



## **Transportation Benefit District**

**by Peter Rimbos, GMVUAC Corresponding Secretary**

On Monday, March 9, 2026, (one week later than the normal “*first Monday of the month*” due to a room scheduling conflict) the Area Council held its Regular Monthly Meeting at the Maple Valley Fire Station at 22225 SE 231st St and via Zoom. Major topics discussed were: (1) Transportation Benefit District; (2) Local Subarea Plan; and (3) School Siting.

During the Public Comment period Ryan Quiglar, South County Relations Manager in the King County Executive’s Office introduced himself. He stated new King County Executive Zahilay ha also has established Relations Managers for East, North, and Central parts of the County. They all are part of a new Community Services and Response Team for the Unincorporated Areas and the Cities. The Area Council will be working with Ryan as one of the means of communication with the Executive’s Office.

## **Transportation Benefit District**

Mike Birdsall, the Joint Transportation Initiative’s (JTI’s) Vice Chair, and a retired Transportation Planner with over 50 years of experience, spoke of King County’s options to fund improvements using the Transportation Benefit District (TBD) process provided by the State (RCW 36.73). JTI is a multi-organization team of Rural Area Organizations led by the Area Council.

Since the 1980’s, the TBD framework has evolved to serve multi-modal and multi-jurisdictional transportation needs, with a lot of flexibility. King County Metro, as a sewer agency, was the first countywide benefit district, and the law has steadily evolved since then—first to add transit to Metro’s powers (1972), then sub-county transit districts (1976 - at request of Community Transit). Funding options include: sales tax, property tax, vehicle license tax, and/or impact fees. There exist many variations on how to create a TBD with county and cities jointly involved.

TBDs revenues may be used for transportation improvements included in a local, regional, or state transportation plan. Improvements can range from roads and transit service to sidewalks and transportation-demand management (i.e., reduce demand in lieu of increase capacity). Construction, maintenance, and operation costs are eligible. The TBD establishing Ordinance must specify the district boundaries, which may include all or part of the city or county establishing the TBD, as well as the transportation improvements that will be funded. Several cities in King County have established TBDs for their local improvements, including Maple Valley, Covington, and Black Diamond.

The King County Council is looking at TBDs due to dire budget constraints faced by the King County’s Department of Local Services’ Roads Division, which only is funded by unincorporated area residents even through a good portion of its infrastructure (roads and bridges) are used by pass-through traffic from cites throughout the County.

## Local Subarea Plan

As the Area Council prepares to review the *Preliminary Plan* for the Greater Maple Valley/Cedar River (GMV/CR) Community Service Area (CSA) Subarea Plan—a long-range community vision over the next 20 years, several potential areas of interest have been identified.

The *Preliminary Plan* will consist of the following major Chapters: *Land Use & Zoning; Housing & Human Services; Environment; Parks, Open Space, & Cultural Resources; Transportation; Services & Utilities; and Economic Development*. King County has provided key upcoming dates:

April 15, 2026 The *Preliminary Plan* will be released to the Public.

April 23, 2026 King County will host a virtual Public meeting in the evening to discuss the plan and the planning process.

May 18, 2026 The public comment period closes after 34 days.

The Area Council's four subject-matter committees will review the *Preliminary Plan* based on its seven Guiding Principles:

### 1. CAPITAL FACILITIES

Do not locate regional capital facilities outside the urban growth area unless it is demonstrated that a non-urban site is the most appropriate location for such a facility. Do not provide urban services in rural areas. Design services for limited access when they are needed to solve isolated health and sanitation problems, so as not to increase development potential of the surrounding Rural Area. Provide a realistic plan to close the Cedar Hills Regional Landfill.

### 2. CODE ENFORCEMENT

Prioritize Code Enforcement; Enforce Haul-Route Agreements.

### 3. INDUSTRIAL FACILITIES

Do not allow Industrial-scale operations including: Materials Processing Facilities (requires change to KC Code 21A.08.080 — *Manufacturing*); Composting Facilities; and Winery/Brewery/Distillery retail tasting facilities. Tighten “vesting” rules for when a permit application is found to be “complete.” Do not allow Upzones.

