

Normal Neighborhood Working Group

Potential Agenda Items

June 19th, 3:00-4:30 City Council Chambers

Meeting Schedule

- Regular meeting time and duration
 - Set dates
- Anticipated number of meetings

Public Input

- Discuss public input process
- Duration per meeting (public forum?)
- Written comments forwarded to Council at continuation of First Hearing

Outline Scope of Review

- Housing concentration (units per acre)
- Zoning provisions
- Transportation connectivity and Infrastructure Improvements
- Open Space and Conservation areas

Suggested Plan Changes – Working Group

Design based neighborhood plan alternatives

- Land Use
- Transportation
- Conservation and Open Space Area

Normal Neighborhood Plan Working Group Meeting

Council wanted the group to review and address the following:

Housing Concentrations and Type

- RPS assumptions on density
- The need for NN zoning
 - Zoning (units per acre)
- Building height (2.5 or 3-story)

Transportation

- General transportation and connectivity issues
 - Transportation to the schools
 - East-west transportation issues
 - Public transportation
 - Traffic reduction (elimination)
- Improvements to East Main St.
- Railroad crossing

Openspace

- Wetland protection
 - state established wetlands
- 25% open space

Infrastructure

- water, sewer, and electric
 - developer driven costs

Public Input

- Incorporate public input and respond accordingly

Memo

To: Ashland City Council
From: Brandon Goldman, Senior Planner, Community Development Department,
Brandon.Goldman@ashland.or.us
Date: May 29, 2014
RE: Normal Neighborhood Plan Continuance

SUMMARY

Two ordinances amending the Comprehensive Plan and Transportation System Plan to implement the Normal Neighborhood Plan are presented at First Reading for the City Council's review. A Normal Neighborhood District Land Use code amendment is presented for discussion only. It will be reviewed as part of a separate legislative action in the upcoming months and is intended to be included in the Unified Land Use Ordinance.

BACKGROUND

The City Council opened the public hearing, received a Staff Report and took public testimony on the Normal Neighborhood Plan on May 6th, 2014. Given the number of speakers providing relevant comments to help inform the Council's decision making process, there was not adequate time for the Councilors to deliberate toward a decision on the Plan. As such the public hearing was continued to Tuesday, May 20th, 2014 at 7:00pm.

During the May 6th hearing a number of questions were raised which had previously been addressed in materials presented to the Planning Commission. Staff has provided the following supplemental information to provide clarification on these issues.

- Plan iterations and changes to the location of the high density NN-03 Zone.
 - Testimony received at the hearing on May 6th referenced changes in the size and location of the proposed NN-03 high density residential zone . Attached as *Exhibit A* is a summary of major plan changes that have been reviewed and discussed by the Planning Commission and the public over the last 15 months.
- Density on the periphery of town:
 - Testimony received at the hearing on May 6th stated that the development of this area is located on the periphery of town and is inappropriate for the densities proposed.
 - The area is within Ashland's established Urban Growth Boundary and is close proximity to schools, parks, and commercial centers as shown on the quarter mile vicinity map previously presented to the Planning Commission and attached as *Exhibit B*.
- Recommended increase in building height from the proposed 35ft and 2½ story maximum up to 40ft and 3-stories exclusively within the NN-03 and NN-03-C zones:



- The draft Land Use ordinance presented to Council for review currently restricts the maximum height of structures to 2.5 stories and 35ft tall within the plan area.
- The Planning Commission has recommended the Council consider amending the proposal to allow an increase in building height from the proposed 35ft and 2½ story maximum up to 40ft and 3-stories exclusively within the NN-03 and NN-03-C zones through a Conditional Use Permit review process.
 - The Planning Commission found that the added allowance (3 stories up to 40') would provide applicants greater site and building design flexibility in achieving the stated densities (15 units per acre) within the NN-03 and NN-03-C zones, while retaining a publically noticed review process to evaluate the bulk and scale of proposed buildings to ensure neighborhood compatibility is preserved.
- Should the Council wish to retain the height maximum of 2.5 stories and 35' consistent with residential zones throughout the City, no Council action need be taken and the draft code would retain that existing limitation.
- NN-03-C proposed commercial overlay location:
 - The NN-03-C zone is a residential zone which allows limited commercial uses. It is anticipated that the zone would initially develop for residential use exclusively while retaining the ability to convert a portion of the ground floor for small scale commercial use only after the neighborhood is largely developed and contains a high enough concentration of customers in the immediate vicinity.
 - Adjacency of the commercial area to the Neighborhood Collector and East Main Street was identified as necessary to increase visibility of any neighborhood serving commercial uses.
 - The commercial overlay area has been located in the vicinity of the highest concentration of housing within the plan area, and in proximity to existing housing developments to the east and south beyond the project area's boundary.
 - Inclusion of a neighborhood serving commercial overlay within the district is largely consistent with the interval spacing of Pedestrian Places intended to provide a commercial area within walking distance to residents in the vicinity, as shown on *Exhibit C*.
- Creek Drive Sanitary Sewer concerns:
 - Testimony received at the hearing on May 6th cited frequent backups at a sewage pump station on Creek Drive which serves the neighborhood to the south. Public Works has verified that due to obstructions (cloth rags) being flushed into the system one of two pumps at the station has clogged with some regularity. The pump being obstructed results in backup or overflow thus requiring City crews to be dispatched to clear the obstructions. Public Works recently replaced this pump with one better designed to address such obstructions, however the potential remains for a pump to be clogged or inoperative resulting in sewage backup.
 - The resolution to the Creek Drive sewer pump station concerns is to develop a gravity flow system which would then eliminate the need for the pumps. An extension of sewer lines through the Normal Neighborhood Plan area, and specifically through development of the property to the north, would essentially resolve the issue according to the Public Works Department.



