

Utilities Element

Purpose and Relationship to GMA

The Growth Management Act (GMA), RCW 36.70A.070, requires cities to prepare a utilities element 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.

The element should provide a framework for the efficient and predictable provision and siting of utility facilities and services within the Town consistent with the serving utilities' public service obligations. This element includes private utilities, (those not provided by the Town) including electricity, telecommunications, and solid waste collection and disposal. This Plan applies to the Town's relationship with current utility providers and any of their successors.

Some utilities are regulated by the Washington Utilities and Transportation Commission (WUTC). The Washington Utilities and Transportation Commission is a three-member board with associated staff that regulates the rates, services, and practices of privately-owned utilities and transportation companies, including electric, telecommunications, natural gas, water, and solid waste collection companies. Most utilities under the WUTC's jurisdiction must provide suitable facilities to supply service on demand. State law regulates the rates, charges, services, facilities, and practices of these utilities. Any changes in policies regarding these aspects of utility provision require WUTC approval.

The primary responsibility for planning for private utilities rests with the utility providers. This planning, however, should be consistent with the Land Use and Utilities Elements of the Comprehensive Plan adopted by the Town of Skykomish.

Information supporting the Utilities Element, including an inventory of utility facilities, is contained in the Utilities Appendix.

Goals

- UT-G1 Ensure that utilities, including electricity, natural gas, telecommunications, and solid waste collection and recycling, are available or can be provided to support existing and designated land uses in a manner that is fiscally and environmentally responsible, aesthetically acceptable to the community, and safe for nearby inhabitants.

Policies

▪ General

UT- P1 When utilities are installed, they should be designed with sufficient capacity to accommodate projected land uses in accordance with the Land Use Element.

UT-P2 The Town shall coordinate with utility providers at early stages in planning for needed facilities.

a. The Town shall encourage utility providers to use the Land Use Element of this Plan in planning for future facilities.

b. The Town shall consider adopting procedures to review and comment on proposed actions and policies of public and private utility providers, including recommending alternate locations for new facilities.

UT-P3 The Town shall strive to minimize adverse environmental, aesthetic, and fiscal impacts associated with the siting, development, and operation of utility services and facilities.

UT-P4 The Town shall promote the coordination of utility construction, and the collocation of utility facilities in shared corridors and trenches to reduce costs, minimize the amount of land allocated for this purpose, and to minimize construction disturbances.

▪ Electrical and Telecommunication

UT-P5 The Town shall encourage telecommunication providers to provide high-speed cable, phone, and data services to businesses, residences, schools, and other facilities throughout the Town.

UT-P6 The Town shall encourage telecommunication providers to provide local telephone access to essential services, such as medical facilities.

- UT-P7 The Town shall encourage telephone and telecommunication providers to provide enhanced telephone and telecommunication services and capacities to support residential and business uses.
- UT-P8 The Town shall require franchise agreements for all utilities located in the right-of-way, and may seek enhanced telecommunications services to benefit the community as a part of franchise agreements.
- UT-P9 The Town of Skykomish shall require new utility distribution lines and telecommunication lines to be located underground, with the exception of high voltage electrical transmission lines, and based on coordination with local utility providers.
- UT-P10 Where physically feasible, the Town of Skykomish shall require existing utility distribution lines and telecommunication lines to be placed underground as streets are widened and/or redeveloped, and based on coordination with local utilities.
- UT-P11 The Town shall promote conservation measures to reduce the need for additional utility distribution facilities in the future.
- UT-P12 Where expected to be safe, the Town will work with utility providers to provide public trails within utility corridors.
- UT-P13 The Town shall encourage utility providers to plant lower-growing trees and shrubs in utility corridors, where appropriate, and to limit disturbance to vegetation within the major utility transmission corridor to that which is necessary for the safety and maintenance of transmission facilities.
- UT-P14 The Town shall require that new cellular/wireless communication facilities be located and designed in a manner that is sensitive to the surrounding character and that minimizes aesthetic impacts.

- **Solid Waste**

- UT-P15 Drop box stations or transfer stations for solid waste shall be located and designed to minimize impacts on adjacent existing and designated uses. Drop box stations or transfer stations for solid waste shall be secure, safe, and buffered from adjacent uses.
- UT-P16 Solid waste management within the Town of Skykomish shall conform to the Washington State laws regarding solid waste management.
- UT-P17 The Town of Skykomish shall encourage King County to continue to support recycling activities.