

Chapter 8 Utilities



INTRODUCTION

The Utilities Element addresses the general location, proposed location, and capacity of all existing and proposed utilities in Ruston. For purposes of this element, utilities include electricity, sanitary sewer, stormwater, natural gas, water, solid waste, and telecommunications. Many public and private agencies are involved in regulating, coordinating, producing, delivering, and supplying utility services.

This element aims to ensure the provision of sufficient and dependable utilities for future growth at a reasonable cost while also safeguarding public health, safety, and sustainability and preserving the distinctive character of the community.

EXISTING UTILITIES AND CONDITIONS

Currently, there is sufficient capacity for all utilities to meet the needs of existing and anticipated new developments within Ruston. The table below gives an overview of Ruston's utilities and providers.

Utility	Provider
Electricity	City of Ruston
Sanitary Sewer	City of Ruston
Stormwater	City of Ruston
Natural Gas	Puget Sound Energy
Water	Tacoma Public Utilities – Water Division
Solid Waste	Murrey's Disposal
Telecommunications	Lumen Technologies and Comcast

Electricity

The City of Ruston owns its own electrical system that purchases and distributes power from Tacoma Public Utilities (TPU). The City of Ruston does not presently

own or operate any substations. Ruston's municipally owned electrical utility bills its customers for the power it purchases and distributes from TPU. Ruston's primary electrical distribution system consists of one distribution feeder serving the area entirely within the city's boundaries. The system is mostly overhead with primary lines extending from the substation to Winnifred Street along 50th Street. The system serves approximately 550 customers in a 0.8 square mile service territory. The existing electrical system appears to be adequately maintained, and construction practices generally conform to industry standards. Overall, there is capacity to meet existing demand within incorporated city limits.

Sanitary Sewer

The City of Ruston owns and maintains its own wastewater collection system which underwent a series of major upgrades and repairs over the past several years. Ruston has an inter-local agreement with the City of Tacoma by which Tacoma receives and treats Ruston's wastewater. The agreement has a term of 35-years and was adopted in January of 1979. Extension of the agreement is currently being reviewed. Sewage from Ruston is collected in an interceptor that runs down Ruston Way to Tacoma's north end Wastewater Treatment Plant. The plant uses physical and chemical processes for secondary treatment and discharges treated water into Commencement Bay through a deep-water outflow. A major plant upgrade was completed in 1997. Tacoma has an ongoing inflow and infiltration program which began in 1995.

Sanitary sewer will serve all new development within city limits. Existing residents not served by sewer should be encouraged to connect to the sewer system. Any new development in Ruston should pay its "fair share" of the cost of improving facilities and extending lines to access the system. Ruston will continue to coordinate with the Tacoma Public Works Department to ensure that the inter-tie between the two municipalities is adequate to serve any new increased flow. Ruston adopts Level of Service Standards for sanitary sewer as expressed in the Tacoma Utilities Plan and the inter-local agreement with Tacoma for sanitary sewer service.

Stormwater

Ruston's stormwater system consists of catch basins and storm sewer pipes and occasional open ditches and culverts under driveways and streets that flow into natural drainage ways. All stormwater from Ruston is discharged into Commencement Bay through three outfalls along the shoreline. All jurisdictions tributary to Puget Sound are required by the Department of Ecology (DOE) to treat stormwater runoff in compliance with the DOE's Puget Sound Water Quality Control Manual.

New development in Ruston should be required to provide adequate stormwater facilities to minimize its impact on stormwater flows and erosion. Stormwater discharge should be maintained to meet DOE and Department of Fisheries standards as may be required by law. Ruston should also continue to maintain a reserve fund to pay for drainage improvements.

Natural Gas

Three providers supply most of the region's natural gas: Puget Sound Energy, Cascade Natural Gas, and Williams. Northwest Pipeline delivers wholesale gas to providers, which distribute the product to retail consumers in the region. There is a single main bidirectional pipeline serving the Puget Sound region with lateral feeders. Ruston is presently served by Puget Sound Energy. A high-pressure line enters Ruston from Baltimore Street and smaller distribution lines feed city customers. Gas service is generally extended to new development upon evaluations of requests based on an economic feasibility study.

