

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  
REGULAR MEETING  
AUGUST 10, 2010  
AGENDA**

- I. **CALL TO ORDER:** 7:00 PM, Civic Center Council Chambers, 1175 E. Main Street
  
- II. **ANNOUNCEMENTS**
  
- III. **CONSENT AGENDA**
  - A. **Approval of Minutes**
    - 1. July 13, 2010 Planning Commission Minutes
  
- IV. **PUBLIC FORUM**
  
- V. **OTHER BUSINESS**
  - A. **Approval of Findings for PA-2010-00582, 1405 Tolman Creek Rd**
  
  - B. **Overview of Pedestrian Node Project**
  
  - C. **Approval of changes to Planning Commission Rules of Conduct/Discussion of Chair and Vice Chairs for remainder of 2010**
  
- 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).

# CITY OF ASHLAND

## ASHLAND PLANNING COMMISSION REGULAR MEETING MINUTES July 13, 2010

### CALL TO ORDER

Chair Pam Marsh called the meeting to order at 7:00 p.m. in the Civic Center Council Chambers, 1175 East Main Street.

#### **Commissioners Present:**

Larry Blake  
Michael Dawkins  
Dave Dotterer  
Pam Marsh  
Debbie Miller  
Melanie Mindlin  
Mike Morris  
John Rinaldi, Jr.

#### **Staff Present:**

Bill Molnar, Community Development Director  
Derek Severson, Associate Planner  
Richard Appicello, City Attorney  
April Lucas, Administrative Assistant

#### **Absent Members:**

None

#### **Council Liaison:**

Eric Navickas, absent

### ANNOUNCEMENTS

Community Development Director Bill Molnar noted the City Council has passed first reading on three of the six Croman Mill ordinances and are scheduled to take up the remaining three on August 3, 2010.

Chair Pam Marsh announced the July Study Session has been cancelled.

### CONSENT AGENDA

#### **A. Approval of Minutes**

1. June 8, 2010 Planning Commission Minutes
2. June 22, 2010 Special Meeting Minutes

Commissioners Dotterer/Morris m/s to approve the Consent Agenda. Voice Vote: All AYES. Motion passed 8-0.

### PUBLIC FORUM

Colin Swales/143 8<sup>th</sup> St/Commented on the preparation of Findings and cited a modified process outlined by former Community Development Director John McLaughlin. Mr. Swales cited the minutes from the February 10, 2004 Planning Commission meeting where Mr. McLaughlin proposed a more standardized form for Findings that would reference the staff report, the applicant's findings, the minutes, and attached conditions; and they would be adopted at the same meeting the hearing is held. Mr. Swales stated Findings are very important documents and are precedent setting, and asked the Commission to consider streamlining the process as suggested by the former Director.

Mr. Molnar stated he believes Mr. McLaughlin proposed this process because at the time they were dealing with a higher number of planning actions. He stated many of the applications at that time were fairly simple and did not have any opposition, and adopting the Findings by reference would have been sufficient. However the City has gone to a different format and appeals to the Council are now "on the record". As a result, Mr. Molnar stated it is necessary for the Findings to be more thorough and address any comments that came up during the hearing. City Attorney Richard Appicello concurred and added it is important for the City and the applicant to make sure the Findings are adequate, and stated he would not recommend rushing the adoption of Findings.

## TYPE II PUBLIC HEARINGS

### A. PLANNING ACTION: #2010-00582

SUBJECT PROPERTY: 1405 Tolman Creek Rd

APPLICANT: Malibar Group, LLC

DESCRIPTION: A request for a Boundary Line Adjustment and a Variance to allow a lot wider than it is deep for the vacant property located at 1405 Tolman Creek Road. COMPREHENSIVE PLAN DESIGNATION: Single Family Residential; ZONING: R-1-7.5; ASSESSOR'S MAP #: 39 1E 23 BA; TAX LOT: 308 and 501.

Commission Marsh read aloud the public hearing procedures for land use hearings.

### Declaration of Ex Parte Contact

Commissioner Morris asked to be recused. He stated he has worked for the applicant in the past and has a potential conflict of interest. *Commissioner Morris left the meeting at 7:13 p.m.*

Commissioners Rinaldi, Mindlin, Dawkins, Dotterrer, Miller and Marsh declared site visits. No ex parte contact was reported.

### Staff Report

Associate Planner Derek Severson reviewed the location of the site and the existing conditions. He explained this application involves a lot line adjustment for two lots; the larger lot is currently 2.32 acres and the smaller lot is .89 acres. The proposal is to reduce the size of the smaller lot to .33 acres and increase the size of the larger lot to 2.89 acres. Mr. Severson noted this type of action is typically approved administratively; however in this case the movement of lot lines will result in a flag lot that is wider than it is deep and therefore a variance is required. Mr. Severson explained that the applicant has demonstrated there is significant development potential for this area. He noted the applicant is offering an irrevocable consent to dedicate a future street which will service development on that property in the future; and at that time, their lot will become compliant with the width versus depth standard. Mr. Severson stated staff is supportive of this application and are recommending approval with the conditions outlined in the staff report.

Staff was asked to clarify the width of the street. Mr. Severson explained the width of the flag drive is currently 37 ft, and a minimum of 47 ft is needed for a new residential street. He explained the applicant has agreed to provide a half-street improvement, which will consist of two travel lanes, a parkrow and a sidewalk on the south side; and if and when the neighboring lot develops, that property owner would be asked to dedicate the remaining 10 ft. Staff clarified the full street improvement of the flag drive would only be needed if the other property decides to build out their lot.

Commissioner Dawkins raised concern with dedicating a street when the applicant does not own the tax lots on the north and south sides. Mr. Severson noted they have done this with other developments in Ashland where you ask for the improvement to develop according to the zoning, and as properties develop the property owners are asked to dedicate the necessary parts of the street. He added they are getting most of the street with this proposal and it is only the street trees and parkrow that will be needed in the future on the north side.

### Applicant's Presentation

**Roy Martin/Applicant and Mark Knox/Applicant's Representative** addressed the Commission. Mr. Knox explained they have two existing lots and all they are really doing is shrinking one of them. He noted the existing development potential and stated where this gets complicated is when you consider how this area will eventually build out. Mr. Knox stated in the future, tax lots 400 and 500 are likely to be portioned off and developed, which will force a street to go in. He explained if you look at the City's Street Standards, it is clear that if these parcels are divided, they will be required to take access off this new lane. He stated as part of this application, his client is agreeing to a  $\frac{3}{4}$  street improvement; and if the owner of tax lot 400 decides to develop their lot, they will likely be asked to provide the last quarter which would consist of curbing, a planting strip and sidewalk. Mr. Knox noted his client's irrevocable consent to dedicate this strip right now, and stated they have identified reciprocal easements to allow the current property owner to use this strip of land.

Mr. Martin noted that typically this type of action only requires a staff approval and it would not have come before the Commission if not for the situation of the lot being wider than it is long. He stated all they are doing is taking one buildable site and making it smaller.

Mr. Knox commented that they are designing these envelopes with the assumption that there is going to be a street there one day. He also noted a neighborhood meeting was held and feels it went well.

Mr. Severson clarified this property is served by city utilities. Mr. Molnar commented on the setback requirements and how future homes might be oriented. It was clarified there are design standards for single family home development that address eaves and porches, but there is no requirement that states the front door must be oriented towards to the street.

### Public Testimony

**Maria Paul/2375 Green Meadows**/Voiced her concern with the impact this lot formation will have on the existing home values along Green Meadows Way. She stated all of the surrounding homes are modest, single story homes and is worried if they start building two-story homes it will have a negative impact on the value of her home. Ms. Paul asked if the variance is approved that it carry with it a mandatory restriction for only single story homes. She stated anything else would be incompatible with the surrounding homes and their views and privacy would be compromised.

**Colin Swales/143 8<sup>th</sup> St**/Stated this should not have come before the Commission as a variance and believes it could have been handled administratively. Mr. Swales clarified what he would like to speak to is the interpretation made by the City's former Assistant Attorney on the Hillview application about what constitutes a front, back, and rear yard. Mr. Swales stated he believes some real errors were made in that interpretation and it impacts this application. He stated infill issues including existing neighborhoods, privacy, and overlooking need to be sorted out; and while he supports approval of this application, he would like the Commission to direct staff to address these infill issues. Mr. Swales asked that the record be left open so he can enter into the record arguments as to why he believes that interpretation is wrong. He added he does not want to hold up this application up, but feels these issues need to be addressed.

Commissioner Marsh asked for clarification as to whether Mr. Swales is asking to leave the record open. Mr. Swales stated he does not want to delay this application, but feels this interpretation needs to be addressed and does not know what the correct course of action is. Mr. Swales stated if the Commission will take up these infill issues on their own, he will withdraw his request to leave the record open.

**Michael Fagundes/2323 Green Meadows**/Stated he lives in this neighborhood and has heard a lot of verbiage tonight that makes him nervous. Mr. Fagundes noted that the applicant does not control this whole piece of land and they don't know what will happen on the other lot in the future. He commented on privacy issues and expressed concern with neighbors looking in on him, and added that a new subdivision will not fit in this area.

### Rebuttal by the Applicant

**Mark Knox**/Stated they have attempted to address the neighbors concerns by providing excessive setbacks over what is required, and noted that these lots will also be bigger than the neighboring lots. Mr. Knox stated it is difficult to say what is compatible and what is not. He agreed that the Green Meadows development is predominately single story homes, but noted that there are two-story houses to the north that are mixed in. Mr. Knox agreed with Mr. Swales and stated he supports the Planning Commission taking another look at the interpretation made by the former Assistant City Attorney.

### Advice from Legal Counsel & Staff

Mr. Severson briefly reviewed the setback requirements and the additional buffer that is part of this application; he also clarified there is no provision that would allow staff to prohibit a two-story house.

