

U DISTRICT URBAN DESIGN

Final recommendations: zoning, development standards,
affordable housing requirements, and amenities



Stephanie Bower, Architectural Illustration

October 6, 2016

www.seattle.gov/dpd/udistrict

Introduction

Dear Community Members:

Since 2011, the City of Seattle has worked closely with residents, businesses, institutions, and community organizations in the U District to plan for growth. This report provides a summary of the planning process, an overview of City investments and partnerships in the neighborhood, and a detailed explanation of new proposed land use regulations.

As one of the six urban centers designated in Seattle's Comprehensive Plan, the U District is a priority area for job growth, housing growth, and public investment. Private development and University of Washington growth are already reshaping the neighborhood, and a new light rail station opening in 2021 will likely intensify redevelopment.

In the face of these changes, we've heard a wide range of opinions from people in the neighborhood. Some are excited for new investment and activity in the neighborhood, others hope that new development can help address long-standing neighborhood challenges, and many are concerned about losing qualities that make the U District special, including its diversity, eclectic character, and affordability.

The legislation summarized in this report has four main pieces:

- 1. Zoning changes** allowing greater height and density in the core of the neighborhood near light rail and campus.
- 2. New design** standards to help development better fit the U District context - requirements including setbacks, landscaping standards, and tower spacing would shape future buildings.
- 3. Mandatory Housing Affordability (MHA) requirements** would require all new development to provide or contribute to affordable housing, to ensure that the neighborhood continues to offer housing options for a wide range of residents.
- 4. New requirements and incentives for amenities** including open space, historic preservation, family-sized housing, childcare.

The U District is already growing, and significant change will continue over the next decade with or without zoning changes. Many in the community are urging us to advance a plan that will help align future growth with local priorities, including affordability, public space, diverse and attractive architecture, and preserving character buildings. After extensive analysis, dialogue, and public review, we believe this proposal offers the best policy tools to help achieve the shared vision.

I extend my thanks to all those who have participated in the planning process, whatever your perspective. Good planning work can't happen without local insights and a healthy back-and-forth between different points of view. We look forward to continuing the dialogue in this and related projects.

Sincerely,



Director Samuel Assefa
City of Seattle Office of Planning and Community Development

1. Executive Summary

The U District is a thriving neighborhood with 14,000 residents, 6,000 jobs, dozens of independent businesses, and its own unique flavor. It's also a cultural and economic hub, as home to the University of Washington, Seattle's largest employer. Finally, it's a magnet for the youth, talent, and thought leaders of the Pacific Northwest.

All these factors contribute to the U District's designation as one of Seattle's six urban centers – the areas planned for the most growth in housing and jobs, and the highest level of public investment. Sound Transit's U District light rail station is opening at Brooklyn Ave NE and NE 43rd St in 2021, and substantial development is already underway.

Since 2011, City planners have worked with the community to identify priorities that can be addressed by land use planning and urban design. After much discussion and analysis, we recommend changes to zoning and development standards, as well as new requirements for affordable housing and other community priorities.

Planning for growth

Many in the community have asked the City to rethink zoning and development standards for the neighborhood. Specifically, people want new tools to help shape growth in a way that complements the light rail station, serves the high pedestrian volume of the neighborhood, and responds to neighborhood priorities.

Planning has been based on an inclusive community process, with over four years of participation by residents, business owners, the University of Washington, social service providers, and the faith community. The U District Urban Design Framework (2013) identified guiding principles (see page 10) and recommendations. Next, we studied several possible zoning scenarios through an Environmental Impact Statement (EIS, 2015).

Light rail, UW growth, and other factors are already bringing change to the U District: about 5,000 new households and 4,800 new jobs will come over the next 20 years. The goal of this proposal is to help shape that growth, and to apply requirements that will better mitigate its impacts.

After completing the environmental review, we drafted amendments to Seattle's Land Use Code, including zoning changes and new development standards. We took public comment on the draft zoning changes from May to July 2016, then revised our recommendations before transmitting to City Council.

Outline of recommendations

The recommendations are built on key ideas from community engagement. It has four main components.

- 1. Rezone, adding height and density in the core of the U District.** This part of the proposal would increase building height and density in areas close to light rail, central campus, and existing highrise buildings. The proposed zoning would allow a limited number of new towers, up to 240' and 320' for residential and 160' for office. This would put more homes and jobs in the area directly served by light rail.
- 2. U District-specific design standards.** These standards respond to community concerns about how development should fit with neighborhood context. They include:
 - **Maintain the scale and character of the Ave.** Keep heights on the Ave relatively low (no highrise), along with new upper-level setbacks and width limits. This will help maintain the scale and character that neighbors value.
 - **Set the stage for architectural variety and active frontage.** Apply standards that will result in a mix of heights and building forms rather than uniform midrise buildings. Make sure buildings meet the sidewalk with pedestrian-friendly frontage. Apply tower spacing, floor plate limits, and other standards for bulk and massing.

- *Provide thoughtful transitions.* Step height limits and density down from the core to the surroundings.

3. New requirements for affordable housing.

- For consistency with the City's Housing Affordability and Livability Agenda (HALA), include mandatory housing affordability requirements for new development.
- All new development on rezoned parcels would be required to set aside affordable housing, or pay into a City fund used to create affordable housing for lower income residents.

4. New requirements and incentives for open space, child care, historic preservation, and other amenities.

- Apply new requirements for open space in residential developments and all large site developments.
- Use incentive zoning to tie new development potential to neighborhood priorities including: child care, street improvements, open space, human services, and historic preservation.

Zoning is one piece of a broader set of efforts, including community initiatives, public investments, private development and UW's long-range-planning. Section 5 of the report summarizes key investments and partnerships, highlighting an integrated approach to planning in the U District.

Coordinated transportation systems, a thoughtful open space strategy, social services, and amenities that appeal to families are all important to people in the U District. To fully achieve these will require a sustained, long-term commitment from the public and, the City, and UW.

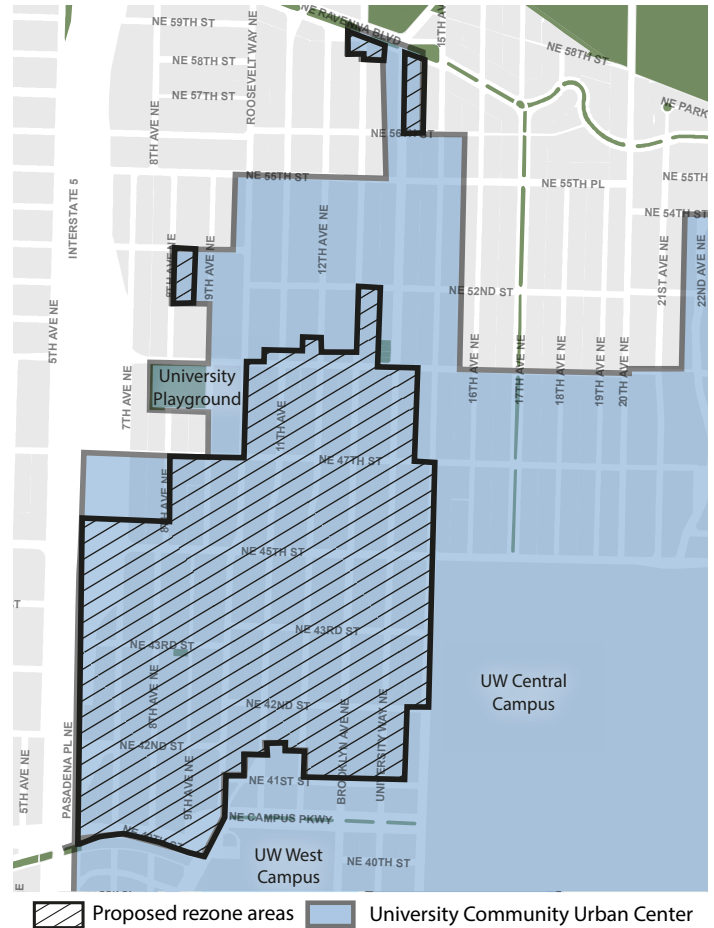


Figure 3. Proposed zoning changes would apply to western portions of the University Community Urban Center.



2. Context & Community Involvement

Since 2011, the Office of Planning and Community Development¹ (OPCD) and other City departments have been talking to the U District community about development, public space, transportation, and other issues related to growth and change. This effort has led to updates to the U District's Neighborhood Plan, a strategic plan, new partnerships, and a new vision for development and public spaces.

Why plan in the U District?

It's one of Seattle's six urban centers. The U District is designated as one of the six areas most important for job and housing growth.

Light rail is arriving in 2021. A new Sound Transit station at NE Brooklyn Ave and NE 43rd St. will provide high-speed connections to downtown and beyond.

New development. There are currently over 2,000 units in the construction pipeline, and we anticipate much more over the next 20 years. This growth raises both hopes and concerns for neighbors.

Community interest. Reacting to growth in the neighborhood, many want to get ahead of development and make strategic decisions about where and how changes should occur.

Balance human needs. The U District is home to a diversity of people and services. Planning and investments are needed to support all those who live, work, and visit the neighborhood.

Growth estimates

The City has just updated Seattle's Comprehensive Plan. Based on regional growth projections, we expect to add 70,000 households and 115,000 jobs over the next 20 years. From past trends and current growth, we estimate that 3,500 to 5,000 of those new households and about 4,800 jobs will locate in U District west of 15th Ave NE.

This growth can already occur under existing zoning in the U District. While the new zoning

¹ Formerly the long-range planning division of the Department of Planning and Development.



UW Daily

recommendations would increase capacity for growth, that is not the primary goal. Rather, the recommendations focus on how to shape the growth and connect it with appropriate mitigation and desired improvements.

Light rail in 2021

This \$2.1 billion infrastructure investment will have significant effects on transportation to and from the U District: the neighborhood will suddenly be minutes away from downtown, bus routes will change to build off the new capacity of light rail, and people on foot and bike will be much more concentrated in the blocks surrounding Brooklyn Ave NE and NE 43rd St. This infrastructure changes the relationship of the U District to the rest of the city.



University of Washington station. (Zach Shaner, Seattle Transit Blog)

Dense, walkable communities around light rail stops are referred to as “transit-oriented development” (TOD). The goal is for zoning and public investments to support job and housing growth in close proximity to transit. This allows more people to live and work close to transit. When focusing growth in a TOD pattern, it is appropriate to prioritize investments in open space, affordable housing, and amenities in the same area.

At the new University of Washington station, which opened in 2016, ridership is breaking records. The U District Station at the heart of the neighborhood is also expected to see heavy use.

Neighborhood snapshot

The concentration of students in the U District heavily influences demographics. The neighborhood is younger and more diverse than Seattle as a whole. More residents rent, and more households are cost-burdened (i.e. spending more than 30% of income on housing) than in other parts of Seattle. Most people in the neighborhood get around by foot, bike, or transit.

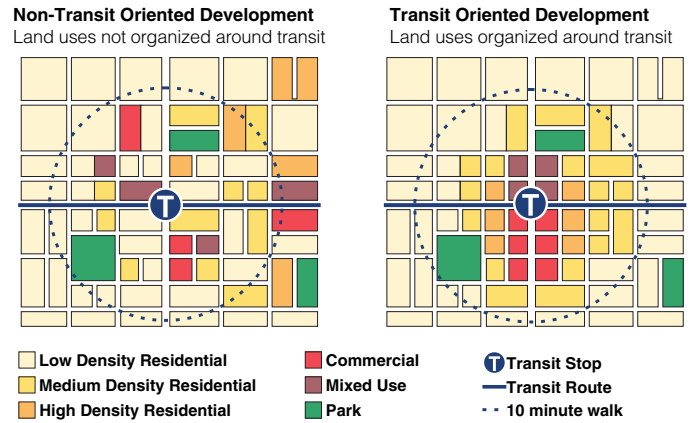
Key statistics: How the U District is different¹

	U District	Seattle
Younger: % of residents between the ages of 18 and 29	75%	23%
More diverse: % of population who are people of color	46%	34%
Transportation choices: % trips made by walking, biking, transit, or carpool	74%	41%
More renters: % of residents who rent	82%	52%
Housing cost burden: % of households paying 30%+ of their income toward housing.	66%	47%

¹ These numbers generally reflect the area west of 21st Ave NE and south of Ravenna Boulevard.

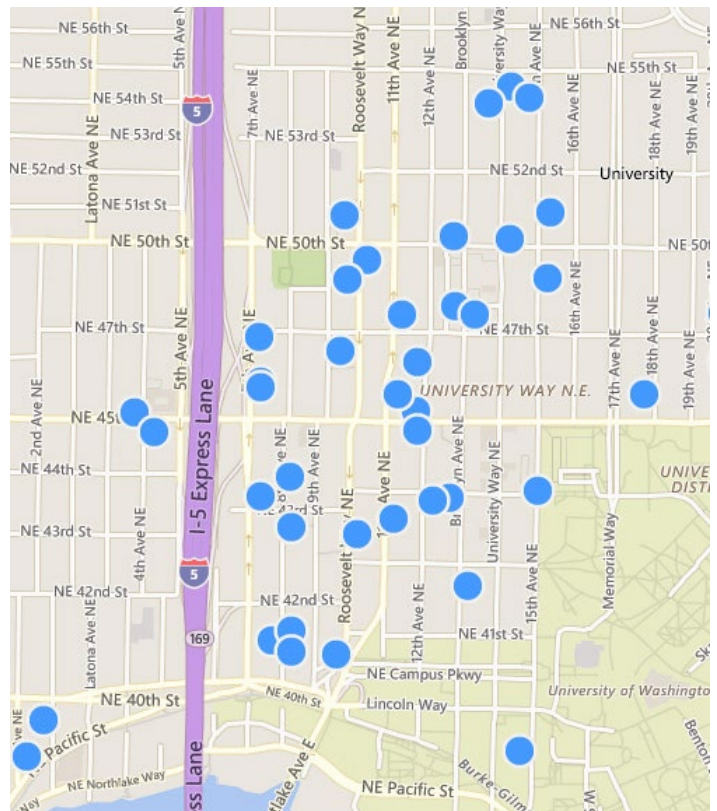
Relationship to Campus Master Plan

Recommendations in this report do not extend into UW’s west campus; the University is conducting their own master planning process, which will be informed by this rezone.



Seattle Planning Commission: “Transit Communities” report

Active development permits (September, 2016)



Rapid redevelopment is occurring under current zoning. Recent projects include numerous midrise apartment buildings aimed at the student market, a new office building, several affordable housing developments, and smaller infill residential projects.

Community involvement

Community members have volunteered enormous amounts of time and energy to help plan the U District's future. Since 2011, OPCD planners have hosted or presented at more than 90 public meetings in the U District, and community groups have held even more meetings and events. Stakeholders are dedicated to careful and thorough consideration of the issues.

