

ARTS COMMISSION AGENDA TOPIC

Grand Connection Crossing Artist Update

Matthew Mazzotta, Artist

Scott MacDonald, Public Art Specialist
Community Development

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY**INFORMATION
ONLY**

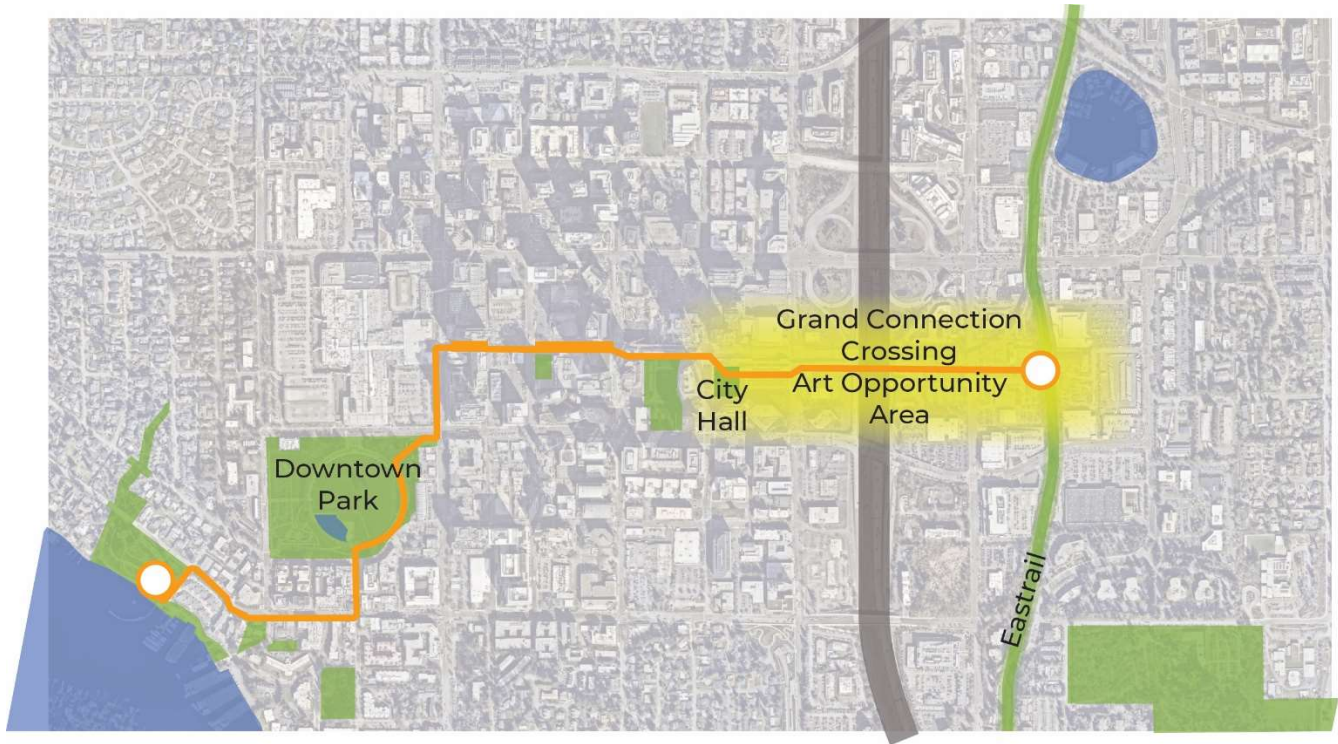
Staff and the artist, Matthew Mazzotta, will provide an update on the commission's draft public art plan for the Grand Connection Crossing. The theme for the crossing art plan is refuge – seeing the crossing as a “cultural commons” where we can come together, learn, feel safe, welcomed and seen. The plan outlines typologies, the theme and its expressions, guiding principles for public art, design considerations, public art typologies and art opportunities on the crossing.

RECOMMENDATION

N/A

BACKGROUND/ANALYSIS

The Grand Connection is a pedestrian and bike route planned from Meydenbauer Bay Park through Downtown crossing Interstate 405 before connecting to Eastrail in Wilburton. The Grand Connection Crossing is the missing section of the broader route from Bellevue City Hall over the freeway connecting to the Eastrail to the east. This segment of the Grand Connection is a major city initiative led by the Office of Grand Connection with support across multiple city departments. The project is planned to start construction near the end of the decade and opening for use in the early 2030s. As part of the Crossing project development, it became clear that this key segment required special focus from an arts and cultural perspective.

