

**DATE:** September 15, 2022  
**TO:** Environmental Services Commission  
**FROM:** Kate Nesse, Senior Planner  
Community Development, Planning Division  
**SUBJECT:** Comprehensive Plan Periodic Update: Utilities Element Update Scope

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## **ACTION REQUIRED**

Staff is providing **information** on the scope of the update to the Utilities Element in the Comprehensive Plan and seeking the Commission's **feedback** on the recommended scope.

## **BACKGROUND / ANALYSIS**

### PROJECT EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Bellevue's Comprehensive Plan provides the roadmap for growth in the City. Washington State's Growth Management Act (GMA) directs counties and cities to update their Comprehensive Plans every 10 years. This update focuses on Volume 1, which contains the citywide policies and the land use map. The subarea plans in Volume 2 are updated on a rolling basis and not included in the periodic update.

Bellevue City Code directs the Environmental Services Commission to advise the City with regard to water, sewer, storm and surface water, and solid waste utility programs on "short and long-range planning, including participating with the planning commission in preparing, reviewing, and recommending comprehensive plan updates and subarea plans; provided, that the planning commission shall review and make final recommendations to the City Council on all matters which will be adopted by the City Council as part of the comprehensive plan" (3.55.070.A) The Commission was introduced to the overall scope of the update at the meeting on April 7, 2022. At the meeting on September 15, 2022, the Environmental Services Commission will review and provide comments on the specific scope of the Utilities Element, with focus on the sections on the City-managed utilities.

For reference, policies relating to the City-managed utilities are attached. Commissioners may view all the existing policies in the Utilities Element online:

## COUNCIL DIRECTION

On February 28, 2022, the City Council directed the Planning Commission to manage the Comprehensive Planning Periodic Update. They directed the other boards and commissions to contribute to the update by providing update recommendations to the Elements and policies where their expertise lies.

## CONTEXT OF THE PROJECT

The state Growth Management Act directs cities and counties to update their comprehensive plans every 10 years (RCW 36.70A). The current update must be adopted by 2024. Within the state of Washington, a specific framework is utilized to ensure consistency and coordination between jurisdictions. The majority of this framework is outlined in RCW 36.70 and 36.70a. Bellevue's Comprehensive Plan is guided by policies in King County's Countywide Planning Policies, Puget Sound Regional Council's (PSRC's) Vision 2050 and Multicounty Planning Policies, which are all created within the framework of the state's Growth Management Act (GMA).

The Environmental Services Commission is directed by City code to participate in this process by, "preparing, reviewing and recommending comprehensive plan updates" in cooperation with the Planning Commission (Bellevue Code 3.55.070.H).

## OPTIONS BEING CONSIDERED

Each element of the Comprehensive Plan includes introductory narrative text and a number of policies that are divided into topical sections. The introductory text gives some history of the City, provides the planning context, and an explanation of the policy direction that the City is taking. This will be updated in 2023. Right now, the project team is considering the detailed scope of changes for the policies. Such changes include:

- 1) Addition of new policies: Adding policies that are needed because of changed conditions or future needs.
- 2) Repeal of policies: Repealing policies that are no longer relevant or in conflict with state, regional, county or City direction.
- 3) Modification of policies: Modifications could include minor text edits to correct typos or awkward wording or major edits that reflect the revised policy intent and that impact the application of the policy.
- 4) Move policies: Occasionally, there are policies that fit better in another element.

The team is also considering renaming or reorganizing the sub-sections within the policy section of each element. Across all policies, staff will be looking at the impact of the policies on equity and may include changes that would result in more equitable distribution of impacts or services.

## STAFF RECOMMENDATION FOR SCOPE OF POLICY AMENDMENTS

Utilities staff, in cooperation with long range planning staff, have reviewed each policy and recommend the following preliminary scope of changes in the Utilities Element. Additional potential policy amendments may emerge from Environmental Services Commission engagement and through the public involvement process. The scope is organized by subsection. Each subsection includes the name of the subsection, describes the changed circumstances, and lists the scope of the potential policy changes in that subsection.

### General Utility System.

Changed Circumstances	Potential Policy Amendments
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Watershed Management Plan in development</li><li>• Changes to properties in the Potential Annexation Area (PAA)</li><li>• Changes to technology and practices across City-managed and non City-managed utilities</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Minor policy language amendments</li><li>• Minor amendments to keep policies in line with the latest technology and practices</li><li>• Clarify annexation process for the remainder of the PAA</li></ul>

### Utility Coordination.

Changed Circumstances	Potential Policy Amendments
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• No changes of note</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Minor policy language amendments</li></ul>

### Hazardous Waste.

Changed Circumstances	Potential Policy Amendments
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• No changes of note</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Minor policy language amendments</li></ul>

