

Kittitas County Clean Energy Siting and Permitting (CESP) Project

PROJECT CHARTER

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The Clean Energy Siting and Permitting CESP-CLEANENERGY25 RFA is supported with funding from Washington's Climate Commitment Act. The CCA supports Washington's climate action efforts by putting cap-and-invest dollars to work reducing climate pollution, creating jobs, and improving public health. Information about the CCA is available at www.climate.wa.gov.



Overview

Purpose Statement

A project charter is a communication and project management document to help ensure project objectives and timelines are met. This project charter has been developed for the Kittitas County Clean Energy Siting and Permitting (CESP) project and outlines the following:

- ✓ Project purpose and background,
- ✓ Project goals and opportunities,
- ✓ Project organization, communication, roles, and responsibilities,
- ✓ Project schedule and deliverables,
- ✓ Potential risks and strategies to address those risks.

Having a project charter is especially vital for a project that involves:

- ✓ Multiple departments, working groups, and agencies,
- ✓ Continual engagement with the public, elected officials, agencies, tribes, and impacted communities throughout the project,
- ✓ A multi-layer analysis and recommendation process,
- ✓ A condensed project schedule where meeting project milestones is imperative to meeting the overall project schedule.

Project Background

In Washington State, there are three permitting pathways for clean energy technologies:

1. Local government-led process,
2. Washington State Department of Ecology's Coordinated Clean Energy Permitting process, and
3. Washington State Energy Facility Site Evaluation Council (EFSEC) process.

To increase the speed and efficiency of clean energy permitting in Washington State, the Washington State Legislature funded the Clean Energy Siting and Permitting (CESP) grant program in 2025. The program supports faster, more efficient, and equitable siting and permitting processes for clean energy projects while ensuring environmental protection, community engagement, and alignment with state climate and energy goals.

Kittitas County, a recipient of the CESP grant, regulates energy facilities under Chapter 17.61 Utilities, which includes provisions for geothermal facilities, major thermal power facilities, major alternative energy facilities, wind energy facilities (KCC 17.61A and 17.61B), and solar facilities (KCC 17.61C). Through this grant-funded project, the

County aims to streamline its local permitting process for clean energy technologies by conducting a programmatic Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) to evaluate current energy uses and permitting processes for solar, wind, geothermal, small modular reactors (SMR), and battery energy storage systems (BESS).

Project goals

Identifying the overall project goals and areas of opportunity as part of the project are valuable to clarify the project focus, early areas of interest, and work towards a successful project outcome. The following goals were developed between Kittitas County and Kimley-Horn during the kickoff meeting and are consistent with the CESP grant.

The Kittitas County Clean Energy Siting and Permitting (CESP) project goals are to:

- Determine what clean energy types are most suitable for permitting,
- Retain local control of permitting in Kittitas County for identified energy projects,
- Develop and/or modify county code, where appropriate, so project applicants and the public understand where various uses may be appropriate, what studies and information is necessary to evaluate applications, and the types of mitigation which may be appropriate for energy projects that are proposed in Kittitas County,
- Where energy uses may be appropriate, create a streamlined permitting process.

To meet the project goals, the CESP project will complete the following process:

- Conduct a programmatic EIS to evaluate appropriate locations, impacts, and mitigations for energy (solar, wind, geothermal, and SMR and BESS projects),
- Based upon the EIS findings:
 - Decide what energy uses are appropriate for the County to permit; and
 - For uses deemed appropriate for the County to permit, identify appropriate areas/zoning where energy facilities within the County may be permitted; and.

