

UTILITIES ELEMENT

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UTILITIES ELEMENT

INTRODUCTION

The Growth Management Act requires all comprehensive plans to include 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 (RCW 36.70A.070(4)). On Bainbridge Island, these utilities are provided by the City of Bainbridge Island, State regulated utilities, federally licensed communications companies and a municipally franchised cable television company.

The City of Bainbridge Island provides some sewer and water services. Other public and privately held water and sewer purveyors on the Island also provide services to residents of the City. Private households provide for a large percentage of the City's utility infrastructure with individual and on-site wells and septic systems. Water and sewer utilities and storm water infrastructure are discussed in detail in the Water Resources Element.

A private corporation based on the Island provides solid waste disposal and recycling services to residents and businesses and is regulated by the Washington Utilities and Transportation Commission (WUTC).

Regional telephone and electric utilities serve the City of Bainbridge Island. The electric and telephone utilities are regulated by the Washington Utilities and Transportation Commission (WUTC).

A variety of federally licensed cellular telephone communication companies currently serve the City. Cable television services are provided on Bainbridge Island by a regional provider and by one local company.

GOALS AND POLICIES

GOAL 1

Facilitate the provision of reliable utility service in a way that balances public concerns over the impacts of utility infrastructure, consumers' interest in paying a fair and reasonable price for utility products, the City's natural environment and the impacts that utility infrastructure may have on it, and the community's desire that utility projects be aesthetically compatible with surrounding land uses.

U 1.1

The City shall develop a comprehensive plan for the undergrounding of Island distribution and communication utility lines using an incremental approach that prioritizes the work and maximizes opportunities with new construction. Costs would be in accordance with rates, regulations and tariffs on file with the Washington Utilities and Transportation Commission.

U 1.2

The City shall require undergrounding:

- A. For distribution, service and communication lines within all new subdivisions; and
- B. For new service lines on property where new construction or extensive remodeling is occurring; and
- C. For new distribution and communication lines on existing rights-of-way where there are no existing overhead utilities.

Discussion: Utility lines include distribution lines, which are the main lines often located within public rights-of-way, and services lines, which feed off of the main or distribution lines and are often placed on private property.

U 1.3

The City shall encourage undergrounding of all existing utility lines, especially in residential areas, by the utility providers in accordance with applicable rates, regulations and tariffs. The City shall cooperate with the formation of local improvement districts (LIDs) to underground existing lines.

U 1.4

The City shall promote the location of compatible utility distribution facilities in shared trenches and coordination of construction timing to minimize construction-related disruptions to the public and to reduce the cost of utility delivery to the public.

U 1.5

The City shall require screening and/or architecturally compatible integration of all new above ground facilities (other than utility lines). Utility facilities shall be designed, constructed and used in a manner which minimizes visual incompatibility with adjacent land uses.

U 1.6

The City shall encourage pruning of trees and phased removal and replacement of improperly located vegetation planted in the right-of-way. Pruning and trimming of trees should be performed in an environmentally sensitive and aesthetically acceptable manner and according to professional arboricultural specifications and standards.

U 1.7

The City shall facilitate the conversion to cost effective and environmentally sensitive alternative technologies and energy sources.

U 1.8

The City shall facilitate and encourage conservation of resources.

U 1.9

The City shall require all utility facilities to be fully enclosed in buildings/structures, where appropriate, which are aesthetically compatible with the area in which they are placed and are landscaped accordingly.

U 1.10

Utilities Development and improvement of utilities shall be compatible with the natural constraints of slope, soil, geology, vegetation, wildlife habitat and drainage.

U 1.11

When adverse impacts to the environment are considered likely as a result of a utility project, the City shall use a preferred order of mitigation (avoid, minimize, rectify, etc.).

U 1.12

All utility projects shall consider the following criteria when siting new facilities:

- Land use compatibility.
- Plan designation for surrounding areas.
- Environmental impacts and opportunities to mitigate impacts.
- Effect on agricultural, forested timber lands; critical areas; historic, archaeological and cultural sites.
- Effect on designated open space areas.
- Indirect and cumulative impacts.
- Costs.
- Potential health impacts.
- Visual/aesthetic impacts.
- Property values.
- Screening/architectural compatibility.

