

**STATE ENVIRONMENTAL POLICY ACT (SEPA)
ENVIRONMENTAL CHECKLIST**

A. BACKGROUND

1. Name of proposed project, if applicable:

Public Utility Skagit PUD No. 1 of Skagit County 2024 Water System Plan Update (Proposal).

2. Name of applicant:

Public Utility Skagit PUD No. 1 of Skagit County (Skagit PUD)

3. Address and phone number of applicant and contact person:

Public Utility Skagit PUD No. 1 of Skagit County
Wendy LaRocque, Project Manager – Environmental Compliance
1415 Freeway Drive
Mount Vernon, WA 98273-1436
Phone: (360) 399-5274

4. Date checklist prepared:

May 20, 2024

5. Agency requesting checklist:

Public Utility Skagit PUD No. 1 of Skagit County

6. Proposed timing or schedule (including phasing, if applicable):

Skagit PUD is required to update its water system plan every ten years under Washington State Department of Health (DOH) regulations. The 2024 Water System Plan will be submitted to DOH and the Skagit PUD Commission for approval.

7. Do you have any plans for future additions, expansion, or further activity related to or connected with this proposal? If yes, explain.

The 2024 Water System Plan provides a foundation for future infrastructure improvements. While the primary focus of the Proposal is the upcoming decade, it also offers a long-term perspective extending to 2046 and beyond. The Proposal discusses planning considerations, existing conditions, operation and maintenance standards, and recommended improvements to the Skagit PUD's water systems to meet future water demands for the retail and wholesale water customers. Both administrative plans and physical system improvement projects are discussed in the Proposal.

The Proposal presents a Capital Improvement Plan (CIP). CIP projects listed in the Proposal should not be viewed as a commitment by the Skagit PUD to implement each project as it is planned with the costs and schedule shown. Actual project implementation will be based on environmental review, permits and

approvals, available funding, and scheduling requirements.

The Proposal is a non-project action. A separate SEPA review will be completed prior to actual implementation and construction of each physical project, as appropriate. Certain categorical exemptions from the SEPA review process may apply to specific projects, in accordance with WAC 97-11-800 under part nine of the SEPA rules.

An update of the water system plan will be required in ten years. At that time, physical projects in the CIP that are scheduled to occur beyond the ten-year planning horizon will be updated. As noted above, a SEPA review will be conducted, if needed, for each project in the CIP scheduled to occur within the next ten years.

8. List any environmental information you know about that has been prepared, or will be prepared, directly related to this proposal.

General programmatic-level environmental impact information for the Proposal is included in Section D. Specific environmental information has not been prepared for this proposal. Additional environmental investigations may be required for capital improvements as proposed on a project-by-project basis.

9. Do you know whether applications are pending for governmental approvals of other proposals directly affecting the property covered by your proposal? If yes, explain.

Consistency determinations will be required from local governments with land use authority over the Skagit PUD's service area.

10. List any government approvals or permits that will be needed for your proposal, if known.

No project-specific approvals or permits are needed as part of this Proposal. Consistency determinations will be required from local governments with land use authority over Skagit PUD's service area. This Proposal will be reviewed by the Commission of Skagit PUD with at least one public hearing. It will receive final review and approval by DOH per WAC 246-290. Washington Department of Ecology shall determine consistency with applicable water law statutes and regulations.

11. Give brief, complete description of your proposal, including the proposed uses and the size of the project and site. There are several questions later in this checklist that ask you to describe certain aspects of your proposal. You do not need to repeat those answers on this page.

The Proposal is a non-project action. Specific physical improvement projects cited in the Proposal will have a separate SEPA review, where necessary. The Proposal includes all elements required by WAC 246-290-100 which organize the development and operation of Skagit PUD's water systems.

The Proposal includes expansion of Skagit PUD's Judy System retail service area into Skagit PUD's designated Coordinated Water System Plan Future Service Area, and retail service area reductions to reflect the transfer of the Fidalgo Island satellite water system to the City of Anacortes. The retail service area expansions serve to facilitate water service in two areas adjacent to the existing retail service area ("Best Road to Swinomish Slough Vicinity" and "Helmick Road Vicinity").

12. Location of the proposal. Give sufficient information for a person to understand the precise location of your proposed project, including a street address, if any, and section, township, and range, if known. If a proposal would occur over a range of area, provide the range or boundaries of the site(s). Provide a legal description, site plan, vicinity map, and topographic map, if reasonably available.

The Proposal affects all designated service areas of Skagit PUD and any undesignated service area in the remainder of Skagit County and adjacent areas, per the Skagit County Coordinated Water System Plan Regional Supplement. The boundaries of Skagit PUD include, but are not limited to, the boundaries of Skagit County, Washington.

