

**COUNCIL SUMMARY BACKGROUND BRIEF:
PUGET SOUND REGIONAL COUNCIL (PSRC)
*January 2019***

GROWTH MANAGEMENT POLICY BOARD (GMPB)

At its January 3 meeting, the GMPB:

- **Discussed proposed updates to the Transportation chapter in VISION 2050, including a brief overview of ongoing efforts related to technology and freight and goods movement.** Board members expressed support for the proposed updates and suggested that staff review policies to ensure they also address equity and social justice, expansion of passenger-only ferries, and stormwater management. Specific draft edits to the Transportation chapter will be reviewed by the Board at its meeting on April 4.
- **Discussed annexation issues and urban growth area adjustments.** Barriers to annexation, as well as planning and managing growth of unincorporated areas, have been identified by the Board as important challenges facing the region's jurisdictions. Examples of barriers to annexation include the financial implications of annexing unincorporated land, such as assuming the cost of building and maintaining local roads and providing police and fire services. Board members expressed support for actions in VISION 2050 that would address these barriers and work toward solutions. The Board also discussed VISION policy and action regarding urban growth area adjustments. Staff will develop policy language for consideration in early 2019 that will be reviewed by the Board.
- **Discussed the role of health in VISION 2050.** Board members expressed support for proposed updates in VISION 2050 that would address health disparities based on place, race and income. VISION 2040 includes health in many policy areas, including: neighborhood design, healthy food, active transportation alternatives, improved air and water quality and preservation of the natural environment. There are disparities in health outcomes throughout the region. For example, residents in areas with high rates of poverty in King County live, on average, five years less than residents of more affluent areas.

PSRC staff proposes to amend VISION 2040 by updating the narrative to include health disparities as an issue and to include the relationship between health and regional planning; retaining the existing health policies; continuing the 'health in all places' approach as all VISION 2050 policies are drafted and discussed; and consider how social equity work can help achieve health equity.

- **Reviewed the proposed structure and approach for the non-policy sections of VISION 2050.** PSRC staff is interested in making VISION 2050 more visually appealing and accessible, putting more emphasis on people in the document, and making it easier to understand and navigate.
- **Received a presentation on the PSRC's draft fiscal year 2020-2021 biennial budget.** The PSRC budget outlines transportation, economic and growth planning activities for the fiscal years 2020-2021. The PSRC's fiscal year runs from July 1 through June 30 of the following year. The region's rapid growth is a major theme of the draft budget, as well as the effects of rapid growth on housing affordability, cost of living, and transportation. The PSRC plans to adopt VISION 2050 during the 2020-2021 biennium. The PSRC's total proposed budget is about \$27 million for 2020-2021. The amount spent on the Regional Growth Planning tasks in the budget is \$2.3 million, which is about the same as 2018-2019. Staffing for regional growth planning is expected to remain the same at six staff.

The next meeting of the GMPB is scheduled for February 7.

At its November 29, 2018 meeting, the GMPB:

- **Recommended certification of subarea plans for the Sumner-Pacific Manufacturing Industrial Center and the Metro Everett Regional Growth Center.** The Sumner-Pacific Manufacturing/Industrial Center (MIC) was provisionally designated as a regional center by the Executive Board in March 2016. The provisional status required the cities of Sumner and Pacific to develop and adopt a Regional MIC Subarea Plan for the 2160-acre subarea. PSRC staff has reviewed the subarea plan and found it consistent with expectations put forth in VISION 2040 for regional manufacturing/industrial centers. Similarly, the Metro Everett Regional Growth Center (670 acres) is a designated regional center, and the City of Everett adopted the Metro Everett Subarea Plan in 2018. PSRC staff reviewed the subarea plan and found that it was consistent with VISION 2040.
- **Received results of a PSRC public opinion survey online, inviting input from people in the region about growth and planning.** The online survey was open from April through October 2018 and received over 2,100 responses. Some of the key findings of interest include: a majority of the respondents feel the quality of life in the region is positive; cost of living, homelessness and traffic are the three worst things about the region (compared to traffic congestion in 2003); and increasing housing choices and preserving the natural environment are seen as important for the region.
- **Reviewed proposed changes to the Development Patterns chapter for policies on transit-oriented development and centers.** The Development Patterns chapter is one of the largest chapters in VISION 2040, and this discussion focused only on transit-oriented development and centers. Potential updates to this section will reflect work related to Growing Transit

Communities, including leveraging transit investments with transit-supportive densities and land uses around stations areas. An important note to this is that depending on the preferred alternative chosen for the updated Regional Growth Strategy, the Board may consider incorporating a regional objective for the amount of population and employment required in station areas. The Board could also consider policies for jurisdictions with significant transit investments to direct a significant share of growth to those transit station areas.

- **Reviewed potential changes to the Environment chapter in VISION 2050.** The chapter focuses on five environmental areas: environmental stewardship, earth and habitat, water quality, air quality, and climate change. The water quality section will be updated with information from the Puget Sound Partnership about the health of Puget Sound. Despite current efforts and policies, many Puget Sound species are struggling. Stormwater pollution and changes in the hydrology of runoff patterns are some of the biggest threats to Puget Sound water quality and are not currently well integrated into land use and transportation planning.