U 1.13

The City shall periodically review the state of scientific research on EMF or other health concerns and make changes to policies if the situation warrants.

GOAL 2

Facilitate the development of all utilities to accommodate the growth that is anticipated to occur in the City of Bainbridge Island. Additions to and improvements of utility facilities should occur at a time and in a manner sufficient to serve planned growth.

U 2.1

The City shall ensure that development regulations are consistent with the public service obligations imposed upon utility providers by all laws.

U 2.2

Utility providers should provide the same level of service to all Bainbridge Island customers. Differences may occur based on technological or geographical circumstances.

GOAL 3

Process permits and approvals for utility facilities in a fair and timely manner and in accord with development regulations.

GOAL 4

When siting all utilities, providers shall comply with the overall goals of the Comprehensive Plan, ensuring timely notice and public involvement regarding any future projects.

U 4.1

The City shall require the utility providers to solicit community input on the siting of proposed facilities prior to seeking City approval.

U 4.2

The City shall encourage utility providers to provide appropriate notice to the public of the potential location for future major utility facilities.

U 4.3

The City and utility providers shall provide timely and effective notice to each other of the construction, maintenance of streets, roads, highways or other facilities, and coordinate such work to ensure that utility needs are appropriately considered.

GOAL 5

The City shall encourage cooperation with other jurisdictions in the planning and implementation of multi-jurisdictional utility facility additions, improvements and emergency response.

U 5.1

Decisions made regarding utility facilities shall be made in a manner consistent with and complimentary to regional demand and resources.

U 5.2

The City and PSE shall coordinate the formulation and periodic update of the utility element (and relevant implementing development regulations) with adjacent jurisdictions.

U 5.3

The City will work to facilitate communication and coordination between the appropriate jurisdictions and utility provider(s) for the timely restoration and provision of electric power services in the event of a major natural event or security concern.

GOAL 6

Encourage the joint use of utility corridors, provided that such joint use is consistent with limitations as may be prescribed by applicable law and prudent utility practice.

U 6.1

The City shall encourage the joint use of utility corridors as non-motorized trails in accordance with the City trails plan. The City and utility companies should coordinate the acquisition, use and enhancement of utility corridors for pedestrian, bicycle and equestrian trails and for wildlife corridors and habitat.

U 6.2

The City shall encourage the consolidation of utility facilities and communication facilities where feasible.

GOAL 7

The City shall continue to implement conservation measures within city-owned facilities.

Electrical Goals and Policies

GOAL 8

Ensure adequate, cost effective and reliable electric service to the citizens of Bainbridge Island.

E 1.1

The City shall recognize PSE's public service obligation to make additions to and improvements of electric utility facilities that provide adequate capacity for planned future growth.

E 1.2

The City and PSE shall encourage the conservation of electrical energy, especially during periods of peak usage.

E 1.3

The City shall encourage PSE to improve the reliability of electric service for City residents so that it attains the average level of reliability of the PSE system.

E 1.4

The City shall encourage PSE to improve the reliability of electric service for City residents by implementing the City's Electrical Reliability Plan, including pursuing planning and permitting for an 115 KV above-ground transmission line connecting the Winslow and Murden Cove substations in a manner which minimizes citizen exposure to EMF from the transmission line.

E 1.5

Encourage undergrounding new transmission lines, if and when the WUTC changes its rates, regulations and tariffs in such a manner as to allow equitable distribution of undergrounding costs across its rate base.

Cellular Goals and Policies

GOAL 9

Encourage adequate and reliable cellular and/or wireless communication service to the citizens of Bainbridge Island.

C 1.1

The City shall require the placement of cellular and/or wireless communication facilities in a manner that minimizes the adverse impacts on adjacent and surrounding land uses.

C 1.2

Cellular and/or wireless communication facilities should utilize existing public and private structures where feasible.

C 1.3

The City shall provide for a regulatory review process for cellular and/or wireless communication facilities addressing criteria such as location, height and appearance of proposed facilities.

C 1.4

The City will undertake improvements to the regulatory environment for cellular and wireless facilities, Island-wide.

Discussion: Improvements to the regulatory environment could be allowing communication facilities as permitted uses in additional areas.