

**COUNCIL SUMMARY BACKGROUND BRIEFING:
KING COUNTY REGIONAL COMMITTEES AND OTHER ISSUES
*July 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)

July 10 meeting summary:

- **Recommendation on Regional Homeless System Redesign.** Seattle and King County are seeking to consolidate homeless response services and functions into a single entity and discussions have been taking place between Seattle and King County since late last year. This was the second briefing on the regional effort to reduce homelessness through improved coordination.

Staff from the Sound Cities Association (SCA) has been meeting with representatives from Seattle, King County, and the philanthropy and business communities. An Executive Leadership Group (ELG) representing these groups was formed, and Bellevue Mayor John Chelminiak, Auburn Mayor Nancy Backus, and Renton Council President Ed Prince represent SCA on the group.

The Seattle Mayor and King County Executive staff have indicated that an Interlocal Agreement (ILA) is being developed, but it has not been shared. Key questions that still need to be answered/resolved include:

- What would it mean to be a signatory to the ILA?
- What is the structure and function of a new entity – Board, staff, roles and responsibilities, scope of authority, and fiduciary responsibility?
- What funding streams are planned to be administered by the new entity?
- What is the relationship to other organizations already in existence, such as All Home?

The Federal Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) requires communities to create a Continuum of Care (COC) process to coordinate homeless services to receive federal funding for homelessness. The County's COC is called All Home. The 16-member All Home

Board includes two SCA members (Mayor Nancy Backus, Auburn, and Councilmember Keith Scully, Shoreline), and members from the County, Seattle, nonprofit providers, and the Seattle Public Housing Authority. If the region were to consolidate homelessness services, the All Home Board would need to be reconfigured and a new charter written.

The ILA legislation will likely be referred to the RPC in August or September.

- **Charter Review Commission Interim Recommendations.** The King County Charter defines the powers of the executive and legislative branches of King County government, establishes financial procedures, sets procedures for elections, defines the role of regional committees and sets other policies that govern the County. The Charter also provides that at least every 10 years the County Executive appoint a citizen commission (the “Charter Review Commission”) to review the Charter and recommend amendments, if any. The County Council may then elect to place recommended Charter amendments on the next general election ballot.

The RPC presentation focused on three early action recommendations from the Charter Review Commission. The recommendations address:

- Changes to the inquest process,
- Removing a prohibition in the Charter that prohibits the County from selling properties purchased with former Municipality of Metropolitan Seattle (“Metro”) funds for less than full value if the property is being used for affordable housing, and
- Providing subpoena power for the Office of Law Enforcement Oversight.

The RPC presentation did not address the issue that is most important to cities: the review of the role and structure of the regional committees established in the Charter. As described in more detail below, the Charter Review Commission is seeking input from the Sound Cities Association (SCA) about a proposal to consolidate the regional committees.

Review of the Regional Charter Committees

As part of its work, the Charter Review Commission received two letters from County Councilmembers expressing interest in changing the regional charter committees (the Regional Policy Committee (RPC), the Regional Transit Committee (RTC) and the Regional Water Quality Committee (RWQC)), including potential consolidation of the committees. In May, the Charter Review Commission decided to review this proposal to consolidate the regional committees and seek input from the SCA.

The SCA created a working group of caucus chairs from each of the three regional committees (the RPC, RTC, and the RWQC), including Bellevue Councilmember John Stokes as the caucus chair of the RPC. The SCA working group has met and discussed using the current Charter review process to achieve a “voice and a vote” for cities and not dilute or eliminate the role for cities.

King County’s three regional committees were first established by a charter amendment in 1994

when King County subsumed the transit and water quality functions of the Municipality of Metropolitan Seattle (“Metro”). The committees were intended to give cities a meaningful “voice and vote” that were an integral part of the old Metro structure, but the reality has been that the committees have been somewhat diminished in the King County decision-making process.

Cities have an interest in keeping the committees intact and functioning as originally intended by the 1994 charter amendment:

- The committees should be about more than just collaboration – they should be about giving cities a voice and a vote in decisions involving hundreds of millions of taxpayer dollars.
- Cities do not support consolidation.
- Cities do not support changes to the committee structure that diminishes the role of cities as originally intended in the King County Charter.

Next Steps

The Charter Review Commission will continue to take feedback through August and a draft final report is planned to be completed in mid-October. Final action on the report by the Charter Review Commission is anticipated in November. At that point, the County Executive and County Council will receive the report and make decisions about what to consider for the ballot in 2020.

- **Update from King County Elections.** King County Elections Director, Julie Wise, provided a briefing to the RPC on the implementation of same day voter registration, the upcoming August primary election, and an overview of elections security.

