

BACKGROUND

In August 2000, the City Council adopted the existing Seattle Pacific University (SPU) Major Institution Master Plan (MIMP) by Ordinance 120074. SDCI, then the Department of Design, Construction and Land Use (DCLU), issued the Final EIS on the MIMP in September 1999. The MIMP replaced the previous plan and does not have a fixed expiration date.

In June 2019, the City Council adopted legislation allowing limited expansion of major institution uses into an area zoned Industrial General and Industrial Buffer near SPU by Ordinance 125845. This legislation also allows for expansion of the SPU MIO district into this area. The area is generally located along the south edge of the Fremont Cut, adjoining the northwest corner of the SPU MIO district. The area was removed from the Ballard Interbay Northend Manufacturing and Industrial Center (BINMIC) by prior Council action.

SPU filed a Notice of Intent to prepare a master plan with SDCI, which was referred to City Council and received Clerk File 314435 in October 2019. In August 2020, the SPU Citizens Advisory Committee (CAC) began monthly meetings for the purpose of reviewing and commenting on the MIMP and EIS.

Site and Vicinity

Site Description

The existing Seattle Pacific University (SPU) campus, as defined by the 2000 Major Institution Master Plan (MIMP) Major Institution Overlay (MIO) district, is approximately 66-acres in size. The campus is generally organized around a core of academic uses, with recreational uses on the north side and housing on the west, south and east sides.

The campus is located on the north slope of Queen Anne hill, situated around the intersection of W Nickerson St and 3rd Ave W. The W Nickerson St corridor is largely characterized by residential and industrial uses to the west and commercial uses to the east. To the south of W Nickerson St, the vicinity is characterized by lowrise residential development that transitions to single family residential development up Queen Anne hill. The campus is bordered by the Fremont Cut and South Ship Canal Trail to the north, which provides opportunities for recreational use.

The campus is located approximately one-half mile north of the Upper Queen Anne Residential Urban Village; three-quarters of a mile east of the Ballard Bridge, which provides access to the Ballard Hub Urban Village; and one-half mile west of the Fremont Bridge, which provides access to the Fremont Hub Urban Village. A portion of the northern boundary of the SPU MIO district adjoins the Ballard Interbay Northend Manufacturing and Industrial Center (BINMIC).

MIO-50	LR1 (M)	MIO-50-LR1 (M)
	LR3 (M)	MIO-50-LR3 (M)
	NC1-55 (M)	MIO-50-NC1-55 (M)
	NC2-55 (M)	MIO-50-NC2-55 (M)
MIO-65	LR2 (M)	MIO-65-LR2 (M)

Zoning Pattern

Surrounding campus, to the west of 3rd Ave W, the zoning pattern is industrial along the Fremont Cut and transitions from commercial to lowrise, east to west, along W Nickerson St. To the east of 3rd Ave W, the zoning pattern is commercial along W Nickerson St. To the south of W Nickerson St, the zoning pattern transitions from lowrise to single family residential up Queen Anne hill.

Shoreline Environments

The northern edge of campus is located within the Shoreline District along the Fremont Cut. Shoreline environments that overlay the existing MIO district include Urban Industrial to the west of 3rd Ave W and Urban General to the east of 3rd Ave W.

Environmentally Critical Areas (ECAs)

There is a contiguous Potential Slide Area along the western edge campus, which continues southeast through campus, following the curvature of W Dravus St and Humes Pl W. Within that Potential Slide Area, there are intermittent, discrete occurrences of Steep Slope Erosion Hazard Areas that vary in size. There is a Known Slide Event and an associated Known Slide Area located near the northeast corner of the intersection of W Dravus St and 6th Ave W.

PROPOSED ACTION

Seattle Pacific University proposes a new MIMP to replace the existing 2000 MIMP. The proposal includes an expansion of the existing Major Institution Overlay district boundary in three locations: in the northwest corner, the southeast corner, and along the east edge. The proposal includes increases to the existing MIO height limits, changing several areas from MIO-37 or MIO-40 to MIO-65. The proposal identifies a few planned projects, and several right-of-way vacations and enhancements. Since SPU is a private institution, SDCI is the lead agency responsible for preparing the EIS.

ANALYSIS - SEPA

SDCI has determined this proposal is likely to have a significant adverse impact on the environment. An environmental impact statement (EIS) is required under RCW 43.21C.030(2)(c) and will be prepared. SDCI has preliminarily identified the following alternatives and elements of the environment for potential discussion in the EIS.

