

FACT SHEET

Project Name

Eastside Rail Corridor Regional Trail Draft Master Plan and Environmental Impact Statement (Draft Master Plan and EIS)

Project Description

King County intends to develop a trail in the approximately 15.6 miles of the ERC under its ownership and the 1.1 miles of ERC owned by Sound Transit in which the County holds a trail easement. This approximately 16.7 miles of the railbanked portion of the ERC is the focus of the Draft Master Plan and Environmental Impact Statement. Sound Transit and Puget Sound Energy also own easements throughout the corridor.

This Draft Master Plan and EIS considers a No Action Alternative and explores two build alternatives for locating a trail in the ERC. The No Action Alternative would keep the corridor open to public use as a trail, except at major physical gaps and structures. The two build alternatives represent different approaches to accommodating the potential future use of the corridor for transit, power transmission, or both, in addition to a trail. For the On-Railbed Alternative, the trail is located along the existing railbed. For most of the corridor, this is the easiest location to construct a trail because it uses the grade established for the railroad tracks. However, because the railbed is often located near the center of the ERC right-of-way, other future uses may need to be located along the corridor edges or the trail may need to be relocated. For the Off-Railbed Alternative, the trail is located as close as possible to one of the edges of the ERC ownership. This alignment would be more challenging to locate the trail because it requires additional clearing and grading; however, it also provides the most flexibility for future uses in the corridor.

Project Proponent and SEPA Lead Agency

King County Parks
201 South Jackson Street, M.S. KSC-NR-0700
Seattle, WA 98104

SEPA Responsible Official

Kevin Brown, Director
King County Parks and Recreation Division

Date of Issuance for the Draft EIS

February 29, 2016

Comment Period

The comment period will begin on the date the Notice of Availability is published in the State SEPA Register. Notice is anticipated to be published on February 29, 2016 and the comment period will conclude on March 31, 2016.

Date Comments Are Due

March 31, 2016

Comment Submittal and Contact Information

All written comments should be sent to:
King County Parks, Attn: Erica Jacobs
Draft ERC Master Plan & EIS Comments
201 South Jackson Street, M.S. KSC-NR-0700
Seattle, WA 98104

Comments can be sent by email to: ERCtrail@kingcouthy.gov

Public Open Houses

Public open houses will be held to provide project-related information and receive feedback on the Draft Master Plan and EIS.

Woodinville

Thursday March 17, 2016
5pm-7pm
Woodinville City Hall
17301 133rd Avenue NE
Woodinville, WA 98072

Renton

Tuesday March 22, 2016
7pm-9pm
Kennydale Elementary School
1700 NE 28th Street
Renton, WA 98056

Bellevue

Thursday March 24, 2016
5pm-7pm
Bellevue City Hall
450 110th Avenue NE
Woodinville, WA 98072

Document Availability and Cost

The Draft Master Plan and EIS is available to view or download at: www.kingcounty.gov/erc.

Printed copies are available for review for no cost at:

Bellevue Library
1111 110th Avenue NE
Bellevue, WA 98004

Kingsgate Library
12507 NE 144th Street
Kirkland, WA 98034

Newcastle Library
12901 Newcastle Way
Newcastle, WA 98056

Newport Way Library
14250 SE Newport Way
Bellevue, WA 98006

Renton Highlands Library
2801 NE 10th Street
Renton, WA 98056

Renton Library
100 Mill Avenue South
Renton, WA 98057

Woodinville Library
17105 Avondale Road NE
Woodinville, WA 98072

Printed copies of Volume 1 – Draft Master Plan and EIS (including a disc of Volume 2 and the supporting materials) and Volume 2 – Preliminary Plans for the Build Alternatives can be purchased from ARC for the cost of reproduction. Documents can be obtained by contacting Cathy Eck at (206)-622-6000. The reproduction cost for each document is anticipated to be approximately \$100.

Permits and Approvals

This Draft Master Plan and EIS are the first step in a phased review process. Permits and approvals will be determined during the future environmental and design phases that will follow the Final Master Plan's adoption.

Authors and Principal Contributors

The List of Preparers can be found in the reference materials at the end of this Draft EIS.

Distribution List

The Distribution List can be found in the reference materials at the end of this Draft EIS.

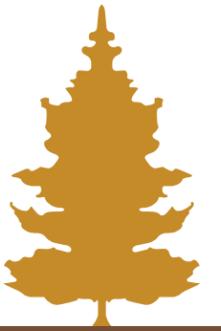
Related Documents

Supporting materials used for this Draft Master Plan and EIS are published on the project website <http://www.kingcounty.gov/erc>. A disc of these materials is attached to the back cover of the hard copies. Background data and reference materials used for this Draft Master Plan and EIS are listed in the References.

Subsequent Environmental Review

After the Draft Master Plan and EIS comment period concludes, the lead agency will review and respond to comments. A Final Master Plan and EIS will be prepared that contain responses to the comments and potential updates to the environmental documents. The Final Master Plan and EIS is anticipated to be published in summer 2016 and approved by the King County Council in fall 2016.

CHAPTER 6



EASTSIDE RAIL CORRIDOR REGIONAL TRAIL MASTER PLAN



6.0 DRAFT ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT STATEMENT

The Draft Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) is integrated into the Eastside Rail Corridor Regional Trail Master Plan. The Draft EIS includes a No Action Alternative and two build alternatives: the On-Railbed and Off-Railbed alternatives. This chapter presents the potential environmental consequences of the On-Railbed and Off-Railbed alternatives the King County Parks Division is considering. King County Parks expects to recommend a preferred trail alternative and submit the Final Regional Trail Master Plan for approval by the King County Council in the second quarter of 2016. Figure 6-1 shows the project location and ownership. Conditions, impacts, and mitigation are evaluated in this chapter for the approximately 15.6 miles of the corridor owned by King County and the 1.1 miles owned by Sound Transit. Over these 16.7 miles, the conditions in and around the corridor vary greatly. Ultimately, the preferred trail alignment could move between the On-Railbed and Off-Railbed alternatives within a segment.

Rather than duplicating information in the Master Plan chapters, this EIS chapter summarizes and then references sections of the Master Plan for key information. Table 6-1 lists where information can be found within the overall document.

This Draft Master Plan and EIS are the first steps in a phased review process. Assessing the potential environmental consequences and benefits at this early stage of planning helps capture the potential types but not the specific details or magnitude of impacts. When the Master Plan is adopted, King County could proceed with preliminary design. Different phasing strategies may be applied so that segments of the trail could be advanced as an independent project. More detailed design-level review will occur as part of the subsequent planning and environmental review phases for these independent projects.

6.1 OBJECTIVES

EIS Summary

The EIS Summary is located at the beginning of this combined Draft Master Plan and EIS on page iv.

State Environmental Policy Act (SEPA)

Environmental review is required by SEPA (Ch. 43.21C RCW) for non-project actions that involve decisions by the government on policies and plans, such as the Master Plan. SEPA is implemented through WAC 197-11. The County's SEPA regulations are established in King County Code 20.44.

The objectives of the Draft Master Plan are to guide development of a regional trail in the ERC that:

- Connects Eastside communities by linking to:
 - Existing and planned regional trails
 - Existing and planned local trails
 - Transit
 - Residential, commercial, and business and employment centers
- Provides nonmotorized active transportation options and expands recreational opportunities to:
 - Expand access for underserved areas of King County
 - Support opportunities for economic development
 - Benefit public health
 - Improve air quality
- Incorporates Eastside heritage and culture

These objectives provide guidance for implementation of the Master Plan. Several important objectives of the Master Plan align with King County priority strategic objectives, including regional mobility, equity and social justice, and confronting climate change. Chapter 1 includes additional discussion on the vision and objectives for the ERC.

TABLE 6-1. Information in Draft Master Plan and EIS

Subject	Information can be found in:
Objectives (Purpose and Need)	Chapter 1, Section 1.3
Alternatives Development	Chapter 3
Alternatives Description	Chapter 4
Corridor Description	Chapter 2, Sections 2.1 and 2.2
Affected Environment	Chapter 2, Sections 2.3 to 2.6 and supporting materials
Methodology and Environmental Effects	Chapter 6
Mitigation	Chapter 6
Implementation	Chapter 5
Supporting Materials	Ecosystem Evaluation of Alternatives (February 2016) Evaluation of Alternatives near Residential Neighborhoods (February 2016) Hazardous Materials Inventory Report (January 2016) Cultural Resources (February 2016) Ecosystem Resource Inventory (May 2015) Corridor Right-of-Way Constraints (May 2015) At-Grade Intersection Inventory (May 2015) Historic and Cultural Resources (May 2015) Geologic Conditions Inventory (May 2015) Community Meetings and Public Open Houses - Comments and Summary

