

**CITY COUNCIL REGULAR SESSION**

Motion to approve the Eastrail Regional Advisory Council (RAC) Memorandum of Understanding.

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*City Manager's Office*

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**EXECUTIVE SUMMARY**

Bellevue has been a member of the Eastrail RAC since 2017 when a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) expanded membership to all Eastrail owners and adjacent jurisdictions. The Eastrail RAC is updating its member agreement to create two co-Chairs: one will be an elected official from the King County Eastrail RAC membership and the other will be an elected official from another Eastrail owner jurisdiction. Bellevue's RAC representative is ineligible to serve in the co-chair role because the City is not an Eastrail owner jurisdiction.

Staff is seeking Council direction to authorize the City Manager to enter into an updated MOU with King County.

**RECOMMENDATION**

Move to approve the Eastrail Regional Advisory Council (RAC) Memorandum of Understanding.

**BACKGROUND/ANALYSIS****Ownership and Interests**

Eastrail is part of a 42-mile rail line that was previously owned by Burlington Northern Santa Fe Railway Company. Eastrail extends from Renton north into Snohomish County, passing through Bellevue, Kirkland, Woodinville and portions of unincorporated King County. It also includes a spur (called the Redmond Spur) that extends seven-plus miles from Woodinville south to Redmond.

King County owns large segments of the corridor and holds a trail easement along segments that are owned by others. Redmond, Kirkland and Woodinville own segments of the corridor within their jurisdictions. Sound Transit owns a 1.1 mile segment of the corridor in Bellevue and holds an easement for transit along other segments; and Puget Sound Energy also holds an easement for utility use along the corridor.

Although the City of Bellevue is not an Eastrail owner, it is the permitting authority for the segment that passes within the City limits. The City has a keen interest in the development of a high quality, multi-use trail for broad public use along the corridor.

**Proposed Eastrail RAC MOU**

The Eastrail RAC was established in 2013 for Eastrail owners and easement holders to coordinate planning and development activities on the rail banked portion of the corridor and the Redmond Spur.

Since that time, the group acknowledged the need to expand the RAC membership to include representatives from non-owner jurisdictions and groups who support the development of the vision for the corridor and surrounding land uses.

At its June 2017 meeting, the RAC unanimously voted to approve a new MOU that formally expands the RAC's membership, establishes a new leadership structure, supports the Eastrail vision, and coordinates Eastrail efforts with regard to planning and development, outreach and funding approaches. The 2017 MOU directed that the Chair must be a King County Councilmember or the County Executive, and the Vice Chair must be a representative of a Eastrail RAC Owner entity.

In July 2017, Council provided direction to the City Manager to enter into the MOU with King County.

Earlier this year, King County proposed a change in the leadership structure. Under the current framework, the group had a Chair from the King County Eastrail RAC membership and a Vice Chair from the other Eastrail owner jurisdictions. Under the proposed new structure, there would be two co-Chairs: one will be an elected official from the King County Eastrail RAC membership and the other will be an elected official from another Eastrail owner jurisdiction. Bellevue's RAC representative is ineligible to serve in the co-chair role because the City is not an Eastrail owner jurisdiction. With the exception of the RAC leadership selection, which will be chosen by the Eastrail owners every two years, the RAC will continue to operate on a consensus basis for all decision-making and will not take votes.

The updated MOU also formally recognizes the corridor to be called Eastrail, which was formerly the Eastrail Rail Corridor (ERC).

During the January 31 Eastrail RAC meeting, members recommended changing the leadership structure and memorializing changes through an update to the MOU. Now that the MOU has been approved by the RAC, all RAC member organizations are asked to sign the new MOU.

The Eastrail RAC MOU comports well with the City's stated Eastrail interests, including the following:

- Upholding the Eastrail vision
- Developing a roadmap for the future
- Being collaborative and transparent

Bellevue staff will return to Council at a future meeting with a comprehensive update on the Eastrail, including a progress report on funding for the Wilburton Trestle and the I-90 Steel Bridge, and a construction update on the NE 8<sup>th</sup> Street overcrossing.

## **POLICY & FISCAL IMPACTS**

### **Policy Impact**

Bellevue City Council's 2021-2023 Vision and Priorities (Regional Leadership and Influence) calls for Council to be an active regional partner, whether it is with cities east of the lake, Seattle and King County, schools and special purpose districts, or the state and federal government. The Eastside RAC is one of a number of local and regional forums where Bellevue representatives work to advance the City's multi-modal goals, policies and interests.

Further, Council's 3-year Priorities 2021-2023 calls to work with King County and Sound Transit to ensure that Eastrail from Renton to the Wilburton Trestle is completed; complete the section of the trail from Kirkland to the Light Rail Maintenance Facility East; complete the interim connection through the Spring District; and begin to establish community connection points to Eastrail.

**Fiscal Impact**

The new Eastrail MOU does not commit the parties to financial partnerships or contributions, nor does it limit jurisdictional authority over individually owned segments of Eastrail.

**OPTIONS**

1. Approve the Eastrail Regional Advisory Council (RAC) Memorandum of Understanding.
2. Do not approve the Eastrail Regional Advisory Council (RAC) Memorandum of Understanding and provide alternative direction to staff.

**ATTACHMENTS & AVAILABLE DOCUMENTS**

- A. City of Bellevue November 21, 2016 Eastside Rail Corridor Council Interest Statement
- B. Proposed updated Eastrail RAC MOU

**AVAILABLE IN COUNCIL LIBRARY**

N/A