

Public Facilities and Services Element

Background

Vision

Quality public facilities, services and utilities contribute to a high quality of life. White Salmon residents value planning for public facilities to ensure they are scaled to manage growth responsibly. Vital community centers and activities connect residents young and old and encourage civic engagement. The library and schools are planned and maintained to accommodate current and future residents.

The City of White Salmon provides a number of public facilities and services to the residents of the City and the Urban Exempt Area. The City's services are typical of a small community and include fire protection, police protection, domestic water supply and distribution, sanitary sewer and to a certain extent storm water runoff systems. The following discussion details the various components of the public facilities and services available in the White Salmon area.

Fire Protection

The City of White Salmon Fire Department is an all-volunteer organization with a typical roster of 25 to 40 members serving under a paid chief. The Department has two main line pumpers, a rescue truck, a tanker, and other small pieces of equipment. Fire departments in the Mid Columbia Gorge Region and the City of Bingen Fire Department maintain mutual aid agreements. After a recent audit, an Inter-local Agreement was signed so that White Salmon, Husum and Bingen would all be toned and respond to fires called into 911 emergency services in these three areas. Also, a fire-training officer has been hired to work with the three fire departments in training and with after-action reviews.

The White Salmon Fire Department maintains a fire rating of six by the Washington Survey and Rating Bureau. This is an extremely good rating for an all-volunteer department. A new, six-bay fire station was built during the 1990's.

Medical Facilities

Skyline Hospital is a facility of a special rural health district chartered under Washington State requirements and is publicly supported in part by property tax levies. The hospital staff of 118 full-time employees, 16 part-time employees and 52 per diem employees, including medical professionals and administrative staff, serves White Salmon and surrounding communities. The hospital has an addition and remodel project of \$15.1 million, which is being funded by revenue bonds. The 24,000 square foot addition provides 17 single state-of-the-art rooms. This part of the project was opened in September of 2009. The remodel portion will include a renovation to consolidate all radiology services into an efficient imaging center.

The hospital operates and maintains the local ambulance service. Two locations are staffed 24/7, one at the hospital and the other in Dallesport. Life Flight service for the Gorge Area is located at Dallesport.

There are eight paramedics and eight EMT's, with one of each on duty around the clock in each location.

Police Protection

Since 2000, the Police Departments of Bingen and White Salmon have been combined. The Bingen-White Salmon police station is located in the lower level of the Park Center on Lincoln Street in White Salmon.

There is an Inter local Agreement between the Bingen-White Salmon councils to cover the operation of the police department. The councils have a joint police committee with two councilors from each City serving on this committee along with the mayors. The department, through an agreement with the Klickitat County Sheriff's Department, uses the Klickitat County Jail in Goldendale when the need arises.

Domestic Water System and Other Public Services

History

The White Salmon area has been provided with domestic water since the early 1900's. The water system was privately owned until the 1930's when the City of White Salmon purchased all water rights and appurtenances and took over the operation and maintenance of the system. The system has grown over the years. Wells were drilled in the late 1990's to serve as the primary source and replace the Buck Water supply. However, with the growth in the area, the City has determined that the wells have not fully met the water demand. Most recently research has been carried out to restore the supply of water from Buck Creek, the original water source for the City. The Buck Creek watershed drainage area is approximately ten to twelve square miles. The State of Washington Department of Natural Resources leases the water source to the City. Studies by the Public Works Department have confirmed that Buck Creek has the capacity to serve the City's long-term needs. The current studies are based on injecting Buck Creek water into the existing wells to enhance the supply and to utilize existing pumping and distribution facilities and equipment.

The estimated water capacity for Buck Creek in a normal year is approximately 10 cubic feet per second. The City has water rights of 4 cubic feet per second, established in 1923 and 1957.

Improvements over the years have been made to "loop" the existing water system, replacing many of the dead-end lines that existed in the system for many years. Line sizes in the White Salmon system include 6, 8, and 10-inch lines. It is noted there are still many thousands of feet of 4-inch and smaller lines in the water system. A plan to replace these lines is being prepared.

The White Salmon Urbanization Study, June 2009, (page 36) further evaluated current constraints and opportunities to continue development based on available water, sanitary sewer, and storm sewer service in four of the White Salmon urban areas: Pucker Huddle, Los Altos, Loop Road Commercial Area and Downtown/Hospital Area. Similar to improvements to the transportation improvements water system improvements will be made incrementally using a blend of public and private funding sources.

Wastewater System

The City of White Salmon's original sewer system and treatment facility was constructed in the 1930's and upgraded in the 1950's. The collection system was built to serve the core area of the City limits with a treatment facility located between the railroad south of the Dock Grade Road and the intersection with State Route 14. Over the years, as the community grew, the collection system was expanded. By 1970 it became apparent that the existing treatment facility was inadequate. The City's collection system was substantially improved in 1974 and consists primarily of 6-inch and 8-inch concrete sewer pipes with some 10-inch mains.