In the late 1990s, a thorough neighborhood planning process resulted in the University Community Urban Center Plan (also known as the Neighborhood Plan). Key goals and policies were adopted into Comprehensive Plan. This effort continues to guide today's discussion.

The current phase of planning and community organizing activities started with a new coalition of neighborhood groups, now known as the U District Partnership (UDP). Supported by an "Only in Seattle" grant from the Office of Economic Development in 2011, the UDP brought together people with a range of perspectives, including:

- Residents
- Business owners
- UW students, staff, faculty
- Social service providers
- Faith community leaders
- Property owners

City planners worked closely with the urban design committee of the U District Partnership. Participants



In spite of a recent development boom, this 2015 aerial shows that the core of the U District has many large surface parking lots and other large likely redevelopment sites.

at any given time included 20-25 representatives of neighborhood organizations.

In addition to these committee meetings, we hosted or participated in dozens of open houses, public hearings, and community events. Along the way, we listened to the community to identify priority land use issues in the neighborhood: What trends concern people? What kinds of development would help build community?



Participants listen to a presentation at the U District Urban Design Framework open house, 2013.



U District Partnership urban design committee working session, 2012.

Key public meetings

Out of 90+ public meetings and hundreds of additional conversations with U District constituents, here are some highlights:

- Urban Design Framework meeting: April 2, 2013
- EIS Scoping Meeting: September 24, 2013
- Draft EIS Public Hearing: May 20, 2014
- Final EIS released: January 8, 2015
- Draft zoning open house: May 31, 2016
- Council Public Hearing: November 2016

For a more detailed list, see Appendix A.

What we heard

Throughout the process we've heard a wide range of opinions. Some people are eager for new growth, investment, and activity in the neighborhood, while others have serious reservations about the rate and scale of change. Many are concerned that the U District is losing its eclectic character, or that taller buildings will worsen traffic, shading, and displacement of residents and businesses.

The [U District Urban Design Framework](#), an early guiding document that came out of our planning process, laid out a set of guiding principles about growth and change (p. 10). Opinions vary widely about land use and zoning issues, but most agree on the following general guidelines:

- Maintain lower-density housing north of NE 50th St., focus new growth to the south.
- Provide reasonable breaks and transitions between higher and lower density areas.

- Give special consideration to the Ave: make sure that new development is compatible with the existing shopping district.

Height

Building height is a frequent topic at U District meetings. Many in the neighborhood advocate for increased height while others oppose possible changes. Those who support increased height cite the following reasons:

- Greater height and density within a 10-minute walk from the light rail station would put more homes and jobs close to the station and encourage infill on underused properties like surface parking lots.
- Allowing highrise could encourage a greater variety of buildings. Today, development is producing uniform midrise buildings. Many prefer to see a mix of heights.
- Raising heights would allow new requirements for affordable housing, public spaces, sidewalk improvements, and historic preservation. Existing zoning provides little in terms of mitigation and public benefits.
- Allowing highrise could diversify the housing mix beyond the current emphasis on student housing, with options for seniors, professionals, and families. It would also produce more affordable housing through MHA requirements (see Section 3).
- Allowing commercial highrise could help bring employers to the area. Other than UW jobs, employment in the U District has declined in recent decades.

For some concerned about height increases, the concerns are aesthetic: how will taller buildings affect views, shading, and the "feel" of the U District? Others worry about displacement: how will more intensive development affect existing businesses and the neighborhood's affordable housing?



Guiding principles

In the Urban Design Framework, participants identified guiding principles. We've heard similar themes throughout the planning process:

- 1. Recognize light rail as a catalyst for change.** Light rail will support commercial uses and residential density. It should be a focal point for redevelopment.
- 2. Balance regional with local.** The U District has its own flavor. As regional influences grow, maintain the eclectic local character.
- 3. Provide a network of great public spaces.** Improve parks, plazas, and streets to create inviting, memorable neighborhood spaces, and support public life.
- 4. Grow and diversify jobs while maintaining thriving retail and services.** Protect small businesses and expand the job base to include more office, tech, and R&D.
- 5. Welcome a diversity of residents.** Provide choices for residents of all ages and incomes. Provide support services and amenities.

- 6. Improve public safety.** Increase natural surveillance through lively streets, work closely with community police.
- 7. Encourage quality and variety in the built environment,** with a particular focus on good design where buildings meet the sidewalk.
- 8. Build an environmentally sustainable neighborhood.** Focus on walkability, efficient buildings, and green infrastructure.
- 9. Improve integration between UW and the U District.** Open the west edge of campus to the U District, and build on partnerships between UW and neighborhood groups.
- 10. Support and coordinate active transportation choices.** Improve bicycle and pedestrian infrastructure while continuing to support transit and cars.

Of particular concern, many oppose increased height on the Ave. While there are some proponents of highrise on the Ave, most people value the existing scale, character, and mix of uses, and would prefer to stay close to the current zoning. (Note that today's zoning on the Ave allows buildings up to 65'.)

In short, we've heard from those who think new highrise in the core of the U District make sense, and from others who oppose the scale of change. The rezones presented here are informed by both positions. We believe the recommended changes strike a balance, allowing some office and residential highrises while spacing out taller buildings and keeping them at an appropriate scale to reduce impacts. The proposed housing and amenity requirements would connect growth to mitigation. (See Section "4. Zoning Recommendations")

Note that economic analysis suggests that highrise development may not yet be financially feasible in the U District, but that it likely will be by the time the station opens in 2021.

Urban form

Conversations about zoning often focus on land use and height. However, design standards that shape

buildings can be just as important for fitting new buildings into the surrounding neighborhood. In our meetings, people have repeated similar priorities:

Street level character. Participants talk about the importance of achieving a human scale in buildings, especially at street level. They want attractive storefronts and active uses.

Variety. Almost all development underway has a similar scale: wide, midrise buildings that are 65' or 75' tall. People see this as monotonous, eroding the neighborhood's eclectic character. They would like standards to increase variety.



Figure 4. A City planner shares information about proposed zoning at the U District Streetfair (2016).

Light and air. Reacting to recent developments, people want requirements to control building bulk: midblock pedestrian pathways, maximum width, upper-level setbacks, maximum floor plate for taller buildings, and separation between towers.

Public space

The U District community has long advocated for more public space. The neighborhood falls short of the City's goals. While some argue that the campus provides a large open space for many in the neighborhood, others contend that campus doesn't serve people who don't study or work at UW.

As the neighborhood grows, more residents and workers will need open space and recreation. People cite both public and private open spaces as critical to livability in the growing U District.

Through an open space planning effort in 2015, participants confirmed a strong interest in open space in the core of the neighborhood. Many want a plaza near the future light rail station as well as other small open spaces as part of redevelopment.

Security, programming, and maintenance are important considerations for new public spaces. Drug dealing and public consumption have increased over the past decade, becoming a major concern for residents and businesses. Some constituents oppose new open spaces unless these issues are addressed first.

Housing and human services

Recent development has focused heavily on the student residential market, with many projects targeting higher-end student housing. People in the neighborhood want new housing to diversify, meeting the needs of a wider mix of residents.

U District stakeholders also support housing at a range of affordability levels, from transitional housing for recently homeless people to moderate income housing for workers who don't make enough to afford market-rate rents in the neighborhood. Many also support adding market rate housing for demographic groups beyond students - including families, seniors, and small households.

People in the U District are proud of the neighborhood's network of social service providers, including a food bank, needle exchange, homeless youth shelter, and various other shelter and food services. Participants in the planning process have asked the City to look for ways to support these services and keep them in the neighborhood. Stakeholders would also like to see more child care and senior services in the neighborhood to make sure the needs of the growing population are met.

Overall response

At each major public input phase (2013, 2014, 2016), public comments have fallen into a similar pattern. For the reasons discussed above, one third of commenters strongly favor rezones to allow



increased height and density, one third are strongly opposed, and one third agree with the basic idea of zoning changes to shape future growth, but have specific concerns.

For this final group, the priorities vary. In some cases they express support for highrise but only if adequately matched with new public space. For others, additional density must be linked to historic preservation, supporting social services, childcare, or other amenities and services.

Following up on the most recent public review period, from May to July 2016, we've released a [compilation](#) of the email comments received, as well as a [summary](#) report about key themes.

The final zoning recommendations respond to many of the issues that people raised during five years of public engagement. Many of the specific requirements relating to design standards, open space, transfers of development rights, bonuses for childcare or social service space, and other issues come directly out of comments we received.

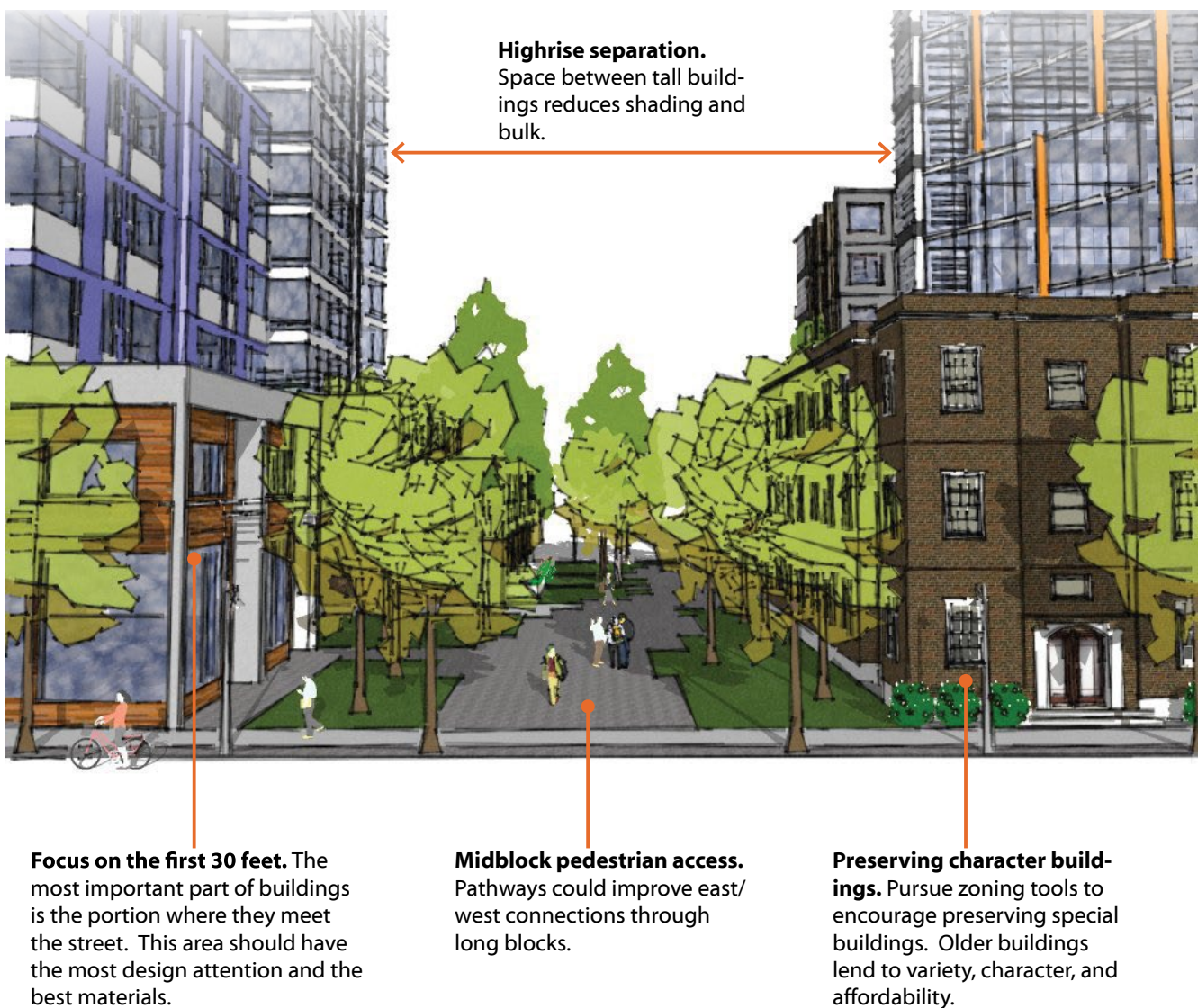
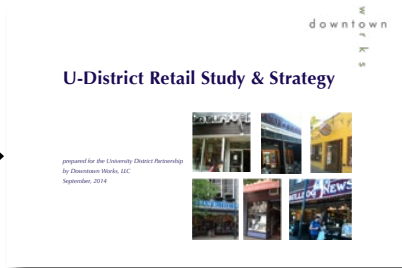


Figure 5. Excerpt from the U District Urban Design Framework, 2013.



Strategic Plan (2013). Led by the U District Livability Partnership (now UDP). Plan for business district revitalization, public safety, neighborhood leadership, and urban design.



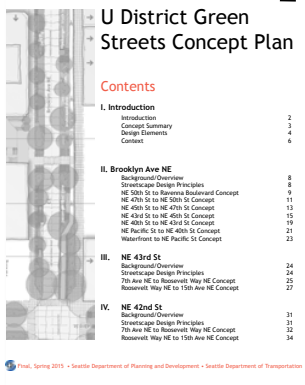
U-District Retail Study & Strategy (2014). Summarizes existing conditions, assets, and challenges of the Ave, presents recommendations for revitalizing the business district. (UDP and Office of Economic Development)



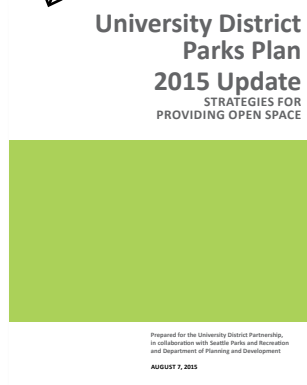
Urban Design Framework (2013). Summarizes public input about growth, open space, transportation, and related issues.



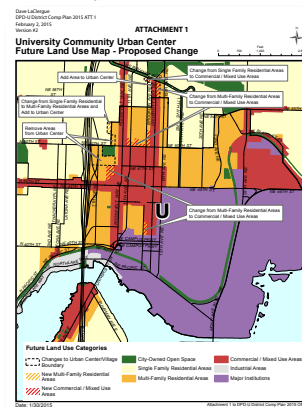
Environmental Impact Statement (2013-15). Studied growth under three zoning alternatives - detailed analysis of UDF concepts.



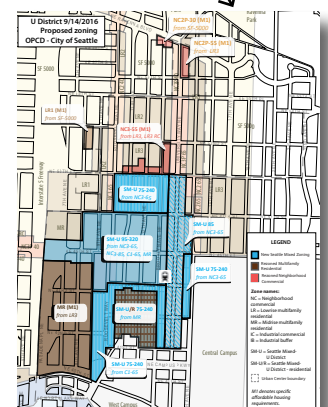
Street Concept Plan (2015). Designed festival street on Brooklyn, pedestrian and landscape improvements for private development. With SDOT.



