

January 25, 2019  
Carly Guillory, Senior Land Use Planner  
Seattle Department of Construction and Inspections (SDCI)

Re: Seattle University Request for a SDCI Decision Regarding Master Plan Change for the 1300 East Columbia property, SDCI Project Number # 3033147

Dear Ms. Guillory:

This letter requests a determination by the Director of the Department of Construction and Inspections (SDCI) as to whether Seattle University's use of the property at 1300 East Columbia would require changes to the University's Major Institution Master Plan (MIMP) and, if so, what type of MIMP change is required pursuant to SMC 23.69.035. The change requested is to allow existing improvements on the property to be used for major institution uses including warehouse/office in the existing structure and parking in the existing surface lot.

Seattle University acquired the 1300 East Columbia building and parking lot on October 28, 2013 after the MIMP was approved in March of 2013. This property was within the MIO long before 2013, and it is described in the MIMP (pages 107-108) as a potential development site. However, even as it anticipated the University's acquisition and significant development of the site, the MIMP did not establish any interim use of the existing structures or surface parking lot. After the property was purchased, the University continued using the building and parking.

At the fall 2018 meeting of the University's Standing Citizen's Advisory Committee, Committee member Bill Zosel asked whether the University's current use of the property is allowed under the MIMP. Upon review, the University realized that although the property was within the MIO and then owned by the University, no major institution use had been established at the site. This letter is the first step in doing so. Seattle University respectfully requests that SDCI process and approve the amendment as minor.

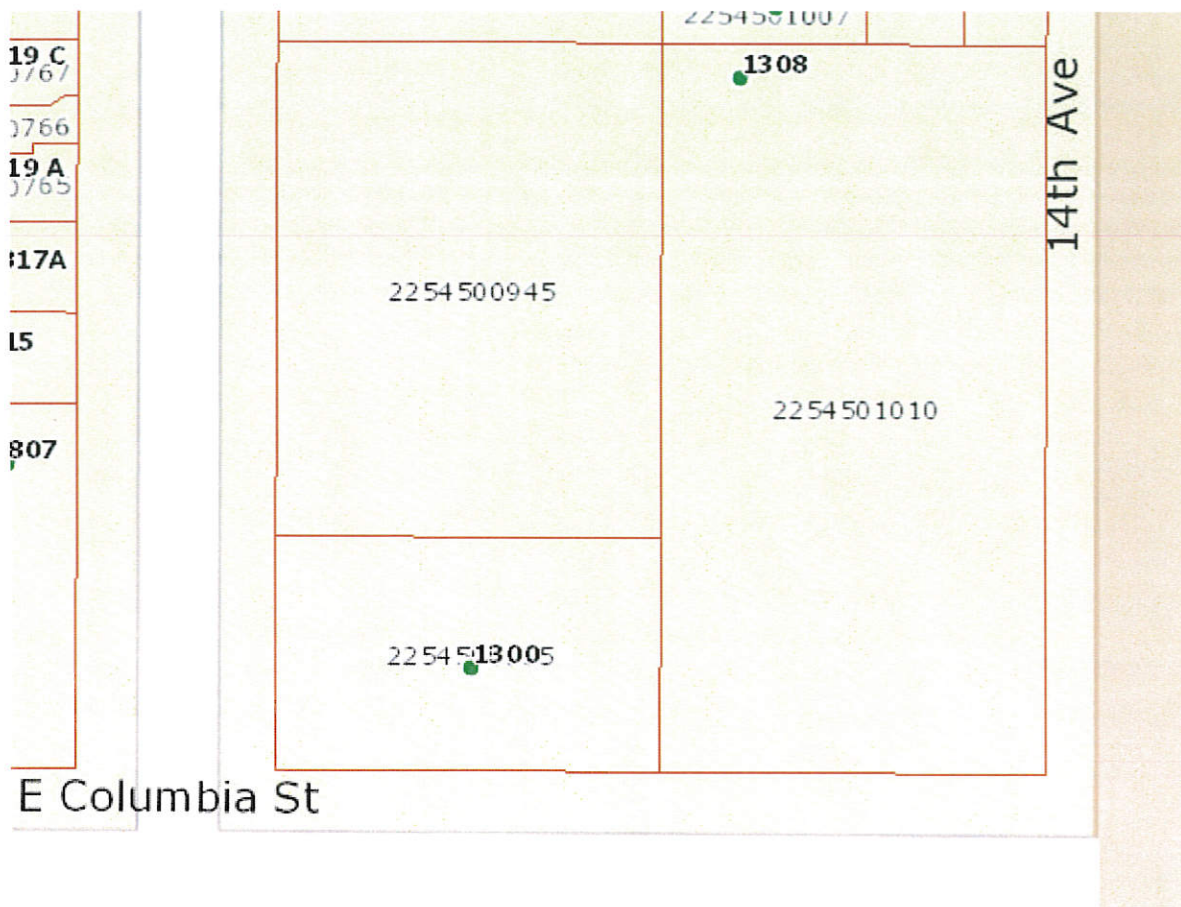
### **Description of 1300 East Columbia Property**

