

Memo

Transportation Commission 3/26/2015

TO: Ashland Transportation Commission

FROM: Brandon Goldman, Senior Planner, Brandon.Goldman@ashland.or.us

RE: Normal Avenue Neighborhood Plan Update

SUMMARY

The draft plan for the Normal Avenue Neighborhood area is intended to establish an integrated land use and transportation framework for the future annexation and development of a 94 acre residential area within Ashland's Urban Growth Boundary. This March 26, 2015 update of the Transportation Commission provides the commission with an opportunity to review the plan, the proposed multimodal transportation framework and street classifications, and provide comments regarding the plan's transportation elements in advance of the upcoming public hearing process.

The Normal Avenue Neighborhood plan presented is the product of over 3 years of public involvement and public meetings to establish neighborhood plan to help guide changes to the area in a manner that accommodates a diversity of households; creates a system of greenways; protects and integrates existing stream corridors and natural wetlands into future residential developments; and enhances overall mobility by arranging for safe and convenient driving, walking, and biking routes.

Ultimately adoption of a neighborhood plan for the area will require amendments to the 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.

BACKGROUND

The Transportation previously reviewed the draft Normal Neighborhood Plan at three meetings between September and November 2013. Following these meetings, and the public hearings before the Planning Commission, the City Council formed a working group comprised of three City Councilors and two Planning Commissioners to further review the proposed Normal Neighborhood Plan. Having completed their review the working group provided their recommendations for plan amendments for Council's consideration. The City Council directed Staff to revise the Normal Neighborhood Plan to incorporate the selected recommendations of the Normal Neighborhood Working Group and to present the updated plan to the Transportation Commission, Planning Commission and Parks Department for comment.



Specifically in relation to the transportation framework the Normal Neighborhood Plan Working Group had a number of specific recommendations which have been incorporated into the neighborhood plan as follows:

- The internal transportation system's local street network should incorporate multiple connections with East Main Street as shown, and maintain the Normal Collector as designated in the draft plan. Additional connections to East Main Street or Clay Street, which are not shown in the proposed Street Framework, should require a major amendment to the Plan.
- Internal local streets should be aligned to provide a more standardized grid pattern, including clear east-west connections.
- Pedestrian and bicycle pathways are critical, especially as a means to connect residents with the middle school and the existing bike path.
- External transportation improvements, including the railroad crossing and improvements to East Main Street are integral and should proceed in concert with development.

Additionally the Council directed staff to conduct an analysis of external infrastructure improvements associated with the plan area's development specifically regarding the future public rail crossing and East Main Street improvements. This analysis is intended to identify and quantify the need and possible means for public investment. Presently the Public Works Department has contracted Hardy Engineering to complete a general cost analysis and evaluate the role of private and public financing to provide the City Council with this analysis.

NEXT STEPS

The Planning Commission will hold a final study session on March 31st to review the final draft of the plan before holding their first formal public hearing on April 28, 2015 . The Normal Neighborhood Working Group is tentatively scheduled to review the revised plan, and comments from the Transportation and Planning Commission, on April 15th, 2015. The final plan will be presented to the City Council for consideration at public hearings in May and June of this year.

Upon completion of this project, the adopted Normal Avenue Neighborhood Plan will provide the underlying framework for future area development through adoption of Land Use standards for the overlay area, a multi-modal transportation circulation plan, and a redistribution of housing concentrations through amended Comprehensive Plan designations for the area. 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 development and annexation process for all properties with the plan area is streamlined while ensuring the City can accommodate its future growth in a systematic and efficient manner.

