

# ENVIRONMENTAL REVIEW PROCESS

## GOAL

Evaluate impacts of roadway projects through an informed decision-making process.

## REQUIREMENTS

Perform and document a comprehensive environmental review of the roadway project. This review should clearly and concisely document:

1. Project name and location.
2. Names and contact information of key players in the decision making process, including (but not limited to): the owner agency, agency representatives responsible for completing the environmental review process, other stakeholders, and relevant professionals involved.
3. Intent and purpose of the roadway project.
4. Descriptions of potential environmental, economic and social impacts of the intended roadway project.
5. Detailed descriptions of the extent of the significance of these impacts with respect to the decision-making process and feasible performance expectations.
6. Description of the public involvement opportunity in the environmental review process; document this opportunity and the results of input in the final decisions.
7. Any jurisdictional requirements for more detailed environmental review documents such as environmental impact statements (EIS) or environmental assessments (EA) to determine the significance of environmental impacts.
8. Description of the final environmental decisions made.

### Details

An environmental review process is a method of decision-making used in project development. The basic intent of the process is to promote informed decision-making by explaining the project in a comprehensive, concise and understandable way. This explanation involves an evaluation of environmental, social and economic impacts in order to meet existing regulations and public stakeholder needs. These impacts, regulations, and needs shape basic decision criteria, vary significantly in complexity between projects, and dictate the effort required during the review process and project implementation. The National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) provides formal guidelines for federally funded roadway projects, and many states have environmental review processes similar to NEPA.

## DOCUMENTATION

- Copy of the final decision document that demonstrates an environmental review process has been completed for the project, with all appropriate agency or jurisdiction representative signatures. Any of the following documents will suffice:
  - Executive summary of the EA or EIS, the Record of Decision (ROD) or Finding of No Significant Impact (FONSI), or jurisdiction equivalent of these documents.
  - Completed copy of the Washington State Department of Ecology State Environmental Policy Act (SEPA) Checklist (or local equivalent). **Note:** Do this if the project is exempt from a formal environmental review or is classified as a “categorical exclusion” (CE).



PR-1

REQUIRED

### RELATED CREDITS

- ✓ PR-2 Lifecycle Cost Analysis
- ✓ PR-3 Lifecycle Inventory
- ✓ AE-3 Context Sensitive Solutions
- ✓ MR-1 Lifecycle Assessment

### SUSTAINABILITY COMPONENTS

- ✓ Ecology
- ✓ Expectations
- ✓ Exposure

### BENEFITS

- ✓ Reduces Air Emissions
- ✓ Reduces Water Pollution
- ✓ Reduces Solid Waste
- ✓ Improves Human Health & Safety
- ✓ Improves Accountability
- ✓ Increases Awareness
- ✓ Increases Aesthetics

## APPROACHES & STRATEGIES

- Check if your state has existing procedures that streamline the environmental review process specifically for roadway projects. The Council on Environmental Quality (CEQ) maintains an updated list of states that are compliant here: <http://nepa.gov/nepa/regs/states/states.cfm>
- Identify opportunities to involve the public early in the environmental review process. Usually this step is most effective during project planning.
- Recognize that the environmental review process can often be iterative, especially during planning and design stages when alternatives are still subject to change.
- Conduct a detailed, multi-disciplinary literature review at the start of a project. This review can help identify existing extraordinary circumstances, such as special wildlife and plant concerns and socio-economic issues.
- Use the checklist provided by the Washington state Department of Ecology State Environmental Policy Act (SEPA) as a guideline for an environmental review process in jurisdictions not subject to NEPA or similar local or state requirements. This checklist is easy and straightforward and may be completed to meet the intent of this Project Requirement. Note that many states also offer checklists that cover the same topics as the Washington SEPA checklist, and will also meet the intent of this Project Requirement. The Washington state checklist is readily available and downloadable for immediate use here: <http://www.ecy.wa.gov/biblio/ecy05045.html>.
- Make the environmental review documentation as concise and comprehensive as possible, while also limiting use of professional jargon. This will create an easy to read and understandable environmental review document for decision makers. There are a number of guidance documents available from the CEQ for NEPA documents, and individual states may also have helpful resources available. These are available from the CEQ here: <http://ceq.hss.doe.gov/nepa/regs/guidance.html>
- For projects typically considered categorically exempt, where jurisdictional precedent has been established for similar roadway projects in previous environmental review processes, complete the Washington state SEPA checklist for purposes of this requirement. This process will also demonstrate 1) that the review process has been completed and all impacts have been addressed, and 2) why your project has been determined a categorical exclusion.
- Follow Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) and Federal Transit Authority (FTA) guidelines for complex, detailed and larger projects that need to produce EIS reports. These guidelines are compiled in a straightforward guidance document located here: <http://www.fhwa.dot.gov/hep/section6002/>. This document includes steps required for the NEPA process and also exemplary project case studies that meet the requirements for the environmental review process.

