

WAC 365-197-030 Integrated project review—GMA project consistency analysis and environmental review under SEPA. The GMA is a fundamental building block of regulatory reform. The GMA should serve as an integrating framework for other land use-related laws. (ESHB 1724, Section 1.)

Integration of permit review and environmental review is intended to eliminate duplication in processes and requirements. The legislature recognized that consistency analysis and determinations of whether environmental impacts have been adequately addressed involve many of the same studies and analyses. SEPA substantive authority should not be used to condition or deny a permit for those impacts adequately addressed by the applicable development regulations.

The primary role of environmental review under SEPA at the project level is to focus on those environmental impacts that have not been addressed by a GMA county's/city's development regulations and/or comprehensive plan adopted under chapter 36.70A RCW, or other local, state, and federal laws and regulations. SEPA substantive authority should only be used when the impacts cannot be adequately addressed by existing laws. As consistency analysis involves the application of development regulations and/or the comprehensive plan to a specific project, it will also help answer the question of whether a project's environmental impacts have been adequately addressed by the regulations and/or plan policies.

During project review, a GMA county/city may determine that some or all of the environmental impacts of the project have been addressed by its development regulations, comprehensive plan, or other applicable local, state, or federal laws or rules (RCW 43.21C.240 and WAC 197-11-158). The GMA county/city may make this determination during the course of environmental review and preparation of a threshold determination (including initial consistency review), if the impacts have been adequately addressed in the applicable regulations, plan policies, or other laws. "Adequately addressed" is defined as having identified the impacts and avoided, otherwise mitigated, or designated as acceptable the impacts associated with certain levels of service, land use designations, development standards, or other land use planning decisions required or allowed under the GMA. Once a determination has been made that an impact has been adequately addressed, the jurisdiction may not require additional mitigation for that impact under its SEPA substantive authority.

Thus, through the project review process:

(1) If the applicable regulations require studies that adequately analyze all of the project's specific probable adverse environmental impacts, additional studies under SEPA will not be necessary on those impacts;

(2) If the applicable regulations require measures that adequately address such environmental impacts, additional measures would likewise not be required under SEPA; and

(3) If the applicable regulations do not adequately analyze or address a proposal's specific probable adverse environmental impacts, SEPA provides the authority and procedures for additional review. (Note to RCW 43.21C.240.)

[Statutory Authority: RCW 36.70B.040. WSR 01-13-039, § 365-197-030, filed 6/13/01, effective 7/14/01.]