

Note: Anyone wishing to speak at any Planning Commission meeting is encouraged to do so. If you wish to speak, please rise and, after you have been recognized by the Chair, give your name and complete address for the record. You will then be allowed to speak. Please note that the public testimony may be limited by the Chair and normally is not allowed after the Public Hearing is closed.

**ASHLAND PLANNING COMMISSION
STUDY SESSION
NOVEMBER 22, 2016
AGENDA**

- I. **CALL TO ORDER:** 7:00 PM, Civic Center Council Chambers, 1175 E. Main Street.

- II. **ANNOUNCEMENTS**

- III. **AD-HOC COMMITTEE UPDATES**

- IV. **PUBLIC FORUM**

- V. **DISCUSSION ITEMS**
 - A. **Ashland Transit Triangle – Infill Strategies Project**

- VI. **ADJOURNMENT**

**CITY OF
ASHLAND**



In compliance with the Americans with Disabilities Act, if you need special assistance to participate in this meeting, please contact the Community Development office at 541-488-5305 (TTY phone is 1-800-735-2900). Notification 48 hours prior to the meeting will enable the City to make reasonable arrangements to ensure accessibility to the meeting (28 CFR 35.102-35.104 ADA Title 1).

Memo

DATE: November 22, 2016

TO: Ashland Planning Commission

FROM: Brandon Goldman, Senior Planner

RE: Transit Triangle Study Session

SUMMARY

The City Council identified the infill strategies project as a high priority long range planning project in 2014. Specifically, the project was described as “create and analyze development scenarios accommodating varying levels of future employment and housing growth for the transit corridors in the southeast portion of the city. Identify strategies to encourage a concentration and mix of housing and jobs and increase the desirability of the corridors for residential living.”

At a study session on October 11, 2016 the Planning Commission reviewed the initial presentation of a return on investment (ROI) analysis by Fregonese and Associates to examine the market feasibility of different types of development within an area referred to as the “Transit Triangle”. The transit triangle area is the area bounded by Ashland St. along the north edge, Siskiyou Blvd. on the southwest side and Tolman Creek Rd. on the eastern edge. The Rogue Valley Transportation District (RVTD) Route 10 provides bus service on Ashland St., Tolman Creek Rd. and Siskiyou Blvd.

BACKGROUND

This initial phase of the long range planning project is intended to provide a basis of information for the Planning Commission and City Council to determine if land use ordinance amendments within the Transit Triangle would encourage a greater concentration of residential and commercial land uses, increase transportation choices, and promote sustainable planning initiatives.

At this time no land use changes, or development proposals, are under consideration. Should the City Council elect to proceed with this project, the second phase of the Transit Triangle project would further evaluate specific land use strategies intended to support the following community objectives:

- Construction of moderately priced rental and for purchase housing
 - Provide a better environment for local business development and expansion
 - Increase ridership of public transit
 - Create a walkable, pedestrian-friendly setting within close proximity to existing residential neighborhoods.
 - Ensure the efficient use of land within the Urban Growth Boundary.
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As presented to the Planning Commission on October 11, 2016 the guiding principles for the Transit Triangle Project are as follows:

- Update infill strategy along major transportation corridors to promote housing and business development, as well as alternative transportation choices (Council Goal 13.2).
- Conduct a Return on Investment (ROI) analysis on sample properties to examine the market feasibility of mixed use development within the project area.
- Consider changes to the land use ordinance that may be inhibiting redevelopment or new construction (Economic Development Strategy 7.3).
- Consider additions to the Site Design Standards and other land use ordinances to ensure that higher density buildings are compatible with their settings.
- Promote a development pattern that results in a balanced, multi-modal transportation system and that enhances opportunities for walking, bicycling or using transit in areas planned for transit service.
- Promote infill development along transit corridors to provide alternatives to, or delays the need for, expansion of the City UGB (RPS).
- Reduce emissions that contribute to climate change through changes to transportation or land use plans that reduce expected automobile vehicle miles traveled.
- Provide a strategy for implementation of project outcomes.

The general objective of this project is to provide for housing for small households; provide high quality infill development; and meet regional plan commitment to accommodate future population growth within the City's existing boundaries.

The following objective was identified in Council's most recent goal setting effort, "Ashland 2020," that relates to the creation of vertical housing along transit corridors affordable to households earning a median income.

