



City Council Workshop Agenda

August 11, 2026 at 6:30 PM

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

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1. 2027 State Legislative Agenda
 2. Downtown Kennewick Strategic Plan

If you need reasonable accommodations due to a disability to attend or participate in this meeting, please give us 24 hours' notice by emailing ClerkInfo@ci.kennewick.wa.us or call 509-585-4273.

Council Agenda Coversheet	Item Number: 1. Date: 8/11/2026	Category:
	Item Type: Presentation Subject: 2027 State Legislative Agenda Department: City Manager	INFO ONLY
Summary Briahna Murray of Gordon Thomas Honeywell will give an overview of the upcoming state legislative session and 2027 topics for Council consideration. Council will have an opportunity to confer with Ms. Murray and explore the topics in greater detail prior to approving the 2027 legislative priorities at a regular Council meeting.		
Attachments: 1. Presentation 2. 2027 Legislative Agenda - DRAFT 3. 2026 Legislative Agenda		



CITY OF KENNEWICK

PREPARING FOR THE 2027 LEGISLATIVE SESSION





AGENDA

2027 SESSION PREVIEW

LEGISLATIVE AGENDA GUIDANCE

DRAFT LEGISLATIVE AGENDA

NEXT STEPS

2027 SESSION PREVIEW

- First year of the two-year biennium
- 105-day “long” session
- Democrat majorities likely
- Legislative Reorganization
 - Committee Changes
 - Potential Leadership Changes
- Major Themes
 - Constrained Operating & Transportation Budgets
 - Ongoing Tax Policy Discussions
 - Affordability
 - Continuation of prior efforts





AWC

2027 LEGISLATIVE AGENDA DEVELOPMENT

LPC Develops
Priorities



LPC
Recommends
Priorities in
August



AWC Board
Adopts Priorities
in September

Emerging Priority

City Financial
Stability

Major Themes

Public Safety and
Public Defense

Transportation and
Infrastructure

Liability



GUIDELINES

Focused (3-5 Top Priorities)

Politically Feasible Policy Requests

Include a Capital Budget request

Limited Transportation and Operating Budget Funds



LEGISLATIVE DOCUMENTS

Legislative Priorities	• 3-5 high priority issues for the City • Funding request or specific request for a change to state law • Purpose: Focus City resources (staff time & legislator’s time) on the areas that will most directly benefit the City
Policy Statements	• List of policy areas that impact City business where legislation may be introduced • Purpose: Allow for timely engagement on issues that could have a significant positive or negative impact on the City



PRIORITY TOPICS

Less Restrictive Alternative (LRA) Housing for SVPs

City Fiscal Health and Sustainability

Kennewick Community Pool

At-Grade Rail Solutions Study

Columbia Center Boulevard Widening



LRA HOUSING FOR SVPS

- Civilly Committed Sexually Violent Predators (SVPs) are released by court order after treatment based on constitutionally-limited criteria.
 - Unconditional discharge
 - Court-imposed conditions with discharge to:
 - DSHS-Contracted LRA
 - Non-Contracted Home Approved by Court
- State legislative authority to regulate limited by civil commitment/constitutional limits.
- However, there are options.

FISCAL SUSTAINABILITY

- **Immediate Issue:** State-imposed sales and use tax exemptions impacting city budgets in 2028.
- **Chronic Issue:** City tax code is not sustainable. State policy and tax code changes are exacerbating city budget challenges.
- **Solutions:**
 - \$200 million in Fiscal Health Account, growth factor
 - Public education and study of city budget reform



POOL REQUEST

- Ideal request between \$500,000-\$1.2 million
- Local match (city committed \$10 million)
- Supported by community



TRANSPORTATION REQUESTS

- Limited funding available
- Highway Use Fee discussion likely
- Transitioning away from project-focused transportation packages
- Encouraged to identify needs:
 - \$300,000 at-grade rail study
 - Columbia Center Blvd Widening



POLICY STATEMENTS

- Infrastructure Funding
- Tourism Funding
- Water Quality/PFAS
- Tumbleweed Disposal/Outdoor Burning
- Homelessness
- Public Safety
- Public Defense
- Local Community Decision-Making
- Unfunded Mandates
- Liability





