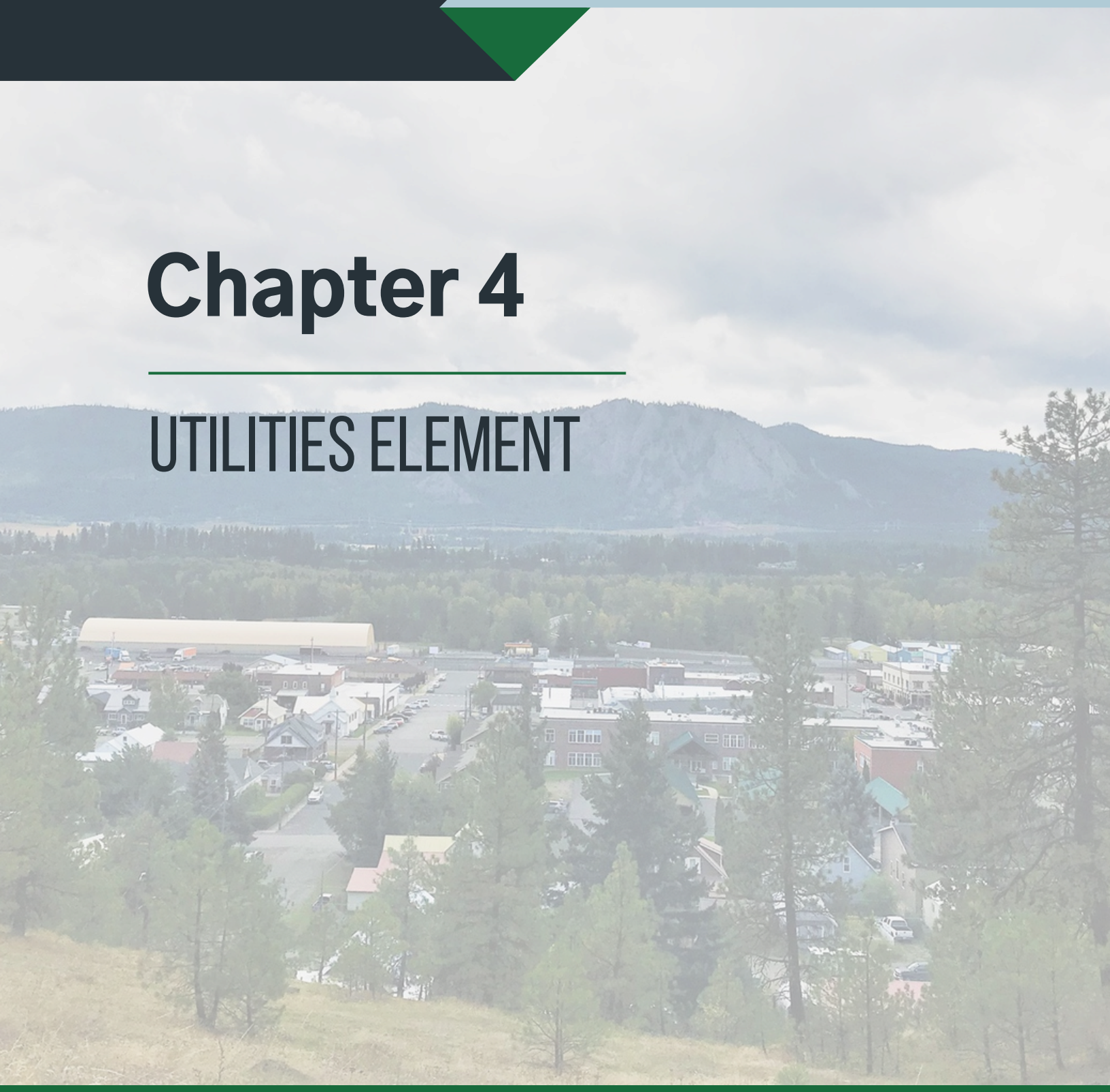
Chapter 4

UTILITIES ELEMENT



City of Cle Elum

CITY OF CLE ELUM

UTILITIES ELEMENT

2026

I. Introduction

This Utilities Element has been developed in accordance with the Revised Code of Washington (RCW) 36.70A.070. This section of the RCW requires communities planning under the Growth Management Act (GMA) to address utility services in the City and Urban Growth Area (UGA). This element represents Cle Elum's policy plan for utilities growth during the next 20 years.

