Seattle Parks and Recreation

University District Park Plan

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Executive Summary

The University District, officially designated as University District Northwest in Seattle's Comprehensive Plan, is an emerging urban center expected to experience high residential and employment growth during the next 20 years. Bordering on the University of Washington (UW) and encompassing several small residential areas, an active business district, and Safeco's corporate campus, the University District has a unique and diverse set of park, open space, and recreational needs. While the community features a few excellent parks and the nearby UW includes attractive passive open space, the University District's 2.86 acres of open space falls 2.97 acres below the Comprehensive Plan's open space goals. The projected increases of 2,000 new households and 2,640 jobs by 2024 mean that this deficit will grow to 5.27 acres unless additional parks and open space can be provided.

Working with local stakeholders in two work sessions, priorities have been identified for various types of new park facilities; the park needs in the highest and high priority categories are:

1. **Highest Priority:** A centrally located park, approximately one-half acre in a high-volume pedestrian area with current or projected multi-family mixed-use buildings; this type of park should be designed to accommodate a variety of recreation uses.

2. **Highest Priority:** A number of smaller plazas in high-volume pedestrian areas. The design of these parks should be coordinated with adjacent development and need not necessarily be provided through Department of Parks & Recreation (Parks) acquisition.

3. **High Priority:** Smaller neighborhood-oriented parks (approximately one-quarter acre) to serve local needs. The type of needs to be served will vary depending on the locale.

To meet these needs, this plan proposes a concept plan emphasizing the following elements:

- **Work collaboratively with property owners of major parcels in the vicinity of Brooklyn Avenue between NE 43rd and NE 47th Streets to develop a central multi-use park.**

  Work session participants noted that this subarea will be intensively re-developed (especially with the Safeco expansion), is centrally located, and is sited conveniently near two possible locations for the light-rail station, making it an ideal location for the community's focal open space. Creation of a park here will likely require a partnership in which the park is constructed in conjunction with private development. Such an arrangement might have considerable advantages if the activities are all compatible and would help ensure that a new park is actively and appropriately used.

- **Protect and enhance the South Lot of the University Heights Center as public open space.**

  The University Community Urban Center Plan and participants in the stakeholder work sessions both stressed the importance of this community resource. Seattle Public School District #1 currently owns the entire site and leases it to the University Heights Center for the Community (UHCC). The UHCC uses the South Lot for weekday parking to help support its activities, so that Parks acquisition would encompass two challenges: 1) persuading the

School District to sell a portion of the site or enter into a long-term lease and 2) convincing the UHCC to forego parking on the South Lot. Nonetheless, Parks acquisition of the South Lot could help the UHCC secure the balance of the site and thus help ensure the preservation of the landmark school building.

- **Add to Christie Park or create another small park in the area south of NE 45th Street and west of Roosevelt Avenue NE.**

  Parks should seek to expand Christie Park at 9th NE and NE 43rd Street by acquiring the two properties immediately to the south, because the existing park is undersized and additional park space is warranted in this subarea with significant residential population. While this park expansion would primarily serve a localized need and would not greatly increase the inventory of City-owned open space in the University District, the surrounding subarea is underserved by open space. If the preceding two priorities cannot be addressed within the timeframe of the current Prop Parks Levy acquisition project, the Christie Park expansion would be the next priority. Conversely, Parks should consider addressing this park expansion in the longer term if it is not addressed in the near future.

- **Upgrade Brooklyn Avenue NE to create a pedestrian corridor.**

  Stakeholder workshop participants noted that Brooklyn Avenue between Cowen Park and Sakuma Viewpoint is a primary corridor for neighborhood activity. The street is wider than necessary for its current two lanes of traffic and could be dramatically improved to link parks and neighborhood facilities

- **Encourage the development of small and attractive urban plazas and pocket open spaces through design review and incentives.**

  Given the current shortage of open space in the community and recent City actions to increase population and density, such spaces will be at a premium. Workshop participants gave this issue a high priority and noted that the design review process would be an appropriate vehicle for securing ground-level open space in lieu of a greater amount of rooftop gardens or other project-related space available only to project residents.

- **Maintain and protect existing open space resources, including University Playfield, Campus Parkway, the 7th Avenue NE p-patch, Peace Park, Sakuma Viewpoint, and the green in front of the City's University Branch Library.**

  All of these open spaces are important resources for the community, without regard to ownership, and several have been enhanced through community efforts. The artwork on Campus Parkway, the intensive gardening at the p-patch, and the new gateway at University Playfield attest to the fondness community members feel toward existing open spaces, and the new Northlake Park currently under development at the 7th Avenue NE street end will add another small focal point.

- **Partner with the University of Washington to provide new public open spaces in conjunction with Southwest Campus development.**

  The University of Washington has provided open spaces, such as Sakuma Viewpoint, that are very attractive to local residents and the general public. As new buildings are constructed in the Southwest Campus, there may be the opportunity to develop new open spaces useful to the needs of the campus and the community. In fact, such open space might serve as the binder that better integrates "town and gown."

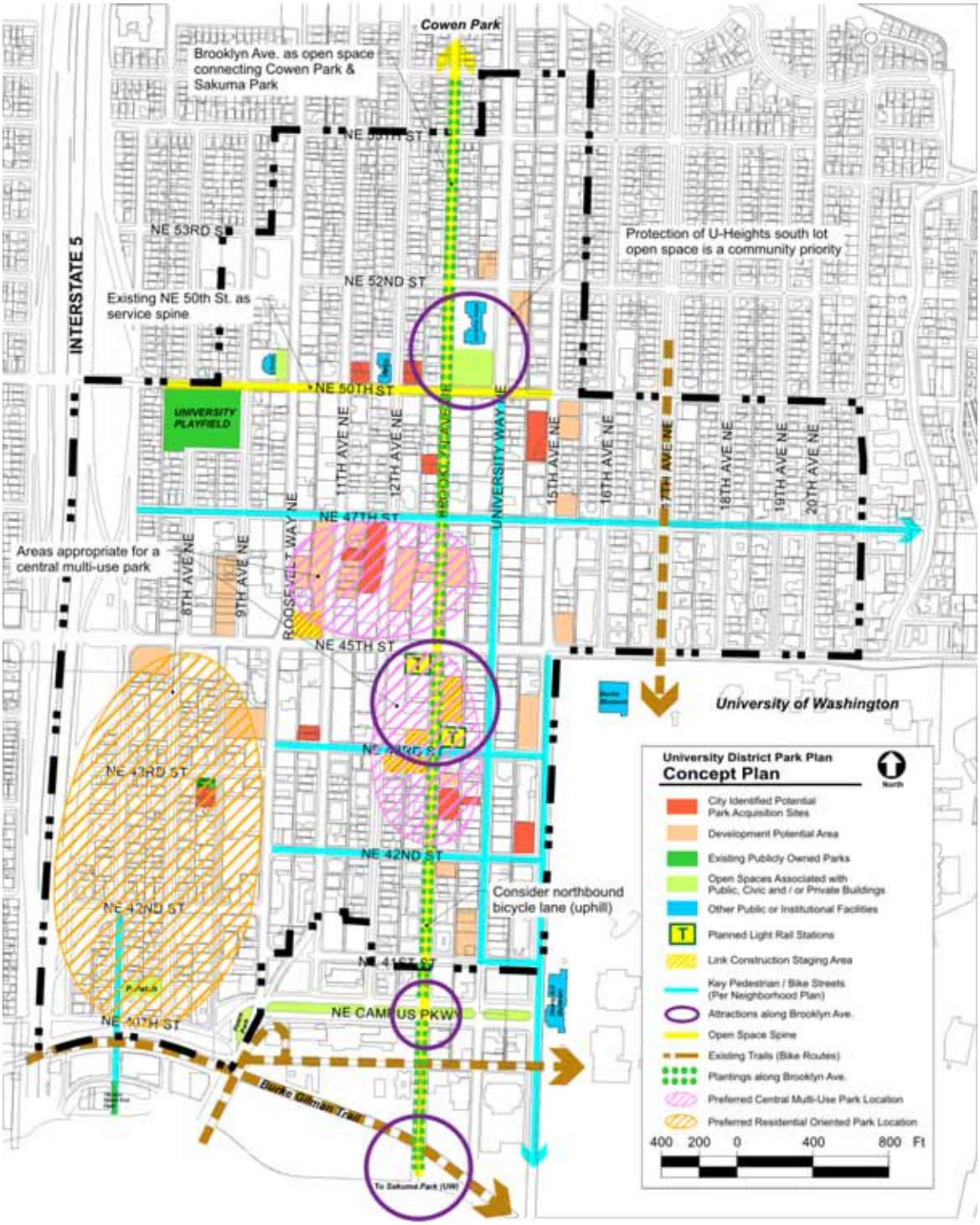


Figure 1. Concept plan for the University District

To implement these general directions, the plan recommends the following actions.

1. **Acquire a significant open space parcel with current funding.**

   Parks has approximately $2 million in Pro Parks Levy and King County Conservation Futures Tax funding to acquire a site for a new park in the University District. Based on the analysis of this study and the recommendations of the University Community Urban Center

Plan, the top priority should be for a centrally located site sufficient to accommodate a range of activities.

Given a number of constraints, five site acquisition/joint development opportunities stand out for special consideration. It is recommended that Parks continue to explore acquisition of the following sites in order of priority (with joint development on a portion of the UDPA property - University District Parking Association - being highest priority). This plan's Appendix includes guidelines intended to help Parks' staff in site evaluation and development.

- UDPA Lot Between NE 45th Street, 12th Avenue NE, NE 47th Street, and 11th Avenue NE.
- University Heights Center South Lot.
- Northeast or Northwest Corner of NE 43rd Street and Brooklyn Avenue NE.
- Two Residential Lots South of Christie Park (9th Avenue NE south of NE 43rd Street).
- Southwest Corner of NE 43rd Street and Brooklyn Avenue NE.

2. Participate in the preparation of a street improvement plan for Brooklyn Avenue NE.

Brooklyn Avenue's route connects several community attractions and future developments, making it an important street improvement opportunity. A streetscape plan would allow the City to upgrade Brooklyn over time as a series of small projects or portions of larger engineering system upgrades. This is especially true since Brooklyn Avenue NE will be the center of the Safeco campus, is an important connector in the UW's Southwest Campus, and is a potential site for the LINK light-rail station. While the leadership of this plan might fall to the Department of Planning and Development or the Department of Transportation, Parks should actively participate in the effort.

3. Continue to participate in the City's design review process to ensure that open space and streetscape improvements provided as part of new development are consistent with the community's objectives and this plan.

The design guidelines in the Appendix provide a tool for the evaluation of project proposals. Participants in the stakeholder work sessions emphasized the need for small plazas and open space provided as part of new development. This emphasis should be communicated to the local Design Review Board and considered in project review.

4. Participate in the City's current regulatory efforts that provide parks funding in conjunction with private development activity.

The fee-in-lieu program and impact fees that are being considered for the Center City may be appropriate in the University District, especially if the project-level "open space" requirement in the current zoning code is reduced.

I. Introduction

Project Purpose

The City of Seattle has designated certain neighborhoods as Urban Centers, with the intent of accommodating redevelopment for high-density residential use and job creation. This redevelopment will increase demand for parks and recreation facilities. Plans for parks and open space linkages to meet the needs of future residents and workers in these neighborhoods can **help marshal the capital resources necessary to develop parks and recreation facilities** and may also **help apportion a share of the costs to new private development**. Further, such plans can **help ensure that the location and scope of park acquisitions and improvements now underway or to be conducted in the future will meet the specific needs of these neighborhoods.**

The University District Northwest is among the neighborhoods with highest priority for such plans at this time due to the combination of existing residential density, anticipated growth, and deficiency of functional open space. In 2004, the City revised the Comprehensive Plan and is currently considering other measures to encourage housing density within the University community.

Seattle Parks and Recreation (Parks) commissioned this study to provide information and a strategic approach that will help the City acquire and develop a system of parks, recreation facilities, and open space linkages in the University community to meet the needs of current and future residents and workers over the next 20 years. The study is based on an examination of current and proposed development in this urban neighborhood and includes recommendations for public acquisition, public-private partnerships, creative land use controls, and the possible redevelopment of public rights-of-way to realize the recommended open spaces.

