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Michael Dawkins
Richard Kaplan
Deborah Miller
Melanie Mindlin
Roger Pearce
Lynn Thompson
City of Ashland Planning Commission
51 Winburn Way
Ashland, Oregon

Re: Normal Neighborhood Plan

Dear Commissioners,

The undersigned is chair of an ad hoc committee representing the homeowners' associations of Meadowbrook Park Estates, Ashland Meadows, Chautauqua Trace and East Village regarding the Normal Neighborhood Plan ("the Plan"). Although various members of our associations have various concerns with the Plan, this letter addresses two main concerns we all have in common; namely, (1) plans regarding the improvement of East Main Street and (2) provisions for density and land use on the portion of the plan area located between Clay Street on the east, Cemetery Creek on the west, Creek Drive on the south and East Main Street on the north, and known informally as the "Baptist Church property." We wish to emphasize again that a reasonable development of this property would be welcome, as the portion of the site behind the existing community church is both an eyesore and a fire hazard.

1. East Main: Currently, this narrow two-lane road has no curbs or sidewalks east of Walker Avenue other than the portion of East Main fronting the Mormon Church, no left turn lanes, and narrow shoulders adjacent to large drainage ditches. Moreover, only the southern side of East Main is in the plan boundaries because the northern side is not within the City of Ashland Urban Growth Boundary. The Plan expressly recognizes that East Main is a designated city boulevard, but that in its current configuration it is a rural road, inadequate for proposed automobile traffic and entirely unsuitable for cyclists and pedestrians. [See Plan, pp. 16 and 18.]

Despite these inadequacies, provisions for the improvement of East Main are somewhat ambiguous. The Plan states as follows:

> The City will consider establishing an Advance Financing District for off-site public facility improvements, as long as the City and the developer enter into a Developer's Agreement. The City's participation in a Normal Neighborhood advance financing district would be intended to achieve a positive impact for the whole of the City.

There does not appear, however, to be any provision for the establishment of such a district. [See proposed ordinance section 18.3.4.075.] In fact, such an ordinance was apparently studied in 2010, but never enacted.

The Plan also states,

> "The City recognizes that infrastructure and transportation improvements to East Main Street could potentially be completed in phases, dependent upon the impacts of proposed developments within the plan area."

This proposed language would seem to indicate that although the Baptist Church property will likely develop first, the improvement of East Main must await the development of the remainder of the Normal Avenue Plan area. This result is contrary to the recommendations of the Transportation Commission and of various members of the Planning Commission and City Council that East Main be improved along its entire length from Walker to Clay Streets concurrently with the approval of any development in the Plan area.

Finally, although the Plan recognizes that East Main is a "city boulevard," there does not appear to be any determination as to whether it will have a center lane [see Street Ordinance, p. 3, Exhibit C, defining two, three and five-lane boulevards. We believe hat it is critical for East Main to have center turn lanes for the safety of those turning to or from Clay Street, the new extension of Creek Drive, and any other proposed street leading from a residential or commercial area onto East Main in the Plan area.

2. Density and Land Use

The Plan specifically provides,

> The NN-1-5,NN-1-3.5, zones are intended to preserve land and open space and provide housing opportunities for individual households through development of single-dwelling housing. [Plan, p. 6.]

It also contains pictures of the types of uses allowed in the various zones. [Plan, p. 12.] The various tables, however, do not distinguish between NN-1-3.5 and NN-2 when it comes to the construction of multi-family residential units. [Id.; see also Ordinance, p. 5.] Various members of the Planning Commission and the City Council have repeatedly expressed the view that

apartment houses are not a desirable use for the NN-1-3.5 zone, and yet the Plan appears to allow that use. Residents in the four HOA's respectfully submit that an apartment house complex is not a use that is compatible with the existing suburban residential developments. Such a use would increase automobile traffic in an area that is already inadequately served by public transportation and ill-suited to pedestrian and bicycle traffic.

Additionally, the Plan expressly recognizes that "the plan area . . . is a weak location for retail." Nevertheless, the Plan contains an NN-1-3.5-C zone on the Baptist Church property which can be used for retail sales and services, adjacent light manufacturing, and professional and medical offices. [See Ordinance, p. 5.] These commercial uses are entirely unsuitable for this area, particularly given the inadequate provisions for the improvement of East Main. Residents in the four HOA's respectfully submit that the Plan be amended to require a conditional use permit for any commercial development in this area.

For all of the foregoing reasons, the residents of Meadowbrook Park Estates, Ashland Meadows, Chautauqua Trace and East Village respectfully request that the Planning Commission revise the Normal Avenue Plan before submitting it to the City Council.

Very truly yours,

Bryce C. Anderson