MUKILTEO MULTIMODAL PROJECT
FINAL
ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT STATEMENT

Ecosystems
Discipline Report

Prepared for:

U.S. Department of Transportation
Federal Transit Administration

Washington State
Department of Transportation

Washington State Ferries

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Discipline Report

Mukilteo Multimodal Project
Final Environmental Impact Statement

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For:

Federal Transit Administration and
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Acronyms and Abbreviations

ADA	Americans with Disabilities Act
BA	Biological Assessment
BMP	best management practice
CFR	Code of Federal Regulations
DMMP	Dredged Material Management Program
DPS	distinct population segment
Ecology	Washington State Department of Ecology
EEZ	exclusive economic zone
EFH	essential fish habitat
EIS	Environmental Impact Statement
ESA	Endangered Species Act
ESU	evolutionarily significant unit
FR	Federal Register
FTA	Federal Transit Administration
HOV	high-occupancy vehicle
mg/L	milligrams per liter
MHHW	mean higher high water
MLLW	mean lower low water
MMC	Mukilteo Municipal Code
MMPA	Marine Mammal Protection Act
MSA	Magnuson-Stevens Fisheries Conservation and Management Act
NEPA	National Environmental Policy Act
NMFS	National Marine Fisheries Service
NOAA	National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration
NTU	nephelometric turbidity unit
NWI	National Wetlands Inventory
PAH	polyaromatic hydrocarbon
PAR	photosynthetically active radiation

PCB	polychlorinated biphenyl
PFMC	Pacific Fishery Management Council
PHS	Priority Habitats and Species
RCW	Revised Code of Washington
SCL	screening level criteria
SEPA	State Environmental Policy Act
SF	square feet
SR	State Route
TMDL	total maximum daily load
USACE	U.S. Army Corps of Engineers
USC	United States Code
USFWS	U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service
WAC	Washington Administrative Code
WDFW	Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife
WSDOT	Washington State Department of Transportation
WSF	Washington State Ferries

1 THE MUKILTEO MULTIMODAL PROJECT

The Washington State Department of Transportation (WSDOT), Ferries Division (also known as Washington State Ferries [WSF]) proposes the Mukilteo Multimodal Project to improve the operations and facilities serving the mainland terminus of the Mukilteo-Clinton ferry route in Washington State. The Federal Transit Administration (FTA) may fund part of the proposed project.

WSDOT and FTA are preparing this Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) for the project in compliance with the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) and the State Environmental Policy Act (SEPA). FTA is the federal lead agency for the NEPA environmental review process. WSDOT is the state lead agency for SEPA.

The ferry route is part of State Route (SR) 525, the major transportation corridor across Possession Sound, which separates Island County (Whidbey Island) from the central Puget Sound mainland. In 2012, the Mukilteo-Clinton route had the most vehicle trips and the second-highest total ridership in the system. Figure 1 shows the regional setting and Figure 2 shows the general project area.