The plan also includes proposed adjustments to the retail water service area for the Judy water system. These adjustments reflect the transfer of a satellite water system to the City of Anacortes (Fidalgo Island Water System Transfer) and serve to facilitate water service in two areas adjacent to the existing retail service area (Best Road to Swinomish Slough Vicinity and Helmick Road Vicinity).

B. ENVIRONMENTAL ELEMENTS

The proposed adoption of the Water System Plan (Proposal) is a non-project action under SEPA, which includes decisions on policies, plan, and programs, and is intended for long-term planning purposes. The Proposal refers to the development and utilization of transmission and water supply projects. Specific physical improvement projects cited in the Proposal will have a separate SEPA review process, where necessary.

Section B Environmental Elements, which applies to specific project actions, is not applicable to the proposed adoption of the water system plan. Please refer to Section D Supplemental Sheet for non-project actions, which provide general programmatic-level environmental impact information.

1. Earth

a. General description of the site (circle one): Flat, rolling, hilly, steep slopes, mountainous, other...

Not applicable.

b. What is the steepest slope on the site (approximate percent slope)?

Not applicable.

c. What general types of soils are found on the site (for example, clay, sand, gravel, peat, muck)? If you know the classification of agricultural soils, specify them and note any agricultural land of long-term commercial significance and whether the proposal results in removing any of these soils.

Not applicable.

d. Are there surface indications or history of unstable soils in the immediate vicinity? If so, describe.

Not applicable.

- e. Describe the purpose, type, total area, and approximate quantities and total affected area of any filling, excavation, and grading proposed. Indicate source of fill.**

Not applicable.

- f. Could erosion occur as a result of clearing, construction, or use? If so, generally describe.**

Not applicable.

- g. About what percent of the site will be covered with impervious surfaces after project construction (for example, asphalt or buildings)?**

Not applicable.

- h. Proposed measures to reduce or control erosion, or other impacts to the earth, if any:**

Not applicable.

2. Air

- a. What types of emissions to the air would result from the proposal during construction, operation, and maintenance when the project is completed? If any, generally describe and give approximate quantities if known.**

Not applicable.

- b. Are there any off-site sources of emissions or odor that may affect your proposal? If so, generally describe.**

Not applicable.

- c. Proposed measures to reduce or control emissions or other impacts to air, if any:**

Not applicable.

3. Water

- a. Surface:**

1) Is there any surface water body on or in the immediate vicinity of the site (including year-round and seasonal streams, saltwater, lakes, ponds, wetlands)? If yes, describe type and provide names. If appropriate, state what stream or river it flows into.

Not applicable.

2) Will the project require any work over, in, or adjacent to (within 200 feet) the described waters? If yes, please describe and attach available plans.

Not applicable.

3) Estimate the amount of fill and dredge material that would be placed in or removed from

surface water or wetlands and indicate the area of the site that would be affected. Indicate the source of fill material.

Not applicable.

4) Will the proposal require surface water withdrawals or diversions? Give general description, purpose, and approximate quantities if known.

Not applicable.

5) Does the proposal lie within a 100-year floodplain? If so, note location on the site plan.

Not applicable.

6) Does the proposal involve any discharges of waste materials to surface waters? If so, describe the type of waste and anticipated volume of discharge.

Not applicable.

b. Ground Water:

1) Will groundwater be withdrawn from a well for drinking water or other purposes? If so, give a general description of the well, proposed uses and approximate quantities withdrawn from the well. Will water be discharged to groundwater? Give general description, purpose, and approximate quantities if known.

Not applicable.

2) Describe waste material that will be discharged into the ground from septic tanks or other sources, if any (for example: Domestic sewage; industrial, containing the following chemicals. . . ; agricultural; etc.). Describe the general size of the system, the number of such systems, the number of houses to be served (if applicable), or the number of animals or humans the system(s) are expected to serve.

Not applicable.

c. Water runoff (including stormwater):

1) Describe the source of runoff (including storm water) and method of collection and disposal, if any (include quantities, if known). Where will this water flow? Will this water flow into other waters? If so, describe.

Not applicable.

2) Could waste materials enter ground or surface waters? If so, generally describe.

Not applicable.

3) Does the proposal alter or otherwise affect drainage patterns in the vicinity of the site? If so, describe.

Not applicable.

- d. Proposed measures to reduce or control surface, ground, and runoff water, and drainage pattern impacts, if any:**

Not applicable.

