



MEDINA, WASHINGTON

AGENDA BILL

Monday, August 24, 2026

Subject/Topic: Public Hearing – Ordinance 1059	Proposed Council Action/Motion:
Dept. Origin: Development Services Department	☐ Information Only
Category: Public Hearing	☐ Receive and File
Prepared by: Jennifer S. Robertson, City Attorney	☐ Discuss
Attachments: Ordinance Nos. 1059 and 1052	☐ Provide Direction
	☒ Public Hearing
	☐ Adopt/Approve
	☐ Other:

Proposed Council Action

No action is proposed or requested at this August 24, 2026 Council meeting. This matter is on solely to hold the required public hearing and take testimony from the public.

Summary

The impacts of large private residential development projects on neighboring properties have been a topic for the City of Medina over the past several years. This is an overview of Medina's recent history regarding actions to address development project impacts which had previously been termed "bulk".

- A significant development project in the early 1990's caused the City to create a highly formalized construction mitigation process. This is the earliest record that the City discussed large development project impacts.
- March and June 2007 the Planning Commission discussed pitched roof incentives with the underlying goal of reducing building bulk near property lines. The topic originated from residents who complained about *"the look and feel of tall, boxy, flat roofed buildings, which are constructed 10 feet from their side yard property lines."*
- April 10, 2010 the City Council clarified that the topic was *"more about reducing the impact of building bulk on neighboring properties than it was about encouraging more pitched roof construction."* The Council directed the topic to the Planning Commission.
- September 29, 2010 the Planning Commission provided a report to the Council titled "Analysis of angled setbacks" in response to the April 10, 2010 direction.

The Planning Commission reviewed several options to reduce the impact of bulk including architectural design standards that affect the look and feel of a building, setback and

height standards including the “wedding cake” setback standard or an angled setback standard. Floor area ratio was discussed as a method of creating flexibility by moving bulk around on a property.

Planning Commission concluded that angled setbacks were the best method of reducing the impact of bulk on neighboring properties, however they did not recommend moving forward with angled setbacks as a solution due to the creation of nonconforming properties and other potential unintended consequences.

Over the next 3-4 years there were zoning code amendments made by the Development Services Director with much of this intended to address the impact of bulk on neighboring properties.

- June 25, 2019 the Planning Commission was introduced to the topic of “Regulating Bulk”. The issue was described as *“at its core, an issue about change in neighborhood character.”*

On the 2019 Planning Commission Calendar was the topic *“Review residential development policy re: bulk, second story setback.”*

The Planning Commission spent about 18-months evaluating the topic of regulating bulk with minor result.

With intention to protect residents from certain impacts of large new development projects, the City of Medina has made good faith attempts since at least 2007 to address the matter. The topic of development project impacts has unfortunately not gone away. Discussions involved in adoption of the state-mandated Middle Housing Ordinance 1040, along with recent resident complaints about large development project impacts have caused the City Council to once again take action.

On February 23, 2026 the Medina City Council adopted interim regulations under Ordinance No. 1052 through a 5:1 vote. Summary of Ordinance 1052:

- Amends Medina Municipal Code (MMC) Table 16.22.030 by increasing minimum side yard building setbacks in all zones, and adding required second story side yard setback from the property lines.

Intent: Increases the privacy of existing Medina residents adjacent to new development projects.

- Amends MMC 16.22.040 to require partial or solid landscape screening.

Intent: Enhances neighboring property privacy and soften the appearance of new development projects.

- Amends MMC 16.22.040 to require sound attenuation of permanently installed water features and similar to a level where neighboring properties do not hear them.

Intent: Protect Medina residents from nuisance sound.

- Amends MMC 16.23.050 and 16.23.060 to eliminate the Bonus Height Standard.

Intent: Remove an administrative decision-making process which has potential for resulting negative impacts on Medina residents who are adjacent to new development projects.

- Amends MMC 16.44.040 to regulate interior lighting which can be seen outside of a dwelling and regulates exterior light trespass on vacant homes.

Intent: Protect Medina residents from new development projects lighting.

In addition, the Council and Planning Commission have been working steadily towards permanent regulations for Phase 1 of this project.

Work on Phase 1:

Since adoption of Ordinance 1052, the Planning Commission and Staff have been working diligently to engage with the public and industry professionals to develop recommendations to address the impacts of Ordinance 1052, particularly on narrow lots. A minor deviation code to address these issues will be presented to the Planning Commission on July 28th with the expectation that it will come to Council in September.

Extension and Modification of Interim Official Control by Ordinance No. 1059:

On July 27th, the Council passed Ordinance No. 1059 extending the interim official control (IOC) with modification which came about due to input from the public. The changes enacted are outlined below:

Setbacks: The extension ordinance removes the second story setback from the IOC (Table 16.22.030).

Protrusions into Setbacks: Clarifying that for the purposes of measuring structures which are over 30 inches in height, that the measurement is “above the existing or finished grade, whichever is lower”. (MMC 16.22.040.)

Lighting for Vacant Residences: Revising the changes made to MMC 16.44.040.H to change the language from:

Interior lights which can be seen from outside of the dwelling shall be kept turned off except when the structure is occupied.

To: Interior lights ~~which can be seen from outside of the dwelling~~ that are visible to or from neighboring properties shall be kept turned off except when the structure is occupied.

Updating Minimum Lot Widths: Given that the narrow lots have created the most impacts and are therefore most impacted by the interim regulations. By modifying the minimum lot widths, no new lots that are narrow will be created during the period that the IOC is in effect. This helps alleviate future problems with impacts created by new narrow lots. (MMC 16.22.020.)

In order to keep the interim official control (as modified) in effect, a public hearing needs to be held within 60 days of passage. The August 24th public hearing meets this requirement. No other action is requested.

Next Steps

The Council does not need to take any action following the public hearing. On August 25th the Planning Commission will hold a public hearing on the Phase 1 work. If approved, that ordinance will then be in front of the City Council in September. Once the Phase 1 work is completed, the Council will establish the scope for Phase 2 work to be undertaken by the Planning Commission.

Council Priorities

This proposal furthers Council Priorities #3 and #5.

1. Financial Stability and Accountability
2. Quality Infrastructure
3. Efficient and Effective Government
4. Public Safety and Health
5. Neighborhood Character and Community Building

Budget/Fiscal Impact: None.

Recommendation: Accept public testimony.

City Manager Approval: 

Proposed Council Motions: Move to open the public hearing, take testimony from the public, then close the public hearing.