

Utilities Element

Part 1 – Goals, Policies, and Implementation Actions

City of Tumwater 2025 Comprehensive Plan

Balancing Nature and Community: Tumwater's Path to Sustainable Growth

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Utilities Element

Part 1 – Goals, Policies, and Implementation Actions



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Abbreviations Used in Document

CDD – Community Development Department

RCW – Revised Code of Washington

TED – Transportation & Engineering Department

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1. Introduction

A. Background

The Utilities Element is part of Tumwater's Comprehensive Plan and was prepared in response to the Growth Management Act (Chapter 36.70A RCW). The Element meets the requirements of RCW 36.70A.070(4) for utilities elements that are found in Appendix B *State Requirements*.

Tumwater's Vision, Mission, and Belief Statements that provide overarching direction for the future of Tumwater are found in the Comprehensive Plan Summary.

The Utilities Element aligns and is consistent with the other elements of the Comprehensive Plan.

Part 1 – Goals Policies, and Implementation Actions establishes Tumwater's goals and policies that set forth a direction to create and maintain private utilities that support development in Tumwater.

The goals and policies of the Utilities Element are guided by the state Growth Management Act and the Thurston County-Wide Planning Policies and the vision of a Tumwater. These goals and

B. How to Read this Part of the Element

In Part 1, Chapters 2 and 3 discuss the Utility Element's connection to the goals of the state Growth Management Act and the Thurston County-Wide Planning Policies.

Chapter 4 presents each goal with introductory text, and an explanation of the lead and timeline for each policy.

policies are coordinated with the other Elements and regional plans.

The Utilities Element supports the Land Use Element of the Comprehensive Plan by ensuring that the policies for provision of efficient and sustainable utilities to serve anticipated growth and development are consistent with the Land Use Element, which establishes the overall growth strategy for Tumwater and its urban growth area. Expansion of utility systems and services follows growth and the demand for reliable services.

The Utilities Element's goals and policies are the policy basis for those draft implementation actions in the Utilities Element and those future actions that will be developed over the next 20 years which will be the foundation for Tumwater's annual work programs to address private utilities and development.

Part 2 – Technical Information provides the background information on private utilities needed to support the twenty-year growth projections for Tumwater.

Appendix A contains the draft implementation actions, which are intended to be a source of annual work program items that serve to implement the goals and policies of the Utilities Element.

The annual work programs will further refine the implementation actions prior to their being put into practice. It is expected that implementation

Commented [BM1]: This will be the document that has the Comprehensive Plan wide goals and policies.

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actions will be further amended, added, or subtracted as needed over the course of the 20 year Comprehensive Plan as new opportunities

arise to meet the intent of the Utilities Element's goals and policies.

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2. Growth Management Act – Element Goals

Chapter 36.70A RCW requires that Tumwater show how the Utilities Element meets the relevant planning goals contained within the Act. The following is a listing of the applicable goals for the Utilities Element and an analysis of how the Element addresses these goals:

1. **Urban Growth.** *Encourage development in urban areas where adequate public facilities and services exist or can be provided in an efficient manner.*

The Utilities Element has goals and policies that ensure that private utility services provided by the private sector, such as natural gas, electricity, or telecommunication services, are consistent with Tumwater's

Comprehensive Plan and can support the community's growth and development as anticipated over the twenty-year planning period.

12. **Public Facilities and Services.** *Ensure that those public facilities and services necessary to support development shall be adequate.*

The Utilities Element, as required by the Growth Management Act, includes an inventory of the general location of all existing and proposed private utility facilities and a description of the current capacity and the expected future capacity of each utility.

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3. County-Wide Planning Policies

The Growth Management Act requires that Tumwater's Comprehensive Plan be consistent with Thurston County's County-Wide Planning Policies, as amended in 2025.

The following is a list of the relevant policies that apply to this Element. All County-Wide Planning Policies are adopted as Appendix B to the Comprehensive Plan. The relevant sections of the County-Wide Planning Policies to this Element are cited below.

I. General Policies

The Utilities Element contains goals, policies, and actions that address County-Wide Planning Policy 1.12. These goals, policies, and actions contribute to energy independence, economic stability, reduced climate impacts, and long-term household and community health.

II. Urban Growth Areas

The purpose of the Utilities Element is to plan the provision of private utilities to Tumwater and its urban growth area.

