U DISTRICT URBAN DESIGN

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

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Office of Planning
and Community Development

Introduction to Draft Proposal

This report summarizes draft zoning recommendations for Seattle's U District. The proposal has been prepared by the Office of Planning and Community Development (OPCD), based on four years of analysis and public input.

The rezone would increase allowable height and density in the core of the neighborhood, adjacent to the Sound Transit light rail station that will open in 2021. It would also apply new development standards to shape growth in a way that responds to the U District context. Finally, the proposal includes new requirements for affordable housing, open space, and other amenities valued by the community.

Background materials, draft zoning, and other information are available at www.seattle.gov/dpd/udistrict. **OPCD will take public comment on this proposal until June 30, 2016**. Please email comments to udistrict@seattle.gov or mail to Dave LaClergue, Office of Planning and Community Development, 700 5th Ave, Suite 1800, Seattle, WA 98124.

Following public review, planners will make revisions before transmitting to the Mayor and City Council for their consideration later in summer 2016.

Figure 1. Participants listen to a presentation at the U District Urban Design Framework open house, 2013.

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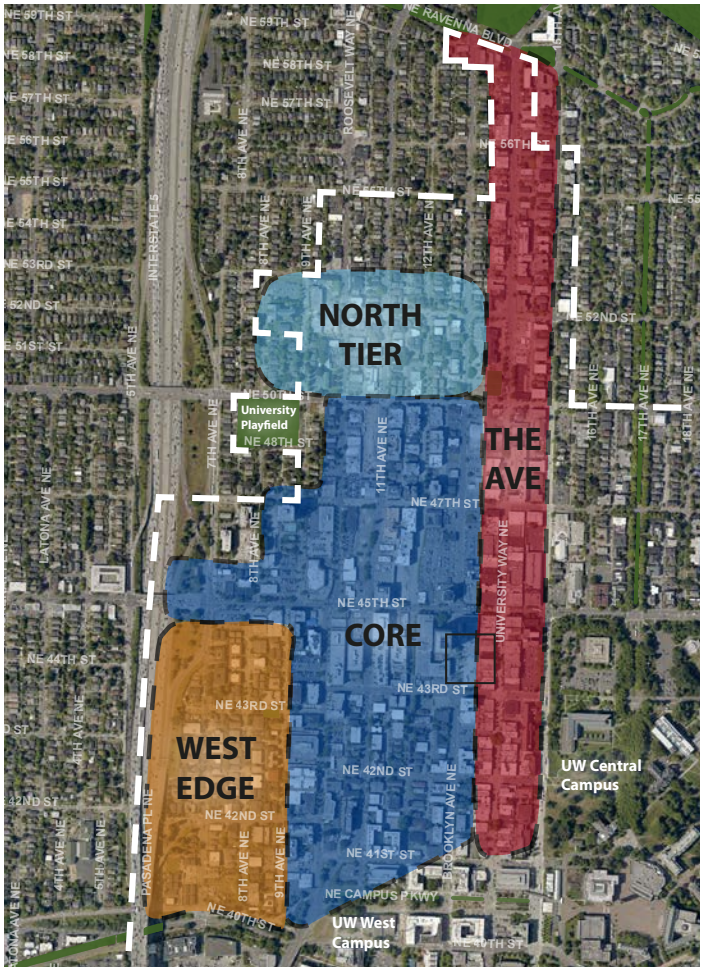


Figure 2. This report organizes discussion of zoning changes into four focus areas.

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 policies regarding housing and other community priorities.

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.

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).

After completing the environmental review, we drafted amendments to Seattle's Land Use Code. These include zoning changes for parts of the U District and new development standards.

Outline of proposal

The proposal is built on key ideas that came up again and again during the outreach process. It has three 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' in some cases. This puts density where there are already tall buildings, and contributes to walkability.
2. **Apply new development standards.** These standards respond to many of the concerns neighbors have raised 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. 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. Limit building width, and use setbacks in key locations to control massing.
   - *Provide thoughtful transitions.* Step height limits and density down from the core to the surroundings.

3. New requirements for affordable housing, open space, child care, and amenities.

- For consistency with the City's Housing Affordability and Livability Agenda (HALA), include mandatory housing affordability requirements for new development.
- Use incentive zoning to require larger buildings to contribute to one or more of the following: child care, street improvements, open space, human services, and historic preservation.

Section 5 of the report summarizes key projects led by the City and other partners, highlighting an integrated approach to planning in the U District. Throughout the planning process, we've worked with neighborhood groups, businesses, social service organizations, City departments, and University of Washington. Zoning is one piece of a broader set of efforts, including community initiatives, public investments, private development and UW's long-range-planning.

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.

Process going forward

This report summarizes draft recommendations for public comment. After we receive public comment, we will make revisions, get additional input from the Mayor, and transmit legislation to Council, where there will be further opportunities for public review.

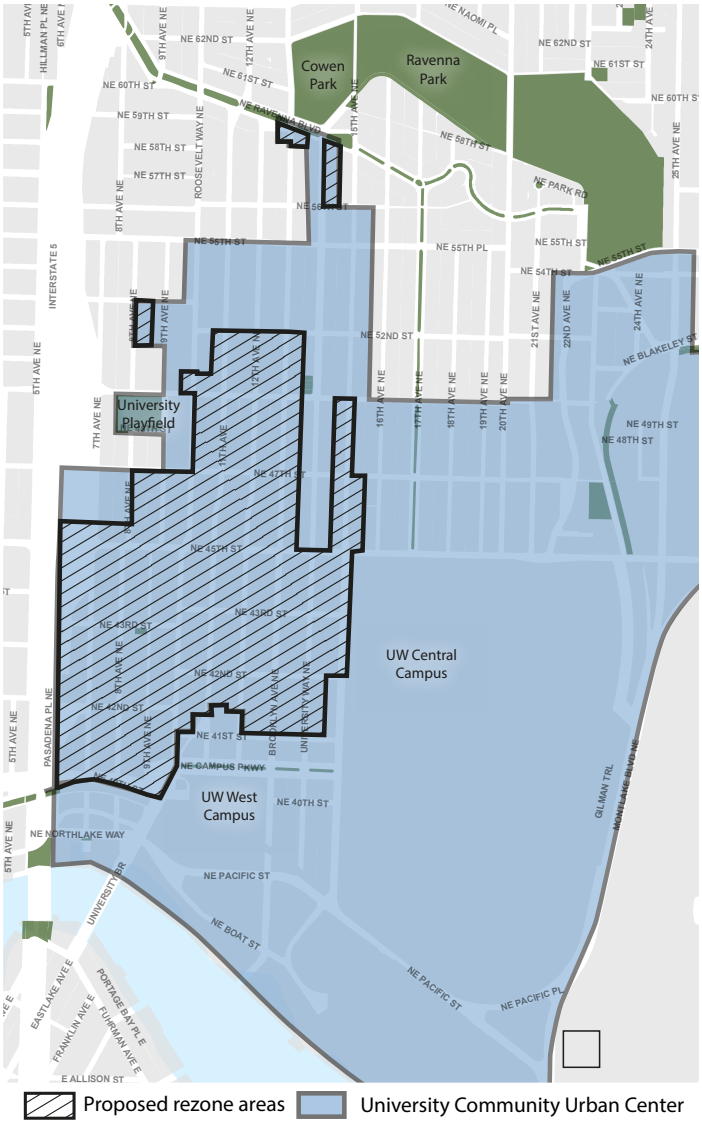
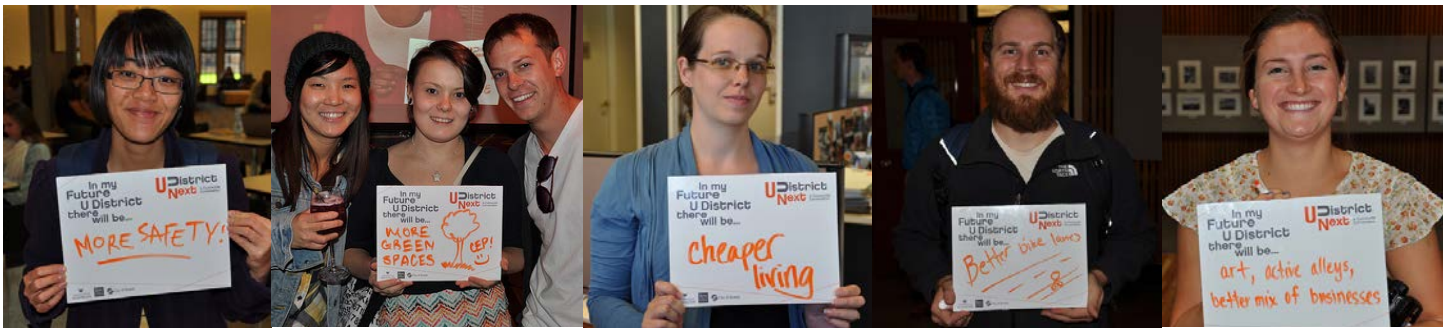


Figure 3. Proposed zoning changes would apply to western portions of the University Community Urban Center.



2. Context & Community Involvement

Since 2011, the Office of Planning and Community Development[1] (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 elsewhere. This infrastructure changes the relationship of the U District to the rest of the city.

New development. The U District is experiencing significant change: there are currently over 2,000 units in the construction pipeline, and we anticipate another 4,000 over the next 20 years. This growth raises both aspirations 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 development should occur.

Balance human needs. The U District is home to a diversity of people and services. Planning and strategic investments will help ensure the neighborhood meets the needs of those who live, work, and visit the district.

Growth estimates

OPCD is currently updating Seattle's long range plan for growth in the Seattle 2035 Comprehensive Plan update. Based on regional growth projections, we expect that the city will add 70,000 households and 115,000 jobs over the next 20 years. From past trends and current growth, we estimate that 4,000 to 5,000 of those new households and 4,800 jobs will locate in U District west of 15th Ave NE.

UW Daily

This anticipated growth can already occur under existing zoning in the U District. While the zoning recommendations in this report would increase capacity for growth, that is not the primary goal. Rather, they are about how to distribute the growth and pair it with appropriate mitigation and desired improvements.

Light rail in 2021

Sound Transit is extending the regional light rail system north from downtown Seattle. The station by Husky Stadium opened for service in 2016, and the station in the heart of the U District will open in 2021.

This $2.1 billion infrastructure investment will have significant effects on transportation to and from the U District: the University campus and the Ave 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.

Dense, walkable communities around light rail stations are referred to as "transit-oriented development," or TOD. The goal is for zoning and public investments to support job and housing growth in close proximity to transit stops (see Figure

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

4). This allows more people to benefit from living and working 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.

In the U District, people have begun to think of the blocks around the future station (NE 43rd Street and Brooklyn) as a "center within a center," both in terms of growth and amenities. The zoning and development standards in this proposal allow greater a greater concentration of growth in the blocks surrounding the light rail station, and impose requirements on that growth for affordable housing and open space.

