

U District Business Improvement Area

Ratepayer Advisory Board

Meeting Agenda

RATEPAYER ADVISORY BOARD

4 p.m. – 5:30 p.m.

April 24, 2025

[Zoom Meeting](#)

Jennifer Antos
*Seattle Neighborhood
Farmers Markets*

Max Blume
The Blume Company

Sally Clark
*CampusSafety,
University of Washington*

David Cohanin
Whitefall, LLC

Lora Gastineau
U District Resident

Chris Giles
*U District Resident
University Plaza*

Joe Gruber
U District Food Bank

Mary Kay Gugerty
*The Evans School,
University of Washington*

Jeanette Henderson,
*UW Real Estate,
University of Washington*

Lincoln Johnson
*Student Life,
University of Washington*

Nikole O'Bryan
Nikole O'Bryan, DDS

Chris Petersen
Café Allegro

Braedyn Reed
*Student
University of Washington*

Brian Sellen
*American Campus
Communities*

Sandy Sun
Compass Real Estate

Carolyn Thompson
Neptune Building

Hui Tian
Studio 19 Architects

Polly Yarioka
University Presbyterian

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|--|----------|
| 1. Welcome and Introductions | Sally |
| 2. Public Comment | TBD |
| 3. Approval of October 2024 Meeting Minutes | Sally |
| 4. Acceptance of the Financials & 2026 Budget | Joe |
| 5. Urban Vitality Updates <ul style="list-style-type: none">○ <i>New Urban Vitality Manager</i>○ <i>Lid I-5 North Feasibility Study</i> | Don |
| 6. Economic Development Updates <ul style="list-style-type: none">○ <i>New Economic Development Manager</i>○ <i>OED Retail Study</i> | Don |
| 7. Clean, Safe, & Outreach Updates | Marcus |
| 8. Marketing and Communications Report | Polly |
| 9. U District Events Updates | Lauren |
| 10. Governance Update & Discussion <ul style="list-style-type: none">○ <i>RFP Award</i>○ <i>2026 Meetings</i>○ <i>Potential Ordinance Update</i> | Don |
| 11. New Business | Jennifer |
| 12. Adjourn | Jennifer |



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Board Meeting Minutes

4:00 PM – 5:30 PM

January 30, 2025

ZOOM

RAB Members in Attendance

Max Blume, The Blume Company
Carolyn Thompson, Neptune Theater
Chris Giles, Resident
Joe Gruber, University District Food Bank
Sally Clark, UW Campus Safety
Mary Kay Gugerty, UW Evans School

Polly Yorioka, University Presbyterian
Jennifer Antos, U District Farmers Market
Braedyn Reed, UW Student
Jeanette Henderson, UW Real Estate

RAB Members Not in Attendance

Lincoln Johnson, UW Student Affairs
Nikole O'Bryan, Nikole O'Bryan, DDS
Maria Barrientos, Barrientos / Ryan
Lora Gastineau, Novell Condominiums
Brian Sellen, American Campus Communities

Hui Tian, Studio 19
Sandy Sun, Corbit Building
David Cohanin, Synergy Construction
Chris Peterson, Cafe Allegro

UDP Staff

Don Blakeney, Executive Director
Marcus Johnson, Clean, Safe & Outreach Manager
Phil Lloyd, Financial Manager
Daniel Lolic, Economic Development Manager

Nikki Somers, Operations Manager
Lauren Carey, Events Manager
Pollyanna Yokokawa, Marketing Manager

Guests Present*

Candice Soules, Soules Properties

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

Welcome and Introductions

Jennifer led a round of introductions with the board, guests and staff and then opened the Winter UDBIA Board meeting

Public Comment

Jennifer asked for a public comment; there was no public comment.

Approval of October 10 , 2024 2024 RAB Meeting Minutes

Jennifer called for the following motion: “The UDBIA Ratepayer Advisory Board approves the October 10, 2024 meeting minutes as presented at the January 30, 2025 RAB Meeting.”

Motion: Chris G. moved to accept the October 2024 meeting minutes.

Second: Braedyn seconded the motion.

Abstention: None

Approval: Minutes were approved

Finance Committee Update and Approval of the Financials

Joe offered an update on the UDP/UDBIA Finances. Since July 2024 spending is largely on track. Don spoke about how UDP is still catching up from a slow transition bringing the clean team in house. UDP is also still working through the DOC grant which distorts the finances. *These and other more detailed updates can be found in the finance narrative included in the January Board packet.* Joe called for the following motion: “The Board accepts the October 2024 UDP financials as presented at the January 30, 2025 UDBIA Meeting.”