In 1991, studies began on the capacity and necessary expansion of the plant as required by Department of Ecology (DOE) because the plant was at 85% capacity. In 1992 DOE provided a mandated time frame in which to expand the treatment plant. White Salmon and Bingen worked together in raising funds for

the expansion from 1993 to 1995. Construction began in June 1995 on the new treatment plant, located in Bingen on Maple Street across from Stevenson Daubenspeck & Stevenson (SDS) Lumber Mill. The plant was completed in December 1996. The expansion was designed to provide a 15-20 year growth for both cities. Bingen owns and manages the plant. The plant operates within the DOE's permit requirements and has received awards in 2007 and 2008 for meeting these requirements. When the present plant reaches 85% of capacity the study process will begin again. The two cities pay equally in the operation and maintenance of the plant, however, White Salmon pays more because they have more ERUs (Equivalent Residential Unit). An inter-local agreement will be required to address the future expansion issues, maintenance and main transmission lines.

The SR #14 sewer project, in the Riverfront Planned Development District, was completed in 2007. This will accommodate the Corps of Engineers Tribal "in lieu" site, the Tribal fish processing plant, the facilities at the Chamber of Commerce, as well as other properties in the area. This system is connected to the treatment plant in Bingen.

Stormwater System

The City does have small individualized storm sewer systems running primarily east and west across the slopes of the City's topography. Each street has its own system, starting in the core area and moving two or three blocks north as well as one or two blocks south. Residential developments are required to have on site water containment.

Solid Waste

The City maintains its own garbage collection services with once-weekly service. It utilizes two collection trucks and deposits the material in the transfer station at Dallesport. It is then transferred to the landfill at Roosevelt. The City provides curbside recycle service twice monthly.

Public Streets

The City of White Salmon maintains the public streets within the City limits, which are primarily residential collectors. The major arterials, including Jewett Boulevard, are State or Klickitat County right-of-ways and are maintained by the State or the County. Coordination with the City is necessary for snow removal because the city designates where the removed snow is placed.

Public Schools

The White Salmon Valley School District manages the public schools in the White Salmon area, with District offices located in the Park Center Building. The School District serves Bingen, White Salmon, the Urban Exempt Area and outlying areas of Husum, Underwood, and Snowden. The School District consists of Whitson Elementary (grades K-4), Henkle Middle (grades 5-8), and Columbia High (grades 9-12), and the alternative school, White Salmon Academy. The district benefits from the Head Start and pre-school programs that are provided by Southwest Washington's ESD #112. Current enrollment is approximately 1,100 students and is divided among Whitson with 450, Henkle with 350 and Columbia and the Academy with 300 students.

The School District is a major employer in the area with a total of 62 certificate employees and approximately 47 classified employees. The nearest regional community college is Columbia Gorge Community College located in The Dalles and Hood River. There are two and four-year colleges and trade schools in the Portland/Vancouver Metropolitan area.

Goals and Policies

The following goals and policies highlight the long-term outcomes and direction for the City of White Salmon.

GOAL PF-1: To maintain a balance between growth and services.

Policy PF-1: The type and installation/establishment of public facilities shall be accomplished in an orderly and cost effective manner and utilized to direct urban expansion.

Policy PF-2: The development of public facilities and utilities shall be planned and coordinated with Klickitat County and other suppliers in advance of need.

Policy PF-3: The provision of public facilities and services shall be based upon financial cost and adequacy of desired levels of services.

Policy PF-4: The City shall prepare and adopt a capital improvement program as a planning tool to assure timely development of public facilities in advance of need. Identify funding sources, such as those listed in the White Salmon Urbanization Study, June 2009, (page 35) and align needed projects with most replacement/expansion funding source or tools.

Policy PF-5: The City shall maintain close coordination and joint ventures with the City of Bingen in the planning and development of public facilities and services to maximize economies of scale.

Policy PF-6: The City shall maintain, utilize, and periodically update City water and sewer plans to assure adequate levels of existing and future essential services are met.

Policy PF-7: The City shall actively participate in the planning process of other public service and utility agencies. Coordinate installation of utilities to maximize land-use potential.

Policy PF-8: The City shall maintain and update the White Salmon Municipal Code as necessary to ensure that adequate and proper consideration of public services are addressed to allow new development to proceed.

Policy PF-9: The City shall maintain the right to require off-site improvements, including street, sewer, and water system improvements, pedestrian walkways, and school improvements, if deemed necessary, at the expense of the developer.

Policy PF-10: The City shall coordinate installation of utilities to maximize land-use potential and ensure adequate inspection of utility installation and hookups. If specialized systems (e.g. step systems for wastewater) are used the system's final operating and mechanical specifications should be reviewed by the City and recorded in an appropriate manner to ensure homeowners are aware of special system needs, benefits and limitations.

Policy PF-11: The City shall encourage sustainable development practices given in Urbanization Study, June 2009.