



## The Red Mountain AVA

The Red Mountain AVA was established in 2001 and covers approximately 4,404 acres. It is located on the southern slope of Red Mountain within unincorporated Benton County. In the spring, grass covering the landscape turns a wine red color, giving the mountain its name. During the fall, Red Mountain maintains its red and orange hue as the vineyards take on their autumn colors.

Ten thousand years ago, the Missoula Floods covered the rocky landscape of the Red Mountain area with nutrient-rich topsoil deposits. This soil, combined with the sunshine, temperature swings, arid climate and cold winters, creates the unique characteristics of this grape growing region.



August 2015

## Red Mountain—Transportation Improvements

Improving transportation throughout the Red Mountain area is critical for enabling the surrounding communities and developing the Red Mountain American Viticultural Area (AVA). Benton County, West Richland and private land owners have completed three road projects resulting in \$3.4 million in local improvements.

Located west of the Tri-Cities, Red Mountain is known as one of the best grape-growing regions in the world. The reputation of the wines produced in this area have brought Red Mountain AVA worldwide acclaim. The vineyards in this area have produced grapes for some of the most sought after wines in Washington State. Red Mountain grapes are shipped to a number of wineries outside the area and used by many wineries on-site. The number of local wineries is growing. In the next ten years, more than 30 wineries will call Red Mountain AVA home.

Improving access to the I-82 interstate corridor is crucial for ensuring enhanced economic vitality for this region. Transportation improvements proposed for the existing Benton City interchange and SR 224 address traffic congestion and safety issues. This will result in a dramatic increase to commercial and industrial development, improve the local economy and increase revenue to the state. Results from an economic study of a new interchange at this location show benefits exceed the cost.



An **American Viticultural Area (AVA)** is a federally designated wine-grape growing region in the United States. AVA's have specific geographic boundaries and distinct features such as climate, soil and elevation.



### Partners

- |  |   |  |
|--|---|--|
| Benton City                            | Benton County                                 | Port of Kennewick                                |
| City of West Richland                  | Kennewick Irrigation District                 | Benton Rural Electric Association                |
| Benton City Chamber of Commerce        | Benton-Franklin Council of Governments        | Benton County Fire Protection District #4        |
| West Richland Area Chamber of Commerce | Washington State Department of Transportation | Washington State Department of Natural Resources |
| Tri-City Development Council           | Tri-Cities Visitor and Convention Bureau      | Red Mountain American Viticultural Area          |

