

EASTSIDE RAIL CORRIDOR REGIONAL ADVISORY COUNCIL

MEETING SUMMARY

October 28, 2015 – 1:30 PM

King Street Center, 8th Floor

Advisory Council Members Present: Christie True, Director of King County Natural Resources and Parks (representing County Executive Dow Constantine, Co-Chair); County Council Chair Larry Phillips; County Councilmember Kathy Lambert; City of Kirkland Councilmember Jay Arnold (representing Kirkland Mayor Amy Walen); Carolyn Hope, Park Planning & Cultural Arts Manager (representing Redmond Mayor John Marchione); Ric Ilgenfritz, Sound Transit Executive Director - Planning, Environment and Project Development; (representing Joni Earl, Chief Executive Officer); and Randy Bannecker (representing Dave Namura of Puget Sound Energy).

Staff presenters: Deb Eddy, King County Council Staff

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.

Work Plan Update

Funding Collaborative: John Howell provided an update on the status of the funding collaborative. In keeping with the RAC's direction to incubate a funding collaborative through relationships with one or more existing organizations such as the Trust for Public Land (TPL), Forterra, The Nature Conservancy (TNC), Transportation Choices, Cascade Bicycle Club, Mountain to Sound Greenway, Futurewise and the Cascade Bicycle Club; the consultants have had discussions with TPL and the Cascade Bicycle Club who have both expressed interest and are reaching out to other organizations to create just such an alliance. The role of the funders collaborative would be education and advocacy in support of funding the corridor, in close partnership with the owners and adjacent governments. John believes that a deep debrief will be in order after the January summit on launching an effective funders collaborative.

Branding: Earlier this year the consultants engaged RAC members regarding branding, with initial hopes of having a tagline, name and logo by the end of the year. Although early discussions were useful, staff tabled the task based on a belief that branding requires engagement of the community and of participants in the funding collaborative. Branding, too, will be reconsidered in developing 2016 work plan goals.

State and Federal Agenda: Deb Eddy described the priority that had been placed on increasing attention and funding for reconnecting the Wilburton gap, noting that an additional \$5 million dollars was successfully secured in the 2015 transportation revenue bill. Since it has been nine

years since the letter of agreement that addressed reconnecting this gap was signed, a meeting has been convened by State Rep. Judy Clibborn, House transportation chair, including WSDOT Secretary Peterson, leaders from King County and the City of Bellevue, for November 6, 2015.

Plans and Policies: Staff continue to improve their communication and share information about the status of projects within the corridor, in ongoing effort to identify opportunities for cost savings and improved public value. Projects being looked at for action include the connection between the South Kirkland Park and Ride and the SR 520 trail, an interim trail along Sound Transit's OMSF development, and a bike/foot crossing at NE 8th Street.

Owners' Year End Updates

City of Kirkland: Councilmember Jay Arnold described Kirkland's efforts to further analyze the potential of the Cross Kirkland Corridor as a transit corridor and to look at alignment options. He noted that the corridor goes through many residential neighborhoods and that there are 18,000 jobs in the immediate area. The city is presently looking at integration with Sound Transit and/or King County Metro. The potential to improve mobility in the area is great.

City of Redmond: Carolyn Hope, for Mayor John Marchione, reported that the bidding process for phase II of the Redmond Central Connector is in process, with bid opening scheduled for October 29, 2015. They have been fortunate to have great financial partners as well having received some state funding. Ms. Hope issued a general invitation to participate in the City 5K Poultry Predictor run that will take place on the Redmond Central Connector on November 14th.

Sound Transit: Sound Transit has had a very busy year with developing the new ST3 plan and delivering the ST2 plan. Work on the OMSF (maintenance facility) adjacent to the ERC included intense negotiations with the City of Bellevue and a local stakeholder group. The city has agreed to process a code amendment that will allow the facility to be permitted. In updating the long range plan, the Sound Transit board has instructed staff to go straight into system planning for ST3. Proposals have been made for both BRT and light rail on the ERC.

King County: Director Christie True reported on progress for master trail planning. Feedback includes the importance of connections to other trails and facilities, the need to separate pedestrians and bicycles, privacy and security of adjacent homeowners and environmental concerns. The next phase is to incorporate the feedback into the possible alternatives. The draft master plan should be released in February 2016. The Executive has transmitted two pieces of rail removal legislation to the Council with one scheduled to be heard before the budget committee and the other to be heard by the committee of the whole.

Councilmember Phillips noted that if anyone anticipated any potential conflicts surrounding these activities that would preclude future use, now would be the time to speak up.

