

# Seattle University Community

Founded in 1869, the City of Seattle is the leading commercial, cultural and advanced technology center of the U.S. Pacific Northwest, and a major port city for trans-Pacific and European trade. With a 2010 population of more than 608,000, the city is the region’s largest and most diverse in terms of population, economic activity, and transportation options. The city has designated six regional growth centers—Downtown, First Hill/Capitol Hill, Northgate, South Lake Union, Uptown Queen Anne, and the University Community—to accept significant planned population and employment growth.

The area that is now known as the University District, or University Community, was largely undeveloped when Seattle annexed it in 1891. It was opened up to development in 1888 when a University District stop was included on Seattle, Lakeshore and Eastern Railway’s service to Sumas. With the move of the University of Washington from its downtown site to its new campus, the University Community grew rapidly. Between 1895 and 1909, 10 subdivisions were platted in the vicinity of the University. Following a succession of tremendously popular world’s fairs around the world, the Alaska-Yukon-Pacific Exposition took place on the grounds of the University of Washington in the summer of 1909. The fair shaped the campus and surrounding area in ways that are visible today, creating the Rainier Vista and Drumheller Fountain, and a series of landscaped boulevards linking the campus to the surrounding community. Today, the University Community is still heavily oriented around the University of Washington, including substantial multifamily housing and a commercial corridor along University Ave that serves the neighborhood.

## Acreage, Density & Mix of Activity

Seattle University Community is a medium-sized regional growth center in terms of total gross acreage (767 acres) with a net developable acreage of 565 acres (74% of gross acres). In terms of its role in the city overall, Seattle University Community contains 1 percent of the city's land area, 4 percent of the population, 3 percent of the housing, and 7 percent of the employment. Compared to centers as a whole, Seattle University Community has a large number of total activity units (56,424), with fairly evenly-mixed activity (59% jobs/41% residents) and a high density of activity (73.6 units per gross acre).

## Urban Form

Seattle University Community's average parcel size is 0.6 acres, which is smaller than the 1.1-acre average size for growth centers. Seattle University Community provides a walkable pedestrian environment, with a complete network of sidewalks (100% coverage) and small blocks at a 3.5-acre average size. The large parcels

## 2010 Summary Statistics

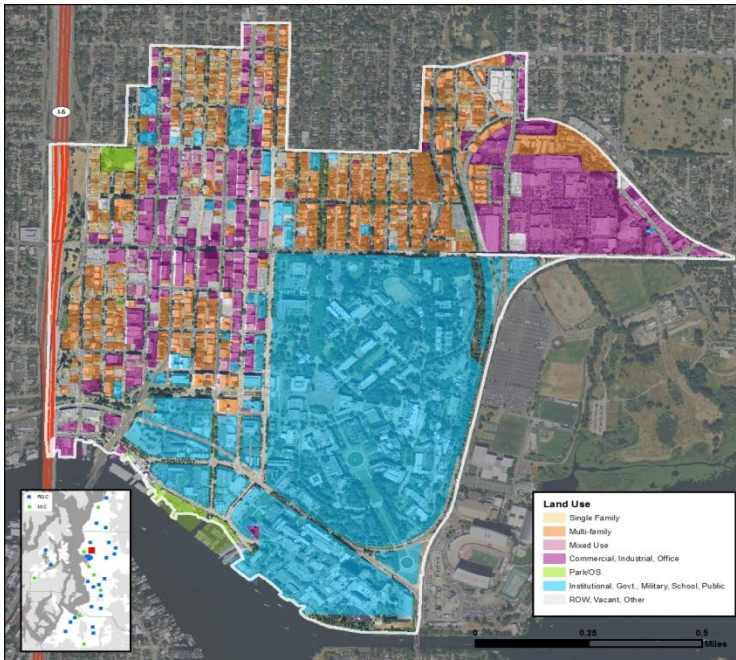
Land Use	
Gross acreage	767
Average block size (acres)	3.5
Average parcel size (acres)	0.6
Mix of Uses	
Population/Employee ratio	.70 : 1
Population+Employee/acre	73.6
Population	
Total population	23,198
Population density/acre	30.2
Change (2000–2010)	3,265
Housing	
Total housing units	8,431
Housing unit density/acre	11
Change (2000–2010)	1,378
Employment	
Total employment	33,226
Employment density/acre	43.3
Change (2000–2010)	-244
Transportation	
Housing access to transit	99%
Employee access to transit	100%
Work-based mode share	
SOV / HOV	55% • 8%
Walk & Bike / Transit	14% • 22%

