

EASTSIDE RAIL CORRIDOR REGIONAL ADVISORY COUNCIL

MEETING SUMMARY

January 26, 2018 – 1:30 PM

Kirkland Justice Center

Advisory Council Members Present: Chair Claudia Balducci, County Councilmember; Vice-chair Jay Arnold, Kirkland City Councilmember (representing Amy Walen, Kirkland Mayor); Don Billen, Director of the Office of Capital Project Development, Sound Transit (representing Peter Rogoff, CEO); Angela Birney, Redmond City Councilmember (representing John Marchione, Redmond Mayor); Brandon Buchanan, City Manager, City of Woodinville; Kathy Lambert, County Councilmember; John Stokes, Bellevue Councilmember; Tom Teigen, Parks Director, Snohomish County; Blake Trask, Eastside Greenway Alliance; and Christie True, Director of King County Natural Resources and Parks (representing County Executive Dow Constantine)

Welcome and Introductions

Chair Claudia Balducci called the meeting to order at 1:39 p.m., welcomed all in attendance and asked the Regional Advisory Council (RAC) members to introduce themselves.

ERC Branding Effort

Erica Jacobs, Project Manager with King County Department of Natural Resources and Parks (DNRP), reported that the Principal Staff Team is working through the consultant selection process with King County Procurement and will be scheduling interviews of the respondents.

Grace Li Bergman with The Trust for Public Land, noted that the initial scope of work was provided at last September's meeting. Once a consultant is selected, it is expected that they will provide the final scope of work and an outline for the public engagement piece. The selection process should conclude in the next few weeks with the consultant starting in March. It is anticipated that they will be introduced at the next RAC meeting where they will present their outreach plan and initial thoughts on branding. The project is expected to wrap up by the end of the year.

Ms. Bergman noted that partners can use their existing infrastructure to individually conduct engagement using the same the consultant develops. They would like input from the RAC regarding areas outside the cities and how far and wide outreach should go.

Discussion ensued regarding maintaining the integrity of the local segments while doing the overall branding, looking beyond current users for input (e.g., younger generations, Girl Scouts, Boy Scouts, schools, broader public, etc.), the challenge of layered brands, looking at how the ERC connects to the rest of the local trail network and the need for branding to encompass the multiple uses of the corridor.

Funding Commission

Jeff Muhm, King County Council Initiatives Director, reported that 24 potential participants were contacted, with eight to ten having confirmed interest thus far. Upon completion, a strong group is expected. A consultant has been hired who will begin work in March and finish up in September. David St. John, Government Relations Administrator, King County Department of Natural Resources and Parks, noted that an invitation had been extended to all preliminary and potential members.* Selection of the participants is anticipated in the next week or so. Part of the problem has been getting the invitation to the right person within the organization. The next step will be scheduling. The first meeting is anticipated in March, followed by five additional meetings. The initial meeting will consist of an orientation tour on portions of the trail plus some classroom orientation. The focus of the group will be to look at priorities and funding options and then synthesize those options. Completion is expected by about September.

*The list of those being contacted will be recirculated so that members can provide input.

The following individuals were introduced as the consultant support team:

Emelie East, a consultant with CBE Strategic, commented that she hopes to bring her experience with the federal government here locally and try to help consolidate information and identify where the opportunities are.

Jamie Strausz-Clark, Director of Facilitation & Public Involvement with PRR, will be facilitating the process. She will partner on developing materials and hopes to do one-on-ones with each RAC member. She previously worked on the ERC master plan.

Jenny Bailey, a senior planner with Parametrix, will be a resource for additional technical information if needed.

Further discussion involved gender distribution of the initial funding list, what is realistic to expect to be accomplished in a single meeting, the possibility of having one meeting run longer than the others, assistance in identifying private and non-government entities to participate, having the group encompass the role of a public-private partnership, the fact that the Funding Commission will have no decision-making ability, quick execution of the groups' strategy, the appearance that the solicitation letter did not seem all inclusive of the various entities involved, the need for greater sensitivity regarding inclusiveness, capturing in written communication the essence of the entire group moving forward, using email versus hard copy to share information, letterhead that encompasses all will be available once branding is complete and the need for good communication amongst the members.

Member Progress and Success Updates

City of Kirkland

- With the passage of the capital budget, the Willows Road project (one of the missing links for the Central Kirkland Connector) is now funded.
- The South Kirkland Park and Ride pedestrian bridge and elevator is fully through permitting.
- Totem Lake Connector is at 100% design. It was included as part of the ERC TIGER grant and will cost \$17 million to construct.
- A newsletter regarding planned activity in the Totem Lake area is available.