4. Plants

- a. Check or circle types of vegetation found on the site:**

— deciduous tree: alder, maple, aspen, other

— evergreen tree: fir, cedar, pine, other

— Shrubs

— grass

— pasture

— crop or grain

— wet soil plants: cattail, buttercup, bullrush, skunk cabbage, other

— water plants: water lily, eelgrass, milfoil, other

— other types of vegetation

Not applicable.

- b. What kind and amount of vegetation will be removed or altered?**

Not applicable.

- c. List threatened or endangered species known to be on or near the site.**

Not applicable.

- d. Proposed landscaping, use of native plants, or other measures to preserve or enhance vegetation on the site, if any:**

Not applicable.

- e. List all noxious weeds and invasive species known to be on or near the site.**

Not applicable.

5. Animals

- a. List any birds and other animals which have been observed on or near the site or are known to be on or near the site:**

birds: hawk, heron, eagle, songbirds, other:

mammals: deer, bear, elk, beaver, other:

fish: bass, salmon, trout, herring, shellfish, other:

Not applicable.

- b. List any threatened or endangered species known to be on or near the site.**

Not applicable.

- c. Is the site part of a migration route? If so, explain.**

Not applicable.

- d. Proposed measures to preserve or enhance wildlife, if any:**

Not applicable.

- e. List any invasive animal species known to be on or near the site.**

Not applicable.

6. Energy and natural resources

- a. What kinds of energy (electric, natural gas, oil, wood stove, solar) will be used to meet the completed project's energy needs? Describe whether it will be used for heating, manufacturing, etc.**

Not applicable.

- b. Would your project affect the potential use of solar energy by adjacent properties? If so, generally describe.**

Not applicable.

- c. What kinds of energy conservation features are included in the plans of this proposal? List other proposed measures to reduce or control energy impacts, if any:**

Not applicable.

7. Environmental health

- a. Are there any environmental health hazards, including exposure to toxic chemicals, risk of fire and explosion, spill, or hazardous waste, that could occur as a result of this proposal? If so, describe.**

- 1) Describe any known or possible contamination at the site from present or past uses.**
- 2) Describe existing hazardous chemicals/conditions that might affect project development and design. This includes underground hazardous liquid and gas transmission pipelines located within the project area and in the vicinity.**
- 3) Describe any toxic or hazardous chemicals that might be stored, used, or produced during the project's development or construction, or at any time during the operating life of the project.**
- 4) Describe special emergency services that might be required.**
- 5) Proposed measures to reduce or control environmental health hazards, if any:**

Not applicable.

b. Noise

1) What types of noise exist in the area which may affect your project (for example: traffic, equipment, operation, other)?

Not applicable.

2) What types and levels of noise would be created by or associated with the project on a short-term or a long-term basis (for example: traffic, construction, operation, other)? Indicate what hours noise would come from the site.

Not applicable.

3) Proposed measures to reduce or control noise impacts, if any:

Not applicable.

8. Land and shoreline use

a. What is the current use of the site and adjacent properties? Will the proposal affect current land uses on nearby or adjacent properties? If so, describe.

Not applicable.

b. Has the project site been used as working farmlands or working forest lands? If so, describe. How much agricultural or forest land of long-term commercial significance will be converted to other uses as a result of the proposal, if any? If resource lands have not been designated, how many acres in farmland or forest land tax status will be converted to nonfarm or nonforest use?

Not applicable.

1) Will the proposal affect or be affected by surrounding working farm or forest land normal business operations, such as oversize equipment access, the application of pesticides, tilling, or harvesting? If so, how:

Not applicable.

c. Describe any structures on the site.

Not applicable.

d. Will any structures be demolished? If so, what?

Not applicable.

e. What is the current zoning classification of the site?

Not applicable.

f. What is the current comprehensive plan designation of the site?

Not applicable.

g. If applicable, what is the current shoreline master program designation of the site?

Not applicable.

h. Has any part of the site been classified as a critical area by the city or county? If so, specify.

Not applicable.

i. Approximately how many people would reside or work in the completed project?

Not applicable.

j. Approximately how many people would the completed project displace?

Not applicable.

k. Proposed measures to avoid or reduce displacement impacts, if any:

Not applicable.

l. Proposed measures to ensure the proposal is compatible with existing and projected land uses and plans, if any:

Not applicable.

m. Proposed measures to ensure the proposal is compatible with nearby agricultural and forest lands of long-term commercial significance, if any:

Not applicable.

9. Housing

a. Approximately how many units would be provided, if any? Indicate whether high, middle, or low-income housing.

Not applicable.

b. Approximately how many units, if any, would be eliminated? Indicate whether high, middle, or low-income housing.

Not applicable.

c. Proposed measures to reduce or control housing impacts, if any:

Not applicable.

