

**Chapter Five
Utilities**

Introduction

Utilities, as defined here~~in~~ and for purposes of the plan, include all lines and facilities used to distribute, collect, transmit, or control electric power, natural gas, petroleum products, information (telecommunications), water, and sewage. Most utilities in Whatcom County are operated by special-purpose districts, ~~and~~ private companies, or ~~are extended~~ by cities. The ~~e~~County's responsibility for utilities provided by other agencies ranges from regulating ~~land their~~ use ~~of land~~ to managing ~~their~~ activities in public rights-of-way.

~~Electricity power~~, natural gas, petroleum, and some other utilities treated herein are inherently regional and are regulated directly and indirectly at several levels, including ~~by~~ the Washington Utilities and Transportation Commission (WUTC) and the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission (FERC). ~~Changing regulations at~~ every level, ~~changing regulations~~ affect the way utilities will be managed through the planning period. Changes in the utility marketplace, together with new and varying utility needs, can be expected to affect the way other utilities are marketed, transmitted, and used.

Purpose

This section contains policies to guide Whatcom County in reviewing private utility development proposals ~~and~~ regional transmission proposals, and in reviewing and regulating utility services and facilities provided by other public agencies and the private sector. This section also provides a general framework for utility-specific comprehensive plans including those prepared by entities other than Whatcom County. The cities, Puget Sound Energy, Cascade Natural Gas, Public Utility District No. 1 (Whatcom PUD) and other special-purpose districts are encouraged to use the Whatcom County Comprehensive Plan in preparing their own plans and capital improvement programs.

It is the intent of this plan to support ~~providers of~~ ~~electricity power~~, natural gas, petroleum, telecommunications, and other ~~utilities providers~~ in fulfilling their "public service obligations" required by state law to provide service on demand to existing and future customers. It is also the intent of this plan to minimize any negative effects resulting from the provision of that service on the residents, infrastructure, and the environment of the county.

~~**Consistency with Process**~~

~~In March 1991, a Utilities Planning and Advisory Committee (UPAC) was formed in response to the requirements of GMA to address utility issues with the exception of water, sewer, and solid waste issues. The committee was comprised of representatives from electric power purveyors, Cascade Natural Gas, Whatcom~~

~~PUD, Whatcom County Planning Division, City of Bellingham, the small cities, and citizen groups. A list of UPAC members and their represented groups is located at the beginning of this plan.~~

~~Unlike most other GMA committees, members were not appointed by the County Executive; instead they are appointed by the County Council. The committee is comprised of a mix of utility industry professionals and private citizens who have conscientiously attended meetings whenever called. The first meeting of the UPAC was in April 1991. The committee met monthly for approximately one and one-half years, then directed county staff to prepare a draft utility chapter for the GMA Comprehensive Plan. Since then, the UPAC members have met when called together for review of subsequent drafts of the chapter, and have been consulted individually on industry-specific issues and questions. Regulations imposed at the state and federal levels and their impact on local jurisdictions' ability to plan were, perhaps, the most difficult issues the committee had to deal with. Of recent note, UPAC was reconvened in 2000 from a request by County Council to look at transmission pipeline siting issues, and has been actively involved in the 2002 update to the utility chapter.~~

~~The coordination requirements of the GMA were complied with in the process of producing this chapter. Many of the main purveyors of utilities as defined in this chapter contributed to the process by providing information and sample plans and by participation in the process itself.~~

~~Documents submitted by Cascade Natural Gas, Puget Sound Energy, (formerly Puget Sound Power & Light), and Qwest (formerly US West) as models for this chapter were used in preparing this document; these and other references consulted are listed in the bibliography for this chapter. The *Draft GMA Electrical Facilities Plan*, Puget Sound Power & Light Company Inc., September 1992, and the *Natural Gas and Hazardous Liquid Pipeline Background Report*, October 2001, were particularly useful.~~

Reason for change: Omitting outdated information.

~~GMA Goals and, County w-Wide Planning Policies, and Visioning Community Value Statements~~

~~The goals, policies, and action plans in this chapter contribute to achievingement of several of the GMA planning goals, including those considering urban growth, reduction of sprawl, open space and recreation, and public facilities and services. The chapter has been written to satisfy those goals while also meeting the intent and requirements of the County w-Wide Planning Policies (CWPP) and general guidelines of Visioning Community Value Statements.~~

~~Although CWPPs do not address all utilities as defined in this chapter as a separate category, various types of utilities are addressed within a number of sections.~~

1 | Specifically, the policies encourage sharing of corridors for utilities, trails, and other
2 | transportation rights-of-way. The CWPPs also call for cities to develop plans, in
3 | cooperation with existing water purveyors and other municipal corporations
4 | providing water or sewer services, affording urban-level water and sewer services
5 | within their Urban Growth Areas (UGAs). The interlocal agreements specified in the
6 | policies must address reasonable criteria for annexation and ensure adequate
7 | services including water and sewer utilities. ~~Within Urban Growth Areas this will~~
8 | ~~comply with what has been adopted.~~ The CWPPs specify that cities will not extend
9 | water and sewer utilities without an adopted program for annexation and an
10 | adopted Capital Facilities Plan. Exceptions may be made in cases where human
11 | health is threatened. The CWPPs require that if water extensions are made, they
12 | must be consistent with the service area boundaries and other provisions of the
13 | *Coordinated Water System Plan*. Outside of Urban Growth Areas, cities and other
14 | public and private utilities may extend water only at rural levels of service. If rural
15 | levels of service are extended, availability of pipeline capacity to meet local supply
16 | needs shall not be used to justify development counter to county-wide land
17 | development patterns and shall not be considered in conversions of agriculture
18 | land, forestry, or rural lands. These and other water quantity and quality issues
19 | covered in the CWPPs are addressed directly and supported in the goals, policies,
20 | and action plans of this chapter.

21 |
22 | The Growth Management Act, in conjunction with CWPPs, ~~as presently adopted,~~
23 | clearly ~~identify~~identifies the County in a decision-making role when it comes to
24 | utility provisions. This is implemented through the County's ~~power authority~~ to set
25 | urban growth boundaries ~~granted by the Growth Management Act~~ and can be
26 | specified through the Interlocal Agreements assigned in the CWPPs. It should be
27 | noted that the CWPPs are locally adopted and could be subject to change in the
28 | future.

29 |
30 | ~~Visioning Community Value Statements do not directly or indirectly address or~~
31 | ~~identify the importance of utilities of any kind. Growth Management goals and~~
32 | ~~County-Wide Planning Policies will be served by adoption of this chapter and~~
33 | ~~implementation of its goals, policies, and action plans.~~

34 |
35 | Reason for change: Omitting outdated information.
36 |

37 | 38 | **GMA Requirements** 39 |

40 | The Growth Management Act mandates that counties required to plan under the act
41 | adopt comprehensive plans including "a utilities element consisting of the general
42 | location, proposed location, and capacity of all existing and proposed utilities,
43 | including, but not limited to, electrical lines, telecommunication lines, and natural
44 | gas lines." The utilities element will include maps illustrating existing and proposed
45 | facilities and define goals and policies concerning those facilities and future
46 | proposed locations for utility facilities and corridors. By future proposed locations, it

1 is the interpretation of Whatcom County that “proposed” means projects that have
2 been submitted to the appropriate Whatcom County agency seeking permits or
3 approval. See **Map 145-1**, which shows existing and planned electrical facilities;
4 **Map 125-2**, natural gas facilities; and **Map 135-3**, communications facilities.
5 This plan does not address all the issues regarding energy or energy policy. As
6 required by GMA, this plan addresses only those issues that are considered utility
7 issues of Whatcom County. Therefore, this document does not address coal,
8 automotive-oriented, or other non-utility energy issues except with regard to
9 transmission corridors.