III. Promotion of Contiguous and Orderly Development, Provision of Urban Services, and Protection of Rural Areas

The Utilities Element seeks to find the most effective way to serve the greatest number of people at the lowest cost possible through examining how private utilities are currently provided, what providers have planned, and how future demand will shape utility distribution.

VII. Economic Development and Employment

In addition to the provision of natural gas and electricity, the Utility Element outlines the provision of telecommunication networks, which supports businesses of all types as internet access becomes increasingly vital to the success of a business.

IX. Transportation

Teleworking is supported by the provision of the internet as covered in Section 5.1.

X. Environmental Quality

Goals U-2 and U-4 of this element address reducing energy consumption and increasing energy generation from renewable sources to minimize Tumwater's carbon footprint.

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4. Element Goals and Policies

A. How to Read These Tables

The Utilities Element’s goals and policies are not in priority order.

Appendix A provides a list of the draft implementation actions by goal and policy that will be considered when developing annual work programs for implementing the Utilities Element’s goals and policies.

1) Department Leads

Implementation of the Utilities Element’s policies are associated with two different Tumwater departments:

CDD Community Development Department

TED Transportation & Engineering Department

2) Period

Each of the Utilities Element’s policies and draft implementation actions are associated with estimated start dates, length of time to complete, and target completion dates, if appropriate based on adequate funding for staff and resources. Most policies are ongoing with no set target completion date.

B. Growth Management Goals

Goal U-1 Promote efficiency when planning for and siting private utilities.

Goal U-1 establishes policies for Tumwater to work with private utility providers to reduce the cost and increase efficiency of providing service to the community.

long-term household and community health. Increased efficiency reduces costs to private utility providers that are in turn passed on to consumers in the form of reduced housing and service related costs.

Commented [BM2]: Update of current goal.

1) Why is this Goal Important?

Goal U-1 contributes to energy independence, economic stability, reduced climate impacts, and

	Policies	Lead	Period
U-1.1	Coordinate with private utility providers to allow utilities to meet anticipated demand.	CDD TED	Term of the Plan

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Policies		Lead	Period
U-1.2	Be aware of public service obligations when a local review of private utility improvements occurs and process permits and approvals for private utility facilities in a fair and timely manner, and in accordance with development regulations that foster predictability.	CDD TED	Term of the Plan
U-1.3	Locate private utility facilities near compatible adjacent land uses.	CDD TED	Term of the Plan
U-1.4	Encourage utilities to collocate or consolidate facilities within rights-of-way whenever feasible to protect health, safety, ensure reliability to the utility system, and reduce visual impacts.	TED	Term of the Plan
U-1.5	Provide timely notification to all affected private utilities prior to road construction or projects that may impact services.	TED	Term of the Plan
U-1.6	Review and approve related private utility permits as part of larger project review and approval processes whenever feasible.	CDD TED	Term of the Plan
U-1.7	Protect existing electrical transmission corridors and public rights-of-way to maintain their usefulness in meeting future utility and other public needs.	CDD TED	Term of the Plan
U-1.8	Coordinate with neighboring jurisdictions to ensure consistency of the respective Utility Elements to facilitate orderly private utility service.	CDD TED	Term of the Plan

Commented [BM4]: Update of current policy.

Commented [BM5]: New policy.

Commented [BM6]: Update of current policy.

Commented [BM7]: Update of current policy.

Commented [BM8]: Update of current policy.

Commented [BM9]: New policy.

Commented [BM10]: Update of current policy.

Goal U-2 Support enhancement of electricity generation, distribution, monitoring, and storage infrastructure serving Tumwater that uses clean technologies and practices.

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Goal U-2 establishes policies for Tumwater to support the use of cleaner technologies and practices that enhance the electricity generation, distribution, monitoring, and storage infrastructure used to support Tumwater.

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1) Why is this Goal Important?

Goal U-2 would protect the health of Tumwater residents by supporting the movement of energy systems to less polluting alternatives.

Policies		Lead	Period
U-2.1	Monitor system or grid-scale energy storage innovations and use the experiences of communities that begin to deploy them to inform updates to Tumwater codes and permitting.	CDD	Term of the Plan

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Goal U-3 Support the efforts of private utility providers to ensure that vital utilities are created, operated, and maintained in a safe manner.

Goal U-3 establishes policies for Tumwater to support work with private utility providers to make sure that vital utilities function as intended.

1) Why is this Goal Important?

Goal U-3 would help to ensure that private utilities are available to Tumwater residents and community members and to reduce the number and effects of disruptions.

