Stephanie Bower, Architecural Illustration

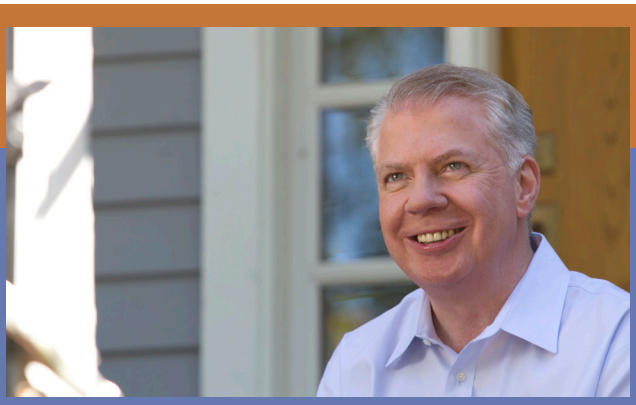
U DISTRICT URBAN DESIGN

Guiding Growth and Planning for Change

The U District is a thriving neighborhood with thousands of residents and an active business district. As home to UW, it's a cultural and economic hub and a magnet for the region's youth and talent. Neighborhood groups are working with the City to plan for growth and the arrival of light rail in 2021.

Neighborhood efforts underway include:

- ***Community partnerships***
- ***New zoning and design standards***
- ***City investments in transportation, open space, affordable housing, and human services***



Planning for Change in the U District

Dear Community Members:

Since 2011, the City of Seattle has been working collaboratively with the residents, the University of Washington, businesses, and leaders of the U District to ensure that as the neighborhood grows, it does so in a way that creates a livable, affordable, vibrant, and interconnected community for all. Together, we have tackled some tough issues and laid out a plan that reflects many voices. From light rail and affordable housing, to creating open space—the U District is charting its own future.

Last year, I created the Office of Planning and Community Development (OPCD) to help the U District, and all Seattle neighborhoods, do the hard work of planning for growth. Their charge is to engage people across Seattle and work with City departments to meet the needs of neighborhoods. Here in the U District, OPCD is working with community-based organizations, businesses, neighbors, human service agencies, and the University of Washington to move your priorities forward.

The U District's Urban Design Framework identifies key strategies to address U District priorities including:

- Zoning and development standards to provide for a growing number of residents and people working in the neighborhood, while preserving the things that make the U District special;
- New requirements and incentives to provide affordable housing, open space, child care, and other amenities;
- Updated neighborhood design guidelines that support a livable, walkable neighborhood and the unique character of the U District;
- Green streets and other streetscape improvements that will host farmers markets and street festivals; and
- Additional parks, plazas, and open spaces for recreation and community events.

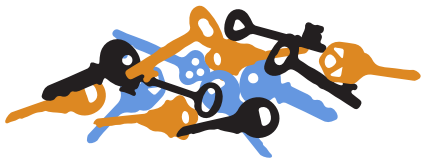
The following pages outline how, together, we will make this shared vision a reality. The City is ready to work with you, invest in the U District, and support a strong community as the neighborhood grows.

We must stay true to our vision for the future and our values of equity and inclusiveness. I am grateful for your work to create a bright future for everyone who lives, works, and visits the U District.

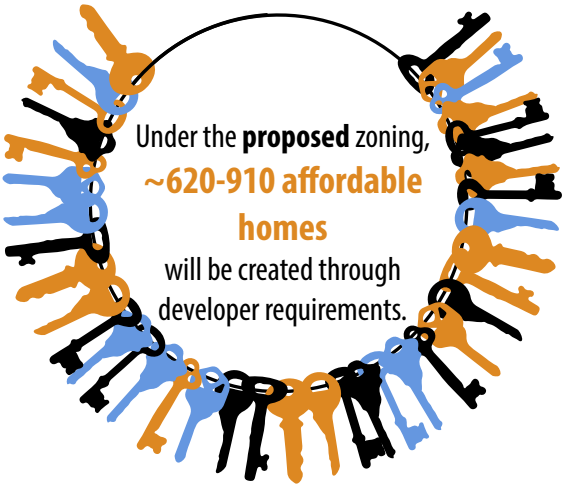
Sincerely,

Mayor Ed Murray

In the next 20 years,
40-275 homes
will be demolished,
with or without zoning changes.
Many of these have low rents.



