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Date: February 9, 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

Please see the attached January 2026 permit reports.

Development permit application quantity and valuation started 2026 slightly ahead of YTD 2025.

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

If Medina development activity continues recent trends, then we will want to evaluate the reasons why and determine if this is a new normal. In years past Medina has had limited new development, and significant re-development. If there is a change in Medina development trends, then the Development Services Department may need to consider changes in operations. The future of government development services departments will involve AI.

Under a 2027 budget request to the Council, I would like to update our Buildable Lands Map. This map update will aid in understanding the development potential within Medina.

Council Work Plan

The February 24, 2026 Planning Commission meeting will be joint with the Council. The topic is the Council Work Plan. It is my understanding that our City Manager has several Work Plan topics to propose.

I have two items that I would like for the Council to consider within the Work Plan. The topic of "bulk" has been discussed by the Council and the Planning Commission in recent years. The term "bulk" has been used to describe large new homes which typically maximize their allowed building envelope creating a flat roofed box shape.

Additional work through code amendments should be considered to address known problems created by large new "bulk" buildings being constructed adjacent to neighboring property. Among the known problems are reduced privacy, noise and light intrusion. Evaluating the full scope of "bulk" and addressing this through Planning Commission and the Council could take considerable time. I propose that the Council direct staff to take one portion of the bulk topic to the Planning Commission for their review and recommendation.

Specifically, I would like the Council to direct staff to have the Planning Commission address privacy, light, and noise impacts created by new homes upon adjacent properties. I am hoping that the Council will make this a Work Plan priority and that the Planning Commission work can be accomplished quickly.

The second Work Plan topic I will offer for the Council's consideration is a review of the current Tree Management Code. Specifically, should the City of Medina consider a new approach to tree management, or not. The answer to this question will not come from the February 24th joint meeting. The answer to whether a new approach to tree management is desired could come from the Council being informed of options and then making decisions based on those.

On the Tree Management Code topic, I will specifically request that I be given a Council Study session to present issues and options. With feedback from this Study Session, it may be found that a second Study Session is warranted. If the Council further directs, I could prepare a 2027 budget request based upon input gained from the Study Sessions. Options of course include doing nothing or amending our existing Tree Management Code.

Planning Commission

Elections

At the January 27th Planning Commission meeting there were required elections to fill the Chair and Vice Chair positions.

Shawn Schubring was elected Chair
Brian Pao was elected Vice Chair

Vacancy

There are two candidates for the position made open through the departure of Laura Bustamante. The Council Personnel Committee will evaluate the two candidates and bring a recommendation to the Council.

Agenda

On January 27th Planning Commission was introduced to the topic of Outdoor Lighting. Our Planning Consultant Kim Gunderson is leading the Outdoor Lighting discussion. On March 24th the Planning Commission will resume the Outdoor Lighting discussion. The topic on March 24th will be a permanent outdoor lighting ordinance focused on "Dark Sky". Once a recommendation for a permanent ordinance is approved by the Planning Commission the Council will be asked to review the draft and will also be asked to direct staff to forward the document to the State Department of Commerce for their review.

It is likely that another (second) extension of the IOC currently in effect will be required considering process timing.

State Building Code Update

Approximately every three years the state adopts a new building code. Medina is required to adopt the state building code, and the city can add amendments within certain rules.

We currently are operating under the 2021 Edition of the State of Washington Building Code as adopted by the City of Medina. It currently appears that the 2024 Edition of the State Building Code will be mandated for adoption in 2027. Our Building Official is tasked with assuring the code update is completed on time and is amended to meet Medina needs, and those needs of other agencies such as the Bellevue Fire Department.

The Council will receive more information on the 2024 code adoption as the process moves forward.

Critical Areas Ordinance Update Status

Correct process takes time. The Critical Areas Ordinance Update is a mandate by Washington State. Medina had a late start on our CAO update. Because of the late start, the Planning Commission and then the Council had their work on this topic compressed.

The Planning Commission had already scheduled not to meet in August 2025. Our consultant Facet was working on the CAO update in July and August 2025, but the Planning Commission did not first see anything

on the topic until September 2025. The Planning Commission was then asked to meet twice per month in an effort to get a recommendation to the Council by early December, which they did. While all of this was happening staff and Facet conducted two public open houses with forums. Overall, the process was successful, but other work of the Planning Commission was delayed.

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.

SEPA review is now completed with no comments received. The Washington State Department of Commerce 60-day review period ends February 8th. The Washington Department of Natural Resources commented on our draft CAO update, but those comments were minor in nature, and DNR gave Medina "kudos". I expect that a final draft of the CAO update will come to the Council for approval on February 23rd.

Critical Areas Map

I am working with our professional consultant Facet towards a Task Order for creation of a new Critical Areas map. This is under Council approved budget for 2026.

This map project follows the recent Critical Areas update. The map will be GIS based and hosted by Medina on our website for public viewing and use.

I expect that this new version of Medina's Critical Areas map will be the most comprehensive, most accurate, and the most accessible the city has ever had. The GIS based map will also be easier to update in the future.

Once the Task Order is completed and approved this will be about a 6-month project.

Right of Way Tree Inventory

The first part of the Medina tree inventory was completed in 2025 and involved parks and other city spaces.

The second part of the inventory is in 2026 and involves trees within the right of way.

We are still working on organizing the project. I would like to inform the public about the inventory to avoid as many questions as possible. We will be having our arborist and his assistants wearing clear identification, Police will be notified, a city-wide email will be sent, social media will inform, and the project is to be broken into specific areas.

The particular areas being inventoried will be shown on a map that is kept on-line during the project. For example, an area will be north of 520. Another area may be between 24th and 520. Evergreen Point Road may be a separate area, etc. With this we can better inform the public about where the inventory is occurring and help reduce the questions and concerns.

Tree Removal Permit Application

PSE regularly needs to trim trees in Medina's right of way. The process to trim trees by PSE is non-administrative meaning the decision goes to the hearing examiner. PSE tree trimming vs. removal are two separate concerns, but the same non-administrative process. Tree removals in the Medina right of way should remain a non-administrative process with hearing examiner decision.

I will be proposing that Medina change the process for PSE tree trimming to an administrative process. The result will be the same. Public noticing will be the same and public comments can still be accepted and considered.

PSE has requested to remove two trees at 247 84th Ave NE and one at 110 84th Ave. NE. These removals have been confirmed as necessary and code conforming by our City Arborist. The trees involved are damaged and

would be replaced with more appropriate ones for the locations. These PSE tree removal permit applications will be evaluated by the hearing examiner.

Medina Population

Annually Medina staff prepare a population report for the Washington State Office of Financial Management (OFM). OFM requires the reporting and gives us two methods of reporting to them. The typical approach is for our staff to complete a form provided which is an estimate. The other method is a "Special City Census" which is a door-to-door approach.

I have asked our Development Services staff to investigate city records to determine how often and when the last door-to-door census occurred.

When I have more information, I will inform the Council.

Attachments:

January 2026 Permits Received Report
January 2026 Permit Issued Report
January 2026 Code Enforcement Report
January 2026 Tree Permit Activity Report