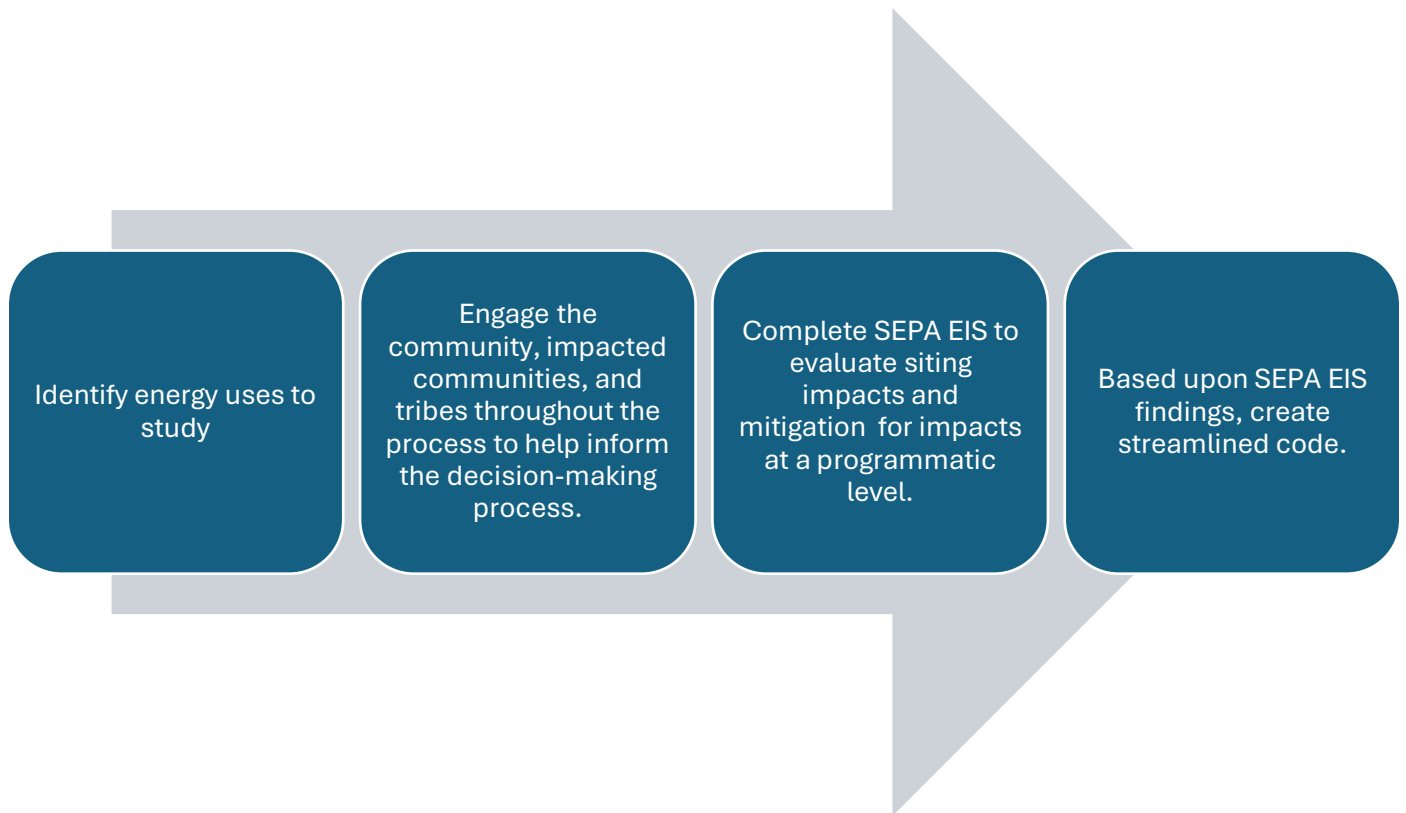
What is a Programmatic EIS?

A programmatic environmental impact statement (PEIS) under the State Environmental Policy Act (SEPA) evaluates the environmental effects of broad, planning-level proposals rather than site-specific projects. It is used when decisions involve multiple projects, long-term implementation, or large geographic areas. The PEIS provides enough detail to compare planning alternatives, assess cumulative effects, and develop broad mitigation strategies.

