

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

At its September 8 meeting, the RPC summary:

- **Reviewed the proposed Best Starts for Kids (BSK) 2022-2027 Implementation Plan.** BSK is a regional initiative aimed at supporting the healthy development of children and youth, families, and communities across King County through strategic investments in promotion, prevention and early intervention programs and services. Last month, King County voters approved a property tax measure that will generate approximately \$872 million over six years. The implementation plan describes how the County will use the BSK revenues. In October, the RPC will consider recommending changes to the proposed implementation plan or recommend adoption.
- **Met King County Regional Homelessness Authority (KCRHA) Chief Executive Officer (CEO) Marc Dones.** In 2019, King County and the City of Seattle signed an interlocal agreement to establish KCRHA as a separate governmental agency. KCRHA's mission is to "significantly decrease the incidence of homelessness throughout King County, using equity and social justice principles." Bellevue City Council will receive a briefing from CEO Dones on September 27.
- **Reviewed the proposed Health through Housing Implementation Plan.** In 2020, the State Legislature passed House Bill (HB) 1590, which provided the option for a sales and use tax for housing and related services. Eight cities imposed the sales tax: Bellevue, Covington, Issaquah, Kent, North Bend, Maple Valley, Renton, and Snoqualmie. The County Council then passed a countywide sales tax. The County must credit these cities for the full amount collected within each jurisdiction. HB 1070 was signed into law this year and further clarifies how the tax revenue can be used.

The Health through Housing implementation plan describes how King County will use the housing tax revenues to rapidly acquire and perpetually operate 1,600 units of affordable housing. Later this year, the RPC will consider recommending changes or recommending the County Council adopt the implementation plan.

The next meeting of the RPC is scheduled for October 13. Councilmember John Stokes serves on the RPC.

REGIONAL TRANSIT COMMITTEE (RTC)

At its July 21 meeting, the RTC:

- **Discussed transit service restoration plans for 2022 and 2023.** As a result of COVID-19, Metro operated at approximately 85 percent of pre-pandemic service levels in early-2021. More ridership is returning throughout the day. In June, boarding reached the highest levels since the start of the pandemic.

Metro staff plans to add 200,000 service hours in October, restoring service to approximately 92 percent of pre-pandemic service levels. An additional 200,000 service hours will be restored in 2022. Metro indicates that at least some service will be restored on all pre-pandemic routes.

Metro staff intends to refine service patterns during the Fall 2022 and Spring 2023 service changes based on observed ridership and travel patterns. Service restoration will be informed by 1) data and analysis, including regional travel demand and equity, and 2) community input. Metro will continue to evaluate route frequency into 2022 and 2023, which may be different than pre-COVID-19 service levels. Metro will engage the community through spring 2023 about using transit, including community and employer stakeholder groups.

At its September 15 meeting, the RTC:

- **Discussed transit policy updates.** In July, King County Executive Dow Constantine transmitted proposed updates to the following transit policy documents:
 - The proposed **Strategic Plan** for Public Transportation 2021-2031, last updated in 2016, would define Metro's vision by establishing 10 goals with objectives, strategies and performance measures. The Strategic Plan will influence how and where transit investments are made by tracking progress toward key outcomes for each goal.
 - The **Service Guidelines**, last updated in 2016, help Metro evaluate, design and modify transit services to meet changing needs and to deliver efficient, high-quality service. The guidelines ensure that decision-making and recommendations are objective, transparent and aligned with the region's goals for public transportation. They also establish criteria

and processes that Metro uses to analyze and plan changes to the transit system. The proposed Service Guidelines would make changes to how transit service is modified with a focus on 1) adding service; 2) reducing service; and 3) restructuring service.

- **Metro Connects** is a vision for bringing more and better mobility services to King County over the next 30 years that includes both service and capital projects. It aligns with the proposed Strategic Plan and the proposed Service Guidelines. The updated plan, originally approved in 2017, makes targeted changes to the proposed service networks while updating associated costs. Metro Connects is an unconstrained plan and, therefore, not fully funded.
- To develop the updates, Metro held regular transit policy briefings with the RTC in 2020 and 2021. Metro also engaged an Equity Cabinet of community representatives; jurisdictional and agency partners; elected officials; transit riders; stakeholders; and community members.
- The proposed updates will be reviewed by the RTC and the King County Mobility and Environment (ME) Committee. In October, the RTC plans to identify issues of interest and potential amendment concepts. IN November, the RTC will consider amendments and may vote to recommend adoption. The updates could be approved by RTC, ME and the King County Council as early as December 7.

