewhat limited by political boundaries.

The need when pursuing any effort to enhance governance to be able to quantify “quality of life” and craft initiatives which make it possible to maintain and enhance quality of life for all. This included a concern about protecting the valued qualities of the area and individual communities whilst encouraging functional consolidation and growth. This might be a way to develop community buy-in and support for governance and collaboration initiatives.

This group keyed in on the potential for private sector funding to provide leverage for governance-enhancing activities. The combination of public and private sponsorship and support might be one mechanism for building a support base for the development of regional facilities – perhaps using the Spokane Metro Park model.

This group was of the strong opinion that the development of a regional common identity is important to improving quality of life and might be achieved through additional marketing.

A particular concern for this group was the ability for medical, non-profit, and service resources to keep pace with growth, as well as the impact of growth on physical infrastructure, an impact which might be lessened by increased “umbrella” (regional) planning, regulatory and funding efforts which address the need for increased cooperation.

This group also expressed the existence of a strong desire for improved cooperation between school districts and other cooperative efforts which might be supported by inter-local agreements.

Finally, this group expressed the pessimistic opinion that only a common crisis might provide the motivation necessary to overcome the many obstacles to further collaboration.

### **Session 5 (4/29): Invitation Focus -- Government**

This was the second session for which the invitation list focused on representatives of government. Like the previous sessions, attendees were engaged, and a spirited discussion developed a number of themes:

These participants were concerned about the impact of growth on the region, particularly on existing infrastructure, physical resources, and education. They also thought that proactive planning and growth management activities would be necessary to deal with these impacts, but expressed the opinion that although there might be opportunities for activities such as joint land-use planning, such developments might come more readily from competition between cities, not from cooperation.

Access to funding to address resource and infrastructure strain was also a strong topic of conversation for this group, through additional taxes which could be applied to fund development in anticipation of population growth, or through identification and acquisition of external funding – the use of “other peoples’ money” for infrastructure and improvements.

A special topic of conversation for this group was the potential for multi-county, multi-city, multi-agency and multi-jurisdiction facilities as a way to address resource scarcity and the need to build infrastructure to support population growth. This was identified as particularly important for addressing education needs in the future. The Portland Metro model was raised as an example of successful funding, integrated planning and representation across multiple jurisdictions. Such developments might serve as the vehicle for developing a more unified voice in marketing and lobbying. But, effort would also have to be made within the region to build community perceptions and engagement regarding the need for cooperation, communication, collaboration and other governance and life-quality enhancing activities.

This group also raised a cautionary point about the need to balance the interests of private property owners and the community, and the need to protect existing businesses and residents while pursuing any initiatives for collaboration, development, growth or public facility development.

### **Session 6 (4/30): Invitation Focus -- Young Leaders**

This was perhaps the most energized of all the sessions, with strong representation from a number of sectors. Key themes arising from this session include:

A clear need for planning at the regional level to address future growth, particularly with regard to infrastructure. But, regional planning was seen as possible only if small town identity and complacency could be overcome, after which collaboration and joint action to promote growth, meet anticipated future needs and act collaboratively on zoning and housing issues could address these needs.

This group also identified an important opportunity to improve current community engagement to involve a growing Latino population.

This group felt that coordinated effort had the potential to build on existing community identity in a manner to motivate coordination and develop a vision and identity for the Tri-Cities which extends beyond the current association with Hanford. This could form the basis for both the development of a stronger community identity and the marketing of the region externally as well as supporting the development of public facilities which would enhance overall quality of life and the attractiveness of the region.

### **Session 7 (5/6): Invitation Focus -- Business & Agriculture**

At this point in the progression of our evening group sessions it became clear to the research team that the process had been the topic of conversations among the groups being invited and others, and that the process itself had fostered discussion about the topics of this study. Participants in this,

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and following, sessions came prepared to talk about the specific questions raised. General themes discussed during this session include:

Further discussion of the need to address concerns about finding economic drivers and a regional identity “post-Hanford” which emphasize qualities and strengths other than association with the nuclear reservation and which reduce the impact of federal funding directed at the Hanford site.

