

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

***March 10 meeting summary:***

**Discussion of the Best Starts for Kids (BSK) Levy Renewal Ordinance**

The BSK Levy was approved by King County voters in November 2015 and raises an average of \$65 million per year countywide to support services for King County families and children. Services range from prenatal care throughout childhood and young adulthood. The levy rate is 14-cents per \$1,000 assessed value (AV). The Levy is set to expire December 31, and a levy renewal development process was initiated by the County with the expectation that a measure to renew the levy will be placed on the countywide ballot in August.

The King County Office of Economic and Financial Analysis' most recent draft economic forecast for countywide AV has been revised upward since the last briefing for the RPC. The upward revision is based on strong residential sales price increases. As a result, the total projected levy amount that would be collected at the proposed renewal rate of 19-cents per \$1,000 AV would be increased by \$62 million—from \$811 million to \$872 million.

The levy renewal proposal would authorize an additional six-year property tax levy for collection beginning in 2022 at 19-cents per \$1,000 AV which is an increase of 35 percent increase from the initial 2015 rate of 14-cents per \$1,000, with the 2022 levy amount being the base for calculating annual increases of up to 3 percent in 2022 through 2026.

**Existing versus Proposed Levy Rate and Proceeds**

<b>2015 Levy Rate</b>	<b>2021 Levy Rate</b>	<b>2022 Proposed Levy Rate</b>	<b>Projected 2016-2021 Levy Proceeds</b>	<b>Projected 2022-2027 Levy Proceeds</b>

14-cents per \$1000 AV	11.6-cents per \$1,000 AV	19-cents per \$1,000 AV	\$404 million	\$872 million
---------------------------	------------------------------	----------------------------	---------------	---------------

The proposed levy would maintain and expand current Best Starts for Kids programs that support pre-natal care through early adulthood. These programs include:

- Home-based services for new parents
- Programs that promote healthy development for youth
- The Youth and Family Homelessness Prevention Initiative

The new revenue from the increased levy rate would be used to expand access to childcare with the intention to reduce the number of children under five who have no access to affordable childcare by two-thirds. In total, the proposal includes funding for 3,000 children who currently have no access to childcare.

Under the proposal transmitted by King County Executive Dow Constantine, 22.5 percent of levy proceeds will continue funding the Youth and Family Homelessness Prevention Initiative and provide new funding for affordable childcare. Of the remaining revenues, 50 percent would support programs for children aged pre-natal through five; 37 percent would be directed to services for children, youth, and young adults aged five through 24; 8 percent would continue funding for Communities of Opportunity; and 5 percent would fund evaluation.

### **Schedule**

The RPC will continue discussion of the proposed ordinance for potential action at a special meeting on March 26.

The next meeting of the RPC is scheduled for March 26, which is a special meeting to consider a position on the BSK Levy renewal. Councilmember John Stokes serves on the RPC.

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

#### ***February 17 meeting summary:***

- **Adopted the RTC's 2021 Work Program.** The King County Council's rule for regional committees calls for the RTC Chair to consult with the RTC Vice Chair "in developing a draft work program for consideration by the full committee." County staff presented a draft work program that follows up on previous RTC work and includes briefings and actions required by County legislation. RTC members discussed the draft and supported focusing on Metro's key policy updates, which include:
  - 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 process and criteria for incrementally adding or reducing transit service.
- The METRO CONNECTS Long Range Plan which proposes to increase transit service by 70 percent by 2040, based on the Puget Sound Regional Council's (PSRCs) growth projections and cities' comprehensive plans.
- **Discussed Updates to the Service Guidelines**, which include Metro's policies for adding and reducing transit service. The Service Guidelines were originally adopted in 2011, were updated in 2016 and are in effect today.

The RTC discussed the following changes:

- Target service levels: identify potential ridership on each transit corridor. Metro presented four scenarios. RTC members supported the scenarios that prioritize equity first.
- Service reductions: Metro staff proposed prioritizing equity in making service reductions. Routes with low productivity and low equity scores would be at greatest risk for reduction. RTC members asked for more information about how routes would be scored and whether reductions would be concentrated on the Eastside and in north King County. Metro staff will provide this information before the April 21 meeting.
- Flexible services: include VanShare, Vanpool, Rideshare Matching, Dial-a-Ride-Transit, Community Access Transit, Community Shuttle, Community Van, Real-Time Rideshare, and Trip Pool. Metro staff presented draft criteria to evaluate these programs.

The RTC will review the draft updates later this year.

The RTC met on March 17. A summary will be included in the April Regional Issues packet. The next meeting of the RTC is scheduled for April 21. Bellevue City Councilmember Jennifer Robertson serves as Vice-Chair of the RTC.

