



CITY OF MEDINA

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MEMORANDUM

DATE: May 22, 2023
TO: Medina City Council and Planning Commission
FROM: Stephanie Keyser, AICP, Planning Manager
RE: Comprehensive Plan (Housing Element)

Although this year might have been the *year of housing* in the legislature with bills passing that will require amendments to Medina’s development code, the 2021-2022 session changed the way cities are required to *plan* for housing. HB 1220 amended the Growth Management Act (GMA) housing goal and requires cities to *plan for and accommodate housing affordable to all economic segments*. This doesn’t mean the City must act as a developer and build housing; rather, the barriers in place via zoning and development regulations need to be identified and removed. The Department of Commerce created a flow chart (Figure 1) that outlines the necessary steps for updating the Housing Element under HB 1220. The old requirements are in grey, the new requirements are in green, and the City’s responsibilities are circled in pink.

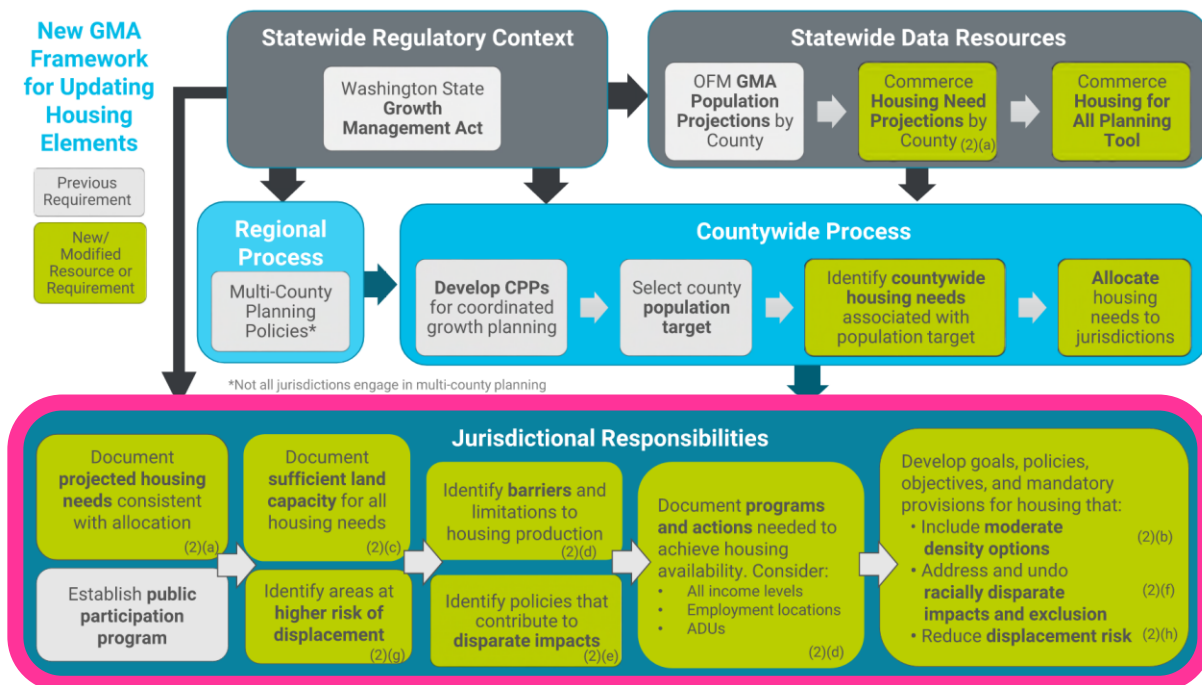


Figure 1. New GMA Framework for Update Housing Elements. Department of Commerce.

As a fully developed, land-locked city with extremely limited vacant land¹, growth in Medina will predominantly happen through redevelopment. By the Comprehensive Plan deadline (December

¹ Available vacant land in Medina generally is the result of a resident owning two or more contiguous parcels where one has not been developed. The vacant lot is then able to be sold and developed as is, without the need for a Lot Line Adjustment (LLA). There have been a couple of new development projects over the past two years that are the result of this situation.

31, 2024), Medina must demonstrate zoned or planned capacity to meet its 2044 target housing growth of 19 new housing units, or a total of 1,151 housing units. It should be noted that missing middle housing was already a requirement for cities to consider as part of this update so the passing of HB 1110 doesn't create more work in that respect.

HB 1110 and HB 1337 Development Code Timeline

The deadline for adopting the development regulations required under HB 1110 and HB 1337 is six months after the Comprehensive Plan deadline, or June 30, 2025. The Department of Commerce will provide guidance on the new legislation and model ordinances by the end of this year. It is anticipated that work will begin on the new development regulations in 2024.

PROACTIVELY PLANNING FOR THE FUTURE

Higher Densities (to be completed by December 31, 2024)

We can reasonably expect more housing changes in the next legislative session. One of the bills that failed this year but has a high probability of coming back centered around Transit Oriented Development (TOD) or creating higher densities around transit stops. While this session's bill (SB 5466) was pared down and, if passed, would not have included Medina, we can realistically assume that at some point in the future, the State will require higher densities around the 520 LID. We also know that 84th Avenue NE to NE 12th Street could, at some point, also be required to have higher densities as they are minor arterial streets with frequent bus stops.

Direction asked:

As part of the Housing discussion, Staff would like Planning Commission to consider what higher density would look like around the LID. At minimum, this would include land that could support higher densities being identified on the future land use map. Even if Council doesn't think rezoning to higher densities right now is appropriate, just having the conversation and identifying where it could make sense to support this kind of development is going to help future staff, Planning Commissions, and City Councils.

Reconfigure some of R-16 (to be completed by December 31, 2024)

Medina's current zoning districts were created in 1955 and haven't changed since then. Best practice during a comprehensive plan update is to review the zoning districts for consistency with the prescribed standards and make adjustments (e.g. rezone) if necessary. R-16 is the largest zoning district and has the largest variety of lots. One of the things that came up during the bulk discussion a few years ago is that because these lots are so varied, it can make it difficult to provide fair regulations; the issues that face the smaller inland R-16 lots are different from issues of R-16 lots along Overlake Drive East.

Direction asked:

As part of the Comprehensive Plan update, Staff would like Planning Commission to consider creating a smaller zoning district and applying it to lots that more appropriately fit that standard. This doesn't mean new development regulations need to be created as the R-16 already accounts for substandard lots. Doing this will allow the City greater nuance with zoning controls in the future instead of the prescriptive blanket in place right now.

Look at decreasing impervious surface and structural coverage (to be completed by June 30, 2025)

Two more observations that came up during the bulk conversation a few years ago center around structural coverage and impervious surface. A complaint that is often heard from residents is that houses seem to be bigger than they used to be, which is correct. Over the years zoning changes were made to grant smaller lots more structural coverage and for lots with easements on them to include that area when calculating maximum allowed coverage (whereas prior, that area was

excluded which resulted in a smaller allowable footprint). Another concern is the amount of impervious surface that is allowed (again, R-16 is granted the most at 55%). It has been correctly observed that this allowance is in conflict with wanting to preserve and retain tree canopy.

Direction asked:

As part of the new development regulation work, consider if a reduction in impervious surface (particularly in R-16) and structural coverage is appropriate.