

SEPA – GHG ORDINANCE SUMMARY

The proposed ordinance:

- Makes findings relating to the potential impacts of climate change on King County and its citizens, King County's actions to date with respect to addressing climate change, and recent legal developments related to greenhouse gas emissions and environmental review.
- Defines a standard for greenhouse gas emission reductions that will be deemed to be non-significant under the State Environmental Policy Act (SEPA). The standard is a reduction of 15% below the emissions that are estimated from complying with existing regulations.
- Identifies types of mitigation measures that proponents may consider as a way to reduce greenhouse gas emissions. The measures include green building and low impact development, use of renewable energy, protection of open space, purchase of transferable development rights from rural areas, and building at higher densities in urban areas.
- Directs the Department of Development and Environmental Services (DDES) to adopt public rules to identify additional measures that will reduce greenhouse gas emissions. Rules will be developed in consultation with an advisory committee. Rules must be approved by the King County Council before they take effect.
- Requires the use of incentives to encourage the use of green building and low impact development practices. Priority processing is provided for development proposals that achieve twice the required level of greenhouse gas emission reductions.
- Requires DDES and DNRP to report to the King County Council by March 31, 2011 on the requirements of the ordinance.