

MEMORANDUM

To: Chad Bala, Community Development Services Director
Jeremy Jonston, Long Range Planner

From: Kimley-Horn and Associates, Inc.

Date: May 19, 2026

Subject: June 2, 2026 – Development Regulations Public Hearing – BOCC amendments for consideration

Purpose

The purpose of this memorandum is to outline the approach for Board of County Commissioner (BOCC) consideration of Planning Commission proposed amendments to the March 26, 2026, draft development regulations changes being proposed as part of the Comprehensive Plan update.

A separate staff report for the public hearing along with a transmittal of the complete public record, including all proposed development regulation changes for this project, will be sent separately and transmitted to the BOCC prior to the hearing.

Background

Development Regulation updates are being completed as part of the 2026 Comprehensive Plan update. Changes are proposed to update county development regulations, so they are consistent with state law changes since the last major comprehensive plan update and to update critical area regulations consistent with new Best Available Science (BAS).

The draft development regulations were released for public comment on March 26, 2026. The Kittitas County Planning Commission held a public hearing on May 12, 2026. The Planning Commission voted 4-0 to recommend approval of the proposed development regulation changes with recommended amendments. CDS does not currently recommend any additional changes beyond the Planning Commission recommendations and supports their proposed amendments.

Planning Commission recommendations

The Board of County Commissioners' hearing on the Draft development regulation update is based upon the March 26, 2026, version of the draft development regulations. However, based upon Planning Commission recommendation, two changes are being forwarded to the BOCC for further consideration.

Inclusion of one or both Planning Commission recommendations would occur by motion and occur prior to the final vote on the draft development regulations changes. The BOCC is not obligated to include any or all proposed changes and the BOCC may have additional changes to propose after review of the public record.

The following provides a summary of the proposed changes. Both recommendations relate to the critical area ordinance.

Planning Commission recommendation one - KCC 17A.02.620 Require wetland professional to have a minimum of 5 years of experience.

"Qualified professional" means a person with experience and training in the applicable field or critical area. A qualified professional must have obtained a B.S. or B.A. or equivalent degree in biology, soil science, botany, engineering, environmental studies, fisheries, geology or related field, and a minimum of 2 years of related work experience. Other equivalently qualified professionals may be approved by the Director on a case by case basis.

A qualified professional for wetlands and fish and wildlife habitat conservation areas must have a Bachelor of Science or Bachelor of Arts or equivalent degree in biology, hydrology, soil science, botany, ecology, resource management or a related fields, and possess relevant professional experience or professional certification (Professional Wetland Scientist Certification) demonstrating that documents expertise capability in performing delineations, conducting critical area functions and values assessments, analyzing critical area impacts, and developing and implementing critical area mitigation plans functional assessment and mitigation techniques. For wetlands, Professional Wetland Scientist Certification, or other documentation of expertise, and 5 years of experience is required.

Planning Commission recommendation two - Remove "as new wetland areas are identified" from the language regarding updating wetland mapping in KCC 17A.07.020.

“The County shall update the maps ~~periodically as new wetland areas are identified~~ and as new wetland information becomes available.”