



UNIVERSITY DISTRICT

ECUMENICAL CAMPUS Coalition

Project Description

January 1, 2010





UDECC is creating a new way to be Church in the 21st Century.

We're 7 faith traditions conducting a feasibility study for a new facility in Seattle's University District. There, multiple sacred spaces will house different congregations worshipping separately and together. The project will also house well-coordinated human services and will be a center for the community, with classrooms, assembly spaces, and a neighborhood park.

As the project proves to be feasible, several congregations will build it together, combining equity from their existing properties and leveraging a period of unprecedented urban growth in a bold new way. These nearby properties can in turn be made available for development of hundreds of housing units for populations in need, distributed throughout the neighborhood.

This great *gesture* will become a great *reach* for justice. Together we will better sustain and renew each congregation's own ministry, as well as the outreach ministries we support in common. Together we will be wiser stewards of the earth's resources and build an environmentally and economically sustainable home. And together we will share a vital center of cultural and civic life with all of our neighbors.



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Fact Sheet

Program: The proposed Ecumenical Campus is a neighborhood development project providing:

- Homes for multiple faith communities, worshiping separately and together
- Homes for numerous human-service organizations they support as outreach ministries
- A variety of community resources, including a neighborhood park, excellent facilities for civic and cultural events, and a vital environment for locally-owned, owner-operated businesses
- Nearby development sites to provide hundreds of housing units for populations in need

Participating Congregations and Campus Ministries:

- Christ Episcopal Church
- Metropolitan Community Church Seattle
- University Baptist Church
- University Christian Church
- University Congregational United Church of Christ
- University Lutheran Church
- University Temple United Methodist Church
- Cooperating Ministries in Higher Education (ecumenical campus ministry program)
- Lutheran Campus Ministry
- Wesley Club (United Methodist Campus Ministry)

Schedule:

- Concept Development: 02/04 – 06/07
- Feasibility Study: 06/07 – 05/10
- Commitment Phase: 05/10 – 11/10
- Preconstruction Phase: 11/10 – 10/12
- Construction Phase: 10/12 – 09/14

Location: The Ecumenical Campus will be located in Seattle's University District neighborhood. The partner congregations and campus ministries have shared this neighborhood for a century, and are committed to actively participating in the life of this vital urban center. The preferred project site, at the prominent intersection of NE 45th Street and 15th Avenue NE, has been selected based on several important criteria, including visibility, proximity to the central campus of the University of Washington, convenient and diverse transportation options, and proximity to the heart of the University District.

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Case Statement

The proposed Ecumenical Campus is an innovative project that promises nothing less than a transformation of the role that faith communities can play in revitalizing and enriching their neighborhoods, and in serving the needs of their less fortunate neighbors, while also ensuring their own vitality.

Urban churches in America are increasingly challenged to sustain their ministries and fulfill their missions in the face of massive economic and cultural shifts in our society. Increasingly, those missions include essential services to disadvantaged populations, the elderly, at-risk youth, and families trying to make their way in uncertain times. At the same time, many of the “mainline” congregations that have historically been in the vanguard of such work face an uncertain future themselves, with stagnating membership rolls, out-of-date facilities, and faltering budgets.

UDECC is an ecumenical group of ten faith communities in Seattle’s University District that have conceived an entirely new approach to being church, offering a hopeful new model to urban congregations throughout the country. Their bold proposal is to sell their outdated, single-use facilities (occupying acres of land in a thriving urban neighborhood with soaring land values) and pool their equity to construct an economically and environmentally sustainable, mixed-use facility. The Ecumenical Campus will be home to numerous partner congregations, each sustaining its own ministry and its own traditions. Importantly, their new home will also be home to a wide range of social service agencies, which the same churches have been instrumental in founding and sustaining over many years. Additionally, the whole is conceived as a lively community cultural center, providing meeting and performance spaces for an eclectic variety of secular gatherings, civic and cultural events, and University academic programs throughout the year.

The proposed Ecumenical Campus is a big strategic move by multiple worshiping communities to embrace better stewardship. By unlocking and pooling their considerable (but illiquid) resources and employing 21st Century land-use principals, they can create a nexus of community life for the important urban center they share, and leverage their assets to better serve populations in need. It is a way for land-rich but cash-poor urban churches to extract the wealth now lying fallow beneath their buildings and use it to transform themselves and their communities.

Mission. The mission of UDECC is to complete a detailed predevelopment study - a legal ownership and governance structure, building program, conceptual facility plan, construction budget and schedule, and development *pro forma* - for the proposed Ecumenical Campus development. The completed study will culminate over six years of concept development and consensus building, dating back to early 2004. In June 2007, UDECC was formed as a nonprofit, 501(c)(3) corporation for the purpose of funding and completing the study.

Leadership and Funding Support. UDECC’s very engaged 21-member Board of Trustees is comprised of representatives from the member congregations and from community stakeholder groups. It is a remarkable group of civic leaders, clergy, educators and professionals. Our first-rate consultant team includes Lorig Associates (real estate development consultant), Olson Kundig Architects, and general counsel Perkins Coie (providing a full range of legal services on a *pro bono* basis). To date, broad-based funding support has come from all member organizations, many supportive individuals, and multiple foundation grants.



UDECC – Member Organizations

Congregations and Campus Ministry Programs Participating in the Predevelopment Feasibility Study

Christ Episcopal Church

Episcopalians have a long history of involvement in social concerns. Among its ministries, Christ Church hosts a nightly homeless shelter for adults run by SHARE, prepares and serves a dinner monthly for homeless teenagers at Orion Center, and participates in Multi-faith AIDS Care Teams and the annual AIDS Walkathon.

CMHE Campus Ministry

Cooperating Ministries in Higher Education (CMHE) is an ecumenical, progressive campus ministry, a collaboration of the American Baptist Church, Christian Church Disciples of Christ, Presbyterian Church, United Church of Christ, and United Methodist Church. CMHE serves the campus community with worship, fellowship, study, and social justice activities.

Lutheran Campus Ministry

Lutheran Campus Ministry is an open, affirming, welcoming U.W. ministry that invites everyone to be a part of challenging our faith and drawing closer to God. We don't leave our questions at the door; we bring along our doubts, fears, hopes, and joys. Our program includes community service opportunities and fun social events.

