



**CITY OF KIRKLAND**  
Department of Public Works  
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## MEMORANDUM

**To:** Kurt Triplett, City Manager

**From:** Aaron McDonald, P.E., Project Engineer  
David Godfrey, P.E., Transportation Manager  
David Snider, P.E., Capital Project Manager  
Ray Steiger, P.E., Public Works Director

**Date:** July 31, 2012

**Subject:** CROSS KIRKLAND CORRIDOR – APPROVE PROGRAM

### **RECOMMENDATION:**

It is recommended that City Council:

- Authorizes rail removal in preparation for an interim trail;
- Approves funding, beginning in 2012, for the Cross Kirkland Corridor (CKC) rail removal and interim trail;
- Authorizes design and construction of an interim trail;
- Approve a draft Master Plan scope of work;
- Selects a preferred funding option for the Master Plan

### **BACKGROUND DISCUSSION:**

The CKC was acquired by the City in April, 2012, after a process that included public outreach, pre-purchase due diligence, and negotiations with the Port of Seattle, the former owner of the corridor. In April, 2011, City Council adopted an interest statement developed by the Transportation Commission (**Attachment A**) that detailed specific interests to be achieved as the corridor was developed. On March 6, 2012, the Council also asked the Transportation Commission, in coordination with the Park Board, to develop recommendations on the Corridor development, public outreach and master planning processes.

The development strategy currently proposed for the CKC by the Transportation Commission is two-phased: the initial phase is rail removal along with design and construction of an interim trail to allow broad public use of the CKC. For the first phase, staff has evaluated the costs of removing the existing rails and constructing an interim gravel path. The second phase is implementation of a CKC Master Plan to determine the ultimate vision and development of the Corridor for both trail and transit. To support this second phase, the Transportation Commission and Park Board developed a draft scope of work (**Attachment B**) and a cost estimate for a master planning process.

Together, rail removal, the interim trail and completing the Master Plan will support the City Council's goals of Balanced Transportation, Sustainable Infrastructure and Parks Open Spaces and Recreational Services.

Further these actions will meet several of the interests identified in the *Interest Statement* including:

- Serve transportation needs of Kirkland
- Actively use the corridor in the near future
- Maintain the corridor in good condition

Finally, these actions help meet the Goals of the City's Active Transportation Plan, specifically Goal G1 which calls for development of the Cross Kirkland Corridor.

At their July 26 meeting, the Transportation Commission reviewed and unanimously reaffirmed their support for rail removal and construction of an interim trail at this time. They also unanimously reaffirmed approval of the Master Plan scope. The Commission feels that given the interests of the City and the need to spend grant funds in a timely manner it is appropriate to move forward with rail removal and trail design/construction while or before the Master Plan is prepared.

#### 1. INTERIM TRAIL DEVELOPMENT:

##### *RAIL REMOVAL*

The rail removal phase will remove all existing rails, cross-ties, road/trail crossing slabs, and will include grading of the surface for trail construction. This work will also include paving of the streets (9 crossing locations) where the rails are to be removed. This work will be put out to bid and it is currently likely that the rail salvage value will offset the cost of rail removal, or possibly result in a credit depending on the scrap market prices and demand for used material at the time of removal. The current cost estimate includes a substantial contingency to cover the risk of low scrap prices or low demand for used materials.

While at least one rail removal contracting firm has a yard in the Puget Sound area, many rail removal contractors work on a nationwide basis. This means that there is generally a 3 month period between request for bids and the date when the bids are to be returned to the City. This extra period allows for firms to inspect facilities and schedule their work in order to offer the best price to the City. WSDOT work at NE 116th Street and I-405 is currently blocking the tracks as crews work on the NE 116th Street bridge over the rails. This work is scheduled to be completed at the end of the year. That need for the longer bid time and the WSDOT work both suggest rail removal should begin in early 2013.

At meetings where the Transportation Commission has discussed rail removal, several citizens have expressed a need to reconsider removing the rails. Common perceptions about leaving the rails in place include: the current facilities could support current or future rail traffic, upgrading the rails would be easier if existing rails are in place, the rails might serve as a redundant line for the Burlington Northern Santa Fe (BNSF) mainline and, if removed, the rails will never be reconstructed and therefore the corridor will never again support rail traffic.

