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CHAPTER 1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 ABOUT YAKIMA COUNTY

Yakima County is located in south central Washington State among seven neighboring counties. The geography varies from densely timbered, mountainous terrain in the west, rolling foothills, broad valleys and arid regions to the east and fertile valleys in its central and southern parts. Yakima County's development was shaped largely by the Northern Pacific Railroad and the Yakima River. Most of the county's population is concentrated along this river, largely because irrigation was critical to the success of the communities and the farmers who settled in this area. Agriculture has been the staple of the economy as far back as 1880s when Yakima settlers developed the land into a commercial agricultural enterprise. With irrigation and railroads, commercial fruit production flourished. Yakima established wine grape vineyards in 1869 and hops acreage in 1872, which remain major parts of its agricultural industry today. Forestry and livestock, dairies and the growing, storage and shipping/processing of deciduous tree fruits (cherry, pears, apples, etc.), are bedrocks of Yakima County's agricultural industry. Yakima County has 558,000 irrigated acres of private land used for agriculture. The most recent federal decennial census for 2010 had Yakima County at a population of 243,231 and the Washington State Office of Financial Management (OFM) has the County at a 2015 population of 249,970. Yakima County is the second largest county by land area in Washington State at 4,296 square miles or 2.75 million acres and is the state's leading agricultural county (\$850 million per year).

1.2 GROWTH MANAGEMENT ACT

The Washington State Growth Management Act (GMA), enacted in 1990, is a state law that requires local governments to manage growth by identifying and protecting critical areas, natural resources, designating urban and rural areas and preparing comprehensive plans and implementing them through development regulations and capital investments. The GMA was adopted because the Washington State Legislature found that uncoordinated and unplanned growth posed a threat to the environment, sustainable economic development and the quality of life in Washington. Rather than centralize planning and decision-making at the state level, the GMA focuses on local control. The GMA establishes state goals, set deadlines for compliance, offers direction on how to prepare local comprehensive plans and regulations and sets forth requirements for early and continuous public participation. Within the framework provided by the mandates of the Act, local governments have many choices regarding the specific content of comprehensive plans and implementing development regulations. The following 14 goals listed

in Table 1.2-1 are adopted under GMA to guide the development and adoption of comprehensive plans and development regulations.

Table 1.2-1 Growth Management Act Planning Goals	
Goal	Description
Urban Growth	Encourage development in urban areas where adequate public facilities and services exist or can be provided in an efficient manner.
Reduce Sprawl	Reduce the inappropriate conversion of undeveloped land into sprawling, low-density development.
Transportation	Encourage efficient multimodal transportation systems that are based on regional priorities and coordinated with county and city comprehensive plans.
Housing	Encourage the availability of affordable housing to all economic segments of the population of this state, promote a variety of residential densities and housing types, and encourage preservation of existing housing stock.
Economic Development	Encourage economic development throughout the state that is consistent with adopted comprehensive plans, promote economic opportunity for all citizens of this state, especially for unemployed and for disadvantaged persons, and encourage growth in areas experiencing insufficient economic growth, all within the capacities of the state's natural resources, public services and public facilities.
Property Rights	Private property shall not be taken for public use without just compensation having been made. The property rights of landowners shall be protected from arbitrary and discriminatory actions.
Permits	Applications for both state and local government permits should be processed in a timely and fair manner to ensure predictability.
Natural Resources Industries	Maintain and enhance natural resource-based industries, including productive timber, agricultural, and fisheries industries. Encourage the conservation of productive forestlands and productive agricultural lands, and discourage incompatible uses.
Open Space and Recreation	Encourage the retention of open space and development of recreational opportunities, conserve fish and wildlife habitat, increase access to natural resource lands and water, and develop parks.
Environment	Protect the environment and enhance the state's high quality of life, including air and water quality, and the availability of water.
Citizen Participation and Coordination	Encourage the involvement of citizens in the planning process and ensure coordination between communities and jurisdictions to reconcile conflicts.
Public Facilities and Services	Ensure that those public facilities and services necessary to support development shall be adequate to serve the development at the time the development is available for occupancy and use without decreasing current service levels below locally established minimum standards.
Historic Preservation	Identify and encourage the preservation of lands, sites, and structures that have historical or archaeological significance.
Shoreline Management	The goals and policies of a shoreline master program for a county shall be considered an element of the county or city's comprehensive plan.

Source: RCW 36.70A.020

The comprehensive plan of Yakima County is required to consist of a map or maps, and descriptive text covering objectives, principles, and standards used to develop the comprehensive plan. The plan shall be an internally consistent document and all elements shall be consistent with the future land use map. The comprehensive plan shall be adopted and amended with adequate public participation as required by the Act. The comprehensive plan

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shall include a plan, scheme, or design for each of the following elements: a land use element, a housing element, a capital facilities element, a utilities element, and, for counties, a rural element. Yakima County's Comprehensive Plan includes the required elements as well as optional elements addressing: natural environment, parks and open spaces, natural hazards, intergovernmental coordination, economic development and subarea planning.

The GMA has changed Washington planning law in several ways:

1. Local governments must develop comprehensive plans and adopt regulations that are consistent with the plan. This changes the historic position in this state that the plan is to serve only as a "guide" to decision-making;
2. Land use authorized by the plan must be supported by adequate public facilities and services;
3. Local plans must comply with state planning goals and regulations and countywide planning policies. Plans that are not consistent with these requirements may be appealed. Penalties, imposed by the state, may be applied to communities whose plans do not conform to the state and regional requirements;
4. Urban Growth Areas (UGAs) must be designated. The UGAs are intended to direct growth to areas with adequate facilities and services, to reduce sprawl and to provide a distinct boundary between urban and rural areas; and
5. A process is required to accommodate essential public facilities (e.g. prisons, wastewater plants, etc.).

THE GROWTH MANAGEMENT ACT ESTABLISHES THE PRIMACY OF THE COMPREHENSIVE PLAN. THE COMPREHENSIVE PLAN IS THE STARTING POINT FOR ANY PLANNING PROCESS AND THE CENTERPIECE OF LOCAL PLANNING.

1.3 THE COMPREHENSIVE PLAN – HORIZON 2040

The Yakima County Comprehensive Plan – **Horizon 2040** is not just a plan for County government. **Horizon 2040** ensures that Yakima County complies with requirements of the Growth Management Act including the fourteen planning goals and represents Yakima County's means for achieving compliance consistent with Central Washington values, customs and culture. Developed out of input from thousands of people in our community at different times over decades, **Horizon 2040** truly is the community's plan. Many goals and policies call for coordination and collaboration among individual citizens, neighborhoods and civic groups, and city government. As always, there will be challenges and change, but the intent is to build on the creativity and strength of our community to shape how we develop. Yakima County residents

have expressed a vision for the future that includes a healthy environment, family wage jobs, convenient transportation, affordable housing, accessible health care, and a diversified economy. Yakima County’s Comprehensive Plan—**Horizon 2040** serves as the blueprint for making this vision a reality.



