

**COUNCIL SUMMARY BACKGROUND BRIEFING:  
KING COUNTY REGIONAL COMMITTEES AND OTHER ISSUES  
*February 2022***

This briefing summarizes recent actions taken by the three regional committees formed as a result of the merger of King County and Metro. The three regional committees are the Regional Policy Committee, the Regional Water Quality Committee, and the Regional Transit Committee. Staff will also include updates on other regional issues as appropriate (e.g., King County Flood Control District, King Conservation District, Affordable Housing Committee, King County Board of Health, King County Regional Homelessness Authority). Summaries also include the work of the Growth Management Planning Council (GMPC). Formed in the early 1990s to comply with the Growth Management Act requirements for collaboration of counties and their cities on Countywide Planning Policies, the GMPC meets three to four times per year to consider amendments to the Countywide Planning Policies and to monitor progress on implementation. These updates are intended to be summary briefings; staff can provide more details on any of the items below.

**REGIONAL POLICY COMMITTEE (RPC)**

At its February 9 meeting, the RPC:

- **Received a briefing on the County's budget.** In June 2021, the County implemented their eighth COVID emergency supplemental budget, appropriating \$200 million in funding, including \$70 million from the American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA). The County's 2020 Federal Emergency Management Agency reimbursement-eligible spending has been documented and the County is in the process of filing for 2021 eligible spending. The current emergency declaration is extended to mid-April at 100 percent reimbursement. The County has distributed \$219 million to landlords and tenants with \$78 million remaining. The remaining funds are expected to last through late-March; however, the County is seeking additional state and federal resources. While applications are still being accepted, the County may close applications due to lack of confirmed future funding. A new COVID-19 recovery program created by County Executive Dow Constantine is connecting people experiencing homelessness to jobs and housing support, starting with crews that are restoring and enhancing regional parks and trails. Employment opportunities are increasing steadily; however, securing housing through this program remains a challenge largely due to staffing.
- **Approved the RPC's 2022 work plan.** The work plan includes "mandatory referral" items, which are topics that the County Council is required to refer to the RPC for review and a potential recommendation. The Veteran Seniors and Human Services Levy (VSHSL) is a mandatory referral item that will likely be a major RPC work item in 2022-2023. First approved by voters in 2005, the levy has been renewed three times. The 2018-2023 VSHSL includes a property tax of 11 cents per \$1,000 assessed valuation.

- **Received a briefing on the King County Flood Control District (FCD).** In 2007, the King County Council created a new countywide special purpose district, the King FCD. Its mission is to bring a comprehensive approach to flood management and provides funding to improve the County's aging and inadequate flood protection facilities. The FCD works to implement the 2006 King County Flood Hazard Management Plan (Plan) which is the county's plan for managing its 500 flood control facilities. The Plan also identifies priority capital improvement projects and floodplain management program needs. The FCD recently approved its 2022 budget of \$163.5 million. During budget deliberations, FCD staff noted its Financial Plan projected a negative ending cash fund balance by 2026.
- **Received a briefing on the 2020 VSHSL Annual Report.** As described above, the VSHSL renewal will likely be a major work item for the RPC in 2022-2023. The VSHSL connects servicemembers and veterans, residents aged 55 or older, and resilient communities to programs and services that help them live healthy, productive and meaningful lives. It helps individuals and families transition to affordable housing, get job training, find employment, receive behavioral health treatment, and more. Levy revenue is allocated equally to support veterans, seniors, and healthy communities. The 2018-2023 VSHSL will expire next year. Bellevue staff expects that Executive Constantine will transmit a replacement levy proposal to the County Council later this year or early next year.

The next RPC meeting is scheduled for March 9. Councilmember John Stokes serves on the RPC.

### **REGIONAL TRANSIT COMMITTEE (RTC)**

At its January 19 meeting, the RTC:

- **Elected Kent Councilmember Toni Troutner as Vice Chair for 2022.**
- **Discussed and approved the Metro Transit 2021 System Evaluation Report.** This annual report assesses the status of Metro's services and identifies investment needs outlined in the Service Guidelines. Because the 2021 Report was prepared using information collected during the COVID-19 pandemic, data from this Report will not be used to inform 2022 service decisions. During the pandemic, ridership fell significantly as more people worked from home and limited non-essential trips. Metro is not planning to make any significant service change decisions in 2022, but Metro will monitor traffic levels as the region recovers from the pandemic to adjust schedules as needed as traffic returns.
- **Discussed the RTC's 2022 work plan.** County staff presented a draft work program that includes action items, including the Metro Connects Implementation Report due in May. It also includes briefings on a new transit performance measures dashboard, RapidRide K Line progress and a RapidRide prioritization plan update. RTC members can expect to have briefings on the PSRC draft Regional Transportation Plan, Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act, East Link Connections service changes, and an overview of the 2023-2024 County budget.

