

PROVISO REPORT REGIONAL PLANNING

Introduction

Ordinance 17695, Section 18 included a proviso attached to the budget for the Office of Performance, Strategy and Budget directing the Executive to submit a plan to the Council for “staffing of regional planning activities and the county's participation in regional planning organizations.”¹

Background: Planning in King County

Under the Washington State Growth Management Act (GMA), long-range planning is mandated at the multicounty (regional), countywide, and local levels. The GMA framework requires consistency among the different levels and was designed to foster a comprehensive and interdisciplinary approach.

Counties are the level of government responsible for leading growth management planning and for ensuring close coordination with cities and towns. King County has ably met this responsibility for two decades, but over time, reduced resources and retirements have thinned the ranks of staff working to address critical issues such as affordable housing, land use, transportation, and environmental systems management. Although the financial realities we live with today constrain our resources, we must continue to plan for the long-term.

At the same time, the focus of King County's planning is transitioning. After the successful annexation of most urban unincorporated areas to cities, the County's attention is shifting to rural and regional planning. This is appropriate at a time when regional issues are gaining in significance. By the year 2040, more than five million people will be living in the Puget Sound region – a 30 percent increase from today. According to the Puget Sound Regional Council (PSRC), this will lead to the creation of one million new jobs during the same period. This

¹ P7 PROVIDED FURTHER THAT:

Of this appropriation, \$100,000 shall not be expended or encumbered until the executive transmits a plan on the staffing of regional planning activities and the county's participation in regional planning organizations, a draft ordinance and a motion that acknowledges receipt of the plan and the draft ordinance and the council has passed the motion. The motion shall reference the proviso's ordinance, ordinance section proviso number and subject matter in both the title and body of the motion.

The executive must file the plan, motion and draft ordinance required by this proviso by March 31, 2014, in the form of a paper original and an electronic copy with the clerk of the council, who shall retain the original and provide an electronic copy to all councilmembers, the council chief of staff and the lead staff for the budget and fiscal management committee, or its successor.

The plan shall describe a staffing model to support county comprehensive planning and countywide planning activities. The plan shall also describe staffing support for the county's participation in regional planning organizations such as the Growth Management Planning Council and the Puget Sound Regional Council, including coordination of the executive and legislative branches' participation in those organizations.

The draft ordinance shall address the required plan topics including amendments to the relevant sections of the King County Code in order to implement the plan.

population and employment growth will occur largely in cities, and will require significant new housing, transportation and other urban infrastructure. The effects of that growth will be felt beyond city boundaries, and will continue to put pressure on the region's natural systems and rural areas. Megatrends like climate change and income inequality will stress our built, natural, and social infrastructure. A cohesive regional strategy, coordinated among cities and the county, is required to address these challenges, and a cohesive internal strategy is required to align the County's resources to meet them.

In the Puget Sound region, long-range planning occurs in multiple forums. The Growth Management Planning Council (GMPC) and Puget Sound Regional Council (PSRC) are two prominent examples. In recent years, both the GMPC and PSRC have broadened and deepened their policy work by better integrating land use and transportation, addressing climate change, and incorporating public health and social equity. The GMPC has recently taken up longstanding and challenging policy issues such as school siting and the adoption of greenhouse gas emission reduction targets. The PSRC recently completed the multi-year Growing Transit Communities project, which developed an integrated strategy to address land use, transportation, economic development and social equity in transit communities across the four county region (King, Kitsap, Pierce, and Snohomish). These are some examples of the types of complex regional issues that demand our attention.

Existing staffing structure

Since the dissolution of the Office of Regional Policy and Planning over 10 years ago, King County's approach to planning has become decentralized. Under this decentralized model, primary responsibility for each level of growth management planning (state, regional, countywide and local) lies with a different Executive agency. Moreover, each uses a slightly different method for internal staff coordination and for Executive-Council coordination (see Table 1). As the County spends more time working on regional issues, and as the complexity of those issues increases, the decentralized model makes it more challenging to develop and consistently carry out a "One King County" approach. It also results in reduced transparency - internally and externally - regarding how the work is accomplished and who is ultimately accountable for it.

For example, the Office of Performance, Strategy and Budget (PSB) currently houses staff that work on regional and countywide planning, annexations, growth forecasting and demographics. The Department of Transportation has primary responsibility for staffing regional work at the PSRC, with assistance from other departments. Meanwhile, the Department of Permitting and Environmental Review (DPER), which has historically led the County's comprehensive planning, has shifted its focus to unincorporated issues. The Comprehensive Planning function is the last part of the department that does regional work. DPER recently changed its name and its location to be closer to its rural customer base, and revamped its fee structure to support a more focused program of permitting work.

