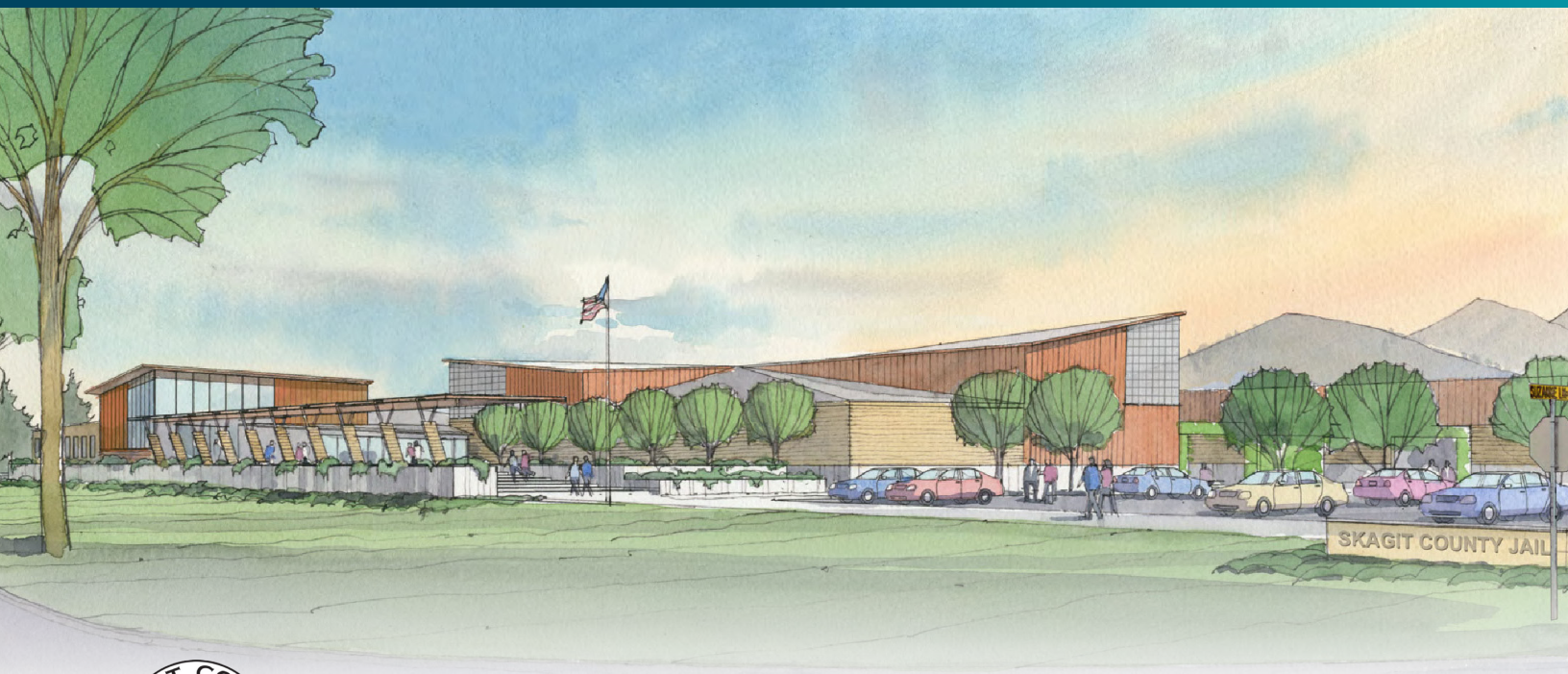
DRAFT ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT STATEMENT

SKAGIT COUNTY JAIL

December 2013



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Mount Vernon, WA 98273

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Planning & Development Services
1800 Continental Place
Mount Vernon, WA 98273

Skagit County Jail
Notice of Availability of Draft Environmental Impact Statement and Notice of Public Hearing

Draft EIS Availability: In accordance with the State Environmental Policy Act (SEPA), a Draft Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) for the Skagit County Jail has been issued and is available for your review and comment. The Draft EIS analyzes probable adverse environmental impacts of the proposed project alternatives and identifies possible mitigating measures for those impacts.

Project Proponent: Skagit County

Proposal Description: A new Skagit County Jail is being proposed to replace the existing, overcrowded Skagit County Jail. The proposed facility is considered an Essential Public Facility and would provide infrastructure to serve the residents, cities/towns, and tribes of Skagit County over the next 15 to 20 years. The project is also intended to accommodate future jail infrastructure needs over a 40- to 50-year planning horizon. Alternatives being considered include no action and construction of a new, expanded jail facility on two alternative sites in the City of Mount Vernon—the Alf Christianson Seed Site and the Truck City/Suzanne Lane Site. A new, expanded jail would accommodate 400 inmate beds at immediate build-out and up to 800 inmate beds at full build-out. Additional services include administrative facilities, a medical diagnosis and treatment area, inmate rehabilitation programs, and a courtroom.

Proposal Locations: The 7.8-acre Alf Christianson Seed Site is located on 21 parcels within the corporate limits of Mount Vernon, Washington. This site is bound by East Kincaid Street to the north, Interstate-5 to the east, East Section Street to the south, and the Burlington Northern Santa Fe Railroad to the west (Township 34N Range 4E Section 20).

The 10.4-acre Truck City/Suzanne Lane Site is located on 5 parcels within the corporate limits of Mount Vernon, Washington. This site is bound by Old Highway 99 South Road to the west, Interstate-5 to the east, McFarland Lane to the north of the site, and Suzanne Lane to the south of the site (Township 34N Range 4E Section 32).

Lead Agency: The City of Mount Vernon and Skagit County are co-lead agencies. The City of Mount Vernon is the nominal lead agency and is responsible for complying with the duties of the lead agency under SEPA (WAC 197-11-944).

Public Comment: A 30-day public comment period has been established for this Draft EIS extending from December 18, 2013, through January 16, 2014. Comments may be submitted verbally at the public hearing or in writing to the Responsible Official noted below.

PUBLIC HEARING: A public hearing will be held before the Responsible Official on Thursday, January 9, 2014, at the Commissioners Hearing Room, Skagit County Administrative Building, 1800 Continental Place, Mount Vernon, Washington, 98273. An open house will begin at 3:00 pm followed by a brief presentation and open hearing from 4:00 pm to 6:00 pm. Citizens who plan to attend the public hearing and have special needs or disabilities are asked to call the office of the Board of County Commissioners at (360) 336-9300 at least 96 hours before the hearing to discuss and arrange any special accommodations.

Responsible Official and Contact Person:

Jana Hanson
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(360) 336-6214
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Locations to View Draft EIS:

City of Mount Vernon
Community & Economic Development Department
910 Cleveland Avenue
Mount Vernon, WA 98273
http://www.mountvernonwa.gov/

Skagit County
Planning & Development Services Department
1800 Continental Place
Mount Vernon, WA 98273
http://www.skagitcounty.net

Mount Vernon Public Library
315 Snoqualmie Street
Mount Vernon, WA 98273

A copy of the document may be purchased from the City or County for $0.15 per page plus actual postage or a compact disc (CD) may be obtained from the County at no charge.

Date Issued: December 18, 2013

Fact Sheet

Project Title	Skagit County Jail
Description of Proposed Action	A new Skagit County Jail is being proposed to replace the existing, overcrowded Skagit County Jail. The proposed facility is considered an Essential Public Facility (EPF) and would provide infrastructure to serve the residents, cities/towns, and tribes of Skagit County over the next 15 to 20 years. The project is also intended to accommodate future jail infrastructure needs over a 40- to 50-year planning horizon. Alternatives being considered include no action and construction of a new, expanded jail facility on two alternative sites: the Alf Christianson Seed Site and the Truck City/Suzanne Lane Site. A new, expanded jail would accommodate 400 inmate beds at immediate build-out and up to 800 inmate beds at full build-out. Additional services include administrative facilities, a medical diagnosis and treatment area, a program area for alcohol and drug treatment and Graduate Equivalent Degree opportunities, a courtroom, and parking for staff and visitors.
Description of Alternatives	Both site alternatives are within the corporate limits of Mount Vernon, Washington. The 7.8-acre Alf Christianson Seed Site (T34N R4E Section 20) is located south of Kincaid Street between South 4th Street and Interstate-5. The 10.4-acre Truck City/Suzanne Lane Site (T34N R4E Section 32) is located east of Old Highway 99 South Road, between Suzanne Lane and McFarland Lane.
Proponent	Skagit County
Date of Implementation	Following the EPF process, design is expected to begin in fall of 2014, with construction commencing in spring of 2016.
SEPA Lead Agencies	City of Mount Vernon and Skagit County
SEPA Responsible Officials	Jana Hanson Director, Community and Economic Development City of Mount Vernon P.O. Box 809 Mount Vernon, WA 98273 janah@mountvernonwa.gov Gary Christensen, AICP Planning & Development Services Manager Skagit County 1800 Continental Place Mount Vernon, WA 98273 garyc@co.skagit.wa.us
Contact Person	Jana Hanson City of Mount Vernon

Project Title	**Skagit County Jail**
Potential Permits and Approvals	Both site alternatives may require: Washington State Department of Ecology, Construction Stormwater General Permit City of Mount Vernon, Comprehensive Plan and Zoning Designation Amendment City of Mount Vernon, EPF Review City of Mount Vernon, Grading Permit City of Mount Vernon, Building Permit City of Mount Vernon, Floodplain Development Permit City of Mount Vernon, Utility and Right-of-Way Permit Additional permits and/or approvals may be identified as project design is finalized.
Authors and Principal Contributors to the EIS	The following are agency individuals who were either reviewers or principal contributors to the preparation of the EIS: Jana Hanson, Community & Economic Development Director, City of Mount Vernon Gary Christensen, AICP, Planning & Development Services Manager, Skagit County The following are contract individuals who were either reviewers or principal contributors to the preparation of the EIS: David Evans and Associates, Inc. Maggie Buckley, LEED AP—EIS Manager Gigi Cooper, AICP—EIS, land use, cultural resources Karen Comings, PE—Floodplains, hazardous materials, geology/soils Jonathan Gage, RLA—Aesthetics Gray Rand, PWS—QA/QC Anthony Wilen, PE, LEED AP—Transportation Pat Mattson—Editing and Document Production Sara Gilbert—GIS Analyst Marc L Estvold Inc. Marc L Estvold, Architect AIA, LEED AP
Date of Issue of Draft EIS	December 18, 2013
Date Comments are Due on Draft EIS	January 16, 2014
Date and Location of Hearing of Draft EIS	January 9, 2014 Skagit County Administrative Building Commissioners Hearing Room 1800 Continental Place Mount Vernon, WA 98273 3:00 pm – 6:00 pm
Date of Final EIS	Anticipated February 2014

Project Title	**Skagit County Jail**
Subsequent Environmental Review	Once an alternative is selected, additional studies and plans may be required. These may include, but are not limited to, studies and plans related to cultural resources, hazardous materials, erosion control, stormwater control, pollution prevention, and traffic control.
Location of Background Information	Background material and supporting documents used in preparation of this document are available for review at: City of Mount Vernon Community and Economic Development Department P.O. Box 809 Mount Vernon, WA 98273
Locations to Obtain Copies or View Draft EIS	A downloadable version of the Draft EIS is available to the public online for free at http://www.mountvernonwa.gov and http://www.skagitcounty.net. Hard copies of the Draft EIS are available from the City of Mount Vernon or Skagit County for a fee of $0.15 per page plus actual postage. Hard copies are also available for viewing at the Mount Vernon Municipal Library, Mount Vernon City Hall, and Skagit County Planning and Development Services Department. A compact disc (CD) with the Draft EIS and Appendices can be obtained from Skagit County at no charge.

Acronyms and Abbreviations

ART	Architects Rasmussen Triebelhorn
BMPs	best management practices
BNSF	Burlington Northern Santa Fe
C-1	Central Business
C-2	General Commercial
C-L	Commercial/Limited Industrial
CESCL	Certified Erosion and Sediment Control Lead
cfs	cubic feet per second
CI	Commercial/Industrial
City	City of Mount Vernon
CLOMR	Conditional Letter of Map Revision
cm	centimeter(s)
CO_2	carbon dioxide
County	Skagit County
DEA	David Evans and Associates, Inc.
DLR	DLR Group
EIS	Environmental Impact Statement
EPF	Essential Public Facility
ESA	Environmental Site Assessment
FEMA	Federal Emergency Management Agency
FTE	full-time equivalent
GMA	Growth Management Act
I-5	Interstate-5
LOS	Level of Service
M-1	Light Manufacturing and Commercial
MTC	Material Testing & Consulting, Inc.
MVMC	Mount Vernon Municipal Code
NEPA	National Environmental Policy Act
NPDES	National Pollution Discharge Elimination System
OFM	Office of Financial Management
P	Public
R-1, 7/0	Single-Family Residential
R-3	Multi-Family Residential
RCW	Revised Code of Washington
SEPA	State Environmental Policy Act
SMP	Shoreline Master Program
SPCC	Spill Prevention Control and Countermeasures
TOD	transit-oriented development
TRB	Transportation Research Board
UGA	Urban Growth Area
USACE	United States Army Corps of Engineers
USGS	United States Geological Survey
UST	underground storage tank
VMT	Vehicle Miles of Travel
WAC	Washington Administrative Code
WSDOT	Washington State Department of Transportation

Glossary

100-year floodplain. The area adjacent to a watercourse that has a 1% chance of flooding in a given year.

alluvium. Loose, unconsolidated soil or sediment that has been eroded and redeposited by water.

base flood elevation. The computed elevation to which floodwater is expected to rise during a 100-year flood.

Best Management Practices (BMPs). Construction practices that help reduce the impacts of construction on the environment.

comprehensive plan. A local planning document that contains goals and policies that direct the physical development of the local agency.

critical facility. Facilities including but not limited to schools, nursing homes, hospitals, police, fire, and emergency response installations which produce, use, or store hazardous materials or hazardous waste.

cumulative impacts. Project impacts, in combination with impacts from past, present, and reasonably foreseeable future actions.

essential public facility. A public facility that is difficult to site, such as airports, state educational facilities, state and local correctional facilities, etc.

impervious surface. A surface that water cannot penetrate.

lead agency. The agency or agencies responsible for all procedural aspects of compliance with the State Environmental Policy Act.

levee. An elongated ridge or wall either naturally occurring or artificially constructed that restricts the flow of water. Generally used to prevent flooding of adjoining land.

level of service. A letter designation that describes a range of operating conditions on a roadway.

liquefaction. The loss of shear strength by loose, saturated soil when subjected to vibration or shaking.

mitigation measures. Actions to reduce adverse impacts on the environment.

petroleum-hydrocarbon. A hydrocarbon is an organic compound consisting entirely of hydrogen and carbon. A wide variety of hydrocarbons are found in crude oil and other petroleum products and are known collectively as petroleum-hydrocarbons.

pre-loading. Technique that applies fill material to a site prior to construction of a permanent structure, until most settlement has occurred.

site alternatives. The Alf Christianson Seed Site Alternative and Truck City/Suzanne Lane Site Alternative.

transportation concurrency. A requirement of the Growth Management Act to establish financial commitments to complete transportation improvements to serve new developments that result in traffic generation that exceed level of service standards.

Table of Contents

List of Figures

List of Tables

Appendices

Summary

This Draft Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) provides information about the environmental impacts that could be associated with construction and operation of a new Skagit County (County) Jail facility in Mount Vernon, Washington. An EIS describes the existing environment that could be affected by a proposed action, analyzes probable adverse environmental impacts, and discusses reasonable mitigation measures for adverse impacts. The Draft EIS also evaluates the No Action Alternative.

Proposed Action

The proposed action includes construction and operation of a new, expanded jail facility in the City of Mount Vernon (City). The new jail would accommodate up to 800 inmate beds, administrative facilities, a medical diagnosis and treatment area, a program area for alcohol and drug treatment and Graduate Equivalent Degree opportunities, a courtroom, and parking for staff and visitors.

The new jail site would accommodate substantial future expansion, if needed. The initial facility would be approximately 100,000 square feet and accommodate 400 beds. Depending on incarceration rates and policy changes, the facility may be expanded in the future to accommodate up to an additional 400 beds, for a full build-out of 165,000 square feet. The single-story design would substantially increase operational efficiencies and would be designed to meet current building codes and correctional facility standards. The new facility would provide an opportunity to institute new technologies, including video surveillance, arraignments, and visitation. An outdoor exercise area would be enclosed and no inmates would be visible from the exterior of the site at any time. Fencing visible on the site may include rolling gates at the Sally Port, perimeter fencing, and fencing around staff parking. All other enclosures would be solid walls.

The proposed jail facility is considered an Essential Public Facility (EPF). EPFs include facilities that are typically difficult to site, such as airports, state education facilities, correctional facilities, etc. The County will be required to complete an EPF process with the City, which involves the community and is intended to assist in the identification and minimization of adverse impacts. Mount Vernon Municipal Code Chapter 17.200 outlines the EPF process and provides criteria for siting EPFs that will be reviewed by the City Hearing Examiner and City Council. The EPF process is expected to occur in summer 2014.

Architectural design is anticipated to begin in September 2014, following the EPF process, and take approximately one year. Construction is expected to begin in spring 2016 and be completed in fall 2017.

Purpose and Need

The purpose of the proposed project is to provide sufficient jail infrastructure to serve the residents, cities/towns, and tribes of the County over the next 15 to 20 years. The project is also intended to accommodate future jail infrastructure needs over a 40- to 50-year planning horizon. The new jail is needed primarily due to overcrowding at the existing jail. Overcrowding results in a variety of other issues such as safety concerns for staff and inmates, increased operational costs, limitations on programming, and inmates being turned away.

Increased Demand for Jail Beds

Population growth in the County has led to an increase in inmate population. The County's population has increased rapidly since 1980. Between 1980 and 1990, it increased 24 percent. In the next two

decades, it increased 29 and 14 percent, respectively (Office of Financial Management [OFM] 2012b). Projections show that the County population could grow by as much as 54 percent over the next 25 years (OFM 2012a). Between 1999 and 2005, the County Sheriff's office calls for service increased 53 percent. Between 2002 and 2012, the criminal cases filed in the County Superior Court increased 73 percent (Washington Courts 2013).

Focus on High-Risk Offenders

The County Sheriff, Superior Court, and Department of Corrections staffing and resources have not been increased to meet the increased demand for jail beds. As a result, the Department of Corrections has focused its supervision on higher risk offenders, most commonly parolees. In response, the Superior Court has moved away from a combination of jail time and community supervision for property offenders to jail time only. As a result, the existing jail is routinely housing mostly felons that compromise safety to inmates and staff. High-risk offenders are mixed in with the general population. There is no way to safely segregate inmates, or to pull someone out into a more isolated or secure setting, which creates a dangerous environment for inmates and staff (Skagit County Government 2013).

Capacity and Programming Constraints

The existing jail was planned in the early 1980s with a $6.4 million grant from the Washington State Jail Standards Commission. To comply with funding requirements, the jail was subject to a number of constraints. For example, the facility size, including core spaces such as kitchen and laundry, was restricted to the capacity that was constructed. This requirement has resulted in a number of operational problems such as overall size constraints, awkward circulation patterns, and a choke point in booking (Skagit County Government 2013).

This space was converted from an indoor recreational yard to a dorm setting for female inmates.

The existing jail opened in 1984 with a capacity of 83 inmates. In the first years, the jail booked an average of approximately 2,500 inmates per year. The jail was expanded in 1991 to 160 beds and again in 2002 to 180 beds. Between the years of 1984 and 2003, the jail experienced over a 240 percent increase in the average daily population for the facility, growing to more than 6,000 inmates per year (Skagit County Jail, no date-b). In lieu of expanding the facility, the number of beds has been increased by converting most individual cells to two- and three-person cells. Recreation areas have also been converted to dorm-like housing spaces (Skagit County Government 2013). The current average daily population (September 15 through 21, 2013) is 263 per day, with a high of 272 (Skagit County Jail, no date-a). Projections indicate that by 2040, the average daily population could be over 400 inmates per day (Skagit County Government 2013). This overcrowding translates to serious staffing challenges and safety issues both inside and outside the jail.

The laundry, medical, food service, and recreation areas within the jail are still in the same space designed to serve 83 inmates. There is only one multi-purpose space for programming, which is also used as the library and chapel. Jail staff share break room space with work stations. The booking area, designed to process a handful of inmates each day, often sees 15 to 20 bookings daily. With already

incarcerated inmates moving in and out of the space on the way to court appearance and attorney sessions, the booking area becomes a significant choke point (Skagit County Government 2013).

The booking area is a choke point in the jail, often overcrowded due to multiple requirements for this space.

Costly Outsourcing

Due to space constraints, the County has been forced to contract the services of Snohomish County to house an average of 25 inmates. This alternative is costly in terms of "outsourcing" fees and transportation costs associated with moving individuals back and forth between the distant jail and the local court system (Skagit County Government 2013). Other concerns associated with outsourcing include the inability to guarantee availability of beds and the cost of beds in the future.

Alternatives

Alternatives being considered in this Draft EIS include no action and construction of a new, expanded jail facility on two alternative sites within the City. Both alternative sites being considered are zoned for commercial use. In order for one of the sites to be used for a jail, the comprehensive plan and zoning designation must be changed to "Public."

Alf Christianson Seed Site Alternative

The 7.8-acre site is bound by East Kincaid Street to the north, Interstate-5 (I-5) to the east, East Section Street to the south, and the Burlington Northern Santa Fe Railroad tracks to the west. The site is comprised of 21 parcels under single private ownership. The west half is developed with vacant industrial warehouse buildings. In the past, it was used for seed processing. The east half is comprised of vacant or previously cleared residential lots.

Truck City/Suzanne Lane Site Alternative

The 10.4-acre site is located in south Mount Vernon. This site is bound by Old Highway 99 South Road to the west, I-5 to the east, McFarland Lane to the north, and Suzanne Lane to the south. The site is comprised of five parcels which currently have three private property owners. The northern half of the site is comprised of a truck fueling station with a food mart, while the southern half of the site is undeveloped.

No Action Alternative

Under the No Action Alternative, the County would not construct a new jail facility on the Alf Christianson Seed Site or the Truck City/Suzanne Lane Site. The current facilities in downtown Mount Vernon would continue to be used.

Potential Environmental Impacts and Mitigation Measures

Table S-1 summarizes the environmental impacts that could occur as a result of construction and operation of the new jail facility, and the measures that would be employed to mitigate these impacts.

Major Conclusions and Significant Areas of Concern

Construction and operation of either site alternative (Alf Christianson Seed Site Alternative or Truck City/Suzanne Lane Site Alternative) would result in environmental impacts. Both site alternatives are located within the 100-year floodplain and have the potential to encounter hazardous materials and archaeological material prior to or during construction (**Table S-1**). A new jail facility would change land use and visual character in the surrounding area, with resulting economic impacts. Mitigation for these impacts is proposed. If the new jail is constructed on either site, it may result in a lost opportunity to construct a commercial development that cannot be constructed elsewhere in the City due to the shortage of commercial and industrial lands citywide and downtown. The potential loss of business activity at the Alf Christianson Seed Site is greater than the Truck City Site due to the higher potential density and economic value of a development on that site. In order to address compatibility and consistency with the Mount Vernon Comprehensive Plan, mitigation measures must also be considered for the Alf Christianson Seed Site Alternative.

If the No Action Alternative is selected, the existing jail in downtown Mount Vernon would continue to be used. The current overcrowding issues would continue, including safety concerns for staff and inmates, increased operational costs, limitations on programming, and inmates being turned away.

Remaining Uncertainties and Issues to be Resolved

Additional investigations are recommended at both site alternatives to further characterize the potential to encounter hazardous materials and archaeological material prior to or during construction. Programming for the new jail facility has not yet been completed, which may lead to changes in site layout, design, staffing, and parking. These details will be resolved during final design.

Decisions to be Made

Upon completion of the SEPA process, the City will initiate the land use approval process to change the comprehensive plan and zoning designation of the site alternatives. The City will subsequently commence the EPF review process. The City Council will make the final decision for the EPF Conditional Use Permit.

Depending on incarceration rates and policy changes, the County will decide whether to expand the jail facility in the future to accommodate up to an additional 400 beds.

Table S-1: Potential Environmental Impacts and Mitigation Measures

	Alf Christianson Seed Site Alternative		Truck City Site Alternative	
Environmental Element	Potential Impact	Mitigation Measures	Potential Impact	Mitigation Measures
Geology and Soils	• Compressible soils create settlement hazard. • Earthwork volumes: 47,000 to 52,000 cubic yards of fill for initial build-out (400-bed facility) and an additional 7,500 to 8,200 cubic yards of fill for full build-out (800-bed facility). • Temporary erosion during construction.	• Deep foundations (40 to 50 feet) and pre-loading the site are recommended to avoid settlement issues. • Further site exploration is recommended to better characterize liquefaction susceptibility. • Erosion control BMPs required by Ecology to reduce erosion during construction.	• Limited settlement hazard. • Earthwork volumes: 75,000 to 83,000 cubic yards of fill for initial build-out (400-bed facility) and an additional 8,600 to 9,400 cubic yards of fill for full build-out (800-bed facility). • Temporary erosion during construction.	• Spread footings and pre-loading the site are recommended. • Further site exploration is recommended to better characterize liquefaction susceptibility. • Erosion control BMPs required by Ecology to reduce erosion during construction.
Floodplains	• Unless the new downtown levee is built prior to construction, site is within the 100-year floodplain and must be constructed with the lowest floor at least 4 feet above existing ground level to avoid flooding. • During operation, jail could be surrounded by one foot of water during a 100-year flood.	• The facility must be constructed per MVMC Chapter 15.36. • Recommended that construction contractor identify a location where heavy equipment can be evacuated to during flood events.	• Site is within the 100-year floodplain and must be constructed with the lowest floor at least 5 feet above existing ground level to avoid flooding. • During operation, site is at risk of being surrounded by floodwater due to extreme floods and cut off from vehicle access.	• The facility must be constructed per MVMC Chapter 15.36. • Recommended that construction contractor identify a location where heavy equipment can be evacuated to during flood events.
Hazardous Materials	• Construction activities may encounter contaminated soil or unknown USTs. • Potential asbestos in on-site buildings. • Heavy equipment use during construction creates risk for spills/leakage of petroleum products. • Facility may use hazardous materials during operation (i.e., fuel, oil and other petroleum based products, natural gas, paint, industrial cleaners, medical waste, etc).	• Further investigation recommended to verify the presence or absence of hydrocarbons, pesticides, or asbestos. Contamination must be removed from the site prior to construction. • Recommended that construction contractor prepare an emergency response plan and spill control and prevention plan to cover routine operation and maintenance activities during construction.	• Construction activities may encounter contaminated soil or unknown USTs. • Potential asbestos in on-site buildings. • Heavy equipment use during construction creates risk for spills/leakage of petroleum products. • Facility may use hazardous materials during operation (i.e., fuel, oil and other petroleum based products, natural gas, paint, industrial cleaners, medical waste, etc).	• Further investigation recommended to verify the presence or absence of hydrocarbons, pesticides, or asbestos. Contamination must be removed from the site prior to construction. • Recommended that construction contractor prepare an emergency response plan and spill control and prevention plan to cover routine operation and maintenance activities during construction.

	Alf Christianson Seed Site Alternative		Truck City Site Alternative	
Environmental Element	Potential Impact	Mitigation Measures	Potential Impact	Mitigation Measures
Aesthetics	• The completed facility will slightly improve visual quality (3.0 rating increases to 3.2) by replacing the existing abandoned industrial building with a more aesthetically designed structure. • Site lighting and vehicle headlights will create new source of light and glare. • Inconsistent with the visual character of the City's planned downtown gateway along Kincaid Street.	• Vegetation and landscaping will be used to screen the project from surrounding land use per MVMC Chapter 17.93.040. • Recommended measures to minimize light and glare include limiting fixture heights, using lighting hoods, and directing outdoor lighting away from adjoining properties. • Recommend incorporation of an attractive outdoor space or public art on the site or adjacent to the site that would be accessible to the public and visible as part of the gateway entrance to downtown. • Recommend compliance with the design guidelines identified in Section 10.7 of the Downtown and Waterfront Master Plan.	• The completed facility will slightly reduce visual quality (4.0 rating decreases to 3.9) by increasing development of the site. • Site lighting and vehicle headlights will create new source of light and glare.	• Vegetation and landscaping will be used to screen the project from surrounding land use per MVMC Chapter 17.93.040. • Recommended measures to minimize light and glare include limiting fixture heights, using lighting hoods, and directing outdoor lighting away from adjoining properties.
Historic and Cultural Preservation	• Construction may impact unknown subsurface cultural resources.	• Further archaeological review is recommended because initial subsurface trenching was limited in scope. • If archaeological materials are encountered during construction, an archaeologist should be notified and work must be halted until the material can be inspected and assessed.	• Construction may impact unknown subsurface cultural resources.	• Further archaeological review is recommended because initial subsurface trenching was limited in scope. • If archaeological materials are encountered during construction, an archaeologist should be notified and work must be halted until the material can be inspected and assessed.

	Alf Christianson Seed Site Alternative		Truck City Site Alternative	
Environmental Element	Potential Impact	Mitigation Measures	Potential Impact	Mitigation Measures
Transportation	• Construction may cause temporary traffic delays and periodically reduce access to adjacent buildings. • The new jail will increase the number of local trips by 34 vehicles per PM peak hour. This is a relatively minor addition and not expected to impact existing traffic levels.	• A construction staging plan will be developed during final project design to help reduce potential traffic congestion problems that may arise due to construction. • If access is placed on the north, a right-in right-out driveway on SR 536 is recommended with provisions for U-turns at the intersection of Kincaid Street and S Third Street to the west, and Broad Street and Blodgett Road to the east. • If access is placed on the south, improvements to pedestrian safety on S 6th Street from Union Street to Blackburn Road are recommended. • If combined access is placed to the north and south, a right-in right-out driveway on SR 536 and pedestrian improvements on S 6th Street from Union Street to Blackburn Road are recommended. U-turn provisions are not required.	• Construction may cause temporary traffic delays and periodically reduce access to adjacent buildings. The impact at this site is expected to be less than at the Alf Christianson Seed Site because adjacent businesses are fewer and further away. • The new jail will increase the number of local trips by 33 vehicles per PM peak hour. This is a relatively minor addition and not expected to impact existing traffic levels.	• Provide pedestrian facilities on the site frontage and Suzanne Lane. • Per MVMC 14.10.080, provide three-quarter street LOS improvements on the project frontage street, Suzanne Lane.
Economics	• Construction will generate business activity in the local economy. • Operation of the jail will employ 76-86 FTE at initial build-out and 136-148 FTE at full build-out. • Annual property tax revenue loss of $51,360. • Foregone opportunity to construct a mixed use development may result in the loss of up to $86 million in gross business receipts, 220 jobs, $9 million in personal income, and over $500,000 in annual tax revenue.	• Final design should reflect the character of the downtown area and its location within the gateway corridor. • Property acquisition will be conducted in accordance with the Washington State Relocation Assistance–Real Property Acquisition Policy (RCW Chapter 8.26.190(2)).	• Construction will generate business activity in the local economy. • Operation of the jail will employ 76-86 FTE at initial build-out and 136-148 FTE at full build-out. • Annual property tax revenue loss of $46,806. • Loss of one sales tax-generating business. • Forgone opportunity to construct a business park may result in the loss of up to $17 million in gross business receipts, 112 jobs, $3 million in personal income, and $150,000 in annual tax revenue.	• Property acquisition will be conducted in accordance with the Washington State Relocation Assistance–Real Property Acquisition Policy (RCW Chapter 8.26.190(2)).