Water

Ruston's water system is owned by the City of Tacoma and their Department of Public Works operates and maintains the system. Tacoma and Ruston have a 50-year franchise agreement (adopted November 1977) under which Tacoma provides Ruston's domestic and firefighting water supply. Evaluation of the franchise

agreement should be considered prior to November 2027, the end of the initial 50-year agreement.

The Green River supplies the water that Tacoma provides for Ruston during most months of the year. However, during some summer months or dry periods approximately 50% of the water is drawn from the Green River and 50% is drawn from wells located along South Tacoma Way. The system does not have a water treatment plant. Water is chlorinated either at the source or open reservoirs. The Portland Avenue reservoir has a capacity of 50 million gallons and the McMillian Reservoir has a capacity of 210 million gallons. In Ruston 12-inch main trunk lines run along Pearl Street, North 51st Street and Orchard Street. There is also one 12-inch line that runs along Ruston Way to commercial/mixed use areas.

The city is required to make future water connections within its borders and the connection fee is financed by the applicant for new development at the applicable rate established by city ordinance. Ruston will continue to coordinate with the City of Tacoma to provide reliable and healthy water service for city residents and businesses. Through its inter-local agreement, Ruston and Tacoma will time new development with provision of water service. New development will be allowed when water connections can be provided, and any new development will be expected to pay its "fair share" of the cost of extending water service facilities and increasing water service capacity. Ruston adopts City of Tacoma Level of Service Standards for its water system since water service is provided by Tacoma. New development connections will be charged at the applicable rate established under City of Tacoma Ordinance.

Solid Waste

The City of Ruston contracts with Murrey's Disposal for the provision of solid waste disposal services.

Telecommunications

The City of Ruston is served by both Lumen Technologies and Comcast for telecommunication services, including cable television, internet and telephone. All of the telecommunication facilities, including aerial and underground, are co-located upon City of Ruston-owned utility poles or within Ruston's right of way. No private utility poles exist within Ruston's right of way.

FUTURE VISION

Planning and placement of utilities in Ruston supports the community's future vision for growth. Utility planning has contributed to Ruston residents' and businesses' quality of life by ensuring efficient utility delivery. Communications facilities are keeping up with changes in technology. Conservation and protection of existing resources have ensured a continued supply of clean water and energy.

GOALS AND POLICIES

Utilities Goal 1: Ruston's utilities are located, monitored, coordinated, and maintained in such a way as to provide safe, sufficient, reliable, efficient, and cost-effective services to all residents and businesses, remaining consistent with regulatory requirements and Ruston's Comprehensive Plan, and meeting demands of growth and economic development.

- UT Policy 1.1** Monitor all public or private utility systems and services; Maintain Ruston-owned systems and services.
- UT Policy 1.2** Develop and maintain updated system-wide inventories and plans for the provision of all public utility services.

- UT Policy 1.3** Develop a strategy for maintaining and rehabilitating Ruston's utility infrastructure.
- UT Policy 1.4** Periodically reassess and modify all agreements, ordinances, and related documents to ensure Ruston's utility services remain consistent with the community's vision and needs. Reassess and consider new services or providers that enable residents, businesses, and live/work uses to compete in the global marketplace.
- UT Policy 1.5** Utility services should be provided concurrently with or in advance of demand.
- UT Policy 1.6** Ensure utility services are appropriate for the size and composition of the development and population they serve.
- UT Policy 1.7** Design new development to allow for efficient and economical provision of utility services and require new development to pay its "fair share" of the cost of providing services.
- UT Policy 1.8** Require the underground installation of all utilities, including electrical and telecommunication, associated with new construction or redevelopment.
- UT Policy 1.9** System design practices and construction schedules should minimize disruptions and ensure the availability of land for utility lines and facilities.
- UT Policy 1.10** Foster collaboration between Ruston and its utility providers for streamlined planning, installation, and long-term maintenance. Coordination on projects such as utility installation, street maintenance, and traffic calming promotes cost-effective construction, minimizes road closures, and delays, and reduces the likelihood of repeated construction activities on the same street.

