

Council Business Meeting

April 19, 2022

Agenda Item	Approval of Public Art & Land Acknowledgement installation for AHS	
From	Jennifer Longshore Aaron Anderson	Chair, Public Arts Commission Associate Planner, Community Development
Contact	aaron.anderson@ashland.or.us; 541-552-2052	

SUMMARY

The Public Arts Commission (PAC) was approached by the Ashland High School (AHS) Equity Diversity and Inclusion (EDI) Committee to propose a public art installation and land acknowledgement project along the Siskiyou Blvd frontage in front of the Ashland School District administrative offices. The PAC enthusiastically endorsed approval of the project and is now requesting that City Council approve of the project per AMC 2.29.110.

POLICIES, PLANS & GOALS SUPPORTED

- Public Arts Master Plan
- Racial Equity Resolution - Section 2.H. Determine the feasibility of a mural project to provide a mode of artistic expression of our community’s commitment to making meaningful, visible, and ongoing progress on issues of social equity and racial justice.
- Comprehensive Plan – Transportation Element: Policy (10.15.06) #3 Encourage public art along multi-modal travel corridors.

At the April 5th regular business meeting representatives from the AHS EDO committee appeared before council during the public forum portion of the meeting and spoke briefly about the project in an effort to generate excitement about the project and ensure a spot on a future council agenda.

BACKGROUND AND ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

At the March 18th regular meeting of the Public Arts Commission (PAC) the AHS EDI Committee gave a 20-minute presentation on proposed design covering the details of the project.

The project is titled: “AHS Land Acknowledgement Project : Otterlifter Canoe Installation” and is briefly described as follows: “Ashland High School will install a donated canoe as a land acknowledgement to honor the gift our school has been given; to recognize the history of violence and dispossession experienced by Native people of our region; to communicate respect to our Native students; and to promote decolonization of land, lifeways, and education”

The application materials describe the project as a land & people recognition to honor the Native inhabitants and history of our Valley; to educate our community; to affirm ASD’s commitment to Native students and families; and to call our community to action on climate crisis.



The installation is oriented around a hand-carved canoe, Otterlifter, which was donated to the school for the purpose of this project. The canoe will be installed above the ground atop two steel posts in concrete pads. Surrounding the canoe will be a garden of plants which are: indigenous to this region; drought-tolerant; and/or culturally significant. We have selected plants which, when landscaped, will resemble a flowing river. Extending beyond the garden is a ring of river rock. The installation will include four interpretive signs with information.

The installation will be located along the north edge of Siskiyou Boulevard beside the entry to the Ashland School District Office parking lot, and will be highly visible from Siskiyou Boulevard by vehicle, bicycle, and sidewalk.

The installation will benefit Ashland High School, Ashland School District, and the Ashland community more generally by serving four roles. The canoe will be:

- A symbolic reminder to improve our ecological behaviors and mitigate climate crisis
- Gathering point to educate students in history, empathy, ecology, and activism
- A highly visible iteration of truth-telling to address historic and ongoing oppression and pursue healing
- A commitment to the inclusion and success of our Native students, and to honor a diversity of lifeways and knowledges

Not least, the installation will also help Ashland SD fulfill its legal obligation to Senate Bill 13 and its policy obligation to the ASD and AHS Equity Plans.

The location is ideal: there is an outcropping of grass raised above the parking lot and level with Siskiyou, inviting a three-dimensional public art installation like this one. The ground is sufficient for landscaping, and there are minimal overhanging branches. Pedestrian and vehicle traffic not only increases the visibility and impact of the piece, but also provides an additional layer of security. The location is close enough that teachers can walk their classes to the installation in moments, but it is accessible to the greater public without requiring their admittance to campus.

The neighbors have shared praise for the Aidan Ellison Memorial BIPOC Celebration Mural around the corner, and we are confident this installation will likewise catalyze self-reflection, community conversations, and action for justice. ASD Maintenance has confirmed that the irrigation system in the area can be easily capped to modify landscaping without impacting other areas of campus.

At the conclusion of the presentation the PAC had an opportunity to ask questions about the design and details about the installation. At the end of the Q&A the PAC made a motion and voted unanimously to recommend approval of the project to Council.

