



Planning Commission WORKSHOP MEETING Agenda

May 18, 2026 at 6:30 PM

City Hall Council Chambers - 210 W. 6th Ave - Virtual

The City of Kennewick broadcasts meetings on the City's website and Zoom. You can watch the broadcast or register to participate via Zoom on the Planning Commissions webpage at www.go2kennewick.com/PlanningCommission.

The public can also submit comments by either filling out an online form at www.go2kennewick.com/PCPublicComment, via e-mail to cedinfo@ci.kennewick.wa.us, or submitting written comments to Kennewick Planning Commission, P.O. Box 6108, Kennewick, WA 99336. Comments must be received no later than 4:00 p.m. on the day before the meeting.

1. CALL TO ORDER

Roll Call/Pledge of Allegiance

2. COMPREHENSIVE PLAN PERIODIC UPDATE

a. Comprehensive Plan Periodic Update: Critical Areas Element

3. CITY COUNCIL ACTION UPDATES

a. City Council Action Updates: Reports, Comments or Discussion of Commissioners & Staff

4. ADJOURNMENT



Parametrix

KENNEWICK MUNICIPAL CODE: CRITICAL AREAS CODE UPDATE

Per Growth Management Act

Planning Commission May 18, 2026

Agenda



Source: MAKERS

Project Team

Washington State Critical Areas Ordinance Overview

Kennewick CAO Update

- General Provisions
- Wetlands
- Critical Aquifer Recharge Areas
- Frequently Flooded Areas
- Geologically Hazardous Areas
- Fish and Wildlife Habitat Conservation Areas

Next Steps

Questions

Project Team



Planning Staff
Anthony Muai
Matt Halitsky



Prime & Project Management
Land Use and Housing Policy
Public Engagement



Land Use and Housing Analyses
Economic Development
Capital Facilities



Utilities
Critical Areas



Transportation



Climate and Resiliency

Critical Areas Code Update

Growth Management Act Guidelines

- Designate and protect critical areas
- Allow no net loss of ecosystem functions and values
- Give special consideration to anadromous fisheries
- Support viable, connected populations over the long term
- Include the best available science



Critical Areas Code Update

Best Available Science (BAS)

- Be based on BAS
- Give consideration to conservation and protection of anadromous fisheries
- BAS: Science based on peer-reviewed literature, standard methods, logical conclusions and quantitative analysis, and reliable references

Functions and Values

- water quality protection
- fish and wildlife habitat
- flood storage
- groundwater recharge and discharge
- drinking water protection
- erosion control
- protection from natural hazards
- recreation

Critical Areas Code Update



Purpose of Critical Areas regulations?

- Protect the public from threats to human safety and to protect public and private property from natural hazards.
- Protect the environment and enhance the state's and City's quality of life.
- Preserve environmentally sensitive areas that are valuable to the public and provide ecological function.

Kennewick Municipal Code

- Ch 18.58 – General Provisions
- Ch 18.59 – Wetlands
- Ch 18.60 – Critical Aquifer Recharge Areas
- Ch 18.61 – Frequently Flooded Areas (no changes)
- Ch 18.62 – Geologically Hazardous Areas
- Ch 18.63 – Fish and Wildlife Habitat Areas



KMC 18.58 – General Provisions

- Added definitions and update definitions to match state code
- Minor updates made to incorporate “best available science” for protecting and managing critical areas
- Added clarifications for mitigation sequencing
- Change references from exhibit maps in the appendices to the City-hosted GIS maps
- Updated outdated code citations

KMC 18.59 - Wetlands

- Wetland boundaries shift over time due to variations in water availability, vegetation changes, (e.g. from development) and other factors
 - Limit approved wetland delineations to five years
- Add methods to reduce buffers
 - End at paved surfaces that do not add function
 - Added buffer averaging
- Clarified wetland buffer table, no changes to buffers

