

CHAPTER 8

UTILITIES ELEMENT

INTRODUCTION

The Utilities Element describes, "the general location, proposed location, and capacity of all existing and proposed utilities, including, but not limited to, electrical lines, telecommunication lines, and natural gas lines". The goals and policies in this element deal primarily with the utility services provided by the Town of LaConner; sewer, water, and drainage. Private providers of natural gas, electricity, cable TV, telephone, and trash pick-up are also discussed. The planning horizon ends in 2025.

Reference documents:

- Skagit County Coordinated Water System Plan dated July 2000. This sets the capacities for each water purveyor in Skagit County through the year 2050. It sets the standards for cross-connection, backflow prevention, and fire flow.
- Town of LaConner Comprehensive Water System Plan dated May 2001. This includes maps showing the locations and sizes of water lines, hydrants, pumps and the storage tank. It contains the rudiments of a water conservation plan and provides capital planning and cash flow analysis through the year 2004.
- Town of LaConner Wastewater Treatment Comprehensive Plan dated August, 1996. This document provides information on the existing wastewater treatment facility at that time and includes management procedures along with criteria for plant expansion. As-built drawings are available at the treatment plant.
- National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System permit no. WA-002244-6, issued August 28, 2002. This document sets the water quality standard for treatment plant effluent, the loading on the plant, and the monitoring/reporting requirements. It contains criteria for Significant Industrial Users (SIU) that are external to the system.
- Contract for Wastewater Treatment and Disposal between the Town of LaConner and the Swinomish Indian Tribal Community, dated December

- 28, 1997. This document contains all of the agreements under which the Town serves the Swinomish Indian Reservation as a bulk customer. It runs until December 31, 2096.
- Town of LaConner Comprehensive Stormwater Management Plan, 1992.

This chapter is based on RCW 36.70A.020(12): “ensure that those public facilities and services necessary to support development shall be adequate to serve the development at the time the development is available for occupancy and use without decreasing current service levels below locally established minimum standards.” This statute is also reflected in the following County-Wide Planning Policies:

- Development shall be allowed only when and where all public facilities are adequate, and only when and where such development can be adequately served by regional public services without reducing levels of service elsewhere (CWPP12.6)
- Public facilities and services needed to support development shall be available concurrent with the impacts of development (CWPP 12.7)

The Town of LaConner is committed to implementing the following goals and policies:

GOALS AND POLICIES

GOAL A

Establish objective procedures for assessing the readiness of the Town's utility systems to meet the impacts of a proposed development without degrading existing levels of service.

Policies

- 8A-1 Considering the requirements set forth in the Comprehensive Water, Sewer, and Drainage Plans, the Directors of Planning, Wastewater Treatment Plant, and Public Works will recommend to the Town Council, for their adoption, appropriate levels of service for each utility. These levels of service should differentiate between residential, commercial, and industrial users.
- 8A-2 Assess the capacities of each utility annually and initiate utility plan revisions when projected demand approaches 85% of capacity.

- 8A-3 Document the demand placed on a given utility by a proposed development in a manner prescribed by the Town.
- 8A-4 The Finance Director and the Town Administrator should annually review general facility charges and hook-up fees to insure that these charges/fees achieve cost recovery.

GOAL B

Integrate capital facility plans with projected capacity needs out to the year 2025.

Policies

- 8B-1 Conduct planning for utilities on a regional basis; detail planning and coordination with Skagit County, other governmental agencies and providers, and private providers.
- 8B-2 Review for revision the comprehensive utility plans of the various providers in the LaConner service area to define potential impacts on Town utilities and estimate capacity needs for the current planning horizon.
- 8B-3 Work directly with franchise holders to encourage planning and investment to meet capacity needs for the Town and the surrounding area.
- 8B-4 Maintain consistency between Comprehensive Plan land use and comprehensive utility/capital facility plans.

GOAL C

Promote joint use of transportation right-of-ways and utility corridors with private utility providers.

