

City of



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October 27, 2015

The Honorable Joe McDermott
Chair, King County Budget & Fiscal Management Committee
King County Council
1200 King County Courthouse
516 Third Avenue
Seattle, WA 98104

RE: Proposed Ordinance 2015-0438, mid-biennium budget proposal for ERC rail removal
& interim trail

Dear Chair McDermott and Members of the Budget & Fiscal Management Committee:

The Eastside Rail Corridor (ERC) is a unique and valuable asset for the region and presents a compelling opportunity to connect communities up and down the Eastside in ways they have not been connected before. Just to our north, the City of Kirkland has moved ahead with interim trail improvements on the rail corridor and the community has warmly received the new facility and seized the new opportunities it has created for transportation, recreation and economic development.

In Bellevue, we share this enthusiasm and the City Council has included an allocation in our current budget to advance the community vision for the rail corridor. In recent months, we have engaged in discussions with King County staff and with Sound Transit to identify ways to extend the interim trail improvements from Kirkland as far south as the Wilburton station at NE 8th Street in Bellevue. We see immediate benefit in developing the King County-owned segment of the corridor from 108th Avenue NE (S. Kirkland Park & Ride) to SR520 in Bellevue and believe it is feasible to have this one-mile segment open for use in 2017. Sound Transit has committed to developing the next segment, from SR 520 to the Wilburton station, and we anticipate this will be open for use in 2020.

In parallel with the discussions concerning interim trail opportunities, Bellevue has been actively engaged with the County's ERC Trail Master Plan effort now underway. Among the key challenges that the City is working with the County to address are the trail crossing at NE 8th Street and the corridor "gap" over I-405 southbound. The Trail Master Plan will map out a vision for these challenges and guide the future development of a paved, long-term trail along the ERC. We believe moving ahead now with the proposed interim trail on the Bellevue segment that is relatively easy to implement will build momentum and enthusiasm for completing the trail along other, more challenging segments of the corridor.

City of Bellevue offices are located at 450 - 110th Avenue N.E.

Handout at BFM meeting 10/28/15

We ask that you support the removal of the existing rails on the corridor through Bellevue and move forward with development of an interim trail on the first segment in Bellevue, as identified in proposed Ordinance 2015-0438. Thank you for your work to preserve this important asset and develop it for the benefit of the community.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Claudia M. Balducci".

Claudia Balducci, Mayor
City of Bellevue

cc: Bellevue City Council
Brad Miyake, Bellevue City Manager
Dow Constantine, King County Executive
King County Council
Deb Eddy, ERC Program Manager for the King County Council