

**COUNCIL SUMMARY BACKGROUND BRIEFING:
KING COUNTY REGIONAL COMMITTEES AND OTHER ISSUES
*February 2018***

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. Staff can provide more details on any of the items below.

REGIONAL POLICY COMMITTEE (RPC)

February 14 meeting summary:

- **Adoption of the RPC Work Program.** The RPC reviewed a proposed work program for 2018 at its January meeting. At the February meeting, Councilmember John Stokes and the Sound Cities Association (SCA) proposed an amendment to the work program to include a briefing on the progress and accomplishments of the King County Flood Control District. The amendment passed and the RPC adopted its work program for 2018. The general subject matters included in the work program are the following:
 - King County Land Conservation Initiative
 - E911 Strategic Planning
 - Homelessness
 - Mental Illness and Drug Dependency (MIDD) Plans
 - Veterans, Seniors and Human Services Levy (VSHSL) governance and implementation
 - Regional transportation (not transit)
 - Solid Waste Comprehensive Plan
 - Public Safety Emergency Radio Network (PSERN) updates
 - Regional Affordable Housing updates
 - Best Starts for Kids (BSK) Reports
 - Elections
 - Natural Disasters
 - King County Flood Control District

One change this year is that the proposed resolution adopting the RPC work program states that the work program shall remain in effect until it is superseded by a new work program. This is to ensure that there is no lapse in mandatory referrals of legislation from the King County Council to the RPC if the County Council is scheduled to consider a countywide plan or policy before the RPC adopts its new work program for the year.

- **Briefing on the Puget Sound Emergency Radio Network (PSERN) Project.** The RPC received an update on the status of the PSERN project to replace and upgrade the County's current emergency radio network. In 2015 King County voters approved a nine-year, \$273

million property tax levy to fund the replacement of the King County emergency radio communications system. The 2018 levy rate is approximately 6 cents per \$1,000 in assessed value and is expected to raise \$32 million this year. Bellevue property owners are expected to contribute approximately \$3.3 million of the total amount raised in 2018.

The emergency radio communications system is used to dispatch responders to incidents and allow responders to communicate with each other at incidents. The current system consists of more than two dozen transmitter sites and multiple microwave and fiber systems, supporting over 100 agencies and 17,000 radios. The current system is owned by King County, the City of Seattle, Valley Communications Center, and the Eastside Public Safety Communications Agency (EPSCA). Bellevue is a member of EPSCA. Once completed, the PSERN project should increase system reliability, increase coverage, provide better security and double the number of radio transmitter sites.

King County is the lead agency for the project, and Motorola is under contract for \$114 million to provide design, development, implementation, testing and ongoing support and maintenance. Final design is now complete, and PSERN project staff are reevaluating the original baseline budget and schedule due to some key changes in project assumptions. Specifically, Motorola has indicated that it will need more time for system testing once it is built, additional radio tower sites are required, other tower sites are no longer viable and there are longer than anticipated lease negotiation processes.

Final project closeout is now expected to be in December of 2022, one year later than originally expected. In addition, schedule delays, site and system design changes, increased site development costs, and additional staffing have increased total project costs. However, the cost increases are offset by expenditure reductions in debt financing, increases in projected levy revenues and other cost reductions.

- **Briefing on the King County Department of Elections Prepaid Postage Pilot.** The RPC received a briefing on the results of the King County Department of Election's pre-paid postage pilot conducted in two special elections in 2017. The Department of Elections piloted pre-paid postage in the February special election for parks in the City of Maple Valley and the April special elections for schools on Vashon Island. Julie Wise, Director of the Department of Elections, presented information regarding the increase in voter participation, the cost of the pilot and estimated costs for countywide prepaid postage.

The next meeting of the RPC is scheduled for March 7.

REGIONAL TRANSIT COMMITTEE (RTC)

January 17 meeting summary:

- **Election of the RTC Vice Chair.** The RTC elected Auburn City Councilmember Claude DaCorsi to the position of RTC Vice Chair for 2018.