Policies

- 8C-1 Develop agreements with private utility providers and public agencies as required facilitating joint use of utility corridors and public right-of-ways.¹

¹ These agreements will set forth standards for locating utilities in public rights of way, and they will, to the maximum extent feasible, locate utility lines so as not to adversely affect future expansion or upgrades of the right of way.

- 8C-2 Include all permit applications for utilities affected by the project.
- 8C-3 Combine public right-of-way use by utilities for access whenever possible.
- 8C-4 Establish appropriate easements and agreements on private property as part of the permitting process.
- 8C-5 Place antennas on existing towers, buildings, or other structures, where possible.

GOAL D

Locate utility facilities in an environmentally sensitive manner.

Policies

- 8D-1 Ensure utility providers avoid placing facilities in areas defined as environmentally sensitive or critical areas unless there are no feasible alternatives and only after a site assessment and mitigation plan has been approved under the provisions of the critical areas ordinance.
- 8D-2 Ensure utility providers use construction and design standards that are environmentally sensitive, safe, cost-effective, and consistent with best management practices.
- 8D-3 Require electric utility providers to evaluate extremely low frequency (ELF) and electromagnetic fields (EMF) exposure from their facilities for compliance with current standards when line extensions or expansions occur.

GOAL E

Install underground utilities where possible.

Policies

- 8E-1 Encourage utility providers to install utility lines underground.
- 8E-2 Use “local improvement districts” as a means to finance the undergrounding of utilities, if undergrounding of the existing overhead utilities is desired and is technically feasible.

- 8E-3 Include provisions to install emergency shut-offs for underground utilities in the event of disasters.

GOAL F

Encourage conservation of water and energy.

Policies

- 8F-1 Conduct a public education program to promote conservation of water and energy in conjunction with the required annual consumer confidence report.
- 8F-2 Maintain an aggressive water leak detection program, utilizing outside technical assistance where necessary.
- 8F-3 Consider pricing structures that encourage conservation and usage reduction.
- 8F-4 Support electric and natural gas utility providers that conduct energy conservation programs for customers.
- 8F-5 Be a leader by example to the public by making every effort to reduce water and energy consumption in government facilities. Adopt development codes that are receptive to new ideas and technologies for reducing water and energy consumption.
- 8F-6 Institute a citizens' utility advisory committee to promote water and energy conservation, participate in setting utility rates, and set priorities for improvements.

Water

Please see Inventory and Analysis section pages 8-12 to 8-13 or refer to the Comprehensive Water Plan, February 2000 for history and usage data.

GOAL G

Deliver a safe and reliable supply of potable water to all customers within the service area.

Policies

- 8G-1 Maintain a close working relationship with the Anacortes Public Works Department in order to insure high water quality and adequate supply.
- 8G-2 Inspect the Town's water tank on a regular basis for structural integrity and cleanliness.
- 8G-3 Maintain a system for users to report problems with the water system and to document action taken.

GOAL H

Reduce unaccounted-for water to less than AWWA standards.

Policies

- 8H-1 Conduct a public relations program to remind customers to report inordinately high water bills and obvious leaks.
- 8H-2 Conduct monthly reconciliation between water purchased and water billed.
- 8H-3 Obtain professional assistance, when deemed necessary, to trace and repair water system leaks.

GOAL I

Plan for capital improvements that will ensure that the urban level of service standards for water, as outlined in the Skagit County Coordinated Water System Plan, are met.

Policies

- 8I-1 Implement the list of capital improvements shown in the Water Comprehensive Plan.
- 8I-2 Update the Capital Facilities Plan per the 6-year plan cycle to include those items listed in the Water Comprehensive Plan.

- 8I-3 Assess the funding necessary to meet the capital improvements and conduct a trade-off analysis of borrowing vs. rate-based financing annually.
- 8I-4 Work with entities within the service area but outside the corporate limits, such as the Skagit Beach Homeowners' Association, to improve fire flow in that area.

GOAL J

Ensure that fire flow capacities are met throughout the town.

Policies

- 8J-1 Complete the list of fire flow improvements outlined in the Water Comprehensive Plan.
- 8J-2 Establish a program for periodic testing of fire hydrants.