### 5. PLANNING

Ensure consistency of plans among adjacent jurisdictions as required by the State's Growth Management Act to ensure consistency for connecting routes.

### 6. CONCURRENCY

Develop, implement, and evaluate concurrency programs and methods that fully consider growth targets, service needs, and level-of-service standards. Work to coordinate rate of future growth in small suburban cities to be concurrent with the provision of adequate capacity on state highways to serve the city-to-city traffic flows. Institute fees for Urban pass-through traffic on County roads.

### 7. TRANSPORTATION

Replace all existing impact mitigation and concurrency management standards and regulations with a new system based on vehicle-miles-of-travel as a common basis for measurement of development impacts, mitigation, and multi-modal system capacity.

## School Siting

The 2011 King County *School Siting Task Force (SSTF)* developed a set of recommendations by consensus, which included the Tahoma School District's (TSD's) existing ~80-ac Rural Area site on the north side of Summit-Landsburg Rd ~1/2 mile east of Maple Valley city limits. The Summit Trail Middle School is located on half of the site and the other half is forest. The developed portion of site

is served by sewer from the City of Maple Valley. It was determined by the SSTF that conversion of the *undeveloped* portion of the site would remove existing forest and associated benefits to water quality and flood-risk reduction in Cedar River Critical Aquifer Recharge Area (Class 1).

Although TSD, over the last 25 years, has completed several capacity additions at existing schools to accommodate growth needs, capacity pressures continue at all grade levels, but unevenly. For example, TSD needs to address significant overcrowding at Tahoma High School.

The SSTF encouraged TSD to: (1) Work with the county and cities in the district to explore opportunities for finding an alternative site within the Urban Growth Area (UGA) that would meet the need for additional capacity that development of another school would provide OR (2) If no viable alternative site that fits within the district's financial plans can be expeditiously found, the availability of sewer and an existing school on the site present compelling reasons for development of the site to meet the district's needs. It also was recommended that, since TSD's Summit-Trail site has conservation value, any new development occurring *adjacent* to the existing school should seek to minimize impacts to the site's forest cover.

Since the Area Council's February Monthly Meeting, where TSD officials were guests, TSD has met with King County Department of Local Services' Director Leon Richardson regarding the "*Donut Hole*," owned by King County, but completely *within* the City of Maple Valley. King County is open to looking at possibilities with that site, but TSD is concerned about potentially high purchase costs. At that meeting they also discussed the process of being able to build on TSD's property next to Summit Trail Middle School. King County stated TSD would need to go through the **PF-22** process, which could take at least a year, if not longer, from start to finish. That process includes:

- a) Shared public facilities such as play fields, parking areas and access drives;
- b) School acquisition or lease of appropriate public lands;
- c) Regulatory changes such as allowing schools to locate in additional zones or revised development standards; and
- d) School design standards that reduce land requirements (such as multi-story structures or reduced footprint) while still meeting programmatic needs.

TSD Superintendent, Ginger Callison, who attended the Area Council's March meeting, stated the Tahoma's Capital Facilities Committee is most interested in using district-owned land for future school construction to keep costs down for taxpayers. The "*Donut Hole*," near Tahoma High School, may be available for purchase, but is not the committee's preferred option due to the cost of the land and potential environmental cleanup concerns from past uses of the land. Superintendent Callison stated that, as part of the **PF-22** process, TSD plans to submit its application this Spring to use the district-owned land neighboring Summit Trail Middle School.

### **Next Area Council Meeting**

The next Area Council monthly meeting will be held **Monday, April 6, 2026**, 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](#) and local *NextDoor* platforms. You can also find us on our [FaceBook page](#). 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 in King County. 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 Rural Team* and its *Joint Transportation Initiative*.

The twelve-seat Area Council has four open seats. If you wish to join, 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 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: *Economic, Environment, Growth Management, Transportation, Public Relations, or Train Show*—please see the Area Council’s [Website](#) and use the drop-down menu under *Committees*.

On our Home page recent *Monthly Meeting Summary Articles* can be in the *2026/2025 GMVUAC Monthly Meeting Articles* box (or by using the drop-down menu under *Correspondence*).