

# EASTSIDE RAIL CORRIDOR REGIONAL ADVISORY COUNCIL

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## MEETING SUMMARY

April 28, 2023 | 10 AM – 12 PM

Zoom Meeting

**Regional Advisory Council (RAC) Members Present:** Jay Arnold, Kirkland Deputy Mayor (Co-Chair), Claudia Balducci, King County Councilmember; John Stokes, Bellevue Councilmember; Christie True, Director, King County Department of Natural Resources and Parks; Matt Larson, Puget Sound Energy; Jessica Forsythe, Redmond Council President; Ryan McIrvine, Renton Councilmember; Alex Krieg (alternate for Don Billen), Sound Transit; Les Rubstello, Woodinville Councilmember; Sharon Swan (alternate for Tom Teigen), Snohomish County

### 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 2023, and reviewed the agenda.

### Approval of January 26, 2022 RAC meeting summary

Councilmember Forsythe moved to approve the January 26 meeting summary and Councilmember Stokes seconded. **Members unanimously voted to approve the January 26 meeting summary.**

### Trail Oriented Development

David St. John (King County DNRP), members of the Principals' Staff Team, and Gene Duvernoy (Eastrail Partners) opened a discussion about Trail-Oriented Development (TrOD) along the Eastrail, how it aligns with recommendations in the RAC founding guidance document *Creating Connections* and within the *connect/construct/complete* framework of the and the ERC Trail Funding Commission, and how to encourage TrOD as RAC partners move forward with comprehensive planning processes and corridor development advances.

Introductory remarks in the presentation included a working definition of Trail-Oriented Development:

- development where the corridor and neighboring land meet that incorporates planning and design tools to encourage engagement with trail; contributes to and benefits from vitality a trail brings to a neighborhood; and includes uses that align with interests of community that uses the trail.

Several Principals' Staff Team members shared examples of TrOD in their jurisdictions (included in meeting packet and further described in this summary).

- Examples from Eastrail jurisdictions:
  - **Kirkland**
    - TrOD building and site design considerations in existing zoning code, e.g., facades visible from corridor incorporate similar building materials and window treatments, pedestrian walkway connecting to business entrances, bike parking and accessible by bike to the corridor, etc. An example is Feriton Spur Park.
  - **Redmond**

- RCC Phase 3 to be constructed by 2025, connects to downtown core and future light rail. Seeing significant private investment and the trail positioned as an amenity and rental draw. Need more direct access from buildings and business activation and use in some locations.
- **Bellevue**
  - Wilburton neighborhood is Bellevue’s next growth area, want to integrate adjacent development and Eastrail. Corridor will support access and circulation and serve as green open space for neighborhood and adjacent building occupants. Currently developing policies and code to encourage adjacent development to integrate and connect with corridor.
- **Renton**
  - Regional trails hub with new commercial and residential development in downtown core. Renton Connector (in design phase) will be a shared use path in downtown core to facilitate connections to destinations. Also working to extend Eastrail further south into Renton and allow trail access from south and west.
- **Woodinville**
  - Surface Transportation Board issued decision re: former rail line; Woodinville will assume responsibility. Area was zoned for light industrial use but discussing potentially rezoning area between Eastrail and SR522 for mixed-use residential and TrOD. 207-unit Eastrail Flats mixed-use development broke ground this week and will be completed in 2025.

Gene Duvernoy presented perspective from Eastrail Partners regarding how to encourage TrOD in and around the corridor moving forward. The “complete” element of the ‘connect/construct/complete’ framework from the Funding Commission report focuses on developing public gathering places, art, and amenities along the trail to enhance the trail experience and knit the Eastrail into surrounding communities and includes encouraging new land use policies and funding tools to support trail development.

Gene indicated that Eastrail Partners is looking for direction and endorsement as they advance TrOD in partnership with RAC entities. Initial work could include:

- Research and reporting on successful examples and incentivization policies from across the country.
- Property inventory of possible sites along the whole corridor to identify opportunities on private and public land.
- Detailed prospective for how to move forward on the three steps of connect, construct, complete.

#### *Discussion & Next Steps*

- Members expressed excitement about progress and leveraging partnerships to advance TrOD to benefit Eastrail and adjacent communities by providing recreation and transportation opportunities as well as community and economic development. Members requested Eastrail Partners provide direction on how to encourage TrOD, e.g., design guidelines, best practices re: policies, zoning, and investments, integration with comprehensive plan update processes, etc.

- Principals' Staff Team members will continue discussion at next meeting, share updates at future RAC meetings regarding using comprehensive planning and land use policymaking processes to create and increase support for TrOD.
- RAC members will share presentation as comprehensive planning discussions are taking place and ask what support is needed in their jurisdiction from the RAC or Eastrail Partners. Members will also continue to think about what role stakeholders like PSE and Sound Transit play in incentivizing TrOD and identify opportunities (e.g., trail lighting, utility extension to the corridor, etc.) to include in planning efforts.

### **Federal and State Engagement**

Katherine Hollis of Eastrail Partners and David St. John from King County DNRP provided updates on federal and state engagement.

#### *State*

- Eastrail projects with funding through Move Ahead WA:
  - SR202 Trestle in Woodinville: \$5M
  - Bellevue Area Eastrail projects (Wilburton Trestle, I-90 Steel Bridge and trail): \$18M
  - Acquisition of corridor in Gene Coulon Park: \$6M
- Language in final transportation budget provides flexibility in the timing of Move Ahead funding, including through the use of reimbursement mechanisms.
- HAWK signal at 132<sup>nd</sup> PI NE/Slater Ave NE and Eastrail in Kirkland is also receiving funding through the current state budget process.
- SB [5452](#) authorizes impact fees to fund bike/pedestrian infrastructure.
- E-bike rebate program and funding to establish an e-bike lending program.

