

**CHAPTER 5**



**EASTSIDE RAIL CORRIDOR REGIONAL TRAIL MASTER PLAN**



## 5.0 IMPLEMENTATION

Following review of this Draft Master Plan and Environmental Impact Statement, implementation would begin with the selection of a preferred alternative and finalization of the Master Plan. After the Master Plan is adopted, King County would likely begin design, further environmental review, and construction of the trail in phases and segments. Throughout all phases, King County is responsible for maintaining and managing the corridor.

### INTERIM TRAIL VS MASTER PLAN TRAIL

In general, there are two strategies for phased implementation of a trail project. Segments of the trail can be built to the final configuration (master planned trail), or segments can first be built temporarily to a lower standard (i.e., interim trail) and completed to the final standard at a later time. For the ERC trail, many different segments could be completed in their final configuration that would be valuable additions to the Regional Trails System before the entire trail is completed. Similarly, developing one or more segments of the trail as an interim trail, most likely with gravel surfacing rather than asphalt, would likely provide a well-used trail facility even if it does not provide the full range of master planned trail uses.

In November 2015, the King County Council approved the phased removal of rails in the railbanked portion of the ERC, and the development of an interim trail from SR 520 to 108th Avenue NE. King County could improve additional segments as an interim trail.

## 5.1 SELECTION OF A PREFERRED ALTERNATIVE

The On-Railbed and Off-Railbed Alternatives described in this Draft Master Plan show the advantages, disadvantages, and impacts of two approaches to building the trail in the corridor. The descriptions of the alternatives and their impacts are intended to provide the public with essential project information for eliciting comments, and for the County to make an informed decision on the trail's final location and character.

The alternative selected for development may be one of the two alternatives described in the Master Plan; however, it is likely that the preferred approach will incorporate portions of both alternatives in different sections of the corridor. Once the Draft Master Plan has been reviewed and public input received, the King County Executive will select a preferred alternative and present a Final Master Plan to the King County Council for adoption.

## 5.2 IMPLEMENTATION PHASING

Given the length of the King County- and Sound Transit-owned portions of the ERC and the anticipated cost, the regional trail would likely be developed in phases and segments. This section identifies some of the considerations for how the trail could be developed over time.

Availability and source of funding will influence the establishment of implementation priorities. Historically, funding for nonmotorized transportation facilities has placed greater weight on trails that connect to regional growth centers and other multimodal facilities such as transit stations, add to an existing nonmotorized system or network, or serve dense areas of current and future land use. The opportunity to provide a facility for underserved communities will also be an important priority for King County.

This Master Plan and Environmental Impact Statement is the first step in a phased environmental review. Subsequent phases would be subject to additional environmental reviews.

### SEGMENTS

To evaluate developing the trail in shorter segments, King County has identified logical termini, based on connections to other nonmotorized facilities and to retail, employment, and recreation destinations. Any one of the segments listed below and shown on Figure 5-1 could be developed and provide a public benefit, regardless of when the other segments are developed.

- A.** Gene Coulon Memorial Beach Park to Coal Creek Parkway
- B.** Coal Creek Parkway to I-90 Trail
- C.** I-90 Trail to Mercer Slough Gateway
- D.** Mercer Slough Gateway to NE 4th Street
- E.** NE 4th Street to SR 520 Trail
- F.** SR 520 Trail to 108th Avenue NE
- G.** Slater Road to Willows Road
- H.** Willows Road to NE 145th Street
- I.** NE 145th Street to NE 175th Street
- J.** Spur: NE 124th Street to NE 145th Street
- K.** Spur: NE 145th Street to NE 175th Street

Within these identified segments, there are opportunities to create even shorter segments. This is particularly true in the segments from the future Mercer Slough Gateway to the SR 520 Trail. In some cases, a local or regional connection must be established to realize the full potential of a segment. For example, NE 145th Street only makes sense as a terminus if access along the street to the Sammamish River Trail and tourist district destinations can be improved. Likewise, the I-90 Trail only makes sense as a terminus if the connection to the I-90 Trail can be established. The timing of these connection improvements would influence the phases of ERC trail development.