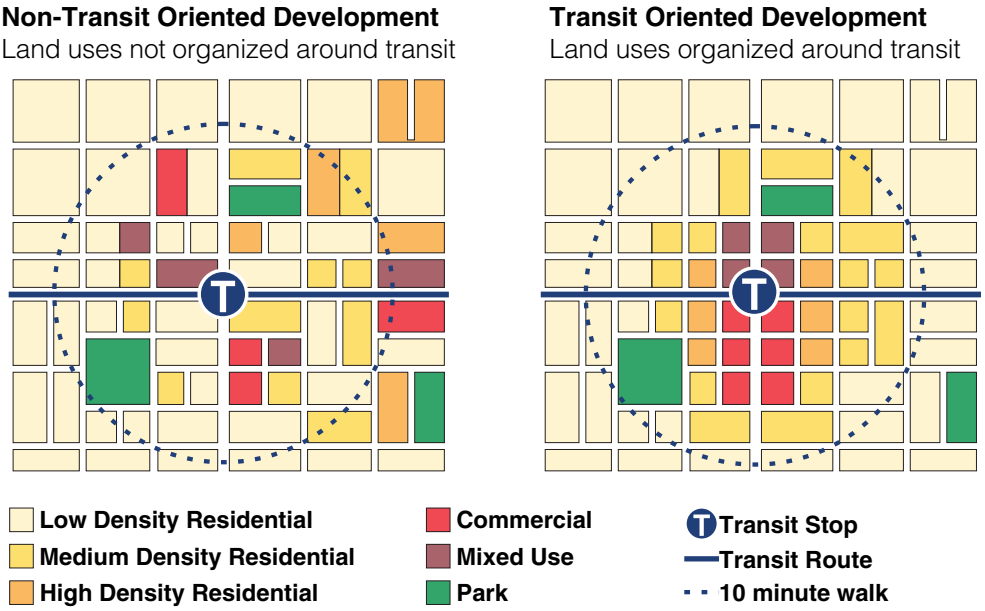


Figure 4. Transit-Oriented Development, or TOD, suggests that land uses and density should be focused around major transit service. Credit: Seattle Planning Commission - from "Transit Communities" report.

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.

Key statistics: How the U District is different[1]

	U District	Seattle
Younger residents: % of population between the ages of 18 and 29	75%	23%
Diversity: % of population who are people of color	46%	34%
Transportation choices: % of trips made by modes other than driving alone (walking, biking, transit, carpool...)	74%	41%
Renters: % of residents who rent	82%	52%
Housing cost burden: % of households paying 30% of household income or more toward housing.	66%	47%

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

Community input

Community members have volunteered enormous amounts of time and energy to help plan the U District's future. Since 2011, OPCD planners have participated in more than 300 meetings in the U District, and community groups have held even more meetings. 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

The UDP consists of a board of directors and working groups focused on topics including urban design, public safety, business development, and community events. City staff worked extensively with these groups to identify priority land use issues in the neighborhood: What trends concern people? What kinds of development would help build community?

The U District Partnership also hosted a series of broader community events called "U District Next: A Community Conversation." From 2012 to the present, these events have covered topics including

U District Partnership urban design committee working session, 2012.

transit-oriented communities, housing diversity and affordability, attracting businesses, and open space. These broader public meetings have often affirmed the direction of smaller working groups, and also have brought up new concerns and perspectives that inform our work.

Land use

While opinions vary widely about the right heights and development standards, most participants agree on the general direction of future zoning changes:

- Maintain lower-density housing north of NE 50th St., and concentrate higher density mixed use in the area to the south.
- Provide reasonable breaks and transitions between high and low density areas.
- Give special consideration to the Ave: make sure that new development is compatible with the existing shopping district.

Height

Many in the neighborhood have encouraged the City to allow increased height in some areas. There is no shortage of growth capacity in the U District, but people cite other reasons for increased height:

- Increased height and density within a 10-minute walk from the light rail station would focus growth where it is most appropriate, putting homes and jobs close to the station. This would also encourage infill on underused properties like surface parking lots.

- Allowing highrise could encourage a greater variety of buildings. Current development is producing fairly uniform midrise buildings. Many would prefer to see a mix of lowrise, midrise, highrise, and open space.
- Higher heights should come with requirements for affordable housing, public spaces, street improvements, and historic preservation. Today's zoning provides little in terms of mitigation and public benefits. New standards could get better results, especially in the core.
- 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 some commercial highrises could help bring employers to the area. Other than University jobs, employment in the U District has declined in recent decades. Many would like to expand the job base.
- Lowrise areas to the north, west, and east should be buffered from abrupt transitions by intermediate heights and/or densities.

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

All of that said, taller buildings are a source of concern for many. For some, the concerns are aesthetic: how will taller buildings affect views, shading, and the "feel" of the U District? Others are concerned about displacement: how will new development with taller buildings affect existing businesses and the relative affordability of the U District's housing stock?

In particular, many people expressed concerns about 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 keep the current zoning. (Note that current zoning on the Ave already allows buildings up to 65' when they choose to redevelop.)

Metro buses on the Ave. Photo credit: Sound Transit Blog.

In short, we've heard from those who think highrises in the core of the U District make sense, and from others who worry about the scale of change. The recommendations presented here are informed by both positions. We believe the recommended standards help strike a balance, allowing some office and residential highrise development while spacing out taller buildings and keeping them at an appropriate scale to address many of the impacts associated with greater height. The proposed housing and amenity requirements would mitigate the impacts of growth better than the existing zoning does. (See Section "4. Zoning Recommendations")

Figure 5. A City planner shares information about proposed zoning at the U District Streetfair (2016).

Guiding principles

In the Urban Design Framework process, participants identified guiding principles. We've heard similar themes throughout the outreach 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 streets and public spaces that creates inviting, memorable neighborhood spaces, and supports 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 by increasing natural surveillance (visibility) and lively streets.

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 by opening the west edge of campus to the U District and building on partnerships between UW and neighborhood groups.

10. Support and coordinate active transportation choices, improving bicycle and pedestrian infrastructure while continuing to support transit and cars.

Urban form

Conversations about zoning often focus on land use and height. However, the design standards that shape buildings can be just as important for fitting new buildings into the surrounding neighborhood. During the course of public outreach, people have expressed strong support for certain features of development and opposition to others. In dozens of meetings and conversations, people have repeated similar priorities:

Street level character. Participants in the planning process talked about the importance of achieving a human scale in buildings, especially at street level. They want attractive storefronts and active uses. They also want ground-level residential units to strike a balance by giving residents privacy without turning a blank wall to the public.

Variety. Almost all development underway in the U District has a similar scale and massing: wide, midrise buildings that are 65' or 75' tall. People worry that this is monotonous, eroding the neighborhood's eclectic character. They would like to see a broader mix of heights, widths, and finishes in new development. Many have expressed support for some highrise if it means other areas will stay lower.

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

Public space

There is a long-standing interest in providing more parks and open space in the U District. The neighborhood has long fallen short of the City's open space goals. While some argue that University campus provides an open space function for many in the neighborhood, others say that campus is not welcoming for people who don't study or work at UW.

As the neighborhood grows, that need for open space per household will increase. People cite both public and private open spaces as critical to livability in the growing U District.

Several new parks and park expansions are underway, including University Heights Park, the expansion of Christie Park, and Portage Bay Park. Even so, there is a lack of open space in the core of the neighborhood. Many neighbors want a plaza near the future light rail station and want to include

other small open spaces as part of redevelopment. UW and Sound Transit plan to develop a building above the light rail station, but the City is pursuing other opportunities for nearby open space.

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

Housing and human services

Since the beginning of our outreach process, it's been clear that housing mix is a key issue for the future of the U District. Recent development has focused heavily on the student residential market, with many projects appearing to target higher-end student housing.

At the same time, cost of living is increasing rapidly in Seattle as a whole. In the long term, this economic pressure affects who stays in Seattle and who leaves. These pressures have a disproportionate impact on people of color and service-sector workers.

U District stakeholders support housing at a range

Focus on the first 30 feet. The most important part of buildings is the portion where they meet the street. This area should have the most design attention and the best materials.

Midblock pedestrian access. Pathways could improve east/west connections through long blocks.

Preserving character buildings. Pursue zoning tools to encourage preserving special buildings. Older buildings lend to variety, character, and affordability.

Figure 6. Excerpt from the U District Urban Design Framework, 2013.

of affordability levels, from transitional housing for formerly homeless people to moderate income housing for workers who don't make enough to afford market-rate construction 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.

"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

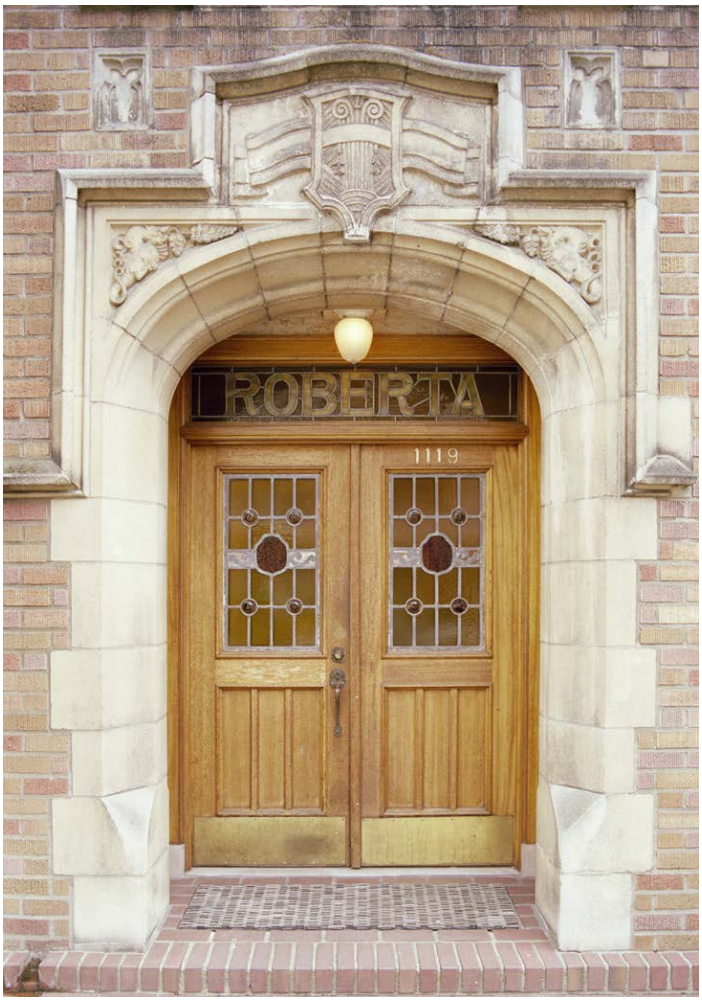
Key public meetings

Out of hundreds of public meetings, here are some highlights for the rezone process:

- 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: TBD

For a more detailed list, see Appendix A.

Kids at University Playfield



Roberta Apartments, University District

3. Analysis & policy development

Environmental Impact Statement process

When cities undertake rezones that may affect shading, traffic, or other aspects of the local environment, state law requires planners to conduct a Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) study. An EIS studies a range of options, identifies the likely impacts of each, and informs policy discussions.

For the U District, the Department of Planning and Development (now OPCD) conducted this process from late 2013 into early 2015. We channeled ideas from the Urban Design Framework and other community conversations into three possible zoning alternatives. Alternative 1 looked at a medium upzone spread out over a larger area. Alternative 2 studied a more focused upzone, confined to the core but with greater heights. Finally, Alternative 3 analyzed growth under current zoning.

We modeled the likely residential and job growth over 20 years for each alternative, then reported on the results in the Draft EIS (April 2014). After a public hearing and comment period, we conducted additional analysis and responded to comments in the Final EIS (January 2015).

Through the EIS we identified various deficiencies and/or impacts of future growth. Deficiencies are problems under any growth scenario, including the "no action" alternative. These include a general lack of elementary school space, falling short of the City's open space goals, constrained electrical capacity, and an ongoing challenges with cost of housing.

Impacts are problems caused or exacerbated by the proposed action, including 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 informed many of the development standards and mitigation programs recommended in this legislation.

After publication of the FEIS, two groups of U District stakeholders filed appeals, challenging the document's adequacy. They raised specific critiques and questions about the City's analysis, focusing on housing affordability and public open space. The Hearing Examiner ruled in favor of DPD (now OPCD), upholding our determination of adequacy for the EIS.

