



## BOARD MEETING AGENDA

11:30 a.m. to 1:00 p.m.

March 19, 2024

[Zoom](#)

I.	Welcome & Introductions	Rob	11:30 a.m.	
II.	Public Comment	Public	11:35 a.m.	
III.	Approval of Meeting Minutes	Rob	11:40 a.m.	(Vote)
IV.	Finance Committee Update	Trevor	11:45 a.m.	
	• Acceptance of Financials			(Vote)
	• Look-Ahead to the Budget Workshop 3/26			
V.	Clean/Safe/Outreach Program Update	Marcus	11:55 a.m.	
VI.	Safety Walk with Elected Officials	Don	12:05 p.m.	
VII.	Spring Events Update	Lauren	12:15 p.m.	
VIII.	Poster Project	Nikki	12:25 p.m.	
IX.	Economic Development Program Update	Daniel	12:30 p.m.	
X.	Governance Committee Report	Josh	12:40 p.m.	
	• Prospective Board Members			
XI.	Scott Soules Award	Don	12:50 p.m.	
XII.	New Business	Rob	12:55 p.m.	
XIII.	Adjourn	Rob	1:00 p.m.	



## Board Meeting Minutes

11:30am to 1:00pm

February 20, 2024

In-Person/Hybrid

U District Partnership Offices

### UDP Board Members in Attendance in Person

Rob Lubin, UW Housing – Co-Chair

Lois Ko, Sweet Alchemy – Co-Chair

Aaron Hoard – Secretary

Trevor Peterson, UW Bookstore – Treasurer

Daniel Blue, HomeStreet Bank

Jeremy Eknoian, UW Real Estate

John Hix, Seattle Vineyard Church

Rick Jones, University Business Center

Anson Lin, Astora Construction

Maya Lu, Boba Up

Angela Mercado, U Heights

Miles Richardson, Audi Seattle/University VW

Don Schulze, U District Property Associates

Anna Sorokina, WSECU

Josh Stabenfeldt, University YMCA

### UDP Board Members Not in Attendance

Stephen Antupit, Resident

Kate Barr, Scarecrow Video/Grand Illusion

Jerred Clouse, ROOTS

Kristine Kenney, UW Planning

Moe Khan, Cedars Restaurant

Alfred Shiga, Shiga's Imports

Santhi Perumal, UW School of Education

### UDP Staff

Don Blakeney, Executive Director

Lauren Carey, Events Manager

Phil Lloyd, Financial Manager

Daniel Lokic, Economic Development Manager

Katy Ricchiuto, Urban Vitality Manager

Nikki Somers, Operations Manager

### Guests\*

Julia Park, UW Daily

*\*Please note, there may have been other guests but due to the hybrid/Zoom format and people entering and leaving at different times, we were unable to track all guests.*

### Welcome and Introductions

Rob started the meeting and led the introductions for the Board, staff and guests.

### Public Comment

Rob called for public comment, but no one from the public expressed an interest in speaking.

### Approval of UDP Board Meeting Minutes

Rob introduced the January 2024 meeting minutes.

**Motion:** Josh moved to accept the January 2024 meeting minutes.

**Second:** Miles seconded the motion.

**Approval:** The motion was approved by all, with the exception of John who abstained.

### **Finance Committee Update and Approval of the Financials**

Trevor shared an update with the Board on the financials. The Finance Committee met on February 9, 2024 with Don and Phil. He walked through some of the variances in the budget report. As previously noted, spending got off to a slow start because of two open positions that were hired late, they are now both filled. Donations and partnerships are always appreciated with UW giving money for late night security early in the fall and winter quarters. Now that UDP is fully staffed, the spending should start to come closer to the budget. Don and the Finance Committee are setting up a budgeting workshop for March to prepare for the 2025 budget, this will include both boards.

*These updates can be found in the finance committee narrative included in the February 2024 Board meeting packet.*

**Motion:** The Finance Committee moved to accept the January 2024 financials as presented at the February 20, 2024 Board Meeting.