Motion: Jennifer moved to accept the October 2024 UDP financials.

Second: Mary Kay seconded the motion.

Abstention: None

Approval: The motion was approved unanimously.

Events Update

Lauren gave a recap of the 2024 UDP Events in Review. The Cherry Blossom Festival had 93 businesses participate in the menu promotion and/or in the window decorating contest, with over 740K attendees. Seattle Boba Fest had 28 businesses participate, with 33.5k attendees. The U District Street Fair had 18 businesses that activated their storefronts, and over 100K attendees. The Chow Down & Street Party had 83 businesses participate, with 50K attendees. Lauren gave an update on the new for 2024 Winter Window Walk event. This brought neighborhood beautification, financial support to small businesses, local business participation (27 businesses), that included 5 cafes with specialty drinks. UDP partnered with the OKAPI cup program, which was a sustainability partnership that offered reusable cups at particular participating shops.

Window walk winners were voted on by other participating businesses, the overall winner was Gargoyles Statuary, they won \$1,000.00. The second place winner was Davis Optical, they won \$500.00 for a business of their choice, and chose The Woolly Mammoth, the third place business.

Lauren shared Looking Ahead at 2025 events; Cherry Blossom in Spring 2025 (date TBD dependent on peak blossom), U District Street Fair on May 17-18, 2025, and Seattle Boba Fest on July 19, 2025. January 30, 2025 was the last day to sign up for the Cherry Blossom Fest guide, UDP currently has 78 businesses signed up, with 18 that are new businesses or have never participated in the past. Street Fair applications opened in mid December 2024, and have already received over 300 applications.

UDP has accepted 150 artists and food vendors. Seattle Boba Fest is moving from April to July in 2025.

Executive Director Report

Don gave an update on UDP and City of Seattle Office of Economic Development request for proposal process (RFP). The UDP will be submitting which proposals are to be submitted by Friday, January 31, 2025. UDP reached out for references and letters of support, some of which are part of the UDBIA. UDP included the 5 Year Strategic Plan, as well as neighborhood stats.

Don announced the U District Partnership was awarded a \$1.5M grant to explore lidding I-5 between NE 45th and 50th streets in Northeast Seattle. This was funded from a grant proposal Katy put together prior to her departure.

Don also gave an update on changes with UDP and the expansion of their offices. Having more space to accommodate a growing staff, and interns.

Don talked a little about hiring for the Urban Vitality Manager position. Interviews will begin in mid February with the hopes to fill the position by MARCH 2025. There is more information on the UDP website about the position.

Lastly, Don announced that Daniel Lokic will be leaving UDP to become the Executive Director for the Manufacturing Maritime Industrial Association. Daniel will be greatly missed, and UDP will have a celebration for Daniel on February 20th at Big Time Brewery.

Economic Development

Daniel offered an update on the Department of Commerce grant. There is a final report that Daniel and Don will work on to complete prior to the due date. The grant dollars have all been expended.

Daniel also discussed the expiring Tip Credit, which expires on January 31, 2025. Restaurants can no longer use this credit for staff. Daniel and Don have been working with a coalition, including DSA, to advocate for changes on the regulatory and permitting side of business.

Daniel is working on the Retail Study that is funded by the Office of Economic Development. OED is still doing the work, and the new Economic Development Manager will take over to continue to work closely with them.

Lastly, Daniel gave an update on new businesses in the last few months, that include Industrious gym, Jai Bakery, and Birrieria Pepe El Toro restaurant which is north on The Ave.

Clean & Safe Report

Marcus reported on the grant that Councilmember Maritz Rivera championed \$25K to go toward the Ambassador Program in 2025. Funds will be used to extend program hours on key dates in the U District as we look forward to fall 2025, and events that include UW football weekends.

Next Marcus gave an update on bringing the Clean Team In-House. UDP has completed the process and are fully staffed that include supervisor Jeremy, Justin, Tim, Yovanni, and Hayden. If you see them in the neighborhood be sure to introduce yourself and give them a warm welcome! Cleaning program updates include continued work on the new operations center, seasonal leaf and snow response, and a reminder to get your ice melt for the freezing days ahead.

