

**FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATION  
OF THE HEARING EXAMINER FOR THE CITY OF SEATTLE**

In the Matter of the Application of

**CASE NUMBER:**  
CF-314435

**UNIVERSITY OF WASHINGTON  
MEDICAL CENTER**

for approval of a Major Institution Master Plan

**Introduction**

The University of Washington Medical Center seeks City Council approval of an updated Major Institution Master Plan (“MIMP”) and rezones to increase the height of the Major Institution Overlay (“MIO”) for the UW Medical Center Northwest Hospital (“UWMC – Northwest”) campus. The public hearing on the application was held before the Hearing Examiner on October 28, 2024. Closing comments were provided by the parties on November 8, 2024. The Hearing Examiner conducted a site visit on November 22, 2024 and the hearing record closed on that date.

At the hearing, the Applicant was represented by Steve Gillespie, attorney-at-law; and the Director of the Seattle Department of Corrections and Inspections (“Director” or “Department”) was represented by Crystal Torres, Senior Land Use Planner.

For purposes of this decision, all section numbers refer to the Seattle Municipal Code (“SMC” or “Code”) unless otherwise indicated. Having considered the evidence in the record and visited the site, the Examiner enters the following findings of fact, conclusions and recommendation on the application.

**Findings of Fact**

**Background**

1. UW Medicine is a state-run regional health care system. The UW Medical Center operates as one hospital at two campuses: the subject site, UWMC – Northwest, and the UWMC Montlake (“UWMC – Montlake”) campus adjacent to the UW main campus. UW Medicine also operates King County’s Harborview Medical Center, the UW Medicine Out-Patient Medical Center, and a number of regional clinics. Hecker Testimony.

2. The UWMC – Northwest campus encompasses approximately 33 acres, bounded on the south by N 115th Street, on the north by N 120th Street, on the east by Burke Avenue N and a row of single-family housing fronting Meridian Avenue N, and on the west by a multifamily complex called Stendall Place and the Bikur Cholim Cemetery, which align with Ashworth Avenue N. Exhibit 1.

3. The UWMC – Northwest campus is mapped in the far northwestern corner of the Northgate Urban Center, approximately 1.2 miles from the Northgate transit hub. Exhibit 1.
4. The first hospital facilities at the site were constructed in 1960 by Northwest Hospital. Northwest Hospital obtained its current MIMP in 1991. Exhibit 1. The University of Washington acquired Northwest Hospital in 2009 and has since fully integrated it into the UW Medicine system. Hecker Testimony.
5. The UWMC – Northwest hospital provides full spectrum, community-based care in fields such as obstetrics, oncology, cardiology, surgery, spine, and behavioral health.
6. UWMC operates under a single hospital license that covers both campuses, totaling 910 beds. The acute-care, teaching hospital at UWMC – Northwest is licensed for 381 of those beds. Hecker Testimony.

### **Current Major Institution Master Plan**

7. The current MIMP, adopted in 1991, created three MIO districts: MIO-105 in the center and southwestern portion of campus, MIO-50 to the east, and MIO-37 to the northwest. Exhibit 1 at 27 & Fig. 3.5. The underlying zoning is Lowrise 2 with an MHA suffix (“LR2(M)”), a designation that will not change with adoption of the proposed MIMP. Exhibit 1 at 19. LR2 zoning “[p]rovide[s] opportunities for a variety of multifamily housing types in existing multifamily neighborhoods and along arterials that have a mix of small scale residential structures” and “[a]ccommodate[s] redevelopment in areas within urban centers, urban villages, and Station Area Overlay Districts in order to establish multifamily neighborhoods of low scale and density.” SMC 23.34.018.A.
8. The land west of the MIO is zoned Lowrise 3 with an MHA suffix (“LR3(M)”), with the southern half developed as a cemetery and the northern half in multifamily use. To the north the land is zoned Neighborhood Residential 2 and is largely in single-family use. To the northeast is a block of LR2(M) in multifamily use. To the east is more NR2 in single-family use. To the south more LR3(M), again in use as a cemetery. Exhibit 1 at 18-20 & Figs. 3.2 & 3.3.
9. The existing MIO includes ten buildings (exclusive of two land leased buildings at the south end of campus) with a total of approximately 738,000 gross square feet of floor area. Exhibit 1 Fig 2.2 & Table 3.2; Blakeslee Testimony.
10. The University of Washington owns all of the land within the MIO. Blakeslee Testimony. Although public rights-of-way form the boundary of the MIO on three sides, no public rights-of-way bisect the MIO. Exhibit 1 at 71.
11. The current MIMP required compliance with Code regarding parking stall counts but did not specify the number of stalls required. However, approximately 1,600 stalls currently exist within the MIO. Exhibit 1 at 9.