Proposal: Regional Planning Section

To address these issues, a new Regional Planning Section within PSB is proposed. The new unit will house a small number of staff who will be accountable for coordinating long-range planning. It will consolidate staff currently assigned to PSB and DPER to enable better coordination of long-range planning and to enable King County to participate more effectively in countywide and regional planning forums. The unit will work with both the executive and legislative branches to develop and support a “One King County” approach to regional planning issues. This will require clearly defined roles and responsibilities, and internal mechanisms for consensus building.

The Regional Planning Section will be responsible for coordinating updates to the King County Comprehensive Plan, Countywide Planning Policies, and VISION 2040, and will coordinate the County’s participation in the GMPC and PSRC. The new Section will also provide growth forecasting and demographics services to county departments and the region and will support and facilitate annexations of remaining urban unincorporated areas to cities. The new section will be supported by an Interbranch Team that includes county departments and Council staff; policy positions will be determined by a Leadership Team comprised of elected officials and staffed by senior executive and council staff. DPER will continue to focus on local land use planning in rural unincorporated areas, which could also benefit from more focused attention and more predictable cycles of planning work. A more detailed list of Regional Planning Section functions follows in Appendix A.

Proposed Regional Planning Section Mission

The Regional Planning Section provides leadership, management and accountability for King County's long-range planning efforts. The Regional Planning Section coordinates and integrates comprehensive, countywide and regional planning efforts as directed by King County policy and coordinated with the County’s elected leaders. Guided by the King County Strategic Plan, the King County Comprehensive Plan, and adopted regional policies, the Regional Planning Section works across King County government to advance initiatives that support resilient, diverse, and sustainable communities.

Table 1. Levels of Planning

Policy Framework	Adopted By	County Coordination	Code/Policy
STATE			
Growth Management Act	Washington State Legislature	KC Executive and KC Council jointly develop annual Legislative Agenda (Council adopts) and monitor GMA bills. Lead: State Intergovernmental Relations Team with support from Departments	RCW 36.70A (GMA) WAC 365.196 (GMA)
MULTICOUNTY / REGIONAL			
<p>VISION 2040</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Regional Growth Strategy Multicounty Planning Policies (required by GMA) <p>Transportation 2040</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Required by Federal Gov't <p>Regional Economic Strategy</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Required by Federal Gov't 	<p>Puget Sound Regional Council</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> General Assembly Executive Board <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Operations Committee Transportation Policy Board Growth Management Policy Board Economic Development District Board 18 subcommittees 	<p>Interdepartmental team is led by KC Executive staff; includes KC Council staff</p> <p>Lead: DOT, supported by interbranch team</p>	<p>PSRC Interlocal</p> <p>SAFETEA-LU Public Works and Econ. Development Act Clean Air Act</p> <p>RCW 47.80 (RTPO) RCW 36.70A (GMA) WAC 365.196 (GMA)</p>
COUNTYWIDE			
<p>Countywide Planning Policies</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Required by GMA Contains Growth Targets Sets Urban Growth Areas Buildable Lands Report Benchmarks Report Potential Annexation Areas 	<p>King County Council</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Recommendations from Growth Management Planning Council Ratification by county, cities 	<p>Interjurisdictional team is led by KC Executive staff; includes KC Council staff</p> <p>Lead: PSB, supported by departments as needed</p>	<p>CPP G-1, G-2</p> <p>GMPC interlocal</p> <p>KCC Title 20 (Planning) RCW 36.70A (GMA) WAC 365.196 (GMA)</p>
LOCAL / COMPREHENSIVE			
<p>King County Comprehensive Plan</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Mutually reinforcing w/KC Strategic Plan Required by GMA Governs unincorporated KC; also contains regional policies Includes subarea and functional plans 	<p>King County Council</p>	<p>Four-year cycle: Executive first develops scope of work and transmits to Council. Executive then develops recommended plan and transmits to Council.</p> <p>Annual Cycle: Executive develops proposal and transmits to Council</p> <p>Lead: DPER, supported by interdepartmental team</p>	<p>KCC 2.16.055 (DPER) KCC Title 20 (Planning)</p>

Relationship to Strategic Plan

The King County Strategic Plan (KCSP) and the King County Comprehensive Plan are mutually reinforcing. The Regional Planning Section will not take over responsibility for the KCSP, but will ensure that the County's regional policy positions are consistent with and reinforce the KCSP.

