

Purpose of Checklist:

The State Environmental Policy Act (SEPA), chapter 43.21C RCW, requires all governmental agencies to consider the environmental impacts of a proposal before making decisions. An environmental impact statement (EIS) must be prepared for all proposals with probable significant adverse impacts on the quality of the environment. The purpose of this checklist is to provide information to help the Responsible Official of the Snohomish County Public Utility District No. 1 and any other agencies with jurisdiction, to identify impacts from your proposal (and to reduce or avoid impacts from the proposal, if it can be done) and to help the agency decide whether an EIS is required.

A. BACKGROUND

- a. Name of proposed project, if applicable:

Sills Corner to North Stanwood 115kV Reconductor-- Phase 3

- b. Name of applicant:

Snohomish County Public Utilities District No. 1 (District)

- c. Address and phone number of applicant and contact person:

**Snohomish County Public Utilities District No. 1
P.O. Box 1107
Everett, WA 98206-1107**

**Applicant: Brian Li, P.E., Snohomish PUD No. 1, (425) 923-8808
Agent: Ann Boeholt, Senior Environmental Planner, HDR, (360) 489-9626 (m)**

- d. Date checklist prepared:

March 30, 2024

- e. Agency requesting checklist:

Snohomish County Public Utilities District No. 1 (District)

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

This project is part of the Sills Corner-North Stanwood 115kV Transmission Line Reconductor Project:

Phase 1, Twin City-Stanwood, was completed in 2020.

Phase 2, Stillaguamish River to Twin City, is planned for construction in 2024.

Phase 3, Sills Corner to Stillaguamish River (the subject of this SEPA Checklist), is planned for construction beginning in 2024 and to be in 2025.

Work within the floodplain would not occur between October 14 and February 20 of any two consecutive years.

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

None other than ongoing maintenance of poles, conductors, and other appurtenances, as needed to preserve electrical system reliability. This may include vegetation management to maintain clearance from equipment, upgrades in capacity, pole relocations, temporary service outages, and other routine utility repair or maintenance that does not increase the footprint or size of facilities, and is within the existing utility corridor.

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

The following studies have been or are being prepared as part of this proposal:

- **Critical Areas Study (HDR 2023)**
- **Floodplain Habitat Assessment Technical Memorandum (HDR 2023)**
- **Shoreline Analysis Memorandum (HDR 2023)**
- **Cultural Resources Assessment Report (ASM 2024)**

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

None Known

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

Snohomish County Public Utilities District No. 1

- **SEPA Threshold Determination**

Snohomish County

- **Shoreline Substantial Development Permit and Shoreline Conditional Use Permit**
- **Flood Hazard Permit**
- **Land Disturbing Activity Permit**

Washington State Department of Natural Resources

- **Aquatic Lands Lease**

Washington State Department of Fish and Wildlife

- **Hydraulic Project Approval**

- k. 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. (Lead agencies may modify this form to include additional specific information on project description.)

The District's existing Sills Corner to North Stanwood electric transmission line, located in Snohomish County, Washington, brings power to customers in northwest Snohomish County and Camano Island and is reaching the end of its design. Many of the poles and associated equipment are aging and in need of replacement. The District plans to rebuild the aging power line in order to provide customers improved reliability and additional capacity. This project is titled the Sills Corner to North Stanwood 115-kilovolt (kV) Reconductor Project (project).

This project is being completed in three phases. Phase 1 was completed in 2020. Phase 2 is currently undergoing permit review with Snohomish County and construction is expected to begin in 2024. Construction for Phase 3 (the subject of this SEPA checklist) is currently planned to begin in 2024 and to be completed in 2025. Phase 3 includes reconductoring the power line between the Stillaguamish River and 188th Street NE/9th Avenue NE --a distance of approximately 3.58 miles. This SEPA Checklist addresses work being done under Phase 3 only.

Phase 3 will remove a total of 69 poles and install 53 new poles. This consists of the removal of 42 existing wooden transmission poles, the installation of 40 new iron/steel transmission poles, and the installation of higher capacity wire. New overhead lines would be installed on the new poles, and existing fiber will be transferred from the old poles to the new poles. The new line will be visually similar to the existing line. Subsequently, the new poles are being configured such that they will accommodate a new distribution circuit to be placed below the transmission line. The distribution underbuild will require the additional removal of 15 existing wooden distribution poles and installation of 9 new distribution poles. Finally, the distribution crossing of the Stillaguamish River will be re-designed, eliminating four 3-pole “H-Frame” structures and replacing each with a single ductile iron pole --resulting in an additional removal of 12 wooden distribution poles and replacement with 4 poles. (See table below for a summary of the poles).

Pole Action	Type/Quantity of Poles	Total
Remove	42 transmission poles	69 poles
	15 distribution poles	
	12 distribution poles at Stillaguamish River crossing	
Install	40 transmission poles	53 poles
	9 distribution poles	
	4 additional poles for distribution crossing of Stillaguamish River	

Two segments of this corridor will be rerouted to overcome chronic access challenges in two areas. The crossing at Cook Slough will be moved approximately 225 feet northwest to align with the Pioneer Highway bridge at a narrower section of Cook Slough. Further southeast along the project corridor, the second reroute will move a section of the transmission line from the southwest side of the BNSF railroad tracks to the northeast side of Sill Road, which extends parallel to the BNSF railroad tracks; the reroute will be approximately 175 feet east-northeast of the existing transmission line. The removed transmission poles and new transmission poles for these two re-route sections are part of the count of 42 existing poles being removed and 40 new poles being added (the northern re-route section will replace 3 existing poles with 4 new poles and the southern re-route section will replace 5 existing poles with 6 new poles).

