

## **EASTRAIL REGIONAL ADVISORY COUNCIL**

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### **MEETING SUMMARY**

January 29, 2020 | 2 – 4 PM

Zoom Meeting

**Regional Advisory Council (RAC) Members Present:** Claudia Balducci, King County Councilmember (Chair); Jay Arnold, Deputy Mayor, City of Kirkland (Vice Chair); John Stokes, Bellevue Councilmember; Christie True, Director, King County Department of Natural Resources and Parks; David Hoffman, Puget Sound Energy; Jessica Forsythe, Redmond Councilmember; Randy Corman, Renton Council President; Tom Teigen, Director, Snohomish County Department of Conservation & Natural Resources; Luke Lamon, Sound Transit; Les Rubstello, Woodinville Deputy Mayor

#### **Welcome and Introductions**

Chair Claudia Balducci called the meeting to order at 2:07 pm, welcomed all in attendance to the first RAC meeting of 2021, and reviewed the agenda.

#### **Approval of October 29, 2020 RAC meeting summary**

Councilmember Forsythe moved to approve the October 29, 2020 meeting summary. Councilmember Stokes seconded. There being no objections, the summary was approved.

Chair Balducci announced she will be stepping down as RAC Chair though she will continue to serve on the RAC. The vote for Councilmember Lambert to take over as Chair will happen at the next meeting.

#### **Co-Creation Framework for Community Engagement Supporting Eastrail Trail Development**

Debbie Lacy, Executive Director of Eastside for All, gave a presentation on inclusive and equitable community engagement to inform approaches for community engagement around Eastrail development.

- Traditional community engagement efforts can and have often been more transactional, tokenizing, and exclusive, eroding trust with communities and causing further harm. Placemaking activities, especially those involving art, can be a powerful tool for inclusive community engagement.
- All projects have the potential for collaborative co-creation, and in this framework, community members may shift between categories of participation (inform, consult, involve, collaborate, empower) based on capacity, interest, passions, and talents. This model of engagement recognizes that placemaking is fluid, has multiple points of entry, and that community must be actively involved as a maker—not just a user—of a place.
- Co-creation model seeks to build transformational rather than transactional relationships. This begins with developing relationships and identifying areas of mutual concern or interest, participating in their events (rather than just asking for time on their agendas), compensating people for their time and expertise, being honest and clear about the ways participation will influence/impact decisions, and providing transparent feedback loops and report backs.
- Additional resources:
  - [EastsideForAll.org/community-learning-institute](https://EastsideForAll.org/community-learning-institute)
  - [Places in the Making: How Placemaking Builds Places and Communities](#)
- Chair Balducci asked staff and RAC members to think about next steps for co-creation around the Eastrail and opportunities for inclusive placemaking, including using events as a way to build

relationships and expand feelings of ownership around the trail. King County staff will continue discussions with Eastside for All about applying these engagement principles to Eastrail development.

### **Eastrail Partners Service Agreement Closeout and Planning for Ongoing Collaboration**

Katherine Hollis, Executive Director of Eastrail Partners, provided updates on the Eastrail Partners 2020 service and funding agreement deliverables, shared priorities for work going forward, and discussed future partnership agreement.

- In its first year, Eastrail Partners focused on maturing the organization and developing advocacy efforts and partnerships with external partners. Despite the inability to hold in-person events in 2020, highlights included securing \$1 million each in Eastrail investment from REI and Facebook and engaging with Washington's federal delegation.
- The vision for future partnership with the RAC is focused on working to unify and catalyze the Eastrail effort by communicating and celebrating progress, building relationships to cultivate corporate support, unifying and amplifying advocacy efforts at the state and federal level, engaging community, and creating opportunities for efficiencies toward a fully connected trail.
- Opportunities at the state and federal level around a transportation package or other infrastructure and stimulus initiatives would be a useful area of focus for the partnership. There are also opportunities to apply for funding through PSRC; the RAC and Eastrail Partners will continue to work to understand individual member priorities and how they fit with Eastrail priorities to facilitate alignment and synergies rather than competition.
- Eastrail Partners will work with RAC staff to determine how to structure its working relationship moving forward and develop a continued partnership agreement.

### **Eastrail Trail Use Counting: 2020 Results and Developing a Long-Term Counting Plan**

Mike Ullmer and David St. John from King County Dept. of Natural Resources and Parks (DNRP) provided updates on 2020 trail use count data and plans for trail counts in 2021. Trail count data is useful for understanding who, how, and why people use trails, informs decision-making and operations and maintenance, supports funding requests, and measures impacts of trails and trends over time. King County conducts trail counts through various methods, including manual counts and intercept surveys, temporary counters, and permanent counters.

