



## School Siting and Impact Fees

by Peter Rimbos, GMVUAC Corresponding Secretary

On August 1 the Area Council held its regular monthly meeting at the King County Sheriff's Precinct #3 at 22300 SE 231st St in Maple Valley (this location will be Area Council's normal place to meet going forward) and online via Zoom. The Area Council now holds *hybrid meetings* that provide the opportunity for members of the Public to attend either in-person or virtually.

Topics discussed were: 2024 *King County Comprehensive Plan (KCCP)* Update; State Department of Commerce (DOC) proposed changes to the *Growth Management Act (GMA)*; Draft School Impact Fee Ordinance; Letter of Support to Maple Valley for its Fish Passage Project ; and Public Relations and Recruiting new Members and Associate Members.

### 2024 KCCP Update

King County is conducting its 8-year major update to the KCCP. The Area Council has participated in all major and midpoint KCCP updates for several decades. The Area Council again is leading a Joint Team of Rural Area Unincorporated Area Council s(UACs) / Unincorporated Area Associations (UAAs) / Organizations to thoroughly participate on every aspect of the 2024 Major Update, which commenced in January of this year.

On July 14 the Joint Team of ten Rural Area Unincorporated Area Councils / Unincorporated Area Associations / Organizations held a meeting with KCCP Manager, Chris Jensen, to discuss the process going forward:

- **Ongoing Work** — Executive Departments are working their respective areas.
- **Public Engagement** — Will continue throughout the process (this meeting was an example)
- **Informal Public Survey** — 4th quarter 2022
- **Public Engagement on “early concepts”** — 1st quarter 2023
- **Public Review Draft & DEIS** — 3rd quarter 2023
- **Executive Recommended Plan** — End of 4th quarter 2023

The Joint Team will provide input into these processes as they proceed.

Also discussed at the meeting were key aspects of the Joint Team's SCOPING Comments submitted to the King County Council on June 3, 2022, to ensure they are understood and will be included as the Update proceeds.

The Joint Team took several *Action Items* to address including potential changes to both King County Code and KCCP Policies that deal with: manufacturing and regional land use uses; rural economic development; a new land-use and zoning study; rural area and natural resource lands; property-specific development standards; and home occupation and home industry zoning. these and others will be worked in the coming months.

As the multiyear process proceeds, more information of can be found at the Area Council's 2024 KCCP Update webpage: <http://gmvuac.org/kccp-major-update/> and King County's 2024 KCCP Up-

date webpage: <https://kingcounty.gov/depts/executive/performance-strategy-budget/regional-planning/king-county-comprehensive-plan.aspx>.

## State DOC Proposed Changes to the GMA

The Department of Commerce (DOC) is reviewing/updating the administrative rules for the Growth Management Act (GMA)—see: [https://www.ezview.wa.gov/site/alias\\_1996/37685/library.aspx](https://www.ezview.wa.gov/site/alias_1996/37685/library.aspx). DOC works with local governments to provide guidance on comprehensive plans and development regulations that affect cities and counties across the state

One of the subjects of possible rule-making is **Washington Administrative Code (WAC) 365-196 — Procedural Criteria for Adopting Comprehensive Plans and Development Regulations**, where a *new* section has been proposed: **WAC 365-196-350 Extension of public facilities and utilities to serve school sited in a rural area authorized**.

The Area Council led the Joint Team of Rural Area UACs/UAA's/Organizations to prepare and submit Comments (see: <http://gmvuac.org/wp/wp-content/uploads/2022/07/DOC-Proposed-Changes-to-GMA-COMMENTS.pdf>) on July 26 to DOC.

The Comments called for the following change:

*Requirements: The Growth Management Act does not prohibit a county planning under RCW 36.70A.040 from authorizing the extension of public facilities and utilities to serve a school sited in a rural area that serves primarily rural area students ~~from a rural area and an urban area~~ so long as the following requirements are met: . . . .*

Such a change would be consistent with the wording and policies in the *King County Comprehensive Plan*, the *King County Countywide Planning Policies (CPPs)*, Puget Sound Regional Council's *VISION 2050*, and *Growth Management Hearings Board's guidance on school siting*.

## Draft School Impact Fee Ordinance

The King County Council has proposed an Ordinance to adopt school impact fees to be collected from all nonexempt *new* residential development in the unincorporated portions of the Tahoma (TSD), Federal Way, Riverview, Issaquah, Snoqualmie Valley, Highline, Lake Washington, Kent, Northshore, Enumclaw, Fife, Auburn and Renton school districts.

