



MEDINA, WASHINGTON

AGENDA BILL

Monday, June 23, 2025

Subject: Lighting Ordinance – Interim Official Control

Category: Council Business

Staff Contact(s): Jennifer S. Robertson, City Attorney and Steve Wilcox, Development Services Director

Summary:

The City Council passed middle housing legislation on May 27, 2025 which takes effect on July 1, 2025. With the potential for significant increases in density and new construction, the Council expressed a desire to address the impacts of the lighting from such future developments in order to protect the sylvan nature of Medina, support “dark skies”, and make the new development more harmonious with the existing high quality natural and built environment in Medina. Lighting was also a prominent issues for the public when providing feedback on middle housing.

The ordinance presented is an “Interim Official Control” (“IOC”) which is a zoning ordinance that can be in effect while the staff, Planning Commission, and City Council consider, process, and perform outreach on permanent lighting regulations. This ensures that development applications that are submitted prior to the permanent regulations will be required to meet the IOC standards. These standards are described below.

The ordinance creates an interim new Chapter 16.25 in the Medina Municipal Code which will apply to all development in Medina. It consists of 8 new sections:

16.25.010 Purpose. This section describes the goals and purpose of the lighting code, including “dark sky”.

16.25.020 Definitions. This section includes definitions needed to implement the code, including accent lighting; cut-off angle (of a luminaire); director; fixture; foot-candle (measurement of brightness); lamp; light pollution; light trespass; luminaire; outdoor lighting fixture; shielding; and spotlight.

16.25.030 Applicability. This section makes the chapter applicable to all outdoor lighting fixtures on private and public property in Medina. The chapter does not apply to interior lighting unless such lighting is emitting light outside of the building and creating a light trespass.

16.25.040 Exemptions. This section provides exemption to the lighting code for traffic lights; streetlights which were installed prior to the ordinance; temporary emergency lighting; lights on moving vehicles; navigation lights; public recreational facilities; seasonal decoration; and outdoor lighting approved by the director for temporary or periodic events.

16.25.050 General standards. This section provides the performance standards for outdoor lighting. These include:

- Prohibiting light trespass
- Requiring lighting to be shielded and aimed downward and located as low as possible
- Requiring lighting to be designed to ensure no light trespass
- Prohibiting lighting from illuminating public waterways, except for navigational lights under state or federal regulations
- Requiring accent lights to be directed downward and not towards the sky or adjacent properties
- Limiting spotlighting on landscaping to 150 watts

16.25.060 Prohibited. This section prohibits:

- Searchlights
- Laser lights or similar high-intensity lights
- Quartz lamps
- Mercury vapor lamps
- Lighting of private sports courts or recreational facilities

16.25.070 Submittals. This section requires all building permits to include information on outdoor lighting and for the applicant to demonstrate compliance with the lighting code.

16.25.080 Figures of acceptable shielding and direction of outdoor light fixtures. This section contains graphics showing acceptable and unacceptable outdoor lighting fixtures.

In addition to the new chapter, the Ordinance includes amendments to MMC 16.66.110 which is the lighting standards for shoreline areas. MMC 16.66.110 was updated to incorporate Chapter 16.25 MMC into the shoreline lighting code for consistency across the city.

Interim Official Control. An interim official control is adopted using the same procedures as a moratorium. The Council may adopt the IOC but is required to hold a public hearing within 60 days. Given the August break, the ordinance sets the hearing for July 28, 2025. The ordinance also gives the Director of Development Services the authority to interpret the IOC. Assuming the public hearing is held, the ordinance will be in effect for 6 months and may be renewed if needed. While the ordinance is in effect, the Planning Commission and Council should consider and process permanent regulations.

These proposed Ordinances meet and support Council's priorities 2, 3, 4 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**

Attachment(s)

Exhibit 1: Ordinance No. 1043 adopting an interim official control for outdoor lighting

Budget/Fiscal Impact: None

Recommendation: Adopt Ordinance and direct the Planning Commission to review and process permanent lighting regulations.

Interim City Manager Approval: 

Proposed Council Motions:

MOTION 1: “I move adoption the Ordinance No. 1043, adopted pursuant to RCW 35A.63.220 and RCW 36.70A.390; imposing an interim official control relating to zoning, adding a new Chapter 16.25 to the Medina Municipal Code (MMC) to require outdoor lighting to meet certain standards therein, revising MMC 16.66.110 for consistency with new Chapter 16.25 MMC; adopting findings in support of this ordinance; providing for vested rights, interpretation authority and setting a public hearing as required by RCW 35A.63.220 and RCW 36.70A.390 to take testimony on this interim official control; providing for severability and corrections; and establishing an effective date.”

MOTION 2: “I move to direct the 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.”

Time Estimate: 45 minutes