

U District Neighborhood Design Guidelines Update

Public Realm Workshop Background Information

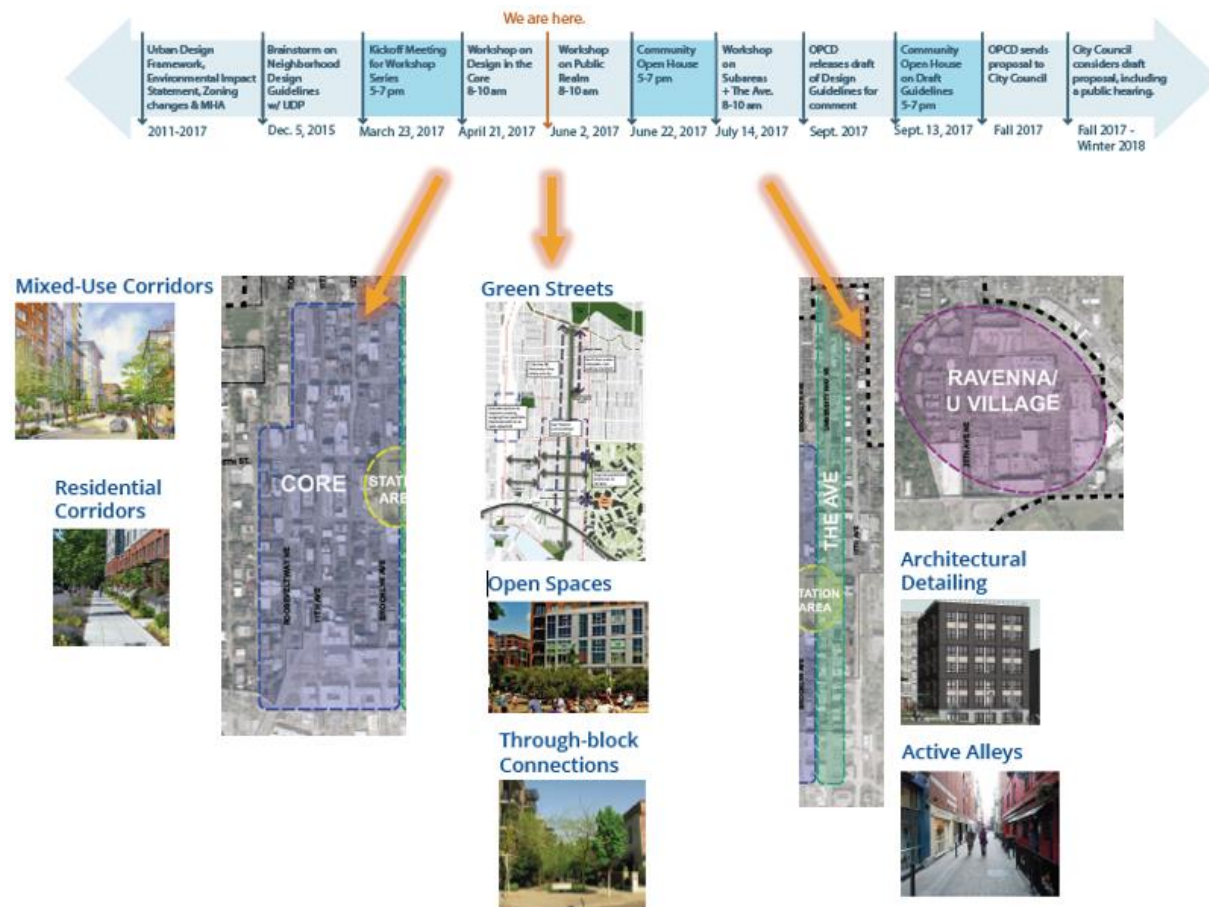
June 2, 2017

Where we are in the Design Guidelines Update process?

We are currently in the information gathering stage, exploring key topic areas that are important for determining which aspects of the existing neighborhood design guidelines need updating, and for identifying new guidelines that may be necessary to address the changes in the character of future development within the U District.

