

# CHAPTER 7

## UTILITIES

### I. INTRODUCTION

The Utilities Chapter addresses both private and public utility services within Thurston County. Goals and policies within this chapter cover issues relating to private utilities, including those that provide power and telecommunications, as well as goals and level of service (LOS) standards for the county-operated utility functions of solid waste, stormwater, drinking water, and sewer.

Local land use decisions and regulatory mandates drive the need for new or expanded utility facilities. Utilities follow growth. Expansion of the utility systems is a function of the demand for reliable service that people, their land uses, and activities place on the systems.

#### 2025 Update: Critical Issues

- ❖ Mitigating for ongoing impacts of climate change;
- ❖ Supporting the development of infrastructure to enable the widespread integration of renewable energy sources;
- ❖ Responding to rapidly changing technology and consumer needs, while maintaining a system of aging infrastructure;
- ❖ Ensuring rural areas of the county have sufficient access to communication technology to support economic opportunity, such as home-based businesses;
- ❖ Balancing the desire for greater access to utilities, such as wireless services, with the impacts of locating the physical infrastructure for such utilities; and
- ❖ Ensuring sufficient municipal solid waste facilities and sewer and water infrastructure is in place to support a growing population.

### GROWTH MANAGEMENT REQUIREMENTS

The Growth Management Act (GMA) requires a utilities element that shall, at minimum, consist 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.”

In addition, the State guidelines for implementing the GMA (Chapter 365-196-420 WAC) state that policies should be adopted that call for:

1. Joint use of transportation rights-of-way and utility corridors, where possible;
2. Timely and effective notification of interested utilities of road construction, and of maintenance and upgrades of existing roads to facilitate coordination of public and private utility trenching activities; and
3. Consideration of utility permits simultaneously with the proposals requesting service and, when possible, approval of utility permits when the project to be served is approved.
4. Cooperation and collaboration between the county and the utility provider to develop vegetation management policies and plans for utility corridors.

## II. PLANNING CONTEXT FOR UTILITIES

This chapter has been developed in accordance with state growth management goals and is coordinated with other chapters of the Comprehensive Plan.

### A. COUNTY-WIDE PLANNING POLICIES

The County-wide Planning Policies include provisions to enable coordinated planning for both private and public utilities across jurisdictions in Thurston County. These policies encourage and accommodate development in urban areas in ways that can best support and be supported by utilities and ensure development in rural areas can be supported by minimal non-urban utilities and services.

- 3.2a Maximize the use of existing infrastructure and assets, and leveraging the value of these in building vital, healthy, and economically viable communities.
- 3.1h Where urban services and utilities are not yet available, require development to be configured so urban growth areas may eventually infill and become urban.
- 3.2d Provide and maintain municipal services (water, sewer, solid waste, public safety, transportation, and communication networks) in a sustainable, and cost-effective manner.
- 3.2g Phase extensions of urban services and facilities concurrent with development and prohibit extensions of urban services and facilities, such as sewer and water, beyond urban growth boundaries except to serve existing development in rural areas with public health or water quality problems.
- 3.2h Identify, in advance of development, sites for...major stormwater facilities... and other public assets. Acquisition of sites for these facilities shall occur in a timely manner and as early as possible in the overall development of the area.
- 3.4a Provide capacity to accommodate planned growth by assuring that each jurisdiction will have adequate capacity in...private utilities, storm drainage systems, municipal services... to serve growth that is planned in adopted local comprehensive plans.
- 3.4b Protect groundwater supplies and maintain groundwater in adequate supply by identifying and reserving future supplies well in advance of need.

These policies are especially applicable to urban growth areas (UGA), but some apply throughout the unincorporated areas of Thurston County.

### B. REGULATORY AUTHORITIES

The primary regulatory agency for most private utilities in Washington State is the Washington Utilities and Transportation Commission (WUTC). The WUTC ensures that services of regulated companies are safe, available, reliable, and fairly priced. The WUTC regulates the rates and charges, services, facilities, and practices of most of Washington's investor-owned gas, electric, and telecommunication utilities.

WUTC defines electricity and standard telephone utilities as critical services that must be provided upon demand. To fulfill public service obligations, these utility providers must plan to extend or add to their facilities when needed. Natural gas is considered a utility of convenience. WUTC prohibits utility providers from passing the cost of new construction onto the existing rate base.

The Federal Communications Commission (FCC) and WUTC regulate telecommunications services. Thurston County has some regulatory authority over telecommunications services through franchises and the development approval process. However, recent changes to FCC rules have limited local discretion over the location of communication infrastructure.

Local government has a role in regulating for certain private utilities, such as franchise agreements with cable companies. However, the effort behind meeting Growth Management Act requirements is not primarily regulatory. Rather, it is to promote coordination and cooperation between jurisdictions and utility providers.

### Renewable Energy

The passage of the Clean Energy Transformation Act (SB 5116) in 2019 commits Washington to an electricity supply free of greenhouse gas emissions by 2045.