While listening carefully to these concerns, the Transportation Commission has unanimously supported rail removal for the following reasons:

- Over the past 3 years since the BNSF has sold the corridor to the Port, no rail operation has come forward with a viable plan to use the rails either now or in the future. The existing rails are not adequate for anything but very low speed operations.
- While it may be true that new rail could be installed somewhat more easily with existing rail, it is unlikely that new rail would be built in the next 20 years, so this benefit has limited value. It is also unclear whether or not any new rail would be constructed on the exact alignment of the existing rail, or if double track would be installed.
- Apparently BNSF saw limited value in the corridor as a back-up to its mainline or it would not have sold the eastside line. Also, the Wilburton tunnel has been removed from I-405. Without a connection across I-405, the corridor is not a redundant link.
- It is unlikely that having the existing rail in the corridor would be the key factor in getting new rail at some point.
- Removal of the rail would greatly benefit maintenance of the corridor and the surface water facilities that are located adjacent to it. The Public Works Department has recently purchased a used pickup truck that's equipped to run on both streets and rails, but it has limited usefulness compared to operating mowers and other types of maintenance equipment the City already has in its fleet on the rail-less corridor. There are also a number of surface water maintenance concerns that will also be easier to address after rails are removed. **Attachment C** is a map showing examples of culverts needing maintenance.
- Removing the rails makes the corridor much more useable to citizens.
- If the rails are removed, the railbed is available for construction of an interim trail with limited work outside the railbed.
- Grant funding already secured for removing rails and constructing an interim trail requires that the funds be spent by the end of 2014. In order to meet those deadlines, it's necessary to begin the rail removal and interim work as soon as possible.

#### *CITY OF SNOHOMISH INPUT*

On July 31, 2012, Council received a letter from the Mayor of the City of Snohomish, written on behalf of the Snohomish City Council. (**Attachment D**) The letter urges the Kirkland Council to consider several points before proceeding with rail removal on the CKC.

Many of the points made in the Snohomish letter are similar to reasons previously heard by the Transportation Commission and others for keeping the rails in place as described above. These include: the Iowa Pacific Railroad may want to operate excursion service, the corridor is subject to future freight operations through rail banking, maintenance of a trail could be more difficult than maintenance of the existing tracks, construction could have environmental impacts and that there would be a number of benefits to having light rail operate on the corridor and connect to regional destinations.

The Cross Kirkland Corridor is a rail-banked corridor. Often when a rail corridor is sold and rail-banked, the selling railroad retains the freight reactivation rights for the line. GNP or its successors may hold those rights for the portion of the rail corridor between Snohomish and Woodinville. They do not hold reactivation rights for the CKC; those rights are held by King County. Therefore, even before a railroad could petition the Federal Surface Transportation Board ("STB") to approve freight service, King County would have to consent or transfer the

reactivation rights to a railroad. If the freight railroad were successful in petitioning the Surface Transportation Board, the cost of upgrading the corridor for freight use would have to be borne by the railroad seeking to operate on the line.

Excursion rail is not within the jurisdiction of the STB. Therefore, an excursion operation would not be able to operate in the corridor without approval from the City of Kirkland. Conversations between the City of Kirkland and the Iowa Pacific railroad indicate that the railroad would be reluctant to invest in the improvements necessary to make the existing rail line serviceable for excursion use, but would be interested in providing such services if Kirkland would rehabilitate and maintain the line. Kirkland currently has no budget for rail replacement and enhancement and the costs to upgrade the line would likely far exceed any potential tax revenue to Kirkland from an excursion train.

Prior to purchase of the corridor, the City completed a Phase I Environmental review following industry standards. Based on that report, there is no reason to believe that there will be environmental concerns with rail removal or construction of an interim gravel trail of the type suggested by the City of Snohomish letter.

