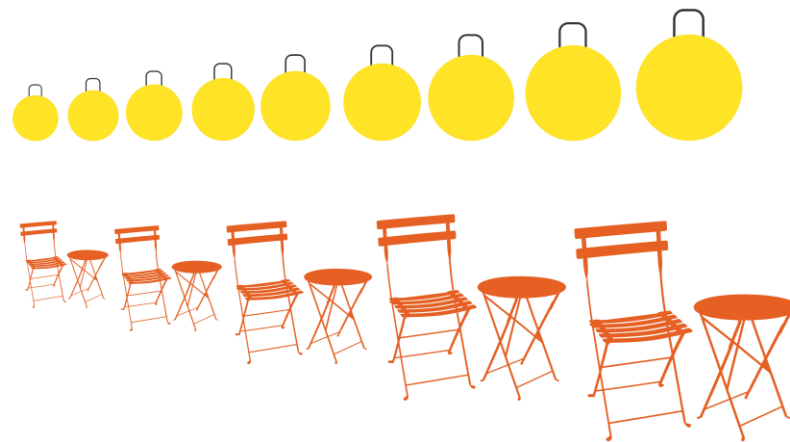


GRAND CONNECTION ACTIVATION PILOT



Final Report - Revised
November 12, 2019



Submitted by:

Augusta DeVries & Matt Jack
Bellevue Downtown Association
(425) 453-1223
info@bellevuedowntown.com
Bellevuedowntown.com



Acknowledgments

Bellevue City Staff

Jesse Canedo
Kris Goddard
Anthony Gill
Emil King
Betsy Anderson
Tom Kuykendall
Sally Nichols
Scott MacDonald
Benjamin Wright
Liz Stead
Ken Hageman
Kimo Burden

City Departments

Economic Development
Development Services
Parks & Human Services
Community Development
Transportation
Right of Way

BDA Member Partners

Kemper Development Company
Madison Marquette
HNTB
Commonwealth Partners
Kilroy Reality
Central Bar + Restaurant
Onni Group
Sound Transit



T able of Contents

[01] Introduction & Overview	4
BDA Strategic Plan Direction.....	6
Goals.....	7
Outcomes Achieved.....	8
[02] Scope & Process	9
Background.....	10
Timeline.....	11
People Power Calculated	12
Public + Private Partnership.....	13
Process.....	14
Property Inventory.....	15
Light Poles.....	18
Bellevue Transit Center.....	19
Permitting.....	21
Early Ideas.....	22
Installation.....	23
Maintenance.....	25
Deinstallation.....	26
[03] Findings	27
Public Feedback.....	28
Lessons Learned.....	36
Private Business Response & Activity....	37
Next Steps.....	38

[01] Introduction & Overview

[01] Introduction & Overview

Every idea starts somewhere. Rooted by a challenge and supported by an opportunity, an idea can flourish into reality through collaboration and hard work. What began as idle hallway discussion in early 2019 about the Grand Connection's potential became Downtown Bellevue's first activation project to contiguously span multiple different properties.

From start to finish, the Bellevue Downtown Association (BDA) and City of Bellevue tenaciously collaborated to complete the project on schedule and within budget. It was never of question of "how can we do it." It was "how can we create the groundwork for future activation." Activating the corridor with color and seating was one goal. Understanding how to do it again and even better was the objective. We met our goal and accomplished the objective.



[01] BDA Strategic Plan Direction

Review → Support → Act

Direction from BDA Board of Directors and strategic plan is to **activate Downtown Bellevue spaces** and **engage the Downtown Bellevue community**. Working under the guidance of the BDA Board, BDA staff worked with its members and Bellevue City staff to implement a largescale placemaking project. Over the course of nine months, the BDA leveraged public and private partners to bring a segment of the Grand Connection alive. Multiple lessons were learned, relationships were built and BDA's ability as a place maker was stress tested to deliver an experience that will pave the way for future partnerships and Downtown activations on the Grand Connection.

BUT WHY? The people-place experience Downtown Bellevue matters; whether Downtown users linger and stay makes a difference in how businesses will continue to invest and grow here. Placemaking makes good business sense: if people enjoy being here, it's good for the Bellevue economy.



