

# **EASTSIDE RAIL CORRIDOR REGIONAL ADVISORY COUNCIL**

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## **MEETING SUMMARY**

June 7, 2017 – 1:00 PM

Kirkland City Council Chambers

**Advisory Council Members Present:** Claudia Balducci, County Councilmember (Co-Chair); Christie True, Director of King County Natural Resources and Parks (representing County Executive Dow Constantine, Co-Chair); Kathy Lambert, County Councilmember; Jay Arnold, Kirkland City Councilmember (representing Amy Walen, Kirkland Mayor); Angela Birney, Redmond City Councilmember (representing John Marchione, Redmond Mayor); Brandon Buchanan, City of Woodinville; Steve Dickson, Snohomish County; Ric Ilgenfritz, Executive Director - Planning, Environment, and Project Development, Sound Transit (representing Peter Rogoff, CEO); John Stokes, Bellevue Mayor; Sharmila Swenson, Manager of Local Government Affairs, Puget Sound Energy; and Blake Trask, Eastside Greenway Alliance.

### **Welcome and Introductions**

Claudia Balducci, Advisory Council Co-Chair, called the meeting to order at 1:12 p.m., welcomed all in attendance and asked the Regional Advisory Council (RAC) members to introduce themselves. She introduced Jeff Muhm, the new King County Council Initiatives Director, who will be working in part on Eastside Rail Corridor (ERC) efforts, and also provided a brief history of the evolution of the RAC.

### **ERC RAC Reorganization**

A memorandum of understanding (MOU), that would officially add non-owners, was distributed for review and comment.

Councilmember Arnold stated that the Kirkland City Council is supportive of expanding membership and looking at expanded financing. He made the following motion to amend the draft MOU:

**Remove the definition of high-capacity transit “(e.g., heavy rail, light rail, or other forms of fixed guideway transportation)” from the sixth “Whereas...” paragraph in the draft Memorandum of Understanding.**

The amendment was seconded.

Councilmember Lambert expressed opposition to this proposed amendment, noting that the whole purpose is for it to be railbanked in perpetuity. Discussion ensued regarding the pros and cons of the amendment.

Councilmember Balducci called for an oral vote on the proposed amendment:

**The motion carried with one dissenting vote by Councilmember Lambert.**

Councilmember Arnold moved the following amendments:

**Change the introductory phrase to the bullets on the second page to read as follows: “The RAC will serve as a venue to advance corridor goals by jointly:”**

and

**Add a bullet point stating, “Recommend any needed changes to long range plans and system plans of Sound Transit and Metro Transit” to the bulleted list in Section 1 of the draft MOU.**

The proposed amendments were seconded. Discussion ensued regarding the potential challenge of making a united decision that might be against the interests of one of our members. It was noted that the group’s role is to advocate for the rail corridor and its goals overall.

**The amendments were adopted unanimously.**

Noting that the paragraph below the bullets on the second page seems comparable to the bulleted items above it, Steve Dickson moved the following amendment:

**Add a bullet that reads: “Recommend a work plan and corresponding budget each year...”** The amendment was seconded.

Councilmember Balducci stated that the group should not be creating a work plan that binds any individual jurisdiction to do something and proposed the following revision to the language in the paragraph:

**“The RAC will approve a work plan and corresponding budget every year that sets out the work of the RAC for the year.”**

The amendment was seconded. Steve Dickson accepted this as a friendly amendment.

**The revised amendment passed unanimously.**

Discussion ensued regarding section 3 and the fairness of not allowing non-owners to hold the vice chair position. It was decided to leave the language as it is presently and revisit this discussion further down the road.

Sharmila Swenson made the following motion:

**Change the selection of chair and vice-chair to read bi-annually rather than annually.**

The motion was seconded.

**The motion passed unanimously.**

It was noted that Section 2a lists Snohomish County twice. **This will be corrected as a Scriveners error.**

**Councilmember Arnold moved approval of the amended Memorandum of Understanding.**

The motion was seconded.

**The motion passed unanimously.**

Councilmember Balducci noted that the MOU will need to be ratified by each jurisdiction and suggested trying to get it approved by our next meeting.

