



CITY OF KIRKLAND

Department of Public Works

123 Fifth Avenue, Kirkland, WA 98033 425.587.3800

www.ci.kirkland.wa.us

To: Dave Ramsay, City Manager

From: Ray Steiger, Interim Public Works Director
David Godfrey, P.E., Transportation Engineering Manager

Date: February 4, 2010

Subject: CORRESPONDENCE FROM MR. GARY GREENBERG

RECOMMENDATION:

It is recommended that the City Council authorize the Mayor to sign a letter of response to Mr. Greenberg who emailed comments on the process for developing improvements on the Eastside Rail Corridor.

BACKGROUND DISCUSSION:

Mr. Greenberg wishes to alert the Council to the process that is being taken to develop the Eastside Rail Corridor and to urge the Council to communicate the City of Kirkland's vision for the corridor to the County and Port. Mr. Greenberg also references a [report](#) prepared for the Legislature by Sound Transit and PSRC, showing the costs and ridership of a potential rail line. An update on the Eastside Rail Corridor is also on the Council agenda for February 16th and contains more details about the corridor's purchase and potential use.

Following Mr. Greenberg's email is an email from Karen Rasmussen to Port and County officials that questions the propriety of a proposal from the Cascadia institute to host a tour of the Eastside Rail corridor.

From: Gary Greenberg [mailto:g.greenberg@comcast.net]

Sent: Sunday, January 17, 2010 4:27 PM

To: Bob Sternoff; Doreen Marchione; Jessica Greenway; Dave Asher; Amy Walen; Penny Sweet; Joan McBride

Subject: BNSF Corridor

Dear Kirkland City Council:

Thank you for your service to our city!

I am forwarding an e-mail sent by one of our members to both Mike Merritt (Port of Seattle) and Pam Bissonnette (King County), regarding serious concerns that we have in reference to current control and usage of the BNSF corridor, public process and other issues. The e-mail was also cc'd to King County Council, Port of Seattle Commissioners and Sound Transit Board Members. There is the e-mail below, and another one that follows that.

The City of Kirkland needs to make clear to King County, the Port of Seattle and Sound Transit, its' vision of the "cross Kirkland trail" (for biking, walking and green commuting), and that a through (and formally promised) public process is necessary prior to any decisions whatsoever are made as to the uses of the corridor. Furthermore, just last year a State and Sound Transit sponsored PSRC report was released showing the substantial costs and safety concerns that surround running passenger rail on the corridor...seems to me that this is being ignored, especially since quite a few of the concerns addressed were within the city limits of Kirkland.

I look forward to hearing back from you.

Thank You...

Gary Greenberg
Eastside Trail Advocates
425-822-0941

I am forwarding a
----- Original Message -----

From: [Karen Rasmussen](#)

To: merritt.m@portseattle.org ; ['Bissonnette, Pam'](#)

Cc: steering@eastsidetrailadvocates.org

Sent: Saturday, January 16, 2010 1:36 PM

Subject: BNSF Corridor - follow up concerns

Mike and/or Pam – again, thank you both for talking with me last week about Eastside Trail Advocates' hopes to stage a celebratory walk on (and draw attention to the greenway potential of) the BNSF corridor, as it winds along the shores of Lake Washington.

We have a follow up question / concern regarding claims as to current control and usage of the corridor.

At the end of this email is an excerpt from an email sent out by the Cascadia / Discovery Institute (who are pushing, with GNP, for commuter rail on the corridor), inviting local government officials to a complimentary dinner and tour program on the Eastside corridor on February 3. Were you aware that Cascadia is intending to host an event on the corridor? This didn't come up in our discussions regarding permission to promote a walk on the corridor.

Aside from the conflict of interest issues that arise when private entities seeking public money provide gratuities to public officials, how can Cascadia circumvent the mandatory public process that is supposed to be conducted by public bodies – after acquisition by the various public bodies is finalized - to determine

what appropriate usage of the corridor in the public interest? They seem to be placing themselves in a position of stewardship over the corridor. The inclusion of Snohomish County Executive Reardon in this event adds a legitimacy which some might find offensive given the supposedly unsettled nature of the corridor.

One other point that occurred to us is that perhaps many of the public officials and decision makers have not actually traversed the corridor to view how it winds through neighborhood centers and backyards, beside parks and schools, and through forest and wetlands areas. This came up in the context of a meeting that several of ETA's members recently had with Jane Hague. When Jane was showed what a dual RR Track plus a trail and fences would look like (and the space it would take along the corridor) through the heart of the oldest neighborhoods in Kirkland, she seemed genuinely surprised and concerned about the type of development that would severely impact the greenway value and the character and value of one of the best residential towns on the Eastside.

