

Appendix C

Cooperative Planning and Alternatives Analysis for a Public Facility Potentially Located within a Mapped Floodplain

1. Introduction

The below table summarizes the step by step process the County has followed, to date, in evaluating alternative sites for the proposed jail facility. The "eight step" analysis is borrowed from the analysis used pursuant to Executive Order in siting federal facilities which have the potential to be located within mapped floodplains and wetlands. The analysis is not required here as the facility being sited here is not federal, and is locally funded. Nonetheless, the local approach has borrowed from the analysis used for federal facilities.

2. Location - Summary



The City of Mount Vernon is located along the Skagit River. With the first levees constructed in 1894, which the City has continually maintained and improved, the City has planned ahead to address River flood risks for over a century. In addition to levee improvements and citizen involvement in addressing flood risks, the City utilizes a flood warning system, which typically provides the City with days of advance warning for major flood events. Given the population's long presence proximate to the River, finding available property which would be feasible for a new jail facility presented significant challenges. The table below summarizes the approach taken to date.

3. Table

<p>Step 1: Determine whether the Proposed Action is located in a wetland and/or the 100-year floodplain, or whether it has the potential to affect or be affected by a floodplain or wetland.</p>	<p>Project Analysis: According to current Flood Insurance Rate Mapping, the alternatives are designated as follows:</p> <p>Site 1: Parking lot north of County Courthouse Complex..... AO*</p> <p>Site 2: Skagit County Fairgrounds..... AO</p> <p>Site 3: Old Wal-mart Site A21</p> <p>Site 4: Meridian Quarry..... C</p> <p>Site 5: Fir Warehouse.....C/A21**</p> <p>Site 6: Lower Fourth Street.....C</p> <p>Site 7: Far Downtown Northern Site.....C</p> <p>Site 8: South of Kinkaid, West of RR tracks.....AO*</p> <p>Site 9: Butler Hill/Pit Site.....C</p> <p>Site 10: Alf Christianson Seed Site (larger).....AO*</p> <p>Site 11: Alf Christianson Seed Site (smaller).....AO*</p> <p>Site 12: Truck City/Suzanne Lane Site.....AO</p> <p>Site 13: Gunn Road Site.....AO</p> <p>Site 14: Port of Skagit Site/North end of Skagit Reg. Airport.....C**</p> <p>AO: 100 Year Flood Plain A21: 100 Year Flood Plain, BFE's (base flood elevations) established C: Outside 100/500 Year Flood Plain</p> <p>*Once planned improvements occur, remapping to "C" is expected. **High potential for impacting wetland.</p>
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Step 2: *Notify public at earliest possible time of the intent to carry out an action in a floodplain or wetland, and involve the affected and interested public in the decision-making process.*

Project Analysis: The planning process to address long term public facility needs initially commences in 2002. Focused public involvement occurs in 2012-13. Public input occurs through 17 meetings and work sessions in 2012, and 20 County presentations in 2013. In 2013 there is news coverage, input from the cities, and a County-wide vote on whether a new facility should be funded.

