



Issaquah-Hobart Road Traffic Issues

by Peter Rimbos, GMVUAC Corresponding Secretary

On Monday, November 4, the Area Council held its monthly meeting. Our Guest Speaker was retired Traffic Planner Mike Birdsall who presented recently generated information on traffic counts and patterns at key intersections along Issaquah-Hobart Road. Other major topics of discussion included: (1) Tahoma School District ; (2) King County Comprehensive Plan; (3) Proposed King County Adult Beverage Ordinance; and (4) Proposed Cedar Hills Landfill Expansion.

Tahoma School District

Tahoma School Board Member Val Paganelli provided an update on the District's search for a new Superintendent. The Board has approved retired Tahoma School District Superintendent Mike Maryanski as interim Superintendent through June 2020, and will accelerate its search for a permanent Superintendent.

Val also mentioned two funding measures to be presented to the Public for vote in February 2020: (1) *Education, Programs & Operations* levy for 4 yr at a rate of \$2/\$1000 Assessed Value to provide funds that support people, programs, supplies and equipment either not funded or not fully funded by State education dollars (it replaces a 2018-voter-approved 2-yr levy) and (2) a *Technology* levy for 4 yr at an initial rate of \$0.45/\$1000 Assessed Value with an intended reduction to \$0.38/\$1000 Assessed Value.

The Board will review funding annually to assure levy amounts are needed in conjunction with any state funding adjustments, assessed property value changes and district student population growth. A ten-year student housing committee began its work in October and will report its findings and recommendations to the board in the spring.

Issaquah-Hobart Road

Mike Birdsall discussed his recently completed traffic pattern assessments. Closing the Landsburg Bridge for renovation in August significantly increased congestion on SR-169 through Maple Valley, as bridge users shifted away from 276th Ave SE en route northward to Issaquah-Hobart Rd. Mike independently conducted traffic counts before and after the bridge closure, to trace the impacts of closing the bridge.

Closing the bridge was found to remove ~75% of the traffic normally traveling through rural Hobart and Ravensdale via the continuous route variously named as Issaquah-Hobart Rd, 276th Ave SE, Landsburg Rd, Ravensdale Way, and Ravensdale Black Diamond Rd. Many of the trips diverted appear to come from areas even south of Black Diamond, as far as Enumclaw. The remainder come from the cities of Black Diamond, Maple Valley, and parts of Covington. Destinations at the north-end of the corridor include Bellevue, Redmond, and Sammamish as well as Issaquah.

Although thought of as a rural road serving rural needs, this route nowadays serve more regional-length trips than local trips. It appears that many of the regional through trips would preferably use SR-169 through Maple Valley, if that route were not so congested.

This brief study arose out of the concern for the already deteriorating rural area quality of life along the route through Hobart and Ravensdale. Traffic using that route will no doubt further increase with future development activity, especially the 6,000-plus homes planned by Black Diamond, because there are no plans for systematic expansion of SR 169 through Maple Valley.

However, the study findings uncovered a still greater problem that the underlying regional growth issues will affect many other roads in the area too. Growth Targets set by the Puget Sound Regional Council (PSRC) and agreed-to by cities indicate upwards of 50% traffic growth in Southeast King County due to rising population and jobs in cities by 2040 (PSRC, Vision 2040) and still more by 2050 (PSRC, Vision 2050). It should be noted that those Growth Targets do not include Black Diamond's planned 6,000-plus homes! The road capacity improvements currently funded or even merely proposed in Southeast King County would provide far less new capacity than needed to serve that amount of forecast traffic growth.

Mike stated current plans are not balanced and not viable in the long run. Much work is needed to identify a balanced land use / transportation solution in Southeast King County. Alternative strategies may include transit and other modal alternatives to new roads, lifestyle changes perhaps linked to climate change, and potentially reducing the land-use Growth Targets as well, if capacity increases cannot be assured to serve such growth by any combination of roads, transit, etc.

More information can be found on the Area Council's Transportation Committee web page: <http://gmvuac.org/transportation/> under Cedar River Landsburg Bridge Construction Closure Impact Study.

King County Comprehensive Plan

The Area Council and all of King County's Rural Area Unincorporated Area Councils (UACs)/Unincorporated Area Associations (UAAs) continue their joint review of the King County Executive's Recommended 2020 Mid-Point Update to the 2016 Comprehensive Plan ("*2020 Update*") transmitted to the County Council on September 30. The 2020 update—the first four-year midpoint review in the new 8-yr major update cycle—serves as a bridge between the 2016 and 2024 major updates. Final adoption by the King County Council will be by June 30, 2020.

