



COMMISSION RECOMMENDATION

Urban Transportation Commission

Recommendation Number 20191112-02D: University Neighborhood Overlay (UNO) Code Amendments

WHEREAS, since its adoption in 2004, the University Neighborhood Overlay (UNO) has helped provide affordable housing and transit-supportive density in the West Campus neighborhood; and

WHEREAS, the area within UNO is located between an Imagine Austin Corridor (North Lamar Boulevard) and a Transit Priority Network Corridor (Guadalupe Street) and in an Imagine Austin Center, identifying it as an important area to plan for transit-supportive density that can help sustain a robust transit and mobility network; and

WHEREAS, the City is currently considering amending regulations for the University Neighborhood Overlay (UNO) in order to, among other things, increase affordable housing capacity in West Campus and provide more flexibility in terms of parking requirements and parking structure re-use; and

WHEREAS, adopting these changes would support the City's goals of promoting multi-modal alternatives to driving by:

- Allowing for more students to live within walking and biking distance of the University of Texas at Austin, reducing reliance on single-occupancy vehicles;
- Providing transit-supportive density along two major corridors, including one designated by the Austin Strategic Mobility Plan for a Dedicated Transit Lane;
- Eliminating required minimums for parking in UNO, which better enables projects to adjust to the needs of residents by not requiring an overabundance of parking; and
- Allowing for re-use of parking structures so that properties within UNO are able to evolve to meet community needs; and

WHEREAS, City Council has provided direction to City staff through the Land Development Code revision process to provide additional housing capacity on Imagine Austin and Transit Priority Network Corridors and within Imagine Austin Centers, and that this capacity should be accompanied by affordable housing requirements; and

WHEREAS, City staff have recommended meaningful improvements to UNO that would better help the City accomplish these goals, including providing for additional affordable housing capacity by increasing density bonus height; and

WHEREAS, the Planning Commission has recommended making further improvements to UNO by allowing more areas to participate in the UNO density bonus, providing greater density bonus heights in a number of areas, and eliminating parking minimums; and

WHEREAS, these recommendations have garnered the support of community groups, including the West Campus Neighborhood Association and the University Democrats; and

WHEREAS, City staff concurs with Planning Commission recommendations that would eliminate required parking minimums and allow re-use of parking structures; and

WHEREAS, the Planning Commission has recommended expanding the Inner West Campus subdistrict across Rio Grande Street, which would support multi-modal mobility choices by allowing more residents to live on Rio Grande Street and utilize the Rio Grande Street bike lane; and

WHEREAS, the Planning Commission has recommended allowing properties in the Outer West Campus subdistrict along 24th Street extending from North Lamar Boulevard, a key Imagine Austin corridor, to participate in the UNO density bonus, an option already available to adjacent properties; and

WHEREAS, the Planning Commission has also recommended allowing properties along San Gabriel Street south of 24th Street to participate in the UNO density bonus, an option already available to adjacent properties; and

WHEREAS, allowing a density bonus on these 24th Street and San Gabriel properties is consistent with Council direction related to increasing housing capacity and affordable housing on and near major corridors;

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the Urban Transportation Commission recommends that Council adopt the Planning Commission's recommendations to:

- Expand the Inner West Campus subdistrict across Rio Grande Street;
- Allow Outer West Campus properties with under 50 ft. of base height to participate in the UNO density bonus program;
- Eliminate parking minimums for projects developed under UNO; and
- Allow for the conversion of existing parking structures to residential and other uses.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that the Urban Transportation Commission recommends calibrating the bonus height for the Outer West Campus properties with under 50 ft. of base height to allow a total height that is consistent with that available to nearby properties through the density bonus.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that the Urban Transportation Commission recommends identifying or otherwise initiating a process to identify additional areas for expanding the Inner West Campus subdistrict and adjusting the density bonus in the Outer West Campus subdistrict in order to provide for greater levels of transit-supportive density and to obtain more affordable, income-restricted housing units.

Date of Approval: November 12, 2019

Record of the vote: 6 - 2 - 2 with Commissioners Blume and Davis voting nay, Commissioners Weatherby and Runas abstaining, and Commissioner Reyna absent

Attest:



Emily Smith, Staff Liaison