This group discussed the related phenomena of uneven distribution of population demographics, tax base, infrastructure improvements, and residential and commercial development across the distinct cities; the need to plan for and address in a more regional manner the infrastructure impacts which will come with population growth and increased demand related to traffic, water, schools, utilities and public health; and the opportunities to more effectively address all these issues from a collaborative regional perspective.

Specifically, this group called out the need to focus on a unified identity and message, which would improve relative standing with the legislature, provide an opportunity to more effectively recruit commercial development such as retailers and manufacturing, and to address the benefits of regional public facilities through regional branding and collective action. Specifically identified as opportunities were the airport, a performing arts center, 911 dispatch, the domestic water system, and potential development along the river.

This group was careful to clarify that they did not see the region in a negative light currently, but that the vehicle of collaborative action was an opportunity for improvement. They did state that water rights would have a significant impact on future growth, and might be the clearest example of the need for more coordinated planning and regulation.

This group, like others, saw that common threat or need can drive collaborative opportunity as effectively as positive incentives, and saw both motivations (avoidance of negative impacts and pursuit of positive gains) as reasons to be pursuing inter-city communication, collaboration and planning. Availability of external funding – state, Federal and private – was cited as a specific reason for a collaborative regional approach.

### **Session 8 (5/7): Invitation Focus -- Government**

This was the third session targeted at representatives of government, and this group came prepared to address both the organizing questions and some of the discussions that had occurred during the earlier government sessions. The themes on which this group focused were:

An emphasis that there has already been a great deal of actual, visible success from regional cooperation in several sectors – with examples to support that claim – especially the positive experience with advanced education programming.

Identification of a number of concerns which might appropriately be addressed in a joint fashion, including the need to provide social services to a growing population with a significant segment in poverty and the challenges of continued funding for education. They saw the Benton/Franklin Transit experience as a model that might translate well to public safety and public health activities.

This group saw unified urban planning as a necessity to deal with a number of issues:

- Water quality
- Quality of life
- Performing arts center is a good approach to regional facilities
- Sprawl
- Preserving views
- Transit planning
- Shoreline planning
- Unified mandates
- Intercity communication

This group thought that joint action might also provide the best opportunity to deal with concerns about balancing demands of growth across current jurisdictional lines, and for balancing distinct metropolitan culture and expectations with the political reality of separate cities to respond to consumer and corporate expectations about more uniform standards, quality of life and regulation. Streamlining or reducing the differences between disparate regulations and protocols in the cities would increase both efficiency and effectiveness in ways that no single jurisdiction could accomplish alone and would allow the mitigation of risk in addition to the sharing of benefits. This group clearly articulated four reasons to pursue joint activity, all of which had been discussed by previous groups: 1) To realize efficiencies or enhanced effectiveness; 2) Because some activities can't be accomplished alone; 3) Because no mechanism to accomplish the activity at the city level exists, and; 4) To more strategically accomplish the sharing of needs, risks and benefits.

This group, like all the others, thought that individual and public perspectives on the issues of collaboration, consolidation and other joint activities might be different from those of government, with more support in the private and civic sectors for united branding and united messaging, although each has its place.

### **Session 9 (5/8): Invitation Focus -- Criminal Justice and Public Safety**

This final session was not as strongly attended as most of the preceding sessions, but still generated significant discussion and some key themes from perspectives not well represented in the earlier sessions:

First, this group confirmed that, particularly in their sector, cooperation is successful so far and has generated significant benefits, but, that there is still room for improvement through joint action.

This group saw particular opportunity for joint activity to address their concerns about meeting increased demand for emergency services and the need for additional community

cooperation/engagement to address criminal justice and – most particularly – mental health concerns. They opined that there was in particular great potential for the hospitals to cooperate better together.

This group thought that a critical step would be developing a more widely-supported definition of “community” that extended beyond the historic focus on the cities. They identified this step as critical because it was a necessary precursor to effective centralized infrastructure planning and any effort to address the critical issues of taxation and government funding.

This group specifically cautioned that the final results of the aquatic center initiative should not be taken as a good indicator of either public support for or the potential success for collaborative or joint action.

While discussing the responses and themes from each session individually is instructive, it was clear to the researchers that there are more similarities than differences across the various invited groups, and that a number of core or common themes were carried through the process from the first session to the last. Where there were differences across sectors, those differences usually took the form of under-recognition of the successes, capacities, resources and opportunities represented by the other sectors.

