

# MEMORANDUM



Bellevue Parks &  
Community Services

DATE: March 1, 2021

TO: Parks & Community Services Board

FROM: Camron Parker, Parks Property and Acquisition Manager

SUBJECT: Eastrail Project Update  
*(Information only; no Board action requested)*

At the March meeting, staff from King County Parks and Eastrail Partners will provide information on the Eastrail project. This transformational regional trail project will be constructing and opening trail segments throughout Bellevue over the coming years. The presentation will focus on what is planned and underway in 2021.

## Background

The Eastrail, formerly called the Eastside Rail Corridor, is a 42-mile rail line that was previously owned by the Burlington Northern Santa Fe (BNSF) Railway Company. The Eastrail 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. A map of the Eastrail is included as Attachment A. 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 holds an easement for utility use along the corridor. A map of the Bellevue segment is included as Attachment B.

Development of the trail is supported in the 2018-2020 Bellevue City Council Vision and Priorities, which call for the City to:

- Work with King County and Sound Transit to ensure that the Eastside Rail Corridor 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 [in the BelRed area];
- Complete the interim connection through the Spring District; and,
- Begin to establish community connection points to the Eastside Rail Corridor.

## **Eastrail Projects in Bellevue**

Planning, design and implementation efforts underway along the trail and within Bellevue include:

- NE 8<sup>th</sup> Street Overcrossing. The County is in the permitting phase for the Eastrail overcrossing at NE 8<sup>th</sup> Street. The overcrossing will provide a safe and comfortable connection over a major arterial and allow pedestrians and bicyclists access to Sound Transit's Wilburton Station. The crossing will be a key junction for frequent transit service, vibrant neighborhoods, thriving businesses, and recreational opportunities. The bridge design team is collaborating with the Japanese American Commemoration Project to memorialize the contributions of the Japanese American community in Bellevue. This project is fully funded. Construction is expected to begin this fall and must be completed in 2022, before the East Link light rail is electrified.
- I-405 Renton to Bellevue Widening and Express Toll Lanes (ETLs) Project. This Washington State Department of Transportation (WSDOT) project will pave the Eastrail from Coal Creek Parkway to Renton. This segment is expected to be completed and open to the public in May. WSDOT's project will also construct a crossing between SE 8<sup>th</sup> Street and I-90 to carry the trail over the southbound lanes of I-405.
- Wilburton Trestle. This project will rehabilitate the historic structure and connect the trail to SE 5<sup>th</sup> Street. The 2020-2025 King County parks, trails, and open space levy provides about \$25 million for the trestle, which is owned by King County. The Bellevue Capital Improvement Program includes \$2.5 million to support Eastrail projects, such as the Wilburton Trestle. Kaiser Permanente is contributing \$500,000 and the State Legislature provided \$3 million for the trestle project in the 2019-2021 biennium. King County plans to advertise for construction this fall and open the structure to the public in 2023. While this project is fully funded, stakeholders are seeking to raise \$5.5 million for the project, which would allow King County Parks levy funds to be used for other projects on the Eastrail.
- Spring Boulevard Connector. Last year, the Puget Sound Regional Council (PSRC) awarded Bellevue \$1.3 million in Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) funds for final project design for a connection between downtown Bellevue and the Spring District. The final design work is scheduled for 2023. An 850-foot-long trail will link the Eastrail with the new Spring Boulevard bicycle and pedestrian path. An estimated \$4.7 million is needed for construction.

- Northup Way Connector. REI and Facebook are each contributing \$1 million for the Northup Way Connector in Bellevue, and King County is contributing \$500,000. This King County project will link the Eastrail and the SR 520 Trail, serving as a gateway into Bellevue and the Spring District neighborhood. This project is scheduled to open next year.
- Connections to Bellevue neighborhoods and corridors. Bellevue Parks and Transportation staff are scoping and completing preliminary design for connections to the Eastrail at Main Street, SE 32<sup>nd</sup> Street, and the I-90 Trail. This work is supported by \$500,000 from Bellevue's Capital Improvement Program.
- Wilburton Eastrail Framework Plan. Between the Wilburton Trestle and NE 12<sup>th</sup> Street (approximately one mile), the Eastrail corridor is generally about 100 feet wide. Trail improvements are expected to involve about 24 feet of the corridor width. City and County staff are coordinating to develop a framework plan that will identify desired uses and improvements for the balance of the area within this segment of the corridor. The plan is expected to include examples of integration between trails and adjacent land uses and identify elements that mutually support activity along the trail and the adjacent development. Work on the Wilburton Eastrail Framework Plan, including engagement with stakeholders, is anticipated to start later this year. The City will manage the outreach component and the County will manage the plan development.

### **Eastrail Partners**

In 2018, an Eastrail Funding Commission was convened to make recommendations for the development of the Eastrail. The Commission was made up of 17 representatives from the private and non-profit sectors. In 2019, the Commission recommended creation of an independent organization – “Eastrail Partners” -- to lead private-sector fundraising efforts and provide a full-corridor perspective on funding decisions and priorities for trail construction and enhancement.

The Director of the organization will provide the Board with more background detail on Eastrail Partners and describe the group's priorities in the coming year. The Eastrail Partners Board of Directors has been formed and includes representatives from Amazon, REI, Seattle Children's, and other Bellevue businesses and property owners.