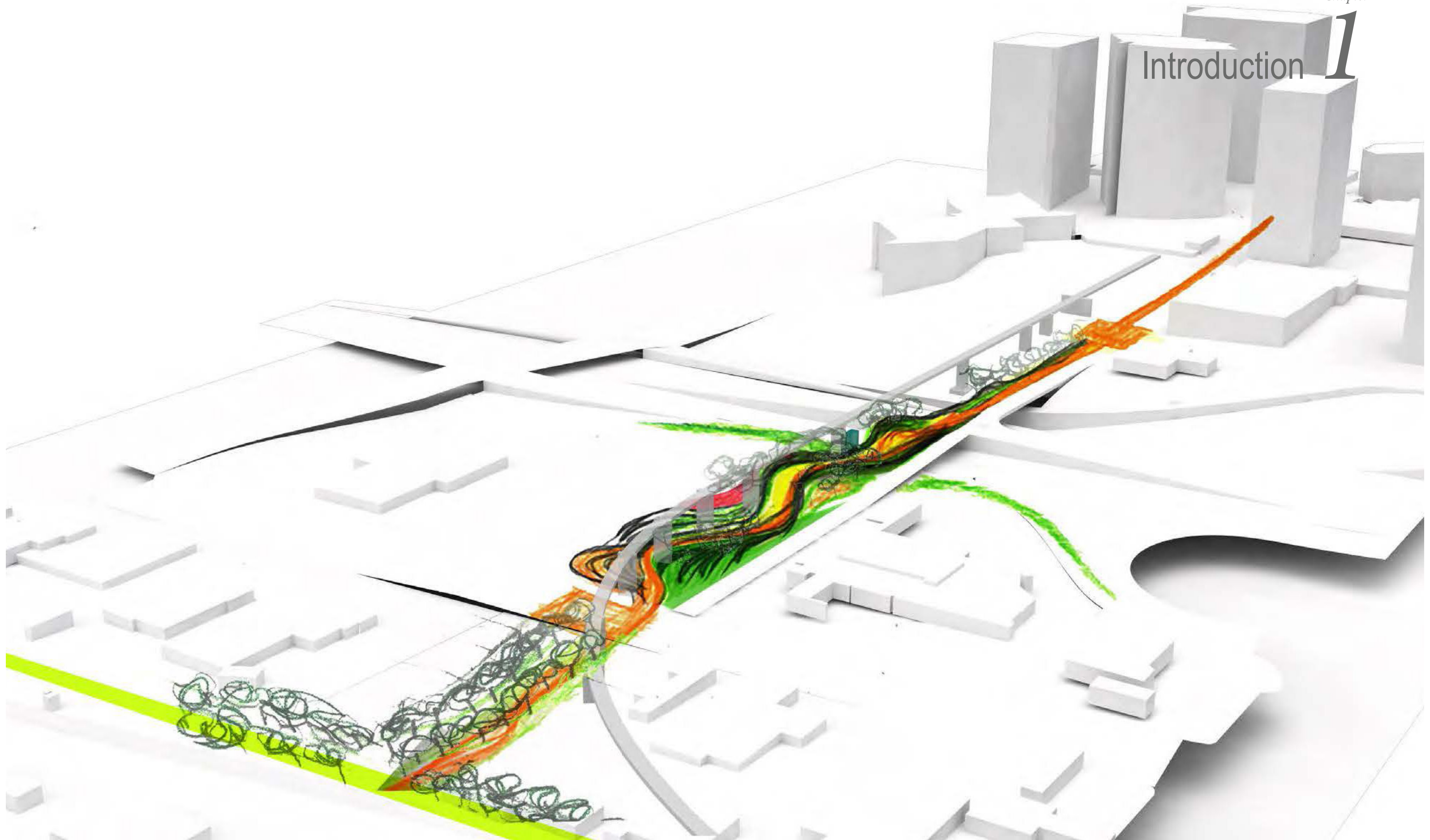
