

City of Medina 2015 Comprehensive Plan

As adopted by Ordinance No. 924, October 12, 2015

1. LAND USE ELEMENT

INTRODUCTION

The Land Use element has been developed in accordance with the GMA (RCW 36.70A) to designate the proposed general distribution, location, and where appropriate, extent of land uses. The Land Use element includes population densities, building intensities, and estimates of future population growth.

This element has also been developed in accordance with King County countywide planning policies (CPP), which direct jurisdictions to focus growth in the cities within the designated Urban Growth Area.

Medina lies within the King County designated Urban Growth Area, but is not a designated Urban Center or Activity Area.

EXISTING CONDITIONS

Residential Uses

Medina is a developed community that consists almost exclusively of single-family homes on individual lots. At the time of the City's incorporation, it was the desire of the community to promote a development pattern that would maintain a single-family residential character. Since that time, Medina has developed and matured according to that vision. Medina historically promoted a development pattern of approximately two homes per acre, which originally corresponded to the maximum enrollment capacity of the two elementary schools. The walking scale of the City's limited street grid, the narrow streets (requiring sufficient area on a building site for off-street parking), the level of fire protection service, the limited internal public transportation system, and the density patterns adopted by neighboring communities – all suggest that the existing overall densities are appropriate for Medina.

In some parts of Medina the development pattern that existed prior to the City's incorporation is sufficient to justify a downward adjustment of the 20,000 square foot average lots size. The Medina Heights area, for example, has been largely developed to an average lot size of 15,000 square feet; however, many of these lots are significantly smaller. In this area and others where such circumstances are present, the 16,000 square foot average lot size specified in the Medina Municipal Code is appropriate. In other areas of the City, existing development patterns, topography, or proximity to Lake Washington justify lower development density; hence a 30,000 square foot average lot size has been instituted for these areas (see Figure 2).

Actual residential densities range from approximately five units per acre in the area between NE 24th Street and NE 28th Street to less than one unit per acre along sections of the Lake Washington shoreline. Average density based on the 2014 King County Buildable Lands Report is 1.98 dwelling units per net acre.

Non-Residential Uses

The non-residential uses that exist in Medina are dispersed throughout the City (see Figure 3). Below is an inventory of land uses found in Medina (Table 1).

Table 1. Land Use Inventory

Land Use	Acres
Single-Family Residential	589.65
Overlake Golf & Country Club	130.44
Medina Park	17.17
Fairweather Nature Preserve	10.08
View Point Park	0.15
Medina Beach Park & City Hall	1.48
Bellevue Christian School	8.29
Medina Elementary School	7.34
Wells Medina Nursery	5.59
St. Thomas Church/School	5.62
Medina Post Office	0.50
Medina Grocery Store	0.22
Gas Station	0.39
South Puget Power Substation	1.63
North Puget Power Substation	0.65
King County Pump Station	0.22
SR 520 Stormwater Facility	2.10
SR 520 Right-of-Way	15.21
City Rights-of-Way	101.68
TOTAL	902.14

Source: King County GIS Center, January 2010

Most of the non-residential land uses that exist in Medina have been in place since before or around the time of the City’s incorporation and have become an accepted and integral part of the community. These non-residential uses are subject to the City’s special use provisions under the Municipal Code. Since Medina is fully developed, there are no tracts of land available for further commercial development nor is there zoning or public support for such development. If the existing use of any of the non-residential properties should change, it is to be developed in conformity with its underlying residential zoning classification or in a manner compatible with surrounding properties in accordance with the City’s conditional use provisions. In addition, property currently used or designated for residential use is strongly discouraged from being utilized for additional churches, clubs, fraternal societies, schools, museums, historic sites, conference centers, or other additional non-residential facilities. These larger scale facilities create additional traffic, disrupt residential traffic patterns, and are inconsistent with Medina’s residential character.

POPULATION AND GROWTH POTENTIAL

The Growth Management Act (GMA) and the King County countywide planning policies (CPP) encourage cities to assume an increasing share of new growth in the future, in order to minimize new growth in rural areas of King County. This means that cities planning under GMA should

accommodate more compact development patterns in “appropriate areas” to absorb the additional share of future growth.