Thurston County adopted a Climate Adaptation Plan in 2018 and Climate Mitigation Plan in 2020. Both plans include strategies to promote energy-efficiency in new construction, land use, transportation, and the management of natural resources within unincorporated areas of the county.

The County-wide Planning Policies also include a policy for increasing the use of renewable energies within Thurston County:

*1.12 Champion energy efficiency and renewable energy strategies that contribute to energy independence, economic stability, reduced climate impacts, and long-term household and community health.*

## C. LEVEL OF SERVICE (LOS) STANDARDS

LOS standards are used to evaluate whether a facility or utility is meeting the basic needs and expectations of the community. Typically, LOS standards provide a quantitative goal for the amount of service or facility that is expected to be available. National and state standards determine some LOS standards, and community input recommendations can influence others. LOS standards for public utilities help determine when investment in a facility is needed to meet community demand and help drive projects to be included in the Capital Improvement Program (Appendix G).

### III. PRIVATE UTILITIES

There is great variability in the level of detail provided for future utility facilities, as many utilities have done extensive future planning while others have done less. More current and complete information may be available by contacting the relevant company.

State law mandates that electric and gas public service companies provide the same level of service on a uniform basis regardless of location (RCW 80.28.110).

As of 2024, in Thurston County, private utilities are provided by the following companies:

<u>Electricity:</u>	Puget Sound Energy
<u>Natural Gas:</u>	Puget Sound Energy
<u>Standard Telephone:</u>	Various Providers
<u>Cellular Telephone:</u>	Various Providers
<u>Cable:</u>	Comcast

#### A. ELECTRICITY

##### **Utility Provider: Puget Sound Energy**

Puget Sound Energy (PSE) is the electrical service provider for Thurston County and the unincorporated areas. PSE serves over 1.1 million customers with electrical service in ten Washington counties.<sup>1</sup> In Thurston County, PSE serves approximately 138,837 total electrical customers.<sup>1</sup> PSE is required to provide service to customers who apply and can be suitably furnished with available electricity.

PSE obtains and generates its electricity from renewables (hydro, wind, solar, and co-generation), coal, gas, and oil-fired plants.<sup>2</sup> PSE is also a national leader in wind power and is recognized as the fourth-largest utility owner of wind energy facilities in the United States.<sup>2</sup> In 2021, Puget Sound Energy pledged to become a “Beyond Net Zero Carbon” energy company by 2045.<sup>3</sup>

##### **PSE Power-delivery facilities in Thurston County, as of 2022<sup>1</sup>:**

- ❖ 1,331 miles of overhead distribution lines
- ❖ 1,942 miles of underground cable
- ❖ 32 distribution substations

##### **Proposed Facilities**

The following list is a summary of PSE’s proposed facilities for Thurston County. For more details on these proposed facilities, please see the *Puget Sound Energy 2021 Integrated Resource Plan* (IRP), which forecasts conservation resources and supply-side resources to meet growing needs of PSE customers over the next 20 years.<sup>3</sup> PSE delivery system infrastructure planning is done on a 10-year

<sup>1</sup> Puget Sound Energy Community Profile, Thurston County, 2022. <https://www.pse.com/about-us>

<sup>2</sup> Puget Sound Energy, Energy Supply. <https://www.pse.com/en/pages/energy-supply/electric-supply>

<sup>3</sup> PSE Integrated Resource Plan, 2021, <https://www.pse.com/en/IRP/Past-IRPs/2021-IRP>.

basis, and those plans are updated continually as conditions, technologies, and customer behavior change.

Although the IRP is not specific to Thurston County, PSE anticipates future improvements will benefit their service network region wide.

### **Transmission: Statewide**

PSE anticipates building over 104 miles of new transmission lines (100 kV and above) and upgrading over 122 miles of existing transmission lines. In addition, PSE anticipates needing to add up to three 230 kV bulk power substations across their service area. These planned improvements do not include transmission needed to support the broader region or improvements needed as a result of providing interconnections for large generation resources. Future transmission projects in the Thurston County region include:

#### **❖ Electron Heights – Yelm 115kV**

Estimated Date of Operation: 2024+

This project aims to increase transmission capacity to resolve line overloads and low voltage conditions under multiple contingencies in the area.

#### **❖ Woodland – St. Clair 115 kV (Phase 2)**

Estimated Date of Operation: 2021+

This project – while not part of PSE’s 10-year plan – will increase the transmission intertie capability and reliability between Pierce and Thurston counties by adding a third transmission with construction of the remaining eight miles of 115 kV line between Gravelly Lake and Woodland substations.

### **Distribution: Statewide**

PSE anticipates the need to build approximately six to eight new distribution substations to serve load as existing substation capacity is exceeded and another two to four new substations to serve specific point loads. They anticipate upgrading approximately three existing substations to replace aging infrastructure and adding additional capacity to serve local load growth. PSE will continue work on improving reliability of its worst performing circuits and installing smart ready equipment for increasing the resiliency of the grid.