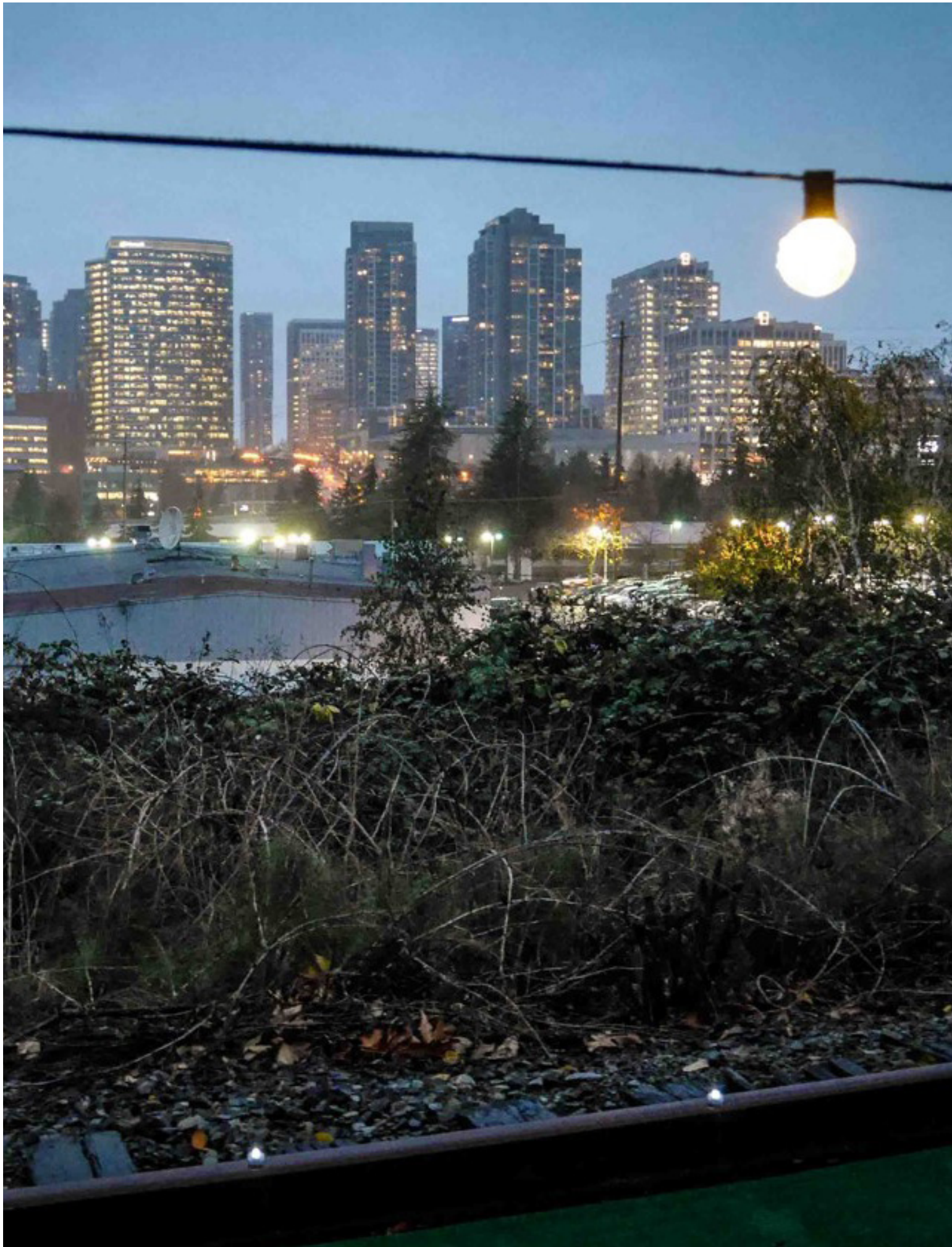


