



MEDINA, WASHINGTON

Planning Commission

Tuesday May 19, 2026

Subject: Outdoor Lighting Ordinance

Planning Commission Action: Discussion item only. No action.

Staff Contact: Kim Gunderson, Medina Planning Consultant

Summary

At its meeting on June 23, 2025 the City Council passed new outdoor lighting regulations. The need for this new Medina Municipal Code Chapter 16.25 comes from Council priorities established as a result of the recent adoption of the Middle Housing ordinance. Increased density which can result from Middle Housing will have adverse impacts on the Medina community. Impacts associated with outdoor lighting is seen as a high priority to address because we have already had lighting complaints even prior to the new density rules.

MMC 16.25 is adopted as an Interim Official Control which is a process having some similarities to a moratorium. An Interim Official Control is a process that adopts temporary (6-month) regulations and allows those temporary regulations to be extended by Council for additional 6-month periods following a public hearing with each extension. The benefit of an Interim Official Control is that it allows a City to immediately apply important changes to its Municipal Code while it studies the particulars that are appropriate of its permanent ordinance.

Amending Medina's Development Code Title 16 requires Planning Commission involvement. Planning Commission is required to review, approve, and forward to the Council with recommendation any new development ordinances. Because the outdoor lighting matter was considered a community priority, Council accepted an Interim Official Control proposal which does not require Planning Commission involvement. Council has given direction at its June 23, 2025 meeting for Planning Commission to study and process permanent outdoor lighting regulations to be brought to Council before the expiration of the interim official control on outdoor lighting. However, due to essentials of code amendment timing, an extension approval by Council of the Interim Official Control (Ordinance 1050) was necessary and occurred on December 8, 2025, extending the validity of the Interim Official Control until June 13, 2026.

Kim Gunderson of Mahoney Planning, LLC is under contract with the City of Medina to provide on-call current and long-range planning support services, and has been tasked with preparing the permanent Outdoor Lighting Ordinance that will be recommended for adoption to City Council. Kim Gunderson has prepared and attached a PowerPoint slide deck that will be presented to Planning Commission at its May 19, 2026 meeting; the slide deck briefly details the scope and framework of the project, advancements made since Planning Commission's April meeting on this topic, and outstanding items to consider with Planning Commission at its May meeting.

Following the January and April Planning Commission meetings, Kim Gunderson incorporated feedback offered by the Planning Commission into a draft permanent ordinance governing outdoor lighting in Medina. This feedback is reflected as redline edits in the attached draft

ordinance and includes:

- Incorporating features of the Dark Sky Model Ordinance
- Creating code that can be enforced
- Defining germane terms, such as color temperature, lumens, seasonal lighting, security lighting, and temporary or periodic events
- Incorporating by reference controls on construction and real estate lighting built into MMC Chapter 16.44 via Ordinance 1052, a separate Interim Official Control governing bulk standards
- Implements controls on color temperature
- Allows security lighting, pool lighting, and accent lighting
- Expressly prohibits light trespass and lighting at school fields and sport courts, whether public or private
- Removes previous exemption for flagpole lighting
- Amends vesting regulations
- Updates Figures as clear demonstrations of acceptable vs. unacceptable lighting.

Importantly, this project has been designed with the intention of efficiently building off of Medina's Interim Official Control as a template, a work product that has already been thoughtfully crafted to reflect feedback from City Council and now only needs refinement to capture remnant direction from City Council. Other key components of this project include: optimizing implementation of the Dark Sky Model Ordinance, ensuring the prevention of light trespass, and limiting the permanent ordinance to allow no more lighting than is allowed via the Interim Official Control.

The new ordinance will apply to new construction and is not retroactive to existing conditions.

It is intended that in May, Planning Commission will be asked to workshop a final Outdoor Lighting Ordinance with the Development Services team that frames the City's expectation for appropriate outdoor lighting exemptions, applicability of the new ordinance, a harmony between the built and natural environments, and particulars related to height, color, shielding, and use for security and protection of property. Staff expect to notice a public hearing for the June 23, 2026 Planning Commission meeting, at which time Kim will request a recommendation from the Planning Commission to be transmitted to City Council.

Attachment(s)

PowerPoint Slide Deck prepared by Kim Gunderson for presentation at May 19, 2026 Planning Commission meeting

Ordinance No. 1050 Outdoor Lighting Interim Official Control with amendments by Kim Gunderson

Ordinance No. 1043 Outdoor Lighting Interim Official Control (original, without amendments)

Proposed Planning Commission Motion:

Discussion item only. No action.