

Normal Neighborhood Working Group

November 20, 2014

4:30-6:00

**Community Development Building
Siskiyou Room
51 Winburn Way**

**Bring packet materials from prior meetings
(draft maps, plan framework, etc) for continued discussion**

I. CALL TO ORDER:

- 4:30 Community Development Building, 51 Winburn Way

II. CONSENT AGENDA

- Approval of Minutes
 - Oct. 23, 2014 Meeting.

III. PUBLIC FORUM

- 20 minutes

IV. DISCUSSION

- Working Group Vision Statement
- Working Group Recommendations
- Draft Recommended Land Use Map

V. NEXT MEETINGS

- Council Review, December 2, 2014
 - Working Group representation/presentation

VI. ADJOURNMENT

MINUTES FOR THE NORMAL NEIGHBORHOOD WORKING GROUP
Thursday, October 23, 2014
Siskiyou Room, 51 Winburn Way

Chair Pam Marsh called the meeting to order at 4:34 p.m. in the Siskiyou Room, 51 Winburn Way.

Mayor Stromberg, Michael Dawkins, Rich Kaplan, Mike Morris, Brandon Goldman, and Mike Faught were present.

1. Consent Agenda

Kaplan/Morris M/S to approve the minutes of October 9, 2014. Voice Vote; all ayes. Motion passes.

Marsh reviewed the process and discussions of the previous meetings. Believes we are starting the last phase of the meetings. Would like to start today by going back to the “big picture” and would like all the group members to review their thoughts on this plan, and where they want to go from here.

2. Discussion

Mike Morris

One issue has been, and will continue to be, affordable housing. Moving the higher density to the proposed new location might work against our affordable housing needs and requirements. He’s still not happy with the streets layout. He’s worried the group hasn’t planned well for 20 years from now. Remembers other projects where nearby neighbors were angry about the project, but those areas are now filled with happy residents.

Morris agrees that the plan has to be done, otherwise we’re stuck with County requirements defining roads and open space. There has to be a plan for the area or we’re planning to fail.

Rich Kaplan

Agrees with a lot of what Morris said. Group moved the higher density to the south when they had no constraints but dealing with both density and affordable housing might require re-thinking. This will be a 20 – 30 year process, so who knows what we’ll end up with, but a good plan helps define an orderly way to make appropriate long-term adjustments. Believes the amendment process to the plan is vital. This plan is probably as good as it can get.

Mayor Stromberg

Discussed working on previous planning process in Napa where it was defined by livability, walkability, and quality of life. Believes the original Normal Neighborhood plan didn’t speak to those values because of too many constraints and goals. Doesn’t think that land use planning style plans produce good quality of life.

Stromberg believes we need to do transit oriented planning and only have density surrounding transit areas. Moving the density south is a good thing because it gets people closer to transit.

Believes we should hit minimum density mid-way to E. Main Street to keep rural character of E. Main Street.

He believes the community's relationship to nature is evolving and being changed by nature. Wants the riparian corridors to be most important and valuable part of this plan. It's an opportunity to deal with urban wildlife in a creative way.

Michael Dawkins

Originally would have liked an agriculturally focused neighborhood, but understands that's not a viable reality. He agrees we need to have a plan in place. The discussions regarding why the Planning Commission/consultant created special zoning names was because they were trying to figure out way to have more flexibility than an average neighborhood. He's adamant that they must preserve the conservation easements. Sight corridors are very important and the conservation spaces will help that. All the property eventually will develop, maybe not for 50 years, but this plan keeps the property from being developed in unhealthy ways. He disagrees with Mayor Stromberg's desire to see East Main remain rural country road. He said East Main Street needs to be upgraded now.

Pam Marsh

We have an opportunity here to build a neighborhood that is a joyful opportunity for residents for years to come. Somehow we lost sight of this in all the boxes, density requirements, lines on paper. The neighborhood she'd like to see would retain the conservation areas determined by the Planning Commission, have cluster housing, and the greater density to the south to be nearer amenities and transportation options. She is not as attached as others to E. Main Street remaining rural, as it's currently unsafe and in need of upgrades. Believes that the improvements (E. Main Street and railroad crossing) can't be entirely funded by the developers, that the City will need to be a partner in those developments. She agrees that we need a plan because without one there will be separate development, lack of trails, reduced open space, septic tanks rather than sewer, etc., all things we don't want to see happen.