**Second:** No second was required because this motion came from the Finance Committee.

**Approval:** The motion was approved unanimously.

### **Executive Director Report**

Don gave a series of updates about a variety of topics. He announced that Polly had her baby early the morning of the meeting, and would continue to be out on parental leave through the U District Street Fair. Lauren Carey has joined the team as the Event Manager, she will be taking on the planning and execution of U District events such as Cherry Blossom, Boba Fest, Street Fair, and Food Walk.

Don gave an update on the office refresh with phase one scheduled for mid April, that includes new carpet tiles and baseboards. Phase two will take place in the next fiscal year, that phase will include new signage/branding, ceiling tiles, paint, and a full kitchen refresh.

Don gave updates on U District Station Park. The development over the light rail station on UW property is scheduled to open fall 2024/winter 2025. Design considerations include: usable open space, such as hardscape, moveable seating, tables/umbrellas, activities, markets, durable planting, good sightlines, public art, operational support, such as water and power access, and lighting. UDP will be working with the developer to activate the pocket park as an extension of the NE 43rd Street Plaza.

Don also brought up the new City Council to discuss an advocacy agenda which includes sustaining homeless outreach, public safety, solid waste management in alleys, internet connectivity for small businesses, housing and zoning issues, as well as the need for public restrooms.

### **Clean, Safe, and Outreach Update**

With Marcus out this week, Don gave an update on the January 2024 homeless census. This included the I-5 encampment removal. Recent safety issues included gunshots in the U District, Hyundai/Kia storefront crashes, an increase in reported assaults, and early morning drug dealing.

A public safety walk is scheduled for February 27th, 2024 at 2:30pm. Attendees will include U District Stakeholders, including UW, , City and County officials including King County Prosecutor- Leesa Manion and City Attorney- Ann Davison, along with representatives from SPD and UWPd, the Seattle City Council and Mayor's Office.

### **Spring Events Update**

Lauren gave an update on the U District Spring events. Cherry Blossom festival is estimated for March 15 - April 1, 2024. Meteorologists estimate peak bloom for the 3rd week of March. There is an updated poster for 2024. UDP currently has 86 businesses offering a Cherry Blossom deal, 10 business sponsors (to date), 6 of the new businesses in the neighborhood are participating, and 51 businesses are signed up for the storefront decoration competition. Advertising and promotion will include A-boards on campus, cafe/outdoor posters, media partnerships, and social media. Be sure to tag UDP on Instagram: @udistrictpartnership Other spring events include Seattle Boba Fest on April 27th, and U District Street Fair on May 18th and 19th.

### **Economic Development Committee Update**

Daniel gave an overview of new business openings, which included businesses opening from January 2023 to present: Urban Mart, Macu Tea, Ice Monster, YU Sushi & Katsu, Classic & Classy Dog Spa, Seattle Nail Studio, Reiwatakiya, Big Mario's Northlake, SeaFab Cafe, Chili's Deli Mart, REV Delivery, Novabox Karaoke, and Seattle Best Tea. Upcoming business openings coming soon in 2024 include Raising Cane's, Seattle Boulderling Project, George's Coffee, Sweetpea's Cakes, RiseCraft Pizza, Kraken Bar & Lounge Honeybee Fried Chicken, and Yan Tea.

Daniel will be hosting an Economic Development Committee meeting on Thursday, February 22nd, from 3-5pm at Cafe on the Ave. Topics of discussion will include insights into business closures/openings, foot traffic data, retail vacancy figures, and market conditions.

Katy and Daniel, along with Roushan are working on an economic development report outline that includes data tracking for retail/commercial, demographics, transit, arts & culture, and private development, as well as pedestrian foot traffic.

### **Urban Vitality Report**

Katy offered an update on some of UDP's planned advocacy and policy efforts for 2024 which included the Seattle Transportation Plan and upcoming transportation levy, as well as the Seattle Comprehensive Plan and University District Sub-Area Plan.

Katy coordinated the repair of the Graduate Hotel mural. A local artist repainted the mural, and then UDP added an anti graffiti coating. This barrier will be applied to other murals throughout the neighborhood.

