



State Representative Visit

by Peter Rimbos, GMVUAC Corresponding Secretary

The Area Council held its regular monthly meeting—in-person for the first time since February 2020—at the Hobart Church on *Monday, June 6*. The Area Council now holds *hybrid meetings* that providing the opportunity for members of the Public to attend either in-person or virtually via Zoom.

Special Guests were District 5 State Representatives Bill Ramos and Lisa Callan who provided a summary of the past Legislative Session and answered questions.

Other major topics discussed were: *King County Comprehensive Plan* and the *Asphalt Facility*.

Tahoma School District (TSD) Update

Area Council Associate Member and former TSD Board Member, Valerie Paganelli, discussed School District internal boundaries for the five Board seats. It has been proposed that all five Board seats include an urban component, thus possibly diluting a rural voice. At the most recent Board meeting Area Council Schools Focal, Warren Iverson, provided Public Testimony on behalf of the Area Council emphasizing the importance of retaining at least one rural-only Board seat.

District 5 State Representatives

Representatives Bill Ramos and Lisa Callan provided a summary of the past Legislative Session may first describing the committees on which each serves. Representative Ramos serves on Transportation (2nd Vice-Chair); Public Safety; and Rural Development, Agriculture, and Natural Resources. Representative Callan serves on: Capital Budget (Vice-Chair); Children, Youth, and Families; and Education. Then each gave a brief summary of key aspects of recent legislation:

Transportation Package (16-yr plan): There is a separate Transportation Budget, but it is not fully funded, thus it needs supplements from time to time. The gas tax is the main source of income for the Transportation Budget. New carbon monies from the recently passed Carbon Pricing program will be added. SR-18 is a piece of the package to complete four lanes from the Issaquah-Hobart Rd to I-90, where a new interchange is being built.

Police Reform: Clarity, transparency, and consistency are being emphasized, which is what Police have indicated they want as well. More police officers are needed. There is only one Police Training facility on the state. To help increase the number of officers twenty-one new classes have been added to accommodate additional trainees. Also needed are more Behavioral Health professionals.

Fire and Forest Health: The State department of Natural Resources (DNR) will help communities to manage urban forests.

School Safety: Strong laws exist, but more are being looked at including: training, hardening entrances, safe storage of firearms and medicines, etc.

The Area Council had prepared several questions and provided same to the State Representatives ahead of the meeting. A summary of some of the Questions and the Representatives' responses follows:

Q1. This past legislative session House Bill 5593 was passed. The summary of which (as published from the State website) states:

"If, during the jurisdiction's regularly scheduled review [comprehensive plan update], the county determines the patterns of development have created pressure in areas that exceed the available and developable lands within the UGA, the county may revise the UGA to accommodate identified patterns of development and future development pressure for the succeeding 20-year period. Areas added to the UGA must not be designated as long-term commercial significance or contain more than 15 percent critical areas. The areas added must be suitable for urban growth and contiguous. The revision may not result in an increase in the total surface area of the existing UGA."

- Please explain this Bill and its potential effects on King County's Rural Area? Please note we are concerned about the vague wording used throughout, such as the following terms: *"pressure in areas;" "patterns of development;" and "suitable for urban growth."*

A1. THEY AGREED TO ADDRESS AREA COUNCIL CONCERNS AND CONSIDER WHEN KING COUNTY SHOULD BE EXEMPTED FROM THIS TYPE OF LEGISLATION IN THE FUTURE.

Q2. The Growth Management Act (GMA) calls for required elements in jurisdiction comprehensive plans and which are needed to obtain certification from the DOC and, in the case of our 4-county region, the PSRC. However, the City of Black Diamond recently decided, after working 8 years on its 2015 (not a typo!) Comprehensive Plan Update to withdraw it from PSRC certification consideration. It did so because it decided it simply could not meet the conditions imposed on it.

- Can a jurisdiction forgo certification and thus, not have a certified comprehensive plan?
- What are the ramifications of not being certified?
- Is certification simply pursued to be eligible for Grant monies? If so, that system doesn't make any sense and should be revisited by the State Legislature.

