

**December 2015**

## **Growth and Transportation Comments to County**

by Peter Rimbo, Corresponding Secretary

On Monday, December 7, the Area Council held its regular monthly meeting. Topics discussed included: (1) Potential Fire District Changes; (2) Comments on the 2016 Major 4-Yr King County Comprehensive Plan Update; and (3) Citizens' Survey / Area Council Election / Newsletter.

### **Fire District Changes**

Fire District 43 Chief Brad Doerflinger discussed potential "Contract for Service" with the Kent Fire District being considered by the Board of Commissioners, which will meet on January 7, 2016, to decide on any consolidation.

A Steering Committee--consisting of 16 local citizens, 2 Commissioners, and 2 Fire Chief Officers--was formed in September to discuss three potential options to fund Fire District 43's future operational and capital needs: (1) Continue merger conversations with the Kent Regional Fire Authority seeking economies of scale and shared resources (existing stations would remain open and in service); (2) Remain independent and present to the voters a Fire Benefit Charge (FBC); and (3) Remain independent and continue current funding mechanisms.

Currently Fire District 43 is funded through periodic Levies and Bond measures, which are based on assessed valuation and have ceilings and other limitations that cause available funding to vary annually. Area Council members asked Chief Doerflinger to describe the FBC under consideration. A FBC requires a Public vote with a 60% majority needed for passage, lasts for 6 years, and only applies to improvements (i.e., not vacant land). Currently 10 of 23 fire districts in King County use the FBC.

Chief Doerflinger stated under such a system the FBS would be coupled with a charge based on assessed valuation, but at a lower rate than is used currently. He described the FBC as a "fairer" system and one in which funding is stabilized year to year, the District determines the revenue needed, and there would be no Bond measures to fund capital needs.

Should the Board of Commissioners vote to not consider a merger with the Kent Fire District at its January 7 meeting, then the other options will be studied further.

### **King County Comprehensive Plan Update**

The Area Council's four subject-matter Committees (Economic, Environment, Growth Management, and Transportation) have been studying the Public Review Draft (PRD) of the 2016 King County Comprehensive Plan (KCCP) Update released on November 6 (Public comments are due by January 6, 2016).

The Growth Management Committee presented its draft Comments for full Area Council approval. These dealt with: (1) Receiving sites for Transfer of Development Rights; (2) Unsuitability of siting urban-serving facilities in the Rural Area; (3) Unsuitability of Demonstration Projects in the Rural Area; and (4) Public participation in future Cedar Hills Subarea Planning. Following deliberation the Area Council approved a final set of Growth Management comments to be submitted to the the King County Executive's Office.

The Transportation Committee presented its draft Comments for full Area Council approval. These dealt with: (1) Need for County-wide Road Networks that know no jurisdictional boundaries to address the rural road usage / funding imbalance; (2) Transportation Concurrency and the overdevelopment / poor infrastructure imbalance; (3) lack of sustainable Transportation funding; and (4) Use of the Transportation Needs Report to identify projects for the Mitigation Payment System. Again, following deliberation the Area Council approved a final set of Transportation comments to be submitted to the the King County Executive's Office.

Approved Comments will be submitted for consideration of inclusion in the final KCCP Update to be submitted by the Executive to the King County Council for review and approval on March 1, 2016. As done throughout the 2016 KCCP Update process (which started in February), all Area Council Comments are posted on our web site's Home page under "Current News."

### **Citizens' Survey / Area Council Election / Newsletter**

The Area Council's Biannual Ballot and Citizens' Survey was mailed on Friday, December 4, to all registered voters (~11,000) in the unincorporated area of the Tahoma School District. For the first time, there is the option to complete and submit both your ballot and Survey online. The Area Council expresses its thanks to citizens in advance for taking a few minutes to vote for members of your Area Council and to respond to the short Survey and some key issues.

### **Area Council Officer Elections**

Five officers comprise the Area Council's Executive Committee with each serving a 1-yr term (January - December). Steve Hiester was re-elected Chair, Rhys Sterling was elected Vice-Chair, Sue Neuner was elected Treasurer, Lorraine Blacklock was elected Recording Secretary,

and Peter Rimbos was re-elected Corresponding Secretary.

**Next Area Council Meeting**

Monday, January 4, 7:00 - 9:00 PM, Fire Station (SE corner of SE 231st St & SR-169 intersection). 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.