### Contact Information

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#### City of Benton City

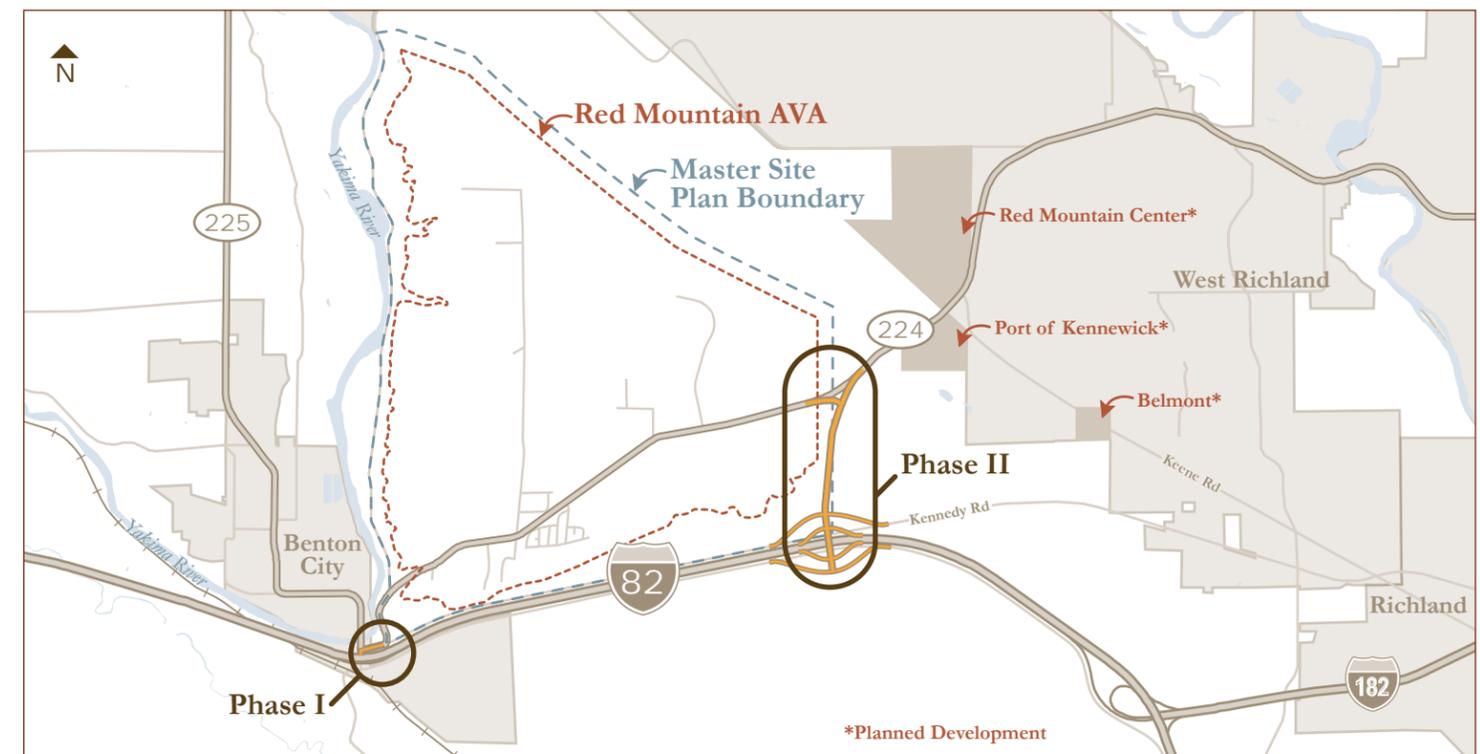
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Visit us on the Web at: [www.redmountainvision.org](http://www.redmountainvision.org)





**Phase I – SR 224/SR 225 Intersection**

### What will Phase I Improve?

**Phase I** improves the SR 224/SR 225 intersection by eliminating two stop signs and building a roundabout. The I-82 interchange at Benton City serves most of the city's commercial activity, the Red Mountain AVA, West Richland and rural areas of Benton County.

The proposed improvements for Benton City and the Red Mountain AVA provide a safe, easily maintainable gateway, serve transportation needs and address the unique cultural and economic needs of the Red Mountain AVA.

### Project Benefits

- **Safety.** The proposed roundabout prevents traffic from backing up onto I-82 and reduces risk of collisions.
- **Mobility.** Eliminating the stop sign at SR 224 improves traffic flow to I-82.
- **Economic vitality.** Improving highway access to and from Benton City and the Red Mountain AVA opens up new areas for economic growth.
- **Health/Environment.** Roundabouts reduce vehicle emissions and fuel consumption by improving traffic flow.



Phase I - SR 224/SR 225 Intersection Design Visualization

### What has been done so far?

In March 2000, the I-82/Red Mountain Area Transportation Study was conducted for the Benton Franklin Council of Governments. The study was initiated by the Kennebec Irrigation District (KID) and the Benton PUD to define the possible future location of an interchange in order to plan for power transmission easements. The study, which included many of the current partners, identified a proposed alignment and interchange location.

In 2005 Benton County, together with an alliance of vineyard and winery operators, local agencies and stakeholders commissioned the Red Mountain AVA Master Site planning process. This plan developed a framework to enhance the region's economic opportunities and increase the visibility of the Red Mountain AVA.

WSDOT, in partnership with Benton County and Benton City, completed a study of the SR 224/SR 225 intersection in June 2009. The study began in response to local safety, congestion and economic concerns. By analyzing traffic data and listening to community input, WSDOT has identified a single lane roundabout at SR 224/SR 225 as the preferred alternative.

In July 2009, Benton County completed an archeological review and inventory for the proposed interchange and SR 224 connection. This report is an important component to the environmental documentation for the project.

The 2011 Transportation Budget provided funds to purchase a key parcel to construct Phase 1. WSDOT acquired this parcel in June 2012.



