

Normal Neighborhood Plan

Please review the draft Normal Neighborhood Plan:

- 1) Tell us which elements of the plan you disagree with and which elements of the plan you support and*
- 2) What is your overall impression of the plan?*

All On Forum Statements sorted chronologically

As of April 30, 2014, 10:08 AM



As with any public comment process, participation in Open City Hall is voluntary. The statements in this record are not necessarily representative of the whole population, nor do they reflect the opinions of any government agency or elected officials.

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Introduction

The City of Ashland is in the final stages of developing a plan for the future neighborhood at the north end of Normal Avenue and is seeking additional citizen input. The proposed Normal Neighborhood Plan reflects nearly two years of public participation and neighborhood involvement.

Neighborhood planning is the opportunity to think ahead and determine a vision for the future of the neighborhood. Having an adopted plan in place will ultimately provide for the coordination of streets, pedestrian connections, utilities, storm water management and open space. The final plan is intended to provide a clear expectation and understanding for both developers and neighboring residents regarding future development.

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http://www.ashland.or.us/SIB/files/NormalPlanDocument_20140225.pdf :

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City officials will read the statements made on Open City Hall and consider them in their decision making process. The Planning Commission will hold a public hearing at 7:00 p.m. on March 11th, 2014 in the City Council Chambers at 1175 East Main Street.

If you have questions please contact Brandon Goldman at (541)552-2076 or brandon.goldman@ashland.or.us.

Written comments may also be submitted via email or mailed to:

City of Ashland
Community Development Department
20 East Main Street
Ashland, OR 97520

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As of April 30, 2014, 10:08 AM, this forum had:

Attendees: 294

On Forum Statements: 26

All Statements: 39

Hours of Public Comment: 2.0

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kelly Arsac outside Ashland

April 29, 2014, 11:01 PM

I grew up on lower Normal Ave and graduated from Ashland High School. At the time the Normal Avenue was rural and open. Gradually expensive homes were built in the area and it became more congested. A private paved road was put in. All of this "change" happened even if the original owners didn't want it. It seems to me the area will be better served by a thoughtful, well-designed plan. Ashland is a wonderful town. I would love to move back here some day and raise a family, but it seems it's getting more and more exclusive. People like me who grew up there can no longer afford to live there. We've had two elementary schools close and the numbers at the high school have been dropping over the years. I would hope this plan would enable more young families to live in our town and go to our great schools and experience the wonderful community like I did. I was blessed to have grown up in the area, and I only wish the same for my kids.

Elizabeth Bishop outside Ashland

April 29, 2014, 7:50 AM

Generosity and inclusivity in Ashland was always the norm, and it can be again. Ashland wants to be "even more family-friendly" as stated on the city's website. It is an on-going goal to encourage diversity by allowing young families to raise their children here. It was more that way 25 years ago. We should fear becoming a city of wealthy retirees who have fled the cities and now want to keep a homogeneous look to their new neighborhood. It's not the Oregon way. Anyone who moved to the Normal area knew it was urban growth area destined to be developed. The few houses in the area 40 years ago knew it, too. Yes, we all appreciate the beautiful new homes built in Ashland, but can't we share the area with young families? Let us allow others to enjoy our city as well. We need to realize that younger people will move to Ashland and their children will graduate from our schools only if they can buy a home within their budget. So let it be!

nancy boyer inside Ashland

April 25, 2014, 11:15 AM

Re; Normal Ave Plan. Recently the City of Ashland announced an increase to 4.3mil to be spent to join TAP, and to be completed by August. This urgency is related to low water levels, climate change, and drought. My understanding is that we will only use TAP for emergencies. Along with many concerns (wildlife,wetlands density and etc.) water has always been a main concern of mine. How much impact will the building of 300-400 or more houses have on our already taxed (no pun intended) water sources ? We, did turn down the chance to join TAP several years ago for much less money, but we didn't need the water. However we continued to build more houses,increasing our needs.Who pays and how much more can this cost all of us? Ironically we have at the end of Normal, what some may call a" Garden of Eden" and the churches are cutting down huge trees, and draining wetlands,all to "Pave Paradise" I hope the city council will review these changing plans with a fine tooth comb!!! Regards,Nancy Boyer Normal Ave

Victor Chang inside Ashland

March 13, 2014, 11:55 PM

Overall the planning looks solid and I appreciate the emphasis on these things: affordable housing, multi-

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density housing, green spaces, multi-use paths, minimizing drive-thru traffic, etc. Concerns: I'm curious as to the efficacy of shared streets. It may be cool for pedestrians but I'd had to live on one and have to drive around people every day. Also, I'm not sure what the plan for water and wastewater is- it cites wells and septic tanks, but surely that would not continue to be the plan. Would have liked to see planning and cost estimates for that. Lastly, though its very eco-chic to emphasize walkability but besides maybe walking to Walker ES, Ashland MS, Scieneworks, Hunter Park... people will be driving. I would like to see the traffic impact study of that many more residents and drivers on the traffic flows on Ashland St, Walker, E. Main, Tolman, etc.