Finally, in spring of 2016 we issued an EIS Addendum covering analysis of Mandatory Housing Affordability requirements, which were not part of the original proposed action.

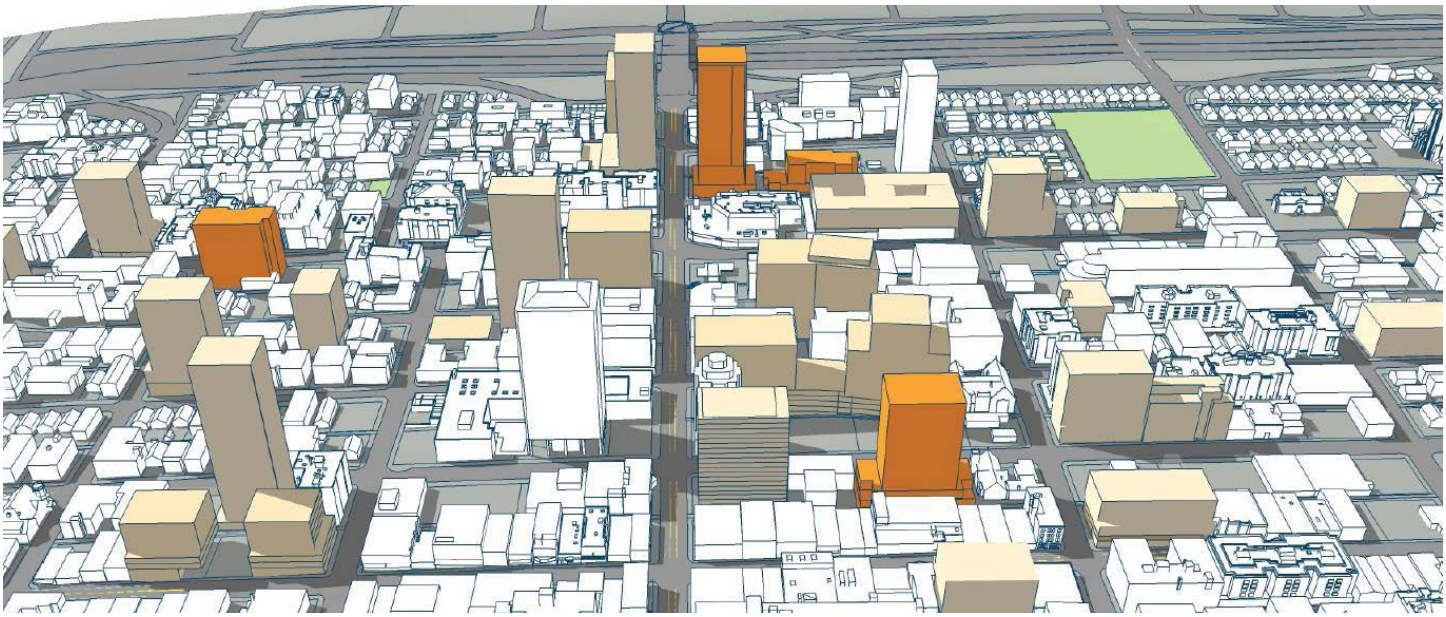


Figure 7. Rendering...
Source: U District Final EIS, 2015

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.

The rising cost of housing and risk of displacing current residents is of critical concern to people in the neighborhood. Citywide, Seattle faces a housing affordability crisis: over 45,000 households spend more than half their income on housing, and more than 2,900 people are sleeping on the streets. In the last five years, the citywide average rent for a one-bedroom apartment has gone up by 35% (Dupre & Scott). These increases are beyond the reach of many working families, driving people to relocate to lower-cost suburbs.

People in the U District worry about these trends, concerned that the residents who make up the neighborhood today will be pushed out. One of the key pieces of this proposal is implementation of Mandatory Housing Affordability requirements, to ensure that all future development in the neighborhood contributes to Seattle's stock of affordable housing. See Section 4 for details.

Housing cost in the U District

The U District has approximately 7,000 housing units, 90% of which are rentals (compared to a rental rate of about 50% citywide). Data from show that market-rate apartment rentals in the U District are somewhat more affordable than the average cost of housing in Seattle (see tables). On a per square foot basis, apartments in the U District are as expensive as in the rest of Seattle, but they tend to be smaller units, resulting in a lower rent per unit. The area is also much cheaper than the other urban centers like Capitol Hill and South Lake Union.

Cost burden is difficult to determine in the U District, due to the student population. Students tend to be lower income than the population as a whole, but they also are more likely to share an apartment to reduce the cost per person. That said, it is reasonable to assume that residents of the U District are at least as likely as the general population to be cost burdened (42% of renter households).

Apartment rental rates - U District

Unit Type	Unit type as share of rental Units	Avg. Square feet	Avg. Rent	Avg. Rent per Square Foot
Studio	28%	422 sq. ft.	$930/month	$2.19/sq. ft.
1 Bedroom	43%	629 sq. ft.	$1,063/month	$1.69/sq. ft.
2 Bdrm 1 Bath	18%	763 sq. ft.	$1,282/month	$1.68/sq. ft.
2 Bdrm 2 Bath	5%	974 sq. ft.	$1,696/month	$1.79/sq. ft.
3 Bdrm 2 Bath	2.5%	1,127 sq. ft.	$1,916/month	$1.64/sq. ft.

Apartment rental rates - Seattle as a whole

Unit Type	Unit type as share of rental Units	Avg. Square feet	Avg. Rent	Avg. Rent per Square Foot
Studio	22%	495 sq. ft.	$1,057/month	$2.14/sq. ft.
1 Bedroom	50%	714 sq. ft.	$1,279/month	$1.79/sq. ft.
2 Bdrm 1 Bath	13%	867 sq. ft.	$1,457/month	$1.68/sq. ft.
2 Bdrm 2 Bath	12%	1,060 sq. ft.	$1,898/month	$1.79/sq. ft.
3 Bdrm 2 Bath	1.5%	1,296 sq. ft.	$2,125/month	$1.64/sq. ft.

Data source Dupre + Scott Apartment Advisors, Apartment Vacancy Report, buildings with 20+ units, Fall, 2013. U District data cover a geographic area larger than the study area, reaching north to approximately 85th Ave NE and east to Lake Washington. Therefore, this should be considered a general comparison of the larger U District neighborhood to the city overall.

Impacts of redevelopment

As part of the Population & Housing element of the EIS, OPCD considered displacement due to redevelopment under different zoning scenarios. The EIS included the required housing analysis as well as optional socioeconomic analysis of housing affordability.

This work started by looking at development capacity in the neighborhood - given zoning, property values, and existing buildings, which sites are most likely to rebuild? Figure 8 shows one of these maps. This is not a forecast - we don't know which of these sites will actually redevelop in the next 20 years - but it does give a sense of where the greatest changes are likely.

According to King County Tax Assessor data, redevelopment of all these sites would result in demolition of approximately 275 existing units. But based on the amount of growth expected, we do not expect that much construction over the next 20 years.

To estimate the likely displacement by demolition over 20 years, the EIS made assumptions about which of these "redevelopable sites" were most likely

to turn over in each zoning scenario (Figures 9 and 10). Then, counting units from the King County Tax Assessor data, we estimated that 40-60 units would be demolished in the near term.

This sounds low compared to the projected 3,900-5,000 new units, but it makes more sense after looking closely at the likely development sites. They are predominantly parking lots, single-story commercial buildings, or single-family homes, all of which have a very low residential unit counts. That said, for those redevelopable lots that do have housing, the units lost are likely to be the most affordable market-rate homes in the neighborhood.

Altogether and looking at a longer time range, OPCD projects somewhere between 40 to 275 units may be demolished, depending on which sites actually redevelop.

Redevelopment is one obvious cause of displacement, but with or without rezones, other factors are putting intense pressure on housing cost. Citywide housing demand, UW growth, and arrival of light rail will all raise rents over the next 20 years.

These findings, together with a citywide discussion about housing policy, have led to the affordability requirements in this proposal (details in Section 4).

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 were no longer relevant or 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 terminology.
- Amending the Future Land Use Map to allow rezones in specific parts of the neighborhood, and to remove the low density residential area around University Playfield from the urban center.

Figure 8. This map shows likely development sites in the U District. Full redevelopment would eliminate about 275 existing units of housing; this would take longer than the 20-year planning horizon.

Figure 9. Alternative 3 from the EIS. This shows redevelopment under existing zoning - 3,900 units are spread out in the planning area, resulting in demolition of about 60 homes.

Figure 10. Alternative 2B from the EIS. This is the densest, most compact growth pattern - 5,000 new units would result in demolition of about 40 homes.

4. Zoning Recommendations

Snapshot: Key Issues

Building on the approach laid out in the Urban Design Framework and information learned through the EIS process, OPCD prepared draft recommendations for zoning and development standards in the U District. Our proposal would allow denser, mixed-use development in the core of the neighborhood, with transitions to the lower density surrounding areas (zoning map, p. 23).

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 C.

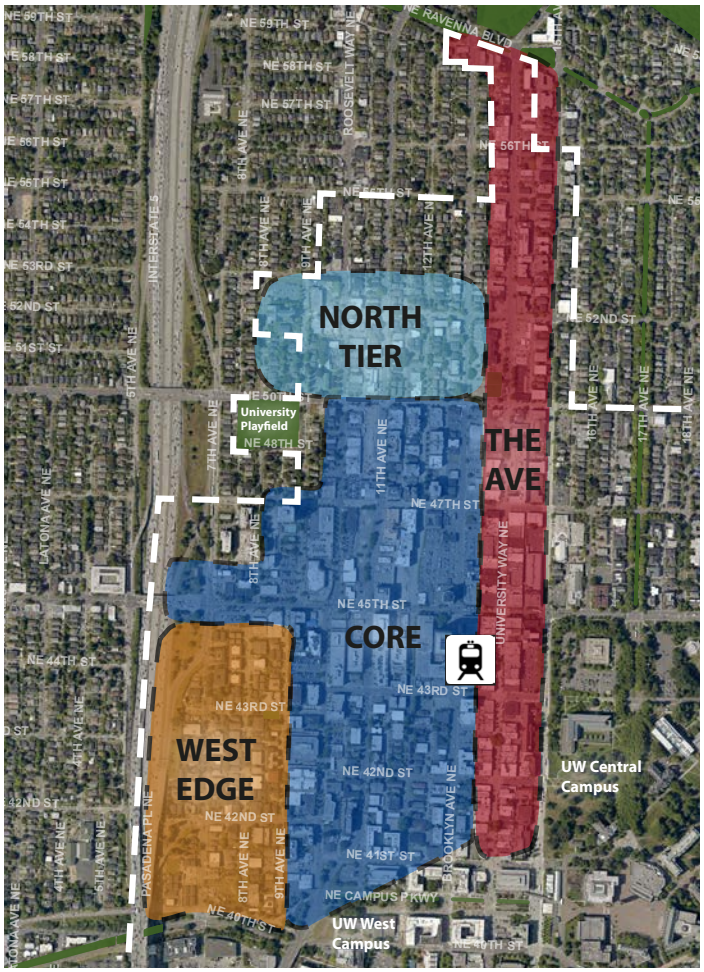


Figure 11. This report organizes discussion of zoning changes into four focus areas.

