



## ***DRAFT BOARD MEETING AGENDA***

4:00 p.m. to 5:30 p.m.

December 5, 2024

WSECU - 1121 NE 45th St, Seattle, WA 98105

- |       |  |        |           |        |
|-------|--|--------|-----------|--------|
| I.    | Welcome & Introductions                                      | Aaron  | 4:00 p.m. |        |
| II.   | Public Comment   | Public | 4:05 p.m. |        |
| III.  | Approval of Meeting Minutes                                  | Aaron  | 4:10 p.m. | (Vote) |
| IV.   | Finance Committee Report                                     | Trevor | 4:15 p.m. |        |
|       | • <i>Acceptance of the 2023 Audit</i>                        |        |           | (Vote) |
|       | • <i>Acceptance of October 2024 Financials</i>               |        |           | (Vote) |
| V.    | U District Winter Window Walk & Study Break                  | Lauren | 4:30 p.m. |        |
| VI.   | Urban Vitality Updates                                       | Don    | 4:35 p.m. |        |
| VII.  | Economic Development Report                                  | Daniel | 4:40 p.m. |        |
| VIII. | Marketing & Communications Report                            | Polly  | 4:45 p.m. |        |
| IX.   | Clean, Safe & Outreach Report                                | Marcus | 4:50 p.m. |        |
| X.    | Governance Committee Report                                  | Josh   | 5:05 p.m. |        |
|       | • <i>Reminder: Board Participation / Conflict Agreements</i> |        |           |        |
|       | • <i>Board Recruitment</i>                                   |        |           |        |
| XI.   | New Business   | Aaron  | 5:15 p.m. |        |
| XII.  | Adjourn to UDP Holiday Party at the Blue Moon Tavern         |        | 5:20 p.m. |        |



## Board Meeting Minutes

11:30am to 1:00pm

October 15, 2024

WSECU, 1121 NE 45th Street, Seattle WA 98105

### UDP Board Members in Attendance in Person

Lois Ko, Sweet Alchemy – *Co-Chair*

Aaron Hoard – *Co-Chair*

Trevor Peterson – *Treasurer*

Stephen Antupit, U District Resident

Katie Betz, Urban Renaissance Group

Jeremy Eknoian, UW Real Estate

Josh Gana, UW Housing & Food Services

Rick Jones, University Business Center

Naomi Lewis, Luminati Labs

Maya Lu, Boba Up

Angela Mercado, U Heights

Miles Richardson, Audi Seattle/University VW

Emily Scully, Shultz's on the Ave

Don Schulze, U District Property

Associates

Anna Sorokina, WSECU

Josh Stabenfeldt, University YMCA

### UDP Board Members Not in Attendance

Santhi Perumal – *Secretary*

Kate Barr, Scarecrow Video/Grand Illusion

John Hix, Seattle Vineyard Church

Kristine Kenney, UW Planning

Moe Khan, Cedars Restaurant

Anson Lin, Astora Construction

Jessie Quan, Ladd & Lass Brewing

### UDP Staff

Don Blakeney, Executive Director

Lauren Carey, Events Manager

Marcus Johnson, Clean & Safe Manager

Daniel Lokic, Economic Development Manager

Katy Ricchiuto, Urban Vitality Manager

Nikki Somers, Operations Manager

Pollyanna Yokokawa, Marketing Manager

### Guests\*

Kate Joncas, Place Strategic

Kare Stone, Seattle Bouldering Project

*\*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

Lois started the meeting, with a round of introductions.

### Public Comment

Lois called for public comment, and Kara Stone from the Seattle Bouldering Project offered information on their opening in late October, located at 4500 University Way NE.

### **Approval of UDP Board Meeting Minutes**

Lois introduced the June 2024 meeting minutes, asked for any questions or amendments.