Metropolitan Community Church Seattle

Metropolitan Community Church Seattle, the oldest LGBT congregation in the Pacific Northwest founded by and for members of the Queer Community and our straight allies, is on a bold mission to transform hearts, lives and history. We are part of a movement that faithfully proclaims God's inclusive love for all people and proudly bears witness to the holy integration of spirituality and sexuality. Just as Jesus did, we are called to:

- Do justice, show kindness, and live humbly with God (Micah 6:8)
- Explore life's questions with open hearts and minds.
- Raise our voices in sacred defiance against religious, political, or systematic exclusion.
- Reach out to those with no hope.
- Lift up a new generation of remarkable spiritual activists.
- Combine our efforts and strengths with other congregations to realize Christ's vision of the new community of God.

University Baptist Church

Drawing upon a Baptist tradition and seeking insight from faith traditions of the world, University Baptist Church seeks to be a compassionate Christian community, inviting people into faithful discipleship as, together, we meet the challenges of contemporary moral and spiritual life with peace, justice, and hope.

University Christian Church

University Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) is a diverse community of Christians called to minister to the people of the University District and the larger community. The congregation has a deep commitment to exploring common ministries, joint programming, and closer community as part of the University District Ecumenical Parish.



University Congregational United Church of Christ

University Congregational UCC has been an Open and Affirming church since 1990 and strongly values and welcomes different perspectives and experiences. We are politically progressive, with a strong commitment to the arts, higher education, and the environment. We particularly strive to be a leader on social justice issues including homelessness and also have a strong mission orientation as seen in our involvement in the Rabour Village Project. We participate in and lead many efforts in our community to change the conditions in which people live, including providing low-income housing and addressing homelessness. In all we do, we seek to respond to Jesus' call for bringing about the world of love and justice.

University Lutheran Church

University Lutheran is a welcoming, affirming, “greening” community that uses many different liturgies for worship and is committed to furthering justice and peace in the world. On-site outreach ministries include Elizabeth Gregory Home (women’s transitional housing and day center), the Sanctuary Art Center, a WHEEL emergency shelter for homeless women, and Teen Feed, as well as support for many other ministries in the University District and elsewhere in the world.

University Temple United Methodist Church

University Temple is an inclusive faith community dedicated to justice and service in Seattle and throughout the world. Its Human Needs Appeal funds University District programs to meet the needs of our more vulnerable citizens. Church volunteers support ROOTS Young Adult Shelter, U Temple Children’s School, Multifaith Works, the University Temple Thrift Store, and more.

Wesley Foundation

Wesley Foundation at the University of Washington is a campus ministry of the United Methodist Church that has provided, since 1921, a Christian community to meet the needs of students and college-age young adults. It offers a blend of spiritual, social, recreational, and service activities accompanied by discussion and fellowship, without strict dogma or doctrine.



The Ecumenical Campus: Top Ten Goals and Strategies

1. Expand and deepen support for a range of service agencies
Currently, numerous agencies are housed in found and borrowed space, many in church basements, scattered around the University District.
 - Better facilities for agencies serving at-risk youth
 - Better facilities for agencies addressing poverty, homelessness and powerlessness
 - Opportunities for better coordination and integration of services
 - Potential expansion of churches' outreach services to seniors
 - Potential expansion of churches' outreach services to families with children
2. Provide a true "Commons" to serve as the focal point of community life in the neighborhood
Urban neighborhoods too often enable "immunity from community," wherein we become increasingly isolated from each other. Few places exist where we can be community at little or no cost; leisure has been perverted into consumption.
 - A place to cultivate the vital, informal public life of the community
 - Generous, well-managed public open space to be shared with the whole community
 - Greatly improved sense of personal safety for all
 - A variety of assembly spaces programmed with academic, civic & cultural events
 - Inclusive, mixed income, multi-generational, ease of association
3. Contribute to greater neighborhood vitality
Currently, the University District is challenged to overcome decades of inertia and accommodate rapid urban growth. Concurrent expansion of University of Washington facilities into the neighborhood further complicates these challenges.
 - Make innovative contributions to a gracious and lively pedestrian environment
 - Mix institutional uses with commercial and residential for a rich urban experience
 - Provide appealing storefront spaces for locally-owned, owner-operated businesses
 - Draw hundreds of church attendees into the neighborhood mix on Sundays
 - Extend activity into the evenings and weekends, beyond daytime business hours
 - Provide entertainment and recreational opportunities
4. Connect University of Washington students, faculty and staff with the surrounding community
Currently, there is a palpable separation "between town and gown," between the UW central campus and the adjacent urban neighborhood. This imbalance results in lost opportunities for each community to enrich the other.
 - Provide facilities for UW cultural and academic programming in the community
 - Churches provide an institutional "bridge" linking communities
 - Civic activities create opportunities for students to develop civic consciousness
 - Students and staff make an important contribution to the diverse community
 - Provide valuable community service learning opportunities for university students
5. Create new opportunities for hundreds of affordable housing units
Currently, the University District is a designated Regional Growth Center, yet has no facilities provided by affordable housing agencies.
 - Coordinated strategy for rapid land acquisition by low-income housing providers
 - Existing church sites can be locations for several affordable housing projects
 - Comprehensive urban-planning approach to mixed-income housing
 - Close proximity to service providers
 - Excellent community integration, with a range of public transportation options



6. Respond to the regional growth management agenda

Currently, multiple church facilities are disbursed, often at inconvenient distances from public transportation alternatives, resulting in heavy use of single-occupant vehicles. Rather than being “neighborhood parishes,” these “metropolitan congregations” draw from the greater Seattle metropolitan area, resulting in many vehicle trips.

- Concentrate higher-density development to achieve more efficient land use
- Locate high-traffic assembly uses adjacent to multi-mode transit
- Provide sufficient off-street parking to reduce competition for on-street parking
- Spread uses over more hours of the day and more days of the week
- Contribute to the appeal of an important Regional Growth Center

7. Achieve greater environmental sustainability

Churches now occupy multiple single-use facilities on large, low-density sites, dispersed throughout a designated Regional Growth Center with high land values and high demand for building sites to accommodate a rising tide of new jobs and housing units.

- Reduce duplication by replacing redundant facilities with a single, shared facility
- Aging, inefficient buildings replaced with new, environmentally-sustainable facility
- Smaller footprint, higher-density development
- High-attendance assembly facilities adjacent to multiple public transportation modes
- New construction with environmentally-sustainable materials and technologies

8. Achieve greater economic sustainability

Churches now struggle to operate and maintain aging facilities designed to serve larger congregations in an earlier time when land was cheap and volunteers were abundant.

