

**COUNCIL SUMMARY BACKGROUND BRIEF:  
PUGET SOUND REGIONAL COUNCIL (PSRC)  
*November 2020***

**SPECIAL MEETING OF THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY**

At its October 29 meeting, the General Assembly:

- **Voted to adopt VISION 2050, the long-range growth management, environmental, economic and transportation strategy for the central Puget Sound region.** VISION 2050 charts the course for the region's growth over the next 30 years. It includes the region's multicounty planning policies and a regional strategy for accommodating growth through 2050. The plan also advances equity for the region's residents, supports a strong economy, expands housing choices, and provides a framework for the comprehensive regional transportation system.

VISION 2050 is integral to continue the region's strategy to accommodate growth inside urban areas, preserve rural areas and open space, and focus a significant share of job and population growth near transit.

- **General Assembly.** PSRC's General Assembly includes elected representation from King, Pierce, Snohomish and Kitsap counties, and more than 80 cities and towns, state agencies, transit agencies, ports, and tribal governments.
- **Snohomish County Amendment.** One amendment to PSRC Executive Board's recommended VISION 2050 plan was approved on October 29. It increased the population growth allocation for Snohomish County's rural areas from 3 percent to 4.5 percent, and reduced the growth allocation for cities and towns within Snohomish County by a commensurate amount. The amendment passed 91 percent to 9 percent in a weighed vote. Bellevue Mayor Lynne Robinson voted to approve the amendment.
- **Voted to Adopt VISION 2050.** In a weighted vote, the General Assembly approved the overall VISION 2050 plan by a 96 percent to 4 percent vote. Bellevue Mayor Lynne Robinson voted to approve the plan.

The next meeting of the General Assembly will occur in 2021 with the date to be determined.

**EXECUTIVE BOARD**

At its October 22 meeting the Executive Board:

- **Approved a new policy on compensating members of PSRC-funded focus groups and committees.** PSRC staff proposed a new policy to compensate focus group members and committee members who are not already compensated for their participation by their employer.

The intent of this policy is to engage and elicit feedback from historically underrepresented residents through their participation in focus groups and/or committees.

- **Approved contract authority for consultant services for the Regional Housing Strategy.** Housing access and affordability are key policy areas in VISION 2050, the region's long-range plan for growth. A new housing action in the draft VISION 2050 plan directs PSRC to develop a regional housing strategy, including a regional housing needs assessment.

The Regional Housing Strategy will include regional and local actions to preserve, improve, and expand the region's housing stock to provide a range of affordable, accessible, healthy, and safe housing choices to every resident and to promote fair and equal access to housing for all people. PSRC will hire consultant support to engage historically underrepresented residents by using a combination of focus groups and surveys. PSRC staff will seek input from those most impacted by housing affordability and accessibility barriers. The proposed consultant contract is not to exceed \$40,000 and is funded in the current biennial budget.

- **Approved a routine amendment adding six projects to the 2019-2022 Transportation Improvement Plan (TIP).** The projects were reviewed by the PSRC staff and were determined to be consistent with VISION 2040 and the Regional Transportation Plan, including:
  - **Bellevue: 130<sup>th</sup> Avenue NE Station Area Park and Ride.**
    - This project will construct a park and ride facility adjacent to the BelRed 130th Light Rail Station.
  - **WSDOT: SR 520/124<sup>th</sup> Avenue NE Interchange Improvements in Redmond**
    - This project will build a new on-ramp to eastbound SR 520 and a new off-ramp from westbound SR 520 at 124<sup>th</sup> Avenue NE.
    - If the State Legislature develops and passes a statewide transportation package in the 2021 session, funding for this project would likely be Bellevue's top priority.
  - WSDOT: State Route (SR) 516 Barnes Creek Fish Passage in Des Moines
  - WSDOT: SR 9/Marsh Road to 2nd Street Widening in Snohomish
  - WSDOT: I-5/Denny Way Lakeview Viaduct Deck Overlay and Expansion Joint in Seattle
  - WSDOT: SR 526 Corridor Improvements in southwest Everett
- **Approved certification of the Regional Center Subarea Plans for Bellevue, Burien, Puyallup Downtown, and Puyallup South Hill.** PSRC staff reviewed these subarea plans and found that they addressed the planning expectations for regional centers established in Vision 2040, the region's long-range plan. The newly adopted Regional Centers Framework calls for review of centers and center planning again in 2025. PSRC may provide additional comments or guidance for center planning as part of that work.
- **Authorized a change in the Regional Transportation Plan for the I-405 NE 132<sup>nd</sup> Street Interchange Project.** WSDOT submitted a request to change the status of the I-405 NE 132nd Street Interchange Project from "candidate" to "approved" status.