The next meeting of the RPC is scheduled for August 21.

REGIONAL TRANSIT COMMITTEE (RTC)

June 19 meeting summary:

- **Update on METRO CONNECTS.** METRO CONNECTS is King County Metro’s (Metro) long-range plan, which calls for a 70 percent increase in bus service hours. Metro staff provided updated information about transit service and capital projects to implement METRO CONNECTS. Some of the updates of interest to Bellevue include:
 - The North Eastside Mobility Project will deploy transit service more efficiently between Seattle and Bothell, Kenmore, Kirkland, Redmond, and Woodinville. This project will also provide more routes and improved transit service between Bellevue and Kirkland. If the proposed changes are approved by the King County Council, the changes will take place in March.
 - RapidRide. Metro’s six existing RapidRide lines provide about 67,000 rides every weekday. By 2027, Metro plans to add seven more RapidRide lines, giving riders better

connections, buses that come more often, and faster, easier-to-use service. Two of the new RapidRide lines are planned within Bellevue, including:

- RapidRide Route 1027 will connect Totem Lake, Bellevue, and Eastgate. This line is scheduled to be completed by 2025.
- RapidRide Route 1030 will connect Renton, Eastgate, and Overlake. The completion year of this route is yet to be determined but will be after 2025.
- Electric bus charging at the Eastgate Park and Ride. Since 2017, Metro has increased the number of all-electric, fast-charge buses from three to 11. These buses are operated out of Metro's Bellevue Base and are charged at the base and at the Eastgate Park and Ride. The buses operate between the Bellevue Transit Center and Eastgate on Routes 226 and 241. Metro recently installed a third electric bus charger at Eastgate to support the additional electric buses.
- **Regional Planning to Implement METRO CONNECTS.** In November, the County Council passed Motion 15252 directing the County Executive to work with the County Council to initiate a regional planning effort in 2019 to:
 - Prepare updated information to supplement METRO CONNECTS regarding population growth, regional congestion, inflation and construction costs, regional mobility needs, and innovations in transportation.
 - Develop a regional funding plan, in collaboration with the County Council, for METRO CONNECTS and to meet County transportation infrastructure needs.

The RTC received a briefing on the *Status Report on Metro Transit's Regional Planning Effort*, which Metro transmitted to the County Council on May 31. Although maintenance of roads and bridges was described in Motion 15252, the status report indicates that the County will pursue this funding in a separate effort.

The status report estimates that an additional \$220 million per year is needed to achieve the METRO CONNECTS vision. The County is seeking input from stakeholders regarding the timing and size of a potential funding measure.

- **Mobility Framework.** In November, the County Council directed Metro to develop a framework for implementing innovations in transit service and mobility. The Mobility Framework will:
 - Review emerging transportation technologies and their impact on transit.
 - Review policies for the use of public space. Transit, transportation network companies (TNCs), private employer shuttles, and delivery vehicles compete for limited curb space.
 - Review industry-wide workforce trends vis a vis emerging vehicle technologies.

The RTC members continued a discussion of the draft guiding principles for the Mobility Framework. The draft guiding principles will next be reviewed by an Equity Cabinet that will

make a final recommendation to the County Executive and County Council regarding the principles.

The July 19 meeting of the RTC was canceled. The next meeting of the RTC is scheduled for August 21.

REGIONAL WATER QUALITY COMMITTEE (RWQC)

The July and August meetings of the RWQC were cancelled.

The next meeting of the RWQC is scheduled for September 4.

EASTRAIL REGIONAL ADVISORY COUNCIL (RAC)

The name of the RAC has been updated to reflect the RAC's decision in April to rebrand the Eastside Rail Corridor (ERC) as "Eastrail."

July 12 meeting summary:

- **Fiber feasibility study.** The RAC received a briefing on the Eastrail Corridor Fiber and Conduit Feasibility Analysis, which explored the potential addition of new communications infrastructure along the Eastrail. King County, Bellevue, Kirkland, Redmond, Renton and other Eastrail stakeholders participated in the study.

Fiber provides a pathway for electronic communications. Almost all high-speed internet (which is also called "broadband") and wireless services are either directly or indirectly dependent on fiber-optic cables to carry signals. Increasing fiber infrastructure can allow more information to be relayed. It can also increase resiliency by adding additional fiber pathways in case one pathway is disrupted by construction, vehicle collisions, or technology failure.

The benefits of installing fiber along the Eastrail include:

- Cost savings. Much of the Eastside is already developed, so expanding the fiber network can be costly due to added costs for utility relocation, traffic control, restoration, and potential property easements. It will be far less expensive to build fiber along the Eastrail while most of the trail is unpaved.
- Expanding the public sector network. This will increase the information capacity and resiliency needed by education, local government, public safety agencies and medical organizations to connect to their internet, telecommunications or cloud providers.
- Increasing competition. Increased capacity allows greater competition among private sector providers. This generally benefits the public by providing more choices, which may reduce broadband costs.

