

22 August 1978

MEMO FOR: RECORD

SUBJECT: Skagit River Levee and Channel Improvement Project - Meetings with Local Officials

1. On 15 August 1978, I traveled to the Mount Vernon area to meet with local officials and discuss our studies of the Skagit River Levee and Channel Improvement Project. I met with officials of Mount Vernon, Burlington, Sedro Woolley, and the Skagit County Public Utility District (PUD).
2. At Burlington, I talked with City Manager, Arnold Hansen, about our studies and the concerns of the city of Burlington. Mr. Hansen said that, in the past, downtown Burlington had usually not been flooded. We discussed what would happen under existing conditions, and both agreed that the danger to Burlington comes from the existing dike being encircled by a flood which would then get into Gages Slough and flow through the city of Burlington and then toward Avon or Samish Bay. He mentioned the Washington Department of Transportation recently produced a report covering upgrading SR-20 between Interstate 5 and Sedro Woolley. The report indicated the most beneficial alignment would be along the river with a channel realignment at the Burlington bend. I asked him whether there were any possibilities for recreational improvements along the stretch of the river near Burlington and he replied that the only location would probably be near Gardner Road where the County had been considering locating improving a boat launching ramp. I also asked him if he had available sewer and water system maps which we could acquire and he said they were available and could be obtained from their engineer, (Radar & Leonard located east of the City Hall in Burlington on the same street). I also obtained a zoning map and comprehensive plan for the city of Burlington from Mr. Arnold.
3. At Sedro Woolley, I talked with Mr. Tom Oaks, the Public Works Director. We discussed whether floods were having any appreciable effect on the town of Sedro Woolley. Mr. Oaks indicated that the Sedro Woolley sat up on the bench and that in the recent past, no appreciable damage had been caused in the city of Sedro Woolley. The sewage treatment plant was within about 3 feet of being put out of commission by the 1975 flood. I asked Mr. Oaks if he could send us copies of the city of Sedro Woolley zoning, comprehensive plan, sanitary and storm sewer systems and he said that he would.
4. Later in the day, I met Bob Vogler (Economic and Social Evaluation Section) and Karen Mettling (Environmental Resources Section) and we went to the Skagit County PUD to discuss the effect our project would have on their operations. We met with Bill Rasmussen and Jerry Lange at the PUD and generally discussed what conditions could cause problems with their water system. We also obtained an anniversary progress report covering the period from 1939 to 1974. Generally speaking, the Skagit County PUD will probably not be affected too seriously by

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floods except for erosion of water supply lines and hydrants. The service area of the PUD is generally east of Swinomish Slough except for the southern part of Fidalgo Island along Skagit Bay. The city of Anacortes has their own water supply line with an intake on the Skagit River at Avon. The Skagit County PUD customers on Fidalgo Island are served off of the Anacortes line however, they could be served from wells in the area if the Anacortes line were to go out. Their reservoir is located on the Cultus Mountain east of Clear Lake. Main transmission lines run through Sedro Woolley and Burlington to Mount Vernon and also through Clear Lake to Mount Vernon. The existing bridges carry water supply lines suspended on them and if the bridges were to go out, the supply line would be severed. However, the areas could probably be served unless all the river crossings were damaged.

5. Later we went to the Mount Vernon sewage treatment plant and met with Mr. Chuck Saunders, plant superintendent. He gave us a tour of the sewage treatment plant and showed us how the electrical building and pump station were floodproofed to approximately 4 feet above the ground surface in the area. The floodproofing consists of metal slots attached to the door and vent openings in which metal plates can be dropped in and the door sandbagged. In the event of a large flood, the slide gate on the trunk sewer entering the sewage treatment plant is closed and the sewage backs up in the existing sanitary sewer system in Mount Vernon coming out through residential and commercial buildings and also through the manholes in the streets. He estimated that the cost of putting the plant back in operation if it were flooded out would be about \$1,500,000.

6. I stopped by the Skagit County Department of Parks and Recreation to meet with Mr. John Onstad, Recreation Planner. He was not in at the time but he had left information which I picked up for Jim Newman to use in his recreation studies.

7. I stopped by the city of Mount Vernon offices and met with the City Engineer, Jack Pittis, and the assistant engineer, Harold Christenson. We discussed the Skagit project in general and I explained to them several concepts we were exploring as part of our levee design in the Mount Vernon area. They said that when we had done the foundation exploration, we had punched a hole in one of the sewers in the town. (I relayed this information to Mr. Tom Ward of F&M Branch). We discussed the possibility of adding recreational amenities along the levee system, possibly including bicycle paths or decorative flood walls. They indicated that in the parking lot area it would be very nice if the flood wall could be decorative. They also indicated that if we build a flood wall with an opening for traffic going through, it would be very nice if the flood wall could step down so that site distance would still be available for traffic going thru the flood wall. We also discussed the levee going through riverside park, and they mentioned that a service club was negotiating to obtain the wooded area just north of riverside park for the city to use as a park. They also said they were looking into the possibility of building bicycle paths around the big bend from riverside park to the Burlington Northern bridge and also relocating some roads to provide better highway alignments.

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They asked if I had any topography of the area and I said I would go back to the office to check and send them what I had. ( I sent them the 1"=50' topography of Mount Vernon on 18 August 1978). I told them other people would be talking to them in the coming weeks on design details and I was merely explaining some concepts they could be thinking about to prepare. We discussed west Mount Vernon and they said that it may be possible to close the street that runs along the top of the levee and put a wall of some sort there, possibly including a bicycle path with it. They also provided me with a copy of the Mount Vernon Comprehensive Land Use Plan which was adopted by their City Council on 13 October 1976.

*Brooks*  
BROOKS

cc:

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RP file