Under **existing** zoning, no more than
20 affordable homes
would be created through incentives.



1 key = 20 homes

*In addition, four to five thousand market rate units will be created in the U District.

Guiding Growth

Zoning changes

The proposed zoning and design standards respond to growth and reflect community priorities. They encourage a variety of building types, and they provide for new affordable housing, open space, and streetscape improvements that will benefit the neighborhood.

The U District rezone will direct growth to blocks near light rail and campus, and it will lead to better-designed buildings. It will also help keep the neighborhood affordable for a diverse range of residents. This is a priority of the community and the Mayor.

Affordable housing

The proposed zoning for the U District incorporates Mandatory Housing Affordability (MHA) requirements, which will further increase the supply of affordable housing over time by an estimated 620-910 units.

Open space and other amenities

New zoning will require large sites to provide public open space, and residential development to provide open space for residents. Incentive programs will encourage new child care, schools, sidewalk improvements, and space for social services.

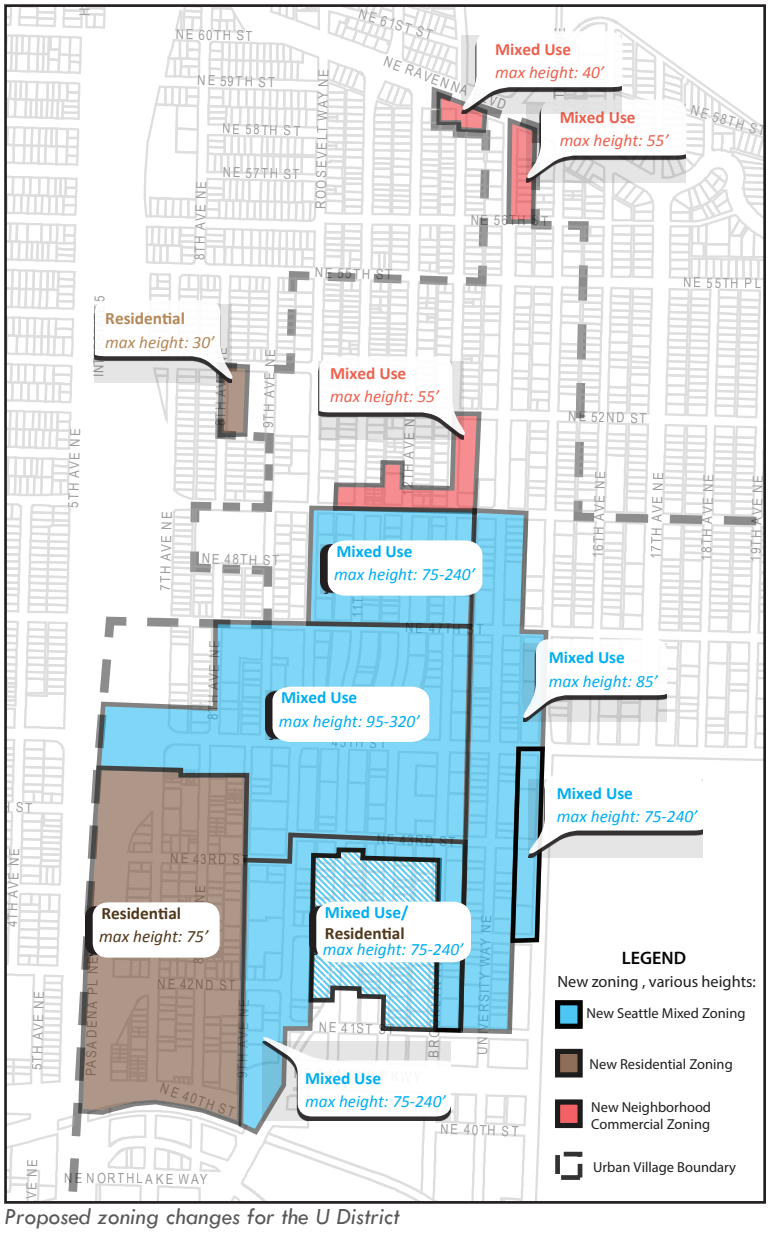
Preserving historic buildings

The proposed zoning allows developers to participate in a "transfer of development rights" (TDR) program where owners of historic buildings could sell development rights from their property to another property owner who wants to build bigger. Through this program, owners of older buildings in the U District could obtain funds for maintenance and improvements so that the buildings can be preserved.

Design standards

Proposed standards set the stage for variety and active street frontage. They allow a mix of heights and building forms instead of uniform midrise buildings.

The proposal responds to many of the community's priorities about how development should fit neighborhood context. New standards prevent overly wide buildings, apply setbacks and tower separation to control massing, and require pedestrian-friendly frontage.



Proposed zoning changes for the U District