GOAL K

Investigate the feasibility of an alternate source of potable water.

Policies

- 8K-1 Investigate with Skagit County Public Utility District the costs and legalities involved in installing an intertie from the Fire Station east along Chilberg Road to Hulbert Road.
- 8K-2 Coordinate with other purveyors of water and participate in wheeling of water when necessary.

Sewer

Please see Inventory and Analysis section pages 8-13 to 8-16 or refer to the Sewer Comprehensive Plan and Facility Plan, August 1996, for history and operating data.

GOAL L

Update the wastewater treatment plant with the latest technology and equipment.

Policies

- 8L-1 Implement the list of improvements scheduled in the Wastewater Comprehensive Plan.
- 8L-2 Plan for financing capital improvements to the year 2025.
- 8L-3 Participate in Association of Washington Cities (AWC), Washington Cities Insurance Authority (WCIA), and American Water Works Association (AWWA) programs to stay abreast of new industry standards and new technologies in wastewater treatment, as well as litigation affecting wastewater services.

GOAL M

Eliminate inflow and infiltration (I&I) as much as possible.

Policies

- 8M-1 Evaluate water usage vs wastewater treatment for in-town usages to estimate I&I.
- 8M-2 Analyze current video inspections and conduct new video inspections of sewer mains and major collectors to determine the appropriate I & I program approach.
- 8M-3 Budget sufficient resources for replacement or repair of leaking collection system components.

GOAL N

Implement the provisions of the National Pollution Discharge Elimination System (NPDES) for controlling the effluent volume and strengths from external industrial users.

Stormwater Drainage

Please see Inventory and Analysis section 8-17 or refer to the Stormwater Management Plan, June 1995, for history and operating data.

GOAL O

Implement Phases II and III of the Sturdy Engineering report dated 1993.

Policies

- 8O-1 Update regularly the engineering and financial planning required to achieve Phase II and III improvements within the 2025 planning horizon.
- 8O-2 Seek financial assistance through Skagit County and through the Public Works Trust Fund.
- 8O-3 Incorporate Phase II and Phase III in the annual update of the Capital Facilities Plan.

GOAL P

Seek non-structural solutions to drainage problems.

Policies

- 8P-1 Encourage new development to reduce impervious surfaces to a minimum.
- 8P-2 Encourage all property owners to install on-site retention systems where feasible.
- 8P-3 Do not allow adverse impacts of new development storm water runoff to neighboring properties.

GOAL Q

Eliminate the discharge of untreated stormwater not exempted from the Stormwater Management sections of the UDC into the Swinomish Channel.

Policies

- 8Q-1 Link the stormwater collected from Maple Avenue and the south end of town for treatment to the Stormwater Treatment facility at Sullivan Slough.
- 8Q-2 Require oil separators on discharges that cannot be connected to the Phase I system.
- 8Q-3 Enlarge and improve the biofiltration system installed at the Sullivan Slough site in order to accommodate all of the flows from the Town.
- 8Q-4 Monitor and enforce stormwater treatment standards and system maintenance for independent systems (i.e. Port of Skagit County and LaConner School District).
- 8Q-5 Pursue grants and low-interest funding through Federal, State and county programs for salmon recovery, clean water act, and county sales tax rebates.

Private Utilities

GOAL R

Coordinate with all private utility providers to insure that service capacities will accommodate growth to the year 2025 and that these capacities will be in place at time of occupancy.

Policies

- 8R-1 Involve private utility providers in the updates of the Comprehensive Plan by requesting their comments before adoption by the Town Council.
- 8R-2 Participate in regional planning programs sponsored by the major utility providers and by Skagit County.
- 8R-3 Invite utility providers to participate in pre-construction meetings.
- 8R-4 Keep utility providers up to date on the Town's Capital Facilities Plan and describe the impacts that will be felt by these utilities.

- 8R-5 Ensure, through a checklist, that all utility services are on site and available for use prior to approving the certificate of authorization.

