

Date: September 21, 2023

Sean Conrad  
City of Seattle Department of Construction & Inspections  
Seattle Municipal Tower  
700 Fifth Avenue  
PO Box 34019  
Seattle, WA 98124-4019

Re: Harborview Implementation Advisory Committee (IAC) Recommendations on Major Amendment Proposal

Dear Sean,

The Harborview Implementation Advisory Committee (IAC) has reviewed the proposed amendments to the Harborview Medical Center Major Institution Master Plan (MIMP) and recommends that SDCI review and approve the proposed changes as a major amendment.

**Overall project background:**

In November 2020, King County voters approved issuing up to \$1.74B in phased general obligation bond funding over 20 years at the Harborview Medical Center campus for health and safety purposes. This measure listed facility improvements, including the construction of a new tower on campus that increases single-patient bed capacity and expansion of the emergency department, which are highly constrained in the current environment.

The Harborview Implementation Advisory Committee has met on 10 occasions to discuss the planned major amendment to the Major Institution Master Plan to support the continued development of the voter-approved improvements at the Harborview campus in First Hill. A MIMP describes the zoning rules that will apply to an institution and identifies long-range planning for developing the major institution's property.

The proposed major amendments to the Harborview MIMP are as follows:

***Major Amendment Proposal #1: Expansion of Major Institution Boundary***

The existing MIO (major institution overlay) boundary totals 594,480 sq. ft. Harborview proposes expanding the MIO boundary by approximately 60,000 sq. ft. to accommodate a proposed two-way access road around the perimeter of the new hospital tower. The proposed road will be for emergency vehicles, sidewalks, and two-way traffic around the campus.

***Committee Recommendation: Approve.*** The committee fully supports the expansion of the MIO boundary to the southwest up to the I-5 corridor. The committee would like to encourage Harborview to continue to study the suitability of extending the planned access road to James St. for emergency vehicle access only. In the committee's view, such an extension would provide multiple entry points to the ER tower for emergency traffic, ease congestion around the hospital, and reduce noise pollution from sirens within the First Hill neighborhood.

***Major Amendment Proposal #2: New Floor Area Ratio (FAR)***

The existing MIO limits Harborview's total FAR to 3.6. Harborview proposes increasing the allowed FAR to 6.0. Doing so enables construction of voter-approved facilities, such as the New Tower, the renovation of

Harborview Hall, a building at the existing Walter Scott Brown building site, and a new building at the existing East Clinic site. The increase in FAR would align Harborview with other major hospital institutions in the area.

**Committee Recommendation: Approve without reservations.** Increasing the Floor Area Ratio (FAR) to 6.0 positions Harborview Medical Center to serve the future needs of the community.

### **Major Amendment Proposal #3: Height, Bulk, and Scale**

Harborview Medical Center proposes increasing the height designation of the Major Institutions Overlay (MIO) west of 8<sup>th</sup> Avenue from 240 ft. to 300 ft. Accordingly, the IAC reviewed the height, bulk, and scale of proposed Harborview development projects, including the proposed massing of the new tower and future projects at the East Clinic and Walter Scott building sites. In all cases, the committee found the proposed building height, bulk, and scale of proposed buildings consistent with existing buildings and the current built environment of the surrounding neighborhood.

**Committee Recommendation: Approve without reservations.** Harborview Medical Center is consistently over capacity within the existing campus. Moreover, they operate in a constrained urban space within a dense city neighborhood. Accordingly, the Committee believes that there is a compelling need to increase the maximum building height above the current 240 ft. MIO as requested. Increasing the height allowance in the proposed location accommodates the need for more hospital beds with the least impact on the wider community.

### **Major Amendment Proposal #4: Open Space**

Currently, the minimum percentage of the Harborview MIO district to remain in open space is 20%. This requirement is satisfied by landscaped open space on top of the existing west garage with a viewpoint and park and through building setbacks. Because the west garage is the planned site of the new tower, Harborview Medical Center proposes developing surplus surface parking east of Harborview Hall into a new community open space. In so doing, HMC proposes reducing current open space requirements on campus from 20% to 12%. During our meetings, no mention was made of reducing setback requirements, so the committee assumes that the proposed reduction comes entirely from the new proposed open space being smaller than the current open space to be developed.

During our meetings, Harborview capital development staff raised numerous perspectives that were acknowledged as having merit. A 12% open space proposal would bring the Harborview MIMP closer to alignment with other major institutions' less-stringent open space goals (Virginia Mason, 4%, Swedish First Hill, 9.5%). Additionally, there are opportunities with an eastside open space nexus to align with planned neighborhood open spaces, such as the Terry Avenue green street concept.

**Committee Recommendation: Approve with reservations.** The committee considers that the primary responsibility of Harborview Medical Center is to provide exemplary care to its patients. We are confident that the reduction of the current open space requirements is necessary for Harborview to continue to provide high-quality patient care. Harborview exists in a highly dense/constrained urban environment where open space is at a premium. However, the committee would be remiss if we did not mention that First Hill is underserved by parks and open space. Both the 2000 Pro Parks levy and the 2008 Parks and Open Space levy identified First Hill as a priority area for developing a neighborhood park—the community is still left waiting. This problem is not necessarily Harborview's to solve. Still, there is a collective action problem between the several First Hill major institutions, the city, and the Seattle Parks Department in providing needed facilities to the First Hill neighborhood. Harborview's planned reduction of open space is necessary but not without serious trade-offs, including a valued neighborhood amenity in View Park. The committee encourages Harborview Medical Center to comply with all provisions of the Terry Avenue Public Realm Action Plan (PRAP) as they plan their campus.

**Major Amendment Proposal #5: Traffic Impacts & Traffic Mitigation**

Harborview commits to the continued development of a Transportation Management Plan (TMP) to minimize neighborhood impact by staff, patient, and visitors' vehicles. As part of an EIS for the construction of the new tower, studies will be conducted on traffic, parking, and congestion, along with ways to mitigate these impacts both during and after construction.

**Committee Recommendation: Provisionally Approve**, with the understanding that a full traffic study will be conducted during the EIS process, which will include opportunities for public comment. The IAC encourages Harborview to continue to defray single-occupancy vehicle trips to the campus through shuttle services, subsidized transit passes, and encouraging rideshare, with the understanding that many work shifts occur during off-peak hours. Single-occupancy vehicle parking impacts are keenly felt by the Yesler Terrace community.

In closing, the IAC recommends approving the proposed amendments to the Harborview MIMP. The vote to adopt this position was: 8 in favor, 1 opposed, and 0 abstaining.

Harborview IAC Members include:

- Jackson Taylor - Approve
- Kenda Salisbury - Approve
- Nancy Hong - Approve
- Cathy Jaramillo - Approve
- Sandy Miller - Approve
- Dani Nouné - Approve
- Kristin O'Donnell - Approve
- Frederick Scheetz - Oppose
- Carlos Estrada - Approve

Sincerely,



Jackson Taylor, Chairperson  
Harborview Implementation Advisory Committee