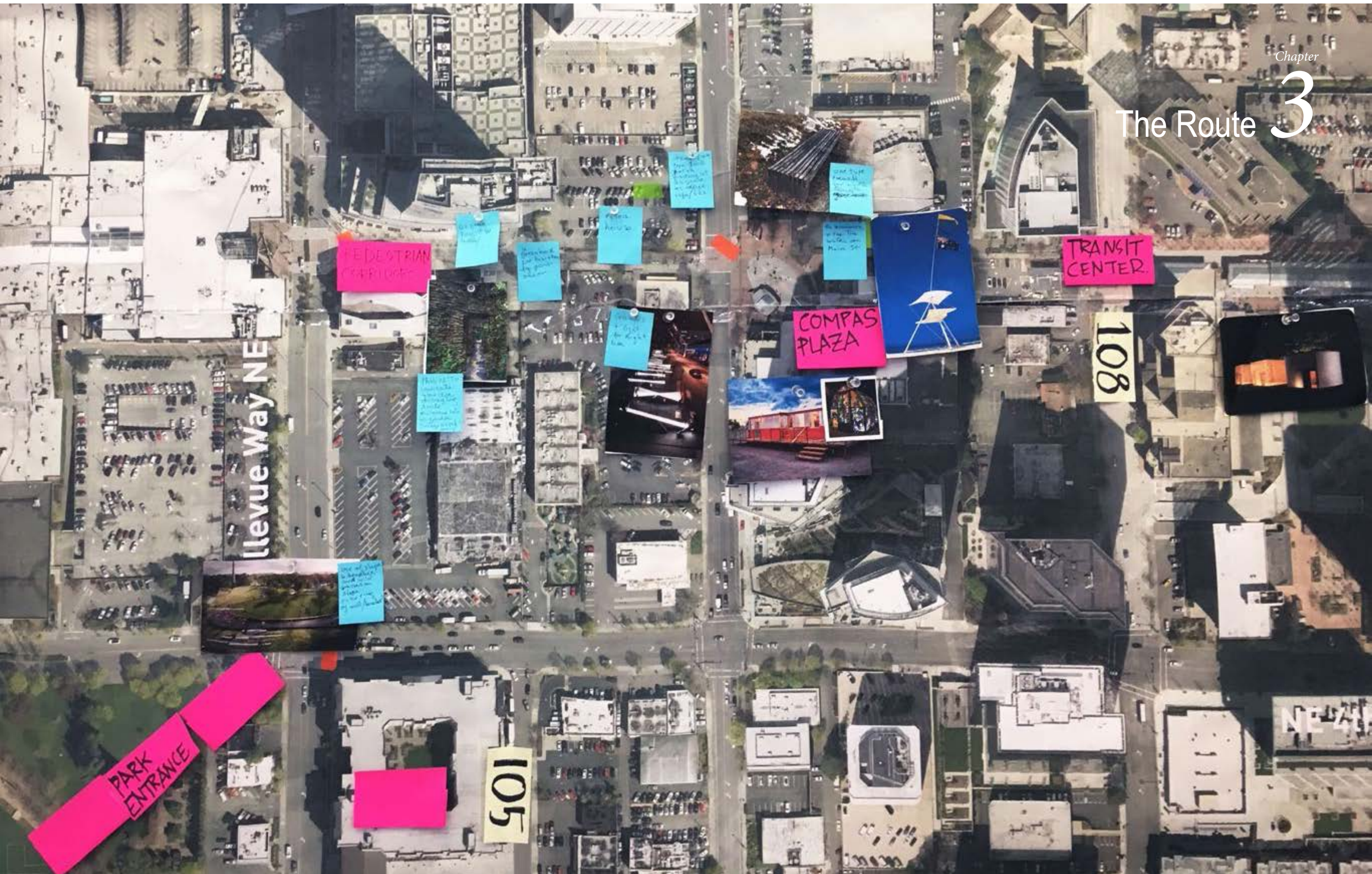


The Route

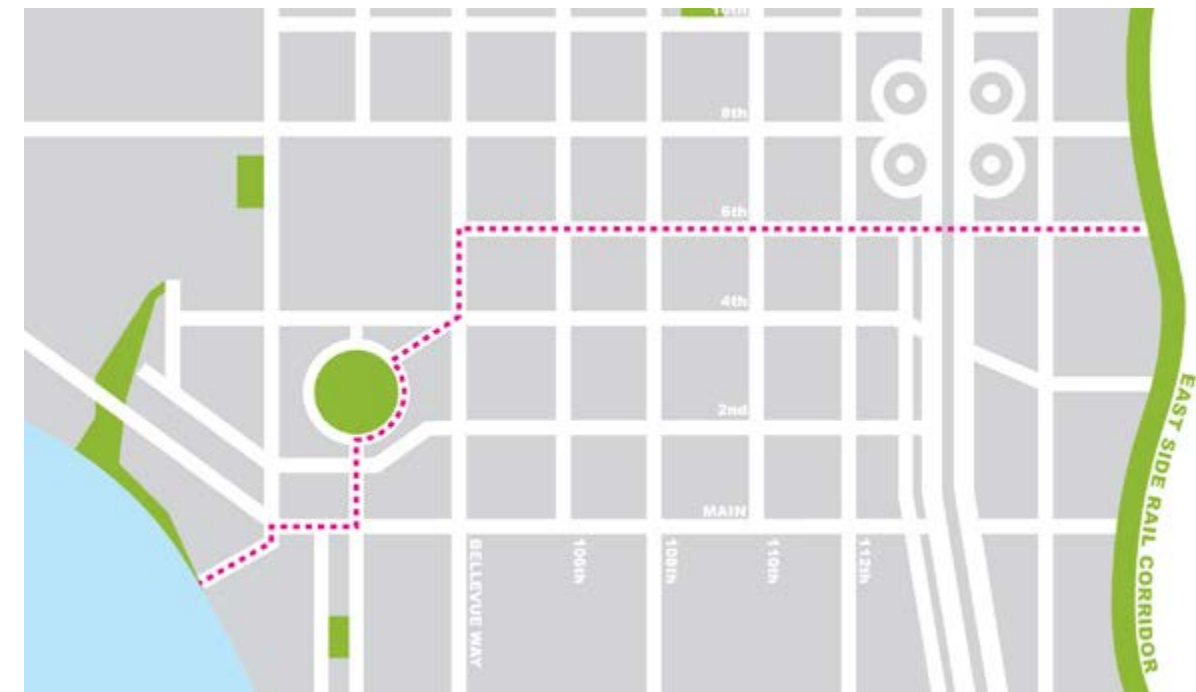


The Route

Overview

The initial concept for the Grand Connection route is to connect Meydenbauer Bay, Old Bellevue, the Pedestrian Corridor, Downtown Bellevue, and the Wilburton Commercial Area to the Eastside Rail Corridor. The route will link Bellevue's waterfront to Downtown while also connecting important existing and future civic and public assets. The extension across Interstate 405 would heal the divide created by and create new development opportunities for the Wilburton Commercial Area. Its interface with the Eastside Rail Corridor will enhance the network of non-motorized connections and to provide access to Downtown Bellevue from points north and south along the Eastside Rail Corridor.

The early concept of the route addressed important elements to connect and to provide access, but did not address the precise route by streets. The following recommendations offer precise locations for the primary route, connecting Meydenbauer Bay to the Eastside Rail Corridor, as well as a secondary route recommendation that expands and enhances connectivity with other regional trail networks, and pursues a secondary route that links additional assets in Downtown Bellevue and the Wilburton Commercial Area.



