

July 24, 2017

## **CITY COUNCIL STUDY SESSION ITEM**

### **SUBJECT**

Eastside Rail Corridor Regional Advisory Council (RAC) Memorandum of Understanding

### **STAFF CONTACTS**

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### **POLICY ISSUES**

An updated Interest Statement on the Eastside Rail Corridor (ERC) was approved by the Council on November 21, 2016 that recognizes the unique quality of this regional corridor and its potential to serve multiple uses along the seven miles of corridor that extend through the City. A key part of the interest statement recognizes the need for a regional governance body for the ERC, including a formalized seat for Bellevue.

### **DIRECTION NEEDED FROM COUNCIL**

#### **ACTION**

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#### **DIRECTION**

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#### **INFORMATION ONLY**

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The current governing body, the ERC Regional Advisory Committee (ERC RAC), is being reconstituted to expand its membership to include Bellevue and other stakeholders.

Staff is seeking Council direction to authorize the City Manager to enter into a Memorandum of Agreement with King County that, among other things, formalizes the City's seat on the ERC RAC and commits the City to working with other ERC stakeholders to advance development of the Eastside Rail Corridor.

### **BACKGROUND/ANALYSIS**

#### **Ownership and Interests:**

The ERC is part of a 42-mile rail line that was previously owned by Burlington Northern Santa Fe Railway Company. The ERC 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 ERC 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 Eastside Rail Corridor Regional Advisory Council Memorandum of Understanding (MOU):**

The ERC RAC was established in 2013 for ERC 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 has 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. In mid-2016, the RAC agreed to reconstitute and formalize its new membership base and to refresh its purpose. At its June 7, 2017 meeting, the RAC unanimously voted to approve a new MOU which is included in Attachment B. Now that the MOU has been approved by the RAC, all RAC member organizations are asked to sign the new MOU.

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

<b><u>Bellevue ERC Interest Statement –</u></b> <b>Below are key components from the Bellevue interest statement regarding regional governance (for a complete list of Interest Statement governance components, please see Attachment A, page 2.)</b>  <b>Based on these interests, a regional governing body should include the following:</b>	<b><u>New ERC RAC MOU –</u></b> <b>Below are key components of the new MOU, which is in alignment with Bellevue's stated interests (for a complete list of RAC objectives, please see Attachment B, page 2).</b>  <b>The new MOU includes the following:</b>
Create a governance body that includes trail owners, adjacent jurisdictions and key stakeholders.	The new MOU formally gives a seat on the RAC to all ERC owners, as well as adjacent jurisdictions like Bellevue and Renton, and the Eastside Greenway Alliance. Previously, the RAC membership only included owners.
Uphold the vision developed by the regional governing body for the ERC.	The RAC is charged with advancing the multiple-use vision of the ERC, as has been envisioned through the King County Trail Master Planning process and multiple complementary planning processes.
Develop a roadmap for management, funding and implementation activities in the corridor vision.	The RAC will coordinate on funding capital projects, developing advocacy agendas, and engaging potential private-sector funding partners on ERC projects and issues.
Develop the corridor in a highly collaborative, open and transparent manner that achieves multiple objectives and efficiencies in design, funding, construction, public outreach and ongoing maintenance of the corridor.	The RAC will serve as a venue for coordinating the planning, development, public engagement, communications and marketing activities in the corridor.

The agreement outlines a new leadership structure for the RAC. Previously, the group was co-chaired by the King County Council representative from District 6 and a designee of the King County Executive.

Under the new structure, the chair position can be held by a King County Council representative from District 6, 9, or 3, or the King County Executive or the Executive's designee.

The new structure also creates a vice chair position. An elected official from an owner jurisdiction is eligible to serve as the vice chair. Under this structure, Bellevue, Renton, Sound Transit, Puget Sound Energy and the Eastside Greenway Alliance are ineligible to serve in the vice chair role. With the exception of the RAC leadership selection, which will be chosen by the ERC owners every two years, the RAC will operate on a consensus basis for all decision-making and will not take votes.

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

Bellevue staff will return to Council this fall with a comprehensive update on the ERC, including a progress report on opening the interim trail to the public in Bellevue, funding for the Wilburton Trestle and new information on the NE 8<sup>th</sup> Street overcrossing, among other things.

#### **ALTERNATIVES**

N/A

#### **RECOMMENDATION**

N/A

#### **ATTACHMENTS**

- A. City of Bellevue November 21, 2016 ERC Council Interest Statement
- B. Proposed new ERC RAC Memorandum of Understanding

#### **AVAILABLE IN COUNCIL DOCUMENT LIBRARY**

N/A