- A new national model for land-rich and cash-poor urban churches
- Reduce redundancies and achieve operational synergies by sharing
- “Integrated multiple-use” rather than “isolated single-use”
- Better stewardship of resources through professional property management
- Produce net annual revenue for support of service ministries

9. Replace or renovate severely outdated facilities for several institutions

Churches are currently housed in obsolete facilities with significant infrastructure problems. Challenges include seismic deficiencies, inadequate fire and life-safety systems, inaccessibility for disabled persons, and aging building systems.

- Right-sized, flexible and adaptable
- Well-suited for current & future needs
- Historic preservation and restoration
- Modern systems & technologies (plumbing, electrical, data, environmental)
- Low-maintenance, non-toxic, contemporary finishes

10. Model Christian unity to the community and the larger world

Currently, the Christian Church is fragmented, and challenged to act effectively as a consequence of its divisions. Locally, nationally and internationally, the 60-year old ecumenical movement seeks to overcome these divisions.

- Celebrate denominational traditions, but don’t let them be points of division
- Multiple sacred spaces for worshiping separately and together
- Shared facilities for fellowship, education, administration, building infrastructure
- Ecumenical campus ministry to serve the neighboring UW community
- A new ecumenical future, with shared mission, ministry and community



Seattle's University District

The proposed University District Ecumenical Campus project will have a profound impact on the health and vitality of the University District. Once one of Seattle's premier destinations for shopping and entertainment, the U. District has endured nearly a half-century of turmoil, and now stands in need of paradigm-shifting ideas to meet big challenges and opportunities.

The Good Times

Following World War II, the University District was a vibrant commercial and residential neighborhood. Beginning in the 1940s and extending to the 1960s, healthy stores and streets attracted a diverse intergenerational clientele to shop and stroll along sidewalks lined with busy shops. University faculty and staff joined students and residents in frequenting the neighborhood's restaurants and cafes. Office workers from General Insurance Company (later Safeco Insurance) hurried to and from the ornate masonry General Insurance Building on Brooklyn Avenue. Across the street, the 16-story Edmond Meany Hotel was headquarters for innumerable business lunches and was the center of social activities in the neighborhood. The National Bank of Commerce, University Federal Savings and Loan, and University National Bank anchored the neighborhood. Handsome apartment buildings were full, and nearby residential streets were lined with fine houses, the homes of University administrators and faculty, and other community leaders. Moviegoers crowded the streets nightly in front of the Neptune Theatre on 45th, and the Varsity and Egyptian Theatres on University Way. Stores stayed open into the evening, and shoppers dressed up to spend a night on the town, shopping, dining, and catching a feature at the movies. The pews of a dozen neighborhood churches were filled every Sunday morning.

Turmoil and Decline

Beginning in the 1960s, this vibrant community entered a period of decline brought on by several grave challenges. New competition from Northgate, University Village, and Bellevue led to the eventual loss of anchor stores including Martin & Eckmann, JC Penney and Nordstrom. The nearby Sears store on Roosevelt departed, too. Making matters worse, the new I-5 and 520 highways formed boundaries (real and perceived) that seemed to separate the neighborhood from the rest of the city.

The 1960s social and cultural upheavals, pervasive throughout American society, hit the U District especially hard due to its concentrated population of young people, for whom the counter-culture had particular appeal. The war in Vietnam looms as a profoundly painful period in our national experience. On- and off-campus rebellion and riots were a recurring theme in the U District. Drug use, crime and vandalism became more pervasive and visible, and general order suffered.

In the 1970s, expansion of the University campus into the adjacent neighborhood led some to wonder if the U. District could long endure. Public and private investment in the neighborhood declined significantly. Families with children fled neighborhoods like those near the U. District, as a strategy of forced bussing (to integrate the Seattle schools) drove many families into the suburbs to the north and east. Many nearby homes, no longer occupied by families, were converted into boarding houses in response to insufficient student housing, frequently leading to a decline in the upkeep of homes and streets in surrounding neighborhoods. The loss of families also led to declines



in church membership and attendance, resulting in a transformation of neighborhood parishes into “metropolitan congregations” with fewer young people; a situation that persists to this day.

In the 1980s, the de-funding of institutions housing and caring for disabled persons resulted in large numbers of emotionally and mentally disabled people living in the streets of our cities. This population, combined with many thousands of disabled veterans from the Vietnam War, became highly visible on the streets of America’s urban neighborhoods. In ensuing years, the University District came to hold a particular attraction for homeless youth and young adults, who feel safest in this neighborhood that exists to serve young people.

And so, the University District changed. From the 1960s to the 1990s, the downturn was profound. Through the 90s, more and more storefronts became vacant, criminal gang activity (driven by drug trade competition) emerged as an additional threat, and at-risk youngsters became one of the most visible groups along University Way. In the mean time, the newly renovated University Village shopping center presented a further challenge to businesses remaining in the University District.

Some Relief at Last

Change came when, in the first years of the 21st Century, University Way (“The Ave”) became the subject of a massive (and massively disruptive) renovation effort. Funded with millions of dollars from the City of Seattle, The Ave was transformed, shedding several layers of neglect. The entire street infrastructure (including utilities, street and sidewalk paving) was replaced along five blocks of University Way between 41st and 50th Streets. New street trees and street furniture were installed, and new private investment resulted in many upgraded storefronts. The transformation was a painful process, and the disruption resulted in the departure of still more businesses. Finally, with the completion of construction in 2003, the decline was arrested, and businesses began returning to the Ave. Today, few empty storefronts remain, business activity is expanding, and new developments promise to bring a new residential population into the University District.

Growth and Transformation

The Puget Sound area is now in the midst of a growth cycle that is expected to continue. Millions of new residents must be accommodated. The regional Growth Management Plan directs high concentrations of new homes and jobs into “Regional Growth Centers,” neighborhoods that are being transformed to accommodate much greater urban density. Within Seattle, the University District is one of these Regional Growth Centers. Growth and redevelopment is going to have a major impact on the U District. These changes have already begun. Several higher-density developments have already appeared throughout the neighborhood. Soon, 6- to 8-story mixed-use buildings will replace many low-rise buildings and surface parking lots throughout the neighborhood. This market-driven development is enabled by land use policies and public investment in transportation options. Within a few years, the changes will be profound.