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Policies		Lead	Period
U-3.1	Coordinate with private utility providers to implement actions in the Natural Hazards Mitigation Plan to reduce service interruptions and provide services that are more dependable during hazard events.	CDD TED	Term of the Plan
U-3.2	Support undergrounding private utilities to increase public safety.	CDD TED	Term of the Plan
U-3.3	Encourage pipeline safety through public awareness and regulations.	CDD	Term of the Plan
U-3.4	Support private provider's actions to increase the safety of utilities infrastructure and operations through appropriate siting and maintenance.	CDD	Term of the Plan

Commented [BM14]: New policy.

Commented [BM15]: Update current policy.

Commented [BM16]: Update current policy.

Commented [BM17]: Implementation action.

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Appendix A – Draft Implementation Actions

Each of the Lands for Public Purposes Element goals and policies in Chapter 4 will require Tumwater to take specific actions to implement over the course of the 20 year term of the Comprehensive Plan.

The draft implementation actions in the tables below were developed in coordination with the community, Tumwater staff, and other agencies. The draft implementation actions are intended to serve as the start for developing annual Tumwater work programs.

As the Comprehensive Plan is put into action over the next twenty years, the draft

implementation actions will change as new, unforeseen opportunities emerge: new ones may be added, proposed ones may be modified or replaced by other actions.

The draft implementations actions below are intended to be draft work program items that serve to implement the goals and policies of the Element. The draft implementation actions will need further refinement before they are incorporated into annual Tumwater work programs.

1. How to Read These Tables

The Lands for Public Purposes Element goals, policies, and the implementation actions associated with them are not in priority order.

Draft implementation actions that can only be undertaken by other entities are not included in this plan.

a) Department Leads

Implementation of the Utilities Element’s policies and implementation actions are associated with two different Tumwater departments:

CDD Community Development Department

TED Transportation & Engineering Department

b) Period

Each of the Utilities Element’s policies and draft implementation actions are associated with estimated start dates, length of time to complete, and target completion dates, if appropriate based on adequate funding for staff and resources. Most policies are ongoing with no set target completion date.

Goal U-1 Promote efficiency when planning for and siting private utilities.

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Policies and Implementation Actions		Lead	Period
U-1.1	Coordinate with private utility providers to allow utilities to meet anticipated demand.	CDD TED	Term of the Plan

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Policies and Implementation Actions		Lead	Period
U-1.1.1	Provide growth projections to private utility providers to allow for utilities to be appropriately planned for and sized to meet anticipated demand.	CDD	Term of the Plan
U-1.1.2	Notify private utility providers when project proposals for large developments are submitted to ensure adequate services will be provided.	CDD TED	Term of the Plan
U-1.1.3	Identify areas with disadvantaged populations and work with private utility providers to support extensions and updates to infrastructure in these areas.	CDD TED	2026-28
U-1.1.4	Explore ways to provide affordable, reliable services such as broadband and cable to vulnerable populations with assistance from private utility providers.	CDD	2026-28
U-1.2	Be aware of public service obligations when a local review of private utility improvements occurs and process permits and approvals for private utility facilities in a fair and timely manner, and in accordance with development regulations that foster predictability.	CDD TED	Term of the Plan
U-1.3	Locate private utility facilities near compatible adjacent land uses.	CDD TED	Term of the Plan
U-1.3.1	Update Tumwater development regulations to address noise, odor, heat, and visual impacts of new private utility facilities on surrounding properties.	CDD TED	2026-28
U-1.4	Encourage utilities to collocate or consolidate facilities within rights-of-way whenever feasible to protect health, safety, ensure reliability to the utility system, and reduce visual impacts.	TED	Term of the Plan
U-1.5	Provide timely notification to all affected private utilities prior to road construction or projects that may impact services.	TED	Term of the Plan

Commented [BM20]: New implementation action.

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Commented [BM22]: New implementation action.

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Policies and Implementation Actions		Lead	Period
U-1.5.1	Seek input from private utility providers when developing policies that affect their service and activities, such as street excavation, street obstructions, and fees.	TED	Term of the Plan
U-1.5.2	Coordinate with private utilities providers on the design and timing of utilities trenching and street repair in public rights of way to reduce disruption.	TED	Term of the Plan
U-1.6	Review and approve related private utility permits as part of larger project review and approval processes whenever feasible.	CDD TED	Term of the Plan
U-1.7	Protect existing electrical transmission corridors and public rights-of-way to maintain their usefulness in meeting future needs.	CDD TED	Term of the Plan
U-1.8	Coordinate with neighboring jurisdictions to ensure consistency of the respective Utility Elements to facilitate orderly private utility service.	CDD TED	Term of the Plan
U-1.8.1	Coordinate with Thurston County and the cities of Lacey and Olympia when private, multijurisdictional private utility additions and improvements are being planned.	TED	2026-28

Commented [BM30]: New implementation action. Source: Olympia.