This property consists of three parcels including a building formerly used for hospital laundry and accessory parking to support the building use. The building is located on parcel # 225450-0935 at 1300 E Columbia and parcel # 225450-0945 at 800 13<sup>th</sup> Ave E. The parking lot is located on parcel # 225450-1010 at 1308 E Columbia. This entire site is referred to as 1300 E Columbia in the University's MIMP.

**Facilities Services**

901 12<sup>th</sup> Avenue Seattle, WA 98122- 1090, (206) 296-6999, [www.seattleu.edu](http://www.seattleu.edu)

The property is zoned MIO 65-LR2,<sup>1</sup> and the prior use was as a commercial laundry, which appears to meet the definition of “commercial, heavy.” The building contains office space as well as the laundry, and approximately 65 stalls of accessory parking. Since the University acquired the property, it has used the office space as such, and used other portions of the building as storage. The University has also parked fleet vehicles in the surface parking lot, and has leased some of the parking to the neighboring Seattle Academy of Arts and Sciences during the development of SAAS’s new academic buildings. The University hopes to use the structures and the parking lot in the same way for the foreseeable future—possibly using the parking lot for construction staging for University projects such as the new science building on 12<sup>th</sup> Avenue, and the office space for University contractors.

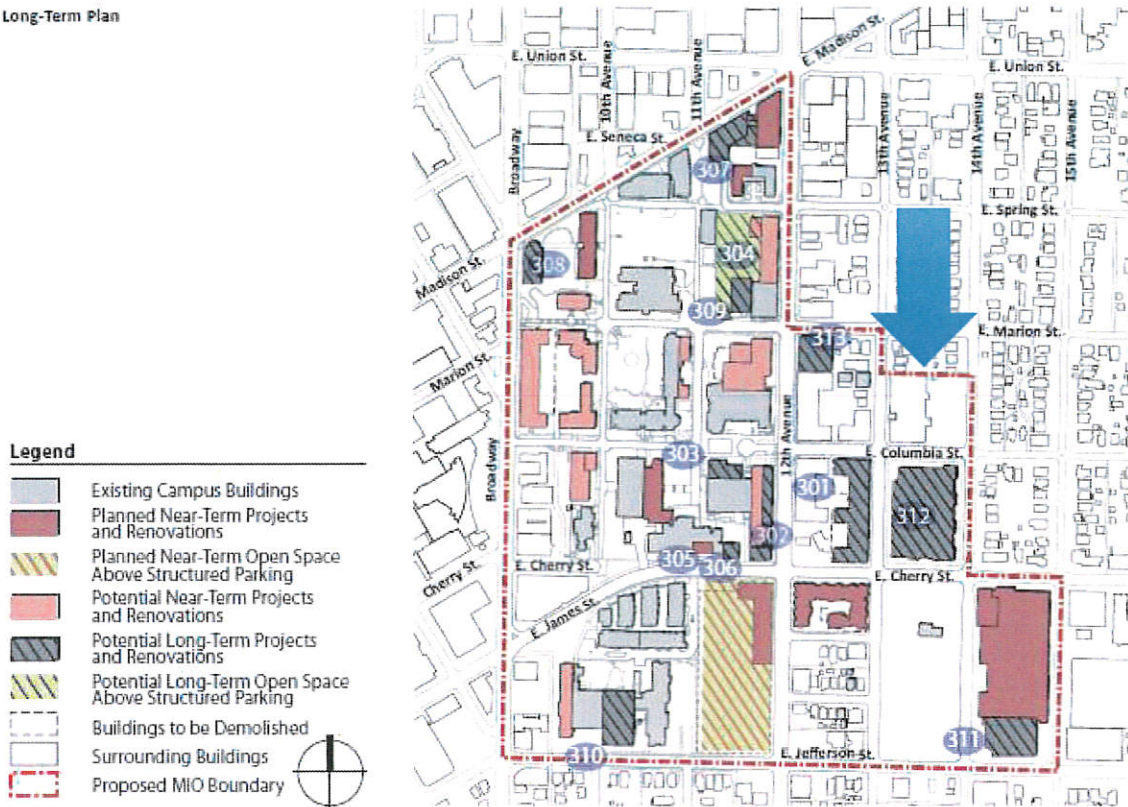


<sup>1</sup> The MIMP contains conditions that establish a building envelop that functionally limits the height of any new institutional structures at 1300 East Columbia well below 65’.

### How the MIMP Categorizes 1300 East Columbia Site Development

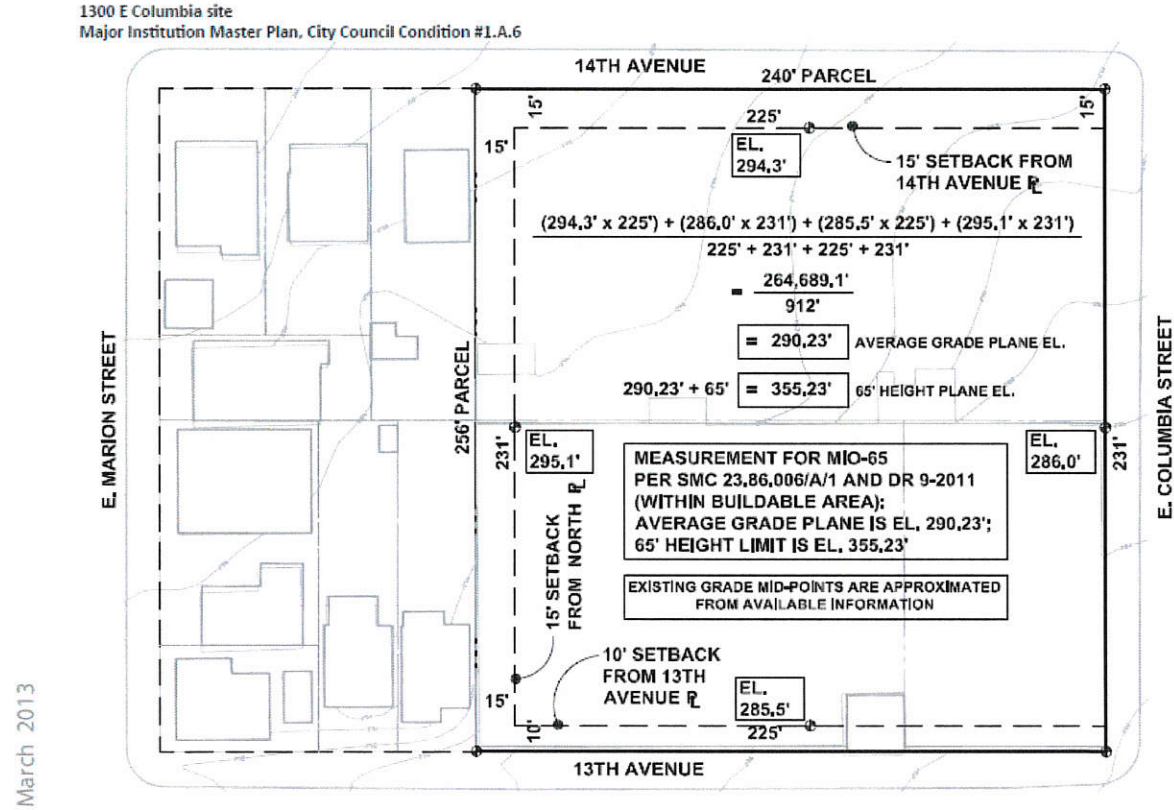
The MIMP does not assign any uses to 1300 East Columbia because the University did not own or control it at the time the MIMP was adopted. The Development Program section of the MIMP includes the 1300 E Columbia property in the MIO (page 47) and the Development Standards section designates it as a potential future building development site (pages 107 and 108).