ALTERNATIVES

The EIS shall discuss alternatives, including the proposed action (Figure 2), reasonable alternatives, and a “No Action” alternative. The proposed action is based on the Seattle Pacific University Concept Plan, dated July 2020, which is on file with the SDCI. Reasonable alternatives shall include actions that could be feasibly attained or approximate the proposal’s objective, but at a lower environmental cost. The “No Action” alternative shall be evaluated and compared to other alternatives. The current ranges of alternatives are described as follows:

- Alternative 1 – No Action
 - No expansion of MIO boundary
 - No increase of MIO height limits
 - No street vacations or intersection improvements
 - No new development or repurposed facilities
- Alternative 2 – Boundary Expansion and Increased Height Limits (Proposed Action)
 - Expand MIO boundary
 - Increase MIO height limits
 - Street vacations and intersection improvements
 - New development
 - Repurpose existing facilities

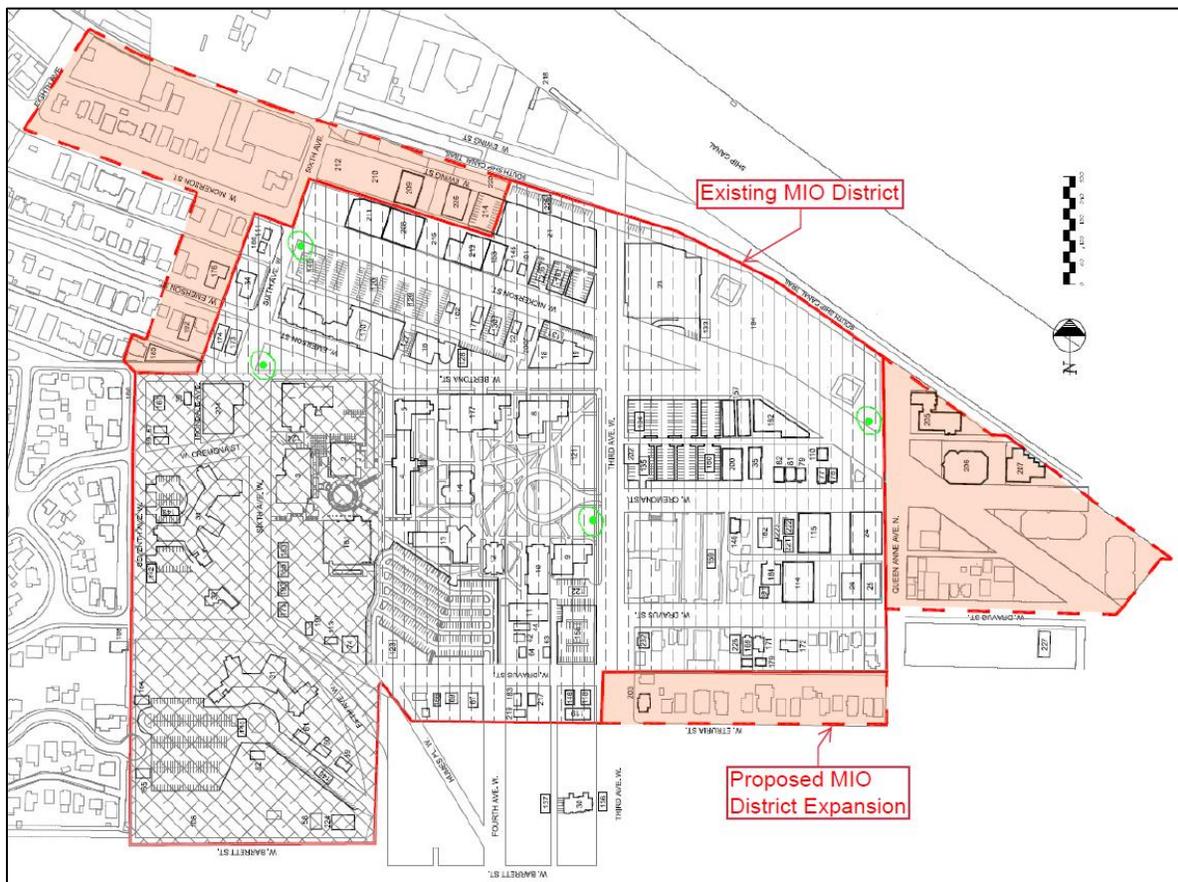


Figure 2: Alternative 2 (Proposed Action) Site Plan

- Alternative 3 – No Boundary Expansion and No Change to Height Limits
 - No expansion of MIO boundary
 - No increase of MIO height limits
 - Limited street vacations and intersection improvements within existing MIO boundary

