



MEDINA, WASHINGTON

AGENDA BILL

Monday, April 27, 2026

<p>Subject/Topic: Development Impacts Discussion</p> <p>Dept. Origin: Development Services Department</p> <p>Category: City Business</p> <p>Prepared by: Kimberly Gunderson, Mahoney Planning LLC, Medina Planning Consultant</p> <p>Attachments: Development Impacts Slide Deck</p>	<p>Proposed Council Action/Motion:</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Information Only</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Receive and File</p> <p><input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Discuss</p> <p><input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Provide Direction</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Public Hearing</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Adopt/Approve</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Other:</p>
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Proposed Council Action

Accept staff's recommendation to 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.

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 commonly been 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:

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 yield injury to 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.

In an effort to address these concerns, the City enacted emergency legislative action limiting the proximity of development within adjoining side yards by increasing side yard setbacks on all properties. 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. In response to this action, property owners interested in developing their properties shared that these limitations have yielded a loss of property value and seemingly restrict denser development that is otherwise called for by the state.

The themes heard by the Medina community on this topic can be summarized as:

- Large, boxy, proximal development has **reduced privacy, reduced property enjoyment, and caused excessive noise and light.**
- Regulations requiring greater distance between homes has caused a **loss in property value** and works **averse to denser development** priorities of the state.

The focus of this 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.

Broad Opportunities for Zoning Reform

Staff recommend exploring three key opportunities to reform the zoning landscape in Medina that would address the goals of the Development Impacts Project:

1. Development regulation amendments (setbacks, height, lot coverage, design, landscaping, etc.)
2. Subdivision code amendments
3. Creating a height restriction zoning overlay (focused on the Lake Washington shoreline and gradient land in its uplands)

Planning Commission Process

With direction offered by Council, the City's Planning Consultant and Development Services team will study each Opportunity for Zoning Reform to fully understand its ability to address development-related impacts. Planning Commission is expected to considerably engage the public through the Development Impacts Project, including hosting at least one Open House and potentially inviting panels of impacted residents and architects to contemplate approaches to resolving the Problem Statement with Planning Commission. The City's Development Services Committee will also be engaged in the project to offer the joint reactions of Medina's representative Planning Commission and Council.

Ordinance 1052: Bulk Standards Interim Official Control

Staff do not recommend repealing or amending Ordinance 1052 until such time as the Planning Commission is able to accept the direction of Council and contemplate an effective permanent solution to the Problem Statement.

Council Priorities

This proposal furthers Council Priorities 2, 3, 4, and 5.

1. Financial Stability and Accountability
2. Quality Infrastructure
3. Efficient and Effective Government
4. Public Safety and Health
5. Neighborhood Character and Community Building

Budget/Fiscal Impact: None

Recommendation: Accept staff's recommendation to 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.

City Manager Approval: 

Proposed Council Motion: Accept staff's recommendation to 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.

Time Estimate: 45 minutes