

City of

Bellevue



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DATE: October 17, 2012
TO: Bellevue Transportation Commission
FROM: Kevin McDonald, AICP, Senior Transportation Planner, 452-4558
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SUBJECT: Downtown Transportation Plan Update

INTRODUCTION

The update to the Downtown Transportation Plan will address mobility issues and challenges and support Downtown growth and urban livability looking out to 2030.

On October 25, 2012, staff is planning to review preliminary recommendations for crosswalks, mid-block crossings, sidewalks and through-block connections (Action: Commission concurrence or alternate direction)

PEDESTRIAN MOBILITY

Walking will be an increasingly significant portion of the daily activity of people in Downtown Bellevue, and also a key element of economic vitality and Downtown livability. Pedestrians need safe and accessible, comfortable and convenient places to walk. The Downtown Transportation Plan Update will work to enhance the three-plus decades of improvements to the pedestrian environment.

Staff and the Commission have previously identified four components of the Downtown pedestrian environment that the Downtown Transportation Plan Update will address: crosswalks, mid-block crossings, sidewalks, and through-block connections. The Pedestrian Corridor is an important component of Downtown pedestrian and bicycle mobility that will be addressed separately, at the Commission meeting on November 8.

Through community outreach staff has gathered information about people's Downtown walking experience. We have shared that with the Commission and the outreach is documented in the January 2012 "Scoping Report". We have also reviewed existing adopted codes and policies, plus the work compiled in the "Great Streets – Downtown Streetscape Design Guidelines" report from 2010 that took a comprehensive look at ways to improve the quality of the Downtown pedestrian environment. Staff recommendations for each component of the Downtown pedestrian system follow:

Crosswalks

At the Transportation Commission meeting on July 12, 2012, we reviewed components of intersections that significantly affect the pedestrian environment: crossing times; crosswalk design, and intersection geometry. With respect to crosswalk design, staff introduced a project concept that would “Employ crosswalk design components that will help to create an exceptional pedestrian experience at key intersections”. Since then we have refined the concept to include three types of crosswalk treatments for Downtown to fit the context: standard; enhanced; and exceptional – described below and shown in **Attachment 1**.

Standard Crosswalk

In Downtown Bellevue the standard crosswalk design consists of 2 parallel white bars that are spaced 8-feet apart. A standard crosswalk also has a pedestrian actuated signal that provides both audible and countdown indicators – these are being installed throughout the Downtown as the older signal heads are replaced. There is a comfortable consistency in having this standard at many intersections, as both motorists and pedestrians know what to expect.

Enhanced Crosswalk

Crosswalks at certain intersections warrant some enhancement beyond the standard. Enhanced crosswalks would be located at intersections where high numbers of both pedestrians and vehicles are expected, and where the urban design treatment along the street would be continued through the intersection. These intersections would include those along NE 8th St and NE 4th St between Bellevue Way and 110th Ave NE; and 110th Ave NE at 108th Ave NE and 110th Ave NE; plus other specific crossings.

The design tools to help create an enhanced crosswalk would include: wider than standard to accommodate a large number of pedestrians and provide a buffer from vehicles; wayfinding at corners; weather protection at corners; special paving treatment across the street; alternative striping, ie) piano key; weather protection; and curb bump outs or tighter radius to shorten crossing distance, calm traffic and provide pedestrian queuing areas.

Exceptional Crosswalk

The Downtown Bellevue Streetscape Design Guidelines (December 2010), known as the “Great Streets” report refers to “celebrated intersections” where the pedestrian is provided a very appealing place to walk across the street. Great Streets identified seven locations as so-called celebrated intersections: Bellevue Way at NE 4th St, NE 6th St, and NE 8th St; 106th Avenue NE at NE 6th St; and 108th Avenue NE at NE 4th St, NE 6th St, and NE 8th St. For the Downtown Transportation Plan, staff has considered additional guidance from adopted code to identify other crosswalk locations suitable for what we proposed to call “exceptional” treatment. Instead of the above list of intersections from Great Streets, we propose crosswalks with

exceptional treatment as those only along rights-of-way that have an “A” designation on the rights-of-way in the “Building/Sidewalk Relationships” Design Guidelines. These rights-of-way are along the Pedestrian Corridor (NE 6th Street at 110th Ave NE, 108th Ave NE, 106th Ave NE and Bellevue Way) and in Old Bellevue across Main Street.

Exceptional crosswalks could incorporate the design components of an enhanced crosswalk, and may also include a pedestrian scramble signal phase, raised crossings; weather protection; and significant wayfinding.

