

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

November 4 meeting summary:

- **Discussed Best Starts for Kids Assessment.** In 2015, voters approved a countywide ballot measure—the Best Starts for Kids (BSK) initiative—that imposed a property tax of 14 cents per \$1,000 of assessed value, with an increase of three percent for each of the five subsequent years. The levy raises approximately \$65 million annually. The six-year levy expires at the end of 2021 and the King County Executive and County Council are planning to place a renewal levy on the countywide ballot next year.

The County Council approved the BSK Implementation Plan in 2016 and programs funded with the levy proceeds began in 2017. The levy funds services and opportunities for children and youths in five “investment areas”, including:

- Invest early
- Sustain the gain
- Communities of opportunity
- Youth and family homelessness prevention
- Results focused and data driven.

Legislation passed earlier this year by the County Council required an assessment of levy initiatives by December. The assessment was forwarded to the County Council Committee of the Whole and the RPC for review. It covers implementation achievements, potential gaps in services and lessons learned that will help inform consideration of a renewal levy by elected officials and stakeholders. The assessment report includes:

- An assessment of how BSK levy proceeds are allocated, strategy and program implementation status, design or policy changes, challenges and outcomes;
- An analysis of the context and impact of the BSK levy addressing goals, strategies, and programs outlined in the BSK implementation plan reported by geography, investments, strategies, and preliminary measurements of change that communities and families are experiencing;
- An analysis of how BSK investments have impacted the advancement of equity and social justice, and have changed systems or policies of racial and other forms of oppression;
- Recommendations for improving BSK if a decision is made to place a renewal levy on the ballot in 2021;
- An analysis on how the goals of the BSK levy align with the King County Strategic Plan, Equity and Social Justice Strategic Plan, the Health and Human Services Transformation Plan, the King County Youth Action Plan, and how the BSK levy implementation plan advances the goals in the Mental Illness and Drug Dependency (MIDD) Behavioral Health Sales Tax, and the Veterans, Seniors and Human Services (VSHS) Levy.

A comprehensive review of the report has not been completed. The plan summary notes that:

- Fifty-two percent of the children, youth, and families served reside in South King County zip codes. The implementation plan focused on responding to variations in health outcomes, expected lifespans, and poverty rates in different communities.
- The implementation plan focused on reversing harmful experiences as a result of racial and ethnic inequity in King County. Approximately 64 percent of those receiving direct services were people of color.
- The implementation plan has intentionally focused on investing in communities of color to connect children and families to services, to reduce health disparities and to increase access to support services for success.
- The levy has delivered direct services to more than 425,000 children, youth, and parents/caregivers across investment areas.

The BSK initiative generally aligns with Bellevue policy statements supporting investments and prevention programs that focus on the root causes of homelessness and developing thriving individuals. Specific impacts on Bellevue and Eastside constituents have been challenging to assess despite repeated requests that County staff provide information on the geographic location of people receiving services under the BSK programs. The assessment does not report this information.

The report acknowledges that BSK, MIDD, AND VSHSL constitute a substantial portion of King County's local health and human service investments to address historical and changing needs in our communities. BSK focuses on child and adolescent development; MIDD focuses on quality mental health and substance abuse supports; and VSHSL focuses on overall supports for

vulnerable populations in the County. The assessment does not provide information regarding overlapping funding, duplication of costs to administer each levy, and/or participants served by the BSK, MIDD and VSHSL initiatives and public health services.

The assessment report contains five recommendations for a potential renewal levy. Department of Community and Human Services (DCHS) staff developed these recommendations based on data from a variety of sources.

Recommendation 1. Keep leading on equity: Center the voices of Black/African American, Indigenous, and people of color (BIPOC) in investment and program decisions to reflect community knowledge and to deepen programming in BSK areas most impacted by systemic and racial oppression.

Recommendation 2. Maintain long-term goals and strategies while refining programs and measures: Sustain the current levy's emphasis on upstream transformation by maintaining goals, allocations, and strategies as outlined in the BSK Implementation Plan, while refining performance measures, community involvement, and programming within each strategy.

Recommendation 3. Strengthen care for children and youth: Increase investment in childcare and youth strategies to support educational advancement and economic prosperity in the region.

Recommendation 4. Build Stronger Systems: Strengthen coordination across programs, initiatives, levies, and funded partners to increase efficiency and to benefit all families and children across the region, particularly those most in need.

Recommendation 5. Expand the role of youth: Modify the Children and Youth Advisory Board (CYAB) structure to promote more youth participation.