Although Medina is expected to absorb some growth over the next twenty years, the following factors severely constrain Medina’s ability to provide significant population growth:

- Medina is landlocked, with no opportunities for annexation;
- There are limited areas in the City capable of supporting development or redevelopment;
- Limited public transportation system;
- No business district; and
- Environmental constraints.

Population and Employment

Population and employment trends are the basis for determining the amount of land and services required to accommodate anticipated growth in the City.

The 2010 census places Medina’s population at 2,969, with 1,061 households and an average household size of 2.80 persons. Since 2000, the population has decreased by 42 persons and the number of households has decreased from 1,111 to 1,061. Both of these numbers align with an overall slightly downward trend in both population and number of households since 1980 (Figure 1). The increase in population between 1990 and 2000 was due to a substantial increase in the number of children (persons under 18), from 696 to 816. Contrary to the overall decrease in population, the number of children have continued to increase since 2000, with 862 persons under 18 in 2010.

According to PSRC’s 2013 Quarterly Census of Employment, there were 461 jobs based in Medina in 2010; the majority of these jobs are classified as finance/services. Major employers in the City include the City, the Overlake Golf and Country Club, the Chevron gas station, and the schools.

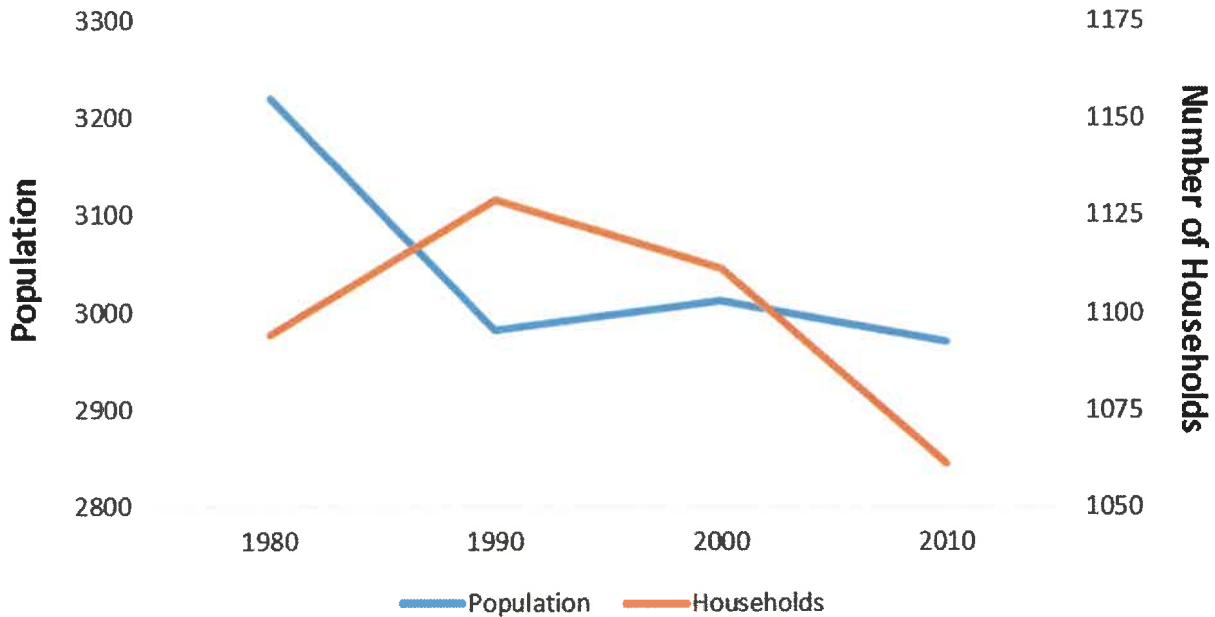


Figure 1. Population and number of households in Medina, 1980-2010.

Population Forecast

The Washington Office of Financial Management provides population forecasts for counties every ten years. As required by the Growth Management Act, the jurisdictions in King County allocate forecasted growth for the succeeding 20 years, and develop and adopt local growth targets for housing and employment based on this allocation.

The PSRC uses these local targets to develop a future land use scenario consistent with the VISION 2040 regional growth strategy. According to this scenario, represented by the PSRC’s 2013 Land Use Target dataset, population in Medina is expected to increase by 46 persons by 2035.¹ Development in Medina is expected to result in a net increase of 35 additional jobs and 27 additional housing units.