Staff was asked to comment on whether a future subdivision application would come before the Planning Commission. Mr. Severson clarified yes, this type of action would be a Type II hearing before the Commission and at that time staff would be looking at all the standards and issues raised earlier.

*Commissioner Marsh closed the public hearing and the record at 8:10 p.m.*

### Deliberations & Decision

**Commissioners Dotterrer/Blake motion to approve Planning Action #2010-00582 with the conditions proposed by staff.** DISCUSSION: Dawkins voiced his concern with the assumptions they are making about the future development of this

area and stated he will be voting no on this motion because he feels this is a roundabout way of approving a future subdivision. Mindlin stated she does not believe the applicant has met the criteria for unique or unusual circumstances that are not self imposed, and voiced concern with approving the applicant's concept for development without dealing with the issues. Blake stated he is not in disagreement with anything that has been said, but noted that a subdivision application would have to come back before them and the applicant is just acknowledging that there is future potential for this. He added he is a believer in master planning and is supportive of infill, and also agrees with management access and having fewer driveways on Tolman Creek Rd. Rinaldi commented that approving this application does not lock them into anything and stated they would be able to look at a development application in more detail when it comes before them. **Roll Call Vote: Commissioners Dotterrer, Miller, Blake, Rinaldi and Marsh, YES. Commissioners Dawkins and Mindlin, NO. Motion passed 5-2.**

*Commissioner Morris rejoined the hearing at 8:25 p.m.*

### **OTHER BUSINESS**

#### **A. Discussion of changes to the Planning Commission Rules of Conduct**

Staff provided a brief review of the changes to the Planning Commission Rules and clarified these updates are necessary to provide consistency with the Uniform Policies and Operating Procedures Ordinance passed by the City Council in February, 2010. Because of the provision in the Rules that requires proposed changes to be announced 14 days prior to the decision, staff noted the Commission will not vote on these changes until their August 10, 2010 meeting.

Commissioner Dotterrer noted change to the number of votes needed to make amendments to the City's Comprehensive Plan. Commissioner Marsh commented that the new Rules change the selection of the Chair and Vice Chair to their first meeting in January, and asked that they discuss at their next meeting how they would like to handle the current Chair's and Vice Chair's terms until they are selected again in January 2011.

#### **B. Planning Commission Liaison to the TSP Technical Advisory Committee**

Mr. Molnar asked for a volunteer to serve on the Technical Advisory Committee being formed for the City's Transportation System Plan update.

Commissioner Dawkins noted his interest in serving on this group. General consensus was reached to select Michael Dawkins as the Planning Commission representative for the TSP TAC.

#### **C. Approval of Findings for PA-2009-01244, 1644 Ashland Street.**

*Commissioners Dawkins and Mindlin left the hearing at 8:37 p.m.*

### **Declaration of Ex Parte Contact**

Commissioner Miller stated she spoke with a citizen but did not receive any new information. No ex parte contact was reported by any of the commissioners.

City Attorney Richard Appicello clarified there is no opportunity for the public to rebut Commissioner Miller's disclosure since no new information was obtained. He added the record is now closed and there is no opportunity for the public to comment on the Findings, and it is too late to issue a challenge or give additional information to the Commission.

### **Deliberations & Decision**

Mr. Appicello briefly reviewed the Findings with the Commission and noted the key issues came down to collocation and economic impacts.

Commissioner Dotterrer asked if the following language contained in the first paragraph on page 14 is necessary: *"The City Council as the legislative body could have written the above referenced design standards to reflect a more rigorous collocation requirement such as the following: ..."* Mr. Appicello stated he included this language because many of the opponents that were commenting were characterizing the collocation standard as a mandatory standard that has to be met.

Commissioner Rinaldi noted the language on page 11 regarding landscape buffering and recommended the following change: *"The design, color and material of the structure ~~and the established landscaping along the property line to the south~~ effectively mitigate any visual impacts of the proposal."* He clarified the adjacent property's landscaping was not a reason for their decision and asked that this be removed. General support was voiced for this amendment.

Commissioners Rinaldi/Morris m/s to approve the Findings for Planning Action #2009-01244 with the revision to page 11 as discussed. Roll Call Vote: Commissioners Morris, Rinaldi, Miller, Blake, Marsh and Dotterer, YES. Motion passed 6-0.

#### **ADJOURNMENT**

Meeting adjourned at 9:12 p.m.

*Respectfully submitted,  
April Lucas, Administrative Assistant*

**BEFORE THE PLANNING COMMISSION**  
**August 10<sup>th</sup>, 2010**

IN THE MATTER OF PLANNING ACTION #2010-00582, A REQUEST FOR )  
A LOT LINE ADJUSTMENT AND A VARIANCE TO ALLOW A LOT TO BE ) **FINDINGS,**  
WIDER THAN IT IS DEEP FOR THE PROPERTY LOCATED AT 1405 TOLMAN ) **CONCLUSIONS**  
CREEK ROAD. ) **AND ORDERS**  
)  
**APPLICANTS:** Malibar Group, LLC )

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**RECITALS:**

- 1) Tax lots #308 and #501 of Map 39 1E 23 BA are located at 1405 Tolman Creek Road and are zoned Single Family Residential (R-1-7.5).
- 2) The applicants are requesting a Lot Line Adjustment and a Variance to allow a lot wider than it is deep for the vacant property located at 1405 Tolman Creek Road. No specific development proposal is associated with these requests. The proposed adjusted lot configuration, including an identified building envelope, is outlined on the plans on file at the Department of Community Development.
- 3) The criteria for Lot Line Adjustment approval are described in Chapter 18.76 as follows:

**SECTION 18.76.140 Lot Line Adjustments.**

*The adjustment of a lot line by the relocation of a common boundary, where the number of parcels is not changed and all zoning requirements are met, shall be accepted by the City, provided the requirements of Sections 18.76.090 through 18.76.130 are satisfied, in addition to Section 18.76.170, where the lot adjustment causes access to be changed to an exterior unimproved street.*

**SECTION 18.76.090 Conditions May be Set.**

*The Planning Commission or the Staff Advisor may require dedication of land or easements, signing in favor of street improvements, and conditions or modifications relating to improvements such as sidewalks, utilities, and the standards of the Subdivision Chapter and the development plan for the area. In no event shall the Planning Commission or the Staff Advisor require greater dedications or conditions than could be required if the area were subdivided. Underground utilities shall be required in connection with all land partition applications as set forth in subsections 18.80.060(C) through 18.80.060(F) of this Title.*

**SECTION 18.76.100 Final Step.**

*Within twelve (12) months of the date of preliminary map approval, the tract of land shall be surveyed, pins set at all corners, and a final map submitted to the Planning Department*

*incorporating any conditions or modifications of the map's preliminary approval. If the applicant has not completed the foregoing within the twelve (12) month period, the applicant must resubmit the partition for preliminary approval consideration.*

**SECTION 18.76.110 Final Map Requirements.**

*The map to be filed with the County Clerk shall be legibly drawn, printed, or reproduced by a process guaranteeing a permanent record in black on polyester-base film having a minimum thickness of .003", 18" x 24". If ink is used on polyester-base film, the ink surface shall be coated with a suitable substance to ensure permanent legibility. An autopositive in black on polyester-base film shall also be filed with the County Surveyor. A reproducible copy of the final map shall be filed with the City Engineer. The map shall incorporate the following items before approval will be given:*

- A. Title block, top and center specifying "minor or major partition", the partition number, City of Ashland and the applicant's name.*
- B. Name of the property owner and developer.*
- C. Number of each lot in the partition.*
- D. Date, scale and north point (arrow) generally pointing to the top of the map.*
- E. Basis of bearing determined by solar observation, Polaris observation, or true bearing determined from the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration Survey Net (formerly Coast and Geodetic Survey).*
- F. The name and right-of-way width of adjacent streets, alleys and private ways.*
- G. Irrigation and drainage easements. Those portions of land within the boundaries of the partitioning subject to periodic inundation which affect the intended use of the land together with the method or source of such determination. Also, other easements of record or conditions which affect the title of land or the use of land.*
- H. All stakes, monuments, or other evidence found and used to establish boundaries of the partition. Any lines or boundaries shown by approximation clearly identified as such.*
- I. Established center lines by the City of adjoining streets.*
- J. The length of all arcs, radii and central angles. Adjust all distances to the nearest 100th of a foot, except on curves, which may be shown closer. Adjust all bearings to the nearest ten (10) seconds. The error of field closure shall not exceed one (1) foot in five thousand (5,000).*
- K. Area of each parcel expressed in either square feet or acres.*
- L. Monumentation:
  - 1. All monuments shall be a minimum diameter of five-eighths inches (5/8") for iron pins and a minimum inside diameter of one-half inches (1/2") for iron pipes. For concrete monuments, refer to ORS 92.060 as amended by Senate Bill No. 487.*
  - 2. Witness corners may be set when it is impractical or impossible to set a monument in its true position, providing course and distance are given to the true position.*
  - 3. All monuments shall be clearly identified with the surveyor's or engineer's name or registration number.**

- M. *Certification of approval before filing with County Clerk and County Surveyor:*
1. *Signature of approval on the face of the map by the Executive Secretary of the Planning Commission, or authorized representative.*
  2. *Dedication of easements for utilities and/or widening of street shall be made on the face of the map. Statement of dedication by owner-developer with signature attested to by notarization.*
  3. *Surveyor's certificate is to be shown with surveyor's seal and signature on the face of the map.*
  4. *Signature of approval by the City Engineer is required when dedication of streets or easements is made on the map.*
- N. *Discovery of error and omissions:*
1. *All corrections or additions on a final map shall be made in ink suitable for the material and sprayed with suitable plastic material for preservation, including those prior to recording.*
  2. *He shall file an affidavit stating the nature of the error with the County Recorder.*
  3. *The map then shall be corrected and initialed by the surveyor under the direction of the County Surveyor.*
  4. *The affidavit document number and date shall be placed on the face of the map that is recorded.*

