



# CITY OF MEDINA

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**Date:** December 9, 2024  
**To:** Honorable Mayor and City Council  
**Via:** Stephen R. Burns, City Manager  
**From:** Steven R. Wilcox, Development Services Department Director  
**Subject:** Development Services Department Monthly Report

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## **Permit Activity and Development Services Fund**

The “November 2024 Issued Permits” report continues to tell us a consistent story of 2024 development activity. I wish I could say that the \$62,856,983.99 in total 2024 YTD permit valuation indicated a busy year, but it is skewed as I mentioned previously. A busy late 2023 pushed work and associated valuations into early 2024. Reality is that our permitting is slow and has been through most of 2024. After the 2023 work was issued as permits in 2024, our “Total Value” numbers dropped considerably. An adjusted permit valuation for 2024 is probably closer to \$30,000,000 which is below average.

At this point I feel unable to provide accurate forecasting of future permitting. Our local development activity has changed. Traditionally and prior to Covid, there was a pattern of development activity that was fairly standard for any particular year. The timing was predictable and volume tended to generally follow the prior year.

Tracking Permit Valuation (Total Value) is one marker to assess department volume. Revenue and expenses are of course the accurate tools for budgeting.

## **Development Services Staffing**

Last month I mentioned in this report that our Development Services Coordinator, Rebecca Bennett will be on maternity leave for about 4-months next year. Rebecca’s baby is due in early February. Rebecca has been working on a comprehensive step-by-step guide to the fundamentals of her position. This guide will be used by a temporary staff member and other in Development Services to solve daily questions while Rebecca is out. The guide is currently about 150 pages.

I have had meetings with a temporary employment agency which we have used successfully in the past. This agency will solicit potential temporary staff for us in early January 2025 for interviews. I hope to overlap Rebecca and her temporary replacement for about one or two weeks. Nothing in this timing can be exact.

Our Development Services Coordinator is central to all of our work. Maintaining the work of this position is important and could be difficult to do through early 2025.

## **Planning Manager Report**

Jonathan G. Kesler, AICP, Planning Manager

### Comprehensive Plan:

The Comp Plan Update was approved by the City Council at the November 12, 2024, meeting. The Council voiced support for doing Comp Plan Amendments in 2025, per the provisions provided under state law, to address any changes that may need to be made to it. The finalized Comp Plan was formally submitted to the State Department of Commerce on November 22, 2024.

### Middle Housing:

SCJ Alliance (SCJ) has begun work in earnest on the Middle Housing Update to the Medina Municipal Code (MMC). SCJ's proposed scope of work is outlined per Medina's Middle Housing Public Engagement and Communication Plan and the Dept. of Commerce grant schedule, tasks, and deliverables. After input from the DSC & the Planning Commission, SCJ will present their public engagement plan in-depth with the PC at the December 5<sup>th</sup> Special Meeting. Council will receive an update at their December 9<sup>th</sup> meeting. A Community Forum has already been scheduled for Thursday, January 9, 2025, at St. Thomas Episcopal Church.

### Planning Commission (PC) Work Plan:

Following the November 25<sup>th</sup> Council meeting suggested changes were incorporated into the PC Work Plan for re-review at the PC Special Meeting on December 5<sup>th</sup>. It will then go before Council on December 9<sup>th</sup> for final approval. The PC Work Plan outlines tasks for the PC to work on in 2025.

## **Fence Permit Application**

We received an application for a fence at Overlake Golf and Country Club. At this moment, a complete permit application review has not been performed. Determination of complete application is the first step. Once the application is deemed complete then the permit process will begin.

The application is for a Non-Administrative Variance with the description: "A variance to improve the safety of the OGCC Driving Range - 50' Fence"

I am mentioning this application because residents near to OGCC have asked me about this fence. OGCC seemed to do a good job of communicating with their neighbors about a desire to install the fence which was prior to our receiving the variance application.

## **Telecommunications Permit Applications**

I mentioned in this report last month that we received three initial planning project permit applications for the reconstruction of the existing T-Mobile pole/antenna site on Bellevue School District property. The three applications are for SEPA, Non-Administrative Special Use, and a Height Variance. There is an existing tower and equipment building within a fenced area adjacent to Evergreen Point Road near the Park N' Ride which is proposed for alteration. The address on the application is 7800 NE 28th St.