NEXT STEPS

Council Discussion of Legislative Priorities

Adopt Legislative Agenda

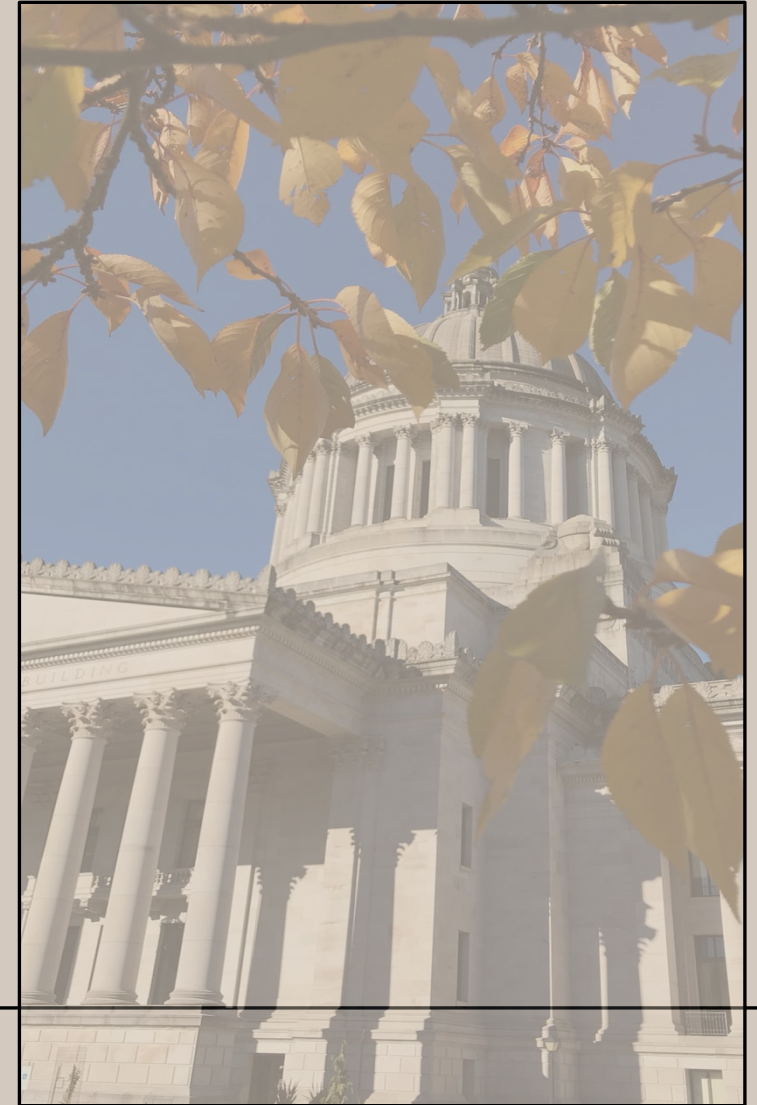
November Election

Brief State Legislators on City Priorities

QUESTIONS?

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BUDGET CONTEXT

OPERATING

Funded by sales tax (48%), B&O tax (18%), other taxes (16%), property tax (12%), real estate excise tax (6%).

Pays for human services, K-12 public schools, higher education, general government, natural resources

Slowing revenue growth, rising caseloads, inflation and policy decisions.

TRANSPORTATION

Funded by gas tax, vehicle related taxes and fees and tolls.

Pays for highway construction, maintenance and preservation of the state system, public transportation, multimodal programs and debt service.

60% Capital and 40% operating.

Declining revenue source, fish culvert injunction, M&P.

CAPITAL

Funded by bonds, federal funds and dedicated accounts.

Pays for school construction, higher ed facilities, affordable housing, behavioral health facilities and grant programs.

Most stable budget, consistently developed in a bipartisan fashion

City of Kennewick 2027 Legislative Agenda

Top Legislative Priorities

Less Restrictive Alternative Housing for Civilly Committed Sexually Violent Predators:

The City of Kennewick, joined by other cities throughout the state, supports legislative reforms to ensure that Washington's less restrictive alternative housing system for Sexually Violent Predators better protects communities through stronger oversight, meaningful local engagement, greater transparency, increased accountability, and clear, legally enforceable standards.