Thanks for considering these comments.

Tanya Way inside Ashland

March 12, 2014, 1:06 AM

The increase in population for this area warrants an immediate plan and installation of a public park similar to the size of Garfield Park in Ashland. The affordable housing being proposed would undoubtedly increase the number of families with children who would benefit immensely from a large park at this end of town. If quality-of-life measures such as park size and placement cannot be maintained for residents along the eastern border of the development, the south end of Ashland will likely see a large drop in property value, recreational activity for families, and overall satisfaction of residents in this area. Beyond this, building homes on a 100-year flood plain will put these homes at high risk for irreparable or expensive damages over time, and the natural beauty of this area would be long gone. This is truly not going to add anything positive to Ashland. This plan needs to be tabled and re-visited after more research and public works planning is completed.

Marni Koopman inside Ashland

March 11, 2014, 5:06 PM

I attended the Charrette and some of the planning meetings. During the Charrette, every group but one communicated that they did not want to see this new development have serious negative impacts to the surrounding existing neighborhoods. They asked that it be designed to avoid creating new stressors such as traffic and safety issues for neighborhoods along Normal Ave., Homes Ave., and Clay Street. These issues were ignored and the development plan in its current state creates a large volume of traffic, congestion, and safety issues along Normal Ave., Homes St., Clay St., and East Main St. These will be costly to rectify later, and the tax payers and home owners on those streets will be the ones to pay the price. Because the corner of Homes and Normal already has very high traffic from the proximity to ball fields, tennis courts, and schools, this area will quickly be overwhelmed by traffic if 450 units are built with 2 cars per unit and multiple trips to and from schools and downtown. I think that the planning for traffic has been inadequate and that the considerations of the surrounding neighborhoods, their quality of life, safety, and housing values have not been adequately addressed with this plan. I was also disappointed that the input from the Charrette participants was ignored.

My other comment is completely unrelated to the first one. I have been working for the City of Fort Collins to help them plan for climate change, and they are currently working with private businesses and residences to move their infrastructure OUT of the 100-year and 500-year flood plain due to increasing severity of storms with climate change. This is expensive (the Woodward technology company, for instance, is moving its entire campus out of the 500-year flood zone), yet the city is taking an active role in protecting its residents and making businesses secure in their investments.

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Severe storms have already increased across the West and are expected to continue to increase. It is irresponsible to put new development in 50-year and 100-year flood plains (not to mention 500-year) at this time. Either those developments will need to be moved in the future, at great cost to the owners and tax payers, or they will be damaged and peoples' livelihoods impacted by severe storms. While I support infill and the avoidance of sprawl, there is no need to put peoples' investments and their safety at risk. Climate change is here, it is affecting communities now, and we know better than to continue to do things that put people in danger from natural disasters.

There is very high agreement among climate models that precipitation is expected to increase in the Pacific Northwest, with more severe storms in the winter and dryer, hotter summers. This increases the likelihood of flooding and water shortage. FEMA flood maps do not yet reflect the increasing risk over time, but they are working to update their information using forward-looking projections rather than historical averages. I am attaching a short overview of climate trends for the PNW that was produced by the US Global Change Research Program. A link is provided in that summary for the full report, which provides in depth information on current and future climate trends for this area. One sentence to note says "An increase in annual mean precipitation is simulated for the majority of the Northwest U.S., for all future time periods and both emissions scenarios. The CMIP3 models are mostly in agreement that precipitation will increase."

There is no excuse for excluding climate change considerations from any current planning efforts, as the science is clear and accessible. Doing so puts people and infrastructure at risk and creates costs for families, businesses, and local government decades from now. We are in a time of transition where our zoning ordinances and development standards reflect historical conditions, but we fully understand that future conditions will be quite different.

At one of the planning meetings, it was obvious that wetlands are not a valued feature and that they are destroyed without much concern. I happen to value wetlands for their wildlife and aesthetic values, but can understand that not everyone shares these values. However, I do want to point out that wetlands do provide very important services to people, including water filtration, flood protection, and nature for kids to enjoy. Because these wetlands are so close to the schools, they could be an important outdoor classroom for school children. In fact, kids that spend time outdoors have been shown to do better in school and have fewer behavioral problems, such as ADHD.

The wetlands also hold water during floods, releasing it slowly and protecting neighboring infrastructure. By lining streams and channeling flows, we reduce the capacity of this "sponge" to function properly and protect us during severe storms. This reduces community resilience.

