

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

**GROWTH MANAGEMENT POLICY BOARD (GMPB)**

At its May 2 meeting, the GMPB:

- **Received briefings and provided comments on VISION 2050, including:**
  - *The Economy Chapter*
  - *The Regional Collaboration Chapter*
  - *The Regional Growth Strategy and Environmental Review*

The GMPB ran out of time and was unable to get to these scheduled items:

- *Action to Proceed with the Draft Multi-County Planning Policies*
- *Vision Statement and Draft Outline*

These items are expected to be heard at a future meeting.

**The Economy Chapter**

The PSRC staff presented an overview of the VISION 2050 Economy Chapter and its proposed policies and actions. There are three goals underpinning this chapter:

- Open economic opportunities to everyone
- Compete globally
- Sustain a high quality of life

Some of the new proposed policies that have direct relevance to Bellevue include: recognition of a community's unique identity as an economic asset; develop job opportunities in a way that promotes accessibility to housing; and recognition of the region's airports as critical economic assets.

An existing VISION 2040 policy that is retained for VISION 2050 concentrates a significant amount of economic growth in designated centers, such as Bellevue, and to connect them to one another.

The PSRC will provide technical assistance, develop regional economic data and develop regionwide and subarea forecasts.

The Board's discussion included whether to add policies for green or ecologically sustainable jobs, whether the jobs/housing balance policy is too vague and the sustainability of urban unincorporated areas.

### *The Regional Collaboration Chapter*

This chapter will consolidate funding policies that are located throughout the VISION 2040 plan and address common themes that cut across chapters but do not fit into any one chapter. Examples of this include: support for the region's Native Americans; planning for military installations; social equity; and improving public health outcomes. This approach recognizes that these issues touch on all aspects of the plan.

New actions are based in four areas – updating plans, monitoring programs, “centering equity” and funding sources. “Centering equity” means that the PSRC will use capacity through its work program and tools to elevate equity. Funding source actions are based on investigating existing and new sources of funding across a variety of areas to assist local governments in implementing VISION 2050.

GMPB members discussed the need to set an overall goal for VISION 2050; the need for collaboration across county borders; a request for clarification of the term “underserved communities”; how “high capacity transit stations” would be designated; and whether equity should have its own chapter.

### *The Regional Growth Strategy and Environmental Review*

The GMPB:

- reviewed and provided comment on potential updates to the Regional Growth Strategy Chapter, including proposed policies,
- reviewed the process to develop a Regional Growth Strategy preferred alternative for the draft VISION 2050 plan, and
- heard an update on comments submitted on the Draft Supplemental EIS.

The PSRC staff developed draft policies for the Regional Growth Strategy Chapter of VISION 2050. Some of the policies are ones that have been moved from the Development Patterns Chapter to better reflect the integration of the regional growth strategy with the remainder of the plan. A new goal has been added to focus growth within existing designated urbanized areas, designated centers and transit stations. New policies support development in centers and there is a placeholder for the percentage of growth in transit centers pending a decision on a preferred regional growth strategy. There is a focus on optimizing efficient use of urban land by increasing density in urban centers consistent with the regional growth strategy. The PSRC staff will track, evaluate and report on growth to understand how the regional growth strategy is being achieved.

Kitsap and Pierce County representatives expressed strong concern that the transit-focused growth alternative concentrates too much growth in too few areas. Each raised a concern that if

jurisdictions, such as Seattle, could not provide the housing to keep pace with the job growth, then they should not be allocated the job growth. They urged the staff to start with an analysis based on the jobs/housing balance and work backwards. Another member stated that not every population group could or would live in high-rise housing.

Those who supported transit-focused growth pointed out that there is not enough funding for infrastructure to support a plan that has more sprawl, that environmental impacts would worsen and that cities are the best places to concentrate growth. There was no conclusion to the debate and PSRC staff will take into consideration the comments made.

General comments received for the Draft Supplemental EIS included 148 discrete comment letters. Local governments throughout the region largely support the transit-focused growth strategy with some adjustment, such as different allocations for various geographies instead of projecting 75 percent of all future growth in metropolitan cities such as Bellevue. Many expressed concerns for a greater displacement risk. The Regional Transit-Oriented Development Advisory Committee also commented, and the major themes expressed were the need for more affordable housing, more access to housing and climate change.

The next GMPB meeting is scheduled for June 6.

### **TRANSPORTATION POLICY BOARD (TPB)**

At its May 9 meeting, the TPB:

- **Discussed funding for special needs transportation.** The Washington State Department of Transportation (WSDOT) announced the results of its 2019-2021 Consolidated Grant competition. This program allocates funding from federal and state sources for special needs transportation projects statewide. Special needs transportation provides mobility services for seniors, people with disabilities, and other populations with mobility challenges due to age, income, or disability. The grant funding can be used to purchase vehicles, to pay for transportation agency staff, or to cover other operational costs.

The 2019-2021 Consolidated Grant competition awarded about \$11 million for 20 projects in the Puget Sound region. Several of the projects awarded funding will expand or support existing special needs transportation in Bellevue, including:

- Catholic Community Services of King County was awarded about \$100,000 to provide transportation free of charge to low-income older adults and persons with disabilities. Bellevue is contributing \$16,000 in 2019 to support this program.
- Hopelink was awarded about \$700,000 for two projects for staffing, short term planning, and operational support for transportation services for low-income people. Bellevue is contributing about \$320,000 in 2019 to Hopelink to support special needs services, however, Bellevue does not fund any programs at Hopelink related to transportation.

- **Discussed passenger-only ferries.** The Washington State Legislature included \$350,000 in the 2019-2021 transportation budget for the PSRC to study passenger-only ferry service throughout the Puget Sound, including on Lake Washington. The study will include an assessment of potential new routes and terminals; ridership demand forecasts; and recommendations to accelerate electrification of the ferry fleet. The PSRC last conducted a study of passenger-only ferry service in 2008. Bellevue Councilmember Jennifer Robertson commented that the report should compare the travel times of potential new ferry service with traditional transit service. She also requested that the report evaluate land use implications of new ferry terminals. The PSRC staff responded that these elements will be included.
- **Discussed Regional Transportation Plan implementation.** The PSRC's Regional Transportation Plan was adopted in May 2018. The plan contains policies and investments to support a sustainable, multimodal transportation system for people and goods. Since the plan's adoption, the PSRC staff has been working to implement the action items identified in the plan, including:
  - Technology. Creating a regional inventory of intelligent transportation system (ITS) infrastructure, which is technology that improves safety, traffic flow, and traveler information.
  - Finance. Monitoring the Washington State Transportation Commission's (WSTC) Road User Charge pilot program and local funding initiatives.
  - Transit, including Transportation Demand Management and Special Needs Transportation. Preparing its annual Transit Integration Report, which describes transit agencies' coordination initiatives.

The next meeting of the TPB is scheduled for June 13.