### Example: SEPA Checklists

Projects not subject to NEPA or an equivalent local or state policy for environmental review will need to submit a completed environmental review process checklist for purposes of this requirement. There are many available from various state agencies or Departments of Transportation (DOT), check with your owner/agency. Several examples of completed checklists are provided in Table PR-1.1.

**Table PR-1.1: Sample Completed SEPA Checklists**

Project Name	Owner	Type	Where to Find Checklist
SR 509/SR 518 Interchange Safety Improvement Project	Washington State DOT	Highway improvement	<a href="http://www.wsdot.wa.gov/NR/rdonlyres/624594AC-5B81-4D62-BA04-2D926347628C/0/SR518SafetySEPAchecklist.pdf">http://www.wsdot.wa.gov/NR/rdonlyres/624594AC-5B81-4D62-BA04-2D926347628C/0/SR518SafetySEPAchecklist.pdf</a>
2009 AAC Program – Fautleroy Way SW between SW Alaska St and SW Holly St	Seattle DOT (SDOT)	Resurfacing	<a href="http://www.seattle.gov/transportation/docs/SEPAFAUNTLEROY.pdf">http://www.seattle.gov/transportation/docs/SEPAFAUNTLEROY.pdf</a>
Revised Aurora Avenue North Transit, Pedestrian and Safety Improvements	SDOT, WSDOT, FHWA	Multi-purpose urban arterial improvements	<a href="http://www.seattle.gov/Transportation/docs/aurora/RevAurora_SEPAchecklist_SigOnFile.pdf">http://www.seattle.gov/Transportation/docs/aurora/RevAurora_SEPAchecklist_SigOnFile.pdf</a>
Eagle Creek Road Improvement Project	Chelan County	Rural road improvements	<a href="http://www.co.chelan.wa.us/pw/data/sepa_checklist.pdf">http://www.co.chelan.wa.us/pw/data/sepa_checklist.pdf</a>

### **Example: Federally Funded Projects and the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA)**

Federally funded roadway projects are required to use the NEPA (National Environmental Policy Act) environmental review process (CEQ, 2007). This includes all roadway projects managed by the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA).

**NOTE:** NEPA clearly states that the environmental review process does *not* require that agencies or project teams make final project decisions based on any of the environmental impacts that are studied or discovered. Rather, the intent of the NEPA process is to inform decision-makers of the potential effects of their actions (Caldwell, 1999; CEQ, 2007).

The FHWA, American Association of State Highway Transportation Officials (AASHTO) and the American Council of Engineering Companies (ACEC) have compiled a guidance document called *Improving the Quality of Environmental Documents* that highlights several case studies of exemplary, easy-to-read and comprehensive NEPA documents. A few of those projects are listed below:

- Alaskan Way Viaduct and Seawall Replacement Project (Washington State DOT)
- Mon/Fayette Transportation Project, PA Route 51 to I-376 (Pennsylvania Turnpike Commission)
- Route Post 13 (I-15) Interchange (Utah DOT)
- Southern Corridor (I-15) (Utah DOT)
- US 93 Somers to Whitefish (Montana DOT)
- I-69 Evansville to Indianapolis (Indiana DOT)
- Mid-Currituck Sound Bridge (North Carolina DOT)

Detailed information on each project (and other non-roadway transportation projects) is included in the completed report for the National Cooperative Highway Research Program (NCHRP) 25-25 Task 1 (2005). This NCHRP report also contains descriptions of why these reports are exemplary of a successful NEPA process.