The Area Council also discussed submitting an annual request called a "*Docket Item Request*" to amend the KC Code so that any "*site-specific rezone*" cannot be reviewed and considered during any KCCP update, but rather go through a *Type 4 permit review process* before a Hearing Examiner, along with a Public Hearing, for a recommendation to the King County Council regarding any changes to the KCCP and zoning. A second "*Docket Item Request*" discussed is to have the King County Council prepare and publish responses to Public Comments on KCCP, updates—as does the King County Executive already does. The Area Council decided to review and vote on both proposed "*Docket Item Requests*" at its December 2 Regular Monthly Meeting.

For more information please see the Area Council's KCCP web pages: <http://gmvuac.org/hot-off-the-presses/> and <http://gmvuac.org/kc-comprehensive-plan/>. Interested members of the Public can contact the Area Council at: info@gmvuac.org to connect with the Transportation Committee on this issue.

Proposed King County Adult Beverage Ordinance

The Area Council has led several efforts with many Rural Area UACs/UAA's to submit detailed written comments on the subject ordinance, in light of its potential far-reaching influence and importance. These included to the full King County Council on 6/12/19, its Local Services, Regional Roads & Bridges (LSRR&B) Committee on 11/9/18, and its Planning, Rural Service, & Environment (PRE) Committee on 6/6/17. The King County Council continues to work on its proposed Ordinance, which the Area Council believes still retains many flaws.

The proposed Ordinance, in its current form, will have sweeping long-term consequences throughout King County's Rural Area. The Area Council has heard from many Rural Area citizens who do not want to see Retail Establishments, Event Centers, etc. that will result in major impacts to the rural character and their quality of life. Unfortunately, the proposed Ordinance has gone through so many iterations, which has resulted in unnecessary complexities, flaws, and loopholes. Consequently, the Area Council believes it should be rejected outright and sent back to the County Executive for a fresh start. In fact, the simplest and best solution is to enforce *current* County Code.

The Area Council decided to schedule a Special Meeting to discuss its response to the proposed Ordinance (see Upcoming Area Council Meetings below). All members of the Public are welcome to attend. Concerned members of the Public can contact the Area Council at: info@gmvuac.org to connect with the Growth Management Committee on this issue.

Proposed Cedar Hills Landfill Expansion

Area Council member Hank Haynes discussed environmental and health issues presented by King County's proposed plan to expand the Cedar Hills Landfill (CHLF). He provided members a copy of an informational video he prepared. He graphically depicted the region's geography and geology and indicated the proposed use/expansion plan has impacts that have thus far gone unaddressed and unresolved and are more far-reaching than previously identified.

Area Council Environment Committee member, Kim Brighton, discussed some specific issues such as environmental and health impacts arising from the landfill's location over a portion of an EPA designated sole-source aquifer that supplies water to the Cedar River and its fisheries and also to the KCWD #90 well field used for public water supply; fault lines have not been adequately assessed and mitigation provided; and gas/odor emissions that have not been evaluated for their chemical constituents and effect on area schools (including the TSD Shadow Lake Elementary School located several miles to the southwest). Kim recommended that TSD and members of the public should make and take every effort and opportunity to file complaints with the regional clean air authority and the State DOE every time there is noticeable air quality degradation/odors stemming from the CHLF.

Kim also noted the aerated treatment of leachate has been suspended and the County is merely adding deodorizers to stem objectionable smells from the landfill operation. Kim believes this is inappropriate and complaints have been lodged by neighbors with the government authorities. Kim and neighbors are scheduling future meetings with County and State officials to further discussions regarding the proposed plan as well as alternatives.

Concerned members of the Public can contact the Area Council at: info@gmvuac.org to connect with the Environment Committee on these issues.

Upcoming Area Council Meetings

All regular monthly meetings are held on the first Monday of the month, from 7 - 9:30 PM, at the Maple Valley Fire Station located at the SE corner of SE 231st St & SR-169 intersection (directly across from the Police Precinct). All members of the Public are welcome. Each meeting begins with an open Public Comment period.

Monday, November 18—Special Meeting: Proposed King County Adult Beverage Ordinance.

Monday, December 2—Guest Speaker: TBD.

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 see the Area Council's web site: www.gmvuac.org.

The sixteen-seat Area Council currently has four open seats. If you have an interest in joining, either: (1) Indicate your interest through our Citizens' Survey (click the "Survey" link on our web site's Home page: www.gmvuac.org); (2) Send us an e-mail at: info@gmvuac.org; or (3)

Attend one of our monthly meetings and express such interest for consideration by the Area Council.