Introduction





Background

Relationship to the Overall Grand Connection Vision

The Interstate 405 segment is one pearl on the string of the Grand Connection. It represents the largest physical improvement along the route, but is dependent on the larger placemaking and connectivity goals of the Grand Connection. It will act as a catalyst for the Wilburton Commercial Area, while reconnecting the physical landscape and urban fabric of Bellevue that was divided by the construction of Interstate 405.

In December of 2017 City Council adopted the *Grand Connection Framework Plan*, establishing the foundation for the route between Meydenbauer Bay Park and the Civic Center District. The plan focused on a number of changes including the identity of the route, cohesive design strategies, art and culture, and placemaking improvements. The Interstate 405 segment seeks to build upon this foundation of improved connectivity and mobility, and placemaking by reconnecting the western and eastern sides of Interstate 405. The crossing will catalyze the Wilburton Commercial Area while completing a missing link in a network of existing and proposed non-motorized trails such as the Eastside Rail Corridor Mountain to Sounds Greenway, and Lake to Lake Trail.

A key goal of the Interstate 405 crossing is to establish a safe and comfortable connection across the interstate for pedestrians, cyclists, and alternative forms of transportation. Additionally, the visioning process seeks to create opportunities for public space as part of the crossing, or adjacent to the crossing, and to create a signature and iconic experience that is identifiable with Bellevue. Along with establishing a connection across the interstate, the crossing will create continuity in

non-motorized routes and connections by interfacing with the regional Eastside Rail Corridor. This interface will create a seamless north-south and east-west connection for non-motorized movement between Downtown, the Wilburton Commercial Area, Spring District, and BelRed.

Relationship to the Wilburton Commercial Area

Historically referred to as “Auto Row,” the Wilburton Commercial Area core straddles the 116th Avenue NE corridor between SE 5th Street and NE 12th Street. Land uses are commercial in nature, and the intensity of use is low. The opportunity for this area as a more urban neighborhood is envisioned by the community and created through local and regional investments in a number of planned transportation infrastructure improvements. By 2023 the Wilburton East Link light rail station will provide service at the northern end of the study area. Additionally the East Main, Bellevue Downtown, and Spring District/120th stations will ensure that the entire study area will be within a transit walkshed. As a complement to the enhanced transit service, the Eastside Rail Corridor will provide a non-motorized north-south spine through the entire study area and connecting to regional destinations and facilities such as the I-90 Trail/Mountains to Sound Greenway and the SR 520 Trail. The Grand Connection is anticipated to interface with the Eastside Rail Corridor and provide an east-west connection to Downtown, further expanding the network of local and regional trails.

Combined with the planned transportation improvements, the Wilburton Commercial Area is positioned between two high growth urban areas in Bellevue - Downtown and BelRed. This advantageous context, in addition to exceptional mobility access, create the opportunity for the Wilburton Commercial Area to become a new urban neighborhood. To explore opportunities and to capitalize on this unique context, the City launched a land use, urban design, transportation, and environmental analysis of the study area. This process created a new vision based upon the analysis of zoning, urban design, transportation, and open space. The analysis was completed in April of 2018, with the vision anticipated to be delivered to City Council in the summer of 2018. The Interstate 405 crossing alternatives were assessed through the Wilburton Commercial Area Draft Environmental Impact Statement (DEIS) process to assist in selecting a preferred alternative.

The City owns the centrally located parcel known as Lincoln Center. It is located between Interstate 405 and 116th Avenue NE and was the previous home of Impact Hub Bellevue, an entrepreneur and startup facility. Sound Transit will control the northern portion of the site with the East Link aerial guide-way passing through this segment. This property is expected to be the most likely landing location of the Grand Connection, connecting pedestrians and cyclists to 116th Avenue NE.

Context

Downtown

West of Interstate 405 is Downtown and the Civic Center District. Anchoring the intersection of NE 6th Street and 112th Avenue NE is the Meydenbauer Center and the future Bellevue Downtown East Link

light rail station. South of the light rail station is Bellevue City Hall. On the east side of 112th Avenue NE, and west of Interstate 405 are commercial office properties. Following the change in zoning as part of the city’s Downtown Livability Initiative, it is reasonable to assume that these properties will redevelop to a greater intensity in the future. Other assets nearby include the Bravern, a high-end retail, office, and residential development, City Center Plaza, and the Bellevue Transit Center.

Two parcels exist within the Civic Center District that are under city ownership. Between the light rail station and Bellevue City Hall, and directly north of the Meydenbauer Center are city owned parcels that are currently being studied as part of a city initiative to determine their future uses and roles. All three alternatives of the Grand Connection do not impact any of the aforementioned properties but do, and will, create a number of opportunities for future development to support the investment of the Interstate 405 crossing segment.

