

## Eastside Rail Corridor Regional Advisory Council

### Meeting Summary

December 4, 2013, 12:00 – 2:00 PM

King County Council Chambers, Seattle

**Advisory Council members present:** Ric Ilgenfritz, Sound Transit (representing Joni Earl, CEO); County Councilmember Kathy Lambert; Craig Larsen, Redmond Parks and Recreation Director (representing Mayor John Marchione); Kirkland Mayor Joan McBride; David Namura, Puget Sound Energy Manager of Local Government and Public Policy; County Councilmember Larry Phillips; Christie True, Director of King County Department of Natural Resources and Parks (representing County Executive Dow Constantine, Co-Chair)

**Advisory Council member excused:** County Council Vice Chair Jane Hague (Co-Chair)

**Staff presenters:** Rebecha Cusack and David St. John (King County); Nate Caminos (Puget Sound Energy); Carolyn Hope (City of Redmond)

**Facilitator:** John Howell (Cedar River Group)

#### Welcome and Introductions

Co-Chair Christie True opened the meeting by welcoming the Regional Advisory Council (RAC) members and attendees, and asked the RAC members and the audience members to introduce themselves.

John Howell reviewed the meeting agenda. The purpose of the meeting was to discuss and if possible come to agreement on: (1) leadership steering function and engagement options for the next phase of collaborative work (RAC 2.0); (2) implementation and staffing options; and (3) a proposed work program framework. Decisions on these topics will lay the groundwork for creating a scope, work plan and schedule.

Rebecha Cusack noted that RAC members have two copies of the final RAC report and recommendations. The number of hard copies is very limited, but the report is available for download on the website at <http://www.kingcounty.gov/operations/erc-advisory-council.aspx>

#### Discussion and Possible Action: RAC 1.5 Status

David St. John said that a team of staff of the corridor owners has been meeting to develop the next steps in the collaborative planning process. The team created a document to lay out options for the RAC to consider (see meeting handout, "Options for Next Steps," dated November 18, 2013).

**Interactions between the RAC and owners' day-to-day operations.** The staff team developed a diagram of the way the RAC's upcoming work and the day-to-day work of the individual owners will interact during both the transitional period (between approval of the RAC report and the next collaborative phase) and during RAC 2.0.

✓ RAC members confirmed they were comfortable with the interaction framework.

**Leadership steering function and engagement options.** The staff team developed three options for how the RAC members (corridor owners) could organize themselves for RAC 2.0, and interact with neighboring jurisdictions, community members, potential funders and other stakeholders (see pages 3 – 5 in the Options for Next Steps paper). In each option the Steering Group would conduct their business on a consensus basis. The Steering Group could add members if/when there are new corridor owners, but any new members would need to agree with the RAC’s vision for the corridor, as stated in its report.

The differences among the three options lie in how the RAC would interact with other jurisdictions, entities and stakeholders in terms of corridor planning and implementation. The three options were:

- Option A Status Quo – The Steering Group interacts informally with other entities and stakeholders as needed
- Option B Roundtable (nested) Model – The Steering Group interacts with “ERC associates” that include neighboring jurisdictions in the ERC, as well as with other stakeholders.
- Option C Distributed Model – The Steering Group interacts with three different types of groups: (i) ERC Associates (such as neighboring jurisdictions and other non-owner entities who could significantly aid the RAC vision); (ii) ERC Advisors (such as PSRC, federal and state policymakers, funders); and (iii) ERC Stakeholders (such as Pierce and Snohomish counties, interested groups and community members). This option also provides a more formal role for the federal delegation and state legislators than do the other two options.

