



CITY OF KIRKLAND
Department of Public Works
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MEMORANDUM

To: Kurt Triplett, City Manager

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

Date: April 7, 2011

Subject: EASTSIDE RAIL CORRIDOR INTEREST STATEMENT

RECOMMENDATION

It is recommended that the Council approve the final Eastside Rail Corridor Interest Statement as proposed by the Kirkland Transportation Commission.

BACKGROUND

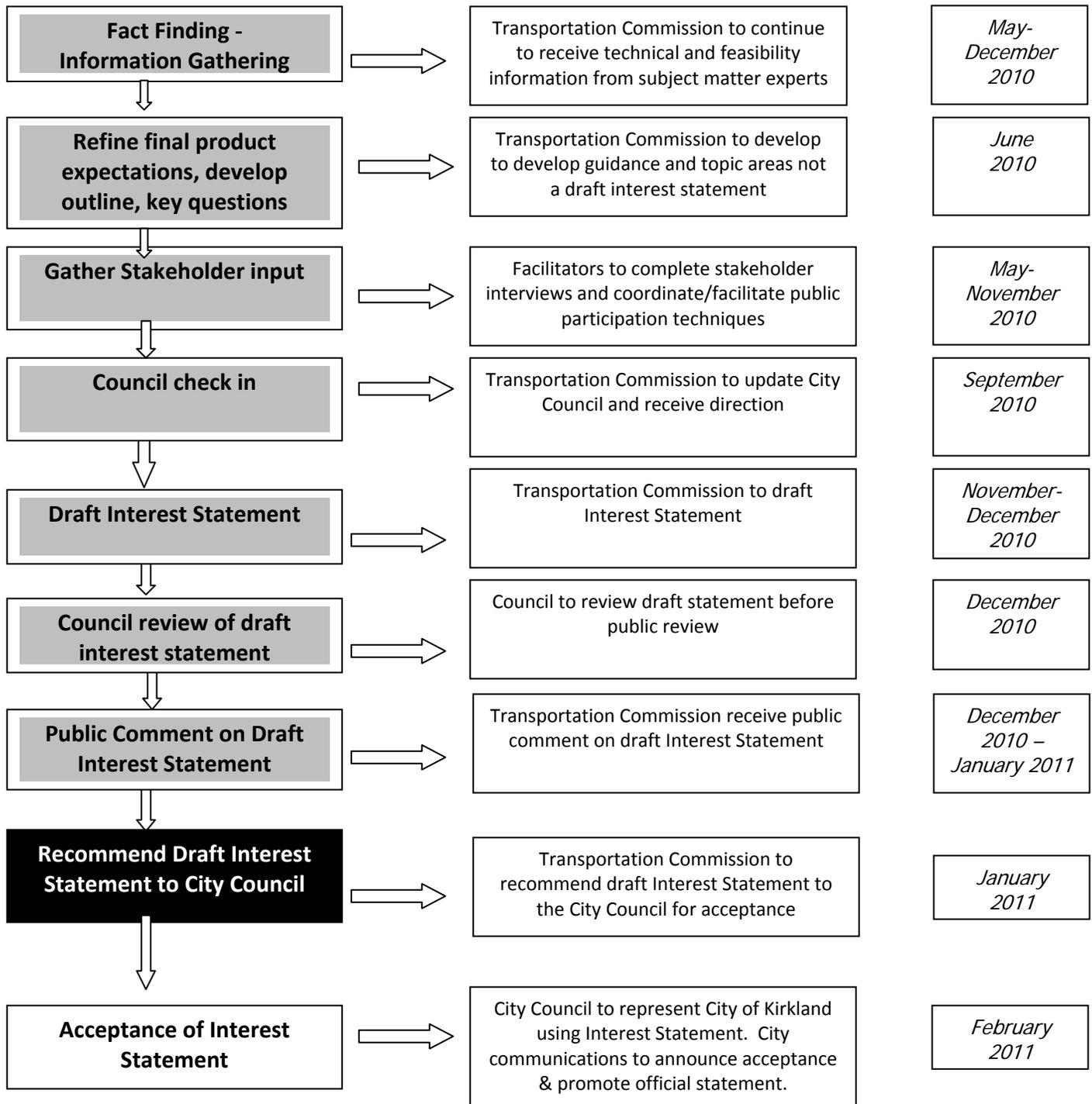
At its June 1, 2010 meeting, the City Council approved a process (see Figure 1) that would culminate in a statement describing the City's interests in development of the Eastside Rail Corridor. Council has received several updates on this process, the most recent occurring on January 18, 2011 when the Council approved a draft Interest Statement for public comment.

Since January, the Transportation Commission fielded a public survey and met with the Park Board, Planning Commission, and the Houghton Community Council. Within the public survey and at the meetings, the Commission focused on two questions: 1) are there any interests that are missing from the document? And 2) are there any interests in the Statement that should be removed? Additionally, the public has provided comments directly to the Commission at various Commission meetings.

During the on-line public survey period, 164 surveys were returned. 74% of the respondents stated that, overall, the Draft Interest Statement reflected their views; 22% stated that it did not reflect their views; and 3% were unsure on the issue. The Commission has concluded that these results demonstrated broad support for the Interest Statement as drafted. Details of the survey results, including verbatim comments, are described in Attachment 1 which is a memo that was prepared for the Transportation Commission. Beyond the survey, helpful comments have been received from each of the contacted groups and from the public.

Based on information received from this outreach effort, the Commission has produced the recommended final Interest Statement document (Attachment 2). Changes from the draft version include revisions of the introduction and conclusion, and the editing of some of the interests and photos. The Commission offers that the proposed document is an accurate representation of the City's interests concerning the corridor and hopes that the document proves useful as development of the Eastside Rail Corridor begins.

FIGURE 1 Process/Timeline for public involvement and interest statement development approved by City Council, June 2010. Tasks in gray boxes have been completed, black box represents current step.





CITY OF KIRKLAND
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MEMORANDUM

To: Kirkland Transportation Commission
From: Marie Stake, Communications Program Manager
Kari Page, Neighborhood Outreach Coordinator
Date: March 18, 2011
Subject: Eastside Rail Corridor Draft Interest Statement: Online Survey Results

Purpose

This memo provides an overview of the results of the online survey regarding the Eastside Rail Corridor Draft Interest Statement. Although the survey is not statistically valid, the results generally reflect support for the Draft Interest Statement as it is written in its current form.