- **Adopted the 2021-2024 Transportation Improvement Program (TIP).** Federal and state legislation requires the PSRC to prepare the regional TIP, which lists all projects using federal transportation funds and all regionally significant projects. The PSRC adopts a new TIP every two years. The Executive Board approved the 2023-2024 Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) and Federal Transit Administration (FTA) funding distribution in July. PSRC staff incorporated these awards into a draft 2021-2024 TIP, as well as incorporating contingency funding awards made in June.
- **Discussed the Regional Aviation Baseline Study.** PSRC is leading a baseline study to gather information about existing aviation activities and assess the needs in the region. The results of this study will set the stage for future planning efforts. This is the first regional aviation study since the Flight Plan Study was conducted in the early 1990s. PSRC has received \$1.64 million in grant funding from the Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) to conduct the study.

Prior to the COVID-19 pandemic, regional demand for commercial and air cargo service was expected to double by 2050. In order to meet this growth, the region is anticipated to need to complete planned infrastructure improvements at Sea-Tac Airport and Paine Field in Everett. The region would also need to add 1-3 commercial airports with three total runways. The study will not analyze potential airport sites.

PSRC staff conducted a statistically valid, online public survey and found that respondents support increasing passenger airline service to meet demand. Respondents prefer to accommodate the additional service at existing airports rather than build a new airport in the region.

Members of the Executive Board asked staff to compile information about adverse impacts to communities from airports, and to consider demand management strategies. PSRC plans to publish its final report later this year.

The next meeting of the Executive Board is scheduled for December 3.

### **GROWTH MANAGEMENT POLICY BOARD (GMPB)**

The GMPB met on November 19 and a summary will be included in a future regional issues packet.

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

At its November 12 meeting the TPB:

- **Discussed the Regional Equity Status Update.** Equity is a key policy area in VISION 2050, the region's long-range plan for growth. A new action in the VISION 2050 Plan directs PSRC to

develop a regional equity strategy to make equity central to PSRC's work and to support the 2024 local comprehensive plan updates.

The strategy will include developing a plan and committing resources for an equity advisory committee. Based on national best practices, PSRC staff will convene an eight-person ad hoc group of government and community organization leaders to develop a recommended proposal regarding:

- Purpose of the Equity Advisory Committee
  - Membership composition and leadership
  - Decision-making
  - Compensation approach for participating community groups
  - Initial agendas and workplan
- **Discussed Regional Transportation Plan outreach.** The Regional Transportation Plan was adopted by the PSRC General Assembly in 2018. The Plan describes how the region will implement transportation policies and goals established in VISION 2050. Under federal and state law, the PSRC is required to develop a Regional Transportation Plan every four years. The 2022 Regional Transportation Plan is under development. Over the past year, the TPB received a series of briefings on the schedule and workplan for this effort, including key focus areas determined by the TPB in February, such as safety and equity. PSRC will begin outreach this fall and continue through early 2022, including a public engagement survey.
- **Discussed specialized transportation services outreach.** As described above, the 2022 Regional Transportation Plan is under development. PSRC staff is preparing targeted outreach to people who experience transportation challenges due to age, income, or disability. These groups are sometimes referred to as people with special transportation needs. The PSRC will identify existing specialized transportation services, mobility needs of the targeted communities and develop strategies to address those needs. This work will be incorporated into the Regional Transportation Plan.
- **Discussed the annual Transit Integration Report.** At the direction of the PRSC Executive Board, PSRC staff prepares annual reports on transit integration. The purpose of the Transit Integration Report is to increase awareness of ongoing transit coordination activities and opportunities in the region. The Transit Integration Report will also satisfy the reporting requirements of RCW 35.58.2796 for the WSDOT to submit an annual report documenting transit coordination in the Central Puget Sound region.

