MEMORANDUM

To: Kurt Triplett, City Manager

From: Kathy Brown, Public Works Director
Joel Pfundt, Transportation Manager
Kimberly Scrivner, Transportation Planner

Date: May 9, 2019

Subject: EASTSIDE RAIL CORRIDOR BRAND LAUNCH AND FUNDING COMMISSION—PROPOSED CITY CONTRIBUTIONS

RECOMMENDATION:

City Council provides direction to staff regarding proposed financial support for two initiatives that support the Eastside Rail Corridor partnership:

- To contribute up to $3,040 to support the launch of the EasTrail brand; and
- To contribute up to $14,000 that would be a percentage shared by the Regional Advisory Council partners of the proposed $100,000 to support establishing the Eastside Rail Corridor Funding Commission’s new entity, called the EasTrail Partnership.

BACKGROUND DISCUSSION:

The Eastside Rail Corridor (ERC) is a former rail line that stretches 42 miles from Renton to Snohomish County, and the Cross Kirkland Corridor (CKC) is a 5.75-mile segment within the ERC. In 2012, the Eastside Rail Corridor Regional Advisory Council (RAC) was formed with the original members being entities that had rights or ownership interests in the corridor. Those included Sound Transit, the cities of Redmond and Kirkland, Puget Sound Energy, and King County. In 2017, the RAC was expanded to include representatives from jurisdictions through which the ERC passes (the cities of Bellevue and Renton), new ERC owners (the City of Woodinville and Snohomish County), and the Eastside Greenway Alliance. These entities work together to fulfill the RAC’s vision, which is:
Our Vision: A corridor for the Ages
Development of the corridor will enhance the mobility of our region by creating a critical north-south transportation corridor that will allow for multimodal connections, including high-capacity transit (e.g. heavy rail, light rail, or other forms of fixed guideway transportation) and non-motorized trail use. The corridor will enable key utility improvements to help meet the demands of a growing population. The corridor will expand the recreation network, creating equitable access for all residents, and benefitting generations of Puget Sound residents.

Deputy Mayor Arnold is the City’s representative to the RAC.

Branding:
On June 6, 2017, a Draft ERC Regional Branding Strategy outline and a proposed regionally-shared budget was presented to the City Council. On September 5, 2017, the Council received the final proposed ERC Regional Branding Strategy outline and subsequently authorized up to $9,000 from the City Council Special Projects Reserve for Kirkland’s share of the cost of the ERC Regional Branding Strategy process. The Strategy states the following goal for branding the ERC:

Communicate the planned uses of the corridor, complement the jurisdictions’ respective and shared visions and existing brands (such as the Cross Kirkland Corridor and the Redmond Central Connector), and engage the public to build momentum and excitement for the ERC.

The first part of the ERC Regional Branding Strategy was initial research, concept development, and choosing a name for the brand. The name preferred by the majority of RAC members was EasTrail. The jurisdictions with ownership rights agreed to defer to the RAC majority and move forward with the EasTrail brand for the ERC. The second part of the process was evaluating and engaging a variety of groups through four branding logo and tagline alternatives. The RAC approved a recommended brand logo on April 5, 2019 with the tagline of “Let’s Connect.” The brand logo and tagline are expected to be presented to the King County Council in June 2019 followed by a brand reveal event tentatively scheduled for June. The brand logo is below:

EAS ~AIL

Now that a preferred brand has been selected, King County is seeking additional funds—totaling $23,000—for efforts to launch the brand. The cost is proposed to be shared by the RAC partners. The brand launch efforts would include developing the following:

- **Coordinated messaging:** A consistent way of communicating what the EasTrail is, since it is shared by different stakeholders for different audiences; a “magic paragraph” that is 4-5 sentences long to be used for websites, in presentations, and in speeches;
and four “elevator pitches” that can be used for social media posts or shorter communications to specific audiences.

- **Launch Plan**: A phased communication approach and strategy for launching the EasTrail brand within the context of the RAC’s communications objectives and events.

- **Mobile Event Kit**: Approach for the event to publicly launch the EasTrail Brand and materials for a series of mini-events that include a modular set of add-on event activities appropriate for different audiences.

- **Landing Page**: Proof of concept design and content for a webpage to be used by all partners for the EasTrail that delivers information about the vision, a map with access points, progress on trail segments and upcoming events.