FISCAL IMPACTS

None – the project is fully funded with grants and contributions.

STAFF RECOMMENDATION

Staff recommends approval of the Mural

ACTIONS, OPTIONS & POTENTIAL MOTIONS

I move to approve the installation of the proposed public art installation at Ashland Highschool

REFERENCES & ATTACHMENTS

- Truth to Power PPT presentation

AHS Land Acknowledgement Project: Otterlifter Canoe Installation

City of Ashland Public Arts Commission
March 18th, 2022

Short Description

Ashland High School will install a donated canoe as a land acknowledgement to honor the gift our school has been given; to recognize the history of violence and dispossession experienced by Native people of our region; to communicate respect to our Native students; and to promote decolonization of land, lifeways, and education.

Action Requests

The AHS EDI Committee requests the approval of Public Arts Commission to present the installation to City Council for final approval.

Next Steps If Approved

If approved by the Public Arts Commission, the project will be presented at the soonest possible City Council meeting.

If we are able to maintain the process timeline projections, the installation will be completed by September 2022.

In the event that construction at AHS requires it, the canoe will be temporarily relocated until installed.

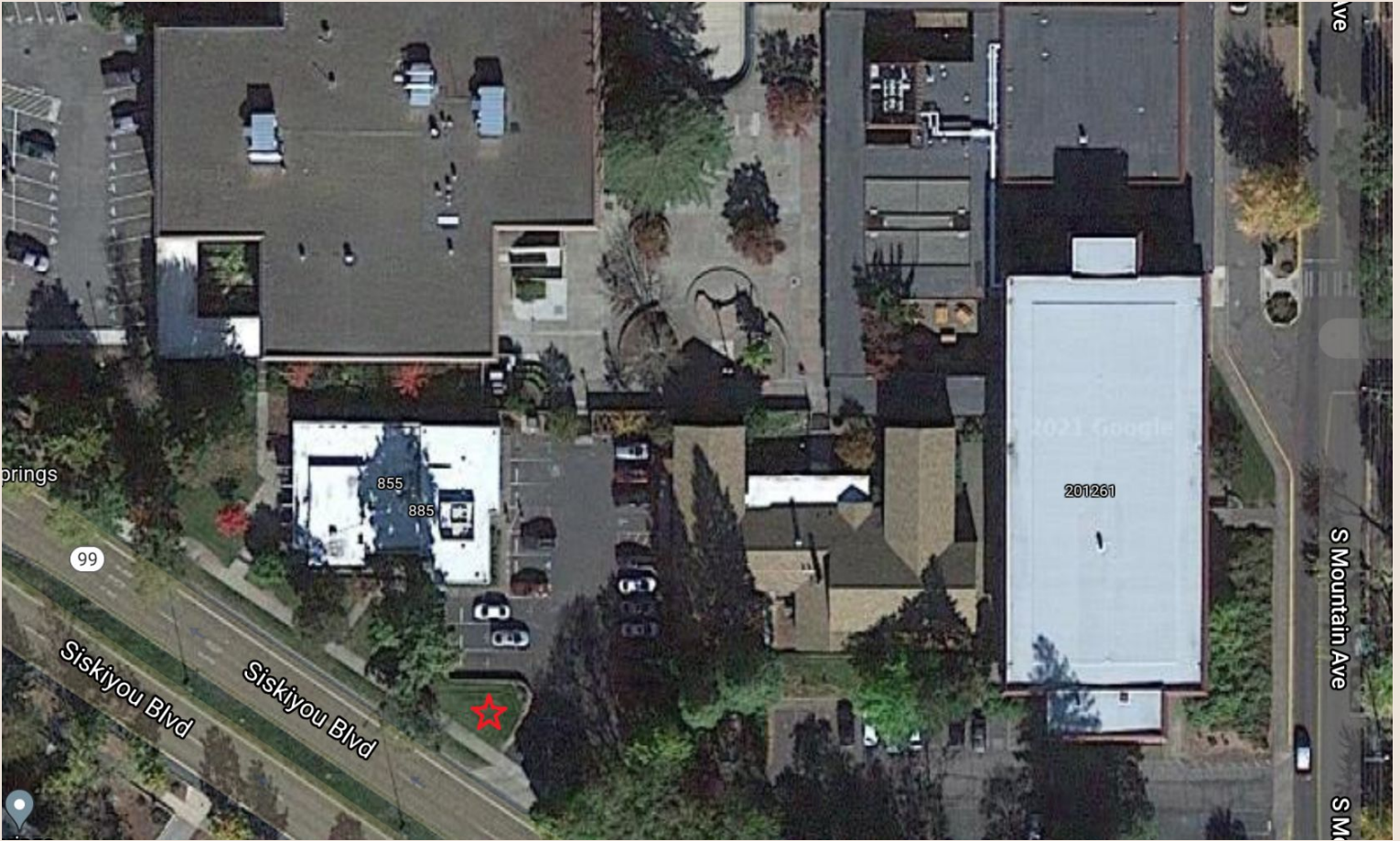
Background and Motivations



Statement of Need

- A symbolic reminder to improve our ecological behaviors and mitigate climate crisis
- Gathering point to educate students in history, empathy, ecology, and activism
- A highly visible iteration of truth-telling to address historic and ongoing oppression and pursue healing
- A commitment to the inclusion and success of our Native students, and to honor a diversity of lifeways and knowledges

Vision and Logistics



Ave

S Mountain Ave

S M

201261

855

885

99

Siskiyou Blvd

Siskiyou Blvd

prings

2021 Google



sketch/rendering!

The canoe will be surrounded by:

- Native plants and medicines
- River rocks
- 4 interpretive signs with:
 - A land recognition; background on the canoe; information on the Indigenous people of this region
 - The same text in Spanish with a QR code to an audio recording in English, Spanish, and Takelma