	Alf Christianson Seed Site Alternative		Truck City Site Alternative	
Environmental Element	Potential Impact	Mitigation Measures	Potential Impact	Mitigation Measures
Land Use	• Requires vacation of South 6th Street and property line adjustment. • Facility may be a barrier to pedestrian movement between uses north and south of the site. • Site does not accommodate mixed use development with commercial and retail uses as identified in the Downtown and Waterfront Master Plan. • Site layout limits opportunity to provide enhancements on Kincaid Street as the gateway to downtown as identified in the Downtown and Waterfront Master Plan.	• Property acquisition will be conducted in accordance with the Washington State Relocation Assistance–Real Property Acquisition Policy (RCW Chapter 8.26.190(2)). The following measures are recommended to improve consistency with the Downtown and Waterfront Master Plan: • To enhance the walkability of downtown, incorporate a pedestrian pathway or sidewalk on the site, with the specific goal of improving connectivity between residential areas south of the site and the downtown area. • Incorporate an attractive outdoor space and/or public art on the site or adjacent to the site that would be accessible to the public and visible as part of the gateway entrance to downtown. Incorporate mature plant material and landscaping to soften and enhance the area along Kincaid Street and on the jail site. • Ensure that the final design of the facility builds upon the intimate scale, street grid, and historic buildings to maintain and strengthen a distinctive downtown character. • Comply with the design guidelines identified in Section 10.7 of the Downtown and Waterfront Master Plan.	• Requires property line adjustment and access easement across Parcel P119267. • Upon completion of comprehensive plan and zoning amendment, the new jail would be consistent with the City's Comprehensive Plan.	• Property acquisition will be conducted in accordance with the Washington State Relocation Assistance–Real Property Acquisition Policy (RCW Chapter 8.26.190(2)).

1. Introduction

A new Skagit County (County) Jail is proposed to replace the existing, overcrowded Skagit County Jail. A site for the new jail has not been selected. Alternatives being considered include no action and construction of a new, expanded jail facility on two potential sites within the incorporated limits of the City of Mount Vernon (City), as illustrated in **Figure 1**. This Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) is being prepared to evaluate the potential environmental impacts of constructing the new jail.

Chapter 1 of the Draft EIS identifies the purpose and need for the proposed project, the purpose of the EIS, and provides a summary of the EIS scoping process. Chapter 2 summarizes the alternative evaluation process, the range of alternatives considered, and describes the alternatives evaluated in this Draft EIS. Chapter 3 describes the affected environment at each site, environmental impacts associated with each alternative, and mitigation measures that may avoid or minimize those impacts. A summary comparison of anticipated impacts and potential mitigation measures for each alternative is provided at the end of Chapter 2.

1.1. Purpose and Need

1.1.1. Project Purpose

The purpose of the proposed project is to provide sufficient jail infrastructure to serve the residents, cities/towns, and tribes of the County over the next 15 to 20 years. The project is also intended to accommodate future jail infrastructure needs over a 40- to 50-year planning horizon.

1.1.2. Project Need

The new jail is needed primarily due to overcrowding at the existing jail. Overcrowding results in a variety of other issues such as safety concerns for staff and inmates, increased operational costs, limitations on programming, and inmates being turned away.

Increased Demand for Jail Beds

Population growth in the County has led to an increase in inmate population. The County's population has increased rapidly since 1980. Between 1980 and 1990, it increased 24 percent. In the next two decades, it increased 29 and 14 percent, respectively (Office of Financial Management [OFM] 2012b). In just the three-year period between 2010 and 2013, the County's population increased 1.45 percent. Projections show the County population growing over the next 25 years by 54 percent as a high forecast, 34 percent as a medium forecast, and 22 percent as a low forecast (OFM 2012a).

Between 1999 and 2005, the County Sheriff's office calls for service increased 53 percent. Between 2002 and 2012, the criminal cases filed in the County Superior Court increased 73 percent (Washington Courts 2013). The average length of stay in the jail has increased substantially as well. Approximately 9 percent of the jail population is long-term (more than 30 days). However, this population accounts for 75 percent of jail space use (Voorhis Associates, Inc. 2005).

Data Sources: Skagit County, City of Mount Vernon, DEA
Background: ESRI Service Layer World Terrain Base

Skagit County Jail Draft EIS

Skagit County and City of Mount Vernon

Figure 1. Vicinity Map

December 2013

Project No.: COMV0000-0011

Focus on High-Risk Offenders

The County Sheriff, Superior Court, and Department of Corrections staffing and resources have not been increased to meet the increased demand for jail beds. As a result, the Department of Corrections has focused its supervision on higher risk offenders, most commonly parolees. In response, the Superior Court has moved away from a combination of jail time and community supervision for property offenders to jail time only. As a result, the existing jail is routinely housing mostly felons that compromise safety to inmates and staff. Nine out of ten inmates in the most crowded section of the County Jail fall into the felon category. Only one in four inmates is serving a short-term (less than 30-day) sentence. High-risk offenders are mixed in with the general population. There is no way to safely segregate inmates, or to pull someone out into a more isolated or secure setting, which creates a dangerous environment for inmates and staff (Skagit County Government 2013).

As a result of increased demand for jail beds and the focus on high-risk offenders, the jail is forced to turn away bookings. Offenders that are guilty of property crimes are booked and released because priority for incarceration goes to violent criminals and others whose jail time is mandated by law.

Capacity and Programming Constraints

The existing jail was planned in the early 1980s with a $6.4 million grant from the Washington State Jail Standards Commission. To comply with funding requirements, the jail was subject to a number of constraints. For example, the facility size, including core spaces such as kitchen and laundry, was restricted to the capacity that was constructed. This requirement has resulted in a number of operational problems such as overall size constraints, awkward circulation patterns, and a choke point in booking (Skagit County Government 2013).

This space was converted from an indoor recreational yard to a dorm setting for female inmates.

The existing jail opened in 1984 with a capacity of 83 inmates. In the first years, the jail booked an average of approximately 2,500 inmates per year. The jail was expanded in 1991 to 160 beds and again in 2002 to 180 beds. Between the years of 1984 and 2003, the jail experienced over a 240 percent increase in the average daily population for the facility, growing to more than 6,000 inmates per year (Skagit County Jail, no date-b). In lieu of expanding the facility, the number of beds has been increased by converting most individual cells to two- and three-person cells. Recreation areas have also been converted to dorm-like housing spaces (Skagit County Government 2013). The current average daily population (September 15 through 21, 2013) is 263 per day, with a high of 272 (Skagit County Jail, no date-a). Projections indicate that by 2040, the average daily population could be over 400 inmates per day (Skagit County Government 2013). This overcrowding translates to serious staffing challenges and safety issues both inside and outside the jail.

The laundry, medical, food service, and recreation areas within the jail are still in the same space designed to serve 83 inmates. There is only one multi-purpose space for programming, which is also used as the library and chapel. Jail staff share break room space with work stations. The booking area, designed to process a handful of inmates each day, often sees 15 to 20 bookings daily. With already

incarcerated inmates moving in and out of the space on the way to court appearance and attorney sessions, the booking area becomes a significant choke point (Skagit County Government 2013).

Drug and alcohol abuse, the greatest root cause of crime in the County, have increased dramatically in recent years. Criminals with drug and alcohol abuse issues are the most receptive to treatment programs, but the space crisis at the existing jail prevents the opportunity for treatment programs (Skagit County Government 2013).

The booking area is a choke point in the jail, often overcrowded due to multiple requirements for this space.

Costly Outsourcing

Due to space constraints, the County has been forced to contract the services of Snohomish County to house an average of 25 inmates. This alternative is costly in terms of "outsourcing" fees and transportation costs associated with moving individuals back and forth between the distant jail and the local court system (Skagit County Government 2013). Other concerns associated with outsourcing include the inability to guarantee availability of beds and the cost of beds in the future.

1.2. Purpose of the EIS

Environmental review under the State Environmental Policy Act (SEPA) is intended to document and provide full disclosure for probable adverse environmental impacts that may result from a proposal and identify possible mitigation for those impacts. Under the SEPA rules (Washington Administrative Code [WAC] 197-11-924 to 938), one agency is identified as the "lead agency" for conducting environmental review of proposals that involve government actions. The City and County are co-lead agencies for the proposed Skagit County Jail project. The City is the nominal lead agency and is responsible for complying with the duties of the lead agency (WAC 197-11-944).

The Draft EIS is the foundation of the SEPA compliance process. An EIS is the highest level of environmental review provided for under SEPA. The City and County jointly determined that an EIS was appropriate to adequately study and document the impacts of the alternatives under consideration. The EIS process provides opportunities for the public, agencies, and tribes to participate in developing and analyzing information related to a proposal. The EIS also provides decision-makers and the public with the information needed to make informed decisions. Based upon information provided in the EIS, SEPA allows a decision-maker to:

- Deny a proposal when "significant" environmental impacts cannot be reasonably mitigated;
- Place additional conditions on the project to protect the environment from adverse environmental impacts; or
- Approve the proposal without further mitigation.

The SEPA process for the Skagit County Jail project formally began on July 22, 2013, when the City and County published and widely distributed a Determination of Significance/Scoping Notice (**Appendix A**). The scoping process was used to identify the alternatives to be analyzed in the EIS, to narrow the focus of the EIS to significant environmental issues, and to eliminate insignificant impacts from detailed study. Upon publication of the Draft EIS, a 30-day comment period will be held and a public hearing will be conducted during the comment period. A Final EIS will be prepared to respond to substantive comments received during the comment period (**Figure 2**). The Final EIS will be used by the City and County to help them decide whether to approve the proposal, approve it with conditions (mitigation), or deny the proposal.

Figure 2. SEPA EIS Process

Both jail site alternatives require a Comprehensive Plan amendment and associated rezone. Per Chapter 17.200 of the Mount Vernon Municipal Code (MVMC,) a jail is considered an Essential Public Facility (EPF); therefore, the County must also follow the siting process established for EPFs, including application for a Conditional Use Permit through the EPF process. Other permits that may be required include a Fill & Grade Permit, Building Permit, Floodplain Development Permit, and Utility and Right-of-Way Permits.

1.3. Scoping Summary

In accordance with SEPA, scoping for the Draft EIS for the Skagit County Jail was conducted between July 18, 2013, and August 20, 2013. The intent of scoping is to invite agencies, affected tribes, and members of the public to comment on the scope of the EIS. The Determination of Significance was published on July 22, 2013. A public hearing was held on Tuesday, August 13, 2013, from 4:00 pm to 6:30 pm at the Skagit County Administrative Building. The hearing consisted of a brief presentation followed by an open hearing. A court reporter was present to record all statements. The hearing was attended by 14 people, 7 of whom provided statements.

Attendees of the EIS scoping hearing held on August 13, 2013.

In addition to statements provided at the hearing, the City received written comments during the scoping period in the form of emails and letters. All comments received during the scoping period were reviewed for SEPA EIS issues. The Washington State Department of Archaeology and Historic Preservation was the only agency to comment.

Specific concerns identified during the scoping process include potential impacts on local employment, sales and property tax revenue, property values, local commerce, and tourism. Other concerns include aesthetics, preservation of night sky, transportation, cultural resources, floodplains, drainage, and soils.

Land use and aesthetic impacts were identified as appropriate areas for mitigation. Many comments expressed a preference for one of the two alternative sites. One comment suggested revisiting a site that has been eliminated from further consideration (Site #9, Butler Hill). The range of alternatives considered, including Site 9, is described in Section 2.2 of this Draft EIS.

The most common concern voiced at the public hearing and in written comments was related to the potential economic impacts of a new jail. As a result, although not required, economics was added as an environmental issue to be evaluated in the EIS. Specific issues to be addressed in this analysis include potential impacts on adjacent properties, property values, tax revenue, jobs, local commerce, and overall development potential of the surrounding area. The addition of an Economics element to the EIS will also be utilized during the EPF decision-making process and respond to the primary concern raised by the community during the scoping period.

SEPA requires that an EIS evaluate only those elements of the environment that may be significantly impacted by a proposal. Based upon the results of scoping process, this "limited-scope" EIS will address the following elements of the environment: geology and soils, floodplains, hazardous materials, aesthetics, historic and cultural preservation, transportation, economics, and land use. Potential impacts to other elements of the environment, as identified in WAC 197-11-444, are not considered to be of probable significance, and are not required to be evaluated through an EIS.

The scoping summary with hearing transcript, written comments, and index are provided in **Appendix B**.

2. Alternatives

2.1. Alternative Evaluation Process

In 2002, the County became aware that the current jail facility would not accommodate the increased need for jail beds in future decades. The Corrections Facilities Committee of the Law & Justice Council, later referred to as the Skagit County Facilities Task Force, was convened in 2002 to begin evaluating future programming needs and the potential range of alternatives. Between 2002 and 2013, the County facilitated an alternative evaluation process that involved a wide range of alternatives and stakeholders.

The Facilities Task Force prepared a "White Paper" in July 2004 that brought the issue of jail overcrowding to light and evaluated programming needs for a new jail. Based upon the results of the White Paper, the County hired Voorhis Associates, Inc. to prepare a Community Justice Center Master Plan in 2005. The Master Plan discussed recidivism, risk and prevention, County population trends and projections, crime trends, court trends, jail trends, inmate profile, alternative sanctions, and physical plant issues, laying the groundwork for the needs of the new jail. Voorhis also prepared a Site Analysis and Analysis of Options in September-October 2005. Voorhis worked with the Facilities Task Force to develop a program for what was referred to at the time as a new "community justice facility," to house the following services: inmate housing, alternative services units and offices, security offices, public spaces, medical services, booking and release facilities, visitation, inmate services, maintenance, jail administration, video court, and support services. In January 2008, the following program areas were added: Superior and District Courts with associated judicial suites and support spaces, public space, district court clerk, jury assembly, district court probation, County Clerk, public defender's office, office of assigned counsel, and prosecutor's office. The County then postponed the alternative evaluation process until 2012.

Near the end of 2011, overcrowding at the Skagit County Jail rose to critical levels. Knowing that the County alone could not solve the problem and realizing that financing would eventually have to come from a vote of the County population, the County created the Skagit County Public Safety Jail Coordinating Council in mid-2012. The council consists primarily of elected public officials and represented County communities with voting members, including four City mayors, one County commissioner, two judges, and the County Sheriff. The idea was that the makeup of the Coordinating Council was diverse enough so that whatever final solution was agreed upon, it would be in the best interest of County voters.

The Coordinating Council was tasked with formulating a recommendation to the Skagit County Commissioners on the number of beds to address the overcrowding issue, a preferred alternative to accommodate the additional beds (expand existing facility, construct a new site, or outsource), and a financing mechanism for doing so. Beginning in June 2012, the council held the first of 17 meetings and work sessions. The council evaluated the feasibility of expanding the existing jail and outsourcing inmates to empty beds in other jail facilities. After 10 months of discussion and analysis, the members of the Coordinating Council unanimously agreed that a new jail is needed and recommended a sales tax increase to fund construction and operation of the new facility.

2.2. Range of Alternatives Considered

The County considered three general types of alternatives to address the project need: expansion of the existing facility, outsourcing, and construction of a new jail facility.

2.2.1. Existing Facility Expansion

In 2012, the County hired a firm that specializes in correctional facility design, DLR Group, to evaluate expansion of the existing jail facility into a two-story, remodeled building. DLR Group analyzed the long-term usability and expansion potential of the existing facility and provided associated cost estimates. DLR Group determined that the existing jail cannot be renovated to accommodate more than 492 additional beds if expanded to the north and south and if the Sheriff's Office was moved off-site. The existing jail facility is landlocked and straddled by a railroad line and high-traffic City streets and a state highway. Poor soil conditions make it impracticable to build up. The required technology and infrastructure upgrades also make the expansion cost prohibitive. Cost studies indicated that due to the current highly competitive construction and real estate markets, it is less expensive to purchase property and construct a new facility than it is to expand the existing facility (Skagit County Government 2013). Therefore, expansion of the existing facility is not considered a viable alternative that meets the project purpose because the site cannot accommodate future expansion beyond 492 beds.


Outdated security technology at the existing jail needs costly upgrades.

2.2.2. Outsourcing

Outsourcing would transport County inmates to facilities in other locations with sufficient capacity, such as Yakima or Snohomish County. The Coordinating Council examined the records of current inmates and found that 70 percent of them would not be eligible for outsourcing because of pending court dates and

other reasons. In addition, the existing facility would have to be renovated in order to accommodate inmate transport. Therefore, outsourcing is not considered a viable alternative that meets the project purpose.

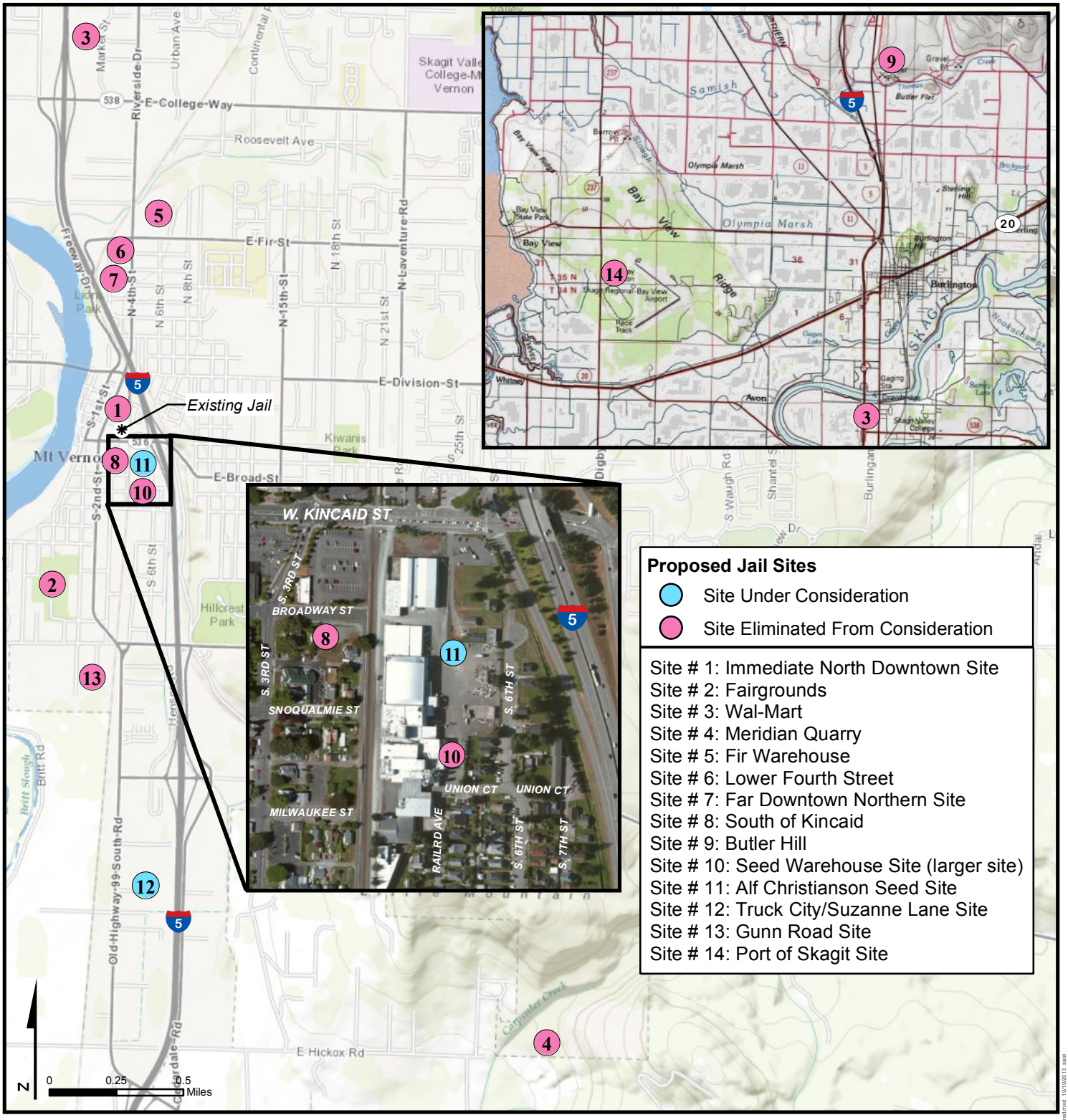
2.2.3. New Sites

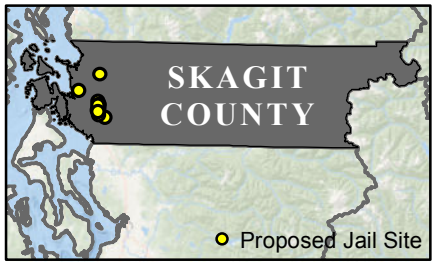
The alternative evaluation process for a new jail site was initially led by the Facilities Task Force and later facilitated by the Coordinating Council. Both entities held frequent progress meetings and relied upon regular input and feedback from the Law & Justice Council, the City of Mount Vernon, and the Skagit County Board of Commissioners.

The site selection and evaluation process for a new jail site began in 2006. The County fostered an open process in which sites were suggested by property owners, realtors, County Commissioners, County staff, Sheriff's office staff, City staff, and consultants. The primary criteria for including a site on the initial consideration list were adequate size (3-5 acres) and proximity to the existing courthouse and other County services. A multi-story building was being considered by the County at this time, which affected the amount of land area needed. An initial list of nine potential sites was developed by the County (Sites 1 through 9) (**Figure 3 and Table 1**).

Voorhis Associates, Inc. developed evaluation criteria in 2007 for evaluation of the nine sites:

- Distance from services (Sheriff's department, fire responder, medical services, attorney offices, and courthouse)
- Location so that the cities can efficiently transport incoming inmates
- Site access—site is easily accessed and must have two access points
- Site character, size, and use
- Site acquisition and costs
- Agency/public support
- Utilities extend to property lines





Data Sources: Skagit County, City of Mount Vernon, DEA
Backgrounds: ESRI Service Layer World Topo Map, USA Topo Map, World Imagery

Skagit County Jail Draft EIS

Skagit County and City of Mount Vernon

Figure 3. Alternative Jail Sites Considered

December 2013

Project No.: COMV0000-0011

Architects Rasmussen Triebelhorn (ART), an architectural firm hired by the County, prepared several site evaluation matrices in 2007 based upon the criteria developed by Voorhis (ART 2007b, 2007c). Upon review of the initial evaluation results, the Task Force eliminated Sites 3 through 6 and agreed to narrow the list to two preferred sites. Site 3 was eliminated because the size and location of the site adjacent to I-5 makes it ideal for future commercial retail development. Site 4 was eliminated because the site is located within a Mineral Resource Overlay, which is an area designated to protect long-term, commercially viable mineral Natural Resource Lands. Site 5 was determined difficult to design due to the narrow shape of the site, the amount of cut and fill needed to build on the site, and limitations on site access. Site 5 was eliminated due to constraints associated with wetlands on-site. Site 6 was eliminated due to size constraints and extensive housing displacements. Later that month, the Task Force agreed by consensus to eliminate Site 9 due to the remote location, operating costs, and the cost of transporting inmates (Skagit County 2007a).

Table 1. Alternative New Sites Considered

Site Number	Description	Size	Ownership	Zoning[1]	FEMA Floodplain Designation[2]
1	Parking lot north of County Courthouse Complex	1.8 ac	County	M-1	AO
2	Skagit County Fairgrounds	16.9 ac	County	P	AO
3	Old Wal-Mart Site	12.4 ac	Private	C-2	A21
4	Meridian Quarry	163 ac	City of Mount Vernon	RRc-NRL, MRO	C
5	Fir Warehouse	5.3 ac	Private	M-1	C, A21
6	Lower Fourth Street	4.8 ac	Private	C-2, M-2	C
7	Far Downtown Northern Site	7.7 ac	Private	C-2, R-3	C
8	South of Kincaid, west of RR tracks	5.3 ac	Private / County	P-P, C-1, M-1	AO
9	Butler Hill / Pit Site	128 ac	County	RRc-NRL, MRO	C
10	Alf Christianson Seed Site (Larger)	17 ac	Private	C-2, M-1, R-3	AO
11	Alf Christianson Seed Site (Smaller)	7.8 ac	Private	C-2	AO
12	Truck City / Susanne Lane Site	10.3 ac	Private	C-L	AO
13	Gunn Road Site	17.2 ac	Private	C-L	AO
14	Port Of Skagit, North end of Skagit Regional Airport	164 ac	Port Of Skagit	BR-HI Bayview Ridge Light Industrial	C

[1]City of Mount Vernon Zoning: C-1=Central Business District, C-2=General Commercial, C-L=Commercial/Limited Industrial District, M-1=Light Manufacturing and Commercial District, M-2=Industrial District, P=Public, R-3=Multifamily Residential District

Skagit County Zoning: BR-HI=Bayview Ridge Heavy Industrial, MRO=Mineral Resource Overlay, RRc-NRL=Rural Resource-Natural Resource Lands

[2]FEMA (Federal Emergency Management Agency) Floodplain Designation: Zone AO: High Risk Area. An area inundated by 100-year flooding, usually in the form of sheet flow, for which average depths have been determined; Zone A21: High Risk Area. An area inundated by 100-year flooding for which no BFEs have been established; Zone C: Moderate to Low Risk Area. An area determined to be outside the 100- and 500-year floodplains.

After soliciting input from the Mount Vernon City Council and the Skagit County Board of Commissioners, the Facilities Task Force determined in November 2007 that the County-preferred sites were Sites 1 and 8 (Skagit County 2007b). ART proceeded with preparation of design layouts for Sites 1 and 8 in early 2008. Preliminary layouts indicated that Site 1 would require a 7-story structure with limited space for future growth. Site 1 was originally intended to re-use the existing jail facility, which was an option no longer being considered by the County. The City also shared plans to use Site 1 for a new parking garage and retail development. Therefore, Site 1 was eliminated from further consideration.

As preliminary design continued on Site 8, concerns arose about the scale of the building, the limited amount of space available for future expansion, and the availability of the property for purchase. ART was then notified that the property east of Site 8 was for sale and significant additional land area was available. As a result, Sites 10 and 11 were added to the evaluation. Site 10 was eliminated shortly thereafter because several of the properties were not available for purchase as originally thought. Site 11, a smaller version of Site 10, was carried forward in the analysis. ART developed a weighted scoring system to evaluate the two final candidate sites (Sites 8 and 11). Based upon the results of the evaluation, ART recommended Site 11 as the preferred site for the new jail (ART 2008). As a result of this recommendation, Sites 2 and 7 were eliminated from further consideration. Site 2 was eliminated due to neighborhood opposition and high relocation costs. Site 7 was eliminated due to a high number of residential displacements and distance to support services in downtown Mount Vernon.

In early 2011, the Port of Skagit notified the Skagit County Administrator that a property was available that may accommodate a new jail. The Port of Skagit site (Site 14) was subsequently added to the evaluation process. On June 14, 2012, the Coordinating Council discussed concerns with siting the jail at Site 14, including wetland constraints on-site that would limit development opportunities and distance to the courthouse and support services such as police, fire, and medical. Increased distance to these facilities results in increased operational costs for the County and the surrounding cities delivering inmates to the jail, as well as safety concerns in the event that back-up is required. For these reasons, in addition to the fact that the City is the greatest user of the jail with approximately 30 percent of total jail bookings, the Coordinating Council determined that the new jail should be located within the incorporated limits of Mount Vernon. The Mount Vernon City Council unanimously agreed with this decision at their council meeting on July 23, 2012. Site 14, the only site under consideration at the time located outside the City limits, was then eliminated from further consideration.

In 2012, the County also began to more seriously consider the long-term operational cost of the new facility. The County determined that a one-story facility was desirable, which would significantly reduce long-term operational costs. As a result, a new set of site criteria were developed:

- Site is located within the city of Mount Vernon
- Site will accommodate up to 800 beds (7.5 or more acres)
- Site topography will allow for efficient building design via a one-story solution
- Site property is currently for sale and is competitively priced

All of the Coordinating Council meetings were open to the public and there was much publicity around the process of siting the new jail. Almost every meeting received front page coverage in the Skagit Valley Herald newspaper. As a result of the significant publicity, property owners contacted the County with sites they thought would meet the revised criteria for the new jail site. Two of these sites (Sites 12 and

13) were determined to meet the new set of criteria. The two new sites were presented to the Coordinating Council on December 13, 2012. One site previously identified by the County in 2008 as a final candidate site (Site 8) was not carried forward in the 2012 evaluation due to strong public opposition and a long and narrow site configuration, which did not meet the new site criteria.

Sites 11, 12, and 13 all met the new site criteria. DLR Group completed a preliminary "test to fit" study with a thumbnail sketch of the proposed 800-bed facility on each of the three proposed sites. The study determined that Site 12 had sufficient acreage, but the long and narrow shape of the site dictated a long narrow site plan, which would have significant operating inefficiencies. This conclusion resulted in the addition of another site criterion: the site must be somewhat square in shape. The County discovered that there was property available for purchase adjacent to and south of Site 12. The addition of this property meant that Site 12 was square in shape and therefore met all of the required site criteria.

The Coordinating Council decided to move forward with Sites 11, 12, and 13. In early 2013, the County project manager, County Sherriff, and County Administrator made a series of presentations highlighting the three sites to the Board of County Commissioners and council meetings at the cities of Mount Vernon, Burlington, Sedro Woolley, and Anacortes. At the end of January 2013, the County submitted an application to the City for consideration of a rezone and conditional use permit for the three sites. At a Mount Vernon City Council meeting in February 2013, the council agreed to docket (consider) Sites 11 and 12. The Council did not docket Site 13, primarily due to its proximity to a local school and school district facilities. Site 13 was subsequently eliminated from further consideration.

In spring of 2013, the Butler Hill/Pit site (Site 9) was reconsidered a possible site based upon public interest and potential construction cost savings. Sites 11 and 12 both had a $40 per square foot allowance in the construction estimates for anticipated poor soil conditions (Marc L. Estvold, Inc. 2013). Since Butler Hill is a gravel pit and was already under public ownership, it was speculated that approximately $3.6 million could be saved by locating the jail there. Despite the potential cost savings, the site was dismissed from consideration by the Coordinating Council for a number of reasons (in addition to those previously cited in 2007):

- The site did not meet the criterion that the jail must be located within the Mount Vernon city limits.
- A site improvement cost study prepared by DLR Group concluded that costs associated with site improvements, access roads, and preparation of a level building pad would likely equal any saving in foundation costs over Sites 11 and 12.
- The Washington State Department of Natural Resources determined, in conversations with the County Public Works Hydrogeologist, that one of the site parcels (P35953, the northeast parcel) must be retained for soil storage and final sloping purposes as part of a future site reclamation plan.
- A jail would restrict access to valuable mineral deposits with several currently operational mining operations. The site is located within a Mineral Resource Overlay, which is an area designated to protect long-term, commercially viable mineral Natural Resource Lands.

In total, the County evaluated 14 potential new jail sites between 2006 and 2013 (**Figure 3**). Aerial maps depicting the exact size and location of each site are provided in **Appendix C**. Based upon the results of the alternative evaluation process, twelve sites were eliminated from further consideration. Two sites (Sites 11 and 12) have been advanced as final candidate sites. In July 2013, an insert was circulated in the Skagit Valley Herald which had drawings of the two final candidate sites. Since that time, the County has given over 20 presentations to community organizations and several newspaper articles have been

written to highlight the two final candidate sites. All four mayors of the County's largest cities (Anacortes, Burlington, Mount Vernon, and Sedro-Woolley) endorsed a provisional agreement with the County Board of Commissioners to share revenue for the construction of a new jail (Skagit County Government 2013). City council members of all four cities also gave unanimous support for a new jail. Voters approved a three-tenths of 1 percent increase in sales tax in the County to fund the new jail on August 6, 2013. The two sites are being evaluated in this Draft EIS to help inform the best decision on a final preferred site for the new jail.

2.3. Actions Common to Both Site Alternatives

A new, expanded jail would accommodate up to 800 inmate beds, administrative facilities, a medical diagnosis and treatment area, a program area for alcohol and drug treatment and Graduate Equivalent Degree opportunities, a courtroom, and parking for staff and visitors.

