

Normal Neighborhood Plan

10/02/2015 - Planning Staff Responses to Mayor Stromberg's Questions.

What is the urgency in adopting a Neighborhood Plan?

The Plan area is currently within the Urban Growth Boundary and has an existing Comprehensive Plan designation to be incorporated into the City. The existing land use designations for the area already permit suburban residential (7.2 units per acre) and Single Family Residential (4.5 units per acre) upon annexation. However these designations do not reflect development that has occurred under county jurisdiction since the original plan was adopted in 1982. Given the land has current comprehensive plan designations; property owners can propose annexations and development under this 1982 plan at this time. Postponement of adoption of a plan would not preclude immediate applications for annexation and development within the area. Additionally, properties in the County can continue to develop under County Standards consistent with the Rural Residential RR_5 zone, without consideration of the future urbanization of the area.

Such rural development within Ashland's UGB could compromise a number of objectives outlined in the neighborhood plan framework including:

- Provision of a variety of housing types
 - Large lot development, or development of conditional uses such as religious institutions, that could continue to occur under county standards will result in a reduction of land available to accommodate future needed housing. As a result the City would either have to increase densities within established neighborhoods within the City Limits, expand the urban growth boundary to increase the land supply, or undertake a combination of the two in order to accommodate future population growth.
- Transportation connectivity
 - Adopting a transportation Network for the plan area into Ashland's Transportation System Plan would give the City standing to request the County consider the approved street and path locations in reviewing any application to develop properties in the County that may not request annexation.
 - Upon receiving an application for annexation, with an adopted plan, the City can require needed street and path dedications to ensure transportation to and through a property is provided in a coordinated manner.
 - Approval of a neighborhood plan and TSP amendments will allow the City and the Rogue Valley Transportation District to plan for public transit options for the area. Development of large lot rural residential uses within the area would not provide the housing density in the area necessary to support transit. Essentially a coordinated land use and transportation plan makes a new bus loop extending down East Main and potentially through the neighborhood along the Normal Neighborhood Collector potentially viable.
- Open space preservation and habitat protection
 - City requirements that are applied upon annexation require greater water resource protection zones than under County Standards. Under county standards no wetland buffer need be maintained and development of structures, private roads, septic systems, could occur all the way up to a wetland edge. Under the proposed plan a 50ft buffer beyond the wetland's boundary is included in the Open Space Plan to ensure these natural areas are better protected.
 - Establishing the Open Space framework for the area as part of the Neighborhood Plan will require applicants for annexation include the proposed open-spaces in their

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proposals, or request an amendment to the plan that demonstrates an alternative that is to be evaluated through a public hearing process. In the event a property owner requested development under County Standards an adopted Open Space Framework for the area would give the City standing to request the County consider the consideration upon open spaces any proposed development (including septic systems, private drives, and buildings).

How are annexations processed?

An annexation is requested by a property owner concurrent with a proposal to subdivide and develop their property. Such a proposal will require public hearings to review consistency with the neighborhood plan, with the Transportation System Plan, the land use requirements for the development, and the criteria for annexation .

- Public hearing process to review proposed development
 - Transportation Commission Hearing
 - Planning Commission Hearing
 - City Council Hearing

In approving as request for annexation the City Council will require a survey be completed showing all proposed tax lots, common areas, and newly dedicated public rights of way and easements. As a condition of annexation it will be the developer's obligation to improve the proposed streets, install utilities, or provide financial security assuring their completion . Then the developer will begin building the units proposed as was approved as part of the public hearing process noted above.

- *Existing criteria for approval of an annexation*
 - *The land is within the City's Urban Growth Boundary.*
 - *The land is currently contiguous with the present city limits.*
 - *The proposed zoning for the annexed area is in conformance with the designation indicated on the Comprehensive Plan Map, and the development proposed is an allowed use within the proposed zoning.*
 - *When the proposed area for annexation is to be residentially zoned, he applicant must demonstrate there is less than a five-year supply of land with the proposed land use classification within the current city limits.*
 - *Affordable housing is provided as required (15-33% of the development depending on the household income levels provided for).*
 - *Adequate transportation can and will be provided to and through the subject property by the proposed development.*
 - *Includes new streets, extensions of existing streets to serve development, upgrades to meet City standards including bike lanes, sidewalks, and multiuse paths where required by the Transportation System Plan.*
 - *There exists, or will be provided as part of a development, adequate City facilities for water, sewage treatment, electricity to the site, and urban storm drainage.*
 - *For all residential annexations, a plan shall be provided demonstrating that the development of the entire property will ultimately occur at a minimum density of 90 percent of the base density for the zone*
 - *Reductions in the total number of units are allowed if necessary to accommodate significant natural features, topography, access limitations, or similar physical constraints.*

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How can the City approve new development if there is not enough water?

The existing City Water Master Plan projected that there will be enough water for the full build out of all of properties within the Urban Growth Boundary using the assumptions that Ashland will grow at approximately 187 people per year and the areas in the UGB would build out at urban densities consistent with the adopted Comprehensive Plan.

However, in order to gain approval of a development proposal (annexation and subdivision) the developer must demonstrate "There exists, or will be provided as part of a development, adequate City facilities for water, sewage treatment, electricity to the site, and urban storm drainage."