**SECTION 18.76.120 Acceptance of the Final Map.**

*Final maps offered for approval shall not be accepted if the individual or agent of a corporation being responsible for the final map is acting simultaneously as the surveyor or engineer for the applicant or developer and the entity having jurisdiction of the minor and major partitioning.*

**SECTION 18.76.130 Final Approval by the Secretary.**

*When the Staff Advisor determines that the final map conforms to the final map requirements and specifications and the conditions (if any) of preliminary approval, the Secretary, or authorized representative, shall date and sign the final map.*

- 4) The criteria for approval of a Variance are described in 18.100 as follows:
- A. *That there are unique or unusual circumstances which apply to this site which do not typically apply elsewhere.*
  - B. *That the proposal's benefits will be greater than any negative impacts on the development of the adjacent uses; and will further the purpose and intent of this ordinance and the Comprehensive Plan of the City.*
  - C. *That the circumstances or conditions have not been willfully or purposely self-imposed.*
- 5) The Planning Commission, following proper public notice, held a public hearing on July 13<sup>th</sup>, 2010 at which time testimony was received and exhibits were presented. The Planning Commission approved the application for a Lot Line Adjustment and a Variance to allow a lot wider than it is deep for the

vacant property located at 1405 Tolman Creek Road subject to conditions pertaining to the appropriate development of the site.

Now, therefore, the Planning Commission of the City of Ashland finds, concludes and recommends as follows:

## SECTION 1. EXHIBITS

For the purposes of reference to these Findings, the attached index of exhibits, data, and testimony will be used.

Staff Exhibits lettered with an "S"

Proponent's Exhibits, lettered with a "P"

Opponent's Exhibits, lettered with an "O"

Hearing Minutes, Notices, Miscellaneous Exhibits lettered with an "M"

## SECTION 2. CONCLUSORY FINDINGS

2.1 The Planning Commission finds that it has received all information necessary to make a decision based on the Staff Report, public hearing testimony and the exhibits received.

2.2 The Planning Commission finds that the proposal involves a Lot Line Adjustment to reduce the size of Tax Lot #501 from .89 acres to .33 acres while Tax Lot #308 is to increase from 2.32 acres to 2.90 acres. The Commission further finds that no additional lots are to be created with the application, and that no development is proposed. Lot Line Adjustments are typically approved ministerially by the Staff Advisor when all requirements of the zoning district are met. In this instance, the Commission finds that both of the proposed lots are larger than the 7,500 square foot minimum lot size for the zoning district, that both lots satisfy the minimum 65-foot lot width and that both lots meet the 80-foot minimum depth. The Commission further finds that while Tax Lot #308 exceeds the maximum width and depth limitations of 150 feet, these are existing conditions that are not exacerbated by the proposed adjustment. The Commission finds that the applicants have identified a proposed building envelope for Tax Lot #501 which provides the required yard areas for the lot as proposed, with a front yard on the east side of the lot between the envelope and Tolman Creek Road, but which also responds to a future street installation in place of the existing driveway. The Planning Commission finds that the proposed relocation of a lot line results in the creation of a flag lot that is 145 feet wide while having a depth of only 80 feet. General regulations within the R-1 zoning district require that no lot shall have a width greater than its depth. The Commission finds that only the proposed width versus depth relationship fails to meet zoning requirements, and as such a Variance to this general regulation is required.

2.3 The Planning Commission finds that the applicants have provided a comprehensive site plan, which while not being considered for approval under the current application, is intended to illustrate conceptually that the proposal's benefits would be greater than any negative impacts on adjacent uses, and would further the intent of the Land Use Ordinance and Comprehensive Plan. This plan identifies the area of the existing driveway, which is approximately 36.94 feet in width, as an area for which the applicants are willing to provide an irrevocable consent to dedicate as street right of way to accommodate a significant portion of the necessary right-of-way for a future street installation to serve the eventual development of the subject properties as well as adjacent Tax Lots #400 and #500 according to the target use of the zoning district. In addition, the applicants propose to provide access easements to both lots #400 and #500 for use of the existing driveway in the interim period to alleviate any access management concerns which might arise with the future development of those parcels. The plan identifies the potential for a phased future subdivision of the subject properties to create a total of eight lots, including a new street installation with turn-around and the potential to relocate an existing unimproved bicycle and pedestrian easement connecting Tolman Creek Road and Apple Way into the new street, eliminating the need for a crossing of Hamilton Creek Tributary #2. The applicants have also identified a proposed building envelope for Tax Lot #501 which provides the required yard areas for the lot as proposed with the current adjustment, with a front yard on the east side of the lot between the envelope and Tolman Creek Road, but which also responds appropriately to the future street installation.

The Planning Commission finds that the subject properties, contiguous parcels under a single ownership, represent a significantly oversized parcel within the zoning district. As it exists, Tax Lot #308 exceeds both the maximum width and maximum depth allowed within the district and has no street frontage, yet this property, in combination with Tax Lot #501, has the potential under the current zoning to accommodate significant additional density, with a base density of 11.55 units (3.207 acres X 3.6 units per acre = 11.545 units). The Planning Commission finds this to be an unusual circumstance which merits consideration to ensure that current actions do not impede future land use efficiency.

The Planning Commission finds that the underlying basis for the width versus depth relationship requirement is to insure efficient land use over the long term, as the creation of wider lots would spread development further along a street, increasing the need for pavement and utility extensions, while the use of narrower lots can accommodate the same number of houses with less pavement and less infrastructure extension. The Planning Commission finds that in the short term, the proposed Lot Line Adjustment has little negative effect on the adjacent properties – the number of lots does not change with the adjustment, and Tax Lot #501 could develop as illustrated in the proposed envelope without the adjustment. The Commission further finds that over the long term the applicants' conceptual comprehensive site plan demonstrates that the proposal is in keeping with the underlying basis of the width versus depth requirements – efficient land use over the long term. With the applicants' offer of easements to adjacent properties and an irrevocable consent to future right-of-way dedication, the proposal benefits adjacent uses and furthers the purpose and intent of the Land Use Ordinance and the

Comprehensive Plan by facilitating more efficient land use for the site, and for properties adjacent to the site, in the manner envisioned within the zoning district standards. Additionally, with the future street installation, Lot #501 would eventually front on the new street to its north, and at that time its width would be less than its depth, ultimately complying with the ordinance.

The Planning Commission finds that the circumstances or conditions are not willfully or purposely self-imposed. The lot size and configuration pre-date the current owners' acquisition of the property, and while the applicants could potentially adjust the proposed width and depth to address the applicable standards in the short-term, in the long-term the proposed configuration ultimately facilitates more efficient land use for the subject properties and surround properties, as envisioned in the standards of the zoning district, and will ultimately satisfy the width versus depth requirement with the eventual street dedication, which the applicants will irrevocably consent to with the application.

2.4 The Planning Commission finds that a tree inventory and tree preservation plan have been provided identifying 16 trees on and in the vicinity of Tax Lot #501 which could potentially be affected by future construction on this tax lot. Three of these trees are identified for removal, including Tree #10, a 12-inch maple and Trees #11 and #12, which are small fruit trees located within the identified fire truck turn-around, and which have a diameter of less than six-inches. The Planning Commission finds that none of these removals is subject to a Tree Removal Permit due to the sizes of the three trees to be removed, and that the remaining trees are to be protected with standard tree protection fencing prior to any site disturbance on the property.

2.5 The Planning Commission finds that the applicants' "Comprehensive Site Plan" has been provided for conceptual/illustrative purposes only, and is not approved with this application. Any future partitioning or subdividing of the property would be subject to land use approval according to the applicable regulations in place at the time of application.

### SECTION 3. DECISION

3.1 Based on the record of the Public Hearing on this matter, the Planning Commission concludes that the proposal for a Lot Line Adjustment and a Variance to allow a lot wider than it is deep is supported by evidence contained within the whole record.

Therefore, based on our overall conclusions, and upon the proposal being subject to each of the following conditions, we approve Planning Action #2010-00582. Further, if any one or more of the conditions below are found to be invalid, for any reason whatsoever, then Planning Action #2010-00582 is denied. The following are the conditions and they are attached to the approval:

- 1) That all proposals of the applicant be conditions of approval unless otherwise modified herein. The applicants' "Comprehensive Site Plan" has been provided for conceptual/illustrative purposes only, and is not approved with this application.

- 2) That a final survey plat shall be submitted within 12 months. Prior to city sign-off of the final survey plat:
- a) All easements for public and private utilities, trails, pedestrian and bicycle access, natural drainageways, irrigation, fire apparatus access, and the reciprocal access easements for shared use of the existing driveway by Tax Lots #400 and #500 (as proposed in the application) shall be indicated on the final survey plat as required by the Ashland Engineering Division.
  - b) That the applicants shall submit a signed and notarized agreement for recording which provides irrevocable consent to dedicate the existing driveway as future street right-of-way with further development of the subject properties, as proposed in the application, with the understanding that street improvements would be provided by the future developer of subject property(ies).
- 3) That prior to the issuance of a building permit to develop tax lot #501:
- a) That the applicants shall provide a site plan identifying improvements to the existing driveway to the development standards of a flag drive, including the required paved width and clear width and provisions for a third “visitors” parking space. Any work within the Tolman Creek Road right-of-way, including but not limited to driveway improvements or utility installation, shall be subject to review and approval by Jackson County and the City of Ashland, with permits to be issued by Jackson County.
  - b) That any development including but not limited to driveway improvements or utility installation within the Hamilton Creek floodplain shall be subject to a Physical & Environmental Constraints Review Permit. Prior to obtaining permits, the applicant shall provide a site plan identifying the limits of the floodplain prepared by an Oregon-licensed surveyor.
  - c) That the requirements of the Ashland Fire Department relating to fire hydrant distance; fire flow; fire apparatus access, turn-around, and work area; and approved addressing shall be satisfactorily addressed in the building permit plan submittals and complied with prior to issuance of the building permit or the use of combustible materials, whichever is applicable.
  - d) That a Verification Permit shall be applied for and approved by the Ashland Planning Division prior to site work, building demolition or construction, and/or storage of materials. The Verification Permit is to inspect the identification of the three trees to be removed and the installation of tree protection fencing for the trees to be retained and protected on and adjacent to the property. Tree protection shall consist of chain link fencing six feet tall and installed in accordance with 18.61.200.B.