Two KCSP goals provide primary guidance for the mission of the Regional Planning Section. The Economic and Built Environment Goal is to "Encourage a growing and diverse King County economy and vibrant, thriving and sustainable communities." The Environmental Sustainability Goal is to "Safeguard and enhance King County's natural resources and environment."

Advancing these two goals, as well as the other KCSP goals, will involve coordination with multiple outside entities and requires the expertise of multiple King County departments and agencies, as follows:

- County Council (provides policy guidance for, participates in development of and adopts the KCSP; Comprehensive Plan and other regional policies)
- DPER (implement comprehensive plan policies for rural land use, directing growth to urban areas, and protecting the environment and life/safety)
- DNRP (protect natural resource lands and encourage agriculture and forestry; manage programs for flood hazard reduction, surface water, water resources, solid waste, and wastewater; facilitate transfer of development rights; manage regional parks and trails; and provide outreach to rural communities through community service areas)
- DCHS (promote affordable housing, address poverty and homelessness)
- DOT (manage county roads and linkages to the rest of the transportation system, provide transit, promote transit-oriented development)
- PH-SKC (protect environmental health through septic system review and promote healthy communities)
- PSB (multi-county and countywide planning, growth forecasting, annexations)
- Executive's Office (Executive direction and leadership, regional relations)
- All departments (address cross-departmental issues such as climate change and equity and social justice)

Proposed Organization

Creating the Regional Planning Section will establish within a single administrative unit a structure that has the resources to work on a future-oriented agenda set by County policy and elected leadership. Strategically locating the unit within PSB provides the section with access to the resources of PSB and the Executive Office and builds on the success of:

- the support that PSB has provided across County departments in improving and leading the biennial budget process and in implementing the King County Strategic Plan (KCSP);
- the interdepartmental team approach used in developing the 2012 Comprehensive Plan Update, include coordination with Council, and the linkages made to the KCSP;
- work to create a “One King County” approach on regional issues, with both Executive branch departments and the County Council, and with our partner jurisdictions across the region; and
- successful implementation of the Growth Management Act (GMA)

The new Section will leverage these strategic planning and performance successes and allow for close coordination with the regional relations function housed in the Executive’s Office. Locating the section within PSB will also ensure better coordination with the County Council and its regional planning staff, and a single point of accountability for regional work.

Under this proposal, Executive-Council coordination would be guided by the structure illustrated on Appendix B. The interlocal agreements that relate to the County’s membership in PSRC and GMPC, and the charter-based responsibilities of the two branches relating to the Comprehensive Plan, would not change.

Staffing

The Regional Planning Section will consist of the following staff²:

- 1 Section Manager (vacant position in DPER)
- 2 Senior Policy Analysts (currently in PSB)
- 1 Comprehensive Plan Manager (vacant position in DPER)
- 1 County Demographer (currently in PSB)

Interbranch Team: the Regional Planning Section will be supported by an Interbranch Team that provides information and data, and helps to develop policy proposals and options for consideration by county elected officials.

Leadership Team: Consisting of elected officials and supported by senior executive and council staff, the Leadership Team will work to develop “One King County” regional policy positions. The Leadership Team would also serve as a forum for discussion of planning-related issues.

Upcoming Work

The following is a partial list of ongoing work that requires regional coordination and focus and that will be coordinated by the Regional Planning Section:

- King County Comprehensive Plan
 - 2014 Annual Update
 - 2016 Four-Year Update
- Annexation Issues
 - Remaining annexations

² These are all existing positions in the 2014 budget. No additional positions are proposed.

- Coordination with Boundary Review Board
 - Service level planning for remaining urban unincorporated areas
- Growth Management Planning Council Coordination
 - School Siting Task Force implementation
 - 2014 Buildable Lands Report
- Countywide Planning Policy Implementation
 - Affordable Housing strategies
 - Climate Change targets
 - Growth targets monitoring and maintenance
 - Regional Transfer of Development Rights
 - Emergent joint planning issues
- Puget Sound Regional Council Coordination
 - Growing Transit Communities regional compact
 - VISION 2040/ Transportation 2040 updates in 2017
 - Industrial lands analysis
 - Regional economic development strategy

APPENDIX A

REGIONAL PLANNING FUNCTIONS

1. Manage the King County Comprehensive Plan (KCCP) Review Process

- Prepare the annual docket report; evaluate and make recommendations on public and stakeholder requests for policy and/or land use changes
- Manage annual and four-year review cycles; coordinate policy development among all county departments, public involvement and stakeholder participation
- Ensure consistency between KCCP and adopted countywide and regional policy
- Ensure alignment between KCCP and KCSP
- Oversee implementation; work with departments to evaluate proposals requiring policy interpretations
- Respond to inquiries from the public; maintain KCCP website

Status Quo: This work is done by the Comprehensive Plan Manager position housed in DPER. The Executive's Office assists with interdepartmental coordination.