Site-specific projects will then be separately evaluated under SEPA and county code. Separate opportunities for public involvement are also provided at the project level.

- Within those areas where certain energy uses may be appropriate, create or modify existing county code to streamline the local permitting pathway by developing a clear easy to read code with predictable processing objectives and known mitigation strategies.
- Engage the public, elected officials, agencies, tribes, and impacted communities throughout the process to help inform the decision-making process.

Figure 1: High-Level Project Steps



The defined project goals align with the Clean Energy Siting and Permitting (CESP) grant purpose, as stated below:

The CESP program provides targeted funding to reduce barriers to clean energy development, increase local capacity, and promote more timely and efficient permitting processes. These efforts help communities prepare for and attract clean energy investments, while aligning with Washington’s 2021 State Energy Strategy, the HEAL Act, and other related policies.

The project goals include creating opportunities to:

- Amend current code and develop new code to create more streamlined permitting processes,
- Identify clear mitigation measures for projects,
- Understand impacts of emerging technologies,
- Position the County for the economic opportunities available in the region,
- Provide directions for on-going maintenance and certification reporting.

Project Approach

Defining the project approach, outcomes, and deliverables ensure that all Kittitas County departments, staff, officials, and Kimley-Horn are on the same page throughout the project. How the project is viewed, what must be accomplished, the steps, and the schedule to get the project completed on time are all important factors that will define the project success.

The Kittitas County Clean Energy Siting and Permitting project centers evaluating the current local permitting process for energy technologies through the creation of a programmatic EIS for solar, wind, geothermal, SMR, and BESS. A programmatic EIS will analyze the environmental impacts and provide clear information on zoning or areas where uses may be permitted, siting criteria, and mitigation measures related to these uses. Possible development code changes will be informed by the EIS. Therefore, while the EIS will study a variety of different energy uses, decisions on uses to ultimately permit, locations where uses may be appropriate, permit processes, application requirements, and required mitigation will occur after the uses are evaluated.

Amending codes to provide a clear permitting pathway does not mean all future permit applications will be approved. Each future application would be evaluated under SEPA and for compliance with Kittitas County Code and other applicable local, state, and federal regulations.

The energy uses selected were done so by Kittitas County staff to address both established and emerging technologies for a reflective and proactive approach. It is important to the County to understand the impacts of emerging technologies and provide input when future energy developers pursue either the local or state permitting pathways. Kimley-Horn provided a clean energy overview memorandum with additional resources to assist in the selection process. The energy uses were confirmed by the Board of County Commissioners and Department of Commerce before proceeding.

The approach for solar and wind energy, as established uses in the County, includes reviewing current regulations, analyzing the environmental impacts for utility-scale energy uses, evaluating current overlays and pre-identified areas recent data and

suitable areas in the County in collaboration with partners, and amending development code for solar and wind energy if deemed appropriate.

Geothermal, SMR, and BESS are emerging technologies not included or only partially included within current County regulations. The approach for these energy uses includes determining interest and concern from partners, analyzing their related environmental impacts, identifying suitable sites within the County, and drafting new development regulations based on the environmental impacts, supported mitigation measures, and feedback heard from the public, elected officials, agencies, tribes, and impacted communities throughout the project.

Project Organization and Communication

As the lead agency in the SEPA process, Kittitas County will be the primary face of the project, including branding colors, website hosting, and contact with the community and interested parties. Kimley-Horn, under the direction of the County, will lead development of engagement materials and lead engagement events, prepare and present at public meetings and hearing, prepare the SEPA EIS, and prepare draft amendments to Kittitas County Code. This is to ensure community and elected official trust and communication on the subject matter that lasts beyond the project itself.

The contacts for the County and Kimley-Horn, as well as their roles and responsibilities, are listed in the tables below. It is important to identify the way work will be completed by the project team, checked for quality assurance, and shared with others.

