



## CITY OF BELLEVUE

In Partnership with the  
University of Washington

### CIVIC CENTER VISION DEVELOPMENT

City of Bellevue Project Lead  
Emil King

University Instructor: Branden Born

Student Author: Flora Tempel

Livable City Year 2018–2019  
in partnership with  
City of Bellevue

Winter - Spring 2019





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in partnership with  
City of Bellevue  
[www.washington.edu/livable-city-year/](http://www.washington.edu/livable-city-year/)

# ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

Our studio would not have been possible without the support and assistance of our City of Bellevue Project Lead, Emil King, Strategic Planning Manager in the City of Bellevue’s Community Development Department. Emil was always available to answer questions and meet with us. In addition, we would like to thank his colleague Gwen Rousseau, who attended all of our meetings and actively participated by supporting and encouraging our projects.

We would also like to thank the following individuals who attended our presentations and design review meetings. They provided key information about the site and Bellevue at large, and used their extensive knowledge to give helpful feedback for our designs.

**Bellevue Downtown Association**

Matt Jack

**City of Bellevue**

**City Manager’s Office**

Nancy LaCombe

**Community Development**

Kris Goddard

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Scott MacDonald

**Finance and Asset Management**

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**Meydenbauer Center**

Tim Carr

Patrick McCluskey

**Sound Transit**

Julie Cripe Montgomery

**Visit Bellevue**

Justin Lynch

Brad Jones

Their active involvement, support, and constructive feedback were invaluable to our learning and the success of this project. Thank you all!



Urban planning studio students at Bellevue City Hall following their final presentation. Instructor Branden Born is second from left.  
TERI THOMSON RANDALL

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**Recommended citation:** Tempel, Flora. *Civic Center Vision Development*. Seattle: University of Washington, Livable City Year. 2018-2019.

## ABOUT LIVABLE CITY YEAR

The University of Washington's Livable City Year (LCY) initiative is a partnership between the university and one local government for one academic year. The program engages UW faculty and students across a broad range of disciplines to work on city-defined projects that promote local sustainability and livability goals. Each year hundreds of students work on high-priority projects, creating momentum on real-world challenges while serving and learning from communities. Partner cities benefit directly from bold and applied ideas that propel fresh thinking, improve livability for residents, and invigorate city staff. Focus areas include environmental sustainability; economic viability; population health; and social equity, inclusion and access. The program's 2018–2019 partner is the City of Bellevue; this follows partnerships with the City of Tacoma (2017–2018) and the City of Auburn (2016–2017).

LCY is modeled after the University of Oregon's Sustainable City Year Program, and is a member of the Educational Partnerships for Innovation in Communities Network (EPIC-N), an international network of institutions that have successfully adopted this new model for community innovation and change. For more information, contact the program at [uwlcyl@uw.edu](mailto:uwlcyl@uw.edu).



## ABOUT CITY OF BELLEVUE

Bellevue is the fifth largest city in Washington, with a population of more than 140,000. It's the high-tech and retail center of King County's Eastside, with more than 150,000 jobs and a skyline of gleaming high-rises. While business booms downtown, much of Bellevue retains a small-town feel, with thriving, woodsy neighborhoods and a vast network of green spaces, miles and miles of nature trails, public parks, and swim beaches. The community is known for its beautiful parks, top schools, and a vibrant economy. Bellevue is routinely ranked among the best mid-sized cities in the country.

The city spans more than 33 square miles between Lake Washington and Lake Sammamish and is a short drive from the Cascade Mountains. Bellevue prides itself on its diversity. Thirty-seven percent of its residents were born outside of the US and more than 50 percent of residents are people of color, making the city one of the most diverse in Washington state.

Bellevue is an emerging global city, home to some of the world's most innovative technology companies. It attracts top talent makers such as the University of Washington-Tsinghua University Global Innovation Exchange. Retail options abound in Bellevue and artists from around the country enter striking new works in the Bellwether arts festival. Bellevue's agrarian traditions are celebrated at popular seasonal fairs at the Kelsey Creek Farm Park.

Bellevue 2035, the City Council's 20-year vision for the city, outlines the city's commitment to its vision: "Bellevue welcomes the world. Our diversity is our strength. We embrace the future while respecting our past." Each project completed under the Livable City Year partnership ties to one of the plan's strategic areas and many directly support the three-year priorities identified by the council in 2018.



## BELLEVUE 2035: THE CITY WHERE YOU WANT TO BE

*Civic Center Vision Development* supports the *High Quality Built and Natural Environment* target area of the Bellevue City Council Vision Priorities and was sponsored by the Department of Community Development.



### HIGH QUALITY BUILT AND NATURAL ENVIRONMENT

**Bellevue has it all.** From a livable high-rise urban environment to large wooded lots in an equestrian setting, people can find exactly where they want to live and work in Bellevue. The diverse and well-balanced mix of business and commercial properties and wide variety of housing types attract workers and families who desire a safe, sustainable, and accessible community.

Bellevue has an abundance of parks and natural open space. Known as a “city in a park,” our park system is one of the best in the nation due to its high park acreage-to-population ratio. From neighborhood walking paths and forested trails to a regional waterfront park, we enjoy a variety of recreational opportunities within walking distance of our homes and businesses. Bellevue is a “Smart City” with a clean, high-quality environment and excellent, reliable infrastructure that supports our vibrant and growing city, including high-tech connectivity. The city has a connected multi-modal transportation system that blends seamlessly with its buildings, plazas, and parks.

Whether it’s an urban high rise, a classic Bellevue Rambler, or a historic resource, the constant is our people. Our neighborhoods and businesses transcend age, ethnicity, and culture to create safe, welcoming places to live and work.

## BELLEVUE 2035: THE CITY WHERE YOU WANT TO BE

*Bellevue welcomes the world. Our diversity is our strength.  
We embrace the future while respecting our past.*

The seven strategic target areas identified in the Bellevue City Council Vision Priorities are:



### ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

Bellevue business is global and local.



### TRANSPORTATION AND MOBILITY

Transportation is both reliable and predictable. Mode choices are abundant and safe.



### HIGH QUALITY BUILT AND NATURAL ENVIRONMENT

From a livable high-rise urban environment to large wooded lots in an equestrian setting, people can find exactly where they want to live and work.



### BELLEVUE: GREAT PLACES WHERE YOU WANT TO BE

Bellevue is a place to be inspired by culture, entertainment, and nature.



### REGIONAL LEADERSHIP AND INFLUENCE

Bellevue will lead, catalyze, and partner with our neighbors throughout the region.



### ACHIEVING HUMAN POTENTIAL

Bellevue is a caring community where all residents enjoy a high quality life.



### HIGH PERFORMANCE GOVERNMENT

People are attracted to living here because they see that city government is well managed.

For more information please visit: <https://bellevuewa.gov/city-government/city-council/council-vision>

# EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The City of Bellevue is working towards developing a vision for a Civic Center. This project will be located adjacent to City Hall, the new East Link light rail station, and Meydenbauer Center. It will also integrate significant connectivity plans for the Downtown area, as well as support the increasing residential and office density in the Downtown and Wilburton neighborhoods. In this Urban Planning studio, students developed an analysis of the site, investigated case studies from around the world, and created different design alternatives for the City.

The three student teams developed their designs by focusing on core values.

- **Team One** focused on “Intimacy” and applied a green infrastructure lens
- **Team Two** created a “Civic Home” with a focus on housing
- **Team Three** developed a “Cultural Center” that developed economic potential on the site.

We hope that these divergent designs and the concepts that inspired them will help Bellevue envision its future Civic Center.

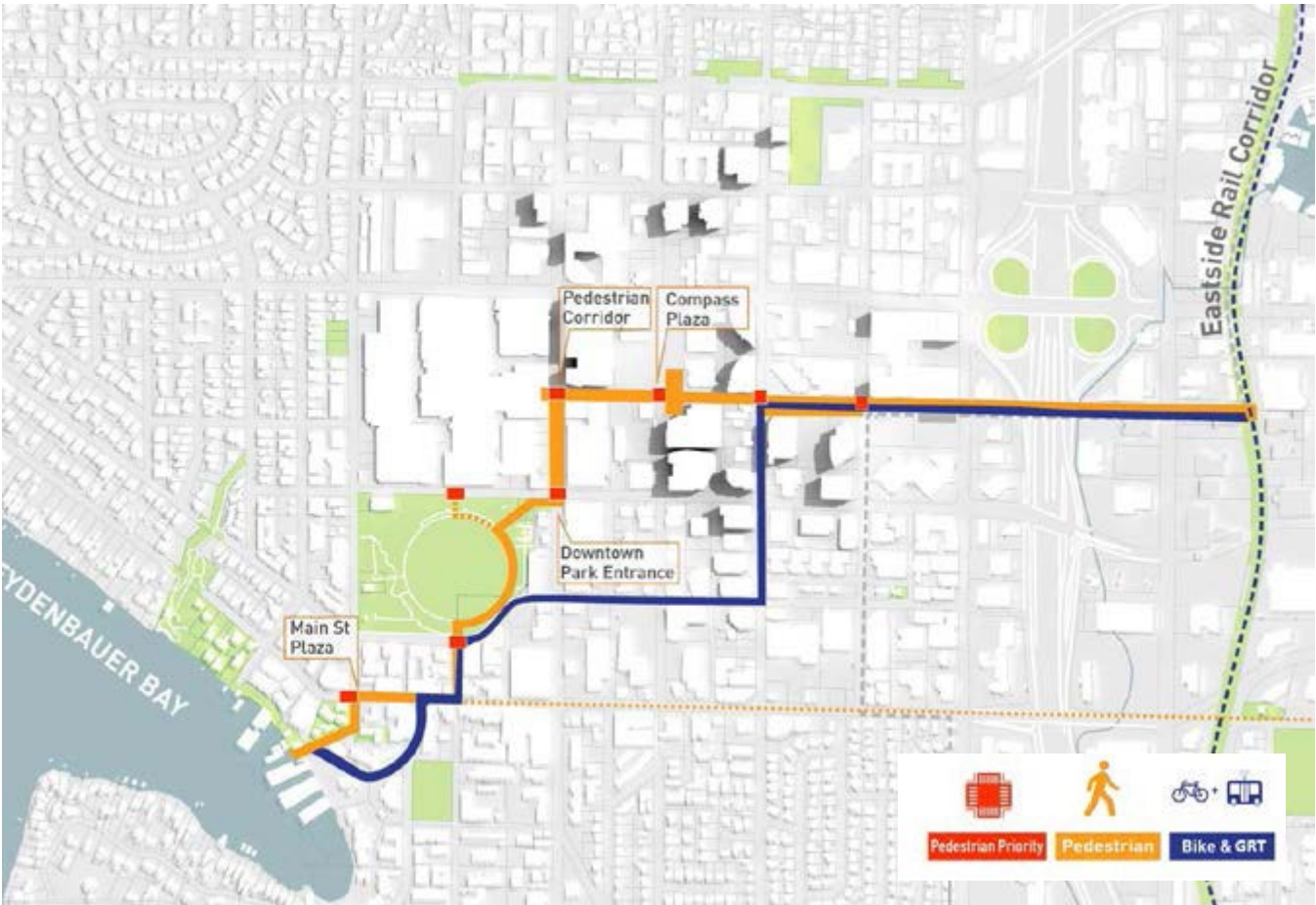


*The Civic Center site when the class visited in mid-April 2019, with the Link light rail station under construction in the foreground and City Hall back left.*  
ANDRES ARJONA

# INTRODUCTION

As the Puget Sound region continues to experience exponential growth, the City of Bellevue seeks to leverage simultaneous downtown redevelopment efforts with a re-envisioned Civic Center District. The Bellevue Comprehensive Plan, adopted in 2015, identifies a Civic Center District surrounding Bellevue City Hall. This Civic Center vision would integrate City Hall, the Metro property adjacent to City Hall, Meydenbauer Convention Center (and its expansion), the existing Transit Center and the future light rail station, opening 2023. The proposed public space enhancements will fulfill this vision by directly integrating City Hall with these other community assets. These enhancements will also establish cohesion between the Civic Center District and the anticipated Grand Connection project, which will provide the public with enhanced pedestrian and bicycle connectivity through downtown, from Meydenbauer Bay Park on Lake Washington to the expanding Eastside Rail Corridor regional bike and pedestrian path. Through these efforts, the City aims to realize a vision in which “Bellevue grows in a manner that enhances the livability of the community, while maintaining the elements that residents cherish” (Comprehensive Plan 2015).

This Livable City Year project developed background work in support of the City’s development of the vision and early master plan for the Civic Center, including research, stakeholder engagement, and the development of design options. Our class also reviewed work previously done on the area, analyzed the existing conditions, and investigated case studies to shape and support our conclusions. We strove to integrate planning for the Civic Center Plan, Grand Connection, and Wilburton study area into one cohesive package.



This map shows the primary route of the existing Grand Connection Framework Plan through Bellevue Downtown, which goes through our project site.  
CITY OF BELLEVUE

# METHODS

## THE STUDIO PROCESS

In Winter Quarter of 2019, students in the URBDP Studio Prep class generated a memorandum articulating their analysis of the three biggest issues facing the Civic Center Area, and their best ideas to solve these challenges. Topography, connectivity, civic functions, human-scale design, and affordability were identified as the five key issues that would guide the 2019 urban planning studio class. At the beginning of the studio, three teams were formed based on skills and interests. Each team was instructed to consider the five key issues, and to develop their own perspective and core values to inform their designs. Team One focused on “Intimacy,” Team Two created a “Civic Home,” and Team Three developed a “Cultural Center.”

Before beginning their designs, the students furthered the work that had been done the previous quarter in the Studio Prep class by developing specific site analysis research. Next, they researched and developed case studies of civic centers and lids and analyzed their relevance to Bellevue’s Civic Center. Local, national, and international examples were selected for study. Students used the lessons from these case studies to formulate a design vision and to focus their values.

At mid-quarter, stakeholders convened for a 50% concept design presentation. Using a design station format, students shared their iterative process, including their vision and values, bubble diagrams, preliminary site plans, and connectivity and circulation maps. They later incorporated the stakeholder input into their final designs.

Topography, connectivity, civic functions, human-scale design, and affordability were identified as the five key issues that would guide the 2019 urban planning studio class.

## INITIAL CONDITIONS REPORT

During Winter Quarter 2019, the Urban Design and Planning Studio Prep 506 class closely examined the current characteristics of Bellevue. Six teams researched Bellevue’s history, demographics, economy, capital facilities, infrastructure, community, safety, housing, existing land use, economic development, and environmental plans. Teams assessed key challenges, threats, and opportunities confronting Bellevue and, in particular, the Civic Center Area. The teams compiled the research findings into an Initial Conditions Report and presented their work to Bellevue stakeholders.

The Studio Prep class identified issues that Bellevue must consider as the city adds density and transforms into an urban center. These elements include developing affordable workforce housing, providing access to open space and recreation opportunities, bolstering arts and culture, establishing neighborhood amenities, and investing in necessary infrastructure. Most of the students who worked on this project in 506 continued on to the studio project in Spring Quarter.

## PROJECTED GROWTH IN BELLEVUE DOWNTOWN



Through research for the Initial Conditions Report (ICR), students were surprised to discover the amount of growth planned for Bellevue Downtown in the future. CITY OF BELLEVUE

# SITE ANALYSIS

## POPULATION

The current population of Bellevue is estimated to be more than 145,000 and is steadily becoming more diverse. There has been a consistent rise in the percentage of foreign-born citizens in the past decade. In 2017, 38% of Bellevue’s population was born in another county. Bellevue is ethnically and racially diverse, with 48% of the population identifying as a minority race or ethnicity. According to the Census Bureau’s 2017 American Community Survey data (1-Year Estimates), 46% of Bellevue speaks a language other than English in their home. The most prominent languages spoken other than English are Mandarin and Cantonese, with a combined 13.65%. It follows that the largest racial/ethnic demographic in Bellevue after White is Asian, with 33.78% of the population in 2017. In Downtown, the Asian population is 41.4%, which is higher than in Bellevue overall (33.8%).

Between 2015 and 2017, Downtown Bellevue more than doubled its population through targeted growth policies. In 2017, an estimated 8.9% of Bellevue’s population lived in Downtown, creating the densest neighborhood in Bellevue. Looking forward, the Downtown neighborhood is expected to accommodate about half of the projected population growth for the entire city through 2035 (Comprehensive Plan 2015).

A daily influx of students, visitors, and workers who travel to the area add to the residential population immediately surrounding the Civic Center in Downtown; the estimated average daytime population of Downtown is 87,200 (Bellevue At a Glance 2018). As the downtown area of Bellevue continues to grow and take on a significant portion of the population growth, there is opportunity in the Civic Center Area to provide a service to the growing, ethnically and culturally diverse residential population of Bellevue, as well as to the significant daytime population who spend their day in the Downtown neighborhood.

### BELLEVUE DOWNTOWN DEMOGRAPHICS, 2000–2019

Downtown Demographics	2000 Census	2010 Census	2017 ACS**
Population	2,421	7,147	14,000***
Median age (years)	57.3	34.1	34.6
Percent of population age 65 or older	43.5%	15.6%	14.5%
Average persons per household	1.43	1.53	1.66
Percent households of one person	65.8%	59.6%	46%
Percent of adults (age 25+) with at least a bachelor’s degree	45.3%	63%	78%
Percent of population who are people of color	19.8%	43.7%	52%
Percent of population (age 5+) that speak a language other than English at home	22.7%	41%	48%

*The Bellevue Downtown neighborhood is a diverse and affluent area, where an increasing number of people choose to live.* CITY OF BELLEVUE

\*\*Source: 2013–2017 American Community Survey 5-year estimates

\*\*\*Source: City of Bellevue Community Development Department (January 2019)

## DOWNTOWN LAND USE

The Downtown Subarea Plan in Bellevue’s Comprehensive Plan divides Bellevue’s Downtown neighborhood into seven neighborhood districts, intended to create distinct areas with unique character, walkable spaces, and neighborhood amenities (Downtown Subarea Plan 2017). A series of “Signature Streets” are intended to tie the districts together and add distinct character to Downtown by building on the existing shopping, entertainment, commercial, and pedestrian functions. Multiple uses are encouraged on individual sites, in individual buildings, and in the district as a whole. Taller buildings and additional density in the Civic Center portion of the district east of 111th Avenue NE between NE 4th and NE 8th Street are allowed, based on proximity to the Downtown Core and convenient access to the regional freeway system and transit (Land Use Code 2017).

