

**January 2016**

## **Economic and Environment Comments to County**

by Peter Rimbo, Corresponding Secretary

On Monday, January 4, the Area Council held its regular monthly meeting. Topics discussed included:

- 1) King County Stormwater Management
- 2) King County Comprehensive Plan Update
- 3) Area Council Ballot/Citizens' Survey
- 4) Seattle Times Letter to the Editor; and
- 5) Letter to Fire District #43 Board of Commissioners.

### **King County Stormwater Management**

John Taylor and Tricia Davis of King County Dept. of Natural Resources, discussed managing polluted Stormwater generated by rainfall runoff from land and impervious areas (streets, parking lots, building rooftops) that could adversely affect water quality.

In vegetated areas (forests, fields, wetlands) rainwater seeps into the ground. When rain falls on paved and other hard surfaces, it runs off and is conveyed by pipes and ditches directly to County lakes, wetlands, and streams. Pesticides, herbicides, and fertilizers are washed off from landscaped areas, and soils are washed away from construction sites. Any substance found on the ground can wind up in stormwater runoff.

The over 2,100 miles of County roads result in toxic runoff into ravines, creeks, rivers, and lakes. Although most of the commuter traffic on those roads comes from cities, those residents pay only city SWM fees. The County is looking at regional solutions and is working with the State and Cities on how best to address such regional problems.

Later this year the King County Council will decide on any potential changes to Stormwater Management (SWM) fees. Any SWM fee change would take effect in 2017.

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

The Area Council has studied the Public Review Draft (PRD) of the 2016 King County Comprehensive Plan (KCCP) Update. In December Growth Management and Transportation comments were submitted to King County.

The Environment Committee presented comments dealing with: (1) Use of State Environmental Policy Act (SEPA); (2) Continued access to Taylor Mountain Park; and (3) Concerns with allowing siting and approval of urban or largely urban-serving facilities in Unincorporated or Rural Areas as a tradeoff to secure Open Space. Following deliberation a final set of Environment comments were approved.

The Economic Committee presented comments dealing with: (1) Need for a County Economic Development Organization; (2) Emphasize home-based businesses; (3) Recognize start-up businesses; and (4) Consider aquaculture and fisheries in the rural economy. Following deliberation a final set of Environment comments were approved.

Area Council comments will be considered for inclusion in the final KCCP Update to be submitted by the Executive to the King County Council for review and approval on March 1. All Area Council comments will be posted on our web site's Home page under "Current News" and on our "Committee" pages.

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

The deadline for submission of Ballot/Surveys is Friday, January 22. Citizens can use fill-out and mail back the Ballot/Survey they received in the mail. Possibly the easiest way to complete the Ballot/Survey online at: <https://goo.gl/nf7nGn>

### **Seattle Times Letter to the Editor**

On Sunday, January 3, the Seattle Times published an Editorial: "Reject change of King County's urban-growth boundary," which called for preserving the integrity of the Urban-Growth Boundary (UGB). The Area Council agreed on a letter to be submitted to the Editor commending the Times for addressing one of most important quality of life issues facing us today and into the future.

The Area Council has diligently worked for nearly 40 years to "keep the Rural Area rural." Unfortunately, since the 1990 passage of the nationally acclaimed Growth Management Act, there has been continual pressure exerted along the UGB fringe.

Endless sprawl hurts everyone. It reduces our quality of life. It causes the need for endless roads to be built and maintained. It requires further extension of expensive infrastructure, such as sewers and water mains. It would result in a much larger tax burden on both people and

businesses. Area Council Citizen Survey respondents have continually called for maintaining the integrity of the UGB.

### **Letter to Fire District #43 Board of Commissioners**

The Area Council agreed on a letter to be sent to the Fire District #43 (Maple Valley Fire & Safety) Board of Commissioners strongly opposing a merger with Fire District #37 (Kent), because of the loss of local control.

Bi-annual citizen surveys continually show support for local control for both Fire and School Districts. This system provides checks and balances in the form of voter approval, which could be outweighed in a larger district. Unfortunately, a merger with Kent (possibly combined with a merger with Tukwila and Des Moines) would remove local control, which the Area Council views as paramount.

### **Next Area Council Meeting**

Monday, February 1, 2016, 7 - 9 PM, Fire Station (SE corner of SE 231st St & SR-169 intersection). Meetings are held the first non-holiday Monday of each month. An opening Public Comment period 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](http://www.greatermaplevalleyareacouncil.org).