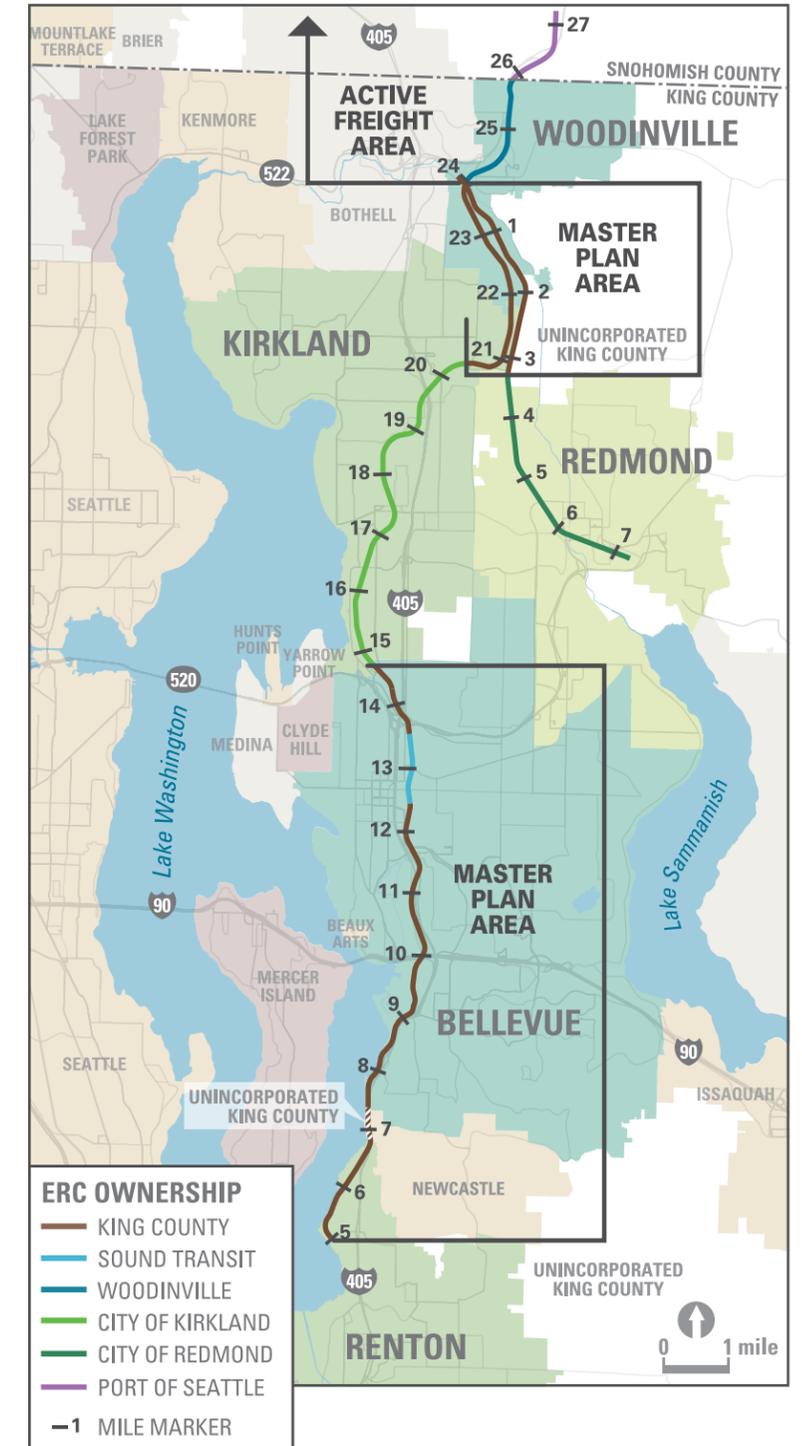


FIGURE 6-1. EASTSIDE RAIL CORRIDOR OWNERSHIP

6.2 ALTERNATIVES

Two build alternatives are evaluated in this Draft Master Plan and EIS—the On-Railbed Alternative and the Off-Railbed Alternative. These alternatives encompass the range of impacts that could occur along the approximately 15.6-mile corridor. Chapter 3 describes the principles that helped form the build alternatives and Chapter 4 describes the two build alternatives in more detail.

The Draft Master Plan and EIS present an early look at how the trail would fit into the corridor. In general, a “planning envelope” that is typically 30 to 40 feet wide identifies where the trail would be located within the ERC; however, the trail would typically be less than 30 feet wide. Identifying a planning corridor wider than the proposed trail allows for flexibility in the final trail design phases. Preliminary alignments used for planning purposes are included in Volume 2 – Preliminary Plans for Build Alternatives.

Potential impacts from the trail have been evaluated based on the width of the entire planning envelope, resulting in a likely overstatement of impacts in the Draft Master Plan and EIS. After reviewing the Draft Master Plan, the King County Executive will recommend a preferred alternative, which could move between the On-Railbed and Off-Railbed alignments in any given segment, and present a Final Master Plan for King County Council adoption. In the subsequent design phase, the actual impacts of the selected alternative will be calculated based on the proposed trail width and location, including more strategies that may be used to minimize impacts. It is anticipated that the proposed trail would be developed in segments following further environmental review and permitting.

In addition to the two build alternatives, this EIS considers the environmental impacts of a No Action Alternative.

NO ACTION ALTERNATIVE

The ERC is a “railbanked” corridor under the National Trails System Act (sometimes called the Rails to Trails Act), 16 USC 1247(d), and remains under the jurisdiction of the Surface Transportation Board. In 2008, the Surface Transportation Board issued three Notices of Interim Trail Use, which provide for interim trail use and preserving the corridor for future freight railroad use. King County is obligated to manage and keep the corridor open for public use as a trail, except at major gaps and structures such as the I-90 bridge, I-405 crossing, and Wilburton Trestle. This obligation requires minimal maintenance to protect public safety and to protect King County from liability. Under the No Action Alternative, King County would:

- Inspect and patrol the corridor at intervals
- Provide basic property maintenance, including vegetation management and drainage maintenance
- Install and maintain handrails and decking on bridges kept open for public use
- Install signs at intersections and elsewhere as needed to manage risk
- Grade as needed to avoid hazardous conditions (i.e., filling holes or washouts)
- Preserve the corridor property against encroachment

King County’s responsibility to maintain and operate the corridor includes managing all County-controlled property within the corridor, including reviewing and deciding on requests for special use permits (requests from private citizens or entities to use public property for private purposes) and determining fees and conditions for such use.

Rail removal is a separate action from that which is considered in this Draft Master Plan and EIS. King County is initiating a process to remove the rails from the County-controlled segments of the corridor, beginning with the segments between Renton

and the Bellevue-Kirkland border at 108th Avenue NE. This separate action is consistent with the Surface Transportation Board’s Trails Act regulations (49 CFR Part 1152) and the Notices of Interim Trail Use. The phased rail removal plan was approved by the King County Council in November 2015, pursuant to King County Motion No. 14555.

ON-RAILBED ALTERNATIVE

The On-Railbed Alternative would generally be located on the existing railbed, which is typically in the center of the ERC. In many locations, widening and associated grading would be needed to accommodate the proposed trail section. The On-Railbed Alternative would generally be easier and less costly to construct and cause less disturbance to existing vegetation and drainage patterns.

OFF-RAILBED ALTERNATIVE

The Off-Railbed Alternative would generally be located as close as possible to one of the edges of the right-of-way. This alternative would provide the most flexibility to accommodate other future uses in the corridor; however, it would generally be more difficult and costly to construct, and require more disturbance of existing vegetation and drainage patterns.

Identifying Alternatives

SEPA requires that an EIS evaluate the proposed action, the no-action alternative, and other “reasonable alternatives” [WAC 197-11-440(5)]. In this case, reasonable action alternatives are limited to the existing ERC’s right-of-way. The main objective of the proposed action is deciding where to locate the trail within that right-of-way corridor.

SEPA also requires that the alternatives description in an EIS discuss the benefits and disadvantages of deferring the implementation of the proposal compared with possible approval at this time. Particular attention should be given to the possibility of foreclosing future options by implementing the proposal.

The current planning efforts of other agencies and local jurisdictions are central to this evaluation. The primary benefit of the current master planning process is to engage with these partners during their own processes so that all of the visions, ideas, and opportunities are considered. The disadvantage of deferring action is that the decisions of others could be made without collaboration regarding King County Parks’ vision for a regional trail.



6.3 ENVIRONMENTAL CONSEQUENCES AND MITIGATION

Scoping for the EIS and Stakeholder Engagement

King County conducted public meetings, workshops, and online surveys to gather input on the scope of this EIS in June and July 2015. The project team sought input on the trail design concepts and the vision for trail use as expressed by the jurisdictions and the public. This outreach helped to determine the environmental elements analyzed in this document. Chapter 5 describes some of the ongoing collaboration efforts with other partner agencies and jurisdictions.

This section presents an existing conditions summary, potential environmental consequences for each alternative, and conceptual mitigation for the following topics:

- Historic and cultural resources
- Geology and soils
- Hazardous materials and contamination
- Consistency with local planning
- Consistency with potential future uses
- Transportation facilities
- Parking and access
- Consistency with stormwater regulations
- Trails and parks
- Ecological resources, including vegetation, wildlife, wetlands, and streams
- Surrounding community, including safety, noise, and aesthetics
- Utilities

Development and operation of the trail are not anticipated to result in any significant adverse impacts that cannot be mitigated.

Chapter 2, Overview of the Corridor, of this Draft Master Plan briefly describes the existing conditions. Figures 2-5 to 2-7 provide an overview of the segment's nearby resources such as trails, parks, schools, and park-and-ride locations.

HISTORIC AND CULTURAL RESOURCES

Overview of Existing Conditions

Portions of the railbanked ERC are archaeologically sensitive for both prehistoric and historic resources.

Prior to the point of contact with European-American peoples (including explorers, fur traders, and military personnel), Native American peoples inhabited the Puget Sound region for over 12,500 years. The ERC, and the area within half mile of the ERC, is located within the traditional territory of four federally recognized tribes, the Snoqualmie Tribe, Tulalip

Tribes, Suquamish Tribe, and Muckleshoot Indian Tribe (Suttles and Lane 1990), as well as the Duwamish Tribe, which is seeking federal recognition. Between 1792 and 1851, there were many villages along the shores of Lake Washington and Lake Sammamish and on the banks of the Black, Cedar, and Sammamish rivers (Haeberlin and Gunther 1930; Smith 1940; Spier 1936; Swanton 1979).

Based on a December 2015 literature review, no archaeological sites have been identified in or adjacent to the ERC; however, there are two recorded Native American names for places in or near the study area (Hilbert et al. 2001) along the shore of Lake Washington in the Lakefront Segment. Additional details are available in the Cultural Resources report dated February 2016, which documents the research conducted to identify the history and cultural resources for native peoples in the area (King County Parks 2016a).

Railroad use in the corridor began over 100 years ago. The Main Line of the ERC was originally called the Lake Washington Belt Line. Planning and construction for this 22-mile stretch of railway from Black River Junction in Renton to Woodinville began in 1890 and was completed in 1904 when the Wilburton Trestle was built. The portion of the ERC referred to as the Spur was constructed by the Seattle, Lake Shore & Eastern (SLS&E) Railway around 1889. The SLS&E Railway and Lake Washington Belt Line consolidated and eventually became part of BNSF Railway.

Based on a previous historic inventory of aboveground elements in the study area (King County Parks 2015a), only one resource was recommended eligible for listing in the National Register of Historic Places and the Washington Heritage Register—the Wilburton Trestle. This 1904 structure was first recorded in 1978 (Stewart 1978), and again in 1980 as part of a Historic American Engineering Record Inventory (Soderberg 1980). A more detailed inventory of historic resources is available in the initial Historic and Cultural Resources report, which focuses on the history of the rail line (King County Parks 2015a).

Environmental Consequences

King County intends to restore and retrofit the Wilburton Trestle to accommodate nonmotorized use across it. To do so, a smooth surface and safety railings will be required. The County may also provide illumination on the bridge. The need for structural improvements is currently being assessed. Depending on the specific design, the improvements could alter the look and feel of the bridge.

It is not currently possible to identify likely impacts on specific cultural resources because this requires design-level information for comparing the proposed construction locations in relation to known and probable cultural resources. Both the On-Railbed and Off-Railbed alternatives provide opportunities for interpretive displays and markers.

The No Action Alternative would not affect any historic or cultural resources but would also not provide opportunities to highlight the heritage and culture of the surrounding community.

Mitigation

As the project moves from master planning to design and permitting, the amount and location of earth-disturbing activities would be better understood. Once the locations of major ground disturbance have been determined, a subsurface survey is necessary. Survey methods would be developed to account for landform, extent of urban development, and probability of buried cultural resources. Should impacts on below-ground cultural resources be anticipated, avoidance and mitigation measures would be specific to the nature of the identified resources.

Throughout trail development, King County will follow applicable regulations. King County typically notifies the tribes, including the Snoqualmie Tribe, Tulalip Tribes, Suquamish Tribe, and Muckleshoot Indian Tribe, about projects through or in connection with the regulatory process. If the project receives federal funding or requires a federal permit, compliance with Section 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act will



be required. Section 106 requires the lead federal agency to take into account the effects of their undertakings on historic properties. The lead federal agency will determine the appropriate efforts to identify historic properties; it is likely that an archaeological survey will be necessary for portions of the alignment. If historic properties are identified, the lead federal agency will need to assess whether the project will cause an adverse effect. Depending on the level of identification efforts, completing the Section 106 process takes at least 60 days. If Section 106 does not apply, the Washington State Department of Archaeology and Historic Preservation (DAHP) is responsible for providing input on cultural resources under SEPA. The Governor's Executive Order 05-05 requires that state grant-funded projects be reviewed by DAHP and that the affected tribes determine potential impacts on cultural resources. Other potentially applicable regulations include King County and city landmark ordinances.

