



November 10, 2015

Skagit County Planning Commission  
Chairman Axthelm  
1800 Continental Place  
Mount Vernon, WA 98273

Reference: Skagit County's Proposed TDR Ordinance

Dear Planning Commission Chair Axthelm:

Thank you for the opportunity to provide comments with regard to Skagit County Planning & Development Services proposal to adopt a Transfer of Development Rights (TDR) program.

The City of Mount Vernon has successfully implemented a TDR program that, to-date, has resulted in the conservation of 35-acres of prime agricultural property. Below I've provided a brief overview of our program below.

**BACKGROUND:**

- The City established our TDR program in 1999 in response to a Growth Management Hearing Board mandate because the City limits had been expanded to include approximately 93-acres of farmland to the southwest and 19.8-acres to the north of the City. Please see the attached maps.
- The City's 19.8-acre site to the north of the City has been sold to Nookachamps LLC and is now a wetland mitigation bank. As such, the City's current TDR program is based on the 93-acre site located to the southwest of the City commonly referred to as the 'Alfco' property.
- The City's TDR ordinance (codified as Mount Vernon Municipal Code Chapter 17.119) has been amended a handful of times since its original adoption in 1999. Currently this ordinance allows a proposed plat to increase its density by one (1) dwelling unit per acre in the City's R-1, 4.0 zone. This means that a developer – with the purchase of a TDR – could increase the density of a net acre from 4.54 dwelling units to 5.54 dwelling units.

**STATUS:**

The City has four (4) developments that have used, or anticipate using TDRs. These developments include:

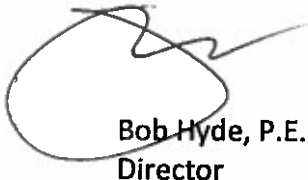
- Iris Meadows (LU06-090) that uses 11 TDRs – has preliminary plat approval;
- Cedar Heights II (LU07-009) renamed Woodside that uses 8 TDRs; has preliminary plat approval;
- Digby Heights (LU07-013) that used 18 TDRs – has final plat approval and TDRs are fully extinguished; and,
- Trumpeter Place (LU07-023) renamed Summersun Estates that used 14 TDRs - has final plat approval and TDRs are fully extinguished.

Of the 186 TDRs available in the City's program 51 have been used or are anticipated to be used in the next few years leaving 135 TDRs that can be utilized in the future.

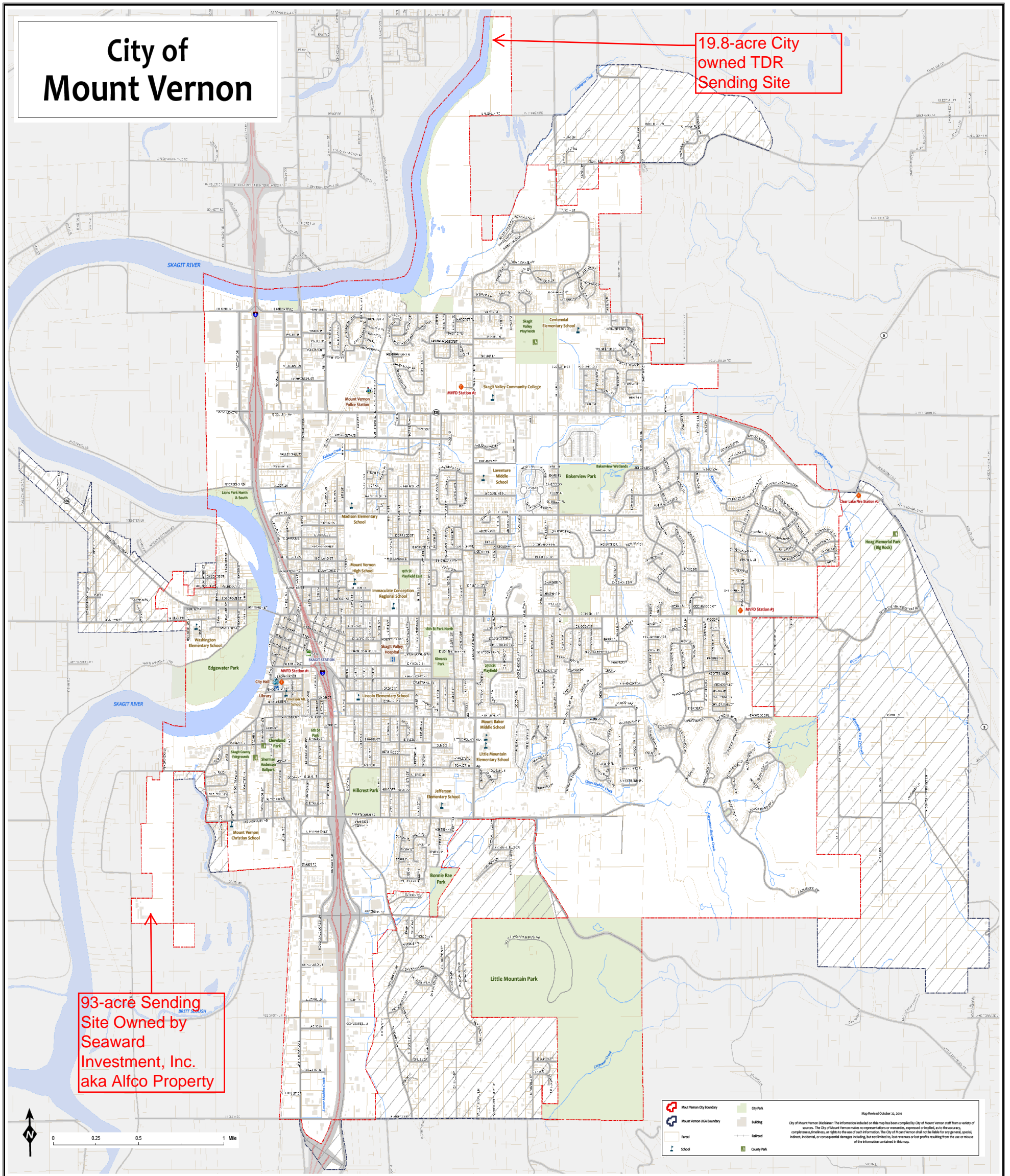
My department will be providing a brief overview of the County's program to our City Council in the near future. With our own successful TDR program up and running I foresee, at some point, the City discussing further the possibility of being part of the County's program. To be clear, the City needs to make sure we are not undermining our existing TDR program; however, there could be some opportunities for the County's program to be utilized especially in the City's outmost portion of our Urban Growth Areas (UGAs) that are not likely to be developed within our current GMA planning horizon of 2016 to 2036.