**Appendix 2: Examples of Successful Processes & Collaborations**

**Examples of Successful Processes & Collaborations (Discussed in 1/3 or more of sessions):**

- Delta High School
- Ben-Franklin Transit
- Fire services in the Tri-Cities
- Tri-Cities Development Council (TRIDEC)
- WSU-CBC partnership
- Metro Drug Task Force
- Tri-Cities Cancer Center
- Public utilities
- Tri-Tech
- Public health
- Juvenile justice system
- Rivershore Enhancement Council
- Tri-Cities Visitor and Convention Bureau
- Tri-Court
- LE gang and SWAT units
- Hospital cooperation

**Examples of processes & collaborations related to overall themes:**

- Tri-Cities Legislative Council
- Tri-Cities Chamber of Commerce
- Mayor/City Manager Meetings
- Benton-Franklin Council of Governments
  - Both past and present roles

- Functions/origin of Portland Metro
- Hospitals and community
- Hospitals and higher education
- Three Rivers Roundtable
- Ports in Tri-Cities
- Aquatic facility election (upcoming)
- Discussions about performing arts center

### **Examples of processes & collaborations from Outside the Region:**

- Seattle-Tacoma metropolitan area
- Woodinville-Bothell sharing fire chief/administration (separate departments)
- Metropolitan Council (scope of practice)
  - Tennessee
  - Minnesota
- Metropolitan planning organizations (including MN)
- Metropolitan Statistical Areas
- Duluth MN-WI (279,771; two states)
- Gainesville FL (264,275; two counties)
- Fort Smith, AR-OK (280,467; two states)
- Kingsport-Bristol-Bristol TN-VA (309,544; other “Tri-Cities” with two states, three counties)
- Huntington-Ashland, WV-KY-OH (364,908; three states)

### Appendix 3: Mechanisms for Collaborative Action (Excerpted verbatim from the project Phase 1 report)

#### *Inter-Local Agreements, Intergovernmental Contracts and Joint-Powers Agreements*

*Many of the problems facing local governments are transjurisdictional in nature and cross existing political boundaries, affecting multiple cities or require a joint city-county response. The classic cases involve criminal activity in one community or part of a county impacting other jurisdictions. Interlocal agreements (ILAs) are an important option for addressing these types of transjurisdictional concerns. This type of activity is extensive across the country. The most common types of activities addressed by ILAs in smaller municipalities include jails, police functions, street lighting, refuse, libraries, planning, engineering services, electrical supply, solid waste, animal control services and water supply.*

*Local governments in the state of Washington can enter into a wide variety of ILAs, as authorized by 39.34 RCW. As in many states, the majority of ILAs in Washington are contracts for services between local governments. Most of these contracts involve direct payments for services. Others are agreements to exchange services. Other agreements are more elaborate and require the creation of a new joint governing body.*

*The main argument for ILAs is that they create new efficiencies. This can happen many ways. Some of the potential gains are from lower service delivery costs. For instance, services that require high levels of capital investment, such as hospitals or public safety dispatch, are good candidates for ILAs because they allow governments to share costs rather than pay the full cost of those investments. The same basic argument applies to services with high staffing costs or intensive staffing needs.*

*Another key potential advantage is that ILAs allow governments to design the service delivery area around service delivery needs rather than around political boundaries. This is especially important given the geographic size of many Washington counties. Many rural areas are much closer to a city or county seat in a neighboring county other than to one in their own county. ILAs allow local governments in these circumstances to deliver services where they are most needed, despite traditional political boundaries.*

*Some believe ILAs have benefits beyond service delivery, that they can in fact improve the quality of regional governance. The widespread use of these agreements emphasizes the regular and persistent service and political interaction between various local government entities. This intensity of interaction can foster a “norm of reciprocity” among elected officials and can help regions to better understand the complexity of their shared challenges and how to address those challenges. This level of interaction is in sharp contrast to a common perspective of communities moving toward consolidation.*

*That said, ILAs are not risk-free. Many citizens resist the idea for fear of losing their local identity when services are delivered. This is crucial for services like public safety and emergency medical services, where citizens fear that the loss of “local knowledge” could diminish service quality or even endanger lives. Local government employees are often skeptical of ILAs for this same reason and because many ILAs result in lower staffing levels or restructuring of existing responsibilities among local government employees.*