Brief Background

As a means to gauge whether the Draft Interest Statement accurately reflects the ideals and goals of the Kirkland community about the Corridor's future development, the following online survey was published on the City's website during the month of February 2011. To promote the online survey, the City issued a news release which was distributed to several email subscriptions (list serves), reaching over 1,400 subscribers. The news release was also forwarded to neighborhood leadership for their distribution. It was also highlighted in a February episode of Currently Kirkland, the city-produced TV show. The Kirkland Reporter newspaper highlighted the survey on February 16, 2011 (http://www.pnwlocalnews.com/east_king/kir/news/116358174.html#)

The survey asked the following questions:

Please select all that apply

- I live in Kirkland
- I live along the Corridor
- I work in Kirkland
- I work along the Corridor
- Other: _____
- Overall, do the interests contained in the Draft Interest Statement reflect your views?
 - Yes
 - No
 - Don't know
- In considering the Draft Statement as a whole, are there any interests you feel do not belong in the Statement?
 - No
 - Yes. Please name them and explain why:
- In considering the Draft Statement as a whole, are there other interests you feel should be included?
 - No
 - Yes. Please name them and explain why:

Overview of Results

During the survey period, 164 submissions were received. The majority of respondents identified themselves as City of Kirkland residents by designating: "Live in Kirkland" (32%) and "Live Along the Corridor/Live in Kirkland" (31%). Below is the breakout of demographic questions:

Live in Kirkland Only	Live Along Corridor Only	Work in Kirkland Only	Work Along Corridor Only
53 (32%)	7 (4%)	1 (.6%)	1 (.6%)

Live in Kirkland; Work in Kirkland	Live Along Corridor; Live in Kirkland	Live Along Corridor; Work in Kirkland	Work Along Corridor; Work in Kirkland
18 (11%)	51 (31%)	2 (1.2%)	2 (1.2%)

Live Along Corridor; Live in Kirkland; Work in Kirkland	Live in Kirkland; Work along Corridor; Work in Kirkland
6 (3.7%)	4 (2.4%)

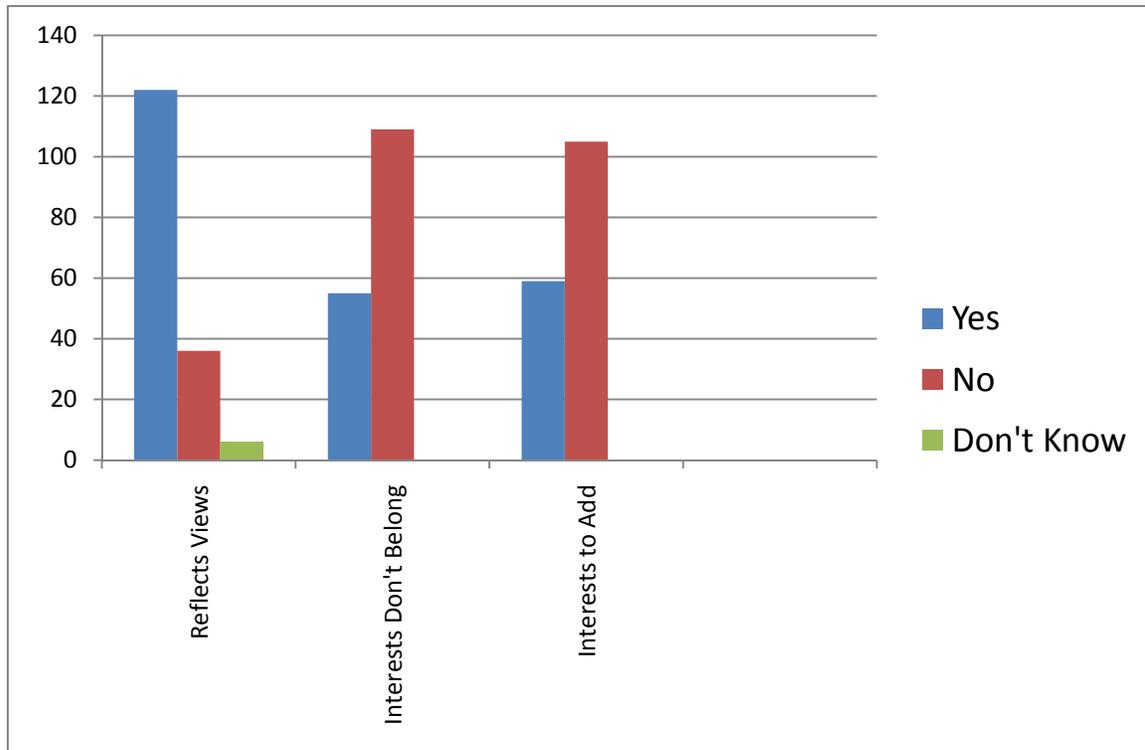
Live Along Corridor; Live in Kirkland; Work Along Corridor; Work in Kirkland	Other
14 (8.5%)	5 (3%)

The Draft Interest Statement was developed by the Transportation Commission based upon public feedback from Kirkland residents, businesses, and visitors, as well as stakeholder groups including City advisory boards, neighborhood associations, and advocacy groups. The purpose of the February 2011 online survey was to gain a sense of whether the document reflects the general sentiments of stakeholders about the potential future development of the Eastside Rail Corridor.

As Graph I below depicts, the majority of respondents (74%) stated that, overall, the Draft Interest Statement reflects their views; 22% stated that it does not; and 3% were unsure. Sixty-six percent (66%) of respondents reflected that there are no interests that should be removed from the document. This result further indicates that most who completed the survey feel the document accurately reflects their ideals and views. Verbatim responses from those who feel interests should be removed from the Draft Interest Statement are contained in **Attachment A**.

In further support that the Draft Interest Statement accurately reflects the vision of the community, 64% of respondents reflected that no additional interests should be added to the document. Comments about additional interests that should be integrated into the Statement are contained in **Attachment B** as verbatim remarks.

Graph I: Document Relevancy



Overview of Results

Survey participants were asked to consider the Draft Interest Statement as a whole when taking the survey and to identify any issues that should be removed from the document and any issues that should be added to the document. The majority of respondents feel the Draft Interest Statement generally reflects their views, that it should remain in its current written state, and that no new interests should be added to the document.

Common Themes

Common themes among those respondents who responded to the question about what should be excluded from the current draft document include: do not allow light rail, freight service, or mass transit. Primary reasons for opposition include: cost, impacts to neighborhoods, alignment of the corridor, and the desire to keep motorized transportation off the corridor.

Common themes among those respondents who suggested the document should address include: Statement should emphasize development of trail as an immediate need; Statement should address impacts to and the protection of neighborhoods and their residents; Statement should address the environmental impacts of future development; and Statement needs to better identify connectivity of the trail to other motorized and non-motorized amenities.

Attachments

Attachment A: Verbatim comments from those who feel the Draft Interest Statement contains interests that should not be contained in the document

Attachment B: Verbatim comments from those who feel additional interests should be incorporated into the Draft Interest Statement

ATTACHMENT A: Verbatim Comments on Interests that Should Not be in the Draft Interest Statement

In considering the Draft Statement as a whole, are there any interests you feel do not belong in the Statement?

