

# 1. LAND USE ELEMENT

## INTRODUCTION

The Land Use element has been developed in accordance with the Growth Management Act (“GMA,” RCW 36.70A) to designate the proposed general distribution, location, and where appropriate, extent of land uses. The Land Use element includes population densities, building intensities, and estimates of future population growth.

This element has also been developed in accordance with King County countywide planning policies (CPP), which direct jurisdictions to focus growth in the cities within the designated Urban Growth Area.

Medina lies within the King County designated Urban Growth Area, but is not a designated Urban Center.

## EXISTING CONDITIONS

### Residential Uses

Medina is a developed community that consists almost exclusively of single-family homes on individual lots. At the time of the City's incorporation in 1955, it was the desire of the community to promote a development pattern that would maintain a single-family residential character. Since that time, Medina has developed and matured according to that vision. Medina historically promoted a development pattern of approximately two homes per acre, which originally corresponded to the maximum enrollment capacity of the then two elementary schools. The walking scale of the City's limited street grid, the often narrow streets (requiring sufficient area on a building site for off-street parking), the level of fire protection service, the limited internal public transportation system, and the density patterns adopted by Medina and its neighboring communities – all suggest that the existing density of Medina is generally accommodating for current residents.

In some parts of Medina, the development pattern that existed prior to the City's incorporation results in the lots being smaller than the Medina average lot size of 20,000 square feet. The Medina Heights area, for example, has been largely developed to an average lot size of 15,000 square feet; however, many of these lots are significantly smaller. In this area and others where such circumstances are present, the smallest lot size specified in the Medina Municipal Code may be appropriate. In other areas of the City, existing development patterns, topography, or proximity to Lake Washington justify lower development density; hence the largest average lot size has been instituted for these areas (see Figure 3).

Actual residential densities range from approximately five units per acre in the area between NE 24<sup>th</sup> Street and NE 28<sup>th</sup> Street to less than one unit per acre along sections of the Lake Washington shoreline. Average density based on the 2021 King County Urban Growth Capacity Report is 1.7 dwelling units per net acre.

### **Non-Residential Uses**

The non-residential uses that exist in Medina are dispersed throughout the City (see Figure 3). Below is an inventory of current land uses found in Medina (Table 1).

**Table 1. Land Use Inventory**

<b>Current Land Use Inventory</b>		
Land Use	Acres	Percent
Local Business	6.19	0.7%
Open Space	136.28	15.5%
Park	27.54	3.1%
Public Facility	1.66	0.2%
School / Institution	21.83	2.5%
Single Family Residential	564.71	64.3%
Transportation Right-of-Way	114.37	13.0%
Unopened Right-of-Way	3.73	0.4%
Utility	2.50	0.3%
Vacant	17.32	2.0%
<b>Total</b>	<b>878.81</b>	

Source: GIS Analysis, LDC, 2024

Most of the non-residential land uses that exist in Medina have been in place since before or around the time of the City's incorporation and have become an accepted and integral part of the community. These non-residential uses are subject to the City's special use provisions under the Municipal Code. Since Medina is fully developed, there are few vacant tracts of land currently available for further development. In addition, property currently used or designated for residential use is discouraged from being utilized for additional churches, clubs, fraternal societies, schools, museums, historic sites, conference centers, or other additional non-residential facilities; these larger scale facilities create additional traffic and disrupt residential traffic patterns, which increase greenhouse gas emissions.

### **POPULATION AND GROWTH POTENTIAL**

The GMA and the CPPs encourage cities to assume an increasing share of new growth in the future, in order to minimize new growth in rural areas of King County. This means that cities planning under GMA should accommodate more compact development patterns in urban areas to absorb the additional share of future growth.