Our Civic Center site lies within the Eastside Center district and is connected to the west side of Downtown through a Pedestrian Corridor on NE 6th Street. The Civic Center site is zoned for Downtown Mixed Use and Downtown Office, allowing for the development of a wide range of retail, office, residential, and support uses.



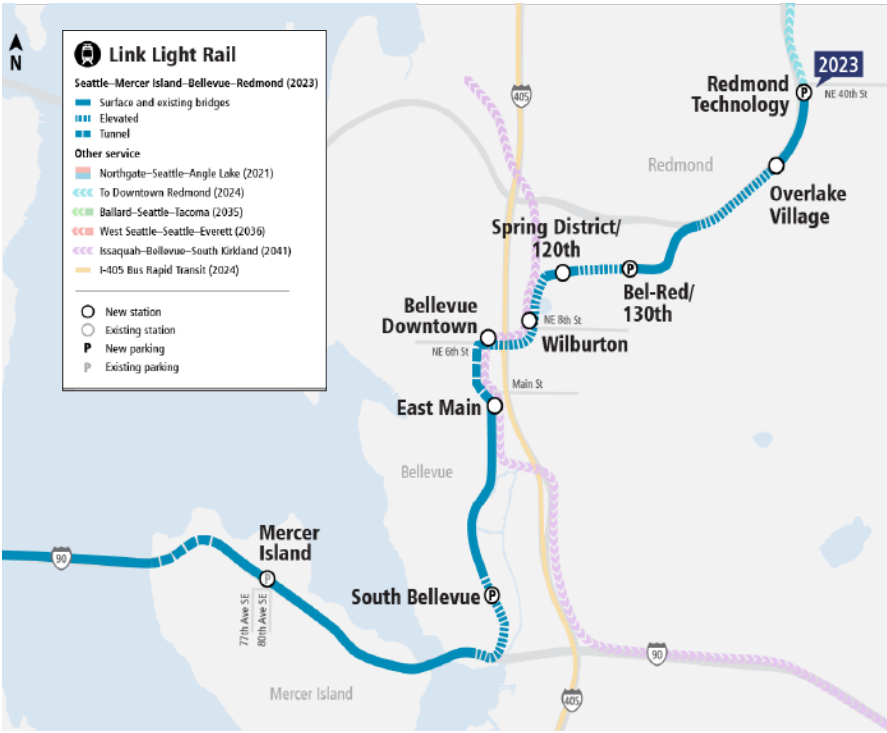


*In the future, Wilburton will become a densely populated neighborhood, which will add to the need for amenities and connectivity in this area.*  
CITY OF BELLEVUE

# CIRCULATION

The Civic Center site’s proximity to the Bellevue Transit Center, I-405, and major sources of employment makes the site an important transportation hub. In the past, moving cars has been a priority, with Bellevue undertaking efforts to be more pedestrian and bicyclist friendly. It has reduced street parking to prioritize midblock pedestrian crossings and protected bike lanes. There is no on-street parking adjacent to the Civic Center site, although it is accessible from existing parking located to the south and east of the site on NE 2nd Street, 2nd Place, 3rd Place, and 106th Avenue NE.

On the site, a grade-separated pedestrian crossing has been suggested on the north side, connecting the light rail station and Meydenbauer Center. An at-grade midblock crossing is being constructed to the west side of the site, connecting City Hall to the City Center Plaza development. The Land Use Code specifies 16-foot sidewalk widths around the Civic Center site, which would improve pedestrian safety at the existing crosswalks (Downtown Subarea Plan 2017).



*The Civic Center site is located between the Bellevue Downtown and Wilburton light rail stations, and will span I-405.* SOUND TRANSIT

For bicyclists, the streets around the Civic Center site are still classified as high traffic roads and most of them have uphill grades, but they have received multiple bike parking options. Only 108th Avenue NE provides formal bike lanes, but they are not separated from motorized traffic; 110th Avenue NE has high volumes of motorized traffic, but also features wide shoulders and wide curb lanes, which improve safety. In contrast, 112th Avenue NE is a caution area for bicyclists, where high volumes of traffic move at high speeds and a lack of shoulders or curb lanes makes for a more dangerous road for bicyclists.

Proximity to bus services at the Bellevue Transit Center allows the site to be well connected to bus lines throughout the Puget Sound region. The site is located less than a block from the Bellevue Transit Center. Because of its importance as an employment hub, the availability and connectivity of public transit has an additional importance; reducing single occupancy vehicle trips, lowering speed limits, and preventing congestion will be future challenges for the city and around the civic center. Nearly two miles of new light rail is planned to pass through the area, greatly increasing connectivity and making the area highly desirable for new development. The main downtown station is being built on the same block as City Hall and is the location where the track will exit the downtown tunnel and become an elevated track over I-405 (East Link Extension 2019). Our site is currently the staging ground for the station. Due to the design of the station, our designs must consider accessibility for emergency vehicles in addition to pedestrians.

## CHARACTERISTICS

Roughly 1600 units of housing exist within one city block of the site. This suggests that there is a large population housed in closed proximity to the site, but there is also a lack of good public spaces and community services. The central Downtown area has no public parks or playgrounds, although it is very close to the large Downtown Park and Meydenbauer Bay to the southwest. Green space is provided on some private properties, including City Hall's south side. The majority of public space in the area is hard surfaced and lacks softer landscaping, particularly landscaping with which people can interact.

The City is in the process of developing a comprehensive wayfinding system with common design elements to facilitate navigation and to contribute to the design character of the public realm. The wayfinding

program has signs with directions, maps, historical photos and descriptive text. In addition, the Downtown Subarea Plan includes goals for using gateways and identity treatments to provide a sense of approach to Downtown at key entry points. The intention is to convey a sense of quality and permanence and enhance the attractiveness of the I-405 right-of-way (Downtown Subarea Plan 2017). Gateways can be expressed through architectural elements, vegetation, water features, decorative pavement, and interpretive or directional signage.

Downtown is centered on a slight hill, with a steeper grade change on the east side than the west. The Civic Center site is located on this steeper eastern side and experiences approximately 55 feet of elevation change from west to east; the elevation is 167 feet above sea level on the northwest corner compared to 112 feet on the southeast corner. This topographic change presents challenges, particularly with the western half already housing a parking garage below grade and the northern portion of the site being transformed into the new light rail station. The Civic Center site benefits from the lower profile height of City Hall to the south, which only minimally shades the site. Tall buildings in Bellevue Downtown can have a significant impact on the ability for sunlight to reach spaces intended for outdoor use. Surrounding tall buildings on the east, west, and north side of the site are more distant to the site and only minimally impact the shading on the site.



*The primary site in the Civic Center project is currently the staging ground for the Bellevue Downtown light rail station. ANDREW FENNER*

# ALTERNATIVE ONE: INTIMACY

## FOUNDATIONS

### CONCEPT

We have focused our concept on the idea of Intimacy. We want to deliver an intimate design that contains multifaceted spaces for the local population and that uses environmentally-friendly infrastructure to tie everything together.

### VALUES

Within this vision of Intimacy, we focused on three main values:

**Rooms:** This value comes from urban planner Robert Fishman, who writes about designing spaces for different uses (Fishman 2011). Fishman states that spaces within an area should complement each other. In a similar way, our design strives to create relationships between the various spaces in the Civic Center study area.

**Local residents:** This value underscores that this space is for the people of Bellevue. While the design does not exclude visitors, its scale and use are oriented to those who work in Downtown and to city residents.

**Green infrastructure:** This value supports the city's brand as a "city in a park." We want to use environmentally conscious infrastructure to unite the study area. Our focus is on water infrastructure, multi-modal infrastructure, and education.

### FEATURES

We emphasize our three values through the following primary features within the study area:

- Amphitheater on Civic Center site to accommodate topography
- Large-scale development on Lincoln Center site
- Multiple pedestrian routes
- Space for transportation network companies (rideshares) and food trucks
- Minimal indoor space on western site
- Educational opportunities throughout site

## ABOUT OUR TEAM



The Alternative One team, from left to right: Rawan Hasan, Linya Cheng, Siman Ning, Brock Goodwin, and Andrew Fenner NORA YAO

**Alternative One team:** Rawan Hasan, Linya Cheng, Siman Ning, Brock Goodwin, and Andrew Fenner

Our team consists of five members with different educational and professional backgrounds and different nationalities. Our diverse set of educational skills result from degrees in Civil Engineering, Architecture, and Urban Planning. Team members have a range of professional experience as a landscape planner, an urban designer, and a military engineer. Our team is additionally globally diverse with two members from the Midwest, two members from China, and another from Jordan in the Middle East. We have found this diversity of thought to be advantageous in the way we address issues and build conclusions.

### OUR PROCESS

From the beginning our team kept in mind that the Civic Center site will one day be the busiest corner in Bellevue. We wanted to responsibly maximize the use of the Lincoln Center site and leave the I-405 lid site intact. We approached this design challenge through the five key topic areas of our studio class: topography, connectivity, civic functions, human-scale design, and affordability. We also considered practicality and cost when refining our proposal.

# CASE STUDY: FIRST AND BROADWAY CIVIC CENTER PARK, LOS ANGELES, CALIFORNIA

The First and Broadway (FAB) Civic Center provides a visual and physical connection from the cultural corridor of 1st Street to the front steps of Los Angeles City Hall. Included is an “open gallery” central plaza, amphitheater, restaurants and cafes, informal seating, gardens, terraces, and a naturally designed creek. The design goal is to provide a space for relaxation in the civic center. Many shaded outdoor rooms for small group gatherings, food fairs, art installations, and community events are provided. All stormwater is handled onsite through capture, treatment, and infiltration.



*These renderings illustrate the use of “rooms” in this design for the First and Broadway Civic Center. OMA*

## RESEARCH

To begin working on our concept, we conducted further research into green design options, particularly green infrastructure methods and green facades and walls.

### Green Infrastructure

Green infrastructure is an approach to water management that protects, restores, or mimics the natural water cycle. It can provide habitat for urban insects and birds and support native plant life. Local green infrastructure practices include rain gardens and bioswales, permeable pavements, green roofs, infiltration planters, trees and tree boxes, and rainwater harvesting systems.

**Rain gardens** help collect and intercept stormwater by slowing and filtering runoff for natural ground infiltration. Rain gardens are typically found in residential areas and consist of a slight depression in soil. They are vegetated with plants that can survive in both flood and drought environments. They are usually smaller installations than bioswales.

**Bioswales** are also designed to manage runoff. Similar to a rain garden, a bioswale can slow and filter stormwater, but it is more linear, deeper, and often requires engineered soils.

### Green Facades and Walls

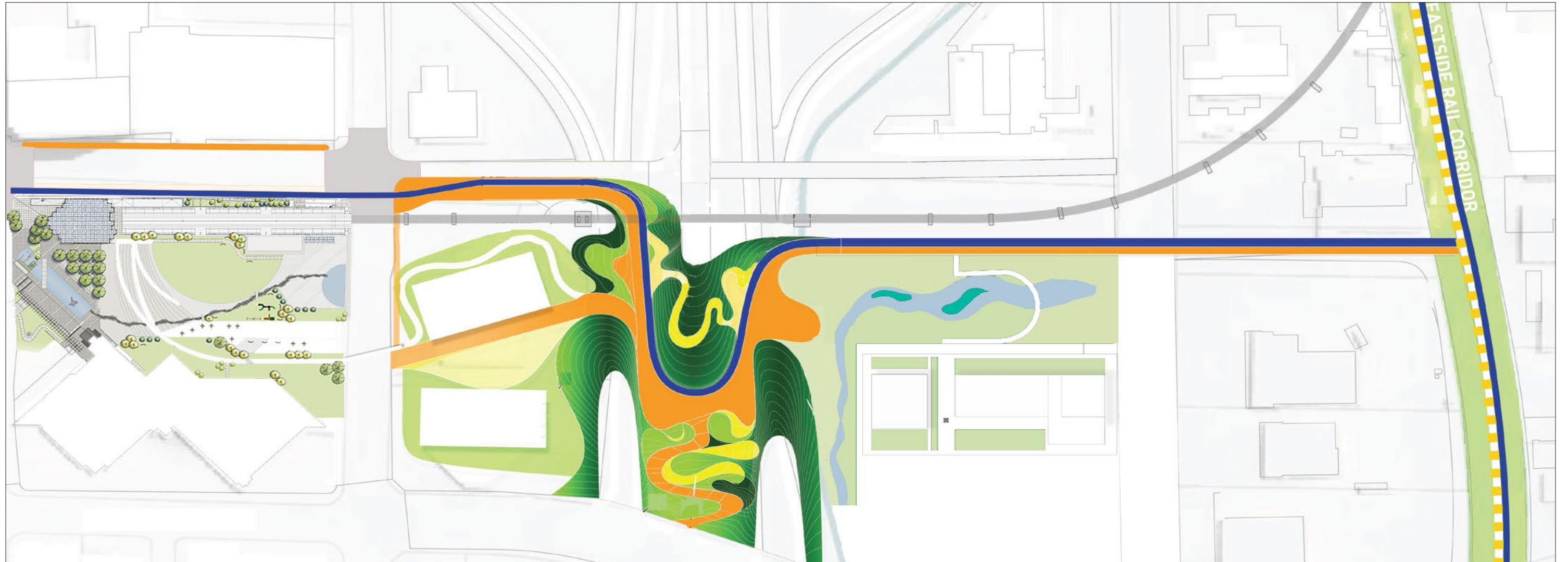
**Green facades** are vertical systems with climbing ground covers or cascading plants to cover supporting structures. Plants are rooted at the base of structures, in intermediate planters, or on rooftops. The supporting structures can be attached to walls or freestanding. Green walls require low maintenance and take three to five years to achieve full coverage.

**Living walls** are systems of pre-vegetated panels or integrated fabrics. The plants are rooted directly into the wall system. Living walls require more intensive maintenance as panels are grown in greenhouses and assembled.

An example of a stormwater retention rain garden at SUNY College of Environmental Science and Forestry, Syracuse, New York. RESTFULC401



An example of a green wall on Blusson Hall, Simon Fraser University, Burnaby, British Columbia, Canada. DASONNENFELD



Alternative One final design, plan view. LCY STUDENT TEAM

## FINAL DESIGN

### OVERVIEW

The western edge of this study area will eventually be the busiest corner in Bellevue. The world's most successful public spaces are walkable, useable, and sit-able, and we strive for the same in our design. Our proposal creates a hybrid park/plaza space within the Civic Center site with diverse spaces for sitting, playing, and organized activities. It is a

space for people to gather, to interact with each other, and to feel a sense of belonging and community. Moving west, the I-405 freeway lid serves as a unifying connection between Downtown Bellevue and Wilburton, creating a more cohesive, urban space. At the Lincoln Center site, we envision housing density, plain and simple. We see high-rise construction with mixed-use ground floor orientations and a wetland to give the space a suggestion of nature. Additionally, the site is situated with attractive proximity to downtown jobs and affordable connections to the region through bus, light rail, and bike infrastructure.

# KEY CONSIDERATIONS

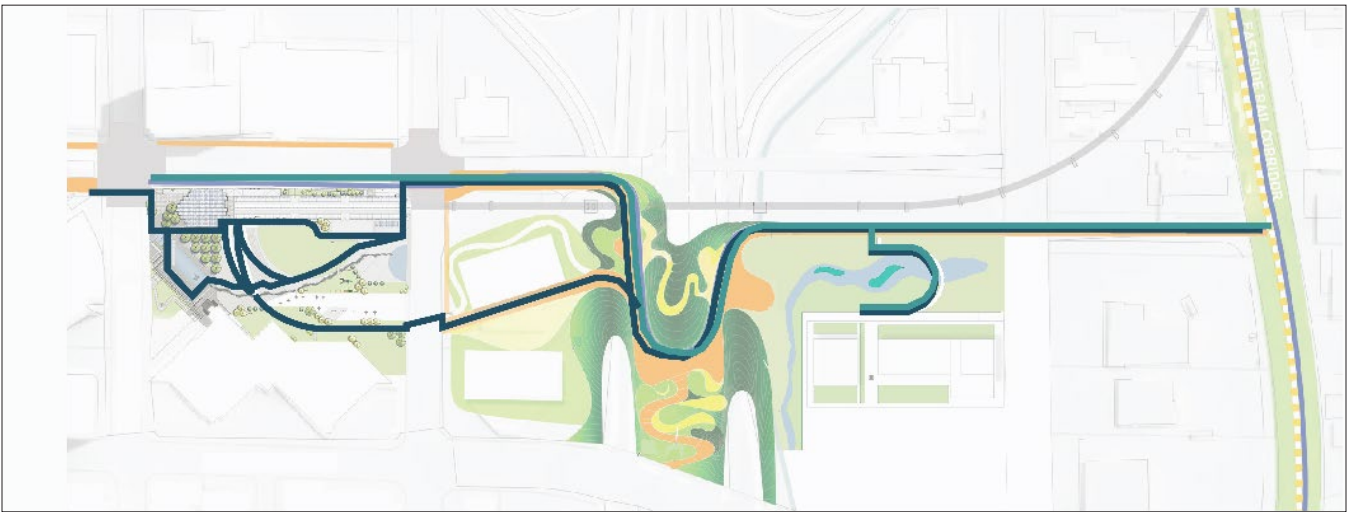
## Topography

Our concept makes every attempt to make best use of the topography. We emphasize the natural contours of the sloping land in the Civic Center site to create an amphitheater that ties together the upper and lower spaces. The topography additionally creates viewpoints within the site that are used to diversify seating options. The I-405 lid creates its own topographic form with gradual slopes and viewpoints. The low, flat topography of the Lincoln Center site allows us to uncover Sturtevant Creek, creating a small wetland on the ground level next to a large high-rise.

## Connectivity

Our design strives to separate commuter traffic from recreational traffic. Within the Civic Center site, the Upper Plaza is left to function simply as an entrance to the Link light rail station to allow quick, seamless movement to and from the station. The design reduces 110th Avenue NE to one driving lane in both directions to facilitate crossing by pedestrians, thus prioritizing the commuter connections between the light rail station, transit center, and downtown. On NE 6th Street the design reduces the lanes to one eastbound lane and two westbound lanes, removing one eastbound lane and a center turning lane. This adds generous space for wide sidewalks and a separated bikeway for the Grand Connection route.