Marcus welcomed Dimitra L of REACH as the new U District Outreach Specialist. Dimitra continues the work of past outreach leaders, David D and JJ B. This role was developed in partnership with REACH, serving as a model for innovative service deployment.

Lastly, Marcus talked about the role UDP played in collaborating with local business and property owners to assist in the investigation in the death of King County Metro bus driver, Shawn Yim. Shawn was tragically killed on December 18, 2024, near 41st St and University Way. This was the second homicide in the U District within weeks, emphasizing the need for improved safety measures.

U District Media Roundup, Marketing, and Communications

Polly offered a snapshot of media in the neighborhood which included the University Book Store turning 125 years, Seattle Magazine did an article about the neighborhood energy, Goldman Sachs purchased the Accolade in the U District, as well as a New York Times article naming Saint Bread as one of the 22 best bakeries across the country.

Nikki offered information on the UDP's new CRM which will allow for U District data all in one place. This CRM will help keep track of property addresses, assessments, businesses, property owners, vendors, incident tracking, and a whole lot more. Gone are the days of multiple spreadsheets.

Polly gave an update on U District Newsletter metrics. UDP newsletter average open rate inclines every year.

New Business

Don asked for new business. Joe G noted the library closure and asked if there has been any update for public restroom ideas.

BIA Meeting Adjournment

Jennifer closed the UDBIA Ratepayer Advisory Board meeting.



Finance Committee Report & Budget Narrative

Prepared on 4/11/25

This financial narrative provides a summary of The U District Partnership's financial statements as of the end of March 2025, covering approximately two-thirds of the fiscal year's spending.

Budget Report

The main variances below pertain to timing issues with the Street Fair income/spending and the reduced spending on staffing due to a slow ramp-up of our in-house clean team and the two vacant manager positions that will be filled by June. UDP will use the surplus funds from the end of fiscal year 2025 to cover any gap between planned spending for next year, and the FY26 assessment, consistent with the strategy from the past few years. The numbers along the left side of the page correspond with the numbers on the budget report:

Income:

444300 – BIA Income: *BIA income is lower than anticipated because there are few costs this year, meaning less reimbursements to UDP from the BIA coffers at the City. This is due to underspending on staffing. With both the Urban Vitality and Economic Development Manager Positions vacant this spring, in addition to the administrative support of program grants, UDP has not needed to invoice the City for as much staff time as originally planned in the 2025 budget. UDP will instead use these unspent funds in 2026 to cover any gap between the annual assessment and the planned program spending for next year.*

44530 – Grants Income: *UDP is spending down the DOC grant in the next few months. The under collection on grants is just a timing issue.*

47000 – Program Fees & Sponsorship Income: *UDP brings in booth fees for the U District Street Fair during the winter months, which boost income in this category. With booth sales up again this year, this surplus should offset any underperformance seen in sponsorship.*

47215 – Sponsorship: *Sponsorship is down this year, offset by increases in program fees and booth fees.*

Expense:

60000 – Staffing: *Spending on staffing is lower than anticipated due to vacant positions this year on the Clean Team, and for both the Urban Vitality and Economic Development Managers. All of these positions will be hired-up by June.*

62000 – Office and Overhead Expenses: *UDP postponed some of the planned office renovations until UW was able to sign a new five-year lease, which happened in February. Future renovations include expanding to the rest of the floor and updating the kitchen. UDP budgeted for a cushion for our lease renewal which shows a slight underspend. Insurance*

came in a little lower than anticipated and the banking fees will increase as Street Fair approaches, with the booth transactions.

70335 – Program Supplies: This relates to the purchasing of cleaning supplies and the underspend here is mostly a timing issue.

70300 – Advertising: UDP has underspent on advertising this year, but may make some investments before July.

70320 – Contracted Services: UDP had planned to hire in-house clean-team employees for FY25, but this transition took longer than anticipated, so the cleaning contract with Seattle Surface Cleaners persisted through October, driving this expense line up. This is offset by the underspend in staffing that was budgeted for the same time period.

70360 – Other Program Expenses: The underspend here will even out by the end of the year, with the completion of the Department of Commerce grant.

70370 – Printing and Reproduction: Cherry Blossom Festival and Street Fair printing costs are still landing, so this variance is more of a timing issue.

Balance Sheet Report

The balance sheet will continue to have some distortion from the lingering influence of the Commerce grant.