As discussed above, when the Council approved the Interest Statement it adopted a multimodal vision for the corridor. In the future, Sound Transit or other transit operator may wish to use all or a portion of the corridor for transit. Based on Sound Transit's current planning, any light rail use of the corridor is a consideration that will take place 20 or more years in the future. Sound Transit's selection of the corridor for light rail would not be based on the presence of the existing rails but rather on the location and functionality of the rail corridor property and its ability to meet the needs of light rail transit as compared to other possible alignments.

#### *INTERIM TRAIL DESIGN AND CONSTRUCTION*

The interim trail will be a gravel surfaced facility matching the width of the existing rail bed (8 to 10-foot wide) that can be used by walkers, wide-tire bikes, and other uses compatible with this type of surface. It will provide an all-weather, crushed gravel path similar to the East Lake Sammamish Trail. Geo-synthetic fabric will be used to retain the gravel where needed. Fences will be installed to serve various purposes. Split rail style fences will keep users from sensitive areas and chain link fence will be used in limited applications to protect users from steep slopes or other hazards and other wooden fencing will be used to prohibit vehicle access to the corridor. Safety improvements such as signs, markings, islands and flashing beacons, as appropriate, will be made at grade crossings and it is possible to make an ADA compliant interim trail through careful specification of materials and proper construction.

Design and construction of a gravel interim trail was unanimously approved by the Transportation Commission.

#### *PAVING THE TRAIL*

A paved trail continues to be evaluated and a fully paved regional trail along the entire CKC is the ultimate goal of the City. However the cost of a similar width paved trail is at least three times the cost of the gravel trail within the current scope. The interim trail is nearly fully funded by the state grant and the PSRC money. Currently there is no identified money to pave the trail. Should the proposed park levy pass, the City would be able to consider paving certain portions of the trail in phases. There are several policy and logistical challenges to paving the

trail in the short term. First, in order to simplify the need for drainage improvements, the trail must be confined to the width of the current railbed, which is primarily 8 feet in width. Given the two-way pedestrian and bicycle traffic that will be on the facility, paving a trail of this width can be problematic because of the higher bicycle speeds that would be supported by a paved trail. Once constructed, a paved trail is also more difficult to move both for cost and public perception. The ultimate vision of multi-modal use requires that the final paved trail be constructed to the left or the right of the center line of the CKC to allow enough room for transit use. An interim trail would be less expensive to move and keeps all future options open, including paving over the interim trail. A paved trail is more expensive, will take longer to complete and is more "permanent" in the mind of the public and therefore can often be difficult and costly to move.

*FUNDING AND SCHEDULE:*

The cost estimate for rail removal and interim trail construction is \$3.6 million. Two grant funding sources have been secured for funding rail removal and interim trail construction, and a third grant application, through the State Pedestrian and Bicycle Safety Program, is under consideration. Table 1 is a summary of the current funding scenario for the Project. The secured Federal CMAQ grant (lines 2 and 3 in Table 1) includes a required match. The State Ped/Bike Grant (lines 5 and 6 in Table 1) will require a match if the grant is awarded.

Table 1 Corridor Funding

LINE	SOURCE	AMOUNT	STATUS
1	Direct State Appropriation	\$2,000,000	Secured
2	Federal CMAQ Grant	\$1,070,000	Secured
3	Local Match for CMAQ Recommended source: Surface Water Reserves	\$203,000	Available with Council Approval
4	<b>SUBTOTAL</b>	<b>\$3,273,000</b>	
5	State Ped/Bike Grant	\$450,000	Under consideration, funding determined by 2013 legislature
6	Local Match for State Ped/Bike Grant Future recommended source: REET Reserves	\$50,000	Available with Council Approval
7	<b>SUBTOTAL</b>	<b>\$450,000</b>	
8	<b>Total</b>	<b>\$3,773,000</b>	

A preliminary project schedule (Figure 1) was developed for use by the Transportation Commission as they discussed their recommendations to the Council. This schedule envisions various components of the development process occurring now, with some elements running concurrently with each other (an example would be rail removal occurring while planning and design for interim trail construction is underway).