Project consultants and Parks staff have compiled City and private sector information on development trends for the area, and have gathered information from property owners, neighborhood representatives, and other City departments. This effort also supports the larger goal, arising from the City's Comprehensive Plan and the University Community Urban Center Plan, to make the University District Northwest a more vital and livable community.

Planning Process

This park plan is built upon the earlier neighborhood planning work of the University Community Urban Center Plan, adopted in 1998, which included several recommendations related to park, recreation, and open spaces.

Parks retained MAKERS architecture and urban design to conduct the current study and provided funding, project management, and staffing for the project. Given the breadth and scope

of work being done in this area, other City departments provided technical review assistance as well as information on related analyses. A Technical Oversight Committee (TOC), comprised of staff from Parks, the Department of Neighborhoods (Neighborhoods), and the Department of Planning and Development provided a sounding board for the project's development and direction.

Two working sessions were held with key stakeholders, community groups, and City department representatives to review the analysis and recommendations. To obtain a community-based perspective, the first session, conducted November 10, 2004, explored stakeholders' general park and open space objectives and priorities for the type of new or improved facilities. The second work session, conducted on January 31, 2005, presented the draft concept plan and focused on specific opportunities. The resulting report, based on this input, will be presented at a public meeting in September 2005.

Figure 2. Work session activities.

II. Context

Vicinity

The University District Northwest is a designated "Urban Center Village" and part of the larger "University Community Urban Center." The University District Northwest includes roughly the area between Interstate 5 in the west to the University of Washington campus/15th Avenue NE to the east, and Campus Parkway in the south to NE 55th Street in the north (see Figure 3). For simplicity, the project area is referred to as the University District in this document.

Figure 4 is an aerial photograph that illustrates the abrupt change from the University of Washington campus to the dense retail, multifamily, and office uses west of 15th NE, as well as the more gradual transition to single-family housing above NE 50th Street.

Land Use Context

The generalized community context, shown in Figure 5, summarizes the community's basic land use and transportation structure and includes some of the principal concepts in the neighborhood plan proposed in 1998 and adopted into the City's Comprehensive Plan. As indicated, the project area is characterized by a mix of uses and development intensities.

The district's commercial areas form an "H" configuration along Roosevelt Avenue, University Way, and NE 45th Street. Arterials bisect the district in both directions, carrying heavy through traffic, while Brooklyn Avenue NE, University Way NE, and NE 47th, 43rd, and 42nd Streets are key pedestrian and bicycle links. The district abuts I-5 on the west and the University of Washington (UW) on the south and east. The area between NE 41st and NE 50th Streets and between Roosevelt Avenue and University Way NE is proposed for the highest intensity land uses and is currently experiencing substantial redevelopment. Safeco is proposing substantial new construction in the vicinity of Brooklyn Avenue NE between NE 43rd and NE 45th Streets. The neighborhood plan targets the area to the north between Roosevelt and Brooklyn Avenues NE and NE 45th and NE 50th Streets for intensive mixed-use development.

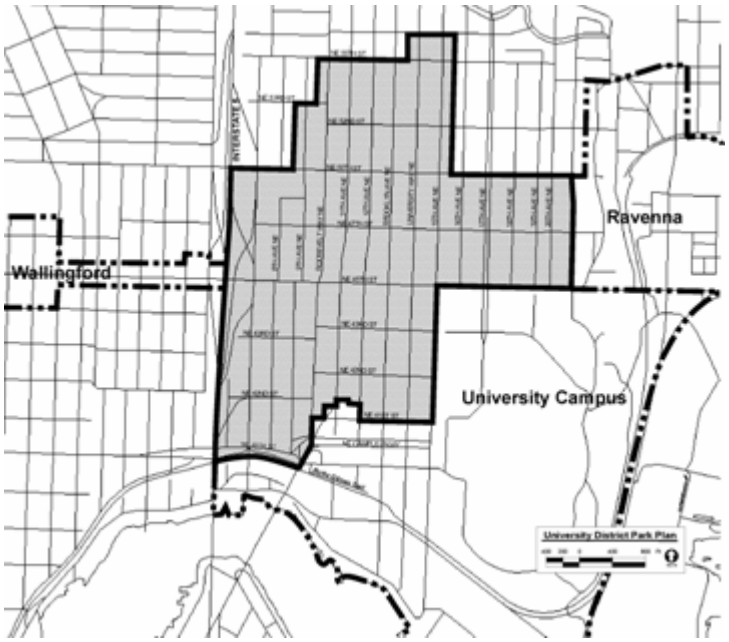


Figure 3. University District vicinity.

The neighborhood plan seeks to protect the smaller scale residential areas shown in yellow on the map and also to better integrate activities and development character along the UW boundary. Another important neighborhood plan community development concept is the enhancement of the "public service spine" along NE 50th Street that links a number of the community and public facilities.

Figure 6 depicts the current zoning in the University District. The highest-density designations are south of NE 47th Street and from Brooklyn west to Roosevelt NE.

Figure 4. University District aerial photograph.

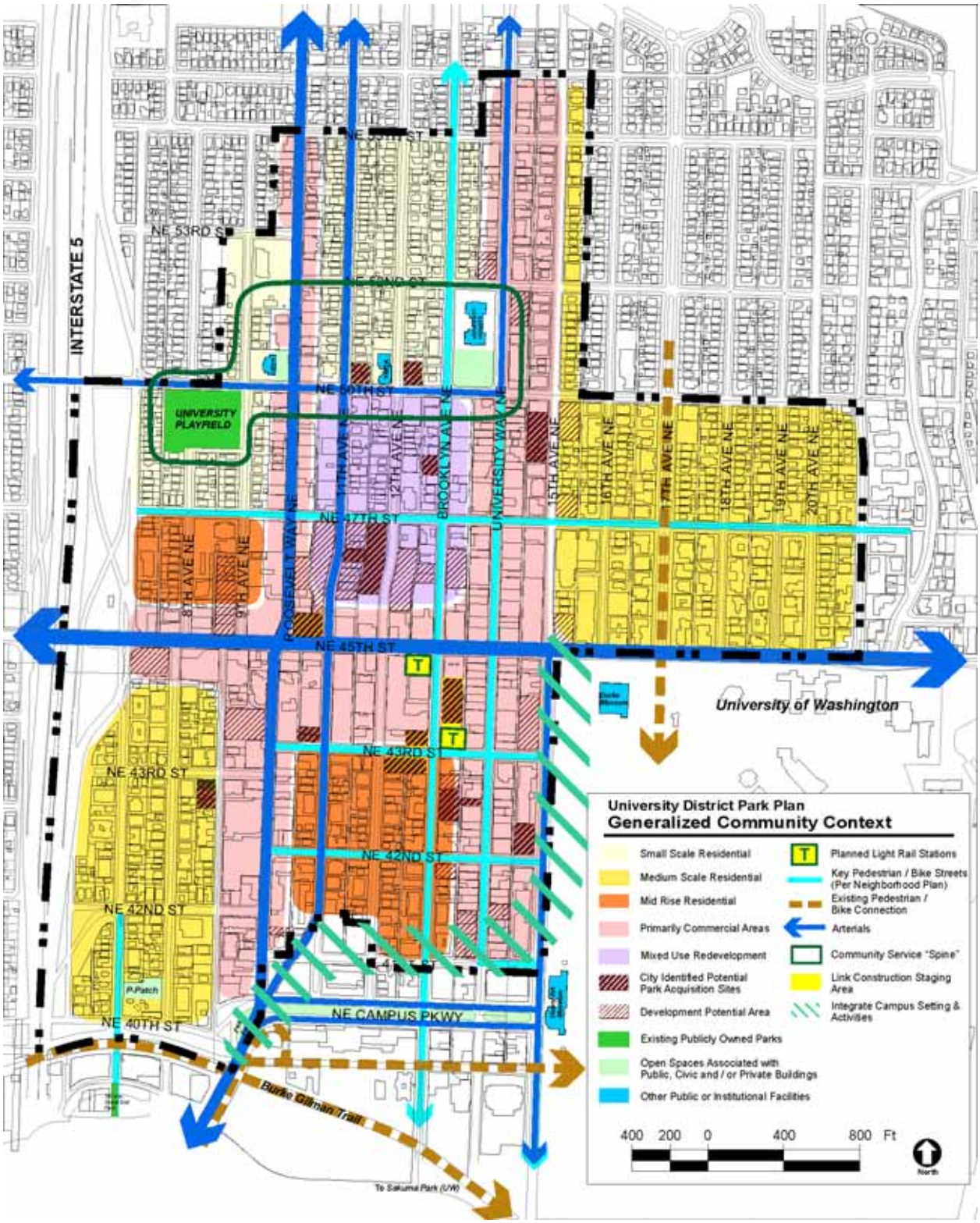


Figure 5. Generalized community context.

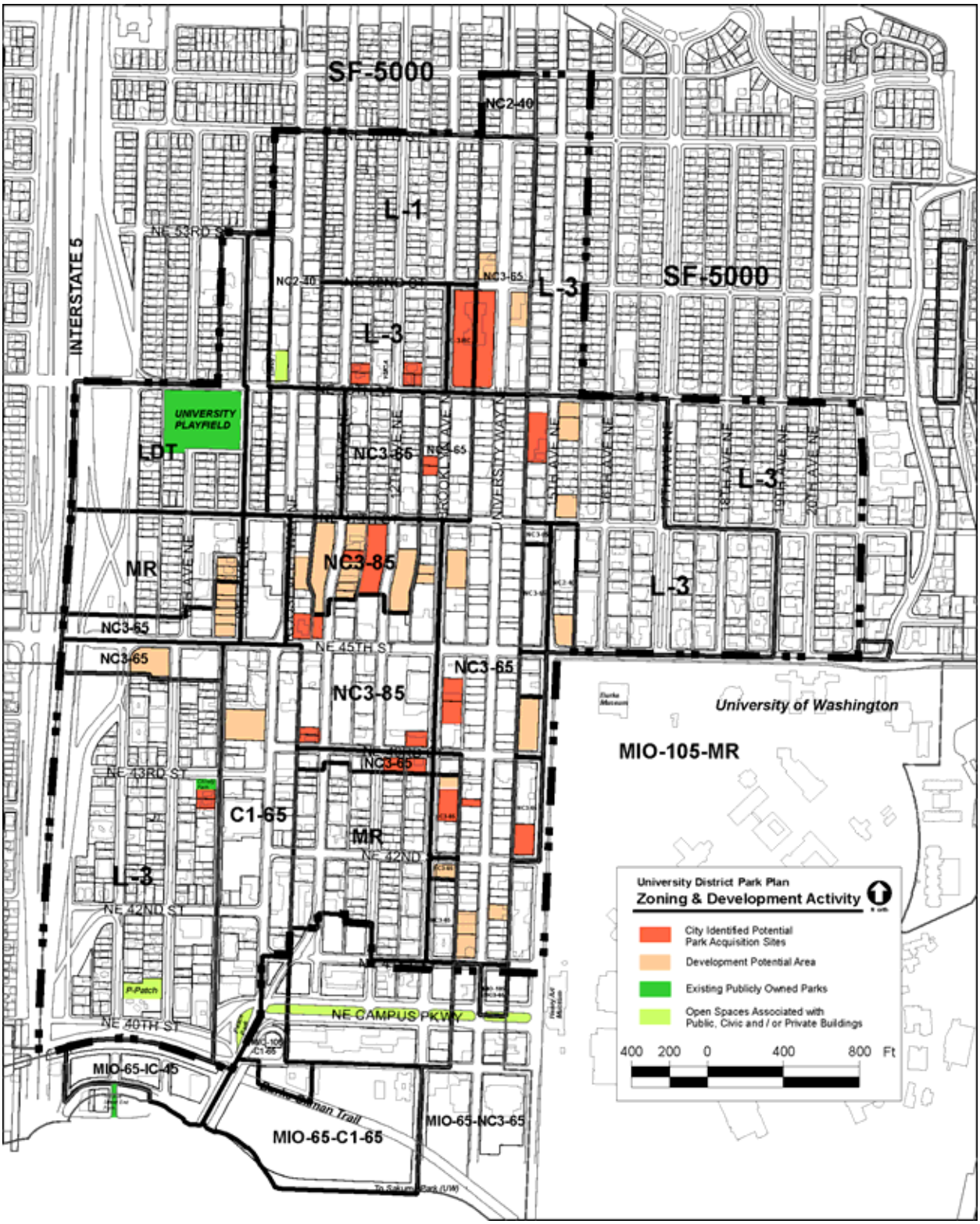


Figure 6. Current zoning designations.