Department of Commerce Grant

The original \$5,126,600 grant has been fully collected, with the exception of a \$25,000 payment which will be paid by Commerce at the closure of the grant. Grant payments are winding down and should be completed by June.

UDBIA Collections As of March 2025

Collections are on target, with collection most years eventually achieving more-than 95%, per the annual budget. UDP works with the City to collect the remaining delinquent assessments.

Period	Total Outstanding	Total Assessment Billed Amount	Collection Rate %	Collected \$
2019	\$ 10,190	\$ 946,505	98.92	\$ 936,315
2020	\$ 21,212	\$ 1,215,853	98.26	\$ 1,194,641
2021	\$ 40,583	\$ 1,271,712	96.81	\$ 1,231,129
2022	\$ 54,965	\$ 1,325,847	95.85	\$ 1,270,882
2023	\$74,723	\$ 1,596,501	95.32	\$ 1,521,778
1S/2024	\$ 70,557	\$ 879,656	92.02	\$ 809,499
2S/2024	\$122,917	\$880,344	86.04	\$ 757,427
Total	\$ 292,586.91		94.73	

The U District Partnership

Budget Report

March 2025

	Mar 25	Budget	\$ Over Budget	Jul '24 - Mar 25	YTD Budget	\$ Over Budget	Annual Budget
Ordinary Income/Expense							
Income							
44430 · BIA Contract	0.00	156,380.51	-156,380.51	1,120,670.02	1,387,424.70	-266,754.68	1,841,566.23
44530 · Grants							
44532 · DOC	223,607.68	41,202.59	182,405.09	428,320.15	370,823.23	57,496.92	494,431.00
44536 · SPU	6,750.00	6,750.00	0.00	20,250.00	20,250.00	0.00	27,000.00
Total 44530 · Grants	230,357.68	47,952.59	182,405.09	448,570.15	391,073.23	57,496.92	521,431.00
47000 · Program Fees	670.37	0.00	670.37	197,482.75	185,000.00	12,482.75	185,000.00
47213 · Retail Sales	0.00	83.33	-83.33	737.35	750.01	-12.66	1,000.00
47215 · Sponsorships	0.00	12,000.00	-12,000.00	28,920.71	37,000.00	-8,079.29	91,000.00
43400 · Donations/Partnerships							
43410 · Business & Corp. Contributions	0.00			6,773.00			
43400 · Donations/Partnerships - Other	2,079.00	3,166.67	-1,087.67	25,134.88	28,499.99	-3,365.11	38,000.00
Total 43400 · Donations/Partnerships	2,079.00	3,166.67	-1,087.67	31,907.88	28,499.99	3,407.89	38,000.00
46400 · Interest and Other	836.05			1,028.50			
Total Income	233,943.10	219,583.10	14,360.00	1,829,317.36	2,029,747.93	-200,430.57	2,677,997.23
Expense							
60000 · Staffing Expenses							
60100 · Wages & Salaries	67,164.18	91,478.99	-24,314.81	703,456.62	823,310.93	-119,854.31	1,119,747.90
60020 · Payroll Taxes	6,520.60	7,775.72	-1,255.12	63,345.36	69,981.43	-6,636.07	95,508.59
60030 · Medical Benefits	5,346.38	8,816.44	-3,470.06	64,106.41	79,347.99	-15,241.58	105,797.31
60040 · Retirement Benefits	1,490.00	2,744.38	-1,254.38	16,888.30	24,699.30	-7,811.00	32,932.44
60050 · Transit Benefit	0.00	250.00	-250.00	2,516.67	2,250.00	266.67	3,000.00
Total 60000 · Staffing Expenses	80,521.16	111,065.53	-30,544.37	850,313.36	999,589.65	-149,276.29	1,356,986.24
61000 · Professional Expenses							
61100 · Accounting Fees	1,500.00	1,500.00	0.00	26,600.00	26,000.00	600.00	30,500.00
61110 · HR Consulting	0.00	166.67	-166.67	0.00	1,499.99	-1,499.99	2,000.00
61120 · Legal Fees	0.00	166.67	-166.67	2,187.00	1,499.99	687.01	2,000.00
Total 61000 · Professional Expenses	1,500.00	1,833.34	-333.34	28,787.00	28,999.98	-212.98	34,500.00
62000 · Office and Overhead Expenses							
62150 · Renovations & Repairs	195.42	0.00	195.42	21,009.14	56,000.00	-34,990.86	56,000.00
63600 · Banking and Service Fees	172.69	2,841.67	-2,668.98	2,186.58	8,774.99	-6,588.41	14,500.00
62800 · Dues & Subscriptions	19.96	141.67	-121.71	1,959.14	1,274.99	684.15	1,700.00
62200 · Insurance	0.00	125.00	-125.00	7,858.29	11,125.00	-3,266.71	12,500.00
63100 · Licenses and Permits	0.00	10.00	-10.00	2,585.40	2,090.00	495.40	17,920.00
63120 · Merchandise	0.00	166.67	-166.67	668.92	1,499.99	-831.07	2,000.00
62300 · Office Equipment	1,267.91	625.00	642.91	5,007.06	5,625.00	-617.94	7,500.00
62900 · Postage & Mailing	0.00	33.34	-33.34	296.48	299.98	-3.50	400.00

