

## **BELLEVUE INTEREST STATEMENT FOR THE EASTSIDE RAIL CORRIDOR**

*Adopted July 22, 2013*

The City of Bellevue supports regional efforts to develop the Eastside Rail Corridor (ERC) for public use and benefit. The City has long supported preservation of this important public right-of-way for multiple public uses. This approach is consistent with regional organizations, local governments, and owners of the corridor. The development of the ERC within King County offers a significant step toward providing important north/south connectivity between local communities from Renton to Woodinville and points along this major public corridor. Over time, this connection provides a rare and unique opportunity to create a variety of benefits and uses for the public. The Bellevue City Council supports the following principles for future corridor design and implementation processes within the King County segment of the corridor:

1. **Governance Structure and Implementation Plan.** Following on the work of the 2013 ERC Regional Advisory Council, Bellevue strongly supports the establishment of a standing regional governing body, including a seat for Bellevue, to provide oversight of the planning, development and implementation steps among affected jurisdictions and parties. This body should be responsible for developing an interim and long-term conceptual plan for the corridor. Examples of the range of work should include the following priority objectives:
  - **Advance the work of the ERC Advisory Council.** Refine the vision developed by the ERC.
  - **Plan for the future.** Develop a roadmap for the design, management and implementation activities in the corridor vision.
  - **Develop a phased, well-integrated plan.** Ensure affected local intersections and state highway interchanges along the corridor are carefully analyzed, planned and phased, especially where there are overlapping or competing interests for uses of the ERC right-of-way in highly constrained locations.
  - **Balance continuity and local interests.** Ensure all efforts address continuity of design incorporating the diverse interests of communities along the corridor.
  - **Be strategic and transparent.** Develop the corridor in a highly collaborative, open and transparent manner that achieves multiple objectives and efficiencies in design, funding, construction and ongoing maintenance of the corridor.
  - **Engage the public.** Design and conduct a comprehensive public outreach program that ensures stakeholder involvement throughout the process.
2. **Develop a Complementary, Comprehensive and Sustainable Financial Plan.** The regional governing body and affected parties should work closely to secure financial support from a range of sources including state, federal and private organizations for capital and operating improvements. Specifically, the financial plan should:
  - Prioritize key investments along the corridor.
  - Provide guidance concerning specific funding alternatives.
  - Use innovative financing mechanisms.
  - Ensure that value engineering, cost containment and other mechanisms are used to optimize funding.

3. **Implement Multiple Uses.** Development of this corridor is an important component for the Eastside's increasingly multimodal transportation network as the Eastside, Bellevue and the region continue to grow. In addition to implementing a trail supporting pedestrian and bicycle uses and passenger rail uses, there are opportunities to achieve multiple policy objectives and efficiencies given the proximity of public utility uses within, under and adjacent to the corridor. As multiple uses are planned, consideration must be given to mitigating noise, mobility, visual and other impacts to residents and businesses along the corridor, improved mobility for pedestrians and bicyclists as well as investigating national and regional best practices and case studies for multimodal uses of the corridor that add capacity to the transportation system.
4. **City Implementation Challenges.** Bellevue has a number of key interests related to phasing and implementation intended to improve multimodal connectivity, help reduce congestion and maintain public safety where the corridor and other improvements overlap, including the following:
  - **Grade Separation.** The City has a number of intersections (NE 4th, NE 6th and NE 8th streets) that cross the corridor right-of-way. Of particular concern is the highly constrained area at NE 8th that will require careful planning and design and where grade separation must be explored.
  - **Sound Transit Projects.** The City and Sound Transit are working to deliver the East Link light rail project. Within the project envelope, there are a number of areas that will require special design consideration. For example, if the International Paper site is ultimately chosen for Sound Transit's East Link project operations and maintenance satellite facility, it must be carefully vetted and well integrated into the Region's vision for the Eastside Rail Corridor. Similarly, special care should be given to the multiple uses near the new East Link Hospital Station on NE 8th Street.
  - **State Highways.** WSDOT's future highway expansion also overlaps with the corridor in downtown Bellevue. The corridor design process must be fully integrated with affected state improvements, including all areas of over- and undercrossing at I-405 and I-90 (including the crossing that was removed as part of the recent I-405 widening project due north of I-90).
  - **Public Access.** Planning efforts must ensure optimal public access points along the corridor.
  - **Wilburton Trestle.** The Wilburton Trestle is an iconic structure and, to the greatest extent possible, should be optimized for public use.
  - **Regional Trail and Other Major Destinations.** The implementation plan should ensure quality connections to major destinations in Bellevue such as the Mountains to Sound Greenway, Mercer Slough, Coal Creek Park, Newcastle Beach Park, 520 Trail, Bel-Red redevelopment area, and Downtown Bellevue.
5. **Ensure Planning Consistency and Innovation.** Relevant regional and local transportation plans, including those developed by the Puget Sound Regional Council (VISION 2040 and Transportation 2040), Sound Transit (ST2 and related Long Range Plan and ST3). ST3, a new effort just getting underway, will provide a new list of high capacity transit improvements for a possible 2016 ballot measure. City Comprehensive Plans and other local improvement plans will require updates to reflect current ERC planning and corridor analysis.