GEOLOGY AND SOILS

Overview of Existing Conditions

The ERC is characterized by a number of geologically hazardous areas: steep slopes (more than 40 percent grade), landslide hazard areas, erosion hazard areas, and seismic hazard areas. These areas are defined through the critical area codes of the local jurisdiction and are typically subject to special development conditions.

When the Lake Washington Belt Line was constructed, the existing topography was altered by cuts and fills where the rail line traverses hillsides or crosses low or high areas to maintain grade and create a flat railbed. Steep slopes occur both naturally and as a result of cuts and fills. The potential for a landslide increases in areas where there are steep slopes. The landslide hazard area of most concern is located along the Kirkland-Woodinville border where the ERC crosses an undeveloped hillside and several ravines. Where built conditions have cleared

or constructed a barrier, such as creating parking spaces across a drainage ditch, this barrier could pose an erosion hazard along the corridor.

Puget Sound is a seismically active region. The Seattle fault zone crosses through the area in the vicinity of I-90. Seismic hazard areas and zones that are more susceptible to liquefaction occur at lower elevations in the ERC vicinity. These areas are near May Creek, Coal Creek, and the Sammamish River Valley and typically have wetter soils that include clay, silt, loose sand, and gravel.

Environmental Consequences

Development of a trail on or near geologically hazardous areas (such as steep slopes and landslide hazard areas) must comply with the local critical area code requirements. During design of the trail, King County would have to demonstrate that construction and operation of a trail would not cause adverse impacts from undermining or destabilizing slopes. If an engineering solution that addresses this need cannot be developed, then King County would have to move the alignment off the slope in that location.

Compared to the On-Railbed Alternative, the Off-Railbed Alternative would likely require many retaining walls that would cut into or fill some of the geologically hazardous areas. Where the trail is designed and constructed on or in proximity to these hazard areas, King County would comply with local development standards. The No Action Alternative would not involve construction on geologically hazardous areas.

During operation of the ERC, neither build alternative is anticipated to affect critical or geologically hazardous areas; however, seismic events and landslides could affect the use of the trail.

Mitigation

The ERC trail would be designed to avoid and minimize impacts on geologically hazardous areas. During construction, best management practices (BMPs) would be used for erosion and sediment control appropriate to the specific site conditions. Possible BMPs could include using construction-staging barrier berms, covering loads during transport, constructing filter fabric fences, and conducting regular monitoring of construction activities in areas of higher risk due to steep slopes.

HAZARDOUS MATERIALS AND CONTAMINATION

Overview of Existing Conditions

Contaminated soil could be encountered during construction of the trail due to past and current uses in and around the ERC. The former railroad uses may have left low-level contamination in the corridor. For example, creosote was frequently used to treat railroad ties. In addition, based on database research and screening, there are approximately six hazardous material sites within the corridor that present a moderate to high risk of encountering contamination during trail construction. Further information on the research for hazardous material sites in the vicinity of the ERC is provided in the Hazardous Materials Inventory Report (King County Parks 2016b).

Environmental Consequences

At this time, specific construction or excavation details for the project are not known. In general, the Off-Railbed Alternative is expected to involve more earth-disturbing activities than the On-Railbed Alternative; therefore, the off-railbed alignment could have a slightly higher potential to encounter contamination. However, the exact nature of potential impacts cannot be determined at this time. Of the six sites that represent a moderate to high risk, the extent to which contamination from these sites has extended into the railbed is not known, but is thought to be relatively limited. Therefore, the potential to remediate existing and known hazardous materials during trail

What is liquefaction?

Liquefaction is what can happen to loose soils when shaking motions from an earthquake causes the soil to turn into a quicksand-like condition. This can cause foundations to fail.

Geologic Conditions Inventory

The ERC is underlain by soil deposits that include peat, clay, silt, loose sand, gravel, recessional outwash, and glacial till. The corridor is part of the Puget Lowlands, a glacially sculpted landscape with north-northwest trending valleys and upland areas between the Olympic Mountains and the Cascade Range. Additional details are contained in the Geological Conditions Inventory (King County Parks 2015b) including:

- *Regional geologic maps and descriptions of soil units in the ERC vicinity*
- *List and descriptions of critical area or geologically hazardous area regulations and requirements for each jurisdiction*



construction is relatively low. Under the No Action Alternative, the potential for encountering contamination during routine maintenance is minimal.

Mitigation

Through the design process, the proximity of the six sites will be monitored and the implications considered. If the potential for encountering contaminated soils cannot be avoided, King County may decide to further investigate the six sites. Construction practices for the safe handling and disposal of contaminated material would be implemented to mitigate potential adverse effects.

CONSISTENCY WITH LOCAL PLANNING

Overview of Existing Comprehensive Plans

The 2016 King County Comprehensive Plan Update identifies the ERC as a major corridor that supports transit and nonmotorized mobility, utilities, parks, recreation, and access (King County 2015). Local comprehensive plans and policies for each of the cities that ERC passes through also support a trail in the corridor and were considered as the Draft Master Plan and EIS was developed. The comprehensive plans for King County and these cities (Renton, Bellevue, Kirkland, and Woodinville) are available online at the respective jurisdiction's website.

Renton

The City of Renton Comprehensive Plan's policy (P-2) is to create a connected system of parks, trails, and natural areas that provides accessible opportunities for recreation and nonmotorized transportation (City of Renton 2015). Overall, the Draft Master Plan is consistent with Renton's Comprehensive Plan.

Bellevue

The City of Bellevue's Comprehensive Plan explicitly recognizes the opportunity to work with regional partners to plan and develop the regional Eastside Rail Corridor trail system (Policy PA-13) (City of Bellevue 2015). Further, Policy S-BR-38c supports the development of this corridor with potential long-term future

rail use and connections to other local trails. Overall, the Draft Master Plan is consistent with Bellevue's Comprehensive Plan.

Kirkland

The Draft Master Plan is consistent with the City of Kirkland's Cross Kirkland Corridor Master Plan (City of Kirkland 2014) and Comprehensive Plan. Kirkland's vision for the trail is to serve a broad range of uses, envisioning a pathway that allows people to connect today and welcomes transit in the future. Kirkland is currently in the process of integrating the Cross Kirkland Corridor into its comprehensive plan in the Land Use and Parks and Recreation Elements.

Woodinville

This Draft Master Plan is consistent with the City of Woodinville's local plans. The Draft Comprehensive Plan & Municipal Code Update (City of Woodinville 2014) identifies the opportunity to construct a rail-with-trail corridor on the ERC to meet the demand for nonmotorized connectivity for access and recreation. Woodinville lists the ERC as a key project. Other plans that discuss the ERC include the 2005 Woodinville Parks, Recreation, and Open Space Plan, Capital Improvement Plan (2013–2018), City of Woodinville Non-Motorized Transportation Plan (2005), and the City of Woodinville 2009 Transportation Master Plan (City of Woodinville 2009).

Environmental Consequences

Because the comprehensive plan and local plans for each of these cities and King County support the development of a trail in the ERC, neither the On-Railbed Alternative nor the Off-Railbed Alternative would cause changes to these policies. Local jurisdictions may develop additional policies in the future as design and development of the ERC progresses. The No Action Alternative would not be consistent with these local plans.

Mitigation

No mitigation measures are anticipated.

CONSISTENCY WITH POTENTIAL FUTURE USES

Sound Transit and Puget Sound Energy have easements within the King County-owned portions of the ERC. Both are currently engaged in long-range planning efforts with specific projects yet to be determined. Use of some portion of the ERC could be advanced through these planning efforts. Even in portions of the ERC without specific plans for future use, proposed trail development would occur with easements remaining in place. King County is required to coordinate and collaborate with Sound Transit and Puget Sound Energy to ensure trail development appropriately accounts for their property interests.

Environmental Consequences

Under the No Action Alternative, the ERC would remain open to the public along the minimally improved railbed. If Sound Transit or Puget Sound Energy proposes a use that would encompass the railbed, the minimal trail would have to be relocated to another area of the ERC.

Under the On-Railbed Alternative, if Sound Transit or Puget Sound Energy approves a use within the railbed, the trail may need to be relocated to another area of the ERC.

The primary advantage of the Off-Railbed Alternative is to preserve space for other future uses. However, there are locations in the ERC with limited width or other constraints that present challenges for locating other uses without acquiring additional right-of-way.

Mitigation

For both build alternatives, in addition to the Sound Transit or Puget Sound Energy environmental review that would occur for any future power or transit proposals, the process for developing a feasible strategy for maintaining a trail corridor in the ERC, along with transit, power lines, or both, would be negotiated through mechanisms in the easements and agreements in place among King County, Sound Transit, and Puget Sound Energy.



TRANSPORTATION FACILITIES

Overview of Existing Conditions

Transportation facilities near the corridor include I-405, I-90, SR 520, and SR 202 (Woodinville-Redmond Road NE), as well as local roadways, transit centers, park-and-rides, and trails. Trails, an important transportation component for nonmotorized users, are discussed in a separate section below. The existing transportation facilities move people throughout the Eastside and central Puget Sound, and contribute to their ability to access the corridor.

Several transit centers and park-and rides are located within 1 mile of the ERC where connections between transit and the corridor could be established. These locations include:

- Newport Hills—located about 0.15 mile east at Lake Washington Boulevard SE and 113th Place SE
- Downtown Bellevue—located less than 1 mile west of the ERC
- South Bellevue—located approximately 1 mile west of the ERC, crossing around or through the Mercer Slough Nature Park
- South Kirkland—located adjacent to the ERC at 108th Avenue NE

Transit centers and park-and rides that are located between 1 and 3 miles from the ERC could also potentially connect trail users to transit, including:

- Renton—located approximately 2.75 miles south of the ERC on Burnett Avenue S.
- Totem Lake—located approximately 1.1 miles northwest of where the ERC crosses Slater Avenue NE
- Kingsgate—located approximately 1.5 miles northwest of where the ERC crosses Slater Avenue NE
- Woodinville—located just over 1 mile east of where the trail would end at the wye

Along the approximately 16.7-mile ERC, there are 27 at-grade crossings of low-volume streets and driveways and 10 at-grade crossings of major arterials, as shown in Table 6-2. Table 6-3 lists the major arterials and the approximate number of motor vehicles that travel through the intersection. The ERC crosses nine bridges and trestles above streets and highways, including

Ripley Lane North and I-90. There are also locations where the ERC is grade-separated underneath streets and highways, such as in Bellevue at the northbound lanes of I-405, NE 12th Street, and SR 520 near Northup Way. Chapter 3 describes typical treatments for common intersection scenarios along the ERC.