Interstate 405

Interstate 405 represents a large divide between Downtown Bellevue and the Wilburton Commercial Area. It is an eight lane interstate with two HOV lanes at the center. The HOV lanes, which provide direct access to NE 6th Street in Downtown Bellevue, have access ramps between NE 6th Street and NE 4th Street. This area has been identified as the most likely route of the crossing into the Wilburton Commercial Area. In addition to the center HOV ramps and lanes, there are on and off ramps providing NE 4th Street access to and from Interstate 405.

There is currently consideration for extending NE 6th Street to the east into the Wilburton Commercial Area.

This extension would likely include only two lanes and the extension would connect to either 116th Avenue NE or 120th Avenue NE.

Wilburton Commercial Area - Lincoln Center Site

The area bound by NE 8th and NE 4th Streets, and Interstate 405 and 120th Avenue NE, has long been referred to as a “special opportunity area.” At the nexus of the light rail line, Eastside Rail Corridor, and the Grand Connection, this central location is at the heart of the Wilburton Commercial Area. West of 116th Avenue NE in the “special opportunity area” is the City-owned Lincoln Center parcel.

The 4.3 acre site will be reduced in capacity by the East Link light rail aerial guide-way, once complete in 2023. The aerial guide-way as well as any potential extension of NE 6th Street would occupy the northern portion of the site, and reduce its footprint to approximately 2.4 acres. A privately-owned property directly adjacent to the Lincoln Center property that is approximately 1.3 acres. This parcel is currently being used as a parking lot for the nearby auto retailers.

The Lincoln Center site has been identified as the most likely landing location for all of the crossing alternatives, and the primary means to connect to 116th Avenue NE within the Wilburton Commercial Area. Each alternative considers different opportunities for the Lincoln Center property which include public space, storm water treatment, and future development opportunities.

Eastside Rail Corridor

The Eastside Rail Corridor is a King County led initiative to transform a former rail line into a regional recreational trail. The trail connects Woodinville to

the north and Renton to the south, with the Bellevue segment passing directly through the center of the Wilburton Commercial Area. The eastern terminus of the Grand Connection is expected to connect with the Eastside Rail Corridor, improving local and regional non-motorized mobility.

In 2018 King County began removing rails and developing an interim trail. Full trail build out is expected by 2023. The Wilburton Commercial Area Citizen Advisory Committee has defined the Eastside Rail Corridor as one of the most important elements to the future vision of the study area. They have also identified the intersection of the Grand Connection and the Eastside Rail Corridor to be essential to the pedestrian, cyclist, and placemaking experience of the Wilburton Commercial Area.

East Link Light Rail

Just south of NE 6th Street will be the aerial guide-way for the East Link light rail. The guide-way emerges from the Downtown tunnel and Bellevue Downtown station and remains south of the NE 6th Street crossing into the Wilburton Commercial Area. As the guide-way moves east it turns north onto the Eastside Rail Corridor with a station on the north side of NE 8th Street. It remains an aerial guide-way for this entire segment. East Link is expected to begin revenue operations in 2023 and will provide enhanced high capacity regional transit connections in and around the Wilburton Commercial Area. The Interstate 405 crossing will navigate the aerial guide-way as part of a complex network of infrastructure between NE 6th Street and NE 4th Street.

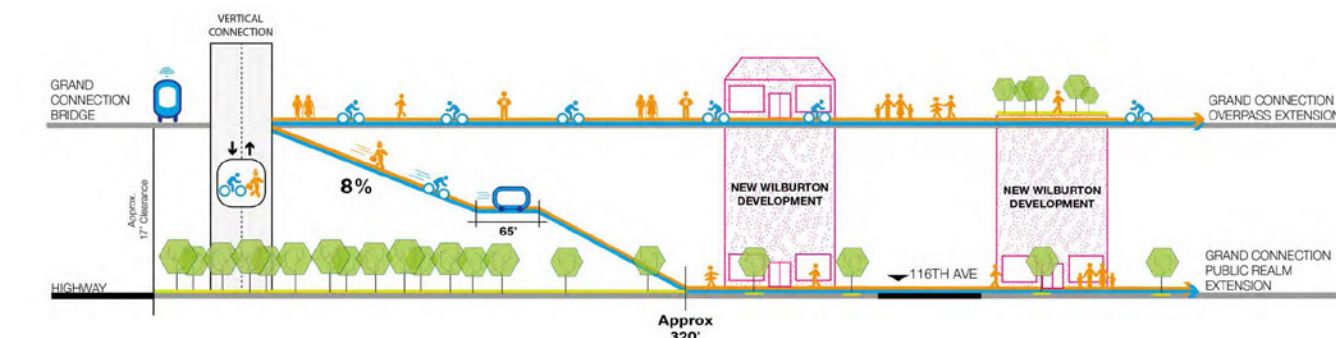
Interface with the Wilburton Commercial Area

