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**CHAPTER 1**

City Environmental Quality Review, or “CEQR,” is New York City’s process for implementing the **State Environmental Quality Review Act (SEQR**), by which agencies of the City of New York review proposed discretionary actions to **identify and disclose** the potential effects those actions may have on the environment.

This chapter of the CEQR Technical Manual explains the CEQR process. Specifically, it addresses the types of projects subject to CEQR, the selection of the agency primarily responsible for the environmental review of the project, the participation of other agencies and the public in the review process, and the determinations and findings that are prerequisites for agency action. It also introduces the documentation used in CEQR, including the Environmental Assessment Statement (EAS) and the Environmental Impact Statement (EIS), and **discusses CEQR’s relationship with** other common approval procedures, such as the Uniform Land Use Review Procedure **(ULURP).** **. . .**

**B. CEQR PROCESS**

In implementing SEQR, the CEQR process **requires City agencies to assess, disclose, and mitigate to the greatest extent practicable** the significant environmental consequences of their decisions to fund, directly undertake, or approve a project. The environmental assessment analyzes the project that is facilitated by the action or actions. An action is a discretionary agency decision (approval, funding, or undertaking) needed in order to complete a project.

Review under CEQR should commence **as early as possible** in the formulation or consideration of a proposal for a project. An agency may, however, conduct environmental, engineering, economic, feasibility and other studies, and preliminary planning and budgetary processes necessary to the formulation of a project, without first beginning the CEQR process. Such activities are considered Type II actions. 6 NYCRR 617.5(c)(21). Typically, review begins at the stage of early design of a project or, in the case of City projects, at the **planning stage or upon receipt of an application** for a permit or other discretionary approval. In the case of City projects, an environmental assessment is not required until the specifics of the project are formulated and proposed. However, an agency may commence its review earlier to help in its examination of project options. **Environmental review must be completed before any activity commits the City to engage in, fund, or approve a project.**

Based on an initial evaluation, an agency determines whether or not a project is subject to environmental review. If the project is subject to environmental review, an **initial assessment** considers a series of technical areas, such as air quality, traffic, and neighborhood character, to determine whether the project may have a significant adverse impact on the environment. There may be specific projects that require additional analyses. If the project under consideration has the potential for a **significant adverse environmental impact**, then the lead agency conducts a detailed assessment to determine whether significant adverse environmental impacts would occur as a result of the project. **If the agency identifies significant adverse impacts, the lead agency must consider alternatives which, consistent with social, economic, and other essential considerations, would avoid or minimize such impacts to the maximum extent practicable.**