- Water pressure issues:
 - Testimony received at the hearing on May 6th cited high water pressure in the subdivisions south of Creek Drive being problematic and requiring installation of pressure regulators at numerous houses.
 - The water reservoir feeding water to this neighborhood is approximately 500' higher in elevation than this neighborhood which results in high water pressure due to the gravity fed system.
 - Developments within the Normal Neighborhood will have to accommodate high water pressure by installing regulators at their water meters, and size their water systems adequately to accommodate the existing pressure.
 - According to the Public Works Department the future development of the Normal Neighborhood area will not impact the water pressure in existing neighborhoods.

- Development impact on existing water wells on properties across East Main St.:
 - The proposed draft land use ordinance contains new provisions for storm water management. These provisions require that future developments retain storm water on site to maximize infiltration, and that post-development water run-off not exceed the pre-development rates. Such a standard is intended to maintain the natural hydrology of the areas to maintain existing subsurface water flow within the area.

- Future Transit:
 - Throughout the planning process for the neighborhood concern has been raised regarding to the future provision of transit to the area. Currently Rogue Valley Transportation District (RVTD) provides fixed route service with the nearest transit stops in the vicinity of the area being located at Abbot Ave @ Tolman Creek Rd, and on Ashland Street @ Ray Lane.
 - The Transportation System Plan identifies a potential new future route (Route 8B) which would potentially extend down Walker Avenue from East Main Street to Ashland Street. The construction of new housing in the neighborhood plan area would result in a potential increase in ridership. In coordination with RVTD the City could define the future bus route to serve the Normal Neighborhood District.
 - The Planning Commission has recommended that future improvements to East Main Street include provisions for the location of a transit stop in the vicinity of the NN-O3 zone.

- Infrastructure improvements:
 - Consistent with Ashland's annexation policies all local streets, shared street, alleys, multi-use paths, and other infrastructure improvements within the plan area would be a developer responsibility.
 - East Main Street, Normal Avenue rail road crossing, and the new Normal Neighborhood Collector are being evaluated by the System Development Charges committee to determine the degree to which these improvements serve broader City wide transportation system benefit. This evaluation will establish the potential eligibility for a contribution of SDCs, and the corresponding contribution will be required of developers within the plan area.



- Concern has been raised that transportation improvements along East Main Street, and establishment of a public railroad crossing, should be addressed prior to development within the plan area. To this end the Planning Commission has recommended that the south side of East Main Street, from Walker Avenue to Clay Street, be fully improved to City Street Standards prior to, or coinciding with any future annexation and development within the plan area. Further the Planning Commission Report dated 4/22/14 recommended that it be verified that the proposed public Rail Road crossing can be installed, and financed, prior to approving any annexations within the plan area.
- Wetland Delineations:
 - In 2007 the City of Ashland completed and adopted a Local Wetland Inventory (LWI). The LWI includes all lands within the Urban Growth Boundary and was prepared to meet the Department of State Lands (DSL) Local Wetlands Inventory Standards and Guidelines (OAR 141-086-0180 through 141-086-0240). The LWI was submitted and approved by the Oregon Department of State Lands (DSL) and the Department of Land Conservation and Development (DLCD). The LWI and Ashland's Water Resource Protection Zone ordinance satisfy the statewide land use planning Natural Resources Goal (Goal 5) to provide protections for "significant" wetlands.
 - A Local Wetland Inventory is a systematic survey of an area to locate, map and describe the wetlands. The inventory was prepared using information sources such as aerial photos and soils maps and by conducting field observations. The wetland scientists that prepared Ashland's LWI (Fishman Environmental Services, a Division of SWC Environmental Consultants) collected data on the vegetation and soils to confirm that an area was or was not a wetland.
 - The primary purposes of the LWI are to provide information for long-range planning by the city, and to alert landowners to the probable wetlands on their property. Because the LWI maps the approximate wetland boundary, and may miss small wetlands, much more detailed field work is needed prior to site development.
 - Property owners in the plan area have presented preliminary wetland delineation maps as exhibits at the public hearing that indicate wetland areas which are smaller than those identified in the 2007 LWI. Although such preliminary delineations would require formal review and concurrence by DSL, the more general question posed to Council is whether the proposed Conservation Area boundaries should be subject to change to respond to formal wetland delineations as part of future development proposals. Simply put, a number of property owners have contended that if it is found a wetland area is smaller than currently shown in the LWI, than the corresponding Conservation Area should shrink to match the newly delineated area.
 - The Normal Neighborhood Plan's approach to the greenway and open space framework is establishing "Conservation Areas" through a proposed amendment to the Comprehensive Plan Map. As proposed these areas are intended to be preserved as natural areas or open space within the district which absent of any environmental constraints would provide recreational and view amenities to the districts residents. As such a reduction in the size of a Conservation Area, even in cases where formal wetland delineation shows a smaller wetland area, would require a major plan amendment.



