

WAC 365-196-420 Utilities element. (1) Requirements. The utilities element shall contain at least the following features: 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.

(2) Recommendations for meeting requirements. Counties and cities should consider the following:

(a) The general location and capacity of existing and proposed utility facilities should be integrated with the land use element. Proposed utilities are those awaiting approval when the comprehensive plan is adopted.

(b) In consultation with serving utilities, counties and cities should prepare an analysis of the capacity needs for various utilities over the planning period, to serve the growth anticipated at the locations and densities proposed within the jurisdiction's planning area. The capacity needs analysis should include consideration of comprehensive utility plans, least-cost plans, load forecasts, and other planning efforts.

(c) The utility element should identify the general location of utility lines and facilities required to furnish anticipated capacity needs for the planning period. This should be developed in consultation with serving utilities as a part of the process of identifying lands useful for public purposes.

(d) Counties and cities should evaluate whether any utilities should be identified and classified as essential public facilities, subject in cases of siting difficulty to the separate siting process established under the comprehensive plan for such facilities.

(e) Counties and cities should evaluate whether any utility facilities within their planning area are subject to countywide planning policies for siting public facilities of a countywide or statewide nature.

(f) Counties and cities should include local criteria for siting utilities over the planning period, including:

(i) Consideration of whether a siting proposal is consistent with the locations and densities for growth as designated in the land use element.

(ii) Consideration of any public service obligations of the utility involved.

(iii) Evaluation of whether the siting decision will adversely affect the ability of the utility to provide service throughout its service area.

(iv) Balancing of local design considerations against articulated needs for system-wide uniformity.

(g) Counties and cities should adopt policies that call for:

(i) Joint use of transportation rights of way and utility corridors, where possible.

(ii) Timely and effective notification of interested utilities about road construction, and of maintenance and upgrades of existing roads to facilitate coordination of public and private utility trenching activities.

(iii) Consideration of utility permit applications simultaneously with the project permit application for the project proposal requesting service and, when possible, approval of utility permits when the project permit application for the project to be served is approved.

(iv) Cooperation and collaboration between the county or city and the utility provider to develop vegetation management policies and plans for utility corridors.

(A) Coordination and cooperation between the county or city and the utility provider to educate the public on avoiding preventable utility conflicts through choosing proper vegetation (i.e., "Right Tree, Right Place").

(B) Coordination and cooperation between the county or city and the utility provider to reduce potential critical areas conflicts through the consideration of alternate utility routes, expedited vegetation management permitting, coordinated vegetation management activities, and/or long-term vegetation management plans.

(h) Adjacent counties and cities should coordinate to ensure the consistency of each jurisdiction's utilities element and regional utility plan, and to develop a coordinated process for siting regional utility facilities in a timely manner.

[Statutory Authority: RCW 36.70A.050 and 36.70A.190. WSR 23-08-037, § 365-196-420, filed 3/29/23, effective 4/29/23; WSR 10-03-085, § 365-196-420, filed 1/19/10, effective 2/19/10.]