

Memorandum

To: Planning Commission

From: Sarah Stiteler, AICP, Senior Planner, 425-556-2469

Date: February 20, 2013

Subject: **Growing Transit Communities – East Corridor Task Force Update**

The purpose of this memo is to update the Planning Commission regarding Growing Transit Communities (GTC) program activities since the last staff briefing in May, 2012. The City of Redmond is a partner in this program, along with many other public and nonprofit agencies and organizations in the central Puget Sound region. The Puget Sound Regional Council is the regional recipient of the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) grant that funds this program and is managing the many activities within the overall grant scope.

OVERVIEW AND UPDATE ON ACTIVITIES

In October 2010 the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development awarded \$4.9 million to the Puget Sound Regional Council (PSRC) to support regional planning for more livable, prosperous and sustainable communities in the Central Puget Sound region. The three-year, five million dollar federal grant supports efforts to capitalize on the more than \$15 billion investment in new light rail transit through 2025 serving places where job and housing growth will be focused in the future. As the grant recipient, PSRC is responsible for managing this regional partnership which includes cities, counties, housing authorities, affordable housing advocates, educational institutions, public health agencies and private industry.

Since 2010, there has continued to be a considerable amount of work underway in implementing the Growing Transit Communities work program as a whole. This includes work as part of the Affordable Housing and Equity Network Steering Committees, Corridor Task Forces, and Catalyst Demonstration Projects. Attachment A provides an update on some of these efforts.

This memo provides an update on three aspects of this project that may be of particular interest to the Planning Commission: 1) the East Corridor Implementation Support Project; 2) Eastside Equity Project and Goals; and, 3) Corridor Action Strategies.

East Corridor Implementation and Support Project

The adopted GTC work plan includes funds for consultant assistance with implementation-related project work specific to the East Corridor. The purpose is to advance achievement of local comprehensive plans by addressing key challenges and opportunities and taking the next steps to catalyze the implementation of equitable transit communities in the East Corridor. Task Force members identified four priority topics for this work:

- affordable housing development;

- business retention and attraction;
- public and private partnerships; and
- transportation access and connectivity

In June, 2012 the Puget Sound Regional Council (PSRC) awarded a \$250,000 contract to a team led by OTAK that includes BAE Urban Economics and Nelson/Nygaard Consulting Associates. The consultant work is organized into two phases. Phase 1 includes best practices research associated with the four topic areas and selection of station areas for further focus, and Phase 2 includes development of recommended actions and strategies to address these issues for the selected station areas. The consultant will also complete an evaluation of lessons learned from both phases and how the knowledge can be applied to all station area locations in the East Corridor. Work completed during the second half of 2012 is summarized below.

Best Practices Research Report: The consultant team compiled and analyzed best practices of relevance to the four priority topics, drawing on experiences from regions across the US and Canada including Denver, Portland, Minneapolis-St. Paul, Burnaby, British Columbia and several in California. The Best Practices Research Report (Jan. 2013) presents examples of how other metropolitan regions have developed plans and strategies to meet housing, jobs, and livability needs along major rapid transit corridors.

Selection of Locations and Scoping: The East Corridor Task Force members weighed in on criteria for use in selecting preferred station areas for further focus in Phase 2. The criteria, which are summarized below, were applied to six light rail stations and two bus rapid transit stations within the East Corridor. Based on these criteria, Overlake Village and NE 130th Station in Bellevue were selected.

- Consistency with Partnership Principles: extent to which there are opportunities to reinforce the Livability Principles that underlie the GTC program
- Affordable Housing: which station areas show more potential for developing housing that is available to a wide range of incomes levels? Which areas are at most risk of losing affordable housing with redevelopment?
- Transit Service and Light Rail Service: extent to which there are opportunities to address bus rapid transit as well as light rail transit and local transit connections.
- Amount of Public Investment Needed: which station areas would benefit most from or are in most need of public investment and financing as well as partnerships?
- Small Businesses: which station areas are in most need of strategies and implementation actions to retain and attract businesses that are TOD compatible/supportive? Where is the highest risk to existing businesses?
- Level of Readiness: which station areas have the most potential to be most ready by the time light rail comes on line in terms of completion of redevelopment activity?

In December 2012 the Task Force provided input to the Phase 2 scope of work for further work to advance implementation of adopted plans for Overlake Village and the 130th Station. Attachment B provides a summary of the proposed Phase 2 scope. The work will be completed by the consultant team by October 2013.

Eastside Equity Project

The second round of GTC equity grants in May 2012 included a \$20,000 award for a multi-agency partnership project involving Hopelink, Futurewise, Sound Transit, King County Metro, and the cities of Redmond and Bellevue. The purpose is to engage community organizations and residents who are not typically involved in public input opportunities, inform them about East Link planning efforts and existing transit options, and encourage them to get involved. As part of this project, the partners are connecting residents with local transportation incentive and subsidy programs, such as \$25 preloaded ORCA cards and maps provided by the City of Redmond, to encourage people to try transit. The project's engagement efforts center on the Overlake stations, and focus on nearby residents and those who will board light rail at Overlake, including residents of Redmond and Bellevue.

In August, 2012, Hopelink hired a community organizer on a contract basis to carry out the community engagement activities. He has made significant progress in connecting with organizations and residents in the Overlake area. As a result, there has been strong interest in affordable housing, better understanding of transit, and better understanding of East Link. Participants have also appreciated the ORCA cards and maps that Redmond staff has provided. In addition, project partners held a workshop and tour on February 9 near the future Overlake Village light rail station. The project continues through March 2013.

Goals and Corridor Action Strategies

Discussion is underway in each of the three Corridor Task Forces: East, North, and South and at the Oversight Committee regarding the form and function of final work products from the Growing Transit Communities Program. Among the primary proposed products are goal statements and corridor action strategies.

The goal statements are intended to provide a high-level vision and principles for each of the three broad areas of the program together with quantifiable benchmarks for outcomes. The three goal areas of the program are:

1. Accommodate more of the region's residential and employment growth near high-capacity transit.
2. Provide housing choices affordable to a full range of incomes near high-capacity transit.
3. Increase access to opportunity for existing and future members of transit communities.

The draft corridor action strategies reflect these three goal areas and indicate options for action steps that may be taken by the PSRC, transit agencies, local governments or other regional partners. These strategies are intended to provide a menu of potential actions that partners throughout the region could take over time to make progress towards the goals.

The Task Forces will continue work through March 2013 to review and provide feedback to PSRC staff on the draft corridor action strategies, which will then be forwarded to the

Oversight Committee for review and action. The Task Forces and Oversight Committee will also continue to consider the form and function of proposed regional and local agreements regarding the goals and corridor action strategies.

Preparation for February 20, 2013 Briefing

Please review the enclosed materials and for further information, online at <http://psrc.org/growth/growing-transit-communities>

Enclosures

Attachment A: Growing Transit Communities Staff Report, January 18, 2013

Attachment B: Summary of Phase 2 Scope of Work

Please contact Sarah Stiteler, 425-556-2469, [sstiteler@redmond.gov](mailto:ssiteler@redmond.gov) with questions or concerns.