There are substantial changes in grade between the beginning point of the Interstate 405 crossing, and its interface with the Eastside Rail Corridor. The intersection of NE 6th Street and the Interstate 405 access ramp is approximately 134 feet in elevation. This area is considered the access or midpoint of the Interstate 405 crossing alternatives. The ridge elevation of the Eastside Rail Corridor in the Wilburton Commercial Area is 140 feet. The landing area of the crossing is at an elevation of 90 feet on the city-owned Lincoln Center site. The area of the Wilburton Commercial Area between Interstate 405 and the Eastside Rail Corridor, as a whole, is at an elevation between 90 feet and 110 feet.

This change in elevation shaped the design and interface of all three alternatives with the Wilburton Commercial Area and the Eastside Rail Corridor. With a new planning vision underway for the Wilburton Commercial Area there is a need to interface the Grand Connection with the new urban neighborhood at the street level and 116th Avenue NE. With the Eastside Rail Corridor expected to be a significant route for pedestrians and cyclists, there is also a strong need to ensure continuity and ease of transitioning from one route to another and to provide efficient access to Downtown Bellevue. To address

the topography changes, all three alternatives include an elevated route that would extend from the 116th Avenue NE landing of each crossing. This elevated route provides a level and accessible transition from the Grand Connection and the Eastside Rail Corridor.

With property on the east side of 116th Avenue currently underdeveloped for the emerging Wilburton Commercial Area vision, the approach was to create a crossing that would successfully integrate into the second or third level of future development. The consultant team has worked closely with stakeholders to create a route that would establish a dynamic and unique intersection between the Grand Connection and the Eastside Rail Corridor. This would allow for increased activation on the second or third level of future development, as well as facing the Eastside Rail Corridor and Grand Connection, while maintaining access directly to 116th Avenue NE and the street level of the Wilburton Commercial Area.



