

# SEPA ENVIRONMENTAL CHECKLIST

## **Purpose of checklist**

Governmental agencies use this checklist to help determine whether the environmental impacts of your proposal are significant. This information is also helpful to determine if available avoidance, minimization, or compensatory mitigation measures will address the probable significant impacts or if an environmental impact statement will be prepared to further analyze the proposal.

## **Instructions for applicants**

This environmental checklist asks you to describe some basic information about your proposal. Please answer each question accurately and carefully, to the best of your knowledge. You may need to consult with an agency specialist or private consultant for some questions. **You may use “not applicable” or “does not apply” only when you can explain why it does not apply and not when the answer is unknown.** You may also attach or incorporate by reference additional studies reports. Complete and accurate answers to these questions often avoid delays with the SEPA process as well as later in the decision-making process.

The checklist questions apply to **all parts of your proposal**, even if you plan to do them over a period of time or on different parcels of land. Attach any additional information that will help describe your proposal or its environmental effects. The agency to which you submit this checklist may ask you to explain your answers or provide additional information reasonably related to determining if there may be significant adverse impact.

## **Instructions for lead agencies**

Please adjust the format of this template as needed. Additional information may be necessary to evaluate the existing environment, all interrelated aspects of the proposal and an analysis of adverse impacts. The checklist is considered the first but not necessarily the only source of information needed to make an adequate threshold determination. Once a threshold determination is made, the lead agency is responsible for the completeness and accuracy of the checklist and other supporting documents.

## **Use of checklist for nonproject proposals**

For nonproject proposals (such as ordinances, regulations, plans and programs), complete the applicable parts of sections A and B, plus the [Supplemental Sheet for Nonproject Actions \(Part D\)](#). Please completely answer all questions that apply and note that the words "project," "applicant," and "property or site" should be read as "proposal," "proponent," and "affected geographic area," respectively. The lead agency may exclude (for non-projects) questions in “Part B: Environmental Elements” that do not contribute meaningfully to the analysis of the proposal.

## **A. Background** [Find help answering background questions](#)

**1. Name of proposed project, if applicable:**

Whatcomm 911 Dispatch New Building

**2. Name of applicant:**

City of Bellingham, Public Works

**3. Address and phone number of applicant and contact person:**

Superintendent of Facilities, Carol Rofkar, 2221 Pacific Street, Bellingham WA 98229. Phone number: 360-778-7973; Email: cmrofkar@cob.org

**4. Date checklist prepared:**

02/13/25

**5. Agency requesting checklist:**

City of Bellingham

**6. Proposed timing or schedule (including phasing, if applicable):**

Currently the project is in the Design phase. We anticipate going to bid in spring of 2025 and being under construction in Summer of 2025. Anticipated completion of new building in Fall of 2026 with project completion in December of 2026.

**7. Do you have any plans for future additions, expansion, or further activity related to or connected with this proposal? If yes, explain.**

No- the building planned is intended to support the operations for the next 20 years. Expansion could take place in 2046 depending on population growth of the county.

**8. List any environmental information you know about that has been prepared, or will be prepared, directly related to this proposal.**

The site and existing building have been in place since 1954, originally used as a fire station. We have conducted site surveys and soil testing. We intend to design a stormwater vault and build in natural landscaping on site to address the stormwater from the site.

**9. Do you know whether applications are pending for governmental approvals of other proposals directly affecting the property covered by your proposal? If yes, explain.**

No other applications are pending. We will be submitting for building permit in the future.

