

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

October 9 meeting summary:

- **State of the Health of the Public.** Dr. Paul Ramsey the Chief Executive Office of the University of Washington (UW) Medicine presented an informational briefing on the state of the Health of the Public. Dr. Ramsey explained new items assisting with measurement and what will be required to maintain public health. The UW established a new Institute for Health Metrics and Evaluation which measures public health in the county down to the neighborhood level. This institute will be able to measure how different interventions are improving the health of a neighborhood, city, county and the state. The institute states that 30 percent of the health issues in the county come from brain disease, including Alzheimer's, Parkinson's, mental health, addiction, stroke, and behavioral health. Brain health is followed by heart health and cancer in order of magnitude. The UW will focus on all three areas in research and clinical studies.

Dr. Ramsey identified primary care physicians and mental health professionals as focus areas to maintain appropriate future staffing levels. King County Councilmember Rod Dembowski referenced the partnership with Harborview Medical Center and that a voter-approved levy to fund safety and infrastructure improvements could be discussed at the County Council in 2020.

- **Homeward Bound Pilot Program.** The RPC received a briefing on a pilot program that would purchase bus tickets for homeless individuals who would like to reunite with family members. The proposal would be voluntary for homeless individuals to reunite with family members outside of King County or adjacent counties. The 2019 point-in-time count of people experiencing homelessness in King County showed that 92 percent were living in King County or an adjacent county when they most recently became homeless. Under the terms of the pilot program, eight percent of individuals experiencing homelessness in King County would be eligible for a bus ticket.

Councilmember Reagan Dunn proposed the pilot program and provided a striking amendment to reduce the proposed funding from \$1 million to at least \$250,000, to expand the transit

options to include rail, and to provide funding for food and hygiene items for the journey. Councilmember Dunn indicated he was open to additional amendments and further discussion.

- **King County Regional Homelessness Authority (Authority).** The RPC continued discussing two pieces of legislation regarding the proposal by King County Executive Dow Constantine and Seattle Mayor Jenny Durkan to realign the regional service system for people experiencing homelessness. The proposal would create a public development authority (PDA) to oversee the effort and proposes a Charter and interlocal agreement (ILA) between Seattle and King County to establish the new entity. Neither piece of legislation directly includes cities outside of Seattle. In order to join the ILA any city would be required to “align provision of in-scope homelessness response services with the Authority’s Five-Year Plan” and other organizational goals and policies. The County has stated no city would lose any funding by not signing onto the ILA.

King County Councilmember Pete von Reichbauer, who chairs the RPC, noted that the committee will provide sufficient time to analyze and receive feedback on the proposed realignment. The proposal is before the RPC under what’s called a “mandatory dual referral”, which gives the RPC 120 days to review and make a recommendation on the proposal. The RPC must finish its work by January 9, 2020 unless the RPC and the King County Council agree to a different timeframe.

The County Council’s Health, Housing and Human Services Committee (HHHS)—the other part of the “mandatory dual referral” —is also reviewing the proposals. Under the rules, the RPC must take action first, then the HHHS Committee acts followed by the King County Council. If the proposals are amended during the process, the amended version goes back to the RPC for concurrence. The Committee has received several briefings.

The next meeting of the RPC is scheduled for November 13.

REGIONAL TRANSIT COMMITTEE (RTC)

September 18 meeting summary:

- **Briefing on Initiative 976 (I-976).** I-976, referred to as “Bring Back Our \$30 Car Tabs” was filed as an initiative to the Legislature. Because the Legislature did not enact the initiative into law, it will be on the November 5 statewide General Election ballot. As written, the initiative proposes to do the following:
 - Limit motor vehicle license fees (VLF, car tab fees) to \$30 per year;
 - Repeal or reduce certain motor vehicle weight fees;
 - Repeal the authority of transportation benefit districts (TBDs) to impose vehicle fees;
 - Reduce electric vehicle fees to \$30 per year;
 - Repeal the 0.3 percent tax on motor vehicle retail sales;
 - Require local motor vehicle excise taxes (MVET) to be calculated using the Kelley Blue Book base value of the vehicle;
 - Conditionally repeal the Sound Transit 0.8 percent MVET; and
 - Require the retirement or refinancing of Sound Transit-related bonds to adjust for the

lost revenue from the MVET.

