

March 2014

Urban Facilities in the Rural Area

by Peter Rimbos, Corresponding Secretary

On Monday, March 3, the Area Council held its first regular monthly meeting of the new year. Topics discussed were: (1) King County Regional Stormwater Retention Facilities and (2) Puget Sound Regional Council's Transportation 2040 Update.

Regional Stormwater Retention Facilities

Over the past month the Area Council's Growth Management Committee and Flood Control & Surface Water Management Committee jointly developed proposed revisions to King County Code 21A.08.060. This code section addresses zoning for "regional surface water flow control and water quality facilities." The proposed language will maintain King County's prerogative to permit siting such Stormwater Retention Facilities in the Rural Area, but ensure such facilities only serve the Rural Area and not large adjacent cities.

King County and Master Planned Developer YarrowBay jointly drafted a Development Agreement for 77-unit clustered subdivision on 394 acres immediately due west of the City of Black Diamond and due south of Horseshoe Lake in the Rural Area. The Area Council's interest here was not the subdivision itself, but rather the establishment of a ~40-ac footprint "Regional Stormwater Retention Facility" in the Rural Area to primarily serve (90%) the adjacent proposed Master Planned Developments in Black Diamond, as well as the precedent it could set throughout the County.

On February 3 the King County Council passed Ordinance 2013-0481 approving the aforementioned Development Agreement over the Oral and Written objections of Rural Area citizens who live near the proposed subdivision and retention facility, Black Diamond Citizens, the Black Diamond Mayor and City Council, and the Area Council. This compelled the Area Council to pursue revisions to the King County Code that governs retention facilities. Our proposed revisions ensure the integrity of the Rural Area, while still providing King County with the flexibility to site Retention Facilities in the Rural Area to serve the Rural Area.

The Area Council approved proposed changes and will submit same to the King County Council with followup contacts to Council member Chiefs of Staff.

Transportation 2040 Update

The Area Council's Transportation Committee, with the help of Four Creeks Unincorporated Area Council members, conducted a comprehensive review of the Puget Sound Regional Council's (PSRC's) Transportation 2040 Update (developed and released every 4 years).

The PSRC is the regional planning organization for the four-county central Puget Sound region. It conducts regional planning for transportation, land use and economic development, under authority embodied in state and federal laws. PSRC maintains a common vision for the region's future, expressed through three connected major activities: VISION 2040--growth strategy, Transportation 2040--long-range transportation plan, and the Prosperity Partnership--economic strategy. PSRC also distributes about \$160 million a year to transportation projects and provides regional data for planning.

Transportation 2040 lays out a balanced set of investments and strategies to accommodate growth and meet the region's long-range transportation needs. The plan includes investments in bike and pedestrian facilities, local and regional transit, auto and passenger ferries, city and county roads, and state highways. Its goal is to reduce congestion and improve mobility for people and freight, within a balanced financial strategy, and while protecting the region's environment. The plan's investments are focused on maintaining and preserving the existing system, enhancing safety and security, improving efficiency, and prioritizing investments in strategic capacity.

The Area Council fully supports the PSRC's efforts to ensure our region stays on track to develop a sustainable transportation system and infrastructure to meet the needs of people and business for the long term. We find the Transportation 2040 Update provides an excellent framework to ensure the impacts of future growth on our transportation infrastructure is handled in a sustainable manner. This will ensure a good quality of life and vibrant economy. The movement to use-based revenue system makes sense and we support its implementation. However, we remain concerned with followthrough and consistency among planning, funding, and implementation.

The objectives for a sustainable transportation infrastructure and a balanced financial plan appear sound. However, to achieve both, it must be ensured the cost of the whole system is known and plans beyond developing project priority lists be identified to create financial balance.

Also, with the apparent focus on the "regional" transportation system, we remain concerned sufficient planning is focussed on rural local and collector roads. The discussion of rural roads focuses on corridors and arterials, but doesn't adequately address local rural roads, which are the vast majority of rural public roads. Also, it doesn't directly address the issue of urban use of rural roads, which is partially the cause of King County shortfalls in maintaining its road infrastructure in the Rural Area.

The Area Council approved a final set of comments and will submit same to the PSRC and King County officials by the March 10 Public Comment deadline.

Next Area Council Meeting

The Area Council's next monthly meeting will held Monday, April 7, 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.