▲ Initial Route for the Grand Connection - Image by SuttonBeresCuller

Primary Route

The primary route for the Grand Connection seeks to create a seamless connection between many of Bellevue's important assets. The route begins at Meydenbauer Bay Park and navigates 100th Avenue NE to provide access from the waterfront to Main Street and Old Bellevue. The route continues east on Main Street to 102nd Avenue NE, where it turns north and connects with the primary southern entrance of the Downtown Park. Using the existing promenade of the Downtown Park, the route exits at the northeast corner of the park at the intersection of Bellevue Way and NE 4th Street, where the route continues north on Bellevue Way to NE 6th Street. The route turns east at NE 6th Street and includes the Pedestrian Corridor to the Transit Center. The route continues along the south side of the Transit Center and extends across Interstate 405, ultimately interfacing with the Eastside Rail Corridor.

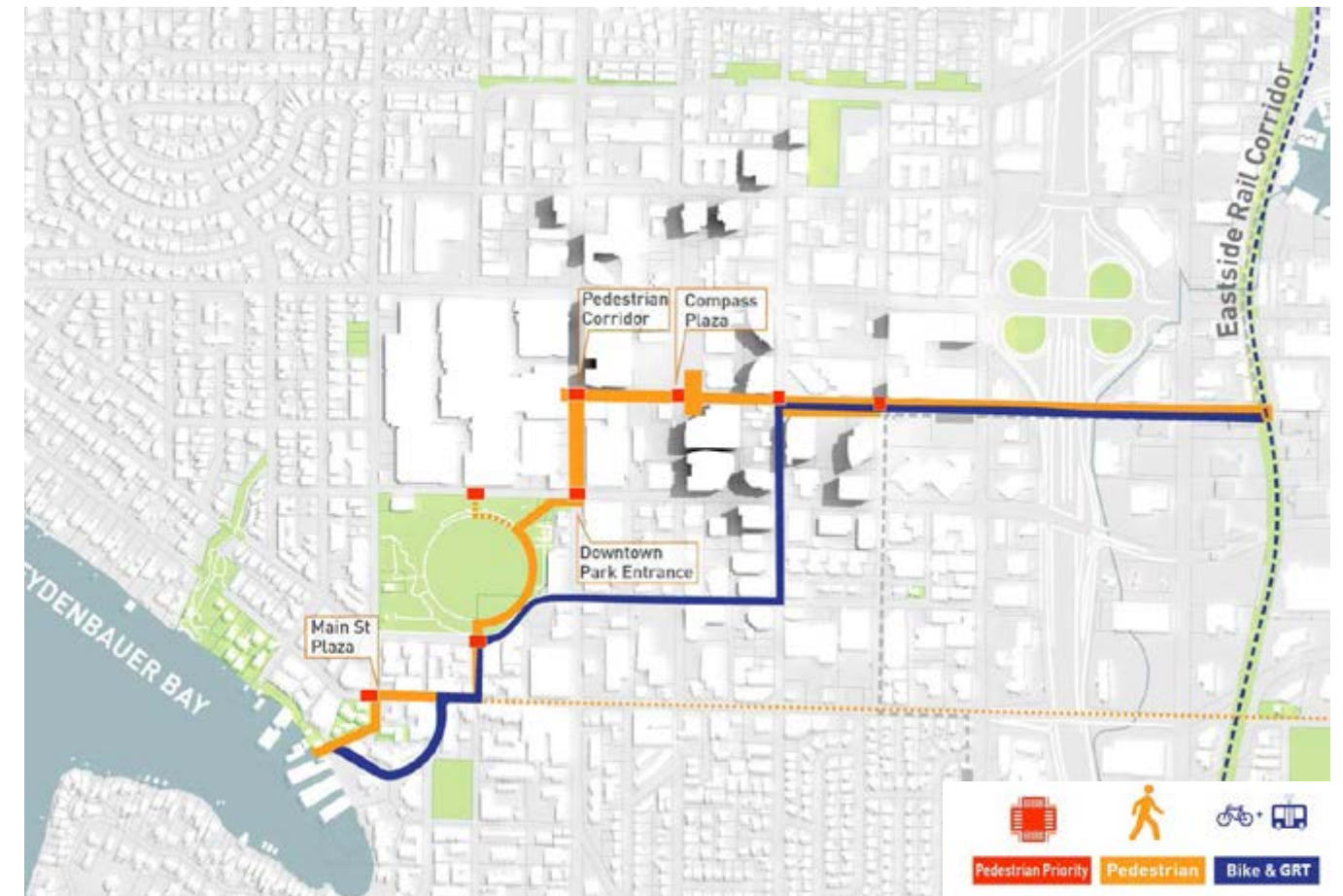
The primary route connects the important assets outlined in the vision for the Grand Connection, including; Meydenbauer Bay Park, Old Bellevue, the