### **Governance Committee Report**

Josh gave a brief overview of some of the board recruitment efforts underway.

### **New Business**

The Board spoke briefly about parking, and how it might be helpful for UDP to track available parking in the U District. The Board also talked about the retail makeup of the district and how some of the vacant spaces are actually filled or a challenge to build-out (under current city rules) for an incoming business. Rick brought up the tag on the building behind the Donut Factory on NE 45th Street. It's persisted for months and UDP is working with ASAP Graffiti and the property owner to address it.

### **Adjournment**

Rob thanked everyone, welcomed Lauren to the team, and then called the meeting adjourned at 1:03 p.m..

# UDP FINANCE COMMITTEE NARRATIVE

*Prepared for the Finance Committee on 3/8/24*

Spring is here, and with the cherry blossoms arriving next week, our event season will be off and running. Spending is largely on track for the year, with variances attributable to new grant income and some technology investments in equipment for a new team member.

## **Budget Report**

With a couple of exceptions related to grant-funded activities, UDP spending is largely tracking the budget. Spending on staffing has finally started to catch up now that the Events Manager position is filled. The comments below add context and details to variances seen in the budget report. The numbers along the left side of the page correspond with the numbers on the budget report:

### Income:

**44300 – BIA Income:** *BIA spending is catching up, but still a little slow due to additional admin fees from grant funding and two open staff positions that persisted until October and November.*

**44530 – Grants Income:** *The variance shown in the Budget Report is offset by an increase in associated spending related to the grants—neither of which were in the budget for the year. With new grant income to support administrative work of the organization, we will begin to see a positive impact to the organization's bottom line.*

**47000 – Program Fees Income:** *The U District Street Fair has sold out for vendors and the booth fees are nearly all collected at this point. This will continue to move around a little until the event in May.*

**47215 – Sponsorships Income:** *This variance represents lower-than anticipated sponsorship numbers for food walk. The team cut some spending to compensate—bringing the event within about \$5,000 of the initial target. Don and Polly have engaged a sponsorship consultant to develop new sponsor strategies for 2024 and 2025.*

**43400 – Donations/Partnerships:** *UW sponsored additional late night security last fall and in January. UHeights also engaged UDP to provide afternoon security for their learning programs during the pick-up hour.*

### Expense:

**60000 – Staffing:** *The Event Manager, Lauren Carey, joined UDP last month, which has helped bring the staffing spending closer to what was budgeted. For months, this variance was associated with two open positions from last fall due to a slow start on staffing spending.*

**62000 – Office & Overhead Expense:** *Insurance (62200) is a timing issue. The budget anticipated a lease renegotiation and a renovation of the current offices. For a few reasons, these activities have been delayed until this winter, so the variances associated with Office Equipment (62300) and Rent, Parking, Utilities (62100) represent a timing issue. Clean and Safe spending on supplies (62400) is down, but could pick up in the spring or roll-forward to FY25. Technology and Software (62700) is up in part due to a coding issue, which can be solved and planned for next year.*

**70000 – Direct Program Expenses:** *Advertising and Marketing (70300), Contracted Services (70320), and Website Design (70330) are all timing issues that will catch up as marketing and*

*urban vitality projects wrap up this year. Other Program Expenses (70360) is seeing an uptick in spending related to grant income, and represents the expanded programming associated with each grant. Repairs and Maintenance (70380) is a timing issue that resolves late in the year.*

**BIA Budget Tracker**

The BIA Budget Tracker shows BIA spending is a little behind, which harmonizes with the budget report.

**Balance Sheet Report**

The balance sheet is still distorted by the Department of Commerce Grant, which has been pushing millions of dollars through UDP's books as the organization receives payments and reimburses grant beneficiaries.

**DOC Grant**

UDP continues to spend down the Department of Commerce grant, which is tracked in the "DOC" column on the Budget Report. The final remaining grant that is open is focused on attracting new retailers to vacant spaces in the U District. Daniel has also negotiated another extension to implement this grant that will last through the end of this fiscal year in June.