As adopted by King County, Medina's house growth target between 2019-2044 is 19 housing units. There are existing factors that limit Medina's ability to accommodate population growth, though not so limiting as to prevent Medina's ability to accommodate its growth target; these factors include:

- Medina is landlocked, with no opportunities for annexation;

- Some areas in the City are incapable of supporting development or redevelopment;
- Limited public transportation system;
- No business district (though historic uses exist in the City); and
- Environmental constraints, including wetlands, steep slopes, shoreline buffers, and other critical areas.

### **Population and Employment**

Population and employment trends are the basis for determining the amount of land and services required to accommodate anticipated growth in the City.

According to the Housing Needs Assessment adopted by the City in May 2022, Medina's population as of 2021 is 2,920, with 1,195 households and an average owner-occupied household size of 2.81 persons and an average renter-occupied household size of 2.25 persons (Appendix C). Since 2000, the population has decreased by 91 persons and the number of households has decreased from 1,095 to 1,027<sup>1</sup>. Both of these numbers align with an overall slightly downward trend in both population and number of households (Figure 1). The increase in population between 1990 and 2000 was due to a substantial increase in the number of children (persons under 18), from 696 to 816. Contrary to the overall decrease in population, the number of children have continued to increase since 2000, with 862 persons under 18 in 2010.

According to Washington State Employment Security Department Covered Employment<sup>2</sup> data published by Puget Sound Regional Council (PSRC) in 2023<sup>3</sup>, there were 747 jobs based in Medina in 2022 the majority of these jobs are classified as services (76%), followed by education jobs (10%). When considered by North American Industry Classification System (NAICS) industry sectors, jobs in Medina are predominately held in Other Services (except Public Administration)<sup>4</sup>.

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<sup>1</sup> Household data compares 2000 and 2020 U.S. Census Bureau data

<sup>2</sup> [Covered Employment data excludes self-employed workers, proprietors, CEOs, etc., and other non-insured workers. This data generally represents 85-90% of total employment.](#)

<sup>3</sup> PSRC - Covered Employment by City - Major Sector, compiled from: Quarterly Census of Employment and Wages (QCEW)

<sup>4</sup> PSRC - Covered Employment by City - NAICS, compiled from: Quarterly Census of Employment and Wages (QCEW)

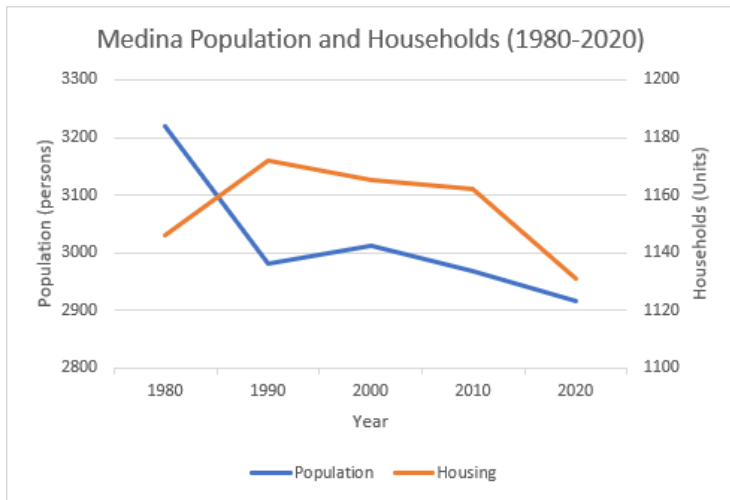


Figure 1. Population and number of households in Medina, 1980-2020.<sup>5</sup>

### Population Forecast

The Washington Office of Financial Management (OFM) provides population forecasts for counties every 10 years. As required by the GMA, the jurisdictions in King County allocate forecasted growth for the succeeding 20 years and develop and adopt local growth targets for housing and employment based on this allocation.

The PSRC uses these local targets to develop a future land use scenario consistent with the VISION 2050 regional growth strategy. According to this scenario, represented by the PSRC's 2022 growth target dataset, Medina is expected to increase by 19 housing units by 2044<sup>6</sup>. Medina is not expected to accommodate any new employment opportunities by 2044.

