

# Categorical Exclusion Determination

Bonneville Power Administration  
Department of Energy



**Proposed Action:** City of Vancouver NE 18<sup>th</sup> Street Improvements

**Project No.:** 20190164

**Project Manager:** Charlene Belt, TERR-TPP-2

**Location:** Clark County, Washington

**Categorical Exclusion Applied (from Subpart D, 10 C.F.R. Part 1021):** B1.24 Property transfers, B1.32 Traffic flow adjustments, B4.9 Multiple use of powerline rights-of-way

**Description of the Proposed Action:** Bonneville Power Administration (BPA) is responding to a request from the City of Vancouver to dispose of approximately 1.4 acres of BPA fee-owned property in the North Bonneville-Ross right-of-way (ROW) to the City of Vancouver, so that the City can improve NE18<sup>th</sup> Street from NE 97<sup>th</sup> Avenue to 107<sup>th</sup> Avenue. BPA authorizes the use of and manages its fee-owned lands pursuant to its authority under sections 2(e) and 2(f) of the Bonneville Project Act. 16 U.S.C. § 832a(e)-(f).

The City of Vancouver is proposing to install several roundabouts, sidewalks, street lights, pedestrian paths, and landscaping. Additionally, the City of Vancouver would build approximately 0.3 miles of new road to connect segments of NE 18<sup>th</sup> Street. Some of these proposed road improvements overlap with BPA's existing fee-owned property, which are the areas that are proposed to be disposed of to the City of Vancouver. In areas where the new pedestrian path meanders outside of the land disposal areas, BPA proposes to issue a land use agreement to the City for about 1.1 acres of the ROW. BPA also proposes to grant the City's request for a temporary construction agreement for approximately 1.1 acres of the ROW; these areas would be used for construction staging and equipment.

**Findings:** In accordance with Section 1021.410(b) of the Department of Energy's (DOE) National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) Regulations (57 FR 15144, Apr. 24, 1992, as amended at 61 FR 36221-36243, Jul. 9, 1996; 61 FR 64608, Dec. 6, 1996; 76 FR 63764, Nov. 14, 2011; 89 FR 34074, April 30, 2024), BPA has determined that the proposed action:

- 1) fits within a class of actions listed in Appendix B of 10 CFR 1021, Subpart D (see attached Environmental Checklist);
- 2) does not present any extraordinary circumstances that may affect the significance of the environmental effects of the proposal; and
- 3) has not been segmented to meet the definition of a categorical exclusion.

Based on these determinations, BPA finds that the proposed action is categorically excluded from further NEPA review.<sup>1</sup>

Beth Belanger  
Environmental Protection Specialist

Concur:

Katey C. Grange  
NEPA Compliance Officer

Attachment: Environmental Checklist

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<sup>1</sup> BPA is aware that the Council on Environmental Quality (CEQ), on February 25, 2025, issued an interim final rule to remove its NEPA implementing regulations at 40 C.F.R. Parts 1500–1508. Based on CEQ guidance, and to promote completion of its NEPA review in a timely manner and without delay, in this CX BPA is voluntarily relying on the CEQ regulations, in addition to DOE’s own regulations implementing NEPA at 10 C.F.R. Part 1021, to meet its obligations under NEPA, 42 U.S.C. §§ 4321 *et seq.*”

# Categorical Exclusion Environmental Checklist

This checklist documents environmental considerations for the proposed project and explains why the project would not have the potential to cause significant impacts on environmentally sensitive resources and would meet other integral elements of the applied categorical exclusion.

**Proposed Action:** City of Vancouver NE 18th Street Improvements

## **Project Site Description**

The project is in Vancouver, Clark County, Washington, approximately 0.25 miles west of Interstate 205 and 2.3 miles north of the Columbia River. The location is in Section 28, Township 2 North, Range 2 East. The right-of-way (ROW) is mostly undeveloped except for the transmission line, NE 97<sup>th</sup> Avenue, and a driveway to a private residence. The surrounding area consists of residential homes.

The vegetation in the project area consists of mostly non-native species, including teasel (*Dipsacus fullonum*), Scotch broom (*Cytisus scoparius*), and grasses.

The National Hydrography Dataset indicates that an intermittent stream crosses the project area; however, field visits determined that there is not a stream at this location. Burnt Bridge Creek is located approximately 0.5 miles to the west.

## **Evaluation of Potential Impacts to Environmental Resources**

### **1. Historic and Cultural Resources**

Potential for Significance: No

Explanation: On May 23, 2019, BPA initiated consultation with the Cowlitz Indian Tribe, the Confederated Tribes of Grand Ronde (CTGR), and the Washington Department of Archaeology and Historic Preservation (DAHP) for geotechnical testing that was needed during the project design phase. DAHP, the CTGR, and the Cowlitz Indian Tribe responded and concurred with the Area of Potential Effect (APE) on May 5<sup>th</sup>, 26<sup>th</sup> and 28<sup>th</sup>, 2019, respectively. A BPA archaeologist and contractor then surveyed the APE for the entire project area. BPA determined that geotechnical testing would not affect historic properties. On August 28<sup>th</sup> and September 20, 2019, DAHP and the Cowlitz Tribe, respectively, concurred with the determination.