How will the character of the University District change as this growth ripples through the neighborhood? Will existing residents be swept aside by a tide of new arrivals? Will rapid gentrification result in a homogenized local culture, indistinct from that of other neighborhoods? Or will the U. District emerge stronger and more whole, with a unique culture that continues to nurture and celebrates diversity, individuality, and creativity?



A Community Cultural Center for the U District

When half-a-dozen (more or less) worshipping communities decide to build a home together, with a variety of beautiful worship spaces, classrooms, meeting rooms and reception areas, you have a very lively place on Sunday mornings. You also have a setting that can serve as ground zero for the civic and cultural life of one of Seattle's great neighborhoods - a place that can sizzle with multiple audience events every night of the week all through the year.

Gathering Spaces of Many Shapes and Sizes

A great community needs a great place to come together as a community. The Ecumenical Campus has been conceived from the start as a multi-generational community cultural center - a great place to attend concerts, academic and literary events, civic debates and family entertainment. It will excel at hosting charity galas, public appearances, lectures and recitals. With such a diverse schedule of events, the Ecumenical Campus will draw new people to the streets of the U District, transforming the neighborhood into a lively activity zone well into the evening hours, and burnishing the U District's appeal as a great place to work and live. Restaurants and merchants will enjoy safer and more active streets and sidewalks well into the evening and on weekends, too. Public safety throughout the neighborhood will improve because there will be more eyes on the street. Small and mid-size arts groups and cultural organizations will enjoy improved access to affordable performance venues. And University departments will have new opportunities to expand their schedules of public events, solving the chronic shortage of suitable on-campus facilities.

At Last, Public Open Space at the Heart of the U District

The University District can have a great future as a neighborhood where people live and work, study and play. Despite its long history, however, there is one important public feature that the neighborhood has always lacked – shared public open space. Public parks are an important feature in neighborhoods where people live and gather in higher densities, but a municipal park in the U District is a difficult proposition. Public safety is essential, and municipal parks in Seattle have a problematic history – especially in neighborhoods with a history of public safety problems.

The solution is a non-taxpayer funded, privately owned and operated garden in the heart of the neighborhood. This unique space will be provided as part of the Ecumenical Campus, secured at night and for special events, but otherwise open and available as a gift to the community, a public benefit to enrich the neighborhood. As with Waterfall Garden in Seattle's Pioneer Square (which was privately built and is still owned and maintained by the Annie E. Casey Foundation), the park at the Ecumenical Campus will be a popular lunchtime spot. With sidewalk café(s) on its perimeter; the park can be a favorite place for children and seniors and everybody in between. At night, tall gates will be locked, and public safety will be preserved. The park will also be secured occasionally for private functions, such as outdoor weddings, private receptions and church gatherings, but will remain open to the public most of the time.

The churches that will build the Ecumenical Campus offer a unique opportunity to the community. Their project is not profit-driven, they mean to enhance the life and vitality of the neighborhood they share, and they have the means to do so in a significant way. Ultimately, their success will lie in the degree to which they can contribute to the betterment of the U District.



Honoring our Elders: A Place for Seniors

The Ecumenical Campus must be a true neighborhood commons, nurturing a diverse, multi-generational community. In this spirit, it is incumbent upon us to reserve an honored place for our elders, and to strive to enrich the lives of seniors in the University District.

On average, each senior center in Seattle serves approximately 450 guests daily. These numbers are increasing. Until recently, Seattle had 9 senior centers (oriented to serving seniors only) distributed throughout the city. Four of these centers are affiliated with Senior Services, a large nonprofit agency. The others are independent. Among the five independent senior centers was Tallmadge Hamilton House, a 10,000 sf freestanding facility located in the University District at 5225 15th Avenue NE. Founded in 1958, Hamilton House was the oldest senior center in the Pacific Northwest, and the only one serving northeast Seattle. It was started by several charitable organizations, including the University Kiwanis Club. But in early 2008, Hamilton House ceased operations, and has closed permanently. The building housing the center, owned by the Kiwanis Club, has been sold.

Senior centers empower seniors in our community. They offer support to maintain their health and well being, foster peer interaction, prevent isolation, reinforce independence, and enrich their daily lives. Tallmadge Hamilton House had offered programs ranging from how-to and self-improvement classes to discussion and support groups, arts and crafts, computer technology, social services and counseling as well as weekday lunches throughout the year. Other Seattle senior center programs include fitness classes, dancing, driving lessons, senior rights assistance, tax assistance, pet food distribution, and transportation services. Such programs are essential to the goal of building a healthy community in a time of increasing personal isolation.

The loss of Tallmadge Hamilton House leaves a gaping absence in the University District, and indeed throughout all of Northeast Seattle.

The University of Washington Retirement Association has a goal of establishing services for seniors in the University District, as well as affordable housing for retired faculty and staff from the University (many of whom qualify for low-income housing). The University District, although generally regarded as a neighborhood tailored to the needs of young people, is in fact a splendid environment for seniors. It is a walkable urban neighborhood, with very affordable restaurants and shops and good transit service, including efficient connections to the rest of the city. Its crown jewel is the presence of the University of Washington. Retired faculty and staff from the University feel a great attachment to the institution, and welcome opportunities to sustain their relationships with the University and its neighborhood after retirement.

The University of Washington is a great resource for all seniors. For only a few dollars, retired persons can audit any of the on-campus classes they choose, and also enjoy full access to the University's library system.

Cultivating a gracious environment for seniors in the U District is an important goal for the Ecumenical Campus. With the post-World War II baby boom generation now approaching retirement, our population of active, vital elders is poised to grow tremendously. This growing cohort has much to offer to their community, and the Ecumenical Campus has much to offer them.



Real Solutions: Street Youth in the U District

At-risk street youth continue to be a pervasive presence in the University District, a challenge that has confronted the neighborhood for decades and a moral dilemma for our larger community. Numerous service agencies have been created to meet the essential needs of this population of marginalized young people who continue to gravitate toward the U District; hungry, homeless, and with many special needs.

They're drawn here by the fact that the U District is, by definition, tailor-made to appeal to young people. They're drawn here because a community of their peers has inhabited the neighborhood for many years. And they're drawn here because human service agencies created to serve them are scattered throughout the neighborhood.