### Solid Waste.

Changed Circumstances	Potential Policy Amendments
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Changes to the technology and practices around recycling of solid waste</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Minor policy language amendments</li><li>• Minor amendments to keep policies in line with the latest technology and practices</li><li>• Consider additional policies related to the promotion of recycling and other environmentally responsible disposal of solid waste</li></ul>

### Wastewater Utility.

Changed Circumstances	Potential Policy Amendments
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• No changes of note</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Minor policy language amendments</li></ul>

## Storm and Surface Water Utility.

Changed Circumstances	Potential Policy Amendments
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Watershed Management Plan in development</li><li>• Changing regulations</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Minor policy language amendments</li><li>• Minor amendments to keep language in line with the Watershed Management Plan</li><li>• Minor amendments to keep policies in line with the latest technology and practices</li></ul>

## Water Utility.

Changed Circumstances	Potential Policy Amendments
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Emergency Water Supply Master Plan</li><li>• New King County policy to protect wellhead areas</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Minor policy language amendments</li><li>• Minor amendments to keep policies in line with the latest technology and practices</li><li>• Address wellhead protection</li></ul>

## General Non City-Managed Utilities.

Changed Circumstances	Potential Policy Amendments
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Increased reliance on internet connection for communication</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Minor policy language amendments</li><li>• Minor amendments to keep policies in line with the latest technology and practices</li></ul>

## Non City-Managed Utilities – Additional Electrical Facilities Policies.

Changed Circumstances	Potential Policy Amendments
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Energize Eastside has begun to be implemented.</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Minor policy language amendments</li><li>• Update language of policies to be consistent with the state of electrical facility planning by PSE on the Eastside.</li></ul>

## Next Steps

The state requires the Plan be adopted no later than 2024. For Bellevue, the staff-recommended timeline takes the more conservative approach of planning for Council to adopt the Plan as early as June 2024. This way the City will have time to address any unforeseen circumstances prior to the deadline.

The planned engagement timeline for Environmental Services Commission is as follows:

**November 2022:** Discuss and provide direction on staff recommendations to the Utilities Element policies.

**March 2023:** Discuss implications of growth alternatives on Utilities and prepare preliminary Environmental Services Commission recommendation for Utilities Element policies.

**July 2023:** Review full draft of the Comprehensive Plan Update and develop Environmental Services Commission policy recommendation for transmittal to the Planning Commission.

#### FISCAL IMPACT

There is no fiscal impact at this time.

#### ATTACHMENTS & AVAILABLE DOCUMENTS

- A. Policies relating to City-managed utilities

## GOALS & POLICIES

### GOAL

- To develop and maintain all utilities at the appropriate levels of service to accommodate the city's projected growth.
- To ensure reliable utility service is provided in a way that balances public concerns about infrastructure safety and health impacts, consumer interest in paying a fair and reasonable price for service, potential impacts on the natural environment, and aesthetic compatibility with surrounding land uses.
- Utility facilities are permitted and approved by the city in a fair and timely manner and in accord with development regulations, to encourage predictability.
- New technology to improve utility services and reliability is used in balance with health and safety, economic, aesthetics, and environmental factors.



### POLICIES

#### *General Utility System*

- UT-1.** Manage utility systems effectively in order to provide reliable, sustainable, quality service.
- UT-2.** Build and manage city-owned utility infrastructure assets to reduce the likelihood of risks to public safety, property and environment, and disruption due to asset failure.
- UT-3.** Use design and construction standards that are environmentally sensitive, safe, cost-effective, and appropriate.
- UT-4.** Encourage public-private partnerships to take advantage of the city's fiber optic network to facilitate innovation, service delivery, and competition for broadband deployment throughout the city.
- UT-5.** Encourage new and cost-effective emerging information and telecommunications technologies that would benefit city utility users and improve utility service and efficient water and energy use.



- UT-6.** Ensure that the location, type, and size of all public facilities is determined and/or approved by the city.
- UT-7.** Base the extension and sizing of system components on the land use plan of the area. System capacity will not determine land use.
- UT-8.** Design, construct, and maintain facilities to minimize their impact on surrounding neighborhoods.
- UT-9.** Encourage the joint use of public facilities such as the development of a storm and surface water detention area as passive recreation.
- UT-10.** Emphasize cost effective management of city utility systems over their lifetime, including planning for their renewal and replacement, balancing risk, and maintaining desired service levels. Forecast future capital and maintenance costs and manage rates so that customer rate revenue funds the cost of ownership equitably across generations.
- UT-11.** Educate and inform utility providers, consumers and the community about the costs and benefits of emerging technologies.
- UT-12.** Develop and periodically update functional utility system plans that forecast system capacity and needs for at least a 20 year planning horizon.
- UT-13.** Consider Low Impact Development principles to minimize impervious surfaces and native vegetation loss on all infrastructure improvement projects.
- UT-14.** Make the city's utility service areas coincide with the Potential Annexation Area.



