

**COUNCIL SUMMARY BACKGROUND BRIEFING:
KING COUNTY REGIONAL COMMITTEES AND OTHER ISSUES
*October 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 October 13 meeting, the RPC:

- **Recommended adoption of the 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. This year, 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.

Prior to recommending the King County Council adopt the plan, the RPC approved amendments, including:
 - Annual reports must include information on levy spending by program area by ZIP Code and the number of individuals receiving levy-funded services by program area by ZIP Code in the county where they reside at the time of service
 - King County must collect this ZIP Code information from all service contractors who receive levy moneys for contracts executed after 2021.
- **Discussed 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. In November, the RPC will consider amending or recommending adoption of the implementation plan.

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

REGIONAL TRANSIT COMMITTEE (RTC)

The RTC met on October 20. A summary will be included in the November Regional Issues packet.

The next meeting of the RTC is scheduled for November 17. Councilmember Jennifer Robertson serves on the RTC.

REGIONAL WATER QUALITY COMMITTEE (RWQC)

At its October 6 meeting, the RWQC:

- **Received a briefing on King County's wastewater rate structure** which is applied to two customer rate classes – single family and business/multifamily. The single-family customer rate is based on an assumed, set volumetric basis while the business/multifamily customer rate is based on how much volume of sewage they generate. An unintended consequence of water conservation measures is that single family customers now carry disproportionately more of the cost burden for the regional wastewater system because their rate is immune to any water conservation benefits that are enjoyed by the business/multifamily sector.

If the County based its wastewater rate model on the actual average volume generated by single-family customers, their bill would drop from the current monthly charge of \$45.33 to \$40.93. However, the County would have to renegotiate its sewage disposal contracts with 34 agencies, including Bellevue before it can update its model.

- **Received a briefing on the King County Auditor's Office (KCAO) report on the draft Clean Water Plan (CWP).** The KCAO recommended greater transparency and clarity around the CWP costs, risks and guiding principles. In particular, the project costs were too high level, many strategies were most likely not viable under current and potential regulations, and benefits to water quality were unclear. In addition, most strategies assumed successful renegotiation of the County's Combined Sewer Overflow Consent Decree with the Environmental Protection Agency which in the KCAO opinion is very unlikely. The County Wastewater Treatment Division acknowledged KCAO's observations and will provide responses to the RWQC in the coming months.

The next meeting of the RWQC is scheduled for November 3. Councilmember Conrad Lee serves on the RWQC.

KING CONSERVATION DISTRICT ADVISORY COMMITTEE (KCDAC)

At its October 12 meeting, the KCDAC:

- **Received a briefing on the King Conservation District (KCD) 2020 budget and expenditures.** KCD receives the majority of its funding through rates and charges administered by King County as laid out in a 2020-2024 interlocal agreement. KCD staff presented a very high-level summary of the 2020 KCD revenues and expenditures but did not include detailed backup documentation. The KCDAC requested that KCD staff provide details of the operating and capital budgets to better understand revenue sources and budget assumptions going forward. This would also promote greater transparency and accountability.
- **Received a briefing on the King Conservation District (KCD) 2020 Annual Report** which highlights accomplishment of a significant amount of its 2020 workplan, especially under the unusual circumstances and restrictions brought about by the pandemic.

The next meeting of the KCDAC is scheduled for December 14. Councilmember John Stokes serves on the KCDAC.

AFFORDABLE HOUSING COMMITTEE (AHC)

At its September 29, 2021 meeting, the AHC:

- **Discussed updating regulations to increase housing choice and diversity and maximize affordability.** The Committee received a briefing on the goals established by the affordable housing task force and Growth Management Planning Committee to meet stated goals through a mix of short- and long-term strategies. A presentation from Futurewise and the Master Builders Association highlighted constraints, opportunities to stimulate housing construction, and best practices to achieve outcomes consistent with the AHC targets.

The committee discussed potential AHC actions to promote existing strategies to achieve faster, more equitable outcomes. The AHC is considering issuing a letter to member communities to support immediate action on affordable housing.

- **Discussed advancing shared revenue principles.** The Housing Interjurisdictional Team (HIJT) which is a staff team representing jurisdictions in King County analyzed the implementation of two authorized affordable housing tools (HB1406, HB1590) to determine next steps for advancing the principles. AHC Chair Claudia Balducci asked member cities to “identify an action or actions they and their coalitions (ARCH and SKHHP) will take to rapidly increase the preservation and production of permanent affordable housing units by deploying available revenue sources.”

The chair discussed new actions taken by the City of Seattle in recent years. Seattle issued three rental Notice of Funding Availability (NOFA's) annually and two homeownership NOFA's. In 2019 and 2020 the city awarded over \$220 million for creation, preservation, and acquisition of 3,753 units. Seattle's efforts have resulted in facilitating faster completion through inter-departmental coordination to decrease regulatory barriers, expedite permitting review, and provide technical assistance for public funding readiness. A Rapid Acquisition NOFA with \$28.5 million in funds was published in July, awarded in September, and anticipate occupancy by the end of 2021.

- **Received a briefing and discussed Work Plan and Committee Functioning Survey Overview.** A survey circulated to AHC members through October 18. The survey fulfills three of this year's work items, and results will inform the AHC discussion about Committee functioning and the 2022 work plan.
- **Discussed the 2022 State Legislative Agenda.** The committee identified three key priorities heading into the 2022 legislative session.
 - Increase funding resources for affordable housing to provide capital funding and ongoing operating funding to support households earning less than 30 percent area median income (AMI).
 - Provide funding for jurisdictions to update their comprehensive plans to increase opportunities for affordable housing and counter displacement.
 - Support housing stability through tenant protections and COVID-19 recovery.
- **Received a briefing on the Health through Housing program.** Utilizing funds generated from HB1590, the County achieved half its goal of 1,600 units by acquiring 859 homes. Half of ongoing revenue was bonded for capital acquisition or construction, and the other half dedicated to ongoing supportive services operations.
- **Received a briefing on federal legislation.** Housing is infrastructure in the Build Back Better Act, committing significant housing investments. Budget work is underway in D.C. but continuing resolutions or government shutdown are possible.

The next meeting of the AHC is scheduled for November 17, 2021. Mayor Lynne Robinson serves on the AHC.

EASTRAIL REGIONAL ADVISORY COUNCIL (RAC)

The RAC met on October 18. A summary will be included in the November Regional Issues packet.

The next meeting of the RAC is scheduled for January 17. Councilmember John Stokes represents

Bellevue on the RAC.