UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE
National Institute of Standards and Technology
Gaithersburg, Maryland 20899

May 3, 2023

MEMORANDUM FOR THE RECORD

From: Michael Blackmon
NEPA Coordinator
National Institute of Standards and Technology

Subject: Categorical Exclusion

Project: Renovation and Addition to the COAD Science Building at Mount St. Mary's University

Location: Mount St. Mary's University
16300 Old Emmitsburg Road, Emmitsburg, MD 21727

The National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) and associated implementing regulations (40 CFR Parts 1500-1508) require that all major federal actions be reviewed with respect to their environmental consequences. The National Institute of Standards and Technology (NIST) has selected the project: Renovation and Addition to the COAD Science Building at Mount St. Mary's University for a federal funding grant. Consequently, NEPA and the associated implementing regulations apply to this project.

This memorandum summarizes NIST's environmental review of the project: Renovation and Addition to the COAD Science Building at Mount St. Mary's University and the determination that this project is categorically excluded from further environmental review under NEPA.

Description of the Action

The existing COAD Science Building is approximately 60 years old and is not meeting the current and future needs of Mount St. Mary's University (MSMU). The existing building has a footprint of approximately 16,600 square feet and a total of 50,000 square feet of existing space. This project includes renovating existing spaces and constructing an addition with a footprint of 7,200 square feet and a total of 21,000 square feet of additional research, teaching and collaborative space. The addition will provide a state-of-art research facility to support and expand undergraduate programs.

The entirety of the addition is within the MSMU Campus. The project is centrally located within the academic quad and the addition will be constructed on exiting lawn area. No parking facilities are part of this project. Figures 1 and 2 show the site location and general plan of the addition.

Effects of the Action

NIST has conducted the following in evaluating the environmental impact of this project:

- Reviewed environmental questionnaire responses received from MSMU,
- Consulted with MSMU project staff,
- Reviewed project plans and designs, and
- Reviewed regulatory agency correspondence.

Potential impacts are discussed below:

Nature of the Project Site:

This entire project will be constructed in a previously developed area and on previously disturbed ground which is now a grass lawn. There will be no disturbance of virgin grounds, steep slopes, or wooded areas

Water/ Stormwater

No significant impacts to storm water or water resources are expected from the proposed project. A Frederick County Erosion and Sediment Control Permit has been obtained for this project specifying control measures required during construction to minimize any impacts to local water resources.

A bioretention pond has been planned for the project to control post construction stormwater runoff. The bioretention pond complies with State of Maryland and Frederick County Environmental Site Design methodology.

