



CITY OF KIRKLAND

Department of Public Works
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MEMORANDUM

To: Kurt Triplett, City Manager
From: Pam Bissonnette, Interim Public Works Director
Date: October 18, 2013
Subject: *Creating Connections*: Recommendations on the Eastside Rail Corridor from the Regional Advisory Council

RECOMMENDATION:

It is recommended that the City Council, based on the recommendations at the end of this staff memo, adopt the attached Resolution to continue participation in the Regional Advisory Council for the Eastside Rail Corridor to establish collaborative working relationships and facilitate planning with the owners of the Eastside Rail Corridor.

BACKGROUND AND DISCUSSION:

Historical Background of the Regional Advisory Council

The Eastside Rail Corridor (ERC) Regional Advisory Council (RAC) was established by the King County Council in 2013 following the County's purchase of the remainder of the ERC not already purchased by Redmond, Sound Transit, and Kirkland, from the Port of Seattle. The RAC membership is comprised of the five owners of the corridor as follows:

King County

- Dow Constantine, King County Executive and Co-Chair
- Jane Hague, King County Council for District 6 and Co-Chair
- Larry Phillips, King County Council
- Kathy Lambert, King County Council

City of Kirkland

- Mayor Joan McBride

City of Redmond

- Mayor John Marchione

Puget Sound Energy

- David Namura, Government & Community Relations Manager

Sound Transit

- Joni Earl, Executive Director

Each member was allowed an alternate. City Manager Kurt Triplett is Kirkland's alternate.

The RAC met regularly during 2013 and developed a report "*Creating Connections: Recommendations on the Eastside Rail Corridor from the Regional Advisory Council* (the Report)"

presenting the RAC's preliminary recommendations for the next steps in a collaborative process for planning, developing, and using the ERC. The purpose of the RAC, as stated in the Report's executive summary, derives from the separate ownerships: "Each of the owners has its own statutory obligations, internal processes and procedures and priorities set by separate governing bodies. Recognizing that these disparate interests, timeframes, and requirements could lead to uncoordinated planning, the RAC was created to establish a framework for a collaborative, regional planning process for the ERC, with the goal of accommodating multiple uses in the corridor."

Scope of the Report

The scope of the Report covers mainly the ERC section within King County, although the final Vision describes a "corridor for the ages" which aspires to extend from Vancouver to Vancouver. Snohomish County, Woodinville, Bellevue, Renton and PSRC were invited to participate at various stages.

The RAC met regularly during 2013 to study conditions, constraints, and opportunities along the ERC, learn about adjacent development and plans of nearby jurisdictions, review lessons from similar multi-use corridors around the country, and hear from interested members of the public. The RAC was supported by a technical team from each owner jurisdiction. Interim Public Works Director Pam Bissonnette was Kirkland's technical team member.

Three technical workshops were held on the County's sections of the corridor. The Workshops were for invited experts by the Owners rather than public events. Redmond and Kirkland provided content from these cities' own Master Plan processes for the Redmond and Kirkland segments. A public hearing was held in Bellevue in July. A draft Report prepared by the RAC's facilitator was reviewed and edited. Here is a [link](#) to the resulting 228 page Report that contains a shared vision for a multi-use ERC with 35 individual recommendations organized under the following headings:

1. Develop a shared Regional Policy Framework
2. Develop a Federal Agenda
3. Develop a State Agenda
4. Develop a Long-Term Regional Approach for Planning Together
5. Develop the Corridor's Regional Legacy
6. Begin Identification of Shared Corridor Guidelines
7. Provide Initial Guidance on Constraints and Opportunities
8. Enlist Community Support

The Report recommends that the RAC continue to:

- Serve as the keepers of the long-term vision; proposing policies, focusing on changes needed to regional and local planning documents.
- Implement the report recommendations as the next step in the collaborative development of the corridor within the established authorities of each of the owners.
- Advocate with state and federal legislative delegations.
- Enlist community and business support in the corridor's development.

- Consider options and strategies for an ongoing forum for collaborative and coordinated decision-making and implementation.
- Collaborate at a technical staff level on specific planning and development issues.

CKC Benefits to Kirkland

The importance of the Cross Kirkland Corridor (CKC) to Kirkland can hardly be overstated. The CKC is critical to the continued economic development of the city, especially to the Totem Lake urban growth area. Stretching the full length of the city, its physical location provides unmatched potential for connecting land uses important to Kirkland's residents and businesses. With its 17 connections to existing streets and paths, the CKC knits together many of Kirkland's major on-street bicycle facilities and walking paths. There are 1,173 businesses with nearly 11,000 employees within less than a half mile of the CKC that are likely to experience real growth and success due to their proximity to the CKC. Google purchased an expansion site on the CKC in part because they recognized the value it would add to their business and employee base.

In addition to the businesses that are already located on or near the corridor whose employees will benefit from an alternative commute route as well as access to a major recreational asset, areas of Kirkland that have been zoned for more density but reliant in part on transit to redevelop may realize their potential sooner rather than later with the multi-modal corridor as the catalyst. A case in point is the southwest quadrant of the Totem Lake Urban Center known as PARMAC. A high tech office district with heights of buildings up to 80' in some areas is the City's vision, and a multi-modal corridor could awaken the district's potential with an increase of 23,000 jobs.

As commuters clamor for a more efficient way to get to work each day, the CKC has high potential for future transit improvements. For now, the interim trail will allow recreational access as well as limited mobility to workplaces and destinations in Kirkland. In the future the 5.75 mile CKC may allow faster transit options from the Totem Lake area all the way to the South Kirkland Park and Ride and into Bellevue to connect with Sound Transit's Eastlink. Passengers can also transfer to buses on Hwy 520 that will allow transit commuters to bypass the busy I405 corridor between Kirkland and Hwy 520.