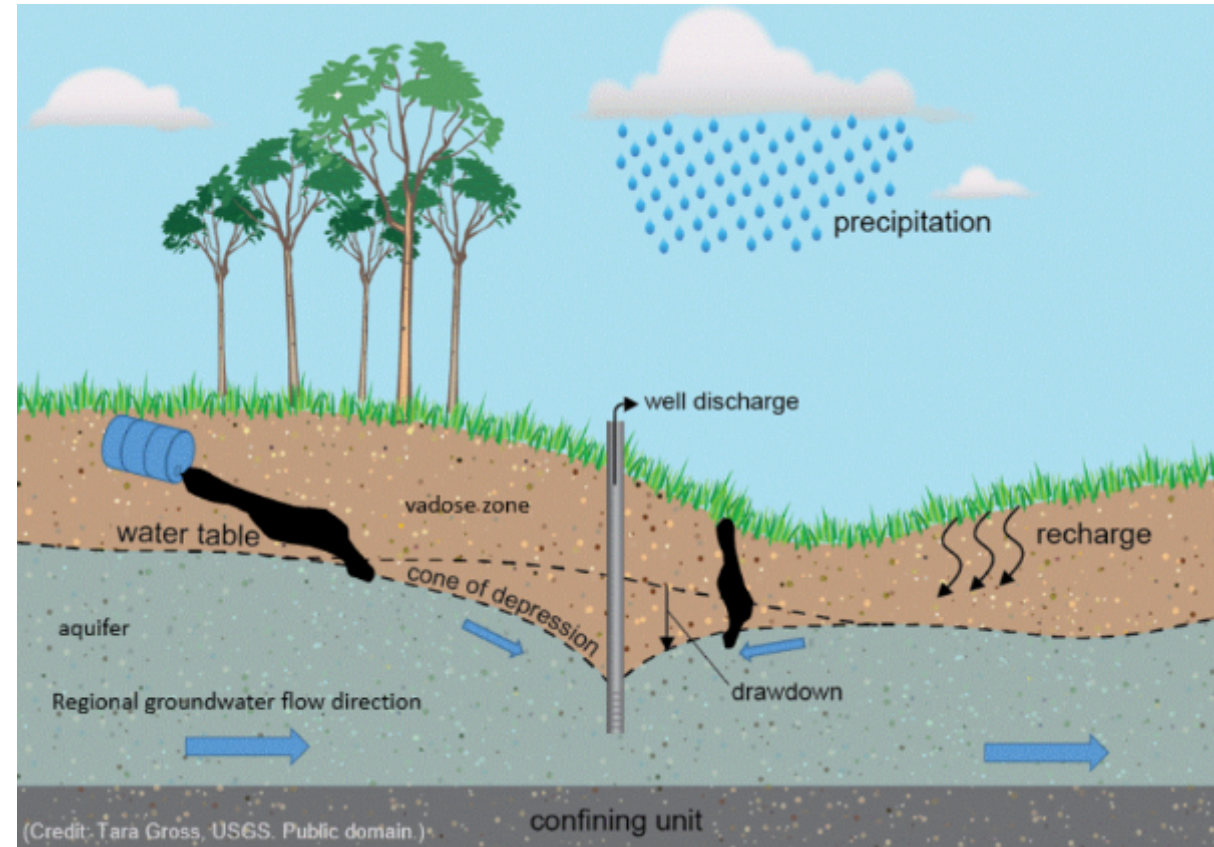


*Source: Washington State
Department of Ecology*

KMC 18.60 Critical Aquifer Recharge Areas (CARA)