The U District Partnership  
Budget Report  
February 2024

	Feb 24	Budget	\$ Over Budget	Jul '23 - Feb 24	DOC Grant	YTD Budget	\$ Over Budget	Annual Budget
Ordinary Income/Expense								
Income								
44430 · BIA Contract	141,715.27	146,696.78	-4,981.51	1,083,993.74	0.00	1,201,933.45	-117,939.71	1,845,000.00
44530 · Grants Income	20,572.71	0.00	20,572.71	97,214.30	2,271,226.30	21,649.94	75,564.36	37,149.94
47000 · Program Fees Income	56,789.95	50,000.00	6,789.95	157,722.13	0.00	85,000.00	72,722.13	175,000.00
47213 · Retail Income	555.00	0.00	555.00	908.73	0.00	500.00	408.73	2,500.00
47215 · Sponsorships	12,000.00	15,000.00	-3,000.00	30,033.66	0.00	55,000.00	-24,966.34	105,000.00
43400 · Donations/Partnerships	3,717.00	3,000.00	717.00	45,701.85	0.00	24,000.00	21,701.85	36,000.00
46400 · Interest and Other	20.42			181.33	0.00	0.00	181.33	0.00
Total Income	235,370.35	214,696.78	20,673.57	1,415,755.74	2,271,226.30	1,388,083.39	27,672.35	2,200,649.94
Gross Profit	235,370.35	214,696.78	20,673.57	1,415,755.74	2,271,226.30	1,388,083.39	27,672.35	2,200,649.94
Expense								
60000 · Staffing	76,928.70	77,909.12	-980.42	533,026.72	86,273.07	623,273.03	-90,246.31	934,909.51
61000 · Professional & Contract Expense	1,742.48	2,708.34	-965.86	33,239.98	6,817.00	34,166.64	-926.66	45,000.00
62000 · Office and Overhead	39,521.06	19,395.00	20,126.06	172,860.44	424.00	142,335.00	30,525.44	252,590.00
70000 · Direct Program Expenses	88,955.38	84,708.32	4,247.06	535,793.23	2,177,712.23	515,166.72	20,626.51	960,500.00
Total Expense	207,147.62	184,720.78	22,426.84	1,274,920.37	2,271,226.30	1,314,941.39	-40,021.02	2,192,999.51
Net Ordinary Income	28,222.73	29,976.00	-1,753.27	140,835.37	0.00	73,142.00	67,693.37	7,650.43
Net Income	28,222.73	29,976.00	-1,753.27	140,835.37	0.00	73,142.00	67,693.37	7,650.43

# The U District Partnership

## Balance Sheet Prev Year Comparison

As of February 29, 2024

	Feb 29, 24	Feb 28, 23	\$ Change
<b>ASSETS</b>			
Current Assets			
Checking/Savings			
10100 · Operating Bank Accounts			
10110 · WSECU Checking	252,265.33	69,377.95	182,887.38
10111 · WSECU Savings	135,256.26	160,026.76	-24,770.50
Total 10100 · Operating Bank Accounts	387,521.59	229,404.71	158,116.88
Total Checking/Savings	387,521.59	229,404.71	158,116.88
Accounts Receivable	182,143.23	174,243.02	7,900.21
Other Current Assets			
12026 · Lease Rights	89,894.06	0.00	89,894.06
12022 · Prepaid Expense	1,344.25	1,913.63	-569.38
12021 · Employee Advances	439.05	1,030.45	-591.40
Total Other Current Assets	91,677.36	2,944.08	88,733.28
Total Current Assets	661,342.18	406,591.81	254,750.37
Fixed Assets			
15000 · Furniture and Equipment	11,013.05	0.00	11,013.05
Total Fixed Assets	11,013.05	0.00	11,013.05
Other Assets			
17025 · Security Deposits	3,235.87	3,235.87	0.00
Total Other Assets	3,235.87	3,235.87	0.00
<b>TOTAL ASSETS</b>	<b>675,591.10</b>	<b>409,827.68</b>	<b>265,763.42</b>
<b>LIABILITIES &amp; EQUITY</b>			
Liabilities			
Current Liabilities			
Accounts Payable	-5,387.03	56,232.75	-61,619.78
Credit Cards	7,158.12	15,101.77	-7,943.65
Other Current Liabilities			
20220 · Lease Liability	91,046.06	0.00	91,046.06
20210 · Deferred Revenue	149,588.66	0.00	149,588.66
24000 · Payroll Liabilities	58,666.75	31,946.64	26,720.11
Total Other Current Liabilities	299,301.47	31,946.64	267,354.83
Total Current Liabilities	301,072.56	103,281.16	197,791.40
Total Liabilities	301,072.56	103,281.16	197,791.40
Equity			
32000 · Unrestricted Net Assets	234,685.26	248,880.08	-14,194.82
Net Income	139,833.28	53,666.44	86,166.84
Total Equity	374,518.54	302,546.52	71,972.02
<b>TOTAL LIABILITIES &amp; EQUITY</b>	<b>675,591.10</b>	<b>405,827.68</b>	<b>269,763.42</b>

