

Environmental Process 101

TERMINOLOGY

Common terms you'll see used:

SEPA

State Environmental Policy Act

Scoping

First step in the EIS process

EIS

Environmental Impact Statement

DEIS

Draft Environmental Impact Statement

FEIS

Final Environmental Impact Statement

SDOT

Seattle Department of Transportation

SDEIS

Supplemental Draft Environmental Impact Statement

SEPA provides a way to identify and study possible environmental impacts of a potential project. The process helps decision-makers and the public understand how a proposed project will affect the environment.

There are essentially three main steps to the SEPA process when developing an environmental impact statement (EIS):

1. SCOPING

Scoping is the first step in the SEPA EIS process and lays the foundation for writing the document. During the scoping period, SDOT seeks input from the public, interest groups, agencies and affected tribes on the actions, alternatives and environmental impacts proposed to be discussed in an EIS.

2. DRAFT ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT STATEMENT (DEIS)

Following scoping, SDOT prepares an EIS. The EIS provides an impartial discussion of significant environmental impacts, reasonable alternatives, and mitigation measures that would avoid or minimize adverse impacts as a result of the proposed project. A draft version of the document, a DEIS, is released and made available for public review. The review period generally consists of a public meeting and a 30-day comment period to allow the public, interest groups, agencies and tribes to comment on the environmental analyses and conclusions presented in the DEIS.

3. FINAL ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT STATEMENT (FEIS)

After the DEIS review period, SDOT prepares a final EIS that considers and responds to the comments from the public, interest groups, agencies and tribes. The FEIS will incorporate any necessary corrections, changes, or additional analysis and will identify a preferred project alternative. Publication of the FEIS marks the completion of the SEPA process.

OPTIONAL: SUPPLEMENTAL DRAFT ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT STATEMENT (SDEIS)

An agency may also choose to issue an SDEIS before an FEIS. In this case, the DEIS is circulated for review, then an SDEIS is circulated for review, and an FEIS is issued which responds to comments on both the DEIS and SDEIS.

For more information about SEPA visit the Department of Ecology's SEPA website: www.ecy.wa.gov/programs/sea/sepa/faq.htm.