

**COUNCIL SUMMARY BACKGROUND BRIEF:
PUGET SOUND REGIONAL COUNCIL (PSRC)
*February 2022***

EXECUTIVE BOARD

At its January 27 meeting, the Executive Board:

- **Adopted a 2022 amendment to PSRC's Title VI Plan.** An update to the Title VI Plan is needed to reflect an update to the organizational structure and a Title VI Coordinator staffing change. Nancy Buonanno Grennan, Deputy Executive Director, will serve as the sole Title VI Coordinator.
- **Approved Renton Councilmember Ed Prince as the Growth Management Policy Board Chair.**
- **Approved the 2022 Policy Framework for PSRC's federal funds.** 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 2022 for PSRC's 2025-2026 Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) and Federal Transit Administration (FTA) funds. The policy focus for the project selection process supports centers and the corridors that serve them, directed by the policies in VISION 2050. Based on feedback from PSRC's Project Selection Task Force, equity and safety has been strengthened. Additionally, FHWA fund policies are updated to provide guidance about which emergency requests for funding may be considered. A Call for Projects will be issued in February with recommended projects being reviewed by the Transportation Policy Board in July.
- **Continued discussion of the Regional Housing Strategy.** The Regional Housing Strategy is intended to serve as a "playbook" of regional and local actions that move towards the region's goals of preserving, improving, and expanding housing; providing a range of affordable, accessible, healthy, and safe housing choices to every resident; and, promoting fair and equal access to housing for all people. Based on feedback from the October 28 and December 2 Executive Board briefings, implementation of the Regional Housing Strategy will focus on:
 - **Monitoring** – A framework to track performance and outcomes over time and identify challenges or barriers;
 - **Typology** – Develop and use a typology to identify the strategies, tools, and actions that have the most potential to make an impact in different types of places; and,
 - **Plan Review** – Develop resources and guidance; convene stakeholders to support the 2024 major periodic comprehensive plan update.

It is anticipated that the Regional Housing Strategy will return for approval at the February Executive Board meeting.

The next meeting of the Executive Board is scheduled for February 24. Mayor Lynne Robinson represents Bellevue on the Executive Board.

GROWTH MANAGEMENT POLICY BOARD (GMPB)

At its February 3 meeting, the GMPB:

- **Postponed action on Black Diamond's comprehensive plan conditional certification until March 3.** Board members wanted additional time to consider the impacts of extending conditional certification status until the next periodic update deadline, currently set for June 30, 2024.
- **Received a briefing on the Regional Transportation Plan and project selection process.** The draft Regional Transportation Plan (2022-2050) is currently open for public comment. The Project Selection Process guides the distribution of PSRC's federal transportation funds. A Project Selection Task Force was organized in 2021 to evaluate the policies and procedures for the upcoming 2022 project selection process. The Task Force recommended strengthening criteria related to safety and equity, emphasized in VISION 2050, and the creation of a new Equity Pilot Program to be developed in collaboration with the Equity Advisory Committee. As described above, the Executive Board approved the updated framework at its January 27 meeting. A Call for Projects will be released in February for the 2025-2026 funding cycle.
- **Received an update on the adopted 2022-2026 Regional Economic Strategy and focus areas for implementation in 2022.** The strategy is a five-year strategic blueprint for regional collaboration around economic development. The focus areas for 2022 include:
 - Analysis and strategy development: Space sector, workforce recovery, COVID economic impacts
 - Technical assistance: Grant applications and comprehensive plan guidance
 - Amplification of regional economic development efforts: Workforce, housing, childcare, broadband, cluster accelerators
- **Received a briefing on Open Space, Rural, and Resource Lands Conservation Toolkit.** PSRC staff is working to develop a toolkit of regional open space conservation and other rural and resource lands protection strategies. The GMPB was briefed on the development of the toolkit and asked to provide additional direction. The GMPB was also reminded about the Department of Natural Resources Urban Forestry grants that are now available.
- **Received an update on Stormwater Parks.** PSRC was awarded a Puget Sound National Estuary Program grant to help catalyze the development of new stormwater parks. The grant is being used to provide jurisdictions with technical assistance for developing new parks. Board members were briefed on progress made to develop new parks. Grant funding has been

awarded to jurisdictions in King, Kitsap, and Snohomish counties. Pierce County jurisdictions are encouraged to consider applying for the technical assistance opportunity.

The next meeting of GMPB is scheduled for March 3. Mayor Lynne Robinson represents Bellevue on the GMPB.

TRANSPORTATION POLICY BOARD (TPB)

At its February 10 meeting, the TPB:

- **Approved the release of project recommendations for the Rural Town Centers and Corridors Program (RTCC) and Transportation Alternatives Program (TAP) for public comment.** Bellevue's Main Street Off-Street Multipurpose Pathway (108th Avenue SE to 112th Avenue SE) Project is recommended for full funding through the TAP. The project installs wide, multimodal access connecting the 108th Avenue Downtown Bikeway with the new East Main Light Rail Station, as well as filling another gap in the Lake-to-Lake Trail and furthering access toward the Eastrail trail. No other Bellevue projects were submitted. After releasing the recommended project list for public review and comment, the final action is scheduled in March.
- **Discussed the 2022 TPB preliminary work program.** The work program includes core functions to meet federal and state requirements and regional policy functions; ongoing or new process improvements such as improved application materials for the Transportation Improvement Program; and, implementing Regional Transportation Plan (RTP) priority areas once the General Assembly approves the Plan.
- **Discussed the RTP schedule and preliminary key themes from public comment.** The draft RTP was released for public comment from January 13 – February 28. An online open house is available with three public webinars in early February. The TPB and Executive Board are scheduled to recommend approval of the RTP at its meeting in April. The RTP is then scheduled for adoption at the General Assembly meeting in May. As of February 10, preliminary comment themes centered on support for more bicycle and pedestrian infrastructure; mixed support and opposition for transit implementation; safety; mixed support to highway and roadway investments; and, support for user fees or road usage charges.