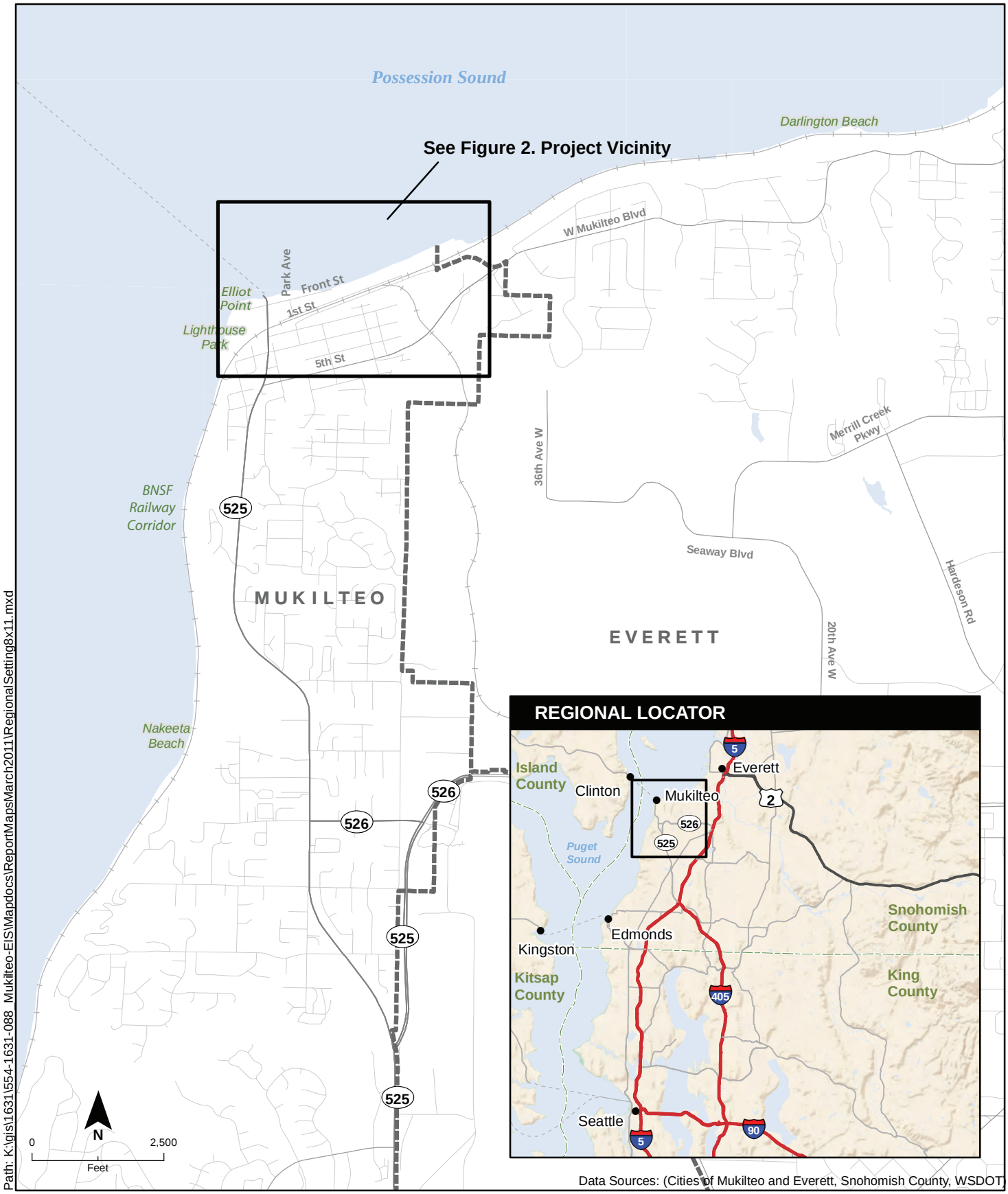
1.1 The Mukilteo Ferry Terminal Area

The existing Mukilteo ferry terminal is located in the city of Mukilteo in Snohomish County, Washington, west of the Mukilteo/Everett city line. The shoreline in this area faces north to northwest and runs primarily east-west within the project area. West of the existing terminal are Elliot Point and Mukilteo Lighthouse Park.

To the east of the existing terminal is the Mukilteo Tank Farm, a 20-acre area, previously used by the U.S. Air Force, and featuring lands, buildings, and a large pier formerly used for fuel storage and loading. A research facility operated by the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) Fisheries Service is on the west and north portion of the Mukilteo Tank Farm; the research facility is also known as the NOAA Mukilteo Research Station. The Mukilteo/Everett city line is at the eastern end of the Mukilteo Tank Farm. The Mount Baker Terminal, a marine-to-rail intermodal facility operated by the Port of Everett, is located just east, in the city of Everett.

Elliot Point and its original shoreline area include several important historic and archaeological sites, including a buried shell midden created by Native American peoples, with deposits dating back over 1,000 years. In fact, the name Mukilteo is derived from a Salish word meaning “a good place to camp.”