All areas where poles will be removed will be restored with native seeding and mulch, or restored to the original ground contour and returned to agricultural use. New overhead lines would be installed on the new poles, and existing fiber will be transferred from the old poles to the new poles. The new line would be visually similar to the existing line.

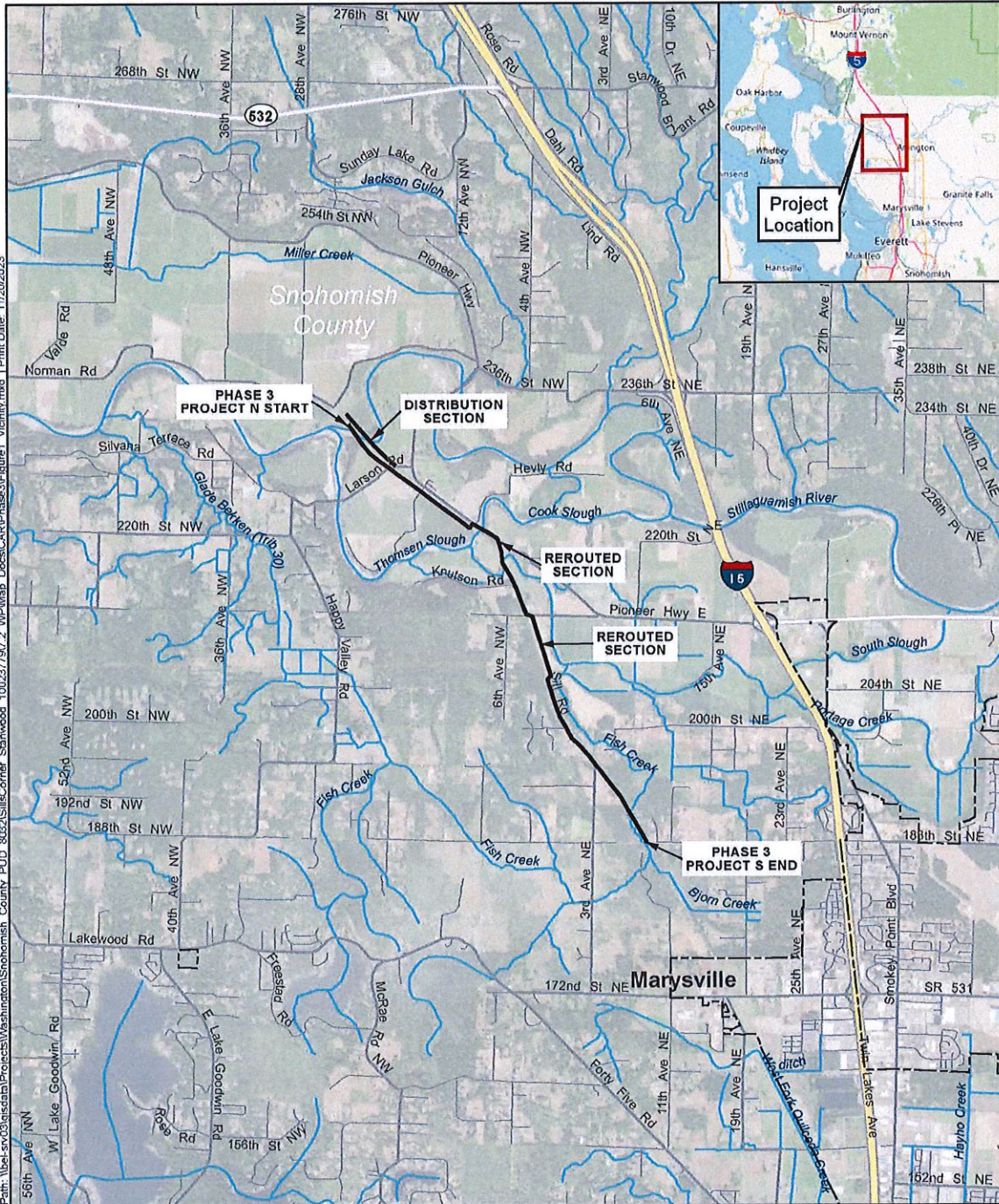
The project also includes re-stenciling (aka re-numbering) the poles so that they are better aligned with mile marker locations along the transmission corridor. Because of this, the number identifier of each transmission pole to be removed is typically not the same number identifier of the pole to be placed, as can be seen on the site plans (Attachment A). When referring to poles, application materials therefore refer to “existing” pole numbers or “new” pole numbers.

- I. 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. While you should submit any plans required by the agency, you are not required to duplicate maps or detailed plans submitted with any permit applications related to this checklist.

The entire project area for Phase 3 is approximately 3.58 miles long and is located entirely within unincorporated Snohomish County. The project begins northwest of the right bank of the Stillaguamish River and extends southeast and parallel to the BNSF railroad, on the west side of the railroad embankment. The southeast terminus of the project alignment is on the west side of the BNSF embankment, parallel to 188th Street Northeast (Figure 1).

