

**COUNCIL SUMMARY BACKGROUND BRIEFING:  
KING COUNTY REGIONAL COMMITTEES AND OTHER ISSUES  
*March 2019***

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. Staff 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)**

***February 27 meeting summary:***

- **2019 Solid Waste Comprehensive Plan.** The RPC unanimously passed an ordinance recommending adoption of the 2019 Solid Waste Comprehensive Plan (Plan). The countywide Plan is subject to a mandatory dual referral, which means that the Plan is referred to both the RPC and a King County Council committee for review and action. Under the dual referral rules, if the County Council amends the Plan that the RPC has adopted, the Plan must be re-referred to the RPC for additional review and action. The King County Council Committee of the Whole began review of the Plan in early March.

The last King County Comprehensive Solid Waste Management Plan was adopted in 2001. State law directs King County to review and update the Plan, as needed, every five years. Since 2001 there have been a series of planning efforts and reports that have informed the current version of the draft Plan.

The Plan provides an assessment of the King County solid waste system, solid waste demand, and forecasts for future solid waste demand. The Plan sets the context for key policy choices related to solid waste disposal, transfer and recycling.

Several key recommendations in the Plan are consistent with previous Bellevue City Council direction regarding the siting of future solid waste transfer capacity in Northeast King County and the development of future solid waste disposal capacity that would not negatively impact the Factoria Transfer Station.

The Plan recommends: 1) the siting and construction of a new Northeast Recycling and Transfer Station to address transfer capacity needs that is in addition to the existing Factoria

Transfer Station; and 2) maximizing the capacity at the Cedar Hills Regional Landfill (Cedar Hills) for future disposal needs to 2040.

The Plan also contains language regarding recycling programs and notes that King County, cities and haulers formed a Responsible Recycling Task Force (Task Force) to address recycling given China's restriction on accepting recyclables. Ongoing restrictions from China could impact the life of the Cedar Hills and city hauling contracts. The Task Force developed a series of recommendations, including: statewide product stewardship policies, improving recycling infrastructure, working to increase recycling markets, and coordinated communications to avoid consumer confusion. Some of the recommendations could result in increased solid waste rates.

After the County Council reviews and adopts the Plan, cities within the King County regional solid waste system, including Bellevue, will be asked to consider adoption of the Plan during a 120-day period.

In order to be an approved Plan that can be forwarded to the Washington State Department of Ecology (DOE) for final action, the Plan must be adopted by cities representing 75% of the total population of the cities that act on the Plan during the 120-day period. King County expects to submit an approved Plan to the DOE for final approval in 2019.

- **Regional Policy Committee Work Program.** The RPC adopted its work program for 2019. The work program includes the following topics:

Mandatory referral items:

- Comprehensive Solid Waste Management Plan
- Veterans, Seniors and Human Services Levy (VSHSL)
- Land Conservation – Parks, Trails and Open Space Replacement Levy
- Homelessness – as related to any countywide plan/policies or proposals to consolidate Seattle and King County functions
- Mental Illness and Drug Dependency (MIDD)
- Regional transportation (not transit)
- Emergency Medical Services (EMS) Levy

Briefings:

- Solid Waste
- VSHSL Annual Reports
- Land Conservation
- Public Safety Emergency Radio Network (PSERN) updates
- Homelessness

- Regional Affordable Housing Strategies
  - MIDD annual report
  - Best Starts for Kids (BSK) Reports
  - Regional transportation
  - Elections
  - Natural Disasters
  - Flood control
  - Proposed King Conservation District fees and charges for 2020-2025
  - Charter review and updates
- **Final Report and Recommendations of the Regional Affordable Housing Task Force.**  
 The RPC accepted the final report and recommendations of the Regional Affordable Housing Task Force (RAHTF). The RAHTF's Five-Year Action Plan (Action Plan) establishes a framework for regional coordination to address affordable housing needs across King County. The recommendations contained in the Action Plan are not structured as mandates for cities, but rather as a menu of policy options. The Action Plan also recommends establishing a standing Affordable Housing Subcommittee of the King County Growth Management Planning Council to guide implementation of the recommended strategies.