NEXT STEPS

Upon approval of first reading of the Normal Neighborhood Plan's implementing ordinances, the final plan and ordinances, as amended, will be presented to the City Council for second reading.

The Normal Neighborhood District Land Use Ordinance will be presented for legislative approval as part of the Unified Land Use Ordinance hearing process and will be forwarded to the City Council following the Planning Commission's public hearing and deliberation.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Staff and Commission Recommendations are provided in the Council Communication presented on May 6th, 2014.

ATTACHMENTS:

Refer to the May 6th City Council Packet and Council Communication for full listing of attachments.

Additional Attachments provided for May 20, 2014

1. Exhibit A: Plan Iteration Summary dated 2/25/2014
2. Exhibit B: Quarter Mile Vicinity Map
3. Exhibit C: Pedestrian Places location map

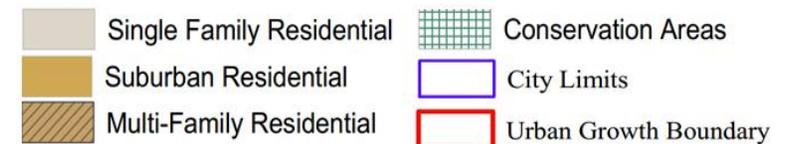
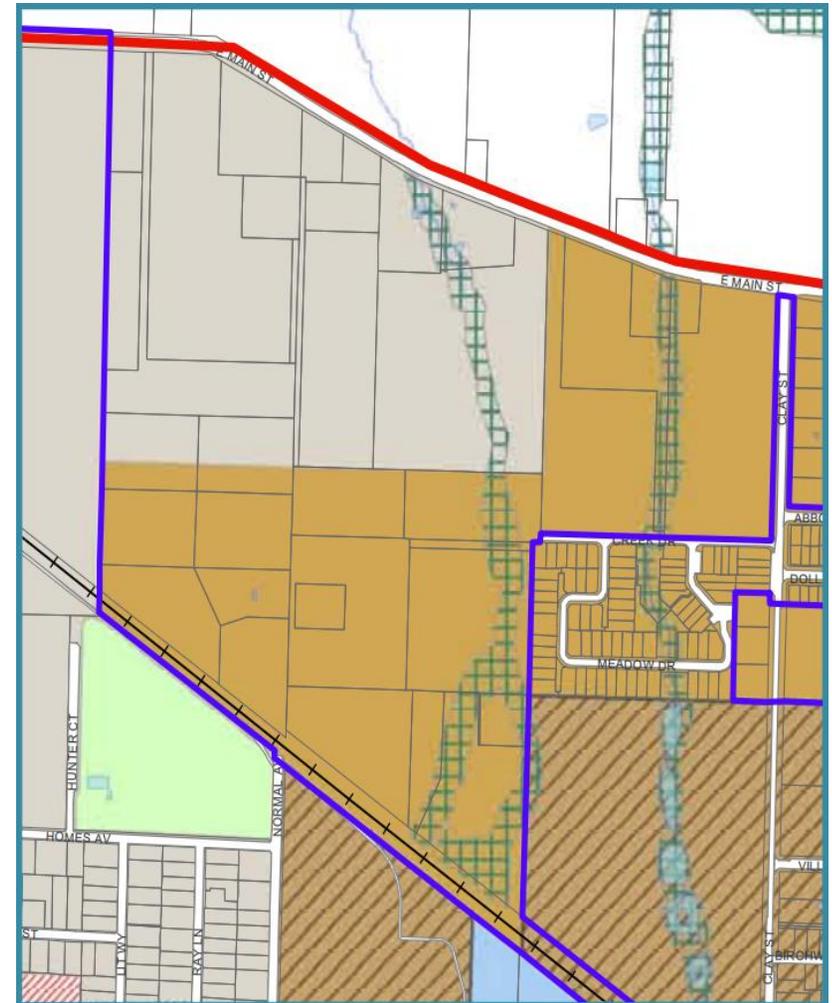


Normal Neighborhood Plan: Summary of Revisions

The Normal Avenue neighborhood is situated between East Main Street to the north and the railroad tracks to the south, Clay Street to the east and the Ashland Middle School to the west. Currently, the 94 acre area has a mix of Comprehensive Plan designations including single family residential and suburban residential, and is presently outside the City of Ashland (City) city limits but within the City Urban Growth Boundary (UGB).

This area constitutes the largest remaining area of residentially designated land that is suitable for medium- to high-density development which remains largely vacant or redevelopable. The plan area contains 35 properties ranging in size between 0.38 acres up to 9.96 acres. There are 26 property owners within the plan area with a number owning multiple parcels.

The Normal Avenue Neighborhood Plan Area is within the Urban Growth Boundary yet presently outside the Ashland City Limits. The City of Ashland Comprehensive Plan anticipates the future urbanization of this area to ensure an orderly transition of land from rural to urban uses. The City of Ashland has an established goal to maintain a compact urban form (Comprehensive Plan Goal 12.09) and to ensure the orderly and sequential development of land in the City Limits. To this end the existing Comprehensive Plan designations within the Normal Avenue Neighborhood Plan Area include approximately 41 acres of land reserved for *Single Family Residential* (SFR) and approximately 50 acres of *Suburban Residential* lands. The housing density expected for the SFR lands would range from 4.5 to six units per acre on average. Suburban residential lands typically accommodate attached housing options with densities between 7.2 and nine units per acre.