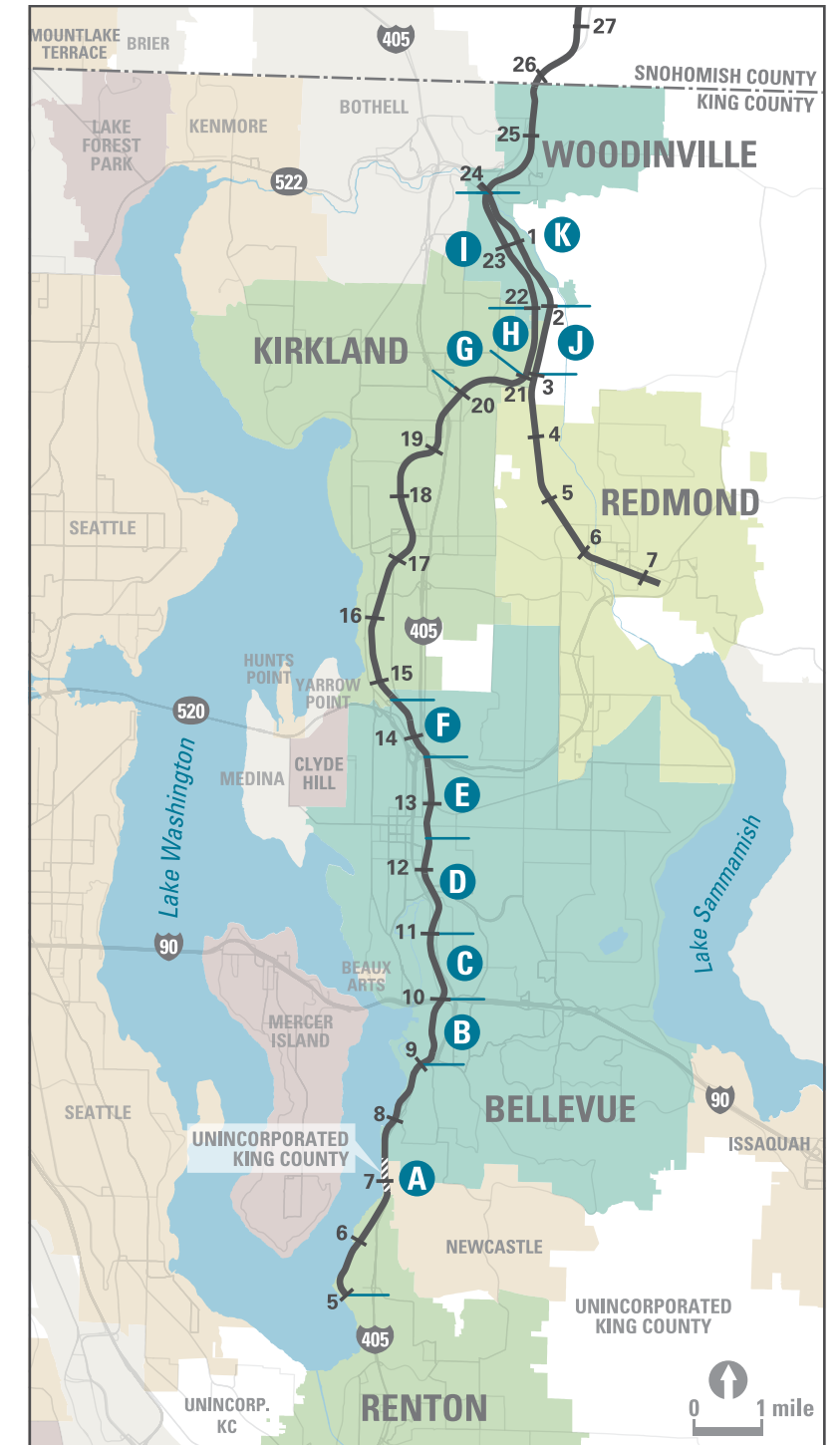
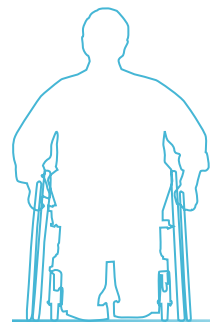


FIGURE 5-1. ERC IMPLEMENTATION SEGMENTS.