The Bellevue City Council received a briefing regarding the Action Plan in December and expressed support for the flexibility and tools provided in the Action Plan.

The RAHTF began meeting in July 2017 and adopted a final Action Plan in December 2018. A Standing Advisory Panel advised the RAHTF that was made up of housing stakeholders, such as the housing authorities in King County, Seattle and Renton; nonprofit and for-profit housing developers and advocates; tenant advocates and representatives from communities of color.

Several Sound Cities Association (SCA) member cities have adopted affordable housing strategies, including Bellevue. Bellevue's Affordable Housing Strategy was adopted by Council in 2017, and Councilmember Stokes and City staff shared strategies and recommendations from Bellevue's strategy to help inform the development of the regional Action Plan.

#### Five-Year Action Plan

The Five-Year Action Plan contains seven goals with associated strategies and actions for each goal. The Action Plan states that the recommendations are not mandates and are not intended to limit local control. Instead, it recognizes that the housing market in different parts of the county will require different solutions to most effectively preserve and increase the supply of affordable housing. The SCA representatives on the RAHTF emphasized the need for technical assistance, shared information, and recommended strategies that will support cities in their efforts to address the housing crisis.

In addition to recommending strategies, the Action Plan calls for establishing a framework for

ongoing collaboration among cities and King County to support implementation and monitoring results. The proposal would create a standing subcommittee of the Growth Management Planning Council (GMPC). The GMPC is the body in King County that develops and updates the King County Countywide Planning Policies in the areas of housing, transportation, development patterns, the environment, the economy, public facilities and services. Members of the GMPC include King County, Seattle, Bellevue and SCA. Bellevue Councilmember Jennifer Robertson represents Bellevue on the GMPC.

- **King County Proposed Parks Levy.** The RPC received a briefing on the King County proposal for a renewed parks levy to be placed on the August ballot at a rate of 16.82 cents per \$1,000 of assessed value. The King County Parks Levy funds operations and maintenance of King County's parks, regional trails and open spaces. Cities also receive funding from the levy to invest in local parks projects.

The original levy was approved at the end of 2013 at a rate of 18.77 cents per \$1,000 of assessed value and will expire at the end of 2019 unless renewed. Due to rising property values, in 2019 the levy is being collected at a rate of 12.68 cents per \$1,000 of assessed value.

The current levy is expected to collect \$420 million over six years. The proposed levy would generate an estimated \$738 million over six years. The enhancements being proposed include:

- Increased land conservation expenditures consistent with the County's Land Conservation Initiative.
- Expanded infrastructure repair and replacement.
- Additional regional trail connections and crossings, including Eastside Rail Corridor (ERC) projects.
- Capital support for the Seattle Aquarium's Ocean Pavilion project.
- Additional direct funding to cities for local parks priorities.

#### Bellevue Implications

Bellevue property owners contribute about \$8 million per year under the current levy. It is estimated that with the increased levy rate and Bellevue's increased assessed value, property owners would contribute about \$12 million per year beginning in 2020. At the current rate of 12.68 cents per \$1,000 of assessed value, a \$1 million home generates about \$126 per year. With a new rate of 16.82 cents, that same home would generate about \$168 annually.

Bellevue currently receives about \$450,000 per year from the King County parks levy. The City uses the funds on a variety of projects, such as property acquisition, trail development and park development, including the recent Downtown Park capital project. It is estimated that Bellevue's direct share would increase to \$730,000 per year under the new levy.

The proposal includes regional funding for four ERC projects in Bellevue: the NE 8<sup>th</sup> Street crossing, the Wilburton Trestle retrofit, the I-90 – 118<sup>th</sup> trail connection and a connection to the SR 520 trail.