Long-Term Plan



March 2013

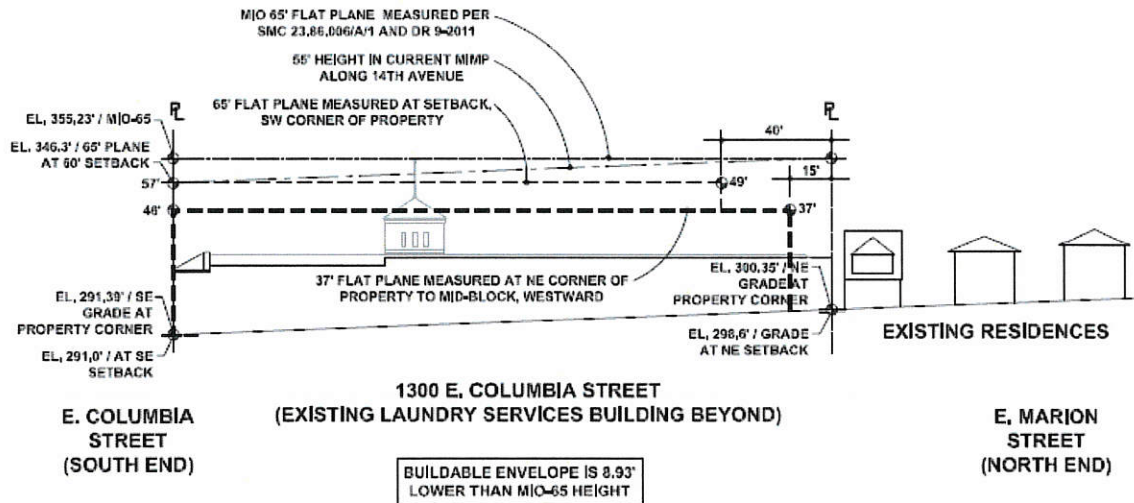
DEVELOPMENT STANDARDS



1300 E Columbia site (Project #101, page 43)  
 Major Institution Master Plan, City Council Condition #1.A.5  
 Given the sensitive boundary edge and transitional nature of this site, any development that proposes to exceed the height limit established for the 1300 East Columbia Site shall require a major amendment in accordance with SMC 23.69.035

Major Institution Master Plan, City Council Condition #1.A.6  
 The height measurement on all portions of the site for the upper levels (above 37') would be taken from an average grade plane of 290.23 feet, resulting in a maximum height of 355.23 feet. This is 8.93 feet taller than the CAC approved height in October 2011, so the height limit for this site would be limited to 346.3 feet in elevation.

**HEIGHT AND SETBACKS ALONG 14TH AVENUE**



March 2013

**SMC 23.69.035 Requirements Regarding MIMP Changes**

If a MIMP change is required to accommodate a project or proposed use, the City considers and acts on the proposed amendment pursuant to SMC 23.69.035. Amendments are categorized as exempt, minor, or major.

An amendment is exempt from City approval if it is a change to the design or location of a planned structure or other improvement from that shown in the MIMP. Exempt changes include:

1. Any new structure or addition to an existing structure not approved in the MIMP that is 12,000 square feet of gross floor area or less; or
2. Twenty or fewer parking spaces not approved in the MIMP; or
3. An addition to a structure not yet constructed but approved in the MIMP that is no greater than 20% of the approved gross floor area of that structure or 20,000 square feet, whichever is less; or
4. Any change in the phasing of construction, if not tied to a MIMP condition imposed under approval by the Council; or
5. Any increase in gross floor area below grade.

SMC 23.69.035.B.

A minor amendment to the MIMP may be considered and approved if it is not an exempt change, it is consistent with the original intent of the adopted plan, and when it meets at least one of the following criteria:

1. The amendment will not result in significantly greater impacts than those contemplated in the adopted master plan; or
2. The amendment is a waiver from a development standard or master plan condition, or a change in the location or decrease in size of designated open space, and the proposal does not go beyond the minimum necessary to afford relief and will not be materially detrimental to the public welfare or injurious to the property or improvements in the vicinity in which the Major Institution is located; or
3. The amendment is a proposal by the Major Institution to lease space or otherwise locate a use at street level in a commercial zone outside an MIO District boundary.

SMC 23.69.035.D.

