

**COUNCIL SUMMARY BACKGROUND BRIEFING:
KING COUNTY REGIONAL COMMITTEES AND OTHER ISSUES
*January 2020***

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 as appropriate (e.g., King County Flood Control District, King Conservation District, Affordable Housing Committee, King County Board of Health, King County Regional Homelessness Authority). Summaries also include the work of the Growth Management Planning Council (GMPC). 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. These updates are intended to be summary briefings; staff can provide more details on any of the items below.

REGIONAL POLICY COMMITTEE (RPC)

December 5 meeting summary:

- **Regional Homelessness Authority.** In September, King County Executive Dow Constantine and Seattle Mayor Jenny Durkan transmitted legislation to their respective councils to charter a King County Regional Homelessness Authority as a public development authority (PDA) and an interlocal agreement (ILA) between King County and Seattle. The Executive also sent companion legislation authorizing the Executive to execute an ILA with cities in King County. The entity was proposed to address the homelessness crisis through more coordination and to realign service delivery to avoid duplication and siloed efforts.

As originally proposed, the creation of the PDA and an ILA between Seattle and King County did not include cities outside of Seattle. In order to join the ILA, cities would have been required to align their homelessness response services with the Authority's Five-Year Plan and other organizational goals and policies. Representatives of King County said that no city would lose any funding by not signing the ILA.

At the November 13 Sound Cities Association (SCA) Public Issues Committee (PIC) meeting, the group recommended SCA Board adoption of principles to provide feedback to the County Council and guide members on the SCA's Executive leadership Group (ELG) and the RPC members as they responded to the proposal. The SCA Board approved principles to guide its interests and these were outlined in a letter to King County Council Chair Rod Dembowski on November 20.

In response, King County Councilmembers Dembowski, Jeanne Kohl-Welles and Pete von Reichbauer sponsored alternative legislation. The legislation differed from the original

ordinance in several significant ways, including: establishing the new Authority through an ILA between Seattle and King County rather than creating a PDA; equal representation on the Governing Committee of the Authority, with three members each from SCA, Seattle, King County, and individuals with lived-experience of homelessness; and increased authority for the Governing Committee to amend and approve plans and budgets. It also stipulated that the Governing Committee would need a 2/3 super-majority to make any changes to the evidence-based plans put forth by the Implementation Board, and a 3/4 super-majority to remove the Executive Director of the Regional Homelessness Authority.

At the December 5 RPC meeting, SCA representatives, including Bellevue Councilmember John Stokes, successfully advocated for amendments to the proposed ILA to ensure that sub-regional planning with cities outside Seattle serve as the basis for the Authority's plans, and reporting requirements from the Authority were strengthened. The ordinance passed unanimously, as amended.

On December 11 the King County Council approved the legislation. The Seattle City Council approved legislation on December 16 authorizing Mayor Durkan to enter into an ILA under the same terms. Mayor Durkan and Executive Constantine signed the final agreement creating the Authority on December 18. Under the terms of the agreement, the new Authority's Governing Committee will need to meet within 90 days and a search will begin for a Chief Executive Officer.

The January RPC meetings were cancelled.

The next meeting of the RPC is scheduled for February 12.

REGIONAL TRANSIT COMMITTEE (RTC)

November 20 meeting summary:

- **Mobility Framework.** In 2018, the County Council directed the County Executive to develop a framework for implementing innovations in transit service and mobility. The Mobility Framework was intended to:
 - Review emerging transportation technologies and their impact on transit.
 - Develop a plan to fund and implement METRO CONNECTS, King County Metro Transit's (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 Mobility Framework Recommendation Summary. The recommendations were developed by an Equity Cabinet 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.

The RTC discussed concerns about how the Mobility Framework recommendations would be balanced with other Metro goals, such as transit productivity and the METRO CONNECTS service expansion goals.

- **2019 System Evaluation Report.** Metro staff briefed the RTC on the 2019 System Evaluation Report, which evaluates the transit system using criteria and processes established in Metro's Service Guidelines. The report identifies service hour needs for Metro's top three investment priorities, which are crowding, reliability, and service growth.

The 2019 System Evaluation Report will be used in combination with feedback from customers, operators, and partners. To develop proposals to change transit service, Metro staff takes these proposals to the public, gathers and incorporates feedback, and submits final plans for transit service changes to the County Council for review and approval.

December 5 meeting summary:

- **Mobility Framework.** The RTC approved a motion to recommend adoption of the Mobility Framework Recommendations Summary, described above. There were amendments proposed that addressed commitments to work with cities and the Equity Cabinet as plans and policies are updated. The motion also directed Metro staff to propose updates to the policies in 2020 to incorporate recommendations from the Mobility Framework, including the following:
 - The Strategic Plan for Public Transportation, which sets goals and performance measures in eight areas, such as safety, environmental sustainability, and service excellence.
 - The Service Guidelines, which define Metro's criteria and process for incrementally adding or reducing transit service.
 - The METRO CONNECTS Long Range Plan, which sets a vision for future transit service, including a goal to increase service hours by 70 percent by 2040.

