

Maurie Jacobs Park construction moving along

By Pat Malach
Emerald Associate Editor

Construction on the first phase of a three-year plan for the Maurie Jacobs Park is under way.

The park, which is named after Eugene business man Maurie Jacobs, is located along the south bank of the Willamette River at the north end of Adams Street near the Owens Rose Garden.

Parks Planner John Etter said the first phase of the project is about half finished. He said the rest of the park plans include constructing an 80-car parking lot on River Road near the Fir Lane soccer field, making landscaping improvements around the community gardens, constructing a grassy beach access, adding some picnic tables and paving the north end of Polk Street.

"By that time we should have used up all of the funds," Etter said.

The total cost for all phases of the project is estimated at \$630,000. So far \$430,000 has been raised through private donations and state funding from the state parks budget. Etter said about one-third of the money has come from local businesses and friends of Jacobs.

Although everything has been going as planned there have been some complaints raised by neighbors who want to see the land that the park will sit on left as it is.

"It is not a neighborhood park," said Eugene City Councilwoman, Ruth Bascom. "It is a city park for use by everyone. We did work with neighborhood groups to hear their concerns. But, it is not a neighborhood park for them to say to leave it the way it is."

Bascom said part of the controversy stems from the belief that the park is planned to be a large memorial to Jacobs. "The park is furthering the Willamette Greenway and honoring one of the principal pushers for that," she added.

Jacobs was instrumental in persuading private parties to donate the land along the Willamette to the city of Eugene or Lane County, Bascom said. He also worked with Alton Baker to gain access to



Photo by Brett Matthews

Work has begun on Maurie Jacobs Park, dedicated to the memory of the late Eugene businessman, on the Willamette River near the rose gardens in northeast Eugene.

the park lands which bears Baker's name. "Without his efforts there would be no public land along the river, it would all be private.

"He twisted arms, raised money and got owners to believe the land should be public property," Bascom said. "He never did it for his own good but out of concern for the public interest."

"Rather than have one memorial, Maurie would rather see continued park development," Etter said.

He added that the memorial portion of the park used only one-sixth of the projects budget.

The small promontory, which will cost \$68,121, overlooks the river and is intended to be an intimate space, Etter said. "If you had six people out there you would feel crowded."

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