- Fall 2020 Eastrail count took place on two dates in September and October across ten locations and was conducted by volunteers recording user type and travel direction. Data showed there were 3,636 users (64% pedestrians, 36% cyclists). The highest single two-hour count was in Kirkland, and intensity and type of use varied widely by location. Most sites had higher pedestrian than bike counts. They plan to develop an intercept survey for various locations on the Eastrail to gather more qualitative data from users in spring or early summer.
- Staff will develop recommendations for long-term Eastrail data collection program, including counter installation, counting methodology, locations, data management, and costs and present recommendations at the July RAC meeting for feedback.
- RAC members are interested in trends over time, as well as the ability to disaggregate and provide data to individual jurisdictions for their own sustainability tracking and reporting efforts.
- RAC members shared concerns about data privacy of counters depending on whether photo or video-based technology is used. This should be considered and factored into the plan.

## **Progress and Success Updates**

King County – 2.5 miles of trail south of I-90 will open in May. Northern segment rail removal (in Kirkland, Redmond, and Woodinville) will be complete next month and will be followed by gravel trail construction completed in September. The NE 8<sup>th</sup> St. Bridge crossing is nearing 100% design; groundbreaking will occur in fall or early 2022. The County is continuing to work with the City of Renton on acquiring the segment near Gene Coulon Park from BNSF.

King County Council completed their biennial budget; as part of that process, Councilmember Balducci was able to direct funding slated for other district 6 projects to support the connection between the 520 regional trail and Eastrail by Northup in Bellevue and, in partnership with DNRP, ensure full funding for the Japanese American legacy project at the NE 8<sup>th</sup> St. crossing. They would like to have conversations with Sound Transit about connecting Eastrail to the light rail station in the Bel-Red area.

Members should review workplan updates in the meeting packet, including the fiber project update as well as updates on state and federal funding priorities. Members should be prepared for potential opportunities to engage on legislative and funding opportunities before the next RAC meeting.

Bellevue – the Japanese American legacy project is going well; Councilmember Stokes is serving as the Arts Commission liaison. Bellevue is in the final stages of completing the Mountains to Sound Greenway Trail connection with the Eastrail.

Woodinville – Woodinville and Snohomish County are partnering on lawsuits regarding the operator of railroad on a segment in order to be able to develop the right of way. By the end of the year, they should have plans for developing the right of way in Woodinville.

Renton – Renton is eager to work with King County to acquire the final piece of the southern segment near Gene Coulon Park. Rocale Timmons of SECO Development and Renton staff provided testimony at the Senate Transportation Committee's hearing on a transportation revenue proposal.

Sound Transit – OMF East construction is nearly complete; Sound Transit is hoping to make a public announcement in March. Staff are currently negotiating terms with the development team related to the TOD site, which includes mixed-use development with affordable and market rate housing and will be approved by the King County Council. The downtown Redmond Link project is under construction and they are approaching 100% design for two Link stations opening in 2024. They will begin construction of downtown Redmond station and Redmond Central Connector beginning in 2022.

PSE – PSE had a productive meeting with Eastrail Partners in November and are continuing negotiations on easement language with Redmond staff on the Redmond Central Connector part 3 portion of transmission project, as well as the permitting process for that project with Kirkland.

Snohomish County – As mentioned above, they are working with Woodinville on lawsuits for right of way use of rail corridor. They are supportive of the state budget request related to the Snohomish River bridge project.

### **Public comment**

- David Allen of Bikes Make Life Better emphasized the importance of the Eastrail as a commute corridor and the need to prioritize unfunded segments in Bellevue to mitigate traffic that will increase as major employers move into the area.

- Peter Bartnik of Woodinville noted the importance of maintaining the existing rail corridor and right of way for transit and future light rail rather than completely converting it to trail.
- Hasan Ajazi noted the importance of installing lighting on trails for evening use.
- Eastrail construction timeline can be found here: [https://kingcounty.gov/~media/services/parks-recreation/parks/ERC/Eastrail maps/Eastrail Anticipated Openings 2020-2026 July 2020.ashx?la=en](https://kingcounty.gov/~media/services/parks-recreation/parks/ERC/Eastrail%20maps/Eastrail%20Anticipated%20Openings%202020-2026%20July%202020.ashx?la=en)
- Christine Baker requested staff follow up with her about how residents of west Bellevue can be engaged in both Eastrail efforts as well as Bellevue’s Neighborhood Enhancement Program.

The meeting recording is available here: <https://kingcounty.gov/council/issues/erc/2021-meetings.aspx>. Interested parties should send comments to [eastrail@kingcounty.gov](mailto:eastrail@kingcounty.gov). Joe Inslee will compile any comments received.

### **Next steps and adjournment**

The meeting adjourned at 3:58 pm.