



Reserve Silica Environmental Emergency **by Peter Rimbos, GMVUAC Corresponding Secretary**

On Monday, October 2, the Area Council held its monthly meeting at the Maple Valley Fire Station at 22225 SE 231st St and online via Zoom. Major topics discussed were: (1) On-Site Sewage Systems; (2) Reserve Silica; (3) 2024 King County Comprehensive Plan Update; (4) Area Council's 25th Annual Model Train Show; (5) King County Community Needs List Program; and (6) King County Councilman Dunn's Staff Visit to Ravensdale.

On-Site Sewage System Code Changes

The WA Department of Health (WADOH) has been reviewing *On-Site Sewage System (OSS) Rule, Chapter 246-272A* of the WA Administrative Code (WAC). Priority issues included local management plans, property sale inspections, treatment levels, ultraviolet disinfection, and licensing of operations and maintenance providers. The draft revisions, a summary of changes, and a revised rule revision process timeline, as well as materials related to the overall process, can be accessed on the department's [On-site Rule Revision webpage](https://doh.wa.gov/community-and-environment/wastewater-management/rules-and-regulations/onsite-rule-revision) (<https://doh.wa.gov/community-and-environment/wastewater-management/rules-and-regulations/onsite-rule-revision>).

Lynn Schneider and Ben Lemon from Seattle-King County Public Health (S-KCPH) discussed potential King County Code changes to meet new state requirements. The state sets minimum standards to meet. Jurisdictions, such as King County, are allowed to exceed those minimums.

It is expected State standards will be updated by March 2024. King County will have ~12 months to update its Code: *Title 13—Water & Sewer Systems*. The Public will be able to weigh in at any time during the next year after which S-KCPH will finalize its Code revisions by March 2025.

Ms. Schneider acknowledged Area Council OSS Focal, Warren Iverson, who has been involved throughout a multiyear process to this point. Warren will continue to act as the Area Council's liaison with S-KCPH as Code revisions are developed and evaluated.

Reserve Silica Environmental Emergency

The Area Council has followed activities at the Reserve Silica site in Ravensdale for many, many years. The site was an old Coal and Sand mine that later was partially filled with over 250,000 tons of Cement Kiln Dust (CKD). It has been in reclamation under the authority of the State Department of Ecology (DOE) through the State's Model Toxics Control Act (MTCA). DOE is overseeing the waste identification and remedial action requirements to effect the removal of materials from this site's soil and groundwater to meet State and Federal standards.

The Area Council invited to the meeting: Greg Wingard, President of the Green River Coalition, who has followed the activities of this site since 1979, and local Ravensdale resident, Michael Brathovde, who also has followed this site for many years. The Area Council is happy to have their expertise available. Greg discussed another major issue that recently has been uncovered on the

site. A construction site within the area around the former Asarco smelter in Tacoma, a Federal Superfund site, generated ~33 dump truck loads of dirt contaminated with Arsenic and Lead and deposited it at the Reserve Silica site between May 3 - 18, covered it with ~20 ft of soil, and graded it. The Reserve Silica site is not authorized to receive such contaminated fill, which is required to be disposed of at a special type of landfill. The matter originally was brought to King County's attention by DOE.

Following several meetings between King County, DOE, S-KCPH, and the Federal Environmental Protection Agency (EPA), a *Response Plan* was developed. The first step was to obtain core samples from appropriate locations on site to both define the boundaries of the area within which the contaminated soil was deposited and the concentrations of Arsenic and Lead present. The next step is to ensure placement of sediment and erosion controls *before* soil removal begins. This would be to prevent: (1) shifting of contaminated soils and (2) erosion or leaching from stormwater, potentially contaminating additional surface area, sensitive areas, or ground and surface waters.

On August 22 King County's Department of Local Services Permitting Division issued an "*Emergency Authorization*" to Reserve Silica to allow removal of the contaminated fill. This was issued because King County stated it has been demonstrated that:

1. The existing emergency is a threat that presents imminent danger to the public health, safety, and welfare;
2. The action must be undertaken immediately, or within a time too short to allow full compliance with King County code standards, to avoid imminent threat of serious environmental degradation;
3. The proposed emergency scope of work is reasonable and necessary in response to the imminent threat presented; and
4. The emergency action is in direct response to and does not exceed the dangers and risks posed by the emergency.

This is now in an initial investigation stage with no legal actions yet taken by King County or DOE. The Area Council believes these initial actions are good, but that it should never have gotten to this point. This particular site has a *multi-decade* history of this type of questionable disposal, on-going contamination of public resources, egregious violations of permits. Further, the site has a long history to this day of doing a terrible job in managing its stormwater and has a record of discharging contaminated water offsite.

Following discussion the Area Council voted to send a Letter to the Permitting Division requesting it take the following actions as part of its resolution of the above-discussed environmental emergency at the Reserve Silica site:

1. Ban it from accepting any *for-pay-disposal* materials and urge steep fines be imposed, as small fines will just be accepted as a "*cost of doing business.*"
2. No longer allow it to use paid disposal of waste as part of its required "*reclamation,*" as the end result has been various levels of blatant disposal of contaminated wastes.
3. Call for the entirety of its *contaminated* fill to be removed and sent to an authorized permitted facility, as indicated by screening of the material or to the permitted inert waste open landfill on the Reserve Silica site—if it qualifies and there is existing permitted capacity.

