

# FINAL Environmental Impact Statement

*for the*

## U District Urban Design Alternatives



City of Seattle  
Department of Planning & Development

January 8, 2015





# **FINAL** **Environmental Impact Statement**

*for the*

## **U District Urban Design Alternatives**

*Preparation of this EIS is the responsibility of the City of Seattle. As Lead Agency, the City is responsible for SEPA compliance and based on the scoping process has directed the areas of research and analysis that were undertaken in preparation of this EIS. This Final EIS is not an authorization for an action, nor does it constitute a decision or a recommendation for an action. The Final EIS will accompany the Proposed Action and will be considered in making final decisions concerning proposed options for U District policy and code amendments.*

**Date of Final EIS Issuance:  
January 8, 2015**





## City of Seattle

Edward B. Murray, Mayor

### Seattle Department of Planning and Development

Diane M. Sugimura, Director

January 8, 2015

Dear Affected Agencies, Organizations, and Interested Parties:

The City of Seattle is pleased to release the U District Urban Design Final Environmental Impact Statement (Final EIS). The proposal considered in this EIS consists of map and text amendments to the Comprehensive Plan and Land Use Code (Seattle Municipal Code Title 23) to allow greater height and density in the U District study area. Zoning changes would be accompanied by an affordable housing incentive program, incentives for open space and other neighborhood amenities, and by development standards regulating setbacks, tower separation, and street frontage. The legislative action, if taken, would apply to the U District study area, generally bounded by Interstate-5 on the west, 15<sup>th</sup> Avenue NE on the east, Portage Bay on the south, and Ravenna Boulevard NE on the north.

The **Draft EIS** considered two action alternatives representing varying approaches for accommodating increased height and development intensity in the study area, together with a No Action Alternative:

- Alternative 1 Medium towers, more dispersed development pattern;
- Alternative 2 Taller towers, most focused development pattern; and
- Alternative 3 No Action – current zoning, most dispersed development pattern.

This **Final EIS** considers two additional alternatives that assume a higher growth estimate than considered in the Draft EIS. These are:

- Alternative 1B Same assumptions for development standards and development pattern as Draft EIS Alternative 1, with 1,100 more estimated residential housing units compared to Draft EIS Alternative 1; and
- Alternative 2B Same assumptions for development standards and development pattern as Draft EIS Alternative 2 with 1,100 more estimated residential housing units compared to Draft EIS alternative 2.

In addition, the **Final EIS** responds to comments offered by the public during the Draft EIS comment period and includes revisions and additions to the Draft EIS analyses as appropriate.

Thank you for your interest in the U District Urban Design EIS.

Sincerely,

Nathan Torgelson  
Acting Director





# FACT SHEET

## NAME OF PROPOSAL

U District Urban Design Alternatives

## PROPONENT

The proponent is the City of Seattle

## LOCATION

The area represented by this Draft EIS is the U District study area, approximately 405 acres bounded by Portage Bay on the south, Interstate-5 on the west, 15th Avenue NE on the east and NE Ravenna Boulevard on the north.

## PROPOSED ALTERNATIVES

EIS action alternatives address height and density changes in the U District study area; and another alternative—No Action—would maintain current zoning requirements. Draft EIS alternatives are based on the same growth assumptions, but vary in the approach to development standards and geographic distribution of growth within the study area. Final EIS Alternatives 1B and 2B are based on a different growth assumption than the Draft EIS alternative, but assume the same development standards and geographic distribution of growth as Draft EIS Alternatives 1 and 2, respectively.