TABLE 6-2. Number of At-Grade Crossings

	Lakefront Segment	Wilburton Segment	Valley Segment- Main Line	Valley Segment- Spur	Total
Arterials	0	4	4	2	10
Low-Volume Streets	9	1	0	0	10
Driveways	5	0	1	11	17

TABLE 6-3. Existing Major Arterials and Recommended Crossing Type

Street	City Location	Traffic Volume	Speed	Recommended Intersection Crossing Type
Wilburton Segment				
SE 1st Street	Bellevue	10,000+ ¹	30 mph	Trail stop with calming measures ²
NE 8th Street	Bellevue	50,000+ ³	30 mph	Grade separated
NE 4th Street	Bellevue	30,000+ ⁴	30 mph	Grade separated or signalized
108th Avenue NE	Kirkland	8,000+ ⁵	30 mph	Trail stop with calming measures
Valley Segment				
Slater Avenue	Kirkland	14,000+ ⁵	30 mph	Trail stop with calming measures ²
Willows Road/139th Avenue NE	Kirkland	5,000+ ⁶	30 mph	Trail stop with calming measures ²
NE 145th Street (west of 140th Place NE)	Woodinville	8,000+ ⁷	30 mph	Trail stop with calming measures ²
Woodinville-Redmond Road NE (SR 202)	Woodinville	7,000+ ⁷	45 mph	Grade separated or signalized
Spur-NE 124th Street/Willows Road	Unincorporated King County	50,000+ ⁶	35 mph (west side) 45 mph (east side)	Signalized intersection, existing crosswalk on east side
Spur-NE 145th Street (SR 202)	Woodinville	8,000+ ⁸	45 mph	Grade separated, signalized, or trail stop

¹ City of Bellevue 2010

² Calming measures could include median refuges, raised crosswalks, installation of signs and flashing lights, or other physical measures

³ City of Bellevue 2015

⁴ City of Bellevue 2009

⁵ City of Kirkland 2013

⁶ King County 2010

⁷ City of Woodinville 2014

⁸ WSDOT 2013



Environmental Consequences

A new regional trail would provide nonmotorized commuters and recreational users with improved connections to transit and existing regional and local trails. Nonmotorized users would be able to connect to other modes at nearby transit centers, park-and-rides, Sound Transit's proposed Wilburton Station, and at-grade street crossings. In the future, King County plans to connect the ERC to regional trails such as the I-90/Mountains to Sound Greenway Trail and SR 520 Trail. The transportation facilities improvements would benefit overall mobility for trail users.

Grade-separated crossings may be considered where high volumes of traffic or safety concerns occur. In the Wilburton Segment, an elevated crossing at NE 8th Street is planned to separate trail users on the ERC from traffic on this high-volume arterial. The crossings of NE 4th Street and SR 202 (NE 145th Street and Woodinville-Redmond Road) in the Wilburton and Valley segments, respectively could also be elevated, depending on the design-phase analysis results. The bridges and approaches may create visual and physical barriers across the corridor. During construction, both alternatives would have the potential to affect roadways underneath new and retrofitted bridges and trestles. There could be short-term or overnight roadway closures or lane restrictions during some activities. Major construction work would be required to build a new bridge across the I-405 southbound lanes, just north of the Mercer Slough Nature Park, where there is currently no bridge or crossing structure in the corridor. Construction over state highways would be coordinated with WSDOT.

Where the trail crosses public streets at-grade, there is a potential for traffic operations to be disrupted. On arterials, while trail users would stop prior to crossing, the crossing could include medians, warning lights such as rectangular rapid flashing beacons, and other features typically associated with traffic calming strategies. These features could affect traffic operations on the arterial if not appropriately designed. The specifics of the crossings would be developed in coordination with the local jurisdiction during the design phase of the project.

Mid-block crossings of low-volume roads and driveways could cause vehicles to make an additional stop because trail users would likely have priority for crossing the roadway. The On-Railbed Alternative is anticipated to have more mid-block crossings than the Off-Railbed Alternative because the Off-Railbed Alternative would move mid-block crossings to nearby intersections where possible. Safety at these crossings, including adjustments to the geometry or grade, would be studied carefully during the trail planning process and future design phases. Adjustments to the geometry or grade to ensure safety at these public streets and driveways would be addressed in future design phases.

Under the No Action Alternative, King County would install signage to safeguard public safety. However, the No Action Alternative is not expected to change existing traffic operations or the transportation system.

Mitigation

To mitigate potential impacts of the trail on motor vehicle traffic during future design phases, at-grade intersections would be studied more closely, and operations may be modeled at some intersections to ensure level-of-service objectives are met. Grade-separation may be recommended in some locations as shown in Table 6-3.

The safety of at-grade crossings would also be studied carefully during the trail planning process and future design phases. Many treatments are available for crossing roads at-grade that may be appropriate, depending on traffic volumes, the geometry of the intersection, surrounding topography, and other factors. Chapter 3 discusses assignment of the right-of-way and depicts some of the typical treatments suggested in this master planning phase.

PARKING AND ACCESS

Parking is a consideration both from the perspective of people trying to access the corridor and the adjacent property owners who may be parking partially or fully within the corridor.

Overview of Existing Conditions

There are currently no formal access points associated with the ERC. Locations where the ERC can be accessed are generally where the former railbed crosses roadways and driveways at-grade. The potential access points and distances to the ERC are shown in Figure 6-2.

Parks and recreation facilities near the corridor might be attractive locations from which people access the trail. These locations could include Gene Coulon Park in Renton, Newcastle Beach Park in Bellevue, and the Wilmot Gateway Park and Woodinville Sports Fields in Woodinville.

Currently, no public parking areas are associated with the ERC. In some locations, adjacent residents and businesses park within the ERC. This private use does not serve the public who wish access to the corridor. In some places, adjacent businesses may be using part of the ERC for internal circulation roads, loading, and other operations. Depending on the location, these informal uses may have been permitted previously by the railroad or may be an unpermitted use. Locations where the trail



Bicycle rack on Metro bus.



FIGURE 6-2. ERC ACCESSIBILITY

planning envelope and other uses overlap are shown in Volume 2 – Preliminary Plans for Build Alternatives.

Environmental Consequences

Trail users would access the trail by nonmotorized modes (walking, running, and bicycling) as well as by driving and parking near the ERC. As part of developing a trail on the ERC, King County would improve access for nonmotorized modes. In general, there would be five types of access to the ERC trail: 1) local street crossings, which would be the most common access points; 2) regional trail connections; 3) local jurisdiction trail connections; 4) neighborhood or private connections, which may be provided if requested and if a special use permit is granted by King County Parks; and 5) new gateways to the trail. These access points would create a trail that is accessible to all types of users. New gateways and locations where the trail can be accessed could potentially be located near:

- May Creek
- Mercer Slough, between 118th Avenue SE and the ERC
- SE 9th Street, south of the Wilburton Trestle
- SE 5th Street, north of the Wilburton Trestle
- Tolt Pipeline Trail, adjacent to SR 202 and the Spur

New gateways and parking facilities would be considered during future design development and some locations would likely require additional property acquisitions.

Nearby surface streets could become informal locations where people park to access the ERC. This could potentially affect the availability of parking for businesses and residents.

Table 6-4 estimates the potential impacts of trail development on existing parking within the ERC. These impacts were identified

TABLE 6-4. Estimate of Affected Parking Spaces in the ERC¹

	Lakefront Segment	Wilburton Segment	Valley Segment- Main Line	Valley Segment- Spur	Total
On-Railbed Alternative	5	95	0	70	170
Off-Railbed Alternative	7	125	0	70	202

¹ For a parking place to be “affected,” the trail planning envelope need only overlap it slightly.

by overlaying the planning envelope for each alternative on an aerial photograph (shown in Volume 2 – Preliminary Plans for Build Alternatives).

Depending on the trail location, the planning envelope overlaps existing parking either partially or fully. Parking impacts for the On-Railbed and Off-Railbed alternatives would be similar except in the Wilburton Segment. North of NE 8th Street in Bellevue, the Off-Railbed Alternative would affect a paved parking area behind a strip mall that is within the corridor.

Under the No Action Alternative, parking for trail access is not required and permitted parking by adjacent property owners would not be affected. King County would prohibit and enforce violations of unpermitted parking that represent a trespass on ERC property.

Mitigation

Measures to dissuade unpermitted parking by trail users would be developed during future design phases. After trail development, the local jurisdiction could choose to limit public parking on neighborhood streets. Additional opportunities for trail use parking would be looked at during design. King County could seek agreements with adjacent businesses that have underutilized parking during the weekends when recreational trail usage is higher.

Mitigation is not anticipated for loss or reduction of unpermitted parking along the corridor. In locations where previously permitted parking could be affected, King County would evaluate options for reconfiguring the parking or slightly adjusting the trail alignment within the planning envelope to reduce the amount of lost parking spaces.



CONSISTENCY WITH STORMWATER REGULATIONS

Overview of Existing Stormwater Management Requirements

King County's objective for accommodating a wide range of trail uses necessitates a smooth, paved surface. This new impervious area must comply with the local stormwater management manuals for flow control. As a non-pollution-generating surface, trails are typically exempt from water quality requirements. However, stormwater flow control facilities may be required even in areas where water quality treatment is not required. Any new parking areas must comply with water quality requirements.

Each of the four cities that the ERC will traverse is covered under the 2013–2018 Western Washington Phase II Municipal Stormwater Permit. The permit requires municipalities to adopt the Stormwater Management Manual for Western Washington as amended in 2014 (Ecology Manual) (Ecology 2014) or an

equivalent manual. Renton, Kirkland, and Woodinville have adopted the King County Surface Water Design Manual (King County 2009). King County is in the process of updating this manual to be equivalent with the 2014 Ecology Manual. Bellevue has written its own manual that is equivalent to the 2005 Ecology Manual. Bellevue expects to update its manual to be equivalent to the 2014 Ecology Manual by the end of 2016. Table 6-5 summarizes the current and anticipated future stormwater management manuals.

The 2014 Ecology Manual includes low impact development (LID), with related definitions, requirements, and an LID performance standard. Other major changes include revised guidelines on protecting wetlands and designing infiltration facilities.

LID will be given consideration early in the design process. The preliminary investigation will include reviewing published soils maps to identify areas where infiltration may be feasible. These

locations will later be refined with information obtained from the geotechnical investigation for the project. Topographical information is also important because many of the LID stormwater techniques require gentle slopes.

The locations and types of stormwater facilities and BMPs will be prioritized based on staying within the ERC, minimizing environmental impacts, having a feasible discharge location, assessing physical constraints (topography and space), ensuring accessibility for maintenance, and maintaining sub-basin (creek) boundaries and threshold discharge area boundaries. In locations where other uses of the corridor are proposed in the future (such as transit), King County would consider options for sharing stormwater facilities.

Environmental Consequences

For the On-Railbed and Off-Railbed alternatives, the intent is to minimize potential impacts on water quantity and quality by adhering to the applicable stormwater management standards. In this Draft Master Plan, trail impacts have been assessed based on the 30- to 40-foot trail planning envelope. This area may provide sufficient space for stormwater BMPs; otherwise, if stormwater BMPs require additional space, this may constrain additional future uses in the ERC. The No Action Alternative would not change existing water quantity or quality. King County would maintain, repair, and replace existing stormwater facilities in the ERC consistent with state and federal requirements.