- 2002: Skagit County Facilities Task Force convenes to evaluate future programming needs and range of alternatives.
- 2004: Task Force prepares a white paper on jail overcrowding.
- 2005: County hires Voorhis Associates, Inc. to prepare a Community Justice Center Master Plan, and later a Site Analysis and Analysis of Options. The Master Plan assesses recidivism, risk and prevention, County population trends and projections, crime trends, court trends, jail trends, inmate profile, alternative sanctions, and physical plant issues.
- 2006: Site selection and evaluation process commences. The initial, primary criteria for including a site on the initial consideration list is adequate size (3-5 acres) and proximity to the existing courthouse and other County services. Nine potential sites are identified.
- 2007: Voorhis Associates, Inc. develops evaluation criteria, which are: (1) distance from services (Sheriff's department, first responder, medical services, attorney offices, and courthouse); (2) location so that cities can efficiently transport incoming inmates; (3) site access - site is easily accessed and has two access points; (4) site character, size, and use; (5) site acquisition and costs; (6) agency/public support; (7) utilities extend to property lines.
- 2005-2008: County work on necessary Justice Center components continues.
- 2012: Skagit County Public Safety Jail Coordinating Council established. Consists of four City mayors, one County commissioner, two judges, and the County Sheriff. The Coordinating Council holds 17 meetings and work sessions. The Coordinating Council considers: (1) expansion of the existing facility; (2) outsourcing; and (3) construction of a new facility, at one of 14 alternative sites.
- 2012: County hires DLR Group to evaluate possibility of expanding the existing facility into a two-story, remodeled building. DLR Group concludes that due to site location and physical constraints it cannot be expanded to accommodate more than 492 additional beds. Also, expansion of the existing facility is more expensive than constructing a new facility. Outsourcing is found to be impracticable. Siting criteria are refined.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 2013: Insert in the Skagit Valley Herald is circulated with drawings of the final candidate sites, followed by 20 County presentations to community organizations, coupled with a series of newspaper articles. • 2013: The mayors of Anacortes, Burlington, Mount Vernon, and Sedro Wooley all endorse a provisional agreement with the Board of County Commissioners to share revenue for justice facility construction. City Council members from the four cities provide unanimous support for a new facility. • 2013: After ten months of discussion and analysis, the Coordinating Council unanimously agrees a new jail is needed and recommends a sales tax increase to fund construction and operation of the new facility. • 2013: County voters approve a 3/10 of 1% sales tax increase to fund the jail. • 2013-2014: SEPA review is completed, with an EIS being prepared, primarily as a mechanism to encourage informed public involvement and participation. As part of this process, although not required, public hearings are held for both scoping the EIS and the Draft EIS. • 2013-present: Legislative process commences for rezone and comprehensive plan amendments. This process will follow the City’s public participation program, adopted through Resolution 491. To date, the docketing hearing has occurred. This will be followed by Planning Commission and City Council review.
<p><i>Step 3: Identify and evaluate practicable alternatives to locating the Proposed Action in a floodplain or wetland.</i></p>	<p>Project Analysis: From 2002-2014, 14 alternative sites are identified, and other options considered, including: (1) expanding the existing facility; and, (2) outsourcing. Of the alternative sites, six are located outside a mapped floodplain, but do not meet siting criteria. Four sites are identified (1, 8, 10, and 11), which are expected to be located outside a mapped floodplain, once planned infrastructure is constructed.</p> <p>The 2012 siting criteria identified the following prerequisites: (1) the site is located within the City of Mount Vernon; (2) the site can accommodate up to 800 beds; (3) site topography allows for efficient building design via a one-story solution; and (4) the site is currently for sale and competitively priced. Based on these criteria, a minimum of 7.5+ acres is required.</p>

Sites Outside the Mapped Floodplain, but Which Do Not Meet Proposal Objectives:

- **Alternative 4:** The site is located outside the City. Also, the site is protected pursuant to state law for long term mineral resource lands use and is owned by the City, which requires its use for that purpose.
- **Alternative 5 (partly within floodplain):** The site is 5.3 acres, with the buildable area further constrained by wetlands. Also, it has a narrow shape, a significant amount of cut and fill would be needed to build on the site, and has access limitations due to its irregular shape, surrounding development, and site conditions.
- **Alternative 6:** The site is 4.8 acres. As it is already developed, its use for the facility would result in significant housing and commercial use displacement. (See Draft EIS, App. C).
- **Alternative 7:** As it is already developed, its use for the facility would result in significant housing and commercial use displacement. (See Draft EIS, App. C).
- **Alternative 9:** The site is outside the City, with a comparatively remote location, north of SR 20. This location would place inmates further from services required for rehabilitation and poorly utilizes public resources. Also, the location increases operational and transportation costs, as well as security challenges resulting from the added transportation of inmates.
- **Alternative 14:** Site 14 is located outside the City, north of SR 20. As with Alternative 9, the location places inmates further from services required for rehabilitation and poorly utilizes public resources. Also, the location increases operational and transportation costs, and increases security challenges resulting from the added transportation of inmates. The site also has significant wetland constraints and access limitations. It is adjacent to the Skagit Regional Airport Runway, which is particularly problematic for a facility with a resident population of up to 800.

