

August 31, 2015

City of Ashland Council
Ashland Planning Commission
Re: Normal St Development plans

Dear Officials:

We have very strong doubts about the Normal area plan:

We are concerned about the ability of the City and the neighborhoods surrounding the plan area to absorb and provide for the increased traffic congestion, infrastructure and water service resulting from the addition of 450 dwellings in the proposed area.

- It does not seem reasonable to put 450 households in an area with limited street access and capacity. Both East Main St and Ashland St. are already often crowded with traffic, especially during morning and evening rush hours, and before and after school hours. The Tuesday growers market also adds to congestion on and near Wightman St.
- Nor does it seem reasonable to take on such a large additional water demand when we are already pushing the limits of our supply.
- Sewer and storm drainage will be hugely increased, and will likely require major additions.

What demand is there to justify these changes? With that much at risk, what compelling reason is there to undertake an addition of this scale?

How will people in Ashland benefit from the addition? Adding population does not necessarily benefit a community, particularly one like Ashland, which already offers a very good quality of life to its residents.

It seems that perhaps there is some “we should do it because we can do it” sort of thinking going on. Progress has many dimensions other than size. Part of the attractiveness of Ashland is that it is reasonable in scale and all of the town is accessible to all of its residents.

This plan seems radically out of scale.

Thank you for your attention.

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