



PLANNING
DEPARTMENT

C20-2024-010 UNO Update

Downtown Commission

April 16, 2025

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Background

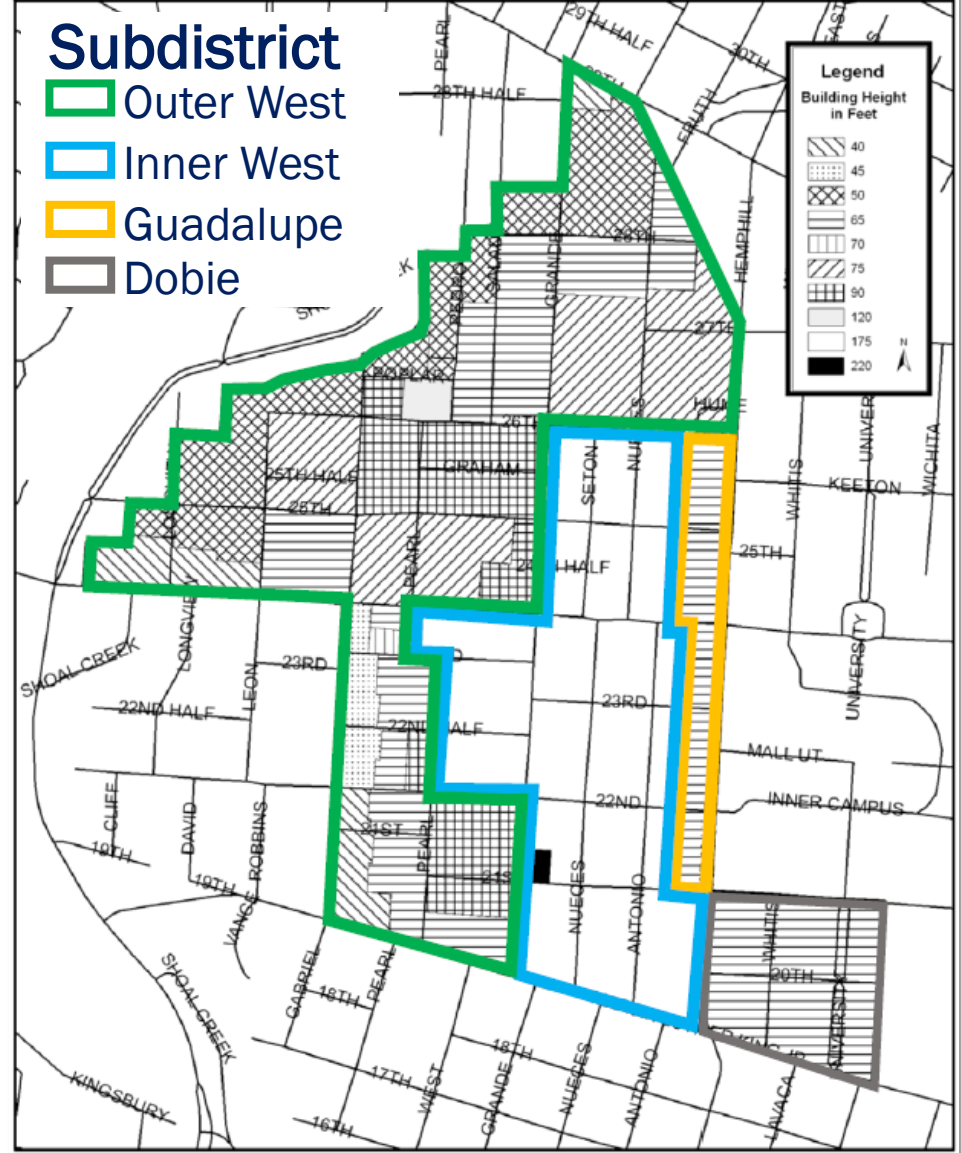


Background

■ UNO: A Brief History

- Established in 2004 (*Updated: 2014, 2019*)
- Overlay district for the West University area designed to promote **high-density** and **pedestrian-oriented** redevelopment that maintains the **existing character** of the area
- Helped to facilitate population growth to over 28,000 residents in the West Campus area

University Neighborhood Overlay Height Districts





City Council Resolution

- **Resolution No. 20240418-077**
 - Adopted on April 18, 2024
 - Includes 29 distinct items for further investigation
 - Initiated updates to the Land Development Code & Building Criteria Manual
 - Requested programmatic updates
 - Land Development Code changes to be considered in Spring 2025

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



Resolution Goals

- Provide quality, safe, affordable living for all, especially for students attending colleges and universities by:



**Increasing housing
capacity, quality, and
affordability**



**Ensuring the area
provides daily needs
and services**



**Supporting the
implementation of light
rail and mobility
enhancements**



Land Development Code Council Direction

- Height limits achievable with participation in the University Neighborhood Overlay (UNO) density bonus program in alignment with the Planning Commission's recommendation to remove height limits for Inner West Campus and Dobie
- Height limits that are similar to what can be achieved with participation in the ETOD overlay, at minimum
- Expansion of UNO boundaries
- Subdistrict boundaries that expand Inner West Campus
- An appropriate step down of heights within expansion areas
- Modifying development requirements to discourage above-ground parking and encourage shared parking and underground parking
- Stakeholder and community engagement