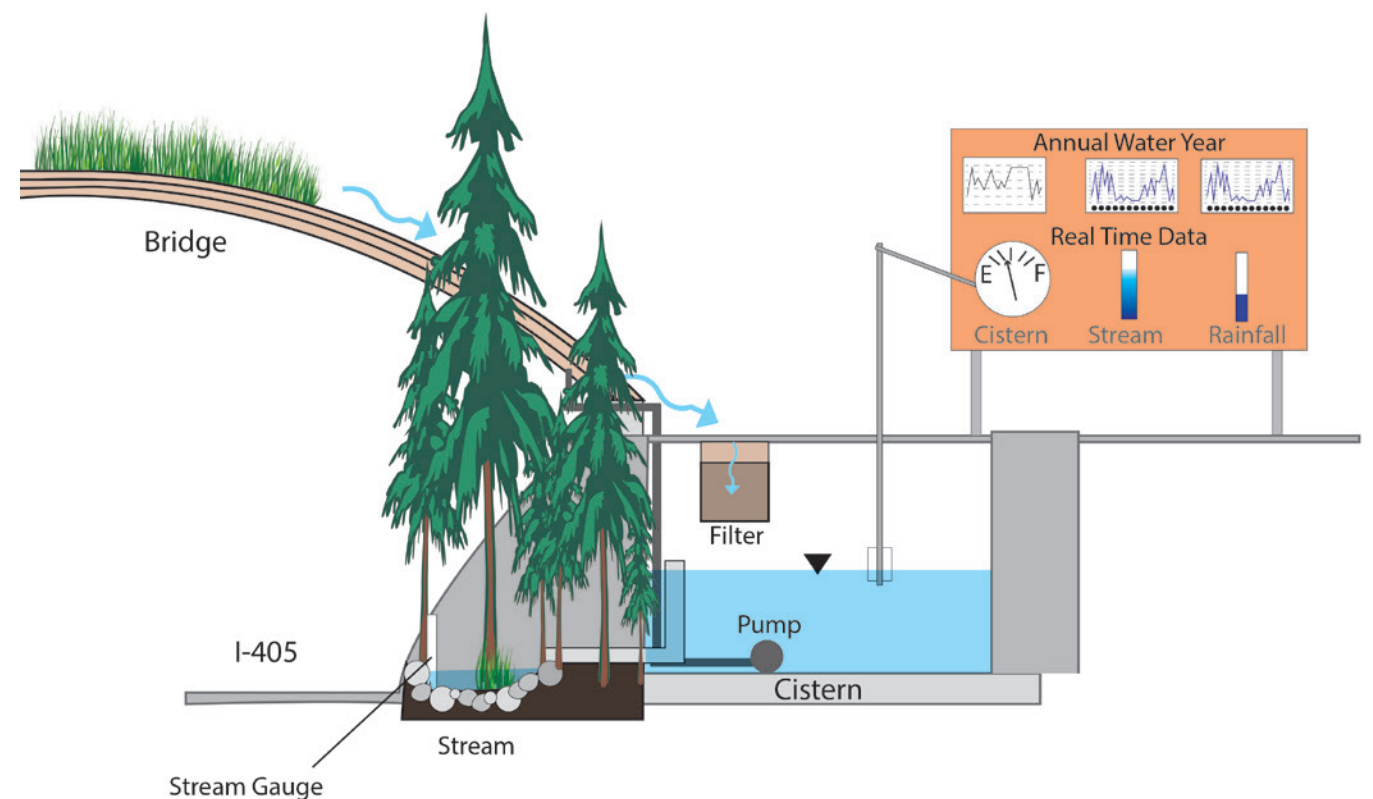
▲ **Diagram Illustrating the Interface of the Grand Connection with the Wilburton Commercial Area and the Eastside Rail Corridor To Address Changes in Topography - Image by** Balmori Associates

Common Sustainable Features

As established in sequence one of the *Grand Connection Framework Plan*, substantial opportunities exist to improve the performance and quality of the natural environment and overall sustainability. The prospect of connecting across Interstate 405 and into the Wilburton Commercial Area provides a unique opportunity to improve the quality of natural assets such as Sturtevant Creek, within the Wilburton Commercial Area, and mitigate impacts from Interstate 405. While each of the alternatives offer different opportunities to improve sustainability, such as the Sculptural Bridge's materiality and the Lid Park's ability to intercept significant quantities of stormwater runoff, each alternative pursues similar strategies to capturing rain water and improving the natural assets within the Wilburton Commercial Area.

Directly east of Interstate 405, within the Wilburton Commercial Area, is Sturtevant Creek. Currently much of the creek flows in a pipe from Lake Bellevue to the north. The portion of the creek impacted by East Link light rail will be daylighted as part of construction and improvements. To continue this opportunity and create a new urban amenity for the future Wilburton Commercial Area vision, each of the Interstate 405 crossing alternatives seek to daylight the portion of the creek on the City-owned Lincoln Center site, and to improve its overall environmental performance.

Each crossing would capture stormwater on its surface and send the runoff into a stormwater facility incorporated as part of improvements to the Lincoln Center site as a standalone stormwater facility or incorporated as part of a larger park. The stormwater facility would feed into a daylighted Sturtevant Creek and improve the overall ecological performance of the



▲ **Cistern Performance Diagram** - *Image by Herrera*

area. The crossing and stormwater facility would offer source and flow control of stormwater, and provide water quality treatment prior to filtering into Sturtevant Creek.

