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Date: January 12, 2026

To: Honorable Mayor and City Council
Via: Jeff Swanson, City Manager
From: Steven R. Wilcox, Development Services Department Director
Subject: Development Services Department Monthly Report

Permitting

Attached are the permit received and issued reports for December 2025 which also provides a summary of the entire year.

The 2025-year end Permits Issued report compares permit and inspection quantities, and permit valuation.

2024 total permits issued: 539

2025 total permits issued: 454

2024 Building Inspections: 1,514

2025 Building Inspections: 1,312

2024 permit valuation total: \$69,349,549.84

2025 permit valuation total: \$28,791,009.18

Permit valuation is only an indication of activity. Financial data will provide actual accounting.

Permit Trends

A chart of permit valuation generally tracks activity levels from 2006 through 2025 and is provided for your review. Again, this is not financial data but is an interesting graphic indication of Medina development activity trends.

Development Services 2025 Highlights

While permitting remained slow, 2025 was a busy and productive year in other ways.

Middle Housing

A new approach to "Middle Housing" as mandated by Washington State was a focus for the first part of 2025. Our staff and consultants did a good job of getting interest in two community forums where residents were able to listen, ask questions, and interact with various staff members. A survey was carried out and there were a total of 203 responses, which is very good in comparison. The Planning Commission worked through the project and presented a recommendation to Council that was eventually approved following state reviews.

Critical Areas Ordinance Update

The second half of 2025 was focused on the state mandated Critical Areas Ordinance Update. The Facet company is a topic specialist and was selected to lead us through the CAO Update. We gave Facet, our Planning

Commission and our City Attorney a difficult task because the start of the project was late. Two open houses/forums were conducted, and the Planning Commission dedicated 4 meetings to the topic of CAO Update. Resident comments were received and carefully considered for inclusion with the required balance of meeting state minimum mandates for approval. Not everyone got what they had hoped for, and overall, the result of the CAO Update was not popular, but that might be saying that the process worked as best as it could.

Professional Resource Changes

It is difficult for a small city to experience change in our staff or consultants. In 2025 we had changes in two of our professional teams and also had another key staff member on leave for about 3 months.

As of last June, we have a new planning consultant under contract and now most of our zoning review and processing work goes to a very highly qualified and respected consultant. Changes and absences like we had in 2025 can be difficult, and planning is possibly the most complex of the professions we have in the Development Services Department. The transition from our previous personnel resources has resulted in a few expected differences in how we operate and apply our code. Unfortunately, those development projects that crossed between the previous team and our new operations team have at times been adversely affected. We have been working to ensure that the projects caught in the transition encounter the least number of associated problems possible by working closely with them. Medina has traditionally had stability, consistency and excellence in current and long-range planning and I am confident that we are back there again.

The success to highlight under my title Professional Resource Changes is that our Medina staff successfully pulled together and covered positions and consultant work when it was needed. There were no questions or complaints from staff. Staff in Development Services and Central Services simply pitched in and got things done.

Permits of Interest

American Tower Corporation Right Way Telecommunication Upgrades. ATC had applied to upgrade 10 existing poles. ATC had originally applied to have electric meters on new posts in the right of way as part of their proposal, but these are no longer a part of the project. One of the poles requires a height variance and will be permitted later. The other 9 existing poles have been reviewed and a comment letter for code compliance changes was sent to the applicant. We are waiting for re-submittal.

T-Mobile at 2800 Evergreen Point Road. This is an existing facility which went to the hearing examiner and was conditionally approved. An original request to conceal a new pole and antenna as a faux tree ("monopine") was rejected by the Hearing Examiner. The permit reviews are completed except that the Tree permit application is still pending corrections. Once the tree permit is approved the permits can be issued.

Critical Areas Ordinance Update Status

Following the Council's approval to do so on December 8, 2025, the draft Critical Areas Ordinance was sent to the Department of Commerce for various agency reviews. SEPA review was also started after the Council approval to do so.

We have received early comments on SEPA from the Department of Commerce. We have also received an early comment from the Department of Natural Resources on the CAO Update.

I expect all state agency comments to be received by February and that the CAO Update can then return to the Council for consideration.

Tree Inventory

Following the Council's budget approval, the second part of the Medina tree inventory has now started. Our Arborist Andy Crossett is leading the inventory of right-of-way trees. This ROW inventory will be completed in the first half of 2026. In 2025, trees in parks and other open spaces were inventoried.

With the completion of the 2026 inventory, Medina will have information necessary to make decisions regarding tree management if it is chosen to do so.

If the Council chooses to consider new approach to our current Tree Management Code, the inventory will be an important set of data to have.

Tree Removal Permit Application

A development project at the 7800 block of NE 10th recently applied to remove 3 trees immediately in front of their property within the public right of way. An initial review of the tree removal permit application indicated that the trees were in poor condition and inappropriate for the location. Removal of the 3 existing Thunderbird Plums and replacement with similar trees initially seemed appropriate based on the application. Thought by staff was that if the trees must be removed that similar, more appropriate trees could be replanted. It was found that at least one neighbor on NE 10th St. preferred that the trees remain. It was also found that there is another alternate and appropriate approach to this.

As he always does, our Arborist Andy Crossett brought the right of way tree removal permit application to me for discussion. Andy and I always consider how to retain right of way trees considering code criteria which may allow their removal. Tree preservation and protection is outlined within various sections of our Comprehensive Plan. Application of Medina's Tree Management Code involves a consideration of our Comprehensive Plan and application of our city ordinance with an understanding of intent and purpose.

The 3 Thunderbird Plums will not be removed at this time. The Plums are in poor condition, and they are also not the most appropriate species for the location. The Plums have not been pruned properly in a very long time. The removal permit application is being denied and the adjacent property owner is being given instruction on how to properly prune the trees under our City Arborist's oversight. There is a chance that even with careful ANSI pruning by a qualified arborist that the Plums will not survive more than another 3-5 more years. If the Plums had been regularly maintained they would now likely be at their mid-point of a 60-70 year life span.

It is situations such as this where our Comprehensive Plan, supported by a more clearly defined Council policy driven Municipal Tree Code, would allow for staff decisions based on better text clarity and a plan for the future of the health of all city trees.

Office of Financial Management

Development Services is about to complete the annual Washington State Office of Financial Management population estimate using a form provided. The estimate form is a standardized method that Medina has traditionally used. The alternate method to determine population is a door-to-door census.

I have asked our staff to investigate through records if, and when Medina has previously conducted a door-to-door census. I will inform the Council when I have an answer.

Attachments:

December 2025 Code Enforcement Report
December 2025 Permits Received Report
December 2025 Permit Issued Report
December 2025 Tree Permit Activity Report
Building Permit Valuation 2006 – 2025 Chart