

# Utilities Chapter

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*This Utilities Chapter is divided into the following sections:*

**The Introduction** describes the intent of the Utilities Chapter and its relationship to Kitsap County's vision of the future and other Comprehensive Plan chapters.

**The Planning Context** discusses the requirements of the Growth Management Act, the Countywide Planning Policy and the regulatory framework as they relate to utility policies.

**The Inventory of Conditions and Future Needs** provides a brief discussion of utility providers, their facilities and projected needs over the next 20-year planning period.

**The Utility Goals & Policies** are intended to ensure that Kitsap County's utilities needs are adequately met to meet expected growth.

## Introduction

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This chapter examines the various public utilities that serve Kitsap County but are not managed directly by the Kitsap County government. The utilities discussed in this plan include natural gas, electricity, telecommunications, . Service areas, facility locations, existing capacity, and planned improvements are discussed. The private water purveyors and publicly owned water and sewer districts (e.g., Silverdale Water District) are discussed in the Capital Facilities Chapter of this plan.

The purpose of this section is to facilitate coordination between the utility providers and Kitsap County to ensure that new facilities provided are compatible and in conjunction with land use. In this section, Kitsap County has identified issues and policies related to the provision of utilities. Planning for utilities is the primary responsibility of the utility providers.

## Planning Context

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The Growth Management Act 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.

The adopted Kitsap County Countywide Planning Policy calls for all county jurisdictions to coordinate planning efforts, including provision of current and future utilities, to address future growth in a coherent manner that leads to more efficient delivery of services.

In addition, the Washington Utilities and Transportation Commission (WUTC) is responsible for regulating privately owned utility and transportation businesses in the state. The WUTC is a three-member board appointed by the governor and confirmed by the state senate. It is the WUTC's responsibility to see that companies provide safe and reliable service to their customers at reasonable rates. The WUTC regulates private utilities only. Publicly owned utilities (such as municipal utilities and public utility districts) are regulated by their respective legislative bodies.

WUTC mandates that utility facilities and service must be provided on a uniform or nondiscriminatory basis to all customers and that cost of service must be equitable. State law regulates the rates and charges, services, facilities, and practices of utilities. Any change in customer charges or service provision policy requires WUTC approval.

There are other federal and state agencies that impose requirements on utilities. The Washington State Department of Health (WDOH) has jurisdiction over water purveyors, the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission and Department of Energy has jurisdiction over electric power service, and the Federal Communications Commission (FCC) has jurisdiction over the telecommunications industry.

# Inventory of Conditions and Future Needs

Inventories and maps of existing conditions and future needs for each of the following utility providers are found in the Utilities Appendix.

## Natural Gas

The Pacific Northwest receives its natural gas from the southwest United States and Canada. Natural gas is supplied to the entire region via two interstate pipeline systems. The Pacific Gas Transmission Company and Northwest Pipeline Corporation each own and operate their respective regional pipeline networks, which supply natural gas to Washington, Oregon, and Idaho.

Cascade Natural Gas Corporation (CNG), builds, operates, and maintains natural gas facilities serving Kitsap County. CNG is an investor-owned utility serving customers in 16 counties in the State of Washington.

CNG's service area includes all of the City of Bremerton and adjacent unincorporated areas; the City of Port Orchard; the majority of South Kitsap, Silverdale, and Central Kitsap; and the City of Poulsbo. Services connections to CNG are initiated by customer demand and individual requests.

CNG has more than 17,000 residential, commercial, and industrial users as of January 1994. According to CNG, the current peak demand is approximately 1,950,000 therms per day.

CNG does not plan in advance for individual connections, rather connections are initiated by customer requests for new construction or conversion from electricity or oil. CNG expects to continue developing distribution systems and services to meet growth at lowest possible cost by maximizing capacity of the existing distribution system.

Factors important in implementing expansion of the CNG system include right-of-way permitting, environmental impact assessments, coordination with other projects (e.g., road construction), and locations of other utilities.

## Electricity

Puget Sound Energy (formally Puget Sound Power & Light Company and Washington Natural Gas) is an investor-owned private utility responsible for providing electricity and gas service to more than 1,377,388 metered customers within the company's 6,000 square mile service territory, including Kitsap County. It is part of a western regional system, which means electricity is produced elsewhere and transported to Kitsap County through high-voltage transmission lines. As electricity nears its point of distribution, the

voltage is reduced and redistributed through the use of transmission substations, distribution substations and transformers.

An analysis of Puget Sound Energy's existing system has indicated that the 230/115 KV transformers at the Bonneville Power Administration's (BPA) Kitsap switching station are approaching capacity. Since only two 230-115 KV, 280 MVA transformers at the BPA Kitsap Switching Station and a 115 KV interconnection to King County via the Vashon submarine cable serve all of Kitsap County, the capacity of these facilities is a measure of their ability to serve the connected load. Using planning guidelines from PSE, the system is designed so one of these large facilities can be taken out-of-service without causing customer outage.

Long-range plans (through year 2020) developed by PSE call for construction of a number of additional transmission and distribution facilities to meet expected demand.

### **Telecommunications**

Telecommunications is the transmission of information by wire, radio, optical cable, electromagnetic, or other similar means. Telecommunication service is regulated by the WUTC, and is subject to various federal laws and regulations administered by the FCC. Telecommunication providers must also comply with local regulations such as land use and public rights of way.