### **Ongoing Maintenance: Statewide**

PSE anticipates replacement of several major substation components because of ongoing inspection and diagnostics. PSE anticipates replacement of its current aging and obsolete Automated Meter Reading (AMR) communication system as well as its electric customer meters with Advanced Metering Infrastructure (AMI) technology to enable smart grid enhancements and customer offerings in the future.

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## B. NATURAL GAS

### **Utility Provider: Puget Sound Energy**

Puget Sound Energy (PSE) operates and maintains 13,282 miles of natural gas pipelines in six counties covering 2,520 square miles.<sup>3</sup> About 75% of the natural gas system consists of corrosion-resistant plastic piping and the remainder is cathodically-protected, coated steel pipe. In Thurston County, PSE serves approximately 57,183 natural gas customers through 994 miles of natural gas lines.<sup>1</sup>

Natural gas is considered a utility of convenience and is therefore not a mandatory provision of service by PSE. Federal and state legislation regulate provision of natural gas service.

### ***Proposed Facilities***

#### **Pressure Regulation Stations: Statewide**

PSE plans to build or upgrade approximately seven Northwest Pipeline-supplied gate or limit stations and 16 district regulator stations to serve load as existing station capacity is exceeded.

#### **Pipelines: Statewide**

PSE expects to add approximately 24 miles of high pressure main and 23 miles of intermediate pressure main as loads grow in our service area.

#### **Ongoing Maintenance: Statewide**

As with the electric system, PSE is continually addressing aging gas infrastructure within the system in accordance with regulatory requirements and operating practices. In the next decade, PSE plans to modernize their natural gas system and focus on pipeline safety. PSE continues to replace its current aging and obsolete Automated Meter Reading (AMR) communication system and gas customer modules with Advanced Metering Infrastructure (AMI) technology to enable smart grid enhancements and future customer offerings.

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## C. STANDARD TELEPHONE

### **Utility Provider: CenturyLink**

CenturyLink is the main standard telephone service provider for unincorporated Thurston County. CenturyLink is an investor-owned corporation offering local telecommunication services to customers in 14 states. They also provide broadband data and voice (including long-distance) communications services outside their local service area and globally. As communities grow, they upgrade facilities to ensure adequate service levels. They also upgrade facilities with new technology to make additional services available.

There are three CenturyLink Communications central switching offices serving Thurston County. One is in the unincorporated county, and the other two are in Olympia and Lacey. The three switching offices work together to provide service to that part of the unincorporated area that is part of CenturyLink's service area. From the switching stations are main cable routes, branch feeder routes, and local loops that provide dial tone.

CenturyLink also maintains a broadband telecommunications network over a mix of optical fiber, coaxial cable, and copper wire. CenturyLink states that it currently provides telecommunications service to Thurston County and is committed to continuing to provide services in the future.

***Proposed Facilities***

CenturyLink states that it provides telecommunications service to a major portion of Thurston County and does not expect difficulties in continuing to provide that service to the future residents over the next 20 years.

**Utility Provider: Tenino Telephone Company**

Tenino Telephone Company has one switching station located at company headquarters in Tenino. The company serves the City of Tenino and part of the unincorporated county around the city.

**Utility Provider: Consolidated Communications**

Consolidated Communications provides phone and internet services to unincorporated Thurston County. Services are fed centrally out of Yelm, along with the regional central office and switching station.

***Proposed Facilities***

Tenino Telephone Company and Consolidated Communications both state that they can increase capacity indefinitely within their service areas and do not foresee any problems in providing telephone service to customers. It is not anticipated that these service boundaries will change in the foreseeable future.

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**D. CELLULAR TELEPHONE**

Since passage of the Federal Telecommunications Act of 1996, there has been rapid growth in the number of cellular telephone antennas in the unincorporated county. For up-to-date information please see Thurston County's Geodata's website at <https://www.thurstoncountywa.gov/departments/geodata-center> for current locations of cellular structures.

***Proposed Facilities***

Unlike other utilities, the cellular telephone industry does not plan facilities far into the future but instead analyzes market demand to determine expansion into new service areas. There are multiple cellular telephone providers in Thurston County, and each will be proposing to add new antenna sites over the coming years.

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**E. CABLE****Utility Provider: Comcast Cable**

Comcast serves cable television to residents of Thurston County.

***Proposed Facilities***

Comcast works closely with other utility companies and the county to stay informed on proposed developments so that cable can be part of developers' plans. Each year, company engineers assess the need for system expansion based on telephone inquiries, permitting data from the county, and technological advances in distribution equipment.



#### IV. COUNTY-OWNED/OPERATED UTILITIES

A brief overview of county-owned and operated utility facilities is included in this chapter.