2023-24 University District BIA

Budget Tracker - February 2024

ACCOUNTS	Budget	TO DATE	REMAINING	% Expended	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct
Program Management	268,028	189,714.16	78,314	70.8%	\$ 13,465.09	\$ 12,228.19	\$ 30,394.29	\$ 26,832.85
Clean Environment	488,010	282,307.14	205,703	57.8%	\$ 30,431.93	\$ 36,735.81	\$ 33,016.32	\$ 30,782.90
Public Safety	447,651	276,791.63	170,859	61.8%	\$ 37,422.25	\$ 33,213.09	\$ 29,385.43	\$ 37,867.46
Urban Vitality	217,741	128,965.05	88,776	59.2%	\$ 15,654.15	\$ 16,671.87	\$ 10,125.96	\$ 12,447.04
Economic Development	149,281	47,579.43	101,702	31.9%	\$ 4,382.31	\$ 4,386.13	\$ 4,740.81	\$ 6,253.64
Marketing	184,288	126,167.42	58,121	68.5%	\$ 13,761.78	\$ 12,484.87	\$ 14,289.99	\$ 17,545.40
Food Wallk	30,000	35,253.46	-5,253	117.5%	\$ -	\$ 143.88	\$ 31,974.98	\$ 12,921.36
Cherry Blossom	15,000	-8,653.88	23,654	-57.7%	\$ -		\$ 750.00	\$ -
Bobafest	15,000	1,500.74	13,499	10.0%	\$ -		\$ 750.00	\$ -
Street Fair	30,000	4,368.59	25,631	14.6%	\$ 68.45	\$ 51.28	\$ 3,516.00	\$ 16.00
Total Requested	1,845,000	1,083,993.74	761,006	58.8%	\$ 115,185.96	\$ 115,915.12	\$ 158,943.78	\$ 144,666.65

	Nov	Dec	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun
Program Management	\$ 21,847.88	\$ 27,156.62	\$ 24,597.26	\$ 33,191.98				
Clean Environment	\$ 32,277.13	\$ 45,940.19	\$ 34,847.67	\$ 38,275.19				
Public Safety	\$ 36,470.43	\$ 32,651.26	\$ 32,505.17	\$ 37,276.54				
Urban Vitality	\$ 29,334.14	\$ 13,617.30	\$ 12,224.42	\$ 18,890.17				
Economic Development	\$ 8,349.82	\$ 4,553.09	\$ 6,952.21	\$ 7,961.42				
Marketing	\$ 17,469.03	\$ 13,155.87	\$ 22,093.71	\$ 15,366.77				
Food Wallk	\$ (795.00)	\$ (8,006.75)	\$ (985.01)	\$ -				
Cherry Blossom	\$ 35.00	\$ 11.82	\$ -	\$ (9,450.70)				
Bobafest	\$ 535.00	\$ 11.84	\$ -	\$ 203.90				
Street Fair	\$ 35.00	\$ -	\$ 681.86	\$ -	\$ -		\$ -	\$ -
	\$ 145,558.43	\$ 129,091.24	132,917.29	141,715.27	-	-	-	-