¹ Local growth targets are adopted in housing units. The 2035 growth target for Medina is 27 housing units. To estimate population and household (occupied housing unit) forecasts from the growth target, PSRC applies a set of assumptions. This population forecast assumes vacancy rates similar to those observed in 2000. 2000 was chosen as a more representative, or “baseline,” year than 2010, which was affected by the recession. The forecast also assumes a person-per-household rate of 2.64, which reflects anticipated demographic changes. These are the same assumptions used in forecasting the number of households in 2035, discussed in Comprehensive Plan Chapter 4, Housing.

Future Growth Issues

The GMA requires cities in King County to participate in the Buildable Lands Program, which offers the opportunity for local governments to coordinate and analyze land supply to make sure that they have enough lands for development and to make sure that their respective comprehensive plans are doing what they are expected to do. Medina's Buildable Lands Analysis, completed in 2014, estimates that the City has the capacity to accommodate a total of an additional 46 new housing units under current zoning with recognition of current market trends (although, as noted above, only 27 new housing units are anticipated by 2035).

There are several general trends occurring in Medina that make the potential for increased growth through redevelopment limited. First, there are a number of older, smaller homes on existing lots. The most common redevelopment practice has been to raze such a structure and construct a new, larger residence in its place. Consequently, there is no net increase in the total number of housing units.

Increasing house size through remodel is also common, particularly in the R-16 zoning district. The R-16 zoning districts contain a number of lots that were platted before incorporation of the City that are now of sub-standard size. Since the current lot development standards are more restrictive than before incorporation, it is often easier to increase the size of a home by making additions rather than tearing down and rebuilding. Again, the result is no net increase in the number of housing units.

The purchase and agglomeration of several adjacent lots to create one parcel is one type of development activity that leads to a flux in the number of developable properties. Agglomeration has occurred on a few occasions in the past, and is likely to continue to a limited extent in the future. The result is a net loss of potentially developable sites. The common theme to current development in Medina is a move towards larger, single-family households, which precludes any net increase in housing units.

In the R-20 and R-30 zoning districts, there are a limited number of large parcels that could potentially be replatted. While a handful of new lots may be created, the addition of these lots would probably be offset by the net loss through agglomeration. Consequently, the number of housing units created through redevelopment will likely remain constant.

Medina is surrounded by incorporated municipalities and cannot extend its boundaries through annexation; therefore, its Urban Growth Area corresponds to its existing boundaries.

An increase in the number of housing units in Medina can be achieved per existing zoning only by the following actions:

- Development of the few remaining lots;
- Subdividing and developing existing properties to their maximum development potential;
- Restricting lot consolidation;
- Development of accessory dwelling units.

Therefore, the current land use pattern and general densities will likely remain largely unchanged over the next 20 years.

Within a four-mile radius of City Hall, there are hundreds of commercial establishments providing well over a million square feet of retail space and an increasing number of professional, health, and social services. Due to their extent and proximity, it is unnecessary for Medina to duplicate these land uses.

In addition, the public transportation system within Medina does not support higher residential densities or increased commercial development. The Countywide Policies are specific about encouraging increased densities and development to locate in those areas of the county where there are sufficient transportation opportunities. Medina has only one major arterial (on the east side of town) and only a few direct transit connections.

The major employers in Medina are the three schools and the golf course. Together, they account for approximately 305 jobs. City government, including administrators, staff, and police, provides 24 jobs. There are also approximately 15 people employed by the gas station, Medina grocery store, nursery, and post office. Additional employment is provided by individual residential properties in the form of housekeeping, groundskeeping, and other household staff positions. Total employment within Medina is listed in the PSRC's 2013 Quarterly Census of Employment as 461 jobs. The PSRC forecasts an increase to 496 jobs by 2035. The majority of this increase is forecasted to occur in the service sector, which is already the largest employment sector in Medina. There is no planned or expected increase in retail or commercial space in Medina. However, there are an increasing number of people working from home. Consequently, traditional employment in Medina is forecasted to remain relatively stable, but there will likely be an increase in home occupations.

