



Inside: Messages from the Chair and information on Civic Awards and Candidate Evaluations

Investigate Issues Facing King County

Voters and policy-makers throughout King County need informed analysis in order to make wise decisions. That's why the Municipal League's Issues Management Committee is digging into topics ranging from government reform to land-use policy:

- Last month, after hearing from experts on all sides of the debate, the transportation subcommittee weighed in on how to replace Seattle's viaduct freeway. The group developed the League's recommendation that voters cast blank ballots in the March 13 election – the first time the League took such a position in its nearly 100-year history.

"The process that has gotten us to this point is a failure, characterized by abdicated responsibility and unwillingness to advance sound public decisions," the League said in an op-ed piece that ran March 5 in *The Seattle Times*. "The deadline to reach a decision by the end of the current legislative session is unwise and unnecessary. City officials and other advocates have offered a variety of proposals that are in need of much more review. Citizens are being handed a hot potato but no real authority to settle the question. We refuse to go along."

- The League also has been closely following developments in Olympia over proposals for a new government agency with the authority to plan, fund and manage the region's transportation system. In an open letter to the governor and legislative leaders, the League urged support for a bill that wouldn't upset progress already being made on transportation infrastructure.

- Although the state's voters last year rejected Initiative 933, which would have upended land-use laws, debate during the campaign highlighted the controversy over public and private property rights. The League plans to examine whether local policies and procedures effectively and fairly accommodate sometimes conflicting interests, and where improvements can be made.

- King County's emergency preparedness is an issue in the wake of this winter's storms and with the destruction of Hurricane Katrina a model of a worst-case scenario. The committee plans to be briefed on the coordination among parties responsible for emergency planning and response, including state and local government agencies, utilities, health providers and public safety officials. The next step will be investigating how to help improve efforts to prepare for and react to disasters.

- The Port of Seattle has recently seen several personnel and procedural changes. The committee is also mapping out a scope of work to review that often overlooked government.

Anyone interested in these and other policy matters facing King County is urged to participate in the Issues Management Committee. For the schedule of upcoming events, contact the League office at admin@munileague.org or 206-686-8333.

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Guest columnist

Cast a blank viaduct ballot

By Bruce Carter
Special to The Times

The Municipal League of King County has concluded that the March 13 advisory ballot asking voters to select between two Alaskan Way Viaduct replacement options has no practical significance. For the first time in our almost 100-year history, we are urging voters to cast a blank ballot.

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We believe the options currently under discussion need more engineering, design and analysis before voters could fairly be asked to choose. Variations of a tunnel, of the surface-and-transit proposals and of the approaches to rebuilding or retrofitting the current structure should be examined.

The Alaskan Way Viaduct separates Seattle from its waterfront. Should it be rebuilt? Replaced? Or maybe it's time to step back and rethink the project.

Upcoming Events

April 26: Civic Awards at Space Needle

May 7: Conference on Clean Energy, Transportation and the Future at Microsoft Conference Center, Redmond

May 22: Comedy night fundraiser at Comedy Underground, in Pioneer Square

June 12, 13: Candidate Evaluation Committee training

June 25: Candidate evaluation process begins

Aug. 21: Primary election

The View From the Chair

The Municipal League is off to a great start in 2007 -- its 97th year. We are fortunate to have the politically diverse perspectives of a strong Board of Trustees, with knowledgeable volunteers directing all facets of our work. Thank you to our stalwart sponsors and members whose increasing support is essential.

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Our mission of promoting good government that is open, effective and accountable is increasingly important. In an age of sound bites, attack ads, huge political war chests and vanishing daily newspapers, the voters of Martin Luther King County have an increasing need for the League's non-partisan studies, recommendations and candidate evaluations. Although not everyone agrees with every recommendation, our non-partisan reputation for pursuing the long-term view predicated on review, careful analysis, and accountability is widely recognized.

That non-partisan perspective is more necessary than ever, especially with the move to 100 percent mail-in ballots and with more voters relying on the Internet for information. The League is determined to marshal additional resources to make more helpful information available. With your support, we plan to expand our web site to offer a wider range of analysis and information. We hope that you will decide to support this effort by increasing your financial support for the League.

Additional information on this important initiative is available from the League office.