3. Group Discussion

Group discussed why the Planning Commission suggested E. Main Street be improved with half remaining rural and half upgraded to City standards This is partly related to who owns the street and partly related to the sorts of development on each side. Group agreed the improvements are necessary because of the increased traffic from those throughout the city using this street, not just because of future traffic from this neighborhood.

Marsh presented a draft set of recommendations to Council [see page 5, below]. Group reviewed the recommendations. They generally agree on the following, based on the attached draft recommendations:

Density

1. Yes, density from south to north. Also group discussed maybe having density go from east to west, with higher density to the east to more closely match the nearby neighborhoods.
2. Agree with #2, but note that they will keep 'NN' notation to allow the intent of extra

flexibility established by the Planning Commission, especially to keep open space reserves.
3. Agree with this as it helps to leave the option open for the future.

Open Space

1. The first sentence is okay. Goldman gave information to the group regarding the minor amendment process. Group agreed to remove the word, “without” in the second sentence.

Design Issues

1. Agreed with this sentence.
2. Group discussed current performance standards required and agreed to remove, “support the use of PUDs to” from the sentence.

Transportation

1. Agree with the first sentence regarding E. Main Street. Group discussed the pros and cons of a straight Normal Avenue intersecting with East Main Street. Generally agreed to leave the main neighborhood collector as not-straight, as shown in the updated plan, with the acknowledgement that any adjustments can be made through the major amendment process if necessary in the future.
2. Agreed to remove, “more of” from the sentence, as many of those east-west connections can’t or won’t happen in the near future.
3. Agreed with this statement.
4. Group discussed how this can be put together, financing options for implementation of E. Main Street and railroad improvements.

Group discussed the next steps in this process - how the Planning Commission and Council would be involved with the review and approval. Ultimately Council may want Planning Commission to review the plan again, but Council is not required to do so.

Group agreed that Goldman will draft a “vision statement” and final working group recommendations, which will be reviewed at the next meeting. This will go to Council for their review and direction on the next steps of the plan process.

4. Public Input

Jan Vidmar: Her home backs up on Cemetery Creek and she’s concerned with flood potential. According to the new FEMA flood map the Normal set-backs would be in her living room. She’s concerned that any development would not allow water to escape, causing flooding. Also, the cottonwood and willow trees on the property currently help control water. Lastly, the many wild animals in the area need to be taken into consideration.

Julie Matthews: Sees this as a jig-saw puzzle. Would like a series of overlays created, at the bottom is wildlife, overlaid with transportation, density, hydrology. Seeing how these issues effect each other might change the group’s “primary objective”. It could get them to be more creative in their plan. Thinks the group needs more time.

Nancy Boyer: Thinks overlays are a great idea. Regarding moving the density to the south, why doesn’t the bus route go on E. Main Street as a continual loop through town? If we want seniors

to live in the area, they can't possibly navigate the steep grade changes from the neighborhood to Ashland Street. Wonders why the group brought back the issue of Normal being straight.

Sue DiMarinis: Told group about wildlife she's seen recently in the area. Regarding the commercial area, there is a big difference between a mom & pop store and an assisted living facility. Those kinds of differences should be looked at. Major amendments should be required for all streets to keep everyone safe. When the city is doing analysis the whole city needs to hear it as there are costs and benefits to all of the city.

Gil Livney: The costs of E. Main Street improvements should not be an issue if safety is really important. Moved here largely for the wildlife but believes in property rights. He doesn't understand why the city wants to take his property for the sake of open space. If open space is very important to the city then the city should buy it from him. Thinks roads should be less defined.

Merry Hart: Is pleased with the information from today. Reminds the group that affordable housing near railroad tracks can't happen. Affordable housing is highly needed in Ashland. No one can use Federal funding with the railroad tracks nearby so moving density nearby means you've eliminated the possibility for affordable housing. Hearing that the group is considering this change is disheartening as they've eliminated much of what this city needs.

Goldman reminded the group that affordable housing is required to be dispersed throughout the development and of similar type to the rest of the development.

5. Next Meeting

November 20, starting at 4:30 p.m. and ending whenever the group is done with their recommendations to Council.