The following will be used for coordination between the County and the consulting team to ensure coordination between deliverables:

Project Meetings –There are several meetings with multiple groups in the project scope. Routine thirty-minute check-in meetings with the County will occur biweekly to start with the cadence adjusting as determined by the County. In-person check-in meetings with the Board of County Commissioners (BOCC) will be coordinated to promote the flow of communication on the project's progression and provide consultant expertise, with an initial coordinated joint meeting between the BOCC and Planning Commission for a project overview. The number of in-person meetings will be determined as the project progresses, but Kimley-Horn will remain flexible to provide the most opportunity to educate the public and build informed participants in the process. These meetings will include the project manager and County staff. The project manager may involve additional project staff in meetings, when necessary, but it is not anticipated they

will be needed at every meeting. Memos will be regularly prepared in order to provide project updates to the BOCC.

Internal Review Schedule – Kimley-Horn will strive to produce drafts in a timely manner for County review. The allotted review time will be proportional to the size and detail of the draft being delivered. When larger documents and reports are ready for review, the project team will provide multiple weeks of review to accommodate county staff time. The project team will consider the required timing for the quarterly reports to the Washington State Department of Commerce and work in review times from these milestones in the project schedule.

The largest review period will be the Draft Environmental Impact Statement. To reduce strain on County staff, reviews of draft material will be split into manageable amounts with County Staff coordinating Kittitas County cross-departmental reviews. Review structure will follow the approach to drafting the environmental impact statement.

Draft Document Sharing – Kimley-Horn will share any draft documents with the County via the arranged SharePoint file sharing process. A SharePoint file link can be extended for the duration of the project to retain archival data for reference. All communication for document review and task completion will be done via email or Microsoft Teams.

Individual Coordination – At times, Kimley-Horn employees may coordinate with county staff on their own to complete work related to their tasks. As such, both parties recognize the balance of responsibilities outside the project and will ensure coordination is done in an intentional manner. It is anticipated that this coordination be limited to small requests or quick questions that will allow the team member to complete a task under the deadline. Coordination that may take longer is encouraged to be completed in consultation with the project manager and County primary contact and reserved for the scheduled meetings to efficiently utilize staff time.

Roles and Responsibilities

Setting roles and responsibilities is a key component for project success including adherence to the project schedule. Table 1 and Table 2 outline the key project personnel, contact information, and high-level roles and responsibilities.

Table 1 County Team

Department	Name	Contact Information	High - Level Roles and Responsibilities
Planning	Chad Bala	chad.bala@co.kittitas.wa.us	Project Oversight and Reviewer
	Jeremy Johnston	jeremy.johnston@co.kittitas.wa.us	Project Oversight and Reviewer
	Jamey Ayling	jamey.ayling@co.kittitas.wa.us	Project Oversight and Reviewer
	Ellie Myers	Ellie.myers@co.kittitas.wa.us	Lead Point of Contact, Engagement Lead
	Bradley Gasawski	bradley.gasawski@co.kittitas.wa.us	Project Reviewer
	Zach Torrance-Smith	zach.torrancesmith@co.kittitas.wa.us	Development Code Update Reviewer
Public Works	Josh Fredrickson	josh.fredrickson@co.kittitas.wa.us	EIS Reviewer
Public Health	Chelsey Loeffers	chelsey.loeffers@co.kittitas.wa.us	EIS Reviewer
Fire Marshal	Dan Young	dan.young@co.kittitas.wa.us	EIS Reviewer

Table 2 Consultant Team

Company	Name	Contact Information	High -Level Roles and Responsibilities
Kimley-Horn	Clay White	Clay.White@kimley-horn.com	Project Manager
	Anna Lundin	Anna.Lundin@kimley-horn.com	Energy Technical Lead
	Zoë Tapert	Zoe.tapert@kimley-horn.com	Technical Writing Coordinator
	Erin O'Kelley	Erin.OKelley@kimley-horn.com	Engagement Coordinator
	Joel Farias	Joel.Farias@kimley-horn.com	GIS Analyst
	Sheridan Payne	Sheridan.payne@kimley-horn.com	Supporting Analyst

Project Transparency

It is important to the County that the public, elected officials, agencies, tribes, and impacted communities are aware of the project, understand the project scope, and can follow its progress to voice input throughout. To properly manage communication channels and the messaging of the project, early engagement will center education on the scope and parameters of what the project will entail to provide opportunities for early input.