## **Procedural Background and Environmental Review**

12. UWMC – Northwest submitted a Notice of Intent to Prepare a New Master Plan on September 27, 2022, and began work with the Department of Neighborhoods toward formation of a Development Advisory Committee (“DAC”). Blakeslee Testimony.
13. UWMC – Northwest submitted a Concept Plan to the Director on December 22, 2022. Exhibit 4.
14. The DAC held a total of sixteen meetings between April 29, 2023, and May July 1, 2024. Blakeslee Testimony. Public correspondence and comments received by the DAC are included with its Final Report. Exhibit 7.
15. As the SEPA lead agency for its Master Plan, the University was responsible for preparation of the Environmental Impact Statement (“EIS”) that evaluated the Plan’s environmental impacts, including alternative proposals. WAC 197-11-926; WAC 197-11-050; Amended 1998 Agreement, §II.A.1. The Draft EIS (“DEIS”) studied the “no action” alternative and two “action” alternatives (“Alternative 1” and “Alternative 2”) that would each add approximately 800,000 net square feet of floor area and a total floor area campuswide of 1.6 million square feet. *See* Exhibit 3.
16. The University published a SEPA determination of significance on March 27, 2023. Exhibit 19.
17. Public scoping of the environmental impact statement occurred from March 27 through April 27 of 2023 and included two public scoping “drop-in” sessions on April 1 and April 6, 2023. Schipanski Testimony. The University established the final scope in May of 2023. *Id.*; Exhibit 3 at 2-11.
18. UWMC – Northwest submitted a Preliminary Draft Master Plan to the Director on May 31, 2023. Exhibit 5.
19. The University published the draft MIMP and DEIS on September 5, 2023, and held a public comment period from September 5 until October 5, 2023. Exhibit 3; Exhibit 6. The University also held a Public Open House on September 21, 2023. Exhibit 2 at 2-12.
20. The University received 55 comment letters and heard testimony on the DEIS at the hearing. Schipanski Testimony. The public comments addressed issues common to each action alternative. In response, the University began study of a third alternative (“Alternative 3”) that addressed each action alternative. Schipanski Testimony.
21. Public comments communicated concern regarding the vehicular access on N 120th Street that was studied in Alternative 1 and 2. Schipanski Testimony. Alternative 3 eliminated the vehicular access. *See* Exhibit 2; Schipanski Testimony.

22. Alternative 3 studied the impacts of moving more of the mass of proposed and potential buildings to the south and center of campus, away from residential users bordering the MIO to the north and northwest. Schipanski Testimony; Exhibit 2.
23. Alternative 3 also increased setbacks compared to Alternatives 1 and 2, while lowering height limits compared to each. Schipanski Testimony; Exhibit 2.
24. UWMC – Northwest worked with its consultants and the DAC to draft Design Guidelines for projects proposed under the new MIMP. Wolf Testimony. The Design Guidelines are intended to help the Implementation Advisory Committee to review projects implementing the MIMP and to monitor construction and impacts. Wolf Testimony.
25. The FEIS includes all written comments on the DEIS and the University’s responses to the public testimony and written comments. *See* Exhibit 2 Ch. 4.
26. A Final Master Plan was submitted to the Director and the DAC in March of 2024, Exhibit 1.
27. The University published a notice of availability of the FEIS on March 1, 2024. Exhibit 11; Blakeslee Testimony.
28. The DEIS (Exhibit 3) and the FEIS (Exhibit 2) review the impacts to the affected environment in Section III of each document. Exhibit 3; Exhibit 2. The DEIS provides most of the substantive analysis and the FEIS updates the analysis in response to comments and also analyzes the impacts of Alternative 3. Schipanski Testimony.
29. The land use impacts of the proposed action are analyzed at DEIS pages 3.1-1 through 3.1-29 and FEIS pages 3-2 through 3-4. The FEIS includes an evaluation of the three alternatives’ relationship to the City’s plans, policies, and regulations. The plans, policies, and regulations include the City Comprehensive Plan’s major institution policies, the City of Seattle Land Use Code rezone criteria, and discussion of the Northgate neighborhood plan. The FEIS does not anticipate unavoidable significant adverse impacts to the land use element of the environment.
30. The air quality and greenhouse gas impacts of the proposed action are analyzed at DEIS pages 3.2-1 through 3.2-9 and FEIS page 3-5. The FEIS does not anticipate unavoidable significant adverse impacts to this element of the environment.
31. The environmental health impacts of the proposed action are analyzed at DEIS pages 3.3-1 through 3.3-7 and FEIS pages 3-6 through 3-7. The FEIS does not anticipate unavoidable significant adverse impacts to this element of the environment.
32. The aesthetics, light & glare and shadow impacts of the proposed action are analyzed at DEIS pages 3.4-1 through 3.4-39 and FEIS page 3-7 through 3-11. The DEIS acknowledges that the action alternatives would result in new buildings in the interior of campus being visible where none are now but noted that whether those changes are positive or negative is subjective. The FEIS acknowledges some adverse environmental impacts, but does not characterize them as

significant, and concludes that Alternative 3 would create fewer impacts than the other action alternatives.

33. The historic and cultural resources impacts of the proposed action are analyzed at DEIS pages 3.5-1 through 3.5-6 and FEIS page 3-11. The FEIS does not anticipate unavoidable significant adverse impacts to this element of the environment.

34. The transportation impacts of the proposed action are analyzed at DEIS pages 3.6-1 through 3.6-29 and FEIS pages 3-12 through 3-15 and include an analysis of peak hour levels of service at several intersections in the vicinity.

35. A majority of UWMC – Northwest employees live in northern King County and Snohomish County. Many of the front-line medical personnel work 12-hour shifts, 7:00-7:00. Swenson Testimony.

36. The single-occupancy vehicle (SOV) rate for employees as of the transportation studies that supported the EIS analysis was 75%. Swenson Testimony.

37. In 2040, performance at the all-way stop intersection of North 115<sup>th</sup> Street and Meridian Avenue North is projected to degrade from LOS D without the project to LOS F with the project. The FEIS anticipates that signalization would mitigate the impacts, and the Applicant agrees to fund a traffic signal should one become necessary. Testimony established that better SOV performance may avoid the impacts altogether. Operations at the intersection of 1<sup>st</sup> Avenue NE and NE 130<sup>th</sup> Street are projected to degrade from LOS D to LOS E with a seven-second increase in delay, but because potential mitigation measures would conflict with a Vision Zero safety corridor project on NE 130<sup>th</sup> Street, no mitigation to increase vehicular capacity is proposed. Swenson Testimony.