Meeting adjourned at 6:40 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,
Diana Shiplet
Executive Secretary

Normal Neighborhood Working Group:
Discussion Draft Recommendations to Council
Presented by Councilor Pam Marsh, Working Group Chair

Density:

1. Density gradation should move from south to north. This would place higher density development near the railroad tracks and within easy access to existing transit lines, parks and community facilities. This approach will also protect the existing viewshed.
2. Zoning designations within the Normal neighborhood area should be consistent with adjacent lands and use the same zoning labels as in the rest of the city.
3. Maintain option for neighborhood serving commercial development on East Main St.

Open Space:

1. Maintain the approach toward designation of open space and conservation areas proposed in the draft plan. Amend the plan to allow non-conservation open space to be relocated without requiring a minor amendment application.

Design issues:

1. Maintain maximum height at 35 feet.
2. Support the use of PUDS to encourage the development of clustered housing that integrates with open space and respects the viewshed.

Transportation:

1. The internal transportation system should incorporate multiple connections with East Main. Maintain the Normal collector as designated in the draft plan.
2. Internal streets should be aligned to provide more of a grid pattern, including clear east-west connections.
3. Pedestrian and bicycle pathways are critical, especially as a means to connect residents with the middle school and the existing bike path.
4. External transportation improvements, including the railroad crossing and improvements to East Main, are integral and should proceed in concert with development. However, we believe the city may need to play a role in the financing/implementation of these projects.

Accordingly, as a next step we recommend that the council direct city staff and/or an outside consultant to identify and quantify: 1) the need and possible means for public investment in the project, and 2) the overall costs and benefits of development to the city.

Memo - draft -

TO: Ashland City Council
FROM: Normal Neighborhood Plan Working Group
DATE: December 2, 2014
RE: Normal Neighborhood Plan Recommendations

Vision Statement

Neighborhood planning is the process by which the City works with Ashland's residents to envision the future of the neighborhood. The eventual incorporation of the Normal Neighborhood Plan area into the City depends on careful consideration of the neighborhood's unique identity and character and a holistic planning approach. The Normal Neighborhood Working Group envisions a neighborhood that is notable for the natural beauty of the area's wetlands and creeks, mountain views, diversity of households, and as an area which accommodates bicycling and walking as a reliable and convenient way to move throughout the area.

Local streams, wetlands, and scenic vistas contribute significantly to define the character of the Normal Neighborhood. The quality of the place is enhanced by these features and the wildlife that they attract. Connected and contiguous open spaces should remain as central features of the area's future development as they help reflect the community of Ashland's commitment to promote environmental quality, provide recreational opportunities, and function to incorporate nature into the daily lives of the area's residents.

The neighborhood should provide for a range of housing choices available to the full cross section of Ashland's population. The neighborhood can accommodate a blend of housing types including individual residences, townhomes, apartments, moderately sized cottages, and pedestrian oriented cluster housing. Given the immediate proximity to existing schools, parks, and local business areas the neighborhood is recognized as place where children can readily walk and bike to schools through a safe, desirable family-based neighborhood.

The Normal Neighborhood Plan Working Group believes a neighborhood plan is necessary to address long-term community goals, unify expectations, and integrate the project area into the fabric of the City. The implementation standards for of the neighborhood plan should be strong enough to maintain the vision for the area, yet flexible enough to respond to changing conditions and adapt over time.



Memo - draft -

Recommendations

Land Use and Housing Density:

1. Housing Density gradation should move from south to north. This would place higher density development near the railroad tracks and within a relatively short distance to transit lines, parks and community facilities. This approach will also protect the existing viewshed.
2. Zoning designations applied within the Normal neighborhood area should be consistent with the zoning of adjacent land within the City Limits, and use zoning labels that are comparable to those used in the rest of the city while recognizing the Normal Neighborhood (NN) district.
3. Maintain option for neighborhood serving businesses and services close to East Main St near the northeast corner of the plan area.

Open Space:

1. Maintain the approach toward designation of open space and conservation areas proposed in the draft plan. Amend the plan to allow non-conservation open space to be relocated requiring a minor amendment application.