Mid-Block Crossings

Mid-block crossings help reduce the scale of Downtown Bellevue “superblocks” to be more manageable for pedestrians. Existing policy specifically addresses mid-block crossings:

Policy S-DT-47. Reinforce the importance of the pedestrian in Downtown Bellevue with the use of a series of signalized midblock crossings. Consideration should be given to the design of adjacent superblocks, consideration of traffic flow, and the quality of the pedestrian environment when implementing mid-block crossings.

While the Downtown Subarea Plan considers the mid-point of each superblock to be a candidate location for a mid-block crossing, the guidance from policy S-DT-47, plus land use factors inform the list of high priority installation of mid-block crossings.

Existing mid-block crossings exhibit a variety of treatments, including signalization and grade-separated pedestrian bridges. Council has approved of several other locations for future pedestrian bridges across Bellevue Way, NE 4th St and NE 8th St. Staff recommends another pedestrian bridge location across NE 6th Street between City Hall and Meydenbauer Center.

Based on community input, and current and future demand, recommended high priority locations for installing new at-grade mid-block pedestrian crossings are listed as follows, and shown in Attachment 2:

- NE 4th Street, between:
 - 106th Ave NE and 108th Ave NE
 - 108th Ave NE and 110th Ave NE
- NE 10th Street, between:
 - 106th Ave NE and 108th Ave NE
- 106th Avenue NE, between:
 - NE 8th St and NE 10th St
- 110th Avenue NE, between:
 - NE 2nd St and NE 4th St
 - NE 4th St and NE 6th St
 - NE 6th St and NE 8th St

Sidewalks

Sidewalks in Downtown Bellevue provide for non-motorized transportation and urban design features that enhance livability. The Downtown Land Use Code - which dates from the 1980s - prescribes the width of sidewalks and the landscaping treatment adjacent to the street. Both the private sector and public sector must incorporate the Code provisions in buildings and infrastructure projects. Staff has prepared a recommendation to update the Code in light of existing and anticipated pedestrian demand and expectations. Recommendations include increasing the required sidewalk width in certain heavily travelled corridors, and substituting a continuous landscape planter along the outside edge of the sidewalk instead of street trees in tree grates. Table 5 summarizes the staff recommendation, see also Attachment 3.

Table 1. Existing and Proposed Land Use Code Requirements for Downtown Sidewalks

Existing Code 20.25A.060	Applicable Road Segment		Proposed Code	Applicable Road Segment	
12 feet plus 4 feet for street trees	106 th Ave NE 4 th - 8 th 108 th Ave NE 4 th - 8 th 110 th Ave NE 4 th - 8 th	NE 6 th St 110 th - 112 th	Same dimensions and landscape	108 th Ave NE Main - 2 nd 4 th - 10 th 110 th Ave NE Main - 6 th 8 th - 12 th	NE 2 nd St Bellevue Way - 106 th NE 6 th St 108 th - 112 th
12 feet plus 4 feet for planter strip	Bellevue Way Main - 12 th	NE 4 th St 100 th - 112 th NE 8 th St 100 th - 112 th	Same dimensions and landscape	Bellevue Way Main - 12 th (except where 16') 106 th Ave NE Main - 4 th 8 th - 10 th 110 th Ave NE 6 th - 8 th	NE 4 th St 100 th - 112 th NE 8 th St 100 th - 112 th NE 10 th St Bellevue Way - 108 th (north side) 112 th - I-405 NE 12 th St 102 nd - I-405(south side)
8 feet plus 4 feet for street trees	Along any other street		Same	Along any other street	
New Categories			8 feet plus 4 feet for planter	100 th Ave NE 1 st - 12 th (east side) 109 th Ave NE 9 th - 10 th 111 th Ave NE 10 th - 11 th 112 th Ave NE 4 th - 6 th	Main Street Bellevue Way - I-405 (south side w/o 108 th) NE 2 nd Place 108 th - 111 th NE 10 th St 100 th - I-405 th (except where 12' s/w) NE 11 th St 110 th - 112 th NE 12 th St 102 nd - 112 th (south side)
			16 feet plus 4 feet for street trees	106 th Ave NE 4 th - 8 th	
			16 feet plus 4 feet for planter strip	Bellevue Way West side south of 4 th - 6 th	

Through-Block Connections

Similar in function to mid-block crossings, through-block connections help to break up the Downtown superblocks into more manageable sizes for pedestrians. The land use code requires that through-block connections be incorporated in new development, design guidelines are provided and basic wayfinding is required. In many situations, access to plazas between buildings can be best accomplished on a through-block connection. However, the actual design of through-block connections is so variable, that the public is uncertain as to whether they are welcome, and wayfinding is not adequate to let a person know where the through-block connection will lead.

