

January 2010 Meeting Highlights

By Peter Rimbo, Corresponding Secretary

On Monday, January 11, 2010, the Greater Maple Valley Area Council held its regular monthly meeting. Your Area Council serves as an all-volunteer, locally elected advisory body to the King County Council representing all rural unincorporated area residents living in the Tahoma School District.

Area Council Elections and Citizens Advisory Survey

In odd-numbered years (e.g., 2009) the Area Council conducts elections to fill half of its 16 seats. Members serve 4-year terms, which are staggered so that half are contested every 2 years. In addition, the Area Council conducts an Advisory Survey to gauge citizens' opinions on a variety of important matters.

Election results have now been tabulated. Dave Fields and Rob Morris were reelected to their seats in the Hobart area and Les Dawson and Patrick Seiver were reelected to their seats in the River Heights area. James Callow was elected to and sworn in as a new member to fill an open position in the Ravensdale Area.

In internal elections for its Officers the Area Council reelected Steve Hiester as Chair, Dave Fields as Vice-Chair, Beverly Tonda as Recording Secretary, and Peter Rimbo as Corresponding Secretary. Susan Dawson was elected as new Area Council Treasurer to replace Kevin Daoust, who decided to retire at the end of 2009.

Results from our Citizens' Advisory Survey will be published in an upcoming edition, as well as posted on the Area Council web site--past results already are posted. In addition, Advisory Survey results will be provided to King County and State District #5 elected officials.

Black Diamond Master Planned Developments

The Area Council discussed the ramifications of two Master Planned Developments (MPDs) proposed by Yarrow Bay in lands just annexed by the City of Black Diamond. A total of 4,530 single-family and 1,520 multi-family units have been proposed on nearly 700 acres. Over 1,100,000 sq ft of commercial and office space also has been proposed. The Area Council is concerned that such large developments on the rural/suburban fringe will directly impact the greater Maple Valley area and its citizens.

Of particular concern is the adverse impact on local and regional transportation corridors, especially SR-169 (Maple Valley Highway) and SR-516 (Kent-Kangley Road), along with local arterials. Estimates of impacts on traffic flow on SR-169 show a near doubling of vehicles when the proposed developments are complete. In addition, major intersections throughout the area will be clogged. All adversely impacting the movement of people, goods, and services.

Rural Area citizens have consistently showed in our Bi-Annual Advisory Surveys that Transportation is a key issue. In addition, the Area Council believes the proposed Yarrow Bay MPDs do not meet the Transportation Concurrency requirements of both the King County Comprehensive Plan and the State Growth Management Act. Consequently, the Area Council voted to send letters of concern to King County and State officials, as well as affected SE King County cities. Those letters describe the adverse impacts that greatly increased traffic will do to our existing clogged major transportation corridors.

Unincorporated Area Transportation Benefit District

On December 23, 2009, the King County Council passed an ordinance establishing a Transportation Benefit District (TBD) within unincorporated King County to provide for targeted transportation improvements. The rationale given was that key transportation infrastructure improvements are needed to "prevent an overall decline in the condition, structural integrity and safety of its transportation system." Available funds have been "reduced in recent years due to the effects of several statewide initiatives, declining revenues from the state motor fuel tax, and decreases in available state and federal grant funding."

Among 20 projects identified, four involve SR-169 between Enumclaw and Maple Valley. At this time those projects are not defined in detail. The Area Council decided to contact King County Councilman Reagan Dunn to provide some of those details at a future Area Council regular monthly meeting.

Levies

Our just-completed Advisory Survey showed that restoration of both the Fire District #43 and Tahoma School District levies is the favored option of area citizens. Restoration of the Fire Levy was favored by 57% and restoration of the School Levy was favored by 46%, with lesser percentages favoring increasing or decreasing either levy. The Area Council also supports restoration of both levies and, as such, will provide and discuss the results of our Advisory Survey to both Fire District #43

and Tahoma School District officials.

Our Next Meeting

Your Area Council meets on the first Monday of each month (except on legal holidays) at the Sheriff's Precinct #3 Headquarters located at 231st St & SR-169 (across from Fire Station). Each meeting begins with a Public Comment period to provide local citizens with the opportunity to voice issues of concern to Area Council members and King County or State of Washington officials in attendance.

Our next Regular Monthly Meeting will be held on Monday, February 1, at 7:00 PM. At this time King County District #9 Councilman, Reagan Dunn, is our scheduled speaker.