GOALS

Work with private utility providers to deliver economical and environmentally sensitive services to the people and business of LaConner.

Policies

- 8S-1 Grant franchises that reflect the market rate for use of town right-of-ways or public properties.
- 8S-2 Monitor the rate structure of private utilities so that the cost of new systems or developments outside of the Town limits is not levied upon Town customers.

Appendix 8A

Inventory and Analysis

Water

Overview: The LaConner water system is connected to the City of Anacortes' transmission main in a vault located immediately west of the intersection of LaConner-Whitney Road and Young Road (approximately four miles north of town). The City of Anacortes has historically been the sole purveyor of water to the Town, commencing in the 1920's. Under the Skagit County Coordinated Water System Plan, the City of Anacortes is a senior water rights holder for Skagit River water withdrawal. The Town's most recent contract with Anacortes was signed in 1989 and provides for annual updates of water allocation, fixed, variable, debt service and capital charges. The Town has regularly participated in the system review and cost allocation sponsored by the City of Anacortes, normally every three years. The Anacortes water is fluoridated. However, the Town of LaConner's water is chlorinated, not fluoridated.

Service area: The Skagit County Coordinated Water System Plan designated the Town of LaConner as water purveyor for the Town proper, Shelter Bay (bulk customer), and the rural area between the Swinomish Channel and LaConner-Whitney Road, north to the Farmhouse Inn and the Shell convenience store at Highway 20. This includes:

- The Skagit Beach plats, but does not include the Telegraph Slough area. On the east side of LaConner-Whitney Road the service area includes the West one half of Sections 8, 17, and 20 in Township 35 N, Range 3 E, W.M.
- The McGlynn Island area south of town is not in the service area. Of the total 621 customers, 501 are in town and 119 are in the rural area, four of which are agricultural users with seasonal hydrant permits.
- The Shelter Bay Community, Inc. is counted as one customer, however they currently have 868 hook-ups as of July 2005. Shelter Bay's population currently ranges from 1,800 to 2,000. They have an additional 56 lots to develop.

Contractual agreements: The contract with the City of Anacortes is amended with new fixed and variable rates on April 1 of each year, but the combined debt service and capital charge has been fixed at \$5,758 per month since April 1, 1998. The contract may be terminated with one-year notice. The contract with the Shelter Bay Community provides for annual rate setting, meter calibration, and also requires one-year notice to terminate. There is no contract with the Skagit Beach Homeowners' Association.

Capacities: On July 24, 2004, the City of Anacortes increased the allocation for LaConner to 162.0 million gallons per year. The Town's contract with the Shelter Bay Community sets a limit of 20.0 million cubic feet per year, of which the Community uses about 9.0 million cubic feet. The Town storage tank is located on the north side of Pioneer Park and has a capacity of 1.5 million gallons, sufficient to deliver service to all customers for 3.6 days under normal use. The reservoir provides fire-suppression and pressure balancing for the Town only. It was overhauled in 2001. The distribution lines are primarily trancite (asbestos cement), with ductile iron and C-900 being installed as replacements are needed. The high pressure transmission mains consist of one 8 inch and one 14 inch line coming from the Anacortes transmission vault at Young Road. The Skagit County Coordinated Water System Plan assigned the LaConner system ID no. 433500 under the State Department of Health, with unlimited Equivalent Residential Units (ERU's).

Total Water Usage – Gallons

| | 1998 | 1999 | 2000 | 2001 | 2002 | 2003 | 2004* |
|--------------|-------------|-------------|-------------|-------------|-------------|-------------|-------------|
| Usage | 143,696,418 | 138,192,177 | 145,080,958 | 137,039,285 | 193,636,854 | 192,138,012 | 149,568,830 |

* Distribution system leaks were corrected in 2004.