10
11 Whatcom County is not a municipal purveyor of electric power or water. While this
12 chapter ~~of the comprehensive plan does thoroughly~~ addresses provision of electric
13 power and other utilities by private and public purveyors, ~~the chapter~~ it does not
14 address water supply other than as might be provided by Whatcom PUD or through
15 other various water districts, associations, or private wells with one or more
16 connections. Water supply and coordination affected by these organizations or
17 parties is largely addressed in the *Whatcom County Coordinated Water System Plan*
18 (*CWSP*). Maps showing locations of water purveyors’ pipelines and service areas, ~~of~~
19 ~~water purveyors~~ and locations of existing sewer system areas, are adopted as they
20 presently exist or are modified.

21 22 **Background Summary**

23
24 Whatcom County is in a special situation due to its unique location between Canada
25 and major utility users ~~of utility services~~ to the south. This creates a situation
26 where utility services move through Whatcom County for their products to reach
27 from the source to the destination. Whatcom County can be viewed as a gateway
28 for utilities entering from Canada to reach demand elsewhere. This is especially true
29 for natural gas, petroleum products, and electricity.

30
31 Utility services in Whatcom County are provided by a number of private and public
32 utility operators. The main purveyor of electrical power within Whatcom County is
33 Puget Sound Energy, but there are other providers as well, notably Whatcom PUD,
34 and the cities of Blaine and Sumas. Cascade Natural Gas provides natural gas for
35 the county; however, there are locations throughout the county where natural gas is
36 not available. Such locations have to rely on electricity, propane, or other means to
37 meet their energy needs. Telecommunications are provided by multiple telephone,
38 cable television, internet, and carriers ~~(telephone), AT&T Broadband (cable~~
39 ~~television), and a number of~~ wireless communication companies. Water is obtained
40 from private and public systems. Sewage treatment is primarily by septic system in
41 the unincorporated areas of the County. There are areas of the County where
42 consumers have the choice between multiple providers of the same utility service.
43 Whatcom County supports free market competition for services, when such
44 competition benefits the County consumers.

1 Whatcom County strongly encourages utilities to develop in a safe and rational
2 manner based on the demand requirements of development consistent with the
3 County Comprehensive Plan.

4
5 The 20-Year Capital Facilities Plan (Appendix E) provides additional information
6 relating to water systems, sewer systems, and solid waste management.

8 **Issues, Goals, and Policies**

10 **Locational Criteria for Siting Utilities**

11
12 County-wide Planning Policies, ~~the Visioning Process~~, open space, greenways, the
13 environment, zoning, existing development patterns, ~~Growth Management~~ urban
14 growth areas, and other physical, political, business, economic, and geographical
15 constraints will demarcate both the need for and the locations available for any new
16 electric power and/or natural gas corridors. Electric power, communications and
17 natural gas purveyors are part of regional systems that are demand-driven and are
18 regulated at the State and, to some degree, at the Federal levels. This chapter
19 provides for general locations of utility facilities needed in the future. Precise
20 locations will be determined in the future and will be evaluated through existing
21 regulatory and review processes including conditional use and environmental
22 review.

23
24 It is the County's preference that utility corridors must be located in areas of least
25 impact to the public and environment ~~of Whatcom County~~ as measured by
26 proximity to populous and environmentally sensitive areas.

27
28 While it is in the best interest of ~~the Whatcom County~~ citizens ~~of Whatcom County~~
29 to plan for the location of utility services in future growth areas, every effort must
30 be made to avoid undesirable effects of locating those facilities in areas where the
31 health or safety of Whatcom County residents may be adversely affected, where
32 the development is prohibitively expensive, or where environmental costs may be
33 too high. Utility corridors shall be shared by compatible utilities when safely
34 possible.

35
36 **Goal 5A: Specify a clear process for determining appropriate locations**
37 **for future needed utility facilities, including electric power**
38 **facilities greater than 55 kV.**

39
40 Policy 5A-1: Use the existing conditional use, major project permit, and
41 environmental review processes to evaluate and determine the
42 suitability of proposed suitable locations for any new utility facilities
43 above the distribution level during the planning period.

- 1 Policy 5A-2: When expansion or improvements of utility systems are being
2 considered, Whatcom County prefers the following in the order
3 provided:
4 • upgrading of existing facilities in existing corridors;
5 • replacing facilities in existing corridors where appropriate;
6 • sharing existing corridors.
7
- 8 Policy 5A-3: Encourage utility purveyors to consider underground installation of
9 distribution facilities consistent with WUTC rates and tariffs.
10
- 11 Policy 5A-4: To the extent that installation of utility facilities affects growth
12 patterns, utility services should be located and designed appropriate
13 to the land use designation.~~reflect designated growth areas.~~
14
- 15 Policy 5A-5: Discourage siting utility facilities in known natural hazard areas
16 unless public benefit outweighs the risk.
17
- 18 Policy 5A-6: Ensure that utilities and power generating facilities are sited where
19 they will not adversely impact the ecological ~~flow~~-regime needed for
20 ~~fish, including~~ threatened and endangered ~~fish~~-species.
21

22 Reason for change: Expand to include all Threatened & Endangered species, not
23 just fish.

24 Trends in Utility Technology

25
26 Changing technology will affect the costs and types of utility services and systems
27 available. Technologies can evolve very rapidly, particularly when breakthrough
28 discoveries occur. ~~Fiber optics are a good example; it is generally accepted that~~
29 ~~fiber optics technology is changing the way we communicate, and is doing so~~
30 ~~rapidly and in a widespread manner.~~ It is likely that new technologies will emerge
31 and existing technologies will evolve within ~~this~~the planning period.
32

33 Reason for change: Removing outdated information.

34 **Goal 5B: Support the development and use of new utility and**

- 35 **information technologies.**
- 36
37
- 38 Policy 5B-1: Facilitate the use of ~~future~~new technologies by allowing flexibility in
39 regulations and policies affecting utility facilities when it can be
40 shown that a net benefit to the public is likely to result.
41
- 42 Policy 5B-2: Support development and use of new technologies.
43
- 44 Policy 5B-3: Recognize the economic opportunities and benefits communication
45 services access provides to the community.