38. The impacts of the proposed action on water, sewer, and stormwater are reviewed at DEIS pages 3.7-1 through 3.7-10 and FEIS page 3-15. The DEIS notes that other utilities (electrical, telecommunications, solid waste) had no known constraints and were not studied. The FEIS anticipates that, if conditioned as recommended in the DEIS, the proposed action will produce no significant impacts to water, sewer, or stormwater.

39. The construction impacts of the proposed action are reviewed at DEIS pages 3.8-1 through 3.8-11 and FEIS pages 3-15 through 3-18. The DEIS and FEIS recommend several mitigation measures for common construction impacts, such as fugitive dust, equipment noise, unstable soils, and tree damage. As conditioned, the DEIS anticipates no significant construction impact. The FEIS updates the discussion of tree impacts to address the new Tree Preservation Ordinance that Council adopted after DEIS publication but does not alter the conclusion that no significant impacts are anticipated.

40. The final DAC report was issued on July 15, 2024, and recommended adoption of the MIMP with conditions. Exhibit 7.

41. Most of the DAC's recommendations were incorporated into the recommendations included in the final Director's Report. *Compare Exhibit 7 with Exhibit 12.*

42. In its prehearing brief and at hearing, UWMC – Northwest expressed agreement with the recommendation conditions included in the final Director’s Report with one clarification. However, at the hearing, the Parties represented that they had reached agreement on that clarification and later jointly presented modified conditions.

43. The Hearing Examiner received no public comment on the MIMP, either written or oral.

### **Proposed MIMP**

44. The Code defines a "Major Institution" as “an institution providing medical or educational services to the community. A Major Institution, by nature of its function and size, dominates and has the potential to change the character of the surrounding area and/or create significant negative impacts on the area.” SMC 23.84A.025”M”.

45. Under the Code, a “master plan” is a conceptual plan for a Major institution that consists of a development program component; a development standards component; and a transportation management program. SMC 23.69.030.A. The MIMP includes all three components. Exhibit 1.

46. The Code requires that each major institution have a Major Institution Master Plan approved by the City Council, as provided in Chapter 23.69 SMC. SMC 23.69.002 states that the purpose of the chapter is to regulate major educational and medical institutions in order to:

- A. Permit appropriate institutional growth within boundaries while minimizing the adverse impacts associated with development and geographic expansion;
- B. Balance a Major Institution's ability to change and the public benefit derived from change with the need to protect the livability and vitality of adjacent neighborhoods;
- C. Encourage the concentration of Major Institution development on existing campuses, or alternatively, the decentralization of such uses to locations more than two thousand five hundred (2,500) feet from campus boundaries;
- D. Provide for the coordinated growth of major institutions through major institution conceptual master plans and the establishment of major institution overlay zones;
- E. Discourage the expansion of established major institution boundaries;
- F. Encourage significant community involvement in the development, monitoring, implementation and amendment of major institution master plans, including the establishment of citizen's advisory committees containing community and major institution representatives;
- G. Locate new institutions in areas where such activities are compatible with the surrounding land uses and where the impacts associated with existing and future development can be appropriately mitigated;
- H. Accommodate the changing needs of major institutions, provide flexibility for development and encourage a high quality environment through modifications of use restrictions and parking requirements of the underlying zoning;

- I. Make the need for appropriate transition primary considerations in determining setbacks. Also, setbacks may be appropriate to achieve proper scale, building modulation, or view corridors;
- J. Allow an increase to the number of permitted parking spaces only when it is 1) necessary to reduce parking demand on streets in surrounding areas, and 2) compatible with goals to minimize traffic congestion in the area;
- K. Use the TMP to reduce the number of vehicle trips to the major institution, minimize the adverse impacts of traffic on the streets surrounding the institution, minimize demand for parking on nearby streets, especially residential streets, and minimize the adverse impacts of institution-related parking on nearby streets. To meet these objectives, seek to reduce the number of SOVs used by employees and students at peak time and destined for the campus;
- L. Through the master plan: 1) give clear guidelines and development standards on which the major institutions can rely for long-term planning and development; 2) provide the neighborhood advance notice of the development plans of the major institution; 3) allow the city to anticipate and plan for public capital or programmatic actions that will be needed to accommodate development; and 4) provide the basis for determining appropriate mitigating actions to avoid or reduce adverse impacts from major institution growth; and
- M. Encourage the preservation, restoration and reuse of designated historic buildings.

47. The Code establishes a Major Institution Overlay (“MIO”) District to overlay each major institution and creates nine MIO designations and corresponding height limits to be used within an MIO District. SMC 23.09.004.

48. SMC 23.69.006.A applies the major institution chapter’s regulations to “all land located within the Major Institution Overlay District “unless specifically modified by this chapter or an adopted master plan.”

### **Institutional Needs**

49. The campus is part of the UW Medicine system. The proposed MIMP recites that UW Medicine’s mission is to provide “an integrated clinical, research and learning health system with a single mission to improve the health of the public.” Exhibit 1.

50. The first hospital facilities at the site were constructed in 1960 by Northwest Hospital. Northwest Hospital obtained its current MIMP in 1991. Exhibit 1; Hecker Testimony.

51. The University of Washington acquired Northwest Hospital in 2009 and has since fully integrated it into the UW Medicine system. Hecker Testimony

52. The University of Washington Medical Center is regulated as one hospital with two campuses: the UWMC – Northwest campus at issue in this matter, and the UWMC – Montlake campus adjacent to the main UW campus. Hecker Testimony.