Finally, I want to note that many communities in California, Montana, Colorado, Washington, Oregon, Vermont, Maryland, and many other states are taking proactive steps to protect their communities from climate change and increase their resilience in the face of natural disasters and other stressors such as water shortage, dam failure, heat waves, new diseases and disease vectors, etc. Ashland needs to become a leader in community resilience rather than continue to plan and develop in the same ways as we have in the past. Ashland is a progressive community, yet this development plan does not reflect our progressive roots and societal values.

Thank you for your consideration. Please feel free to contact me for more information.

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Marni Koopman, Ashland Resident

1 Attachment

https://pd-oth.s3.amazonaws.com/production/uploads/attachments/1255sq3yxjkw.3k4/NCA-NW_Regional_Scenario_Summary_20130517_banner.pdf (1.18 MB)

Alma Alvarez inside Ashland

March 10, 2014, 9:06 PM

Like many others that have posted comments, I have also participated in some of the planning sessions. While I understand that the city of Ashland would like to keep its growth within the boundary of the city, I was surprised to see that the plan, after all of the residents' discussions still listed the possibility of up to 560 dwellings. Most of the residents at the planning sessions attempted to "bargain down" the number to 450 units. While the plan is made with an eye towards encouraging walking and biking as alternative modes of transportation, I am concerned about the amount of traffic we will experience in the neighborhood if we were to have up to 560 units. The reality of modern living is that most households have at least two vehicles. The amount of traffic in such a densely populated area would mean a lot of cars.

Like other Normal neighbors, I am concerned with maintaining the natural character of the area. I hope that our city takes good care of preserving the wetlands and the natural life connected with it.

While I am not in support of the plan in terms of the proposed number of units, I do hope that our city makes a commitment to having some of the units marked as affordable housing units.

Peter Halt outside Ashland

March 10, 2014, 12:43 PM

I own one of the parcels on normal Avenue directly abutting the wetlands currently slated for development. I currently have non-developable wetlands in my back yard. There are several things concerned about this plan.

1. When I went to the planning commission meeting last week, it was apparent that the developers have no real interest in preserving the rural feel of this neighborhood. While they are careful to talk about preserving the wetlands, it is fairly clear that they are skeptical that wetlands exist or should exist on their property. Currently the plan states that the adjoining property with designated wetlands on it will be zoned NN-02, allowing for 10 units per acre. There is a provision in this plan that allows them to increase the density of housing by 1.5 if any portion of that lot is designated wetlands. That means that what is currently open space and in my backyard will have housing at the density of 15 units per acre, where there is none right now. Is there a housing shortage so grave that we need to put high density row houses into what is now unspoiled open land and wetlands? Is this the only alternative, or are we bowing to pressure from monied developers? I haven't seen this density of housing anywhere in Ashland. It makes no sense to drop it into the middle of farmland. Where are the studies demonstrating a need for this type of housing? Even if all the property in question was zoned at NN-01, at 5 units per acre, this is an enormous number of small homes to add to the real estate market in Ashland.
2. I have heard concerns about the capacity of Ashland City water and sewer and that there have been problems with the Clay street development. Has the city thoroughly explored its capacity to support this huge

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acreage filled with homes?

3. Currently the plan states that Normal Avenue will open to East Main. There was some talk at the planning commission meeting that this was a bad idea and will change to prevent Normal Ave from becoming a thoroughfare. I would agree with that and hope that this wisdom prevails. That straight road opened up to East main would be the most destructive feature of this plan if there is any true desire to preserve the "feel" of this neighborhood.

4. Do those of us that don't want to be annexed, that moved here for the rural feel, get to keep our TID irrigation, our horse and farm friendly zoning?

Carol Block / Nicole Lee outside Ashland

March 10, 2014, 6:56 AM

I would like to draw the Planning Commission and citizens of Ashland's attention to a comment made by one of the other posters who noticed that several trenches have appeared in the southern section of designated Wetlands9 [Roxanne Jones post of March 7, 2014]. In walking that area the last two days, that person is absolutely correct in their observation!

These trenches serve only one purpose: to draw rainwater away from the wetlands into a storm drain at the upper section of the Ashland Middle School turnaround. It's an obvious, blatant attempt to dry up the Wetlands of course. Some of these trenches are new (within the last year based on the lack of vegetation I suspect). You can even see the tractor marks! Why and who did this I wonder?

There is no doubt that this work was done to minimize and reshape Wetlands9 in order to allow for higher density zoning allowance on the property. If the wetlands dried up, the property owners would have a larger footprint to build upon. If they have to mitigate wetlands, a smaller parcel would have to be identified (and not the 5.38 acres this wetland encompasses).