For zones that show two height limits, many developments will be limited to the lower (midrise) height, some office buildings can go to 160', and some residential developments could include towers that achieve the higher listed height.

After new zoning for the U District neighborhood is adopted, the City will continue working with the community to update the neighborhood design guidelines. These guidelines supplement zoning requirements to reinforce the desired building character and to make sure that development is responsive to local transit, bicycle, and pedestrian improvement plans.

image: Stephanie Bower

Investing in the U District

YMCA redevelopment

New, larger facility will include transitional housing for homeless youth, a daycare, and an indoor pool.

CoMotion Labs (UW Innovation District)

photo: Conrado Tepado

New headquarter space for experts to partner with government, businesses, and nonprofits in forming start-ups.

Making walking and biking safer and easier

photo: Seattle Greenways

- Planned bike lanes for 11th Avenue
- Protected bike lanes under construction on Roosevelt, NE Campus Parkway, and NE 40th St
- Expanded sidewalks on NE 43rd St

New and redesigned parks

photo: Friends of University Playground

- New park at the University Heights Community Center
- Christie Park, a pocket park south of 45th, will be redesigned and doubled in size
- Large new waterfront park on Portage Bay (Seattle Parks & Recreation, UW, Washington State Department of Transportation)

image: Walker Mercy

New affordable housing

The Office of Housing funded two new affordable housing buildings, opening in 2016 and 2017:

- LIHI's "The Marion West" (48 units)
- Bellwether Housing's "Arbora Court" (133 units)

photo: Low Income Housing Institute

image: Weber Thompson

Bus rapid transit and improved bus service

- SDOT is studying high capacity transit along the Roosevelt corridor
- SDOT, Metro, Sound Transit, and OPCD continue to plan improved bus service for the U District

photo: Seattle Transit Blog

Investments in the station area core

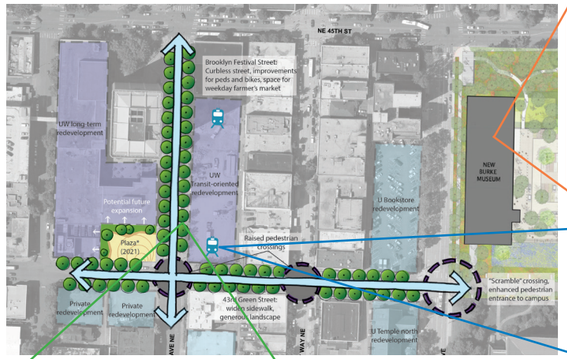


image: Olson Kundig/Stephanie Bower

New Burke Museum

image: Jacobs Associates/Sound Transit

photo: sea turtle, via Flickr

"Festival Street" on Brooklyn Ave NE will be developed by Sound Transit. Zoning will support further investments on Brooklyn.

