



Director of the King County Department of Local Services

by Peter Rimbos, GMVUAC Corresponding Secretary

On Monday, October 9, the Area Council held its regular monthly meeting at the Maple Valley Fire Station and via Zoom. Our Special Guest was Leon Richardson, new Director of the King County Department of Local Services (DLS). Major topics discussed were: (1) DLS issues and potential solutions; (2) 2024 King County Comprehensive Plan Update; and (3) Annual Operating Model Train Show.

Department of Local Services

As one of our main local government providers, DLS is comprised of two Divisions—Permitting and Road Services. Presentations to Director Richardson discussed issues and potential solutions related to each division. Also present from King County DLS were: Ty Peterson, Permitting Division—Commercial Product Line Manager, and Andrew Kim, Road Services Division Deputy Director.

Permitting Division

General Concerns

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| Issue | There appears to be an ingrained culture of ignoring Code and Policy. |
| Solutions | Launch a new Executive-led initiative to address long-term, ingrained issues and use existing Code Enforcement tools in KC Code. |

Case Study of Reserve Silica

The old coal and sand mine, located south of Ravensdale for nearly two decades has been conducting “reclamation” under the auspices of a Grading Permit with no terms or conditions represents an abject failure of King County’s responsibilities.

Major concerns discussed were: (1) Reserve Silica imported far more fill material than is permitted under its Clearing & Grading Permit; (2) Reserve Silica violated the essence of its Clearing & Grading Permit and Reclamation Plan; (3) King County allowed major operating expansions beyond the Clearing & Grading Permit and Reclamation Plan, without any public notification, review or comment; and (4) King County enforcement of the Clearing & Grading Permit has been virtually non-existent, only motivating even more violations.

It was expressed that King County’s position on enforcement here has approached that of negligence. Without due diligence from nearby stewards in Ravensdale, who had legal access to a viewpoint, the Public would not have known about illegal clearcutting and illegal dumping, including ASARCO toxic waste, until EPA and DOE stepped in. We remain extremely disturbed with lack of any kind of transparency by KC despite many communications.

A proposed resolution Plan was offered to Director Richardson:

- I. Identify all the *issues and potential violations*.
- II. Identify *any and all guilty parties*.
- III. Develop a comprehensive *Resolution Plan*.
- IV. Require identified guilty parties to *rectify any and all violations*.
- V. Assess appropriate *finest* accordingly.
- VI. Convene a Public Meeting to *inform* the community.

During and following the presentation Ty Peterson provided some updates and agreed to send the Area Council documentation on several items. The Area Council's Growth Management Committee will review the materials and provide an assessment to the full Area Council. Director Richardson also stated the Area Council will be given the opportunity to review and comment on the pending Reserve Silica permit update, conditions, and reclamation plan *prior* to these being finalized and approved.

Please see: [Issues and Potential Solutions & Case Study: Reserve Silica](http://gmvuac.org/wp/wp-content/uploads/2024/10/Permitting-Division-Presentation-10-7-24.pdf) (<http://gmvuac.org/wp/wp-content/uploads/2024/10/Permitting-Division-Presentation-10-7-24.pdf>).

Road Services Division

[A Decade of Definition, Analysis, and Commitment](http://gmvuac.org/wp/wp-content/uploads/2024/10/JTI-A-Decade-of.10724.pdf) (<http://gmvuac.org/wp/wp-content/uploads/2024/10/JTI-A-Decade-of.10724.pdf>)

Transportation issues are regional issues not neighborhood issues. Local rural groups realized more than a decade ago that joining forces was vital to effectively address transportation problems affecting rural/unincorporated areas. The rural/unincorporated population is about 11% of the total population of King County. Rural citizens are underrepresented in King County policy formation. It was only logical to join together to increase the volume of our voices.

In 2014 the Joint Transportation Initiative (JTI) was formed comprised of multiple Rural Area organizations lead by the Area Council. JTI has held several major Transportation Forums with State Legislators, PSRC Transportation managers, and King County Councilmembers. JTI has conducted several technical studies, including *Opus Trafficus*, *The Trouble with Traffic in Rural King County* and provided same to King County officials.