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Planning Commission Approval

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Date

# City of Ashland

## Transportation & Growth Management Outreach Workshop



### FINAL REPORT

October 19, 2007

CITY OF  
ASHLAND



COGAN  
OWENS  
COGAN

SERA



KITTELSON & ASSOCIATES, INC.  
TRANSPORTATION ENGINEERING/PLANNING

**City of Ashland TGM Outreach Workshop  
Designing Great Arterial Streets**

**Conducted September 20, 2007**

**Project Team**

TGM Program

Constance Beaumont

Consultants

Matt Hastie, Cogan Owens Cogan

Tim Smith, SERA Architects

Beth Wemple, Kittelson & Associates, Inc.

City of Ashland

Maria Harris

Bill Molnar

*This project was funded by the Oregon Transportation and Growth Management (TGM) Program, a joint program of the Oregon Department of Transportation and the Oregon Department of Land Conservation and Development. The contents of this document do not necessarily reflect the views or policies of the State of Oregon.*

# Introduction

This report summarizes the Transportation and Growth Management-funded Outreach workshop in Ashland, Oregon on Thursday, September 20, 2007.

## Background

The Transportation and Growth Management (TGM) Program is a partnership of the Oregon Department of Transportation (ODOT) and the Oregon Department of Land Conservation and Development (DLCD) that works to expand transportation choices for people. TGM supports community efforts to expand transportation choices for people. By linking land use and transportation planning, TGM works in partnership with local governments to create vibrant, livable places in which people can walk, bike, take transit or drive where they want to go.

### Ashland Outreach Workshop

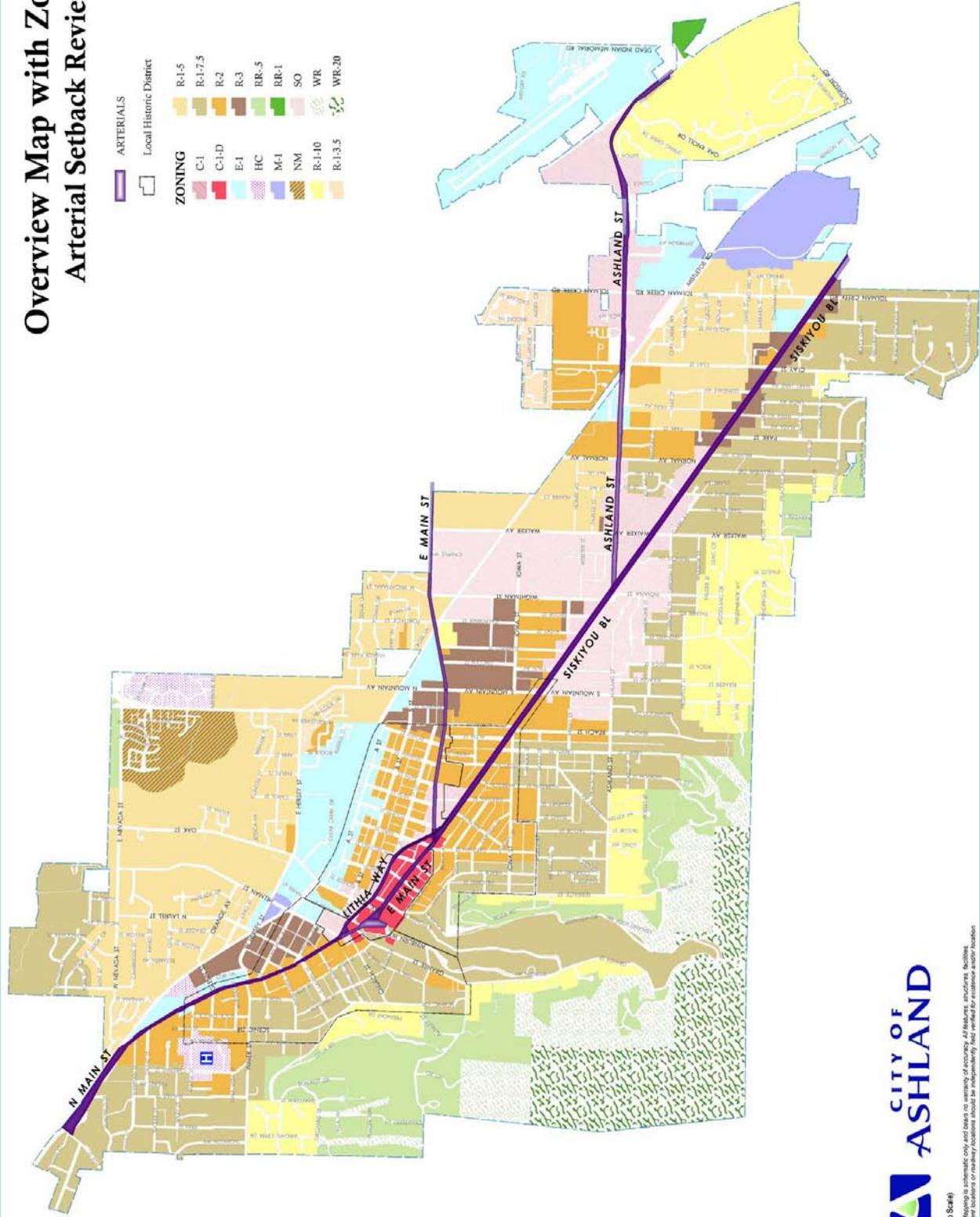
The City of Ashland currently enjoys an attractive downtown and effective transportation system. The City is blessed with a vibrant downtown, a variety of shopping, dining and entertainment opportunities. These include the Oregon Shakespearean Festival and an outstanding park system, including Lithia Park, which is directly adjacent to the downtown area.

City leaders and local residents want to continue to build on and strengthen the quality of streets in the downtown area and elsewhere, particularly along the City's five arterials (see map on page 2). Encouraging quality private development and public facilities near them also is important. In addition, City staff has noted a need for more information and education about good urban design and transportation planning principles that can help the City address more specific street design and land use planning issues related to development along these arterials.

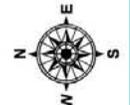
The state's TGM Outreach assistance program retained Cogan Owens Cogan (COC), in partnership with SERA Architects and Kittelson Associates, Inc., to accomplish the following objectives:

- Provide an overview of urban design and land use planning principles.
- Identify key issues and approaches to designing arterial streets and planning for land uses adjacent to them.
- Facilitate a discussion among community members about these issues and approaches.

# Overview Map with Zoning Arterial Setback Review



(Not To Scale)  
This map is intended only as a general guide. It does not constitute a contract. The City of Ashland is not responsible for any errors or omissions in this map. The City of Ashland is not responsible for any damages or liabilities arising from the use of this map.



To address the above issues, the City, TGM and COC collaborated on an outreach workshop held in Ashland on Thursday, September 20, 2007. In advance of the workshop, team members reviewed a variety of background materials and interviewed City Planning staff and representatives of the Oregon Department of Land Conservation and Development.

This report summarizes the workshop discussion. The PowerPoint presentation is included in a separate document, while a brief description of the topics discussed at the workshop is included below.

## Workshop Summary

Approximately 25 Planning Commissioners, City Councilors, local residents and others participated in the workshop on September 20.

Ashland Senior Planner Maria Harris welcomed participants. She thanked participants for attending and encouraged them to take this opportunity to discuss important urban design and transportation planning issues. She noted that the workshop was an opportunity to take a step back from some of the more specific planning issues the community has recently wrestled with and learn and talk about some general urban and street design issues. These concepts can help improve the quality of the downtown, foster economic development and continue to create great streets and places for Ashland residents and visitors.



Next, Constance Beaumont gave an overview from the State's perspective. Constance manages TGM's Education and Outreach Program, the source of funding for the workshop. She emphasized the program's interest in giving Oregonians more transportation choices while strengthening the economic health of downtowns and livability of surrounding neighborhoods. Matt Hastie, principal with Cogan Owens Cogan, then introduced members of the team – Tim Smith, Director of Urban Design and Planning at SERA architects, and Beth Wemple, Associate Engineer at Kittelson and Associates, Inc. Matt then turned the presentation over to Tim and Beth, who discussed the following topics:

- Functions of great streets
- Advantages of mixed use development
- Key urban and streetscape design elements, including building design, street furnishings, the importance of intersections, gathering places, street trees, landscaping and other topics

- Arterial street design and traffic operation and capacity issues
- Parking design and management
- Possible redevelopment opportunity sites

## Group Discussion

Participants then participated in a discussion with members of the consulting team about urban design, land use and transportation planning issues discussed during the presentation. Following is a summary of comments and questions from participants, as well as responses from members of the consulting team (shown in *italics*).