Finally, the Area Council and other Rural Area councils and associations, have had many ongoing concerns with the Permitting Division's mission statement, permit and enforcement execution, and lack of resources. Such concerns only will continue until needed changes are made. The repeated incidents of questionable disposal of contaminated wastes and decades of discharging toxic wastes into the environment seriously undermines King County's system of permitting for mine reclamation and code enforcement thereof.

2024 King County Comprehensive Plan Update

The Area Council continues to lead a Joint Team of ten Unincorporated Rural Area Councils in participating in the **Update**—a 3-yr effort from January 2022 thru December 2024.

As part of the **Update** the County's Growth Management Planning Council (GMPC) has been conducting an in-depth review of the *4:1 Program*, which allows willing land owners to voluntarily apply to have their land considered, with 20% of the land (i.e., the "1") potentially added to the Urban Growth Area (UGA) and the remaining 80% (i.e., the "4") permanently added to the County's Open Space system

Throughout this year the Joint Team provided both Oral and Written Testimonies to the GMPC. A major issue was which UGA boundary to use as a basis for potential 4:1 transactions—the 1994 UGA or that called for later in the mid 1990's through Joint Planning Area (JPA) Agreements with several cities. The Joint Team called for use of the 1994 UGA, as it would not serve as a "piggybacking," of 4:1's on what essentially were 4:1's in the JPA Agreements.

The Joint Team's recommendations were in agreement with July 12 and September 22 letters provided to the GMPC by the WA Department of Transportation (WSDOT), which is trying to protect its \$188M investment in the upcoming SR-18 / I-90 Interchange near the City of Snoqualmie. At its September 27 meeting the GMPC voted to indeed use the 1994 UGA as the basis for potential 4:1 transactions and this will be included in the County Executive's *Recommended Plan* to be released to the County Council this December.

25th Annual Model Train Show

The Area Council is hosting its **25th Annual Model Train Show** at Gracie Hansen Community Center at 27132 SE Ravensdale Way in Ravensdale on the weekend of October 21 and 22, from 10:00 AM to 5:00 PM on Saturday and 10:00 AM to 4:00 PM on Sunday. Suggested Donation (sorry, no credit cards) is: Adults—\$5.00 and Children (ages 3-11)—\$2.00. The show is jointly sponsored by the Area Council and Rock Creek Sports.

There will be operating model trains, trains, and more trains featuring creative operating layouts in most gauges! Attendees can bring their own trains (Lionel / HO / other) to run on all our tracks (with approval of participating Clubs).

The show is held in a full-sized gymnasium filled with many operating model trains and train-related items. Model Train Clubs from the Pacific Northwest make this a family-fun and very memorable event for all. Attendees can enjoy trains of most scales, including an entire village, and trains made entirely of Legos.

The creativity and ingenuity of the Club Members is truly amazing and a sight to behold by all ages. It is in a very relaxed atmosphere where people can wander about and enjoy the trains at their own pace. There also will be trains with live steam engines (based on availability). There also will be displays from the Black Diamond Museum depicting various aspects of our regional history.

King County Community Needs List Program

The King County Community Needs List (CNL) effort seeks the opinions of residents who live in unincorporated areas (areas that lie outside of city limits) on what would make their communities better places to live. The CNLs include potential services, programs, facilities, and capital improvements that communities would like King County to prioritize. The County conducted the online *Survey* through the end of August. Over 1,500 people participated. Community Workshops are planned for this Fall. The Area Council will request one be the subject of its next regular monthly meeting on November 6.

King County Councilman Dunn's Staff Visit to Ravensdale

Area Council Joint Transportation Initiative (JTI) Chair, Susan Harvey, discussed the September 21 visit by Councilman Dunn's Staff Cody Eccles and Jack Ipsen to Ravensdale.

Susan and her team conducted a whirlwind tour which included: Gracie Hansen Community Center; future site of two picnic shelters in the Ravensdale Park Meadow area; approximate entry site of Reserve Silica and Erickson/Wagner property (Ravensdale LLC); site of the proposed Glamping Park permit application (CDUP23-0002); site of the Pioneer Cemetery; and the Ravensdale Market.

Susan expressed hope to continue dialogue with Councilman Dunn's office, especially on those issues of greatest priority to Ravensdale residents.

Next Area Council Meeting

The next Area Council monthly meeting will be held Monday, November 6, from 7 - 9:30 PM at the Maple Valley Fire Station at 22225 SE 231st St (across from the KC Sheriff's Precinct). **As a hybrid meeting, members of the public will be able to attend either in-person or virtually via Zoom.**

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, Agendas, and Zoom information are published in the *Voice of the Valley*, the Area Council's [Website](http://www.gmvuac.org) (www.gmvuac.org) and local *NextDoor* platforms. You can also find us on our [FaceBook page](https://www.facebook.com/GMVUAC/) (https://www.facebook.com/GMVUAC/). 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 *works to keep the Rural Area rural*. The Area Council also works *regionally* with other King County Rural Area organizations through both *Joint Planning* and its *Joint Transportation Initiative*.

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.

Residents, 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-Chairs and *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 [Website](http://www.gmvuac.org) (www.gmvuac.org) and use the drop-down menu under *Committees*.

All Monthly Meeting Summary Articles, such as this, can be found on our website's Home page in the *2023/2022 GMVUAC Monthly Meeting Articles* box or by using the drop-down menu under *Correspondence*.