Proposed: The Comprehensive Plan Manager position would move to the new Regional Planning Section, with authority to coordinate across all County departments. The Manager would retain office space and have office hours at DPER to ensure coordination of regional and local land use planning issues.

2. Lead all work related to the Growth Management Planning Council (GMPC):

- Lead an inter-jurisdictional staff team representing King County, Seattle, Bellevue, Sound Cities Association and Special Districts; facilitate monthly team meetings
- Develop and negotiate countywide policies (i.e., Countywide Planning Policies or CPPs) and facilitate and monitor their implementation
- Ensure consistency between CPPs and adopted regional policy
- Develop GMPC annual work program, manage GMPC meeting logistics, maintain GMPC website

Status Quo: This work is led out of PSB, with assistance from department staff.

Proposed: The Regional Planning Section would continue to lead, with increased coordination with Council, the Executive's regional relations director, and more proactive work with Council and departments.

3. Coordinate the County's participation in the Puget Sound Regional Council (PSRC):

- Track and coordinate all PSRC-related work, develop a "One King County" approach

- Staff the King County Executive and Councilmembers on the Executive Board, Growth Management and Transportation Policy Boards, Economic Development District Board, Operations Committee and at the annual General Assembly
- Coordinate the County's participation at the Regional Staff Committee
- Tracking Industrial Lands Analysis (work is underway)
- Track and participate in the development of growth forecasting, modeling and data work, which drives growth management planning, infrastructure design and implementation
- Coordinate the County's participation in 18 other PSRC boards and committees, including those that influence transportation operations, funding, and the prioritization of investments.

Status Quo: Primarily led by staff in King County's Department of Transportation (DOT), in consultation with other departments. DOT provides critical support in multiple forums at PSRC including those related to project selection. Many other agencies also provide support. All demographic work is currently housed in PSB.

Proposed: This work would be led by the Regional Planning section to raise visibility, transparency and coordination with regional relations and with Council. This will provide increased coordination among all County departments and create better connections to issues that span policy realms. KCDOT will continue to provide critical support at PSRC related to project selection and distribution of grant funds and staffing of transportation committees and forums.

4. Track and Analyze GMA and related state laws

- Track and analyze state law and GMA-related legislation
 - During the yearly state legislative session, serve as a resource to the county government relations team and WSAC
 - Provide data, statistics, policy briefs, testimony to the Legislature regarding county land use programs
 - Draft legislation or amendments, as needed
- Ensure that GMA is implemented through the Countywide Planning Policies and King County Comprehensive Plan
- Coordinate with Department of Commerce
- Track Growth Hearings Board cases

Status Quo: Work is performed by a combination of staff in the Executive Office, PSB and DPER.

Proposed: Work to be led by Regional Planning Section in coordination with DPER and other departments. This will provide better transparency, coordination and accountability.

5. Demographics and Growth Forecasting

- Coordinate data collection for and preparation of King County Buildable Lands Report
- Coordinate Census participation, data development and dissemination
- Work with regional partners to prepare growth forecasting and growth targets
- Respond to inquiries from departments, other governments, media, stakeholders, private sector and public

Status Quo: Currently housed in PSB with Executive, Council and departmental coordination.

Proposed: Work will be housed in Regional Planning Section to provide better internal mechanisms for information sharing throughout King County.

6. Facilitate Annexations and Joint Planning with Cities

- Serve as liaisons to cities with Potential Annexation Areas
- Coordinate development of annexation proposals:
 - Serve as link to departments, Council and Prosecuting Attorney's Office
 - Negotiate and draft Interlocal Agreements; prepare transmittal packages
 - Coordinate staff work related to the Boundary Review Board (e.g., preparation of technical data, presentations, briefs)
- Work with cities on emergent issues that require joint planning
- Coordinate with the Boundary Review Board
- Develop and implement a strategy for efficiently providing services to remaining urban unincorporated areas until annexation

Status Quo: Work is performed by PSB staff in coordination with the Executive's Office, including the Regional Relations Director and department staff.

Proposed: Work will be housed in the Regional Planning Section to provide increased transparency, accountability and coordination.

Appendix B. Regional Planning Section

Proposed Structure for Executive-Council Coordination