King County and Bellevue do not collect a VLF or MVET. However, the state, Sound Transit, and 13 King County cities use this tax and fee revenue to fund mobility projects, including many operated by King County Metro Transit (Metro) or the King County Road Services department, which is responsible for all county-owned roads, bridges and related infrastructure in unincorporated King County.

The passage of I-976 could result in significant cuts across the state and local jurisdictions, including \$130 million in cuts to Metro services between 2020 and 2025. Metro estimates it would lose 175,000 annual service hours funded by the Seattle TBD.

- **Mobility Framework.** Last November, the County Council directed the County Executive to develop a framework for implementing innovations in transit service and mobility. Per Council direction, the Mobility Framework will:
 - Review emerging transportation technologies and their impact on transit.
 - Develop a plan to fund and implement METRO CONNECTS, Metro's long-range transit service vision.
 - Review policies for use of public space by transit vehicles.
 - Review workforce trends in the transit industry.

The RTC was briefed on the draft Mobility Framework recommendations, which were developed by the Equity Cabinet. The Equity Cabinet is comprised of 22 community leaders selected to represent riders and communities countywide, including priority populations (low-income populations, people of color, immigrants and refugees, limited-English speaking communities, and people with disabilities). Examples of its recommendations include:

- Unmet needs. Provide additional transit service in areas with unmet needs, defined as areas with high density; a high proportion of low-income people, people of color, people with disabilities, and members of limited-English speaking communities; and areas that have limited mid-day and evening service. Adapt Metro's adopted policies to meet this need and to ensure regular and ongoing evaluation of needs in those areas.
- Innovation. Change Metro's adopted policies to increase focus on the role of innovation, add new mobility services, and support innovative, equitable, sustainable mobility to ensure they supplement transit services and work first for priority populations.
- Sustainability. Meet King County's climate goals by reducing car use and by prioritizing ways to make transit convenient and accessible.

Feedback from the RTC will be incorporated into the Mobility Framework Recommendations Summary, which will be transmitted to the King County Executive in October. In November, the RTC will review the Mobility Framework Recommendations Summary and consider recommending approval by the King County Council.

October 16 meeting summary:

- **Mobility Framework.** As described above, Metro is developing a framework for implementing innovations in transit service and mobility. To prepare for the RTC's deliberation in November, Metro staff provided an overview of three Metro policy documents, which will be updated in 2020 based on the Mobility Framework recommendations:
 - The Strategic Plan for Public Transportation sets goals in eight areas, such as safety, environmental sustainability, and service excellence.
 - The Service Guidelines define Metro's process for incrementally adding or reducing transit service.
 - METRO CONNECTS sets a vision for future transit service, including a goal to increase service hours by 70 percent by 2040.

When these documents are updated next year using the Mobility Framework recommendations, Metro and the RTC will need to consider how the recommendations will be prioritized against one another and to resolve any conflicts. The County Council has final authority to change Metro policy.

- **Access paratransit** provides supplementary transit service for people with disabilities. The federal Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) requires transit agencies to provide paratransit service that is, at a minimum, comparable in scope to fixed-route transit service. Metro's Access program provides most of its trips in County-owned, wheelchair-accessible vans operated by contractors.

The RTC discussed a five-year contract to provide Access services, which was recently awarded to MV Transportation. To inform the contract, Metro convened an Access Workgroup of riders, caregivers, stakeholders, and County staff before the contract was awarded. Workgroup recommendations included higher performance standards, stronger financial incentives and disincentives for the contractor, and customer-centered service.

The next meeting of the RTC is scheduled for November 20.

