UNIVERSITY PLACE BETWEEN THE LINES

A City of University Place Publication

"Between the Lines" Newsletter — Right to Your Home!

Welcome to the first edition of our new City newsletter "Between the Lines"! In our continuing effort to inform our residents of important news and events, this newsletter will come out periodically, with information specifically designed to keep you up to date on the happenings in our community.

For those who have signed up, you will continue to receive the biweekly "Headlines" e-newsletter via email. If you aren't receiving it now, you can sign up today by scanning the QR code to the right, or visiting the City website at www.cityofup.com.

Let us know how we're doing! If there's information that you'd like to see, or input you'd like to share, send an email to **UPPublicRelations@cityofup.com**.

Keep a watchful eye on your mailbox for the next edition that will share the City's well-loved summer events, including Music on the Square, Movie in the Park, National Night Out and more!

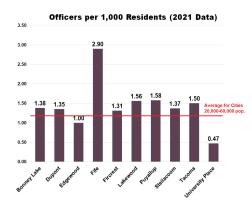


Ensuring the safety and security of our growing community has been a challenge for the U.P. Police Department. The UPPD operates with a commissioned staff of 16, including 14 deputies, one sergeant and one chief. University Place ranks last among all jurisdictions in Washington in officer-per-resident ratio.

Without additional staffing, this gap will continue to grow as the City's population grows. The result will be reduced officer availability and slower response times to calls for service.

This ratio is not the only formula used to determine appropriate police staffing levels. Each community has different needs and characteristics. It does. however, provide a good comparison.

Washington ranks last in the U.S. for officers per 1,000 residents. University Place ranks last in Washington out of 218 agencies.





Public Safety Levy on April Ballot

At its February 21 meeting, the City Council decided to place a revised **Public Safety Levy on the April 25** ballot. The levy would provide funding for additional public safety staffing, including eight additional patrol and traffic officers, and a specialist to address homelessness, park safety and crime prevention. Compared to the levy presented to voters last November, this revised levy reduces the cost to homeowners by about 14%.

If approved by voters, the City will continue its existing policy of dedicating all property tax revenue it receives from this levy to public safety, without reducing funds currently dedicated to public safety expenses.

You will receive a more detailed mailing about the levy in the coming weeks.



Budget 101: A Challenging Equation

Over the years, the City Council has been asked whether the City could expand a service, provide a new service or maintain an existing service by reallocating funds or cutting expenses elsewhere. The bottom line is that, due to a variety of State laws, the City is increasingly limited to providing legally mandated and essential services. Any expanded or new service requires new ongoing revenue.

Explaining the City's budget has always been a challenge because municipal finance laws and State restrictions on the use of certain funds are unnecessarily complex. The City's 2023 operating budget is \$20.3 million.

The budget is funded by **flexible revenue sources**, such as:

- Property Tax: \$0.66 out of \$10.88 per \$1,000 in assessed value.
- Sales Tax: 0.84% of the total 10% sales tax.
- Utility Taxes: 6% tax on utility service providers.

Almost half of these flexible revenues, however, are used to fund the City's debt payments and public safety expenses. A substantial portion of the remaining amount is used for State mandated positions and State mandated responsibilities. Many of these mandatory positions and responsibilities are not what most residents would think of as essential. So, they largely go unnoticed.

The City's operating budget also includes **legally restricted revenue sources**, such as:

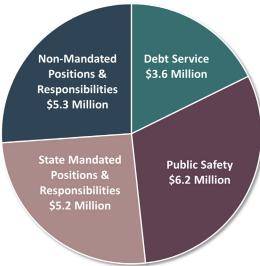
- Transportation Benefit District & Fuel Tax: State law restricts to street maintenance expenses.
- County-wide Parks Sales Tax: State law restricts to parks maintenance expenses.
- Development/Permit Fees: State law restricts to permitting expenses.
- Real Estate Excise Tax: State law restricts to capital project expenses.

The combination of State mandates, legally restricted revenues, debt service and the prioritization of public safety, substantially limits the ability to shift funding to new or expanded services without new revenue.