1 Policy 5B-4: Support development regulations that are flexible and receptive to
2 innovations and advances in communication technologies ~~technology~~
3 and that recognize the positive impact of moving information rather
4 than people.
5

6 Policy 5B-5: Work closely with major utility providers to enhance the ~~e~~County and
7 private geographic information systems (GIS) data-bases.
8

9 **Electric Power, Natural Gas, Petroleum, and Telecommunications**

10
11 All Whatcom County residents should have access to utilities as defined in this
12 section. The WUTC requires equitable availability and controls the price of electric
13 power and natural gas services provided by investor-owned utilities. FERC does so
14 for electric, natural gas and petroleum facilities crossing state lines. Additionally,
15 the Energy Facility Site Evaluation Council (EFSEC), the Department of Labor and
16 Industries (DLI), and the US Department of Energy (DOE) regulate utility siting and
17 operations. Goals relating exclusively to natural gas and hazardous liquid lines are
18 addressed separately.
19

20 Changes in the utilities marketplace will probably create a need for recognition of a
21 variety of service needs and for new models of how energy is distributed, stored,
22 and used. Regulations concerning provision of utility services to consumers should
23 remain flexible and offer opportunities for review with respect to changes in utility
24 industry dynamics dictated by market forces and regulations at the state and
25 federal levels.
26

27 **Goal 5C: Facilitate accessibility of utilities.**

28
29 Policy 5C-1: Support user access to natural gas, electric, and communications
30 utilities.
31

32 Policy 5C-2: Review the policies in this chapter as necessary in order to keep
33 them current with market and regulatory changes.
34

35 Policy 5C-3: ~~Include~~ Encourage the processing of utility permits ~~in-concurrent with~~
36 the processing of Major Development Permit and Planned Unit
37 Development permit applications, when applicable.
38

39 Reason for change: Revised for clarity – utility installation and projects don't always
40 coincide.

41
42 Policy 5C-4: Make use of advanced technology to assist government operations
43 and enhance public accessibility.
44

- 1 | Policy 5C-5: Encourage regional planning of public facilities and utilities ~~which-that~~
2 | will facilitate coordinated land-use management and capital facility
3 | construction.
4 |
- 5 | Policy 5C-6: Support capital facilities to correct existing deficiencies, and to
6 | accommodate new growth in an efficient, cost effective, and timely
7 | fashion.
8 |
- 9 | Policy 5C-7: Public facilities and utilities will be designed and located in a manner
10 | ~~which-that~~ protects the integrity of planned land uses, existing land
11 | forms, drainage ways, natural systems, critical areas, and resource
12 | lands.
13 |
- 14 | Policy 5C-8: Extension of urban utility services shall be limited to areas
15 | designated for urban development. ~~will be carefully staged in order~~
16 | ~~to discourage new development in areas that are premature in terms~~
17 | ~~of planning, timing and funding.~~
18 |
- 19 | ~~Policy 5C-9: Extension of urban governmental services and utilities will be~~
20 | ~~confined to areas planned for urban development and be consistent~~
21 | ~~with the optimal land use and urban growth area plan.~~
22 |

23 | Reason for change: Consolidating two similar policies – urban governmental
24 | services policies are contained in Chapters 2 and 4.

- 25 |
- 26 | Policy 5C-~~109~~: Appropriately scale pPublic utility systems ~~will be appropriately~~
27 | ~~sealed~~ to accommodate anticipated population growth.
28 |

29 | **Permitting Process Efficiency**

30 |

31 | Time required for permitting processes can increase development costs and can
32 | impede the timely provision of electric power and other utilities to residential,
33 | commercial, and business users. Any new utility installation requires precisely
34 | designed and selected components to complete and bring a facility on line. Careful
35 | planning is necessary to ensure the proper components are available as needed.
36 | Delays in obtaining permits can disrupt planning cycles and can result in utility
37 | services not being available when needed. Local permit processing should not
38 | interfere with or cause long delays for the provision of utilities to residents,
39 | industry, or business.

40 | **Goal 5D: Minimize the time required for processing utilities permits.**

- 41 |
- 42 |
- 43 | Policy 5D-1: Maintain sStreamlined and simplifledy permitting processes relating
44 | to installation of utility facilities designed to serve existing or
45 | approved development.
46 |

1 | Policy 5D-2: ~~Eliminate-Avoid~~ duplication of criteria in permits.

2

3 **Goal 5E: Reduce unnecessary obstacles to land use development**
4 **applications.**

5

6 Policy 5E-1: County Planning and Development Services will notify and seek
7 comment from utility operators concerning land use development
8 applications adjacent to existing major utility facilities and will take
9 comments received under advisement.

10

11 Policy 5E2: Require evidence of compliance by the applicant with all relevant
12 easement provisions as a condition of all discretionary and non-
13 discretionary land use approvals.

14

15 Policy 5E3: Utility companies shall provide notification of proposed projects to
16 abutting landowners when required by County code.

17

18 **Impediments to the Provision of Utilities**

19

20 The ability of utility purveyors to meet the mandates of WUTC and FERC could be
21 affected by all of the following: GMA regulations, goals, and policies; plat
22 covenants, conditions, and restrictions; infrastructure requirements; zoning ~~(how~~
23 ~~much?—where?)~~; County ~~w-Wide~~ Planning Policies; ~~Visioning—Community—Value~~
24 ~~Statement scenarios~~; and environmentally sensitive areas.

25

26 **Goal 5F: Identify and remove impediments to effective siting of**
27 **necessary utility facilities.**

28

29 Policy 5F-1: Periodically review existing regulations to identify and eliminate
30 unintended or unreasonable constraints on the provision of necessary
31 utilities as defined in this section.

32

33 **Regulatory Controls Encouraging Energy Conservation**

34

35 Conservation is considered a substantial contributor to regional and local energy
36 supplies. Generally, there are two components of conservation: *regulatory issues*
37 and *infrastructure*. Regulatory issues include the efficiencies created by zoning
38 density, development standards, establishing minimum energy efficiency standards,
39 and energy code enforcement. Infrastructure issues include existing utility facilities
40 and privately owned equipment ranging from purveyor-owned hardware to
41 consumer-owned appliances. While energy demand increases as a result of growth,
42 conservation plays a large role in limiting the quantity of that new demand.

43

44 **Goal 5G: Support cost-effective conservation as a significant supply**
45 **factor and implement policies that promote energy**
46 **conservation measures.**

- 1 | Policy 5G-1: ~~Review and revise existing and proposed~~Land use regulations should
2 | ~~be for~~ consistency with the conservation and ~~the~~ other goals in this
3 | chapter.
4 |
- 5 | Policy 5G-2: Encourage and support the use of conservation-based methods and
6 | technologies.
7 |
- 8 | Policy 5G-3: Support energy conservation and energy efficiency in all proposed
9 | residential, commercial, and industrial projects by improving the
10 | energy efficiency of new construction and the existing building stock
11 | through building codes and practices, and support refurbishing and
12 | remodeling projects to include energy efficient components via
13 | expedited permitting and assistance.
14 |
- 15 | Policy 5G-4 Facilitate and encourage conservation of resources, in order to delay
16 | the need for additional facilities for electrical energy and water
17 | resources, and to ~~achieve improved~~maintain adopted air quality
18 | standards.
19 |
- 20 | Policy 5G-5: The County should consider funding and promoting energy education
21 | services in order to inform citizens on energy conservation and the
22 | use of renewable energy sources.
23 |
- 24 | Policy 5G-6: Consider use of renewable energy sources in County facilities.
25 | Improve energy efficiency in County facilities, vehicle fleets, and
26 | equipment consistent with the measures identified in the Whatcom
27 | County Climate Protection and Energy Conservation Plan (2007).
28 |
- 29 | **Goal 5H: Support cost-effective renewable energy projects and**
30 | **implement policies that promote renewable energy projects.**
31 |
- 32 | Policy 5H-1: ~~Land use Review and revise existing and proposed~~ regulations should
33 | ~~be for~~ consistency with the renewable energy goals and ~~the~~ other
34 | goals in this chapter.
35 |
- 36 | Policy 5H-2: Encourage and support the development of renewable energy
37 | projects and technologies, including pursuing renewable energy
38 | supply portfolios for the County from power suppliers as well as small
39 | local renewable energy projects such as anaerobic digesters and
40 | solar and wind energy, where applicable.
41 |
- 42 | Policy 5H-3: Support renewable energy incentives to businesses and groups for
43 | comprehensive renewable energy efforts.
44 |

1 Policy 5H-4: Locate solar energy generation equipment on County facilities where
2 cost/benefit analyses prove advantageous over the life cycle of the
3 facilities.
4

5 **Utility Corridors**

6
7 Where feasible, multiple land uses in utility corridors should be encouraged. The
8 potential for shared use of utility corridors should be realized to the greatest
9 practical extent. While some corridor uses have proven incompatible, others work
10 well. Some uses are clearly mutually exclusive, but others are unaffected, and in
11 some cases enhanced, by proximity to other uses thereby serving multiple needs.
12 Questions have been raised concerning potential for long-term, adverse health
13 effects associated with exposure to 60Hz electric and magnetic fields. Many studies
14 have been conducted concerning those effects and many are in process; results are
15 mixed.