The project is located within the Stillaguamish River Watershed, Washington Water Resource Inventory Area (WRIA) 5, and occurs within Sections 1, 2, 12, and 13 of Township 31 North, Range 4 East, and Section 18 of Township 31 North, Range 5 East.

SEPA ENVIRONMENTAL CHECKLIST
 Sills Corner to Stillaguamish River 115kV Reconductor – Phase 3
 Snohomish County Public Utility District No. 1.



Source: Municipal Boundary, Road, and Stream - Snohomish County (2013 and 2015), Aerial - ESRI Online (2015)

- Phase 3 Alignment
- Stream
- Municipal Boundary



Figure 1
Project Vicinity Map



Print Date: 11/20/2023
 Sills Corner to Standwood Transmission Line

B. Environmental Elements

1. Earth

a. General description of the site:

(circle one): Flat, rolling, hilly, steep slopes, mountainous, other _____

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

The project alignment is mostly flat. The steepest slope along the project corridor is 16%, between CI 7/3 (new pole number) and CI 7/4 (new pole number); however, work will occur from the top of this slope (off of Knutson Road) and at the base of this slope. No construction equipment will need to access the slope itself.

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.

The USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service Web Soil Survey¹ shows the following soils in the project area:

- Alderwood-Everett-Complex, gravelly, sandy loam, 25 to 70% slopes
- Lynnwood loamy sand, 0 to 3% slopes
- Puget silty clay loam, 0 to 3% slopes
- Puyallup fine sandy loam, 0 to 3% slopes
- Riverwash variable sand, 0 to 5% slopes
- Sultan silt loam, 0 to 3% slopes
- Terric Medisaprists, nearly level

The project occurs on agricultural land of long-term commercial significance, but no soil will be removed from this land.

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

No surface indications or history of landslides appear in the immediate vicinity of the project corridor. However, the entire utility corridor is mapped as containing Erodible Surficial Geology, in the form of Alluvium.

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.

The project will require only minor soil disturbance through excavation and fill associated with removal and installation of utility poles. Excavation and fill will be limited to the areas required to remove the old poles and install new poles. No new access roads or road improvements are required.

Transmission poles will be installed by first installing a casing that is 3 feet in diameter, with a vibratory hammer mounted to a digger derrick truck. The contents of the casing, to a depth of 10 feet, will then be removed (approximately 2.6 cubic yards of material removed for each

¹ <https://websoilsurvey.sc.egov.usda.gov/App/HomePage.htm>

transmission pole). The pole will then be set within the casing and backfilled with crushed rock, followed by removal of the casing.

New distribution poles will generally be directly embedded and not installed within casings. These will require excavations that are approximately 3 feet in diameter by 6.5 feet deep (about 1.7 cubic yards of excavation per distribution pole). After transmission and distribution pole installation, the area surrounding each pole will be backfilled with approximately 1 cubic yard of gravel plus a 6-inch surface layer of topsoil for grass seeding.

Removed poles will be pulled from the ground; the remaining cavities will be backfilled to match the surrounding grade, and all disturbed areas will be stabilized with seeding and appropriate erosion control.

Permanent impacts at each new pole location total 3.14 square feet—the surface area of the new pole. Temporary land disturbance at each new pole location is estimated to be 16.5 square feet (5-foot-diameter clearing area minus the 3-foot-diameter pole). Excavated material would be removed from sensitive areas for disposal or spread evenly onsite and permanently stabilized in areas outside of sensitive areas.

Given that the project requires installation of 53 new poles, 13 of which are new distribution poles; and removal of 69 existing poles, 27 of which are distribution poles - A total of approximately 130 cubic yards of excavation is anticipated for installation of new poles; and 53 cubic yards of fill is anticipated.

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

Some erosion could occur during excavation and backfilling for new poles during construction, but erosion control measures would be implemented in accordance with the Snohomish County Land Disturbing Activity Permit to minimize this potential. See section B.1.h. below for typical BMPs that may be used to minimize the potential for erosion. Erosion and sediment control measures are described in more detail in the Construction Stormwater Pollution Prevention Plan (SWPPP).

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

The project will result in a reduction of approximately 50.3 square feet of impervious area. This area was calculated by subtracting the area occupied by the new poles (166.4 square feet of impervious surface [3.14 square feet per pole for 53 poles]) from the area associated with the existing poles that will be removed (216.7 square feet of impervious surface [3.14 square feet per pole for 69 poles]). The resulting 166.4 square feet of impervious surface area is far less than one percent of the project area.

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

Temporary Erosion and Sediment Control (TESC) measures will be designed in conformance with and implemented as required by the District and Snohomish County. A SWPPP will be submitted with the Snohomish County Land Disturbing Activity Permit application and will be implemented during construction. The District's construction crew will comply with the terms of the SWPPP and the TESC measures to be shown in the project plans. The District's TESC Lead will be responsible for the performance, maintenance, and review of TESC measures as described in the approved plans. All staging and temporary access routes will be stabilized, following standard best management practices (BMPs) for erosion and sediment control.

