

**COUNCIL SUMMARY BACKGROUND BRIEFING:  
KING COUNTY REGIONAL COMMITTEES AND OTHER ISSUES**  
*March and April 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, and King County Growth Management Planning Council) as appropriate. This is intended as a summary briefing; staff can provide more details on any of the items below.

**REGIONAL POLICY COMMITTEE (RPC)**

*March 9 meeting summary:*

- **Received a briefing on the implementation plan for the Best Starts for Kids Youth and Family Homelessness Prevention Initiative Implementation Plan.** The Best Starts for Kids (BSK) levy approved by voters in November included \$19 million over the course of the levy for initiatives to “prevent and divert children and youth and their families from becoming homeless.” The initiative is based on a successful statewide best practice, The Washington State Domestic Violence Housing First Program which included funds for case management as well as flexible funds to address client needs.

Staff reviewed the outcome measurements geared to prevent youth and families from becoming homeless. The three measures of success include: 1) absence from the Homeless Management Information System (HMIS) which tracks homeless services; 2) reduction in newly homeless youth and families; and 3) success and stability (measure to be determined). The implementation plan also proposed several strategies to ensure funds are distributed in a way that addresses racial and LGBTQ disproportionality. The implementation plan proposed approximately \$3.1 million be appropriated during 2016 (\$2.89 million to be competitively awarded to community-based provider agencies and \$200,000 for program administration.)

Some of the questions raised by RPC members related to disproportionality and if it applied to geographic distribution of resources as well. It was also noted that agencies receiving these funds will need to have strong connections and partnerships with local school districts as well other agencies serving youth and families.

*April 13 meeting summary:*

- **Took action approving an implementation plan for the Best Starts for Kids (BSK) Youth and Family Homelessness Prevention Initiative Implementation Plan.** This was a follow up to the briefing at its March 9 meeting. The RPC approved the plan, including an amendment that changed the goal for splitting the funds to begin with the 2017 fiscal year. The intention is that the funds would be split 50% for case management and 50% in flexible funds for client needs.
- **Received a briefing on the Best Starts for Kids (BSK) Improvement Plan.** Executive staff briefed the committee on the status of the implementation planning, specifically on progress related to the development of the general BSK implementation plan. The first year’s levy proceeds, \$19

million will be set aside to fund the Youth and Family Homelessness Initiative (see above) as well as to pay for election costs related to the levy. All remaining levy funds will be disbursed as follows: 50% for Early Childhood Allocation (0-5 year olds), 35% for School-Aged Allocation (5-24 year olds), 10% for Communities of Opportunity Allocation, and 5% for Data and Evaluation Allocation. The briefing included information about the Oversight and Advisory Board and input from other groups to the Board, including the Sound Cities Roundtable. Community Conversations are also being held around the county to receive additional input, including one held in Bellevue in partnership with Eastside Pathways.

- **Received a briefing on renewal planning for the Mental Illness Drug Dependency (MIDD) Service Improvement Plan.** Executive staff reviewed the timeline for the renewal of the MIDD sales tax in 2016; the MIDD sales tax was initially approved by the King County Council in 2007. The County Executive is anticipated to transmit legislation to the King County Council that would renew the MIDD sales tax in June. A comprehensive historical review and assessment will be available no later than June 30, and a MIDD Service Improvement Plan to guide the investment of a renewed MIDD sales tax is due no later than December 1.

The next meeting of the RPC is scheduled for Wednesday, May 25 (rescheduled from May 4).

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

The next meeting of the RTC is scheduled for Wednesday, April 27. At the time of this writing, the full meeting agenda was not available. The Committee is expected to:

- Review final recommendations for the King County Metro Strategic Plan & Service Guidelines, and potentially vote on the amended ordinance; and
- Hear a presentation on the draft King County Metro Long Range Plan.

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

#### ***March 2 meeting summary:***

- **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, two (2) Wastewater Treatment Division staff (WTD) and two (2) King County Council staff.

The WaterWorks program ultimately adopted by the County Council included a Grant Ranking Committee (GRC) with slightly different representation: three (3) MWPAAC, three (3) King County resident representatives, one (1) water quality specialist, and two (2) King County Council staff.

The County’s 2015-2016 budget included funding for the WaterWorks program in the amount of \$4 million, 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 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.

At the RWQC meeting in February, 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 the WTD giving priority to certain projects based on location (Green/Duwamish watershed) in the first round of grants without providing the County Council with a role in that decision.

MWPAAC approved a letter asking the County Council to delay action on the ordinance amending the WaterWorks program in order to allow the GRC to engage in a process of identifying lessons learned from the first round of grants and wait until the next budget cycle to make any changes if needed.

At the Committee briefing in March, Councilmember Dembowski introduced an amendment to the proposed ordinance that states that those nominated should have some expertise in water quality issues and Councilmember nominations should consider MWPAAC representatives (in their district) to serve as dual representatives on the GRC.

Although the Sewer District representatives on the RWQC did not support the proposed ordinance as amended (they wanted to let MWPAAC review the amended proposal first), the ordinance as amended had enough votes to pass.