16
17 **Goal 5J: Facilitate maintenance and rehabilitation of existing utility**
18 **systems and facilities and encourage use of existing utility**
19 **corridors.**

20
21 Policy 5J-1: Encourage utility providers to explore expanded and/or joint use of
22 existing utility corridors before seeking sites for new rights-of-way.

23
24 Policy 5J-2: Promote, when reasonable and feasible, the co-location of new public
25 and private utility distribution facilities in shared trenches/corridors,
26 as well as coordination of construction timing.

27
28 Policy 5J-3: Allow for recreational use of utility corridors where practical.

29
30 Policy 5J-4: ~~Require~~Encourage utility companies to notify impacted residents of
31 vegetation control measures.

32
33 Reason for change: Code does not have requirements for notification of vegetation
34 control measures.

35
36 **Goal 5K: Be responsive to new information on electric and magnetic**
37 **field (EMF) research progress.**

38
39 Policy 5K-1: As new information regarding EMF becomes available, consider the
40 need for new standards.

41
42 Policy 5K-2: Educate the public with regard to any new information concerning
43 possible EMF health effects.
44

1 **Goal 5L: Support direct and indirect economic benefits to Whatcom**
2 **County originating with energy or utilities in general.**
3

4 Policy 5L-1: Recognize economic benefits derived from coordination of utilities
5 with established and projected residential, commercial, and industrial
6 growth patterns in the County.
7

8 Policy 5L-2: Require a utility proponent to show how the proposal provides local
9 or regional benefit.
10

11 **Natural Gas and Hazardous Liquid Transmission Pipelines**
12

13 Transmission of hazardous liquids and gases by pipeline is an efficient and
14 convenient essential transportation mode for transporting these products. ~~While~~
15 ~~pipelines offer an efficient and convenient method of transport~~ However, potential
16 for ruptures and uncontrolled leaks of products which are highly flammable,
17 explosive, or toxic requires careful consideration of pipeline siting and protection of
18 pipelines from third party damage.
19

20 The goals of Whatcom County regarding pipelines are: to provide safety for County
21 residents and to provide predictability for future pipeline siting.
22

23 The County is not able to control all issues regarding pipelines, as there are other
24 agencies with jurisdictional authority (such as the EFSEC–Energy Facility Site
25 Evaluation Council and the FERCFederal Energy Regulatory Commission), as well as
26 demand from areas outside of Whatcom County, which preclude the County from
27 having the ultimate authority. Nonetheless, goals and policies for the County are
28 appropriate and incorporated herein.
29

30 The following goals and policies shall apply to all natural gas and hazardous liquid
31 transmission pipelines. This shall include pipelines which operate at a hoop stress of
32 twenty percent or more of the specified minimum yield strength or as may be
33 amended hereafter by federal regulations. Such a pipeline would by federal, state,
34 and local definition be classified as a transmission line. The goals and policies
35 presented herein should be interpreted in conjunction with the general utility
36 policies of this chapter where applicable, with priority and deference given to these
37 policies which are specific to natural gas and hazardous liquid pipelines where they
38 appear contradictory. *The Natural Gas and Hazardous Liquid Pipelines Background*
39 *Report* contains more detailed information regarding pipelines and related issues
40 ~~and is adopted by reference~~. The Utilities Committee concluded notification was the
41 most appropriate method to meet the County’s goals, as opposed to imposing
42 setbacks or other restrictions which would limit landowners’ use of land on the
43 remote possibility an event would occur. Map 12-5-2 indicates a notification area of
44 1320 feet (660 feet from each side from the pipeline) for natural gas and hazardous
45 liquid transmission pipelines, which may be of value to the public.
46

Reason for Change: We only adopt by reference though policies, not in narrative.

Goal 5M: Protect the citizens and the environment of Whatcom County through informational, educational, and regulatory measures.

Policy 5M-1: Seek intervener status on all pipeline proposals which may not be within the County’s regulatory authority, so as to preserve the County’s legal right to retain a voice in the proposal. The County will review a pipeline proponent’s application ~~materials~~—and file comments with the reviewing bodies according to the appropriate procedure and within the timelines provided. Staff shall engage in continual and ongoing communication with the regulatory authorities regarding the project as the need or occasion arises.

Policy 5M-2: Carefully scrutinize new or updated ~~franchise agreements~~. ~~R~~review and evaluate model franchise agreements, if available, for provisions to be incorporated into negotiation discussions regarding proposed provisions in future franchise agreements.

Policy 5M-3: ~~Develop~~ Provide information, ~~education~~, and notification programs to alert the public of pipeline location and safety considerations when making land purchase or development decisions adjacent to transmission pipelines.

Policy 5M-4: Require transmission pipeline operators to provide accurate ‘as-built’ pipeline maps as a condition of approval for any county development permit. In addition to scaled plan maps which shall be accurate to the parcel level, pipeline information (pipe size, allowable pressure, fuel type, etc.) shall also be ~~provided~~ required. Whatcom County’s GIS ~~department staff~~ is to provide update copies of all major pipeline routes to Whatcom County’s Division of Emergency Management.

Policy 5M-5: Require, early in the transmission pipeline permitting process, that the proponent provide funds to the County, adequate to cover the cost of an informational session which will be conducted by an independent third-party to be selected by the County on the topics of eminent domain and right-of-way acquisition. Pipeline proponents shall also be required to conduct “open house” and “town hall” style public meetings as a part of ~~County any~~ land use development permit process for a new or major transmission pipeline expansion.

Policy 5M-6: Require transmission pipeline proponents to notify all fire ~~districts~~, water, and sewer districts, and jurisdictions with urban growth areas where the siting of new pipelines crosses those service areas.

- 1 Policy 5M-7: Monitor transmission pipeline construction to ensure pipelines are
2 installed in accordance with all applicable critical area regulations.
3
- 4 Policy 5M-8: Encourage the Office of Pipeline Safety to enact stronger safety
5 measures for transmission pipelines, and to encourage pipeline
6 applicants to voluntarily enact stronger safety measures than
7 required by federal law ~~in Whatcom County~~.
8
- 9 **Goal 5N: Develop locational siting criteria specific to special conditions**
10 **regarding transmission and large distribution pipelines.**
11
- 12 Policy 5N-1: ~~Utilize~~ Use a GIS-based siting criteria for evaluating transmission
13 pipelines ~~which is~~ consistent with ~~the comprehensive plan~~ policies for
14 transmission pipelines and the recommendations in the *Natural Gas*
15 *and Hazardous Liquid Pipeline Background Report*.
16
- 17 Policy 5N-2: Encourage transmission pipelines to ~~follow~~ locate adjacent to
18 established corridors where possible. Require applicant justification
19 for proposed deviations.
20
- 21 Policy 5N-3: Transmission pipelines are inappropriate and discouraged in urban
22 growth areas and areas of intense rural development ~~which would~~
23 ~~render such pipeline siting inappropriate~~.
24
- 25 Policy 5N-4: No transmission pipeline facilities should be constructed or located in
26 critical areas without fully mitigating the project impact.
27
- 28 Policy 5N-5: Designated agricultural and forestry lands ~~in the Comprehensive Plan~~
29 are preferred locations for transmission pipelines.
30
- 31 Policy 5N-6: Restrict the location of transmission pipelines in high-risk landslide
32 areas where evidence of instability could be ascertained by recent
33 events, or verifiable geological conditions.
34
- 35 Policy 5N-7: For natural gas transmission pipelines, encourage siting of critical
36 facilities and high occupancy facilities pursuant to the regulations of
37 WAC 480-93-020, and 480-93-030 (not closer than 500' from a 500
38 psi pressure or greater pipeline, not closer than 100' from a pipeline
39 with a pressure between 250 and 499 psi) and as hereafter
40 amended.

