



BELLINGHAM PLANNING DEPARTMENT

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TO: Planning Board & Applicant
FROM: Robert Lussier, P.E., Director of Planning and Engineering
RE: Blackstone Street Extension
DATE: November 4, 2025

The board, applicant, and Planning Department are in receipt of the third-party peer review letter entitled, "Peer Review – Stormwater Engineering, Blackstone Street Improvements", prepared by Beals and Thomas, dated September 16, 2025. The above-mentioned letter references certain aspects of the Town of Bellingham's Subdivision Regulations, including drainage, roadway, and other infrastructure requirements.

As this application is not contemplating a proposed Subdivision, the applicant has requested guidance and clarification regarding the approval criteria and applicable standards to which this application is being reviewed. It is my understanding that the application in front of the Planning Board is to provide a "passable" road in order to allow access to the twelve (12) ANR lots located along the unimproved Blackstone Street right-of-way (abandoned). The applicant provided plans which show the improvement of the abandoned portion of Blackstone Street, which provides a majority of the work within the right-of-way. It is also my understanding that if the roadway cannot be improved to accommodate a safe and "passable" road, the applicant will need to file a Definitive Subdivision in order to expand the abandoned right-of-way and meet the Town of Bellingham's Subdivision Regulations in their entirety.

In response to the applicant's request, and to provide clarity to the board, I have outlined applicable minimum safety standards below, which are outlined in the Town of Bellingham's Subdivision Regulations.

Chapter 245 Subdivision Regulations:

§245-12.D(1) – Minimum width for a roadway serving no more than twelve (12) dwelling units in 22 feet. The proposed plans do not specify a proposed width for the roadway and appears to be a variable width throughout the proposed improvements area.

§245-12.E(2) – Maximum roadway grades are 8%. The proposed plans provide an 8.2% and 10% roadway grade for a portion of the proposed roadway improvements.

§245-12.F – The construction specifications associated with the roadway construction materials must be followed in their entirety. The construction details in the submitted plan set appear to conform with the Town of Bellingham's specifications.

§245-12.G – Bituminous concrete curbs shall be installed along both sides of the proposed roadway improvements in its entirety.

§245-13 – The stormwater management section of the subdivision control regulations shall be complied with in its entirety. The stormwater management system is currently under peer review.

§245-14 – The utility section of the subdivision control regulations shall be complied with in its entirety. The plan set as submitted does not appear to provide adequate space for overhead utilities and poles within the existing right-of-way. Additionally, the applicant shall endeavor to provide underground

utilities as has been common practice for all recently approved subdivisions. The proposed plans do not appear to show any proposed street lighting. Street lighting shall be installed with spacing to not exceed 350 feet. The lighting shall also be Dark Sky Compliant, deter any light spill off on abutting parcels, and provide shielding from any existing or proposed residential properties.

§245-15.B – Construction of the proposed roadway shoulders shall meet the requirements set forth in the subdivision control regulations.

§245-15.E – Construction of the proposed retaining walls associated with the proposed culvert shall meet the requirements set forth in the subdivision control regulations.

527 CMR 1.00 – Massachusetts Comprehensive Fire Safety Code

In addition to the above-mentioned applicable safety regulations, the Bellingham Fire Department is also requiring specific requirements and expressing concerns related to the Massachusetts Comprehensive Fire Safety Code. Please see comments below:

- Road Widths - The plans show no specific widths but rather variables. The code states a minimum of 20' wide roads excluding the shoulders.
- Road Grades - The plan shows a maximum grade of 10% in one arear which causes great concern for access of emergency vehicles.
- One Way In - The permitted cul-de-sac must accommodate the turning radius of our Ladder Truck.
- Maximum of 30 Dwellings - Code states that if more than 30 residential dwellings, multiple fire apparatus access roads may be required.
- Hydrant Locations - If a fire hydrant is located on an access road, the minimum required road width increases to 26 feet in the immediate vicinity.

Proposed Dwelling Units

As mentioned above, the intent of the proposed plans is to provide adequate “passable” access to the existing 12 ANR lots. As this road will not meet the subdivision regulations in their entirety, I want to be very clear regarding any future expansion/construction of dwellings being serviced on the proposed Blackstone Street extension. The applicant has alluded to a potential larger project in the future but has not given any definitive details or submitted an associated application. However, the proposed improvements to the unimproved portion of Blackstone Street will only be utilized for access of the 12 ANR lots. If additional dwellings are to utilize the roadway, a definitive subdivision application will need to be submitted, and the roadway will need to be designed to meet the specifications for a Minor Street or Collector Street.

In closing, the above-mentioned criteria shall be met to accommodate safe and passable access to the 12 ANR Lots. If the existing right-of-way cannot accommodate the roadway improvements, the applicant shall submit a definitive subdivision application and associated materials. Please note, the submitted plans do not appear to meet these criteria as the proposed cul-de-sac is not located within the limits of the abandoned right-of-way.

Sincerely,
Robert Lussier, P.E.
Director of Planning & Engineering