

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

**GROWTH MANAGEMENT POLICY BOARD (GMPB)**

At its July 11 meeting, the GMPB:

- **Directed the PSRC staff to compile a complete draft of the VISION 2050 for a 60-day public review and comment period.** The public review and comment period is expected to begin July 19 and end September 16. The draft plan includes:
  - A preferred alternative regional growth strategy that includes:
    - The Transit Focused Growth Strategy (supported by the Bellevue City Council);
    - Amended growth allocations for Pierce and Snohomish Counties which reallocates growth from the High Capacity Transit Communities' geographies to the unincorporated urban and rural geographies of those counties; and
    - Amended geographies as requested by Kitsap County and applied only to Kitsap County.

The draft plan also includes direction to include the following remaining topics:

- Policy which discourages increases in land development capacity that is not served by high capacity transit.
  - Policy for phasing growth in unincorporated areas to ensure urban infrastructure is available, particularly transit.
  - Policy to prevent conversion of rural lands to commercial uses by focusing commercial, retail and community uses that serve rural areas into nearby cities.
  - Policy to conserve rural and resource lands by lessening development pressures to do so.
  - Policy to avoid growth in rural areas that cannot be adequately served with rural levels of service for infrastructure.
  - Action to develop tools within existing land conservation programs at the different levels of government to reduce rural growth pressures.
  - Policy for flexibility to address discrepancies in real vs allocated growth provided it supports the regional growth strategy.
  - Action to modify housing and employment targets that cannot be met and tools that can help jurisdictions achieve them.
- **Heard a report by PSRC staff on the planned outreach efforts during the VISION 2050 public comment period.** Residents and stakeholders will be invited to review and comment in

public workshops to be held in each county, an on-line open house, tabling at local events throughout the region, a recorded webinar that reviews the draft plan, an outreach toolkit, blog posts, social media and targeted outreach.

The next meeting of the GMPB is scheduled for September 5. There will be no meeting in August.

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

At its July 11 meeting, the TPB:

- **Approved a routine amendment to the 2019-2022 Transportation Improvement Program (TIP).** Two agencies submitted two projects this month for routine amendment into the TIP. These projects were awarded local, state and federal funding through various processes. The projects were reviewed by the PSRC staff and were determined to be consistent with VISION 2040 and the Regional Transportation Plan.

The projects approved for routine amendment to the TIP include:

- City of Kent: South 224<sup>th</sup> Street Phase II
- City of University Place: 67<sup>th</sup> Avenue Improvements Phase II
- **Recommended authorizing a change in the Regional Transportation Plan project status for the Sound Transit Federal Way Link Extension project.** The Federal Way Link Extension project will construct a 7.8-mile extension of Link light rail from the Angle Lake Station in SeaTac to Federal Way. Traveling primarily along I-5, trains will serve three new stations at Highline College, South 272nd Street, and the Federal Way Transit Center.
- **Released the list of projects recommended for Rural Town Centers and Corridors (RTCC) Program funding for public comment.** RTCC funding is used for small projects, including sidewalk and intersection improvements. The 2019 RTCC competition was conducted between March and June. The project selection committee met in June and evaluated the projects based on established criteria. The committee developed a recommended list of projects for the \$5 million in RTCC funding, as well as a contingency list. The public comment period will run from July 11 to September 26.
- **Recommended projects for Federal Transit Administration (FTA) funding.** In March, the PSRC was notified that the region's final 2019 funding from the FTA was approximately \$39.8 million over the estimated allocation. This additional funding is available for distribution. The funding will allow transit agencies to purchase new vehicles, conduct preventative maintenance, and make improvements to transit bases. Although the funding is not allocated to particular areas within King County, some programmatic investments will benefit Bellevue, including:

- King County Metro will receive an additional \$5 million for bus replacements.
- Sound Transit will receive an additional \$4 million for its Regional Express (STEx) Bus Program. The STEx program includes Routes 532 (Everett-Bellevue), 535 (Lynnwood-Bellevue), and 550 (Bellevue-Seattle).
- **Discussed the Washington State Transportation Commission's (WSTC) road usage charge (RUC) study.** The WSTC conducted a pilot project of a road usage charge (RUC) system from February 2018 to January 2019. Approximately 2,000 drivers participated in the pilot. Information collected from the pilot project is being compiled and analyzed, and a report will be prepared for the Governor, State Legislature and U.S. Department of Transportation in early 2020.