### ***March 13 meeting summary:***

- **King County Proposed Parks Levy.** The RPC continued its discussion of the King County proposal for a renewed parks levy to be placed on the August ballot at a rate of 16.82 cents per \$1,000 of assessed value. In order to be placed on the August ballot, the King County Council must adopt the final legislation by April 30.

The King County Parks Levy funds operations and maintenance of King County's parks, regional trails and open spaces. Cities also receive funding from the levy to invest in local parks projects. Additional background information about the levy and the impacts to Bellevue can be found above in the February 27 RPC meeting summary.

RPC members discussed the schedule for processing the levy legislation and agreed to add a special RPC meeting on March 28 to ensure that the County can meet its April 30 deadline. King County Councilmember Claudia Balducci shared discussions that have been occurring at the County Council that might lead to proposed amendments, including adding projects and increased flexibility in how the funds may be used. SCA members requested that potential amendments be shared as soon as possible to facilitate the RPC's review of the proposal.

- **Veterans, Seniors and Human Services Levy Housing Oversight Coordination Report.** The RPC voted to accept the Veterans, Seniors and Human Services Levy (VSHSL) Housing Oversight Coordination Report, in compliance with the VSHSL Implementation Plan. This report analyzes and identifies how the county can increase coordination of VSHSL oversight of housing stability investments with all other entities overseeing the County's investments in housing, including examining the potential to consolidate all entities that oversee housing investments. Entities include the VSHSL Advisory Board, the Mental Illness and Drug Dependency (MIDD) Advisory Committee, the Best Starts for Kids/Children and Youth Advisory Board and the Joint Recommendations Committee, which is the committee that administers the Community Development Block Grant Program and the HOME Investment Partnerships Program funding.

In the report, the King County Department of Community and Human Services (DCHS) recommends against consolidation of housing advice into a single board without a prerequisite or contemporaneous unification of housing stability policy and governance.

The report presents the following recommendations for improvements:

1. Invite board and commission members to an annual training that explains processes and requirements for each funding source.
2. Provide an annual briefing to advisory entities on housing stability activities and progress toward a shared vision and solicit feedback.
3. Invite the MIDD Advisory Committee members to join the housing stability RFP process

funded through MIDD.

4. Provide information and support for meetings between chairs and co-chairs of the advisory entities to discuss housing stability investments.

King County staff plan to implement the recommendations within existing staff capacity. The report also notes that successful implementation of the report's recommendations may warrant adjustment to align with the Regional Affordable Housing Task Force recommendations as well as other policy or organizational changes that may emerge as King County continues to confront affordable housing and homelessness.

### Background

The original Veterans and Human Services Levy (VHSL) was first approved by King County voters in November 2005 and was renewed in 2011, with an expiration date of December 31, 2017. In November 2017, King County voters approved the VSHSL to replace the expiring VHSL. The new VSHSL expands investment in services for veterans and human services and funds new services for seniors and their caregivers. The VSHSL is levied at \$0.10 per \$1,000 in assessed value and collected \$53.3 million in 2018, with approximately \$5.6 million coming from Bellevue property owners.

- **Puget Sound Emergency Radio Network Project Update.** The RPC received a briefing on the status of the Puget Sound Emergency Radio Network (PSERN) project to replace and upgrade the County's current emergency radio network. In 2015 voters approved a nine-year, \$273 million property tax levy at a rate of 6 cents per \$1,000 in assessed value that is expected to raise about \$32 million a year. Bellevue property owners contributed 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.

The expected completion dates for the project have not changed since the last quarterly briefing to the RPC in September 2018. The milestone for substantial completion of the project is February 2022 and the current final closeout date for the project is May 2023.

King County is the lead agency for the project, and Motorola is under contract for \$117 million to provide design, development, implementation, testing and ongoing support and maintenance. Final design is now complete, and as reported in previous updates to RPC this year, PSERN project staff reevaluated the original baseline schedule due to some key changes in project

assumptions. Specifically, Motorola indicated that it needed more time for system testing, additional radio tower sites are required, other tower sites were no longer viable and there were longer than anticipated lease negotiation processes.