The single-story jail building would be approximately 100,000 square feet at immediate build-out and 165,000 square feet at full build-out. The single-story design would substantially increase operational efficiencies and would be designed to meet current building codes and correctional facility standards. The new facility would provide an opportunity to institute new technologies, such as surveillance, arraignments, and visitation through video. An outdoor exercise area would be enclosed and no inmates would be visible from the exterior of the site at any time. Fencing visible on the site may include rolling gates at the Sally Port, perimeter fencing, and fencing around staff parking. All other enclosures would be solid walls.

The new jail will utilize a model of enhanced indirect supervision, meaning that the primary supervision of inmates is via control rooms with direct line-of-sight to each inmate housing area. Custody officers will also provide direct supervision of inmates on a roving basis. Although the final number of employees and working hours are not determined, the new 400-bed jail would be staffed with an estimated 76 to 86 full-time equivalent (FTE) employees. This includes 68 to 78 County staff plus 8 contract staff to provide food service, laundry, medical, and inmate program/education services. No court-related staff are anticipated. Assuming that the indirect supervision model is continued and future jail expansion would have a similar mix of inmate beds and types, staffing for the 800-bed facility is estimated at 136 to 148 FTEs, which includes 16 contract staff.

Jail administration and service staff will work the day shift (6:00 a.m. to 2:00 p.m.), while custody staff will work 24 hours per day, 7 days per week, split into the day shift, the night shift (2:00 p.m. to 10:00 p.m.), and the overnight shift (10:00 p.m. to 6:00 a.m.). Volunteers will also be on-site providing services related to visitation, education, religious services, and drug and alcohol treatment.

Video visitation will accommodate visitors as often as the jail reception desk is staffed or a volunteer station is manned. Visitors in person will generally be allowed 9:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m. on weekdays, with limited visitation in the evenings and weekends.

Parking demand depends on how the facility is operated in terms of the timing of court operation, visitation schedule, and the duration of allowed visits. The total parking demand is estimated to be approximately 115 to 155 stalls. Staff parking and public and court parking will be provided in separate lots. Staffing parking is estimated at 50 to 60 stalls, court parking is estimated at 40 stalls, and public parking is estimated at 22 to 55 stalls.

Site Phasing

Both sites would accommodate substantial future expansion, if needed. The initial facility would be approximately 100,000 square feet and accommodate 400 beds. Depending on incarceration rates and policy changes, the facility may be expanded in the future to accommodate up to an additional 400 beds, for a full build-out of 165,000 square feet.

Land Use Approval Process

Both sites being considered are zoned for commercial use. In order for one of the sites to be used for a jail, the designation must be changed. The City has initiated the comprehensive plan and zoning amendment process to change the land use designation on both sites to "Public." Once the SEPA process is completed, the City will commence the process for the land use designation change. The process will require an open record public hearing before the City's Planning Commission. The Planning Commission will make a recommendation to the City Council. After a hearing, the City Council will make the decision on the land use designation change. Only those who became a "party of record" by commenting in writing before, or speaking at the Planning Commission hearing, may speak at the closed record City Council hearing. Parties of record are only allowed to reiterate or reference their testimony or materials from the Planning Commission hearing (no new evidence). This land use process is expected to occur in spring 2014.

The County will be required to complete an EPF process with the City for the selected site. The EPF process is intended for facilities that are difficult to locate and is intended to identify and minimize adverse impacts. The EPF is a Type IV, Conditional Use process that includes a public hearing before the City's Hearing Examiner and a public hearing before the City Council. The Hearing Examiner makes a recommendation to the City Council and the City Council makes the decision. Only those who became a party of record at the Hearing Examiner's hearing may speak at the closed record City Council hearing. Similar to the land use process, parties of record are only allowed to reiterate or reference their testimony or materials from the Hearings Examiner's process (no new evidence). The EPF process is expected to occur in summer 2014.

Design and Construction

Architectural design is anticipated to begin in September 2014, following the EPF process, and take approximately one year. Some construction activities, such as demolition of existing structures and preloading of the site could begin in early 2015. Permitting, bid letting, and execution of construction contracts would begin in fall of 2015 and conclude in early 2016. Construction would commence that spring and be completed in fall 2017.

The cost to construct either site alternative is approximately $60 million. This includes approximately $40 million for construction and $20 million for permitting, environmental documentation, architecture and engineering, property acquisition, financing costs, etc.

Existing Jail Facility

The existing jail facility likely would be retained by the County and used for Sheriff's Department operations such as training, storage of court records, and the relocated computer data center. County services currently located in leased buildings also may be relocated to the existing jail facility.

2.4. Site Alternatives

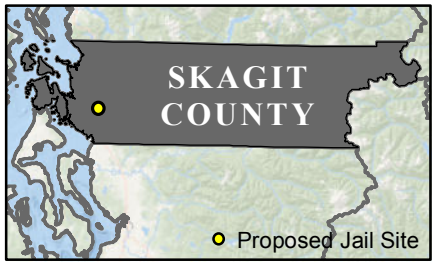
This Draft EIS evaluates construction of a new expanded jail facility on two alternative sites in Mount Vernon:

- Alf Christianson Seed Site
- Truck City/Suzanne Lane Site

2.4.1. Alf Christianson Seed Site Alternative

The 7.8-acre site is located across Kincaid Street and to the south of existing Public zoning and across the railroad tracks and to the east of existing Public zoning (**Figure 4**). This site also is located within walking distance of other Public zoning and related uses in downtown Mount Vernon. The site is bound by East Kincaid Street to the north, Interstate-5 (I-5) to the east, East Section Street to the south, and the Burlington Northern Santa Fe (BNSF) Railroad tracks to the west. The County Assessor describes the subject site as parcels: P121047, P26886, P26788, P53373, P53374, P53375, P53376, P103224, P53377, P53378, P54113, P54114, P54115, P54120, P54122, P54117, P54119, P54118, P54116, P35579; which are all located within a portion of the SW ¼ of Section 20, Township 34 North, Range 04 East, W.M. The 7.8-acre site has one property owner. The west half is developed with vacant industrial warehouse buildings. In the past, it was used for seed processing. The east half is comprised of vacant or previously cleared residential lots.

This site would require a property line adjustment and street vacation of South Sixth Street north of Union Street, including utility relocation and removal of existing easements. The main circulation and access point for staff and the public will be determined during final design, but may be onto Kincaid Street to the north, onto Union Street to the south, or a combination of the two. All existing structures on-site will be demolished. A conceptual design layout for the site, which is subject to change during final design, is shown in **Figure 5**.



Alf Christianson Seed Site (7.8 acres)

Skagit County Tax Parcel

Data Sources: Skagit County, City of Mount Vernon, DEA
Background: ESRI Service Layer World Imagery

0 75 150 Feet

N

Skagit County Jail Draft EIS

Skagit County and City of Mount Vernon

Figure 4. Alf Christianson Seed Site

December 2013

City of MOUNT VERNON

Project No.: COMV0000-0011

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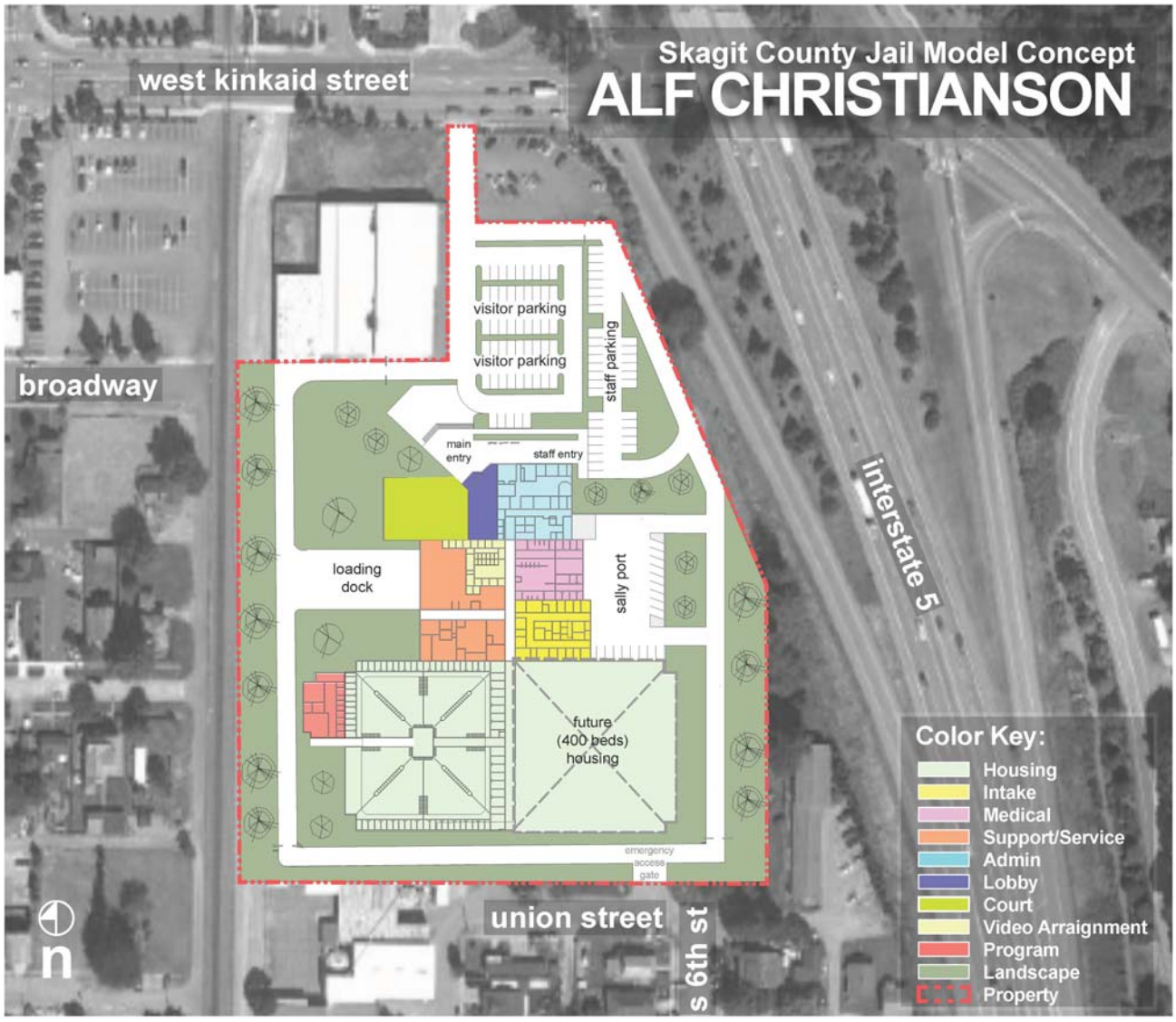
Figure 5. Alf Christianson Seed Site Conceptual Design Layout (for illustrative purposes only)



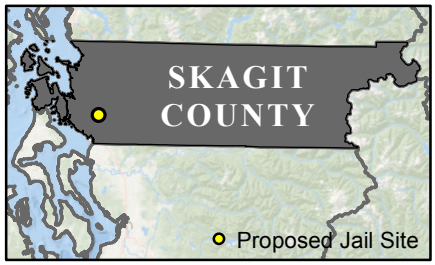
2.4.2. Truck City Site Alternative

The 10.4-acre site is located in south Mount Vernon (**Figure 6**). This site is bound by Old Highway 99 South Road to the west and I-5 to the east, with McFarland Lane to the north, and Suzanne Lane to the south. The site currently has three property owners. The Skagit County Assessor describes the subject site as parcels: P119262, P119263, P119265, P119267, P29546; which are all located within a portion of the NW ¼ of Section 32, Township 34 North, Range 04 East, W.M. The northern half of the site is comprised of a truck fueling station with a food mart, while the southern half of the site is undeveloped.

This proposal would require a property line adjustment and a 30-foot access easement across Parcel P119267 to the east half of the site. Access and utilities would be from Old Highway 99 South and Suzanne Lane. The truck fueling station and food mart will be demolished. A conceptual design layout for the site, which is subject to change during final design, is shown in **Figure 7**.

2.5. No Action Alternative

The County would not construct a new jail facility. The current facilities would continue to be used. Overcrowding in the existing facility would continue, causing continuing staffing and safety problems. The booking area would continue to be a choke point. Security technology would continue to be outdated. The facility would continue to lack a substance abuse treatment program area. The recreation area would continue to be used for beds. The County would continue to pay outsourcing fees to other jurisdictions.



Truck City/Suzanne Lane Site (10.4 acres)

Skagit County Tax Parcel

Data Sources: Skagit County, City of Mount Vernon, DEA
Background: ESRI Service Layer World Imagery

0 75 150 Feet

N

Skagit County Jail Draft EIS

Skagit County and City of Mount Vernon

Figure 6. Truck City/Suzanne Lane Site

December 2013

Project No.: COMV0000-0011

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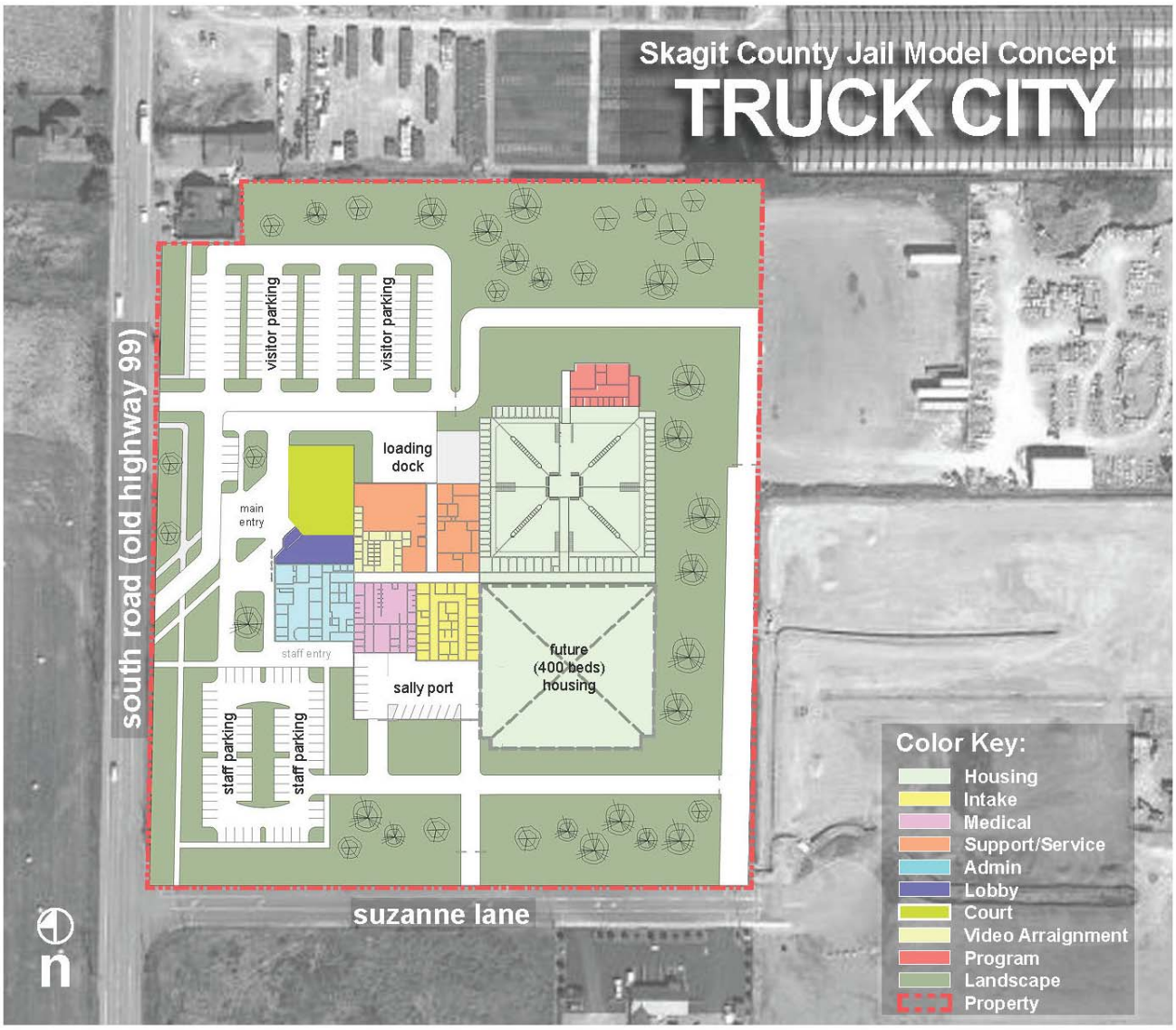
Figure 7. Truck City Site Conceptual Design Layout (for illustrative purposes only)



2.6. Comparison of Alternatives

A comparison of existing conditions, proposed uses, and potential environmental impacts between the two site alternatives and the No Action Alternative is provided in **Table 2**. Additional detail regarding potential environmental impacts and proposed mitigation measures is provided in Chapter 3.

Table 2. Comparison of Alternatives

	Alf Christianson Seed Site Alternative	Truck City/Suzanne Lane Site Alternative	No Action Alternative (Existing Jail Site)
Existing Conditions			
Size	7.8 acres	10.4 acres	1.45 acres
Parcels	21	5	6
Owners	1	3	1
Existing Land Use	Vacant warehouse buildings and undeveloped land	Fueling station, food mart, café, and undeveloped land	Existing Skagit County Jail
Proposed Use			
Initial Build-out	400 beds /100,000 ft^2	400 beds /100,000 ft^2	N/A
Full Build-out	800 beds/165,000 ft^2	800 beds/165,000 ft^2	N/A
Access Points	Kincaid Street or Union Street (or both)	Old Highway 99 South and Suzanne Lane	N/A
Meets Project Purpose and Need	Yes	Yes	No
Potential Environmental Impacts			
Geology and Soils	Compressible soils onsite create settlement hazard. Earthwork volumes: 47,000 to 52,000 cubic yards of fill for initial build-out and an additional 7,500 to 8,200 cubic yards of fill for full build-out. Temporary erosion during construction.	Limited settlement hazard. Earthwork volumes: 75,000 to 83,000 cubic yards of fill for initial build-out and an additional 8,600 to 9,400 cubic yards of fill for full build-out. Temporary erosion during construction.	None.
Floodplains	Site is within the 100-year floodplain and must be constructed with the lowest floor at least 4 feet above existing ground level to avoid flooding. During operation, jail could be surrounded by one foot of water during a 100-year flood.	Site is within the 100-year floodplain and must be constructed with the lowest floor at least 5 feet above existing ground level to avoid flooding. During operation, site is at risk of being surrounded by floodwater due to extreme floods and cut off from vehicle access.	None.
Hazardous Materials	Construction activities may encounter contaminated soil or unknown underground storage tanks (USTs). Potential asbestos in on-site buildings. Use of heavy equipment during construction creates risk for spills/leakage of petroleum products. Facility may use some hazardous materials during operation.	Construction activities may encounter contaminated soil or unknown USTs. Potential asbestos in on-site buildings. Use of heavy equipment during construction creates risk for spills/leakage of petroleum products. Facility may use hazardous materials during operation.	None.

	Alf Christianson Seed Site Alternative	Truck City/Suzanne Lane Site Alternative	No Action Alternative (Existing Jail Site)
Aesthetics	The completed facility will slightly improve visual quality (3.0 rating increases to 3.2). Site lighting and vehicle headlights will create new source of light and glare. Inconsistent with the visual character of the City's planned downtown gateway along Kincaid Street.	The completed facility will slightly reduce visual quality (4.0 rating decreases to 3.9). Site lighting and vehicle headlights will create new source of light and glare.	None.
Historic and Cultural Preservation	Construction may impact unknown subsurface cultural resources.	Construction may impact unknown subsurface cultural resources.	None.
Transportation	Construction may cause temporary traffic delays and periodically reduce access to adjacent buildings. The new jail will increase the number of local trips by 34 vehicles per PM peak hour. This is a relatively minor addition and not expected to impact existing traffic levels.	Construction may cause temporary traffic delays and periodically reduce access to adjacent buildings. The impact at this site is expected to be less than at the Alf Christianson Seed Site because adjacent businesses are fewer and farther away. The new jail will increase the number of local trips by 33 vehicles per PM peak hour. This is a relatively minor addition and not expected to impact existing traffic levels.	None.
Economics	Construction will generate business activity in the local economy. Operation of the jail will employ 76-86 FTE at initial build-out and 136-148 FTE at full build-out. Annual property tax revenue loss of $51,360. Foregone opportunity to construct a mixed use development may result in the loss of up to $86 million in gross business receipts, 220 jobs, $9 million in personal income, and over $500,000 in annual tax revenue.	Construction will generate business activity in the local economy. Operation of the jail will employ 76-86 FTE at initial build-out and 136-148 FTE at full build-out. Annual property tax revenue loss of $46,806. Loss of one sales tax-generating business. Forgone opportunity to construct a business park may result in the loss of up to $17 million in gross business receipts, 112 jobs, $3 million in personal income, and $150,000 in annual tax revenue.	Increased cost of outsourcing, including inmate transport.
Land Use	Requires vacation of South 6th Street and property line adjustment. Facility may be a barrier to pedestrian movement between uses north and south of the site. Site does not accommodate mixed use development with commercial and retail uses. Site layout limits opportunity to provide enhancements on Kincaid Street as the gateway to downtown.	Requires property line adjustment and access easement across Parcel P119267. Upon completion of comprehensive plan and zoning amendment, the new jail would be consistent with the City's Comprehensive Plan.	None.

3. Affected Environment, Impacts, and Mitigation Measures

3.1. Methodology

This Draft EIS is limited in scope, focusing only on those elements of the environment that may be significantly impacted by the proposed project. The City and County determined based upon the results of the scoping process that this limited-scope EIS will address the following elements of the environment:

- Geology and soils
- Floodplains
- Hazardous materials
- Aesthetics
- Historic and cultural preservation
- Transportation
- Economics
- Land use

Chapter 3 describes the existing conditions at the two alternative sites for each element of the environment and analyzes potential significant adverse environmental impacts of the build and no build alternatives. The direct, indirect, and cumulative impacts of each alternative are considered both during construction and operation. Cumulative impacts are discussed in a separate section at the end of Chapter 3. Reasonable mitigation measures are identified for each element of the environment that will reduce or eliminate potential adverse impacts of the project.

The analysis for the geology and soils, hazardous materials, historic and cultural preservation, transportation, and economics subsections is based upon a series of discipline reports prepared for the proposed project. The following discipline reports are included as appendices to this Draft EIS: Cursory Geotechnical Evaluation Reports (MTC 2013a, MTC 2013b); Phase I Environmental Site Assessments (MTC 2013c, MTC 2013d); Cultural Resources Review (Drayton Archaeology 2013); Transportation Concurrency Review (DEA 2013a) and Trip Generation Rate Analysis (DEA 2013b); and Economic Analysis (Property Counselors 2013).

3.2. Geology and Soils

Cursory Geotechnical Evaluation Reports were prepared to help understand existing geologic conditions and assess geotechnical feasibility for construction of a new jail on the Alf Christianson Seed Site and Truck City Site (MTC 2013a, MTC 2013b). The reports are included as **Appendix H** to this Draft EIS.

3.2.1. Existing Conditions

Alf Christianson Seed Site Alternative

Existing conditions on the Alf Christianson Seed Site are comprised primarily of improvements such as buildings, asphalt, and paving. The eastern portion of the site, which was historically utilized for single-family residences, is currently undeveloped and vegetated with field grass, sparse brush, and trees. The site is generally flat and level with little to no variability in topography.

The geology of the Alf Christianson Seed Site is mapped on both the *Geologic Map of Washington – Northwest Quadrant* and the *Geologic Map of Mount Vernon, Skagit County Washington*. Both of these

maps indicate that site geology is composed of alluvium. This Holocene age alluvium was deposited by the Skagit River and is composed predominately of heterogeneous deposits of silt, sand, and gravel (MTC 2013a).


A deposit of historic wood found below the surface at the Alf Christianson Seed Site.

The site soils are mapped by the Soil Survey of Skagit County primarily as Mt. Vernon-Field complex with 0 to 3 percent slopes (**Figure 8**). This soil complex is described as being very deep and moderately well drained. Soil conditions at the site were also determined by field testing. These tests indicate that the surface layer is composed of topsoil less than a foot thick. Beneath this layer are various types of fill from previous construction, including a deposit of historic wood found 7 to 11 feet below the surface at one of the test sites. Below these surface layers there are three distinct layers of alluvium: upper, middle, and lower. The upper layer is predominately sand with varying silt content in a layer roughly 25 to 30 feet thick. The middle layer is composed of inter-bedded sand, silt, clay, peat, and organics and is typically 15 to 30 feet thick. The lower layer is again mostly sand with varying silt and gravel content. The base of this stratum extends to approximately 86.5 feet below the surface (MTC 2013a).

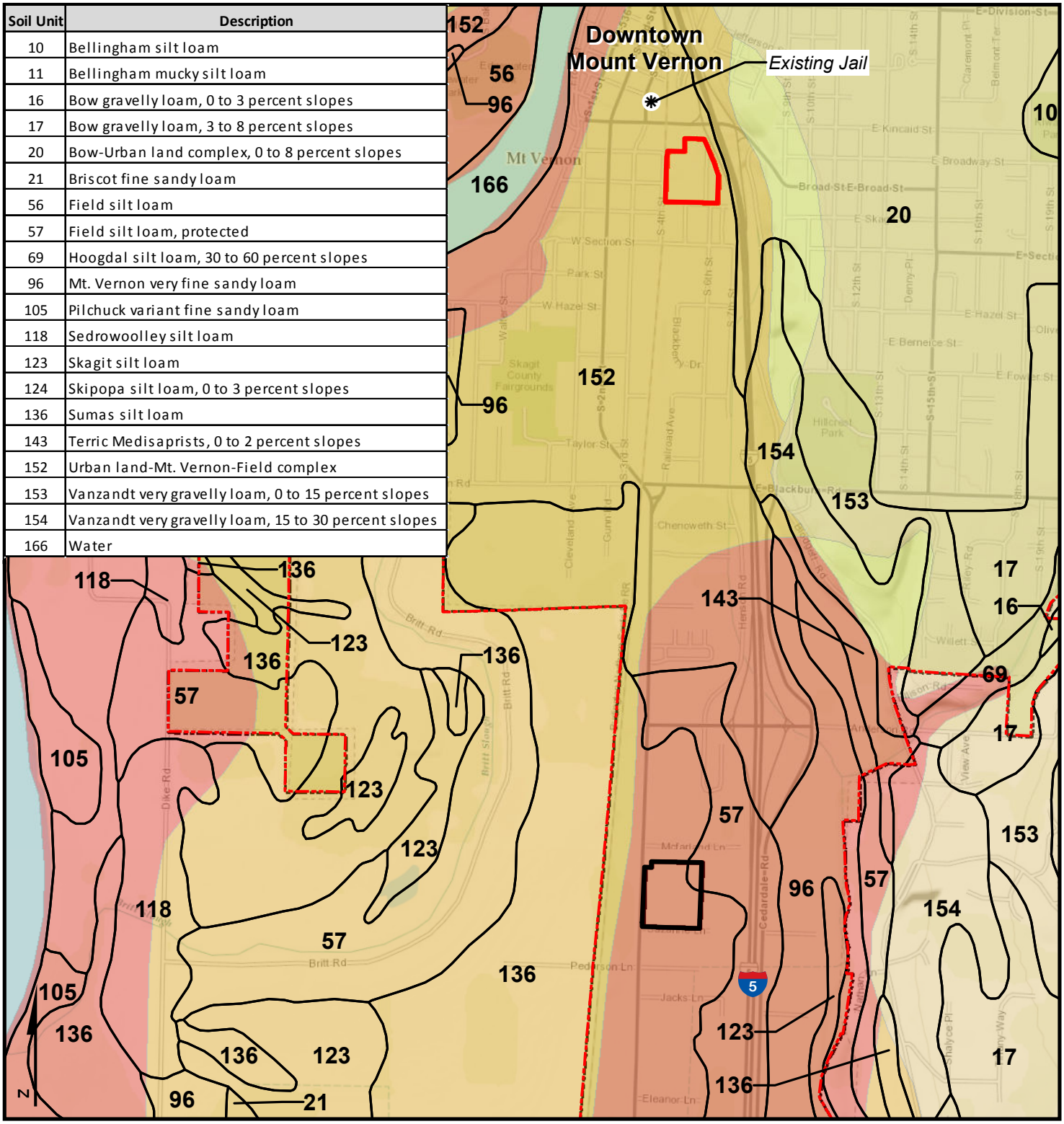
The soft silt, clay, and organic soils and saturated fine- to medium-grained sand soils encountered at this site are considered susceptible to seismically-induced settlement, liquefaction and amplified ground motion in the event of an earthquake. According to the *Liquefaction Susceptibility Map of Skagit County, Washington* (Palmer et al. 2004), this site is located in an area with moderate to high liquefaction susceptibility (**Figure 8**). However, based on the locations of nearby fault lines, it does not appear that the proposed improvements are subject to ground rupture during a seismic event (MTC 2013a). According to the *Potential Landslide and Erosion Areas Map of Skagit County*, this site does not contain erosion hazard soils, unstable slopes, alluvial fans, or landslide areas (Skagit County 2009).

Truck City Site Alternative

Existing conditions on the north half of the Truck City Site are comprised of improvements such as retail and commercial buildings, a fueling center, and asphalt. The southern half of the site is undeveloped and vegetated with field grass, sparse brush, and a few young trees. The site is generally level.

Similar to the Alf Christianson Seed Site, the Truck City Site is also mapped as alluvium on both the *Geologic Map of Washington – Northwest Quadrant* and the *Geologic Map of Mount Vernon, Skagit County Washington*. This Holocene age alluvium was deposited by the Skagit River and is composed predominantly of heterogeneous deposits of silt, sand, and gravel (MTC 2013b).

Soil Unit	Description
10	Bellingham silt loam
11	Bellingham mucky silt loam
16	Bow gravelly loam, 0 to 3 percent slopes
17	Bow gravelly loam, 3 to 8 percent slopes
20	Bow-Urban land complex, 0 to 8 percent slopes
21	Briscot fine sandy loam
56	Field silt loam
57	Field silt loam, protected
69	Hoogdal silt loam, 30 to 60 percent slopes
96	Mt. Vernon very fine sandy loam
105	Pilchuck variant fine sandy loam
118	Sedrowoolley silt loam
123	Skagit silt loam
124	Skipopa silt loam, 0 to 3 percent slopes
136	Sumas silt loam
143	Terric Medisaprists, 0 to 2 percent slopes
152	Urban land-Mt. Vernon-Field complex
153	Vanzandt very gravelly loam, 0 to 15 percent slopes
154	Vanzandt very gravelly loam, 15 to 30 percent slopes
166	Water



Alf Christianson Seed Site

Truck City/Suzanne Lane Site

NRCS Soil Unit

Liquefaction Susceptibility

- High
- Moderate to high
- Low to moderate
- Low

Note: Only soil units which are shown on the map are included in the table.

0 0.25 0.5 Miles

Data Sources: Washington DNR, NRCS STATSGO Soils, DEA
Backgrounds: ESRI Service Layer World Topo Map

Skagit County Jail Draft EIS

Skagit County and City of Mount Vernon

Figure 8. Geology and Soils

December 2013

Project No.: COMV0000-0011

Geotechnical exploration activities at the Truck City Site.

The site soils are mapped by the Soil Survey of Skagit County as primarily Sumas silt loam with 0 to 2 percent slopes (**Figure 8**). This soil type is described as being shallow and poorly drained. Field testing of soil conditions found a topsoil layer of brown silt with traces of sand and gravel that extends to a general depth of 0.5 to 1.3 feet. Beneath the top soil are three layers of alluvium: upper, middle, and lower. The upper alluvium layer is composed of sand with varying amounts of silt generally encountered immediately below the surface topsoil. The middle alluvium layer is a ten-foot-thick layer of silt encountered typically 28 feet below the ground surface. The lower alluvium layer is a course grained soil consisting of sand and silt extending as deep as 81.5 feet below the ground surface.

