

# Utilities Element

## Introduction

The Growth Management Act (GMA) requires the City to include a Utilities Element within its Comprehensive Plan consisting 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. (RCW 36.70A.070) The Utilities Element should also provide a framework for the efficient and predictable provision and siting of utility facilities and services within the City, consistent with each of the servicing utility's public service obligations.

## Goals & Policies

**Goal U-1. Quality Utility Services. Ensure quality utility services are provided throughout Anacortes to meet the needs of residents and businesses.**

**Policy U-1.1.** Work with utility providers to ensure that reliable, quality services are provided at reasonable, equitable rates in all areas of the city.

**Policy U-1.2.** Support the timely expansion and maintenance of utility infrastructure in order to meet the evolving needs of the community.

**Policy U-1.3.** Encourage the use of new technologies that will enhance the quality of services and that are financially feasible.

**Policy U-1.4.** Utilize a variety of methods to protect and advance community interests, such as partnerships, interlocal agreements and franchise agreements.

**Policy U-1.5.** Explore options for improving telecommunication services in Anacortes, with high speed internet being a high priority.

**Goal U-2. Sustainable Utility Infrastructure. Work with utility providers and other partners to plan for sustainable utility infrastructure that supports City and regional growth plans.**

**Policy U-2.1.** Support utility service areas that are consistent with growth and development patterns outlined in the City's Comprehensive Plan and Skagit County's Comprehensive Plan.

**Policy U-2.2.** Coordinate the formulation and periodic update of the utility element (and relevant implementing development regulations) with adjacent jurisdictions.

**Policy U-2.3.** Coordinate, and seek to cooperate, with other jurisdictions in the implementation of multi-jurisdictional electric utility facility additions and improvements. Such coordination and cooperation should include efforts to coordinate the procedures for making specific land use decisions to achieve consistency in timing and substantive requirements.

**Policy U-2.4.** Share information with utility providers and other partners, to facilitate coordinated planning for sustainable regional utility infrastructure.

**Policy U-2.5.** Coordinate review of significant development proposals with utility providers to determine whether there is available capacity to accommodate development without lowering service standards, and identify any needed system improvements.

**Policy U-2.6.** Encourage the joint use of utility corridors and facilities, provided that such use is consistent with limitations as may be prescribed by applicable law and prudent utility practice, in order to pool utility resources and to minimize the amount of land area impacted by utility infrastructure.

**Policy U-2.7.** Provide timely and effective notice to utilities of the construction, maintenance or repair of streets, roads, highways or other facilities, and coordinate such work with the serving utilities to ensure utility needs are appropriately considered and to facilitate coordination of trenching activities.

**Policy U-2.8.** Support the use of utility corridors for recreation and open space purposes, where appropriate.

### **Goal U-3. Sensitive Design. Mitigate negative impacts of utility systems to community members.**

**Policy U-3.1.** Minimize impacts to the community associated with the construction, operation and maintenance activities of utility providers, such as loud noises, service outages, transportation disruptions and public safety hazards.

**Policy U-3.2.** Work with utility providers to inform the community about utility activities and to provide opportunities for public engagement in the planning processes, as appropriate.

**Policy U-3.3.** Minimize visual impacts to the community associated with the siting and design of utility infrastructure, for instance by regulating light and glare, screening and landscaping, and location of above-ground facilities.

**Policy U-3.4.** Require installation of all new utilities underground, as well as convert existing overhead wiring through such procedures as local improvement districts, contract agreements between property owners and utility companies, and by any other legal means.

### **Goal U-4. Coordination. Support coordination with service providers to minimize cost and service disruption.**

**Policy U-4.1.** Coordinate the timing of construction activities with public and private utilities to minimize disruption to the public and reduce costs of utility delivery.

**Policy U-4.2.** Promote co-location of new public and private utility distribution facilities.

**Policy U-4.3.** Promote awareness by property owners of proper procedures for notification of utility providers prior to construction activities (e.g. Call Before You Dig, etc.).

### **Goal U-5. Sustainable Design. Minimize negative impacts of utility systems to the environment.**

**Policy U-5.1.** Encourage siting, construction, operation and maintenance activities that are consistent with environmental best management practices.

**Policy U-5.2.** Encourage energy utilities to adopt efficient practices and explore alternative energy resources, in order to help meet long-term energy needs and reduce environmental impacts associated with traditional energy supplies.

**Policy U-5.3.** Work with utilities to limit trimming of trees to that which is necessary for the safety and maintenance of transmission facilities.

**Policy U-5.4.** Encourage development of vegetation management policies and plans for utility corridors.

**Policy U-5.5.** Promote education of the public on choosing and maintaining vegetation with growth habits that will not interfere with nearby utilities.

### **Goal U-6. Energy Conservation. Encourage conservation of energy resources, including the reduction of energy consumption in city facilities.**

**Policy U-6.1.** Residential, commercial and industrial development shall be encouraged to use energy-efficient, cost-effective and environmentally sensitive technologies and resources in new construction.

**Policy U-6.2.** Encourage the use of alternative energy resources in the design and construction of new development.

**Policy U-6.3.** Encourage the use of solar energy for water and space heating and consider developing ordinances to protect solar access.

**Policy U-6.4.** Consider incentive programs to seek and implement alternative energy resources in building and site design, and land use.

### **Goal U-7. Hazardous Liquid Pipelines.**

**Policy U-7.1.** Require proposed developments, expansion of existing uses and construction projects, both public and private, located near hazardous liquid pipelines to:

- A. Show the location of the liquid pipeline corridors in relation to proposed structures, utilities, or clearing and grading.
- B. Use techniques prior to and during construction to minimize the potential for disturbing the pipeline.
- C. Identify and mitigate potential erosion impacting pipelines from stormwater discharge.
- D. Use setbacks and other site design techniques to minimize potential hazards; and

E. Develop emergency plans as appropriate.

**Policy U-7.2.** Notify and coordinate with the pipeline operator when developments are proposed near a hazardous liquid pipeline corridor to reduce the potential for problems.

**Policy U-7.3.** Consider appropriate uses near hazardous pipeline corridors and require appropriate mitigation measures that help reduce adverse impacts in the event of a pipeline failure.