 - Excerpts of the same text in Takelma/Chinuk Wawa/other relevant Athabaskan language

The design will resemble the canoe in use in a flowing river, once the plants grow high enough.

sketch/rendering!

plant images



Native plant garden details

Surrounding the canoe will be a garden of drought tolerant and culturally significant native plants. To contribute to the aesthetic of design, we have selected plants which will simulate water in color and/or shape.

We are collaborating with local permaculturists and gardeners for guidance, starts, and resources.

We intend to have at least one community event to prepare and plant during the early summer.

The garden will require watering and maintenance throughout its first year, but will eventually be self-sufficient with occasional maintenance.

These plants include:

- **Camas**
- **Lupine**
- **Rosemary**
- **Vitex/Chaste Tree**
- **Garden Sage**
- **Mugwort**
- **Clary Sage**
- **Hyssop**
- **Lavender**
- **Wormwood**
- **Bleeding heart**
- **Ajuga**
- **Self-heal**

Collaboration with stakeholders

- Grand Ronde
- Siletz
- Cow Creek Umpqua
- Shasta
- Modoc
- Klamath
- AHS NASU
- AMS NASU
- SOESD Indian Education
- SOU Native Studies
- Native community leaders

To prevent unwanted attention and vandalism, we are considering the following measures...

- Angling the canoe
- Highly visible location
- Plants, rocks, and interpretive signs to create boundary
- Additional signage
- Anti-graffiti coating
- Solar floodlight
- “Tag this instead” board
- Surveillance cameras and signs
- Fencing (must be minimal to prevent “cage” or “museum” effect)

	Item	Approx cost	Notes
Structural installation of canoe	Materials: cement; steel	\$850	
	Labor	Donated - \$0	Includes licensed & bonded contractor (fees included in materials estimate); community volunteers and ASD staff & students
	Additional decorative accents - student art	\$500	
Garden	Native plant starts from local permaculturists	\$100	Approx. \$300 value donated
	Soil	\$300	
	River rock	\$300	About 2 cu. yds.
	Labor	Donated - \$0	Community volunteers and ASD staff & students; Student affinity groups
	Interpretive signs	\$300	
Protective measures	Anti-graffiti sealant	\$100	Leftover from TTP mural
	Solar floodlight	\$125	
	Additional protective measures	\$500	