Several challenges remain: (1) Need to better understand how Federal and State governments affect the policies of King County, hence rural residents and (2) Learn how to better communicate with WSDOT to increase our rural footprint in its decision-making process.

[Future Funding for Unincorporated Area Roads](http://gmvuac.org/wp/wp-content/uploads/2024/10/Future-Funding-for-Unincorporated-Area-Roads-100224.pdf) (<http://gmvuac.org/wp/wp-content/uploads/2024/10/Future-Funding-for-Unincorporated-Area-Roads-100224.pdf>)

Several ideas were presented on how to resolve the enormous lack of funding for roads that has consistently limited King County's ability to properly serve needs of the unincorporated area. Most of the tax base for the county road fund has been lost due to annexations and incorporations of new cities. Meanwhile, outlying cities generate growing streams of commuter traffic through the unincorporated area, accounting for the majority of traffic on rural arterials even though those city residents pay zero into the county road fund.

Several unconventional ideas were presented to raise funds or reduce costs. A countywide voter-approved tax was suggested, aimed at improving safety of roads for all users in all cities as well as the county – pedestrians, bicyclists, motorists, and transit. Taking a balanced budget view of the long-term needs for road reconstruction would identify roads that must be closed for lack of funds to maintain them. Some unfunded costs for county roads can be avoided by closing a couple of roads at

strategic points so long-distance commuters must use state highways. Four high-volume roads designated as “*Rural Regional Arterials*” (e.g., the Issaquah-Hobart Rd) could be turned over to the state, since they function the same as state highways.

It was expressed by Director Richardson that King County has been looking at many of the ideas mentioned in the presentation and Andrew Kim was directed to continue to work with the Area Council on several key issues.

2024 King County Comprehensive Plan Update (Update)

The Area Council continues to coordinate a *Joint Rural Team* of nine Unincorporated Rural Area Councils in participating in the **Update**—a 3-yr effort. The Joint Rural Team has offered multiple amendments to the **Update**. The Joint Rural Team has been conducted several one-on-one meetings with the offices of each of the nine King County Councilmembers to discuss and request *sponsorship* its proposed Amendments for the **Update**. In July and August meetings were held with the offices of Councilwoman Mosqueda; Councilman Zahilay; Councilman Upthegrove; and Councilman Dem-bowski. In September meetings were held with the offices of Councilman Baron; Councilwoman Bal-ducci; and Councilwoman Perry.

The Council’s Striking Amendment, that will include those amendments sponsored by various councilmembers, will be released to the Public on November 14. A Public Hearing before the Council will be held on November 15.

Final approval by the full Council will take place some time this December. More information can be found at: [Update](https://kingcounty.gov/so-so/dept/council/governance-leadership/county-council/useful-links/comprehensive-plan/2024) (https://kingcounty.gov/so-so/dept/council/governance-leadership/county-council/useful-links/comprehensive-plan/2024).

Annual Operating Model Train Show

The Area Council’s 2024 Annual Operating Model Train Show will be held on October 19-20 at the Gracie Hansen Community Center at 27132 SE Ravensdale Way in Ravensdale. from 10 am to 5 pm on Saturday and 10 am to 4 pm on Sunday.

There will be operating model train layouts in many popular gauges. There will be an exhibit from the Black Diamond Museum depicting local history, including transportation, timber, and mining.

The show is fun for the entire family. If you have questions about model railroading the exhibitors are happy to try to answer them. There will be plenty of free parking. The suggested donation for the train show is \$5 for adults and \$2 for children ages 3-11.

Please visit the Area Council’s table. We have monthly Council meetings that are open to the public. The dates are listed on our [Website](http://www.gmvuac.org) (www.gmvuac.org). The Area Council is a Washington non-profit corporation and is not any type of 501c charitable organization under the IRS code. Note that the Gracie Hansen Community Center is made available courtesy of Rock Creek Sports.

Next Area Council Meeting

The next Area Council monthly meeting will be held Monday, November 4 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). All meeting announcements, agendas, and Zoom information are 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, founded in 1978, is one of the longest continuously active local councils. It 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: [GMVUAC](mailto:info@gmvuac.org) (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 (including as Chair or Vice-Chair) 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*.