## **Process for On-Boarding New Board Members**

As new stakeholders express interest in UDP Board service, it's important to have a basic, consistent, and well-understood process for bringing them into the organization's ranks. The steps below are designed to shorten the on-ramp by providing a few ways to better understand the work of the organization and the Board. It's also designed to introduce new Board members with other Board members to facilitate connections early. Lastly, it's designed to help people find meaningful ways to contribute to the organization in their first year.

- I. Initial conversation with Executive Director (Optional)**
- II. Initial conversation with UDP Board member, or Governance Committee member**  
Follow up information to be shared about the roles and responsibilities of a UDP Board Member, including:
  - UDP Bylaws
  - Role of UDP Board of Directors
  - UDP Board Member Participation Agreement
  - UDP Work Plan
- III. Guest visit to UDP Board meeting**  
Packet sent to prospective Board members in advance of their first meeting.
- IV. Follow up conversation to confirm interest, identify committee interest areas**
  - Set up committee visits, connect with committee chair, work toward assignment
- V. Nomination by Governance Committee to the Board at following Board meeting**
  - Prospective Board member introduces themselves formally and shares more about their interest in Board service
  - Assign Board buddy
- VI. Board & organization orientation with Executive Director and UDP team**  
Team escorts new Board member for a walk to educate them on their individual program areas after the Executive Director meets new Board member for lunch to cover the following topics:
  - Organizational history
  - What is a BIA?
  - Why the RAB and UDP boards?
  - Bylaws and board docs
  - Finances and reports
  - Top issues facing the district
  - Confirm committee assignment



## PROGRAM REPORTS

### March 2024

#### CLEAN, SAFE & OUTREACH

##### **U District Safety Walk King County Prosecutor & City Attorney**

On February 27th, the UDP convened a public safety meeting with community stakeholders who have been impacted by public safety issues to engage with local government representatives, including King County Prosecutor Leesa Manion, Seattle City Attorney Ann Davison, command staff from the Seattle Police Department, the CARES Department, and representatives from several elected officials from City Council and the Mayor's Office. At the forefront of discussion were pressing issues identified by the UDP, which included persistent street-level drug markets, assaults and aggressive behavior, retail theft and vandalism, and recent shootings.

During the meeting, UDP facilitated visits to various stakeholders in the neighborhood directly impacted by these public safety concerns. This allowed City and County officials the opportunity to witness firsthand the challenges faced by the community and provided a platform for them to offer insights and strategies on how they could assist in addressing these issues effectively. UDP will be convening a Clean and Safe Committee meeting in April to further explore issues and solutions identified on the walk.

##### **Ongoing Solid Waste Issues in U District Alleys**

Managing solid waste collection in dense urban cores like the University District has posed significant challenges for both the City and Recology, the solid waste hauler who has the contract to service the neighborhood. Merely glancing into any alley around University Way, one can see that current protocols are falling short. Over the past year, UDP has developed a weekly census of overflowing bins and problematic alleys in the U District to try to hold City officials and contractors accountable. By monitoring and reporting solid waste compliance incidents to Seattle Public Utilities (SPU), UDP compiles reports identifying problematic dumpsters, whether they're overflowing, damaged, or contaminated with the wrong types of waste. Subsequently, we rely on the City to hold their contractors accountable for rectifying these situations.

In some cases, even when reported through the proper channels, the City and Recology are simply unable to respond in a reasonable amount of time. In these cases, UDP clean teams will intervene and remove the refuse and garbage from the alley. One particularly challenging area is the alley behind the former Target on the 4500 Block of University Way. Collaborating with Recology and SPU, UDP has engaged stakeholders in the alley to address ongoing issues related to contamination, freeloading,

illegal dumping, and unlocked dumpsters. Working with Recology, UDP was able to evaluate container ownership and service levels. By the end of March, all damaged dumpsters will be pulled and replaced and relabeled with the name and address of the customer or corresponding business. Although labor-intensive, this process promises effective results, potentially prompting similar interventions in other problematic alleys if successful.