- ❖ Solid Waste
- ❖ Stormwater
- ❖ Water and Sewer

This section also includes level of service standards for each utility.

For more information on the individual plans for each, please contact the departments or see their website for a list of those plans. For proposed projects of county-owned and operated utilities, please see the most recent adopted version of the Capital Improvement Program (Appendix G).

##### A. SOLID WASTE

In Thurston County, solid waste services are provided by both the public and private sectors as described in the Thurston County Solid Waste Management Plan (SWMP). The SWMP is a coordinated, comprehensive solid waste

See Chapter 6, Capital Facilities for information on existing inventory, future needs, and capital projects for solid waste.

management plan in cooperation with the cities and towns within the county. The purpose is to serve as a guiding document for local governments' solid waste services, including programs for waste reduction, collection, handling, recycling, organics management, and disposal. The Thurston County Hazardous Waste Management Plan is another important document related to solid waste planning. Individual subscription services or incorporated jurisdictions' private collection companies collect solid waste from residences and businesses. In the case of the City of Olympia, city collection crews collect solid waste. LeMay, Inc. is the hauler for all other curbside collection service within the County, certified through the WUTC. Thurston County government is responsible for providing facilities for municipal solid waste to be collected, and the resulting waste transfer and disposal. Thurston County Public Works Solid Waste Division manages the Waste and Recovery Center (WARC) located in Hawks Prairie, which includes:

- ❖ A closed landfill;
- ❖ A moderate risk waste collection facility;
- ❖ Inbound and outbound scalehouses, and
- ❖ A contractor-operated transfer station along with separate collection areas for residential trash, yard waste, and recyclable materials.

As provided in county Ordinance 15957, the WARC and two drop-box facilities located in Rainier and Rochester comprise the designated disposal system for all municipal solid waste generated in Thurston County. Waste received at the drop-box sites is transferred to the county-owned transfer station at the WARC where all waste collected is processed and prepared for transport. Solid waste is ultimately transferred for final disposal to the Roosevelt Regional Landfill located in Klickitat, WA. Roosevelt Regional Landfill is a state-of-the-art operation implementing climate-based solutions. Each year, Roosevelt creates enough energy to power more than 18,000 homes by converting methane gas to electricity.



Organics, which include food waste and yard debris, are accepted at the WARC from private collection companies, businesses, and residents. The material is ground up on-site, and transported to an organics composting facility, Brady Trucking and Landscape Supply, in Mason County.

Moderate risk waste (MRW) is accepted from residents and small quantity generator (SQG) businesses at the county's MRW facility located at the WARC (HazoHouse). There is no charge to residents to utilize the facility, however SQG businesses are charged fees for their use. The wastes collected are transported and ultimately either recycled or disposed, depending on the material, by a contractor licensed to perform such work.

Permitting for solid waste facilities is provided by the Thurston County Department of Public Health and Social Services.

Solid waste facility operations are funded through tipping fees collected from customers for waste management services provided.

Table 7-1. LOS Standard for Solid Waste

LOS Level	LOS Units	LOS Standard
<b>LOS A – Includes all 3 service level units.</b>	<b>1. Regulatory</b>	<b>New or Existing Facility:</b> Meets or exceeds federal, state, and/or local regulatory requirements.
<b>LOS B – Includes a combination of any 2 service level units.</b>	<b>2. Health/Safety</b>	<b>New or Existing Facility:</b> Meets or exceeds federal, state, and/or local health / safety issues for public or employees.
<b>LOS C – Includes 1 or no service level units.</b>	<b>3. Policy</b>	<b>New or Existing Facility:</b> Addresses a solid waste comprehensive plan goal or policy.

## B. STORMWATER UTILITY

The Stormwater Utility is a ratepayer-financed program that reduces flooding, erosion, and pollution in rainwater runoff. Property owners in unincorporated Thurston County pay Stormwater Utility rates as part of their property tax statement.

See Chapter 6, Capital Facilities, for information on existing inventory, future needs, and capital projects for stormwater facilities.

The Stormwater Utility was formed in 1985 in the northern part of the county and in 2007 expanded to include all portions of unincorporated Thurston County. Since then, Thurston County has been required to comply with the updated federal and state water pollution control laws. Washington Department of Ecology issues a municipal stormwater permit to Thurston County (Permit), which requires the county to take actions to manage where and how stormwater enters our streams, rivers, lakes, and groundwater within the regulated area.

While rain is a natural occurrence, stormwater can carry pavement, oil from vehicles, and yard chemicals to our vital water resources. The Permit requires the county to develop, implement, and annually update a Stormwater Management Program Plan to protect water quality and reduce discharges of pollutants from its municipal stormwater systems.