- I would like to know if in the case of an emergency (snow) who would have the right away down the corridor with vehicles....the city or state? (Response #2)
- light rail - planning and building a trail for bicycle and pedestrian use would be considerably less expensive if the light rail concept was not considered either now or in the future. (Response #7)
- heavy freight-I think this does not seem a viable option, even in the future. (Response #20)
- The statement is comprehensive and inclusive, but I personally do not feel that any form of rail makes economic sense, not here or anywhere in the RTA area, now or in the future, because of the geographic constraints of the Seattle/Eastside area. Current commuter rail is losing money by the millions, just in operating costs, to say nothing of capital costs. I can agree to include FUTURE light rail use as an OPTION, but at this point hope to see this developed immediately as a pedestrian/bicycle trail, one I would use regularly. (#29)
- Use of the corridor for rail or transit (#30)
- I like all of the interests but let's face it, the cost of high-speed rail is prohibitive and getting a regional system approved and built could take years or decades.
- Maybe we should scale back our interest in passenger rail and use the City of Kirkland's money to improve old-fashioned bus service through King County Metro instead. If we did, we should still develop the rail corridor as a bike and hike trail. Also, I would like to say that if you are going to put off doing anything until agreement is reached on a regional rail system, that would be a mistake. We should at least get going on the bicycle and pedestrian uses, and fixing drainage issues, rather than just letting the corridor sit unused. (#35)
- "However, it is important that trail planning be done with rail compatibility as the long term goal." The cost of moving a paved pedestrian/bicycle trail is peanuts compared to building rail. The reality is IF light rail was ever to go in, it would be elevated to provide both N & S travel with a trail underneath it. Therefore the existing tracks should be recycled and a paved path laid down and when the rail is a reality, we can address the needed changes. To try and predict what will be acceptable to a potential rail service 20 years from now is a waste of time and money. (#36)
- Mass transit is pointless to run through neighborhoods where there is no parking or place for a transit stop. (#42)
- I would prefer that the trail be used for pedestrians and bicycles only.(#45)
- I don't think rapid transit belongs there. Mass transit should be focused on the 405 corridor where we are already set up with park and rides, buses and wider roads. This is the perfect place for a trail. Like the Burke Gilman and the Sammamish River Trail. (#49)
- I feel that if possible rail should be the first focused use and the trail second. Once it is used as a trail for a number of years resistance to the rail option will grow and will be less likely to be added at a later date. (#53)

- Your facts are accurate, but you are missing one level of detail that entirely changes the conclusion. This sentence about rail from Page 3 is accurate: "Service should be frequent, available most of the day, operate between desirable destinations, be easily accessible by potential riders and offer reasonable travel speeds." What it DOESN'T say is that the corridor is so winding through Kirkland that reasonable travel speeds on a train within the corridor are unachievable. The only options are to: (1) straighten out the corridor by purchasing local properties at a cost of billions, or (2) move rapid transit expectations to the I-405 corridor that Sound Transit has already invested in with BRT. By arbitrarily selecting the option that costs the public far more than the other, with no known benefits in traffic mitigation, the city of Kirkland is doing the community a disservice. It is also sowing confusion that delays coordinated support for a pedestrian core that can revitalize Kirkland--another disservice. Please revisit your conclusions. (Response #60)
- I do not agree that high speed/ high capacity transit should be considered inevitable. Its scale is not compatible with the #1 goal of bike and pedestrian access, and it will have severe impacts on the east/west connections in the City. (Response #63)
- Commuter Rail Doesn't belong on this corridor PERIOD! Feasibility study after feasibility study has confirmed this. This sentence about rail from Page 3 is accurate: "Service should be frequent, available most of the day, operate between desirable destinations, be easily accessible by potential riders and offer reasonable travel speeds." As we all know, the corridor has numerous twists and turns, travels precariously close to parks and schools, making it a poor candidate for commuter rail, fast or otherwise. A connector trail on the other hand, would actually encourage clean commuting and promote healthy behaviors such as walking that would benefit local businesses. Some day, rapid transit along 405 may be feasible and appropriate, but never on the BNSF corridor. Please review your conclusions. (Response #65)
- There is a strong bias in the Statement for trail and an unrealistic viewpoint of the true benefits to the community. This looks like it was written by only bicyclists. (Response #66)
- There appears to a bias towards using this corridor as a high capacity rail corridor which causes contradictory goals to be put forth. In particular the goals of: Protect neighborhood feel and atmosphere; Serve the transportation needs of pedestrians and bicyclists and Transit service must be designed to move people - frequently, quickly, and be available most times of the day. Running trains through the Houghton and Highland neighborhoods frequently enough and at high enough speeds does nothing to preserve the neighborhood feel and atmosphere. If you put in tracks for high capacity transit next to the bicycle path, there will have to be a jersey wall/link fence separation which will slice these neighborhoods in two. It will also separate Kirkland into an eastside and a westside for pedestrians and cyclists with long stretches uncrossable. If you want to see something of this combination, take a look at the SMART bicycle train line as it goes through the Cal Park Hill Tunnel. It looks awful. A protected bicycle/pedestrian will enhance Kirkland's neighborhoods. A fence running the length of the corridor will not. (Response #68)
- Hesitate on the rail / bus option as see major issues at multiple current road crossings and general noise pollution to many nearby residences (Response #70)
- Light rail. I favor use as a trail, but would not plan for light rail due to noise, lack of connecting population bases that would use the light rail, and the concerns below. (Response #83)
- The document is not spelled out clearly enough to say "YES" I agree or "NO" I don't as it appears to support all views and interests. You should itemize the details and allow people to express their thoughts on each item rather than lump them altogether in one vague statement that encompasses all views. (Response #85 & 86)