## Urban Amenities

Food & Drink	
Restaurants	100
Grocery	14
Cafes & Bars	30
Home Supplies & Services	
Pet Supplies	2
Laundry & Haircuts	12
Home supplies	5
Clothing & Shoes	30
Banks	15
Arts & Recreation	
Spectator Sports	-
Fitness & Outdoors	8
Electronics & Toys	6
Bookstores & Libraries	8
Arts & Culture	6
Public & Civic Services	
Social Services	12
Schools & Childcare	11
Police, Fire, Postal, City Hall	1
Pharmacy	3
Healthcare	52
Residential Care Centers	1

that comprise the University of Washington and University Village shopping center skew the average block size – most blocks north and west of the university are considerably smaller.

The presence of amenities is an important aspect of urban form. Seattle University Community has a moderate set of urban amenities (316 total amenities / 0.41 amenities per gross acre). Food/Drink (50%) and Public/Civic Services (23%) represent the largest amenity categories, with specific concentrations in Restaurants, Healthcare, Clothing/Shoes, and Cafes/Bars.



**Land Use**

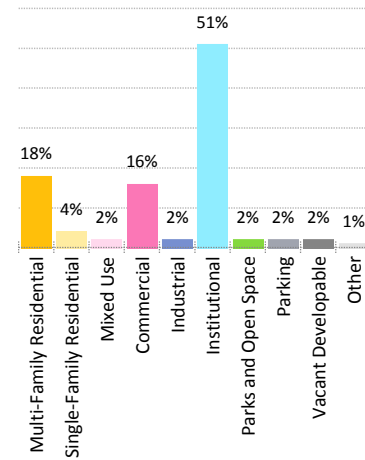
The major land uses in Seattle University Community are institutional (51%), multi-family residential (18%) and commercial (16%). About 71 percent of the center’s 565 net acres are in employment-related use, including mixed-use buildings. Approximately 18 percent of the land in the center are exclusively residential uses.

**Demographics**

The total population in Seattle University Community is 23,198, and has grown by 3,265 residents over the past 10 years. The center has more young working age residents than the region as a whole, with small shares of youth (2%) and seniors (2%). The age of residents is predominantly 18-34, followed by 35-64 (95% for both age groups combined). At 39 percent, Seattle University Community’s racial diversity is greater than the region’s 27 percent share of non-white residents. The groups with the highest shares in Seattle University Community are White (61%) and Asian (27%). Five percent of residents identify as Hispanic.

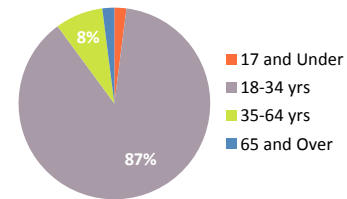
**Current Land Use**

(565 net acres)



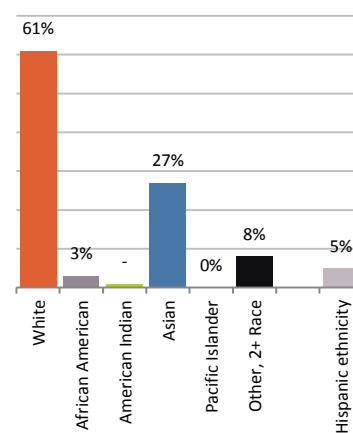
**Age of Residents**

(23,198 residents)



