



**SAN JUAN COUNTY PLANNING COMMISSION MEETING**

**MINUTES OF THE FEBRUARY 21, 2020 MEETING**

The meeting of the San Juan County Planning Commission was called to order by Chair, Tim Blanchard, at 8:32 a.m. in the County Council hearing room, Legislative Building, 55 Second Street, Friday Harbor, and San Juan Island.

Planning Commission

Members Present: Tim Blanchard, Dale Roundy, Camille Uhlir, Michael Pickett, and Georgette Wong (by phone).

Planning Commission

Members Excused: Steve Rubey

Department of Community Development (DCD) Staff

Present: Erika Shook, Director; Linda Kuller, Planning Manager; Julie Thompson, Planner III, Adam Zack, Planner III; Sophia Cassam, Planner I; and Lynda Guernsey, AS II.

**Administrative Items**

Confirm Agenda – Dale Roundy stated he would need to leave the meeting by 11:00 a.m.

Election of Officers – Discussion of potential candidates.

Moved by Michael Pickett, seconded by Dale Roundy, to nominate Camille Uhlir as Chair. Dale Roundy – yes, Michael Pickett – yes, Camille Uhlir – yes, Georgette Wong – yes, and Tim Blanchard – yes. Motion passed unanimously.

Moved by Michael Pickett, seconded by Camille Uhlir, to nominate Dale Roundy for Secretary. Dale Roundy – yes, Michael Pickett – yes, Camille Uhlir – yes, Georgette Wong – yes, and Tim Blanchard – yes. Motion passed unanimously.

Moved by Camille Uhlir, seconded by Michael Pickett, to nominate Tim Blanchard for Vice Chair. Dale Roundy – yes, Michael Pickett – yes, Camille Uhlir – yes, Georgette Wong – yes, and Tim Blanchard – yes. Motion passed unanimously.

Results of the above motions were: Camille Uhlir – Chair; Tim Blanchard – Vice Chair; and Dale Roundy, Secretary.

Minutes of January 17, 2020

Moved by Dale Roundy, seconded by Georgette Wong, to approve the January 17, 2020 minutes as submitted. Motion passed with three yes votes, zero no votes, and two abstentions (Uhlir and Pickett).

DCD Update – Linda Kuller, Deputy Director

1. An updated Planning Commission and County Council calendar was handed out and Linda Kuller went through the dates with the Planning Commission.
2. There will be a hearing with the Planning Commission today on the Shoreline Master Program periodic update.
3. The County Council will be renewing the moratorium on marijuana in March 24th.
4. Linda Kuller and Adam Zack will be attending the Eastsound Planning Review Committee meeting in March to discuss land use issues.
5. The Deer Harbor Review Committee has made a request for changes to their land use map and code.

There was a reminder to staff about having a discussion on ethics in planning at a meeting. Linda Kuller responded to questions and comments from the Planning Commission.

Public Access Time – There was no one to speak.

### **Public Hearing on the Shoreline Master Program Periodic Update – Linda Kuller, AICP, Planning Manager**

Linda Kuller gave a presentation on the background of changes proposed to the Shoreline Master Program as part of the program's periodic update.

Public testimony was opened and as there was no one to speak, closed with the option to reopen.

Staff responded to any questions and comments from the Planning Commission.

### **Deliberations**

Moved by Camille Uhlir, seconded by Dale Roundy, to recommend approval of the changes to the Shoreline Master Program as submitted by staff in the January 31, 2019 staff report, and Attachment B, Draft Public Hearing Ordinance, as part of the periodic update. Dale Roundy – yes, Michael Pickett – yes, Camille Uhlir – yes, Georgette Wong – yes, and Tim Blanchard – yes. Motion passed unanimously.

### **The following briefings are part of the San Juan County Comprehensive Plan 2036 Update Project**

#### **Briefing on the Open Space Program - Julie Thompson, Planner III, DCD and Bill Shanks, Current Use/DFL Administrator, Assessor's Office**

Julie Thompson and Bill Shanks were present to give the Planning Commission background on the current use and Designated Forest Land (DFL) programs. Bill Shanks addressed the DFL program and the current use farm and agriculture programs. Julie Thompson addressed the current use agriculture conservation land and current use open space programs. They both responded to questions and comments from the Planning Commission.

#### **Briefing on Amendments to Element 10, Economic Development - Sophia Cassam, Planner I**

Sophia Cassam gave a presentation of Bill Appel's, board member of the Economic Development Council, suggested changes to Element 10 of the Economic Development Element.