Key elements of each alternative include the following:

- ▶ **Alternative 1 and 1B.** These alternatives would allow high rise towers ranging between 125–160 feet in height. Towers would generally be focused in the core area of the study area, including portions of the University Way NE commercial corridor. New areas of mid-rise development would be permitted in the area extending north of the core area. No changes are proposed to the University of Washington (UW) Major Institution Overlay (MIO) or existing industrial zoning in the southern part of the study area.
- ▶ **Alternative 2 and 2B.** These alternatives would allow high rise towers ranging between 240–340 feet in height. Towers would be focused in the core of the study area. Building height along the University Way NE commercial corridor would be limited to 65–85 feet. North of the core area, no changes to the existing SF 5000 zoning are proposed and limited changes to the existing

commercial and multifamily zoning are proposed. No changes are proposed to the UW MIO or existing industrial zoning in the southern part of the study area.

- ▶ **Alternative 3** This alternative would retain existing zoning designations and associated development standards within the study area.

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**FINAL ACTION**

Potential Seattle City Council approval of Comprehensive Plan and/or Land Use Code amendments to allow greater height and density in the U District study area. Final action is anticipated to occur in mid-2015.



## REQUIRED APPROVALS AND/OR PERMITS

The following actions would be required to adopt a preferred approach to text and map amendments to the Comprehensive Plan and Land Use Code:

- ▶ Identification of a preferred approach; and
- ▶ Development of specific Land Use Code and Comprehensive Plan amendments to implement the preferred approach.

At such time as project-specific development is proposed, a broad range of approvals/permits pertaining to construction and operation of site-specific development would be required from agencies with jurisdiction.<sup>1</sup> These approvals may include the following:

### Seattle Department of Planning and Development

- ▶ Land Use
- ▶ Master Use Permit
- ▶ Seattle Design Commission Review
- ▶ Construction
- ▶ Demolition Permit(s)
- ▶ Building Permit
- ▶ Grading / Shoring Permit
- ▶ Mechanical Permits
- ▶ Electrical Permits
- ▶ Plumbing Permits
- ▶ Utility Extension Agreements
- ▶ Water Service Availability Certification
- ▶ Sewer Service Availability Certification
- ▶ Comprehensive Drainage Control Plan Approval
- ▶ Large-Parcel (possibly) Drainage Control Plans with Construction Best Management Practices and Erosion and Sediment Control Approval
- ▶ Street improvement Approval (e.g. curb-cut and/or sidewalk modifications)
- ▶ Signage Approvals
- ▶ Occupancy Permit

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<sup>1</sup> An agency with jurisdiction is "an agency with authority to approve, veto, or finance all or part of a nonexempt proposal (or part of a proposal)" (WAC 197-11-714 (3)). Typically, this refers to a local, state or federal agency with licensing or permit approval responsibility concerning the proposed project.

#### **AUTHORS AND PRINCIPAL CONTRIBUTORS TO THIS EIS**

This U District Urban Design EIS has been prepared under the direction of the City of Seattle Department of Planning and Development. Research and analysis associated with this EIS were provided by the following:

- ▶ **Studio 3MW LLP**—lead EIS consultant; document preparation; environmental analysis—land use/relationship to plans and policies, public services and utilities
- ▶ **Hewitt**—aesthetics, light/glare, shadow, viewshed
- ▶ **Fehr & Peers**—transportation, circulation, parking; greenhouse gas emissions
- ▶ **BERK**—population, employment, housing
- ▶ **Artifacts**—historic resources
- ▶ **Seattle Department of Planning and Development**—open space
- ▶ **Weinman Consulting**—SEPA strategy, alternatives

#### **DATE OF ISSUANCE OF THE DRAFT EIS**

April 24, 2014

#### **DATE DRAFT EIS COMMENTS WERE DUE**

June 23, 2014

#### **DATE OF ISSUANCE OF THIS FINAL EIS**

January 8, 2015

#### **DATE OF DRAFT EIS OPEN HOUSE AND PUBLIC HEARING**

May 20, 2014

University Temple Methodist Church

1415 NE 43rd Street

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#### **LOCATION OF BACKGROUND DATA**

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## AVAILABILITY OF THIS FINAL EIS

Copies of this Final EIS or notices of availability have been distributed to agencies, organizations and individuals noted on the Distribution List (Appendix A to this document). Notice of Availability of the Final EIS has also been provided to organizations and individuals that requested to become parties of record.