53. UWMC – Northwest provides full spectrum, community-based care in fields such as obstetrics, oncology, cardiology, surgery, spine, and behavioral health. Exhibit 1; Hecker Testimony.
54. The UWMC – Montlake campus provides higher-end quaternary care in a number of fields. Exhibit 1; Hecker Testimony.
55. UWMC – Montlake is at capacity, so to free up space to provide its high-end services, the UWMC – Northwest campus must expand its capacity to serve patients with less complex healthcare needs. Exhibit 1; Hecker Testimony
56. Providers, including doctors, nurse practitioners, and physician assistants, in the UW Medical Center tend to rotate between campuses, particularly between UWMC – Northwest and UWMC – Montlake. Exhibit 1; Hecker Testimony.
57. UWMC – Northwest has determined that its core hospital functions require approximately 1.6 million square feet of floor area over the life of the MIMP to accommodate current and future needs. Exhibit 1; Wolf Testimony.
58. UWMC – Northwest bases its estimated growth needs on regional population growth, an aging population that requires increasing levels of care, its own aging infrastructure, and changes in modern health care requirements. It cites code changes, such as seismic, fire and life safety, and updated health standards, such as the need for larger single-patient rooms for privacy and disease control and to accommodate complex equipment at the bedside, as well as the fact that the cost of upgrading existing facilities to meet current standards often exceeds the cost of replacing them. Wolf Testimony.
59. UWMC – Northwest anticipates a 22% increase in growth of the 65+ age group within its service area, and a doubling of inpatient hospital care on the UWMC – Northwest campus by 2041. Exhibit 1 at 11-12. In the same time period, outpatient visits are estimated to grow from 6 million to 8 million patient visits annually. Exhibit 1 at 12.
60. The Proposed MIMP identifies several goals for the long-term future of the UWMC – Northwest campus, including:
- 1. Accommodate Future Growth.** Accommodate future clinical care growth requirements while maintaining a positive campus experience for patients, visitors, staff, and the community.
  - 2. Align Vision with Strategic Plan.** Align the UWMC – Northwest campus vision with the larger UW Medicine Strategic Plan.
  - 3. Phased Growth for Future Needs.** Replace aging facilities, phase necessary campus expansion, and consider the energy efficiency and utility needs for future development.
  - 4. Flexibility to Adapt with Changing Needs.** Create flexibility to support the dynamic, ever-changing healthcare market that allows project sequencing based on need and funding strategies.



**5. Community Engagement.** Through clear and transparent communication, ensure the community understands the project vision. Exhibit 1 at 16.

### **Development Program**

61. Planned and Future Development. Details of the proposed development program are found at pages 18 through 38 of the MIMP, Exhibit 1.

62. MIO Boundaries. No changes are proposed to UWMC – Northwest’s existing MIO boundaries. Exhibit 1 at 19. However, the proposed MIMP includes increased MIO height limits and altered setbacks. *Compare* Figs. 3.5 and 3.6, Exhibit 1 at 27 *with* Figs. 3.7 and 3.8, Exhibit 1 at 29.

63. Density. Under SMC 23.69.030.E.2, density for a major institution is calculated across the entire campus using floor area ratio (FAR). The new MIMP anticipates 1.6 million square feet of total development at full build-out, Exhibit 1 at 18, which with a 33-acre site, equates to a FAR of approximately 1.11.

64. Under the MIMP at Exhibit 1 pages 103-104, the following spaces are excluded from the 1.6 million square feet: structured parking; floor area below grade; open areas such as parking lots, courts, and light wells, or portions of upper floors eliminated by rooms or lobbies that rise above single-floor ceiling height; and interstitial mechanical space (defined as space between floors for mechanical, electrical, and HVAC systems). Covered exterior walkways, terraces, and open roofed areas that are paved shall have the architectural area multiplied by an area factor of 0.50 and be added to the measured building gross square feet.

65. Parking Count. The MIMP anticipates an additional 1,700 parking stalls on campus, for a maximum of 3,300 total stalls in a combination of surface lots and structured parking. Exhibit 1 at 38. The MIMP does not propose any street vacations and all drives and roadways within the campus are privately owned. *Id.*

66. Existing and Proposed Physical Development. The MIMP discusses existing and proposed physical development, including anticipated demolitions, at pages 22-26. UWMC – Northwest consists of ten buildings. *Id.* at 22. Two buildings on the south side of the campus are privately owned and are not proposed to be redeveloped. *Id.* Additionally, the MIMP does not propose changes to any leased facilities outside the MIO in the Northgate neighborhood. *Id.* The MIMP indicates older structures that may be demolished. *Id.* at 24.

67. Planned Projects. The MIMP does not identify any planned projects but does discuss building heights and volumes at Exhibit 1 pages 27-31.