The soft silt soils and saturated fine to medium grained sand soils encountered at this site are considered susceptible to seismically-induced settlement, liquefaction, and amplified ground motion in the event of an earthquake. According to the *Liquefaction Susceptibility Map of Skagit County, Washington* (Palmer et al. 2004), this site has a high liquefaction susceptibility (**Figure 8**). However, based on the locations of nearby fault lines, it does not appear that the proposed improvements are subject to ground rupture during a seismic event (MTC 2013a). According to the *Potential Landslide and Erosion Areas Map of Skagit County*, this site does not contain erosion hazard soils, unstable slopes, alluvial fans, or landslide areas (Skagit County 2009).

3.2.2. Alternative Impacts

Alf Christianson Seed Site Alternative

Direct Impacts – Construction

Compressible soils at the Alf Christianson Seed Site indicate that long-term settlement could be problematic. As an additional complication, compressible soils are creating a situation where settlement would be uneven across the site. Furthermore, organic silt and peat deposits pose an additional long-term settling hazard, as will the historic milled-wood fill found at the site.

Earthwork volumes at the Alf Christianson Seed Site for the first phase of construction (400-bed facility) will total approximately 47,000 to 52,000 cubic yards of fill. Full build-out of the site (800-bed facility) will require an additional 7,500 to 8,200 cubic yards of fill. Approximately 4 feet of fill will be required to bring the site above the 100-year base flood elevation. One foot of fill will also be required to replace the existing topsoil on-site.

Temporary erosion could occur during construction activities such as clearing of vegetation and topsoil and removal of existing structures, foundations, asphalt, and other existing on-site improvements. Soils temporarily exposed during construction could be eroded by stormwater runoff. Implementation of standard best management practices (BMPs) and erosion control measures will minimize these potential short-term impacts.

Direct Impacts – Operation

Once the site is constructed and operational, no further impacts to soils or geology are anticipated. Risk from seismic activity is ever present in Western Washington. To reduce this risk, the facility will be constructed according to all applicable federal, state, and local codes.

Indirect Impacts

No indirect impacts are anticipated for soils and geology.

Truck City Site Alternative

Direct Impacts – Construction

Earthwork volumes at the Truck City Site for the first phase of construction (400-bed facility) would total approximately 75,000 to 83,000 cubic yards of fill. Full build-out of the site (800-bed facility) would require an additional 8,600 to 9,400 cubic yards of fill. Approximately 5 feet of fill will be required to bring the site above the 100-year base flood elevation. One foot of fill will also be required to replace the existing topsoil on-site.

Other construction-related impacts to soils and geology for the Truck City Site are similar to those described above for the Alf Christianson Seed Site.

Direct Impacts – Operation

Once the site is constructed and operational, no further impacts to soils or geology are anticipated. Risk from seismic activity is ever present in Western Washington. To reduce this risk, the facility will be constructed according to all applicable federal, state, and local codes.

Indirect Impacts

No indirect impacts are anticipated for soils and geology.

No Action Alternative

The No Action Alternative would not construct a new jail facility. In this case, there would be no direct or indirect impacts to soils and geology.

3.2.3. Mitigation Measures

The new jail facility will be constructed in accordance with all federal, state, and local regulations for foundational stability and seismic security. Because both sites are larger than one acre, construction will require Washington Department of Ecology BMPs for erosion control as stipulated in the National Pollution Discharge Elimination System (NPDES) general permit. These BMPs include but are not limited to:

- Limit clearing and land-disturbing activities to the minimum area needed to construct the project.
- Employ temporary (e.g., straw mulch, hogs fuel or landscape mulch; plastic sheeting; and erosion control blankets) and permanent (e.g., hydroseeding) cover measures to protect disturbed areas.
- Restrict the length of time soils are allowed to remain unprotected (2 days in the winter, 7 days in the summer).
- Install barriers (e.g., silt fences, straw bale barriers, and sediment ponds or basins) prior to upslope grading to prevent sediment from leaving the site and entering downstream waterways via runoff.

- Stabilize unsurfaced construction site entrances, roads, and parking areas used by construction traffic with rock pads to minimize erosion and tracking of sediment off-site.
- Construct ditches and/or dikes to intercept surface water runoff and divert it away from exposed soils in the construction areas to a sediment trap or pond.
- During summer months, implement preventive measures as needed to minimize the wind transport of soils, such as watering or covering exposed soils.
- Designate practices to be used for disposal of unsuitable soils or any other materials that cannot be re-used at the construction site.
- Restore the construction area and seed, plant, or mulch as soon as possible after grading to prevent erosion.
- For work within riparian buffers, wetlands, and wetland buffers, comply with the conditions dictated by permits/approvals received for the project.
- Adhere to the MVMC and the International Building Code to incorporate seismic design standards for buildings to address seismic considerations.
- Incorporate provisions allowing temporary cessation of work under certain limited circumstances, if weather conditions warrant.
- Incorporate permanent control of surface water in the final grading and site design.

It is recommended all on-site erosion and sediment control measures be reviewed regularly by a certified erosion and sediment control lead (CESCL). Reviews should occur weekly during the wet season. During the dry season, reviews should be conducted monthly within 3 days of the calendar day for the last inspection. Reviews should also be conducted within 24 hours of any storm event greater than 0.5 inches of rain in 24 hours or less. Maintenance or repairs should be conducted as soon as a problem is discovered.

Alf Christianson Seed Site Alternative

Geotechnical recommendations for this site include using deep foundations (40 to 50 feet below ground surface) to avoid settlement difficulties. Alternatively or in conjunction, the site could be pre-loaded with structural fill to reduce long-term settlement. Pre-loading is a technique that applies fill material to a site prior to construction of the permanent structure, until most of the settlement has occurred. Additional site explorations are recommended to determine the appropriate thickness of the pre-load and to develop a settlement monitoring schedule. Surface settlement should be allowed until no further settlement is observed (likely up to 6 months). Further investigations are also recommended to better characterize the liquefaction susceptibility on the site.

Truck City Site Alternative

Preliminary review of site conditions suggests that a shallow, spread-footing foundation system may be suitable for use at the Truck City Site because settlement is expected to be limited. However, further testing is recommended to verify the degree of settlement that could be expected from liquefaction during an earthquake. Pre-loading is recommended for the site to further reduce post-construction settlement. Pre-loading is a technique that applies fill material to a site prior to construction of the permanent structure, until most of the settlement has occurred. Additional site explorations are recommended to determine the appropriate thickness of the pre-load and to develop a settlement monitoring schedule. Surface settlement should be allowed until no further settlement is observed

(likely up to 2 months). Further investigations are also recommended to better characterize the liquefaction susceptibility on the site.

3.3. Floodplains

3.3.1. Existing Conditions

History of Flooding

The Skagit River has an extensive history of flooding in the Mount Vernon area. The United States Geological Survey (USGS) records flows in the Skagit River at three key locations: near Concrete, Sedro-Woolley, and Mount Vernon. The Sedro-Woolley flow gage is used here as point of comparison for statistical determinations of flood frequencies that have been conducted in past years. Flood frequency statistics vary due to differences in methods used and the amount of data that is available when the calculations are conducted. **Table 3** shows flood frequencies that have been determined by various agencies over the years. All of the estimates shown here take into consideration the presence of levees and flows regulated by the presence of upstream dams.

Table 3. Flood Frequency Estimates from the Sedro-Woolley Flow Gage

Frequency	FEMA 1989 (cfs)	USGS 1998 (cfs)	USACE 2009[1] (cfs)
10-year flood	132,000	183,000	123,610
50-year flood	200,000	299,000	183,780
100-year flood	229,000	362,000	215,270
500-year flood	321,000	n/a	322,900

cfs = cubic feet per second

USACE = US Army Corps of Engineers

FEMA = Federal Emergency Management Agency

[1]These flow frequencies are considered preliminary and are under review by FEMA (FEMA 2010a).

The USGS lists historic peak flows recorded by their gages. Peak flows recorded at the gage near Mount Vernon date back to 1906. The six highest flows from this gage are provided in **Table 4**.

Table 4. Six Highest Peak Flows in Mount Vernon since 1907

Date of Record	Flow (cfs)
November 1906	180,000
February 11, 1951	144,000
November 25, 1990	152,000
November 30, 1995	141,000
October 21, 2003	135,000
November 7, 2006	138,000

It should be noted that during extreme events, floodwaters can overtop dikes between Sedro-Woolley and Mount Vernon. When this happens, a portion of the flow is directed north, away from Mount Vernon. As a result, flows reaching Mount Vernon during extreme events are typically less than those in Sedro-Woolley. However, even taking this into account, the values in **Tables 3** and **4** indicate that even a 50-year event is very rare in Mount Vernon and a 100-year event may never have occurred.

Floodplain Mapping

The Skagit River floodplain affects the Skagit County Jail alternatives to differing degrees. Floodplain maps for the 100-year flood (a flood with a 1-percent chance of occurring during any year) are issued, regulated, and updated by the Department of Homeland Security–Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) in conjunction with local jurisdictions. Local jurisdictions use these maps to regulate activity within floodplains. For this project, the City is the regulating agency. The current effective floodplain maps for the Skagit River, relevant to the two alternative jail sites, were issued in 1985 (FEMA 1985a, 1985b). Efforts to update these maps are underway.

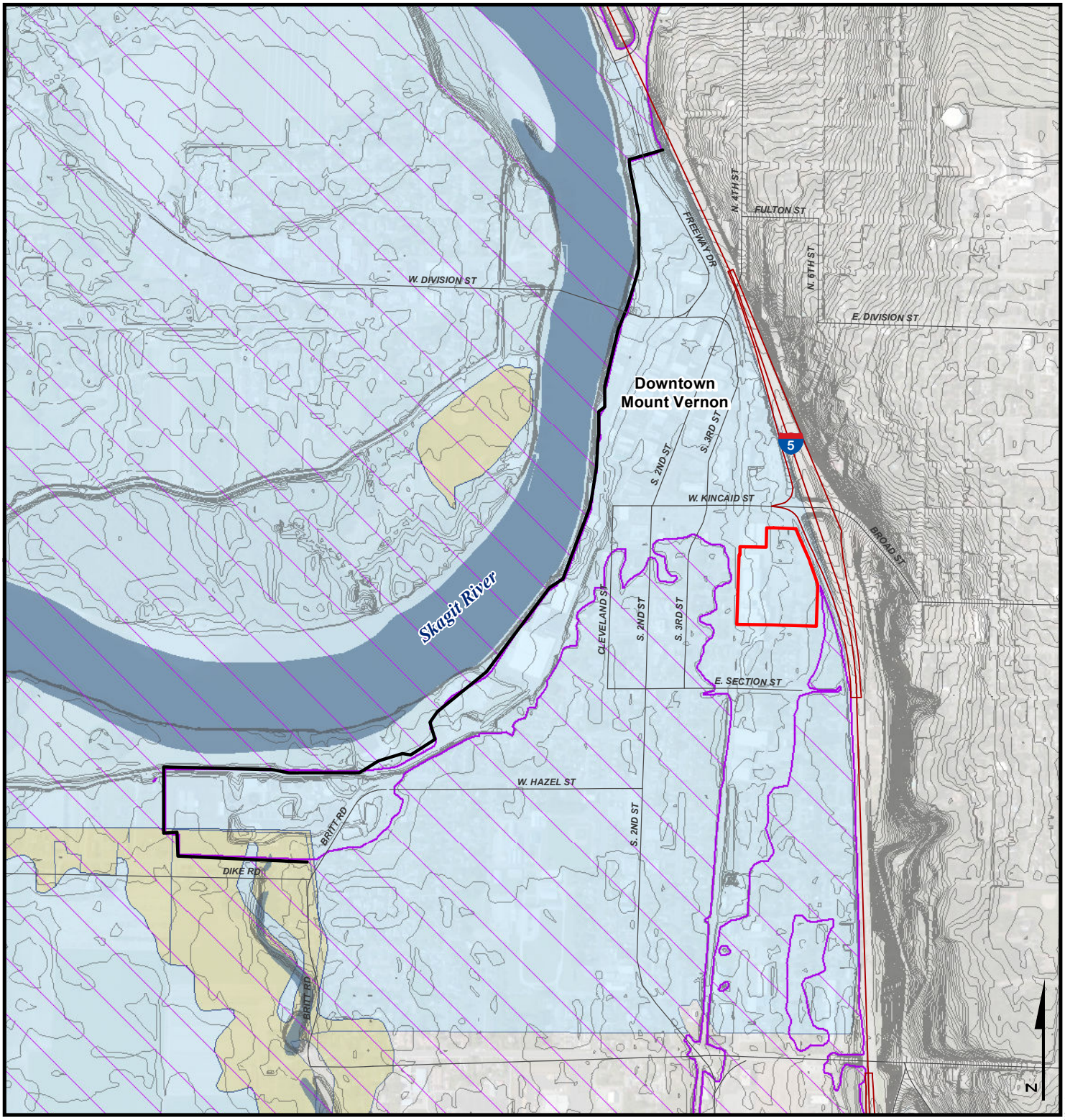
Existing levees along the Skagit River protect Mount Vernon and surrounding areas from frequent flooding. The first levees were constructed in 1894 and levee maintenance and improvement has been conducted by the City ever since. While the existing levees protect against frequent smaller floods, they are not certified to prevent flooding during a 100-year event. For this reason, the downtown area of Mount Vernon is shown within the 100-year floodplain on the FEMA FIRMs.

Alf Christianson Seed Site Alternative

The Alf Christianson Seed Site Alternative is within the City's downtown area. This area is mapped within the 100-year floodplain. The City's most recent proposed levee project (City of Mount Vernon 2013) will improve and construct levees along the downtown waterfront that are high enough to provide 100-year flood protection (**Figure 9**). The City has developed maps that predict what the 100-year floodplain boundaries will be once the levee is completed (anticipated completion is in 2015-2016, contingent upon funding). These maps indicate that the Alf Christianson Seed Site will be fully protected by the new levee and no longer within the 100-year floodplain. **Figure 9** shows the relationship of the Alf Christianson Seed Site to the FEMA mapped floodplains and the projected floodplain once the new levee is completed.

Truck City Site Alternative

The Truck City Site Alternative is roughly a mile and a half south of the Alf Christianson Seed Site. This site is also within the Skagit River floodplain. The construction of the new levee downtown will not remove this site from the floodplain. **Figure 10** shows the relationship of the Truck City Site to the FEMA mapped floodplains and the projected floodplain once the new levee is completed.



Alf Christianson Seed Site
Contour (2 ft interval, NAVD29)
I-5
Major Street
Levee Project
Post Levee Project 100-year Floodplain (CLOMR)
1985 Effective 100-year Floodplain
1985 Effective 500-year Floodplain

Data Sources: FEMA, USACE, Skagit County, City of Mount Vernon, DEA
Background: ESRI Service Layer World Imagery

0 500 1,000 Feet

Skagit County Jail Draft EIS
Skagit County and City of Mount Vernon

Figure 9. Floodplains in the Alf Christianson Seed Site Vicinity

December 2013

Project No.: COMV0000-0011

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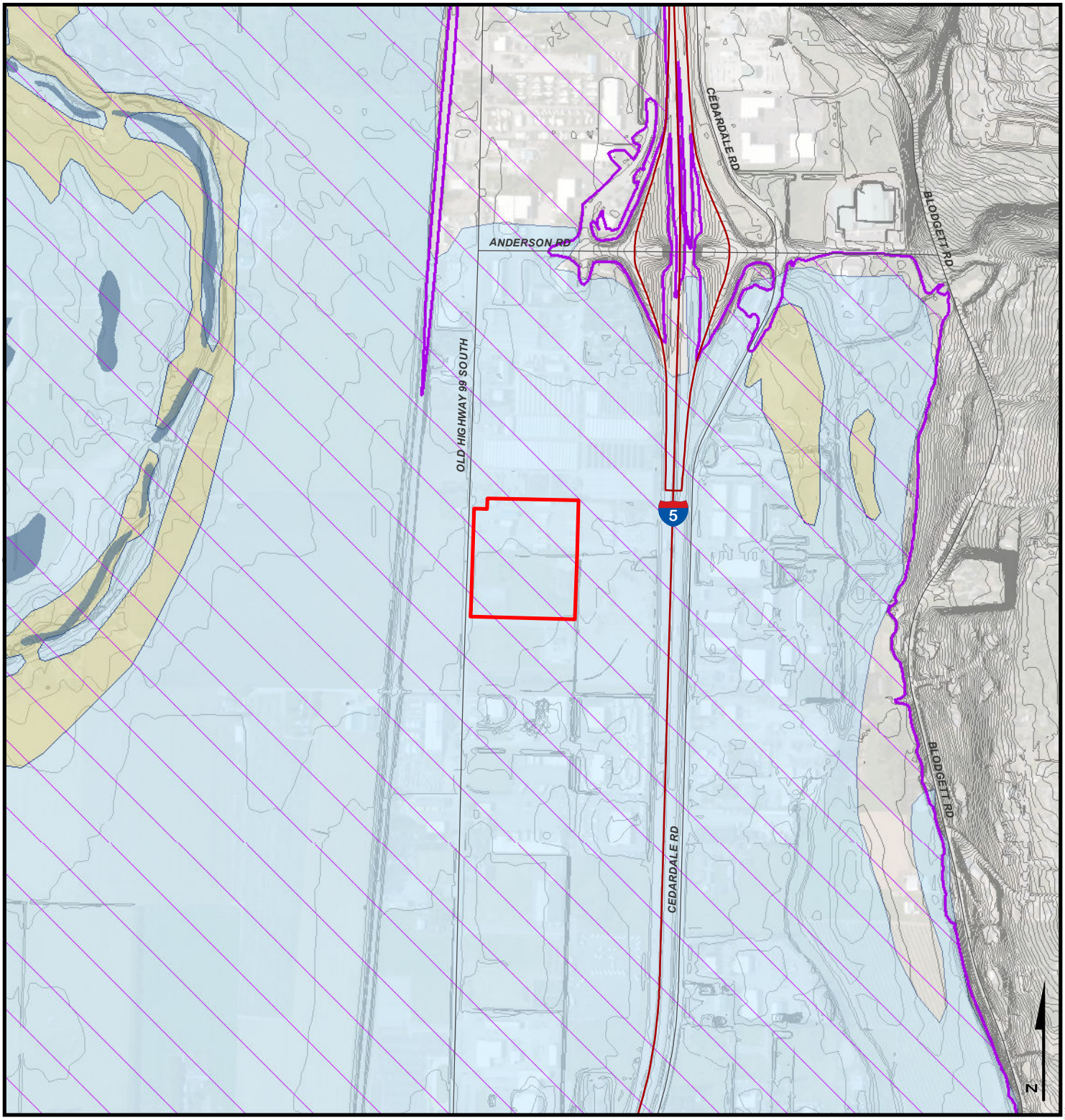

Truck City/Suzanne Lane Site
Contour (2 ft interval, NAVD29)
I-5
Major Street
River/Lake
Post Levee Project 100-year Floodplain (CLOMR)
1985 Effective 100-year Floodplain
1985 Effective 500-year Floodplain

Data Sources: FEMA, USACE, Skagit County, City of Mount Vernon, DEA
Background: ESRI Service Layer World Imagery

0 500 1,000 Feet

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Skagit County and City of Mount Vernon

Figure 10. Floodplains in the Truck City/Suzanne Lane Site Vicinity

December 2013

Project No.: COMV0000-0011

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3.3.2. Alternative Impacts

Alf Christianson Seed Site Alternative

Direct Impacts – Construction

The new jail facility will be constructed according to MVMC Chapter 15.36, Floodplain Management Standards (City of Mount Vernon 2011a). As a critical facility (see description of critical facilities below), the lowest floor of all buildings must be elevated at least 3 feet above the level of the base flood (100-year flood) elevation. The level of the base flood elevation will ultimately be determined by what floodplain map the City uses at the time of final design.

The base flood elevation, as shown on FEMA's FIRM, at the Alf Christianson Seed Site is one foot on average. The ground level at the site is around elevation 24 feet. Therefore, the lowest floor elevation the facility can have is 28 feet; 4 feet above ground level.

However, the City's goal is to complete the levee improvement project by 2016. If the levee is completed before the new jail is built, then the site will be out of the floodplain and the buildings can be constructed at ground level.

Direct Impacts – Operation

Until the proposed levee project is completed, operation of the new jail could be disrupted during large floods. During a 100-year flood, the jail facility could be surrounded by roughly one foot of water. Depending on the location of the facilities main entrance, this could impede vehicle traffic from accessing the site for the duration of the flood.

Smaller and more frequent flood events are not expected to affect the site because existing levees protect the downtown area. After the downtown levee project is completed, the facility will be protected from the 100-year flood and remain accessible during such an event. It should be noted that while protected from most floods, some amount of risk will always remain that a flood event exceeding the 100-year level could breach or overtop the levee, inundating the facility.

Indirect Impacts

No indirect impacts to floodplains are anticipated at the Alf Christianson Seed Site.

Critical Facilities Criteria

The MVMC Section 15.36.255 has floodplain regulations for critical facilities. This code defines a critical facility as "facilities including but not limited to schools, nursing homes, hospitals, police, fire, and emergency response installations which produce, use, or store hazardous materials or hazardous waste." These are facilities for which even a slight chance of flooding might be too great in that flooding would disrupt essential services. While jails are not specifically listed as a critical facility, they are considered critical to protect against flooding because the inmates they house are dependent on uninterrupted vehicle access to bring in food, medical supplies, and other essential items.

Construction of critical facilities within a 100-year floodplain is only permitted by the MVMC if no feasible alternative site is available. Alternative jail Sites 4, 6, 7, 9, and 14 considered by the County are located outside the 100-year floodplain. However, as discussed in Chapter 2, these sites were determined infeasible and were subsequently eliminated from consideration for the

new jail site. Site 4, Meridian Quarry, was eliminated because the site is located within a Mineral Resource Overlay, which is an area designated to protect long-term, commercially viable mineral Natural Resource Lands. Site 6 (Lower Fourth Street Site) and Site 7 (Far Downtown Northern Site) were eliminated due to site constraints, extensive commercial and residential displacements, and distance to support services in the downtown area. Site 14, Port of Skagit site, was eliminated due to wetland constraints, access limitations, and distance to support services.

For a critical facility to be constructed within a floodplain, it must adhere to the following requirements:

- The lowest floor must be three or more feet above the level of the base flood elevation.
- Flood proofing and sealing measures must be taken to ensure that toxic substances will not be displaced by or released into floodwaters.
- Access routes must be elevated to or above the level of the base floodplain to the extent feasible.

If the new jail is constructed on the Alf Christianson Seed Site prior to completion of the proposed downtown levee project, the jail must be constructed to meet the first two requirements. Raising access routes above the base flood elevation is infeasible in this case because of the technical complication and financial burden of raising downtown roadways and roadways linking to a major interstate. If the new jail is constructed after completion of the proposed downtown levee project, the facility will be outside of the 100-year floodplain and will not need to adhere to these requirements.

Truck City Site Alternative

Direct Impacts – Construction

As discussed above for the Alf Christianson Seed Site, the new jail facility will be constructed according to MVMC Chapter 15.36, Floodplain Management Standards (City of Mount Vernon 2011a). As a critical facility, the lowest floor of all buildings must be elevated at least 3 feet above the level of the base flood (100-year flood) elevation.

According to the effective FIRM, the base flood depth at the Truck City Site is on average 2 feet. The ground level at this site is around elevation 16 feet. Therefore, the lowest floor elevation the facility can have is 21 feet; 5 feet above ground level. Because this is a critical facility, elevating access roads to at least the level of the base flood should be considered. However, the length of roadway that would need to be elevated in this case would likely make raising the access roads financially infeasible.

Construction of the proposed downtown levee will not remove the Truck City Site from the floodplain.

Direct Impacts – Operation

The Truck City Site is well within the 100-year floodplain and would be surrounded by as much as 2 feet of floodwater during this level of event. This level of flooding would likely prevent vehicle access to the facility for the duration of the flood. Because this location is in the floodplain fringe, floodwaters are expected to recede relatively quickly (within 24 hours) from the site. Flood warning systems already in place typically provide notice up to 24 hours in

advance. Such warnings would provide time to for the Skagit County Jail to ensure sufficient provisions are on hand in the rare case that the facility would be cut off by floodwater. Sandbag walls can also be employed as an additional emergency contingency.

Indirect Impacts

No indirect impacts to floodplains are anticipated at the Truck City Site.

Critical Facilities Criteria

The critical facilities criterion for construction of the new jail at the Truck City Site is the same as the Alf Christianson Seed Site. This area is protected by uncertified facilities and the BNSF railroad corridor. However, to maintain access from I-5 during a 100-year flood, approximately 1,500 feet of Old Highway 99 South and 500 feet of Anderson Road would need to be raised by at most 2 feet. Raising this length of roadway would be a considerable expense making it infeasible to include as part of the jail's construction. However, if flooding along access roads proves to be a persistent problem, raising these roads could be accomplished at a later time as is encouraged in the Skagit County Natural Hazards Mitigation Plan (Skagit County 2003).

No Action Alternative

Under the No Action Alternative, the Skagit County Jail would remain in its current location in downtown Mount Vernon. This site is within the 100-year floodplain; however, because the site is within the downtown area, construction of the proposed downtown levee will protect this site and remove it from the floodplain. Because this alternative would not change existing conditions, it is considered to have no impacts to floodplains.

3.3.3. Mitigation Measures

Alf Christianson Seed Site Alternative

The Alf Christianson Seed Site Alternative will be constructed according to MVMC Chapter 15.36, Floodplain Management Standards. If constructed prior to the completion of the downtown levee project, the facility must be constructed with its lowest floor at least 3 feet above the base flood elevation as shown on the 1985 effective FEMA FIRM. If constructed after the completion and certification of the downtown levee, the facility will be out of the floodplain and mitigation measures will be unnecessary.

In case of a major flood during construction, it is recommended that the construction contractor identify a location where heavy equipment can be evacuated to if flood warnings indicate a risk to the construction site. It is also recommended that contractors are advised regarding the risks of construction in a floodplain. Contractors may want to place construction trailers and temporary buildings with the floor elevated 1 foot above the base flood elevation for protection of their property.

These recommendations would not be necessary if construction of the facility occurs after the proposed levee project is completed.

Truck City Site Alternative

The Truck City Site Alternative will also be constructed according to MVMC Chapter 15.36, Floodplain Management Standards. This facility will not have base flood elevation protection by current levees and so must be constructed with its lowest floor at least 3 feet above the base flood elevation as shown on the 1985 effective FEMA FIRM.

The safeguards for construction listed above for the Alf Christianson Seed Site are also recommended for the Truck City Site.

Flood events are also mitigated by operations of controlled reservoirs (dams) upstream. When flood warnings indicate that flows in the Skagit River will exceed 90,000 cfs, the USACE utilizes storage in upstream reservoirs to hold back additional water. This, along with flood fighting efforts of regional dike districts and agencies, diminishes the risk of flooding in downstream areas, including the City. The flood warning system also will provide the Skagit County Jail with days of advance warning of major flood events so that preparations can be set in place. These preparations may include setting up sandbag walls around vulnerable areas and insuring that supplies are fully stocked in the event the facility is cut off from vehicle deliveries.

3.4. Hazardous Materials

Phase 1 Environmental Site Assessments (ESA) were prepared for each site alternative and are included as **Appendix G** to this Draft EIS (MTC 2013c, MTC 2013d). These assessments were conducted by first reviewing federal, state, and local records. This review included information from databases, maps, and aerial photos. Site reconnaissance was also conducted along with interviews of property owners, site managers, and applicable occupants of the properties.

3.4.1. Existing Conditions

Alf Christianson Seed Site Alternative

On-Site Review


An original building from the Alf Christianson Seed Company.

All parcels that compose the Alf Christianson Seed Site are currently vacant. The larger parcels on the west side of the site were developed as industrial land for lumber, coal, and hay storage as early as 1912. The northern portion of the site was operated as a lumber yard until around 1957. The southwestern portion of the site was developed with industrial buildings for a cold storage facility by 1948. The property was purchased by the Alf Christianson Seed Company in 1972, after which time the site was developed into the current configuration of industrial/agricultural buildings. The site was operated as an agricultural seed and bulb producer until the 2000s, at which time it was vacated. During this industrial/agricultural history of the site, the presence of underground storage tanks (USTs) was recorded. Records also show that some of these USTs have leaked and petroleum-hydrocarbon surface spills have occurred.

Residential homes in the eastern portion of the site were constructed around 1906. Some of these homes were removed for the expansion of the Alf Christianson Seed Company in the 1970s. The remainder of the homes was removed in the 2010s.

Surrounding Sites

Records were reviewed for properties up to a mile from the Alf Christianson Seed Site. This review identified 116 database entries among 67 distinct sites listed in 12 environmental

databases. Most of these environmentally-regulated sites are far enough from, or down slope from, the Alf Christianson Seed Site that they do not present an obvious risk to the site's environmental conditions, with the following potential exception:

> A former UNOCAL fueling station is located north and adjacent to the property. This fueling station had an UST that leaked fuel. The leaking tank was removed in 1990 and the site was monitored thereafter until 1996. In 1997 the site received a conditional no further action determination from the Washington State Department of Ecology. The historic gas station is close enough to the Alf Christianson Seed Site that it could have contributed to the current environment conditions on the site.

Truck City Site Alternative

On-Site Review

The parcel covering the north half of the Truck City Site is currently being used as a gas station, truck stop, restaurant, and retail store. Fueling and temporary passenger-car parking are to the west and south of the gas station and truck washing building. Temporary and long-term truck parking is located east of the gas station. The perimeter buildings are partially in use for storage of tools and machinery. The parcels covering the south end of the site are undeveloped and are not currently in use.

The Truck City Site was developed as a truck stop in 1952-53 and operated eleven USTs until the facility burned down in 1976. When the facility was rebuilt in 1978, the original USTs remained in place until they were decommissioned and removed in 1993. When the tanks were removed, approximately 6,000 cubic yards of petroleum-contaminated soils and approximately 90,000 gallons of petroleum-contaminated groundwater were also removed from the site. A Phase II ESA was conducted in 2006 and no further contamination was found.

The fueling station, food market, and restaurant currently operating on the Truck City Site.

Surrounding Sites

Records were reviewed up to a mile radius around the Truck City Site. This review identified 25 database entries among 15 distinct sites listed in 10 environmental databases. Most of these environmentally-regulated sites are far enough from, or down slope from, the Truck City Site that they do not present an obvious risk to the site's environmental conditions, with the following exception:

> The Hallmark Refining Corporation is located east of the Truck City Site, on the opposite side of I-5, at the intersection of Cedardale Road and Dale Lane. This facility is a federally-listed large quantity generator of hazardous materials. Available records do not indicate a past environmental concern, but this facility does produce, store, and manage large quantities of hazardous waste. The facility also discharges wastewater into state waters and privately-owned treatment works under a regulated NPDES

permit. In addition, the facility appears to be up-gradient from the Truck City Site with respect to regional and local groundwater flow patterns (typically east to west).

3.4.2. Alternative Impacts

Alf Christianson Seed Site Alternative

Direct Impacts – Construction

Construction activities such as demolition of existing structures and site clearing and grading have the potential to encounter contaminated soil or unknown USTs. If contamination or unknown USTs are discovered on-site, these would need to be removed and appropriately disposed of prior to or during the demolition phase of construction. Based on the known historic presence of leaking USTs and petroleum-hydrocarbon surface spills, the Phase I ESA recommends a limited exploratory environmental sampling program on the site. This investigation would cover exterior and interior locations on the site. The goal of the investigation would be to confirm cleanup of previously spilled hydrocarbons, verify locations of any remaining USTs, and assess the general presence and extent of impact from pesticides and lumber treatment compounds from past use.

The buildings on-site were constructed during a time when asbestos was commonly used. The presence of asbestos in the buildings to be demolished will need to be confirmed prior to the start of demolition. If asbestos is found on-site, special abatement protocols will need to be followed to prevent the release of asbestos fibers during demolition.

