

26 Sep 2013

To:

City of Ashland Transportation Commission
Ashland City Council
City of Ashland Planning Commission
20 East Main Street
Ashland, OR 97520

From:

Brett & Susan Lutz
1700 East Main Street
Ashland, OR 97520
541-218-5203

Council and Commission Members,

My wife and I moved to Ashland 7 years ago, in the latter half of 2006. We moved here to become part of the vibrant community, for the good schools, the balance of open space with wise development, and plentiful outdoor recreation, among other reasons. Last summer we moved to 1700 East Main Street, into the proposed Normal Avenue Neighborhood Development area, with our 3 young children. Our property lies on 1.16 acres adjacent to the Ashland Middle School and Grace Point Church.

My family and I wish to continue to remain zoned in Jackson County. We do NOT want to be annexed into the city of Ashland. My comments to follow, specific to the transportation plan, will explain some of the reasons why.

In the Phase 2 (long term) portion of the "Neighborhood Plan", the diagram found at http://www.ashland.or.us/SIB/files/Phase2_Aerialx.pdf shows a neighborhood street for the project going through what are deemed "locally significant" wetlands. These should be preserved for water filtration and wildlife habitat. Additionally, the existing road is used by the Middle School as a bus turn-around area, parking during sporting events for both Ashlanders and family and friends of visiting schools, and by both Grace Point Church and Temple Emek Shalom. Current traffic volume is so high already during certain times of certain days that adding additional traffic would certainly result in increased congestion likely resulting in the need for a traffic light. Adding a traffic light would increase road noise, pollution to air and water (there is both a stream and a TID line on the north side of our property that ends up in Bear Creek), and slow traffic movement on East Main Street. Additionally, we fear that a traffic light would make it more difficult to get in and out of our driveway that exits to East Main Street and would almost certainly lower the value of our property.

Instead, we would like to see the nearby wetlands expanded, not reduced in size. As our climate continues to change, the need for wetlands for filtering water and to buffer us from flash flooding due to increased rainfall rates will increase. During dry times, these wetlands can buffer us from drought by serving as water and moisture storage for us and wildlife. Therefore, we believe that there should be a wildlife corridor established and preserved from these wetlands to Bear Creek, and see ourselves as part of that.

Thus, we wish to be excluded from the expansion project and ask that no road beyond what already exists be establish^{ed} through the locally significant wetlands and along the east edge of our property. Rather than develop our land, we want to use it for local food production, green space, as a wildlife corridor, and for renewable energy production.

Thanks for your time and understanding.

Sincerely,

Signed  and 
Brett & Susan Lutz and Family