SPECIAL PLANNING AREAS AND ESSENTIAL PUBLIC FACILITIES

Certain areas within the City have unique planning requirements because of the impact these areas and the facilities they contain have on surrounding uses. These areas and facilities typically serve regional needs, and any planning involving them requires coordination with other jurisdictions and agencies. By establishing a process for reviewing requests for development within these designated Special Planning Areas, the City can ensure that (i) the public will be included in the planning process, (ii) appropriate mitigation is implemented, (iii) adverse impacts on the surrounding uses and the City as a whole will be minimized, and (iv) regional planning will be facilitated. To accomplish these goals, development within designated Special Planning Areas will be handled through the City's Special Use Public Hearing process.

It is intended that future development of Special Planning Areas will be guided by the need to limit or mitigate the impact of such development on surrounding uses and the City as a whole. The role of government, in this context, is to seek a balance between the needs of a growing population and preservation of the environment and to ensure the maintenance of a high standard of living.

Any consideration of facilities to be sited within Special Planning Areas (or the expansion of existing facilities within Special Planning Areas) should follow submittal by the applicant of a

Master Plan for the facility providing at a minimum the application criteria specified in Chapter 20.32 and must apply and integrate, to the extent applicable, the policies and requirements of:

- This Comprehensive Plan.
- The City's Shoreline Master Program (Subtitle 20.6), the SEPA Model Ordinance, Critical Areas Regulations (Ch. 20.50 and 20.67), Construction Mitigation Ordinance (Ch. 15.20), and Medina Tree Code (Ch. 20.52).
- Environmental assessments and studies procured by the City dealing with drainage and water quality, wildlife habitat, noise, the City's shoreline and aquatic habitat, and air quality.
- State and regional plans and studies.
- Reports and studies generated by the towns of Hunts Point and Yarrow Point, and the City of Clyde Hill on issues common to the Points Communities.

SR 520 Corridor Special Planning Area:

This Special Planning Area consists of the SR 520 right-of-way, including the Evergreen Point Bridge to mid-span, which runs across the City at the base of Evergreen Point, from Lake Washington on the west to the City's boundaries with the Town of Hunts Point and the City of Clyde Hill on the east. The area has undergone significant changes as part of the Washington Department of Transportation (WSDOT) SR 520 bridge replacement project. In addition to replacing the floating bridge, approaches, and interchanges, the project includes a lidded overpass at Evergreen Point Road in Medina, with pedestrian access down to a median transit stop. The new bridge features two general travel lanes and one HOV lane in each direction. The bridge also includes a bicycle/pedestrian path that connects to regional trails east of Medina, and a pedestrian overlook and view corridor within the bridge's southern right-of-way west of Evergreen Point Road.

84th Avenue N.E. Corridor Special Planning Area:

This Special Planning Area consists of that portion of the 84th Avenue N.E. right-of-way within the City of Medina between the SR 520 interchange on the north and N.E. 12th Street on the south. The easterly portion of the 84th Avenue N.E. right-of-way is located within the City of Clyde Hill. In 2012, the City completed improvements to a 0.75-mile stretch of the corridor between NE 12th Street and NE 24th Street. Improvements included new roadway resurfacing, new road channelization with formal designated bike lanes, and a new landscaped median.

Essential Public Facilities:

The GMA requires that jurisdictions planning under its authority develop and adopt a process for identifying and siting essential public facilities. The GMA defines essential public facilities as "those facilities that are typically difficult to site, such as airports, state education facilities, state or regional transportation facilities [such as SR 520], state and local correctional facilities, solid waste handling facilities, and in-patient facilities, including substance abuse facilities, mental health facilities, and group homes." The County and all its cities must jointly agree upon the siting process for these types of facilities. The GMA states that no Comprehensive Plan or development regulation may preclude the siting of essential public facilities. SR 520 is the only essential public facility currently located in Medina.

The City reviews proposals for the siting of essential public facilities or the expansion of existing essential public facilities through the Special Planning Area process. If a proposed essential public facility is not located within a Special Planning Area, the proposed essential public facility shall be designated as a Special Planning Area. The boundaries of the resulting Special Planning Area will be the boundaries of the proposed essential public facility.