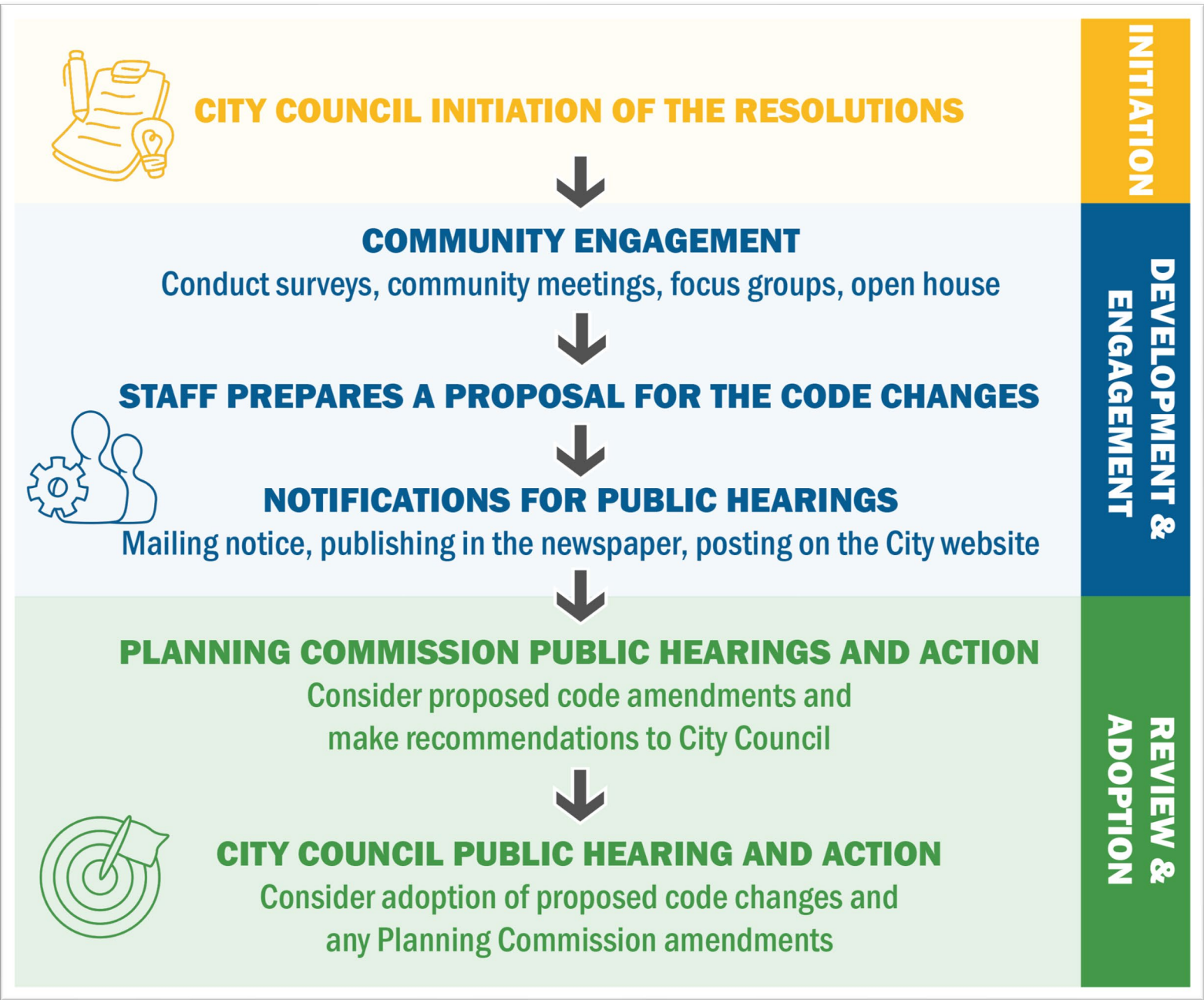
Process



How it Works

■ 3-Step Process for Code Amendments:

- ☑ Initiation
- ☑ Development & Engagement
- ☑ Review & Adoption





Rezoning Process

- To update the regulations, staff proposes to create a **new zoning district** that incorporates the existing overlay with requested updates
- Rezoning requires notice to impacted properties and review by the Planning Commission and City Council at public hearings



Plan Amendment Process

- Mixed use land use designation allows up to 3:1 floor-to-area ratio (FAR)
- High density mixed use is appropriate for areas with 3:1 FAR or greater
- Staff propose updating the Central Austin Combined Neighborhood Plan to ensure that the future land use map (FLUM) provides clear guidance related to desired future land uses in the area
- A plan amendment requires notice to impacted properties and review by the Planning Commission and City Council at public hearings



Proposed Changes



Overview

Standard	Status
Applicability	Modified
Exemptions	Unchanged
Street Wall	Unchanged
Occupant Space	Unchanged
Setbacks	Modified
Streetscape	Modified
Uses	Modified
Building Design	Modified
Parking	New
Lease & Redevelopment	New
Subdistricts	Modified
Affordability	Modified





Program Structure

General Requirements

Applicable to any participating developments include:

- Applicability of the Program
- Allowed Uses
- Site Development and Design Standards
- Parking Allowances
- Lease and Redevelopment Requirements



Subdistrict Requirements

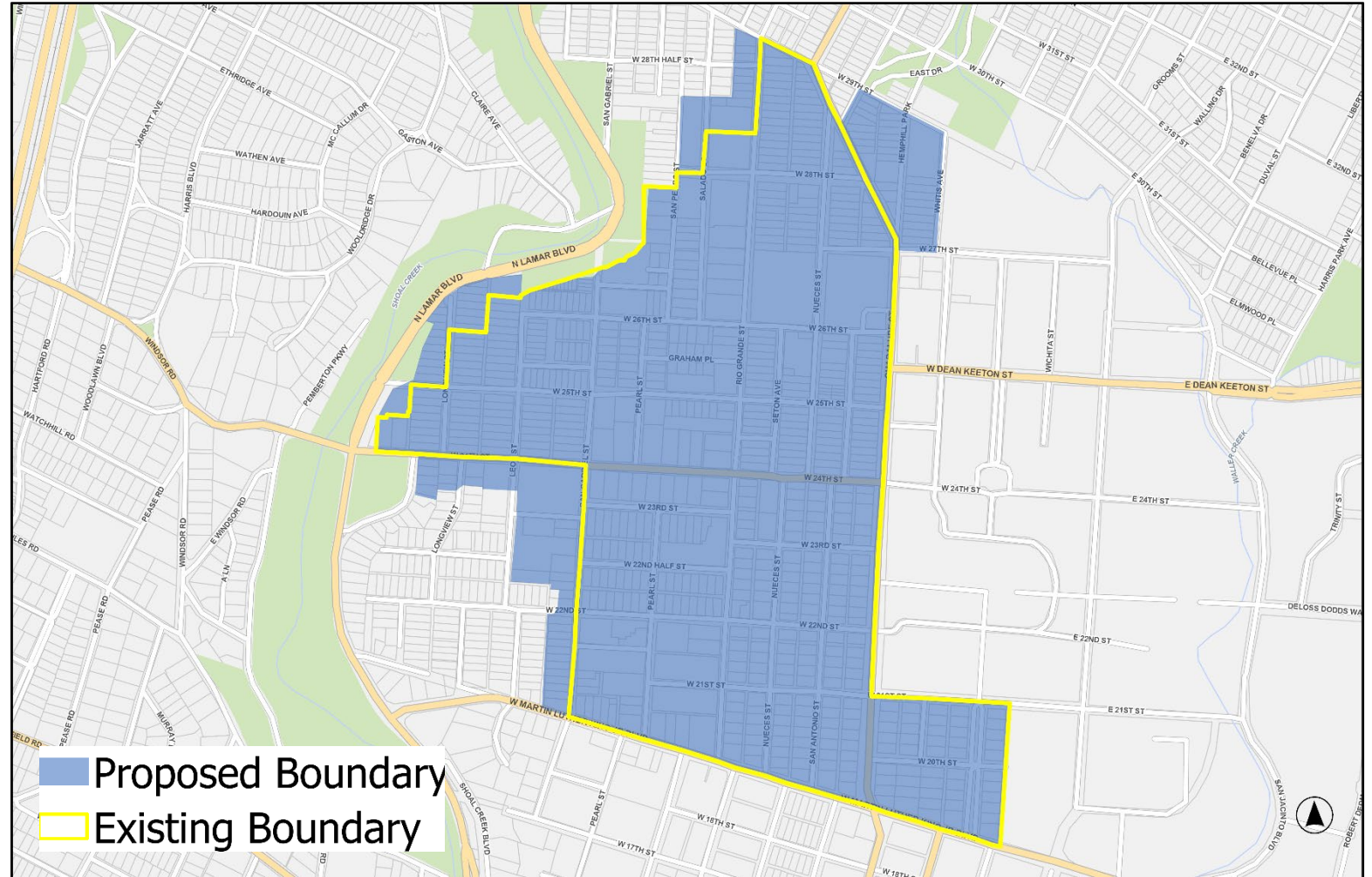
Additional regulations within each subdistrict include:

- Height Allowances
- Specific Site Development Standards
- Affordability Requirements
- Community Benefit Requirements



Proposed Applicability

- Expanded to include **Commercial and Multifamily** properties directly adjacent to the current boundaries
- UNO is a **voluntary** program
- Properties are mapped to a specific subdistrict





Site Development Standards Unchanged

	Existing
Exemptions	Maximum floor-to-area ratio Maximum building coverage Landscaping requirements Minimum site area Private common open space Impervious cover – defined by subdistrict
Street Wall	24' minimum height 12' step back required at a height of 65ft
Occupant Space	Areas intended for occupancy including rentable and common areas - excluding parking and mechanical areas 75% of net street frontage and 42% of Street Wall



Site Development Standards Modified

	Proposed	Existing
Streetscape	Pedestrian Zone dimensions prescribed by the Transportation Criteria Manual + UNO Street Furnishings	12' sidewalk + UNO Street Furnishings
Setbacks	No minimum unless necessary to ensure adequate Fire Department access 10' maximum street yard except for public plaza/private common open space	No minimum 10' maximum street yard except for public plaza/private common open space
Uses	Residential Uses including Group Residential Hotel/Motel (with limitations) Modified Local Uses - only in first two stories Prohibits or makes conditional non-transit supportive uses	Residential Uses including Group Residential Hotel/Motel - with limitations Local Uses - 20% of floor area
Building Design	UNO Design Standards 2-Star Rating under Austin Energy Green Building	UNO Design Standards 1-Star Rating under Austin Energy Green Building
Screening	Requirements for screening of trash receptacles and above-ground parking	Requirements for placement of trash receptacles



New Parking Standards

- **Maximum parking allowance at 40%** formerly required by Appendix A - Tables of Off-Street Loading Requirements and Former Off-Street Parking Requirements.
 - **May exceed the maximum to 60%** if 50% of provided parking is included in an underground parking structure
- **Bicycle Parking**
 - Minimum of five spaces or 15% of the proposed motor vehicle parking spaces, whichever is greater
 - For residential uses, at least the maximum number of long-term bicycle parking spaces required in the Transportation Criteria Manual



New Lease and Redevelopment Requirements

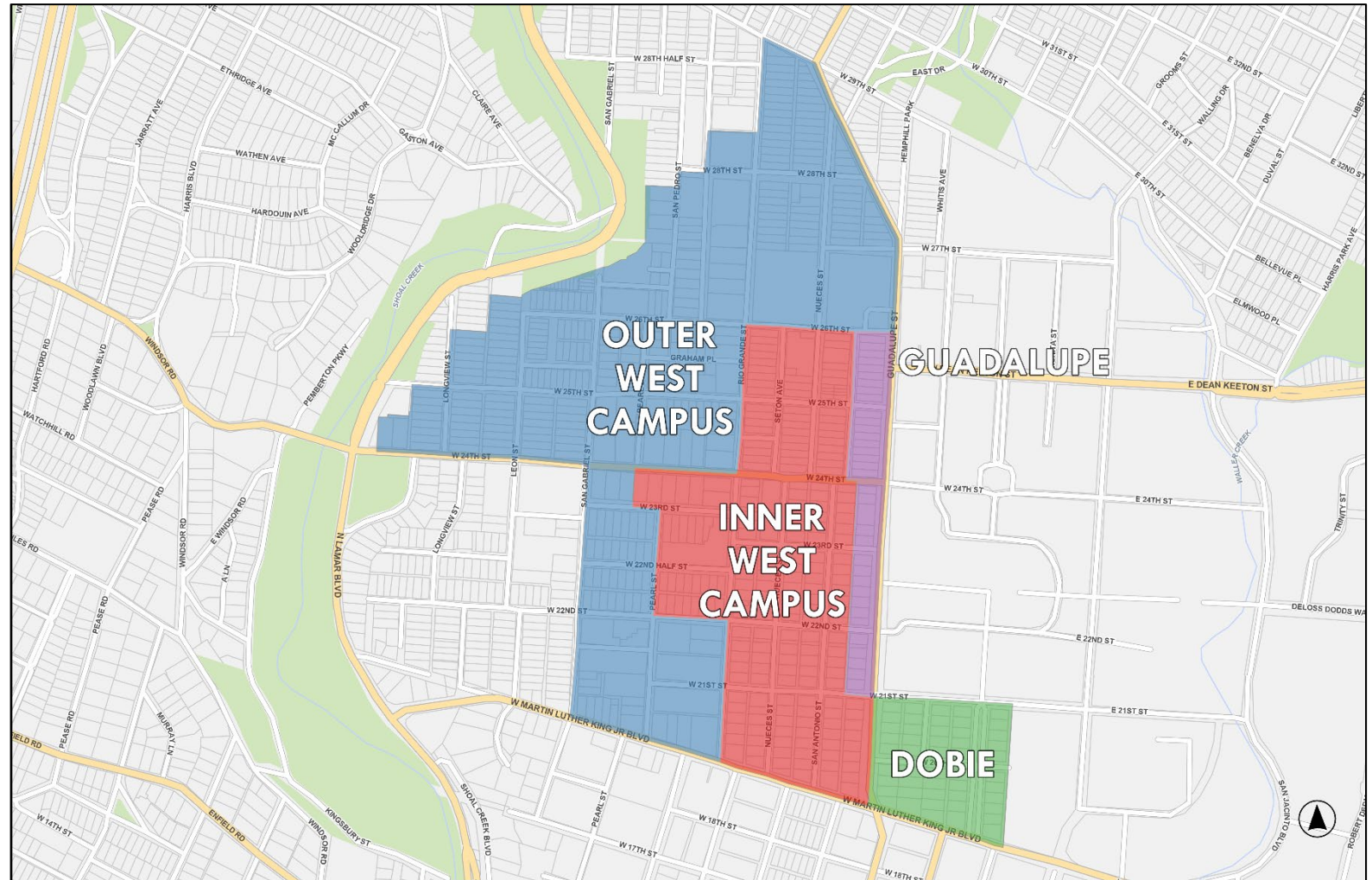
- **Density Bonus Lease & Redevelopment Requirements**
 - Require dispersion of affordable units and equal access to amenities
 - Require tenant protections and redevelopment requirements for existing multifamily and certain commercial uses
- **Amendments to 4-18:**
 - **Restrictions on early leasing**
 - Limit the window of pre-lease and lease renewal offers
 - **Delay of Occupancy Accommodations**
 - Establish a baseline of accommodations for tenants whose units are not ready for occupancy by the start of the lease term
 - **Windowless Bedroom Prohibition**
 - Participating developments must commit to exterior windows in all bedrooms



