

From: [VERNON SCHRAG](#)
To: [PlanningCommission](#); [King, Emil A.](#); [Jeremy Barksdale](#)
Subject: Land Use Code Revisions - Future Planning Fwd: Grand Connection Inputs November 12th Update
Date: Monday, November 9, 2020 7:23:03 PM
Attachments: [Grand Connection 11-10-20 Status Parks Board.pdf](#)

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Dear Planning Commissioners & Council member Barksdale:

Tomorrow there's a Parks Board review (per attached) of Land Use Code Compliance & Permitting Process/Policy Revisions needed for City of Bellevue to carry out it's unlikely and extremely costly Grand Connection project Downtown. Knowing it's a big deal for city priority funding, please be mindful and use good judgement.

Although it seems like a slam-dunk, I wish to honestly inform you it is NOT. I've personally reviewed the Design consulting proposals at City Hall during public meetings 2018 timeframe. It will be a messy project that will cost 2 to 3 times what anyone may be suggesting now. Ask your most trusted experts in Planning such as Emil King.

So get ready to defend any foolhardy efforts you may decide upon to be less than fully transparent in attempting to move forward. Permitting will be put to the test.

Any unprofessional, messed up, improper or faulty planning will come into full Public view, ... just so you know. See my comments to Bellevue Planner Michael Austin below. Thanks.

Regards,
Vernon Dwight Schrag
Downtown Bellevue resident

----- Original Message -----

From: VERNON SCHRAG <dwights30@comcast.net>
To: "maustin@bellevuewa.gov" <maustin@bellevuewa.gov>
Cc: nharvey <nharvey@bellevuewa.gov>, "jzahn@bellevuewa.gov" <jzahn@bellevuewa.gov>, cameron parker <cparker@bellevuewa.gov>
Date: 11/09/2020 4:37 PM
Subject: Grand Connection Inputs November 12th Update

Hello Michael,

I see that you will update the Parks Board about Scope of Code changes for the Grand Connection proposal.

Last month/October the Parks Board minutes show such low funding availability for resources that not even a Master Plan revision for Ashwood

Park can proceed in 2021 Capital Plan. No people to do it and no resources exist for future priorities.

Although with enormous funding shortfalls; and considering unknown/huge costs for Grand Connection it may someday be feasible to do something, ... it still makes no common sense whatsoever for many years to come.

Please make an effort to make these realities clear for the Parks Board. Do your best. Seems a waste of time to go forward.

I sat through a major review of the project by the design consultants. Many questions, well beyond experience-level of Parks Board to even consider the impacts, costs, complexities, land purchases and/or schedules for such a project.

With urgent capital needs for Affordable Housing and Homeless facilities, another Park can wait awhile. Agreed?

Lets put it on hold for now, ... maybe 5 to 7 years? Thank you.

Vernon Dwight Schrag
Downtown Bellevue resident
Ashwood Park neighborhood



Parks & Community Services Board Meeting

DATE: November 10, 2020
TO: Chair Trescases and Members of the Parks & Community Services Board
FROM: Michael Austin, AICP, LEED AP-ND, Senior Urban Designer/Planner, 425-452-4637
maustin@bellevuewa.gov
SUBJECT: Grand Connection Sequence One Guidelines and Standards

DIRECTION REQUESTED

- Action
- Discussion/Direction
- Information (Planning Commission is lead on this Land Use Code amendment)

On November 10, 2020, staff will provide a briefing to the Parks & Community Services Board to describe the pending Land Use Code changes being recommended as one tool to implement the Grand Connection Framework Plan. In addition to the briefing materials provided in this memo, staff will share a presentation to describe the recommended Grand Connection design guidelines.

Purpose of the Project

Staff in several city departments are involved in updating the existing Pedestrian Corridor and Major Public Open Space Guidelines to reflect the elements of the Grand Connection Framework Plan vision and the project's role as a Council Priority. These new guidelines and standards, referred to as the Grand Connection Sequence One Guidelines and Standards, will support the vision to improve livability, access, and placemaking along the route between the intersection of 100th Avenue NE and Main Street and the Bellevue Transit Center (NE 6th Street and 110th Avenue NE). The guidelines are applied to private-sector development projects that are located along the Grand Connection. Roadway intersections along the Grand Connection are designed to meet the intent of both the Downtown Transportation Plan and the Grand Connection.

Council Direction

Because amendments to the Land Use Code are required, Community Development is the lead department on this project, supported by Development Services, Parks & Community Services, and Transportation. As part of the amendment process, the Planning Commission will conduct a public hearing and will provide a final recommendation to the City Council. With Council direction, study sessions with the Planning Commission will be scheduled to seek input and direction before a formal public hearing is identified on the draft guidelines and standards (tentatively scheduled for the fall 2020/spring 2021). Council adoption could ultimately occur later in 2020/2021.

