Normal Neighborhood Working Group

July 24th, 4:00-5:30

Community Development Building
Siskiyou Room
51 Winburn Way

I. CALL TO ORDER:

- 4:00 Community Development Building, 51 Winburn Way

II. CONSENT AGENDA

- **Approval of Minutes**
  - July 10, 2014 Meeting.

III. DISCUSSION ITEMS

- Greenway and Open Space Framework (creek corridors, riparian areas & wetlands)
- "Conservation Area" Designation
  - Amendment procedure

IV. PUBLIC FORUM

- 10 minutes

V. NEXT MEETING

- August 21, 2014 - Transportation Framework
  - Quorum Check

VI. ADJOURNMENT

MINUTES FOR THE NORMAL NEIGHBORHOOD WORKING GROUP
Thursday, July 10, 2014
Council Chambers, 1175 E. Main Street

Pam Marsh called the meeting to order at 4:34 p.m. in the Council Chambers.

Mayor Stromberg, Michael Morris, Michael Dawkins, Rich Kaplan, Brandon Goldman, and Bill Molnar were present.

Mayor appointed Councilor Marsh as chair pro-tem.

1. Consent Agenda
Dawkins/Kaplan M/S to approve the minutes as presented. Voice Vote; all ayes. Motion passes.

2. Discussion items
Marsh reviewed the focus of each meeting agreed upon at the last meeting. She explained the mapping "homework" she asked each of the group members to do, requesting that they filled out a map of the area as they would like to see the zoning and housing concentrations. She noted that the group is not wiping the slate clean, but rather were using this exercise to find out their places of agreement.

Each group member explained their maps and shared the reasons for locating densities in the plan. They also discussed connections with areas outside the plan.

Marsh thanked the group for their participation and appreciated their creativity.

The group discussed annexation pros/cons. They discussed why this plan was being done even without complete annexation. They discussed how annexation has density and affordable housing requirements and how that is reflected in the plan.

The group discussed commercial zoning in the plan. Asked staff for examples of the types of businesses allowed in the current plan. Staff explained that the types would be limited by size and probably wouldn't come into play until there was a high enough build-out of homes in the area to make businesses viable. The group discussed whether or not it was important to keep commercial zonings in the plan.

Group discussed the things they found consensus on within each of their maps from the mapping exercise. They included:

- Transition from south to north in density (i.e. higher densities closer to Ashland Street and amenities)
- Maintaining the East Main Street view plain (i.e. lower densities along East Main Street)
- Moderate density levels in the interior of the plan
- More grid-like streets for better connectivity
- Use of zoning language more typical of the rest of the city's zoning labels
- Maintaining of open space – they will discuss this further in their upcoming conservation discussion

The group requested that staff see if they can do a "joint" map, using all the maps provided by the group. They would like to then see who that plan compares to the overall density goal. They would also like staff to make the plan using the traditional R-1, R-2, etc. zoning designations.

3. Public Input

Barry Vitcof: thanked the group for their work. Appreciated it's challenges as the discussion reflected art vs. science of the plan. He prefers annexation and is concerned with how this fits into the context of the entire city, not just this small area. The plan currently focused outside in, he would like it focused inside out.

Randy Jones: likes the process so far. He hopes this plan becomes something more like N. Mountain and less like Croman by having the group be connected to the people who actually own the land there.

Sue DeMarinus: Appreciates sustainability as part of the plan. Thinks there needs to be either parks, with garden plot space for community gardening, or room for food gardening in each back yard. The group should have placeholders in the plan for keeping the open space for a sense of place. She is concerned that with a grid-like street system, and with no school to slow it down, the traffic will be too fast. She appreciated the circuitous street plan for the potentially slower traffic patterns but understands and appreciates the need for more connectivity. She wants the group to remember "like next to like" when transitioning from nearby neighborhoods.

4. Future Meeting Dates

The group decided the next meeting would occur on July 24 at 4:00 pm, in the Siskiyou Room. The meeting following will be August 21, at 4:30 in the Siskiyou Room.