68. Open Space. The MIMP discusses existing and future open space, landscaping, and trees at Exhibit 1 pages 32-35.

69. Campus Circulation. The MIMP discusses campus circulation, parking, and wayfinding at Exhibit 1 pages 36-38.
70. Ownership. UWMC – Northwest owns all the property within the MIO, and no MIO expansion is proposed. Blakeslee Testimony. UWMC – Northwest does not own and is not leasing or otherwise occupying any structures or properties outside, but within 2,500’ of, the MIO.
71. Phased Development. The MIMP anticipates development in phases as funding becomes available and as near-term needs demand but does not set out a specific phasing order or schedule. Exhibit 1 at 21.
72. Rights-of-Way. No public rights-of-way cross the MIO, and UWMC – Northwest neither proposes any street or alley vacations nor the abandonment of existing rights-of-way. Exhibit 1 at 21.
73. Decentralization. UW Medicine operates multiple medical centers, including UWMC – Northwest and UWMC – Montlake. The uses proposed for UWMC – Northwest are intentionally collocated at the campus, and no further decentralization of healthcare services is proposed. Exhibit 1 at 21.
74. Expiration. The proposed MIMP includes no expiration date. The MIMP would remain in place until the allowed square footage is constructed or UW Medicine determines its planning needs require a different plan. Planned uses include hospital replacement, clinic replacement, research, infrastructure (particularly the Central Utility Plant discussed in the MIMP), parking, administrative office, and other uses related to UWMC – Northwest functions. *See e.g.* Exhibit 1 at 103-105.
75. Density. Under SMC 23.69.030.E.2, density for a major institution is calculated across the entire campus using floor area ratio. At full buildout under the MIMP, the 33-acre campus would support a maximum of 1.6 million square feet of floor area, for an FAR of approximately 1.11.
76. Housing and Displacement. No housing exists within the MIO, and the plans anticipated in the MIMP would not displace any housing.
77. Consistency with Purpose and Intent of Chapter 23.69 SMC. The MIMP’s analysis of this factor is contained in the discussions under the following sections of Exhibit 1: UWMC – Northwest’s Mission, Vision, & Values; Campus Needs and MIMP Goals; regional growth and health care needs; the existing campus; applicable goals, policies and public benefits of the development program; and portions of the text in each MIMP element.

### **Development Standards**

78. The proposed MIMP establishes Development Standards at Exhibit 1 pages 66-82.

79. Underlying zoning. The underlying zoning for the entire campus is LR2(M), which the MIMP does not propose to modify.
80. The development standards of the proposed MIMP are intended to supersede the standards of the underlying LR2(M) zone. The Director's Report provides a comprehensive analysis of the differences between the MIMP development standards and those of SMC 23.45.570 (Institutions).
81. Setbacks. The proposed MIMP at Exhibit 1 pages 70-71 establishes building setbacks from the campus edges of 20 feet from N 115<sup>th</sup> Street and 40 feet from all other campus edges. *See also* Exhibit 1 Page 29, Fig. 3.8. There are no rights-of-way within the MIO and the MIMP does not propose building setbacks for structures internal to campus.
82. Height Limits. The MIMP proposes height limits of 65 feet at all campus edges adjacent to residential uses, 105 feet at the southern and western portion of campus, 145 feet (MIO 160 conditioned down) at the north-central part of campus, and 175 feet (MIO-200 conditioned down) in the center of campus. *See* Exhibit 1 at 29, Fig. 3.7; 69-70 (Building Heights and Exceptions).
83. Lot Coverage. At Exhibit 1 page 74, the proposed MIMP defines lot coverage as the percentage of the MIO occupied by structures, including parking garages but excluding covered walkways, surface parking lots, below-grade structures, fences/screens, internal drives, sidewalks, plazas, patios, and other paved areas. The lot coverage limit is 48%.
84. Landscaping Standards. Landscaping standards are established at Exhibit 1 pages 71-72. The intent of the landscaping section is to: "Identify, develop and maintain a network of accessible open space throughout the campus in support of creating a healing environment. Create welcoming and inviting landscapes that patients, employees and visitors can connect to directly or indirectly. Site buildings with sensitivity to existing mature trees and create open spaces appropriate for adjacent building use and surrounding context."
85. Open Space. The MIMP establishes a minimum percentage of open space of 20%, with up to 10% of that being on structures. Exhibit 1 at 71.
86. Transition in Height and Scale. The MIMP Development Standards provide for transition in height and scale between development within the MIO and the surrounding areas. *See* Exhibit 1 at 29, Figs. 3.7 and 3.8 (proposed heights step down at campus edges, setbacks are larger for edges adjacent to residential areas). The Building Heights section seeks "to create a volumetric relationship at campus edges next to the residential neighborhood." Exhibit 1 at 69-70.
87. Landmarks. There are no designated historic landmarks on or near the UWMC – Northwest campus. Exhibit 12 at 28.
88. The University has an internal process for projects that alter buildings or landscapes more than 25 years of age. It prepares a Historic Resources Addendum to "aid the reviewing bodies and further ensure that historic resources are respected" that features the elements listed in the MIMP at Exhibit 1 pages 43-44.

89. View Corridors. No SEPA-designated view corridors are on or near the UWMC – Northwest campus, and the MIMP does not propose any measures to protect views. Exhibit 12 at 48.

90. Pedestrian Circulation. The proposed MIMP establishes standards for pedestrian circulation at Exhibit 1 page 75. The goal is to encourage pedestrian trips between buildings and spaces on campus with universal pedestrian access to open spaces and between points of arrival and destinations within the MIO. The proposed MIMP requires designated crossings, adequate lighting, and wayfinding. Sidewalks must be at least five feet in width and comply with accessibility standards.

### **Transportation Management Program**

91. The proposed MIMP Transportation Management Program (TMP) is on Exhibit 1 pages 84-98.

92. Parking Supply. The TMP recites that campus parking supply is set to accommodate campus needs while minimizing spillover parking and discouraging SOV commutes. The campus currently has 1,542 stalls and the proposed MIMP anticipates 3,300 stalls at full build-out.

93. The Code default method for calculating minimum parking depends on the number of “hospital-based doctors” and “staff doctors,” as well as the number of “all other employees present at peak hour.” SMC 23.54.016.B.2.a.1.

94. Testimony established that the University of Washington Medical Center is one medical center with two campuses, UWMC – Northwest and UWMC – Montlake, and that providers, a term which includes physicians, nurse practitioners, and physician assistants, frequently move between the two campuses. Hecker Testimony.

95. Because of the way providers move between UWMC – Northwest and UWMC – Montlake, there is no reliable way to calculate the inputs for the parking minimum established for a medical major institution in SMC 23.54.016. Hecker Testimony; Swenson Testimony.

