

**COUNCIL SUMMARY BACKGROUND BRIEF:
PUGET SOUND REGIONAL COUNCIL (PSRC)
April 2015**

GROWTH MANAGEMENT POLICY BOARD (GMPB)

At its April 2 meeting, the GMPB:

Discussed the City of Issaquah's application for designation as a regional growth center.

Issaquah has asked the PSRC to designate its Central Issaquah Urban Core as a regional growth center. Issaquah staff described the city's plans for transforming the area into a mixed use center with more housing, jobs, parks and open space, and better transportation connections for biking, walking and transit. PSRC staff reviewed the city's application and found that the proposed center meets the requirements for designation. The Board will make a final recommendation in June.

Considered the scope and schedule for updating the centers framework.

In addition to the 28 designated regional growth centers and eight manufacturing/industrial centers, the region has many other local centers and activity areas. The PSRC will work with member jurisdictions and other partners to develop recommendations for a common centers framework that would recognize both at the regional level. The goal is to better support local centers that help achieve the regional growth strategy.

In other business, the Growth Management Policy Board:

- Heard an update on the PSRC's housing work program, including the recent *Where We Live and Where We Learn* forum on the intersection of housing and education issues.
- Heard a presentation, *Stuck in Traffic*, highlighting congestion and other transportation trends in the region over the last five years.

The next meeting is scheduled for June 4.

TRANSPORTATION POLICY BOARD (TPB)

At its April 9 meeting, the TPB:

Received a briefing on the new Sea-Tac Sustainable Airport Master Plan.

SeaTac's Sustainable Airport Master Plan (SAMP) is a long-term blueprint for airport development to meet the needs of the traveling public, while reducing environmental and social impacts. The plan will retain the current three-runway airfield configuration, and will focus on new terminal development, roadway improvements, and facility modernization and expansion possibilities. In 2034, forecasts project SeaTac will reach 66 million annual passengers and 540,000 annual operations.

Received a Briefing on the Washington State Road Usage Charge Assessment.

Since 2012, the state legislature has repeatedly directed and funded efforts for the Washington State Transportation Commission to work with a diversified stakeholder steering committee to examine the feasibility of transitioning to a road usage charge, and then to explore policy issues, evaluate the business case, and lay out a path to potential implementation. The charge has been to conduct an assessment of Road Usage Charging and determine if it is feasible and develop a long-term implementation plan. Road Usage Charging (RUC) assesses users of the road system a per-mile charge, as opposed to the current system in which roads are paid for via a gas tax assessed on a per-gallon basis at the time fuel is purchased.

Key findings since 2012:

- A road usage charge is a proposed per mile charge that, if adopted, would be assessed for using public roads within Washington State.
- GPS and other location technologies are not required to implement a road usage charge. Motorists will have choices about how to report and pay.
- The State Transportation Commission has been studying road usage in recent years, at the direction of the legislature due to concerns about the long-term viability of the motor fuel tax arising from improvements to vehicle fuel economy, hybrid and electric vehicles.
- The Commission believes it is time to learn how a road usage charge might work in the real world, and will propose that the legislature authorize a demonstration project.
- The intent of a road usage charge is that it would co-exist with the gas tax and taxpayers would pay one or the other – not both. The reason both would exist is so that out of state drivers and taxpayers not paying the road usage charge would still pay for use of the roads via the gas tax.

During the 2014 session, the legislature provided additional funding to the Transportation Commission to further develop the concept of a road usage charge system. The Washington State Road Usage Charge Assessment – Phase 3 final report was submitted to the Governor and the Legislature in January 2015. The report summarizes the work and analyses conducted during 2014 and includes a proposal for a comprehensive, statewide demonstration project that would be carried out over four years. On April 9, Reema Griffith, Transportation Commission Executive Director, provided the Board an overview of the Washington State Road Usage Charge Assessment and next steps.

Received a sneak peak at the PSRC's 2015 Regional Macroeconomic Forecast, due to be published later this month.

By 2040, the region is forecast to reach 4.9 million people, an increase of 1.07 million over 2014 levels (cumulatively, 28 percent growth over the 26-year forecast period). The number of households would rise by 665,000 for a total of 2.12 million (a cumulative 45 percent increase). Wage and salary employment is forecast to reach 2.75 million jobs, an increase of 850,000 from 2014 levels; when self-employment and military jobs are included, regional employment reaches 2.98 million by 2040 (cumulatively, 40 percent more than 2014).

The next meeting of the TPB is scheduled for May 14.