The current gas tax of 49.4 cents per gallon funds the state's roads and other infrastructure. As cars become increasingly more fuel efficient and the number of electric vehicles continues to increase, the revenue from the gas tax to support transportation projects is flat as funding needs increase. The RUC pilot project tested a 2.4-cent per mile charge for light-weight, non-commercial vehicles including gasoline-fueled, hybrid, and electric vehicles. Under this system, drivers would pay a per-mile tax based on miles driven, rather than gallons of fuel consumed. The pilot was funded through a federal grant.

Preliminary results of the pilot study indicate that upon conclusion of the pilot, about 70 percent of the pilot participants support implementing an RUC as a replacement to the gas tax to fund transportation infrastructure. Privacy and data security are among the participants' chief concerns and this was echoed by the TPB members.

- **Discussed the VISION 2050 draft.** As described above, the PSRC is leading the VISION 2050 update to the shared, regional guide for managing growth in the Puget Sound region. VISION 2050 will guide the location of future population and employment growth in the region along with supporting policies and impact mitigation. Each of the four counties in the region will allocate growth targets within their respective jurisdictions based on the regional growth strategy adopted in VISION 2050. The TPB received an update on the VISION 2050 process and was advised that the GMPB was expected to release a complete draft plan for a 60-day comment period. Additional information is included above in the GMPB update.
- **Discussed the scope and schedule of the passenger-only ferry study.** As part of the study, the PSRC will review potential routes and terminals, ridership demand, costs, and use of alternative fuels. The PSRC last studied passenger-only ferry service in 2008. The Washington State Legislature appropriated \$350,000 in the 2019-2021 budget for this study. The PSRC will begin stakeholder engagement this month. Bellevue staff will participate in the study using the principles of the Bellevue City Council Vision, such as reliability, predictability, and safety. As the study is conducted, staff will update Council on potential policy issues.

The next meeting of the TPB is scheduled for September 12.

## **REGIONAL TRANSIT-ORIENTED DEVELOPMENT ADVISORY COMMITTEE (RTODAC)**

At its June 21 meeting, the RTODAC:

- **Engaged in a discussion of the growth alternatives included in the VISION 2050 Draft Supplemental Environmental Impact Statement.** The committee received a presentation on the environmental review process, including public comments received to date. The committee engaged in a discussion of potential impacts of shifting more growth to rural areas in the draft Preferred Alternative as compared with the Transit Focused Growth alternative. The draft Preferred Alternative uses the Transit Focused Growth alternative as a starting point with adjustment of the percentage of population growth occurring in high-capacity transit areas. Additional information about the draft VISION 2050 process is contained above in the GMPB update.
- **Engaged in a discussion of proposed updates to the multicounty planning policies and actions relating to VISION 2050.** The committee reviewed proposed multicounty planning policies and actions to determine if the policies capture the goals and intent of the Growing Transit Communities Strategy. Several committee members supported integrating equity language into the growth policies. Committee members also emphasized the importance of positive growth that benefits a community rather than growth just to meet a target number. All the proposed revisions are generally consistent with Bellevue's stated vision, policies, and positions. The draft VISION 2050 plan will be released for a 60-day comment period later this summer (tentatively scheduled for mid-July through mid-September). Additional information about the draft VISION 2050 process is contained above in the GMPB update.

The next meeting of the RTODAC is scheduled for November 15.