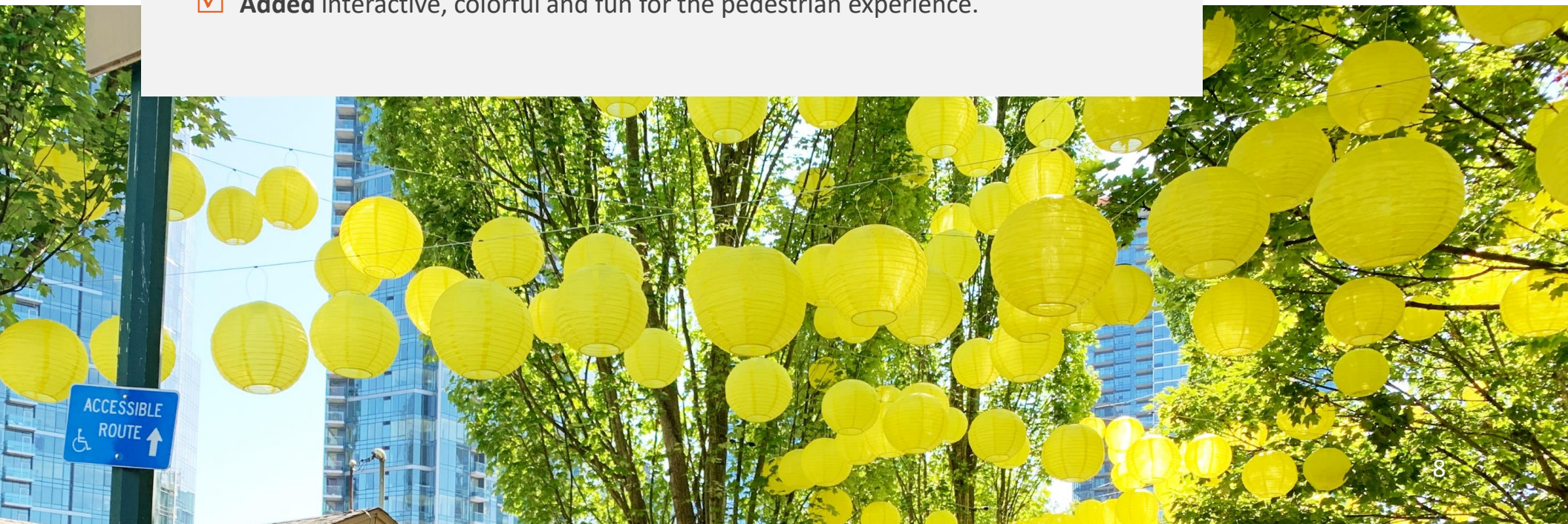
[01] Goals

- ☐ Build capacity among organizations.
- ☐ Test various types of activations.
- ☐ Evaluate potential models for collaboration around the Grand Connection.
- ☐ Collect public feedback and impressions on new and existing events and activities.
- ☐ Generate additional public excitement around the Grand Connection concept.
- ☐ Build a stronger network of private property owners and public agencies.
- ☐ Spur property owner support for advancing the Grand Connection concept.
- ☐ Demonstrate the positive economic impact of activation - people linger and invest.



[01] Outcomes Achieved

- ✓ **Cataloged** and built upon what's already happening on the corridor in support of Grand Connection activation; identified gaps and opportunity areas.
- ✓ **Unified a portion of** the route, prioritizing the pedestrian experience.
- ✓ **Measured** activity, public interest and engagement.
- ✓ **Built** confidence and buy-in for future public and private/ property owner investment in the corridor experience.
- ✓ **Added** interactive, colorful and fun for the pedestrian experience.



[02] Scope & Process

[02] Background

Defining “**how**” to implement a large-scale placemaking project was the common objective for the BDA and the City. Trying to answer the “**how**” led us to even more questions that we unpacked as we went along in our placemaking journey.

- How can an urban setting with wide building setbacks be activated?
- What type of permitting is used for temporary art installations and seating?
- How to build confidence and buy in from property owners?
- What are right of way limitations?
- Where are the property boundaries?
- Which City departments need to be involved?
- Who manages the properties?
- What type of materials will last three months of weather and use but were cost effective?
- How to order and organize bulk materials?
- How to install high up lanterns and seating?
- How to market the Grand Connection?
- How to measure success?
- What will the public perception be?
- How will we build capacity within the BDA to do this kind of work in the future?

[02] Timeline

Met with COB, and Visit Bellevue to share ideas

Drafted Grand Connection scope recommendation

Contacted property owners

Walked route with key COB staff for feedback.

Selected lanterns and bistro sets as activation focus

Received COB/ Port of Seattle grant funding commitment to catalyze project.

Submitted first permit; refinement - property owner letters, meet COB and consulted WSDOT standards for materials

Acquired property owner approval letters

Updated application design materials

Ordered bistro sets from Georgia.

Hired activation specialist for consultation and heavy machinery use

Launched new Grand Connection website and survey

Marketed pilot project, installed wayfinding

JAN

FEB

MAR

APR

MAY

JUNE

JULY

AUG

SEPT

BDA + COB "hallway" discussion

Communication continues about activation pilot idea

Defined scope and early designs with COB

Measured the route and took inventory of light poles, trees, and open space opportunities

Produced renderings and draft site plans

Met with property owners; received buy in

Researched materials, calculating budget feasibility

Ordered 790 lanterns from overseas

Ordered installation hardware.

Submitted second permit; COB approved.

Organized 12-person volunteer group

Installed activation on July 20; volunteers worked for 6 hours, staff and installation specialist (lift operator) committed 24 hours

Deinstalled lanterns with lift operator and pedestrian detour near Kilroy site, and removed seating

[02] People Power Calculated

BDA STAFF

The pilot project was managed by two BDA FTEs over seven months. While cross collaborating from start to finish, management focuses were divided into:

- Public relations, budget, application, maintenance
- Design and engineering, research, implementation

Between the two, an estimated 20 hours/week was committed over the course of the project (Mar 1-Sept 30).



CONTRIBUTORS / PARTNERS

Kemper Development Company – Lantern install/deinstall on light poles **(10 Hours)**

HNTB - Volunteers: Lantern Installation **(40 Labor Hours)**

Commonwealth Partners – Security monitoring seating at City Center Plaza **(Daily)**

Central Bar + Restaurant – Lanterns install/deinstall at their site **(2 Hours)**

Puget Sound Energy – Financial Support for Materials

INSTALLATION CONSULTANT

Malcolm Peterson Enterprises – Installation expert / lift operator **(35 hours)**

[02] Public + Private Partnership

CITY SUPPORT IS CRITICAL

From the very beginning, Bellevue City Staff provided instrumental support.

Bellevue's Cultural and Economic Development team was the project's biggest champion. The department provided \$32,000 in funding, weekly check-ins, organized other departments for consultative feedback, and helped the BDA navigate government regulations through the permitting and review process.

Bellevue's right of way team kept the project safe with design and pedestrian traffic feedback and provided direction and an escort to work with our machinery.

Bellevue's land use planner helped with vital design feedback and helped us fit our project into the land use code. After the walking tour with city staff, the BDA incorporated many of the proposed ideas which included the "zig-zag" at Kilroy's property and planter-basket arms for light poles.



**BDA + COB
Walking Tour**



**BDA Staff +
COB Cultural and Economic Development team**



**BDA Staff with
Right of Way Team**

[02] Process

WHAT IT TAKES

With such a short turnaround time on a project that had never been done before, planning ebbed and flowed based on incoming information on feasibility. Bellevue's Cultural and Economic Development and Right of Way teams were instrumental to guiding the BDA's work in the right direction. The effort unfolded as a public-private partnership, a successful outcome of the pilot project.

In terms of effort, the flow chart ranks the amount of effort each step required.