The Stormwater Utility has completed nine basin plans as of 2024. Thurston County Stormwater Utility programs include:

- ❖ Planning for community growth through Basin Planning and Watershed Characterization studies of our local waters.
- ❖ Publishing the Drainage Design and Erosion Control Manual (DDECM) which contains rules developers must follow to manage rainwater runoff.
- ❖ Inspecting stormwater facilities in neighborhoods and at businesses to make sure they work properly.
- ❖ Constructing stormwater facilities to improve water quality and reduce flooding and erosion in older neighborhoods built before development rules were in effect.
- ❖ Pollution prevention programs and construction of stormwater facilities and restoration projects, including floodplain, riparian, and wetland restoration to address regulatory obligations contained in Total Maximum Daily Load water cleanup plans.
- ❖ Monitoring the county's stormwater drainage system by detecting, eliminating, and preventing illicit discharge (illegal dumping) into the system.
- ❖ Developing, implementing, and annually updating a Stormwater Management Program Plan designed to reduce discharges of pollutants from its municipal stormwater systems to protect water quality.

Current and future stormwater facilities plans are found in the Capital Improvement Program (Appendix G). Capital projects are intended to address emerging environmental or regulatory issues relating to flooding, water quality, and/or habitat degradation.

*Table 7-2. LOS Standards for Stormwater Facilities*

LOS Level	LOS Units	LOS Standard
<b>LOS A - Includes all 3 service level units</b>	<b>1. Local Flow Control:</b> Provide flow control to reduce the impacts of stormwater runoff from hard surfaces and land conversions	<b>Facilities for new development and redevelopment:</b> Meet applicable DDECM flow control performances standards.
<b>LOS B - Includes a combination of any two service level units.</b>		<b>Facilities to improve deficiencies:</b> Meet the current DDECM flow control performance standards to maximum extent practicable.
<b>LOS C - Includes 1 or no service level unit.</b>		<b>Facilities accounting for future climate conditions:</b> Size facilities to flow control performances standards to account for projected climatic rainfall conditions.

	<b>2. Water Quality:</b> Provide runoff treatment to reduce the impacts of stormwater runoff from hard surfaces and land conversions.	<b>Facilities for new development and redevelopment:</b> Meet applicable DDECM runoff treatment performances standards.  <b>Facilities to improve deficiencies:</b> Meet the current DDECM runoff treatment performance standards to the maximum extent practicable.  <b>Facilities accounting for future climate conditions:</b> Size facilities to runoff control performances standards to account for projected climatic rainfall conditions.
	<b>3. Operations &amp; Maintenance (O&amp;M):</b> Inspect, maintain, repair, and replace municipal storm drainage infrastructure to ensure proper function.	<b>Regulatory Compliance:</b> Meet applicable MS4 permit and UIC requirements for stormwater drainage infrastructure.  <b>Enhanced Maintenance:</b> Apply Utility best practices for operating stormwater drainage infrastructure Countywide.

## C. WATER AND SEWER

Thurston County does not provide municipal water or municipal sewer service to rural areas, except for those areas where a public health-related issue or water quality concern necessitates county involvement. Cities are expected to provide water and sewer facilities to unincorporated areas within their respective urban growth areas.

The county owns three water systems (Boston Harbor, Grand Mound, and Tamoshan), and five sewer systems (Grand Mound, Boston Harbor, Tamoshan/Beverly Beach, Woodland Creek, and Olympic View), and one sewer line system in the Lacey UGA (Woodland Creek Sanitary Sewer). The Grand Mound water and sewer systems are located in the UGA.

On occasions when other rural, privately-owned water and sewer systems experience operating troubles or failures which could pose a risk to public health, the county may assist the residents in the planning, engineering, and construction of improvements to the existing water and sewer systems to solve these problems.

See Chapter 6, Capital Facilities for information on existing inventory, future needs, and capital projects for water and sewer.

To see information on wells, see Chapter 9, Environmental, Recreation, & Open Space, under Environment, Water Resources.

### Urban Growth Areas

Sewer and water systems are expected to be provided to unincorporated parts of areas identified and zoned for urban growth, with these systems constructed as the areas urbanize. The cities are typically responsible for extending these services within the unincorporated parts of urban growth areas.

**Grand Mound UGA:** An urban growth area was established in the Rochester/Grand Mound area in the late 1970s. The UGA boundaries and zoning were updated in 1995. A Utility Local Improvement District (ULID) was formed through approval by the community in late 1996 to provide water and sewer system improvements in the Grand Mound UGA. Both water and sewer systems are in operation providing service to customers located within the UGA. In 2002, the county established policies to provide water service to properties located outside of the UGA.

**Lacey UGA:** An urban growth area was established in the Lacey area in the early 1990s. The UGA boundaries and zoning were updated in compliance with city and county joint planning. Thurston County received loan and grant funding from the Washington State Department of Ecology to convert 131 septic systems in the Woodland Creek Estates and Covington Place developments to a STEP sewer system that connects to the City of Lacey sewer collection system. The county will own this STEP system until ownership is turned over to the City of Lacey, either when the loan is paid off or through annexation. Until then, by mutual agreement with the City of Lacey, they will operate, maintain, and manage the system. The system was completed and has been operational since March 2014.

