KITTITAS COUNTY
PUBLIC WORKS STUDY SESSION MINUTES
COMMISSIONERS' AUDITORIUM, 205 WEST 5TH ROOM 109

MONDAY **1:30 PM** **SEPTEMBER 14, 2026**

Board members present: Chairman Brett Wachsmith, Vice-Chairman Laura Osiadacz and Commissioner Jeff Leichleiter.

Others: Joshua Fredrickson, Arden Thomas, Lisa Godden, Kittitas County Public Works; James McCubbin, Kittitas County Prosecutor's Office; Darren Higashiyama, Kittitas County Sheriff's Office; Cory Wright, Kittitas County Conference of Governments; Kristi More and Christopher Griffin, The Ferguson Group (virtual), no members of the public.

At 1:30 PM Chairman Brett Wachsmith opened the Public Works Study Session.

NO CITIZEN COMMENTS

YAKIMA RIVER AT EASTON FLOOD RISK CATEGORIES

Arden Thomas briefed the Board of County Commissioners on the need to establish additional flood risk categories for the Yakima River at Easton following the December 2025 flood event. Arden Thomas explained that the existing National Weather Service forecast information identifies only an action stage and minor flooding, limiting the ability to communicate the potential severity of larger flood events to the public. Staff requested direction to coordinate with the National Weather Service to develop and publish additional flood impact categories using available hydraulic modeling. The Board supported staff proceeding with this coordination and public outreach. Arden Thomas noted that the categories would be reviewed and adjusted as conditions warrant.

OTHER BUSINESS - NO ACTION TO BE TAKEN

Joshua Fredrickson introduced Cory Wright and Kristi More regarding the proposed regional federal advocacy and grant-services arrangement through the Kittitas County Council of Governments and The Ferguson Group. Cory Wright stated that the County's annual contribution would remain at $7,000 and that the arrangement is anticipated to begin October 1, 2026. Kristi More described expanded services, including a County-specific strategic funding plan, identification of federal, state, foundation, and private funding opportunities, regional advocacy, and continued support for County-specific federal priorities. No action was taken.

APPROVED
10/6/26

PORTION OF 1ST STREET RONALD ROAD VACATION REQUEST

Joshua Fredrickson briefed the Board of County Commissioners on a petition to vacate approximately 0.04 mile of First Street in Ronald to allow expansion of an adjacent business. Joshua Fredrickson explained that, as submitted, the vacation would create a landlocked parcel. Staff has advised the applicant that an easement or boundary line adjustment is needed before the request can be supported. Following discussion, the Board directed staff to request the applicant's written agreement to postpone the public hearing while the applicant completes the necessary property-line work, with the application remaining active under the existing fee. If the applicant requests that the hearing proceed before the issue is resolved, staff will return to the Board with the matter and a recommendation to deny the request.

STONE ROAD SPEED REVISION

Joshua Fredrickson briefed the Board of County Commissioners on a proposed reduction of the posted speed limit on Stone Road, south of Ellensburg off Canyon Road, from 50 mph to 35 mph. The roadway is a 0.6-mile no-outlet road, and the most recent 85th-percentile speed study recorded a speed slightly above 36 mph. Joshua Fredrickson explained that the reduced speed would support the proposed roadway elevation and flood berm work while maintaining access to County-owned floodplain property and adjoining private driveways. The Board directed staff to prepare the engineer's report and documents necessary to schedule a public hearing on the proposed speed revision.

BEAD BROADBAND PROJECT UPDATE

Joshua Fredrickson briefed the Board of County Commissioners on the Broadband Equity, Access, and Deployment (BEAD) program. The County has been awarded funding for seven project areas, totaling more than $32 million, to expand service to unserved and underserved locations. Joshua Fredrickson reported that the funding is fully supported by federal and state sources and includes reimbursement for County administration, grant compliance, and related staff resources. The County is expected to enter a subgrant agreement with the Washington State Broadband Office, then execute a corresponding agreement with the selected provider. The project will include an irrevocable right of use for a 12-strand fiber line throughout the project area for County and government-partner communications needs. The State requested execution of the subgrant agreement by October 8, 2026; construction must be completed by 2030, subject to the provider's ability to complete work sooner. No action was taken.

6-YEAR TRANSPORTATION PLAN UPDATE

Joshua Fredrickson briefed the Board of County Commissioners on the annual update to the Six-Year Transportation Improvement Plan. Following the public-comment period, staff corrected calculation errors and added a final-year feasibility study for an extension connecting Bowers Road to Look Road near the airport. Public comments also addressed Passmore Road and the Kittitas Highway No. 6 intersection. Joshua Fredrickson reported that the intersection remains the County's top transportation-safety priority for pursuit of state funding, while the requested speed reduction will proceed as a separate process. The updated plan will be brought forward for final consideration at a future meeting. No action was taken.

BOWERS FIELD AIRPORT UPDATE

Joshua Fredrickson briefed the Board of County Commissioners on airport capital projects and lease activities. The hangar taxi-lane project is under construction and is expected to be completed by the end of fall 2026; it will provide access to additional hangar sites with nearby water and sewer utilities. Staff is also advancing design of a parallel taxiway project estimated at approximately $15 million. The project is anticipated to require a 10 percent County match, estimated at approximately $1.5 million, with a smaller design-phase match expected in 2027 and the larger construction match anticipated in 2029. Staff is evaluating potential funding sources for the match. Joshua Fredrickson also reported that four grazing leases will expire at the end of 2026. The Airport Advisory Committee supports a new solicitation for the leases, which will be presented to the Board at a future meeting. No action was taken.

FLOOD CONTROL ZONE DISTRICT 2027 - 2032 CAPITAL IMPROVEMENT PLAN

Arden Thomas briefed the Board of County Commissioners on the Flood Control Zone District's 2027-2032 Capital Improvement Plan. Current priority projects include the Whiskey Creek siphon implementation project, Lower Kittitas Reach floodplain reconnection project, and Mercer Creek flow conveyance restoration project. Arden Thomas reported projected 2027 capital expenditures of $3.3 million, contingent upon receipt of a $1 million Federal Highway Administration grant; expenditures would decrease substantially if the grant is not received. Arden Thomas also described the importance of partnerships with the Kittitas County Conservation District, Mid-Columbia Fisheries Enhancement Group, and the City of Ellensburg in delivering flood-risk-reduction and habitat projects. No action was taken.

NO OTHER BUSINESS

Meeting concluded at 2:25 PM

KITTITAS COUNTY COMMISSIONERS
KITTITAS COUNTY, WASHINGTON

Lisa Godden,
Administrative Assistant

Brett Wachsmith, Chairman