As with many deeply entrenched social issues, the question that needs to be addressed is this: Is it enough for our community to commit its limited resources toward merely managing the situation, or shall we be more ambitious, and seek solutions that can meaningfully reduce the street population in the neighborhood?

Problem Statement

There are many reasons young people find themselves out on the street. Many have aged out of foster care, and have to find their way after the state stops providing for them. In other cases, they've fled from abusive parents and other unhealthy situations at home. Many have chronic medical or mental health issues. Some have developmental delays and/or disabilities. Many have emotional problems, or are trapped by addictions. Their educations are incomplete; they lack adequate work training or employment skills. They want for everything, and operate in survival mode all the time.

Young people often make bad choices. They just do. Too often, family and friends are absent or nonexistent, and there's no safety net, nobody to come to the rescue. They fall hard, and they end up on our streets.

One problem faced by the U District's population of homeless youth is that they are often blamed unfairly for urban problems with more complex roots. While panhandling and stealing are certainly common to their experience, criminal activity in the U District and surrounding neighborhoods can often be traced to other groups, notably urban gangs who compete to control drug trafficking in certain parts of the City. Police also struggle to deal with college students, especially those in off-campus boarding houses, fraternities and sororities, whose habits and activities can draw the ire of others who live nearby.

That said, the abundance of homeless young people can certainly strain the resources and patience of those with whom they share the University District.



What have we tried?

Over the last 20 years, a broad range of human service agencies has taken root in the University District for the purpose of serving the neighborhood's population of at-risk street youth. Collectively, these agencies provide the following range of services:

- Shelter and hygiene facilities for young adults 18-25
- Meals programs for youth and young adults
- Educational access, including GED preparation
- Youth drop-in center
- Drop-in medical clinic for youth, including mental health and addiction counseling
- Visits to shelters and drop-in centers by healthcare providers
- On-site roving case managers, referrals to other services
- Life skills development, mentoring, discussion groups and outreach
- Help with transportation
- Food bank services
- Needle exchange, specialty health care and education for intravenous drug users
- Arts activities and arts-related job training and placement
- Advocacy and referral services
- Faith-based service to youth
- Public education about services and needs
- Volunteer training

Churches in the neighborhood, often working together to identify and confront an unmet need, initiated many of these programs. In most cases, these independent service agencies operate in spaces provided by the churches. Members of the congregations provide volunteer assistance, economic aid and other resources. Still, the service agencies are under-funded, poorly located and distant from each other. They subsist in borrowed spaces in leftover corners of church basements. Coordination of services among far-flung agencies is a chronic challenge for the service providers and the population they serve.

In the words of one neighborhood service provider: "Their life is so spread out. Pack up and go here, wait... Pack up and go there, wait..."

A More Effective Solution: The Ecumenical Campus

Homeless young people by the dozens continue to inhabit the streets of the U District. Numerous service agencies work hard to provide for their basic needs while addressing underlying causes, but the agencies struggle to meet the need. Too often, they find that they are treating symptoms. Shelter capacities are insufficient, hygiene facilities are meager, and budgets are strained. Programs are dispersed, some not even located in the same part of the city. Redundancies reduce efficiency.

UDECC proposes a different approach, with a renewed emphasis on transitioning homeless street youth and young adults into productive, engaged lives, full contributors to the life of a healthy community. To achieve this, we propose a 3-pronged approach:



Part One: Better Coordination of Services in Better Facilities

Services to at-risk youth must be delivered more efficiently and effectively. To this end, UDECC proposes to create a single location where a full range of services can be provided by several collocated agencies. Rather than needing to find their way from one agency to another through the streets of the city, recipients will be able to access a full range of well-coordinated services in a single location. This will be especially meaningful for youth recently arrived in the District. Consolidated programs will realize reduced costs and greater space efficiencies, and long lines of homeless people outside the doors of existing street ministries will become a thing of the past.

Part Two: Skilled on-Site Job Training and Placement

Self-sufficiency is the key to ending - rather than just managing - homelessness. With this goal, UDECC is actively pursuing a partnership with a comprehensive career training program that combines hands-on training with classroom instruction, case management and job-placement services. Details of this partnership remain to be finalized, but the combination of improved human services with skilled training for long-term careers is the sort of “paradigm shift” that it will take to stop treating symptoms and actually solve the conundrum of homeless young people on the streets of the U. District.

Part Three: Community

Hunger for community is the strongest force that draws at-risk youth to the streets of the University District, seeking out others in the same situation. As luck would have it, “Community” is also the powerful purpose underlying every aspect of the Ecumenical Campus concept.

While most of the service agencies in the U District are housed in church buildings, and were typically started as church initiatives, they are presently dispersed, as the churches are dispersed. Hence, any given congregation feels greater ownership of the programs in its own facility than for those located elsewhere. By collocating the churches, and similarly collocating a full range of service providers in the same facility, the Ecumenical Campus will change that dynamic. The result will be an increased sense of “ownership” felt by the members of each congregation toward all of the assembled service providers and those they serve. This more direct relationship with all of the participating churches will certainly result in more generous gifts of time, talent and treasure from the members of all the congregations, to the benefit of all the supported agencies.

While that goal bodes well for sustaining the service agencies, another aspect of community can be even more valuable to the homeless young people these agencies serve, and constitutes a vital element in our proposed set of strategies: We propose to develop a one-on-one mentoring program, pairing well-trained volunteers from our congregations and our campus ministry programs with young people working to transition out of homelessness. As part of this program, University Students will also have access to service learning opportunities in a well-managed program administered in concert with the University of Washington.

Such direct personal relationships represent the rarest gift of all - an invitation to join in the life of the larger community.



Affordable Housing

One of the first questions that emerged in early discussions about the Ecumenical Campus concerned future uses of existing church properties. While the project depends upon the ability to sell and reinvest the equity value of each congregation's property, the question remains, "what will become of our former church home?"

The members of the UDECC member churches are eager to direct their previous properties toward purposes that resonate with their churches' mission goals. As we have studied the neighborhood's needs, one particular unmet need has emerged as an opportunity we are uniquely able to address: affordable housing.