By Consensus, staff to work on clarifying the language suggested by Bill Appel, with input from the Planning Commission, and agree to have the clarified language added to the draft element.

**Briefing on Element 8, Utilities - Sophia Cassam, Planner I**

Sophia Cassam gave a presentation on what the Utilities Element includes and responded to questions from the Planning Commission. She then went through the draft Utilities Element dated February 20, 2020 to receive the Planning Commission's additions and revisions.

A handout was given to the Planning Commission of the Draft Utilities Element with Goals and Policies, with items in red being changes/suggestions by staff and items in blue suggestions by OPALCO. The Planning Commission went through the draft element including goals and policies with guidance by staff. The Planning Commission made the following changes and suggestions by consensus. Attachment A to these minutes will show the changes and/or items accepted by the Planning Commission in purple.

**Comprehensive Plan, Draft Section B, Element 8, Utilities Element, February 20, 2020**

There were no comments on the draft element up to 8.5 Goals and Policies.

8.5 Accept underlined changes.

8.5.A. Accept underline/strikeout changes.

Goal 1. Accept the "clean" underlined version.

Policies: 1. – 5. Accept the underline/strikeout changes.

Goal 2. Accept the underline/strikeout changes.

Policies: 1. – 4. Accept the underline/strikeout changes.

Goal 3. Accept the strikeout as shown.

Policies: 1. – 2. Accept strikeout and relocation of these policies.

New Goal 3. Accept the underline/strikeout changes.

New Policies:

1. Accept underline/strikeout changes.

2. Accept strikeout change.

New 2. Accept underline strikeout changes.

Goal 4. Accept underline/strikeout changes with the suggested addition of language from the Planning Commission.

Policies 1. – 5. Accept staff to rework policies to include code requirements.

Goal 5. Accept underline/strikeout changes.

Policies 1. – 4 Accept underline/strikeout changes.

Goal 6. Accept underline/strikeout changes.

Policies:

1. Accept underlined changes.
2. Accept with ending the policy after the word "mainland", making the remainder of the policy a new policy 3, and renumbering the policies.

New Policy 3. Accept underline/strikeout of the new policy.

4. Accept underlined changes.
5. Accept underlined changes.
6. Accept underlined changes.
7. and Bullet 1. Accept underlined changes.
7. Bullet 2. Accept underline/strikeout changes, the strikeout are the words "beyond State energy efficiency requirements".

Goal 7. Accept the underline/strikeout changes.

Policies:

1. Accept as stated.
2. Accept the underline/strikeout changes.
3. Accept with the provision that staff research what the goal was behind this policy.
4. Accept the underline/strikeout changes.
5. Accept the underline/strikeout changes.
6. Accept the strikeout and have new language "Review appropriate land use designations for the location of alternative power generation facilities."

Goal 8. Accept underline/strikeout changes.

Policies:

1. Accept the underline/strikeout changes, the deletion of the OPALCO suggested wording.
2. Accept the strikeout/underline with staff to check if a "provider" in addition to Rock Island would be appropriate.

Goal 9. Accept the underlined change.

Policies:

1. Accept the underlined change.
2. Accept the underlined change

New 3. Accept staff to add a policy regarding safe transport and storage of bulk fuel.

### **Briefing on Element 2, Land Use: Urban Land Use - Adam Zack, Planner III**

Adam Zack gave a presentation on the background to the land use element, Growth Management Act (GMA) planning requirements, and how the sections would be handled going forward. He then went through the urban land use (UGAs) issues as part of his briefing and responded to questions and comments from the Planning Commission.

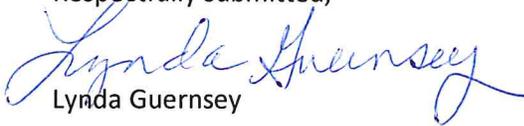
**Return to Administrative Items**

The Planning Commission heard from Erika Shook, Director of DCD, regarding vacation rental data and responded to questions and comments from the Planning Commission.

**Adjournment**

Moved by Michael Pickett, seconded by Camille Uhlir, to adjourn the meeting at 1:00 p.m. and the motion passed unanimously. The next meeting of the Planning Commission will be Friday, March 20, 2020, at 8:30 a.m. in the County Council hearing room, Legislative Building, 55 Second Street, Friday Harbor, San Juan Island.

