

BELLEVUE INTEREST STATEMENT FOR THE EASTSIDE RAIL CORRIDOR

November 21, 2016

The City of Bellevue supports regional efforts to develop the Eastside Rail Corridor (ERC) for public use. The ERC provides a rare and unique opportunity to create a variety of transportation, recreation, utility and community development benefits for the public. The development of the ERC offers a significant step toward providing important north/south connectivity between the cities of Renton, Bellevue, Kirkland, Redmond and Woodinville, as well as economic vitality and placemaking opportunities throughout this major regional corridor. The Bellevue City Council supports the following principles for future corridor design and implementation:

- 1. 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, bicycle and transit 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 well as the close proximity to some of Bellevue's most dense existing and future neighborhoods. As multiple uses are planned, consideration must be given to mitigating noise, mobility, visual and other impacts to residents and businesses along the corridor, while maximizing placemaking and improved mobility. National and regional best practices and case studies for multiple uses of the corridor should be considered during the implementation process.
- 2. Implementation Considerations within Bellevue.** Bellevue has a number of key interests related to phasing and implementation of the corridor projects. These interests need to be closely coordinated with the ERC to provide alternate commute mode options, improve multimodal connectivity, enhance placemaking and recreation use, bolster economic development, and maintain public safety along the corridor.
 - **Wilburton Grand Connection Land Use and Transportation Project.** The ERC is an integral element of the Wilburton Commercial Area, offering significant opportunities to implement trail and transit-oriented development in the redevelopment area. The Grand Connection provides the opportunity to create a strong link between Meydenbauer Bay, Downtown Bellevue and the ERC, increasing multimodal transportation options for residents and workers within the City's center.
 - **City Street Grade Separation Opportunities.** The City has a number of intersections (NE 4th, NE 6th and NE 8th streets) that cross the corridor right-of-way and will require careful planning and design, and potentially grade separation. Of particular concern is the highly constrained area at NE 8th Street, which requires a grade separated overcrossing and seamless integration with Sound Transit's East Link light rail project.
 - **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, including the Wilburton Station Area, Operation and Maintenance Facility East, and the potential extension of light rail from Wilburton Station to the South Kirkland Park and Ride. In all cases, Sound Transit facilities must be well integrated into the region's vision for the ERC. Similarly, special care should be given to the multiple uses near the new East Link Wilburton Station on NE 8th Street.

- **State Highways.** WSDOT's future highway expansion overlaps with the corridor in Bellevue, and south to Renton. 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.
- **Wilburton Trestle.** The Wilburton Trestle is a state historic landmark and an iconic structure for the City, the region and the ERC as a whole. The trestle, including the land under and around the structure, should be optimized for public use. Public safety should be carefully considered during the design and eventual operation of the Trestle.
- **Regional Trail and Other Major Destinations.** The implementation plan should ensure quality connections to major destinations in Bellevue such as the Grand Connection, Mountains to Sound Greenway, Mercer Slough, Coal Creek Park, Newcastle Beach Park, SR 520 Trail, and the BelRed redevelopment area. Planning efforts must ensure abundant public access points to the City's local trail system and provide connections to Bellevue neighborhoods along the corridor.
- **Consistency with Local Plans.** The ERC, as it is implemented through Bellevue, must support and enhance policies and actions of Bellevue's local plans including, but not limited to, the Comprehensive Plan, the Parks & Open Space System Plan, the Pedestrian and Bicycle Transportation Plan and Bellevue Transit Master Plan. The trail should be context sensitive to the areas through which it passes, and align with existing and planned land uses.

3. **Governance Structure and Implementation Plan.** Bellevue strongly supports the constitution of a standing regional governing body, including a seat for Bellevue, to provide oversight of the planning, development and implementation for the trail amongst owners, adjacent jurisdictions and key stakeholders. This body should be responsible for keeping the vision of the corridor, developing an interim and long-term funding strategy, and sharing information about relevant activities within the corridor. Examples of the range of work should include the following objectives:

- **Advance the vision of the ERC.** Uphold the vision developed by the regional governing body for the ERC.
- **Plan for the future.** Develop a roadmap for management, funding and implementation activities in the corridor vision.
- **Develop a phased, well-integrated plan.** Ensure the King County ERC Trail Master Plan is implemented at a high quality, and that affected local intersections and state highway interchanges along the corridor are carefully analyzed, planned and phased. This is particularly important where there are overlapping or competing interests for uses (like utilities) of the ERC right-of-way in highly constrained locations. Implementation strategies should be informed by careful consideration of public safety for all users.
- **Balance continuity and local interests.** Ensure all efforts collaboratively address continuity of design, incorporating the diverse interests of communities along the corridor, while creating an important non-motorized intra-Eastside connection.
- **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.

4. Develop a Complementary, Comprehensive and Sustainable Financial Plan. The regional governing body should work to secure financial support from a range of sources including federal, state, county, cities 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.
- Identify partnership opportunities for joint grant applications and interlocal agreements.
- Ensure that value engineering, cost containment and other mechanisms are used to optimize funding while still fulfilling the vision of the ERC Trail Master Plan.