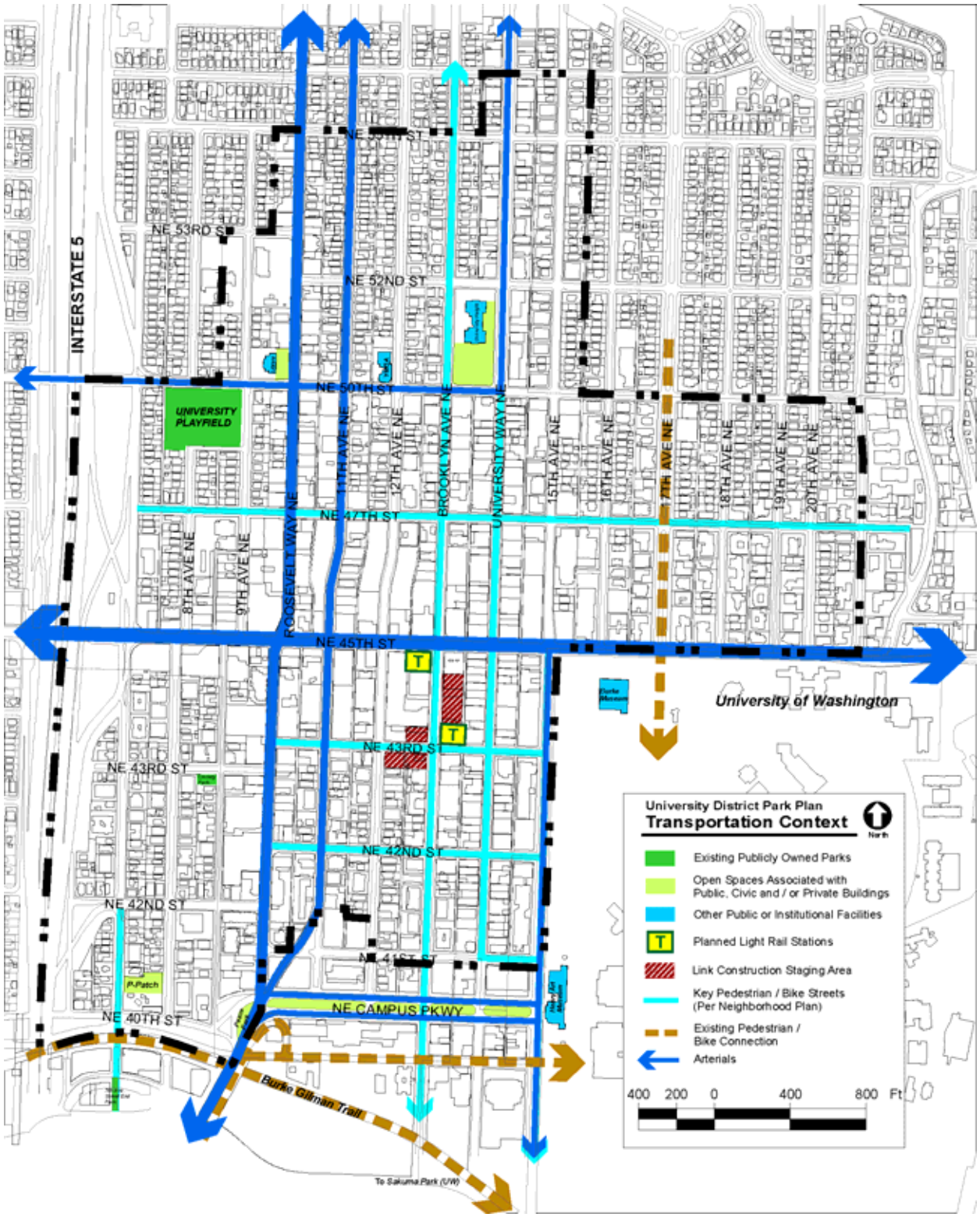


Figure 7. University District circulation.

Circulation Context

Figure 7 illustrates the most relevant circulation considerations. The district is bisected by NE 45th Street and the Roosevelt Way NE/11th Avenue NE couplet, both carrying heavy volumes of through traffic. Buses run primarily on University Way NE (The Ave) and 15th Avenue NE. The primary pedestrian/bicycle corridors have been identified as Brooklyn Avenue NE, The Ave, and NE 47th, NE 43rd, and NE 42nd Streets. The Burke Gilman Trail and 17th Avenue NE are designated bicycle routes connecting to regional destinations.

Sound Transit is proposing to build a light-rail station within the district. Sites between NE 47th and NE 43rd Streets on Brooklyn Avenue NE and on 15th Avenue NE are being considered, but funding for site acquisition and construction has not yet been secured. Sound Transit had decided to locate the station along Brooklyn, in the block between NE 43rd and 45th Streets, as shown in Figure 6. However, the station location is being re-examined in light of Safeco's decision to expand its campus to include the property along both sides of Brooklyn Avenue NE in this block.

University District Neighborhood Plan

Figure 8 identifies the most important park, recreation, open space, and urban design recommendations from the University Community Urban Center Plan, which was adopted in 1998 as part of the Seattle Neighborhood Planning Process. The letter-number markers refer to specific plan recommendations that are included in the appendices of the urban center plan. The most relevant recommendations for this park plan are:

D-2 Create a community open space at the South Lot of the University Heights Center.

D-7 Create a small park at the 7th Avenue street end (now named Northlake Park), perhaps with environmental restoration, hand-held boat launch, and/or small seating area.

D-17 Create a small P-Patch near the small park at NE 43rd Street and 9th Avenue NE (Christie Park).

D-24 Partner with Metro to create an open space along with the proposed staging/parking structure. (Although the bus staging/parking died from I-695 funding constraints, the need for open space in the center of the neighborhood still exists.)

D-26 Improve Brooklyn Avenue NE as a green street and signed bicycle route from Ravenna Boulevard to the water.

D-30 Support the YMCA expansion in coordination with the University Heights Center and Seattle Parks and Recreation to fulfill indoor recreation needs.

D-31 Identify key open space opportunities associated with new development. Institute workable development incentives for developers to provide open space.

D-32 Revise zoning requirements to allow payment to open space funding in lieu of open space associated with new housing (west of 20th Avenue NE only). Pursue Conservation Futures funds. Establish an open space fund to manage and increase the account.

D-33 Unify the area between NE 40th and NE 41st/Brooklyn and 15th Avenue NE. Develop small open spaces and improve streets as parcels are redeveloped.

While many of the plan's open space and urban design recommendations have been successfully accomplished or are under way - including the street improvements to The Ave and NE 50th Street, the enhancement of the NE Campus Parkway open space, development of the 7th Avenue NE street end, and improvements to the University Heights Center South Lot - the community still lacks a central multi-purpose open space. As the plan notes, this could be accomplished through the creation of a permanent open space in the University Heights Center South Lot or at another site near Brooklyn between NE 47th and NE 42nd Streets.

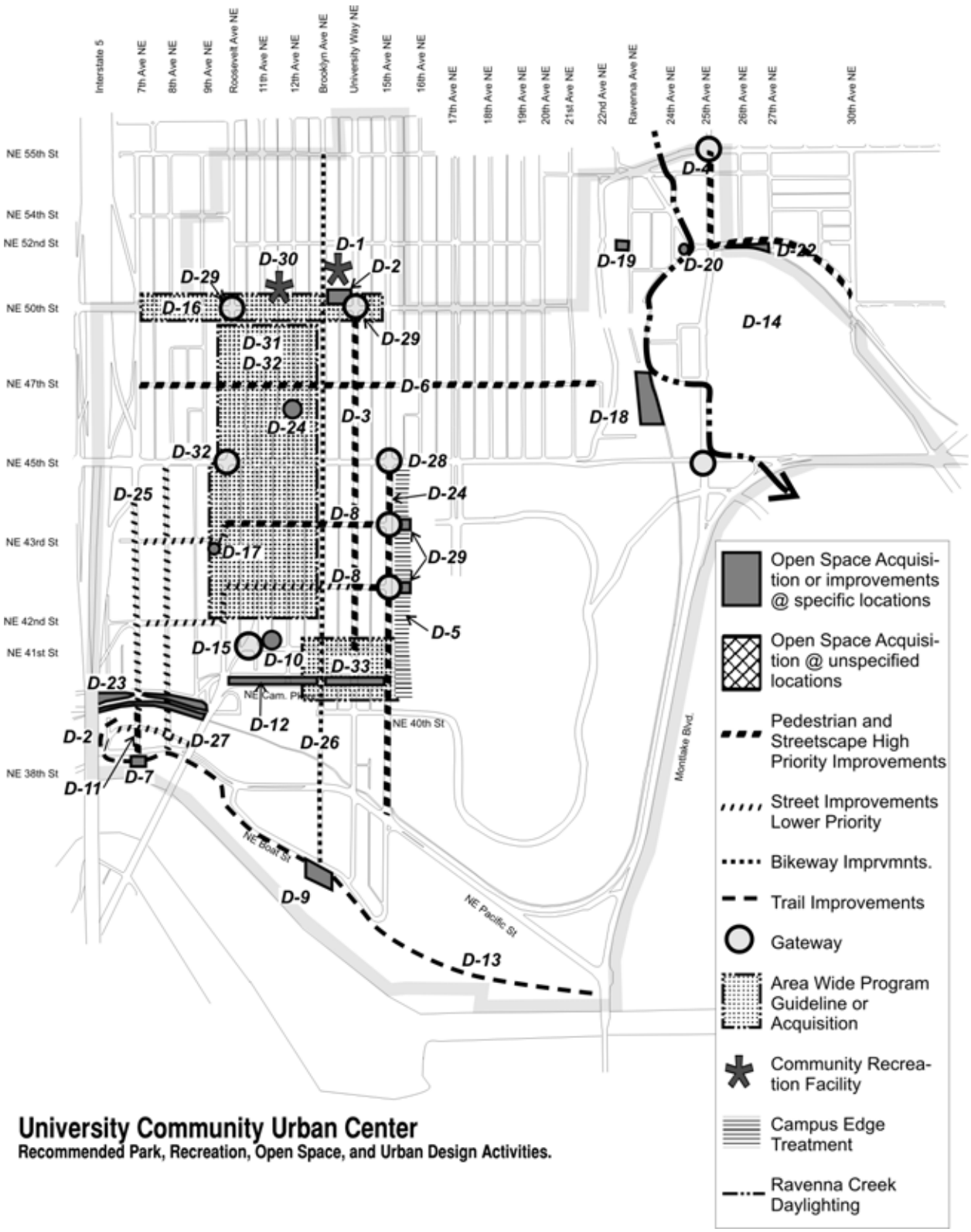


Figure 8. University Community Urban Center Plan recommendations (1998).

Park Resources

Existing Parks and Open Space

Table 1. University District Village Open Space Acreage Owned by Seattle Parks and Recreation

Park/Open Space	Official Park Acreage	Usable/Accessible Acreage
University Playground	2.75 acres	2.75 acres
Christie Park	0.11 acres	0.11 acres
Total Village Open Space	2.86 acres	2.86 acres

The University District currently contains only two City of Seattle parks, encompassing a total of 2.86 acres. These City parks, as well as parks and open space provided by other entities, are shown on Figure 16.

- **University Playground** occupies 2.75 acres adjacent to NE 50th Street in the northwest portion of the neighborhood. The playground includes a baseball/softball field that also can be converted into a soccer field, two tennis courts, and a children's play area. The playground is well-utilized, both by neighborhood residents and residents from surrounding neighborhoods. A stunning new gateway has been added to the north entrance.

