

**COMPREHENSIVE PLAN  
SECTION B, ELEMENT 8**

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**UTILITIES ELEMENT**

**November 2005**

**January 6, 2021**

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**ELEMENT 8**

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UTILITIES ELEMENT**

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1 **8.1 INTRODUCTION**

2  
3 **8.1.A Purpose**

4  
5 The purpose of the Utilities Element is to set goals and policies which provide guidelines for the  
6 provision of utility services in San Juan County, and to facilitate coordinated, cost-effective  
7 planning and construction by the County and by individual utility service providers in a manner  
8 consistent with the goals and policies set forth in this *Plan*. This element consists of General Goals  
9 and Policies, Utility Specific Goals and Policies, and a Utilities Inventory in Appendix 8.

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

14  
15 This Element establishes goals and policies to guide the provision of utility services. Goals and policies  
16 aim to facilitate coordinated, cost-effective provision of services, planning, and construction by utility  
17 service providers in a manner consistent with the goals and policies of other elements of the  
18 Comprehensive Plan (Plan). This document also identifies opportunities and challenges for utility services  
19 through the 2036 planning period. These opportunities and challenges stem from projected population  
20 increases, new technologies, and climate change.

21  
22 The Utilities Element reflects certain key assumptions:

- 23  
24 1. Utility providers are the best identifiers of utility problems and the solutions needed to overcome  
25 them;  
26  
27 2. Level of service (LOS) standards, concurrency, and capacity requirements do not apply to utility  
28 services addressed in this element;  
29  
30 3. Privately owned utilities are not public facilities although they provide a public service. Each utility  
31 bears the responsibility for providing services to San Juan County residents within the guidelines  
32 of their own policies and in a manner consistent with the regulatory bodies having jurisdiction  
33 over them; and  
34  
35 4. County residents ultimately bear the majority of the costs associated with the provision of utility  
36 services through utility rates, taxes, land development costs, and impacts to environmental and  
37 aesthetic values.  
38

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

44  
45 The Utilities Element is oriented toward meeting the needs of the people of the County in the midst of  
46 growth, climate change, and ever-advancing technologies. The GMA calls for comprehensive plans to  
47 include “the general location, proposed location, and capacity of all existing and proposed utilities” in

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

## 5 **8.2 RELATIONSHIP TO OTHER PLAN ELEMENTS**

6  
7 The siting and provision of utility services interacts with other topics in the *Plan*. Utilities information can  
8 be found in both the Utilities and Capital Facilities Elements and Inventories. Water and sewer utilities  
9 are discussed in the Capital Facilities Element and Inventory, and are subject to concurrency requirements  
10 and Level of Service (LOS) standards. Services discussed in the Utilities Element and Inventory are not  
11 subject to concurrency requirements or LOS standards. The siting of utilities facilities, such as propane  
12 storage, electrical substations, and telecommunication towers, is a land use issue. Telecommunication  
13 services are closely tied to issues discussed in the Economic Development Element. The Utilities Element  
14 must be consistent with other *Plan* elements. No element can be enacted independently without  
15 consideration of other elements.

## 16 17 **8.3 CURRENT CONDITIONS AND FUTURE OUTLOOK**

18  
19 The following subsections summarize existing utilities conditions and provide a look at what the future  
20 may hold for the provision of those services. The outlook is based on the assumption that the County  
21 will grow according to the population projections in *Plan* Appendix 1. Both existing and future utility  
22 services are and will be operating in the context of climate change and the development of new energy  
23 and communication technologies.

### 24 25 **8.3.1 Electricity**

#### 26 27 Current Conditions

28  
29 Orcas Power and Light Co-operative (OPALCO) provides electricity in the County. The majority of  
30 electricity is sourced from hydropower on the mainland. Bonneville Power Administration and Puget  
31 Power generates and distributes it. Local renewable energy sources, such as solar power, currently  
32 generate about one percent of electricity. In 2019, OPALCO served 14,913 accounts on 21 islands.  
33 OPALCO estimates an annual increase of 0.5 percent for the number of residential accounts and 2.0  
34 percent for commercial accounts.