Previous updates included information regarding the results of an in-building task force that examined the ability of first responders to communicate with each other inside and outside buildings during an emergency. The task force identified areas of concern for radio coverage and concluded that urban areas with taller buildings and higher density had a greater risk of a failure of in-building coverage during an incident. Downtown Bellevue and downtown Seattle were highlighted as the highest risk areas. To address these concerns, the task force recommended a three-part approach to add: (1) new radio tower sites in high and medium density areas, (2) distributed antenna systems (DAS) to bring the exterior PSERN system inside buildings, and (3) vehicular repeaters for sustained incidents.

The next meeting of the RPC is scheduled for March 28.

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

The February meeting of the RTC was cancelled.

The RTC met on March 20, and a summary will be included in the April Regional Issues Packet.

The next meeting of the RTC is scheduled for April 17.

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

##### ***March 6 meeting summary:***

- **Regional Water Quality Committee Work Plan.** The RWQC adopted its 2019 Work Plan. The proposed 2019 Work Plan includes many topics carried over from the 2018 Work Plan, and some new topics such as capacity charge studies regarding low-income assistance, potential revisions to the rate structure and briefings regarding a potential new interlocal agreement for wastewater services. Priority topics for the City of Bellevue include: briefings regarding reclaimed water planning, systemwide planning, and resiliency (earthquake preparedness).
- **Clean Water Plan.** The Committee received a presentation on a new wastewater systemwide planning effort recently launched by the King County Wastewater Treatment Division (WTD). WTD has begun a broad planning effort that encompasses many of the agency's programs and services. King County sees the planning exercise as an avenue to explore the multiple mandates and program demands that WTD will address in the coming years, along with possible rate impacts.

Examples of the current and anticipated challenges include:

- Substantial capital investment to reduce and control combined sewer overflows;
- Complications associated with management of stormwater and wastewater in a single system;
- Conveyance system improvements: extending and upgrading the pipeline network to respond to anticipated demand and system upgrade needs;
- Increased loading of solids to the system due to increased population and less water in the system due to water-efficient fixtures;
- Aging infrastructure and asset management needs;
- Potential regulatory requirements including possible nutrient management requirements; and
- Need for increased system resiliency and redundancy, as highlighted by the recent West Point system failure in 2017.

The cumulative financial impact of these challenges could result in significant pressure on regional wastewater rates.

King County is now referring to this systemwide plan as the Clean Water Plan (Plan). The WTD estimates that billions of dollars will be spent on water quality protection in the coming decades, including both wastewater and stormwater management improvements, and wants to make the right investments at the right time.

The Plan is expected to include a regional discussion about the County's role in protecting local waterways and public health. As the regional policy entity for water quality and wastewater issues, the RWQC should play a role in setting direction for, and reviewing, this planning effort. However, aside from occasional briefings, it is unclear what role RWQC will play in the planning process. Committee members in the RWQC Sound Cities Association caucus are considering requesting a mandatory referral of the Plan to the RWQC as well as a role in Plan development.

In addition, King County is proposing to convene a Stakeholders Advisory Group and has hired a consultant to develop a coordination plan that describes the responsibilities of the committee. The group is expected to have 20 members representing various constituencies in the region. Two seats are designated for "component agencies", or agencies that are part of the regional wastewater system. Seattle Public Utilities and Alderwood Water and Wastewater District are the designated representatives for the component agencies. Bellevue staff will be discussing the opportunity for additional city representatives with King County and the other component agencies.



- **Stormwater.** The Committee received a briefing from the King County Water and Land Resources Division (WLRD) staff regarding recent work analyzing stormwater volume, sources and existing treatment across the King County area.