Consultations with Nonprofit Housing Developers

Seattle has a number of very fine nonprofit housing developers, who have created thousands of units of affordable housing throughout the city. Unlike other urban neighborhoods, however, they are absent from the University District. Incredibly, there are no housing projects by nonprofit providers in the neighborhood. Due to the designation of the University District as a Regional Growth Center, pressure is increasing to accommodate a disproportionate share of new jobs and housing. Land values are rapidly rising, making it nearly impossible for nonprofit housing providers to compete with the commercial sector for development sites. Their decision-making processes are slower, and their funding sources are harder to access when properties come onto the market.

In November and December 2007, UDECC met with several low-income housing providers to discuss their interest in developing housing projects to serve the University District, on sites that the churches can make available. We also met on site with House Speaker Frank Chopp and his staff, for the purpose of seeking ways of enabling housing providers to find the early funding necessary to conclude property acquisition deals with University District churches. On January 10, 2008, we convened a forum on this topic that was attended by representatives of 5 churches with potential development sites, 4 nonprofit housing providers, a nonprofit housing funder, the developer of off-campus UW housing, the Washington State Legislature, and the City's Office of Housing.

The Rapid Response Fund

As an outgrowth of the UDECC forum on affordable housing in the U. District, we were able to work with Speaker Chopp's office in the development of a bill that ultimately passed the State House and Senate and was signed into law by the Governor in a ceremony attended by UDECC Executive Director Clint Pehrson on March 21, 2008. This legislation established a new fund, called the "Rapid Response Fund," within the State Housing Trust Fund. The Rapid Response Fund provides \$10 million in new money, to be made available to nonprofit housing developers for the purpose of securing control of scarce real estate in rapidly gentrifying neighborhoods like the University District.

We are growing more confident that housing providers, in concert with churches who want to see their existing properties employed for affordable housing, will have the means and the opportunity to create hundreds of housing units at sites distributed throughout the University District.



The 15th Avenue Rezone

One immediate opportunity for affordable housing entails property on the block extending along 15th Avenue NE, between NE 47th and 50th Streets. At the north end of this block, University Christian Church has over 30,000 sf of land beneath a surface parking lot and two homes rented to students. At the south end of the same block, University Presbyterian Church has nearly 26,000 sf of land with a parking lot and houses that are presently used for church offices. Between them lie a small apartment building and another house.

UDECC has worked steadily with University Christian and University Presbyterian Churches for several months on plans for a rezone of the block they share, upgrading the zoning so this large tract of land can be used for a large number of housing units. After numerous meetings with neighborhood stakeholders and decision makers as well as a number of City administrators and elected officials, the application to rezone that entire block was submitted on May 6, 2008. Master Use Permit signs have been posted on the site, and the public comment period has concluded. The application, co-sponsored by both churches and their adjacent neighbors, will be in review for several months, but the applicants are optimistic about approval, and in discussion with potential developers about options for development of the property.



UDECC - Board of Trustees

President: Ivan L. Hutton, Ph.D. (Representing University Lutheran Church)

Van Hutton is Associate Dean and Assistant Professor in the College of Education at Seattle University, where he has worked for 17 years. His BA and MA in Philosophy are from Gonzaga, his MDiv in Theology from the Jesuit School of Theology at Berkeley, and his PhD in Administration and Policy Analysis from Stanford.

Vice President: G. Franklin Shirbroun, Ph.D. (Representing Christ Episcopal Church)

The owner of Live Oak Booksellers, an online rare book business, Frank Shirbroun has taught at Episcopal Theological School at Claremont, Fuller Theological Seminary, and Seattle Pacific U. His Ph.D. is from Princeton Theological Seminary. Past community service includes friends of the library groups and heading an agency for stroke survivors.

Secretary: Ann Berner (Representing University Lutheran Church)

Ann Berner is an avionics systems and airplane safety engineer with an S.B. in Aeronautics and Astro-nautics (avionics program) from M.I.T. After having worked at Universal Avionics, Boeing, and Hughes Aircraft (Radar Systems), she founded and is Principal of Transport Safety Engineering in Seattle.

Treasurer: Dale Hoff (Representing University Temple United Methodist Church)

Dale Hoff is Owner and President of Hoff Construction Company. He has taught high school English and has served on several nonprofit boards and committees, most recently spending four years on the Futures Planning Team of University Temple United Methodist Church.

Marty Curry (Representing University Congregational United Church of Christ)

Marty Curry currently teaches part-time at the University of Washington in the Urban Design and Planning Dept. and does consulting work for public and non-profit agencies after a 25 years career at the City of Seattle, working on planning and human services policy issues and 12 as Director of the Planning Commission. She also has significant experience organizing and facilitating public processes. Marty has been an active member of University Congregational Church UCC for 30 years, working on various boards, and serving as moderator of the church in 2007-08.

Sinan Demirel, Ph.D. (At-large Board Member)

Sinan Demirel is Executive Director of ROOTS, serving the U District homeless community. Degrees in philosophy and religion from Iowa State and Vanderbilt, respectively, preceded University of Washington graduate degrees in sociology. He serves on a variety of city and county committees on homelessness, health care, and at-risk youth.

Donna M. Dockter (Representing University Temple United Methodist Church)

Pharmacist/owner of Sand Point Clinic Pharmacy, Donna Dockter also is on the Clinical Affiliate Faculty, UW School of Pharmacy, was on the Seattle Indian Health Board, and was head pharmacist at the Seattle-King County Health Department's North District Clinic. She has served on various health-related boards and professional associations.



Rev. John Gienapp, Ph.D.

(Representing University Lutheran Church)

John Gienapp, retired clergyman, teacher, and university administrator, was most recently Director of Graduate Medical Education at the UW School of Medicine. Nonprofit boards on which he has served include those of Lutheran General Hospital in Park Ridge, Illinois, Samaritan Center in Evanston, Illinois, and Foss Home and Village in Seattle.

Deborah Giles

(Representing University Christian Church)

Deborah Giles is a Pathology Assistant at Northwest Pathology Services in Seattle. She has taught anatomy, physiological chemistry, and pathophysiology at community colleges. Her B.S. in chemistry and M.S. in physiology are from the University of Florida; she also holds a B.S. in physical therapy from U Maryland's School of Medicine.

Frank Gonzales

(Representing Lutheran Campus Ministry)

Frank Gonzales is a former University of Washington student who is now working as a Program Manager in the Computer Industry. Frank has been involved in Lutheran youth and campus ministries for over 10 years and is currently a member of the Lutheran Campus Council at the University of Washington.