Information gathered from today's workshop session and earlier sessions along with input gathered during the U District Streetfair and via the UDP webpage will be shared at the Open House meeting scheduled for June 22.

TIMELINE AND TOPIC AREAS



Design Guidelines Input to date

OPCD has been gathering input from the community about design of the public realm throughout the planning process, beginning with the development of the 2013 Urban Design Framework plan (UDF). This input also influenced updates to the U District Parks Plan, development of the Green Streets concept plans, and development standards adopted for the SM-U zones.

Input from previous workshops and events where Design Guidelines were discussed

OPCD and the UDP continue to collect input from community members related to design guidelines. The following are highlights of what we have heard to date related to the Public Realm. At the upcoming open house scheduled for June 22, OPCD will present a summary of all the public input collected to date for the community to review and respond to.

What do people like, want to see more of - favorable comments:

- Trees and landscaping lend to the favorable opinion of existing and recent developments (overall, greenery, landscaping and trees are noted very frequently when people “like” a project)
- More retention of existing trees
- More open space along the street frontage
- Accessible privately owned public space (POPS)
- People notice and like street furnishings, places to sit
- Using open space areas to break up building mass
- Terraces and balconies
- Use of many/large windows
- Visual interest at street level
- Provision of covered spaces at street level – awnings
- Like mix of uses at street level
- Use of lighting to enhance public spaces
- Making usable spaces out of courtyards and alleys
- Large sidewalk areas with setback and stoops for residential units
- Material likes: brick most often noted, also materials with sense of permanence, quality
- Art installations on site
- Enhanced gateway sites, set back buildings at gateway corners
- Inclusion of wayfinding features
- Good transition spaces between street and building entrances

What do people dislike, want to discourage – unfavorable comments:

- Not enough greenery/landscaping
- Lack of accessibility to open space and building entries
- Building is not engaging of the sidewalk
- Lack of pedestrian scale
- Lack of privacy (for residential uses)
- Streetscape that is not activated – feels unsafe
- Buildings are too plain, too boxy, lack visual interest
- Material dislikes: large cladding panels, reflective glass
- Streetscape/building design that is not compatible with existing character

U District Parks Plan 2015 Update

The UDP worked in collaboration with Seattle Parks and Recreation, OPCD (then DPD) and MAKERS (consultant) to develop the Parks Plan Update. Below is a copy of the map that illustrates the “Planning Concept” and highlights six physical strategies that support the community vision.



The six physical strategies listed below in priority from 'Very High' to 'High.'

PUBLICLY-OWNED CENTRAL SQUARE

A large, publicly-owned gathering space for all types of people in the District.

NORTH-SOUTH GREEN SPINE

A vegetation, pedestrian, and cycle connection(s) and safety from Cowen Park to the waterfront.

EAST-WEST PEDESTRIAN CONNECTIONS

More pedestrian options between NE 41st St and NE 45th St Campus Parkway, including mid-block pass-throughs and improved streetscape.

ACTIVATE EXISTING AND PLANNED PARKS

Enhancements and additional uses to existing and planned parks.

POCKET PLAZAS

Small, publicly-accessible spaces, integrated into activate streets and new development.

UW CAMPUS EDGE

Better integration with UW open spaces, the addition of new attractions, and celebrated entrances along 15th Ave NE.

SM-U Zone – Public Realm-related design standards.

There are several design and development standard requirements and incentives that apply to development within the SM-U – zoned areas and help contribute to the public realm.



On-site publicly accessible open space:

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. This provides open space and helps offset the bulk and massing of a large development. Typically provided as a plaza as part of a development, and open to the public. A developer can earn this extra floor area through fee-in-lieu if contributions are used toward a public park or privately developed open space.

Open space (23.48.650,).