- **Discussed the Health through Housing Implementation Plan.** The Executive proposed and the Council approved a Health through Housing initiative in October with the goal of housing 2,000 homeless or those at risk of chronic homelessness by Oct 22, 2022 through an increase in sales tax and a bonds package. The funds are proposed to be used to:
 - Acquire single-room properties like hotels while economic conditions are favorable;
 - Convert those properties to emergency housing;
 - Provide supportive services, including behavioral health; and,
 - Convert single-room settings into permanent supportive housing over time while developing other affordable housing.

In addition to King County, Bellevue and the following cities in King County have voted to enact the sales tax Covington, Issaquah, Kent, Renton, Snoqualmie, North Bend and Maple Valley.

King County legislation called for submittal of an implementation plan for the Health through Housing initiative that is required to describe goals, strategies, performance measures, reporting

requirements and annual expenditure plan to direct use of the tax proceeds from 2022 through 2028.

The Executive is required to consult with the Growth Management Planning Council's (GMPC) Affordable Housing Committee and the chief executive officer of the King County Regional Homelessness Authority while developing the implementation plan.

The implementation plan will direct expenditures from a Health through Housing fund 1) to conform to state law directing populations served and use of the sales tax proceeds and 2) meet three goals cited in the enabling legislation approved by the Council in October as follows.

At least 60 percent of the sales tax proceeds must be used for:

- a. Constructing affordable housing, including new units within an existing structure and facilities providing housing-related services;
- b. Constructing mental and behavioral health-related facilities;
- c. Funding operations and maintenance of new affordable housing and facilities where housing-related programs are provided, or newly constructed evaluation and treatment centers

Remaining funds may be used for operation, delivery or evaluation of mental and behavioral health treatment programs and services or housing-related services for individuals whose income is below 60 percent of area median income (AMI) and within the following population groups:

- Persons with behavioral health disabilities
- Veterans
- Senior citizens
- Homeless, or at-risk of being homeless, families with children
- Unaccompanied homeless youth or young adults
- Persons with disabilities
- Domestic violence survivors

The three King County goals are:

- The creation and ongoing operation of two thousand units of affordable housing with housing-related services;
- An annual reduction of racial and ethnic demographic disproportionality among persons experiencing chronic homelessness in King County; and
- The creation and operation of a mobile behavioral health intervention program with access for its clients to be created, operated, or otherwise funded by the sales tax proceeds

The implementation plan is required to name persons to and describe the responsibilities of a Health through Housing advisory committee. The committee would advise the Executive and

County Council and report annually to the County Council and broader community regarding accomplishments and the effectiveness of the expenditure of proceeds.

The legislation directs the Executive's selection of persons to serve on the committee, including people who have experienced homelessness; representatives of racial and ethnic communities disproportionately represented among people experiencing chronic homelessness in King County; and residents of cities with populations greater than 60,000 and unincorporated areas. In addition, the committee will include representatives from county, city, and subregional boards, commissions or committees to promote regional coordination across King County human services investments.

The next meeting of the RPC is scheduled for December 2.

REGIONAL TRANSIT COMMITTEE (RTC)

October 21 meeting summary:

- **Updating Metro Transit Service Guidelines.** Metro staff provided a briefing on potential changes to the agency's Service Guidelines. Adopted in 2011 and updated in 2016, these policies guide additions or reductions of transit service, using the following criteria:
 - Corridor productivity – serving housing, jobs, schools, and other key destinations.
 - Social equity – serving minority and low-income populations.
 - Geographic value – serving transit activity centers, regional growth centers, and manufacturing/industrial centers.

For each transit corridor, a "target service level" is set based on these criteria. Corridor productivity accounts for 50 percent of a transit corridor's score and social equity and geographic value each account for 25 percent.

A major driver of the update to the Service Guidelines is the Mobility Framework, 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 the recommendations are integrated into Metro's plans and policies.

Based on the Mobility Framework, Metro staff presented proposed changes to setting target service levels:

- Expanding the equity score from race and income to add disability, foreign-born status, and limited English speakers;
- Adding consideration of low- and medium-income job locations to the productivity score;
- Adding target service levels for weekend service to cost estimates; Using population data instead of boarding data; and,
- Adding corridors from "Metro Connects" which is the long-range plan for expanding service by 70 percent. This revision would improve corridor consistency between the two plans.

RTC members said Metro's service should support the regional growth strategy by serving centers. Members asked for additional information about how the proposed changes would impact the service network. Metro will provide this information at the next meeting.

The next meeting of the RTC is scheduled for November 30.

REGIONAL WATER QUALITY COMMITTEE (RWQC)

The RWQC did not meet in November. The next meeting is scheduled for December 9.

AFFORDABLE HOUSING COMMITTEE

November 13 meeting summary:

The AHC is a standing committee of the Growth Management Planning Council (GMPC). It was formed in 2019 to address regional affordable housing needs and to implement recommendations made by the King County Regional Affordable Housing Task Force (Task Force). It is also involved in updating the Housing Chapter of the Countywide Planning Policies.