- UT-15.** Extend the service area boundaries only if landowners requesting service have begun the annexation process or have made prior agreements with city.
- UT-16.** Use pre-annexation agreements only if immediate annexation cannot be required or is not reasonable.

### *Utility Coordination*

- UT-17.** Extend water and wastewater utility service to unserved areas of the utility service area, including extensions into potential annexation areas, if the city's costs are reimbursed and provided that service will be extended only upon annexation to the city.
- UT-18.** Coordinate with other jurisdictions and governmental entities in the planning and implementation of multi-jurisdictional utility facility additions and improvements.
- UT-19.** Coordinate with the appropriate jurisdictions to ensure that utility facilities that are to be constructed in potential annexation areas are designed and built in accord with City of Bellevue standards.
- UT-20.** Coordinate emergency preparedness and response with local and regional utility partners.

### *Hazardous Waste*

- UT-21.** Cooperate with other private and public agencies in the region to manage and control hazardous waste and moderate risk waste, including medical wastes and hazardous household substances.
- UT-22.** Educate the public in the proper handling and disposal of hazardous household waste and on the use of alternative products or practices which result in reducing the use and storage of hazardous materials in homes and businesses.
- UT-23.** Provide for the safe and convenient disposal of hazardous household waste through a permanent and conveniently located collection facility for Bellevue residents.







## Solid Waste

- UT-24.** Promote the recycling of solid waste materials by providing opportunities for convenient recycling and by developing educational materials on recycling, composting, and other waste reduction methods.

*Discussion: Waste reduction and source separation are the city's preferred strategies for managing solid waste. Materials remaining after effective waste reduction and source separation should be handled in accordance with the King County Solid Waste Plan.*

- UT-25.** Encourage and actively seek an effective regional approach to solid waste management.
- UT-26.** Use a public review process in the selection and approval of sites for any disposal facility, to study and consider sensitivity to aesthetics, health effects and the environment.
- UT-27.** Maintain a safe, cost-effective and responsive solid waste collection system that provides convenient, efficient, environmentally-friendly and visually unobtrusive components and services.
- UT-28.** Manage solid waste collection to minimize litter and neighborhood disruption.
- UT-29.** Work with King County to maintain a geographically balanced system of solid waste transfer and disposal facilities and avoid disproportionate impacts to any individual community.
- UT-30.** Explore transfer and disposal options for the period after the city's current contract with King County terminates in mid-2028.

### *Wastewater Utility*

- UT-31.** Provide a reliable wastewater disposal system that ensures public health and safety, and protects the environment.
- UT-32.** Require wastewater connections for all new development, including single family plats, unless otherwise allowed by state or county regulations.
- UT-33.** Allow existing single family homes with septic systems to continue to use septic systems, provided they remain in compliance with Seattle-King County Public Health requirements. Homeowners are encouraged to connect to wastewater systems where available. If existing septic systems fail to maintain compliance with Seattle-King County Public Health standards and cannot be brought into compliance, homeowners should be required to connect to the wastewater system.



### *Storm and Surface Water Utility*

- UT-34.** Provide a storm and surface water system that controls damage from storms, protects surface water quality, provides for the safety and enjoyment of citizens, supports fish and wildlife habitat, and protects the environment.
- UT-35.** Participate in regional watershed based efforts with the goals of achieving local drainage basin health and addressing Endangered Species Act issues. Manage the storm and surface water system within a system wide, watershed based context.
- UT-36.** Design context appropriate stormwater management facilities that reflect the unique character of the neighborhood in which the site is situated.
- UT-37.** Educate the public about water quality issues.
- UT-38.** Encourage the use of low impact development and stormwater best management practices to manage stormwater runoff, which may result in smaller facilities constructed on- and off-site for flow control, conveyance, and water quality.





### *Water Utility*

- UT-39.** Provide a reliable, cost-effective supply of safe, secure, high quality drinking water that meets the community's water needs in an environmentally responsible manner.
- UT-40.** Provide a water supply that meets all federal and state drinking water quality standards.
- UT-41.** Provide reliable water service for domestic use, fire flow protection, and emergencies.
- UT-42.** Promote conservation and the wise and efficient use of the public water supply and discourage the waste of this valuable resource.
- UT-43.** Improve the quality and quantity of the water supply of well water users by allowing access to the city water system as contained in the Water System Functional Plan, and provided that at least the fair share costs are paid by the benefiting parties.
- UT-44.** Serve as a role model for the community in the efficient use of water.

## NON CITY-MANAGED UTILITIES

### *General Non City-Managed Utilities*

- UT-45.** Coordinate with non-city utility providers to ensure planning for system growth consistent with the city's Comprehensive Plan and growth forecasts.
- UT-46.** Support new and emerging information and telecommunications technologies that would benefit utility service delivery by being sustainable, appropriate and viable.
- UT-47.** Defer to the serving utility the implementation sequence of utility plan components.