- **RWQC Work Plan.** The Committee discussed the 2016 work plan for RWQC; action is planned for April. Much of the work plan for 2016 continues and carries forward work from 2015. Items the RWQC will be discussing this year include:
  - *Regional Wastewater Services Plan Update:* this plan defines major policies that govern the operation of the wastewater system. MWPAAC engaged in a review of the policies and sent proposed changes to a subcommittee of the RWQC. Concurrently, the Executive has been reviewing the policies, and RWQC and MWPAAC are awaiting feedback from the Executive. Once all the feedback has been received, RWQC will be tasked with review as well.
  - *Wastewater Rate:* The Executive is expected to propose a wastewater rate for 2017 in May, 2016.
  - *WaterWorks:* The RWQC is currently reviewing proposed changes to the program.
  - *Combined Sewer Overflows:* The RWQC is expected to continue to focus on work associated with a County Council budget proviso addressing costs and further evaluation of options for optimization, cost control and risk.

- *Capital Cost Estimating*: The RWQC will receive briefings on work of the Technical Working Group that will make recommendations for improvements to the WTD's process for estimating capital project costs in the early planning stages of projects.

Other items for the Committee in 2016 include: briefings on the update to the Conveyance System Improvement program, discussion of the WTD's capital debt profile now and into the future, and inflow/infiltration recommendations from a MWPAAC work group. A request was also made to include stormwater on the list of topics for the RWQC to consider.

- **Capital Cost Estimating Technical Working Group Status Update.** In response to an audit report by the County Auditor noting the need for strengthening cost estimating processes in planning level cost estimates for wastewater capital projects, the County Council included a proviso in the 2015-2016 budget to address planning level cost estimating. The proviso required establishment of a technical working group to make recommendations regarding: (1) the processes to establish and update planning level cost estimates from the time of preliminary design to thirty percent design, and (2) the processes to reconsider projects as they move from project identification to thirty percent design.

This agenda item updated the RWQC on the project status. The technical working group includes two Metropolitan Water Pollution Abatement Advisory Committee (MWPAAC) representatives, including one from Bellevue, Andrew Lee, Utilities Deputy Director. The group is currently working on identification and analyses of issues as well as a trends analysis. It is expected that the group will finalize technical recommendations by December, 2016.

- **Briefing on Green Stormwater Infrastructure in Wastewater Projects.** Green Stormwater Infrastructure (GSI) is utilized by the County to help manage peak stormwater flows in the combined stormwater/wastewater system in the Seattle portion of the County system. GSI helps to divert and hold stormwater to limit peak flow volumes and reduce the required size and expense of other structural solutions. GSI generally refers to a mix of techniques such as plantings, soil depressions, street trees, barrels, gardens, and channeled runoff that are applied in strategic ways to mitigate stormwater volumes. An example of the use of GSI was in the Barton Combined Sewer Overflow project completed by the County. This briefing updated the RWQC on the use of GSI in County wastewater projects and provided specific examples of its use and how the County is monitoring the performance of these projects.

#### *April 6 meeting summary:*

- **Recognition of outgoing Wastewater Treatment Director Pam Elardo.** The RWQC recognized and thanked Pam Elardo for her years of service to King County. She is leaving King County to take a position in New York. Gunars Sreibers will be the Acting division director.
- **Chair's Report: Proposed ordinance amending the WaterWorks grant program.** The Chair reported that the WaterWorks grant program amended ordinance was approved by the King County Council on March 21 as recommended by the RWQC. Please see the report above from the March 2 RWQC meeting for details on the ordinance.

- **RWQC Work Plan.** The Committee approved the 2016 work plan for RWQC. Much of the work plan for 2016 continues and carries forward work from 2015. Please see the report above from the March 2 RWQC meeting for details on the work plan.
- **Briefing on proposed Fish Consumption rule recommended by the Department of Ecology.** A representative from the Department of Ecology (DOE) provided an overview of DOE's draft rule regarding the human health component of water quality standards, otherwise known as "fish consumption." The criteria are established in part to ensure that fish and shellfish consumed in the human diet are safe to eat, based on assumptions of volumes consumed, levels of toxics present in tissue, average weight of consumers and reasonable risk level. The proposed rule revises an earlier recommended rule, originally issued in January 2015, which was intended as part of a package that included the rule and proposed toxics legislation. The toxics legislation proposed last year by Governor Jay Inslee was not passed by the Legislature, so this new rule is a standalone recommendation.

The new draft rule assumes a fish consumption amount of 175 grams per day – which is the same as the 2015 proposed rule but is a substantial increase over existing levels. The new rule also recommends a lower risk rate than the proposed 2015 rule – a one in a million additional lifetime incidence of cancer.

King County is supportive of the rule and has indicated that the rule provides certainty in how it will apply to its wastewater facilities such as combined sewer overflow plants.

