

## CITY COUNCIL STUDY SESSION

Recommended Land Use Code Amendment (LUCA) for Sequence One of the Grand Connection guidelines and standards, amending Part 20.25A of the Land Use Code (LUC) to create a new section LUC 20.25A.175 and providing conformance amendments. File No. 20-114098-AD.

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## DIRECTION NEEDED FROM COUNCIL

### DIRECTION

Staff will introduce the recommended Grand Connection LUCA. Planning Commission Chair Radhika Moolgavkar will present the Planning Commission recommendation approving the LUCA without modification. The Resolution documenting this recommendation is included as Attachment A.

Following discussion, staff is seeking Council direction to prepare the Ordinance for final action at a future meeting.

## RECOMMENDATION

Direct staff to bring the Grand Connection LUCA Ordinance as drafted for final action at a future meeting.

## BACKGROUND & ANALYSIS

### Background

The Grand Connection Initiative is a City Council Priority to implement a major placemaking feature that connects Meydenbauer Bay Park, through Downtown Bellevue, to the Wilburton Area. This vibrant, people-focused route builds upon the City's existing Pedestrian Corridor and Major Public Open Space network, a hallmark of Downtown Bellevue that has been incrementally added to over the years.

The Grand Connection route is separated into two sequences. Sequence One addresses the area from the intersection of 100<sup>th</sup> Avenue NE and Main Street to the east end of the Transit Center (NE 6<sup>th</sup> Street and 110<sup>th</sup> Avenue NE). Sequence Two addresses the area east of NE 6<sup>th</sup> Street and 110<sup>th</sup> Avenue NE and the crossing of Interstate 405 to the Wilburton Area and the Eastrail.

The recommended LUCA implements key elements of the vision illustrated in the Grand Connection Framework Plan and the 2018 Grand Connection Comprehensive Plan Amendment (CPA) for Sequence One. The LUCA will amend Part 20.25A LUC to establish guidelines and standards in a new section of the Land Use Code, LUC 20.25A.175, and will revise and replace the existing Pedestrian Corridor and Major Open Space Design Guidelines. This LUCA, and the overall Grand Connection

Framework Plan and CPA, together referred to as the Grand Connection Initiative, support improving livability, access, and placemaking along the Grand Connection route.

### **Components of the Recommended LUCA**

The LUCA will amend Part 20.25A LUC to create LUC 20.25A.175, Grand Connection and Major Public Open Spaces. The new section streamlines provisions related to the Grand Connection and is intended to be clearer and more user-friendly for reviewers, project teams, and the general public. The recommended LUCA also includes “conformance amendments” to Part 20.25A LUC to effectively integrate the new LUC 20.25A.175 and ensure consistency with the broader Downtown Code. A draft Ordinance is provided as Attachment B and a strike-draft of the LUCA is provided as Attachment C.

The LUCA covers the Grand Connection route through the Downtown Park and Old Bellevue and establishes a “room” for each block along the Grand Connection route to encourage a variety of context-specific experiences. This approach will preserve the unique character-defining elements of different rooms within the Grand Connection, such as Old Bellevue and the Downtown Park, while encouraging strategies that create a sense of identity for the whole corridor.

Consistent with the current LUC, the LUCA includes the applicable review process for Grand Connection improvements and provisions for an interim Grand Connection, an option that is potentially available to phased projects.

Additionally, the LUCA includes general requirements that are applicable to the full length of Sequence One of the Grand Connection, including Major Public Open Spaces. The provisions are based on the existing requirements of LUC 20.25A.090.C.1-2, which the LUCA amends for conformance and clarity. Provisions include requirements for 24-hour public access, maintenance, rules on temporary furnishings for businesses along the corridor, and clarification on the development allowances above and beneath the Grand Connection and Major Public Open Spaces. The proposed general requirements ensure that the Grand Connection remains accessible to the public every day, year-round. Maintenance and operation requirements are in place to ensure the Grand Connection remains clean, safe, and in a state of good repair for all members of the public to enjoy.

Guidelines and standards to shape private development are included in the LUCA. Common Grand Connection features include paving, furnishings and lighting, ecological framework, integrated artistic elements, and the use of the signature Grand Connection Gold color. The new guidelines and standards in this LUCA supplement the existing requirements, standards, criteria, and guidelines provided in Part 20.25A LUC for Downtown Bellevue.