*Local elected officials must be key players in ILA design and must agree in advance to a mechanism to revisit the ILA as citizen demands change. If not, they will face the constant temptation to back out of the partnership as the only way to respond to their constituents’ concerns. Therefore, although it is limited in scope, the empirical research to date on ILAs offers an important lesson: ILAs can have enormous benefits, but long-term success in ILAs is a function of quality governance. Citizens, elected officials and local government staff must have a constant dialogue across jurisdictions about if and how an ILA is meeting its goals and objectives. This requires a shared goal of improving the*

*quality and efficiency of local government services. But more important, it requires a shared vision for the region's future, and that vision must include some sense of where and how to trade-off efficiency for other goals.*

### **Special Districts**

*Special districts are by far the most numerous type of government in the US. Special districts are independent, limited-purpose governments other than school districts. They are administratively and fiscally independent from local governments.*

*There are currently more than 1,600 special districts in Washington State (Municipal Research and Service Center [MRSC] 2012). They most often perform a single function, though some perform a limited number of functions. They provide an array of services and facilities including electricity, fire protection, flood control, health, housing, irrigation, parks and recreation, library, water-sewer service and more recently stadiums, convention centers and entertainment facilities that are not otherwise available from city or county governments. While the number of special district statutes counted may vary depending on the definition of a special district, over the years, the Washington Legislature has enabled more than 80 different types of special purpose districts. Once thought of as existing only in unincorporated portions of counties, many district statutes allow the inclusion of cities and towns.*

### **Regional Councils**

*There are about 453 regional councils in the US. These are, for the most part, voluntary associations of local governments. These organizations are quite diverse in character. The vast majority of these councils were established as councils of governments (COG), while others evolved from either economic development districts or from regional planning commissions. Since about 1980, federal financial support for these entities has been largely eliminated, and as a result the number of regional councils has declined steadily since that time.*

*Interest in regional councils has recently grown due in large part to the passage of the Intermodal Surface Transportation Efficiency Act (ISTEA) in 1991 and with the Clean Air Act Amendments of 1990. ISTEA requires that a regional planning organization be designated for the development of a comprehensive and balanced regional transportation plan. The Clean Air Act mandates the development and implementation of regional air quality standards or risks the loss of federal funds for transportation projects.*

### **Alternatives to Consolidation**

*As a number of studies have pointed out there are several alternatives to consolidation that communities can make use of. These include, Private Contracting – Contracting out services to private firms is the most common alternative service delivery approach used by local governments. Under private contracting arrangements, a local government pays a private firm to deliver all or a portion of a service instead of doing the work itself. Contracting with private firms may result in lower costs where competition keeps prices low. In addition, local governments may be able to avoid high capital investment costs where private firms provide their own specialized equipment.*

*Mutual Aid Agreements – Mutual aid agreements provide municipalities with collaborative support on an “as needed” basis in such areas as fire protection, emergency services, and law enforcement. The participating local*

*governments maintain control of their participating departments and services.*

*Shared Use of Facilities and/or Equipment – Sharing facilities and equipment also presents opportunities for improving the efficiency of services. For example, it may be much more cost effective for several small jurisdictions to pool their resources for the purchase of expensive street cleaning or snow removal equipment, where the costs of purchasing, operating, and maintaining the equipment can be spread over a larger population base.*

*Exchange of Services – A variation on the sharing of facilities or equipment would be an exchange of services in-kind between two or more local governments. For example, one city could plow snow in the winter while the other maintains rights-of-way in the summer.*

*Intergovernmental Contracting – Intergovernmental service contracts with neighboring jurisdictions may also provide opportunities to reduce service delivery costs where smaller jurisdictions can collectively realize economies of scale that would not be possible for individual jurisdictions. Opportunities arise in situations where one municipality has greater resources or ability to provide a given service, and effectively “sells” the service to neighboring municipalities.*

*Consolidation of Selected Functions – Functional consolidation is any agreement by two or more local governments to consolidate the funding and/or delivery of a specific service. This can be done at a service level (e.g., street sweeping) or at the departmental level (e.g., police or public works)” (MRSC, Summer 2003).*

### Appendix 4: Selected Case Studies

#### Portland Metro

Portland Metro is a metropolitan planning organization for the Portland Metropolitan Statistical Area (Portland MSA). The jurisdiction of Portland Metro covers twenty-five cities in three counties in Oregon. Unlike BFCOG, Metro's members are directly elected by their constituents. Transit is another area where the two organizations differ: BFCOG exercises direct control over Ben Franklin Transit while Metro does not administer Portland's TriMet.