Existing Subdistricts

Maximum Height

- 300ft
- 50ft - 145ft
- 60ft
- 85ft

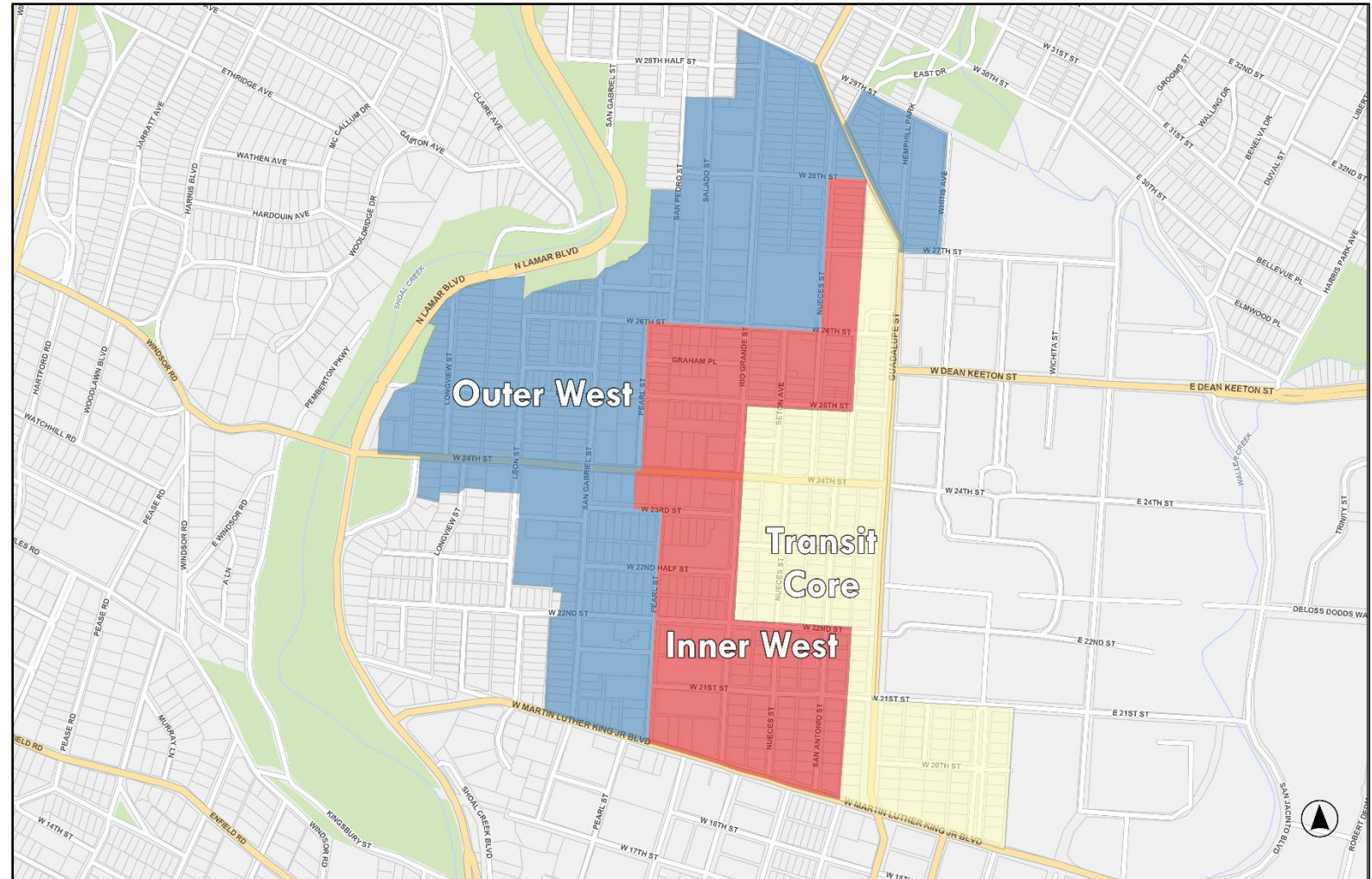


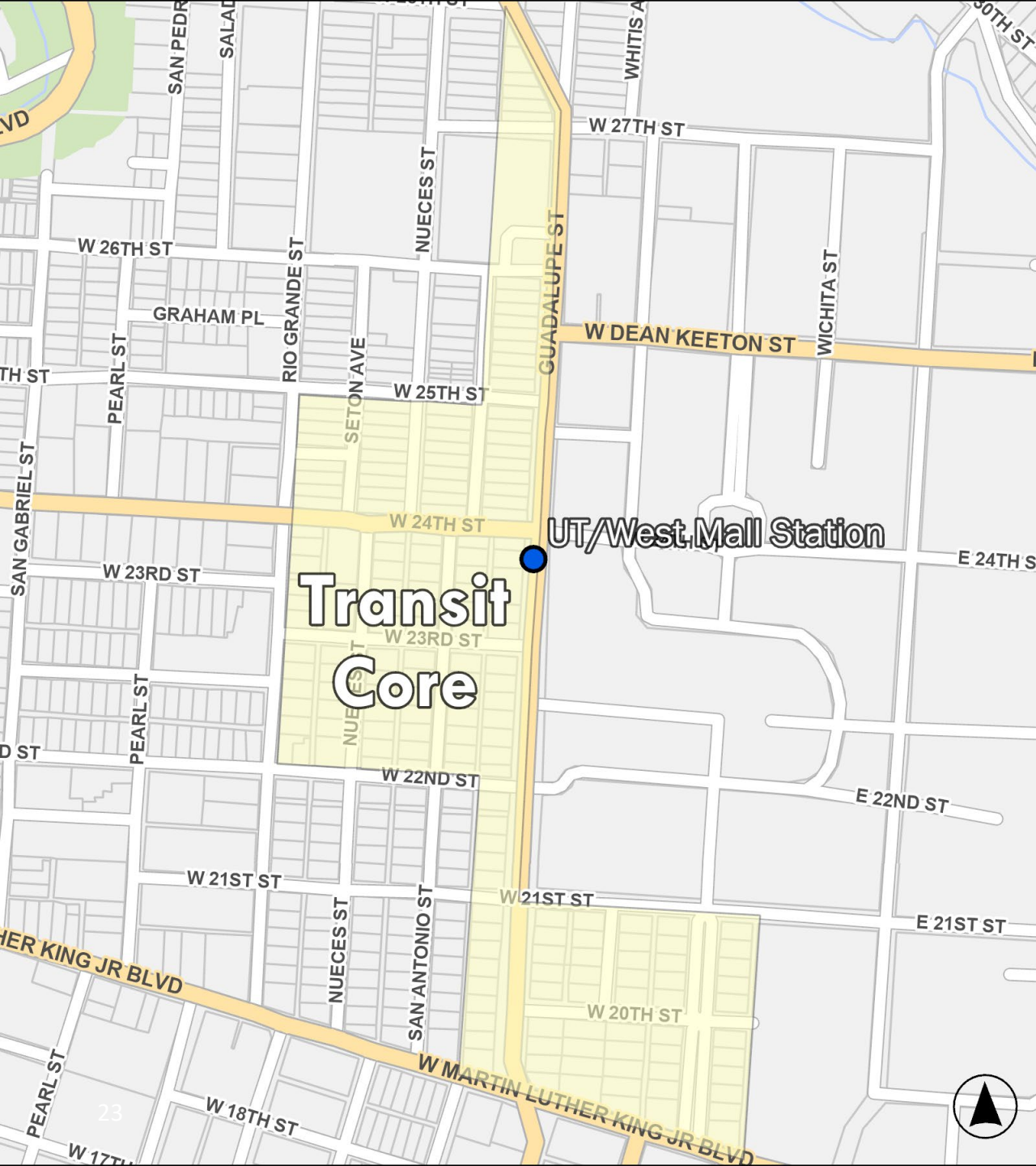


Proposed Subdistricts

Per Council’s direction to increase height