BNSF owns and operates a railroad that runs south of the Mukilteo ferry terminal and adjacent to the southern boundary of the Mukilteo Tank Farm. The BNSF tracks mostly follow the shoreline between Seattle and Everett. East of where the railroad crosses under SR 525, it borders the Mukilteo Tank Farm, and a rail spur



City Boundary

Figure 1. **Regional Setting**

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Existing Terminal
Project Area
Mukilteo Tank Farm
City Boundary

Figure 2. **Project Vicinity**

Mukilteo Multimodal Project

connection extends to the Mount Baker Terminal. Sound Transit's Sounder commuter rail also uses the BNSF tracks. Its Mukilteo Station is located southeast of Park Avenue, between the Mukilteo Tank Farm and the BNSF railroad tracks.

1.2 Purpose and Need

The following purpose and need statement will guide decisions about the project.

1.2.1 Project Purpose

The purpose of the Mukilteo Multimodal Project is to provide safe, reliable, and efficient service and connections for general-purpose transportation, transit, high-occupancy vehicles (HOVs), pedestrians, and bicyclists traveling between Island County and the Seattle-Everett metropolitan area and beyond. The project is intended to:

- Reduce conflicts, congestion, and safety concerns for pedestrians, bicyclists, and motorists by improving local traffic and safety at the terminal and the surrounding area that serves these transportation needs.
- Provide a terminal and supporting facilities with the infrastructure and operating characteristics needed to improve the safety, security, quality, reliability, and efficiency of multimodal transportation.
- Accommodate future demand projected for transit, HOV, pedestrian, bicycle, and general-purpose traffic.

1.2.2 Project Need

The existing facility is deficient in a number of aspects, including safety, multimodal connectivity, capacity, and the ability to support the goals of local and regional long-range transportation and comprehensive plans, including future growth in travel demand. Those factors, which are further described below, demonstrate the need for an improved multimodal facility.

Safety and Security

Safety is WSDOT's top priority, and security at transportation facilities is a national concern. Safety and security come into play with this project in several ways: at the pedestrian/vehicle interface, with the general traffic flow in the SR 525/Front Street vicinity, and in maintaining safety and security for the facility itself. Safety and security improvements are needed because:

- The Mukilteo ferry terminal has received few improvements since it was built in 1957. The existing timber structures, including the docking facilities, are beyond the end of their useful lives.

- The existing terminal does not meet current seismic standards. The existing facility is underlain by deep, potentially liquefiable soils that are highly susceptible to lateral spreading during an earthquake.
- Changed U.S. Coast Guard and U.S. Department of Homeland Security protocols now require the ability to secure terminal areas when there is a natural disaster, heightened security alert, or other emergency. The existing facility has city streets within the terminal area and does not allow for a physical separation between the terminal and open public areas, which increases safety and security concerns, and could require WSDOT to interrupt service or close the terminal to respond to an emergency or a heightened security alert.
- Collisions near the SR 525/Front Street intersection have included sideswipes, vehicle/pedestrian collisions, and collisions with parked vehicles.
- Because of congestion caused by ferry traffic, pedestrians often make high-risk decisions to cross the SR 525/Front Street intersection during breaks in ferry traffic; near misses between vehicles and pedestrians are common. Pedestrians who access the terminal area, transit facilities, surrounding businesses, and Mukilteo Lighthouse Park compete with vehicles for access to this intersection.
- Other inadequate facilities include a lack of passenger drop-off/pick-up areas and poor bus access to the bus bay; both increase congestion and the risk of accidents.
- Passengers who are loading and unloading from the ferry or going between the toll booth and the passenger building must traverse routes that do not meet the requirements of the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA).