Mitigation

No mitigation measures are anticipated beyond adhering to the applicable stormwater management standards.



ERC crossing at North 43rd Street in Renton



TABLE 6-5. Stormwater Management Standards

Jurisdiction	Current Stormwater Management Standards	Future Stormwater Management Standards
King County	2009 King County Surface Water Design Manual (KCSWDM)	2016 KCSWDM (adoption expected by the end of 2016)
City of Renton	2009 KCSWDM City of Renton Amendments to the 2009 KCSWDM	2016 KCSWDM (adoption expected by the end of 2016)
City of Bellevue	2014 Surface Water Engineering Standards	2016 Surface Water Engineering Standards (expected to be adopted in late 2016 and will be equivalent to the 2014 Ecology Manual)
City of Kirkland	2009 KCSWDM Addendum to the 2009 KCSWDM	2016 KCSWDM (expected to be adopted by the end of 2016)
City of Woodinville	2009 KCSWDM	Unknown at this time



Kennydale Beach Park in Renton

TRAILS AND PARKS

Overview of Existing Conditions

There are eight regional trails, five local trails, and 12 parks located near the corridor. Two of the regional trails and one park are in both the Lakefront and Wilburton segments. Chapter 2 Figures 2-5 to 2-7 show the locations of trails and parks.

Lakefront Segment

In the Lakefront Segment, three regional trails provide connections for commuters and recreational users to reach destinations across King County:

- Cedar River Trail—This approximately 17-mile trail is paved for about 12 miles and is a soft-surface trail for 5 miles. This trail connects communities from Maple Valley in south King County to Lake Washington near the Renton Municipal Airport.
- I-90/Mountains to Sound Trail—This 10-mile paved trail follows I-90 from Seattle to Bellevue and Issaquah and is one of King County’s most important regional routes.
- Lake to Sound Trail—This planned trail will link Des Moines to Renton where the Cedar River flows into Lake Washington. There is a gap between the ERC and the point where this trail ends. The City of Renton is studying proposed routes to close the gap.

In this segment, four local trails connect nearby neighborhoods to the ERC and create links to the trail system. Gene Coulon Memorial Beach Park in Renton offers 1.5 miles of paved walking trails along the Lake Washington shoreline. May Creek Trail is a 0.25-mile soft-surface trail along May Creek in Renton. Coal Creek Natural Area Trails offer 4.5 miles of soft-surface trails, located 0.25 mile east of the ERC. The Lake Washington Loop is a popular bicycle route that runs parallel to the ERC.

Five parks and nature areas in this segment are located near the ERC. Gene Coulon Memorial Beach Park, Kennydale Beach Park, and Newcastle Beach Park are all located on the Lake Washington shoreline and have walking trails, picnic areas, and playgrounds.



Ecosystem Evaluation of Alternatives

This evaluation contains additional details about the existing conditions, impacts, and mitigation for vegetation, fish and wildlife, streams, and wetlands in the ERC (King County Parks 2016c).

Wilburton Segment

Two regional trails provide connections for commuters and recreational users in and through the Wilburton Segment:

- I-90/Mountains to Sound Trail—This 10-mile paved trail follows I-90 from Seattle to Bellevue and Issaquah and is one of King County’s most important regional routes.
- SR 520 Trail—Currently, there is a gap in the SR 520 Trail that the City of Bellevue is addressing with improvements along Northup Way. In the long-term, WSDOT’s preferred alternative for connecting the SR 520 Trail in this area includes using a short section of the ERC at Northup Way.

Three local trails are located in nearby neighborhoods and could potentially link to the ERC. Mercer Slough Nature Park trails offer 7 miles of trails on interconnected boardwalks, soft-surface trails, and asphalt paths. The Lake to Lake Trail and Greenway is a series of nonmotorized facilities connecting Lake Sammamish to Lake Washington. The Wilburton Hill Park Trail has approximately 3.5 miles of primarily soft-surface trail through the 105-acre park and gardens.

In this segment, four parks and nature areas are located near the ERC. Mercer Slough Nature Park offers many recreational opportunities for cycling, hiking, canoeing, blueberry picking, and environmental education. Two large city parks, Kelsey Creek Park and Wilburton Hill Park, including the Bellevue Botanical Garden, are to the east of the corridor and would be connected to the ERC via the Lake to Lake Trail and Greenway. The one state park in vicinity of the corridor, Bridle Trails State Park, is approximately 1.5 miles north of the ERC.

Valley Segment

There are two regional trails in proximity to the ERC in the Valley Segment:

- Tolt Pipeline Trail—This approximately 14-mile soft-surface trail runs east-west between Bothell and Duvall, crossing the ERC in Woodinville near the wineries north of NE 145th Street.
- Sammamish River Trail—Located at the north end of the corridor, this 10.9-mile paved trail extends from Bothell, through Woodinville, to Redmond. The trail becomes the Burke-Gilman Trail, leading from Blyth Park in Bothell and continuing to Seattle.

In this segment, four parks are located close to the ERC. Totem Lake Park is a 24-acre natural area consisting of wetlands with some boardwalk access. The City of Woodinville plans to develop a trail system on West Sammamish Valley View Park property. Two existing parks in Woodinville are adjacent to the Sammamish River Trail—Wilmot Gateway Park and Woodin Creek Park. The Wilmot Gateway Park provides an opportunity to become a gateway to the ERC trail. This park is located just across the Sammamish River from the wye and includes a playground, grassy area, picnic areas, and parking. Woodin Creek Park is also within 0.5 mile of the ERC and includes a large open space, tennis court, public art, and a picnic area. In addition, two parks are proposed near the corridor:

- The City of Woodinville is planning a community park, Little Bear Creek Linear Park, located northeast of the wye.
- The City of Redmond’s planned Sammamish Valley Park proposes a community pea patch, boardwalk, and educational building located south of NE 124th Street near the Spur.

Environmental Consequences

The impacts and benefits of the On-Railbed and Off-Railbed alternatives on trails or parks are anticipated to be the same. Both alternatives would create improved connections to regional and local trails, which would benefit overall mobility for trail users. Linking the ERC to nearby local and regional trails could increase overall accessibility to the trail system and increase trail use. Both alternatives would connect to the same trails.

In general, the ERC trail would improve access to parks in the vicinity but not adversely affect the parks. Depending on the final design of the north connection to the Sammamish River Trail in the vicinity of NE 175th Street, more trail users may circulate through Wilmot Gateway Park to access the connection. Likewise, pedestrian traffic through Gene Coulon Park may increase as trail users access the ERC from the south.

The No Action Alternative would not improve connections to parks and trails.

Mitigation

No mitigation measures are anticipated.



ERC crossing over May Creek



ECOLOGICAL RESOURCES

Ecological resources is the term used to refer to the plants, animals, and water elements of the environment, which are specified in WAC 197-11-444.

Overview of Existing Conditions

The urban development surrounding the ERC has dramatically changed the natural environment over the last 100 years. Ecological resources (vegetation, wildlife, streams, and wetlands) were observed in the corridor to understand existing conditions.

Vegetation, Terrestrial Wildlife, and Habitat

The urban environment surrounding the ERC includes many residences, commercial buildings, and other structures that have lawns, ornamental plants, shrubs, and scattered trees. Occasional riparian corridor crossings and pockets of natural areas are scattered throughout this area. Larger riparian corridors intersect the ERC, including May Creek, Coal Creek, and Kelsey Creek. Larger riparian corridors have a greater abundance of forested vegetation compared to the smaller riparian systems that function more as channels (via pipes, culverts, and narrow daylighted channels) for runoff rather than places of habitat. A large mix of second-growth native forest occurs along the Main Line of the Valley Segment from Willows Road NE into Woodinville.

No rare plant species identified by the Washington Natural Heritage Program are likely to be affected by the ERC trail (WDNR 2015).

Invasive plant species, however, are common within the ERC study area and diminish the value of habitats by competing with native vegetation. Examples of invasive vegetation that were observed include:

- Canada thistle
- Yellow archangel
- Sow thistle
- Himalayan blackberry
- Japanese knotweed
- Reed canarygrass
- Poison hemlock
- Herb Robert
- Yellow flag iris
- English ivy
- Scotch broom
- Hedge false bindweed
- Policeman's helmet
- Purple loosestrife
- Tansy ragwort

No terrestrial Endangered Species Act (ESA)-listed species or state-listed threatened or endangered terrestrial species are known or expected to occur in the ERC vicinity. Within 0.5 mile of the ERC, a bald eagle breeding area was identified by the Washington State Department of Fish and Wildlife (WDFW) Priority Habitats and Species (PHS) program in the area between the railbed and I-405, near Exit 9, which is the Lake Washington Boulevard Newcastle/I-405 interchange (WDFW 2015). The bald eagle is a state-listed sensitive species. Although not mapped within 0.5 mile of the corridor, several other state-listed sensitive species and candidate species may use habitats in the study area. A state-listed sensitive species that could be within the corridor is the peregrine falcon. Other candidate species that could be within the corridor include Townsend's big eared bat, western toad, pileated woodpecker, and Vaux's swift.

Urban areas typically provide habitat only for adaptable species such as sparrows, starlings, doves, rats, mice, raccoons, opossums, and squirrels. However, larger habitat patches that support a larger variety of species, particularly songbirds, raptors, small mammals, coyotes, and black-tailed deer, do intercept or are in proximity to the ERC.

Streams and Wetlands

Surface waters, which include streams and wetlands, in the ERC are located in Water Resource Inventory Area (WRIA) 8 (Lake Washington/Cedar/Sammamish Watershed). Wetlands and streams were inventoried in support of the master planning process and EIS analysis. Once a preferred alternative is chosen, additional studies to identify and evaluate resources will be completed during the subsequent environmental review and design phases. Based on the inventory, streams occur in all local jurisdictions—8 in Renton, 2 in unincorporated King County, 11 in Bellevue, 8 in Kirkland, and 12 in Woodinville. Of the 41 streams observed along the ERC, 28 are within the planning envelope for the On-Railbed and Off-Railbed alternatives (King County Parks 2016c).

Salmonid species have been documented in seven of the streams. Of the salmonid species known or expected to occur in streams in the ERC, the Puget Sound evolutionarily significant units of Chinook salmon and steelhead trout are listed as threatened under the ESA. Chinook salmon is also listed as a state candidate species. Steelhead trout has no listing status at the state level. Bull trout has not been documented in streams that intersect the corridor.

Seventy-nine wetlands were encountered during a field inventory of the ERC, ranging from less than 0.1 acre to over 7 acres. Wetlands occur in all local jurisdictions—11 in Renton, 3 in unincorporated King County, 26 in Bellevue, 13 in Kirkland, and 26 in Woodinville (King County Parks 2016c). The wetlands in the ERC vicinity are generally narrow and run parallel to the rail corridor in an adjacent ditch—relics of dredging along the railbed and the manmade barrier of the rail prism. Several wetlands are associated with slopes adjacent to the railbed where small drainages or seeps occur. Some of these wetlands extend outside of the right-of-way where the boundary was estimated. Many of these wetlands have been filled or modified in some manner and contain non-native or invasive species, but may provide habitat for urbanized wildlife.

