

**COUNCIL SUMMARY BACKGROUND BRIEFING:
KING COUNTY REGIONAL COMMITTEES AND OTHER ISSUES
October 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. This is intended as a summary briefing; staff can provide more details on any of the items below.

REGIONAL POLICY COMMITTEE (RPC)

October 18 meeting summary:

- **Veterans, Seniors and Human Services Levy Governance Plan.** The Committee received a briefing regarding the Veterans, Seniors and Human Services Levy (VSHSL) Governance Plan (Plan). The VSHSL will be on the November ballot as a replacement six-year (2018-2023) property tax levy at a rate of \$0.10 per \$1,000 in assessed value. If it passes, the levy will generate about \$52 million in revenues in 2018 and \$354 million over the life of the levy. A Bellevue property assessed at the median value of \$690,000 would pay \$69 in the first year of the proposed levy compared to \$28 per year under the current levy.

The Governance Plan is required by the ballot measure and outlines the creation and composition of three governance boards: the Human Services Levy Advisory Board, the Seniors Levy and Healthy Aging Board, and the Veterans Levy Advisory Board. The Plan also establishes an Executive Board (made up of representatives from the three governance boards) to provide oversight of the expenditures of the levy proceeds. Both the Human Services Levy Advisory Board and the Seniors Levy and Healthy Aging Board will be comprised of representatives appointed by the King County Council and the King County Executive. Elected officials are ineligible for membership on both the boards, although the Sound Cities Association may nominate one non-elected official for each board.

The Veterans Levy Advisory Board is slightly different than the other two boards due to a state requirement that counties must maintain an advisory board to oversee each county's state-mandated veterans assistance program. The Governance Plan establishes a new board that includes the members of the state-mandated board with other representatives nominated by the King County Council and the King County Executive. King County staff is still evaluating whether this structure is consistent with County Charter requirements that the Executive appoints members of all boards with confirmation by the County Council.

The Committee discussed the proposed board structure and provided feedback to County staff regarding alternative board structure options. One option discussed would create one overarching advisory board in place of the three proposed boards. Another option would create a new board or committee to provide oversight of the housing stability investments for veterans, seniors and vulnerable populations. The Committee did not take action, and the Plan will be brought back to the RPC for action at a later date.

- **Veterans, Seniors and Human Services Levy Transition Plan.** The Committee received a briefing regarding the Veterans, Seniors and Human Services Levy (VSHSL) Transition Plan (Plan). The Plan outlines how programs funded under the expiring levy would continue to be funded in the first year of the new levy, if approved by the voters in November. The Plan would govern the expenditure of levy proceeds until the subsequent adoption of a comprehensive Implementation Plan for the balance of the levy investments. The Transition Plan funds existing programs, and:
 - Allocates 1% of funding to capacity building (such as providing assessments of senior centers and providing technical assistance to current and new programs under the levy);
 - Outlines how the required 50% of first-year levy funds will be spent on housing stability;
 - Includes criteria to address geographic differences in housing costs; and
 - Allocates \$3.5 million in new investments to senior centers in King County. Prior to allocating this funding, stakeholders will be asked to help define “senior center”. This will be important to cities such as Bellevue that provide services to seniors in community centers that are not specifically dedicated to seniors.
- **Briefing on E911 Strategic Planning Process.** The Committee received a briefing regarding the progress to date of the development of a King County Regional E911 Strategic Plan. The King County Executive appointed a multi-jurisdictional Leadership Group of elected and appointed officials to develop and recommend a Plan to the Executive and the King County Council by December 31. Bellevue Councilmember Robertson serves on the Leadership Group, and Bellevue staff is serving on the Planning Group that supports the Leadership Group, as well as on the Task Forces for Governance, Technology and Operations, and Finance.

King County’s Enhanced 911 (E911) system provides emergency call taking and dispatch services to residents in King County and is funded partly by the E911 excise tax and partly by local jurisdictions through their Public Safety Answering Point (PSAP) (in Bellevue’s case through city funding to its PSAP, NORCOM). The E911 system consists of the King County 911 Program Office as well as the 12 PSAPs in the county, such as NORCOM.

The system currently in use does not allow for digital information (text, photos, video – Next Generation 911 or NG911) to be sent by the public to the PSAPs. A complete replacement of the legacy system currently in use is required to facilitate moving to NG911. The region is currently working to develop a Strategic Plan to address funding, system investments, and regional priorities.

Draft Leadership Group Recommendations

- The Governance Task Force is proposing that the future governing board should be advisory to the King County 911 Program Office, have 12 voting positions (one for each PSAP), and operate by consensus when possible. If voting is required, it should require a two-step process with 40% of those present and 60% of current call volume required for an affirmative decision.
- The Finance Task Force found that the current level of spending is not sustainable after 2023 and is recommending that a sustainable revenue source be deployed for long-term system viability.
- The Technology and Operations Task Force articulated two alternatives for the future system and recommended the “Platform” alternative. The Leadership Group endorsed this recommendation, but with a caveat that additional information during implementation may cause them to modify their course.