Meeting adjourned at 5:55 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,
Diana Shiplet
Executive Secretary

CITY OF ASHLAND

Memo

DATE: 7/24/2014

TO: Normal Neighborhood Plan Working Group

FROM: Brandon Goldman, Senior Planner

RE: Greenways and Open Space

Natural areas, including streams, wetland, and other environmentally sensitive features contribute significantly to the existing character of the neighborhood and were most cited by residents as needing preservation to retain the rural character of the area. Although the creek locations and designated floodplains are readily identifiable, the precise extent of the existing wetlands in the area cannot be known without a wetland specialist conducting formal wetland delineations. However, as wetland boundaries change over time, and are typically only valid for about five years, a present delineation may no longer be relevant when an affected property eventually proposes annexation and development. Given this uncertainty, property owners and members of the public have alternatively contended that the extent of wetlands areas shown in the plan are either represented as too expansive or not expansive enough.

The final plan presented to the City Council, and as recommended by the Planning Commission, incorporated all existing mapped wetlands, as identified in the Local Wetland Inventory (2007), Wetland buffer areas (50' from mapped wetlands), riparian areas and 100 year floodplains into designated "Conservation Areas" (See Comprehensive Plan map amendment attachment). The draft land use ordinance for the Normal Neighborhood District states that all projects containing land identified as Conservation Areas on the Normal Neighborhood Plan Land Use Zone Map must dedicate those areas as: common areas, public open space, or private open space protected by restrictive covenant. The draft land use ordinance amendments further stipulate that changes to Conservation areas require either a minor or major plan amendment as follows:.

> Minor amendment
> *A change in the Plan layout that changes the boundaries or location of a conservation or open space area to correspond with a delineated wetland and water resource protection zone provided there is no reduction in the contiguous area preserved.*
>
> Major amendment
> *A change in the Plan layout that eliminates or reduces an area designated as a conservation or open space area*.

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Essentially the amount of land included in the Normal Plan's Conservation Areas would be the minimum acreage to be preserved even if the actual wetland area as determined through a formal delineation is less than is currently assumed. In such cases the additional open space area outside of water resource protection areas could be utilized for recreational purposes or kept as passive open space. The district's draft land use ordinance could clarify that community gardens and other neighborhood agricultural uses would be an allowable use upon these non-resource lands.

Attachments

- Greenway and Open space Framework: The attached document was developed by the project consultants to both provide a basic inventory of the plan area's natural features as well as to outline a number of recommendations for consideration as the plan was developed. These materials were initially presented at an open house and Planning Commission study session on February 26th, 2013 to help inform the preparation of the first draft of the neighborhood Plan. Ultimately the Normal Neighborhood Plan Framework document incorporated much of this early work into the existing conditions analysis and the Open space Network map (attached).
- Normal Neighborhood Plan Open space Network map
- Map of Water Protection Areas

Normal Avenue Neighborhood Plan – Greenway and Open Space Framework

Introduction

Our overall approach to the greenway and open space framework is to maximize protection of the existing natural resource areas and provide usable, connected open space within the plan area.

Existing streams and wetlands are oriented generally in the north-south direction. These provide a framework for several north-south greenway corridors. In addition, a wetland adjacent to Ashland Middle School is an opportunity for a destination at the west end of the neighborhood and an anchor for east-west connectivity between greenway corridors.

Identification of Existing Natural Areas

(wetlands, riparian areas and other environmentally sensitive areas)

Summary of Natural Areas

1. Four areas on the site have significant natural resources including 3 locally significant wetlands, and 2 locally significant streams:
   - Wetland W9, (the middle school wetland)
   - Wetland W12 (a linear isolated wetland)
   - Cemetery Creek and its associated wetland W4
   - Clay Creek
2. Except for wetland W9, which is isolated, they have a north - south orientation, with water flowing towards Bear Creek to the north.
3. Wetland W9 is the largest wetland in the Ashland UGB
4. Water resource protection zones are established by the City's Land Use Ordinance. For locally significant wetlands, Wetland Protection Zone includes the wetland plus 50' buffer, and the Stream Bank Protection Zone for locally significant streams includes all lands 40' from centerline of stream.