Figure 9. University Playground

- **Christie Park** occupies 0.11 acres on a converted residential lot. The park includes landscaped areas, a small picnic shelter with a table and benches, and a basketball hoop. Since there are residential uses directly adjacent to the park, activities are somewhat constrained, but the park is well located to serve the residential community south of NE 45th Street and west of Roosevelt Way NE.

Figure 10. Christie Park.

The broader neighborhood also contains several other, smaller open spaces that are not owned by Seattle Parks and Recreation.

- **Sakuma Viewpoint**, at the south end of Brooklyn Avenue and outside of the University District boundaries, is owned by the University of Washington and includes a lawn, seating, a water overlook deck, and attractive landscaping. The small open space is a popular retreat for those wishing a little solitude, sunlight, and views of the Ship Canal.

Figure 11. Sakuma Viewpoint.

- **NE Campus Parkway Median**, also located just outside the district's boundaries, has recently been improved as part of The Ave street improvements. The slightly sunken sculpture court, street trees, lighting, and the "Friendship Grove" landscaping within the right-of-way between University Way NE and Brooklyn Avenue NE provide a green ribbon extending from the campus and add visual interest.

Figure 12. NE Campus Parkway Median

- **University Heights Center South Lot**, approximately two-thirds of an acre out of the total site area of 2.41 acres, includes the paved area that is used for parking on weekdays and is home to the University Farmers Market on Saturdays from May to November. Between the South Lot and the building is a raised area with a children's play area, small plaza, and community garden. The University Community Urban Center Plan recommends acquisition of the South Lot for open space. Seattle Public School District #1 owns the entire site and leases it to the University Heights Center. The Center uses the weekday parking to help support its activities, so that Parks acquisition would encompass two challenges: persuading the School District to sell a portion of the site and convincing the Center to forego parking on the South Lot

Figure13. University Heights Center South Lot.

- **University District P-Patch**, just north of NE 40th Street between 7th and 8th Avenues NE, owned by Metro and operated by the P-Patch program within the Department of Neighborhoods. This is a popular facility but its location is not central to the District.

Figure 14. University District P-Patch.

- **Northlake Park,** with improvements funded by the Pro Parks Levy and scheduled to be completed in 2005, will include a small waterfront open space with improved sidewalks and new landscaping at the end of 7th Avenue.

Figure 15. Northlake Park.

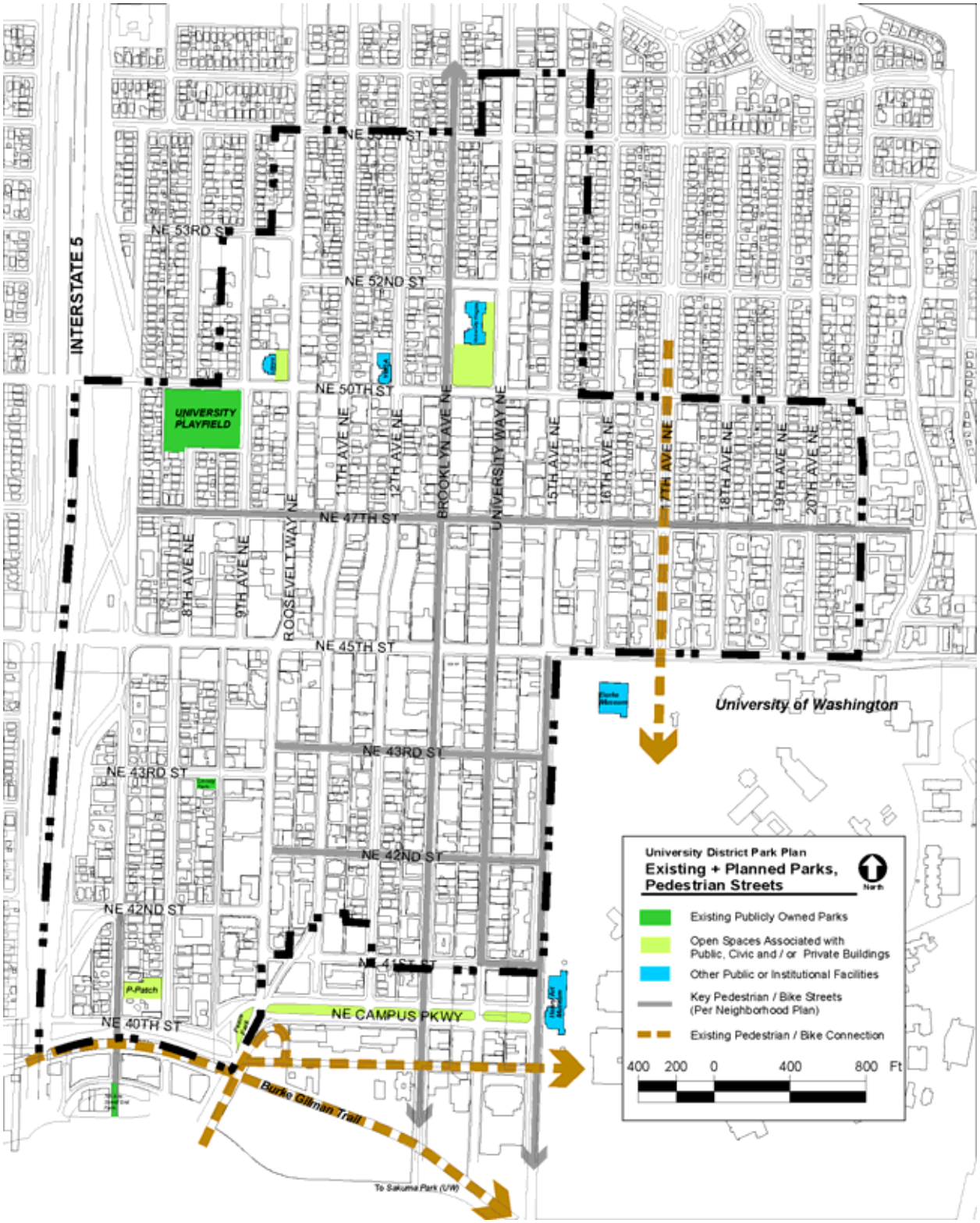


Figure 16. Existing and planned parks and pedestrian streets.

Current Park and Open Space Acquisition and Development Efforts

The Pro Parks Levy approved by Seattle voters in November 2000 is the principal source of current funding for new park acquisition and development projects. The Levy extends through 2008 and includes three development projects to help serve park and recreation needs in the University District. These projects were selected from the recommendations in the Urban Center Plan and comprise the following:

- Northlake Park street-end improvements at 7th Avenue NE, as described earlier;
- University - Burke Gilman Area Improvements, to upgrade the area around the Burke-Gilman Trail near the University Bridge, I-5 bridge, and Peace Park; and
- University Heights Open Space Improvements, to create a community open space on the south side of the University Heights Center.

The Levy also includes a $10 million Acquisition and Development Opportunity Fund to provide funding for projects identified by neighborhood and community groups. In 2001-2002, the Pro Parks Levy Oversight Committee conducted a public process for the first funding cycle of the Opportunity Fund. The Committee recommended allocating $3 million for acquisition of new neighborhood parks or open spaces in three urban center villages: University District, Denny Triangle, and Pioneer Square/International District. This recommendation assumed that each neighborhood would receive approximately one-third of the total, or $1 million each. In August 2002, the Mayor and City Council approved the Committee's recommendation.

Recognizing that $1 million would not go very far in view of current land values, Parks applied for $2 million in King County Conservation Futures funding in April 2003 to supplement the Opportunity Fund allocations for the University District and Denny Triangle. In November 2003, King County awarded $1.9 million in matching grants for these two acquisition projects.

In Spring 2005, the Pro Parks Levy Oversight Committee recommended funding allocations for the second cycle of the Opportunity Fund. The recommendations include approximately $200,000 (a share of $600,000 targeted for three Urban Centers) to begin to develop the acquired site or to supplement acquisition if necessary. At the time of writing, the legislation to approve these recommendations has been submitted to the City Council, but has not yet been approved.

Combining these allocations, the funding available for the University District park acquisition project is currently between $1.9 million and $2.2 million, subject to final site selection.

Meanwhile, Parks began planning for the University District park acquisition project in 2003, including public meetings and consultation with local neighborhood representatives and groups to identify potential site(s) for acquisition.

At a June 2003 public meeting, Parks staff outlined planning and property research that the City and citizens had done to date, and citizens suggested additional sites and approaches for consideration. After subsequent meetings with members of local community councils and other groups, Parks has been exploring two strategies at the same time:

- Acquire a "stand-alone" site in the range of 10,000 to 15,000 square feet, or expand an existing park to that size.
- Partner with a developer, property owner, or non-profit group such as the UHCC to create a new open space or park on a larger site.

Growth Projections

Current growth targets from Seattle's Comprehensive Plan for the University District call for an increase of approximately 2,000 housing units and 2,640 jobs by 2024.

Table 2. University District Household Growth Targets per the Seattle Comprehensive Plan.

	UNIVERSITY DISTRICT
2004 Households	5,230
2004 – 2024 Growth Target	+2,000
2024 Households per Growth Target	7,230

Table 3. University District Employment Growth Targets per the Seattle Comprehensive Plan.

	UNIVERSITY DISTRICT
2004 Jobs	6,170
2004 – 2024 Growth Target	+2,640
2024 Jobs per Growth Target	8,810

These growth figures drive the base open space requirements identified in Section III.

III. Park and Recreation Facility Needs

Parks Plan 2000 Goals for Urban Villages

This plan is intended to help guide the City's provision of parks and open space in the University District over the next twenty years – including and beyond the implementation of the 2000 Pro Parks Levy. Seattle's Parks and Recreation Plan 2000 (hereafter referred to as the Parks Plan 2000) provides a starting point for this effort by setting open space goals for Urban Villages based on household and employment population: one acre of Village Open Space per 1,000 households plus one acre per 10,000 jobs. Such Village Open Space should be at least 10,000 square feet in size, accessible to the public, and usable for recreation and social activities.

Table 4. Desirable Open Space Acreage for Urban Village Residential Population

	UNIVERSITY DISTRICT
2004 Households	5,230
2004 Open Space Goal per Households [1]	5.23 acres
Existing Village Open Space [2]	2.86 acres
Projected Total Households by 2024	7,230
2024 Open Space Goal per household projection	7.23 acres (8.11 acres total for housing + jobs)

Notes:

1. *Goal as stated in the Seattle Parks and Recreation Plan 2000 is 1 acre per 1,000 households. Since household numbers were unavailable, dwelling unit numbers are used as a substitute.*
2. *Village Open Space is defined in the Seattle Parks and Recreation Plan 2000 as a dedicated open space of at least 10,000 square feet in size, publicly accessible, and usable for recreation and social activities.*

Table 5. Desirable Open Space Acreage for Urban Village Employment Population

	UNIVERSITY DISTRICT
2002 Jobs	6,170
2002 Open Space Goal per Jobs [1]	0.6 acres
Existing Village Open Space [2]	2.86 acres
Projected Total Jobs by 2024	8,810
2024 Open Space Goal per job projection	0.88 acres (8.11 acres total for housing +jobs)

Notes:

1. *Goal as stated in the Seattle Parks and Recreation Plan 2000 is 1 acre per 10,000 employees.*
2. *Village Open Space is defined in the Seattle Parks and Recreation Plan 2000 as a dedicated open space of at least 10,000 square feet in size, publicly accessible, and usable for recreation and social activities.*

Needs for Additional Parks and Open Space

Comparing the existing acreage of Parks ownership with the Parks Plan 2000 goals yields quantitative measures of the needs for additional parks and open space in the University District. This analysis indicates an existing deficiency of open space that will grow over time unless the City is able to acquire properties to serve this need.