- ★ 1 – 10 hours
- ★★ 11 – 20 hours
- ★★★ 21 – 50 hours
- ★★★★ 50 – 100 hours



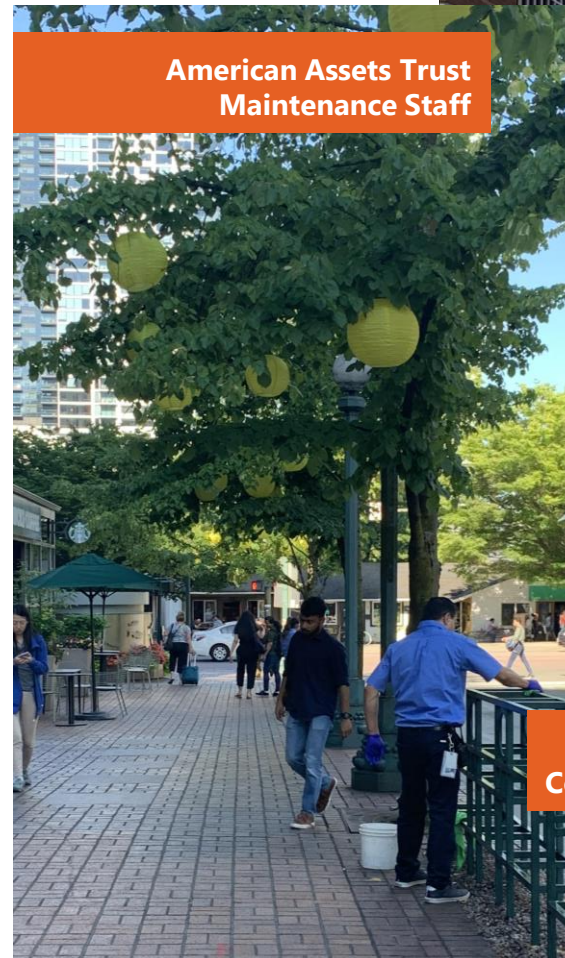
[02] Property Care Inventory

CARING FOR DOWNTOWN

Most private properties have day porters, maintenance staff and overnight security to care for the public space and sidewalks directly adjacent to their properties.

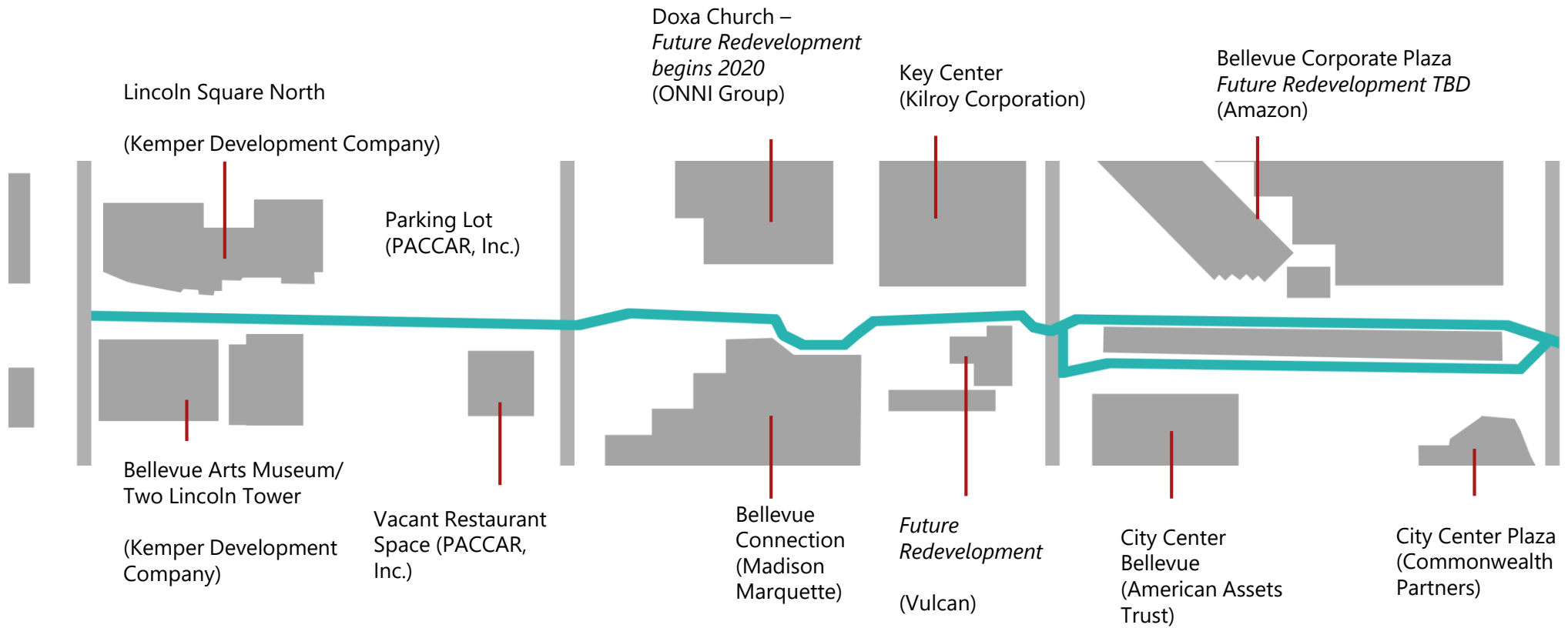
Trash receptacles along the corridor are generally managed by the City of Bellevue.

There is a shared desire amongst the property owners to better understand what others are doing to provide upkeep for their properties.



[02]

Property Ownership Inventory



[02]

Property Responsibility Inventory

Compass Plaza is a shared asset between Madison Marquette and Onni Group. Parts of the plaza will be closed due to future construction but Onni Group is planning a large public plaza.

Food trucks will need to be relocated early 2020.

Kilroy owns and maintains the trees, brick pavers, stairs and landings. The City of Bellevue treats this as a public pedestrian right of way via an easement.

Bellevue Transit Center facility is owned by Sound Transit, managed by King County Metro.

Both agencies, as well as Community Transit operate transit service here.

