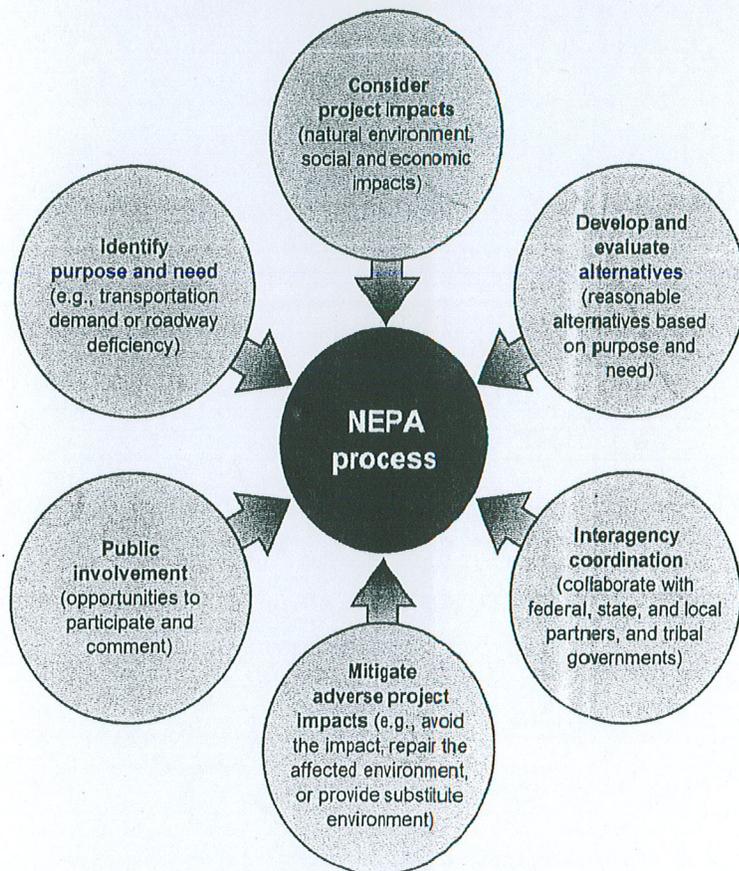


Figure 1: The Federal Highway Administration's Principles of the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) Process in Transportation Decision Making



Source: GAO. | GAO-15-71

According to CEQ and FHWA, establishing the purpose and need for the federal action takes into account the project sponsor's purpose and need for a project and is essential in establishing a baseline for the development of the range of reasonable project alternatives required in environmental reviews. It also assists with the identification and eventual selection of a preferred alternative. For FHWA NEPA reviews for federal-aid highway projects, the purpose and need for a proposed project might take into account the status of the project (e.g., the project's history, funding, and schedules, as well as information on agencies involved); a