Table 6. Current Open Space Needs in the University District

	UNIVERSITY DISTRICT
Current Village Open Space Goal for Residential Population	5.23 acres
Current Village Open Space Goal for Employment Population	0.60 acres
Total Current Village Open Space Goal	5.83 acres
Total Existing Village Open Space	-2.86 acres
New Open Space Needed to Meet Current Goals	**2.97 acres**

Table 7. Future Open Space Needs in the University District

	UNIVERSITY DISTRICT
Projected 2024 Village Open Space Goal for Residential Population	7.23 acres
Projected 2024 Village Open Space Goal for Employment Population	0.90 acres
Total Projected 2024 Village Open Space Goal	8.13 acres
Total Existing Village Open Space	-2.86 acres
New Open Space Needed to Meet 2024 Goals	**5.27 acres**

As the charts above indicate, there is a current village open space deficit in the University District of 2.97 acres and a projected 2024 deficit of 5.27 acres. These figures do not include the village open space that will be acquired with Pro Parks Levy funding because the location and size of this property is not yet determined at the time of writing. The existing and future deficits are also somewhat mitigated by the fact that much of the District's population is comprised by students who have access to open space and recreational facilities on the University of Washington campus. The University campus also includes open spaces that are available to the general public, such as Sakuma Viewpoint and the Campus Parkway Median.

The University campus, the UHCC grounds, and the Burke-Gilman Trail are examples of "offsets," defined by Parks Plan 2000 as open spaces that are used or experienced similarly to City-owned parks and greenspaces. While not considered as Breathing Room or Usable Open Space, these offsets do help provide open space for passive or active recreation or enjoyment. Nevertheless, there is a marked lack of open space in the core of the University District, especially considering that this is the area expected to absorb much of the expected 2000 new dwelling units and that one of the neighborhood goals is to increase the percentage of non-student, long-term residents. Providing adequate public open space can be an important element in attracting new residents to help achieve that goal.

Needs for Specific Types of Parks and Open Space

Identifying the types and priorities of uses for new parks and open spaces in the University District can help to establish the location, configuration, and design of these facilities. To do this, the planning team engaged workshop participants in a series of exercises. The results of the first exercise are presented in Table 8.

Table 8. Open Space/Recreation Type Priorities
(Summary of November 10 Stakeholder Work Session)

Space/Use Type	Priority *(1-5: 5=highest)*	Participant Comments
Large Play Field		
■ Formal sports field(s)	**2**	• Don't see many families. • High demand for U-Heights playground - variety of uses.
■ Informal/multi-use (at least 1 acre of lawn area)	**4**	• Practical matter - difficult to find big enough space that is usable.
Neighborhood Park *(at least 1 acre)*	**5**	• Multi-use and urban quality - dog friendly, informal sports, water feature, able to see other people, green space, near streets but separate (pocket park). • One space available south of 45th.
Sports Courts		
■ Basketball	**4**	• Should be higher priority than tennis. • Basketball courts used to be available at U-Heights. • Christie Park has one court - not open in nighttime. • Noise can reduce privacy for nearby residences.
■ Tennis	**1**	
■ Skateboard Parks	**5**	• Strong interest; could be stand-alone facility; could be small requires case-by-case assessment. • nighttime use may be incompatible with nearby residences. • 7th Avenue may be a location opportunity.
■ Other		• General playground/volleyball/rock climbing - high interest but liability - needs private partnership. • Full community center needed - acquire U-Heights permanently as a community center - needs to be free.
Recreational/Community Facility		• Full service is offered at the YMCA.
■ Gym	**3.5**	• The YMCA is too small and a pay facility. • Students have access to University facilities.
■ Pool	**3.5**	• Greenlake pool is mobbed, like the Magnolia pool.

Space/Use Type	Priority (1-5: 5=highest)	Participant Comments
■ Indoor meeting rooms: large and small	?	• Need to think about securing the future of U-Heights
Dog-Friendly Spaces	2	• There are other opportunities; off-leash area is not needed - just a place to take a dog. • Concerns about maintenance and exclusivity.
Children's Play Areas	4	• Needed for families; don't need to be big; visibility is critical. • Siting should be coordinated with daycare facilities.
Urban Plazas	5	• For arts; U-Heights South Lot is an opportunity; small plaza just for sitting. • Good for small sites; community areas; size is not important; need a place to gather; aesthetically pleasing.
Community Garden		
■ P-Patch	5	• Important; easy to site; can serve schools too.
■ Other Public-Accessible Garden Space	5	• Aesthetic value.
Pedestrian-Friendly Streets	5	• Connect lower parks - down Brooklyn – transit station link. • 15th and 47th as opportunities.
Other Comments		• Need at least one open space south of 45th - mix of hard spaces and plazas. • Car dealerships are not going to be available in the future. • Restaurants are best at the street level – rooftop open space is unusable.

From this exercise and other sessions, the following general priorities were evident:

- **Playfields.** While the University playfield accommodates much of the need for formal field sports and while the area's demographic trends point away from families with children, an additional informal multi-use play area would be very desirable. A paved area that could accommodate a number of active uses might be the most useful.
- **Neighborhood Park.** The community has no local open space that functions as a neighborhood park. Cowen Park, at NE Ravenna Boulevard and Brooklyn Avenue NE, is the closest park that accommodates a variety of functions and has at least an acre of usable, unprogrammed open space. Therefore, a centralized park serving similar needs is greatly needed close to the core of the University District.
- **Sports Courts.** With the number of youth in the area looking for a quick, informal game of basketball, tennis, or volleyball, the need for sports courts is relatively high. Stakeholders at the workshop gave basketball and skateboard parks high priority. They also noted that sports courts can be noisy and that they should be located to minimize impacts.
- **Recreational/Community Facility.** Indoor recreation appears to be a lower priority because the YMCA and the Greenlake Recreation Center with the Evans Pool are within a

mile. Stakeholders also noted the importance of retaining and upgrading the University Heights School for community use.

- **Dog-Friendly Spaces.** Areas where dogs can run received a high level of support among participants, who also noted that the projected growth in multi-family units will increase the need for this type of open space.
- **Children's Play Areas.** Places for children to play received a moderately high priority, as an encouragement for young families to reside in the District. However, as some participants noted, the current trend is away from young children in the community.
- **Urban Plazas.** Stakeholders gave urban plazas highest priority and emphasized that they should accommodate a wide variety of uses, ranging from outdoor lunches to concerts, cinema, public art, and some of the other activities accommodated in neighborhood parks. Plazas can be developed as part of private or institutional development and can vary in size and configuration.
- **Community Gardens.** Community gardens—such as P-patches or flower gardens cared for by organized groups – were also rated a high priority. There are already two community gardens in the neighborhood, so a more detailed survey of need might be conducted when considering this type of use.

During a later work session, stakeholders participated in an exercise to test how these priorities and preferences might be applied to a potential acquisition site or sites. The participants were given a "game kit" of typical site dimensions and colored paper pieces indicating typical dimensions of different uses, such as a dog run or basketball half-court. Each group then planned a series of parks by combining the uses they thought were most appropriate. While there were considerable differences in the mix of different uses, nearly all groups produced a layout on a medium-sized site, ranging from approximately 100' x 100' (10,000 SF or one-quarter acre) to 200' x 200' (40,000 SF or one acre), that combined a number of uses and typically included at least a small amount of unprogrammed green space and a plaza.

From these exercises and an evaluation of current facilities and conditions, the following appear to be the most desirable types of facilities to add to the current park and open space inventory in the University District:

1. **Highest Priority:** A centrally located park, approximately one-half acre, in a high-volume pedestrian area with current or projected multi-family mixed-use buildings; this type of park should be designed to accommodate a variety of recreation uses.
2. **Highest Priority:** A number of smaller plazas in high-volume pedestrian areas. The design of these parks should be coordinated with adjacent development and need not necessarily be provided through Department of Parks & Recreation (Parks) acquisition.
3. **High Priority:** Smaller neighborhood-oriented parks (approximately one-quarter acre) to serve local needs. The type of needs to be served will vary depending on the locale.

IV. Concept Plan

The University District's existing facilities provide a diverse spectrum of open space resources, ranging from athletic fields to community gardens, waterfront overlooks, and regional trail connections. However, these spaces tend to be scattered along the perimeter of the community. For this reason, this park and open space planning effort for the University District emphasizes the development of a centralized park serving multiple uses in the high-intensity core and a convenient north/south link connecting the community's open space assets. This central park could occur along or near Brooklyn Ave NE between NE 47th and 43rd Streets, or at the University Heights South Lot.

The elements described below and illustrated in Figure 19 were ranked highest in priority by stakeholders at the work sessions on November 15, 2004 and January 31, 2005. Taken together, they would provide a range of accessible open space resources generally aligned along the Brooklyn Avenue NE spine. Many of the items are discussed in greater detail in the Implementation section. These are priorities in the long term but are also listed and discussed here in order of priority from the perspective of the Pro Parks Levy acquisition project.

- **Work collaboratively with property owners of major parcels in the vicinity of Brooklyn Avenue between NE 43rd and NE 47th Streets to develop a central multi-use park.**

  Work session participants noted that this subarea will be intensively re-developed for both housing and office development (especially with the Safeco expansion), is centrally located, and is sited conveniently near the light-rail station, making it an ideal location for the community's focal open space. Creation of a park here will likely require a partnership in which the park is constructed in conjunction with private development. Such an arrangement might have considerable advantages if the activities are all compatible and would help ensure that a new park is actively and appropriately used.

  Another possibility is that Parks could acquire a site for interim use as a LINK light-rail construction staging site or contractor parking lot. While this would delay the park's development for a number of years, the opportunity to secure a central, highly active site might be a reasonable trade-off. However, the extension of the LINK system to Northgate has not yet been funded and the siting of the University District transit station has been re-opened by Safeco's decision to expand its campus along Brooklyn Avenue NE. Therefore, a possible partnership between Parks and Sound Transit may have to be deferred to the mid-term, after the completion of the Pro Parks Levy at the end of 2008.

- **Protect and enhance the University Heights South Lot as public open space.**

  The University Community Urban Center Plan and participants in the stakeholder work sessions both stressed the importance of retaining this resource for community use. Seattle Public School District #1 currently owns the entire site and leases it to the University Heights Center for the Community (UHCC). If the District were willing to sell only a portion of the site, Seattle Parks and Recreation should consider acquiring the south lot. As noted earlier, the UHCC uses the South Lot for weekday parking to help support its activities, so that Parks acquisition would also be contingent on convincing the UHCC to forego this use of the South Lot. If both of these conditions appear possible, Parks acquisition of the South Lot could help the UHCC secure the balance of the site and thus help ensure the preservation of the landmark school building. However, the community's keen interest in the facility should be noted for the long term, whether or not Parks is able to acquire the South Lot with current Pro Parks Levy funding.

Figure 17. The University Heights South Lot is active on Saturdays when the Farmer's Market is a community focus, but at other times it is an unsightly parking lot. Retaining the paved area for park uses during the week while upgrading the perimeter for passive uses would increase the utility of the site and enhance the role of the University Heights Center for the Community.

  The Pro Parks Levy also includes a $206,200 project to "create a community open space on the south side" of the University Heights building. This would be on School District property, so some form of agreement between Parks and the District will be needed in any event.

- **Add to Christie Park or create another small park in the area south of NE 45th Street and west of Roosevelt Avenue NE.**

  Parks should seek to expand Christie Park at 9th NE & NE 43rd Street by acquiring the two properties immediately to the south, because the existing park is undersized and additional park space is warranted in this subarea with significant residential population. While this park expansion would primarily serve a localized need and would not greatly increase the inventory of City-owned open space in the University District, the surrounding subarea is underserved by open space. If the preceding two priorities cannot be addressed within the timeframe of the current Pro Parks Levy acquisition project, the Christie Park expansion would be the next priority. Conversely, Parks should consider addressing this park expansion in the longer term if it is not addressed in the near future.

- **Upgrade Brooklyn Avenue NE to create a pedestrian corridor.**

  While "The Ave" is a shopping street of regional importance, stakeholder workshop participants noted that Brooklyn Avenue between Cowen Park and Sakuma Viewpoint is a primary corridor for neighborhood activity. The street is wider than necessary for its current two lanes of traffic and could be dramatically improved. The proposed Safeco campus expansion will focus on Brooklyn Avenue NE, so it provides an opportunity to set the standard for street improvements. Several ideas for this street were suggested at the work sessions, ranging from bicycle lanes (at least one going uphill, if there is not room for a lane

on each side of the street) to curb bulbs at the intersections, sidewalk lighting, signature trees, and heavily landscaped sidewalk widening.