According to regulations updated in 2001 from the FHWA, many transportation projects for both roadways and bridges, specifically rehabilitation activities, are considered to be categorically exempt (CEs) because they have been deemed to meet 40 CFR § 1508.4 based on past precedent. Accordingly, these certain project types:

- Do not have significant environmental, planned growth or land use impacts
- Do not need relocation of many people
- Do not have impact on natural, cultural, recreational, or historic resources
- Do not have air, noise, or water quality impacts
- Do not have significant impacts on travel patterns
- Do not, either individually or cumulatively, have any significant environmental impacts

See 40 CFR §1508.4 and 23 CFR §771.117. For purposes of this requirement, projects that qualify as NEPA CEs must complete a checklist equivalent to those shown in Table PR-1.1.

### **Example: States with Environmental Review Processes**

Some states, regions and territories of the United States require an environmental review process that is similar to NEPA. These locations are listed in Table PR-1.2. Additionally, some local and regional departments of transportation (DOT), or projects funded by those agencies, may also require an environmental review process that is generally based on the NEPA. Completing such an owner/agency process meets this requirement, provided that it addresses all the steps noted. Note that some owners/agencies may have stricter criteria than NEPA. Also, guidance documents and examples at the federal level can often provide a helpful resource or template for state level documentation.

**Table PR-1.2: U.S. Locations with Existing Environmental Review Processes<sup>1</sup>**

California	Montana
Connecticut	Nevada/California – Tahoe
District of Columbia	New Jersey
Georgia	New York
Guam	North Carolina
Hawaii	Puerto Rico
Indiana	South Dakota
Maryland	Virginia
Massachusetts	Washington
Minnesota	Wisconsin

<sup>1</sup><http://nepa.gov/nepa/regs/states/states.cfm>

## POTENTIAL ISSUES

1. Projects that are typically classified as “categorical exclusions” under NEPA (or equivalent) may need to expend extra effort to achieve the intent of this requirement.
2. Inadequate or ineffective public, stakeholder, and agency involvement during project scoping, leading to a poorly defined or incomplete solution.
3. Lead agencies are responsible for the scope of the environmental review, but consultants or developers are often required to pay for and perform the work involved (CEQ, 2007).
4. Climate change is not often adequately addressed by the environmental review process, which has occasionally resulted in litigation (Clark, 1994; Lemons, 1998).
5. Inadequate mitigation of indirect and cumulative effects because of jurisdictional limitations or lack of scientific data (Clark, 1994; Lemons, 1998).

## RESEARCH

An environmental review process has two main purposes: providing an avenue for more informed decision-making and allowing public involvement in agency projects that may have adverse impacts on the environment (CEQ, 2007). Generally speaking, it is the first step toward achieving a general mark of roadway sustainability; this step, when taken at the outset of design and construction, allows comprehensive consideration of elements that contribute to overall sustainability at the most basic level of project decision making.

Completion of an environmental review process ensures that the project has received early scrutiny and guidance from the public, stakeholders, and appropriate agencies and jurisdictions before it is designed and built. However, importantly, the process does not dictate the final decisions made. In other words, some impacts that are considered adverse may actually be implemented based on weighing a number of tradeoffs. This way, stakeholder values and local regulations provide the environmental, social, economic and other political parameters within which a project must fit.

### Why is the environmental review process a requirement in Greenroads?

No matter how small the roadway project is, it still has an impact, even if it is considered at some regulatory level to be an “insignificant” one. Greenroads seeks to recognize those projects that have been subject to the robust public and regulatory agency review process imposed by the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) or a state-level equivalent procedure. To clarify, in particular, many roadway projects have been classified as Categorical Exclusions. Such regular exclusion of this process requirement detaches the impacts that are perceived as insignificant on a project basis and at a practical level actually has a potentially large aggregate environmental impact. Passing off insignificant impacts does not preclude the value of the process in a decision-making situation, especially for the broad range of impact that roadway projects have. Also, by considering using a metric like Greenroads in project-level planning, we feel that the environmental review process may be augmented by consideration of some of the ideas at the project conception.