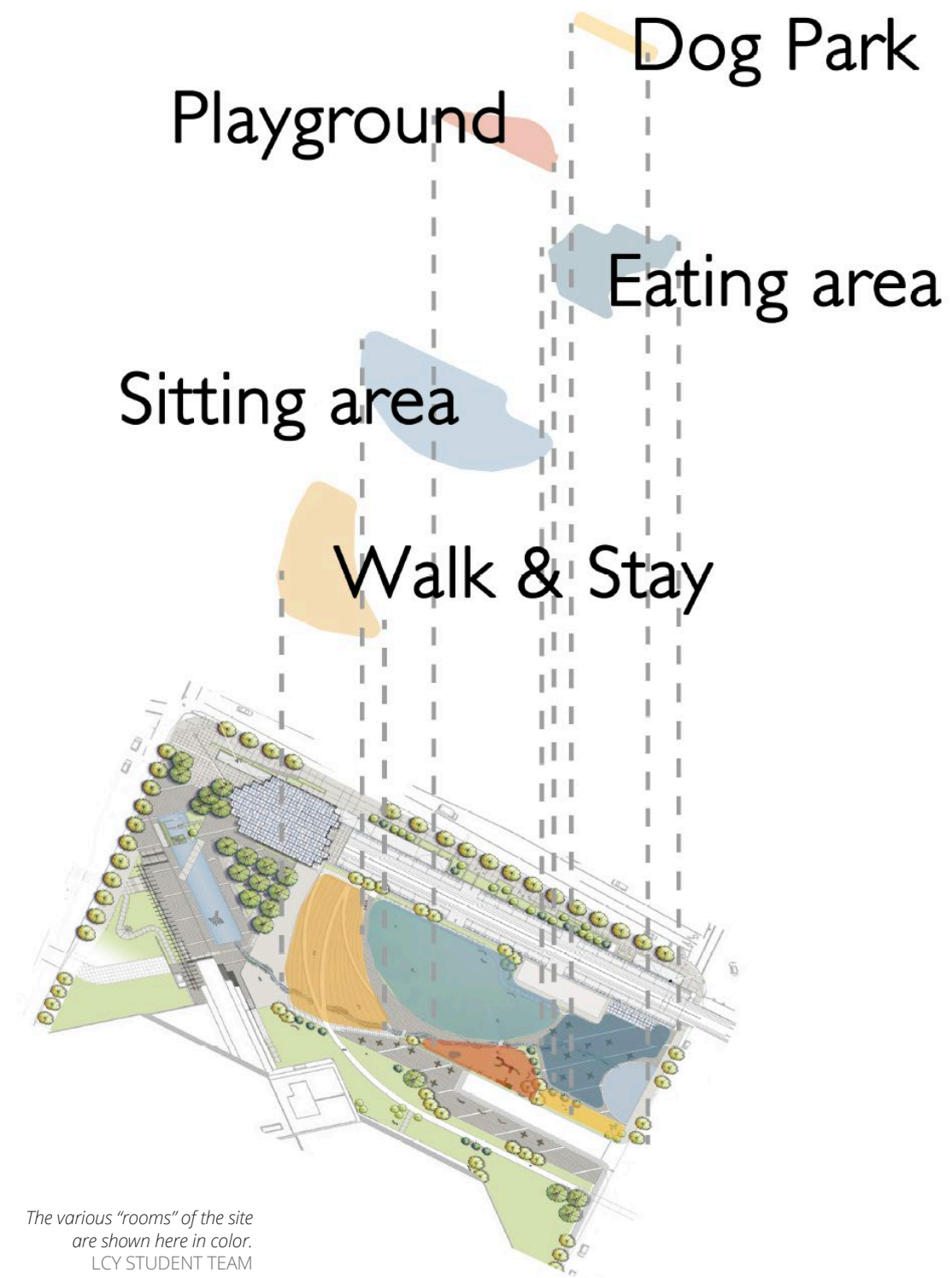
Multiple options within the Civic Center site allow east-west passage including a pedestrian bridge over 112th Avenue NE, which connects the site to the I-405 lid. This connection continues across the lid and joins the bikeway at NE 6th Street. It then continues through Lincoln Center onwards to the Eastside Rail Corridor. Lincoln Center is connected to the Grand Connection route via an elevated circular ramp that “flies” across the wetland section and connects the ground-level retail.



This plan view illustrates the pedestrian and bicyclist connections in dark blue and light blue, respectively LCY STUDENT TEAM



An approximate cross section of the entire site shows the topographical changes. LCY STUDENT TEAM

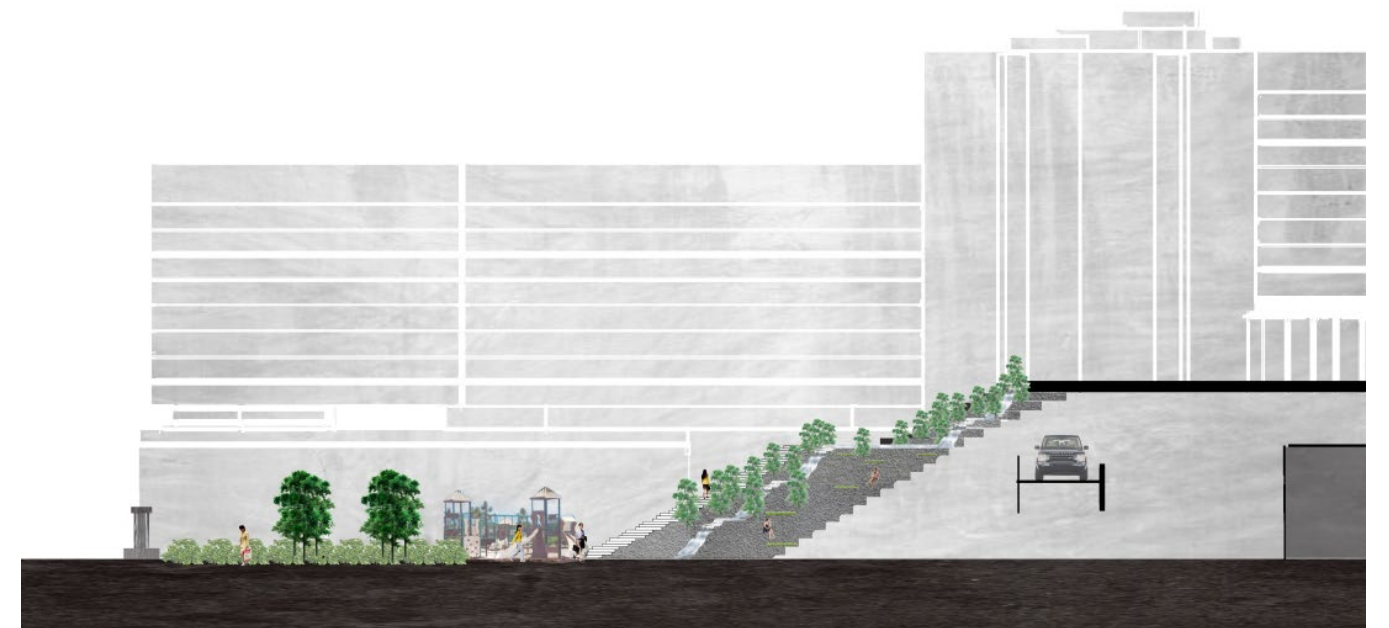


### **Civic Function**

Our design concentrates civic functions on the western site of the study area. This is due to its proximity to the city center and its opportunity to act as the "front door" to the city. We define civic functions as places that are for the public, and that develop a sense of community. The design provides various spaces to fit the needs of different groups while allowing them to interact with each other. The I-405 lid and Lincoln Center site will draw people to the Civic Center space by increasing access (the I-405 lid) and by providing residences close to the space (Lincoln Center).

### **Human Scale Design**

The underlying values of our concept — rooms, local residents, and green infrastructure — cause us to consider human scale. The Civic Center site already has a feeling of enclosure with large structures located on all sides (especially after the Legacy project on the east side of 112th Avenue NE is built). For this reason, we emphasize minimal building space within the site to preserve a more intimate, human scale. The site uses trees, fountains, and landscaping to create a welcoming atmosphere. The I-405 lid also preserves human scale as it is designed for the pedestrian and active-transit. The Lincoln Center site uses a small wetland and activated retail space at ground level to reduce the impact of the height of the proposed building.



This perspective illustrates how the Civic Center site maintains human scale through park-like landscaping. LCY STUDENT TEAM

**Affordability**

We feel that the affordability issue is best addressed at the Lincoln Center site as it has sufficient space to develop and also good proximity to the Grand Connection, City Hall, and a highway intersection. The Grand Connection will eventually offer further advantage with biking and walking access to the light rail station, downtown transit center, and City Hall Plaza.

While acknowledging the great market location, we see an opportunity to develop affordable housing with mixed-use development in the Lincoln Center site. We know that affordable housing is challenging for financing, so we recommend mixed-use commercial development to help balance the profit of the property. With ground-floor retail, as well as offices and a hotel on site, the Lincoln Center could generate revenue to cover some of the costs of providing affordable housing on the site.

The addition of retail on the ground floor of this convenient location could create a popular space for restaurants, local shops, and gyms. The convention exhibition space could also hold small- to medium-sized conventions/performances which could boost the hotel business on site.

For affordable housing units, we recommend using energy-efficient materials and appliances as well as solar panels to reduce utility costs. Our design surrounds the affordable housing with greenery to create a sense of privacy and separation from the convention/exhibition space. Roof gardens on the parking levels will help reduce the energy needed to cool the buildings in the summer, and provide space for recreation.

With ground-floor retail, as well as offices and a hotel on site, the Lincoln Center could generate revenue to cover some of the costs of providing affordable housing on the site.

**CIVIC CENTER DESIGN FEATURES**

**Streets**

Our concept proposes to “humanize” 110th Avenue NE. The street is currently a major barrier between the new light rail station and the existing bus transit center, the two busiest places in the city. Our design reduces the lanes and emphasizes crossings for this reason. We propose “bump-outs” at the intersection of 110th Avenue NE and NE 6th Street to reduce walking distance for pedestrians crossing the road. Additionally, we propose the addition of flexible, food-truck parking on the northwestern edge of the avenue. We feel this location makes the most sense due to its proximity to commuters and to people working downtown. On the northeastern edge we propose pick-up/drop-off spots. With the ever-growing use of ridesharing companies (also known as transportation network companies), these spaces are needed so as not to impede traffic. On the rest of 110th Avenue NE we propose parallel, on-street parking to provide flexible parking and to slow speeds on the road, increasing safety for all users.



On 110th Avenue NE, the number of lanes is reduced from five, car-only-use lanes to a more interactive space. LCY STUDENT TEAM

On NE 6th Street we propose creating a multi-modal right-of-way. This design reduces the importance of the private vehicle, prioritizes bus transit, and provides new options for active-transit such as bikes and walking. The design reduces NE 6th Street to one eastbound lane. This is meant to discourage private vehicle use while still allowing direct access to I-405 for buses coming from the transit center. The design continues to offer two lanes in the westbound direction so as not to impede bus traffic and allow for garage access to both the Meydenbauer Convention Center and The Bravern. With the overall reduction in lanes, the right-of-way then offers additional space to pedestrians while creating a separated bikeway that increases safety for active-transit users and pedestrians. The space additionally allows for an innovative bioswale to be incorporated between the bikeway and sidewalk, creating a improved solution for water runoff.

**Amphitheater**

The amphitheater is a design strategy to solve the topography challenge, which is about a 20-foot drop in elevation. Through this feature we intend to connect the upper plaza, the City Hall parking rooftop, and the lawn space. The amphitheater serves multiple purposes as stairs, a visual corridor, and a seating space. We also provide a zig-zag ADA ramp that allows people with physical challenges to cope with the topography change.



On NE 6th Street, the number of lanes is reduced to create a multimodal street with a bioswale. LCY STUDENT TEAM

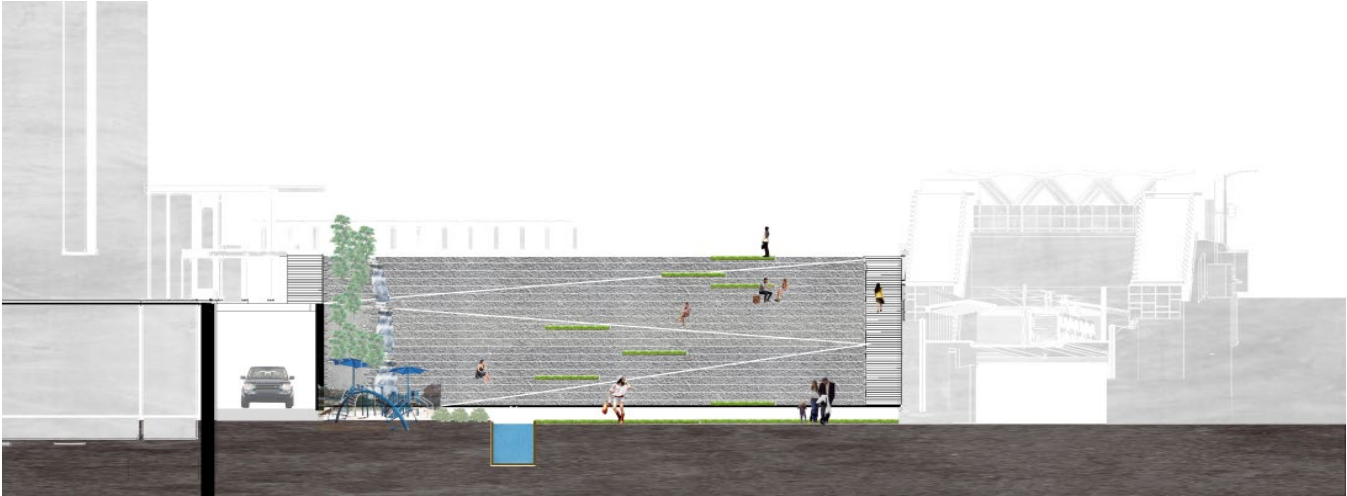
The amphitheater is designed with an arc shape to focus the view towards the lawn space, where activities take place. The stairs serve as informal seating spaces for events such as plays and music events. The amphitheater has some natural features on its southern side — a small waterfall and some green space. The waterfall provides coolness in the summer as well as white noise to mitigate traffic noise. On the ground level, the waterfall transitions to a creek and provides a playful experience for children. The water is supplied by harvested, filtered rain water, which is stored in an underground cistern beneath the amphitheater.

**Upper Plaza**

Our concept generally leaves this section to the original design by Sound Transit and the City of Bellevue. The space is convenient for commuters and we see that as an important trait. Our design emphasizes additional elements such as wayfinding and bike racks to continue to orient the section for transit. The upper plaza will be extended over the garage below and flow seamlessly into the amphitheater.

**Lawn**

The lawn space serves as a flexible use space and a “room” by itself. It is open to public events such as live music, summer theater, and outdoor games. The lawn is intentionally placed central to the Civic Center site as it is the most flexible space. The amphitheater provides seating to view the lawn for shows, or as additional space for large gatherings. The lawn can act as an extension of the food area during large festivals.



The amphitheater looks over the lawn, playground, dog park, and food area below. LCY STUDENT TEAM

**Playground**

The playground is designed to include children with different ages and abilities. The playground includes equipment from the entry level (such as swings) to a challenging level (such as spinning and climbing). A splash pad located near the water feature provides a fun summer activity that fits with the overall design. Parents are able to watch their children from the adjacent lawn and seating area.

**Dog Park**

With an increase in dog-friendly workplaces and more housing, we have identified a need for a downtown dog park, which we have placed at the east end of the plaza. This provides entertainment not only for dogs and their owners, but for kids who can observe from the playground. The dog park contains multiple space for dogs to roam and socialize, and a water feature in the center. The dog park activates the use of the whole plaza. Both the playground and the dog park use permeable pavement.

**City Hall Parking Rooftop**

The City Hall parking rooftop is currently underutilized despite its nice landscaping. We think it will activate once it is connected to the plaza by a clearly marked public path and is enhanced with seating and things to watch. We propose that the path be part of the Grand Connection by continuing off the rooftop as a pedestrian bridge to the I-405 lid park. We also propose “lidding” the current driveway out of the parking garage with an overlook on which seating is provided as well as along the edge of the parking rooftop garden. Since the overlook gives sweeping views towards the waterfall, landscape, and people, it is a great spot for city employees to enjoy a relaxing moment during lunch time.

**Food**

The food space in the east side of the plaza is an anchor point to draw visitors. It is strategically placed near the entrance to the light rail station, where a large volume of foot traffic is expected. People can enjoy the food in the shaded seating area with movable furniture. The nearby water feature separates 112th Avenue NE from the food area; it also adds a pleasant visual component and masks noise from vehicle traffic.

**CASE STUDY: PUBLIC SQUARE, CLEVELAND, OHIO**

Public Square is the heart of Cleveland and provides a vital connection from the Tower City Center light rail station into downtown. Redesigned in 2016, the new square features a restaurant, fountain and splash pad, natural amphitheater, speakers’ terrace, hills and greenspace, historic monuments, and a special use street in the center. It functions as a vital civic center for both residents and visitors and sees constant, year-round use. Programming and maintenance are managed by The Group Plan Commission, a non-profit agency that works closely with the City and other community organizations.



*These images of Public Square in Cleveland, Ohio, show a fostering of connectivity through a variety of rooms and functions. ERIK DROST*

## LID PARK DESIGN FEATURES

The lid park serves multiple functions: as a connection between east and west of I-405, as a public open space, and as a sustainable open space. We recommend that the City continue to pursue the Alternative 3 design of the lid park from the Grand Connection Framework Plan. In our design, we primarily focus on its benefits as a connector for pedestrian and bicyclist transit between downtown and the developing Wilburton neighborhood.