10. Aesthetics

a. What is the tallest height of any proposed structure(s), not including antennas; what is the principal exterior building material(s) proposed?

Not applicable.

b. What views in the immediate vicinity would be altered or obstructed?

Not applicable.

c. Proposed measures to reduce or control aesthetic impacts, if any:

Not applicable.

11. Light and glare

a. What type of light or glare will the proposal produce? What time of day would it mainly occur?

Not applicable.

b. Could light or glare from the finished project be a safety hazard or interfere with views?

Not applicable.

c. What existing off-site sources of light or glare may affect your proposal?

Not applicable.

d. Proposed measures to reduce or control light and glare impacts, if any:

Not applicable.

12. Recreation

a. What designated and informal recreational opportunities are in the immediate vicinity?

Not applicable.

b. Would the proposed project displace any existing recreational uses? If so, describe.

Not applicable.

c. Proposed measures to reduce or control impacts on recreation, including recreation opportunities to be provided by the project or applicant, if any:

Not applicable.

13. Historic and cultural preservation

- a. Are there any buildings, structures, or sites, located on or near the site that are over 45 years old listed in or eligible for listing in national, state, or local preservation registers located on or near the site? If so, specifically describe.**

Not applicable.

- b. Are there any landmarks, features, or other evidence of Indian or historic use or occupation? This may include human burials or old cemeteries. Are there any material evidence, artifacts, or areas of cultural importance on or near the site? Please list any professional studies conducted at the site to identify such resources.**

Not applicable.

- c. Describe the methods used to assess the potential impacts to cultural and historic resources on or near the project site. Examples include consultation with tribes and the department of archeology and historic preservation, archaeological surveys, historic maps, GIS data, etc.**

Not applicable.

- d. Proposed measures to avoid, minimize, or compensate for loss, changes to, and disturbance to resources. Please include plans for the above and any permits that may be required.**

Not applicable.

14. Transportation

- a. Identify public streets and highways serving the site or affected geographic area and describe proposed access to the existing street system. Show on site plans, if any.**

Not applicable.

- b. Is the site or affected geographic area currently served by public transit? If so, generally describe. If not, what is the approximate distance to the nearest transit stop?**

Not applicable.

- c. How many additional parking spaces would the completed project or non-project proposal have? How many would the project or proposal eliminate?**

Not applicable.

- d. Will the proposal require any new or improvements to existing roads, streets, pedestrian, bicycle or state transportation facilities, not including driveways? If so, generally describe (indicate whether public or private).**

Not applicable.

- e. Will the project or proposal use (or occur in the immediate vicinity of) water, rail, or air transportation? If so, generally describe.

Not applicable.

- f. How many vehicular trips per day would be generated by the completed project or proposal? If known, indicate when peak volumes would occur and what percentage of the volume would be trucks (such as commercial and nonpassenger vehicles). What data or transportation models were used to make these estimates?

Not applicable.

- g. Will the proposal interfere with, affect or be affected by the movement of agricultural and forest products on roads or streets in the area? If so, generally describe

Not applicable.

- h. Proposed measures to reduce or control transportation impacts, if any:

Not applicable.

15. Public services

- a. Would the project result in an increased need for public services (for example: fire protection, police protection, public transit, health care, schools, other)? If so, generally describe.

Not applicable.

- b. Proposed measures to reduce or control direct impacts on public services, if any.

Not applicable.

16. Utilities

- a. Circle utilities currently available at the site: electricity, natural gas, water, refuse service, telephone, sanitary sewer, septic system, other:

- b. Describe the utilities that are proposed for the project, the utility providing the service, and the general construction activities on the site or in the immediate vicinity which might be needed.

Not applicable.

C. SIGNATURE

The above answers are true and complete to the best of my knowledge. I understand that the lead agency is relying on them to make its decision.

Signature: Wendy LaRocque

Name of signee: Wendy LaRocque

Position and Agency/Organization: Skagit PUD Project Manager - Environmental Compliance

Date Submitted: August 12, 2024

D. SUPPLEMENTAL SHEET FOR NONPROJECT ACTIONS

1. How would the proposal be likely to increase discharge to water; emissions to air; production, storage, or release of toxic or hazardous substances; or production of noise? Name of proposed project, if applicable:

The construction of components of the Proposal may involve the creation and discharge of construction stormwater. Effects on surface water during construction could include increased runoff volumes and increased peak flows.

Impacts to air quality due to the construction of water system facilities could include temporary increases in: 1) particulate emissions that would depend on the level and type of activity, soil characteristics, weather, and equipment employed; 2) carbon monoxide and oxides of nitrogen in the exhaust of construction equipment powered by gasoline and diesel engines; 3) carbon monoxide and oxides of nitrogen emitted from vehicles that are delayed while transiting through the work areas; and 4) fugitive dust.