The King County Council's Mobility and Environment Committee will review the motion in early

2020 before making its recommendation for action to the full County Council, which has final authority on changes to Metro policies.

- **2019 System Evaluation Report.** The RTC approved a motion to accept the 2019 System Evaluation Report. As described above, the report evaluates the transit system and identifies transit service needs to address crowding, reliability, and service growth.

January 15 meeting summary:

- **Committee Leadership.** The Chair is selected by the King County Council and the Vice Chair is selected by city members of the group. County Councilmember Dave Upthegrove will serve as the RTC Chair and Tukwila Councilmember Kathy Hougardy was elected to serve as the RTC Vice Chair in 2020.
- **2020 RTC Work Program.** The RTC discussed major work items for 2020, including updates to the Strategic Plan, Service Guidelines, and METRO CONNECTS Long Range Plan. The RTC members expressed concerns that the County's proposal to complete all policy updates this year would not provide enough time for city representatives to brief their respective Councilmembers on the proposals. The RTC Chair will work with the RTC Vice-Chair and County staff to develop a revised work program and timeline.
- **Policy Updates.** County staff provided an overview of the Strategic Plan, Service Guidelines, and METRO CONNECTS Long Range Plan. The RTC will review potential updates to these policies later this year.

Key drivers for the policy updates include:

- The adoption of METRO CONNECTS in 2017 which needs to be integrated into the Strategic Plan and Service Guidelines.
- The King County Marine Division was incorporated into the Metro Transit Department last year.
- In December, the RTC adopted the Mobility Framework Summary, a set of recommendations intended to build on and strengthen Metro's existing network of transit services. Metro staff will make recommendations and the RTC and the County Council will determine how these recommendations are integrated into Metro's plans and policies.
- **Strategic Plan and Performance Measures.** The Strategic Plan sets goals in eight areas, such as safety, environmental sustainability, and service excellence. The Strategic Plan requires Metro to report every two years on 68 performance measures, which are aligned with the goals. The next Strategic Plan Progress Report is due later this year.

The RTC reviewed potential changes to the Strategic Plan, including changes to:

- Incorporate the Mobility Framework recommendations.
- Include updated information on King County ferry operations.
- Align the Strategic Plan with the METRO CONNECTS Long Range Plan.
- Simplify performance measures and make them more transparent.

The next meeting of the RTC is scheduled for February 19.

REGIONAL WATER QUALITY COMMITTEE (RWQC)

The December 4 and January 1 meetings of the RWQC were cancelled.

The next meeting of the RWQC is being rescheduled as a special meeting, with the date yet to be determined.

AFFORDABLE HOUSING COMMITTEE (AHC)

January 17 meeting summary:

At the January 17 meeting King County staff presented background on the update of the Housing Section of the Countywide Planning Policies (CPPs) and engaged the Committee on the following issues:

1. Methods for ensuring regional accountability.
2. Geographic distribution and siting of affordable housing.
3. Planning policies to address the need for housing affordable to very low-income households.
4. Affordable housing goals and housing need by AMI percentage.

Issue 1: Chair Claudia Balducci noted the importance of measuring progress against goals and also acknowledged concern for measuring against a target that may not be attainable. Bellevue Mayor Lynne Robinson commented that progress needed to account for the goals and values of individual cities.

Issue 2: Chair Balducci noted that it is important to target displacement around transit. Committee members noted that areas of opportunity go beyond transit. Mayor Robinson added that it includes families not being displaced from schools.

There was insufficient time to discuss Issues 3 and 4, and an additional meeting will be scheduled to cover these issues.

The Committee also received a progress report on the Committee's Work Plan, the Affordable Housing Dashboard, and the recent announcement by Microsoft of additional investments it is making to address affordable housing and homelessness.

The next meeting of the Affordable Housing Committee will be an added meeting that is yet to be scheduled.

BOARD OF HEALTH, SEATTLE-KING COUNTY (BOH)

January 16 meeting summary:

- **Director's Update on Public Health Issues.** Director Patty Hayes reported on the following:
 - A new virus that started in China, the Wuhan coronavirus (similar to SARS), is being tracked, but no screenings are being conducted at SeaTac yet, unlike some other airports. Public Health staff sent an advisory about the virus to healthcare facilities last week. As of this writing, one case of the virus has been reported in Snohomish County.
 - It is already a severe flu season with nine deaths reported in King County, including one child. One reason the flu season is worse than normal is that several different strains of the flu virus are emerging at the same time, rather than over the course year.
 - Hepatitis A, particularly among homeless populations, is continuing to be monitored and actively addressed. There are 41 cases this year compared to 15 last year, and an additional eight cases were reported recently. There is no single 'hot spot', but rather, it is diffuse across the county. Public Health staff are actively training shelter staff and others to use an environmental health toolkit which features a checklist of best practices to stem the spread of Hepatitis A. The same checklist is being distributed to severe weather shelters.