



6: State Environmental Policy Act (SEPA)

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6-A: When is SEPA triggered?

Determine if the State Environmental Policy Act (SEPA) will apply:

Every project will be reviewed to see if SEPA applies.

If SEPA is triggered, the first step is to submit a checklist with your land use application to determine if the project would create impacts on the quality of the environment.

The SEPA Checklist will help the city determine if an environmental impact statement (EIS) is required. If an environmental impact statement (EIS) is required, the standard 120-day land use permit review timeline clock stops for the EIS review process and will likely result in additional conditions and/or mitigations.

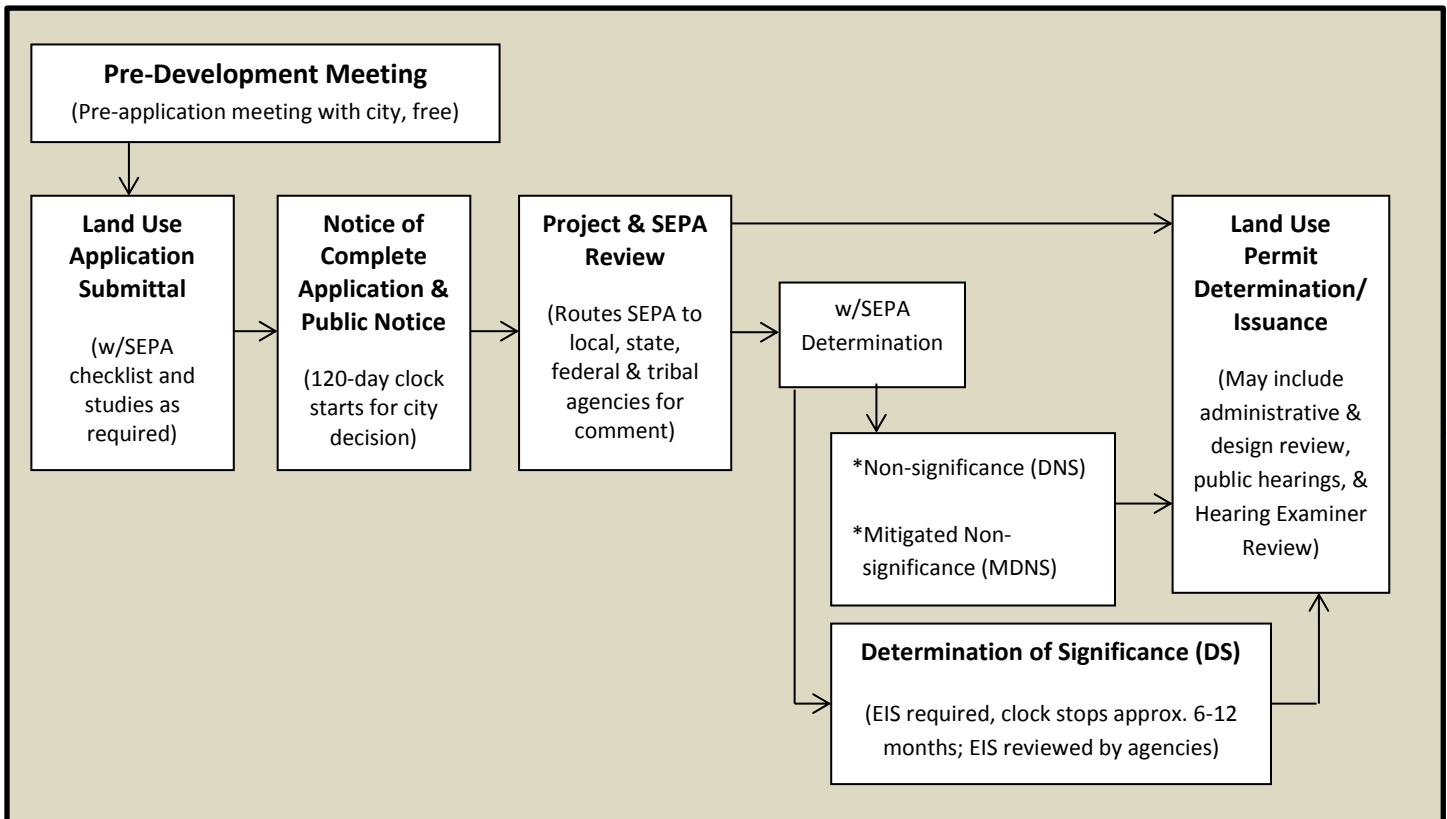
Is a SEPA Checklist Required?

The [SEPA Checklist](#) is required to be completed and submitted for projects that include any of the following:

- Any presence of critical areas, wetlands, etc.
- Any potential adverse impact to environment
- Buildings 30,000+ sq. ft.
- Adding 90+ parking spaces
- Excavating and/or filling 1,000+ cubic yards

IMPORTANT: Talk with city staff at a pre-development meeting to determine which studies or analyses will be required to be submitted with your application. *Incomplete information* may cause the 120-day project review clock to stop.

Overview of the Land Use Permitting Process with SEPA



Application Submittal

Staff will review your application materials to ensure all required materials are included and appear to be adequate (e.g. a wetland study that is prepared by a wetland biologist, a traffic study prepared by a transportation engineer, certificate of water availability).

Most jurisdictions complete this step in 28 days or less.

Notice of Complete Application

If your application is accepted as complete, the Notice of Complete Application is issued by the city.

This notice is often combined with the Public Notice of Application and includes formal public notice published in the newspaper, physically posting at the project site, mailing notices to all property owners within a certain distance of the site, posting on city website, etc. This Notice alerts the public to the proposed project and generally includes at least a two-week comment period.

Project & SEPA Review

Your application materials and SEPA Checklist are routed to local, state, federal and tribal agencies for review and comment. Generally, at least two weeks is given for review and to provide comments back to the designated staff (usually the planner).

SEPA Determination

Staff reviews comments received from affected departments, agencies, and organizations. This is when the Determination of Non-Significance (DNS), Mitigated Determination of Non-Significance (MDNS), or Determination of Significance (DS) is issued.

However, if a reviewing entity has identified that there is a technical inadequacy in submitted materials, or an additional study is needed (e.g. site visit reveals a previously unsuspected wetland may be present), the planner may put the project “on hold” (also known as “stopping the clock”) until the additional information is provided.

This is fairly uncommon but can occur when something that was unknown – and therefore was not covered at the Pre-Development Meeting– is discovered during the site review. The application will be placed “on hold” until additional materials are submitted.

If the jurisdiction decides to issue a Determination of Significance (DS), the applicant will need to modify the proposal to reduce the adverse impacts from the project or prepare an Environmental Impact Statement (EIS).

6-B: SEPA: Environmental Impact Statement

After review of the SEPA checklist and supporting documentation, the city (or other lead agency) will issue one of the following determinations:

SEPA Determination	Outcome
Determination of Non-Significance (DNS)	Proposal continues through city’s land use review process
Mitigated Determination of Non-Significance (MDNS)	Potential impacts have been mitigated and proposal continues through city’s land use review process
Determination of Significance (DS)	All proposals with probable significant adverse impacts on the quality of the environment must complete an environmental impact statement (EIS). The 120-day clock stops for the EIS review process and will likely result in additional conditions and or mitigations. For more information on the EIS Process visit Ecology’s website.