Ariel Taylor, King County staff, stated that a new version of the MOU will go out, but it will be in legal formatting so it may look a little different but the content will be the same.

## **ERC Branding and Messaging**

REI representatives Leslie Wellott and Lance Henie provided a PowerPoint presentation entitled “Eastside Rail Corridor Branding Exploration” that ran through the branding approach they use and the ideas that came out of it.

Vicky Clarke of the Eastside Greenway Alliance, provided a presentation on a process proposal and its related rationale to re-brand the ERC. This information was compiled as a collaborative effort between the Eastside Greenway Alliance (EGA) and other Principal Staff Team members. The presentation covered the reasoning behind the development of a regional brand, what the brand must communicate, a recommended approach and how it was derived, the proposed deliverables and next steps.

It was agreed that the work REI had done could be used in the process. The REI representatives were agreeable to this.

Discussion ensued regarding availability of funding, enthusiasm regarding the progress made thus far and the appeal of working with a professional.

Procurement of consultant services, a work plan and timelines will be addressed at the next meeting.

## **Member Progress and Success Updates**

Blake Trask – Eastside Greenway Alliance is working hand in hand with the County regarding the Wilburton Tunnel project. He noted that transportation package opportunities are available in the state’s capital budget.

Steve Dickson – Snohomish County is working on the design for 12 miles of trail. The challenges include crossing the Snohomish River Valley and the river itself. We expect to be wrapping up shortly and will be doing public outreach.

Councilmember Birney – Redmond’s trail design team received an award for its work. Phase II of the Central Connector project is underway. The trail is expected to be open this summer with a grand opening ceremony planned for September 7<sup>th</sup>.

Mayor Stokes – Provided an update on the Grand Connection, noting that it is a non-motorized corridor. The 405 crossing is a key piece. Final recommendations will be presented to the city council on June 19<sup>th</sup>. Pedestrian/bicycle improvements on Northup Way are nearing completion. The hope is to have a fall opening. Work is moving ahead with WSDOT on crossing 405 up north. Work continues on ideas for crossing NE 8<sup>th</sup> as well as NE 4<sup>th</sup> by REI.

Christie True – The County hopes to start rail removal in August and also hopes to have the interim trail open at the Cross-Kirkland Corridor soon. A great deal of work has been done with Bellevue and Sound Transit on the NE 8<sup>th</sup> crossing. Also working on the whole Wilburton segment, with the trestle being our priority. Working closely with WSDOT as they work on 405 as it relates to the Wilburton gap. Looking at ways to make connections between the ERC and regional trails.

Councilmember Arnold – Focus has been on the Totem Lake connector bridge where the corridor crosses 10 lanes of traffic. A design was approved at last night’s council meeting. The city will be seeking a grant to assist with funding. The Senate has \$1.4 million and the House has \$1.1 million in their capital budgets for “the missing link”.

Brandon Buchanan - Have budgeted to begin design work on their portion of the corridor however, are unable to proceed as there is still significant uncertainty about the near and long term existence of freight rail operations on that portion of the corridor. Until that issued is resolved, they cannot commence their design work. All efforts at

this point are meant to identify, with certainty, if freight operations will continue to exist on their section in the future.

Sharmila Swenson – Nothing new to report. They would like to be brought in early if there are easement issues.

Ric Ilgenfritz – A contract has been issued for construction of the Operations Maintenance Facility East which is currently under way. The board will be taking up action on the 22<sup>nd</sup> to direct staff to address a new alternative in downtown Redmond. The Eastlink alignment will be extended from REI to Redmond. Hope to include the establishment of a system access fund for the NE 8<sup>th</sup> crossing in our 2018 budget.

### **Public Comment**

Todd Woosley – Noted that this is an incredible opportunity and encouraged the placement of high-capacity transit capabilities in the shorter term. He noted the need for every little bit like that in order to accommodate growth.

Lisa McConnell – Noted that the City of Kirkland has a great intergovernmental relations person, and suggested that the RAC would be wise to have a similar representative who could interact with legislators.

### **Next steps and adjournment**

The next meeting is tentatively scheduled for Friday, September 15, 2017.

The meeting adjourned at 2:54 p.m.