



Planning and Community Development Department

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Determination of Non-Significance (DNS)

USE2023-0027, DR2023-0033, CAP2024-0006, and SEP2023-0039

Date of Issuance of Threshold Determination: 2/22/2024

Project Name: Franklin Academy Addition

Project Description: Proposed two-story, approximately 7,256 square foot (sf) addition to the existing 18,039 sf Franklin Academy school building at 3000 Northwest AVE (Robin Hall). The proposed addition will house a commons area, eight (8) classrooms, and a staff lounge. Associated site improvements include a fenced and landscaped courtyard abutting Northwest AVE, restriping existing parking spaces, paving several new parking spaces, removal of masonry walls in two locations to improve sight lines and increase safety, and the planting of street trees along Northwest AVE. Eight (8) existing on-site trees are proposed to be removed to accommodate the expanded building footprint and the applicant is proposing a 1:1 tree replacement ratio (in addition to the street tree planting).

Student enrollment levels will not be increased. The proposed new classrooms will be used by existing enrolled second graders currently using the facilities at Franklin Academy's 1509 E Victor Street location (Markell Hall). Per the submitted Traffic Memo prepared by TranspoGroup, considering the project does not increase student enrollment, "overall traffic is not anticipated to change; however, there would be some shifts in traffic from Markel Hall to Robin Hall."

The property is in an area mapped with coal mine hazards having a severe potential for subsidence, requiring a critical area permit for the proposed construction pursuant to Bellingham Municipal Code (BMC) Section 16.55.130(C)(3) and (E). Per the Geotechnical Report prepared by Geotest Inc., there is a "low risk of mine related hazards negatively impacting the planned addition."

Design review is required per BMC 20.25.020(E). The project scope does not meet eligibility criteria for an administrative conditional use permit (CUP) modification in BMC 20.16.010(I), and therefore requires a CUP amendment to the governing CUP (HE-02-PL-047, CUP2002- 00013 later amended by HE-07-PL-029, CUP2007-00006). SEPA environmental review is required per BMC 16.20.090(D) and the WAC 197-11-800.

Project Location: 3000 Northwest AVE. Columbia Neighborhood, Area 2, Zoned Neighborhood Commercial.

Proponent: Daniel Lawrence, Zervas Architects, 209 Prospect ST, Bellingham WA 98225

Lead Agency: City of Bellingham, Planning and Community Development Department (PCDD)

Environmental Information Considered:

- SEPA Environmental Checklist, prepared by Jean Paul Slagel, Civil Engineer with Freeland & Associates, Inc., dated November 6, 2023
- SEP2002-00061 file – Original 2002 SEPA determination for school construction.
- Preliminary Stormwater Proposal, prepared by Jean Paul Slagel, Civil Engineer with Freeland & Associates, Inc., dated November 8, 2023.
- Architectural and Landscape Plans Set, prepared by Zervas Architects and Pacific Landscape Architecture, dated December 19, 2023.
- Conditional Use Permit Criteria Responses, prepared by Daniel Lawrence, Zervas Architects, dated November 10, 2023.
- Applicant Responses to City Request for Information Letter, dated December 21, 2023.
- Traffic Memo, dated January 12, 2024, prepared by TranspoGroup.
- Geotechnical Engineering Report, dated February 2, 2024, prepared by Joe Schmidt, PE, and Devin Murphy LG with Geotest Inc.

The lead agency has determined that the requirements for environmental analysis, protection, and mitigation measures have been adequately addressed in the development regulations and comprehensive plan adopted under chapter [36.70A](#) RCW, and in other applicable local, state, or federal laws or rules, as provided by RCW [43.21C.240](#) and WAC 197-11-158. Our agency will not require any additional mitigation measures under SEPA. This decision was made after review of the environmental information considered on file with the lead agency. This information is available to the public at <http://www.cob.org/notices> or upon request.

- This DNS is issued after using the optional DNS process in WAC 197-11-355. A notice of Application and Optional DNS was issued on **1/12/2024**, there is no further comment period on the DNS.

Appeal Rights: Pursuant to BMC 16.20.210(D), there is no administrative appeal of this environmental determination.

Staff Contact:

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Signature