The guidelines also provide direction to design teams on how a project should be designed and allow flexibility in how guidelines are applied to a project. Guidelines use the words “should” or “consider,” and typically describe a general outcome that projects must produce. Projects are always required to comply with guidelines, though there may be flexibility to achieve such compliance. The Grand Connection guidelines represent “best practices” in placemaking and are intended to help further shape the route as a vibrant cultural corridor that offers enjoyable and memorable experiences.

Standards are strict requirements or criteria that a project must meet. Standards typically use the word “shall” or a clear directive “is required,” and are specific mandates. Projects must comply with every

standard, with little or no flexibility. The Grand Connection standards establish minimum requirements to ensure a cohesive design strategy for Sequence One while promoting equitable and quality design.

An analysis of how the recommended LUCA complies with the decision criteria in LUC 20.30J.135 for an application to amend the text of the LUC may be found in the Staff Report, Attachment D.

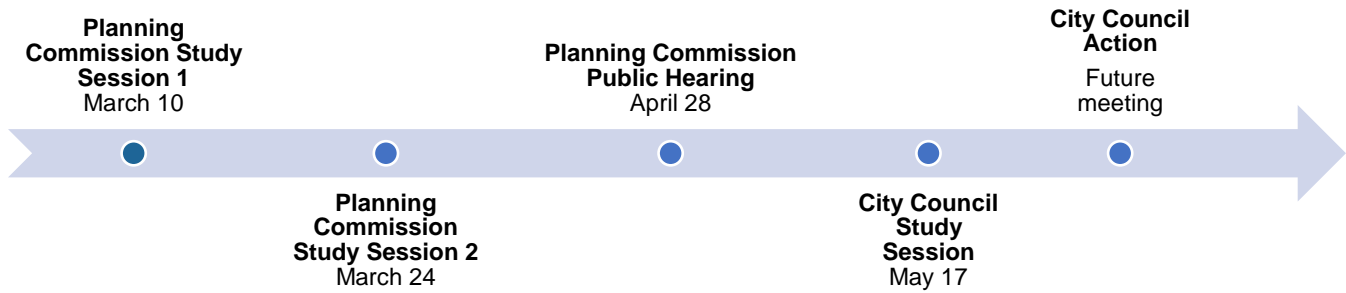
### **Public Engagement**

Extensive internal collaboration and public involvement informed development of the recommended LUCA. Staff followed a public engagement plan with three modes of outreach and engagement to ensure the public, stakeholders, and interested parties had access to up-to-date project information and the opportunity to provide comments over the course of the project.

- A. Process IV Requirements. Process consistent with Chapter 20.35 LUC procedural requirements to provide opportunities for public comment, including:
  - Notice of Application of the recommended LUCA, SEPA notification; and
  - Public hearing on the recommended LUCA, which occurred in April, before the Planning Commission.
  
- B. Engagement and Feedback. Dialogue and sourcing previously documented comments with various stakeholders, including:
  - Sourcing and referencing previously documented comments from the Grand Connection Framework Plan process;
  - Informational briefings with City boards and commissions and civic and business organizations in Bellevue;
  - Focus groups with landscape architects, architects, and developers with property along the Grand Connection route; and
  - Consultation and testing of the draft LUCA content with design teams working on active projects along the Grand Connection.
  
- C. Online Presence. City webpage to provide opportunities for the public to stay informed, including:
  - Staff contacts; and
  - Public information regarding LUCA progression.

### **Review Process**

The timeline identifies the review process for the LUCA. Council will consider the recommended LUCA during the May 17 Study Session, with final action at a future meeting.



## POLICY & FISCAL IMPACTS

### Policy Impact

The recommended LUCA will advance Council priorities under the Grand Connection Initiative.

### Fiscal Impact

There is no fiscal impact associated with implementing the recommended LUCA.

## OPTIONS

1. Direct staff to bring the Grand Connection LUCA Ordinance as drafted for final action at a future meeting.
2. Provide alternative direction to staff.

## ATTACHMENTS & AVAILABLE DOCUMENTS

- A. Planning Commission Resolution Recommending LUCA
- B. Draft LUCA Ordinance
- C. Strike-Draft of LUCA
- D. Staff Report

## AVAILABLE IN COUNCIL LIBRARY

N/A