Parks Plan update (2015). Priorities include centrally-located open space, a north/south "green spine", and small public spaces. With UDP & Parks.



Comp Plan amendments (2015). Amended goals and policies for the neighborhood, approved by City Council.



Zoning changes. Changes to uses, allowed heights, development requirements (described in this report).

Planning process results, 2012-2016

In the past five years, the Office of Planning and Community Development and partners have produced eight major planning documents. Each focuses on a particular scope of issues while building on previous efforts. All are available at www.seattle.gov/dpd/udistrict.

3. Analysis & policy development

Environmental Impact Statement process

When cities consider rezones that will likely have significant impacts on shading, traffic, or other environmental conditions, state law requires planners to write an Environmental Impact Statement (EIS). An EIS studies a range of alternatives and identifies likely impacts of each to inform policy discussions.

For the U District, the Department of Planning and Development (now OPCD) conducted this process from 2013 to 2015. We shaped ideas from the Urban Design Framework into three possible zoning scenarios. Alternative 1 looked at a medium-density upzone spread out over much of the neighborhood. Alternative 2 studied a more focused upzone, confined to the core but with greater heights. Alternative 3 studied growth under current zoning.

We modeled residential and job growth over 20 years for each alternative, then presented the results in the Draft EIS (April 2014). After a public hearing and comment period, we conducted further analysis, including a sensitivity analysis with two additional alternatives, and responded to comments in the Final EIS (Jan. 2015).

Through the EIS we identified various deficiencies and impacts of future growth. Deficiencies are problems under any growth scenario, including the “no action” alternative. These include a lack of

elementary school space, falling short of the City's open space goals, constrained electrical capacity, and ongoing challenges with cost of housing.

Impacts are problems caused or exacerbated by proposed zoning changes. These include increased shading of public parks, greater traffic delays in some locations, and greater inconsistency with open space goals. The deficiencies and impacts identified in the EIS inform many of the requirements recommended in this legislation.

In spring 2015, two groups of U District stakeholders filed appeals, challenging the document's adequacy. They raised critiques and questions about the City's analysis, focusing on housing affordability and open space. The Hearing Examiner ruled in favor of DPD, upholding the adequacy of the EIS.

Finally, in spring of 2016 we issued an EIS Addendum covering analysis of Mandatory Housing Affordability requirements.

Housing

During the planning process, OPCD looked at housing issues through several different studies, including an [existing conditions report \(2012\)](#), a [residential market analysis \(2013\)](#), the [Environmental Impact Statement \(2014-2015\)](#), and continual review of growth and real estate trends.

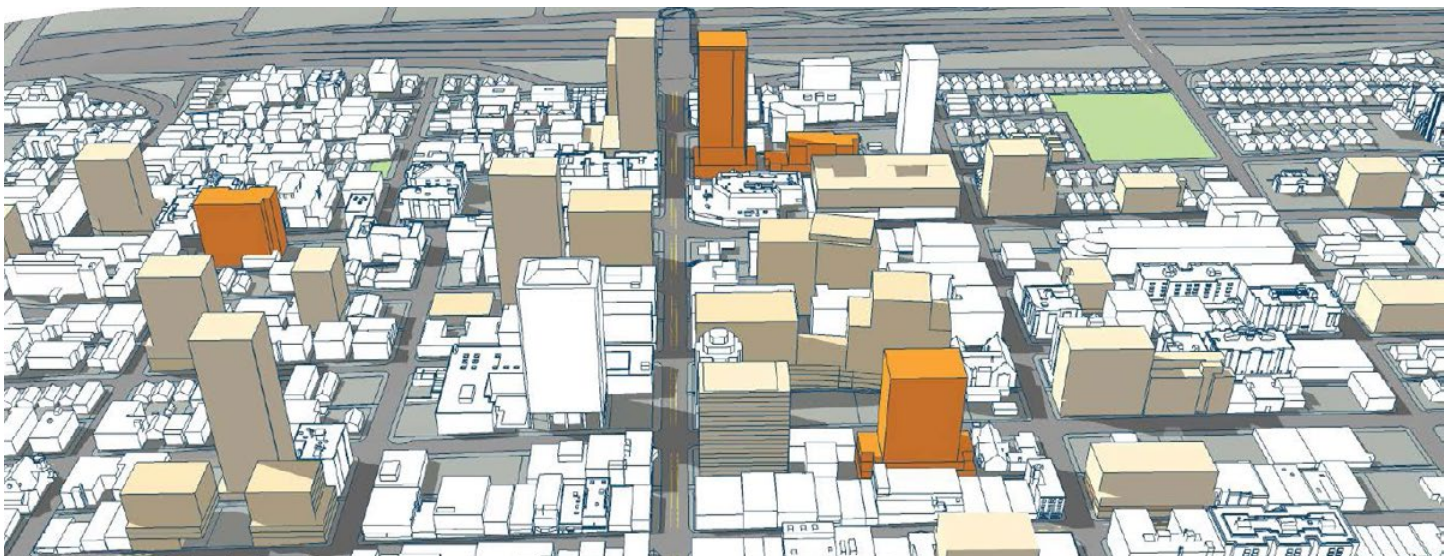


Figure 6. Rendering of projected growth under the highest density rezone alternative. Final EIS, January 2015.

Information from these and other citywide studies were synthesized into a Housing Displacement Analysis (2016), Appendix C to this report. Key findings include:

- ▶ In growing cities, the primary cause of residential displacement is a housing shortage. When people seeking housing outnumber available homes, housing gets more expensive as wealthier residents bid up the price and property owners target higher-income households.
- ▶ From 2010 to 2015, the number of jobs in Seattle increased almost twice as fast as the number of homes. During that same period, average rent for a one-bedroom apartment increased 35 percent.
- ▶ Displacement is already occurring in the U District with or without zoning changes. Direct displacement can occur from specific events, like an eviction to allow repairs or demolition. Economic displacement occurs as housing scarcity causes housing costs to rise.
- ▶ Displacement tends to have the most pronounced and acute effect on marginalized populations: low-income people, people of color, English language learners, and people with disabilities.
- ▶ Proposed zoning will reduce displacement compared to existing zoning by increasing market-rate and affordable housing options, and by concentrating growth on fewer sites.
- ▶ With or without zoning changes, growth over the next 20 years would result in an estimated 40-60 demolished homes. These numbers reflect assumptions about growth and likely development sites. Under a more aggressive set of assumptions, it's possible that up to 275 homes could be demolished.
- ▶ Additional height and density in the core of the U District would relieve pressure on existing housing by expanding housing opportunity overall. When housing is scarce, the need for subsidized housing increases.
- ▶ Outside single-family zones, more than 17 new homes have been built for every home demolished in Seattle (2010-2016).

- ▶ Market-rate housing rarely decreases in cost to a level affordable to the lowest-income households. Increasing the supply of rent- and income-restricted housing is critical to meeting this need.
- ▶ Under the proposed Mandatory Housing Affordability (MHA) requirements, new development would directly contribute to affordable housing. The City estimates that growth in the U District would create 620-910 affordable homes over 20 years.
- ▶ Some have advocated for a "one for one replacement housing" requirement. While there is not a clear policy path to require this for individual projects, our analysis shows that Mandatory Housing Affordability standards in the U District will produce substantially more affordable housing than a "one for one" requirement would do.
- ▶ Along with increasing housing choices and creating new subsidized housing, the City is pursuing further anti-displacement solutions, such as renter protections, preservation of existing affordable housing, and other actions to increase stability and opportunity.

See Section 4 for details and further discussion about the proposed affordable housing requirements.

2015 Comprehensive Plan Amendments

Through the community process and EIS analysis, it became clear that some Comprehensive Plan goals and policies for the U District needed updating. We proposed amendments, which Council adopted in September 2015. Updates included:

- New goals about open space in the core of the neighborhood.
- Removing outdated references and unclear language.
- Amending the Future Land Use Map to allow rezones in some parts of the neighborhood, and to remove the residential area around University Playground from the urban center.

Appendix G includes relevant goals and policies from the Comp Plan.

4. Zoning Recommendations

Snapshot: Key Issues

Building on the approach laid out in the Urban Design Framework, information learned through the EIS process, and public responses to draft zoning in spring 2015, OPCD has prepared recommendations for zoning and development standards in the U District. The proposal would allow denser, mixed-use development in the core of the neighborhood, with transitions to the lower density surrounding areas (zoning map, p. 17).

Along with additional height and density, the proposal includes requirements and incentives designed to:

- Achieve a variety of building types, scaled appropriately to neighborhood context, and providing an attractive street frontage.
- Increase production of affordable housing.
- Support development of new open spaces, schools, and cultural amenities.
- Increase landscaping in what is now a relatively impervious, treeless area.

The following section provides a discussion of the zoning and development standards. For a technical analysis of how the proposal fits the rezone criteria in the Land Use Code, see Appendix E.

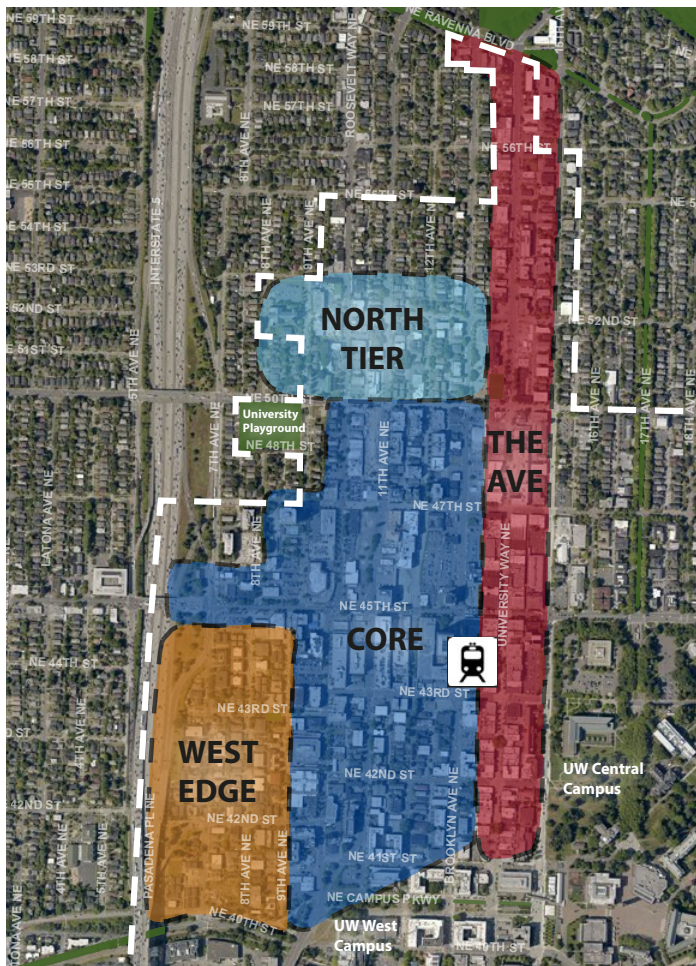


Figure 7. This report organizes discussion of zoning changes into four focus areas.

Focus Areas

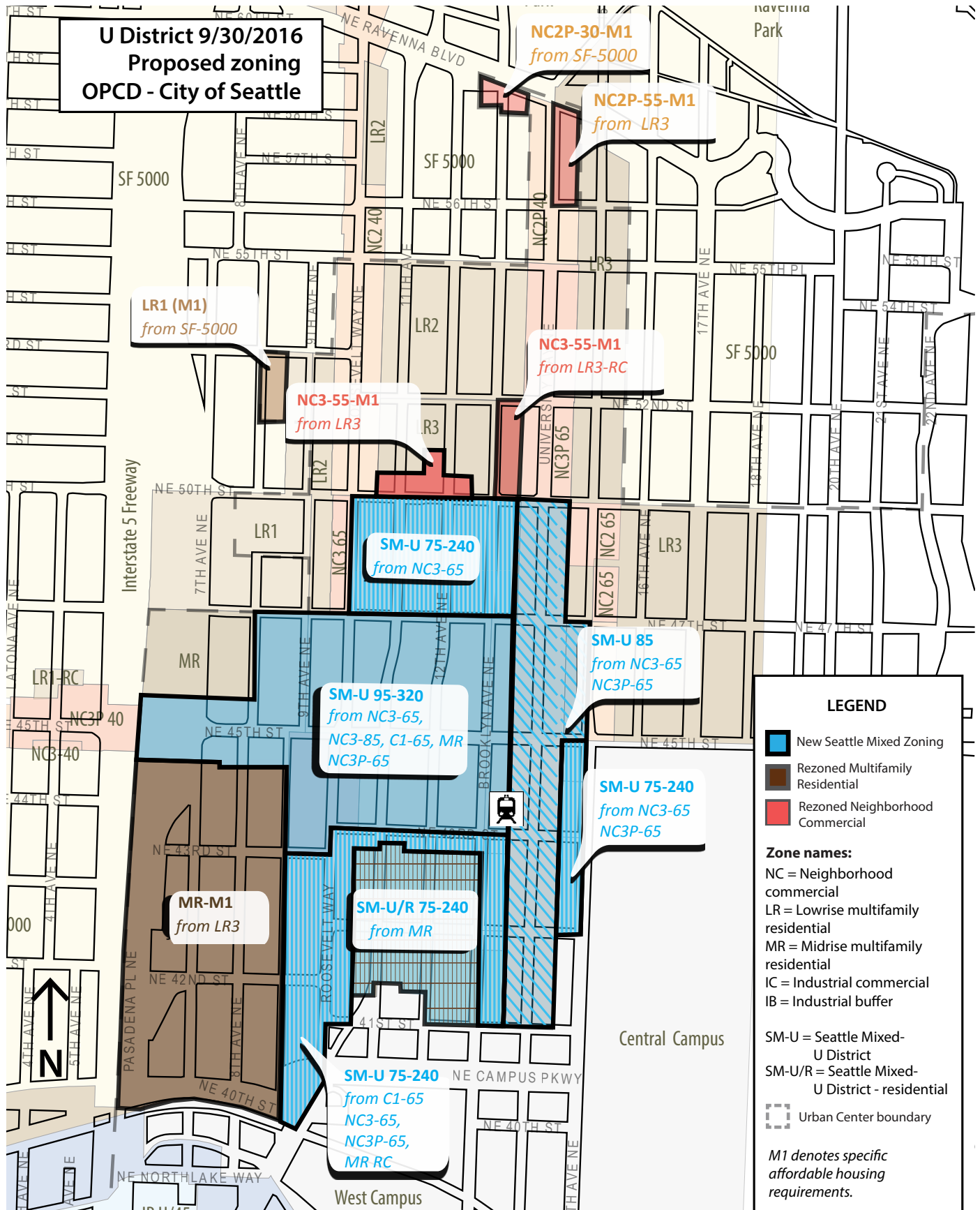
To help orient readers, details of the proposal are discussed in terms of four focus areas, shown in Figure 7.

