

## What is the purpose of the Environmental Checklist?

The checklist provides information to help you and the city determine how your proposed development will impact the environment and how those impacts might be reduced or avoided. The checklist helps the city determine whether the impacts will be significant, requiring the preparation of an Environmental Impact Statement (EIS). If the applicant and the lead agency agree up front that an Environmental Impact Statement is required, the checklist does not need to be completed.

## Why is the checklist necessary?

The State Environmental Policy Act (SEPA) requires all governmental agencies to consider the environmental impacts of a proposal before making a decision. The State of Washington developed the checklist as an evaluation tool and requires its use by the city and project proponents.

## Is the checklist the same as an EIS?

No. The checklist is an evaluation tool used in part to determine whether an EIS is necessary.

## Do all proposals require a checklist?

SEPA contains a list of actions that are exempt from SEPA requirements. If the type of project you propose is included in the "categorical exemptions" identified by SEPA and is not in a critical area, you do not need to fill out a checklist. However, please check with the city staff to confirm your proposal is exempt.

## Isn't single-family construction exempt from SEPA?

In most cases, single-family construction is exempt. However, if your project will occur in or involves grading in a critical area—such as on a steep slope, stream setback, or wetland setback—the exemption may not apply.

## The checklist looks really long. How much time does it take to complete?

The time will vary, depending on proposal complexity and your access to and familiarity with the information requested. For smaller, simpler projects the checklist may take as little as an hour or two to complete.

## Can I fill out the checklist myself?

In many cases, you should be able to answer the checklist questions from your own observations or project plans, without the need to hire experts. Sometimes, depending on the nature or complexity of the proposal or its impacts, the checklist needs to be supplemented by technical information and analysis—such as a wetland or stream studies, geotechnical evaluation, traffic impact analysis, or similar documentation. Technical studies and reports must be prepared by a qualified professional.

## How should I answer the questions?

You should answer the checklist questions briefly but as accurately and carefully as possible. Provide the most precise information known or give the best description you can. Focus especially on the project description; make it as complete as possible. If you really do not know the answer, or if a question does not apply to your proposal, write "do not know" or "does not apply." In order to avoid unnecessary delay of your project application, your answers should be as complete as you can make them.

## How can I answer questions about government regulations?

You should answer questions about regulations such as zoning, shoreline, and landmark designations to the extent you are able. You can ask city staff to give you more direction and information with respect to these regulations.

### **What if my proposal has adverse impacts?**

The city will evaluate the impacts to determine whether they are significant and whether they can be reduced or avoided. In most cases, impacts can be avoided or reduced to an acceptable level if the proponent makes project revisions or agrees to incorporate measures into the proposal that will mitigate the impacts.

### **Will adverse impacts cause my proposal to be denied?**

Adverse impacts do not automatically result in project denial. Usually, the project can be approved if the impacts are sufficiently mitigated through project revisions or conditions of project approval ensuring the incorporation of mitigating measures. No proposal can be denied under SEPA unless an EIS is first prepared. However, even the requirement for an EIS does not necessarily lead to denial of the proposal.

### **Can I attach information to the checklist?**

If you have drawings, proposal descriptions, environmental studies, or similar materials, they should be added to the checklist as appendices and submitted with your completed checklist to the city. Your responses to the checklist questions should summarize the information presented in the appendices.

### **Does my proposal require the preparation of an EIS?**

Although just about every proposal has environmental impacts of some kind, only proposals that will have probable significant adverse impacts require that an EIS be prepared. Typically, such proposals are large and complex. Most smaller projects do not require an EIS.

### **Where can I get additional information?**

- Call the Land Use Information Desk in Development Services at 425-452-4188
- See the Department of Ecology web site at [www.ecy.wa.gov/services.html](http://www.ecy.wa.gov/services.html). Select "Environmental Review (SEPA)."

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This document is intended to provide guidance in applying certain Land Use Code regulations and is for informational use only. It cannot be used as a substitute for the Land Use Code or for other city codes, such as the Construction Codes. Additional information is available from Development Services at Bellevue City Hall or on the city website at [www.bellevuewa.gov](http://www.bellevuewa.gov).

For land use regulations that may apply to your project, contact the Land Use Information Desk in Development Services. Phone: 425-452-4188. E-mail: [landusereview@ci.bellevue.wa.us](mailto:landusereview@ci.bellevue.wa.us). Assistance for the hearing impaired: dial 711.

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