Through-block connections are great shortcuts through superblocks that make it easier to get around on foot in Downtown, but some design refinements may be appropriate. Proposed design refinements would create: standard public access wayfinding; commonly recognizable paving material or inlays; and universal accessibility according to ADA standards. Since these components affect urban design and mobility, these design considerations will inform work on the Downtown Livability Initiative.

NEXT STEPS

At the next scheduled Commission meeting on November 8, 2012 staff will present concepts for the 112th Avenue NE bicycle facilities and a design for better integrating wheeled users into the NE 6th Street pedestrian corridor.

ATTACHMENTS

1. Crosswalks Map
2. Mid-Block Crossing Map
3. Sidewalks Map

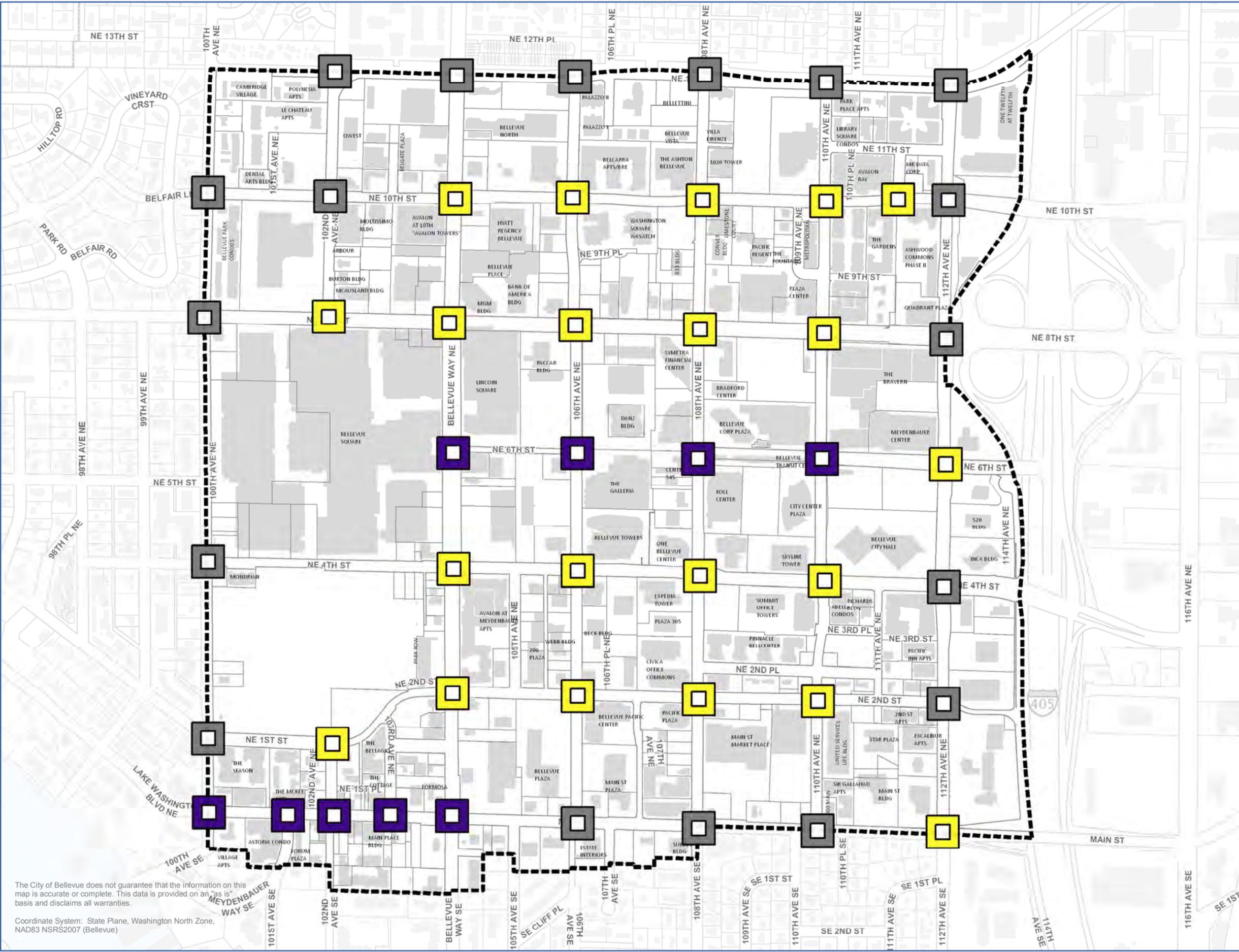
Proposed Intersection Designations

Downtown Transportation Plan Update

Legend

Designations Proposed for Downtown Crosswalks

-  Exceptional
-  Enhanced
-  Standard



Sources:
City of Bellevue
Building Footprints:
Spring 2009

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Coordinate System: State Plane, Washington North Zone, NAD83 NSRS2007 (Bellevue)