Respectfully submitted,

  
Lynda Guernsey

**Attachment A – Draft Comprehensive Plan, Section B, Element 8, Utilities Element, from 2/20/2020 with Planning Commission edits/suggestions in purple.**

**COMPREHENSIVE PLAN  
SECTION B, ELEMENT 8**

**UTILITIES ELEMENT**  
~~November 2005~~  
February 20, 2020

**Staff comments in RED, OPALCO edits in BLUE, Planning Commission  
edits in PURPLE.**

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**ELEMENT 8**

**DRAFT  
UTILITIES ELEMENT**

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## 8.1 INTRODUCTION

### 8.1.A Purpose

~~The purpose of the Utilities Element is to set goals and policies which provide guidelines for the provision of utility services in San Juan County, and to facilitate coordinated, cost-effective planning and construction by the County and by individual utility service providers in a manner consistent with the goals and policies set forth in this *Plan*. This element consists of General Goals and Policies, Utility-Specific Goals and Policies, and a Utilities Inventory in Appendix 8.~~

The Utilities Element includes the current and projected conditions of utilities in San Juan County. Utility services included in this Element are electricity, propane, telecommunications, internet and cable. San Juan County does not provide utility services; therefore, this Element relies on information shared by utility providers.

This Element establishes goals and policies to guide the provision of utility services. Goals and policies aim to facilitate coordinated, cost-effective provision of services, planning, and construction by utility service providers in a manner consistent with the goals and policies of other elements of the *Comprehensive Plan (Plan)*. This document also identifies opportunities and challenges for utility services through the 2036 planning period. These opportunities and challenges stem from projected population increases, new technologies, and climate change.

The Utilities Element reflects certain key assumptions:

1. Utility providers are the best identifiers of utility problems and the solutions needed to overcome them;
2. Level of service (LOS) standards, concurrency, and capacity requirements do not apply to utility services addressed in this element;
3. Privately owned utilities are not public facilities although they provide a public service. Each utility bears the responsibility for providing services to San Juan County residents within the guidelines of their own policies and in a manner consistent with the regulatory bodies having jurisdiction over them; and
4. County residents ultimately bear the majority of the costs associated with the provision of utility services through utility rates, taxes, land development costs, and impacts to environmental and aesthetic values.

This Element supports the *Plan* Vision and fulfils the requirements of the Growth Management Act (GMA) for utilities planning. Regarding energy, the Vision states, “Our community strives for energy independence...we use renewable energy.” Regarding communication systems, the Vision affirms that “Advanced communication infrastructure is encouraged...we encourage new ideas and new technology... [and] communication systems support our economy.”

The Utilities Element is oriented toward meeting the needs of the people of the County in the midst of growth, climate change, and ever-advancing technologies. The GMA calls for comprehensive plans to include “the general location, proposed location, and capacity of all existing and proposed utilities” in

RCW 36.70A.070(4). By fulfilling the GMA requirement, the County positions itself to make effective use of existing utilities infrastructure, and to be responsive to inevitable change. Together, this Element and Appendix 8, Utilities Inventory meet this requirement. Appendix 8 contains the in-depth inventory of utilities.

## 8.2 RELATIONSHIP TO OTHER PLAN ELEMENTS

The siting and provision of utility services interacts with other topics in the Plan. Utilities information can be found in both the Utilities and Capital Facilities Elements and Inventories. Water and sewer utilities are discussed in the Capital Facilities Element and Inventory, and are subject to concurrency requirements and Level of Service (LOS) standards. Services discussed in the Utilities Element and Inventory are not subject to concurrency requirements or LOS standards. The siting of utilities facilities, such as propane storage, electrical substations, and telecommunication towers, is a land use issue. Telecommunication services are closely tied to issues discussed in the Economic Development Element. The Utilities Element must be consistent with other Plan elements. No element can be enacted independently without consideration of other elements.

## 8.3 CURRENT CONDITIONS AND FUTURE OUTLOOK

The following subsections summarize existing utilities conditions and provide a look at what the future may hold for the provision of those services. The outlook is based on the assumption that the County will grow according to the population projections in Plan Appendix 1. Both existing and future utility services are and will be operating in the context of climate change and the development of new energy and communication technologies.