I do believe that a permit is required to do any soil disruption on designated wetlands and includes a significant financial penalty. I wonder whether a permit was obtained?

The Normal Neighborhood Plan is clearly the driver to having these trenches pull water away from the area and the citizens of Ashland should be up in arms over this. We should be nurturing these wetlands, not destroying them to make room for homes, retirement facilities, etc.

This is the second time a pro-development speculative landowner has tried to minimize the designated wetlands on property they own. The first report was when someone cut down several

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Poplars and leveled out a section of their property.
Does the City/County care that this kind of behind the screen
destruction of naturescape is happening? I am sure the
Department of State Land does. And in the earlier case,
the developer was red tagged by DSL.

For those who live and love this area of Ashland, this is an
egregious act and I hope the Planning Commission is as
concerned with this deliberate act and understands the
motivation behind it. I hope these land owners are held
accountable and are required to restore that which they are
trying to destroy. These people should be ashamed of themselves.

https://fbcdn-sphotos-c-a.akamaihd.net/hphotos-ak-ash3/t1/p261x260/1488648_664526177532_654660052_n.jpg

5 Attachments

[https://pd-oth.s3.amazonaws.com/production/uploads/attachments/1252ykgd80fk.4ro/photo.JPG \(247 KB\)](https://pd-oth.s3.amazonaws.com/production/uploads/attachments/1252ykgd80fk.4ro/photo.JPG)
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[https://pd-oth.s3.amazonaws.com/production/uploads/attachments/1252ylt46zls.6l1/photo8.JPG \(324 KB\)](https://pd-oth.s3.amazonaws.com/production/uploads/attachments/1252ylt46zls.6l1/photo8.JPG)

Karen Horn outside Ashland

March 9, 2014, 9:53 PM

I live across Clay Street from the Normal Neighborhood area. We were not brought into the planning process when it started because, we were told by a city representative, we do not live within the area itself. Since then, we have gone to many meetings about this plan, made statements at Planning Commission meetings, and strategized with our neighbors on how to best make our opinions heard.

First, I commend the Planning Commission for even attempting to create a written plan for development rather than allowing it to happen in the traditional way of waiting for developers to come forward with their own plans and then saying yea or nay.

That said, I do not feel the finished plan reflects the opinions that I heard voiced in the meetings. Instead, a group of consultants from out of town seems to have been let loose to do what they thought best, even though they were missing some key pieces of information about public transportation on E. Main, the extent of the wetlands on the property, and the latest urban planning ideas about how to create housing without wasted space for front lawns. Unfortunately there is nothing innovative or interesting about this plan. It does not reflect the best of what Ashland has to offer. I am not even sure that the people who wrote this pretty plan walked the property even one time.

We recently spent many thousands of dollars to mitigate water damage in the crawl space of our house. All

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three of the housing developments along Clay Street south of us are plagued by water damage and the constant remediation that is required because they were built over ancient creeks. The Normal Neighborhood is not development-friendly; anyone who builds there would be wise to make a sale and get out before the next wet year. Are those the kind of developers we want to encourage?

Another seemingly insurmountable problem with this Plan is that E. Main will never have a bus route. Public transportation is necessary for a development of the size described in the Plan, and everyone involved repeats that mantra. However, the county won't put a bus route on E. Main because right now there is not enough demand for it and because there is no room for a bus to stop without holding up all traffic behind it. Forces could be aligned to overcome these obstacles IF all parties agreed it was a vital goal to do so, but we are far from that today.

The best use for the land in the Normal Neighborhood is agricultural. To grow plants, the overabundance of ground water suddenly becomes a positive thing.

I have heard repeatedly through this planning process that using the land for community gardens is unrealistic because we need more development here in Ashland. There is no shortage I see of housing for the wealthy, but it is true that there is not enough low-income housing. The vision of protecting land outside the urban growth boundary depends on urban infill. But why not do infill on the vacant lots on Ashland Street, just a few blocks south? There is already a bus route there and lots of stores and restaurants to walk to.

I think protecting farmland by keeping sprawl inside the urban growth boundary is a good idea. But for those who will live within the urban area, in condos on small lots without garden space, let's set aside parts within the urban growth area as a place where they can grow food on small allotments, similar to the British system.

Let's face it: the challenge facing us in the future will not be to provide more and more newcomers with housing. It will be to make our town more self-sufficient for the people who are living here now, in growing our own food, reducing the miles that our food travels, and strengthening the community bonds that hold us together as we are drawn forward into an increasingly uncertain future.

