

June 2016

King County Comprehensive Plan by Peter Rimbos, Corresponding Secretary

On Monday, June 6, the Area Council held its regular monthly meeting. Topics included: (1) King County Comprehensive Plan Major Update Comments and (2) King County Council's Marijuana Moratorium.

Public Comment

Bill Passig expressed deep concerns about the logjams on the Cedar River and the safety problems they present to the Public. Bill was informed of two June 8 meetings being held by the King County Department of Natural Resources and Parks, Water and Land Resources Division in Mercer Island on the subject. Key contact is: Laird O'Rollins at laird.orollins@kingcounty.gov or 206-477-4790.

King County Comprehensive Plan Comments

The King County Council's Transportation, Economic, & Environment (TrEE) Committee is reviewing the King County Executive's proposed 2016 KCCP 4-yr major update submitted to it on March 1. The Area Council's major committees have been reviewing the Executive's proposal and developing sets of Written Comments. The Area Council has decided to submit its comments to the TrEE Committee in major pieces: Transportation (submitted on May 3), Growth Management, Economic Development, and Environment, which also lines up with the Area Council's major committees.

The Area Council's Growth Management Committee presented a set of comments which addressed several issues including: Opposition to siting of urban or largely urban-serving facilities in the in Rural Area; Recognition that legal parcels of less than 5 ac shall be allowed to drill private wells; Opposition to siting of Marijuana growing operations, processing/manufacturing facilities in Rural Area residential neighborhoods, and support for the elimination of the Reserve Silica Demonstration Project. Following discussion, the full Area Council agreed to a final set of comments to submit.

Written Comments under development by the Area Council's Environment Committee and Economic Development Committee Committee will be discussed at the Area Council's July 11 monthly meeting.

All the Written Comments agreed to will be submitted to the King County Council's TrEE Committee and be posted on this website.

Marijuana Moratorium

Based on concerns expressed by many, many residents the King County Council's TrEE Committee recently passed a 4-mo moratorium on permitting of Marijuana production operations and processing facilities in the Rural Area. During that time it is contemplating proposed Ordinance 2016-0236 related to zoning of same. The Area Council's Growth Management Committee, which in May was asked to research the issues related to siting of such businesses and to draft a letter to the TrEE Committee for Area Council review. The Growth Management Committee completed its tasks and presented its draft letter, which identified three potential solutions: (1) A full ban in the Rural Area (as currently exists in the urban unincorporated area); (2) A zoning code change to require a minimum of 20 or even 40 acres (current code minimum is 4 1/2 ac); or (3) Site only in the Agricultural Production District and Commercial/Industrial areas.

After review and modification, the Area Council voted to submit the letter to the TrEE Committee. The letter, besides offering potential solutions, identified some of the key issues voiced by Rural Area citizens at several standing-room-only meetings over the past two years: Public Safety following years of continuous cuts to the Sheriff's Office; Lack of credible Code Enforcement, Ability and integrity of Onsite Septic Systems to handle special chemicals, etc.; Odor, which can be overwhelming; and Noise often associated with large fan systems to control odor.

The letter also details how neighboring counties handle Marijuana businesses. Snohomish and Kitsap Counties ban Marijuana businesses from their Rural Areas and Pierce County bans such businesses from its Unincorporated Area. Consequently, the letter states the following: "King County, which has a far more residential Rural Area (mostly residential housing, not farms) than any of its three neighboring counties, appears to be an outlier, as it has even more reason to not permit Marijuana businesses in its Rural Area."

Next Area Council Meeting

Monday, July 11, from 7:00 - 9:00 PM, at the Fire Station located at the SE corner of SE 231st St & SR-169 intersection. All members of the Public are welcome.

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.