Table 7-3. LOS Standards for Water & Sewer

Facility	LOS Units	LOS Standard
<b>Water Systems</b> <u><b>Rural:</b></u> <b>Boston Harbor and Tamoshan</b>  <u><b>Urban:</b></u> <b>Grand Mound</b>	<b>Equivalent Residential Units (ERU):</b> Cubic feet per month of water consumed as measured at the source, based on the following minimums: <b>Rural:</b> ERU=700 cf/mo <b>Urban:</b> ERU-700 cf/mo	<b>Rural:</b> Capacity to provide domestic water and fire flow services for residential and limited commercial uses. <b>Urban:</b> Capacity to provide domestic water and fire flow services for residential, commercial, and industrial uses. In addition, Rural and Urban water systems shall meet current federal, state, and local drinking water standards, whenever possible.
<b>Sewer Systems</b> <u><b>Rural:</b></u> <b>Boston Harbor, Tamoshan/ Beverly Beach, and Olympic View</b>	Equivalent Residential Units (ERU): Cubic feet per month of sewerage discharge as measured at the source, based on the following minimums;	<b>Rural:</b> Capacity to provide sewer collection and wastewater treatment services for residential uses.

<b><u>Urban:</u></b> <b>Grand Mound</b> <b>Woodland Creek Estates</b>	Rural: ERU=700 cf/mo Urban: ERU=700 cf/mo	<b>Urban:</b> Capacity to provide sewer collection and wastewater treatment services for residential, commercial, and industrial uses. In addition, Rural and Urban systems shall meet federal, state and local permit requirements for receiving water standards, whenever possible.
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For proposed projects for county-owned and operated utility facilities please see the most recent adopted version of the Capital Improvement Program (Appendix G).

## V. GOALS, OBJECTIVES, AND POLICIES

### PRIVATE UTILITIES

**GOAL 1:** TO FACILITATE PRIVATE UTILITY SERVICES AT THE APPROPRIATE LEVELS TO ACCOMMODATE THE DEMAND ASSOCIATED WITH CURRENT AND FUTURE LAND USES. SUCH SERVICES SHOULD BE PROVIDED IN A MANNER THAT MAXIMIZES PUBLIC SAFETY AND MINIMIZES POTENTIAL ADVERSE ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACTS.

**OBJECTIVE A:** The county maintains current information on the existing and proposed facilities of private utilities.

#### POLICIES:

1. Expansion and improvement of private utility systems should be recognized primarily as the responsibility of the private utility providing the corresponding service. The county should generally participate in the development of, and rely upon, plans prepared by each utility undertaking facility and capital improvement planning.
2. The county should maintain current information in the Comprehensive Plan on the future plans of private utility providers and as new information from private utility providers becomes available.
3. The county should maintain copies of utility providers' long-range system improvement plans and make them available as public information.

**OBJECTIVE B:** The county promotes the joint use of transportation rights-of-way and other utility corridors.

#### POLICIES:

1. The county should promote, wherever feasible, the co-location of new utility distribution and communication facilities when doing so is consistent with utility industry practices and

national electrical and other codes. Examples of facilities which could be shared are trenches, transportation rights-of-way, towers, poles, and antennas.

2. The county should provide timely and effective notice to all affected private utilities of road construction, including the maintenance and repair of existing roads, in order to promote the joint planning and coordination of public and private utility trenching activities.
3. The county should review county standards and procedures to ensure that they support joint use of transportation rights-of-way and utility corridors.
4. The county should standardize locations for utilities within road rights-of-way when feasible.

**OBJECTIVE C:** The county coordinates with the cities and towns throughout the county on private utility planning.

**POLICIES:**

1. The county should coordinate on an ongoing basis with the cities and towns on private utility planning to ensure consistency in long-range plans and regulations to promote efficient and effective provision of utility services.
2. The county should coordinate with the cities and towns in the planning of multi-jurisdictional private utility facility improvements.
3. The county should encourage decisions made regarding private utility facilities to be consistent with and complementary to regional demand and resources and should reinforce an interconnected regional distribution network.

**OBJECTIVE D:** The county coordinates with private utility providers.

**POLICIES:**

1. The county should coordinate on an ongoing basis planning activities with private utility providers to ensure consistency between the facilities' plans of private utilities and the long-range plans and regulations of the county.
2. The county should seek input from private utility providers when developing new plans, regulations, and procedures which affect private utility service and activities, such as street excavation, street obstructions, and fee schedule revisions.
3. The county should support outreach efforts of utilities to educate commercial and residential power customers about the benefits of clean and efficient energy technologies and practices.