The next TPB meeting is scheduled for March 10. Councilmember Jennifer Robertson represents Bellevue on the TPB.

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT DISTRICT BOARD

At its February 2 meeting, the Economic Development District (EDD) Board:

- **Elected EDD Board officers for the 2022-24 term.** Based on recommendations of a nominating committee which was selected at its December meeting, the EDD Board elected Axel Strakeljahn as President and Councilmember Conrad Lee of Bellevue as Vice President.
- **Approved presidential appointments for the 2022-24 term.** In addition to the EDD Board seats allocated to regional cities, counties, ports, tribes, and other local jurisdictions and economic development organizations, the bylaws of the EDD Board give the incoming EDD Board President the authority to nominate Presidential Appointments to the board to ensure adequate representation. The Board approved a slate of presidential appointments, with the term completing at the EDD Board's annual meeting in February 2024. The appointments are:
 - Tom Florino, Amazon
 - Alex Pietsch, Washington State University
 - Terry Ryan, Snohomish County
 - Michael Greer, Arts Fund
 - Emily Wittman, Aerospace Futures Alliance
- **Discussed the Industrial Lands Analysis which is underway and being led by PSRC staff.** This document provides an assessment of the major industrial lands in the region, to inform economic development and land use planning work across the Puget Sound.

In 2015, PSRC published an Industrial Lands Analysis that provides an assessment of these lands in the region. The report inventoried a net supply of 28,615 acres of industrial lands, primarily in 13 geographic clusters across the region. The assessment demonstrated sufficient supply of industrial lands through 2040, but observed that demand, development pressures, and activities on these lands varied by subarea, and that tailored strategies would be required to support the industrial land base in the future. While the general inventory of industrial lands has not changed dramatically in the region since the 2015 report was published, several new issues have emerged:

- Last-mile delivery and package distribution have grown rapidly with changing spending habits
- Changes to state tax collection have modified the financial incentives for industrial land for local jurisdictions
- Pressure to convert industrial lands for non-manufacturing uses continues to rise
- Manufacturing jobs are increasingly seen as providing access to opportunity

The EDD Board was asked for feedback on early scoping for the industrial lands update. A draft report may be prepared in the late summer with a goal to complete the report in late 2022 as cities and counties begin work on local plan updates.

- **Discussed the Regional Workforce Recovery Planning Project, which is being led by PSRC staff and a project consulting team.** The project was designed to provide actionable

regional labor market information to a broad array of stakeholders on in-demand industries and occupations, as well as available regional training programs. Of course, the impacts of COVID-19 have underscored that economic opportunity for all residents has not been readily available. So far, the consulting team has completed its analysis of stakeholder interviews, which it held across industry groups, community and technical colleges, workforce training providers and development councils, and worker and labor groups. The team also recently completed its analysis of key occupations needed in each of these four fields, as well as the available education and training programs need to fill these roles. The occupational profiles include:

- In construction; construction managers, carpenters, and construction laborers
- In manufacturing; buyers, sales managers, and logisticians
- In healthcare; registered nurses, medical assistants, and behavioral health counselors
- In information technology; software developers and quality assurance analysts, web developers and UI designers, and computer user support specialists

The consultant team is in the process of finalizing their report, which will include an outreach strategy for communicating with regional stakeholders to increase awareness of these promising occupations and improve access to information for marginalized and underrepresented communities. The full report will be finalized over the next two months.

- **Received a briefing on the EDD Board's Draft Supplemental Biennial Budget and Work Program.** The proposed supplemental budget for the coming year updates the budget's financial assumptions and reflects revenues and expenditures of approximately \$32 million, including approximately \$1.8 million in carryover grants from the previous biennium. This is a technical update which must be carried out each year to ensure that the adopted budget aligns with budget actuals.
- **Received a briefing on the Arts and Culture Economic Strategy, which is an adopted work item for 2022.** This year, PSRC will manage a consultant-led project to analyze the economic recovery and resilience of the nonprofit arts and culture industry in the Puget Sound region. Earlier reports found that overall revenue of arts agencies decreased by nearly \$100 million in the first year of the pandemic, a decline of over 21 percent. The vast majority—over 80 percent—of these organizations report that their delivery shifted significantly to online content.

PSRC's analysis of the arts and culture industry's economic recovery will build on the earlier studies and help the industry increase its resilience for future economic shocks. After a public request for qualifications and solicitation, BERK Consulting was selected as the project consultant. Over the coming months, the project team will conduct thorough data collection and analysis to inform strategy development, which will be undertaken in concert with an industry-led steering committee.