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Kitsap County, Washington

43 languages

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Coordinates: 47.64°N 122.65°W

Kitsap County is located in the U.S. state of Washington. As of the 2020 census, its population was 275,611.^[1] Its county seat is Port Orchard;^[2] its largest city is Bremerton. The county, formed out of King County and Jefferson County on January 16, 1857, is named for Chief Kitsap of the Suquamish Tribe. Originally named Slaughter County, it was soon renamed.^[3]

Kitsap County comprises the Bremerton-Silverdale, WA Metropolitan Statistical Area, which is also included in the Seattle-Tacoma, WA Combined Statistical Area.

The United States Navy is the largest employer in the county, with installations at Puget Sound Naval Shipyard, Naval Undersea Warfare Center Keyport, and Naval Base Kitsap (which comprises former NSB Bangor and NS Bremerton).

Kitsap County is connected to the eastern shore of Puget Sound by Washington State Ferries routes, including the Seattle-Bremerton Ferry, Southworth to West Seattle via Vashon Island, Bainbridge Island to Downtown Seattle, and from Kingston to Edmonds, Washington. Kitsap Transit provides passenger-only fast ferry service between Bremerton and Seattle, Kingston and Seattle, and Southworth and Seattle.

History

The Kitsap Peninsula was originally acquired by the U.S. Government in three pieces by three treaties negotiated with the Native American tribes:

- The Treaty of Medicine Creek, signed December 26, 1854, ratified March 3, 1855
- The Treaty of Point Elliott, signed January 22, 1855, ratified April 11, 1859
- Point No Point Treaty, signed January 26, 1855, ratified March 8, 1859.^[4]

Territorial Governor Isaac Stevens represented the United States in all three negotiations.

When the Washington Territory was organized in 1853, the Kitsap Peninsula was divided between King County to the east and Jefferson County to the west. Official public papers were required to be filed at the county seat, which meant Peninsula business people had to travel to either Seattle or Port Townsend to transact business. On the understanding that they would "bring home a new county," area mill operators George Meigs and William Renton supported the candidacies to the Territorial Legislature of two employees from their respective mills: Timothy Duane Hinckley from Meigs' and S.B. Wilson from Renton's.

Upon arrival in Olympia, the two men introduced bills to create a new county, to be named "Madison". Representative Abernathy from Wahkiakum County proposed an amendment to name it "Slaughter", in recognition of Lt. William Alloway Slaughter, who had been killed in 1855 in the Yakima War. The bill passed as amended. It was signed by Governor Isaac Stevens on January 16, 1857. The county seat would be located in Meigs's mill town at Port Madison.^[5]

In Slaughter County's first election on July 13, 1857, voters were given the opportunity to rename the county. The options were "Mill", "Madison" or "Kitsap". Slaughter was not one of the options. Kitsap won by an overwhelming majority.^[6]

Kitsap County is home to several major United States Navy facilities, collectively named Naval Base Kitsap, and grew in response to wars and conflicts in the 20th century. Bremerton, the site of the Puget Sound Naval Shipyard, peaked at 80,000 residents during World War II. Naval Submarine Base Bangor was developed in the 1980s to store nuclear weapons for submarines and contributed to the county's population growth during the decade from 147,000 to 190,000.^[7]

Geography

According to the United States Census Bureau, the county has a total area of 566 square miles (1,470 km²), of which 395 square miles (1,020 km²) is land and 171 square miles (440 km²) (30%) is water.^[8] It is the fourth-smallest county in Washington by land area and third-smallest by total area.

In addition to occupying most of the Kitsap Peninsula, Kitsap County includes both Bainbridge Island and Blake Island. According to Puget Sound Partnership, Kitsap county has over 250 miles (400 km) of saltwater shoreline.

The portion of the county north of Silverdale is often referred to as North Kitsap, and the portion south of Bremerton as South Kitsap.

Geographic features

- Bainbridge Island
- Blake Island
- Colvos Passage
- Dyes Inlet
- Hood Canal
- Kitsap Peninsula
- Liberty Bay
- Port Gamble
- Port Madison
- Port Orchard
- Puget Sound
- Sinclair Inlet
- Blue Hills
- Seattle Fault Zone
- Kitsap Lake

Adjacent counties

- Island County - northeast
- Snohomish County - east
- King County - east/southeast
- Pierce County - south/southeast
- Mason County - southwest
- Jefferson County - northwest

Demographics

2020 census

As of the 2020 census, there were 275,611 people living in the county.^[citation needed]

2010 census

As of the 2010 census, there were 251,133 people, 97,220 households, and 65,820 families residing in the county.^[14] The population density was 635.9 inhabitants per square mile (245.5/km²). There were 107,367 housing units at an average density of 271.9 per square mile (105.0/km²).^[15] The racial makeup of the county was 82.6% white, 4.9% Asian, 2.6% black or African American, 1.6% American Indian, 0.9% Pacific islander, 1.6% from other races, and 5.8% from two or more races. Those of Hispanic or Latino origin made up 6.2% of the population.^[14] In terms of ancestry, 21.3% were German, 14.4% were Irish, 13.8% were English, 7.1% were Norwegian, and 4.2% were American.^[16]