- **There seems to be a tension between mobility for cars and access for pedestrian on the types of streets you are talking about. And this conflict creates stress. How can “great pedestrian streets” also accommodate the need to carry a certain number of cars efficiently?**

*While we are calling these streets “great pedestrian streets,” they actually serve multiple functions. For example, Main Street through downtown needs to accommodate*



*a certain amount of auto traffic that is passing through, whether it is originating or traveling to locations just outside the downtown or to or from farther away. The street needs to balance these different needs but the community may want to emphasize one or another in different locations along the same street. For example, in the heart of the downtown, pedestrian connectivity and safety may be more important than traffic capacity and speed and drivers or the community as a whole may be willing to put up with more traffic delay. Farther outside the downtown, the emphasis may be reversed on the same street. Not all Arterials are created equal and they don't all function the same way throughout their length. It is up to the community to decide which functions are most important in which locations and act accordingly.*

- **Would it make more sense to decide what the function of the road should be and then design buildings to fit that, rather than designing the buildings first and then forcing the road to match that?**

*Not necessarily. The best approach is to look at function of road and the intent of adjacent land uses at the same time. They are directly linked*

*and a coordinated approach to land use and transportation is very important.*

- **What is the current way of defining or designing a pedestrian friendly street? Where should sidewalks be located and how wide should they be? I find many sidewalks along streets in Ashland to be right next to the curb, too narrow and sometimes they do not feel safe when they are right next to traffic.**

*The primary objective should be to separate or buffer pedestrians from traffic with parking or landscaping, particularly on roads where traffic speeds are higher. In areas where traffic moves more slowly, this may be less of an issue but is still important. Some situations may be tough to retrofit because there is not enough room to add parking or landscaping and maintain enough street capacity. The community may decide to live with less than ideal conditions in some locations while looking for ways to improve them as land is developed or redeveloped in the future (e.g., on some sections of North Main Street).*

- **Improvements to North Main to incorporate some of the urban design elements discussed tonight could have negative impacts on traffic capacity and/or congestion in that area. We should be careful about implementing some of these urban design and streetscape approaches in areas like that.**
- **Has anyone developed a way to measure level-of-service (LOS) for sidewalks or other pedestrian facilities? Do you have any information about that?**

*There has been some research into that issue but it has focused primarily on very large areas or communities such as New York City. There also has been research done on how to define the quality of pedestrian facilities.*



- **I constantly walk downtown. During a recent power outage recently when the traffic lights were out, I noted that traffic actually worked very well downtown. There were no traffic jams. People behaved in a courteous manner and cars and pedestrians coexisted well. I've read about a "shared space" approach in some cities in Europe where they don't use typical traffic signals, lane markings or other things like that. Is this something that would be appropriate to consider in Ashland.**

*Some people looking at these types of systems in certain areas or cities in the United States. They appear to work well in European cities where they have been implemented, either in pedestrian-oriented commercial areas or on local, residential streets. It could be something to consider.*

*However, it also should be noted that implementation of such treatments should be considered very carefully and tested at locations with relatively low levels of activity prior to implementing such programs in busier areas.*

- **Do you have opinions on one-way streets vs. couplets?**

*The couplet seems to work relatively well here based on our observations. Traffic moves through at an appropriate pace with good pedestrian connectivity. (Beth Wemple)*

*I'm not a big fan of couplets. They often promote faster speeds and a less pedestrian-friendly environment. (Tim Smith)*

*On the other hand, couplets can help with pedestrian safety because cars are only traveling in one direction and there are fewer turning movements and conflicts with pedestrians in that sense. (Matt Hastie)*

*We all agree that they can work well if vehicle speed is controlled and careful attention is paid to street design (e.g., on-street parallel parking on both sides of the street, short crossing distances for pedestrians and other good pedestrian amenities).*

- **East Main is unfriendly to pedestrians. Cars move faster on that leg of the couplet. One half of couplet works relatively well while the other doesn't. That makes the urban design tools you've been talking about even more important on that and other one-way streets.**

- **What are some criteria to use in deciding where to create public plazas, courtyards or other open spaces?**

*Three things to think about are building on existing areas of activity that seem to be natural gathering points, using them to strengthen sites with redevelopment potential and identifying those sites that seem to have the greatest potential for success in serving that function.*

*Another approach is to go for the low-hanging fruit – someplace that could be designed and built relatively easily. Locate it as centrally as possible and provide multiple entry points. Design it to be relatively tightly occupied. Estimate how many people might use it at one time and design it to be half the size needed to accommodate that number. It's better for those spaces to be crowded.*

- **Does Lithia Way present any opportunities? How would you design it from an outsider's perspective?**

*Create a good amenity. Have the doors open onto a plaza or open space if appropriate. Do all the other things we talked about in the presentation to create a good building and street design. Make it look like it belongs there.*

- **What are some rules of thumb for sidewalk design and width?**

*Sidewalks in a mixed use area should be 12-15 feet wide and curb cuts should be minimized. Centrally located parking should be on the inside of buildings or developments. Sidewalks should be separated into three zones as discussed in the presentation (the “shy zone,” “walk/talk” and “furnishing/buffer” areas). Curbside parking and other sidewalk design elements described in the presentation also can serve as rules-of-thumb.*

- **For bulb-outs, what is the narrowest crossing distance you should try to achieve (curb-to-curb)?**

*Thirty-three (33) feet is a good distance to shoot for (two eleven-foot travel lanes and an eleven-foot turn lane (similar to what you have on East Main)).*

- **How about building enclosure? Is there a preferred height to width ratio for buildings vs. street widths?**

*Alan Jacobs developed a very complicated formula which I found too difficult to understand and apply. I like a one-to-one ratio but have seen them work anywhere from one to two and five to one. They can be much higher than that in very large cities. For a community the size of Ashland a ratio somewhere between 1:1 and 2:1 seems to be most appropriate.*

- **North Main Street has four lanes of traffic, no sidewalks in some sections and there is a constant log jam there. If the total daily traffic on that road is about 19,000 vehicles, could it work better with three lanes (two travel lanes and a turn lane)?**

*It seems to be right on the edge. Operation of a three-lane road, typically starts to breakdown at about 19,000 vehicles per day. It might not work any worse now but probably would if traffic increased. It could be OK if traffic was allowed to be slower there.*

## Next Steps

The following next steps were discussed at and subsequent to the workshop.

**Opportunity Areas.** Identify potential future activity nodes; incorporate the principles discussed at the workshop in developing or redeveloping these areas. Three potential nodes were identified during the workshop. Each one represents an intersection of one or more arterials and/or collector streets. Each one also presents an opportunity for a mixture of uses that would add activity and energy to the intersection and surrounding area. Finally, each one includes a mix of redevelopable sites, commercial uses and community oriented facilities at or very near the intersection. They include the following:

- **Siskiyou Boulevard/Bridge Street.** This intersection is adjacent to Southern Oregon University and a variety of commercial uses. Redevelopment of some of these uses along with targeted streetscape improvements, such as street crossing improvements, wider sidewalks and other pedestrian amenities could enhance activity in this area and improve the pedestrian experience.
- **Ashland Street/Walker Avenue.** This intersection includes The Beanery, as well as two relatively large corner properties with potential for new development or redevelopment. More intensive commercial and/or mixed use development in these areas, coupled with streetscape improvements to enhance the pedestrian experience would strengthen this area.
- **East Main/Mountain Avenue.** This intersection is bordered by a school facility (playing fields), a vacant/potentially redevelopable property and a community arts center. It also is near the City's civic center. Redevelopment of the underutilized sites into a mixed use node, coupled with potential streetscape improvements could result in a vibrant mixed use area that

would also help meet neighborhood commercial needs for nearby residents.

**Arterial Streetscape Improvements.** The City may want to consider some sections of existing arterials for future pedestrian and bicycle improvements. For example, workshop participants discussed the possibility of reducing a portion of North Main between the city limits and downtown from five to three lanes in order to add sidewalks and bicycle lanes. This could be an option, depending on the following factors:

- **Current and future projected traffic levels.** Staff report that this road currently sees about 19,000 cars per day. At this level, a three lane road with a turn lanes could potentially function adequately, although with higher levels of congestion. However, as traffic continues to increase, at some point, three lanes likely would not be adequate. For example, if traffic exceeds 25,000 to 30,000 vehicles per day, five lanes likely would be needed. Any proposed change should be considered within the context of future traffic levels.
- **Extent of turning movements.** The number of intersections with left turn lanes and the number of turning movements at these intersections will affect the ability to reduce the number of lanes without causing unacceptable levels of congestion. As turning movements onto and off the main street increase, the traffic volume threshold for a three lane facility decreases.
- **Traffic control and signalization.** The number of controlled intersections along North Main and type of control uses (e.g., signals), in tandem with the extent of turning movements also will affect traffic flow and mobility/congestion. For example, fewer turns coupled with a higher degree of intersection control will improve the efficiency of traffic movement and allow for a higher volume on fewer lanes.

Assuming city jurisdiction of this road also could affect the ability to make changes to its design.

**Continued Public Education.** Further discussion of these issues will be important as the City makes decisions about the character and location of future development, as well as supportive street design. City staff and Planning Commission members may want to continue to use the presentation developed for this workshop or portions of it to illustrate design and planning issues in the future.

## **Appendix A: Powerpoint Presentation**

The presentation delivered at the design workshop has been provided in a separate document.

## Appendix B: Questionnaire Responses

Participants were provided with an optional written comment form to complete and return at or after the meeting. Only two participants chose to complete the form. Responses are described below, with questions shown in *bold italics*.

**1. What are Ashland's most outstanding assets with regard to roadways (arterials) and walkability?**

Most of the arterials are aesthetically pleasant and safe for both pedestrians and motorists. Bike lanes and crosswalks are generally well marked and way-finding signage is good.

**2. How best can arterial traffic be balanced with pedestrian-friendliness? What improvements would you like to see to accomplish this?**

Make sidewalks wide enough for two people to walk. No sign posts and trees in the middle of walking space.

Match width and amenities on sidewalks to level of pedestrian traffic. Continue to enforce speed limits at pedestrian crossing & bicycling rules. Improve pedestrian aesthetics & traffic calming along Lithia Way.