REGIONAL WATER QUALITY COMMITTEE (RWQC)

October 2 meeting summary:

- **Water Quality Benefits Evaluation Toolkit.** The RWQC received a briefing on the utility and functions of the Water Quality Benefits Evaluation toolkit. The Water and Land Resources Division (WLRD) developed the toolkit following regional discussions regarding priorities and strategies that would help inform development of the Clean Water Plan using a science-based alternatives analysis. The final plan is estimated to be adopted in 2022. The remainder of 2019 and 2020 will focus on developing programs, projects and policies.
- **Conveyance System Improvement Project.** The RWQC received a status update on the Conveyance System Improvement Project from the County's Wastewater Treatment Division

(WTD) staff. The Conveyance System Improvement Program is updated every five years, as required by the Regional Wastewater Services Plan. In response to a Regional Needs Assessment prepared in 2015, the WTD issued a report in May 2017 that looked at and listed projects to meet identified capacity needs and constraints in the County's regional conveyance system.

The Plan identifies where additional conveyance capacity will be needed through 2060 in the portion of the conveyance system served by separated sewers. The County has adopted a 20-year "peak flow capacity" standard for regional conveyance facilities to prevent sewer overflows. Facilities must have the capacity to convey peak flows of a magnitude that can be expected to occur during a severe storm event occurring on average once every 20 years.

Following the development of conceptual improvement projects, WTD undertook a prioritization process, to identify high priority projects for early project scheduling. The projects in Bellevue are:

- Eastgate Trunk Replacement;
- Factoria Trunk Diversion;
- Lake Hills Interceptor Replacement;
- Sweyolocken Pump Station Upgrade; and
- Eastside Interceptor Section 8 Storage.

Projects in other jurisdictions utilizing Bellevue Utility Services are:

- Medina Trunk Replacement;
 - Medina Siphon Replacement; and
 - Medina Pump Station Upgrade.
- **Resiliency-Recovery Planning in Preparation for Seismic or other Natural Disaster.** The King County Wastewater Treatment Division (WTD) staff provided a briefing on the vulnerability of system facilities and structures to damage from natural disasters. The RWQC was last briefed on the topic of "Resiliency and Recovery" in the context of seismic preparedness in February 2017.

Seven high-level preparedness strategies are included in the 2018 Preparedness and Recovery Recommendation Report. The recommendations would improve the WTD's ability to recover from a large-scale earthquake, landslide, flood or severe weather event.

The seven strategies are:

- Develop and implement a Continuity of Operations Plan;
- Hire a designated Emergency Management Coordinator;
- Implement an Employee Training Plan and build staff-wide capacity to achieve implementation;
- Focus on efficient contracting and procurement;
- Monitor best practices for communication, documentation and information systems to

- integrate when appropriate;
- Develop and implement strategies to manage and mitigate financial risks; and
- Establish an Emergency Recovery Working Group.

The WTD is integrating recommendations from the 2018 report concerning known vulnerabilities and high-risk areas and has established ranking criteria within a new resiliency category.

The next meeting of the RWQC is scheduled for November 6.

EASTRAIL REGIONAL ADVISORY COUNCIL (ERAC)

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."

October 17 meeting summary:

- **Trail Development Implementation.** The RAC received a briefing on candidate projects for near-term funding collaborations between ERAC members or the private sector. In 2018, stakeholders estimated a funding need of \$230 million for Eastrail projects. Since then, King County voters approved the 2020-2025 King County Parks Levy in August. The levy included about \$50 million for Eastrail projects.

Bellevue's Spring Boulevard Connector was one of the projects discussed. This project will connect the Eastrail with Spring Boulevard. It will include a pedestrian and bicycle trail along the north side when Spring Boulevard is completed in 2020, as well as quality connections to Downtown Bellevue, BelRed, and the Spring District. Bellevue and King County are exploring potential alignment options for the Eastrail connection to Spring Boulevard. The options explored to date have preliminary cost estimates of \$6-7 million.

