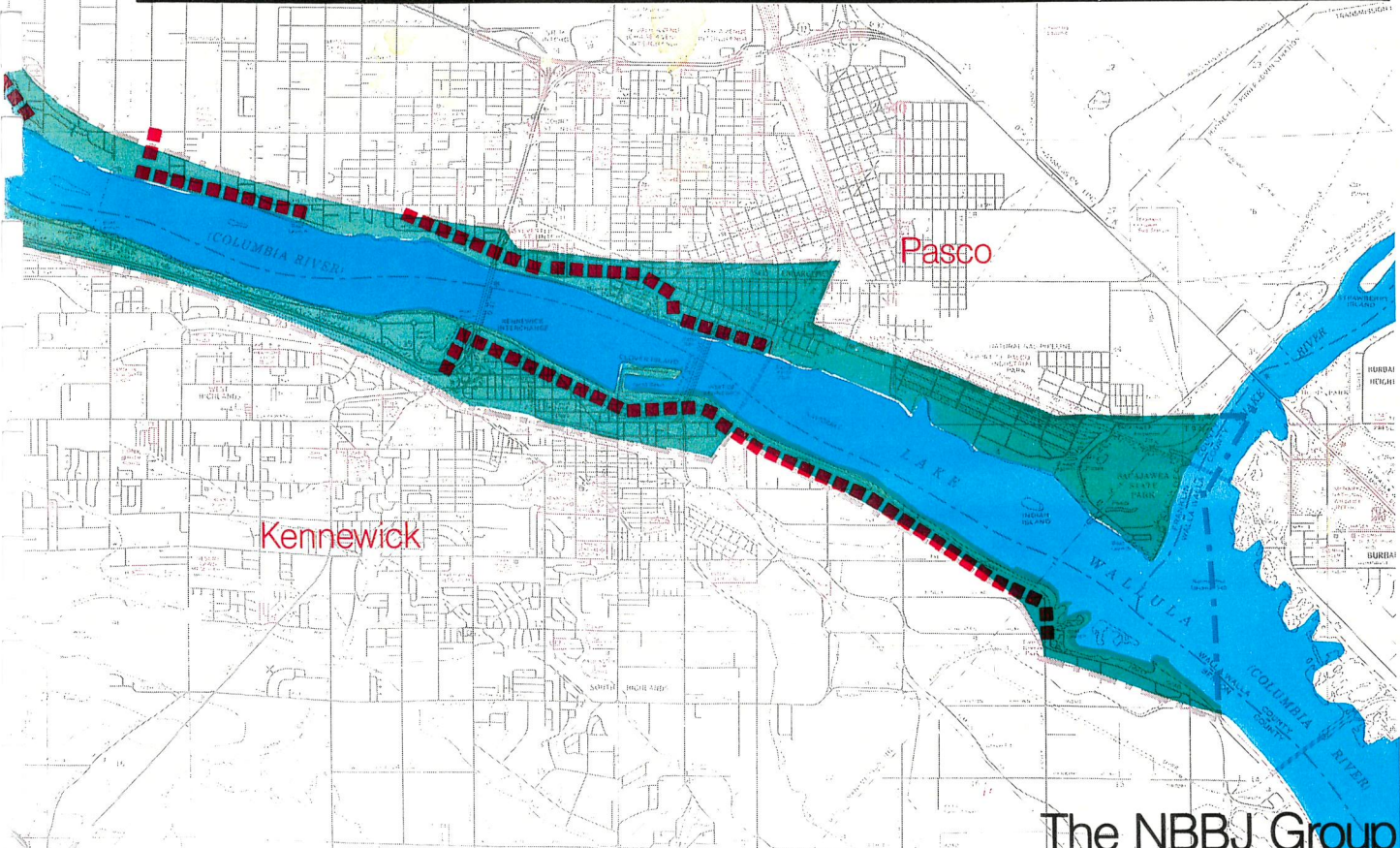


# Tri-Cities Regional Rivershore Enhancement Plan

Richland • Kennewick • Pasco

Washington



The NBBJ Group

## The Opportunity

The Columbia River and its shoreline are treasured resources that could greatly benefit the Tri-Cities -- as an asset for vitalizing the area's economy and as a recreational "mecca" for visitors and residents. Unfortunately, the rivershore's potential has been barely touched. A combination of factors -- the unsightly and physical/visual barrier of the levees; the large amount of vacant or underutilized riverfront property; and the deteriorated nature of some of the major parklands -- has rendered the rivershore a forgotten resource.

Interest in enhancing the rivershore has arisen as part of the larger effort at diversifying the local economy. The Regional Rivershore Enhancement Plan represents a long-term vision for the physical development that achieves three major goals. First, the Plan proposes to greatly improve public access to the river and shoreline. Improved access is afforded, not only through modifying and beautifying the levees, but also by creating better links between key rivershore developments and to the upland areas. Second, the Plan provides for enhanced recreational opportunities of all kinds -- boating, swimming, picnicking, sports activities -- in short, allowing the rivershore to become a major element of the Tri-Cities life. Third, economic diversification is aided by providing opportunities for commercial, industrial, and residential development on key rivershore sites.

The Plan is the result of an extraordinary regional effort that required consensus and compromise on the part of the many jurisdictions -- the Cities of Richland, Kennewick, and Pasco; Benton and Franklin Counties; and the Port Districts of Benton, Kennewick, and Pasco. The direction provided by the Rivershore Enhancement Committee, consisting of individuals from all relevant public agencies and several private citizens, as well as the active participation of the public throughout the planning process, assure that the Plan is a reflection of the entire community.

The Rivershore Enhancement Plan contains an ambitious vision for the shoreline. Finding money to pay for the spectrum of improvements proposed in the Plan will be a challenge requiring a strong and ongoing commitment from both the public and private sectors. The positive, "can-do" spirit of the Tri-Cities community will be the most important ingredient for success.