A website landing page will be created by Kittitas County with an ArcGIS story map provided by Kimley Horn. The story map will be able to provide latest information on the project and information about the process while the County website provides a long-term landing page to live beyond the lifetime of the project. The website will provide an accessible and transparent location individuals to find information on the project, its current status, and materials relating to the project progression,

Project Accessibility

The data and materials used during this project will be shared between the County staff and consultant team through the project SharePoint system to ensure ease of access in data resources, GIS layers, and other materials needed during the project's lifespan.

Project Schedule and Deliverables

Project Schedule

Based on the discussions with the County at the kickoff meeting, the schedule below and found attached has been agreed upon.

Table 3: High-Level Project Schedule

Kittitas County CESP Project			2026										2027							
			Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	July	Aug	Sept	Oct	Nov	Dec	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	June	
Phase	Start	End																		
Kickoff	Feb-26	Mar-26	[Orange bar]																	
Engagement	Mar-26	Jun-27	[Yellow bar with markers: * in Mar, Apr, May; x in Oct; * in Mar, Apr, May, June 2027]																	
Scoping	Mar-26	Jul-26	[Green bar]																	
DEIS	Mar-26	Nov-26	[Blue bar]																	
FEIS	Nov-26	Mar-27											[Grey bar]							
Development Code	Jul-26	Jun-27	[Purple bar]																	

* - Potential Planning Commission and/or Board of County Commissioner meetings and hearings

x - Public engagement opportunities

Deliverables

The following high-level deliverables have been identified in the project scope of work.

Deliverables:

- **Final Project Charter**
- **Final Engagement Plan**
- **Scoping Notice and EIS Alternatives**
 - Determination of Significance and Scoping Notice
 - Three EIS Alternatives, including a No Action Alternative and two Action Alternatives.
 - Scoping Period Comment Summary.
- **Draft EIS.**
 - DEIS Outline
 - Existing Conditions
 - No Action Alternative Analysis
 - Two Action Alternative Analyses
- **Final EIS**
 - Response to Comments
 - Final edits and preferred alternative selection (if made)
- **Draft Development Code Updates**
 - Outline of approach
 - Draft redlines
- **Final Development Code Updates**

The Draft EIS process includes writing across selected elements of the environment to provide an analysis for significant adverse impacts, reasonable alternatives, and possible mitigation measures. The elements of environment span the natural, built, and social environment and their selection are a key focus of the scoping process.

Other deliverables will be distributed throughout the process including attending public meetings and hearings, providing draft deliverables for review, and creating meeting agendas, meeting notes, and engagement activity reports.

Task Roles

The following is a general outline of project tasks with associated actions, timeframes, and deliverables. While it is important to work toward deadlines and keep on schedule, the project team will remain flexible and maintain communication regarding schedule changes and related mitigation.

Generally, the project will be broken down into phases that closely follow the scope of work.

1. **Kickoff** – These tasks include introductions of teams, contacts, and initial data collection and research.
2. **Community Engagement and Project Coordination**– These tasks include coordination with stakeholders and any public facing education, meetings, or materials.
3. **Draft EIS Scoping / Selection of Alternatives** – These tasks will include a determination of significance and scoping notice, materials prep for the scoping meeting, and development of (3) alternatives.
4. **Draft EIS Preparation/Issuance** – These tasks include preparation of a draft EIS and a draft notice of availability.
5. **Final EIS Preparation/Issuance** – These tasks will include preparation of a final EIS with a fact sheet, table of contents, Draft EIS analysis and corrections, description of the preferred alternative, and response to comments.
6. **Development Code Updates** – These tasks include draft and final code and engagement with the community.