#### Delta High School

Delta High School is a STEM focused high school founded in 2006. It represents collaboration between several education groups in the Tri-Cities. Delta's founding partners were the Kennewick, Pasco, and Richland School Districts, Columbia Basin College, WSU Tri-Cities, and Batelle. Pacific Northwest National Laboratory and Washington STEM Education Foundation have been added to the list of partners. While Delta was cited by all nine groups as an example of multi-jurisdiction collaboration, it has not been without its challenges. While trying to secure funding for a permanent site for Delta, Richland was reluctant to commit to the process. This reluctance led Kennewick, Pasco, and Washington STEM Foundation to give Richland a deadline to commit in order to participate in the relocation discussion. In June 2013, Delta High School announced a planned move from its current Richland location to Pasco.

<http://www.thenewtribune.com/2013/06/03/2623913/pasco-city-council-oks-permit.html>

<http://www.tri-cityherald.com/2012/12/12/2202405/delta-high-schools-new-facility.html>

[http://www.thedeltahighschool.com/index.php?option=com\\_content&view=article&id=26&Itemid=29](http://www.thedeltahighschool.com/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=26&Itemid=29)

[http://www.thedeltahighschool.com/index.php?option=com\\_content&view=article&id=25&Itemid=25](http://www.thedeltahighschool.com/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=25&Itemid=25)

#### Tri-Cities Cancer Center

Founded in 1994, Tri-Cities Cancer Center is a non-profit organization that represents a partnership between Lourdes Health Network, Kennewick General Hospital, and Kadlec Regional Medical Center. TCCC offers treatment options and support for cancer victims and their families. Other independent partners include Columbia Basin Hematology and Oncology, Blue Mountain Oncology Program, and Tri-Cities Laboratory. Addition organizations represented on the 2013 Board of Directors included Tri-Cities Cancer Center Foundation and Kennewick Public Hospital District No. 1.

[http://www.tccancer.org/who\\_we\\_are/](http://www.tccancer.org/who_we_are/)

[http://tccancer.org/treatment/campus\\_partners/](http://tccancer.org/treatment/campus_partners/)

### **Fire and EMS Services**

Each of the cities in the Tri-Cities MSA maintains its own fire department but these departments make frequent use of interlocal agreement and joint efforts. Kennewick Fire Department and Benton County Fire District 1 jointly operate a training facility while the Benton County Fire Master Collective Agreement outlines cooperation between Kennewick Fire Department, Richland Fire Department, and Benton County Fire Districts 1, 2, and 4. The agencies covered by the BCFMCA also completed a three-year test of a joint administration center and are completing a fifth year with a joint administration center. Kennewick, Richland, and Pasco also have developed a uniform standard for equipment, uniforms, records management, and certification. There has also been a history of regular meetings between the chiefs of the fire services serving the Tri-Cities area.

<http://www.tri-cityherald.com/2012/01/18/1791077/pasco-to-urge-local-cities-to.html>

<http://www.tri-cityherald.com/2013/05/28/2412318/more-fire-stations-needed-in-kennewick.html>

### **Tri-Cities Development Council (TRIDEC)**

Founded as the Tri City Nuclear Industrial Council, TRIDEC is a non-profit economic development agency and claims to be “the leading development agency for Benton and Franklin Counties.” In 1969, TCNIC supported the creation of a Tri-Cities-focused “visitor and convention bureaus. It was first known as TRIDEC (Tri City Industrial Development Council) during the 1980s. The 1980s also marked TRIDEC taking on its role as “the official economic development agency for the counties, cities, and ports. TRIDEC facilitated community input during the 1980s development of the Tri-Party Agreement and during the mid-1990s was designated as the “community voice” for communications with the Department of Energy. TRIDEC now coordinates the 100-member Mid-Columbia Energy Initiative.