### Why is environmental review important for roadways?

Roadway construction and maintenance activities place an incredible demand on national environmental and financial resources. However, current roadway design and construction practice does not always systematically or holistically address environmental impacts or environmental quality. For many projects, often it is difficult to conceptualize the environmental impacts or influence that a roadway has on its surroundings. This could be due to three general problems: 1) decision-makers are unable to understand the complexity of ecosystems and how manmade roadways fit within this context; 2) the decision requires thoughtfulness that goes beyond conventional wisdom or traditional assumptions 3) decision-makers fail to understand the limits of control that humans have on ecosystem management (Caldwell, 1999). Also, not all projects are covered by NEPA or an equivalent state or local policy; sometimes existing policies require no more than a cursory evaluation of environmental, social and economic impacts. In these cases, many critical impacts are unintentionally overlooked or ignored and these impacts may have long-term consequences for the environment and local communities. Approaches that do not address direct, indirect and cumulative effects of roadway design and construction demonstrate, at best, weak stewardship efforts, and are inadequate toward achieving sustainability due to their lack of comprehensiveness.

For example, evaluation of project air emissions, total energy use, or surrounding ecosystems is rarely extended outside of regulatory compliance, such as meeting requirements for a cumulative effects assessment in National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) documents. The Bureau of Transportation Statistics (2007) reports that approximately \$54 billion was spent on pavement materials alone in 2006. Production, transport and placement of common pavement materials, such as hot-mix asphalt (HMA) and portland cement concrete (PCC), represent the majority of life cycle greenhouse gas emissions and energy usage associated with roadways (Zapata and Gambatese, 2005). Additionally, the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) has attributed several direct, cumulative and long-term environmental impacts, such as ecosystem degradation, fragmentation and habitat loss, due to the linear and decentralized nature of the four million mile network of roadways in the U.S. (1994) Performing an environmental review on a roadway project provides a means of investigating these special environmental impacts in a more detailed manner in order to make better environmental decisions for roadway development.

### What are the steps in the environmental review process?

Generally, there are three generic steps in the environmental review process. For projects with no environmental review process within their jurisdiction, these are guidelines provide a general idea of the process.

1. Complete the initial permitting process for the governing jurisdiction. Usually this involves some review of historical documentation for the area where the project will be located.
2. Determine if an environmental review is needed. Usually, a project falls into a certain classification which has specific environmental review requirements.
3. If needed, perform an environmental review and submit for approval by the governing agency.

These three steps may be iterative depending on the complexity of the project. The eight steps of this Project Requirement match this general framework, in slightly more detail, and without the agency permits.

### How is the environmental review process used for decision-making?

Roadway design and construction is a complex process that requires experienced professionals and clearly defined expectations and values. The environmental review process is an important part of decision-making in roadway projects because ultimately, it helps tell the whole project story in an effective manner. Determining stakeholder expectations and needs, spatial and temporal bounds (Clark, 1994), feasible options and their environmental impacts, and which choices are most sensible based on all known costs and benefits are critical steps in approaching the project in a meaningful and comprehensive way. Further, without defining these same values, efforts toward project sustainability would be ineffective.

### What is the public involvement role?

Public involvement plays a key role in a comprehensive environmental review process because the public is one of the largest stakeholders in most roadway and transportation-related projects. It plays a complementary role

to the technical knowledge and experience of the interdisciplinary professionals involved in the design and construction of the roadway. Open consensus-based public participation strategies provide a critical avenue for exchange of important information about needs, opinions, expectations and local values between the public and project decision-makers. Essentially, this part of the environmental review process engages the people who will be most likely to be impacted by the decisions made.

The FHWA provides several publications and guidance materials on creating and implementing successful public involvement campaigns for roadway projects. [http://www.fhwa.dot.gov/environment/pi\\_pubs.htm](http://www.fhwa.dot.gov/environment/pi_pubs.htm)

### What is considered in an environmental review process?

The Washington state Department of Ecology (DOE) SEPA checklist provides a comprehensive example of what is typically included in an environmental review process. Basic topics covered include those shown in Table PR-1.3.

