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FEB 25 2014

2105 E. Main St.  
Ashland, OR 97520  
February 25, 2014

*Re: Normal Street Development Plan*

*Please read this document at your planning meeting so it will be entered into the records of the Ashland Planning Commission*

We have some serious concerns with the Normal Street Development Plan; we feel that, if implemented, a multi-story development on the Baptist Church property on East Main Street would adversely affect the quality of life for the property owners on the north side of the street.

In prior testimony and letters, no mention has been made of the impact on those properties, since they are in the county and not in the urban growth boundary. We have lived here and farmed this land since 1986. Just because the properties on our side of the street are not under the jurisdiction of the City of Ashland doesn't mean that we should be ignored during the planning process.

Our concerns are in three areas: water, traffic, and future expense.

We depend on a combination of TID water and Clay Creek to irrigate our fields, which we are required to farm under an EFU (Exclusive Farm Use) designation. This past summer (2013) was one of the most difficult irrigation seasons we've experienced since 1986; the water just wasn't flowing enough to irrigate our fields. And this year's drought conditions may cause an even more difficult summer watering season.

Twice in the past 15 years we have also experienced problems with the drinking water from our well. Both times our well dried up during the hot summer days, and we were forced to dig a deeper well, at great expense. This happened soon after new development on both sides of lower Clay Street and after the Mormon Church sunk a new well for irrigating their ball fields. Our property is at the end of the "water chain," adjacent to Bear Creek, so we are at the mercy of those using the water above us - or buildings and concrete limiting the flow of water. We can only imagine what a new high-density development across the street from us would do to exacerbate the water flow issue.

Looking at current traffic problems, we would definitely not support an increased number of cars speeding by our property if new feeder streets pour traffic into East Main. At some times of the day it's already a 5-minute wait to safely walk across the street or leave the driveway in a car. If the proposed plan for the area on the south side of East Main Street were to be implemented, there would be a significant increase in vehicle trips along our street.

From what I gathered at the October meeting, some think the traffic solution is to widen East Main Street, adding sidewalks and gutters. Since we have a long street frontage, I am concerned that we would be forced to incur a massive expense to "improve" East Main, which we would rather not see turned into a city street.

We all know that EFU and high density residential are incompatible uses near each other; property on the edge of town is usually kept at a very low density to make the transition to agricultural use logical and seamless. If the parcel of land in question were planned for mostly single family homes instead of higher density housing – with strong protective measures for dealing with water problems – then fewer houses would be built, the street would not need to be redone, there would not be additional concerns about water, and the retention of a rural atmosphere would prevail.

Thank you for listening to our concerns and considering them in your planning process.

Yours truly,

Jim and Marcia Hunter