Commented [BM31]: New implementation action.

Commented [BM32]: Update of current policy.

Commented [BM33]: Update of current policy.

Commented [BM34]: Update of current policy.

Commented [BM35]: Update current implementation action.

Goal U-2 Support enhancement of electricity generation, distribution, monitoring, and storage infrastructure serving Tumwater that uses clean technologies and practices.

Commented [BM36]: Update of current goal.

Policies and Implementation Actions		Lead	Period
U-2.1	Monitor system or grid-scale energy storage innovations and use the experiences of communities that begin to deploy them to inform updates to Tumwater codes and permitting.	CDD	Term of the Plan
U-2.1.1	If technological progress is proven, collaborate with energy providers for the deployment and siting of such storage solutions.	CDD	2026-28

Commented [BM37]: Update of current policy.

Commented [BM38]: New implementation action.

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Goal U-3 Support the efforts of private utility providers to ensure that vital utilities are created, operated, and maintained in a safe manner.

Commented [BM39]: Updated current goal.

Policies and Implementation Actions		Lead	Period
U-3.1	Coordinate with private utility providers to implement actions in the Natural Hazards Mitigation Plan to reduce service interruptions and provide services that are more dependable during hazard events.	CDD TED	Term of the Plan
U-3.1.1	Work with private utility providers to harden the existing electrical grid to reduce peak demand and maintain reliable energy, especially during extreme weather events.	TED	Term of the Plan
U-3.1.2	Refer to the most current Natural Hazards Mitigation Plan to identify areas where private utility providers should reinforce and harden their utilities to remain dependable during hazard events.	TED	Term of the Plan
U-3.2	Support undergrounding private utilities to increase public safety.	CDD TED	Term of the Plan
U-3.2.1	Identify areas at high risk for natural hazards and require that private utilities be placed underground as part of new development and redevelopment.	CDD	Term of the Plan
U-3.2.2	Develop and maintain a management plan, consistent with the Tumwater Municipal Code and the Engineering Development and Design Standards, for underground and overhead private utilities as part of Tumwater’s franchise agreements.	TED	Term of the Plan
U-3.2.3	Support a change in state policies to increase the share of funding for undergrounding overhead wires to reduce power outages.	CDD	Term of the Plan
U-3.2.4	Work with private utility providers to utilize construction projects and infrastructure updates as an opportunity to install underground utilities.	TED	Term of the Plan

Commented [BM40]: New policy.

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Commented [BM42]: New implementation policy.

Commented [BM43]: Update current policy.

Commented [BM44]: New implementation action based on 2023 Hazards Mitigation Action Plan.

Commented [BM45]: New implementation action.

Commented [BM46]: New implementation action.

Commented [BM47]: New implementation action.

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Policies and Implementation Actions		Lead	Period
U-3.2.5	Work with neighborhood associations to encourage the development of local improvement districts to provide funding for undergrounding existing private utilities.	CDD TED	Term of the Plan
U-3.3	Encourage pipeline safety through public awareness and regulations.	CDD	Term of the Plan
U-3.3.1	Adopt regulations that limit high-risk uses near pipelines to protect both the public and the pipelines themselves.	CDD	Term of the Plan
U-3.3.2	Support public education on pipeline safety and pipeline locations within Tumwater.	CDD	Term of the Plan
U-3.3.3	Discourage above-ground natural gas gate stations from being located in nonindustrial areas.	CDD	Term of the Plan
U-3.4	Support private provider’s actions to increase the safety of utilities infrastructure and operations through appropriate siting and maintenance.	CDD	Term of the Plan
U-3.4.1	If permitting new large scale energy storage systems, ensure private utility facilities are located with compatible surrounding land uses with regard to the size of exposed apparatuses, the production of audible noise, and public health and safety.	CDD	2026-28
U-3.4.2	When a private provider proposes a large new scale energy storage system, require adequate safety and maintenance plans and documentation be provided as part of project review in accordance with federal and state regulations.	CDD	2026-28

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Commented [BM53]: Implementation action.

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