

DRAFT Environmental Impact Statement

for the

U District Urban Design Alternatives



City of Seattle
Department of Planning & Development

DRAFT

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 Draft EIS is not an authorization for an action, nor does it constitute a decision or a recommendation for an action. In its final form—as a Final EIS—it 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 Draft EIS Issuance:
April 24, 2014

**Date of Draft EIS
Public Meeting:**
May 20, 2014

Please refer to the City's website (www.seattle.gov/dpd/udistrict) or the Fact Sheet of this EIS for the time and location of the meeting.

**Date Comments on the
Draft EIS are Due:**
June 9, 2014



City of Seattle
Edward B. Murray, Mayor

Seattle Department of Planning and Development
Diane M. Sugimura, Director

April 24, 2014

Dear Affected Agencies, Organizations and Interested Parties:

The City of Seattle invites your comment on the U District Urban Design Draft Environmental Impact Statement (Draft 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, 15th Avenue NE on the east, Portage Bay on the south and Ravenna Boulevard NE on the north.

Objectives of the proposal include:

- Better integration of land uses with the neighborhood's future light rail station;
- Development standards to accommodate a greater variety of building types; and
- Support for equitable communities with a diversity of housing choices.

Two action alternatives representing varying approaches for accommodating increased height and development intensity within the U District study area are evaluated in this Draft EIS, together with a No Action Alternative. The alternatives, based on extensive community involvement, are:

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 Draft EIS identifies environmental impacts and mitigating strategies for each alternative. Elements of the environment evaluated in this Draft EIS include: land use/ plans and policies, population, employment, housing; aesthetics; historic resources; transportation; climate change; open space; public services; and utilities. The public comment period for this Draft EIS is: April 24, 2014 through June 9, 2014. Please see the Fact Sheet for information on submitting written comments.

In addition, the City invites your comments on the Draft EIS at an open house and public hearing scheduled for May 20, 2014 at 6:00 p.m. The open house and public hearing will be held at the University Temple Methodist Church, 1415 NE 43rd Street. Additional information concerning the open house and public hearing is provided on the City's project website at www.seattle.gov/dpd/udistrict and the [Fact Sheet for the Draft EIS](#).

Following the Draft EIS comment period, a Final EIS will be prepared that addresses written comments and public testimony received during the Draft EIS public comment period.

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

Sincerely,

Diane M. Sugimura
Director



City of Seattle, Department of Planning and Development
700 Fifth Avenue, Suite 2000
P.O. Box 34019, Seattle, WA 98124-4019

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

Two alternatives address height and density changes in the U District study area; a third alternative—No Action—would maintain current zoning requirements. All 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. Key elements of each include the following:

- ▶ **Alternative 1** This alternative 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** This alternative 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.

LEAD AGENCY

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FINAL ACTION

Potential Seattle City Council approval of Comprehensive Plan and/or Land Use Code amendments. Final action is anticipated to occur in mid-2015.

REQUIRED APPROVALS AND/OR PERMITS

The following actions would be required to adopt a preferred zoning approach:

- ▶ Identification of a preferred approach; and
- ▶ Enactment through zoning and development code revisions of preferred height and density changes for the U District study area.

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.¹ 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

¹ 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 THIS DRAFT EIS

April 24, 2014

DATE DRAFT EIS COMMENTS ARE DUE

June 9, 2014

WRITTEN COMMENTS ARE TO BE SUBMITTED TO:

Seattle Department of Planning and Development

Attn: Dave LaClergue, Urban Designer

700 Fifth Ave., Suite 1900

P.O. Box 34019

Seattle, WA 98124-4019

or via e-mail: Dave.LaClergue@seattle.gov

DATE OF DRAFT EIS OPEN HOUSE AND PUBLIC HEARING

May 20, 2014

University Temple Methodist Church

1415 NE 43rd Street

Seattle, WA 98105

This meeting will include the following schedule:

- ▶ 6:00–6:30 pm **Open House**
- ▶ 6:30–6:35 pm **Introductions**
- ▶ 6:35–6:50 pm **Draft EIS overview**
- ▶ 6:50–7:00 pm **Overview of the EIS Process**
- ▶ 7:00 pm **Public Comments Regarding the Draft EIS**
- ▶ **Concluding Remarks** following Public Comments

The purpose of the open house and public hearing is to provide an opportunity for agencies, organizations and individuals to review information concerning the Draft EIS and to present oral comments on the Draft EIS—in addition to submittal of written comments

LOCATION OF BACKGROUND DATA

City of Seattle, Department of Planning and Development

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Seattle, WA 98124-4019

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AVAILABILITY OF THIS DRAFT EIS

Copies of this Draft 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 Draft EIS has also been provided to organizations and individuals that requested to become parties of record.

The Draft 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)

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2. ALTERNATIVES
3. ANALYSIS
4. REFERENCES
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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 Draft EIS and the appendices are also available online at:
www.seattle.gov/dpd/udistrict

FINAL EIS

The Final EIS is tentatively planned for issuance in Fall 2014.

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Acronyms

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

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

FACT SHEET
1. SUMMARY
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3. ANALYSIS
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APPENDICES

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