**OBJECTIVE E:** Potential adverse impacts of utility facilities are minimized.

**POLICIES:**

1. The county should encourage utility facilities such as electric substations, natural gas gate stations, wireless communication facilities (cellular telephone towers), and telephone

switching stations be designed to minimize aesthetic and other impacts on surrounding land uses. Landscaped screening, buffers, setbacks, and other design and siting techniques should be used to accomplish this objective. The extent of these requirements depend on the adjacent land uses and zoning.

2. The county should encourage the location of private utility facilities near compatible land uses.
3. The county should encourage telecommunication providers to use existing structures, such as existing towers and buildings, where feasible.
4. The county should encourage that community input is solicited prior to county approval of private utility facilities which may significantly impact the surrounding community.
5. To minimize adverse impacts on water quality and human health, the county should continue to review, through the existing permitting process, (a) the management, spraying and clearing of vegetation in utility corridors and in the sanitary control portions of public right-of-way corridors, and (b) the new construction and expansion of lines.
6. The county should encourage utility corridors on public lands be made available for recreational use when such use does not negatively impact adjacent land uses and does not pose a public health or safety hazard or result in property damage on adjacent lands.
7. If federal laws on electromagnetic fields change, the county should review its policies and regulations accordingly.

## SOLID WASTE

**GOAL 2: PROVIDE FOR THE MANAGEMENT OF SOLID WASTE AND HAZARDOUS WASTES ON A COUNTYWIDE BASIS, INCLUDING PLANNING FOR FACILITIES AND SERVICES.**

### POLICIES:

1. The county should require that handling and disposal of solid and hazardous waste be done in ways that minimize land, air, and water pollution and protect public health.
2. The Thurston County Solid Waste Management Plan and the Thurston County Hazardous Waste Management Plan will identify the services that should be provided in the county.
3. The county should promote an integrated solid waste management strategy that places priority on waste reduction, reuse, and recycling of solid waste above resource recovery, incineration, and disposal in landfills.
4. The county should provide education and promotion of programs for the reduction of residential and commercial organics, including yard debris and food waste, through collection, composting, and anaerobic digestion, in order to reduce the quantity sent to a landfill. Additionally, the county should prioritize efforts to divert edible food away from the waste stream and towards food banks and other agencies that can utilize the food to feed



the hungry. The county also should utilize finished compost products in their projects when appropriate and track that usage for reporting to the Department of Ecology.

5. The county has the responsibility for transfer and disposal of all solid wastes generated in the county and therefore should continue to maintain its existing solid waste facilities and construct improvements, as needed, to meet current and future demand for services.
6. The county should continue to promote safe disposal of household and small business hazardous wastes outside of landfills, as well as the use of safer, less hazardous products and the reduction of hazardous materials.
7. The county should seek practical solutions to problems of illegal dumping.
8. The county should require that all facilities that store, process, or use hazardous materials or generate or treat hazardous wastes in their operations be sited in compliance with state and local laws and be consistent with the county's Solid Waste Management Plan; use best management practices for the protection of groundwater, surface waters, and air quality and be periodically monitored for compliance with such laws and practices.
9. The county should revise the Zoning Code to ensure consistency with the adopted Moderate Risk Waste Plan, the Northern Thurston County Ground Water Management Plan, the Critical Areas Ordinance, and the Comprehensive Plan's policies.

## STORMWATER UTILITY

**GOAL 3:** PROVIDE FOR STORMWATER MANAGEMENT IN A MANNER THAT PROTECTS ENVIRONMENTAL QUALITY AND AVOIDS INCREASING THE RISK OF PROPERTY DAMAGE FROM STORMWATER RUNOFF.

**OBJECTIVE:** Provide stormwater management in a manner that protects receiving waters and property, consistent with state and federal law.

**POLICIES:**

1. The county should maintain or improve the quantity and quality of water entering groundwater and surface waters through the implementation of the County's Drainage, Design, and Erosion Control Manual (DDECM) and the Municipal and Underground Injection Control Stormwater Management Program Plans (SWMPP).
2. The county should protect steep slopes and unstable soils through the implementation of DDECM and Thurston County Critical Areas Regulations to reduce the potential for slope failure.
3. The county should review and update SWMPPs, DDECM, and Stormwater CIP prioritization methodology to comply with regulatory obligations and reflect advancements in stormwater management.
4. The county should periodically evaluate and set level of stormwater management service utility rates to fund regulatory obligations and desired level of service.

5. The county should work with stakeholders to meet stormwater management objectives.
6. The county should consider accommodating projected future climate conditions, such as higher peak flows associated with more frequent and intense precipitation events when constructing new and replacement drainage infrastructure.
7. The county should review and update education and escalating enforcement efforts to ensure stormwater infrastructure is managed per DDECM standards.

## DRINKING WATER & SEWER UTILITIES

**GOAL 4: PROVIDE PUBLIC WATER AND SEWER UTILITIES SERVICE AT THE APPROPRIATE LEVELS WHERE IT SERVES THE PUBLIC INTEREST.**

**OBJECTIVE A:** Provide sewer systems in designated urban growth areas and in rural areas only under limited circumstances.