- I do not feel that rail is appropriate and I think it is unnecessary to consider future rail requirements while developing the corridor for bike & pedestrian transport. (Response #90)
- I don't think there should be any interest stated in approving light rail through our neighborhoods (Response #97)
- It should not be open 7/24, ie, night travel. The Burke Gilman and other commuting trails are not used at night. The trail should be open for recreation and commuting and requires some night hours since winters are dark here. But it doesn't need to be open from 11pm to 4am. (Response #99)
- I do not want the corridor to be used for motorized transportation. I want it to be used exclusively for bike and pedestrian traffic. That area is way too small to safely and pleasantly accommodate a big train alongside pedestrians. I have two young children and would love a place to walk and ride bikes with them that is not adjacent to a busy street or big train. Kirkland is missing this one thing to make it a truly wonderful city for families. (Response #100)
- I'm no lawyer, but delete the word all weather and all skills levels to lessen the liability of the City on page 3 of the Serve the Transportation Needs....In the Conclusion--A paved trail is not the efficient option for an interim solution. A compacted earthen/small gravel trail is a better solution. A good example is the East Sammamish Rail Trail. I rode it a couple of weeks ago after heavy rainfall and the surface was in good shape for 95 % of the entire trail! (Response #101)
- Rail use is prohibitively expensive and impractical from many standpoints, and realistically, trying to do pedestrian and bicycle with rail will never work. While the rail option should always be kept in mind, practically we should start soon on the pedestrian/bicycle option. (Response #103)
- Serving the needs of bicyclists and pedestrians should be deleted. This property is extremely valuable and should not be simply made into a trail that will serve a few percent of the population. (Response #104)
- Drop the idea of train service in the corridor. (Response #106)
- I do not believe any motorized use of the corridor would be good for Kirkland, and it also does not appear to be viable. The focus should be entirely on pedestrian and bicycle use. Many (including me) would commute to work by bike using this trail. A pedestrian-only trail would be a tremendous asset to Kirkland. (Response #108)
- Anything about motorized usage !!!! (Response #109)
- I really don't want trains running next to the bike trail. Let's just build it as a bike trail. (Response #110)
- We do not need mass transit in Kirkland. (Response #111)
- Anything to do with Light rail or any other form of mass transit along the corridor... Our current Metro bus system is a model program within the US and the use of busses offers the most flexibility and cost effective means of any form of mass transit. All rail based forms of transportation, (that were not developed 50 years ago and paid for in 19950's dollar value) are now so expensive to develop that they are a monumental waste of taxpayer money. There is no way that the tax money from such a transit system will ever or can ever be beneficial to the community. All transportation decisions are simple economics...supply/demand and cost/benefit. None of the City council members who will vote on this ridiculous proposal commute to City of Kirkland meetings on mass transit. Why, because the cost in time (aka convenience) and money (vehicle/gas) is still lower with an automobile. Only when the cost in time/convenience/money is lower for mass transit than the automobile, will anyone use transit. Believing that any form of

rail (the most expensive possible transit option) is a viable option, is a belief that the solution to transit problems, is to drive up the cost of Automobile transportation, (time, traffic, fees) to the point where it is cheaper to ride the train.... This belief is an absolute fantasy and shows complete ignorance of economics. The solution is not to drive up the cost of the "automobile" (time/traffic/gas)....but, rather, to lower the cost of Mass Transit. Microsoft has proven that if you create a bus system that is convenient to its users and low cost...people will use it. A train system will never be either...convenient or inexpensive. For the all the taxpayer money that has been wasted on this light-rail transit fantasy...that will forever be a waste of money, and never remotely pay for itself...the freeways and METRO-bus system could have been improved and operated practically operated for FREE...Do not support or waste any City of Kirkland funds on a train based transportation system that the City can't afford and will never be financially viable. Support actions that increase the convenience and reduce the cost of METRO....that's a transit plan that will actually work.... not this tax-spend fantasy, resulting in nothing but a waste of City tax funds that could be providing actual services to citizens of Kirkland. City council members swear an oath to serve the community interests of Kirkland...that is, to improve Kirkland. Anyone who is considering this "Transit" (rail) option, believes that the correct action is to drive up the cost of Automobile transportation (through congestion/taxes/fees) to the point that the cost of a car is higher than the cost of riding the train....In other words....allow the city's transportation system to get so bad...and make every citizen's life/commute miserable...that it becomes more convenient to ride the train....Only when the train is more convenient and cheaper than an automobile, will people use it.... This might be the case in NY with a population 8 million, size of 468 sq.miles and density of 27,000/sq. mile....not King County with a population of 1.9 million, size of 2,126 square miles and a density of 817 per square mile.... King County has 5x the size and less than 1/4 the population, to support a rail-based transit system... Rail can never service a King County sized area, with this population....at a price that is remotely financially viable.... Making Kirkland a better place, not worse, is the Oath that City Council Members swore to the Citizens of Kirkland...any vote for the ridiculous Light Rail system is hypocritical....and a violation of the oath that you swore to the Community. Sincerely, A 42 year, Peter Kirk Elementary, Kirkland Jr. High, Lake WA High and UW Alumni. Born and raised Kirkland Resident and Business Owner...(Response #113)

- I do not support light rail due to the noise, subsequent traffic congestion at crossings, the danger to the residents at crossings and the subsequent devaluation of residential property. (Response #114)
- Any motorized transportation option must be discarded: it saves our money and it makes for a better quality of life. The train is not economically viable. Be a leader, not a follower. (Response #115)
- We do not believe that rail service, either passenger or freight, is appropriate on this corridor (Response #116)
- I am very strongly in favor of a trail. It's beautiful, level, and would be a huge asset to Kirkland. I think the statement does a good job in addressing the rail interests in a practical manner. (Response #119)
- With so many at grade crossing and transit through neighborhoods and so close to schools light rail needs to connect with the I405 corridor. Love the idea of trail! (Response #120)
- The statement does not give light rail enough of a chance. (Response #121)
- I would fully and vehemently object to ANY rail (light, rapid trains or heavy) implemented on any part of the rail corridor that traverses through a residential neighborhood. Said limitation would encompass a very large portion of the rail corridor. (Response #123)