### 8.3.1 Electricity

#### Current Conditions

Orcas Power and Light Co-operative (OPALCO) provides electricity in the County. The majority of electricity is sourced from hydropower on the mainland. Bonneville Power Administration and Puget Power generates and distributes it. Local alternative energy sources, such as solar power, currently generate about one percent of electricity. In 2019, OPALCO served 14,913 accounts on 21 islands. OPALCO estimates an annual increase of 0.5 percent for the number of residential accounts and 2.0 percent for commercial accounts.

#### Energy Outlook

Globally, we face a climate crisis induced by human-generated greenhouse gas emissions. In the Pacific Northwest, we have observed wildfires, drought, lack of snowpack, and increased ocean acidification in recent years<sup>1</sup>. Governor Inslee's Executive Order 14-04 includes key areas for addressing climate change, including reducing carbon emissions and improving energy efficiency<sup>2</sup>. San Juan County can reduce carbon emissions by increasing reliance on electricity if it comes from clean, renewable sources, and is used as efficiently as possible. Transportation and home heating/cooling are two major sources of energy

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<sup>1</sup> <https://fortress.wa.gov/ecy/publications/documents/1902031.pdf>, pg. x.

<sup>2</sup> [https://www.governor.wa.gov/sites/default/files/execute\\_order/eo\\_14-04.pdf](https://www.governor.wa.gov/sites/default/files/execute_order/eo_14-04.pdf)

expenditure in the County (and anywhere else). Thirty five percent of county residential energy use is for heating, and over half of energy use is for transportation (source: OPALCO analysis, US Department of Energy), which accounts for 41 percent of Washington State fossil fuel emissions (source: WA Department of Ecology). Electric transportation costs about 75 percent less than fossil fueled transportation, helping keep dollars in the local economy (source: OPALCO analysis, US Department of Transportation, WA Department of Transportation).

The electrification of transportation and heating will add—are expected to increase load by 37 percent by 2030, and reduce greenhouse gas emissions by 72 percent by 2050 (source: The Brattle Group). The number of Electric Vehicles (EVs) in the county increased by 65 percent last year (source: WA DOT) to electricity demands due to an increase in the use of electric vehicles (EVs) as they become less expensive and allowed for longer ranges. The State has reinstated tax breaks for non-luxury electric vehicles in an effort to increase their prevalence and reduce transportation emissions.

In 2019, Washington State Ferries (WSF) announced that it would begin transitioning its diesel ferry fleet to hybrid-electric, with the addition of at least one new all-electric ferry. The anticipated 2030 ferry electrification will add load as well. Ferry electrification is an effort to drastically reduce greenhouse gas emissions. Currently, WSF generates fifty percent of greenhouse gas emission from working boats in Puget Sound (220,000 metric tons annually), despite only making up only six percent of such boats<sup>3</sup>.

While power in Washington may be cleaner than in other states that rely heavily on fossil fuels to generate electricity, hydropower is not without environmental impact. Dams that generate hydropower are harmful to Chinook Salmon populations, which Orca Whales in the Salish Sea rely on as a food source. That said, WA hydro power is cleaner than solar, wind, coal and natural gas (source: UN IPCC [https://archive.ipcc.ch/pdf/special-reports/srren/SRREN\\_FD\\_SPM\\_final.pdf](https://archive.ipcc.ch/pdf/special-reports/srren/SRREN_FD_SPM_final.pdf)) and most other sources of energy, and helps reduce the impacts of climate change on ocean warming and acidification, which is driving ecosystem collapse, impacting thousands of species. Hydro is an essential resource in the 2019 WA Clean Energy Transformation Act (CETA) for firming intermittent renewables like solar and wind.

There is a push toward energy independence from the mainland. Renewable energy resource costs have been falling, while mainland pricing has been slowly rising. The point at which they cross is called *grid parity*. In other words, grid parity is the point at which an emerging technology becomes economically viable. At that point, the emerging technology has increasing cost savings compared to the legacy technology. Once a resource is at grid parity or better, it can be added into OPALCO's energy portfolio to replace or moderate the cost of legacy energy sources. OPALCO expects that local renewable energy resources will become competitive with mainland power wholesale electric rates and reach grid parity around 2025. OPALCO is transitioning to a more locally generated energy mix, which could include member-generated energy (solar, wind, micro-hydro), Community Solar, utility-scale solar, tidal energy, and other new technologies. OPALCO expects that over fifty percent of County energy will be generated locally by 2040. (source: OPALCO Integrated Resource Plan).

