

CITY COUNCIL STUDY SESSION

Update on the Eastside Rail Corridor Implementation Activities

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DIRECTION NEEDED FROM COUNCIL

Christie True, Director of the King County Department of Natural Resources and Parks (DNRP), will provide an overview of plans for the Eastside Rail Corridor (ERC). The ERC is a new regional trail that will connect the cities of Renton, Bellevue, Kirkland, Woodinville, and Redmond with new opportunities for non-motorized recreation and transportation. The following topics will be addressed in tonight's presentation:

**INFORMATION
ONLY**

- ERC project implementation in Bellevue
- Recent work by the ERC Regional Advisory Council and the ERC Funding Commission
- Public input regarding the Wilburton segment received at the October 9 Open House

Tonight's briefing is an opportunity to learn more about the status of the ERC, ask questions and provide feedback. No Council action is required.

RECOMMENDATION

N/A

BACKGROUND & ANALYSIS

The ERC is a 42-mile rail line that was previously owned by the Burlington Northern Santa Fe (BNSF) Railway Company. The ERC extends from Renton north to Snohomish County, passing through Bellevue, Kirkland, Woodinville and portions of unincorporated King County. It also includes a spur (called the Redmond Spur) that extends about seven miles from Woodinville south to Redmond. King County owns segments of the corridor and holds a continuous trail easement along segments that are

owned by others. Redmond, Kirkland, Woodinville and Snohomish County also own segments of the corridor. Sound Transit owns a 1.1-mile segment of the corridor in Bellevue and holds an easement for transit along other portions. Puget Sound Energy also holds an easement for utility use along the corridor.

Although Bellevue is not an ERC owner, it is the permitting authority for the segment within the City limits. The City has an interest in the development of a high-quality, multi-use trail for broad public use along the corridor. The Bellevue City Council adopted an updated ERC Interest Statement in November 2016 that recognizes the multiple uses of the corridor, identifies implementation considerations, supports a regional approach to planning and governing the corridor, and recognizes the need for a comprehensive and sustainable financial approach for investing in the corridor. The interest statement is included as Attachment A.

The 2018-2020 City Council Vision and Priorities also calls for the City to work with the County and Sound Transit to ensure that the ERC from Renton to the Wilburton Trestle is completed; complete the section of the trail from Kirkland to Sound Transit's Operations and Maintenance Facility: East; complete the interim connection through the Spring District; and begin to establish community connection points to the ERC.

Since 2016 planning and design work for a multi-use trail along the ERC has continued, and King County has recently completed segments of an interim gravel surface trail at the north and the south ends of the trail in Bellevue. In 2017, the City of Redmond completed the second segment of the Redmond Central Connector, Redmond's spur-line portion of the ERC. With this segment completed, the improved trail is open to the public between Bear Creek and NE 100th Street in the Willows Road area.

Regional Governance

Since 2013, the ERC owners have worked together through the Eastside Rail Corridor Regional Advisory Council (RAC) to maintain a collaborative, regional planning process for the ERC. In 2017, the RAC structure was revised to include adjacent non-owner jurisdictions (Bellevue and Renton) and the Eastside Greenway Alliance (a coalition of seven community non-profit organizations interested in supporting development of the corridor). Councilmember John Stokes serves as the Bellevue representative on the RAC. This year, the RAC is overseeing a branding initiative to develop a new name and identity for the trail.

Earlier this year, the RAC also convened the ERC Funding Commission to produce recommendations for funding implementation of the various ERC trail segments. Made up of 17 representatives from the private and non-profit sectors, the Funding Commission is identifying opportunities for private, non-governmental and public-private partnerships to fund ERC trail development.

ERC Projects in Bellevue

Christie True, King County DNRP Director, will present an update on the various planning, design, and early implementation efforts underway along the trail and within Bellevue. These include:

- Rail removal and replacement with interim trail surfaces on the north and south portions of the corridor in Bellevue;
- Status of the trail overcrossing at NE 8th Street;
- Permanent paved trail improvements planned in South Bellevue and across the I-405 Wilburton gap, that will be implemented as part of the Washington State Department of Transportation's (WSDOT) I-405 Renton to Bellevue Widening and Express Toll Lanes project;
- Rehabilitating the Wilburton Trestle and retrofitting it for trail use;
- Planning underway to establish a vertical and horizontal alignment for the trail through the Wilburton Commercial Area – to be aligned with the City's Grand Connection and Wilburton redevelopment plan initiatives; and
- Planned connections from the ERC trail to the SR 520 Trail, the I-90 Mountains to Sound Greenway Trail, and to other points in Bellevue such as the Spring District.

2019 King County Parks Levy Planning

King County DNRP Director Christie True will describe which ERC projects are under consideration for inclusion in a King County Parks levy that could be placed on the ballot in 2019. King County is in the planning stages for the levy, which would replace the six-year King County Parks, Trails, and Open Space Replacement Levy, approved by voters in 2013. Funding for the NE 8th Street trail overcrossing and the Wilburton Trestle rehabilitation projects could be included in the levy proposal.

POLICY & FISCAL IMPACTS

Council adopted an Interest Statement for the ERC in November 2016 that recognizes the unique quality of this corridor and its potential to serve multiple uses. The interest statement identifies key interests related to projects that will be addressed in tonight's presentation, including:

- The highly constrained area at NE 8th Street that requires a grade-separated overcrossing and seamless integration with Sound Transit's East Link light rail project.
- The ERC design process must be fully integrated with WSDOT's planned facility improvements, such as the I-405 Renton to Bellevue Widening and Express Toll Lane project.
- The ERC is an integral element of the Wilburton Commercial Area, offering significant opportunities to promote trail- and transit-oriented development.

The 2018-2020 City Council Vision and Priorities also calls for the City to work with the County and Sound Transit to ensure that the ERC from Renton to the Wilburton Trestle is completed; complete the section of the trail from Kirkland to Sound Transit's Operations and Maintenance Facility: East; complete the interim connection through the Spring District; and begin to establish community connection points to the ERC.

The following is a summary of Bellevue's funding contributions and commitments to the ERC trail development:

- Bellevue allocated \$1 million to the ERC project (G-103) in the 2015-2021 Capital Investment Program (CIP). The funding was intended to be used for the development of conceptual design, other amenities (such as plantings or gravel pathways) or purchases along the ERC. Bellevue increased the funding allocation to \$2.5 million in the 2017-2023 CIP. Council directed that \$500,000 be used to advance the design of key crossings and connections in the Wilburton segment in partnership with other regional agencies. The remaining \$2 million is intended for improvements to the Wilburton Trestle.
- In 2014, Bellevue competed for Surface Transportation Program funding in the Puget Sound Regional Council's (PSRC) countywide program. In 2016, \$350,000 was allocated to design multimodal connections to the Wilburton Station. Bellevue worked with the PSRC to designate the King County DNRP as the lead agency to design a grade-separated, non-motorized crossing of NE 8th Street and the interface between the planned ERC trail and the Wilburton Station.
- In 2015, Bellevue completed a new crosswalk for the Eastside Rail Corridor at 108th Avenue NE. Bellevue's cost for this improvement was approximately \$55,000.
- In 2017, Bellevue contributed \$45,000 to the design of the NE 8th Street overcrossing.

OPTIONS

N/A

ATTACHMENTS & AVAILABLE DOCUMENTS

A. November 2016 Updated Eastside Rail Corridor Interest Statement

AVAILABLE IN COUNCIL LIBRARY

N/A