

VISION QUEST: What should the future look like?

First round of visioning meetings is complete; next large group is Nov. 15

- **By:** John Baker
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Photo By: John Baker

Twenty-two people split into four groups to answer the questions of how development in Canby should look in the future. Those ideas were committed to paper and will be shared at the large group meeting Nov. 15.

As black Sharpie markers squeaked their way across four large pieces of paper Wednesday night, they reflected the hopes, dreams and ideas of a Canby for the future.

With each squeal of those pens, Canby's possibilities for the future sprung to life from 22 people split into four groups at the Woodburn Police headquarters. It was visioning at its finest, and the final small group session in the first round of Canby's new visioning process.

The process started with a large group meeting Sept. 25, then added a series of smaller meetings with specific focuses: Oct. 16 — Transportation and public safety; Oct. 22 — Community (arts and culture); Oct. 23 — parks and recreation; and Wednesday's meeting which focused on development.

Susan Meyer, as asset manager who has done extensive work with Wilsonville, facilitated the evening and tasked the four groups with the night's mission – how should Canby go about development while keeping its small town feel.

"How does Canby retain that small town feel," she asked the participants before they began. "How do we do that as we continue to grow? There are other

towns with similar demographics, but they don't feel like a small town. What is that special treasure we have here?"

And with that, the work began. Former Canby City Councilor Robert Bitter was in one of the groups and said he enjoyed the process. "I thought last night was pretty productive," Bitter said. "It's clear that some common thoughts came out from the large group and have trickled into the small groups." Bitter said that in his group, the focus was on positive, not negative.

"In our small group, everyone was thinking about what we can do – no negative thoughts," Bitter said. "People were really focused on the vision."

Meyers agreed, saying she noticed the positive vibe with each table she visited.

"I think it went well," she said. "I'm really happy with the participation and that people are continuing to show up. We're seeing different people at each breakout session and I feel that every session has had lively discussions."

Meyers said that development is an important component for Canby as the town is projected to grow to 26,000 residents by 2030. Sitting at just over 16,000 now, Meyers asked the group how Canby can absorb 10,000 more people and still maintain its "small" feel.

"I think it's starting to show up in the responses," Meyers said. "It's not just one thing, but a lot of different elements that Canby has that people want to hold onto."

Bitter said there are definite themes coming through, such as how people would like to see the urban growth boundary expanded, creating a more seamless downtown and Highway 99E area, capitalizing more on the city's motto, "The Garden Spot," preserve the city's historic core, create a place where people want to do things and especially the younger generation.

Other ideas tossed around were an emphasis on clean or green jobs, perhaps create a larger medical complex, avoid strip malls, a brew pub downtown or other restaurants downtown to create a night life. Now that the small groups have put ideas to paper, those ideas will be compiled and general themes will be broken down. At the group's next breakout meeting, they'll take those general themes and ask the hard question – "How do we achieve getting there," Meyers said.

The next large group meeting will be Thursday, Nov. 15, from 7 to 9 p.m. at Cutsforth's Town Hall. At that meeting, the findings of the initial small group breakouts will be presented and the task ahead will be explained.

To get more information about the visioning process, check the city's website at <http://www.ci.canby.or.us/visioning.htm>.