The U District light rail station will open in 2021. About 12,000 transit riders will pass through the station daily. Riders will travel to Downtown in 8 minutes and to Northgate in 5 minutes.

Strengthening Community Partnerships

The Office of Planning and Community Development (OPCD) serves as a point of contact for the community and collaborates across city departments to help ensure that new investments are coordinated and responsive to the needs of the U District community.

U District Partnership (UDP)

The U District planning and community organizing work began with a coalition of neighborhood groups, now known as the U District Partnership (UDP). The formation of the Partnership was supported by "Only in Seattle" grants from the Office of Economic Development and funding from the UW. The UDP brought together people with a range of perspectives, including residents, business owners, UW students, staff, faculty, social service providers, faith community leaders, and property owners.

The UDP includes committees focused on business development, events and marketing, urban design, and the "Clean and Safe" initiative (see below). While continuing to receive grants from the City, the UDP has built sustainable funding through a Business Improvement Area (BIA) and support from the UW.

UDP Clean and Safe Projects

The "Clean and Safe" initiative has been identified as the highest priority for the UDP. The UDP promotes use of the City's "Find it, Fix It" app, monitors coordinated cleaning efforts, and addresses vacant properties. UDP staff and volunteers provide ongoing street cleaning, pressure washing, and graffiti removal, and organize monthly cleanups around the U District with 25-50 volunteers at each event. The Clean and Safe Committee recently completed the "U Loo" study, in partnership with the U District Conversation on Homelessness and DON. The study recommends the installation of 24/7 public restroom facilities in the U District.

Public safety

The Seattle Police Department (SPD) designated a Community Police Team officer to the U District who works with community members to promote public safety. The UW Police Department (UWPD) works in partnership with SPD and serves as backup. The UWPD recently moved to a new building on 15th Ave NE and will share the space with SPD. Partnerships with the City of Seattle and University Police departments allow the UDP to track crime in the U District resulting in an improved public perception of safety. Coordination between UWPD, SPD, and King County Metro Police has substantially reduced drug dealing on the Ave.

Youth Employment Program

The U District is home to a strong network of social service providers, with a particular focus on services for homeless youth and young adults. Many organizations provide food, shelter, sanitation, and other basic services. The ROOTS shelter for young adults has been working to build a "shelter to employment" pipeline to provide job training and employment opportunities for their clients. Together with the U District Partnership, they ran a pilot program in 2014, and are now working with the City and UW to strengthen and grow this program.

Neighborhood Farmers Market Alliance

The U District Farmers Market operates a year-round farmers market on Saturdays at U Heights, providing access to healthy foods. Through a partnership with the Office of Sustainability and the Environment, people who receive EBT/SNAP benefits can participate in the "Fresh Bucks" program, which supplies them with vouchers to spend at the market. Further, the City and Sound Transit's plan for Brooklyn Ave is designed to host a spin-off weekday market by the light rail station.

Green Seattle Partnership

The Green Seattle Partnership is a collaboration between the City, Forterra, community groups, businesses, schools, and thousands of volunteers working together to restore and actively maintain the City's forested parklands including Ravenna Park and the City-owned portion of the Union Bay Natural Area. The Green Seattle Partnership has also developed a self-guided "Tree Walk" for the U District that highlights significant trees and their benefits to the urban landscape.

University of Washington Town-Gown Relations

photo: UW Daily

The City maintains ongoing communication and coordination with the University of Washington's campus and capital planning staff. The following are some of the UW plans and projects that are underway in the U District.

