



Contact

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Alternative One Interstate 405 Crossing - Image by Balmori ▶





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Acknowledgments

Bellevue City Council

Established as a Council priority in 2012, the Bellevue City Council has provided their enthusiastic support and generous funding to advance the vision of the Grand Connection. Council's support and direction has allowed the project to pursue new concepts and ideas that have established a transformational vision and pursuit of new opportunities.

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Kevin Wallace

Consultant Team

The ideas set forth through the Grand Connection Visioning process were a result of a collaboration with the City of Bellevue and a world-class consultant team of designers, engineers, artists, and transportation experts. The City wishes to thank this team of consultants for their energy, creativity, and passion for transforming public spaces, connectivity, and the urban environment. Their ideas and concepts will leave a lasting and transformational legacy on the project and the City of Bellevue.

City of Bellevue Steering Committee

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Executive Summary

Introduction

The *Grand Connection Framework Plan: Interstate 405 Crossing* provides three design alternatives for the portion of the Grand Connection that crosses Interstate 405 between Downtown and the Wilburton Commercial Area. In an effort to reconnect Bellevue's urban fabric, the crossing will become a signature and defining feature in Bellevue's landscape, while also serving as a catalyst for a new urban neighborhood within the Wilburton Commercial Area.

This sequence of work seeks to develop a high-level understanding of the varied scales and complexities for crossing Interstate 405, while creating new and unique opportunities for placemaking, public space, signature design, and interface between the two neighborhoods. As cities across the country have demonstrated, the healing of infrastructure divides has proven to be a unique opportunity to reclaim land for public space, while activating areas that have not achieved full potential.

Cities such as Seattle, Philadelphia, New York, Dallas, and Edina, Minnesota have, or are, pursuing full or partial lids over their interstates, creating opportunities for public space while mitigating the negative impacts of the interstate below. Other cities such as Chicago, Denver, Portland, and Atlanta crafted signature crossings and bridges that efficiently and pleasantly navigate complex infrastructure to unite neighborhoods. In all cases, these crossing unlocked new development potential for additional housing, public space, employment, and a more contiguous urban fabric.

The crossing of Interstate 405 represents more than only improved mobility and access for pedestrians,

cyclists, and alternative transportation modes. It represents an opportunity to transform the area east of the interstate, the Wilburton Commercial Area, as a new area of opportunity, and Bellevue's next urban neighborhood. Combined with light rail and the Eastside Rail Corridor, a successful and memorable crossing over the interstate will thread Downtown and the Wilburton Commercial Area together, while providing access to unparalleled local and regional transportation access. As the terminus of the Grand Connection, the Interstate 405 crossing can transform the Wilburton Commercial Area from a pass through, to a regional destination. Its interface to the Eastside Rail Corridor, and proximity to multiple light rail stations will provide connectivity options to the greater Eastside, and the region, without the dependence on a personal automobile.

The ideas set forth, as part of this second volume of work, seek to build upon the unique opportunities and vision of the Grand Connection. It is the first step in realizing a signature crossing for Bellevue, serving as a transformational and defining feature within Bellevue's urban landscape. It also builds upon the first volume of the framework plan, adopted by Council in December 2017.

Principles and Vision

The Interstate 405 crossing will be the most significant new public investment as part of the Grand Connection. It will represent an opportunity to reconnect the urban fabric west and east of Interstate 405. The crossing will create a new, dedicated route, for pedestrians, cyclists, and alternative transportation options to cross the interstate, and create new

opportunities for public space, sustainability, and a signature piece of infrastructure that would be unique to the city of Bellevue.

The visioning of the Interstate 405 crossing was guided by a series of objectives, including:

- Create a signature piece of infrastructure that is visually dynamic and iconic;
- Pursue opportunities to create public space on or adjacent to the crossing;
- Create a safe and comfortable crossing for pedestrians and cyclists;
- Mitigate the impacts, including sights and sounds of Interstate 405;
- Interface with the future Eastside Rail Corridor;
- Integration with future development opportunities east and west of Interstate 405;
- Provide connectivity and access to the future vision of the Wilburton Commercial Area; and
- Serve as a catalyst to encourage the development of the future vision of the Wilburton Commercial Area.

