

**RESOLUTION NO. 20240418-077**

**WHEREAS**, Austin is committed to quality, safe, affordable living for all, especially for students attending colleges and universities; and

**WHEREAS**, the University Neighborhood Overlay (“UNO”) was established in 2004; and

**WHEREAS**, Resolution No. 20230223-043 directed the City Manager to review the City’s experience with UNO and make land use recommendations that may be applicable for other areas within the City that are adjacent to campus facilities with a high need for student housing; and

**WHEREAS**, in March of 2024, as part of implementing Resolution No. 20230223-043, the City released a report titled “University Neighborhood Overlay: A Local Case Study” (“Case Study”); and

**WHEREAS**, according to the Case Study, the UNO density bonus program has been the most effective density bonus program at encouraging private developers to provide an abundance of dense student housing adjacent to the University of Texas at Austin while producing income-restricted units, thereby enabling many low-income students to live near campus for below-market rates in newer developments; and

**WHEREAS**, inflation-adjusted rents in UNO today are an average of \$204 less than rents in 2004; and

**WHEREAS**, UNO continues to become a more diverse neighborhood since its original adoption, seeing a 13 percent increase in non-white populations from 2010 to 2020, according to the Case Study; and

**WHEREAS**, 11 percent of UNO households do not own a vehicle compared to six percent citywide; and

**WHEREAS**, UNO's design standards include reducing parking minimums, allowing greater density, and enhancing sidewalks have created a safer, more walkable neighborhood for its thousands of residents and visitors compared to Austin overall; and

**WHEREAS**, despite its walkability, getting to a supermarket still requires a car-trip or careful planning for UNO residents, as there are still areas in UNO where they cannot reach a grocery store within 25 minutes; and

**WHEREAS**, UNO was updated in 2014 and 2019 to increase the number of income-restricted units in West Campus, deepen affordability, extend the affordability period, and address some of the equity concerns from the original iteration, setting a precedent for updating UNO to better address the needs of the students residing in the area; and

**WHEREAS**, on January 9, 2024, the Planning Commission initiated an amendment to City Code Title 25 to remove height limits for Inner West Campus; and

**WHEREAS**, UNO's success in creating thousands of mixed-income housing units adjacent to transit has helped increase ridership for existing bus routes along Guadalupe and future Project Connect Phase 1 Light Rail; and

**WHEREAS**, Resolution No. 20240201-054 initiated an Equitable Transit Oriented District ("ETOD") Overlay that would allow up to 120 feet of height, with an exploration of additional height above 120 feet, for non-single family

properties within one-half mile of the Project Connect Phase 1 Austin Light Rail project alignment, excluding existing overlays and regulating plans; and

**WHEREAS**, according to the Case Study, the remaining redevelopment potential in the current UNO boundary is limited; and

**WHEREAS**, since 2019, issues have been identified necessitating a further update to UNO to address equity and livability issues such as windowless bedrooms, SMART bedroom dispersion, and mobility enhancements for people walking and rolling; **NOW, THEREFORE**,

**BE IT RESOLVED BY THE CITY COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF AUSTIN:**

The City Council initiates amendments to City Code Title 25 (*Land Development*) to amend the UNO to achieve the following:

1. Sleeping rooms with windows or openings that allow access to natural light, including exploring options for natural ventilation;
2. Functionally equivalent market-rate units and affordable bedrooms that include windows and openings;
3. Expansion of the UNO affordable housing bonus program to additional areas in the UT Campus area, including areas that are adjacent to the current bonus area;
4. Height limits achievable with participation in the UNO density bonus program in alignment with the Planning Commission's recommendation to remove height limits for Inner West Campus and Dobie;

5. Height limits that are similar to height limits that can be achieved with participation in the ETOD overlay, at minimum;
6. An appropriate step down of heights in expansion areas;
7. Subdistrict boundaries that expand Inner West Campus;
8. Increased ground floor commercial development requirements in areas receiving increased entitlements;
9. Amended design guidelines to further encourage ground floor activation and store fronts instead of parking, and further concealment of parking structures and dumpsters;
10. Enhanced sidewalks, bikeways, and pedestrian realm improvements on key corridors for east-west travel to the University of Texas from West Campus to expand capacity to move people and increase safety; and
11. Tenant protections that reflect any recommendations that result from the City's comprehensive density bonus updates.

**BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED:**

The City Manager is directed to make programmatic updates to UNO that, to the extent feasible, achieve the following objectives:

1. Avoiding concentrating income restricted bedrooms by requiring property owners to disperse affordable bedrooms throughout residential units in a development participating in the SMART

housing program with an exception for cooperative housing developments;

2. Upgrading the Affordable Housing Online Search Tool (“AHOST”) so that students have dynamic, frequently updated information regarding affordable housing options for students;
3. Requiring participating property owners to provide sufficient support to students in the case of delayed move-in dates beyond the start of a lease, in coordination with the University of Texas at Austin;
4. Requiring all rental developments participating under UNO to be inspected every five years for code violations;
5. Reducing the likelihood that participating property owners price-fix rents via software algorithms; and
6. Extending the required period of affordability for existing affordable units within UNO through funding after evaluating the relative efficacy of preventing the expiration of affordable units in existing buildings or securing affordable units in new construction.

**BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED:**

The City Manager is directed to initiate the following regarding mobility improvements in West Campus:

1. Expand the boundaries of UNO’s Parking Benefit District (“PBD”) to more areas of West Campus, in coordination with UNO density bonus expansion;

2. Explore the merits of converting UNO's PBD to a Parking and Transportation Management District ("PTMD");
3. Ensure broad stakeholder representation of residents and businesses in PBD/PTMD oversight, especially student representation;
4. Engage the West Campus community, especially renters, to identify projects to be funded by the PBD/PTMD, including but not limited to street repair, sidewalks, curb ramps, and in-street scooter corrals;
5. Explore and provide recommendations to convert 23rd Street from Rio Grande Street to Guadalupe to a pedestrianized street;
6. Utilize a data-driven, community-informed approach to identifying and implementing micro-mobility parking spaces, in coordination with MetroBike expansion planning, and prioritize on-street corrals;
7. Identify potential funding opportunities and a timeline for street safety improvements for high injury network streets within and adjacent to UNO; and
8. Explore, with CapMetro and the University of Texas, a more holistic approach to campus shuttles and other mobility options to expand accessibility to grocery stores and other healthy food destinations.

**BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED:**

The City Manager is directed to explore:

1. Potential sites and funding opportunities to create pocket parks in the West Campus area;

2. Modifying development requirements to incorporate climate resilience and green infrastructure improvements;
3. Creating commercial development incentives or requirements, especially on corridors receiving enhanced pedestrian and bikeway requirements, that encourage and maintain useful stores for everyday livability and locations that sell produce and healthy food such as grocery stores and markets; and
4. Modifying development requirements to discourage above-ground parking and encourage shared parking and underground parking in areas with no height limits.

The City Council initiates amendments to Title 25 (*Land Development*) to the extent necessary to implement any recommendations that result from exploring these ideas.

**BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED:**

The City Manager is directed to engage area stakeholders, including but not limited to student groups, tenant groups, panhellenic organizations, surrounding neighborhood groups (including University Area Partners and Central Austin Neighborhood Planning Advisory Committee), housing cooperatives, business organizations, and institutional and industry partners on proposed changes to UNO, along with any other proposed changes that arise out of the engagement, and return with a final ordinance for Council approval by Spring 2025.

**ADOPTED:** April 18, 2024 **ATTEST:** *Myrna Rios*  
Myrna Rios  
City Clerk