



TO: Elizabeth Pauli, City Manager
FROM: Bill Fosbre, City Attorney
COPY: Economic Development Committee; Tadd Wille, Assistant City Manager
PRESENTER: Steve Victor, Deputy City Attorney
Shirley Schultz, Principal Planner, PDS
SUBJECT: SEPA Lead Agency Procedures
DATE: December 10, 2019

PRESENTATION TYPE:

Informational Briefing

SUMMARY:

Staff will provide an informational briefing regarding project review under the State Environmental Policy Act (SEPA), with emphasis on the role and responsibilities of a project's SEPA lead agency, and information on the differences between SEPA review, permitting requirements and criteria, and jurisdictional differences between the SEPA lead and agency and other permitting agencies involved in a project.

BACKGROUND:

Staff and Council Members have received multiple questions over the past months and years about to the City's responsibilities under SEPA. The questions arise both from projects solely within the City's permitting jurisdiction, as well as those located in Tacoma that involve permitting by multiple governmental jurisdictions. Staff will provide an overview of the state laws and administrative rules regarding SEPA roles and responsibilities, how those are decided, and which agency fulfills SEPA duties. Topics will include what the purpose of SEPA is (and is not), what the role of a Lead Agency is (and is not), and what the parameters for permitting are (and are not), and the legal distinctions between the SEPA process, and the permitting process.

ISSUE:

This is an information briefing only, as requested by Council.

ALTERNATIVES:

This is an information briefing only. There are no alternatives presented.

FISCAL IMPACT:

This is an information briefing only. There is no fiscal impact.

RECOMMENDATION:

This is an information briefing only. There is no recommendation.