96. In the face of the uncertainty regarding calculation of parking minimums, the transportation engineering team devised another method based on actual performance at the UWMC – Northwest campus, ultimately calculating a parking rate as a function of campus floor area. Swenson Testimony.

97. The current parking rate is 2.8 stalls/1,000 sq. ft. of floor area. Exhibit 1 at 88; Swenson Testimony. For future conditions, under the proposed methodology, the transportation engineer calculated that the rate could be reduced as the floor area increases, to account for projected increases in floor area that will not generate additional trips (i.e., single-occupancy rooms that replace double-occupancy rooms, “breakout rooms” for teaching purposes that serve staff and students already at the campus). Swenson Testimony. The proposed parking rate is 2.06 stalls/1,000 sq. ft., a 30% decrease in rate but an increase in the absolute number of parking stalls. Exhibit 1 at 88; Swenson Testimony.

98. Loading and Service Facilities. The proposed MIMP discusses loading and service facilities at Exhibit 1 page 89. It recites that the campus currently has eight loading berths, which meets the requirements of SMC 23.54.035.A. The MIMP established that observations of performance in the field confirm that Code requirements exceed the needs of the institution. Exhibit 1 at 73-74. The proposed MIMP anticipates that nine berths would provide sufficient loading capacity at full build-out. Exhibit 1 at 73

99. Traffic Circulation. The TMP discusses traffic circulation at Exhibit 1 pages 84-87, which builds on the Design Guidance discussion of circulation at Exhibit 1 pages 55-60. Internal vehicular circulation will rely on the new loop drive. *See* Exhibit 1 at 56 & 86, which will be developed in phases as projects are completed under the new MIMP, Exhibit 1 at 107.

100. Pedestrian Circulation. Pedestrian circulation will be aided by the same loop drive, as well as the system of sidewalks and open spaces described in the Development Standards section at Exhibit 1 page 75.

101. Bicycle Circulation. Bicycle circulation will also benefit from the loop drive, as well as added bicycle infrastructure that the UWMC – Northwest will be developed in accordance with the Design Guidance on Exhibit 1 page 59, as well as the Development Standards at Exhibit 1 pages 68-69.

102. SOV Rate. The TMP proposes a SOV commute goal of 50%, which would improve on the current performance of 75%. Exhibit 1 at 89.

103. The TMP proposes specific programs to reduce traffic impacts and encourage the use of alternatives to SOV commutes. *See* Exhibit 1 at 89-98.

104. At the hearing, the Applicant and SDCI represented that they had reached agreement regarding modifications to the language of conditions presented in the Director's Report and jointly provided the modified conditions after the close of the hearing.

### **Conclusions of Law**

1. The Hearing Examiner has jurisdiction over this matter pursuant to Chapters 23.69 and 23.76 SMC.

2. The University of Washington is the SEPA Lead Agency for this proposal in accordance with WAC 197-11-926(1). The University provides no administrative SEPA appeal, WAC 478-324-145. The Hearing Examiner has no jurisdiction to hear a procedural SEPA appeal for this matter. No party filed such an appeal.

3. The Hearing Examiner reviewed and relied upon the DEIS (Exhibit 3) and FEIS (Exhibit 2) completed by the University of Washington and its consultants, and that review informs the recommendation below.

4. Project-level impacts for projects that comply with the rezone and MIMP approval will be examined at the time of project-level permitting in accordance with WAC 197-11-060(5)(c) and other applicable law.
5. The Director's report (Exhibit 12) includes a detailed analysis of the proposed MIMP in accordance with the criteria included in SMC 23.69.032.E, and of the proposed rezones pursuant to Chapter 23.34 SMC, including SMC 23.34.008 and 23.34.124. Except as otherwise indicated, the Director's analyses are adopted herein by reference.
6. The intent of the Comprehensive Plan's Major Institution Goals and Policies, and the Major Institution Code, Chapter 23.69 SMC, is to balance public benefits of a major institution's growth and change with the need to protect the livability and vitality of adjacent neighborhoods.
7. UWMC – Northwest's assessment of its need for growth is reasonable considering the age of its existing facilities, regional population growth, the increasing health care needs of an aging population, the campus's role in the UW Medical Center and UW Medicine system, and the physical space demands associated with current health care delivery.
8. The public benefits of UWMC – Northwest's proposed growth and expansion are described in the record and include but are not limited to: employment opportunities; continued provision of uncompensated care in the hundreds of millions of dollars annually, and community health improvement services; expanded facilities for medical research; continued support for medical education; volunteer opportunities for people of all ages, some of whom may be interested in pursuing careers in healthcare; programs serving the entire "WAMI" region comprised of Washington, Alaska, Montana, and Idaho; and enhanced open spaces, landscaping, and pedestrian amenities throughout the campus, which will be available to the public.
9. The proposed rezone, which will increase the height limit of the MIO with no horizontal expansion, complies with applicable standards of Chapter 23.34 SMC. The rezone and corresponding MIMP approval could create bulk and scale impacts, but those will be avoided or mitigated by the setbacks proposed at campus edges, particularly those adjacent to residential uses with no intervening street, as well as tiered height limits and landscaping requirements.
10. The proposed MIMP serves the purposes set forth in SMC 23.69.002.
11. The proposed MIMP and corresponding rezone will not displace any housing, therefore no mitigation is required.
12. The MIMP is consistent with the relevant Goals and Policies of the Comprehensive Plan, as analyzed in the Director's Report at pages 31-32.
13. The MIMP components comply with the Code and should be approved subject to the recommended conditions, as modified by agreement between the Applicant and SDCI. The development program is consistent with SMC 23.69.030. The development standards further the goals and objectives of the MIMP and the Major Institution Policies. The TMP includes the required elements. The Design Guidelines will help guide future development under the MIMP.