A. Growth Management Act (GMA) Requirements

The Washington GMA (GMA) requires that the following be addressed by the utilities element:

(4)(a) A utilities element consisting of the general location, proposed location, and capacity of all existing and proposed utilities, including but not limited to, electrical, telecommunications, and natural gas systems.

(b) The city shall identify all public entities that own utility systems and endeavor in good faith to work with other public entities, such as special purpose districts, to gather and include in its utilities element the information required in (a) of this subsection. However, if, after a good faith effort, the city is unable to gather the information required in (a) of this subsection from the other public entities, the failure to include such information in the utilities element shall not be grounds for a finding of noncompliance or invalidity under chapter 228, Laws of 2023. A good faith effort must, at a minimum, include consulting the public entity's capital facility or system plans, and emailing and calling the staff of the public entity. (RCW 36.70A.070(4)).

B. Relationship to Other Elements

The Utilities Element has also been developed in accordance with the Countywide Planning Policies, is consistent with other federal, state, and regional organizations and regulations, and has been integrated with all other planning elements to ensure internal consistency throughout the Comprehensive Plan.

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C. Regional Power Plans

Northwest Power and Conservation Council (NPCC). Since Congress passed the Northwest Power Act in 1980, the (NPCC) has developed 20-year electric power plans for the Northwest. In its 2021Northwest Power and Conservation Plan Mid-Term Assessment, published September 2024, the Council recommended the following strategies

- Acquire between 750 and 1,000 average megawatts of cost-effective energy efficiency.
- Acquire at least 3,500 megawatts of renewable energy.
- Acquire low-cost and frequently deployable demand response, such as 720 megawatts of time-of-use and demand voltage regulation potential identified in the plan.
- Use the existing system conservatively to provide additional reserves to help integrate new resources (roughly double the assumed existing reserve levels)

D. PSE Integrated System Plan (ISP).

PSE is in the process of developing the first Integrated System Plan in Washington State history, and one of the first in the nation. The ISP will build on past planning efforts including the 2017 Integrated Resource Plan, the 2021 Clean Energy Implementation Plan, and the 2023 Biennial Clean Energy Implementation Plan update.

E. Applicable Countywide Planning Policies

In addition to following State of Washington requirements, planning efforts in Cle Elum require consistency with Kittitas County's Countywide Planning Policies (CWPP). The CWPP recognizes cities as the providers of urban governmental services as identified in the GMA and adopted urban growth management agreements. The CWPP associated with Cle Elum's Utility Element can be found in Appendix A.

F. Urban Growth Area (UGA)

The UGA boundary defines where future urban services will be available to development, including the provision of utility improvements. The City recognizes that planning for utilities is primarily the responsibility of the utility providers. However, the City will incorporate plans prepared by the providers into its comprehensive planning efforts to identify ways of improving the quality and delivery of services provided in the City and it's designated UGA. All development requiring urban services will be located in the City and it's UGA and will have these services extended to them in a timely and financially feasible manner.

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G. Federal and State Laws/Regulations

Washington Utilities and Transportation Commission (WUTC) Utilities and transportation are regulated in Washington by the WUTC. The WUTC, composed of three members appointed by the governor, is empowered to regulate utilities (including, but not limited to, electrical, gas, irrigation, telecommunication, and water companies). State Law (WAC 480) regulates the rates and charges, services, facilities, and practices of utilities. Any change in customer charges or service provision policy requires WUTC approval. The WUTC requires private utility providers to demonstrate that existing ratepayers will not subsidize new customers. The intent of the WUTC regulations is to ensure safe, reliable, and reasonably priced utility services for consumers.

Federal Communications Commission (FCC) The FCC was created by the Communications Act of 1934 to regulate interstate and international radio, wire, satellite, cable, and television communications. The FCC is an independent five-member government agency.

Federal Energy Regulatory Commission (FERC) The FERC is an independent five-member commission with the U.S. Department of Energy. FERC establishes rates and charges for the interstate transportation and sale of natural gas, for the transmission and sale of electricity, and the licensing of hydroelectric power projects. In addition, the commission establishes rates or charges for the interstate transportation of oil by pipeline.

Natural Gas Policy Act of 1978 (NGPA) The central theme of the NGPA is encouragement of competition among fuels and suppliers across the country. As a result, natural gas essentially has been decontrolled. The NGPA also contained incentives for developing new natural gas resources and a tiered pricing structure aimed at encouraging the development of nation-wide transmission pipelines. The result of the Act has been that many consumers are now paying less for natural gas than they were in 1980.