The project would not adversely affect any native vegetation and is unlikely to disturb the

soil, as the soil is expected to be dry and firm during construction. That said, to avoid soil compaction, construction mats will be used to support construction equipment in sensitive areas or their buffers. No road improvements will be needed to accommodate construction.

The District's standard BMPs will be used to minimize erosion during construction. These will include: retention of existing vegetation to the greatest extent practicable, marking construction limits, installing and maintain silt fences, straw wattles, mulching, temporary/permanent seeding of disturbed ground, and use of construction matting where necessary.

Following pole installation, disturbed areas not in active agricultural use will be restored to preconstruction contours and seeded. Land which is actively in use as agriculture will be restored to preconstruction contours.

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.

Sources of emissions during construction include fugitive dust and construction equipment exhaust. Fugitive dust will be limited because much of the adjacent surfaces are paved. The quantities of emissions generated and transported off-site from the construction corridor will depend upon wind and weather conditions but are anticipated to be minor and of short duration. Odors from construction materials may occur and engine exhaust will be present during construction.

The greenhouse gas emissions associated with the active construction of the project as well as the embodied GHG emissions (from the finished poles, in place) are estimated to be as follows:

Greenhouse Gas	Construction (metric tons)	Embodied (metric tons)
Carbon dioxide:	18.60	
Methane:	0.36	
Nitrous oxide:	0.57	
Total combined in CO2 equivalents:	18.78	223.34

Long-term emissions for the project are expected to remain consistent with existing emissions resulting from daily operations. These include emissions that may be associated with routine maintenance and/or repair of the completed project.

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

Off-site emissions sources and climate change may have the potential to affect the proposal.

The Puget Sound Clean Air Agency has established local ambient air standards for six criteria air pollutants and the Agency monitors and reports on these air quality observations annually. These criteria air pollutants are:

- Particulate Mater (10 micrometers and 2.5 micrometers in diameter)
- Ozone
- Nitrogen Dioxide
- Carbon Monoxide
- Sulfur Dioxide
- Lead

Efforts to address air quality in the region have successfully achieved attainment for several of the criteria pollutants; however, observation sites in King, Pierce, and Snohomish counties continue to exceed the Puget Sound Clean Air Agency local PM_{2.5} health goal for fine particulate matter.

Observations at sites monitoring ozone indicate ozone levels remain a concern in the region. Carbon dioxide and methane are additional emissions of interest associated with climate change with the potential to affect weather conditions in the Snohomish County region.

Potential impacts in the Pacific Northwest due to climate change have been assessed through the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration U.S. Global Change Research Program, and summarized in the 2017 report titled "Climate Science Special Report: Fourth national Climate Assessment, Volume 1." The projected changes include declining springtime snowpack, reduced summer stream flows, warmer water temperatures, higher ambient temperatures, and rising sea levels. Such changes could result in reduced water supplies, and thus the need to seek new sources or methods to meet future water demand.

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

All passenger vehicles and construction-related vehicles and equipment will be properly maintained and will comply with applicable emission control standards and federal and state air quality regulations for exhaust pipe emissions. Most air quality impacts from this project are anticipated to be caused by gas or diesel powered vehicles and equipment. Contractors will comply with regulatory requirements and implement appropriate erosion and dust control measures as necessary.

Vehicular emissions associated with construction of the project are anticipated to occur in the short term. Erosion control and dust control measures will be provided as needed. Best management practices to limit deposition of soil on roadways will be implemented and active dust suppression measures will be evaluated and applied as necessary.

Possible measures to minimize vehicular emissions include:

- Requiring contractors to use best available emission control technologies (e.g., mufflers)
- Maintaining all vehicles in proper working condition
- Minimizing vehicle and equipment idling.

Measures to minimize dust emissions from construction may include:

- Spraying exposed soils and soil storage areas with water or otherwise covering them during dry weather periods
- Covering exposed earthen stockpiles and loads of material being transported to and from the site
- Inspecting vehicles before entering roadways to minimize track-out of soils.

3. Water

- a. Surface Water:

- 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.

The Phase 3 section of the transmission line corridor crosses or is adjacent to the following streams (Table 1):

Table 1. Streams Adjacent to Phase 3

Stream	Tributary To	Rating	Width of OHW (feet)	Phase 3 Crosses (Y/N)
Stillaguamish River	Port Susan	S (Shoreline of the State)	380	Yes
Cook Slough	Stillaguamish River	S (Shoreline of the State)	230	Yes
Portage Creek	Cook Slough	S (Shoreline of the State)	70	Yes
Stream 7/1	Stillaguamish	F (Fish-bearing)	5	No
Stream XCC42	Fish Creek	F (Fish bearing)	5	Yes
Fish Creek	Portage Creek	F (Fish bearing)	15	Yes

Note: OHW = ordinary high water.

The Stillaguamish River is located between existing Poles CI 8/7 and CI 8/6 at the northwestern terminus of the Phase 3 project corridor. Where the transmission corridor crosses the Stillaguamish River, it flows east to west and is approximately 380 feet wide (between left- and right-bank ordinary high water marks [OHWM]). The Floodplain Assessment Technical Memorandum (HDR 2023) provides detailed information regarding the characteristics of each stream.

