

Memo

Planning Commission 10/08/2013

TO: Ashland Planning Commission

FROM: Brandon Goldman, Senior Planner
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RE: Normal Avenue Neighborhood Final Draft Plan

Summary

On September 24th the Planning Commission held a study session to review the final draft version of the Normal Avenue Neighborhood Plan. Given the extent of the plan materials provided for review this item was additionally noticed for the October 8th, 2013 Planning Commission meeting to hear further public testimony and allow to allow Commissioner deliberation regarding plan refinements in advance of the legislative hearing process.

The neighborhood plan for the 94 acre north Normal Avenue area is intended to provide a detailed vision for the area which efficiently accommodates future growth, provides for a system of greenways, protects and integrates existing stream corridors and natural wetlands, provides for a variety of housing types, and enhances overall mobility by planning for safe walking, bicycle, and automobile routes while providing convenient access to future bus service. Neighborhood planning represents an opportunity to collectively think ahead, determine a vision, and instill a degree of confidence about being prepared for changes, rather than merely being put in a position to react to change.

The neighborhood plan presented at the September 24th Planning Commission Study Session, and again at this evening's meeting, includes two major components:

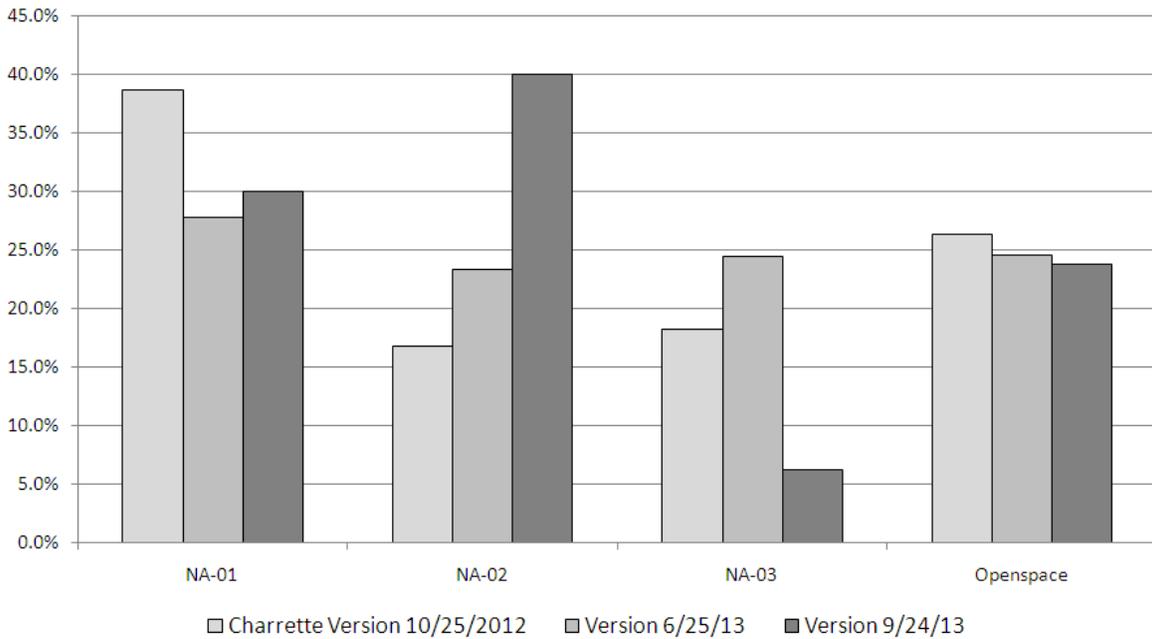
- Normal Avenue Neighborhood Plan (Deliverable 7.4 final Draft)
 - Land Use Zones map
 - Pedestrian and Bicycle Network
 - Street and Openspace Network
- Draft Chapter 18 Code Amendments

Collectively the Normal Avenue Neighborhood Plan and the Draft Land Use Ordinance Code amendments provide the underlying framework for future area development through adoption of land use standards for the overlay area, establishment of a multi-modal transportation circulation plan, and the redistribution of housing concentrations through amended Comprehensive Plan designations. Although future development of this area is expected to occur in an incremental way, as individual parcels propose annexation for specific housing developments, with an adopted neighborhood plan in place each individual development proposal can coordinate the provision of streets, pedestrian connections, utilities, storm water management, and open space. Such an approach can ultimately help reduce development costs through appropriate sizing of needed facilities, provision of easements, and secured street access. Additionally a significant benefit of an adopted plan is that there is a clear expectation and understanding regarding the level of development anticipated by both developers and