#### *Federal*

- I-90 Steel Bridge \$25M RAISE grant application to complete and pave final major trail segment connecting corridor communities and support a full range of desired uses and anticipated use levels by 2028. Project includes removing rails; cleaning, painting, and paving steel bridge; designing protective/security measures; installing lighting along 1.7 miles; repairing/improving SE 32<sup>nd</sup> trestle for trail use; and connecting to Mountains to Sound Greenway Trail. Full project funding strategy includes \$12M from Move Ahead WA over next three biennia, \$25M RAISE grant as well as other federal funding mechanisms, and other TBD sources including King County Parks levy funding and public and private contributions.

#### *Discussion*

- Councilmember Balducci requested Eastrail Partners share information about the e-bike sharing program.
- Members discussed ways to best position the RAISE grant application, including organizing an educational trip with the Washington federal delegation to support engagement and advocacy. Eastrail Partners will begin organizing and provide updates to RAC members.

### **Co-creation and Community Engagement**

Katherine Hollis provided updates on Eastrail public arts projects and community engagement.

- Eastrail Partners has been presenting the Guiding Principles to partner Arts Commissions, including 4 Culture, Bellevue, Renton, Redmond, Woodinville and Kirkland.
- Received a Foster Belonging grant in partnership with Eastside for All to co-create art along the Eastrail. Project will bring together immigrant and non-immigrant communities to co-create a

cross-cultural art project. 14 participants attended the project's first meeting on April 25 in Kirkland and will meet monthly. Currently recruiting BIPOC artists to create inclusionary call for artists. Goal is to identify co-created art project by the fall. Eastrail Partners will share the invitation to join the project planning group.

### Summer Events Planning

Joe Inslee of King County and Katherine Hollis shared information about upcoming summer events in conjunction with capital project and engagement work happening on Eastrail.

- **Northup Connector:** going to bid and construction this summer to connect ramp between Eastrail and 520 Trail and Northup Way. Plan to complete in August and hold a celebration at the end of the summer.
- **Totem Lake Bridge:** ribbon cutting and community activation event July 8.
- **NE 8<sup>th</sup> Bridge:** ribbon cutting planned for October, event will also highlight partnership with local artists and Japanese American Agricultural Heritage art commemoration.
- Community activation events on Eastrail:
  - May 12: Eastrail tour with Mountains to Sound Greenway and Leafline Trails. Email [info@eastrailpartners.org](mailto:info@eastrailpartners.org) to RSVP.
  - May 19: Bike to Work Day
  - July 12 - August 5: summer evenings events in Feriton Spur Park.
- City events: shifting to building awareness of events near/along the trail and reminding people that Eastrail is a great way to get to those events.
  - Redmond
    - Derby Days July 14/15
    - Rockin' on the River summer concert series Wednesday evenings in August
    - Redmond Open Streets August 26
  - Woodinville
    - Wilmot Gateway Park summer concert series Wednesday evenings in July
    - City Hall farmers market May - Sept
  - Kirkland
    - Friday night markets

### Progress and Success Updates

Bellevue – Looking forward to the various partner projects that will complete three major projects that connect Eastrail segments and fill gaps by end of 2023, including NE 8<sup>th</sup> crossing, Northup Way connector, and Totem Lake connector.

King County – looking forward to NE 8<sup>th</sup> crossing opening in October, encourage people to attend. Design work is underway for interim trail between 6<sup>th</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup> with a continuous connection once the bridge opens. Also making progress on I-405 crossing and approaching completion.

Kirkland – encourage people to attend July 8 Totem Lake connector ribbon cutting event.

Redmond – RCCIII is at 60% design and on budget and on schedule. Will have drone show at Derby Days. Redmond high school seniors can apply for \$1,500 [Derby Do Gooder community service scholarship](#) through June 4.

Renton – construction is underway on trestle bridge and north water walk at Coulon Park. Targeting June for trestle bridge and summer for north water walk completions. Will also be doing a drone show in Downtown Renton during Renton River Days, July 21-23.

Snohomish County – continuing to work through legal issues related to securing railroad rights access and ownership. Have a property north of the Brightwater Wastewater Treatment Plant which will be main trailhead onto Eastrail and are in the first phase of permitting to begin construction. Currently scoping trail connection project between Everett and Snohomish on Snohomish River Trail which will feed into Eastrail. Also in design for a three-mile section of incomplete trail that will connect the White Horse Trail to the Centennial Trail as well as a section currently closed due to slide impacts.

Woodinville – SR202 Trestle project is moving forward and includes a connector over SR202 and an Eastrail-branded mixed-use development. Also applying for a RAISE grant in the current 2023 round for initial planning and design of their section of the corridor.

#### **Public comment**

- Jim Schnitzius requested the time for the Totem Lake bridge ribbon cutting. It has not been set but RAC members will be promoting the event and publish this information soon.

The meeting recording is available here: [2023 Meetings - King County](#). Interested parties should send comments to [eastrail@kingcounty.gov](mailto:eastrail@kingcounty.gov). Joe Inslee will compile any additional comments received.

#### **Next steps and adjournment**

The date of the next RAC meeting is July 27 and is tentatively planned as an in-person event. Staff will send out meeting registration information soon.

The meeting adjourned at 11:47 am.