limits, height allowances will be based on an increase from the height allowed under the base zoning district of a property

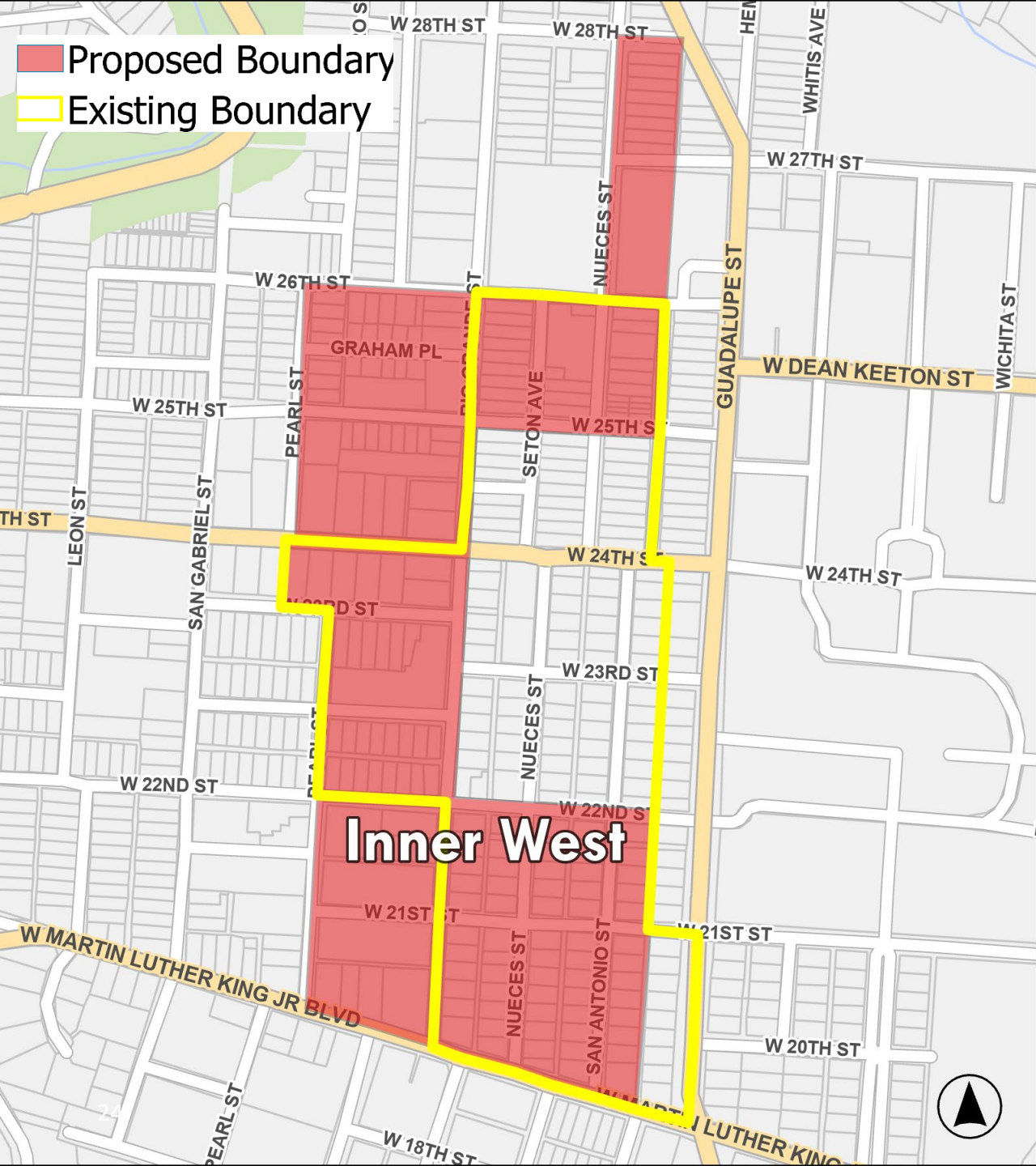
- Maximum Height
- 600ft (+540ft)
- 420ft (+360ft)
- 90ft (+30ft)