John Colwell outside Ashland

March 7, 2014, 9:17 PM

Our committee has had opportunity to review Ashland Planning Commission's final draft of the Normal Street project. This review has been disappointing and we feel that our requests and input were, if not ignored, minimized and substituted with the planners own ideas of what they would like to see on our property. We were continually advised to give input and we did.

We asked to have a zoning that would allow for a retirement facility to be included, we asked for the open area to be based on a real wetland survey rather than an out of date best guess of the extent of the wetland size, we asked for the required road to be moved and not be a straight through thoroughfare. Of these requests only the last one was adopted and even with this there was another road, surreptitiously called an "alley", also placed on our land. If this wasn't adding insult to injury we don't know what is.

Our current opinion is that we will not support this plan and will do anything we can to fight its adoption. We will be at the Ashland City Council meeting when this is up for a vote and plan to discuss the leading way we were drawn into this process only to have nothing we said be adopted despite the fact that we are a major land owner

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within the boundaries of this project.

At issue first, is planning staff indicating that the wetland designation and the open spaces were to be compensated by increased density zoning elsewhere in the plan. We were led to believe this meant on our land, giving us a 15 unit per acre NN-03 zoning which would allow for density close to retirement facility requirements.

Secondly there was no indication of a second transportation corridor on any plans we saw until the final one. Now the planning staff think it is their prerogative to pull an alley out of our land also.

We are disappointed in our planning process and the lack of consideration given to property owner's concerns and also with the promise to participate in a process that seems predetermined from its outset.

Sincerely: John Colwell and Ray Eddington for Gracepoint Church

Roxanne Jones outside Ashland

March 7, 2014, 7:06 PM

When a change is instituted within a city it is not always a bad thing, provided the change is being done for the right reasons. Many people have asked, who is it that is wanting the Normal Plan? The vast majority of the property owners who live on Normal Avenue, and the surrounding neighborhoods, do not want any drastic changes to the beautiful natural environment that currently exists. It was stated at a city council meeting that Ashland currently has a surplus of housing and will not be needing any additional housing in the next twenty years. So, once again I ask, who is the plan for if it is not for betterment of the neighborhood or the city. Additionally, what's the rush? Let's do things once, and do it right. It seems that the only people who are intent on pushing this plan forward are speculators looking to make a fast return on their investment. To do this, they will attempt to convince us that high-density, high-impact housing that replaces the natural beauty of one of the last undeveloped parcels of county land adjacent to Ashland is required. Some of those individuals don't even live in Ashland, and they will very likely take their profit and leave without doing anything to enhance or contribute to our local economy. Instead, Ashland residents will be left paying for "improvements" to East Main Street and other areas within the project site for years to come. I am in favor of developing a plan that accommodates the city's future needs, but I ask you to stand with me against a plan that irreparably damages the pristine acreage of lower Normal Avenue, robbing our community of a great resource. A successful plan will blend seamlessly with the existing environment.

Ashland is an exceptional town filled with a diverse cross-section of residents who have chosen to live, work, shop, donate their time and resources, and educate their children in this uniquely progressive and open-minded town. Those of us who have lived here for many years have a high benchmark for what constitutes an improvement. Standards exist

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that make it seem straightforward for a city to pave roads, install utilities, and designate dwellings here and there. However, Ashland is not Anytown, U.S.A. We hold ourselves to high standards, and as such we expect more of ourselves and our neighbors. To that end, our city council does works tirelessly to protect our interests for our community today as well as for future generations. There has been a tremendous amount of work and dialogue invested into the Normal Plan, but we are still waiting for a version which we can stand behind.

Before that can happen, we will need to address the following questions:

1. Why is the City of Ashland not more concerned about destroying the rural nature of the land?
2. Why have we not chosen to celebrate and preserve the excellent soil in the Normal Plan area and set aside an extensive amount of acreage to be used as a community garden by the neighborhood that could also be conveniently accessed by the middle school to provide learning opportunities?
3. Why must many of the streets be so massively wide, some in excess of 50 feet, that they will end up looking like Anywhere U.S.A.?
4. What would the cost savings to the project be if the streets had a smaller footprint?
5. What will happen to the thousands of birds and other wildlife who currently call this area home?

We are already seeing a lack of respect for nature in the Normal Plan area. It has been stated by others at city council meetings that one developer indiscriminately cut down trees and made an attempt to diminish a creek bed, another developer has blocked the flow of runoff water so that it now poses a threat to an existing neighborhood, and it also appears that the largest wetland in Ashland, Wetland 9, has been extensively altered this past year. Someone used a tractor to dig a series of lengthy trenches to direct the wetland water away from the ecosystem it supports and into a storm drain, and then they cleared a massive area of the wetland of all vegetation. These acts of environmental destruction are deliberate, on-going, and being carried out furtively on multiple properties with the end-goal of diminishing the wetland area. Smaller wetland, more room to build. This is only the first taste of the environmental degradation, motivated by financial gain, that will completely destroy the ecosystem of Wetland 9 and the area surrounding lower Normal Avenue if the current plan is

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approved.