41 Water Supply

42
43 Whatcom County residents obtain domestic water from public and private water
44 systems. For the purpose of this discussion, the term "public" refers to the State
45 Department of Health (Health) definition, and not to ownership of the system. This
46 distinction is important and can often be confusing. Public systems, as defined by

1 the State Health Department, must comply with specific regulations designed to
2 protect the health of people using the supply. Private systems do not have to meet
3 these same requirements. However, the County Council, acting as the Board of
4 Health, adopted the Whatcom County Drinking Water Ordinance in 2002, which
5 established standards for private water systems used for new ~~land~~-development.
6 This ordinance includes siting criteria, such as setbacks from septic tanks, and
7 initial water quality sampling requirements. It does not impose on-going water
8 quality monitoring on private water systems.

9
10 The complete definition of a public water system ~~can be referenced~~ is found in WAC
11 246-290 and WAC 246-291. In general, State Health regulations define a public
12 water system as all systems *except* those serving only one single family residence
13 ~~and or~~ a system with four or fewer connections all of which serve residences on the
14 same farm. However, the regulations do allow systems with only two connections to
15 be exempted from State Health rules at the discretion of local/State Health.
16 Whatcom County has taken advantage of this allowance and, in certain
17 circumstances, does not require residential systems with two services to meet
18 public systems requirements. However, these two-party wells that are exempt from
19 state rules must still comply with the County's Drinking Water Ordinance.

20
21 ~~As of 1998, 29,196 people (almost 20% of the county's population) were served by~~
22 ~~individual wells. Additionally, 128,304 people (over 80% of the population) were~~
23 ~~served by public drinking water systems (Whatcom County Coordinated Water~~
24 ~~System Plan, Feb. 2000, p. 3-6).~~

25
26 ~~Over 80 percent of~~ Most Whatcom County residents obtain potable water from a
27 municipality or ~~district~~ public water systems. ~~There are, however, many people~~
28 ~~who~~ The rest obtain their drinking water from private water supplies including wells,
29 surface water, and rainwater catchment. ~~water from one of the over 350 smaller,~~
30 ~~privately owned public water systems~~ individual wells. Water is critical to Whatcom
31 County agriculture; irrigation is necessary for all high-value crops. Livestock must
32 be watered year round, and dairy equipment and facility cleanup also go on all
33 year. Some industries are also large-scale water users, and they may need both
34 potable and non-potable water.

35
36 Four major water systems, Whatcom County PUD #1, City of Bellingham, Lake
37 Whatcom Water and Sewer District and City of Lynden, draw surface water from
38 the Nooksack River and Lake Whatcom. Most of the rest rely on groundwater as
39 their source. This is not as distinct a difference as it seems, since Whatcom County
40 water resources are an interconnected system. Water supply for public water
41 systems in the county is identified in the *Coordinated Water System Plan*. The
42 current Whatcom County Coordinated Water System Plan (CWSP) coordinates the
43 plans of the county's public water purveyors (e.g., forecasting demand, identifying
44 supplies and service areas) with the objective of ensuring the County has an
45 adequate supply of potable water to serve planned domestic, commercial, and
46 industrial uses, provided by public water systems. The CWSP must be consistent

1 with this Comprehensive Plan, including land use designations, permitted densities,
2 and related growth management policies, including identifying sufficient water
3 supplies to accommodate projected growth for the next 20 years.
4

5 The largest purveyor in the county is the City of Bellingham. Bellingham directly
6 supplies water to about 76,000 people, relying primarily on water from Lake
7 Whatcom and the Middle Fork of the Nooksack River via a diversion pipeline.
8 However, Bellingham also sells water to Water District 2, Water District 7, Water
9 District 10 and the Lummi Water & Sewer District. If water sold to these districts
10 were included, Bellingham provides water to approximately 88,000 people. The City
11 also has the largest collection of water rights of all purveyors in the county. This
12 large water right portfolio could enable it to continue its role as a major purveyor in
13 the future. ~~Bellingham has indicated concerns about stormwater in the Geneva area~~
14 ~~and the County fully supports creation of a stormwater district, even in the absence~~
15 ~~of annexation.~~
16

17 The Public Utility District No. 1 (PUD), which obtains water from the Nooksack
18 River, has the second largest collection of rights in the county. The PUD is a public
19 water utility authorized under RCW Chapter 54 which provides retail service within
20 its designated service boundary and has the potential to provide wholesale water on
21 a county-wide basis. The PUD currently provides both direct retail and wholesale
22 water supplies to customers within the county. The PUD holds water rights for
23 municipal water supply purposes – including residential, commercial, industrial, and
24 agricultural use. Pursuant to state law, the PUD develops and provides water supply
25 within its service area in accordance with authoritative demand and/or population
26 projections.
27

28 The PUD will consider petitions for service or assistance from all areas in Whatcom
29 County which are not presently claimed by cities, water districts, or other purveyors
30 operating within the county. The level of service to be provided to PUD customers
31 requesting service or new supply will be consistent with their water rights and
32 relevant capital facility and/or land use plans and policies in existence at the time of
33 service extension.
34

35 Regardless of size, public or private, many water purveyors in Whatcom County
36 face common challenges in meeting existing and future demands. Water quality
37 concerns which have been identified include nitrates, arsenic, bacteria,
38 iron/manganese, sea water intrusion, and pesticides/VOCs. Quantity concerns
39 include legal limitations on supplies and questions regarding actual amounts and
40 depletion of water. Regulatory requirements under the Safe Drinking Water Act, for
41 example, further challenge the ability of purveyors to meet new demands.
42

43 Reason for Change: Text updated and moved from Chapter 1. CWSP plan is in the
44 process of being updated, with an expected completion date of 2016. That
45 document will contain additional updated and detailed information.
46

1 Meeting existing and future water demands throughout the county will require
2 careful integration of land use and water resource planning. The County's strategy
3 to meet existing and future water demands throughout the county include:

- 4 • Periodically updating the Coordinated Water System Plan to identify future
5 supply, demand, and delivery requirements for the public water systems that
6 supply the majority of potable water supplies in the County;
- 7 • Implementing the ~~Water Resource Inventory Area (WRIA) 1 Watershed~~
8 Management Project's 2005 WRIA 1 Watershed Management Plan, the 2007
9 WRIA 1 Detailed Implementation Strategy, and the 2010 Lower Nooksack
10 Strategy, including pursuing water rights negotiations, developing a
11 groundwater model to better understand groundwater supply potential and
12 continuity with surface waters, and identifying future non-public water
13 system needs such as agriculture and private well owners, including the
14 WRIA 1 Watershed Management Plan (due in 2003) and the computer-based
15 Decision Support System model that can aid in evaluating different scenarios
16 associated with water quantity, water quality, fish habitat and in-stream flow
17 conditions;
- 18 • Adhering to the various protection and management strategies discussed in
19 the Chapter Eleven: Environment, Water Resource Section;
- 20 • Incorporating the updated comprehensive water plans that have been
21 developed by some of the water purveyors; and
- 22 • Implementing the Capital Facilities Plans and Interlocal Agreements
23 developed by the Cities and County under the Growth Management Act to
24 facilitate delivery of water to urban growth areas.;
- 25 • the use of short term planning area boundaries within urban growth areas;
26 and

27
28 Reason for Change: Remove or edited outdated information.