The 2019 RWQC Work Plan includes the topic of stormwater and its impact on the wastewater system. King County staff noted that stormwater impacts wastewater in two primary ways: 1) stormwater enters the wastewater treatment system resulting in additional system capacity and treatment needs; and 2) stormwater drains to local receiving waters, where treated wastewater effluent is also discharged. Both inputs can impact the water quality of these receiving waters.

Stormwater enters the wastewater system by design and by accident. By design, a “combined sewer system” is one where stormwater drainage pipes are connected directly to the sanitary sewer lines. In a “separated system”, stormwater and sanitary sewer pipes are designed and maintained as separate systems. In addition, stormwater can enter wastewater systems by accident through leakage from cracks in pipes, manhole covers, and illegal stormwater connections.

Much of the City of Seattle is a combined system and consequently, the West Point Treatment Plant’s wet season flow is almost triple the dry season flow primarily due to stormwater. The South Treatment Plant in Renton also sees increased flows during the wet season from leakage of stormwater into the wastewater system. The South Treatment Plant’s peak flow in the winter wet season is twice the dry season flow.

The WLRD study has estimated how much stormwater comes from King County rural and urban lands. The study also estimates how much stormwater is being treated and how much is draining to receiving waters without treatment.

King County estimates that of the 2,187 square miles in the County, about 540 square miles, or 25% of the County area, generates stormwater. King County estimates that three quarters of the stormwater in King County has little to no treatment. Because so much of Seattle’s stormwater drains to the West Point Treatment Plant, a much higher portion of Seattle’s stormwater receives treatment (two-thirds) compared to urban areas outside Seattle where only one-seventh of the urban area stormwater receives treatment.

The King County 2015 Combined Sewer Overflow Water Quality Synthesis Report looked at various water and pollution inputs to three local water bodies that have been impacted by combined sewer overflows and found that stormwater discharges were responsible for a majority of the annual loads of nutrients, certain chemicals, and metals to these waters. This and other studies have indicated that stormwater is having a dramatic impact on local water quality.

The RWQC members discussed implications and challenges of adding treatment to stormwater facilities across King County. The Committee members also considered the value of regional

investments in stormwater management and treatment as compared to investments in wastewater combined sewer overflow control.

The next meeting of the RWQC is scheduled for April 3.

### **KING CONSERVATION DISTRICT (KCD)**

The King Conservation District (KCD) has been working with its Advisory Committee and other stakeholders to develop a proposal for a five-year work program for 2020-2024. 2019 will be the fifth and final year of the KCD's current work program. Later this year, the KCD will submit a 2020-2024 rate increase and work program proposal to the King County Council for approval. The KCD will continue working with the Advisory Committee and other stakeholders through the spring to develop the proposal. Bellevue Councilmember John Stokes serves as Chair of the KCD Advisory Committee.

The KCD serves 35-member jurisdictions (34 cities and King County) representing a total population of 1.8 million. KCD currently describes its program of work as focusing on four main areas:

1. Agriculture and Local Food, including agricultural drainage, regional and community agriculture programs;
2. Forest Stewardship, including wildfire preparedness and work with cities and rural landowners;
3. Clean Water, including riparian and rural stewardship; and
4. City Partnerships, including member jurisdiction grants.

### **Current KCD Rates and Charges**

District funding is based on a system of rates and charges assessed on properties in King County that are within the KCD. The current annual rates and charges are \$9.45 per residential parcel, \$9.23 per commercial parcel, and \$10 per agricultural parcel. The rates and charges provide annual revenue of slightly more than \$6.1 million. The current rate was approved by the King County Council in 2014 to fund the 2015-2019 work program. The KCD leverages this revenue with grants and other resources to cover additional expenses. In 2019, KCD's total budget including all revenue sources is approximately \$7.5 million.

In 2018, the property owners in Bellevue paid approximately \$525,000 in KCD rates and charges. Of the \$6.1 million collected countywide, approximately \$1.4 million is returned to the contributing jurisdictions in the form of jurisdictional grants each year. In 2018, Bellevue applied to use approximately \$95,000 in jurisdictional grant funding for City parks, forestry and garden investments. Under the current KCD rate structure, Bellevue is eligible for approximately \$78,000 in grant funds each year. Funds not used in one year roll over to the next.

