

## Public Engagement Plan

### City of Medina Middle Housing Project

#### Introduction

The Public Engagement and Communication Plan is a working document that describes the goals, objectives, activities, and timeline for community engagement conducted in support of the Department of Commerce Middle Housing Grant. This includes the following elements:

- Objectives of the Public Engagement and Communication Plan.
- Key messages we want to convey to the public about middle housing and this project.
- Stakeholder groups to engage as part of the process, including details on the information needs or engagement objectives for each group.
- Strategies for engagement corresponding to the timeline in the project plan.
- Timeline of the project and engagement activities.
- Summary of previous engagement done by cities to create a shared understanding of what the City of Medina has done to engage the community on housing issues, including challenges.
- Use of a Middle Housing webpage to keep the public informed as to the status of this update.

This Plan will be amended as needed to ensure that there is broad public engagement in the Middle Housing Land Use Code Update.

#### Objectives

The objectives for public engagement are:

1. Engage community members who have not reliably participated in previous community planning efforts.
2. Identify racially disparate impacts, any previous displacement, and exclusion in housing in the City of Medina, how these impacts are experienced day-to-day, and how might changes in city policy impact the community.
3. Identify areas and communities at greater displacement risk.
4. Identify barriers to building middle housing in existing neighborhoods, including concerns of residents of existing neighborhoods and barriers to developmental feasibility.
5. Lay the groundwork for successful Middle Housing Land Use Plan Update by disseminating key messages and information (*see* key messages below) and addressing common concerns about updating city policies and codes to allow for more diverse housing types.
6. Increase the community's understanding of middle housing types and the benefits they can bring the community.
7. Help the public and stakeholders understand state law requirements applicable to Medina in terms of updating the land use code for the purposes of allowing middle housing and accessory dwelling units.

## *Key Messages from the State Department of Commerce*

The following key messages will guide communications throughout all community engagement efforts.

### **About Middle Housing**

1. Middle housing refers to homes that are between single-family homes and larger apartment buildings.
  - Middle Housing was commonly built throughout Washington communities until the rise in popularity of single-family zones in the mid-twentieth century. Exhibit 1 illustrates types of middle housing.
  - Middle Housing buildings can be at the same scale as single-family buildings.
  
2. Medina is mandated to comply with Washington requirements for middle housing and accessory dwelling units (ADUs).
  - State law requires certain cities to allow middle housing and accessory dwelling units.
  - Medina is a “Tier 3 City” under the middle housing legislation and therefore must allow an additional unit on every residential lot, with limited exceptions.
  - Medina also must allow for zero lot line subdivisions as part of the State middle housing legislation.
  
- 2.3. Middle Housing includes diverse housing options such as townhouses, duplexes, triplexes, fourplexes, courtyard buildings, cottage housing, and live/work lofts.
  - Common before 1940, these housing types were outlawed in planning practices due to the rising popularity of exclusive single-family zones, which only permitted single detached housing structures. Historic neighborhoods have utilized middle housing to create mixed-use space.
  - The architectural style, scale, and density of middle housing can be similar to single-family homes or different. Middle housing options are often compatible in neighborhoods with primarily single-family buildings.
  - Middle housing can be rented or owned.
  - Middle housing serves housing needs not met by single-family homes or large-scale multifamily development.
  - Middle housing offers housing that meets the needs of multigenerational households, households that don't have the interest or capacity to maintain a larger home and yard, single households, allow a worker to live near their workplace or clients, students, a young family to be close to the support of relatives, someone experiencing hardship to stay near friends, a young adult to remain in the neighborhood they grew up in, or an older adult to age in place.
  - Middle Housing promotes more efficient use of existing infrastructure and more

walkability in neighborhoods.

- Middle Housing can allow for more affordable options.
- Middle Housing options can offer homeownership opportunities, particularly entry-level homeownership.
- Middle Housing can prevent large portions of the community from being excluded from areas of the community.

3.4. Changing zoning to allow for missing middle housing does not affect the property value of existing homes.

- Property values are based on the condition and size of your land and structure(s), as well as market conditions.
- Allowing missing middle housing is associated with potential land value increases on lots that are suitable for redevelopment.
- Reinvestment into existing neighborhoods can improve the infrastructure for everyone, such as adding sidewalks, transportation improvements, and neighborhood-based services.
- New investment into development and amenities will increase property values. Depending on market conditions, these changes may not happen within the 30-year planning horizon.

4.5. Changing zoning to allow for middle housing does not affect property taxes of existing homes. Future development and investment may impact future property values and thus taxes.

- New investment in a neighborhood can increase the value of land and property, which may increase the landowners' property taxes. Depending on market conditions, these changes may not happen within the 20-year planning horizon.
- Washington State offers property tax relief programs to senior citizens, disabled persons, households with limited income, widows, and widowers of veterans. A household at risk of losing their home due to property tax increases may be eligible for property tax exemptions or relief.

Cities who have legalized middle housing have seen incremental change in neighborhoods.

- Cities that have legalized middle housing types have increased the variety of new housing, though only modest upticks in the number of middle housing units. Most of the new housing is still single- family or apartment units.

5.6. Why aren't we just building more affordable housing?

- Our current housing challenges largely stem from not enough housing relative to job growth and new household formation. The solution is more housing.
- Local government does not build housing, it establishes rules on what can be built where. Housing is primarily built by private homebuilders.
- Current regulations, including restricting most of our residential areas to low numbers of housing units, prevent homebuilders from innovating in response to market demand.

- All types of new housing are needed, including affordable housing and more expensive housing. Housing prices tend to continue to appreciate when there is a variety of housing options but at more manageable rates.

