

**COUNCIL SUMMARY BACKGROUND BRIEFING:  
KING COUNTY REGIONAL COMMITTEES AND OTHER ISSUES**  
*January 2017*

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. In addition, the Growth Management Planning Council (GMPC), was 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. This is intended as a summary briefing; staff can provide more details on any of the items below.

**REGIONAL POLICY COMMITTEE (RPC)**

*January 11 meeting summary:*

- **Election of Vice Chair.** The RPC vice-chair role has historically been a member of the Sound Cities Association (SCA) caucus. The SCA RPC caucus met before the RPC meeting and elected Kent Mayor Suzette Cook as chair of the caucus. Mayor John Stokes was elected vice-chair of the caucus. At the RPC meeting, Mayor Cook was elected vice-chair of the RPC.
- **Briefing on the Solid Waste Comprehensive Plan.** King County Solid Waste Division staff briefed the committee regarding the process and schedule for updating the Comprehensive Solid Waste Management Plan.

The current Comprehensive Solid Waste Management Plan (Plan) was adopted in 2001. Although the King County Solid Waste Division (SWD) has engaged in a series of planning studies since that date, the Plan itself has not been updated. A new draft Plan was developed in 2013 after a series of meetings with the Metropolitan Solid Waste Advisory Committee (MSWAC). Alison Bennett is the current Bellevue representative on this committee. This 2013 draft is the starting point for the current review schedule.

Major elements of the Plan include: planning, waste prevention and recycling, collection, transfer, disposal and finance. The SWD has developed a schedule for review and adoption of the new Plan:

MSWMAC review and input	January – September 2017
Public comment	October – December 2017
State review and feedback	February – May 2018
RPC/County Council adoption	June – September 2018
City ratification*	October 2018 – January 2019
Final state approval	March 2019

*\*In order to go into effect, the Plan must be approved by cities representing  $\frac{3}{4}$  of the population of the jurisdictions taking formal action to approve or disapprove the Plan within 120 days of receipt of the Plan.*

The MSWMAC review is scheduled to start in January with a discussion of the planning chapter. Bellevue staff will be reviewing and providing input on each chapter, with particular attention to transfer station policies, financial policies and overall consistency with City goals.

Currently, the transfer station chapter includes a plan to develop a new northeast transfer station when the Houghton Transfer Station is closed. Bellevue staff will continue to support the development of a new northeast station in order to ensure regional equity and the avoidance of disproportionate negative impacts to Bellevue's rates, roads, traffic and the environment.

As you will recall, the County is proposing to implement a demand management pilot study (close Houghton, extend Factoria hours and increase rates during certain operating hours) in 2018 in order to evaluate demand management as an alternative to building a new northeast transfer station. Bellevue staff has serious concerns with demand management and with the proposed pilot due to the potential serious consequences to Bellevue's traffic and environment; closing Houghton will double the amount of trips to Factoria, and increasing rates during certain hours will shift additional traffic into Bellevue's peak rush hour. The Factoria Transfer Station operates in Bellevue pursuant to a Conditional Use Permit. Bellevue staff is scheduled to meet soon with King County staff to discuss the County's current permit, updated traffic analyses and potential modifications to the permit that may be required.

- **PSERN Quarterly Briefing.** This briefing provided the RPC with a fourth quarter update on the status of the implementation of the Public Services Emergency Response Network (PSERN) Project. This project will replace and upgrade the County's current emergency radio network. In 2015 King County voters approved a nine-year, \$273 million tax levy for the replacement. King County is responsible for leading and implementing the PSERN project through completion, which is expected in late 2020.

The PSERN Project is complex with multiple tasks over the course of the implementation period including radio site design, acquisition and construction, as well as the acquisition of radios, consoles, and data systems. David Mendel, King County PSERN Project Director, provided a brief overview of the status of leases and other required agreements and discussed risk management issues. Bellevue staff is continuing to monitor and work with NORCOM and PSERN on issues that may directly impact the City.

- **2017 Work Program Potential Issue Identification.** The goal of the RPC briefing was to identify potential priority issues for RPC members. King County staff will then bring back potential milestones/decision points and a draft work plan to regional staff members for review and potential approval by the RPC in February or March.