## Background

Current momentum for enhancement of the Tri-Cities rivershore has been brought about by a combination of factors, including:

- Recognition of the rivershore's potential as an asset in diversifying the area's economy.
- Acknowledgement that the rivershore is a largely untapped resource. The visual and physical barrier of the levees, the great amounts of vacant or underutilized land, and the deteriorated nature of some public areas are symptomatic of neglect of this valuable asset. The rivershore needs to become an exciting and accessible place for residents and visitors alike.
- The opportunity to obtain federal funds for modifying and improving the levees. Congress has authorized approximately \$2.6 million for levee beautification as part of the proposed Second Powerhouse Project at McNary. Funds for the project have not been appropriated and it is now believed that the Second Powerhouse will not be needed until 1995 at the earliest. There is reason to believe that federal aid for enhancing the levees is possible regardless of the outcome of the Second Powerhouse Project. The prospect of receiving federal assistance is more favorable if levee enhancement can be presented within the context of a regional rivershore plan for the Tri-Cities.

The Rivershore Enhancement Committee was formed in early 1988 to coordinate development of a regional plan for enhancement of the Tri-Cities rivershore. Consisting of individuals from each relevant public agency and several private citizens, the committee applied state diversification funds in combination with a Local Development Matching Fund Grant (and some private sector contributions) to finance this study.

The objectives of this study were to develop 1) an in-depth and detailed regional rivershore enhancement plan for the Tri-Cities; 2) a rivershore enhancement implementation plan including a marketing plan; and 3) a business plan for continued planning and design activities.

The planning process used in the study effort focused on building consensus for an exciting and achievable vision for the rivershore. Five workshop sessions were held during which the public and the Committee actively participated in formulating goals, developing and evaluating physical concepts, and determining effective implementation strategies.