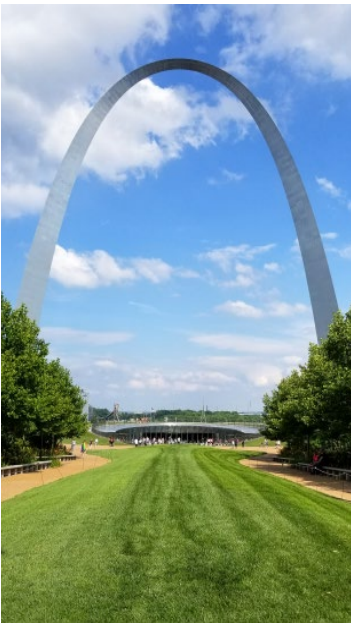
The lid park creates numerous access points to allow users to move across the interstate highway with a multitude of experiences. On the west side, it connects to NE 6th Street and 112th Avenue NE; on the south side, it connects to NE 4th Street via a ramp; and on the east side, it connects to the eastside rail corridor via an elevated bike/pedestrian bridge. An elevator and a ramp help people get from Lincoln Center to the Grand Connection.



Our plan allows for the integration of the functions envisioned in the existing Grand Connection Framework Plan, shown here in a preliminary rendering.  
CITY OF BELLEVUE

## CASE STUDY: GATEWAY ARCH LID PARK, ST. LOUIS, MISSOURI

The Gateway Arch Lid Park spans over I-70 to bridge the gap between downtown St. Louis and the Mississippi River waterfront. Part of a complete renovation of the St. Louis Arch, the lid is an open and wide pathway with sweeping curves to reflect the Arch's architecture. Trees are located at the north and south to buffer the highway and create a more human space. The lid serves one primary function: to connect two parks on either side of the I-44 highway and connect the Arch to the city. The wide pedestrian paths draw visitors in with an incredible view of the Arch.



In 2014, Gateway Arch National Park was connected to St. Louis' Old Courthouse by a small lid plaza over Interstate 44, creating a bike and pedestrian connection for the first time. GRIFFEN LIVERMORE, PAULMCDONALD

# LINCOLN CENTER DESIGN FEATURES

## Building

The Lincoln Center is a mixed-use development complex with retail, office, hotel, convention space, and affordable housing. The ground level is used as retail space that attracts people on foot. The second and third floors provide parking for residents, workers, and visitors. We assume the parking space could be shared due to the fact that visitors and office workers use the parking at different times. A green roof provides space to relax for people visiting the small convention center as well as lunch space for people working in the area. It also serves as a natural screen between the public space and the residential tower. A nine-story office tower starts from the parking garage rooftop and provides workspace for about 300–400 employees. A 12-story hotel is stacked upon the office tower and provides about 160 hotel rooms for visitors with a great view of the mountains. The western tower includes about 150 affordable residential units. Green walls are placed on parking facades.

## Sturtevant Creek/Wetland Park

This proposed park is in accordance with the Grand Connection vision for the Lincoln Center site. We envision this park to be a wetland park through which flows the uncovered Sturtevant Creek. The park collects rainwater from nearby rooftops and provides an opportunity to educate visitors about rainwater conservation. The park is designed to accommodate some recreational activities in the dry season and retain stormwater in the rainy season. We recommend native rain garden plants to meet floodplain requirements.



Our model for Lincoln Center includes a large podium with two residential and office towers. Affordable housing is shown in yellow, hotel in pink, office in blue, and retail in red. A wetland area runs on the north side. LCY STUDENT TEAM



Project Lead Emil King, far left, leads urban planning students on a tour of the study site. ANDRES ARJONA

# ALTERNATIVE TWO: CIVIC HOME

## FOUNDATIONS

### CONCEPT

We call our concept Civic Home because our proposal is both a civic gathering place for Bellevue and a literal home for many residents. We define “civic” space as a flexible gathering place for the purpose of building community and engagement. Civic space can accommodate, for example, street-food night markets, announcements of City initiatives, and arts performances. We emphasize the concept of “home” as well because the space acts as the City’s living room. We expect all residents — both of the site and Bellevue residents at large — to take ownership of the space and become its stewards.

### VALUES

Within this vision of Civic Home, we focused on three main values:

**Space fluidity** removes perceived barriers between the site and its neighbors —Meydenbauer Convention Center, Bellevue Transit Center, and the future I-405 lid park. We want to make sure that those who want to enter the space can do so without any obstacles. We imagine the site being accessed by pedestrians, so we’ve looked at street calming, pedestrian prioritization crossings, and direct paths as ways to mitigate the perceived barriers. We have also designed the proposal to ensure easy movement through the site itself.

**Vertical recreation** takes the site’s hilly topographical challenge and uses it to its advantage by creating various levels of activities throughout the site. Additionally, we considered how the proposed high-rise, which consumes a third of the space, will add to the public’s ability to gather and build community.

The value of **affordable opportunities** attempts to create an equitable space within which more people can recreate and live. This value addresses both housing and commercial opportunities because Bellevue Downtown is lacking in affordable housing options and affordable retail business opportunities. By prioritizing these affordable opportunities Bellevue can further diversify its population.

## ABOUT OUR TEAM

### Alternative Two team:

Asela Chavez Basurto, Liang Huang, Ted Cheung, Jason Steinberg, and Andres Arjona

Our team consists of five members with a diverse set of backgrounds and global perspectives. Our educational and professional expertise is in architecture, landscape architecture, communication, sociology, and psychology, while our global background comes from Chicago, China, California, Mexico, Colombia, and Japan. With these sets of skills and perspectives, we applied our combined knowledge to propose this design alternative for Bellevue’s Civic Center Site and Lincoln Center.



The Alternative Two team, from left to right: Asela Chavez Basurto, Liang Huang, Ted Cheung, Jason Steinberg, and Andres Arjona LCY STUDENT TEAM

### OUR PROCESS

Our team thought specifically about the meaning of “civic” for the site while considering its proximity to high-quality transit. We were initially excited by potential programming, such as rooftop restaurants, outdoor concerts, and night markets. We determined that, for this programming to be successful, the space would benefit from permanent residents. Therefore, we tasked ourselves with the challenge of maximizing housing while balancing the space with civic identity.

We used resident living experience as our lens when considering the five key issues: topography, connectivity, civic functions, human-scale design, and affordability. Primarily we focused on the affordability of housing and decided to maximize or significantly increase the FAR for more market- and below-market-rate housing. We also understand the need to mitigate the building’s domination of the sites so that the public civic functions can thrive in the remaining plaza spaces and courtyards.

FEATURES

Our three values will be emphasized through the following primary features on the Civic Center and Lincoln Center sites:

- Integrated workforce / affordable housing
- Levels of plazas
- Open public retail
- Public spaces within buildings
- Rooftop programming
- Embedded pedestrian connection

We identified these features before starting our design process so that we would be cognizant of the features necessary to accomplish our Civic Home goal. Knowing that the Civic Center site alone would not have sufficient space to fulfill our goal, we took advantage of Lincoln Center’s potential for development and used it to maximize housing and provide a continuity of civic space. In all of our buildings we prioritized workforce and affordable housing and open retail.

RESEARCH

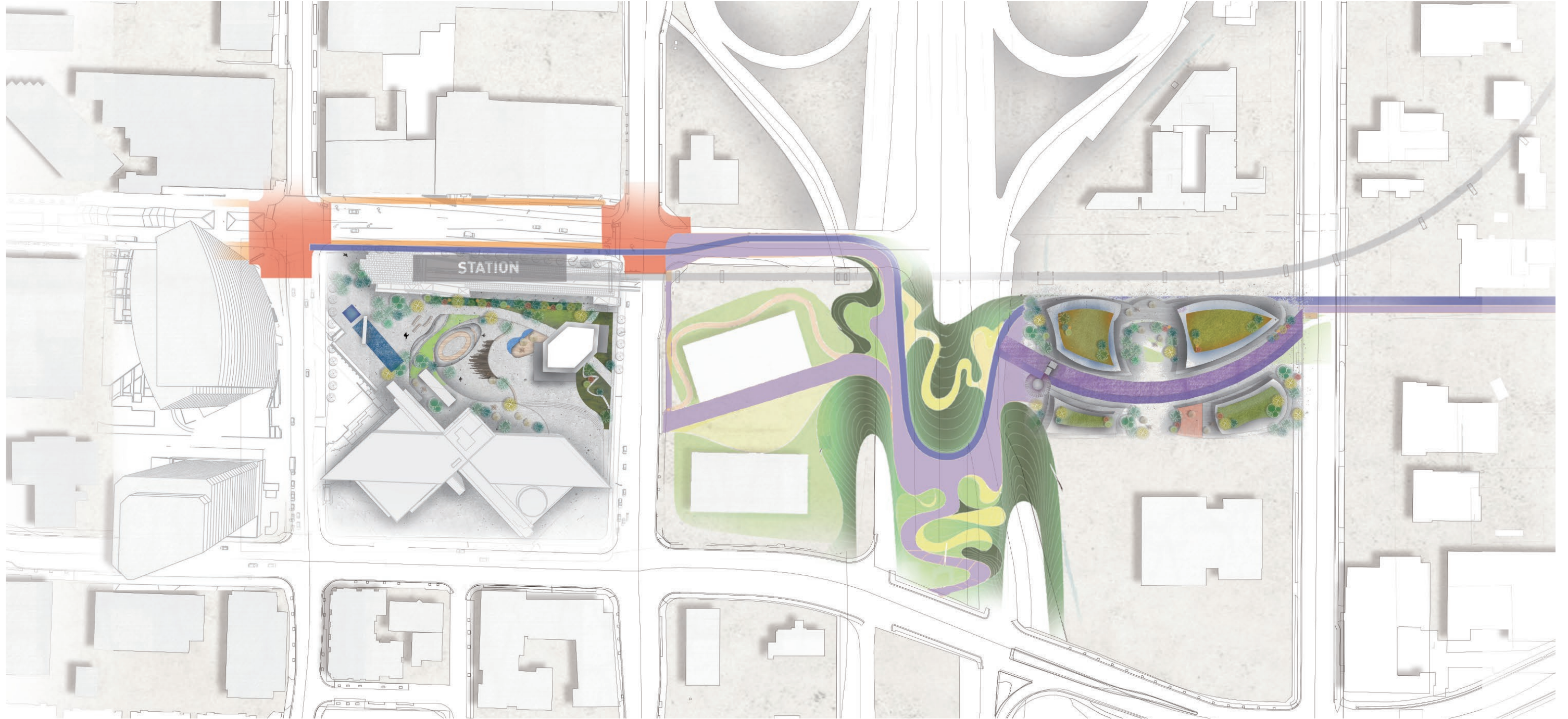
We visited the Civic Center Study Area and examined views to the mountains, pedestrian connections to adjacent blocks, topographical depth of the site, and the Lincoln Center site. Our main findings from our site visits were concerns about the street widths, development space, and topography. Regarding street widths, 110th Avenue NE, NE 6th Street, and 112th Avenue NE are too wide for the desired human scale and they pose obstacles for pedestrians to connect to the Civic Center Site. At the same time, the width can be viewed as an opportunity for multimodal infrastructure. Similarly, the topography is an obvious issue but it can be used advantageously to create views and multiple levels and uses with varying privacy options throughout the Study Area.

Additionally, we researched the technical aspects of what is permissible according to the zoning. On the Civic Center site, zoning allows for mixed-use, 6.0 FAR (with an additional 1.0 under the Affordable Housing Development Flexibility exemption), and 403-foot maximum height with a 20-foot setback at 80 feet. We used King County iMap/Assessor data to determine the 35,150-square-foot lot area of the Civic Center site. With the goal to maximize FAR, we designed a 246,050-square-foot building for mixed-income housing.

On the Lincoln Center site, we found that the current zoning (Office Limited Business) is not adequate to meet our goal of maximizing housing. We also learned about the geographic context of the Sturtevant Creek in order to understand the potential for daylighting it adjacent to the Lincoln Center development area.



The Alternative Two team gained perspective on the site by viewing it from Meydenbauer Convention Center's third floor deck. ANDRES ARJONA



Alternative Two final design, plan view. LCY STUDENT TEAM

# FINAL DESIGN

## OVERVIEW

The design of this alternative focuses on the strategic building of housing (a significant proportion below market-rate) while maintaining an area for public space. The design balances built and open space with flow/pass-through connections and sit-down/gathering areas. It does so by placing the Grand Connection through the Civic Center plaza and within our proposed tower's podium, and by providing multiple levels of plazas for gathering, seating and play. The idea of flow and multi-level gathering is also mirrored in the design for the Lincoln Center site.

The flow of the Grand Connection begins on the south side of Bellevue Transit Center and crosses 110th Avenue NE at a raised all-way crossing. On the other side, one has the option of entering Sound Transit's plaza, boarding the light rail, or continuing down into the lower level plazas. From there you will see a small retail building directly south and have the option of walking onto City Hall's green roof or take the steps into the lower plaza levels. If you continue on the Grand Connection you will be lowered down into a gathering/artistic/retail/food experience that exists underneath the podium of the proposed residential tower.

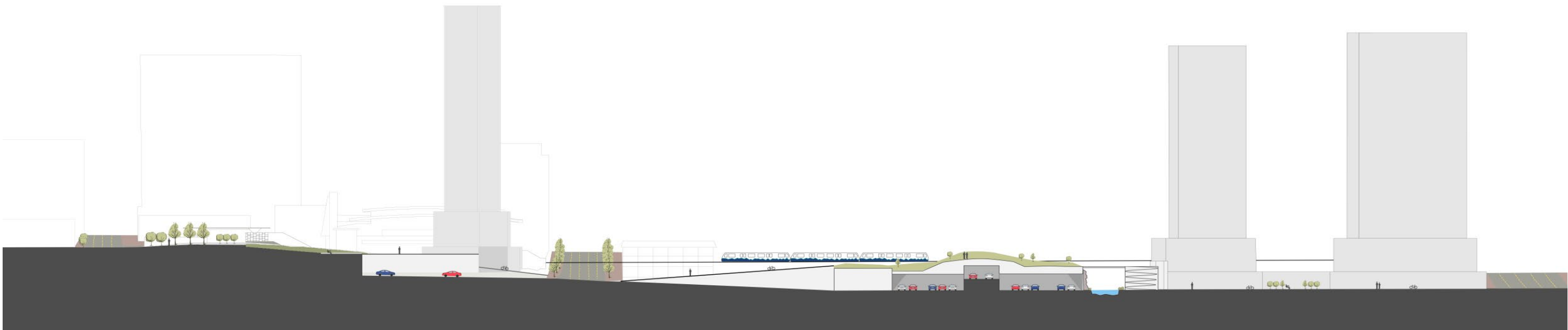
The Grand Connection flows upward into the I-405 lid with its vegetated and recreational spaces. It continues into the Lincoln Center, first overpassing the daylight Sturtevant Creek, and then going through a proposed set of residential towers with ground-level courtyards and elevated vegetated/recreational/restaurant spaces. The Grand Connection eventually continues northeast.

## KEY CONSIDERATIONS

### Topography

The topography is always an issue and an opportunity. A major issue is how the Grand Connection will enter and exit the I-405 lid. As you can see there is a steep descent, then a quick rise to overpass the highway, followed immediately by a drop to the Lincoln Center site. Considering the phasing of all these projects, we recommend bringing the Grand Connection to street level at 112th Avenue NE.

The opportunity that topography brings is the ability to create multiple levels of recreation. Humans are most comfortable around the edge of a space and rarely congregate in the middle; by creating multiple levels of plaza, we are able to break up the space with many edges, catering to people's preference for staying on the edges.



An approximate cross section of the entire site showing the topographical changes. LCY STUDENT TEAM

### **Connectivity**

In our design, we narrow all the streets around the Civic Center site. This allows for a safer and easier crossing for pedestrians and bikers. Additionally, on the connection between the Bellevue Transit Center and the Civic Center site we raise the crosswalk and recommend an all-way raised crossing for ease of transfers between bus and light rail. Lastly, the Grand Connection is likely to be phased because of the complexity with the I-405 lid. Keeping this in mind, our design first extends the Grand Connection on NE 6th Street and meets with Lincoln Center, then incorporates the Civic Center site, Legacy properties, and the I-405 lid.

### **Civic Functions**

Our design attempts to balance the need for housing with space for civic function. We did this by reserving two-thirds of the ground level for public/civic space in the Civic Center site (including, among other features, an amphitheater for events such as speeches and gatherings) and by extending City Hall's green roof into the plazas below. In the Lincoln Center site, we made sure to incorporate the Grand Connection and reserve courtyard space for public recreation. The programming in these spaces is meant to be flexible and fluid for any event in the future.

A major challenge for the area's civic space will be the environmental and noise pollution of I-405. The phasing of this lid project needs to work in tandem with the other two sites to create a continuous civic space as soon as possible.