Distribution - Gallons

| | 1998 | 1999 | 2000 | 2001 | 2002 | 2003 | 2004 |
|--------------------|------------|------------|------------|------------|------------|------------|------------|
| In Town | 44,903,996 | 49,840,272 | 49,745,762 | 56,865,962 | 40,058,130 | 46,129,811 | 41,522,093 |
| Shelter Bay | 51,160,208 | 56,824,064 | 57,515,216 | unknown | 64,868,086 | 66,975,920 | 67,130,008 |
| Rural | 22,533,702 | 26,714,835 | 28,677,722 | unknown | 22,619,632 | 33,975,933 | 41,062,627 |

Debt: At 12/31/05 outstanding debt on the water bond fund will be \$118,065 on a loan from Skagit State Bank at 6%. This debt is scheduled to be paid off in July, 2007.

Sewer

Overview: The LaConner wastewater treatment plant is a regional plant. The plant is owned and operated by the Town of LaConner, but the Town is obligated under a contract with the Swinomish Indian Tribal Community that confers certain rights to the Tribe. It may serve a future role in development near the

Town, i.e. areas such as Pleasant Ridge and Landing Road. The Town will continue coordination with the Skagit County Planning Department with regard to these areas.

The plant sits on a 9.5-acre tract east of the Town limits on land leased long-term from the Port of Skagit County. Efforts to include this area in the Town's urban growth boundary have not been successful. Co-location of the treatment plant with the fire station and the Public Works Department, plus the installation of a biofiltration swale for stormwater treatment, limit the amount of space available for future growth of the treatment plant.

History: Prior to 1976 the residents and businesses of LaConner utilized septic systems and, in some cases, discharged raw sewage into the Swinomish Channel. Using a federal grant for the treatment plant, and a bond issue for the collector and interceptor systems, the town built a plant with a capacity of 225,600 gallons per day, with BOD at 574 pounds per day, and TSS at 470 pounds per day. The Indian Health Service contributed \$20,490 for the right to deliver wastewater from the Swinomish Village. In 1984, the Town and the Tribe signed an agreement, which documented the Tribe's allocation at 38,352 gpd and prescribed a "fair share formula" for pricing along with a procedure for arbitrating disputes. In 1993, the Town and the Tribe signed an agreement to expand the plant, and by December 1995, the Tribe had paid \$300,000 to purchase an additional 31,700 gpd, making their total 70,052 gpd. Skagit County Sewer District #1 contributed \$144,500 of the Tribe's share in order to hook-up the Shorewood, Snee-Oosh, Sunnyslope and Reef Point Lane plats. In May 1996 a Memorandum of Understanding between the Town and the Tribe awarded the Tribe an additional 32,300 gpd at no cost, making the Tribe's allocation 102,352 gpd. On December 28, 1997, the Town and the Tribe signed an agreement that superseded the 1993 agreement. This agreement provided for a major expansion of the treatment plant capacity and revised allocations as shown below:

Capacities:

| | Plant* | Town | Tribe |
|-------------------------|---------|---------|---------|
| Capacity gpd MMADF | 520,000 | 345,000 | 175,000 |
| Capacity gpd AADF | 409,800 | 272,000 | 137,800 |
| BOD pounds/day at MMADF | 1,300 | 860 | 440 |
| TSS pounds/day at MMADF | 1,100 | 730 | 370 |

* The MMADF, BOD and TSS limits were approved by the Department of Ecology in its NPDES dated August 28, 2002. It runs for six years from that date.

Costs: Project costs were allocated as follows:

| | Town | Tribe |
|----------------------|----------------|----------------|
| Cash | \$938,008.13 | \$480,500.00 |
| Sewer Dist #1 cash | | 144,500.00 |
| Interest earned | 18,395.36 | 19,071.52 |
| DOE grant | | 692,600.00 |
| DOE no-interest loan | 418,250.20 | |
| Totals | \$1,374,653.69 | \$1,336,671.52 |
| Grand total | \$2,711,325.21 | |

The treatment plant improvement project was accepted as complete by the Town Council on January 20, 2000.