**Motion:** Don Shulze moved to accept the June UDP Board meeting minutes.

**Second:** Stephen seconded the motion.

**Approval:** The motion was approved by all.

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

Trevor shared an update with the Board on the financials. The UDP Finance Committee met on October 11, 2024 with Don and Phil. Trevor noted we are in good shape financially, the BIA assessment collections are still coming in. UDP spending as a whole is moving as it should, with a few variances that include: BIA contract income still low because of some timing issues, and some of the administrative costs were covered by the DOC grant. UDP is bringing the clean team in house, hiring has not been completed which skews the budget slightly. Also, renovations and repairs on the new operations center are still in process and this is just a timing issue.

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

**Motion:** On behalf of the Finance Committee, Trevor moved to accept the September 2024 financials as presented at the October 15, 2024 Board Meeting.

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

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

### **5 Year Strategic Plan**

Aaron gave an overview of the 5 year strategic plan, and reminded the Board of the City's upcoming RFP process. Kate discussed the significant outreach that the Board and staff had done in the last four months to engage with nearly 500 different stakeholders in and connected to the U District. Many different groups participated from students, business owners, visitors, residents, employees in the form of online and in-person surveys, one-on-one interviews and focus groups. Don thanked the Board members that were part of the planning process.

**Motion:** Trevor made a motion for the Board to officially accept the 5 year strategic plan.

**Second:** Rick seconded the motion.

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

### **Mission, Vision, Values**

Aaron presented the updated UDP mission and vision statement that had been workshopped and discussed at the Board retreat on September 17th.

**Motion:** Stephen moved to accept the vision, mission, and values.

**Second:** Don Schulze seconded the motion.

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

## **Clean & Safe Report**

Don Blakeney and Marcus offered a public safety update. The U District is experiencing an increase in street level drug activity, with the epicenter at 47th and University Way NE. This rise has negatively impacted quality of life and safety in surrounding areas, especially near U Heights. In response to concerns, Seattle City Council passed a new SODA (stay out of drug area) ordinance, designating a specific area within the U District to deter drug activity. The law aims to improve safety, and reduce drug-related challenges in the neighborhood. UDP is actively advocating for more support from the City and regional partners. By collaborating with local organizations, UDP is advancing safety strategies and seeking additional resources to improve neighborhood conditions. Don and Marcus shared the various elements of the current public safety action plan and will report back on progress in December.

Marcus next reported on the clean team. The cleaning program updates include transitioning the cleaning program to an in-house model which will be fully transitioned by the end of October 2024. Currently, the clean team is a hybrid with 3 in-house and an outside contractor. The decision follows the successful acquisition of infrastructure and skills needed for an independent clean team. UDP secured a larger operations center to support its clean and safe programs. Located across from U Heights, the facility offers ample storage space, parking for staff, and room for program growth. Renovations are underway, with completion expected by the end of October 2024.

## **Urban Vitality Report**

Don made the announcement that Katy Ricchiuto had accepted a position as Policy Director with the Transportation Choices Coalition and will be leaving UDP in November. This is a big step for Katy, and a huge loss for UDP. Her last day will be November 8th, with a goodbye send off happening on November 7th. Katy will be dearly missed.

Katy led off with news of the International Downtown Association conference that was held in Seattle in September, and how UDP was part of it. The IDA conference attracts people from other BIA's from all over North America. The UDP led three separate tours in the U District with over 120 guests total attending. Katy also noted that every year IDA reaches out for submissions of cool projects where you have been involved and it has impacted your neighborhood. Daniel submitted on behalf of UDP the storefront program that we administered last year, and was awarded the top award, the Pinnacle Award!

RapidRide J Line had a groundbreaking ceremony that included UDP on October 8, 2024. This is a project that will be opened approximately 2027. This bus line runs between U District and downtown Seattle, replacing route 70.

Katy gave an update on upcoming public realm improvements which include tree lighting on the Ave updates. UDP is looking for funding to replace the picnic tables on 43rd, which include a more sturdy table scheme. UDP is also working with Lincoln Properties to activate and manage the UDSB Park at 43rd and Brooklyn to make it a great addition to the neighborhood.