City Fiscal Health and Sustainability: The City of Kennewick urges the Legislature to ensure cities have a stable and sustainable tax code. Historically, local tax authority has mirrored the state's, but recent changes have shifted that relationship. For example, the state recently exempted diapers, hygiene products, and over-the-counter medications from state and local sales tax, thereby reducing city revenues. The City requests full mitigation of these losses in 2027 and broader tax reform to ensure cities can sustainably fund essential public services.

Kennewick Community Pool

The City of Kennewick requests \$1 million toward construction of a new community pool. The Kenneth Serier Memorial Pool has reached the end of its useful life. The City has committed \$10 million to build a replacement at its new civic campus in partnership with the Kennewick School District and requests the state's partnership to complete this priority project.

Community Connectivity: At-Grade Rail Solutions Study

A United Pacific (UP) and Burlington Northern Santa Fe (BNSF) rail lines bisect Kennewick with five at-grade crossings, three of which are located downtown. The crossings can delay traffic for up to 20 minutes. The City requests \$300,000 to study solutions to improve safety and mobility, including grade separations and other improvements, as rail traffic is expected to increase with completion of Stampede Pass upgrades.

Columbia Center Boulevard Widening

Columbia Center Boulevard is a major arterial and freight corridor serving Columbia Center Mall, Costco, the Toyota Center, and the Three Rivers Convention Center. The City requests state funding to add one lane in each direction between Quinault and Deschutes Avenues. This project is ranked #3 on the Benton-Franklin Council of Governments' Top Six Regional Transportation Projects.

Policy Statements

The City of Kennewick supports the efforts of the Association of Washington Cities. Below are issue areas of emphasis that the City follows with close attention and engagement:

Infrastructure Funding: The City of Kennewick supports increased funding to state grant programs for infrastructure, including programs such as the Public Works Assistance Account, the Recreation and Conservation Office, the Transportation Improvement Board, and other similar programs.

Tourism Funding: Visit Tri-Cities is funded through a \$3 per-room fee that was initiated by the local hotel/motel industry and enacted by the local cities. The state-granted authority to impose this fee is partially set to sunset in 2027. The City of Kennewick supports legislation to remove the sunset.

Water Quality/PFAS: The City of Kennewick is committed to providing quality water to its current and future residents. The City will monitor any action on biosolids as its new facility comes online.

Tumbleweed Disposal and Outdoor Burning: The City of Kennewick supports modernizing regulations governing the disposal of tumbleweeds. The City requests that the Department of Ecology recognize tumbleweed trailers as approved outdoor burning containers and that the county population threshold for permit exemptions related to outdoor burning be increased.

Homelessness: The City of Kennewick has taken a compassionate approach to managing individuals experiencing homelessness within the community. The City asks that the Legislature honor this approach, including maintaining authority to regulate the public rights-of-way.

Public Safety: The City of Kennewick supports the efforts of the Washington State Association of Sheriffs and Police Chiefs, and specifically supports further amending regulations around automated license plate readers, and clarifying a 2021 law to ensure that juveniles who are witnesses to or victims of a crime can be interrogated by law enforcement.

Public Defense: The City of Kennewick is responsible for providing public defense services to indigent defendants of misdemeanor charges. The City asks for the state's partnership in recruiting public defenders and allocating the necessary funding needed to meet public defense caseload standards under consideration by the Washington State Supreme Court.

Local Community Decision-Making: The City of Kennewick conducts significant public processes and community engagement when developing local policies. The city calls on the Legislature to honor this community-driven process and allow decisions to be made locally, particularly in relation to land use and right-of-way management.

Unfunded Mandates: The City of Kennewick urges the Legislature to consider local costs when developing state policies, including labor-related issues such as PERS cost-of-living increases and expanded eligibility for the state Paid Family Medical Leave program.

Liability: Like most public agencies in Washington, the City of Kennewick is experiencing increased insurance premiums and liability costs. The City asks that the state take action to reduce liability for public agencies.



