
*****SPAM***Re: Normal master plan**

From : Nancy Parker <naparker@mind.net>

Thu, Sep 10, 2015 08:40 AM

Subject : ***SPAM***Re: Normal master plan 1 attachment**To :** Pam Marsh <pam@council.ashland.or.us>**Cc :** Carol Voisin <cjvoisin@yahoo.com>, rich@council.ashland.or.us, mike@council.ashland.or.us, stefani@council.ashland.or.us, Greg Lemhouse <greg@council.ashland.or.us>, John Stromberg, Mayor <john@council.ashland.or.us>, Mike Fraught <fraughtm@ashland.or.us>, Bill Molnar <molnarb@ashland.or.us>, Brandon Goldman <brandon.goldman@ashland.or.us>

Dear Pam,

Thank you very much for your thoughtful email (see below this email) in response to the Citizen Action Group's Position Paper. The group appreciates your extensive knowledge of and investment of untold hours in the Normal Neighborhood planning process.

As you observed at the Council meeting on September 1, there is widespread concern on the part of many Ashlanders about this plan, concerns that are shared not only by Normal Avenue neighborhood residents but also by citizens throughout the city.

It is our strong belief that, as people of conscience and community-mindedness, you and all of us can reach agreement and consensus on the Master Plan, so that it reflects the best interests of all Ashlanders.

This past weekend, a group of us (non-Normal Ave. Ashlanders) took a walking tour through the NNP area so that we could better appreciate the NNP plan and its impact. We came away with a number of impressions, which form the basis for a possible consensus we might reach:

1. **Wetlands** - The wetlands are threatened by the zoning in the current plan. The dense zoning overlaying wetlands cries out for use of the "wetland mitigation" loophole in state law, which would allow developers to designate some "comparable" wetland acreage in another area of the state in order to pave over the wetlands in the NNP. We understand that the city allows mitigation to other areas within the parcel, as though naturally occurring wetlands could be relocated based on developer convenience. Needless to say, many of us would like to see NO zoning imposed over these wetlands. However, our group recommends a compromise:

- Those areas currently zoned NN 1-3.5 which overlap wetlands be reduced in density to NN 1-5.
- Concurrently, we ask that the City agree to deny all efforts to mitigate these wetlands, either onsite or offsite, or at least require a Major Amendment for any such mitigation.
- We also offer a suggestion: that the City purchase the wetlands acreage within the NNP and designate it as park land, so that it will remain open space in perpetuity.

2. **Density** - We agree with the idea in your email that density should "mirror the density of surrounding parcels." Zoning 75% of the 94 NNP acres as NN-1-3.5, NN-1-3.5-C, and NN-2 fails to mirror the density of surrounding parcels. It is much too high. (Using Quiet Village as an example of a "surrounding parcel" is irrelevant. It is not adjacent.) Of the total buildable acreage zoned **NN-1-3.5** that is needed across the entire UGB, you are packing fully 75% of it into the Normal neighborhood. Further, of the total buildable acreage zoned **NN-2** that is needed across the entire UGB, you are packing half of it into the NNP. Also, we find it confusing and misleading that the NNP's Amended Zoning Map in no way matches the Hardey Engineering "Dwelling Unit Potential" Map (2/28/15). We recommend the following by way of compromise:

- Limit the number of dwellings on the acreage to 225 instead of the current 450, which would more

accurately reflect the surrounding neighborhood.

- This reduction in density could be offset by an increase in residential zoning density on other buildable UGB parcels. Please refer to the attached annotated copy of Ashland's Buildable Lands Inventory to see other buildable parcels where high density zoning could be accommodated.
- What we want to avoid in the NNP is any development in areas zoned NN-1-3.5 which has a density of more than 7 dwellings per acre. Thus, we recommend eliminating allowance of multifamily dwellings in NN-1-3.5 parcels.
- Land usage restrictions should be imposed so that density bonuses will not allow for more than 6.6 dwelling units per acre in NN-1.5 zoned parcels.
- Eliminate the NN-2 zoning in the NNP and spread it across other buildable UGB parcels.