Horizon 2040 is a set of goals, policies, maps, illustrations, and implementation strategies that state how the county should grow physically, socially, and economically. The plan emphasizes innovative and flexible strategies to guide growth and development. One of the central themes of **Horizon 2040** is the promotion of economic development that occurs in harmony with environmental protection and preservation of natural resources. **Horizon 2040** recognizes the interest of the entire community and promotes cultural and ethnic diversity.

Yakima County Comprehensive Plan - **Horizon 2040** establishes a pattern of land uses to shape the future in desirable ways. Land use plan map designations include: residential, commercial, industrial, urban, rural, and resource areas. Identifying and defining these land use categories ensures compatibility among uses, protection of property values, and efficient provision of infrastructure and services. **Horizon 2040's** land use plan map also identifies urban growth area (UGA) boundaries. UGAs are intended to reduce sprawl and provide a clear separation between urban and rural areas.

The benefits to Yakima County of developing and implementing a comprehensive plan include:

1. Identifying the major trends and issues that will affect the county’s future form, livability and overall health;

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2. Assuring the protection and enhancement of the county's natural resources, environmental systems and neighborhood and community character in the midst of anticipated growth and change;
3. Using capital improvements, regulatory programs and incentives to guide new development and encourage appropriate redevelopment; and
4. Acting strategically to improve the county's economic future and its ability to attract and retain well-paying jobs.

1.3.1 Plan Overview/Organization

Each Element of **Horizon 2040** is generally organized to include the following sections:

- **INTRODUCTION** section provides a brief overview of the specific context of the chapter.
- **GROWTH MANAGEMENT ACT (GMA) REQUIREMENTS** outlines the legal framework for the element and the topics covered by **Horizon 2040** goals and policies. Table 1.2-1 lists the state goals in RCW 36.70A.020 that form the basis for GMA.
- **OPPORTUNITIES** examine issues specific to Yakima County, the topics are also addressed later in the goals and policies section.
- **EXISTING CONDITIONS** document the baseline situation addressed by each element.
- **GOALS AND POLICIES** formulate strategies for resolving the major issues. The Yakima County Visioning reports originally published in 1992, and through a "check-in" process an addendum to the Visioning Reports was published on April 8, 2015, and the County-wide Planning Policy, described in the Intergovernmental Element are the basis for the basis for the goals and policies in each Element. Where appropriate, the goals and policies are also categorized according to the geographic areas where they apply, such as urban, rural, and economic resource (agriculture, forest and mining) lands.
- **ENVIRONMENTAL ANALYSIS** summarizes the probable significant environmental impacts according to the four alternatives and suggests mitigation measures. A Supplemental Environmental Impact Statement has been issued with the 2017 Comprehensive Plan Update to address changes in goals and policies that may have a significant impact on the environment and mitigating factors to mitigate those impacts.

Each element provides the information needed to understand how **Horizon 2040** will guide growth and development for Yakima County. Each element is also required to be internally consistent so that goals and policies in one element do not conflict with goals and policies in a different element. An external consistency requirement provides for **Horizon 2040** and all other plans, development regulations, and all other guidance documents to work together to take Yakima County in the same direction. Table 1.3.1-1 below lists each of **Horizon 2040** Comprehensive Plan Elements.

Table 1.3.1-1 <i>Horizon 2040</i> Elements	
Chapter	Element
Chapter 1	Introduction
Chapter 2	Natural Setting
Chapter 3	Hazard Mitigation
Chapter 4	Economic Development
Chapter 5	Land Use*
Chapter 6	Capital Facilities*
Chapter 7	Housing*
Chapter 8	Parks and Open Space
Chapter 9	Utilities*
Chapter 10	Transportation*
Chapter 11	Intergovernmental Coordination
*GMA required elements.	

1.3.2 Goals and Policies

1.3.2.1 Goal Setting

Much time and considerable effort by many people have been invested in developing goals and policies, as documented in Chapter 2. **Horizon 2040** takes into account the requirements of the Growth Management Act, the Yakima County-wide Planning Policy, results of the visioning check-in process, comments received during the public during an extensive citizen involvement process, recommendations of the various citizens' committees, and the guidance of the County's Planning Commission, Board of County Commissioners and senior staff.

1.3.2.2 Background/Major Opportunities or Summary

Introduces the context for the goals and policies. The reader is given the key concepts and issues addressed in greater detail in the individual plan elements.

1.3.2.3 Purpose Statements

Purpose Statements describe the current conditions or considerations that make the goal and its associated policies necessary and explain how the goal and policy address the problem/condition.

1.3.2.4 Goals

Goals are broad statements of a community's aspirations. Goals tell us *where* we want to go. The language of a goal statement includes directives, such as "ensure," "provide," and "retain."

1.3.2.5 Objectives

Objectives are more specific and measurable than goals and are required by the GMA for the Housing Element only. By the end of the planning period, it should be possible to state whether or not a specific objective has been reached.

1.3.2.6 Policies

Policies express a commitment to a course of action in one of three ways:

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1. The policies themselves, as they appear in an adopted comprehensive plan, provide clear guidance for decision making when a situation arises;
2. They form the basis for revised development regulations (e.g., zoning, subdivision, development/building codes); or
3. They provide the overall direction for implementation of a strategy or course of action.

1.4 PRINCIPAL HORIZON 2040 CONCEPTS AND ASSUMPTIONS

The following concepts, and the assumptions that underlie them, are basic to the approach in **Horizon 2040**:

1. Predictability is a primary tenet of the plan. Citizens, interest groups, agencies and decision-makers who are planning the use of land, making financial decisions, and trying to influence the course of a decision, need to understand how the Plan works and the standards for review.
2. Goals and policies will follow the shared vision of the future for improving and sustaining our quality of life advocated in the original *Focus 2010, Vision 2010 and in the Visioning "Check-In" in 2015*.
3. Goals and policies will also be consistent with the Planning Goals of the Growth Management Act, and with the Yakima County-wide Planning Policy.
4. Population growth should be focused toward urban centers where services and facilities are present.
5. Future land use within Urban Growth Areas (UGAs) is designated by both the cities and Yakima County. Land use planning is a shared responsibility within the unincorporated portions of the UGA, although the County retains land use jurisdiction. The County's objective within the UGA is to facilitate and manage the transition from rural to urban land use and minimize public costs and uses that could prevent development consistent with the adopted future land use plans.
6. Development choices consistent with rural character should be allowed in rural areas. At least 80 percent of the non-urban population increase should occur in rural areas. In descending order of preference:
 - Rural Settlements
 - Rural Transitional Areas
 - Rural Self-sufficient Areas
 - Rural Remote
7. To protect the County's resource-based economy, non-resource residential development should be discouraged in resource areas (agriculture, forestry and mining).