#### 35 36 Energy Outlook

37  
38 Globally, we face a climate crisis induced by human-generated greenhouse gas emissions. In the Pacific  
39 Northwest, we have observed wildfires, drought, lack of snowpack, and increased ocean acidification in  
40 recent years<sup>1</sup>. Governor Inslee’s Executive Order 14-04 includes key areas for addressing climate change,  
41 including reducing carbon emissions and improving energy efficiency<sup>2</sup>. San Juan County can reduce  
42 carbon emissions by increasing reliance on electricity if it comes from clean, renewable sources, and is  
43 used as efficiently as possible. Transportation and home heating/cooling are two major sources of energy

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

2 [https://www.governor.wa.gov/sites/default/files/exe\\_order/eo\\_14-04.pdf](https://www.governor.wa.gov/sites/default/files/exe_order/eo_14-04.pdf)

1 expenditure in the County (and anywhere else). Thirty five percent of county residential energy use is for  
2 heating, and over half of energy use is for transportation, which accounts for 41 percent of Washington  
3 State fossil fuel emissions<sup>3</sup>. Electric transportation costs about 75 percent less than fossil fueled  
4 transportation, helping keep dollars in the local economy<sup>4</sup>.

5  
6 The electrification of transportation and heating are expected to increase load by 37 percent by 2030 and  
7 reduce greenhouse gas emissions by 72 percent by 2050<sup>5</sup>. The number of Electric Vehicles (EVs) in the  
8 county increased by 65 percent in 2019 as they became less expensive and provided longer ranges<sup>6</sup>. The  
9 State has reinstated tax breaks for non-luxury electric vehicles in an effort to increase their prevalence  
10 and reduce transportation emissions.

11  
12 In 2019, Washington State Ferries (WSF) announced that it would begin transitioning its diesel ferry fleet  
13 to hybrid-electric. The anticipated 2030 ferry electrification will add load as well. Ferry electrification is  
14 an effort to drastically reduce greenhouse gas emissions. Currently, WSF generates fifty percent of  
15 greenhouse gas emission from working boats in Puget Sound (220,000 metric tons annually), despite only  
16 making up only six percent of such boats<sup>7</sup>.

17  
18 While power in Washington may be cleaner than in other states that rely heavily on fossil fuels to generate  
19 electricity, hydropower is not without environmental impact. Dams that generate hydropower are  
20 harmful to Chinook Salmon populations, which Orca Whales in the Salish Sea rely on as a food source.  
21 That said, WA hydro power is cleaner than solar, wind, coal and natural gas and most other sources of  
22 energy, and helps reduce the impacts of climate change on ocean warming and acidification, which is  
23 driving ecosystem collapse, impacting thousands of species<sup>8</sup>. Hydro is an essential resource in the 2019  
24 WA Clean Energy Transformation Act (CETA) for firming intermittent renewables like solar and wind.

25  
26 There is a push toward energy independence from the mainland. Renewable energy resource costs have  
27 been falling, while mainland pricing has been slowly rising. The point at which they cross is called *grid*  
28 *parity*. In other words, grid parity is the point at which an emerging technology becomes economically  
29 viable. At that point, the emerging technology has increasing cost savings compared to the legacy  
30 technology. Once a resource is at grid parity or better, it can be added into OPALCO's energy portfolio to  
31 replace or moderate the cost of legacy energy sources. OPALCO expects that local renewable energy  
32 resources will become competitive with mainland power wholesale electric rates and reach grid parity  
33 around 2025. OPALCO is transitioning to a more locally generated energy mix, which could include  
34 member-generated energy (solar, wind, micro-hydro), Community Solar, utility-scale solar, tidal energy,  
35 and other new technologies. OPALCO expects that up to fifty percent of County energy will be generated  
36 locally by 2040<sup>9</sup>.

