



Search and Rescue Facilities

by Peter Rimbos, GMVUAC Corresponding Secretary

The Area Council held its regular monthly meeting virtually on *Monday, July 12* (one week later than the normal first Monday due to the July 4 Holiday). Major topics discussed were: (1) Search and Rescue Facilities; (2) Countywide Planning Policies Update; (3) Erickson Trench-filling; and (4) Area Council Guiding Principles.

Tahoma School District (TSD) Update

TSD Board member and Area Council committee member, Val Paganelli, provided an update. She introduced two of the 2021-22 student school board representatives, S. Sanjay and A. Rana, who joined the meeting.

Graduation and end-of-school-year events were held successfully throughout the district. Students will be returning to full-time, in-person learning in the Fall with mask protocols those mandated by the WA State Department of Health. TSD currently is working on: (1) 2021-22 Budget (public hearing period coming soon); (2) Board member District 2 appointment after resignation of prior member; (3) Housing Committee reconvening in the fall with planned report to the Board early 2022; and (4) Board five-year goals, including equity, mental health, community partnerships, excellence.

Search and Rescue Facilities

King County Department of Local Services (DLS) Permitting Division has issued a Determination of Non-Significance (DNS) on King County Council-proposed Ordinance No. 2021-0163.2, which calls for changing county Code **Title 21A Zoning** with regards to the location of Search and Rescue (SAR) “*training facilities*” in the Rural Area (RA).

The Area Council coordinated and led a team of King County Rural Area Unincorporated Area Councils (UACs) / Unincorporated Area Associations (UAAs) / Organizations [*] to review same and prepare Comments.

While we support SAR and the need for training, that is not the key issue here based on how the proposed Ordinance is written. What is the key issue is that such zoning changes contemplated would open the RA to urban development. To meet SAR needs, that is totally unnecessary. In fact, the SAR facilities contemplated clearly meet the physical descriptions of facilities that should and can be accommodated inside King County’s Urban Growth Area (UGA) or Rural Towns. Thus, a broadly worded Ordinance, as the proposal is, that would apply to any parcel in the RA over 4.5 acres, is unwanted and unnecessary. Rejection of the proposed Ordinance is recommended.

The Area Council voted to approve the Joint Team’s Comment Letter. The letter will be submitted by the Area Council on behalf all the organizations [*] prior to the July 21 deadline and it will posted on the Area Council website’s Correspondence-Letters page: <http://gmvuac.org/letters/>.

[*] : EPCA: Enumclaw Plateau Association; FoSV: Friends of Sammamish Valley; GMVUAC: Greater Maple Valley Area UAC; GV/LHA: Green Valley/Lake Holm Association; HHA: Hollywood Hills Association; SCAR: Soos Creek Area Response; and UBCUAC: Upper Bear Creek UAC.

Countywide Planning Policies (CPPs) Update

The CPPs serve as the guiding principles and policies for all Comprehensive Planning for King County and its Cities. The CPPs, which cover Environment, Development Patterns, Housing, Economy, Transportation, and Public Facilities & Services, currently are undergoing an update.

Over the past 10 months the Area Council has lead a Joint Team of eight Rural Area Unincorporated Area Councils/Associations (UACs/UAs) to review draft policies developed by the King County Executive's Office and an *Interjurisdictional Team*. Our Joint Team prepared and submitted multiple-sets of Comments to King County in 2021 (see: <http://gmvuac.org/countywide-planning-policies/>).

In general, the Joint Team was successful in ensuring the **2021 CPP Update (Update)** properly addresses Rural Area Needs. This includes many of the Amendments that GMPC members offered just prior to its final approval.

The next step is for the King County Council and all the King County Cities to review and approve the **Update** prior to final submittal to PSRC by the end of this year. The Joint Team has drafted Testimony to provide to the King County Council when it takes up approval of the **Update**, expected to be in late August (Mobility & Environment Committee) and early September (full Council).

Erickson Trench-filling

The Area Council discussed endorsing detailed comments prepared by local citizens Michael and Donna Brathovde who have lived near the Erickson site (near Ravensdale) and thoroughly have researched the project's evolution for many, many years, including all the trench-filling that has been authorized and beyond.

Specific concerns include: Past permits and remedies for past problems; Sediment runoff related to any expansion of any of the trenches; Wetland identification and adherence to all buffer requirements; Reclamation/Restoration of the site to forestry use; and Traffic impacts on the already congested SR-169 and the Issaquah-Hobart Rd.