The Core is where the greatest changes would occur. Containing the new light rail station, adjacent to campus, and home to several existing highrise buildings and large development sites, the Core is the area best suited to accommodate growth.

The Ave would continue to be the main pedestrian shopping and services area in the U District. To preserve existing scale and character, heights would stay relatively low on the half-blocks facing the Ave. The back sides of those blocks (facing 15th Ave NE and Brooklyn Ave NE) would see greater increases in allowed height.

The North Tier is a transition area from the Core to lower density residential areas to the north. More commercial uses would be allowed along NE 50th St, and other specific changes would help align zoning with existing uses.

The West Edge is a transition from the Core toward the freeway and Wallingford. An upzone to midrise multifamily residential would allow this enclave of student housing to grow further.



Summary: the U District Zoning Proposal

Table 1. Summary of Key Issues and Recommendations

Issue	Recommendations
Housing: affordability and variety	<p><u>New housing programs.</u> Apply Mandatory Housing Affordability (MHA) requirements to all upzoned property, requiring new development to provide affordable housing or make in-lieu payments, generating an estimated 620-910 affordable homes.</p>
	<p><u>Incentive for larger, “family-friendly” units.</u> Allow extra floor area for buildings that include 10+ larger units with 2-3 bedrooms to provide family housing options with direct access to outdoor amenity area.</p>
	<p><u>Allow some highrise development.</u> Highrise residential buildings tend to produce smaller, higher quality, and more expensive units that could appeal to retirees and professionals.</p>
	<p><u>Allow more midrise multifamily residential.</u> Change one area from Lowrise to Midrise Residential (MR). MR produces housing types ranging from studio apartments to larger condos to congregate housing.</p>
	<p><u>Preservation of older buildings through Transfer of Development Rights (TDR).</u> Options to earn extra floor area include preservation of older buildings. In many cases, these buildings have relatively affordable units (Appendix B).</p>
Open space	<p><u>Development bonuses for public space improvements.</u> Incentive zoning would link new density to providing non-housing amenities. To earn extra floor area, developments would have to provide open space, street improvements or other benefits.</p>
	<p><u>Transfer of development rights.</u> As part of incentive zoning, allow property owners to move development potential from one site to another - this makes it easier to find a viable park site.</p>
	<p><u>Residential amenity area.</u> New buildings with apartments or condos have to provide open space for residents.</p>
	<p><u>On-site open space.</u> Large sites must set aside 15% of the property as public open space. This provides open space and helps offset the bulk and massing of a large development.</p>
Single family residential	<p><u>Very limited single-family rezones.</u> All lots zoned for single-family residential would remain single family, except for three locations: Blessed Sacrament Church, Cowen Park Grocery, and an apartment building located on Ravenna Blvd.</p>
Managing building bulk and shadows	<p><u>Regulate bulk through Floor Area Ratio (FAR).</u> FAR manages the bulk of development while allowing design flexibility.</p>
	<p><u>Variety of scales.</u> The development standards are designed to encourage infill development, resulting in a mix of lowrise, midrise, and highrise development.</p>
	<p><u>Maximum width.</u> Limit building width to 250’, to prevent overly wide buildings on the U District’s long north/south blocks.</p>
	<p><u>Floor size limits and tower separation.</u> Limit the footprint (or “floor plate”) of highrise buildings based on tower height, and highrises must be spaced a minimum 75’ from one another.</p>
	<p><u>Setbacks in key locations.</u> Apply street-level and upper level setbacks in specific locations to help reduce bulk, create an appropriately scaled street wall, and create openness next to constrained sidewalks.</p>

Table 1. Summary of Key Issues and Recommendations

Issue	Recommendations
<p>Historic preservation</p>	<p><u>Floor area exemption and bonus for preserving landmarks and masonry buildings.</u> Don't count historic buildings against the total development allowed on a property, and allow extra floor area for preserving them.</p>
	<p><u>Transfer of development rights for landmarks and historic buildings.</u> Allow property owners to move development potential from one site to another in order to protect designated landmarks and other historic brick buildings.</p>
	<p><u>Avoid major changes to height & density on the Ave.</u> To preserve the general scale and character, do not allow highrise development on the lots abutting the Ave.</p>
<p>Jobs</p>	<p><u>Keep flexibility for a range of uses.</u> Apply zoning that allows residential, retail, office, research, and a variety of other commercial uses.</p>
	<p><u>Allow larger commercial buildings.</u> Allow building configurations that work for office and research uses. Highrise office would be allowed, typically up to a height of 160'. Bulk would be regulated through floor size limits, floor area ratio, and other standards.</p>
	<p><u>Support Ave businesses.</u> Require commercial frontage along the Ave to maintain a continuous pedestrian retail area. Increase density on the surrounding blocks to grow the local customer base.</p>
	<p><u>Transfers of Development Rights.</u> New standards to encourage historic preservation can help preserve existing buildings with smaller, more affordable commercial space.</p>
<p>Childcare</p>	<p><u>Floor area exemptions.</u> Don't count childcare or school facilities toward the maximum amount of development that can occur on a lot.</p>
	<p><u>Incentive zoning.</u> Any commercial development that takes advantage of new height/density must provide childcare space or pay in lieu.</p>
<p>Trees and landscaping</p>	<p><u>Seattle Green Factor.</u> This requirement encourages tree preservation, rain gardens, green roofs, rooftop gardens, and other types of planting.</p>
	<p><u>Street tree requirements.</u> SDOT will continue to require preservation of healthy street trees during construction and planting of new street trees.</p>
	<p><u>Stormwater Code.</u> Regulations for flow control and water quality emphasize the use of green infrastructure to meet drainage requirements.</p>
<p>Social services</p>	<p><u>Floor area exemption.</u> Don't count space that will be used for social services toward the maximum amount of development that can occur on a lot.</p>
	<p><u>Floor area bonus.</u> Allow bonus floor area for any development that include space for social services.</p>

Affordable housing requirements

As part of this proposal, all rezoned areas would have new affordable housing requirements. These requirements help address the challenges presented by the rising cost of housing.

During the planning process, many in the community advocated for adding affordability requirements as part of a U District rezone to make sure that future development contributes to long-term affordability. This idea gained support in 2015 through the Housing Affordability and Livability Agenda (HALA), initiated by the Mayor and City Council. HALA convened an interdisciplinary task force of 28 members, including housing experts, community group representatives, non-profit housing providers, and for-profit architects in order to find housing solutions.

The HALA committee issued a report in July 2015 with 65 recommendations for making Seattle more affordable. Key among these were upzones to allow increased housing supply, along with new requirements to set aside rent- and income-restricted units or make in-lieu payments to a housing fund.

The HALA committee recommended Mandatory



"We are facing our worst housing affordability crisis in decades. My vision is a city where people who work in Seattle can afford to live here. Housing affordability is just one building block to a more equitable city. It goes hand in hand with our efforts on raising the minimum wage, providing preschool education for low-income children, and increasing access to parks and transit. We all share a responsibility in making Seattle affordable."

– Mayor Ed Murray

Housing Affordability requirements (MHA) as the primary tool for addressing housing affordability as Seattle grows. MHA requirements are intended to apply in all multifamily residential and commercial areas throughout the City, along with upzones to increase development capacity.

MHA includes a residential program and a commercial program (MHA-R and MHA-C). Council has adopted frameworks for each of these programs, but they do not apply to new development until Council subsequently approves zoning changes that add development capacity. In this process, the U District would be an early adopter.

Mandatory Housing Affordability in the U District

Under MHA, developers in the U District will be required to contribute to affordable housing as part of new development. This contribution can be met either by including affordable housing within new development ("performance") or by paying into a fund to support development of affordable housing.

The performance and payment requirements would vary by zone, as shown in Table 2.

For residential development, the amount of affordable housing required under the performance option is calculated by multiplying the percentage by the total number of homes to be developed. For commercial development, the square feet of affordable housing to meet the performance option is calculated by multiplying the required percentage by the floor area of commercial uses. Payment amounts would be measured in dollars per square foot of residential and commercial development, excluding portions of buildings that are underground as well as certain exempted commercial area. Payment amounts will adjust annually to account for inflation. Appendix F contains a detailed discussion of the relationship between payment and performance amounts.



The U District is a diverse community. To support the wide range of residents and workers, it needs a diversity of housing and services.

In setting the performance and payment amounts, we considered factors including:

- The critical need for affordable housing;
- The importance of additional housing supply in limiting future increases in housing cost;
- The increase in development capacity being provided;
- The feasibility of development under proposed zoning, including the higher costs of high-rise construction;
- Market trends, particularly related to arrival of light rail in the U District;
- Additional requirements to provide open space or other incentive zoning amenities (see p. 31);
- The challenges of building single-purpose commercial buildings in lowrise and midrise zones, due to the cost of steel and concrete construction.

The total amount of new affordable housing produced will depend on the amount of development that occurs. Assuming the growth

projections in the EIS, we estimate that MHA in the U District will produce between 610 and 920 units of affordable housing over the next 20 years. A summary of specific requirements for units created through performance and payment are below.

Performance Option

All affordable housing provided through the performance option must meet the standards outlined in Seattle Municipal Code 23.58B and 23.58C. (Concurrent with discussion of the U District rezone, Council will consider amendments to Chapter 23.58B to better align that chapter with the recently adopted 23.58C.)

Location: Affordable housing must be located on the same site as the development being permitted for residential development. For commercial development, the affordable housing may be located on the same site or elsewhere within the University Community Urban Center.

Duration of affordability: Rental housing must remain affordable for 75 years, except that in the case of a residential development that is demolished or changed from residential use, or converted to ownership housing, the requirements expire at that time. In the event of such demolition, change of use, or conversion to ownership housing, the owner must make a payment in lieu of continuing affordability.

Distribution: Affordable housing units must be distributed throughout each structure within the development containing residential units.

Table 2. Mandatory Housing Affordability Requirements in the U District

	Residential		Commercial	
	Performance %	Payment \$	Performance %	Payment \$
SM-U High-rise zones ¹ (SM-U 75-240, SM-U 95-320, SM-U/R 75-240)	9%	\$20.00	9%	\$20.00
Lowrise and midrise zones with M1 suffix (LR1, NC2P-30, NC2P-55, NC3-55, MR)	9%	\$20.00	8%	\$11.25
Mixed use on the Ave (SM-U 85)	6%	\$13.25	5%	\$7.00

¹If a project in a highrise zone cannot build highrise due to development standards such as minimum lot sizes or tower separation, the MHA requirements will be the lower payment/percentage amounts shown for SM-U-85.

Table 3. Affordable housing income limits (60% Area Median Income)

Household size	Qualifying income
1	\$37,980
2	\$43,380
3	\$48,780
4	\$54,180
5	\$58,560

Source: Office of Housing, based on Income Limits published by U.S. Department of Housing & Urban Development Program

Comparability to other units: Affordable housing must be comparable to market-rate units in terms of number of bedrooms/bathrooms and size. The units must have substantially the same features as other units, and households occupying affordable housing must be allowed access to the same development amenities as other tenants. Tenants of affordable units must also be offered comparable lease terms to those of market-rate tenants.

Public subsidy: An applicant for a permit may seek public subsidies for development, but the affordable housing units provided to satisfy MHA requirements must be different than those provided as a condition of such subsidy or incentive. For example, if 20% of the total units in a development must be rent- and income-restricted in order to qualify for a residential property tax exemption using Seattle's Multifamily Property Tax Exemption (MFTE) program, those units must be *in addition to* any units provided to satisfy affordable housing requirements under MHA.

Eligible households:

- For a rental unit with a net area of 400 square



Table 4. Allowed rents in affordable housing at 60% AMI

Bedrooms	Maximum rent
0	\$949
1	\$1,017
2	\$1,219
3	\$1,409
4	\$1,572

feet or less, affordable housing may serve only households with incomes no greater than 40% of AMI at initial certification and no greater than 60% of AMI at annual recertification;

- For a rental unit with a net area greater than 400 square feet, affordable housing may serve only households with incomes no greater than 60% of AMI at initial certification and no greater than 80% of AMI at annual recertification;
- For an ownership unit, affordable housing may be sold only to households with incomes no greater than 80% of AMI at initial occupancy and that meet limits on assets.

Additional requirements for affordable housing for renters:

- Rent levels: Monthly rent (including a utility allowance and any recurring fees required as a condition of tenancy) may not exceed 30% of the income limit for an eligible household.
- Annual income certification. Owners must re-certify tenant incomes and household sizes annually. Owners must attempt to obtain third party verification whenever possible.
- Over-income households: If a tenant of an affordable housing unit is determined, upon recertification, to no longer be an "eligible household," the owner of the development must provide a comparable substitute unit of affordable housing as soon as one becomes available. In addition, the owner of the development must provide at least six months' notice of any rent increases to over-income tenant households once the unit substitution has occurred.

Additional requirements for affordable ownership housing include:

- Affordable sale price: The initial sale price is regulated to be affordable for households at 65% of Area Median Income. The Office of Housing administers rules about the maximum down payment and other housing costs.
- Affordable resale price: The resale price will be calculated to allow modest growth in homeowner equity while maintaining long-term affordability for future buyers.
- Other restrictions: Owners must occupy the units as their principal residence, and meet other conditions to maintain the property.

Payment Option

Developers who choose to use the payment option would be required to provide a cash contribution to the City that would be used to develop, or in some cases preserve, affordable housing. The Office of Housing will deposit all cash contributions into a special account established solely for the purpose of supporting housing for renter households with incomes at or below 60% of AMI, or owner households with incomes at or below 80% of AMI.

The Office of Housing invests funds strategically in long-term affordable housing developments. The regulatory framework for MHA lays out the following

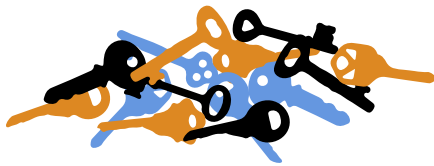
The total amount of affordable housing created under this proposal (somewhere between 620 and 910 homes over 20 years) will depend on how much growth actually happens in the U District. More building projects would lead to more development of affordable housing.

priorities for determining where MHA funds should be spent:

- Affirmatively furthering fair housing choice.
- Locating within an urban center or urban village.
- Locating in proximity to transit: light rail and/or frequent bus service.
- Furthering City policies to address the needs of communities vulnerable to displacement.
- Locating affordable housing near the developments that generate cash contributions.

