

**COUNCIL SUMMARY BACKGROUND BRIEFING:
KING COUNTY REGIONAL COMMITTEES AND OTHER ISSUES
*January 2021***

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)

January 13 meeting summary:

- **Discussed the Committee's 2021 Work Plan:** The 2021 work plan includes briefings on subjects that are required to be referred to the RPC. These include: solid waste; Veterans, Seniors and Human Services Levy; homelessness, including the Regional Homelessness Authority and the Health Through Housing Initiative; Mental Illness and Drug Dependency Levy; regional transportation (does not include transit); affordable housing; and the Best Starts for Kids Levy.

In addition to these subjects, the Committee will receive updates on flood control, regional approach to public safety, state of agriculture in King County, updates on emergency management preparation, 2020 Census results, and the King County International Airport expansion and regional airport needs.

- **Discussed and Adopted Amendments to the Health Through Housing Initiative:** The Health Through Housing Initiative is the King County Executive's proposal for use of funds generated by the recently approved countywide one-tenth percent sales tax for affordable housing, homelessness and supportive services. The proposal calls for issuing bonds to move quickly to acquire single-room properties impacted by the economic downturn such as hotels and/or assisted living facilities to house as many as 2,000 people experiencing chronic homelessness. The Executive is authorized to issue bonds and use other funds in 2021 via the county's budget process.

Beginning in 2022, HTHI expenditures will be guided by an implementation plan and required elements of the plan were referred to the Regional Policy Committee (RPC) for review and

approval. Amendments were adopted to require the proposed Plan to include a consultation process between the County and its cities regarding the location of facilities and jointly agree on the locations to be purchased or constructed. Other amendments require: a communications and partnership plan; a forecast of annual expenditures; information on the allocation of funds by jurisdiction included in the annual report; and require the Executive work with jurisdictions who have dedicated funding to ensure consistency with plans for housing services.

- **Accepted the 2019 Annual Mental Illness and Drug Dependency (MIDD) Evaluation Summary Report:** The first MIDD sales tax levy of one-tenth of one percent was adopted by the King County Council in 2007 for the delivery of mental health and chemical dependency services and therapeutic courts. Since then, the MIDD sales tax levy was renewed a second time—MIDD 2—in 2016 and will expire January 1, 2026.

There are five policy goals for this MIDD levy:

1. Divert individuals with behavioral health needs from costly interventions such as jail, emergency rooms and hospitals.
2. Reduce the number, length and frequency of behavioral health crisis events.
3. Increase culturally appropriate, trauma-informed behavioral health services.
4. Improve the health and wellness of individuals living with behavioral health conditions.
5. Explicit linkage with, and furthering the work of, King County and community initiatives.

The full MIDD Annual Report evaluates performance metrics associated with each of these goal areas. Overall, data indicates that they are seeing improvements in these goal areas. The other key piece of the MIDD annual report is the information provided on geographic distribution of people served by MIDD. Notably, Seattle and South King County saw an increase in residents served from 2018 to 2019 whereas East King County saw a decrease and North King County saw no change.

The next meeting of the RPC is scheduled for February 10. Councilmember John Stokes serves on the RPC.

REGIONAL TRANSIT COMMITTEE (RTC)

November 30 meeting summary:

- **Updating Metro's Service Guidelines.** Metro staff provided a briefing on potential changes to the 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 three criteria. Geographic value is prioritized first, productivity second, and social equity is prioritized third. 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 three scenarios to revise the process for setting target service levels. King County Councilmember Girmay Zahilay and Seattle City Councilmember Dan Strauss spoke in support of prioritizing social equity first. RTC members asked for additional information to evaluate the scenarios. Metro will provide this information in February.

- **Updating Metro Connects, Metro’s long-range plan.** Metro Connects is a financially-unconstrained vision to expand transit service by 70 percent. The plan is based on the Puget Sound Regional Council’s (PSRC) growth forecasts and cities’ comprehensive plans. Metro staff briefed the RTC on potential changes to the RapidRide program within Metro Connects. Metro Connects envisioned adding 20 new lines, for a total of 26 by 2040. The updated plan would reduce the number of new RapidRide lines to 10-17. Metro will assess the 20 draft RapidRide lines, as well as modifications to existing lines, and assign them a priority order. The routes that do not become RapidRide lines will still operate at RapidRide frequency levels.

The RTC met on January 20. A summary will be included in the February Regional Issues packet. The next meeting of the RTC is scheduled for February 17. Councilmember Jennifer Robertson serves on the RTC.

REGIONAL WATER QUALITY COMMITTEE (RWQC)

The RWQC did not meet in January. The next meeting is scheduled for February 3. Councilmember Conrad Lee serves on the RWQC.