Unless the City has declared a moratorium based upon a shortage of water, sewer, or electricity, it is recognized that adequate capacity exists system-wide for these facilities. In the event a prolonged drought changes the availability of water to no longer be sufficient for projected growth (or existing demand for that matter) the City could declare a moratorium to development, and would then need to investigate how to rectify the shortage and would be required by the State to implement measures to increase supply to be sufficient to again accommodate growth. The City will continue to monitor water and expects to update the water master plan in 2016/17. This update effort will be informed by projected growth rates, Comprehensive Plan designations, and adopted neighborhood plans.

Would the City (taxpayers) be at risk if the City participated in an Advanced Financing District (Reimbursement District)?

Reimbursement Districts, also known as Advance Financing Districts, are a potential method of funding public improvements. The process for forming such a district, is codified in Chapter 13.30 of the Ashland Municipal Code.

In the event a developer proposes a Reimbursement District under section 13.30 the City Council will hold a public hearing in which persons impacted by the creation of the proposed Reimbursement District shall be given the opportunity to comment. The City Council, after the public hearing, has the discretion to decide whether the District is to be formed or not. The Normal Plan does not obligate the City to participate in the formation of a Reimbursement District it only notes that it is an option. In order to determine whether the proposed reimbursement district is in the best interest of the City the applicant will have to provide actual engineering, construction, the boundary of the district, and financing costs at a public hearing for review.

If the formation of the Reimbursement District is acceptable to the City Council, then a resolution approving and formation of the district would be developed. This resolution would include a Reimbursement Agreement between the City and the applicant that clearly describes the provisions of repayment (13.30.040) and the performance responsibilities of the City and applicant.

In the event the developer advanced the funding for the needed improvements, the City may collect a fee from new development within the district on behalf of the developer to repay the original cost of the improvements over a period of 10 years (can be extended to 20 by the Council). The applicant would not be reimbursed for that portion of the fee representing the benefit to the applicant's property.

In the event the City advanced any funding for the public facility improvements the City Council could require through the Reimbursement Agreement that the applicant provide security (land, bond, etc) to ensure timely payback and thus mitigate risk associated with any advance financing.

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Who pays for the all the new roads and utilities needed for the new housing?

Facilities needed to serve the development (internal roads, extension of utilities) are to be installed by the property developer at their expense.

Facilities with a city wide benefit (attributable to general City impact beyond development impact) are typically installed jointly by developers and the City. The City contribution is limited to only that percentage related to city wide use (benefit).

- System Development Charges are collected from new development (building permits) and provide the funding source for the City's proportional contribution for needed upgrades
- Property Taxes are not used to build new City roads, as such property taxes would not increase as a result of upgrading East Main Street or the Railroad Crossing.

Would the supply of developable land in the BLI change upon adoption of the Normal Neighborhood Plan?

The BLI is an assessment of vacant and partially vacant land, not land presently "available" for development. The BLI does not aim to anticipate which properties will be developed and in what timeframe. The BLI simply quantifies supply of land that is eligible for development under existing zoning and in consideration of physical constraints.

Adoption of a plan alone does not constitute a reduction in land supply. The inventory of buildable land would only change as properties are developed. In the case of the Normal Plan, this consumption of land could either occur as properties are developed under the County's jurisdiction, or would require approval of a development proposal, annexation, and finally the build out of the units proposed.

Upon approval of a neighborhood plan any new zoning designations, and changes in the land area in each zone, would be reflected in an update of the BLI.

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Why do the Normal Neighborhood land uses have the housing densities proposed?

The Working Group modified the Land Use designation in the initial draft of the Plan in order to make them consistent with existing City Zones adjacent to the project area. The proposed residential zoning densities in each of the three Normal Neighborhood zones are the same as within their corresponding City Zones:

Zones (NormalNeighborhood /Existing City)	Base Density	Lot coverage Maximum	Building Height Maximum	Permitted Uses
NN-1-5 / R-1-5	4.5 units per acre + density bonus options	50%	2.5 Stories- up to 35'	Single Family Accessory Residential Units Duplexes Open space
NN-1-3.5 / R-1-3.5	7.2 units per acre + density bonus options	55%	2.5 Stories- up to 35'	Single Family Accessory Residential Units Duplexes Multifamily Open space
NN-2 / R-2	13.5 units per acre + density bonus options	65%	2.5 Stories- up to 35'	Single Family Accessory Residential Units Duplexes Multifamily Open space

Given the consistency in zoning it is anticipated that properties in the Normal Plan area, once annexed, would develop in a manner that is compatible with the adjacent properties presently within the City. As an example the Old Buds Dairy Subdivision built on Clay Street was developed under the R-1-3.5 zone. The 5 acre property contains 37 single family two story attached homes, and a 6 unit apartment complex. This development has a total of 43 units, thus a density of 8.6 units per acre was achieved by utilizing a 19% density bonus for the provision of affordable housing. It is anticipated that NN-1-3.5 zoned properties would develop in a similar manner, although the Normal Neighborhood Plan encourages a greater variety of housing types and promotes the use of common center greens for a new housing type called Pedestrian Clustered Housing.