



## King County Department of Local Services

by Peter Rimpos, GMVUAC Corresponding Secretary

On Monday, May 6, the Area Council held its monthly meeting at the King County Sheriff's Precinct #3 due to a room conflict at the Maple Valley Fire Station, its normal meeting venue, and via Zoom. Major topics discussed were: (1) 2024 King County Comprehensive Plan Update and (2) the King County Department of Local Services.

### 2024 King County Comprehensive Plan Update (Update)

The Area Council continues to coordinate a *Joint Team* of nine Unincorporated Rural Area Councils in participating in the **Update**—a 3-yr effort. The King County Council's Local Services & Land-Use (LS & L-U) Committee was assigned to review of the King County Executive's "*Recommended Plan*" released last December.

Starting in January of this year *Joint Team* members have been providing Oral Testimonies at nine daytime and evening LS&L-U Committee Public Briefings. There are nine daytime briefings (9:30 AM and hybrid) and five evening meetings at various sites throughout the County with each Briefing devoted to different parts of the **Update** (see: <https://cdn.kingcounty.gov/-/media/king-county/depts/council/comprehensive-plan/2024/committee-schedule-updated-3-4-24.pdf?rev=84b7cb8ed2624c3babb66c589cecf25c&hash=FDA51EC052A27E6C76C4B4FAE4AF8B49>).

The *Joint Team* provided ten *Oral Testimonies* plus two in writing (<http://gmvuac.org/wp/wp-content/uploads/2024/04/KC-C-LSL-U-Comm-Briefings-Jt-Tm-Oral-Testimonies-4-3-24-4-17-24.pdf>) at the April 3 and 17 Briefings. These covered a wide range of topics, such as: Parks, Transportation, Services, Facilities, Economic Development, and Development Regulations.

The *Joint Team* also plans to speak at the May 15 Briefing, which will deal with the LS&L-U Committee's "*Striker*," due to be released the day before on May 14. The "*Striker*" will be an edited (i.e., deletions [*strikethroughs*], additions [*underlines*], etc.) version of the existing King County Comprehensive Plan (KCCP). The *Joint Team* will review the "*Striker*" and offer proposed Amendments to King County Councilmembers for incorporation in the final product.

As it has throughout the **Update** process, the *Joint Team* review of the "*Striker*" will focus on five major themes:

1. Good Policies define "*Rural Character*," but permitting / code enforcement is broken.
2. Rural Area viability threatened by neglect of local access needs due to outmoded road standards and a broken financial system for roads.
3. Urban-type and urban-serving facilities should not be sited in Rural Area.
4. Exhausted mining sites must revert to forest resource land base, not *non-resource* uses.
5. Permit exceptions should be for specific, limited purposes, e.g., SUPs, TUPs, CUPs, Home Occupations/Industries.

The LS&L-U Committee plans to make its final recommendations on the **Update** to the full Council on June 5. All information on the **Update** can be found at: <https://kingcounty.gov/so-so/dept/council/governance-leadership/council/useful-links/comprehensive-plan/2024>.

## King County Department of Local Services (DLS)

The King County DLS serves as the local government for all the unincorporated area—both urban and rural. DLS consists of two Divisions: Permitting, which both issues permits and conducts code enforcement, and Road Services, which maintains our roads, shoulders, and bridges.

King County has many well-considered policies and code, but these only serve the people if effectively honored and enforced. Unfortunately, the reality experienced in the Rural Area demonstrates the Permitting Division's significant downward trend in upholding these policies and code. Likewise the degradation of road conditions in the Rural Area stems from an inability of the Road Services Division to accomplish its mission given its limited funding and a lack of vision to change that situation.

Due to such concerns which have developed and compounded over several years, the *Joint Team* sent a letter to King County Executive Constantine on February 26 (<http://gmvuac.org/wp/wp-content/uploads/2024/02/Joint-Team-Ltr-to-King-County-Exec-DLS.pdf>), as he contemplates hiring a new DLS Director to replace John Taylor, who moved over to head the Department of Natural Resources and Parks. That letter discussed the need for a new “*culture*” at DLS to help redirect efforts to meet citizens’ expectations and King County’s goals and plans.

As a direct result of that letter, the King County Executive’s Office directed King County Chief People Officer, Whitney Abrams, who is assigned with finding and hiring a new DLS Director, to meet with the *Joint Team*. That meeting took place virtually on April 24 with Ms. Abrams; Ms. Hill, KC Deputy Chief Operating Officer; Ms. Smith, KC Director of Regional Planning, and the *Joint Team*. The meeting went well, as many issues and potential solutions were discussed. One of the fallouts of the meeting was an invitation for two *Joint Team* members to serve on a *Community Panel* to meet and talk with finalists for the DLS Director position during a day-long session on Monday, June 10.

## Next Area Council Meeting

The next Area Council monthly meeting will be held Monday, June 3, from 7 - 9:30 PM, at Maple Valley Fire Station located at 22225 SE 231st St (across from the King County Sheriff’s Precinct #3). 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 is posted on 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.

## 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 (TSD). The Area Council, in “*working to keep the Rural Area rural*,” collaborates *regionally* with other King County Rural Area organizations through both the *Joint Team* 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](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 TSD.

Residents, even those not living *within* the TSD, are eligible to become *Associate Members* who can serve on any Area Council Committee: *Environment, Growth Management, Transportation, Public Relations, or Train Show*. 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 can be found on our Home page in the *2024/2023 GMVUAC Monthly Meeting Articles* box or by using the drop-down menu under *Correspondence*.