

February 22, 2016

**COUNCIL SUMMARY BACKGROUND BRIEFING:
KING COUNTY REGIONAL COMMITTEES AND OTHER ISSUES
*February 2016***

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. We will also include updates on other regional issues (e.g., King County Flood Control District, King Conservation District) as appropriate. This is intended as a summary briefing; staff can provide more details on any of the items below.

REGIONAL POLICY COMMITTEE (RPC)

February 10 meeting summary:

- **Election of a Vice-Chair.** The Committee elected Councilmember Bill Peloza of Auburn as the Vice-Chair of the RPC. King County Councilmember Pete von Reichbauer will continue as committee Chair.
- **Received a briefing on the 2016 RPC Work Program.** The Committee was briefed on a rather extensive work program for the year. As you will recall, the RPC covers issues not within the scope of work of the Regional Transit Committee and the Regional Water Quality Committee. Its range of issues covers a broad swath of topics, many of which are of importance to Bellevue. Some of the work program items for 2016 include solid waste, public safety, Veteran's and Human Services Levy, Mental Health and Substance Abuse Services, "Best Starts for Kids" programs, regional transportation planning, behavioral health services (including changes in state laws, strategies and funding for involuntary commitments and delivers of community-based services), housing and homeless, Flood Control District, King Conservation District, regional and local economic development plans and equity and social justice issues. Once the Committee approves its work plan, staff will include updates on the issues noted above and provide briefings for Council as needed.
- **Received a briefing on the King County Marine Division's Final Report on Ferry Expansion Options.** The final report identified 37 potential route combinations serving 18 potential terminal locations in Bellevue, Des Moines, Kenmore, Kirkland and Seattle (including Ballard, the University of Washington, Pier 50, Fremont and South Lake Union). Three routes were identified for further consideration, based on the overall time competitiveness compared to other modes of travel and the cost of operation. The three routes included:
 - Kenmore to the University of Washington
 - Kirkland to the University of Washington
 - Ballard to Downtown Seattle

The report estimates operating and capital costs associated with these potential routes and describes the community outreach and feedback about the three potential ferry expansion routes. The report

will go to the King County Council for its review and if it is approved by the Council, the next steps would be consideration by the County on whether an expansion of King County ferry service should and which potential route or routes should move forward for additional analysis and consideration. This consideration could occur during review and adoption of the 2017-2018 Biennial Budget and the 2017 ferry levy.

The recommendations were met with a variety of responses from RPC Committee members, including the high cost of subsidizing the ferry service to these areas compared with other modes of transportation. There was outright skepticism expressed by some members. Staff will be monitoring this issue and reporting back to Council if it appears there is serious consideration of the proposals.

The next meeting of the RPC is scheduled for Wednesday, March 9.

REGIONAL TRANSIT COMMITTEE (RTC)

January 20 meeting summary:

- King County Councilmember Claudia Balducci was appointed Chair of the RTC, and Mayor Dave Hill of Algona was elected Vice-Chair, at the January 20 RTC meeting. The committee reviewed and discussed its 2016 work plan, which will center around the review and adoption of the King County Metro Transit Strategic Plan for Public Transportation 2011-2021, King County Metro Transit Service Guidelines, accepting the King County Metro Transit 2015 Service Guidelines Report, and overseeing the King County Metro long range plan.
- The RTC accepted the King County Metro Transit Strategic Plan for Public Transportation 2011-2021, and King County Metro Transit Service Guidelines, and is slated to adopt the reports this spring. The committee held a special workshop to learn more about the reports on February 3 in what marks the first of a series of discussions on the strategic plan and service guidelines.
- The RTC will meet on February 17, which is after the time of this writing. A summary of the agenda is provided below, and a summary of the meeting will be included in the March regional issues packet.

At its February 17 meeting, the RTC is expected to:

- Consider an ordinance to adopt updates to the Strategic Plan for Public Transportation 2011-2021 and King County Metro Service Guidelines; and
- Receive a briefing on the Metro Transit Long Range Plan: Capital and Infrastructure.

The next meeting of the RPC is scheduled for Wednesday, March 16, 2016.

REGIONAL WATER QUALITY COMMITTEE (RWQC)

February 3 meeting summary:

- **Selection of a Vice Chair for the 2016 RWQC.** This item allowed Committee members who are not County Councilmembers an opportunity to select a Vice-Chair for 2016, as provided in the King County Charter. County Council members of the RWQC are Jeanne Kohl-Welles (Chair), Rod Dembowski, Reagan Dunn and Kathy Lambert (alternate). Sound Cities Association members are John Wright (Lake Forest Park), Ed Prince (Renton), Penny Sweet (Kirkland), Benson Wong (Mercer Island), and alternates Leanne Guier (Pacific) and Shari Winstead (Shoreline). Sewer district representatives are Walt Canter, Bill Tracy and alternate Arnold Lind. Seattle representatives are Lisa Herbold and Kshama Sawant. The Committee elected Bill Tracy as the Vice-Chair.
- **Orientation to Water Quality Improvement and Wastewater Treatment.** This item focused on Committee orientation for new members to provide background and context for future RWQC items. Pam Elardo, Director of the County's Wastewater Treatment Division (WTD), provided background and a system overview. Pam Carter, Valley View Sewer District Commissioner and Vice-Chair of the Metropolitan Water Pollution Abatement Advisory Committee (MWPAAC), provided background regarding MWPAAC, its structure and its work.
- **Proposed Ordinance amending the WaterWorks grant program.** The WaterWorks grant program (which grew out of the old "Culver" fund) was developed in 2014 by a subcommittee of Metropolitan Water Pollution Abatement Advisory Committee (MWPAAC). The subcommittee proposed criteria and a process for project selection, including a project selection team with the following representation: three (3) MWPAAC members, two (2) Wastewater Treatment Division (WTD) staff and two (2) King County Council representatives, which could be staff.

The WaterWorks program ultimately adopted by the County Council included a Grant Ranking Committee (GRC) with slightly different representation: three (3) MWPAAC members, three (3) King County residents, one (1) water quality specialist, and two (2) King County Council representatives, which could be staff. The County's 2015-2016 budget included funding for the WaterWorks program in the amount of \$4 million, which is about 1½ % of the Wastewater Treatment Division's operating budget.

The proposed ordinance would change the composition of the GRC as follows: one (1) water quality specialist, three (3) MWPAAC members and nine (9) people residing within the WTD service area, one representing each Council district. The ordinance would also allow the County Council to annually specify priorities in addition to the regular criteria for evaluating funding proposals for water quality improvement projects.

MWPAAC has not had a chance to review this new proposal, and Bellevue staff have concerns with the changes. The WaterWorks program was intended to provide an unbiased structure for reviewing water quality projects in the WTD service area and ensure an appropriate use of wastewater ratepayer funds. The changes create a GRC that is heavily weighted with people that are representing their districts' interests rather than the entire system. The change to allow the County Council to annually change or add priorities dilutes the purpose of the program as well. Bellevue staff communicated with Seattle and Sound Cities Association staff to discuss these concerns, ask that they communicate these issues to their RWQC members and encourage them to ask to delay any action in order to give MWPAAC time to review and comment.

At the RWQC meeting, County Councilmember Rod Dembowski spoke about the proposed

ordinance, calling it “transparency” legislation and noting that it did not propose to change the criteria developed by MWPAAC. He also noted that it was in response to WTD giving priority to certain projects based on location (Green/Duwamish watershed) in the first round of grants without providing the County Council a role in that decision.

The Committee discussed the issues and decided to hold off on a vote in order to provide time for more review.

The next meeting of the RWQC is scheduled for Wednesday, March 2.