The RAC members’ discussion included the following comments:

- It is important to have the owners called out in a separate Steering Group and at the center of the corridor planning and development. The owners need to be able to come together as a group to discuss specific issues.
- The Steering Group will take into account the owner jurisdictions’ existing formal agreements, recognizing one another’s purchased rights, and will focus on what they can do jointly.
- The ERC’s report emphasizes that the owners will be transparent in decisions and coordination. Either Option B or C would accomplish this most effectively.
- Option B as a roundtable format with a lot of players seems less focused. Option C is more targeted in engaging partners at appropriate times.
- Option B would require other entities to spend more time on meetings related to the corridor than they will need to spend. Option C involves other entities in an efficient way.
- Having a stakeholders group (in Options B or C) is important, but how they are identified (or how they identify themselves) and their role(s) will need to be fleshed out.
- Option C is the most dynamic and collaborative. It would enable the owners to get advice from other entities and let them know their involvement is important, without requiring regular meeting responsibilities of all of the other entities.
- There was clarification that the county has budgeted resources for facilitation services in 2014.
- Option C would be the most help in trying to get a federal agenda started.

- ✓ There was consensus to take Option A off the table. The RAC members agreed to come back to discussion about their preference after the discussion about staffing and work plan.

**Implementation and staffing options.** The staff team developed three options for the implementation/staff model based on the RAC report and the agreements (see pp. 5 – 8 in Options for Next Steps). In all three options, the Steering Group directs the implementation and staffing for the joint effort, and all recognize the day-to-day business functions of each owner. The differences among the options are:

- Option 1 organizes implementation into two categories according to the type of expertise needed: (a) Planning and policy development, and (b) Capital and operations implementation. It includes staff support for the Steering function and the two implementation functions.
- Option 2 is the same as 1 with the addition of an Admin/logistics support function devoted to the Steering Group. It recognizes the need for staff support for the Steering Group and its processes.
- Option 3 is more streamlined. It combines the two implementation functions, which would need to identify the different expertise needed for different areas of implementation. This option also includes a Facilitation function separate from the Staffing group to support the Steering Group and help ensure the work moves forward.

The RAC members' discussion included the following comments:

- Option 1 assumes the work is in two areas (planning/policy and capital/operations). But most staff wear multiple hats. There may be a need at times to bring in other staff who are expert in a specific area. Option 3 recognizes that the staff team will need to fill a variety of functions.
- One of the functions of the staff group should be to seek grant funding opportunities.
- One staffing model would be for each owner to have a staff point person for the RAC's work, but to bring in other staff as appropriate to accomplish the different needed functions.
- Option 3's structure is good, but the diagram needs a bulleted list of functions under each title. The wording in the paragraph above the chart is more descriptive.
- Calling out the facilitation function (in Option 3) adds clarity. Facilitation will be important to continue in the next phase of the RAC's work.
- Having a neutral facilitator was very helpful to stay on target and move the process forward. But perhaps this could be accomplished in-house in the next phase. This is a policy question.
- The Day-to-Day business function box in the chart is small, but for many of the owners, that is where the majority of the work will take place and resources will be needed.
- Option 3 offers a way for the collaborative work to be dynamic and flexible in order to realize the regional vision.
- In developing the options, the staff team assumed that there would not be any additional resources for ongoing staffing. There will be tough choices to make on priorities and frequency of meetings.

- ✓ There was consensus around Option 3, with more description to be added on the relationship between the Day-to-Day box and the RAC staffing function, and with the understanding that

owners can bring in other expertise as needed. RAC members asked the staff team to consider how often meetings will be needed.

**Work program.** The staff team introduced the multipage table titled “Discussion Draft Work Program and Timelines – Sorted by Functional Home.” The table lists every recommendation in the RAC report, identifies a primary and secondary functional home for it, identifies the primary owners for implementation and other key owners needed, notes if it addresses an identified “issue of urgency,” and plots a timeline for action by quarter for 2014 and 2015. The table is also in four sections by function: Steering, Planning and Policy Development, Capital Operations and Implementation, and Owner Day-to-Day Business. These sections indicate which group needs to “own” each recommendation. In the timeline, quarters are marked in red if there are specific deadlines. The staff team still needs to fill in the column for deliverables and to identify resources that are needed.

Of the 57 RAC recommendations, 25 have significant roles for the Steering Group, 11 are characterized as Planning and Policy Development, 15 are Owner Day-to-Day Business, and seven are Capital Operations and Implementation in nature.