37  
38 The impacts from climate change, changing carbon emission regulations, and the restructuring of the  
39 electric transmission market throughout the Pacific Northwest will impact the electric grid serving the  
40 County. This may increase the potential for unplanned outages and rolling blackouts. The need for locally

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<sup>3</sup> OPALCO analysis, US Department of Energy, WA Department of Ecology

<sup>4</sup> OPALCO analysis, US Department of Transportation, WA State Department of Transportation

<sup>5</sup> The Brattle Group

<sup>6</sup> WA State Department of Transportation

<sup>7</sup> <https://medium.com/wagovernor/clean-transportation-advances-with-hybrid-electric-ferries-85d2db1f902b>

<sup>8</sup> 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)

<sup>9</sup> OPALCO Integrated Resource Plan

1 generated electricity from wind, solar, tidal, and other sources are vitally important to prevent economic  
2 disruption and preserve the County's environment. Siting electric facilities serving locally generated  
3 electricity and its supporting infrastructure can enable the deployment of an electric ferry system and the  
4 electrification of the state's transportation system.

5  
6 More information about the future of electricity in San Juan County can be found in OPALCO's planning  
7 documents. OPALCO's long-range plan contains an analysis of capacity development needed to meet  
8 future demands. Additionally, their four-year Construction Work Plan contains load forecasts and  
9 information on construction projects.

### 10 11 **8.3.2 Propane**

12  
13 There are no natural gas lines in San Juan County. The population relies heavily on propane. Propane  
14 tanks are not allowed on Washington State Ferries. Propane utility providers barge propane from the  
15 mainland to their distribution centers on San Juan, Orcas, and Lopez islands. The two propane providers  
16 in San Juan County are Inter-Island Propane and San Juan Propane. Inter-Island Propane recently  
17 established a facility on Orcas Island, which is subject to County inspection prior to starting operations.

18  
19 The demand for propane will likely increase as the County's population increases. However, alternative  
20 renewable energy sources, such as home solar energy installations, and changes in State building code  
21 requirements to meet WA State Greenhouse Gas targets for energy efficiency may reduce the per capita  
22 demand for propane in the future.

### 23 24 **8.3.3 Communications**

25  
26 San Juan County encourages the development of advanced communication infrastructure. Reliable, up-  
27 to-date communication services support everything from healthcare and public safety, to economic  
28 opportunity and modern lifestyles. Geographic isolation and relatively small resident populations have  
29 historically inhibited the extension of telecommunication services to some islands in the County. Today,  
30 Fiber and LTE are providing faster and more expansive communication services.

- 31  
32
- 33 ▪ **Fiber:** The availability of fiber optic based services has grown extensively throughout the County in  
34 the past decade, meeting the growing needs of the electric grid, emergency communications, and  
35 residential and business broadband and cell phone service. Approximately half of County addresses  
36 are located within a serviceable distance of existing fiber optic facilities. As demand for higher  
37 bandwidth and additional improvements are made to public infrastructure, the availability of fiber  
38 optic services are expected to continue to grow. Fiber is provided in San Juan County by Rock Island  
39 and Century Link.
  - 40 ▪ **Voice over Internet Protocol (VoIP):** Anyone with a reliable internet connection can purchase VoIP  
41 service, which is becoming more common as internet access and speed increases. It is the  
42 predominant method for non-wireless voice communications around the nation, particularly for  
43 businesses. Rock Island is the primary provider of VoIP in the County.
  - 44 ▪ **Fixed Wireless - Long-Term Evolution (LTE):** LTE is a standard for wireless broadband  
45 communication for mobile devices and data terminals. It increases the capacity and speed using a  
46 different radio interface together with core network improvements. LTE utilizes cellular technology  
47

1 to provide high-speed data and voice service has been deployed throughout the County. It provides  
2 access to phone and internet where fiber is currently unavailable, including eighteen non ferry-  
3 served islands. Fixed wireless is primarily provided by Rock Island in San Juan County.