Figure 1 Preliminary Schedule

Work Item	Calendar Quarter						
	Q3 2012	Q4 2012	Q1 2013	Q2 2013	Q3 2013	Q4 2013	Q1 2014
<b>Rail Removal</b> Environmental, design, bidding							
<b>Rail Removal</b> construction							
<b>Trail</b> environmental							
<b>Trail</b> design							
<b>Trail</b> Construction							

## 2. MASTER PLAN

On March 6, 2012, City Council confirmed that the Transportation Commission should move forward with development of a Corridor Master Plan Scope and cost estimate. The Commission conferred with the Park Board on the scope; the Commission chair met with the Park Board at the Board's April and May meetings.

The Commission purposefully looked at the balance between prescriptiveness within the scope and giving the experts freedom to help propose the best course of action for various tasks. Currently, the balance is away from a prescriptive scope, while still insuring that the City's interests are achieved. The Draft Scope is Attachment B.

The basic elements of the scope of work are as follows:

- Understand the corridor – form a comprehensive understanding of the physical nature of the corridor including mapping of critical areas such as streams, wetlands, and slopes.
- Public process – A complete public process allowing for comment and approval by stakeholders will be a major element throughout the Master Plan development.
- Goals/Vision – Building on the approved Corridor Interest Statement, a vision and goals statement will be prepared to guide and evaluate other parts of the Master Plan.
- Design Guidelines and principles – These guidelines and principles will help translate the vision and goals into physical design. Examples of elements covered in the guidelines could include lighting, spacing of certain amenities, how art will be integrated throughout the corridor, etc.
- Develop alternatives – In this task, near-term, mid-term and long-term corridor alternatives will be developed. Each alternative will have different cross sections and amenity packages. Illustrations will be created to highlight the features of each alternative.
- Cost estimating -- Design, construction and maintenance costs will be calculated for each of the alternatives in the development of alternatives task.
- Alternative selection – The result of this task will be a preferred alternative for each time period -- short, mid and long-term. This will be done using the work developed in other tasks, in particular, determining how various alternatives meet the goals and vision. This task will be a key focus of public process.
- Implementation Plan – An implementation plan will identify likely funding and phasing scenarios for design and construction of preferred alternatives over time.

The Draft Master Plan will be assembled from the component reports prepared after each task and will be subject to a thorough public process and review by City Council at a Council Study Session. A Final Plan will be prepared based on the comments received on the Draft Master Plan and submitted for approval by City Council.

A team of consultants from various disciplines would be hired to fulfill the scope of work. During meetings with the Transportation Commission and Park Board, a process for selecting a consultant team was discussed. It was anticipated that staff would request and review a number of proposals from which staff would select two or three final teams for interviews. A member of the Park Board and a member of the Transportation Commission would serve with staff on an interview group to select the final consultant team. Before being undertaken, this process will be reviewed in more detail with Council.

New information may become available during the rail removal, interim trail construction and other processes that may take place between now and when funding is confirmed for the Master Plan. Before beginning the Request for Proposal process, the draft scope should be revised based on any such new information.

It's estimated that the cost of preparing the Master Plan is between \$300,000 and \$500,000. This figure is based on informal discussions with professionals who have recent experience preparing similar documents. The Master Plan process would likely take 18 to 24 months to complete.

Several options for securing funding to complete the Master Plan were evaluated:

1. Repurpose existing grant funding: Under this option, funding secured from existing grants would be used to fund the Master Plan and grant funds be replaced with funds from another source such as the Kirkland Park Levy. This option is not viable due to restrictions on the scope of services for the grant already received; those grants do not allow expenditure of funds on general planning.
2. Obtain grants specifically for funding the Master Plan: Staff is continually looking for grant funding opportunities for corridor improvements including funding for the Master Plan. It's possible that such grant funding will be found but not likely because the majority of grant programs do not fund planning studies.
3. General funds: Given the 2013-2014 budget outlook, it is not likely that general funds will be available to fund the Master Plan. A Service Package could be prepared to request funding, however, the budget process will not be complete until the end of 2012, which could delay the schedule.
4. Transportation CIP: At this time the draft Transportation CIP, as reviewed by Council, does not include funding for the Master Plan. Funding for the Master Plan would require reprioritization of funded projects that are funded by General revenues, since REET and impact fee revenues are not available for general planning purposes.
5. King County Parks Levy: Kirkland receives funding each year from the King County Park Levy. There may be limited portions of the Master Plan work that could be funded by these funds. However, specific guidelines from the County on how King County Parks Levy funds can be used may limit the degree to which these funds for general planning.