**Table PR-1.3: Topics Addressed by an Environmental Review Process**

<b>Earthen materials</b>	Site topography, soil conditions, grading quantities, erosion potential, impervious surfaces
<b>Air</b>	Expected on-site and relevant off-site air emissions
<b>Water</b>	Water bodies in vicinity, in-water grading quantities, surface and groundwater conditions, floodplain status, expected point and non-point discharges, stormwater management
<b>Plants</b>	Native vegetation, vegetation management, landscaping plan, endangered species
<b>Animals</b>	Native wildlife, migratory habits, endangered species
<b>Energy</b>	Energy types needed and used, renewable energy sources, conservation efforts (if any)
<b>Human health and safety</b>	Exposure to toxic chemicals, risk of fire and explosion, spill, or hazardous waste, emergency services needed, hazard controls in place, safety issues and needs being addressed.
<b>Noise</b>	Traffic, equipment, operation (short-term, long-term), times of expected noise,
<b>Land and shoreline use</b>	Current use, existing structures (any planned demolition), agricultural status, zoning and master plan, current and displaced populations, environmental sensitivity,
<b>Housing</b>	Addition or loss of housing units
<b>Aesthetics</b>	Structure height, views in area
<b>Light and glare</b>	Time of day for expected glare, safety considerations, off-site glare,
<b>Recreational, historic, cultural resources</b>	Types of opportunities in vicinity, existing registrations (if any), any displacement of recreational, historical, or cultural opportunities as a result of project
<b>Transportation</b>	Access from other public streets and highways, transit facilities, parking, type of construction expected, nearness to air and rail modes, peak traffic volumes, trip generation
<b>Public services and utilities</b>	Types of public services and utilities needed or impacted, new services or utilities proposed

Generally, documentation of the environmental review process for roadway projects requires that sources of all potential environmental, economic and social impacts, expected nature and extent of these impacts, and the final decisions made in light of these impacts are stated concisely and clearly.

### What is NEPA?

The National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) is a broad declaration of environmental values intended to encourage changes in attitudes and social behaviors at a national level (Caldwell, 1999). NEPA was instituted as federal law in the United States in 1969 and published in the Federal Register in January 1970. (CFR 42 § 4321) The full text of the act is available online at <http://ceq.hss.doe.gov/nepa/nepanet.htm>. Compliance with NEPA is managed by the Council of Environmental Quality (CEQ, 2007). As a law, NEPA mandates that an interdisciplinary and transparent approach is taken during alternative selection in the decision-making process. Projects are required to state all known direct, indirect, and cumulative environmental, social and economic impacts that might result from implementing the project (CEQ, 2007).

NEPA applies to all federally funded projects, which commonly includes projects such as roadways managed by the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA), environmental remediation efforts through the EPA, government buildings and other infrastructure projects receiving federal funding. Because many roadway projects are at least partly funded by federal money, many agencies and consultants are likely to be experienced with the level of detail expected during the NEPA process. Additionally, many states may have regulations that map directly back to NEPA or have more stringent environmental review expectations due to local or statewide policy or other special environmental conditions.

In general, there are five classifications of projects that are subject to environmental review under NEPA. These are shown with a brief description of the documentation needed and produced to meet the requirements of NEPA process in Table PR-1.4. Significantly more detail regarding each type of report in the text of the Act itself and from CEQ at <http://ceq.hss.doe.gov/nepa/nepanet.htm>.