- 4
- 5 ▪ **Fixed Wireless –Cellular Service:** All major cellular carriers have coverage to an extent in the  
6 County; however, the geography currently limits coverage in some areas. For some residents and  
7 visitors, lack of cell service poses a safety concern because it would be difficult to call for help in the  
8 case of an emergency. T-Mobile is the most extensive provider of cellular service in the County.
- 9
- 10 ▪ **Plain Old Telephone Service (POTS):** The main provider of POTS is CenturyLink. Use of POTS has  
11 decreased in the recent years as consumers discontinue landline service or switch to VoIP.
- 12
- 13 ▪ **Cable:** Cable internet and television services are available from CenturyLink, Zito Media, and POGO  
14 Zone in parts of Friday Harbor and Orcas Island. Use of cable services is declining as fiber and  
15 wireless broadband becomes more popular.
- 16

## 17 8.4 KEY CHALLENGES

18

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

- 22
- 23 ▪ Preparing to serve the County’s 2036 forecasted population in *Plan* Appendix 1;
- 24 ▪ Meeting energy and telecommunications needs within and outside of population centers;
- 25 ▪ Reducing greenhouse gas emissions;
- 26 ▪ Reducing environmental impacts of all forms of energy we use;
- 27 ▪ Increasing energy efficiency; and
- 28 ▪ Working with the challenges presented by the islands’ unique geography.

## 29 8.5 GOALS AND POLICIES

30

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

### 36

### 37 **8.5.A General Goals and Policies**

38

39 The Ggeneral Ggoals and Ppolicies in this Element address the planning, location and siting of utilities;  
40 services to new development;<sub>2</sub> and environmental protection. These issues are common among all utility  
41 services.

#### 42

#### 43 ~~8.2.A Long-range Planning~~

44 **Goal 1.** ~~Goal: To e~~ Coordinate planning efforts between San Juan the County and utility service  
45 providers and encourage the regular exchange of information plans, maps, and other pertinent  
46 information;~~to aid utility service providers in anticipating and responding to growth by establishing land~~



1 use policies and regulations to direct and manage future growth; and to maintain consistency between  
2 utility service plans and San Juan County plans.

3  
4 CLEAN: Coordinate planning efforts between the County and utility service providers and encourage the  
5 regular exchange of information to aid utility service providers in anticipating and responding to growth  
6 and to maintain consistency between utility service plans and County plans.

7  
8 Policies (8.2.A.1-6):  
9

- 10 1. Provide utility service providers with appropriate plans and mapped information to help establish  
11 a common €County-wide base map for utilities planning.
- 12  
13 2. Obtain Mmaps and facility inventories, with text designating the approximate location of existing  
14 facilities and the general location of proposed new facilities, ~~will be obtained~~ from utility service  
15 providers and integrated them into the €County's Geographic Information System (GIS).
- 16  
17 ~~3. Review the utility facilities inventory annually and provide updates on a biennial basis or as~~  
18 ~~necessary.~~
- 19  
20 3. 4. Provide utility service providers with ~~annual updates and status reports~~ for the six year capital  
21 improvement financing plan to aid in their ability to coordinate necessary system improvements.
- 22  
23 4. 5. Cooperate with utility providers in siting facilities for new and alternative technologies to save  
24 money and promote reliability of existing utilities by conserving existing energy resources, while  
25 promoting a feasible conversion to energy-saving technologies.
- 26  
27 5. 6. Cooperate with utility service providers in future comprehensive planning efforts, ~~and in to~~  
28 ~~evaluating~~ actual patterns and rates of growth and ~~comparing such patterns and rates them~~ to  
29 demand forecasts.
- 30

31 ~~8.2.B Project Coordination~~  
32

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

36  
37 Policies (8.2.B.1-4):  
38

- 39 1. Facilitate inter-agency coordination and planning for joint trenching, installation, upgrade, repair,  
40 maintenance, and construction of new utility facilities between the Public Works Department, the  
41 various utility service providers, and other agencies.
- 42  
43 2. Provide timely notification of proposed projects in public rights-of-way to utility service providers  
44 and coordinate the placement of both above- and underground utility facilities, which are  
45 necessary to provide adequate service, including transformers, switch vaults, telephone  
46 pedestals, utility equipment cabinets, and other necessary utility equipment or structures.
- 47

