

EASTRAIL REGIONAL ADVISORY COUNCIL

MEETING SUMMARY

April 29, 2022 | 10 AM – 12 PM

Zoom Meeting

Regional Advisory Council (RAC) Members Present: Jay Arnold, Kirkland Deputy Mayor (Vice Chair), John Stokes, Bellevue Councilmember; Claudia Balducci, King County Councilmember; Sarah Perry, King County Councilmember; Christie True, Director, King County Department of Natural Resources and Parks; Jessica Forsythe, Redmond Council President; Ryan McIrvine, Renton Council President; Luke Lamon, Sound Transit; Les Rubstello, Woodinville Councilmember; Tom Teigen, Snohomish County; Vicky Clarke, Eastside Greenway Alliance

Welcome and Introductions

Deputy Mayor Arnold called the meeting to order at 10:02 am, welcomed all in attendance to the second RAC meeting of 2022, and reviewed the agenda.

Approval of January 31, 2022 RAC meeting summary

Councilmember Forsythe moved to approve the January 31 meeting summary and Councilmember Stokes seconded. **Members unanimously approved the January meeting summary.**

RAC Leadership Position Confirmations

Councilmember Balducci moved to appoint Councilmember Perry and Deputy Mayor Arnold as co-chairs of the RAC for a two-year term (through April 2024). Councilmember McIrvine seconded. **Eastrail jurisdiction owners reached consensus to confirm Councilmember Perry and Deputy Mayor Arnold as co-chairs under the new RAC leadership structure.** The revised RAC MOU formalizing the transition to this new leadership structure has been signed by approximately half the RAC member entities; other RAC member entities are working through the signature process.

Federal and State Engagement for Eastrail Trail Support

Katherine Hollis of Eastrail Partners provided updates on federal and state funding opportunities.

State Opportunities

- \$29M secured in the state transportation package for Eastrail projects:
 - \$5M to expand and improve where Eastrail passes over SR202 trestle in Woodinville (sponsors: Senator Dhingra and Reps. Springer and Goodman)
 - \$18M to begin retrofitting I-90 steel bridge in Bellevue and advance progress on the Wilburton Trestle (sponsors: Senator Kuderer, Reps. Slatter and Walen)
 - \$6M toward acquisition to extend Eastrail into Gene Coulon Park (sponsors: Senators Wellman and Keiser, Reps. Thai, Senn, Orwall, Gregerson)
- Funding award timing is unclear as the transportation package is over 16 years, but Eastrail Partners and project sponsors will be tracking state efforts to resolve this and informing those deliberations as appropriate.

Federal Opportunities

- Federal offices solicited community funding requests for consideration in FY23 appropriations bill. Woodinville submitted a request for outstanding costs for SR202 project and Redmond submitted a request for Phase 3 of Redmond Central Connector.
- Transportation alternatives budget increased by 70% which could impact future Eastrail projects, and USDOT issued guidance for state DOTs on implementing increased funding over 5 years.
- The meeting packet contains a draft letter to legislative champions thanking them for their support on behalf of the RAC. **Councilmember Forsythe moved that the RAC sign on to the letter, Councilmember Stokes seconded. Members unanimously supported the motion.**
- Eastrail Partners is also planning a summer celebration in a project area to thank legislative champions.

Discussion

- Councilmember Balducci requested RAC staff follow up to provide estimates to complete projects funded through state transportation package (i.e., remaining funding needs).
- The earliest funds could begin being distributed would be July 2023. Staff anticipate dialogue between project sponsors and the state regarding funding timing.
- King County is committed to completing projects but is seeing significant inflation, supply chain impacts, and impacts from the concrete workers' strike, etc. They will be thinking about creative ways to use state funding (e.g., alongside interim interfund borrowing) to support project delivery.
- Some RAC entities are pursuing PSRC funding (i.e., federal pass-through) opportunities, though generally they aren't a great fit for the types of projects the County is pursuing given their cost. Other potential federal funding sources created through recent federal legislation and infrastructure packages have so far not been favorable to Eastrail projects (e.g., favor rural rather than urban, ports, other transportation modes, etc.), but staff will continue reviewing notices of funding opportunities.