## Goals for the Rivershore

Four major goals for regional rivershore enhancement were identified:

- Modification and improvement of the levees must be a major element of rivershore enhancement.
- Rivershore enhancement should be a catalyst for economic diversification. Development opportunities should be provided for a balance of recreation, industrial, commercial, and residential uses.
- The rivershore should be a primary asset for creating an exciting image of the Tri-Cities. This will only be realized if the rivershore's potential is tapped by improving both public access and recreational opportunities along the shoreline.
- The Plan must be achievable. Phasing and priorities must be agreed upon, and mechanisms for funding specific developments must be found. In addition, the Plan should be a flexible "framework" for development rather than a prescriptive master plan that restricts development opportunities.

## Rivershore Potentials and Constraints

The study area includes approximately 32 miles of shoreline along the Columbia River, extending from Horn Rapids Road in the north to the confluence of the Columbia and Snake Rivers in the east. This area includes shorelines that lie within the Cities of Richland, Kennewick and Pasco, as well as unincorporated Benton and Franklin Counties and the Ports of Pasco, Kennewick, and Benton County. Much of the rivershore is owned and managed by the Federal Army Corps of Engineers as part of the McNary Dam project and related flood control activities.

Through a review and definition of the existing physical, regulatory, and economic conditions in the study area, a number of potentials and constraints were identified. Major rivershore potentials or opportunities include:

- Consensus within the community and the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers that enhancement of the levees is vital for improving visual and physical access to the shoreline.
- The majority of the rivershore study area is publicly-owned or controlled, creating a unique opportunity for shaping shoreline developments in the public interest.
- The significant number of existing shoreline parklands represents an excellent starting point for rivershore enhancement.

The primary constraints in the rivershore environment are:

- The necessity for flood control, which means that levees will always be present to some extent; some degree of physical and visual obstruction will have to be tolerated.
- The uncertain economic climate associated with potential employment losses at Hanford, which suggests that the attraction of large-scale private development to the rivershore (e.g. destination resort) in the near-term is unlikely.
- Funding for rivershore public improvements will be difficult because of severely constrained local budgets and the absence of major state and federal funding programs for parks and recreation.

## Rivershore Enhancement Plan

Three initial land use concepts for the study area were developed. Two of these concepts presented extreme visions for the rivershore. One placed heavy emphasis on economic diversification by proposing significant commercial, industrial, and residential development. The second concept emphasized beautification with parks, trails, beaches, and boating facilities. A third composite concept balanced economic development with beautification.

