



# Bellevue Planning Commission

June 24, 2020

## PLANNING COMMISSION STUDY SESSION ITEM

### **SUBJECT**

Grand Connection Sequence One Guidelines and Standards Update

### **STAFF CONTACT**

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### **POLICY ISSUES**

Staff 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's role in improving livability, access, and placemaking along the route from the intersection of 100th Avenue NE and Main Street to the Bellevue Transit Center (NE 6th Street and 110th Avenue NE).

### **DIRECTION NEEDED FROM THE PLANNING COMMISSION**

#### **ACTION**



#### **DIRECTION**



#### **INFORMATION ONLY**



The intent of this study session is to update the Planning Commission on the progress for the *Grand Connection Sequence One Guidelines and Standards*, highlighting what has been developed to-date, how it fits with the broader vision for this signature placemaking feature, and identifying next steps. This session is for informational-purposes only. The Planning Commission will continue its work this fall to review and refine a set of Grand Connection guidelines and standards for Council adoption.

### **BACKGROUND/ANALYSIS**

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 to key public space locations and mobility.

The Grand Connection scope of work was separated into two sequences; the first addressing changes and improvements to existing infrastructure between the intersection of 100th Avenue NE and Main Street, and the Civic Center District. The second sequence addressed the crossing of Interstate 405 and its interface with Downtown, the future vision of the Wilburton Commercial Area, and the Eastside Rail Corridor (now rebranded as Eastrail).

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 of the Grand Connection framework documents, Council initiated Comprehensive Plan amendments and Land Use Code amendments (including the development of design guidelines).

- Based on a set of recommendations from the Planning Commission, on December 10, 2018, amendments to the Comprehensive Plan specific to the Grand Connection were adopted by Council (Ordinance 6449).
- In 2019, staff launched the development of the *Grand Connection Sequence One Guidelines and Standards* to implement elements from the *Grand Connection Framework Plan*. Additionally, staff are working with developers vested under the current Land Use Code in the review of their applications/projects along the route to incorporate Grand Connection components.
- 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 code standards and guidelines, highlight existing provisions 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 next step in the process is to gather public input and conduct testing on a set of draft *Grand Connection Guidelines and Standards*. This is planned for summer, and will include a series of online focus groups and survey. This feedback will inform refinements to the draft documents and ready the guidelines and standards for Commission review.

At Planning Commission study sessions this fall staff will seek input and direction to schedule a formal public hearing for the *Grand Connection Sequence One Guidelines and Standards*. The goal is to transmit a recommendation from the Commission to Council in November 2020 for adoption.

#### **ATTACHMENT**

1. Draft map of Sequence One route with different rooms