September 27, 2016

The Honorable Joe McDermott

Chair, King County Council

Room 1200

C O U R T H O U S E

Dear Councilmember McDermott:

This letter transmits a motion that will approve the Master Plan and preferred alternative for the Eastside Rail Corridor (ERC) Regional Trail. The Trail Master Plan is consistent with the regional vision for the ERC as a multi-use corridor that enhances mobility and connectivity, supports utility infrastructure, and provides recreational opportunities in King County’s largest and fastest growing communities.

The motion will express the Council’s approval of the Trail Master Plan for phased implementation of a regional trail within the ERC in accordance with the Preferred Alternative for trail alignment identified in the Plan. Budget for implementation of specific trail segment projects within the ERC will be subject to Council appropriation through the biennial capital budget process over time.

We are prepared to move forward this fall and are hoping the Council could take action on this legislation by November 21, 2016.

The Trail Master Plan also furthers the goals of key County plans and initiatives as follows:

* The Plan furthers the King County Strategic Plan goal of mobility by establishing a trail alignment within the ERC, a nonmotorized transportation corridor which will connect an extensive network of regional trails and multimodal transportation options, including direct connections from the trail to high capacity transportation options such as Sound Transit’s light rail stations, the South Kirkland Park and Ride and Metro’s Rapid Ride in Bellevue.
* The Plan furthers the King County Equity and Social Justice Initiative goal of improving transportation choices that connect to underserved communities, providing alternatives to auto travel and better access to transit.
* The Plan furthers the Strategic Climate Action Plan goal of reducing greenhouse gas emissions by supporting the development of the ERC as an integral element of the regional nonmotorized transportation network, connecting people to employment and recreational opportunities through use of less-polluting modes of transportation.

In developing the Plan, the Department of Natural Resources and Parks (DNRP) engaged stakeholders, public agencies, and the broader community. The Preferred Alternative was developed based on community input and coordinated planning with partners in the corridor such as Sound Transit and Puget Sound Energy. Key stakeholders, agency partners, community organizations and the general community have indicated that they support the Plan.

Thank you for considering this motion. The Trail Master Plan will help King County residents benefit from a significant new regional trail connecting the Eastside’s largest communities and employment centers, and becoming part of the everyday experience for thousands of King County residents for commute trips and recreation. The ERC Trail will be a truly valuable asset to the citizens of King County.

DNRP issued an addendum (see attachment) to the Final Master Plan and EIS that modified the presentation of estimated project costs to present a single cost for implementation of each trail segment, rather than a range. This update does not change the analysis or Preferred Alternative and is intended to eliminate confusion regarding the funding needed to advance the project. As SEPA document holders, each Councilmember received a copy of the addendum and a courtesy copy of a conformed Volume 1 for reference during review and consideration of this motion. If you have any questions about this motion, please contact Kevin Brown, Division Director of the Parks and Recreation Division of the Department of Natural Resources and Parks, at 206-477-4525.

Sincerely,

Dow Constantine

King County Executive

Enclosures

cc: King County Councilmembers

ATTN: Carolyn Busch, Chief of Staff

Anne Noris, Clerk of the Council

Carrie S. Cihak, Chief of Policy Development, King County Executive Office

Dwight Dively, Director, Office of Performance, Strategy and Budget

Christie True, Director, Department of Natural Resources and Parks (DNRP)

Kevin Brown, Division Director, Parks and Recreation Division, DNRP