<sup>5</sup> Office of Financial Management (OFM) - April 1 postcensal estimates of population & housing.

<sup>6</sup> Housing growth targets are adopted in dwelling units and emergency housing beds. The 2044 housing growth target for Medina is 19 housing units and 4 emergency housing beds. Housing growth is inferred from OFM population projections and accounts for traditional households as well as group quarters housing and homelessness. In King County, future housing needs are planned for by PSRC and growth targets are distributed among member counties and then further to member cities based on jurisdictions ability to provide for housing growth.

## **Future Growth Trends**

The GMA requires cities in King County to participate in the Buildable Lands Program, which offers the opportunity for local governments to coordinate and analyze land supply to make sure that they have enough land for development and to ensure that their respective comprehensive plans are doing what they are expected to do. The King County Urban Growth Capacity Report (2021) estimates Medina’s capacity for total housing units is 8 under current zoning with recognition of current market trends (although, as noted above, 19 new housing units are anticipated by 2044).

There are several general trends occurring in Medina that make the potential for increased growth through redevelopment limited. First, there are a number of older, smaller homes on existing lots. The most common redevelopment practice has been to raze such a structure and construct a new, larger residence in its place. Homes are also commonly remodeled to include additions, yielding a larger home on the lot. Neither of these practices result in a net increase in the total number of housing units.

Medina is surrounded by incorporated municipalities and cannot extend its boundaries through annexation; therefore, its Urban Growth Area corresponds to its existing boundaries.

An increase in the number of housing units in Medina can be achieved per existing zoning only by the following actions:

- Subdividing and developing existing properties to their maximum development potential;
- Restricting lot combinations;
- Development of accessory dwelling units.

To accommodate more residential development opportunity, the City could choose to amend its zoning standards; common considerations include reducing minimum lot size or increasing allowed density to facilitate the potential for lot redevelopment. By adopting revised or new land use regulations that implement state legislation passed in 2023 (House Bills 1110 and 1337), denser, neighborhood-scale housing options will be allowed throughout much of Medina, which is likely to organically serve the projected growth targets assigned to Medina. Findings of the Land Capacity Analysis (LCA) prepared to examine Medina’s capacity for housing development indicate that approximately 939 residential lots in the City could potentially be developed with one or two accessory dwelling units (ADUs). Based on the history of ADU development in Medina, these lots could potentially provide 117 new dwelling units in the form of ADUs/DADU’s by 2044 and sufficiently cover the City’s housing growth target. Given the passing of recent legislation, the capacity for development of ADUs, the trend of ADU development in Medina over the last five years, and the expressed feedback of preferred housing types by the Medina community, it is expected that ADU development will be the prominent solution to residential growth in Medina over the next 20 years.

As a fully planning community under the GMA, Medina is also subject to recent state legislation requiring the City to accommodate more diverse housing options. Complying with new state law will, in part, require the City to revise its land use and development regulations to ease the siting of accessory dwelling units (ADUs); per RCW 36.70A.681, *the city or county must allow an accessory dwelling unit on any lot that meets the minimum lot size required for the principal unit*. To this end, revisions to the Medina Municipal Code are expected to occur in 2025 and are

**Commented [DJ1]:** Commerce, 08/01/2024, Comment 2.b  
KCAHC, 09/05/2024, Recommendation 1  
PSRC, 07/18/2024, Page 2

Addressing housing capacity deficit identified in the LCA will impact the details of this section.

Consider revising this language to remove explicit references and leave the burden of proof of housing capacity to the Land Capacity Analysis.

expected to increase the housing capacity of the City sufficient to satisfy its assigned housing growth targets (see Appendix C to the Comprehensive Plan for the City's Housing Needs Assessment and Housing Action Plan further detailing the City's approach to accommodating diverse housing options).