Darel Grothaus

(At-large Board Member)

Darel Grothaus has been Interim Executive Director of Washington Association of Churches, Director of Community Development for the City of Seattle, Vice President and Community Reinvestment Manager for Pacific First Savings, and a President of Bank of America. He holds an M.A. in Urban Finance and is a licensed CPA.

Lee Jeronimo

(Representing Metropolitan Community Church Seattle)

Lee Jeronimo, a lawyer and accountant, is a recent transplant to the Seattle area and currently works as a contract accountant. Prior to her arrival, she earned her law degree in Houston, Texas and served for 5 years as a staff attorney in a legal clinic dedicated to representing persons living with HIV/AIDS. Since making her home in the Northwest, she has taught accounting part time at Bellevue College and serves as Treasurer for Metropolitan Community Church - Seattle.

Karen Ko

(At-large Board Member)

Karen Ko is Neighborhood District Coordinator for the University Neighborhood Service Center, City of Seattle. She works with neighborhoods throughout the northeast district but focuses on the University District and is especially intrigued by the challenges of its conflicting constituencies - homeless youth, homeowners, businesses, and the University of Washington.

Judy Lightfoot, Ph.D.

(Representing University Christian Church)

After 35 years of teaching English at secondary and college levels Judy Lightfoot became Founding Head of Eastside Prep in Kirkland, Washington. Most recently she was Interim Director at the National Alliance on Mental Illness in Seattle. She is an active volunteer for community social service nonprofits.

Rev. Wayne McCleskey

(Representing Wesley Foundation)

Wayne H. McCleskey is an ordained United Methodist Minister who has served as director of the Wesley Foundation since 1987. He is also a Licensed Marriage and Family Therapist in private practice in the Hawthorne Hills area of Seattle.



Rev. David Meekhof (Representing Cooperating Ministries in Higher Education)

David Meekhof has been President of Sheldon Jackson College in Sitka, Alaska, and Executive of the Presbyterian Church Alaska-Northwest Synod. Now retired, he served as Board President for the Church Council of Greater Seattle and is on the advisory board of the Institute of Ecumenical Studies at Seattle University's School of Theology and Ministry.

Rev. Jack D. Olive (At-large Board Member)

Jack Olive is Interim Associate Dean for Ecumenical Relations at Seattle University's School of Theology and Ministry. His ecumenical involvement includes the Church Council of Greater Seattle, the American Jewish Committee, Children of Abraham Dialogue Group, and Seattle Jewish Christian Clergy Dialogue Group.

Dan Peterson (Representing University Baptist Church)

Dan Peterson is sternwheeler *Queen of the West's* Columbia River Historian on cruises between Portland, Astoria, and Lewiston, Idaho. He taught history at Olympic, Highline, and Seattle Community Colleges, is Past President of the Washington State Association of Historians, and has served with many professional associations and nonprofits.

Rev. Tom Quigley (Representing University Christian Church)

Tom Quigley was most recently President-Director of the Church Council of Greater Seattle. Now retired, he serves on several nonprofit boards and on committees of the United Way of King County. A graduate of the University of Chicago's Divinity School, he is an ordained minister in the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ).

Michael Shaw (Representing University Temple United Methodist Church)

Michael Shaw, formerly Assistant Auditor with the State Auditor's Office Higher Education Team in Seattle, is Business Manager at North Seattle Community College and is a CPA. He serves on the ROOTS board and has provided audit services and prepared financial statements for many nonprofit social agencies.

Executive Director: Clint Pehrson, AIA

Clint Pehrson has practiced architecture in Seattle since 1980, specializing in facilities for cultural institutions - libraries, churches and arts organizations. He was a founder of Seattle's Town Hall and has served on several public commissions and nonprofit boards, including Allied Arts of Seattle and Pacific Lutheran Theological Seminary in Berkeley, CA. In 2007, he suspended his private architectural practice of 20 years in order to be fully engaged as UDECC Executive Director.



Woven Together

The Story of Seattle's Ecumenical Campus

The challenges are common and complex:

1. Land-rich but cash-poor urban congregations, seeking a more economically and environmentally sustainable way to be Church in the 21st Century.
2. Aging, single-use church facilities with looming deferred-maintenance backlogs and daunting safety and accessibility deficiencies.
3. Social justice and human service challenges in a neighborhood with tremendous development pressure and high land values.
4. A “university ghetto” neighborhood in need of revitalization and public open space.
5. An evolving Church, comprised of separate denominations that have spent the past 50 years working nationally and internationally to knit themselves back together.

The Ecumenical Campus project gathers several congregations with diverse denominational ties into a single urban development project in which they can worship separately and together in a variety of sacred spaces, while at the same time sharing many other functions in common; a single community of believers. Located at the heart of the neighborhood they share, it anchors them at a great urban crossroads. Through this model, they will be wiser stewards of the Earth's resources, transform themselves, and embrace a powerful expression of unity.

Context

Seattle's University District is a neighborhood in transition. Like many western cities, Seattle is experiencing rapid growth. The University District is one of the city's “Regional Growth Centers,” targeted to receive a disproportionate share of new homes and jobs during the next 20 years.

The University District, home to the massive University of Washington, is a complete urban neighborhood. It's an active commercial center, with recreational, dining and cultural opportunities, dense housing, and great transit connections. During the past 10 years, comprehensive regional planning has led to zoning changes, expansion of public transit options, and other changes in land-use policy. The results of these changes are now being felt. Land values are rising quickly, and pressure is increasing for higher density redevelopment.

Abiding within this context is a community of churches that have shared the University District for a century. As “metropolitan congregations,” these urban churches draw their members from the greater Seattle metro area. Their outreach ministries include support for a broad range of social service organizations vital to the community. Over 20 service providers call the neighborhood home, many of which are housed within church buildings disbursed throughout the neighborhood.

In recent years, these churches have been transforming themselves into the University District Ecumenical Parish. This cross-polity group is a local expression of the international ecumenical movement that has been spreading among many Christian denominations for the last 60 years. This growing movement is a deliberate counterpoint to the disunity which has characterized so much of the Church's history. Locally, the Ecumenical Parish has reinforced already strong bonds between the University District churches. Manifestations of this unity include a variety of shared worship



services throughout the church year, “pulpit exchanges” wherein clergy exchange preaching duties in each other’s congregations, and diverse fellowship and educational opportunities.