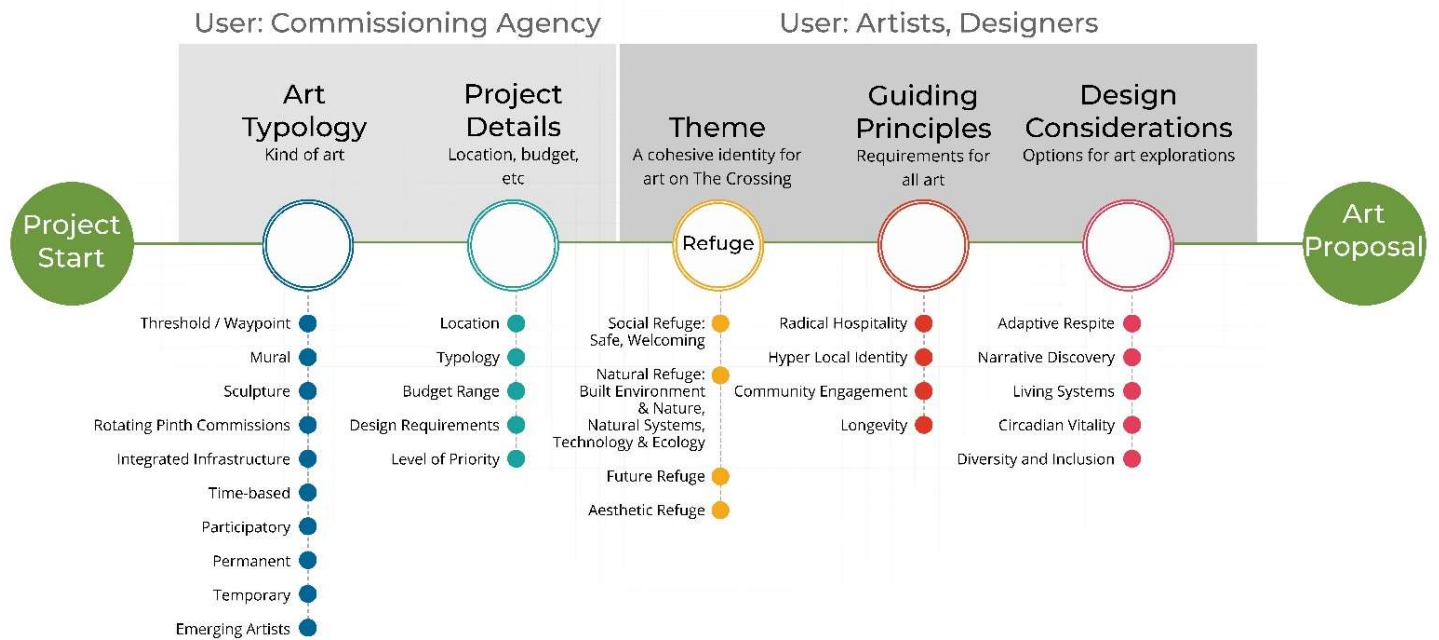


Artist Matthew Mazzotta was selected to create a public art plan and a preliminary public art concept for the Grand Connection Crossing in mid-2025. During the fourth quarter of 2025, Matthew completed extensive public outreach while also exploring Bellevue, Eastrail and neighboring cities.

Components of the Art Plan

Examples of each of the major elements of the plan will be provided at the commission meeting.

The plan will be a tool for artists to get inspiration for specific projects, city staff to plan and prioritize projects, the bridge designers as the design continues to develop and for private developers on adjacent parcels that will connect into the future crossing. Given that the plan is intended to be a tool, it is organized around the steps needed to complete projects. Below is a diagram for how to use the future plan.



Art Typologies

Art typologies are simply broad types of art. The full list of typologies will likely change from what is shown in the diagram above as opportunities for art are further defined as the draft plan evolves.

Public Art Opportunities/Project Details

This section of the plan will include information and graphics depicting different opportunities for art along the Crossing.

