

EASTRAIL REGIONAL ADVISORY COUNCIL

MEETING SUMMARY

October 31, 2025 | 10 AM – 12 PM

Zoom Meeting

Regional Advisory Council (RAC) Members Present: Claire Sumadiwirya, Bellevue Councilmember; John Taylor, King County Dept. of Natural Resources and Parks Director; Jay Arnold, Kirkland Deputy Mayor; Ryan McIrvine, Renton Councilmember; Tom Teigen, Snohomish County Director of Conservation and Natural Resources; Michelle Evans, Woodinville Councilmember; Savanna Steele Sound Transit; Matt Larsen, Puget Sound Energy

Welcome and Introductions

Deputy Mayor Jay Arnold called the meeting to order at 10:05 am, welcomed all in attendance to the final RAC meeting of 2025, and reviewed the agenda.

Public Comment

Don noted that as a Wilburton resident, he is looking forward to Trestle completion and would like to request a gravel trail between NE 4th and SE 1st before the Grand Connection is completed. He noted there are some trash issues in that area and would like to see it open sooner. He also expressed appreciation for Councilmember John Stokes's contributions and thanked RAC members for recognizing him at the previous RAC meeting.

Steve McCarthy requested an update on timing for the Wilburton Trestle.

Approval of July 25, 2025 RAC meeting summary

Councilmember Evans moved to approve the July 25 meeting summary; Councilmember Ryan McIrvine seconded. **Members unanimously voted to approve the July 25 meeting summary as drafted.**

“Future of Eastrail” Workshop Report Out and Follow-up Actions (Information and Discussion Item)

David St. John of King County Parks recapped the June 13 Future of Eastrail workshop, lessons learned, and follow-up actions. Slides were included in the meeting packet.

- Workshop objectives were to clarify next steps, inspire future commitment, bolster partnerships, and celebrate achievements. ~80 attendees shared visions for the role of Eastrail, including creating community and social cohesion, an interconnected Eastside, and supporting local business.
- Themes for types of action included coordination, communication, fundraising, connecting mobility modes, building community, creating supportive policy, and activation. Specific ideas included:
 - Involve community youth
 - Explore, develop, and implement new public/private funding strategies and mechanisms
 - Refresh and update corridor vision and development plan
 - Install amenities that support a positive trail user experience
 - Implement an “adopt-a-trail” program
 - Incentivize/implement trail-oriented development

Discussion & Next Steps

- Members expressed appreciation for the event and the cross-sector collaboration, thought

leadership, and momentum-building it facilitated. They noted that members are focused on different types of actions based on the current phase of trail development in their jurisdiction.

- RAC members requested more time to consider questions related to follow-up actions and will revisit for further discussion at the next RAC meeting.

RAC Membership – Resolving Eastside Greenway Alliance Departure (Consensus Item)

Deputy Mayor Arnold and David St. John summarized options and next steps for Eastside Greenway Alliance’s (EGA) departure from the RAC. Slides were included in the meeting packet. Options include:

1. Keep RAC seat for the role EGA was playing and identify and secure a new entity for the seat. *No group has been identified; this is not a viable option at this time.*
2. Keep RAC seat but leave unfilled while the RAC works through a process to identify a new entity to take the seat.
3. **Eliminate RAC seat and reduce the number of RAC member entities. Longer term, decide how to sustain a community voice in RAC meetings.**

The process to pursue option three is:

1. EGA sends a letter to RAC co-chairs indicating its intention to leave the RAC (received Oct. 17).
2. RAC consensus agreement confirming EGA’s departure and resulting modification to RAC membership (requesting today).
3. Letter of interest among RAC member entities affirming membership revision.
4. Revision and execution of MOU to document new membership.
5. King County Council motion approving MOU and formalizing new RAC membership.
6. RAC member resolution publicly acknowledging contributions of EGA and thanking EGA and its member entities.