Top Legislative Priorities

City of Kennewick Government

Kennewick Activity Center Asbestos Abatement

The Kennewick Activity Center provides a space for community sports and activities. The city requests \$90,000 in state funding for asbestos abatement for the second floor of the Center. The second floor of the building remains closed due to asbestos. Once fully operational, the Center can open for community programming.

Toyota Center HVAC System

The Kennewick Toyota Center is a multifunctional facility that hosts conventions, special events, trade shows, and concerts. The city requests assistance in identifying \$300,000 to replace the failing HVAC and implement safety improvements.

Community Connectivity: At-Grade Rail Solutions Study

A United Pacific (UP) and Burlington Northern Santa Fe (BNSF) rail line runs through the Kennewick community, with several at-grade rail crossings. In downtown Kennewick, there are three at-grade rail crossings: Washington, Benton and Fruitland). Additionally, there are two in west Kennewick: Kellogg and Edison. The crossings cause delays of up to 20 minutes for residents. The City requests \$300,000 to study potential solutions to improve safety and alleviate traffic delays, including grade-separation and other enhancements, as rail traffic increases in the region with the completion of improvements at Stampede Pass.

MAJOR PROJECTS ON THE HORIZON

Columbia Center Boulevard Widening

Columbia Center Boulevard is one of Kennewick's main arterial streets and is a freight corridor. The Boulevard serves the existing Columbia Center Mall, Costco, Toyota Center, and Three Rivers Convention Center and experiences continuously high traffic volumes. Kennewick requests \$14.7 million to add a south and northbound lane to Columbia Center Boulevard from Quinault to Deschutes Avenues. The project is recognized regionally as #3 on the Benton-Franklin Council of Government's Top Six Regional Transportation Projects.

Community Pool Replacement

The Kennewick Pool is nearing end-of-life and will need replacement within five years. The City is exploring a partnership with Kennewick School District to replace the pool and hopes that the state will be a partner as the project is refined (estimated at \$11-20M depending on scope).

City Hall Replacement

City Hall was built about 60 years ago and has millions of dollars' worth of needed repairs, from a leaky roof to failing and outdated heating, ventilation and air conditioning and information technology. City staff have run out of room in the building for workers and needed storage space for files and equipment. The city is currently drafting an RFP to select an architecture firm to conduct a renovation analysis and determine the cost and process of building a new city hall. (current estimate before scoping is \$35M)

Southridge Fire Station

Kennewick plans to construct a new fire station in the Southridge area to meet the needs of this fast-growing area of the city – over the next 20 years, it is expected that 3,500 homes, 1,800 apartment buildings, and more than 1 million square feet of commercial office space will be constructed in the area.



Policy Issues

City of Kennewick Government

Policy Statements

The City of Kennewick supports the efforts of the Association of Washington Cities. Below are issue areas of emphasis that the City follows with close attention and engagement:



Infrastructure Funding:

The City of Kennewick supports increased funding to state grant programs for local infrastructure, including the Public Works Assistance Account, grant programs through the Recreation and Conservation Office, the Transportation Improvement Board and other like grant programs.



Water Quality /PFAS:

The City of Kennewick is committed to providing quality water to its current and future residents. The City is interested in any guidance on biosolids as our new facility comes online.



Homelessness:

The City of Kennewick has taken a compassionate approach to managing individuals experiencing homelessness within the community. The City asks that the Legislature honor this approach, including maintaining the ability to regulate encampments in public rights-of-way.



Public Safety:

The City of Kennewick transitioning from FLOCK to Axon cameras and upgrading law enforcement technology as force multipliers. Any relevant policies to these ongoing updates would be of interest.



Public Defense:

The City of Kennewick is responsible for providing public defense services to indigent defendants of misdemeanor charges. The City asks for the state's partnership in recruiting public defenders and allocating the necessary funding needed to meet public defense caseload standards under consideration by the Washington State Supreme Court.



Local Community Decision-Making:

The City of Kennewick conducts significant public processes and community engagement when developing local policies. The City calls on the Legislature to honor this community-driven process and allow decisions to be made locally, particularly in relation to land use and right-of-way management.



Fiscal Sustainability:

The City of Kennewick urges the Legislature to approve policies and tools that allow local governments to maintain fiscally sustainable budgets that keep pace with inflation, such as removing the 1% cap on property tax levies.



