

RESOLUTION NO.

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

21 **WHEREAS**, UNO continues to become a more diverse neighborhood since
22 its original adoption, seeing a 13 percent increase in non-white populations from
23 2010 to 2020, according to the Case Study; and

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

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

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

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

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

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

44 **WHEREAS**, Resolution No. 20240201-054 initiated an Equitable Transit
45 Oriented District (“ETOD”) Overlay that would allow up to 120 feet of height,
46 with an exploration of additional height above 120 feet, for non-single family
47 properties within one-half mile of the Project Connect Phase 1 Austin Light Rail
48 project alignment, excluding existing overlays and regulating plans; and

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

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

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

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

- 58 1. Sleeping rooms with windows or openings that allow access to natural
59 light, including exploring options for natural ventilation;
- 60 2. Functionally equivalent market-rate units and affordable bedrooms
61 that include windows and openings;
- 62 3. Expansion of the UNO affordable housing bonus program to
63 additional areas in the UT Campus area, including areas that are
64 adjacent to the current bonus area;

65 4. Height limits achievable with participation in the UNO density bonus
66 program in alignment with the Planning Commission's
67 recommendation to remove height limits for Inner West Campus and
68 Dobie;

69 5. Height limits that are similar to height limits that can be achieved with
70 participation in the ETOD overlay, at minimum;

71 6. An appropriate step down of heights in expansion areas;

72 7. Subdistrict boundaries that expand Inner West Campus;

73 8. Increased ground floor commercial development requirements in
74 areas receiving increased entitlements;

75 9. Amended design guidelines to further encourage ground floor
76 activation and store fronts instead of parking, and further concealment
77 of parking structures and dumpsters;

78 10. Enhanced sidewalks, bikeways, and pedestrian realm improvements
79 on key corridors for east-west travel to the University of Texas from
80 West Campus to expand capacity to move people and increase safety;
81 and

82 11. Tenant protections that reflect any recommendations that result from
83 the City's comprehensive density bonus updates.

84

85 **BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED:**

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

- 88 1. Avoiding concentrating income restricted bedrooms by requiring
89 property owners to disperse affordable bedrooms throughout
90 residential units in a development participating in the SMART
91 housing program with an exception for cooperative housing
92 developments;
- 93 2. Upgrading the Affordable Housing Online Search Tool (“AHOST”)
94 so that students have dynamic, frequently updated information
95 regarding affordable housing options for students;
- 96 3. Requiring participating property owners to provide sufficient support
97 to students in the case of delayed move-in dates beyond the start of a
98 lease, in coordination with the University of Texas at Austin;
- 99 4. Requiring all rental developments participating under UNO to be
100 inspected every five years for code violations;
- 101 5. Reducing the likelihood that participating property owners price-fix
102 rents via software algorithms; and
- 103 6. Extending the required period of affordability for existing affordable
104 units within UNO through funding after evaluating the relative
105 efficacy of preventing the expiration of affordable units in existing
106 buildings or securing affordable units in new construction.

107
BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED:

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

- 110 1. Expand the boundaries of UNO's Parking Benefit District ("PBD") to
111 more areas of West Campus, in coordination with UNO density bonus
112 expansion;
- 113 2. Explore the merits of converting UNO's PBD to a Parking and
114 Transportation Management District ("PTMD");
- 115 3. Ensure broad stakeholder representation of residents and businesses in
116 PBD/PTMD oversight, especially student representation;
- 117 4. Engage the West Campus community, especially renters, to identify
118 projects to be funded by the PBD/PTMD, including but not limited to
119 street repair, sidewalks, curb ramps, and in-street scooter corrals;
- 120 5. Explore and provide recommendations to convert 23rd Street from
121 Rio Grande Street to Guadalupe to a pedestrianized street;
- 122 6. Utilize a data-driven, community-informed approach to identifying
123 and implementing micro-mobility parking spaces, in coordination
124 with MetroBike expansion planning, and prioritize on-street corrals;
- 125 7. Identify potential funding opportunities and a timeline for street safety
126 improvements for high injury network streets within and adjacent to
127 UNO; and

128 8. Explore, with CapMetro and the University of Texas, a more holistic
129 approach to campus shuttles and other mobility options to expand
130 accessibility to grocery stores and other healthy food destinations.

131 **BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED:**

132 The City Manager is directed to explore:

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

135 2. Modifying development requirements to incorporate climate resilience
136 and green infrastructure improvements;

137 3. Creating commercial development incentives or requirements,
138 especially on corridors receiving enhanced pedestrian and bikeway
139 requirements, that encourage and maintain useful stores for everyday
140 livability and locations that sell produce and healthy food such as
141 grocery stores and markets; and

142 4. Modifying development requirements to discourage above-ground
143 parking and encourage shared parking and underground parking in
144 areas with no height limits.

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

148 **BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED:**

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

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157 **ADOPTED:** _____, 2024 **ATTEST:** _____

158 Myrna Rios
159 City Clerk
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