

U District Development: A Spiritual Dimension

June 30 2007

To foster the spiritual dimensions of rapid growth in Seattle's University District, and to help ensure that it will enhance the lives of everyone in the neighborhood including its most vulnerable populations, several Christian organizations in the neighborhood have joined together to form the nonprofit University District Ecumenical Campus Coalition (UDECC).

The University District, as one of three designated Urban Centers in Seattle, will receive a lion's share of the city's new homes and jobs during the next 20 years. Growth is being accelerated through comprehensive regional planning that includes zoning changes and transportation improvements such as the proposed U District light rail station.

In light of this expansion, UDECC wishes to develop an ecumenical home for several Christian congregations the University District - a capital facility that will:

1. House multiple church ministries and sanctuaries for worship
2. Provide urban amenities such as public open space and community assembly facilities
3. Accommodate well-coordinated services to disadvantaged populations
4. Lease spaces to compatible organizations and businesses

The UDECC Board of Trustees was officially seated on June 30, 2007. Six University District congregations and faith-based organizations are represented on the Board, whose officers are Van Hutton, President (University Lutheran), Frank Shirbroun, Vice-President (Christ Episcopal), Ann Berner, Secretary (University Lutheran), and Dale Hoff, Treasurer (University Temple United Methodist Church)

Other members of the Board are Donna Dockter and Michael Shaw (University Temple United Methodist), John Gienapp (University Lutheran), Tom Quigley, Judy Lightfoot, and Debbie Giles (University Christian), David Meekhof (Coordinated Ministry in Higher Education), and Dan Peterson (University Baptist).

Next on UDECC's agenda is the completion of a detailed feasibility study for the project. UDECC is currently seeking to hire an Executive Director who will secure funding for the study, select consultants, and supervise progress.