

EASTSIDE RAIL CORRIDOR REGIONAL ADVISORY COUNCIL

MEETING SUMMARY

February 12, 2014 – 2:00 PM

Kirkland City Hall Chambers

Advisory Council Members Present: County Council Vice Chair Jane Hague (Co-Chair); Ric Ilgenfritz, Sound Transit (representing Joni Earl, CEO); County Councilmember Kathy Lambert; Craig Larsen, Redmond Parks and Recreation Director (representing Redmond Mayor John Marchione); David Namura, Puget Sound Energy Manager of Local Government Affairs & Public Policy; County Council Chair Larry Phillips; Christie True, Director of King County Natural Resources and Parks (representing County Executive Dow Constantine, Co-Chair); and Amy Walen, Mayor of Kirkland.

Staff presenters: Mary Bourguignon, Rebecha Cusack and David St. John, King County; Carolyn Hope, City of Redmond; Kurt Triplett, Kirkland City Manager.

Facilitator: John Howell (Cedar River Group)

Welcome and Introductions

Jane Hague, Advisory Council Co-Chair, called to order the first meeting of the year, welcomed all in attendance and asked the Regional Advisory Council (RAC) members to introduce themselves. A special welcome was extended to the newest member of the RAC, Mayor Walen of Kirkland. She thanked Mayor Walen and City Manager Triplett for hosting the meeting.

John Howell reviewed the meeting agenda. He noted the need for input from the RAC regarding the RAC leadership structure. It was noted that the RAC does not vote but tries to take action by consensus.

RAC Leadership Structure and RAC Membership

David St. John provided a summary of the proposed organizational structure, revised to capture discussion from the RAC's December meeting. He noted that this version should be considered the starting point for the next phase of the RAC's work within the railbanked area, with the option for it to evolve. (See meeting handout, *RAC 2.0 Organizational Description*)

Per the proposed organizational structure, the Steering Group would be the Eastside Rail Corridor (ERC) owners whose role is to carry forth the vision. The Steering Group's goal would be to hold quarterly meetings, with the option to add additional meetings as needed. Staff members would meet as needed.

ERC Associates would include other governmental entities, such as neighboring jurisdictions. Associates would be invited via a letter signed by the co-chairs and would be asked to support the regional, multiple-use vision for the corridor. The RAC, at its discretion, would invite Associates to participate in discussions on specific topics, either at their planned quarterly meetings or at additional

meetings called by the RAC. The Associates would not be convened as a separate body from the RAC. The engagement of Associates is anticipated to be ongoing and relatively frequent.

ERC Advisors would include entities with specific, unique expertise or capacity related to achieving the RAC vision and that can provide valuable information or funding. They would also be invited to participate via letter signed by the co-chairs, and would be asked to support the regional, multiple-use vision of the corridor. The RAC, at its discretion, would invite Advisors to participate in discussions on specific topics, either at their planned quarterly meetings or at additional meetings called by the RAC. The Advisors would not be convened as a separate body from the RAC. The engagement of Advisors is expected to vary in regularity and intensity over time, based on emerging and timely implementation issues.

ERC Stakeholders would include organizations and individuals that have an interest in the ERC. Stakeholders would be welcomed to engage in the work of the RAC by attending and providing feedback at its meetings. The Stakeholders would not be convened as a separate body from the RAC.

The staffing function would be led by the staff of the Steering Group members (called the “Principals’ Staff Team”). A broader technical staff team that could include staff from ERC Associates and Advisors is not shown in the diagram, but this larger group would be convened as needed.

The RAC members’ discussion included the following comments:

- Stakeholders and RAC members will stay in touch via these meetings, the website and public meetings
 - With the RAC focus on the railbanked area, whoever buys property interests within that area could seek to participate formally on the RAC, provided they meet the other criteria. If in the future the RAC expanded the geographic focus area beyond the railbanked area, owners in expanded areas of the corridor could also seek to participate formally on the RAC.
 - Owners will provide staffing for their own day-to-day operations, including master planning.
 - The County has provided a budget for a facilitator for 2014. Beyond that, the RAC may want to discuss cost sharing.
 - The guiding principles and charter will be updated.
 - It was suggested that the various jurisdictions try to coordinate efforts so as to share resources.
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- ✓ The RAC members approved the structure as presented.
 - ✓ There was consensus that quarterly meetings would be a good starting point.