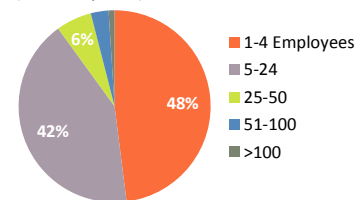
**Racial/Ethnic Composition**

(23,198 residents)



**Size of Businesses**

(716 workplaces)



### Employment

The total employment in Seattle University Community is 33,226, decreasing by 244 jobs over the past 10 years. The major industry sectors are Education (75%) and Services (13%), and the largest employer in the center is the University of Washington.

### Housing

Seattle University Community has 8,431 total housing units, with a density of 11 housing units per gross acre. Over the past 10 years, housing has grown by an impressive 1,378 units (20% increase). Based on Census Block Group data, Seattle University Community has a moderate share (26%) of single family and 2- to 4- unit multifamily dwellings and a very large share of 5- to 19- and 20+ unit multifamily housing (73%). In terms of unit affordability, Seattle University Community’s owner-occupied housing tends to be somewhat more expensive than the region as a whole (based on Census Block Group data). The center's share of units under \$300,000 is 22 percent, whereas the region's share is 38 percent. The center's share of units over \$500,000 is 41 percent, whereas the region's is 25 percent.

### Transportation

For work-based trips, the Seattle University Community regional center's travel characteristics are very different from the region as a whole, with significantly fewer single-occupant vehicle (SOV) and more transit and walk/bike trips. The region’s SOV share is 76 percent, while the center's share is 55 percent. The region's non-SOV mode share is 24 percent, with 10 percent in transit and 5 percent in walk/bike. The center’s non-SOV share is 44 percent, with 22 percent in transit and 14 percent in walk/bike. The total daily trips from Seattle University Community are highly focused on destinations in regional centers (36% of all trips); this includes trips that stay within the center (14%) and trips that go to other centers (22%).

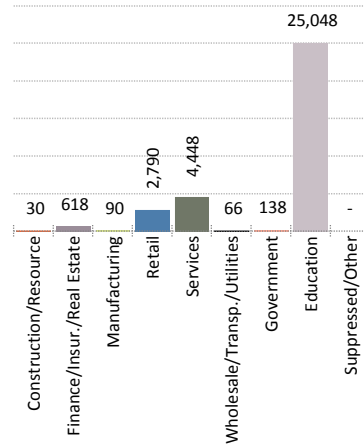
In terms of employee access to transit, Seattle University Community has complete access, with 100 percent of employees within a 1/4 mile walk to a transit stop. For residential, Seattle University Community has complete access, with 99 percent of housing units within a 1/4 mile walk.

### Plan Overview

Seattle includes a section of the Neighborhood element of its comprehensive plan dedicated to the University Community. Through its neighborhood planning process, Seattle developed neighborhood plans for each of its regional growth centers. Though the plans were recognized as the vision and goals of neighborhoods, only the subset of policies adopted in the Neighborhood element of its comprehensive plan are considered adopted city policy. Policies included in the element are based on the neighborhood plan completed in 1998. The element includes goals and supportive policies, along with maps of residential neighborhoods, commercial areas, desired transportation improvements, and open space.

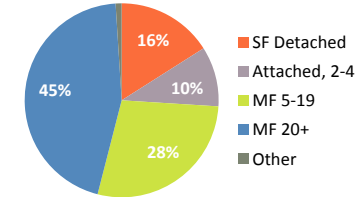
### Jobs by Sector

(33,226 jobs)



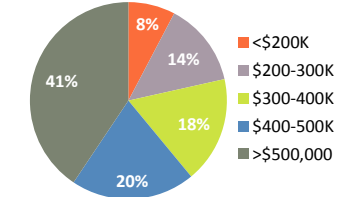
### Housing Units, by Type

(11,540 units)