Transit Connectivity and Reliability

The current facility provides poor connections between transit, rail, and ferry modes, which significantly hamper the quality and reliability of the transportation system in this area and add to the overall transportation and safety problems related to the terminal. The major concerns are:

- Transit connections at the Mukilteo ferry terminal cannot adequately serve current or future needs. There are only two bus bays, located 200 feet away, uphill and across a major local street. The limited transit facilities are inadequate to support the current service, including staging and layover needs for transit operations, and there are limited boarding areas and amenities for transit riders. The current configuration would not allow bus service to be expanded. In addition, the Sounder commuter rail stops at the Mukilteo Station, approximately 2,000 feet from the existing terminal, and the streets between the ferry terminal and the station have missing or substandard pedestrian and bicycle facilities.
- Keeping the ferry on schedule is integral to multimodal connectivity and the ability of the system to meet growing demand by allowing passengers to make on-time connections to scheduled bus and train service. Inefficient vehicle staging slows fare collection, which delays departures. Lack of a dedicated HOV

access lane makes it difficult to implement WSDOT's preferential program for carpools, and worsens operating efficiency. Also, pedestrians walking on and off the ferry use the same span that vehicles use. This requires passengers and vehicles to be loaded at separate times, which leads to system inefficiency and can cause delays that last throughout the day.

Growth in Travel Demand

The Mukilteo-Clinton route connects SR 525 between Island County (Whidbey Island) and the Seattle-Everett metropolitan area. SR 525 is a major transportation corridor and is classified as a Highway of Statewide Significance. In addition to serving ongoing travel demand, SR 525 is needed to connect the communities and military facilities on the island for evacuations, disaster relief, and medical emergencies.

WSDOT's travel forecasts highlight the higher future demand for improved multimodal facilities serving the Mukilteo-Clinton route: WSDOT predicts a 73 percent increase in annual passengers (1,840,000 to 3,175,000) on the Mukilteo-Clinton route from 2006 to 2030.

The Mukilteo-Clinton route serves a high number of commuter trips, and growth in employment on both Whidbey Island and on the mainland is a primary reason for the predicted growth in trips by ferry. In response, the *Washington State Department of Transportation Ferries Division Final Long-Range Plan: 2009–2030* calls for meeting the growing travel needs at the Mukilteo ferry terminal primarily through increasing the share of walk-on trips. This reinforces the need for improved connections and facilities between ferries and other modes, including transit, bicycle, and walking (WSDOT 2009).

Other Related Objectives

Through its public planning and outreach efforts, including public scoping comments, WSDOT has also identified environmental and project development goals to help guide the project:

- The project should be fiscally responsible and supportive of state, regional, and local transportation plans including, but not limited to, the *Washington State Department of Transportation Ferries Division Final Long-Range Plan: 2009–2030* (WSDOT 2009), as well as regional and local land use plans.
- The project should be sensitive to the rich cultural and environmental resources of the vicinity in a manner that respects and enhances these resources.
- The project should not preclude development of a second slip at the terminal in the future to provide operational flexibility or additional capacity.

1.3 Alternatives

The project is considering four alternatives:

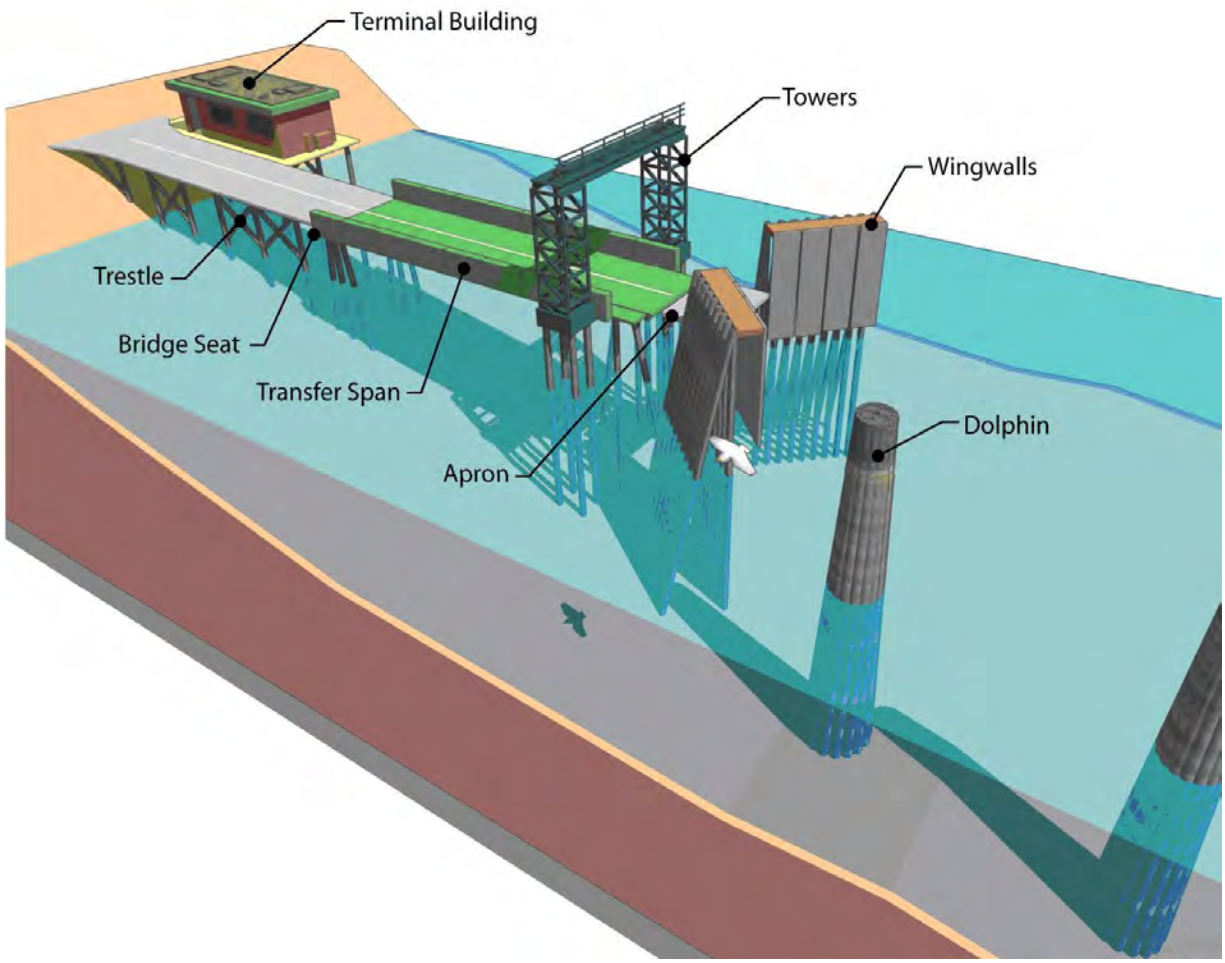
- The No-Build Alternative, which maintains the existing facility but does not improve it; this alternative provides a basis against which to compare the effects of the "Build" alternatives
- The Preferred Alternative (a modified Elliot Point 2 Alternative), which would relocate the terminal to the western portion of the Mukilteo Tank Farm as part of an integrated multimodal center, and it would remove the existing terminal
- The Existing Site Improvements Alternative, which would construct an improved multimodal facility by replacing the existing Mukilteo ferry terminal with an expanded terminal and multimodal center at the current site
- The Elliot Point 1 Alternative, which would relocate the terminal to the eastern portion of the Mukilteo Tank Farm as part of an integrated multimodal center and it would remove the existing terminal

1.3.1 No-Build Alternative

The No-Build Alternative provides a baseline against which to compare the effects of the Build alternatives. It includes what would be needed to maintain the existing ferry terminal at a functional level. Figure 3 shows the key parts of a typical ferry terminal.

Maintenance and structure replacements would occur in accordance with legislative direction to maintain and preserve ferry facilities, but WSDOT would make no major investments for improvements. Figure 4 illustrates the elements replaced as part of planned maintenance activities.

Nearly all of the ferry docking, loading, and unloading facilities would need to be replaced because they will have reached the end of their lifespan by 2040. The existing vehicle holding area would remain at its current location. The terminal supervisor's building, passenger and maintenance building, and the three existing toll booths would be replaced at their current locations. This alternative would not improve substandard conditions related to congestion, vehicular and pedestrian conflicts, poor sight distance, and security.