Juvenile Interrogations:

The City of Kennewick joins stakeholders in requesting that the Legislature clarify a 2021 law ensuring that juveniles who are suspects of a crime are provided with an attorney prior to being questioned by law enforcement, but that juveniles who are witnesses to or victims of a crime can otherwise be interrogated by law enforcement.



Rising Labor Costs

The City of Kennewick urges the Legislature to consider local costs when addressing labor-related issues, including PERS cost-of-living increases, expanded eligibility for the state Paid Family Medical Leave program, and impacts to collective bargaining.

Council Agenda Coversheet	Item Number: 2. Date: 8/11/2026	Category:
	Item Type: Presentation Subject: Downtown Kennewick Strategic Plan Department: Community Planning	INFO ONLY
Summary Stantec and their team has been hired to develop a strategic plan for the redevelopment of downtown. This presentation will provide Council an overview of the Downtown Kennewick Area-wide Plan and outreach to the Historic Downtown Kennewick Partnership. Council will then have the opportunity to review recommendations from the area-wide plan in order to prioritize these recommended actions.		
Attachments: 1. Presentation		



Downtown Kennewick Area Wide Planning (AWP) Study

City Council Workshop August 11, 2026

(Image Source: Google Earth Pro)

Introduction

Consultant team – Stantec and AHBL

Meeting objectives:

1. Re-introduce the planning study
2. Discuss strategic action prioritization
3. Discuss next steps

AWP Overview

- The Benton-Franklin Council of Governments (BFCOG), received a federal grant totaling \$600,000 from the EPA for several projects
- Downtown Kennewick was chosen for an Area Wide Planning (AWP) study using some of the funds
- Initial public engagement efforts:
 - City/ BFCOG listening session
 - Public Working Group Meetings – series of 3
 - Survey was conducted in 2025, was widely advertised, and received 196 responses
 - *Some key stakeholders not included in original engagement*



AWP Overview

- City of Kennewick hired consultant team for development of a Strategic Plan to continue efforts of the AWP
- Initial steps
 - Consultant team met with HDKP on May 13, 2026
 - Result: HDKP developed a ranking of proposed strategies
 - Consultant team presented an introduction to the City Council at the workshop meeting on June 9, 2026
 - Result: City Council requested the item be brought back

Community Priorities

Key themes emerged from community engagement that helped outline strategic goals/objectives for Downtown Kennewick:



Theme A: Create a Downtown Destination Beyond 9-5



Theme B: Enhance Downtown’s Public Realm, Safety, and Functionality



Theme C: Create Quality and Multi-functional Community Gathering Spaces



Theme D: Support Economic Development, Adaptive Reuse, and Urban Infill Projects



Theme E: Expand Housing Options in Downtown



Theme F: Host Annual Events and Community Traditions

Strategies / Urban Framework Plan

KENNEWICK – DOWNTOWN AREA WIDE PLAN (AWP)



Urban Framework Plan

The UFP and its accompanying Planning Initiatives List outline recommended near- and long-term mobility, open space, and land use improvements for the Focus Area. These include streetscape and access improvements, catalyst site identification, open space and recreation projects, and the designation of subdistricts.

- L.# = Land use district designations
- M.# = Mobility initiatives
- P.# = Parks and open space initiatives