More information about the future of electricity in San Juan County can be found in OPALCO's planning documents. OPALCO's long-range plan contains an analysis of capacity development needed to meet future demands. Additionally, their four-year Construction Work Plan contains load forecasts and information on construction projects.

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<sup>3</sup> <https://medium.com/wagovernor/clean-transportation-advances-with-hybrid-electric-ferries-85d2db1f902b>

### **8.3.2 Propane**

There are no natural gas lines in San Juan County. The population relies heavily on propane. Propane tanks are not allowed on Washington State Ferries. Propane utility providers barge propane from the mainland to their distribution centers on San Juan, Orcas, and Lopez islands. The two propane providers in San Juan County are Inter-Island Propane and San Juan Propane. Inter-Island Propane recently established a facility on Orcas Island, which is subject to County inspection prior to starting operations.

The demand for propane will likely increase as the County's population increases. However, alternative renewable energy sources, such as home solar energy installations, and changes in State building code requirements to meet WA State Greenhouse Gas targets for energy efficiency may reduce the per capita demand for propane in the future.

### **8.3.3 Communications**

San Juan County encourages the development of advanced communication infrastructure. Reliable, up-to-date communication services support everything from healthcare and public safety, to economic opportunity and modern lifestyles. Geographic isolation and relatively small resident populations have historically inhibited the extension of telecommunication services to some islands in the County. Today, Fiber and LTE are providing faster and more expansive communication services.

- **Fiber:** The availability of fiber optic based services has grown extensively throughout the County in the past decade, meeting the growing needs of the electric grid, emergency communications, and residential and business broadband and cell phone service. Approximately half of County addresses are located within a serviceable distance of existing fiber optic facilities. As demand for higher bandwidth and additional improvements are made to public infrastructure, the availability of fiber optic services are expected to continue to grow.
- **Voice over Internet Protocol (VoIP):** Anyone with a reliable internet connection can purchase VoIP service, which is becoming more common as internet access and speed increases. It is the predominant method for non-wireless voice communications around the nation, particularly for businesses.
- **Fixed Wireless - Long-Term Evolution (LTE):** LTE is a standard for wireless broadband communication for mobile devices and data terminals. It increases the capacity and speed using a different radio interface together with core network improvements. LTE utilizes cellular technology to provide high-speed data and voice service has been deployed throughout the County. It provides access to phone and internet where fiber is currently unavailable, including eighteen non ferry-served islands.
- **Fixed Wireless - Cellular:** All major cellular carriers have coverage to an extent in the County; however, the geography currently limits coverage in some areas. For some residents and visitors, lack of cell service poses a safety concern because it would be difficult to call for help in the case of an emergency.

- Plain Old Telephone Service (POTS): The main provider of POTS is CenturyLink. Use of POTS has decreased in the recent years as consumers discontinue landline service or switch to VoIP.
- Cable: Cable internet and television services are available from CenturyLink, Zito Media, and POGO Zone in parts of Friday Harbor and Orcas Island. Use of cable services is declining as fiber and wireless broadband becomes more popular.

## 8.4 KEY CHALLENGES

The key challenges for utilities provided below are based on the utilities inventory in *Plan* Appendix 8 and the energy outlook. Considering the assessment of electricity, propane, and communications services, the utilities goals and policies in the following section put an emphasis on:

- Preparing to serve the County's 2036 forecasted population in *Plan* Appendix 1;
- Meeting energy and telecommunications needs within and outside of population centers;
- Reducing greenhouse gas emissions;
- Reducing environmental impacts of ~~generating the electricity~~ all forms of energy we use;
- Increasing energy efficiency; and
- Working with the challenges presented by the islands' unique geography.

## 8.5 GOALS AND POLICIES

Utilities goals and policies guide San Juan County's actions affecting the provision of utility services. This section aims to result in meeting San Juan County's current and projected needs for energy and communications in a way that is cost-effective, efficient, appropriate for the character of the islands, and responsive to climate change. These goals and policies are informed by the 2005 Utilities Element, other *Plan* elements, information from utilities providers, community feedback, and by state climate directives.

### **8.5.A General Goals and Policies**

The ~~G~~general ~~G~~goals and ~~P~~olicies in this Element address the planning, location and siting of utilities; services to new development; and environmental protection. These issues are common among all utility services.

#### ~~8.2.A~~ Long-range Planning

~~**Goal 1.** Goal: To e~~ Coordinate planning efforts between San Juan the County and utility service providers and encourage the regular exchange of information plans, maps, and other pertinent information; to aid utility service providers in anticipating and responding to growth by establishing land use policies and regulations to direct and manage future growth; and to maintain consistency between utility service plans and San Juan County plans.