On January 22, 2025, BPA sent another determination of no historic properties affected to the consulting parties, which covered the complete scope of the project. On January 23, 2025, DAHP concurred with BPA's determination. No additional responses were received within 30 days.

Notes:

- If any inadvertent discoveries of potentially historic resources are found during construction, the City of Vancouver shall stop work and follow Post-Review Discovery Procedures.

### **2. Geology and Soils**

Potential for Significance: No

Explanation: The City of Vancouver's proposed road improvements and associated work in the disposal and temporary work area would involve soil excavation and grading. The maximum depth of disturbance would be 36 inches deep and non-paved surfaces would be revegetated upon project completion to stabilize disturbed soils.

### **3. Plants (including Federal/state special-status species and habitats)**

Potential for Significance: No

Explanation: No Federal or state special-status species or habitats are present in the project area. Some existing vegetation would be removed permanently from newly developed areas. In the areas adjacent to the pedestrian path in the ROW, the City of Vancouver would plant a mix of native bare-root shrubs and native herbaceous seeds.

### **4. Wildlife (including Federal/state special-status species and habitats)**

Potential for Significance: No

Explanation: No federal or state special-status species or habitats are known to occur in the disposal and temporary work area. The surrounding area is a densely populated urban area, with major highways to the east and west that limit most wildlife from moving through the area, although some species still utilize the ROW corridor. Some wildlife, such as birds or deer, may temporarily avoid the area during construction activities conducted by the City of Vancouver. Post-construction planting of native shrubs and herbaceous plants would be beneficial for pollinators.

### **5. Water Bodies, Floodplains, and Fish (including Federal/state special-status species, ESUs, and habitats)**

Potential for Significance: No

Explanation: There are no water bodies, floodplains or fish in or adjacent to the disposal and temporary work area. No federal or state special-status species, ESUs or habitats would be affected by the City of Vancouver's road improvement activities within the ROW.

Notes:

- The City of Vancouver plans to use sediment fencing, straw waddles and other best management practices to prevent soil erosion and potential sedimentation of waterbodies.

### **6. Wetlands**

Potential for Significance: No

Explanation: There are no wetlands in or adjacent to the disposal and temporary work area. No wetlands would be impacted by the City of Vancouver's road improvement activities within the ROW.

### **7. Groundwater and Aquifers**

Potential for Significance: No

Explanation: The City of Vancouver's road improvement project and associated activities in the disposal and temporary work area would not affect groundwater or aquifers because the maximum depth of disturbance would be 36 inches.

### **8. Land Use and Specially-Designated Areas**

Potential for Significance: No

Explanation: There would be no substantial changes to land use in the disposal and temporary work area. The addition of a pedestrian path in the ROW would be compatible with multiple uses of the ROW. There are no specially-designated areas that would be impacted by the project or land disposal.

## 9. Visual Quality

Potential for Significance: No

Explanation: The visual quality of the area would not change substantially after the City of Vancouver completes the portion of their project in the disposal and temporary work area. The project is in a developed urban area with residential roads and houses, adjacent to the ROW.

## 10. Air Quality

Potential for Significance: No

Explanation: Construction activities may result in a small amount of dust and an increase in vehicle emissions.

## 11. Noise

Potential for Significance: No

Explanation: The City of Vancouver's construction activities in the disposal and temporary work area may temporarily increase noise during construction activities. The City has included a sound wall barrier (off ROW) between the new road segment and residential housing to mitigate long-term noise impacts due to increased traffic.

## 12. Human Health and Safety

Potential for Significance: No

Explanation: Human health and safety would not be negatively affected by BPA's land disposal to the City of Vancouver.

### **Evaluation of Other Integral Elements**

The proposed project would also meet conditions that are integral elements of the categorical exclusion. The project would not:

**Threaten a violation of applicable statutory, regulatory, or permit requirements for environment, safety, and health, or similar requirements of DOE or Executive Orders.**

Explanation: N/A

**Require siting and construction or major expansion of waste storage, disposal, recovery, or treatment facilities (including incinerators) that are not otherwise categorically excluded.**

Explanation: N/A

**Disturb hazardous substances, pollutants, contaminants, or CERCLA excluded petroleum and natural gas products that preexist in the environment such that there would be uncontrolled or unpermitted releases.**

Explanation: N/A

**Involve genetically engineered organisms, synthetic biology, governmentally designated noxious weeds, or invasive species, unless the proposed activity would be contained or confined in a manner designed and operated to prevent unauthorized release into the environment and conducted in accordance with applicable requirements, such as those of the Department of Agriculture, the Environmental Protection Agency, and the National Institutes of Health.**

Explanation: N/A

### **Landowner Notification, Involvement, or Coordination**

Description: The City of Vancouver would be responsible for coordinating with any adjacent landowners that may be affected by their construction activities. No landowner notification, involvement or coordination is necessary for the disposal of BPA's fee-owned land to the City of Vancouver.

Based on the foregoing, this proposed project does not have the potential to cause significant impacts to any environmentally sensitive resource.

Signed:

Beth Belanger  
Environmental Protection Specialist