

Chapter 7. UTILITIES

7.1. Plan Context

The utilities discussed in this chapter include natural gas, electricity and telecommunications, water, stormwater and wastewater utilities.

Although not managed directly by the Port Orchard City government, natural gas, electricity and telecommunications are subject to both state and federal regulations. State law regulates the rates, charges, services, facilities and practices of utilities. The Washington Utilities and Transportation Commission (WUTC) regulates privately owned utility and transportation businesses to ensure that companies provide safe and reliable service to their customers at reasonable rates. WUTC mandates that utility facilities and services be provided on a uniform or nondiscriminatory basis to all customers and that cost of service is equitable. Any change to customer charges or service policies requires WUTC approval.

The Growth Management Act (GMA) requires that comprehensive plans include a utilities element that consists of the general location, proposed location, and capacity of all existing and proposed utilities, including, but not limited to, electrical lines, telecommunication lines, and natural gas lines. Kitsap's Countywide Planning Policies (CPPs) call for all jurisdictions in the county to coordinate planning efforts, including provision of current and future utilities and to address future growth in a coherent manner that leads to more efficient delivery of services. Utility providers make improvements in response to consumer demand. However, private utilities are not subject to concurrency requirements. Other agencies that impose requirements on utilities include the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission and the Department of Energy, which regulate electricity service, and the Federal Communications Commission (FCC), which regulates the telecommunications industry.



Many goals and policies of this chapter are facilitated through the 2006 Capital Facilities Plan update. The Capital Facilities Plan provides a frame work and works in conjunction with this Utilities chapter of the comprehensive plan.

7.2. Utility Goals and Policies

Goal I. Ensure utilities are provided in a timely manner to meet the needs of Port Orchard's future population.

- Policy UT-1 Facilitate planning for utility improvements by providing utility purveyors with population and employment projections on a regular basis.
- Policy UT-2 Improvements and additions to utility facilities shall be reviewed in a manner sufficient to serve planned growth.
- Policy UT-3 Encourage the designation and development of utility corridors and facilities in a manner consistent with the needs and resources of the City.
- Policy UT-4 Coordinate provision of utilities with future development by designating appropriate sites for utility facilities and ensuring their availability and consider future annexations in developing coordinated strategies for supplying future utilities of the city
- Policy UT-5 Coordinate provision of utility services with planned development by improving mechanisms to process development permits and approvals in a fair and timely manner.
- Policy UT-6 Consider impacts and timing of future phases when permitting large utility projects.
- Policy UT-7 Ensure that development regulations allow timely development of utility facility additions and improvements.
- Goal 2. Ensure utility services are provided in an efficient and coordinated manner.**
- Policy UT-8 City decisions regarding utility corridors and facilities should consider regional utility needs as well as City interests.
- Policy UT-9 Enhance efficiency of planning for utilities by facilitating coordination between the City of Port Orchard, WUTC and utilities regulated by the WUTC during development of comprehensive utility plans.
- Policy UT-10 Coordinate collection, integration and maintenance of Geographic Information System (GIS) utility data among utility providers to ensure consistent and up-to-date information on facility locations and capacities.
- Policy UT-11 Enhance efficiency by coordinating the implementation of utility facility additions and improvements affecting multiple jurisdictions.
- Policy UT-12 Coordinate land use, transportation and utility planning and development.
- Policy UT-13 Encourage the joint use of utility corridors and sites, provided such joint use is consistent with applicable law and prudent utility practice.

Policy UT-14 Ensure that utility policies and regulations are consistent with, and complementary to, utility public service obligations.

Policy UT-15 Ensure that utilities are provided consistent with applicable rules, regulations, and prudent utility practice.

Policy UT-16 Ensure all chapters of the Port Orchard Comprehensive Plan (and implementing development regulations) are consistent with, and do not otherwise impair the fulfillment of, public service obligations imposed upon the utility provider by federal and state law.

Goal 3. Maintain and enhance utility service quality.

Policy UT-17 Encourage utility providers to protect and enhance the performance, reliability and stability of their utility systems.

Policy UT-18 Encourage utilities to incorporate new and improved technologies to enhance the quality and cost effectiveness of their services consistent with the provider’s public service obligations.

Goal 4. Minimize environmental an aesthetic impacts of utility facilities.

Policy UT-19 Place utility facilities along public rights-of-way and encourage underground distribution lines in accordance with state rules and regulations.

Policy UT-20 Encourage siting of large, above ground utilities (e.g. antennas, towers) in industrial or commercial areas or along appropriate transportation and utility corridors.



Policy UT-21 Minimize the visual impact of utility facilities on view corridors, vistas and adjacent properties by developing design guidelines for cellular towers, antennas and other types of utility facilities.

Goal 5. Support and promote energy conservation.

Policy UT-22 Encourage and support development of renewable energy projects and technologies.

Policy UT-23 Support renewable energy incentives to businesses and groups for comprehensive renewable energy effort.

Policy UT-24 Establish incentives to lessen use of resources.

Policy UT-25 Encourage programs to educate utility users on the benefits and means of conservation.

Goal 6. Support the extension of fiber optic cable in the City of Port Orchard.

Policy UT-26 Recognize broadband’s influence and importance to economic diversification in Port Orchard.

Policy UT-27 Encourage installation of broadband infrastructure in all new residential subdivisions, economic development projects, and arterial improvements.



Goal 7. The City shall establish incentives to lessen use of resources.

Policy UT-28 Promote conservation of utilities.

Policy UT-29 The City shall encourage programs to educate utility users on the benefits and means of conservation.

Policy UT-30 Improve utility service provision.

Policy UT-31 The City shall require the undergrounding of future or existing utility lines including gas, cable television, electric distribution lines, and telephone as appropriate during the design review process and in accordance with local, regional and state rules, regulations and tariffs.

Policy UT-32 The City shall establish capacity and levels of service for City managed utilities.

Policy UT-33 The City shall not allow for the extension of municipal utilities outside City limits except within, or transmission to serve Urban Growth Boundaries, except extensions in those circumstances necessary to protect public health and safety and the environment and when they are financially supportable at rural densities and do not permit urban development.