

KitsapCounty

PLANNING COMMISSION

Executive Summary

Issue Title:

Title 17 Definition Edits

Meeting Date: 7/21/2026

Time Required: 45 Minutes

Attendees: Garrett Ballew, Long Range Planner

Action Requested at this Meeting:

Hold a public hearing on the draft Title 17 *Zoning* code updates, accept public testimony, and, following the close of the hearing, proceed with deliberations and findings of fact.

Background:

Kitsap County is proposing edits to Kitsap County Code (KCC) Title 17 *Zoning*. In response to recent data center permitting activity and development occurring in nearby jurisdictions the County has identified a need to further clarify the definitions of "Research laboratories" (KCC 17.110.658) and "Warehousing and distribution" (KCC 17.110.743).

Data centers are often large-scale development projects that can have substantial land use, resources, and infrastructure requirements. They require significant amounts of electricity and water for operation and cooling, which may have implications for local utilities, natural resources, and environmental conditions, including water quality.

DCD is awaiting technical and best practices guidance by several groups and actions:

- The Governor’s Data Center Workgroup, led by the Department of Revenue, issued a preliminary report in December 2025. The report suggests the Utilities and Transportation Commission and the Department of Commerce create reporting for new large loads across regulated and public utilities, including data quality, documentation, and transmission needs. It also recommends directing and funding the Department of Ecology to develop best practices for siting and operating data centers with input from permitting agencies, industry, Tribes, local governments, and utilities, addressing water resources, Tribal rights/resources, air resources, greenhouse gas emissions, and cumulative impacts.



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- Federal Executive Order 14365 “Ensuring a National Policy Framework for Artificial Intelligence,” dated December 2025, addresses state-level AI and potentially data-center-related regulations. It directs the U.S. Secretary of Commerce, within 90 days, to evaluate existing state AI laws and identify “onerous” laws that conflict with the federal policy of a minimally burdensome national AI framework. The final report is not yet available.
- Several groups, including the Washington State Association of Counties and the National Association of Counties are collaborating to propose legislation or best practices guidance for use by its county membership.

The County is following the status of these efforts and is monitoring regional trends to understand potential approaches to regulating and managing data centers.

Neighboring jurisdictions have received applications for data centers submitted under use classifications such as research laboratories or warehouses. The proposed revisions to these definitions in Title 17 will provide greater clarity regarding the intended scope of those uses in Kitsap County.