The U District Partnership Budget Report March 2025

	Mar 25	Budget	\$ Over Budget	Jul '24 - Mar 25	YTD Budget	\$ Over Budget	Annual Budget
62100 · Rent and Monthly Parking	5,840.08	7,416.67	-1,576.59	60,463.27	66,749.99	-6,286.72	90,500.00
63300 · Staff Development	45.29	1,099.98	-1,054.69	11,411.91	9,900.06	1,511.85	13,200.00
62400 · Office Supplies	255.32	416.67	-161.35	2,028.53	3,749.99	-1,721.46	5,000.00
62700 · Technology and Software	976.90	1,870.83	-893.93	16,314.81	16,837.51	-522.70	22,450.00
62600 · Telephone	148.08	151.67	-3.59	1,332.72	1,364.99	-32.27	1,820.00
62500 · Local Travel and Meetings	254.85	458.34	-203.49	2,502.64	4,124.98	-1,622.34	5,600.00
Total 62000 · Office and Overhead Expenses	9,176.50	15,357.51	-6,181.01	135,624.89	189,417.47	-53,792.58	251,090.00
70000 · Direct Program Expenses							
70310 · Committee & Board Meetings	190.09	750.00	-559.91	6,196.81	6,750.00	-553.19	9,000.00
70335 · Program Supplies	516.69	3,916.67	-3,399.98	14,692.44	22,249.99	-7,557.55	36,600.00
70300 · Advertising	600.00	2,055.23	-1,455.23	3,614.16	8,915.67	-5,301.51	11,690.67
70320 · Contracted Services	37,435.00	43,420.83	-5,985.83	394,965.21	367,587.51	27,377.70	586,012.00
70340 · Equipment Rental	0.00	0.00	0.00	12,833.58	12,000.00	833.58	52,800.00
70350 · Event Entertainment	0.00	0.00	0.00	2,900.00	7,000.00	-4,100.00	22,500.00
70360 · Other Program Expenses	40,067.69	23,493.42	16,574.27	161,877.81	199,440.74	-37,562.93	268,128.18
70370 · Printing and Reproduction	437.66	6,480.76	-6,043.10	11,121.55	21,692.28	-10,570.73	30,354.77
Total 70000 · Direct Program Expenses	79,247.13	80,116.91	-869.78	608,201.56	645,636.19	-37,434.63	1,017,085.62
Total Expense	170,444.79	208,373.29	-37,928.50	1,622,926.81	1,863,643.29	-240,716.48	2,659,661.86
Net Income	63,498.31	11,209.81	52,288.50	206,390.55	166,104.64	40,285.91	18,335.37