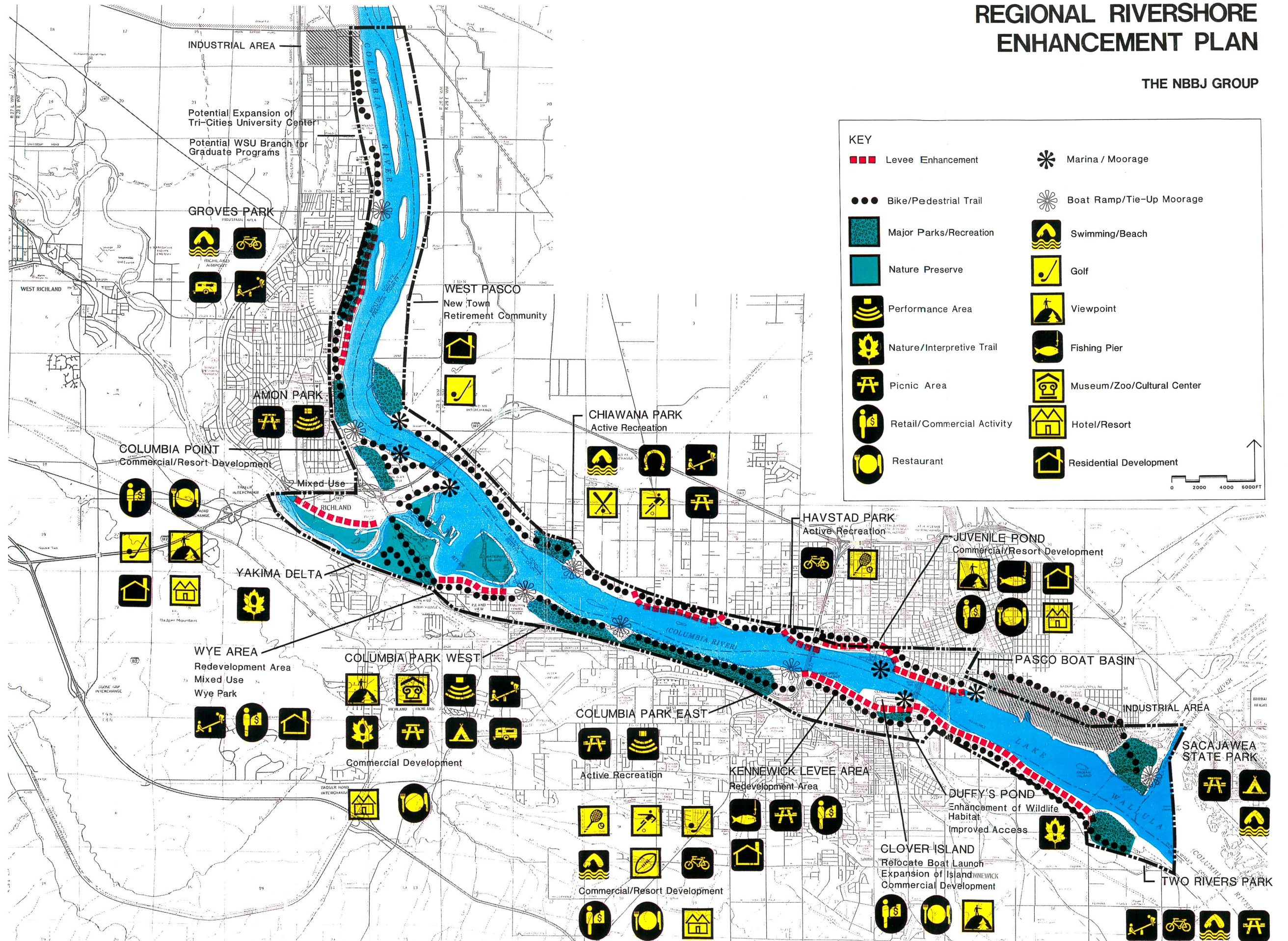
A series of community worksessions were held to describe and brainstorm the concepts. With some revision, the composite concept was selected as most appropriate for the Tri-Cities. The final Rivershore Enhancement Plan:

- Represents a long range vision of what the rivershore can be. It is not constrained by short-term limitations such as uncertain market demand.
- Reflects a mix of uses that promotes both economic diversification and increased recreational and other leisure time opportunities. The overriding goal of the Plan is to make the rivershore a place that is accessible and exciting for residents and visitors.
- Represents a framework for development of the shoreline, specifying land uses for certain focus areas and recommending key linkages. The Plan is intended to be a flexible guide for rivershore enhancement and development rather than a prescriptive master plan.

The Plan is comprised of three elements: a land use component, an access and circulation element, and proposed capital improvements. The Plan allows for two alternative levee modification options. A "minimum" option would lower the levees by three or four feet, the amount currently recognized as acceptable in certain areas by the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers. A "maximum" option would lower the levees by eight to ten feet in all areas except around Juvenile Pond in Pasco, where the existing levees would be completely removed and relocated further upland.