Species Information

Information was obtained through review of online sources:

Vegetation Species

Washington State Department of Natural Resources (WDNR) Natural Heritage Features

Wildlife Species

WDFW Priority Habitats and Species data

Salmonid Species

Information was obtained through review of online sources:

City of Bellevue 2009 Fish Use of Stream Basins in the City of Bellevue

Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife SalmonScape

WDFW Priority Habitats and Species data



What is the difference between enhancement and mitigation?

Enhancements: improve upon existing ecological functions, values or benefits not related to an impact.

Mitigation: avoid, minimize, or compensate for an impact.

Best Management Practices

BMPs are approved physical, structural, or managerial practices that, for example, prevent or reduce erosion, dust, and spreading of sediment or pollutants that could discharge into waterbodies.



Larger riparian corridors that intersect the Lakefront Segment are located along May Creek and Coal Creek. In the Lakefront and Wilburton segments, Mercer Slough Nature Park is Lake Washington’s largest remaining wetland and provides a diverse habitat for wildlife. Through the Wilburton Segment, the ERC crosses wetlands in the vicinity of Mercer Slough, Lake Bellevue, and between NE 12th Street and Northup Way. There are also wetlands and a large riparian corridor in the vicinity of Kelsey Creek; however, the corridor is high above this location on the Wilburton Trestle. Small streams emerge from the hillside between Kirkland and Woodinville along the Main Line of the Valley Segment. Approximately 400 acres of forested area cover this slope

Environmental Consequences

The No Action Alternative would not result in any additional development or use beyond that currently being conducted for the rail corridor. As a result, there would likely be no impact or minimal impacts on aquatic species and habitat in the study area for all segments. Some minor impacts could occur through routine work by King County to clean or repair existing ditches, culverts, and related structures to maintain the established drainage regime. The No Action Alternative would not include enhancements to aquatic habitats, wetlands, or vegetation that could be included as part of enhancements or compensatory mitigation for the On-Railbed and Off-Railbed alternatives.

Vegetation, Terrestrial Wildlife, and Habitat

Potential impacts on wildlife would occur primarily where vegetation connecting to wetlands, streams, and lakes is removed. This is because those areas have higher habitat value. Construction of the On-Railbed Alternative would affect about 10.8 acres of tree canopy, compared to the 24.8 acres affected by the Off-Railbed Alternative. Neither alternative would likely affect species listed under the ESA, state-listed threatened or endangered terrestrial wildlife species, or rare plant species identified by the Washington Natural Heritage Program (King County 2016c). WDFW’s PHS program identified a bald eagle (*Haliaeetus leucocephalus*) breeding area in the vicinity of

the Lake Washington Boulevard/I-405 interchange, which is within 0.5 mile of the ERC (WDFW 2015).The higher functioning terrestrial habitats in the corridor are the riparian habitats associated with May Creek, Coal Creek, and Kelsey Creek; Mercer Slough; and the forested slope along the Main Line of the Valley Segment. This forested slope would experience the greatest impacts due to tree canopy removal.

Streams and Wetlands

The majority of streams and associated aquatic habitats within the ERC are in poor condition, limited by the surrounding urban environment. These habitats have reaches that are channelized or piped (corrugated pipes and culverts). Streams and wetlands could be affected by:

- Widening existing culverts
- Constructing new culverts
- Placing fill
- Adding illumination on the trail

The On-Railbed Alternative would typically require the widening and potential replacement of culverts under the railbed. The Off-Railbed Alternative would typically require the construction of new culverts to convey streams under the trail. Additional stream assessments would be conducted during the future design phases, in conjunction with an assessment of fish passage barriers. Minimal impacts are expected for the May Creek, Coal Creek, Stream SR6, and Kelsey Creek aquatic habitats because all work would take place on the existing trestles that cross over them.

To construct the trail, there would likely be locations that necessitate placing fill within a stream channel, or relocating the stream; as a result, aquatic habitat would be affected. The On-Railbed Alternative has the greater estimated impact on aquatic habitat totaling 4,000 linear feet. The Off-Railbed Alternative would affect an estimated 2,250 linear feet of aquatic habitat. This difference is due to three sections of streams that parallel the On-Railbed Alternative to a greater extent than the Off-Railbed Alternative.



Vegetated area located on the side of the railbed near 139th Avenue NE and Willows Road



Vegetation along railbed near 116th Avenue NE south of SR 520



Vegetated area located east of Slater Avenue NE



Vegetation along railbed near Northup Way and 116th Avenue NE

During future design, the need for illumination of the trail will be assessed, which could include lighting near streams with aquatic habitat. Lighting has been shown to increase predation of juvenile salmon.

The Off-Railbed Alternative has the greater estimated area of impact on wetlands—approximately 4.7 acres of wetlands compared to 4.1 acres with the On-Railbed Alternative. Of the 79 wetlands observed within the ERC, the Off-Railbed Alternative would affect 44 wetlands and the On-Railbed Alternative would affect 58 wetlands. Because all work would occur on the existing trestle that crosses over Kelsey Creek, it is unlikely work would occur in the stream’s adjacent wetlands.

Table 6-6 shows the amount of tree canopy, streams, and wetlands that could potentially be affected by the proposed trail development for the On-Railbed and Off-Railbed alternatives.

There are clear trade-offs between the two build alternatives. The On-Railbed Alternative has greater impacts on streams, but requires the removal of far less tree canopy and affects slightly less wetland area than the Off-Railbed Alternative.

Evaluation of Alternatives near Residential Neighborhoods

This report contains additional details about the residential neighborhoods in proximity to the ERC, including information on noise regulations for each jurisdiction and property values (King County Parks 2016d).

TABLE 6-6. Potential Tree Canopy, Stream, and Wetland Impacts

Segment/ Alternative	Tree Canopy (acres)	Number of Streams Intersected	Affected Stream Length ¹ (feet)	Fish-Bearing Streams ²	Number of Affected Wetlands	Size of Affected Wetland (acres)
Lakefront Segment						
On-Railbed	4.9	13	1,700 ³	May Creek, Coal Creek	20	1.9
Off-Railbed	11.4	13	950 ³	May Creek, Coal Creek	19	2.1
Wilburton Segment						
On-Railbed	2.3	1	0	Kelsey Creek	7	0.7
Off-Railbed	5.2	1	0	Kelsey Creek	6	1.9
Valley Segment						
Main Line: On-Railbed	3.1	11	2,000	None	22	1.0
Main Line: Off-Railbed	7.6	11	1,000	None	12	0.3
Spur: On-Railbed	0.5	3	300	SW15, SW16, SW17	9	0.5
Spur: Off-Railbed	0.6	3	300	SW15, SW16, SW17	7	0.4
TOTAL						
On-Railbed	10.8	28	4,000	-	58	4.1
Off-Railbed	24.8	28	2,250	-	44	4.7

¹ The estimated affected stream length is rounded to the nearest 50 linear feet.

² Sources: City of Bellevue 2009; WDFW 2014; WDFW 2015.

³ The planning envelope assumes the existing trestles over four intersected streams (May Creek, Coal Creek, Kelsey Creek, and SR6) will be used for the proposed trail and would not result in permanent impacts below the ordinary high water mark of these streams.



Enhancements

Development of the regional trail may offer some opportunities to enhance ecological resources on the ERC. Plantings for either alternative could enhance habitat values by replacing invasive species with native grasses, shrubs, and trees. Particularly along riparian corridors and near large areas of natural habitat, native plants could help restore connectivity for a variety of animal species. Potential ecosystem enhancements will be considered further during the preliminary design process. Fish-impassable structures in the corridor affected by the project would be upgraded as required for fish passage, and additional structures outside the corridor could also be considered for improvements that enhance habitat.

Mitigation

Impacts on ecological resources would be mitigated in accordance with the requirements established by local critical area ordinances, the Clean Water Act (CWA), and other statutes and policies.

When selecting the preferred alternative, King County will weigh potential impacts on ecosystems against other types of impacts (such as geological hazards and transportation), costs, and project objectives. Avoidance and minimization of impacts on vegetation, wildlife, streams, and wetlands will be part of the subsequent design process.

After the preferred alternative is identified, King County will comply with standard specifications, BMPs, and applicable federal, state, and local mitigation requirements during design, construction, and post-construction activities. Significant water quality impacts are not expected if erosion control BMPs, and stormwater and spill-containment measures are properly implemented, monitored, and maintained during construction. A temporary erosion and sediment control (TESC) plan may be implemented to minimize and control pollution and erosion from stormwater.

The ERC trail could incorporate additional strategies to avoid and minimize impacts on ecological resources such as:

- Shifting alignments away from critical areas within the 30- to 40-foot planning envelope
- Using retaining walls, boardwalks, fish-passable culverts, or bridges to narrow the trail section where critical areas are adjacent or crossed
- Designing lighting carefully over streams where salmon habitat might be present to minimize spillover
- Applying the narrowest typical trail section when adjacent to high-quality critical areas
- Reducing the potential for human and pet intrusion through the use of fencing and signage

Temporarily disturbed areas would be restored to pre-construction conditions, where feasible, and planted with appropriate native species when construction is completed. The length of time that would be required for site restoration to effectively replace habitat functions would vary.

For any stream, wetland, and buffer impacts that could not be avoided or adequately minimized, King County would replace the area and functions lost through compensatory mitigation. Mitigation projects can occur on site (at or near the place where the impact occurs) or off site, depending on various factors such as jurisdictional code, practicality, and meaningful ecological benefit.

In some instances, on-site mitigation may not be practical. Sound Transit and Puget Sound Energy both hold easements within much of the corridor, and on-site mitigation could create encumbrances that affect the ability of the other owners to act on their interests. In these circumstances, on-site mitigation would likely only be pursued if the other approaches are unavailable or cannot be permitted. King County would consider opportunities to establish mitigation in advance of the impacts from future construction of the ERC.

SURROUNDING COMMUNITIES

Communities surrounding the ERC were studied to evaluate potential effects on certain built environment elements such as noise, land use, light and glare, and aesthetics, which are specified in WAC 197-11-444.

Overview of Existing Conditions

The ERC traverses a variety of land uses between Renton and Woodinville. In the Lakefront Segment, between Renton and the south end of Bellevue, the surrounding development is primarily residential, but also includes the Seahawks' Virginia Mason Athletic Center (VMAC), commercial properties, and community uses such as parks. Some residential property owners in this segment applied for variances to reduce or eliminate code-required setbacks from the right-of-way to build or expand their residences.

In the Wilburton Segment, from I-90 to where the ERC would be reconnected across I-405, there is a mix of light industrial and multi-family housing between Mercer Slough and I-405. Once the corridor crosses to the east side of I-405, the surrounding urban development becomes quite dense up to SR 520, and consists primarily of commercial businesses, office space, and hospital-related uses with pockets of residential neighborhoods. North of SR 520 to the Kirkland border, the corridor travels underneath SR 520 and I-405 passing through a mix of office and commercial land uses. The corridor also backs pockets of residential neighborhoods.