Seventeen wetlands were identified within the study area, and one wetland was identified in close proximity to the study area. All wetlands are within unincorporated Snohomish County: Wetland 8/7, 8/7B, 8/5, 7/B, 7/A, 7/11, 7/4, 7/4B, 7/2, 7/1, 6/B, 6/C, 6/11, 6/9, XCC42, XCC42B, 5/5 and 5/4. The Critical Areas Report (HDR 2023) provides detailed information regarding the characteristics of each wetland.

Wetlands and streams have been addressed in detail within the Sills Corner to North Stanwood 115kV Reconductor Project, Phase 3 Critical Areas Study (HDR 2023).

- 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.

No in-water work is proposed in any of the aforementioned streams. The existing overhead line crossings of the aforementioned streams will be removed and replaced with new transmission lines.

One new pole is proposed to be installed within a wetland, and nine poles are proposed to be located within wetland buffers. Four poles currently located within wetlands are proposed to be removed, and the replacement poles will be installed in the adjacent wetland buffers. Compared to the existing transmission line configuration, the proposed project will result in the number of poles located in wetlands being reduced by three and the number of poles located in wetland buffers being increased by two. The locations of the new poles were selected to avoid wetlands where feasible, while staying within the District's easement and complying with design standards. The new poles require excavation of a 3-foot diameter hole, and would be backfilled with gravel as described above (in response to question A.11).

The project would be constructed in such a way as to avoid or minimize impacts to wetlands and streams: to the extent possible, pole locations would be accessed from existing roadways or existing access routes to minimize disturbance. The District will obtain temporary access easements through farm fields in order to avoid mapped wetlands and streams for pole access as much as possible. It will not be possible to avoid all temporary wetland and buffer encroachments since some of the poles are located directly within identified wetlands or their buffers. All wetlands and buffers that might be so disturbed are farmed wetlands that are seasonally dry. Staging areas will be outside wetlands and streams or their buffers and will be determined during the construction phase.

- 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.

For the installation of 14 metal transmission poles in wetlands or their buffers (1 within a wetland; 9 within wetland buffers; and 4 replacement poles moved from wetlands to wetland buffers), a total of approximately 14 cubic yards of imported gravel will be placed to backfill the new transmission poles (1 cubic yard per pole installed). Approximately 36.7 cubic yards will be excavated (2.62 cubic yards per pole) from wetlands or their buffers.

There will be no need to lay down any gravel or other material to construct or enhance accesses, since access will be from existing paved roads or hard packed existing farm roads. Construction will occur in the summer when the soil of the farmed fields are, for the most part, dry. Should areas of soil moisture be encountered along accesses, temporary construction mats may be laid down to prevent soil compaction and rutting. However, use of construction mats would result in no excavation, fill, or re-deposit of incidental fill.

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

No.

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

In Phase 3, approximately 1.6 miles of the northwest corridor is within the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) regulated 100-year floodplain of the Stillaguamish River. 30 poles (12 distribution and 18 transmission) will be removed from the floodplain, and 22 poles (5 distribution and 17 transmission) will be installed within the floodplain.

- 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.

No.

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.

No.

- 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.

No waste materials would be discharged into the ground.

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.

The main source of runoff during and after construction of the proposed project would be stormwater, as no other runoff-generating materials are proposed. A SWPPP has been prepared which specifies BMPs to minimize water quality impacts during construction through erosion control.

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

No waste materials are anticipated to enter the ground or surface waters during construction or operation of the project. BMPs will be implemented to prevent releases of turbid water and spills from equipment during construction.

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

No.

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

Section B.1.h. (above) discusses typical BMPs that will be used during construction to control erosion and sedimentation resulting from stormwater runoff. Additional construction BMPs that can be implemented to minimize impacts to surface, ground, and runoff water during construction include:

- **Maintaining spill containment and clean up materials in areas where equipment fueling is conducted.**
- **Refueling construction equipment and vehicles away from surface waters.**
- **Containing equipment and vehicle wash water associated with construction and preventing it from draining into surface waters.**
- **Storing fuels and other potential contaminants away from excavation sites and surface waters in secured containment areas.**
- **Conducting regular inspections, maintenance and repairs on fuel hoses, hydraulically operated equipment, lubrication equipment, and chemical/petroleum storage containers.**
- **Establishing a communication protocol for the unlikely event of a spill (Spill Prevention, Control, and Countermeasures Plan).**
- **Monitoring the site during construction by a Certified Erosion and Sediment Control Lead (CESCL).**

4. Plants

a. Check the 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
- Orchards, vineyards or other permanent crops.
- wet soil plants: cattail, buttercup, bullrush, skunk cabbage, other
- water plants: water lily, eelgrass, milfoil, other
- other types of vegetation

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

The majority of the project corridor is vegetated with only annual crops or pasture. No trees will be removed as part of the project and only minimal brush located around the existing poles will be trimmed or removed as needed to access the work locations. The District performs ongoing maintenance of the transmission line corridor to trim and remove plants and trees to maintain clearances from the lines, and this activity would continue during operations.

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

A search of the Washington Department of Natural Resources (WDNR) Natural Heritage Program database² and the Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife's (WDFW) Priority Habitats and Species (PHS) on the Web³ were conducted for listed plant species in the project area; no rare plant species were identified within or near the project area.

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

Following pole installation, disturbed areas not in active agricultural use will be restored to preconstruction contours and replanted with a native seed mix. Land which is actively in use for agriculture will be restored to preconstruction contours.