6. Kirkland Park Levy funding: This may be the most likely source of funding. If a ballot measure passes this fall, funds generated for non-maintenance purposes could be used to fund the Master Plan.

Staff recommends options 5 and 6 as the method for funding the Master Plan. If the Kirkland Park Levy is not successful or the King County Levy funds cannot fund the entire cost, staff will bring specific proposals for Options 3 and 4 to Council for consideration as part of the Budget and/or CIP processes.

### 3. Conclusion

Staff requests City Council's authorization to commence with rail removal. Staff further requests Council's authorization of funding in order to immediately begin rail removal and trail design/construction and permitting efforts. The City portion of funding needed for work efforts in 2012 leading to the construction of an interim trail in 2013 is \$203,000, with funding available from Surface Water Reserves (**Fiscal Note Attachment E**). Surface Water Reserves are used initially because of the improved access to surface water facilities needing repair that will be provided through rail removal and interim trail development.

Staff also requests approval of the Draft Master Plan Scope of work and using Park Levy funding as the source of funding Master Plan completion as appropriate.

# City of Kirkland Eastside Rail Corridor Interest Statement

*Adopted 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 Trail<sup>1</sup> 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 on-line 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 Study<sup>2</sup> 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 goals<sup>3</sup> 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 determined<sup>4</sup> 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 support current and future plans for economic and neighborhood development.

***Connect Totem Lake***

Because of the corridor's proximity to the Totem Lake Urban Center<sup>5</sup>, 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 corridor<sup>6</sup> 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 Plan<sup>7</sup> 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. The 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 options.<sup>8</sup>

**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**

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

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

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

<sup>4</sup> BNSF Corridor Preservation Study, Final Report May, 2007 Puget Sound Regional Council. Page 7. [http://www.psrc.org/assets/3176/07-20\\_BNSFfinalreport.pdf](http://www.psrc.org/assets/3176/07-20_BNSFfinalreport.pdf)

<sup>5</sup> 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.

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

<sup>7</sup> *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](http://www.ci.kirkland.wa.us/depart/Public_Works/Transportation_Streets/Active_Transportation_Plan.htm)

<sup>8</sup> 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.

## Draft Cross Kirkland Corridor Master Plan Scope of Work June 26, 2012

### Purpose

On April 13, 2012, the City of Kirkland purchased the Cross Kirkland Corridor, 5.75 miles of the former Burlington Northern Santa Fe (BNSF) rail line in Kirkland. A Master Plan is needed to help collect, develop, understand and put into context a number of facts, ideas and opinions about the Corridor. The resulting plan will be a practical reference and guide which charts the course of facility development into the future.

### Background

Almost 20 years ago Kirkland began to pursue the Cross Kirkland Trail. This project was set aside after it became clear that the BNSF Railway was not interested in partnering on a rail/trail concept. King County undertook purchase of the entire "Woodinville Subdivision" rail line from Renton to Snohomish in 2005 when the BNSF signaled its interest in selling the corridor. In 2009 several entities including King County, the Port of Seattle, PSE, and the City of Redmond entered into a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) which resulted in the Port of Seattle owning the corridor, with the intent that other entities would purchase various interests for various portions of the property.

Given the terms of the 2009 MOU, Kirkland anticipated a regional process to discuss how the Eastside Rail corridor should be developed. In preparation for such a process an set of interests was developed. In April of 2011 the Interest Statement was approved by the City Council. This interest statement clearly lays out a vision for a multi-modal transportation facility. By 2011, full consummation of the MOU had not been completed; notably the County had not purchased the corridor in Kirkland. Subsequently, the City of Kirkland successfully negotiated with the Port to purchase a 5.75 mile long section of the Corridor in Kirkland. The purchase was completed on April 13, 2012.