14. The parking standard established in SMC 23.54.016 is a “development standard” and the Major Institutions Code allows modification of development standards except those related to transportation concurrency. *See* SMC 23.69.020.B.
15. The default parking calculation method established in the Land Use Code at SMC 23.54.016 is not designed to handle a system wherein medical personnel move between campuses, so the Applicant’s transportation engineers appropriately devised an alternative parking calculation method that relies on historic performance at the MIO as well as assumptions about future growth, which would allow an increase in the total number of parking stalls while lowering the rate of parking stalls as a function of MIO square footage.
16. The parking rate established in the proposed MIMP strikes the proper balance between providing enough parking to prevent spillover parking in the neighborhood, while not providing so much that SOV trips would be encouraged.
17. The proposed MIMP’s parking calculation method and conclusions comply with Ch. 23.69 SMC, and Council should adopt them.
18. All environmental issues identified in the DEIS and FEIS have been adequately addressed in the MIMP, particularly due to the creation of Alternative 3 as the preferred alternative and its incorporation into the MIMP, as well as the conditions recommended below.
19. The proposed SOV target of 50% aligns with the Land Use Code and realistically estimates the SOV rates that the Applicant can achieve with the reasonable measures detailed in the TMP.
20. As additional transportation infrastructure becomes operational, such as Link light rail service to Everett and the opening of infill stations such as NE 130<sup>th</sup> St, SDOT and SDCI will work with the applicant to re-evaluate and adjust the SOV performance goal, as set forth in the conditions recommended below.
21. The agreed-upon conditions jointly presented by the Applicant and SDCI appropriately avoid or mitigate impacts of the MIMP as required by Ch. 23.69 SMC and SEPA.
22. With the recommended conditions, the proposed MIMP fulfills the intent and requirements of the Major Institution Code.

### **Recommendation**

Based on the foregoing, the Hearing Examiner recommends that Council approve the proposed MIMP and corresponding rezone, subject to the conditions listed below.

### **CONDITIONS OF MASTER PLAN APPROVAL**

**MIO 1.** The single-occupancy vehicle (SOV) performance goal of 50% is established at the adoption of the MIMP, per 23.54.016.C SMC.

As additional transit capacity is added to the area through regional planning efforts in the future, the Transportation Management Plan will reflect a progressive reduction in the SOV goal in alignment with the SOV targets established by the City of Seattle’s Commute Trip Reduction (CTR) requirements (Chapter 25.02 SMC), as described below.

The major transit infrastructure improvements anticipated at the time of MIMP adoption include the following two milestones:

1. 2030: The transportation network is anticipated to include the Lynnwood Link extension (2024), Line 2 Link to downtown Redmond (2025), NE 130th Link infill station (2026), Federal Way Link extension (2026), and Stride S3 Line (2027).
2. 2038: The transportation network is anticipated to include the West Seattle Link extension (2032) and Everett Link extension (2037).

UWMC – Northwest shall meet with the City after the completion of the first CTR survey following each of the milestones above are reached (i.e., in 2030 or once all improvements in milestone 1 are completed, whichever is later) to review and adjust the SOV goal. The updated SOV performance goal at this site shall follow the relevant standards outlined in Director’s Rule 01-2021 (or any successor rule) on Transportation Management Programs.

**MIO 2.** Revise the MIMP’s Landscape and Open Space section to note “Tree Protection – Retention of existing street and campus trees shall be encouraged along property perimeters. No trees shall be removed from the City right-of-way without approval of SDOT.”

**MIO 3.** Amend the MIMP language to clarify the loop drive must provide a minimum 20’ landscaped setback from east and west property edges, as well as the north property edge, with the exception of the property edge adjacent to the existing cemetery.

**MIO 4.** Amend the MIMP’s Landscape and Open Space section to include a North Campus Edge bullet and language stating a minimum 20’ landscaped setback from the north campus edge shall be provided, maintaining existing mature trees as feasible.

### **CONDITIONS OF REZONE APPROVAL**

**Rezone 1.** As described in the Master Plan, structures in areas designated MIO- 160 shall be limited to 145 feet in height, and all structures in areas designated MIO-200 shall be limited to 175 feet in height, subject to exceptions to height limits set forth in the Master Plan.

### **CONDITIONS OF SEPA APPROVAL**

#### **PRIOR TO ISSUANCE OF MASTER USE PERMIT**

**SEPA 1.** At the time of Master Use Permit application, related tree survey and arborist report as necessary will be submitted for review.



**SEPA 2.** At the time of individual permits, water, sewer, and stormwater shall be evaluated to verify the capacity of each utility service to serve each specific new development project.

**SEPA 3.** At time of individual permit application submit transportation information related to coordinating the following improvements with SDOT:

- a. Install no right turn on red signage at the intersection of Aurora Avenue N and N 115th Street – a key intersection for pedestrians traveling between campus and RapidRide stops at Aurora Avenue N and N 115th Street. These improvements will be triggered when the first development project is approved by SDCI.
- b. Calculate the LOS at Meridian Avenue N/N 115th Street intersection with each MIMP project implementation and evaluate mitigation options with SDOT when the project degrades the intersection to LOS F or increases intersection delay by more than 5 seconds when the baseline or with-project LOS operates at LOS F. The EIS identified the potential for a traffic signal, however lesser mitigation could be identified as appropriate, including but not limited to a traffic circle/roundabout. UWMC-Northwest responsibility would include the costs associated with the design and construction of the improvement. The final design of any improvement must accommodate the movements of buses and emergency vehicles destined for the hospital. The cost to the institution shall not exceed the cost of a traffic signal if a more expensive solution was desired by SDOT.
- c. UWMC-Northwest will design and construct protected bike lanes on Meridian Ave N between N Northgate Way and N 115th Street, as approved by SDOT – completing a gap in the bicycle connection between Northgate Link light rail station and the UWMC-Northwest campus. The requirement to construct these improvements would be triggered when the first patient occupiable area and/or administrative office area project that results in an increase in site-wide vehicle trip generation is approved by SDCI, and completion of these improvements shall be a condition precedent to occupancy of said project. To avoid a requirement to construct these improvements with a particular project, UWMC-Northwest must demonstrate to SDOT and SDCI that there will be no increase in site wide vehicle trip generation during the MUP process for the proposed development. The central utility plant and parking increases will not trigger the protected bike lane improvements.