LAND USE PLAN

Medina has developed and matured into the type of community envisioned at the time of its incorporation. Old and new residents alike have invested substantially in their homes on the premise that Medina will continue to maintain its residential quality and character. Development ordinances and regulations have been adopted over time to assure that these expectations are met. As the above discussions indicate, there are no compelling reasons for Medina to institute fundamental changes to its basic land use pattern.

It is important to the community that uses such as the post office and the Medina grocery store, and facilities such as the City Hall, clock tower, and water tower are retained because of their functional, historic and cultural contribution to the City. The historical character of these buildings and structures, and appropriate uses should be retained for future generations. In line with this policy, in 2013 the City Council amended its zoning regulations and map (Ordinance No. 900) to better reflect existing uses. St. Thomas Church/School and the Post Office were both rezoned under the Park and Public Places zoning designation. The amendment also created more uniform zoning boundaries, and eliminated split zoning on individual parcels.

In the absence of any substantial future growth, it is the basic policy of the City to retain and promote the high-quality residential setting that has become the hallmark of the Medina community. Medina will continue to consider ways in which to restrict the size of homes so that individual lots do not become over-developed and adversely impact the character of the community or the environment.

Future Land Use Designations

The Future Land Use Map adopted in this plan establishes the future distribution, extent, and location of generalized land uses within the City (see Figure 3). The land use categories on the Future Land Use Map include Single Family Residential, Local Business, Public Facility, School/Institution, Utility, Park, and Open Space.

GOALS

- LU-G1 To maintain Medina’s high-quality residential setting and character.
- LU-G2 To maintain, preserve, and enhance the functional and historic contributions of Medina’s public facilities and amenities.
- LU-G3 To maintain active community involvement in land use policy and regulations.
- LU-G4 To preserve community treasures, including, but not limited to, those structures and uses that reflect the City’s heritage and history.

POLICIES

- LU-P1 The City shall minimize changes to existing zoning and land use patterns except as to meet above goals when deemed necessary by its citizens.
- LU-P2 The City shall consider ways to restrict the size of homes in order to retain the character of the community and lessen impacts associated with construction.
- LU-P3 Residential uses shall not be considered for conversion to non-residential use except when clearly supported by the community and when impacts to the surrounding area can be fully mitigated.
- LU-P4 The City shall develop a program to preserve community treasures, including, but not limited to, those historical structures that reflect the City's heritage and history.
- LU-P5 Existing non-residential uses are encouraged to be maintained. Existing non-residential uses include:
- City Hall
 - Medina Grocery Store
 - Post Office
 - Bellevue Christian School
 - Wells Medina Nursery
 - Overlake Golf and Country Club
 - St. Thomas Church
 - St. Thomas School
 - Gas Station
 - Medina Elementary School
 - City facilities and parks
 - Utilities
- LU-P6 Existing non-residential uses within a residential zone may be converted to residential use, or may be redeveloped with a new non-residential use in a manner compatible with surrounding properties when allowed through the conditional use process.
- LU-P7 The City shall work with WSDOT and City residents to develop mitigation measures that it seeks to be implemented as part of regional facilities development or improvement projects, such as SR 520 and related structures and improvements.
- LU-P8 The City shall encourage and facilitate public participation in all land use planning processes.
- LU-P9 The City shall afford due consideration to all stakeholders prior to any land use decision.
- LU-P10 Development of Special Planning Areas and essential public facilities shall require review of a Master Plan that addresses mitigation of impacts on surrounding uses and the City as a whole.
- LU-P11 If a proposed essential public facility is not located in an existing Special Planning Area, the proposed site of the essential public facility shall be designated as a Special Planning Area.

- LU-P12 The City shall not preclude the siting of essential public facilities.
- LU-P13 The process to site proposed new or expansions to existing essential public facilities should consist of the following:
- a. An inventory of similar existing essential public facilities, including their locations and capacities;
 - b. A forecast of the future needs for the essential public facility;
 - c. An analysis of the potential social and economic impacts and benefits to jurisdictions receiving or surrounding the facilities;
 - d. An analysis of the proposal's consistency with County and City policies;
 - e. An analysis of alternatives to the facility, including decentralization, conservation, demand management and other strategies;
 - f. An analysis of alternative sites based on siting criteria developed through an inter-jurisdictional process;
 - g. An analysis of environmental impacts and mitigation; and
 - h. Extensive public involvement.