### Scope of Work

#### **General comments**

All products should be presented in web, electronic and hard copy formats and will be made available to the public. It is anticipated that the products of certain tasks will be chapters or appendices in the final report and should be formatted appropriately. The following tasks are not necessarily consecutive; some may happen together or some tasks may be completed before tasks with lower numbers.

#### **Task 1 Project Management**

Provide regular updates on progress. Develop and maintain a schedule and progress made toward key events. Implement project management techniques to insure progress toward completion within schedule and budget.

**Product:** Schedules and updates as appropriate and monthly at a minimum.

### **Task 2 Understanding the corridor**

Collect and evaluate existing information and gather additional information as needed to form a comprehensive understanding of the physical nature of the corridor. A partial list of existing information available from the City includes:

- A. Corridor survey data:
  - 1. Record of survey
  - 2. Refined topographic data in Autocad format
  - 3. 3D laser scanning data
  - 4. 360° photos viewable with free proprietary browser plug-in
- B. Phase 1 Environmental report following ASTM standards, completed March 19, 2012.
- C. Railroad valuation maps
- D. GIS data including city owned utility data, sensitive areas, trail crossings

Identify and map critical areas including streams, wetlands, and slopes which will impact development of the Corridor. Determine the locations of private utilities as appropriate.

Understanding the current and planned land use context adjoining the corridor for purposes of determining how the corridor can support those land uses

**Product:** Memo describing critical issues for corridor development such as narrow corridor width, sensitive areas, surface water features, etc

### **Task 3 Design and carry out Public process**

Develop a public process plan that will allow meaningful input throughout the Master Plan process. Public process will be required development of the vision and goals, prior to the development of alternatives, to vet the alternatives and identify the preferred alternatives, to review the Draft Master Plan, and to review the Final Master Plan. At a minimum, the following groups (listed in no particular order) will require briefing and involvement in the process:

City Council	Transportation Commission
Park Board	Advocacy groups
Sound Transit	Neighborhood Associations
Adjacent property owners	Groups representing business interests
Neighboring cities	King County agencies including Metro and Parks

The various groups will be involved to varying extents and at different points in the process. Public process should be designed using International Association for Public Participation methods. A robust web based comment method for products of various tasks should be included in the public process. It is important that all relevant documents are available to the public throughout the development of the Plan.

**Product:** A memo describing a Plan and schedule for Public Process in all other Tasks, including an explanation of the principles that underlie the selected processes.

#### **Task 4 Goals/vision**

Using the Interest Statement as a starting point, and considering Council Goals, Comprehensive Plan Goals and Active Transportation Plan Goals, a vision and a set of goals for corridor development will be prepared. These will be used as guidance for the rest of the process and serve as a key touchstone for developing and evaluating alternatives. The development of the goals and vision will be a key focus of public process.

**Product:** A document that summarizes the vision and goals for the corridor.

#### **Task 5 Design guidelines and principles.**

Develop a set of guidelines and principles that can be used by designers as the corridor is developed. These guidelines and principles will help translate the vision and goals into a physical design. Examples might include spacing of certain amenities, integration of art, trail head designs, fencing guidelines, lighting guidelines, dynamic envelopes of transit, etc. This task is not meant to develop a complete list of guidelines, but rather to identify the main elements that will put constraints on alternatives.

**Product:** A document that summarizes the guidelines and principles.

#### **Task 6 Develop potential alternatives**

Based on the results of Tasks 4 and 5, alternative development plans will be prepared for three time periods; 1 to 5 years, 5 to 10 years and beyond 10 years. For each time period, two alternates will be developed. It is expected that the alternatives will have less detail the farther they are in the future. The alternatives will encompass different cross sections and different packages of amenity elements. Access points and implications for land use changes will also be evaluated. Environmental process implications will be developed for each alternative. The selection of the alternatives will be a key focus of public process.

**Product:** Memorandum describing a set of trail/transit cross-sections, documentation of the selection process and a review of why the selected options were chosen. Also includes draft illustrations of proposed sections.

#### **Task 7 Develop cost estimates for various cross sections**

Prepare a cost estimate including design, construction and maintenance costs for each of the alternatives developed in Task 6. This work will include identifying uniform sections of the corridor and finding representative unit costs for each section and each alternative. Any additional costs such as boardwalks, bridges, signals, crossing improvements, etc. should also be added to the estimate.

