

CITY COUNCIL REGULAR SESSION

Ordinance to amend Part 20.25A LUC and replace the Pedestrian Corridor and Major Public Open Space Design Guidelines with a new section LUC 20.25A.175, Grand Connection and Major Public Open Spaces; amending LUC 20.25A.010, 20.25A.020, 20.25A.030, Chart 20.25A.060.A.4, 20.25A.070, Chart 20.25A.070.D.4, 20.25A.090, Figure 20.25A.090.A.1, Table 20.25A.090.A.1, 20.25A.170, and Figure 20.25A.170.B to ensure conformance with new section LUC 20.25A.175; providing for severability; and establishing an effective date.

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

On May 17, after discussion in Study Session, Council directed staff to finalize this Ordinance for approval. Consistent with the Planning Commission recommendation, this Ordinance is a Land Use Code Amendment (LUCA) to incorporate design guidelines and standards for Sequence One of the Grand Connection.

RECOMMENDATION

Move to adopt Ordinance No. 6580

BACKGROUND & ANALYSIS

Background

This Ordinance will amend the Downtown Code, Part 20.25A of the Land Use Code (LUC), to replace the Pedestrian Corridor and Major Public Open Space Design Guidelines with a new section LUC 20.25A.175. The recommended LUCA streamlines provisions related to the Grand Connection and is intended to be clearer and more user-friendly for reviewers, project teams, and the general public. The LUCA also includes “conformance amendments” to effectively integrate the new LUC 20.25A.175 and ensure consistency with the broader Downtown Code. A final strike-draft of the recommended LUCA is provided as Attachment A.

Council was introduced to the LUCA at a study session on May 17. Council reviewed the Planning Commission recommendation to adopt this LUCA without modification and concluded the LUCA complies with the decision criteria in LUC 20.30J.135.

During the May 17 study session, Council discussed opportunities to highlight and integrate diversity and inclusion through programming and art as the Grand Connection is implemented. Council also discussed opportunities to support multimodal transportation through the Grand Connection. In addition, Council discussed stakeholder comments and requested that staff provide information on how these comments have been addressed in the LUCA, or if the comments are outside the current scope

of this LUCA. Following deliberation, Council directed staff to finalize an Ordinance for the LUCA as drafted for approval.

Responses to Stakeholder Comments

A summary of stakeholder comments about the recommended LUCA and staff's responses are provided below.

1. *Suggestion to recheck paver standards, illustrative diagrams, and Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) compliance, for consistency with the Downtown Code and as they relate to properties that are not redeveloping*

Response: The recommended guidelines and standards in the LUCA were tested and reviewed to support all types of projects along the Grand Connection, including projects abutting existing sites with existing pavement that are not redeveloping, as well as active projects, such as the Bellevue 600 development just north of the Transit Center. Illustrative diagrams in the LUCA have been provided to demonstrate elements of the design guidelines, without dictating a specific design, to allow and encourage individual property owners' design concepts. Additionally, as with all development applications, proposed projects are reviewed by the Transportation Department to ensure ADA compliance as a baseline for universal accessibility.

2. *Questions and requests for code clarity regarding Sequence Two, Downtown Park, and certain definitions and provisions*

Response: The Grand Connection Initiative is a City Council Priority to implement a major placemaking feature that connects Meydenbauer Bay Park, through Downtown Bellevue, to the Wilburton Area. Key elements of the vision are illustrated in the Grand Connection Framework Plan and the 2018 Grand Connection Comprehensive Plan Amendment (CPA). While the Grand Connection route is separated into two sequences, both Sequence One (the area from the intersection of 100th Avenue NE and Main Street to the east end of the Transit Center) and Sequence Two (the area east of NE 6th Street and 110th Avenue NE and the crossing of Interstate 405 to the Wilburton Area and the Eastrail) will implement the overall vision and the Grand Connection Initiative. Work on Sequence Two will occur at a future date as follow-up to this Sequence One effort.

The Downtown Park is a Room within the Grand Connection, with its own specific guidelines and standards. The LUCA includes a recommendation for a new signature artistic element at the southern entrance to Downtown Park. The exceptions to a couple general guidelines and standards, specifically fixtures and pavers, are due to the nature of this area. The route through Downtown Park may be reinforced through activation strategies and wayfinding. Such strategies would be studied in future phases of work, including an eventual update to the 2005 Wayfinding Plan.

Stakeholders sought clarity on several definitions and provisions. First, "universal access and design" is one of the predominant goals in the Grand Connection in the new LUC 20.25A.175.D to provide for "integrating intuitive features within each Room to promote equitable use and safe and accessible opportunities for people to move, explore, gather, and relax."

Second, the term “watershed” has been removed from the recommended LUCA. The term “robust ecological framework” is intended to give design teams flexibility with their approach to outdoor spaces to ensure plantings are resilient to current and future conditions.

Third, the rationale for minor artistic element spacing (150-foot separation) is developed from the Grand Connection Arts and Culture Plan. This separation is intended to ensure that the route includes artistic elements to promote visual interest, including within long blocks that can extend to 600 feet. Artistic elements do not have to qualify as “art”, and the LUCA establishes that elements may be embedded within wayfinding pavers.

Fourth, micromobility options including bikes are allowed along the Grand Connection. Options such as autonomous vehicles will require separate study before a pilot study could be completed. This study will likely include determining ride capture, route options, planning for extreme weather, and coordinating shared space with existing right-of-way uses.

3. Recommend future work to address inconsistencies in Grand Connection buildout between existing properties and new development

Response: Additional comments regarding future work items beyond the scope of this LUCA have been noted to inform the scope and approach for Sequence One activation, Sequence Two, and Meydenbauer Bay Park. Staff will continue to work with stakeholders on these work items.

Review Process



POLICY & FISCAL IMPACTS

Policy Impact

The recommended LUCA will advance Council priorities under the Grand Connection Initiative.

Fiscal Impact

There is no fiscal impact associated with implementing the recommended LUCA.

OPTIONS

1. Adopt the Ordinance to amend Part 20.25A LUC and replace the Pedestrian Corridor and Major Public Open Space Design Guidelines with a new section LUC 20.25A.175, Grand Connection and Major Public Open Spaces; amending LUC 20.25A.010, 20.25A.020, 20.25A.030, Chart 20.25A.060.A.4, 20.25A.070, Chart 20.25A.070.D.4, 20.25A.090, Figure 20.25A.090.A.1, Table

20.25A.090.A.1, 20.25A.170, and Figure 20.25A.170.B to ensure conformance with new section LUC 20.25A.175; providing for severability; and establishing an effective date.

2. Do not adopt the Ordinance and provide alternative direction to staff

ATTACHMENTS & AVAILABLE DOCUMENTS

- A. LUCA Final Strike-Draft
Proposed Ordinance No. 6580

AVAILABLE IN COUNCIL LIBRARY

N/A