The Final EIS can be reviewed at the following public libraries:

- ▶ **Seattle Public Library**—Central Library (1000 Fourth Avenue)
- ▶ **Seattle Public Library**—University Branch (5009 Roosevelt Way NE)
- ▶ **University of Washington**—Suzzallo/Allen and Built Environment libraries (University of Washington campus)

A limited number of complimentary copies of this Draft EIS are available while the supply lasts—either as a CD or hardcopy from the Seattle Department of Planning and Development Public Resource Center, which is located in Suite 2000, 700 Fifth Avenue, in Downtown Seattle. Additional copies may be purchased at the Public Resource Center for the cost of reproduction.

This Final EIS and the appendices are also available online at:  
[www.seattle.gov/dpd/udistrict](http://www.seattle.gov/dpd/udistrict)

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## Acronyms

<b>ACS</b>	American Community Survey
<b>ALS</b>	Advanced Life Support
<b>AMI</b>	Average Median Income
<b>APE</b>	Area of Potential Effect
<b>BAT</b>	Business Access and Transit
<b>BLS</b>	Basic Life Support
<b>CSO</b>	Combined Sewer Overflow
<b>DAHP</b>	Washington Department of Archaeology and Historic Preservation
<b>DPD</b>	Department of Planning and Development
<b>EIS</b>	Environmental Impact Statement
<b>EMFAC</b>	Emissions Factors
<b>EPA</b>	US Environmental Protection Agency
<b>FAR</b>	Floor Area Ratio
<b>FLUM</b>	Future Land Use Map
<b>GHG</b>	Greenhouse Gas
<b>GMA</b>	Growth Management Act
<b>HCM</b>	Highway Capacity Manual
<b>HPI</b>	Historic Property Inventory
<b>HUD</b>	US Department of Housing and Urban Development
<b>IB</b>	Industrial Buffer
<b>IC</b>	Industrial Commercial
<b>ITE</b>	Institute of Transportation Engineers
<b>ITS</b>	Intelligent Transportation Systems
<b>KCPP</b>	King County Countywide Planning Policies
<b>kV</b>	kilovolt
<b>LEED</b>	Leadership in Energy & Environmental Design
<b>LOS</b>	Level of Service
<b>LR</b>	Lowrise
<b>LUC</b>	Land Use Code
<b>MFTE</b>	Multifamily Property Tax Exemption
<b>MIO</b>	Major Institution Overlay



<b>MR</b>	Midrise
<b>MTCO<sub>2e</sub></b>	Metric Tonne Dioxide Equivalent
<b>MXD</b>	Mixed Use Development Trip Generation
<b>NC</b>	Neighborhood Commercial
<b>NRHP</b>	National Register of Historic Places
<b>POPS</b>	Privately Owned Public Spaces
<b>PSRC</b>	Puget Sound Regional Council
<b>PZ</b>	Pressure Zone
<b>RPZ</b>	Restricted Parking Zone
<b>SCL</b>	Seattle City Light
<b>SDOT</b>	Seattle Department of Transportation
<b>SEPA</b>	State Environmental Policy Act
<b>SF</b>	Single Family
<b>SMC</b>	Seattle Municipal Code
<b>SPU</b>	Seattle Public Utilities
<b>TDR</b>	Transfer of Development Rights
<b>U DISTRICT</b>	University District
<b>UATAS</b>	University Area Transportation Action Strategy
<b>UCUC</b>	University Community Urban Center
<b>UDF</b>	Urban Design Framework
<b>UW</b>	University of Washington
<b>VMT</b>	Vehicles Miles Traveled
<b>WAC</b>	Washington Administrative Code
<b>WHR</b>	Washington Historic Register
<b>WISAARD</b>	Washington Information System for Architectural and Archaeological Records Data
<b>WSDOT</b>	Washington Department of Transportation

**FACT SHEET**  
1. SUMMARY  
2. ALTERNATIVES  
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