- A bike trail would be good, but a passenger train would cause problems and cost too much. (Response #124)
- To be most efficient, it needs to be used for rail or bus with bridges at crossings. It should transport people that can't ride a bike. (Response #127)
- It seems impractical to have a train between these short distances. The old train was fine because you would dine on it for special occasions. A paved pedestrian path makes more sense, since a lot of people go for walks or bike in Kirkland (I know several people who bike to work!). (Response #128)
- I don't believe rail should be on this corridor. While it may be a small benefit to Kirkland residents, I think it's a larger "benefit" for those outside of Kirkland, to the detriment of Kirkland. (Response #130)
- I do not think it's economically prudent to develop light rail transportation on the rail. There doesn't seem to be a natural "train stop" location along the route. It should just be a walking/bicycle path similar to Burke-Gilman. (Response #132)
- I do not want to see light rail on the corridor. I love the idea of a trail for biking and walking. I feel that light rail is too expensive and the expense cannot be justified. (Response #134)
- You mention keeping the already fragile neighborhoods protected, yet initiating a train service will depreciate all properties along the corridor. Look at Bart in San Francisco, Chicago, New York in the Queens area. All properties next to the train systems lost substantial value in their homes. This corridor is not the place for a train service. It needs to be bike and walking trail to have a safe place to run instead of the main arterials. (Response #136)
- There is a very large difference in using the corridor for walking/bicycling and rail. I am against light rail of any kind and I do not agree with lumping these 2 very different uses together. The economics and ridership of Sound Transit's similar project have been disappointing. Such a system on the Eastside, a much less dense area, would likely have far less (Response #141)
- I think all the interests specified with regards to having the corridor as a high-use/high transportation corridor are not realistic at this time. Do what you can to keep within budget, and make the corridor safe and useful. I don't think pie-in-the-sky interests are realistic. Especially light rail, etc. (Response #145)
- Do not see the applicability of heavy rail or freight transit. (Response #151)
- Heavy rail system for such a short run with many stops does not seem a good use. A light rail system would be cheaper, able to make frequent stops and would not overload the rails. The railway goes through many residential areas. I was here during the dinner train years and the noise and size of a full size train was too much. (Response #152)
- I don't feel that the corridor is in the right alignment to be used for light rail but I understand that it needs to be in the statement because the future is always uncertain. I appreciate the mention of the rapid transit bus option because that is what I support as a transportation solution for commuting in many areas of King County. It wasn't clear though if you were planning on running the rapid bus along the corridor or on the road. This could be better clarified. (Response #154)
- Rail should not be considered; it would ruin the park-like potential for the right of way. Separate paths for pedestrian and bicycle use are what is needed. (Response #156)
- Get over the rail idea. Kirkland would benefit from dual paths for pedestrians and bicycles. Rail would ruin the park-like potential for the right-of-way. (Response #157)

- The tracks need to be for pedestrian and bikes only. Driving downtown Kirkland is becoming dangerous. Trains through existing neighborhoods are not a feasible answer to the needs of Kirkland and neighboring communities. (Response #159)
- Given the location of the tracks and the fact that they don't connect cities in a meaningful way, I believe we should move ahead and convert the area into a greenway that would serve the needs of pedestrians and bicyclists. Since the area has been rail-banked, at such time (if ever), rail transportation makes sense, then a thoughtful discussion can be had to determine how to integrate other modes of transportation. (Response #160)
- Rail should be implemented in the near term too! (Response #165)

ATTACHMENT B: Verbatim Comments on Interests that Should be in the Draft Interest Statement

In considering the Draft Statement as a whole, are there other interests you feel should be included?

- I believe it should be explicitly stated that bikes and pedestrians MUST be kept separate. It is scary, stressful, and unpleasant to walk on trails with bikes whizzing past your shoulder and startling you when they yell "on your left!" (Response #1)
- Just like on the E. lake Sammamish trail, I feel that pedestrians should have to stop to cars, not cars stopping at every trail crossing. (Response #2)
- More detailed proposed timeline for each stage of completion. (Response #3)
- Health benefit to our children when adding the trail option. (Response #4)
- Let's buy it and get going building a walking/biking trail! (Response #10)
- In the immediate short term, it would be very cost-effective to simply fill the old railway tracks with gravel, thus creating a high quality pedestrian trail. (Response #11)
- Clicked 'yes' so that I could comment. no room for other comments so here goes...planning for multi use like Marin county model with transit, peds & bikes = great plan. thank you. (Response #13)
- Are they listed by the number of responses each comment received? If not, since a bike/pedestrian trail is more feasible near-term, I feel it should be moved up the list. (Response #19)
- I think impact to the people living near the corridor should be more discussed. Not only parking, but also increased foot traffic, the need for sidewalks, animal waste collection, and the impact of having more people walking along my front yard type of issues (theft, burglary?). (Response #25)
- Yes, the interest of local families and residents in having easily accessible recreational and exercise opportunities right in our neighborhoods. Please develop paved hiking and biking trail ASAP. This trail could be a very safe tie in to larger trail systems giving bikers more off the streets and out of traffic riding opportunities. (Response #26)
- Development as a hiking and nature trail (Response #30)
- We could consider a "nostalgia" or "tourist" train instead of transit train, along with bicycle/pedestrian use. This would keep the tracks in use but would be a lot cheaper as the route would be shorter and the vendors who use the tracks would probably supply antique or older trains and the tracks wouldn't have to be modified, just repaired. Another benefit would be connecting Kirkland to adjacent cities such as Redmond, Bellevue, Renton, Woodinville and Snohomish and promoting regional tourism. Come to think of it, we can't connect to Redmond and Issaquah because Redmond tore up their train tracks in the town center, darn it. (Response #35)
- Children's safety should be a high priority when designing co-existing rail and trail plans- specifically any intersections where children might be able to get on the transit area. (Response #37)

- Start working on the running/bike trail asap. This will allow Kirkland residents as well as other residents of other communities to use this railway in a healthy way. (Response #41)
- I believe that regional benefits to having rail capacity were not emphasized nearly as much as the trail components and that does not reflect a view consistent with decisions that reflect the greater good. We should seek a joint corridor with equal benefits of rail and trail. The document seems to reflect a "lean" towards a preference to a trail only concept. As stated, the longer that we wait to move forward, functionally and deliberately, the more difficult it will become to convert this line to transit. (Response #43)
- I just think Kirkland needs to get in front of this. Like Redmond. They bought their section, made a plan for Redmond and now they decide who gets to come in and do what. Instead of other groups from around the area pushing us into their agendas. Kirkland needs to make the decisions for Kirkland. (Response #49)
- including support for wildlife and environmental goals of Kirkland. Also how this would link to and support development (economic and non-economic) in the Kirkland area. (Response #52)
- I think the city/county/sound transit should start evaluating neighboring properties for potential stations/parking for any transit. With property values low there may be possibilities of strategic purchases. (Response #57)
- safety while public transit is in motion, a small fence perhaps (Response #58)
- There should be more of a sense of urgency. There is no reason that with a modest investment combined with volunteer help, a dirt / gravel "starter trail" can't be opened well before 2015 (Response #59)
- Feedback on the statement of interest should be more than adding or subtracting from a list of interests. You have not asked anyone if they agree with the most important part--the conclusion after listing of interests. This deprives the conclusion of community buy-in. That concerns me. Doesn't it concern you? (Response #60)
- Other low impact locally focused transit options should be considered such as streetcar, circulator buses or shuttles that serve Kirkland neighborhoods, with high capacity rail located adjacent to the 520 and 405 corridors. Consider an option that allows a mother to put her child on transit near the South Kirkland Park and Ride, and then they hop off at Lakeview Elementary School, or a worker gets on at their home in Totem Lake and rides down to Google, but hops off near the post office and Park Place on their way. Look to other communities in the US and beyond for new ideas, rather than limit the options to what's been done. Explore low tech options with low start up costs that can be expanded incrementally and have minimal environmental impact. Be bold and creative. (Response #63)
- There is not evidence on the rail being desirable for freight. Plus laws dictate that MUST be used for freight. It is misleading to think it can be used just for a trail. We need to take trucks off of the road. This is a viable first step. We CAN'T remove the rail and must not for the future. (Response #66)
- I don't feel the bicycle/pedestrian trail only option was fully fleshed out. (Response #68)
- Like the general tone that near term focus on pedestrian / bike. Overall knowing the route in Kirkland think from a cost effective and practical long term stand point still believe converting to a trail only is best solution. (Response #71)
- Security to neighboring residents and businesses and maintenance for the rightaway to prevent storm damage and over growth. (Response #77)

