

February 2014

County Property Tax Assessments

by Peter Rimbos, Area Council Corresponding Secretary

On Monday, February 3, 2014, the Greater Maple Valley Unincorporated Area Council (GMVUAC) held its first regular monthly meeting of the new year. Topics discussed were: (1) Coordination with the City of Maple Valley; (2) King County Property Tax Assessments; and (3) King County Transportation Concurrency Ordinance.

Maple Valley City Council Visit

Maple Valley Deputy Mayor and Councilman, Sean Kelly, and Councilwoman, Erin Weaver, discussed potential areas of interest between the Maple Valley City Council and the Area Council. Several mutual areas of interests were identified: Transportation, Comprehensive Planning, and Community Events.

King County Property Tax Assessments

King County Chief Deputy Assessor, Tre' Maxie, and Phillip Sit, Communication and Outreach Coordinator, discussed property assessments and taxes.

The Department of Assessments establishes property values, conducts on-site inspections, and develops comparable sales of similar properties and comparisons of select properties.

Washington operates under a "revenue-based" property tax system in which taxing districts, such as fire, library and school districts, submit their annual adopted budgets to the County Assessor who has the responsibility to set the levy rate that is necessary to meet the adopted budgets regardless of assessed values.

Mr. Maxie reviewed market trends for commercial and residential properties across King County and in our local area. Depending upon where one lives, the specific taxes levied in an area, and local real estate values, it is possible that, while the appraised value of one's home has decreased, one's taxes have increased. That is because about half of one's property tax is determined by voted-approved local levies for schools, parks, EMS and fire/rescue, etc. If these levies stay the same or increase from the year before, one's property taxes may increase.

Seventeen cents of every property tax dollar supports the King County General Fund. The other 83 cents are divided between the State, cities and other local jurisdictions. There are 163 local taxing districts in King County. Break downs among levies are included in one's tax bill.

Property tax bills for 2014 will be mailed out on February 14. The first half property tax portion will be due on April 30. Appeals can be filed online. For more information please visit: <http://www.kingcounty.gov/Assessor.aspx>

King County Transportation Concurrency Ordinance

The Area Council discussed King County's annual update to its Transportation Concurrency Management (TCM) Program. Concurrency means transportation facilities must be able to accommodate trips created by new development for the development to occur: "...local jurisdictions must adopt and enforce ordinances which prohibit development approval if the development causes the level of service on a locally owned transportation facility to decline below the standards adopted in the transportation element of the comprehensive plan..." (RCW 36.70A.070(6)(b)).

The County prepares Concurrency Maps that divide the unincorporated area into 25 "Travel Sheds" that are meant to look at traffic flows in an area. The concept is analogous to watersheds which include water flowing through tributaries, streams, and rivers.

Our Transportation Committee studied the proposed update and developed a set of comments for full Area Council review and approval. While the Area Council fully supports the County's TCM Program, it does have concern with one of the major elements of the proposed update: Travel Shed Splitting. The proposed change calls for separate evaluation of Urban and Rural areas within the same travel shed. Such separate concurrency evaluation could be counterproductive by allowing approval of more development within travel sheds that have urban areas, even though the vehicle trips generated by those urban areas will affect the rural areas of the same travel shed. This appears to defeat the laudable purpose of using the travel shed concept to recognize the interwoven traffic patterns across jurisdictional lines.

Because the proposed change could allow more development than the road infrastructure can accommodate--directly contrary to the GMA's dictates, the Area Council voted to approve its Transportation Committee's comments and submit them officially submit to the King County Council, which soon will be taking up an Ordinance on the TCM Program update.

New Member

The Area Council welcomed new member Nikki Long from the Francis Community Area. Nikki has property management experience from her professional life. Due to her keen interests in growth and transportation issues, Nikki joined both the Area Council's Growth Management and Transportation Committees.

Next Area Council Meeting

The Area Council's next monthly meeting will be held Monday, March 6, 2014, from 7:00 - 9:00 PM at the Fire Station at SE corner of 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.

