



King County Biennial Budget

by Peter Rimbos, GMVUAC Corresponding Secretary

The Area Council held its regular monthly meeting virtually on *Monday, December 6*. Our Guest Speaker was Dwight Dively, Director of the King County Office of Performance, Strategy and Budget, who discussed the County biennial budget. Other major topics discussed were: Area Council Survey; Periodic Reviews of Mining Sites; and Countywide Planning Policies.

Tahoma School District (TSD) Update

TSD Board member, Val Paganelli, provided a summary of recent TSD activities.

The TSD recently honored 16-year Board Director, Tami Henkel, as she is retiring from board service. On December 7 a Special Board meeting will be held at 6 PM to swear in new Director Haley Pendergraft and re-elected Director Val Paganelli. Also to be discussed are site plans for each elementary school in the district under the new site plan format and the district's five-year goals and targets. TSD is monitoring its budget to ascertain impacts due to reduced student enrollment, state apportionment, and Federal (pandemic) funding.

King County Budget

Dwight Dively, Director of the King County Office of Performance, Strategy and Budget, discussed the 2021-2022 County Biennial Budget. King County provides local and regional services to millions of people, with a two-year budget of ~\$12.4 billion, ~15,000 full-time-equivalent employees (most employed in Transit, Criminal Justice, and Public Health), and more than 60 different services. We are about half way through the two-year budget.

The County economy has recovered back to its pre-pandemic level. Metro Transit has recovered due to Federal transit monies and the recovery of sales taxes. Federal COVID relief funds have been very helpful and will cover certain expenses through about the middle of 2022.

For the two-year ~\$12.4 billion budget Major Revenue sources are: Charges for Services—those provided to other jurisdictions such as cities (26%), Taxes (33%), Federal/State/Miscellaneous Revenue (25%), and Capital Revenue (11%). Major Expenditures are: Natural Resources & Parks (25%), Health & Human Services (22%), Metro Transit (17%), and Law, Safety, & Justice (12%).

There are two areas of the budget that fund many of the services received in the Rural Area: *General Fund* and *Roads Fund*. Both continue to face major financial challenges.

General Fund — This is a small part (~21%) of the budget, ~\$1.9 billion. It provides for the traditional functions of a county government—most of which are required by state law. However, revenue sources available to the General Fund are restricted by State law. Major Revenue sources are: Property Tax (41%), Charges for Services (30%), and Sales Tax (15%). Unlike the State or cities, counties are *not* authorized to impose utility or business taxes. Major Expenditures are: Criminal Justice & Public Safety (72%) and General Government (14%). The General Fund has a serious structural financial problem as property tax revenues do not grow fast enough to cover expenses of services. Since 2001, State law has limited the revenue growth in most property taxes, including county General Funds, to 1% per year. In addition, the value of new construction is added to the tax base and

represents ~1% additional growth, depending on economic conditions. Thus, the property tax has not been able to, and cannot, keep up with inflation and population growth.

Roads Fund — This is chronically underfunded due to its revenue structure, with many users of County roads paying little to support them. Changes by the State Legislature will be needed to develop a more comprehensive revenue system. There are no funds available for any expansion of roads. Gas taxes are a relatively flat source of monies with little growth. Approximately half of the vehicles on County roads are from cities or are commercial vehicles. The new Federal infrastructure bill will help the County to work on bridges and road culverts, but that is all. The County has the technology to toll County roads and charge specific users, such as those from the urban areas. This possibly could be done by creating a Transportation Benefit District. However, this presents several problems to implement, since those few County Councilmembers who represent the unincorporated areas also represent urban areas. The Area Council has voiced many concerns about the Roads Fund and for several years and continues to actively work with State Legislators and the County to help resolve the complex revenue issues.

There is no specific budget for the Rural Area as the State Growth Management Act never addressed what would happen once areas within Counties incorporated into Urban Areas taking a large portion of the available tax base with them.

King County agencies are early in the process of preparing the 2023-2024 Proposed Budget. In September of next year the King County Executive will submit his proposed 2023-2024 budget to the King County Council. Public hearing will be held, then in November of next year the King County Council will adopt a final 2023-2024 budget.