Support and promote, through policy, programs that make the City affordable to live in. Pursue affordable housing opportunities, especially workforce housing. Identify specific incentives for developers to build more affordable housing. (high priority for 2015-2017)

The City adopted a new chapter in the Ashland Comprehensive Plan in 2012 to incorporate the applicable portions of the adopted the Greater Bear Creek Valley Regional Plan. As a part of the regional planning process, six of the seven communities identified areas outside their respective urban growth boundaries (UGB) for future growth. However, the City of Ashland did not identify UGB expansion areas and committed to evaluating innovative land use strategies to accommodate future residential and employment growth within the City's existing boundaries. The Ashland Comprehensive Plan includes the following performance indicators in the Regional Plan Element.

- *Reach density of 6.6 dwelling units per acre for land in the UGB that is annexed or offset by increasing the residential density in the city limits.*
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- *Achieve targets for dwelling units and employment in mixed-use/pedestrian-friendly areas.*
- *Participate in a regional housing strategy that strongly encourages a range of housing types.*

Other related goals and policies in the Ashland Comprehensive Plan include the following.

- *Ensure a variety of dwelling types and provide housing opportunities for the total cross-section of Ashland's population, consistent with preserving the character and appearance of the city. (Housing Element)*
- *Maintain and improve Ashland's compact urban form to allow maximum pedestrian and bicycle travel. (Transportation Element)*

Successful implementation of infill strategies developed as part of this project would result in the construction of several hundred moderately priced housing units; additional businesses offering goods and services for Ashland residents; increases in local employment opportunities; increased utilization of transit; and enhancements to the character of the area through creation of vibrant walkable areas and more efficient development patterns.

ATTACHMENTS

Ashland Scenarios Memo from Fregonese & Associates dated 11/15/ 206.



DATE November 15, 2016
TO Bill Molnar, Planning Director
Maria Harris, Brandon Goldman
FROM John Fregonese, Fregonese Associates, Inc.
RE Transit Triangle – Prototype & Scenario Review

Dear Bill, Maria and Brandon:

We have been working on developing scenarios for the Transit Triangle area, and consolidating our recommendations in preparation for the November 22nd meeting. Based on the discussion with the Planning Commission, we decided to look at the effect **building height** and **number of stories** has on **density** and **cost**. We also looked at the effect of a **10' setback** on the **third and higher floors**.

1896 Ashland Street - a currently under developed property at the corner of Park Street and Ashland Street

Current Zoning in the R-2 Multi-family Zone:

- 13.5 du per acre
- 35' maximum height (2.5 stories)
- Existing parking requirements for multi- family developments are:
 - Studio units or 1-bedroom units less than 500 sq. ft. – 1 space/unit.
 - 1-bedroom units 500 sq. ft. or larger -- 1.50 spaces/unit.
 - 2-bedroom units -- 1.75 spaces/unit.
 - 3-bedroom or greater units -- 2.00 spaces/unit.
- 35% landscaping is required

R-2 currently has a very low maximum density allowance. As we have said, density is related to affordability. Since land cost is a fixed cost, the only way to afford the land and construction cost in a low-density zone is to price the housing units at a high price point. The R-2 zone has a maximum density of 13.5 units per acre. A density limit this low results in one of two outcomes. Either investment is not financially feasible and new construction does not happen, or the resulting units are very large and have a high price tag. The R-2 residential zone also has very high landscaping requirements, which can

further restrict financial viability of new construction. The R-2 zone requires 35% landscaping, respectively, however, 15% would be more viable urban standards. The R-2 allows only 2.5 stories, which is the same as the Single-Family R-1-5 zone. As discussed above, 3 story construction can be more cost effective.

Prototype Summary:

We created and modeled a mixed-use building prototype for a currently under developed property at the corner of Park Street and Ashland Street. This study reveals what a specific project would look like on a real site.

- **Height** – The building represents a “real”, modern 3 story building, which would permit up to a 45’ height for a building with 3 floors. This is because the first floor in modern mixed-use buildings is often very high: 14 to 16 feet. The roof also can have a parapet, which allows the roof to be used for outdoor facilities, such as a barbeque facility or even a small pool.
- **Landscaping** – 15% landscaping
- **Unit limit** – No unit limit (determined by FAR rather than unit count)
- **Parking** – One parking space per unit; No parking required for the on-site retail up to 2,000 square feet.
- **Unit size** – The building has 650 to 700 square foot apartment units and a small amount of retail on the Ashland Street frontage.