Table 3 Task Roles

Tasks and Actions	Goal Completion	Kimley-Horn Lead	Kittitas County Lead
Task 1: Project Kickoff and Charter			
Kickoff Agenda	February 2026	Clay White and Zoë Tapert	Chad Bala
Kickoff Meeting	February 2026	Zoë Tapert	Chad Bala
Kickoff Summary	February 2026	Zoë Tapert	Chad Bala
Project Charter Draft & Final	March 2026	Zoë Tapert	Ellie Myers, Chad Bala
Engagement Plan Draft & Final	March 2026	Zoë Tapert	Ellie Myers, Chad Bala
Task 2: Community Engagement and Project Coordination			
Scheduled Check-In Meetings	Ongoing	Zoë Tapert	Ellie Myers
Prep Memos/BOCC Meeting Materials	Ongoing	Erin O’Kelley and Zoë Tapert	Ellie Myers, Chad Bala
Check in Meeting Materials	Ongoing	Zoë Tapert	Ellie Myers
Website Content	Initial: March 2026 Updates: Ongoing at Milestones	Erin O’Kelley, Zoë Tapert	Ellie Myers (County hosts and contact email)
Project FAQ Sheet	March 2026	Zoë Tapert and Sheridan Payne	Ellie Myers, Bradley Gasawski, Chad Bala

Tasks and Actions	Goal Completion	Kimley-Horn Lead	Kittitas County Lead
Community Meeting Materials	April – October 2026	Erin O’Kelley and Sheridan Payne	Ellie Myers, Bradley Gasawski
Stakeholder Meetings	April-September 2026	Erin O’Kelley	Ellie Myers, Bradley Gasawski, Jamey Ayling, Jeremy Johnston, Chad Bala
Tribal Meetings	April-September 2026	Zoë Tapert	Ellie Myers and Bradley Gasawski, Jamey Ayling, Jeremy Johnston, Chad Bala
Summary of Stakeholder and Tribal Engagement	October 2026	Erin O’Kelley	Ellie Myers, Bradley Gasawski, Jamey Ayling, Jeremy Johnston
Task 3 Draft EIS Scoping and Selection of EIS Alternatives			
Determination of Significance and Scoping Notice	March 2026	Zoë Tapert	Bradley Gasawski, Ellie Myers, Jamey Ayling, Jeremy Johnston, Chad Bala
Scoping Fact Sheet	March 2026	Zoë Tapert	Bradley Gasawski, Ellie Myers, Jamey Ayling, Jeremy Johnston, Chad Bala
Scoping Comment Period	April 2026	Zoë Tapert	Bradley Gasawski, Ellie Myers, Jamey Ayling, Jeremy Johnston, Chad Bala
Scoping Meeting	April 2026	Clay White, Zoë Tapert, and Anna Lundin	Bradley Gasawski, Ellie Myers, Jamey Ayling, Jeremy Johnston, Chad Bala
Selection of SEPA Alternatives	May 2026	Zoë Tapert and Clay White	Bradley Gasawski, Ellie Myers, Jamey Ayling, Jeremy Johnston, Chad Bala
Task 4 Draft EIS Preparation and Issuance			
Draft EIS Outline	April 2026	Zoë Tapert	Bradley Gasawski, Ellie Myers, Jamey Ayling, Jeremy Johnston, Chad Bala

