

June 19, 2017

CITY COUNCIL STUDY SESSION ITEM

SUBJECT

Distribution of the draft *Grand Connection Framework Plan* – Sequence One and presentation of renderings of the Interstate 405 crossing alternatives.

STAFF CONTACTS

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POLICY ISSUES

On December 7, 2015, Council provided direction to proceed with the Wilburton-Grand Connection Land Use and Transportation project. Council has established the Grand Connection as a Council Priority to “establish the vision of a grand connection from Meydenbauer Bay Park to the Wilburton Special Opportunity Area.”

DIRECTION NEEDED FROM COUNCIL

ACTION



DIRECTION



INFORMATION ONLY



Staff will distribute copies of the draft *Grand Connection Framework Plan* to Council, which summarizes the work and next steps from the Grand Connection visioning process. Staff will present the structure of the document and the review process of the work as part of the presentation. Staff will also provide an update on the draft final renderings for the Interstate 405 crossing alternatives being advanced into the Draft Environmental Impact Statement (DEIS) for the Wilburton Commercial Area.

BACKGROUND/ANALYSIS

The Grand Connection is a Council priority initiative to establish a vision for a non-motorized corridor that connects from Meydenbauer Bay, through Downtown Bellevue, to the Wilburton Commercial Area and Eastside Rail Corridor. The Grand Connection will serve as a unique and signature element to Bellevue’s urban landscape and will create opportunities for a new land use and urban design vision for the Wilburton Commercial Area, which is currently in the planning process with a Citizen Advisory Committee.

The visioning process began in April of 2016 following the selection of Balmori Associates as the lead design consultant. The scope of work was divided into two parts. Sequence One addressed the existing infrastructure between Meydenbauer Bay Park and Bellevue City Hall. Sequence Two addressed the Interstate 405 crossing and its interface with the Wilburton Commercial Area and the Eastside Rail Corridor.

Grand Connection Framework Plan

The Plan

The *Grand Connection Framework Plan* (the “Plan”), presents the full body of work from sequence one of the visioning process. The Plan includes background information and results from the public engagement process. The Plan includes design recommendations, programming considerations, and other improvements that fulfill the scope of work and the defining principles of the project.

The draft Plan is divided into chapters that address the recommendations in distinct categories. These categories include:

- Defining the route
- Defining the overall identity of the route
- Cohesive design strategies
- Summary of the art and cultural plan (an independent report will also be made available)
- Improvements to public spaces
- The Interstate 405 crossing
- Programming strategies
- Implementation and next steps

Each recommendation is structured to provide background, a description of the improvement, rationale, and design-related drawings and graphics. At the conclusion of each recommendation, a series of next steps are detailed. These steps include design refinement, further evaluation and study, parallel recommendations, and opportunities to collaborate with other City initiatives or partners. The Plan concludes with a high level set of recommendations for implementation and next steps.

The renderings for the Interstate 405 crossing, as part of the report, are for information only. The Interstate 405 crossing alternatives will be evaluated as part of the Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) process for the companion planning effort of the Wilburton Commercial Area. This process is expected to last through 2017, with the final EIS scheduled for release in the first quarter of 2018.

Process and Continued Engagement

The distribution of the draft Plan at tonight’s Study Session will coincide with release of the document to the public on June 20. The draft plan will be available to the public for review and comment until September 29th. Staff will collect and consider public comment during this period and factor comments, where appropriate, into the refined document along with Council’s recommendations and direction. Other public comments will be catalogued and considered in future design refinements where applicable. Staff will return to Council following this public comment period. Following direction from Council, staff will refine the Plan into the final recommendation plan as a result of the Grand Connection visioning.

During the review period staff will make the Plan available to the public on the project and city websites. Staff will also coordinate a series of online and in-person open houses for public and stakeholder review for continued public engagement. Upon request, staff will also provide copies of the Plan and presentations to civic organizations, neighborhood associations, and other interested parties.

Following future Council direction and adoption of the final plan, staff will proceed with developing a work and implementation plan.

I-405 Crossing Alternative

Sequence Two of the Grand Connection Visioning (I-405 Crossing) will establish the connection between Downtown, the Wilburton Commercial Area, and the Eastside Rail Corridor. The crossing presents a unique opportunity to further improve the City's network of non-motorized connections, while serving as a catalyst for future change in the Wilburton Commercial Area. As part of the scope of work the consultant was tasked with identifying and developing three alternatives to cross Interstate 405 ("I-405"), by creating a unique, comfortable, and attractive route while also exploring opportunities to create a sense of place. The consultant was tasked with providing three alternatives that investigated various levels of complexity regarding design, constructability, cost, and timing.

This update is for information only and to ensure Council and the public remain informed as the designs continue to advance. Tonight staff will present refined versions of the I-405 crossing designs in preparation for the Wilburton Commercial Area Draft Environmental Impact Statement (DEIS). Council last reviewed the three preliminary alternatives on March 13, 2017, and included in this memorandum as Attachment C.

Significant changes include:

Option 1 – Sculptural Bridge – Further articulated design of form, materials, and public space. A shift of the structure and route further south of the future East Link light rail line and interface with future development opportunities.

Option 2 – Bridge – Refinement and advancement of the overall design including form, public space and integration with existing and future development opportunities. A shift of the structure north, and the integration of the crossing into future public space and development opportunities.

Option 3 – Lid – Design refinement including the articulation of the rolling topography, connectivity to the Wilburton Commercial Area and Eastside Rail Corridor, and the programming and refinement of public space nodes as an element of the crossing.

Per prior Council direction, the three alternatives will be included as part of the Wilburton Commercial Area Draft Environmental Impact Statement (DEIS). Staff will provide an update on the process timeline and next steps as part of the DEIS evaluation.

ALTERNATIVES

N/A

RECOMMENDATION

N/A

ATTACHMENTS

A. Grand Connection Primary Route

B. Sample pages from the Draft Framework Plan

C. I-405 Crossing alternatives from the March 13th City Council presentation

AVAILABLE IN COUNCIL DOCUMENT LIBRARY

N/A