

City Council Statement Regarding "Piping the Ashland Canal"
September 3, 2019 Business Meeting

Dozens of Ashlanders have talked to me about their concern of piping the Ashland Canal. We've read the staff reports and heard the council on the matter, but nowhere do we see anyone addressing "worst case scenarios" as the canal moves towards being piped. We'd like to know whether the following concerns have been thoroughly investigated by staff as part of their study.

1. Where is a detailed account of costs and plans for storm drain and potential debris flow mitigation that comes with piping?
2. How do staff Justify the cost of piping a canal when the city is struggling to balance its budget in order to keep utility rates from continually rising?
3. How can staff be certain that E coli doesn't live in the new pipes when studies show that it does and will?
4. What is the detailed maintenance plan for the canal because lack of maintenance is what got us here in the first place?
5. What is the cost cap for this project?
6. How can the cost of destroying at least one hundred trees and other eco-systems along the canal be justified for this project? What is the guarantee that they can be replaced?
7. What is the comparison of seismic risk between an open canal and a piped one – or what is the liquefaction susceptibility of the alternatives?

These are serious questions with consequences and cost/benefit budgetary concerns that must be addressed by the council and staff before a vote this evening.

The staff opinion is that the opposition to the canal is simply a NIMBY problem, but the neighborhood of concerned citizens reaches from Oak Knoll to Ashland Mine Road as well as along the canal. The entire length of our town has citizens who want a "no" vote on piping the canal.

When deliberating keep in mind these questions that have yet to be answered. Also realize that the Atkins Engineering report clearly states that foundations for decks close to the canal are in jeopardy and would need support footing (21) and new retaining walls with drains are essential (36) and expensive. This means citizen's property will be disturbed significantly and here in lies the possibility of lawsuits. This can't be overlooked.

Do the right thing and get answers to these questions and concerns before going forward.

Dr. Carol Voisin
Ashland