While Medina is an incorporated city, its character and function are that of a mature residential neighborhood. Within a four-mile radius of City Hall, there are hundreds of commercial establishments providing well over a million square feet of retail space and an increasing number of professional, health, and social services. Due to their extent and proximity, and given Medina's assigned employment growth target of 0 by 2044, there has been little demand for these land uses within Medina.

The major employers in Medina are the three schools, country club and employers in the service industry. Together, they account for approximately 87% of all jobs<sup>7</sup>. City government, including administrators, staff, and police, provides approximately 4% of all jobs. There also are approximately 8% of jobs that are covered by other employers including the country club, a gas station, grocery store, nursery, and post office. Additional employment is provided by individual residential properties in the form of housekeeping, groundskeeping, and other household staff positions.

As of 2022, there are approximately 746 jobs within Medina. The PSRC forecasts an increase of approximately 15 jobs by 2044. The majority of this increase is forecasted to occur in the education sector while services are projected to decrease by 56 jobs. There is no planned or expected increase in retail or commercial space in Medina. However, there are an increasing number of people working from home. Consequently, traditional employment in Medina is forecasted to remain relatively stable, but there will likely be an increase in home occupations.

### **SPECIAL PLANNING AREAS AND ESSENTIAL PUBLIC FACILITIES**

Certain areas within the City have unique planning requirements because of the impact these areas and the facilities they contain have on surrounding uses. These areas and facilities typically serve regional needs, and any planning involving them requires coordination with other jurisdictions and agencies. By establishing a process for reviewing requests for development within these designated Special Planning Areas, the City can ensure that (i) the public will be included in the planning process, (ii) appropriate mitigation is implemented, (iii) adverse impacts on the surrounding uses and the City as a whole will be minimized, and (iv) regional planning will be facilitated. To accomplish these goals, development within designated Special Planning Areas will be handled through the City's Special Use Public Hearing process

It is intended that future development of Special Planning Areas will be guided by the need to limit or mitigate the impact of such development on surrounding uses and the City as a whole. The role of government, in this context, is to seek a balance between regulations, the needs of a growing population, preservation of the environment, to ensure the maintenance of a high standard of living, and potentially to accommodate diverse housing options. When the development or improvement of capital facilities is considered in Special Planning Areas, the review of drainage, flooding, and stormwater runoff and any needed corrective actions to

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<sup>7</sup> 2022 PSRC - Covered Employment by City - Major Sector, compiled from: Quarterly Census of Employment and Wages (QCEW)

mitigate the potential for pollution in discharges that could impact the health of the Puget Sound or its connected waterbodies will be considered in the City's annual Stormwater Management Program; additional information on this Program is included in the Capital Facilities Element of the Comprehensive Plan and should be reviewed for a holistic perspective of the City's role and review of these development opportunities.

**SR 520 Corridor Special Planning Area:**

This Special Planning Area consists of the SR 520 right-of-way, including the Evergreen Point Bridge to mid-span, which runs across the City at the base of Evergreen Point, from Lake Washington on the west to the City's boundaries with the Town of Hunts Point and the City of Clyde Hill on the east. The area has undergone significant changes as part of the Washington Department of Transportation (WSDOT) SR 520 bridge replacement project. In addition to replacing the floating bridge, approaches, and interchanges, the project includes a lidded overpass at Evergreen Point Road in Medina, with pedestrian access down to a median transit stop. The new bridge features two general travel lanes and one HOV lane in each direction. The bridge also includes the SR 520 Bridge Trail that provides connectivity between Seattle and regional trails to the east used both for commuting and for recreation, and provides a pedestrian overlook and view corridor within the bridge's southern right-of-way west of Evergreen Point Road. The SR 520 Bridge Trail crosses Evergreen Point Road at-grade.

**84<sup>th</sup> Avenue N.E. Corridor Special Planning Area:**

This Special Planning Area consists of that portion of the 84<sup>th</sup> Avenue N.E. right-of-way within the City of Medina between the SR 520 interchange on the north and N.E. 12<sup>th</sup> Street on the south. The easterly portion of the 84<sup>th</sup> Avenue N.E. right-of-way is located within the City of Clyde Hill. In 2012, the City completed improvements to a 0.75-mile stretch of the corridor between NE 12<sup>th</sup> Street and NE 24<sup>th</sup> Street. Improvements included new roadway resurfacing, new road channelization with formal designated bike lanes, and a new landscaped median.