Wetlands:

<u>W9 (Middle school wetland)</u>

- 5.38 acres
- Large wetland adjacent to the school
- Isolated – no surface water connection to other water bodies
- Largest wetland in city of Ashland
- Determination of goal 5 Locally Significant Wetland: Significant
- Berms bordering much of the site
- Possibly spring fed

<u>W4 (Cemetery Creek wetland)</u>

- 3.86 acres

- Associated with Cemetery Creek
- Reed canary grass dominant GC, cattail and willow
- Determination of goal 5 Locally Significant Wetland: Significant

W12 (isolated linear wetland)

- 1.68 acres
- Originates in pasture
- Not associated with stream or pond
- Determination of goal 5 Locally Significant Wetland: Significant

Streams:

Cemetery Creek

- Begins south of the tracks and north of Siskiyou Blvd.
- Forked north of railroad tracks
- Has emergent wetlands associated with it
- Goes through landscaped yards

Clay Creek

- Headwaters in the hills south of Ashland
- Upstream is channelized to approx 5' wide
- 6 inline ponds in mobile home park
- Riparian vegetation was removed in Meadowbrook Park estates rip-rap, lawn and bark
- It goes through a culvert under Creek Dr.
- Vegetation is more natural in project area, although some clearing has occurred

Floodplains:

- Clay Creek is in the FEMA 100 year floodplain
- Cemetery Creek and Clay Cr. are both designated as City of Ashland Floodplain Corridor lands

Greenway and Open Space Recommendations

Overall Recommendations:

The objective for the open space and greenway framework is to preserve existing natural areas and provide usable, connected open space within the plan area. Open space will help maintain the neighborhood's rural character, promote environmental quality, and provide passive recreation opportunities. Riparian corridors, wetlands and native vegetation promote environmental quality by absorbing stormwater and providing wildlife habitat and connectivity. Opportunities for passive recreation and active transportation like walking and biking increase neighborhood livability. By highlighting the site's natural features, a unique neighborhood identity and character can be developed. Other community benefits include education opportunities and connectivity.

- Vehicular crossings of wetlands and streams in east - west direction should be minimized to the extent possible.

- Vegetated corridors should be introduced in the site layout to connect the wetlands to each other and to the streams. This can also serve as open space and vegetated buffers between development clusters.
- Streams and wetlands should be maintained as amenities with access for all area residents.
- Pedestrian and bicycle circulation should be integrated along the edges of these places to provide access and greater buffers between development.
- The stormwater management strategy used in the plan area is critical to maintaining the health and function of the existing streams and wetlands. While streams and wetlands can function to absorb stormwater, every effort should be made to ensure that stormwater runoff is filtered and slowed before discharging into streams and wetlands. The most effective way to treat stormwater is by managing it as close to its source as possible with small, shallow facilities. Impervious surfaces should be minimized; and green streets, swales and residential surface stormwater management should be maximized.
- Streams and wetlands can absorb stormwater runoff after it has been filtered. Treated stormwater should be used to recharge wetlands and improve water quality in streams.

Specific Recommendations for natural resource areas:

Wetland W9:

Wetland W9, the middle school wetland, is significant to the neighborhood development due to its size and proximity to the school. It is the largest wetland within Ashland's urban growth boundary. It provides an opportunity for a large open space area, and potential for outdoor education associated with the school and science learning center west of Walker Ave. It also provides an opportunity for a destination open space that can anchor the neighborhood at the west end.

- Provide an open space area near wetland W9.
- Long range vision: W9 has the potential for vegetated connection to the northwest through the bus turnaround site to a drainage north of main. A vegetated corridor could be created to link the wetland with Bear Creek and in the future a bike/ped connection to the Bear Creek Greenway Trail could be made.

Wetland W12:

Wetland W12 has the lowest resource value of the three wetlands in the plan area. It is the smallest of the 3 wetlands, isolated, has the lowest rating for fish habitat, and a medium rating for stormwater control due to its unrestricted outlet. If any of the wetlands are impacted by development, removing or otherwise impacting W12 is likely to be least detrimental. However, there would benefits to protecting W12, and enhancing its stormwater management function.