In some cases, projects in the SM-U highrise zones will not be able to build highrise due to constraints from design standards. For example, a site may not meet minimum lot size requirements for a highrise, or cannot achieve the minimum spacing from existing highrise buildings. In these cases, the ordinance provides that the performance and payment amounts shall be reduced to the amounts that apply in SM-U 85.

In the next 20 years,
40-275 homes
will be demolished,
with or without zoning changes.
Many of these have low rents.



1 key = 20 homes

Under **existing** zoning, no more than
20 affordable homes
would be created through incentives.



Under the **proposed** zoning,
~620-910 affordable homes
will be created through
developer requirements.

*In addition, 4,000-5,000 market rate units will be created in the U District.

Broader application of HALA initiatives

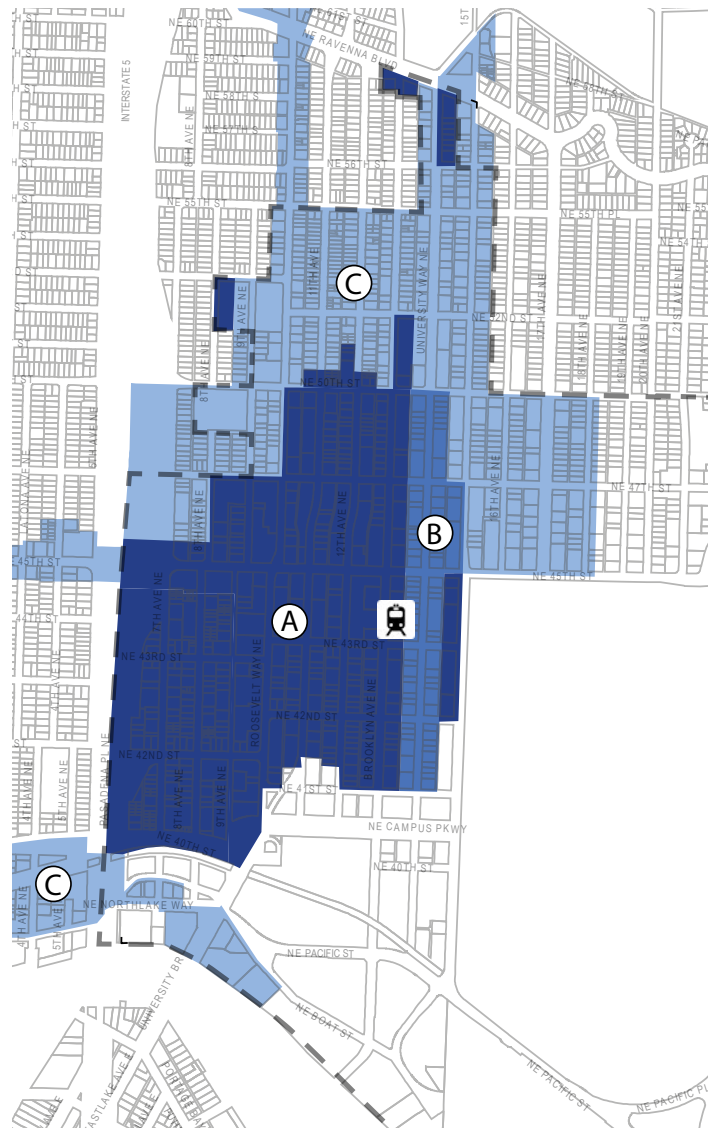
After the U District, Downtown and South Lake Union are likely to be the next areas where the City will implement MHA. The City is also undertaking a community engagement process that will continue into 2017 to identify specific zoning changes to implement MHA citywide. It is likely that when those changes are adopted, they will modify some of the commercial and multifamily residential properties in the U District that are not included in this current proposed action (see map).

Other housing affordability actions

The following are additional HALA-recommended actions that the City is advancing or has advanced to support the creation and preservation of affordable housing (separate from zoning changes):

- New tenant protection laws to prevent “economic eviction” and ensure due process for tenants facing eviction.
- Renew and expand the Seattle Housing Levy - Seattleites approved a new expanded levy in August 2016.
- Renew the Multifamily Tax Exemption (MFTE) Program – The MFTE program was renewed by the City Council in November 2015. The program was expanded to all multifamily-zoned areas and also provides increased incentives for providing affordable units with 2 or more bedrooms.
- Create a Preservation Property Tax Exemption Program – The City and other affordable housing advocates support the passage state legislation that would create a local option for a 15-year tax exemption for property owners who agree to set aside 25 percent of their units for low-income tenants. This legislation did not pass in 2016, but advocates may try again next year.
- Create a Voluntary Employers Fund - The City is leading an effort to establish a program where the City will partner with local employers and major institutions to contribute to a City fund that builds and preserves affordable housing.

MHA in the U District



- A) U District rezones with highrise or other substantial increases (2016).** MHA-R amounts are 9% of units or \$20 per square foot.
- B) Ave rezones.** MHA-R amounts are 6% of units or \$13.25 per square foot.
- C) All other existing commercial and multifamily residential properties (2017).** Rezoning will be addressed, and MHA applied, as part of zone-wide changes anticipated in 2017.

Housing variety

In addition to affordability, OPCD recognizes the desire in the U District for housing that serves a broad demographic spectrum. While young people age 18-29 make up 75% of the U District's residents, the community also includes young families, recent graduates, senior citizens, and middle-aged people. Within each age category, there is a wide range of ethnic and economic diversity.

Because recent development has focused heavily on student housing, some people are interested in increasing the breadth of housing choices going forward. Zoning can't and shouldn't dictate which groups of people live where, but it can help achieve a mix of housing types to serve different needs.

The current zoning proposal strives to do this in several ways:

- Exemption for larger "family-friendly" residential units. The proposed SM zoning includes a provision where larger units conducive to family housing do not count against the total square footage allowed for the building. Specific criteria include 2 or more bedrooms, a minimum area of 900 square feet per unit, and direct access to outdoor amenity space (e.g., stoops connecting to a courtyard).
 - Incentives for providing school facilities. Allow a floor area exemption for schools within a development.
 - Allow some highrise residential in the core. The tower portions of these buildings will tend to serve seniors and professionals - the construction type is too expensive to pencil out for most student housing developers.
 - Maintain single-family and lowrise residential in the north. The proposal focuses rezones south of NE 50th St., leaving much of the lower-density zoning intact to the north. This preserves another housing type that works for families and can also be subdivided to provide relatively low-cost housing for students.
 - Rezone the area west of Roosevelt to midrise residential (MR). MR zoning allows spacious, high-quality apartment construction (often with larger unit sizes) suitable for professionals and families. It also allows congregate housing, with shared living space.
- Requiring childcare in certain developments (see p. 31). Under incentive zoning, large nonresidential developments must provide or contribute to childcare – this would help make the neighborhood more attractive to families.



Roberta Apartments, University District



The Core

Extending from NE 50th St. down to the edge of UW’s West Campus at NE 41st St., the Core is the focus area with the biggest proposed changes. It is the location of the new light rail station (NE Brooklyn Ave and NE 43rd St), and it is adjacent to the activity centers of the Ave and the UW campus.

Further, several analyses identify the Core as appropriate for highrise development¹. Due to the existing highrise buildings (UW Tower, Hotel Deca, and University Plaza Condos), new towers would not be out of place. Several large, consolidated properties, used mostly as surface parking, represent the major redevelopment sites in the neighborhood. The focus area is separated from lower density residential uses by a freeway, major arterials, and medium-density uses.

Demand for housing in the core will be even higher in the future than it is today. Close to UW’s central campus, the core will soon be an 8-minute train ride from downtown. Already a major employment center due to UW jobs, the neighborhood may become more attractive to other employers.

¹ Heartland, Residential Market Analysis, 2013. DPD, Urban Design Framework, 2013. GGLO, Urban Design & Market Feasibility Analysis, 2016.



Looking south from on Brooklyn, into the core of the U District.

The proposal would change zoning in much of the Core to “Seattle Mixed” (SM) zoning. SM zoning encourages a mix of residential and non-residential uses with some highrise development, and it allows the City to customize development standards for a specific neighborhood. A core set of standards apply to all Seattle Mixed zones, but the Land Use Code has separate subchapters for each neighborhood to address local conditions. In this case the new zones would be called “Seattle Mixed – U District” or “SM-U.”

To see the specific zoning boundaries, see the proposed rezone map on p. 17.

Which uses are allowed?

Seattle Mixed zoning allows flexibility for residential, retail, services, office, biomedical research, schools, research and development, parking structures meeting specific requirements, and light

Table 5. Use standards for Seattle Mixed-U District (23.48.005, 23.48.605)

Allowed uses include:	Prohibited uses include:	Conditional uses:
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Multifamily residential • Retail and services • General office • Schools • Biomedical research • Arts and culture facilities • Parking structures 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • All high impact uses • Park-and-ride lots • Drive-in businesses • Solid waste management • Heliports • Animal shelters • Jails 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mini-warehouses

manufacturing. It prohibits high impact uses and various other incompatible uses, including solid waste management, heliports, jails, park-and-ride lots, drive-in businesses (other than gas stations), and heavy manufacturing (23.48.005). Some uses, such as mini-warehouses, are allowed on a conditional basis, limiting their size and operations.

The Seattle Mixed Residential (SM/R) zone south of NE 43rd St. is primarily a higher-density residential zone. It allows limited non-residential uses, but only in a small fraction of each development - like a small street-level retail space or café.

Floor area ratio: How big can buildings be? (23.48.620)

While discussion about zoning tends to focus on the maximum allowed height, "Floor Area Ratio" is a development regulation that is equally important to the bulk and scale of future buildings.

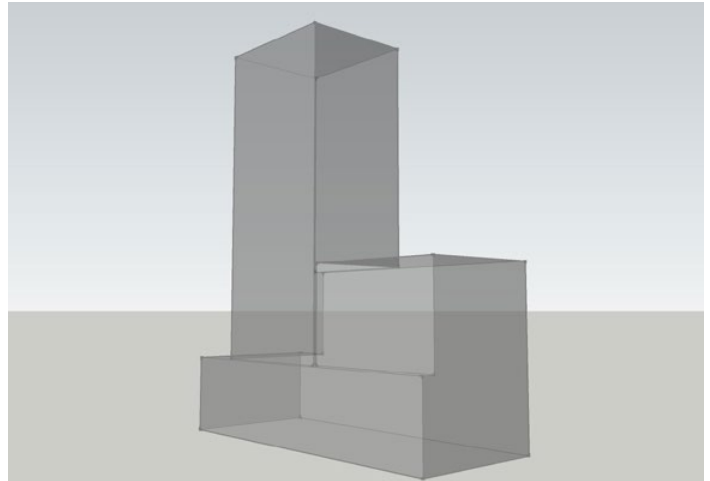
Floor Area Ratio, or FAR, establishes how much development is allowed on a given lot, in relation to lot area – with an FAR limit of 4 on a 10,000 square foot lot, a project could have up to 40,000 square feet of floor area. Those 40,000 square feet could be arranged in different ways – for example, a taller, slimmer building on part of the lot, or a 4-story box that covers the entire lot.

Under existing zoning in the U District, maximum FAR in the core ranges from FAR 4.25 to 6. Allowed heights range from 65-85', so in most cases, using the full allotment of FAR fills most of a property up to the maximum allowed height.

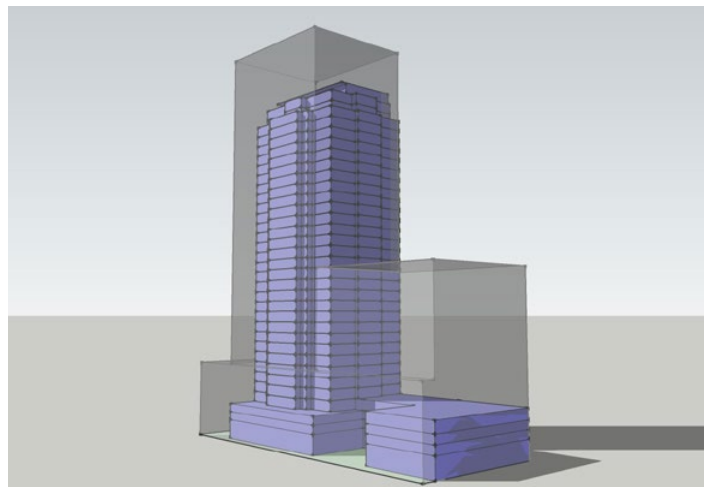
The proposed FAR limits for SM-U, in combination with height limits, encourage a greater variety of building types. There are many ways to achieve the allowed FAR.

A "base" FAR is allowed outright for development projects in these zones. To exceed the base, an applicant must participate in incentive zoning, which allows additional floor area (up to the maximum FAR) only if the project provides non-housing amenities, in addition to MHA requirements. See details below.

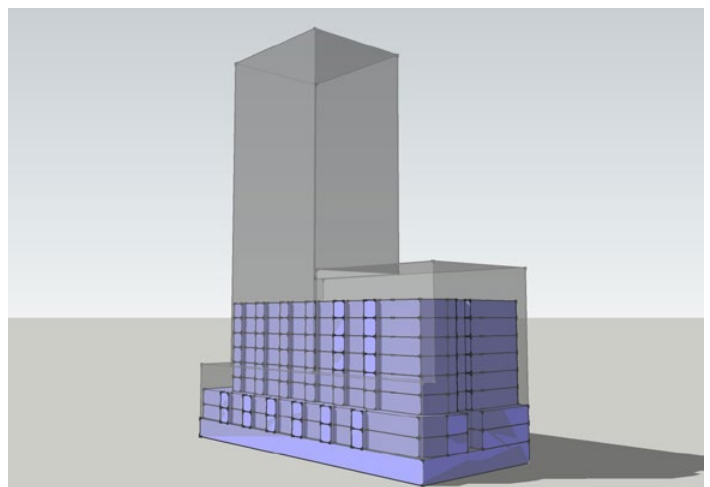
In SM-U, a project's FAR limit is determined by the building's uses and height (Table 7). The standards are designed to accommodate two basic highrise types. Larger footprint office buildings are allowed up to a maximum height of 160', while more slender residential buildings are allowed up to 240' or 320'



A "zoning envelope" shows the theoretical space that a building could occupy. It is defined by setbacks, width limits, maximum height, and other bulk control standards.



FAR determines how much of the zoning envelope a project can fill. This example shows a residential development with an FAR of 11.



Within the same zoning envelope, this example shows a commercial development with an FAR of 7.

(depending on the zone). Many combinations of uses and forms are possible.

FAR exemptions (23.48.620). To encourage certain uses, SM-U standards exempt them from floor area calculations. These are uses that would support the continued liveliness and character of the U District, but which a developer may be less inclined to provide, since doing so would reduce the amount of floor area that could be used for more profitable uses. These include:

- Space dedicated to social services
- Arts and culture facilities
- Ground level retail and services
- Designated landmark structures
- Preschool, elementary school, or secondary school
- 2+ bedroom units with specific features amenable to family housing

Transfers of development rights and combined lot development (23.48.626) In SM-U zones, transfers of development rights (TDR) and combined lot standards are both mechanisms that allow projects to move floor area from one parcel to another. These provisions help protect historic buildings, provide open space, and support a mix of building types.