**Product:** Memorandum describing costs, and methods used to establish the costs.

#### **Task 8 Alternative selection**

Based upon information developed in previous Tasks, select preferred alternatives for each time period. The selection of the preferred alternatives will be a key focus of public process.

**Product:** Memorandum describing the preferred alternatives, documentation of the selection process and a review of why the selected options were chosen.

#### **Task 9 Implementation Plan**

Prepare a plan that identifies likely funding and phasing scenarios for design and construction of preferred alternatives over time. An initial plan for development should be described. An important element in this work will be examining how various transit modes are likely to be implemented in the corridor. The implementation plan should identify significant constraints, obstacles and risks to various alternatives.

**Product:** Memorandum describing funding and phasing.

#### **Task 10 Draft Plan**

The draft plan will summarize of the work completed in Tasks 1 through 8 in a single document. A thorough public review will include a review by the City Council at a study session.

**Product:** A draft document with high quality presentation and graphic elements.

#### **Task 11 Final Plan**

Based on the comments and recommendations on the Draft Plan, prepare a Final Plan.

**Product:** A final document, to be adopted by Transportation Commission, Park Board and City Council. The final plan shall be presented in electronic and web-based versions, with limited hard copies.





# CITY OF SNOHOMISH

*Founded 1859, Incorporated 1890*

116 UNION AVENUE SNOHOMISH, WASHINGTON 98290 TEL (360) 568-3115 FAX (360) 568-1375

July 30, 2012

Mayor Joan McBride and City Council  
City of Kirkland  
123 Fifth Avenue  
Kirkland, WA 98033-6189

**RECEIVED**

JUL 31 2012

CITY OF KIRKLAND  
CITY MANAGER'S OFFICE

Dear Mayor McBride and City Council Members:

The City of Kirkland is facing one of those truly historic decisions that will affect your City for generations, not to mention the economic engines of our two counties, King and Snohomish.

On behalf of the Snohomish City Council, I thank you for this opportunity to provide input on the Kirkland City Council's anticipated actions related to your Cross-Town Corridor property.

The Corridor is a central section of the 30-mile Eastside Rail Corridor running between the City of Snohomish and Renton. We applaud Kirkland for its vision in purchasing the corridor within its city limits from the Port of Seattle, as has the City of Redmond. Our city bought the segment just north of the Port of Seattle purchase, buying it directly from BNSF in 2009. We spent years investigating and negotiating this acquisition. Snohomish County previously purchased the approximately 30-mile-long segment extending north from our city limits from BNSF as well.

It has come to our attention that your City Council will consider actions to authorize the removal of the railroad tracks along the Cross-Town Corridor. Our recent discussions with a possible new operator of the line, Iowa Pacific Holdings, give us some hope for future excursion and commuter rail use of this valuable corridor.

We urge you to acquire direct answers to the issues described below, detailing the effect that removal of these tracks would have on your community's well-being.

#### Cross-Town Corridor Issues:

1. The Cross-Town Corridor property is owned by Kirkland, but the federal government has placed what is, in effect, a permanent transportation easement that permits rail interests to forcibly reinstate rail use on the corridor and not reimburse the City for any capital investments the City has made to the property (such rights are currently preserved under federal railbank law). The rights under this "easement" are held by the third party operator of the corridor, currently the bankrupt GNP Railway. The rights will endure past the bankruptcy and will be transferred to another rail operator. The outcome of the rail operator bankruptcy proceedings is approaching completion; Kirkland should not rush to invest public funds into the corridor which might be lost, and more importantly to

Kirkland, city staff resources should not be diverted at this time from projects with more reliable outcomes. A master plan completed without the results of the third-party rail operator will be incomplete and subject to costly revision.