1 3. ~~Allow for utility services in N~~new dedications for public rights-of-way ~~should allow for utility~~  
2 ~~services.~~

3  
4 4. ~~Utility providers should be consulted~~ Encourage consultation between permit applicants and  
5 utility providers during the permitting process for installation of utility systems. [Moved from Goal  
6 4]  
7

8 8.2.C—Location and Siting  
9

10 **Goal 3. ~~XX XXX~~**

11 ~~Goal: To Allow for the presence, continuing operation, maintenance, and expansion of the full range of~~  
12 ~~utility services available as reflected in the facilities inventory.; to Accommodate future changes in~~  
13 ~~conditions and technologies which may impact the character and operation of utility facilities. ; to~~  
14 ~~recognize that the geographic character of San Juan County necessitates providing access and the ability~~  
15 ~~to cross shorelines and waterways to utilities; and to recognize that utility facilities must occupy and~~  
16 ~~traverse a broad range of areas and land use designations.~~  
17

18 Policies (8.2.C.1):  
19

20 1. ~~Recognize that the geographic character of San Juan County necessitates providing access and the~~  
21 ~~ability to cross shorelines and waterways to utilities; and to and that recognize that utility facilities~~  
22 ~~must occupy and traverse a broad range of areas and land use designations. [Moved to~~  
23 ~~Environment/Rural Character goal]~~  
24

25 2. ~~Locate and site utility facilities to minimize negative impacts to the rural character and natural~~  
26 ~~environment of the county. New transmission facilities, substations and submarine transmission~~  
27 ~~cable terminal facilities should be located and sited to minimize adverse impacts to the county's~~  
28 ~~shorelines and rural character. [Moved to Environment/Rural Character goal]~~  
29

30 3. ~~New utility facilities should conform to the policies of the Land Use Element.~~  
31

32 8.2.D—Permitting  
33

34 **Goal 3.** ~~Goal: To f Foster~~ predictability and timeliness in processing permit applications for ~~utilities new~~  
35 ~~utility facilities or utility service work; and to allow for necessary development, maintenance, repair,~~  
36 ~~improvement, and expansion of utility facilities in a timely and efficient manner.~~  
37

38 Policies (8.2.D.1-3):  
39

40 1. ~~Priority should be given to maintenance and repair work required to restore utility service under~~  
41 ~~emergency circumstances.~~

42 Provide provisions for emergency response for delayed permitting of activities necessary to  
43 prevent an imminent threat to public health, safety, or the environment; or to public or private  
44 property.  
45

46 2. ~~Identify utility installation, relocation and maintenance activities which are expected to have~~  
47 ~~insignificant environmental impacts and will establish exemptions from permit requirements for~~  
48 ~~those types of activities.~~

1  
2 Continue to allow utility exemptions from critical area requirements for the installation and  
3 construction of utility lines and equipment, provided the conditions of exemption are met and  
4 documented.

5  
6 **8.2.E—New Development**

7  
8 **Goal 4.** ~~Goal:—To minimize adverse impacts of providing utility services to new development on the rural~~  
9 ~~character of San Juan County ; to allow for the provision of the full range of utility services to county~~  
10 ~~residents; and to provide for new utility facilities which are compatible with or can be mitigated to~~  
11 ~~minimize adverse impacts to adjacent land uses. Protect rural character while also providing for the~~  
12 ~~location and extension of necessary utility facilities.~~

13  
14 **Policies (8.2.E.1-3):**

- 15  
16 1. ~~Require Nnew utility installations distribution lines to serve for new development should to be~~  
17 ~~installed underground, except that sServices for single-family residential construction on an~~  
18 ~~existing parcel may connect with existing overhead utility facilities.~~  
19  
20 2. ~~Require Nnew development should to be designed so that utility easements are accessible and~~  
21 ~~have sufficient capacity for installation of the full range of required utility services.~~  
22  
23 3. ~~Utility providers should be consulted during the permitting process for installation of utility~~  
24 ~~systems. **[Moved to Goal 2]**~~

25  
26 Require landscaping to buffer adjacent uses for new utility installations excluding aboveground  
27 utility facility development and distribution or transmission corridors when located outside a  
28 public right-of-way.