In the earth and habitat section, the Board discussed updating VISION's open space policies to reflect recommendations from the Regional Open Space Conservation Plan, including protecting and restoring lands in the regional open space network, enhancing tree canopy in the region, and increasing equitable access to open space.

In the environmental stewardship section, the Board heard about public and private ownership practices that play key roles in the management of environmental lands and the Regional Open Space Conservation Plan identified stewardship as a key strategy to preserve the ecological value of open space.

Air quality data will also be updated for VISION 2050. Discussion topics included: environmental justice, resiliency, ecosystem services, preparation for hazard impacts, and integration of the environment with planning for land use and transportation.

Climate change information is described below.

- **Received a briefing on efforts to address climate change in the PSRC's long-range planning.** VISION 2040 includes climate-related strategies in all policy sections. The Regional Transportation Plan includes a Four-Part Greenhouse Gas Strategy encompassing land use, transportation choices, user fees, and technology. Staff are working on a background paper for VISION 2050 that will expand on this climate change work.

This was the last meeting for the GMPB in 2018.

TRANSPORTATION POLICY BOARD (TPB)

At its December 13 meeting, the TPB:

- **Discussed the Regional Aviation Baseline Study.** The PSRC is leading a Regional Aviation Baseline Study, in consultation with airport operators in the region. The study will gather information about existing aviation activities and assess the needs in the region that will set the stage for future planning efforts. The TPB received a briefing on this work, for which the PSRC has received \$1.64 million in grant funding from the Federal Aviation Administration. Commercial aviation is a cornerstone of the region's economy. Continued coordinated planning is needed to ensure the regional airport system can accommodate growth in the aviation sector. The study will assess specific capacity needs, issues, challenges, and community impacts.
- **Discussed VISION 2050.** The TPB received a briefing on VISION 2050, which is an update to VISION 2040, the long-term strategy for sustainable growth in the central Puget Sound region. VISION 2040 includes goals, multicounty planning policies, and implementation actions. It also sets forth the Regional Growth Strategy, which provides numeric guidance for planning for population, housing, and employment growth through countywide targets and local comprehensive plans. The PSRC staff is reviewing existing policies and text and will identify proposed edits and updates. In addition, two background papers are being prepared on the movement of freight/goods and emerging transportation technologies. The background papers will highlight implications for land use and development decisions.

At its January 10 meeting, the TPB:

- **Discussed the PSRC Draft Fiscal Year 2020-2021 Biennial Budget and Work Program.** The process to develop the PSRC's next biennial budget and work program is underway. The PSRC budget outlines transportation, economic and growth planning activities for the fiscal years 2020-2021. The region's rapid growth is a major theme of the draft budget, as well as the effects of rapid growth on housing affordability, cost of living, and transportation. The PSRC plans to adopt VISION 2050 during the 2020-2021 biennium. Major transportation-related activities anticipated for this period include:
 - Project selection for federal transportation funding.
 - Completing the Regional Aviation Baseline Study.
 - Beginning an update to the Regional Transportation Plan, which is scheduled for adoption in 2022.
- **Approved the Regional Transportation Plan Project Amendment for the Washington State Department of Transportation's (WSDOT) I-90 / Eastgate SR 900 Corridor Improvements project.** The Regional Transportation Plan contains a variety of investments to preserve and maintain the transportation system, improve the system's efficiency, and expand the system's strategic capacity. This project will: reconstruct existing shoulders on I-90 to full-depth pavement; restripe eastbound and westbound I-90 to create an additional lane in each direction between the Eastgate and West Lake Sammamish Parkway interchanges; and modify the westbound I-90 off-ramp to West Lake Sammamish Parkway. The project will be completed in 2020, is estimated to cost approximately \$73 million and is funded through the Connecting Washington statewide transportation revenue package passed by the state legislature in 2015.

With this action, the TPB recategorized the I-90 / Eastgate SR 900 Corridor Improvements and changed its status to “approved,” so that the project can begin construction.

- **Discussed the Puget Sound Clean Air Agency’s (PSCAA) potential adoption of a regional fuel standard.** The PSCAA is a special purpose, regional government agency chartered by state law in 1967 under the Washington Clean Air Act. The PSCAA is governed by a board of directors composed of elected officials from across the region. Of the 10 members of the Board, five represent cities, four represent counties, and one member represents the public-at-large.

The PSCAA is considering adopting a regional clean fuel standard to help reduce greenhouse gas emissions from transportation. The PSCAA is authorized under the Washington Clean Air Act to regulate the emission of air contaminants such as vehicle emissions. The PSCAA would regulate fuel producers and importers within Snohomish, King, Pierce, and Kitsap Counties. The fuel producers and importers would be required to either reduce their carbon emissions or purchase credits. Producers and importers of cleaner fuels such as ethanol and biodiesel, electricity, natural gas, biogas and propane would generate credits. The market would set the price of the credits, with a regulatory cap to prevent sudden changes in fuel prices. The agency is undertaking an analysis of a variety of issues as it moves toward creation of a draft rule for consideration by its Board.