Katy gave an update on the NE 42nd Street project, which was created and managed by the U District Advocates. The project wrapped up earlier this month, and provided activations all summer to simulate and pilot what a more dynamic, pedestrian-oriented NE 42nd Street design could be. While there was much positive feedback for activating the street, the U District Community Council and U District Advocates did here a lot of frustration from local businesses

who didn't feel there was sufficient outreach about planned street closures or flexibility at the outset to address people confused by the reconfiguration/closures, who were trying to access streets and local businesses. In one instance, a dump truck was unable to access NE 42nd Street and had to reverse, but ended up backing into a dumpster that caused 20,000 worth of damage to a local business' garage door, after which they incurred another \$10,000 in costs for relocating their supplies to a storage facility off-site while they worked to repair the damage. The Board discussed other impacts on businesses and improvements that could help with outreach in the future. UDP will continue to monitor the ongoing issues, but there was still consensus that this type of flexible activation could be positive for the district, if executed thoughtfully, and with the active involvement of nearby stakeholders.

Katy reported on the Seattle Transportation Levy that was headed to the ballot in November. It seeks to raise \$1.55 billion for major transportation-related investments in Seattle. Just a few of the programs that could benefit the U District include a variety of capital projects related to safety and infrastructure upgrades, bridge structural repairs, as well as new sidewalks, and a study of a highway lid over Interstate 5 between NE 45th and NE 50th Streets—a project for which UDP also applied for \$2 million in funding from the US Department of Transportation. UDP created a separate website for the project, you can check it out at [lidi5north.org](http://lidi5north.org).

Stephen introduced a motion seeking the approval of the board and UDP to endorse the 2024 Keep Seattle Moving Transportation Levy. The transportation levy is up for election on the November ballot and UDP has been asked to be added to the endorsement list.

**Motion:** Stephen moved to accept the motion to endorse the transportation levy

**Second:** Trevor seconded the motion

**Approval:** Jeremy , Angela , Stephen , Aaron , Katie, Trevor

**Opposed:** Naomi, Rick, Don, Anna

**Abstentions:** Emily, Josh, Miles, Lois, Maya

\*\* The motion passed 6-4

## **Events Update**

Lauren gave a recap of the fall events. Chow Down 2024 brought in over 40,000 attendees. UDP was able to work with the UW first year programs, and over 9k were invited. There were 28 tent activations on the Ave, with a street closure from 41st - 45th, that included stage contests & demos by local experts.

Lauren shared some of the dates for the 2025 event season: Cherry Blossom in March/April, U District Street Fair on May 17-18, and Boba Fest moving to July 19, 2025.

## **Economic Development**

Daniel started with the recent business openings and coming soon. New businesses include Toasted Bagel, Sweetpea's Cakes, Insomnia Cookies, Sumo Express Sushi, Bombay Express, Birrieria Pepe El Toro, Stuff in Seattle, and Solo Noodle. UDP awaits the openings of Industrious Gym, The Boulderling Project, Raising Cane's, Ancient Gaste Coffee, George's Cafe, Avole Cafe, and JIE Bakery & Tea.

Daniel shared that in partnership with OED, a retail study will kick off, which will include property owner roundtables, retail vision & consensus building, as well as a vacant space analysis.

### **U District Media Roundup**

Polly offered a snapshot of media in the neighborhood which included the New York Times article about what to do in Seattle with 36 hours, University of Washington Magazine article about Husky Classic Rock, Eater's article about the Best Restaurants in Seattle's University District, as well as an article about the College Inn Pub will be closing. Lastly the Seattle Times' article about the U District possibly getting a public restroom, and Seattle Culture Magazine regarding Grand Illusion moving

### **Governance**

Josh Stabenfeldt called a vote for UDP Board Member nominations of Josh Gana and Jessie Quan.

**Motion:** On behalf of the governance committee, Josh Stabenfeldt nominated both Josh Gana and Jessie Quan to the UDP Board of Directors.

**Second:** Because this motion came from the committee, there was no need for a second.

**Approval:** Unanimously approved.

### **New Business**

Don Blakeney talked about an effort afoot this year to update BIA laws at the state level to simplify city legislation requirements, clarify ratepayer definitions and formation process, expand definition of services, enhance enforcement, and clarify formula adjustments.