- There are potential benefits to integrating W12 into the plan for stormwater management. This would potentially impact the wetland from a regulatory perspective and require wetland mitigation, but it's worth exploring whether the stormwater benefits would outweigh the cost of mitigation.
- Integrating W12 into the plan and enhancing its habitat value by connecting it hydrologically or with a vegetated corridor to Cemetery Creek would improve overall habitat value in the plan area.
- Reinforcing the north-south greenway pattern of the neighborhood plan would support the overall character of the neighborhood

Cemetery Cr. and Wetland W4

Cemetery Cr. and wetland W4 (along with Clay Cr.) provide a north - south framework that should guide development pattern in the neighborhood. This stream corridor has the potential to provide valuable habitat connectivity, as well as a framework for bike and pedestrian connections within the site and beyond the neighborhood.

- The natural resource protection area associated with Cemetery Creek is widest in the vicinity of the wetland. Vehicular crossing of Cemetery Cr. should be minimized
- Any crossing should be located in narrow section of stream north of the Wetland W4. If a road crossing of Cemetery Creek is necessary it should be done with a bridge. (Ashland code currently requires a bottomless crossing design).

Clay Creek:

Clay Creek's headwaters are in the hills south of Ashland. Clay Creek has the potential to be an amenity for the plan area and the city by providing connectivity from the hills to Bear Creek through the plan area. There are many opportunities for restoration along Clay Creek in the plan area, and the opportunity for bike, pedestrian and habitat connectivity to the north and south.

- New development should preserve areas along Clay Creek as open space, restore the stream corridor by removing invasive vegetation and planting native riparian vegetation
- New development should provide a bike/ped connectivity along the corridor.
- The sections of Clay Cr. through the mobile home park and through Meadowbrook Park Estates subdivision also offer opportunities for a multi-use path in the future.
- The RR tracks along the south edge of the plan area are currently a barrier to bike/ped connectivity. Options for multi-use path crossings/overpass in this location should be explored.

Clay Cr. has been impacted by the Meadowbrook subdivision and a mobile home park to the south. Vegetation has been removed, and bank condition consists of mown lawn and barkdust.

Identification of opportunities for open space:

- Multi-use paths along existing stream corridors linked to other natural areas and the neighboring public sidewalk system.
- A larger open space adjacent to wetland W9, so that people can access wetland viewing areas and potentially walk through it on a multi use path/boardwalk. This provides a connection between the middle school and new neighborhood
- In addition a greenway should be oriented in the east west direction for the purpose of connections across the site and habitat connectivity between the wetland and stream corridors
- A significant constraint to ped/bike greenway connections beyond the neighborhood is the rail line along the southern boundary of the site. A system must currently lead to the crossing at Normal Ave.
- Wetlands that exist on private property should be maintained as private open space until it can be acquired by the city.