The Normal Plan represents the largest area that could possibly be incorporated into the city, so let's continue working on this plan until a vision that maintains the current beauty and rural feel can be effectively meshed with the potential for additional housing some twenty years down the line when the housing is actually needed.

Sue DeMarinis outside Ashland

March 6, 2014, 3:20 PM

I have reviewed and participated in every public meeting regarding the Normal Neighborhood Plan (NNP) since the first Charette in 2012. Every iteration and discussion of the Plan slightly changes the look of the potential zoning, roads and open spaces.

I agree that there should be open spaces preserved/protected within this area. I commend the planners in their vision to do so. However, in the latest zoning map (Feb.25, 2014), there appeared an overlay of NN-02 zoning under the open space designations. Is the plan able to double zone lands within the NNP just in case a private land owner is able to mitigate their designated natural/wetland area off their land? What happens then to the overall "green space" as envisioned for the whole NNP? What compensation would be given, and by whom, to land owners if they must have their land zoned for public use as a green space/park or road? What if a land owner wanted to preserve their private farming rights where a public park or road is delineated?

The transportation network is currently designed for connections between E. Main and Ashland Street, but the egresses onto E. Main should follow the density zoned for the eastern half of the NNP. To add another exit on the western half creates three real concerns regarding safety for the children at the AMS school bus turnaround, crossing through a State designated wetland, and exiting onto a blind curve of E. Main St. If that cut-through street doesn't exist, then the new meandering road network within the NNP will truly be for the new residents. Otherwise, I see this western egress becoming a problem as a regularly used alternative vehicle route between the major boulevards in order to avoid the congestion and school speed zones on Walker Ave. A pervious surface (not paved), multi-use path toward AMS would serve the NNP community better, preserve our wetland resource, and encourage a green lifestyle and safe access for pedestrians and bicyclists.

Also, the transportation map shows paved neighborhood streets, shared streets, and alleyways all going through planned conservation areas and current State Designated Wetlands. Shouldn't impact studies and delineations be mandatory with this plan before locating roads through sensitive areas and established wildlife corridors, as well as for the effect these roads would have on storm water drainage, aquifer recharge and soil compaction?

My overall impression of the NNP is that it is being driven by consideration for development and not much concern given to the impact on the existing neighborhood/environment. System development charges are said will be included in developer's permits, but there will be hidden costs to all the citizens of Ashland for overall improvements to its sewer, water treatment, roads and RR crossings. And, no one has specifically stated what the mandatory "local improvements, or neighborhood LID" will cost the current residents already in the Normal Neighborhood who may not want these "improvements".

Thank you for listening,
Sue DeMarinis
Ashland, OR 97520

Jean Taylor inside Ashland
All On Forum Statements sorted chronologically

March 5, 2014, 2:41 PM

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I oppose this development. As with all recent housing developments, Ashland has been attempting to infill as much as possible, which leads to the most houses possible crammed into a little area. I think this policy causes unattractive homes with very little space between neighbors.

The proposed "green space" is not enough.

And, as others have mentioned, has anyone asked for this development or is it just a way to spend grant money?

jonathan seidler inside Ashland

March 5, 2014, 9:17 AM

I have attended all the study groups and have come away with a couple of disturbing facts that none here have alluded to. First is the total size of the proposed annexation. 90+ acres creates a guaranteed scenario of piecemeal development. This has been addressed as fact during comment time from developers at the study groups. It is a fact not disputed and over how many years the plan becomes realized is anyones guess. Real estate being very cyclical and risky in itself provides the scenario of abandoned efforts and a checkerboard effect of muddy half developed blocks amongst finished efforts. It has been put forth at the meetings that it is likely development would migrate in a southern direction from E. Main as primary services would begin there as it is the most cost effective starting point and the lure of the most profitable sales. The next point that has been made numerous times is the whereabouts of, if any, of wetlands. The developers have made numerous assertions that there are NO wetlands and that the "creeks" are presently irrigation flows during season and that their flows can be manipulated as so to make their presence as minimum and as invisible as possible. I would hope the council will address the fact of how large this annexation is and how little experience it has with one this size. I hope the council will only annex proposals ready to proceed with a guarantee that incidentals are in place to incorporate and promote to connecting properties for their future development. I hope the council does NOT back down on promoting wet land creation and preservation. If a developer then feels that he/she is losing their economic viability then they can raise their prices accordingly and see if the risk pans out in the market they've entered.