Arts Coordination Planning

Jeff Aken of Redmond and Katherine Hollis presented staff work to inform development of the framework for arts coordination on Eastrail, included in the meeting packet. Staff will make updates based on the discussion with the goal of presenting updates at future meetings and a final framework for RAC approval in January 2023.

- Draft mission: a collaborative effort amongst Eastrail Stakeholders to create a roadmap for using art and design to inspire, enrich, and connect the Eastrail for people throughout the corridor.
- Draft vision: a trail connected by a variety of public art, events spaces, and places that reflects the values and connected history of our diverse communities along the Eastrail.

Discussion

- Members were supportive about arts coordination along Eastrail but requested more clarity about how this effort relates to and fits in with existing jurisdictional arts programs and plans (i.e., who owns it, makes decisions, etc.) and how it will be a multi-benefit value-add. Members are interested in defined roles and responsibilities and do not want to duplicate efforts.
- Members were also interested in including programming beyond static art installations, e.g., cultural events and other programming.
- Members suggested including 4Culture in framework development.

Budgeting for Eastrail Collaboration in 23-24 Biennium

David St. John of King County DNRP discussed how to address budgeting and cost shares for Eastrail collaboration in 2023-2024. Slides were included in the meeting packet.

- RAC member entities have provided funding for joint actions in the past, including for the 2106 Eastside Rail Corridor Leadership Summit, the Eastrail brand development project in 2017-18, and launch of the Eastrail Partners funding/service agreement in 2020.
- RAC members have previously expressed dissatisfaction with unplanned mid-biennium funding requests because they are difficult to support, and encouraged more proactive consideration of joint funding as part of customary budget development processes
- Staff anticipate the following will occur in the 23-24 biennium:
 - Continued emphasis on fostering equity and access (co-creation initiatives)
 - Progress on major capital projects to construct the trail
 - Openings and activation of certain segments
 - Opening/revenue service of several East Link stations and connecting routes along Eastrail (e.g., Wilburton, SE Redmond)
 - Realizing and growing benefits of critical public-private partnerships
 - Growing emphasis on connecting the middle (I-90) and current endpoints (Renton, Woodinville, Snohomish County) of Eastrail
 - 10th anniversary of the RAC/collaborative corridor development
- Actions supported by joint funding by RAC member entities could look like the following:
 - Community co-creation: activation events for newly opened segments, co-creation action seed money (e.g., compensating CBOs for their work on events)
 - Public arts: development and implementation of coordinated Eastrail art framework/plan, and seed funding for development and installation of artwork or funding public art events
 - User education: resources for trail ambassadors, recreate responsibly user education, fabrication, installation, and maintenance of wayfinding signage
 - Awareness building/communications: Eastrail celebration conference/workshop, similar to 2016 summit with speakers, policy/program discussions, recognition of contributions and leadership, and 10th anniversary of RAC, developing and deploying tools for coordinated comms and marketing (website, social media, etc.).

Discussion

- Members would like to see cost estimates and scopes of potential elements to consider how best to approach budget requests in their jurisdictions.
- Previously, RAC member contributions ranged from ~\$5,000 – 13,000 with King County generally contributing the largest amounts.
- Members are interested in seeing actions serve multiple purposes, i.e., coupling a 10th anniversary celebration with a series of community engagement events and segment openings. Members want to celebrate connections and successes but also continue to demonstrate need and equitably distribute events.
- Members are also interested in continuing co-creation with community-based organizations, as well as a new summit event given the success of the 2016 summit which catalyzed a lot of RAC work. Such an event could build inspiration and excitement about what comes next.

Eastrail Partners Action Update

Eastrail Partners is hiring a Community & Communications Manager to build capacity for community engagement and relationship development as well as strengthening their online presence. King County

Parks Foundation provided matching funds to support this position for two years so they have time to find sustainable funding for the role.