*Instructor Branden Born discusses the Alternative Two plan with the design team during their final review. TERI THOMSON RANDALL*

### ***Human-Scale Design***

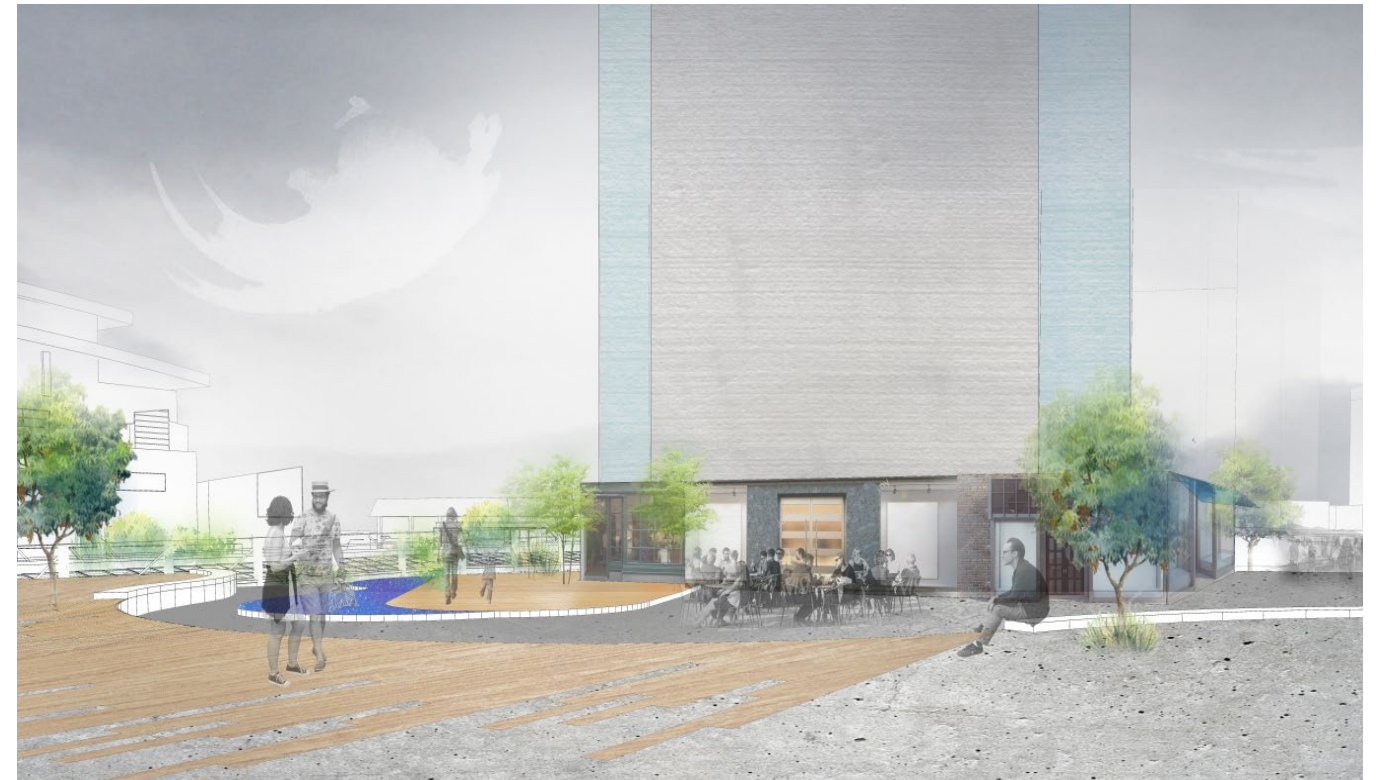
In an effort to better implement human-scale design in and around Downtown Bellevue, we have created numerous human-level features in our proposal. These include:

- Two-floor retail elements below larger residential structures
- An amphitheater
- A play area
- Vegetated courtyards
- Restaurants and cafes
- Open-air, third-floor restaurant seating above a courtyard
- A walkway through City Hall's green roof
- A third-floor (open-air) community garden

In accordance with our emphasis on vertical recreation, our proposal implements human-scale features at multiple levels. In the Civic Center plaza at the ground level we recommend retail, restaurants, a performance space, and a play area, but at various heights due to topographical variation. In both the plaza and the Lincoln Center site, we propose elevated, human-scale features such as an outdoor restaurant and community garden on the third floor, both facing courtyards below. We also propose rooftop amenities such as accessible green roofs and potentially restaurant/bar space. There is also some fluidity between levels such as the varied ground-floor levels in the plaza and a sloping path between the plaza and the City Hall green roof. Structurally, all buildings have setbacks so that the most publicly accessible portions are also the most visible to pedestrians.

### ***Affordability***

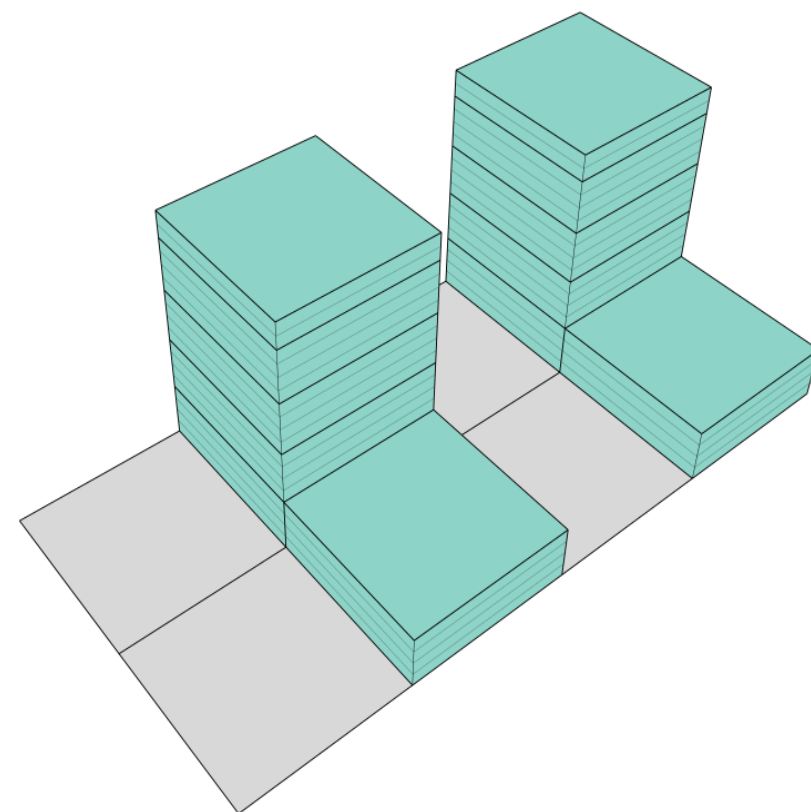
Our design would include below-market-rate housing that would address the affordability issues experienced by many who work in low- and middle-income occupations in the city such as teachers, nurses, and service-level workers. Affordability becomes increasingly important as Amazon plans to bring thousands of high-income tech jobs into Downtown Bellevue. According to recent data, an estimated 30% of Bellevue residents have incomes that are rent-burdened by the cost of a studio; this will likely be exacerbated in coming years.



*Human scale is created in the Civic Center plaza with trees and moderate topographic changes. LCY STUDENT TEAM*

Considering currently high rent costs in Bellevue and many incoming jobs, we recommend 35–40% of the units be below market-rate, and that they integrate with market-rate housing units throughout each residential tower. The Lincoln Center portion of our site also has an option for emergency housing for students enrolled in the Bellevue School District who are experiencing homelessness. A food pantry option may also be anchored at the Lincoln Center site to serve individuals experiencing food insecurity.

We also recommend affordable retail opportunities; a smaller square footage per retail unit would reduce costs for small businesses and potentially reduce costs for their customers. In addition, a night market would allow opportunities for non-traditional small businesses to sell products at relatively lower prices for consumers.



*This FAR model of Lincoln Center illustrates how the increase in height will allow for the development of more affordable housing.*  
LCY STUDENT TEAM

## CIVIC CENTER DESIGN FEATURES

### **High Rise Tower**

Considering the limited space of the site, our biggest challenge was how to design the tower to house as many residents as possible while maintaining a civic center. We assessed that any building will be an added barrier to the site and that this can be mitigated by elevating the platform to allow pedestrian travel and shopping underneath the tower. We felt that the architecture of City Hall was interesting to mirror and followed the same angles. Lastly, multiple tower setbacks are necessary to allow for some preservation of views.



*This bird's eye view perspective shows the relationship between the Civic Center and the high-rise tower.* LCY STUDENT TEAM

We recommend reserving the first two stories for retail — specifically restaurants and cafes — thereby establishing the main draw of the space. The first-floor plate consumes the least amount of space possible to allow for abundant public space around the tower. Since the tower is very tall and narrow, it maximizes FAR to accommodate affordable workforce housing and to best use tax-payers' dollars. Public and/or commercial use is incorporated at multiple terrace and rooftop levels. Finally, the tower's design should reflect the architecture of Bellevue City Hall and be a world class attraction. Art features can be incorporated.

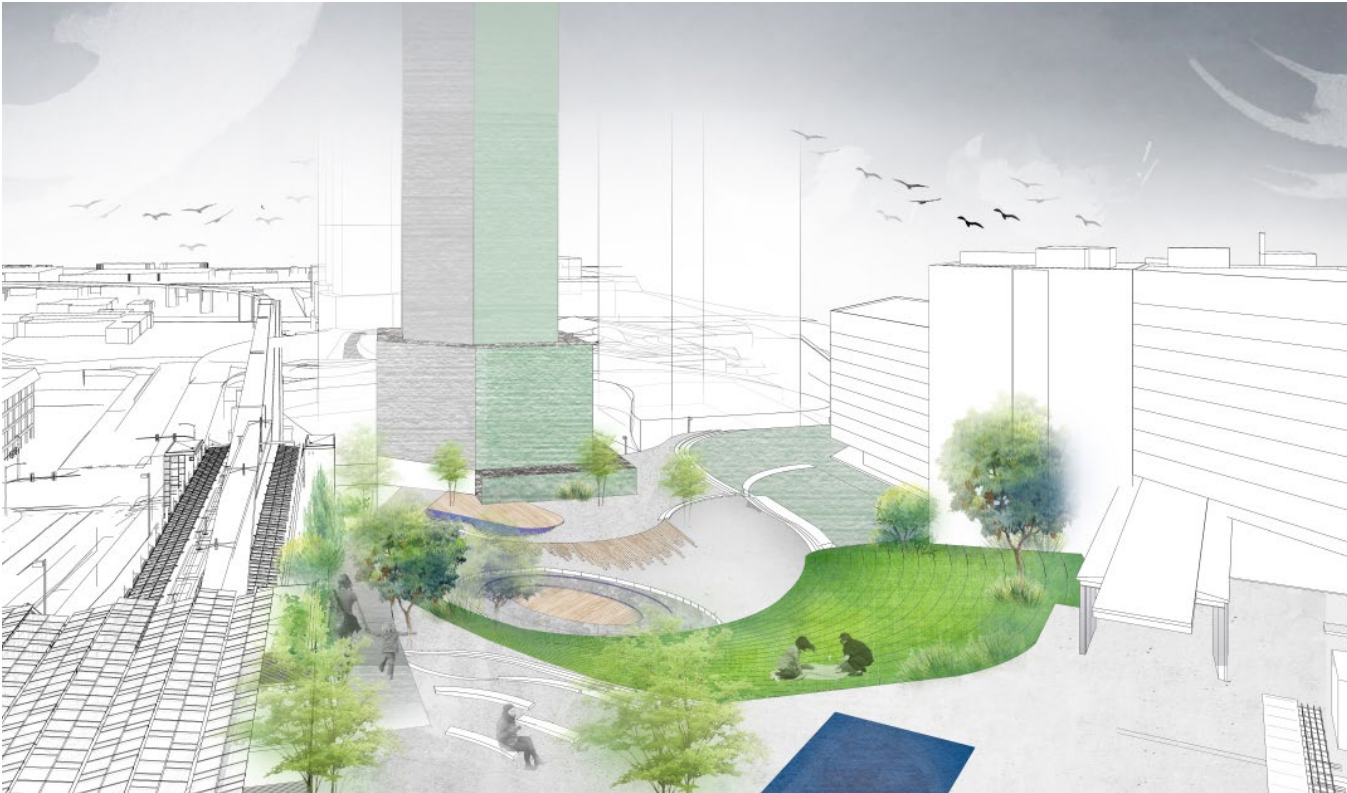
**Plaza Levels**

Our design includes three main plaza levels and two sloped connections. On the first level is the Sound Transit Plaza at the top of the hill. We maintain the design proposed by Sound Transit. Next is the grassy slope over the parking that takes you down to the amphitheater-level plaza. This amphitheater is intentionally inward looking to provide face-to-face interaction. At the third level you'll find a children's playground by the retail area at the base of the tower. We imagine outdoor, cafe-style seating around the retail area. Finally, a slope reaches to the stairs or ramp that leads you down to 112th Avenue NE. Opportunities to access the Grand Connection are created at each of these levels.

Each level has an attraction that draws people to that level. Whether it is an amphitheater, playground, or cafe, the attraction gives people reason to stay at each level. Each level also has different textures to make it unique and provide a private or intimate feeling.

We recommend the following:

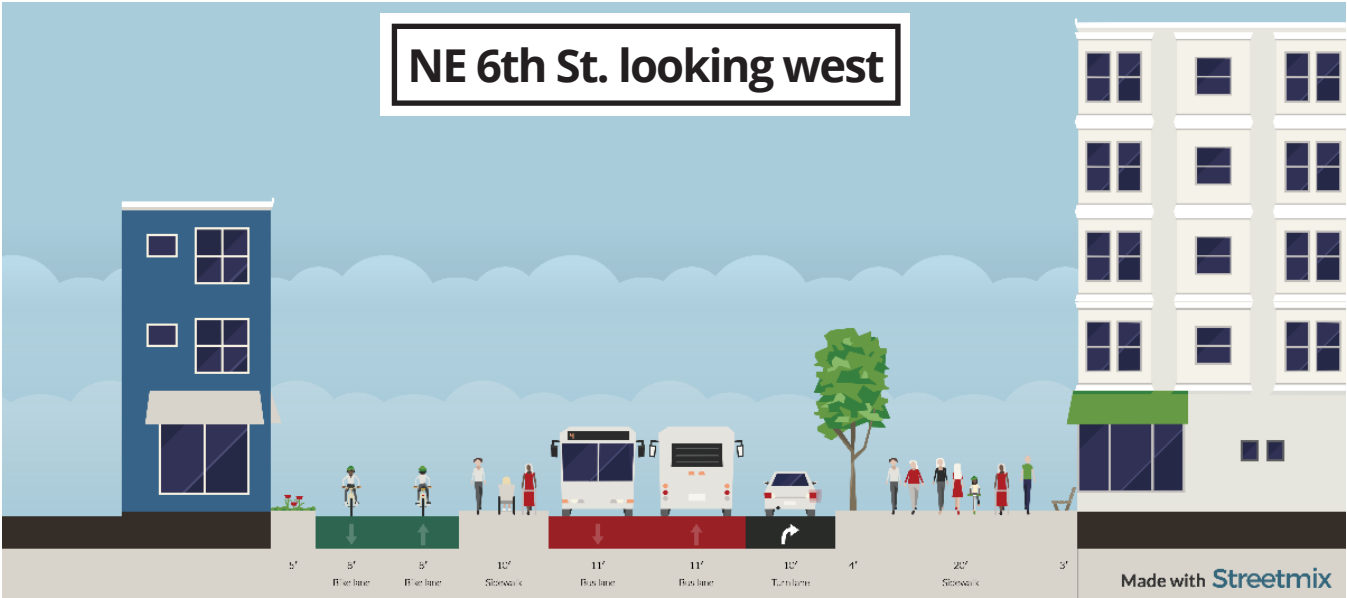
- Connect the City Hall rooftop garden to the site through one of the levels.
- Lid or cover the garage access road between City Hall and the site to add space to the plazas.
- Allow flexibility for multiple types of programming in each plaza — e.g., night markets, live performances, and competitions.



*This perspective looks down from the highest point of the Civic Center across the plaza levels. LCY STUDENT TEAM*

**Street Redesign**

We consider the streets around the Civic Center site to be an extension of the site. While the Civic Center site might be the main attraction, the streets will need to be inviting enough to engage different types of activity. To do this we have narrowed 110th Avenue NE, NE 6th Street, and 112th Avenue NE by two lanes each. Because of light rail construction, 110th Avenue NE is currently a two-lane road and should be kept as such so that the City can add a transportation network company (rideshare) drop-off zone and bike lanes for downtown commuters. Limiting NE 6th Street to three lanes and adding a mid-block crossing can allow Meydenbauer Center to feel closer to the site. Additionally, the light rail station on NE 6th Street will be a nice protector for the bike path on that street, which will be part of the Grand Connection. In addition, 112th Avenue NE can also incorporate rideshare drop-off zones and a mid-block crossing to connect the Civic Center Site to the Legacy properties.



On NE 6th Street looking west and on 110th Avenue NE looking north, the number of lanes has been reduced, adding options for other forms of transit. LCY STUDENT TEAM

### LID PARK DESIGN FEATURES

The I-405 lid will be situated between the Civic Center to the west and the Lincoln Center to the east; the Grand Connection will run through all three. The lid will have a curving path for bikes and pedestrians going ultimately from west to east and vice-versa. There will be ample space on the lid for people to meander, including a plaza. We have decided to keep the current I-405 lid plan largely intact; we simply recommend flexibility going forward to allow for a plethora of programming possibilities. These may involve small built structures, including those that are temporary. We also strongly recommend ample green space. A balance of programmable and vegetated spaces can provide those on the lid with psychological and social benefits. Lastly, adequate infrastructure and signage should be implemented to keep both pedestrians and cyclists safe.



*This preliminary map of the existing Grand Connection Framework Plan highlights the flexibility of the programming in the space and can be integrated with our plan.* CITY OF BELLEVUE

### CASE STUDY: AUBREY DAVIS LID PARK, MERCER ISLAND, WASHINGTON

Formerly the Mercer Island Lid and First Hill Lid, the Aubrey Davis Park was created to minimize the impact of I-90 upon the Mercer Island community by covering and lidding over the top of it. Open to the public in 1990, the park offers playgrounds, dog parks, and recreational spaces. Mercer Island is now considering expanding the park to fully lid I-90 across the island.



