



# Transportation Commission Study Session

**DATE:** October 1, 2015

**TO:** Chair Lampe and Members of the Transportation Commission

**FROM:** Mike Ingram, Senior Planner, 452-4166, [mingram@bellevuewa.gov](mailto:mingram@bellevuewa.gov)  
*Transportation Department*  
Camron Parker, Senior Planner, 452-2032, [cparker@bellevuewa.gov](mailto:cparker@bellevuewa.gov)  
*Parks & Community Services*

**SUBJECT:** EASTSIDE RAIL CORRIDOR UPDATE

## **DIRECTION REQUESTED**

- Action
- X Discussion
- X Information

Staff will provide an update on the Eastside Rail Corridor (ERC). No specific action is requested from the Commission at this time.

## **BACKGROUND**

The City Council adopted an Interest Statement on the Eastside Rail Corridor on July 22, 2013. The statement recognizes the unique quality of this corridor and its potential to serve multiple uses. The 2015-16 adopted CIP allocates \$1 million for the Eastside Rail Corridor (CIP G-103).

Consistent with city policy and Council direction, staff have engaged with King County and other owners of the corridor to advance planning and implementation of a trail along the Bellevue segment of the ERC. There was a briefing and discussion of ERC at the City Council meeting on September 21. The Commission received a briefing on the King County ERC Trail Master Plan process on January 22, 2015.

## **INFORMATION**

The Eastside Rail Corridor is owned and managed by King County, the cities of Kirkland and Redmond, Sound Transit, and Puget Sound Energy. These owners work together through the Regional Advisory Council (RAC) to maintain a collaborative, regional planning process for the ERC. The City of Bellevue is an "Associate" member of the RAC, with staff from the Transportation and Parks & Community Services departments participating on RAC staff teams and staff from the City Manager's office providing relevant input to RAC initiatives.

Work on the ERC is moving forward actively on many fronts. A summary of major work items is provided below.

### **ERC Owners Regional Advisory Committee (RAC) Activity**

The current focus of the RAC is investigating options for a regional collaboration among public, private and non-profit stakeholders that would support the development of a paved trail on the ERC. A “summit” event is being planned for January 2016 to engage a range of stakeholders.

On July 22, 2015 a delegation from the City, led by Mayor Balducci, met with RAC members from King County and Sound Transit to discuss the City’s interest in moving forward with early implementation of trail improvements on the ERC in Bellevue from 108<sup>th</sup> Avenue NE (near the South Kirkland Park & Ride) to the Wilburton Station at NE 8th Street, as well as the key trail crossing at NE 8<sup>th</sup> Street. The group will meet again in early October to review updates of staff work directed at the July meeting and discuss next steps.

### **Early Implementation of Interim Trail in Bellevue**

Consistent with City Council direction, Bellevue and King County staff are working to identify the parameters, timeline and costs for an interim (gravel) trail on the ERC in Bellevue, extending south from the current terminus of the Cross Kirkland Corridor trail at approximately 108<sup>th</sup> Avenue NE (near the South Kirkland Park and Ride) on the Kirkland and Bellevue border. The City and the County are investigating a permitting and construction strategy and developing a high-level cost estimate based upon information shared by the City of Kirkland regarding their trail development. Once a potential time frame and cost are established, the City and County will discuss funding options and determine which agency is best positioned to lead construction. The agencies will also propose a plan for operation and maintenance of the interim trail.

### **King County Trail Master Planning Process**

As part of the trail master planning process, King County is preparing an Environmental Impact Statement (EIS). Staff from several departments have been involved in contributing information and providing feedback to the county for the master plan and EIS for a paved trail along the ERC. A draft plan and EIS is expected to be released in the first half of 2016, with final adoption of the plan by the King County Council in late 2016.

### **NE 8<sup>th</sup> ERC Trail Crossing Design and Funding**

Elected and appointed officials and staff from the City, King County and Sound Transit worked over the past several months to successfully secure the status of a future NE 8<sup>th</sup> Street elevated non-motorized crossing within the ST 3 funding package as a potential project in the System

Access Program. Sound Transit has agreed to work with the City and King County to review design options and participate in a joint effort that could potentially complete a crossing in conjunction with completion of the Wilburton station.

### **Wilburton Gap over I-405**

During this year's state Legislative session, funding was secured to supplement \$5 million included in the WSDOT I-405 budget to reestablish the ERC connection that was severed with the demolition of the I-405 Wilburton Tunnel in 2008. King County is arranging a follow-up meeting with RAC members, local legislators and City officials to review options for a new crossing and determine how local and state agencies can move ahead with design and engineering plans for a preferred option as well as further refine anticipated funding needs.