Focus Areas

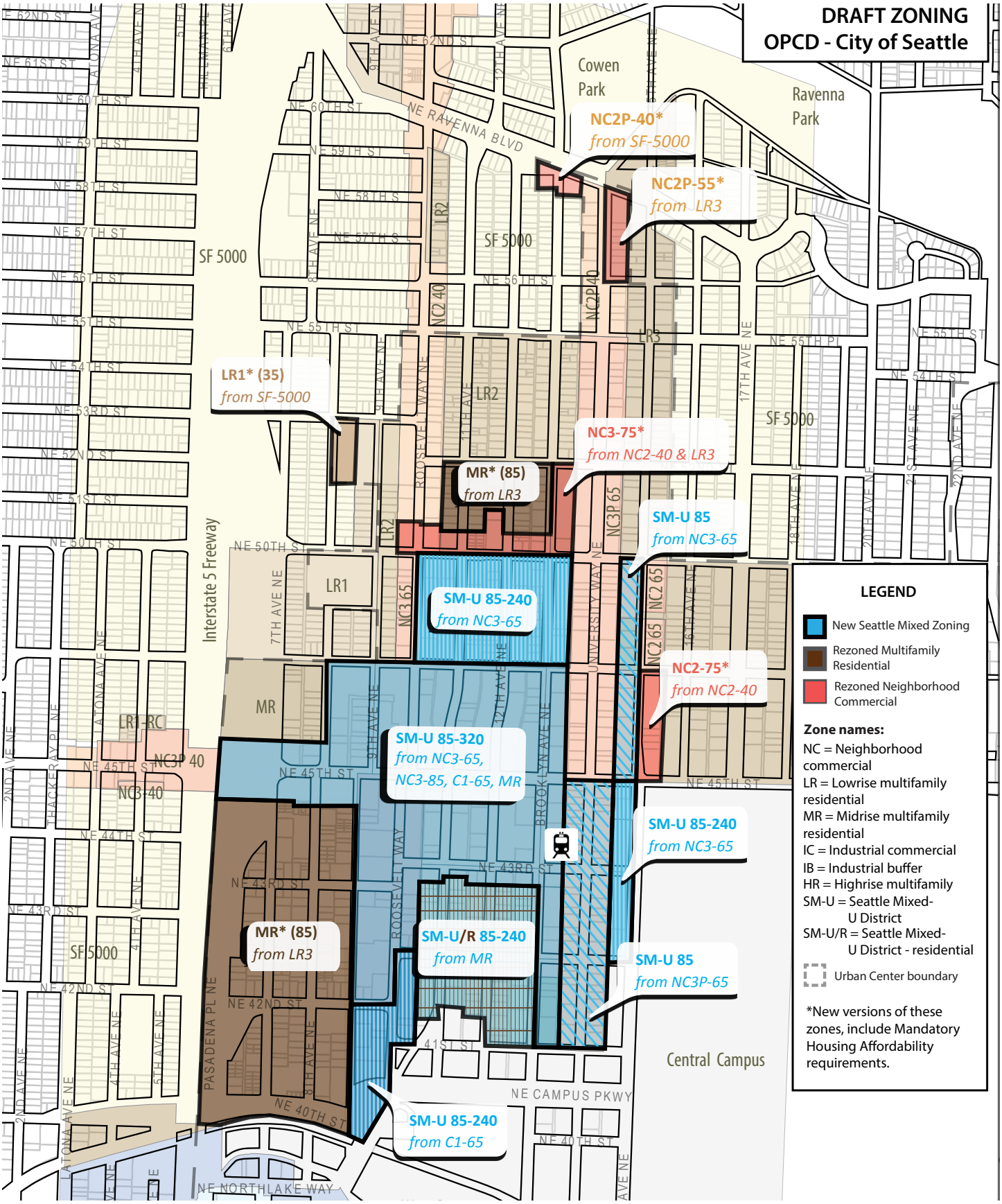
To help orient readers, details of the proposal are discussed in terms of four focus areas, shown in Figure 11.

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 east back side of those blocks (facing 15th Ave NE) would see greater increases in allowed height.

The North Tier is a transition area from the Core to the lower density residential areas to the north. More commercial uses would be allowed along NE 50th St, while an upzone from lowrise multifamily residential to midrise multifamily residential would allow larger apartment buildings on parcels south of 52nd.

The West Edge is a transition from the Core toward the freeway and Wallingford. Existing residential density and narrow rights-of-way would make office and other commercial uses challenging. An upzone to midrise multifamily residential would allow this enclave of student housing to grow further.


DRAFT ZONING
OPCD - City of Seattle
Cowen Park
Ravenna Park
NC2P-40*
from SF-5000
NC2P-55*
from LR3
LR1* (35)
from SF-5000
NC3-75*
from NC2-40 & LR3
MR* (85)
from LR3
SM-U 85
from NC3-65
SM-U 85-240
from NC3-65
NC2-75*
from NC2-40
SM-U 85-320
from NC3-65,
NC3-85, C1-65, MR
SM-U 85-240
from NC3-65
MR* (85)
from LR3
SM-U/R 85-240
from MR
SM-U 85
from NC3P-65
SM-U 85-240
from C1-65
Central Campus
Interstate 5 Freeway
NE RAVENNA BLVD
NE 45TH ST
NE 40TH ST
NE CAMPUS PKWY
NE NORTHLAKE WAY
LEGEND
New Seattle Mixed Zoning
Rezoned Multifamily Residential
Rezoned Neighborhood Commercial
Zone names:
NC = Neighborhood commercial
LR = Lowrise multifamily residential
MR = Midrise multifamily residential
IC = Industrial commercial
IB = Industrial buffer
HR = Highrise multifamily
SM-U = Seattle Mixed- U District
SM-U/R = Seattle Mixed- U District - residential
Urban Center boundary
*New versions of these zones, include Mandatory Housing Affordability requirements.

Summary: Key Issues in the U District Draft Zoning Proposal

Table 1. Summary of Key Issues

Issue	Recommendations
Housing: affordability and variety	New housing programs. Apply Mandatory Housing Affordability (MHA) requirements to all upzoned property, requiring new development to provide affordable housing or make in-lieu payments.
	Incentive for larger, "family-friendly" units. Encourage larger units with 2-3 bedrooms to provide family housing options with direct access to outdoor amenity area.
	Allow some highrise development. Highrise residential buildings tend to produce smaller, higher quality, and more expensive units that could appeal to retirees and professionals.
	Allow more midrise multifamily residential. Change two areas from Lowrise to Midrise Residential (MR). MR produces housing types from studio apartments to larger condos to congregate housing.
	Preservation of older buildings through Transfer of Development Rights (TDR). Options to earn extra floor area include preservation of older buildings. In many cases, these buildings have relatively affordable units (Appendix B).
Open space	Development bonuses for public space improvements. 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.
	Transfer of development rights. 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.
	Residential amenity area. New buildings with apartments or condos have to provide open space for residents.
	On-site open space. 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.
Single family residential	Very limited single-family rezones. All lots zoned for single-family residential would remain single family, except for three sites: Blessed Sacrament Church, Cowen Park Grocery, and an apartment building located on Ravenna Blvd.
Managing building bulk and shadows	Regulate bulk through Floor Area Ratio (FAR). FAR manages the bulk of development while allowing design flexibility.
	Variety of scales. The development standards are designed to encourage infill development, resulting in a mix of lowrise, midrise, and highrise development.
	Maximum width. Limit building width to 250', to prevent overly wide buildings on the U District's long north/south blocks.
	Floor size limits and tower separation. Limit the footprint (or "floor plate") of highrise buildings based on tower height, and highrises must be spaced a minimum 75' from one another.
	Setbacks in key locations. 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.

Table 1. Summary of Key Issues	
Issue	**Recommendations**
Historic preservation	Floor area exemption for preserving landmarks. Don't count designated landmarks against the total development allowed on a property.
	Transfer of development rights for landmarks and historic buildings. Allow property owners to move development potential from one site to another in order to protect designated landmarks and other historic brick buildings.
	Avoid major changes to height & density on the Ave. To preserve the general scale and character, do not allow highrise development on the lots abutting the Ave.
Jobs	Keep flexibility for a range of uses. Apply zoning that allows residential, retail, office, research, and a variety of other commercial uses.
	Allow larger commercial buildings. 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.
	Support Ave businesses. 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.
Childcare and social services	Floor area exemptions. Don't count childcare and social services toward the maximum amount of development that can occur on a lot.
	Incentive zoning. Any commercial development that takes advantage of new height/density must provide childcare space or pay in lieu.
Trees and landscaping	Seattle Green Factor. This requirement encourages tree preservation, rain gardens, green roofs, rooftop gardens, and other types of planting.
	Street tree requirements. SDOT will continue to require preservation of healthy street trees during construction and planting of new street trees.
	Stormwater Code. Regulations for flow control and water quality emphasize the use of green infrastructure to meet drainage requirements.

Affordable housing requirements

In all areas with increased height or density under this proposal, new affordable housing requirements would help address the challenges presented increasingly expensive housing.

In most parts of the U District, current zoning does not include affordable housing requirements or incentives. During public outreach, many advocated for adding affordability requirements as part of any U District rezone to make sure that future development contributes to long-term affordability. This idea gained momentum 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.

> Assuming growth of 5,000 new homes and 4,800 new jobs in the U District by 2035, MHA will produce between 439 and 745 units of affordable housing.

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 for developers to set aside rent- and income-restricted units or make in-lieu payments to a housing fund.

The HALA committee recommended Mandatory 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 (MHA-R) and a commercial program (MHA-C). Council is adopting each of these programs initially as frameworks in Chapter 23.58 of the Seattle Municipal Code, but they will not apply to new development until Council subsequently approves zoning changes that add development capacity.[3] In this process, the U District would be an early adopter.

3 *Council adopted the policy framework for MHA-C in 2015, and is reviewing the framework for MHA-R beginning in May 2016.*

Mandatory Housing Affordability in the U District

Mandatory Housing Affordability for Residential Development (MHA-R) will require, for the performance option, 5-8% of units to be affordable for a minimum term of up to 50 years, or payment-in-lieu. (Specific requirements are established in the MHA framework, Seattle Municipal Code Chapter 23.58C.)

The proposed payment rate is $7-12/sq. ft. of gross floor area in residential use. The Office of Housing will leverage the collected funds with other funding sources to fund housing developers who create affordable housing through new construction or acquisition/rehab.

Generally, units of affordable housing provided through MHA-R must be rent- and income-restricted for households with incomes 60% of area median income or less. Rental housing of 400 square feet or less must be rent and income restricted for households with incomes 40% of area median income or less, and units for housing ownership must be priced for and sold to households with incomes 80% of area median income or less.

Mandatory Housing Affordability for Commercial Development (MHA-C). Commercial development brings jobs with a range of wages and salaries to Seattle. To mitigate some portion of the additional need created for affordable housing as a result of

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

this development, commercial developers will be required to provide affordable housing through either a payment or performance option. These MHA-C requirements will apply to chargeable floor area in commercial use that totals more than 4,000 square feet.