All collected fees and earned interest would be distributed to the respective school districts for expenditure on capital facilities projects, identified in adopted capital facilities plans, which are necessary to accommodate residential growth within the districts.

The King County Permitting Division is accepting public comments on the draft through Monday, August 8 (<https://kingcounty.gov/depts/local-services/permits/planning-regulations/~media/depts/local-services/permits/legislation-public-review/school-impact-fees-plain-language-summary-202207.ashx>).

The Area Council is concerned about projections of additional facilities in the coming 10 years that are shown in the King County-supplied TSD capital facilities document. It is the Area Council's understanding that the stakeholder TSD Housing Committee has not yet made a recommendation to the TSD Board. Consequently, this forthcoming work is *not* reflected in this document.

The document says TSD has used its own data for the first time this year for single-family home impact fee calculations. However, it is not clear how the new calculation may have affected the increase in impact fees. In looking at the other King County-supplied school district capital facilities documents, some districts show increases; some decreases.

The plain-language summary of the proposed Ordinance suggests a financial plan is to be included that shows how service levels are expected to be maintained. It is not clear that information appears in the King County-provided school district documents. In the recently approved 2022-2023 TSD Budget, there is not a line item labeled “*impact fees*,” but there is a line-item in the *budget pre-work* for \$500K under this title. If “*impact fees*” align with the official budget line item labeled “*local non-tax revenue*” on previous budgets, it was in the \$1M-\$2M range in the last budget.

Another concern is that the most recent TSD demographer’s report (used to create the enrollment projections for each TSD school) contains some errors. For example, it inappropriately mapped 63 single family homes in the unincorporated area to be served by Tahoma Elementary (57 built in 4Q 2021 and 6 under construction). While these developments do impact TSD, they are misrepresented as to the potential unincorporated area buildings impacted.

The Area Council voted to prepare and submit Comments to King County. Because of concerns with the accuracy of the numbers and protections used to develop needs that feed into the proposed impact fees, the Area Council decided to oppose the proposed Ordinance.

### **Letter of Support to Maple Valley for its Fish Passage Project**

The City of Maple Valley’s *Jenkins Creek Fish Passage Barrier Removal Project* will replace multiple culverts that currently prevent fish passage due to their size and deterioration and also cause flooding of public roads and homes. The City seeks funding from NOAA under its *Restoring Fish Passage through Barrier Removal Program*.

Jenkins Creek courses through the Area Council’s territory and, as such, our Environment Committee and Growth Management Committee have direct concerns with enhancing its environmental benefits for both people and fish. The proposed Fish Barrier Removal Project would help to enhance habitat along Jenkins Creek. Benefits also will impact the Green River watershed through reduced flooding, as well as one of our goals to improving habitat and long-term restoration.

The Area Council voted to prepare and submit to the City a Letter of Support for the project to accompany its application to NOAA for funding.

### **Public Relations and Recruiting**

The Area Council plans to secure a booth at Black Diamond Days on September 4 and 5 to meet members of the public and talk about the Area Council and how we support/represent the over 18,000 unincorporated area residents of the Tahoma School District.

### **Area Council Vice-Chair**

LarKen Buchanan was nominated and elected as the new Area Council Vice-Chair replacing Andy McDonald, who has moved out of the area. The Vice Chair serves in the absence of the Chair and performs other duties as the Chair, or the Area Council, directs. The Vice Chair also coordinates with other Area Council members to find and invite prospective guest speakers for Regular Meetings.

### **Next Area Council Meeting**

The next Area Council monthly meeting will be held Monday, September 12 (the *second* Monday of the month due to the Labor Day Holiday which falls on the *first* Monday) from 7 - 9:30 PM at the

King County Sheriff's Precinct #3 at 22300 SE 231st St in Maple Valley. 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](http://www.gmvuac.org)) and local *NextDoor* platforms. You can also find us on our FaceBook <https://www.facebook.com/GMVUAC/> page. Each meeting begins with an open Public Comment period where anyone can voice concerns, comments, etc. to the Area Council.

### **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](mailto: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, Public Relations, or Train Show. Each committee votes for its own Chair and Vice-Chair and Area Council Associate Members are eligible for those positions.

The Area Council welcomes your participation. For information on each of these committees please see the Area Council's web site: [www.gmvuac.org](http://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](mailto:info@gmvuac.org). Thank you.