8. The Plan must be reasonably internally consistent, well integrated, financially feasible, and generally capable of implementation.
9. **Horizon 2040** will be implemented in various ways. These include the goals and policies in the plan itself, action strategies identified in the plan and various types of implementation measures consistent with the plan goals, objectives and policies. Implementation measures will be guided by the following principles:
 - A. Reduce the cost of governmental services by focusing development in areas where services, utilities, and access are appropriate, or can reasonably be upgraded.
 - B. Maintain flexibility, locational choice, and preferences as provided in Concepts 5 and 6 above; explicitly state service expectations and limitations for each of the development areas.
 - C. Streamline and integrate the regulatory process to achieve more predictable process and time frames.
 - D. Use incentive based planning, such as focused public investment, clustering, and density bonuses, transferable development rights and performance based development standards.
 - E. Emphasize a coordination or partnership approach to service provision and development finance between the public and private sectors as well as across jurisdictional lines.

1.5 HORIZON 2040 IMPLEMENTATION

Horizon 2040 is designed to be a working document. Its adoption by the Board of Yakima County Commissioners is not the end of our community's long range planning effort but rather the means by which we will see growth occur. **Horizon 2040** will be used by both County staff and private citizens as a dynamic tool to manage growth over the next twenty years to protect our high quality of life and foster a healthy economy.

Once **Horizon 2040** is adopted, several key implementing actions must take place. The County will develop specific measures to implement **Horizon 2040**. These measures start with development regulations. Development regulations implement our community's comprehensive plan. The GMA does not dictate where a community must place these regulations in their municipal codes, so the locations vary. GMA regulations may be divided into separate municipal code titles including Zoning, Subdivision, Critical Area and Shoreline Management, or they may be consolidated in a unified development code. Yakima County currently has a unified land development code for zoning and subdivision. Central to the implementing process will be the re-evaluation of these existing development regulations, as well as other ordinances, County policies and procedures, to identify the changes needed to make them consistent with plan goals and policies and whether they reflect the philosophy of **Horizon 2040**. Where action is needed to implement the plan, specific strategies and schedules will be developed.

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Before adopting any development regulations intended to carry out **Horizon 2040**, the County will review its terms to make sure that it is consistent with and implements the comprehensive plan, and will make a finding to that effect. When the entire implementation strategy has been developed, the County will review it to make sure that it is consistent with the comprehensive plans of other Counties or cities with which it shares common borders or has related regional issues.

In addition, the Master Interlocal Agreement between Yakima County and the fourteen incorporated cities addresses urban growth policies for joint areas of planning concern. The Master Interlocal Agreement also implements the comprehensive plan by addressing land use regulations, service provision, and development and construction standards for the unincorporated portions of the urban growth areas. The Agreement specifies the process by which affected local governments may review and comment on comprehensive plan amendments, zone changes and development applications processed by another jurisdiction within urban growth areas (CWPP F.3.4). Sub-agreements may be negotiated for appropriate allocation of financial burdens resulting from the transition of land from county to city jurisdiction.

1.6 PLAN DEVELOPMENT

Yakima County adopted its first GMA compliant comprehensive plan – **Plan 2015** on May 20, 1997. The development of that Plan was an extraordinary community effort and is well documented in the Policy Plan Element of **Plan 2015**. The Growth Management Act under RCW 36.70A.130, required Yakima County to review and evaluate its comprehensive plans and development regulations and take legislative action, if needed, to ensure the plan and regulations comply with the requirements of the Growth Management Act. The initial GMA compliant update deadline established for Yakima County was December 2007. Yakima County made changes to **Plan 2015** as part of its first GMA required comprehensive plan update, which was completed on December 18, 2007.

As of 2015, **Plan 2015** has outlived its initial twenty-year planning horizon. With a new GMA (RCW 36.70A.130) mandated update deadline of June 30, 2017, Yakima County made the decision to conduct a simplistic approach to the update of **Plan 2015**. After the initial plan review, Yakima County was unable to adopt a finding of GMA consistency without first making at least some revisions to **Plan 2015** and development regulations. This is because ensuring consistency requires: (1) a consideration of updated population projections; (2) changes in the community vision; (3) amendments to GMA statutes; and (4) Growth Management Hearing Board and court interpretations of GMA regulations.

1.6.1 Population Projections

So, the first step Yakima County took was to extend the planning horizon out another twenty-years. Instead of using 2037, it was decided to use year 2040, which corresponded to the recent Washington State Office of Financial Management’s population projections that went to 2040. Under RCW 43.62.035, the Office of Financial Management (OFM) must develop county

population projections for growth management planning. State and county populations are provided at five-year and single year interval projections out to 2040 to accommodate the various GMA planning targets specified by counties. RCW 36.70A.115 requires Yakima County to ensure that comprehensive plans and development regulations provide sufficient capacity of land suitable for development within their jurisdictions to accommodate their projected and allocated employment growth consistent with the twenty-year population forecast from OFM. These projections and allocations of growth are foundational inputs that will inform many aspects of the comprehensive planning process over the next few years.

As mandated by the GMA, the OFM has developed low, medium, and high population forecasts for each county. The GMA requires Yakima County to select a 20-year GMA planning target that is within the high and low growth projections prepared by OFM. Projections are statements about the future based in a particular set of assumptions. The medium series is considered the most likely because it is the best foreseeable future based on assumptions that have been validated with past and current information. Yakima County choose the OFM’s medium population projections as the baseline for the 20-year planning horizon (see Demographic section).

1.6.2 Visioning

Now with the planning horizon and population projections determined, the next step in the process was to ensure that the original vision of **Plan 2015** was still appropriate for Yakima County’s new comprehensive plan – **Horizon 2040**. Traditionally, comprehensive planning has been a community’s effort to understand where it has been and what direction it plans to take during the next 20 years. Citizen participation is at the heart of Yakima County’s planning process. Recognizing that the comprehensive plan must reflect the people it serves, citizen input is necessary and required under GMA. To accomplish this, the community examines its needs, problems, and potentials and then prepares its vision for the future. From that vision, a comprehensive plan is developed: a working document stating the community’s goals and policies and providing direction and vision for the future.

Visioning:

1. Emphasizes community assets rather than needs.
2. Assesses community options and opportunities based on shared purposes and values.
3. Stresses early and continuous public involvement in the process.
4. Acts as a stand-alone process or part of a comprehensive planning process.

To ensure the appropriate development of **Horizon 2040**, Yakima County conducted a visioning “check in” to “validate” the goals from the original **Vision/Focus 2010** process. The “check in” process was conducted through a series of online surveys over a two month period in late 2014 in both English and Spanish. Over the course of 8 weeks the community had the opportunity to take the survey for the Upper Valley, Lower Valley, or both and to state if they still, (1) agreed with the goal, (2) thought the goal was already achieved, (3) thought the goal was no longer

relevant, (4) if they neither disagree nor agree, (5) if they did not agree with the goal, or (5) if they wanted modification of an existing goal.

Inset 1. Horizon 2040 Visioning Goals
General Goals

Humanity and Family:

- A. Provide Quality Education.
- B. Provide Economic Opportunity.
- C. Ensure Cultural Diversity.
- D. Support Human Services.
- E. Enhance Transportation.