- **Encourage the development of small and attractive urban plazas and pocket open spaces through design review and incentives.**

  Given the current shortage of open space in the community and recent and ongoing City actions to increase the population of residents and employees, such spaces will be at a premium. Workshop participants gave this issue a high priority and noted that the design review process would be an appropriate vehicle for securing ground-level open space in lieu of a greater amount of rooftop gardens or other project-related space available only to project residents. This could benefit from revision of design guidelines for the University District and this plan suggests such guidelines in the Appendix. Small plazas and pocket open spaces could be implemented by new development projects, or developer contributions could help build a fund for such features.

Figure 18. An example of a plaza appropriate for the University community.

- **Partner with the University of Washington to provide new public open spaces in conjunction with Southwest Campus development.**

  The University of Washington has provided open spaces, such as Sakuma Viewpoint, that are very attractive to local residents and the general public. As new buildings are constructed in the Southwest Campus, there may be opportunities to develop new open spaces useful to the needs of the campus and the community. In fact, such open spaces might serve as the binder that better integrates "town and gown."

  The recent improvements to NE Campus Parkway provide a good example of how a partnership could work. The City provided modest improvement funds for many of the new street and open space elements, while the University has provided and will maintain special landscaping. Community members, University representatives, and City staff collaborated on the design, and University art and architecture students added the substantive artwork.

- **Maintain and protect existing open space resources, including University Playfield, Campus Parkway, the 7th Avenue NE p-patch, Peace Park, Sakuma Viewpoint, and the green in front of the City's University Branch Library.**

  All of these open spaces are important resources for the community, without regard to ownership, and several have been enhanced through community efforts. The artwork on Campus Parkway, the intensive gardening at the p-patch, and the new gateway at University Playfield attest to the fondness community members feel toward existing open spaces, and the new Northlake Park currently under development at the 7th Avenue NE street end will add another small focal point.

  University District advocacy groups could help maintain and protect existing open spaces by continuing their active stewardship of these community resources.

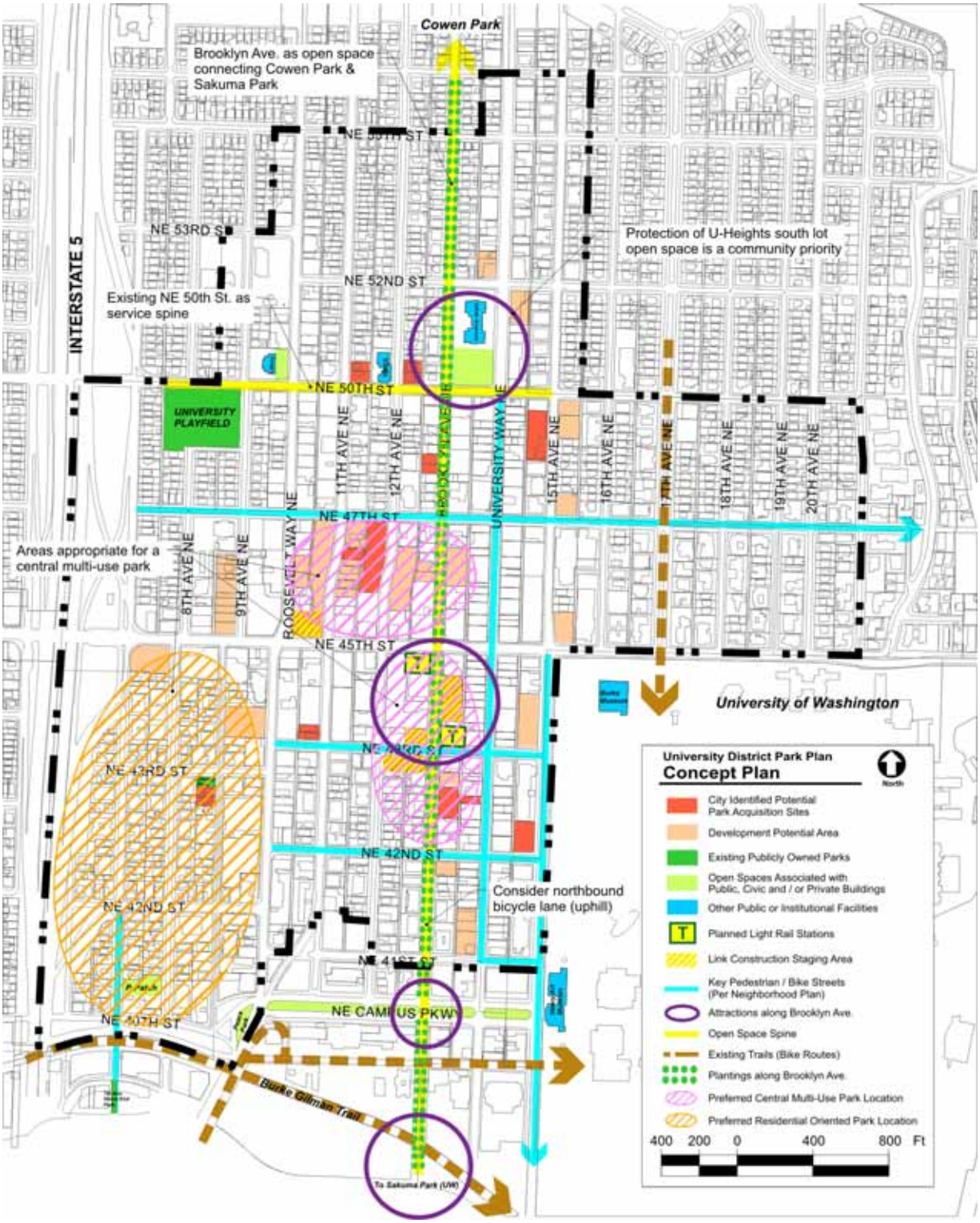


Figure 19. Concept plan for the University District

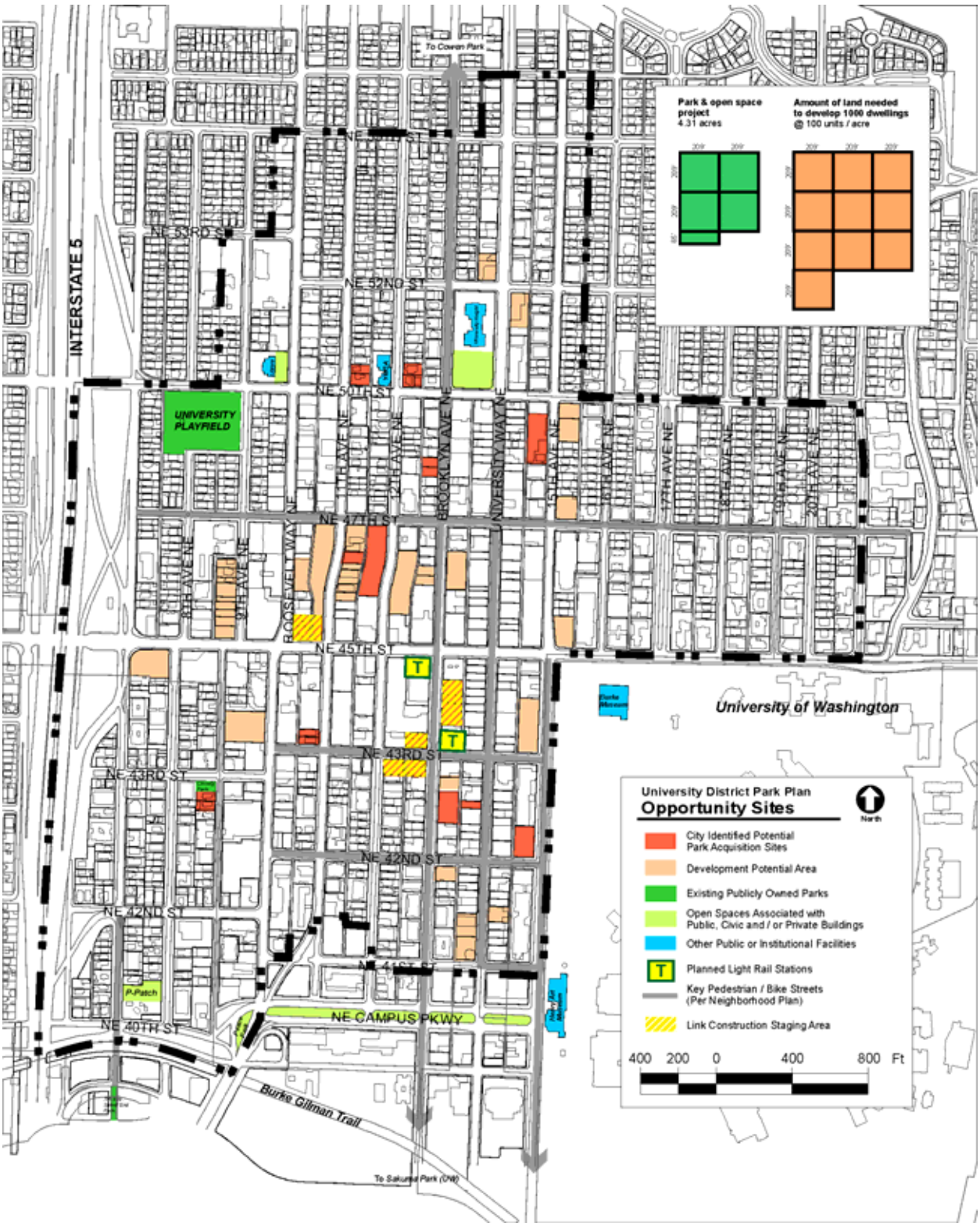


Figure 20. University District opportunity sites.

V. Implementation

A. Park and Open Space Design

Use guidelines in the planning and design of parks and open space.

The draft open space development guidelines included in the Appendix are intended for several purposes including:

- Assist in evaluating potential acquisition sites.
- Facilitate programming and design of new parks and improvements to existing parks.
- Provide direction in the review of open space design as part of private development.

The guidelines address a variety of locational, programmatic, and design objectives including safety, security, use, durability, and attractiveness. The provisions of these guidelines support other implementation measures and responds to workshop participants who overwhelmingly noted the importance of safety, security, use flexibility, and attractiveness in maximizing the effectiveness of limited open space resources.

The guidelines address the following topics:

General Guidelines

- Sunlight
- Accessibility
- Incentives
- Grade
- Views
- Information
- Wind and weather
- Size
- Noise
- Seating
- Amenities
- Spatial variety and articulated edges
- Good management

Use

- High-priority uses
- Adjacent open spaces
- Adjacent uses
- Peripheral uses
- Services extending the range of uses

Relationship to Street

- Orientation
- Accessibility
- Green Streets

Safety and Security (CPTED)

- Natural surveillance
- Lighting
- Landscaping
- Fencing
- Windows
- Entrances
- Natural access control
- Territoriality
- Maintenance and target hardening
- Defensible space

B. Park Acquisition and Development

Seek to acquire a significant central open space in the near-term.

Parks currently has approximately $2 million in Pro Parks Levy and Conservation Futures Tax funding to acquire a site for a new park in the University District. Based on the analysis of this study and the recommendations of the University Community Urban Center Plan, the top priority should be for a centrally located site sufficient to accommodate a range of activities. Current land values in the District vary with location, zoning, and site configuration, but this funding appears sufficient to purchase a site between one-quarter and one-half acre in size.

Figure 20 shows identified opportunity sites that potentially may be available for purchase. Ideally, the park site would be adjacent to new development with its own open space so that the public investment would leverage additional open space that would benefit the development as well as the general public. Another possibility could be to purchase a LINK construction staging site and develop a park after the light-rail construction is completed. Unfortunately, there is not much time to deal with potential developers, and Sound Transit's LINK alignment appears unlikely to be resolved during near term.

Given these constraints, five site acquisition/joint development opportunities stand out for special consideration. It is recommended that Parks continue to explore acquisition of the following sites in order of priority (with joint development on a portion of the UDPA property - University District Parking Association - being highest priority). Suggested activities are listed below each site.