For Bellevue, issues related to regional levies and funding plans remain a high priority. In 2017, the RPC will have opportunities to weigh in on major issues impacting solid waste, human services and housing (i.e. Veterans and Human Services Levy renewal) and public safety and emergency management.

Additional issues raised by RPC members at the meeting included green spaces in urban areas, public health issues associated with homeless encampments, the epidemic of opioid addiction, the Solid Waste Comprehensive Plan, and housing affordability. Bellevue staff will work with regional staff and King County on the development of the work plan in the coming weeks.

The next meeting of the RPC is scheduled for Wednesday, February 8.

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

### ***December 14 meeting summary:***

- **Review of Metro Connects.** At its December meeting, the Regional Transit Committee completed its review of Metro Connects, King County Metro's long-range transit service and capital plan. The committee spent the better part of 2016 reviewing the plan, and passed an ordinance to transfer the plan to the King County Council for final review and adoption at its December meeting. RTC members focused most of their plan review on clarifying questions regarding funding, partnerships and implementation. King County Metro proposed a new "Metro Connects Development Program," which would bridge the gap between existing Metro reports and implementation of Metro Connects and budget decisions to address the questions raised. Metro staff committed to bringing a fully fleshed out Development Program back to the RTC in 2017, which is expected to be much of what the RTC focuses on for the year.
- **In other business,**
  - **The RTC Accepted the King County Metro Transit 2016 System Evaluation Annual Service Guidelines Report.** As a requirement of the Strategic Plan for Public Transportation 2011-2021 and the King County Metro Service Guidelines report, Metro must provide an annual system evaluation report to the RTC. The 2016 report is similar to the 2015 report, with a few important changes:
    - It uses performance data from September 2015 through March 2016, unless otherwise noted;
    - Topic presentation is reordered and the list of exhibits is modified; and
    - Corridor analysis reflects the changes to the King County Metro Service Guidelines adopted in 2016.

With Sound Transit opening the University Link light rail expansion to Capitol Hill and University of Washington Stations in March 2016, and King County Metro bus routes in the vicinity were significantly restructured at the same time. Although performance data for the restructured routes will not be available until next year's report, King County Metro took the restructure into account when calculating the investment needs identified in this Report.

The next meeting of the RTC is scheduled for Wednesday, January 18, 2017, which is after the time of this writing. The agenda will include briefings on:

- The Work Plan and Metro Connects Development Program;
- The Metro Parking Initiatives; and
- An Alternative Transit Services Update

A summary of the January meeting will be included in the February Regional Issues packet.

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

### ***December 7 meeting summary:***

- **Toxics in Washington Waters; Ecology Proposed Rules, Environmental Protection Agency Regulatory Determination.** In August, the Washington Department of Ecology (DOE) submitted a new and revised water quality standards rule to the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) for review and approval. As you will recall, the rule addressed 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 submitted 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 in 2015 by the Governor was not passed by the Legislature, so this new rule is a standalone recommendation.

The new 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.

The EPA approved part of the rule and disapproved other parts. Overall, the EPA accepted the 175 grams per day and the one in a million additional lifetime incidence of cancer standard. The EPA also approved 45 specific human health criteria, but disapproved 143 others, along with portions of the variance provision. DOE must now revise its rule to reflect the more stringent EPA water quality standards.

At the RWQC briefing, King County staff stated that it is still analyzing the rule and EPA’s comments in order to understand how it will impact the wastewater system permits. The new standards will likely be implemented over time as permits need to be renewed. There is a considerable amount of uncertainty due to the fact that some of the proposed standards appear to be unachievable with current technology.

In response to a question about how the rule might impact cities’ NPDES stormwater permits, it was noted that currently those permits use a “presumptive” approach through best management practices so the water quality standards would not directly impact the permits. However, given the amount of uncertainty surrounding the new standards, Bellevue staff will continue to monitor the impacts of the new rule during the permit update process and brief Council as appropriate.