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Highlights of the land use and circulation elements of the Plan include:

- Generally lowering and improving the levees into a park and trail system.
- Mixed-use commercial/office/residential uses at Columbia Point, the Juvenile Pond area, and on Clover Island.
- Mixed-use commercial/recreational uses at the east and west ends of Columbia Park and major enhancement of park and recreation facilities throughout the park.
- Potential mixed use commercial/residential redevelopment of the area behind the levees that are between the bridges in Pasco and Kennewick, the Richland Wye and the Jadwin area. Potential golf course/residential uses in Franklin County north of I-182.
- Major enhancement of park and recreation uses at Chiawana Park.
- Preservation of the Yakima River Delta area with passive recreation uses such as trails/interpretive centers.
- Minor enhancement of park and recreation uses at Amon, Groves, Sacajewea, Two Rivers and Wye Parks, and at the Pasco Boat Basin.
- Continued industrial uses on Port of Pasco and Benton County property.
- Continued institutional use and potential expansion of the Tri-Cities University Center (TUC) in Richland. Potential Washington State University Branch Campus adjacent to TUC in Richland.
- Completion of bicycle/pedestrian trail linkages: Amon Park to Columbia Park, Columbia Park to Two Rivers Park, and throughout Franklin County rivershore.
- Encouraging/enhancing upland linkages: Freedom Park, Edison Street Interchange, Fruitland Street, Washington Street, A Street, and 10th Street.

A preliminary capital improvement plan was compiled to estimate the required public costs for rivershore enhancement. Total estimated costs for providing the necessary infrastructure (levee modification, roads, utilities), and park and recreational enhancements (ballfields, boat launches, trails, irrigation, etc.) is \$44 million with minimum levee modification and \$105 million with maximum levee modification.



## Implementation

Several key elements of successful plan implementation -- identifying funding sources; organizational strategies; and a short-term action plan -- were explored.

Funding Sources: The full spectrum of currently available funding sources was identified, with the following conclusions:

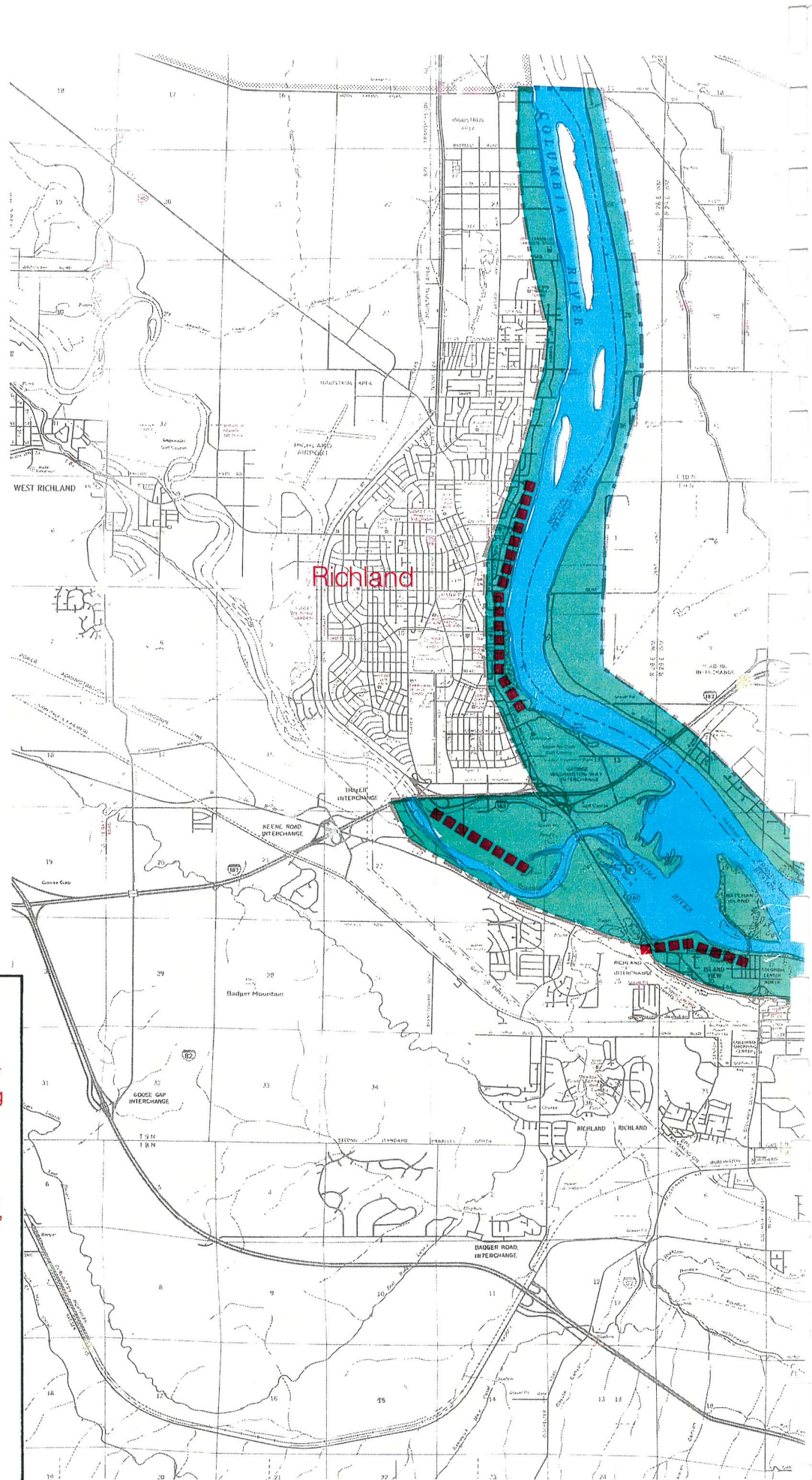
- Federal assistance for levee modification and enhancement offers the greatest potential for funding large-scale rivershore improvements.
- Existing federal and state parks and recreation programs offer important, if limited, assistance for rivershore improvements.
- Local governmental tax-supported budgets are likely to represent a minor source of funding.
- Private fund raising managed through an organization similar to the Greenway Foundation in Yakima may offer an important source of local funds.
- Private development fees and/or income could become a major source for funding capital improvements on prime development sites such as Columbia Point, Columbia Park, and the Juvenile Pond area.
- After full consideration of these funding sources, it is likely that additional, locally generated funds will be needed to achieve the Plan's entire rivershore vision. A multi-jurisdictional bond issue may be necessary to achieve full implementation.

Organization Strategies: Three organizational models -- a formal advisory group such as the existing Rivershore Enhancement Committee, a new legal organization such as a metropolitan park district, and individual jurisdiction planning -- were reviewed and evaluated as vehicles for undertaking future rivershore planning. It is recommended that:

- The Rivershore Enhancement Committee continue as the primary vehicle for regional planning on the rivershore.
- Further research be conducted on the potential use of a metropolitan park district.

Short-Term Action Plan: The following actions are recommended as initial steps for implementing the Plan:

- Adoption of the Rivershore Enhancement Plan by all jurisdictions.
- Rivershore Enhancement Committee agreement on the focus for regional cooperation (e.g. pursuit of levee modification funds).
- Committee agreement on a strategy for levee modification, specifically whether to pursue modification options that would be in conflict with current Corps standards and involve long timeframes for implementation.
- Undertaking the needed marketing effort to "sell" the Plan, including: 1) developing a briefing package to inform key decision-makers (Governor, Congressmen, etc.); 2) distributing a summary brochure to the public and potential funding sources as educational and informational guide; and 3) preparation of tailored site-specific marketing documents for those areas offering prime development opportunities.
- Conducting further research on the feasibility of initiating a metropolitan park district for the rivershore.



The Tri-Cities Regional Rivershore Enhancement is a joint effort of the Benton-Franklin Governmental Conference and the Tri-Cities Visitor and Convention Bureau, representing local private business, cities, counties, ports, chambers of commerce, and interested citizens.

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