<http://www.tri-cityherald.com/1751/>

<http://www.tri-cityherald.com/tridec/>

### **Ben-Franklin Transit**

Ben-Franklin Transit was founded in 1981 and serves Kennewick, Pasco, Richland, West Richland, Benton City, Prosser, and portions of Unincorporated Benton County and Unincorporated Franklin County. BFT estimates the Benton Franklin Public Transportation Benefit Area has a population of 228,992.

BFT participates in the Transportation Improvement Plan (TIP) designed by the Benton-Franklin Council of Governments. Funding is provided through a county-wide sales tax in Franklin and Benton Counties. A May 15, 2001 election saw a 0.03 percent sales tax increase deleted by 169 votes. The same sales tax increase was approved March 12, 2002. Both counties had over 53 percent support for the tax.

<http://www.bft.org/about/bft-history/>

<http://www.bfcog.us/transportation.html>

### **Columbia Basin College and WSU Tri-Cities**

WSU and CBC collaborate through the “Coordinated Bachelors Degree Program (CBD) or “BRIDGE” program. This program gives students a guaranteed transfer path by coordinating CBC and WSU advising and programs—and by ensuring that students have an advisor at both schools. CBD/BRIDGE also gives CBC students access to events and organizations at WSU. WSU Tri-Cities and Columbia Basin College are also supporting partners of Delta High School.

<http://www.columbiabasin.edu/index.aspx?page=1245>

<http://www.tricity.wsu.edu/bridges/guidelines.html>

<http://www.tricity.wsu.edu/bridges/partners.html>

### **Metro Drug Task Force**

Tri-Cities Metro Drug Task Force (MDTF) is an interagency group that is the product of federal funding and an inter-local agreement between law enforcement agencies in the Tri-Cities. MDTF was first formed in 1988 and is currently supported by personnel from Benton County Prosecutor’s Office, Franklin County Prosecutor’s Office, Benton County Sheriff’s Office and Franklin County Sheriff’s Offices, Washington State Patrol, Richland Police Department, Kennewick Police Department, Pasco Police Department, and West Richland Police Department. West Richland’s MDTF detective position was eliminated in 2004 but it rejoined the task force in 2010. The task force shares its headquarters with the Tri-Cities Drug Enforcement Administration (DEA) office. DEA pays for the maintenance of the location while the individual agencies pay for their employees. MDTF also cooperates with agencies across the state including King County Sheriff, Snohomish County Narcotics Task Force, Seattle Police Department, Grays Harbor Drug Task Force, and Washington State Patrol.

<http://www.tri-cityherald.com/2010/03/23/949685/west-richland-police-rejoin-metro.html>

<http://thedailyworld.com/sections/news/local/police-say-huge-drug-busts-puts-major-dent-heroin-traffic.html>

<http://www.co.franklin.wa.us/sheriff/investigations.shtml>

[http://www.go2kennewick.com/go2kennewick/default.aspx?option=com\\_flexicontent&view=item\\_s&cid=337&id=527&Itemid=170](http://www.go2kennewick.com/go2kennewick/default.aspx?option=com_flexicontent&view=item_s&cid=337&id=527&Itemid=170)

### **Tri-Tech Skills Center**

Tri-Tech Skills Center is a publicly-funded vocational education center located in Kennewick. It identifies as a “branch campus of all Tri-Cities area high schools” and requires that students stay at

their “home” high school for three periods per day. Kennewick, Pasco, Richland, Finley, Columbia Burbank, Kiona-Benton, and North Franklin School Districts are all members of Tri-Tech while Prosser School District is also served by the center. Tri-Tech participates in Tech Prep, a Washington program that allows students in high school programs to earn college credit through affiliated colleges and technical schools. Eighty percent of courses offered at Tri-Tech are Tech Prep courses. The primary Tech Prep affiliate for Tri-Tech is Columbia Basin College.

<http://www.techprepcc.org/>

<http://www.ksd.org/tritech/faq.asp>

<http://www.ksd.org/tritech/about.asp>

### **Tri-Cities Regional Public Facilities District**

Tri-Cities Regional Public Facilities District (RPF) is the product of a 2010 interlocal agreement between Richland, Kennewick, and Pasco. The agreement states that RPF was created to “fund and operate one or more regional centers or recreational facilities... serving all three Cities [sic] and benefiting the entire Tri-Cities area.” It has the statutory authority to propose additional “sales and use tax” (up to 0.2 percent) to fund regional facilities.