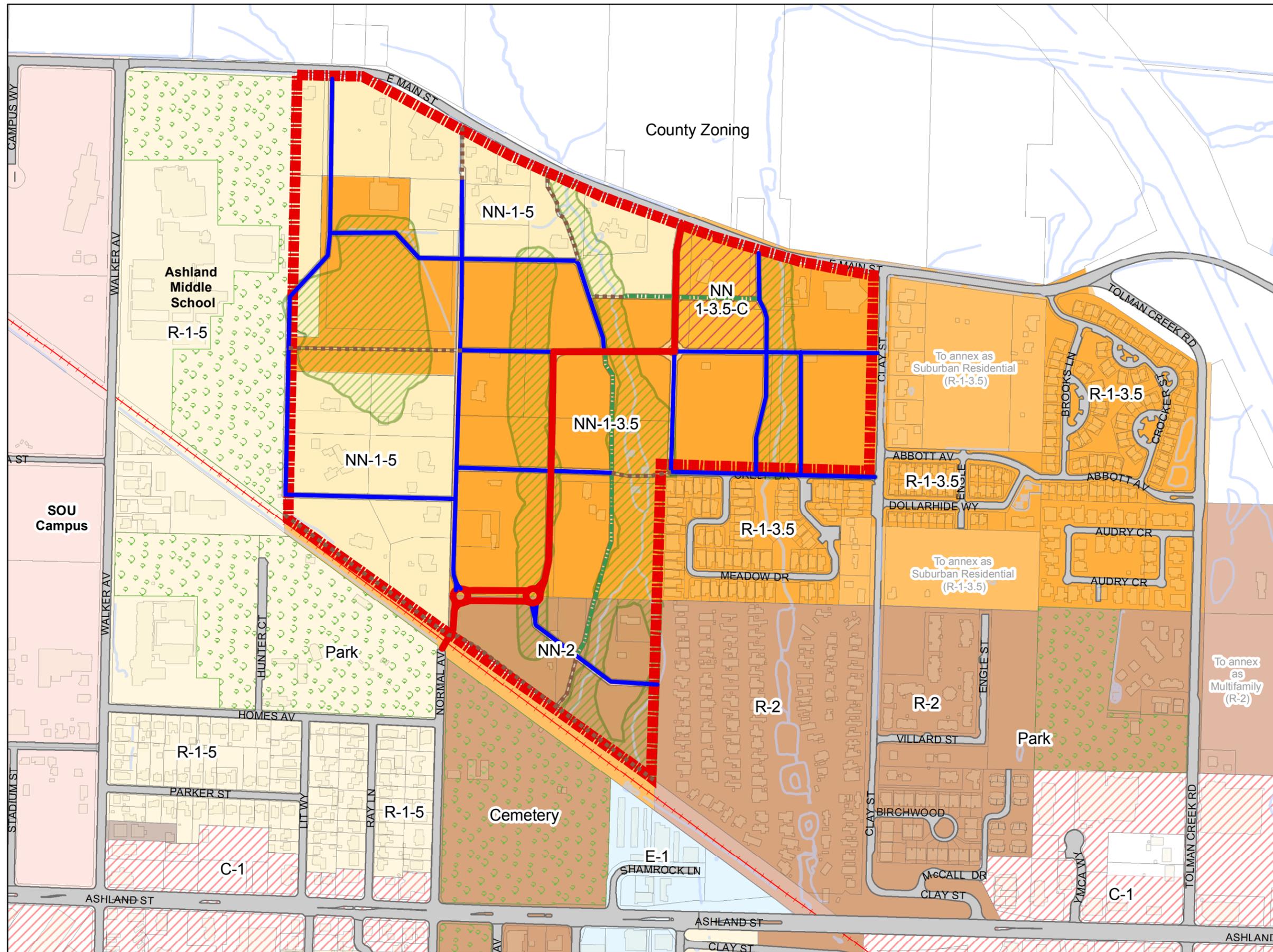
Design issues:

1. Maintain a maximum building height of 35 feet.
2. Encourage the development of clustered housing that integrates with open space and respects the viewshed.

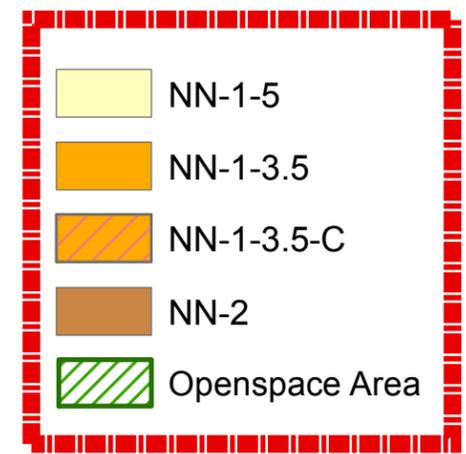
Transportation:

1. The internal transportation system's local street network should incorporate multiple connections with East Main St 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.
2. Internal local streets should be aligned to provide a grid pattern, including clear east-west connections.
3. Pedestrian and bicycle pathways are critical, especially as a means to connect residents with the middle school and the existing bike path.
4. External transportation improvements, including the railroad crossing and improvements to East Main St., are integral and should proceed in concert with development. However, we believe the city may need to play a role in the financing/implementation of these projects. Accordingly, as a next step we recommend that the council direct city staff and/or an outside consultant to identify and quantify:
 - a. the need and possible means for public investment in the project, and
 - b. the overall costs and benefits that these facilities present to the entire city.

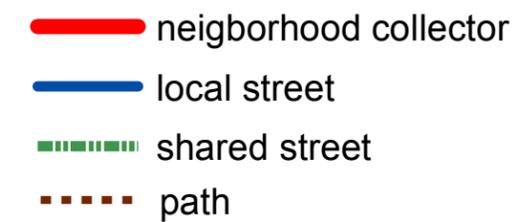




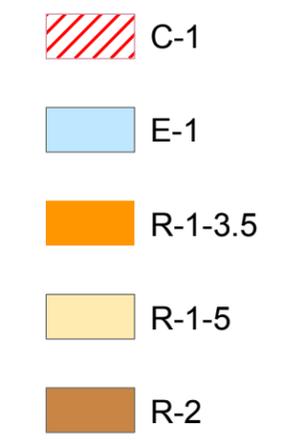
Potential Zoning for Normal Plan Area



Road Classifications



City Zoning



Normal Neighborhood Plan Working Group
Recommended Land Use Map



Normal Neighborhood Working Group

From : Janet Vidmar <jan2010727@hotmail.com>

Mon, Oct 27, 2014 08:43 AM

Subject : Normal Neighborhood Working Group 1 attachment**To :** goldmanb@ashland.or.us, rpkaplan46@gmail.com, pam@ashland.or.us, mike@council.ashland.or.us, john@council.ashland.or.us

The October 23rd. working group meeting was excellent, with enlightened discussions. As always, I appreciate your dedication.

I felt badly that Mr. Livni expressed concerns that the wildlife corridor and wetland may impede his property development. I know that is not the intent of any of the neighbors. My concerns regarding the flow of water through Cemetery Creek come from my reading of the submitted Livni and the Mahar wetland studies. Areas of wetland have been documented as changed, but Cemetery Creek is still jurisdictional, and it's role in dispersing water and providing a wildlife corridor are important. Cemetery Creek was a drainage for uplands long before roads, ditches and buildings impeded the water's progress.

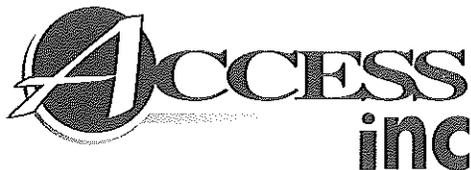
To keep the corridor open for wildlife, existing cottonwoods and willows need to stay in place for habitat and cover. This refers to the low areas on either side of the Creek, which would already be within the allowed setback guidelines. The cottonwoods are native, and help to soak up water. The willows help to shore up the banks. The land downstream, including the Livni property, would maybe require conduits as part of the development so that high water can exit and not back up. I don't see this as a deterrent to housing, but a guideline. Please refer to the FEMA Floodplain Map of 05/03/11. Some of the neighbors on Cemetery Creek have seen water rise quickly, and then flush.

Our hope is that water as well as wildlife will be taken into consideration, and that development can proceed in an enlightened manner.

Thank you for all you do,

Jan Vidmar
320 Meadow Drive
541-301-3271

**Flood Zone Comparison Map 5-11.pdf**536 KB



Helping People Help Themselves

3630 Aviation Way
P.O. Box 4666
Medford, OR 97501

November 12, 2014

Dear Normal Neighborhood Working Group,

ACCESS would like to submit the following comments and recommendations to you in response to your most recent meeting discussions that took place on 10/23/14. During this meeting, a Draft document containing Recommendations to Council was reviewed and discussed. Merry Hart, ACCESS Housing Analyst, was in attendance at this meeting.