People here need to understand that annexation does not

mean that Ashland owns the land. Creating market gardens,sporting ovals,stomping grounds,etc, are all at the expense of the developers so it is likely the proposals will attract minimum expense when costs are considered.

Angelina McClean inside Ashland

March 3, 2014, 10:07 PM

I appreciate the effort that has been made so far to try to accommodate so many different interests in the community.

Personally, I would like to see this area as undeveloped as possible. I don't know how realistic that is, but I am interested to know if considerations and studies have been or will be made concerning the environmental impacts that more development will have on this area.

Specifically, I am concerned about the wetlands and if the proposed buffer zones are adequate. How did this area fare after the heavy rains we had recently, and how would that differ once it is developed?

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I am also curious about wildlife impact studies. I have heard there are owls, foxes, and other sensitive wildlife in the area. Is their habitat and mobility being taken into consideration? Do any species, like birds or waterfowl rely on this area for migration or overwintering?

However this project plays out, I would like to add my support to the few who have already suggested a community garden. Natural, open spaces, parks, and community gardens are all things that will increase the value of our community far into the future. Lately I have seen articles about food forest plans that are cropping up in places like Seattle and Austin. I tried to paste a photo of the plans for the Austin food forest, but am only able to link to the webpage. It's worth considering.

The article is at: www.austinchronicle.com

The plans for the food forest are at:

<http://festivalbeachfoodforest.weebly.com/food-forest-plans.html>

Margaret Garrington inside Ashland

March 3, 2014, 4:16 PM

Provide multi use path connectivity for bicyclists and pedestrians separate from streets. Link East Main bike path via a multi use path through the Normal neighborhood to the existing bike path to the south, and also create a western path link to the middle school. Shared streets are inconsistent with safety concerns when you have the opportunity to create separate transportation byways.

Also designate place holders for public art and require developers to set aside a certain percent of development costs for multi use paths, parks, and public art.

Jan Vidmar inside Ashland

March 3, 2014, 10:31 AM

Jan Vidmar inside Ashland

I support the Normal Plan with two caveats. The proposed development of land adjacent to Cemetery Creek, just close to the railroad tracks, is currently designated NN-02. It makes more sense to have single family homes, similar to the homes currently built along Normal. In other words, like facing like and designated NN-01. Ashland has very few "below the boulevard" neighborhoods with large yards.

My second concern is the flow of Cemetery Creek. Although the creek is not always visible, walking through the wetland area is a soggy affair. A wetland does not always present itself with lakes, stream flow and ducks. Cemetery Creek should be considered a pathway for drainage. At times, after a hard rain, the creek flows and the water has a way to proceed from the hills to the valley floor. Any development that blocks that flow potentially puts home owners in flood peril. The current Normal Plan has homes and roads that would potentially impede this water flow.

Michael Shore outside Ashland

February 28, 2014, 2:19 PM

Normal Neighborhood Plan

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The process that arrived at this plan was fueled in part by a grant of money from the state.
Part of the motive for this plan was described as finding a way to comply with rules laid out by the state pertaining to sprawl.

Any plan like this would bump into the freedom of use that property owners would like to assume as rights vs the ability of either the state or the town to exert some controls on that use.

This is a perfect set up for a turf battle. In an effort to find a middle ground some interested parties were invited to the "table", some were not.

Certain developers made it clear that they would move forward to get the most value out of the land. I presume that value would be measured in dollars extracted.

Some factions thought that with the "right amount" of preservation and beautification , controlled density would be abided..... so long as the density was not in proximity to them.

What ever you believe about the power of special interests in determining policy, in this plan you can find evidence of owners and developers and government entities striving to get what they want.

I think it is good for citizens to work hard to arrive at compromise. However some citizens represented ideas without the so called authority of ownership. Are mere residents and neighbors people who have legitimate claims to voice in the outcome? Are land owners the only legitimate voices in this decision?

During the discussions some important points were raised and important questions went unanswered.

Streets, safety,sewage, water, cost of fire protection, actual connectivity to public transit, cost of maintaining the proposed "natural" areas, these were all costs and conditions left hanging.

Meanwhile some suggestions regarding the loss of beauty, habitat and ground water recharging area were received as charming but crank notions un related to the pragmatic business of real estate investment or satisfaction of State mandates.

The plan arises from a need to control a blight called sprawl. The proponents say that at least there needs to be a plan because without a plan chaotic growth will be worse.

I believe Ashland should annex the land and create a demonstration farm providing organic food for the local institutions, training and employment for the local interested citizens and yes some low income housing for those who choose to work and learn full time in the created facility.