- 29  
30 4. ~~New utility installations should provide vegetative screening or buffers for existing adjacent~~  
31 ~~development. Locate and site utility facilities to minimize negative impacts to the rural character~~  
32 ~~and natural environment of the county. **[Moved from old goal 3]**~~  
33  
34 5. ~~New development approved adjacent to existing utility facilities should provide vegetative~~  
35 ~~screening or buffers. New utility generation facilities, transmission facilities, substations and~~  
36 ~~submarine transmission cable terminal facilities should be located and sited to minimize adverse~~  
37 ~~impacts to the eCounty’s shorelines and rural character. **[Moved from old goal 3]**~~

38  
39 **8.2.F—Environmental Protection**

40  
41 **Goal 5.** ~~Goal:—To Protect and preserve natural habitats and environments while also providing for the~~  
42 ~~location and extension of necessary utility facilities.~~

43  
44 **Policies (8.2.F.1-4):**

- 45  
46 1. ~~View Environmental protection and a quality environment are viewed as one product of, and not~~  
47 ~~a constraint on, good utility service, and are important components of operation in the public~~  
48 ~~interest. Regulations for environmental protection should recognize both the significance and~~

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

3  
4 ~~2. Locate New utility facilities should be located away from, or constructed them in a manner~~  
5 ~~compatible with, critical areas, Resource Lands, and Shorelines. Recognize that physical and~~  
6 ~~service constraints may not allow relocation away from or full compatibility with such areas and~~  
7 ~~resources.~~

8  
9 ~~2. 3.Condition the approval of new utility facilities so as to avoid or mitigate any significant adverse~~  
10 ~~impacts, and to develop appropriate compensating measures where mitigation is not feasible.~~

11  
12 ~~3. 4.Ensure that utility service providers are responsible for costs such as those associated with damage~~  
13 ~~caused to the environment and public rights-of-way so that utilities providers will seek to~~  
14 ~~minimize those costs in their planning, decision-making, and project execution.~~

15  
16 ~~4. 5.Recognize that the geographic character of San Juan the County necessitates requires providing~~  
17 ~~access to and the ability to cross shorelines and waterways to connect utilities; and to and that~~  
18 ~~recognize that utility facilities must occupy and traverse a broad range of areas and land use~~  
19 ~~designations. [Moved from old goal 3]~~

## 21 **8.5.B Utility-Specific Goals and Policies**

### 22 **ELECTRICITY**

#### 23 **8.3.A5.B Electricity**

24  
25  
26 **Goal 6. Minimize the environmental impacts of electricity production and use while promoting energy**  
27 **independence.**

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

30  
31 **Policies (8.2.G.1):**

32  
33 1. **Encourage utility service providers to explore innovative and alternative methods of producing**  
34 **energy.**

35  
36 2. ~~**Support the transition toward energy independence from the mainland by.**~~ **[Moved to goal 7,**  
37 **policy 7]**

38  
39 ~~**Working with the San Juan County Conservation District and OPALCO to promote community**~~  
40 ~~**solar projects and provide technical assistance and incentives to increase individual home solar**~~  
41 ~~**installations.**~~

42  
43 3. **Encourage utility providers, Washington State Department of Transportation (WSDOT), and the**  
44 **public to reduce greenhouse gas emissions.**

45  
46 4. **Adopt regulations that allow facilities that support the distribution of electricity for cleaner**  
47 **transportation including electric vehicles and electric ferries.**

1  
2 5. Encourage the provision of electric vehicle chargers at key destinations throughout the County.