**Essential Public Facilities:**

The GMA requires that jurisdictions planning under its authority develop and adopt a process for identifying and siting essential public facilities. The GMA defines essential public facilities as "those facilities that are typically difficult to site, such as airports, state education facilities, state or regional transportation facilities [such as SR 520], state and local correctional facilities, solid waste handling facilities, and in-patient facilities, including substance abuse facilities, mental health facilities, and group homes." The County and all its cities must jointly agree upon the siting process for these types of facilities. The GMA states that no Comprehensive Plan or development regulation may preclude the siting of essential public facilities. SR 520 is the only essential public facility currently located in Medina.

The City reviews proposals for the siting of essential public facilities or the expansion of existing essential public facilities through the Special Planning Area process. If a proposed essential public facility is not located within a Special Planning Area, the proposed essential public facility should be designated as a Special Planning Area. The boundaries of the resulting Special Planning Area will be the boundaries of the proposed essential public facility.

## LAND USE PLAN

Medina has developed and matured into the type of community envisioned at the time of its incorporation. Old and new residents alike have invested substantially in their homes on the premise that Medina will continue to maintain its residential quality and character. Development ordinances and regulations have been adopted over time to ensure that the character of Medina is maintained.

It is important to the community that uses such as the Points Loop Trail and other pedestrian and bicycle paths, post office and the Medina grocery store, and facilities such as the City Hall, clock tower, and water tower, are retained because of their functional, historic and cultural contribution to the City. The historical character of these buildings and structures, and their appropriate uses, should be retained for future generations. Maintaining a functional and unopened right-of-way (ROW) system is an important component of the Medina community for the continued recreational and social joys of its residents, and should be retained.

In the absence of any substantial future growth, it is the basic policy of the City to retain and promote the high-quality residential setting that has become the hallmark of the Medina community. Medina will continue to consider ways to creatively implement land use practices in a way that accommodates all socioeconomic groups in Medina and reduce environmental risks imposed by climate change and wildfires without adversely impacting the character of the community or the environment.

### Future Land Use Designations

The Future Land Use Map adopted in this plan establishes the future distribution, extent, and location of generalized land uses within the City (see Figure 3). The land use categories on the Future Land Use Map include Residential, Local Business, School/Institution, Open Space, Park, Utility, Transportation Right-of-Way, and Unopened Right-of-Way.

### GOALS

- LU-G1 To maintain Medina’s high-quality residential setting and character, while considering creative housing solutions to accommodate community members of all socioeconomic groups.
- LU-G2 To maintain, preserve, and enhance the functional and historic contributions of Medina’s public facilities and amenities.
- LU-G3 To maintain active community involvement and equitable engagement in land use policy and regulations.
- LU-G4 To preserve community treasures, including, but not limited to, those structures and uses that reflect the City’s heritage and history.
- LU-G5 To promote connectivity, public safety, and resident health and well-being through the use and maintenance of bicycle routes and unimproved rights-of-way in the City.

### POLICIES

- LU-P1 The City should minimize changes to existing zoning and land use patterns, except

**Commented [DJ2]:** Commerce, 08/01/2024, Comment 2.b  
KCAHC, 09/05/2024, Recommendation 1  
PSRC, 07/18/2024, Page 2

Previous description of housing capacity should be summarized here as well.