With 1,158 surveys completed, the results were compiled and provided to the Yakima County Planning Commission. The Planning Commission held numerous study sessions, paying close attention to comments submitted in the survey, the original intent of the ***Vision/Focus 2010*** process, and their own understanding of the desired future for Yakima County. The updated visioning goals were published simply as a “check in”. This “check in” document helped affirm the direction Yakima County Planning Division, the Planning Commission, and the public took in the development of the Yakima County Comprehensive Plan - ***Horizon 2040***.

1.6.3 Consistency with New GMA Laws

The Washington State Department of Commerce develops a checklist that is intended to help counties that are fully planning under the Growth Management Act (GMA) to conduct the “periodic review and update” of comprehensive plans and development regulations required by RCW 36.70A.130(4). Counties can use the checklist to identify components of their comprehensive plan and development regulations that may need to be updated to reflect the latest information, or to comply with changes to the GMA since their last update. Commerce’s checklist includes only components of the comprehensive plan and development regulations that are specifically required by the GMA. Yakima County utilized the checklist as part of the development of ***Horizon 2040*** to help identify new components of the GMA that may not have been addressed in previous annual updates or other amendments outside of the required periodic update process.

1.6.4 Growth Management Hearings Board and Court Decisions

Yakima County utilized recent hearings board and court decisions throughout the development of ***Horizon 2040***. It was important to ensure that the decisions being made on goal and policy development of ***Horizon 2040*** were adequately reviewed against all applicable hearings board and court cases. If a particular issue arose, planning staff, Planning Commission or the Board of Yakima County Commissioners consulted with Yakima County Corporate Counsel for proper legal advice. If Corporate Counsel deemed the issue potentially non-compliant a change was made to ensure the plan was GMA compliant.

1.7 HORIZON 2040 BIENNIAL AMENDMENTS AND MAINTENANCE

As previously mentioned, the Growth Management Act requires local jurisdictions to update their comprehensive plan and development regulations on regular intervals to ensure the plan and regulations comply with any recent amendments to the Growth Management Act. A process for Plan amendments to ensure **Horizon 2040** remains current and consistent with state law sets the stage for full-scale reviews every eight years and annual check-ups to identify urgent problems and review proposed changes and opportunities.

1.7.1 Plan Amendments

The Growth Management Act makes the comprehensive land use plan and development regulations subject to continuing evaluation and review by the County (RCW 36.70A.130). Yakima County Code 16B.10 provides procedures and criteria for adopting, amending and updating the Yakima County Comprehensive Plan, as well as their respective implementing development regulations. Plan amendments may involve changes in the written text or policies of the plan, to the comprehensive plan maps, or to supporting documents, including capital facilities plans. Plan amendments will be reviewed in accordance with Chapter 16B.10, the state Growth Management Act (GMA), the Yakima County-wide Planning Policy, the goals and policies of the Yakima County Comprehensive Plan, local city comprehensive plans, inter-local agreements, applicable capital facilities plans, official population growth forecasts and growth indicators.

1.7.2 Initiation

Horizon 2040 Amendments may be initiated:

1. By request of the Board of Yakima County Commissioners or Planning Commission;
2. The Planning Commission may hold a meeting each year to report to the public on progress in implementing the comprehensive plan. At that time, the Planning Commission will accept oral and written public comments and suggestions from any interested party regarding changes needed in the comprehensive plan and development regulations. The Planning Commission will consider the proposed changes for docketing as set forth in YCC 16B.10;
3. By a property owner filing an application for a plan map amendment with the Planning Division on a standard form with a fee.

1.7.3 Timing

The Growth Management Act allows amendments to the comprehensive plan no more often than once a year (RCW 36.70A.130), except under the following circumstances:

1. The initial adoption of a subarea plan. Subarea plans adopted under this subsection (2)(a)(i) must clarify, supplement, or implement jurisdiction-wide comprehensive plan policies, and may only be adopted if the cumulative impacts of the proposed plan are addressed by appropriate environmental review under chapter 43.21C RCW;

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2. The development of an initial subarea plan for economic development located outside of the one hundred year floodplain in a county that has completed a state-funded pilot project that is based on watershed characterization and local habitat assessment;
3. The adoption or amendment of a shoreline master program under the procedures set forth in chapter 90.58 RCW;
4. The amendment of the capital facilities element of a comprehensive plan that occurs concurrently with the adoption or amendment of a county or city budget; or
5. The adoption of comprehensive plan amendments necessary to enact a planned action under RCW 43.21C.031 (2), provided that amendments are considered in accordance with the public participation program established by the county and all persons who have requested notice of a comprehensive plan update are given notice of the amendments and an opportunity to comment.
6. Emergency situations that require amendments outside of the normal schedule must be based on findings that show that the amendment was needed to deal with an emergency situation affecting a neighborhood, community, or the County as a whole, and not a personal emergency of a particular applicant or property owner. Before they consider whether to allow an emergency amendment, the Board of County Commissioners must approve written findings that document the nature of the emergency.

To make sure that **Horizon 2040** stays consistent, the Planning Division will evaluate it for consistency internally, with the plans of other jurisdictions, and with the development regulations. The results of this review will be provided to the Planning Commission for their consideration (WAC 365-195-630) as part of its annual **Horizon 2040** review.

Yakima County has adopted a biennial plan amendment cycle. This every other year cycle allows Yakima County time to effectively analyze and review the results of each plan amendment. Applications for plan amendments, with the exception of Urban Growth Area boundaries, will be considered on a biennial basis and must be submitted in writing, to the Planning Division, no later than the prescribed deadline in order to be considered for that biennium's amendment process. The plan amendment process may be suspended by the Board during a general plan or code update process.

At its first regularly scheduled meeting following the biennial plan amendment deadline, the Planning Commission will review the suggested plan changes for docketing and those development regulation changes for docketing consideration. When the Planning Commission has completed its review, it will set the docket of proposed amendments. The Planning Commission will begin its review at a date, which will allow adequate time for review and recommendation to the Board of Yakima County Commissioners prior to December of each year.

The GMA requires Yakima County to review its designated Urban Growth Areas and the densities permitted within both the incorporated and unincorporated portions of each urban growth area the UGAs at least every ten years, and revise **Horizon 2040** to accommodate the urban growth

projected for the next 20 years (RCW 36.70A.130). Practically, that review should occur at each major update or completion of five of a six-year Capital Facility Planning cycle.

1.7.4 Approval Criteria

Map amendments will be reviewed for consistency with the goals, objectives, and policies of **Horizon 2040**, along with the plan and development regulation amendment approval criteria found in YCC Title 16B and YCC Title 19 – Unified Land Development Code. To make sure that **Horizon 2040** stays consistent, the Planning Division will evaluate it for consistency internally, with the plans of other jurisdictions, and with the development regulations. All proposals to amend the plan are subject to environmental review under the State Environmental Protection Act (SEPA) and an evaluation of their cumulative effects on the plan. After the Yakima County Planning Division reviews the proposed amendments, a staff recommendation of approval, denial or modification will be submitted to the Yakima County Planning Commission for their consideration.

1.7.5 Public Hearings

After the Planning Commission has reviewed applications and staff's recommendation, it will hold a public hearing to receive comments on the proposed modifications. The Planning Commission will then deliberate and submit their recommendation and the record to the Board of Yakima County Commissioners for their consideration.