Key parts of a typical ferry terminal

fixed dolphin – an assembly of steel piles or concrete drilled shafts supporting a concrete cap and a fendering system.

floating dolphin – concrete or wooden barge structures located offshore clad with a perimeter fendering system and anchored to the seabed; used to help guide the ferry into the slip.

wingwall – an assembly of steel piles or concrete drilled shafts supporting a steel or concrete cap and a fendering system to guide and stop the ferry at its loading and unloading position.

tower – currently used to house and support the cable and counter weight system that supports, raises, and lowers the outboard end of the transfer span. (The tower system will be replaced by hydraulic lifts regardless of the alternative chosen.)

apron – adjustable ramp at the end of the transfer span that accommodates varying water heights.

transfer span – movable bridge that allows the vehicles and pedestrians access on and off the ferry; it is the link between the ferry and the trestle.

trestle and bridge seat – over-water stationary pile-supported bridge structure that serves as a connection between land and the nearshore end of the transfer span for both vehicle and pedestrian traffic (pedestrians do not use the trestle if overhead passenger loading is available).

Figure 3. Key Parts of a Typical Ferry Terminal

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No-Build Alternative

Elements to be replaced

Ferry Traffic Control Light

Figure 4. **No-Build Alternative**

1.3.2 Preferred Alternative (Elliot Point 2)

The Preferred Alternative is a slightly modified version of the Elliot Point 2 Alternative that was studied in the Draft EIS. This alternative would develop the project on the western portion of the Mukilteo Tank Farm. It would have a more compact footprint than the Elliot Point 1 Alternative due to the deeper water near the shore where the ferry would berth. Its key features are shown on Figure 5.

The Preferred Alternative would construct in-water facilities that include the features needed for the ferry berth, including wingwalls and fixed dolphins. A floating dolphin would be relocated from the existing ferry terminal. The alternative will construct a new transfer span, including hydraulic-lifting mechanisms and structures and a bridge seat foundation, as well as a new concrete trestle and bulkhead. Because there is no beach and the water is deeper at this location, the ferry slip is near to the shore, which allows the trestle to be shorter than other alternatives, including fewer piles to support the trestle. The Tank Farm Pier, which includes approximately 3,900 piles, would be removed. A channel about 500 feet wide by 100 feet long would be dredged through part of the area currently occupied by the pier to provide a navigation depth of -28 feet at an average lowest tide, which would require dredging to a depth of -30 feet. Under the pier, current depths are -15 to -35 feet. Approximately 19,500 cubic yards of material would be dredged for the channel.

The existing ferry berth and all of its marine structures would be removed, including the Port of Everett fishing pier and day moorage. The Preferred Alternative would reconstruct the fishing pier and day moorage as part of the new multimodal facility.

A new passenger building and a maintenance building would be combined as a two-story building and aligned parallel to the shoreline. The building would bridge over the vehicle driveway to the ferry trestle, and an overhead loading ramp would connect to the second story of the building.

The vehicle holding area would have a 266-vehicle capacity. The terminal supervisor's building would be west of the vehicle holding area, as the second floor of a building that would also house the new toll booths. A new transit center with six new bus bays and a transit passenger area would be on the eastern part of the site, and it would have an area for ferry employee parking.

First Street would be realigned and extended as a four-lane roadway, beginning on a retained fill structure from the new signalized intersection with SR 525, descending to near the existing grade at Front Street, and continuing to a signalized entrance to the new ferry terminal. First Street would continue as a two-lane road to a new bus transit and paratransit center. This alternative also develops a public parking area between the BNSF railroad and the new First Street extension, near SR 525, to replace some displaced street parking. It also would modify the access road and the

Figure 5. **Preferred Alternative (Elliot Point 2)**

parking for the Mukilteo Station. A stormwater treatment facility would be located between Front Street and the First Street extension east of Park Avenue.