A2. THEY ARE NOT AWARE OF ANY OTHER JURISDICTION FORGOING COMPREHENSIVE PLAN CERTIFICATION. THEY AGREED TO LOOK AT THE GMA.

Q3. The GMA is very clear on focusing growth and infrastructure within a county's designated UGA. However, there has been decadal continuing pressure to site urban-serving facilities in the Rural Area of King County-Schools, Mega-churches, WBDs, Marijuana factories, etc.-all because the land is cheaper!

- What is next: Ethanol Plants tied to a corn farmer; Meat-Packing plants tied to a steer raiser?
- How can we ensure King County meets the GMA requirements and is GMA compliant?
- Doesn't the requirement to be GMA compliant mean something?

- Must the public always seek redress through the courts for what the State should be policing?

A2. THEY AGREED THE STATE HAS NOTHING TO DO WITH ZONING.

Q4. There have been funds allocated to SR-18, consisting of two parts. One consisting of expansion from I-90 to which a particular bridge and the second from this bridge to Issaquah-Hobart Road.

- Is this correct? Does funding include 10% inflation or a 2008 type recession possibility?

A4. THEY STATED THE FUNDING HAS BEEN SET TO GET THE JOBS DONE, WHICH IMPLIED THE LEGISLATURE TOOK INFLATION INTO ACCOUNT.

Q5. *[Directed to Representative Ramos]* You have been called Mr. Highway 18 for your funding efforts. Now we wish to enroll your support regarding widening of Highway 169 from Maple Valley to the Jones Road area. This may require a two-lane bottleneck at Jones Road because of sensitive areas or significant costs. However, this would allow a huge increase in traffic on this road and reduce traffic on rural county roads which are not designed to handle urban traffic volumes and significantly adversely impact the rural lifestyle for residents (Issaquah-Hobart Road is an example). This widening was first proposed in 1937.

- Will you support this effort and become Mr. Highway 169 for us?

A5. THEY STATED, WITH SR-18 IMPROVEMENTS NOW SET IN LEGISLATION, SR-169 WILL BE LOOKED AT NEXT.

Q6. At the beginning of the legislative session the State had large budget surplus. The legislature chose to spend almost all of it in a supplemental budget.

- How much was the surplus and how much remains?
- With staggering inflation and escalating taxes why was relief not given to taxpayers who very much could use it?

A6. THEY SAID THERE WERE TRADE-OFFS MADE., E.G., SOME ITEMS NEEDED TO BE BACKFILLED, ETC. THIS INCLUDED THE STATE'S RAINY-DAY FUND. THE STATE DOES NOT HAVE A GOOD TAX STRUCTURE THE CURRENT TAX STRUCTURE IS VERY REGRESSIVE. A TAX STRUCTURE WORK GROUP WAS CREATED THAT IS LOOKING THESE ISSUES INCLUDING RESTRUCTURING THE B&O TAX, ETC.

Q7. The State has been under emergency executive power for over two years, which is not the intent of granting such powers.

- Has the legislature had any discussion on limiting the use of emergency executive power and returning the state to a representative government?
- What does state law say regarding emergency executive power and what can be changed?

A7. THEY STATED THERE WERE WELL OVER A DOZEN PIECES OF LEGISLATION PROPOSED IN THE RECENTLY COMPLETED TWO-YEAR SESSION, BUT NONE MADE IT THROUGH THE WHOLE PROCESS TO BECOME LAW. THE GOVERNOR DID NOT GO BEYOND HIS AUTHORITY. IF HE HAD, THE LEGISLATURE COULD HAVE SUED THE GOVERNOR.

Q8. HB 1799 states:

“When newly developing, updating, or amending solid waste management plans after July 1, 2024, each local solid waste plan must consider the transition to providing organic materials collection services to certain residents and businesses in 2027. Solid waste plans implemented by a county must also identify: ... priority areas within the county for the establishment of organic materials management facilities. Priority areas must be in industrial, agricultural, or rural zones and may not be located in overburdened communities identified by Ecology;”

• Would you help us understand the last sentence, as we already are overburdened in a relatively small area by the CHRLF, Cedar Grove Composting, several Materials Processing facilities, Quality Aggregates, Elk Heights Gravel, Stoneway, Queen City Farms Superfund Site, and the soon to be built Asphalt Facility.

