



DATE: November 20, 2023

SUBJECT: Puget Sound Regional Committees Update

Executive Board

At its September 28 meeting, the Executive Board:

- **Approved certification of Pierce County Countywide Planning Policies.** On May 17, 2022, Pierce County and its cities adopted and ratified a major update to countywide planning policies. PSRC then reviewed planning policies based on a comparative analysis of other multicounty planning policies and made sure they aligned with the goals of the Regional Growth Strategy.
- **Adopted non-voting seats on the Transportation Policy Board and Growth Management Policy Board.** The changes include a permanent seat to be shared by four Public Health Agencies and a seat for the Equity Advisory Committee. Another change includes altering the structure of eight non-voting seats to “up to six” seats. The changes include recruitment on an as-needed basis; rather than three-year staggered terms on a once-a-year schedule. The revised structure will be implemented for the 2023 non-voting recruitment process this fall.
- **Heard an update from Washington State Ferries,** including issues the ferry system is grappling with and ways PSRC can support the system. Washington has the largest ferry system in the nation, with 21 auto-passenger ferries and around 6.8 million total riders from January 1 to May 3. However, vessel availability and difficulty in workforce recruitment, retention and development have led to challenges.
- **Discussed the Regional Safety Plan draft scope of work** developed through funding awarded by the USDOT Safe Streets and Roads for All (SS4A) Grant Program. The draft scope of work was developed with feedback from the Regional Safety Summit, as well as to components required by USDOT under the provisions of the SS4A planning grant.
- **Provided feedback on recommendations to the 2024 Washington State Legislature.** PSRC is proposing a framework of keeping the region moving, increasing housing choices and affordability, significantly reducing greenhouse gas emissions, and sustaining a strong economy. The Executive Committee will finalize recommendations and the Executive Board is expected to adopt the legislative agenda in December.

At its October 26 meeting, the Executive Board:

- **Approved projects for Rural Town Center and Corridors (RTCC) Program and**



Transportation Alternatives Program (TAP) funding. In May 2023, PSRC released a call for projects for all eligible sponsors for the RTCC program. After eligible projects were evaluated by countywide organizations and staff, the RTCC Project Selection Committee developed a recommended list of projects to receive the approximately \$6.09 million available. In June 2023, PSRC released a call for projects under TAP. Staff scored applications for eligible projects based on the adopted project evaluation criteria, and the TAP Project Selection Committee developed a list of projects recommended to receive the \$23.6 million available. The City received funding for one TAP application for the *Eastrail – Mountains to Sound Greenway Regional Trails Connection Project* in the amount of \$2.5 million.

- **Provided feedback on the 2024 Project Selection Process**, including policy issues under consideration. Every two to three years, a competitive project selection process is conducted to distribute PSRC's federal funds. Safety, equity and climate are priority themes in the Regional Transportation Plan and PSRC's funding processes. Staff provided background on the project evaluation criteria, information on the projects funded in the last cycle, administrative details of the project selection process and key policy questions related to safety, climate and equity. Discussion will continue through the end of the year, culminating in a recommendation on the policy framework in January 2024.
- **Heard a federal legislative update** from PSRC's federal consultants from Holland & Knight about federal policy, funding and legislative efforts in Washington D.C. Information was shared about key competitive Bipartisan Infrastructure Law (BIL) and Inflation Reduction Act (IRA) opportunities, the change in House speakers, a Fiscal Year 2024 appropriations update, and competitive House and Senate races.

Transportation Policy Board (TPB)

At its October 12 meeting, the TPB:

- **Recommended approval of projects for Rural Town Center and Corridors (RTCC) Program and Transportation Alternatives Program (TAP) funding**, as described above.
- **Received a briefing on the 2024 legislative priorities and was asked for feedback on potential legislative policy items.** PSRC is proposing a framework of keeping the region moving; increasing housing choices and affordability; significantly reducing greenhouse gas emissions; and sustaining a strong economy. The board provided feedback, and the Executive Committee will finalize recommendations and propose the Executive Board adopt the legislative agenda at the December meeting.
- **Heard an update on the Climate Pollution Reduction Grant Program.** The Puget



Sound Clean Air Agency is leading an effort to develop a Regional Climate Action Plan, funded by the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) under the Climate Pollution Reduction Grants program. Washington has received \$3 million, and the Puget Sound region received \$1 million for planning work. EPA has also recently released the Notice of Funding Opportunity for \$4.6 billion in implementation funding, to be tied to the planning work. Applications are due April 2024, and it is anticipated that grants will be awarded within tiers between \$2 million and \$500 million.

- **Prepared for the 2024 project selection process.** A competitive project selection process is conducted every two to three years for the distribution of PSRC's federal funds. The next process will be conducted in 2024 for PSRC's 2027-2028 Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) and Federal Transit Administration (FTA) funds. The board discussed the background of the project evaluation criteria, information on previously funded projects, administrative details of the project selection process and key policy questions. Preparation for the 2024 project selection process will continue over the next several months resulting in a recommendation on the Policy Framework in January 2024.

The TPB met on November 9. A summary will be included in the next Intergovernmental Affairs packet. The next TPB meet is scheduled for December 14. Councilmember Jennifer Robertson represents Bellevue on the TPB.

Growth Management Policy Board (GMPB)

At its October 5 meeting, the GMPB:

- **Received a briefing on the Transit Oriented Development event held on September 29 called, "From Pandemic to Prosperity: Downtowns Reimagined."** The event focused on the recovery and reimagining of downtowns, the impacts of the pandemic and new innovations to revitalize the region's downtown. The event heard presentations from regional and national speakers who looked at data associated with the recovery of downtowns and heard from local leaders about recovery strategies for King County Metro, Seattle, Tacoma and Bothell. In the afternoon, there were two walking tours exploring areas of Downtown Seattle, viewing Pike/Pine Renaissance improvements and the King County civic campus.
- **Received a briefing on PSRC Summer Planning Academy (SPA).** The cohort hosted 23 students from across the region and educated them on planning topics, introduced them to panelists and speakers and conducted site visits. The topics covered were Metropolitan Planning Organization basics, transit, environment and a combined session on housing and equity. With successful completion of SPA, students received a \$500 scholarship.



- **Received a briefing on the 2024 legislative priorities and was asked for feedback on potential legislative policy items.** PSRC is proposing a framework of keeping the region moving; increasing housing choices and affordability; significantly reducing greenhouse gas emissions; and sustaining a strong economy. The GMPB provided feedback, and the Executive Committee will finalize recommendations and propose the Executive Board adopt the legislative agenda at the December meeting.
- **Received a briefing on the Regional Centers work program.** Centers are the hallmark of VISION 2050 and the Regional Growth Strategy; the region has designated 30 regional growth centers and ten manufacturing/industrial centers. PSRC is developing a data dashboard with profiles for individual regional centers. Data includes measures on demographics, housing, transportation, and urban form. The agency is also creating a 2025 monitoring and redesignation process based on the Regional Centers Framework and will finalize the updated center profiles and return to the board in November to discuss.

The GMPB met on November 2 and a meeting summary will be included in the next Intergovernmental Affairs packet. Mayor Lynne Robinson represents Bellevue on the GMPB.