**3. What are the best ways you see to connect the arterials discussed in the workshop to downtown and/or surrounding neighborhoods?**

Create nodes along Ashland Street and along Siskiyou beyond Walker so they aren't so fast and (like a) "strip mall"

I think the connections are clean now. I think the idea of using bio-swailes at nodes for aesthetics, runoff clean up and traffic calming is a good idea.

**4. What are the major "nodes" or intersections along these arterials where you would like to see improvements made? Please be as specific as possible.**

Block between Walker & Harmony Lane.

I think the "Copeland" project design and the future/re-design of the Wells Fargo property are critical to the future vitality of downtown. The design could be coordinated and the design appropriate to Ashland in look & scale. Now is the time to work with the bowling alley owner & associated businesses around Walker & Siskiyou on a cohesive design for the node. Lithia @ 1st. Pioneer & Oak.

5. ***On a scale of 1-10 with 10 being high, to what extent do you agree with the urban design principles presented this evening (building out to the sidewalk, human-scale architecture, parking in the rear, good window coverage, street furniture, traffic calming, etc)?***

10, 7-8

'Building out on the sidewalk' is entirely site-dependant.

***Which principles in particular do you like, or have concerns with?***

Like: The idea of sidewalk bio-swales. Like: Menu-district design appropriate to traffic & business/residential context. Dislike: Over-urbanized design bias. Concerns: Lack of integrated project (area) design. Too much project by project permitting for same area.

6. ***What additional types of features would you like to see along the arterials such as Lithia Way, North and East Main, Siskiyou Blvd. and Ashland St.?***

Lithia (Copeland) 3-story limit; encourage incorporating set back public plaza area. Wells Fargo – sunken parking: attractive public wide spaces at intersection midway between 1st & Pioneer. N. Main: bike safety issues: link existing businesses through attractive design from Mountain View to Breachboard.

7. ***Are there any other strategies that should be considered? Other suggestions, comments?***

Some way to bring owners, target occupants, designers (architectural & engineering) and public together to discuss impacts and opportunities for more integrated design around target development areas (one to two block sizes). I don't know how but I do feel it is absolutely necessary.

**EVALUATION**

1. ***On a scale of 1 to 10, with 10 being the highest, how valuable was this workshop for you?***

6, 9

2. ***On a scale of 1 to 10, with 10 being the highest, please rate the presenters.***

9, 8

***Other comments:***

Grateful for the opportunity to meet together to discuss these issues.

# Back to Basics in Transportation Planning

Categories: [Building Community Through Transportation](#), [Transportation](#)

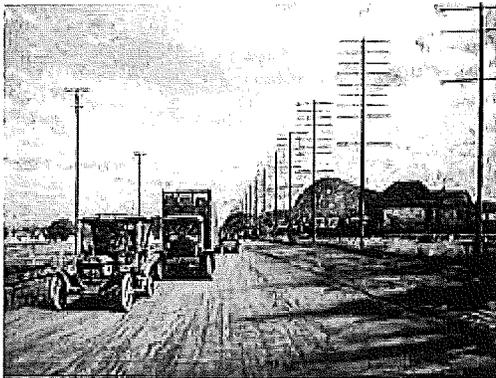
by Gary Toth

I started at the New Jersey Department of Transportation in 1973 right out of college as a civil engineer trainee. For the first twenty years of my career as a transportation planner, I bought into the prevailing belief of the profession that the solution to congestion was to build more and bigger roads. We felt we were not doing our jobs properly unless enough lanes were added to ensure free flowing traffic 24/7/365.

I was part of a profession that for five decades viewed its mission as simply accommodating the demands of traffic, whether on local streets or on state and national highways. The quality of life in communities and the condition of the environment were someone else's business; our job was to move cars and trucks as smoothly and rapidly as possible.

Gradually my faith in this "wider, straighter, faster" paradigm of traffic planning began to change. This occurred while I was in charge of a new unit at the New Jersey Department of Transportation (NJDOT) that had been created to meet with communities, business owners, public agencies and other community stakeholders to seek their support for various road projects. We were supposed to reduce community resistance, which was beginning to delay and even cancel projects. But as time went on, it became clear to me that the real point of transportation projects should be building successful communities and fostering economic prosperity.

## How did we get into this jam?



The first highway funded under 1916 Federal Aid Road Act was in Contra Mesa County, California.

Prior to the introduction of the automobile, Americans' concept of what constituted a good road had a vastly different meaning from today. Serving the community and creating an efficient and livable pattern of development were essential values at the center of street design. In short, transportation was fully integrated into land use planning.

The growing popularity of automobiles after 1910 created pressure for the federal government to become more directly involved in financing roads. Spurred on by cries of "Get farmers out of the mud," Congress passed the Federal Aid Road Act of 1916, which made continuous funding available for states to make road improvements. Motorists and other organized interests began to apply intense pressure to build more highways. In the 1930s many American officials visited the German Autobahn network and returned with a sense of urgency that we must create a national system of high-speed highways. This ultimately led to federal legislation in 1944 to establish the Interstate System and in 1956 to fund it, which ignited the great road building

era of the 1950s, '60s and '70s.



There was an overwhelming consensus in the 1950s among politicians that the Interstate Highway system was a matter of national interest. Highway engineers had carte blanche to carry out their plans.

Today, it is fashionable to vilify the transportation profession for ignoring the negative effects of large-scale road building on our communities. However, two men at the top of the transportation field during the years the Interstate highway system was shaped—Thomas H. MacDonald, chief of the federal Bureau of Public Roads (BPR), and his top aide, Herbert S. Fairbank—warned that thoughtless planning and improperly placed roads: “will become more and more of an encumbrance to the city’s functions and an all too durable reminder of planning that was bad.” They recognized that a shift of population to the suburbs was beginning to take a toll on cities.



As early as the 1930s, federal highway chief Thomas MacDonald voiced concerns about what urban freeways would do to cities. (photo from THE GENIE IN THE BOTTLE: The Interstate System and Urban Problems, 1939-1957.)

Unfortunately, the federal government ignored MacDonald and Fairbank's vision of connecting highway development to a broader regional planning approach. As late as 1947, at the annual meeting of the American Association of State Highway Officials (now AASHTO), MacDonald urged his colleagues to do whatever they could to reverse politicians' refusal to subsidize mass transportation. Repeatedly, however, Presidents Roosevelt, Truman and Eisenhower along with Congress ignored these sensible recommendations for an integrated and balanced transportation network in the various federal highway acts that were enacted.

Starting in the 1950s, the transportation industry mobilized in an unprecedented way to deliver a mandate for a new generation of highways that would eliminate hassles and obstacles to the rapid flow of traffic. Planning in the U.S. became dominated by transportation engineers, while citizens, advocacy groups and planners in other fields saw their influence decline. The transportation profession was remarkably successful in convincing two generations of politicians, developers, construction industries, special interest groups, and the public about how things should be done. With blinders firmly attached, the transportation planners and the nation at large ignored mounting evidence of the unintended consequences of this huge road-building campaign.

## The transportation profession "hits the wall"

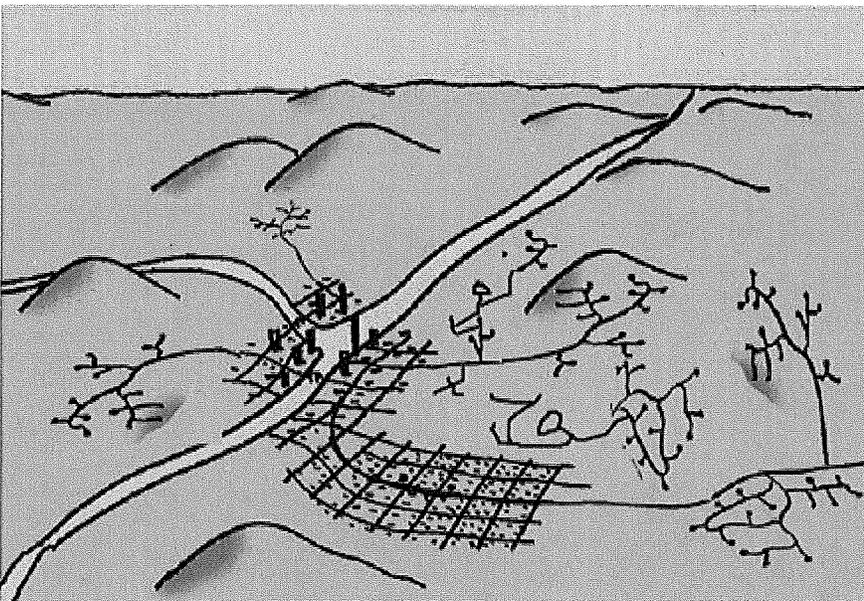
By the early 1990s, when the Interstate Highway System-one of the biggest construction projects in human history-was essentially completed, congestion in urban areas was still growing worse and community opposition was stronger than ever to new road projects. Within the transportation profession, there was a dawning recognition that something was innately wrong with the way we think about and design highways.

Yet not knowing any other way to operate, the transportation profession continued to plan new road projects in the same old way: attempting to meet peak demand according to a formula based on maintaining the free flow of traffic at the thirtieth busiest hour of the entire year .

When the inevitable resistance from affected communities arose, state DOTs found that invoking the "national interest", which worked so well during the Interstate era to override community objections, was no longer effective in pushing through the projects. By the 1990s, citizen opposition was able to bring many projects to a standstill.

Meanwhile, evidence was mounting that the wider, straighter, and faster approach was not solving the problem. The Texas Transportation Institute (TTI), in their 2005 Urban Mobility Report, revealed that over the last two decades of the 20th century, congestion indicators had spiraled out of control. The hours each year a motorist spends in congestion had quadrupled.

