

KITTITAS COUNTY, WA

2024 Federal Legislative Platform

Approved by Board of Commissioners
February 27, 2024

Kittitas County
WASHINGTON





Kittitas County, WA

From the Cascades to the Columbia

Kittitas County is located at the center of the state of Washington between the Cascade Mountains and the Columbia River. Ellensburg serves as the county seat and is accompanied by four other incorporated cities which include Cle Elum, Kittitas, Roslyn, and South Cle Elum. Almost 50,000 people call Kittitas County home.

The county is rich in natural resources and boasts a history of supporting its communities through its lands and beauty. The Kittitas Valley served as a traditional gathering place for tribes who occupied the lands along the Yakima River for thousands of years. Later, the nutrient-rich soils and abundant water in the Valley supported livestock, farming, dairies, logging, lumber processing, and mining. To this day, agriculture remains one of the top industries for the county's economy.

Approximately 64% of Kittitas County is owned and managed by Federal and State Agencies. These lands include the Alpine Lakes Wilderness Area within the Okanogan-Wenatchee National Forest and the U.S. Army's Yakima Training Center. Kittitas County is also the home of Central Washington University, located in Ellensburg, which supports a highly educated workforce. The University hosts approximately 12,000 undergraduate and graduate students each year and remains a top priority for investment from the State of Washington.

The natural beauty and diverse climate of the county also provides robust recreational opportunities for residents and tourists including skiing, biking, hiking, fishing, and outdoor events.

Board of Commissioners

Cory Wright – District 1
Laura Osiadacz – District 2
Brett Wachsmith – District 3

Year Organized

1883

County Seat

Ellensburg

Population

47,935

Area

2,314 sq. miles
1,481,600 acres

Elevation

From 478' to 7881'


Did you know?

Upper Kittitas County was a significant coal mining area in the early 20th century and still has estimated reserves of over 200 million tons.

Did you know?

The Ellensburg Rodeo is considered one of the nation's top rodeos and has been held every Labor Day Weekend since 1923.

Federal Priorities



INFRASTRUCTURE

Reliable and safe public infrastructure is a top priority for Kittitas County as we strive to support our current residents and plan for our future.



PUBLIC SAFETY

Kittitas County endeavors to provide safe communities, reliable law enforcement, and enhanced protections for our residents and communities.



COMMUNITY SUPPORT & ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

One of Kittitas County's top priorities is ensuring that public initiatives provide our residents with the support they need and help drive local and regional economic resiliency.



NATURAL RESOURCES

Preserving and protecting the robust natural resources of Kittitas County is essential to the overall health and vitality of our communities and their residents.



INFRASTRUCTURE

I-90 Corridor Support funding for the expansion and improvement of the I-90 Corridor to encourage economic development, improve public safety, and ease traffic congestion. Support the I-90 Corridor efforts through coalition development.

Bowers Field Support funding to aid in the expansion of airport infrastructure at Bowers Field (Kittitas County Airport) including opportunities to enhance training and education facilities.

County Buildings Support funding for the construction and/or improvement of County buildings, including increasing energy efficiency and improving technologies.

Broadband Deployment Support funding to accelerate the deployment of broadband technology in the County including increasing bandwidth and last mile connections.

Transportation Infrastructure Support legislation that provides funding for transportation infrastructure, in particular for rural areas. Seek funding for County transportation infrastructure priorities. Support local control of roadways and transportation infrastructure.

Water and Wastewater Infrastructure Support legislation that provides funding for the improvement of water and wastewater infrastructure in communities. Seek funding for County water and wastewater infrastructure priorities.

Kittitas Valley Event Center Support funding for the improvement, repair, and preservation of historic structures at the Kittitas Valley Event Center and Fairgrounds.



COMMUNITY SUPPORT & ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

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| Economic Development Opportunities | Support programs and initiatives to advance economic development activities throughout the County. |
| Housing Diversity | Support programs and initiatives to provide for the availability of sustainable and diverse housing for all County residents. |
| School Resource Officers | Support programs to help establish school resource officers in unincorporated areas of the County. |
| Workforce Training | Support programs and initiatives that provide workforce training opportunities for County residents including County inmates. |
| Land Use Planning | Support programs and initiatives that promote local and regional land use planning. |
| Mental Health and Substance Abuse | Support programs and initiatives to help address mental health and substance abuse issues, including wraparound services, which have particularly been exacerbated by the COVID-19 Pandemic, for all County residents including inmates. |





PUBLIC SAFETY

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| Emergency Operations Center | Support funding for the expansion and improvement of the County Emergency Operations Center. |
| Traffic and Commercial Vehicle Enforcement | Support programs and funding to assist the County in Traffic and Commercial Vehicle Enforcement and Safety which is affected by the high number of visitors to the County for outdoor recreation. |
| Diversion Programs | Support programs and initiatives to help the County establish diversion programs to provide alternative methods of holding offenders accountable including pre-diversion program where individuals at higher risk of committing crimes are provided support to potentially avoid involvement with the justice system. |
| National Flood Insurance Program | Support the reauthorization of the National Flood Insurance Program. Support programs and initiatives to reduce the number of properties impacted by flooding in the County each year and that provide for accurate flood zone mapping. |
| Officer Training | Support programs that provide ongoing officer training opportunities. |
| Technology & Equipment | Support officer safety and operational efficiencies through the implementation and use of innovative equipment and technologies. |
| 911 and Emergency Services | Support programs and initiatives that provide funding to improve technology, operations, and facilities for 911 and emergency service deployment and inter-agency coordination. |



NATURAL RESOURCES

Forest Management

Support legislation and programs that help forest communities address recreation management, water quality, and forest management issues related to public lands, including ways to help mitigate and prevent wildfires.

Floodplain Management

Advocate for programs that appreciate the essential role floodplains hold in the management of our natural resources, including the consideration of floodplains to salmon recovery.

Barrier Removal and Salmon Recovery

Support funding for fish barrier removal and salmon recovery efforts in County waterways.

PILT and Secure Rural Schools

Support legislation and policies that reauthorize and maintain funding provided to counties through the Payment In Lieu of Taxes (PILT) and Secure Rural Schools (SRS) programs.