*Mercer Island is planning to extend Aubrey Davis Lid Park, which covers a part of I-90, over the entire highway.* CITY OF MERCER ISLAND

# LINCOLN CENTER DESIGN FEATURES: GRAND CONNECTION

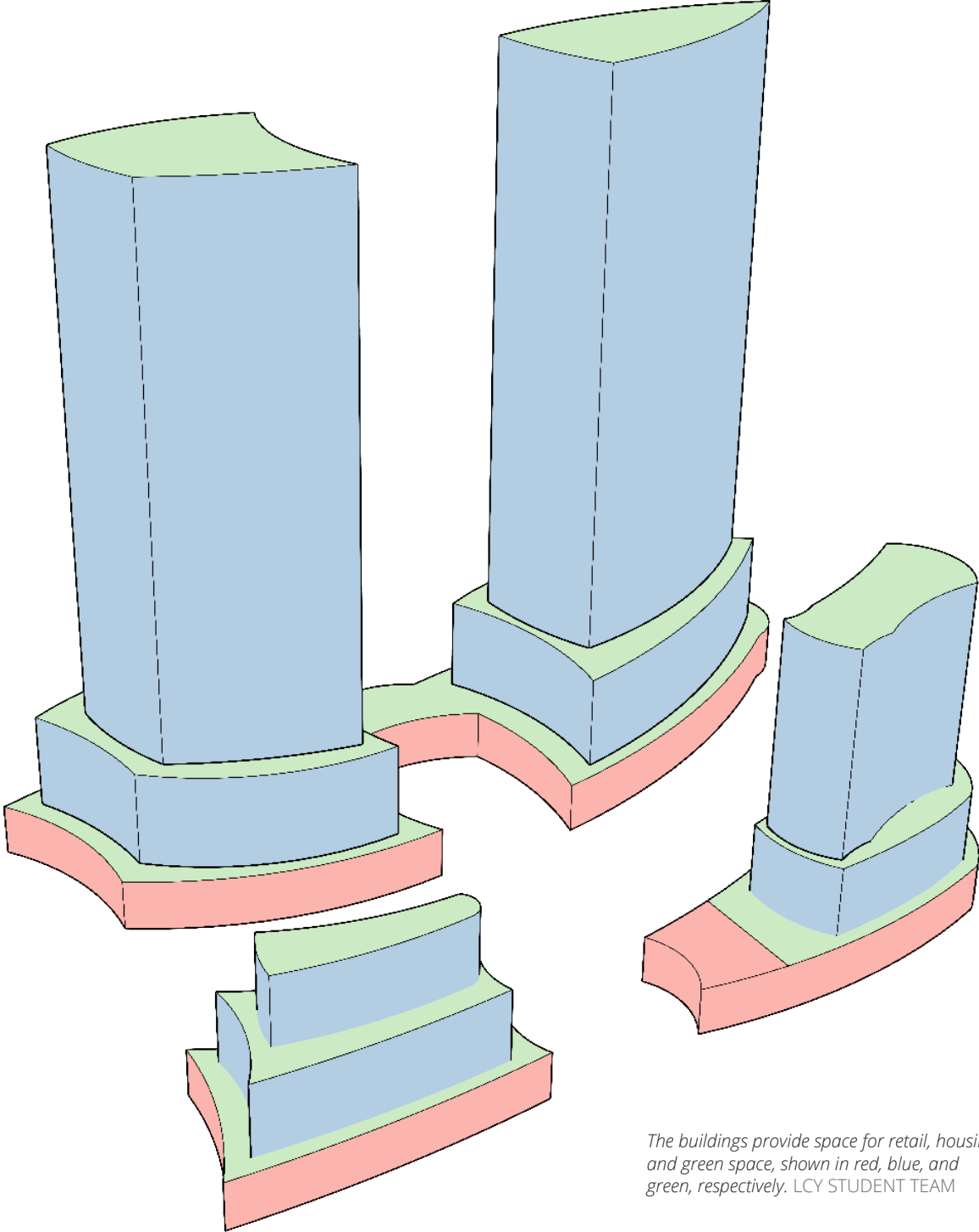
From the top of the lid, the Grand Connection continues on to Lincoln Center, passing over a bridge over a daylit Sturtevant Creek. On the Lincoln Center side of the bridge, a staircase, an elevator, and a helix bike-lane structure address the topographical gap between the top of the lid and the ground level of the Lincoln Center. The Grand Connection continues across the development between the two courtyards to meet where the proposed NE 6th Street extension intersects 116th Avenue NE. Additionally, there is open access from the Grand Connection to the southern edge of the parcel so that any redevelopment that happens at the current Ford car dealership would have access to the Grand Connection via a midblock crossing.

## Housing

In our model of the development of Lincoln Center, the height of the southwest building is 130', the southeast is 213.5', the northwest is 380', and the northeast is 400'. We made the southern buildings smaller to allow more sunlight into the area. We also left room available for the Grand Connection to go through, two courtyards, and the Sturtevant Creek on the western end. The bottom two floors include retail, and a restaurant/cafe space on the third floor of the southeast tower takes advantage of the large rooftop garden deck.

We propose 82 total floors of housing on the site, with 1,350+ units in a Studio/1BR/2BR/3BR ratio of 3:4:2:1, reflecting estimated family and non-family demographics. If we are considering combined parcels as provided by King County iMap, the FAR would be 3.74. If we cut one parcel to exclude the rail and north of it, the FAR would be 5.64. This design proposal requires up-zoning to a level similar to Bellevue Downtown to allow 400 feet, as well as a FAR of up to 6.0, which is somewhat higher than is currently proposed in Wilburton.

In addition to the aforementioned recommendation for 35–40% of units to be below market-rate, we also recommend potentially substituting less than 10% of the units on this site for emergency housing for Bellevue students experiencing homelessness. We also recommend potentially substituting some of the retail space for a food pantry to feed those who are experiencing food insecurity.



The buildings provide space for retail, housing, and green space, shown in red, blue, and green, respectively. LCY STUDENT TEAM

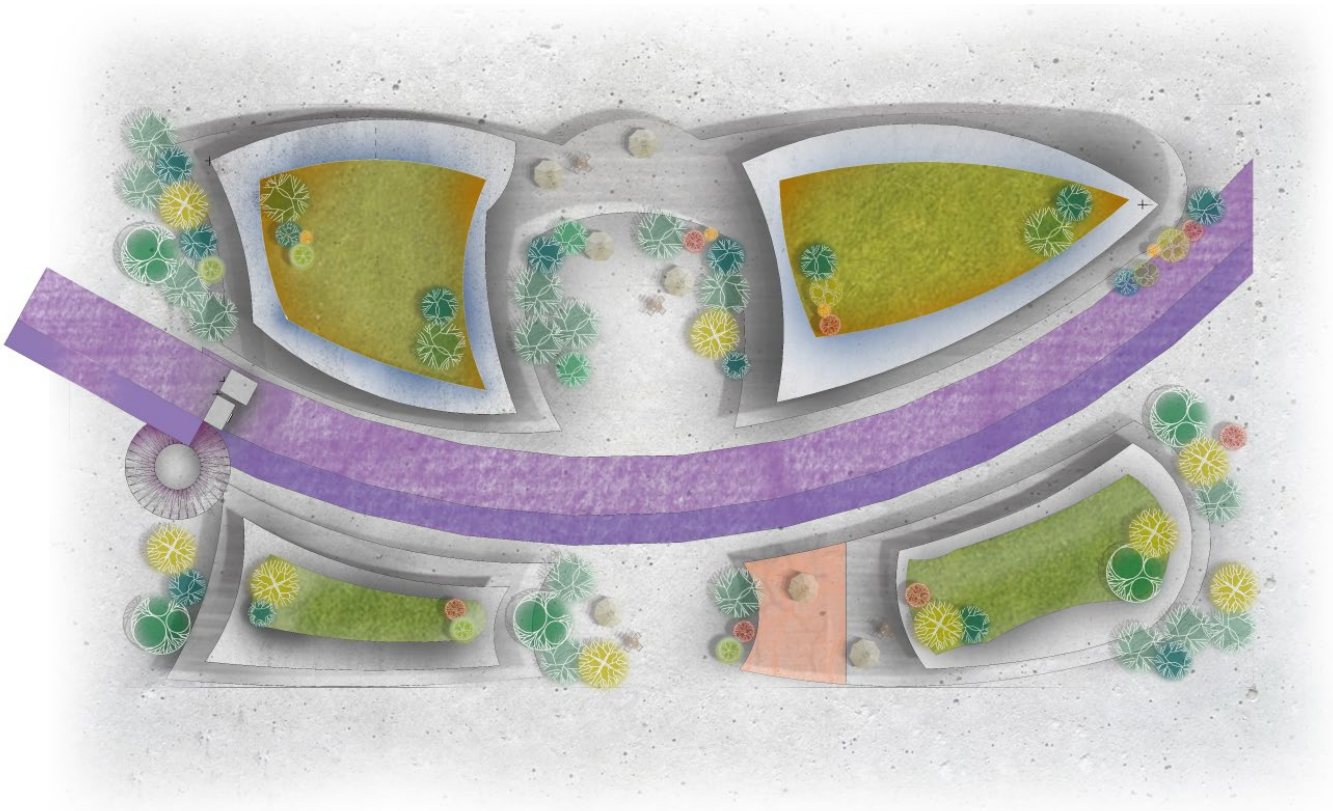
**Outdoor Uses**

Situated in the middle of the Lincoln Center site, just north and south of the Grand Connection, are two courtyards. These provide vegetated recreational spaces for gathering. Each courtyard space is wrapped with two floors of retail, including restaurants. The southern courtyard has restaurant/cafe space on the third floor, overlooking the central portion of the Lincoln Center. Along the north and, potentially, the south side of the Grand Connection are also two floors of retail.

An important piece of our design in Lincoln Center is the potential for vertical green spaces. We recommend creating a community garden connecting the north towers on the third floor, above the retail that rings the northern courtyard. We envision vegetation on every roof and setback, including a public green roof/restaurant/bar space. We also imagine connecting this space with the courtyard below through a green wall. Finally, we recommend visible sustainability features with the inclusion of solar panels on every/every other window, which will also reduce energy costs.

**Sturtevant Creek**

On the west of the study site, between the lid park and Lincoln Center, flows the daylit Sturtevant Creek, which can be viewed from the Grand Connection and also the northwestern tower. We recommend incorporating a water feature such as a fountain in the courtyard area to connect the site with the creek, as well as creating indoor and outdoor viewing areas for the creek's watershed area.



*The design for Lincoln Center uses interesting shapes to create spaces for interaction and for roof gardens on multiple levels. LCY STUDENT TEAM*

# ALTERNATIVE THREE: CULTURAL CENTER

## FOUNDATIONS

### CONCEPT

We developed our concept of a Cultural Center with the idea of creating a cultural heart at the future entrance into Bellevue’s thriving Downtown. Our design is informed by the city’s motto: “Bellevue welcomes the world. Our diversity is our strength. We embrace the future while respecting our past.” Bellevue’s City Council envisions Bellevue in 2035 as “The City Where You Want to Be.” We carefully considered these identity-rich statements in developing the cultural center concept. The Civic Center will be a central focus of Downtown and Wilburton, drawing residents, visitors, daytime workers, and evening visitors to the area through its compelling expression of civic identity, local economy, and culture and diversity.

### VALUES

Within this vision of a Cultural Center, we focused on three main values:

**Civic identify:** The creation of meaningful and memorable civic identity is a key challenge and opportunity for the Civic Center area. We value art and opportunities for interaction, engagement, gathering, placemaking, and elements of intrigue and surprise as integral to vibrant urban life. Our Cultural Center design reflects these elements.

**Local economy:** Bellevue Downtown is a thriving hub of technology and innovation, with corporate offices fueling the rapid expansion of high-wage employment, and high-end specialty retail serving an affluent customer base. We envision the Civic Center as an opportunity to build the local economy with affordable space for local retail, services, and artist incubators.

**Culture and diversity:** As a majority minority city, Bellevue is rich with culture and diversity. Our Cultural Center design honors and celebrates the past, present, and future of Bellevue’s multi-cultural population.

## ABOUT OUR TEAM

**Alternative Three team:**  
Jingjing Bu, Joseph Gray,  
Nora Yao, Jamie Merriman-  
Cohen, and Flora Tempel

Like Bellevue, our diversity is our strength. Our five team members hail from Beijing, Brooklyn, Hunan Province, and Seattle, and have lived, studied, and worked in Canada, China, Israel, Italy, and the United States. Holding degrees in architecture, engineering, urban studies, interdisciplinary studies, and anthropology, we have brought a unique set of skills and expertise to this design challenge.



The Alternative Three team, from left to right: Jingjing Bu, Joseph Gray, Nora Yao, Jamie Merriman-Cohen, and Flora Tempel LCY STUDENT TEAM

### OUR PROCESS

Our group shares a passion for art, culture, community space, and expressing civic identity in the public realm. Drawing inspiration from our experiences in great public spaces locally, nationally, and internationally, we are excited about this opportunity to help Bellevue envision design options for the Civic Center. During the 2019 winter quarter Studio Prep class, members of our team contributed to the community context and existing plans sections of the ICR, leading us to bring a fresh lens to our design for the Civic Center study area in spring quarter.

Early in the design phase we articulated values for the project and organized our thinking around the concept of Bellevue’s civic area as a cultural center. Our cultural center plan fully optimizes the Civic Center, I-405 lid, and Lincoln Center sites, and addresses the five key issues of topography, connectivity, civic functions, human-scale design, and affordability. In early May we presented 60%-complete plans to stakeholders and received valuable feedback, which we incorporated into the final design.

## FEATURES

We emphasize our three values through the following primary features within the study area:

- Art and creativity: a monumental, identity-laden art piece at the entrance to the Civic Center Site between the Transit Center and City Hall infuses drama and excitement. This striking artwork invites photos, interaction, and engagement. An art-lined corridor connects and unifies the Civic Center area, winding from the western Civic Center site, across the I-405 lid, through the Lincoln Center/Wilburton entrance on 116th Avenue NE. Maker and artist spaces at the Civic Center and Lincoln Center sites and a “Creative Street” enhance the artistic identity of the Cultural Center.
- Flexible gathering spaces: The Civic Center area builds in spatial opportunities for flexible programming, events, and unstructured leisure.
- Affordable retail and housing: Modular, affordable spaces for local retail are integrated into the Civic and Lincoln Center sites. Affordable housing and co-working office spaces at Lincoln Center provide needed affordable live and work space for the local population.
- Green spaces: A grassy area at the Civic Center site welcomes relaxation. A Japanese Garden and memorial on the I-405 lid honors Bellevue’s historic, displaced population. Lush plantings on the I-405 lid and community gardens at Lincoln Center offer natural respites from the urban environment.
- Community and aquatic center: The Lincoln Center site is home to a state-of-the-art community and aquatic center, attracting local and regional use.

## RESEARCH

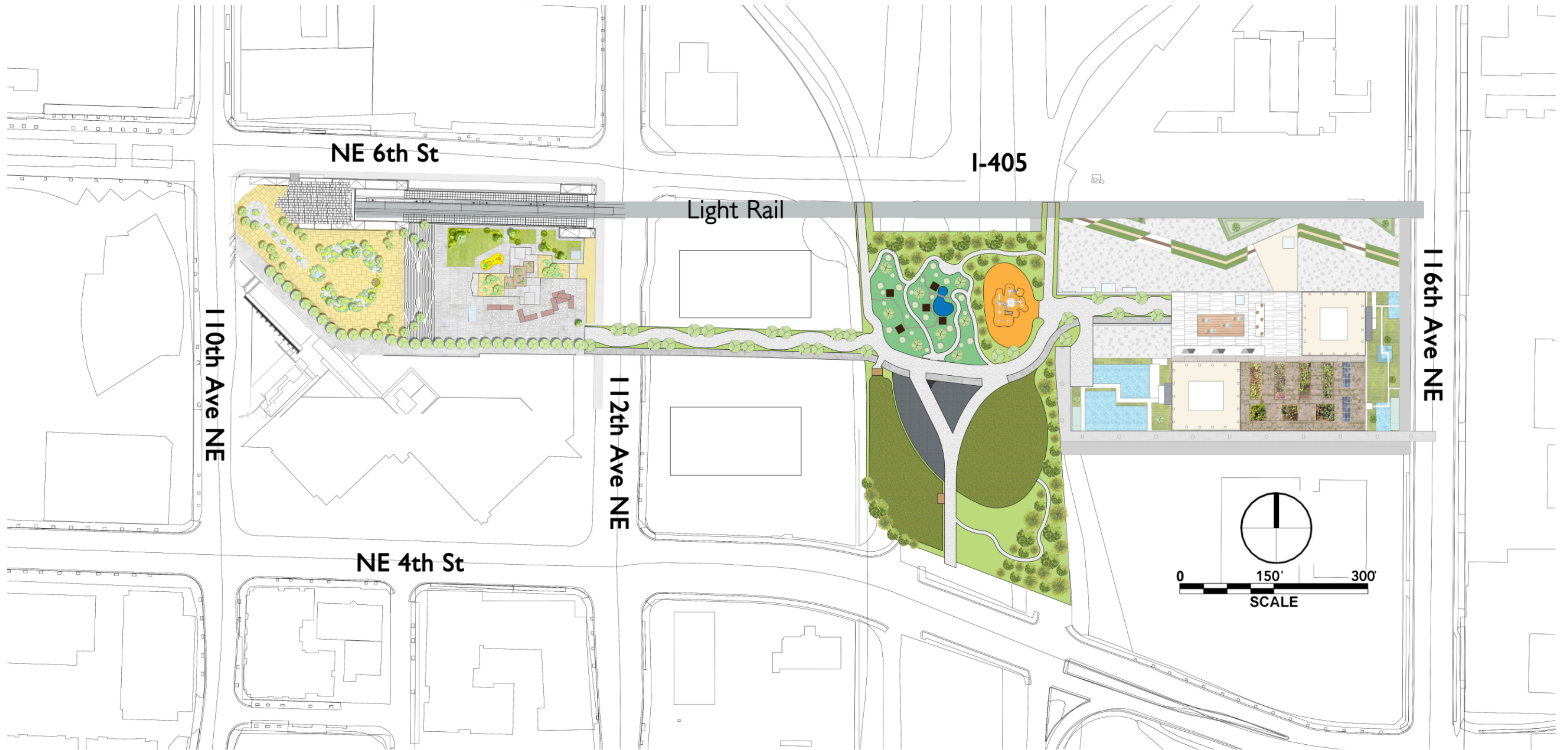
We began developing our designs by conducting additional research into specific ideas for our site, for example, parks and public art. A 2015 community survey on parks and open space reveals a demand for uses like small playgrounds, off-leash dog parks, swimming pools, outdoor theater, and space for food trucks or small coffee shops (Parks and Open Space Plan 2016). Bellevue's Parks and Community Services uses a ratio of one multi-use community recreation center for every 25,000 residents; therefore, a need exists for a community recreation center to serve Downtown residents.

With increased density, there is also a demand for affordable housing and commercial spaces. The City of Bellevue Affordable Housing Strategy, approved by City Council June 5, 2017, recognizes a shortage of affordable housing as a significant issue for livability, and lack of workforce housing as a primary economic development challenge for businesses. To address this, the City proposes to increase development potential for affordable housing on land owned by public agencies and surplus public lands in proximity to transit hubs; our site features both of these types of land.

To build community identity for the increasing number of residents, businesses, and visitors, we are also integrating art throughout the Civic Center study area. Bellevue's visual arts program seeks to enhance the public experience through works of art that "create a more visually pleasing, humane environment, and add to the overall beautification and cultural climate of the City of Bellevue and the quality of life of its citizens" (Parks and Open Space Plan 2016).