This was occurring because of the way street and road networks were being planned. Spread out development made possible by the new highway capacity was creating congestion faster than transportation agencies could widen or replace failing highways. Furthermore, mass transit could not serve the new sprawling suburbs and street design made biking and walking all but impossible. This all caused vehicle trips and vehicle miles to explode at a rate many times faster than population growth. Transportation professionals and state DOTs watched these problems worsen but stood aside and did nothing in the belief that their job was building roads and that land use planning was someone else's responsibility.



Sprawling transportation patterns make travel by any means other than automobile virtually impossible. (photo courtesy of the firm of Glatting Jackson.)

Now it has become clear with each new fiscal year that construction costs for adding new capacity to roads is escalating sharply at exactly the same time our aging transportation infrastructure demands more and more attention. And in most states, revenue sources have been flat for almost a decade. State legislatures are afraid to mention the "T" word— taxes. Many roads and bridges built in the highway boom years between the 1940s and 1960s have aged to the point of needing major repairs or replacement, creating a towering backlog of Fix-It-First projects. All of these factors make it far less likely that even the most determined DOTs can build their way out of congestion.

As congestion has worsened in a transportation system focused on high speed travel, so have other social problems. The skyrocketing vehicle miles traveled (VMT) in the US is a major factor in gas consumption and CO2 emissions that spur global warming. Our nation's public health indicators are also taking a nosedive. The National Center for Disease Control (CDC) reports that 25 years ago, only two states had obesity rates above 10%, and none had rates above 15%. Today, in a startling turnaround, no state has less than a 10% obesity rate, and only one is below 15%. Twenty-eight states—more than half the union—are above 20%, and one is above 25%.



Wide roads promote speedy car travel, not neighborhood interaction.

The CDC classifies this rapid deterioration of public health as an "Inactivity Epidemic", and warns us that our increasing lack of fitness brings major health problems in addition to obesity: diabetes, cardiovascular disease, increased symptoms of depression and anxiety as well as poorer development and maintenance of bones and muscles. While some still dispute our transportation system's role in this widening health crisis, new studies linking sprawl and obesity are accumulating.

### **How can we get out of this jam?**

1. Target the "right" capital improvement projects first: The first step is to recognize that transportation decisions make a huge impact on land use and community planning—and vice versa. Major investments in roads should be pursued only in communities and regions with effective land use plans in place, which will protect the public investment in new highway capacity. With funds for expanding our road system now at a premium, we can no longer afford to invest in areas whose inadequate land use practices will mean the new roads are soon overburdened. Taxpayers deserve to know that their money will be spent in ways that solve our transportation problems—not in creating new problems. The transportation profession itself

needs to accept that road projects carry significant social and environmental consequences. Transportation professionals need to heed Thomas MacDonald's and Herbert Fairbank's advice from the 1930s: "Freeway location should be coordinated with housing and city planning authorities; railroad, bus, and truck interests; air transportation and airport officials; and any other agencies, groups, and interests that may affect the future shape of the city." (Quote from THE GENIE IN THE BOTTLE: The Interstate System and Urban Problems, 1939-1957 by Richard F. Weingroff)

2. Make Placemaking and far-sighted land-use planning central to transportation decisions: Traffic planners and public officials need to foster land use planning at the community level, which supports instead of overloads a state's transportation network. This includes creating more attractive places that people will want to visit in both existing developments and new ones. A strong sense of place benefits the overall transportation system. Great Places – popular spots with a good mix of people and activities, which can be comfortably reached by foot, bike and perhaps transit as well as cars – put little strain on the transportation system. Poor land-use planning, by contrast, generates thousands of unnecessary vehicle-trips, creating dysfunctional roads, which further worsens the quality of the places. Transportation professionals can no longer pretend that land use is not our business. Road projects that were not integrated into land use planning have created too many negative impacts to ignore.

3. Re-envision single-use zoning: We also must shift planning regulations that treat schools, grocery stores, affordable housing and shops as undesirable neighbors. The misguided logic of current zoning codes calls for locating these amenities as far away from residential areas as possible. Locating these essential services along busy state and local highways creates needless traffic and gangs local traffic atop of commuting and regional traffic, thus choking the capacity of the road system.



Bringing back mixed-use neighborhoods.

4. Get more mileage out of our roads: The 19th and early 20th Century practice of creating connected road networks, still found in many beloved older neighborhoods, can help us beat 21st century congestion. Mile for mile, a finely-woven dense grid of connected streets has much more carrying capacity than a sparse, curvilinear tangle of unconnected cul-de-sacs, which forces all traffic out to the major highways. Unconnected street networks, endemic to post-World War II suburbs, do almost nothing to promote mobility.

5. View streets as places: Streets take up as much as a third of a community's land. Yet, under planning policies of the past 70 years, people have given up their rights to this public property. While streets were once a place where we stopped for conversation and children played, they are now the exclusive domain of cars. Even the sidewalks along highways and high-speed local streets feel inhospitable. But there is a new movement to look at streets in the broader context of communities (see the Federal Highway Administration's website on Context-Sensitive Solutions.) It's really a rather simple idea—streets need to be designed in a way that induces traffic speeds appropriate for that particular context. Freeways should remain high-speed roads but on other roads and streets we need to take into account that these are places for people as well as conduits for cars.

6. Think outside the lane: Last but not least, the huge costs of eliminating traffic jams at hundreds of locations throughout a state will allow for only a few congestion hot spots to be fixed by big engineering projects each year. That means that most communities must wait decades or even a century for a solution to their problems unless we adopt a new approach that incorporates land use planning, community planning and alternative modes of transportation to address ever increasing volumes of traffic.

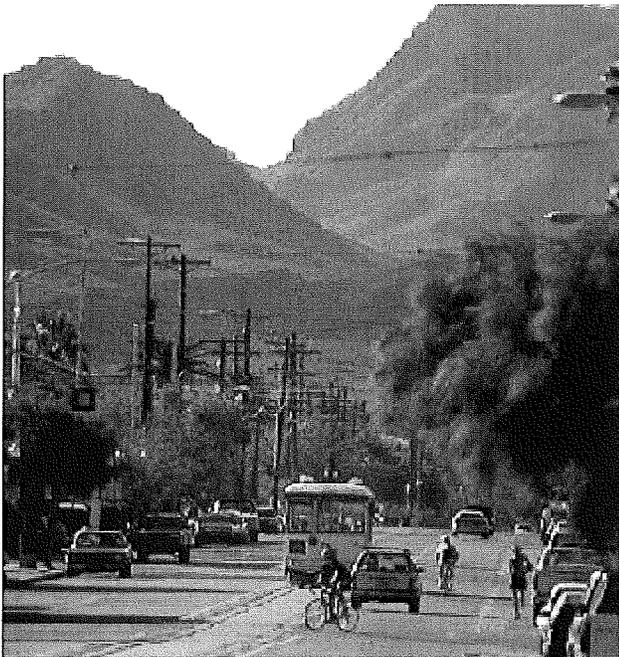
## A new approach to transportation for a new century

The transportation profession responded to a mandate from government officials in the post-World War II era to build a new generation of highways for public mobility and national defense. They should be commended for a job well done. A new generation of solutions is needed for the 21st Century, however, and this well-organized and well-trained profession should apply its talents to help us adapt to these new realities. We need a new vision of transportation that truly improves our mobility, sustains our communities, protects our environment and helps restore our physical fitness and health.

The transportation profession can no longer respond to mounting levels of congestion as well as community and environmental dilemmas by trying to widen existing roads or build new ones. New highways are now packed with cars almost as soon as they open. And today there is simply not the money available for that kind of large-scale road building. Most states can't even keep up with the backlog of repair projects.

When I was at NJDOT, we came to realize the 1950s were long past and that we needed a new approach to meet the needs of our citizens. So we began collaborating with the public on solutions that took into account the whole context of communities being served by a particular road—the approach known as Context Sensitive Solutions. Like most people we initially believed that Americans were in love with the automobile and would demand we continue to provide them with bigger, faster roads separated from shopping and neighborhoods. While we did find this response in some communities, we were surprised by how many more communities firmly supported better land-use and community planning.

Americans may always love their automobiles, but that does not mean we want to spend all day stuck inside them. Transportation systems which afford Americans the choice of getting to places without using their cars actually offer more freedom than those where people are solely dependent on the auto to get anywhere. People easily understand this, and can see that a transportation network catering exclusively to cars has harmed our communities, compromised our health, fueled the environmental crisis and made us dependent on foreign oil.