Proposed Mid-Block Crossings

Downtown Transportation Plan Update

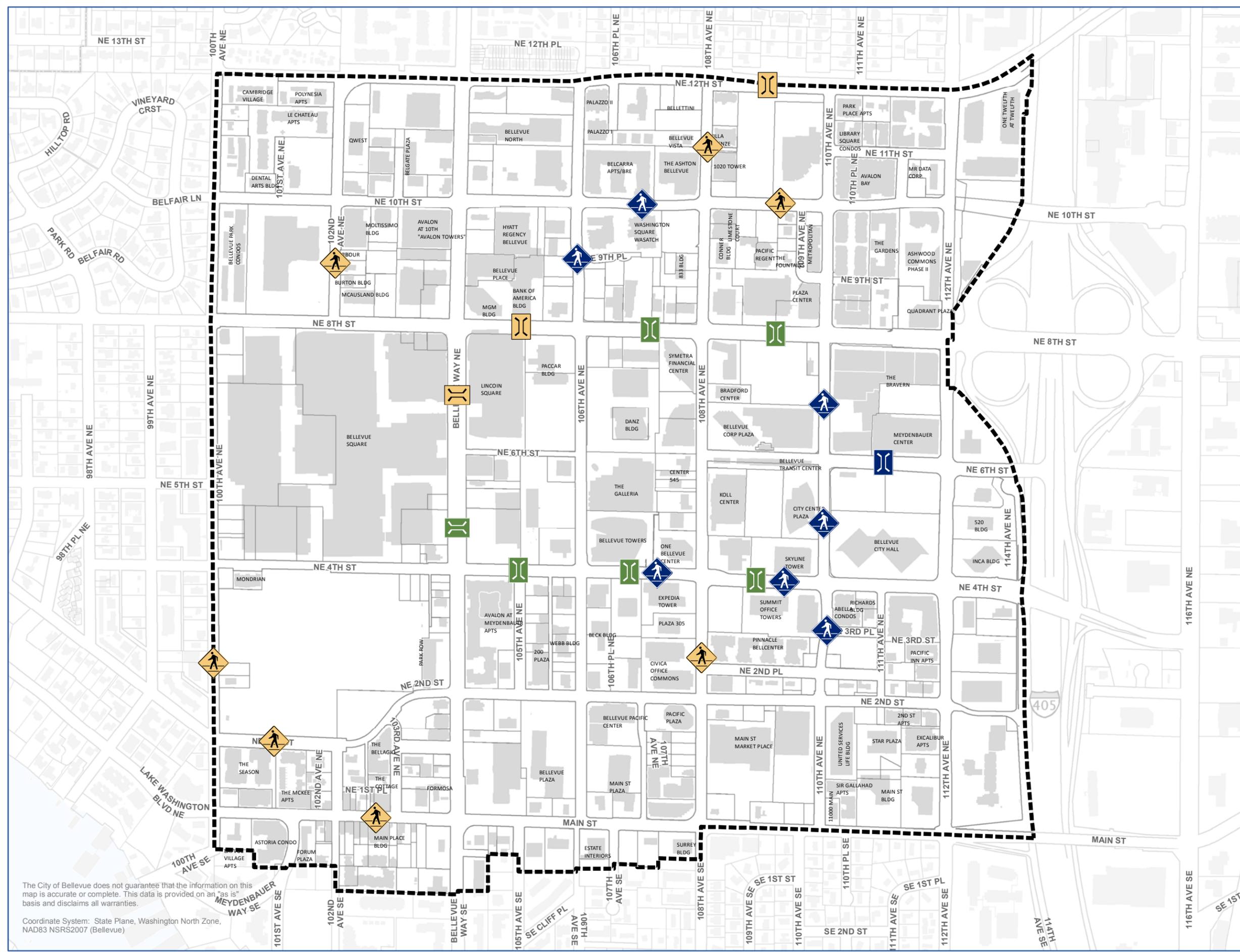
Legend

Downtown Mid-Block Crossings and Code Recommendations

-  Proposed Priority Mid-Block Crossing on this Block
-  Existing Mid-Block Crossing on this Block
-  Propose Permitting Pedestrian Bridge on this Block
-  Code Permissible Pedestrian Bridge on this Block
-  Existing Pedestrian Bridge on this Block