Downtown Park, the Pedestrian Corridor, Bellevue Transit Center, Civic Center District, Wilburton Commercial Area, and the Eastside Rail Corridor.

Significant grade changes exist along much of the route, as well as spatial limitations. In response, the recommendation was made to include a route that deviated from the mainline of the Grand Connection, beginning at 108th Avenue NE. This alternative route would provide access for bicycle commuters and potential alternative modes of transportation covered later in this document. While bicycles would not be prohibited between 108th Avenue NE and the Downtown Park, the alternative route allows for safe and efficient movement of bicycles until the route reconnects with the mainline at 102nd Avenue NE and NE 2nd Street. To address the grade challenges between Old Bellevue and Meydenbauer Bay Park, the route splits again at Meydenbauer Way SE in order to navigate the planned entrance to Meydenbauer Bay Park at 100th Avenue SE and its terraced entry.



▲ Rendering of Meydenbauer Bay Park's Entrance Looking West from 100th Avenue and Main Street



▲ Primary Grand Connection Route - Image by Balmori Associates

Secondary Route

The secondary route seeks to build upon the connectivity of the primary route by linking more of Bellevue's green assets. The most significant change is the inclusion of Main Street as a secondary route. This expansion, first suggested through public comment, would connect with Wilburton Hill Park and the Botanical Garden. Through the online and physical engagement map, the City heard the importance of these green assets and making them part of a larger network or public space. Including Main Street as a secondary route would link the Grand Connection with the Lake to Lake Trail with potential aesthetic and public space improvements that complement the primary route.

To the west, the route is also expanded to include all of the future Meydenbauer Bay Beach Park and extending into the nearby neighborhoods to form a connection along NE 4th Street and the northern entry to the Downtown Park. Ultimately the route would include the entire Downtown Park promenade. The expansions to include all of the future Meydenbauer Bay Park and Main Street also seek to capitalize on future independent City projects such as the park expansion and improvements to Main Street that support the overall vision of the Grand Connection improving mobility and connectivity while linking together Bellevue's public assets.

The expansion of the route was also supported by an Urban Land Institute National Advisory panel that conducted an analysis of the Wilburton Commercial Area in May of 2016. Their recommendation was to expand the route to connect Bellevue's "green assets" that could be enhanced by technology to support and showcase the local economy and businesses.

Public Input

Bicycle and Pedestrian Safety

Improved safety for cyclists and pedestrians was a top priority for public engagement respondents. The expansion of the route, and including a dedicate bike route, creates opportunities to improve the safety of more routes and corridors for cyclists and pedestrians.

