

September 2013

Emergency and Disaster Preparation

by Peter Rimbos, Corresponding Secretary

On Monday, September 9, the Greater Maple Valley Unincorporated Area Council held its regular monthly meeting. Topics discussed were: (1) King County's Emergency Management Plan and (2) Tahoma School District Bond Measure.

Emergency Management Plan

Rich Tokarzewski, Plans Manager from the King County Emergency Management Office, spoke on the county's Comprehensive Emergency Management Plan (CEMP). The CEMP, which details who does what during emergencies, is used by County officials and departments in mitigating, preparing for, responding to, and recovering from natural and technological disasters.

The CEMP includes: Identification of hazards; assessment of vulnerabilities; and planning for regional and catastrophic disasters, evacuations, mass care and feeding, and hazardous materials accidents.

The Emergency Management Office also deals with the procedures to follow; training of emergency management personnel; identification of emergency equipment; and practice exercises in preparation for emergencies and disasters.

[More information can be found here.](#)

Tahoma School District Bond Measure

Superintendent Mike Maryanski discussed the upcoming \$195 million construction bond measure. An additional \$20 million will be matched by the State resulting in a total of \$215 million. The 20-yr bonds would cost property owners \$1.47 per \$1,000 of assessed valuation above the current tax rate. The owner of a home valued at \$300,000 would pay about \$441 a year more than the current tax.

Mr. Maryanski stated the construction bond measure would result in a new four-year Tahoma High School, a remodeled Lake Wilderness Elementary School, and modifications to other schools, all of which would relieve the district's severe overcrowding.

The new high school for grades 9-12 will be built on 35 acres being purchased from King County in what is commonly called the "Donut Hole" along SR-516. The State Legislature approved a \$4 million grant to aid in the land purchase.

When the new high school opens the existing eight schools will be reconfigured to eliminate most portables. Plans for the new high school include partnerships with local community colleges, as well as evening adult learning opportunities. Tentative opening of the new high school would be slated for the 2017-2018 school year.

The construction bond measure will be on the November ballot.

Growth Concerns

On August 26 the Area Council submitted a detailed set of comments on the City of Covington's Northern Gateway Study Hawk Property Subarea Draft Planned Action Environmental Impact Statement (DEIS). The Hawk Property Subarea encompasses approximately 212 acres located in the northern portion of the City of Covington abutting SR-18 on its northwest boundary. It contains both land within the city limits and land in unincorporated King County, the latter of which directly abuts the Area Council's southwest boundary just west of Cedar Creek Park. Three Alternatives are under consideration: Alternative 1 or "no action" maintains the status quo--gravel pit and Tar Plant. Alternative 2 would add 1,000 homes and 680,000 sq ft of commercial development. Alternative 3 would add 1,500 homes and 850,000 sq ft of commercial development. Both Alternatives 2 and 3 would be Master Planned Developments (MPDs). The Master Developer would be YarrowBay.

The Area Council identified impacts to our local communities, primarily through increased traffic, and potential impacts to the Tahoma School District, already plagued by overcrowding (see above). There will be major impacts to SR-516 and SR-169--the two 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.

In particular, assumptions made in the transportation assessment were found to be unrealistic (e.g., the expansion of SR-516 up to five to seven lanes, with no plan or funding identified). In addition, it was assumed there will be full build-out and mitigation of the Black Diamond

MPDs, whose traffic assessments were found wanting by the City's Hearing Examiner and all future phases are undergoing new traffic modeling and analyses.

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 to maintain them from all users.

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

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, October 1, 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.greatermaplevalleyareacouncil.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.