Light poles and street trees owned and maintained by the City of Bellevue

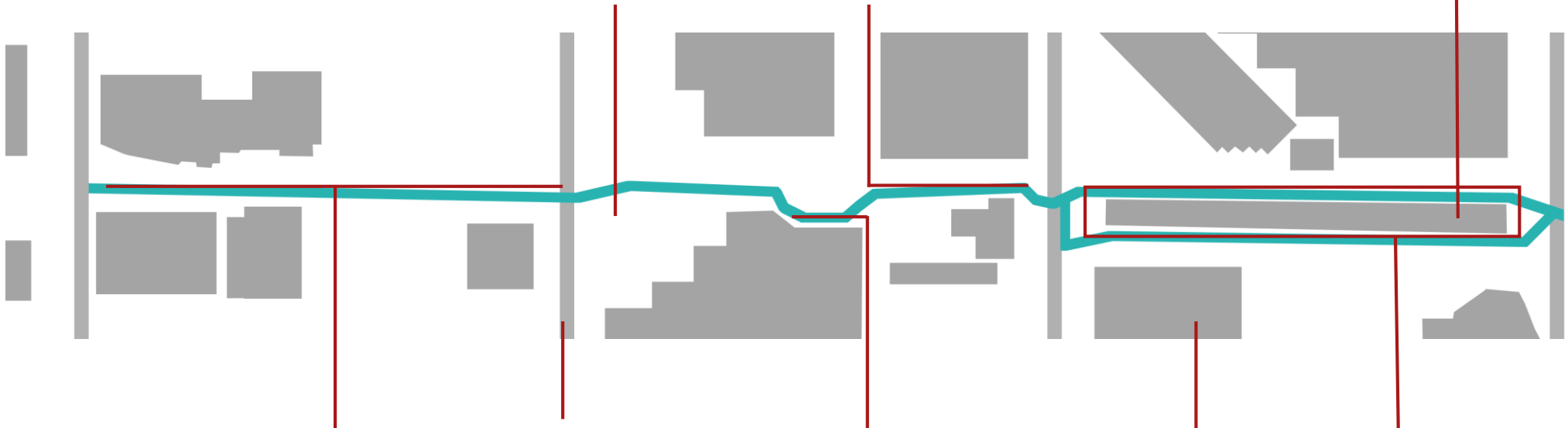
Bus Stop out of service but utilized by Amazon shuttles. Owned by Sound Transit – maintained by Metro.

Trash service by Metro increased due to the research in this project.

Madison Marquette owns and manages the light poles and trees along their building façade.

Eastern building façade is the property line; Northern property line goes to the curb. AAT manages cleanliness of sidewalk, with the exception of the trees

Light poles and street trees on both the north and south side of NE 6th owned and maintained by the City of Bellevue



[02]

Light Poles

According to the City of Bellevue, original development plans along the NE 6th Pedestrian Corridor included the installation of light poles per the design guidelines at that time.

Light poles are technically owned by the property owners who developed the site. Ownership, however, has not translated into maintenance. Its vague “who” is responsible for changing light bulbs, replacing poles, or cleaning the globes. Many cases show the City fulfilling this responsibility and not the property owners.

Unless someone carefully looks at a map of property lines or the variation in distances between light poles on different parcels, it would be easy to assume the City owns the light poles. As time passes and property managers moved in-and-out, the role of the property owner has been lost. Expectations are not clear when discussing this issue with property managers.

Clearly, there’s no shared understanding of the division of responsibility with the lighting along the corridor. Clarifying responsibilities will establish expectations for a safer, cleaner environment.



[02]

Bellevue Transit Center

The Bellevue Transit Center is owned by Sound Transit and maintained by King County Metro.

Understanding the scope of maintenance and responsibility for the transit center took persistence and patience. Numerous emails and calls led us back and forth between Sound Transit and King County Metro – neither agency taking complete ownership over the vision, maintenance and responsibility for the Bellevue Transit Center.

In order to create an safe, inviting public amenity for thousands to use each day, it's important to understand the scope of responsibility and set a long term vision for the asset that incorporates cleanliness, adequate seating and standing room and long term maintenance.



[02]

Bellevue Transit Center

Ultimately, a Sound Transit facilities manager recovered an interlocal agreement dating back to 2002 for Metro to maintain the following:

3.3 Distributed Improvements

The improvements to be distributed throughout the vicinity of the transit island which are covered by this Agreement as "BTC improvements" shall consist of:

b. bus shelters, benches, litter receptacles and/or signage located at the following four (4) bus stop locations on sidewalks located on City of Bellevue right-of-way and/or sidewalk easements:

1. on the east side of **106th** Avenue N.E., immediately north of the N.E. **6th** Street alignment;
2. on the west side of **106th** Avenue N.E., to the south of the N.E. **6th** Street alignment;
3. on the east side of **108th** Avenue N.E., immediately south of the N.E. **6"** Street alignment;
4. on the west side of **108th** Avenue N.E., immediately north of the N.E. **6"** Street alignment;

In 6.3.2 of the BTC agreement list the maintenance schedule and King County's responsibilities.

6.3.2 Scheduled Maintenance

The County will perform scheduled maintenance as described in Exhibit C and in accordance with its current procedures used at other transit centers owned and operated by the County, subject to the agreed upon frequencies specified in Exhibit C.