The U District Partnership

Balance Sheet Prev Year Comparison

As of March 31, 2025

	<u>Mar 31, 25</u>	<u>Mar 31, 24</u>	<u>\$ Change</u>
ASSETS			
Current Assets			
Checking/Savings			
10100 · Operating Bank Accounts			
10110 · WSECU Checking	354,416.33	304,497.94	49,918.39
10111 · WSECU Savings	160,555.11	135,278.09	25,277.02
Total 10100 · Operating Bank Accounts	<u>514,971.44</u>	<u>439,776.03</u>	<u>75,195.41</u>
Total Checking/Savings	514,971.44	439,776.03	75,195.41
Accounts Receivable	8,829.00	186,821.98	-177,992.98
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	234.22	883.93	-649.71
Total Other Current Assets	<u>39,353.61</u>	<u>92,122.24</u>	<u>-52,768.63</u>
Total Current Assets	563,154.05	718,720.25	-155,566.20
Fixed Assets			
15000 · Furniture and Equipment	14,690.79	11,013.05	3,677.74
Total Fixed Assets	14,690.79	11,013.05	3,677.74
Other Assets			
17025 · Security Deposits	3,235.87	3,235.87	0.00
Total Other Assets	<u>3,235.87</u>	<u>3,235.87</u>	<u>0.00</u>
TOTAL ASSETS	<u>581,080.71</u>	<u>732,969.17</u>	<u>-151,888.46</u>
LIABILITIES & EQUITY			
Liabilities			
Current Liabilities			
Accounts Payable (Prepaid Expenses)	-41,461.55	19,403.71	-60,865.26
Credit Cards	1,372.20	7,609.90	-6,237.70
Other Current Liabilities			
20220 · Lease Liability	33,880.56	91,046.06	-57,165.50
20210 · Deferred Revenue	51,100.80	132,457.66	-81,356.86
24000 · Payroll Liabilities	62,323.48	59,972.10	2,351.38
Total Other Current Liabilities	<u>147,304.84</u>	<u>283,475.82</u>	<u>-136,170.98</u>
Total Current Liabilities	<u>107,215.49</u>	<u>310,489.43</u>	<u>-203,273.94</u>
Total Liabilities	107,215.49	310,489.43	-203,273.94
Equity			
32000 · Unrestricted Net Assets	267,474.67	234,685.26	32,789.41
Net Income	206,390.55	187,794.48	18,596.07
Total Equity	<u>473,865.22</u>	<u>422,479.74</u>	<u>51,385.48</u>
TOTAL LIABILITIES & EQUITY	<u>581,080.71</u>	<u>732,969.17</u>	<u>-151,888.46</u>



Program Reports

Winter 2025 UDBIA Ratepayer Advisory Board Meeting

April 24, 2025

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

Hiring for Economic Development Manager Position

After five years of service to UDP, Daniel Lokic took a job leading the new Manufacturing Maritime Industrial Association (MMIA), a citywide stewardship organization dedicated to strengthening Seattle's maritime, manufacturing, logistics, and industrial sectors. UDP is in the final stages of hiring for this position and hopes to have someone in this role by the end of May.

URBAN VITALITY

Lid I-5 North Initiative

Earlier this year, the U.S. Department of Transportation (USDOT) awarded The U District Partnership (UDP) \$1.5 million to explore the feasibility of lidding Interstate 5 as part of the federal Reconnecting Communities Pilot (RCP) Program. This was three-fourths of the projected cost of the project and traditionally, awards like this can take up to nine to contract, after which point UDP would engage a project management firm to begin leading the project with UDP and the Lid I-5 North Coalition.

This funding complements a local match of \$250,000 that was awarded to this effort through the Seattle Transportation Levy. The Washington State Legislature is also considering funds to support this effort. Washington State Senator Javier Valdez is stewarding a \$500,000 funding package that will fill a critical budget gap that still remains for one-fourth of this project which will conduct an engineering and programmatic feasibility study, in addition to a community visioning process that investigates ways to reconnect Northeast Seattle neighborhoods. This is the second Reconnecting Communities grant to be awarded to a Seattle project—the first of which was the Lid I-5 project in downtown Seattle. More details to follow as details of the grant are shared with The U District Partnership.

There continues to be much turmoil and confusion over federal spending, so UDP will follow what is happening in Washington D.C. and support the local delegation (including U.S. Senator Patty Murray, who has been incredibly supportive and helpful) as they advocate to honor this award. The team remains optimistic, but the path forward is murky for the time being.

New Urban Vitality Manager

UDP has hired a new Urban Vitality Manager who will start later this spring and will be announced later this month. This new manager will fill the role left by Katy Ricchiuto in November of last year when she left after five years to take the role of Policy Director at Transportation Choices Coalition.

CLEAN, SAFE & OUTREACH

Homeless Census

As part of its monthly effort to better understand and respond to neighborhood needs, the UDP conducted its March homeless census. During the census, approximately 100 individuals were observed, with 52 recognized from prior engagement. Of those, 16 are known by name, and seven are currently participating in the High Impact Individual Case Conferencing program, which connects individuals to intensive, coordinated services.

