



DATE: November 7, 2022

TO: Mayor Robinson and City Councilmembers

FROM: Jesse Canedo, Chief Economic Development Officer, 452-5236
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Community Development Department

SUBJECT: Grand Connection Program Update

In 2015, City staff began working in earnest on the planning elements of the Grand Connection. To date, the Council has adopted Sequence 1 & 2 of the Grand Connection Framework Plan, which establishes the vision for the corridor from Meydenbauer Bay across downtown to its future intersection with Eastrail, and has adopted land use code amendments to support the vision as redevelopment continues downtown.

The Grand Connection is a complex public-private partnership that involves more than 35 property owners and four government agencies. Elements are in various stages of implementation and require dedicated attention and coordination. To help accelerate implementation of the full vision from Meydenbauer Bay to Eastrail, the City will begin coordinating the various elements under the new Grand Connection Program. This will ensure the various projects and programs that contribute to (or interact with) the vision move forward in a coordinated manner and support Bellevue's ongoing growth. Our goals are as follows:

- Manage the route holistically, with an eye toward the whole route
- Increase use of existing public spaces and develop an operations framework
- Quickly advance work on the highway crossing

Advancing the Grand Connection will require advancing public capital projects, private redevelopment projects, and unifying operations and management along the route.

One of the larger and most significant elements of the work entails launching design for the crossing over I-405. This is currently envisioned as a two-phase process – a nearer-term pedestrian bridge and a longer-term lid over the freeway. To support this effort, Amazon expects to donate \$2.5 million for initial design work on Phase 3a. The 2023-2024 preliminary biennial budget includes a City matching contribution of an additional \$2.5 million. If the Council approves the matching contribution, it will substantially accelerate the implementation of the Grand Connection vision.

Continued support from external partners will be essential to advance the design, conduct environmental and plan review, and identify funds to enable construction of the highway crossing. In the coming year, staff will work collaboratively with our partners to advance the design work as expeditiously as possible, with a goal to complete 30

percent design on the bridge in 2024. Additional design, review, and fundraising would follow.