Exhibit C: Scheduled and Unscheduled Maintenance and Operations Tasks
(Updated 2008)

Task	Frequency	Responsibility
Scheduled Maintenance on Island & Bus Lanes (Sec. 6.3.2)		
Clean platforms/bus lanes	Six times per week	KCM
Pick up trash/empty receptacles	*	
Clean/stock restrooms	*	
Spot clean spills	*	
Minor graffiti removal	*	
Clean benches	*	
Clean field Office	*	
Clean glass windcreens	Once per week	
Pressure wash island surfaces	*	
Mechanical sweep of bus lanes and NRV parking	*	
Pressure wash island pavement	*	
Scheduled Maintenance of Distributed Zones (Sec. 6.3.2)		
Clean sidewalks in and around shelters	Three times per week	KCM
Pick up trash/empty receptacles	*	
Spot clean spills	*	
Minor graffiti removal	*	
Clean benches	*	
Pressure wash shelters except roofs	*	
Scheduled Maintenance of Certain Facilities (Sec. 6.3.2)		
Inspect/clean catch basins	Once per year	KCM
Certify backflow prevention devices	*	
Clean roofs/gutters	Twice per year	
Unscheduled Maintenance Response (Sec. 6.3.3)		
Graffiti removal	As needed	KCM
Special cleaning		
Replace broken glass except signage		
Touch-up painting		
Plumbing repairs		
Electrical repairs		
Lock/hardware repairs		
Restriping		
Test/Clean/Repair Utility lines- outside buildings (water, electrical, sewer, storm-water)		
Snow shoveling on island		
Sanding on island		
Service Supervisor (Sec 6.2.2)		
	Supervision for the BTC shall be provided as part of the overall service supervision for the eastside district. No service supervisor will be assigned specifically to the BTC.	KCM

[02] Permitting Application Requirements for Placemaking

The application process for a large-scale placemaking project proved to be a difficult task because the City doesn't have simple guidelines for temporary urban art installations. With no specific guidelines to reference, BDA and City staff had to collaborate on identifying code language that would guide design while adhering to safety requirements. In some cases, the application designs had to meet standards for major construction projects or permanent signage.

No Existing Code, Must Reference a Higher Power

Initial design plans called for plant-basket arms to be attached to light poles along the route. Existing guidelines for attaching "things" to light poles requires adherence to WSDOT sign standard G-30.10-04; rules for large metal signs seen over highways. Since rules for light-weight art installations don't exist, the bracket arms were attached with WSDOT-approved materials that could support 2,000 LBs and resist 90 MPH winds. As a consequence, the pilot had to limit this design to one stretch because the requirements added costly materials and intensive labor.

Application Checklist

- Statement of purpose
- Ownership and maintenance inventory
- Art installation renderings
- Site plans
- Property owner authorization letters
- Signage designs and locations
- Adherence to right of way guidelines
- Timeline

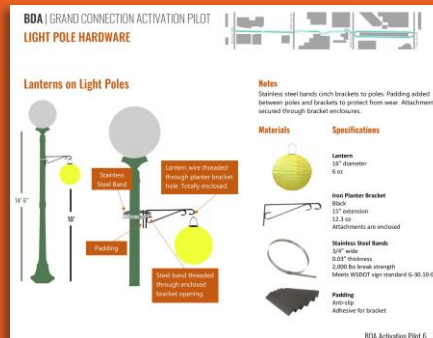
Installation Actions

- Schedule inspections before installation work
- Coordinated delivery/pickup of major machinery
- Communicate expectations with property owners
- Place temporary signage to divert foot traffic

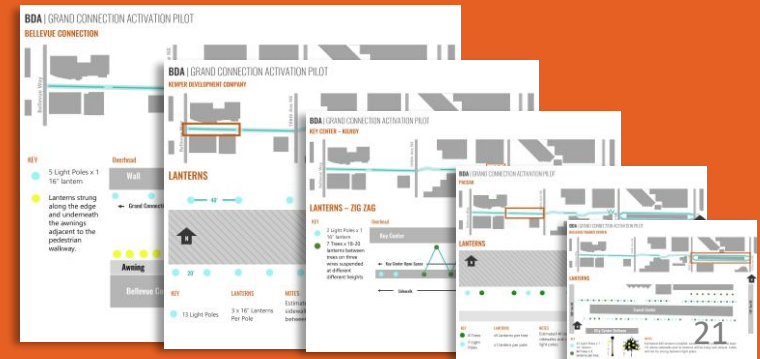
SEATING SITE PLAN



HARDWARE GUIDE

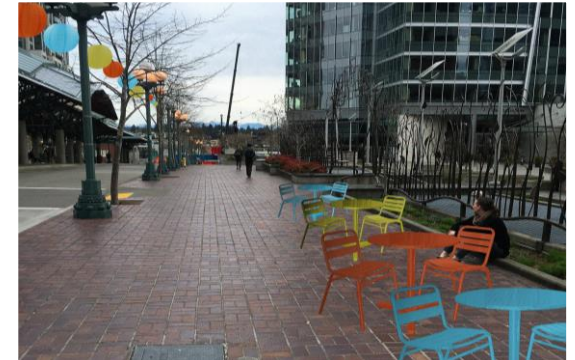
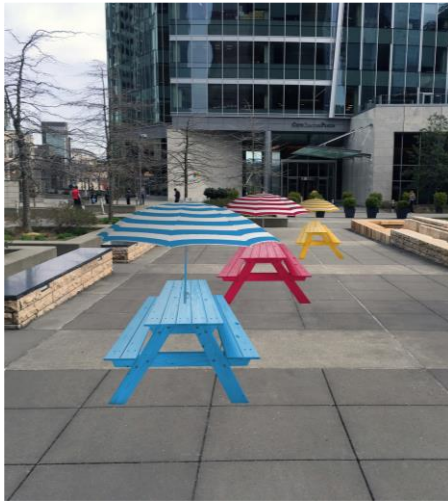


LANTERN SITE PLANS



[02]

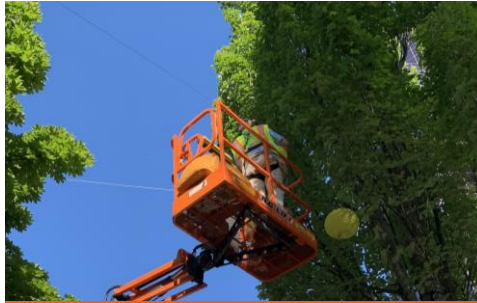
Early Ideas that Didn't Make the Cut



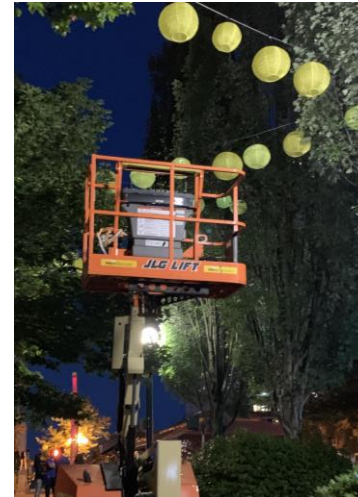
[02] Installation



Safety was the #1 priority.