Developers may move development capacity from a “sending site” to a “receiving site,” building a

Table 7. Floor Area Ratio			
Developments 85' or less in height Seattle Mixed – U District (SM-U)			
Zone	Base FAR	Maximum FAR	
All SM-U & SM/R-U zones	4.75	6	
Developments greater than 85' in height Seattle Mixed – U District (SM-U)			
Zone	Base FAR	Max FAR commercial	Max FAR residential & mixed use
SM-U 240	4.75	7	10
SM/R-U 240	4.75*	0.5*	10*
SM-U 320	4.75	7	12

* In SM/R-U, FAR for all non-residential uses is limited to 0.5, and floor plate above 45' is limited to 10,500 sq ft. Table simplified from 23.48.620

bigger project in the receiving site in order to protect existing uses and/or structures at the sending site.

There is no gain in permitted floor area under these provisions; the floor area is only allowed to be moved between lots, and development on all lots would still be subject to applicable height limits and other development standards. This can help achieve better massing of buildings and open spaces.

Table 6. Transfers of development right and combined lot standards		
Seattle Mixed – U District (SM-U)		
	TDR	Combined lot
What can be moved?	Unused base FAR	Base and extra FAR (extra must be earned through incentive zoning)
Eligible sending sites	Sites within the U District Urban Center containing public open space, landmarks, historic masonry buildings with structural upgrades	Any property within the same block as the receiving site.
Eligible receiving sites	Any property within the SM-U zones that is using incentive zoning to exceed the base FAR allowance	Any property zoned SM-U within the same block as the sending site.
How does the standard affect the receiving site?	Helps earn the extra floor area through incentive zoning.	Increases the total amount of development that could happen on a given site, but does not earn extra floor area.

An important difference between combined lot standards and transfer of development rights (TDR) is that a combined lot allows property owners to move both the base and bonus floor area between properties. TDR only allows moving the base floor area. However, TDR allows flexibility to move development potential between blocks while combined lot standards only allow moving potential within a block.

For a preliminary inventory of buildings eligible for preservation through TDR, see Appendix B.

How tall can buildings be?

Maximum heights are as shown on the zoning recommendations map on page 17. In the core, they range from 240' to 320', with the highest heights flanking NE 45th St., stepping down to the north and south.

Most SM-U zones list two heights. The maximum height applies to developments that include a residential highrise. In SM-U 75-240 and SM-U 95-320, highrise office buildings are also allowed, but the larger floor plates for office are only allowed up to 160'.

The lower height (75' or 95', depending on zone) applies to developments that do not include highrise. See the following sections for further discussion about the standards that would determine whether or not a site can build highrise.

Standards for highrise² buildings (23.48.625-645)

While the height limit is increased throughout the core, it does not mean that every property can develop as a highrise. Standards limit how many highrises are allowed and how close together they can be. Of these, the most important limits are:

- No highrises on lots smaller than 12,000 square feet in the SM-U 320' and SM-U 240' zones.
- Minimum separation of 75' between highrise structures.
- "Podium" or base standards – lower portions of a building can cover most of the lot area, but only up to 45' in height.

² In this proposal, "highrise" is considered as any building that goes higher than 85' in height.

Highrise office and residential examples:

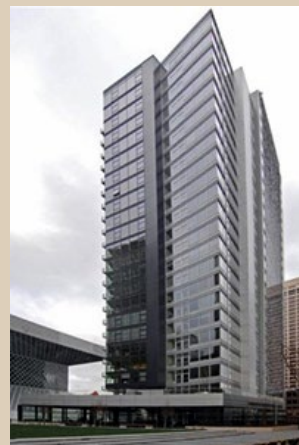
*Similar to what would be allowed for highrise in SM-U zones.
FARs estimated by building envelope for most examples.*



2720 3rd Avenue
148 residential units over retail
Height: 125'
Lot Area: 19,432 sq ft
Building area: 174,982 SF
Floorplate: ~14,000 SF
FAR: 9 FAR
This has a larger floor plate than allowed in SM-U for residential at this height (12K SF), but smaller than would be allowed for office (20K SF)



234 9th Ave N
12-story building with office, retail, and 1 residential unit.
Height: 160'
Lot Area: 21,582 sq ft
Building area: 165,297 SF
FAR: 7 FAR
Floorplate: 14,500 SF
This has a larger floor plate than allowed in SM-U for residential at this height (12,000 SF), but smaller than would be allowed for office (20K SF).



909 5th Ave
23-story condo tower over a drugstore, office, and parking structure
Height: 240'
Lot area: ~24,000 sq ft
Building area: ~225,000 sq ft
FAR: 9.5

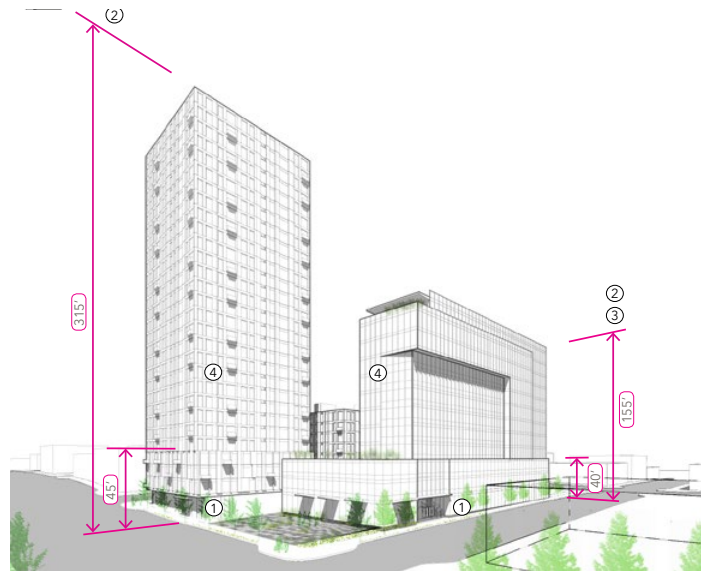
- Limits on floor size: in the residential SM/R-U zone, the average floor size above the podium may not exceed 10,500 square feet. In the other SM-U zones, the maximum floor size above the podium is linked to building height and use (Table 8).

Further, the interaction between height limits and FAR will constrain the size and location of highrise buildings. Buildings designed with a larger floor size (18-20K sq ft) will typically hit the FAR limit before they get to 160' in height. To reach the maximum tower heights allowed (240' or 320'), a typical development would need to use a much smaller floor plate, around 9,000 square feet – this floor size building works in a residential tower, but is too small for most offices.

Table 8. Highrise floor size limits	
Limits apply to buildings taller than 85'	
Building characteristics	Max floor size
Zero to 45' in height	No limit
Floors between 45'-160' (non-residential)	20,000 sq ft (24,000 sq ft for R&D)
Floors between 45'-160' (residential)	12,000 sq ft
Buildings that exceed 160', up to 240'	10,500 sq ft all floors above 45'
Buildings that exceed 240'	9,500 sq ft all floors above 45'



Potential locations for highrise. This figure highlights properties that are both likely to redevelop and large enough to allow highrise under the proposed zoning. Note that in several economic and development analyses, the anticipated highrise development is lower than the eligible sites shown here (2-14 highrise buildings, depending on aggressiveness of assumptions).



Two SM-U prototype buildings:

Residential tower (left)
Height: 315'
Site size: 28,840 sq ft
Building area: 191,000 sq ft
FAR: 10.6

Office tower (right)
Height: 155'
Site size: 38,000 sq ft
Building area: 130,000 sq ft
FAR: 6.2

Incentive zoning (23.58A)

Along with housing, amenities to support growth are a key priority. In particular, people want childcare to make the neighborhood more family-friendly, open space to provide more places for interaction and community events, and historic preservation to maintain neighborhood character.

Incentive zoning is a tool used to achieve development-related public benefits in higher density parts of Seattle. Through this program (SMC 23.58A), a developer is allowed to exceed the base floor area limit for the zone, up to a defined maximum, when they provide public amenities selected from a menu of mitigation options.

In the past, incentive zoning has included both affordable housing and non-housing amenities. Going forward, the City intends for affordable housing obligations to be met through compliance with MHA (see previous discussion), but non-housing incentive zoning requirements (e.g., childcare, open space, green streets, landmark preservation) will continue to be the mechanism for achieving additional floor area.

The U District has incentive zoning in only two small areas currently - this proposal would expand it to all the new SM-U zones. The following prerequisites would apply for any project seeking extra floor area:

- LEED Gold certification
- Transportation demand management plan

After these standards are met, a project must either provide on-site amenities or a payment-in-lieu to earn the extra floor area. Options to earn extra floor area in SM-U zones are as follows in Tables 9 & 10.

Nonresidential development must earn 65% of its extra floor area through contributions to child care. Providing childcare helps make living and working in the U District possible for more families. The facilities must meet specific requirements to comply with state child care standards, and provide slots at a variety of income levels including households with incomes at or below 80% of area median income.

Other features that earn extra floor area are:

- Neighborhood open space. Typically provided as a plaza as part of a development, open to the public. A developer can earn this extra floor



U District highrises at night. RNAPhotos via Flickr.

Table 9. OPTIONS FOR GAINING FLOOR AREA ABOVE BASE FAR - Residential development

Amenity feature	Bonus square footage earned
Neighborhood open space	21:1
Green street setbacks	15:1
Green street right-of-way improvements	15:1
Mid-block corridor	15:1
Historic building transfer of development rights (TDR)	3:1

Table 10. OPTIONS FOR GAINING FLOOR AREA ABOVE BASE FAR - Non-residential development

%	Amenity feature	Bonus square footage earned
65%	Child care facilities (in addition to fulfilling MHA)	~8,000 sq ft per slot
35%	Neighborhood open space	7:1
	Green street setbacks	5:1
	Green street right-of-way improvements	5:1
	Mid-block corridor	7:1
	Historic building transfer of development rights (TDR)	1:1



Figure 8. Affordable housing requirements and non-housing amenities. All buildings must meet MHA requirements from the ground up. Projects choosing to take advantage of bonus floor must also meet incentive zoning requirements, providing open space, child care, landmark preservation, and/or other features.

area through fee-in-lieu if contributions are used toward a public park or privately developed open space.

- Green street setbacks. Open space or landscaping abutting a designated green street: Brooklyn Ave NE, NE 43rd St., NE 42nd St.
- Green street right-of-way improvements. New sidewalks, landscaping, bike facilities, or other features identified in a streetscape concept plan. These improvements can be abutting the development site, or on a designated green street within a quarter mile.
- Mid-block corridor. Path allowing public passage from one side of a block to the other side, meeting minimum standards.
- Transfer of development rights for landmark buildings and vulnerable masonry buildings. Eligible sending sites include designated

landmarks and historic brick buildings that will be retrofitted with seismic improvements.

Both residential and non-residential development can also gain up to 0.5 extra FAR by incorporating the following features, provided that they meet specific code requirements:

- Landmark buildings or vulnerable masonry buildings.
- Space dedicated to human services.
- Preschool, elementary school, or high school.
- “Family-friendly” housing with 2+ bedrooms.



Figure 9. Building width. U District buildings have historically been relatively narrow, typically ranging from 50'-200'. The long north-south blocks allow much wider buildings though, and recent developments are often larger than 300' wide. Very wide development, applied broadly across the neighborhood, would reduce architectural variety and visual interest. The proposed zoning would limit building width to a maximum of 250'.

Building form: detailed development standards

Maximum width and depth (23.48.635). Blocks in the U District are very long in the north/south direction. This affects walkability and architectural character.

In Seattle's downtown, blocks are typically 240' x 240'. In Portland's Pearl District, the street grid divides blocks into 200' x 200' squares. These smaller blocks lend themselves to flexible, varied route options for pedestrians and also to a good variety of buildings.

To compare, U District blocks are 400'-600' in length and about 220' in width. Historically, retail buildings were built 40-50' wide, and apartment buildings ranged from 50'-120'. In recent years however, new buildings have become much wider – many recent developments range from 300' – 450'. Even with well-articulated massing, where good materials and details are used, these very wide buildings have a monotonous effect on the streetscape.

This proposal recommends a maximum building width and depth of 250' feet. This limit encourages greater architectural variety, preventing a long half block from being dominated by a single building. It still allows larger, efficient floor configurations for a variety of housing and employment uses.

Churches, schools, community centers, and buildings over the light rail station would be exempt from the width limit. Other projects could get a departure through a Design Review process, but

the applicant would have to demonstrate a design approach that solves the bulk/scale challenge of larger buildings.

Midblock pedestrian corridor (23.48.640). Midblock corridors can play two important roles in U District development. First, they would allow more paths for east/west pedestrian movement – allowing more flexible routes and opportunities for ground-level businesses. Second, if applied to large lot developments, they would serve to break up development into a more appropriate scale for the neighborhood.

This proposal would require mid-block corridors for development on lots that exceed 30,000 square feet and about two north/south avenues. The ends of the corridor would need to be at least 150 feet from the block corners. The corridor needs to be at least 25' wide on average, with some larger portions. These pathways would count toward open space requirements (explained below). Also, if the corridor is open to the public, it would be eligible to earn extra floor area allowed through incentive zoning.

Modulation (23.48.646). Modulation means variation in a facade surface – some portions extend forward and others are set back. Modulation breaks up long facades for variety facing the street, and reduce the overall appearance of bulk.

Unlike modulation requirements in many parts of Seattle, the proposed standards would apply to all



Building modulation breaks up the mass of a building's frontage. When done well, it creates visual interest and can reflect the program inside the building to passersby. (GGLO)

portions of buildings, not just the upper levels. These requirements would apply to any development on a lot greater than 15,000 square feet, pushing portions of the facade back 10' from street lot lines, at widths and intervals that vary depending on the height of the building.

Setbacks (23.48.640; 23.48.645). Setback requirements are used in zoning to achieve several different outcomes. In some cases, setbacks relieve pressure on crowded walkways. In other cases they provide some separation and privacy for

residents and adjacent properties. Certain setbacks, especially at upper levels, help integrate new buildings into a historic context, and to provide light and a feeling of openness at the street level.

In an urban, mixed use neighborhood, setbacks should be applied with care. For pedestrian-oriented commercial areas, the traditional urban form has storefronts meeting the sidewalk. This creates an active street edge: passersby are drawn into businesses, and ground-level businesses create a sense of security by providing "eyes on the street." Also, overly strict setbacks could make development challenging on the U District's narrow half-blocks.

Based on these considerations, OPCD recommends the setbacks listed in Table 11.