ACCESS develops, builds and manages affordable housing throughout Jackson County. Your recommendation to move higher density housing parcels adjacent to both railroad tracks and wetlands raises several concerns. From the standpoint of raising funds to build affordable housing, this location would almost certainly preclude the possibility of securing public dollars to construct in this location. The reason for this is that neither State nor Federal funding sources will support building affordable housing next to railroad tracks, as it is not considered a desirable location. Mitigation efforts (sound attenuation, etc.) are not considered relevant to this policy. This means, for example, that the City of Ashland would not be able to use its Community Development Block Grant dollars on a project so located.

We also understand that the City of Ashland has conducted studies indicating that the city has a high need for more multi-family developments and higher density housing. The Normal Neighborhood is well suited to allow the many types of zoning that could accommodate this need in a thoughtful, planned way and have it be compatible with existing neighborhoods.

There was also discussion about commercial development. As a policy matter, ACCESS supports the careful integration of appropriate commercial enterprise into residential housing developments. There was concern that an assisted living facility could be allowed and someone in the audience objected to that stating "a mom & pop store has a very different impact than a 100 unit assisted care". It may be useful to know that there are many memory care facilities that are much smaller, serving 15 or so residents, and that they might be a very nice fit in the neighborhood.

We support and agree that the City should play a role in the financing/implementation of transportation improvements that will need to be made to East Main and the railroad crossing.

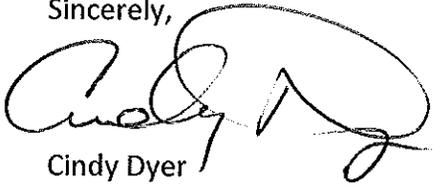
One final thought is related to the July 19, 2013 proposed rule issued by HUD (Department of Housing and Urban Development) concerning how HUD-funded jurisdictions must undertake some analysis in their communities. The proposed rule identifies four areas for local action:

1. Improving integrated living patterns and overcoming historic patterns of segregation
2. Reducing racial and ethnic concentrations of poverty
3. Reducing disparities in access to community assets such as education, transit access and employment, as well as exposure to environmental health hazards and other stressors that harm a person's quality of life.
4. Responding to disproportionate housing needs by protected class.

In response to this rule, the Fair Housing Council of Oregon has developed a checklist for local jurisdictions to use in reviewing their land use and subdivision ordinances and related practices. It is called "Examining Local Land Use with a Fair Housing Lens", www.fhco.org. A review of this information could be beneficial to all, before solidifying recommendations to the City Council.

We appreciate the planning efforts that have taken place and look forward to following the progress of what is sure to be a well thought out and inclusive neighborhood.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Cindy Dyer", with a large, stylized flourish at the end.

Cindy Dyer
Housing Director
ACCESS

Normal Neighborhood Plan

From : Janet Vidmar <jan2010727@hotmail.com>

Sat, Nov 15, 2014 09:29 AM

Subject : Normal Neighborhood Plan**To :** pam@council.ashland.or.us, goldmanb@ashland.or.us,
john@council.ashland.or.us, mike@council.ashland.or.us,
rpkaplan46@gmail.com

Dear Working Group Members,

As the approval for the Normal Plan is drawing near, I have a few thoughts to share.

As I drive around this area, I notice more signs for land sales. Not only is there an updated sign by Coldwell for the acreage backing up to East Main by Chautauqua Trace, but the Pierson's 200+ acres is now on the market. The working group has focused away from East Main and toward Normal Street, and I am now wondering if the plan should change. The discussions have favored keeping a more rural feeling to the edge of the Normal Plan but perhaps this no longer should be a compelling reason to avoid development along East Main. I think that the rural nature of the properties will be changing soon, and that East Main will be improved to accommodate that development on both sides of the road.

The Normal Street access is too small and narrow for the bulk of traffic, so it makes sense for the most development and major access to be on East Main. The Baptist Church property is the easiest developed, flattest, and will have the best road access. It will also have the least impact on the Cemetery Creek drainage, as the fields are dry and ready for development.

As the plan proposal stands now, the densest development is closest to the Normal Street access, instead of East Main. I think that the densest should now be shifted to directly on East Main, away from current neighborhoods. This would perhaps also satisfy affordable housing if away from the railroad tracks and onto East Main. It would also provide for future public transportation if the majority of housing units were on East Main.

Thank you for all you do,

Jan Vidmar
320 Meadow Drive