RAC Work Plan and Schedule for 2014

Mary Bourguignon presented an overview schedule for the RAC for 2014 (See meeting handout *ERC 2014 At-a-Glance*). This is an abbreviated look at the full RAC work plan as developed in the October 2013 RAC report. The right side of the At-a-Glance overview lists each owner’s day-to-day work with some of the major decision points and comment periods. The table on the left provides a high-level overview of some of the major issues that may be expected to come before the RAC this year.

The RAC members' discussion included the following comments:

- A legend in the bottom for some of the acronyms would be helpful.
 - The work plan should be updated through the year as work progresses.
 - Opportunities for public comment should be highlighted.
- ✓ The RAC members approved the 2014 work plan and schedule with the modifications suggested.

State/Federal Outreach

Rebecha Cusack noted that pursuant to the RAC report recommendation staff had jointly developed a document to be used in briefing State and Federal officials. The handout entitled "Eastside Rail Corridor" (see meeting handout *ERC Handout 01-30-14*) is the culmination of that effort and was used by King County Councilmembers during their outreach to Federal officials during a recent trip to Washington DC. She noted that this overview handout can be supplemented with inserts on specific issues, such as reestablishing the connection at the Wilburton Tunnel or the SR-520 ramps in Redmond. She further noted that efforts are underway to try to host an opportunity for a briefing of interested legislators in Olympia.

RAC members expressed appreciation of this effort and thought it worthwhile to have a handout that could begin to put a face on the work of the RAC.

RAC Policy Development

Carolyn Hope provided an update on the status of items 1A through 1D, the regional policy development area of the RAC's October 2013 report. She noted that the Puget Sound Regional Council (PSRC) is in the process of accepting comments on its Draft Update of Transportation 2040, which is the region's federally-required transportation plan. She noted that several projects needed for initial implementation of the ERC vision have been included in the "constrained" (funded) portion of Transportation 2040.

Ms. Hope noted that the other area for staff focus has been the Countywide Planning Policies, which are the province of the Growth Management Planning Council (GMPC). The GMPC's staff group meets monthly, and staff will bring them draft policy language regarding the ERC's status as a corridor of regional significance.

The RAC members' discussion included the following comments and directions to the staff:

- It would be helpful to develop more specific policy language for the Transportation 2040 Draft Update.
- The RAC should also reach out to the PSRC to ensure that the ERC's unique status as a multi-use corridor of regional significance is incorporated in its policy language.
- RAC jurisdictions' representatives to the PSRC should be alerted to the ERC's status.

- RAC jurisdictions' representatives to the GMPC should inform colleagues of the ERC's status and efforts of the RAC.

Cross Kirkland Corridor Master Plan Update

Kurt Triplett provided a presentation on the Cross Kirkland Corridor's master planning process to date. Mr. Triplett noted that the presentation was to inform and consult the RAC, but was not presented for RAC approval.

He explained that Kirkland's master planning process has been guided by goals that are similar in theme to the RAC's guiding principles. These are:

- Connect Kirkland
- Foster a Greener Kirkland
- Shape a place unique to Kirkland
- Activate Kirkland

The master plan is broken into geographic zones, with each zone responding to current and planned neighborhood character. The master plan is designed to welcome transit by ensuring a continuous 40-foot envelope for Sound Transit or Metro. Kirkland acknowledges the King County trail easement on the corridor. The trail and transit envelopes have been designed as much as possible so as not to interfere with the existing wastewater pipe.

Mr. Triplett noted that Kirkland recently held a transportation symposium where experts discussed ideas that could complement Sound Transit and Metro. Various types of transit opportunities were discussed, such as Metro bus, bus rapid transit, light rail transit, straddle bus, magnetic levitation vehicles, and even gondolas. The goal is to make Kirkland a place to go TO, not just a place to go through.

Mr. Triplett discussed two areas that will play a key role in fostering regional connections: the South Kirkland Park and Ride and Totem Lake Urban Center.

For the South Kirkland Park and Ride, Kirkland received funding from the State and the King County Council to create a pedestrian/bicycle connection from the ERC to the Park and Ride. The investment of King County in the pedestrian bridge connection from the South Kirkland Park and Ride to the CKC was acknowledged by Kirkland with appreciation.