- Large lots must set aside 15% of the lot area as accessible open space
- Area must be visibly and physically accessible from street level
- Area should be one connected area, unless open space is larger than 4,500 sq. ft. in which case it may be broken up into separate locations as long as no separate area is less than 2,000 square feet
- At least 60% of the area must be open to the sky.
- A maximum of 20% of the area may be covered overhead by a structure such as an arcade
- A maximum of 35% of the area may be enclosed, such as an atrium, or covered portion of a mid-block pedestrian corridor.
- The minimum horizontal dimension allowed is 10 feet and the average is no less than 20 feet
- Open space may be provided on an alternate open space site as long as the site is located within a SM-U zone and within 500 feet of the project site.

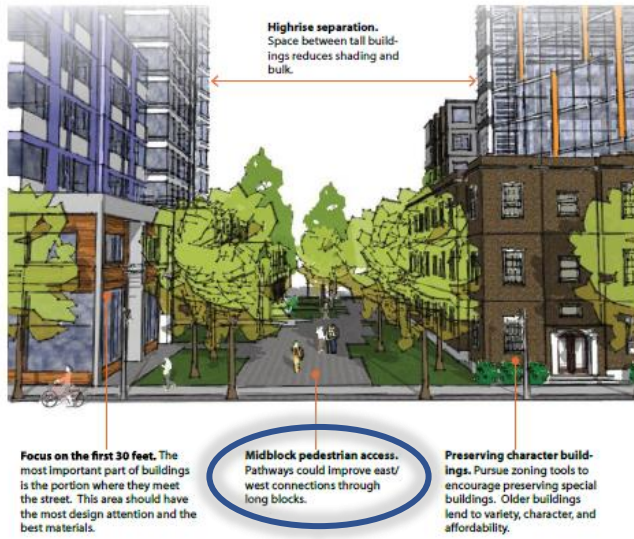
Image above from the 2015 U District Parks Plan Update

Incentive zoning (23.58A.040 Bonus floor area for open space amenities)

- In order to build more than the base allowable floor area (FAR), developments must provide one or more of a number of site amenities of which publicly accessible open space is one.
- The following types of open space areas can count toward this bonus floor area:

- Neighborhood open space
- Green street setbacks on lots abutting designated green streets
- Green street improvements (adjacent to, or within ¼ mile of the site by payment-in-lieu
- Mid-block corridor; and
- Hillside terrace
- Neighborhood open space must meet minimum standards to count toward bonus floor area:
 - Minimum of 3,000 square feet in size and minimum horizontal dimension of 10 feet
 - Minimum 35 percent of area shall be landscaped with grass, ground cover, bushes, and/or trees.
 - Seating must be provided
 - Open space shall be configured to maximize solar exposure, allow easy access from streets and allow convenient pedestrian circulation.
 - Must be visually and physically accessible
 - Up to 20% of the space may be covered with kiosks, or pedestrian shelters, overhangs, arcades or art, that contributes to pedestrian comfort and active use of the space.
 - Some space may be reserved for customer seating for restaurants abutting the space, but is limited to 500 square feet or 15% of the open space area, whichever is less.
- Green Street setback areas must meet minimum standards to count toward bonus floor area:
 - Setback shall be continuous for the length of the frontage of the lot abutting the green street, and a minimum of 50% of the setback area shall be landscaped.
 - Area of driveways is not included
 - Average setback from lot line shall no exceed 10 feet with a maximum setback of 5 feet.
 - Design of setback areas shall allow for public access such as access to street-level uses in abutting structures or access to areas for seating.
- (23.48.620.D) Private amenity areas are required for projects that are achieving a floor area exemption for larger “family-friendly” residential units. The SM-U 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).

Mid-Block Corridors (23.48.640)



Midblock pedestrian corridor (23.48.640)

Midblock corridors can play two important roles in U District development. First, they will allow more paths for east/west pedestrian movement – allowing more flexible routes and opportunities for ground level businesses.

Second, if applied to large lot developments, they will serve to break up development into a more appropriate scale for the neighborhood.

Map B for 23.48.640
Area requiring mid-block corridors



Mid-block corridors are required for development on lots that exceed 30,000 square feet and abut two north/south avenues.