29
30 ~~The Coordinated Water System Plan was completed in February 2000 and was~~
31 ~~adopted by the State Department of Health in August 2000. The plan, written by~~
32 ~~some of the local water purveyors, agencies, and others, was intended to help~~
33 ~~ensure more efficient planning for water supplies throughout the county. It~~
34 ~~identifies recommendations and requirements related to system design and~~
35 ~~planning, joint facilities and interties, system service areas, satellite system~~
36 ~~management, conservation, and general resource management.~~

37
38 Although the various tools noted above will assist in helping to meet water
39 demands, there is work to be done in both completing the specific elements and
40 ensuring their consistency with each other.

41
42 With so many uncertainties and so few clear answers, caution is necessary in
43 making water-related decisions. It is likely that much dialogue, coordination, and
44 clear understanding will be necessary to work through a myriad of water-related
45 issues and decisions. Changing priorities, organization, and regulations at state and
46 federal levels make comprehensive decision-making yet more arduous. County staff

1 and elected officials must participate in all processes aimed at quantifying,
2 regulating, or ~~controlling-managing~~ water in any way to protect the best interests of
3 ~~the-our~~ citizens ~~of Whatcom County~~. Specifically, the WRIA 1 Watershed
4 Management ~~Plan, WRIA 1 Detailed Implementation Plan, and Lower Nooksack~~
5 ~~Strategy were developed~~ ~~Project has been initiated~~ to address issues of water
6 quantity, water quality, fish habitat, and in-stream flows. Additionally, Whatcom
7 County created the Water Resources Division of the Public Works Department in
8 1999 to address water issues.

9
10 ~~This plan is based on the assumption that agriculture is important to the County as~~
11 ~~identified in the Visioning Process, and that water will be available to serve the~~
12 ~~agricultural community. The plan also assumes that adequate water will be~~
13 ~~available to serve the proposed Urban Growth Areas. It is recognized that certain~~
14 ~~actions are needed to ensure supplies to those areas. These actions will be~~
15 ~~pursued and the Urban Growth Area boundaries will be periodically reviewed~~
16 ~~sited as part of the seven-year review Comprehensive Plan update process to determine if~~
17 ~~the boundaries are consistent with water availability.~~

18
19 Reason for Change: Water availability issues are discussed in Chapter 11.

20
21 ~~Identified urban growth areas are served by public water either within an approved~~
22 ~~water service area or logical service boundary. Where gaps or shortfalls exist in~~
23 ~~planning or capital facilities, the County will use short-term planning area~~
24 ~~boundaries to assure adequate levels of urban services.~~ Water rights are a
25 ~~significant~~ ~~always an~~ issue in planning for adequate facilities. Treaty rights with the
26 tribes, minimum instream flows for adequate protection of fish, and use and
27 protection pursuant to state water laws, all affect ~~the ability of the issuance of new~~
28 ~~water rights~~ ~~purveyors to meet service objectives. It is not the intent of the County~~
29 ~~to second-guess a projection in an approved or pending plan.~~ The County will
30 review plans periodically to ensure consistency with the growth and population
31 projections of this plan, and changes in the availability of water or permits ~~which~~
32 ~~that~~ may affect the ability to serve.

33
34 Because of concerns about water supply, and requirements of state law,
35 development will be contingent on providing evidence of adequate water supplies.

36
37 **Goal 5P: Resolve county water issues through pro-active participation**
38 **in processes leading to a solution of water-related conflicts**
39 **including the WRIA-1 Watershed Management Project.**

40
41 Policy 5P-1: Plan for interlocal agreements with other agencies to manage failing
42 water associations that fall into receivership.

43
44 Policy 5P-2: Encourage and actively participate ~~actively~~ in forums, workshops,
45 and other water-related planning activities.

1 Policy 5P-3: Discourage extension of urban levels of water service to areas not
2 designated as urban growth areas or Rural Communities, except in
3 those limited circumstances shown to be necessary to protect basic
4 public health and safety and the environment and when such
5 services are financially supportable at rural densities and do not
6 permit urban development.
7

8 Policy 5P-4: The County should periodically examine its role as a potential
9 purveyor of water and sewer service in order to determine if
10 increased involvement may be needed to help solve some of the
11 utility problems in the county.
12

13 Policy 5P-5: Investigate the opportunity for multiple solutions to other issues such
14 as flood management; when looking towards acquiring additional
15 water supplies/rights.
16

17 Policy 5P-6: Evaluate and, where feasible, support alternative supplies of water
18 such as desalinization, re-use of treated wastewater, and storage of
19 flood water. Investigate reservoir holding ponds that take advantage
20 of flood water when needed for beneficial uses such as fisheries,
21 agriculture, domestic and industrial water supplies.
22

23 Reason for Change: Moved from Chapter 5 Action Plan item 26, which was not
24 addressed previously in policies.

25
26 **Goal 5Q: Work with ~~Whatcom County PUD and other~~ water purveyors**
27 **to provide service to all existing and designated urban growth**
28 **or industrial areas.**
29

30 Policy 5Q-1: Work with the ~~PUD, Birch Bay Water and Sewer District, Blaine,~~
31 ~~Ferndale, Ecology, and other~~appropriate jurisdictions ~~as appropriate,~~
32 to ensure adequate water rights and supplies to the Urban Growth
33 Areas and designated industrial areas in northwest Whatcom County.
34 Consider all options, including but not limited to, extension of water
35 service areas, extending a water transmission pipeline from Ferndale
36 to the District, to convey water from the PUD's and /or Ferndale's
37 water rights, conjunctive management of surface and groundwater,
38 artificial storage and recovery and reclamation of wastewater.
39

40 Policy 5Q-2: Ensure provision of urban levels of water service to urban growth
41 within areas designated for urban growth.
42

43 Policy 5Q-3: Periodically rReview Urban Growth Areas to ensure appropriate
44 actions have occurred to provide adequate water supplies.
45

1 Policy 5Q-4: Encourage annexation of areas zoned for urban densities concurrent
2 with extension of urban level services.
3

4 Policy 5Q-5: The County should work closely with purveyors and the State
5 Department of Health in the development and review of
6 Comprehensive Water Plans to ensure consistency with land use and
7 urban growth area needs.
8

9 ~~Policy 5Q-6: Where necessary, to protect public health or the environment, utility~~
10 ~~extensions may be made.~~
11

12 Reason for Change: GMA, case law governs this.

13
14 Policy 5Q-76 The County will work with the Department of Ecology, City of
15 Bellingham, the Port of Bellingham, the PUD, and local, regional, and
16 state economic development agencies to ensure an adequate water
17 supply to areas planned for industrial development.
18

19 **Goal 5R: Ensure that potable water supplies required to serve**
20 **development are available at the time the development is**
21 **available for occupancy and use.**
22

