



**Date:** May 24, 2019  
**To:** City Council Select Committee on Citywide Mandatory Housing Affordability  
**From:** Geoff Wentlandt, OPCD  
**Subject:** Environmental review for MHA implementation in portions of University District

## **Background**

In February of 2016 zoning changes to increase height and floor area and implement MHA were adopted by the City Council for portions of the U District study area (Ordinance 125267), however land along University Way NE and certain other multifamily and commercial lands within the EIS study area were not rezoned at the time. In March of 2019 zoning changes to increase height and floor area and implement MHA were adopted by the City Council for urban villages and commercial and multi-family zoned lands throughout the City (Ordinance 125791). A decision was made at the time of Ordinance 125791 not to include lands along University Way NE and certain other multifamily and commercial lands. (See attached map.)

A Final Environmental Impact Statement (FEIS) for *U-District Urban Design Alternatives* was issued in January of 2015. The FEIS evaluated probable significant environmental impacts of four rezone alternatives with different combinations of zoning. An FEIS on the alternatives for citywide implementation of MHA was issued in November 2017. The MHA EIS did not address a specific rezone proposal for the University District area. It can be interpreted that environmental review for the current MHA implementation proposal has not been fully conducted for portions of the University District that were not previously rezoned.

## **Supplemental Environmental Review**

To ensure required SEPA environmental review is conducted for MHA implementation in the geographies of University Way NE and adjacent commercial and multi-family zoned areas where MHA has not yet been implemented, OPCD will prepare a Supplemental Environmental Impact Statement (SEIS). The SEIS will supplement the 2015 *U-District Urban Design Alternatives EIS*. A supplemental EIS is required because the current MHA proposal is different from the proposal that was evaluated in the 2015 FEIS, and several portions of the proposed geographic area for MHA implementation were not proposed for rezone in the 2015 FEIS.

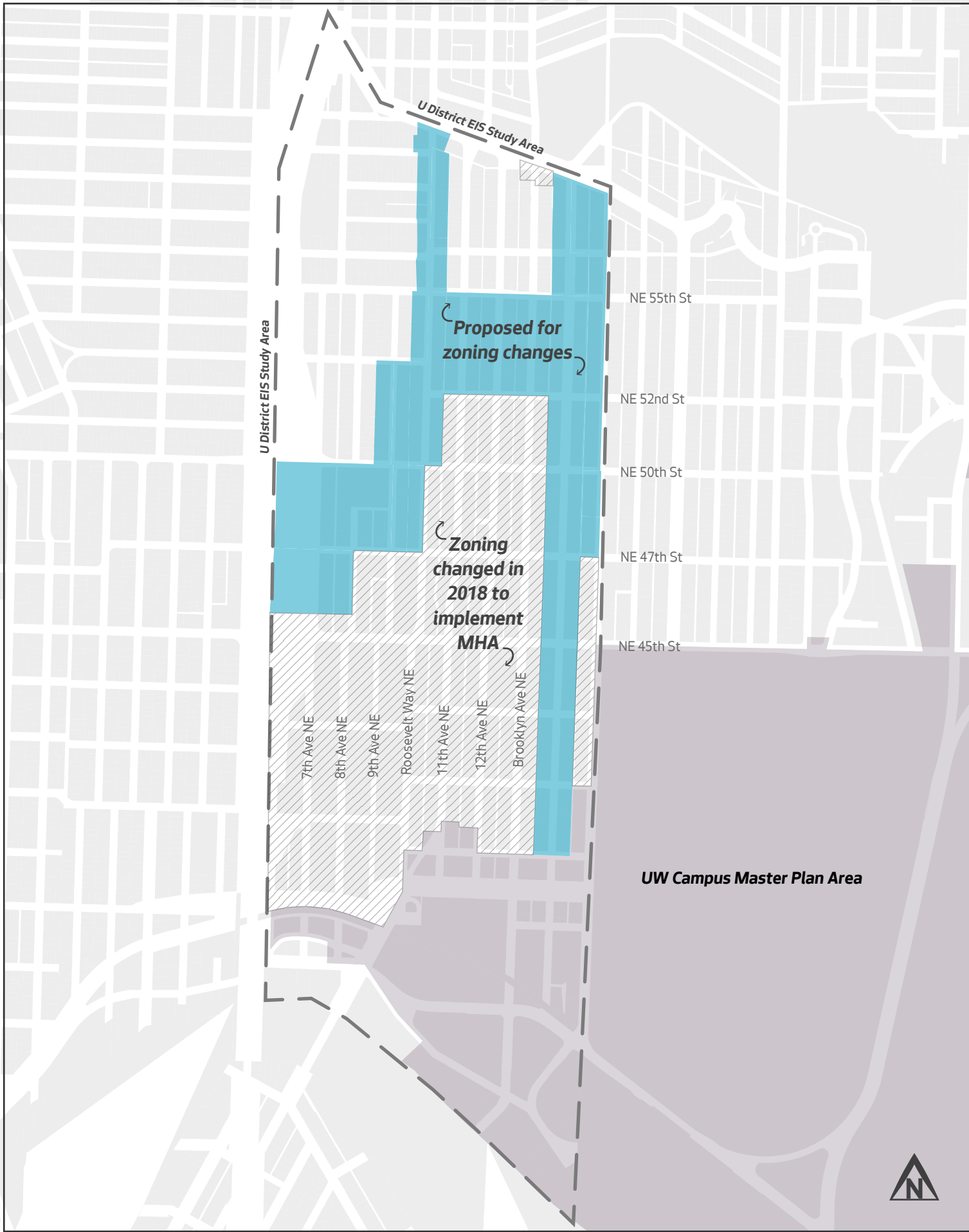
## **SEIS Process**

The required process for an SEIS includes a scoping phase, a Draft EIS (DEIS) with comment period, and a Final EIS (FEIS). OPCD is issuing the combined SEIS and scoping notice on May 30<sup>th</sup>, 2019. A scoping meeting is scheduled for Wednesday June 12, 2019 at Seattle City Hall, Third Floor Room 370. The scoping comment period is a

required minimum 21 days and will extend until Friday June 21<sup>st</sup>. It is expected that the Draft EIS will be issued in late summer 2019 with a 30-day comment period, followed by a Final EIS that could be issued in approximately October 2019. Following issuance of a Final EIS, City Council may take action to make zoning changes and implement MHA. Adequacy of a FEIS may be appealed administratively to the City Hearing Examiner. If there is an appeal, it would need to be resolved before Council could take final action.

### **SEIS Content**

An SEIS requires evaluation of alternatives. The preliminary scope for the SEIS is to evaluate three alternatives that have a range of zoning choices to implement MHA. One alternative will consider zoning changes as proposed during the time of citywide MHA implementation. A second alternative will consider more intensive height and floor area increases some of which are similar to scenarios studied in the 2015 U-District Urban Design Alternatives EIS. The SEIS will also include a No Action alternative that does not make zoning changes or implement MHA. Preliminary topics of focus for the SEIS include: land use, aesthetics, and housing. The SEIS will also add information from the UW Campus Master Plan, which was not completed at the time of the 2015 U-District Urban Design Alternatives EIS.



Proposed Zoning Evaluated in U District EIS  
**University District Supplemental EIS**