- **Adopted Shared Revenue Principles.** The intent of the Shared Revenue Principles is to assist decision-making on potential revenues to meet the goal of adding 44,000 low-income homes between 2019 and 2024 as proposed in the Task Force Plan. The principles recognize a shared responsibility for funding affordable housing including contributions from local jurisdictions, state, federal, business and philanthropic entities. An estimated \$20 billion--\$5 billion of which would come from local governments—is needed to construct or preserve, operate and service 44,000 low-income homes. AHC members who represent the Sound Cities Association (SCA) proposed an amendment that acknowledged that \$5 billion is not an achievable goal. The proposed amendment was adopted, and language was included that noted the urgency of raising sufficient funding in the region while mindful of the challenges.
- **Discussed Updates to the Housing Chapter of the King County Countywide Planning Policies (CPPs).** Three core areas for the update were identified: strengthening local and regional accountability; achieving health and equity outcomes; and alignment with existing plans and guidance that include PSRC's Vision 2050, the Regional Affordable Housing Task Force and direction from the AHC.

Key policies in these areas were reviewed and received general support. The AHC will have a study session in January to review the full draft of the CPP Housing Chapter and possibly forward the recommendation to the GMPC. Once the GMPC adopts updated policies, they are referred to the King County Council for adoption and then referred to local jurisdictions for ratification. The Housing Chapter and housing policies, like other CPPs are binding on the 30 cities and King County, setting

direction and coordination on housing issues that extend beyond the boundaries of a single jurisdiction.

The proposed housing CPPs will require extensive update to the Housing Chapter of Bellevue's Comprehensive Plan.

- **Reviewed the proposed AHC State and Federal Legislative Agendas.** Comments from the AHC members included the need to align the funding request for the State Housing Trust Fund with that of other housing advocacy groups; and, strengthening language on preservation of manufactured housing communities. King County Housing Authority Executive Director Stephen Norman stressed the importance of the federal legislative agenda, noting that 69 percent of the affordable housing funding for King County comes from the federal government. The AHC is expected to act on the legislative agendas at its next meeting.

The next meeting of the AHC will be in January with the date to be announced.

EASTRAIL REGIONAL ADVISORY COUNCIL (ERAC)

October 31 meeting summary:

- **Federal and State Engagement Planning.** Eastrail Partners, a nonprofit trail advocacy group, is advocating for federal funding for four priority projects:
 - Wilburton Trestle in Bellevue
 - NE 8th Street Overcrossing in Bellevue
 - I-90 Steel Bridge in Bellevue
 - Totem Lake Connector Bridge in Kirkland

In July, the U.S. House of Representatives passed a large infrastructure funding package called the Moving Forward Act. The Senate has not responded with its recommendations. Eastrail Partners reached out to Senator Patty Murray and Senator Maria Cantwell to discuss projects included in the House bill that would benefit the Eastrail, including:

- 75 percent increase in funding for non-motorized transportation in the recreational trails program and greater flexibility for local match requirements;
- Funding for projects that reduce traffic fatalities and injuries;
- Funding for transportation projects to link existing trail facilities

To complement federal engagement efforts, the Eastrail Partners developed an outreach strategy for state legislators focusing on projects that align with state funding programs in the state's transportation budget and multi-modal project funds.

Priority projects for state funding include:

- 75 percent increase in funding for non-motorized transportation in the recreational trails program and greater flexibility for local match requirements;
- Funding for projects that reduce traffic fatalities and injuries;
- Funding for transportation projects to link existing trail facilities.

Priority projects for state engagement include:

- I-90 Steel Bridge in Bellevue
- Central Wilburton Trail Segment in Bellevue
- Redmond Central Connector Phase III in Redmond
- SR 202 Trestle Widening project in Woodinville

The ERAC and Eastrail Partners staff will develop a one-page information sheet about the Eastrail and funding priorities to share with state legislators. Eastrail Partners is exploring the idea of a virtual state “lobby day,” possibly in coordination with the Washington Trails Association. The Eastrail Partners is also considering a small-group trail visit with legislators over the next six weeks, if allowed under COVID-19 pandemic restrictions.

- **Fiber Communications.** The ERAC discussed the request for proposals (RFP) for fiber development along the Eastrail. In July, the ERAC received a briefing on the cost to install and maintain fiber communications along the 28-mile Eastrail corridor, from Renton to Woodinville and along the Redmond spur. The installation would cost an estimated \$6-12 million and the costs could be recouped in 20 years if 17 percent of the fiber capacity is leased to the private sector. Once installed, operations and maintenance would cost approximately \$75,000 per year.