**Table PR-1.4: Types of NEPA Environmental Reviews**

NEPA Classification	Documentation Needs	How to Meet Needs
Significant Effects Identified	Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) Record of Decision (ROD)	Follow NEPA Process guidelines for generating an EIS. EPA reviews EIS.
Effects Uncertain	Environmental Assessment (EA) Finding of No Significant Impact (FONSI) or follow EIS procedure	Follow NEPA Process guidelines for generating an EA. Results of EA may dictate a more detailed EIS is required for the roadway project.
Listed Categorical Exclusion (CE)	Letter from the governing jurisdiction stating the existing CE for project. FHWA lists CEs in 23 CFR §771.117	Provide copy of existing statement of Categorical Exclusion (CE)
No CE listed by Agency	Environmental Assessment (EA) Finding of No Significant Impact (FONSI) or EIS and ROD	Follow NEPA Process guidelines for generating an EA. Results of EA may dictate a more detailed EIS is required for the roadway project.
Extraordinary circumstance for a listed CE	Environmental Assessment (EA) Finding of No Significant Impact (FONSI) or EIS and ROD	Follow NEPA Process guidelines for generating an EA. Results of EA may dictate a more detailed EIS is required for the roadway project.

#### Criticisms of NEPA

Some of the common criticisms of NEPA are outlined by *NCHRP Report 25-25(01)* (TransTech et al., 2005). Most complaints arise from loss of meaningfulness in the environmental review process due to two coupled issues, the vagueness of the language used in the Act and the bureaucratic approval process required of the NEPA documentation.

The language in the Act is very broad compared to other U.S. regulations, and often the requirements for NEPA are considered unclear by comparison. Interviewees in the NCHRP 25-25 initial survey cited the need for clearer language, less jargon, consistent styles and formats, and the need to be succinct (TransTech et al., 2005). However, the meaning of the process is not likely lost in the process itself, but rather in the unnecessarily verbose documents that are generated. Many sections often contain duplicate information. This problem has spurred the guidance documents available from FHWA, AASHTO, and ACEC (noted in the preceding Examples section) which stress brevity and clarity in final NEPA documents.

Historically, documentation of the NEPA process has also been considered unwieldy and arduous because project teams often try to present as much information in as broad of language as possible, in order to address the lack of specificity in the Act and avoid possible litigation for errors and omissions (Clark, 1994; Lemons, 1998). Interviewees frequently mentioned that demonstrating legal sufficiency is the main reason documents by DOTs are so long (TransTech et al., 2005). Consequently, these lengthy documents require lengthy reviews. The review process is complicated further if a project does not begin the NEPA environmental review in early stages of decision-making or if documentation is not properly tracked.

A third complaint that has actually resulted in recent (and complicated) litigation is the NEPA requirement for cumulative environmental effect assessment, specifically related to global climate change. Smith (2008) notes that the NEPA has traditionally not included any climate change analyses in the environmental impact assessment process. Recently though, climate change has appeared as a comment from the lead agency on reviews of environmental impact statements and environmental assessments. However, Lemons (1998, p. 89) states “Because of the significant amount of scientific uncertainty in prediction the environmental impacts of human activities [such as climate change], opponents of agency decisions have often been successful in challenging agency decisions if they can demonstrate that the agency did not rigorously consider certain impacts or if they can demonstrate that an agency did not follow prescribed steps in dealing with scientific uncertainty. Alternatively, if an agency has followed these prescribed steps, then opponents of an agency’s decision will have a difficult time fulfilling the burden of proof requirements to overturn that decision.” For example, Smith (2008, p. 76) identifies the landmark case, *Center for Biological Diversity v. National Highway Traffic Safety Administration*, as the “most significant NEPA climate change court decision to date” related to NEPA and transportation. In this decision, the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration failed to identify the cumulative effect of incremental emissions on climate change in the EA process. However, in this and similar cases, even the best scientific knowledge for ecosystem-related consequences can be too variable and uncertain to be considered significant evidence in a court of law. Statistical significance in science and engineering, unfortunately, does not translate to beyond a reasonable doubt in law.

Clark (1994, p. 322) echoes this difficulty and states that the “lack of consensus concerning the application of cumulative impact analysis methodology is primarily associated with issues of temporal and spatial bounds and the difficulty of reaching agreement upon the geographical boundaries of the study area and how far into the future and how far into the past one must look to adequately assess the cumulative impacts.” In essence, the real issue is that most project teams are unable to define regional and global problems in a context relevant to project-level decisions. Most of the cumulative effect assessments for transportation projects miss the point (if completed at all), and more data (easy to collect) is often provided without completely synthesizing the information in a meaningful way (because analysis is more difficult) (TransTech et al., 2005). Guidelines for the level of detail required and process suggestions for cumulative effects studies of transportation projects are provided in *NCHRP 25-25(01)*.