Boom lift required for Kilroy site.



Worked into night.



700+ lanterns were unpacked and organized for installation.



Seating stored in offices.



Ladders rented.



HNTB volunteered to install lanterns.



Yes, they glow.



12 hours to install hardware.

[02] Lantern Outcome



Madison Marquette Awning



Just in time for Arts Fair



Central Bar + Restaurant



Planter hooks on poles near BAM



250+ Lanterns at the Kilroy Site

[02]

Maintenance



Seating Upkeep

Bistro sets required daily cleaning and repositioning. BDA staff spent 30 minutes every workday morning wiping tables and reposition tables and chairs. Remnants of food and spills from beverages were common messes. Chairs and tables were often moved into shaded areas.

Damage and Theft

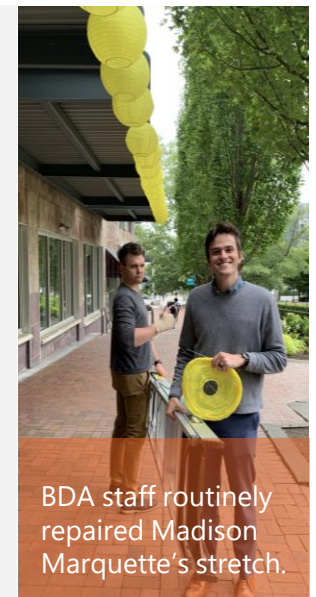
Minimal damage to tables and chairs occurred. Common issues included minor dents to table tops. No chairs or tables were stolen from either site.

Lantern Upkeep

With over 700 lanterns installed, it was expected that some would fall. BDA staff would not replace lanterns whimsically installed, but they would replace lanterns where purposefully installed. Sites like Madison Marquette's awning and the light poles with lanterns attached by metal planter arms required routine replacement due to wind or vandalism.

Damage and Theft

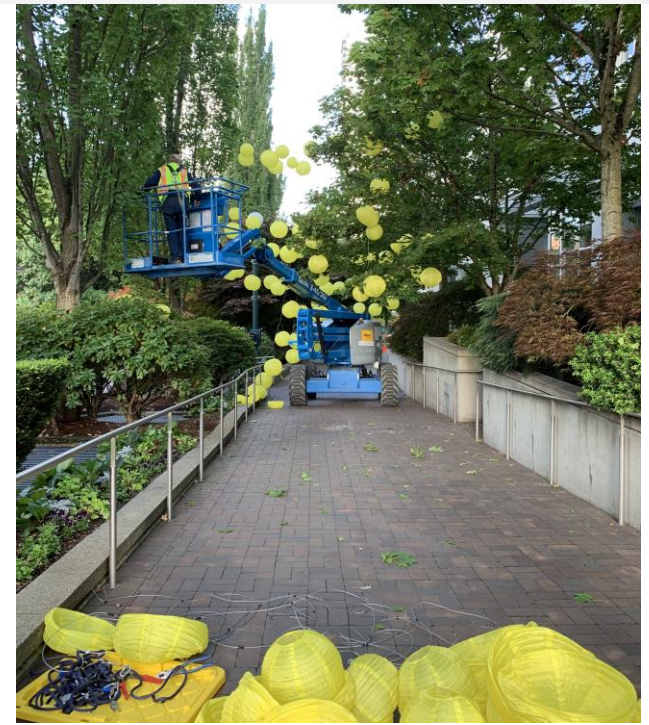
Evidence of vandalism was common at the Madison Marquette awning closest to the ground. Twenty lanterns were replaced at Madison Marquette, while the other sites combined reported 15 total fallen lanterns.



[02] Deinstallation

The lanterns came down in a fraction of the time. We saved the ones we could and packed them up for future use.

Many of the lanterns near the transit center were unsalvageable – quite dirty from bus emissions and soot.



[03] Findings

[03] Marketing the Grand Connection



1,680

Pageviews
Aug 1 – Oct 25

WEBSITE REDESIGN

Informing the public about the Grand Connection's full build-out potential is critical for building excitement and support.

The new website is an interactive experience that allows users to see how the Grand Connection interacts with new and future projects with an opportunity to review the Grand Connection Framework Plan and the creative Design Charrette concepts.

WAYFINDING

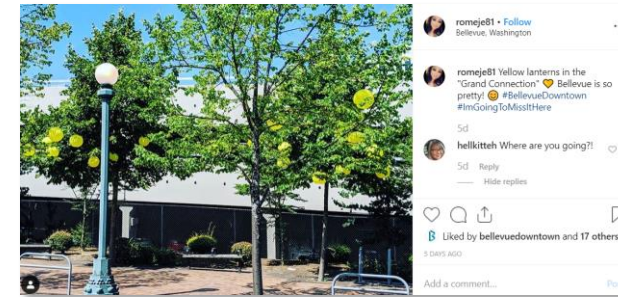
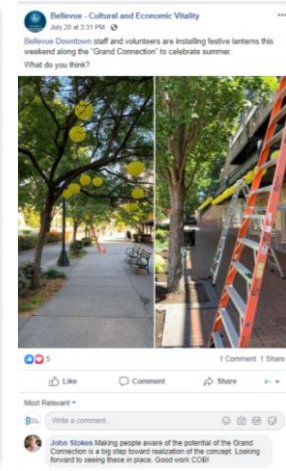
Two temporary signs were installed over the Downtown wayfinding maps. High-level information made it attractive and easy to read.