Next Steps

The Leadership Group will be asked to approve all the recommendations for the Plan at its November 9 meeting.

The next meeting of the RPC is scheduled for November 15.

REGIONAL TRANSIT COMMITTEE (RTC)

September 27 meeting summary:

- **King County Metro Transit Flat Fare Proposal.** Metro Transit staff provided an overview of the following three ordinances related to its flat fare proposal:
 - Proposed Ordinance 2017-0350 would amend King County Code to eliminate peak and zone-based fares, setting a \$2.75 adult fare for all Metro bus trips. The fare change would provide a \$0.50 fare decrease for two-zone peak rides and no change for one-zone peak rides. The price of off-peak trips would increase by \$0.25.
 - Proposed Ordinance 2017-0352 increases the availability of tickets for very low-income riders by raising the Human Service Ticket Subsidy budget by \$400,000.
 - Proposed Ordinance 2017-0354 would eliminate the administration fee for Regional Reduced Fare Permits (RRFP) for senior and disabled riders (this will reduce revenues by \$75,000 annually), and lower the ORCA card fee from \$5 to \$3 (resulting a loss of \$700,000 annually). Reducing the card fee is intended to lower the barrier to user adoption, while still covering some of the \$8 cost to administer each card.

After considering the revenue impacts and impacts to riders, the RTC passed all three of the proposed ordinances unanimously and referred them to the King County Transportation, Economy and Environment Committee (TrEE), which held an initial briefing on October 3. The ordinances are expected to return to TrEE for action on October 31.

- **2nd Quarter Report on Alternative Services (Community Connections).** Metro staff provided a quarterly update on its Community Connections Program. This program offers a range of transportation and mobility services that are tailored for each community depending on its needs and circumstances.

Community Connections is funded through the 2015-2016 Biennial Budget Ordinance 17941. It states that the program, “shall use a collaborative process led by the transit division and include discussion with local governments, nonprofit organizations, private businesses, community groups, and other stakeholders representing communities where fixed-route transit may not be a cost-effective option.” In 2016, project planning criteria for Community Connections applications included: (1) Geographic and time-based gaps; (2) Rural and emerging markets; (3) Community need; and, (4) Partnership opportunities.

Bellevue applied for, and was awarded, a pilot project to focus on the Eastgate-Factoria area. In the application, jurisdictions were asked to identify gaps in transit service delivery. Following selection, jurisdictions work in partnership with Metro to develop potential solutions, which will be individualized to each pilot. The Bellevue pilot is currently in the first phase, which is needs assessment.

The next meeting of the RTC is scheduled for October 25. This special meeting – held in a workshop format – will cover the Metro Connects Development Program (MCDP) Policy Report and related information. This will set the stage for the remaining 2017 RTC meetings. A summary of the October meeting will be available in the November regional issues packet.

REGIONAL WATER QUALITY COMMITTEE (RWQC)

October 4, 2017 meeting summary:

- **West Point Treatment Plant Independent Assessment--Implementation of Recommendations.**
Earlier this year King County Council hired AECOM, a consulting firm, to conduct an independent review of the February 9 failure of the West Point Treatment Plant. AECOM performed an assessment of the causes and contributing factors to the flooding event, an evaluation of how it could have been averted, and recommendations for preventive approaches, practices, and systems to help avoid future problems. The cause of the failure began with a power outage, which led to a failure of the plant pump system and subsequent flooding. Problems were exacerbated by the size of the storm, high tide, and the hydraulic constraints of the plant. In addition, on September 12, the Washington State Department of Ecology (DOE) issued a penalty and administrative order to the King County Wastewater Treatment Division (WTD) in response to the plant failure. At the October 4 meeting, the Committee received a progress report from Robert Waddle, Operations and Maintenance Manager for the WTD, on the implementation of recommendations in the AECOM Independent Assessment of the West Point Treatment Plant System Failure and the Administrative Order issued by the DOE.

The key AECOM Report recommendations are:

- Expand life safety management practices to be used facility wide. Under life safety management, operations and maintenance procedures are more strictly applied, and staff across all levels of the organization work together to achieve the best possible outcomes.
- Formulate and adopt a formal emergency training and emergency exercise program compliant with Federal Homeland Security standards.
- Implement a strategic plan with short-term and long-term improvements.

Additionally, 98 mitigation strategies are identified in the report to address potential failures at the West Point Treatment Plant. Further evaluation of these strategies by King County WTD staff is necessary to determine an appropriate implementation response.