Centrally-located open space

The UW has committed to provide for public open space at the intersection of NE 43rd St and Brooklyn Ave NE when they develop above the transit station. This open space area would be adjacent to the planned *Festival Street* and has the potential to expand in the future. (see map on p. 4-5)

Volunteer efforts and service learning

The Carlson Leadership & Public Service Center develops service-learning and community-based research for UW students that sustain partnerships, deepen learning, and contribute to the greater community. In the U District, 3,500 service learners have been engaged between 2002 and 2014 with 50 community partners. Service learners are critical contributors to the ROOTS shelter for homeless young adults.

Burke Museum and improved campus connections

The UW has begun construction of a new Burke Museum at NE 43rd St and 15th Ave NE. The new building, supported in part through a capital facilities grant from the City, will face 15th Ave NE, removing the retaining wall and welcoming the community into the campus.

Faculty/staff housing

The recent successful collaboration between UW and Children's Hospital on the "Bridges@11th" project provided 184 apartments, 37 of which are affordable to households earning 65%-85% of area median income. Many are larger, family-friendly units. The UW is continuing to look for ways to expand faculty and staff housing opportunities near campus.

Childcare facilities

The UW is expanding its childcare program by approximately 140 spaces to help meet the needs of faculty, staff and students. There are currently three child care centers at the Seattle campus providing year-round, on-site infant, toddler, and preschool childcare.

Light rail station site and surrounding area

The UW is working to develop the site above the new transit station. Longer-term, they are considering redeveloping nearby UW property to maximize job growth, housing, and open space.

UW Campus Master Plan update

The UW is updating the Campus Master Plan to prepare for growth and provide new ways of learning and preparing students for their next phase in life. The University is working closely with its Citizen's Advisory Committee to make certain the community's voice is heard. The Plan considers new spaces for learning and innovation, new open spaces for the public, and softening the hard boundary along 15th Ave NE. CUCAC, OPCD, SDCI, SDOT, and SPU will work closely to review and provide input on the plan as it is developed.

Innovation District

The UW Innovation District is a place for experts in social work, public health, engineering, life sciences and performing arts to partner with government, business and non-profit groups to form successful startups. On the UW campus and beyond, the Innovation District will spur discoveries that will help solve real world problems. The UW has recently opened the new CoMotion Headquarters on Roosevelt Ave NE, which includes 34 individual workspaces, two virtual reality (VR) labs, conference rooms, event rooms, and other common spaces. Collectively, the CoMotion HQ lab space and existing incubator space on campus, in Fluke Hall and Startup Hall, will further the successful history of nurturing UW startups. The Fluke Hall incubator space, currently houses 20 startup clients and has graduated eight more. It has helped clients raise more than $33 million in equity, and received more than $14 million in grants. Two startups have been acquired, and startups continue to raise equity and grant money after leaving the incubator space.

U District Urban Design
A Community Collaboration

OPCD has hosted or presented at over 80 public meetings since 2011.

2011

U District community planning begins

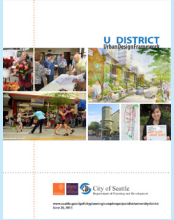
THE U DISTRICT PARTNERSHIP

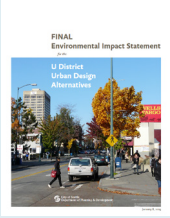
U District Partnership forms

2012

2013

Strategic Plan, Urban Design Framework



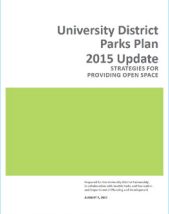


Environmental Impact Statement (EIS)

2013-2015

2015

Parks Plan update, Green Streets Concept Plan, Comprehensive Plan amendments

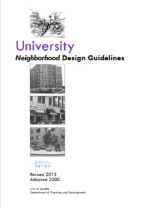


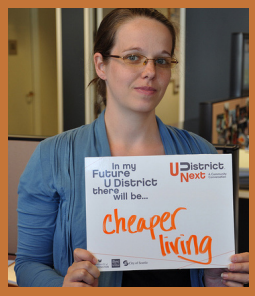
Zoning Recommendations

2016

2017

Neighborhood Design Guidelines update





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