Since my last report to you I have met with T-Mobile representatives. We discussed a technical comment letter drafted by our staff and some aspects of the mono-pine (imitation tree) pole/antenna concealment proposal. Our code allows for these types of concealment proposals. I asked for specific locations in identified jurisdictions where the mono-pine concealment have been used. I would like to know exactly what is being proposed for 7800 NE 28<sup>th</sup> and what other jurisdictions think about having similar mono-pines installed. I also asked for photo simulations of other concealment concepts, or at least what the unconcealed pole/antenna would look like. I was told by T-Mobile that the unconcealed pole would have a can type antenna surround of 80" in diameter. The mono-pine proposal is one option and so far the only option provided by T-Mobile. I have asked repeatedly for the mono-pine information, been promised photos and information, but to date have not received anything beyond what Council was presented last Spring.

A staff report for the Hearing Examiner must be drafted for this project. Support for the existing facility and for the enhanced service is something that will be clarified within the staff report. The question still remains as to what the pole/antenna should look like. The mono-pine concealment is a proposal, not a requirement for Medina to accept. The Hearing Examiner makes the decision, but guidance from staff on the concealment matter is needed.

Understandably, T-Mobile has not accepted my proposal for a public forum and open house to present the concealment options. I understand the concerns. However, without resident input the mono-pine or other concealment option as described for the Hearing Examiner will be left solely to staff discretion. A mono-pine may be the best option for the 7800 NE 28<sup>th</sup> St. location, but unfortunately we will not have the level of resident input I had hoped for. Again, I do understand T-Mobile's legitimate concerns about additional noticing for this project beyond what is required.

Currently we have three planning project permit applications for the T-Mobile 7800 NE 28<sup>th</sup> St. site:

- Non-Administrative Special Use
- Non-Administrative Variance
- SEPA Threshold

Medina residents will receive notice about the T-Mobile project and may participate through comments and in the hearing. Once the three planning projects have been approved a building permit application is needed.

### **Tree Permits**

Council had asked me to improve the monthly tree permit report. I met with our Arborist and staff about this. We updated the existing Medina Development Services webpage reports tab for tree permits. The report contained some errors that were corrected. See the Medina website – Permits and Applications – Development Services – Reports – Active Tree Reports.

The Active Tree Permit list is extensive. Often small building permits, and tree activity permits are not closed through final inspection. This is common in all jurisdictions. Applicants with tree activity permits involving a single tree or other small project often do not call us when the permitted work is completed. We do have a reminder system which helps, but it is the responsibility of the applicant to tell us when the work is completed and schedule a final code/permit compliance inspection with us. Closing larger projects is not an issue and we do watch more controversial projects closely.

I asked our Arborist Andy Crossett to work with Rebecca Bennett towards reducing the number of permits on the Active Tree Permit list. This likely will not happen until Rebecca returns from her leave.

Additionally, the tree activity report you receive with this staff report will be enhanced as was requested. We will include tree activity permits and associated site plans with the monthly report. We will provide the development project permit information, but not all of the non-development information unless there is something to note. This month there was nothing to add.

As Council mentioned to me last month, having an on-site notice for tree removal would be beneficial. I had worked with our previous attorney on the tree removal site notice topic, but nothing resulted. I will speak with our new attorney about the possibility of requiring a site notice and possibly a waiting period for all non-hazard tree removal permits. Of course, a code amendment will be needed which will include Planning Commission review.

### **Second Substitute Senate Bill 5290**

On the Council Consent agenda is SSSB 5290 is a Washington State mandate which will have administrative impacts on Development Services Department permitting operations. SSSB 5290 will take effect on January 1, 2025.

Please see the Agenda Bill and proposed Ordinance 1039.

On November 6, 2024 the Medina Planning Commission reviewed and unanimously approved the proposed amendments to MMC 16.80.

Through Consent, please approve the necessary amendments to Medina Municipal Code Chapter 16.80 which are necessary to enact SSSB 5290.

### **Mechanical Appliance Sound Testing**

The Development Services Department has required that newly installed outdoor mechanical appliances such as air conditioners and similar be tested for compliance with our noise ordinance. This process has been in effect for many years. We will now be eliminating the sound testing requirement as a part of mechanical permitting.

Sound testing is an administrative process which is not identified in ordinance or resolution. However, there is a fee for sound testing which is in Resolution 400.

Mechanical appliances have greatly improved in efficiency over the past years with resulting lowered noise output. Regular compliance sound testing is no longer needed.

Eliminating required sound testing will lower permit costs which will benefit small projects by Medina residents in particular. Administrative work by Medina staff will also be reduced. If there are any complaints received by Development Services regarding noise from mechanical appliances we will approach this similar to other code enforcement actions.