In addition to transit, the CKC will also become Kirkland's premier paved recreational trail for cyclists and pedestrians. Kirkland is currently the only major city on the Eastside with no regional trail. The CKC will provide a spine with links to recreational parks and trails with a southern link to bicycle and trail improvements along Hwy 520 as well the potential development of links to regional trails from the northern end near Totem Lake. The Corridor is pleasantly wooded in many areas and provides a feeling of being far from an urban center, though in reality, it is very close to neighborhoods, schools, business and shopping areas. Its length allows a good hike or bike ride on even wintery days when mountain trails are not an option.

The CKC also provides an underground and air corridor for utilities important to Kirkland residents and continued economic development, such as power, water, wastewater, and stormwater management.

Benefits of Continued Collaboration

While these local benefits are of overwhelming importance, Kirkland will benefit further by connecting the CKC to Bellevue, Redmond, Woodinville, and Seattle over the new 520 bridge to the University of Washington. The ERC Report describes these regional benefits in detail. To realize all these benefits will take all the owners working together to coordinate each of their developments as they take place over time. Given the investments that each owner has made and will continue to make, such planning and coordination must remain collaborative.

There are significant tasks that are better accomplished as a coalition, such as the development of, and then advocacy for, a federal and state agenda that supports the corridor; joint projects where ownerships merge (such as at the S. Kirkland Park & Ride, and the connection between Kirkland, the County, and the Redmond Central Connector); and potentially joint funding proposals.

The RAC is considering whether it is advisable to add membership to the RAC from Bellevue, Renton, Woodinville, PSRC, and the State/WSDOT. These are important stakeholders from investment and land use regulation standpoints.

Technical staff will need to continue to work together as issues arise, such as the siting of the PSE poles on the north end of the CKC and private development adjacent to the CKC (such as the SRM/Google expansion), to make sure that all owner rights are respected and accommodated within the corridor. Kirkland has been requested to confirm participation in this process. We have responded informally that we would participate as long as the process remains advisory and recommendations are reached by consensus, and that the process is efficient, focusing on those issues where we are stronger in a coalition, such as a State and Federal agenda that supports the ERC.

Recommendations

1. Kirkland should continue to participate on the RAC with a main focus on developing a state and federal agenda supportive of corridor development and building a coalition of support.
2. Kirkland should support expansion of the membership of the RAC to other cities along the corridor, PRSC and the State/WSDOT, and that the RAC remain advisory and a collaborative group in making its recommendations.
3. Kirkland should work with the other members of the RAC on developing funding proposals to fully implement the corridor.
4. Kirkland should provide staff to the technical team of the RAC to continue to work through plan and project implementation issues in accordance with the rights and responsibilities of each of the owners.

RESOLUTION R-5020

A RESOLUTION OF THE CITY COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF KIRKLAND AUTHORIZING THE CITY TO CONTINUE PARTICIPATION IN THE REGIONAL ADVISORY COUNCIL FOR THE EASTSIDE RAIL CORRIDOR TO ESTABLISH COLLABORATIVE WORKING RELATIONSHIPS AND CONTINUE PLANNING EFFORTS WITH THE OWNERS OF THE EASTSIDE RAIL CORRIDOR.

WHEREAS, the Eastside Rail Corridor (ERC) Regional Advisory Council (RAC) was established by the King County Council in 2012 following the County's purchase of the remainder of ERC not already purchased from the Port of Seattle by Redmond, Sound Transit and Kirkland; and

WHEREAS, the RAC is composed of executive-level representatives from the five owners: King County, Sound Transit, Redmond, Kirkland and Puget Sound Energy; and

WHEREAS, the RAC was created to establish a framework for a collaborative, regional planning process for the ERC, with the goal of accommodating multiple uses in the corridor; and

WHEREAS, the RAC met regularly during 2013 and developed a report summarizing recommendations for the first phase of the planning effort entitled *Creating Connections: Recommendations on the Eastside Rail Corridor from the Regional Advisory Council*; and

WHEREAS, City staff has reviewed the report and recommends continued participation in the RAC with additional recommended principles to guide the City's participation;

NOW, THEREFORE, be it resolved by the City Council of the City of Kirkland as follows:

Section 1. The City acknowledges receipt of the RAC report *Creating Connections: Recommendations on the Eastside Rail Corridor from the Regional Advisory Council* and expresses its appreciation to all members of the RAC for developing a collaborative and inspiring multi-modal vision for the Eastside Rail Corridor.

Section 2. The City should continue to participate in the Regional Advisory Council for the Eastside Rail Corridor to enhance collaborative working relationships and continue planning efforts with the other owners of the Eastside Rail Corridor.

Section 3. The City's continued participation in the Regional Advisory Council (RAC) for the Eastside Rail Corridor should be guided by the following principles:

- a. Kirkland should continue to participate on the RAC with a main focus on developing state and federal agendas supportive of corridor development and building a coalition of support.
- b. Kirkland should support expansion of the membership of the RAC to other cities along the corridor, the Puget Sound Regional Council and the Washington State Department of Transportation.
- c. Kirkland should support that the RAC remain advisory and a collaborative group in making future recommendations.
- d. Kirkland should work with other members of the RAC on developing funding proposals to fully implement the corridor multi-modal vision.
- e. Kirkland should provide staff to the technical team of the RAC to continue to work through plan and project implementation issues in accordance with the rights and responsibilities of each of the owners.

Passed by majority vote of the Kirkland City Council in open meeting this ____ day of _____, 2013.

Signed in authentication thereof this ____ day of _____, 2013.

MAYOR

Attest:

City Clerk