



CITY OF MEDINA

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MEMORANDUM

DATE: May 28, 2025
TO: Medina Planning Commission
FROM: Jonathan G. Kesler, AICP, Planning Manager
RE: Middle Housing Update and Next Steps for Medina

UPDATE:

At the last meeting, this body reviewed the Middle Housing and Unit Lot Subdivision Ordinances in a public hearing. A unanimous vote to recommend approval to the Council was passed.

As noted in the May 27th Council packet, the City Council is continuing to process the required land use code updates for Middle Housing. At the May 12th Council Meeting, the Council held a public hearing on the two draft ordinances (Middle Housing and Unit Lot Subdivisions), which remained open through the May 27th Council meeting. The Council will continue to take public comments and will review the comments from the Department of Commerce as well as changes directed by both the Council and the Planning Commission.

Comments from the Department of Commerce. We received draft comments on the Middle Housing Amendment Ordinances (Middle Housing and Unit Lot Subdivisions) from Lexine Long, AICP, Senior Planner with Commerce and the review staff at the Department of Commerce this week. Overall, they expressed support for the Council's work and only issued two minor comments.

The first, more substantial, comment was about changing the definition of ADU in the Medina code to reflect that an ADU may be on the same lot as single-family homes but also on the same lot as duplex, triplex, townhome, or other housing units. Commerce recommended changing the definition in MMC 16.12.020 to align with [RCW 36.70A.696](#)(1). Staff have reached out to Commerce requesting that this not be required for Medina, as changing the ADU definition as suggested by Commerce will create confusion in the code. This is because Medina is a Tier 3 city and is subject to a two-dwelling unit density requirement. The Council has elected to treat ADUs as middle housing units for density purposes. Therefore, ADUs are only allowed if the primary unit on a lot is a single-family housing unit. In that scenario, there can be up to two ADUs added. However, when the primary unit(s) on the lot are middle housing type units (like duplex, triplex, townhome, or cottage), ADUs are *not* allowed.

Commerce was amenable to Medina's position after a discussion by phone with staff. Lexine Long noted in a May 23rd email: *We appreciate you addressing our comments to the extent possible, and do not plan to comment further. We will add this email communication to the Planview record, but do not plan to send a final comment letter.*

The second comment was minor and was regarding the inclusion of a provision in the Medina ADU regulations to allow an ADU to be sited on a lot line if the lot line abuts a public alley. This is a requirement of State law. ([RCW 36.70A.681.1.i.](#)) Staff has added language about property lines and ADUs when abutting a public alley, as requested by Commerce. That change is found in Section 16 of the Ordinance at MMC 16.34.020.D.10 and provides:

10. Detached ADUs may be sited at a lot line if the lot line abuts a public alley, unless it is a public alley that the City regularly snow plows.

Revisions Directed by Council and Planning Commission. In addition to the one revision requested by Commerce, staff also updated the Ordinances based on feedback provided previously by both the Planning Commission and Council. These changes are set forth below and are highlighted in yellow in the Council materials for ease of review:

1. **Condos.** On May 12th, the Council directed staff to add language regarding condo sales. This was added at Section 12 in MMC 16.21.060 by adding a new Subsection "E" which provides:

E. The creation or sale of condominiums consistent with State law is allowed provided that the maximum condominium units created or sold on a lot (or on a parent lot in the case of a lot split or unit lot subdivision) is limited to the maximum dwelling units as set forth in this section.

2. **Attached units.** The Planning Commission directed that language be added to the Unit Lot Subdivision Ordinance establishing the minimum attachment standard for zero lot line, attached homes. That language was added at Section 7, MMC 16.73.095 by adding a new Subsection "C" which provides:

C. The common wall construction as described in this section, must be a minimum length of twenty-five percent of the total length of each unit, or fifteen feet, whichever is longer.

Council will have the opportunity to review the three revisions, which are outlined in this Agenda. Council should also take any testimony as the public hearing was kept open from the May 12th Council meeting. If Council is ready to adopt both of the ordinances, it may do so. If the Council would like to wait and adopt the ordinances at its June 9th Council meeting, it may do so. If Council would like these ordinances to be on the Consent Calendar for June 9th, it may also direct that action. June 9th is the last opportunity to adopt the ordinances at a regular council meeting to ensure that they are in effect prior to the June 30th deadline.

NEXT STEPS:

Regarding what's next for the Planning Commission, staff will bring forward a proposal to Council on June 9th. It will begin the process of working on **affordable housing** issues. We will seek direction to bring the subject matter to this Commission for discussion to begin at the June 24, 2025, meeting.

As a brief refresher, recall that Medina has a 2019-2044 housing unit target of 19 units, per King County's Countywide Planning Policies (CPPs). As Medina's 2024 Comp Plan notes: *Policy H-1 of the 2022 CPPs establishes a countywide need for housing in 2044 by percentage of AMI. Table 4 demonstrates the allocation of projected housing units by income level, as established by the CPPs. To meet the 19 new housing units, King County has allocated 8 units between 0-30% AMI, 3 units between 31-50% AMI, and 8 units between 51-80% AMI; Medina has also been allocated 4 emergency housing10 units, which are not included in its housing target of 19.*

These challenging goals will be a primary focus of the upcoming work. Note: Table 4 and the entire 2024 Medina Comp Plan Housing Element are attached as Exhibit 1.

Exhibits:

- Exhibit 1 – Housing Element of the 2024 Medina Comprehensive Plan