The next meeting of the RTC is scheduled for October 20. Councilmember Jennifer Robertson serves on the RTC.

REGIONAL WATER QUALITY COMMITTEE (RWQC)

At its September 1 meeting, the RWQC:

- **Received a briefing on unpermitted wastewater discharges from King County wastewater treatment plants in January.** A large wind and rainstorm in January caused widespread power disruptions. This led to unpermitted discharges of about 13.5 million gallons of untreated wastewater from four King County facilities into Lake Washington and Puget Sound. Approximately 11 million gallons were released from the West Point Treatment Plant in Seattle and 86,000 gallons from the Medina Pump Station. Several beaches were closed for a few days. King County estimates needing to spend \$71 million to make power and other upgrades to its facilities to prevent such occurrences in the future.
- **Received a briefing on the Clean Water Plan draft strategic packages** which will provide policies, strategies, and actions to manage and operate the regional sewer system through 2060. The five packages include options to guide County Wastewater Treatment Division's (WTD) responsibilities as the regional sewer service provider regarding its wastewater treatment plants, pollution source control and product stewardship; stormwater and combined sewer

overflows; wastewater conveyance; asset management, resiliency, and redundancy; legacy pollution, resource recovery, and finance.

Several proposed actions extend beyond WTD's responsibilities to provide regional sewer services and treatment. RWQC asked for cost estimates and overall water quality benefits of each package before it can provide constructive input.

The next meeting of the RWQC is scheduled for October 6. Councilmember Conrad Lee serves on the RWQC.

KING COUNTY FLOOD CONTROL DISTRICT ADVISORY COMMITTEE (FCDAC)

At its July 29 meeting, the FCDAQ:

- **Received a briefing on the County's management oversight process for capital projects** to ensure the right decisions and investments are made at key project milestones. An update on WTD's Black River Pump Station project was also provided.
- **Received a briefing on the Flood Control District's (FCD) preliminary 2022 operating and 2022-2027 CIP budgets.** The 2022 projected capital and operating ending fund balance is approximately \$62 million. The FCD financial plan anticipates a negative cash balance by 2026. The FCDAC discussed options to increase revenue sources including issuing bonds. The FCDAC also reviewed a draft letter to the FCD Board of Supervisors recommending approval of the 2022 operating and 2022-2027 Capital Improvement Program budgets.

Bellevue has received over \$21.8 million from the FCD for three Utilities' flood reduction projects over the past several years.

At its August 12 meeting, the FCDAC:

- **Received a briefing on the FCD's final draft 2022 operating and 2022-2027 capital improvement program budgets.** No substantive changes were made since the budgets were presented in July. The committee approved a draft letter to the FCD Board of Supervisors recommending approval of the 2022 operating and 2022-2027 Capital Improvement Program budgets.

The next meeting of the FCDAC has not been scheduled. Councilmember Jeremy Barksdale serves on the FCDAC.

AFFORDABLE HOUSING COMMITTEE (AHC)

At its July 21 meeting, the AHC:

- **Discussed updating regulations to increase housing choice, diversity and affordability.** The AHC reviewed 10 recommended zoning, land use, or regulatory strategies changes to increase affordable housing development and increase housing choice and diversity, particularly in areas served by frequent or high-capacity transit. Presenters included Bellwether Housing, the Master Builders Association, and Futurewise.
- **Received a briefing on the King County Countywide Planning Policies (CPPs).** The King County CPPs create a shared framework for growth management planning for all King County jurisdictions in accordance with state law. The CPPs were last comprehensively reviewed and updated in 2012 and will be updated this year for consistency with VISION 2050 and its Multicounty Planning Policies, approved in 2020.

In June, the GMPC recommended the 2021 CPP updates to the King County Council for approval. Approximately 20 proposed amendments were not included in the CMPC's recommendations to the County Council. Instead, the GMPC directed the AHC to review the proposed amendments, conduct additional analysis, and provide the GMPC with a recommendation.

