



SEPA Review

State Environmental Policy Act

H
A
N
D
O
U
T



SEPA determinations and administration

SEPA is the State Environmental Policy Act (RCW 43.21C, WAC 197-11 and WCC 16.08). SEPA is intended to provide decision makers at all levels with information pertaining to the likelihood and significance of adverse environmental impacts that will result from the proposed action. SEPA actions may be any planned action (e.g., ordinances, Comprehensive Plan amendments, etc.) or project action (e.g., development and construction permits, clearing & grading, etc.) not specifically exempt from SEPA.

Unless specifically exempt, a SEPA Environmental Checklist must be completed and submitted along with an application for the proposed action to the designated SEPA Official with the SEPA lead agency. It is not uncommon for proposed actions to require permits from various regulatory agencies. However, there will be only one SEPA Lead Agency and one Threshold Determination used by all state and local agencies. If Whatcom County requires a permit or approval for an action, then Whatcom County is almost always the SEPA Lead Agency with few exceptions.

Based on the information provided in the environmental checklist and application materials, the SEPA Official issues one of three types of SEPA threshold determinations:

- Determination of Non-Significance (DNS)
- Mitigated DNS (MDNS)
- Determination of Significance (DS)

A **DNS may require** a 14-day comment period, a **MDNS always requires** a 14-day comment period, and a **DS requires** that an Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) be prepared.

Fees

Please refer to the current Whatcom County Unified Fee Schedule.

Information

Due to the administrative complexity of these regulations, it is usually best to visit with the county SEPA Official to answer any additional questions.

Planning and Development Services
5280 Northwest Drive
Bellingham, WA 98226 USA
E-mail: pds@co.whatcom.wa.us

Staff Contact: SEPA Official
Phone: (360) 676-6907

THE PLANNING AND DEVELOPMENT SERVICES HANDOUT SERIES

Whatcom County Planning & Development Services
5280 Northwest Drive, Bellingham, WA 98226
Phone (360) 676-6907 ▪ Fax (360) 738-2525 ▪ Inspections (360) 738-2520

Updated: 2/13/07