



MEDINA, WASHINGTON

Planning Commission

Tuesday August 25, 2026

Subject: Development Impacts Project, Phase 1

Planning Commission Action: Discussion and Approval of Recommendation

Staff Contact: Kim Gunderson, Medina Planning Consultant

Summary

The City of Medina intends to permanently enact regulatory reform that will trend development away from recent development tendencies and address the impacts of these tendencies on the sense of community enjoyed in Medina. This effort is known as the Development Impacts Project. This project has been commonly referred to as “bulk impacts” over the last 20 years and the issue has been a regular matter of focus for regulatory reform in Medina. The goal of the Development Impacts Project is to develop permanent amendments to Medina’s zoning context in a way that resolves development-related impacts and implements the land use goals of the Medina Comprehensive Plan:

H-P1: “Ensure new development is consistent with citywide goals and policies, including but not limited to sustainable site standards, landscaping and tree retention requirements, and diversity of housing options all while maintaining a quiet, safe, and livable city.”

LU-G1: “To maintain Medina’s high-quality residential setting and character, while considering create housing solutions to accommodate community members of all socioeconomic groups.”

LU-G3: “To maintain active community involvement and equitable engagement in land use policy and regulation.”

Problem Statement

The City has observed an increasing trend in the development of massive single-family homes which tend to overwhelm the size of adjacent homes and injure the privacy and property enjoyment of neighboring residents. Medina frequently reviews proposals for the demolition of modest homes and their replacement with boxy, wide, tall homes accompanied by considerable glazing that is often oriented toward neighboring living spaces.

Thematic Public Feedback

Medina recognizes that the character of high-quality living is not hallmarked only by luxurious homes, but by privacy in indoor living space and comfort in outdoor recreational space, too. Bucking trends in many other western Washington communities to decrease minimum lot sizes and increase bulk consumption of property, Medina has represented the value conveyed by its residents in the quiet comfort of their sylvan waterfront environment. In recent years, these residents have expressed a loss of their comforts by the growing trend of massive neighboring residential development. The trend of proximal, boxy homes has caused obtrusive light and noise, loss of privacy and property enjoyment, and an unease among some residents in the geotechnical stability of Medina’s steep slopes to withstand the charge of such large structures.

Interim Official Controls

In an effort to address these concerns, the City enacted emergency legislative action on February 23, 2026 limiting the proximity of development within adjoining side yards by increasing side yard setbacks on all properties (Ordinance 1052). In the same legislative action, the City created requirements for recessed upper stories and removed its allowance for height bonuses, which previously could allow the construction of a home up to 36-feet in height. At its July 27, 2026 regular meeting, City Council passed a second piece of emergency legislation (Ordinance 1059) which slightly modified and extends Ordinance 1052. Modifications in Ordinance 1059 include removing the recessed upper story requirement created by Ordinance 1052, clarifying vacant home lighting provisions, and increasing the minimum lot width and street frontage in the R-16 and R-20 zones from 70-feet to 90-feet.

In response to the passing of Ordinance 1052, property owners interested in developing their properties shared that the ordinance's limitations have yielded a loss of property value and seemingly restricts denser development that is otherwise called for by the state.

The themes heard by the Medina community on this topic comprise "The Problem" and can be summarized as:

- Large, boxy, proximal development has **reduced privacy, reduced property enjoyment and value, and caused excessive noise and light.**
- Regulations applied under Ordinance 1052 has caused a **loss in property value** and works **averse to denser development** priorities of the state.

The focus of the Development Impacts Project will be to explore methods of amending the City's zoning landscape that considers each of these themes offered by the public and to create a balance between fostering the increased density with livability for all residents.

Council Direction

At its April 27, 2026 regular meeting, City Council gave the following direction:

"Direct the Planning Commission to study each presented zoning reform opportunity for its efficacy in satisfying the goals of the Development Impacts Project and prepare a recommendation for Council's adoption."

Additional discussion with Council divided the project into two (or potentially three) phases: Phase 1, which intends to expeditiously resolve The Problem; and Phase 2, which is a longer-term study of the broad zoning reform opportunities introduced by the Planner at Council's April 27, 2026 meeting. It is expected that this project will prioritize Phase 1 and will limit its focus initially to its resolution, initiating Phase 2 only upon the completion of Phase 1.