The record that accompanies any amendment to **Horizon 2040** or development regulations will be similar to the record for the adoption of the initial plan and regulations. This means that whenever a provision of the comprehensive plan or development regulations is based on factual data, that data or a clear reference of its source will become part of the record of adoption. In addition, the record will describe how public participation requirements were met. Public hearings will be recorded, and tape recordings of the proceedings will be kept (WAC 365-195-640). After due notice and public hearing, the Board of Yakima County Commissioners may amend, supplement or modify the proposed amendments to **Horizon 2040**.

1.7.6 Adoption and Submission to the State

After Board adoption, all amendments to **Horizon 2040** or development regulations will be submitted to the Washington State Department of Commerce in the same manner as the initial plan and development regulations. This Notice of Adoption starts the GMA required 60-day appeal period.

1.7.7 Continuous Citizen Involvement

As required by the Growth Management Act, Yakima County established procedures for "early and continuous" public participation in the development and amendment of **Horizon 2040** and its implementing development regulations implementing those plans (RCW 36.70A.140). In developing **Horizon 2040**, the County undertook a major communication and information program. That program was designed to develop a shared vision of the future; assure consideration of a wide range of viewpoints and interests; develop a dialogue with the general public to identify and explore the problems and opportunities that would need to be addressed

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in developing **Horizon 2040**; present and get feedback on the proposals and alternatives that were being considered; provide opportunities for written comments; hold public meetings after giving effective notice; allow for open discussion in various locations and formats, and assure consideration of and response to public comments. Except for the visioning effort, a similar process will precede the adoption of development regulations.

The Planning Commission will monitor compliance with **Horizon 2040** and the development regulations. At least biennially, the Planning Commission will convene a public meeting to provide information on how implementation of the plan is progressing, and receive public input on any changes that may be needed (WAC 365-195-610). When amendments are proposed for adoption, the same public hearing procedure will be followed that was used for the initial adoption of **Horizon 2040** (RCW 36.70A.106; WAC 365-195-600).

1.8 DEMOGRAPHICS OVERVIEW

1.8.1 Introduction

This demographics section describes the people who live in Yakima County now, and the people who will live here during the next 20 years. It defines who we are: our ages, cultural heritage, education, and income. From that definition, we can predict the challenges that face us and use that information to estimate the County's future land use, housing, capital facilities, utilities, transportation, and other requirements. Understanding who we are now and how we're changing provides the foundation for **Horizon 2040**.

1.8.2 Purpose of the Section

This section provides the statistical foundation to build the rest of the comprehensive plan. How many people will need to be housed? Who are they, and what will they need? Where is our population growth coming from, and will it continue? The answers to these questions will determine the answers to every other element in the comprehensive plan. Additional demographic information is also included in other elements.

1.8.3 Washington State's Growth Management Act (GMA) Requirements

The Growth Management Act (GMA) does not specifically require a Demographics Element, however it does require that the Land Use, Housing, Capital Facilities Elements include population densities, building intensities, and estimates of future population growth.

1.8.4 Existing Conditions

1.8.4.1 Historical Growth Trends

Table 1.8.4-1 shows the Census population by decade for Yakima County from 1910 through 2010, and the change per decade. During the period from 1910 to 1940, the County's growth was dramatic and reflected the rapid advance of the agricultural industry. The introduction of rail transportation and extensive irrigation projects intensified agricultural development and the related industries which support agricultural activity. Regional influences during the 1940's and 1950's included establishment of Hanford Atomic Works during World War II, expansion of the

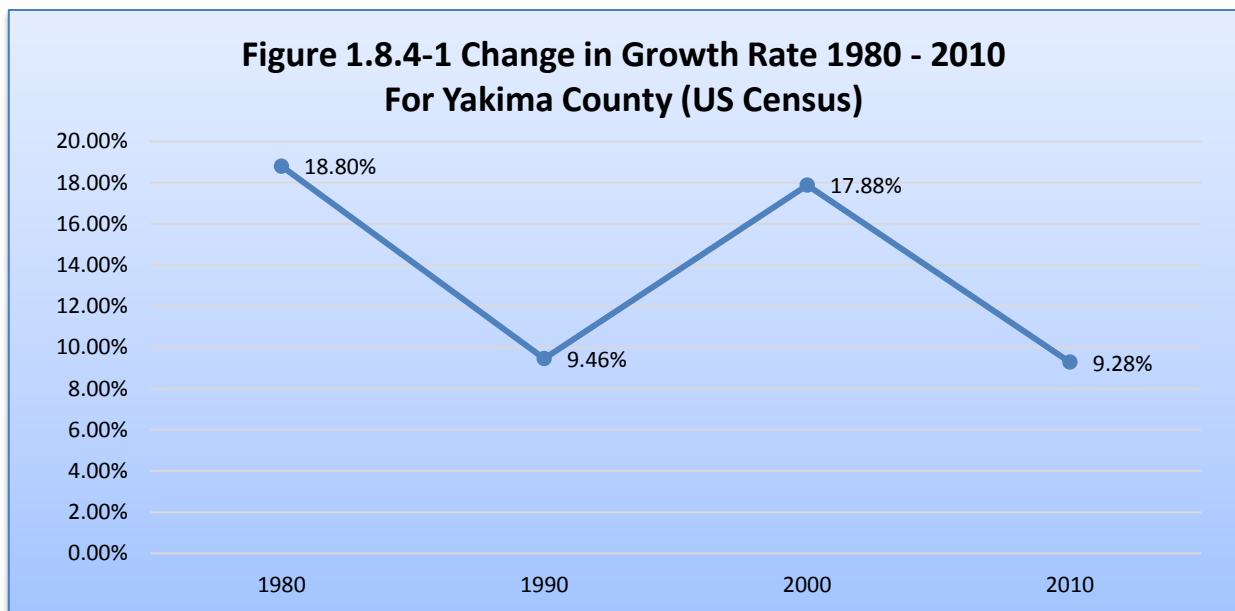
land area under irrigation, growth of food processing industries, and access to new markets. Growth diminished during the 1950's as construction concluded on major irrigation projects and agricultural growth slowed.

During the 1960's, Washington State followed a nationwide rural to urban migration pattern. Population growth slowed. Agricultural employment in the Yakima Valley was decreasing, while many new jobs were being created on the west side of the Cascades. During the decade, the County population increased by only 100 persons, approximately 0.1 percent. By 1990, Yakima Valley's agricultural patterns changed. Acreage in potatoes and irrigated pasture declined, while acreage in hops, alfalfa, wheat, apples, and grapes increased.

Table 1.8.4-1 Yakima County Historic Growth Trends			
Year	Population	Change from Previous Decade	% Change
1910	41,709	--	--
1920	63,710	22,001	52.75%
1930	77,402	13,692	21.49%
1940	99,019	21,617	27.93%
1950	135,723	36,704	37.07%
1960	145,112	9,389	6.92%
1970	145,212	100	0.07%
1980	172,508	27,296	18.80%
1990	188,823	16,315	9.46%
2000	222,581	33,758	17.88%
2010	243,231	20,650	9.28%

Source: US Census

Population growth between 1980 and 2010 has shown a consistent up and down by decade as shown in the Figure 1.8.4-1.