King County

- The TIGER Grant request for \$25 million has been submitted, with a response anticipated this first quarter. A great deal of help was received, including over 50 letters of support.
- There is a lot of rail removal taking place.
- While many people are already using the trail, the official opening will be later this spring.
- Design work is underway for the NE 8th Crossing and Wilburton Segment, including the Wilburton Trestle.
- Much work has been done with the Washington State Department of Transportation related to the pedestrian crossing on I-405.
- A RFP will go out in the next couple months to see if there is any excursion service interest for the Valley segment.
- A crossing will be needed at NE 145th Street.
- Portions of the interim gravel sections of the trail will be open in March.
- The Northup Way connector is in progress.

City of Redmond

- Asking for more state funding for Phase III.
- Working with Kirkland on the Willows part of the trail.

Sound Transit (Sent email to Luke requesting the slides 1/30)

- East Link construction is underway around Bellevue City Hall and the Wilburton section of the ERC. The King County trail will be adjacent to the guideway.
- Operations and Maintenance Facility East – a temporary interim bike trail will be created connecting the northerly King County trail with the southerly City of Bellevue trail. This will be part of the 120th NE expansion.
- Site construction has begun on the Overlake Village Station.
- Preliminary engineering has begun on the downtown Redmond link extension.
- The I-405 bus/rapid transit program, including the Totem Lake area, will be presented to the Board soon.
- A new Park and Ride has been established at Southeast Redmond Station.
- Research will be conducted to determine whether there is a market for transit oriented development.

City of Bellevue

- Two connections will be opening up – one in the north in the Kirkland corridor at 120th Street, and a 4-mile section from Gene Coulon Park to Newcastle Beach.
- The Wilburton Commercial Area Advisory Committee is about to wrap up. Changes to the building heights will allow for more residential accommodation. The new requirements incorporate the ERC.
- In the process of looking at alternatives for the Wilburton area.
- Thinking about the area along 116th up to NE 8th and possible expansion opportunities by utilizing lidding over portions of I-405.

City of Woodinville

- Still working on resolving issues with freight operations on their portion of the corridor. Looking at alternatives in the next 7-9 months.

- Excited to work with the County on the 145th Street portion. This will help deal with pedestrian traffic and safety.
- The ERC appeared to be a hot topic at the Association of Washington Cities Community Action Days.

Snohomish County

- Design and engineering work for their portion of the ERC is 30% complete. Aiming to be at 60% by the end of the year.
- A suggestion was received regarding putting forward a tax break for trails.

Eastside Greenway Alliance (EGA)

- An additional one-half million dollars came in on the capital budget.
- Looking forward to advancing their work at the State level.
- The EGA website will be unveiled on February 3, 2018.
- The SR 520 bridge trail opened on December 20, 2107.

Public comment

The following attendees offered public comment:

John Kearnes asked about a request for proposal (RFP) for excursions.

It was noted in response to this question, that an RFP to determine if there are any proposed uses for existing parts of the corridor is expected to be done by the end of the year.

Scott Kaseburg noted that he is part of a group of homeowners that live between the Eastside Rail Corridor and Lake Washington near Pleasure Point in Bellevue. He expressed appreciation for work to remove the rails and noted the professionalism of the contractor doing the work. He commented on severe drainage problems in the area and efforts of various public agencies to remedy them. He expressed concern over a potential lack of communication between the agencies and organizations involved in resolving the drainage issues and suggested that the drainage remediation efforts by the Washington State Department of Transportation be kept out of the rail corridor.

Chair Balducci asked King County staff members to look at what is being proposed and provide feedback.

Jeanne Demund seconded the praise for the professionalism of the contractor doing the rail removal work. She expressed concern regarding trail user and vehicular interfaces, noting that the south end of the trail dumps pedestrians onto a section of Mountain View Avenue in Renton that is a single lane, where visibility can be poor and often pedestrians do not look for traffic before venturing onto the roadway. She also commented on litter and animal waste issues and asked that the trail opening be delayed until fences and bag dispensers for pet waste are installed. Additionally, she noted that there is currently limited parking in the area and asked that parking issues be resolved before opening the trail. She stated that the neighbors are ready and willing to meet to discuss these issues.

Mary Erikson echoed safety and visibility concerns in the evening hours and expressed a desire for safety additions.

Bruce Erickson expressed kudos to Erica Jacobs for the excellent work she has done. He also agreed with the safety concerns previously expressed. He noted that there are some real pinch points at the bridges that deserve some attention.

David Patton introduced himself as the new Regional Director of The Trust for Public Land and expressed his interest in working with the group.

Next steps and adjournment

The next meeting will be held on Thursday, April 5, 2018. The time and location are yet to be determined.

The meeting adjourned at 3:30 p.m.