

QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS ABOUT THE CRITICAL AREAS ORDINANCE

Q: WHERE CAN I FIND OUT ABOUT THE CAO?

A: King County recently mailed information about the Critical Areas Ordinance to all rural property owners in King County. The Web version of this brochure can be viewed at: <http://dnr.metrokc.gov/dnrp/cao/index.htm>. The Metropolitan King County Council has also posted some general information on the CAO, as well as copies of the final ordinances on their Web site at: www.metrokc.gov/mkcc/cao/index.htm.

Q: GIVEN PASSAGE OF THE CAO, HOW DO I APPLY FOR A PERMIT AT DDES?

A: The permit application process is largely unchanged by the Critical Areas Ordinance. The DDES Web site lists several questions and answers about applying for permits and the permit process. These can be found at: www.metrokc.gov/DDES/faq/#permproc.

Q: I FILED A PERMIT APPLICATION WITH DDES PRIOR TO JANUARY 1, 2005. HOW DO I FIND OUT IF THE CAO AFFECTS MY PERMIT APPLICATION?

A: Vesting questions should be directed to the following DDES staff:

- Clearing and Grading: Randy Sandin at 206-296-6778;
- Plats and Short Plats: Lisa Dinsmore at 206-296-7171;
- Site issues pertaining to single family development: Jim Chan at 206-296-6740;
- Site issues pertaining to commercial development: Jim Chan at 206-296-6740; and
- Drainage review: Jim Chan at 206-296-6740.

Q: HOW CAN I FIND OUT IF THERE ARE CRITICAL AREAS ON MY PROPERTY?

A: The actual presence or absence of critical areas on the ground, as defined in Title 21A of the King County Code (KCC), determines permit requirements for property in unincorporated King County, regardless of what is contained in maps and other documents.

King County has *not* mapped all critical areas on all property within King County. Customers may contact the DDES Permit Center at 206-296-6797 to discuss the process of finding out whether a property contains critical areas. Please have the Tax Parcel Number available.

Options for determining the presence of critical areas include:

- Briefly discuss a proposed project with Permit Center staff on the phone (206-296-6600) or in-person at DDES offices.
- Set up a Critical Areas Inquiry or Designation to have a parcel investigated for critical areas. While DDES does charge by the hour for

this service, a Critical Areas Inquiry or Designation can save the property owner unanticipated expense during the permit review process by providing information about potential site constraints affecting a proposed project in advance of preparing detailed construction plans.

- Complete a formal building or development permit application, which may be followed by a Critical Areas Review.

DDES staff will ask several questions, such as:

- Is there a stream, wetland or steep slope on or adjacent to the specified property? (Buffers may extend across property lines.)
- Are there areas on the specified property where coal mining activities were previously conducted, or areas with easily eroded soils?

Property research is available through the DDES Web site at www.metrokc.gov/ddes/property.htm, where customers also may access a variety of parcel-specific information. For maps and descriptions of individual parcels, go to www.metrokc.gov/gis/mappointal. Please note that Web-based information is a guide only; it does not accurately show all critical areas on a parcel. For those critical areas that are shown, precise boundaries are not indicated.

Q: WHAT IS DDES DOING TO HELP THE PUBLIC LEARN ABOUT THE CAO?

A: DDES will host a public workshop on the Critical Areas Ordinance on January 28, 2005. Registration procedures and additional information is online at www.metrokc.gov/ddes/lusd/ddesclass.htm. In the event that individuals are unable to attend the workshop for any reason, the workshop will be broadcast on King County Civil Television repeatedly throughout 2005.

DDES will also publish several [Fact Sheets](#) online by January 1, 2005, and will also have updated all [Customer Information Bulletins](#) to be consistent with CAO regulations.