This improvement is not meant to be a corridor restoration project for full street improvements. Improvements excluded from this condition include:

- Corridor-wide curb line modifications
- Intersection curb ramps, except as may be required under SDOT DR 01-2017, “Right-of-Way Opening and Restoration Rules”
- Corridor-wide modifications to other modal facilities such as sidewalks
- Modifications to the curb line or signal system at the Meridian Ave N/Northgate Way intersection

Modification to the typical cross section to match existing conditions at N 115<sup>th</sup> Street and Northgate Way would need to occur (e.g. transition bike lanes to/from the existing sharrows) without modifying the signal system or existing curb lines at the intersection. Construction will follow the SDOT Director's Rule 01-2017 ROW Opening and Restoration Rules.

- d. Ensure construction of curb, gutter, and sidewalk along the south side of N 120th Street between Meridian Avenue N and west to the existing improved section. The requirement to install these improvements would be triggered when the medical center development cumulatively increases the patient occupiable area and/or administrative office area by greater than 250,000 net new gross square footage. The central utility plant and parking increases will not trigger the curb, gutter, and sidewalk improvements.

#### **DURING CONSTRUCTION FOR FUTURE DEVELOPMENT**

**SEPA 4.** At the time of building permit application for each building proposed within the UWMC Northwest MIO, the Applicant shall provide a Construction Management Plan that has been approved by SDOT and focused on the current proposal. The submittal information and review process for Construction Management Plans are described on the SDOT website page "Construction Use in the Right of Way" or its successor page.

**SEPA 5.** Locate the Central Utilities Plant facility a minimum 50' from the nearest residential property line and provide noise studies at time of permit review.

**SEPA 6.** Contractors shall meet the following noise control criteria:

- a. The use of electric equipment and machinery is preferred. If noise levels on any equipment or device cannot reasonably be reduced to criteria levels, either that equipment or device will not be allowed on the job or use times will have to be scheduled subject to approval.
- b. The sound pressure level of each piece of equipment cannot be greater than 85 dBA at a distance of 50 feet. Rubber-tired equipment is to be used whenever possible instead of equipment with metal tracks. Mufflers for stationary engines are to be used in the hospital areas and areas within 100 feet of the campus boundary. Construction traffic should be routed through nearest campus exit.
- c. Air compressors are to be equipped with silencing packages.
- d. Jack hammers and roto hammers may be used where no other alternative is available; core drilling and saw cutting equipment is preferred.
- e. Specific scheduling of construction-related noise activities is required at the UWMC Northwest Hospital.

Entered December 20, 2024.

/s/Ryan Vancil

Ryan Vancil  
Hearing Examiner

### **Concerning Further Review**

Any person who submitted a written comment to the Director, or who provided a written or oral comment to the Hearing Examiner, may submit in writing an appeal of the Hearing Examiner's recommendation regarding a Type IV land use decision to the Council and, if desired, a request to supplement the record. No appeals of a DNS or the determination that an EIS is adequate will be accepted. SMC 23.76.054.A

Appeals of the Hearing Examiner's recommendation shall be filed with the City Clerk by 5 p.m. of the 14th calendar day following the date of issuance of the Hearing Examiner's recommendation. When the last day of the appeal period so computed is a Saturday, Sunday, or federal or City holiday, the appeal period runs until 5 p.m. on the next day that is not a Saturday, Sunday, or federal or City holiday. SMC 23.76.054.B

The appeal shall clearly identify specific objections to the Hearing Examiner's recommendation and specify the relief sought. SMC 23.76.054.C

**BEFORE THE HEARING EXAMINER  
CITY OF SEATTLE**

**CERTIFICATE OF SERVICE**

I certify under penalty of perjury under the laws of the State of Washington that on this date I sent true and correct copies of the attached **FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATION** to each person listed below, or on the attached mailing list, in the matter of **University of Washington Medical Center NW- Major Institution Master Plan**. Council File: **CF-314435** in the manner indicated.

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SEATTLE, WA 98104

KING COUNTY DEPARTMENT OF  
PERMITTING AND  
ENVIRONMENTAL REVIEW  
35030 SE DOUGLAS ST. STE 210  
SNOQUALMIE, WA 98065-926

PORT OF SEATTLE ENVIROMENTAL  
MANAGEMENT  
PO BOX 1209  
SEATTLE, WA 98111

DEPARTMENT OF NATURAL  
RESOURCES PARKS DIVISION  
201 S. JACKSON ST. STE 700  
SEATTLE, WA 98104

<p>KING COUNTY METRO TRANSIT ENVIRONMENTAL PLANNING 201 S JACKSON ST SEATTLE, WA 98104-3856</p> <p>DEPT OF THE ARMY CORP OF ENGINEERS REGULATORY PO BOX C-3755 SEATTLE, WA 98124-3755</p>	
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Dated: December 20, 2024

/s/ Angela Oberhansly  
Angela Oberhansly  
Legal Assistant