King County, Sound Transit, and King County Councilmember Balducci’s office all have tentatively communicated their intent to contribute to this effort. The other signatories to the MOU (noted above) are also being asked to contribute. The Eastside Greenway Alliance has communicated they are unable to contribute because their alliance is comprised of primarily non-profit organizations. King County’s proposed share for Kirkland is estimated to be up to $3,040.

**Eastside Rail Corridor Funding Commission and proposed EasTrail Partnership:**
Development of the ERC has been led by the public sector, but the RAC has explored expanding participation to the private sector with the hope that private sector participation could accelerate completion of the ERC. On April 30, 2018, the RAC convened the Eastside Rail Corridor Funding Commission, comprised of community leaders from the private and non-profit sectors, tasked with developing recommendations for identifying and securing funding from private and non-governmental sources to complete development of the trail within the ERC. They convened seven times between April 2018 and January 2019.

The Funding Commission developed a three-part strategy for completing the trail that encourages public/private partnerships and contributions:

- **Connect**: Build a safe, less expensive interim trail along the entire length of the corridor and open it for use as soon as possible;

- **Construct**: Make continuous progress toward widening and paving the entire trail so that people of all ages and abilities can use it; and

- **Complete**: Develop public gathering spaces, art, and amenities along the trail to enhance the trail experience and knit the ERC into surrounding communities.

This strategy includes a set of recommendations based on the following activities:

- Create opportunities for private participation;

- Encourage land use policies and new funding tools that support trail development; and

- Create an independent entity to accelerate development and maximize the value of the ERC.
Now that the Funding Commission has developed a plan, the recommendation from the RAC is to form an independent entity called the EasTrail Partnership to accelerate the development of the ERC and to maximize its value. This new entity would act as a private/non-profit partner.

Key Functions of the proposed EasTrail Partnership Funding Entity are:

- Communications and stakeholder engagement;
- Fundraising and partnerships; and
- Advocacy.

In addition, the new EasTrail Partnership would include a Leadership Committee comprised of 12-17 members to serve as the leadership body of the EasTrail Partnership. Members may include community leaders, major employers and property owners, businesses, and representation from historically underserved or under-represented communities with an interest in or proximity to the ERC trail. This also may include organizations that support parks, trails, and/or open space.

Governance:
- The EasTrail Partnership would be a sponsored project by another organization—such as the King County Parks Foundation—to minimize startup costs and enable the EasTrail Partnership to stand up quickly.
- The Leadership Committee would direct the EasTrail Partnership activities, in consultation with the RAC and the host/sponsoring organization.
- Over time, if it makes sense, the EasTrail Partnership could spin off from host/sponsoring organization.

Expected Staffing: 1 FTE

Funding:
- YEAR ONE budget of $200,000
  - Request for $100,000 contribution from RAC members
  - Request for $50,000 matching grant from King County Parks Foundation
  - Raise $50,000 from other private and philanthropic contributors
- MOU would delineate functions supported by public funding

Kirkland’s estimated share is based on the previously agreed-upon percentages from the initial ERC Regional Branding Strategy but is subject to change based on the percentage distribution with new owners, Woodinville and Snohomish County, and distribution of the Eastside Greenway Alliance’s former share of 7%. This is assuming that all the RAC partners contribute. Assuming a range of 11.7% - 13.2% partnership share of the proposed $100,000, the current estimate for the Kirkland contribution is approximately $14,000. If Council chooses to move forward with this contribution, the likely source of funding would be the City Council Special Projects Reserve.
NEXT STEPS:

- If Council provides direction to support the EasTrail brand launch, the EasTrail Partnership, or both, staff will work closely with the RAC Principal Staff Team (PST) to finalize the contribution amount for each partner that will be presented to the RAC for final cost allocation.

- If the RAC receives the necessary contributions from RAC members, the King County Parks Foundation, and from other private and philanthropic efforts—and chooses to move forward with the EasTrail Partnership—staff will continue to provide support to the PST and the RAC as it works with the newly established entity to implement the recommendations.

- During the first year, one of the issues the EasTrail Partnership will need to address is how to sustain the entity long-term. There is a possibility that Kirkland could be asked to contribute in subsequent year(s), but no commitments have been made to do so.