DATE	NUMBER OF PEOPLE
03/27/2025	100
02/19/2025	46
01/15/2025	47

Four encampments were documented during the March count, including two tents, one RV, and an unstructured collection of tarps and personal belongings. This monthly snapshot helps inform the UDP's approach to outreach, safety, and resource coordination, ensuring efforts remain responsive and grounded in current conditions on the ground.

Clean and Safe Committee

Join UDP for the Spring U District Clean and Safe Committee Meeting on Wednesday, April 17th from 3:00 to 4:30pm in the Rita Koontz Community Room at WSECU (1121 NE 45th St). The meeting will cover updates and initiatives across public safety, alleyway improvements, homeless outreach, and neighborhood beautification. Topics include ongoing advocacy efforts, alley audits, oil storage concerns, the latest homeless census, and a chance to meet our new outreach team member, Dimitra. The discussion will also highlight spring beautification projects, including flower bed plantings, new hanging baskets, and our work along NE 43rd Street.

New Retro Litter Cans

The U District served as a pilot site for Seattle Public Utilities' Public Litter Can Program over the past several years, testing an alternative can design in high-pedestrian areas within our furniture zones. While these experimental cans provided valuable insights, they ultimately proved problematic and were not selected for citywide use. Badly beaten-up, the cans currently in place have reached the end of their lifecycle much sooner than anticipated.

The U District Partnership is now working with SPU to refurbish a previous style of litter cans that are more durable, less bulky, and allow for U District branding. SPU plans to return them to the neighborhood with more strategic and thoughtful placement in the next month.



Summer Flower Baskets on the Ave to Arrive in May

This year, UDP is working with a new flower basket supplier, Squak Mountain Nursery. By partnering directly with the grower, UDP was able to upgrade the quality of the baskets while also reducing costs. These savings will allow UDP to bring on Henry Gavin, the gardener behind the landscaping on NE 43rd

Street, to maintain the baskets with daily watering and regular care. The new baskets are scheduled to arrive shortly after the U District Street Fair.

Tulips

Back in November, UDP planted thousands of tulips, crocuses, and daffodils in the flower beds along NE 43rd Street to bring a vibrant burst of color to the neighborhood as winter fades. These early spring blooms were chosen to create a welcoming and lively atmosphere for passersby and to highlight the continued investment in making 43rd a welcoming corridor in the heart of the neighborhood. Right now, the tulips are in full bloom and putting on a stunning show.



MARKETING

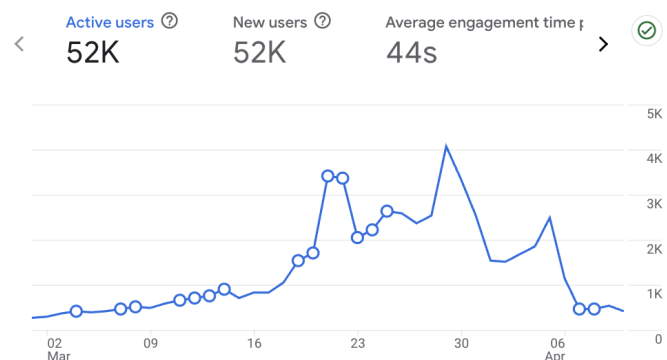
Festival Promotion, Advertising & Analytics

The U District Partnership worked with local media to feature the fourth annual U District Cherry Blossom Festival. Media partnerships with KUOW and The Stranger offered expanded reach through digital advertising opportunities.

Additionally, UDP collaborated with local news stations to feature the festival in widespread segments. FOX 13's [Good Day Seattle](#) filmed four segments, plus an [additional segment](#) for the evening news on the first day of the festival with features and interviews with business representatives at Leon Coffee House, TOASTED. Bagels & Coffee, Seattle Boulderling Gym, Shultz's Bar & Grill, and Luminati Labs. [KIRO 7's Around the Sound segment](#) featured an video interview with UDP's Don Blakeney and on-location features of Sweet Alchemy Ice Creamery, Shiga's Imports, and footage of festivity around University Way NE, a subsequent [Around the Sound feature article](#) was also published.

Website traffic for the event surpassed 2024 numbers by about 5k additional active users and 7k additional new users. The [udistrictseattle.com](#) website continues to provide a strong central location for the general public to experience and explore U District major events and happenings.