Existing Comprehensive Plan Designations (1981)

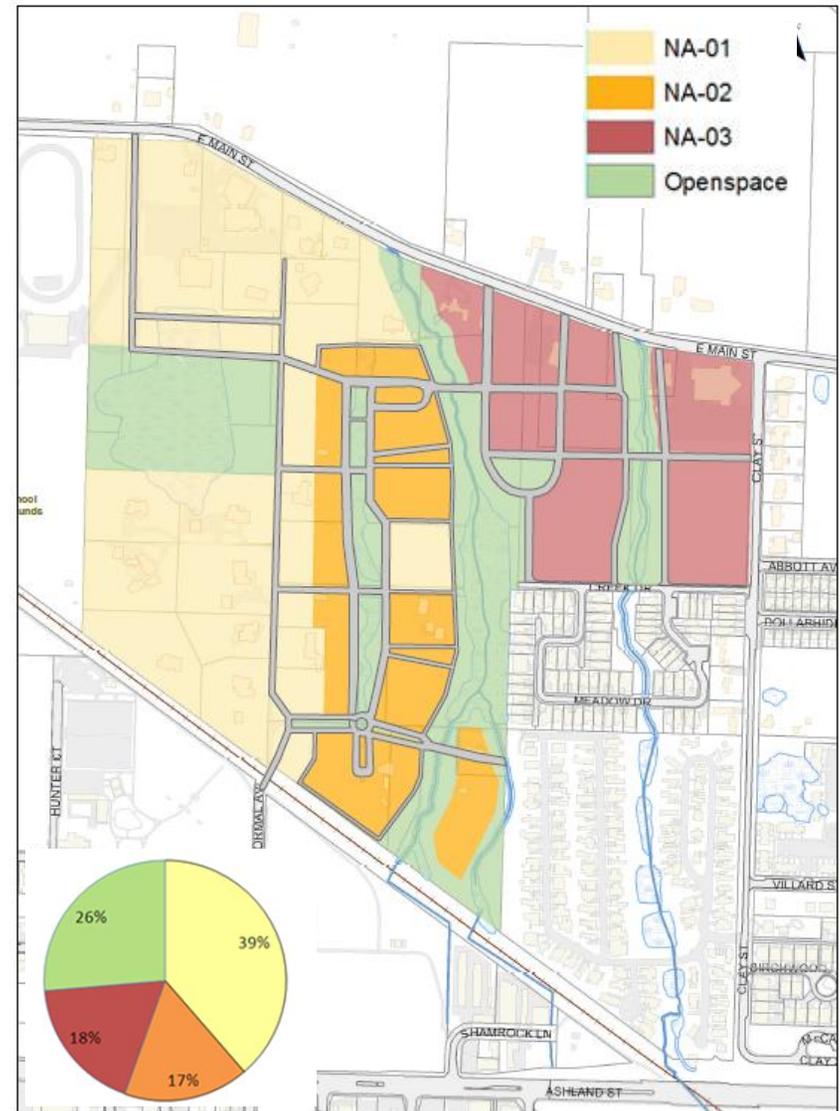
Normal Neighborhood Plan: Summary of Revisions

The original illustrative plan was developed over the course of an intensive three day Charrette from October 23-25th, 2013, including two neighborhood meetings and numerous meetings with area property owners and residents.

Revisions to the Charrette concept were presented to the Planning Commission and public at study sessions on Feb. 26, 2013 and April 9, 2013.



- Areas currently developed as single family homes in the east half of the plan area were designated for low density residential uses (NA-01) consistent with existing development patterns.
- The center of the plan area was designated for a medium density zone (NA-02) which could accommodate a variety of housing types including a mix of single family homes, townhomes, small apartment complexes, and pocket neighborhoods (cottage housing).
- Higher Density areas (NA-03) were located in the North east portion of the plan area where large lot, undeveloped property with limited physical constraints is located.
- Existing natural areas, wetlands, floodplains and riparian areas were identified and reserved for private or public open space.