At Totem Lake Urban Center, Kirkland has completed a master planning process for Totem Lake Park, and hopes to redevelop the area to create a sense of place, connect to the ERC, and provide easy pedestrian crossing of the 124th/Totem Lake Boulevard intersections.

Mr. Triplett also shared a possible connection option to Redmond's portion of the ERC. This Redmond-Kirkland connection is supported by a local business with 400 employees in the area.

Kirkland has developed a draft process regarding the development and permitting process so that partners, city council and the public would automatically be notified when there are new proposals affecting their portion of the ERC.

Google has offered to develop a portion of the ERC, to include volleyball court, basketball court, etc. This would require City approval and would be available to the public. Google will remove their improvements if needed by Sound Transit in the future.

The RAC members did not take action but did have a discussion that included the following comments:

- The plan was described as very visionary and well thought out. The City of Kirkland was complimented for thinking outside the box.
- PSE, Sound Transit, Redmond and King County Wastewater commented that the CKC Master Plan did a good job of reasonably planning for all ownership rights at this stage.
- It was noted that Kirkland's process has shown the work of the RAC has borne some fruit.
- King County will start its trail master planning process later this spring.
- Garbage repositories, lighting, and continuous cell coverage were suggested as things to keep in mind during the corridor's development.
- The appeal of "eddies," as a design feature to provide places for calm and reflection along the trail, was noted.
- The possibility of carrying through a theme to some degree was suggested.
- Sound Transit sent a response letter to Kirkland about their trail proposal. The letter stated that "based on the level of detail and information currently available, we believe the trail concept presented is compatible with future high capacity transit development." The master planned trail will occupy the rail bed until the transit investment comes along.
- RAC members who have comments regarding the Google proposal should share that information with Kirkland.
- Councilmember Phillips commended the City of Kirkland on a wonderful presentation. He asked that the RAC partners have the opportunity to review the proposed process and noted that each jurisdiction has a duty to inform the regional partners about uses in the corridor.
- Regarding the proposed development along the corridor on the Google campus, Councilmember Phillips suggested that the RAC might consider developing boilerplate language regarding what "temporary" means. He noted that the Google example is something that could potentially be replicated up and down the corridor, therefore the need for uniform language to provide clarity as far as expectations and outcomes .

Owner Updates

King County will be initiating its master trail planning process later this spring with consultants Parametrix and project manager Jenny Bailey.

Sound Transit is working on a draft environmental impact statement (EIS) for the Operations and Maintenance Satellite Facility (OMSF) and plan to publish that in late May. They hope to brief the RAC in late April/early May. They are also continuing work on the high-capacity transit corridor studies. One of the studies is focusing on the ERC. Sound Transit is also in the process of updating the agency's Long-Range Plan. That information will also be shared with the RAC.

The City of Redmond expressed thanks to all who attended their ribbon cutting in December. They have just installed the second significant piece of art, and look forward to beginning construction of Phase II.

Puget Sound Energy (PSE) will be providing a briefing on Energize Eastside at the next meeting of King County Council's Committee of the Whole.

Public Comment

Six attendees offered public comment - Karen Guzack, City of Snohomish Mayor; Peter Camp, Snohomish County Executive's Office; Dave McCray, Renton property owner along corridor; Michael Ingram, City of Bellevue; T. G. Court, Bellevue Community College; and Tabby Walter, Cascade Bicycle Club. They offered the following comments:

- The City of Snohomish is an owner of 1 mile of the northern section of the corridor and 3 miles of track. At a minimum they encourage RAC to open up membership to Snohomish County.
- As the upper portion of the ERC, Snohomish County encourages communication and consideration in making them part of the RAC.
- Snohomish County will close on the purchase of 12 miles of rail corridor by the end of June and has \$2 million set aside for trail development. The RAC was asked to consider more deeply the ownership/membership relationship, and to widen the focus and consider what it will look like when Snohomish County is an owner.
- Concern was expressed that the ERC could be used as a utility corridor with overhead transmission lines.
- The City of Bellevue supports the ERC and welcomes the opportunity to have a seat. Alternatively they look forward to working with the RAC in an advisory role.
- A view that WSDOT should be part of the Advisory Council was expressed.
- It was noted that this is an opportunity to create a legacy trail. Kirkland was commended on their leadership and for removing the rails. A desire was expressed that King County will also remove the rails, particularly in the portion between Kirkland and Redmond.

The meeting adjourned at 4:30 p.m.