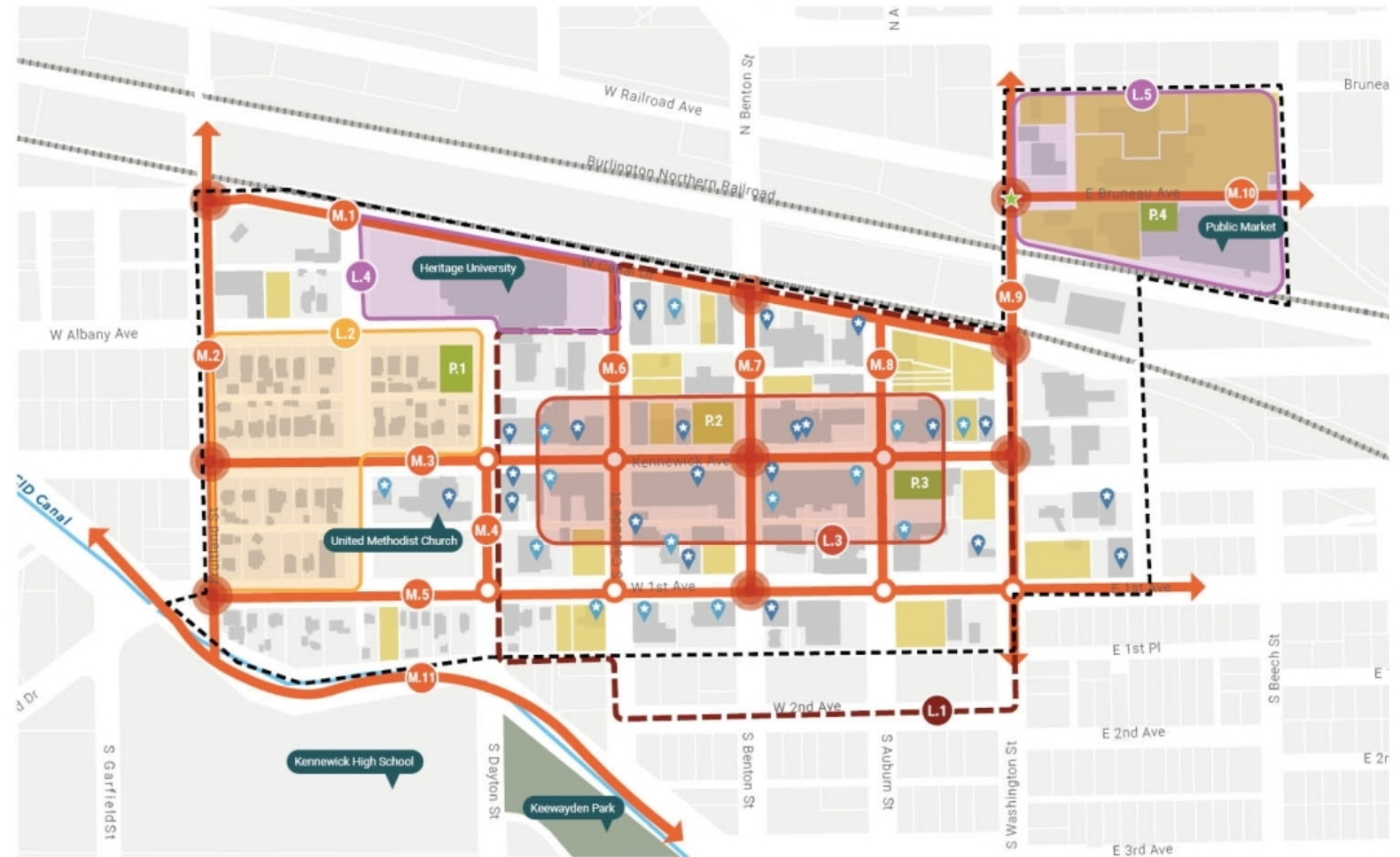


FIGURE ES.2 URBAN FRAMEWORK PLAN

1:4,800
0 200 400 ft

Focus Area Boundary
Existing Parks
Parcels

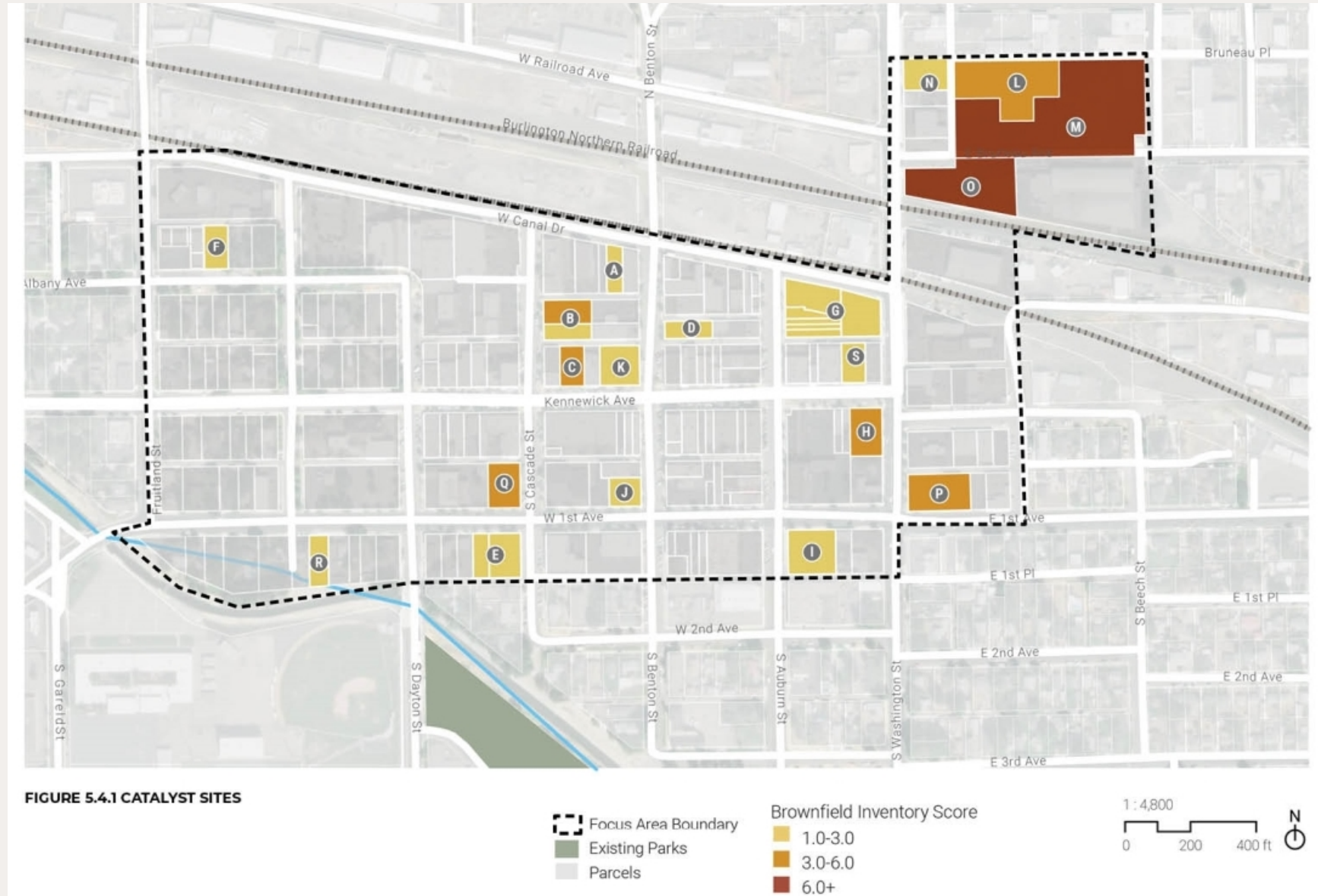
Streetscape improvements
Minor intersection treatment
Major intersection treatment
Gateway feature

Downtown Subdistrict
Residential Subdistrict
Mixed-use Subdistrict
Commercial Subdistrict

Potential Park/Open Space
Potential Catalyst Site
Historic Structure (NRHP) Eligible
Historic Structure (KRHP) Eligible

Potential Catalyst Sites

- The Community Survey revealed that **“Development/Redevelopment of under-utilized lots/buildings ranked third** in terms of community priorities.
- Selected sites based on property inventory and initial feedback from listening session
- Total identified sites: **19**



MENU / INTRO – Community Revitalization Strategies



Proposed Revitalization Strategies



STRATEGY 1: DIVERSIFY DOWNTOWN LAND USE

- **Subdistrict Designation** –Formally designate subdistricts to prioritize commercial, retail, wellness, and entertainment uses to achieve a critical mass of attractions.
- **Zoning Refinements** – Refine the zoning code to encourage a diverse urban scale mixed-use development and allow for more community-oriented uses
- **Objective Design Standards** – Implement objective building and site design standards to streamline development enhance architectural quality and preserve historic character.
- **Introduce More Community Spaces** – Expand the network of parks, plazas, and open spaces in Downtown.

