



Tahoma School District Levies

by Peter Rimbos, GMVUAC Corresponding Secretary

On Monday, January 15, the Area Council held its first monthly meeting of 2024 at the Maple Valley Fire Station and via Zoom. Major topics discussed were: (1) Tahoma School District 2024 Levies; (2) City of Maple Valley State Legislative Agenda; (3) 2024 King County Comprehensive Plan Update, and (4) Reserve Silica.

Area Council Officer Elections

At its first monthly meeting of the year the Area Council conducts internal elections for its Officers. The positions and duties are: Chair: Maintain Council operations and interfaces and preside at all meetings; Vice-Chair: Serve in the absence of the Chair and Chair the Public Relations Committee which manages Area Council member elections; Recording Secretary: Prepare and distribute Council meeting minutes; Corresponding Secretary: Prepare and transmit all Council correspondence, author articles on activities, and control web site content; and Treasurer: Receive and be accountable for all Council funds, maintain accounts, and pay all obligations.

For 2024 the Area Council re-elected, by acclamation, Steve Hiester as Chair; LarKen Buchanan as Vice-Chair; Luke Hansen as Recording Secretary; Peter Rimbos as Corresponding Secretary; and Sue Neuner as Treasurer. All officers then assumed their positions and duties for 2024.

Tahoma School District (TSD) Levies

AJ Garcia, TSD Communications, discussed the two 2024 school levies on February 13 ballot:

- Proposition 1. Educational Programs and Operations — Safety / Security; Mental Health Support; Special Education; Sport / Clubs / Activities; Education Support Staff; Special Academic Programs (e.g., Advanced Placement courses); and Multilingual Learner Support — Cost: \$2.50 per \$1,000 assessed value.
- Proposition 2. Technology — Devices; Accessibility Tools; and Instructional Support Staff — Cost: \$0.40 per \$1,000 assessed value.

Each are 2-yr *replacement* levies to meant to maintain existing programs and operations and to close the funding gap based on what the State provides. Current revenue split is ~80% State; ~17% Local Levies; and ~3% Federal.

Also from TSD in attendance were: Jennifer McMaster, new School Board Director, and Tracy Krauss, Assistant Superintendent of Operations and Resources.

City of Maple Valley State Legislative Agenda

City of Maple Valley Mayor, Sean Kelly, discussed the city's 2024 Legislative Priorities for its ongoing talks with State Legislators:

- Land-Use—Affordable Housing Credit Process; Trip reduction incentives.
- Transportation—SR-169 funding from city limits to Jones Rd; "Move Forward WA" funds for the planned Pedestrian Overpass (over SR-169) to the Legacy Site.
- Law Enforcement—New King County Sheriff's helicopter; Police pursuit policies.
- Mental Health Service Funding.

The city also is in the middle of its 2044 20-Yr Comprehensive Plan development. It will be holding an Open House on Friday, February 2, from 6 to 8 PM, at the Lake Wilderness Lodge. Discussion will include the Planning Commission's proposed updates. Periodic updates to the Plan allow the city to come together to build a vision for the future. Maple Valley will continue to grow with new housing options, the development of Downtown, new economic development opportunities, and transportation improvements. Mayor Kelly stated this plan will be a well-rounded guide to Maple Valley for the next 20 years.

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.

On December 7, 2023, the King County Executive submitted his *Recommended Plan* (ERP) to the King County Council. Since that time the Joint Team has reviewed the ERP's Chapters, Appendices, Reports, etc. Draft Comments are in work (150 pp and counting).

Starting January 17, 2024, the King County Council's Local Services & Land-Use (LS&L-U) Committee (the designated responsible entity for the **Update**) will commence Public Briefings on the ERP. There will be nine daytime briefings (9:30 AM and hybrid) and five evening meetings at various sites throughout the County (on February 8, 6:30 PM, one of these will be held at the City of Covington Council Chambers). Each Briefing is devoted to different parts of the **Update** (see the LS&L-U Committee's Briefing Schedule at: https://cdn.kingcounty.gov/-/media/king-county/depts/council/comprehensive-plan/2024/committee-schedule_updated-12-15-23.pdf?rev=37794d22e8b445d-d8b5e349ba374f6c0&hash=2FBE830E04E118F253F021C61FE54C93). The Joint Team plans to testify at most of these meetings.

All information on the **Update** can be found at: <https://kingcounty.gov/en/dept/council/governance-leadership/county-council/topics-of-interest/comprehensive-plan/2024>.

Reserve Silica

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 still is following the ramifications of the ~33 dump truck loads of dirt contaminated with Arsenic and Lead deposited at the Reserve Silica site in the Spring of 2023, then covered with ~20 ft of soil, and graded. 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 the State Department of Ecology.

Area Council representations and several members of the local community have held several meetings with personnel from the King County Department of Local Services, Permitting Division (DLS-P) regarding steps to be taken to find out exactly what happened, who is responsible, how things will be cleaned up, and what steps will be taken to ensure no such emergencies be repeated in the future.

Recent official correspondence with DLS-P includes: December 22, 2023, DLS-P Response Letter to the Area Council and December 27, 2023, Area Council Letter to DLS acknowledging the December 22, 2023, letter and requesting: (1) An update on the **Sampling Process** and the **Clean-up Activities** of ASARCO-related materials dumped on the Reserve Silica site; (2) A copy of the **Sample Data** that is your current focus; (3) A copy of the **Fill Survey** information, when received from the Applicant; and (4) An **Estimated Date** when the stated Additional Research will be complete and when we will receive responses to our questions, which at this time are left **Unanswered**. The Area Council also has submitted and received information from Public Records Requests, which currently are under study.

In general, the Area Council remains concerned with what steps DLS-P will take on this entire matter to rectify the harm done and to ensure it doesn't happen again.

Next Area Council Meeting

The next Area Council monthly meeting will be held Monday, February 5, from 7 - 9:30 PM at the Maple Valley Fire Station at 22225 SE 231st St (across from the KC Sheriff's Precinct). Meetings are held on the *first* Monday of the month (except for Holidays, when they are held on the *second* Monday). **As a hybrid meeting, members of the public will be able to attend either in-person or virtually via Zoom.**

Meeting announcements, Agendas, and Zoom information 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** (<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** (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*.