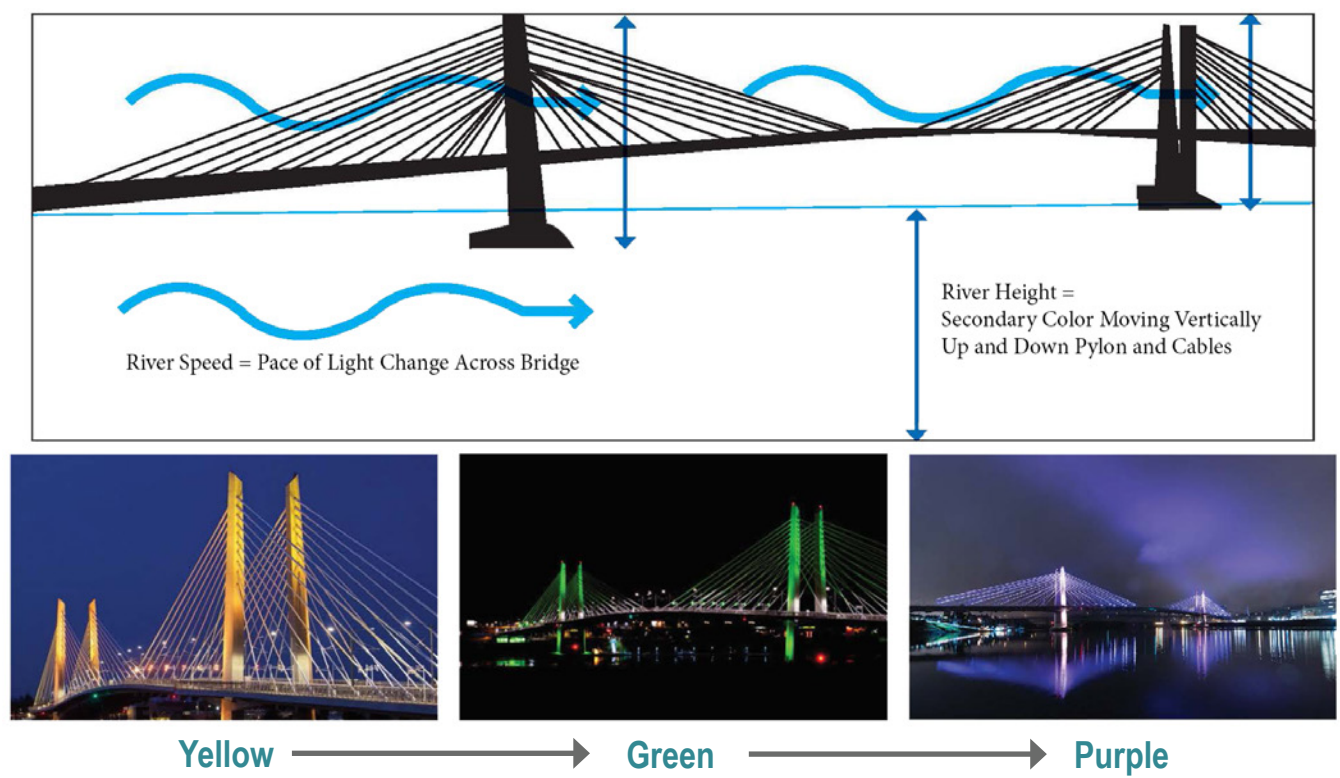
The stormwater facility presents a unique opportunity for interactive educational opportunities and artistic installations that could speak to the environmental performance of the crossing and creek through an interactive cistern. A large interactive water cistern can provide a way for people to learn about and connect with the dynamic hydrological processes that occur in the local climate. Statistics regarding real-time cistern storage, stream gauge elevation data, and rainfall data can be displayed to provide an interactive, continual learning platform that connects the processes of rain events with water quantities and stream behavior.

This performance could also be translated into artistic expression, consistent with the Grand Connection’s overall vision of enhancing opportunities for art and culture. An example is Tilikum Crossing in Portland, Oregon. The crossing employs an illumination display that corresponds to the conditions of the Willamette River below. The color of the crossing’s illumination is determined by the temperature of the water; the warmer the water temperature, the warmer the color of the illumination. The pace of the illumination horizontally across the bridge corresponds to the speed of the river below. A secondary color moves vertically up and down the pylons and cables of the crossing and corresponds to the river height. In its entirety, the color, intensity, and movement of the illumination reflects the speed, height, and color conditions of the river, exhibiting long term and daily changes.



▲ Tilikum Crossing - Portland, Oregon - Image by Kiewit

Tilikum Crossing Illumination Display



Base color is determined by water temperature. The warmer the color, the warmer the water temperature of the river. Large changes will occur over the course of the seasons, and smaller fluctuations will occur constantly throughout the day.