- **Briefing on the RTC Work Program for 2018.** The RTC will focus its 2018 work program on the METRO CONNECTS Development Program (MCDP), including an in-depth review of partnership-related policies and bus service network-related policies. Other MCDP topics are likely to include the regional project schedule, the second phase of the transit fares work program, the capital program, and innovative technology/next generation ORCA.
- **Briefing on the METRO CONNECTS Development Program.** Metro staff provided RTC members with a review of the MCDP work to date, a timeline for next steps, and an initial discussion surrounding partnerships. The topic of partnerships continues to be of keen interest to the Sound Cities Association caucus, and this was the first of several discussions on partnerships in 2018.

Metro staff emphasized that partnerships will look different for each city, and that the agency plans to work proactively with partner cities to identify partnering opportunities to leverage resources and timing of projects and service. Partnership opportunities could include financial contributions, in-kind contributions, staff involvement, and right-of-way. The MCDP assumes that partnerships will provide a \$3.14 billion value (total value, not cash) to its capital program through 2040, which accounts for 28 percent of the projected \$11 billion of need.

Metro staff is beginning to develop a partnerships prioritization process. The development of this process will include staff-level collaboration with cities through the MCDP technical advisory committee, which will also assist in estimating funding needs through the biennial budget process.

The next meeting of the RTC is scheduled for February 21, which is after the time of this writing. The agenda will include:

- A briefing on the Transit Resource Guide for RTC Members
- Discussion and possible action on accepting the Metro Connects Development Program Policy Report
- A briefing on the Transit Fares Work Program, Phase 2
- An update on parking

REGIONAL WATER QUALITY COMMITTEE (RWQC)

February 7 meeting summary:

- **King County Wastewater Treatment Division Director's Update.** Mark Isaacson, King County Wastewater Treatment Division Director, presented the division's 2018 priorities and identified the following key priorities: continuing to make improvements at the West Point Treatment Plant in response to the 2017 flood event; managing major construction projects such as breaking ground on the Georgetown Wet Weather Treatment Plant; working on partnerships such as the joint tunnel project with the City of Seattle; and continued negotiations on potential new regional wastewater contracts.
- **Half-Century Assessment of the West Point Treatment Plant.** The Committee received a

briefing from the King County Wastewater Treatment Division (WTD) staff summarizing the *Half Century Assessment of the West Point Treatment Plant Report* (Report) and highlighting key elements of the Report.

By way of background, in 2017 the King County Council directed the WTD to review and evaluate the West Point Treatment Plant (West Point) after a half-century of operation, as well as its positioning for service in the coming decades. The Report evaluates prospective conditions, considers likely impacts on the West Point facility and provides recommendations.

The Report finds that while West Point has performed as designed and met permit requirements, some issues were identified that could impact or limit the plant's future operations. Notable West Point constraints and vulnerabilities include:

- Solids and organic material loadings to West Point may exceed capacity before 2030.
- Regulatory requirements may pose a major constraint to West Point's operations.
- Aging infrastructure poses the risk of equipment failure that would limit West Point's treatment capability.
- Managing higher flows during wet weather increases plant vulnerability as the frequency of high-intensity storms increases.

King County WTD is currently working to address a number of these concerns and conduct studies that will provide more information to develop strategies for addressing West Point's constraints and vulnerabilities.

- **WTD Strategic Asset Management Plan.** The Committee received a presentation on the Wastewater Treatment Division's (WTD) recent evaluation of its existing Strategic Asset Management Plan (SAMP).

The review found that the WTD has initiated important steps in asset management but identifies areas for strengthening the asset management program. The review identifies early action recommendations, suggests an update to the SAMP to incorporate strategies identified in this review, and recommends an update to the Asset Management Work Plan. The WTD reports that it is already moving forward with the early actions and is expected to implement the remaining recommendations as well.

- **2018 Work Plan for the Regional Water Quality Committee.** The RWQC considered an initial list of topics for its 2018 work plan. Many of the topics are follow-on topics to issues raised by the West Point Treatment Plant system failure of February 2017. The Committee will revisit the work plan at its next meeting.

The next meeting of the RWQC is scheduled for March 7.