- UT Policy 1.11** Require the co-location of public and private utilities in shared trenches. Require the placement of Ruston-owned conduit for future undergrounding of utilities whenever feasible (at the discretion of the city engineer) during trenching or road construction activities.
- UT Policy 1.12** Natural gas services should be extended to all existing and new developments instead of using propane tanks.
- UT Policy 1.13** Utility services and infrastructure shall not be designed and situated in locations that negatively impact community character.
- UT Policy 1.14** Reassess the Land Use Element if Ruston cannot provide funding to maintain adopted levels of service for public utilities that it manages.

Utilities Goal 2: Ruston develops and manages utility infrastructure and services in an environmentally sensitive manner to protect and enhance the natural environment and promote sustainability.

- UT Policy 2.1** Design Ruston with a strong emphasis on biking and walking to foster energy efficiency, sustainability, reduced energy consumption, lower emissions, promotion of healthy lifestyles, diminished noise levels, and conservation of resources.
- UT Policy 2.2** Support energy efficiency by encouraging the use of energy-efficient building designs and land uses.
- UT Policy 2.3** Ensure existing and new developments minimize total runoff quantity, prevent increased peak stormwater runoff, and avoid alterations to natural drainage systems to prevent flooding and water quality degradation.

- UT Policy 2.4** Discourage stormwater infiltration in areas that are contaminated or may impact nearby contamination.
- UT Policy 2.5** Cooperate and coordinate with local and regional agencies on developing the Ruston Stormwater Plan to protect public and private properties from flooding and polluting Puget Sound.
- UT Policy 2.6** Support the conversion to cost-effective and environmentally sensitive alternative technologies and energy sources.
- UT Policy 2.7** Promote improved conservation, more efficient water use, and increased use of reclaimed water, as is practical, given ASARCO soil contamination issues. Support and participate in the City of Tacoma's water conservation activities.
- UT Policy 2.8** Support recycling of municipal and household waste as part of Ruston's commitment to sustainability.

Utilities Goal 3: Ruston utilizes sound fiscal management of utility infrastructure and services to cultivate a transparent and collaborative relationship between the government, residents, and businesses, all while ensuring cost-effective rates.

- UT Policy 3.1** Develop a financial strategy for financing Ruston's utility infrastructure, including funding sources and reserve funds to pay for replacement and rehabilitation.
- UT Policy 3.2** Pursue grant funding whenever feasible to assist with funding needed for utility system extensions, undergrounding, rehabilitation, and upgrades.
- UT Policy 3.3** Encourage and pursue, whenever feasible, opportunities to share facilities and costs with different public or private agencies/entities.

UT Policy 3.4 Anticipate and control demand for services to ensure that Ruston can maintain an appropriate level of service within its financial resources while serving new growth.

UT Policy 3.5 Recognize that the responsibility for financing utility construction generally rests with developers, users, and others directly benefiting from the improvement.

UT Policy 3.6 Continue to participate in conservation programs and seek funding to support them.

POLICY CONNECTIONS

Utilities must be planned to accommodate future growth with adequate financing available. **The Land Use Element** and **Housing Element** each include policies and information about projected growth and housing.

The **Capital Facilities and Utilities Element** each includes policies demonstrating how public services and utility infrastructure will serve existing and future land uses.

Utilities must be coordinated with transportation infrastructure to prevent conflicts within the right of way. The **Transportation Element** provides information for Ruston's transportation system including streets, bike facilities, sidewalks, on-street public parking and public transit facilities.

Utilities must not negatively impact community character. The **Community Character Element** includes policies to preserve community character.

The **Economic Vitality Element** includes guidance on utility infrastructure needed to support economic development.

The **Shoreline Element** includes guidance on the placement of utility infrastructure within the shoreline jurisdiction.