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

### ***March 3 meeting summary:***

#### **Discussion of the 2021 RWQC Workplan**

Each year, the RWQC adopts a workplan to guide its activities during the year. King County Council staff presented a draft workplan for 2021 that is very ambitious and possibly trying to cover too many issues which may not allow time for RWQC members to become fully informed and aware of several critical issues in the water quality and wastewater arenas. Major briefing items include the following:

- Proposed wastewater rate
- Asset management plan
- Nutrient caps proposed by the state Department of Ecology (DOE) for treatment plants that

- discharge into Puget Sound
- Clean Water Plan/Workshops
- Major capital projects
- Flows and loads report

Of particular concern to Bellevue and other cities/water and sewer districts that are part of the regional wastewater system are the proposed sewer rate, the costs of the proposed Asset Management Plan, the impacts, impacts of nutrient caps proposed by DOE, and costs associated with the Clean Water Plan now under development. The RWQC members need sufficient time and adequate briefings to fully understand the potential significant cost increases associated with these plans. While County staff have provided several presentations on these and other issues that will affect the rates, there is still much uncertainty about the implementation, policy choices, risk assessment, the tradeoffs between competing goals (or leveraging) of the major efforts, as well as the anticipated costs.

#### **Discussion of the Sewer Rate Schedule and Process—Asset Management as a Rate Driver:**

County staff briefed the RWQC on the proposed 2022 sewer rate and the components that make up the rate, including: asset management, regulatory issues, resources and energy; operational enhancements, capacity improvements and resiliency.

At the September, October and December RWQC meetings presentations were provided on the development of the wastewater physical plant, the executive review process for asset updating and upgrading, the history of wastewater asset management, the life cycle of wastewater assets, capital project prioritization, and asset management at regional treatment plants.

The primary factors driving the rates related to asset management include controlling combined sewer overflows; potential upgrades to meet DOE's proposed discharge Nutrient Permit requirements; improving system resilience as demonstrated by the major system failure at West Point in 2017; and addressing aging and treatment capabilities of the physical infrastructure, especially of the West Point and South treatment plants and associated conveyance systems.

The schedule for adopting the 2022 sewer rate is included below:

- Early March: Briefing King County Executive on draft 2022 sewer rates and capacity charge
- Mid-March: Draft 2022 sewer rates and capacity charge transmitted to King County Executive
- Early April: County Executive final approval of recommended proposal
- Q1 and Q2: RWQC receives briefings on draft 2022 sewer rate and capacity charge
- April 15: County Executive transmits draft 2022 sewer rate and capacity charge recommendation to County Council
- June: King County Council hearing and adoption of 2022 sewer rate.

#### **Briefing on the Clean Water Plan**

King County's Wastewater Treatment Division (WTD) is developing the 2023-2060 Clean Water Plan

("Plan"), a broad scale planning effort intended to guide investments needed to protect water quality and inform the community on the costs and tradeoffs. WTD staff described the Plan's components, and key drivers and influencing factors, including the following Decision Areas:

- Treatment Plants
- Pollution Source Control/Product Stewardship
- Stormwater and Combined Sewer Overflows
- Wastewater Conveyance System
- Asset Management, Resiliency, and Redundancy
- Legacy Pollution
- Resource Recovery
- Finance

The discussion was conducted in a workshop format with particular emphasis on asset management. The Executive will transmit a proposed Plan to the County Council and the RWQC in early 2022. The aggressive adoption schedule may preclude adequate time for the RWQC to fully analyze and understand the tradeoffs, consequences and the very significant potential costs of the Plan.

Bellevue and other stakeholders continue to be concerned about insufficient information on how the following issues will be comprehensively analyzed, addressed and financed in the Plan:

- Lack of specifics on the costs and schedule to address aging infrastructure and its resiliency per WTD's Asset Management Program,
- Significant uncertainties about the conditions, requirements and effectiveness of DOE's proposed NPDES Nutrient Permit,
- Potential impacts on growth and development, and
- Adequacy of treatment plant and conveyance capacities and treatment capabilities.

The next meeting of the RWQC is scheduled for April 7. Councilmember Conrad Lee serves on the RWQC.

### **KING COUNTY FLOOD CONTROL DISTRICT ADVISORY COMMITTEE (FCD AC)**

#### ***February 23 meeting summary:***

This meeting was the first for this committee in 2021 and the group will meet on a regular basis for the next several months. The committee is advisory to the King County FCD Board of Supervisors (composed of the members of the King County Council). The FCD is funded via a property tax levy and its first priority is to resolve flooding issues as guided by the Flood Hazard Plan. The February 23 agenda summary is included below:

- Election of the Vice-Chair: The operating rules of the FCD require election of the Vice Chair at the committee's first meeting in odd-numbered years. The Vice-Chair must be an elected official. Kent Mayor Dana Ralph was unanimously reelected Vice-Chair.
- Review of Operating Rules: FCD staff reviewed the Open Public Meetings Act regarding virtual meetings to ensure the AC understood the requirements and to consider any updates to the committee's operating procedures as a result of Governor Jay Inslee's restrictions due to the COVID-19 pandemic. No amendments were needed.
- Summary of the FCD's recent activities: Executive Director Michelle Clark summarized recent activities, discussed the 2021 work plan and the FCD's 2021 budget adopted by the Board in November. The 2021 budget includes funding for projects in Bellevue, including
  - 2021 Subregional Opportunity Fund Allocations:
    - \$636,000 for the Upper Kelsey Creek Phase 2 Culvert/Bridge Replacement at Lake Hills Boulevard to replace aging, undersized culverts and address localized road flooding in the area.
  - 2021-2026 CIP Project Allocations list included funding for projects that Bellevue is managing, including:
    - \$3.7 million for the (No. 86) Factoria Boulevard Drainage project in the 2021 budget, with the total allocation of \$5.7 million for 2021-2026. The project will reduce flooding during high intensity storms along Factoria Boulevard. Bellevue staff is requesting an additional \$5.4 million to address project design developments and resulting cost increases. Bellevue staff are working with King County Councilmember Reagan Dunn on this request so that construction can proceed in 2022-2023.
    - \$300,000 for the (No. 88) Lower Coal Creek Phase 1 project in the 2021 budget. The total 2021-2026 allocation is \$3.5 million. Five bridges were constructed that replaced undersized culverts in the 2017-2020 time period. Remaining work includes acquiring easements and building two stormwater outfalls.
    - \$400,000 for the (No. 89) 148th Ave SE / Larsen Lake project in the 2021 budget to elevate a portion of this heavily-travelled arterial that experiences frequent flooding. Preliminary engineering work is anticipated for this year.
  - An FCD project of interest to Bellevue is the **Willowmoor Floodplain Restoration** project which has been allocated \$1 million in the 2021 budget. The FCD planned to conduct a third-party review of options last December to resolve seasonal flooding and property damage experienced by homeowners on Lake Sammamish. The FCD issued two requests for proposal (RFP) but received no responses. The project is on hold until the FCD Board

determines next steps. FCD staff are working on potential options to help resolve the flooding and staff anticipates hearing more details soon.

The committee approved a motion directing the FCD staff to plan capital projects incorporating the principles of integrated floodplain management and prioritize implementation of multi-benefit floodplain management projects. The following community interests need to be addressed where applicable:

- Equity and social justice
  - Environmental justice
  - Habitat protection and salmon recovery
  - Resilient communities and ecosystems
  - Productive and viable agriculture
  - Sustainable development
  - Jobs and sustainable livelihoods
  - Open space conservation
  - Sustainable and clean water
  - Recreation and other opportunities to connect people with nature
- 2021 KCFCD staff work plan: FCD staff highlighted major internal workplan items which include the following:
  - Overseeing capital projects and developing a process to incorporate strategies to include integrated floodplain management principles
  - Develop draft 2022 budget
  - Manage Water Resource Inventory Area (WRIA) and Flood Reduction Grant programs. The Flood Reduction Program was expanded to include three new categories in addition to the original program elements. Each category will administer \$3,000,000 in awards.
    - Original flood reduction
    - Urban streams flooding
    - Culvert replacement/fish passage restoration, and
    - Coastal erosion/coastal flooding

Over the last several years staff from several jurisdictions, including Bellevue, have raised concerns with the FCD's funding of the WRIAs and whether and how the FCD will ensure that funding for those programs and the new grant programs have a clear nexus to the overall mission of the FCD, which is to resolve flooding issues. Projects outside the FCD's original purpose, while valuable, should not prevent timely resolution of flooding problems.

The date of the next meeting of the FCD Advisory Committee was not available at the time of this writing. Councilmember Jeremy Barksdale serves on the committee.

## **GROWTH MANAGEMENT PLANNING COUNCIL (GMPC)**

### ***February 24 meeting summary:***

- **Discussed action items from the Affordable Housing Committee (AHC)** which require final approval from the GMPC since the AHC is a subcommittee of the GMPC. Items included: Approval of the 2021 legislative agenda, amendments to the charter for AHC to provide a more streamlined process and approval of the Chair and Vice-Chair and appointment of new members including King County Councilmember Kathy Lambert, Mark Ellerbrook on behalf of King County Executive Dow Constantine, King County Department of Community and Human Services; Niki Krimmel-Morrison, Northwest Justice Project and Deputy Mayor Nigel Herbig, Kenmore (alternate), representing the Sound Cities Association.
- **Discussed the Urban Growth Capacity (UGC) Report** which is King County's review and evaluation program for growth management and comprehensive planning. In support of 2024 Comprehensive Plans, the study is due to the state Department of Commerce in June. The UGC report documents findings on sufficient capacity for adopted targets and achieving growth targets and planned densities. Jurisdictions with insufficient capacity or non-achievement can document specific development barriers and actions to overcome these barriers. However, if barriers are not present or actions are not documented, the UGC will find that reasonable measures must be adopted in comprehensive plans. The committee was also provided an overview of how achievement of growth targets is defined and initial findings from the study including whether there is sufficient capacity within the urban growth area to accommodate existing growth targets and also if this leaves sufficient area for planned capacity .
- **Discussed the 2021 Countywide Planning Policies (CPPs) update.** The committee received a briefing on changes to each of the chapters within the CPPs. The most significant changes occur in the Housing and the Development Patterns chapter.

The next meeting of the GMPC is scheduled for March 31. Councilmember Jennifer Robertson serves on the GMPC.