### **Adjournment**

Lois thanked everyone and then called the meeting adjourned at 1:04 p.m.



## Finance Committee Report & Budget Narrative

*Prepared on 11/17/24*

This financial report represents the close of October financials, and four months of U District Partnership spending. The organization is on solid footing, although BIA collections for this semester are at about 91%, instead of the budgeted 95%—something the team is working with the City to improve in the months ahead, but doesn't represent a cash flow issue for the organization.

### **Budget Report**

Spending is largely on track, with the exception of the Clean Team, which has had an underspend on staffing related to longer-than-anticipated hiring process and an associated overspend on contract services to continue cleaning while the new staff got hired and trained up. Chowdown income was a few thousand dollars lower than budgeted, but largely offset by cost savings. Commerce Grant spending was slow moving at the outset of the financial year, but will pick up shortly as the grant concludes next spring. The numbers along the left side of the page correspond with the numbers on the budget report:

#### Income:

**444300 – BIA Income:** *BIA spending is lower than anticipated, due to underspending on staffing. This spending will pick up later this year.*

**44530 – Grants Income:** *The under collection on grants is just a timing issue. Daniel is tracking DOC grant income and spending carefully. This grant should be spent-down as planned by early next year.*

**47000 – Program Fees & Sponsorship Income:** *UDP brought in new sponsorship and supplementary income this year for the Chow Down, while bringing down the costs—which enabled the event to come very close to hitting the financial targets within a few thousand dollars. As this is the first event, UDP has a long runway to bring in additional resources in the months to come.*

#### Expense:

**60000 – Staffing:** *Spending on staffing is behind and with Katy leaving for TCC, there may be some continued salary savings for a couple of months this fall.*

**62150 – Renovations & Repairs:** *The upgrades to the new operations center are landing this fall and will show a timing variance for a few months to come.*

**63300 – Staff Development:** *With the International Downtown Association conference in Seattle, and some discounted conference fees for the team, this is currently showing as an underspend. Team members are looking at other professional development opportunities this spring.*

**70320 – Contracted Services:** *UDP had to hire up and train the new in-house clean team. For the last few months, UDP has been incurring cleaning contractor fees, which result in a variance on the staffing and contracted services line.*

**70350 – Event Entertainment:** *With some of the community contests at the Chow Down, there was a cost savings on entertainment.*

**70360 – Other Program Expenses:** *Other event savings are showing up here, along with delayed spending on the grant.*

**70370 – Printing & Reproduction:** *New signage elements were created for the Chow Down that are reusable next year.*

### **Balance Sheet Report**

The balance sheet will continue to have some distortion from the lingering influence of the Commerce grant. The balance sheet shows a decrease in cash that is the equivalent of the deferred revenue. New reporting requirements are reflected showing UDP's office lease as a financial obligation and an unrealized asset.

### **Department of Commerce Grant**

The original \$5,000,000 grant was extended again through the end of the current fiscal year, with roughly \$400,000 left to be spent-down by UDP on programs and administration.