CLEAN Read: Coordinate planning efforts between the County and utility service providers and encourage the regular exchange of information to aid utility service providers in anticipating and responding to growth and to maintain consistency between utility service plans and County plans.

Policies (8.2.A.1-6): (8.5.A.1.1 – 6)

1. Provide utility service providers with appropriate plans and mapped information to help establish a common eCounty-wide base map for utilities planning.
2. Obtain Maps and facility inventories, with text designating the approximate location of existing facilities and the general location of proposed new facilities, ~~will be obtained~~ from utility service providers and integrated them into the eCounty's Geographic Information System (GIS).
- ~~3. Review the utility facilities inventory annually and provide updates on a biennial basis or as necessary.~~
- ~~3.~~ 4. Provide utility service providers with ~~annual updates and status reports~~ for the six year capital improvement financing plan to aid in their ability to coordinate necessary system improvements.
- ~~4.~~ 5. Cooperate with utility providers in siting facilities for new and alternative technologies to save money and promote reliability of existing utilities by conserving existing energy resources, while promoting a feasible conversion to energy-saving technologies.
- ~~5.~~ 6. Cooperate with utility service providers in future comprehensive planning efforts, ~~and in to~~ evaluateing actual patterns and rates of growth and comparing ~~such patterns and rates~~ them to demand forecasts.

~~8.2.B~~ Project Coordination

~~Goal 2.~~ Goal: ~~To a~~ Allow for the timely and cost-effective provision of utility services to eCounty residents by enabling inter-agency joint project planning; and ~~to~~ ensure the availability and use of utility corridors within public rights-of-way for the placement of utility service facilities.

Policies (8.2.B.1-4): (8.5.A.2.1 - 4)

1. Facilitate inter-agency coordination and planning for joint trenching, installation, upgrade, repair, maintenance, and construction of new utility facilities between the Public Works Department, the various utility service providers, and other agencies.
2. Provide timely notification of proposed projects in public rights-of-way to utility service providers and coordinate the placement of both above- and underground utility facilities, which are necessary to provide adequate service, including transformers, switch vaults, telephone pedestals, utility equipment cabinets, and other necessary utility equipment or structures.
3. Allow for utility services in New dedications for public rights-of-way ~~should allow for utility services.~~
4. ~~Utility providers should be consulted~~ Encourage consultation between permit applicants and utility providers during the permitting process for installation of utility systems. **[Moved from Goal 4]**

## 8.2.C—Location and Siting

### ~~Goal 3. XX XXX~~

~~Goal: To Allow for the presence, continuing operation, maintenance, and expansion of the full range of utility services available as reflected in the facilities inventory; to Accommodate future changes in conditions and technologies which may impact the character and operation of utility facilities. ; to recognize that the geographic character of San Juan County necessitates providing access and the ability to cross shorelines and waterways to utilities; and to recognize that utility facilities must occupy and traverse a broad range of areas and land use designations.~~

#### Policies (8.2.C.1):

- ~~1. Recognize that the geographic character of San Juan County necessitates providing access and the ability to cross shorelines and waterways to utilities; and to and that recognize that utility facilities must occupy and traverse a broad range of areas and land use designations. [Moved to Environment/Rural Character goal]~~
- ~~2. Locate and site utility facilities to minimize negative impacts to the rural character and natural environment of the county. New transmission facilities, substations and submarine transmission cable terminal facilities should be located and sited to minimize adverse impacts to the county's shorelines and rural character. [Moved to Environment/Rural Character goal]~~
- ~~3. New utility facilities should conform to the policies of the Land Use Element.~~

## 8.2.D—Permitting

~~Goal 3. Goal: To f Foster predictability and timeliness in processing permit applications for utilities new utility facilities or utility service work; and to allow for necessary maintenance, repair, improvement, and expansion of utility facilities in a timely and efficient manner.~~

#### Policies (8.2.D.1-3): (8.5.A.3.1 – 2)

- ~~1. Priority should be given to maintenance and repair work required to restore utility service under emergency circumstances.  
Provide provisions for emergency response for delayed permitting of activities necessary to prevent an imminent threat to public health, safety, or the environment; or to public or private property.~~
- ~~2. Identify utility installation, relocation and maintenance activities that are expected to have significant permanent or immitigable impacts. [re-inserted by PC]~~
- ~~3. Identify utility installation, relocation and maintenance activities which are expected to have insignificant environmental impacts and will establish exemptions from permit requirements for those types of activities.~~

Continue to allow utility exemptions from critical area requirements for the installation and construction of utility lines and equipment, provided the conditions of exemption are met and documented.