- crossing the corridor is discussed but more focus could be given to pedestrian crossing especially school routes. As an example the burke gilman trail has some issues with crossings because of the speed of bikes and who has the right of way, etc. (Response #81)
- I lived in Woodinville when the train ran from Renton to Ste. Michelle, then later to Columbia Winery. I rode the train several times with family and friends and we all thoroughly enjoyed it each time. The cost of a rail line is expensive, there's no getting around that, but once it's gone, it will be gone forever. It would be wonderful to find a way to keep a train running along the corridor. (Response #82)
- (1) It remains unclear who owns the corridor! Depending on how rail access was acquired/given/easement to BNSF, a number of property owners along the corridor may actually be given title to the portion of corridor that runs through their property. Legal action is ongoing regarding this. (2) I have read that the roadbed for much of the corridor was built from slag from the smelters such as Asarco. Has anyone tested the roadbed for arsenic, asbestos and other compounds? What will be added costs if significant soil removal and treatment are needed? Further, BNSF must have been regularly applying herbicide along the corridor for years. It used to be free from weeds, but now there is quite a bit of growth. What remains in the roadbed and sides from the herbicides? (3) Absent from your Draft is what to do with the numerous "pinch-points" along the corridor where there is not enough room for trail and rail side by side. How do you plan to deal with this? If one option is to do elevated segments with over/under rail/trail, significant adverse impact will be to view and property values, and noise from elevated segments. (4) Draft seems to focus only on the segment through Kirkland; pinch-points outside of Kirkland, and impacts there need to be considered.
- Please itemize (Responses 85 & 86)
- More emphasis on getting a rail option added sooner. I'm all for the bike trail first but the need for rail commuter system on the east side is growing exponentially! (Response #88)
- It was not clear as to whether or not you plan to segment foot traffic from bike traffic on different paths with this plan. You should separate those lanes. (Response #89)
- Public trails are essential for the physical and mental health of the community. (Response #92)
- Greater emphasis on pushing for regional consensus for rail transit in the near term. (Response #95)
- As someone who lives very near the corridor and has asthma, there are two things that I would like to be considered in the development of a transit system along the corridor: 1) We moved where we are because it is a quiet neighborhood, so if transit is very loud that would be annoying. 2) A train which does not produce exhaust would be preferable to one that does (electric over diesel, basically). We like our clean air! (Response #96)
- There was not nearly enough emphasis given to protecting our neighborhoods and quality of life. Have light rail run commuter traffic through our neighborhoods in the morning and in the evening would radically alter the ambience (and house value) of thousands of Kirkland residents. You're considering taking one of the best places to live in the NW and ruining it. Who wants to live along a rail line? This affects thousands. (Response #97)
- I would like to emphasize that it immediately being developed as a pedestrian and bike trail will greatly help the area and that no rail should be put in until it is an integral part of the regional light rail system. Putting heavy rail in is unacceptable. (Response #102)

- Due to the outstanding location (running through the heart of Kirkland, including areas with views such as Houghton) this property is prime. The usual ideas such as a bike path are stale, serve a fraction of the population, and bring little economic benefit to the city.
- I suggest thinking out of the box and consider using the property in some more valuable way. Examples, could be gardens, parks, solar collectors, business development or housing such as the small bungalow communities Ross Chapin has designed which do not require roads to each residence. A bike trail shows a real lack of imagination. (Response #104)
- For rail transit to be successful it must connect high density living and working sites. There are not really any such sites along the corridor (excepting downtown Bellevue, which the corridor is too far away from.) If rail is to be included as part of the plan, I believe that must be made in coordination with: (1) Connections to other transit (this was mentioned but it is a must to have commitments for this prior to building any rail). (2) Plans by various cities for high density development. For example, the high density developments surrounding stations of Vancouver's Sky Train. (3) Park and ride lots are a poor second choice to high density. To put it succinctly – I believe that any rail development plans must be made in coordination with cities' plans for high density urban growth. If the cities have no such plans then rail is of dubious value. (Response #105)
- The only interest should be to develop it as a pedestrian boulevard. (Response #106)
- Parking needs need to be considered. You aren't going to get people completely out of their cars, it's not always convenient to take transportation. (Response #111)
- Include provisions for: quick access to corridor for emergency/safety services; planting NW-native trees and bushes, where ever possible, for shade, noise abatement, soil stabilization; installing along the corridor, wherever possible, benches and even rain shelters. (Response #115)
- There needs to be more immediate emphasis on network level design of any future high capacity transit along the corridor, and what would really meet the transit needs of Kirkland. (Response #118)
- The traffic congestion on the surface road where there are train crossings should be taken into consideration (Response #120)
- More about European style light rail (Response #121)
- Maintaining the status quo, despite the "opportunity costs" briefly mentioned. (Response #123)
- Nearby schools, because of how close they are to the corridor. (Response #124)
- I think that you are overstating the size of rail service that would be needed through the corridor. I think the main purpose of the corridor should be used to develop a rail connection from Kirkland through to Woodinville. There are a number of rail cars that could be used instead of a large engine and passenger cars. Smaller commuter rail cars are available. I know because I rode them all the time while stationed in Germany. Inexpensive smaller cars running in 1/2 hour increments or some other time frame will draw people through Totem Lake and into Woodinville and passenger traffic would be far greater than I believe is considered. I ride a bike in the summer months to work, but I believe bike traffic is overstated in this area. Not many people commute during the winter, and the during the summer months it is not much higher. I believe the number of bike commuters would not be very high along this corridor, and the recreation riders wouldn't be enough to warrant a dedication of the corridor to bikers. Focus on building a rail connection for commuters and shoppers and the demand will build. Making the corridor exclusively for bikers and walkers would be short sighted. I know that as one that lives in Totem

Lake, I would take a rail car to Kirkland and Woodinville instead of driving, but I wouldn't bike or walk there. (Response #133)