**About the Middle Housing Land Use Code Update Project**

1. This project is funded by a grant from the Washington State Department of Commerce.
2. This project is one of many efforts to address the housing affordability crisis in King County, and more generally Washington State.
  - Housing costs have risen three times as fast as incomes over the past decade in King County (2010-2021), creating challenges for both owner and renter households.
  - The cost to purchase an average home is only affordable to those with incomes more than \$569,131 which is 524% of HUD AMI and 268% of the City’s median income. Even a bottom tier home requires a household income of \$411,773, or 194% of HUD AMI.
  - Renters spending more than 30% of their income on rent are considered cost-burdened. About 30% of households are cost-burdened or severely cost-burdened in Medina, which includes tenants and owners. Of these, 52% of renters in Medina are cost burdened or severely cost burdened. Renter-occupied housing makes up only 14% of households in Medina, compared to 43% for King County overall. Entry-level homeownership is not possible without affordable rental options.
3. This project aims to identify unmet housing needs and policy options to meet those needs.
  - This project will seek to identify areas suitable for zoning to allow for middle housing. This may be based on access to jobs, transit, infrastructure, or other factors. The City will use this information to inform future changes to zoning and regulations to allow more diverse housing types within the community.
  - Where middle housing is allowed, it must still meet City development standards.
  - Development standards regulate development on topics like parking requirements, impervious surfaces, building height, setbacks, and architectural design.
4. This Project is required by state law as Medina is classified as a Tier 3 City under the state middle housing legislation. As a result, Medina must update its land use code to allow middle housing that increases density to two dwelling units for each single family, with limited exceptions. In addition, Medina must allow for ADUs (which may be counted as the middle housing) and zero lot line subdivisions.
- 4.5. This Middle Housing Land Use Update will inform future updates to local land use and zoning regulations. Washington State is requiring all GMA planning cities to allow greater housing diversity in existing neighborhoods.
  - Washington State Law requires all cities to update their comprehensive land use policies and development regulations. The updates are required (RCW 36.70A.070(2)) to account for housing needs at all economic levels, include provisions for middle housing options, and to identify and remedy existing policies that may have a

discriminatory impact.

- State law also requires cities (Tiers 1, 2, and 3) to allow a certain density of middle housing and requires cities to allow accessory dwelling units. *See* RCW 36.70A.635 - .638; RCW 36.70A.630; and RCW 36.70A.680 - .682.

The Growth Management Act requires that the City of Medina establish procedures providing for early and continuous public participation in the development and amendment of comprehensive land use plans and development regulations. The procedures described below for the City of Medina Middle Housing Land Use Code Update Process will achieve the following:

**A. Early and continuous participation**

In addition to meeting the requirements set forth in Chapter 16.81 MMC, the City Council, Planning Commission, or designee and city staff will ensure expansive and effective public involvement by using methods that include surveys, information bulletins, and distribution lists for all interested parties to receive regular notices, meeting advertisements, and updates. The public will be well advised of the opportunities for involvement and particularly encouraged to participate in the drafting and review of the proposed updates to the Medina Development Regulations.

**B. Communication and information programs**

City staff will use all available and practical means to encourage participation at all levels, through outreach and educational efforts, ~~including television appearances,~~ presence at public events, and the city website. The primary method of communication will be via the City's website.

A bulletin-type publication will be posted, and updated regularly, at City Hall and on the City's website with a copy sent to the Bellevue School District. This bulletin is designed to describe the Medina Middle Housing Land Use Code Update process, outline opportunities for public involvement, and provide contact information, including the website and email for public inquiry and comment. Detailed information and progress reports may be available upon request for local organizations and media outlets, such as local newsletters, ~~news articles, and radio announcements.~~

**C. Public meetings with adequate notice**

All formal public meetings concerning the Middle Housing Land Use Code Update will be advertised throughout the community. Formal public notices will be posted and published in consistent locations including the City Hall office, Bellevue School District office, and in "The Seattle Times" (local newspaper) as required. Interested parties will be further notified through a notice distribution list, providing process updates and meeting details.

**D. Provisions for open discussion**

Open discussion will result from a fair and open process, with various opportunities for public input. Public workshops will be advertised and made accessible to the broadest audience possible, building on established venues whenever possible. The discussion will be ensured and encouraged by designated time for facilitated discussion, public hearings before the adoption of amendments, and well-noticed public comment periods.

**E. Opportunity for written comments**

Written comments will be accepted and encouraged at all public meeting venues and in various forms, including email messages and facsimiles. Notice of public comment periods will encourage written comments and provide contact information, especially on draft comprehensive plan

updates. Comments should be addressed to Jonathan G. Kesler, AICP, Planning Manager, City of Medina Planning Department at:

Medina City Hall, 501 Evergreen Point Rd, Medina, WA 98039

Email: [jkesler@medina-wa.gov](mailto:jkesler@medina-wa.gov)

Subject: Medina Middle Housing Land Use Code Update

(Website) <https://www.medina-wa.gov/>

Planning staff will provide public comment cards or online comment options at meetings and at strategic locations throughout the City. Written comments will be presented to the Council during official public meetings.

**F. Consideration and “fair response” to public comments**

All comments on draft proposals and alternatives will be accepted and brought to the attention of the Planning Commission for their consideration. Written comments will also be kept on file for public review. City Planning Staff will acknowledge the receipt of written comments by sending a response with notification of opportunities for further involvement.

**G. Broad dissemination of proposals and alternatives**

Draft proposals and alternatives will be broadly disseminated throughout the community. A bulletin-type publication, [distributed by email, posted on the City website, and](#) posted at various locations to provide general information about the process, will direct the public to the city-wide locations for reviewing the draft materials.

Locations for the review of draft proposals and alternatives include:

1. City Hall Office, 501 Evergreen Point Rd, Medina, WA 98039
2. City of Medina website, <https://www.medina-wa.gov/>.