

April 11, 2016

CITY COUNCIL STUDY SESSION ITEM

SUBJECT

Briefing on the results of the Grand Connection Visioning Charrette, and an update on the status of the Grand Connection.

STAFF CONTACTS

Chris Salomone, Department Director, 452-6191

Dan Stroh, Planning Director, 452-5255

Bradley Calvert, Community Development Program Manager, 452-6930
Department of Planning & Community Development

POLICY ISSUES

On December 7, 2015 Council provided direction to proceed with the Wilburton-Grand Connection Land Use and Transportation project. Staff will provide an update regarding the Grand Connection Visioning process and Grand Connection Charrette.

DIRECTION NEEDED FROM COUNCIL

☐ Action

☒ Discussion

☒ Information

Background – Grand Connection Charrette

As part of the Wilburton-Grand Connection Land Use and Transportation project, the City and Bellevue Arts Museum (BAM) forged a partnership to host the Grand Connection Visioning Charrette as part of BAM's *Louis Kahn: Power of Architecture Exhibit*. As one of only three United States host cities for the exhibit, a unique opportunity existed to create a design exercise that would bring together architects, planners, urban designers, and artists to create visions and ideas around the Grand Connection through the inspiring momentum of the exhibit.

The City and BAM coordinated the charrette, held between April 7 and April 9. The night of April 7 was a kickoff event for participants to familiarize themselves with the project, route, and their team assignments. April 8 consisted of a full workday from 9:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. at the Resonance at the SOMA Towers. A stakeholder open house was held from 12:00 p.m. to 2:00 p.m. to observe the process of the charrette and engage with participants to convey their ideas.

Saturday, April 9, consisted of a half day workday from 9:00 a.m. to 1:00 p.m., which included preparation for the closing ceremony at the Bellevue Arts Museum. Keynote speaker Charles Montgomery hosted urban design roundtable discussions from 2:00 p.m. to 4:00 p.m. prior to the public open house. Prior to and during the public open house the City's selected design consultant for the Grand Connection project, Balmori Associates engaged with the public and stakeholders to obtain initial input to inform the design process.

At tonight's study session, staff will share some of the ideas generated at the charrette. A publication will follow in the coming weeks detailing the full results of the event.

Background – Grand Connection Visioning

As part of Council direction to proceed with the Wilburton – Grand Connection Land Use and Transportation project, staff has moved forward with selection of a design consultant for the Grand Connection visioning phase of the project.

Following a national and international search staff recommended the selection of New York based urban design and landscape architecture firm, Balmori Associates. Council provided consent on March 7, 2016.

The kick off meeting for the project was held at Bellevue City Hall on April 11, 2016 and included City staff and Balmori's sub consultants. Prior to the meeting Balmori began its public engagement process as part of the Grand Connection Charrette. During the public open house Balmori made themselves available to stakeholders, residents, and other members of the public to express their interest and priorities in the project. Balmori will begin work immediately and will hold several public engagement opportunities during the design process, including open houses and Council engagements. During the kickoff meeting City staff and the Consultant drafted a detailed schedule highlighting these opportunities.

At several points throughout the process staff and the consultant will be engaging the public and Council to present alternatives and to seek direction in the design process.