While ambitious in its pursuits, the Interstate 405 crossing also seeks to create a pragmatic, yet iconic vision. The principles and objectives of the visioning are intended to produce achievable results that will make this segment of the Grand Connection a reality.

Plan Highlights

The *Grand Connection Framework Plan: Interstate 405 Crossing* contains three alternatives that range in scale, and complexity, to achieve the objectives set forth in the visioning process. Each alternative addresses:

- **Signature Form:** Create a visually dynamic, and readily identifiable structure in the Bellevue landscape.
- **Unique Experience:** Create an experience that is unique to Bellevue for pedestrians and cyclists, while integrating elements of the larger Grand Connection vision to create a unified experience.
- **Public Space:** Identify opportunities to create public space over or adjacent to Interstate 405 to serve as an asset to the future vision of the Wilburton Commercial Area, as well as Downtown Bellevue.
- **Safety:** Create an environment that is safe for pedestrians and cyclists, as well as those that may use any supporting public space.
- **Cohesion and Integration:** Create design alternatives that navigate the complexities of future infrastructure development, private property development, and existing infrastructure that integrates the crossing as part of Bellevue's urban fabric.

Presentation of Alternatives

Each alternative is presented to provide the following information:

- Overview of the design
- Evolution of the design
- The Interstate 405 crossing design
- Relationship to Downtown Bellevue
- Relationship to the Wilburton Commercial Area
- Relevant Precedents and Case Studies

The document concludes with a comparative summary of the three alternatives, and identification of next steps.

Chapters

The *Grand Connection Framework Plan: Interstate 405 Crossing* consists of the following chapters:

1. Introduction
2. Alternative One - Sculptural Bridge
3. Alternative Two - Linear Bridge
4. Alternative Three - Lid Park
5. Alternative Comparison
6. Next Steps

1 - Introduction

Chapter One discusses the relationship of the Interstate 405 crossing to the entirety of the Grand Connection. It also provides context relating to the surrounding urban environment, and other infrastructure improvements in the immediate area.

2 - Alternative One - Sculptural Bridge

Chapter Two discusses the design concept for Alternative One, the Sculptural Bridge. The chapter covers the evolution of the design, the route of the crossing, attributes such as public space, screening from the interstate, and other amenities; and its interface with Downtown, the Wilburton Commercial Area, and the Eastside Rail Corridor.

3 - Alternative Two - Linear Bridge

Chapter Three discusses the design concept for

Alternative Two, the Linear Bridge. The chapter covers the evolution of the design, the route of the crossing, attributes such as public space, screening from the interstate, and other amenities; and its interface with Downtown, the Wilburton Commercial Area, and the Eastside Rail Corridor.

4 - Alternative Three - Lid Park

Chapter Four discusses the design concept for Alternative Three, the Lid Park. The chapter covers the evolution of the design, the route of the crossing, attributes such as public space, screening from the interstate, and other amenities; and its interface with Downtown, the Wilburton Commercial Area, and the Eastside Rail Corridor.

5 - Alternative Comparison

Chapter Five includes a comparative summary of the three alternatives, as well as results from the Wilburton Commercial Area Draft Environmental Impact Statement.

6 - Next Steps

Chapter Six discusses the next steps following the selection of a preferred alternative.

Next Steps

The *Grand Connection Framework Plan: Interstate 405 Crossing* provides a comprehensive view of the strengths, weaknesses, and opportunities of each Interstate 405 crossing alternative. Each alternative is presented with the necessary information to assist in the selection of a preferred alternative and to continue

advancing the vision for the crossing. Next steps are outlined as part of this framework plan.

Following this report the City will need to take the following steps towards implementation:

- Select a preferred Interstate 405 crossing alternative.
- Initiate design refinement of the preferred alternative to develop a grant ready proposal.
- Continue engagement with key stakeholders and the public to further develop a shared vision.
- Evaluate opportunities for funding of the Interstate 405 crossing.
- Initiate processes for required easements or land acquisitions as applicable.
- Incorporate elements of the Interstate 405 crossing and Wilburton Commercial Area segment of the Grand Connection as part of Comprehensive Plan, Land Use Code, and Design Guideline updates.

