

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

***February 12 meeting summary:***

- **Regional Policy Committee Work Program.** The RPC adopted its work program for 2020. The work program includes the following topics:

Mandatory referral items:

1. Solid Waste
2. Veterans Seniors and Human Services Levy (VSHSL)
3. Homelessness including Regional Homeless Authority Updates
4. Mental Illness and Drug Dependency (MIDD)
5. Regional Transportation (not including transit)
6. Affordable Housing
7. Best Starts for Kids (BSK) Levy Updates

Briefings:

- Solid Waste, including Waste-to-Energy Export Study
- VSHSL Annual Reports
- Land Conservation Initiative
- Public Safety Emergency Radio Network (PSERN) updates
- Homelessness
- Regional Affordable Housing Strategies
- MIDD Annual Report
- Best Starts for Kids (BSK) Reports
- Regional Transportation
- Elections

- Natural Disasters
  - Flood Control
  - Charter Review Commission Update
  - Census Outreach Efforts
  - KC International Airport Expansion and Regional Airport Needs
  - State of Agriculture in King County
  - Regional Approach to Gang Violence
  - Composting
  - Continuum of Care Progress Report
- **Motion Accepting the Third Annual Report on the Best Starts for Kids Initiative.** The RPC received a briefing and voted to accept the Best Starts for Kids (BSK) Third Annual Report. In 2015, King County voters approved a six-year \$400 million property tax levy to fund a prevention-oriented regional plan aimed at supporting the healthy development of children and youth, families and communities across the county. The BSK levy rate is \$0.14 per \$1,000 of assessed value, and Bellevue's annual contribution is approximately \$6.2 million out of a total of \$65 million generated per year.

The BSK Third Annual Report describes the programs funded, key milestones and preliminary data on outcomes and performance measures. Because the BSK funding is typically invested in programs with a two or three-year commitment, the outcomes in the report are not fully developed. Full evaluations and performance measures will not be available until subsequent reports.

To date, 14 agencies in Bellevue and the Bellevue School District have been awarded nearly \$4 million in multi-year BSK funding. The Third Annual Report, however, provides limited information regarding the specific populations served by the BSK-funded programs. Sound City Association (SCA) representatives requested that the BSK staff provide more detailed information, such as a map or zip codes of people receiving services, to show where grant awards are being made and who is being served. Having this would help Bellevue staff identify where there might be gaps in services or where Bellevue residents are traveling long distances to receive services.

- **Mental Illness and Drug Dependency (MIDD) Annual Report.** The RPC was briefed on the 2018 MIDD Annual Report. This briefing had been delayed from 2019 due to the committee's work on the Regional Housing Authority legislation.

In 2007 the King County Council authorized the MIDD 1 levy and collection of an increase in the sales and use tax of one-tenth of one percent for the delivery of mental health and chemical dependency services and therapeutic courts through December 2016. Subsequent legislation established the MIDD Oversight Committee, MIDD Implementation Plan and MIDD Evaluation Plan. In August 2016 the King County Council established MIDD 2 as a continuation of the

MIDD sales tax with an expiration date of January 1, 2026. The sales tax generated \$136.5 million in 2017-2018 biennium and is expected to generate \$150 million in 2019-2020.

Over 26,400 individuals in King County received at least one MIDD-funded service in 2018. Of those, 62 percent were adults ages 18 – 54 and 40 percent were youth or children through age 17. In 2018, 5 percent of MIDD participants resided in North King County, 14 percent in East King County, 30 percent in South King County, and 39 percent in Seattle. Eleven percent of the MIDD participants resident's address/location was unknown or 'other'. Statistics regarding hospitalizations and adult jail bookings were significantly reduced for participants receiving MIDD services.

The next meeting of the RPC has not been scheduled. The March 11 and April 8 meetings are cancelled due to elected officials' attendance at national conferences.

### **REGIONAL TRANSIT COMMITTEE (RTC)**

The RTC met on February 19. A summary of the meeting will be provided in the March Regional Issues packet.

The next meeting of the RTC is scheduled for March 18.

### **REGIONAL WATER QUALITY COMMITTEE (RWQC)**

The February 5 meeting of the RWQC was cancelled.

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

### **EASTRAIL REGIONAL ADVISORY COUNCIL (ERAC)**

#### ***January 31 meeting summary:***

- **Fiber Communications.** The ERAC discussed the potential addition of new communications infrastructure along the Eastrail. Installing fiber underground along the 28-mile Eastrail corridor in King County (including the Redmond Spur) would cost an estimated \$6-12 million. The installation costs could be recouped in 20 years if 17 percent of the capacity was leased to the private sector. Operations and maintenance are estimated to cost approximately \$75,000 per year.

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 a different pathway is disrupted.

The ERAC approved a resolution in support of forming a stakeholder group to further discuss installing fiber communications within the Eastrail. All ERAC member entities are invited to participate. The stakeholder group will identify a project lead entity and begin developing a project implementation plan.

- **ERAC 2020-2022 Work Plan and Budget.** The ERAC reached consensus on a draft work plan that includes 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.
  - Engagement of underrepresented communities by conducting outreach at community events and other venues to raise awareness and solicit input.
  - Wayfinding and signage plan by engaging a consultant to develop a coordinated wayfinding and signage plan across all Eastrail segments.
  - Legislative outreach as each of the ERAC 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 \$250,000. Bellevue's estimated share is about \$30,000 over two years.

- **Eastrail Partners.** 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.

Last year, 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." The ERAC supported this recommendation. The Eastrail Partners was registered as a non-profit in July.

The new Eastrail Partners Executive Director, Katherine Hollis, was introduced to the ERAC. Prior to joining the Eastrail Partners, Katherine served as the Conservation and Advocacy Director of The Mountaineers for six years. The Eastrail Partners Board of Directors has recruited three new members:

- John Marchione, former Mayor of Redmond
- Joan McBride, former Mayor of Kirkland and former State Legislator
- Sung Yang, Pacific Public Affairs

The next meeting of the ERAC is scheduled for April 30.

### **AFFORDABLE HOUSING COMMITTEE (AHC)**

#### ***January 30 meeting summary:***

The January 30 meeting of the AHC was added to continue discussion of Countywide Planning Policies (CPP) housing section update issues. Four issues were presented at the January 17 meeting, but only the first two were discussed.

1. Methods for ensuring greater regional accountability;
2. Geographic distribution and siting of affordable housing;
3. Challenges to address the need for housing affordable to very low-income households; and
4. Aligning the CPPs with the Task Force recommendations and Vision 2050's planning framework.

Issue 3: AHC members commented on challenges with developing housing that serves families and individuals earning less than 30 percent median income. This housing requires deep subsidy to build and ongoing rent subsidy. Stephen Norman, Executive Director of the King County Housing Authority (KCHA) shared that supportive housing at this income level can be layered with Section 8 vouchers, but there are not new vouchers for new units. Mayor Lynne Robinson commented that cities should think of affordable housing as infrastructure that is budgeted for.

Issue 4: AHC Chair Claudia Balducci commented on the need to set CPP housing target goals that are achievable, but also focus on housing need (existing and future cost burden) found in the Regional Affordable Housing Task Force (RAHTF) report. She also noted that the AHC is focused on increasing housing affordable to families and individuals earning up to 50 percent median income.

The next meeting of the Affordable Housing Committee is scheduled for March 30.