Common Challenges

On February 1st, 2004, 150 people from 10 neighborhood congregations gathered on a Super Bowl Sunday for an event dubbed the “Ultimate Potluck.” That day, they shared a meal and a discussion about the unique ecumenical relationship that binds their congregations together.

That first meeting led to the realization that these churches have much in common, particularly with regard to their most daunting challenges. Like many urban churches, they are confronted with the realities of aging, unsustainable, single-use facilities. Their membership numbers are significantly smaller than when their World War I-vintage buildings were constructed, meaning the congregations are often poorly matched to their facilities. Issues commonly include safety and accessibility deficiencies, aging building systems, and poor energy efficiency. Parking shortages are common. Contractors and consultants have to be paid for work once done by member volunteers. Deferred maintenance lists grow longer each year.

These challenges, however, stand in marked contrast with the lively, progressive culture that the University District churches share. As they look to the future, these congregations remain committed to sustaining vital, activist ministries emphasizing social justice and peace, community engagement and inclusive fellowship.

The Learning Curve

Looking forward, it seemed like a collaborative approach among the churches might serve their collective best interests, together seeking new strategies that had previously eluded them. An ad hoc task force was formed to learn as much as possible about the particular circumstance of each congregation. Meeting monthly, this “Ecumenical Stewardship Task Force” evolved into an active working group with representatives appointed by the governing bodies of 8 neighborhood churches. Lutheran, Methodist, Episcopal, Congregational, Disciples of Christ, American Baptist, Quaker and Christian Science churches were active participants.

The task force gathered and examined a mountain of data; institutional, historical, financial, and architectural. A thorough analysis of all existing facilities was conducted, including the preparation of measured drawings of every church building. (In addition to 8 parish churches, this study also included Covenant House, an ecumenical facility housing campus ministry programs for 7 denominations.)

The buildings of these 9 institutions contained over 314,000 square feet of floor space, and occupied 313,000 square feet (over 7 acres) of highly valued real estate. Amazingly, the churches owned all of this property outright, with almost no debt. To their astonishment, they realized that together they held developable real estate with a market value in the neighborhood of 60 million dollars! To leave this abundance untapped was poor stewardship of their resources, at a time when their progressive goals for service, mission and ministry were growing more ambitious than ever.



The “Big Idea”

As the conversation expanded, an idea started to emerge. What if some of these aging, single-use facilities were sold, and the equity pooled into a new mixed-use facility that could house multiple congregations? At first murmured cautiously, the idea started to gain traction as the ongoing conversation began to give shape to the concept. Here was a group of faith communities with much in common. Still, each denomination had traditions that were deeply valued, mostly centering on their distinctive approaches to corporate worship. If a facility could be created that would permit each congregation to worship according to their unique traditions, yet enable them to share other facilities as part of a larger faith community, great advantages might be found. Since they already valued a great sense of community, shared fellowship facilities made sense. As all of the churches have enriching programs of adult study and discourse, as well as educational programs for children and youth, shared classroom space is also beneficial. Shared building infrastructure and parking are obvious benefits as well.

Deepening their commitment to a variety of social service providers, the churches can also provide better facilities for these essential services, now scattered throughout the neighborhood. Gathering several of these operations into a single, flexible location, the churches can provide more space of higher quality than the cramped and inefficient spaces now available. Importantly, this clustering of services will also improve coordination between providers.

A new building with a variety of assembly spaces and classrooms provides a rare opportunity to connect with the wider community. Diverse civic, cultural and academic activities promise to activate the facilities of churches that otherwise sit idle too often. Worship calls for spiritually-uplifting sacred spaces, but those same spaces can also be designed to work well for secular events.

Since these churches want to be where the most people are, it makes sense to target a location right in the midst of a busy urban center. This also means the new facility will be well-located for commercial enterprises behind street-activating storefronts. Incorporating commercial uses into an institutional project helps to capitalize project costs, generates reliable income to cover ongoing operating costs, and helps to knit the whole into the fine-grained fabric of the neighborhood. Locally-owned, owner-operated enterprises will be selected for their ability to make a genuine contribution to the sense of a lively and healthy “commons” for the whole community.

Key to the Ecumenical Campus concept is the provision of public open space, privately owned and operated, secured at night and for special events, but otherwise open and available as a gift to the community, a public benefit that will further enrich the neighborhood. The University District has a chronic shortage of park facilities. Such “breathing room” will be increasingly important (and increasingly difficult to achieve) as neighborhood density increases.

Finally, existing church real estate no longer needed after completion of the Ecumenical Campus can be made available to low-income housing providers, to create hundreds of housing units dispersed throughout the neighborhood. Affordable housing for University faculty and staff, student housing, low-income housing for disadvantaged populations, and senior housing are all under consideration.



The Vision

Thus was born the vision for a new building type: a civic commons integrated into the mixed-use fabric of a vital urban center, providing a more sustainable home for multiple faith communities, and the campus ministry programs and social service agencies they support. The Ecumenical Campus has the potential to transform these churches, as well as the surrounding community.

UDECC

In 2007, after 3 years of steady concept development and consensus building, six worshiping communities (now ten!) made the commitment to form and fund a new nonprofit corporation, for the purpose of completing a full feasibility study of the Ecumenical Campus concept. The University District Ecumenical Campus Coalition (UDECC) was incorporated in June of 2007, and plans to deliver its feasibility report to the partner institutions in early 2010. The feasibility study will address project scope, program, schedule and budget, site control, market analysis, and ownership/governance issues (including a great deal of legal work). Each partner institution will then resolve for itself the question of whether or not it elects to move on from its current facility and collocate with its neighbors at the Ecumenical Campus. Completion and occupancy of the Ecumenical Campus is projected for 2014.

The UDECC logo is a labyrinth. Not only are labyrinths graphically compelling and iconic, but there is also a long tradition in the Christian Church of walking a labyrinth as a spiritual exercise. As you contemplatively wend your way through the labyrinth's twists and turns, you leave one reality behind, and move patiently toward your goal, where a new reality awaits. The process of building consensus within a single worshiping community is daunting, even for the simple decisions. To do so with multiple congregations simultaneously, when the question is of such existential significance, is a profoundly labyrinthine exercise.

Success, however, will mean an entirely new reality for this vital group of worshiping communities, the outreach ministries they support, and the neighborhood they've shared for generations.