The DOE Administrative Order assessed a \$361,000 penalty and requires significant improvements to plant facilities and operations. The six recommendations include:

- Add redundancy to effluent pump discharge valve by April 1, 2018
- Improve alarm prioritization and visibility by February 1, 2018
- Conduct evaluation of plant constraints and redundancy by February 1, 2018
- Develop and implement an emergency operations training program by March 1, 2018
- Review operator training and redevelop as necessary by March 1, 2018
- Develop and implement influent sampling protocol by July 1, 2018

Mr. Waddle reported that the WTD is already initiating implementation of many of the AECOM recommendations and will be evaluating implementation of each of the AECOM mitigation

strategies. As the recommendations are developed, the WTD will report back as it progresses on implementation and will provide an explanation for any strategies not implemented. The WTD is also proceeding to meet the direction of the DOE order and intends to implement each of the corrective actions called for in the order.

- **West Point Treatment Plant Independent Assessment--Discussion of Potential County Legislative Initiatives.** Two draft King County legislative measures were shared with RWQC members. Neither measure has yet been formally introduced to the King County Council. The intent of the measures is to hold the King County Wastewater Treatment Division (WTD) accountable for its schedule and performance in meeting the recommendations in the AECOM Independent Assessment and the corrective actions in the Washington State Department of Ecology (DOE) Order.
 - The first ordinance directs the WTD to prepare an implementation plan for the AECOM Independent Assessment recommendations and the requirements in the DOE Administrative Order, including a timeline and quarterly progress updates. It also requires the King County Auditor to provide oversight of the implementation plan.
 - The second ordinance addresses staff retention and a staff reporting tool. The measure directs the King County Executive to prepare a report addressing issues related to staff concerns at the West Point Treatment Plant. Specifically, the report should address how to provide an anonymous safety reporting tool for staff, and how to improve staff satisfaction and retention at the plant.

The measures are expected to be introduced at the King County Council meeting on October 16.

- **Conveyance System Improvements Project-Status Report.** The committee received a status report regarding the wastewater conveyance system improvements update. 77 of the system's conveyance facilities are currently below or expected to fall below the peak-flow design standard by 2060, and 40 of the facilities do not currently meet peak-flow standards. The WTD has identified a list of projects needed to improve the wastewater conveyance system so it will be adequate to handle peak-flows through 2060.

The WTD has been coordinating with the Metropolitan Water Pollution Abatement Advisory Committee (MWPAAC) and local agencies (including Bellevue) on elements of the plan including establishing priorities within the list of projects. Bellevue Utilities staff has been tracking the plan and supports the County's approach to-date. Several of the projects are in the Bellevue area or directly serve Bellevue including: Medina Trunk Replacement, Yarrow Bay Pump Station Replacement and Swaylocken Pump Station Upgrade.

The next meeting of the RWQC is scheduled for November 1.

KING COUNTY REGIONAL AFFORDABLE HOUSING TASK FORCE

September 22 meeting summary:

This was the second meeting for the King County Regional Affordable Housing Task Force (Task Force). The meeting included a recap of the July meeting and an overview of state legislative work in Olympia from House Speaker Frank Chopp. The Task Force approved the members of the Standing Advisory Panel, most of whom were present to introduce themselves. The Panel is comprised of various experts in the field of housing with an emphasis on affordable housing. Their role and make-up is

similar to the Technical Advisory Group (TAG) that provided expert guidance for Bellevue's Affordable Housing Strategy. None of the Panel members served on Bellevue's TAG, however, there are three organizations represented on the Panel that were also represented on Bellevue's TAG.

The Task Force reviewed a draft work program that is due to be adopted by the Task Force by October 31. A final report and recommendation is due to the King County Council by the end of 2018. As a reminder, the Task Force purpose and objectives are:

- Assess the current state of regional housing affordability in King County, including efforts by jurisdictions;
- Develop a recommended statement of intent to address the regional affordable housing crisis in King County;
- Identify collective tools and actions that can be taken at the regional level to create more affordable options where needed and preserve affordable housing where it exists today. This could include a recommended plan for new partnerships, local strategies, regulatory reform, and funding approaches that could include, but is not limited to, evaluating a countywide sales tax increase of one-tenth cent under RCW 82.14.530;
- Develop a recommended state legislative strategy to address issues relating to affordable housing and homelessness; and
- Develop a dashboard for displaying region-wide progress in meeting the Countywide Planning Policies.

The Task Force received a presentation on data and information regarding population and job growth, housing costs, household income, and cost-burdened households by geography, race and income group. The purpose of the presentation was to provide the Task Force members with a common base of knowledge about affordable housing in King County. The Task Force also heard about the gap between the supply and demand for affordable housing from speakers representing the Housing Authorities of Seattle, King County and Renton.

The next meeting of the Task Force is scheduled for October 31.