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

The following invasive species occur within the project area: Himalayan blackberry (*Rubus armeniacus*), and reed canarygrass (*Phalaris arundinacea*).

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.

Examples include:

birds: songbirds, waterfowl, swans, birds of prey

mammals: deer and small mammals

fish: coho salmon, resident coastal cutthroat trout, fall chum salmon, pink salmon, Chinook salmon, winter steelhead trout

² <http://data-wadnr.opendata.arcgis.com/>

³ <https://geodataservices.wdfw.wa.gov/hp/phs/>

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

A search of the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service iPaC report, as well as WDFW's SalmonScape and PHS on the Web³ lists the following species and habitats potentially within the Phase 3 project location.

Federal and State Threatened and Endangered Species:

- Marbled Murrelet (Threatened (Federal); Endangered (State))
- Yellow-billed Cuckoo (Threatened (Federal); Endangered (State))
- Bull trout (Threatened (Federal); Candidate (State))
- Steelhead trout (Threatened (Federal))
- Chinook salmon (Threatened (Federal))

State-Designated Priority Habitats and Species:

- Coho Salmon
- Chum Salmon
- Chinook Salmon
- Pink Salmon
- Sockeye Salmon
- Residential Coastal Cutthroat Trout
- Bull Trout
- Trumpeter Swans

State Listed Sensitive Species:

- American White Pelican
- Gray Whale
- Common Loon
- Larch Mountain Salamander
- Pygmy Whitefish
- Margined sculpin
- Olympic mudminnow

There is no suitable habitat for Marbled Murrelet and Yellow-Billed Cuckoo within the project corridor and these species are not expected to be present in the project area. Bull Trout may be present in Fish Creek and Stream XCC42; Chinook Salmon may be present in Stream XCC42, as well as within inundated portions of Wetland 7/1, 7/2 and 5/4; and Steelhead Trout may be present in Stream XCC42 – however no in-water work is proposed as part of the project. The geographic ranges and required habitats for state listed sensitive species was reviewed to determine their likely presence in the study area. A full review of sensitive species and their habitats is available in the Critical Areas Study (HDR 2023).

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

The project is located within the Great Pacific Flyway, a migratory bird route that spans from Alaska to South America. The lower Stillaguamish River valley is a major wintering area for many species of waterfowl (including trumpeter swans) and many of the agricultural lands are used by these and other migrating shorebirds.

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

As part of the District's Wildlife Injury Prevention & Response Plan, the District continues to develop and implement design/construction standards incorporating avian protection – for both new and existing facilities. These standards include insulation or barrier cover over energized parts, increased separation to prevent electrocution and line markers to make power lines more visible to reduce the risk of collision. For this specific project, line markers will be installed on the power lines.

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

No invasive animal species are known to be on or near the site.

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.

The overall project is an electric system improvement to meet reliability and increased service needs for customers in the surrounding areas.

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

No.

- 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:

Staging, construction, operations, and maintenance personnel would turn off non-essential equipment to conserve energy.

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.

Electric fields and magnetic fields (EMF) are associated with every power delivery system and electrical device. Possible effects upon human health from electric and magnetic fields continue to be investigated, with emphasis directed primarily at magnetic fields. Current research concerning EMF and human health are inconclusive, despite ongoing research. There are no established or known levels of human exposure to power line magnetic fields which have been determined to be either safe or harmful.

Gasoline and other petroleum products used in vehicles also have potential environmental health hazards. The contractor would be using petroleum products to fuel and service equipment during construction. A spill prevention plan prepared by the contractor would be developed to minimize and/or clean up spills. Hazards would be minimized through careful maintenance of all vehicles, and minimization of environmental and human exposure to these chemicals.

High voltage electrical lines are inherently dangerous under near-contact conditions, and the design of these lines and their maintenance is driven in part by strict national safety and design standards. Lines are located along specific easements and on poles that are difficult to scale to avoid the potential for contact.

- 1) Describe any known or possible contamination at the site from present or past uses.

None known.

- 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.

None known.

- 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.

The only toxic or hazardous materials proposed during construction (gasoline) are associated with vehicles and equipment.

- 4) Describe special emergency services that might be required.

No special emergency services would be required for the project.

- 5) Proposed measures to reduce or control environmental health hazards, if any:

In 2005, the State of Washington amended the "Safety Requirements for Electrical Workers", Washington Administrative Code (WAC) chapter 296-45, to require that "All electrical utilities and entities operating transmission and distribution facilities within the State of Washington must design, construct, operate, and maintain their lines and equipment according to the requirements of the 2012 National Electric Safety Code (NESC) (ANSI-C2)..." This is referenced under the paragraph WAC 296-45-045. The upgraded power line would be designed in accordance with the NESC.

Additionally, the following measures would be implemented during construction to minimize or control environmental health hazards:

- **Maintain construction equipment and check for leaks daily.**
- **Keep spill kits in vehicles and equipment on site.**
- **Implement spill plan if a spill occurs.**
- **Contain and properly clean up spills.**
- **Dispose of contaminated soils at approved site.**
- **Maintain and refuel vehicles in approved upland areas where spills would not have the potential to enter groundwater or surface water.**
- **Implement best management practices to minimize water quality impacts during construction.**

b. Noise

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

Typical noises presently experienced within the project area include noise from rail and car traffic and agricultural equipment; these would not affect the project.

