

## Actions to Take

- Get on our email list for information about future actions.
- Spread the word to as many people as possible.
- Sign Livable U District Position Statement at [www.LivableUDistrict.com](http://www.LivableUDistrict.com).
- Contact Seattle City Council and Mayor Murray and ask them to:
  - Oppose the proposed U District upzones.
  - Require a risk analysis for all proposed low income redevelopment and provide mitigation for those being removed.
  - Provide one to one replacement when low income rentals are removed.
  - Require landlords to disclose rent they charge in their annual City report.
  - Support the policies in the Solutions to Seattle’s Housing Emergency\*.
  - Impose impact fees on new development so developers pay their fair share and the public doesn’t bear the increased infrastructure costs.

### Seattle City Council

*Left column has Councilmembers on the Planning, Land Use & Zoning Committee*

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\*This report is available at: <https://assets.documentcloud.org/documents/1687633/community-housing-caucus-report.pdf>.

For more details on the problems caused by U District upzones see: “Impacts of Upzoning on Housing Affordability in the University District” at <http://alexpedersen.org/wp-content/uploads/2016/04/U-District-Housing-Survey-Complete-040715.pdf>

## Save the U District

### Upzoning the U District for 320’ Highrises:

### Its impact on the affordability and livability of our community

#### Current Affordability & Livability

For many decades the U District has been an affordable area not only for students and UW staff, but also for long time residents, seniors and others. Low rents for many small businesses also provide a diversity of inexpensive ways for residents, students, and workers to eat, drink, socialize, and shop.

#### Drastic U District Changes & Its Impacts

The UW plans, in cooperation with developers and City of Seattle staff, to upzone (allow larger buildings) in the District. It will allow building heights up to 320’ and create a high-tech Innovation District that will bring in multiple, expensive high-rise office towers in the heart of the District’s current residential neighborhood.

This will destroy current U District benefits and create the following problems:

- Directly eliminate about 500 low-income units.
- Increase land values that will eliminate the affordability of another 1,000 units and increase property taxes.
- Force the current small businesses out of their storefronts because of increased rents from higher land values.
- Increase traffic, while *reducing* the amount of parking.
- Change the neighborhood from a community of residents and small shops to an expansion of the UW campus and UW and corporate office buildings.
- Will strain already over-stressed public services & infrastructure.

#### First Things First

The upzones will significantly increase problems that already exist in the U District, such as unmanageable traffic congestion, a lack of parking, lack of open space, loss of tree canopy, and loss of existing affordable housing and historic buildings. Including planned and permitted projects on the City’s website, the U District exceeds 150% of its City-assigned growth target for 2024 and Seattle should address the current problems and put First Things First.

#### The Need to Act Quickly

Upzone decisions will be happening soon, so it’s important to act now (see suggestions on the back page). Related to this are two critical meetings:

- June 21, 9:30am, City Council Land Use Committee: no upzones without both a displacement analysis showing how many affordable units will be removed and there’s sufficient infrastructure for those living there now.
- June 27, 6:00pm, 2035 Comprehensive Plan hearing. This 2035 Comp Plan removes neighborhood input and most restrictions for developers.

# Analysis

## Follow the Money

The main promoters of the upzones are those who will benefit financially from them: the UW, U District property owners on the University District Partnership, City of Seattle, and developers.

## Affordability

According to the 2013 Heartland report done for the City: “69% of the total households [in the U District] earn less than \$50,000” and “65% of the apartments were built before 1990,” which are generally the more affordable market rate apartments.

Yet already “a new group of higher end market developments are being developed in the U District” and the City, UW, developers, etc. are pushing for high-tech, research or medical highrises significantly higher than South Lake Union and residential highrises that one local developer said salaries would “need to be at least 80k to afford.”

In short, U District rents would skyrocket, not be more affordable.

## Density

While it may not appear so, Seattle is already quite densely populated. For cities over 200,000, Seattle is the fifth densest city west of the Mississippi and will soon overtake Los Angeles as the fourth densest.

The U District is already past its 2024 targets, which, according to past Comprehensive Plans, means the District should reduce development, not increase it.

## Open Space

While most in the community want more open space and tree canopy to create a more livable U District, those who want highrise buildings and a high-tech hub want something different. Scott Soules, who owns buildings/land where open space has been proposed, says “... urban public parks and spaces in Seattle are centers for crime and anti-social behavior ...” The Urban Land Institute report recommends that the “open space” be *inside* with the retail shops in the tower over the light rail station. While others others supporting the highrise towers want consider open space to be tiny parklets and/or private property with green space on it that’s not accessible after business hours.

## Parking

The City’s target growth in the U District is 2,000 people through 2024. With current planned and permitted units exceeding 3,100, developers of those units provide parking for less than half that. This 1,600 fewer parking spaces than units is more than the street parking in the entire U District core. This only increases both community traffic congestion and individual parking aggravation.

# Map of Proposed U District Zoning

Current maximum heights 65’ or less, except 85’ Brooklyn to Roosevelt, 43<sup>rd</sup> to 47<sup>th</sup> UW’s University Tower is 325’. 85’ is 6-8 stories, 320’ is 24-32 stories.

For details on Seattle zoning: [www.seattle.gov/dpd/codesrules/codes/zoning/](http://www.seattle.gov/dpd/codesrules/codes/zoning/)

