

EASTRAIL REGIONAL ADVISORY COUNCIL

MEETING SUMMARY

April 19, 2020 | 1 – 3 PM

Zoom Meeting

Regional Advisory Council (RAC) Members Present: Kathy Lambert, King County Councilmember (Chair); Jay Arnold, Deputy Mayor, City of Kirkland (Vice Chair); Claudia Balducci, King County Councilmember; Christie True, Director, King County Department of Natural Resources and Parks; David Hoffman, Puget Sound Energy; Jessica Forsythe, Redmond Councilmember; Tom Teigen, Director of Snohomish County Department of Conservation & Natural Resources; Luke Lamon, Sound Transit; Les Rubstello, Woodinville Deputy Mayor

Welcome and Introductions

Chair Kathy Lambert called the meeting to order at 1:02 pm, welcomed all in attendance to the second RAC meeting of 2021, and reviewed the agenda.

Approval of January 29, 2021 RAC meeting summary

Councilmember Forsythe moved to approve the January 29, 2021 meeting summary. Christie True seconded. There being no objections, the summary was approved.

Major Capital Project Status

Project staff gave status updates on several trail projects along the Eastrail corridor. Details and visuals were included in the meeting packet.

- *East Lake Sammamish Trail North Extension* – project will connect Redmond Central Connector (RCC) section of Eastrail in Downtown Redmond and East Lake Sammamish Trail and is being constructed as part of the Sound Transit Downtown Redmond Link Extension (DRLE) project. Project is at ~100% design, started construction last fall and trail is expected to open in 2024. There will be fencing and separated structures to allow both the trail and light rail to coexist at grade. Mike Ullmer will provide information about change in Bear Creek Bridge length.
- *Redmond Central Connector Phase III* – Third and final phase of RCC that includes a 1.6-mile segment to extend RCC north to NE 124th Street at the Kirkland border. Design is estimated to start in 2023 with construction beginning in 2024; still working toward complete funding package via federal requests, PSRC grants, and state grants.
- *Kirkland to Woodinville Trail* – 2.5-mile trail connection between Kirkland and Woodinville actively under construction. Kirkland is building Willows Connector now with a goal of opening by the end of 2021. At 145th, Woodinville is building crossing.
- *Totem Lake Connector* – bike/ped bridge connecting two ends of the 5.75-mile Cross Kirkland Corridor currently severed by one of Kirkland’s busiest intersections, Totem Lake Boulevard and NE 124th St. Currently under construction, estimated to open July 2022.
- *520 Trail/Northup Way Connector* – trail ramp to connect Eastrail to SR 520 Trail at Northup Way. REI and Facebook contributed \$1 million each; King County contributing the remainder. Currently in early design, estimate construction starting in 2022, completion by fall 2022.
- *NE 8th Street Crossing* – going to bid spring 2021, provides critical connection to Wilburton Light Rail Station and will include Japanese American Agricultural Heritage commemoration. Construction will occur through 2022; goal is to open before light rail opens for passenger service.

- *Wilburton Trestle* – project includes distinctive railing, benches, and overlooks. Finalizing viewpoints on the structure, currently developing 100% design. Going to construction bid in late fall or early 2022, expected to open 2023.
- *Lake Lanes I-405 Expansion* – partnership with WSDOT on 2.5 miles of wide paved trail opening May 2021 with a dedicated Eastrail crossing over I-405.
- *May Creek Trestle* – retrofitting May Creek trestle with wide concrete deck panels (currently narrow so will improve trail user experience), expected to open January 2022.

Eastrail Partners/RAC Memorandum of Understanding Scoping

David St. John of King County and Katherine Hollis of Eastrail Partners shared the draft MOU with Eastrail Partners, included in the meeting packet. Staff will incorporate feedback and circulate a consensus version to be approved at the next RAC meeting in July.

- MOU term is two years and can be amended as needed subject to mutual agreement. It includes ongoing collaboration via quarterly RAC meetings and principal staff team meetings, as well as three priority action areas:
 - Developing and implementing a communications framework for shared work.
 - Playing unifying role as primary point of contact for federal funding priorities.
 - Developing and supporting community activation events and maintaining connection with eastside businesses.

Questions/Comments

- Recommend that a recital should state that this is a continuation of an existing partnership to reflect the successful completion and sunset of the prior agreement.
- In recitals, “Cross Kirkland Connector” should be corrected to read “Cross Kirkland Corridor.”
- Broadband likely does not fit under action priorities as it is not really within the purview of Eastrail Partners, however there are opportunities for coordination and cooperation especially related to funding. To the extent that broadband items are of interest, staff can bring those as individual agenda items to the RAC and keep abreast of state and federal legislation that might facilitate fiber along the corridor.