Greenhouse Gas (GHG) Emissions Performance Standard RCW 80.80.060(4) establish limits of CO2 emissions from new baseload generating resources and prohibit utilities from entering into long-term contracts to acquire power from existing generating resources that exceed the standard. The City of Cle Elum has developed a GHG Reduction Emission Policy (Resolution No. 2010-15) and established policies to reduce GHG emissions in and by: public buildings, fleet and vehicles, City-owned equipment, waste reduction and use, land use decisions, and transportation. 1991 Clean Air Amendments The passage of the Washington State Clean Air Act in 1991 indicates a state intent to promote the diversification of fuel sources for motor vehicles. This is in response to a need to both reduce atmospheric emissions and reduce the nation's reliance on gasoline for strategic reasons. The Act called for encouraging the development of natural gas vehicle refueling stations.

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II. Inventory and Analysis

Several utilities are available to serve the City of Cle Elum. While the specific location of utilities listed below are not inventoried or mapped at the city-level, it can be stated that they are generally within or directly adjacent to city right-of-way (ROW). New subdivisions and short plats are required to dedicate 10-foot utility easements along their street frontages for utilities to be extended through. Where utilities are not within or directly adjacent to ROW, they are on private property within dedicated easements.

Many public and private agencies are involved in regulation, coordination, production, delivery, and supply of utility services. This section of the element identifies those providers. The inventory includes:

- Natural Gas
- Electrical
- Telecommunications
- Cellular Phone
- High-speed Internet (Broadband)
- Cable Television

Providers of these utilities for the City of Cle Elum and its UGA are listed in Table 6.1. Water and sewer utilities are discussed in the Capital Facilities Element of this Comprehensive Plan. Electrical, telecommunications, and natural gas are regulated by the WUTC. Cable television, telecommunications, and cellular phones are regulated by the FCC, in cooperation with local governments.

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TABLE 6-1. UTILITY SERVICE PROVIDERS, CITY OF CLE ELUM AND URBAN GROWTH AREA

Type of Service	City of Cle Elum	Remainder of UGA	Phone Number	Website
Natural Gas	Puget Sound Energy	Puget Sound Energy	1-888-225-5773	www.pse.com
Electric Utility	Puget Sound Energy	Puget Sound Energy	1-888-225-5773	www.pse.com
Telecommunications	Inland Networks	Inland Networks	509-649-2211	inlandnetworks.com
	CenturyLink	CenturyLink	888-320-2794	fast.centurylink.com
Cellular Telephone	Various providers	Various providers	Varies	Varies
Internet	Inland Networks	Inland Networks	509-649-2211	inlandnetworks.com
	CenturyLink	CenturyLink	888-320-2794	fast.centurylink.com
	Hugesnet	Hugesnet	855-504-8648	www.hugesnet.com
	Starlink	Starlink	n/a	www.starlink.com
	Others	Others	Varies	Varies
Cable Television and Satellite	Inland Networks	Inland Networks	509-649-2211	inlandnetworks.com
	Dish Network	Dish Network	1-833-875-1313	www.dish.com
	Directv	Directv	844-244-5413	www.directv.com
	Others	Others	Varies	Varies

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A. Natural Gas and Electrical Utilities

The City of Cle Elum is served by Puget Sound Energy (PSE). PSE serves areas in ten counties including portions of Kittitas County. Puget Sound Energy can serve customers outside its service area if the customer assumes some of the cost of extending the lines. Such contributions may be partly reimbursed only if additional customers connect to the same main. When deciding to serve development outside current service areas, utilities must expand their service area by applying for a "certificate of convenience" from the WUTC.

The WUTC is currently studying the possible need for improved safety standards on small gas pipeline systems in Washington State to improve public safety while avoiding unnecessary regulation

State legislation passed in 2008 (480-108 WAC) established new rules for interconnecting small, alternative power generators of wind, solar, and other energy sources with established utility infrastructure. The intent of the regulation is to establish baseline rights of and responsibilities of both utilities and electric generation owners, and to ultimately connect more alternative power sources to the power grid for the benefit of both parties. The WUTC is exploring ways to ensure that these new rules are fully implemented.

The utility will provide power services as market conditions demand. As a private utility, Puget Sound Energy is not bound by the level of service and concurrency requirements under the GMA.