The use of heavy equipment during construction creates the risk for spills or leakage of petroleum products such as fossil fuels, lubricants, and solvents. This risk is not greater than the risk normally associated with typical construction activities. The risk for such a spill or leak to result in a health hazard for construction workers or nearby residents is low. Standard BMPs will be utilized during construction to minimize the risk of spills or leaks.

Direct Impacts – Operation

Operation of the new jail will follow all applicable federal, state, and local regulations for hazardous materials handling and disposal. This facility is not expected to produce, store, or dispose of large quantities of hazardous materials. Hazardous materials used in operation of the facility may include but is not limited to fuel, oil and other petroleum based products, natural gas, paint, industrial cleaners, medical waste, etc. These materials will be properly stored and transported in accordance with applicable regulations.

Indirect Impacts

No indirect impacts to hazardous materials are anticipated from construction and operation of the Skagit County Jail on the Alf Christianson Seed Site.

Truck City Site Alternative

Direct Impacts – Construction

Construction activities such as demolition of existing structures and site clearing and grading have the potential to encounter contaminated soil or unknown USTs. If contamination or unknown USTs are discovered on-site, these would need to be removed and appropriately disposed of prior to or during the demolition phase of construction. Based on the known

historic use of the Truck City Site as a commercial truck fueling station, records of previously leaking USTs on the site, and the potential for the presence of undocumented oil tanks, the conclusions from the Phase I ESA are that further investigation of this site is warranted. This recommended investigation should include an exploratory sampling program. The primary goal of the program would be to assess the general presence and extent of potential petroleum contamination from past and current use.

Similar to the Alf Christianson Seed Site, the use of heavy equipment on the Truck City Site during construction creates the risk for spills/leakage of petroleum products such as fossil fuels, lubricants, and solvents. The risk for a spill or leakage to result in health hazards is low and will be minimized through the use of standard BMPs during construction.

Direct Impacts – Operation

Impacts from operation of the new jail are the same at the Truck City Site as discussed above for the Alf Christianson Seed Site.

Indirect Impacts

No indirect impacts to hazardous materials are anticipated from construction and operation of the Skagit County Jail on the Truck City Site.

No Action Alternative

Under the No Action Alternative, a new Skagit County Jail would not be built on either site. This project would not be required to investigate or remove contaminants from either the Alf Christianson Seed Site or the Truck City Site. Whatever contaminants may be currently present on these sites would remain until, presumably, some unknown time when remediation is called for by different circumstances.

3.4.3. Mitigation Measures

To protect against hazardous substance spills from routine operation and maintenance activities during construction on either site, it is recommended that the contractor provide an emergency response plan to demonstrate knowledge of proper hazardous material storage, handling, and emergency procedures, including proper spill notification and response requirements. The plan should be prepared and reviewed with all construction staff prior to construction.

Additional construction BMPs recommended during construction to prevent the release of contaminants include:

- Maintaining spill containment and cleanup materials at all active construction areas and where equipment fueling is conducted.
- Conducting fueling operations on paved areas whenever possible.
- Storing fuels and other potential contaminants away from demolition, clearing, and grading sites in secured containment areas.
- Conducting regular inspections, maintenance, and repairs on fuel hoses, hydraulic equipment, lubrication equipment, and chemical/petroleum storage containers.
- Requiring the contractor to use BMPs in accordance with a Stormwater Pollution Prevention Plan.
- Preparation of a Spill Prevention Control and Countermeasures (SPCC) Plan that identifies methods for preventing, containing and controlling potential releases during construction.

Alf Christianson Seed Site Alternative

Further investigation of the Alf Christianson Seed Site is recommended due to the nature of past industrial/agricultural uses on the site, and the site's history with leaking USTs and surface spills. The existing structures on this site also pose a high risk for the presence of asbestos and this investigation should confirm if this material is present. Contamination should be removed from the site prior to construction or during the demolition phase of construction. Hazardous materials removed from the site must be properly handled and disposed of in accordance with federal, state, and local regulations.

Truck City Site Alternative

Further investigation of the Truck City Site is recommended due to the nature of fueling station currently on the site, and the site's history with leaking USTs. Contamination should be removed from the site prior to construction or during the demolition phase of construction. Hazardous materials removed from the site must be properly handled and disposed of in accordance with federal, state, and local regulations.

3.5. Aesthetics

Visual analysis was performed by a landscape architect following the guidelines of the Federal Highway Administration's Visual Assessment for Highway Projects (FHWA 1981). This methodology is repeatable by others, and uses a qualitative and quantitative approach to analyze existing and proposed views of the project area. Viewpoints are selected that are representative of the project and different viewer groups (e.g., residents, pedestrians, motorists, etc.) in the project area.

3.5.1. Existing Conditions

Alf Christianson Seed Site Alternative

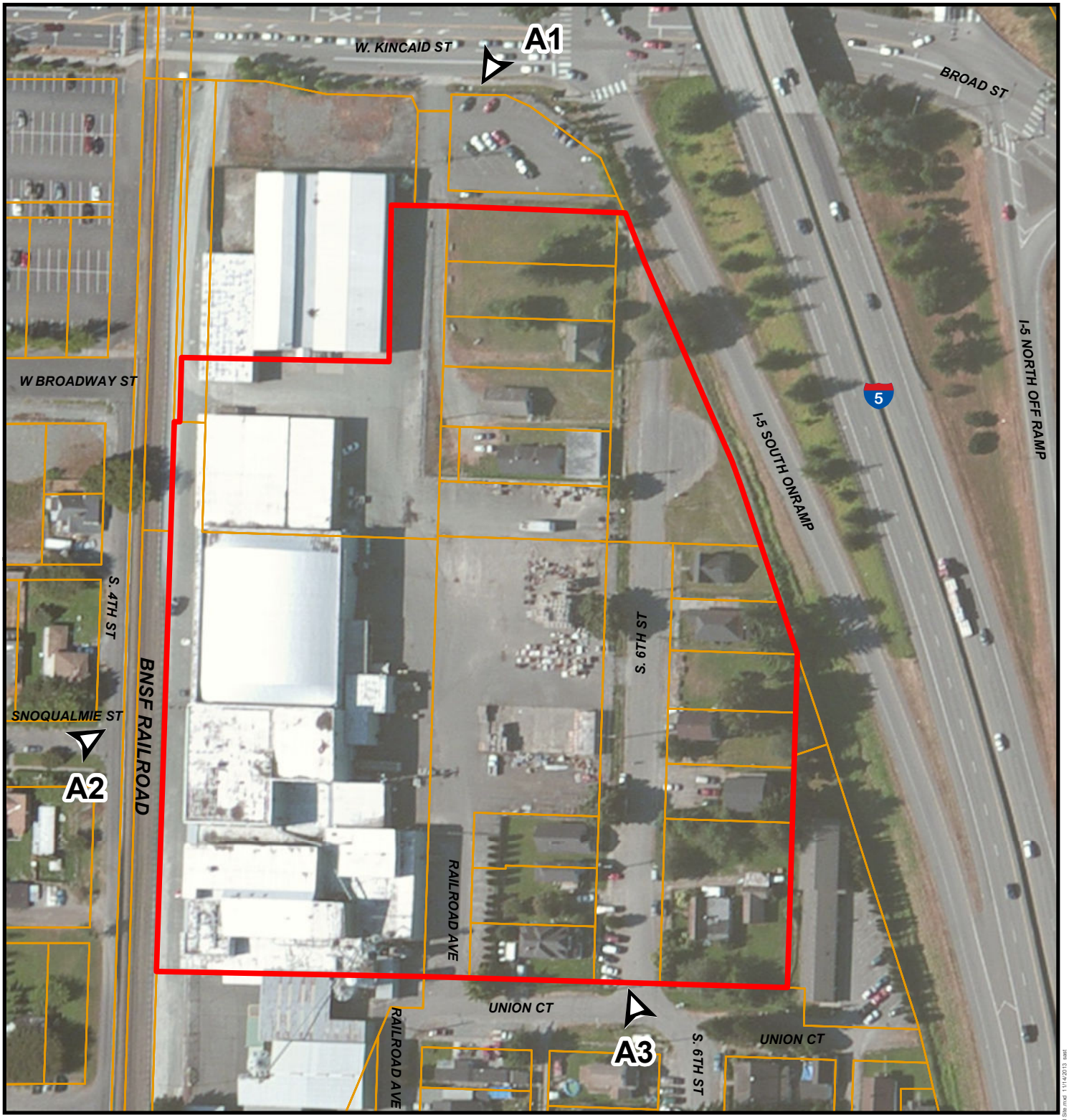
The Alf Christianson Seed Site is located on West Kincaid Street across from the Courthouse in downtown Mount Vernon. West Kincaid Street is a gateway to the City and has an urban to light industrial visual character with views of the central business district, transit station, single-family neighborhoods, and the I-5 corridor. The site is viewed by sensitive viewers including pedestrian and vehicular traffic in the vicinity of the gateway, including I-5, and residences south and west of the site.

Three representative viewpoints were analyzed for existing visual quality at the Alf Christianson Seed Site (**Figure 11**). The visual quality rating system considers three factors in determining visual quality: vividness, intactness, and unity. Each factor is rated on a scale of 1 to 7, with 7 representing the desirable conditions. The total visual quality rating is a numerical average of the three ratings. The existing visual quality at these viewpoints is as follows:

- A1 (**Figure 12**), view south from West Kincaid Street: 3.2 (average)
- A2 (**Figure 13**), view northeast from Snoqualmie Street: 2.9 (average)
- A3 (**Figure 14**), view northwest from Union Street: 2.9 (average)

The average overall existing visual quality for this site alternative is 3.0 (average).

Rater's Total Visual Quality Score Breakdown
5.7 - 7.0 = Very High, a dramatic, pristine natural environment with water, mountains, and mature vegetation or Superb example of built environment in dramatic physical setting.
4.7 - 5.6 = High
3.7 - 4.6 = Moderately High
2.7 - 3.6 = Average
1.9 - 2.6 = Moderately Low
1.1 - 1.8 = Low
0.0 - 1.0 = Very Low



Viewpoint Location and Direction

Alf Christianson Seed Site

Skagit County Tax Parcel

Data Sources: Skagit County, City of Mount Vernon, DEA
Background: ESRI Service Layer World Imagery

0 75 150 Feet

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Skagit County Jail Draft EIS

Skagit County and City of Mount Vernon

Figure 11. Viewpoint Locations for Alf Christianson Seed Site

December 2013

Project No.: COMV0000-0011

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Figure 12. A1, View South from West Kincaid Street

A1 – Existing (3.2. rating)

A1 – Proposed (3.2 rating)

Source: DLR Group 2013

Figure 13. A2, View Northeast from Snoqualmie Street

A2 – Existing (2.9 rating)

A2 – Proposed (3.4 rating)

Source: DLR Group 2013

Figure 14. A3, View Northwest from Union Street

A3 – Existing (2.9 rating)

A3 – Proposed (3.1 rating)

Source: DLR Group 2013

Truck City Site Alternative

The Truck City Site is located on Old Highway 99 South Road in south Mount Vernon. It has a rural to light industrial visual character with views of agricultural areas, intermittent commercial development, the I-5 corridor, and foothills in the background to the south and east. This site is highly visible by vehicles from the I-5 corridor traveling both north and southbound. These viewers tend to have low sensitivity due to the short frequency and duration of view.

Three representative viewpoints were analyzed for existing visual quality at the Truck City Site (**Figure 15**). The existing visual quality is as follows:

- T1 (**Figure 16**), view southeast from Old Highway 99 South Road: 3.4 (average)
- T2 (**Figure 17**), view northwest from I-5 Northbound: 4.3 (moderately high)
- T3 (**Figure 18**), view northeast from South Road: 4.3 (moderately high)

The average overall existing visual quality for this site alternative is 4.0 (moderately high).

Viewpoint Location and Direction

Truck City/Suzanne Lane Site

Skagit County Tax Parcel

Data Sources: Skagit County, City of Mount Vernon, DEA
Background: ESRI Service Layer World Imagery

0 125 250 Feet

N

Skagit County Jail Draft EIS

Skagit County and City of Mount Vernon

Figure 15. Viewpoint Locations for Truck City/Suzanne Lane Site

December 2013

Project No.: COMV0000-0011

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Figure 16. T1, View Southeast from Old Highway 99 South Road

T1 – Existing (3.4 rating)

T1 – Proposed (3.7 rating)

Source: DLR Group 2013

Figure 17. T2, View Northwest from I-5 Northbound

T2 – Existing (4.3 rating)

T2 – Proposed (4.0 rating)

Source: DLR Group 2013

Figure 18. T3, View Northeast from South Road

T3 – Existing (4.3 rating)

T3 – Proposed (4.0 rating)

Source: DLR Group 2013

3.5.2. Alternative Impacts

Alf Christianson Seed Site Alternative

Direct Impacts – Construction

The most noticeable temporary adverse impacts to visual quality throughout the project area will result from:

- Stockpiling materials and establishing staging areas for equipment and other materials.
- Operating construction equipment of all sizes, including cranes, hauling trucks, earth-working, and heavy equipment.
- Placing temporary erosion and sediment control measures such as plastic sheeting, erosion fabric, sandbags, silt fences, and straw bales.
- Exposure of soils and minimal dust associated with earth movement activities.

Medium- and heavy-duty construction equipment will temporarily affect visual quality because they will disrupt views towards the site. Residential viewers to the south and west of the site with the highest sensitivity to changes in visual quality will be those most affected by construction activities. However, these impacts are temporary in nature and are not considered significant.

Direct Impacts – Operation

As shown in **Table 5**, the Alf Christianson Seed Site Alternative will increase overall visual quality slightly from 3.0 (average) to 3.2 (average). In general, this is because the existing abandoned light industrial building will be replaced with a more aesthetically-designed structure with a lower height. This will improve the visual character of views toward the site. However, this amount of increase is minor and overall the visual quality would remain average.

Table 5. Visual Quality Ratings for Alf Christianson Seed Site Alternative

Viewpoint	Location	Existing	Proposed	Difference
A1	view south from West Kincaid Street	3.2	3.2	0.0
A2	view northeast from Snoqualmie Street	2.9	3.4	0.5
A3	view northwest from Union Street	2.9	3.1	0.2
	Overall Average	3.0	3.2	0.2

Sources of new light and glare include new overhead site lighting and headlights from vehicular traffic using the jail at night. This could be a nuisance to surrounding residents that view the site from the south and west. On-site lighting will be visible at night but will comply with the MVMC 17.84.010, requiring that where off-street parking shares a common boundary with any residentially zoned property, the illumination devices shall be directed away from the more restrictively zoned property.

Indirect Impacts

The new jail will be visible from Kincaid Street. As discussed in the City's Downtown and Waterfront Master Plan, the Kincaid Street frontage on the west side of I-5 is identified as the gateway to downtown. The Alf Christianson Seed Site is identified as a large industrial site that is

likely to be redeveloped, with the north edge fronting on Kincaid Street (See Section 3.9 Land Use for further discussion).

The master plan reiterates the importance of Kincaid Street serving as a gateway into downtown:

- "The portion of the site along Kincaid Street should be designed to provide an attractive entry experience to downtown…"
- Future development on Kincaid Street "will contribute to the gateway experience into downtown."

The Alf Christianson Seed Site Alternative does not propose any improvements to the properties immediately fronting Kincaid Street. The existing park and ride lot and vacant seed processing building on Kincaid Street will remain. Mitigation measures are recommended to improve consistency of the site design with the Downtown and Waterfront Master Plan and enhance the gateway to downtown. While the new jail facility does not extend north to Kincaid Street, it will limit the opportunity for a larger redevelopment and will be visible from Kincaid Street. Without mitigation, this alternative may not be consistent with the City's planned gateway visual character, and the associated aesthetic improvements at this location.

Truck City Site Alternative

Direct Impacts – Construction

The direct impacts from construction on the Truck City Site will be the same as those anticipated for the Alf Christianson Seed Site Alternative discussed above.

Direct Impacts – Operation

As shown in **Table 6**, the Truck City Site Alternative will slightly reduce overall visual quality from 4.0 (moderately high) to 3.9 (moderately high). Viewpoint T1 improves visual quality because the new jail will be more harmonious with the surrounding landscape and have fewer encroachments than the existing, vacant commercial-industrial development. Viewpoints T2 and T3 show slightly reduced visual quality because of increased development to views with relatively little development. The reduction is minor because the new jail will be an aesthetically-designed structure with a low building height that is partially screened by evergreen vegetation. Therefore, the new jail will not significantly change visual quality on the Truck City Site. This amount of decrease is minor, and overall visual quality will remain moderately high.

Table 6. Visual Quality Ratings for Truck City Site Alternative

Viewpoint	Location	Existing	Proposed	Difference
T1	view southeast from South Road	3.4	3.7	0.3
T2	view northwest from I-5 Northbound	4.3	4.0	-0.3
T3	view northeast from South Road	4.3	4.0	-0.3
	Overall Average	4.0	3.9	-0.1

Sources of new light and glare include new overhead site lighting and headlights from vehicular traffic using the jail at night. This will introduce a new source of glare and light in areas where

none previously existed. Due to the surrounding agricultural and commercial-industrial land uses in the area and absence of sensitive residential viewers, it may not be a nuisance.

On-site lighting will be visible at night but will comply with the MVMC 17.84.010, requiring that where off-street parking shares a common boundary with any residentially zoned property, the illumination devices shall be directed away from the more restrictively zoned property.

Indirect Impacts

The Truck City Site alternative will affect the perceived visual character of the area from rural and commercial/light industrial to more urban in nature.

No Action Alternative

Under the No Action Alternative, a new Skagit County Jail would not be built on either site. No visual impacts are anticipated.

3.5.3. Mitigation Measures

Avoidance and Minimization

Both the Alf Christianson Seed Site and the Truck City Site will meet or exceed the requirements of MVMC Chapter 17.93: Landscaping. Vegetation and landscaping will be used to screen the project from surrounding land use per MVMC Chapter 17.93.040 Screening Requirements. A Type 1 screen will create visual separation with evergreen trees in combination with an earthen berm or 6-foot-high fence.

Both sites will meet or exceed the lighting requirements in MVMC 17.84.010. Also, pedestrian and parking lighting will be minimal in height to minimize light and glare.

Compensatory Mitigation

Alf Christianson Seed Site Alternative

The following measures are recommended to improve consistency with the Downtown and Waterfront Master Plan. The same measures and several additional to further address consistency are provided in Section 3.9 Land Use.

- Incorporate an attractive outdoor space and/or public art on the site or adjacent to the site that would be accessible to the public and visible as part of the gateway entrance to downtown. Consider use of the remaining property fronting Kincaid Street for this public space. Incorporate mature plant material and landscaping to soften and enhance the area along Kincaid Street and on the jail site.
- Comply with the design guidelines identified in Section 10.7 of the Downtown and Waterfront Master Plan. Compliance with these guidelines should be demonstrated through site plans, sign plans, and elevation drawings during final design of the new jail, with final approval provided by the City.

To reduce the impacts from increased light and glare on surrounding receptors and night skies, the following measures are recommended:

- Require that outdoor lighting be hooded to reduce glare when viewed from adjoining land uses.
- Require outdoor lighting to use full cut-off fixtures so that direct light from high-intensity lamps would not result in glare.
- Orient/direct outdoor lighting away from adjoining land uses.
- Locate plant material to reduce light and glare.

Truck City Site Alternative

To reduce the impacts from increased light and glare on surrounding viewers and night skies, the following measures are recommended:

- Require that outdoor lighting be hooded to reduce glare when viewed from adjoining land uses.
- Require outdoor lighting to use full cut-off fixtures so that direct light from high-intensity lamps would not result in glare.
- Orient/direct outdoor lighting away from adjoining land uses.
- Locate plant material to reduce light and glare.

3.6. Historic and Cultural Preservation

A Cultural Resources Review of the Proposed Skagit County Jail Sites was prepared to evaluate the probability for encountering cultural resources on each alternative site (Drayton Archaeology 2013).The report records the results of the background research and field investigation and is included as **Appendix D** to this Draft EIS.

3.6.1. Existing Conditions

Cultural resources are evidence of past human activity, including historic and archaeological sites. A review of historic and cultural archival information was performed as part of a cultural resource assessment for the alternative sites conducted in September 2013 (Drayton Archaeology 2013). Results of the archival research indicate that:

- Occupation of the area would not have been possible until the late pre-contact period due to geologic formation processes having recently formed the Skagit River Delta. The area is situated in a formerly forested river mouth area with access to fresh water and salt marsh estuary resources.
- The alternative sites are in the lower Skagit River floodplain delta, the southern half of which was once freely populated by the Kikiallus band of Skagit peoples, and the northern half of which was populated by the Nookachamps band of Skagit peoples. An ethnographically and historically recorded Kikiallus village is known to have existed near the mouth of the Skagit River far south of either property.
- Neither site was utilized during the early contact and historic period.
- No settlers or delineated farmland are depicted at either site.

Background review determined that both sites are located in an area of low to moderate probability for archaeological resources based upon development and past land use. Cultural resources of a historic nature are expected within a short depth of the surface, while pre-contact cultural materials could range in depth from the surface to several meters below the present surface due to the geologic formation processes of the Skagit River delta. Types of cultural resources thought possible for discovery include pre-contact settlements; hunting, fishing, and plant gathering remains; ceremonial remains; and/or historic trash scatters or artifacts associated with farming and logging activities, residential occupation, and/or transportation.

Field investigations at both sites included pedestrian survey and trench excavation conducted on September 12, 2013. The County pre-selected the number of trenches and their general locations. A backhoe operator excavated two trenches at each site, each approximately 3 to 4 meters long and 61 centimeters wide. All of the trenches were dug to a depth below the proposed construction excavation. Trenching was prohibited in the developed areas where asphalt and/or gravel would have been disturbed. All soils were inspected for cultural materials. No evidence of pre-contact or historic archaeological occupation or deposits was encountered during field investigations.


Trench excavations at the Alf Christianson Seed Site

Alf Christianson Seed Site Alternative

The Alf Christianson Seed Site does not contain any known places or objects listed on, or proposed for, national, state, or local preservation registers such as the National Register of Historic Places and the Washington Heritage Register. There are no recorded archaeological sites on the site or within a mile of the site. There are several historically significant structures near the site in downtown Mount Vernon.


A historic knife blade recovered from the Alf Christianson Seed Site.

Field investigations did not locate any cultural resources at the site. Trench 3, on a former residential lot, was 267 centimeters (cm) deep. Trench 3 showed minor signs of alteration in the upper portion, but natural deposits below the top layer. Trench 4 was 239 cm deep. Trench 4 showed nearly one meter deep of disturbed fill and trash, including historic material (a complete knife blade from England). These materials are not considered significant due to the mixed nature of older materials with modern trash.

Truck City Site Alternative

The Truck City Site does not contain any known places or objects listed on, or proposed for, national, state, or local preservation registers such as the National Register of Historic Places and the Washington Heritage Register. There are no recorded archaeological sites on the site. There are two recorded archaeological sites within about one mile of the Truck City Site.

Field investigations did not locate any cultural resources at the site. Trench 1 went to a depth of 175 centimeters. The upper layer was very compacted, probably due to the area having been utilized as a stockpile location during development of the parcel immediately to the east. Trench 2 went to a depth of 273 cm. No cultural material was found in either trench. Both trenches showed minor signs of alteration in the upper portion, but natural deposits below the top layer.


Trench 2 near the Moose Lodge on the Truck City Site.

3.6.2. Alternative Impacts

Alf Christianson Seed Site Alternative

Direct Impacts – Construction

Because cultural resource assessments might not identify all possible cultural resources within a given area, it is possible that construction of the new jail could impact unknown subsurface cultural resources on the site. Although no evidence of pre-contact or historic archaeological material was encountered during field investigations, site soils suggest that deposition could have inundated and preserved surfaces that might have supported human activity. Data returned from the trenches indicates that there is a potential for preserved, buried pre-contact cultural deposits in undisturbed alluvial deposits.

Direct Impacts – Operation

Operation of the new jail at the Alf Christianson Seed Site would not have any operational impacts to archaeological or historic resources, as ground-disturbing activities would occur only during construction.

Indirect Impacts

Since there are no archaeological or historic resources on or immediately adjacent to the Alf Christianson Seed Site, no indirect impacts are anticipated.

Truck City Site Alternative

Direct Impacts – Construction

Similar to the Alf Christianson Seed Site, it is possible that construction of the new jail on the Truck City Site could impact unknown subsurface cultural resources on the site. Although no evidence of pre-contact or historic archaeological material was encountered during field investigations, site soils suggest that deposition could have inundated and preserved surfaces that might have supported human activity. Data returned from the trenches indicate that there is a potential for preserved, buried pre-contact cultural deposits in undisturbed alluvial deposits.

Direct Impacts – Operation

The operation of the new jail at the Truck City Site would not have any operational impacts to archaeological or historic resources, as ground-disturbing activities would occur only during construction.

Indirect Impacts

Since there are no archaeological or historic resources on or immediately adjacent to the Truck City Site, no indirect impacts are anticipated.

No Action Alternative

Under the No Action Alternative, the County would not construct a new jail facility. Therefore, no direct, indirect, or cumulative impacts to historic or archaeological resources are anticipated.

3.6.3. Mitigation Measures

Alf Christianson Seed Site Alternative

Further archaeological review is recommended at the Alf Christianson Seed Site. Additional subsurface testing should be conducted because subsurface trenching was limited in scope. The locations made available for trenching were limited to selected locations outside of the developed commercial areas. Components in the observed soil profiles suggest that there is a potential for encountering buried, intact surfaces during excavations.

In the event that archaeological materials are encountered during the development of the property, an archaeologist should immediately be notified and work halted in the vicinity of the find until the materials can be inspected and assessed. At that time, the appropriate persons are to be notified of the exact nature and extent of the resource so that measures can be taken to secure them. In the event of inadvertently discovered human remains or indeterminate bones, pursuant to RCW 68.50.645, all work must stop immediately and law enforcement should be contacted. Any remains should be covered and secured against further disturbance, and communication established with the Mount Vernon Police Department and the State Physical Anthropologist at the Washington State Department of Archaeology and Historic Preservation for coordination with the concerned Native Tribe(s).

Truck City Site Alternative

The recommended mitigation measures are the same as the Alf Christianson Seed Site Alternative.

3.7. Transportation

Potential impacts to the existing transportation system of constructing a new jail were determined based upon the results of a Trip Generation Rate Analysis (DEA 2013b) and Transportation Concurrency Review (DEA 2013a). The reports are included as **Appendices F** and **E** to this Draft EIS.

3.7.1. Existing Conditions

Alf Christianson Seed Site Alternative

The Alf Christianson Seed Site is located in downtown Mount Vernon near the I-5 Kincaid Street interchange, where local traffic is concentrated. Principal arterials in the downtown area include Kincaid Street, S 2nd Street, and S 3rd Street. Kincaid Street is a designated State Route (SR 536). According to the Transportation Element of the City's Comprehensive Plan (City of Mount Vernon 2008), as of 2005 these roads carried roughly 10,000 to 18,000 vehicle trips each day on average. By 2025[1] it is anticipated that the range will increase to 15,000 to 21,000 vehicle trips each day. Traffic in the downtown area is currently moderately congested. Congestion is expected to increase in the future with delays becoming extensive in some areas.

As a designated State Route (SR 536), access points to Kincaid Street must meet Washington State Department of Transportation (WSDOT) standards and are subject to WSDOT review. SR 536 is currently designated as a Managed Access (Class 5) Highway with the following access requirements:

- Accesses must be spaced 125 feet apart.
- Only one (1) access to individual or contiguous parcels under the same owner is allowed.

[1] All estimates cited herein for 2025 assume the same road network present in 2005. However, the City of Mount Vernon Transportation Element Comprehensive Plan proposes changes to the City's road network that would reduce, though not entirely eliminate, future congestion.

- Variance permits may be allowed.

In the future, SR 536 is anticipated to be designated as a Limited Access (Modified Control) Highway with the following access requirements:

- At-grade intersections are allowed for selected public roads and approaches for existing private driveways.
- Commercial approaches may be allowed.
- Do not allow direct access if alternate public road access is available.
- SR 536 must accommodate future WSDOT interchange upgrades at Kincaid Street.

Truck City Site Alternative

The Truck City Site is located in a less congested area than the Alf Christianson Seed Site. This site is in a commercial/industrial area adjacent to agricultural land. Fewer roads cross through this area with Old Highway 99 South being the main north-south route. Anderson Road would serve as the jail's closest access to I-5 from the Truck City Site. Both Anderson Road and Old Highway 99 South are the two main principal arterials in this area. These two roads were estimated to carry from 5,000 to 9,000 average vehicle trips per day in 2005 (City of Mount Vernon 2008). By 2025, the traffic on Old Highway 99 South is estimated to more than double, carrying around 20,000 daily trips on average, while Anderson Road is expected to increase to around 6,000 to 12,000 trips. Currently there is little congestion in the area around the Truck City Site, but congestion is expected to increase considerably in the future with delays becoming extensive, especially along Old Highway 99 South.

3.7.2. Alternative Impacts

Transportation concurrency is one of the requirements of the Washington State Growth Management Act (GMA). The GMA directs agencies to set and maintain Level of Service (LOS) standards for roadways. Transportation concurrency requires that a financial commitment must be in place to complete transportation improvements to serve new developments that result in traffic generation which exceed LOS standards.

The transportation concurrency review process requires applicants to estimate the number of traffic trips generated by a proposed development. Trip generation for the new jail is based on a full build-out 800-bed jail facility. The proposed jail facility at the Alf Christianson Seed Site will generate 34 net traffic trips per PM peak hour, of which there are 15 entering trips and 19 exiting trips. The proposed jail facility at the Truck City Site will generate 33 net traffic trips per PM peak hour, of which there are 5 entering trips and 28 exiting trips (DEA 2013a).

As part of the transportation concurrency review process, the LOS is used to describe operational conditions within the surrounding roadway system. For un-signalized and signalized intersections, LOS is defined in terms of delay, which is a measure of driver discomfort and frustration and lost travel time. There are six LOS levels ranging from LOS A to LOS F, with LOS A representing the best operating conditions with little to no delay, while LOS F represents the most significant delays.

For signalized intersections and all-way stop-controlled intersections, LOS is determined by the average intersection delay. For two-way stop-controlled intersections, LOS is determined by the worst delay experienced by the stop approaches. LOS criteria are provided in **Table 7**.

Table 7. Intersection Level of Service Definitions

Level of Service	Control Delay (seconds/vehicle)		Expected Delays
	Sign Control Intersections	Signalized Intersections	
A	0-10	≤10	Little or no delay
B	>10-15	>10-20	Short traffic delays
C	>15-25	>20-35	Average traffic delays
D	>25-35	>35-55	Long traffic delays
E	>35-50	>55-80	Very long traffic delays
F	>50	>80	Extremely long traffic delays

Source: 2000 Highway Capacity Manual (TRB 2000)

Alf Christianson Seed Site Alternative

Direct Impacts – Construction

Impacts associated with construction cannot fully be determined until final design. However, it can be assumed that construction of the Alf Christianson Seed Site is likely to cause temporary traffic delays and may periodically reduce access to adjacent buildings. All applicable efforts will be made to limit construction impacts.

Construction trips will consist of construction crews, heavy equipment, trucking, and supply deliveries. This additional traffic will be distributed throughout the local, regional, and state roadway/freeway network based on probable trip patterns. It is expected that construction crews will arrive and depart outside of the AM and PM peak hours. Primary construction impacts will be from vehicles arriving and departing during the AM and PM peak hours. Dedicated construction haul routes can be identified to limit impacts to local businesses, residences, and other local attractions.

A construction staging plan will be developed during final project design to help reduce potential traffic congestion problems that may arise due to construction. These plans are used to identify where traffic can be rerouted, detoured, or shifted in the existing roadway right-of-way along adjacent roadway corridors and to minimize total disruption to adjacent traffic and local businesses. All staging plans must minimize the impact to emergency services such as police, fire, and rescue vehicles, as well as transit services such as Skagit Transit. As part of the construction staging plan, efforts will be made to ensure that traffic movements and access to local businesses is maintained during construction.

