

# City of Kirkland: Eastside Rail Corridor INFORMATIONAL SHEET

*The Kirkland City Council is committed to ensuring its residents have the most current and accurate information about the Eastside Rail Corridor. The City is also committed to bringing Kirkland's interests to the forefront of the regional planning efforts and to actively partner with regional entities so that Kirkland's interests are understood and included in the decision making process.*

*To this end, the City Council and Transportation Commission will host public outreach and involvement activities to help guide the development of Kirkland's "Interest Statement" about the short term and long term vision of the corridor. The "Interest Statement" will be based upon public input as well as other practical considerations of rail and trail uses along the corridor.*

*For more information about Kirkland's efforts, including frequently asked questions (FAQs), please visit [www.ci.kirkland.wa.us/eastsiderailcorridor](http://www.ci.kirkland.wa.us/eastsiderailcorridor).*

## **About the corridor:**

The entire corridor is known as the "Woodinville subdivision" and is 44 miles in length. The northern portion (25 miles) of the corridor consists of the freight portion and the Redmond spur. The southern portion (19 miles) extends from Woodinville through Kirkland to Renton. About 6 miles of the corridor lie within Kirkland City limits.

## **Transfer of property:**

In December, 2009, the Port of Seattle (Port) finalized its acquisition of the Eastside Rail Corridor from Burlington Northern Santa Fe (BNSF) Railway. Final cost for the northern section of the 44-mile corridor between Woodinville and Snohomish was approximately \$81 million. BNSF donated the southern portion of the corridor between Woodinville and Renton and the Redmond Spur that goes through the City of Redmond.

## **Regional partners:**

The Port, King County, Sound Transit, City of Redmond, Puget Sound Energy, Cascade Water Alliance are parties to a non-binding Memorandum of Understanding that proposes dual use of the corridor as a recreational trail and high capacity transit or bus transportation.

**King County** is considering the corridor for development as a "dual-use" corridor—with the potential to meet future public transportation needs while still providing connections to South, East and North King County through a series of biking, walking and hiking trails. The County intends to have a full regional process to decide how the corridor should be developed. The details of such a process have not been developed.



**Sound Transit** is interested in deed ownership of a section of the line between downtown Bellevue and State Route (SR) 520 for potential East Link alignments. East Link is Sound Transit's voter-approved project to build light rail between Seattle and the Overlake corridor. Sound Transit is also interested in an easement for future use along the entire southern portion (Woodinville through Kirkland to Renton).

Sound Transit II, a plan approved by the voters in November of 2008, includes a provision by which Sound Transit could invest in rail operation in the Eastside Rail Corridor, outside the East Link program. Sound Transit's investment is limited to a maximum contribution of \$50 million dollars, which may be used for engineering and design, and for the purchase of capital equipment and real estate that can either be sold or used on Sound Transit's existing transportation system. Sound Transit plans to solicit requests for proposals for the \$50 million in the fall of 2010.

**City of Kirkland** has long looked upon the BNSF right-of-way as primarily a facility for non-motorized travel. However, we are also interested in an investigation of how rail transport might function alongside a trail. There are a number of unanswered questions concerning rail operations including impact on residential neighborhoods and local street traffic, ridership potential, parking accommodation and station locations.

**City of Redmond** intends to own the section of the southern corridor (south of NE 124<sup>th</sup> Street) that lies within its city limits and to develop it as a trail.

**Cascade Water Alliance** is interested in obtaining utility easements along the southern portion and spur and **Puget Sound Energy** wants utility easements over most of the subdivision.

## **Public Outreach and Involvement**

Rails and trails can operate together. It is not a matter of one prohibiting the other. The bigger questions surround timing; when will a trail or rail or both be developed; if a trail is developed what should it be like; and how wide, what type of surface and what type of rail if any should be operated. These issues are yet to be decided.

Kirkland is committed to getting out in front of the regional planning for the Eastside Rail Corridor and developing a community interest statement to help guide the negotiations of Kirkland's portion of the corridor.

**Learn more about the Eastside Rail corridor, become involved, and provide your input by participating in Kirkland's outreach and involvement opportunities.**

**[www.ci.kirkland.wa.us/eastsiderailcorridor](http://www.ci.kirkland.wa.us/eastsiderailcorridor)**

*For more information on the City of Kirkland's efforts, contact*

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