Figure 1, Site Location

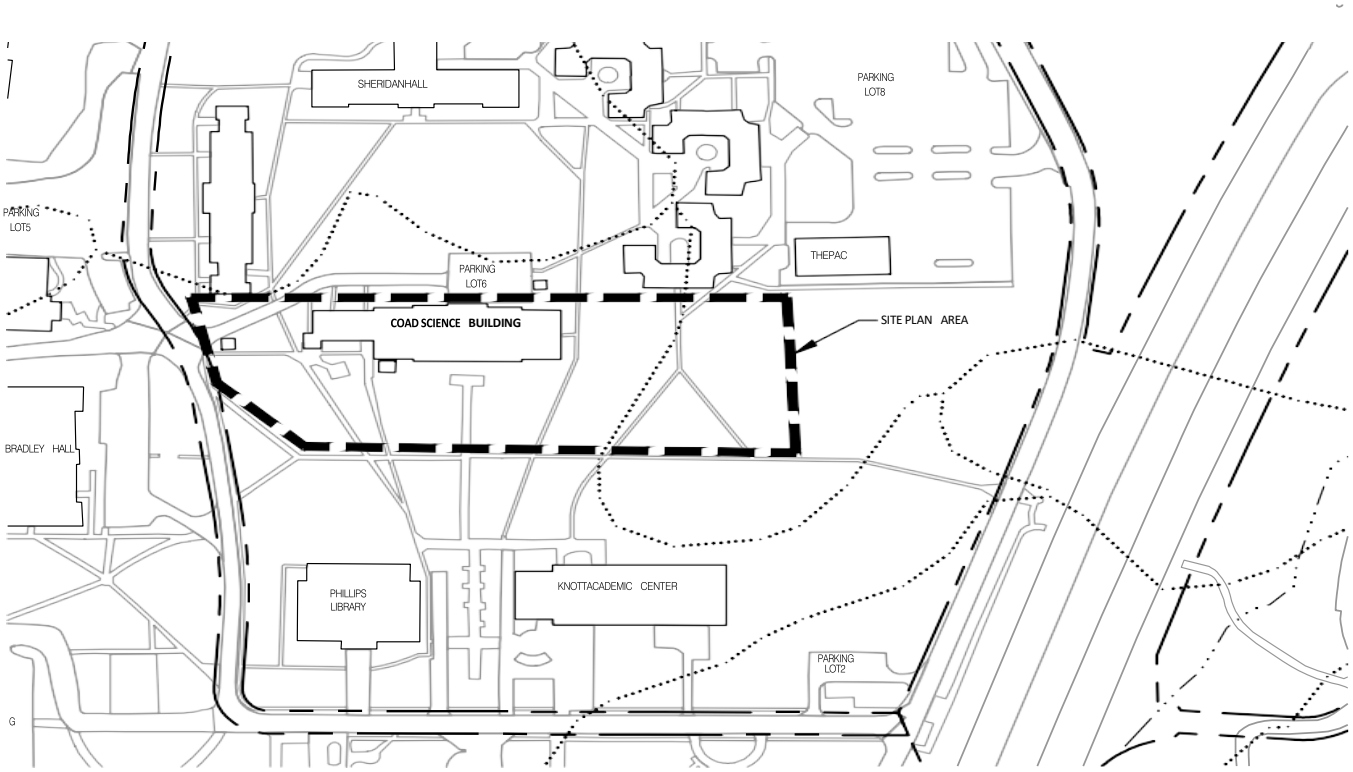
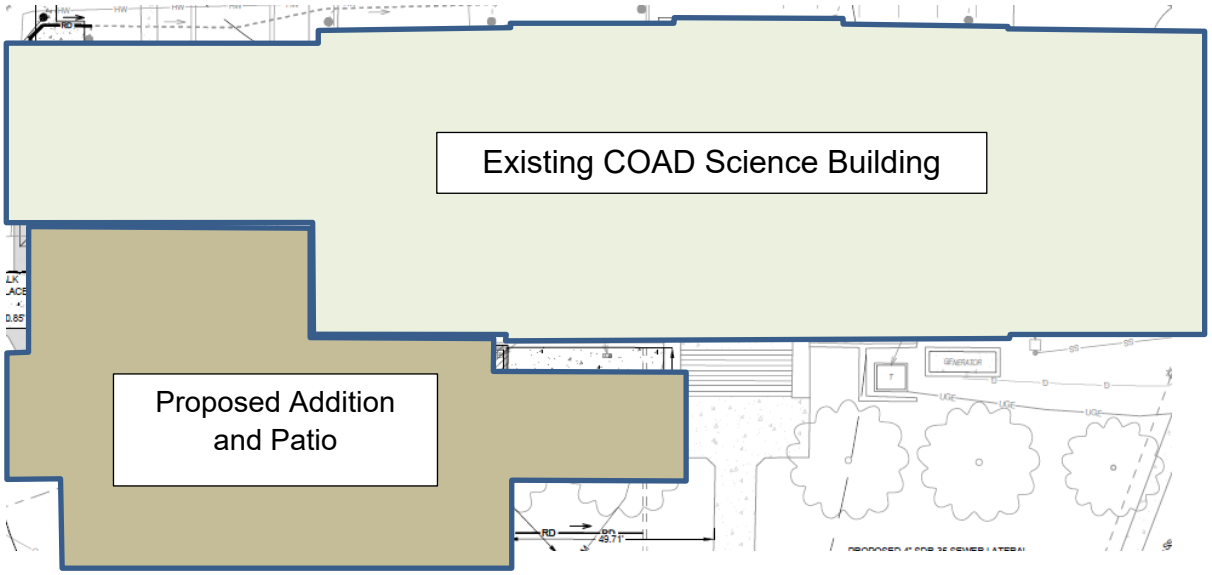


Figure 2, Proposed Addition to the COAD Science Building



Utilities
MSMU owns and maintains its own domestic water supply and distributions system and wastewater treatment plant. This project will not exceed the capacities of the water supply or wastewater treatment systems. The local electric grid can support the demand of this project.

Floodplains/Wetlands
The project is not located within a 100-year or 500-year floodplain. The project is in an area of minimal flood risk.

The U.S. Fish and Wildlife National Wetlands Inventory was reviewed, and no wetlands were noted on the project site.

