

Headlines

News from University Place City Hall



February 6, 2019

U.P. Mayor Keel Serving on Two Regional Boards

Mayor Kent Keel has been asked by Washington's Secretary of Transportation, Roger Millar, to join the Transportation Demand Management Executive Board.

The organization is tasked with shaping and determining policies for improving transportation efficiency from the project level to the statewide system. This community-based approach relies on collaboration, commuter information and incentives to influence travel patterns and commuter choices. The goal is to support successful, innovative transportation solutions that address issues related to public health, economic vitality and climate change.



In addition, Mayor Keel has also been appointed as one of two new vice chairs of Sound Transit, where he will contribute to oversight of all capital, operational and administrative functions for the three-county public transit agency. This includes continued progress toward opening light rail to the South Sound, including the Hilltop Tacoma Link in 2022.

Keel's presence on these two key boards ensures that University Place and other South Sound communities have a voice at the table. "This is an opportunity to highlight our city as a player in transportation planning because these are truly legacy efforts that will have a lasting impact on communities across the state and, in the case of Sound Transit, our immediate three-county region," Keel said.

"Since these are regional and state-wide committees, I have to be careful about balancing the needs of all stakeholders, but I want to make sure that all of U.P.'s citizens are connected and involved beneficiaries of this work. I'm a firm believer that all ships rise on a high tide."

Public Disclosure Requests Available Online

If you'd like to make a request to see official public records relating to things such as business licenses, county police and fire records or historical information, the City Clerk's office has implemented a web portal **Public Disclosure Requests**.

U.P. **Ordinance 478** states that citizens be given access to public records. Although requests for public records can be made through the City's Public Records Request Center or through the City Clerk's Office at City Hall, this online portal enables citizens to make requests outside of normal office hours (Monday - Friday, 9 a.m. - 4 p.m.).

"We've tried to make this a user-friendly experience that enables people who make requests to be able to track the progress of their requests and see previous requests," said U.P. City Clerk Emy Genetia. "After creating and using a personal log-in, the system uses a key word identification process. Our goal is to build on and create a robust system of archived public records. We also have links to the county's records site for any records that are dated prior to August 1995 when the City of U.P. was incorporated, as well as Police, Fire, or other records not maintained by the City."

The new portal features commonly asked questions so that users can quickly see the legal and administrative requirements for fulfilling their request. "One of the most common questions people have is if there is a cost to viewing public records," Genetia said. "The answer is 'no.' If people request us to make copies, there is, however, a small fee for that."

Moody's Upgrades City's Bond Rating!

Moody's Investors Service (Moody's), as part of its annual surveillance of municipal debt for investors, recently conducted a review of its rating on the City's outstanding Limited Tax General Obligation bonds. As part of this review, City staff responded to in-depth questions about the City's financial operations and reserves, the City's tax base and local economy, City debt, pensions, capital planning and cybersecurity, and the stability of the City's management team. After a thorough evaluation by its ratings committee, Moody's decided to raise the City's bond rating from "Aa3" to "Aa2".

Moody's stated that the new Aa2 rating reflects their view of significant improvement in the City's financial and economic profile, including the City's:

- History of structural balanced operations due to conservative management practices;
- Stable and strong reserves and liquidity levels;
- Favorable socioeconomic profile.

Moody's noted that the City's outstanding debt consists of "fixed-rate obligations," and they described the debt as "manageable." They added: "As a result of the City's continued practice of conservative budgeting, it has been able to significantly improve its financial reserves and liquidity since its historical low levels in fiscal 2010 and consistently outperform budgeted projections."

This ratings upgrade is the third upgrade in the past four reviews by Moody's.

- 2016 Upgraded two notches from A3 to A1;
- 2017 Upgraded to Aa3;
- 2019 Upgraded to Aa2.

There are only two ratings above the City's new Aa2 rating: Aa1 and Aaa.

The principal purpose of these types of ratings is to inform investors as to the City's creditworthiness and ability to repay its outstanding bonds. While the City does not have plans to issue new debt, the ratings upgrade will help the City obtain lower interest rates, with a substantially lower cost to taxpayers, if the City decides to issue any bonds in the future. However, perhaps as important, the ratings upgrade also provides U.P. residents with some assurance, from a neutral, informed third-party expert, of the financial stability and efficiency of their local government.

Advisory Commission Vacancies

Applications are currently being accepted from citizens interested in serving on the following City of University Place advisory commissions:

- Economic Development Advisory Commission
- Park Advisory Commission

One position is available on each commission. Positions are open until filled. Commissioners are citizens who, through their volunteer efforts, play an integral role in the growth and development of their City. Citizens serving on the City's

Commissions apply their unique knowledge and experiences to the issues and the needs of their city and then create ideas, identify resources, and make recommendations toward fulfilling the Council's Vision.

Forms are available on the City's website on the **Committees, Commission and Partners** page, and at City Hall. For more information, contact the City Clerk's office at 253.566.5656.

More Improvements to Cirque, Bridgeport and 67th Avenue Coming in 2019

2019 will be another busy year for street improvements in University Place. Thanks to over three million dollars in federal grants, Cirque Drive, Bridgeport Way and 67th Avenue will have much needed upgrades starting soon.

Cirque Drive – 83rd Avenue to Grandview Drive

New sidewalks, street lighting and landscaping will be installed along both sides of Cirque Drive this year, between 83rd Avenue and Grandview Drive. This project will complete the Cirque Drive corridor, and as a result, residents will be able to enjoy continuous sidewalks and bike lanes along the entire length of Cirque Drive throughout the City. Construction is scheduled to begin this summer.



Bridgeport Way Overlay and Accessibility Improvements – Cirque Drive to 37th Street

Driving and walking along Bridgeport is soon to get much more comfortable. New asphalt will be placed on the street between Cirque Drive and 37th Street, providing a smooth riding surface and preserving the life of the road. In addition, all non-ADA compliant sidewalks and ramps will be upgraded to current accessibility standards, making it easier for pedestrians of all ages and abilities. Construction is scheduled to begin this spring.

**67th Avenue Overlay –
37th Street to 44th Street**

Motorists and cyclists alike will enjoy new pavement to ride on along 67th Avenue between 37th Street and 44th Street. This new asphalt surfacing is scheduled for later this summer.

If you have any questions or would like additional information on these projects, please contact the University Place Engineering Department at 253.460.2526.

Inclement Weather in University Place

Should City Hall hours, meetings or events be affected by inclement weather, it will be noted on the City website at www.CityofUP.com as well as on the City's **Facebook** and **Twitter** pages as soon as information is available.

Upcoming Events

Please Note:

The **Sweetheart Dance** has been rescheduled to Saturday, March 16 from 6:30-9 p.m. due to the snow forecast.

The **Volunteer Dinner** scheduled for Feb. 9 at Community Connection Place has also been cancelled.

**For upcoming events and Council Meeting information
visit the Upcoming Events Calendar.**

University Place City Council



Mayor Kent Keel



Mayor Pro Tem Caroline Belleci



**Council Member
Javier Figueroa**



**Council Member
Steve
Worthington**



**Council Member
Ken Grassi**



**Council Member
Denise
McCluskey**



**Council Member
Chris Nye**