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Proposed Changes to the Sidewalks Land Use Code

Downtown Transportation Plan Update

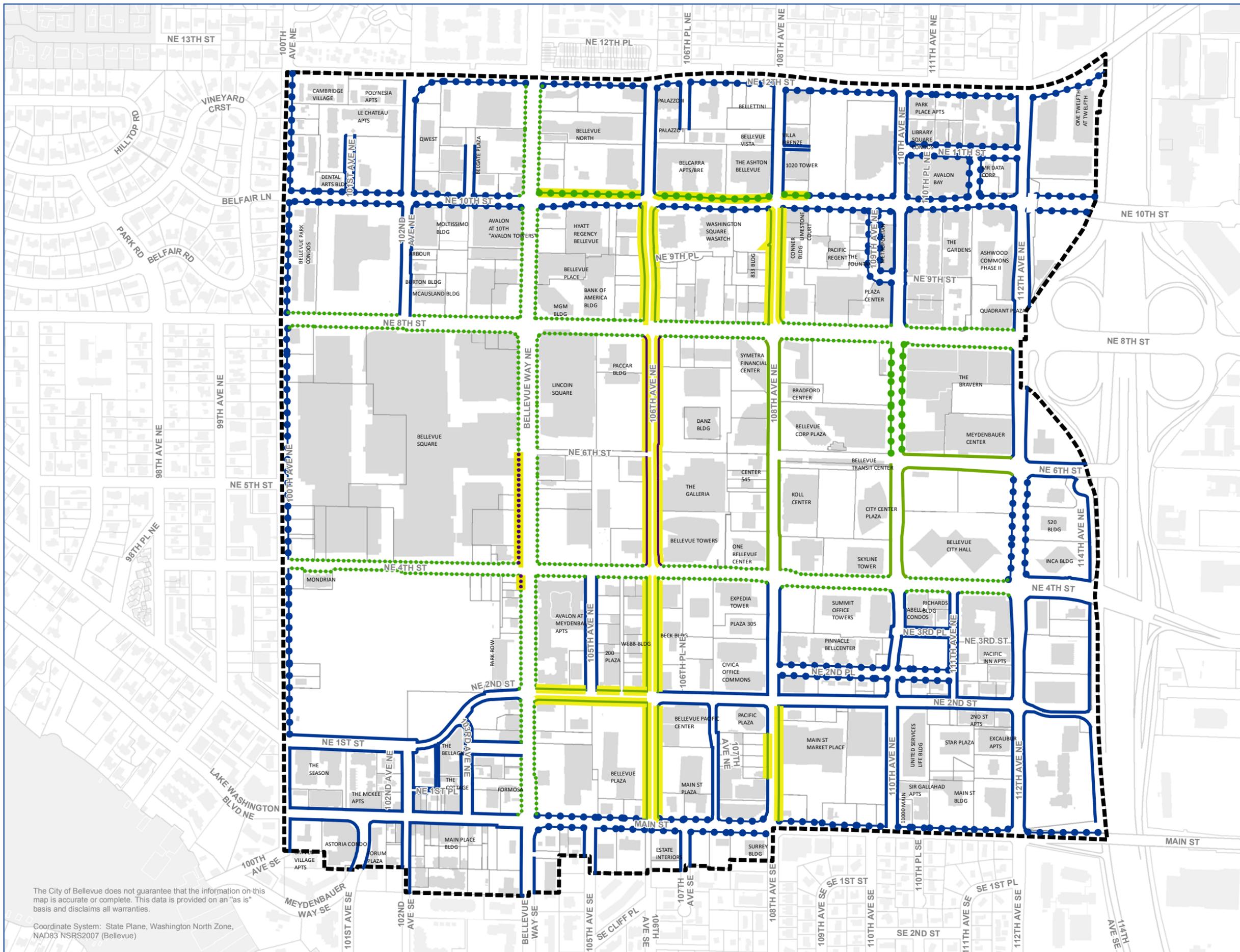
Legend

Changes to Existing Code

- Twenty Foot Sidewalks**
- 16' Width (12' existing)
 - 4' Street Trees
 - 16' Width (12' existing)
 - 4' Planter
- Sixteen Foot Sidewalks**
- 12' Width
 - 4' Street Trees
 - 12' Width (8' existing)
 - 4' Street Trees
 - 12' Width
 - 4' Planter
 - 12' Width (trees existing)
 - 4' Planter (trees existing)
 - 12' Width (8' existing)
 - 4' Planter (trees existing)
- Twelve Foot Sidewalks**
- 8' Width
 - 4' Street Trees
 - 8' Width
 - 4' Planter (trees existing)



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