### **NEXT STEPS**

Staff will continue to monitor and support the various ERC-related initiatives described above. The next opportunity for public input on the King County Trail Master Plan process will be at a series of public Open House events in October. The Open House for the ERC segment in Bellevue north of I-90 is on October 12 at Cherry Crest Elementary School from 6pm-8pm. The Open House for the segment of the ERC south of I-90 is on October 13 at Renton High School from 5pm-7pm. Information on the Open House events is on the King County website at, <http://www.kingcounty.gov/erc>.

Staff anticipate returning to the Commission in early 2016, once King County has released their draft Trail Master Plan for public comment.

### **ATTACHMENTS**

1. CIP Project Description (G-103, Eastside Rail Corridor)
2. Eastside Rail Corridor Interest Statement, adopted July 22, 2013
3. Eastside Rail Corridor Coordination map (showing area for prospective interim trail)

# G-103 Eastside Rail Corridor

Category: **Econ Growth & Competitiveness**  
 Department: **City Manager's Office**

Status: **New**  
 Location: **Former BNSF Rail Corridor**

**Programmed Expenditures**

Programmed Expenditures	Appropriated To Date	FY 2015 Budget	FY 2016 Budget	FY 2017 Budget	FY 2018 Budget	FY 2019 Budget	FY 2020 Budget	FY 2021 Budget
1,000,000	-	1,000,000	-	-	-	-	-	-

**Description and Scope**

This project provides placeholder funding to be programed later but could include the development of conceptual design, other amenities (such as plantings or gravel pathways) or purchases along the Eastside Rail Corridor. The final programming of these funds will be addressed by Council. This project will assist in informing City coordination with King County Parks in developing and advancing design options for a trail that address the needs of the multiple agencies with ownership or other secured interest in using the corridor (including Sound Transit, PSE and King County Parks) while also meeting the needs and interests of the Bellevue community.

**Rationale**

This project assists in assuring that the city's interests are considered by King County and others in the planning for a regional trail on the Eastside Rail Corridor alignment. The corridor through Bellevue is owned by King County and Sound Transit and crosses multiple city streets and passes through commercial areas and neighborhoods.

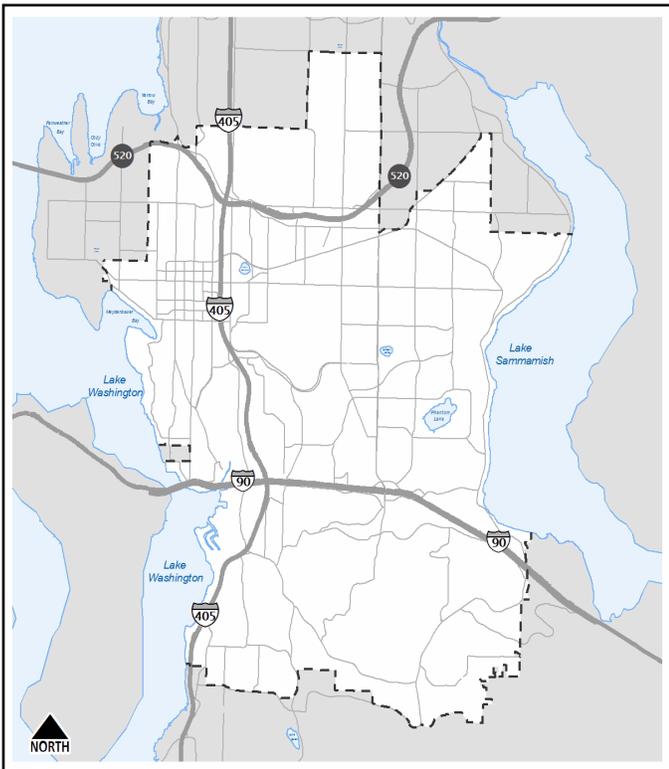
**Environmental Impacts**

A project specific environmental review, consistent with federal requirements, will be made during the project design phase.

**Operating Budget Impacts**

None

**Project Map**



**Schedule of Activities**

Project Activities	From - To	Amount
Project Costs	2015 - 2015	1,000,000
<b>Total Budgetary Cost Estimate:</b>		1,000,000

**Means of Financing**

Funding Source	Amount
General Taxes & LTGO Bond Proceeds	1,000,000

**Total Programmed Funding:** 1,000,000  
**Future Funding Requirements:**

**Comments**



# BELLEVUE INTEREST STATEMENT FOR THE EASTSIDE RAIL CORRIDOR

*Adopted July 22, 2013 by Bellevue City Council*

---

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.

# Eastside Rail Corridor Coordination

