

EASTSIDE RAIL CORRIDOR REGIONAL ADVISORY COUNCIL

MEETING SUMMARY

January 28, 2015 – 2:00 PM

Chinook Conference Center

Advisory Council Members Present: County Council Vice Chair Jane Hague (Co-Chair); 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 Councilmember Kathy Lambert; County Council Chair Larry Phillips; Christie True, Director of King County Natural Resources and Parks (representing County Executive Dow Constantine, Co-Chair); and City of Kirkland City Councilmember Jay Arnold (representing Amy Walen, Mayor of Kirkland).

Excused: Sound Transit CEO Joni Earl or designee

Staff presenters: Andrea Tull, Sound Transit; Lorena Eng and Paula Reeves, Washington State Department of Transportation; David St. John and Erica Jacobs, King County Department of Natural Resources and Parks.

Facilitator: John Howell (Cedar River Group)

Welcome and Introductions

Christie True, Advisory Council Co-Chair, called the meeting to order, welcomed all in attendance and asked those in the room to introduce themselves. John Howell provided a review of the agenda.

Owners' Updates

City of Kirkland: Councilmember Arnold noted that Kirkland will be holding an interim trail opening for the Cross Kirkland Corridor. Gravel has been put down and a split rail fence installed. Flashing beacons have been placed where traffic crosses the corridor. He invited all to the grand opening at noon on Saturday, January 31 at Terrace Park, as well as a 12th Man Rally at 2:00 Saturday at Marina Park.

City of Redmond: Craig Larsen stated that the city is at 90% in the design for Phase II of the Redmond Central Connector, which will extend from the Sammamish River to the 9900 Block along Willows Road. They expect to be under construction this spring and complete the project later this year. Phase III, which will extend to 124th Street and connect Redmond and Kirkland, will be the last portion of the Connector to be completed.

Sound Transit: Andrea Tull reported that the agency continues work on the Operations and Maintenance Satellite Facility (OMSF), with a conceptual design and Final Environmental Impact Statement under way. The Sound Transit Board has adopted an updated Long-Range Plan (LRP) and has directed that system planning be initiated as the next phase in implementing the LRP.

Brown Bag Follow-up

Co-Chair Hague explained the brown bag concept to the audience. At the two owners' group brown bag meetings that were held during 2014, the owners focused on the work program for "RAC 2.0," as well as developing a funders' collaborative that could help secure outside funding for the ERC. She noted that the RAC has been working to showcase its progress to federal and state elected officials and agencies. The next brownbag is anticipated in June.

Government Relations and Tour Update

David St. John reported that two tours of the corridor were held last year, one in August and another in December. To show the spectrum of activity that has taken place and that is planned, the tours included:

- The future (unfunded) East Link station in downtown Redmond;
- The area of a potential connection between Redmond and Kirkland;
- Talks by Nytec and Google about how they are integrating their properties with the corridor;
- The South Kirkland Park and Ride, where a bridge will connect the parking garage to the corridor;
- The Sound Transit OMSF site;
- The planned East Link Hospital Station;
- The Wilburton Trestle and Gap; and
- Potential redevelopment areas just south of the Seahawks facility.

He noted that people are interested in what we are doing and they want to hear more. The tours were a good opportunity for them to actually see the sites. They appreciate the complexity of what we are trying to do and welcome the opportunities to view the sites, be updated and talk with the neighboring businesses. The next event is a March 4th open house and reception in Olympia focused on engaging our legislators.

Co-Chair Hague shared feedback she had received from members of Congress, noting that our Congressional delegation is engaged and interested. She also noted the importance of engaging the U.S. Department of the Interior and Secretary Sally Jewell. Councilmember Phillips affirmed the importance of educating legislators on this project.

WSDOT

Lorena Eng, WSDOT's Northwest Region Administrator, presented on opportunities for WSDOT to align with the ERC. She summarized WSDOT's strategic plan (called "Results WSDOT"), which is focused on strategic investments, modal integration, environmental stewardship, organizational strength, community engagement, and smart technology.

She summarized the SR-520 multimodal corridor study and I-405 Master Plan, and then discussed several ERC-specific issues:

Wilburton Gap: Ms. Eng reminded RAC members of the 2006 Letter of Understanding (LOU) between WSDOT, BNSF, and King County. Through this LOU, WSDOT agreed to make a number of improvements for BNSF instead of replacing the Wilburton Tunnel connection on the ERC; and agreed to fund or construct a bike/pedestrian connection for King County, with the notion that any future rail crossing would be the responsibility of the rail service provider. Ms. Eng also noted that WSDOT is working with King County on the possible acquisition of some portions of the ERC where it intersects with I-405 and I-90, as well as on implications for the ERC and Lake Washington Trail due to future I-405 widening between Bellevue and Renton.

Ms. Eng suggested that next steps could be to retire the already-completed portions of the 2006 LOU and to negotiate an agreement with King County to invest in a trail crossing, with construction anticipated during 2018-2019. RAC members asked that WSDOT staff provide additional information on the [terms of the Wilburton Gap LOU](#) and more detailed plans for the reconnection, particularly on how potential future rail could be accommodated.

