



## Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) Process Overview

Washington's State Environmental Policy Act (SEPA) and the associated implementing regulations govern the EIS process.

The three major steps in the EIS process are:

- EIS Scoping
- Draft EIS
- Final EIS

### What is EIS Scoping?

Per SEPA regulations, the required EIS Scoping period is a minimum of 21 days. To encourage public participation in the process, the EIS scoping period for the NEC Regional Municipal Jail will be extended to 43 days and six public meetings will be held. These additional steps constitute "Expanded Scoping" under SEPA.

- Scoping is the first step in the EIS process.
- The purpose of scoping is to narrow the focus of the EIS to just address:
  - probable significant environmental impacts; and to
  - identify the range of alternatives that should be analyzed in the EIS.
- At the scoping meetings, the Elements of the Environment poster and the handout list the potential range of environmental elements that can be evaluated as part of the EIS process per SEPA. The ones that are highlighted are those that have been preliminarily identified for analysis in the EIS.
- EIS Scoping helps the NEC decide what issues and alternatives to analyze in the Draft EIS.
- Scoping provides notice to agencies, organizations and the public that an EIS will be prepared for the proposed project.

## **What is the Draft EIS?**

- The Draft EIS is the NEC's initial analysis of probable significant environmental impacts of each of the alternatives. Key sections of the Draft EIS include:
  - Fact Sheet
  - *Section I* – Summary
  - *Section II* -- Description of the Proposed Action and Alternatives
  - *Section III* – Affected Environment, Significant Impacts, Mitigation Measures and Unavoidable Adverse Impacts for each environmental element
- The Draft EIS is distributed to agencies (federal, state, regional, county, cities), organizations, and the public for review and comment.
- Public meeting(s) will be held following issuance of the Draft EIS to gather comments regarding the Draft EIS.
- It is anticipated that the Draft EIS will be issued in the third quarter of 2009.

## **What is the Final EIS?**

- The Final EIS is the third and final part of the EIS process.
- The Final EIS provides the following:
  - changes or clarifications to the project/alternatives since the Draft EIS was issued, as applicable;
  - revisions or clarifications to the analysis of impacts that was contained in the Draft EIS, if warranted; and
  - responses to written comments and public testimony that was received concerning the Draft EIS from agencies, organizations and individuals
- The Final EIS, together with the Draft EIS, is the document that NEC will use -- along with previous and ongoing public input and other analyses -- to make a decision regarding the selection of a site for the Regional Municipal Jail Facility.

- In summary, the EIS is an objective, impartial evaluation of the environmental consequences of the proposal and alternatives. The EIS is:
  - an informational tool that is used by the NEC, other agencies and the public in the decision-making process;
  - it identifies and evaluates probable significant environmental impacts of each of the alternatives;
  - it identifies measures that if implemented, could mitigate the significant impacts that are identified in the EIS; and
  - it identifies unavoidable adverse impacts of the project, if any.
  
- It is anticipated that the Final EIS will be issued in the first quarter of 2010.

## **What is the Purpose of Tonight's Meeting?**

The purpose is to gather your comments concerning the scope of the EIS.

## **Will there be Other Opportunities for Public Input?**

Yes. There will be continual opportunities for public input.

- Once the Draft EIS is issued, there will be multiple public meetings during the required comment period to gather comments on the analysis contained in the Draft EIS.
  
- The public can continue to provide input on the Jail project via the NEC Web site at [www.necmunicipaljail.org](http://www.necmunicipaljail.org). You can also sign up at this Web site to receive regular email updates about the project.
  
- In addition, NEC representatives are happy to attend community meetings to provide information, answer questions, and obtain input on the project. If you wish to arrange for a NEC representative to attend a community meeting, please submit your request via the NEC Web site, [www.necmunicipaljail.org](http://www.necmunicipaljail.org) or contact the Keller Group at (425) 788-8990.
  
- Once a preferred site is identified, the local legislative body with jurisdiction over the location will begin its decision-making process, which will include more opportunities for public input.