**Commented [DJ3]:** Commerce, 08/01/2024, Comment 1

The City should include language concerning wildfire risk and mitigation in the Land Use Element. Commerce specifically recommends “... *The addition of wildfire preparedness and fire adaptation measures in the land use element with identification of specific procedures as required by RCW 36.70A.070(1).*”. During the 09/11 meeting of the Planning Commission, Commerce representative Lexine Long indicated that a discussion of Wildfire Risk would be sufficient to address this requirement.



as to meet above goals when deemed necessary by its citizens; if meeting the above goals results in denser zoning, middle housing, or infill development, the City should particularly support these housing types to be located along frequent transit corridors, such as neighborhoods within 1/2 mile of the Evergreen Point Park & Ride, or within planned higher-density areas of the City.

- LU-P2 The City should consider ways to restrict the size of homes in order to retain the character of the community and lessen impacts associated with construction. The City should consider ways to reduce or mitigate impacts to existing smaller housing when adjacent to larger remodeled or newly-constructed homes. The City should also discourage lot combinations to reduce the loss of housing capacity.
- LU-P3 Residential uses should not be considered for conversion to non-residential use except when clearly supported by the community and when impacts to the surrounding area can be fully mitigated.
- LU-P4 The City should develop a program to preserve community treasures, including, but not limited to, those historical structures that reflect the City’s heritage and history.
- LU-P5 Existing non-residential uses are encouraged to be maintained. Existing non-residential uses include:
- City Hall
  - Medina Grocery Store
  - Post Office
  - Three Points Elementary School
  - Wells Medina Nursery
  - Overlake Golf and Country Club
  - St. Thomas Church
  - St. Thomas School
  - Gas Station
  - Medina Elementary School
  - City facilities, trail systems, and parks
  - Utilities
- LU-P6 Existing non-residential uses within a residential zone may be converted to residential use or may be redeveloped with a new non-residential use in a manner compatible with surrounding properties when allowed through the conditional use process (e.g., senior center or community center).
- LU-P7 The City should work with WSDOT and City residents to develop mitigation measures that it seeks to be implemented as part of regional facilities development or improvement projects, such as SR 520 and related structures and improvements, and are designed to promote and improve physical, mental, and social health and reduce the impacts of climate change on the natural and built environments. Coordination between the City, King County, and WSDOT should reflect opportunities to promote or improve public health and safety of regional trail systems.
- LU-P8 The City should encourage and facilitate equitable public participation in all land use planning processes, including participation from Medina community

**Commented [DJ4]:** PSRC, 07/18/2024, Page 3

The City should discuss where this denser housing may be appropriate. This could include the specific identification of “frequent transit corridors” or other details that could be used to deduct potential locations for the siting of higher density housing.

members, including those Medina community members of all ethnicities and races, socioeconomic statuses, members with disabilities, language access needs, and immigrants or refugees. Engagement efforts should also facilitate the participation of local tribes, the Puget Sound Partnership, and other affected jurisdictions to support regional collaborative land use planning.

- LU-P9 The City should encourage input from all stakeholders prior to any land use decision, including consideration of the potential physical, economic, and cultural displacement risk to residents, particularly to communities that have historically faced greater risk of displacement.
- LU-P10 Development of Special Planning Areas and essential public facilities should require review of a Master Plan that addresses mitigation of impacts on surrounding uses and the City as a whole. If a proposed essential public facility is not located in an existing Special Planning Area, the proposed site of the essential public facility should be designated as a Special Planning Area.
- LU-P12 The City should not prevent the siting of essential public facilities.
- LU-P13 The process to site proposed new or expansions to existing essential public facilities should consist of the following:
- a. An inventory of similar existing essential public facilities, including their locations and capacities;
  - b. A forecast of the future needs for the essential public facility;
  - c. An analysis of the affordable and equitable access to public services to all communities, especially those historically underserved;
  - d. An analysis of the potential social and economic impacts and benefits to jurisdictions receiving or surrounding the facilities;
  - e. An analysis of the proposal's consistency with County and City policies;
  - f. An analysis of alternatives to the facility, including decentralization, conservation, demand management and other strategies;
  - g. An analysis of alternative sites based on siting criteria developed through an inter-jurisdictional process;
  - h. An analysis of opportunities to facilitate or encourage modes of travel other than single-occupancy vehicles, the incorporation of energy-saving strategies in infrastructure planning and design, and the feasibility of using electric, sustainable, or other renewable energy sources for new or expanded public facilities and developments to reduce greenhouse gasses;
  - i. An analysis of environmental impacts and mitigation; and
  - j. Extensive public involvement.
- LU-P14 The City should consider opportunities to promote public health and address racially and environmentally disparate health outcomes by providing or enhancing opportunities to safe and convenient physical activity, social connectivity, protection from exposure to harmful substances and environments, and denser housing in potential future changes to land use designations, as appropriate to serve the needs of the Medina community.
- LU-P15 To promote adequate stormwater management within the community, the City should consider land use development standards and other local regulations that

