

Comprehensive Plan Vision

As a majestic gateway to Central Washington, Kittitas County is distinguished by its towering evergreen forests that cradle a carefully crafted rural ambience and lifestyle. Interstate 90 is the lifeline of several urban settlements that offer critical services as well as educational and cultural opportunities to county residents. These cities respect the Yakima River and its tributaries and are thoughtfully nestled within the timberland and the shrub steppe ecosystems as well as the agricultural resources. Employment is mostly tied to the major industries and related sectors of agriculture, forestry and eco-tourism. These are prized, protected and strengthened through innovation, key investments and strategic partnerships. New opportunities for economic development **are attracted by inexpensive infrastructure and clean energy.**¹ **These are** accommodated in a manner that maintains affordable lifestyles and provide opportunities for better paid employment. Healthy living is assured through a commitment to maintaining above-average air and water quality, an abundance of locally grown food, as well as increasing options for walking, biking and transit.

Principles

- Those who are attracted by the county's **rural character** and scenic backdrop should partake in efforts to safeguard these very features for the enjoyment of future generations.
- The high quality of air, water and the **natural environment** are vital to the county's economy and quality of life and should be protected through the careful allocation of limited public resources and enhanced with each new development.
- **Economic opportunities** are essential to generating revenue that offset the cost of public services and infrastructure. This should be pursued vigorously in a manner that protects existing industries and enterprises, builds on latent recreational opportunities, and establishes clear pathways for more affordable housing and a healthy portfolio of living wage jobs.
- County resources should be **invested strategically** into infrastructure and public facilities/services to prioritize access to jobs, active lifestyles as well as environmental quality. County investment should leverage private capital to benefit the most residents.
- Fair, clear and consistent **rules and administrative procedures** provide predictability, reduce public administrative expenses, and should direct both public and private sector developments.
- Decisions related to public development should be **equitable and ensure a** better quality of life **for each county resident.**²

¹ Original text: New opportunities for economic development are buoyed by locally generated alternative energy

² Original text: Decisions related to development and public investment should meet the highest standards for **equity** by not unfairly affecting a single income group or community, and by offering to those impacted compensation that supports an equal if not better quality of life.

- To **govern effectively**, the County should be responsive to changing circumstances, informed by an open participatory process and administered through clear communications with the public.

Existing

Kittitas County is an area with a distinct rural quality based upon the value and assortment of cultural, natural and health environments. Kittitas County demonstrates its commitment to quality of life by:

- Ensuring a diverse rural and agricultural economy comprised of a variety of small-scale employment opportunities;
- Promoting safe and affordable housing for all income levels;
- Providing safe and effective multi-modal transportation; and
- Ensuring access (and enhancing?) recreational opportunities.