520 Trail: Ms. Eng noted that there are missing segments of the 520 Trail between 108th and 124th. WSDOT has \$8 million available toward the estimated 12 million cost for an interim trail in that area. It is seeking funding partners and looking to practical design and least cost planning. In response to questions, she confirmed that this segment of trail would connect to the South Kirkland Park & Ride.

SR-520/SR-202 Crossing. Ms. Eng noted that a grade-separated crossing is desired, but unfunded, at the 520/202 interchange and over Bear Creek to connect a number of trails in Redmond. Craig Larsen noted that initial design concepts indicate that East Link would make a turn at this location as it enters downtown Redmond, and that the City of Redmond hopes to collaborate with Sound Transit and WSDOT to construct the desired grade-separated trail crossing in coordination with the construction needed for East Link.

Co-Chair Hague thanked Ms. Eng and Ms. Reeves for WSDOT's willingness to work with the RAC on issues related to the ERC's development.

Mr. Howell noted that WSDOT has been invited to be an ERC Associate, which would include staff-level participation. Ms. Eng and Ms. Reeves noted that WSDOT would be amenable to that and noted that they have been working with Redmond and Kirkland on grant applications. Ms. True noted that County staff had a very helpful meeting with WSDOT staff during 2014.

King County ERC Program Manager

Co-Chair Hague introduced Deborah (Deb) Eddy, the new Eastside Rail Corridor Program Manager, and explained her background and expressed pleasure to have her on board.

King County Trail Master Plan Project Briefing

Erica Jacobs provided an update of the King County Trail Master Planning process. She noted that the trail master planning project began in spring 2014 and is anticipated to be adopted in fall 2016. There are several phases to the work – investigation, visioning, and alternatives – and the process is currently in the investigation phase. Ms. Jacobs summarized a number of issues based on the team's work to date:

- **Ecological Resources.** The team identified 77 wetlands, 37 streams, and 28 jurisdictional ditches. The ERC crosses four major streams, all of which support salmon.
- **Narrow Right-of-Way/Encroachments.** The team identified the following widths along the corridor: 3.1 miles less than 50 feet wide (very constrained for multiple uses); 2.3 miles 50-75 feet wide; 6.8 miles 75-100 feet wide; and 4 miles 100 feet wide or more.

In response to questions from RAC members, Ms. Jacobs indicated that the team looked at permanent encroachments, such as roadway access and buildings. She noted that her team is working with Real Estate Services to identify and permit temporary encroachments. Staff will also recommend a consistent approach to encroachments for all members of the RAC to consider.

- **Intersections/Crossings.** The team identified 19 roads (11 arterials, 8 local); 18 driveways; and 4 major road crossings (three of which are in Bellevue).
- **Steep Slopes.** The team identified the following side slopes along the corridor: 9.3 miles greater than 20% side slope (constrained outside rail bed); 7.8 miles 20-40% side slope; and 1.5 miles) 40% side slope.
- **Historic Resources.** The Wilburton Trestle, which was constructed in 1904, is historically significant. There are many other artifacts and opportunities for historic interpretation along a trail.

- **Adjacent Land Uses.** On both sides of the corridor, adjacent uses include: 13.5 miles of residential; 10.0 miles of industrial; 5.3 miles of commercial/office; 1.5 miles of agriculture; and 1.1 miles of parks/open space.

Ms. Jacobs noted that this inventory identified 3.1 miles of unconstrained corridor (greater than 75 feet width, no water resources, side slope less than 20%); 3.1 miles less than 50 feet wide; 6.5 miles adjacent to water resources; and 6.6 miles with greater than 20% side slope.

She noted that the team has developed planning envelopes for PSE, trail, rail, and light rail to develop potential alternatives for different scenarios.

RAC members asked if the team has considered sub-surface and aerial utility needs (answer: yes); how disparate uses will be buffered (answer: difficult in some areas, but the team is developing alternatives); and how the potential for future rail will be analyzed (answer: the team is developing alternatives).

Work Plan

John Howell noted that the Principals' Staff Team (PST) has been working to develop a two-year work plan, which will be presented at the next RAC meeting. In response to questions from RAC members, he updated them on the process of inviting neighboring jurisdictions to become RAC Associates and have staff participation in the planning effort.

Public Comment

Five attendees offered public comment:

- Mike Ingram from the City of Bellevue noted that Bellevue is happy to accept the RAC's invitation to become an Associate member.
- John Kropf addressed the benefits of Sky Tran and encouraged RAC members to consider it.
- Steve Dickson from Snohomish County Public Works Department summarized the progress Snohomish County has made on its portion of the corridor. The County Council has approved work on a trail from the King County line to the City of Snohomish, which will function as an extension of the Centennial Trail.
- Lisa McConnell shared the enthusiasm for the trail from Kirkland residents.
- TG Court, a Bellevue College student, noted that the participation of WSDOT is very helpful, and stated that light rail can run on heavy rail track under certain conditions.

Wrap Up

John Howell noted that he will work with Deb Eddy to set up a schedule for the year. Co-Chair Hague commented on the success of the meeting and thanked WSDOT for agreeing to partner with the RAC. The meeting adjourned at 4:07 p.m.