Along the Main Line of the Valley Segment, between Kirkland and Woodinville, the corridor runs behind an industrial area along NE 124th Street. As the Main Line turns north, it crosses Willows Road and is surrounded by vegetation. A residential area is located to the east but it is separated by the steep grade of the hillside that slopes from west to east towards the valley floor. Between NE 145th Street and the wye, the Main Line continues to traverse vegetated and forested areas, and the slope of the hillside decreases as the corridor continues north. There are a couple residential developments to the west, and industrial,



office, and commercial uses to the east. North of NE 145th Street, the Main Line does not cross any streets or driveways until it reaches the Woodinville-Redmond Road just south of NE 175th Street at the wye.

Along the Spur, which connects Redmond to Woodinville in the Valley Segment, there is a nursery and agricultural uses on the east side of the rails between NE 124th Street and NE 145th Street. The west side of the Spur is bounded by an industrial use, a forested area, and a winery. Once the Spur crosses NE 145th Street, it is adjacent to the east side of the Woodinville-Redmond Road where there are several commercial and office uses. The Spur crosses 11 driveways to these uses, which also include wineries and a private school.

Residential neighborhoods in proximity to the ERC present unique opportunities and constraints to the development of a regional trail. Table 6-7 lists these neighborhoods and Figure 6-3 shows their locations.

Within these neighborhoods, 22 schools are located within approximately 0.5 mile of the corridor and are listed and shown in Chapter 2 Figures 2-5 to 2-7. Two non-traditional schools are also located close to the corridor. The Overlake Specialty School in Bellevue, located near Northup Way and 116th Avenue NE, is affiliated with the Overlake Medical Center. Chrysalis High School, a specialized private school, is located along the Spur in Woodinville-Redmond Road.

TABLE 6-7. Residential Neighborhoods Located along the ERC

Neighborhood	Location	Jurisdiction
Lakefront Segment		
Kennydale	Gene Coulon Park through NE 44th Street	Renton
South Newport	NE 44th Street to Coal Creek Parkway	Renton, unincorporated King County, and Bellevue
North Newport	Coal Creek Parkway to I-90	Bellevue
Wilburton Segment		
West Bellevue	I-90, west of I-405	Bellevue
Woodridge	I-90, east of I-405, to Lake Hills Connector	Bellevue
Wilburton	Lake Hills Connector to Main Street	Bellevue
Valley Segment		
Kingsgate	Willows Road to NE 145th Street	Kirkland
Upper and Lower West Ridge	NE 145th Street to NE 175th Street	Woodinville

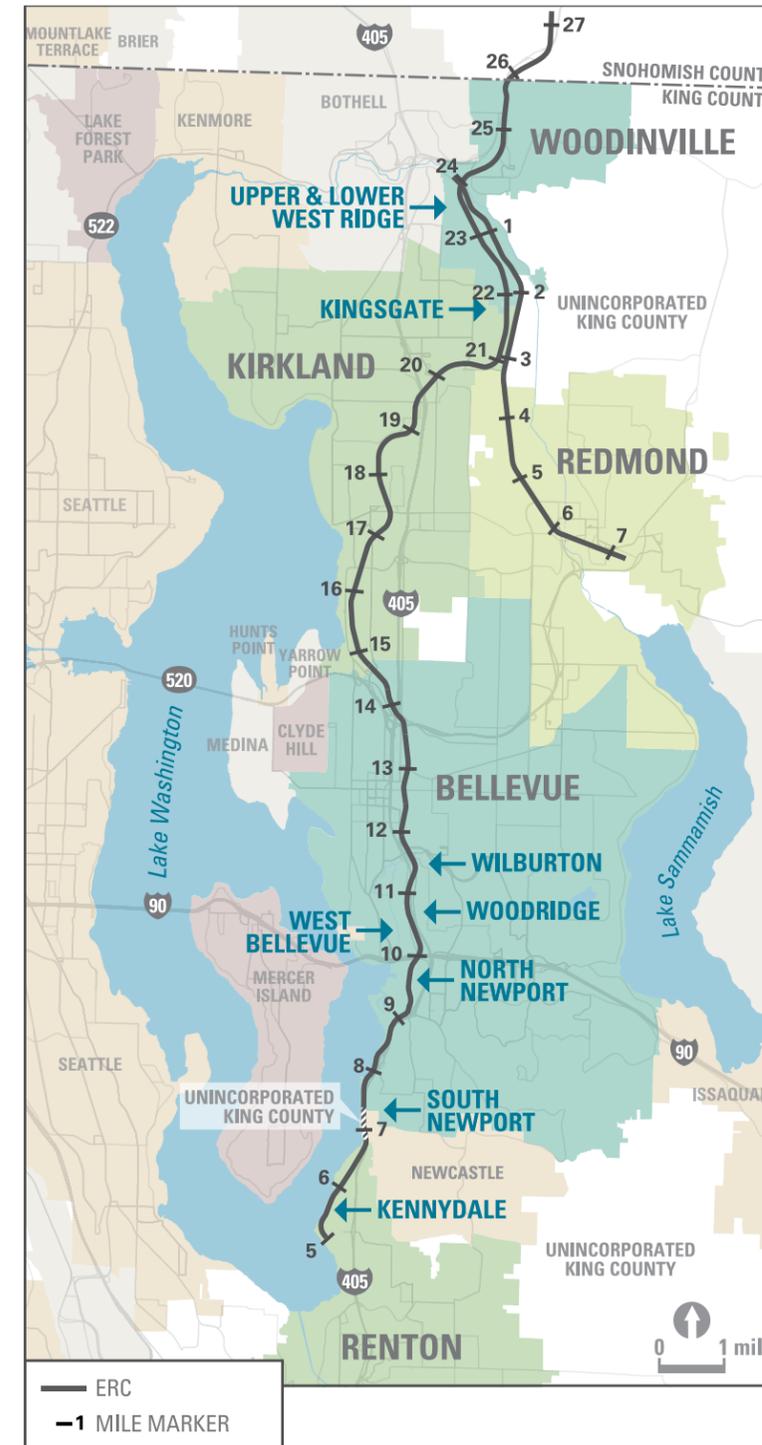


FIGURE 6-3. LOCATIONS OF RESIDENTIAL NEIGHBORHOODS ALONG THE ERC



Environmental Consequences

Trails in the King County Regional Trails System are considered linear parks, open from dawn to dusk 7 days a week, according to King County Code Section 7.12.480. In considering the potential impacts of developing a trail on the surrounding land uses and communities, the following elements were studied:

- Lighting
- Public Safety (trespass and crime)
- Privacy
- Schools
- Noise
- Aesthetics
- Business

The No Action Alternative would include basic maintenance and required safety features, such as signs, hand rails, safety fencing on bridges or trestles, and ecology blocks (concrete barriers) or other means to keep motor vehicles off the corridor. However, compared to the On-Railbed and Off-Railbed alternatives, the No Action Alternative would not incorporate additional features for

these elements. For most of these topics, the potential impacts of the two build alternatives are very similar, except as noted.

Lighting

Currently, trail illumination is largely limited to intersections with public roads, where the requirements of the local jurisdiction are applied; otherwise, the trails are not typically illuminated. Illumination would be considered during future development on the ERC, with high priority emphasis at the following locations:

- Undercrossings where trail users may feel uncomfortable or vulnerable. For the ERC, lighting the undercrossings of I-405 and SR 520 would be considered.
- Approaches to bridges and boardwalks. For the ERC, this would include existing railroad bridges that may be restored for trail use, and new bridges such as those over I-405 and NE 8th Street.
- Changes in trail geometry. For the ERC, this could occur where the trail alignment shifts to cross perpendicular to a driveway.

- Areas in which the trail mixes with cross pedestrian and/or bicycle traffic. For the ERC, this could include the area around the Wilburton Station and at the intersections of the ERC trail with other regional trails (such as the I-90/ Mountains to Sound Greenway Trail).

Other areas that could be considered for illumination include intersections with driveways that are steep or skewed, or more remote areas. King County could consider the use of a reflective material to delineate the edge or center of the trail at periodic intervals. The selection of the type and level of illumination would be sensitive to the setting to avoid creating safety issues associated with glare and to minimize the potential for obscuring existing views. The selection of the type and level of illumination would also be sensitive to the setting to avoid impacts on aquatic habitat where juvenile salmon may be present. The impacts and benefits associated with lighting would be similar for both build alternatives.

The No Action Alternative would not have any impacts or benefits related to lighting because no lighting would be installed.



Looking north towards the Seahawks practice facility (VMAC) located in Renton.



Looking north towards downtown Bellevue from the Wilburton Trestle.



Public Safety

The potential for increased trespass and crime on adjacent properties would be the same for the On-Railbed and Off-Railbed alternatives. With the development of a trail, occasional incidents of trespass or private property vandalism could occur but are not expected to differ substantially from existing conditions. Some trespass or vandalism may be associated with a trail, but public use of a trail may discourage vandals near homes and businesses as well. Overall, no impacts are expected. King County does not typically construct fences or barriers to address these concerns, except where there is a safety or liability concern. However, several types of fence will be present in the corridor to address other needs that could also discourage trespass:

- Auto-Protection Barriers are used when the trail is immediately alongside a road, driveway, or parking. The purpose is to protect trail users from motor vehicles. Standard roadside guardrails are the most typical barrier type used in these situations

- Trail Safety Barriers are located to protect trail users from falls if they lose control and leave the trail; these are typically used where the trail is adjacent to a very steep slope or drop off. The most common type of trail safety barrier for King County regional trails is vinyl coated chain link fence, typically colored black.
- Guidance Barriers are sometimes used to control circulation where the edges of public space may not be clear to trail users. These types of barriers are typically low split-rail or wood-pole fences, and are used to control access to sensitive areas and occasionally adjacent private property.

Adjacent businesses and residences with concerns about theft and other crimes could also construct security fences on the property line.

The No Action Alternative would be expected to have fewer public safety concerns due to the lower volume and frequency of trail users.



Looking east from the ERC across the Sammamish River Valley.

Privacy

The ERC trail would be closest to adjacent residences in the Lakefront Segment. In some areas, the proposed trail would be at the same elevation as nearby homes. Comments received during scoping show some residents would consider the physical proximity of trail users an intrusion or loss of privacy. Voices from trail users may be audible inside adjoining residences where a window is open near the trail. Some residents may be less inclined to spend time in portions of their yards that are in view of the trail and may curtail their outdoor activities. In the Lakefront Segment, the On-Railbed Alternative could remove vegetation on the west side of the railbed that provides some privacy to adjacent property owners; the Off-Railbed Alternative could be at a slightly higher elevation looking down onto adjacent properties. In most other locations in the corridor, development of either build alternative is likely to be perceived to reduce privacy of adjacent residences in a similar manner.

The No Action Alternative would be expected to have fewer privacy concerns due to the lower volume and frequency of trail users.

Schools

None of the school properties is anticipated to be adversely affected by trail operations. The trail could provide some students with a safer walking or bicycle route to school; however, there are no traditional public schools in proximity to the trail.