The BNSF Railroad runs adjacent to the Alf Christianson Seed Site. The project team and construction crews will coordinate with the railroad regarding construction activities so that rail operations and construction activity impacts will be minimized.

Direct Impacts – Operation

The transportation concurrency review for the Alf Christianson Seed Site considered the vehicle trips already occurring from the warehouse facility on the property and compared those trips to the projected number of trips that would be generated by the jail facility. The new jail will

increase the number of trips by 34 vehicles per PM peak hour. This is a relatively minor addition when compared to the 10,000 to 18,000 daily trips already occurring along the downtown streets. Roadway segment capacity LOS deficiencies are not expected because a relatively small number of project-generated trips are present on the roadway network during the PM peak hour.

With access to the new jail provided from the north on Kincaid Street, eight (8) surrounding intersections either had 10 or greater project trips per PM peak hour or had intersection LOS deficiencies. Deficient intersections are primarily two-way stop control, and the side street volumes at most of the intersections are usually low. **Table 8** and **Figure 19** provide operational analysis results from the Alf Christianson Seed Site.

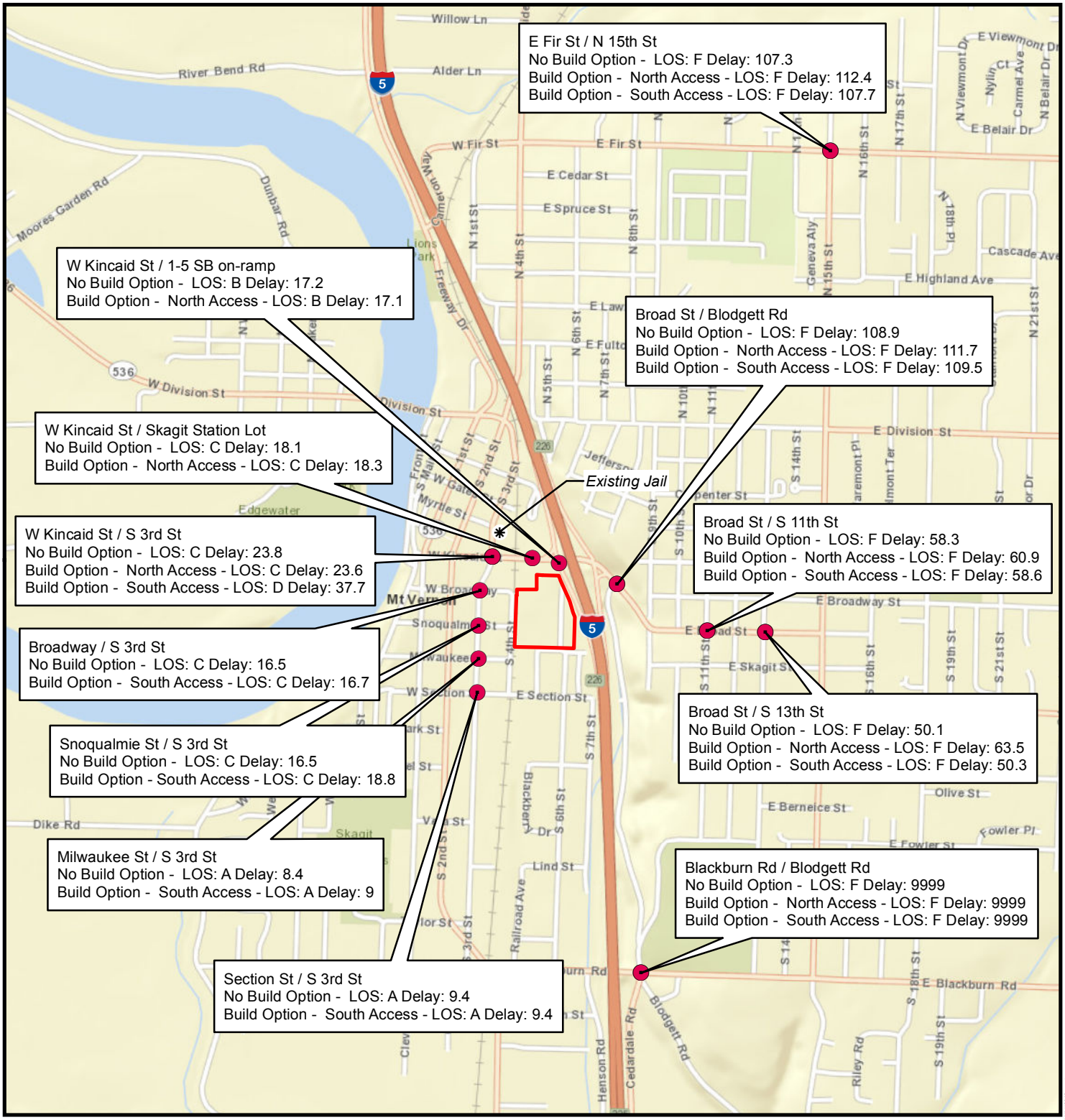
Table 8. Operational Analysis – Alf Christianson Seed Site with North Access

Intersection Name	Control Type	No Build LOS (Delay)	Build LOS (Delay)	Site Trips[1]
E Fir St / N 15th St	Two-Way Stop	F (107.3)	F (112.4)	1
W Kincaid St / S 3rd St	Signal	C (23.8)	C (23.6)	10
W Kincaid St & I-5 SB	Signal	B (17.2)	B (17.1)	12
Broad St / S 11th St	Two-Way Stop	F (58.3)	F (60.9)	9
Broad St / S 13th St	Two-Way Stop	F (50.1)	F (63.5)	7
Blackburn Rd / Blodgett Rd	Two-Way Stop	F (9999)	F (9999)	1
Broad St / Blodgett Rd	Two-Way Stop	F (108.9)	F (111.7)	11
W Kincaid St / Skagit Station Lot	Two-Way Stop	C (18.1)	C (18.3)	12

[1] Per PM Peak Hour

The existing and future WSDOT access requirements for Kincaid Street encourage the reduction and elimination of access points along the roadway. This policy is intended to maximize the capacity of Kincaid Street and provide local and regional access to I-5. There are potential concerns about the location of the driveway relative to the I-5 southbound off-ramp, and in particular, the conflicts created by vehicles exiting southbound I-5 and attempting to merge across the westbound through lanes in a very short distance to access the site. WSDOT's preference is for no or limited (right-in right-out only) access from the site to SR 536 (DEA 2013a). This is consistent with the current and future WSDOT Access Policy for SR 536.

If the access was limited to right-in right-out only at the driveway on SR 536, provisions for U-turns would need to be provided east and west of the site access to allow for full access. U-turns are not permitted at interstate freeway ramps so the nearest opportunities for providing U-turns are at the intersection of Kincaid Street and S Third Street to the west, and Broad Street and Blodgett Road to the east. Neither of these intersections currently meets design standards for the provision of U-turns, and both would require significant widening to provide sufficient space for U-turns to occur.



Intersection Level of Service (LOS)

Alf Christianson Seed Site

Data Source: DEA
Background: ESRI Service Layer World Street Map

0 750 1,500 Feet

N

Skagit County Jail Draft EIS

Skagit County and City of Mount Vernon

Figure 19. Intersection LOS for Alf Christianson Seed Site

December 2013

Project No.: COMV0000-0011

Limiting the access to right-in right-out also increases the impacts to the I-5 interchange as traffic exiting the site destined to the west would impact each ramp intersection two times in order to travel from the site to Blodgett Road for the U-turn, and then back past the site to downtown.

With access provided from the south via Union Street and S 6th Street, 10 surrounding intersections either had 10 or greater project trips, or had intersection LOS deficiencies. Those intersections are primarily two-way stop control, and the side street volumes at most of the intersections are usually low. **Table 9** and **Figure 19** provide operational analysis results from the Alf Christianson Seed Site, south access.

Table 9. Operational Analysis – Alf Christianson Seed Site with South Access

Intersection Name	Control Type	No Build LOS (Delay)	Build LOS (Delay)	Site Trips[1]
E Fir St / N 15th St	Two-Way Stop	F (107.3)	F (107.7)	2
W Kincaid St / S 3rd St	Signal	C (23.8)	D (37.7)	13
Broad St / S 11th St	Two-Way Stop	F (58.3)	F (58.6)	3
Broad St / S 13th St	Two-Way Stop	F (50.1)	F (50.3)	2
Blackburn Rd / Blodgett Rd	Two-Way Stop	F (9999)	F (9999)	4
Broad St / Blodgett Rd	Two-Way Stop	F (108.9)	F (109.5)	3
Section St & S 3rd St	Two-Way Stop	A (9.4)	A (9.4)	12
Broadway / S 3rd St	Two-Way Stop	C (16.5)	C (16.7)	13
Snoqualmie St / S 3rd St	Two-Way Stop	C (16.5)	C (16.8)	13
Milwaukee St / S 3rd St	Two-Way Stop	A (8.4)	A (9.0)	14

[1] Per PM Peak Hour

Although the total net increase in trips is small for the Alf Christianson Seed Site (34 new vehicle trips per PM peak hour), little to no increase in traffic crash frequency can be assumed due to the increase in traffic volume for the north, south, or combination access point configurations. The increase in vehicles will not create major additions to congestion. Therefore, the risk of rear-end or side-impact crashes is minimized compared to the No Action Alternative.

Additional left-turn conflicts would occur at the driveway access points, depending on the site and driveway location(s), north, south, or a combination. Driveway locations during site planning shall consider sight distance and turning movements to minimize obstructions for drivers that would increase the risk of collisions while turning into and out of the site. Right-turn conflicts could arise at a right-in right-out driveway configuration for the north access point along Kincaid Street. However, this type of collision is minor compared to a left-turn across opposing traffic.

Indirect Impacts

The general proximity of the Alf Christianson Seed Site to the Skagit Station transit center also results in a potential ridership loss compared to a greater density development such as residential, retail, or commercial centers in the same area. A jail facility at this location results in a lost opportunity for other transit-oriented development (TOD) that could easily utilize the transit facilities. Additionally, if the Alf Christianson Seed Site is not properly designed, the

layout could potentially prohibit pedestrians traveling from the existing residential areas south of the site to the Skagit Station transit center.

Truck City Site Alternative

Direct Impacts – Construction

The construction impacts described for the Alf Christianson Seed Site (above) also apply to the Truck City Site. At this site, adjacent businesses are fewer and further away reducing the likelihood that access to these properties would be affected by construction. The BNSF Railroad is also further from the Truck City Site than it is from the Alf Christianson Seed Site, reducing the likelihood that construction would impact the railroad. Coordination with the railroad regarding construction will still be conducted, if necessary.

Direct Impacts – Operation

Similar to the Alf Christianson Seed Site, the transportation concurrency review for the Truck City Site considered the vehicle trips already occurring from the Truck City Site facilities currently on the property and compared those trips to the projected number of trips that will be generated by a new jail. The jail will increase the number of trips by 33 vehicles per PM peak hour, which is a relatively minor addition when compared to the 5,000 to 9,000 daily trips already occurring along adjacent roads. Roadway segment capacity LOS deficiencies are not expected due to the relatively small number of project-generated trips that enter the roadway network during the PM peak hour.

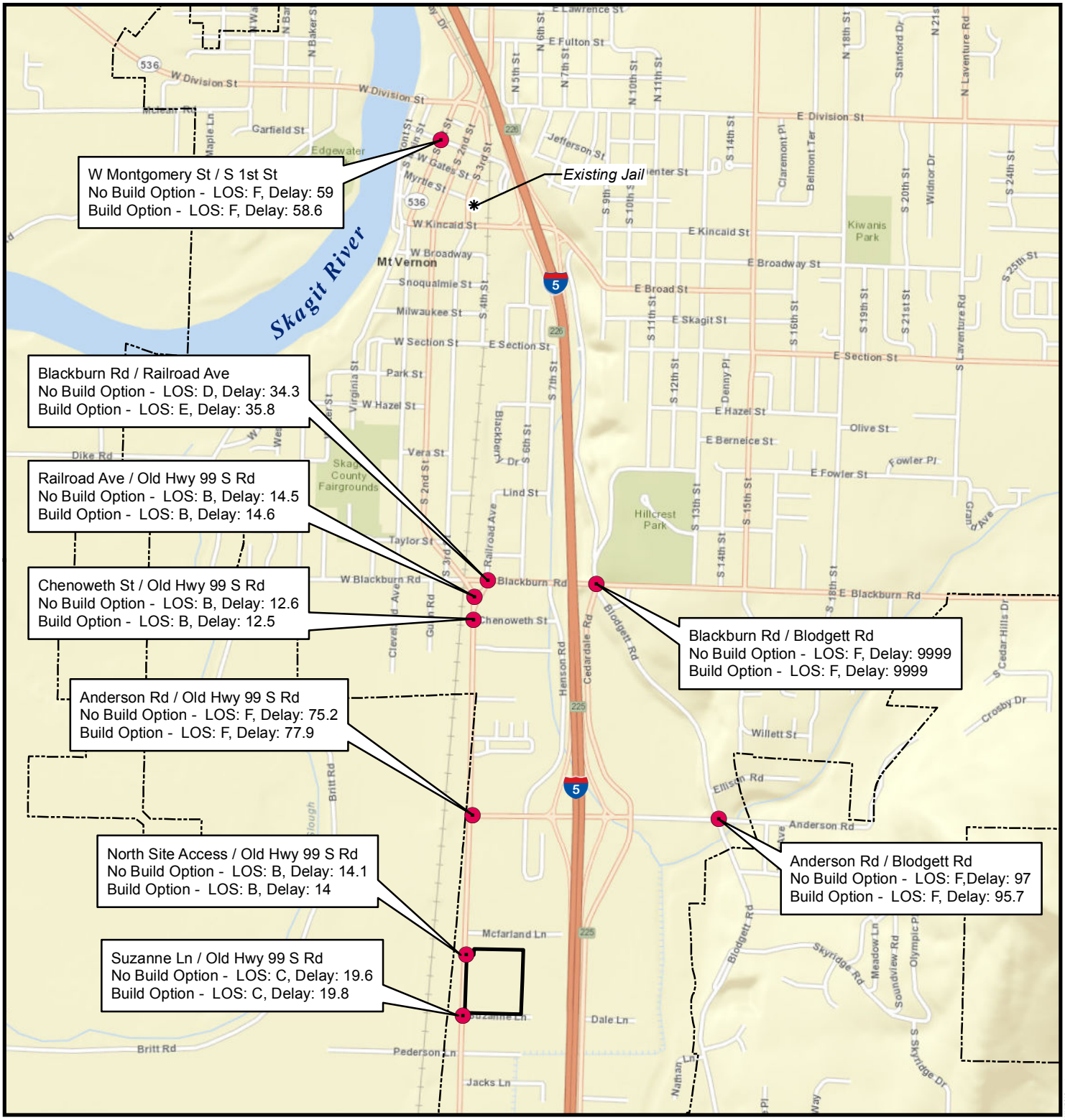
As identified in **Table 10** and **Figure 20**, the intersection LOS analysis indicated that there are nine (9) intersections that have 10 or more project-generated trips or with LOS deficiencies. The intersections with deficiencies are all controlled with two-way stop control, and the side street volumes at most intersections are usually low.

The Truck City Site will not result in significantly longer delays to the deficient intersections than the No Build condition. The LOS deficiencies are mostly resulting from background traffic growth.

Table 10. Operational Analysis – Truck City Site

Intersection Name	Control Type	No Build LOS (Delay)	Build LOS (Delay)	Site Trips[1]
Railroad Ave / Old Hwy 99 S Rd	Two-Way Stop	B (14.5)	B (14.6)	15
Blackburn Rd / Railroad Ave	Two-Way Stop	D (34.3)	E (35.8)	9
Blackburn Rd / Blodgett Rd	Two-Way Stop	F (9999)	F (9999)	9
Anderson Rd / Old Hwy 99 S Rd	Two-Way Stop	F (75.2)	F (77.9)	23
Anderson Rd / Blodgett Rd	Two-Way Stop	F (97.0)	F (95.7)	1
W Montgomery St / S 1st St	Two-Way Stop	F (59.0)	F (58.6)	1
Suzanne Ln / Old Hwy 99 S Rd	Two-Way Stop	C (19.6)	C (19.8)	13
North Access / Old Hwy 99 S Rd	Two-Way Stop	B (14.1)	B (14.0)	15
Chenoweth St / Old Hwy 99 S Rd	Two-Way Stop	B (12.6)	B (12.5)	14

[1] Per PM Peak Hour



Intersection Level of Service (LOS)

Truck City/Suzanne Lane Site

Data Source: DEA
Background: ESRI Service Layer World Street Map

0 0.25 0.5 Miles

N

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Figure 20. Intersection LOS for Truck City/Suzanne Lane Site

December 2013

Project No.: COMV0000-0011

Although the total net increase in trips is small for the Truck City Site (33 new vehicle trips per PM peak hour), little to no increase in traffic crash frequency can be assumed due to the increase in traffic volume for the access point configuration. The increase in vehicles will not create major additions to congestion. Therefore, the risk of rear-end or side-impact crashes is minimized compared to the No Action Alternative.

Additional left-turn conflicts would occur at the driveway access points, depending on the site and driveway location(s). Driveway locations during site planning shall consider sight distance and turning movements to minimize obstructions for drivers that would increase the risk of collisions while turning into and out of the site.

Indirect Impacts

Due to the Truck City Site's distant proximity to transit facilities, such as the Skagit Station transit center, it is not expected that TOD would be generated on the site. There is little to no lost opportunity for TOD on the site.

No other indirect effects relative to transportation are anticipated.

No Action Alternative

The No Action Alternative would not impact traffic, because a new jail would not be constructed.

3.7.3. Mitigation Measures

Alf Christianson Seed Site Alternative

A construction staging plan should be developed during final design to help reduce potential traffic congestion problems in the downtown area. Identification of construction haul routes is recommended to limit impacts to local businesses, residences, and other local attractions.

Following are the recommended conditions of approval for this project at the Alf Christianson Seed Site:

- If the access is placed on the north, a right-in right-out driveway on SR 536 is recommended with provisions for U-turns at the intersection of Kincaid Street and S Third Street to the west, and Broad Street and Blodgett Road to the east. This mitigation is not eligible for impact fee credits.
- If the access is placed on the south, improvements to pedestrian safety on S 6th Street from Union Street to Blackburn Road are recommended. This mitigation is not eligible for impact fee credits.
- If combined access is placed to the north and south, a right-in right-out driveway on SR 536 and pedestrian improvements on S 6th Street from Union Street to Blackburn Road are recommended. U-turn provisions would not be required with this access point configuration.

Impact fees are generally adjusted by the City each year to account for inflation. The impact fee for Commercial and Industrial Groups is $1,839 per PM peak hour trip based upon the City's latest adopted impact fee (effective February 2013). The proposed jail facility at the Alf Christianson Seed Site will generate 34 net new PM peak hour trips, which results in impact fees of $62,526.

Truck City Site Alternative

Following are the recommended conditions of approval for this project at the Truck City / Suzanne Lane Site:

- The project is required to provide pedestrian facilities on the project frontage, Suzanne Lane, per MVMC 14.10.080. This mitigation is not eligible for impact fee credits.

- Site frontage improvements on Suzanne Lane per MVMC 14.10.080: Three-quarter street LOS improvements must be in place on the project frontage street, Suzanne Lane. This mitigation is not eligible for impact fee credits.

Impact fees are generally adjusted by the City each year to account for inflation. The impact fee for Commercial and Industrial Groups is $1,839 per PM peak hour trip based upon the City's latest adopted impact fee (effective February 2013). The proposed jail facility at the Truck City Site will generate 33 net new PM peak hour trips, which results in impact fees of $60,687.

3.8. Economics

An assessment of the current economic climate and potential economic impacts of construction of a new jail facility were evaluated in an Economic Analysis report (Property Counselors 2013). The report is included as **Appendix I** to this Draft EIS.

3.8.1. Existing Conditions

Population and Employment

Since 2006, the City has grown at an average annual rate of 1.7 percent, reaching a population of 32,710 in 2013. This is higher than the growth rate for other cities and unincorporated communities in the County. Mount Vernon's Urban Growth Area (UGA) is expected to increase to 47,900 by 2025 (Property Counselors 2013).

Government is the largest single employment sector in the County, followed by retail, manufacturing, health care, and accommodations and food services. Skagit County has a higher share of its total employment in those sectors than Whatcom or Snohomish counties. The County is the largest single employer, followed by Skagit Valley Medical Center, Mount Vernon School District, and Skagit Community College. The largest private employer is Draper Valley Farms, a food processor. The visitor industry is important to the County economy, contributing greatly to the local transportation, gas, and food service sectors. Regence BlueShield is also a major private employer, providing a regional claims service center in Burlington. Employment in the County reached peak levels in 2007, just before the recession (Property Counselors 2013).

The County is lagging the state and the nation in its recovery from the recession. However, there are signs that the local economy is slowly improving (Property Counselors 2013):

- Unemployment in the County reached its peak in February 2010 at 12.6 percent and has fallen slowly and consistently throughout 2012 and 2013. The unemployment rate in June 2013 was 8.7 percent.
- In 2009, annual visitor spending per capita in the County was $2,004, compared to the statewide average of $1,812.
- Increasing housing prices in the Seattle-Everett metropolitan area are anticipated to fuel continued growth in the County's population and employment, as new residents seeking less congestion and lower land and housing prices move to the area.
- Retail sales in the City and County began to recover in 2010 and 2011. Based upon the total amount of taxable retail sales, the largest sectors in the downtown Mount Vernon area are recreation, food, and drink; food stores; and motor vehicles, building materials, and garden supplies.

Market Demand

While the City continued to attract new single-family residential development during the recession, there has been virtually no multi-family development. Since 2006, the City has only issued building permits for two projects for a total of 20 units. With such limited increases in supply and continued population growth, vacancy rates have fallen since 2009, reaching a low of approximately 2 percent in 2012. Average rents increased during the same period, reaching a high of $765 per month in 2012 (Property Counselors 2013).

The highest rents for office space are in the medical buildings around the Skagit Valley Hospital and in newer buildings on College Way. Rent per square foot in these areas ranges from $12 to $24. There are no new office buildings located in the downtown area, resulting in lower rents ranging from $12 to $15 per square foot. With newer, high-amenity office buildings along the river, the downtown should be able to capture higher rents in the future. There are several business parks in south Mount Vernon, with rents ranging from $8 to $14 per square foot (Property Counselors 2013).

Demand for commercial and industrial space in south Mount Vernon is strong. There are 10 projects in various stages of permitting with the City, including several plats and site plans for business parks. Previous land analyses identified a need for additional commercial and industrial land to meet projected employment levels citywide. Opportunities to expand the UGA to accommodate this need are limited in Mount Vernon due to state statutes prohibiting expansion into the floodplain.

Lodging revenues in all cities and unincorporated areas of the County declined with the recession. Burlington and Mount Vernon have experienced the fastest growth over the past two years. With no major additions to supply over this period, the growth is attributed to high occupancy and average daily rental rates. Potential developers have expressed interest in siting a hotel along the river in the downtown area (Property Counselors 2013).

Downtown and Waterfront Master Plan

The City adopted a Master Plan for Downtown and the Waterfront in 2008. The plan outlines a vision for the downtown area that includes increasing the density of downtown development to build on and enhance existing retail activity; creating a vibrant, attractive, and safe waterfront and downtown with improved access to the Skagit River; providing new and improved public amenities; and stimulating mixed use redevelopment that will generate new jobs and create housing that preserves the character of the downtown area. The master plan identifies potential demand in the downtown area over the next 20 years (**Table 11**) (Property Counselors 2013).

Table 11. Potential Development Demand in Downtown Mount Vernon

Potential Demand	2008-2018	2018-2028
Retail	125,000 square feet	155,000 square feet
Office	55,000 square feet	65,000 square feet
Residential	200 units	250 units
Lodging	100 rooms	100 rooms

The master plan also identified 11 vacant, under-utilized properties within the downtown area that may provide opportunities for new development. These sites are referred to in the master plan as "opportunity sites." Potential uses identified for these opportunity sites include residential units, retail,

office space, public, parking, and hotels or mixed use complexes. The Alf Christianson Seed Site is identified as Opportunity Site 11. The site is the largest opportunity site in downtown. Potential uses for the site include a large development such as a hotel or a complex of uses such as an office park or mixed use development. The 11 opportunity sites cannot accommodate all of the potential development demand projected for the downtown area in **Table 11**. The remaining development would have to occur on sites that are not currently identified as being susceptible to market demand (Property Counselors 2013).

Alf Christianson Seed Site Alternative

The 7.8-acre Alf Christianson Seed Site is located in downtown Mount Vernon on property zoned for general commercial use. Local access to the site is somewhat constrained by the railroad to the west, proximity to the I-5 on-ramp to the north and east, and a residential neighborhood to the south. Immediate freeway access to the site is provided from I-5 exit 225 (Kincaid Street), allowing for visibility from both northbound and southbound traffic on I-5. A broad range of land uses surround the site, including multi-family and single-family residential, commercial, public, and civic uses.

The assessed value of land and improvements within one-half mile of the Alf Christianson Seed Site is approaching $500 million. This includes approximately 3.6 million square feet of building area. The assessed value of the site is approximately $4 million.

The Alf Christianson Seed Site is near a variety of activity generators and supporting uses, including the Skagit Station transit center, I-5 and SR 536 traffic, civic center, and downtown stores and restaurants.

Skagit Station is a multimodal transportation hub located north of the Alf Christianson Seed Site.

Truck City Site Alternative

The 10.4-acre Truck City Site is located in south Mount Vernon on property zoned for retail, limited industrial, and manufacturing and business park uses. The site is accessed locally from Old Highway 99 South Road and Suzanne Lane, with freeway access available approximately one-half mile to the north from I-5 exit 224 (Anderson Road). Similar to the Alf Christianson Seed Site, the Truck City Site also has excellent visibility from both northbound and southbound traffic on I-5. Land uses surrounding the site are limited to commercial/industrial, agricultural, and some single-family residential uses.

A variety of commercial and industrial uses are located in the south Mount Vernon area.

Activity generators and supporting uses near the Truck City Site include Old Highway 99 South traffic and other commercial industrial businesses.

The assessed value of land and improvements within one-half mile of the Truck City Site is nearly $150 million. The building area within this one-half mile area is just over one million square feet. The assessed value of the site is approximately $3.7 million.

3.8.2. Alternative Impacts

Alf Christianson Seed Site Alternative

Direct Impacts – Construction

Construction of the new jail will generate business activity in the local economy through expenditures and employment during the construction period. The cost to construct the new jail is approximately $40 million, which includes the cost to employ on-site laborers, engineers, and managers associated with the project. Construction workers are likely to utilize local businesses for food, accommodations, and other services, increasing local sales revenues.

Direct Impacts – Operation

The new jail would employ 76 to 86 FTE employees at initial build-out (400 beds) and 136 to 148 FTE employees at full build-out (800 beds). The new jobs will stimulate the local economy through the direct increase of personal income for jail employees ($7,360,000 to $8,010,000 annually) as well as generating increased support for surrounding businesses in the downtown area for food services and conveniences.

Properties designated for "Public" use are exempt from property taxes. Therefore, the acquisition and redesignation of the site properties will convert taxable land to nontaxable land, resulting in a permanent loss in property tax revenues for local jurisdictions. The removal of the Alf Christianson Seed Site properties from the tax roll will result in an annual loss in property tax revenue of $51,360 (Property Counselors 2013).

Indirect Impacts

In addition to the direct impacts of operating a new jail on each site alternative, potential indirect impacts may occur on development in the surrounding area and the local economy. These potential impacts are primarily associated with opportunities that are lost as a result of the jail siting, in terms of what would likely occur on each site if the jail were not located there. An alternative use scenario for the Alf Christianson Seed Site was developed based upon market demand, the characteristics of the site, and the identification of the property as an opportunity site in the Downtown and Waterfront Master Plan. This scenario includes 2 acres of hotel use, 0.5 acre of retail, and 5.3 acres of office park development. The hotel and retail development would occupy the northeast portion of the site, benefiting from the immediate freeway access, visibility from I-5, and proximity to the businesses and amenities downtown. The hotel would include approximately 100 rooms and be configured in three floors with surface parking. The office park would be located in the southern portion of the property, in multiple buildings, with extensive landscaping to provide a campus setting and buffer from the BNSF railroad. The potential economic contribution of the alternative development scenario for the Alf Christianson Seed Site is shown in **Table 12** (Property Counselors 2013).

Table 12. Alternative Development Scenario – Alf Christianson Seed Site

	Potential Economic Contribution	Potential Net Economic Impact if Opportunity is Foregone
Gross Business Receipts	$85,906,900	($85,906,900)
Jobs	368	(220)
Personal Income	$16,754,750	($8,744,750)
Local Tax Revenues	$587,963	($587,963)

Notes: Parentheses indicate a negative value/loss. All values recur annually. Net economic impact is based upon the potential economic contribution of the alternative development scenario minus the potential economic contribution of operating the Skagit County Jail.
Source: Property Counselors 2013

If the new jail is constructed on the Alf Christianson Seed Site, it could result in a lost opportunity to implement the alternative development scenario. The potential demand for new development in the downtown area (**Table 11**) exceeds the capacity for the eleven opportunity sites identified in the Downtown and Waterfront Master Plan. The Alf Christianson Seed Site is somewhat unique compared to the other opportunity sites due to its large size near a freeway interchange within the gateway corridor to the City, which makes it particularly well suited for a hotel or office campus. While other properties may redevelop and capture a share of market demand, a portion may be foregone if the Alf Christianson Seed Site is not available for private development. If that alternative development does not occur, its loss represents a negative economic impact as a result of constructing the new jail on that site (**Table 12**). The entire economic contribution could be lost due to the overall shortage of commercial land within the City, the lack of sufficient space to capture the total potential development demand in the downtown area, and the unique gateway features of the Alf Christianson Seed Site. The lost opportunity represents nearly $86 million in gross business receipts, 220 jobs, $9 million in personal income, and over $500,000 in annual tax revenue (Property Counselors 2013).

Potential adverse impacts of operating a jail on surrounding businesses are likely to be limited. Such impacts are related to consumer and business owner perceptions of increased crime, or to the design and appearance of the facility. Studies have found that correctional facilities have not contributed to community crime rates (Property Counselors 2013). However, the appearance of the facility is particularly important on the Alf Christianson Seed Site due to its location along Kincaid Street, which is identified as the major gateway to downtown. The preliminary design of the jail is shown in **Figures 12, 13, and 14**. In order to minimize potential adverse impacts to surrounding businesses, it is recommended that the final design of the jail incorporate features that reflect the character of the downtown area and its location within the gateway corridor, as discussed in Section 3.5 Aesthetics and Section 3.9 Land Use.

Reduced property values are a common concern of property owners adjacent to a proposed jail facility. Studies indicate that correctional facilities do not result in adverse impacts on property values. However, there is an apparent hierarchy of susceptibility of impact, with high-income/high-amenity office or residential uses being most susceptible to impacts. The uses adjacent to the Alf Christianson Seed Site are generally medium value office and low market value residential uses, which are toward the bottom of the susceptibility scale. Future development in the surrounding area envisioned by the Downtown and Waterfront Master Plan

vision could be higher on the scale and therefore more susceptible to impacts. The current uses adjacent to the Alf Christianson Seed Site are unlikely to experience significant negative property value impacts (Property Counselors 2013).

Truck City Site Alternative

Direct Impacts – Construction

Construction impacts on the Truck City Site are the same as those identified for the Alf Christianson Seed Site.

Direct Impacts – Operation

The employment impacts of operating the new jail on the Truck City Site are the same as those identified for the Alf Christianson Seed Site.

The removal of the Truck City Site properties from the tax roll will result in an annual loss in property tax revenue of $46,806 (Property Counselors 2013). The acquisition of the Truck City Site properties will also result in the relocation of one sales tax-generating business, resulting in a small loss in sales tax revenue for local jurisdictions.