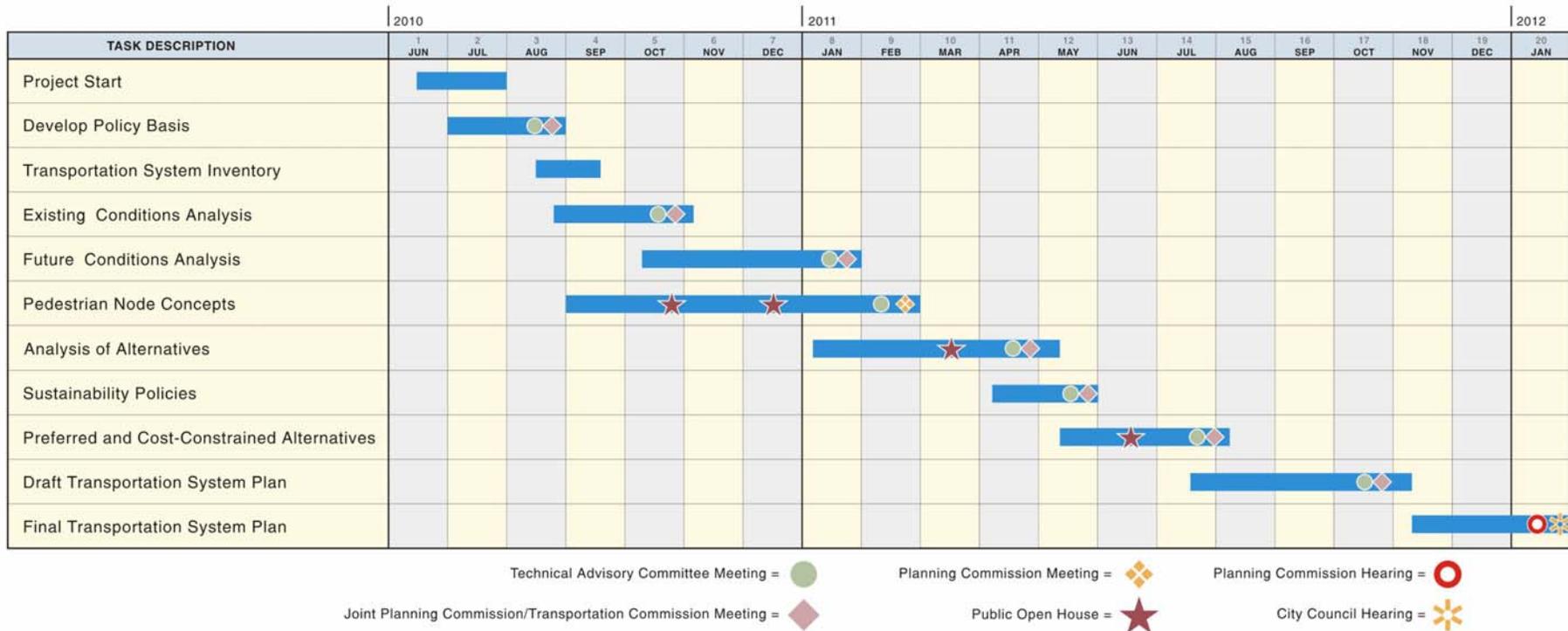
Older neighborhoods all over the country are seeing a renaissance as Americans rediscover the pleasures of living in mixed-use communities that foster walking, biking and transit.

There is nothing un-American about planning communities as a whole, and acknowledging that roads are just one of the elements that create a livable place. This was the common sense that guided our communities until at least 1920. While pre-20th Century community planners were by no means perfect, they did create places where transportation was integrated into broader public hopes. The roads and bridges in these areas were built to foster economic development and quality of life in the community, not to hamper it.

If we are to really embrace the concept of healthy, livable communities that serve a diverse population and that make choices for mobility a priority, then we must integrate our transportation planning with other goals and we must design our roads for all users. In short, we must capitalize on the wisdom of our roots.



## CURRENT SCHEDULE FOR CITY OF ASHLAND TRANSPORTATION SYSTEM PLAN UPDATE



**PLANNING COMMISSION RULES<sup>1</sup>**  
**GOVERNING THE CONDUCT OF ITS BUSINESS**

1. **Meetings.** The number of Planning Commission, hereinafter referred to as “commission”, meetings per month and a schedule of meeting dates shall be established and may be altered or changed at any regularly scheduled meeting. Two regular meeting dates are established each month on the second and fourth Tuesdays at 7 p.m. in the Council Chambers.
  - 1.1. Public hearings shall conclude at 9:30 p.m. and be continued to a future date to be set by the commission, unless the commission by a two-thirds vote of those present, extends the hearing(s) for one-half hour until 10:00 p.m. and for an additional half-hour until 10:30 p.m. if desired, at which time the commission shall set a date for continuance.
  - 1.2. All meetings shall end no later than 10:00 p.m., unless the commission by two-thirds vote of those present extends the meeting for one-half hour until 10:30 p.m. at which time the commission shall set a date for continuance of the agenda items not acted upon.
  - 1.3. Additional meetings may be held at any time upon the call of the chair or by a majority of the voting members of the commission or upon request of the city council. Notwithstanding notice requirements under Oregon law, advance notice of at least 36 hours shall be provided for all meetings.
  
2. **Quorum.** A meeting of greater than one-half of the regular members constitutes a quorum. A simple majority of the quorum present determines the action on any motion, question, ordinance, or resolution. The recommendation to the City Council of any amendment to the Land Use Ordinance or Comprehensive Plan shall be by the affirmative vote of not less than a majority of the total members of the commission.

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<sup>1</sup> Section 2.10.070 of the Ashland Municipal Code authorizes the Commission to adopt rules for its governance and procedures, consistent with the laws of the state. These rules are adopted under such authority.

3. **Election of Officers.** At its first meeting of the year the commission shall elect a chair and first and second vice-chairs. The recording secretary shall be a member of the Community Development Department staff.
4. **Duties of Officers.** The duties and powers of the officers of the commission shall be as follows:
  - 4.1. The Chair Shall:
    - 4.1.1. Preside at all meetings of the commission.
    - 4.1.2. Call special meetings of the commission.
    - 4.1.3. Sign documents of the commission.
    - 4.1.4. See that all actions of the commission are properly taken.
  - 4.2. First Vice-Chair. During the absence, disability, or disqualification of the chair, the first vice-chair shall exercise or perform all the duties and be subject to all the responsibilities of the chair.
  - 4.3. Second Vice-Chair. During the absence, disability, or disqualification of the chair and first vice-chair, or at the request of the chair, the second vice-chair shall exercise or perform all the duties and be subject to all the responsibilities of the chair.
  - 4.4. The recording secretary shall:
    - 4.4.1. Take minutes for commission meetings.
    - 4.4.2. Give or serve all notices required by law.
    - 4.4.3. Prepare the agenda for all meetings of the commission.
    - 4.4.4. Be the custodian of commission records.
    - 4.4.5. Inform the commission of correspondence relating to business of the commission and attend to such correspondence.
5. **Scheduling Council Matters.** Matters referred to the commission by the city council shall be placed on the calendar for consideration and action at the first meeting of the commission after such reference.

## 6. Rules of Order.

- 6.1. *Robert's Rules of Order* shall generally govern the commission in all cases not otherwise provided for by these rules by ordinance or by state law. Failure to strictly follow *Robert's Rules of Order* shall not be cause to void or otherwise disturb a decision or action of the commission.
- 6.2. The commission may set time limits for speakers, providing equal opportunity for opponents and proponents, while enabling the commission to finish business scheduled before the commission. The chair may set the order of speakers and changes to agenda order as needed to conduct business before the commission.
- 6.3. Reconsideration. The commission may reconsider matters brought before the commission as set forth below.
  - a. The staff liaison, applicant or any interested party may request reconsideration of the vote after the public record has been closed, but prior to adoption of the final order (findings, conclusions and orders) by providing evidence to the Community Development Director that a factual error occurred through no fault of the party asking for reconsideration, which in the opinion of the director might affect the decision before the commission. Failure of an issue to be raised in a hearing, in person or by letter, or failure to provide statements or evidence sufficient to afford the commission an opportunity to respond to the issue precludes a reconsideration request.
    - i. Such request shall be at least fifteen (15) days prior to the commission's next regular meeting.
    - ii. If the director is satisfied that an error occurred crucial to the decision, the director shall schedule reconsideration with notice to participants of the matter before the commission. Reconsideration shall be scheduled before the commission at the next regularly scheduled meeting.
    - iii. The commission shall first decide, by motion, whether to reconsider the matter and if so, the limits of reconsideration and testimony.

Unless agreed to by a majority, reconsideration shall be limited to the portion of the decision affected by the facts not raised during the open public hearing and record.

- iv. Regardless of who files the request for reconsideration, if the applicant has not consented to an extension of the time limits (120 day rule) as necessary to render a decision on the reconsideration, the reconsideration shall be denied by the director.
  - b. Any member of the commission who voted in favor of the decision may move to reconsider the decision at the next regular scheduled meeting. If the motion is seconded the commission shall vote on whether to reconsider. If the commission votes to reconsider, the process outlined in 6.3.a.iii above shall be followed.
7. **Procedure.** Hearings shall be conducted as set forth in Ashland Municipal Code and Oregon Law, and the commission shall adopt and make available to the public the City of Ashland Public Hearings Format for Land Use Hearings as adopted by the commission.
8. **Hearings Board.** The conduct of the Hearings Board shall be governed by applicable sections of these rules, specifically, sections 6, 7, 9, 10 and 11.
9. **Voting.** Voting on quasi-judicial matters shall be by roll call vote and the order of voting shall be rotated. Voting on other matters may occur by voice vote unless an oral vote is requested by the commission.
10. **Public Disclosure.** Any member of the commission who has a conflict of interest or a bias on any matter that is on the commission agenda shall voluntarily excuse themselves, vacate the member's seat and refrain from discussing and voting on such items as a commissioner.

11. **Absence at Hearing.** Except as provided below, only those members of the commission present at the hearing may act on a planning action. Any commissioner absent for any part of the hearing on an action may act if the commissioner reviews the record of the hearing and all of the documents submitted at the hearing(s) prior to participating in any deliberations or decisions.
12. **Notification of Absence.** Each member of the commission who knows that the member will not be able to attend a scheduled meeting of the commission shall notify the commission chair or staff liaison at least two hours prior to the meeting. The Community Development Director shall notify the chair of the commission in the event that the projected absences will produce a lack of quorum.
13. **Vacancy.** The vice-chair shall succeed the chair if the chair vacates the office before the term is completed. The vice-chair shall serve the unexpired term of the vacated office. A new vice-chair shall be elected at the next regular meeting.
14. **Amendments.** These rules may be amended at any meeting of the commission by a majority of the commission, provided that the text of a proposed rule change and scheduled consideration date is announced at a commission meeting at least fourteen (14) days prior to the meeting where the rule change is to be considered, and provided further that notice of such proposed amendment is given to each member in writing at least fourteen (14) days prior to the meeting.

Adopted by the Planning Commission on the \_\_\_\_ day of \_\_\_\_\_, 2010.

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Pam Marsh, Chair  
Ashland Planning Commission