### **Telephone**

Telephone service for Kitsap County is provided by US West Communications, United Telephone Northwest and PTI. Telephone service is initiated by customer demand and requests. Telephone service providers are required to provide adequate telecommunications service on demand (RCW 80.36.090). Accordingly, telephone service providers will provide facilities to accommodate whatever growth patterns occur. Since telephone service providers do not generally conduct detailed, long-range planning activities, no specific projects have been identified by any of the carriers. General improvements to expand service to meet the projected future demand include constructing additional fiber optic cable, copper cable and switching stations.

### **Radio Communications**

Radio communication forms an integral part of an established communications system within Kitsap County. Public sector communications provides services for law enforcement agencies, municipalities, interagencies, fire departments, search and rescue organizations, the American Red Cross, departments of emergency management, Puget Sound Energy, medical administration, and maritime.

Alternative emergency communications exist which are designed to supplement or replace existing public safety communications systems during times of emergencies or disasters. Emergency communications may include the use of local radio stations and HAM operators who provide a link to federal and state emergency management personnel during emergencies or disasters. Links are established throughout the county. Kitsap County recognizes the value of these facilities as part of an emergency broadcast network which has been in place for many years.

**Cellular**

Kitsap County is served by several providers. The FCC regulates the cellular industry. The cellular system will expand in response to several factors: customer growth within a designated area, shift in distribution patterns, and/or a decrease in service quality or reliability (measured by the record of dropped calls or complaints of poor sound quality). In general, cellular system growth follows trends in population density along the higher volume transportation corridors.

**Cable Television**

Kitsap County is served by four cable television providers: TCI, Falcon, Northstar and Northland. Both TCI and Falcon Cable have franchised with Kitsap County to serve the entire county. Northstar Cable serves the Kingston and Hansville area. Northland serves Suquamish, Indianola, Bainbridge Island, and the greater north Poulsbo area.

Cable television companies are regulated under the Cable Television Consumer Protection and Competition Act of 1992 enforced by the FCC. Cable companies must enter franchise agreements with local governments to regulate service rates according to FCC guidelines. Kitsap County's master ordinance specifies that cable coverage shall be available to all residents within county where there are at least 32 dwelling units per street mile. This ordinance also states that the franchisee with the nearest service facility and/or distribution line will be responsible to furnish cable service in areas which are adjacent to an unbuilt area.

# Goals and Policies

**T**he goals and policies are intended to maintain a quality of life for Kitsap County residents and businesses where utilities are accessible, affordable and provided with minimal disruption to the environment.

**Goals**

1. To facilitate the development of all utilities at the appropriate levels of service to accommodate the growth that is anticipated to occur in the Kitsap County.
2. To formulate, interpret and apply the policies within the Kitsap County Utilities Chapter in a manner which is consistent with, and complementary to, the serving utility's public service obligations.
3. To facilitate utilities providers with information necessary to ensure that utilities are provided in an environmentally sensitive and safe manner which is compatible with land use and consistent with prudent utility practice.
4. To designate the general location of existing and proposed facility locations, and capacity of existing and proposed utility facilities.
5. To encourage the designation and development of utility corridors and utility facilities in a manner consistent with the needs and resources of Kitsap County.
6. To coordinate utility services with planned development and provide a basis for the county to process permits and approvals which are consistent with this planning in a fair and timely manner.
7. To minimize the visual impact utilities facilities (e.g. towers, antennas) have on surrounding neighborhoods.

## Policies

- UT-1** *Plan for Growth* – Encourage utility providers to make additions to and improvements of facilities that provide adequate capacity for future planned growth. Provide utility providers with annual updates of population, employment and development projections.
- UT-2** *Be consistent with applicable laws and practice* – Recognize that utilities must be provided consistent with applicable rules, regulations, tariffs and prudent utilities practice. Strive to coordinate and cooperate with other jurisdictions in the implementation of multi-jurisdictional utility facility additions and improvements.
- UT-3** *Use Rights-of-Way* – Place utility facilities along public rights-of-way, and encourage undergrounding of distribution lines in accordance with state rules, regulations and tariffs. Encourage siting of antennas and towers near transportation and utility corridors. Encourage planning for utilities installation in conjunction with new road or reconstruction projects.
- UT-4** *Improve the Permit Process* – Formulate, interpret and apply development regulations to allow timely development of utility facility additions and improvements. Allow properties that are within designated future utilities locations or corridors to be considered during the permitting process, subject to applicable development regulations.
- UT-5** *Facilitate communication* – Encourage communication between Kitsap County, WUTC and utilities regulated by the WUTC, regarding planning for adequate utility services.
- UT-6** *Provide planning consistency* – Ensure all chapters of the 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.
- UT-7** *Encourage Joint Use* – Encourage the joint use of utility corridors, provided such joint use is consistent with limitations prescribed by applicable law and prudent utility practice. Encourage the joint use of utility corridors for non-motorized trails in conjunction with Kitsap County’s greenways plan, provided such joint use is consistent with applicable law and prudent utility practice. Encourage, where feasible, shared sites and towers to minimize the need for new towers.

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- UT-8** *Allow for service enhancements* – Encourage utilities to use new and improved technology to enhance the quality of their product when these changes are cost effective and are consistent with the provider's public service obligations. Encourage utilities to protect the performance, integrity, reliability and stability of the utility system.
- UT-9** *Indicate appropriate siting for utilities* – Designate the general location of utility facilities on a comprehensive plan map to coordinate land use decisions with the provision of supporting utilities. Ensure land will be available for location of utilities to provide for more efficient, cost effective and reliable utility service. Encourage the siting of large, above-ground utilities (antennas, towers) on industrial and commercially designated areas.
- UT-10** *Minimize Environmental Impact* – Minimize environmental impact of utilities by developing guidelines to evaluate the visual impacts antennas and towers have on view corridors, vistas and adjacent properties on a case-by-case basis.