**Phase II – SR 224 to I-82 - Red Mountain/West Richland Interchange**

### What will Phase II Improve?

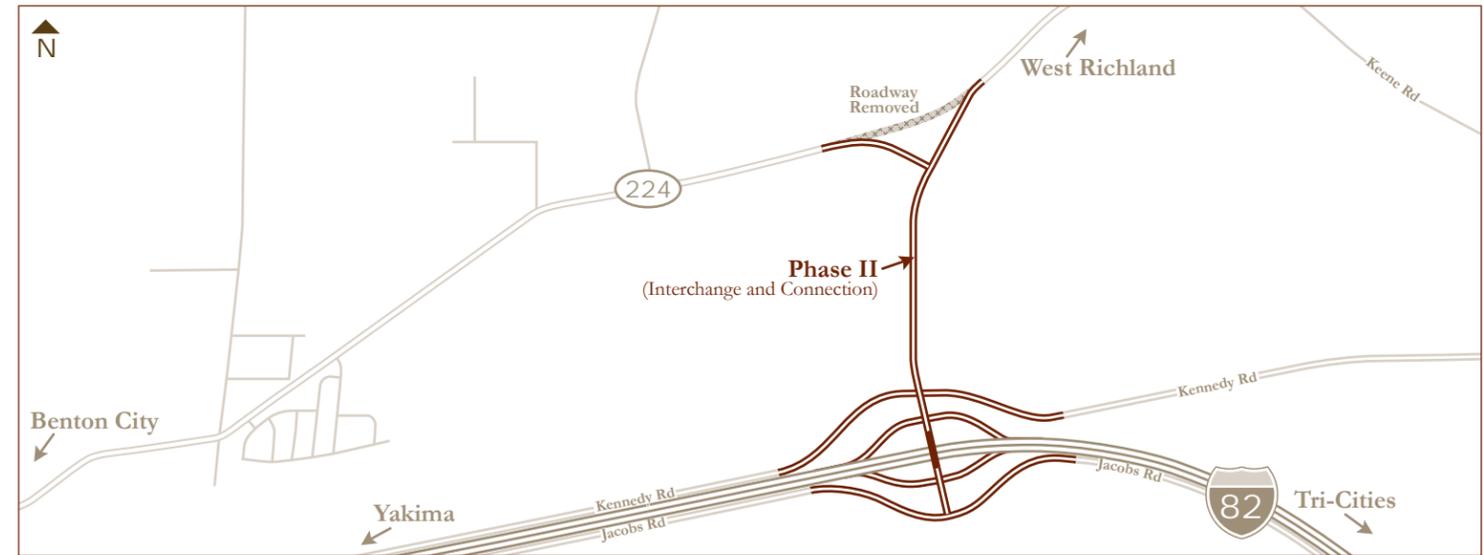
**Phase II** provides an I-82 interchange and new connection to SR 224, east of Benton City. The proposed connection and interchange will provide direct interstate access to and from developments in West Richland while improving emergency response times to the entire area.

### Financial Return

Multi-agency sponsored economic impact analysis estimates that more than \$900 million of economic stimulus will occur in the immediate area of the new interchange during the first 20 years after construction. The analysis also estimates a potential return of \$3.8 billion in the expanded area, creating potentially thousands of new jobs.

### Project Benefits

- **Safety.** A new overpass and freeway ramps improve emergency response time by up to 50 percent.
- **Mobility.** Improved freeway access to and from the Red Mountain AVA and West Richland opens up new areas for economic growth.
- **Economic vitality.** Constructing a new interchange provides the infrastructure needed for commercial and industrial development and provides the only direct link from the interstate to West Richland.
- **Health/Environment.** More efficient traffic flow reduces vehicle emissions and improves the air quality for the area.



Phase II Alignment

### How much will this cost? (Preliminary Cost Estimates)

Phase I – SR 224/SR 225 Intersection	Phase II – SR 224 to Red Mountain/West Richland Interchange
<b>Total . . . . . \$4.5 Million</b>	<b>Total . . . . . \$27 Million</b>
\$3.5 million funded by 2015 Connecting Washington Revenue Package and \$1 million is pre-existing funds	\$24.9 million funded by 2015 Connecting Washington Revenue Package and \$21 million is pre-existing funds

### Project Timeline (Funded)

**Phase 1 - SR 224/SR 225 Intersection**  
Construction planned to begin Spring 2016

**Phase 2 - SR 224 to I-82 Red Mountain/West Richland Interchange**  
Construction planned to begin Spring 2019