

City of Canby Canby Theater Project Official Statement

The Canby Theater Project originated out of the closing of the Canby Theater in October of 2012. The issue was brought to City Council for discussion and City staff was directed to begin negotiating with the property owner for acquisition. The reason behind seeking acquisition of the property is multifold:

- Minimal maintenance and upkeep on the building had caused a decline in the facility. If left to continue the probability of the space turning into a blighted property became more of a reality. Alternative uses for a movie theater building are few without major renovations to the structure itself and would take significant capital to accomplish. The ultimate fear was that the building would decay to a state where the City would be forced to condemn the structure and tear it down. The resulting gap in the downtown business district would more than likely never be filled. The City would be left without a once treasured amenity and with a taxpayer cost for tearing down the building greater than the current acquisition price.
- Movies, for years, were produced on common 35 millimeter film reels. The movie industry is shifting and in near future 35 mm film will no longer be produced. The cost associated with converting a theater from 35 mm film to digital projector is expensive. Estimates range from \$60,000 to \$80,000 to convert one projector setup. The lack of local ownership, necessary upkeep, and renovations meant declining attendance to the theater and low revenues. Without those sales it was speculated the property owner did not have the financial means to convert the equipment.
- The City wanted to retain an iconic structure of the downtown business district. The theater building was constructed in 1940 and had been in business up until the October 2012 closing. For several decades people came to the Canby Theater to enjoy a good show. The theater was a place for people of all ages to go as a form of entertainment in the community. The City wants to continue to promote community vitality by having these amenities for our current citizens, our future citizens, and all those in the Canby area.
- There is an ancillary effect on other local businesses. While going to the movie is an experience in and of itself, movie goers tend to make an event out of it. Not only do they visit the theater but they may go out to eat before or after. They may do some shopping at the local retail stores as well.

During the time when the City negotiated for the property, staff assembled cost estimates for work to be done as well as a plan for the operation and management of the theater. The Canby Theater Project is broken down into several areas which need to be addressed.

- Exterior Renovation
- Digital Equipment Conversion
- Seating Replacement
- Heating and Cooling Upgrade
- General Repairs
- Performing Arts Viability
- Sound Facility Management

The **exterior marquee** is in need of repair and restoration. Once the proud symbol and attraction of the downtown, it has fallen into disrepair and no longer illuminates the evening atmosphere. The City will

contract with a reputable entity to do the necessary repair work to the marquee. Lighting conversions may take place to replace the old incandescent bulbs with lighting fixtures more energy efficient, but will retain the style and feel of the original marquee. The end result will be a renovated exterior which attracts and allures those who look upon it.

The **digital equipment conversion** is a mandatory step in bringing the Canby Theater into proper function once again. The old projection and sound equipment will be removed. The new digital equipment will be purchased and installed through a company which specializes in small town digital conversions. Not only will the projector be upgraded to digital, but the sound equipment must also be upgraded to a surround sound system. The end result will be a picture and sound quality second to none.

The current **seating** in the theater is small, short, and cramped. This will be replaced with new, modern movie theater seating.. The City will contract with a movie theater seating company which would take care of the removal of old seating and installation of new. They would also provide seating layout plans for the dimensions of the Canby Theater. The end result is sitting back in a comfortable chair made for the movie going experience.

Anyone who has been to the Canby Theater in the summer knows of the dank, damp smell associated with the auditorium. The current **cooling system** utilizes a “swamp cooler”. Cold water is sprayed onto a metal screen which has air drawn through it. The cold water cools the incoming air and is then forced through a massive air exchanger into the theater. The swamp cooling system will be abandoned and new mini-split heat pumps will be installed. The heat pumps will provide cooling as well as heating to the theater. They will also be significant quieter than the swamp cooler to keep noise minimal while the movies are playing.

Various **general repairs** will need to be made to the theater. Roof inspections, painting, and maintenance are a few examples. As with any old building which hasn’t been well kept for a period of time, it will take some work to whip it into shape.

The primary purpose of the Canby Theater is to show movies. However, the City wants to make the building **multifunctional** to maximize the effectiveness of the space. The Canby Theater currently has a stage built in the auditorium. This would be inspected and, if necessary, renovated to suit the performing arts. Lighting and sound equipment would be obtained to make the performing arts a viable use of the building. The space would be available to rent out for such purposes. Committees associated with the City should be able to apply for grants to help bring varied cultural events to the community and to utilize the facility.

Last, but not least, crucial to the success of the project will be **sound facility management**. The City will retain ownership of the building and equipment then lease it to an entity to run it as a theater. By retaining ownership and controlling the lease the City can insure the lessee is an entity who wishes to run the theater with the quality it deserves.

The City believes completing all these areas of improvement will produce a local theater second to none. To date the City has received financial support through private individuals and grants to help assist with the acquisition and renovations. The City is accepting donations from individuals and entities wishing to help. **All donations are tax deductible.** The public will have top notch picture and sound; all in the comfort of new, modern theater seating with an inviting atmosphere. The Canby Theater will once again take its place as one of the crowning jewels of the Canby community.