The Area Council voted to submit a Comment Letter by the July 15 deadline to King County Department of Local Services-Permitting Division opposing proposed expansion of the Erickson Trench-filling and endorsing the Brathovde's detailed Comments. The Area Council Comment Letter will posted on our website's Correspondence-Letters page: <http://gmvuac.org/letters/>.

Guiding Principles

There are many overriding issues important to Rural Area residents. The Area Council, in conjunction with members of the Public, as well as other UACs/UAs, over the years has developed and continually updated a list of key issues. The Area Council discussed these and voted to formally document them into a set of *Guiding Principles* that will be used to inform official correspondence:

1. CAPITAL FACILITIES—Do not locate regional capital facilities outside the urban growth area unless it is demonstrated that a non-urban site is the most appropriate location for such a facility. Do not provide urban services in rural areas. Design services for limited access when they are needed to solve isolated health & sanitation problems, so as not to increase development potential of the surrounding rural area. Provide a realistic plan to close the Cedar Hills Regional Landfill.
2. CODE ENFORCEMENT—Prioritize Code Enforcement; Enforce Haul-Route Agreements.
3. INDUSTRIAL FACILITIES—Do not allow Industrial-scale operations including: Materials Processing Facilities (requires change to KC Code 21A.08.080 — *Manufacturing*); Composting Facilities; and Winery/Brewery/Distillery retail tasting facilities.
4. PERMITTING—Tighten “*vesting*” rules for when a permit application is found to be “*complete*.” Do not allow Upzones.
5. PLANNING—Ensure consistency of plans among adjacent jurisdictions (e.g., city and county) as required by the State's Growth Management Act to ensure consistency for connecting routes.

6. CONCURRENCY—Develop, implement, and evaluate concurrency programs and methods that fully consider growth targets, service needs, and level-of-service standards. Work to coordinate rate of future growth in small suburban cities to be concurrent with the provision of adequate capacity on state highways to serve the city-to-city traffic flows. Institute fees for Urban pass-through traffic on County roads.
7. TRANSPORTATION—Replace all existing impact mitigation and concurrency management standards and regulations with a new system based on vehicle-miles-of-travel as a common basis for measurement of development impacts, mitigation, and multi-modal system capacity.

These *Guiding Principles* will be a “*living document*” to be updated as situations change and will be posted on the Area Council website.

Upcoming Area Council Meetings

The next Area Council monthly meeting will be held Monday, August 2. It will be another “*virtual*” meeting via Zoom. Access information will be posted on the Area Council’s website www.gmvuac.org.

The Area Council has begun to discuss when and how to start having some *in-person* meetings again—possibly as early as September, based on State and County COVID guidelines. Once decided, meetings again will be held at the Maple Valley Fire Station—SE corner of SE 231st St & SR-169 intersection across from the Police Precinct.

All regular monthly meetings are held on the *first* Monday of the month (except for Holidays, when they are held on the *second* Monday), from 7 - 9:30 PM. Meeting announcements are published in the *Voice of the Valley*, the Area Council’s website (www.gmvuac.org) and local *NextDoor* platforms. You can also find us on *Facebook*. Each meeting begins with an open Public Comment period.

Area Council Membership

Your Area Council serves as an all-volunteer, locally recognized advisory body to King County on behalf of all rural unincorporated area residents living in the Tahoma School District. The Area Council’s *Vision Statement* is:

“Our community’s Rural Character will be supported by facilitating strong local ties and communication between the public, organizations, and government; promoting locally owned businesses and supporting quality education; protecting the environment, and maintaining landowners’ rights and responsibilities; promoting controlled and well-planned growth with appropriate infrastructure; ensuring proper representation for rural interests and needs; and supporting the health and safety and the privacy of our vibrant community.”

The twelve-seat Area Council currently has three open seats. If you have an interest in joining please send an e-mail to: info@gmvuac.org or attend a monthly meeting and express your interest.

Citizens who are not members of the Area Council or do not live within the Tahoma School District still are eligible to join and serve on any of the Area Council’s three major subject-matter Committees: Environment, Growth Management, or Transportation, as well as the Ad Hoc Economic, Public Relations, and Train Show Committees. The Area Council welcomes your participation. For information on each of these committees please see the Area Council’s website: www.gmvuac.org and use the drop-down menu under *Committees*. Again, if you have an interest in joining any Area Council committees, please send an e-mail to: info@gmvuac.org. Thank you.