23 Policy 5R-1: Building permit applicants, new subdivisions, short plats, and binding
24 site plans will be required to provide evidence that adequate and
25 legal (in consultation with the Department of Ecology) supplies of
26 water are available prior to their approval by the County.
27

28 Policy 5R-2: Work with purveyors to assist them in modifying their systems as
29 required to support the land use element of the comprehensive plan.
30

31 Sewage Treatment

32
33 Whatcom County does not currently own, operate, or maintain a sewage treatment
34 facility, or associated pumping stations or pipelines. Sewage treatment in the
35 unincorporated county is primarily by septic system. While adequately designed and
36 installed on-site septic systems can be appropriate for rural-level development,
37 maintenance of such systems varies from excellent to none-at-all. Poorly
38 maintained septic systems are a source of ground and surface water pollution and
39 have been identified at both the state and the local level as significant contributors
40 to high nitrate levels in soil and coliform bacteria in surface water. Some systems
41 can be in a failure mode for years before being noticed. "Package" sewage
42 treatment systems and multiple-user septic systems may be a desirable alternative
43 to the single-user, on-site system. Larger sewage treatment facilities are more
44 appropriate for urban levels of growth. Whatever type of system is used, adequate
45 maintenance is the best deterrent to system failure and to pollution of ground and
46 surface water.

- 1 **Goal 5S: Reduce the incidence of on-site sewage treatment system**
2 **failure through system management and enforcement of**
3 **standards.**
4
- 5 Policy 5S-1: Support state on-site sewage system regulations (WAC 246-272)
6 which requires that local health departments implement a program
7 ensuring proper maintenance and operation for all on-site systems.
8
- 9 Policy 5S-2: The maintenance and operation program should be phased in
10 beginning with high priority areas designated by the County Council.
11 In implementing this policy, Lake Whatcom and Drayton Harbor are
12 high priority areas.
13
- 14 Policy 5S-3: The development and implementation of the maintenance and
15 operation program should consider use of the private sector where
16 possible.
17
- 18 **Goal 5T: Support development of new sewage treatment facilities,**
19 **including new pipelines and extensions of existing pipelines,**
20 **to areas designated for urban-level growth.**
21
- 22 Policy 5T-1: Discourage extension of sewer lines in areas not designated as urban
23 growth areas or Rural Communities, except in those limited
24 circumstances shown to be necessary to protect basic public health
25 and safety and the environment and when such services are
26 financially supportable at rural densities and do not permit urban
27 development.
28
- 29 Policy 5T-2: For those areas designated as Rural Communities and wishing to
30 infill, work with the communities to create sewer and water districts
31 as necessary to manage both utilities. Public water and sewer service
32 shall be limited to areas where existing lot sizes and development
33 patterns make public water and sewer appropriate and shall not be
34 extended outside of the Rural Community.
35
- 36 Policy 5T-3: Assist sewer and water districts in environmental review and
37 mitigation and in preparing grant applications to obtain package
38 sewer services that can be developed in a phased and cost-effective
39 manner to serve designated Rural Communities.
40
- 41 Policy 5T-4: Support the development of new technology and alternative sewage
42 disposal methods as an alternative to expensive sanitary sewer
43 systems to assure ground water quality is maintained.
44

Solid Waste Management

~~Whatcom County is responsible for managing solid waste generated by any activities in the county. Over 44% of the county's solid waste stream is recycled through public and private efforts. Two privately operated facilities process unseparated county solid waste. This product will is then be delivered to a private landfill located outside Whatcom County. Local landfill options are limited to construction waste and demolition debris at a private site on Hemmi Road. No solid waste is deposited at the county-owned Cedarville landfill site which was closed in 1990. A private organization leases a portion of the Cedarville site for a solid waste drop box location for "self-haulers." There are three other drop-box locations in the county; Birch Bay, Point Roberts, and Lynden drop boxes are privately operated (two of these drop-boxes, at Birch Bay and Point Roberts, are on land leased to the operators by Whatcom County). The county will continue to use a private waste disposal system within the GMA planning period assuming no unforeseen and/or uncontrollable circumstances.~~

~~All solid waste management background information, goals, policies, and action plans in this chapter have been extracted directly, or interpreted from, the *Whatcom County Comprehensive Solid Waste Management Plan, 1999*~~

~~State law (RCW 70.95.010) requires counties to plan an integrated solid waste management system that emphasizes waste reduction and recycling. Management of solid waste that cannot be recycled can be incinerated or placed in a landfill. Whatcom County Health Department is the lead planning agency for solid waste planning in the County as of January 1, 2015, taking on the responsibility formerly with the Public Works Department. The County prepared a Comprehensive Solid and Hazardous Waste Management Plan in 2008 and began the process of updating the plan in 2014.~~ That plan has been prepared to meet the requirements of RCW 70.95.

Private collection, processing, and disposal services managed in accordance with the provisions of county ordinances and city contracts constitute Whatcom County's solid waste management system. Adopted Disposal and Collection Districts, and a Service Level Ordinance serve as the foundation for county waste management. The Lummi and Nooksack Reservations and the Newhalem area are not included in the eCounty's waste management plan.

Generally, eCounty waste management system priorities are met by waste prevention, recycling and source-separated composting, market development to increase local use of recycle-ables, collection, transfer, export, and land-filling.

The county includes several waste-prevention programs as part of its highest waste management priority, including waste reduction and re-use, education, legislation, and governmental waste-prevention activities. Education is directed at school-age

1 children through in-school programs; at shoppers; and at the general public
2 through awareness programs, videos, demonstration sites, and awards programs.
3 Whatcom County and the City of Bellingham jointly provide a hazardous waste
4 management program including education, technical assistance, and operation of a
5 moderate risk waste (MRW) facility. The MRW facility receives household hazardous
6 waste and small quantities of commercial hazardous waste and prepares the waste
7 for ~~re-use or transport to a hazardous waste landfill/off-site treatment in Oregon.~~
8 The County and City also jointly maintain a clean green yard waste facility open to
9 all County residents.

10
11 Reason for Change: Remove outdated information.

12
13 **Goal 5U:** Support waste prevention for both solid waste and hazardous
14 ~~substances—waste~~ as a primary focus prior to waste
15 management.

16
17 Policy 5U-1: Support solid waste source reduction activities including conservation
18 education programs, source reduction programs for county agencies,
19 a waste exchange and materials re-use clearinghouse, and home
20 composting and other activities related to yard debris.

21
22 **Goal 5V:** The County's waste diversion goal is to reach 50 percent
23 source-separated recycling, with additional diversion
24 potentially available through waste processing of non-source-
25 separated recyclables.

26
27 **Goal 5W:** ~~Using existing and future technologies, m~~Make ~~available~~ safe,
28 effective, economical, and environmentally sound techniques
29 for solid and hazardous waste disposal available using
30 existing and future technologies.

31
32 Policy 5W-1: Support best -management practices for disposal of household,
33 commercial, and industrial solid and hazardous wastes.

34
35 Policy 5W-2: ~~Establish—Maintain~~ and enforce standards for disposal of bio-solids,
36 including management of the amount of heavy metals and other
37 pollutants, and management of impacts to sensitive areas.

38 Stormwater Management

39
40 Stormwater management is treated in *Chapter 11: Environment* and is not included
41 in this Utilities Chapter.

42
43 ~~Utilities Action Plan~~
44

1 ~~1. Provide a mechanism for the county and utility providers to cooperatively~~
2 ~~support education programs for both citizens and government officials on~~
3 ~~conservation issues, and promote awareness regarding location of all types~~
4 ~~of utility facilities.~~

5
6 Reason for change: This item is already addressed by Policies 5M-3 and 5U-1.