Of the 97,220 households, 31.7% had children under the age of 18 living with them, 53.2% were married couples living together, 10.2% had a female householder with no husband present, 32.3% were non-families, and 25.2% of all households were made up of individuals. The average household size was 2.49 and the average family size was 2.97. The median age was 39.4 years.^[14]

The median income for a household in the county was \$59,549 and the median income for a family was \$71,065. Males had a median income of \$52,282 versus \$38,499 for females. The per capita income for the county was \$29,755. About 6.1% of families and 9.4% of the population were below the poverty line, including 11.8% of those under age 18 and 5.3% of those age 65 or over.^[17]

Communities

Cities

- Bainbridge Island
- Bremerton
- Port Orchard (county seat)
- Poulsbo

Census-designated places

- Bangor Base
- Bethel
- Burley
- Chico
- Hansville
- Indianola
- Keyport
- Kingston
- Parkwood
- Port Gamble Tribal Community
- Rocky Point
- Seabeck

Kitsap County

County

Kitsap County Courthouse

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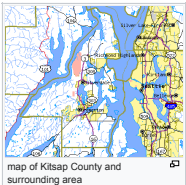
Kitsap County Courthouse

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<



- East Port Orchard
- Enetai
- Erlands Point
- Gorst
- Kitsap Lake
- Lofall
- Manchester
- Navy Yard City

- Silverdale
- Southworth
- Suquamish
- Tracyton

Other unincorporated communities [\[edit \]](#)

- Annapolis
- Bay Vista
- Breidablick
- Brownsville
- Camp Union
- Central Valley
- Clear Creek
- Crosby
- Eglon
- Fernwood
- Fragaria
- Gilberton
- Glenwood
- Harper
- Holly
- Horseshoe Lake
- Illahee
- Island Lake
- Kariotis
- Lofal
- Lone Rock
- Long Lake
- Olalia
- Olalia Valley
- Scandia
- South Colby
- South Park Village
- Virginia
- Waterman
- Wautauga Beach
- Wildcat Lake
- Wye Lake

Politics [[edit](#)]

Kitsap County is generally considered to be a relatively Democratic area. In the 2016 U.S. presidential election, Democrat Hillary Clinton received 49.05% of the vote to Republican Donald Trump's 38.07%.^[18] This Democratic margin widened in 2020, with candidate Joe Biden receiving 56.90% of the vote versus incumbent Trump receiving 38.80%.^[19]

On mainland Kitsap County, politics are strongly influenced by working-class [Bremerton](#), which casts moderate margins for Democratic candidates. Unincorporated Kitsap County is a mix of battleground areas. Non-Bremerton parts of incorporated mainland Kitsap County vary, with [Silverdale](#) having become a Republican stronghold, [Poulsbo](#) marginally Democratic, and [Port Orchard](#) consistently electing Republican candidates.

Democrats typically carry the [Indian reservations](#) of the area by wide margins; the area around [Little Boston](#) (part of the [S'Klallam Indian Reservation](#)) regularly votes for Democratic candidates.

The Kitsap County Auditor Website has detailed election results from 1998 to the present. County area political trends can be tracked by analyzing the election precinct data.^[20]

Government [\[edit \]](#)Board of County Commissioners [[edit](#)]

- Ed Wolfe (R) - District #3, Central Kitsap.

Wolfe became the first elected Republican county commissioner since [Jan Angel](#) was elected South Kitsap Commissioner in 2004. Wolfe replaced Linda Streissguth (D), who had been appointed in January 2014 to replace Josh Brown (D).^[22] Prior to his election, he was a local attorney specializing in litigation and business law. Commissioner Wolfe served with the U.S. State Department during the Ronald Reagan and George H.W. Bush administrations as Deputy Assistant Secretary of State for Oceans and Fisheries Affairs with the rank of ambassador.

- Charlotte Garrido (D) - District #2, South Kitsap.

Garrido was re-elected in Nov. 2012, when she defeated Linda Simpson. Commissioner Garrido previously served on the county commission from 1997 to 2000 and again from 2009 to 2012.^[23]

- Robert Gelder (D) District #1, North Kitsap.

Gelder was appointed to replace Steve Bauer, who resigned in March 2011.

State legislators [[edit](#)]

23rd Legislative District [[edit](#)]

Bainbridge Island, East Bremerton, Poulsbo and Silverdale

- Sen. [Christine Rolfes](#) (D) - Elected November 2012.
- Rep. [Tarra Simmons](#) (D) - First elected November 2020.
- Rep. [Drew Hansen](#) (D) - Appointed September 2011 to replace Christine Rolfes who had been appointed to the Senate. First elected in November 2012.