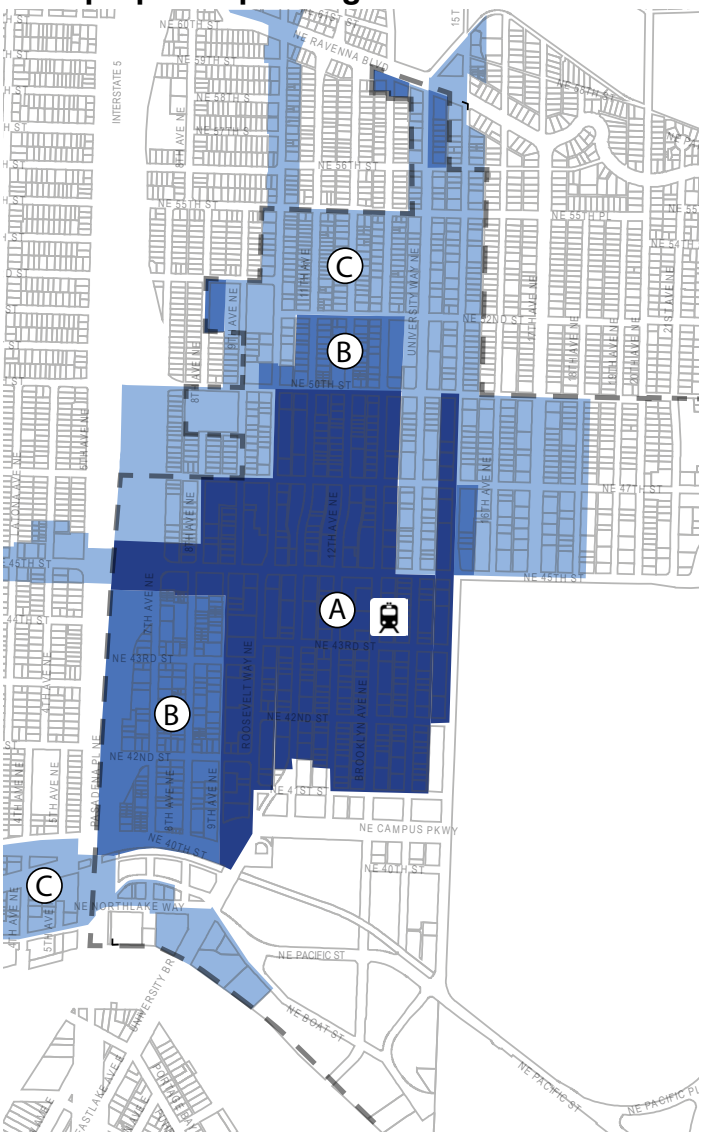
The payment amount will range between $7-$12 per square foot. The City will leverage those funds to create affordable housing as described in the MHA-R discussion above. MHA-C also includes a performance option, whereby commercial developers can produce housing onsite or offsite to meet the requirements. In the U District, this provision would require an amount of dedicated affordable housing equal to between 5% and 6.8% of chargeable floor area in commercial use.

MHA payments amounts and performance set-asides will help broaden the mix of affordability as development occurs. The HALA Advisory Committee recommended that the performance set-aside and payment-in-lieu amounts be tied to the upzones, market, and construction type. These conditions were taken into consideration in establishing proposed rates for the U-District. 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 439 and 745 units of affordable housing over the next 20 years.

Downtown and South Lake Union will likely be the first areas where the City will implement MHA. Following that, areas including the U District that were already in the middle of rezone discussions will likely move forward with MHA before other neighborhoods, implementing changes in 2016.

Elsewhere, there will be an extensive community engagement process in 2016-2017 to identify specific zoning changes to implement MHA citywide.

MHA proposed phasing



A) All Seattle Mixed – U District (SM-U) zones. MHA will be applied as part of this 2016 rezone proposal. This includes new development in SM-U 85, SM-U 240, SMU/R 240 and SM-U 320 zones.

B) All other commercial and multifamily residential rezones included in this proposal. MHA will be applied as part of this 2016 rezone in the areas that are changing to LR1, MR, and NC zones.

C) All other existing commercial and multifamily residential properties. MHA may be applied as part of zone-wide changes anticipated in mid-2017. MHA would be adopted with small zoning increases, allowing approximately one additional story in each zone in areas across the city to implement MHA.

This broader process will inform changes in some of the same zones as in the 2016 U District rezone (Neighborhood Commercial, MR, LR; shown as "Area B" on the MHA phasing diagram, opposite). If the 2017 HALA process results in different zoning standards than those applied through the 2016 U District rezone, we will revisit the U District zones to align them with the citywide approach.

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 - The current levy expires in 2016, and the Mayor and Council have put an expanded levy on the ballot for 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.

> "It is paramount that the private market has a role to play in providing affordable housing."
>
> -UDP Urban Design Working Group meeting notes, 2012

Housing variety

In addition to affordability, OPCD recognizes the desire in the U District for housing that serves a broad demographic spectrum. As discussed in Section 2, providing a variety of housing choices is a high priority for the neighborhood. 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 often works for families but can also be subdivided to provide relatively low-cost housing for students.
- Rezone some areas to midrise residential (MR). Midrise zoning is proposed for two areas that are currently zoned LR3. MR zoning allows spacious, high-quality apartment construction (often with larger unit sizes) suitable for professionals and families. Buildings with larger units would more likely be provided in the MR area north of NE 50th St. It also allows congregate housing, with shared living space - this is likely to be used for student housing in the area west of Roosevelt and south of NE 45th St.
- Requiring childcare in certain developments (see below). Incentive zoning for some nonresidential development must provide or contribute to childcare – this would help make the neighborhood more attractive to families.

A photo from UW Tower, looking east toward campus and Lake Washington.

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 most substantial 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. It is where most redevelopment is occurring already, and it contains the neighborhood's most likely future redevelopment sites.

Further, several analyses identify the Core as appropriate for highrise development[1]. Due to the existing highrise buildings (including the 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 generally 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 also 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.

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 a high degree of flexibility for residential, retail, services, office, biomedical research, schools, research and development, parking structures meeting specific requirements, and light 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 the same non-residential uses as the other SM-U zones, but only in a small fraction of

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

Table 2. Use standards for Seattle Mixed-U District (23.48.005, 23.48.605)

Allowed uses include:	Prohibited uses include:	Conditional uses:
• Multifamily residential • Retail and services • General office • Schools • Tech R&D • Biomedical research • Arts and culture facilities • Parking structures	• All high impact uses • Park-and-ride lots • Drive-in businesses • Solid waste management • Heliports • Animal shelters • Jails	• Mini-warehouses

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

each development. Of the allowed square footage, only about 1/20th could be non-residential. In other words, the buildings could include 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 in determining the bulk and scale of future buildings.

Floor Area Ratio, or FAR, establishes how much development is allowed on any given lot, in relation to lot area – with an FAR limit of 4 on a 1,000 square foot lot, a developer could build up to 4,000 square feet of floor area. Those 4,000 square feet could be arranged in many 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, are intended to achieve a greater variety of building types. In other words, there are many ways to achieve the allowed FAR.

The "base" FAR is allowed outright for development projects in these zones. To exceed the base, an applicant must participate in the incentive zoning program, which allows additional development (up to the maximum FAR) only if the project provides specific 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 3). The standards are designed to accommodate two basic highrise types. Larger footprint office buildings are allowed up to a maximum height of 160', and relatively slender residential buildings are allowed up to 240' or 320' (depending on the zone). Many different use combinations and forms are possible.

FAR exemptions (23.48.620). To encourage certain uses, SM-U would 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

Table 3. 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*	12*
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*

- 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 generally support a mix of building size and age.

Developers may move development capacity from a "sending site" to a "receiving site," building a 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 provision; the floor area is only allowed to be moved between lots, and development on all lots would still be subject to the applicable height limits and other development standards. This can help achieve a more desirable massing for buildings and open spaces.

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.

> "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*

Table 4. Transfers of development right and combined lot standards

Developments 85' or less in height
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 within the SM-U zones
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.

U District highrises at night. RNAPhotos via Flickr.

How tall can buildings be?

Maximum heights are as shown on the proposed zoning map on page 17. In the core, they range from 240' to 320', with the highest heights flanking NE 45th St., 240' to the north and south, and lower heights 35'-85' stepping out into the neighborhoods. There are advantages to allowing the greatest height in the area shown:

- The area contains the largest redevelopment sites (surface parking lots, large single-story commercial lots).
- The area already contains three large highrises, so the presence of additional towers will be less abrupt.
- Concentrating development here will provide more homes and jobs in the area most directly served by light rail.

While some developments will be able to achieve these heights, many will not. Because of Floor Area Ratio limits, many projects will run out of floor area before they reach the maximum height. Also, the development standards described in the next section will make highrise infeasible in some cases.

Office and highrise residential building examples in Seattle Mixed (SM) 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).

630 Boren Ave N

16-story residential building with ~258 units and 7,723 sq ft ground level commercial.

Height: 160'

Lot Area: 34,522 sq ft

Building area: 276,370 sq ft

FAR: 8 FAR

Based on FAR, this exceeds the bulk that would be allowed for an office building in SM-U, but it's less than what would be allowed for residential.

Office and highrise residential building examples similar to U District proposal.

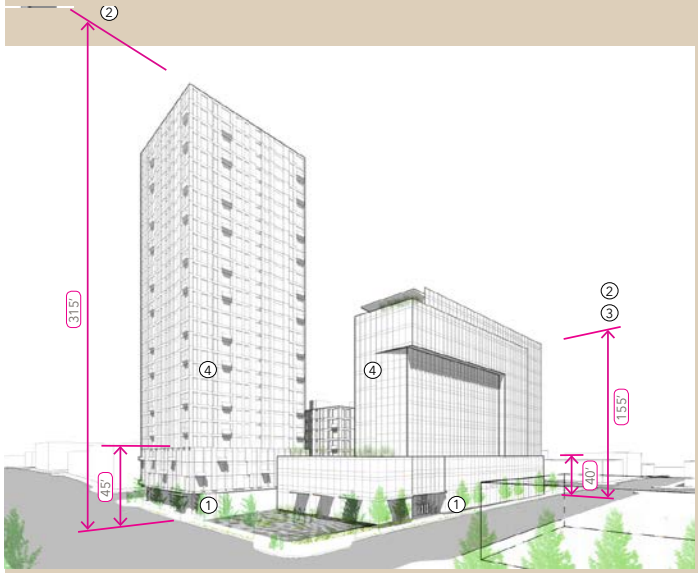
909 5th Ave
23-story condo tower over a drugstore, office, and parking structure

Height: 240'

Lot area: ~24,000 sq ft

Building area: ~225,000 sq ft

FAR: 9.5



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

Limits on highrise[2] buildings (23.48.625, 23.48.645)

While the height limit is increased throughout the core, it does not mean that every property can be developed as a highrise. Development 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. 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, as follows:

Table 5. 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'

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

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

Figure 12. 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.

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.

Incentive zoning

Along with housing, neighborhood amenities to support growth are a key priority. In particular there is support for 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 mid and high density parts of Seattle. Under the current incentive zoning program (SMC 23.58A), a developer is allowed to exceed the base floor area limit and/or height 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 addressed both housing and non-housing amenities. Going forward, the City intends for affordable housing to be automatically met through compliance with MHA (see previous discussion), but non-housing incentive zoning requirements (e.g., childcare, open space, 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 of the new SM-U zones. The following requirements would apply for any project seeking extra floor area:

- LEED Gold certification
- Transportation demand management plan
- Compliance with MHA for all square footage

After these prerequisites 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 6 and 7.

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 area through fee-in-lieu if contributions can be used toward a public park or privately developed open space.
- Green street setbacks. Open space or landscaping abutting a designated green street (in the case of the U District, this means Brooklyn, NE 43rd St, and NE 42nd St.)
- Green street right-of-way improvements. New sidewalks, landscaping, bike facilities, or other features identified in a streetscape concept plan.
- 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.

Table 6. 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 7. 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

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. 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 produce a monotonous effect.

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 also allows larger, efficient floor configurations that work for a variety of housing and employment uses.

Churches, schools, community centers, and buildings over the light rail station would be exempt

Figure 13. 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'.

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 corridor (23.48.640). Midblock corridors can play two important roles in U District development. First, they would allow more options 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 abut 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 some of the "bonus" 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 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.

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)

Table 8. 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

Setbacks (*23.48.640; 23.48.645).* Setback requirements are used in zoning to achieve a variety of outcomes. In some cases the setbacks are intended 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, traditional urban form features 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, and could decrease the variety from one building to the next.

Based on neighborhood priorities, OPCD recommends the setbacks listed in Table 8.

Street level requirements (23.48.040; 23.48.640). Design quality and the mix of uses at the street level play a critical role in defining neighborhood character. They also 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 fence, a blank facade, or a long swath of parking.