Theme for Art on the Crossing

Conversations with stakeholders, who saw the Crossing as a destination itself and not just a bridge, greatly informed his development of the theme of refuge for the Crossing. He explains the theme of refuge as:

Public art on the Grand Connection Crossing is unified by the concept of Refuge. For the purposes of this plan, Refuge can be evoked by a sense of welcoming, home, safety, calmness, health and wellness. In this plan, Refuge transcends mere quietude; it is found in the vibrancy of social gathering, the provocation of new ideas, and structural protection from the urban environment.

Refuge transforms The Crossing into a destination of distinction—a place of arrival, wellness, and connection to the natural world. By providing a strategic juxtaposition to the surrounding city, this theme acts as both a creative catalyst and an act of civic resistance, surfacing what is missing in our urban fabric and highlighting our priorities for the future.

Guiding Principles for Art

Guiding principles within the plan are a requirement for every art project on the Crossing to address. These include Radical Hospitality, Hyper-Local Identity, Community Engagement and Longevity.

The draft plan defines these as:

Radical Hospitality: “For the Crossing to be a true refuge, it must practice ‘Radical Welcoming’—creating a sensory environment where people of all ages, abilities, and backgrounds feel immediate safety, intrigue, and belonging. Artworks should act as “hosts,” fostering a sense of ownership and ‘Home’ in the heart of the city.”

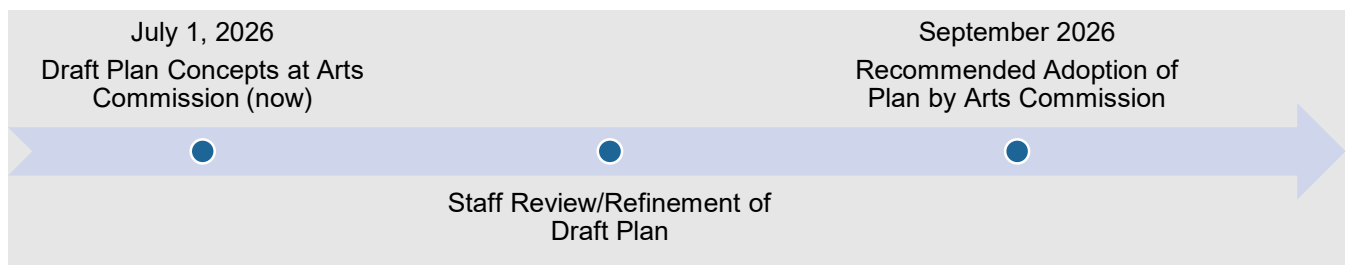
Hyper Local Identity: “Bellevue is a city of converging stories. Artworks should draw from the specific cultural DNA of the region—from ancestral indigenous land stewardship to the modern narratives of Bellevue’s diverse global population. Refuge here means being “seen” within the city’s narrative.”

Community Engagement: “Artworks on The Crossing are opportunities to amplify the stories of the area and its inhabitants. By involving community members and stakeholders in the creative process or through planned activation events, artists ensure the work is deeply rooted in local culture. This collaborative approach informs the project’s concept and reception, fostering long-term public ownership and advocacy.”

Longevity: “Bellevue has a range of weather conditions and artworks created for The Crossing are exposed year-round to these conditions. Artworks must consider materials and fabrication techniques to withstand the elements and provide maintenance plans for the allotted time these artworks are designed for (applies to permanent and temporary).”

Overarching Design Considerations

Design Considerations within the draft plan provide artists options for art exploration. These include Adaptive Respite, Narrative Discovery, Living Systems, Circadian Vitality, Diversity and Inclusion.



Arts Commission City Code and Bylaw Support

This item is presented to the commission as it is supported by City Code 3.56.070 item F. “Develop recommendations for acquiring public artwork consistent with guidelines and priorities approved by city council.”

Policy Impact

The Grand Connection Crossing Art Plan broadly supports multiple policies throughout the Comprehensive Plan, the Economic Development Plan and the Diversity Advantage Plan.

Fiscal Impact

There is no direct fiscal impact in a future recommendation to adopt the plan, although the plan will be used to develop future budgets for public art projects and programming on the Grand Connection Crossing.

OPTIONS

N/A

ATTACHMENTS

N/A