Social media reach and engagement was also strong during the fourth annual U District Cherry Blossom Festival. Particularly on Instagram, posts sustained strong organic reach with favorable interest in the event. Dates for the event were announced on social media on March 3. The post, containing a branded event graphic depicting cherry blossoms and the U District skyline, garnered over 3,000 likes, 2,830 shares, reaching over 72,317 accounts, with 95,667 views. An Instagram reel produced by UDP and showing features of the festival, reached over 4,500 accounts with over 7,000 views.



Recent Media Features

- Seattle Refined – [17 of the oldest things around modern-day Seattle](#)
Cafe Allegro, celebrating 50 years in 2025, is noted in this lineup. Founder Dave Olsen chose the location for Cafe Allegro as it would be the busiest entrance to the University of Washington campus.
- The Daily – [TOASTED.'s Ramadan hours offer cafe nightlife and celebration in the U-District](#)
Despite the fact that it was nearly 10 p.m. on a Wednesday night, TOASTED. Bagels & Coffee was already filling tables during their second opening of the day. In the typically quiet Seattle night, swaths of customers showed out for the second night of TOASTED.'s extended Ramadan event.
- KUOW – [U District pharmacy closures leave community anxious about medication access](#)
As thousands of pharmacies shutter nationwide, a series of closures in Seattle's University District has left residents wondering how they'll access important medications if the trend continues.
- Daily Journal of Commerce – [Hello, Gateway, and farewell, UDSB!](#)
The U District Station Building is no more. Set atop U District Station, the brand-new office tower at 4328 Brooklyn Ave. N.E. is now the Gateway Building.
- SeattleMet - [Secret Spots in Seattle's University District](#)
Highlights from the U District neighborhood, including Cafe Allegro, Voula's Offshore Cafe, University Book Store, and Bulldog News to name a few.

Email Marketing

Email opens remain strong across topics and features for U District events.

- | | |
|--|--------------------------|
| • 4/9 – Newsletter - Cherry Blossom Fest, Pressure Washing | Opens: 33.6% / CTR: 4.1% |
| • 4/3 – Event Email - Cherry Blossom Festival | Opens: 41.9% / CTR: 2.4% |
| • 3/25 – Newsletter - Cherry Blossom Fest | Opens: 50.0% / CTR: 5.1% |
| • 3/21 – Event Email - Cherry Blossom Festival | Opens: 41.6% / CTR: 5.5% |
| • 3/14 – Newsletter - Street Fair Last Call, Event Dates | Opens: 48.3% / CTR: 6.0% |
| • 2/28 – Newsletter - Revive I-5 Delayed, UDP Hiring | Opens: 51.4% / CTR: 4.5% |
| • 2/13 – Newsletter - Snow Response, Valentine's Day Fun | Opens: 52.9% / CTR: 4.5% |

EVENTS

Cherry Blossom Festival

The fourth annual [U District Cherry Blossom Festival](#) returned March 21- April 6 in alignment with peak bloom of the historic cherry blossom trees on the University of Washington campus.

82 businesses participated in the event featuring cherry and blossom-themed food, drink, and retail specials. During the festival dates, over 657k unique visitors (not including residents or regular employees) came to the U District business area, 43% of which visited the Ave directly. This translated to 1.86million+ visits to the same U District business area, roughly 419k+ visits to the Ave during the festival dates of Friday, March 21-Sunday, April 6.



The Cherry Blossom Festival window decorating contest also returned this year—expanding to offer three prizes to participating small businesses! The Grand Prize winner receiving \$1000 was Shiga's Imports and the two runners up were Cheba Hut and Pink Gorilla Games, both of which received \$500 gift certificates to spend at the U District business of their choice.

Window decorations from the U District Cherry Blossom Festival



U District Street Fair Returns May 17-18, 2025

The Street Fair is sold out! This year, there is a fantastic lineup of artists, food, music, dancers, and activations on Brooklyn! In addition to over 300 booths on the Ave stretching from NE Campus Parkway to NE 50th Street, the Street Fair is expanding to bring activity to the new U District Station Park. The park and space along 43rd will include live muralists, screen printing, custom dog portraits, a wild putt-putt course (holes designed by artists), UW Engineering Student- robots, rockets and race cars! Plus Emerald City Soul will be on-hand spinning vintage 45's to keep the vibe.



Seattle Boba Fest Jumps to A New Summer Date – July 19

[Seattle Boba Fest](#) returns this year, but will be making a move from April to July to make use of warmer weather as the U District continues to build excitement for the robust bubble tea offerings of the neighborhood.

Registration for participating businesses will open later this spring!