I believe over time we will look back on a plan that decreased Ashland's dependence on imported food, increased Ashland's influence on food quality with a civic pride in non GMO local seeds and maintained the beautiful view and free space of the Normal area acres with the pleasure that comes from seeing a secured and precious conservation plan in action. The Ashland Organic project would be one more reason for tourists, eco tourists, to visit and be enriched by our embrace of sustainable culture.

Barry Vitcov inside Ashland

February 28, 2014, 11:58 AM

I'm happy to see how the latest version of the Normal Neighborhood Plan has changed the area immediately north of Creek Drive to NN-02. This makes sense as it better blends the Meadowbrook Park Estates community to whatever might be developed in that area. I'm also pleased with the amount of open space in the plan.

However, the NN-02 designated areas to the land west of Meadowbrook Park Estates and the adjacent open

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space does not seem appropriate. I believe that entire area, with the possible exception of the NN-02 designation that abuts North Main Street, ought to be designated NN-01. It doesn't make sense to me to have a swathe of higher density housing cut through what is now larger single-family parcels. There are increasingly fewer opportunities for families to purchase homes with significant yard space in Ashland, and I think it would be a good idea to reserve some potential for that type of property.

Barbara Comnes inside Ashland

February 28, 2014, 10:13 AM

The plan does not directly address possible changes in railroad crossings. I live north of the Railroad District across the tracks and am very interested in seeing the 4th Street rail crossing be developed at least for pedestrians, if not for cars. I am concerned that the Normal Neighborhood Plan could remove the possibility of developing the 4th Street crossing. The distance between safe rail crossings with sidewalks and access to people with mobility issues in this part of town is one mile, which seems unacceptable for this most central location that blends housing with commercial activity, promoting a green lifestyle.

Priscilla Hunter inside Ashland

February 28, 2014, 7:04 AM

There are a couple of confusing items in your plan that I thought you'd like to know about.

1. In your list of housing types, your second category is a Double Dwelling Residence Unit, which I believe one would also call a duplex. You describe it as a pair of self-contained living facilities existing in either a side-by-side or a stacked configuration. I point out first that this housing type also exists in an "L" configuration. (This category appears to be a form of the Attached Residential Unit, your category 5, which seems to refer to the triplex or, as suggested by one of your photos, even the quatriplex structure, without reaching the housing capacity of the Multiple Dwelling Residential Unit, your category 6).

2. The third residential unit type listed in your plan is an Accessory Residential Unit (you describe it as a small living unit sharing a lot with a Single Dwelling Residential Unit). It is apparently a structure one would call a cottage, and, although you don't mention that word in your description of it, it does seem to be the same thing as what you call Cottage later in your report. It is clearly not the same thing as your second category in this list of housing forms, a Double Dwelling Residential Unit or your fifth category, an Attached Residential Unit. You have apparently listed the Accessory RU (cottage) as zoned for NN-01, NN-02, and NN-03. Later in your chart showing target housing density in each zoning district, the Cottage is the second category you have listed. However it does not appear to be included as a permitted structure in zones 02 and 03, which seems to contradict what you have said about the Accessory RU in the earlier part of your plan.

I hope you find this helpful information.

Brian Kolodzinski inside Ashland

February 27, 2014, 9:44 PM

I support the project overall but was surprised when I got to the end and read there was no city water or sewer

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service. Is this true for all developments in that part of town? I also hope there would not be too many roadways over streambeds. The natural layout of the area should be incorporated into the design of the neighborhoods as much as permissible. In addition to the open spaces, it would be nice to see some community gardens for residents that are residing in the higher density dwellings.

Steve Read inside Ashland

February 27, 2014, 7:26 PM

First a question: Who or what is driving this project, ie. what needs does it fulfill. Did the neighborhood request changes?

Second: The story about the trains blocking emergency vehicles must be a really old one as there have been almost no trains for 10 years or so. Inserting that scare tactic into the discussion destroys the credibility of the entire project. If you will use scare tactics to sell your project then I will never support it. Your credibility has been damaged.

Jim Curty outside Ashland

February 27, 2014, 5:15 PM

I stand in opposition to the plan. Roadways have been planned without listening to the owners. The size of wetland W9 is grossly overstated. As a representative of land that will be procured for roads... we feel that use of our land is being decided without our future plans being taken into consideration. (Two roads across the land!) We do not want to stand in the way of progress, but the plan means our land will no longer be able to be developed in any way that would enhance our mission.

Donald Stone inside Ashland

February 27, 2014, 4:00 PM

I have no objection to the plan. However, my concern would be whether or not the residents of the Normal Neighborhood have been active in wanting and requesting these changes. If not, and they are simply "victims" of another City Administration pie in the sky "improvement plan" similar to the Plaza renovation, then I would favor the City just butting out and considering that it likely ain't broke so don't try to fix it.

Don Stone
395 Kearney St