Service area: In 1976, the service area was defined as the corporate limits of the Town of LaConner plus the Swinomish Village. Prior to that time the Shelter Bay developer was granted permission to build his own treatment facility, which has never been part of the regional system. Under the 1997 agreement with the Tribe, the Town is obligated to provide wastewater treatment services for the entire Swinomish Indian Reservation. In January 2005, however, the Town supported the Tribe's application for a grant to build a separate wastewater treatment plant near the northern boundary of the reservation. Any service area expansion to the north or east of Town will be subject to the planning criteria and development regulations adopted by Skagit County. Any allocation or sale of excess capacity in these areas will be subject to a first right of refusal by the Swinomish Tribe, as set forth in the 1997 agreement.

Usage Data (metered flow to wastewater treatment):

| | 2000 | 2001 | 2002 | 2003 | 2004 |
|---------------------|------------|------------|------------|------------|-------------|
| Total flow (gal.) | 87,671,098 | 89,511,873 | 84,208,300 | 98,459,010 | 102,129,000 |
| Average gpd | 240,195 | 245,238 | 230,708 | 269,751 | 279,041 |
| Tribe (gal) | 27,992,000 | 27,157,098 | 24,233,700 | 30,281,900 | 31,194,800 |
| Town (gal) | 59,679,098 | 62,354,775 | 59,974,600 | 68,177,110 | 70,934,200 |
| Outside waste (gal) | 1,869,013 | 1,855,309 | 1,353,825 | 2,498,971 | 3,399,099 |
| BOD load (lbs) | 252,080 | 187,815 | 210,515 | 237,427 | 229,245 |
| O&M cost | \$461,848 | \$374,894 | \$375,467 | \$415,740 | \$401,270 |

Customer Classifications (Billed Usage): (2004 data)

| Classification | Number | Volume (cf) | % of Total |
|-----------------|---------|-------------|------------|
| Residential | 319 | 2,347,119 | 24.1% |
| Commercial | 111 | 1,874,811 | 19.3% |
| Industrial | 12 | 511,370 | 5.3% |
| Schools | 8 | 230,965 | 2.3% |
| Town Facilities | 12 | 284,915 | 2.9% |
| Port | 10 | 301,902 | 3.1% |
| Tribe | 1 (420) | 4,170,427 | 42.8% |
| | | 9,721,509 | |

Inflow and Infiltration² (I&I): Using the two tables above, the amount of unbilled wastewater can be estimated. It can be assumed that the majority of this wastewater is likely from “inflow and infiltration”.

The above Customer Classification table for 2004 shows that total billed volume at the treatment plant was 9,721,509 cu.ft. The Tribe's volume was 4,170,427 cu.ft., therefore the volume from Town was 5,551,082 cu.ft. By multiplying the Town billed water usage by 7.48 (gallons per cubic foot), the amount of wastewater generated from known Town sources is 41,522,093 gallons.

The Usage Data chart shows that in 2004 the total wastewater flow from the Town was 70,934,200 gallons. The metered water usage from the Town minus the waste flow attributed to the Town should indicate an I&I estimate for the Town. The difference is 29,412,107 gallons. This equals 41.5% of Town flow.

Excessive I&I has several negative results; the ratio for cost sharing with the Tribe is affected; energy and treatment resources are used unnecessarily, and O&M costs are higher. This problem should be reviewed and analyzed further by Town administration and sewer plant management to identify the sources of the unbilled wastewater.

Debt: None

Composting: In 1996, after touring a number of municipal wastewater treatment plants, the Town began investing in a composting program as an alternative to commercial sludge disposal and land application. As shown above, the demand for septage processing has increased over the years, and the Town has found this to be an excellent source of revenue, while eliminating the sludge disposal problem. Combined with this program is the sale of compost punch cards for individuals who wish to dispose of green waste and obtain finished compost product. The Town also sells compost product directly to soils retailers and commercial landscapers. This enterprise is separate from the 1997 agreement with the Swinomish Tribe.

² **Inflow** is wastewater from other than sanitary sewer sources, such as roof drains hooked into the sewer lines. **Infiltration** is ground water from cracks in the interceptors, collectors, or sewer mains.