3  
4 6. Increase energy efficiency of buildings and systems on the islands by:

- 5  
6 ■ Providing educational materials and supporting education on energy efficiency in buildings,  
7 beyond State energy efficiency requirements; and  
8 ■ Updating and building new County buildings beyond State energy efficiency requirements and  
9 generating some electricity with solar arrays when feasible alternatives are available.  
10 Installing solar panels on new and updated County buildings when feasible.

11  
12 **Goal 7.** ~~Goal:—To Assist~~ Collaborate with the Orcas Power and Light Company Co-Operative (OPALCO) in  
13 achieving its goals for local energy resiliency. ~~as stated in the Cooperative's Bylaws and Articles of~~  
14 ~~Incorporation: "to make electric energy available to its members at the lowest cost consistent with sound~~  
15 ~~economy, good management, and the public interest."~~

16  
17 Policies (8.3.A.1-6):

- 18  
19 1. Assist OPALCO when necessary to respond to new, unforeseen conditions and technologies that  
20 may affect utility operations and facilities.  
21  
22 2. Coordinate planning to allow for the appropriate location and siting of all necessary existing and  
23 future facilities including overhead, underground, and submarine transmission and distribution  
24 systems, substations, cable terminals, standby and generation, and any other necessary  
25 equipment or structures. ~~Existing facilities are shown in Figure 1, below.~~  
26  
27 3. ~~Consider~~ Identify electric power facilities to be as essential public facilities.  
28  
29 4. Locate and site ~~New~~ upland power transmission facilities, substations and submarine  
30 transmission cable terminal facilities ~~should be located and sited~~ to minimize adverse impacts to  
31 the rural character, shorelines and natural environment of the County.  
32  
33 5. ~~Allow the testing of pilot programs to evaluate~~ new alternative renewable energy sources ~~which~~  
34 ~~are~~ consistent with the goals and policies of this *Plan* and that ~~which~~ comply with all ~~attendant~~  
35 regulations.  
36  
37 6. ~~Develop a process for locating sites deemed appropriate for the location of alternative power~~  
38 ~~generation facilities.~~

39  
40 Provide opportunities within land use designations for the development and use of renewable  
41 energy resources which are compatible with natural environment and rural character.

- 42  
43 7. Support the transition toward energy independence from the mainland by up to 50 percent by  
44 the year 2040. [Moved from Goal 6, policy 2]

1 **TELECOMMUNICATIONS**

2 **8.3.B Telecommunications**

3  
4 **Goal 8.** ~~Goal:~~ ~~To~~ Promote the widespread availability of communication systems to facilitate  
5 communication among members of the public, public institutions, government agencies, and businesses,  
6 and to promote the public service and safety advantages and economic opportunities afforded to the  
7 community due to the availability of state-of-the-art telecommunications technology.

8  
9 Policies (8.3.B.1):

- 10  
11 1. ~~Identify~~ ~~Telecommunications~~ facilities ~~which are~~ developed and operated expressly to carry out  
12 emergency services ~~should be considered~~ as essential public facilities.  
13  
14 2. ~~In keeping with the County's goal to promote the public service, safety advantages and economic~~  
15 ~~opportunities of widespread availability of state-of-the-art telecommunications technology,~~  
16 ~~potentially suitable personal wireless facility locations identified on the Official County Map, per~~  
17 ~~SJCC 16.80.040, as (1) preferred, (2) potentially suitable and (3) conditionally suitable locations,~~  
18 ~~should be reviewed and updated every five years.~~

19  
20 Coordinate with telecommunications service providers, Emergency Services, Public Works, and  
21 the County's Fire Districts to upgrade the County's emergency radio communications.

22  
23 **PROPANE**

24  
25 **Goal 9:** Recognize propane as a heating source used in the County.

26  
27 Policies

- 28 1. Identify appropriate land use designations for the siting of bulk fuel storage.  
29  
30 2. Support the use of historic barge landings that have served as landing sites for transporting bulk  
31 fuels.  
32  
33 3. Work with the Ports, the Town of Friday Harbor, WSDOT and propane distributors to develop safe  
34 transportation and circulation routes for the transport of propane.