GROWTH MANAGEMENT PLANNING COUNCIL (GMPC)

December 2 meeting summary:

- **Briefing on the 2021 Countywide Planning Policies (CPP) Update** with specific review of the Housing and Development Patterns chapters and the Growth Targets process.

The Housing policy framework brings together policy around the demand for housing reflected in Vision 2050 with policies addressing inequity in housing supply and markets as stated in the Affordable Housing Committee (AHC) principles.

The Development Patterns framework reflects the recently adopted Vision 2050 Regional Growth Strategy. This means that in King County policy guidance will continue to focus growth in urban areas with a specific emphasis on centers and in urban areas with a transit-oriented development focus. King County is proposing six development center classifications, up from the current two classifications in Vision 2040.

- **Briefing on the CPP review schedule** and the focus on reviewing the draft CPPs in order to make a recommendation to the King County Council, affirming the Urban Capacity Report work, and adopting 2044 Growth Targets. The schedule includes monthly meetings of the GMPC through June. The King County Council will review and adopt during the summer, and cities will be asked to ratify the CPPs in the fall. King County plans to submit the CPPs for PSRC ratification by the end of the year.

The next meeting of the GMPC is scheduled for January 27. Councilmember Jennifer Robertson serves on the GMPC.

EASTRAIL REGIONAL ADVISORY COUNCIL (ERAC)

December 3 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.

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

Priority projects for state funding 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 letter about the Eastrail and funding priorities to share with state legislators. Eastrail Partners is exploring the idea of a virtual state “lobby day,” and a coordinated social media campaign. The Eastrail Partners is also considering a small group trail visit with legislators, if allowed under COVID-19 pandemic restrictions

The next ERAC meeting is scheduled for January 29. Bellevue Councilmember John Stokes serves on the ERAC.

GREATER SEATTLE PARTNERS EXECUTIVE COUNCIL (GSP)

December 17 meeting summary:

- **Update on the regional economic recovery framework.** The 175-person recovery task force has been meeting over the past several months to draft the recovery plan. The taskforce consists of seven work groups including:
 - Organizing Work Group
 - Industry Cluster Development
 - Policy and Advocacy
 - Small Business
 - Workforce and Talent
 - Marketing and Tourism
 - Mayors Advisory

The framework consists of two phases of work:

- Phase 1: Regional Economic Recovery Framework. This phase includes development of a Recovery Framework that includes a set of five goals, 30 strategies, and 150+ actions.
 - Phase 2: Moving from Framework to Implementation: This phase will draw “high-impact initiatives” from the framework that regional partners can align around.
- **Economic Recovery Draft Framework, Problem Definition and Metrics.** This item included a review of the framework, the data informing the framework, and the metrics the framework will use to measure success. The draft framework target metrics seek to match or surpass peer metro areas on the following four indicators

of an inclusive economy across the “Greater Seattle” region (King, Snohomish, and Pierce counties):

1. Reducing the number of out of work people by 65,000
2. Reducing the number of people in low-wage jobs by 13,000
3. Reducing the number of underemployed people of color and women by 4,000
4. Start and grow 4,100 high-growth businesses owned by people of color and women.

“Signature projects” drawn from the framework for initial areas of focus for the region are based on the following criteria:

1. Directly addresses specific race/gender disparities
 2. Directly addresses COVID-19 impacts
 3. Regional in scope
 4. Evidence of potential impact (peer reviewed or best practices)
 5. Engaged leadership from public and private sectors.
- **Organizational Health Update.** 2020 had sizable impacts on GSP’s organizational health including a 50 percent reduction in expenses and the reduction of five full time equivalent (FTEs) positions. Actions to ensure organizational health led to GSP exiting 2020 in a better financial position than it entered it, and in 2021 GSP will take steps to build organizational capacity.
 - **GSP’s Commitment to Advancing Equity.** An equity focus is present throughout GSP’s economic recovery plan resulting from the events of 2020 and conversations on racial equity. This commitment includes three high-level goals:
 - Build an equitable and inclusive regional economy
 - Focus on racial equity
 - Actively address racism and other forms of oppression.
 - **Fundraising Campaign Update.** This addressed GSP’s base three-year funding campaign. Currently GSP has achieved 66 percent of the campaign’s 2020-2022 goal. Fundraising is on hold while GSP updates materials and re-evaluates goals. It is anticipated that fundraising activity will resume early 2021.

The next meeting of the GSP Executive Council is scheduled for June. Bellevue Councilmember Conrad Lee represents Bellevue on the GSP.