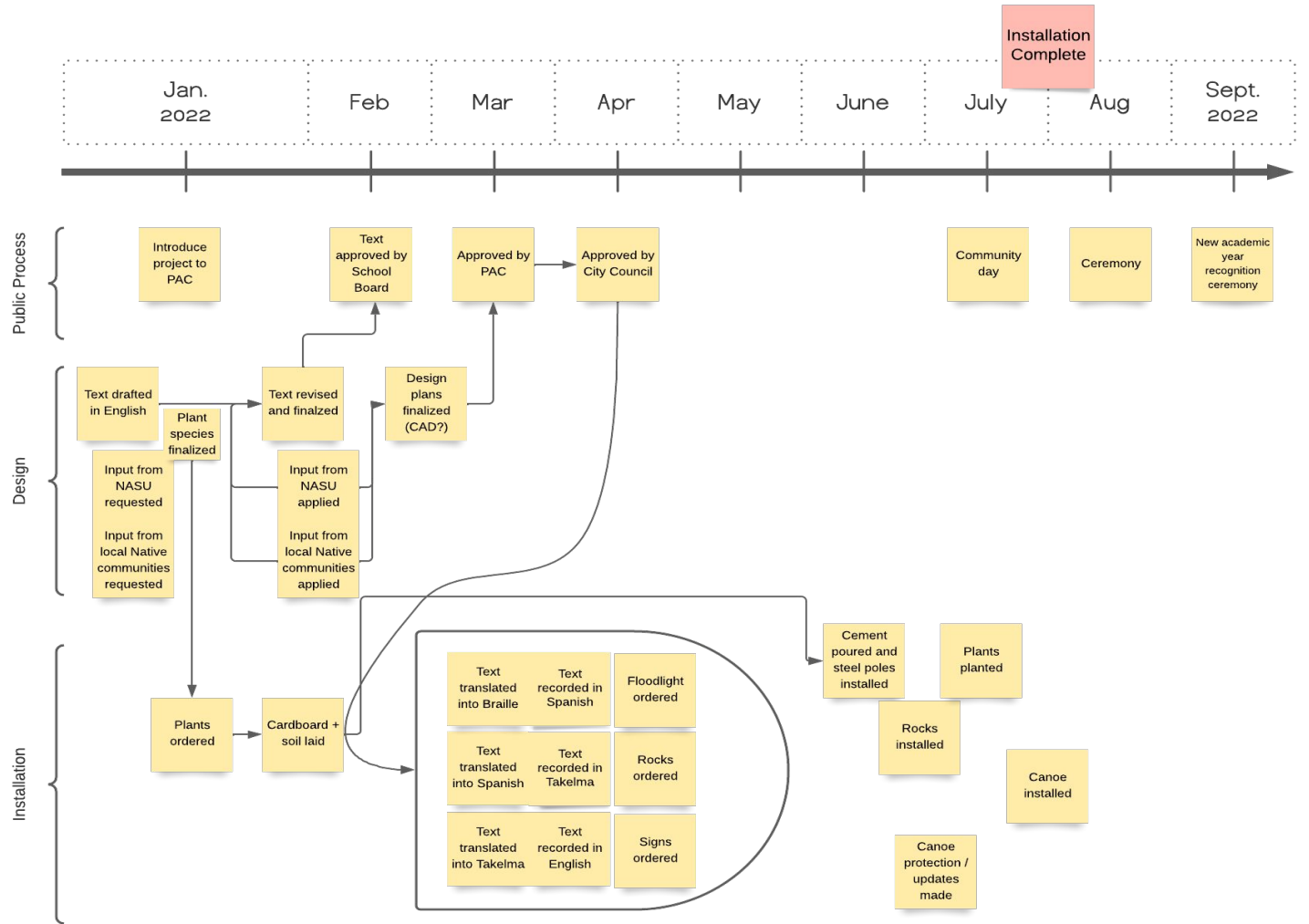
Total projected expenses

\$3100

Funding sources:

- Rotary grant - NASU component
- Private donations to EDI Committee
- Discretionary funding from AHS and ASD budgets
- Budget line from AHS/ASD??