# The U District Partnership

## Budget Report

### October 2024

	Oct 24	Budget	\$ Over Budget	Jul - Oct 24	YTD Budget	\$ Over Budget	Annual Budget
Ordinary Income/Expense							
Income							
44430 · BIA Contract	145,525.79	146,380.51	-854.72	603,689.29	615,522.15	-11,832.86	1,841,566.23
44530 · Grants	27,514.92	41,202.59	-13,687.67	147,565.26	171,560.28	-23,995.02	521,431.00
47000 · Program Fees	400.00	0.00	400.00	6,060.00	10,000.00	-3,940.00	185,000.00
47213 · Retail Sales	35.84	83.33	-47.49	712.20	333.36	378.84	1,000.00
47215 · Sponsorships	0.00	0.00	0.00	21,420.71	25,000.00	-3,579.29	91,000.00
43400 · Donations/Partnerships	2,277.00	3,166.67	-889.67	14,270.00	12,666.64	1,603.36	38,000.00
46400 · Interest and Other	25.89			97.11			
Total Income	175,779.44	190,833.10	-15,053.66	793,814.57	835,082.43	-41,267.86	2,677,997.23
Gross Profit	175,779.44	190,833.10	-15,053.66	793,814.57	835,082.43	-41,267.86	2,677,997.23
Expense							
60000 · Staffing Expenses	102,481.83	111,065.53	-8,583.70	385,456.04	444,262.00	-58,805.96	1,356,986.24
61000 · Professional Expenses	8,000.00	8,083.34	-83.34	19,000.00	19,833.28	-833.28	34,500.00
62000 · Office and Overhead Expenses	16,505.05	21,057.51	-4,552.46	65,598.49	68,229.92	-2,631.43	251,090.00
70000 · Direct Program Expenses	72,287.44	61,451.75	10,835.69	332,124.67	307,307.00	24,817.67	1,017,085.62
Total Expense	199,274.32	201,658.13	-2,383.81	802,179.20	839,632.20	-37,453.00	2,659,661.86
Net Ordinary Income	-23,494.88	-10,825.03	-12,669.85	-8,364.63	-4,549.77	-3,814.86	18,335.37
Net Income	-23,494.88	-10,825.03	-12,669.85	-8,364.63	-4,549.77	-3,814.86	18,335.37

# The U District Partnership

## Balance Sheet Prev Year Comparison

As of October 31, 2024

	<u>Oct 31, 24</u>	<u>Oct 31, 23</u>	<u>\$ Change</u>
<b>ASSETS</b>			
Current Assets			
Checking/Savings			
10100 · Operating Bank Accounts			
10110 · WSECU Checking	350,856.70	736,411.57	-385,554.87
10111 · WSECU Savings	160,439.31	135,171.09	25,268.22
Total 10100 · Operating Bank Accounts	<u>511,296.01</u>	<u>871,582.66</u>	<u>-360,286.65</u>
Total Checking/Savings	511,296.01	871,582.66	-360,286.65
Accounts Receivable			
11000 · Accounts Receivable	142,865.97	160,994.97	-18,129.00
Total Accounts Receivable	142,865.97	160,994.97	-18,129.00
Other Current Assets			
12026 · Lease Rights	33,119.29	89,894.06	-56,774.77
12022 · Prepaid Expense	6,000.10	1,344.25	4,655.85
12021 · Employee Advances	-1.58	1,631.51	-1,633.09
Total Other Current Assets	<u>39,117.81</u>	<u>92,869.82</u>	<u>-53,752.01</u>
Total Current Assets	693,279.79	1,125,447.45	-432,167.66
Fixed Assets	4,606.61	11,013.05	-6,406.44
Other Assets	3,235.87	3,235.87	0.00
<b>TOTAL ASSETS</b>	<u><u>701,122.27</u></u>	<u><u>1,139,696.37</u></u>	<u><u>-438,574.10</u></u>
<b>LIABILITIES &amp; EQUITY</b>			
Liabilities			
Current Liabilities			
Accounts Payable	2,606.64	28,300.39	-25,693.75
Credit Cards	8,131.28	39,623.11	-31,491.83
Other Current Liabilities			
20220 · Lease Liability	33,880.56	91,046.06	-57,165.50
20210 · Deferred Revenue	338,605.69	700,500.81	-361,895.12
24000 · Payroll Liabilities	58,809.45	55,527.36	3,282.09
Total Other Current Liabilities	<u>431,295.70</u>	<u>847,074.23</u>	<u>-415,778.53</u>
Total Current Liabilities	<u>442,033.62</u>	<u>914,997.73</u>	<u>-472,964.11</u>
Total Liabilities	442,033.62	914,997.73	-472,964.11
Equity			
32000 · Unrestricted Net Assets	267,453.28	234,685.26	32,768.02
Net Income	-8,364.63	-9,986.62	1,621.99
Total Equity	<u>259,088.65</u>	<u>224,698.64</u>	<u>34,390.01</u>
<b>TOTAL LIABILITIES &amp; EQUITY</b>	<u><u>701,122.27</u></u>	<u><u>1,139,696.37</u></u>	<u><u>-438,574.10</u></u>



