



City of Edmonds Media Release

Economic Development ~ 121 5th Ave N, Edmonds, WA 98020

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE: November 8, 2016

To: Media

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MAYOR EARLING SUPPORTS ADVISORY TASK FORCE RECOMMENDATIONS ON SOLUTIONS TO AT-GRADE RAIL CROSSINGS

After a Year of Study and Public Engagement, Task Force's Top Recommendation Is Single-Lane Emergency Access/Pedestrian-Bicycle Connector from Edmonds Street to Waterfront

(Edmonds, WA) - Last night, Tuesday, November 7th, at the Edmonds City Council meeting, Mayor Dave Earling unveiled his recommendations for alternatives to the at-grade rail crossings at Main and Dayton Streets on the heels of a set of findings and recommendations issued by his appointed Advisory Task Force upon the culmination of their 13-month process.

After initially considering up to 51 various alternatives to address pedestrian and vehicle safety, efficient traffic movement, emergency access, and intermodal access, the Task Force held four public open houses to engage members of the public through the process of analysis and narrowing the field of alternatives. Ultimately the Task Force identified a preferred alternative: a single-lane structure connecting Sunset Avenue at Edmonds Street to the parking lot at Bracketts Landing North, dubbed the Edmonds Street Waterfront Connector. This structure is intended to provide every-day access to and from the waterfront for pedestrians and cyclists, and in the event of the one or two anticipated train blockages per year at the Main and Dayton Street crossings, access for emergency vehicles and ferry off-loading or on-loading with the assistance of traffic control officers. The anticipated cost of such a project would be \$25-30 million, for which a combination of regional, state and federal funding would be sought.

“The Advisory Task Force, led by Port Commissioner Jim Orvis and Councilmember Mike Nelson, conducted a text-book process, with thorough analysis of every possible alternative, copious public engagement, and dedicated and thoughtful work by each of its members,” stated Mayor Earling. “I’m deeply grateful for the participation and dedication shown by the Task Force members, including Edmonds citizens and representatives of WSDOT, Burlington Northern Santa Fe, Sound Transit, Community Transit and the Port of Edmonds, as well as the top-notch work by our Tetra Tech engineering team, led by Rick Schaefer.”

The Task Force also identified a smaller, lower-cost alternative and a larger, higher-cost alternative for additional consideration. The smaller project would consist of a pedestrian bridge, complete with elevator access, spanning the railroad tracks near the existing Edmonds Train Station. This would provide access during train blockages for pedestrians and emergency personnel. No emergency vehicle access would be possible, nor would any benefit accrue to the Ferry Terminal. In addition, given that Sound Transit would require a similar structure in the future once a second rail track is built by Burlington Northern Santa Fe, the Task Force believes this alternative may be best left for Sound Transit to implement.

The larger alternative consists of moving the Ferry Terminal to an area south of the Marina and north of Marina Beach Park, including fully grade-separated vehicle access – a project called “Edmonds Crossing” that is still technically contained in the City’s Comprehensive Plan and the State Department of Transportation’s long-range ferry plan, albeit with no current funding. Given the \$350 to \$400 million price tag for such a project, and the WSDOT’s other major projects and priorities, this project has very little likelihood of taking shape for up to the next 20 years. The Task Force recommended that the City continue to support the eventual implementation of this project, yet recognized that it cannot provide a solution to the growing traffic and safety concerns along the Edmonds Waterfront in any acceptable timeframe.

Given the limited benefit of the pedestrian bridge and the huge price tag and very long timeframe of the Edmonds Crossing project, the Task Force put forward the Edmonds Street Waterfront Connector as the frontrunner among all the alternatives considered.

Mayor Earling went further to state: “After careful consideration of their findings, public input, and in consultation with City staff, I concur with the Task Force’s recommendations and fully support the Edmonds Street Waterfront Connector as the most prudent, financially feasible and most beneficial solution to the growing safety and emergency-access issues associated with growing train volumes through Edmonds.”

In addition to the above-mentioned “structural solutions,” as described by Tetra Tech’s Schaefer in last night’s meeting, the Task Force recommended several “immediate recommendations” to address pedestrian and vehicle safety as well as emergency response: crosswalk improvements at the Main and Dayton Street crossings, an emergency evacuation plan, and potential coordination with BNSF on emergency response activity along the Edmonds Waterfront.

The Edmonds City Council will provide a public comment period at next Tuesday evening’s Council meeting, starting at 7pm in City Council Chambers, specifically intended to gather feedback on the alternatives and the Mayor’s recommendation.

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