



# MEDINA, WASHINGTON

## AGENDA BILL

Monday, April 13, 2026

<b>Subject/Topic: Public Hearing – Ordinance 1052</b>	<b>Proposed Council Action/Motion:</b>
<b>Dept. Origin:</b> Development Services Department	<input type="checkbox"/> Information Only
<b>Category:</b> Public Hearing	<input type="checkbox"/> Receive and File
<b>Prepared by:</b> Steven R. Wilcox	<input type="checkbox"/> Discuss
<b>Attachments:</b> Ordinance 1052.	<input type="checkbox"/> Provide Direction
	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> <b>Public Hearing</b>
	<input type="checkbox"/> Adopt/Approve
	<input type="checkbox"/> Other:

### Proposed Council Action

Hold public hearing and take testimony from the public. No other action is proposed or requested at this April 13, 2026 Council meeting.

### Summary

The impacts of large private residential development projects on existing neighboring properties have been a topic for the City of Medina at times over the past several years.

This is an overview of Medina's recent history regarding actions to address development project impacts which had previously been termed "bulk".

- A significant development project in the early 1990's caused the City to create a highly formalized construction mitigation process. This is the earliest record that the City discussed large development project impacts.
- March and June 2007 the Planning Commission discussed pitched roof incentives with the underlying goal of reducing building bulk near property lines. The topic originated from residents who complained about *"the look and feel of tall, boxy, flat roofed buildings, which are constructed 10 feet from their side yard property lines."*
- April 10, 2010 the City Council clarified that the topic was *"more about reducing the impact of building bulk on neighboring properties than it was about encouraging more pitched roof construction."* The Council directed the topic to the Planning Commission.
- September 29, 2010 the Planning Commission provided a report to the Council titled *"Analysis of angled setbacks"* in response to the April 10, 2010 direction.

The Planning Commission reviewed several options to reduce the impact of bulk including architectural design standards that affect the look and feel of a building, setback and height standards including the “wedding cake” setback standard or an angled setback standard. Floor area ratio was discussed as a method of creating flexibility by moving bulk around on a property.

Planning Commission concluded that angled setbacks were the best method of reducing the impact of bulk on neighboring properties, however they did not recommend moving forward with angled setbacks as a solution due to the creation of nonconforming properties and other potential unintended consequences.

Over approximately the next 4 years there were zoning code amendments made by the Development Services Director with much of this intended to address some impacts of bulk on neighboring properties.

- June 25, 2019 the Planning Commission was introduced to the topic of “*Regulating Bulk*”. The issue was described as “*at its core, an issue about change in neighborhood character.*”

On the 2019 Planning Commission Calendar was the topic “*Review residential development policy re: bulk, second story setback.*”

The Planning Commission spent about 18 months evaluating the topic of regulating bulk with limited results.

With intention to protect residents from certain impacts of large new development projects, the City of Medina has made good faith attempts since at least 2007 to address the matter. The topic of development project impacts has unfortunately never been adequately or comprehensively addressed by the City of Medina. Discussions involved in adoption of the Washington State mandated Middle Housing through Ordinance No. 1040, along with recent resident complaints about large development project impacts, have caused the City Council to once again find a need to take action. The City of Medina has an obligation to consider resident concerns and take appropriate action where viewed possible.

Medina’s review of development project impacts on residents will balance and must integrate recently adopted Ordinances regulating housing while also considering the City’s on-going work towards creating affordable housing opportunities. The question of how to protect residents from the impacts of new development projects has never been more complicated.

On February 23, 2026 the Medina City Council adopted Ordinance No. 1052 through a 5:1 vote.

Summary of Ordinance 1052:

- Amends Medina Municipal Code (MMC) Table 16.22.030 by increasing minimum side yard building setbacks in all zones and adds required second story side yard setbacks (AKA ‘wedding cake’) from the property lines.

Intent: Increases the privacy and reduces overall impacts such as light and noise imposed upon existing Medina residents who live adjacent to new development projects.

- Amends MMC 16.22.040 to require partial or solid landscape screening.

Intent: Enhances existing Medina resident privacy and softens the appearance of new and imposing development projects.

- Amends MMC 16.22.040 to require sound attenuation of permanently installed water features and similar permanently installed sound attenuation devices to a level where neighboring properties do not hear them.

Intent: Protect Medina residents from nuisance sound.

- Amends MMC 16.23.050 and 16.23.060 to eliminate the Bonus Height Standard.

Intent: Remove an administrative decision-making process which has potential for resulting negative impacts on Medina residents who are adjacent to new development projects. Note that this change may increase nonadministrative variance applications.

- Amends MMC 16.44.040 to regulate interior lighting which can be seen outside of a vacant residence and additionally regulates exterior light trespass onto other properties.

Intent: Protects Medina residents from new development projects lighting and includes any vacant residence within the City. Addressing vacant residences is an expansion of the new development impacts topic, but the two are closely integrated. Addressing vacant house light trespass addresses an on-going City concern and is consistent with the City's move towards "dark sky" lighting.

### **Next Steps**

The Council will meet again on April 27, 2026. Our planning consultant is scheduled to give a presentation on the development project impacts topic at the April 27<sup>th</sup> meeting.

At the April 27, 2026 Council meeting staff will have an Agenda Bill for the Council which describes the new development project impacts matter (AKA 'Bulk') and recommends directions for the Planning Commission review. Ordinance 1052, Section 15. Direction to the Planning Commission has already directed staff to forward this to the Planning Commission for them *"to review this Ordinance and study the issues presented and to develop and process final regulations for City Council consideration."* However, Section 15 does not have a complete charge from the Council for the Planning Commission to follow, meaning the Agenda Bill and clear directions are necessary.

At the April 27, 2026 Council meeting, the Council will have the opportunity to direct Development Service staff regarding Ordinance 1052 with consideration of the April 13, 2026 public hearing. If the Council were to choose to amend the Interim Official Control (IOC) that is under Ordinance 1052, then a new IOC would be required which would replace the current version. If the Council were to choose to direct amendments to Ordinance at the April 27, 2026 Council meeting, then staff could have a draft prepared by no later than the May 26<sup>th</sup> Special meeting.

Whether the Council decides to amend Ordinance 1052 or not, the development impacts topic (which also includes studying some new regulations for vacant residences) has already been directed to the Planning Commission for calendaring.

**Council Priorities**

This proposal furthers Council Priority #3.

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 public testimony.

**City Manager Approval:** 

**Proposed Council Motions:** None.