### **POLICIES:**

1. The county should allow sewer systems in designated urban growth areas. In rural areas, sewer systems should be allowed only to correct identified health hazards or water quality deficiencies of areas of existing development. Expansion or extension into rural areas must be consistent with the Growth Management Act.
2. Intermediate-density wastewater technologies such as State-regulated Large Onsite Septic Systems (LOSS) should be encouraged in designated higher-density rural areas to reduce total wastewater loading while also reducing the cost of a future transition to sewer. Areas suitable for such intermediate-density wastewater systems should be the subject of Feasibility Studies for determining compatible future land uses.
3. Decisions on the design capacity and service area designation for such sewer systems in rural areas should be made with consideration of adopted zoning designations of adjacent areas.
4. Where sewer systems are being provided to unincorporated rural areas or the Rochester-Grand Mound area, the county should be the primary sewer system provider through the County Services Act.
5. In unincorporated areas inside the urban growth areas around cities, the cities should be the primary sewer provider. As an exception, the county could provide sewers in a UGA on an interim basis (if the cities are unable to provide the service) or to protect water quality.
6. Utility services within growth areas should be phased outward from the urbanizing core as that core becomes substantially developed to concentrate urban growth and infilling.
7. The county should develop, and periodically review and update, a comprehensive sewerage general plan for all unincorporated rural areas where there are health and water quality problems related to sewage in areas of existing development, and in all urban growth areas where no sewerage planning has been done.

*NOTE: Other related policies dealing with sewer systems and water quality are found in Chapter 9 (Environment, Recreation, and Open Space).*

**OBJECTIVE B:** Consider all factors and impacts in determining appropriate sewage treatment and disposal methods.

**POLICIES:**

1. Wastewater disposal methods should be determined by considering all factors, such as environmental impacts, long-term effects, technical feasibility, and cost effectiveness, especially the maintenance and improvement of water quality.
2. Wastewater collection, treatment, and disposal alternatives should be encouraged where feasible, where water quality can be protected, and/or where appropriate operation and maintenance are provided.
3. Alternative methods of wastewater collection, treatment, and disposal should be discouraged in areas where sewer service is provided or planned. In other areas, they should be considered only when an acceptable plan for operation and maintenance is provided, and they will not adversely affect ground and surface water quality and/or public health.
4. The county should monitor the functioning of on-site wastewater disposal systems and require that they be maintained in a condition that will assure their longevity, protect public health, and prevent contamination of surface and ground water.
5. The county should periodically review and update the capacity and alternatives for wastewater treatment related to the limits of the LOTT treatment plant.
6. The county should review and revise policies for on-site wastewater disposal alternatives to comply with the above policies and adopted state wastewater disposal regulations.
7. Existing impacts from legacy wastewater disposal practices should be considered when evaluating the capacity of soils and aquifers to receive and assimilate additional wastes. Existing data on groundwater quality should be reviewed prior to recommending additional wastewater loading in p
8. The human health and environmental risks from human and animal waste loading should include consideration of long-lived chemicals of emerging concern (CECs) including examples such as PFAS substances (per- and polyfluoroalkyl substances). The potentially irreversible risks from these substances should be determined prior to making major zoning and land-use determinations.
9. The county should examine the building code for standards for low-water use fixtures and should make available to residents the literature comparing efficiency of low-water use fixtures and issues related to the no-flow alternative.
10. Planning for increased density, especially where desirable in UGAs and within cities, should assist the transition to

*NOTE: Ecology does not allow discharge of chlorine.*

**OBJECTIVE C:** Drinking water service inside urban growth areas around cities are provided by cities or private utility systems which are the designated service providers through coordinated water system planning; the county provides drinking water systems in rural areas only under limited circumstances.

**POLICIES:**

1. In order to resolve documented health hazards, safety, or pollution in areas of existing rural development, the county may serve as the water utility owner or develop a proactive assistance program focused on keeping small distribution systems in private ownership.
2. In rural areas where the county provides sewer service, the county or a private utility system should also be the water provider.
3. The capacity of natural recharge to provide groundwater recharge, streamflow and mitigation for water systems should be explicitly calculated.
4. Water banking, innovative mitigation and other methods for improving recharge should be developed as long-term plans for supplies of water.
5. The feasibility of large-scale options for water storage, including reforestation, soil storage, deep aquifer storage, managed Aquifer Recharge (MAR) and pipelines from existing reservoirs should be further considered and potentially developed as explicit plans in coordination with regional and local partners.
6. Governance systems should be developed similar to other successful watershed-based multi-stakeholder coordination councils or water districts, for the development of strategic large-scale water resource plans and mitigation programs.
7. Reclaimed water should be explicitly added as a component of long-term resource planning.

*NOTE: See Chapter 9 (Environment, Recreation, and Open Space) for other policies related to management of water systems and water resources.*