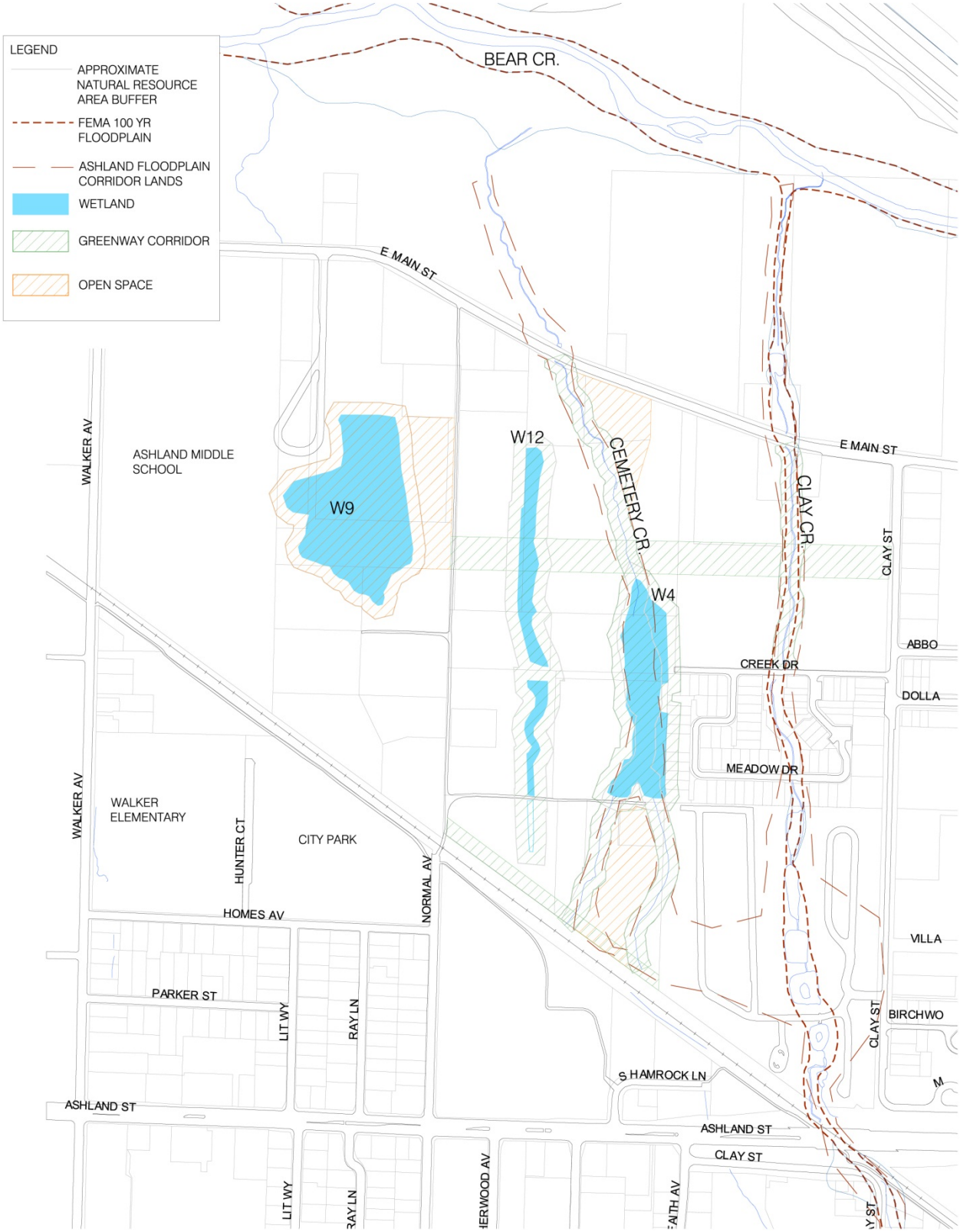
- The property with the barn (the Wallace property) exemplifies the rural character of the area. If possible the barn and surrounding property (south and east of the property to the stream) should be maintained as open space to preserve the rural character and views. In the future this could serve as a community center, urban farm, farmstand, park and open space.
- If possible the property between the 2 forks of cemetery creek at the south end of the site near the RR tracks should be maintained as an open space. Access to the site is difficult due to the rail line, and provides good habitat/restoration potential since it is adjacent to a stream on 2 sides.

Site Character:

The existing site has an agricultural feel. Fields, open views and an existing barn contribute to the rural character. While the planned density of the new neighborhood will change the feel of the neighborhood to some extent, the rural character of the neighborhood can be highlighted through the development pattern of the neighborhood and through infrastructure and architectural details of the development.

- Clustering housing and preserving open space, fields, riparian areas, or space for community gardens or orchards would contribute to an agricultural character
- Narrow road widths would help to keep traffic speeds slow, reduce overall impervious surface and provide a rural feel.
- Gravel or curbless street edges would also contribute to a more informal/ rural neighborhood character.
- Preserve view corridors to hills would make the neighborhood feel more open and connected to its surroundings.