Context of the Project

Sequence One of the Grand Connection includes design for pedestrian and bicycle access improvements along the following blocks:

- Main St, north sidewalk, between 100th Ave NE and 102nd Ave NE
- 102nd Ave NE, east and west sidewalks, between NE 1st St and Main St
- Downtown Park, east ring (includes the new NE Corner Plaza)
- Bellevue Way NE, west sidewalk, between NE 4th St and NE 6th St
- NE 6th St, pedestrian corridor, between Bellevue Way NE and 110th Ave NE

BACKGROUND

In December 2015, the Bellevue City Council approved the work plan for the Grand Connection planning initiative and identified it as a Council Priority. The visioning for the Grand Connection began in April 2016 to develop high-level strategies regarding aesthetic enhancements such as paving, weather protection, intersections, art and culture, and vegetation; as well as concepts for key public space locations and mobility.

The Grand Connection scope of work was separated into two sequences: sequence one addresses changes and improvements to existing infrastructure between the intersection of 100th Avenue NE and Main Street and the Civic Center District (the area in the vicinity of City Hall). Sequence two addresses the crossing of Interstate 405 and its interface with Downtown, the future vision of the Wilburton Commercial Area, and the Eastrail.

Between 2017-2018, the Parks & Community Services Board provided comments on the development of the Grand Connection Framework Plan, transmitted in two memos to City Council that are included in the Board's packet for this meeting. Recommendations related to design guidelines included encouraging the development of a cohesive and strong sense of identity, encouraging spaces that could facilitate gathering and events, promoting a robust ecological framework, advancing accessibility and inclusion, and seeking opportunities to highlight the city's history and heritage.

In December 2017, Council adopted the *Grand Connection Framework Plan: Sequence One*, which established the high-level vision for the corridor between Meydenbauer Bay and the Civic Center District. In 2018, Council adopted the *Grand Connection Framework Plan: Sequence Two*, which established the high-level vision for the corridor between I-405 and Eastrail.

Upon adoption, Council initiated Comprehensive Plan amendments, Land Use Code amendments, and the development of design guidelines.

On April 4, 2018, staff provided the Planning Commission an overview of the Grand Connection vision and highlighted the work associated with the Comprehensive Plan amendments, Land Use Code updates, and design guidelines. On May 9, staff reviewed with the Planning Commission draft policy language and changes to graphics and maps proposed for the Comprehensive Plan Amendments. Amendments to the Comprehensive Plan specific to the Grand Connection were adopted on December 10, 2018 (Ordinance 6449).

Beginning in 2018, the Parks & Community Services Department began design for the NE Corner of Downtown Park, which will feature an iconic sculpture that will serve as a gateway to the park from downtown and mark the Grand Connection route. Construction of the NE Corner project is currently underway.

Between 2016 and 2018 the Bellevue Transportation Department launched a series of pedestrian facility improvements projects along the Grand Connection route as part of the Downtown Transportation Plan implementation (adopted 2013). These included a raised intersection project that was done in coordination with the completion of the Downtown Park on 102nd Avenue NE and NE 1st Street.

In 2019, staff, in collaboration with the Bellevue Downtown Association, led the *Grand Connection Activation Pilot* to identify near-term activation strategies—leading to the temporary installation of lanterns and seating along the route.

In 2019, staff launched the development of the *Grand Connection Sequence One Guidelines and Standards* as one strategy for implementing elements from the *Grand Connection Framework Plan*. As one tool of many to implement the vision for the Grand Connection, guidelines and standards will offer direction on key features of the route as development occurs, including an ecological framework for landscape treatments along the corridor, paving treatments, color, furnishings, pedestrian lighting, and the design intent of different blocks within downtown. The design intent for each block, or “room” as referenced in the draft content, will serve to encourage a variety of context-specific experiences along the Grand Connection in addition to the common features that populate the full route. This context-specific approach will preserve the unique character-defining elements of different rooms within the Grand Connection, for example Old Bellevue and Downtown Park, while encouraging strategies that create a sense of identity for the corridor as a whole. Additionally, staff are working with developers in the review of current private-sector development applications/projects along the route.

In 2020, staff performed an audit of the *Pedestrian Corridor and Major Public Open Space Guidelines* and the *Downtown Land Use Code* and conducted a precedent analysis to identify opportunities to reduce redundant policies and guidelines, highlight existing guidelines that could remain, and capture best practices. Precedents included the *Mission Rock Design Controls* in San Francisco, *South Waterfront Design Guidelines* in Portland, and both the *Yesler Terrace Design Guidelines* and *Central District Design Guidelines* in Seattle. In response to COVID-19, the team also performed a resilience prioritization exercise to identify physical strategies that could support the community during-and-after acute shocks and ongoing stressors.

The overall implementation work is to be completed as part of Capital Improvement Plan (CIP) No. CD-44 (Grand Connection Implementation) for publicly funded improvements. Improvements associated with private development along the connection will be implemented through interpretation of the guidelines and standards once adopted.

Next Steps

With Council direction, future study sessions with the Planning Commission will be scheduled to seek input and direction before a formal public hearing is identified on the draft guidelines and standards (tentatively scheduled for the fall 2020/spring 2021). Council adoption of Land Use Code amendments could ultimately occur later in 2020/2021.

Attachments

1. Strategic Planning Projects Diagram
2. Memo to Park Board re Grand Connection Crossing - June 19, 2018
3. Park Board memo to Council re Grand Connection – Oct 10, 2017 (with highlights)