### Spring Event Preparation

With temperatures on the rise and spring events on the horizon, UDP's Clean Team is diligently preparing the neighborhood for the upcoming festivities. Resuming our sidewalk pressure washing efforts, the Clean Team now operates two to three times a week to clean the sidewalks of the accumulated winter grime. The Clean Team is starting on 43rd, the primary corridor linking the U District Light Rail Station to the UW Campus. This area sees heavy foot traffic, particularly during events such as the UW Cherry Blossom Festival scheduled from March 16th to April 1st. Ultimately, the aim is to ensure a clean and welcoming environment for the thousands of visitors expected to attend these events.

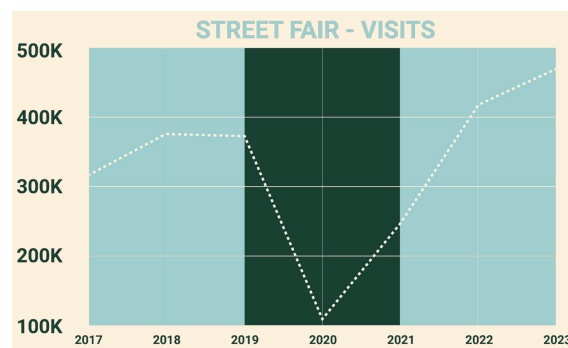
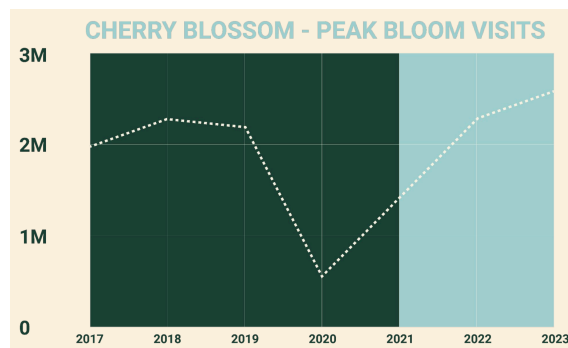
## ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

### Economic Development Committee

The U District Economic Development Committee met on Thursday, February 22nd and received an overview surrounding outdoor dining, business openings/closures, retail recruitment, event foot traffic, private development, and an outline of the economic development report.

Through an initial analysis of ground-floor commercial spaces, UDP presented data which shows a 5.3% vacancy rate within the BIA, and 4.2% vacancy rate on University Way. The presentation highlighted challenges surrounding retail recruitment which includes the fact that 4 vacant spaces (CVS, Target, Standard leasing, and Varsity) account for 69% of vacant commercial SF available (74K SF out of 107K SF total).

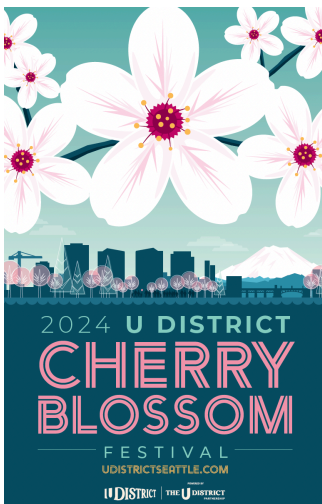
The committee was also presented with event foot traffic data which highlights the significant rebound the U District has experienced since the pandemic. With the launch of three new events (cherry blossom, boba fest, foodwalk) and return of the Street Fair, foot traffic during these events has surpassed the numbers seen pre-pandemic.



Outside of the data presented, participants and guests provided valuable insights into the permitting challenges facing small businesses. Multiple businesses have experienced significant setbacks in opening due to plumbing permits, and many have faced struggles in understanding the requirements and regulations to open. The conclusion of this conversation sparked the idea of UDP facilitating a business mentorship program, leveraging the experience of current operators and owners to help others navigate the permitting process and resources available to them.