GREENWAY AND OPEN SPACE FRAMEWORK



CITY OF ASHLAND

Normal Neighborhood Plan Open Space Network

0 200 400 800 1,200 Feet

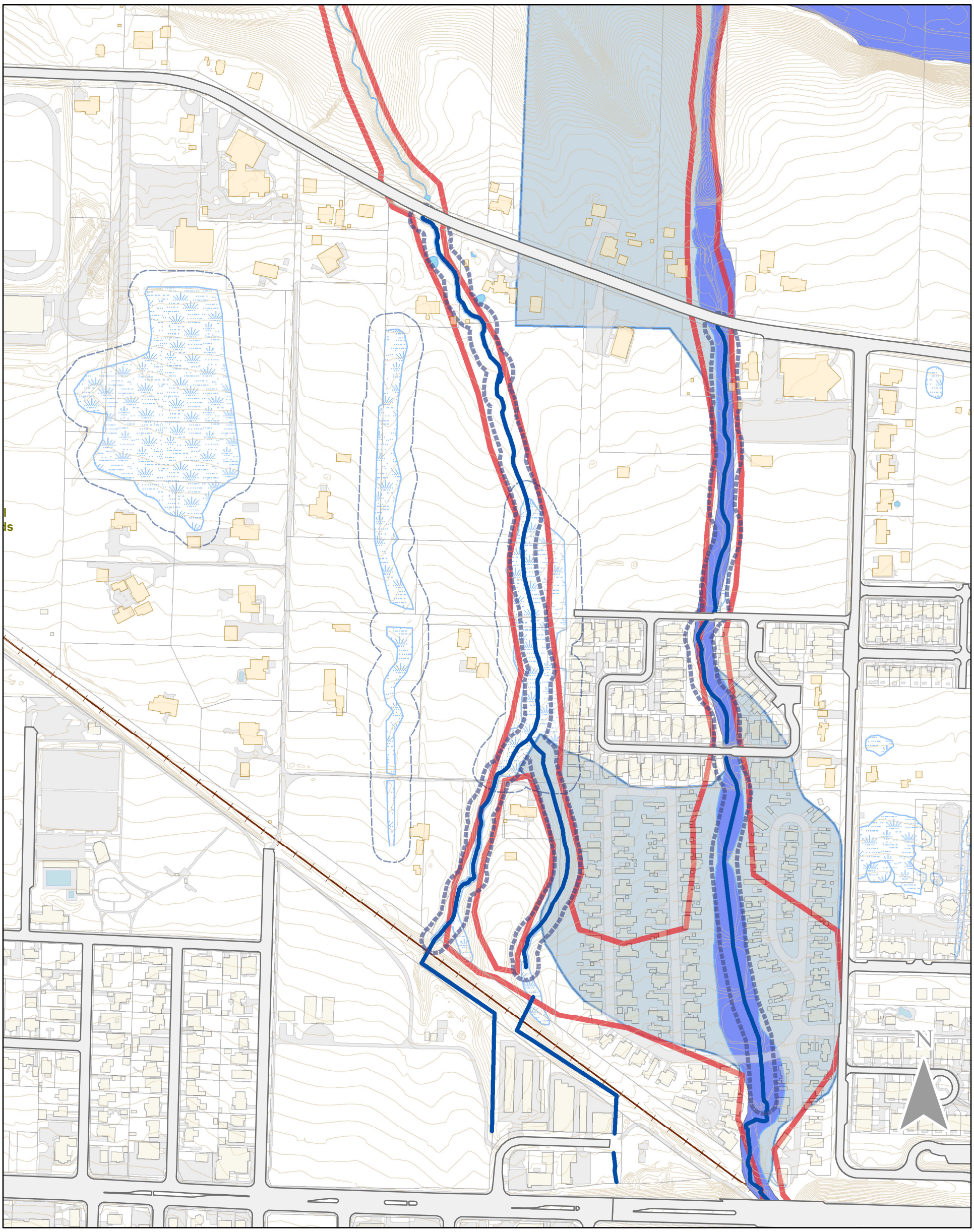
natural area/open space

green streets

pocket park

multi-use path

3/11/2014



Normal Ave. Neighborhood

Water Protection areas

- Ashland Wetland 50' Buffer
- Ashland Floodplains
- Local Wetland Inventory (2007)
- 500 Year FEMA
- 100 Yr FEMA
- Contours - 2ft
- Ashland Riparian Setback

0 200 400 800 1,200 1,600 Feet

----- Forwarded Message -----
From: suedem@charter.net
To: brandon goldman <brandon.goldman@ashland.or.us>
Sent: Tue, 15 Jul 2014 00:27:58 -0700 (PDT)
Subject: Re: Normal Neighborhood Plan Working Group meeting

Hi Brandon,

I just wanted to have on record, for the Normal Neighborhood Subcommittee's consideration, the reference of the intention of the Grace Point Church for their development plans. They own the largest wetlands/conservation area on the NNP map just east of AMS. Their board members submitted a letter on October 8, 2013 to the Planning Commission (which is in their archived minutes). In the last of their list of concerns, #7, they describe their intentions for building an adult care community and other high density uses.