Attachment A: Eastside Rail Corridor Funding Commission Final Business Plan
About this plan
This plan provides a framework for establishing an independent entity to support development of the Eastside Rail Corridor (ERC). For this business plan, we are calling the entity the Eastrail Partnership, recognizing it is likely to transition to a new name once established.

Purpose of the Eastrail Partnership
The purpose of the Eastrail Partnership is to maximize the value of the ERC to all King County residents by supporting the Connect, Construct, Complete strategy.

The Eastrail Partnership will be a trusted partner of the ERC Regional Advisory Council (RAC) and take a supportive and complementary approach to achieving the best possible development of the ERC.

Key Functions of the Eastrail Partnership

Communications and stakeholder engagement
- Activate the Eastrail brand
- Supplement public outreach conducted by King County and the Cities of Redmond and Kirkland, including:
  - Implement programs and events to build public support for development of the ERC
  - Publicize progress on developing the ERC trail to inspire private sector and community support

Fundraising and partnerships
- Establish guidelines for fundraising and joint partnerships according to best practices
- Raise funds from the private sector to implement the ERC
- Work with RAC jurisdictions to help identify and create opportunities for private sector partnership
- Establish partnerships with communities and businesses; for example, facilitate corporate sponsorships and joint ventures

Advocacy
- Advocate for resources and policies to support Connect-Construct-Complete, including the 2019 Parks Levy (on the ballot in August 2019)
- Conduct public opinion research and analysis for ballot measures
- Assist with trail-supportive policy development
Eastrail Partnership Leadership Committee

The Leadership Committee—comprised of 12-17 members—will serve as the leadership body of the Eastrail Partnership. Many of the existing Trail Funding Commission members have indicated they are interested in being represented on this committee.

Membership characteristics:
- Community leaders along the length of the ERC corridor, including and especially representation from historically underserved or under-represented communities
- Major employers and property owners with an interest in or proximity to the ERC trail
- Businesses related to trail usage (such as those providing retail or hospitality services to trail users)
- Community leaders from organizations that support parks, trails, and/or open space

Types of expertise
- Diversity, equity, and inclusion
- Policy and land use
- Public-private partnerships
- Non-motorized transportation
- Tourism
- Financial management
- Fundraising

Organizational Structure

Governance
- The Eastrail Partnership will be a sponsored project by another organization—such as the King County Parks Foundation—to minimize startup costs and enable the Eastrail Partnership to stand up quickly.
- The Leadership Committee will direct the Eastrail Partnership activities, in consultation with the RAC and host organization.
- Over time, if it makes sense, the Eastrail Partnership can spin off from host organization.

Funding
- Funding would include private sector and philanthropic investments and public funding.
- There would be a clear and documented financial reporting structure to track Eastrail Partnership functions supported by public funding. Publicly supported functions will be finalized with RAC engagement and can include activities such as establishing the Leadership Committee, hiring staff, outreach, fundraising, sponsorships, and policy development. It is expected that functions supported by private funding may include advocacy and ballot measure development and opinion research and analysis.
- RAC members would provide a total public sector commitment of $100,000 to cover a portion of the cost of functions appropriate for public funding.
Over the first year of operation the Eastrail Partnership will raise $100,000 in private sector contributions. We anticipate approximately $50,000 from the King County Parks Foundation and $50,000 from other private sector organizations.

Expected Staffing

- 1 FTE
- Key characteristics of staff lead
  - Strong organizational skills
  - Strong transactional skills
  - Knows ERC-related businesses and key personnel
  - Knows ERC communities
  - Well-reasoned judgement
  - Refined project execution skills

Budget

$200,000 for year ONE spending allocations.

Timeline

The timeline below illustrates the proposed first year activities of the Eastrail Partnership, including those that will be supported solely by private funds.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Month 1</th>
<th>2</th>
<th>3</th>
<th>4</th>
<th>5</th>
<th>6</th>
<th>7</th>
<th>8</th>
<th>9</th>
<th>10</th>
<th>11</th>
<th>12</th>
<th>Percentage of Year 1 budget</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Develop financial tracking and reporting structure</strong></td>
<td><strong>Recruit and onboard staff lead</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>15%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Develop communications and stakeholder engagement plan and collateral</strong></td>
<td><strong>Implement communications and stakeholder engagement plan</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>35%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Develop organizational funding/execution plan</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>35%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td><strong>Secure an exemplary corporate sponsorship and joint venture</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>