

August 2015

August Special Meeting: The Rural Economy

by Peter Rimbo, Corresponding Secretary

On Monday, August 24, the Area Council held a special meeting outside of its regular first Monday of the month schedule. Guest speakers were Ivan Miller King County Comprehensive Plan (KCCP) Update Manager and John Taylor of King County's Dept. of Natural Resources and Parks (DNRP). Major topics of discussion were: Environment and Economic Development issues related to the 2016 major update to the King County Comprehensive Plan (KCCP).

Rural Economic Strategies

The King County Council approved an update to the Rural Economic Strategies (RES) several months ago. Mr. John Taylor of King County's DNRP provided an overview and discussed its key elements.

King County, as the local government provider for people who live and work in the Rural Area, is committed to fostering and improving economic opportunities in this area. The County updated the RES to both meet evolving economic conditions and to ensure implementation of KCCP policies relating to the rural economy.

The mission of the RES is to help sustain and enhance the long-term economic viability of the Rural Area and Natural Resource Lands consistent with the unique character and lifestyle of rural King County. Goals include: Engaging farmers, foresters, rural business owners, and rural communities in an on-going dialogue; Advocate for and partner with programs that promote the economic viability of existing and start-up businesses in: Agriculture, Forestry, Equestrian, Home-Based Business, and Tourism/Recreation; Promote opportunities for rural residents to both live and work in the Rural Area and on natural resource lands; and Identify new state revenue authority to fund the needs of rural roadways in support of the rural economy.

The RES update provides specific strategies for the rural economy to implement policies identified in Chapter 9--Economic Development of the King County Comprehensive Plan (under review by the Area Council, see below). The Area Council supports these strategies.

King County Comprehensive Plan Update

The Area Council discussed its fifth and final input for this stage of the 2016 Four-Year King County Comprehensive Plan (KCCP) Update--the Public Review Draft (PRD) being prepared by the King County Executive's Office for release for comment in early November.

Policies in the existing (2012) KCCP Chapter 4--Environment were reviewed by the Area Council's Environment Committee, which developed a set of Recommendations for discussion by the full Area Council. These included: Use of in-lieu fees for mitigation; Private property owner compensation; Adjacent wetland protection; and Cost-effective solutions for failing septic systems.

The Rural Economic Strategies (RES), though not a part of the KCCP Update, are a key foundation for KCCP Chapter 9--Economic Development. Consequently, the Area Council's Economic Committee reviewed the RES and developed a set of Comments, which included: Economic opportunity and growth through: (a) encouraging open and diverse participation; (b) identifying needs; and (c) supporting a problem-solving innovative culture to secure local employment and community building. Our guest, John Taylor, responded to some of these including much better support to the agricultural community.

The Area Council approved a final set of Questions/Concerns/Recommendations related to all the above-mentioned Policies. These will be submitted to the King County Executive's Office for consideration of inclusion in the KCCP Update's PRD.

Citizens can submit comments to: COMPPLAN@kingcounty.gov; follow the Update: <http://www.kingcounty.gov/depts/executive/psb/regional-planning/king-county-comprehensive-plan.aspx>; and provide comments to the Area Council at its monthly meetings.

Next Area Council Meeting

The Area Council's next monthly meeting will be held on Monday, September 14, from 7:00 - 9:00 PM at the Fire Station on the southeast corner of the intersection of SE 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 an opportunity to voice issues of concern to Area Council members and

government officials in attendance. Your Area Council serves 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: www.greatermaplevalleyareacouncil.org.