3. Advance financing - We have all experienced real estate bubbles such as the one in 2005-2013. In 2005, Many invested in property which subsequently lost 40-50% of its value; many were forced to default on mortgages and faced foreclosure. That, in turn, drove down the value of surrounding property. The idea of the city extending credit to developers in this highly speculative and volatile real estate market, for the purpose of building infrastructure in and around the NNP, seems ill-advised and reckless. The citizens of Ashland would essentially be loaning money to developers and assuming the risk that developers would otherwise have to shoulder themselves. Spreading the risk to the citizens of Ashland without their consent seems wrong and irresponsible. We recommend that you:

- Eliminate the option of advance financing altogether for NNP, or at least build into any advance NNP financing agreement, language that will absolutely mitigate the risk assumed by the City and, by extension, the citizens.
- At minimum, require that any developers taking advantage of advanced financing be bonded against default on repayment of these loans.

4. Water and Sustainable Growth - We are living in a time of unprecedented climate change and, while none of us knows the future with any certainty, experts agree that the planet is warming and the drought conditions in our region may well be our new normal. Our local water resources are driven by realities beyond our civic control - snow pack, drought, and in the case of TAP, Medford authority. We recommend:

- Modification of the NNP Master Plan so that it can be flexibly changed to allow for only growth that is sustainable in the face of limited resources, should dramatic water shortages occur.
- If you agree to our Density recommendations in Item 2, above, you would go a long way toward accomplishing sustainability.

Our action group recognizes and accepts the inevitability of growth and agrees with you that a Master Plan for the Normal neighborhood is necessary. We understand that your goal in putting together this plan is to allow for growth that is in the best interests of the people of Ashland. We share these ideals and feel that growth must be designed in a way that is sustainable. It is our hope that we can work together with you to reach solutions to our specific concerns. Toward that end, we ask to meet together with you, Bill Molnar in the Planning Dept., and Mike Faught in Public Works, if possible, ahead of the Sept. 15 Council meeting, to explore solutions.

The Oregon Dept. of Land Conservation and Development's Citizen Involvement Advisory Committee (refer to the enclosed email below from the DLCD) has issued guidelines for citizen involvement in land use planning actions. (Please see <http://www.oregon.gov/lcd/pages/citizeninvolvement.aspx> for more information.) One of their strong recommendations is that town hall-style meetings be held, during which an open dialogue can occur between citizens, planning leaders, and decision-makers, where citizens' questions and concerns can be fully addressed. Our final recommendation is that we table further action on the NNP Master Plan until at least one such meeting can occur. This would go a long way toward reassuring Ashlanders that the NNP truly and fairly reflects community values and interests.

We look forward to an open and consensus-driven dialogue with you about this important matter.

Sincerely,

The NNP Citizens Action Group:

- Bryce Anderson /s/ (representing 400 residents of the Chautauqua Trace, Meadowbrook Park Estates, East Village, and Ashland Meadows HOA's)
-
- Tod Brannan /s/
- Beth F. Coye /s/
- Sue DeMarinis /s/
- Paula Fox /s/
- David Hoffman /s/
- Sabra Hoffman /s/
- Nancy Parker /s/

Enclosure: Email from Oregon Dept. of Land Conservation and Development

From: "Carney, Sadie" <sadie.carney@state.or.us>
 Date: Sep 4, 2015 9:14 AM
 Subject: RE: Urban growth boundary regulations
 To: 'Sue DeMarinis' <suedem@charter.net>
 Cc: "LeBombard, Josh" <josh.lebombard@state.or.us>

Hi Sue,

Thank you for your email. I sympathize with you, deciphering planning code and finding supporting statute is not always as easy as we'd like it to be. Even internally!

I consulted with our urban land use attorney here, and we agree that the guidance DLCD offers that is most closely related to your query (as I understand it) is Goal 10 - Housing. While not explicitly permitted, the shifting of planned density from one area within a UGB to another is not disallowed or even discouraged. As long as a city is maintaining and planning for overall densities appropriate to the housing needs as outlined in Goal 10, they are in compliance with the guidance and direction offered in both statute and rule.

I'm not sure if that is the kind of answer you're looking for. You have a regional representative in Southern Oregon who I have cc'd on this email. As such, he may be more familiar with the issue and better able to answer questions specific to the planning activities in Ashland.