**10. List any government approvals or permits that will be needed for your proposal, if known.**

City of Bellingham building permit; SEPA; Commercial Design Review; Site Development Permit/Grading; Demolition Permit; FAA Determination for Radio Tower

**11. Give a brief, complete description of your proposal, including the proposed uses and the size of the project and site. There are several questions later in this checklist that ask you to describe certain aspects of your proposal. You do not need to repeat those answers on this page. (Lead agencies may modify this form to include additional specific information on project description.)**

The funding will be used for the new construction of a new 8,000 S.F. Whatcomm 911 Dispatch center. The new building will be climate resilient for heat, cold, smoke, and other severe weather. It will include redundant and reliable systems for public safety (backup power, earthquake, security, etc.) as well as a radio tower to support communications and radio equipment. The building is planned to support employee health and wellness in mind to support employee retention. The project will meet all state and local requirements for the construction of a public safety government building, maximize the efficiency of the building to minimize operational costs and will be LEED certified Silver. It is planned to be constructed on the existing site while the existing building is still in operation and performing the public safety function. Demolition of existing building and landscaping will be completed upon occupation of the new building and the remainder of the site will be developed as a single, cohesive site.

**12. Location of the proposal. Give sufficient information for a person to understand the precise location of your proposed project, including a street address, if any, and section, township, and range, if known. If a proposal would occur over a range of area, provide the range or boundaries of the site(s). Provide a legal description, site plan, vicinity map, and topographic map, if reasonably available. While you should submit any plans required by the agency, you are not required to duplicate maps or detailed plans submitted with any permit applications related to this checklist.**

The property is located at 620 Alabama Street, Bellingham WA 98225. Site plan is attached to this application.

## B. Environmental Elements

### 1. Earth [Find help answering earth questions](#)

a. **General description of the site:**

45,521 SF Sloped 95% existing impermeable surface covered with asphalt, the building and the hose tower.

**Circle or highlight one: Flat, rolling, hilly, steep slopes, mountainous, other:**

b. **What is the steepest slope on the site (approximate percent slope)?**

The average slope is approximately 2.7%.

c. **What general types of soils are found on the site (for example, clay, sand, gravel, peat, muck)? If you know the classification of agricultural soils, specify them, and note any agricultural land of long-term commercial significance and whether the proposal results in removing any of these soils.**

Clay and some sand

d. **Are there surface indications or history of unstable soils in the immediate vicinity? If so, describe.**

No

e. **Describe the purpose, type, total area, and approximate quantities and total affected area of any filling, excavation, and grading proposed. Indicate source of fill.**

30,486 SF of the lot will be touched either with construction or demolition. The lower portion of the lot will require some structural fill, and the parking area will be patched and restriped as needed.

f. **Could erosion occur because of clearing, construction, or use? If so, generally describe.**

No

g. **About what percent of the site will be covered with impervious surfaces after project construction (for example, asphalt or buildings)?**

55%

h. **Proposed measures to reduce or control erosion, or other impacts to the earth, if any.**

Full stormwater and erosion control will be used during the construction process. The site will have more pervious surface once the project is completed and landscaping is established.

## 2. Air [Find help answering air questions](#)

**a. What types of emissions to the air would result from the proposal during construction, operation, and maintenance when the project is completed? If any, generally describe and give approximate quantities if known.**

This building will not emit any emissions other than standard office building emissions.

**b. Are there any off-site sources of emissions or odor that may affect your proposal? If so, generally describe.**

No

**c. Proposed measures to reduce or control emissions or other impacts to air, if any.**

We anticipate minimal emissions or impacts to air.

## 3. Water [Find help answering water questions](#)

**a. Surface Water: [Find help answering surface water questions](#)**

**1. Is there any surface water body on or in the immediate vicinity of the site (including year-round and seasonal streams, saltwater, lakes, ponds, wetlands)? If yes, describe type and provide names. If appropriate, state what stream or river it flows into.**

No

**2. Will the project require any work over, in, or adjacent to (within 200 feet) the described waters? If yes, please describe and attach available plans.**

No

**3. Estimate the amount of fill and dredge material that would be placed in or removed from surface water or wetlands and indicate the area of the site that would be affected. Indicate the source of fill material.**

None

**4. Will the proposal require surface water withdrawals or diversions? Give a general description, purpose, and approximate quantities if known.**