Fiber provides a pathway for electronic communications. Almost all high-speed internet (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 other pathways are disrupted.

King County is drafting an RFP for fiber construction. Its release is delayed until next year to allow for legal reviews. King County may use the RFP process to gauge the interest of private investors and to refine the project cost estimates. The level of funding needed to buy into the fiber project will depend on the implementation model selected via the RFP process. The dollar amount, or even the range, is not yet clear.

- **2021-2022 Biennium Budgeting and Work Plan.** In January, 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.
- **Member Updates.** ERAC members were invited to share updates about trail projects. King County Council Chair Claudia Balducci briefed the ERAC on the NE 8th Street Overcrossing in Bellevue.

The Overcrossing is west of the former site of the Bellevue Growers Association Packing and Shipping Warehouse. The warehouse was owned and operated by Japanese American farmers who used it to store and ship their produce to local and national markets. Community members have expressed interest in commemorating Japanese American agricultural history as well as the incarceration of Japanese Americans during World War II.

The overcrossing has been identified as an opportunity to memorialize the contributions of the Japanese American community in Bellevue, as part of a larger project—the Japanese American Commemoration Project—that is exploring potential sites throughout the area. The NE 8th Street Overcrossing design team drew on this element of the site’s history to inform the aesthetic treatment of the bridge. The Bellevue City Council received an update on this project in February. The City’s Arts program is contributing \$40,000 to this effort.

King County will complete design of the Overcrossing this month and the project will be ready to bid in the spring. Construction is scheduled to begin next year and must be completed by 2022 due to East Link construction.

The next ERAC meeting is scheduled for January 28.

KING COUNTY FLOOD CONTROL DISTRICT (FCD)

The FCD Advisory Committee, comprised of elected officials from throughout King County, makes annual recommendations to the FCD Board of Supervisors. Members of the King County Council serve as the FCD Board of Supervisors. The Committee reviews the annual budget, capital projects and workplan and provides recommendations for consideration by the Board of Supervisors. This year, the Committee held four meetings over the summer to review the operating budget and 2021-2026 Capital Improvement Program (CIP).

The FCD Board approved the operating and capital budgets for 2021 on November 4. The budgets were revised slightly from the Advisory Committee’s recommendations to incorporate updated information received after the Advisory Committee’s recommended budget was transmitted on August

31. The total budget was increased by \$4,098,764 or a 2.95 percent increase from the Advisory Committee's recommended budget. The increased amount was primarily for capital projects that will use unexpended or carry over funds from the 2020 budget.

As recommended by the Advisory Committee, the FCD will keep the 2021 property tax levy rate the same as the 2020 rate of 9.3 cents per \$1,000 of assessed value (AV). The budget also assumes collection of additional revenues from new construction. This rate will generate an estimated \$58,403,522 in 2021. Bellevue property owners contribute approximately eight percent of the total FCD budget, which will be nearly \$5 million in 2021.

The final 2021 operating budget totals \$13,171,717, which is approximately \$300,000 less than the 2020 operating budget. The final capital budget is \$124,690,145, significantly less than the revised 2020 capital budget of \$202,547,438 due to the timing of capital projects and the availability of carry over funding from 2020.

The adopted 2021-2026 CIP includes funds for Bellevue to complete the Lower Coal Creek/Newport Shores project to reduce flooding and improve stream conveyance in the Newport Shores neighborhood adjacent to Coal Creek as it approaches Lake Washington.

The 2021-2026 CIP also includes funding for King County to continue work on the Willowmoor project to control lake levels in Lake Sammamish and improve conditions in the Sammamish River immediately downstream of the lake and within Marymoor Park. The FCD Board of Supervisors recently directed FCD staff to renew a procurement process to secure a consultant to review and evaluate two different engineering solutions for flood control at Lake Sammamish and the Sammamish River transition zone. Anticipated completion and delivery of a final report is targeted for mid-April to early May.

Bellevue also receives nearly \$600,000 per year from the FCD Subregional Opportunity Fund for local flood control projects. Bellevue uses these funds for design and construction of local capital projects including flood reduction and conveyance improvements such as the Meydenbauer Basin, Sunset Creek at SE 30th, and Factoria Boulevard. The FCD also provides funds for flood reduction grants to individual jurisdictions as well as funding salmon recovery projects through Watershed Resource Inventory Areas (WRIAs). In 2021 the FCD has provided \$9.6 million for the WRIAs, twice the amount compared to prior years.

The 2021 budget also incorporated an expanded grants program to include three new categories of flood risk reduction grants. The grant categories address urban stream flooding, coastal erosion and flooding, and replacing culverts that block fish passage. Each of the grant programs were allocated \$3 million. Government agencies and tribes are eligible for the new grant funding.