At its February 16 meeting, the RTC:

- **Approved the work plan for 2022.**
- **Discussed the Puget Sound Regional Council's draft Regional Transportation Plan (RTP).** The RTP serves as the region's long-range transportation plan under both federal and state law. It is developed to implement VISION 2050, the region's long-range plan for growth management. Key policy focus areas of the RTP include access to transit; safety; equity; climate; local agency needs; and, longer range transportation investments such as inter-regional high-speed rail or passenger-only ferries. The plan must also be supported by a financial strategy that shows the region has a reasonable capacity to fund the investments envisioned in the plan. PSRC is seeking public comment on the draft RTP through February 28, 2022.
- **Received a briefing on Next Generation One Regional Card for All (ORCA).** King County Metro is one of seven regional transit agencies that worked together to develop a smart card fare payment technology called One Regional Card for All (ORCA). The existing ORCA provides a common, noncash fare system throughout the regional participants' service areas. Next Generation ORCA will launch in Spring 2022 with a new website and mobile apps for Android and Apple. Anticipated benefits of the new system include immediate availability of value they load onto their ORCA card and expanded ways and locations to purchase and load value onto ORCA cards. The system is anticipated to eventually provide for phone tap-to-pay functionality from Apple Wallet and Google Wallet.

The next RTC meeting is scheduled for March 16. Bellevue City Councilmember Jennifer Robertson serves on the RTC.

#### **REGIONAL WATER QUALITY COMMITTEE (RWQC)**

At its February 2 meeting, the RWQC:

- **Elected Lloyd Warren, Sammamish Plateau Water District Commissioner as RWQC Vice Chair.**
- **Discussed the draft RWQC 2022 work plan.** County staff presented a draft workplan. Key items include the 2023 proposed sewer rate, federal infrastructure funding bill, Clean Water Plan, Combined Sewer Overflow Consent Decree negotiations, and Ecology's Nutrient General Permit.
- **Received an update on status of Ecology's Nutrients General Permit (Permit)** The Permit was made effective on January 1, 2022. It regulates 58 publicly owned wastewater treatment facilities by limiting the amount of nitrogen that can be discharged into Puget Sound, establishing reporting provisions, and imposes penalties for not meeting Permit requirements.

In late December 2022, King County, in addition to nine other entities, appealed the Permit. King County and the City of Tacoma also filed separate Motions for Stay. The State Pollution Control Hearings Board (PCHB) has jurisdiction over the matter. It is anticipated the PCHB will decide on the Motions for Stay in the coming months and take up the appeals in 2023.

The next RWQC meeting is scheduled for March 2. Councilmember Conrad Lee serves on the RWQC.

### **AFFORDABLE HOUSING COMMITTEE (AHC):**

At its February 9 meeting, the AHC:

- **Received a briefing on State projected housing needs under HB 1220. the 2022 State Legislative Agenda.** In 2021, the state amended portions of the Growth Management Act (GMA, through E2SHB 1220) that change the minimum housing planning requirements for cities and counties subject to the Act. New amendments mandate that jurisdictions that plan under the GMA now must “plan for and accommodate housing affordable to all economic segments of the population” whereas the prior language required jurisdictions to encourage the availability of affordable housing. E2SHB 1220 also instructs the Washington State Department of Commerce (Commerce) to provide an inventory and analysis of existing and projected housing needs that identifies the number of housing units necessary to manage projected growth, including projections for units affordable to moderate- to extremely low-income households, emergency housing, and emergency shelters, and permanent supportive housing. Commerce decided to produce its projections at the countywide level. Commerce anticipates releasing draft methodologies in May-August of 2022.
- **Received a briefing on Growth Management Planning Council (GMPC) Motion 21- 1 Project Scope and Schedule.** On June 23, 2021, the GMPC adopted recommended amendments to the King County Countywide Planning Policies (CPP), including amendments to align the CPP Housing Chapter with recent changes to the state’s GMA, Puget Sound Regional Council’s VISION 2050, and the Regional Affordable Housing Task Force’s Final Report and Recommendations, while centering equitable outcomes in the policy amendments. As part of the motion to adopt, the GMPC directed the AHC, a committee of the GMPC, to commence a collaborative effort to address housing need and affordability.
- **Approved the 2022 AHC Work Plan.** The AHC’s charter requires the Committee to adopt an annual work plan to guide efforts to recommend actions and assess regional progress to advance affordable housing solutions recommended within the Regional Affordable Housing Task Force Five Year Action Plan. The Committee voted to adopt the recommended 2022 work plan.
- **Received a briefing on the State Legislative Agenda.** The AHC adopted 2022 State Legislative Priorities in November 2021. At the February 9 AHC meeting, members received a

briefing and update on priorities still under consideration by the state legislature. Relevant bills that surfaced this session and their progress were discussed with the Committee.

The next AHC meeting is scheduled for March. Mayor Lynne Robinson serves on the AHC.