KING COUNTY REGIONAL AFFORDABLE HOUSING TASK FORCE

January 30 meeting summary:

The King County Regional Affordable Housing Task Force (Task Force) continued the process of

building a foundation of information and understanding about the issues and challenges around development of affordable housing and current efforts by jurisdictions and agencies in the region.

This meeting was devoted entirely to hearing testimony from the public. King County staff displayed demographic, economic and housing information that was presented to the Task Force at previous meetings before taking comments from the public. The meeting was held at the New Holly Gathering Place in south Seattle. About 50 people testified, but there were many more people in the room.

The key points listed below are from the public testimony and reflect many of the same points made by Bellevue's Technical Advisory Group during development of the City's Affordable Housing Strategy.

- The homelessness challenge is likely larger than what has been presented to the Task Force and people experiencing homelessness have highly varied needs.
- Displacement is breaking up longstanding communities, particularly communities of color and low-income households. These communities seek opportunities to own property and are concerned new affordable units are not serving the specific neighborhoods being displaced.
- Even with increases in the minimum wage, incomes are not keeping up with rising rents and property taxes. Many households must choose between safe, decent housing and basic needs.
- There is far more demand for low-income housing units than there is supply.
- Seniors and people with disabilities have specific housing needs that are not being met – they need more accessible housing.
- Low-income households are vulnerable to landlord mistreatment, fear retribution and cannot afford to move.
- Government needs to make it easier to build housing and to provide social services.
- There are many local housing success stories, but it takes dedication, money and cooperation from those in power.

February 15 meeting summary:

The primary objective of the February meeting was for the Task Force to receive additional information regarding affordable housing resources, financing and coordination. First, the Task Force received an overview of King County affordable housing funding, including current federal, state, regional and local resources. The discussion also included a review of housing funding from King County levies and taxes, such as the Veterans, Seniors and Human Services levy and the Mental Illness and Drug Dependency sales tax.

The Task Force then received a presentation on the process and financing of affordable housing projects. This highlighted the complexities of putting a project together and securing financing. Finally, King County staff presented an overview of funding and coordination opportunities, including a discussion of state and local taxes, development-related sources, real estate-related sources and private funding.

The Task Force is expected to meet again on March 29.

ONE TABLE - COMMUNITY ACTION WORKGROUP FOR AFFORDABLE HOUSING

February 6 meeting summary:

The One Table initiative was launched by King County Executive Dow Constantine, Seattle Mayor Jenny Durkan and Auburn Mayor Nancy Backus. Mayor John Chelminiak is participating on the group representing Bellevue and the Sound Cities Association. The One Table effort is described as a regional discussion of homelessness with a focus on root causes and reducing the number of people coming into homelessness. Related organizations are All Home, which is working primarily on responding to the homeless crisis, and the Regional Affordable Housing Task Force (discussed above), which is focused on addressing affordable housing at all income levels.

One Table is made up of two leadership groups: The Civic Leadership Group and the Elected Leadership Group. Participants represent expertise across the community including elected officials, business leaders, local philanthropists, and service providers. Five subgroups for particular topics have also been established called Community Action Workgroups:

- Affordable Housing
- Behavioral Health
- Child Welfare System
- Criminal Justice
- Employment

Bellevue Mayor Chelminiak is a member of the Elected Leadership Group and the Affordable Housing Workgroup. Bellevue staff attend the Affordable Housing Workgroup as well.

At the February 6 Affordable Housing Community Action Workgroup meeting, participants shared expectations for the One Table effort, reviewed data on homelessness and affordable housing, and worked in groups to provide input on the factors that lead to an increase or decrease in affordable units. Analysis of these factors will shape the actions and strategies that will be developed in subsequent meetings.

The next meeting of the One Table Community Action Workgroup (for all subgroups) is February 22, and the next meeting of the One Table Civic Leadership Group is February 28. The date of the next meeting of the Elected Leadership Group has not been determined.

KING COUNTY FLOOD CONTROL DISTRICT

Willowmoor Floodplain Restoration Project Update.

