

2.3 POPULATION AND PROJECTED GROWTH

Meaningful planning for the County's future growth depends on reliable data for existing and projected population. It is through the use of this data that planning not only for new residents occurs, but also the protection of resources and ways of life that are more typical to the rural lands found in unincorporated areas.

The GMA standard for Comprehensive Planning updates is to ensure that the County's UGAs are sized to efficiently and adequately accommodate growth based on a 20-year planning horizon. This Plan assumes a growth rate and population projection that is based on the Washington Office of Financial Management's (OFM) projections. Using the OFM projections, the County adopted its countywide growth and allocation for its cities on April 4, 2017 via County Resolution 2017-068, as shown in Table 2-2.

Table 2-2 2037 County Population Growth and Allocations

Jurisdiction	2017 Population	2037 Population Growth	2037 Population
Cle Elum	1,875	1,808	3,683
Ellensburg	20,783	11,757	32,540
Kittitas	1,481	807	2,288
Roslyn	896	307	1,203
South Cle Elum	595	464	1,059
County Rural	17,043	8,154	25,197
Kittitas County Total Population	46,670	23,297	65,967

Source: Office of Financial Management 2017, Berk & Associates Population Review (2016)

The County population allocations are based upon an overall projected growth rate of 2% per year over the 20-year planning timeframe. This 2% growth rate was selected as a slight refinement to OFM's projections, based on a review completed by Berk & Associates in July 2016. The OFM projections are provided as a range of low, medium or high. For Kittitas County, the OFM projections range from 0% growth for the low projections, 1.08 percent growth for the medium projection, and 2.13% for the high projection.

Typically, Counties and Cities will simply adopt the medium projection to for their planning purposes. Because the medium projection is OFM's actual estimate, and the high and low projections are to provide for a margin of safety, it is assumed that the medium projection will be the most accurate in most cases. Occasionally, however, a local government will have reason to believe that OFM's projections are not reflective of local conditions. In such cases the burden is on the local government to refine or overturn the OFM projections before using different projections for comprehensive planning. While Kittitas County is not using the middle projection for this Comprehensive Plan, the projection of 2% as the growth rate, which falls between the high and medium OFM projections, is well within the range for acceptable planning practices under GMA, because it does still fall within the overall range of OFM projections.

The County's decision to deviate from the OFM medium growth projection is based on careful analysis and local knowledge of the growth patterns and trends in recent years, as well as well-founded projections of what to expect in the future. In 2015 Kittitas County and the Cities/Town within the County entered into



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