We experimented with 3, 4 and 5 stories. The following are the results for the height experiment as they pertain to **dwelling units per acre** and **average rents**:

Dwelling Units per Acre

Stories	Stepback	No Stepback
3	44.5 Du/acre	48.7
4	51.1	55
5	56.2	60

Average Rent

Stories	Stepback	No Stepback
3	\$1,295	\$1,295
4	\$1,282	\$1,282
5	\$1,270	\$1,270

As you can see the height increase can add 35% to the number of units per acre. The effect on price is not very dramatic. There is no change between the stepback design and the standard design in rent. However, we have been informed that the stepback will be more expensive and complex to construct because of load bearing issues. This additional cost is not reflected in our model.

We also conducted massing and photomorph studies looking at how this would appear at the site on Ashland Street.

Site Plan



The following two images show the massing study with a 3 story stepback, and a 4 story stepback.

3-Story MU with 10' stepback



4-Story MU with 10' stepback



Finally, we have photomorphs of the site with a 3-story stepback, a full 3-story (no stepback), and a full 4-story building

1896 Ashland Street Site – Today



3-story with stepback



Full 3-story (no stepback)



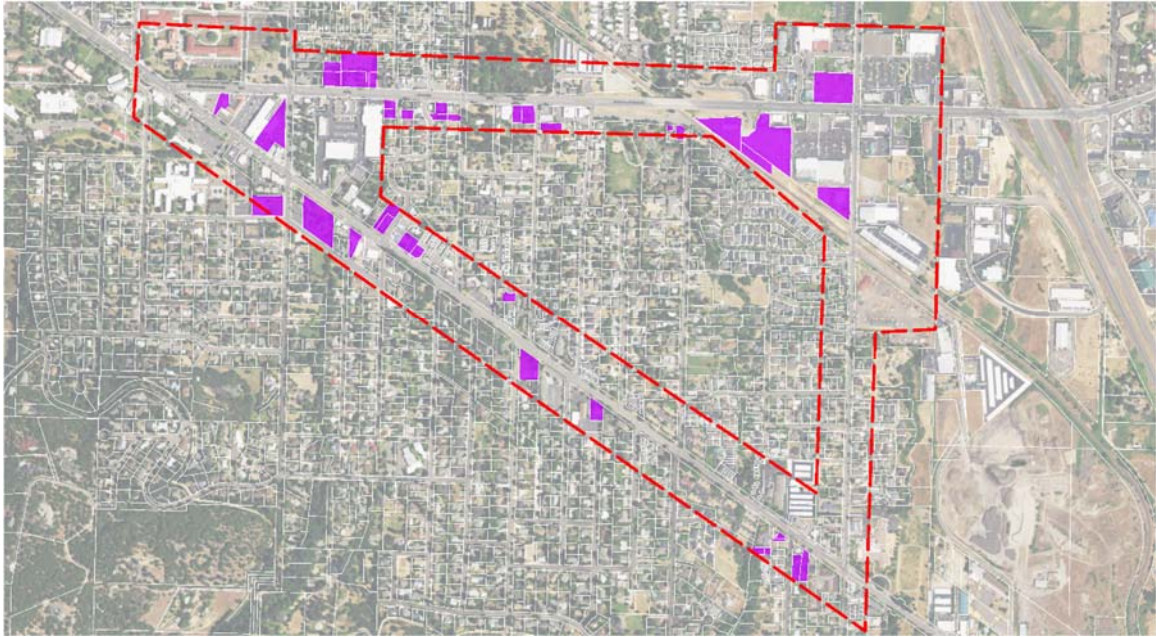
Full 4-story (no stepback)



We believe that this provides a good range of options for the prototype to move forward with. Based on our preliminary studies, we are leaning toward **recommending the 3-story stepback**, as it appears to yield a fair number of relatively moderately-priced new units available to medium income households. However, we will want to investigate the cost issue. The second choice would be the full 3-story, which may be less expensive to construct and will yield 10% more units, all other things being equal.

Transit Triangle Scenario

We also ran a scenario using the 3-story stepback unit based on **vacant and redevelopable parcels** within the Transit Triangle study area that were **zoned C-1, R2 and R3**. It achieved the following results:



Development Characteristics	Scenario Results
New dwelling units	876
New people housed	1,072
New jobs	79

If we went to the full 3 story design these numbers would increase by approximately 10%.

Next Steps

1. It would be helpful to see how our scenario relates to the RVCOG forecast and traffic modeling. We have the TAZ data and are considering the number of units that are expected in this area.
2. We are preparing another visualization on Ashland Street as well.
3. We look forward to further discussion before the Planning Commission.