



For immediate release

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Port of Seattle announces new partners in rail corridor

King County, Sound Transit, others join in preserving 42-mile line

SEATTLE – The Port of Seattle will be joined by several local agencies in preserving the Eastside Rail Corridor and placing it in public ownership. King County, Sound Transit, the City of Redmond, Puget Sound Energy, and the Cascade Water Alliance will partner with the port in maximizing the corridor’s benefit for the region.

The six partners signed a memorandum of understanding (MOU) on Thursday that outlines the components of the plan. The governing boards of each organization must also authorize the negotiations. The port’s acquisition of the corridor is scheduled to close Dec. 15.

“The port’s goal has always been to help place the corridor into public ownership,” said Port of Seattle CEO Tay Yoshitani. “It would be impossible to recreate a similar asset today, and we need to protect it for the region’s citizens. We’ve formed a consortium that ensures the best use of the property for the future.”

The 42-mile corridor stretches from Snohomish to Renton, with a short spur that goes through the city of Redmond. The Port of Seattle will maintain freight service between Snohomish and Woodinville. King County and Sound Transit will acquire rights in the southern section between Woodinville and Renton. The southern portion of the track will be preserved for dual transportation and recreation uses under the federal rail banking program. King County intends to develop a bike and walking path along portions of the corridor.

“The diversity of the partnership demonstrates the value of this corridor to the people of this region,” said King County Executive Kurt Triplett. “This once-in-a-lifetime investment will improve the region’s quality of life, creating a legacy for generations to come.”

“Putting this corridor in public ownership supports Sound Transit’s upcoming East Link light rail construction and other possible long-term transit investments in the corridor,” said Sound Transit CEO Joni Earl. “Sound Transit’s interest is to protect needed right of way for the future.”

The City of Redmond will acquire some rights along a small section of the track known as the Redmond spur. Redmond Mayor John Marchione noted how the city will benefit from their involvement with the partnership. “Acquiring an interest in the corridor allows us to connect to the heart of our downtown and build a stronger community for our citizens,” Marchione said.

Regional utilities Puget Sound Energy and Cascade Water Alliance will negotiate easements for their facilities and services along the corridor – easements that are crucial for future service and growth. “Puget Sound Energy is pleased to join this vital effort in preserving this corridor for public use while also preserving our utility easements and service to area customers,” said Stephen P. Reynolds, PSE president and CEO. “We have more than 180 pipe and wire crossings in the existing corridor and need to make sure that our investment is protected for our customers now and in the future.”

“Cascade is proud to be a part of this regional solution which not only preserves an important public corridor but ensures Cascade’s ongoing ability to provide water to our customers today and in the future,” said Lloyd Warren, chair of Cascade Water Alliance’s Board of Directors.

For a copy of the MOU and other details about the rail corridor, visit www.portseattle.org.

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