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### **REI Co-op and Facebook Make \$2 million Investment in the Eastrail**

*Eastrail Partners applauds this public-private partnership furthering a fully connected Eastrail*

Bellevue, WA – Today, REI Co-op and Facebook announced they will each contribute \$1M in capital funds for the Eastrail. Built on a historic railroad line, the Eastrail is a trail system that runs 42 miles on the east side of Lake Washington, from Renton to Snohomish County. The Eastrail offers significant benefits to these diverse communities by providing connectivity to transit including four new Sound Transit Link light rail stations, boosting economic growth and state-of-the-art fiber optic connectivity, and improving access to outdoor health and wellness.

“This is exactly the collaboration and public-private partnerships we work to create,” said Katherine Hollis, Executive Director of Eastrail Partners. “REI and Facebook understand the impact the Eastrail will have in creating active transportation options for their employees and communities of Lake Washington’s Eastside.”

The Puget Sound region has already made great strides in realizing the vision for the Eastrail with over \$93M invested in purchasing and improving the former rail corridor. However, an estimated \$233M still needs to be raised for the trail to be fully realized as a multifaceted community asset.

“On behalf of the City Council and our residents, I want to thank REI and Facebook for their generous contribution to Eastrail – and the region,” said Bellevue Mayor Lynne Robinson. “With more than five miles of Eastrail running through Bellevue, including the iconic Wilburton Trestle, this donation brings us closer to our vision of a connected and balanced transportation system.”

Eastrail Partners, the nonprofit established to catalyze the Eastrail effort, unites the diverse communities, governments, the private sector, and nonprofits of Lake Washington’s Eastside to make the vision for the completed Eastrail a reality and improve equity through access. As the entity solely focused on this effort, they convene and catalyze advocacy and community engagement for the trail and establish community awareness to build diverse support.

“The COVID-19 pandemic has given us an even deeper appreciation for how much we rely on open spaces and trails for our physical, social and emotional well-being,” King County Council Chair and Eastrail Regional Advisory Committee Chair Claudia Balducci said. “This exciting investment in Eastrail Partners represents REI delivering on their ongoing commitment and Facebook joining the journey to expand our amazing regional trail system. With government, community and business support, we are building momentum to complete a world-class regional trail system that will make lifelong access to the outdoors a reality for everyone across King County.”

REI and Facebook recognize the many benefits the Eastrail will have in creating active transportation options, recreation and green space access, and overall quality of life for their employees and all Eastside residents. Their leadership in this public-private partnership is a great step forward in the journey to a fully connected 42-mile trail.

"At REI, we believe in convening diverse groups for greater collective impact," said Eric Artz, REI Co-op President and CEO. "The Eastrail is one of the most innovative trail projects in the region, bringing

together public and private partners to provide non-motorized commuting connections, green space and bolster community and economic development. We believe wholeheartedly in this work and on behalf of our 1.4 million members and nearly 3,000 employees in the area are thrilled to be a part of this big step forward."

"At Facebook we believe in the power to build community and bring the world closer together. We are honored to make this donation to Eastrail Partners connecting diverse communities and businesses on the Eastside," said Vijaye Raji, Head of Office, Vice President of Entertainment, Facebook. "As we continue to grow, we strive to be a good neighbor and have a positive impact on the communities around us and look forward to continuing to be a part of Bellevue's success."

King County owns several sections of the trail, including the Wilburton Segment through Bellevue, past REI's Bellevue Store and by the Spring District, where REI yesterday [announced the sale of its headquarters building to Facebook](#).

"The combined \$2 million donation by REI Co-op and Facebook will accelerate our work to complete Eastrail, a 42-mile trail that will knit together Eastside communities and connect to four of the 10 light rail stations we will open in 2023," said King County Executive Dow Constantine, who is also a member of the Sound Transit Board of Directors. "Our strong public-private partnership is helping us create a healthy, prosperous future for more people in our region by offering safe, reliable connections to some of the world's leading job centers."

To learn more about the Eastrail, please visit [www.eastrailpartners.org](http://www.eastrailpartners.org)

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