No

**5. Does the proposal lie within a 100-year floodplain? If so, note location on the site plan.**

No

**6. Does the proposal involve any discharges of waste materials to surface waters? If so, describe the type of waste and anticipated volume of discharge.**

No

**b. Ground Water: [Find help answering ground water questions](#)**

**1. Will groundwater be withdrawn from a well for drinking water or other purposes? If so, give a**

**general description of the well, proposed uses and approximate quantities withdrawn from the well. Will water be discharged to groundwater? Give a general description, purpose, and approximate quantities if known.**

No

- 2. Describe waste material that will be discharged into the ground from septic tanks or other sources, if any (domestic sewage; industrial, containing the following chemicals...; agricultural; etc.). Describe the general size of the system, the number of such systems, the number of houses to be served (if applicable), or the number of animals or humans the system(s) are expected to serve.**

None

**c. Water Runoff (including stormwater):**

- a) Describe the source of runoff (including storm water) and method of collection and disposal, if any (include quantities, if known). Where will this water flow? Will this water flow into other waters? If so, describe.**

There will be a reduction of storm water as the proposed impervious surface is reduced from approximately 85% of the site to 55% of the site. Currently there are no stormwater management facilities on site. The existing pavement drains south to a catch basin that drains to a ditch at the southwest corner of the site. The proposed project introduces stormwater management including flow control and water quality treatment to comply with current stormwater codes. Since the existing soil is not suitable for infiltration, the proposed project will route stormwater to an underground modular detention system located under the south parking area.

- b) Could waste materials enter ground or surface waters? If so, generally describe.**

No

- c) Does the proposal alter or otherwise affect drainage patterns in the vicinity of the site? If so, describe.**

No

- d) Proposed measures to reduce or control surface, ground, and runoff water, and drainage pattern impacts, if any.**

Standard BMP will be employed during construction

#### 4. Plants [Find help answering plants questions](#)

a. Check the types of vegetation found on the site:

- deciduous tree: alder, maple, aspen, other
- evergreen tree: fir, cedar, pine, other
- shrubs
- grass
- pasture
- crop or grain
- orchards, vineyards, or other permanent crops.
- wet soil plants: cattail, buttercup, bullrush, skunk cabbage, other
- water plants: water lily, eelgrass, milfoil, other
- other types of vegetation

b. What kind and amount of vegetation will be removed or altered?

It is anticipated all vegetation within the footprint of the new facility will be removed and replaced with native vegetation. One significant tree will be removed and new trees planted in accordance with BMC standards.

c. List threatened and endangered species known to be on or near the site.

None

d. Proposed landscaping, use of native plants, or other measures to preserve or enhance vegetation on the site, if any.

All landscaping in the project will be native and drought resistant

e. List all noxious weeds and invasive species known to be on or near the site.

None

#### 5. Animals [Find help answering animal questions](#)

a. List any birds and other animals that have been observed on or near the site or are known to be on or near the site.

Common birds such as Robins and Crows

Examples include:

- Birds: hawk, heron, eagle, songbirds, other:
- Mammals: deer, bear, elk, beaver, other:
- Fish: bass, salmon, trout, herring, shellfish, other:

b. List any threatened and endangered species known to be on or near the site.

None

c. Is the site part of a migration route? If so, explain.

Unsure

d. **Proposed measures to preserve or enhance wildlife, if any.**  
The project will be increasing the amount and quality of plants on the site to support the native wildlife, including pollinators.

e. **List any invasive animal species known to be on or near the site.**  
Unknown

## 6. Energy and Natural Resources [Find help answering energy and natural resource questions](#)

1. **What kinds of energy (electric, natural gas, oil, wood stove, solar) will be used to meet the completed project's energy needs? Describe whether it will be used for heating, manufacturing, etc.**

Geothermal, electric, and solar will be used for heating and cooling the facility

2. **Would your project affect the potential use of solar energy by adjacent properties? If so, generally describe.**

No. It should not affect the ability of neighboring properties to use solar. We are designing the building to be low profile and single story.

