

July 27, 2015

TO: Ashland Planning Commission, City Council and local newspaper editors  
RE: Normal Avenue Neighborhood Plan

My husband and I recently testified at the City Council before its decision to shut off access by 86 subscribers to TID irrigation water due to possible water shortage in 2015. *At that time, I was unaware of the City's* planning process, begun in 2012, for a Normal Avenue Neighborhood of 94 acres currently within the city's urban growth boundary but outside the city limits. According to the current Ashland Comprehensive Plan, these 94 acres are zoned low density, but according to the Normal Avenue Neighborhood Plan, changed zoning would allow density of potentially 500 units, both houses and multiple-unit dwellings. This change could add to Ashland an enormous number of potential water users.

When the City redirected the TID water of about one-half of all TID users, the rationale included: the City's right to do so in the event of a water shortage, the limit of "emergency" only use of TAP water available from Medford, the cost of purchasing TAP water, and the desirability of not drawing down water stored in the City's reservoir for safety's sake (toxicity or dire emergency issues).

I see a stark contradiction between the City's decision to take TID access by about one-half of the users due to a water shortage and the possible annexation of 500 potential units to Ashland. The Normal Avenue Neighborhood Plan does not address this contradiction.

Within the framework of the 94 acres, this plan for a new neighborhood addition to Ashland appears generally thorough and thoughtful. However, only one brief paragraph deals with the issue of sustainability within this neighborhood. Moreover, nowhere does the plan address how 500 new residential units will impact sustainability for the larger Ashland community, particularly in relation to scarcity of water and climate change.

A KEY QUESTION IS: Can Ashland accommodate the anticipated growth if this plan is adopted without ongoing restrictions on water consumption, increasing water costs, and decreasing water quality...all of which potentially impact all Ashland citizens?

In short, the plan does not address the likely draw down on Ashland's limited water resources or the impact of the Normal Avenue Neighborhood's development, as planned, on the City's carrying capacity, in particular, it's water supply.

Sincerely,



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