



MEDINA, WASHINGTON

AGENDA BILL

January 13, 2025

Subject: City Right of Way Discussion

Category: City Business

Staff Contact: Mayor Jessica Rossman, Ryan Osada, Public Works Director, Stephen R. Burns, City Manager, and Jennifer Robertson, City Attorney

Summary

The purpose of this discussion is to ensure that Council has identified the universe of potential issues for future work on Right of Way policies.

Please review the below list and be prepared to suggest additions, deletions or corrections.

This should be a targeted discussion, as a preliminary step toward defining a scope of work. The eventual scope of work will likely be divided into multiple projects, requiring prioritization.

Background

This follows several mentions of future “Right of Way policy” conversations at recent Council meetings, in a variety of contexts (e.g., resident comments on parking rules and variation of uses of right of way land within neighborhoods, trimming of vegetation overhanging sidewalks or impeding visibility, future community design and appearance, responsibility for planting on right of way land, implementation of state housing mandates, etc.).

A similar list of Right of Way issues was also reviewed at Council’s retreat on February 10, 2024, and approved for inclusion in Council’s list of future work. This specific list was discussed during the Roundtable portion of the December 9, 2024 Council meeting.

Problems to Be Solved

References to “right of way policy” have come to mean a variety of different things, and it is important that Council and staff come to a shared understanding of what issues the city should address if possible.

The specific “problems to be solved” by new policy will be defined through this process. Vision, goals and prioritization will be discussed at future meetings as projects are scoped and developed.

Suggested Next Steps

At the end of this agenda item, Council will be asked to refer the list to staff for their further input, to ensure the list is complete from all perspectives. If needed or desired, Council may

also ask staff for additional input, background, or information. Subsequent steps will depend on the content of the final list.

Right of Way Topics:

- Community Design Issues
 - Possibility of addressing in the context of an update to the Community Design Element of the Comprehensive Plan
 - What should streets in Medina look like?
 - What “look and feel” will preserve unique neighborhood character but also allow functionality with increased density?
 - Lighting?
 - Signage?
 - Note Council vote on 7/10/2023 that the walking path on the west end of Overlake Dr E “be completed and maintained as is with crushed rock and for city staff to not resubmit the grant application for the paving part....” [6-0, one councilmember absent.]
 - Need for community input/involvement in vision
- Parking
 - What are the City’s on-street parking rules? Do most people know them? Are they consistent? Are they fair across different neighborhoods and different street conditions?
 - Do we need to manage ROWs differently to have more parking?
 - Do we have adequate parking for home-hosted events?
 - Will we need more street parking with increased density from middle housing?
 - Should there be shoulder development requirements more like Hunts Point and Yarrow Point have, to preserve parking?
 - Should adjoining landowners be entitled to pave or otherwise permanently construct on City ROW land to create parking spots?
 - Is this consistent with low impact development practices encouraged or required by Department Ecology, etc.? What are the implications for stormwater infrastructure and unfiltered runoff to Lake Washington?
 - If parking space construction is allowed, should the look be standardized? (e.g., to make clear that it is public land/parking, to make easier to repair if City disturbs, etc.)
 - Should the City allow placement of boulders, rocks, etc. in ROW land?
- Does the City anticipate needing anything more or different (e.g., sidewalks, tools for managing increased bicycle traffic, etc.)?
- Who is responsible for maintaining ROW land not in use as streets or sidewalks? What public safety regulation is necessary, if any?

- Who pays for restoration when City or utility disturbs private landscaping on publicly owned ROW?
 - Is this a blanket rule, or are there factors to be considered in deciding whether to reimburse an adjoining property owner?
 - Who is responsible for installing landscaping on ROW land if adjoining landowner does not want to do it?
 - Examples from 12th Street: outside the golf course's new fence, and newly constructed planting beds next to the sidewalk.
 - Are those examples the same answer, or different answers?
 - Who is responsible for keeping hedges trimmed off sidewalks?
 - Can/should the city request & collect reimbursement for costs of trimming private landscaping away from pedestrian paths and/or traffic? [Council direction and ongoing discussion, circa 2019 levy vote onward]
 - Should there be safety rules about what can be planted or put in the area between a sidewalk and a street? (e.g., for visibility between street and sidewalk, to minimize likelihood of growth out over sidewalk or into street, etc.)
 - What happens if city ROW land is not maintained by an adjoining landowner and becomes unattractive?
- What communication with residents is needed?
 - How will residents understand what land the City owns (or has an easement on), so that they are aware of any risk that landscaping they install there may be disturbed in the future?
 - What kind of communication with residents is needed before adjoining ROW land is disturbed for City or utility projects?

“City Right of Way Discussion” meets and supports Council’s priorities 2, 3, and 5.

Council Priorities:

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

Attachments:

None.

Budget/Fiscal Impact: N/A

Recommendation: Discussion and direction.

City Manager Approval:



Proposed Council Motion: N/A

Time Estimate: 30 minutes