Tasks and Actions	Goal Completion	Kimley-Horn Lead	Kittitas County Lead
Preliminary Draft EIS	September 2026	Zoë Tapert	Bradley Gasawski, Ellie Myers, Jamey Ayling, Jeremy Johnston, Chad Bala
Issue Draft EIS	October 2026	Zoë Tapert	Bradley Gasawski, Ellie Myers, Jamey Ayling, Jeremy Johnston, Chad Bala
Draft EIS Comment Period	October-November 2026	Zoë Tapert	Bradley Gasawski, Ellie Myers, Jamey Ayling, Jeremy Johnston, Chad Bala
Task 5 Final EIS Preparation and Issuance			
Response to Comments	January 2027	Zoë Tapert	Ellie Myers, Bradley Gasawski, and Chad Bala
Preliminary Final EIS	February 2027	Zoë Tapert	Ellie Myers, Chad Bala
Final EIS	March 2027	Zoë Tapert	Ellie Myers, Chad Bala
Task 6 Development Code Updates			
Summary Outline of Proposed Changes	November 2026	Erin O’Kelley and Zoë Tapert	Ellie Myers, Bradley Gasawski, Jamey Ayling, Jeremy Johnston, Chad Bala
Draft Development Code Changes	January 2027	Zoë Tapert	Ellie Myers, Bradley Gasawski, Jamey Ayling, Jeremy Johnston, Chad Bala
Final Development Code Changes	March 2027	Erin O’Kelley and Zoë Tapert	Ellie Myers, Bradley Gasawski, Jamey Ayling, Jeremy Johnston, Chad Bala
Final Code Adoption	June 2027	Erin O’Kelley and Zoë Tapert	Kimley-Horn & Kittitas County

Project Risks and Mitigation Strategies

During the project kickoff meeting, the Kittitas County and Kimley-Horn team proactively identified potential risks to address ahead of time to reduce their impact.

Limited Project Timeline.

The short project timeline calls for quick turnarounds on deliverables and reviews.

To mitigate this risk, the project team has developed a comprehensive schedule of tasks, established clear roles and responsibilities for reviews, and is committed to clear, proactive, and consistent communication to ensure any schedule disruptions are identified early and addressed head on.

Cross Departmental Reviews

To mitigate this risk, the project team has identified a singular county lead in coordinating across county departments and their specific staff members that are likely to review portions of the draft EIS. The project schedule also identifies where cross departmental reviews will occur so early communication can occur.

Timely Website Updates

To mitigate this risk, Kimley-Horn will produce materials that remain relevant, useful, and in-demand throughout the project timeline for the project website while incorporating key milestone moment updates. Additionally, there will be a separate folder specific to website content to share with the County website team.

Complicated Subject Matter with Rapidly Emerging Technologies.

To mitigate this risk, engagement materials, such as the Frequently Asked Questions, will be written in plain terms, where feasible, and technical jargon to simplify complexity and reduce potential questions to staff and elected officials. Periodic check-in meetings with elected officials will ensure they are current with project developments and receive any answers or clarifications for constituent questions.

The Kimley-Horn team provided an overview of established and emerging energy technologies along with additional resources and key consideration information for Kittitas County to select the specific energy uses to be examined. Kittitas County will confirm the selected energy uses with the Board of County Commissioners to confirm political approval before proceeding.

Geographical Siting Limitations.

Siting location limitations may provide an additional challenge as part of this project, specifically in relation to federal lands, agricultural lands of long-term commercial significance, and proximity to high voltage power lines.

To mitigate this risk, the project team will assess what lands are currently suitable for the stated energy uses and meet with stakeholders in determining pathways to reflect Kittitas County preferences in development code or actions to be taken at later dates.

Diverse Opinions on Energy Technologies

To mitigate this risk, the project team seeks to address this challenge by providing proactive outreach and engagement early and continuously throughout the project lifespan to ensure all parties are informed, involved, and have opportunities to voice concerns, share resources and information, and foster collaboration to achieve a balanced approach to energy development in Kittitas County.

Additional information surrounding project engagement, potential engagement barriers, and engagement mitigation measures can be found within the Public Engagement Plan.