The only way they can achieve this goal for such a dense and commercial housing design is if the City Council allows the underlying zoning for this land to start at NN-02 and be bumped to a NN-03 zoning with the 1.5 density bonus used in exchange for relinquishing their 5.3 acres into a conservation area. This dramatic change to the existing rural neighborhood would be devastating, not to mention the effect on the adjacent habitat/environment of the wetland. Such a development would bring excessive asphalt parking lots (more than for single family housing), heavy delivery and emergency vehicles compacting neighboring soils affecting aquifer recharge ability, and adding air and noise pollution with idling engines, 24 flood lights affecting habitat, etc.

I strongly urge the Subcommittee to suggest that any and all areas underlying or adjacent to their outlined conservation areas ONLY be initially zoned as NN-01. The NN-02 density bonus, if used adjacent to the conservation areas, will be impactful enough!

Please forward this letter to the subcommittee and include it in the public record. Thank the members of the committee for listening and being involved in this very important process of how our town becomes a community.

Sincerely,

Sue DeMarinis

145 Normal Ave.

Ashland, OR

NORMAL NEIGHBORHOOD WORKING GROUP

I first want to thank each of you for the thoughtful and interesting discussions. All of us are grateful and pleased to live in a community with dedicated individuals.

The following are my comments on the various discussed issues.

1. One unexpected result of the Normal Plan has been the bonding of our neighborhoods: Chautauqua Trace, Ashland Meadows, MPE, Wingspread, and the residents of the Dollarhide, Clay and Normal St. locations. We are a community of homeowners, taxpayers, and voters that have one or two story homes, and would like to see similar homes in the new Plan. Please, like for like.
2. During the June 19th meeting, someone commented that it's hard to know what families in the future will want in terms of housing and density. One thing I've learned by attending Meadowbrook Park HOA meetings is that young families with small children want space to play and garden. I've listened to parents discuss the hazards of their kids playing in streets, and they don't know where to place athletic equipment such as moveable basketball hoops. When suggested that their children could use parks or playgrounds, all the parents said no, that they wanted the kids supervised and in their neighborhoods. All the existing communities were built without consideration for the young families.
   In MPE, we have seen families leave to buy in Oak Knoll or up behind Bi-Mart where they have a yard for play.
3. I support reserving a zone for a community garden, bee hives, and a place for hoops and other equipment for children. You have the opportunity to have at least one family friendly neighborhood on this side of Ashland. The housing density of our communities did not take the needs of families into consideration, and they consequently move.
4. A centralized community gathering place would help visually transition the area from the railroad crossing to East Main and the agricultural and farming properties.
5. Please consider approving the parcels of land for single family homes, cottages, and cluster homes. High density benefits none of the residents, and should be reserved for semi-commercial areas, and land closer to the city center. High density is certainly fitting along Ashland Street proper, the railroad district, out North Main, and downtown.
6. I understand the grid proposal for roads, but wherever there are straight lines, drivers speed. All the existing neighborhoods have curved roads that slow traffic and protect small children and pets. Grids are convenient for drivers, but that's the only user that benefits.
7. Curved roads promote the feeling of connectivity among the neighbors, and provide for a quieter neighborhood. I honestly think that MPE, where I live, would have had child fatalities without the curves to alert drivers to kids.
8. Those of us who own homes facing Cemetery Creek or Clay Creek paid more for those view lots, green belts and wildlife corridors. The Normal Plan encompasses both wetland areas, and hopefully the roads will not be placed on the creek sides, but instead allow residents to have their homes facing these areas.

Thank you,
Jack Vedman
320 Meadow Dr.