## Program Reports

### December 2024 UDP Board of Directors Meeting

December 5, 2024

#### CLEAN, SAFE & OUTREACH

##### **UDP Works to Address Chronic Public Safety Issues with City and Neighborhood Partners**

In recent months, there has been a significant uptick in drug-related activity along University Way NE and Brooklyn Ave NE, north of the light rail station, up to and around University Heights Center—as well as in and around University Playground Park. This drug activity is part of a challenging ecosystem with many inputs and that attracts a range of people with highly-impactful behavioral health issues that remain unaddressed. Unfortunately, it is having a major impact on the quality of life and safety for many stakeholders in the U District, including small businesses, university and elementary school students, community organizations, and the viability of new residential and commercial office buildings. The U District Partnership (UDP) is working through a public safety action plan with City and neighborhood partners to address various aspects of this ecosystem that are having the largest impact. As a part of this work, UDP is thrilled and grateful to announce that D4 City Councilmember Maritza Rivera secured \$25,000 in funding to support additional UDP ambassador emphasis patrols in the evenings and during major surges in visitors.

##### **Homeland Security Investigation Leads to Major U District Drug and Arms Bust**

Over a 48-hour period on October 30th and 31st, a major fentanyl trafficking operation in Seattle's University District was dismantled through a coordinated, multi-agency law enforcement effort. The operation, which was led by Homeland Security and supported by the Seattle Police Department and other agencies, resulted in 11 arrests and searches at 31 locations. 19 kilograms of fentanyl, over 60 firearms—including automatic weapons and high-capacity ammunition—and substantial amounts of cash and jewelry were confiscated. This operation used wire taps to target individuals higher up the trafficking hierarchy. While a significant disruption to the supply chain, the immediate impact on street-level dealing may be minimal as UDP is still monitoring prolific street-level drug use and dealing.

##### **CARE Team Expands to U District in December**

The City of Seattle is expanding the newly established Community Crisis Responder (CCR) program under the CARES Department to the North Precinct. This strategy reduces the strain on emergency services and improves outcomes by tailoring responses based on the nature of the emergency. Operating under a dual-dispatch model, this program assists the Seattle Police Department by

responding to non-violent crisis calls, connecting individuals to appropriate services, and allowing police and firefighters to focus on high-priority situations requiring a traditional police or fire response to 911 calls. The North Precinct CCR team will operate out of the UWPD Police Station in the neighborhood, ensuring localized and effective crisis response.

The U District Partnership is partnering with CARES Chief Amy Barden to ensure that U District priorities and needs are addressed and fully understood by the team operating in the North Precinct. UDP will provide an updated timeline for this expansion as details become available. For now, the City indicates that the rollout is planned for the near term.

### New Outreach Care Coordinator

The U District Partnership is excited to welcome Dimitra as the new REACH Outreach Care Coordinator for the U District. Dimitra brings extensive experience from the shelter and supportive services sector, giving her a strong understanding of the resources and support needed by our unhoused population. Over the next month, Dimitra will be training with David Delgado to ensure a smooth and thoughtful transition into the neighborhood.

## EVENTS

### UDP Launches First Winter Window Walk & Study Break December 6-15

Beginning December 6, ground floor businesses will be brightening up the U District with fresh holiday window displays as they compete for the best winter-themed window. This competition is modeled after last spring's successful U District Cherry Blossom Festival window contest.