The production and release of toxic or hazardous substances is not anticipated. There would, however, likely be some storage and use of chemicals associated with the operation of water treatment facilities.

Proposed measures to avoid or reduce such increases are:

The construction, maintenance, and operation of water system components identified in the Proposal would include minimization of impacts to surface waters would be achieved through implementation of applicable Best Management Practices and compliance with regulatory requirements and permit (e.g. NPDES Construction Stormwater Permit) conditions.

Measures to minimize impacts to air quality may include keeping exposed soil damp by spraying with water, covering truck loads, using wheel washers, removing particulate matter deposited on public roads, covering dirt and debris piles, properly maintaining equipment, and communications and coordination regarding the scheduling and routing of construction truck traffic to help eliminate or reduce delays encountered by local traffic. Such mitigation and coordination are usually facilitated through traffic management and mitigation plans, haul road agreements, and other permitting requirements.

Any necessary chemical storage would be designated to meet required safety and environmental regulatory requirements including secondary containment, leak detectors, alarms, and the use of plans for prevention, containment, and clean-up of any spills.

2. How would the proposal be likely to affect plants, animals, fish, or marine life?

Plants, animals, fish, or marine life could be affected by certain facilities depending on their location and function. For buried structures such as pipelines, the impacts would be temporary and limited to the construction period. For above-ground facilities such as tanks and pump stations, effects could extend beyond the construction period.

Proposed measures to protect or conserve plants, animals, fish, or marine life are:

The siting and design of system components would emphasize avoidance of impacts to plants, animals, fish, and marine life. Where complete avoidance was not possible, the principal of minimization would be stressed. Impacts would be mitigated, and enhancement measures implemented, as appropriate. Generally, these protective provisions are set forth in land use codes, laws and regulations, and permit conditions.

3. How would the proposal be likely to deplete energy or natural resources?

Water system components would consume, but not deplete, energy and natural resources. The Skagit PUD currently diverts surface water and withdraws groundwater in accordance with existing regulations, permits, agreements, and water rights.

Proposed measures to protect or conserve energy and natural resources are:

System components would be sited, designed, constructed, maintained, and operated to be as efficient as possible.

4. How would the proposal be likely to use or affect environmentally sensitive areas or areas designated (or eligible or under study) for governmental protection; such as parks, wilderness, wild and scenic rivers, threatened or endangered species habitat, historic or cultural sites, wetlands, floodplains, or prime farmlands?

None of the proposed water system components in the Proposal are or would be located in areas designated as wilderness. It is possible that some components could be located near or on, or traverse, environmentally sensitive areas. Pipelines could be routed through wetlands or floodplains. Parks, endangered species habitat, wild and scenic rivers, and historic or cultural sites would be avoided whenever possible.

Proposed measures to protect such resources or to avoid or reduce impacts are:

Water system components would be sited with the intent of avoiding environmentally sensitive areas. If use of an environmentally sensitive area were necessary, the footprint and construction impacts of the component would be minimized whenever possible.

5. How would the proposal be likely to affect land and shoreline use, including whether it would allow or encourage land or shoreline uses incompatible with existing plans?

All elements of the Proposal are required to be consistent with local land use plans, policies, and development programs.

Proposed measures to avoid or reduce shoreline and land use impacts are:

System components would comply with existing land use and shoreline management plans. Construction of facilities in shoreline areas would be avoided whenever possible.

6. How would the proposal be likely to increase demands on transportation or public services and utilities?

The construction, maintenance, and operation of water system components identified in the Proposal would increase demands on transportation, public services, and utilities. The Proposal supports the Skagit County Coordinated Water System Plan Regional Supplement and provides clarity concerning water service to specific areas, thereby supporting managed growth under existing zoning and land use plans.

Proposed measures to reduce or respond to such demand(s) are:

Modern equipment that would maximize efficiency and minimize power consumption would be utilized to construct, operate and maintain components of the Proposal. Also, to the extent possible, pipeline alignments would be chosen that would maximize the use of gravity flow and minimize the need for pumps to move water in the system.

Under the Proposal, the Skagit PUD will continue to implement a water conservation program.

7. Identify, if possible, whether the proposal may conflict with local, state, or federal laws or requirements for the protection of the environment.

The Proposal follows the basic format suggested by the Washington State Department of Health, includes content required by the Washington State Department of Health, and is similar to many other water system plans reviewed by the Skagit PUD. Conflict with local, state, or federal laws or requirements for the protection of the environment is not anticipated to occur.