

October 2012

County Budget Impacts Road Services

by Peter Rimbos, Corresponding Secretary

On Monday, October 1, the Greater Maple Valley Unincorporated Area Council (GMVUAC) held its regular monthly meeting. Our guest speakers were from the King County Department of Transportation. Brenda Bauer, Road Services Division Director; Jay Osborne, Manager of the Strategic Planning; and Jeff Granlund, Supervisor in Road Maintenance discussed the proposed King County unincorporated area roads budget and related impacts to services.

County Budget Proposal for Roads

Ms. Bauer stated the King County road system, valued at \$39 billion, was built over many generations and requires continuous monitoring and maintenance. King County Executive Dow Constantine's proposed 2013/2014 budget for Roads is \$189 million (down from \$225 million in the 2011/2012 biennium), which is far less than what is needed to maintain the current quality of the County's roads, let alone enhancing quality or capacity. For comparison, in 2014, the Roads budget will be 40% less than it was in 2008.

For 2013 the proposed budget is \$98 million--\$73 million for operations and \$25 million for road preservation capital projects. The total budget will be reduced in 2014 by an additional \$7 million to \$91 million. What led to this decline is that unincorporated area property and gas taxes are projected to be \$8 million less in 2013 than 2012. In addition, many dense areas surrounding cities have been annexed into those cities, taking away that property tax revenue. There also are fewer Grants available and many require matching funds which are in short supply. Ms. Bauer emphasized the disconnect in that the County has not seen a proportional drop in its responsibility for repairing, maintaining, and replacing roads, bridges, and culverts, and is still responsible for over 1,500 miles of roadway.

The loss of road funding is taking a major toll on County roads. In recent years, pothole repairs have been cut by nearly half. In 2012, just 11 miles of deteriorated roadway is being repaved. During 2013/2014, the County will likely have no local funding for paving unless new revenue sources become available.

The Executive has proposed three measures to preserve some roads services and maintain public safety: (1) paying the first two years of debt service on the new South Park Bridge from excess bond reserves, instead of from the Road Fund; (2) ending the practice of using the Road Fund to support a special police motorcycle unit for the unincorporated areas; and (3) accelerating needed work on storm water management (SWM) projects on rural roads by borrowing money at historically low rates. These measures, if approved by the King County Council, will help preserve some services to county roads, but are small compared to the shortfall.

Finally, Ms. Bauer stated that the State Legislature has authorized local jurisdictions to create Transportation Benefit Districts. Using such a district the County could then levy up to a \$20 vehicle fee in the unincorporated areas. However, that fee would raise only \$4.5 million against the \$50- to \$65-million a year required just to keep our County roads drivable.

[For more information please click here.](#)

Train Show

The Area Council made final preparations its 15th Annual Operating Model Train Show to be held on Saturday and Sunday, October 20 & 21, from 10 AM to 5 PM at the Gracie Hansen Community Center gymnasium at 27132 SE Ravensdale Way in Ravensdale.

The show includes all kinds of operating model trains and train-related items in a very relaxed atmosphere where people of all ages can wander about and enjoy the trains at their own pace. All members of the public are invited.

[Please see our Train Show page for more information.](#)

Next Area Council Meeting

Meetings are held the first Monday of each month. A Public Comment period at the beginning of each meeting provides citizens an opportunity to voice issues of concern to Area Council members and County and State government officials in attendance. Your Area Council's next monthly meeting will be Monday, November 5, from 7:00 - 9:30 PM at the Fire Station at 231st St & SR-169.

Your Area Council "works to keep the Rural Area rural" by serving as an all-volunteer, locally elected advisory body to King County on behalf of all rural unincorporated area residents living in the Tahoma School District. Please visit our web site: www.greatermaplevallyareacouncil.org for more information on your Area Council and rural issues.

*** NOTE: If you live in the Tahoma School District outside the City of Maple Valley, you are eligible to apply to become a member of the Area Council. Interested Rural Area citizens can send a brief letter of interest to GMVUAC, P.O. Box 101,

Maple Valley, WA 98038 or an e-mail to gmvac_chair@hotmail.com. ***