(1) University District Parking Association (UDPA) Lot Between NE 45th Street, 12th Avenue NE, NE 47th Street, and 11th Avenue NE.

This large site is presently a UDPA parking lot, but it offers the opportunity for a joint park/mixed-use development project. Park development would ideally be timed with new private development, and commercial parking might be part of the mix. Parks might also seek to acquire a portion of the site and lease the property back to UDPA until a feasible development plan is prepared. Because the lot slopes to the south, a number of park, subsurface parking, and development configurations might be possible. Suggested steps include:

Figure 21 UDPA lot at 11th Avenue NE and NE 47th Street.

a. Continue contacts with UDPA to determine if there is an interest in the approach described above.

b. If there is an interest, explore site planning and ownership agreement options for a high-quality mixed-use park integrated into new development.

(2) University Heights South Lot.

This site was identified as a top priority in the neighborhood plan, and stakeholder work session participants reiterated its importance. Suggested steps include:

Figure 22. University Heights Center South Lot.

a. Work with the UHCC to develop an agreed program and approach to propose to the School District. Make sure that the UHCC can accept Parks' policy not to use the park site as a parking lot. Prepare guidelines as needed for the use and management of other areas, such as the community garden, plaza, and children's play area.

b. Jointly approach the School District with a proposal for Parks to purchase the South Lot. Conduct three-party discussions to determine if a mutually beneficial acquisition/management agreement can be developed.

(3) Northeast or Northwest Corner of NE 43rd Street and Brooklyn Avenue NE.

The former bank and IHOP sites are currently owned by Safeco and programmed for their campus expansion. However, it may still be useful to explore the possibility of acquiring a park space on either of the corners in conjunction with allowing Safeco to build a taller tower so that their development capacity is maintained. (Note: This has been attempted, but the window of opportunity may now have closed. However, a small but efficient multi-use park might fill the needs of both Safeco and the University District community.) Suggested steps include:

Figure 23. Northeast corner of NE 43rd Street and Brooklyn Avenue NE.

a. Approach Safeco, the City Council, and the Mayor's office to determine if there is any interest in exploring a park option in this area.

b. If there is an interest among all parties, conduct an informal work session with Safeco's developers and Parks staff to explore design/master planning options.

c. If the team identifies a mutually agreeable option, review as appropriate with stakeholders and refine it.

(4) Two Residential Lots South of Christie Park (9th Avenue NE south of NE 43rd Street).

While this site is not centrally located or near where most new growth is expected, adding the two lots would enhance Christie Park's value to the local neighborhood, which is currently underserved by public open space. Because this site would primarily serve the nearby vicinity rather than a more central, high-growth area, this site is a lower immediate priority than the preceding sites. If this site is not acquired with current Pro Parks Levy funding, however, Parks should still seek to

Figure 24. Christie Park.

acquire these lots in the mid-term future.

(5) Southwest Corner of NE 43rd Street and Brooklyn Avenue NE.

Although this site is on the north side of the block and subject to shading by development to the south, its central location makes it attractive as a park site. It is suggested that the current property owners be approached with an offer to purchase the property. Parks could lease the lot for parking until development funds are available.

Figure 25. Southwest corner of NE 43rd Street and Brooklyn Avenue NE.

C. Streetscape Improvement Strategy

Participate in the preparation of a street improvement plan for Brooklyn Avenue NE.

While many sections of Brooklyn Avenue NE provide a pleasant residential setting and pedestrian sequence, its sixty-foot curb-to-curb width, the planned redevelopment along it, and its route connecting several community attractions make it an important street improvement opportunity.

Figure 26. Brooklyn Avenue NE

Because the City recently completed the $8 million "Ave" improvements to University Way, it is unlikely that money will be available for a full reconstruction of Brooklyn's sidewalk and streetscape elements in the near future. However, a conceptual scheme for Brooklyn Avenue NE should be developed in the next one to two years so that the City will know what kinds of street improvements should be installed as part of new development. Such a plan would also allow the City to upgrade Brooklyn over time as a series of small projects or portions of larger engineering system upgrades. This is especially true since Brooklyn Avenue NE will be the center of the expanded Safeco campus, is an important connector in the UW's Southwest Campus, and is being considered as one of the sites for the District's LINK light-rail station. While the leadership of this plan might fall to the Department of Planning and Development or the Department of Transportation, Parks should actively participate in the effort.

Because Brooklyn Avenue NE is important to so many groups and institutions, the street improvement plan should be a cooperative effort, with the opportunity for all interests to participate. Such an open process has been beyond the limitations of this plan. However, the following street design ideas and principles have arisen during public participation and should be considered in future street improvement planning.

a. Consider the needs of bicyclists. The neighborhood plan noted that Brooklyn Avenue NE is the best north-south corridor in the district for bicyclists and recommended that it be designated a "green street" and signed as a bicycle route. Participants in this effort suggested striping a bicycle lane in the uphill (northbound) direction.

b. Evaluate options to narrow the street to make room for additional landscaping. This may conflict with the idea of a bicycle lane or a signed bicycle route.

c. Acknowledge that the street has several different segments with different characters. Brooklyn Avenue NE transitions from a single-family residential street in the north to a commercial district with a number of parking lots, Safeco's expanded campus, a higher-density residential area, and the UW Southwest Campus to the south. Each of these different contexts might best be supported by a different streetscape character. At the same time, some segments already feature mature street tree plantings that should be retained unless there is a compelling reason to the contrary.

d. Increase the street's design continuity. Adding a stronger, more continuous, and unifying design character would give the street a stronger identity as a north-south connector. This objective might seem to contradict principle "c" above, which stresses the street's diverse nature, but the two goals are not mutually exclusive. Greater continuity might be achieved by unifying elements, such as distinctive lights, pavements, or a color scheme. Directional signs pointing to attractions along the corridor might also add to the street's image, especially if the signs feature a unique design.

e. Consider sidewalk extensions (bulbs) at intersections. Widening the sidewalk about seven feet (less than the width of a parking lane) would ease pedestrian crossing, visually narrow the street (which tends to reduce vehicle speed), and provide a space for a highly visible unifying element, such as a signature street tree or special lighting fixture. The bulbs should not extend into the space normally used by bicyclists.

D. Regulation and Incentive Program Actions

With substantial growth anticipated for the University District over the next 20 years, there is an opportunity to develop additional open space in conjunction with private development. The Department of Planning and Development is proposing to reduce the required amount of project-related open space for residential use in commercial zones from 20 percent to 10 percent of the residential gross floor area, and allow part of that requirement to be met indoors or by contributions to public open space projects located off-site. This would help provide for residents' needs in all seasons, and be better aligned with similar requirements in multifamily residential zones. However, it would also increase the need for public open space in the neighborhood.

(1) Continue to participate in the City's design review process to ensure that open space and streetscape improvements provided as part of new development are safe and useful and are consistent with the parks and open space objectives of the community and this plan. The design guidelines in the Appendix provide a tool for the evaluation of project proposals. Participants in the stakeholder work sessions emphasized the need for small plazas and open space provided as part of new development. This emphasis should be communicated to the local Design Review Board and considered in project review.

(2) Participate in the City's current regulatory efforts that would provide parks funding in conjunction with private development activity. The fee-in-lieu program and the park impact fees that are being considered for the Center City may

be appropriate in the University District, especially if the project-related open space requirement is reduced.

a. **Fee-in-Lieu Program.** This program would provide residential developers an option to pay a fee in lieu of providing up to 50 percent of their required project-related open space on site. While the program would allow for reduced on-site open space, it would provide money that would be pooled with other resources to provide public open space. The money collected from each private project would have to be spent within five years of receipt and allocated to a nearby public site within walking distance of the contributing project(s).

b. **Impact Fees.** Under this program impact fees would be exacted from all types of development (commercial and residential). The fees would be based on the size of development, cost of land in the immediate area, and Park Plan 2000 policies. The subject fees for an individual development may not be sufficient to fully fund a new park so fees from several projects must be combined to be effective. The City is now considering the formula for collecting fees for the full range of possible uses in the Center City.

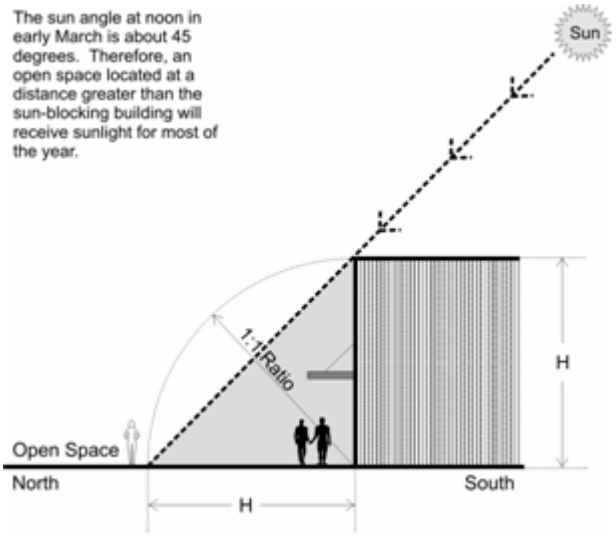
Appendix
Guidelines for Parks and Open Space

The following guidelines are intended to assist City staff, property owners, and citizens participating in the planning, programming, and design of open spaces accessible to the public. Potential uses include guidance to:

- Department of Parks & Recreation staff in evaluating sites for acquisition.
- Those planning and designing public parks and open space.
- Design Review Boards in their evaluation of private development projects.
- City staff reviewing proposals for development incentive programs.

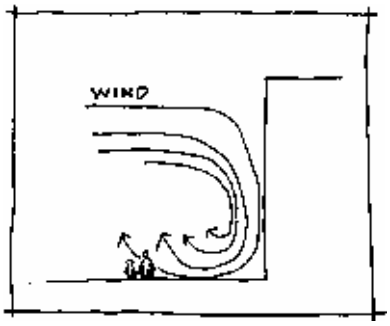
General Guidelines

General guidelines apply across a broad range of conditions and are intended for a wide variety of objectives.

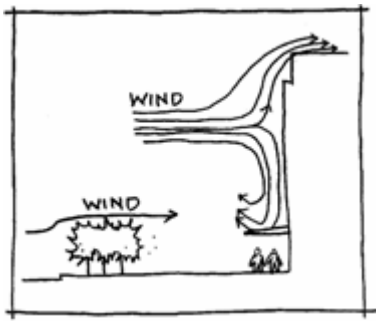


- **Sunlight:** All applicable open spaces should be sited to receive direct, year-round sunlight at noon, if possible. This is especially true of areas with predominantly passive activities, such as seating and picnicking. Direct sunlight is less important, although desirable, in active areas, such as sports courts and off-leash areas. Locate seating for good sun exposure. Consider "heat traps"—south-facing areas with walls reflecting sunlight.
- **Accessibility:** All facilities must comply with the Americans with Disabilities Act.
- **Transit:** All applicable facilities should be integrated with adjacent transit stops by, at a minimum, providing physical and visual access from the transit stop area.
- **Incentives:** When administering regulatory and incentive programs, engage developers to meet both public and private open space objectives by encouraging coordinated open space development and coordinated public/private improvements.
- **Grade:** Unless there is a compelling reason to the contrary, locate plazas and small parks no more than 3 feet above or below street level.
- **Views:** Take advantage of views and other amenities.

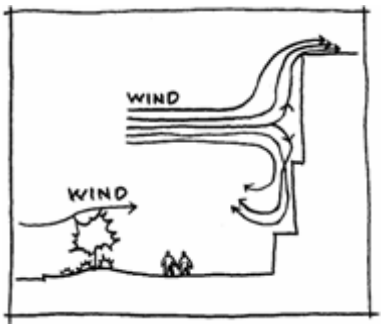
- **Information:** Provide easy access to public information and telephones.
- **Wind and Weather:**
  - Avoid seating in the center of larger, unprotected areas.
  - Avoid wind funnels: narrow openings between buildings.
  - Provide weather protection where appropriate, especially where it can extend the hours of use.