Normal Avenue Neighborhood Plan
Oct 25, 2012 - Charrette Discussion Draft

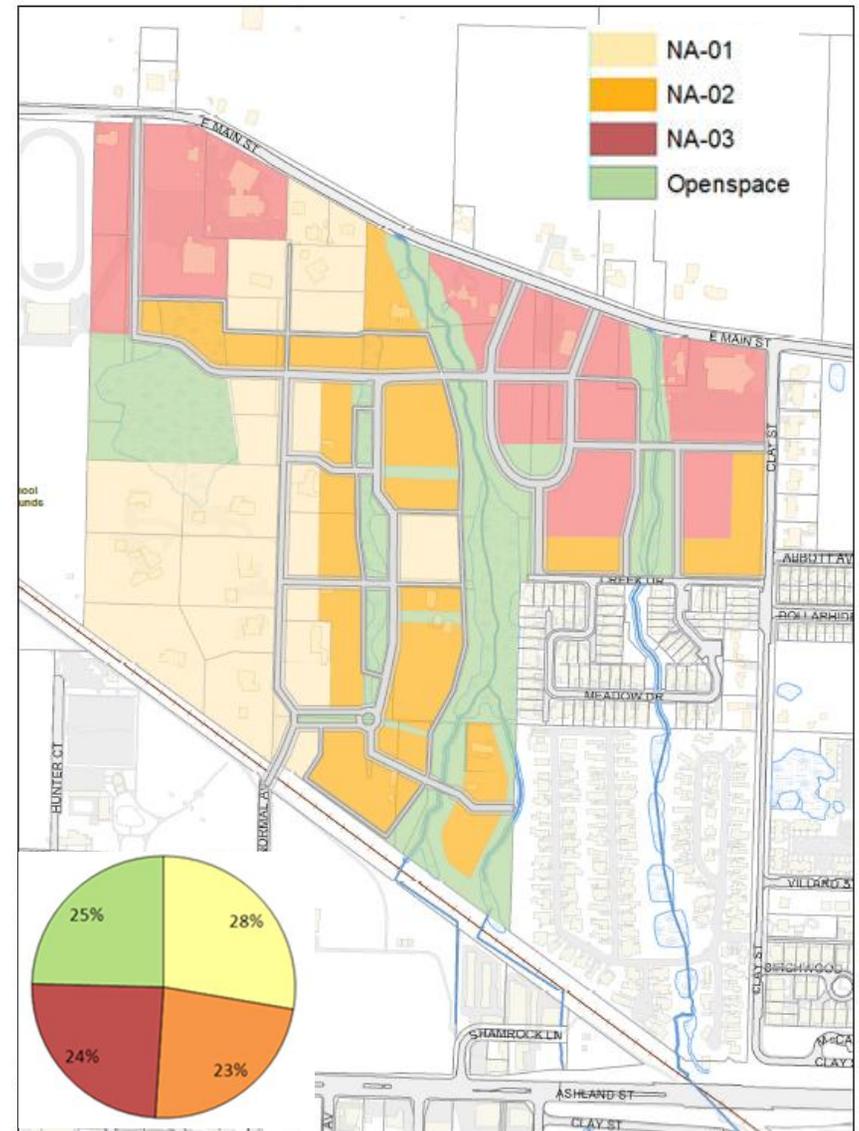
0 100 200 400 600 800 1,000 Feet

(GIS map reproduction: April, 2013)

Normal Neighborhood Plan: Summary of Revisions

On June 25th, 2013 a revised Draft Plan was presented to the Planning Commission and the public in consideration of input received at the April 9th study session including:

- Alternatives for high density housing in consideration of lowering the density adjacent to established neighborhoods.
 - The NA-03 (multi-dwelling high density residential) Zone was modified north of Creek Drive and west of Clay Street to be zoned NA-02 (Multi-dwelling low-density) extending 100 feet back from each street.
- Transitional standards to correlate density, height, and coverage of new developments with existing established neighborhoods.
 - The original concept for the NA-03 zone was to allow 3 stories up to 45 ft. in height, which was reduced to 2.5 stories up to 35 feet tall to be compatible with existing City residential zones.
- Distribution of density throughout the plan area.
 - In the North West corner of the plan area a number of properties which were previously designated as NA-01 (single dwelling residential) were modified to include a mix of NA-02 and NA-03 effectively distributing more of the units within the plan area to be adjacent to East Main Street and in immediate proximity to Ashland Middle School.
 - The NA-02 zone would allow for a variety of housing types including single dwelling units, townhouses, and cluster (cottage) housing
- Street Network
 - Introduced Shared Streets (Woonerfs) to address pedestrian and bicycle circulation along natural areas.
 - Two local street intersections proposed along East Main Street, adjacent to Clay Creek, eliminated to address access management objectives.
 - Proposed street in south east area relocated to avoid an existing home.



