

**August 2013**

## **Covington Northern Gateway DEIS** by Peter Rimbo, Corresponding Secretary

On Monday, August 5, the Area Council held its regular monthly meeting. Topics discussed were: (1) (1) Growth Concerns; (2) King County Transportation Funding Issues, and (3) Focal Point and Committee Changes.

New member Carl Buchholz, representing the Ravensdale Community Area, was sworn in as the Area Council's sixteenth Councilperson completing all open positions. Welcome Carl!

### **Growth Concerns**

The City of Covington recently released a Draft Environmental Impact Statement (DEIS) for the Hawk Subarea property (located just outside our southwest border on the north side of the city, west of Cedar Creek park, and SE of SR-18). From a preliminary assessment there will be obvious impacts to our communities, primarily through increased traffic, and potential impacts to the Tahoma School District, already plagued by overcrowding.

The DEIS's Alternate 3 calls for 1,500 homes that will put ~2,600 more vehicles on our roads (less than the Black Diamond Master-Planned Developments (BD MPDs), whose 6,000 homes will add ~10,000 more vehicles, but cumulatively a major problem). There also is planned 850,000 sq ft of commercial space (also a little less than the 1.1 M sq ft of the BD MPDs). Plus, up to 60-ft tall buildings.

The Area Council is concerned there will be major impacts to SR-516, SR-18, SR-169--the three backbones of our area's transportation infrastructure, and many local roads in between. This is evidenced by the near-failing and failing Intersection Level of Service (LOS) numbers in the DEIS's traffic assessment.

The Area Council voted to pursue a detailed review of the DEIS and prepare and submit substantive comments. Four of the Area Council's Standing Committees--Flood Control/Surface Water Management, Growth Management, Natural Resources/Parks, and Transportation Committees--will each work in their respective areas. The full Area Council will review, approve, and submit Final comments by the August 26 deadline.

### **King County Transportation Funding Issues**

The Area Council's Transportation Committee has initiated a project to review King County roads funding and usage to propose a better model to ensure unincorporated area road infrastructure is sustainable in the long run.

Currently, the largest component of funding for King County roads, such as the Issaquah-Hobart-Ravensdale-Black Diamond Rd, comes from property taxes levied on unincorporated area residents. However, these roads are used by both unincorporated area and city residents. Clearly, County roads are suffering from ever-increasing wear and tear without sufficient revenue streams from all users.

Due to its broad scope this effort will include working with representatives from both the Four Creeks and Upper Bear Creek Unincorporated Area Councils.

### **Focal Point Changes**

The Area Council's School District Affairs focal point monitors activities and attends meetings of the Tahoma School Board. Sue Neuner volunteered to be our new Focal Point. The Area Council's Human Services focal point monitors activities and attends meetings of King County human and social services departments and private organizations. Todd Mitchell volunteered to be our new Focal Point.

### **Committee Changes**

With the addition of several new members the Area Council decided to review and expand its committee rosters. The following includes changes made: Outreach/Survey/Election -- Prepare and execute bi-annual Area Council Elections and Citizens' Advisory Survey. Public outreach was added to the Committee's responsibilities. Lorraine Blacklock and Anne Meis joined the committee.

**By-Laws** — Reviews current by-laws and in conjunction with the entire Area Council, identify any item/issue needing update, or change, and drafting proposed language. Reviews and revises voting precincts that define Council Districts every four years. Susan Harvey left to attend to other committee duties and Rhys Sterling joined the committee.

**Train Show** — Defines Council support requirements and recruits and implements activities necessary to conduct train show. Craig Duckering and Susan Harvey joined the committee.

**Flood Control/Surface Water Management** — Study King County flood control and surface water management issues, assess current status of policies and fees. Tara Larson left to attend to other committee duties and Todd Mitchell and Sue Neuner joined the committee.

**Growth Management** — Monitor County land-use decisions, zoning, and we and enacted ordinances. Susan Harvey left to attend to other committee duties and Lorraine Blacklock, Craig Duckering, and Rhys Sterling joined the committee.

**Natural Resources/Parks** — Study regional parks, historic landmarks, natural habitats, water quality, wastewater, and solid waste. Tara Larson and Bev Tonda left to attend to other committee duties and Carl Buchholz, Chuck Meis, and Rhys Sterling joined the committee.

**Transportation** — Investigate the area's transportation problems and offer potential path towards mitigation. Rob Morris left to attend to other committee duties and Carl Buchholz and Lorraine Blacklock joined the committee.

### **Next Area Council Meeting**

The Area Council's next monthly meeting will held Monday, September 9, from 7:00 - 9:00 PM at the Fire Station at 231st St & SR-169. Meetings are held the first non-holiday 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 government officials in attendance.

### **Area Council Information**

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. 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.

**\*\*\* NOTE \*\*\*** If you live in the Tahoma School District outside the City of Maple Valley, you are eligible to become a member of the Area Council. Rural Area citizens interested in applying can mail a brief letter of interest to GMVUAC, P.O. Box 101, Maple Valley, WA 98038 or e-mail [gmvac\\_chair@hotmail.com](mailto:gmvac_chair@hotmail.com).