If you have any questions about the contents of this letter; or if you need additional information, please do not hesitate to call me at (360) 336-6214; or to email me at: [bobh@mountvernonwa.gov](mailto:bobh@mountvernonwa.gov)

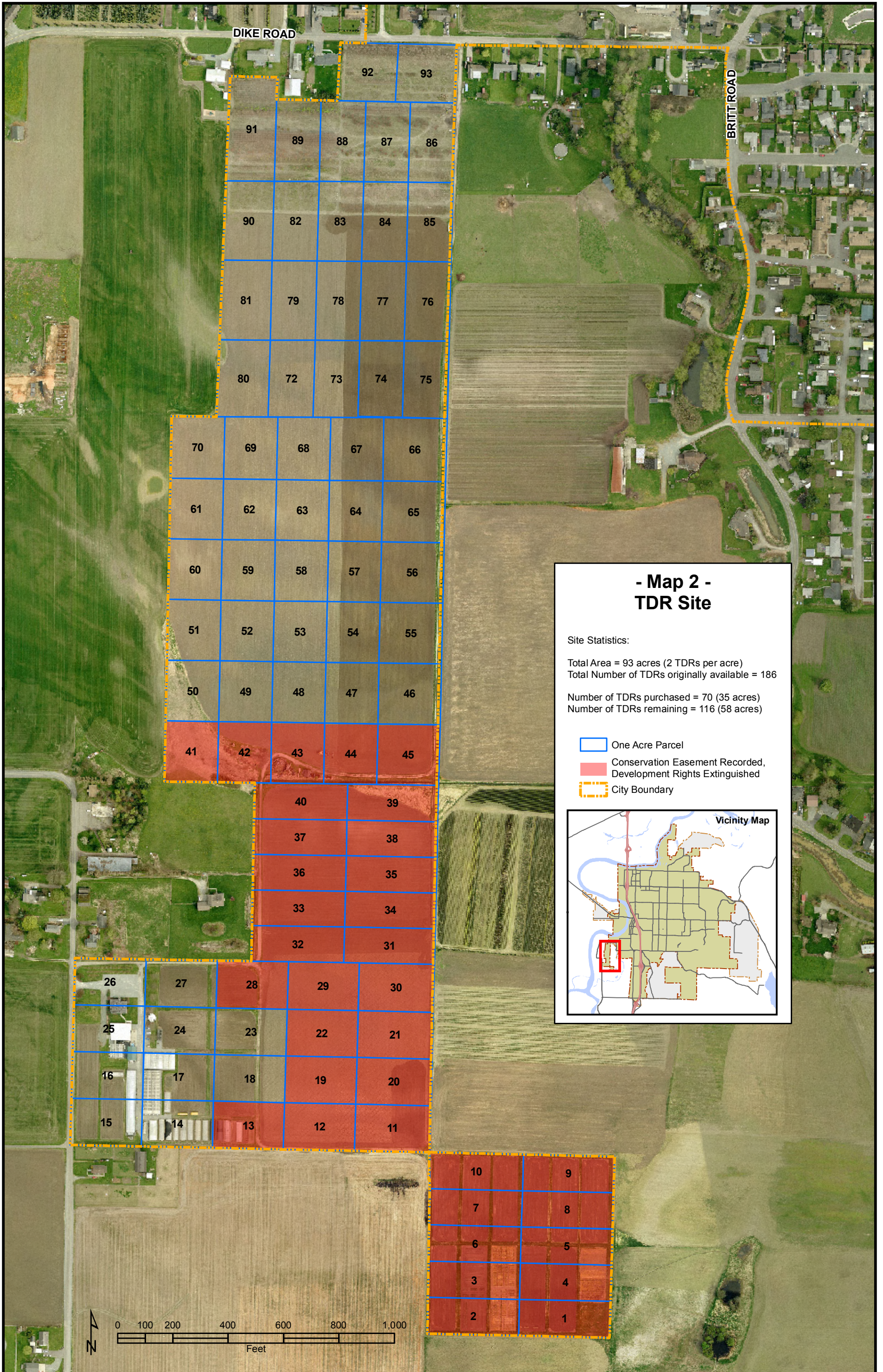
Sincerely,



Bob Hyde, P.E.  
Director



**MAP 1 – LOCATION OF TDR SENDING SITES IN MOUNT VERNON**



DIKE ROAD

BRITT ROAD

### - Map 2 - TDR Site

Site Statistics:

Total Area = 93 acres (2 TDRs per acre)  
 Total Number of TDRs originally available = 186  
 Number of TDRs purchased = 70 (35 acres)  
 Number of TDRs remaining = 116 (58 acres)

- One Acre Parcel
- Conservation Easement Recorded, Development Rights Extinguished
- City Boundary