#### **American Recovery and Reinvestment Act of 2009 and NEPA**

The NEPA process is required for any transportation infrastructure improvement project applying for or granted funds under the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act of 2009 (ARRA). According to the CEQ (2009c), NEPA reviews are representative of the sustainability and environmental stewardship goals embedded in ARRA. As of September 2009, infrastructure projects through the United States DOT amounted to 9% of the total funded projects in ARRA. NEPA was not applicable for only two of these projects funded for USDOT in 2009 (CEQ, 2009c).

#### **Resources for Project Environmental Reviews**

- Blank copies of the Washington state Department of Ecology SEPA checklist are available and downloadable for use here: <http://www.ecy.wa.gov/biblio/ecy05045.html>.
- Information for highway proposals and SAFETEA-LU requirements is available from the FHWA at <http://www.fhwa.dot.gov/safetealu>.
- A “Citizen’s Guide to Transportation Decision-Making” and “The Metropolitan Transportation Planning Process: Key Issues. A Briefing Notebook for Transportation Decisionmakers, Officials, and Staff” are available from the FHWA at <http://www.fhwa.gov/planning/citizen/index.htm>.
- The FHWA provides an Environmental Review Toolkit that is a useful resource for many projects: <http://www.fhwa.dot.gov/planning/metro/index.htm>
- Detailed questions and answers for environmental review processes are spelled out in the SAFETEA-LU Final Guidance, available here: <http://www.fhwa.dot.gov/hep/section6002/>

- The FHWA also has guidance for creating effective public Involvement programs. A useful resource is *Public Involvement Techniques for Transportation Decision-making*, available on the web at: <http://www.fhwa.dot.gov/REPORTS/PITTD/cover.htm>
- The Transportation Research Board (TRB) has a committee focused on public involvement with several useful resources: <http://www.trbpi.com/>
- The AASHTO Center for Environmental Excellence has many guidelines and resources for addressing NEPA compliance, including a guidebook for SAFETEA-LU Environmental Review Processes. [http://environment.transportation.org/center/products\\_programs/practitioners\\_handbooks.aspx](http://environment.transportation.org/center/products_programs/practitioners_handbooks.aspx)

## GLOSSARY

<b>ACEC</b>	American Council of Engineering Companies
<b>AASHTO</b>	American Association of State Highway and Transportation Officials
<b>ARRA</b>	American Recovery and Reinvestment Act of 2009
<b>Categorical Exclusion (CE)</b>	A decision, project, or activity that has no significant single or cumulative outcome that undermines the quality of the environment and requires no environmental assessment or environmental impact statement. (40 CFR §1508.4 and 23 CFR §771.117)
<b>Categorically exempt</b>	See Categorical Exclusion (CE)
<b>CEQ</b>	Council on Environmental Quality
<b>EA</b>	Environmental Assessment (40 CFR §1508.9)
<b>EIS</b>	Environmental Impact Statement (40 CFR §1508.11)
<b>Environmental review process</b>	A method of informed decision-making used in project development
<b>Extraordinary circumstance</b>	Any special situation that may indicate a need for a more detailed environmental assessment (EA), including (but not limited to): impacts to habitat for endangered species, archaeologically-sensitive areas, wetlands, low income communities, etc.
<b>FHWA</b>	Federal Highway Administration
<b>FONSI</b>	Finding of No Significant Impact (40 CFR §1508.13)
<b>Lead agency</b>	The agency held responsible for NEPA compliance (40 CFR §1508.16)
<b>NCHRP</b>	National Cooperative Highway Research Program
<b>NEPA</b>	National Environmental Policy Act of 1969
<b>NHTSA</b>	National Highway Transportation Safety Agency
<b>ROD</b>	Record of Decision
<b>SEPA</b>	State Environmental Policy Act. Note that some states have different acronyms for their environmental policies.

## REFERENCES

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