The state has also stated that the new rule will not apply to stormwater discharges as National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System (NPDES) permits will continue to use a presumptive approach through best practices. During the comment period, Bellevue staff communicated in writing to DOE to ensure that this approach is memorialized. Bellevue reiterated the City's understanding that strict application of the numeric criteria to stormwater is inappropriate and that NPDES compliance occurs through application of the DOE design manual and best practices provisions in the permit. Bellevue staff will continue to monitor the development of the draft rule and update Council as needed.

- **Briefing on the work products and anticipated schedule leading to consideration of a 2018 Long Term Combined Sewer Overflow Plan Amendment and the 2018 Combined Sewer Overflow Program Review.** King County Wastewater Treatment Division (WTD) staff provided a brief update to RWQC regarding the next Combined Sewer Overflow (CSO) program update. King County's renewal of its NPDES permit requires an amendment to assess the effectiveness of the CSO reduction plan to date, to reevaluate the project priority ranking and list projects to be accomplished. The last update of the CSO program occurred in 2012 when the plan was incorporated into a consent decree with the Environmental Protection Agency. King County policies require that the Executive submit a CSO review report to the Council and RWQC prior to completion of the NPDES amendment. The purpose of the review is to evaluate changes to regulations, new technologies, existing CSO performance and human and environmental health priorities that may affect implementation of the CSO control plan. The WTD has begun work on the review and is targeting a 2018 completion date.

The next meeting of the RWQC is scheduled for Wednesday, May 4.

## **METROPOLITAN WATER POLLUTION ABATEMENT ADVISORY COMMITTEE (MWPAAC) UPDATE ON PROPOSED WASTEWATER RATE AND CAPACITY CHARGE FOR 2017-2018**

King County Wastewater Treatment Division (WTD) staff updated MWPAAC on the King County Executive's wastewater rate proposal for 2017-2018. The rate and capacity charge proposal are scheduled to be transmitted to the County Council on April 21, and a rate must be approved by June 30. The current rate is \$42.03 per month, and it is proposed to increase by 5.2% to \$44.22 per month for 2017. No increase is proposed for 2018. The wholesale rate increase of 5.2% translates into a 3.0% retail rate impact for Bellevue customers. The typical Bellevue residential wastewater bill for 2016 is \$75.35. The 2017 wholesale increase will add \$2.26 to the typical bill. Under the early outlook budget forecast, the total monthly bill for 2017 is \$79.72 (including increases for wholesale, local and taxes).

Increased debt reduction targets are the primary driver for the wholesale rate, accounting for 3.8% of the increase and will result in increased cash financing of the capital improvement program. WTD's plan for total debt reduction from 2017-2030 will reduce debt by \$582 million (out of total debt of \$4.5 billion). The rest of the rate increase, 1.4%, is the general inflationary increase for operations and capital, after incorporation of operational efficiencies and debt service savings from bond refundings in 2015-2016.

As Council will recall, the County's wastewater capacity charge is updated every three years, and in the intervening years, the capacity charge is increased to reflect inflation. This year the base charge is being updated for 2017-2019. County policy requires an update to the cost and growth projections, interest rate assumptions, and other factors in order to calculate a new capacity charge. After the update, the proposed 2017 capacity charge would be \$60.80, a 3.6% increase from the 2016 charge of \$58.70. The total payment over 15 years would be \$10,944 or \$8,974 if the customer chooses to pay up front in one lump sum.

Staff will keep Council updated on any changes as the rate and capacity charge are considered by the County Council.

## **GROWTH MANAGEMENT PLANNING COUNCIL (GMPC)**

### ***March 30 meeting summary:***

There were four items for information and discussion on the GMPC agenda:

- PSRC staff presented population and growth trends for the four-county region, with a focus on King County, over the past 15 years. The presentation described how much growth has been occurring as well as where it has been occurring and how well it aligns with the regional growth strategy in *VISION 2040*. Overall, the region continues to experience very strong growth that is generally consistent with the regional growth strategy. This is particularly true in King County where 98% of growth has occurred in the urban areas.
- King County staff provided a brief history and overview of the King County Countywide Planning Policies (CPP) that was intended to provide background for the many new members of GMPC who have joined since the CPP's were last updated in 2012.

- PSRC staff provided an overview and update on the Centers Framework Update Project currently underway for the region. There was discussion about how the regional criteria and process relate and compare to the CPP criteria and process for designating urban centers within the countywide growth framework. PSRC designation of regional growth centers (Downtown Bellevue is designated as a regional growth center) requires designation by counties as a first step in the regional designation process. King County CPP thresholds for designation are higher than the other three counties and the regional criteria. There was discussion about the need to review and possibly revise CPP criteria depending upon the outcomes of the PSRC Centers Framework Update Project.
- King County staff reported on meetings being held between school districts and jurisdictions in response to the requirements of CPP PF-19A, adopted last year. The policy requires cities and school districts to meet and discuss issues related to siting and development of new schools to serve growth. Each city is required to report the results of those meetings and a summary is presented to the GMPC. This was the first report to the GMPC under this new policy. City of Bellevue and Bellevue School District staff have ongoing conversations about various items as they arise, including siting and development issues.

The next meeting of the GMPC is scheduled for Wednesday, May 25.