3. **What kinds of energy conservation features are included in the plans of this proposal? List other proposed measures to reduce or control energy impacts, if any.**

We are looking at ground source heat pumps, utilizing natural lighting, a large solar system on the roof and possibly battery storage for the solar. All lighting will be LED and zero VOC materials will be used.

## 7. Environmental Health [Find help with answering environmental health questions](#)

a. **Are there any environmental health hazards, including exposure to toxic chemicals, risk of fire and explosion, spill, or hazardous waste, that could occur because of this proposal? If so, describe.**

No

1. **Describe any known or possible contamination at the site from present or past uses.**

Unknown

2. **Describe existing hazardous chemicals/conditions that might affect project development and design. This includes underground hazardous liquid and gas transmission pipelines located within the project area and in the vicinity.**

It is not anticipated that any underground hazardous materials will be found.

3. **Describe any toxic or hazardous chemicals that might be stored, used, or produced during the project's development or construction, or at any time during the operating life of the project.**

None are anticipated

4. **Describe special emergency services that might be required.**



None

**5. Proposed measures to reduce or control environmental health hazards, if any.**

The project is scheduled to obtain LEED silver and we are employing BMP for all aspects of environmental health.

**b. Noise**

**1. What types of noise exist in the area which may affect your project (for example: traffic, equipment, operation, other)?**

The project is positioned next to a main road.

**2. What types and levels of noise would be created by or associated with the project on a short-term or a long-term basis (for example: traffic, construction, operation, other)? Indicate what hours noise would come from the site)?**

Short term noise will be standard construction noise including scraping of asphalt, back up warning bells on equipment, compressors, etc. There will be no additional long term noise.

**3. Proposed measures to reduce or control noise impacts, if any.**

We will limit the hours of construction based on the neighborhood requirements.

**8. Land and Shoreline Use** [Find help answering land and shoreline use questions](#)

**a. What is the current use of the site and adjacent properties? Will the proposal affect current land uses on nearby or adjacent properties? If so, describe.**

On two sides of the property there is residential housing, on the North side it is a main road and on the East side it is a street, followed by parking lot and commercial businesses.

**b. Has the project site been used as working farmlands or working forest lands? If so, describe. How much agricultural or forest land of long-term commercial significance will be converted to other uses because of the proposal, if any? If resource lands have not been designated, how many acres in farmland or forest land tax status will be converted to nonfarm or nonforest use?**

No

**1. Will the proposal affect or be affected by surrounding working farm or forest land normal business operations, such as oversize equipment access, the application of pesticides, tilling, and harvesting? If so, how?**

No

**c. Describe any structures on the site.**

The current 4500sf single-story building and a 3 story training tower.

**d. Will any structures be demolished? If so, what?**

All existing structures will be demolished- the training tower will be demolished at the start of the project, the existing building will be demolished after the construction is completed.

**e. What is the current zoning classification of the site?**

Public Subarea:9

**f. What is the current comprehensive plan designation of the site?**

Public - Governmental Services

**g. If applicable, what is the current shoreline master program designation of the site?**

N/A

**h. Has any part of the site been classified as a critical area by the city or county? If so, specify.**

No

**i. Approximately how many people would reside or work in the completed project?**

There are 28 people who work at the site covering 24/7 operations.