Wind impacts



Wind protection



Another means of wind protection

- **Size:** Urban plazas will generally have a "human scale" if they are less than 60 feet across.
- **Noise:** High levels of traffic, industrial, and other ambient noises detract from the enjoyment of a plaza. Noise can be partially mitigated by detracting attention from the noise source through the introduction of such elements as fountains or waterfalls.
- **Seating:** Provide adequate seating in protected areas. Generally, for urban plazas, provide one linear foot of seating per 30 square feet of plaza. Movable seating and tables are encouraged. Ledges and steps can also serve as seating, provided they are at least 16 inches in depth.
- **Amenities:** Provide necessary site furniture and amenities, such as waste receptacles, bicycle racks, fountains, game tables, kiosks, children's play equipment, and artwork.
- **Spatial Variety and Articulated Edges:** Unless there is a specific symbolic or functional desire to accommodate large-scale activities, large open spaces should be spatially defined into smaller, more easily identifiable and relatable areas that facilitate orientation and territory definition. People commonly gather at articulated edges in or around a plaza. A distinct sense of place can be achieved, in part, by defining edges and establishing a sense of enclosure through the use of canopies, trees, arcades, and trellises, which must be balanced with issues of visibility and defensibility.
- **Good Management:** During planning and design, consider how the park will be managed and maintained. Consider programmed events, regular or seasonal activities, and opportunities for Adopt-A-Park activities.

Use

Use guidelines deal with the number and types of activities in parks, plazas, and open spaces. They are particularly relevant to park planning and space programming activities.

- **High-Priority Uses:** When programming the uses for an applicable park and/or recreational facility, refer to high-priority park and recreation uses identified in the Urban Center Park Plan and/or the neighborhood plan. Endeavor to include at least two of the high-priority uses

in the improvement. The mix of compatible uses at each facility should encourage increased use and human activity, expanded hours of usage, and optimized benefit from an individual asset.

- **Adjacent Open Spaces:** Where possible, open space adjacent to, or near, other open spaces should feature complementary uses and appropriate circulation. Combining open space on adjacent parcels is generally desirable. Safe, well-lit pedestrian connections—especially through-block connections—are encouraged and should be a feature of open space planning on full-block developments.

- **Adjacent Uses:** Consider adjacent land uses in park location and design. Ensure that park design and activities are compatible as much as possible with adjacent uses. Where possible, integrate parks with adjacent properties in terms of circulation patterns, spatial layout, and design character.
- **Peripheral Uses:** For plazas, small parks, and portions of larger parks, peripheral uses that generate activity, such as eating and drinking outlets, small retail, and music performances, are particularly important to the parks' attractiveness and liveliness.
- **Services Extending the Range of Uses:** Provide secure electrical outlets, water spigots, and other services that will encourage a greater range of uses, such as concerts, multimedia art, and special activities.

Relationship to Street

A park's orientation to the street is an important factor for a number of reasons, including access, security, and attractiveness. The nature of the street/park relationship depends on both the character of the park and that of the street. Therefore, the following guidelines should be conditioned by the nature of the adjacent street.

- **Orientation:** If the site fronts on a designated Green Street or Principal Pedestrian Street in a Pedestrian-Designated Zone and the park or recreational facility is desirable on such a street, then the applicable facility should be oriented to that street unless the City finds that there is a compelling reason to the contrary.
- **Accessibility:** All applicable facilities should be directly—physically and visually—accessible from the adjacent street. Depending on the type of uses and design character, the open space may either be directly integrated with the sidewalk or separated by an appropriate enclosure with one or more prominent entries.
- **Green Streets:** Address the following guidance regarding Green Streets:

  (a) Green Streets are intended to:
    - Serve as landscaped open spaces connecting the surrounding neighborhoods.
    - Foster and focus pedestrian and neighborhood activity.
    - Create a sense of neighborhood identity.
    - Integrate buildings and open spaces into a more unified whole.

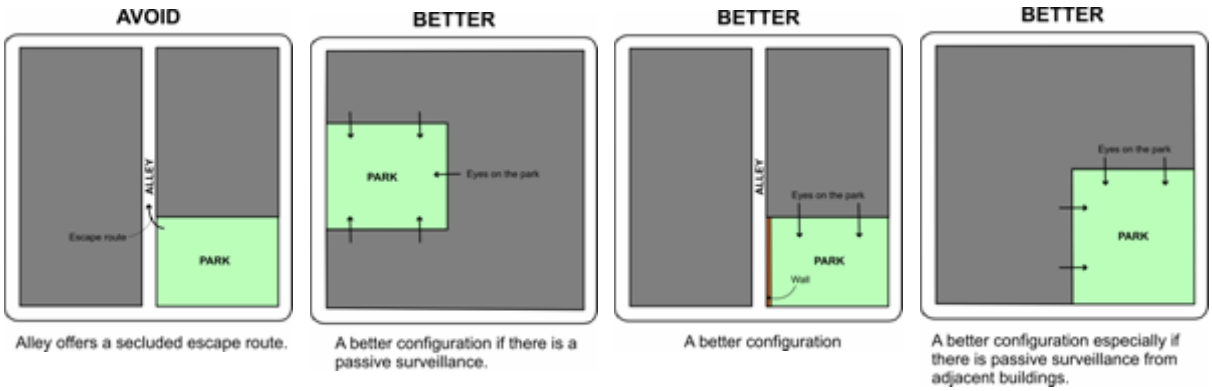
(b) As opposed to larger, high-volume streets, which are intended to be attractive and continuous thoroughfares, Green Streets are more neighborhood oriented, intimate, and activity focused. Given this direction, parks on, or connected to, Green Streets should conform to the following guidelines:

- Open spaces and public facilities should enhance neighborhood circulation by connecting directly to Green Streets and, if possible, provide a mid-block connection.
- Open spaces should enhance approaches and entries into buildings.
- Open spaces should include pedestrian elements and features to attract a wide variety of users.
- Open spaces should be visible from the street. In most cases, integration of the open space with the sidewalk will be desired. However, in some cases, such as an off-leash area, children's playground, or enclosed oasis-type space, some separation between the park and the street may be preferred.
- A variety of open spaces is desired; therefore, new open spaces should not duplicate existing spaces but provide different settings and activities.
- The selection of landscape elements, such as plant materials, paving, lighting, and site furniture, should consider those elements of the Green Street streetscape. In some cases, it may be best to integrate or extend the streetscape elements; in other cases complementary or contrasting elements may be preferred.
- Park designs that create gateways to a neighborhood are encouraged.
- Parks and open spaces should include neighborhood-defining elements such as art and signs.

Safety and Security (CPTED)

Crime Prevention Through Environmental Design (CPTED) refers to a group of strategies intended to reduce the fear of crime and the opportunities to commit crime. It acknowledges that the existing environment can influence criminal behavior. The application of CPTED guidelines is critical to the safety and success of new parks. The guidelines below are based on the City of Seattle's Facility Standards and the Seattle Police Department's Crime Prevention Program.

- **Natural Surveillance:** Natural surveillance, or "passive surveillance," occurs when areas of the park are open to view by the public and neighbors. For example, the ability of neighboring residents or workers to look down on the park is a major crime deterrent. Where possible, urban park and plaza design should maximize the number of "eyes on the park."



Location and configuration can affect park safety significantly.

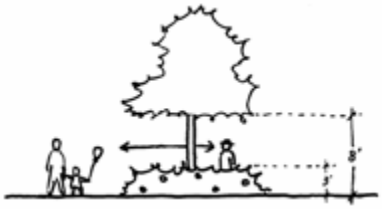
Another aspect of natural surveillance is the ability of an officer driving by or through the park to see the facilities that might be targeted by offenders. The screening and vegetation around the parking lots should be trimmed to allow visibility of the ground plane. Orient restrooms, shelters, and other structures so that they are easily visible from the roadways and parking areas.

- **Lighting:** Lighting should reflect the intended hours of operation; i.e., lighting of playfields or structures in local parks may actually encourage after-hour criminal activities. Motion-sensing lights perform the double duty of providing light when needed and letting trespassers know that "they have been seen."

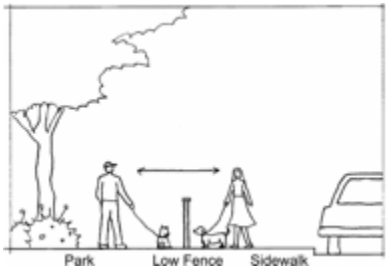
  Unless there is a compelling reason to the contrary, provide at least the following minimum light levels:
  - Areas of high activity, attractions (such as fountains), or special services (such as phone booths): 4 foot-candles.
  - Pedestrian paths: 2 foot-candles.
  - General areas of low activity where security is a concern and parking: 1 foot-candle.

  Use cut-off fixtures to avoid light spill to adjacent properties.

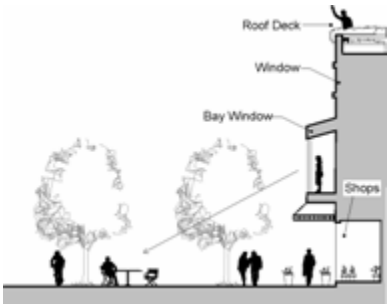
- **Landscaping:** Avoid irregularly shaped sites that offer hiding places. Plants should follow the 3-to-8 rule of thumb: hedges no higher than 3 feet and tree canopies starting no lower than 8 feet. This is especially important around entryways and windows. Landscaping should also be designed so that it does not interfere with lighting design.



- **Fencing:** Fences should allow people to see into the park and to spaces within the park. Avoid fences that create entrapment areas.



- **Entrances:** Park entrances should be prominent, well-lit, and highly visible from inside and outside of the park.
- **Windows:** Encourage windows that look out onto parks and provide good natural surveillance. Parks with residential and/or other adjacent uses that look out onto the park space will discourage criminal activity. Retirees, stay-at-home parents, and people working from home offices can provide good surveillance for the neighborhood during the day.



- **Natural Access Control:** Access control refers to homes, businesses, parks, and other public areas having distinct and legitimate points for entry and exit. However, this should also be balanced to avoid "user entrapment"—not allowing for easy escape or police

response to an area. Generally, crime perpetrators will avoid areas that only allow them one way to enter and exit, that have high visibility, and/or that have a high volume of user traffic. This can be assured by:

- *Entry Points:* Park designs with open, uninhibited visibility and a defined entry point generally, but not always, can discourage criminal activity. A good example is a park with transparent fencing around the perimeter and one large opening in the gate for entry. Putting active uses near this entrance creates more traffic and more surveillance.
- *Circulation:* Park entries and walkways should be emphasized with lighting, landscaping, and signage so that users can clearly see them.
- *Buildings:* Park building entrances should be accentuated through architectural elements, lighting, landscaping, or other treatments.
- *Borders:* Visible and attractive borders that separate the park from private spaces should be provided.
- *Restrooms:* Park restrooms should be located in visible, well-trafficked areas—preferably visible from an adjacent roadway, but the park should be visible from adjacent uses.

- **Territoriality:** Territoriality means showing that your community "owns" your neighborhood. While this includes removing graffiti and keeping buildings and yards maintained, it also refers to small personal touches. Creating flower gardens or boxes, putting out seasonal decorations, or maintaining the plants in traffic circles sends a clear message that people in the neighborhood care and won't tolerate crime in their area. This approach is often called "fixing broken windows" after the book by George Kelling and Catherine Coles, which demonstrates that such proactive actions can reduce crime.
- **Maintenance and Target Hardening:** Well-maintained parks send the message that the area is well cared for, observed, and owned. Target hardening, as the name suggests, is constructing the facility so that it is a difficult crime target and deals more with the design of the individual site feature than the park's layout. Target hardening includes methods such as:
  - *Boundaries:* Utilize appropriate plants to maintain site lines.
  - *Materials:* Durable, high-quality, and maintainable exterior materials should be used.
  - *Walls:* Walls should be treated in a way that deters graffiti. Provide texture, anti-graffiti coverings, or landscaping, as appropriate.
  - *Locking Systems.*
- **Defensible Space:** Do not locate or design parks where potential perpetrators can lurk or commit a crime and then flee via a convenient escape route. Parks bordering on a dark alley or a secluded ravine, for example, can invite predators. The site diagrams below offer positive and negative examples.