7
8 ~~2. Support conservation efforts within county government.~~

9
10 Reason for change: See Policy 5G-6.

11
12 ~~3. Directly support communities to work with utility providers in promoting~~
13 ~~utility conservation.~~

14
15 Reason for change: This item is already addressed by Goal 5-G and implementing
16 policies.

17
18 ~~4. Work with state utility regulators to facilitate energy conservation efforts.~~

19
20 Reason for Change: This item is already addressed by Goal 5-G and implementing
21 policies.

22
23 ~~5. Review and enforce existing energy codes.~~

24
25 Reason for change: Energy codes are part of IBC, which the County has adopted.
26 IBC is reviewed regularly at the state level.

27
28 ~~6. Work with utility purveyors to define ways for conservation to positively~~
29 ~~influence Whatcom County's economic development through specific~~
30 ~~conservation efforts and economic savings obtained through conservation.~~

31
32 Reason for Change: This item is addressed Goal 5-G and implementing policies.

33
34 ~~7. Adopt land-use implementation strategies such as development standards~~
35 ~~and incentives, and investigate multiple problem solving aimed at conserving~~
36 ~~water and energy.~~

37
38 Reason for change: This item is addressed Goal 5-G and implementing policies.

39
40 ~~8. Adopt conservation standards for new construction.~~

Reason for change: Energy codes are part of IBC, which the County has adopted.

1 **Alternative Energy Sources**

2 ~~9. Adopt solar access ordinances such as solar orientation and solar design~~
3 ~~standards.~~

4 Reason for Change: See Goal 5H and implementing polices, and Policy 6G-3.

5 ~~10. Adopt ordinances enabling and facilitating alternative sources of energy.~~

6 Reason for change: This item was addressed by adoption of ordinances on wind
7 energy systems and electric vehicle charging.

8 **Permitting Process**

9 ~~11. Expedite utility-oriented permitting processes.~~

10 Reason for change: This item is already addressed by Policies 5D-1 and 5D-2.

11 ~~12. Establish screening and landscaping standards for utility facilities.~~

12 Reason for change: screening is required between unlike zones, WCC 20.80.300.

13 ~~13. Direct growth and appropriate utility facilities to designated urban growth~~
14 ~~areas.~~

15 Reason for change: This item is already addressed by Policy 5C-8

16 ~~14. Map existing and proposed utility corridors and establish appropriate~~
17 ~~notification zone for each type of corridor. Notify applicants for development~~
18 ~~permits of proximity to utility corridors.~~

19 Reason for change: This item already addressed in WCC 20.81.050.

20 **Task Forces**

21 ~~15. Direct the county Health Department to do the following concerning EMF:~~
22 ~~• monitor research;~~
23 ~~• plan and accomplish public education concerning EMF; and~~
24 ~~• review regulations and policy.~~

25
26 Reason for change: This item is already addressed by Policies 5K-1 and 5K-2.

1 **Education and Information**

2 ~~16. Develop and implement a notice to use the "one-call" system place~~
3 ~~conspicuously on County land use development permits requiring excavation.~~
4 ~~Provide "one-call" brochure to applicant with permit materials.~~

5 Reason for change: Information on "one call" is currently provided with permit
6 materials.

7 ~~17. Design an educational program and handouts which explain the importance~~
8 ~~of using the "one-call" system.~~

9 Reason for change: Need to review administratively and prioritize on work plan.

10 ~~18. Enhance the County's permitting system by developing a standard procedure~~
11 ~~to provide copies of project plans to utility companies for opportunity to~~
12 ~~review and comments.~~

13 Reason for change: Need to review administratively and prioritize on work plan.

14 ~~19. Educate the public with regard to landowner rights that are applicable to~~
15 ~~utilities, including information about eminent domain.~~

16 Reason for change: Need to review administratively and prioritize on work plan.

17 **Transmission Pipelines**

18 ~~20. Develop GIS data linked to county permitting system to allow, at a minimum,~~
19 ~~for permits requiring excavation within 100 feet of a pipeline are to be~~
20 ~~flagged. The permit applicant can be informed to the existence of the pipeline~~
21 ~~with a notice place conspicuously on the permit and "one-call" materials are~~
22 ~~to be included with permits.~~

23 ~~21. Apply GIS-based siting criteria for evaluating pipelines to any and all future~~
24 ~~pipeline proposals.~~

25 Reason for change: This item is already addressed under Goal 5N.

26 **Water Supply**

27 ~~22. Encourage implementation of the Coordinated Water System Plan.~~

28 Reason for change: County already supports CWSP – intent unclear.

1 ~~23. Develop interlocal agreements with local surface and groundwater~~
2 ~~management agencies to ensure adequate water supplies in urban areas.~~

3 Reason for change: This item is addressed in WRIA 1 and CWSP.

4 ~~24. Establish an interlocal agreement with Whatcom County PUD, Water District~~
5 ~~10, and other interested Satellite System Management Agency (SSMA)~~
6 ~~candidates, consistent with the recommendation from the CWSP, to manage~~
7 ~~failing water associations that fall into receivership.~~

8 Reason for change: This item already addressed in Policy 5P-1.

9 ~~25. Actively participate in all appropriate water-related meetings, forums, and~~
10 ~~coalitions.~~

11 Reason for change: This item already addressed in Policy 5P-2 and in Chapter 11.

12 ~~26. Evaluate and, where feasible, support alternative supplies of water such as~~
13 ~~desalinization, re-use of treated wastewater, and storage of flood water.~~
14 ~~Investigate reservoir holding ponds that take advantage of flood water when~~
15 ~~needed for beneficial uses such as fisheries, agriculture, domestic and~~
16 ~~industrial water supplies.~~

17 Reason for change: This item moved to new Policy 5P-6.

18 ~~27. Review urban growth areas to ensure adequate water supplies are available~~
19 ~~and revise boundaries accordingly.~~

20 Reason for change: This is already addressed by Policies 5U-1 and 5Q-3.

21 ~~28. The county shall review new residential projects requiring land use or~~
22 ~~construction permit approval for the availability of an adequate water supply.~~

23 Reason for change: This is already required.

24 ~~29. The county shall notify purveyors of potential inconsistencies between their~~
25 ~~water system plans and the comprehensive plan, and shall work with them to~~
26 ~~find acceptable solutions.~~

27 Reason for change: This is already part of CWSP process.

28 ~~30. The county shall work with rural water system operators to achieve level of~~
29 ~~service and construction standards for rural systems that are consistent with~~
30 ~~rural densities and service expectations.~~

1 Reason for change: This item already addressed in Policy 5R-2.

2 ~~**Sewage Treatment**~~

3 ~~31. Establish a maintenance management program for all new and existing septic~~
4 ~~treatment systems.~~

5 Reason for change: This item already addressed in Policies 5S-1, 2, and 3.

6 ~~32. Require no-protest agreements from all developers for sewer service LIDs.~~

7 Reason for change: This is not currently being required – policy discussion may be
8 warranted prior to inclusion in comprehensive plan as policy.

9 ~~**Solid Waste Management**~~

10 ~~33. Monitor changes in technology and in the marketplace that could change the~~
11 ~~economics of solid waste management and waste-to-energy projects.~~

12 Reason for change: This item already addressed in Policy 5W-1.

13 ~~34. Implement the recommendations of the Whatcom County 1999~~
14 ~~Comprehensive Solid Waste Management Plan.~~

15 Reason for change: CSWMP is currently being updated, Health Department is
16 charged with implementation.