Timeline



Timeline

- March 2022:
 - Seek PAC approval
 - Consult with stakeholders
 - Begin landscaping (cardboard, soil, groundcover)
- April, May, June 2022:
 - Seek City approval
 - Consult with stakeholders
 - Acquisition and production
- June & July 2022:
 - Install rocks, garden, concrete, posts, signs
 - Community day
 - Install canoe
- August 2022: Ceremony
- September 2022: AHS Ceremony

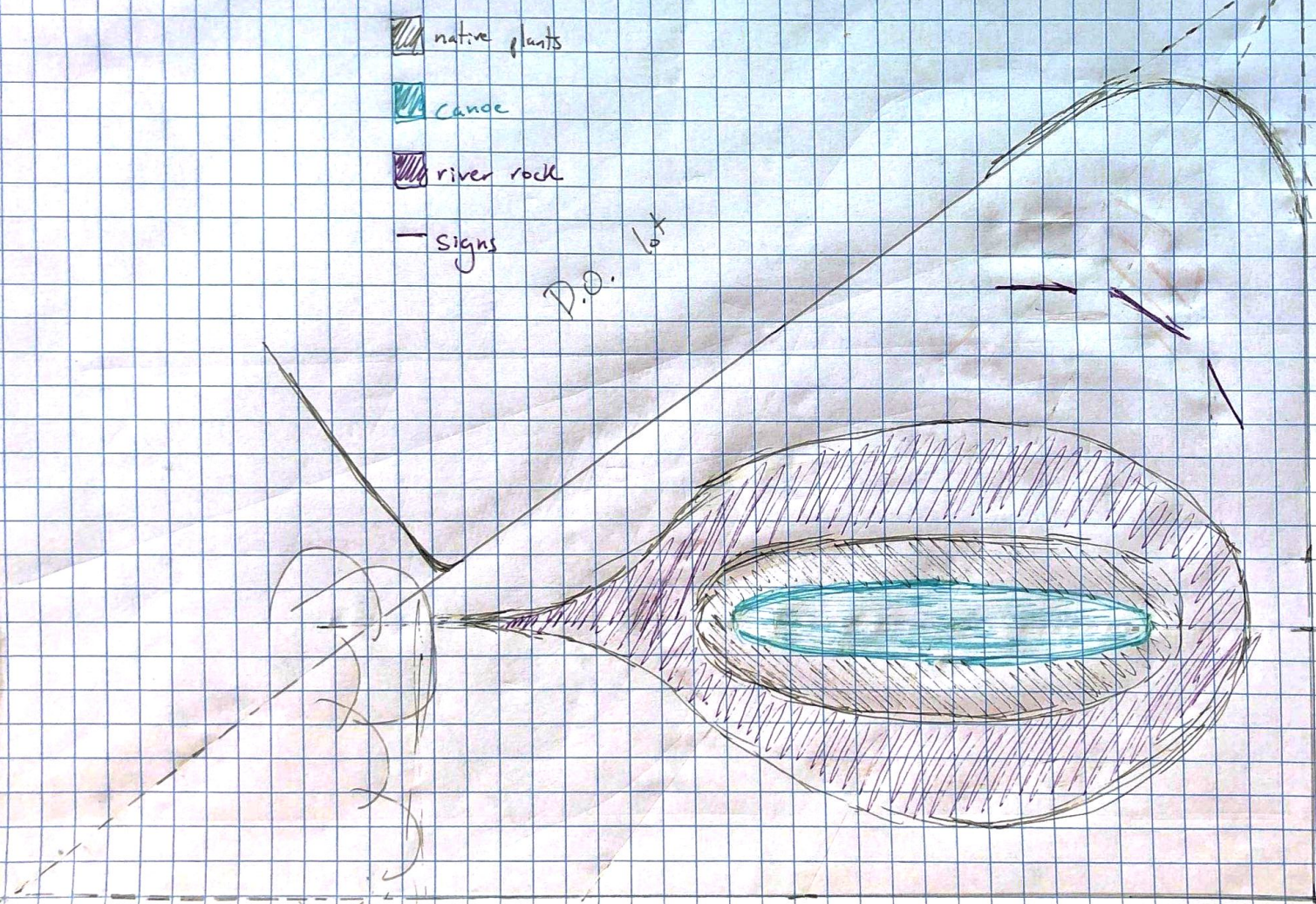
native plants

canoe

river rock

signs

D.O. 10x



SISKIYOU