An amendment is considered major if it is not an exempt change or a minor amendment. In addition, any of the following shall be considered a major amendment:

1. An increase in a height designation or the expansion of a boundary of the MIO District; or
2. Any change to a development standard that is less restrictive; or
3. A reduction in housing stock outside of the MIO District boundary but within 2,500 feet; or
4. A change to the single-occupancy vehicle goal of an approved transportation management program; or
5. A use that requires Council Conditional Use approval; or
6. The update of an entire development program component of a MIMP.

SMC 23.69.035.E.

**Proposed 1300 East Columbia Use Requires No More Than a Minor Amendment**

Although it might make intuitive sense to conclude that siting an unanticipated low-impact institutional use in an existing structure should qualify as an exempt change, it does not fit neatly into any of the examples of exempt changes. Nevertheless, because the use is consistent with the intent of the adopted MIMP and will not produce significantly greater impacts than anticipated in the MIMP, it qualifies as a minor amendment under SMC 23.69.035.D.1.

The proposal is consistent with the intent of the adopted MIMP. The MIMP anticipated that Seattle University would acquire and develop 1300 East Columbia in major institution uses. It anticipated that the site would be redeveloped with a significantly larger footprint and building

floor area than currently exists. *See, e.g.*, MIMP at pages 107-08 (establishing heights and setbacks for the site); 127-28 (Council Amendment #1.A.12 requiring CAC review if footprint exceeds 45,000 sq. ft.). Although the MIMP did not expressly establish a use for the property between acquisition and redevelopment, some interim major institution use is implicit in the MIMP. It is unreasonable to conclude that Council intended for the University to acquire an existing and occupied structure, then keep it vacant for an indeterminate time before redeveloping it into a major institution use arguably more intense than the prior heavy commercial use.

Putting the existing improvements to major institution use does not produce greater impacts than those anticipated in the adopted MIMP, and certainly not “significantly greater impacts.” As discussed above, the MIMP anticipated development of a major structure at the site—possibly a five-story structure with a footprint exceeding 45,000 sq. ft. The construction impacts alone of such a project exceed the impacts that will result from the sort of uses the University proposes to site in the existing structure.

One of the fundamental objectives of the MIMP is to meet parking demands with on-campus parking facilities and to reduce the amount of college-related parking on neighborhood streets. The proposed use of the building and accessory parking lot reduces the amount of college-related parking on neighborhood streets to service the building, complete construction projects and meet other parking needs. As such, it is clearly consistent with the intent of the MIMP and satisfies the threshold requirement for a minor amendment under SMC 23.69.035.

The University’s use of the building and parking lot will not result in significantly greater impacts than those contemplated in the MIMP. The proposal to allow the University to continue to use the building and parking lot based upon the past and existing uses of the building for warehouse/office use and the lot for parking will not result in greater impacts than those contemplated in the adopted master plan.

### **The Change is Not a Major MIMP Amendment**

As described above, the change meets the criteria for approval as a minor MIMP amendment and thus cannot be considered major by definition. SMC 23.69.035.E (an amendment can only be major if it does not satisfy the requirements for a minor amendment). The change does not meet any of the six enumerated criteria for major amendments. SMC 23.69.035.E.1-6.

### **Standing Advisory Committee Comments**

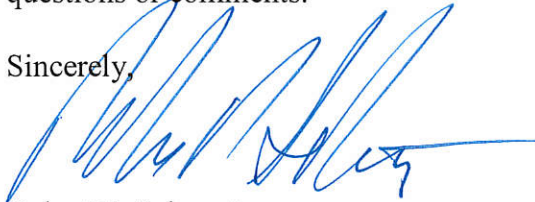
According to SMC 23.69.035 the Advisory Committee shall be given the opportunity to review a proposed minor or major amendment and submit comments on whether it should be considered minor or major, and what conditions (if any) should be imposed if it is minor. Seattle University will present the proposal to establish an institutional use for the 1300 E Columbia property for the existing uses as warehouse/office space and parking to the Standing Advisory Committee on February 5, 2019 for their comments and recommendation.

## Conclusion

Seattle University requests that the change to establish institutional use for the 1300 E Columbia property for warehouse/office space and parking be processed and approved as a minor amendment to the MIMP.

Thank you for your consideration of this request. Please feel free to contact me with any questions or comments.

Sincerely,



Robert P. Schwartz  
Associate Vice President for Facilities

cc: Lara Branigan, Mary Petersen, Colleen Pike, Jordan Talge, Seattle University  
Steve Gillespie, Foster Pepper PLLC