- Monorail. It would elevate the tracks, allow for mixed use and be far cheaper than light rail. The two systems could connect. (Response #137)
- I feel that the Draft Statement is incomplete. While it references public transit, most of the discussions are about bicycles and pedestrians which are low impact users. It references mass transit, but doesn't give any guidance on what type should be prioritized or encouraged (light rail vs heavy rail/freight, etc.). These are significant/high impact uses, which must be implemented carefully and thoughtfully. (Response #138)
- Light rail should be included with a bike/walking trail. However, light rail should be a very high priority. (Response #140)
- No rail of any kind should be in the proposal. It should clearly state this instead of vague terms about different forms of "pedestrian transportation" which can mean many things. (Response #141)
- In my view, the rail tracks should be kept with the trail built next to it. The right of way is large enough in most places to accomplish this and this allows easy dual mode use without the additional cost of re-locating trail or rail tracks in the future. The tracks could also be used as a historical feature along the trail to educate residents about the history of the area sort of like an visual "timeline" from rail to trail. (Response #142)
- I'd like some expansion of the environmental effect, in that this does run through forested area and may serve wildlife habitat needs as well as other environmental purposes if maintained in a way consistent with the forested and wetland areas it runs near (e.g. Cotton Hill and Crestwoods parks). (Response #147)
- How the system will connect the TOD at South Kirkland Park & Ride to Downtown Bellevue, Downtown Kirkland, and Totem Lake. (Response #150)
- Although it is mentioned frequently, more focus on a bias toward bike and pedestrian trail development throughout the document. Seems the survey discussion is slightly more focused on general rail transportation usage. (Response #151)
- In my opinion the tracks should not be removed even temporarily. Rather, the trail should be built along the existing tracks since the right of way is large enough along most of the way to do this. Hopefully the corridor can be used for both rail and trail since there are very few times when we can take advantage of a continuous right of way that is unimpeded. (Response #158)
- The runners and bikers are increasing. Driving is becoming more of a problem. A specific place for bikes and runners is needed. To convert the South Kirkland Park and Ride with low income housing, fast food restaurants and a train system is not being in touch with all the residential communities in South Kirkland, Houghton, and downtown Kirkland. (Response #159)
- What about the city proposing a bond issue (much like was done for parks a number of years back) to initiate the purchase of that portion which goes through our city. What a wonderful way to provide meaningful connections throughout our neighborhoods and business districts, as well as add to health (both physical and economic) of our community. (Response #160)
- Currently the Redmond City Parks and Recreation Department is considering a tourist streetcar on the Redmond-Woodinville rail link. The streetcar would connect downtown Redmond with the Woodinville wineries. A similar tourist streetcar could operate between the proposed Bellevue light rail Hospital Station, South Kirkland P&R, Kirkland Way, Totem Lake and Woodinville

wineries. Little improvement to the existing track would be needed for this low speed, low capacity use. As a tourist attraction, a streetcar would draw attention to shopping opportunities in Kirkland. This project could be privately funded with little or no cost to the City of Kirkland. While high capacity public transportation on this rail line may be decades away, like Redmond's proposal this service could be implemented in a very short period of time. Some economies of scale might be obtained by combining this streetcar route with Redmond's proposed operation, such as a common maintenance and storage facility and use of the same brand of streetcar. As with the dinner train in the past, I think this rail line has good tourist potential that can be developed at a relatively low cost. (Response #163)

City of Kirkland Eastside Rail Corridor Interest Statement

Proposed for Adoption by the Kirkland City Council April 19, 2011

Introduction

In December 2009, the Port of Seattle purchased the Woodinville subdivision from the BNSF Railroad. The Eastside Rail Corridor, stretching between Snohomish and Renton via Kirkland, thereby became a publicly-owned corridor. The City of Kirkland has long been interested in the corridor as a potential facility for bicycle and pedestrian transportation; having identified the Cross Kirkland Trail¹ project more than 15 years ago.

With the corridor coming into public ownership, the City Council directed the Transportation Commission to conduct public outreach, then identify and document the City's interests in the corridor. This Interest Statement is the product of that work.

Outreach elements included gathering comments at the Wednesday Market, fielding three online surveys, meeting with Boards, Commissions and neighborhood groups, walking the corridor and receiving testimony at Transportation Commission meetings. The 2009 Final Eastside Commuter Rail Feasibility Study² study prepared by Sound Transit and PSRC also served as a reference.

This Interest Statement is not a proposal or a recommendation per se. Rather, it is intended to guide evaluation of proposals for corridor development. Proposals that satisfy more of the interests would rank more highly than proposals that satisfy fewer of the interests. The conclusions at the end of this document describe the type of corridor development that is likely to be practical and meet the City's interests given current information.

Interests

Serve Transportation needs of Kirkland

Transportation on the corridor should be integrated with and support the City's transportation goals³ to provide travel options within Kirkland and to points outside Kirkland. This implies an interest in how and when the corridor is developed in other cities as well.

Keep the corridor in public ownership

The region has determined⁴ that the public interest is served by public ownership of the corridor, and the City of Kirkland supports this position. Keeping the corridor in public ownership may require the City to purchase its portion of the right-of-way, and Kirkland's ownership may help the City meet other interests as well.

The Eastside Rail Corridor (black line) touches many neighborhoods and parks in Kirkland



A section of the right-of-way in the Highlands neighborhood



Source: City of Kirkland

Council Goal concerning Balanced Transportation:

Kirkland values an integrated multi-modal system of transportation choices.

Council Goal: To reduce reliance on single occupancy vehicles. (September 2009)

Actively use the corridor in the near future

Because the corridor is a valuable asset that could be used to transport people, allowing it to remain unused or undeveloped has a high opportunity cost. The longer it is not used, the more resistance may be encountered toward any particular use.

Maintain the corridor in good condition

The corridor should be maintained to protect its value and the value of adjacent properties. Proper operation of drainage facilities, prevention of encroachment, and the preservation of structures and crossings are examples of ongoing maintenance needs.

Contribute to economic sustainability

Development of the corridor should be done in a cost effective manner and should consider the short and long term costs of construction, maintenance, and operation. Development should and support current and future plans for economic and neighborhood development.

Connect Totem Lake

Because of the corridor's proximity to the Totem Lake Urban Center⁵, it has the potential to help connect Totem Lake to the rest of the city and the region.

Protect neighborhood feel and atmosphere

Development of the corridor should allow for access across and along the corridor and not create barriers within or between neighborhoods. Residential neighborhoods should be protected from any excessive noise and safety impacts caused by corridor uses. Development of any trailheads, transit stations and/or parking locations should consider and minimize impacts to neighborhoods. The corridor is adjacent to several parks, schools and other amenities. These facilities should be protected appropriately as the corridor is developed.

Plan for a multi-use facility

In the long term, transit, pedestrians and cyclists should be able to simultaneously travel safely and efficiently in the corridor. Planning or implementing one transportation mode must not foreclose future corridor use by another mode. Additionally, underground utilities that currently use and will continue to use the corridor⁶ must be considered. Freight operations may be considered along the corridor, but there does not appear to be much commercial interest in freight rail service within Kirkland.

