

EASTSIDE RAIL CORRIDOR REGIONAL ADVISORY COUNCIL

MEETING SUMMARY

April 5, 2018 – 9:00 AM

Bellevue Botanical Garden

Advisory Council Members Present: Claudia Balducci, King County Councilmember (Chair); Angela Birney, Redmond City Councilmember (representing John Marchione, Redmond Mayor); Reagan Dunn, King County Councilmember; Kathy Lambert, King County Councilmember; John Stokes, Bellevue City Councilmember; Tom Teigen, Parks Director, Snohomish County; Blake Trask, Eastside Greenway Alliance; Christie True, Director, King County Department of Natural Resources and Parks (representing County Executive Dow Constantine); Bernard van de Kamp, Sound Transit (representing Peter Rogoff, CEO) and Amy Walen, Kirkland Mayor.

Welcome and Introductions

Chair Claudia Balducci called the meeting to order at 9:05 a.m., welcomed all in attendance and asked the Regional Advisory Council (RAC) members to introduce themselves.

Chair Balducci noted that the RAC meetings are open to the public and that it would be beneficial to the administrative staff if the meetings were recorded. She asked members to speak up if they had any issues with that. There were none raised.

Fiber Feasibility Update

Brenda Cooper, Chief Information Officer, City of Kirkland, and Darryl Hunt, Project Manager, King County Department of Information Technology; provided information regarding efforts to explore the addition of communications infrastructure to the corridor. A group of Eastside Rail Corridor (ERC) partners have been meeting for about a year to address fiber feasibility. Last spring a request for proposal (RFP) was released to find a vendor to conduct a feasibility study.

Most broadband is in some way dependent on fiber-optic cables. The availability of high-speed broadband plays an important role in future economic prosperity and equality, and enables the use of smart technology. Installing a fiber build will be expensive and take a fair amount of time, though installing while most of the trail is still “interim” will be more cost effective.

The scope of the feasibility study will include the creation of a conceptual fiber route along the length of the corridor and explore business models for accomplishing the build. Deliverables will include technical and capacity requirements, construction estimates, a fiber plan, a list of strategic points of presence, a business case analysis, possible business models and options and an analysis of construction funding. These findings will factor in the sensitive areas along the corridor as well as consider options to connect to existing infrastructure or install new infrastructure.

The cost of the feasibility study is estimated at \$50,000 - \$100,000 or more. Several parties have committed to help fund the study; Kirkland is assisting with procurement and King County is providing project management.

Ongoing and future tasks (and estimated timeframes) include continued talks with potential partners, evaluation of the RFP responses and vendor selection (2nd quarter 2018), completion of the feasibility study (3rd quarter 2018), briefing PST and RAC as desired, presentation of final report recommendations to the RAC and completion of the fiber buildout.

It was noted that steps are being taken with current projects in progress to enable the inclusion of fiber.

Discussion ensued regarding parties that have been contacted, the role of the Community Connections Consortium and Pacific Northwest Gigapop. The purpose of the project is to both lay infrastructure and future trail use, addressing revenue generation and the possible use of any savings to help build out the trail. The latter was noted as a policy question that would need to be addressed by the RAC. Snohomish County is currently looking at fiber replacement options.

Branding

Curt Warber who recently joined the King County Department of Natural Resources and Parks as a project manager replacing Erica Jacobs, addressed the benefits of the ERC and Regional Trails System (RTS) working together on branding efforts. Both groups had previously looked into branding individually, and now have the opportunity to pool their knowledge and resources on branding efforts while utilizing a single consultant.

Sujata Goel, a special projects coordinator with the King County Department of Natural Resources and Parks, and member of the RTS, noted that discussions with residents in different neighborhoods revealed that they are familiar with trails in their areas, but not with how they may connect to other trails. Current efforts include work with the National Rails to Trails Conservancy. A diagram showing a portion of the Philadelphia trail circuit was provided as an example of how the interconnection of our various trails could be depicted. Examples of branding efforts around the country were also provided. From a regional trails perspective, they are looking at focus groups and diversity within those groups.

An understanding of the values of residents and tying those to what is being provided should be taken into account when considering logo options. The goal is to enable residents to identify the trail they are on.

