LITTLE MOUNTAIN ROAD WATERLINE EXTENSION PROJECT

Skagit Public Utility District (PUD) operates the most expansive public water system in Skagit County—the Judy Reservoir Group A water system (Judy System). The Judy System is located along the I-5 corridor and serves the cities of Mount Vernon, Burlington, and Sedro-Woolley as well as surrounding suburban and rural areas. Skagit PUD has been working recently with state legislators to help solve rural water supply issues that impact Skagit County in a manner that is consistent with the PUD’s aim to be a regional leader and innovative utility provider.

In 2001, Washington State Department of Ecology adopted Chapter 173-503 WAC, establishing minimum instream flows on the Skagit River. Due to these regulations and Washington Water Law, new uses of water (including “permit-exempt” wells) are not allowed in most of the Skagit River watershed without an approved mitigation plan.

A property owner wishing to build a new home in this affected area has several ways to get water, however, drilling a well without approved mitigation is no longer permitted. The available options are:

- Drill a well with approved mitigation.
- Collect and store rainwater with an approved and properly engineered system.
- Connect to a public water supply.

Skagit County and Ecology have provided a mitigation plan for a limited area east of the city of Mount Vernon, but the potential for mitigation in other areas has proven quite limited. A small number of landowners have been building homes with the use of rainwater collection, but this unique source of water comes with significant challenges.

Skagit PUD recently performed an analysis of the Judy System’s network of waterlines. After review, the PUD selected three projects that were suitable options for providing waterline extensions into rural areas to supply existing and future land owners with a reliable source of water. The first of these three projects is on Little Mountain Road, from East Blackburn Road to Amick Road. The PUD requested funding directly from the State to complete the engineering design of this project. Construction funding will be sought in future budget requests. If this project proves successful to help alleviate some of the rural water supply issues, we will then ask state legislators for additional funding for two other projects located near Conway.

LITTLE MOUNTAIN ROAD PROJECT

The Little Mountain Road Project begins in the southeast corner of Mount Vernon and extends approximately three miles east through unincorporated Skagit County to the Big Lake area, connecting to another existing part of the water system. This project was selected first due to the high number of potential new water services, benefits to the existing water system, and proximity to nearby urban areas. Skagit PUD regularly receives inquiries from potential customers in this area, but the cost of required waterline extensions was too expensive for individual landowners to bear on their own.
ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS ABOUT THE LITTLE MOUNTAIN ROAD WATERLINE PROJECT

Where will the pipeline extension start and end?
Enclosed is a project map that shows the proposed route of the new pipeline. The project will begin at the intersection of Little Mountain Road and East Blackburn Road, and end at the intersection of Little Mountain Road and Amick Road. The PUD has no plans for any additional extensions on nearby roads such as Amick Road or Criddle Lane. It is possible that private landowners or developers could fund additional extensions on nearby roads in the future.

What is included in the project?
The current design includes a connection to an existing District pipeline near the intersection of Little Mountain Road and East Blackburn Road, approximately three miles of pipeline and a booster pumping station. A pressure reducing station will be installed near the intersection of Little Mountain Road and Amick Road where the project will connect to an existing PUD pipeline. Conduit will also be installed in the trench for future fiber optic service. The PUD is assessing potential alternatives to the booster pumping station, such as additional waterline connections near the existing water system that could provide the required water pressure.

How much will the project cost?
The estimated total project cost is $6 million, in 2019 dollars.

Where is the funding coming from?
Skagit PUD will receive $1.3 million from the 2019 State Capital Budget for project design, property acquisition and public outreach. The PUD will apply for the remaining $4.7 million in next year’s Capital Budget. All money is in the form of a grant, which is not required to be reimbursed to the State.

When will the project be completed?
Design is expected to begin in 2019. If construction money is secured in 2020, construction is estimated to be completed in 2021 or 2022.

Will area property owners be required to pay for the project?
No. The money for the design phase of the project was received from the State in the 2019 Capital Budget. We plan to make another request to the State for the remaining $4.7 million to complete the construction.

Will property owners that currently have wells be required to abandon their wells?
Skagit PUD does not have the authority to require abandonment of private wells by property owners. If a property owner with a well chooses to connect to the new waterline, the PUD may require certain types of plumbing equipment, such as a backflow prevention assembly, to protect the public water system from potential contamination sources.

State law requires Skagit County to review permit applications to ensure legal and physical availability of an adequate water supply for the proposed use or building, and to ensure that the proposed use will not degrade surface water and groundwater resources. It is possible that Skagit County may have restrictions on...
continued use of a private well for certain proposed uses if a public water system is available. For additional information, contact Skagit County Planning and Development Services at (360) 416-1320.

**How much will it cost to connect to the new pipeline?**
Costs vary depending on the size of the meter. For property owners that want to connect to the new pipeline, please visit Skagit PUD’s website to learn about the connection process and the costs involved. Visit [SkagitPUD.org > My Account > Water Rates & Fees](http://www.SkagitPUD.org).

You may also call the PUD’s Engineering Department at (360) 848-4469.