The staff team asked if this chart was a helpful way to present the work to be done. The RAC members’ discussion included the following comments:

- The format is helpful, especially to tie the work to the recommendations.
- Displaying the work in quarters seems to work well for a timeline.
- 24 recommendations is a lot for the Steering Group to address. The staff team will need to help by recommending a way to prioritize the work.
- Identifying the recommendations that have urgency is a good idea, but there are a large number that indicate urgency.
- Prioritizing and identifying level of effort will take some time. Doing so will also help in determining how often the Steering Group will need to meet.
- It would be difficult to get the preparation done for a Steering Group meeting in January 2014. However, the RAC might want to prepare for King County’s visit with our Congressional delegation at the end of January, and for the 60-day session of the Legislature.
- The staff team will continue to meet and could prepare talking points for use with policymakers.
- The Steering Group can add value when the owners need to speak with one voice, an issue of coordination needs to be resolved, and/or public comment is needed. A lot of the other work in the corridor will be part of each owner’s day-to-day activities.

There was discussion about the frequency of Steering Group meetings in 2014. RAC members generally agreed that a quarterly meeting schedule would be workable. However, there were concerns that there might be a need for more frequent meetings, especially in the first year. There was a suggestion to develop a way of making decisions between meetings for issues that need a more immediate decision. Another suggestion was to schedule more frequent meetings, such as bimonthly, and then cancel them if not needed. An alternative as to wait until the staff team has fleshed out the work plan further, then see if it suggests an appropriate meeting schedule.

- ✓ The RAC members agreed to adopt Implementation and Staffing Option 3.
- ✓ The RAC members approved the work plan format that was presented, and asked the staff to propose the frequency of Steering Group meetings tied to the work program and to develop options for decision-making between meetings when needed.
- ✓ The RAC members agreed that they support Option C for the leadership steering function, and would like the staff team to keep fleshing out the details of this option.

## **Public Comment**

There were comments from two meeting attendees, Nancy LaCombe of the City of Bellevue Transportation Department, and Peter Camp, Snohomish County Executive. They offered the following thoughts:

- Neighboring jurisdictions have appreciated the opportunities to participate in the RAC's workshops and to offer comments to help shape the corridor.
- The City of Bellevue reaffirms its interest in working together with the corridor owners on corridor development.
- Snohomish County is proceeding with purchase of 12 miles of the corridor in their county, and has set aside funding for trail development. They hope to close negotiations on the purchase with the Port of Seattle early in 2014.

## **Owners' Updates**

Co-Chair True recognized Mayor McBride's many years of service to Kirkland and the county, and thanked her for her work as part of the RAC. Mayor McBride expressed appreciation to the other RAC members for their effort in developing a visionary plan for the ERC.

Redmond will have a formal opening celebration on Saturday, December 7 at 5:30 PM for the first mile of the Redmond Central Connector on its portion of the corridor.

Sound Transit has completed the scoping work for the Long-Range Plan update and Environmental Impact Statement (EIS). They received more than 11,000 comments in 30 days through an online portal, received three dozen letters from jurisdictions in their service area, and talked with 300 members of the public who attended public meetings. The Board is expected to take the next step at its December meeting. Sound Transit also expects to complete a draft EIS on the proposed operations and maintenance facility, and to receive comments from jurisdictions in the second week of December. The work on East Link is ahead of schedule.

King County is in the middle of the process of selecting a team for master trail planning. In response to requests from Kirkland and Bellevue for help with traffic congestion at road crossings with the corridor, the County has removed signage from a number of intersections, and has also removed some equipment from the corridor.

Kirkland expects to open an interim trail on the Cross Kirkland Corridor next year. With the removal of the rails, residents are already actively using the corridor. For the time being, Kirkland has adopted the King County trail use rules. Kirkland is considering developing a park next to the corridor at Totem Lake.

### **Wrap Up**

RAC members thanked the staff team for their work in turning the recommendations into a work program and laying out options for structure and staffing.

The staff team will follow the RAC's direction at this meeting to further develop the structure and implementation/staffing charts. The team will also continue to work on the work plan, propose a meeting schedule for the Steering Group, and develop draft talking points for use with policymakers.

The meeting adjourned at 2:00 PM.

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