1.8.5 Population Growth and Demographics

Yakima County has grown from a population of 41,709 in 1910 to a 2010 population of 243,231 (2010 US Census), and an estimated 2015 population of 249,970 according to the Washington State Office of Financial Management (OFM). RCW 43.62.030 states that OFM shall annually determine the April 1 populations of all cities and towns of the state. OFM population estimates for cities and towns are used in state program administration and in the allocation of selected state revenues (RCW 43.62.020). Population estimates for counties are used to allocate revenues as specified in RCW 36.13.100 and RCW 43.62.030.

Table 1.8.5-1 shows the OFM population estimates from 2010 to 2015 for the County and indicates how the population is divided between the unincorporated and incorporated areas. The distribution of population in the unincorporated and incorporated areas has been generally consistent for the five year period between 2010 and 2015.

Jurisdiction	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015
Yakima County	243,231	244,700	246,000	247,250	248,800	249,970
Unincorporated	83,755	84,300	84,800	84,910	85,410	85,985
Incorporated	159,476	160,400	161,200	162,340	163,390	163,985

Source: WA. State Office of Financial Management (OFM)

The County’s overall population growth from 2010-2015 averaged roughly 1,347 persons per year (see Table 1.8.5-2), with an average annual growth rate of 0.54% per year (see Table 1.8.5-3).

Jurisdiction	Annual Change in Total Pop 2010-2011	Annual Change in Total Pop 2011-2012	Annual Change in Total Pop 2012-2013	Annual Change in Total Pop 2013-2014	Annual Change in Total Pop 2014-2015	Average Annual Change in Total Pop 2010-2015
Yakima County	1,469	1,300	1,250	1,550	1,170	1,347

Source: WA. State Office of Financial Management (OFM)

Jurisdiction	Annual % Change in Total Pop 2010-2011	Annual % Change in Total Pop 2011-2012	Annual % Change in Total Pop 2012-2013	Annual % Change in Total Pop 2013-2014	Annual % Change in Total Pop 2014-2015	Average Annual % Change in Total Pop 2010-2015
Yakima County	0.60%	0.53%	0.51%	0.63%	0.47%	0.54%

Source: WA. State Office of Financial Management (OFM)

Population increases since the last federal census are due to both natural increase and net migration. Natural increase (see Table 1.8.5-6) in population is the difference between the

numbers of births per year (see Table 1.8.5-4) versus the number of deaths per year (see Table 1.8.5-5 Deaths).

Table 1.8.5-4 Yakima County OFM Births Per Year, 2010-2015					
Jurisdiction	Births 2010-2011	Births 2011-2012	Births 2012-2013	Births 2013-2014	Births 2014-2015
Yakima County	4,401	4,212	4,008	4,034	4,066
Source: WA. State Office of Financial Management (OFM)					

Table 1.8.5-5 Yakima County OFM Deaths Per Year, 2010-2015					
Jurisdiction	Deaths 2010-2011	Deaths 2011-2012	Deaths 2012-2013	Deaths 2013-2014	Deaths 2014-2015
Yakima County	1,828	1,800	1,826	1,838	1,879

Table 1.8.5-6 Yakima County OFM Natural Increase Per Year, 2010-2015					
Jurisdiction	Natural Increase 2010-2011	Natural Increase 2011-2012	Natural Increase 2012-2013	Natural Increase 2013-2014	Natural Increase 2014-2015
Yakima County	2,573	2,412	2,182	2,196	2,187
Source: WA. State Office of Financial Management (OFM)					

The residual net migration represents the adjusted number of Yakima County residents that moved into or moved out of Yakima County. A positive number would be an increase in residual net migration, while a negative number indicates a decrease in residual net migration (see Table 1.8.5-7).

Table 1.8.5-7 Yakima County OFM Residual Net Migration Per Year, 2010-2015					
Jurisdiction	Residual Net Migration 2010-2011	Residual Net Migration 2011-2012	Residual Net Migration 2012-2013	Residual Net Migration 2013-2014	Residual Net Migration 2014-2015
Yakima County	-1,104	-1,112	-932	-646	-1,017
Source: WA. State Office of Financial Management (OFM)					

The difference between the natural increase (Table 1.8.5-6) and residual net migration (Table 1.8.5-7) equates to the overall annual change in total population (see Table 1.8.5-2) for Yakima County.

Yakima County developed the twenty-year population allocations using OFM’s middle range as the baseline and provided them to each city as part of the GMA mandated comprehensive plan and Urban Growth Area update process, as shown below in Table 1.8.5-8.

Table 1.8.5-8 Yakima County Twenty-year Population Projection and Allocations						
	2015	2020	2025	2030	2035	2040
Yakima County*	256,341	269,347	282,057	294,445	306,636	318,494
Unincorporated Total	91,460	97,047	102,478	107,784	112,977	117,983
Incorporated Total	164,881	172,300	179,579	186,661	193,659	200,511
Grandview	11,269	11,762	12,239	12,695	13,137	13,558
Granger	3,561	3,905	4,269	4,652	5,057	5,484
Harrah	650	677	703	727	751	773
Mabton	2,325	2,401	2,471	2,535	2,595	2,649
Moxee	3,831	4,430	5,108	5,871	6,733	7,701
Naches	830	881	931	982	1,033	1,084
Selah	7,489	7,965	8,445	8,926	9,412	9,899
Sunnyside	16,365	17,030	17,668	18,271	18,850	19,397
Tieton	1,272	1,357	1,443	1,529	1,617	1,706
Toppenish	9,004	9,241	9,454	9,642	9,810	9,955
Union Gap	6,185	6,404	6,611	6,803	6,984	7,151
Wapato	5,073	5,232	5,380	5,514	5,638	5,750
Yakima	93,825	97,493	100,993	104,288	107,433	110,387
Zillah	3,202	3,523	3,864	4,226	4,610	5,016

Source: Office of Financial Management (OFM)* and Yakima County Planning

The County’s population allocations in Table 1.8.5-8 are based on the following assumptions:

- The population projections were completed mid-2014 prior to OFM issuing 2015 population estimates, therefore there may be slight differences between Yakima County’s 2015 population projection and OFM’s 2015 population estimates.
- The Yakima County economy is on a slow path of recovery from the depressed economic years of 2009 and 2010.
- In general, future growth rates for cities, unincorporated urban areas, and rural areas will be similar to historic and currently documentable OFM growth rates.
- The timing and rate of annexation will be governed by individual city annexation policies. Therefore, estimating the unincorporated UGA population over the twenty-year planning period is difficult.
- With less frequent annexations and relatively slow population growth the current trends of population distribution between incorporated, unincorporated UGA and rural/resource areas should continue for the foreseeable future.
- Previous population projections and allocations used OFM’s high projections and have shown to be too high and are more in-line with OFM’s medium projections.
- On-going population allocations should be more consistent due to the County conducting the UGA update and population allocations every five years, as per Yakima County Code.

