

Proposed GMPB follow-up memo from Dr. Morrow to Heather Culver

FM: Dr. Gib Morrow, Health Officer, Kitsap Public Health District, and Growth Management Policy Board Public Health Regional Liaison, gibmorrow@kitsappublichealth.org

TO: PSRC Growth Management Policy Board Leadership

- Heather Culver, Administrative Assistant II, hculver@psrc.org
- Councilmember Ed Prince, Councilmember, City of Renton and GMPB Chair, eprince@rentonwa.gov

RE: May Growth Management Policy Board meeting health considerations

CC: Regional Public Health staff liaisons:

- Pierce – Erika Bartlett - EBartlett@tpchd.org
- Kitsap – Adrienne Hampton – adrienne.hampton@kitsapublichealth.org
- Snohomish – Cristina Ciupitu-Plath, Cristina.Ciupitu-Plath@co.snohomish.wa.us
- King – Richard Gelb and Julie West Richard.gelb@kingcounty.gov; Julie.west@kingcounty.gov

Thank you for the opportunity to offer comments on the May 2024 PSRC GMPB meeting topics. These suggestions present a regional public health perspective on opportunities to further advance health and health equity in regional growth management policy.

Comments on May meeting agenda topics:

- **Discussion Item 6 – Racially Disparate Impacts in Housing**

Given the legacy of racially disparate impacts in housing, we agree that identifying displacement risk is a high priority as housing instability and neighborhood characteristics can strongly influence health. In this way, as PSRC and Commerce support mapping and data of displacement risk, cities and counties also have the opportunity to work closely with local public health jurisdictions to identify protective factors that prevent and address racially disparate impacts to ultimately increase healthy housing options. Below are additional considerations at the intersection of displacement and health:

- Explore strategies to increase housing supply as multifamily housing naturally becomes more affordable as it ages, yet before housing ages into disrepair or present health impacts. This is especially true for unsubsidized housing.
- PSRC can promote anti-displacement and increase healthy housing options by assessing displacement risk data to identify opportunities for investments in weatherization, major repairs, and ensuring clean drinking water and sanitation.
- In Snohomish County, greater risk of displacement has been identified among renters, particularly renters of color. The relatively high risk of displacement in the unincorporated Southwest Urban Growth Area where future light rail stations are planned warrants the need for intentional interventions to ensure that new development around much-needed infrastructure expansion remains accessible to current residents, particularly those with low and very low income levels. This is

essential for ensuring the preservation of historical and cultural communities within our region.

- Displacement risk can be mitigated by maintaining healthy housing options, yet these investments are costly. Inherently linked, disparities are seen in economic stability by geography and race and ethnicity across the Puget Sound Region. In a recent survey conducted in Kitsap County, community members reported cost as the primary barrier to meeting basic needs for housing, food, reliable transportation, and childcare alone. In 2021, more than one in two (52%) renter-occupied housing units in Kitsap spend more than 30% of their monthly income towards housing costs and similar trends are seen throughout the Puget Sound region.¹ In this way, relocation assistance is also necessary for tenants of housing that has become uninhabitable, more so for renters who pay more than 30% of their income on housing.
 - For example: Tacoma-Pierce County Health Department (TPCHD) has received displacement concerns from smaller cities and towns in connection with aging rental housing stock. TPCHD is using assessor data to inventory existing multifamily housing built before 1985 and elevating programs that support healthy, safe, housing improvements. Additional resources:
 - [Commerce’s Weatherization Plus Health program](#), which successfully partnered with local Community Health Workers in the [Pierce County Healthy Homes Study](#).
 - [City of Lakewood’s Proactive Rental Housing Inspection program](#).
 - [Craft 3 Clean Water Loans](#)

Furthermore, in addition to housing options, we seek to promote healthy communities by way of a Health in All Policies approach which centers community members in decision making processes such as inclusionary zoning, land use, and procedures. Health in All Policies is a way to ensure health impacts of policy decisions are taken into consideration across departments and sectors by way of engaging a cross-cultural and diverse set of community partners in policy development.

Thank you for your consideration of these discussion topics. For additional questions, please reach out to Dr. Gib Morrow at gib.morrow@kitsappublichealth.org

¹ [Executive Summary \(kitsappublichealth.org\)](#)