The ends of the corridor 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 can also count toward open space requirements. If the corridor is open to the public, it will be eligible to earn extra floor area allowed through incentive zoning.



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

The U District 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. Improvements along the green streets may also count toward incentive zoning requirements.

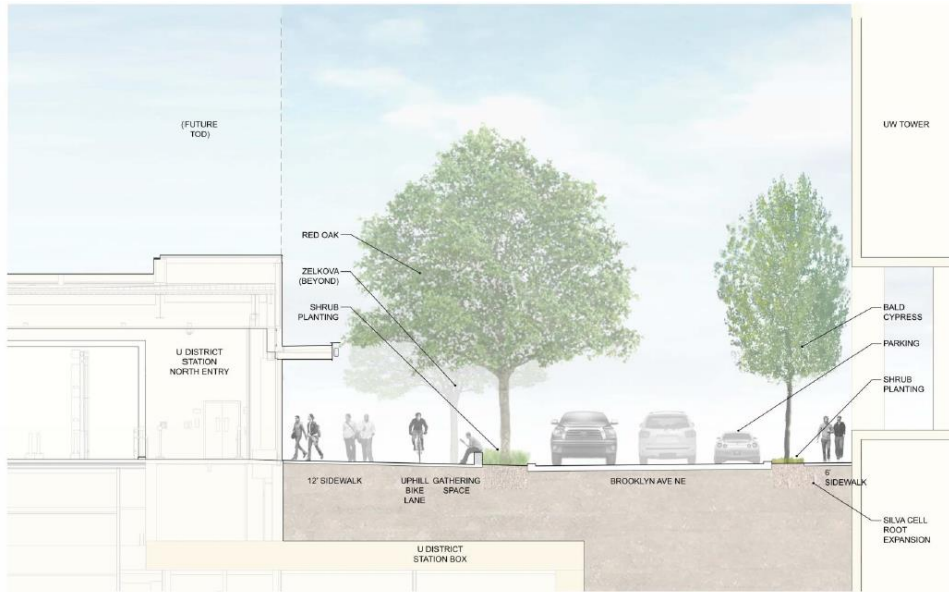
Green street right-of-way improvements. New sidewalks, landscaping, bike facilities, or other features identified in a streetscape concept plan. These improvements can be abutting the development site, or on a designated green street within a quarter mile.

Development adjacent to designated green streets



On the following page are a cross-section and site plan showing the 90% Design drawings for the ROW improvements at the Light Rail Station Site (Brooklyn Ave NE and NE 43rd St).

Streetscape Improvements at Light Rail Station Site:



Section Through Brooklyn Ave NE



Site Plan

Amenity areas for Multifamily development (23.48.045)

Residential amenity space is required for any project that includes more than 20 residential units. It must be equal to at least 5% of total gross 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.

- All residents shall have access to the required amenity area
- Amenity area may be provided at or above ground level
- Minimum size of amenity area is 225 sq. ft.
- A maximum of 50 percent of the amenity area may be enclosed
- Minimum horizontal dimension of amenity areas is 15 feet (except that if provided as landscaped open space located at street level and accessible from the street, minimum horizontal dimension is 10 feet)
- Amenity area provided as landscaped open space located at street level and accessible from the street shall be counted as twice the actual area toward meeting the amenity area requirement
- Open space provided on site to meet the floor area bonus for open space amenities may also be counted toward amenity area for MF development if it meets the minimum standards
- If a lot abuts a designated Green Street, up to 50% of the amenity area requirement may be met by improving the abutting Green Street according to the adopted standards

Trees and landscaping and “Green Factor” (23.48.055)

All rezoned areas, including the SM-U designations at the core, are 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.

Street tree requirements

Street trees are required for almost all new development (exceptions for single family and minor modifications to existing structures/sites). The current tree canopy in the U District is 5%. With new development and requirement to plant street trees, it is estimated tree canopy will eventually exceed 15% - the City’s goal for mixed use areas.