Table 1.8.5-9 Urban Growth Area Population Estimates 2010-2015

	2010 US Census	2011 OFM Pop Est.	2012 OFM Pop Est.	2013 OFM Pop Est.	2014 OFM Pop Est.	2015 OFM Pop Est.
Total Urban Growth Area Population	21,784	21,840	21,873	21,756	21,884	22,238
Grandview UGA	746	752	756	754	759	755
Granger UGA	95	98	98	98	98	97
Harrah UGA	33	38	38	38	38	38
Mabton UGA	340	344	353	356	359	365
Moxee UGA	727	730	731	658	652	597
Naches UGA	143	146	146	145	148	148
Selah UGA	1,587	1,595	1,579	1,582	1,579	1,359
Sunnyside UGA	2,043	2,036	1,961	1,959	1,956	1,957
Tieton UGA	173	177	176	176	176	176
Toppenish UGA	941	945	950	949	949	951
Union Gap UGA	798	800	807	801	805	807
Wapato UGA	2,618	2,628	2,632	2,632	2,634	2,640
Yakima UGA	11,212	11,220	11,315	11,331	11,455	12,073
Zillah UGA	328	331	332	275	276	275

Source: Office of Financial Management (OFM)

Table 1.8.5-9 below provides a breakdown of the overall population estimates for the County’s fourteen urban growth areas. These estimates make up both the incorporated population of the fourteen cities and towns and the population of the unincorporated portions of the urban growth area.

When Yakima County conducted the original Visioning process for the comprehensive plan in the mid-1990’s, a citizen preference for population distribution throughout the County was identified. The distribution was 75 percent of the total population will be living in the cities or their surrounding Urban Growth Areas, while the remaining 25 percent of the total will locate in the rural and resource lands. This population distribution is not required by the Growth Management Act. Yakima County however, has used the same 75% urban and 25% rural population distribution as the County’s benchmark since adoption of the comprehensive plan in 1997.

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Using the 2015 OFM population estimates for the County, the urban growth areas and the incorporated cities and towns, a population distribution between urban and rural population can be calculated, as shown in Table 1.8.5-10. The table shows a population distribution of 74% urban and 26% rural.

Table 1.8.5-10 2015 OFM Population Distribution of Yakima County (Urban vs. Rural)			
	2015 OFM Population Estimate	2015 OFM Urban Vs. Rural Population Estimates	Population Distribution (Urban/Rural)
Yakima County Total Population	249,970	249,970	100%
Unincorporated Population	85,985	63,747 (Total Unincorporated Pop of 85,985 minus Total UGA Pop of 22,238)	26%
Incorporated Population	163,985	186,223 (Total Incorporated Pop of 163,985 plus Total Unincorporated UGA Pop of 22,238)	74%

Source: Office of Financial Management (OFM)

1.8.6 Race and Ethnicity

Table 1.8.6-1 presents race and ethnicity data for Yakima County using 2010 Census population data. Based on that data, 63.7 percent of the County's population is white, 1.0 percent is black, 4.3 percent is American Indian, Eskimo or Aleut, 1.1 percent is Asian, 26.1 percent is classified as some other race, 3.7 as two or more races, 45.0 percent as Hispanic or Latino (of any race).

Table 1.8.6-1 Yakima County, Race and Ethnicity, 1990-2010						
Race	1990		2000		2010	
	Number	Percent	Number	Percent	Number	Percent
Total population	188,823	100%	222,581	100%	243,231	100%
One race			214,830	96.5%	234,122	96.3%
White	139,514		146,005	65.6%	155,056	63.7%
Black or African American	1,938		2,157	1.0%	2,320	1.0%
American Indian and Alaska Native	8,405		9,966	4.5%	10,568	4.3%
American Indian, specified [1]					8,682	3.6%
Alaska Native, specified [1]					128	0.1%
Both American Indian and Alaska Native, specified [1]					11	0.0%
American Indian or Alaska Native, not specified					1,747	0.7%
Asian	1,922		2,124	1.0%	2,560	1.1%
Native Hawaiian and Other Pacific Islander			203	0.1%	204	0.1%
Some Other Race	37,044		54,375	24.4%	63,414	26.1%
Two or More Races			7,751	3.5%	9,109	3.7%
Two races with Some Other Race					3,979	1.6%
Two races without Some Other Race					4,543	1.9%
Three or more races with Some Other Race					206	0.1%
Three or more races without Some Other Race					381	0.2%
HISPANIC OR LATINO						
Total population			222,581	100%	243,231	100%
Hispanic or Latino (of any race)			79,905	35.9%	109,470	45%
Mexican			69,413	31.2%	102,047	42%
Puerto Rican			345	0.2%	432	0.2%
Cuban			93	0.0%	113	0.0%
Other Hispanic or Latino [2]			10,054	4.5%	6,878	2.8%
Not Hispanic or Latino			142,676	64.1%	133,761	55%
RACE AND HISPANIC OR LATINO						
Total population					243,231	100%
One race					234,122	96.3%
Hispanic or Latino					104,451	42.9%
Not Hispanic or Latino					129,671	53.3%
Two or More Races					9,109	3.7%
Hispanic or Latino					5,019	2.1%
Not Hispanic or Latino					4,090	1.7%

Source: 1990, 2000 and 2010 US Census Data. Data gaps due to lack of enumerated category during that specific census count.