Transit Core Subdistrict

- High-density residential development
- Locates greatest density near the University of Texas campus and the planned light rail along Guadalupe Street
- Incorporates parts of the previous Dobie, Guadalupe, and Inner West subdistricts



Inner West Subdistrict

- High-density residential
- Next closest subdistrict to the campus area
- Expands Inner West and increases building height
- Falls generally within the campus shuttle routes



Transit Core & Inner West Site Development Standards

	Proposed Transit Core	Proposed Inner West	Existing Inner West
Height Bonus	540' (600' Max)	360' (420' Max)	175' - 300' Max
Impervious Cover	100%	100%	100%
Uses	Residential, Local, Hotel/Motel (with Limitations)	Residential, Local	Residential, Local, Hotel/Motel (with Limitations)
Above-Ground Parking Max.	3 Stories	3 Stories	None
Community Benefits	Choice of 1	Choice of 1	None
Tower Spacing	20' Stepback at a Height of 120'	20' Stepback at a Height of 120'	None



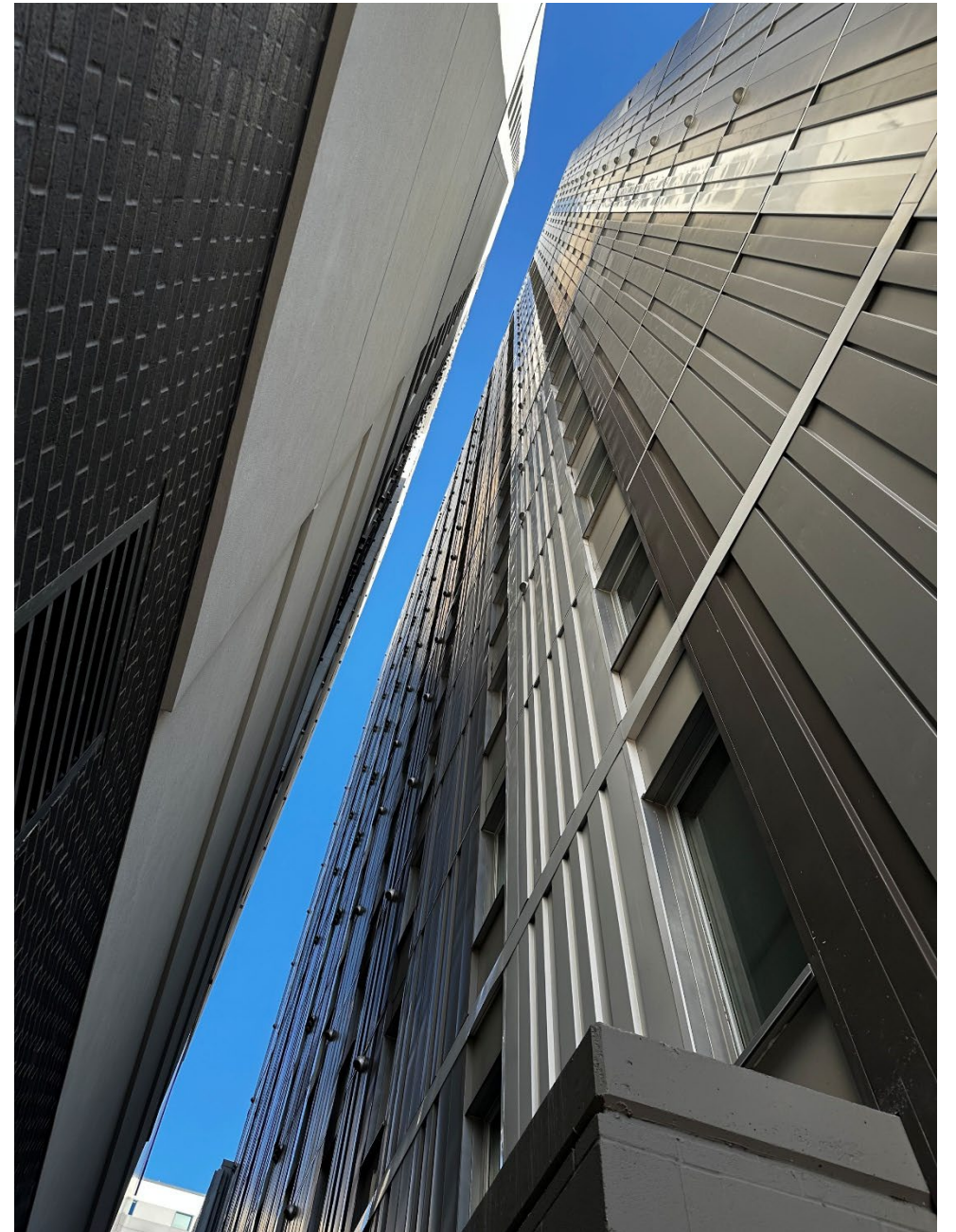
Transit Core & Inner West

Gatekeeper Community Benefits Options

- **Pedestrian-Oriented Commercial**
 - 75% of frontage must contain pedestrian-oriented commercial uses
- **Grocery Store Use**
 - Must contain min. 2,500 sf
- **Transit-Supportive Infrastructure**
 - Ex: 5,200 sf of space for a Traction Powered Substation (TPSS)
 - Only available in the Transit Core
- **On-site Water Reuse System**
 - Projects would be ineligible for Fee-In-Lieu allowed under 25-9-414 (C)
- **Green Roof**
 - Must contain min. 4,000 sf and meet ECM performance standards
- Properties that provide more than 50% of bedrooms or units as affordable are exempt from community benefit requirements