Indirect Impacts

The alternative development scenario for the Truck City Site includes a 10.4-acre business park that would accommodate 260 employees. This scenario is based upon recent development in south Mount Vernon with commercial industrial uses, convenient automobile access, good freeway visibility, and few supporting amenities and services. A planned business park with a mix of light industrial, warehouse distribution, and showroom uses would respond to current market trends in the area. Such uses could include types of businesses that have recently expressed interest in this area including RV sales, equipment sales, and landscape supply. A business park on the Truck City Site would occupy multiple buildings, with the more industrial uses and warehouse facilities to the rear of the site and the display uses along Old Highway 99 South. The potential economic contribution of the alternative development scenario for the Truck City Site is shown in **Table 13** (Property Counselors 2013).

Table 13. Alternative Development Scenario – Truck City Site

	Potential Economic Contribution	Potential Net Economic Impact if Opportunity is Foregone
Gross Business Receipts	$16,701,620	($16,701,620)
Jobs	260	(112)
Personal Income	$11,050,000	($3,040,000)
Local Tax Revenues	$145,484	($145,484)

Notes: All values recur annually. Net economic impact is based upon the potential economic contribution of the alternative development scenario minus the potential economic contribution of operating the Skagit County Jail.
Source: Property Counselors 2013

If the new jail is constructed on the Truck City Site, it could result in a lost opportunity to implement the alternative development scenario due to the shortage of developable commercial industrial sites within the City. Development of a jail on the Truck City Site would mean that opportunities for commercial and industrial development such as a business park

would be foregone, representing a negative economic impact (**Table 13**). In the short term, there are other properties in south Mount Vernon that could develop as a business park. However, in the long term, the City's growth is limited by state statutes that prohibit expansion of the UGA into the floodplain. Therefore, the entire economic contribution of the alternative development scenario could be lost in the long term. The lost opportunity represents nearly $17 million in gross business receipts, 112 jobs, $3 million in personal income, and almost $150,000 in annual tax revenue (Property Counselors 2013).

Similar to the Alf Christianson Seed Site, potential adverse impacts of operating a jail on surrounding businesses are likely to be limited for the Truck City Site.

The land uses around the Truck City Site are industrial in nature and have the least potential for impact on surrounding property values.

No Action Alternative

The No Action Alternative would not construct a new jail facility. The existing jail would continue to operate in its current location in downtown Mount Vernon with approximately 43 FTEs. The cost of outsourcing, including inmate transport, is likely to increase as the demand for beds continues to increase. The alternative development scenarios on either site alternative may occur at a later date and time, which would result in the economic contributions identified in the previous section.

3.8.3. Mitigation Measures

Alf Christianson Seed Site Alternative

Property acquisition will be conducted in accordance with the Washington State Relocation Assistance–Real Property Acquisition Policy (RCW Chapter 8.26.190(2)). It is recommended that the final design of the new jail reflect the character of the downtown area and its location within the gateway corridor, per mitigation measures identified in Section 3.5 Aesthetics and Section 3.9 Land Use.

Truck City Site Alternative

Property acquisition will be conducted in accordance with the Washington State Relocation Assistance–Real Property Acquisition Policy (RCW Chapter 8.26.190(2)).

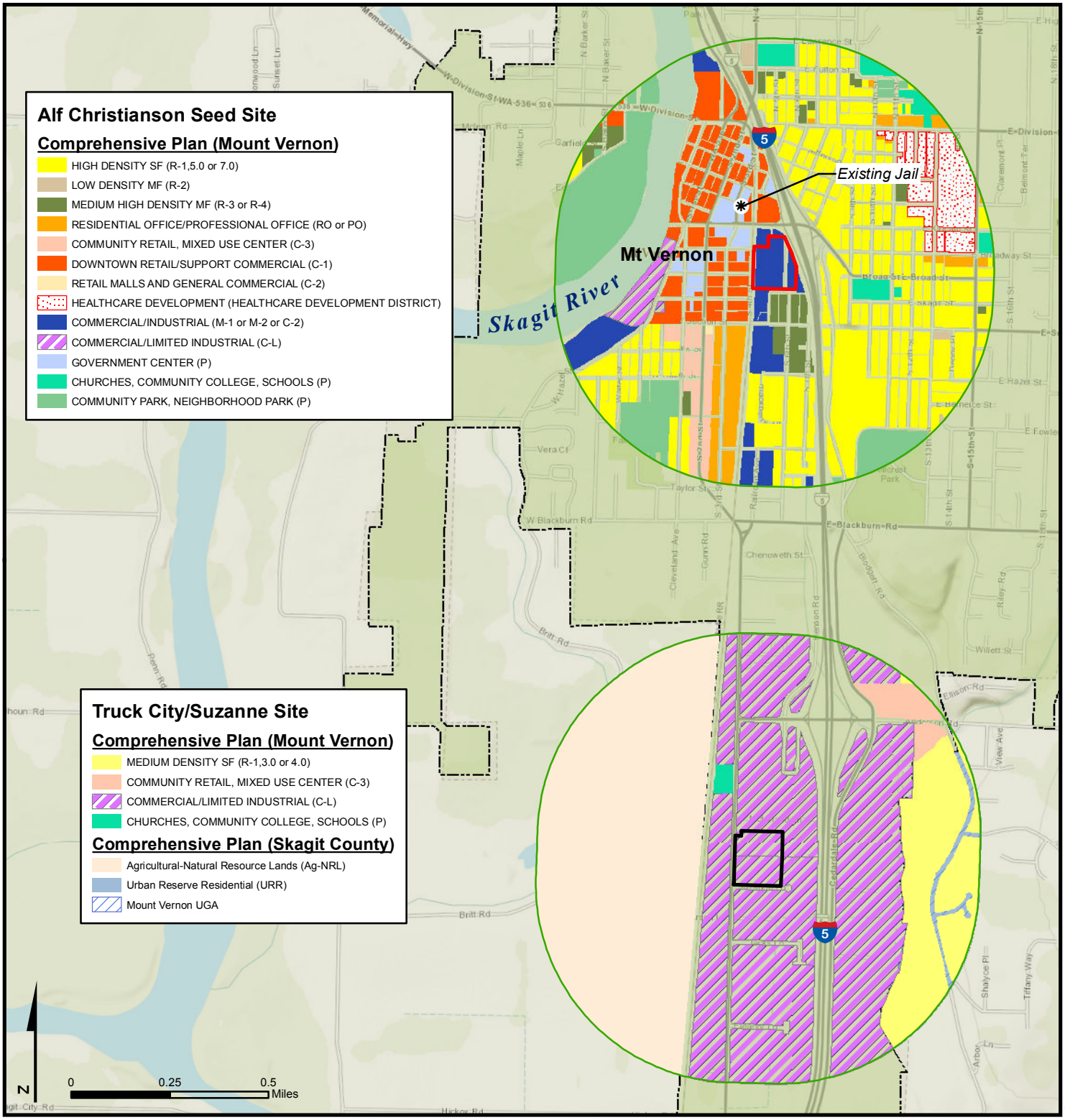
3.9. Land Use

3.9.1. Existing Conditions

Alf Christianson Seed Site Alternative

The 7.8-acre site is located within the Mount Vernon city limits and UGA. It is comprised of 21 parcels held by a single private owner.

The site is currently designated Commercial/Industrial (CI) in the Mount Vernon Comprehensive Plan (**Figure 21**). Most of the site's zoning designation is General Commercial (C-2), with the easternmost portion zoned Light Manufacturing and Commercial (M-1) (**Figure 22**). The C-2 zoning designation allows commercial uses such as retail stores and restaurants and public uses such as government buildings and museums. The M-1 zoning designation is intended for commercial uses with limited retail contact and light manufacturing. C-2 and M-1 have no minimum or maximum net density requirements or minimum lot size. There are no overlay designations on the site.



Alf Christianson Seed Site

Truck City/Suzanne Lane Site

1/2 mile Buffer from Proposed Site

Mount Vernon City Limits

Data Sources: Skagit County, City of Mount Vernon, DEA
Backgrounds: ESRI Service Layer World Topo Map

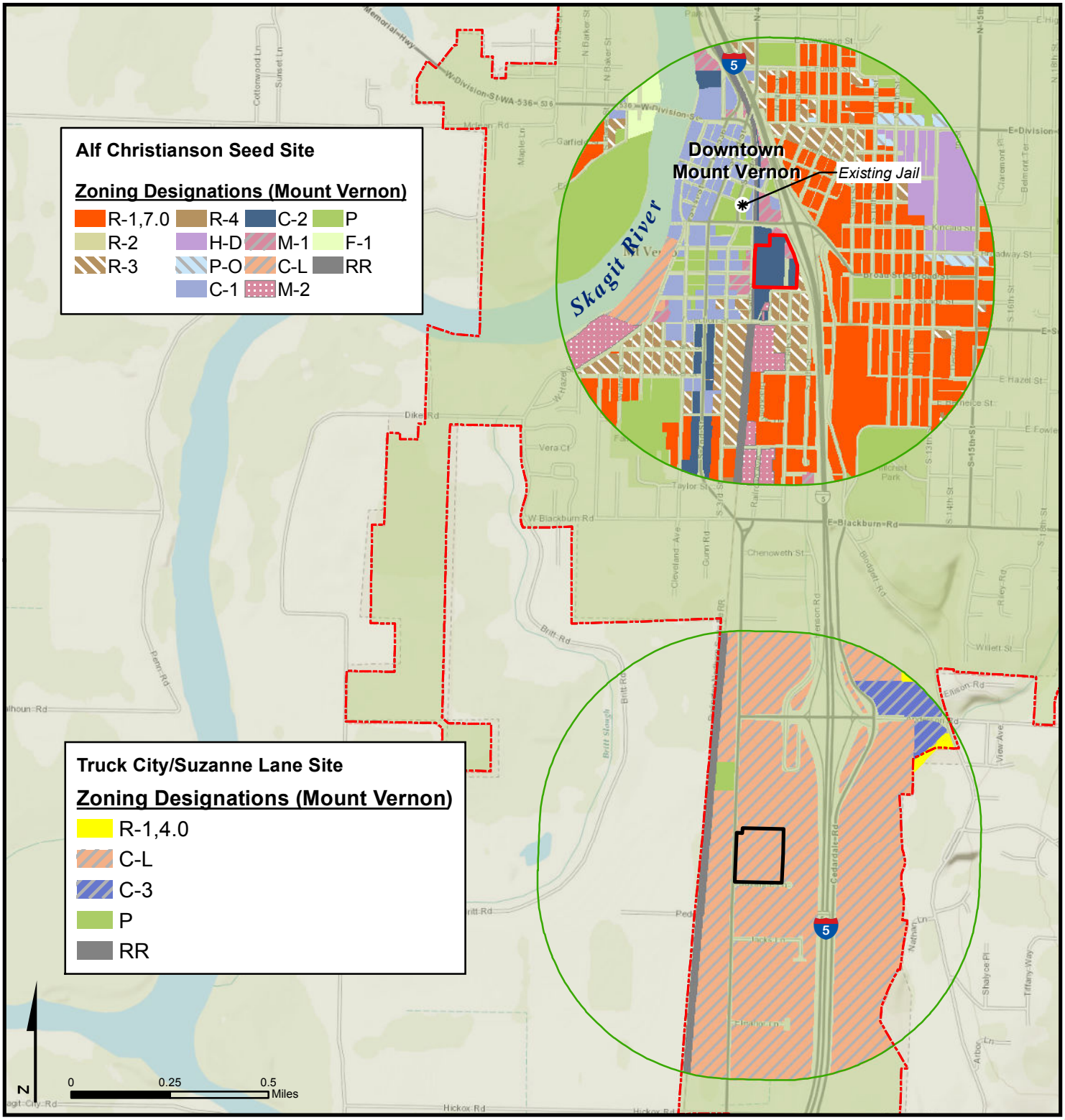
Skagit County Jail Draft EIS

Skagit County and City of Mount Vernon

Figure 21. Comprehensive Plan

December 2013

Project No.: COMV0000-0011



Alf Christianson Seed Site

Truck City/Suzanne Lane Site

1/2 mile Buffer from Proposed Site

Mount Vernon City Limits

Data Sources: Skagit County, City of Mount Vernon, DEA
Backgrounds: ESRI Service Layer World Topo Map

Skagit County Jail Draft EIS

Skagit County and City of Mount Vernon

Figure 22. Zoning

December 2013

Project No.: COMV0000-0011

Mount Vernon's Shoreline Master Program (SMP) implements Washington's Shoreline Management Act. Mount Vernon's shorelines regulated by the SMP are limited to the "Big Bend Reach" of the Skagit River that occurs within the City's corporate limits. This encompasses approximately seven miles of the river's shoreline in two segments, one near downtown and the other to the north. The Alf Christianson Seed Site is just east of, but not included in, inventory unit #4. Therefore, the SMP regulations do not apply to the site (City of Mount Vernon 2011b).

Regulated critical areas in the city include aquifer recharge areas, steep slopes, streams, and wetlands. There are no critical areas on the site. The closest stream to the site is a fish-bearing stream parallel to I-5, south of East Section Street. The closest potential wetland is south of East Hazel Street between the rail line and Blackberry Drive (MV Engineering 2012).

The west half of the Alf Christianson Seed Site is developed with vacant industrial warehouse buildings. In the past, it was used for seed processing. The east half is comprised of previously cleared residential lots that were used by the seed processing company.


Vacant seed processing buildings on the Alf Christianson Seed Site.

Surrounding Conditions

Zoning designations surrounding the site include C-2 and Multi-Family Residential (R-3) to the south, Public (P) and M-1 to the west, and C-2 and M-1 to the north (**Figure 22**). The downtown area west of the railroad line is mostly zoned Central Business (C-1) and P. The area east of I-5 is zoned Single-Family Residential (R-1, 7.0).

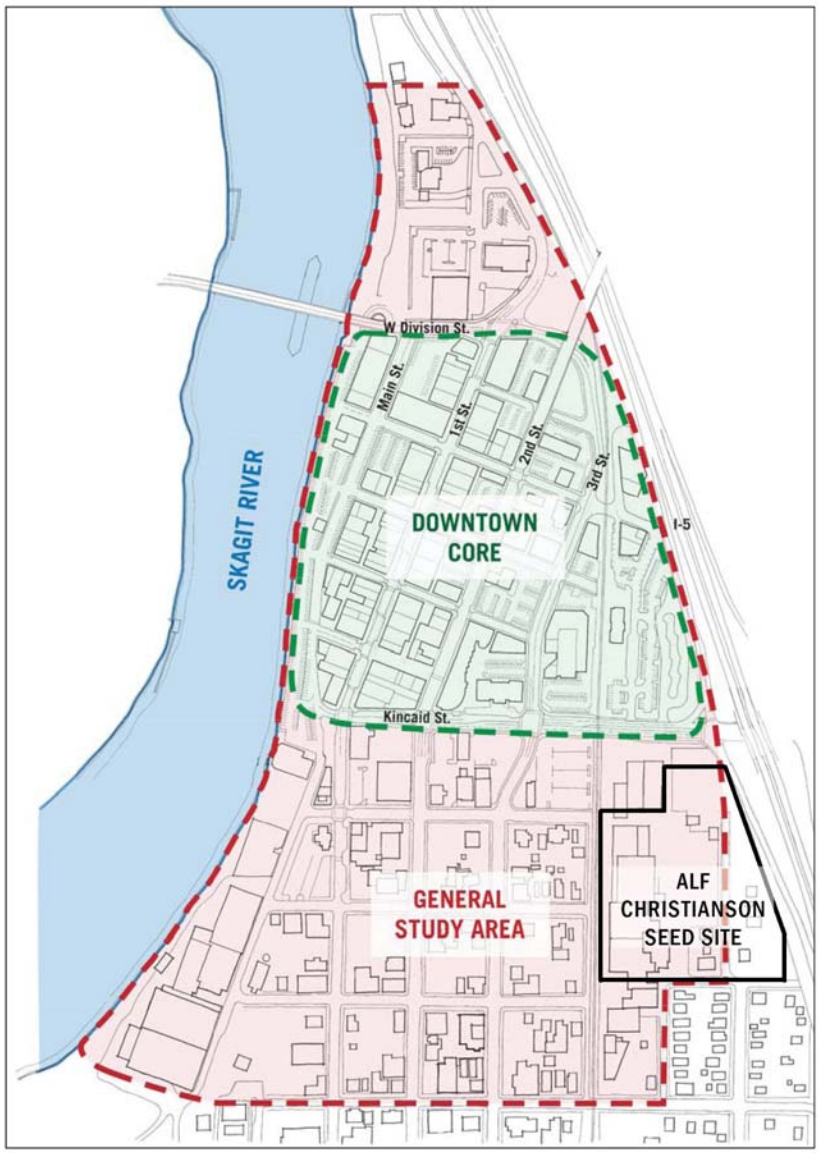
The site is bounded by I-5 on the east and the BNSF railroad line on the west. A vacant industrial warehouse building and park and ride lot are located between the northern site boundary and Kincaid Street. Uses north of Kincaid Street include the existing Skagit County Jail, Skagit County Courthouse, the Amtrak Station, and the Skagit Station transit center. Vacant industrial buildings and single-family residences are located to the south.

Plans and Policies

The City's Comprehensive Plan contains policies and recommendations to direct public and private decisions affecting future growth and development. The City updated the comprehensive plan in 2005, in compliance with the Washington State GMA. In the 2005 update, the site was included in Sub-Area Plan A: Downtown Planning Area (City of Mount Vernon 2005). The uses that the Sub-Area Plan envisions for downtown are culture, entertainment, tourism, conventions, restaurants, shops, and hotels. The Alf Christianson Seed Site is identified as Area (g), for "hotel convention and retail development as well as improving access to the site off Kincaid, to encourage re-development." The Sub-Area Plan calls for the City and County to prepare master plans that address Sub-Area Plan G: Interstate 5 Corridor and City Entry System, and notes that the residential area south of Kincaid Street "suffers from its proximity to the noise and fumes of Interstate 5," is bisected by the railroad tracks and warehouses, and lacks an adequate buffer of trees.

The Comprehensive Plan envisioned additional sub-area plans to be created or amended after the 2005 update, including the Downtown/Waterfront Planning Area, which was completed in 2008 as the City of Mount Vernon Master Plan: Downtown and Waterfront Master Plan Project (KPFF Consulting Engineers 2008). The purpose of the master plan is to guide the investment of public and private resources in the downtown area over the next 20 years: "The City intends to increase the density of the downtown, building on and enhancing existing retail activity along First Street to create a vibrant, attractive, and safe waterfront and downtown, with enhanced public access to the shoreline and river, new and improved public amenities, and mixed-use redevelopment that will generate new jobs and create housing that preserves the character of downtown Mount Vernon." The Alf Christianson Seed Site is located within the master plan General Study Area, south of the Downtown Core (**Figure 23**).

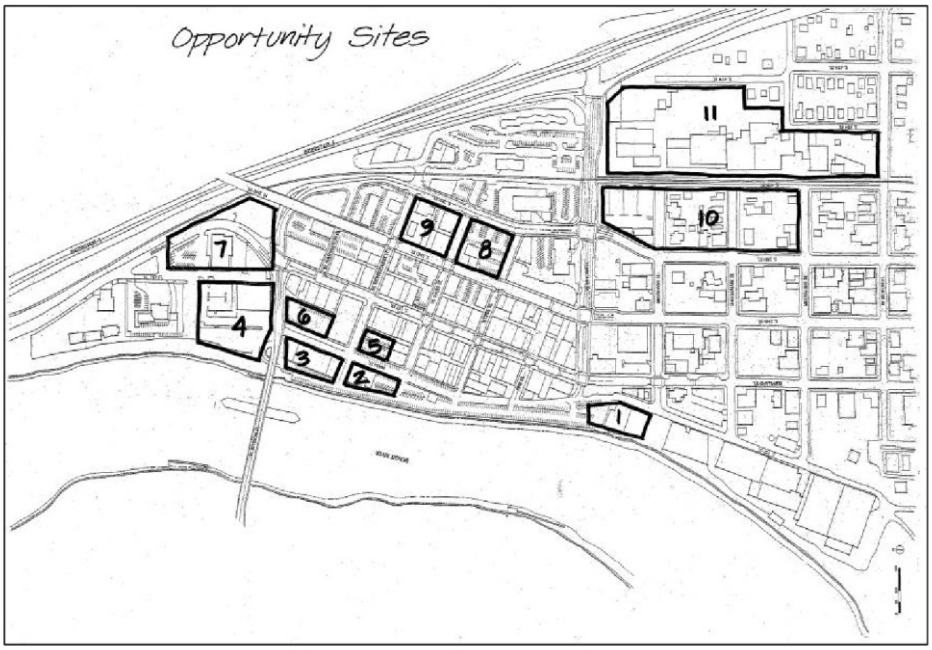
Figure 23. Downtown and Waterfront Master Plan Study Area



Source: KPFF 2008. Note: Alf Christianson Seed Site outline and label added.

The Downtown and Waterfront Master Plan (now Sub-Area Plan K) identifies 11 sites that provide opportunity for redevelopment (**Figure 24**). The plan identifies the Alf Christianson Seed Site as Opportunity Site 11, the largest contiguous site downtown, suitable for a large single use such as a hotel or complex of uses. "The portion of the site along Kincaid Street should be designed to provide an attractive entry experience to downtown, and should be coordinated with streetscape improvements on both sides of Kincaid Street." It identifies the industrial site as having constrained vehicular access because of the railroad on the west and the freeway on-ramp on the east.

Figure 24. Downtown and Waterfront Master Plan Opportunity Sites



Source: KPFF 2008.

Truck City Site Alternative

On-Site Conditions

The 10.4-acre site is within the Mount Vernon city limits and UGA. The site is comprised of five parcels held by three private owners.

The Comprehensive Plan and zoning designation of the Truck City Site are both Commercial-Limited Industrial (C-L). Uses permitted in C-L include a wide variety of commercial and industrial uses, as well as government buildings and public works facilities. "'Public facilities' means streets, roads, highways, sidewalks, street lighting systems, traffic signals, domestic water systems, storm and sanitary sewer systems, park and recreation facilities, schools, and public buildings." The designation has no minimum or maximum net density requirements or minimum lot size. There are no overlay designations on the site.

The Truck City Site is not within an SMP regulated shoreline designation—it is over a mile east of the Skagit River.

There are no aquifer recharge areas, steep slopes, or wetlands on the site. According to the City Streams, Drainage Basins, & Potential Wetlands map, there is a perennial stream adjacent to the site that runs north-south along the property's east edge. The City's biologist determined that although the map indicates that the site has a drainage culvert with an intermittent flow tied to a fish bearing stream, it is part of a historic drainage system and is entirely piped, and therefore is not subject the City's Critical Areas Ordinance. The closest potential wetland is north of McFarland Lane, west of Old Highway 99 South (MV Engineering 2012).

The northern half of the Truck City Site is comprised of a truck fueling station with a food mart and cafe, while the southern half of the site is undeveloped.

Vacant land and truck fueling station (in the distance) on the Truck City Site.

Surrounding Conditions

The area surrounding the Truck City Site within the City limits is zoned C-L as well, on both sides of I-5 (except for one parcel designated and used as a church). The land west of the site, between Old Highway 99 South and the BNSF railroad line, is currently used for agriculture. However, this land is zoned C-L and the surrounding area within the City limits is primarily developed with commercial and light industrial uses. Much of this area has been developed with commercial retail uses to take advantage of the visibility from I-5, such as RV sales, machinery sales, and landscaping businesses. There are currently ten projects in various stages of permitting with the City for commercial and industrial development in the south Mount Vernon area (Property Counselors 2013). The majority of these projects are for subdivisions and business parks, consistent with the commercial character of this area. The land directly east of the site adjacent to I-5 is currently being utilized to store rock, gravel, and trucks. Undeveloped land and a commercial building are located immediately to the south. A mixture of industrial, commercial, and scattered residential uses is located north of the site.

Plans and Policies

According to the 2005 update to the City's Comprehensive Plan, the site is generally covered in Sub-Area Plan G: Interstate 5 Corridor and City Entry System.

3.9.2. Alternative Impacts

As described in Section 2.3, the initial jail facility will be approximately 100,000 square feet and accommodate 400 beds. Depending on incarceration rates and policy changes, the facility may be expanded in the future to accommodate up to an additional 400 beds, for a full build-out of 800 beds in a 165,000-square-foot single story. The jail would accommodate administrative facilities, a medical diagnosis and treatment area, a program area for alcohol and drug treatment and Graduate Equivalent Degree opportunities, a courtroom, and parking for staff and visitors. The jail will be staffed with an estimated 76 to 86 FTE for the 400-bed facility and 136 to 148 FTE for the 800-bed facility.

A jail is considered an institution, which is not a permitted use within the commercial and industrial zoning designations on both sites. The Public designation permits a wide range of public uses such as

institutions, government buildings, schools, parks, and utilities. The City has initiated the comprehensive plan and zoning amendment process (**Figure 25**) to change the comprehensive plan designation on both sites to "Government Center" and the zoning designation on both sites to "Public." The County submitted a Pre-Application meeting request to the City for the Alf Christianson Seed Site and the Truck City/Suzanne Lane Site in June 2013. The County submitted applications to change the land use designations for both sites in January 2013. The Public designation does not have lot size or maximum land coverage limitations. Maximum height is 4 stories or 50 feet. All uses are subject to a site design review.

Once the SEPA process is completed, the City will commence the process for the land use designation change. The process will require an open record public hearing before the City's Planning Commission. The Planning Commission will make a recommendation to the City Council, whom will make the final decision on the land use designation change.

Figure 25. Land Use Designation Change Process

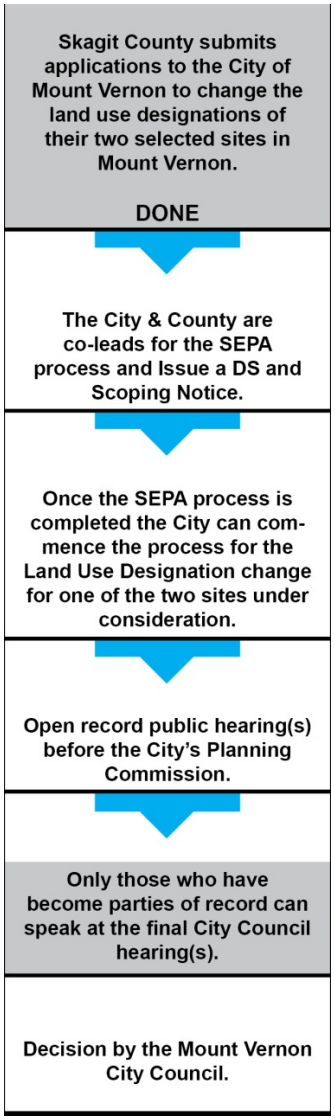
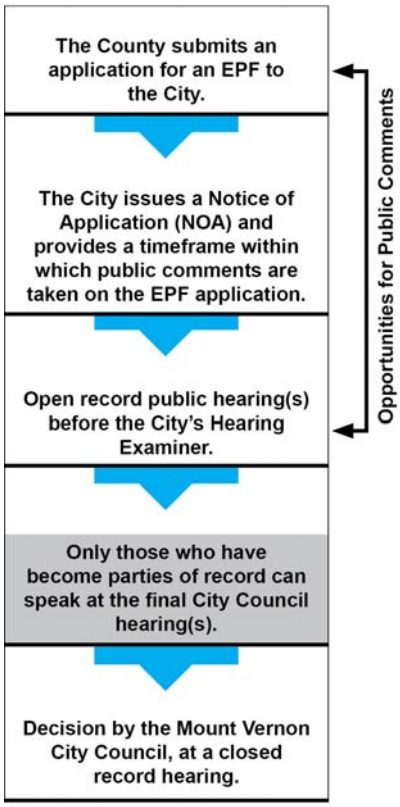


Figure 26. Essential Public Facility Conditional Use Permit Process



The County will be required to complete an EPF process with the City (**Figure 26**). The EPF process is intended for facilities that are difficult to locate and is intended to identify and minimize adverse impacts. The City's EPF process involves the community and is intended to assist in the identification and minimization of adverse impacts. Per MVMC Section 17.200.060.A.2., the proposed jail is classified as a Type Two Local EPF, since it serves Skagit County and is not a state correctional facility.

An EPF is considered a conditional use in all zones. The EPF is specifically categorized as a Type IV, Conditional Use Permit process that includes a public hearing before the City's Hearing Examiner and a public hearing before the City Council. The Hearing Examiner makes a recommendation to the City Council and the City Council makes the final decision.

Alf Christianson Seed Site Alternative

Direct Impacts – Construction

Existing structures on the site would be demolished, including the former seed plant and accessory buildings. None of the buildings are currently being used or occupied. Therefore, there would be no construction impacts such as disruption to operations, noise, etc. to on-site uses. Construction activities may be a disturbance to residences located south and west of the site. However, such air quality, noise, and visual quality impacts will be temporary and localized and are not considered significant.

Direct Impacts – Operation

None of the existing structures are currently in use. Therefore, no displacement of businesses or residents would occur.

This site would require street vacation of South 6th Street north of Union Street, including utility relocation and removal of existing easements. South 6th Street currently serves only the seed plant site and is blocked just north of Union Street with temporary concrete barriers. The multi-family residential building on the corner of Union Street is accessed via South 7th Street, so vacating South 6th Street would not affect accessibility. The circulation and access points will not be determined until final design, but may be onto Kincaid Street to the north, onto Union Street to the south, or a combination of the two. Use of the site would require a property line adjustment to encompass the land east of South 6th Street. A conceptual design layout for the site, which is subject to change during final design, is shown in **Figure 5**.

City of Mount Vernon Comprehensive Plan

With the anticipated comprehensive plan and zoning amendment to the Government designation, with mitigation the new jail would be consistent with the Comprehensive Plan. The key focus of the 2005 comprehensive plan update for the use at the Alf Christianson Seed Site is to provide a buffer from I-5 for adjacent residential areas. Objectives LU-54.1 and 54.2 of the Comprehensive Plan Land Use Element are to "Balance residential, commercial, industrial, and public land uses within the City" and "Maintain zoning and subdivision regulations to ensure that adequate setbacks, landscaping and buffering are required where land use impacts occur between residential and non-residential uses." The new jail, if designed consistent with the Comprehensive Plan and Downtown and Waterfront Master Plan, could provide a transition between the more intensive downtown uses and the residential uses to the south. Additional traffic would be minor (an additional 34 trips per hour), so adverse impacts to adjacent residential uses are not anticipated. If designed appropriately, the parking areas and landscaping on the site will uphold Objective 54.2.

Downtown and Waterfront Master Plan

Master plan goals and objectives relevant to the new jail at the Alf Christianson Seed Site are identified below, followed by a brief consistency discussion for each.

- *Goal 2*: Develop a pedestrian-oriented downtown where people are encouraged to circulate on foot.
    - *Objective b*: Install streetscape improvements, wider sidewalks, and other sidewalk amenities.

- *Objective c*: Encourage retail and hospitality businesses at street level and office and residential development above.

As currently designed, the proposed jail facility will not facilitate pedestrian movement in the downtown area. The site does not extend all the way to Kincaid Street on the north. Therefore, no streetscape improvements or additional sidewalk amenities are proposed on Kincaid Street as part of the proposed project. However, the master plan does acknowledge that because of traffic volume, not much additional space can be allocated for pedestrians on Kincaid Street east of Second Street. Although a landscape buffer is proposed around the periphery of the site, no sidewalks or other pedestrian improvements are proposed on-site. As such, the new jail may serve as a barrier for pedestrian movement between the residential neighborhood south of the site and the Skagit Station transit center and other downtown uses accessed from Kincaid Street.

The site does not support objective (c) because it does not directly provide mixed use development. However, the existing park and ride lot and vacant seed processing building fronting Kincaid Street will remain to the north of the new jail. These properties may provide opportunity for future redevelopment that may support the intent of this objective. However, this opportunity is limited due to fragmentation of the site for development of the jail. The remaining properties fronting Kincaid Street will be approximately 1.4 acres, compared to the larger site as a whole, which is approximately 8.7 acres and is the largest opportunity site identified in the master plan. The remaining, fragmented property is not likely to accommodate the large, cohesive development of a single use as envisioned in the master plan for Opportunity Site 11.