- **Discussed the Alaskan Way Viaduct Closure and mobility options.** State Route (SR) 99 will be closed through downtown Seattle for three weeks beginning at 10 p.m. on Friday, January 11. This will be the longest major highway closure in the Puget Sound region and will allow the WSDOT to connect the on- and off-ramps with the new SR 99 tunnel. At the end of the closure, the tunnel will open, providing a direct route from the stadiums to the Space Needle. The Alaskan Way viaduct and the Battery Street tunnel will both be permanently closed in preparation for the removal of the viaduct.

The next meeting of the TPB is scheduled for February 14.

REGIONAL TRANSIT-ORIENTED DEVELOPMENT ADVISORY COMMITTEE (RTODAC)

At its November 30 meeting, the RTODAC:

- **Received an overview from PSRC staff on the TOD policies in VISION 2040.** The committee was asked to provide input on incorporating components from the Growing Transit Communities strategy into VISION 2050. Committee members expressed interest in retaining local land use control around transit station areas. Some voiced concern regarding any new mandates or requirements for growth targets in station areas. Committee members expressed support for the PSRC working with jurisdictions to bring about better coordination with Sound Transit and an allocation of state funds to help with station area planning.

- **Engaged in small group discussion regarding social equity and displacement.** Committee members expressed interest in a regional plan that: is more explicit about addressing displacement and gentrification issues; provides direction based on best practices on how to prepare and respond versus react; and develops better benchmarks for measuring outcomes. A summary of the committee's discussion will be shared with the Growth Management Policy Board to help inform its February 7 session on social equity.

The next meeting of the RTODAC is scheduled for March 15, 2019.

I-5 SYSTEM PARTNERSHIP

The Washington State Department of Transportation (WSDOT), in partnership with the PSRC, convened a group of stakeholders to focus on transportation system issues associated with the I-5 corridor. This is part of the WSDOT's implementation of its State Facilities Action Plan, which describes the needs and proposed actions for the most critical issues facing state transportation facilities. The I-5 stakeholder group includes representatives from local and state agencies; community transit agencies; bicycle and pedestrian interest groups; technology; environmental; major employers; and the Washington State Patrol. Representatives of the cities of Bellevue, Mill Creek and Newcastle are participating in the group. Councilmembers John Stokes and Janice Zahn represent Bellevue.

The group is charged with:

1. Developing a regionally-shared understanding of the longer-term challenges facing the I-5 system and the regional High Occupancy Vehicle (HOV) system,
2. Exploring emerging opportunities to maximize the value of the I-5 system as a public asset, and
3. Proposing potential solutions within the I-5 study area, and developing goals, objectives and a broader regional consensus on a strategic plan for the future.

At its January 15 meeting, the I-5 System Partnership:

- **Discussed transit service on I-5.** Representatives from the region's transit providers spoke to the I-5 System Partnership members about current and future transit on I-5. Sound Transit plans to expand the high-capacity transit spine with several Link light rail extensions adjacent to I-5, including: the Northgate Link Extension in 2021; the Lynnwood Link Extension in 2024; the Federal Way Link Extension in 2024; and the Everett Link Extension in 2035. The buildout of the light rail system will provide regional travelers with a frequent and reliable alternative to traveling on I-5.

King County Metro Transit, Sound Transit, Community Transit, and other service providers will continue to operate bus transit on I-5 after the regional light rail system is built out. These service providers are already experiencing increased operating costs due to congestion on I-5. Trip times are increasingly unpredictable, especially during peak travel times. Metro Transit and Community Transit suggested that the region revisit the occupancy standards for I-5's HOV

lanes, given that the current 2+ standard does not allow the traffic in the HOV lane to move faster than the traffic in the general-purpose lanes during peak travel times. The transit operators are using bus-on-shoulder driving on I-5 between Lynnwood and Mountlake Terrace when traffic is traveling less than 35 miles per hour, rather than using the HOV lane.

- **Discussed the Seattle Area Joint Operations Group and Joint Base Lewis McCord Joint Operations Group.** The WSDOT has formed partnerships with key stakeholders in the greater Seattle area and near Joint Base Lewis McCord to manage congestion caused by major incidents such as a train derailment. The Seattle Area Joint Operations Group has been meeting for about five years to develop emergency response plans for the regional transportation system, including I-5. In 2017, an overturned tanker carrying propane shut down all lanes of I-5 in Seattle for more than eight hours. The Seattle Area Joint Operation Group identified several lessons learned from that incident and the group is working on a multi-phase plan to improve coordination. The Joint Base Lewis McCord Operations group was instrumental in responding to the 2017 train derailment near DuPont. Joint Operations Group members were able to use emergency management procedures to clear the train from the area, allowing I-5 to reopen faster.

The next meeting of the I-5 System Partnership is scheduled for February 19.