**j. Approximately how many people would the completed project displace?**

0

**k. Proposed measures to avoid or reduce displacement impacts, if any.**

N/A

**l. Proposed measures to ensure the proposal is compatible with existing and projected land uses and plans, if any.**

N/A

**m. Proposed measures to reduce or control impacts to agricultural and forest lands of long-term commercial significance, if any.**

N/A

**9. Housing** [Find help answering housing questions](#)

**a. Approximately how many units would be provided, if any? Indicate whether high, middle, or low-income housing.**

0

**b. Approximately how many units, if any, would be eliminated? Indicate whether high, middle, or low-income housing.**

0

**c. Proposed measures to reduce or control housing impacts, if any.**

None

**10. Aesthetics** [Find help answering aesthetics questions](#)

**a. What is the tallest height of any proposed structure(s), not including antennas; what is the principal exterior building material(s) proposed?**

25'

**b. What views in the immediate vicinity would be altered or obstructed?**

None

**c. Proposed measures to reduce or control aesthetic impacts, if any.**

The intent is to blend the new facility into the existing neighborhood with minimal impacts on view. The building has been designed to be a single story and massed to have lower scaled spaces next to residentially zoned properties and the taller volumes adjacent to commercially scaled properties. A 100' radio tower is being placed on the site, and in order to reduce the perception of it, tall trees and other vegetative screening around it has been implemented into the site design.

**11. Light and Glare** [Find help answering light and glare questions](#)

**a. What type of light or glare will the proposal produce? What time of day would it mainly occur?**

The project will employ the five Dark Sky lighting principles for responsible outdoor lighting:

- a. Useful: Use lights only if it is needed
- b. Targeted: Direct light so it falls only where it is needed
- c. Low level: Light should be no brighter than is necessary
- d. Controlled: Use light only when it is needed
- e. Warm-colored: Use warmer color lights where possible

Lighting needs would primarily be after sundown and before sunrise.

**b. Could light or glare from the finished project be a safety hazard or interfere with views?**

No

**c. What existing off-site sources of light or glare may affect your proposal?**

Traffic and street lighting.

**d. Proposed measures to reduce or control light and glare impacts, if any.**

We are designing towards the five Dark Sky principles noted above.

**12. Recreation** [Find help answering recreation questions](#)

**a. What designated and informal recreational opportunities are in the immediate vicinity?**

The site is located ½ mile from a walking/biking trail as well as a local park.

**b. Would the proposed project displace any existing recreational uses? If so, describe.**

No

**c. Proposed measures to reduce or control impacts on recreation, including recreation opportunities to be provided by the project or applicant, if any.**

There will be no public recreational opportunities provided by the project.

**13. Historic and Cultural Preservation** [Find help answering historic and cultural preservation questions](#)

- a. **Are there any buildings, structures, or sites, located on or near the site that are over 45 years old listed in or eligible for listing in national, state, or local preservation registers? If so, specifically describe.**

No- the site and structures were already evaluated and determined to be non significant.

- b. **Are there any landmarks, features, or other evidence of Indian or historic use or occupation? This may include human burials or old cemeteries. Are there any material evidence, artifacts, or areas of cultural importance on or near the site? Please list any professional studies conducted at the site to identify such resources.**

No

**Describe the methods used to assess the potential impacts to cultural and historic resources on or near the project site. Examples include consultation with tribes and the department of archeology and historic preservation, archaeological surveys, historic maps, GIS data, etc.**

We have an IDP on file and notified appropriate tribes of the project.

- c. **Proposed measures to avoid, minimize, or compensate for loss, changes to, and disturbance to resources. Please include plans for the above and any permits that may be required.**

**14. Transportation** [Find help with answering transportation questions](#)

- a. **Identify public streets and highways serving the site or affected geographic area and describe proposed access to the existing street system. Show on site plans, if any.**

Please see site plan

- b. **Is the site or affected geographic area currently served by public transit? If so, generally describe. If not, what is the approximate distance to the nearest transit stop?**

Yes- approximate distance to bus stop is 100 ft.

- c. **Will the proposal require any new or improvements to existing roads, streets, pedestrian, bicycle, or state transportation facilities, not including driveways? If so, generally describe (indicate whether public or private).**

No

- d. **Will the project or proposal use (or occur in the immediate vicinity of) water, rail, or air transportation? If so, generally describe.\**

No

- e. **How many vehicular trips per day would be generated by the completed project or proposal? If known, indicate when peak volumes would occur and what percentage of the volume would be trucks (such as commercial and nonpassenger vehicles). What data or transportation models were used to make these estimates?**

No additional traffic or trip will be generated by the completed project.