[03] Activating Social Media

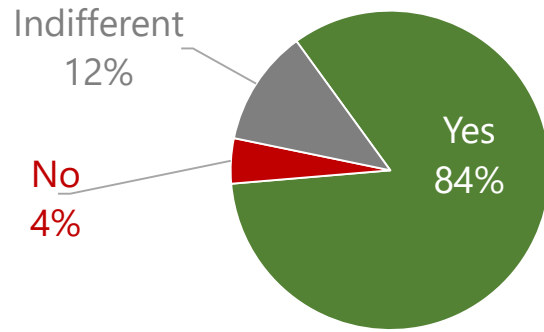
PLACEMAKING IS BUZZWORTHY

The pilot project generated positive feedback on Facebook and Instagram. A sense of identify and place was thematic in the messaging, rebuking common criticism that Bellevue lacks culture, life, and color.



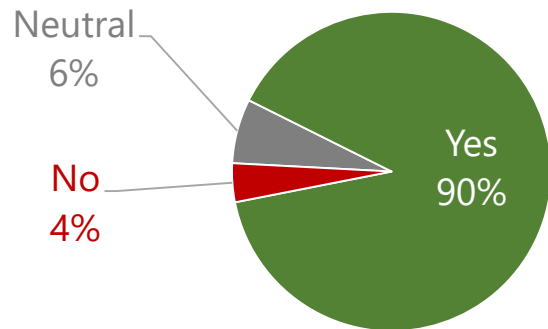
[03] By the Numbers Public Survey Responses

Do you like the lanterns?



84%
Yes

Would you like to see more creative activations along the route in the future?



90%
Yes

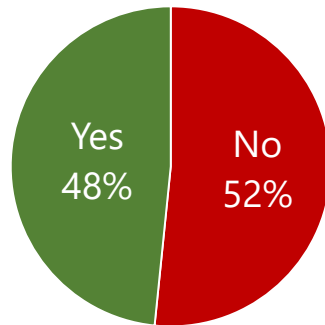
SAMPLE SIZE: 154 RESPONSES



6th Street Arts Fair

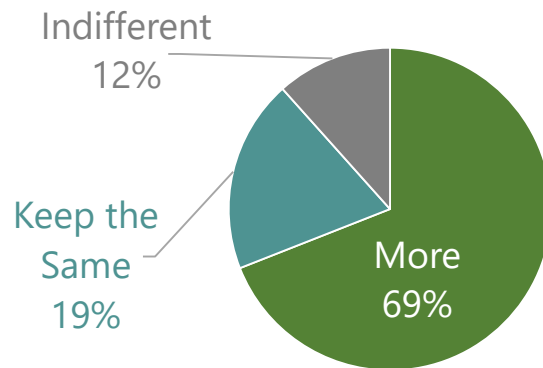
[03] By the Numbers Public Survey Responses

Did you use the bistro seating?



52%
No

Do you want **more** or **less** seating? Or, do you want to **keep it the same**?



69%
More

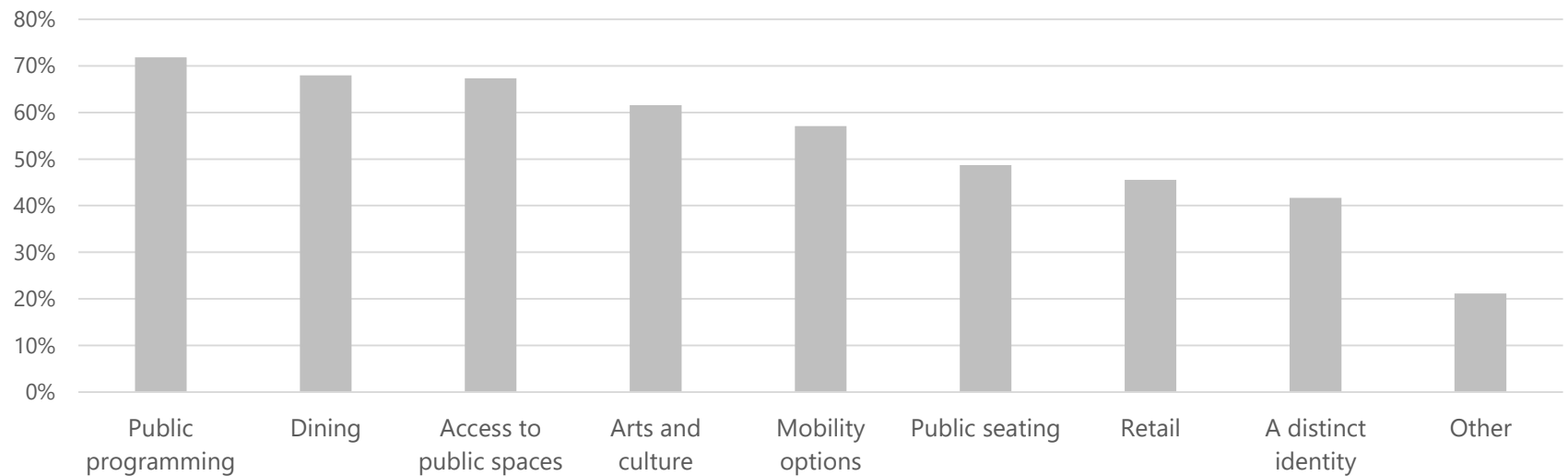
SAMPLE SIZE: 155 RESPONSES



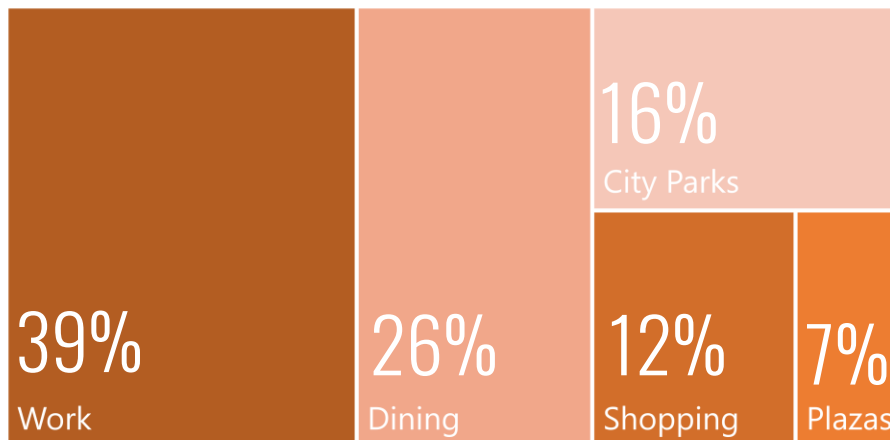
Compass Plaza

[03] By the Numbers Public Survey Responses

Attractions and amenities that would draw visits to the Grand Connection



Most frequented destinations on the Grand Connection



75%

Walk the
Grand Connection
at least once a week

58%

Work in
Downtown
Bellevue

[03] Public Comments

Love the pop of color!