2. Safety and maintenance concerns of the rails are no different than when BNSF or the Port held the properties. Has the corridor logged significant police or other emergency activity since the City's purchase? Have there been reports of injuries? Maintenance required for a gravel trail, new fencing, signage and street crossings will be significantly more than any current maintenance activities.
3. Construction activities to remove the tracks and grade the rail bed's super-elevated curves to place gravel trail surfacing and related drainage work are likely to create substantial amounts of airborne dust with potential toxic properties after 100 years of diesel and coal fuel use on the corridor. Soil surveys (EPA Phase I and II Site Assessments) should be conducted as an initial, stand-alone step and prior to costly investment in further master planning.
4. The current rail class rating of the tracks was selected by BNSF Railway to reduce inspection frequency and limit expenses. The Cross-town Corridor rail alignment was surveyed and constructed to higher standards and can support higher speeds than currently authorized.
5. The I-405 freeway at NE 85<sup>th</sup> regularly approaches gridlock conditions now and this will only get worse without an alternative for Everett-to-Bellevue/Renton commuters. The state has taken the position that there will be no new highway lane miles constructed in this area as part of efforts to reduce air pollution.
6. While a large number of Kirkland residents may not currently commute to Everett, employment opportunities do change over time and may make commuter rail services highly desirable to your residents in the future. Everett residents certainly commute to Bellevue and their vehicles help to create the congestion on I-405 through Kirkland, impacting your residents' mobility and commute times.
7. Tolling proposed for this stretch of I-405 would impact Kirkland residents, both by paying the toll and dealing with surface congestion as drivers avoid I-405 for local commutes to Bellevue and Redmond. Proposed parking charges at Park & Ride lots will also impact Kirkland residents.
8. Kirkland residents travel to other Eastside locations, Sea-Tac International Airport and downtown Seattle. Transit rail on the Cross-Town Corridor would provide a convenient, car-free option for Kirkland residents to connect to an East Link light rail station in Bellevue and from there to Seattle, the airport, regional rail and ferry travel, and the growing public transportation network.
9. An alternative that makes available to Kirkland residents the ability to walk to a cross-town passenger rail from home-and avoid I-405 altogether-would significantly benefit Kirkland's continued status as a highly-desirable place to live.

10. Buses are affected by the same I-405 gridlock that slows the SOV commuter. Trains offer far more reliable travel times than buses or cars.
11. Trains that reduce traffic congestion are likely to be more green (fewer carbon emissions) than buses operating in the same corridor due to the number of passengers accommodated by rail and with rail's new cleaner fuel options.
12. While it is true that the destruction of the Wilburton Tunnel severed the original rail connection to Renton, WSDOT's design for the widening of I-405, in consultation with GNP Railway, provided for the ability to rebuild this connection.

As public officials, you continually plan for the future as well as current needs. While taking your next steps concerning this transportation corridor, please move with your usual thoughtfulness and vision for Kirkland's future well-being, and delay taking action either to remove the rails or initiate a master plan prior to conclusion of the current GNP Railway bankruptcy proceedings, and the possibility of another rail operator that could provide a viable connection to all of our cities along this corridor.

Kirkland has much to gain and little to lose by a temporary delay.

Best regards,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Karen Guzak', with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

Karen Guzak  
Mayor

c: City Council

**FISCAL NOTE**

CITY OF KIRKLAND

Source of Request							
Ray Steiger, Public Works Director							
Description of Request							
Request for funding of \$203,000 for the Cross Kirkland Corridor project from the Surface Water Construction Reserve to provide local match funding for a federal CMAQ grant.							
Legality/City Policy Basis							
Fiscal Impact							
One-time use of \$203,000 from the Surface Water Construction Reserve. This reserve is able to fully fund this request.							
Recommended Funding Source(s)							
<i>Reserve</i>	Description	2012 Est End Balance	Prior Auth. 2011-12 Uses	Prior Auth. 2011-12 Additions	Amount This Request	Revised 2012 End Balance	2012 Target
	Surface Water Construction	3,376,431	368,000	0	203,000	2,805,431	N/A
	2011-12 Prior Authorized Use of this reserve: \$218,000 for Totem Lake Flooding and \$150,000 for Billy Creek Ravine Stabilization.						
<i>Revenue/Exp Savings</i>							
<i>Other Source</i>							
Other Information							
Prepared By	Neil Kruse, Senior Financial Analyst				Date	August 1, 2012	