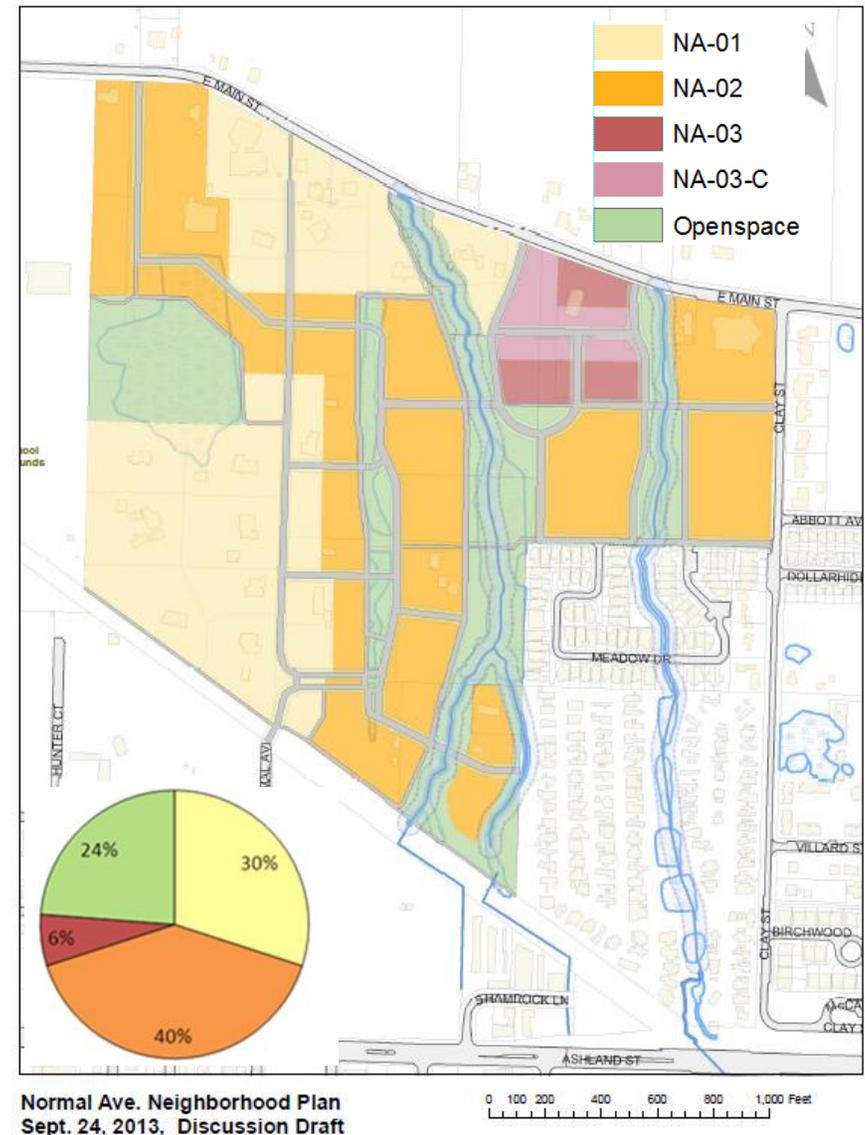
Normal Avenue Neighborhood Plan
June 25th, 2013 Discussion Draft

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Normal Neighborhood Plan: Summary of Revisions

The Final Draft Plan revisions presented at the September 24th – November 26th Planning Commission meetings included:

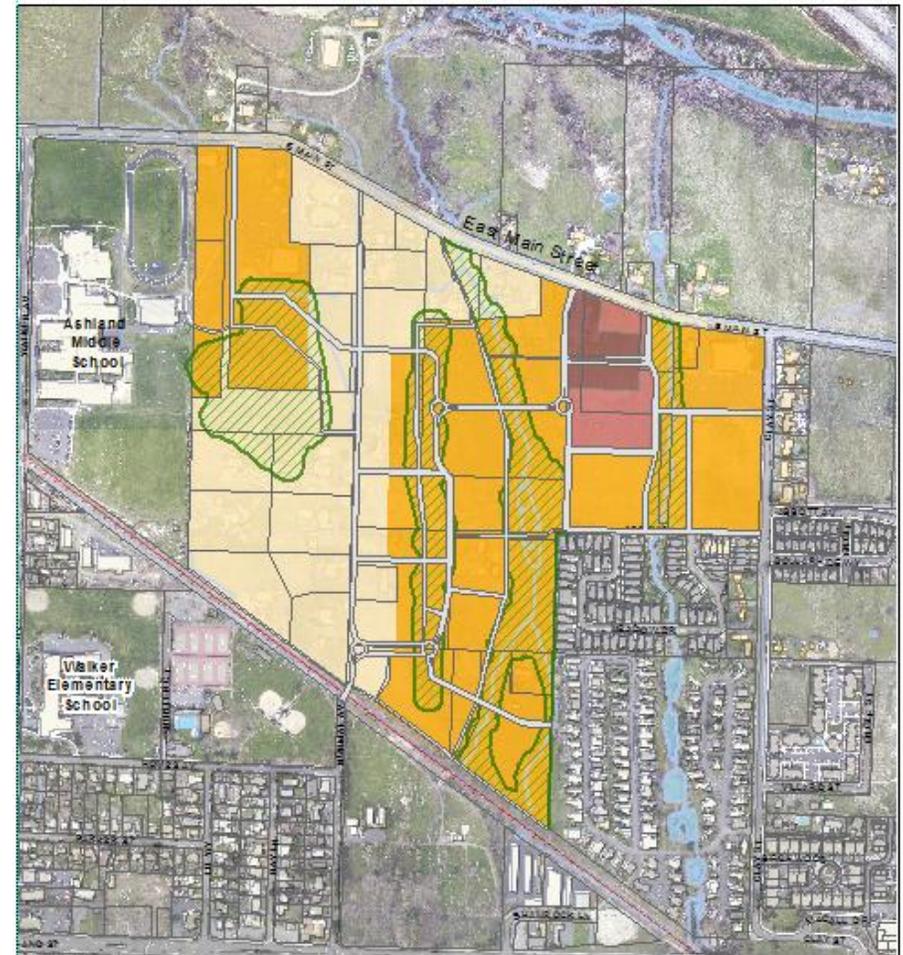
- Neighborhood Serving Commercial area designated
 - Overlay zone introduced (NA-03-C) along the Neighborhood Collector and visible from East Main Street.
 - On June 25th in review of the preliminary land use code Commissioners discussed the scale and type of neighborhood serving commercial uses that would be appropriate in the plan area.
- Reduction in the land area designated as NA-03.
 - Concerns were raised that concentration of HDR along East Main Street would create an incompatible homogenous higher density streetscape immediately across from rural lands.
 - A mix of single family, medium density, and higher density zones were located along East Main Street to ensure a variety of housing types.
- Increased land area designated as NA-02
 - Properties in the Northwest corner changed from NA-01 to NA-02 to allow for an increase in density to offset the cumulative reduction due to limiting the extent of NA-03
 - Former Greene Property changed to NA-02 to provide continuity in the central plan area
- Street Network
 - Street Connections at East Main in the NA-03 area were moved further apart in consideration of the Future Traffic Analysis which cited concern over access management and the spacing distance between the “U” street intersections with East Main.



