

## City vision caught and delivered

Now the process begins to turn some of these vision-developed ideas into reality

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Photo By: John Baker

*Nearly 50 people descended on the Canby Police station Wednesday night to see what the city's visioning effort had wrought.*

Despite the feeling that a major project had been put to rest, there was an air of anticipation about what comes next in the city's visioning process. Nearly 50 people gathered in the Canby Police Department Wednesday night to hear the unveiling of the city's visioning process — and find out what it all means.

"I think it has been a great process," said Greg Ellis, Canby city administrator. "We had a good crowd, and we actually got some surveys back. This is kind of a moving, living document — not necessarily static. Let's keep adding to it as necessary." "I was pleased at the turnout for the visioning meeting," said Canby Mayor Briain Hodson. "I think the opportunities that the different committees came up with and the subsequent action steps are very solid. Many of them, we are already working on."

The meeting offered four key points — community, parks and recreation, transportation and public safety, and growth and economic development.

“Within each of the four categories, the information from several previous small group meetings offered an aspiration for a certain group of ideas, presented priority gaps for those ideas, then the ideas themselves.

An example would be:

**Diversity Aspiration:** Embrace diversity through inclusive communication, events and the arts.

**Top Priority Gap:** Better community is needed.

**Action Steps:** Display Spanish language posters at Hispanic businesses and churches, use radio and OCTS, interpreter (shared among city agencies), text message broadcasts, information kiosk with videos for nonreaders, get ideas and advice from other communities, send email messages to church secretaries, have a bilingual dispatch person at CAT.

**Second Priority Gap:** Canby needs a single organization-resource that supports diversity as its sole mission.

**Action steps:** Expand support and awareness of “bridging cultures,” provide funding for volunteers.

**Third Priority Gap:** More personal ambassadors and connectors.

**Action steps:** Establish a neighborhood association for South Canby (99E-Township-Ivy and Locust), National Night Out, create networking opportunities for people to “meet and greet” each other, cross connections with faith organizations and community clubs and centralized listing of available volunteers to match with opportunities.

In a night when a lot of information was squeezed into two hours, each of the four focus groups offered the vision and ideas that their sessions had produced.

Stephanie Murphy, speaking for the parks and recreation group, spoke of river recreation and amenities, upgrades in the parks and the idea of “completing the emerald necklace,” a series of walking paths and parks that would connect to surround the city of Canby.

Mary Kerr spoke to transportation and public safety, echoing her report by telling the audience that “Canby will have a safe, attractive system of roads that are well maintained and support the efficient movement of people, goods and services.”

When the reports were done and the information offered in booklets, the obvious question became, “What’s next?” Ellis answered that by telling the audience that “Now is when this thing starts,” noting that if the people in the room wanted to see this project through to success, they needed to go home and look in the mirror. “They need to keep it going,” Ellis said.

To help with that, the city of Canby has a survey it would like Canby residents to participate in. Copies were available Wednesday night and can be accessed at <https://www.surveymonkey.com/s/2013CanbyVisionSurvey>.

Ellis hopes that people will look at the visioning document then offer their thoughts on the survey, which is due by Feb. 5.

There are no more meetings planned regarding visioning in the near future, though Ellis felt the city’s goal-setting weekend of Feb. 23 will likely address the document at some length.

Until then, the document sits awaiting volunteers to come forward, committees to form and projects to be identified as getting done.

“Going forward, the council and staff will be looking at the ideas and suggestions made, line them up with what is currently being worked on and prioritize from there,” Hodson said. “Once that is done, I would like

to hear more public input, and we can start working up the plans so they are ready to implement when the time is right.”

“This whole process was fast-tracked and that was intentional,” Ellis said. “We wanted to get momentum and then keep it rolling, and I think people really did a good job, even over Thanksgiving and Christmas, of staying involved and helping to keep the momentum going.”

To see the full document, check the website at <http://www.ci.canby.or.us/documents/Visioning/PublicCommentVisionDoc2013.pdf>.

## **SIDEBAR STORY:**

In the prism of trying to bring the future into focus, Wednesday’s Canby community vision meeting paid more than a passing glance to the past.

That was intentional, said Canby City Administrator Greg Ellis. Too often, the community forgets what the city gets done. Ellis asked Matilda Deas, city senior planner, and meeting facilitator Tom Olson to help focus some attention on what’s come before.

“The reason I wanted to do this was that I went to a meeting in early September and was talking about the upcoming visioning process,” Ellis said. “I’m all excited talking about things, and the response was essentially, ‘We’ve done this before and nothing ever gets done.’”

“I thought it was important to let people know that ‘Yes, there is stuff getting done,’” Ellis added. “People look at today and forget about yesterday. You look around this community, and you see a lot of stuff getting done.”

Ellis admitted that he didn’t know how that opening salvo was going to be received but admitted he felt good about Deas’ passion for the idea.

Deas talked about the lack of funds, passion of volunteers and the amount of programs that have come to fruition. She also told the audience that Canby does a good job of turning grant applications into resources.

“We’ve received about \$2.5 million in the last few years and had to put in only about \$500,000 in matching,” Deas said. “That’s a three-to-one ratio, which is pretty good.”

But, she noted, most grants pay for the creation or implementation of project not the ongoing upkeep. That’s where volunteers and other sources of funds must come into play.

The other aspect of Deas’ talk was that it confirmed some of what would be presented in the upcoming visioning meeting.

“A good thing about this (visioning) process is that it is reconfirming what we already thought was important,” Ellis said. “It’s important to make that statement — that things are getting done and are on our to-do list. We need to celebrate our successes.”