Stormwater Drainage

History: Cedar box drains were used in the past to provide a rudimentary drainage system in certain portions of the Town. These systems have now failed. Community surveys have indicated that the highest priority for the citizens is to solve the drainage problems. In 1991 the Town obtained an FCAAP grant for a study to determine the best way to approach stormwater management. Public hearings were held, and the Town Council decided on a 25-year flood event as the basis for planning. Sturdy Engineers, Inc. was retained to do the study, and they produced a three phase plan that would provide in Phase I drainage for Morris Street and the north end. Phase II would provide drainage in the areas east of the hill and along Maple Avenue. Phase III would provide drainage to the south end and eliminate the pump station that currently pumps stormwater into the Swinomish Channel.

Current Status: Phase I was implemented with the Morris Street improvement project in 2003 and will be completed with lateral extensions north of Center Street in summer 2005. This involved the construction of a large subterranean pump station at Sixth and Morris to collect all of the stormwater on Morris and Center Streets, and convey it approximately 0.7 mile east to settling and infiltration ponds located south of the Public Works compound at Sullivan Slough. Stormwater from the north end of town no longer discharges into the Swinomish Channel. Another component of Phase I of this system consists of two ponds. One pond serves as a settling pond for incoming stormwater, and the second pond is an infiltration/evaporation pond. Phase II entails constructing a 4.8 acre wetland and outfall to Sullivan Slough.

Capacities:

| | |
|-----------------------------------|------------------------|
| Sixth & Morris pump vault | 3,500 gallons per hour |
| Second and Caledonia pump station | 1,320 gallons per hour |

Future Needs:

1. Funding to complete Phases II and III within the planning horizon.
2. Coordination with the Port of Skagit County to better control parking lot and maintenance yard run off.
3. Improved public relations programs to keep the ratepayers abreast of progress and enhance their support of the fees required to finance these improvements in the future.

Debt: The Town retains a Public Works Trust Fund loan at 3%. The balance as of 12/31/05 was \$187,317 with thirteen years remaining on the loan.

Private Utility Providers

Natural Gas: Cascade Natural Gas in 2005 is the natural gas service provider in the Town of LaConner. The company has adequate infrastructure to meet the needs of the Town over the next 20 years, and it does not envision any major expansion of service in the areas around LaConner. In 2003, Cascade Natural Gas extended service across the Swinomish Channel by directional bore drilling beneath the channel following the old Morris Street bridge right-of-way.

Electric Power: Puget Sound Energy in 2005 is the electrical service provider in the Town of LaConner. PSE engineers have upgraded the reliability of the substation at the corner of LaConner-Whitney Road and McLean Rd., as well as improving the stability of the lines along McLean Rd. into Mount Vernon so that power failures in the Town have been greatly reduced. PSE has the capacity to serve the projected needs of LaConner for the next 20 years.

Telecommunications:

- a. Phone and fiberoptic: Verizon is the “land line” service provider for the 466 prefix. It also provides DSL service to those customers who subscribe. The company participated in the underground utility installations involved in the Morris Street project in 2003, and has fiber optic service available for extension throughout the Town. The Town has approximately \$89,621 remaining in a fiber optic grant from Skagit County, which must be committed by summer, 2007. It is anticipated that Verizon will be able to meet the phone and fiber optic needs of the Town for the next 20 years.
- b. Fiberoptic: Black Rock Cable has installed a separate fiber optic line along Maple Avenue, leading to and over the Rainbow Bridge. No connections are envisioned for this system, but it will provide broadband and cable TV connectivity for entrepreneurs in the future.
- c. Cable TV: WAVE Broadband Telecommunications holds a franchise with the Town of LaConner and delivers a wide range of telecommunications services, including wireless support. The company sees no problems in meeting the needs of the people and businesses of LaConner for telecommunications services over the next 20 years.

Trash Disposal: Waste Management, Inc. provides weekly trash pick-up throughout the Town. This firm has indicated no problems, which would detract from their service over the next 20 years. However, because this is a rural service, and because Skagit County has permitted a private firm to recycle solid waste, this service in LaConner may change in the near future.