The First Street improvements also would include a reconstructed intersection with Park Avenue. The extended roadway would generally be along the southern portion of the Mukilteo Tank Farm. First Street would feature sidewalks and bicycle lanes.

A pedestrian pathway from First Street would connect to a waterfront promenade and on to the passenger building, which would include a passage allowing continuous pedestrian access along the waterfront. Other sidewalks and crosswalks would link the Mukilteo Station and the transit center. This alternative would include new security fences and gates surrounding the holding area and terminal.

1.3.3 Existing Site Improvements Alternative

The Existing Site Improvements Alternative would construct an improved multimodal facility by replacing the existing Mukilteo ferry terminal with an expanded terminal on and around the current site. Its key features are shown on Figure 6.

All of the existing ferry facility marine and upland features would be replaced. The ferry dock and trestle would be rebuilt facing due north to provide a straighter alignment with SR 525. The Port of Everett existing fishing pier and seasonal day moorage would be removed and need to be relocated.

The existing vehicle holding area would remain at the same general location and would still store approximately 216 vehicles, the equivalent of one-and-one-half 144-vehicle vessels. Toll booths and a supervisor's building would be constructed nearby. A new passenger and maintenance building would be constructed east of the ferry access driveway expanding into areas currently occupied by other uses. Overhead passenger loading ramps would connect to the second story of the new passenger building.

Front Street and Park Avenue would become one-way streets, and First Street would be extended west to a new signalized intersection with SR 525. A new transit center would be constructed east of the vehicle holding lanes, combined with a parking area for ferry employees.

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- Existing Site Improvements
- Ferry
- To be removed
- Ferry Traffic Control Light

Figure 6. **Existing Site Improvements Alternative**

1.3.4 Elliot Point 1 Alternative

The Elliot Point 1 Alternative would develop the Mukilteo Multimodal Project on the eastern portion of the Mukilteo Tank Farm. Its key features are shown on Figure 7.

Because the shoreline slopes more gradually in this location, the ferry slip would need to be located about 250 feet offshore, which would require a longer pier and trestle. A new passenger building and a maintenance building would be located over water on the new concrete trestle; this shortens walk distances and allows the nearby shoreline area to be developed for open space and stream restoration purposes. An overhead passenger loading ramp would connect to a second story of the new passenger building. A stormwater treatment facility would be located between Front Street and the First Street extension east of Park Avenue.

As with the Preferred Alternative, this alternative would remove the Tank Farm Pier and its piles, and it would dredge a navigation channel approximately 500 feet wide under where the pier is now located.

WSDOT would remove the existing ferry terminal, including buildings and marine structures, and the Port of Everett fishing pier and day moorage would be relocated. The current vehicle holding area would be vacated.

The Elliot Point 1 Alternative would also provide parking for commuter rail, the Mount Baker Terminal shoreline access area, and ferry employees. The alternative includes toll booths, ferry vehicle holding areas, and shoreline promenades on each side of the new ferry dock. Japanese Creek, which currently runs in a pipe culvert below the Mukilteo Tank Farm, would be restored to an open stream north of the extended First Street, with a 50-foot buffer on either side. The stream would be crossed by a pedestrian bridge near the shoreline.

The vehicle holding areas would hold about 216 vehicles. A terminal supervisor's building would be constructed above four new toll booths east of the holding area. This 35-foot-high structure would be oriented north-south. New lighting would illuminate First Street and the terminal facilities, including the vehicle holding areas.

First Street would be realigned and extended as a four-lane roadway from SR 525 to the Port of Everett's Mount Baker Terminal, with sidewalks and bicycle lanes. A new signalized intersection with SR 525 would be constructed. A rebuilt First Street/Park Avenue intersection would provide access to a reconfigured parking and access area for Mukilteo Station.

A new transit center with six bus bays would be built west of the new terminal. Access and parking for Mukilteo Station would be configured to connect to the First Street extension. New security fences and gates would secure the holding and terminal area during periods of heightened security, as required by the U.S. Coast Guard.