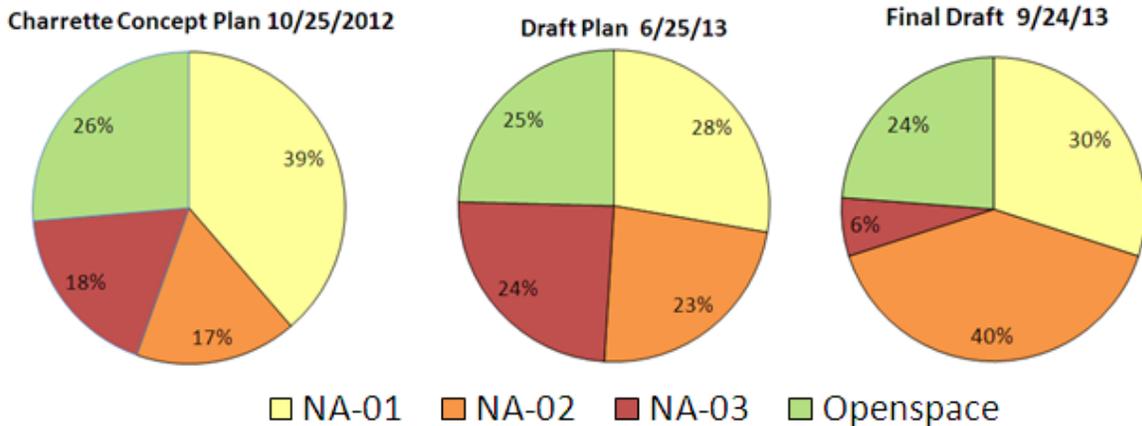


neighboring residents. In this way the future development and annexation process for properties with the plan area is streamlined while ensuring the City can accommodate its future growth in a systematic and efficient manner.

At the September 24th Planning Commission meeting a comparison of the distribution of the NA-01, NA-2, and NA-03 land use designations, as they have changed since the original charrette concept plan, was requested. Attached to this memo are three maps that include tables indicating the gross acreage and calculated net buildable acreage for each plan iteration. The chart below summarizes the relative change in the gross land area for each land use designation in the three versions of the plan (October 25, 2012 Charrette; the June 25, 2013 draft plan; the September 24th Final Draft Plan).



The changes in gross acreage from the original concept plan (Oct.24, 2012) to the current version (Sept 24, 2013) reflect an overall reduction in total land area dedicated to NA-01 and NA-03, and a corresponding increase in land designated as NA-02. The pie charts below illustrate the relative percentage of each designation in each of the three plan iterations.



Despite the alternative designations of land uses in each plan iteration the total housing capacity for the buildable lands within the plan area has remained relatively consistent. The charrette concept plan had a calculated capacity of 432 dwelling units that could be developed in consideration of areas previously developed and areas reserved for openspace. The draft plan presented on June 25th had an estimated capacity of 466 dwelling units. The current final draft plan has a calculated capacity of approximately 451 units on the available buildable lands. For the purposes of comparison the existing comprehensive plan designations for the area have a calculated capacity of approximately 560 dwelling units.

During the September 24th study session Planning Commissioners identified a number of areas to be further evaluated in preparation of a final plan:

- Revisions to the draft Land Use code pertaining to the dimensional standards, Criteria relating to clustered housing (pedestrian oriented pocket neighborhoods), and site and building design standards.
- Examine the potential of eliminating sidewalks along wetlands when sidewalks are provided on the opposite side of the street where development would occur.
- Consideration of making Assisted Living, Congregate Care, etc. a Conditional Use or Special Permitted Use within NA zones.
- Adjustments where necessary to ensure transportation facilities do not go through existing buildings when they are to be retained.
- Adjustments of street locations in consideration of property lines where feasible.
- Consideration of subsurface groundwater hydrology prior to development in consideration of maintaining wetlands and stormwater management.
- Review of the Capital Improvements Plan regarding the measure of future upgrades anticipated to East Main Street.
- Evaluation of future traffic impacts at the Clay Street and Ashland Street intersection.
- Access and frontage requirements in relation to alleys and woonerfs.
- Evaluation of the railroad crossing at Normal Avenue in relating to pedestrian and bicycle access to the Central Bike Path.

NEXT STEPS

The Transportation Commission reviewed the draft final plan at their regular meeting on September 26th, 2013. The Transportation Commission took public testimony and continued their discussion on the plan to their October 24th regular meeting. Following their October 24th deliberations their comments and recommendations will be forwarded to the Planning Commission and City Council for consideration as part of the legislative review process.

The Normal Avenue Neighborhood Plan, incorporating revisions to the Final Draft Plan and land use amendments, is scheduled to come before Planning Commission at their regular meeting on November 26th, 2013. The City Council is tentatively scheduled to review the final plan at their January 7th, 2014, meeting, although a study session before the Council is expected to be scheduled in advance of the regular Council meeting.



Ultimately adoption of a neighborhood plan for the area will require amendments to the Land Use Ordinance, City's Transportation System Plan's Street Dedication, Existing and Planned Bicycle Network, and Planned Pedestrian Network maps to incorporate the proposed multi-modal transportation network and street classifications. Additionally the establishment of woonerfs as a new street type within the Plan area will necessitate amending the Comprehensive Plan's Transportation Element to include this new functional classification for the area..

ATTACHMENTS:

- Sept 24th Final Draft Plan map – taxlots highlighted
- Sept 24th Final Draft Plan map with gross and net acreage table
- June 25th Draft Plan map with gross and net acreage table
- Oct. 25th, 2012 Charrette Concept plan with gross and net acreage table
- Oct. 25th, 2012 Charrette Concept plan Original Illustration

Refer to the September 24th Packet for printed materials as listed below

- Normal Avenue Neighborhood Plan
 - [Draft Final Plan](#)
 - [Land Use Zoning Map](#)
 - [Street and Open space Network](#)
 - [Pedestrian and Bicycle Network](#)
- [Draft Chapter 18 Land Use Code Amendments](#)
- [Draft Future Traffic Conditions Report - Technical Memorandum \(SCJ Alliance Consulting\)](#)
- [Transportation Existing Conditions Memo](#)