Air
No new air emissions sources are expected from the proposed project.

Endangered Species
Based on review of the geographic area of this project by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, two threatened, endangered, or candidate species are known to inhabit the area project: the Northern Long Eared Bat and the Monarch Butterfly. However, no critical habitats were identified that could be impacted by the proposed project.

Noise
A minor increase in noise levels is expected during construction of this project but will be limited to daylight hours and will be short term.

Hazardous Materials
Hazardous materials will be used in the laboratories planned for this project. The materials will be handled and eventually disposed in accordance with state and federal regulations.

No existing contamination of the project site is known. Due to the age of the COAD Science Building asbestos and lead based paint are expected to be present. Precautions and abatement will be undertaken in accordance with State and Federal regulations to address any asbestos and lead based paint that will need to be disturbed.

Historic Significance
A request was submitted to the Maryland Historic Trust/Maryland State Historic Preservation Office (SHPO) for a project review and clearance under Section 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act. The SHPO provided a response on 4/26/23 finding that this project will have no adverse effect on historic properties.

Visual Impacts

The project will be constructed to blend in with the existing COAD Science Building and surrounding structures. No adverse visual impacts are anticipated.

Extraordinary Circumstances

No extraordinary circumstances are anticipated for this project. The project should be viewed as a positive impact for the MSMU Campus. The project was reviewed by the Frederick County Planning Department and MSMU has announced the project on it's website. No negative comments or concerns have been received.

Categorical Exclusion

The activities associated with this project fall under the following Department of Commerce (DOC) Categorical Exclusion (CATEX):

> A–2, New construction upon or improvement of land where all of the following conditions are met:
>
> (a) The site is in a developed area and/or a previously disturbed site,
>
> (b) The structure and proposed use are compatible with applicable Federal, Tribal, State, and local planning and zoning standards and consistent with Federally approved State coastal management programs,
>
> (c) The proposed use will not substantially increase the number of motor vehicles at the facility or in the area,
>
> (d) The site and scale of construction or improvement are consistent with those of existing, adjacent, or nearby buildings, and
>
> (e) The construction or improvement will not result in uses that exceed existing support infrastructure capacities (roads, sewer, water, parking, *etc.*). This CE does not apply where the project must be submitted to the National Capital Planning Commission (NCPC) for review and NCPC determines that it does not have an applicable Categorical Exclusion. DOC is not a major land managing agency in the Federal government. Department activities involving new construction or improvements of land typically involve single buildings and supporting infrastructure in a single locality. Any potential for environmental impacts would be of a small scale and confined to more localized impacts.

This project meets the conditions described above in DOC CATEX A-2 as described below:

Condition (a):
This project site is a previously developed area in the central portion of the MSMU Campus, and the project site has been previously disturbed.

Condition (b):
This project is compatible with applicable Federal, Tribal, State, and local planning and zoning standards and consistent with Federally approved State coastal management programs. The project was reviewed by the Frederick County Planning Department and MSMU has announced the project on its website. No negative comments or concerns have been received. The project site is not in a coastal zone.

Condition (c):
The proposed use will not substantially increase the number of motor vehicles at the facility or in the area. Some incremental increase in students and faculty is expected at MSMU, but this will be a gradual increase not directly as a result of this project alone.

Condition (d):
The site and scale of this project are consistent with the existing, adjacent, and nearby buildings. This project will result in an approximately 42 percent increase in the size of the COAD Science Building. The height of the proposed addition is consistent with the existing building and nearby buildings.

Condition (e):
This project will not result in uses that exceed existing support infrastructure capacities (roads, sewer, water, parking, etc.). MSMU owns and maintains its own domestic water supply and distributions system and wastewater treatment plant. This project will not exceed the capacities of the water supply or wastewater treatment systems. The local electric grid can support the demand of this project. No expansion of roads or parking is required for this project.

This project is not under the purview of the National Capital Planning Commission.

Potential environmental impacts of this project are considered to be of a small scale and confined to localized impacts.

The proposed project, Renovation and Addition to the COAD Science Building at Mount St. Mary's University, is categorically excluded from the need for further environmental review under NEPA. Any changes to the above project will require additional NEPA review.

Mike Blackmon

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Michael Blackmon
NIST NEPA Coordinator

Date

ROBERT VAUGHN

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R.C. Vaughn
NIST Chief Facilities Management Officer

Date