*The Alternative Three team used a 2015 community survey on parks and open space to identify specific things that people in Bellevue want to have in their parks and other open spaces. CITY OF BELLEVUE*



Alternative Three final design, plan view. LCY STUDENT TEAM

# FINAL DESIGN

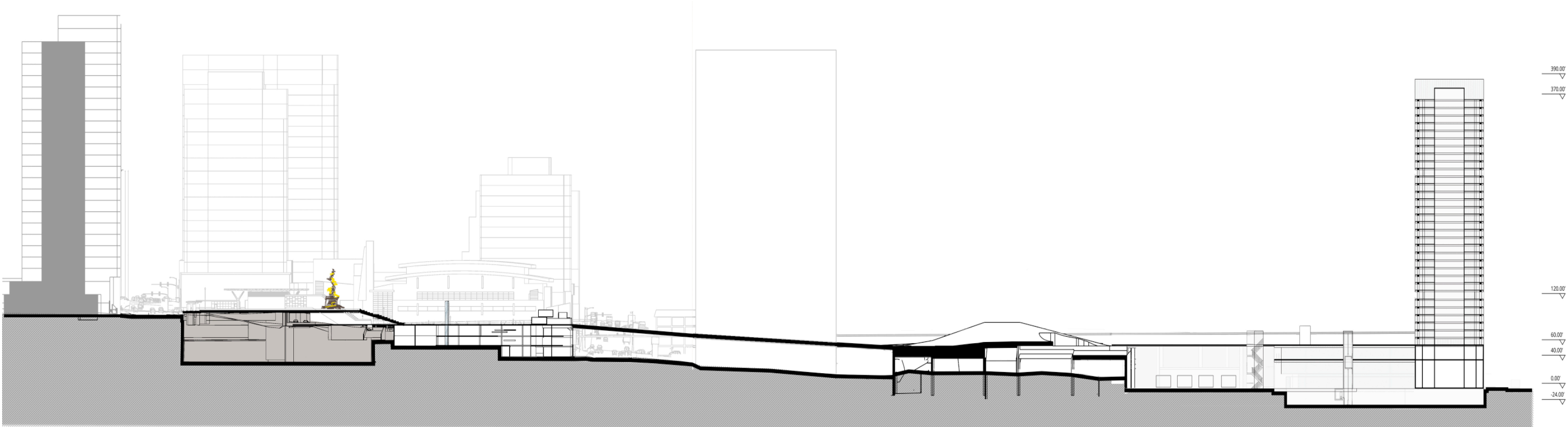
## OVERVIEW

Stretching from 110th to 116th Avenue NE, our plan actively uses the entire Civic Center area to create an important place for residents and visitors to connect with the City of Bellevue and with each other. Public spaces to the east and west of I-405 are also re-connected through integrated and cohesive design elements, a lid over the freeway, and the pedestrian and bicycle-friendly Grand Connection.

The Civic Center’s functions, inspired by the expressed needs and desires of Bellevue’s residents, are as follows:

- a plaza
- a grand staircase
- local retail, eateries, maker and meeting spaces
- affordable housing and offices
- a regional aquatic center
- a state-of-the-art community recreation facility
- a Japanese garden and memorial
- community gardens
- a dog park
- children’s playgrounds

The design is inspired by world-renowned civic spaces, as well as Bellevue’s regional role as a center of technology and innovation.



*An approximate cross section of the entire site reveals topographical changes. LCY STUDENT TEAM*

# KEY CONSIDERATIONS

## Topography

The Civic Center site presents an intriguing topographical challenge. Our design addresses the steep elevation change between 110th and 112th Avenue NE by creating a series of four levels resting on lid-like structures. We are integrating elements of interest, excitement, and surprise into each level. A grand staircase, futuristic glass elevator, landscaping, art, and local retail and workshops provide visual enticement to help visitors navigate the topography and experience all that the Civic Center has to offer.

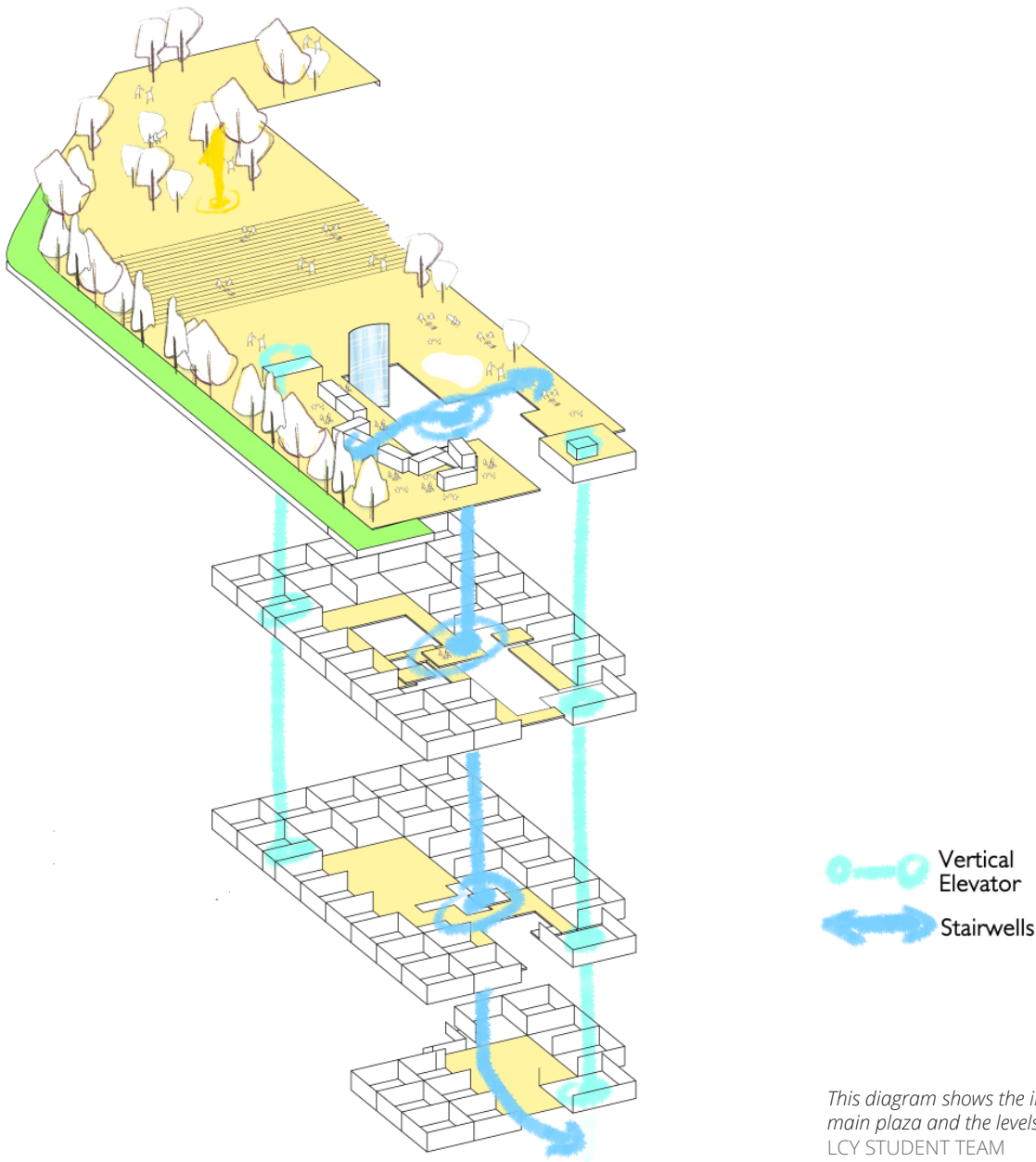
## Connectivity

The design greatly enhances connectivity between City Hall, Downtown, and Wilburton. Visitors have multiple entry points into the area, identified by unique gateways, art, digital displays, and high-tech lighting. The Grand Connection flows seamlessly across the Civic Center area and unifies the Metro and light rail transit facilities at NE 6th Street, the bustling commercial and office node at 110th Avenue NE, local retail and gallery spaces along 112th Avenue NE, the I-405 lid park, and Lincoln Center's Creative Street along 116th. Pedestrians and cyclists have designated travel lanes for safety and ease on the Grand Connection.

## Civic Functions

Bellevue's cultural and artistic identity is on full display throughout the civic functions of the site. A monumental art piece entices visitors to enter the plaza from the Light Rail Station, Transit Center, and the Downtown Core. A central staircase — an architectural focal point — provides connectivity, pedestrian flow, and space for leisure and congregating. Small local retail and restaurants are prominent on each level creating a rich user experience.

Art continues to feature prominently in the connections between the Civic Center site, I-405 lid, and Lincoln Center. A Creative Street along 116th Avenue NE enhances the civic nature and possibilities of the Lincoln Center site. With a state-of-the-art aquatic center, community center, public meeting spaces, gardens and restaurants, the civic identity of the eastern portion of the Civic Center Area is activated by its variety of civic functions.



*This diagram shows the interaction between the main plaza and the levels of small local retail.*  
LCY STUDENT TEAM

**CASE STUDY: PIONEER COURTHOUSE SQUARE,  
PORTLAND, OREGON**

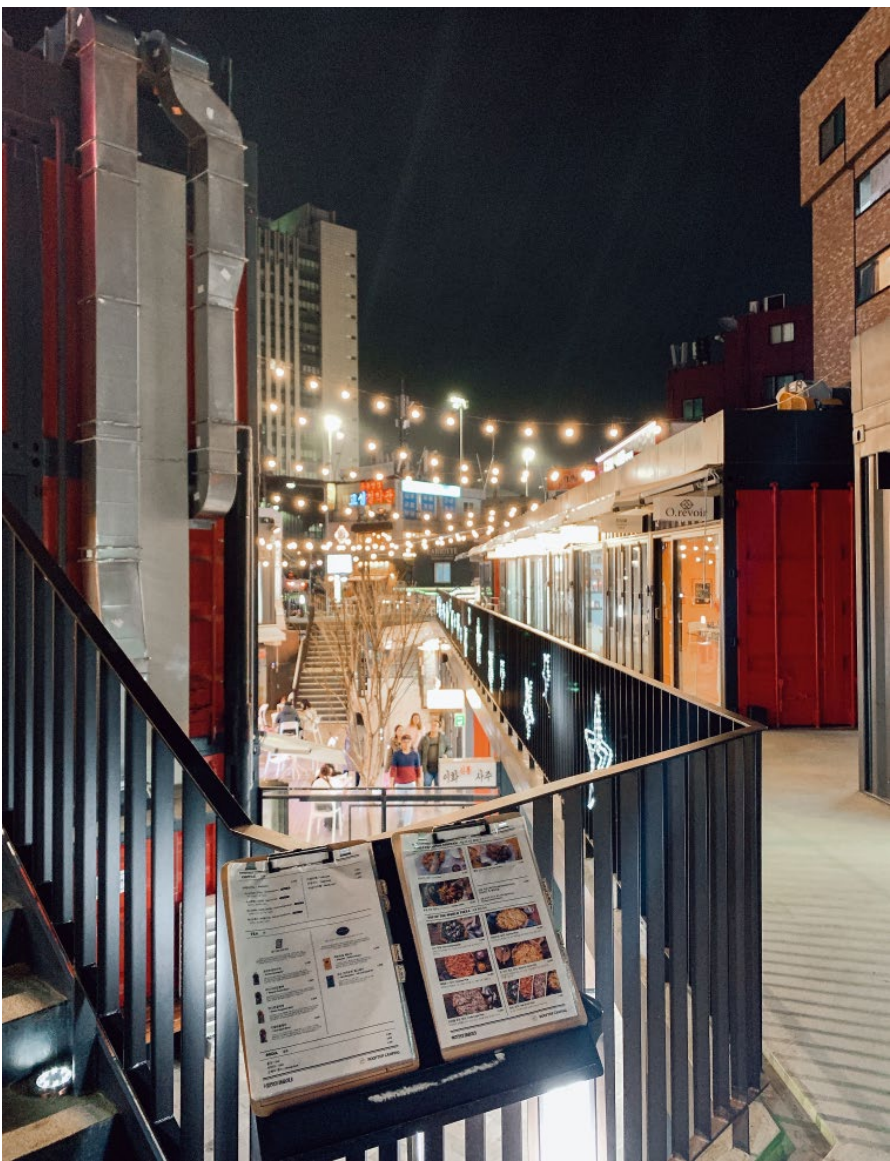
Known as “Portland’s living room,” Pioneer Square Courthouse is a flexible civic center where the events reshape the space on a daily basis. Permanent elements include an amphitheater, coffee shop, steps, information booths, and trees and other landscape features. Public transit routes exist on either side of the square, with major pedestrian boulevards moving through the space.



*Portland’s Pioneer Courthouse Square provides a great location for Portland’s many cultural events. ANOTHER BELIEVER, WILLIAM BEUTLER*

**Human Scale Design**

The Civic Center site makes use of human scale design elements that enhance the human experience and make the site more approachable. From the size of the food stalls on the upper plaza to the size of the retail units in the building below, everything is built on an appropriate, human scale. The Civic Center is grand in quality, not in size. The staircase at the center is not a “grand opera” style staircase but rather a web of intimate stairwells.



*Through the design process, the team developed a plan for small, local retail units arranged to maximize movement and interaction with storefronts. This photo, from Seoul, South Korea, had a significant influence on the team. NORA YAO*

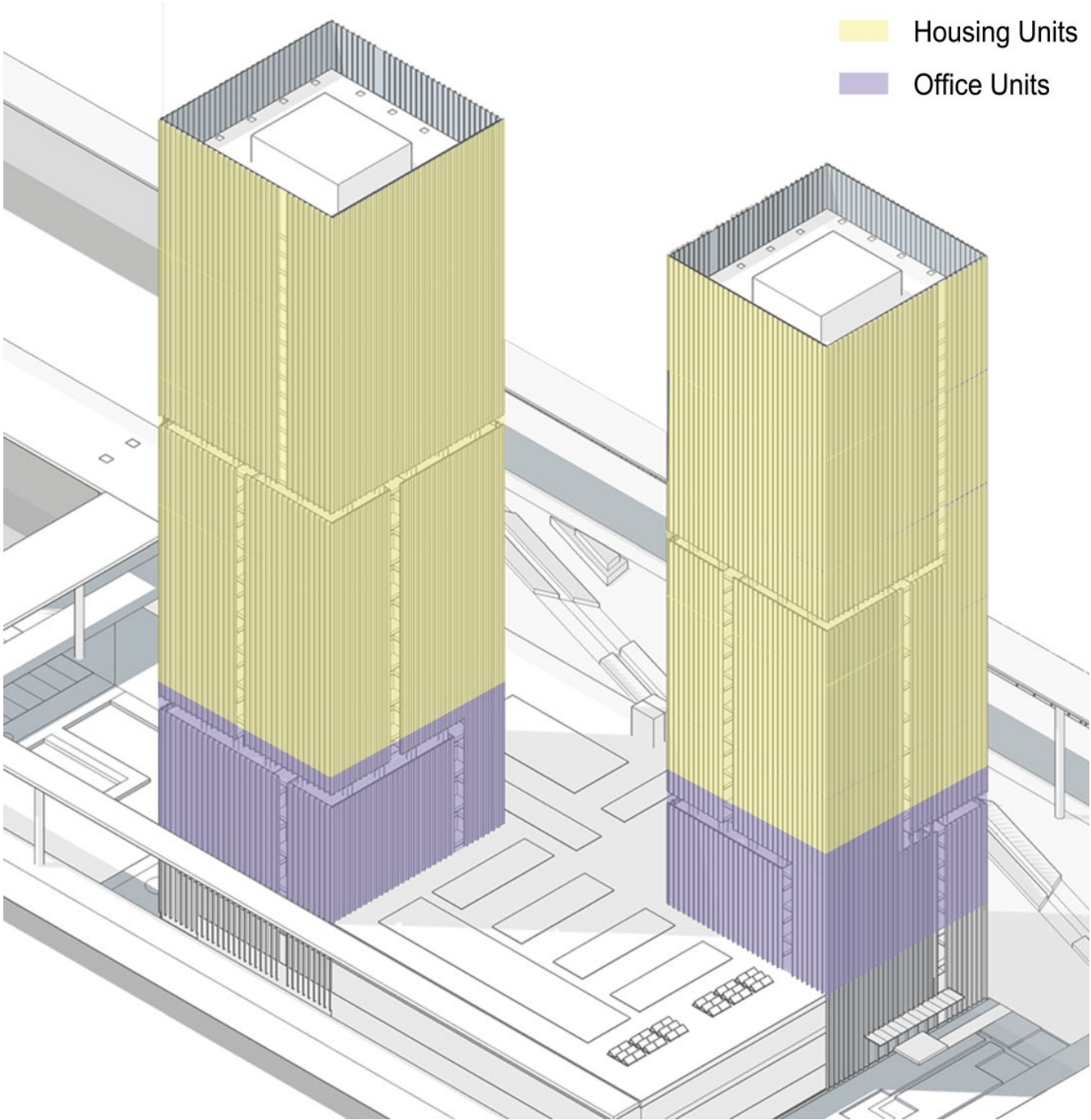
The lid is organized into a series of unique environments that create a human scale to the lid expanse. Covered teahouses invite families and friends to gather in an intimate setting. At Lincoln Center, small retail kiosks, space for pop-ups, community gardens, an outdoor restaurant and beer garden, and private open space integrate human-scaled elements into the design.

**Affordability**

Approximately half of Bellevue’s workforce earns less than \$50,000 year and cannot afford the average rental rates in Bellevue. Sixteen percent of all renters and almost one-third of all households spend more than 30% of their income on housing. To address this, the City’s Affordable Housing Strategy proposes to increase development potential for affordable housing on suitable land owned by public agencies, and to develop affordable housing on surplus public lands in proximity to transit hubs. The Lincoln Center Site is a perfect match for these criteria and is an opportunity for Bellevue to put its housing strategy in motion. Our team proposes providing affordable housing on the Lincoln Center site to help solve this housing affordability crisis.

Towers at the Lincoln Center site include smaller floor plate office space. These offices provide a necessary alternative to the prevailing development pattern in Bellevue Downtown, where space is scarce for tenants who need less than several floors in a building. Co-working and startup facilities or an extension of City Hall offices are uses that would marry well with the civic nature of the site.

At less than 1,000 square feet, modular commercial units provide affordability for local retail and restaurants at the Civic Center site. Flexibly designed spaces create opportunities for artists, makerspaces, galleries, and small-scale restaurants to operate in a prime location with a customer base that draws from the nearby Convention Center, offices, residences, and hotels.