- f. **Will the proposal interfere with, affect, or be affected by the movement of agricultural and forest products on roads or streets in the area? If so, generally describe.**

No

**Proposed measures to reduce or control transportation impacts, if any.**

We will be installing bike racks and the building has multiple bus stops within ½ mile as well as being directly on a main bus line.

**15. Public Services** [Find help answering public service questions](#)

- a. **Would the project result in an increased need for public services (for example: fire protection, police protection, public transit, health care, schools, other)? If so, generally describe.**

No, this project is supporting the first responders who dispatch public services.

- b. **Proposed measures to reduce or control direct impacts on public services, if any.**

N/A

**16. Utilities** [Find help answering utilities questions](#)

- a. **Circle utilities currently available at the site: electricity, natural gas, water, refuse service, telephone, sanitary sewer, septic system, other:**

All of the above except septic

- b. **Describe the utilities that are proposed for the project, the utility providing the service, and the general construction activities on the site or in the immediate vicinity which might be needed.**

There will be a need for increased electrical service at the site. Most likely a new transformer will be installed by Puget Sound Energy the electrical provider for the area.

While natural gas is available, the proposed project does not include any natural gas equipment.

A new 8-inch diameter water main will connect to an existing water main on the east of the building, from Iron Street and run west across the north side of the new building. Two new fire hydrants will be provided on site serving the north and south side of the building. Water is provided by the City of Bellingham.

A new 6-inch side sewer will run from the west of the proposed building and connect to the existing 8-inch sewer main in the alley. Trenching will be required to install the new side sewer.

Waste is managed by Sanitary Service Company.

**C. Signature** [Find help about who should sign](#)

The above answers are true and complete to the best of my knowledge. I understand that the lead agency is relying on them to make its decision.

X   
\_\_\_\_\_

Type name of signee: Carol Rofkar

Position and agency/organization: Superintendent of Facilities, City of Bellingham

Date submitted: 2/13/2025

**D. Supplemental sheet for nonproject actions** [Find help for the nonproject actions worksheet](#)

**IT IS NOT REQUIRED** to use this section for project actions.

Because these questions are very general, it may be helpful to read them in conjunction with the list of the elements of the environment.

When answering these questions, be aware of the extent the proposal, or the types of activities likely to result from the proposal, would affect the item at a greater intensity or at a faster rate than if the proposal were not implemented. Respond briefly and in general terms.

**1. How would the proposal be likely to increase discharge to water; emissions to air; production, storage, or release of toxic or hazardous substances; or production of noise?**

- Proposed measures to avoid or reduce such increases are:

**2. How would the proposal be likely to affect plants, animals, fish, or marine life?**

- Proposed measures to protect or conserve plants, animals, fish, or marine life are:

**3. How would the proposal be likely to deplete energy or natural resources?**

- **Proposed measures to protect or conserve energy and natural resources are:**

**4. How would the proposal be likely to use or affect environmentally sensitive areas or areas designated (or eligible or under study) for governmental protection, such as parks, wilderness, wild and scenic rivers, threatened or endangered species habitat, historic or cultural sites, wetlands, floodplains, or prime farmlands?**

- **Proposed measures to protect such resources or to avoid or reduce impacts are:**

**5. How would the proposal be likely to affect land and shoreline use, including whether it would allow or encourage land or shoreline uses incompatible with existing plans?**

- **Proposed measures to avoid or reduce shoreline and land use impacts are:**

**6. How would the proposal be likely to increase demands on transportation or public services and utilities?**

- **Proposed measures to reduce or respond to such demand(s) are:**

**7. Identify, if possible, whether the proposal may conflict with local, state, or federal laws or requirements for the protection of the environment.**