Street level requirements (23.48.040). Design quality and the mix of uses at the street level play a critical role in defining neighborhood character. They determine how hospitable sidewalks are for people on foot; a generous sidewalk with good landscaping doesn't feel safe or pleasant if it runs along a blank wall or a long swath of parking.

For any lot abutting a street within an SM-U zone, ground-level commercial space should engage pedestrians and allow flexibility to accommodate a variety of uses over time. The following standards would help achieve this:

Table 11. NEIGHBORHOOD SETBACKS IN SM-U ZONES

Location	Distance	Purpose
Street level setbacks		
NE 45th St (from the freeway to 15th Ave NE)	8'	Wider pedestrian area
NE 50th St (from the freeway to 15th Ave NE)	5'	Wider pedestrian area
NE 43rd St and NE 42nd St	3' average	Green street landscaping
Any ground-level residential or live/work units	7' average	Privacy for residents, allow stoop/entry landing
Upper-level setbacks		
All projects that do not exceed 85' in height	10' for all portions above 65' in height (average)	Control bulk & street wall of all non-highrise buildings
Abutting University Way (The Ave)	15' for all portions above 45', above 80% of street frontage (average)	Maintain a street wall consistent with the historic scale of the Ave
SM-U 240 or SM-U 320 lots abutting or across the street from multifamily residential zones	15' for all portions above 65'	Provide appropriate transitions to lower density zones

- Transparency: business frontage must be at least 60% transparent (windows and doors).
- Blank facades are limited to a maximum of 15' wide. This may be increased where artwork or special architectural features are used to provide visual interest.
- Ground-level businesses must have a minimum floor to floor height of 13'. Higher ceilings create spaces that work for different uses over time. Spaces with lower ceilings are hard to retrofit for restaurants or other uses that require specific mechanical equipment. A spacious ground level also creates more attractive frontage, and is often more consistent with historic storefronts.
- Commercial space at the ground level that is required or exempt from FAR calculations must allow access from the sidewalk – it cannot be accessed through internal circulation only.

“Neighborhood character is established by the streetscapes and urban design that occur below 30 feet, regardless of the height of the buildings. The additional density provided by the greater upzone will create more social capital, transit ridership, economic growth, and simultaneously reduce car-dependency and GHG output. The Ave is in need of more residents and a greater variety of residents to provide 24-hour activation, eyes-on-the-street, and reduced crime.”
– *Public comment, 2014*

Beyond these standard requirements, additional requirements apply in some high volume streets connected to the Ave business district (see “Class 1 Pedestrian Streets” on Figure 10).

- A minimum of 75% of frontage must be occupied by active uses including general sales and service, eating and drinking establishments, entertainment uses, public libraries, public parks, and arts facilities.
- The required street level uses must be within 10' of lot line.
- All other uses including residential and live/work units are limited to no more than 25% of the frontage in this area.

Successful residential units at the ground level require a careful balance between engaging passersby on the sidewalk and providing privacy for residents. These seemingly conflicting goals can actually support each other: if a ground-level unit is adequately separated, residents are more likely to open blinds and windows, and/or use open spaces adjacent to the sidewalk. Code requirements include the following:

- Set ground-level units back an average of 7', and no less than 5'.
- Private amenity areas, stoops, steps, porches, and/or landscaping within that setback.
- Bay windows, canopies, and other architectural features may extend up to 4' into the setbacks.



Figure 10. Neighborhood green streets (Brooklyn, 43rd, and 42nd), Class 1 pedestrian streets, and locations of street level use requirements.



The U District also has three designated neighborhood green streets (Brooklyn Ave NE, NE 43rd St, and NE 42nd St). Street improvements as part of development along these streets must be designed in accordance with concept plans pre-approved by OPCD and SDOT. Also, improvements along the green streets may count toward incentive zoning requirements (see pp. 31-32).

Open space (23.48.650, 23.48.045). Usable open space is an important priority for the U District community. Many who support increased height and density do so because they see it as a means to accommodate growth while increasing open space amenities for the neighborhood.

“...a unique network of open spaces must be created that successfully balances the needs of its growing population and refines the District’s unique identity. This will involve collaboration amongst the City departments, UW administrators and students, University District Partnership (UDP), business community, and residential neighbors.”

-U District Open Space Plan, 2015

The proposal includes both requirements and incentives for new open space. Open space requirements apply in the following circumstances:

- Residential amenity space is required for any project that includes more than 20 residential units. It must be equal to at least 5% of all residential floor area. It must be accessible to all residents, and it may or may not be accessible to the public. At least half must be unenclosed, and incentives encourage putting the open space at street level.
- Public open space is required for large lot developments. On any lot exceeding 30,000

square feet, development must provide open space equivalent to at least 15% of the lot area. The standards allow flexibility for a variety of accessible open spaces, including plazas or atriums.

Open space incentives include everything described previously in the discussion of incentive zoning (page 29). In order to access additional floor area and height, developers must provide or contribute to one or more types of amenities, including plazas, midblock crossings, off-site open space, or green street improvements.

For more information on partnerships to provide open space in the core of the neighborhood, see page 44.

Trees and landscaping (23.48.055). All rezoned areas in this proposal, including the SM designations at the core, would be required to comply with Green Factor landscaping standards. Green Factor uses a landscape scoring system and sets a minimum score that all new projects are required to meet. The scoring system is weighted to favor landscape features with high functional value, like large trees, rain gardens, and green roofs.

This is the same landscaping requirement that has applied to commercial zones in the U District since



A plaza designed to meet the large lot open space requirement in South Lake Union.

2007 and multifamily residential zones since 2011. It is the primary reason for the rooftop garden areas and more generous planting strips seen in recent developments, and will continue to increase tree canopy in the U District's core over time.

In the core of the U District, most of the large development sites have a tree canopy cover of less than 5% (in many cases, it is 0%, without even street trees). Under the proposed standards, canopy for redeveloped sites would increase to greater than 15%, the City's target for mixed use and commercial areas like the U District.

Parking location standards (23.48.685). The proposed SM zoning for the U District does not include parking minimums. This is consistent with citywide policies on parking in urban centers. It does include some specific limits and standards:

- Accessory parking for non-residential uses is limited to one space per every 1,000 square feet of gross floor area.
- One story of parking is allowed above grade for every two stories below grade.
- At the ground level, all parking must be separated from the street by intervening uses.
- Above the ground level, at least 30% of the length of any parking area must be separated from the street by an intervening use – the rest must be screened.

Seattle Mixed chapter outline:

Seattle Mixed (SM) general

23.48.002 Scope of provisions
23.48.005 Uses
23.48.010 Relocating landmark structures
23.48.020 Floor area ratio (FAR)
23.48.021 Extra floor area
23.48.025 Structure height
23.48.040 Street-level development standards
23.45.045 Amenity area for residential uses
23.48.055 Screening and landscaping standards
23.48.065 Noise and odor standards

23.48.075 Light and glare standards
23.48.080 Required parking and loading
23.48.085 Parking and loading location, access and curb cuts
23.48.090 Assisted living facilities
23.48.095 Pet daycare centers

Seattle Mixed U District (SM-U)

23.48.602 Scope of provisions for SM-U zones
23.48.605 Uses in SM-U zones
23.48.615 Structure height in SM-U zones
23.48.620 Floor area ratio in SM-U zones
23.48.621 Mandatory housing affordability (MHA) program in SM-U zones
23.48.622 Extra floor area in SM-U zones
23.48.623 Transferable of Development Rights (TDR) and Transferable of Development Potential (TDP)
23.48.624 Bonus floor area for open space amenities in SM-U zones
23.48.625 Structure height in SM-U zones
23.48.626 Combined lot development in SM-U zones
23.48.627 Adoption of rules to implement SM-U zone regulations
23.48.630 Adoption of vulnerable masonry structure rules
23.48.635 Maximum width and depth limits in SM-U zones
23.48.640 Street-level development standards in SM-U zones
23.48.645 Upper-level development standards in SM-U zones
23.48.646 Facade modulation in SM-U zones
23.48.650 Required open space for large lot developments in SM-U zones
23.48.680 Parking quantity in SM-U zones
23.48.685 Parking location in SM-U zones
23.48.690 Development agreements in SM-U zones



U District skyline at dusk. (Matt Hoehnen)



Burke-Gilman Trail



The Ave

The Ave (University Way NE) is the U District's defining corridor. It's an important center of student life, eating, shopping, and cultural activity. While opinions vary about how people want to see the Ave improve, people value the street's overall character and liveliness. In our public outreach, we've heard

strong support for preserving the Ave's scale and fine-grained commercial mix.

This proposal keeps heights on the Ave relatively low, going from 65' to 85' south of NE 50th St., and keeping the existing zoning to the north. Zoning would continue to allow a mix of commercial and residential uses. To see the specific zone boundaries, see the draft rezoning map on p. 17.

Along the portion of the Ave that will remain zoned NC, the existing "pedestrian designation" overlay will continue to encourage active frontage. This overlay requires 80% of street frontage to be occupied by the following non-residential uses:

- Arts facilities
- Community gardens
- Eating and drinking establishments
- Entertainment uses
- Food processing and craft work
- Institutions, except hospitals or major institutions
- Lodging uses
- Medical services
- Small offices
- Parks and open spaces

"While a neighborhood changes, the communal spaces, like main streets and parks, should be slow to change. The slow to change shared spaces would provide a constant in a neighborhood and help ensure that the identity of a neighborhood isn't uprooted."

-Public comment, 2015

- Rail transit facilities

South of NE 50th St., we recommend applying a new zone of Seattle Mixed - U District 85' (SM-U 85). This zoning would require ground-level uses similar to those required for NC pedestrian overlay areas. It would add 20 feet of allowed height, along with new development standards:

- **Upper level setback (23.48.645).** Above 45', portions of buildings must set back an average of 15' to maintain a lower facade along the street.
- **Maximum width.** Buildings can't exceed 250' in width (details in the "Core" section).

- **Modulation.** Large buildings must break up the facade for variety and an appropriate scale (details in the "Core" section).

- **Incentive zoning and MHA requirements.** (See the "Core" section)

- **Midblock pedestrian pathways and open space requirements.** (See the "Core" section)

Today's zoning allows development to achieve an FAR limit of 5.75. Under the proposed zoning the new maximum would

be an FAR of 6. While the additional height gives flexibility for the form of development, the actual bulk



Cowen Park Grocery, at the north end of Brooklyn. As requested by Roosevelt Neighbors Alliance members, this rezoning would allow 1-2 stories of development above the store/cafe.

would be similar to what is currently allowed.

East of the Ave, several half-blocks facing onto 15th Ave NE are appropriate for larger development. South of 45th, the proposed zoning is SM-U 240', described in the previous section. North of 45th, one half block would see a moderate increase from NC3-65 to SM-U 85.

Throughout this area, we recommend removing the existing "Station Area Overlay District." This overlay was established to provide additional capacity and flexibility under existing zoning, but the proposed rezone further increases the overall capacity in the area, making the overlay redundant and confusing (Figure 11).

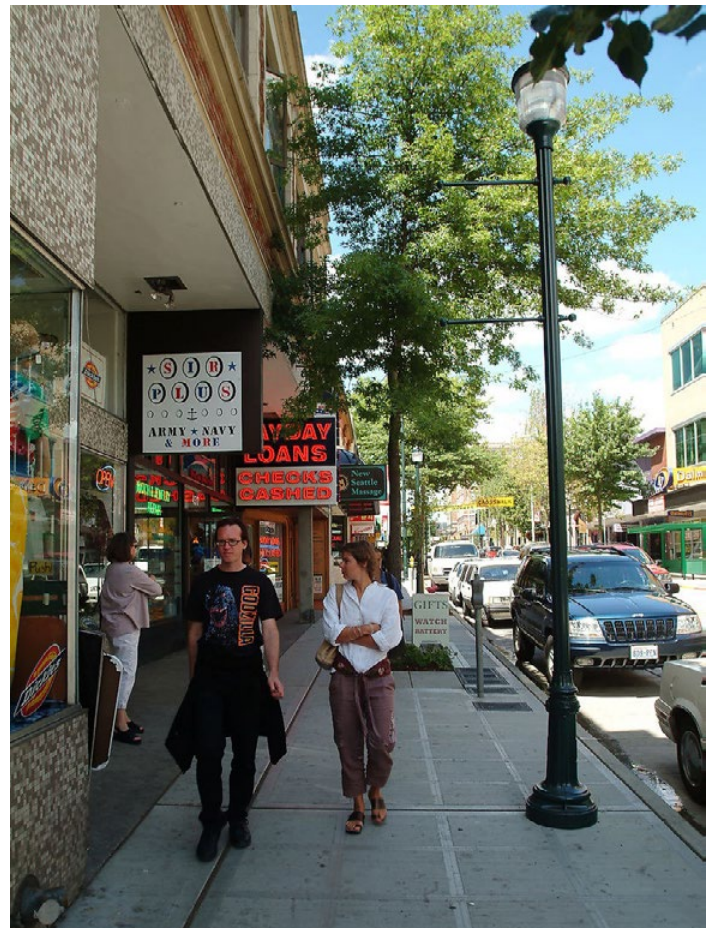
At the north end of the Ave, the proposal includes two minor zoning amendments. First, a strip of LR3 frontage on the east side of the northernmost block would change to Neighborhood Commercial (NC2P-55-MHA). This would be more consistent with the pedestrian commercial character of the Ave and with the adjacent uses. Also, there is at least one nonconforming business (a restaurant) and existing non-conforming apartment buildings structures (i.e., they do not meet standards of the current LR zone). Rezoning to NC would more closely match the existing buildings.

Second, the proposal would change two parcels fronting on NE Ravenna Blvd from Single-Family Residential to Neighborhood Commercial. These parcels also feature non-conforming uses - apartments, a neighborhood grocery store, and a café. Changing the zoning to NC2P-40-MHA would better reflect the fact that the Ave business district extends out to Ravenna. It would also allow those uses to redevelop or build an addition in the future. Neighbors have requested that the City grant this additional flexibility to the grocery store site to help that business grow in place.

NOTE: This proposal would apply Mandatory Housing Affordability requirements to all rezoned areas (see discussion on pages 20-25). Parcels that retain their current zoning for now will likely have MHA requirements added in 2017 when the City applies zone-wide changes.



Figure 11. The existing Station Area Overlay. This designation adds capacity under current zoning, but is made redundant by proposed zoning. OPCD recommends removing it as part of this rezone.



Pedestrians on the Ave, 2003.



The North Tier

This area, north of NE 50th St and west of the Ave, represents a physical and demographic transition from the dense, active core to the lower density residential areas to the north. Land uses are varied but tend toward residential. Buildings are smaller, and the mix of residents is different. More families, middle-

aged residents, and seniors live in this part of the neighborhood.