Progress and Success Updates

Bellevue – NE 8th Street groundbreaking will happen in May. Bellevue applied for \$4.9M in PSRC funding for the Eastrail to Spring Blvd. connector project.

Kirkland – concrete strike has slightly delayed the Totem Lake Connector Bridge which is now scheduled for spring 2023 completion. Kirkland is applying for PSRC funding for the crossing at 132nd and Slater. They anticipate heavy use at this five-intersection crossing and will be funding an at-grade crossing with HAWK signal. Kirkland will be holding a grand opening for the Feriton Spur Park expansion at the Google campus on July 13 or 14 and will announce the date and share details once confirmed.

Redmond – contract for RCCIII will come to City Council in June and design will be underway in the summer. Parts of Eastrail will be open to biking for Derby Days (July 8 & 9), and there will be a virtual bike ride as well as in-person events at the Velodrome. Please take Redmond Parks' [Parks Plan survey](#).

Renton – looking forward to next steps with state funding for Gene Coulon Park. There is \$250,000 for the May Creek boardwalk to connect to the other side of I-405 and provide transit and housing access to Eastrail. They are also looking into traffic calming measures along Lake Washington Blvd. to improve safety. Installation of new play equipment at Kennydale Beach Park will require temporary closures. WSDOT is conducting ongoing widening work on NE 44th St.

Woodinville – hopefully in the final stage of the process to secure their section of the railroad corridor. SR202 trestle project received state funding and they have signed a contract with designers. The trail crossing by Chateau St. Michele winery with HAWK signal is moving toward completion.

Snohomish County – continue to be fully engaged in legal activities related to securing rights access and ownership of the railroad corridor. Snohomish County is supportive of arts efforts along Eastrail; the opening of the north end terminus to the Centennial Trail connecting to Eastrail at the Nakashima Farm Trailhead provided an opportunity for the descendants of the Nakashima family, owners of that land who lost it after being interned during WWII, to host a family gathering with 80 members of the family who came from all over the world.

Eastside Greenway Alliance – Eastrail project funding was second in amount only to \$50M for improvements along Aurora Ave. in the state transportation budget package. There were also large increases in bike/ped grant programs (\$75M in last package to \$278M) and Safe Routes to School (\$142M in last package to \$290M). \$216M of Safe Routes to Schools funding will go to two new bike education programs, including programs to provide bikes for kids.

Sound Transit – Sound Transit is working with Bellevue staff to ensure safety and access in the area they own south of 520 along Eastrail. They are looking forward to the NE 8th crossing groundbreaking at Wilburton Station. Seattle is hosting the WTS Conference May 18-20; Sound Transit is partnering with Bellevue and others to lead a tour of the East Link alignment and discuss interagency collaboration to support a regional trail and high capacity transit system.

King County – will share NE 8th St. groundbreaking date once confirmed. There is another 2.5-mile trail segment opening in May in the north; Kirkland, Woodinville, and King County will be coordinating to plan a celebration. Eastrail Fiber Project RFI will also be published soon.

Public comment

- Scott Howell commented that he lives on Mountain View Ave. in Renton and is a daily trail user. As trail use has grown, interactions between pedestrian, commercial, and private vehicles on Mountain View have become a flash point and he expressed concern that there is a high potential for serious liability. RAC staff will follow up regarding work underway with City of Renton.
- Marlene Winter commented that she also lives on Mountain View Ave. and noted that many people will be upset that bridge construction will require closing the north park gate. She also thanked Curt Warber for promptly addressing concerns reported to him related to trail litter and maintenance.

The meeting recording is available here: [2022 Meetings - King County](#). Interested parties should send comments to eastrail@kingcounty.gov. Joe Inslee will compile any additional comments received.

Next steps and adjournment

The date of the next RAC meeting is TBD. Staff will send out meeting information soon.

The meeting adjourned at 12:03 pm.