- **Discussed advancing shared revenue principles.** AHC members are identifying actions to equitably and rapidly increase the preservation and production of affordable units, as well as potential support the AHC or stakeholders could provide. AHC jurisdictional members are preparing this information for the September 29 AHC meeting. AHC members will need to work with their councils before making commitments to specific action.
- **Received a briefing on the Community Partners Table (CPT).** In June, King County contracted with Headwater People Consulting to establish and manage the CPT of the AHC. The CPT will identify shared priorities, review and provide input on the current tasks and strategies of the AHC, including recommendations for future plans (late 2021 workplan activities and 2022 work plan goals), and provide a community perspective analysis of the how dashboard metrics are being reflected in on-the-ground experiences.

Headwater People Consulting submitted plans to King County for a program and position description, member selection, CPT meetings, member onboarding, and stipends. Headwater People Consulting provided the AHC with a high-level overview of their organization and approach for establishing the CPT. After approval of the plans, Headwater People will begin implementation, starting with CPT member recruitment.

- **Received a briefing on Federal legislative priorities.** In May, the AHC adopted a statement of legislative priorities drafted by King County Housing Authority. The statement included the following priorities:
 - Ensuring a Long-Term Housing Recovery Act (Sponsored by Representative Adam Smith)
 - Infrastructure funding relative to affordable housing

- Fiscal Year 2022 Transportation, Housing, and Urban Development (THUD) Appropriations Bill

The next meeting of the AHC is scheduled for September 29. Mayor Lynne Robinson serves on the AHC.

EASTRAIL REGIONAL ADVISORY COUNCIL (RAC)

At its July 19 meeting, the RAC:

- **Approved Chair and Vice Chair for terms starting January 2022.** King County Councilmember Kathy Lambert will continue as Eastrail RAC Chair and Kirkland Deputy Mayor Jay Arnold will continue as Vice Chair for two additional years.
- **Approved a partnership Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) between the Eastrail RAC and Eastrail Partners.** In 2019, the Eastrail RAC adopted a consensus resolution on a cost-share agreement to provide \$100,000 to the Eastrail Partners. Bellevue contributed about \$11,000 for stakeholder engagement at the community and legislative levels regarding the Eastrail vision and advancement opportunities. The RAC members' agreement with Eastrail Partners ended in December 2020.

The new two-year MOU provides structure and guidance for partnership and includes three main elements: ongoing collaboration, priorities for action and terms. The new MOU does not commit the Eastrail RAC, including Bellevue, to any funding for Eastrail Partners.

- **Approved a letter to Washington's congressional delegation.** Eastrail Partners shared a letter addressed to United States Senators Patty Murray and Maria Cantwell encouraging them to support federal investment for Eastrail projects. Letters were also sent to United States representatives Adam Smith and Suzan DelBene thanking them for their support of Eastrail funding.
- **Discussed the trail visitor survey and data collection work plan.** A data collection program will build awareness of people's experience on the trail, inform decision-making, illustrate value to funders and generate data for grant applications. The data collection plan includes manual counts, intercept surveys and automated counters.

Eastrail RAC member staff recommended the following actions for the work plan:

- Create and implement a 10-year data collection and management plan.
- Secure resources for purchase, installation, and ongoing operations and maintenance for data collection at seven desired counter locations.
- Continue current manual count locations in 2021 and beyond using 2020 protocols.
- Create and implement a data management system that will include securing technical

- expertise to scope and build the system.
- Develop a tool for collecting and managing qualitative information about Eastrail beyond trail use data.

Staff will return to the Eastrail RAC in October with a refined proposal.

- **Discussed co-creation event planning for Eastrail outreach.** The Eastrail RAC's 2020-2022 workplan includes outreach to underrepresented communities. Underrepresented communities include people of color, people born outside of the United States, English language learners, low-income households and people with disabilities. Debbie Lacy of Eastside for All joined King County staff to update Eastrail RAC members on planning for Welcoming Week as a co-creation and community engagement event related to Eastrail. This effort is intended to build ongoing relationships and serve as a model for future outreach efforts and partnerships.

The next meeting of the Eastrail RAC is scheduled for October 18. Bellevue Councilmember John Stokes represents Bellevue on the Eastrail RAC.