Of the remaining \$1.9 million in flexible revenues, \$1.55 million is used to fund the portions of the City's Parks and Public Works Department that are not funded with restricted revenues. Shifting these funds to new services would have a very noticeable effect on the appearance and livability of our community.

Despite the complexities of the budget, the City emphasizes transparency. You can find information about the City's 2023-2024 budget and audits of the City's finances at www.cityofup.com. If you have a question, email efaison@cityofup.com.

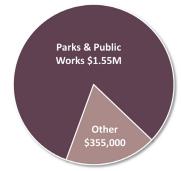
2023 Operating Expenses: \$20.3 Million



Non-Mandated Positions & Responsibilities: \$5.3 Million



Flexible Funds: \$1.9 Million



Legislative Update – Housing

In this year's State legislative session, there have been more than two dozen bills introduced that address housing. Many of these bills have gained significant support with legislators, affordable housing advocates and developers. A couple of these bills would have the effect of eliminating single-family zoning in cities like University Place.

Legislators have supported proposals that would require U.P. to allow up to four unit multi-family housing complexes in all residential neighborhoods.

proposals that would require U.P. to allow up to four unit multi-family housing complexes in all residential neighborhoods. The map on the right illustrates where the State also would require the City to allow up to six unit complexes.

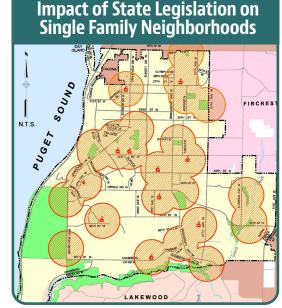
The City Council is opposed to the Legislature's efforts to take away local control and to spread growth haphazardly throughout the city. The

Council supports a regional effort to combine transit and transportation infrastructure investments, utility infrastructure investments and denser residential zoning, with existing or planned employment centers.

It is important that our residents are aware of these bills because, like many issues that the City deals with, the City's zoning is not entirely controlled by your City Council.

If you have questions about the City's zoning, email Kevin Briske, the City's Director of Community & Economic Development, at kbriske@cityofup.com.

Legislators have supported



ZONING ALLOWING SIX UNIT COMPLEXES PARK OR GOLF COURSE

SCHOOL



The City Council is opposed to the Legislature's efforts to take away local control and to spread growth haphazardly throughout the city.

Upcoming Events







ECRWSS Postal Customer



City Council Contacts		
Mayor Steve Worthington	253.565.4855	
Mayor Pro Tem Javier Figueroa	253.682.7379	
Council Member Kent Keel	253.878.8041	
Council Member Ed Wood	253.320.1274	
Council Member Denise McClusey	253.878.8039	
Council Member Stan Flemming	253.566.5656	
Council Member Caroline Belleci	253.878.8040	

Did You Know? Property Taxes

- 1. Property tax is one of the City's largest sources of revenue. But the City only receives \$0.66 per \$1,000 in assessed value out of \$10.88 paid by property owners.
- 2. An average U.P. homeowner will pay \$7,096 in property tax in 2023. The City will receive \$430 of the total, all of which is dedicated to public safety.
- 3. The amount the average homeowner has paid the City in property tax has been relatively consistent over the past decade, increasing by only \$40.

	2014	2023
Average Home Value	\$272,515	\$652,240
Average City Property Tax Bill	\$390	\$430
Average Total Property Tax Bill	\$4,630	\$7,096

- 4. This consistency is because state law limits the growth in how much property tax revenue local governments can collect without voter approval. This limit in revenue is regardless of any increase (or decrease) in the average home's value.
- 5. The April property tax levy would increase the City's levy rate from \$0.66 per \$1,000 to \$1.01 a \$0.35 increase. The levy would fund additional public safety staffing, including eight additional patrol and traffic officers and a specialist to address homelessness, park safety and crime prevention. This increase would take place in 2024. Based on 2023 assessed values, the average homeowner's total tax would increase from \$7,096 to \$7,324.