At Chrysalis High School, a trail along the Spur would cross the driveway leading to the school. This could cause motor vehicles to make an additional stop to allow trail users to cross before entering or exiting the school parking lot.

Overall, the trail is not anticipated to have noticeable impacts or benefits to schools with either the On-Railbed or Off-Railbed Alternative. The No Action Alternative would not have any impacts or benefits to schools.



Noise

Noise sources associated with the use of the trail would include bicycles traveling on pavement, occasional bicycle warning sounds, foot traffic on pavement and gravel shoulders, and unamplified human voices. These sounds could be noticeable to adjacent residences. Near the gateways, motor vehicles in and around the parking lots would also create some noise.

Occasionally, trail maintenance could also be a source of noise. Trail maintenance would be infrequent at any given location. Maintenance activities could involve occasional motor vehicle use on the trail, vegetation management (such as mowing or hazardous tree removal), and drainage maintenance. These occasional maintenance activities would generate noise audible at nearby locations similar to existing neighborhood yard maintenance noise that occurs along portions of the trail.

Along areas of the ERC near I-405, I-90, and I-5, it is highly likely that trail use noise would be completely masked by existing noise from nearby motor vehicle traffic. In areas of the ERC that are relatively quiet, nearby residents could notice noise generated by trail users. However, overall trail use noise would be a minor source in the overall acoustic environment. In future design phases, as additional gateway opportunities are identified, proximity to residences will be considered.

Construction of the trail would generate noise associated with construction equipment and activities. Construction would include the use of equipment such as excavators, graders, compactors, trucks, and pavers; this equipment would generate varying levels of noise. Construction-related noise would be temporary, and measures to control construction noise would be implemented, when possible. No substantial noise impacts related to construction of the trail are anticipated.

The Cities of Renton, Bellevue, Kirkland, and Woodinville have noise regulations that the project would be subject to during construction of the trail and for users of the trail once it is open. Typically, construction noise is limited to daytime hours (varies by jurisdiction) unless the jurisdiction grants a noise variance. The local jurisdictions would be responsible for resolving trail-related noise sources if they disrupt nearby uses.

The impacts and benefits associated with noise during construction and operation would be the same for both build alternatives. The No Action Alternative would have fewer trail-related noise concerns due to the lower volume and frequency of trail users.

Aesthetics

The presence of the trail could change the visual character of the neighborhoods and commercial areas by removing vegetation, building retaining walls, increasing paved areas, constructing fences, and adding illumination. These features are necessary for safety and to minimize other impacts. Retaining walls reduce the footprint of the project, but could result in visual impacts from the landscape changes.

In areas where the trail is immediately adjacent to residences and businesses, changes in visual character would be more noticeable to property owners. In these areas, the height of the walls and the type of fence matter to the overall aesthetic values; aesthetically pleasing fencing and wall treatments would reduce the visual impact.



In general, the Off-Railbed Alternative requires more retaining walls and vegetation removal that could change the visual character of the area. In the Lakefront Segment and the Main Line of the Valley Segment, the Off-Railbed Alternative introduces retaining walls that could be more than 10 feet tall.

Both build alternatives may introduce new grade-separated crossings (such as bridges) over major arterials such as NE 4th Street and NE 8th Street in the Wilburton Segment, and NE 145th Street and Woodinville-Redmond Road in the Valley Segment. While the potential bridges and approach ramps in the Wilburton Segment are in a distinctly urban environment, many changes are occurring in this area that could collectively affect the visual character of the area. In the Valley Segment, the new bridges and approach ramps may be visually inconsistent with the rural look and feel of the Sammamish River Valley.

Business

The Master Plan envisions a trail within the ERC right-of-way. However, the trail envelope extends beyond the right-of-way in two places, both of which are located in commercial areas. The first location is in the vicinity of NE 8th Street. Based on Sound Transit's designs for East Link and the Wilburton Station, there isn't enough space within the ERC to develop the preferred trail section and a trail bridge over NE 8th Street. The immediate area where acquisition may be required is primarily parking and circulation around businesses. If stair and elevator access are included to the trail bridge from the street, then partial acquisition of an existing commercial building may be required.

The second location is along a northern portion of the Spur in which rail is still active and the right-of-way is narrow. To develop the preferred trail section, some right-of-way acquisition may be required. The area that may be affected is primarily landscaping and sidewalk facilities fronting business parking.

The areas in which right-of-way may be required are shown in Volume 2 and described in Chapter 4.

Mitigation

Lighting

Lighting will be considered during the design process to create a safe and accessible environment for all trail users. Lighting would be designed according to local standards to minimize glare and intrusions to surrounding neighborhoods. Lighting over streams, especially where juvenile salmon might be present, would be carefully designed to minimize spillover.

Public Safety

With the incorporation of adequate public safety mitigation measures, public safety impacts are anticipated to be minimal. Public safety mitigation measures could include:

- Locating safety barriers and fences where there is a safety or liability concern, such as access to undeveloped waterfront properties
- Placing signage to delineate limits of public property
- Considering lighting in areas remote from roads and driveways
- Posting signs to prevent trail users from parking in private or restricted parking lots located near trail access points
- Implementing trail patrols by volunteer trail ranger programs
- Monitoring crime rates in the area and conducting additional coordination with law enforcement if crime rates increase

Privacy

King County could consider vegetation plantings and fencing to protect privacy where there is enough space to do so without affecting the trail, but these decisions would be made during project design and on a case-by-case basis.

Schools

As described under the Transportation Facilities and Parking and Access sections, the safety of at-grade crossings would be studied carefully during the trail planning process and future design phases. No additional mitigation measures are anticipated.

Noise

In future design phases, the proximity to residences would be considered as additional parking and trailhead opportunities are identified. However, specific mitigation measures for noise would not be needed because surrounding noise sources, particularly roadways, are the primary noise sources in the neighborhood.

Aesthetics

Decisions regarding aesthetic design features would not be made until the final design phase of the project. However, to reduce impacts on visual quality, the project could:

- Replant areas along the corridor after construction is completed
- Use a type of wall material that is cohesive with the neighborhood setting
- Minimize the use of fences, except where necessary for safety and liability
- Where fences are necessary, use the least visually intrusive type of fence that is practicable

Business

If permanent acquisitions are needed in the vicinity of NE 8th Street or along the northern portion of the Spur, the owners or their occupants whose operations are impacted would be compensated in accordance with the Washington Relocation Assistance – Real Property Acquisition Policy Act of 1970, as amended.



UTILITIES

Overview of Existing Conditions

The major utilities in the corridor are King County's Eastside Interceptor, wastewater pipes, electrical lines, and fiber optic lines. The Eastside Interceptor is a regionally significant 60- to 96-inch sewer line that carries flows south through portions of the Lakefront and Wilburton segments to King County's South Plant at Renton. In these segments of the corridor, the Eastside Interceptor is located on the same side of the right-of-way as the Off-Railbed Alternative, with the exception of short stretches where the corridor crosses I-90 and the Kelsey Creek Valley (site of the Wilburton Trestle).

Other major wastewater pipes in the corridor include the York and North Creek force mains. The York force mains are located on the south side of the ERC Main Line at Slater Road where they follow NE 124th Street to the east and connect to the York Pump Station adjacent to the Spur's right-of-way. The North Creek force mains are located on the east side of the Spur between NE 124th and NE 145th Streets, and then follow the west edge of the Spur's right-of-way past NE 175th Street.

In the Valley Segment, other major pipelines that cross the corridor are the Tolt Pipeline, a water pipeline owned by Seattle Public Utilities, and the Olympic Pipeline, a fuel pipeline operated by BP Pipelines.

Puget Sound Energy electrical lines cross or run adjacent to the ERC in numerous locations. In addition, Puget Sound Energy owns natural gas pipelines that cross under the corridor in several locations such as in the vicinity of NE 8th Street in the Wilburton Segment. Also, there are hundreds of smaller water, sewer, gas, fiber optic, and power connections that either cross the corridor or use the corridor for short segments.

Environmental Consequences

In this Master Plan, the location of the trail planning envelope may coincide with the location of underground utilities. None of the major sewer lines in the corridor are located under the existing railbed; thus, the On-Railbed Alternative would likely have very little potential effect on these lines. The Off-Railbed Alternative is intentionally located on the side of the right-of-way with the major sewer lines for most of its length. Although the design for the trail is only complete to a planning level, grading for the Off-Railbed Alternative has typically emphasized adding fill to the corridor, rather than cutting into the hillside, to avoid potential conflicts with the sewer lines. The Off-Railbed Alternative includes extensive walls for much of its route.

If development of the trail requires embedment of retaining walls, bridge abutments, or boardwalk piles, these trail features would be designed to clear the major utilities. This may require

some refining of alignment during design. As the trail is designed and constructed, extensive coordination will be necessary to ensure that there is no conflict between the trail and the different sewer lines.

For smaller utilities, relocation may be necessary. After a preferred alternative is selected, coordination with utility providers would be initiated to identify and locate utility lines for electricity, communication, water, sewer, and gas prior to construction. Future design efforts would seek to minimize impacts on utilities.

Mitigation

No mitigation measures are anticipated.



6.4 CUMULATIVE IMPACTS AND MITIGATION

Cumulative impacts are the environmental impacts of the project considered in combination with the impacts of other past, present, and reasonably foreseeable projects in the vicinity. Cumulative impacts are considered during construction and operation of the proposed trail.

At this planning stage of the Draft Master Plan and EIS process, the project-specific details for construction and operation have not yet been developed. Additional analysis and design efforts will be conducted in the future as plans for the ERC trail are developed. This trail planning process responds to the development in the surrounding communities that has been shaped by the local comprehensive plans and Washington State's Growth Management Act. The ERC trail helps to mitigate the impacts of urban growth and development in King County.

At this planning stage, it is assumed that construction would occur in a busy urban environment. Construction of the ERC trail could potentially overlap with WSDOT's widening of I-405 from Renton to Bellevue, Sound Transit's construction of East Link and the Wilburton Station, and Puget Sound Energy's Sammamish-Juanita transmission line project. Other local projects that may occur nearby would be identified during future phases of development.

Potential construction-related cumulative impacts, such as noise and dust, could add to the temporary adverse construction-related impacts of those other projects if they were to occur at the same time. Therefore, the ERC trail could potentially contribute to an adverse cumulative impact during construction. Mitigation would consist of measures to reduce the overall impacts of construction by coordinating with other projects and agencies to verify the effectiveness of BMPs and ensure that people can navigate efficiently and safely through construction areas.

Overall, operation of a trail is not expected to contribute to adverse cumulative impacts. Existing and planned land uses along the corridor are generally expected to stay the same, with some increases in density and intensity particularly in the vicinity of planned transit-oriented development. These increases would likely increase demand for nonmotorized transportation alternatives such as the ERC trail. It is anticipated that any operational impacts of the ERC trail, combined with other reasonably foreseeable projects, would result in long-term improvements to nonmotorized active transportation and access, and would further the goals of regional and local land use and transportation plans.

Cumulative Impacts

The evaluation of cumulative impacts is required as part of the SEPA EIS analysis (WAC 197-11-792).