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

- 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 many 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 calculatons must allow access from the sidewalk – it cannot be accessed through internal circulation only.

Figure 14. Neighborhood green streets (Brooklyn, 43rd, and 42nd), Class 1 pedestrian streets, and locations of street level use requirements.

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.
- If the first story of housing is at least 4' above sidewalk level, it must be set back an average of 5' (with no minimum).

Beyond these standard requirements, additional requirements apply in some high volume streets connected to the Ave business district (see Figure 14).

- 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.

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 previous

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 getting open space amenities for the neighborhood.

The proposal includes open space considerations in two general categories: open spaces that are encouraged through the use of incentives, and open spaces that are required for new development.

The first category, optional but encouraged open space, includes 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.

The second category of open space is required for all projects meeting certain specifications:

- 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.

Landscaping (23.48.055.A.2). 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 2007 and multifamily residential zones since 2011.

> "...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

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.

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.

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

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

(Matt Hoehnen)

Seattle Mixed U District (SM-U)

23.48.602 Scope of provisions for SM-U zones

23.48.605 Uses in SM-U zones

23.48.620 Floor area ratio in SM-U zones

23.48.621 Extra floor area in SM-U zones

23.48.622 Transferable of Development Rights (TDR) and Transferable of Development Potential (TDP)

23.48.623 Mandatory housing affordability (MHA) program in SM-U zones

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

23.48.635 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

23.48.648 Setbacks in the SM/R-U 240 zone

23.48.650 Required open space for large lot developments in SM-U zones

23.48.680 Required parking in SM-U zones

23.48.685 Parking location in SM-U zones

23.48.690 Development agreements in SM-U zones

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, with 85' south of 45th St and 65' to the north. Zoning would continue to allow a mix of commercial and residential uses. To see the specific zone boundaries, see the draft rezone 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
- Rail transit facilities

> "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

South of 45th 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 would be similar to what is currently allowed.

Cowen Park Grocery, at the north end of Brooklyn. As requested by Roosevelt Neighbors Alliance members, this rezone would allow two stories of residential development above the store/cafe.

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, three half blocks would see moderate increases from NC3-65 to SM-U 85 and from NC2-40' to NC2-75'.

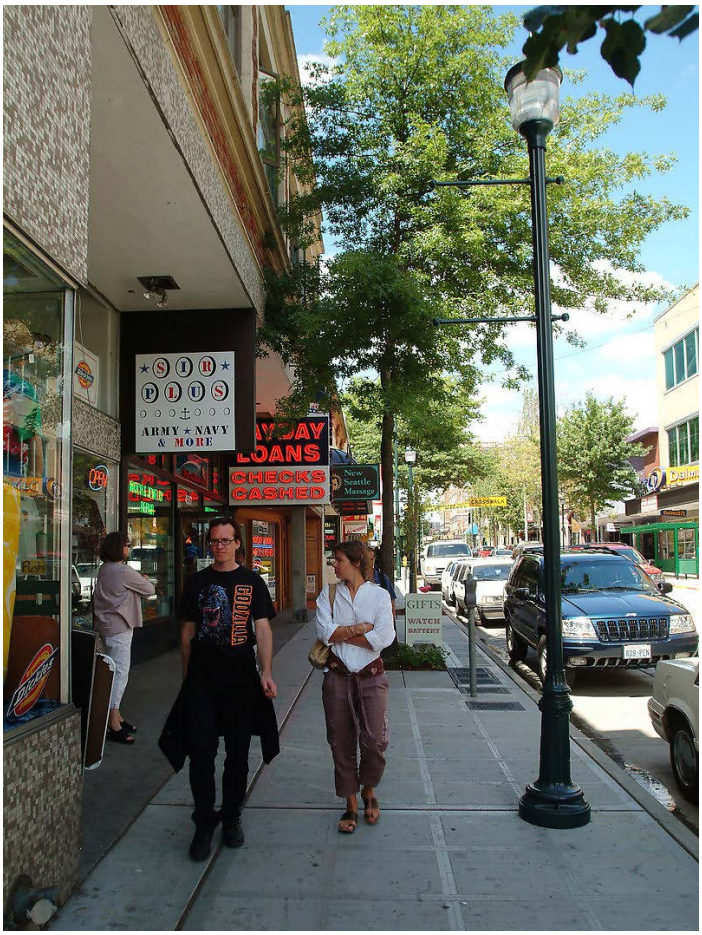
Throughout this area, we recommend removing the existing "Station Area Overlay District." This overlay was established to provide additional capacity and flexibility under existing zoning, but the proposed rezone further increases the overall capacity in the area, making the overlay redundant and confusing (Figure 15).

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 in the previous "Core" section). Parcels that retain their current zoning for now will likely have MHA requirements added in 2017 when the City applies zone-wide changes. They may also add approximately one story of allowed development.

Figure 15. The existing Station Area Overlay. This designation adds capacity under current zoning, but is made largely 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 (NC3-65-MHA). 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.

Just to the north, the proposal would upzone some LR3 properties to Midrise Multifamily Residential zoning (MR-MHA). The new zoning would allow additional residential density on those properties, with setbacks and landscape requirements consistent with the neighborhood's desired approach. (See Table 9.)

> "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

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-MHA would make the whole property consistent, facilitating long-term improvements including a new level of underground parking and accessibility upgrades.

Table 9. 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	4.25
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

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.

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.

Building examples in Neighborhood Commercial (NC) 65', 85' zones:

120 Harvard Avenue E (3013471)

7-story building with 38 residential units. Parking for 48 vehicles below grade.

Height: 70' Lot area: 9,600 sq ft

Building area: 38,373 sq ft FAR: 4 FAR

419 NE 71st Street [description]

6-story structure with 130 residential units above 14,609 sq ft retail. Parking for 106 vehicles below grade.

Height: 65' Lot area: 25,094 sq ft

Building area: 113,223 sq ft FAR: 4.5 FAR

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 the North Tier discussion for a more detailed comparison of LR3 and MR zoning (page 38).

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

5. Implementation Partnerships

This legislative proposal is one piece of a larger effort. Since the beginning of the current planning process in 2011, discussions about land use and urban design have been linked with other important work in the neighborhood, including community projects, new public investments, private development, and UW's long range planning and growth. We've worked with neighborhood groups, businesses, social service providers, other City departments, and the University of Washington.

Coordinated transportation options, a thoughtful open space strategy, social services, and amenities that appeal to all kinds of residents are important to people in the U District. The zoning recommendations in this report can help with these issues, but ultimately they will depend on a sustained, long-term commitment from many.

This section of the report highlights key groups and their work – these have all informed the zoning recommendations.

OPCD urban design initiatives

In addition to the zoning changes recommended in this legislation, OPCD has worked and is working on related policy efforts:

Green street plans. The 1998 Neighborhood Plan designated Brooklyn, 42nd, and 43rd as "neighborhood green streets," recognizing that these streets provide particularly important pedestrian connections through the neighborhood. In 2013-2014, we worked with the neighborhood to develop detailed concept plans for these streets. Now adopted, these plans will help coordinate street and landscape improvements in coming years. This design work informed Sound Transit's final design for the street improvements at the U District light rail station. ADD GRAPHICS

Neighborhood design guidelines. Neighborhood design guidelines provide qualitative guidance for development during the permitting process. They supplement zoning standards, allowing local design review boards and communities to get involved in reviewing and shaping projects. OPCD is working on an update the U District's design guidelines to make them more relevant to the different type of development envisioned for the area under the new zoning.

SDOT transportation improvements

12th Ave Greenway. Greenways provide safe, all-ages routes for walking and biking through neighborhoods. Seattle Department of Transportation (SDOT) conducted community outreach and made improvements to 12th Ave NE in 2014. Changes included installing stop signs and signals at several busy intersections. At the south end of the greenway, a new UW development is opening a new connection from 12th to the Burke-Gilman trail.

New bike lanes. Hundreds of daily trips in the U District occur on bike. SDOT is working to make those commutes safer and easier, by installing dedicated bike lanes on Roosevelt, NE Campus Parkway, and NE 40th St. Portions of Brooklyn have a dedicated bike lane, and it will develop over time as a multi-block, two-way cycle track.

Coordination for improved bus service. SDOT, Metro, Sound Transit, and OPCD are in frequent communication about bus route planning for the U District. All agencies continue an ongoing conversation about rerouting buses in 2021 for better connections between bus and light rail. SDOT and Metro are working on changes to the NE 45th St. corridor to improve bus travel times and reliability.

Seattle Parks and Recreation investments and planning

New parks. Funded by the previous levy and the new Parks District, Seattle Parks has several current projects to provide new and expanded parks in the neighborhood. Construction has started on a new park at the University Heights Community Center – this was a top priority of the neighborhood's 2006 parks plan. Christie Park, a residential pocket park south of 45th, will be redesigned and double in size. Parks and UW are collaborating to build a large new waterfront park on Portage Bay, funded by mitigation money from the SR 520 expansion.

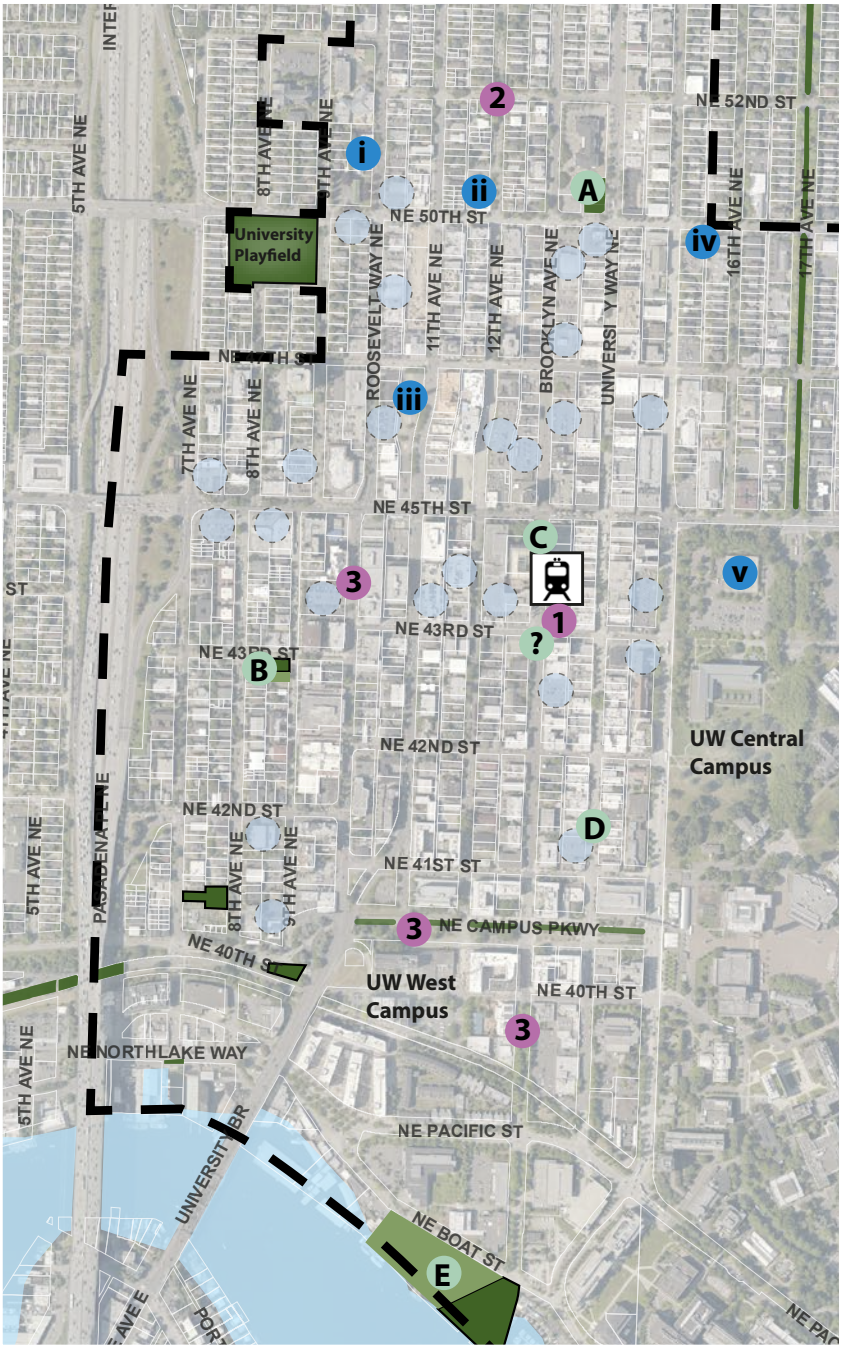


Figure 16. U District Urban Center Investments and Opportunities

U District Urban Center
Investments and opportunities

Transportation investments
1 Link light rail (Sound Transit, 2021)
Potential bus stop (Metro)
2 12th Ave Greenway bike and ped safety (SDOT)
3 Protected bike lanes (SDOT)