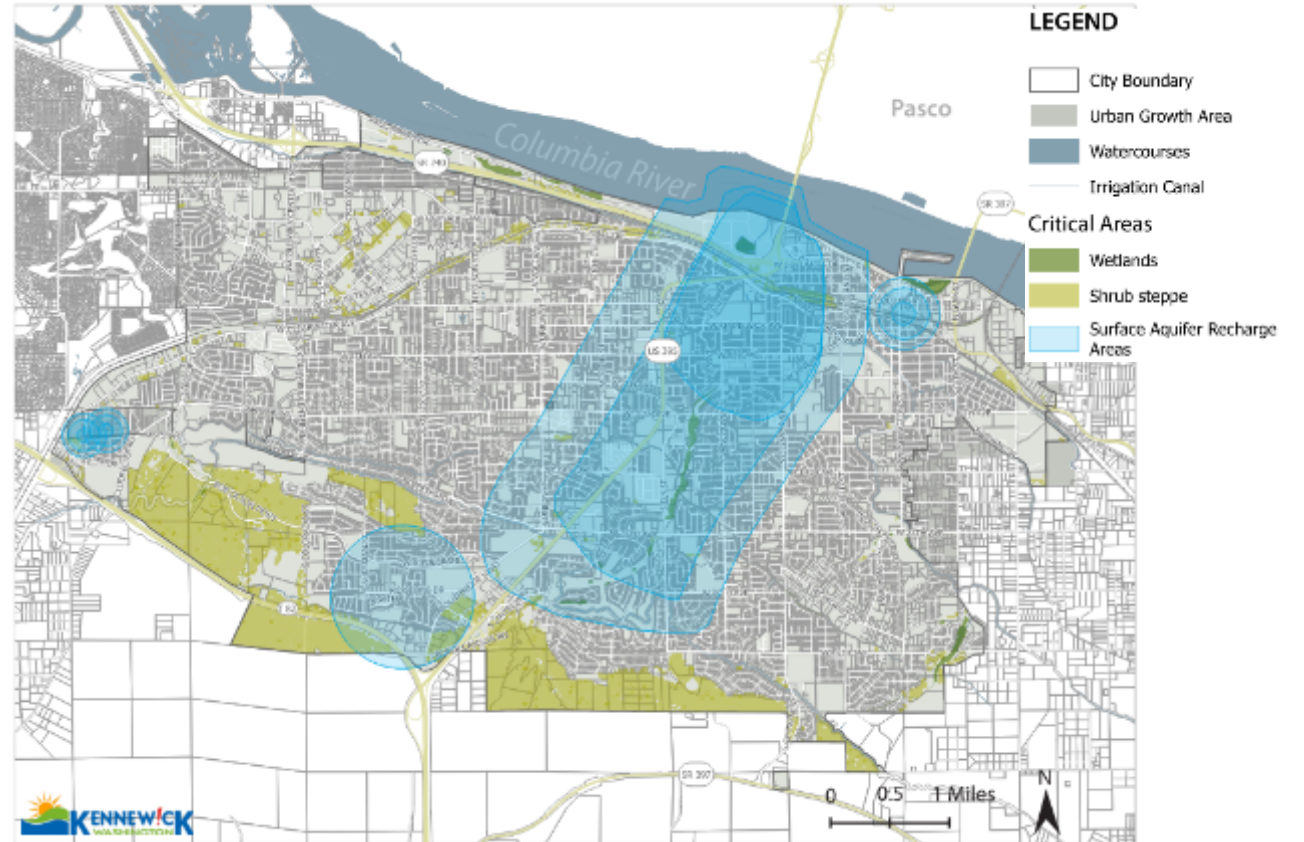
What is a CARA?

- Area that has a critical recharging effect on aquifers used for potable water
- Including aquifers that:
 - Are a source of drinking water that is vulnerable to contamination
 - Are susceptible to reduced recharge



KMC 18.60 Critical Aquifer Recharge Areas (CARA)

- Add 10-year ground water travel areas for other Group A wells (wells serving more than 15 connections)
- Expand uses prohibited in CARAs (e.g. mining, chemical manufacturing)



KMC 18.62 Geologically Hazardous Areas

What is a Geologically Hazardous Area?

- Areas with susceptibility to erosion, sliding, earthquake, or other geological events, are not suited to development consistent with public health or safety concerns.
 - Erosion hazard areas
 - Landslide hazard areas
 - Seismic hazard areas
 - Extreme slope hazard areas
- Minor updates to definitions

