

DRAFT 10/22/10
Eastside Rail Corridor
Interest Statement

Summary

The Eastside Rail Corridor is a magnificent transportation facility that represents enormous opportunity. The main focus should be on development of a trail in the short term with the goal of adding transit when feasible, likely in the medium to longer term.

Ultimately, the best use of the corridor is as the site of an active transportation facility and a high capacity transit system. Either system might use all or part of the corridor and they might use it simultaneously. A safe, fully featured high capacity rail system would be very expensive and would require a great deal of careful planning. Such a system is currently contemplated in the Sound Transit master plan. There may be less expensive transit options that could be developed in the shorter term, such as bus rapid transit. Although it too would require public financing, a facility for bicycles and pedestrians would be far less expensive and require a less extensive planning process.

The following interests should be used to evaluate proposals. Proposals that satisfy more of the interests would rank more highly than the proposals that satisfy fewer of the interests.

Interests

Use the corridor as soon as possible

Because the corridor is a valuable asset that could be used to transport people, letting it remain unused/undeveloped has a high opportunity cost.

Maintain the corridor until a use is agreed upon

Proper maintenance helps prevent encroachment by adjacent property owners, minimizes drainage problems and reminds people that the corridor is a valuable asset.

Serve Transportation needs of Totem Lake

Use of the corridor should be integrated with and support development of Totem Lake, Kirkland's designated Urban Center. It is a goal of the City to connect Totem Lake with High Capacity Transit.

Provide connections

Citizens have expressed a desire to see the corridor connected beyond Kirkland, whatever its ultimate use. For example, people would like to see a connection to Sound Transit Link or other transit systems.

Integrate into Kirkland's transportation system

Trail development should include provision of new connections to existing streets. The Active Transportation Plan has a list of such trail connections.

Serve pedestrian/bicycle transportation needs

An active transportation path should allow all weather, day/night use. It should be sized to allow safe passage for both pedestrians and cyclists.

Disclose and mitigate environmental impacts

Prior to any development of the corridor, a complete environmental review should be conducted to disclose impacts and propose mitigations for those impacts. Noise, air quality, surface water and sensitive areas are typical areas that would require analysis.

Consider grade crossing implications

Our interest is that delay incurred by vehicles using streets is appropriate given adopted standards. Grade crossing treatments must provide a reasonable level of safety for pedestrians, bicycles and street traffic.

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

Because transit can profoundly impact surrounding land use, it must be carefully planned. For example, choosing the locations of light rail stations and any associated parking is a decision with major long term impacts on the surrounding neighborhoods and transportation network. A process to determine station locations would require extensive work with neighborhood groups, appropriate boards and commissions and the City Council.

Transit service designed to move people

Transit service should operate weekdays at 30 minute or greater frequency, with service spanning early morning to late night and providing service on weekends.

Use appropriate transit vehicles

Transit vehicles should be quiet and clean.

Dual use considerations

Transit service and a pedestrian/bicycle facility might coexist in the corridor. Dual use should not compromise the safety or operational characteristics of either use.