

Dawn Nations

From: M3 Sweatt <m3sweatt@outlook.com>
Sent: Monday, February 23, 2026 3:20 PM
To: Council
Subject: Feedback on Interim Official Control Ordinance (IOC)

Hello, City Council -

Reading that you will discuss the Interim Official Control Ordinance (IOC) in a Study Session, thank you for taking the time on this matter. Certainly, balancing the state-mandated middle housing requirements go hand in hand with the preservation of residential privacy, noise, and lighting standards in Medina. As a long time city resident, I have a few questions and observations / concerns for consideration in your study session and to be entered in the public comment.

1. Increased Setbacks and Building Bulk (Items 1, 2, 3, and 4): How will the 5 FT wider side yard setback for second stories (totaling >10 FT) impact the footprint and design flexibility of new development, particularly duplexes and cottage housing on narrow lots? How does this align with state-mandated middle housing requirements to increase density?

A concern is that increased side yard setbacks combined with strict landscape buffers (Items 1-3) may limit architectural, and force more of the boxy, zero footprint style structures we see going up, which residents have previously indicated are undesirable in neighbourhoods.

2. Side Yard Protrusions and Landscaping (Items 3 and 4): What specific criteria will be used to define the term "dense landscape buffer" in narrow side yards? Who is responsible for maintaining these buffers on property lines over time?

Reading this section, reducing deck or patios into setbacks to 25% could significantly restrict outdoor living space. When combined with increased setbacks, this may negatively impact the ability to build high quality and functional housing.

3. Noise and Lighting Regulations (Items 5, 7, and 8): How will the requirement that "fountains... not be heard by neighboring properties" be enforced? Does this refer to ambient noise or a specific decibel level, and does it apply to all residential water features?

With an existing, small water feature that exists within current standards, owners could find themselves in violation for having a backyard feature that's quieter than allowed levels for sound (and even and music).

Also, the requirement for vacant homes to keep interior lights off (Item 7) raises privacy and security concerns for residents who might be away for extended periods but wish to maintain an appearance of being occupied for safety and security purposes. There's ample evidence that automatically controlled indoor and enhanced outdoor lighting can contribute to decreased residential nighttime crime. As such, I'd be very interested to hear what our police department and other residents may have to offer on the subject.

4. Height Bonuses (Item 6): Eliminating height bonuses (Item 6) likely removes incentives for specific building designs (e.g., pitched roofs) that help mitigate the visual impact of taller buildings. Has the city analyzed if this makes new homes appear more bulky than those that previously used the bonus?

While eliminating bonuses reduces overall maximum height, it may lead to taller, flat-roofed, box-like structures, which again were flagged in previous concerns regarding the overall character of the neighbourhood.

For each of these items, I trust that you will carefully consider any such changes and carefully review proposals. Ultimately, we should ensure such changes do not unintentionally and negatively impact the development of middle housing that the state now requires.

Thank you.

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