- **Eastrail Partners Formation and Coordination with the RAC.** The ERAC convened a 17-member Eastrail Funding Commission (Commission) in 2018 to provide recommendations regarding:
 - Potential funding sources for trail projects.
 - Candidate projects for private-sector funding.
 - Strategies to build and maintain support for Eastrail corridor development.

In January, the Commission recommended creating of an independent organization to raise private-sector funding, engage stakeholders, create partnerships, and advocate on behalf of the trail named "Eastrail Partners."

At the July ERAC meeting, members adopted a consensus resolution on a cost-share agreement to provide \$100,000 to the Eastrail Partners. Bellevue's share will be about \$11,000. The Eastrail Partners secured more than \$50,000 from private and philanthropic contributors and \$50,000 in matching grant funds from the King County Parks Foundation.

In July, the Eastrail Partners registered as a non-profit. Many former Commission members have joined the Eastrail Board of Directors. The Eastrail Partners is recruiting for an executive

director who will lead the Eastrail Partners' fundraising, develop operations and communications plans, and serve as the primary liaison with the ERAC.

- **ERAC 2020-2022 Work Plan and Budget.** The ERAC discussed a draft work plan, that included the following:
 - Coordinated outreach and communications to develop a strategic communications plan to achieve increased Eastrail brand awareness and will include coordinated online and social media programming.
 - Engage underrepresented communities by conducting outreach at community events and other venues to raise awareness and solicit input.
 - Wayfinding and signage plan engaging a consultant to develop a coordinated wayfinding and signage plan across all Eastrail segments.
 - Legislative outreach as each of the RAC organizations has legislative priorities, and staff does not recommend creating an ERAC legislative agenda. Instead, staff recommends identifying one-to-three priority projects and developing materials to advocate for state funding.

The work plan identifies tasks that require cost-share contributions from members, to help members identify funding within their budget for the 2021-2022 biennium. The cost-share for all tasks is estimated at \$150,000-\$210,000. If the ERAC uses the same allocation process as it used for the branding effort, Bellevue's share would be about \$26,000 over two years.

The RAC will consider finalizing the work plan at its next meeting.

- **ERAC leadership.** King County Councilmember Claudia Balducci will continue as Chair and Kirkland Deputy Mayor Jay Arnold will continue as Vice Chair. Each will serve a second two-year term.

The next meeting of the ERAC is scheduled for January 31, 2020.

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.

September 25 meeting summary:

The GMPC discussed the Greater Downtown Kirkland Urban Center designation and process and discussed GMPC Affordable Housing Committee implementation calendar dates.

Most of the meeting was spent hearing from the PSRC staff on the continuing work on Vision 2050, including the latest iterations on the Regional Growth Strategy and target-setting in King County, climate change reflective of the King County Cities Climate Collaborative (K4C), and financial implementation tools for jurisdictions.

The next meeting of the GMPC is scheduled for November 20.

AFFORDABLE HOUSING COMMITTEE (AHC)

September 20 meeting summary:

The King County Regional Affordable Housing Task Force adopted a Five-Year Action Plan in December that recommends strategies for regional coordination to address affordable housing needs. A standing Affordable Housing Committee (AHC) of the Growth Management Planning Council (GMPC) was formed to guide implementation of the recommended strategies. To date, the AHC has met three times, June 21, July 30, and September 20.

The committee Chair is King County Councilmember Claudia Balducci. Bellevue Deputy Mayor Lynne Robinson serves as a Sound Cities Association alternate on the committee.

At the September 20 meeting there was continued discussion of work program priorities and highlighting equity considerations in the work program. The Committee adopted a recommendation regarding House Bill 1406, credit against the state share of the sales tax local option for affordable housing. The recommendation supported: 1) pooling of funds; 2) prioritizing funds to the extent possible for housing that serves very low-income households; and 3) advancing preservation efforts and equitable development.

The next meeting of the Affordable Housing Committee is scheduled for November 15.