## EVENTS

### Spring Events Are Here! And So is “Peak Bloom”!



The weather is inching up above 60 degrees this week, just in time to facilitate the ‘peak bloom’ for the U District Cherry Blossom Festival. People from around the region flock to the University of Washington campus each year to see Seattle’s world-renown cherry blossoms transform the UW Quad into shades of pink. The 29 Yoshino cherry trees that line the UW Quad are on track to reach ‘peak bloom’ the last week of March. Originally a gift from Japan to the United States in 1912, the iconic Yoshino trees were first planted at the Washington Park Arboretum and eventually relocated to the main campus.

During the 10-day U District Cherry Blossom Festival, visitors to the UW’s iconic cherry trees are also invited to enjoy cherry-themed promotions throughout the U District. For the third year in a row, the U District Partnership has partnered with small businesses to create a unique U

District menu available during the festival that includes cherry and blossom-themed savory bites and festival specials, treats and desserts, coffee drinks and bubble tea, cocktails and brews, and retail products and discounts.

The U District Cherry Blossom Festival runs for just-over two weeks, **Saturday, March 16 through Monday April 1**. Local businesses are encouraged to participate in a **Storefront Decoration Competition**. Participating businesses may decorate their storefronts in a cherry blossom theme and can enter to win up-to \$1,500 in prizes.

### Volunteers Needed!

UDP couldn’t pull-off these tremendous celebrations without the help of volunteers. Two volunteer opportunities are coming up before it is all-hands-on-deck for the U District Street Fair, May 18 & 19.

**Sunday March 24 9:30- 2 30 pm.** Join the neighborhood to promote the Cherry Blossom Festival outside the light rail station.

<https://www.signupgenius.com/go/10C0F4DAFAB22A5FBCF8-48261692-cherry>

**Saturday April 27th 9:30 - 4:00 pm** Join us to promote Boba Fest! Help us get balloons out at all

our partner businesses in the morning. Sell Boba tee-shirts and hand out event guides. This will also be outside the light rail station.

<https://www.signupgenius.com/go/10C0F4DAFAB22A5FBCF8-48262075-boba>

### **Seattle Boba Fest is Just Around the Corner!**

Boba Fest returns for the third time on **Saturday, April 27, 2024!** 28 local businesses are participating in the annual celebration of Boba Tea in the U-District.

### **The U District Street Fair is Back, and Sold Out!**

The Street Fair returns on **Saturday, May 18-19, 2024.** Over 360 vendors have applied, selling out this event for the first time in decades.

## **URBAN VITALITY**

### **Urban Vitality Committee February Meeting**

The Urban Vitality Committee met in February to discuss the Seattle Transportation Plan, Comprehensive Plan, and UDP's public restroom thinking. The group also received an update on new business openings and other economic development data. The next meeting is at the end of March.

### **Mural Maintenance**

The UDP has contracted with artist Kathleen Warren of Overall Creative to fix, maintain and install several murals through the end of June this year. Kathleen and her team are working to fix the Graduate Hotel mural, which continues to be tagged. It will be coated with anti-graffiti coating and maintained by UDP. UDP will also work with Overall Creative to identify and paint a new mural in a prominent U District location this spring, around the time of the Street Fair.

### **Seattle Draft Comprehensive Plan and Transportation Plan Released**

This month, the City of Seattle released two major plans for the region - the One Seattle [Comprehensive Plan](#) and the Seattle [Transportation Plan](#). Both plans will influence future infrastructure and building projects across the City. The Seattle Transportation Plan will be used to inform an upcoming Transportation Levy, which will be voted on by the public in November. It is in its final form and has been sent to the City Council. Major changes to the plan are not expected before it is adopted by the council this spring/summer. The Comprehensive Plan will inform zoning-related changes across the City. It has been sent to Council as a draft and will have a 60-day comment period for the public. It is a high level document that will not have specific prescriptions per neighborhood. The University District will go through a sub-area planning process in 2025-2026 that will inform more specific zoning changes in the neighborhood.