Open space improvements
A University Heights Community Center Park
B Christie Park expansion
C Brooklyn Festival Street (Sound Transit, DPD, SDOT, Neighborhood Farmer's Market Alliance)
D Parklet (U District Advocates)
E Portage Bay Park
? Central open space - TBD

Key development projects
i Transitional housing, food bank (LIHI, OH)
ii University YMCA, transitional housing (YMCA)
iii Bridges @ 11th multifamily housing (Security Properties, UW, Children's Hospital)
iv Bellwether housing development
v Burke Museum rebuild (UW)

Other major changes
- New zoning, affordable housing requirements, design guidelines (DPD)
- New community organization and BIA (U District Partnership)

Large potential redevelopment sites

Parks Plan update. OPCD and Parks have worked closely with neighborhood groups through the U District Partnership to update the neighborhood's Parks Plan. Much of this process focused on community interest in a centrally located plaza, leading to incentives in this zoning proposal. Through extensive public engagement, we've narrowed the focus onto several possible sites for a central plaza. We have also identified a strong need for programming and maintenance if this space is to be successful. Parks and OPCD are now talking to property owners about how to move forward.

Affordable Housing

YMCA Transitional Housing. The YMCA is raising money to build a new, larger facility at their current site. The development would include 15-20 units of transitional housing for formerly homeless youth. This redevelopment depends on OPCD's recommended zoning changes along NE 50th St. The Y is buying parcels from the Low Income Housing Institute (LIHI) to allow the expansion – LIHI in turn will use this money to create new affordable housing.

Office of Housing partnerships. The Office of Housing has funded two new buildings in the U District:

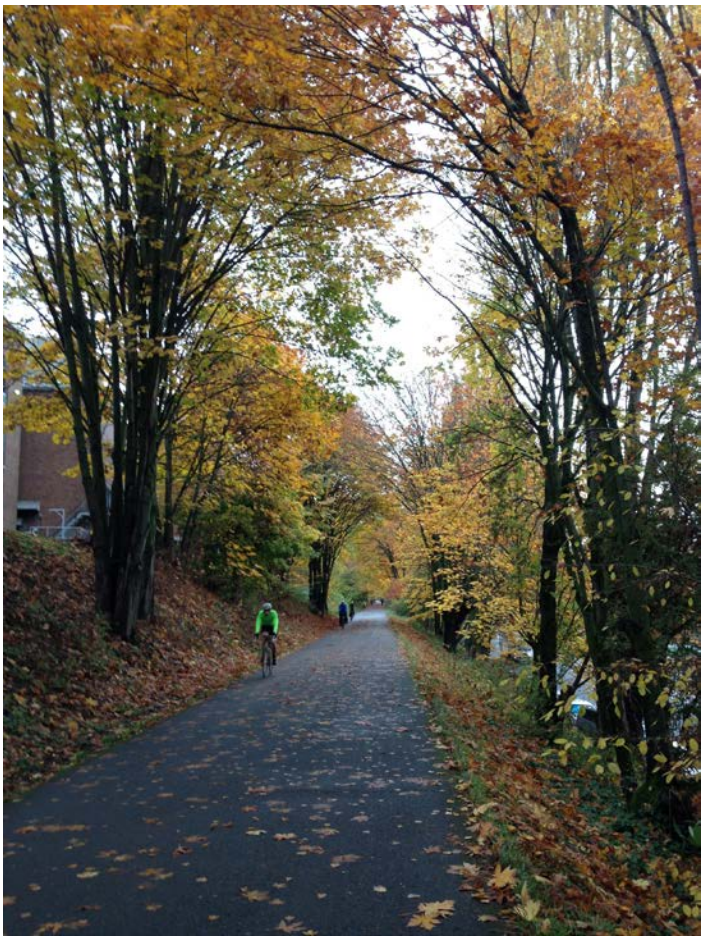
- LIHI's "University Commons" (on Roosevelt), with 48 housing units for extremely low income and recently homeless residents, including 20 units for homeless young adults.
- Bellwether Housing's "Arbora Court" (on 15th Ave NE) with 133 units at a variety of sizes and affordability levels, including transitional housing for homeless families.

Both projects were funded in part with money from incentive zoning in downtown and South Lake Union.

U District Partnership

This organization emerged from the City's community planning work. It is a coalition of neighborhood groups working together on efforts including:

"Clean and safe" initiatives. Neighborhood volunteers are working with law enforcement officials to encourage more frequent, targeted actions against drug dealers in the neighborhood. They've also started a process to bring public restrooms to the U District, and they've hired local homeless youth to clean sidewalks and remove graffiti.



Business district improvements. Local business owners are working together to recruit new businesses to the U District. In particular, they are working market the U District to help attract new employers.

Community events. The U District Partnership coordinates several major annual events, including Streetfair, the fall festival, and various recent alley activation events.

Expanded Business Improvement Area. The U District Partnership administers a new, expanded business improvement area (BIA), which helps fund the above programs and other efforts.

Sound Transit

Light rail station. The U District station, situated behind the Neptune Theater on Brooklyn Ave NE, will open in 2021. The facility is currently under construction, and Sound Transit is working with UW to prepare the site for construction above the station.

Brooklyn Ave Festival Street. Consistent with community input and OPCD's concept design, Sound Transit is designing Brooklyn abutting the U District station to be a curbless "festival street." This street will include a wide sidewalk, generous landscaping, a dedicated bike lane, and will be conducive to holding community events.

Neighborhood Farmer's Market Alliance

The U District Farmers market will keep its main location on the Ave for Saturday mornings. They also plan to open a weekday farmer's market next to the light rail station in 2021. OPCD worked with the farmer's market, Sound Transit, and SDOT to design the festival street to support the farmer's market.

University of Washington

Bridges at 11th Housing. UW recently completed this multifamily housing development. It is a well-designed building that includes options for faculty/staff from UW and Children's Hospital, income-restricted housing at a variety of affordability levels, and larger "family-size" units.

Burke Museum redevelopment. The new Burke Museum will face onto 15th Ave NE, helping to break down the hard edge between Central Campus and the U District. It will provide public open space and a welcoming entrance.

Campus master plan. UW is beginning the planning process for updating their campus master plan. This project will anticipate future decades of growth, especially in the west campus area. As part of this planning process, they will look at growth on campus in the context of growth in the district under OPCD's current proposal.

YMCA

The University Family YMCA is a hub of neighborhood activity. The YMCA has outgrown its current facility. After considering a number of different locations in and out of the neighborhood, the YMCA has decided to redevelop in their current location. They've requested mixed use zoning and increased height to make this possible. These changes are included in the current proposal.

Note...farmers market NFMA.jpg

Neighborhood groups

OPCD has maintained ongoing dialogue with many separate neighborhood resident groups as part of this process. Representatives from these groups participate in the U District Partnership, and OPCD has met frequently with the individual groups as well. Each group includes supporters and opponents of zoning changes, but both sides have influenced OPCD's recommendations. These groups include:

- University Park Community Club
- City/University Community Advisory Committee (CUCAC)
- Roosevelt Neighbors Alliance
- Various condo associations

Private development

OPCD continues to monitor development in the neighborhood, tracking permitting trends, and speaking to developers. To the extent possible, we keep neighborhood groups informed about big projects underway, and we translate priorities from community processes back to the development community. Some developers have been involved in the community events, while others have not – it helps everybody's objectives if developers have an early and accurate awareness of neighbor concerns.

U District Coordinated Planning/Improvements Timeline

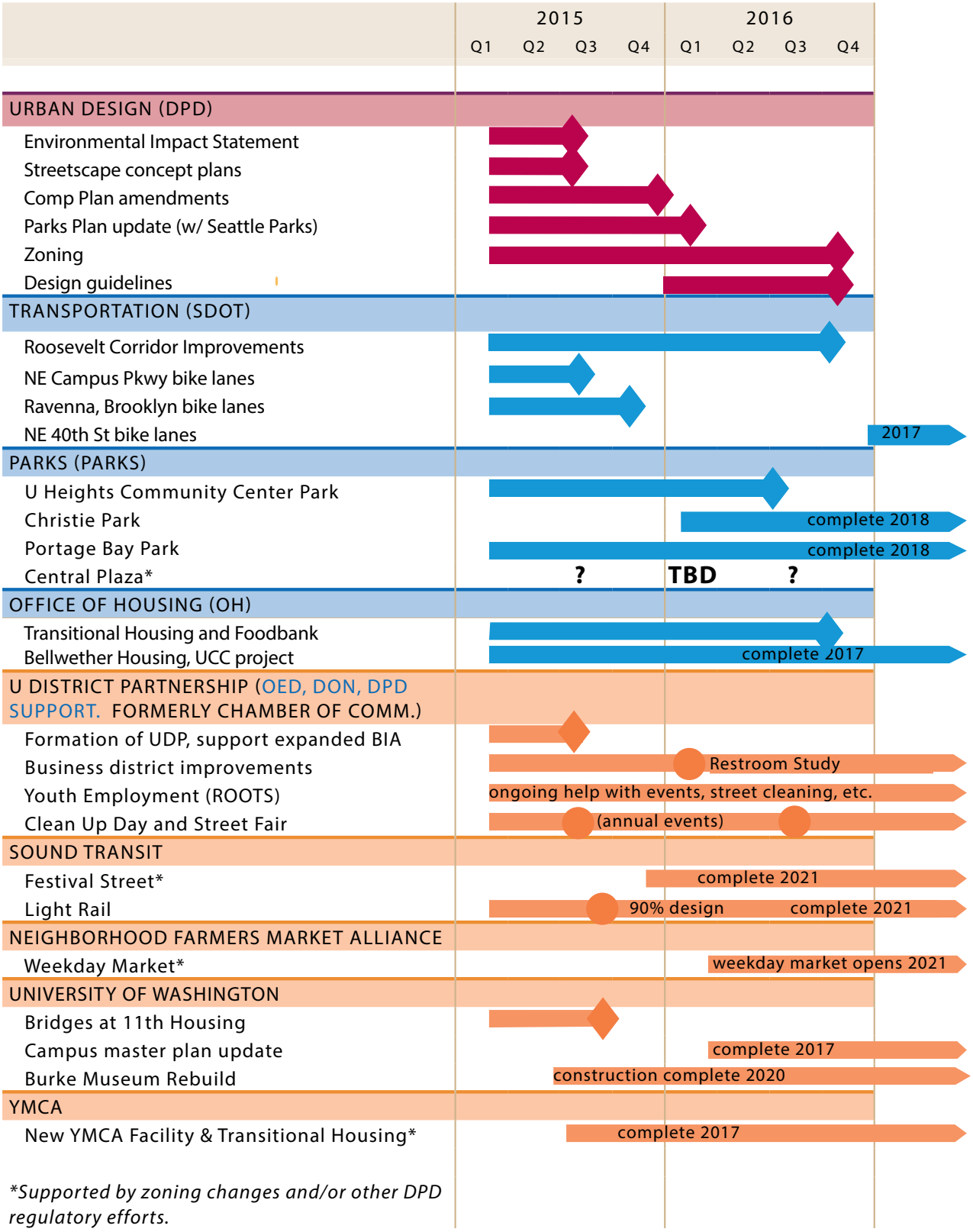


Figure 17. U District Coordinated Planning/Improvements Timeline

6. Departmental Recommendation

People in the U District view the arrival of light rail and growth with a mixture of excitement and concern. Many see the changes as a way to return the neighborhood to greatness - drawing 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 four years of community involvement. It combines neighbors' personal preferences with technical analysis about what can realistically happen at key development sites.