[http://www.go2kennewick.com/go2kennewick/default.aspx?option=com\\_docman&task=doc\\_view&gid=3870](http://www.go2kennewick.com/go2kennewick/default.aspx?option=com_docman&task=doc_view&gid=3870)

[http://tcpfd.org/blog/?page\\_id=93](http://tcpfd.org/blog/?page_id=93)

### **Utilities**

Water and sewer services are all provided by their respective cities. City of Richland is the only city to provide power and garbage to its residents—Pasco and Kennewick receive their power from the Franklin and Benton PUDs while they contract with Basin Disposal and Waste Management for their respective disposal needs. West Richland provides water, sewer, and garbage services to its residents. It also provides irrigation services through partnerships with Columbia and Kennewick Irrigation Districts. Benton PUD and Franklin PUD both participate in Mid-Columbia Energy Initiative while Richland signed an interlocal agreement with Benton PUD to participate in Batelle’s Pacific Northwest Smart Grid Demonstration.

<http://www.westrichland.org/Utilities.cfm>

Contract No. 112-11

[http://www.go2kennewick.com/go2kennewick/default.aspx?option=com\\_flexicontent&view=item\\_s&cid=305&id=341&Itemid=427](http://www.go2kennewick.com/go2kennewick/default.aspx?option=com_flexicontent&view=item_s&cid=305&id=341&Itemid=427)

<http://www.ci.richland.wa.us/index.aspx?NID=391>

**Appendix 5: Session Hand-out Descriptive Materials**

## **Tri Cities Evolution (TCE)**

### **Phase II - Community Leader Dialogue**

This second phase of the joint TCE/Ruckelshaus Center process consists of data collection through up to ten group sessions, conducted over several non-consecutive weeks during the months of March through May, 2013. Sessions will be facilitated by Ruckelshaus staff and held at the Tri-Cities Business & Visitor Center. Invites will be made to specific individuals allowing them to designate a delegate and RSVPs will be requested to plan for an ideal attendance of 20 -25 and with a limit of 30 invited participants (on a first come first serve basis). Three or four TCE members will also attend as observers and to address any questions about the TCE group.

**Planned sessions:**

- Two business and agriculture sessions (invitees can choose which session to attend) asking for the participation by either the Owner/CEO, CFO or Economic Development representative. This will include:
  - Large and Small businesses
  - Agriculture
  - Hispanic businesses
- Three governmental sessions (invitees can choose which session to attend) to include:
  - Richland, Pasco, Kennewick and West Richland - City Council members, Mayors and city managers. Selective invites will also be made to Finley, Burbank and Benton City leadership.
  - Benton and Franklin County - Commissioners and County Leadership
  - Port of Benton, Port of Pasco and Port of Kennewick – Port Commissioners and Port Leadership
  - Leadership from the Benton Franklin Council of Governments (BFCOG)
- A session for Non-Profits and Healthcare providers
- A session for Young Professionals including Leadership Tri-Cities current program participants and some alumni
- A session for leadership from public safety and criminal justice to include police, courts and fire districts
- A session for Education
  - Leadership from regional colleges (WSU Tri-Cities and CBC)
  - Principals from High Schools and select Grade Schools/Middle Schools (Public and Private)
  - School District Leadership
  - Alternative school leadership
  - School Board members
- A session TBD (possibly as a makeup)

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If an individual cannot make their designated session they may choose another scheduled session if attendance limits are not exceeded. Key individuals in leadership positions that cannot or do not attend a session will be interviewed by the Ruckelshaus staff (by phone or visit).

### Session Introduction

1. Brief introduction by Ruckelshaus Center facilitator with explanation of their role especially regarding neutrality and impartiality.
2. TCE representative summary history and role of TCE group.
3. The Ruckelshaus Center facilitator will discuss Phase 1 and the history of local cooperation and collaboration.

Ruckelshaus staff will be responsible for taking notes. Up to three TCE working group members per session will attend as observers & participants.