I am afraid if we have more public seating it will attract more homeless people to our streets like in Seattle.

I love how they cheer up my commute.

I would have used the seating, but they were all full at the time.

I would also like to see more shade structures.

Following the yellow lanterns led me on a new path I would not have taken otherwise.

It's been great to see activation of this corridor, both with the playful lanterns and the tables & chairs. The space encourage people to engage and linger.

I was able to use the lanterns as wayfinding when I gave directions to someone who was looking to get to BAM from the library - head south and make a right at the yellow lanterns; follow them and you'll get to BAM.

The color. The playfulness. Downtown Bellevue is a dull, colorless mass of steel and cement. It needs color and playfulness.

They entice me to walk further and see what's down the way.

Having a lot of public seating during any break in the weather is an excellent way to lure people outside, make connections and enjoy the great public spaces in the downtown core.

Public Feedback - Seating



Public Feedback - Lanterns



[03]

Lessons Learned

- ☐ Placemaking requires sustained relationships and trust building. No single property owner can do it alone and no single property owner was all-in from the start. It took convincing and a common vision to make this plan come to life.
- ☐ Placemaking can play a key role in educating the public about what the Grand Connection is and its potential.
- ☐ City's Public-Private Partnership Manager is a critical role for placemaking. This role supported the BDA's effort to navigate different City departments while simultaneously managing relationships with property owners.
- ☐ Approach property owners for assistance earlier in the planning process. Each property has resources, and if the BDA can provide clear direction and materials, there's a strong likelihood the property's maintenance staff can implement projects faster and easier than a group of volunteers.
- ☐ BDA must leverage its membership and convening tools to build more support for future placemaking opportunities.

[03]

Private Business Response & Activity



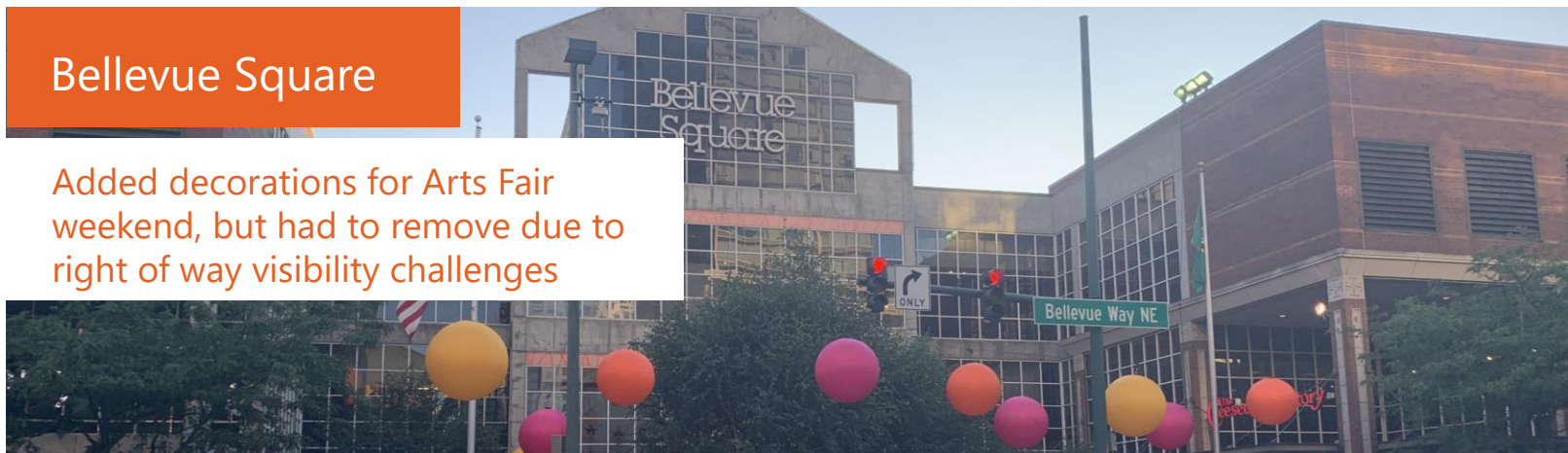
Central
Bar + Restaurant



Doxa Church
Bellwether 2019

Bellevue Square

Added decorations for Arts Fair weekend, but had to remove due to right of way visibility challenges



[03]

Next Steps

Confidence and relationships were built through this pilot program. The BDA and City now know what it takes to activate space across Downtown Bellevue. The BDA demonstrated how effective placemaking creates an attractive and fun environment for everyone. We look forward to continuing this work and have outlined how to build on this success in these next steps.

- ☐ Discuss feasibility and support for 2020 placemaking projects with City and property owners.
- ☐ Research conditions, identify scope, and develop a 2020 activation plan.
- ☐ The BDA took 60 delegates in October 2019 to Dallas, TX to study Klyde Warren Park where public-private partnerships thrived as the driving force behind completing projects and activating spaces. Build on these learnings moving forward.
- ☐ Partner with the City and private stakeholders to update the Comprehensive Plan with land use code design guideline language that'll support short-term activation projects.
- ☐ Find funding to expand BDA staff to sustain and expand future placemaking projects – leaning on both public and private resources.



OUR MISSION:

To strengthen the economic and
cultural vitality of Downtown Bellevue.

Thank You.