The RAC recognized the value of expanding fiber infrastructure along the Eastrail and asked staff to continue exploring governance structure options for ownership and operation of the infrastructure.

- **Formation of the Eastrail Partners.** The RAC convened the ERC Funding Commission (Commission) last year to make funding recommendations for development of the Eastrail. The Commission is made up of 17 representatives from the private and non-profit sectors.

Earlier this year, the Commission recommended creating an independent organization to advocate for the entire corridor, lead private-sector fundraising, and provide a full-corridor perspective on funding decisions and priorities for trail construction and enhancement. The Commission has proposed naming the independent fundraising organizing entity the “Eastrail Partners.”

At the April RAC meeting, the Commission provided a draft work plan for the first year of the Eastrail Partners operation. The Commission proposed an initial budget of approximately \$200,000 for the first year. The RAC members have been asked to provide \$100,000 of this initial funding. Bellevue’s share would be approximately \$11,000.

At the July 12 meeting, the Commission announced that the King County Parks Foundation has contributed \$50,000 and that private sector partners have contributed \$43,000 to date. The RAC adopted a consensus resolution in support of forming the Eastrail Partners. The resolution includes a goal for the RAC members to finalize their funding contributions by September 30.

- **Eastrail branding and July 20 event.** The King County Department of Natural Resources and Parks (DNRP) is leading an effort to establish a brand for the Eastrail and to build support and awareness around the multiuse trail. At the April RAC meeting, participants selected the name “Eastrail” for the ERC as well as a new logo and tagline. The RAC members publicly unveiled the new name, logo, and tagline on July 20 at an event in Redmond. In addition to unveiling the new brand materials, speakers announced the formation of the Eastrail Partners.
- **Eastrail RAC Work Plan and Budget.** The RAC discussed workplan items for 2021-2023 including: public outreach, implementing the Funding Commission’s recommendations, and creating a coordinated plan for art along the Eastrail. The RAC will continue the work plan discussion at its next meeting which has not yet been scheduled.

AFFORDABLE HOUSING COMMITTEE (AHC)

June 21 Meeting:

The King County Regional Affordable Housing Task Force adopted a Five-Year Action Plan in December that recommends strategies for regional coordination to address regional affordable housing needs, including the development of a standing affordable housing committee of the Growth Management Planning Council (GMPC) to guide implementation of the recommended strategies. The standing committee is known as the Affordable Housing Committee (AHC) and it met for the first time

on June 21.

Bellevue Deputy Mayor Lynne Robinson serves as a Sound Cities Association (SCA) alternate on the committee. The full roster is as follows:

Name	Organization/Jurisdiction
Patricia Akiyama	Master Builders Association of King and Snohomish Counties
Don Billen	Sound Transit
Susan Boyd	Bellwether Housing
Jane Broom	Microsoft Philanthropies
Kelly Coughlin	SnoValley Chamber of Commerce
Chelsea Hicks	Northwest Justice Project
Nicole Vallesterro Keenan-Lai	Puget Sound Sage
Stephen Norman	King County Housing Authority
Brett Waller	Washington Multi-Family Housing Association
Bryce Yadon	Futurewise
Councilmember Claudia Balducci	King County
Councilmember Larry Gossett	King County
Councilmember Jeanne Kohl-Welles	King County
Mayor David Baker	Kenmore
Mayor Debbie Bertlin, Mercer Island	Sound Cities Association
Councilmember Claude DaCorsi, Auburn	Sound Cities Association
Councilmember Nancy Tosta, Burien	Sound Cities Association
Mayor Ken Hearing, North Bend (alternate)	Sound Cities Association
Councilmember Marli Larimer, Kent (alternate)	Sound Cities Association
Councilmember Ryan McIrvine, Renton (alternate)	Sound Cities Association
Deputy Mayor Lynne Robinson, Bellevue (alternate)	Sound Cities Association
Councilmember Mike O'Brien	City of Seattle
Emily Alvarado <i>(on behalf of Mayor Jenny Durkan)</i>	City of Seattle, Office of Housing

The meeting was primarily an introductory and organizational meeting. The AHC was briefed on the Five-Year Action Plan, its responsibilities, structure and staffing, and decision-making process. The committee selected King County Councilmember Claudia Balducci as its Chair and Nicole Vallesterro Keenan Lai, the Executive Director of Puget Sound Sage, as its Vice Chair.

The next meeting of the AHC is scheduled for July 30.