

Medina Comprehensive Plan Proposed 2024 Updates

Section 8 - UTILITIES ELEMENT

INTRODUCTION

The Growth Management Act (GMA) requires the Utilities Element of the comprehensive plan to consist of “the general location, proposed location, and capacity of all existing and proposed utilities, including, but not limited to, power lines, telecommunication lines, and natural gas lines.”

EXISTING CONDITIONS

Medina receives utility service from several providers. Electrical and natural gas services are both supplied by Puget Sound Energy, Inc (PSE). PSE maintains two substations in Medina: one adjacent to Wells-Medina Nursery on 84th Avenue NE and the other at the corner of NE 10th Street and 80th Avenue NE adjacent to Medina Park. In the face of emerging technology, growing trends in professionals working from home, increasing installation of residential electric vehicle (EV) charging stations, anticipated increases in land use density, and siting of larger homes on lots previously developed with smaller homes, the electrical utility service needs in Medina are evolving. While PSE’s substations in Medina offer sufficient electrical capacity, nearby availability to connect to service provider lines is not always available in certain parts of the City.

Numerous companies provide cell phone, land-line telephone and internet service to Medina. Small wireless facilities, as regulated by Section 16.38 of the Medina Municipal Code, provide cell coverage throughout the City. Comcast/Infinity provides traditional cable TV service, in addition to high-speed internet connections to local residential customers. Fiber optic cable is not available in Medina to residential users.

Solid waste and recycling for Medina is handled under a Washington Utilities and Transportation Commission agreement with Republic Services. There are currently no household hazardous waste transfer stations in the City, though Medina is proportionately funding Bellevue's recycling activities to allow its residents the opportunity to utilize hazardous waste programs there.

All of the above services are provided to Medina customers on an individual basis, and it is the providers' responsibility to maintain equipment and handle service problems and inquiries. With the exception of the two PSE electrical substations, two cell phone towers and numerous small-cell antenna systems, there are no other major facilities operated by these providers within the City limits.

UTILITIES PLAN

Given the recent trends in emerging technologies, opportunities to work from home, and the potential for land to be used more densely in the next ten years, the utility demand, particularly for electrical power, is likely to grow. The trend of replacing small homes with larger homes or developing multiple dwelling units on residential lots, and new technologies like residential EV charging stations and remote work opportunities, will spur this increased demand. Upgrades to the existing system, and exploration of providing additional utilities (such as fiber optic cable) will be necessary to maintain and/or improve efficiency, reliability and/or capacity. Additional gas, internet, telephone and electrical hook-ups will be made on an individual, as needed basis. Providers will need to review their plans and may need to locate major/minor new facilities in the City, based on their future projections.

The City actively encourages future undergrounding of remaining above ground service utility lines, as well as distribution lines, where feasible. The financial constraints of the prohibitive costs of any additional undergrounding of utilities are recognized by the City. Alternative sources of electrical power, such as solar, will be encouraged, while protecting Medina's tree canopy as well.

Household waste reduction and recycling of waste materials will continue to be encouraged. In addition, the City will continue to work with Bellevue to provide special and hazardous waste programs.

GOALS

UT-G1 To maintain and upgrade utility services sufficient to serve the City's projected housing-size growth and other needs, and to provide utility access to all communities, especially underserved ones, over the next ten years.

UT-G2 To minimize the negative aesthetic and environmental impacts caused by utility services by undergrounding service and distribution type power lines, along with any other applicable remediation, where feasible, and to consider climate change, economic, social, and health impacts when locating utility services.

POLICIES

UT-P1 The City should coordinate with applicable electric, gas, landline telephone, cell telephone, internet service, and fiber optic cable providers, and with counties, cities, tribes, and special purpose districts to seek repairs and upgrades to existing utility facilities as necessary to maintain and/or improve efficiency, reliability, and/or capacity. Coordination should support the Regional Growth Strategy, including addressing long-term needs, supply, and the use of conservation and demand management.

UT-P2 Seek to provide leadership and support development of a plan to underground remaining above-ground service and distribution power lines.

UT-P3 Continue to encourage household waste reduction and recycling of waste materials and maintain a working relationship with Bellevue to jointly fund the current special and hazardous waste programs.

UT-P4 Consider the potential impacts of climate change on public facilities and consider supporting the necessary investments to move to low-carbon energy sources.