Ric Ilgenfritz commented that all projects have been designed to incorporate multiple uses and that the only conflicts anticipated are during construction projects. He also reported that ST is in ongoing discussion with Bellevue concerning interim access, during those construction periods.

The Department of Natural Resources and Parks will begin a structural inspection of the Wilburton Trestle in November.

January 9, 2016, ERC Summit Update

Deb Eddy noted that the January 9th Summit previously approved by the owners is a joint effort with the Cascade Bicycle Club and The Trust for Public Land. This summit will provide an opportunity to bring together and engage with businesses, the community, developers, other organizations and legislators. It will be a day-long conference with engagement by national speakers with experience in multi-use corridors across the nation. Although the event will recap what's been done, the focus will be on the future, what needs to be done now. Meydenbauer Center has been reserved for the function, with a seating capacity of 200. Kirkland has broached the subject of having an event the night before, perhaps on the corridor.

As part of the outreach to constituent groups, Elizabeth Kiker, executive director, Cascade Bicycle Club (CBC), and Roger Hoesterey, senior vice-president, Trust for Public Land (TPL), have agreed to serve as leads for the nonprofit and stakeholder community in event planning and execution. ERC RAC staff and NGO staff are sharing documents and collaboratively planning the event. Ms. Kiker stated that she is excited to have this opportunity to participate in a coalition that is not just a CBC coalition.

Mr. Hoesterey stated that an important goal of the summit is to involve the community, to bring all different groups together and further define the shared vision. The tagline is the multi-use vision and opportunity. He thanked the RAC for its work.

Councilmember Lambert observed that the collaborative work has been well received but emphasized the continued need to make clear that this is a multi-use corridor, including trails, rails and pedestrians. Councilmember Arnold concurred that planning for the event seemed to be on the right track and noted that bringing speakers to share best practices in other urban areas that are pursuing multi-use corridors would be helpful.

Ms. Hope noted that marketing for the summit needed to be clear that there are three distinct themes: education, soliciting input about implementation plans, and generating interest in the opportunities related to full corridor development. Mr. Ilgenfritz emphasized that the educational component is important, getting more people comfortable with what's going on in the corridor.

Support for Kirkland Transit Project

Councilmember Arnold commented that he had been working with ERC RAC members to find some agreed language for a letter that the city had submitted for ERC RAC approval. He suggested that there were various ways that the ERC RAC or its members could indicate support for Kirkland's ST3 transit proposals in the corridor. As the proposals are all directed at

Sound Transit, Mr. Ilgenfritz recused himself from this discussion.

Councilmember Lambert asked that the words “rails and trails” be added to the second paragraph following the word “priority”.

Mr. Howell suggested the group talk about how they feel about the concept of sending a letter to the Sound Transit Board, when several of the members serve on the board.

Councilmembers Lambert and Phillips did not express concern and supported signing the letter.

Ms. True stated that it may be premature to show preference over projects at this point and suggested the letter might be revised so it was not “on behalf of the RAC”, but from co-chair Hague stating that the project is consistent with the goals of the RAC. “That way it is not a potential conflict for RAC members who are also ST Board members,” she said.

Councilmember Phillips pointed out that what seemed to be tripping people up is not the policy stated in the letter, which is a shared policy of all ERC owners. Rather, the problem seems to lie in process. Councilmember Arnold suggested that, with changes suggested by Ms. True and Councilmember Lambert, perhaps Chair Hague could sign the letter with logos of ERC RAC members?

In conclusion, Mr. Howell recapped the discussion as follows: Instead of “on behalf of”, say “as co-chair of” and “is acceptable” instead of “in concurrence”, add Councilmember Lambert’s addition to the second paragraph and don’t put it on RAC letterhead. He and Ms. Eddy stated that they would take the matter up with the chair on her return.

Public Comment: None

Next steps: Ms. Eddy stated that the issue of how ERC RAC members would support each other in realizing the multi-use vision for the corridor, including transit use, needed more attention. She stated that she would be working with Mr. Howell to come up with ways to address this question, so that the potential of competing roles for ERC RAC members and perceptions of conflict by those other roles didn’t derail the group’s commitment to multiple uses.

Mr. Howell noted that in regard to the funders collaborative conversation, there is great energy among a coalition of groups around the summit and also how to support the RAC’s vision. He suggested that he does not feel quarterly meetings will be adequate next year. Ms. True concurred and asked that a meeting be scheduled shortly after the summit.

Councilmember Lambert expressed concern that some groups may feel left out. She reported strong feedback about noise and lighting from neighbors and a need for some ideas on how to handle those concerns.

The meeting adjourned at 3:12 p.m.