Normal Neighborhood Plan: Summary of Revisions

The Final Plan presented at the Planning Commission study session for review February 25, 2014 has been revised in consideration of input received during the Planning and Transportation Commission study sessions held during September, October, and November 2014:

- The Planning Commissioners identified a number of areas to be further addressed in preparation of a final plan and proposed district's land use ordinance:
 - Designation of open space lands as protected conservation areas.
 - Provide for the transfer of housing density out of the water resource protection zones.
 - Establishment of a minor amendment process to allow final open space locations to be moved to correlate with natural features (future wetland locations and boundaries), and a major amendment process if a proposal would reduce the cumulative acreage of conservation area/open space as represented in the plan.
 - Flexibility in shared streets to alternatively be alleys or multiuse paths where appropriate adjacent to water protection zones.
 - Consideration of establishing mandatory standards relating to storm water management.
 - Alignment of streets and zoning to correlate with existing property lines.
 - The Final Plan aligns the northern portion of the Neighborhood Collector to run along a common property line.
- The Transportation Commission recommendations regarding the Street Network included:
 - Elimination of two of the three proposed new street connections to East Main Street, leaving only the new Normal neighborhood Collector connection in its proposed location.
 - The Public Works Director alternatively recommends an additional East Main St. connection (4 total).
 - Softening the 90 degree turns in the final Neighborhood Collector design to promote traffic flow on the central street.



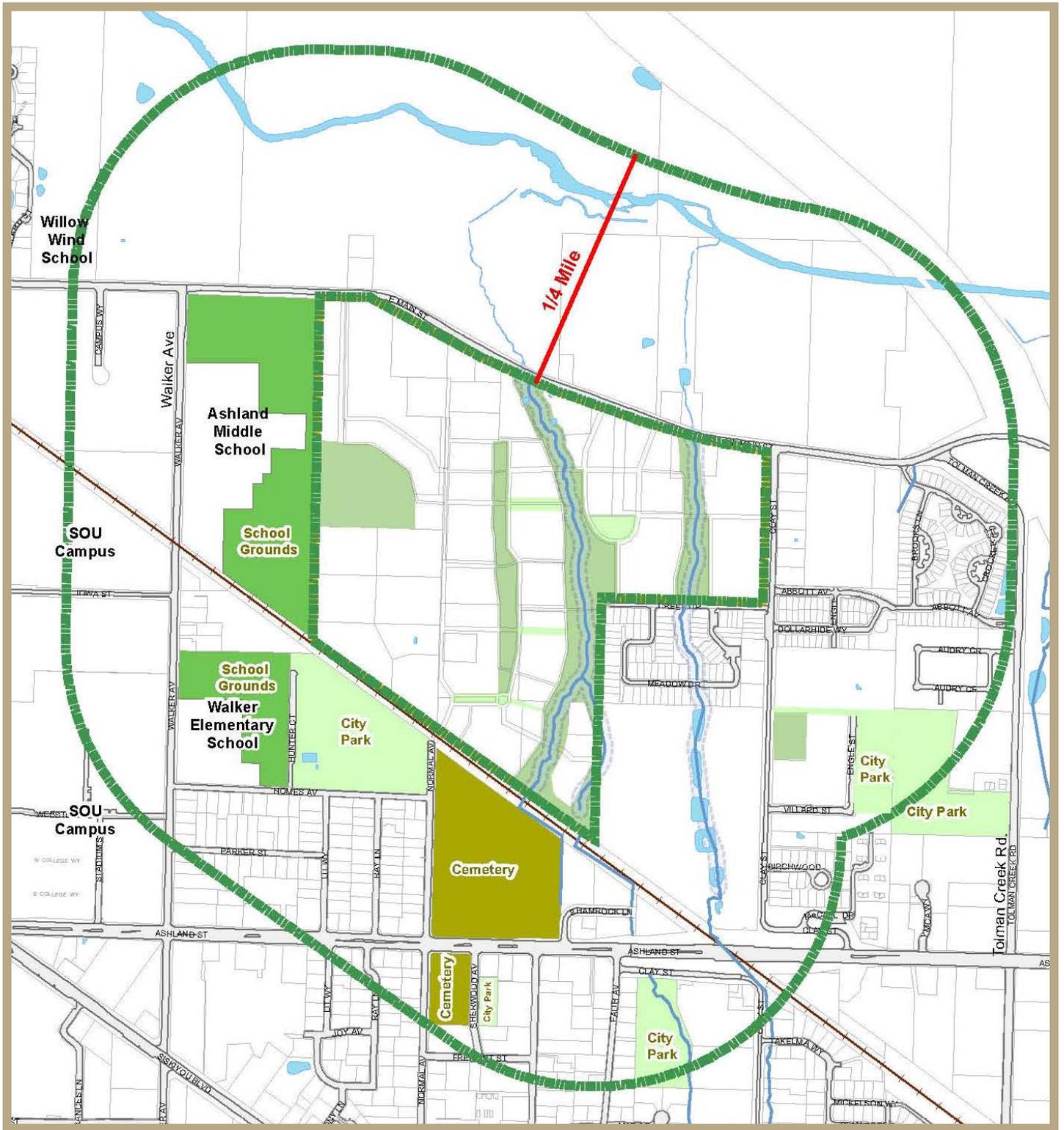
**Normal Neighborhood Plan
Land Use Designation Overlay Zones**