For close to a decade, Bellevue has been monitoring King County's management of the Transition Zone (TZ) between Lake Sammamish and the Sammamish River due to seasonal high-water levels that have impacted Bellevue property owners living along Lake Sammamish.

Background

Lake Sammamish drains north to the Sammamish River through an engineered outlet channel located at King County's Marymoor Park. The engineered channel, referred to as the TZ, is where the lake "transitions" to the Sammamish River. Designed and built by the U.S. Army Corp of Engineers (Corps) in the 1960s, the TZ is a wide, relatively steep, straightened stream channel equipped with a shallow fixed concrete spillway that functions as a weir. The weir, submerged during periods when the lake is full, becomes exposed in the summer when the lake level is low, and maintains minimum lake levels for

recreational purposes. The original intent of the design of the constructed channel and weir was to provide downstream flood protection while maintaining minimum lake levels.

The degree to which vegetation grows in the outlet channel is one of several factors that affect how quickly the lake drains. In recognition of this fact, King County and the Corps agreed on vegetation maintenance plans in the 1960s that maintain the design intent of the project.

With the 1999 listing of chinook salmon as “threatened” under the federal Endangered Species Act, the vegetation maintenance plan was modified by King County, in agreement with the Corps, to balance competing needs for high flow conveyance, maintaining minimum lake levels and providing critical shade habitat to keep the water cool for returning salmon. Annual vegetation clearing was reduced to every other year, and instead of trimming vegetation on both sides of the river each year, King County transitioned to cutting and trimming only one side each year. After the implementation of the modified maintenance practices, Lake Sammamish property owners began to experience increased lake levels during winter storms and spring runoff. The increased lake levels submerged and damaged docks and led to increased shoreline erosion from wave action.

In 2010 Lake Sammamish residents contacted King County about the impacts of the changes, and in 2011 a new maintenance plan was approved that would increase mowing, remove cuttings and remove sediment from the TZ.

The Willowmoor project was conceived to explore landscape improvements that:

- Provide lake level controls, flow conveyance, and downstream flood control to standards that protect property and minimize shoreline erosion,
- Improve aquatic and riparian habitat within and adjacent to the TZ for migrating salmon,
- Reduce summer water temperatures in the river to improve habitat conditions for migrating salmon,
- Reduce costs, complexity, and ecological impact of operations and maintenance activities, and
- Protect and enhance recreational opportunities.

In 2013, to help scope the project, King County convened the Willowmoor Stakeholder Advisory Committee (SAC), a group of interested parties comprised of lakeshore property owners, agency staff, citizens, and other advocates of Lake Sammamish. Bellevue staff also participated in the SAC as the group considered project alternatives and provided feedback to King County. The SAC did not come to a consensus on a recommended option, but provided comments on the alternatives considered by King County

On February 22, 2016, the Bellevue City Council received a briefing by King County’s Water and Land Resources Division Director on the Willowmoor Project, including an overview of the design alternatives the County was considering at the time. Following the briefing, the Bellevue City Council sent a letter to the King County Flood Control District supporting the “Split Flow Channel” design alternative.

The King County Flood Control District selected the “Split Channel Alternative” and approved funding to proceed to 30% design. The King County Water and Land Resources Division (WLRD) is managing the project design and construction with oversight by the King County Flood Control District and has hired a consultant team to design the Willowmoor Floodplain Restoration Project. According to the

County's request for consultant proposals, the "Willowmoor Project seeks to improve habitat conditions within and adjacent to the TZ and to reduce the risks of high lake levels in Lake Sammamish while maintaining downstream Sammamish River flood control performance, the function of downstream storm water facilities and protection of Redmond's shallow drinking water aquifer."

The contract work will take place in two phases. The first phase of work will be to develop 30% design during 2018. Phase two will be the remaining design tasks through construction of the project. At the completion of 30% design, the King County Flood District will decide whether to proceed to the next phase of design work and construction. King County and its consultant team expect to reconvene the SAC for input on the project approach and will call for public input at the completion of 30% design. Bellevue staff will continue to monitor the project and update Council as needed.