**Scheduled Dates:** These will be held at the Tri-Cities Business & Visitor Center, Bechtel Board Room from 6:00 pm to 8:00pm. Heavy snacks and refreshments will be provided.

Session	Date	Group
1.	Monday, March 25, 2013	Business & Agriculture
2.	Monday, April 15, 2013	Government
3.	Monday, April 22, 2013	Education
4.	Tuesday, April 23, 2013	Non-Profit & Healthcare
5.	Monday, April 29, 2013	Government
6.	Tuesday, April 30, 2013	Young Leaders
7.	Monday, May 06, 2013	Business & Agriculture
8.	Tuesday, May 07, 2013	Government
9.	Wednesday, May 08, 2013	Public Safety & Criminal Justice
10.	TBD	Make up Session

### Standard Questions

1. Can you provide examples of existing successful cross-jurisdictional cooperation, joint effort or collaboration that might serve as models for additional future activity in the Tri-Cities region?
2. The Tri-Cities has been one of the fastest growing areas in the country, and is projected to grow significantly in the next decades. To what extent do you believe future growth of the Tri-Cities will affect opportunities for additional collaborative efforts to maintain or improve our quality of life?

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3. Do you think there are any particularly ripe opportunities for such coordinated or collaborative activities?
  - a. Would you include regional planning on this list? If so, what elements should be covered in the plan?
  - b. To what extent is a singular identity important for the Tri-Cities region (e.g., Economic Development, Tourism, etc.)?
  - c. The Tri-Cities is faced with a dilemma – the Tri-Cities airport requires a major expansion and remodel of about \$35M and passenger/airport revenues may not be able to cover all of the bonding capacity. What are your thoughts about addressing any differential?
4. How might the Tri-Cities enhance the effectiveness of putting forward a united value proposition in recruiting new businesses and economic development? Same with political and legislative needs?
5. How do you evaluate the quality and cost effectiveness of services and amenities offered by local government to Tri-Cities residents?
  - a. What services and amenities are effectively provided?
  - b. What services and amenities represent the greatest opportunities for improvement, particularly in light of projected growth? Would you include regional facilities on the list?
  - c. Do you see opportunities where more effective and/or lower cost services might be provided to our citizens using a collaborative regional approach versus individual governments or entities (e.g., land use planning, business licensing)
6. If additional services or amenities are deemed advantageous how would you suggest they be funded (e.g., user fees, sales tax, B&O tax, property tax).

Ruckelshaus Center staff may ask clarifying and/or follow up questions to best gauge sentiment of individuals and/or the group.

# THE WILLIAM D. RUCKELSHAUS CENTER

UNIVERSITY OF WASHINGTON

## About the Ruckelshaus Center

### Mission and Vision

The mission of the William D. Ruckelshaus Center is to act as a neutral resource for collaborative problem solving in the State of Washington and Pacific Northwest. The Center provides expertise to improve the quality and availability of voluntary collaborative approaches for policy development and multi-party dispute resolution.

The Center envisions a future in which governmental leaders, policy makers, stakeholders and citizens in the state of Washington and the Pacific Northwest routinely employ the tools of collaborative decision making to design, conduct and implement successful public policy processes.

### Background

The Center was named for William D. Ruckelshaus, who is highly respected for his public service, corporate leadership and help on community issues. He was the first and fifth director of the EPA. Ruckelshaus is a former senior vice president at Weyerhaeuser and chairman/CEO of Browning Ferris Industries, and currently is a strategic director at Madrona Venture Partners. He has led large-scale collaborative policy efforts on salmon recovery and Puget Sound clean-up.

The Center is a joint effort of Washington's two research universities and was developed in response to requests from community leaders. Building on the unique strengths of the two institutions, the Center is dedicated to assisting public, private, tribal, non-profit and other community leaders in their efforts to build consensus and resolve conflicts around difficult public policy issues. The Center also advances the teaching and research missions of the two universities by bringing real-world policy issues to the academic setting.

The Center is hosted at the University of Washington by the Daniel J. Evans School of Public Affairs and at Washington State University by WSU Extension. It is guided by an advisory board of prominent local, state and regional leaders representing a broad range of constituencies and geographic locations. The board is chaired by William Ruckelshaus.