The existing corridor contains many drainage facilities that require regular maintenance.



Source: City of Kirkland

The Burke-Gilman trail in Seattle is on an abandoned railroad right-of-way.



Source: King County

This area in the Houghton neighborhood contains wetlands.



Source: City of Kirkland

A shared rail and trail facility



Source: Marin County Bicycle Coalition

Serve the transportation needs of pedestrians and bicyclists

A bicycle and pedestrian transportation facility should allow all weather, day and night use. It should be sized to allow simultaneous safe passage for both pedestrians and bicyclists of all skill levels. Its development should include protection of existing connections and include new connections to the City’s streets and trails. The Active Transportation Plan⁷ has a list of such connections.

Design Transit to efficiently move people

Successful transit systems must have certain characteristics. Service should be frequent, available most of the day, operate between desirable destinations, be easily accessible by potential riders and offer reasonable travel speeds. best choice of transit technology may vary, with one system best in the shorter term and another better in the longer term. The viability of transit in the corridor should be compared to other options⁸.

Plan any transit use in close consultation with the City of Kirkland.

Locating transit stations and associated parking and feeder bus connections has major short- and long-term impacts on the surrounding neighborhoods and on the transportation network. A process to determine station locations should include extensive work with neighborhood groups, appropriate Boards and Commissions and the City Council.

Consider grade crossing delay and safety

Crossings must provide a reasonable level of safety and convenience for both users of the corridor and for street traffic. Design of the corridor should consider the potential time delays and safety concerns for all users of the corridor and facilities that intersect it.

Disclose and mitigate environmental impacts

Develop the corridor in a way that meets the City’s goals for environmental sustainability. Prior to any development of the corridor, a complete environmental review should be conducted to identify and disclose impacts and to propose mitigations for those impacts. Noise, air quality, surface water and sensitive areas are topics that typically require analysis in an environmental review.

Conclusions

By its nature, an interest statement does not establish specific positions on issues. Instead it describes interests, which could be met in a variety of ways. The purpose of these conclusions is to demonstrate how the interests described above could be met, to varying degrees, by a range of development options.

Ultimately, the City’s interests would be met by implementing a welcoming, transportation-oriented facility for pedestrians and bicyclists, coupled with a high capacity transit system that connects Kirkland to the region.

These photos illustrate different types of transit. How they might help meet Kirkland’s interests on the corridor would depend on a number of factors.

Heavy rail: Sound Transit Sounder



Source: Railpictures.net Image © PNWRailfan

Electric Light Rail: Sound Transit Link



Source: lisatown.com

Diesel multiple unit: DMU in service in Australia



Source: thetransportpolitic.com

Bus Rapid Transit: Community Transit Swift



Source: blogs.seattleweekly.com

The main focus for development of the corridor in the short term should be on a trail. A paved, accessible, bicycle and pedestrian trail would be far less expensive than a high capacity rail or bus system and would require a less extensive planning process than would a transit option. However, it is important that trail planning be done with rail compatibility --that would meet Kirkland's interests-- as the long term goal.

Due to its poor physical condition, the current infrastructure in the corridor is not capable of supporting rail traffic that would offer a viable transportation option. If rail were to be located on the corridor, a safe, fully featured high-capacity rail system --similar to Link Light Rail--is perhaps the ideal option. A high capacity rail system would require a great deal of careful planning to meet Kirkland's interests.

Because of its high cost, and Sound Transit timing, it is not likely that regional rail transit would be in operation before 2030. Moreover, the Eastside Rail Corridor may not be the best alignment for such a route. In the shorter term, there may be less expensive corridor transit options that could be developed, such as bus rapid transit linking the South Kirkland Park & Ride and Totem Lake.

While freight operations may be part of a future rail corridor, there does not appear to be much current commercial interest in freight rail service within the city. It is difficult to conceive of freight rail operations that would meet many of Kirkland's interests.

The Eastside Rail Corridor is a transportation facility that represents enormous opportunity for the City of Kirkland and the region. Kirkland is fortunate to have such a facility within its boundaries and should strive to see that its interests are met during development of the corridor.

City of Kirkland Transportation Commission

The City of Kirkland Transportation Commission is made up of seven members appointed by the City Council to four year terms. The Commission meets every month to make recommendations on transportation policy to the City Council. Visit the Commission webpage where you can join the Transportation Commission List-Serve and automatically receive e-mail updates on the Commission's activities.

Commission members:
Donald Samdahl, Chair
Joel Pfundt, Vice Chair
Morgan Hopper
Tom Neir
Thomas Pendergrass
Sandeep Singhal
Michael Snow
Carl Wilson

Summary of interests

- **Serve transportation needs of Kirkland**
- **Keep the Corridor in public ownership**
- **Actively use the corridor in the near future**
- **Maintain the corridor in good condition**
- **Contribute to economic sustainability**
- **Connect Totem Lake**
- **Protect neighborhood feel and atmosphere**
- **Plan for a multi use facility**
- **Serve the transportation needs of pedestrians and bicyclists**
- **Design transit service to efficiently move people**
- **Plan any transit use in close consultation with the City of Kirkland**
- **Consider grade crossing delay and safety**
- **Disclose and mitigate environmental impacts**

¹ The Cross Kirkland trail was originally envisioned as a trail that would operate beside what was at the time an active railroad corridor.

² 2009 Final PSRC and Sound Transit BNSF Eastside Commuter Rail Feasibility Study, 2009 Puget Sound Regional Council <http://www.psrc.org/transportation/bnsf>

³ City of Kirkland Council Goals. <http://www.ci.kirkland.wa.us/Assets/City+Council+Goals.pdf>

⁴ BNSF Corridor Preservation Study, Final Report May, 2007 Puget Sound Regional Council. Page 7. http://www.psrc.org/assets/3176/_07-20_BNSFfinalreport.pdf

⁵ In cooperation with member cities, Puget Sound Regional Council has designated a number of Urban Centers where regional growth is to be targeted. Totem Lake is the only Urban Center in Kirkland. Downtown Bellevue, downtown Redmond and Overlake are examples of other nearby Urban Centers.

⁶ Puget Sound Energy and Cascade Water Alliance are examples of current and potential users respectively.

⁷ *More People, More Places, More Often, an Active Transportation Plan* City of Kirkland, March 2009. Page 100. http://www.ci.kirkland.wa.us/depart/Public_Works/Transportation_Streets/Active_Transportation_Plan.htm

⁸ Ridership on existing King County Metro routes could be a reasonable benchmark. The proposed Bus Rapid Transit (BRT) System on I-405 could also be compared.