1.8.7 Age and Gender Structure

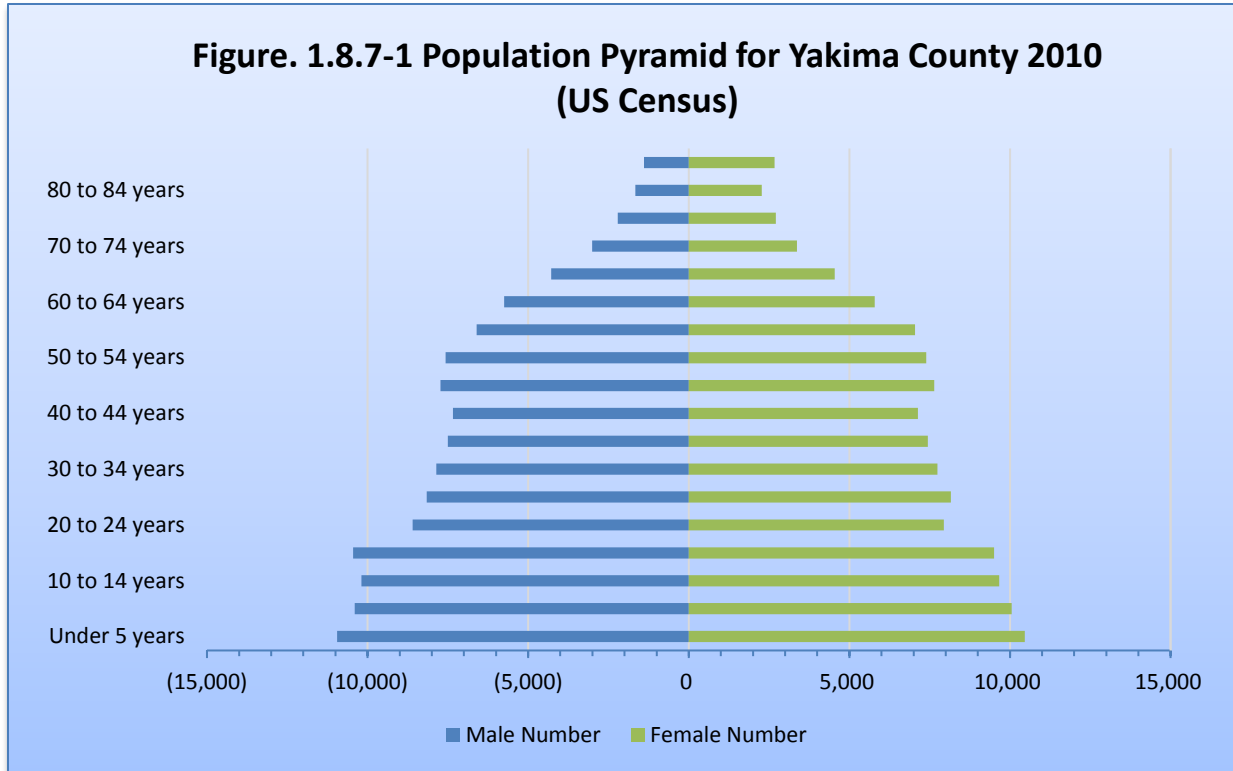
Age, gender and population trends play an important role in community planning. As the demographic makeup of an area changes, the demand for housing, utilities, economic development and County services shifts. Yakima County must consider many options available to it to meet the needs of a shift in population and demographics. Table 1.8.7-1 outlines the age

and gender breakdown in five year increments for Yakima County, while Figure 1.8.7-1 shows the same population breakdown in a population pyramid for a more graphic representation.

Table 1.8.7-1 Yakima County, Age and Gender, 2010		
AGE AND GENDER	Male Number	Female Number
Total population	121,676	121,555
Under 5 years	10,950	10,459
5 to 9 years	10,399	10,057
10 to 14 years	10,196	9,663
15 to 19 years	10,454	9,510
20 to 24 years	8,593	7,937
25 to 29 years	8,156	8,161
30 to 34 years	7,855	7,746
35 to 39 years	7,500	7,447
40 to 44 years	7,345	7,139
45 to 49 years	7,729	7,646
50 to 54 years	7,574	7,394
55 to 59 years	6,607	7,049
60 to 64 years	5,750	5,793
65 to 69 years	4,287	4,541
70 to 74 years	3,007	3,364
75 to 79 years	2,211	2,707
80 to 84 years	1,666	2,272
85 years and over	1,397	2,670

Source: 2010 US Census

The Table shows that males outnumber females in total population throughout the County, however the distribution by age and gender shows that females from the age of 55 and over dramatically outnumber males of the same age. This distribution is common throughout the county and state, and is primarily due life expectancy between males and females. As mentioned above, these age and gender breakdowns can be a valuable tool in forecasting future facility and infrastructure needs. For example, identifying the age groups between 5 and 19 years can be beneficial for forecasting primary and secondary school enrollments. The Table also shows that there is a significant population drop off in the 20 to 24 year old increment for both males and females; this out migration of young adults could be attributed to college enrollment, military enlistment or out of County employment. Obviously the age distribution for those 20 years old or older have a significant relationship with forecasting future housing needs.



1.8.8 Economic Status of the Population

The US Census (5-Year American Community Survey for the years 2009-2013), has Yakima County's median household income at \$43,506, well below the \$59,478 median for Washington State. The County's per capita income was \$19,433, compared to \$30,742 for the State. OFM estimates are slightly lower for the County and the State. OFM has Yakima County's 2014 median household income at \$43,336 behind the 2014 state median income of \$58,686.

According to the U.S. Census (5-Year American Community Survey for the years 2009-2013), 22.6 percent of the population of Yakima County was living below the poverty level, an increase of 2.4 percent since 1990. In comparison, only 13.4 percent of all persons in Washington State live below the poverty level.

1.8.9 Education

Educational attainment is a good indicator of the earnings potential of an individual. It also reveals the quality of our labor force. The US Census (5-Year American Community Survey over the years 2009 to 2013), shows that in Yakima County, 16.8 percent of all persons aged 25 years and over have less than a 9th grade education, while 15.5 percent of the same age group had four or more years of college education. In comparison, at the state level, 4.0 percent have less than 9 years and 31.6 percent have four or more years of college. Census data for the educational status for 18 to 24 year-olds indicates that 31.2 percent of Yakima County have less than high school diploma as compared to 16.4 percent for the state.

1.8.10 Capital Facilities & Transportation Elements

The Level of Service (LOS) standards found in the Capital Facilities and Transportation Elements was developed using Yakima County's 20-year population projections, which were based on OFM's middle population projection of 318,494.

Yakima County does not anticipate in Policy CF 3.2 that the Level of Service standards will be diminished. As part of each annual amendment to **Horizon 2040**, the County will assess the LOS standards and reconcile any LOS calculations based on the revised OFM population forecasts.

1.8.11 Land Use Element

The Land Use Element applies Yakima County's 20-year population projections of 318,494 people (County-wide), which was based on OFM's middle population projection for the year 2040.

1.8.12 Housing Element

The Housing Element examines current population trends from the US Census, OFM and Yakima County's population forecast with respect to the future demand for additional housing.

1.9 ANALYSIS OF ASSETS, NEEDS, AND OPPORTUNITIES

Who we are and who we are becoming will influence the land use policies we choose and, in turn, those land use policies will affect us. As **Horizon 2040** is developed, adopted, and then reviewed annually, it will continue to consider the unique, diverse and dynamic characteristics of Yakima County's population. Overall our population is young, as shown in Figure 1.8.7-1 Population Pyramid for Yakima County 2010, but the senior population is growing. As indicated in Table 1.8.6-1 Yakima County, Race and Ethnicity, 1990-2010, culturally we are becoming more diverse.

These changes will affect future housing needs, recreational preferences, economic development opportunities, income levels, and a variety of other needs. Growing populations will require particular consideration. They include school-age youth, minorities, the elderly, the poor, and persons with limited English proficiency.

Another challenge for County residents is to address the effects of poverty and to prevent poverty at its source. Residents must understand and be sensitive to the relationships between the following: education and income, a trained workforce and economic development, births to teen mothers and poverty, limited English skills and poverty, lack of affordable housing and homelessness, as well as poverty and crime.

Some of these issues are given greater attention in other parts of **Horizon 2040**. For example, affordable housing issues are explored in the Housing Element while the quality of the workforce and jobs are discussed in the Economic Development Element. **Horizon 2040** but have important impacts on the lives of Yakima County residents. Crime and the perception of crime affect residents and people considering moving here. The fact that the County spends more than 80 percent of its general fund on law and justice indicates the significance of this issue.