



# MEDINA, WASHINGTON

## AGENDA BILL

Tuesday, February 22, 2022

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**Subject:** Alternatives to Original Grade

**Category:** Discussion

**Staff Contact(s):** Stephanie Keyser, Planning Manager

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### **Summary**

Original grade has been used as the starting point for measuring structure height in Medina for decades. Defined as the natural ground elevation that existed prior to any lot development or manmade modifications in the first instance (MMC 16.12.080), determining original grade is not as simple as looking at a site with your naked eye or reviewing a topographic map. As prescribed in the code, the determination requires a soils investigation by a geotechnical engineer along the parameters of the proposed exterior walls/sides (MMC 16.23.080(B)). Test pits are dug and based on those samples, the geotechnical engineer determines original grade underneath the entire structure. A written report is submitted with the building permit and is reviewed for completeness against the requirements in MMC 16.23.080(D). The process is an imperfect science where different experts can reach different determinations for the same lot. Over the years, moving away from the original grade process has been discussed. Most recently, Planning Commission included a recommendation to investigate alternatives to original grade among the bulk recommendations that were presented to Council at their February 8, 2021 meeting. On October 11, 2021, Council adopted Planning Commission's 2021-2023 work plan. Item 5 on the work plan is alternatives to original grade.

**Attachment(s)** Alternatives to Original Grade Memo

**Budget/Fiscal Impact:** N/A

**Recommendation:** Discussion

**Proposed Commission Motion:** N/A

**Time Estimate:** 60 minutes