- Limited new development under existing height limits within existing MIO boundary
- Repurpose existing facilities
- Alternative 4 – Boundary Expansion and No Change to Height Limits
 - Expand MIO boundary
 - No increase of MIO height limits
 - Street vacations and intersection improvements
 - Limited new development under existing height limits
 - Repurpose existing facilities
- Alternative 5 – No Boundary Expansion and Increased Height Limits
 - No expansion of MIO boundary
 - Increase MIO height limits
 - Limited street vacations and intersection improvements within existing MIO boundary
 - Limited new development within existing MIO boundary
 - Repurpose existing facilities
- Alternative 6 – Boundary Expansion, Increased Height Limits and No Street Vacations
 - Expand MIO boundary
 - Increase MIO height limits
 - No street vacations or intersection improvements
 - New development
 - Repurpose existing facilities

ELEMENTS OF THE ENVIRONMENT

The following elements of the environment have been preliminarily identified for potential discussion in the EIS for this non-project action. This list may change as a result of the comments received from agencies and the public during the scoping period, as well as from comments received on the Draft EIS. Environmental impacts associated with future individual development projects within the SPU MIO district will be reviewed on an individual basis as subject to SEPA.

Height, Bulk and Scale

The increase of height limits, as well as the added potential for development sites that are larger than the prevailing pattern of the surrounding neighborhood, may result in adverse height, bulk, and scale impacts between areas of less intensive zoning and more intensive zoning.

Land Use

Increasing the capacity for institutional uses by expanding the SPU MIO district may result in adverse land use impacts, including incompatibility with the surrounding residential uses; influence on the surrounding commercial land use pattern and availability of commercially zoned land; and creation of inconsistencies with the adopted goals and policies of the Seattle Comprehensive Plan.

Parking

The increased parking demand associated with the growth of student, faculty and staff populations, and more intensive development may result in adverse impacts on availability of parking in the surrounding neighborhood.

Traffic and Transportation

Increased trips and traffic volumes, and revised traffic patterns associated with increased students, faculty and staff populations, more intensive development, and right-of-way closures, may result in adverse impacts on motorized and non-motorized transportation facilities, including streets, intersections, sidewalks, and bicycle infrastructure; which has the potential to undermine the stability, safety, and character of the surrounding neighborhood.

Shadows on Open Space

The campus is located to the south of West Ewing Mini Park. The increase of height limits and potential for larger development sites may result in adverse impacts in the form of light blockage and shadows on this public open space.

DECISION - SEPA

This decision was made after review of the information on file with the department by the responsible official on behalf of the lead agency. This constitutes the Threshold Determination and form. The intent of this declaration is to satisfy the requirement of the State Environmental Policy Act (RCW 43.21.C), including the requirement to inform the public of agency decisions pursuant to SEPA.

- Determination of Non-Significance (DNS). This proposal has been determined to not have a significant adverse impact upon the environment. An EIS is not required under RCW 43.21.030(2)(C).
- Determination of Significance (DS). This proposal has or may have a significant adverse impact upon the environment. An EIS is required under RCW 43.21C.030(2)(C).

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Seattle Department of Construction and Inspections

Date: November 30, 2020

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IMPORTANT INFORMATION FOR ISSUANCE OF YOUR MASTER USE PERMIT

Master Use Permit Expiration and Issuance

The appealable land use decision on your Master Use Permit (MUP) application has now been published. At the conclusion of the appeal period, your permit will be considered “approved for issuance”. (If your decision is appealed, your permit will be considered “approved for issuance” on the fourth day following the City Hearing Examiner’s decision.) Projects requiring a Council land use action shall be considered “approved for issuance” following the Council’s decision.

The “approved for issuance” date marks the beginning of the **three year life** of the MUP approval, whether or not there are outstanding corrections to be made or pre-issuance conditions to be met. The permit must be issued by SDCI within that three years or it will expire and be cancelled (SMC 23-76-028). (Projects with a shoreline component have a **two year life**. Additional information regarding the effective date of shoreline permits may be found at 23.60.074.)

All outstanding corrections must be made, any pre-issuance conditions met and all outstanding fees paid before the permit is issued. You will be notified when your permit has issued.

Questions regarding the issuance and expiration of your permit may be addressed to the Public Resource Center at prc@seattle.gov or to our message line at 206-684-8467.