Discussion & Next Steps

- **RAC members agreed to pursue option 3** and move forward with updating the MOU. David St. John will distribute letter template for RAC members to submit supporting this position.

Grand Connection Project and Wilburton Area Land Use Policy (Information Item)

Nathan Torgelson of City of Bellevue and Sarah Langton of Langton Public Affairs provided updates on the Grand Connection over I-405, which will support growth and development in the Wilburton area and provide a new urban mixed-use community to enhance livability, promote active transportation, and support economic vitality in the area. Slides were included in the meeting packet.

- Bellevue adopted necessary package of code amendments this year to facilitate Wilburton Vision implementation and accelerate development of under-/undeveloped parcels for affordable housing, mixed-use, commercial, and transit-oriented development, and reconnect areas of Bellevue bisected by I-405. The Grand Connection will help integrate Eastrail into surrounding communities and enhance the entire regional trails system.
- Bellevue plans to release RFP/RFQ for general contractor/construction manager in winter 2026, and begin construction as early as Q2 2027 with anticipated completion in 2030.

“Welcome to Eastrail” Community Guidelines and Trail Ambassadors Program Implementation (Information Item)

Joe Inslee of King County and Colin Petkus of Eastrail Partners shared outcomes from the summer pilot implementation of Welcome to Eastrail community guidelines and Trail Ambassador program and implications for future development. Slides were included in the meeting packet.

- King County developed and deployed signage with visuals in multiple languages throughout the trail system and worked with Eastrail Partners to pilot an ambassador program over the summer.

- Staff spent six days engaging in 110+ conversations with trail users in Renton, Woodinville, Kirkland, and Redmond, answering questions and promoting trail etiquette awareness through positive messaging (not enforcement). Key themes included user behavior concerns (e-bikes, bike/ped conflicts, long dog leashes, etc.), projects updates, and the King County Parks levy.
- Lessons learned include:
 - Need for an array of signage sizes/types, batch ordering for cost savings and efficiency.
 - Opportunity to add digital formats and amplify via regional social media campaign.
 - Work to do to improve existing trail signage and need for standardized, shared wayfinding to highlight destinations and connections into cities.
 - Not sure stationary engagement model was most effective.
 - Questions were very technical, not sure how feasible staffing with volunteers would be.
 - Consider regional approach as staff received questions about non-Eastrail segments/trails.

Discussion & Next Steps

- RAC members noted other opportunities and community touch points to educate and activate users, including schools, retirement communities, etc.

King County Parks Levy Vote and Next Steps (Information Item)

John Taylor of King County Park shared updates on the recently passed six-year \$1.45 billion King County Parks levy. The levy provides funding for operations and maintenance, grant programs, and support for local jurisdictions, parks districts, and partners. It also includes \$65 million for Eastrail projects to complete various segments, including the Wilburton Trestle and I-90 bridge crossing, connecting along Gene Coulon Park and design from Coulon Park to VMAC, completing trail in central Wilburton, and interim trail development along the mainline between Woodinville and Kirkland.

Progress and Success Updates (Information Item)

Woodinville – King5 recently did a story on the Eastrail tunnel at 133rd roundabout.

Sound Transit – Federal Way Link light rail station on the 1 Line will open December 6. They are also testing the 2 Line on I-90 and will have more to share in the coming months.

PSE – two months away from removing coal from generation portfolio and meeting Washington’s Clean Energy Transformation Act requirements.

Renton – accepted Sound Transit grant for NE 44th station which will install a HAWK signal on Lake Washington Blvd. They plan to begin design and construction next year, which will provide another connection point to the May Creek Trail.

Eastrail Partners – railbanked all the way to Snohomish and excited to continue building momentum.

The meeting recording is available here: [2025 Meetings - King County](#). Interested parties should send comments to eastrail@kingcounty.gov. Joe Inslee will compile any additional comments received.

Next Steps and Adjournment

2026 RAC meetings have not been officially scheduled yet, but the next RAC meeting is planned for January 26. The meeting adjourned at 11:54 am.