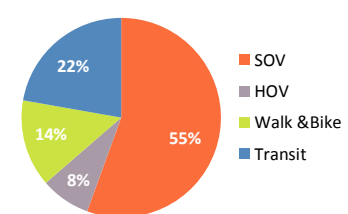


### Value of Owner-Occupied Units

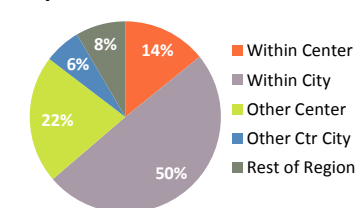
(1,154 units)



### Mode Shares



### Trip Destinations



### **Comparison to Center Plan Checklist**

The city's primary center planning document was reviewed to evaluate the extent to which the plan addresses topics in the PSRC Regional Center Plan Checklist. Both the Urban Village element and the relevant section of the Neighborhood element were reviewed for this analysis. This policy-level review of the current plan is intended both to provide preliminary assessment of consistency of the plan with center guidelines and to evaluate the Regional Centers Checklist for any potential improvements.

Seattle has a framework in place to guide development in the city's multiple center types. Goals and policies established in the Urban Village element in Seattle's comprehensive plan are applicable to all six of Seattle's regional growth centers. Urban Village policies address a number of aspects of the Regional Growth Center Plan Checklist. The element describes the centers in a regional context. Policies call for compact mixed-use places and transportation improvements to support walking, transit and demand management. The element calls for directing compact growth in centers and accommodating a range of economic activity. Policies focus on directing new investments in infrastructure and services to areas expected to receive additional growth and providing housing choices, accessible open space and employment opportunities. Urban centers are characterized by the presence of public facilities and human services; parks, open spaces, street designs and recreational facilities; and neighborhood design guidelines. Mode split goals, employment and residential growth targets, and a description of capital facilities for each regional growth center are described elsewhere in the comprehensive plan.

The Neighborhood element – University Community section addresses many aspects of the Regional Growth Center Plan Checklist. The vision for the center is embodied in eleven general goals, which envisions a center that accommodates growth, is home to a vibrant commercial district, provides an efficient multimodal transportation system, and provides a range of services and amenities for residents. The plan includes several policies related to open space, documents current locations and includes criteria to prioritize expansion of open space. A map of center boundaries and residential and commercial uses is included, consistent with designated center boundaries. Policies are included that supports design for pedestrian-friendly, transit-oriented development. Several of the Transportation 2040 Physical Design Guidelines have been addressed, including planning for a mix of uses, managing parking, and supporting a multimodal network. The element includes several policies to address transit coordination, including capitalizing on Sound Transit improvements to facilitate intermodal connections, working with King County Metro and Community Transit to create efficient bus circulation, and exploring local shuttle transportation options.

The plan meets many of the existing expectations of the Regional Growth Center Plan Checklist, though there are aspects that the plan does not address or that could be strengthened in future updates. A stronger emphasis on the environment could be incorporated in the plan, including policies addressing air pollution and greenhouse gas emissions. Though the plan includes general policies about housing, additional detail could be provided on implementation strategies. The plan does not yet include a market analysis of the center's development potential. Given the element's policy focus, it provides a limited amount of information on the existing conditions, including industry clusters in the center and the mix, distribution, and location of existing uses.

### **Planning Challenges & Implementation Strategies**

As noted by the city in its March 2009 presentation to the Growth Management Policy Board, as well as a 2011 survey, the Seattle University Community center's challenges include reduced business vitality on University Ave due to the growth of regional retail centers, working with UW on housing issues, and disruption from major transportation construction projects such as light rail and SR 520.

Seattle has employed strategies to address challenges and plan for the success of its centers. These include incentive zoning, ongoing zoning amendments to increase development capacities, no minimum parking requirements, flexibility in mixing of uses, and transit oriented communities planning.