The proposal would change zoning along the north side of NE 50th St from Lowrise Multifamily Residential to Neighborhood Commercial (NC3-55-M1). NC3 is a better fit with the existing nonresidential uses along this corridor: the U Heights Community Center, YMCA, library, fire station, and small retail businesses. The rezone would better allow the Ave business district to grow onto 50th and would support the YMCA's planned expansion and redevelopment.

To the west of Roosevelt, the proposal would modify zoning on the west half of the Blessed Sacrament Church property. Blessed Sacrament and the Roosevelt Neighbors Alliance have requested a rezone to this area. Currently the historic landmark church has split zoning: the west half is single family and the east half is LR1. Changing the west half to LR1-M1 would make the whole property consistent, facilitating long-term improvements including a new level of underground parking and accessibility upgrades.

Other than Blessed Sacrament, single family and lowrise multifamily zoning would remain in place in this area. It is outside the immediate walkshed of the light rail station, and this area has a high concentration of relatively affordable rental housing and owner-occupied homes.

To see the specific zone boundaries, see the draft rezone map on p. 17.

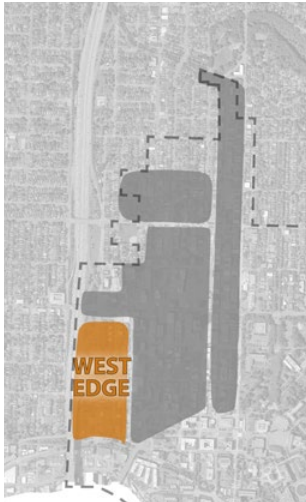
"It has been our longtime goal to preserve our neighborhood's historic character by preserving the old housing stock... Existing housing is sought after for a life style preferred by many people, including families, drawn here by close proximity to work and school... They have renovated their old homes and are an integral part of the community. Many old houses in our neighborhood are divided into duplexes or triplexes with rents that are considerably more affordable than smaller units of new construction."

-Roosevelt Neighbors Alliance
public comment, 2014

As discussed in previous sections, Mandatory Housing Affordability requirements would apply to the rezones proposed as part of this action. Multifamily zones that remain "as is" for now will likely be modified in 2017.



Zoning changes along NE 50th St would make it possible for the YMCA to redevelop at their current location. The new facility is planned to include housing for recently homeless young adults.



The West Edge

Between the U District's core and the freeway, a collection of new and old apartment buildings provides housing primarily for UW students. This area is not appropriate for intensive mixed use, due both to the existing concentration of residential uses and also to the narrow streets and awkward dead ends. The redevelopment

sites in this area tend to be relatively small and spread out.

The proposed zoning would change this area from Lowrise Multifamily Residential to Midrise Multifamily Residential. In addition to allowing more overall housing in this close-in focus area, MR zoning would allow the development of congregate housing, i.e., private units that share kitchens and living spaces. This type of development helps provide affordable housing options for students and others.

To see the specific zone boundaries, see the draft rezone map on p. 17.

See below for a more detailed comparison of LR3 and MR zoning.

Building examples in Multifamily Residential (MR) zones:



403 Belmont Ave E

7-story structure with 47 residential units. Parking for 16 vehicles below grade.

Height: 72'

Lot area: 7,207 sq ft

Building area: 32,260 sq ft

FAR: 4.25 FAR

Table 12. EXISTING AND PROPOSED ZONING

	Existing Zoning: LR3	Proposed Zoning: MR
Maximum allowed height	40'	85'
Floor Area Ratio (FAR)	1.1 to 2, depending on housing type	4.5
Landscaping	Seattle Green Factor	Seattle Green Factor
Setbacks	7-15 feet, depending on lot line	7-15 feet, depending on lot line
Residential amenity area	25% of lot area	5% gross area of development

5. Implementation Partnerships

The legislative proposal described in this report is one piece of a larger effort. Since the beginning of the planning process in 2011, discussions about land use and urban design have been linked to other important work in the neighborhood, including community-driven initiatives, new public investments, and private development. We've worked with neighborhood groups, businesses, social service providers, many City departments, and the University of Washington.

People in the U District care about building form, density, housing affordability, and the other issues that are directly affected by zoning. But they also care about a broader set of issues, including coordinated transportation planning, a thoughtful open space strategy, social services, and amenities for all kinds of residents. The zoning recommendations in this report will help address these issues, but achieving the vision of comprehensive solutions will depend on a sustained, long-term commitment from many.

Coordinated City investments

In September, Mayor Ed Murray identified some key investments in the U District community, including City spending on infrastructure, social services, affordable housing, and cultural facilities.

Key examples include:

- New and expanded parks at U Heights Center, Christie Park, and Portage Bay waterfront.
- New affordable housing, including 181 units in new buildings opening in 2016 and 2017.
- A new partnership with the ROOTS Young Adult Shelter, U District Partnership, and UW to set up and fund a homeless youth employment program.
- A variety of investments in the neighborhood's "clean and safe" priority, including community police engagement and the "Find It, Fix It" program.
- New protected bike lanes on Roosevelt, NE Campus Parkway, and elsewhere.



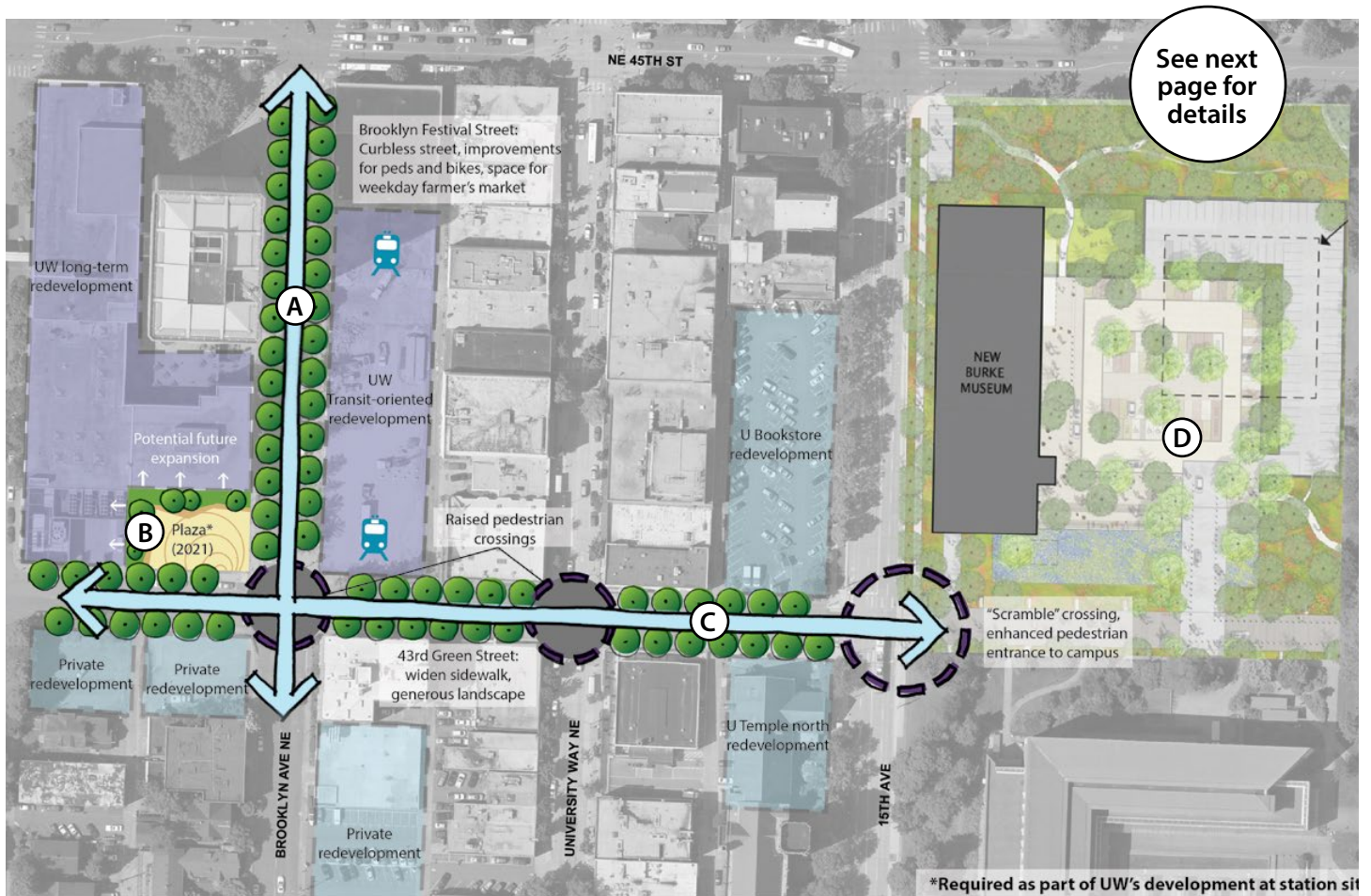
"Marion West" is one of two new affordable housing developments that the City is funding in the U District in 2016-17. Together, they will provide 181 new homes, including transitional housing for homeless families.



SDOT is investing in a new greenway, intersection safety, protected bike lanes, and a sidewalk expansion (Seattle Greenways).

- Improved bus service, and integration of surface transit with light rail.
- Pedestrian safety improvements, including an expansion of the NE 43rd St. sidewalk connecting light rail to the Ave and UW's Central Campus.

For a full summary of investments and partnerships, please see Appendix D.



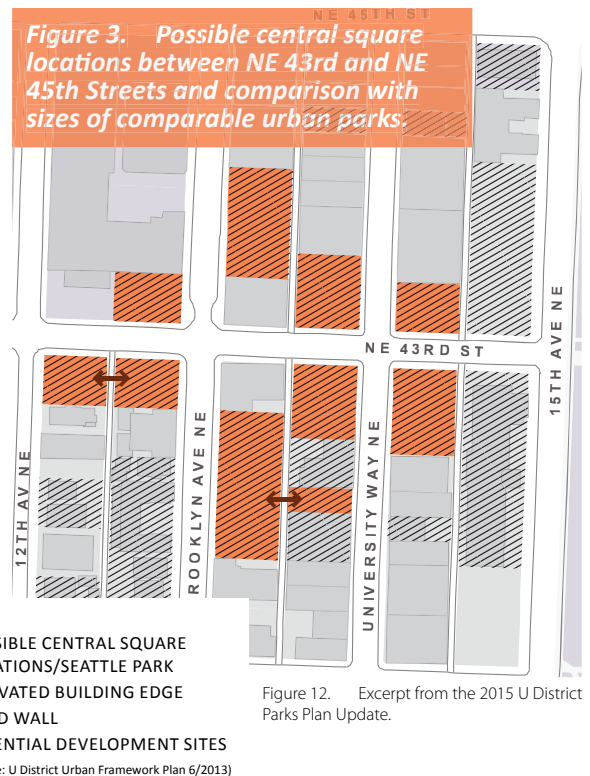
Central open space partnerships

In 2014 and 2015, the City and the U District Partnership hosted a series of public meetings to talk about open space priorities for the neighborhood. We finalized a [Parks Plan update](#) for the neighborhood later in 2015.

The highest priority coming out of this process was a centrally-located, publicly-owned plaza, as well as complementary open spaces.

Three public agencies, Sound Transit, University of Washington, and City of Seattle are working together to help address this community priority, with the investments summarized on this and the following pages.

As the new open spaces are completed, Seattle Parks is interested in partnering with community groups to program activities to encourage a lively, fully-used public realm in the neighborhood's core.

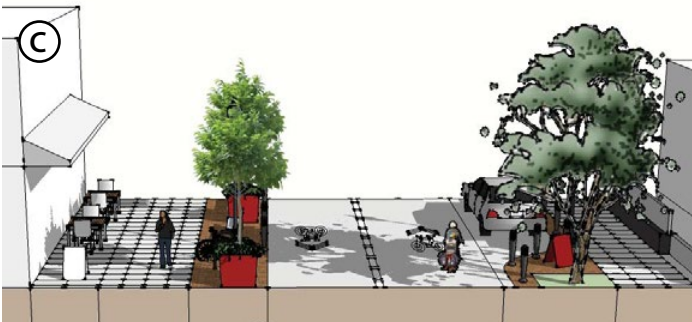




A) Brooklyn Festival Street. When Sound Transit rebuilds the street next to the U District light rail station, they will provide a curbsless festival street similar to Bell Street Park Boulevard (pictured). The concept design, which came out of a public process in 2014-2015, allows for regular closures to car traffic to host community events. The Neighborhood Farmer's Market Alliance plans a weekday market for this location, as a spinoff of the Saturday market on the Ave. (Photo: MIG|SvR)



B) Public open space. In the 2015, the community identified several suitable sites for a central plaza (see Figure 12). At one of these locations (NW corner of Brooklyn and NE 43rd St.), UW will develop a public open space to meet the requirements of their planned development on Brooklyn. Initially, the scale will be similar to this corner plaza in South Lake Union, but the site may grow in the future if UW redevelops buildings around UW Tower.



C) NE 43rd St pedestrian improvements. Prior to the station opening in 2021, the City will expand the sidewalks and provide new landscaping on the blocks connecting light rail to the Ave and campus. In some locations, the widened sidewalk will allow sidewalk cafes.



D) Burke Museum rebuild. UW is building a new Burke Museum facing into the neighborhood at 15th Ave NE. In addition to the new museum facility, the project will open the west edge of campus, provide a more welcoming pedestrian entrance, and provide new landscaping and public space. (Rendering: Olson Kundig|Stephanie Bower)

6. Departmental Recommendation

People in the U District view the arrival of light rail and growth with a mixture of excitement and concern. Many hope that the changes will reinvigorate the neighborhood, drawing residents, visitors and shoppers back to an area that has gradually lost businesses and investment. Many are concerned about a wave of growth displacing current residents and businesses, with out-of-scale buildings that detract from overall livability. Others envision a new U District: a thriving jobs center fueled by new biomedical research and tech jobs, but managing to retain its eclectic urban character and diverse cultural organizations.

This zoning proposal incorporates thinking from all of these groups, gathered over five years of community involvement. It combines neighbors' personal preferences with technical analysis about what can realistically happen at likely development sites.

The recommendations would allow substantially greater density in the neighborhood's core. To mitigate the impacts of this growth, the recommendations include:

- New affordable housing requirements
- New public space requirements
- Standards to control the bulk of new developments, including tower spacing and floor plate limits
- Provisions to maintain the general pedestrian retail scale of the Ave and preserve historic buildings.

In addition to the proposed zoning and development standards, the City is working with the public, the U District Partnership, and UW to bring about other positive changes in the neighborhood, including safer transportation, better open space, and improved housing and services. Together, the zoning and investments will help shape growth in a way that benefits this dynamic neighborhood and the people who live and work in it.