On-site improvements do not support the objectives of this goal. However, this alternative does not preclude future streetscape developments on Kincaid Street nor does it preclude redevelopment of the smaller, remaining properties fronting Kincaid Street that could support the objectives of this goal.

The plan also identifies the neighborhood south of Kincaid Street as being in transition. Potential development opportunities cited include services and facilities that support the downtown retail core and opportunities to increase residential density within close proximity to the retail core. If the Alf Christianson Seed Site (Opportunity Site 11) is selected as the preferred jail site, the opportunity cost of not redeveloping the site as a hotel or complex of uses will be high (see Section 3.8 Economics).

- *Goal 3*: Encourage a mixture of land uses, including public open space, shoreline recreational, cultural, and institutional uses integrated with revenue producing uses that may include office, retail, restaurant, hotel, entertainment, and residential uses.
  - *Objective c*: Increase intensity of commercial and retail activity.

A new jail at this location would integrate with existing institutional uses in that it would be two blocks from the Superior Court and would integrate with existing and future residential and commercial uses by providing a buffer to I-5 and the BNSF railroad track. The proposed project would redevelop the property with a use compatible with adjacent and nearby uses, with no or low traffic, noise, or other impacts. A new jail at this location does not increase the intensity of commercial and retail development, accommodate pedestrian activity at street level, or

contribute to the desired character of the downtown area. With architectural and site design treatment, consistent with the policies of the Downtown and Waterfront Master Plan, as well as public amenities incorporated as mitigation, a jail development could help support these uses.

The Urban Design Framework Plan in the master plan shows the location and extent of recommended improvements to downtown Mount Vernon. The Kincaid Street frontage on the west side of I-5 is identified as the gateway to downtown. The Alf Christianson Seed Site is identified as a large industrial site that is likely to be redeveloped, with the north edge fronting on Kincaid Street. The Alf Christianson Seed Site Alternative does not propose any improvements to the properties immediately fronting Kincaid Street. The existing park and ride lot and vacant seed processing building on Kincaid Street will remain.

The master plan reiterates the importance of Kincaid Street serving as a gateway into downtown:

- "*The portion of the site along Kincaid Street should be designed to provide an attractive entry experience to downtown*…"
- Future development on Kincaid Street "*will contribute to the gateway experience into downtown*."
- "*Kincaid Street, the primary entrance to downtown from the south, is shown as a tree-lined boulevard to provide an attractive and calming invitation into the downtown core*."
- "*Kincaid Street is a high volume street that serves as a primary gateway into Mount Vernon, so it needs to reflect the character of the city*."

While the new jail facility does not extend north to Kincaid Street, it will limit the opportunity for a larger redevelopment and will be visible from Kincaid Street (**Figure 12**). In order to uphold the vision, goals, and objectives of the master plan, the design of the jail must comply with the Design Guidelines established in Section 10.7 of the master plan. These guidelines provide specifications for setbacks, building materials and colors, building height, entryways, windows, modulation, lighting, fencing, and signage for new structures in the downtown area. The design should reflect the character of the downtown area and recent development downtown such as the Skagit Station transit center, north of Kincaid Street. Opportunities to enhance the site as part of the gateway to the downtown area should also be considered, including incorporation of a pedestrian pathway, public art, courtyard, and/or public outdoor space.

Indirect Impacts

The courthouse and other government buildings are within walking distance of the Alf Christianson Seed Site. Employees could easily access these buildings as well as the amenities downtown. At the same time, the jail facility would be self-contained so that adjacent properties would experience minimal indirect impacts.

Compliance with EPF Criteria

As part of the EPF Conditional Use Permit process, the Hearing Examiner and City Council must review applicable decision criteria as outlined in *MVMC, Title 17: Zoning, Chapter 17.200: Essential Public Facilities*. In order to streamline the EPF review and decision-making process,

preliminary responses to the decision criteria are provided in **Appendix J**. These criteria will be formally reviewed for the selected site, after the SEPA process has been completed.

Truck City Site Alternative

Direct Impacts – Construction

Existing structures on the site would be demolished, including the truck fueling station, food mart, and cafe. The property acquisition will comply with the Washington State Relocation Assistance–Real Property Acquisition Policy (RCW Chapter 8.26.190(2)) to ensure just compensation and relocation assistance, if desired. Due to the low density of development in this area, construction impacts to adjacent properties will not be significant.

Direct Impacts – Operation

This site would require a property line adjustment and a 30-foot access easement across Parcel P119267 to the east half of the site. Access and utilities would be from Old Highway 99 South and Suzanne Lane. The truck fueling station and food mart would be demolished. A conceptual design layout for the site, which is subject to change during final design, is shown in **Figure 7.**

With the anticipated comprehensive plan and zoning amendment to the Government Center/Public designation, a new jail would be consistent with the 2005 comprehensive plan update, Sub-Area Plan G: Interstate 5 Corridor and City Entry System. The jail would serve as a transition from the rural farmlands at the south end of the city to denser residential and commercial uses in the city center. The Sub-Area Plan does not have goals or objectives specifically relevant to the Truck City Site, and no area master plan has been prepared. The proposed jail facility would be consistent with Comprehensive Plan Objective LU-54.1 of the Comprehensive Plan Land Use Element: “Balance residential, commercial, industrial and public land uses within the city.” The jail would be a public use in the midst of commercial, industrial, agricultural, and some residential uses in the areas. The parking areas and landscaping in the proposed site design would be consistent with Comprehensive Plan Policy LU-54.1.2: “Maintain zoning and subdivision regulations to ensure that adequate setbacks, landscaping and buffering are required where land use impacts occur between residential and non-residential uses.” Additional traffic would be minor (an additional 34 trips per PM peak hour), so as to not impact adjacent uses.

Indirect Impacts

Use of the site for a jail facility would likely have fewer circulation and noise impacts to the residences to the north than the existing truck refueling facility. In addition, the northern portion of the site would be landscaped and developed with parking, providing a buffer between the buildings and the residences and commercial uses on adjacent properties. As with the Alf Christianson Seed Site, the jail facility would be self-contained so that adjacent properties would experience minimal indirect impacts.

The Truck City Site is approximately 1.5 miles south of the Superior Court and approximately 4 miles from the main police station. This increased distance in comparison to the existing jail location and the Alf Christianson Seed Site is not expected to have substantial impact on jail operations because inmates must be transported by vehicle from either location. Moving the jail from its current location downtown to the Truck City location is not expected to substantially

increase travel times for jail and court employees nor is it expected to trigger new development in the surrounding area. As discussed in Section 3.8 Economics, jail employees at the Truck City Site are likely to utilize existing support services and businesses in downtown Mount Vernon.

Compliance with EPF Criteria

Preliminary responses to the EPF decision criteria for the Truck City Site are provided in **Appendix J**.

No Action Alternative

Under the No Action Alternative, the County would not construct a new jail facility. Therefore, there would be no direct or indirect impacts on land use.

3.9.3. Mitigation Measures

Alf Christianson Seed Site Alternative

The proposed facility would be designed and permitted in accordance with City land use and site and building design standards. Property acquisition will be conducted in accordance with the Washington State Relocation Assistance–Real Property Acquisition Policy (RCW Chapter 8.26.190(2)). Conditions of approval will be attached to the selected site and facility development through the comprehensive plan and zoning amendment, EPF process, design review, and building permit processes. In addition to the aesthetic mitigation measures identified for the Alf Christianson Seed Site in Section 3.5.3, the following measures are recommended to improve consistency with the Downtown and Waterfront Master Plan.

- To enhance the walkability of downtown, incorporate a pedestrian pathway or sidewalk on the site, with the specific goal of improving connectivity between residential areas south of the site and the downtown area.
- Ensure that the final design of the facility builds upon the intimate scale, street grid, and historic buildings to maintain and strengthen a distinctive downtown character.

Truck City Site Alternative

The proposed facility would be designed and permitted in accordance with City land use and site and building design standards. Property acquisition will be conducted in accordance with the Washington State Relocation Assistance–Real Property Acquisition Policy (RCW Chapter 8.26.190(2)). No specific conditions of approval are recommended for the Truck City Site.

3.10. Cumulative Impacts

The intent of a cumulative effects analysis is to consider how a proposed action will contribute towards the total impact of development in an area over time. For the Skagit County Jail project, development within the project vicinity is guided by several of the City's planning documents. The Land Use Element of the City's Comprehensive Plan, including its adopted sub-area plans, provide a long-term vision for development and land use patterns within the City limits (City of Mount Vernon 2005). The City also conducted a buildable lands analysis to create an accurate account of existing developed land and inventory the land available for development and redevelopment within the City's UGA (City of Mount Vernon 2010). The intent of the analysis was to ensure that the City's comprehensive plan and/or development regulations provide sufficient capacity of land suitable for development to accommodate their allocated housing and employment growth. The analysis concluded that the City will be able to accommodate the number of homes necessary to meet the population that was allocated to the City for

the planning timeframe between 2005 and 2025. The analysis also identified a lack of commercial and industrial lands available for development within the City.

The cumulative analysis for this EIS focuses on the development potential within one-half mile of each alternative site (**Figures 27 and 28**). The one-half mile study area loosely represents the geographic extent of potential direct and indirect effects caused by the proposed action. The existing character and development potential within each area is summarized below.

3.10.1. Affected Environment

Alf Christianson Seed Site

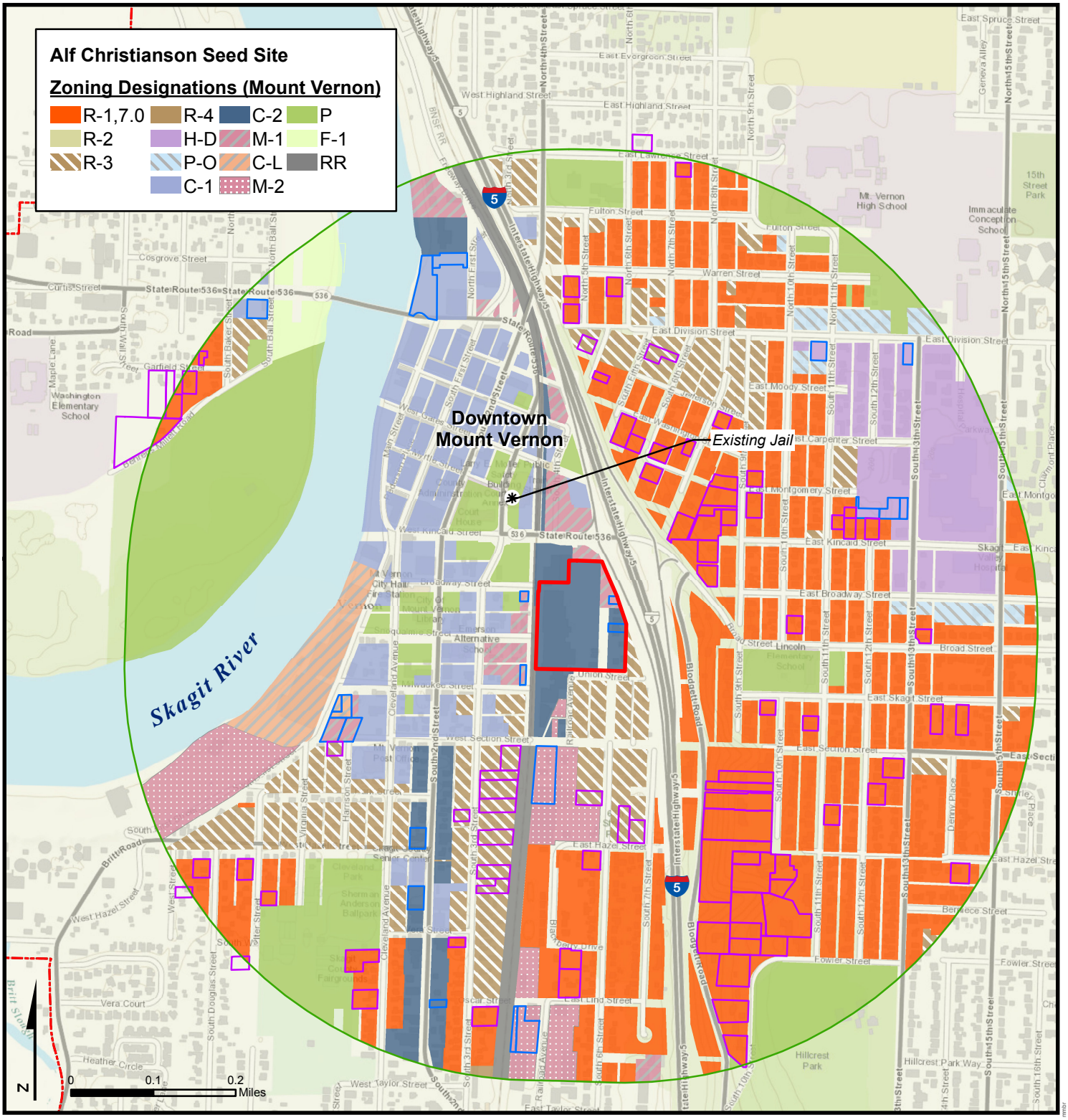
The site is currently zoned General Commercial (C-2) and Light Manufacturing and Commercial (M-1) and has a Comprehensive Plan designation of Commercial-Industrial (CI). This site is surrounded by a mix of zoning including residential (both single-and multi-family), varying intensities of commercial zoning, public, health care, office, and a few small pockets of manufacturing areas.

The area surrounding the site includes a variety of public/civic uses, such as the County Courthouse.

This area also has a sub-area plan that has been adopted as Sub-Area Plan A (Downtown Planning Area) within the Land Use Element of the Comprehensive Plan. Sub-Area Plan A identifies this area as being planned for "hotel convention and retail development as well as improving access to the site off Kincaid, to encourage re-development." Circulation within Sub-Area Plan A is restricted due to the "*natural features such as the river and the topographic change to the east*..." I-5 along the topographic edge of this area improves north-south movement but exacerbates the problems of east-west movement. There is only one bridge connecting downtown to the Westside, and only two streets span I-5, connecting downtown with adjacent neighborhoods.

The Alf Christianson Seed Site is part of the original City center. The character of this area is defined by its history, pedestrian and transit-oriented development, public art, and historic landmarks. Downtown Mount Vernon is part of the National Trust Main Street Program, which focuses on preservation-based economic development to revitalize the downtown area. This status helps the downtown enhance and maintain its unique charm.

The site is located in the historic and pedestrian-oriented downtown Mount Vernon.



Alf Christianson Seed Site
1/2 mile Buffer from Proposed Site
Mount Vernon City Limits
Parcel with Residential Development Potential
Parcel with Commercial Development Potential

Data Sources: Skagit County, City of Mount Vernon, DEA
Backgrounds: ESRI Service Layer World Topo Map

Skagit County Jail Draft EIS

Skagit County and City of Mount Vernon

Figure 27. Development Potential
Alf Christianson Seed Site

December 2013

Project No.: COMV0000-0011

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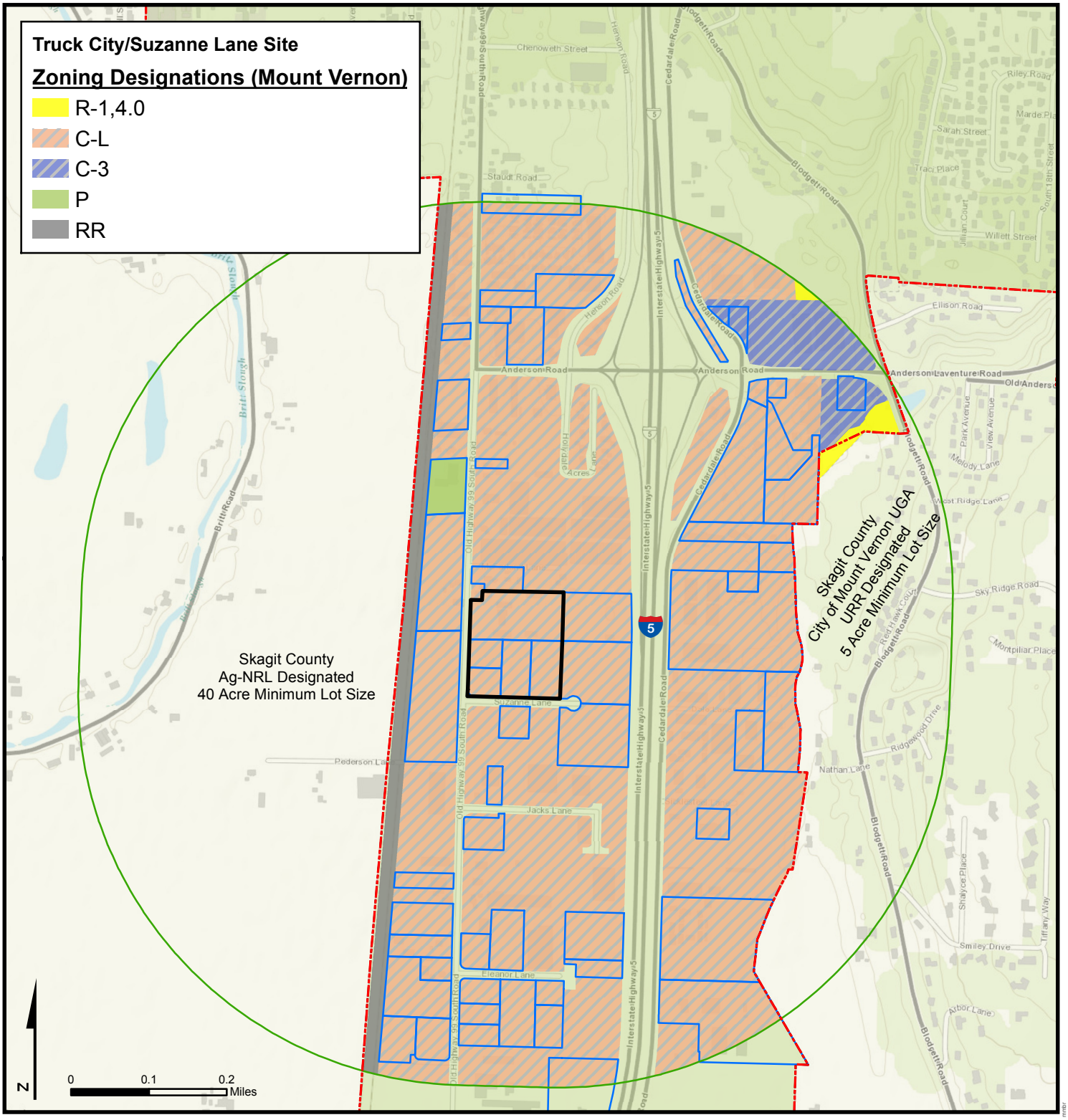

Truck City/Suzanne Lane Site

1/2 mile Buffer from Proposed Site

Mount Vernon City Limits

Parcel with Commercial Development Potential

Data Sources: Skagit County, City of Mount Vernon, DEA
Backgrounds: ESRI Service Layer World Topo Map

Skagit County Jail Draft EIS

Skagit County and City of Mount Vernon

Figure 28. Development Potential
Truck City/Suzanne Lane Site

December 2013

Project No.: COMV0000-0011

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Sub-Area Plan A states the following about downtown:

- "Man-made and topographic elements physically isolate downtown from the rest of the City; however, it is the commercial, business, and emblematic heart of the City."
- *"Downtown has a physically fine-grained quality as characterized by its narrow streets, small parcel development, continuous street walls, and rich materials and detailing."*
- *"The potential of downtown can be realized by emphasizing and strengthening the qualities already existing while developing the growing activities of culture/entertainment, increased river access, and tourism/convention which will reinforce the current role."*

Parcels with potential for residential or commercial development within one-half mile of the site are shown in **Figure 27**. The total amount of potential development is estimated at 4.46 acres of commercial development and 155 residential units. The buildable lands analysis completed by the City identified the Alf Christianson Seed Site as the proposed site for the new jail. The site itself is not discussed as a site with future commercial or industrial development opportunity. However, the Downtown and Waterfront Master Plan does identify the Alf Christianson Seed Site as the largest "opportunity site" in the downtown area (**Figure 24**). Potential uses for the site are identified as a large development such as a hotel or a complex of uses such as an office park or mixed use development.

Potential development demand in downtown Mount Vernon was also estimated as part of the Downtown and Waterfront Master Plan (**Table 11**). Over the next 10 years, potential development demand downtown is 125,000 square feet of new retail, 55,000 square feet of new office, and 100 to 200 units of residential. The City's Comprehensive Plan also contains a 2020 vision statement. The part of this statement that pertains to the subject area is as follows:

> *"The Mount Vernon of 2020 has a well-developed downtown, with tree-lined streets, sidewalk cafes and a waterfront park with trails linking the parks throughout the area. The City is busting with vital services, professional businesses, retail shops, and governmental offices. Bicycles share the road with pedestrians and quiet public transit vehicles link downtown with satellite services and other cities. Ride-sharing, multi-story parking, and widespread use of public transit help citizens enjoy a largely traffic-free downtown."*

Truck City Site

The site has both a zoning and Comprehensive Plan designation of Commercial-Limited Industrial (C-L). This site is surrounded by other C-L zoned properties with agricultural zoned areas by the County located to the west of the BNSF rail line. Large lot (5-acre minimum) residential areas zoned by the County are also surrounding Blodgett Road on the east side of the one-half mile study area. The surrounding area is characterized by large, commercial-industrial, vehicular/truck-oriented development to take advantage of the visibility from I-5. Per the City code (MVMC 14.10.170), instead of sidewalks, developments within this sub-area only have to provide a 4-foot-wide paved shoulder. This standard reinforces the vehicle/truck dominated nature of this area.


The area surrounding Truck City is developed with large-lot, vehicular-oriented uses.

In contrast to the historic nature of the area surrounding the Alf Christianson Seed Site, the south Mount Vernon area was not identified as part of the City's UGA until 1997. Following its identification as an UGA, a new zoning district was prepared (C-L) to expand the permitted land uses in the area, and support more intense commercial and industrial developments. The area surrounding the Truck City site within the City limits was annexed into the City in February of 2005.

Parcels with potential for residential or commercial development within one-half mile of the site are shown in **Figure 28**. The total amount of potential development is estimated at 65.25 acres of commercial development. All of the parcels that comprise the Truck City Site are identified as having commercial development potential. No residential development is anticipated in this area.

3.10.2. Alternative Impacts

Geology and Soils

Operation of the new jail at either site, in combination with other potential development projects, would not significantly affect geology in the one-half mile project area. Therefore, no cumulative impacts are anticipated for soils and geology. If other projects were constructed simultaneously in the project vicinity, BMPs and erosion control measures could be used at each construction site to minimize potential short-term cumulative impacts to air and water quality.

Floodplains

In general, infrastructure constructed within floodplains encroaches on floodplain flow and storage. After the proposed downtown levee is completed, the Alf Christianson Seed Site will be out of the floodplain. The site, therefore, is not expected to contribute to long-term cumulative floodplain impacts.

If the Truck City Site is selected, the facility will be constructed in accordance with MVMC Chapter 15.36, Floodplain Management Standards, which will minimize fill and alteration of the natural floodplain. Fill that is added to a floodplain removes volume from the floodplain and causes flood elevations to rise. Federal regulations, as adopted by the City, allow for filling of floodplain fringes up to the point where the floodplain has risen one foot. Once this point is reached, the remaining flooded area is defined as the floodway. As long as no fill is placed within the floodway, floodwaters will not rise higher than one foot. The Truck City Site is not within the floodway. The fill placed by this project and others in the surrounding area is accounted for in the City's floodplain regulations.

Hazardous Materials

If contamination from past and current use of either site is found before or during construction, these materials will be removed from the site. Use of hazardous materials at the Skagit County Jail is assumed to be less than what was previously and currently used on either site. Potential development within the one-half mile project area will be individually responsible for conducting remediation if hazardous materials are encountered on those sites. Siting the jail facility at the Alf Christianson Seed Site or the Truck City Site would, therefore, contribute to a cumulative reduction of hazardous materials and contamination in the local area.

Aesthetics

As discussed in Section 3.5 Aesthetics, without mitigation, the Alf Christianson Seed Site Alternative is not consistent with the visual character of the area as the gateway to the downtown. No other potential development is identified within the downtown core or on properties fronting Kincaid Street (**Figure 28**). The Alf Christianson Seed Site is greater in size than all of the potential commercial development properties within the one-half mile study area. The new jail facility has the greatest immediate opportunity to influence the character of this area from a visual standpoint due to the size and location of the property. Therefore, without mitigation, a jail at this site would contribute to cumulative adverse impacts to visual resources.

A new jail facility would change aesthetics in the immediate vicinity and add lighting at the Truck City Site where none currently exists. These changes would affect the perceived visual character of the area. If all of the surrounding properties with development potential in the one-half mile project area are developed, there could be a cumulative adverse impact to visual resources. However, the new jail at the Truck City Site would represent a much smaller portion of the cumulative impact than the Alf Christianson Seed Site, at 10 acres out of a total 65 acres of commercial development within the one-half mile study area. Other development surrounding the site could transform the area to a more urbanized visual character, contributing to light and glare and screening territorial views of the mountains and foothills in the background north and east of I-5.

Historic and Cultural Preservation

The Alf Christianson Seed Site and the Truck City Site have been heavily disturbed with multiple uses and have expansive impervious surface. However, site soils suggest that redevelopment of either site could impact unknown subsurface archaeological resources. If all of the surrounding properties with development potential in the one-half mile project area are developed, there could be a cumulative adverse impact to archaeological resources. Additional archaeological review is recommended at either alternative site to further characterize the potential to encounter buried, intact resources.

There are over 20 historic or landmark buildings within one-half mile of the Alf Christianson Seed Site. The City's Comprehensive Plan states the following with regard to these historic areas: "*The character of these should be retained as part of the object of maintaining Mount Vernon's historical flavor and small town nature.*" The new jail facility is not expected to affect the retention of historic character at these sites. Future redevelopment within this area will undergo individual SEPA review and should consider the proximity to these sites. Redevelopment of the Alf Christianson Seed Site for the jail facility use would not contribute to any foreseeable cumulative impacts to historic resources.

Transportation

Operation of a new jail on the Alf Christianson Seed Site or the Truck City Site would increase PM peak hour vehicle trips by 34 and 33 in the downtown Mount Vernon area, respectively. This small increase is part of a continual trend of growth in the City. General growth in the area has been taken into account by local traffic studies including those discussed in the Transportation Element of the Comprehensive Plan (City of Mount Vernon 2008) that estimates traffic conditions in 2025. The impact of even a small number of trips is greater at the Alf Christianson Seed Site than the Truck City Site because the existing traffic conditions are closer to capacity in the downtown area, leaving less capacity for additional trips. The Truck City Site is an area with greater available traffic capacity and would not be as impacted by additional traffic.

The Alf Christianson Seed Site has the potential to become a TOD due to its proximity to Skagit Station—a multi-modal transit facility with bus and rail access. TODs have the potential to reduce vehicle trips and thus help achieve state mandated Vehicle Miles of Travel (VMT) by providing direct linkage between housing, jobs, and transit. Reducing VMT is a key strategy in achieving state and national and carbon dioxide (CO_2) emission reduction goals. Development of the site as a jail would result in the loss of a prime TOD site and result in future jobs and housing being displaced into areas likely less accessible to transit, resulting in higher VMT and CO_2 emissions in the long-term.

A jail facility at the Truck City Site would create travel patterns consistent with the vehicle-oriented access in south Mount Vernon and would not likely impact or change VMT or CO_2 reduction potential.

Economics

As a key opportunity site, the Alf Christianson Seed Site has the potential to capture a portion of the long-term demand for commercial uses in downtown Mount Vernon. If the jail is located at that site, a portion of that potential would be delayed or foregone. This may result in lost jobs and revenue within the downtown area. A similar loss could occur if the jail is located at the Truck City Site due to the overall shortage of commercial industrial properties citywide. The cumulative impacts on the long-term economic development potential of the surrounding area may be greater at the Alf Christianson Seed Site because the site has higher potential development density and economic value than the Truck City Site.

Land Use

Upon completion of the comprehensive plan and zoning amendment for the Alf Christianson Seed Site and implementation of recommended mitigation measures, the new jail will be consistent with the Comprehensive Plan. The Truck City Site Alternative fits within the character of the surrounding area and is consistent with the Comprehensive Plan with no recommended mitigation. The commercial and residential development identified in the surrounding area on **Figures 27** and **28** is proposed on lands for which such development is an allowed use. Therefore, upon implementation of mitigation, construction and operation of the jail on either site, in combination with potential development within the project vicinity, will be consistent with the Comprehensive Plan.

The City's buildable lands analysis identified a lack of commercial and industrial lands available for development within the City limits. Construction of a new jail at either site will remove two large areas designated for commercial and industrial use from the inventory of available land. This will exacerbate the lack of inventory and will contribute to an adverse land use impact. While the impact is similar for both alternatives, the impact may be greater in the area surrounding the Alf Christianson Seed Site,

which has more limited opportunities for commercial development (4.46 acres) compared to the Truck City Site (65.25 acres). As shown in **Figure 27**, no parcels with development potential are identified within the downtown core (**Figure 23**), specifically highlighting the lack of available commercial land within the downtown area.

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5. List of Preparers

The individuals listed in **Table 14** were the principal contributors to the preparation of the EIS.

Table 14. Principal Contributors to EIS

Name	Firm/Agency	Contribution	Education
Maggie Buckley, LEED AP	David Evans and Associates, Inc. (DEA)	EIS Manager	MPA Environmental Policy B.S., Economics, Environmental Studies
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Gigi Cooper, AICP	DEA	Introduction, Alternatives, Land Use, Cultural Resources	Master of Urban and Regional Planning B.A., Oriental Studies, Political Science
Marc L Estvold, Architect AIA, LEED AP	Marc L Estvold, Inc.	EIS Review, Alternatives	Bachelor of Architecture
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Sara Gilbert, GISP	DEA	GIS Mapping/Analysis	M.S., Earth Sciences/GIS B.S., Geography
Jana Hanson	City of Mount Vernon	EIS Review	B.A., Environmental Studies and Planning
Pat Mattson	DEA	QA/QC and Document Production	N/A
Gray Rand, PWS	DEA	QA/QC	Post-Baccalaureate, Environmental Science B.S., Biology
Victor Salemann, PE	DEA	Transportation	B.S., Civil Engineering
Anthony Wilen, PE, LEED AP	DEA	Transportation	B.S., Civil Engineering

6. Distribution List

Local Governments

City of Anacortes
City of Burlington
City of Mount Vernon
City of Sedro Woolley
Economic Development Association of Skagit County
Mount Vernon-Skagit County Health Department*
Port of Anacortes*
Port of Skagit*
Skagit Council of Governments
Skagit County Dike District #3*
Skagit County Drainage and Irrigation District #17*
Skagit County Jail

Skagit County
Skagit County Public Utility District No. 1*
Town of Concrete
Town of Hamilton
Town of La Conner
Town of Lyman

State of Washington

Department of Archaeology and Historic Preservation*
Department of Commerce*
Department of Ecology
Department of Fish and Wildlife*
Department of Health*
Department of Social and Health Services*
Department of Transportation*
Governor Inslee's Office*
Parks and Recreation Commission*

Federal Agencies

Federal Emergency Management Agency*
National Marine Fisheries Service*
U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, Seattle District*
U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, Region 10*
U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service*

Tribes

Samish Indian Nation
Sauk-Suiattle Tribe
Skagit River Systems Cooperation*
Swinomish Indian Tribal Community
Upper Skagit Tribe

Libraries

Mount Vernon Public Library

Schools

Mount Vernon School District*
Skagit Valley College*

Newspapers

Skagit Valley Herald*

Other

AT&T*
Cascade Natural Gas*
Comcast*
Puget Sound Energy*
Skagit Transit*
Verizon*

*Received Notice of Availability only