Sites Identified Which, Following Construction of Planned Infrastructure, are Likely Outside a Mapped Floodplain:

- **Site 1:** The site is 1.8 acres. (The City also has plans to use the site for parking garage and retail development.)
- **Site 8:** The site is 5.3 acres, and is proximate to Site 11, which is a better

	<p>site.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Site 10: Several properties are no longer available, so it required reconfiguration. • Site 11: Site 11 was originally part of Site 10, but is available for development. The site is developed, but with vacant buildings, and meets the siting criteria. <p>Existing Site: The site is within a mapped floodplain, but once planned infrastructure is constructed, it is expected to be located outside a mapped flood plain. However, it has inadequate capacity to accommodate the planned facility.</p>
<p><i>Step 4: Identify the full range of potential direct or indirect impacts associated with the occupancy or modification of floodplains and wetlands, and the potential direct and indirect support of floodplain and wetland development that could result from the Proposed Action.</i></p>	<p>Project Analysis: The Environmental Impact Statement prepared for the proposal addresses these impacts.</p>
<p><i>Step 5: Minimize the potential adverse impacts from work within floodplains and wetlands (identified under Step 4), restore and preserve the natural and beneficial values served by wetlands.</i></p>	<p>Project Analysis: The sites which meet proposal objectives are developed sites which do not provide natural and beneficial floodplain or wetland values. (The sites with wetland constraints do not meet proposal objectives.) Redevelopment to current regulatory requirements will in fact provide improvements to water quality. For example, stormwater will be addressed pursuant to current requirements. The Environmental Impact Statement prepared for the proposal identifies mitigation, which will be further developed during the permitting process. At minimum, the facility would be built at the elevation required at the time of construction. For critical facilities, the lowest floor must be three or more feet above the level of the base flood elevation. Also, flood proofing and sealing measures must be taken to ensure that toxic substances will not be displaced by or released into floodwaters. City Municipal Code Ch. 15.36 and building code requirements would be adhered to, and an emergency response plan required.</p>

<p>Step 6: <i>Re-evaluate the Proposed Action to determine: 1) if it is still practicable in light of its exposure to flood hazards; 2) the extent to which it will aggravate the hazards to others; 3) its potential to disrupt floodplain and wetland values.</i></p>	<p>Project Analysis: Sites which meet proposal objectives are developed sites and are practicable. Impacts resulting from exposure to flood hazards can be mitigated and measures taken to avoid any aggravation of hazards to others. Mitigation and re-evaluation, and consideration of mitigation measures will occur throughout the siting and permitting process. All sites are protected by an existing, well maintained diking system. Although within a mapped floodplain, due to the levees, the City does not have records of any site meeting proposal objectives as having flooded.</p>
<p>Step 7: <i>If the agency decides to take an action in a floodplain or wetland, prepare and provide the public with a finding and explanation of any final decision that the floodplain or wetland is the only practicable alternative. The explanation should include any relevant factors considered in the decision-making process.</i></p>	<p>Project Analysis: A final siting decision has not yet been made. If the final site is located within a mapped floodplain, decision makers will prepare analysis regarding the decision. Such a decision will rely on the Environmental Impact Statement, the siting process, and other analysis.</p>
<p>Step 8: <i>Review the implementation and post-implementation phases of the Proposed Action to ensure that the requirements of the Executive Orders are fully implemented. Oversight responsibility shall be integrated into existing processes.</i></p>	<p>Project Analysis: This is not a federal facility, so Executive Orders do not apply. However, proposal review in conjunction with flood plain location is integrated into the permit review processes, with mitigation measures imposed through required permits.</p>