- 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.

Construction activities will increase noise levels on a temporary and intermittent basis during scheduled work hours. It is anticipated that these short-term noise levels will be consistent with levels associated with normal operations of construction equipment, and within hours and days allowed by Snohomish County regulations described in Chapter 8.16, Public Disturbance Noise, of Snohomish County Code, limiting construction noise to the hours of 7 a.m. to 9 p.m. on weekdays and 9 a.m. to 9 p.m. on weekends.

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

Construction, operations, and maintenance personnel will turn off non-essential equipment to reduce the amount of noise generated during on-site activities. Additionally, construction personnel will limit work to daylight hours, primarily during the week, thereby eliminating project-related noise during the evening, weekend, and nighttime hours.

The transmission line will be maintained to keep the hardware connecting the conductor line tight, to minimize the potential for corona noise.

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.

The current use of the project site is an existing transmission line, adjacent to residential, commercial, and agricultural properties. The proposal will not affect current land uses.

- 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?

The majority of the project area is currently in use as working farmland. Poles will be installed within working farmland within the District's easement. Placement of poles will not preclude agricultural use within the project area except immediately adjacent to the poles. Since the new poles are generally within the same location as existing poles that are to be removed, no loss of working farmland is anticipated from installation of new poles.

- 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, and harvesting? If so, how:

In the short term, temporary disruption to working farmlands is likely to occur during pole removal, pole installation, and wiring. In the long term, occasional maintenance of the poles and lines will occur.

- c. Describe any structures on the site.

Structures currently on the site include existing poles. Structures adjacent to the poles and project alignment include the BNSF railway and associated railroad features, and single-family residences.

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

Existing poles will be removed and replaced with new poles. No other buildings or structures will be removed.

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

The project area is located in unincorporated Snohomish County, within the Snohomish County PUD's existing utility line easement. The current Snohomish County zoning classification in the proposed project area is Agriculture 10-Acre (A-10).

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

The Snohomish County Comprehensive Plan shows the following Future Land Use designation within the proposed project area: Riverway Commercial Farmland.

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

The project area is located within the Resource and Aquatic Shoreline Environments in Snohomish County.

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

Seventeen wetlands were identified within the study area, and one wetland was identified in close proximity to the study area. All wetlands are within unincorporated Snohomish County: Wetland 8/7, 8/7B, 8/5, 7/B, 7/A, 7/11, 7/4, 7/4B, 7/2, 7/1, 6/B, 6/C, 6/11, 6/9, XCC42, XCC42B, 5/5 and 5/4. The Critical Areas Report (HDR 2023) provides detailed information regarding the characteristics of each wetland.

There are six streams within the study area: Cook Slough, Stream 7/1, Stream XCC42, Fish Creek, Portage Creek, and the Stillaguamish River.

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

None.

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

None.

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

No impacts are anticipated; therefore, no measures are proposed.

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

The project is consistent with Snohomish County regulations and requirements, and necessary permits would be obtained prior to beginning construction. As no impacts on land use are anticipated, no mitigation measures are proposed.

m. Proposed measures to reduce or control impacts to agricultural and forest lands of long-term commercial significance, if any:

No agricultural or forest lands impacts are anticipated; therefore, no mitigation measures are proposed.

9. Housing

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

No housing units would be provided.

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

No housing units would be eliminated.

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

No housing impacts are anticipated; therefore, no mitigation measures are proposed.

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?

The proposed transmission poles are each approximately 80 feet tall, and the proposed distribution poles are each approximately 45 feet tall. The new distribution poles for the crossing of the Stillaguamish River will be approximately 95 feet tall. New overhead lines will be installed on the new poles, but the new power line will be visually similar to the existing line.

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

Views are not anticipated to be altered or obstructed by the project. New poles would be installed in the same area as the existing poles, to the extent possible.

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

No aesthetic impacts are anticipated; therefore, no mitigation measures are proposed.

11. Light and Glare

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

No light or glare would be produced by the project.

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

No.

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

No existing sources of light or glare may affect the project.

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

No light or glare impacts are anticipated; therefore, no mitigation measures are proposed.

12. Recreation

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

Waterfowl hunting occurs within the immediate vicinity of the project, with several agricultural fields identified as within the Private Lands Hunting Access Program. The Stillaguamish River floodplain, west of Interstate 5, is identified as within Goose Management Area 1.

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

Waterfowl hunting season within Goose Management Area 1 is between October 14 and February 20 of any two consecutive years. Construction is planned to occur between late spring 2024 and early fall 2025; however, construction within the floodplain areas of Phase 3 would not occur between October 14 and February 20, in order to avoid interference with waterfowl hunting. Arresting construction within the floodplain during the late fall and winter seasons would have the added benefit of avoiding work when the soils could be moist.

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

No recreation impacts are anticipated; therefore, no mitigation measures are proposed.

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? If so, specifically describe.