Final Plan – 2/25/2014

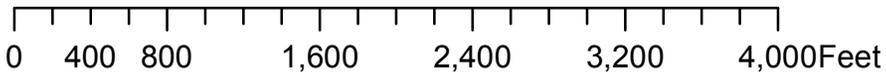
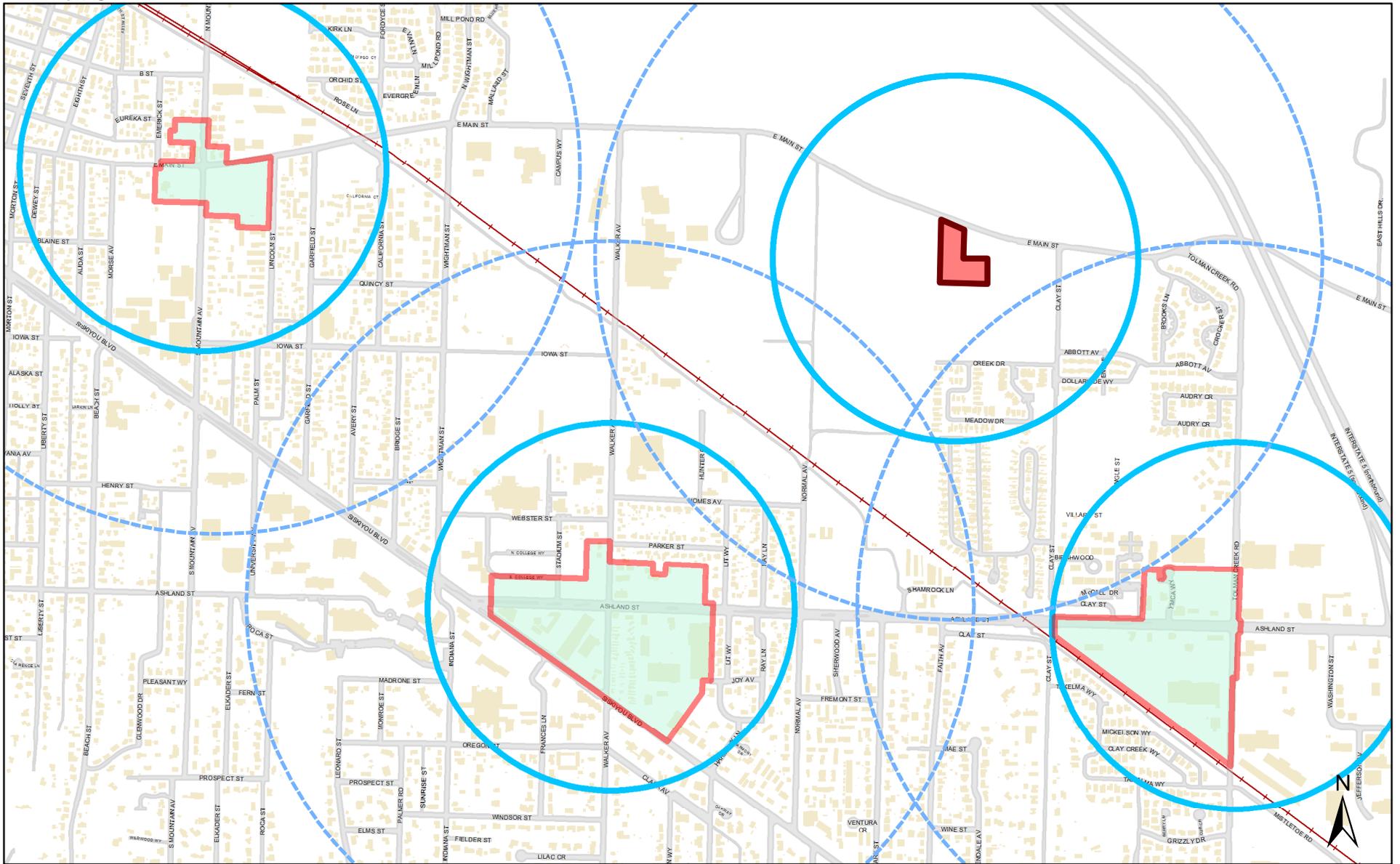
Exhibit B

Normal Neighborhood Plan Area Vicinity



A quarter mile is approximately a five minute Walk

Exhibit C



Key

-  Pedestrian Place Overlay
-  Normal Neighborhood Plan Commercial Overlay (proposed)

-  5 minute walk
-  10 minute walk



Pedestrian Place Overlay Areas