Anticipated outcomes are research regarding the value of the corridor and network, name and logo options for the corridor and network, and a brand identity to help tell our story. Connectivity values include seeing the entire 300+ mile system as interconnected, understanding where the network will enable you to go, identifying the trail/corridor, and aligning network, trail, segment, jurisdiction and non-profit partners.

The RFP is close to finalization.

Discussion ensued regarding the use of GPS, data sharing as a topic at the RTS's October summit, the inclusion of other counties, corporate sponsorship opportunities and having a name that evokes regional recognition.

Funding Commission

Jamie Strausz-Clark of PRR addressed progress on work to create a funding commission and provided a draft Charter. Seventeen of the 23 individuals approached to participate on the funding commission have accepted. These 17 provide a good geographical representation. One-on-one meetings with these potential participants are currently underway, with seven complete. Everyone seems to have a good understanding of the role of the funding commission, know that they will not be a part of the design process, have a strong interest in the timeline and want their participation to be meaningful and appreciated.

The hope is to affirm the draft charter at the first meeting on April 30th. Prior to this first meeting there will be optional narrated tours of portions of the corridor. Future meetings are anticipated for May (this may need to be rescheduled), June, July, September and November.

Further discussion addressed using a letterhead with all of the members' logos on it, and using terms such as corridor and interim trail rather than just trail to emphasize the multi-use function of the corridor.

Member Progress and Success Updates

Eastside Greenway Alliance (EGA)

- Enjoyed a ride on the Kirkland to Bellevue segment of the ERC.
- Vicky Clarke will be transitioning out of the EGA.

City of Kirkland

- Approximately 18,000 people have use the Kirkland corridor segment each month.
- Received \$2.5 million in State funding towards the pedestrian crossing at 124th.

Snohomish County

- Working towards 100% completion of design and engineering. Anticipate being ready to go by 2020. Next seven months will be very important. Planning it as a multi-use corridor. There are presently active trains using the rails.

City of Bellevue

- There is now a trail connection at the north and south ends of the city.
- Groundbreaking for the Sound Transit Operations and Maintenance Satellite Facility (OMSF) was held yesterday.
- Looking at how to implement the Grand Connection.
- Noted that REI has been a fantastic partner.

City of Redmond

- Working with Sound Transit on project requirements for the downtown Redmond link which will share the corridor with the Redmond Central Connector.
- A trail connection has been proposed between the East Lake Sammamish trail and the Redmond Central Connector trail that is planned to be built by Sound Transit as part of the Downtown Redmond Link Extension.
- The city is looking for funding for Phase III, final phase, of the Redmond Central Connector.

- Grant funding has been applied for and the State is providing some funding.
- The downtown park will be opening this September, it will be a block off the RCC.

Sound Transit

- Continues to work with Corridor partners.
- A temporary trail will be established near the OMSF. Hope to have a formal opening next month.
- A future project from South Kirkland to Issaquah will use some of the Corridor.
- The East Lake extension to Redmond is getting ready to go out to bid. The connection to the East Lake Sammamish Trail is a big part of the project - currently working with the City.
- East Lake construction is on schedule.

King County

- Welcomed Curt Warber to the Department of Natural Resources and Parks and the ERC.
- Commended Erica Jacobs for the work she has done on behalf of the ERC.
- There will be an official opening in May for each section of the interim trail.
- Doing a great deal of design work – particularly in the area of the Wilburton segment.
- Working on plans for busy crossings in Woodinville.
- Working hard to meet all the commitments in our agreement with WSDOT.
- The TIGER grant that we submitted did not get funded. Projects across the board like ours received no funding. Another opportunity may be coming up with proposals due in August.

Public comment

The following attendees offered public comment:

Lisa McConnel – suggested building a pedestrian bridge using 3-dimensional printers and noted that the actual building of the bridge could be an event in itself. She provided a handout with photos and links to the web pages of two bridges created this way. She also suggested eliminating the word “Rail” from Eastside Rail Corridor.

John Kearnes – commented on the reference to an excursion train at the previous meeting and expressed concern that it is not a feasible plan as he believes the easement was given to another railway.

Nathan Proudfoot – Noted that Eastside Community Rail, which has been defunct for about two years, currently holds the easement. His rail company will be conducting some rail replacement in Woodinville this summer.

Next steps and adjournment

The next meeting is scheduled for Thursday, July 12, 2018.

The meeting adjourned at 10:44 a.m.