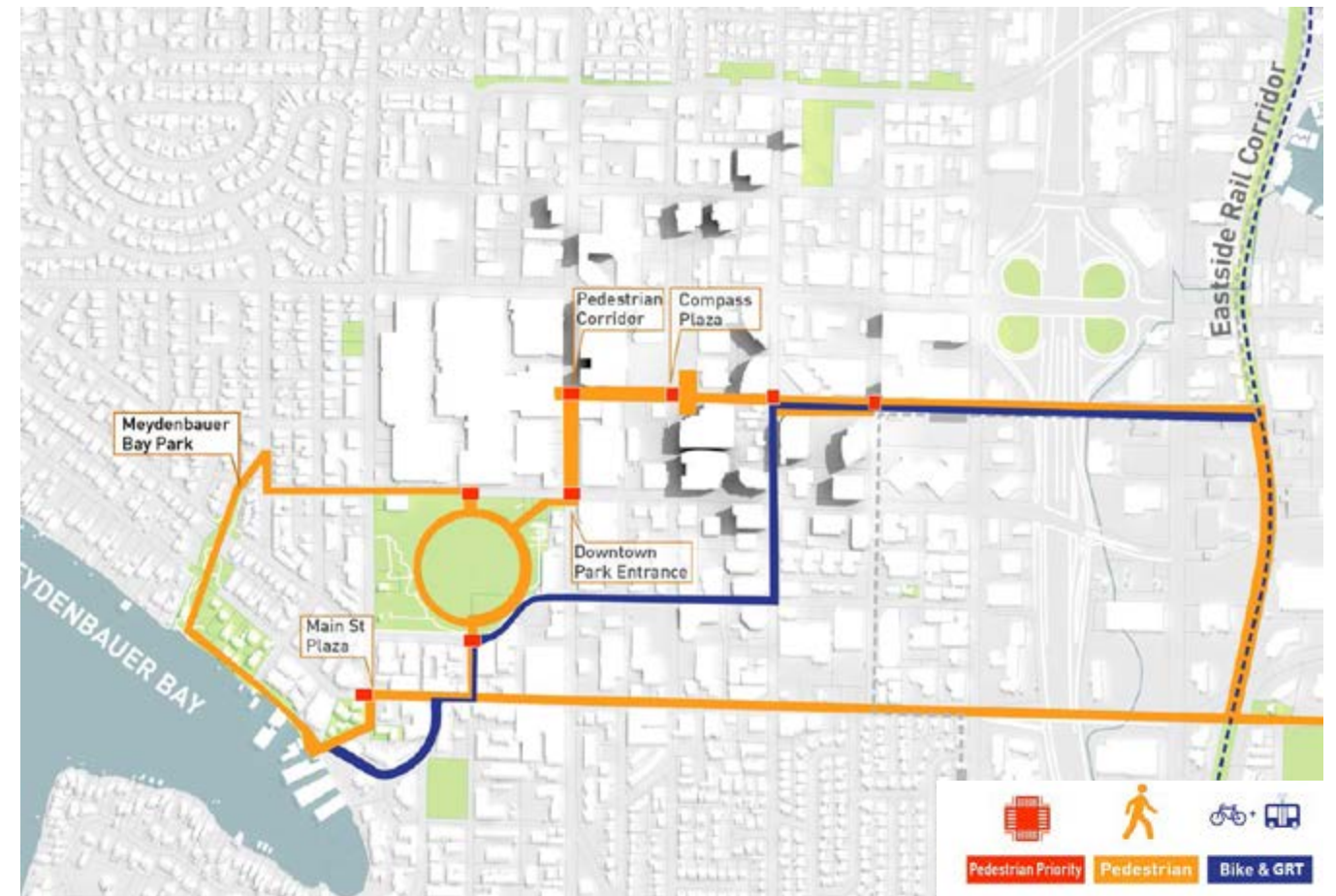
Bellevue Botanical Garden

The Botanical Garden was perceived as a key asset to the City and a unique opportunity to integrate this beloved public space as a destination for the project. Connecting to the Botanical Garden ranked as one of the most frequent comments received during public engagement.



Next Steps:

- Study impacts of the alternative transportation route and its impact on existing and proposed infrastructure and initiatives. Consider other potential alternatives as options for the alternative transportation route.
- Explore feasibility of secondary route on Main Street and its potential impacts and continuity with existing City plans and initiatives such as the Lake to Lake Trail.
- Study impacts of the route expansion north and west of Meydenbauer Bay Park.
- Evaluate potential to connect route to the Wilburton Hill Park and Botanical Garden.



▲ Primary, Secondary and Expanded Grand Connection Route - Image by Balmori Associates