A8. THEY STATED THEY BOTH VOTED “NO” ON THIS. THEY NEED TO FIND OUT HOW THE DEPARTMENT OF ECOLOGY IDENTIFIES “OVERBURDENED COMMUNITIES.”

Following the Questions-and-Answer parts of the discussion, both representatives stated the Area Council’s questions were well thought-out and showed a good understanding of issues important to the Rural Area. The Area Council thanked the representatives for attending and for answering every question posed to them in a non-partisan matter and simply sticking to the facts.

2024 King County Comprehensive Plan (KCCP) Major Update

In January King County (KC) kicked off its *“Major 8-Year KCCP Update (Update).”* The Area Council, again, is coordinating a Joint Team consisting of nine KC Rural Area Unincorporated Area Councils (UACs) / Unincorporated Area Associations (UAAs) / Organizations (EPCA, FCUAC, FofSV, GRC, GV/LHA, HHA, SCAR, UBCUAC) to interact with KC by meeting with key focal points, reviewing materials, and preparing/submitting sets of Comments.

On March 31 the KC Executive transmitted his recommended *Scope* to the KC Council, which will decide on the final *Scope* to be used for the *Update*. On June 7 the KC Council will hold a Public Hearing on the *Scope*. On June 3, ahead of that Hearing, the Joint Team submitted detailed Comments (<http://gmvuac.org/wp/wp-content/uploads/2022/06/Recommended-24-KCCP-Upd-SCOPE-Jt-RA-Tm-COMMENTS.pdf>) to the KC Council on the *Scope*.

Comments were offered on the following recommended *Scoping* items: *4:1 Program Review; Transfer of Development Rights; Transportation; Agricultural Production Districts; and Mineral and Materials Processing*. In addition, the Comments suggested several new *Scoping* items be included: *Urban-Serving Facilities; Property-Specific Development Standards; Demonstration Projects; Rural Neighborhood Centers; and Home Occupation & Industry Zoning*.

Throughout the rest of the *Update* process, which goes through 2024, the Joint Team will continue to discuss with both KC Executive’s Office Staff and the KC Council those items that are important for Rural Area residents.

The next phase of the *Update* process will be devoted to the preparation of a Public Review Draft (PRD) and a Draft Environmental Impact statement (DEIS). For more information on the schedule

and the process, please see: <https://kingcounty.gov/depts/executive/performance-strategy-budget/regional-planning/king-county-comprehensive-plan.aspx>.

Letter to the Editor on Asphalt Facility

On April 14 the King County (KC) Department of Local Services–Permitting Division (DLS-P) approved Lakeside Industry’s development and shoreline permits for its move and construction of its Asphalt facility formerly located in the City of Covington: <https://kingcounty.gov/depts/local-services/permits/public-notices.aspx>.

On May 10 an “*article*” titled “*Appeals Filed Against Lakeside Industries’* ” was published in the *VOICE* which contained several pieces of mis-information including the deceptive title. The Area Council decided to rebut the “*article*” by writing and submitting a Letter to the *VOICE*.

Please see: <http://gmvuac.org/asphalt-facility> for all Area Council research and detailed Comments that were submitted to KC DLS-P throughout the process starting in 2017.

Next Area Council Meeting

The next Area Council monthly meeting will be held Monday, July 11 (the first Monday of the month is the July 4 Holiday) from 7 - 9:30 PM at the Hobart Church. As a *hybrid meeting*, people will be able to attend either in-person or virtually via Zoom.

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 our [Facebook](#) page. Each meeting begins with an open Public Comment period where anyone can voice concerns, comments, etc.

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 has four open seats. If you have an interest in joining, please send an e-mail to: info@gmvuac.org or attend (either in-person or virtually) a monthly meeting and express your interest. To be eligible to join the Area Council as a member you need to live *within* the Tahoma School District.

Anyone—even those who do not live *within* the Tahoma School District—are eligible to become *Associate Members* who can serve on any Area Council Committee: Environment, Growth Management, Transportation, Ad Hoc Economic, Public Relations, or Train Show.

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.