In January, the KCD hosted workshops and meetings with stakeholders to explore alternative program and rate scenarios and get feedback on the work program. On March 13, KCD presented its current proposal at a Sound Cities Association Workshop.

### KCD Proposal for 2020-2024

The KCD's 2020-2024 work program and rate proposal would carry forward the same priorities and services the organization offers with some minor changes and additions. The KCD is proposing a rate increase of close to 40%, or approximately an additional \$3.90 per parcel per year, depending on the parcel type. This increase would raise roughly \$2.8 million per year in additional funds for the District. This would increase the annual KCD revenue collected from rates and charges from \$6.1 million to \$8.9 million.

The KCD staff has stated that this increase is needed to replace one-time funding that has been used for program costs in recent years, expand current programs, and to cover the cost of inflation as follows:

- 62% of the increase would be used to sustain existing programs.
- 23% of the increase would expand programs including increasing the jurisdictional grants program, a new grant program for community agriculture, and additional staffing for performance measurement, education, and forestry.
- 15% of the increase would cover inflation since 2015 and through the end of the proposed 2024 work plan.

Several issues have been raised by staff from Bellevue and other jurisdictions, including whether the KCD utilized one-time funding to establish on-going programs, how much benefit urban property owners receive from the KCD programs and why expansion of its programs is appropriate. To date, the KCD has not adequately answered these and other questions about its proposed rate increase.

The KCD will be discussing the 2020-2024 work program and rate proposal with the Advisory Committee on March 27. The KCD is expected to submit a rate proposal to the King County Council by July of this year.

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

The GMPC typically meets three to four times per year to consider amendments to countywide planning policies and to monitor progress on implementation. Councilmember Jennifer Robertson serves as Bellevue's representative on the GMPC.

Five meetings are scheduled in 2019:

1. February 27
2. March 27
3. July 24
4. September 25
5. November 20

***February 27 meeting summary:***

- **GMPC Affordable Housing Committee.** The Regional Affordable Housing Task Force adopted a Five-Year Action Plan in December that recommends strategies for regional coordination to address affordable housing needs, including the development of a standing housing committee of the GMPC to guide implementation of the recommended strategies.

King County Councilmember Claudia Balducci emphasized that the Affordable Housing Committee would serve as a coordinating body for the County and a place where elected officials and interested parties can work together, share information, and deepen their understanding of affordable housing challenges.

GMPC members were briefed about the proposed composition of the Affordable Housing Committee and reviewed the draft charter and the proposed 2019 work program. Sound Cities Association (SCA) members noted that the SCA will appoint four members and strive to ensure balanced geographic representation. King County Executive Dow Constantine affirmed that each caucus—King County, Seattle, and the SCA—would appoint its own members.

GMPC members expressed support for the Affordable Housing Committee and asked staff to clarify the role of delegates and to confirm voting protocols. King County staff is also planning to bring recommendations for the non-elected membership of the Housing Committee to the next GMPC meeting on March 27.

- **VISION 2050 Draft Supplemental Environmental Impact Statement (DSEIS)** The GMPC received a briefing regarding the Puget Sound Regional Council's VISION 2050 update and the DSEIS, including the analysis of the three growth strategy alternatives (discussed in more detail in the Growth Management Policy Board (GMPB) committee summary in the PSRC document in this regional packet). GMPC members discussed whether to develop a letter commenting on the three growth alternatives in the DSEIS at its next meeting on March 27. The SCA is currently encouraging cities to respond to the DSEIS individually rather than have the GMPC develop a letter before most cities have had a chance to analyze the impacts of the growth scenarios. Bellevue staff is currently analyzing the growth scenarios and will schedule a Council briefing before the April 29 deadline for DSEIS comments.