Phase 1

Kim Gunderson of Mahoney Planning, LLC is under contract with the City of Medina to provide on-call current and long-range planning support services and has been tasked with leading the Development Impacts Project. Kim has prepared and attached a PowerPoint slide deck that will be presented to Planning Commission at its August 25, 2026 public hearing on Phase 1 of the Project. The slide deck refamiliarizes Planning Commission with the project and presents staff's recommended Phase 1 code amendments and its ancillary support materials. Staff propose the adoption of permanent revised zoning code provisions in its resolution to Phase 1; this is in direct response to consistent outspoken feedback from Development Impacts Project stakeholders who have asked for reliability as the Project advances.

Public Noticing and Statutory Requirements

Phase 1 of the Development Impacts Project has been robustly noticed to those with outspoken interest in the Project. Phase 1 has also undergone each of its statutory obligations for the adoption of new city ordinances.

SEPA

The City of Medina is the SEPA Lead Agency for the Development Impacts Project. Medina's SEPA Responsible Official has reviewed a project SEPA Checklist and related materials, and issued a Determination of Nonsignificance (DNS) for Phase 1 of the Project. The DNS was noticed in all manners required of MMC 14.04.010 and comments on the threshold determination were invited from August 7 – August 21, 2026. The City received one comment from the Department of Ecology seeking to understand the scope of the project and whether it impacted the Medina Shoreline Master Program.

Notice of Intent to Adopt (Commerce)

The City is required to provide notice of its intent to adopt (NOI) new or revised development regulations to the Department of Commerce (Commerce) under RCW 36.70A.106. The NOI is transmitted to most state agencies by Commerce, and a typical 60-day review and comment letter is extended to state agencies. At the request of the City, Commerce can choose to approve a requested expedited review of only 14 days.

Kim provided NOI with a request for expedited review to Commerce on July 29, 2026. On August 14, 2026, the City received its approved request for expedited review. No agency comments were received by the City. This satisfies the City's NOI obligations.

Notice of Planning Commission Public Hearing

MMC 16.81.070 provides the City's requirements for noticing its public hearings on zoning code text amendments. MMC 16.81.070 requires that public hearings be published in a newspaper of general circulation and posted in the same manner as regular Planning Commission and City Council meetings.

It is well understood that an engaged body of the Medina citizenry and their representatives seek to remain involved in the Development Impacts Project. Known as the "Development Impacts Project stakeholders," these Medina community members have regularly attended public meetings, provided public comment, and/or participated in the June 17 Project Phase 1 Charrette. The City has observed and appreciated the involvement of the Project stakeholders and wishes to continue providing them with abundant engagement. In that interest, the City over-noticed its August 25, 2026 Planning Commission public hearing and mailed notice of the hearing to any member of the Medina community with a record of public participation in the Project since its inception in February 2026. Fifty (50) Project stakeholders received this notice. A list of these recipients is attached to this agenda bill.

Notice of public hearing was timely provided on August 3, 2026. No comments have been received by the City as of the preparation of this agenda bill.

The City also committed to providing individual written responses to any verbal or written comments received after its initial presentation of a draft Phase 1 Ordinance to Planning Commission on July 27, 2026. All comments and City responses are attached to this agenda bill.

Project Schedule

Should Planning Commission recommend approval of the Development Impacts Project, Phase 1 Ordinance at its August 25th public hearing, Phase 1 is expected to continue advancing forward on

the following schedule:

- August 31 – Development Services Committee meeting and presentation review
- September 14 – City Council study session
- September 28 – City Council public hearing
- October 12 – Request ordinance adoption from City Council

Attachment(s)

1. DRAFT Ordinance, MMC Amendments for Development Impacts Project Phase 1 (redline)
2. DRAFT Ordinance, MMC Amendments for Development Impacts Project Phase 1 (clean)
3. Interim Official Control, Ordinance 1059
4. Interim Official Control, Ordinance 1052
5. DRAFT Template Landscape Covenant
6. Privacy Landscape Screening List
7. Notices and Public Comments
 - a. SEPA Checklist, DNS, and Notice
 - b. Commerce NOI and Expedited Review Approval
 - c. Notice of Public Hearing and Additional Email Recipient List
 - d. Public Comments and City Responses

Proposed Planning Commission Motion:

I move to recommend approval of the Development Impacts Project, Phase 1 Ordinance and to direct staff to forward the Planning Commission's recommendation to the City Council.