26th Legislative District [[edit](#)]

Bremerton, Gig Harbor and Port Orchard

- Sen. [Emily Randall](#) (D)
- Rep. [Jesse Young](#) (R)
- Rep. [Michelle Caldier](#) (R)

35th Legislative District [\[edit \]](#)

Bremerton, Shelton and Mason County

- Sen. [Tim Sheldon](#) (D)* (*Caucuses with Republicans*)^[citation needed]
- Rep. [Dan Griffey](#) (R)
- Rep. [Drew C. MacEwen](#) (R)

Education [\[edit \]](#)

Post-secondary education [\[edit \]](#)

- Olympic College

Public schools [\[edit \]](#)

- Bainbridge Island School District
- Bremerton School District
- Central Kitsap School District
- North Kitsap School District
- South Kitsap School District

Transportation [\[edit \]](#)

Kitsap County is connected to the eastern shore of [Puget Sound](#) by several [Washington State Ferries](#) routes, including the [Seattle-Bremerton Ferry](#), [Southworth to West Seattle](#) via [Vashon Island](#), [Bainbridge Island to Downtown Seattle](#), and from [Kingston to Edmonds, Washington](#).

Kitsap Transit provides local transit service within Kitsap County and connects to other transit systems that continue onto the Olympic Peninsula. The agency launched its **fast ferry** services to Seattle in July 2017, beginning initially with a Bremerton route and later expanding to Kingston in 2018.^{[24][25]} Fast ferry service to Southworth is expected to begin in 2020.

The county is connected to Jefferson County and the [Olympic Peninsula](#) to the west by the [Hood Canal Bridge](#).

A 48-mile-long (77 km) government-owned rail line, the Bangor-Shelton-Bremerton Navy Railroad, runs through the county. It is a branch off the [Puget Sound and Pacific Railroad](#), with its junction at Shelton. At the Bremerton Junction near Gorst a spur follows Highway 3 along the shore of the Sinclair Inlet terminating at the Puget Sound Naval Ship Yard, the other follows Highway 3 along the western shore of Dyes Inlet, servicing Bangor Naval Submarine Base. The Navy had originally intended to use armored trains to transport nuclear missiles to Bangor for the Trident submarines but protesters and a series of court decisions derailed the plan. Today the railroad is primarily used to transport scrap from PSNS.^[a]

Notable people [[edit](#)]

- [Tarn Adams](#), programmer and game designer, creator of *Dwarf Fortress* and other games
- [Nathan Adrian](#), swimmer and Olympic gold medalist^[27]
- [Ben Gibbard](#), musician
- [Richard F. Gordon Jr.](#), naval officer and aviator, test pilot, and NASA astronaut
- [Russell Johnson](#), actor, best known as [The Professor](#) on TV's *Gilligan's Island*.
- [James Kelsey](#), sculptor
- [Debbie Macomber](#), best-selling romance novelist
- [Gregg Olsen](#), best-selling mystery/crime novelist
- [Benji Olson](#), NFL player for Tennessee Titans
- [DeLilah Rene](#), radio personality, author and songwriter
- [Bree Schaff](#), 2010 Winter Olympics competitor in bobsled.
- [Aaron Sele](#), former *all-star* MLB pitcher.
- [Ben Shepherd](#), bass player of Seattle rock band [Soundgarden](#)
- [Scott Shipley](#), slalom canoeist
- [Marvin Williams](#), NBA player for the Atlanta Hawks
- [Andrew Wood](#), lead singer of Seattle rock band [Mother Love Bone](#)

In popular culture [\[edit \]](#)

Walking Tall with *The Rock* and *Johnny Knoxville* was based in Kitsap County, and the City of Port Orchard is the basis for the fictional community of

See also [\[edit \]](#)

- [National Register of Historic Places listings in Kitsap County, Washington](#)

Notes [[edit](#)]

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External links [[edit](#)]

- [Kitsap County official website](#)
- [Kitsap County USGenWeb](#)
- [Kitsap Peninsula Visitor and Convention Bureau](#)
- [Kitsap Economic Development Alliance](#)
- [Kitsap Historical Society and Museum](#) Archived [August 19, 2014](#), at the [Wayback Machine](#)
- [Kitsap County, Washington](#) at [Curlie](#)

	Places adjacent to Kitsap County, Washington	[show]
V + 0 E	Municipalities and communities of Kitsap County, Washington, United States	[show]
V + 0 E	State of Washington	[show]
V + 0 E	Seattle metropolitan area	[show]
	Authority control databases	[show]

Categories: [Washington \(state\) counties](#) | [Kitsap County, Washington](#) | [Washington placenames of Native American origin](#)
[1857 establishments in Washington Territory](#) | [Populated places established in 1857](#) | [Seattle metropolitan area](#) | [Western Washington](#)