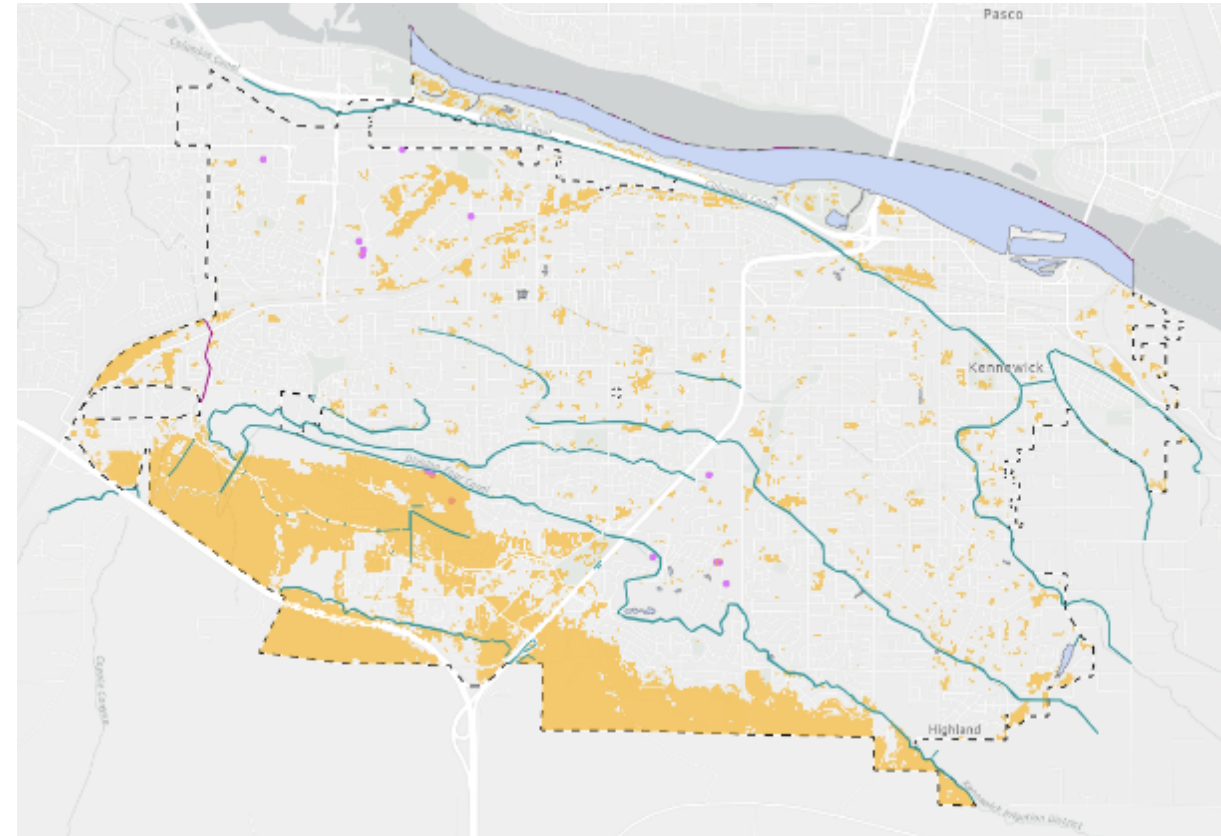


Source: Claire Hoffman

KMC 18.63 – Fish and Wildlife Habitat Conservation Areas (FWHCAs)

What are FWHCAs?

- Areas where endangered, threatened, and sensitive species have primary association
- Habitats and species of local importance as determined locally important by the city
- Naturally occurring ponds under 20 acres
- Streams
- Priority habitats (e.g. Shrub-steppe)



Source: Parametrix GIS

KMC 18.63 – Fish and Wildlife Habitat Conservation Areas

- Update Stream typing
 - Type S – Shoreline of the State (Columbia River)
 - Type F – that are known to be used by fish or meet the physical criteria to be potentially used by fish. Fish streams may or may not have flowing water all year; they may be perennial or seasonal.
 - Type Np - Streams that have flow year-round and may have intermittent dry reaches downstream of perennial flow during normal rainfall years.
 - Type Ns - Streams that do not have surface flow during at least some portion of the year
- Add methods to reduce stream buffers (same as for wetlands)
 - End at paved surfaces that do not add function
 - Buffer averaging
- Added requirement for habitat assessment within shrub-steppe habitat



*Source: Washington State
Department of Ecology*

Next Steps

- May 18 - Planning Commission Workshop (today)
- June SEPA (part of the Comprehensive Plan SEPA)
- July/August Planning Commission make recommendation to City Council
- August/September - City Council review meeting(s)
- End of September City Council adopt areas ordinance

Thank You & Questions

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Project website:

<https://www.go2kennewick.com/249/Comprehensive-Plan-Periodic-Update>



Source: Claire Hoffman