## DESIGN APPROACH

Upon adoption of the Master Plan, King County could proceed with preliminary design for the entire 16.7 miles of the ERC trail. The advantage of this strategy is that it advances trail development for the entire corridor, allowing more time for future phasing and funding to be determined. It also better ensures consistency of design. After preliminary design, different phasing strategies could be applied.

Alternatively, King County could advance a small segment of trail as an independent project through design, permitting, and construction. This approach would capitalize on momentum from the master planning process, create near-term excitement, and demonstrate progress and commitment to the public. Subsequently, different phasing strategies could be applied to the remainder of the corridor.

## COLLABORATION WITH PARTNERS

Other agencies and local jurisdictions have plans for the area in and around the ERC. Examples include Sound Transit's development of its East Link, Wilburton Station, and OMSF projects; Puget Sound Energy's Sammamish–Juanita 115-kV transmission line project; WSDOT's widening of I-405; and the City of Bellevue's redevelopment of the area around NE 6th Street. Coordination with these agencies has been central to the master planning process to ensure all of the partner visions, and plans are considered.

As these projects are advanced, there is an advantage to continued collaboration on the planning, design, and potentially construction of some of these projects. At a minimum, design interface and the timing of construction should be coordinated. Other opportunities could include coordination on drainage and ecological mitigation. There may be some opportunities for developers or other agencies to construct a portion of the ERC trail.

## BYPASSES

The City of Bellevue has expressed an interest in developing a bypass to the I-405 and Wilburton Trestle crossings, because both are significant capital improvement projects that may take some time to develop. King County would work with the local jurisdictions in these situations to ensure that safe, local connections can be accommodated. In these situations, however, King County assumes the local jurisdiction will be responsible for implementing the bypass. For example, the bypass to the I-405 and Wilburton Trestle crossings would likely involve improvements to the City of Bellevue's Lake to Lake Trail. This local trail is a combination of facilities, including bicycle lanes and sidewalks, rather than a continuous regional trail in a separate right-of-way.

## REDUNDANCY

In several areas of the corridor, there are redundant nonmotorized facilities. In the Lakefront Segment, the Lake Washington Loop parallels the ERC in places. In the Valley Segment, the Sammamish River Trail parallels both the ERC Main Line and Spur. In these areas, the full realization of a paved, multi-use trail may be a lower priority than in areas in which no parallel trails exist. The areas with redundancy also offer the opportunity to create different trail experiences, such as keeping a segment as a soft-surface trail in the foreseeable future. The specifics of the segments and phasing also depend on the ability to make connections between the parallel facilities.

In some cases, these redundant trails may be affected by other development. For example, a portion of the Lake Washington Loop may be affected by I-405 widening and the ERC trail could become the replacement.

## 5.3 CORRIDOR MAINTENANCE AND MANAGEMENT

Throughout trail development, King County will provide basic property maintenance, including vegetation management and drainage maintenance. King County is also responsible for managing all County-controlled property within the corridor, including reviewing and deciding on requests for special use permits (requests from private citizens or entities to use public property for private purposes). Given the significant level of investment, study, and planning that is occurring in the railbanked portion of the ERC, there are only limited circumstances under which King County will authorize private development and private uses in the corridor during the master planning process. During this process, King County is considering new access and utility requests through its permitting process. Permitting of other private development or private use requests will not be considered or approved until after the master planning process. These uses include future amenities described in the Draft Master Plan including, but not limited to, landscaping, fencing, and trail access.