could be revised, as appropriate, to better accommodate site drainage and encourage the practice of low-impact development.

- LU-P16 The existing residential character of Medina should promote the health and well-being of its residents by supporting equitable access to parks and open space and safe pedestrian and bicycle routes.
- LU-P17 The City should explore opportunities to improve connectivity and ensure public safety of existing pedestrian and bicycle routes in the City, as needed.

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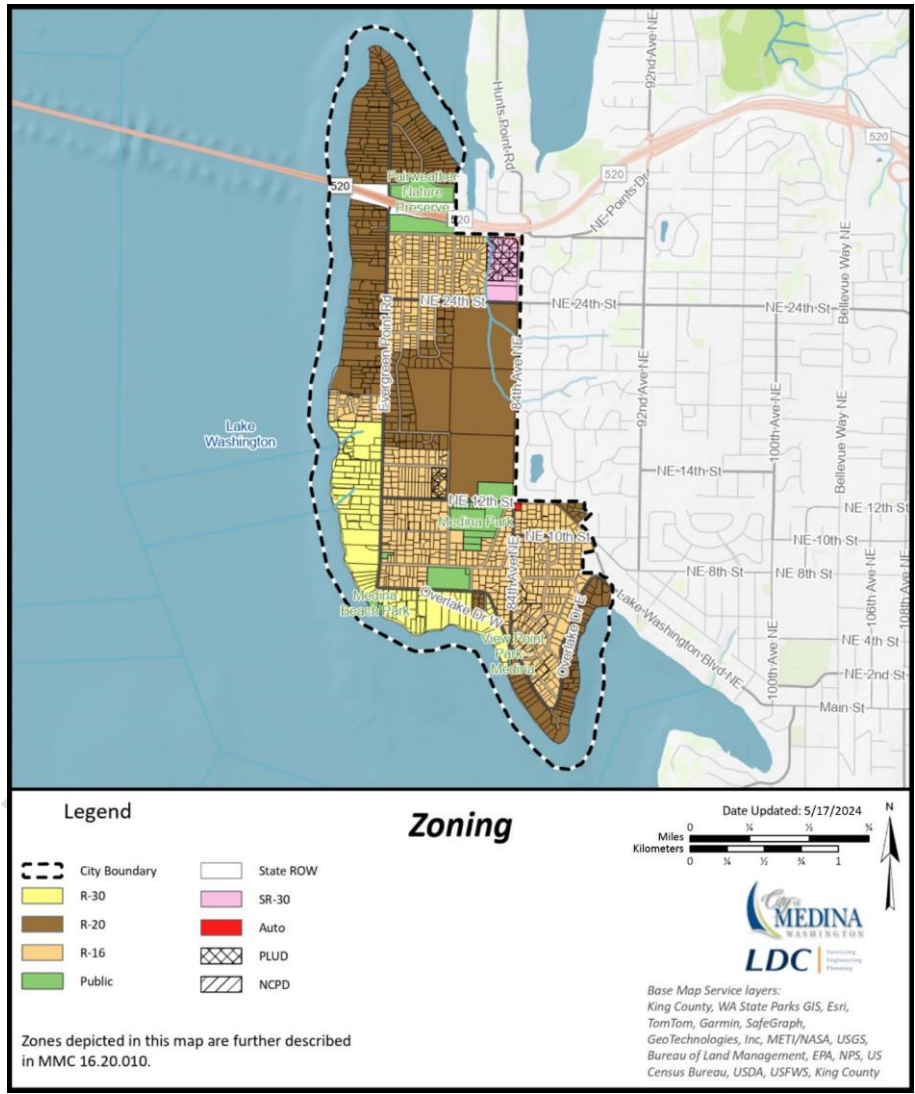