On the Lincoln Center site, two towers provide affordable housing and space for small offices. LCY STUDENT TEAM

## CIVIC CENTER DESIGN FEATURES

### AN ICONIC LIVING ROOM FOR BELLEVUE

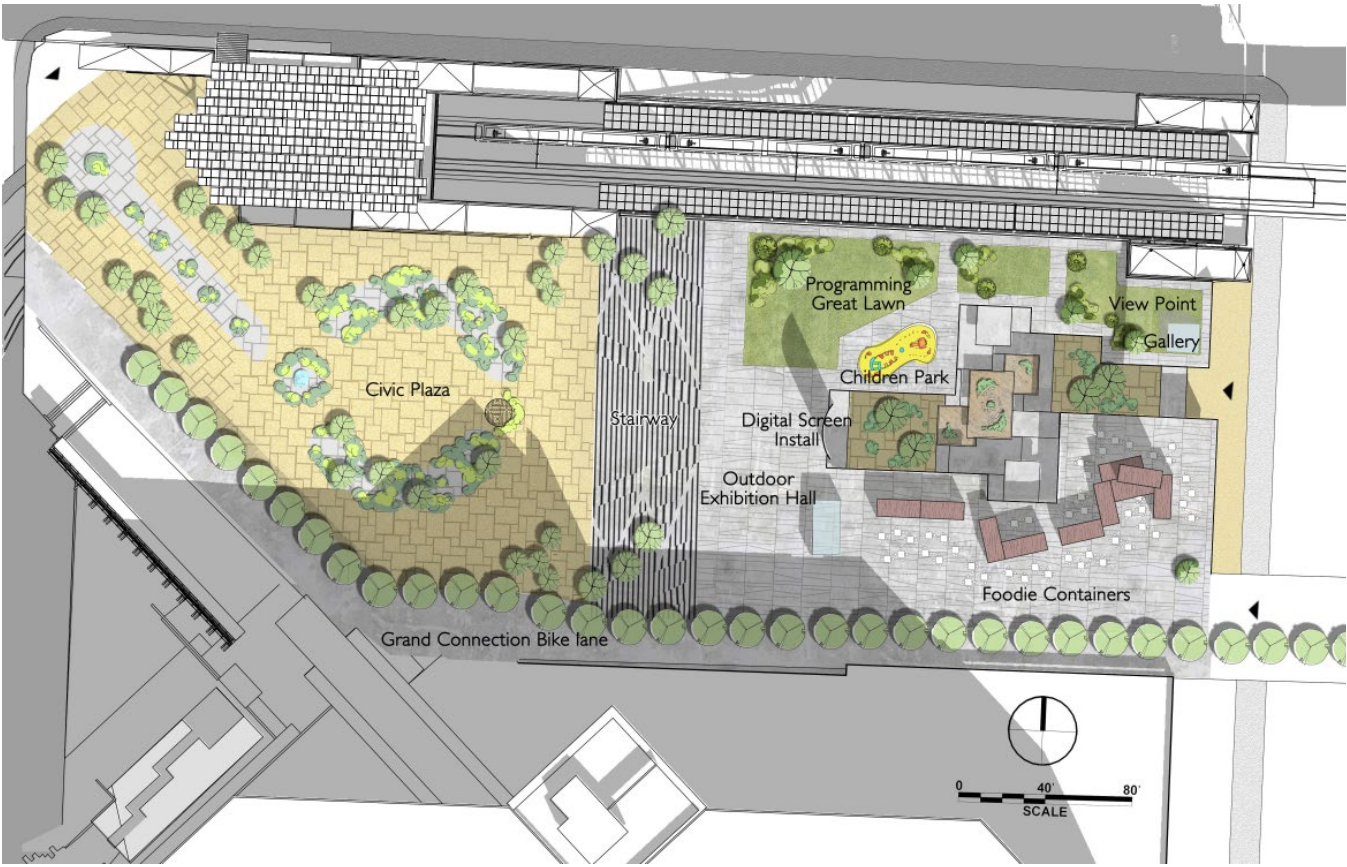
This unique site will be for many the first thing they see when entering Bellevue by light rail. We carefully considered this location and decided to propose changes to its design. It is on this level that one is able to enter City Hall, access multimodal transit, and connect directly to Bellevue Downtown and Wilburton via the Grand Connection. For this reason, we chose to position an iconic art installation at the center. We hope for this artwork to scream: “BELLEVUE” so that anyone seeing it will know that they are at the heart of this vibrant city.

While there is vegetation along this upper plaza, it is clustered in corridors and preserves sightlines down to the lower plaza. Views here are framed and guide the user towards either the Grand Connection or the continuation of the plaza below. This method of clustering vegetation creates a buffer between the Civic Plaza and the Grand Connection bike lane.

A great portion of space is preserved as open paved space. This is the perfect place for civic activities such as festivals, speeches, and social gatherings. When a teacher takes her students to meet City officials, the Bellevue Fire Department, or the Bellevue Police Department, this is the perfect gathering space for them to meet. A public information kiosk and visitor’s center, ideally located at this level, allows newcomers to quickly orient themselves to Bellevue. It is important to note that this level directly connects to 110th Avenue NE allowing for informal food carts, book stands, or even food trucks to easily access this site.

#### **Local Commercial**

Studies show that the size of leased retail spaces is increasing, however the need for modest-sized spaces under 1,000 square feet continues to grow (Seattle Commercial Affordability 2016). This presents a challenge for small businesses who depend on modest-sized spaces. Small businesses create opportunity for immigrants and minorities, add unique character, and contribute to civic identity. Our design addresses this by providing small-footprint eateries on the plaza level and modular commercial units on the 112th Avenue NE level. Our hope is that the commercial units offer space for artists, galleries, and other vibrant and dynamic uses.



*The plan for the Civic Center includes many small activity areas, all in support of building cultural connections. LCY STUDENT TEAM*

**Circulation**

Those visiting the Civic Center must enter at either 110th Avenue NE, 112th Avenue NE, or via the Grand Connection bridge. Depending on their entry point, visitors encounter either an uphill or a downhill experience. From the lowest plaza the visitor first experiences a transparent facade dotted with storefronts that invite the visitor to enter. Stairs lead to three different levels of retail before culminating in a landscaped stairwell connecting to the Civic Plaza. Elevators are conveniently located throughout.

**Iconic Nodes**

Our design features three iconic nodes:

- The iconic art piece on the Civic Plaza is meant to be not only a landmark but a central node.
- The next permanent node is located in the center of the middle plaza. There, a vertical digital display spans one story in height from the highest viewpoint and four stories in height from the lowest.
- The facade along 112th Avenue NE, which we envision as a transparent facade, is also a node. This facade will invite people in from I-405, the Light Rail, and the Grand Connection.

**Lid Park Design Features**

Our design for the I-405 lid park strives to use art as a way to commemorate Bellevue’s history and cultural diversity while providing inviting spaces for locals and visitors to use. As pedestrians and bicyclists enter the park from the Civic Center, they encounter a Japanese garden. Japanese farmers played an important role in Bellevue’s economy until discrimination and internment during World War II decimated their population. This garden is intended to recognize that history while speaking to the present and future of Bellevue’s diverse community. It also provides covered teahouses for people to gather in. The garden is surrounded by the overlook walk, where one can see Mt. Rainier to the south from the highest elevation on the lid. Finally, a playground provides a high-quality play space for children in Downtown and Wilburton.

**CASE STUDY: KLYDE WARREN PARK,  
DALLAS, TEXAS**

Opened in 2012, the Klyde Warren Park in Dallas connects the walkable Uptown neighborhood with the Dallas Arts District and Downtown. The park was designed to attract pedestrian foot-traffic, increase the value of surrounding businesses, and provide connections by way of vibrant public space. Since its completion, the walkability of the city center has significantly increased through an integration of pedestrian, streetcar, and bicycle accessibility. The park is viewed as a model for sustainable landscape design through an integration of native plantings, stormwater reclamation, and solar and geothermal energy for park buildings.



*These photos from Klyde Warren Park illustrate how a lid park can reclaim space for both everyday interactions and special events. MICHAEL BARERA, KEVIN1086*

The southern side of the lid park provides programmable spaces that can be used for everyday activities as well. These spaces take advantage of the unique topography of the lid, which is caused by on-ramps located in the center of the north end and the two corners of the south end. This provides space for a large sloping lawn facing a permanent, low-rise stage. The space can be used by residents on a daily basis as well as for medium-sized events. Buffering the lawn from traffic, low trees, and landscaping provide space for educational nature walks. On the southwestern slope, an innovative dog park has plenty of space for both residents and workers to engage their pets in play. Finally, an informal seating area can accommodate food trucks. In the center of the lid, a unique piece of art welcomes visitors to the Duwamish tribe's ancestral homelands.

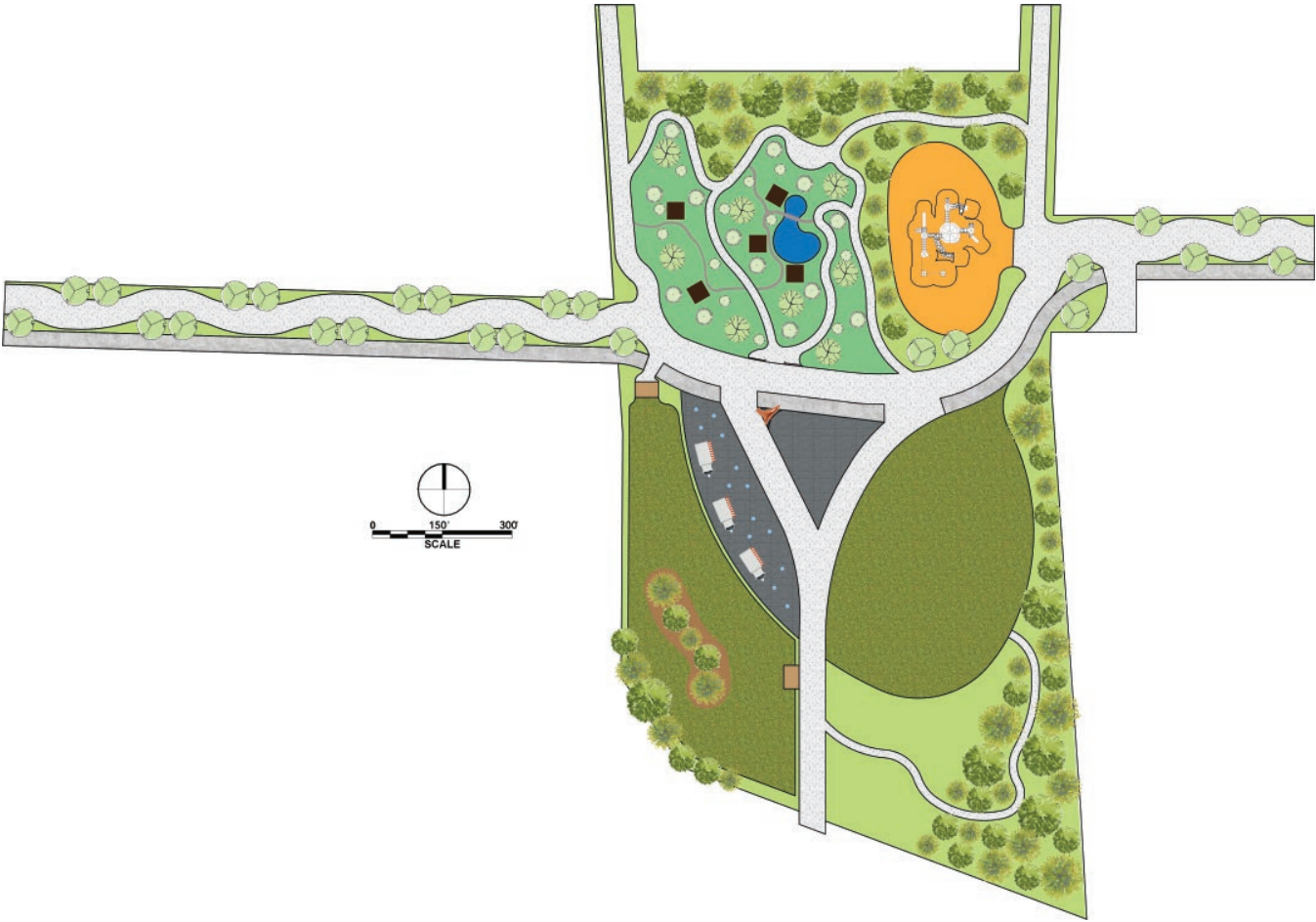
## LINCOLN CENTER DESIGN FEATURES

### **Housing**

Residential towers are designed with apartment units geared towards families and the local workforce. With Overlake Hospital, numerous businesses, and the re-imagined Spring District in close proximity, affordable workforce housing is a crucial asset. Affordable housing guidelines for 2019 identify the following income thresholds: 30% of area median income (AMI) [\$27,090 for a family of four], 30%–50% of AMI [\$45,150 for a family of four], and 50/60%–80% AMI [\$72,240 for a family of four]. Our development would provide a range of units to support these incomes.

### **Resident Amenities**

The podium design creates space for residents to gather, garden, frequent the rooftop restaurant, and access the shops at the Creative Street level. Private outdoor space for residents' use is nestled between the Grand Connection and the podium. The I-405 lid has a playground at its eastern edge — a desirable amenity for residents of the family-sized affordable housing units.

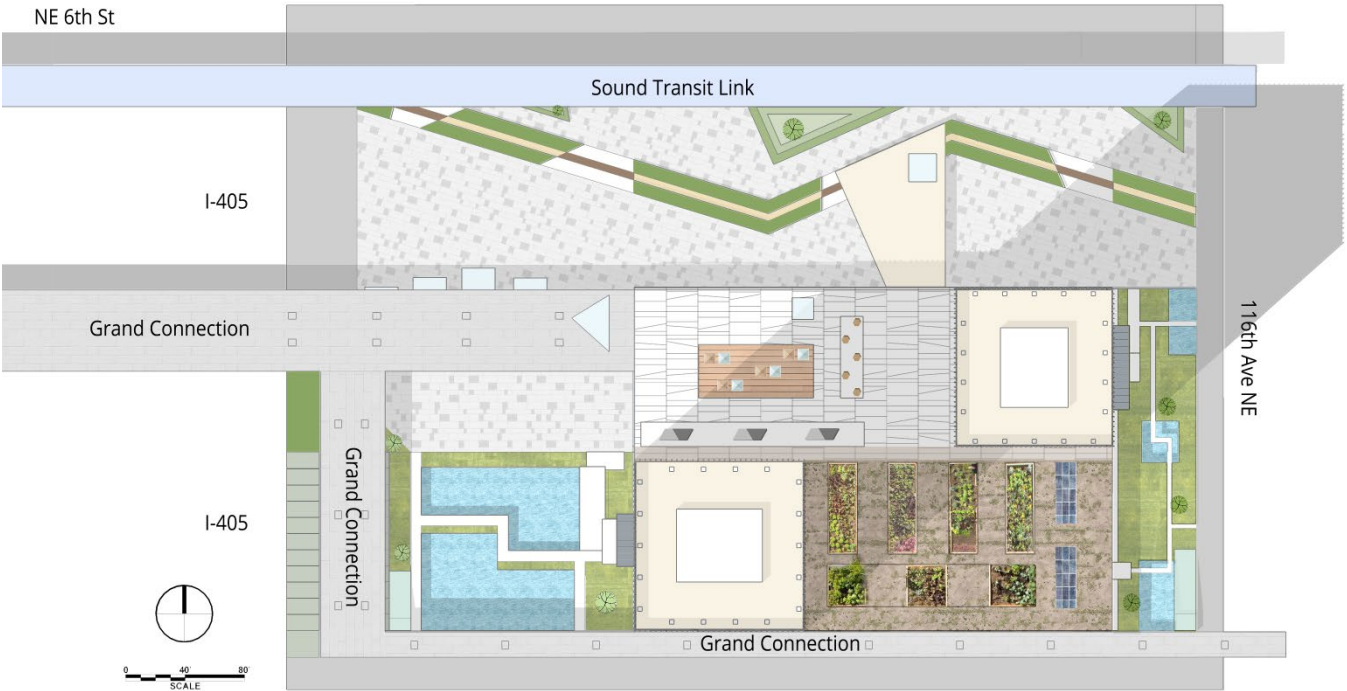


*This redesigned lid park concept prioritizes flexible, year-round uses that reflect Bellevue's cultural history. LCY STUDENT TEAM*

**Community-Centered Design**

Aquatic centers are destination attractions, particularly when built out with an Olympic-sized lap pool, specialized diving facilities, a warm water exercise pool, and a children’s play zone. Given the civic orientation of the Lincoln Center site, the light rail transit access, and the residential character of the surrounding Wilburton neighborhood, Lincoln Center is an ideal location for an aquatic center that serves the local and regional population. A community center will further enhance the active nature of Lincoln Center, with the pedestrian and bicycle connections created by the Grand Connection.

The Creative Street knits together the artistic identity of the entire Civic Center area. Vibrant lighting and human-scale retail kiosks stimulate attention and interest. Lighting creates an opportunity to connect Bellevue Botanical Garden’s popular wintertime Garden d’Lights festival to Bellevue Downtown’s holiday festivities through Lincoln Center and the Grand Connection. The BAM ARTSfair may also leverage the art synergy and extend across the I-405 lid to the Creative Street.



Lincoln Center incorporates cultural activities and resident amenities around the towers. LCY STUDENT TEAM



The Alternative One team discusses their plan with Gwen Rousseau (far left), Senior Planner with the Community Development Department, and Julie Cripe Montgomery (second from left), Director of Architecture and Art at Sound Transit. TERI THOMSON RANDALL

# CONCLUSION

We view this project as an opportunity to provide Bellevue with a range of options and ideas for their Civic Center. We recognize that, although we designed the site as a whole, the three sites of our study area will be developed at different times. As the City considers how to move this project forward, we encourage imagining these concepts in creative combinations. From amphitheaters and affordable housing to a wetland and an aquatic center, we believe that each design has many pieces with unique strengths. We hope that this variety helps the City to design each site in a way that lets each be compelling on its own while maintaining an overall vision for the whole area when it is completed. We believe that the future of this area has a lot of potential and we are proud to have participated in the planning of a vibrant Civic Center.



*The students enjoyed visiting the site and working with stakeholders in meetings at City Hall. ANDREW FENNER*

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