



MEDINA, WASHINGTON

Planning Commission

Tuesday September 22, 2026

Subject: Council Priorities Nos. 18-21

Planning Commission Action: Discussion item only. No action.

Staff Contact: Kim Gunderson, Medina Planning Consultant

Summary

The Washington state legislature has been active in recent years creating statutes that largely aim at addressing the availability of housing and affordable housing. In large part, these statutes require cities to adopt by ordinance provisions of House Bills (HBs) and Senate Bills (SBs) which have amended the zoning landscape in Washington cities, particularly those subject to the Growth Management Act (GMA). As a fully planning city under Washington's GMA, and as an incorporated code city, Medina is subject to complying with the requirements of these new statutes. The 2025-26 legislative session concluded with four bills passed into law that are required to be implemented in the Medina Municipal Code (MMC) by summer 2027: HB 1757, HB 1096, SB 5559, and SB 5509. Below is a summary of each new law:

HB/SB	RCW	Bill Summary
1757 Existing buildings used for residential purposes	35A.21.440 35.21.990	Related to the conversion of existing buildings for residential use, code cities may not: • Restrict density increases of up to 50% for housing units built within existing buildings, subject to building code and fire and life safety limitations. • Require off-street parking commensurate with added dwelling units in an existing building. • Require a change of use permit or other use-based permitting requirement for an existing building's residential conversion or use, except for transitional or emergency housing. • Impose design regulations, setbacks, FAR, or lot coverage requirements for residential use of an existing building beyond what applies in the underlying zone. • Impose exterior design requirements on residential use of an existing building beyond what's necessary for health and safety of the interior use of the structure, or to preserve character-defining streetscapes. • Prohibit housing units along major pedestrian corridors, except on the ground floor. • Require unchanged portions of a building used or previously permitted for residences to comply with current energy codes, or require changed portions of the building to comply with new energy codes except under certain instances. • Deny building permit application for the addition of housing units if nonconformities to parking, height, setbacks, etc. exist. • Require a transportation concurrency study or SEPA environmental study based on the addition of living units in an existing building.

<u>1096</u> Residential lot splitting	36.70A.635	In general, cities must allow a “parent lot” to be divided via an administrative process creating two lots, each of which must meet minimum density and lot size zoning standards. “Unbuildable lots” due to critical areas are not eligible for lot splits.
<u>5559</u> Unit lot subdivision	58.17.020 58.17.060	Cities are required to allow for unit lot subdivisions and unit lot short subdivisions, which are new ways to subdivide land that rely on a “parent lot” and “children lot” collectively meeting the minimum dimensional standards of a zone, rather than each individual lot needing to meet those requirements (as is typical in a traditional subdivision).
<u>5509</u> Siting of childcare centers	35.21.996	Cities must allow childcare centers, and the conversion of existing buildings into childcare centers, as an outright permitted use in all zones except industrial zones, light industrial zones, and open space zones. Cities may impose reasonable restrictions on the use, such as pick-up and drop-off areas.

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 asked to present an introduction of these new laws to Planning Commission at its September 22, 2026 meeting. Kim will offer a summary of these bills and discuss the City’s requirement to amend its MMC implementing each bill. Further discussion on the particulars of MMC amendments to complete this project would commence following direction from Council for Planning Commission to recommend such amendments.

Attachment(s)

HB 1757
HB 1096
SB 5559
SB 5509

Proposed Planning Commission Motion:

Discussion item only. No action.