Co-Creation Action Proposal

Debbie Lacy of Eastside for All and Joe Inslee from King County reviewed the co-creation framework discussed at the January meeting and provided information on using Welcoming Week as a focusing effort for co-creation and community engagement related to Eastrail.

- Co-creation model seeks to build transformational—not transactional and time-limited—relationships with communities. This begins with developing relationships and identifying areas of mutual concern or interest, participating in their events (rather than just asking for time on their agendas), compensating people for their time and expertise, being honest and clear about the ways participation will influence/impact decisions, and providing transparent feedback loops and report backs.
- Welcoming Week is a national event that brings together community groups to create and co-sponsor events. It began in September 2016 as a way to spotlight diversity and encourage new ways of working together as a community. Bellevue, Redmond, Kirkland, Issaquah, and Sammamish participated beginning in 2016.
- This year’s mostly virtual event will be September 10-19. The theme is “belonging begins with us” and it could serve as a focusing event to start connecting with community-based organizations and groups to engage on Eastrail.

- Eastside for All will be making introductions to community partners throughout the spring and summer to begin engagement and continue partner activation after Welcoming Week in September. Engagement will begin by identifying communities to get involved, working with them to understand how they use community and public space, and then working with groups and community ambassadors to invite community members to Welcoming Week events.
- Staff will provide updates on engagement activities at next RAC meeting.

State and Federal Funding Updates

David St. John and Katherine Hollis provided updates on state and federal funding opportunities.

State

- Currently over \$24 million in Eastrail projects are listed as priority projects in the state and transportation budgets. Projects are part of the new revenue transportation budget that must pass in the next week (not part of the two-year regular biennium budget but a longer transportation package). Legislators are currently negotiating and have work to do to agree on several pieces of a new revenue package, however, even if it does not pass this session, having these projects on lists helps set us up for future funding when work on a future revenue transportation budget occurs.
- The RAC can send follow-up letters thanking legislators who sponsored projects and emphasizing the desire to move this forward with the budget this session. Councilmember Lambert and Deputy Mayor Arnold will work with Katherine to finalize and send this letter on behalf of the RAC.

Federal

- Transportation – FAST Act expires at the end of September, expect a larger omnibus package before the end of the year (though likely a pared down version of what the President proposed).
- RAISE (formerly BUILD) Grant Program via USDOT could provide funds for Eastrail-type projects.
- Community Partnerships Fund: appropriations are returning and could fund smaller projects (\$1-5 million). Eastrail Partners has already received interest from the federal delegation asking for information about Eastrail projects, demonstrating importance and efficacy of RAC engagement with them last fall (and need for potential future engagement on trails if possible).

Progress and Success Updates

King County – Many updates were covered in trail progress updates above. Darryl Hunt, King County IT, shared that they are working on the first draft of the fiber project RFP and have identified legal agreements required for the project. They are developing documents with principal staff team members and working with Eastrail owners’ attorneys on an MOU. They have also completed a revised high-level schedule that will be distributed; schedule revisions are a result of building in extra time for review and approval of legal agreements. They are working with principal staff team to keep agencies informed and project moving forward.

The opening day for the 2.5-mile trail segment just south of I-90 connecting Bellevue to Renton is tentatively set for the end of May (exact date TBD). Staff will be coordinating with elected officials and will work with RAC on messaging and publicity.

Kirkland – updates were covered in trail progress updates above.

Redmond – updates were covered in trail progress updates above.

Sound Transit – updates covered in trail progress updates above. Staff will work with Joe Inslee to provide more information about weather protection for the trail connection to the SE Redmond Light Rail Station.

Snohomish County – they continue to work with City of Woodinville and Surface Transportation Board on lawsuits to eliminate the operator of railroad on a segment to be able to develop the right of way.

Public comment

- Kirk Hovenkotter and Kelli Refer of the Greater Redmond Transportation Management Association noted that the Redmond Central Connector phase III project is still seeking funding and will connect a busy and growing corridor. They strongly urged support and funding for this connection in time for light rail service in 2024. To advocate for phase III funding, they have met with legislators on Washington Bikes Lobby Day and they are promoting funding for that segment in the state House transportation package. They have also written a letter of support to Rep. DelBene and are organizing with a national coalition of grassroots organizations focused on funding for transit, walking, and biking in the federal package. GRTMA looks forward to working together with the RAC to connect the region.
- David Allen of Bikes Make Life Better shared that Bikes Make Life Better manages bike commuting programs for large companies on the west coast and one of the biggest barriers to bike commuting is perception of safety. He applauded the work of the RAC to advocate for the development of safe active transportation opportunities.

The meeting recording is available here: <https://kingcounty.gov/council/issues/erc/2021-meetings.aspx>. Interested parties should send comments to eastrail@kingcounty.gov. Joe Inslee will compile any comments received.

Next steps and adjournment

The next meeting is Monday, July 19th.

The meeting adjourned at 2:53 pm.