

Resource Lands Advisory Committee (RLAC)
Policy Recommendations

RLAC Vision Statement

Vision Statement

We will continue to manage Kittitas County to ensure long-term environmental and economic sustainability. This means a landscape that supports the full range of human uses, from natural resource management, community development and recreational opportunities, while maintaining the rural setting and quality of life that Kittitas County is known for. The vision will be accomplished by:

1. Creating and implementing management policies and principles based on careful, well thought out planning that provide incentives, assistance and flexibility to landowners.
2. Working in collaboration with knowledgeable and involved parties, industry, the business community and other stakeholders.
3. Recognizing the historical, aesthetic and recreational values while improving the economic base of the County.
4. Providing the opportunities for new businesses, cottage industry and services as well as affordable housing.
5. Promoting open space in strategically identified areas that provide public benefit.
6. Identify, develop and implement economically viable strategies to support agriculture, forest and mineral resource activities.

Policy Issues and Recommendations.

Water for domestic use.

The RLAC recognizes that water availability will be among a handful of issues that will determine how and where growth will occur in Kittitas County. Decisions regarding the areas where growth will be encouraged and directed should include discussion on the availability of adequate water supplies. The RLAC recommends:

A viable and demonstrated water supply shall be required prior to all final plat approvals. No plat shall receive final approval without a connection to an approved water source or a well in place producing water in sufficient quality and quantity for domestic use.

Boundaries of the Comprehensive Plan Land Use Map designations.

The RLAC does not recommend changing the current boundaries of the land use designations on the Comprehensive Plan Land Use Map with the exception of the following situations:

Where it is determined that the Urban Growth Areas or Urban Growth Nodes should be modified due to change in the population forecast or refinement of urban services information.

The addition of a “Rural Transition Overlay” designation (this will be discussed with further detail later in this report)

The addition of a “Limited Area of More Intense Rural Development” (LAMIRD) designation where deemed appropriate.

Encourage Urban Growth Areas and Rural Transition Overlay designations to areas that minimize conversion of prime agricultural farm land.

The Ellensburg Urban Growth Area south of Interstate 90 should be reconsidered to recognize potential impacts to the Yakima River and flood hazards to development.

Recognize the need for parity in Land Use designations.

Develop incentives for those lands that are contained in the Commercial Agriculture and Commercial Forest designations so that property owners will want to remain in those designations. The RLAC recommends:

The implementation of Transfer of Development Rights (TDR) and Purchase of Development Rights (PDR) programs to allow the transfer and purchase of development rights from the Commercial Agriculture and Commercial Forest designations following a TDR, PDR analysis and program development. A provision for this program is identified in the land use element preferred alternative found later in this report.

Require sub area planning in the Teanaway Drainage Basin prior to development other than at one unit per 80 acres. Sub area plan to be developed within two years of the adoption of this plan.

Allow the use of the Cluster Subdivision Code in the Commercial Forest designation. Develop a Forest Practices Ordinance that identifies the process for conversion of land currently in forestry to other uses.

Create consistency between the Land Use map and Zoning map.

The RLAC recommends:

The Land Use Map and Zoning Map should be consistent. Rezones should be limited to occur only when a comprehensive plan land use map designation change is approved within the context of the yearly review cycle.

Density in the Rural land use designation should be based on a public benefit rating system.

The RLAC recommends:

Base density in the rural designations should be 1 unit per 20 acres. Densities between 1 unit per 20 acres and 1 unit per 5 acres should be based on a public benefit rating system and determined using the public benefit rating system at the time of parcel creation. Density of 1 unit to 2.5 acre may be obtained through a density transfer from Commercial Agriculture.

The overall footprint of development in the rural designations should be minimized to the greatest extent possible.

The RLAC recommends:

All parcel creation in the rural designation below a density of 1 unit per 20 acres shall use the public benefit rating system and shall use clustering to maximize the retention of open space and minimize the development footprint.

Consider how the county will develop not just within the 20 year planning period but within the next 100 years.

The RLAC recommends:

Development and Implementation of a “Rural Transition Overlay Zone” in the Rural designations that will identify areas of the county for growth beyond 20 years. This overlay zone will allow for orderly development for growth beyond the 20 year planning period and will provide a receiving area for development rights from the Commercial Agriculture Zone.

Loss of Agricultural land with good soils and irrigation, regardless of land use designation, should be minimized to the greatest extent possible.

The RLAC recommends:

An element of the public benefit rating system should give high recognition to development that maintains agricultural land with good soils and irrigation by clustering development on the least productive of these lands and provides for large (greater than 40 acres) intact acreages suitable for agricultural use.