I hope I was at least somewhat helpful!

Many thanks,
 Sadie

ps. The DLCD is currently recruiting someone interested in Citizen Involvement for a position on our Citizen Involvement Advisory Committee - if you'd like to learn more about the committee and its role please check out our website at this link: <http://www.oregon.gov/lcd/pages/citizeninvolvement.aspx> Perhaps you would be a good fit!

Sadie K Carney | Rural Policy Analyst/Communications Manager
 Director's Office
 Oregon Dept. of Land Conservation and Development
 635 Capitol Street NE, Suite 150 | Salem, OR 97301-2540
 Direct: (503) 934-0036 | Cell: (503) 383-6648 | Main: (503) 373-0050
sadie.carney@state.or.us | www.oregon.gov/LCD/

-----Original Message-----

From: Pam Marsh
 Sent: Monday, September 07, 2015 9:53 PM
 To: naparker@mind.net

Subject: Normal master plan

Hi Nancy,

Thanks so much for re-sending your position paper last week. The first attempt must have gotten lost in cyber space, so I appreciate your subsequent emails.

I'm sorry it has taken me a few days to get back to you; finally, the weekend has given me a chance to catch up. I'll try to respond to your concerns, although I probably won't do all your questions justice in an email.

What's gotten lost in all our ruckus is why we took on a master plan for Normal in the first place. Critically, if Normal doesn't develop within the city, it will likely be developed under county standards, which would allow large parcels, wells and individual septic fields, and less protection for the wetlands. In ten years, once we've used up any vacant land currently within city limits, we'd be forced to go outside what is now our urban growth boundary to expand. The Normal parcel is surrounded on three sides by the city, and that seems vastly preferable to me than taking in land on the other side of the freeway. So it seems to me that failing to plan for Normal would be an environment disaster and a tremendous missed opportunity in a day and age when we need to use our land efficiently.

It's also critical to keep in mind that this is a very long term plan. Some of the land is now being used by 10 acre parcels, and those are unlikely to redevelop anytime soon, and certainly the churches, temple, etc. are not likely to change. So the plan just lays out where the roads and density would be if and when someone wants to do something. In the meantime, the truly vacant parcels could support about 300 units if fully developed, -- only about 3-4 years worth of growth for the city, assuming our current very low .75% growth rate.

The proposed density mirrors the density on the surrounding parcels. We are trying to create an intergenerational neighborhood that could appeal to families and seniors looking for a smaller, less expensive home. The zoning would allow 3,500 square foot parcels, with much more common open space that is required in any other development in town.

There should be little if any taxpayer money involved in development. Internal infrastructure, including roads, water, sewers, etc. will be constructed and paid for by the developer(s). Two external transportation improvements - the railroad crossing and improvements to East Main Street -- will be financed by Normal development and the city's commitment of SDC (system development charges) money. The SDC funds are intended to offset just that portion of the traffic that can be attributed to citywide use, and the Normal development will pay for the portion that is attributed to Normal. As you probably know, SDC charges are paid by developers and must be spent to ameliorate the impact of development. So this is not tax money, but rather money intended to improve citywide infrastructure.

It is also possible that the city would employ something called advanced financing, to initiate the two external improvements. If we do so, it will be with the ironclad assurance that development within Normal will pay its share of the projects.

Finally, a word about drought. The water master plan for the community assumed about a .75-1% growth rate in the community over the next years. Normal would be part of that 1%. So water use in the new neighborhood has already been calculated into our assessment of need. Of course, the drought has made us all much more aware of water impacts. But we can't cut off growth. The state has mandated that we set aside developable lands, and Normal is part of that.

I expect you have other questions or concerns that I haven't touched. This is just a quick note to convey some of my thinking. Thank you so much for the opportunity to share some of my thoughts on this big, complicated master plan. I hope you will share my response with others in your working group; if anyone has questions or believes I've mis-stated something, I hope they will email or call.

Please let me know if you want to talk further.

My best,

Pam Marsh
541-282-4516

Councilor Pam Marsh

City of Ashland

(541) 282-4516

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