

LEAVING A LEGACY: THE CANBY GREENSPACE & ART PARK

by JillMarie Wiles, Canby Livability Coalition Park & Recreation Advisor

A neighborhood can make a difference. Citizens can create a legacy. Art can tell a story. Parks can reveal the heart of what makes a community special.

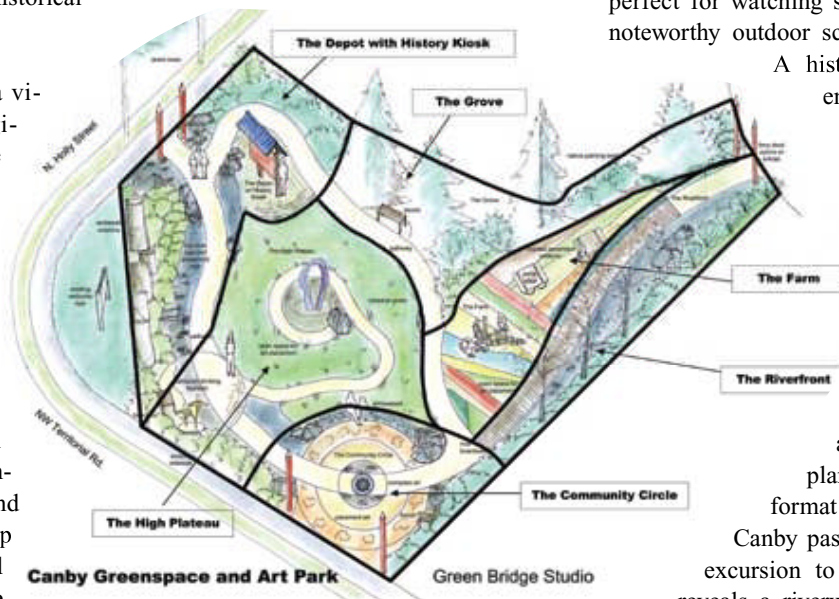
The Canby Art Park is a 9,300-square-foot lot communicating the history, river heritage and agricultural roots of Canby, Oregon, a farming community of 14,000 residents. The lot on which the Canby Art Park is being built now stands vacant but will soon become a community oasis for neighbors, exercise enthusiasts, artists, historians, tourists, students and families. The park site will also serve as an outdoor classroom for Canby High School agri-science/horticulture students. The space, though small, constructively utilizes the square footage to serve one purpose: to communicate the quality of life in Canby while leaving a historical legacy for future generations.

The Canby Livability Coalition had a vision to transform a corner lot, originally intended for building a home in a subdivision, into a unique park. The main park entrance sits at the city limits beside a "Welcome to Canby" sign. Visitors arriving from the ferry, traveling into downtown to Interstate 5 or Highway 99E all pass by the Art Park site. In order to secure the lot, the Canby Livability Coalition entered into an agreement with the Canby City Council to provide half the cost of the land by fundraising \$35,000. The group felt that a park with a historical theme was a better backdrop to the "Welcome to Canby" sign than a backyard fence. The community agreed, and the council voted unanimously to approve the park idea. By November 2006, various fundraisers and private donations completed the goal of \$35,000. The development of the park continues with brick sales and sponsorships.

Grants from the Clackamas County Cultural Coalition, the Oregon Cultural Trust and the Starbucks Foundation funded the conceptual drawing as well as marketing pieces. Support from the Clackamas County Arts Alliance, the Canby Arts Association, Canby Kiwanis, Canby Telcom, local businesses and numerous citizens serving as community partners have made building the park a reality. Canby Livability President Bob Tice recently reported that irrigation had been funded, students are excited about being involved with the project, and sponsorships are coming in for art installation. The

Elizabeth Thorstenson, landscape architect, who created the conceptual drawing, interpreted the vision communicated from citizen input and the Canby Greenspace and Art Park Steering Committee, producing an image that brought the concept full circle. The park concept consists of six sections (see diagram), each with its own message about Canby's heritage. The three entrances, indicated by colorful ferry pylons symbolic of the Canby Ferry Terminal, invite visitors into the space. Circular pathways create a trail that eventually winds into the (1) "High Plateau" area, perfect for watching sunsets or displaying a noteworthy outdoor sculpture at its summit.

A history kiosk flanks one entrance at (2) "The Depot," introducing visitors to Canby history and information about available resources. The entrance into the surrounding neighborhood offers a picnic table in (3) "The Farm" area, which shows in plant form or in an artistic format all the crops grown in Canby past and present. A slight excursion to (4) "The Riverfront" reveals a riverwalk footbridge over a dry creek bed, with planks of Trex decking offering river facts, artwork or names of generous donors. As visitors walk the path, a variety of art highlights fish and wildlife native to the rivers surrounding Canby. The section known as (5) "The Grove" is a tribute to the land and native flora where the Art Park



next step is an engineering survey of the site so implementation of the conceptual design can begin with pathway construction and signage. From there, permanent art installation will be ongoing as sponsorships and artists are secured.

resides. Before the land sold for a housing development, 10 acres of filbert trees quietly grew on the corner. There are no filbert trees today, but eventually, the area will be home to a bench shaded by trees planted by the students and neighbors. The (6) “Community Circle” has an “art-full” retaining wall, serving a dual purpose as a cleverly disguised resting bench. Visitors or exercise



enthusiasts will enjoy an interesting place to rest combined with a drinking fountain. Elizabeth took into account what the park needed while staying on task with the committee’s criteria. She infused her knowledge of park use, design and programming, ADA requirements and site needs, such as proper grading and drainage. The conceptual drawing beautifully communicates a strong community image and a sense of place.

Soon, the message of the “Welcome to Canby” sign will be reinforced by an art-filled, history-enlightening park, constructed by citizens using positive, proactive solutions. With a recreational, educational, artistic and historical perspective, Canby citizens are preserving their cultural heritage by creating a park for the next generation.

To further support the efforts of building the Art Park, supporters are encouraged to purchase a brick, commit to a sponsorship, refer an artist, offer a resource or suggest a compatible grant. Contact Canby Livability online at www.canbyartpark.org — funding sources: grant funding, private donors, city of Canby, community fundraising and in-kind donations.

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