The 2020 Transit Integration Report describes the significant impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on travel behavior across the country and in the Central Puget Sound region. During the first month of the pandemic, average transit ridership fell by up to 74 percent compared to 2019 baseline levels. The region's transit agencies temporarily reduced service based on ridership losses and plan to incrementally restore service as ridership returns. The long-term impact on transit ridership is unknown.

- **Discussed Project Selection Task Force scoping.** The Task Force is comprised of volunteers from the PSRC boards, including the TPB. The Task Force will review the Policy Framework, which outlines the policy guidance for the distribution of federal funds. Every two years, PSRC conducts a competitive project selection process to distribute federal transportation funds. The Task Force may make recommendations to the TPB prior to the 2022 funding allocation process.

The next process will be conducted in 2022 to allocate the PSRC's 2025-2026 Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) and Federal Transit Administration (FTA) funds. The PSRC convenes a Project Selection Task Force prior to each funding allocation process to review and consider updates to the Policy Framework for allocating federal funds. PSRC plans to convene the Task Force in February and host extra meetings to allow more time to consider proposed changes.

TPB members spoke in support of the revised meeting schedule.

The next meeting of the TPB is scheduled for December 11.

### **ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT DISTRICT BOARD (EDDB)**

At its October 7 meeting, the EDDB:

- **Discussed recovery planning efforts underway by the Washington State Department of Commerce (Commerce) and Greater Seattle Partners (GSP).** Each agency is developing recovery plans and tools for use by local and regional partners.

The EDDB discussed Commerce's efforts to assist and support small businesses and industries including tourism and hospitality businesses heavily impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic. In addition, Commerce is developing policy and funding recommendations to secure additional federal funding to aid relief efforts. Finally, Commerce has deployed an Economic Recovery Dashboard, which uses a variety of data sources to track the state's recovery and resiliency.

The EDDB also discussed GSP's Regional Recovery Framework, which is developing recommendations for industry cluster development, marketing and tourism, policy and advocacy, small business, and workforce and talent. The framework is meant to complement existing subregional and state-level efforts, and is intended to be implemented by private, public, and nonprofit partners. A draft recovery framework is already in circulation and is expected to be adopted by GSP's Recovery Taskforce by the end of the year.

- **Discussed the scope of the update to the regional Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy (CEDS).** The CEDS was last adopted in September 2017 by the EDDB, and an update must be submitted to the U.S. Economic Development Administration (EDA) by January 2022. This update is a statutory requirement to maintain eligibility for certain federal grants. The Economic Development District recently received a \$400,000 grant to perform this update.

The EDDB discussed focus areas for the plan, which include a strength, weakness, opportunity and threat (SWOT) analysis, action plan, and evaluation plan. Additionally, the plan will align

with the GSP Regional Recovery Framework and any plans underway by the Washington State Commerce. The plan will continue to focus on economic opportunity, global competitiveness, quality of life, and equity and inclusion.

At a November 4 working meeting, the EDDB:

- **Discussed possible EDDB focus areas for 2021.** Each year, the EDDB adopts a set of focus areas for the EDD to guide the district's work over the coming year. Typically, the areas are broad, high-level, and regional in scope. This year, focus areas included building capacity among regional organizations, performing useful analysis, and organizing helpful programming for the regional economic development community. In 2021, the EDD will develop an update to its Amazing Place comprehensive economic development strategy and performing economic recovery work to address the impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic. The EDDB discussed possible areas of focus, including regional recovery, workforce development, subregional equity, and infrastructure. The focus areas will be discussed and considered for adoption at the next meeting.

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