Also, ticket sales are underway for our gala 2007 Civic Awards celebration on April 26 at the Space Needle. The event provides a wonderful opportunity to support the League's Candidate Evaluation Committee and Municipal League Foundation while meeting local politicians and candidates for office, and celebrating the unsung heroines and heroes who have done so much to improve our county's communities. Please buy tickets for yourselves and you public-spirited friends at www.munileague.org or by calling 1-800-838-3006.

Finally, you are invited to participate in the League's issues work, which is open to members who want to hear from local experts and study important issues confronting our area. Please call the League office in order to participate in an even-handed review.

I hope to see you at Civic Awards,



*Municipal League Chair,
Bruce Carter*

Meet the Board of Trustees

The Municipal League welcomes a slate of new trustees for 2007 (in alphabetical order):

- **Steve Call** of the Cascade Water Alliance previously served as Assistant King County Executive and director of the Office of Management. He is working with the issues committee.
- **Rachel Jackson** of the Gates Foundation previously served on the Municipal League Foundation board and several years ago was the League's office manager.
- **Chris Johnson** of Bellevue, policy director for the Washington State Attorney General, previously worked for the King County Council.
- **Rick Lewis** of Intel previously served in a leadership position with the Candidate Evaluation Committee.
- Former State Senator **Dan MacDonald** of Bellevue returns after an extended tour in state politics. He recently served on the Regional Transportation Commission along with board member **Mary Gates** of Federal Way.

Visit the League web site for in-depth information about current issues facing King County
www.munileague.org

Meet the Board of Trustees *(continued)*

- **Bradley Meacham** of Microsoft is an experienced journalist. He serves as chair of the communications committee.
- **Kristin Peterson** is director of legal affairs and clinical policy for the Washington State Hospital Association and is a former public defender.
- **Kathy Putt** is director of franchising and general affairs at Comcast.
- Consultant **Lucy Steers**, a former League vice-chair who has remained committed to League issues, returns to the board after a brief hiatus.
- **Gary Strannigan**, Safeco director of government relations, carries on Safeco's long history of League support.
- **Jen Watkins** of Conservation Northwest has done an extraordinary job preparing for the 2007 Civic Awards as the League's event chair. She is a former League office manager.
- Seattle attorney **Rodney Wendt** previously served as chair of the League's viaduct subcommittee.

Volunteer to Create Better Government

Daylight-saving time isn't the only thing leaping forward on the calendar this year.

Due to a change in Washington's election calendar, the Municipal League's candidate evaluations are starting in June. That means the League needs volunteers earlier than ever -- and it means they will complete their important work earlier than ever.

The process has been streamlined by reducing the Candidate Evaluation Committee schedule to eight evenings of interviews spread over two weeks. There is also more time built in to research candidates. But the key to maintaining a short schedule is having enough volunteers to share the effort.

The legislature moved the primary election forward a month to the third Tuesday in August. The deadline for candidates to file for office moved up by about six weeks to the first week of June.

To accommodate the revised election calendar, the League this year will offer training on the evaluation process and local issues on June 12-13. Volunteers will start meeting with the candidates in late June and, following a week off for the July 4 holiday, the committees will complete their work in mid-July. Ratings will be released by the end of the month.

Volunteers should sign up now! Pass the word to your friends about this opportunity to make good government happen. Visit www.munileague.org or call the League at 206-264-1070 for an application and more information.

Celebrate Improving the Community

The League's annual celebration of citizens and organizations who work to improve local government will be held April 26 at the Space Needle. Started by the League in 1960, the Civic Awards aim to focus attention on often unappreciated efforts and are intended to inspire more citizens to get involved in building healthy communities.

This year's event includes an awards ceremony, open bar, heavy appetizers, and a silent auction to benefit the Municipal League Foundation. Here are the 2007 awardees:

- **Walt Crowley**, Citizen of the Year
- **Fred Jarrett**, Public Official of the Year
- **William Ruckelshaus**, Warren G. Magnuson Award
- **Randy Revelle**, James R. Ellis Regional Leadership Award
- **John Okamoto**, Public Employee of the Year
- **Asian Counseling and Referral Service**, Organization of the Year
- **Erica C. Barnett**, Government News Reporting of the Year
- **George Cheung**, Doug Mason Memorial Award
- **Kathy Elias**, Mary Skelton Memorial Volunteer Award



The event is 6-9 p.m. Tickets are \$50 and can be ordered directly at <http://www.brownpapertickets.com/event/9564> or by phone at 1-800-838-3006.

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ABOUT THIS PUBLICATION...

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