For more information, please see: [21-22 ADO-Bi-BudgetExecSummary.pub \(kingcounty.gov\)](#).

Area Council Bi-Annual Survey

A set of 10 questions have been developed. The Survey will go live on the Area Council website (www.gmvuac.org) by the end of the year. The Survey will be anonymous. Residents are encouraged to participate and share their concerns. Results will be tabulated, summarized on the Area Council website, and shared with County agencies.

Periodic Reviews of Mining Sites

The Area Council has determined through a dialogue with the King County Department of Local Services—Permitting Division (DLS-P) that both King County Code **21A.22.50 Periodic review** and King County Comprehensive Plan (KCCP) Policy **R-688** are being mis-interpreted such that periodic reviews of the reclamation of mining sites are *not* being conducted even though all mining permits require a reclamation plan to be executed once final mineral extraction and processing operations cease.

KCCP Policy **R-688** states:

The periodic review process for mineral extraction and processing operations shall include sufficient public notice and comment opportunities. The purpose of the periodic review process is to provide opportunities for public review and comment on the mineral resource facility's fulfillment of state and County regulations and implementation of industry-standard best management practices, and for King County to modify, add or remove conditions to address new circumstances and/or unanticipated project-generated impacts. The periodic review process is not intended to re-examine the appropriateness of the mineral resource use, or to consider expansion of operations beyond the scope of existing permitted operations since that review would be accomplished through the County's permitting process. The periodic review is intended to be a part of King County's ongoing enforcement and inspections of mineral resource sites, and not to be a part of the County's permitting process.

The Area Council is not aware of any "periodic review process" as "part of the ongoing enforcement and inspections" of any reclamation activities at any mining sites. Consequently, the Area Council is not aware the Public has been provided any review/comment opportunity as part of such a process, nor has been notified of same.

To begin to rectify this problem and provide the Public with transparency and voice called for by King County Code and Policy, the Area Council discussed and voted to submit a KCCP Docket Request calling for Code **21A.22.50 Periodic review** and Policy **R-688** to specifically include language that includes "reclamation" activities. By mid-December the 2021 Docket Request will be jointly submitted by eight Rural Area Unincorporated Area Councils/Associations to the King County KCCP Manager requesting King County Council action in 2022.

Countywide Planning Policies (CPPs) 2021 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.

The Area Council has lead a *Joint Team* of eight Rural Area Unincorporated Area Councils/Associations to review draft policies and to prepare and submit Comments on the **Update** throughout a 20-mo process.

The *Joint Team* submitted Written Testimony to both the King County (KC) Council's Mobility & Environment (M&E) Committee on November 30 and the County's Growth Management Planning Council (GMPC)—which prepared the **Update** on December 1. These Written Testimonies addressed: A County Council proposed Four-to-One Program Review (*NOT NEEDED AS A NEARLY IDENTICAL ONE WAS COMPLETED TWO YEARS AGO*); Siting of Urban Facilities in the Rural Area (*AGAINST*); Infrastructure Responsibilities of Private Investment (*FOR*); School Siting in the Rural Area (*AGAINST*); and *Changes to Transportation Policies (REQUESTED)*. Three members of the *Joint Team* provided Oral Testimony at the December 1 the County's GMPC meeting.

A final Public Hearing will be held by the King County Council at its December 14 meeting. The Joint Team again plans to provide both Oral and Written Testimonies. The final-approved (by King County and all its cities) **2021 CPP Update** is to be submitted to the Puget Sound Regional Council (PSRC) by the end of the year. Please see: <http://gmvuac.org/cpp-update/>.

Upcoming Area Council Meetings

The next Area Council monthly meeting will be held Monday, January 10 (due to the official New Year's Day Holiday being celebrated on January 3, which would be our normal first Monday of the month meeting date). This meeting again will be held "virtually" via Zoom.

Once all meetings are *in-person*, they again will be held at the Maple Valley Fire Station—SE corner of SE 231st St & SR-169 intersection across from the Police Precinct. The Fire Station's large meeting room remains closed to the Public.

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 (i.e., minus the City of Maple Valley). 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 **two 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. To join you need to live *within* the Tahoma School District.

All, even those who do not live *within* the Tahoma School District, 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 web site: 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.