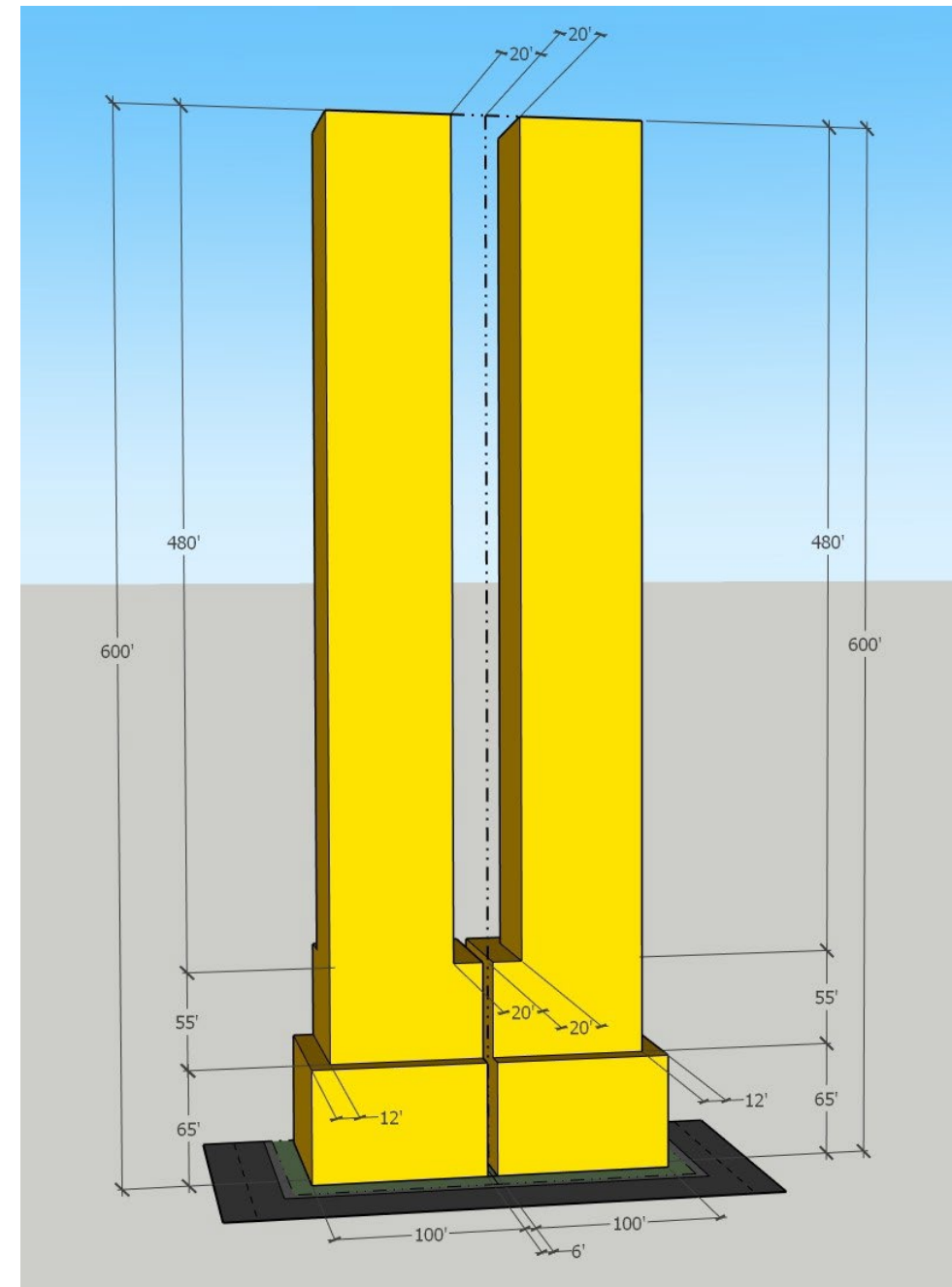
Tower Spacing - Example





Tower Spacing

- 40ft step-back above 120ft in height from existing building of 120ft in height or greater; OR 20ft from a parcel with a maximum allowed building height greater than 120ft
- If the lot frontage is under 100ft then the maximum building coverage for portions of a building above 120ft is 65%





Outer West Subdistrict

- More residential in character
- Mid-rise development pattern
- 15 to 20-minute walk to campus and with access to transit options
- Provides a balance between the denser subdistricts close to the university and the lower-density neighborhoods to the west