The proposal allows substantially greater density in the neighborhood's core, but to mitigate the impacts of growth it includes:

- 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, as well as preservation of 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.

Appendix A Summary of Public Meetings

The following is a partial list of meetings between planners from OPCD (formerly DPD) and groups in the U District. It does not include hundreds of public meetings with the U District Partnership board and working groups, individual stakeholders, City staff, and UW.

10-Oct-11	UW undergraduate students
4-Nov-11	University stakeholders to discuss upcoming OED grant and opportunities for community planning
17-Jan-12	Youth Social Service Providers
27-Jan-12	UW Transportation
6-Feb-12	U District Town Hall/ Mayor's Forum
15-Feb-12	UW Book Store
16-Feb-12	University Park Community Club
28-Feb-12	"Only in Seattle" Press Event
28-Feb-12	Seattle Police Department North Precinct
13-Mar-12	Roosevelt Neighbor's Alliance
15-Mar-12	University Greenways
1-May-12	Sound Transit Open House
14-May-12	Conversation on Homelessness
15-May-12	Youth Social Services Providers
21-Jun-12	U District Farmer's Market
3-Jul-12	Ron Moe-Lobeda, University Lutheran
9-Jul-12	Seattle Police Department North Precinct
12-Jul-12	Northeast District Council
13-Jul-12	Public Safety working group, SPD, DON and community members
26-Jul-12	Historic Preservation advocates
8-Aug-12	University District Community Council
10-Aug-12	Public Safety working group meeting and walking tour
11-Sep-12	Chris Curtis, U District Farmers Market
24-Sep-12	UW Landscape Architecture studio
9-Oct-12	Community Conversation happy hour at Lucid Lounge
9-Oct-12	Meeting with service providers and student team in advance of outreach to homeless youth and young adults
11-Oct-12	Walk and Talk sponsored by Feet First
11-Oct-12	Roosevelt Neighborhood Association
23-Oct-12	University Park Community Club
25-Oct-12	Community Conversation, community-wide event
25-Oct-12	U District Square
30-Oct-12	Reception with UW President Young for community members active in planning
9-Nov-12	Meeting with residents from the northern planning area
13-Nov-12	Roosevelt Neighbors Alliance
14-Nov-12	University Greenways
6-Dec-12	Community Conversation, community-wide event
13-Dec-12	Meeting with Ave business owners
28-Feb-13	Seattle Planning Commission
12-Mar-13	Roosevelt Neighbor's Alliance
29-Mar-13	Urban Design Framework "Drop in office hours" at Café Allegro
2-Apr-13	UDF Open House, U Heights CC
4-Apr-13	Urban Design Framework "Drop in office hours" at Café Allegro
4-Apr-13	UDF presentation and discussion at Northeast District Council
5-Apr-13	Urban Design Framework "Drop in office hours" at Café Allegro
18-Apr-13	Presentation to University Plaza Condos
4-May-13	Mayor's Office walking tour and open house
14-May-13	CUCAC (City/University Citizens Advisory Committee), U District Square discussion of public space
16-May-13	U District Parking Associates
20-May-13	Concerned RNA neighbors (U Heights Community Center, evening meeting)
12-Aug-13	Phil Thiel & U District Square
21-Aug-13	Neighborhood Farmer's Market Alliance
24-Sep-13	U District EIS scoping meeting
25-Sep-13	U District Parking Associates
26-Sep-13	Planning Commission housing and neighborhoods committee
3-Oct-13	Open Space Planning Forum

31-Oct-13	Open Space Planning Forum (U District Partnership "spin-off")
12-Nov-13	Roosevelt Neighbors' Alliance
13-Nov-13	National League of Cities
15-Nov-13	Historic preservation advocates
20-Nov-13	Greenways neighborhood meeting (SDOT led, DPD supporting)
13-Jan-14	Open Space Planning Forum
31-Jan-14	Roosevelt Neighbors Alliance concerned members
11-Mar-14	RNA – update on EIS process
16-Apr-14	Green streets public open house (U Heights)
30-Apr-14	RNA and Blessed Sacrament – Urban Center boundary discussion
13-May-14	CUCAC re: DEIS
20-May-14	Draft EIS Public Hearing
24-Jul-14	Canterbury Court residents
16-Oct-14	ASUW – Student union reps, on housing and zoning issues
11-Nov-14	Roosevelt Neighbors Alliance – Comp Plan amendments, EIS
13-Jan-15	CUCAC re: Comp Plan amendments
29-Jan-15	Student American Planning Association – overview of City projects, discussion
8-Jun-15	YMCA representatives
19-Aug-15	YMCA, Low Income Housing Institute
25-Nov-15	ROOTS and UDP (Youth Employment)
25-Nov-15	U District Square
9-Dec-15	YMCA
7-Jan-16	Northeast District Council
22-Jan-16	University Temple Methodist
14-Mar-16	ROOTS, Human Services Department, U District Partnership, UW, re: homeless youth employment
11-May-16	U District Community Council
16-May-16	Seattle Displacement Coalition, Roosevelt Neighbors Alliance, others, for a housing and displacement forum
17-May-16	Ravenna Bryant Community Association
21-May-16	U District Street Fair
22-May-16	U District Street Fair
31-May-16	Draft zoning open house

Drumheller Fountain and Mount Rainier Vista, University of Washington campus. Photo credit: ***The Seattle Times***.

Appendix B Buildings eligible for TDR

Under the rezone proposal, developers that want to build above the base floor area must participate in the "incentive zoning" program. These requirements allow various options for a project to gain additional floor area, including providing open spaces or preserving historic buildings.

This appendix lists the buildings that would be eligible for "transfer of development rights" (TDR) under this proposal. Owners of these buildings could sell development rights from their property to another property that wants to build bigger. This mechanism helps raise money for rehabilitating older structures, which have historic character and are often relatively affordable.

Two categories of buildings are eligible:

- **Designated historic landmarks.** These are buildings that meet a high standard of historical significance and/or architectural character. They are designated by the Landmarks Preservation Board, and they have special restrictions that limit options for redeveloping or modifying them. In return, they receive special tax benefits.
- **Vulnerable masonry buildings.** These are buildings that have been identified as being higher risk for earthquake damage - they are in need of structural retrofits to meet current safety standards. To be eligible for TDR under this proposal, they must also be identified as "Inventory" or "Hold" in a historic resources survey - meaning they are potentially eligible to be designated as landmarks.

Note that there are only a handful of designated landmarks currently in the U District, but more property owners may be inclined to go through the process once TDR is available.

Eligible landmark buildings:

Neptune Theater Building (1301 NE 45th St)
Lot area: 11,405 SF
Proposed zoning: SM-U 320
Building chargeable floor area: 19,806 SF
Base FAR: 4.75 (54,174 SF)
Available TDR: 34,368 SF

University Library (5009 Roosevelt Way)
Lot area: 32,000 SF
Zoning: NC3 65
Building chargeable floor area: 11,648 SF
Base FAR: 4.75 (142,500 SF)
Available TDR: 130,852 SF

Fire Station #17 (1010 NE 50th St)
Proposed zoning: NC3 75
Lot area: 10,500 SF
Building chargeable floor area: 23,537 SF
Base FAR: 4.75 (111,801 SF)
Available TDR: 88,264 SF

United Methodist Episcopal (4142 Brooklyn Ave NE)
Proposed zoning: SM-U/R 240
Lot area: 8,240 SF
Building chargeable floor area: 12,550 SF
Base FAR: 3.2 (26,368 SF)
Available TDR: 13,818 SF

Wilsonian Apts Ballroom (4710 University Way NE)
Zoning: NC3 65
Lot area: 14,834 SF
Building chargeable floor area: 79,374 SF
Base FAR: 4.75 (70,462 SF)
Available TDR: 0 SF

University Heights School (5031 University Way NE)
Zoning: NC3 65
Lot area: 79,640 SF
Building chargeable floor area: 55,653 SF
Base FAR: 4.75 (378,290 SF)
Available TDR: 322,637 SF

Vulnerable masonry buildings - preliminary inventory

This list includes a preliminary list of building that appear to be unreinforced masonry and also qualify for preservation under the draft zoning proposal, based on historic resource inventory status. There may be additional buildings eligible under this proposal.

Common Name	Address	Historic Resource Inventory Category	Unreinforced Masonry?	Zone
Levere Apartments	4105 Brooklyn Avenue NE	Yes-Hold	Yes	SM-U/R 240
Big Time Brewery	4133 University Way NE	Yes-Hold	Yes	SM-U 85
Blue Moon	712 NE 45th Street	Yes-Hold	Yes	SM-U 320
University Baptist Church	4554 12th Avenue NE	Yes-Inventory	Yes	SM-U 320
Hardt Apts./Bucklin Bldg.	4137 University Way NE	Yes-Inventory	Yes	SM-U 85
Frederick Apartments	4737 Brooklyn Avenue NE	Yes-Inventory	Yes	SM-U 240
Varsity Arms Condo	4235 Brooklyn Avenue NE	Yes-Inventory	Yes	SM-U/R 240
Carol and Roberta Apts	1115/1119 NE 43rd Street	Yes-Inventory	Yes	SM-U 320
Wellesley Apartments	4203 Brooklyn Avenue NE	Yes-Inventory	Yes	SM-U/R 240
University Regency	4522 Brooklyn Avenue NE	Yes-Hold	Yes	SM-U 320
10 unit apartment bldg.	4134 11th Avenue NE	Yes-Hold	Yes	SM-U/R 240
Rudy's Barbershop/Apts	4736 University Way NE	Yes-Hold	Yes	NC3P 65
M. J. Feet	4336 University Way NE	Yes-Hold	Yes	SM-U 85
Meister Building/Varsity Theater	4329 University Way NE	Yes-Inventory	Yes	SM-U 85
Gelb Building	4534/4536 University Way NE	Yes-Inventory	Yes	NC3P 65
Masonic Building	4338 University Way NE	Yes-Inventory	Yes	SM-U 85
Lambert Building	4546/4550 University Way NE	Yes-Inventory	Yes	NC3P 65
La Paz Building/Apts	4200 University Way NE	Yes-Inventory	Yes	SM-U 85
University Methodist Church	1415 NE 43rd Street	Yes-Hold	Yes	SM-U 240
Hardwick Swap Shop	4212 Roosevelt Way NE	Yes-Hold	Yes	SM-U 240?
Johnny's Flowers	4145 University Way NE	Yes-Hold	Yes	SM-U 85
Stanford Apartments	1304 NE 42nd Street	Yes-Inventory	Yes	SM-U 320
Carter Hall (Condo)	901-905 NE 43rd Street	Yes-Inventory	Maybe?	SM-U 320