Proposed Revitalization Strategies



STRATEGY 2: REVITALIZE PROPERTIES

- **Catalyst Site Designation** – Designate catalyst sites in and around the Downtown that should be prioritized for new community-serving uses and infill/adaptive reuse/redevelopment projects that strengthen Downtown's character.
- **Incentivize Revitalization or Redevelopment** – Provide incentives to support revitalization.
- **Encourage Adaptive Reuse** – Support and prioritize adaptive reuse of Downtown's existing buildings to activate vacant/underutilized storefronts.
- **Environmental Site Assessment and Remediation** – Provide financial assistance via grant and loan funding for environmental studies and, potentially, cleanup/abatement activities that address site contaminants, pollutants, and/or hazardous building materials.



Proposed Revitalization Strategies



STRATEGY 3: ENHANCE SAFETY AND CONNECTIVITY

- **Streetscape Enhancements** – Incorporate streetscape enhancements in Downtown outlined in the UFP to create a safe, functional, and distinctive destination.
- **Trail and Bikeway Extensions** – Expand and connect existing trails and bikeways within and around Downtown to integrate seamlessly with the broader Kennewick and regional active transportation network.
- **Gateway Enhancements** – Designate major gateways into Downtown with landscaping, signage, art, and/or monumentation to define the space and welcome visitors and reinforce the Downtown and arts district.
- **Crime Prevention Through Environmental Design** – Incorporate CPTED principles to enhance safety, improve visibility, and promote more activity.
- **Parking Strategy** – Conduct a district-wide study and develop strategies to address current and future needs in and around Downtown.
- **Utilities Analysis** – Conduct a comprehensive utilities and infrastructure analysis.



Proposed Revitalization Strategies



STRATEGY 4: MARKET AND BRAND DOWNTOWN + THE CREATIVE DISTRICT

- **Community Events and Traditions** – Partner with local and regional businesses, organizations, and community groups to host community events and traditions throughout the year in Downtown.
- **Downtown Branding and Promotion** – In partnership with HDKP, rebrand Downtown.
- **Developer and Business Recruitment** – Implement a developer and business recruitment plan to entice private investment in and around Downtown.
- **Wayfinding Signage Program** – Implement the wayfinding signage program for Downtown.
- **Interim Uses / Temporary Installations** – Identify potential interim/temporary uses to activate vacant and underutilized buildings and properties until they are redeveloped/reused for permanent tenants.

HDKP Ranking



HIGH

1. Utilities Analysis
2. Zoning Refinements
3. Gateway Enhancements
4. Streetscape Enhancements
5. Wayfinding Signage Program
6. Introduce More Community Spaces
- 7a. Incentivize Revitalization or Redevelopment
- 7b. Encourage Adaptive Reuse





MEDIUM

- Objective Design Standards
- Trails and Bikeway Extensions
- Crime Prevention Through Environmental Design
- Parking “*Communication*” *
- Community Events and Traditions
- Downtown Branding and Promotion
- Developer and Business Recruitment
- Interim Uses / Temporary Installations

HDKP Ranking



LOW

- Subdistrict Designation
- Catalyst Site Designation
- Environment Site Assessment and Remediation

Prioritization Discussion



HDKP Ranking



HIGH

1. Utilities Analysis
2. Zoning Refinements
3. Gateway Enhancements
4. Streetscape Enhancements
5. Wayfinding Signage Program
6. Introduce More Community Spaces
- 7a. Incentivize Revitalization or Redevelopment
- 7b. Encourage Adaptive Reuse

MEDIUM

- Objective Design Standards
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- Community Events and Traditions
- Downtown Branding and Promotion
- Developer and Business Recruitment
- Interim Uses / Temporary Installations

LOW

- Subdistrict Designation
- Catalyst Site Designation
- Environment Site Assessment and Remediation

Next Steps

Compile rankings and draft a preliminary project prioritization

Strategic Plan document consisting of the following sections:

- Executive Summary
- Community Context and Vision
- Situational Analysis (Strengths, Weaknesses and Opportunities and Threats)
- Strategic Goals & Objectives
- Action Plan and Implementation Strategy
- Resources and Partnerships
- Monitoring and Evaluation