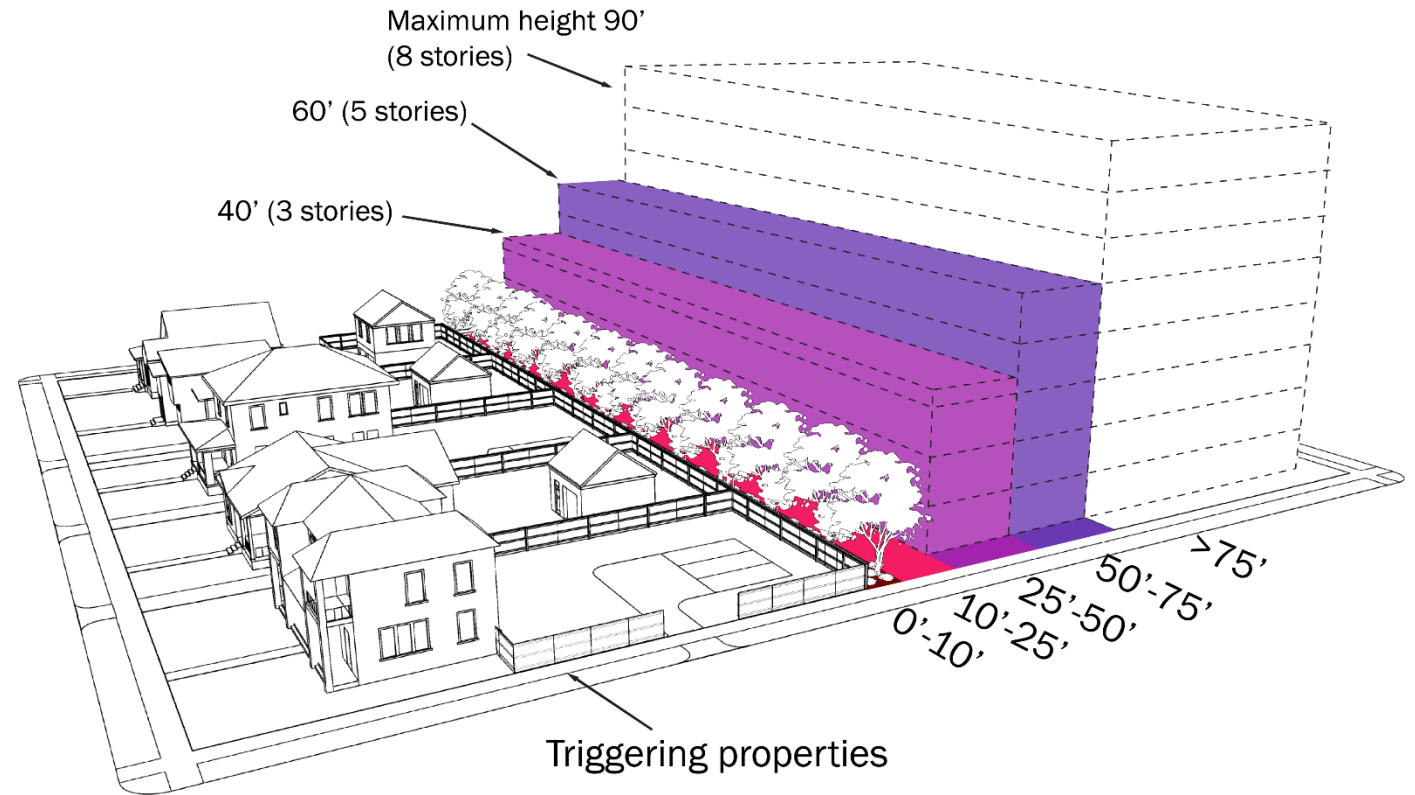


Outer West Site Development Standards

	Proposed Outer West	Existing Outer West
Height Bonus	30' (90' Max)	50' – 145' Max
Impervious Cover	90% or Base Zoning	90% or Base Zoning
Uses	Residential, Local	Residential, Local
Above-Ground Parking Max.	2 Stories	None
Community Benefits	Not Applicable	None

Compatibility

- Citywide compatibility standards will impact properties within 75' of a triggering property
- No triggering properties currently within the UNO district





Affordability Requirements

Rent Limits by the Bedroom

	MFI Limit	Single Occupancy	Double Occupancy
Proposed	50%	\$882	\$485/person
Existing	50%	\$882	\$485/person
	60%	\$1,181	\$649/person

Rent Limits by the Unit

	MFI Limit	1-Bedroom	2-Bedroom	3-Bedroom	4-Bedroom	5-Bedroom
Proposed	50%	\$1,102	\$1,260	\$1,417	\$1,575	\$1,701
Existing	50%	\$882*	*Existing program requirements for properties electing to rent by the unit sets a maximum rental price regardless of the number of bedrooms within the unit.			
	60%	\$1,181*				

Rent limits are the maximum rents that can be charged for a unit or bedroom counted as affordable based on the MFI limit stipulated in the program. Housing Department updates rental rates annually based on HUD’s current income limits.



Proposed Affordability Requirements

- All affordable bedrooms or units are required at the 50% MFI level
- A tiered system allows property owners to choose a height allowance that best fits their development while maximizing the affordability within each tier
- Developments leasing by the unit provide a lower proportion due to the increased rent differential of each affordable unit
- Fee-in-lieu calibrated to be of equivalent cost of providing on-site units

Additional Height	Tier One	Tier Two
Transit Core Subdistrict		
+240' (300' Max)	Bedroom: 20% Unit: 10%	Bedroom: 20% Unit: 10% AND
+300' (600' Max)		Bedroom: 10% or Fee Unit: 5%
Inner West Subdistrict		
+240' (300' Max)	Bedroom: 20% Unit: 10%	Bedroom: 20% Unit: 10% AND
+120' (420' Max)		Bedroom: 10% or Fee Unit: 5%
Outer West Subdistrict		
+30' (90' Max)	Bedroom: 20% Unit: 10%	

Existing program similarly has two Tiers of affordability requirements with varying heights across subdistricts and was the base for consultant modeling and calibration



Likely Development Outcomes

Transit Core



High-rise residential (30-50 stories) with ground-floor activation

Typical of Rainey St. & UNO (since 2019)

Inner West



High-rise residential (15-40 stories) with ground-floor activation

Typical of NBG & UNO (since 2019)

Outer West



Mid-rise residential (5-8 stories) with ground-floor activation

Typical of Mueller, UNO (Outer West), VMU, or TOD districts



Engagement and Timeline

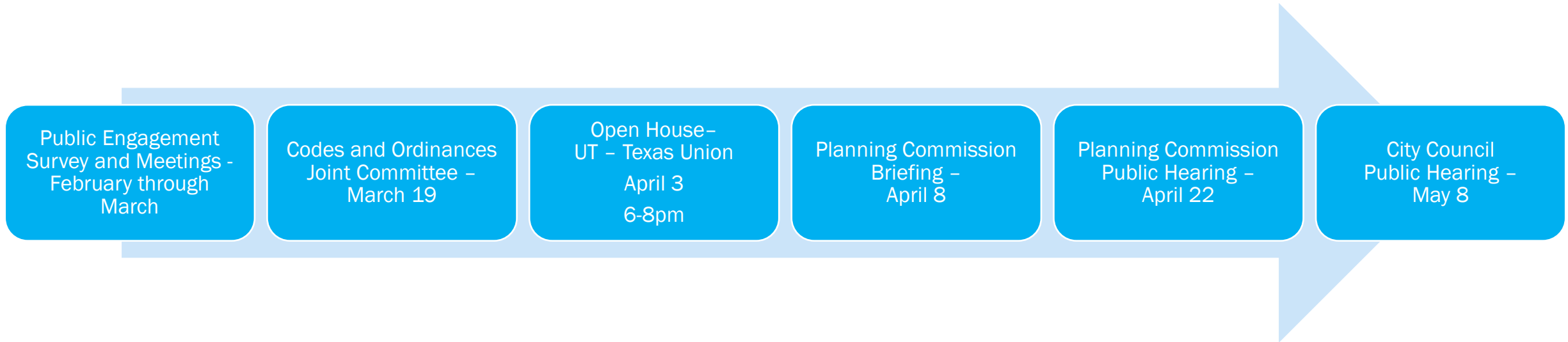


Public Engagement Summary

- Small group/individual meetings with stakeholders
 - University Area Partners
 - University of Texas at Austin
 - Central Austin Neighborhood Planning Advisory Committee
 - CapMetro
 - College Houses
 - University Tenants' Union
 - Judge's Hill Neighborhood Association
 - On the Moov UT
 - SafeHorns
 - Real Estate Council of Austin
 - AIA Austin
- Survey to hear feedback on the priorities for the area
 - Sent to over 6,000 individuals or groups with 300+ responses received



Timeline





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Thank You