- **WaterWorks Grant Funding Proposals.** The RWQC received a briefing regarding the current round of recommended water quality grants. The King County WaterWorks Grant Program (old “Culver” fund) was renewed recently after an extended legal process that confirmed the eligibility of wastewater revenues for water quality grant purposes. The WaterWorks Grant Ranking Committee (which includes representatives from the Metropolitan Water Pollution Abatement Advisory Committee (MWPAAC), among other stakeholders) met on multiple occasions to review applications and recommend proposals for funding. The total funding available for this round is \$850,000. The grants are open to non-profits, local governments, special purpose districts and tribes.

Bellevue submitted a \$100,000 project proposal, and the project is included on the recommended list. Bellevue's project would retrofit a portion of the existing stormwater system to reduce the loading of contaminants from stormwater runoff into Kelsey Creek. It also contains a community educational component for local high school students. The King County Council has not taken final action on the recommended list and has asked for additional information.

- **Water Quality Assessment – Long-Term Combined Sewer Overflow Control Plan.** This briefing was an update on the combined sewer overflow (CSO) control plan water quality assessment and study. The study is intended to ensure that future CSO projects are well-planned and timed to improve water quality. Recommendations that emerge from the assessment may include changes in the sequencing and prioritization of the remaining CSO projects. King County staff reported on findings from the Duwamish Estuary Study, the Bacteria Study and Contaminants of Emerging Concern. Key findings include:
  - Uncontrolled CSOs are the largest pathway for bacteria (fecal coliform) to the water bodies, and
  - Upstream watersheds and stormwater are the largest pathways of lead, mercury, flame retardants and PCBs.

The study was originally scheduled for publication by the end of 2016, but is behind schedule. The study's technical reports are now anticipated in mid-2017. The reports will be used to support the CSO Plan Update, due in 2018.

The RWQC did not meeting in January. The next meeting of the RWQC is scheduled for Wednesday, February 1.

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

### ***December 13, 2016 meeting summary:***

- **Follow-up discussion on the conditional certification of** several small cities' comprehensive plans by the Puget Sound Regional Council (PSRC). The main issue before the GMPC was whether to revisit the growth targets that had been established and adopted in the countywide planning policies in 2010. One of the bases for conditional certification by the PSRC was the degree to which these small cities were planning for growth well beyond the targets established by the countywide planning policies and agreed to by all of the cities. After consideration by staff from King County and several other cities (including Bellevue), the effort that would be required to revisit the targets at this time (option 2 below) was deemed to be time and resource intensive, not timely given cities had just updated their comprehensive plans based on those targets, and that any reallocation of growth was not likely to resolve the gap between targets and the plans of these small cities.

Staff proposed two options with a recommendation to GMPC to approve option 1:

- 1) Do not revisit targets at this time but rather stay on the existing schedule to update targets in a few years ahead of the next required comprehensive plan update; encourage the small cities and PSRC to explore the unique circumstances of each city to explain the need for the higher levels of growth; and encourage small cities to take actions, short of amending their comprehensive

plans, to ensure future actions and plans better align with the role and expected growth for small cities embodied in VISION 2040;

- 2) Revisit targets now and possibly reallocate existing growth targets which are already based on the most recent state and regional forecasts and develop a “reconciliation process” for reallocating future targets in the interim periods between state and regional forecast updates.

The city of North Bend introduced a third option at the GMPC meeting as follows; PSRC grants full certification based on cities’ “findings of facts,” King County and cities would update growth targets beginning in 2017 based on new state population forecasts, once new growth targets were established cities would update their comprehensive plans. The North Bend option was supported by some members of the SCA caucus; however, there was not a consensus among the caucus for any of the options and the SCA requested the item be brought back at the next meeting.

There was not support among a majority of the GMPC members, including Bellevue, for revisiting the targets at this time because of the burden it would place on jurisdictions to update targets and comprehensive plans ahead of the next required updates. Additionally, none of the options were supported by a majority of the GMPC members so there was no action and the item was deferred to the next GMPC meeting in February. Subsequent actions by the PSRC and small cities may resolve the issue before the next GMPC meeting, in which case the item will be reported on with no additional discussion or action required by the GMPC.

The next meeting of the GMPC is scheduled for Wednesday, February 22, 2017.