No buildings, structures, or sites that are over 45 years old listed in or eligible for listing in national, state, or local preservation registers are located within or immediately adjacent to the project corridor. Three archeological sites and one historic building are documented within 1-mile (mi) of the project corridor. The historic building is known as the Zion Lutheran Church (45SN118) and is located 0.8 mi north of the project area. In addition to the four sites described above, a disturbed layer of precontact historic debris was discovered during the cultural resource survey for this project near proposed pole CI 6/4. Cultural monitoring has been recommended to occur during the replacement of this pole. More details are outlined in the Phase 3 Cultural Resources Report (ASM 2023).

- 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.

The Stillaguamish Tribe expressed the potential for sensitive cultural material along portions of the project area near the Stillaguamish River. The cultural representatives of the Stillaguamish Tribe and other area tribes were contacted prior to commencement of the cultural resources assessment to inquire about potential cultural resources within the project area, and to offer tribal representatives the opportunity to accompany the archaeologists during fieldwork. Specific archeological sites are addressed in the Phase 3 Cultural Resources Report (ASM 2023).

- 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.

A Cultural Resources Database Review (CRDR) accessed the DAHP Washington Information System for Architectural and Archaeological Records Data (WISAARD) online cultural resources database for previously recorded sites and cultural resources surveys conducted within a 1-mile radius of the project. No cultural sites were identified directly within the proposed transmission line route.

ASM Affiliates (ASM) conducted a literature review of site forms and previous cultural resources reports on file at the DAHP and consulted pertinent historic and ethnographic maps and documentation for the project. Ethnographic documentation indicates extensive Stillaguamish Tribe utilization in the vicinity of the project alignment. However, the ethnographic records do not

Speak specifically to the project corridor or its immediate environs. Similarly, no specific historic period activity is within the project alignment.

A segment of the former Great Northern Railroad originally constructed in the 1890s runs immediately adjacent to the project alignment. However, the railroad grade is still in use and has undergone extensive modification. A segment of this same railroad grade north of the project corridor was recommended as ineligible for listing in the NRHP.

ASM completed an archaeological survey of the project corridor. Field survey methods utilized both pedestrian and subsurface surveys of the project area at the locations of new poles, where poles were to be removed, and within construction access routes. A surface survey was conducted throughout the project area at 10-meter intervals and STP excavations were conducted where poles were to be installed or removed. If affected poles were within 40 meters of each other, one STP was excavated for both poles. Fieldwork consisted of a surface examination of access routes and 69 subsurface shovel test probe (STP) excavations across the project area. STPs measured between 45 and 50 centimeters (cm) in diameter and were excavated to a maximum depth of 102 cm below the surface (cmbs) at 20 cm level increments. All sediments from these excavations were screened through a ¼-inch hardware mesh. Excavation results were documented on ASM forms, which include provenance, cultural material descriptions, information on sediment type, color determination, termination depth, and general observations. All STP units were backfilled after documentation was completed. Digital photographs recorded the general condition of the survey area and the sediment deposits observed during subsurface investigations. A differential, post-processed, decimeter-level Trimble Geo XH global positioning systems unit recorded the location of all subsurface excavations and obstructions. The results of the survey were documented in a technical report for Phase 3 of this project and will be submitted to DAHP via the WISSARD online database.

Specific details are outlined in the Phase 3 Cultural Resources Report (ASM 2024).

- 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.

Construction activities will be limited to the greatest extent practicable to minimize ground disturbance. Pedestrian ground surveys and shovel test pits were completed along all known construction and access ways to identify any culturally significant material that would need to be avoided or otherwise addressed. An inadvertent discovery plan identifies response procedures and contact information should culturally significant objects be discovered during construction. If any artifacts, historical or cultural features are uncovered during construction activities, work will be immediately stopped and contact made with Snohomish County, DAHP, and area Indian tribes.

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.

The project site is accessible from the following public streets: Larson Road, Sather Road, Pioneer Hwy, Knutson Road, 212th St NW, 200th St NW, and 3rd Ave NE. Additional access will be through temporary construction easements on private property utilizing existing private roads or farm roads. No new access roads or driveways are proposed.

- 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?

No.

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

No parking spaces would be added or eliminated by the project.

- 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).

No.

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

The project corridor parallels BNSF railroad right of way, but construction is not expected to affect rail travel.

- 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 non-passenger vehicles). What data or transportation models were used to make these estimates?

Typical trips per day are less than one, with this length of line needing approximately one vehicle trip per month (or less) for maintenance and evaluation over the lifespan of the equipment.

- 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.

The project will not interfere with or affect movement of agricultural and forest products.

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

No transportation impacts are anticipated; therefore, no mitigation measures are proposed.

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.

The project will not result in an increased need for public services.

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

No impacts on public resources are anticipated; therefore, no mitigation measures are proposed.

16. Utilities

- a. Circle utilities currently available at the site:

electricity, natural gas, water, refuse service, telephone, sanitary sewer, septic system, other

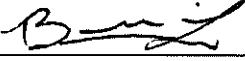
- b. Describe the utilities that are proposed for the project, the utility providing the service, and the general construction activities on the site or in the immediate vicinity which might be needed.

Not applicable.

SEPA ENVIRONMENTAL CHECKLIST
Sills Corner to Stillaguamish River 115kV Reconductor -- Phase 3
Snohomish County Public Utility District No. 1.

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: 

Name of Signee: Brian Li, Professional Engineer and Project Manager/
Snohomish County Public Utilities District No. 1

Date Submitted: 4/24/2024