If you haven't walked the corridor, particularly through Kirkland, we would encourage you to do so and/or would be happy to join you to provide narrative about the area – or if it would be helpful in advance of actually walking the corridor, we would be happy to meet and provide pictures and descriptions of various segments of the corridor. Please let us know if you are interested and we can schedule a time that is convenient for you.

Thank you again for your consideration of these issues. We look forward to hearing back regarding the public process issues raised above.

Karen Rasmussen
Eastside Trail Advocates
425-822-4649

steering@eastsidetrailadvocates.org
www.eastsidetrailadvocates.org

“In late December 2009, the Port of Seattle and BNSF reached an agreement that will allow the Renton to Snohomish rail line to remain intact. Under the agreement, King County, Sound Transit, the City of Redmond, Puget Sound Energy and the Cascade Water Alliance will purchase segments of the corridor.

This purchase agreement represents an unprecedented opportunity for the future development of transportation in the corridor – a corridor that can and should accommodate trail and commuter rail needs. In addition, we believe the corridor can be a shining example for smart and sustainable growth with numerous opportunities for transit oriented development at possible station sites.

The Cascadia Center for Regional Development cordially invites you to participate in a complimentary tour and dinner program on the Eastside Rail and Trail Corridor on February 3, 2010. The tour will depart from The Bellevue Club in downtown Bellevue at 3 p.m., and travel through Bellevue, Redmond, Kirkland and Woodinville - and the BNSF line - and return to Bellevue at 6 p.m.. Following the tour, we invite you to join us for a hosted dinner at The Bellevue Club from 6:00 – 9:00 p.m. On February 4 and 5, Seattle will host the New Partners for Smart Growth Conference for 2010. Attending the conference and joining the Cascadia Center's tour and dinner

program will be Andy Peri and Deb Hubsmith of the Marin County Bicycle Coalition, who will be in Seattle to attend the conference. Mr. Peri and Ms. Hubsmith are closely involved with the [Sonoma Marin Area Rail Transit \(SMART\)](#) in San Francisco's North Bay. SMART serves as a model of how to unite different communities in a common cause and offers a clear example of how a publicly owned railroad right of way can be developed to accommodate the needs of the community for **both** trail and bike users and commuter trains. We will find out how they successfully united bicycle clubs, train supporters, local communities and other user groups to achieve 70 percent support for the SMART project.

We have also confirmed that Sound Transit Board Chair and Snohomish County Executive Aaron Reardon will join us for the February 3 dinner, to discuss Sound Transit's successes and potential partnerships with the BNSF line. The evening concludes with a community response panel of elected leaders, local bicycle organizations from the Eastside and two organizations Cascadia works with on rail issues - All Aboard Washington and Transportation Choices – who will provide their perspectives on multiple use corridors on the Eastside.

We encourage you to participate in the tour and evening program, on February 3, to learn about the corridor, the issues involved and the challenges and opportunities that this corridor presents.

To RSVP to participate in the tour, the dinner or both, please contact Mollie Tschida at The Discovery Institute at molliet@discovery.org or at (206) 292-0401 ext. 111.

Bruce Agnew
Director
Cascadia Center for Regional Development
206-228-4011
bagnew@discovery.org”

DRAFT

February 17, 2010

Mr. Gary Greenberg
10335 NE 55th St.
Kirkland, WA 98033

Dear Mr. Greenberg:

Thank you for your email to the Kirkland City Council regarding the former Burlington Northern Santa Fe Eastside Rail Corridor. There is great interest by citizens and advocacy groups in how the corridor will be developed in the short and long term.

Over the next months, the City of Kirkland will be clarifying its position on the corridor and transmitting it to King County, the Port of Seattle, Sound Transit and other entities involved in ownership of the corridor. The City Council is aware of the studies concerning rail use that have been completed in the past and will consult them as we consider our position. We are committed to making sure that a full public process takes place before decisions about the corridor's use are finalized.

The City Council appreciates your thoughts and interest in how the Eastside Rail Corridor is developed. Please contact David Godfrey, Transportation Engineering Manager at (425)587-3865 or dgodfrey@ci.kirkland.wa.us if you have further questions on this or other transportation matters affecting Kirkland.

Sincerely,

Kirkland City Council

By Joan McBride, Mayor