Figure 1 - Zoning Map

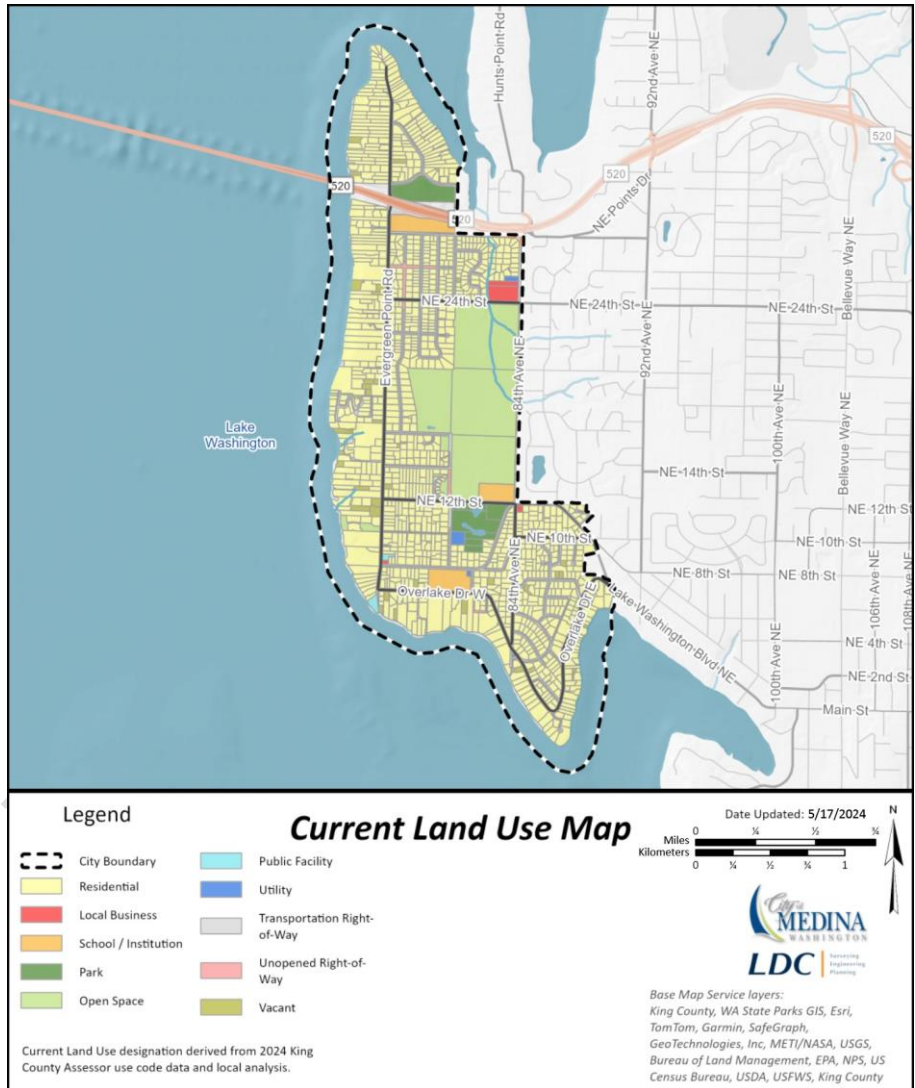


Figure 2 - Current Land Use Map



Figure 3 - Future Land Use Map