

PROPOSED CHARTER FOR ERC REGIONAL ADVISORY COMMITTEE

The members of the Eastside Rail Corridor Regional Advisory Council recognize that the Eastside Rail Corridor (ERC) is a corridor of regional significance and affirm the importance of a cooperative regional planning process for the ERC. The regional planning process will respect the ~~individual~~ ownership rights of the five owners in the corridor (who are represented on by the members of the RAC) and the current agreements among and between the owners in the southern¹, railbanked portion of the corridor. This planning process must emphasize the critical importance of supporting multi usage of the ERC. The RAC will consider a variety of potential uses to link the communities, centers and cities of the Puget Sound region: including for instance for public transit (such as heavy rail, light rail, and other forms of fixed guideway² transportation and public transit), non-motorized³ trail use for pedestrians and bikes, public utility connections, and private uses, such as utility connections and excursion rail, where appropriate. to link the communities, centers and cities of the Puget Sound region. The planning process will consider the needs and potential uses for both the corridor as a whole, and for the different geographic segments of the corridor.

Historically, the forty-two mile corridor (referred to as the Lake Washington Belt Line a century ago) provided transportation services to the new communities along the eastern shores of Lake Washington. In modern times, the ERC was known as the Burlington Northern-Santa Fe (BNSF) rail corridor. BNSF declared its intent to divest itself of the corridor in 2003. The current owners (King County, Kirkland, Puget Sound Energy, Redmond, and Sound Transit) acquired ownership interests rights in the corridor in stages, between 2009 – 2013.

The members of the ERC Regional Advisory Council also affirm that:

- The ERC provides contiguous public ownership of the southern, railbanked portion of the corridor. This ownership ~~The ERC~~ creates an opportunity for direct and contiguous land use and multi-modal transportation connection to the communities of Renton, Bellevue, Kirkland, Redmond, Woodinville, Snohomish County, and King County;
- The ERC provides an opportunity to connect jobs, housing and transportation across multiple communities and within communities;
- The ERC has the potential to meet future public transportation mobility needs by providing regional livability connections to South, East and North King County through public high capacity transit, other public transit, ~~and~~ biking, walking, and hiking trails, that will enhance livability in those communities;
- The ERC could also provide for a regional trail system that could extend into Snohomish and Skagit counties to the north and Pierce County to the south;

¹ From mileposts 5.0 to 23.8 of the Main line of the corridor and from mileposts 0.0 to 7.3 of the Redmond Spur.

² Federal Transit Administration defines fixed guideway transportation systems as: A public transportation system facility using and occupying a separate right-of-way (ROW) or rail for the exclusive use of public transportation and other high occupancy vehicles (HOV), or a fixed catenary system useable by other forms of transportation. Examples include: rail, ferry, street cars, and buses operating in exclusive right-of-way.

³ Non-motorized uses include motorized mobility devices such as electric wheel chairs

- The ERC is a regional utility corridor that is crucial for the transmission of needed utility services, including natural gas, electricity, water, and wastewater;
- The ERC provides a ~~trans~~multi-generational opportunity to support walkable, compact, and connected communities;
- The ERC can be used to enhance and protect the environment, as well as to improve public health through increased opportunities to bike and walk;
- The ERC provides a regional opportunity to connect historically disadvantaged and geographically disparate communities and centers;
- The ERC's southern portion was "railbanked" for possible resumption of interstate freight service under the federal National Trails Act, and is subject to the legal obligations imposed by it; and
- The ERC will become a model for how a regional process can recognize and respect the plans and work of all owners of the corridor, and integrate them into the larger regional context.

The members of the Regional Advisory Council affirm in partnership their intention to conduct and complete a cooperative partner planning process that will include:

- a) -recommendations on a long-term vision for the use of the ERC that allows flexibility for future multiple uses;
- b) making recommendations for coordinating the ~~rail, trail, and utility~~multiple uses in the ERC, including identification of work the owners will do together to resolve issues or take advantage of opportunities;
- c) coordinating uses with non-owner cities encompassing the ERC around local planning and development;
- d) recommendations on how the owners will continue to work together beyond the Regional Advisory Council process to plan and make decisions about the future use of the ERC;
- e) engaging a broad spectrum of stakeholders, including but not limited to representatives of regional partners, local governments in the ERC, community organizations, business owners, adjacent landowners, rail/trail advocates, public health agencies, and citizens who are interested in the ERC's development; and
- a)f) operating in an open and transparent manner.

The members of the Regional Advisory Council affirm that they will develop ~~near and long-term~~ recommendations for the ERC that recognize the evolving uses of the corridor over time, the multiple needs, current and future planning efforts, and varying ownership rights, and decisions or policies that the owners have adopted. In planning cooperatively, the RAC will respect the purchased rights of all owners, and strive to make recommendations that do not preclude the realization of those rights and values over time.

The Regional Advisory Council will also consider, as well as recommendations for potential changes in the Countywide Planning Policies by July 31, 2013 (or a date mutually agreed upon).