#### 8.2.E—New Development

**Goal 4.** Goal: ~~To minimize adverse impacts of providing utility services to new development on the rural character of San Juan County ; to allow for the provision of the full range of utility services to county residents; and to provide for new utility facilities which are compatible with or can be mitigated to minimize adverse impacts to adjacent land uses.~~ Protect rural character by minimizing the adverse impacts of utility services. PC suggestion: Protect rural character while also providing for the location and extension of necessary utility facilities.

#### Policies (8.2.E.1-3): (8.5.A.4.1 – 5)

1. ~~Require~~ New utility installations to serve for new development should to be installed underground, ~~except that s~~ Services for single-family residential construction on an existing parcel may connect with existing overhead utility facilities.
2. ~~Require~~ New development should to be designed so that utility easements are accessible and have sufficient capacity for installation of the full range of required utility services.
3. ~~Utility providers should be consulted during the permitting process for installation of utility systems.~~ [Moved to Goal 2]
4. ~~New utility installations should provide vegetative screening or buffers for existing adjacent development.~~
5. ~~New development approved adjacent to existing utility facilities should provide vegetative screening or buffers.~~
3. Require landscaping to buffer adjacent uses for new utility installations excluding aboveground utility facility development and distribution or transmission corridors when located outside a public right-of-way.
4. Locate and site utility facilities to minimize negative impacts to the rural character and natural environment of the county. [Moved from old goal 3]
5. New transmission facilities, substations and submarine transmission cable terminal facilities should be located and sited to minimize adverse impacts to the eCounty's shorelines and rural character. [Moved from old goal 3]

#### 8.2.F—Environmental Protection

**Goal 5.** Goal: ~~To Protect and preserve natural habitats and environments while also providing for the location and extension of necessary utility facilities.~~

#### Policies (8.2.F.1-4): (8.5.A.5.1 – 4)

1. ~~View Environmental protection and a quality environment are viewed as one product of, and not a constraint on, good utility service, and are important components of operation in the public interest. Regulations for environmental protection should recognize both the significance and~~

~~permanence of potential environmental damage and the cost to mitigate or avoid potential damage for proposed utility projects.~~

2. ~~Locate~~ New utility facilities should be located away from, or constructed them in a manner compatible with, critical areas, Resource Lands, and Shorelines. ~~Recognize that physical and service constraints may not allow relocation away from or full compatibility with such areas and resources.~~
  
- ~~2.~~ 3. ~~Condition the approval of new utility facilities so as to avoid or mitigate any significant adverse impacts, and to develop appropriate compensating measures where mitigation is not feasible.~~
  
- ~~3.~~ 4. ~~Ensure that utility service providers are responsible for costs such as those associated with damage caused to the environment and public rights-of-way so that utilities providers will seek to minimize those costs in their planning, decision-making, and project execution.~~
  
- ~~4.~~ 5. ~~Recognize that the geographic character of San Juan the County necessitates requires providing access to and the ability to cross shorelines and waterways to connect utilities; ~~and to and that recognize that utility facilities must occupy and traverse a broad range of areas and land use designations. [Moved from old goal 3]~~~~

## 8.5.B Utility-Specific Goals and Policies

### ELECTRICITY

#### 8.3.A5.B Electricity

#### Goal 6. Minimize the environmental impacts of electricity production and use.

~~Goal: Encourage the exploration of innovative and alternative technologies regarding energy conservation.~~

Policies (8.2.G.1): (8.5.B.6.1 – 6)

1. Encourage utility service providers to explore innovative and alternative methods of producing energy.
2. Support the transition toward energy independence from the mainland ~~by~~.
3. ~~W~~working with the San Juan County Conservation District and OPALCO to promote community solar projects and provide technical assistance and incentives to increase individual home solar installations.
4. Encourage utility providers, WASDOT, and the public to reduce greenhouse gas emissions.
5. Adopt regulations that allow facilities that support the distribution of electricity for cleaner transportation including electric vehicles and electric ferries.
6. Provide ~~(Promote the provision/availability of... OR Increase the prevalence/availability of...)~~ electric vehicle chargers at key destinations throughout the County.
7. Increase energy efficiency of buildings and systems on the islands by:

- Providing educational materials and supporting education on energy efficiency in buildings, beyond State energy efficiency requirements; and
- Updating and building new County buildings ~~beyond State energy efficiency requirements~~ and generating some electricity with solar arrays when feasible alternatives are available. ~~Installing solar panels on new new and updated county buildings (will the new Beaverton valley facility have solar panels??) when feasible.~~

**Goal 7. Goal:** ~~To Assist Collaborate with the Orcas Power and Light Company Co-Operative (OPALCO) in achieving its goals for energy resiliency. as stated in the Cooperative's Bylaws and Articles of Incorporation: "to make electric energy available to its members at the lowest cost consistent with sound economy, good management, and the public interest."~~

Policies (8.3.A.1-6): (8.5.B.7.1 – 5)

1. Assist OPALCO when necessary to respond to new, unforeseen conditions and technologies that may affect utility operations and facilities.
2. Coordinate planning to allow for the appropriate location and siting of all necessary existing and future facilities including overhead, underground, and submarine transmission and distribution systems, substations, cable terminals, standby and utility-scale generation, and any other necessary equipment or structures. ~~Existing facilities are shown in Figure 1, below.~~
3. ~~Consider electric power facilities to be essential public facilities.~~ The impacts from climate change, the changing regulations around carbon emissions, and the restructuring of the electric transmission market throughout the Pacific Northwest will impact the electric grid serving San Juan County, with the potential for increased unplanned outages and rolling blackouts. The need for locally generated electricity from wind, solar, tidal, and other sources are vitally important to prevent economic disruption, and preserve San Juan County's environment. The siting of electric facilities serving locally generated electricity and its supporting infrastructure will enable the deployment of an electric ferry system and speed the electrification of the state's transportation system. These types of development activities are to be addressed as Essential Public Facilities due to their importance serving the San Juan County island community.

~~Staff does not recommend this change. Instead, OPALCO's suggested paragraph could be added to the Energy Outlook in part 8.3.1 Electricity.~~

4. Locate and site ~~New~~ upland power transmission facilities, substations and submarine transmission cable terminal facilities ~~should be located and sited~~ to minimize adverse impacts to the rural character, shorelines and natural environment of the County.
5. ~~Allow the testing of pilot programs to evaluate~~ new alternative energy sources ~~which are~~ consistent with the goals and policies of this *Plan* and that ~~which~~ comply with all attendant regulations.
6. ~~Develop a process for locating sites deemed appropriate for the location of alternative power generation facilities.~~ Review appropriate land use designations for the location of alternative power generation facilities. (Placeholder)

## TELECOMMUNICATIONS

### 8.3.B Telecommunications

Goal 8. Goal: ~~To~~ Promote the widespread availability of communication systems to facilitate communication among members of the public, public institutions, government agencies, and businesses, and to promote the public service and safety advantages and economic opportunities afforded to the community due to the availability of state-of-the-art telecommunications technology.

Policies (8.3.B.1): (8.5.B.8.1 – 2)

1. Consider ~~Telecommunications facilities which are developed and operated expressly to carry out emergency services should be considered~~ as essential public facilities.

~~OPALCO suggested wording: Telecommunications facilities developed and operated expressly to carry out emergency services are to be addressed as Essential Public Facilities due to their importance serving the San Juan Island community.~~

Staff does not recommend this change. Policies should start with verbs. “Due to their importance” is unnecessary. The importance of telecommunications facilities can be assumed in the fact that the County has policies specific to telecommunications.

2. ~~In keeping with the County’s goal to promote the public service, safety advantages and economic opportunities of widespread availability of state-of-the-art telecommunications technology, potentially suitable personal wireless facility locations identified on the Official County Map, per SJCC 16.80.040, as (1) preferred, (2) potentially suitable and (3) conditionally suitable locations, should be reviewed and updated every five years.~~

Coordinate with Rock Island (telecommunications providers), Emergency Services, Public Works, and the County’s Fire Districts to upgrade the County’s emergency radio communications.

## PROPANE

Goal 9: Recognize propane as an important heating source in the County.

Policies (8.5.B.9.1 – 2)

1. Identify appropriate land use designations for the siting of bulk fuel storage.
2. Support the use of historic barge landings that have served as landing sites for transporting bulk fuels.
3. *[Add policy related to safe propane transport and storage]*