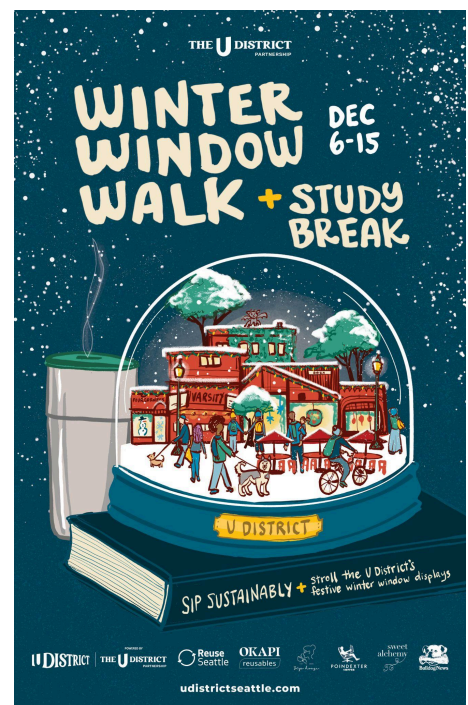
This fun and festive competition encourages businesses to decorate their storefronts while The U District Partnership encourages visitors to come and enjoy the displays.

All participating businesses will have a professional photo taken of their window display for the official competition, which will be judged by participating businesses. The winning window will receive a \$1000 cash prize. The runner up will receive a \$500 gift certificate to a neighborhood business of their choice.

The event poster was designed by [Stacy Nguyen Creative](#) with custom illustrations of the U District featuring neighborhood Easter eggs including a few iconic storefronts, lighted trees, the Varsity Theatre marquee, a husky dog, and a gargoyle seated atop a building with virginia creeper ivy.

What to know:

- The promotional event will last during finals week at UW: Friday, December 6 - Sunday, December 15.
- The promotion is in partnership with OKAPI Reusables who has developed a reusable/borrow-a-cup program. During the event dates, people can [download the OKAPI app to](#)



[their phone](#) and sign up for the program for just \$1 (instead of the regular fee) using the code **UDISTRICT**.

- Once they are a part of the program, customers will be eligible for \$1 coffees and specialty drinks at the four participating businesses: Bulldog News, Sweet Alchemy Ice Creamery, Sip House, and Poindexter Coffee.

## 2025 Spring and Summer Event Dates

While it seems far off in the distance, the 2025 event season is just around the corner!

- U District Cherry Blossom Festival: business registration begins in January
- U District Street Fair: returns May 17-18, 2025! Vendor registration goes live in December
- Seattle Boba Fest: date is moved to Saturday, July 19, 2025

## MARKETING

### Seattle Magazine Says “The U District Hums with Energy”

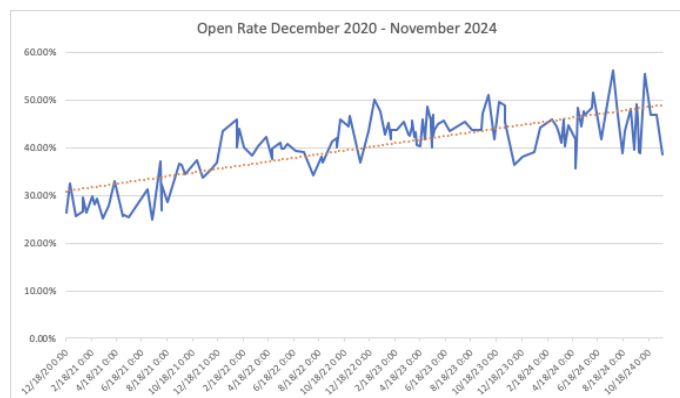
This month, Seattle Magazine offered up a friendly hat tip with a great feature on the U District. [From the article:](#)

*“Been to the University District lately? The neighborhood centered around the University of Washington is one of the city’s most vibrant and eclectic. Think youthful energy, diverse population, and a mix of culture and academia. Currently in post-pandemic flux, the U District is a stimulating change of scene.”*

Businesses featured in the article included University Book Store, Magus Books, Bulldog News, Big Time Brewery, Cafe Solstice, Cafe Allegro, Red Light Vintage, Burke Museum, The Henry, Meany Center for the Performing Arts, and Grand Illusion Cinema.

### Email Metrics Show Above Average Engagement

The U District Partnership has sustained a growing email list over the past four years, with an above-market average open rate and click rate across newsletter, event, call-to-action, and other marketing announcement campaigns.