B. Telecommunications

The City of Cle Elum is served by Inland Networks, Centurylink, and VOIP. There are various facilities located throughout the county and the City. Many of the telecommunication facilities, including aerial and underground, are co-located with those of the electrical power provider. As private utilities, Inland Networks, Centurylink, and VOIP is not bound by the level of service and concurrency requirements under the GMA.

C. Cellular Telephone

Various federally licensed cellular telephone communication companies serve Kittitas County. These companies are regulated by FCC and WUTC. The FCC regulates cellular telephones because radio signals are used for communications.

D. Cable Television/ Phone/ Internet

Cable television providers in Cle Elum include Inland Networks, CenturyLink, DirectTV. There are several phone and internet providers, many of which offer both, or also include television options. Several cellphone providers also offer home internet packages as well.

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III. Goals and Policies

Goal U-1: **Designate the general location, proposed location, and capacity of existing and proposed utility facilities in the City and Urban Growth Area (UGA).**

Policy:

U - 1.1: Encourage the joint use of utility corridors, provided that such joint use is consistent with limitations as may be prescribed by applicable law and prudent utility practice.

U - 1.2: Appropriately place utilities within public rights-of-way.

U - 1.3: Where safe and practical, use regional and local power, natural gas, and telecommunication corridors for the development of recreational trails, open spaces, parking lots, or other land uses that may provide multiple benefits to the local community or neighborhood.

U - 1.4: Where practical and desired by local property owners or developers, locate existing or proposed power distribution lines underground to reduce possible storm damage and aesthetic clutter.

U - 1.5: Promote whenever feasible emerging and innovative technologies which can be used to broaden the types of alternative forms of energy in or for new public and private utility distribution facilities.

GOAL U-2: **The City of Cle Elum's plan for utility improvements will be formulated, interpreted and applied in a manner consistent with and complementary to serving the utility's public service obligations.**

U - 2.1: On an annual basis, provide all private utility companies copies of the City of Cle Elum's revised Six-Year Capital Facilities Plan, particularly the schedule of proposed road and public utility construction projects so that the companies may coordinate construction, maintenance, and other needs in an efficient manner.

GOAL U-3: **Decisions made by the City of Cle Elum regarding utility services within the City will be made in a manner consistent with and complementary to regional demands and resources.**

Policy:

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U - 3.1: Promote energy conservation measures in building codes including the use of insulated roof and siding material, window panes and entryways, and other applications in accordance with Washington State guidelines. Promote energy conserving practices including the use of energy-efficient appliances, temperature maintenance levels, and other activities to reduce power and natural gas demands.

U - 3.2: Site utilities away from critical areas, or site them in a manner that is compatible with critical areas.

U - 3.3: New development shall be allowed only when and where utilities are adequate, and only when and where such development can be adequately served by essential public utilities, or provided by the developer, without significantly degrading level of service elsewhere.

GOAL U-4: Additions to and improvements of utility services will be allowed to occur at a time and in a manner sufficient to serve planned growth.

Policy:

U - 4.1: Process permits and approvals for all utility facilities in a fair and timely manner, and in accordance with land development regulations that ensure predictability and project concurrency.

U - 4.2: Develop right-of-way and infrastructure improvements for future development through the planning process, including, but not limited to, public and private utilities.

Goal U-5: Planning by the City of Cle Elum for utility facilities development within the City and UGA will be coordinated with planning by other jurisdictions for utility development.

Policy:

U - 5.1: The City shall coordinate the formulation and periodic update of the Utility Element and relevant development regulations with adjacent jurisdictions.

U - 5.2: The City shall coordinate and seek to cooperate with other jurisdictions in the implementation of multi-jurisdictional utility facility additions and improvements. Such coordination and cooperation should include efforts to coordinate the procedures for making specific land use decisions to achieve consistency in timing inter-jurisdictional coordination in the planning and provision of utilities

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U - 5.3: Provide timely and effective notice to utilities of the construction, maintenance or repair of streets, roads, highways, or other facilities, and coordinate such work with the serving utilities to ensure that utility needs are appropriately considered.

U - 5.4: Promote whenever feasible co-location of new public and private utility distribution facilities in shared trenches and physical locations, and coordinate construction timing to minimize construction-related disruptions and reduce the cost of utility delivery.

U - 5.5: Promote whenever feasible co-location of new public and private electric charging stations.

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