



Oct 2, 2015

Christie True  
Director  
King County Dept. of Natural Resources and Parks  
King Street Center  
201 South Jackson Street, Suite 700  
King County  
Seattle, WA 98104-3855

Dear ~~Christie~~: *Christie*

I am responding to your letter dated September 16, 2015 requesting Sound Transit's position about the viability of using the existing rails on the Eastside Rail Corridor for future high capacity transit.

Based on a review of the relevant environmental documents, reports and agreements regarding the Eastside Rail Corridor we have the following observations have about our potential use of the existing trail.

We do not see the existing infrastructure as adequate for transit use, nor do we contemplate using it ourselves to provide transit service; and rather, we are planning to design, build, and operate new infrastructure to provide transit service in certain portions of the Eastside Rail Corridor as directed by our board.

The Sound Transit/Puget Sound Regional Council (2008) study of passenger rail on the Eastside Rail Corridor found that the condition of the existing rail was generally very poor due to the age of the rail. To operate passenger rail on the corridor would require a variety of capital improvements to accommodate higher speeds and to improve the safety of the track, structures, and roadway crossings. The study also found that the corridor can accommodate both a trail (or a reactivated freight rail service) and the passenger rail in most places, with some areas requiring right-of-way acquisitions.

For the East Link light rail extension, Sound Transit acquired 1.1 miles of the Eastside Rail Corridor. The existing rails will be removed for the implementation of that project. Space for a trail adjacent to light rail will be provided.

In addition, the interim trail that is contemplated as part of the Link OMSF project, if adopted, would require removal of the rails. The Final EIS describes development of an interim condition, crushed gravel trail in the Eastside Rail Corridor extending from SR 520 south to the north end of the Wilburton Station as part of the Preferred Alternative. The trail design evaluated in the FEIS would be

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**Joni Earl**

developed with crushed gravel on the existing rail bed, requiring removal of the rails.

The Sound Transit High Capacity Transportation Easement identifies the process for Sound Transit review of project plans on the Eastside Rail Corridor. This process includes a Sound Transit review of proposed plans. This review would allow Sound Transit to determine any effects of the rail removal on Sound Transit's ability to implement high capacity transit on the corridor and/or proper conditions for trail implementation.

So, in summary, Sound Transit has no objection to King County's removal of the existing rails as part of their project to implement a trail on the Eastside Rail Corridor.

Sincerely,



Ric Ilgenfritz  
Executive Director  
Planning, Environment and Project Development  
Sound Transit

cc:

Jennifer Belk, Deputy General Counsel, Legal  
Don Billen, HCT Project Director, PEPD  
James Irish, Deputy Director, Environmental Affairs, PEPD  
Andrea Tull, Senior Project Manager, PEPD