All Time: December 2020 - November 2024

**Past Year: November 2023 - November 2024**

Nonprofit Industry Benchmark

Professional Services Benchmark

Average Open Rate: 40.5%

**Average Open Rate: 44.5%**

Average Open Rate: 40.04%

Average Open Rate: 32.7%

CTR: 4.4%

**CTR: 4.4%**

CTR: 3.27%

CTR: 3.04%

## ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

### UDP Developing Standardized Welcome for New Businesses

The U District Partnership is committed to fostering a thriving, inclusive business community by ensuring that new businesses in our neighborhood feel welcomed and supported. While staff continue to build relationships and connect new businesses with resources, a standardized welcome process for new businesses is being developed which includes new protocols and a helpful information packet.

The new business welcome packet will include: (1) an overview of the U District's unique character, demographics, and economic opportunities; (2) a clear description of UDP and the role it plays in supporting local businesses; and (3) an overview of services and resources UDP provides including cleaning, safety, homeless outreach, marketing, placemaking, events, and economic development. In addition to this welcome packet, staff will also schedule new business tours to create a personalized opportunity for new businesses to meet the entire UDP team and learn more about leveraging the resources and programs available.

While the packet is primarily designed to welcome new businesses, it'll also serve as a recruitment tool by demonstrating the unique advantages of operating in the U District. This proactive approach will continue to position the U District as a desirable location for prospective business owners.

### Fall Foot Traffic Continues to Exceed Pre-Pandemic Levels

Expanded light rail service, new residential development, and an increase in the UW student population continue to enhance neighborhood vibrancy and visitation. With the support of the City of Seattle and Placer.ai data software, UDP has innovative tools to effectively analyze trends in foot traffic and visitation. When analyzing visitation between September 15 – October 15, the U District experienced 3.6 million visits in 2019. Fast forward to 2024, and that number has skyrocketed to 4.6 million; an increase of 1 million visits during this month, in the last five years.

## NEIGHBORHOOD PLANNING & PUBLIC REALM

### Seattle Transportation Levy – Keep Seattle Moving Passes

In November, Seattle voters approved a ballot measure to invest in a variety of transportation projects across the city, including road and bridge repairs, expansion of bike lanes, and upgrades to pedestrian facilities. While the levy will fund approximately 30 percent of the Seattle Department of Transportation's budget, it includes several key investments that will benefit the U District:

- **University Bridge Maintenance and Seismic Upgrades:** Critical funding will go toward maintaining and upgrading the aging University Bridge, which serves as a key connection between the U District and the rest of Seattle. Seismic retrofitting and structural repairs would ensure the bridge remains safe and functional, especially as traffic and population grow in the area.
- **People Streets and Public Spaces:** The levy allocates \$57 million to enhance business and commercial districts through the "People Streets & Public Spaces" initiative, focusing on improvements in lighting, seating, and pedestrian access. Additionally, the levy supports "Neighborhood Street Improvements," allowing community members to co-create projects that

address local needs, particularly in underinvested areas, resulting in safer and more inclusive public spaces.

- **NE 42nd Street Green Street Project:** Levy funds will be allocated to advance the development of NE 42nd Street into a "green street" to enhance pedestrian and cyclist safety. This project will create more green space, improve walkability, and prioritize non-motorized transportation, especially in the busy corridor between the University of Washington campus and U District Station.
- **Sidewalk and Pedestrian Infrastructure Upgrades:** Levy dollars will be eligible to target crucial sidewalk repairs and curb ramp installations, particularly in high-foot-traffic areas like University Way NE and near the U District light rail station. Enhanced crosswalks and improved lighting would make the area safer for pedestrians, especially students, seniors, and people with disabilities.
- **Lid I-5 Feasibility Study:** The levy allocates funding for a feasibility study of a potential lid over I-5 between NE 45th Street and NE 50th Street. This project aims to reconnect the neighborhood with green space, reduce noise pollution, and offer new opportunities for public amenities and/or housing while improving safety around the highway.

More information about the 2024 Seattle Transportation Levy can be found on the Seattle City Council's [website](#).