

## MINUTES FOR THE CONSERVATION COMMISSION

Wednesday, April 24, 2019  
Siskiyou Room, 51 Winburn Way

### 1. Call to Order

The April meeting of the Conservation Commission was called to order at 6:00 p.m. by Vice Chair Roxane Beigel-Coryell. Commissioners Risa Buck, Larry Cooper, Marion Moore, Jamie Rosenthal, Bryan Sohl were present. Commissioners Marni Koopman, James McGinnis, and David Sommer were absent for the beginning of the meeting. Staff members Stu Green, Julie Smitherman, and Kevin Caldwell were present. Councilor Julie Akins and staff member Adam Hanks were absent.

As this was Cooper's first meeting since being appointed, each Commissioner and staff introduced themselves.

### 2. Consent Agenda

#### 2.1. March 27, 2019 Meeting Minutes

Beigel-Coryell asked for any corrections on the March 27, 2019 meeting minutes. Buck moved to approve the minutes as written with Moore providing a second. After no discussion Beigel-Coryell called for a vote. Cooper abstained from voting as he was absent from the previous meeting. All other present members voted in favor of approving the minutes and the motion passed.

### 3. Announcements

#### 3.1. Next Regular Meeting: May 22, 2019

Beigel-Coryell announced that the next meeting will be held on May 22, 2019 and asked the Commission to let the Chair and staff know if anyone would be absent. Sohl and Green stated that they will not be able to attend the next meeting. Rosenthal might be absent for the next meeting as well.

#### 3.2. Upcoming Sub-committee meetings

No Sub-committee meetings are currently scheduled.

#### 3.3. Other Announcements from Commissioners

Sohl announced that he will have to leave the meeting early. Cooper brought up that as the City is in the middle of the budget process it is important for all to read and engage in the budget document and budget message. Rosenthal reminded the Commission of the Annual Household Hazardous Waste Event on Saturday, May 4 from 8 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. at the White City Transfer Station. On the same day at the Valley View Transfer Station, the Annual Firewise event is being held. Residents of Ashland (ID needed) can bring debris that can be ignited to drop off. Rogue Valley Bird Day will be held on Saturday, May 11 from 8 a.m. to 12 p.m. at North Mountain Park. The theme of Bird Day is "protect birds: be the solution to the plastic pollution".

Green announced that May is Bike month. He is also encouraging Ashland residents to fill out the Home Energy Audit Tool, which can be found at [ashland.eeaudit.com](http://ashland.eeaudit.com). The tool takes around five minutes to complete, gives residents recommendations on upgrades, and helps with the City's inventory.

### 4. Public Forum

There was no public input.

### 5. Reports/Presentations

#### 5.1. Ashland Canal Project– Julie Smitherman

Smitherman gave a presentation on the Ashland Canal Project with assistance from Caldwell. See attached presentation slides. Discussion that stemmed from the presentation included:

- Right water, right use – with water savings the City can have the water run to more homes for irrigation versus having to use potable water as currently done;

- City efforts to work with homeowners along the ditch during construction and after to help reduce the loss of trees;
- Grants applicable for this project, both federal and state, and how other Oregon jurisdictions have received funding for similar projects;
- Closure of trail near Weller Lane as there is no trail easement there. Other locations along the trail will stay open as the Parks and Recreation Commission has trail easements for most of the trail;
- Water rights as some water from the Talent Irrigation District (TID) comes from the Klamath Basin which could mean that less water is given to TID. Smitherman emphasized the need for conservation if less water running is in the canal. Sohl also commented that the contested water rights of the Klamath Basin are more focused on the irrigators in the Klamath Basin as they use more water from the Basin than TID does;
- Impact of those areas that are currently piped and how that would help show a comparison to those proposed to be piped.
- Climate change also reducing the amount of water and the importance of conservation. Smitherman agreed and informed the Commission that during the 2014 and 2015 drought the TID water was shut off two weeks early. The City could have requested for it to stay on longer and could do that in the future if needed.
- The backup of water supply to the City if snowpack is reduced and the reservoir is not filled.

Additional materials for the Ashland Canal Project can be found at [ashland.or.us/ashlandcanal](http://ashland.or.us/ashlandcanal).

## 6. Old Business

### 6.1. Ashland Canal Project Letter review and approval

Sohl had drafted a letter for the Commission to review and send to Council as a recommendation on the project. Sohl wrote the letter without a stance on which alternative to support, but requested that if the Commission agreed to include support for Alternative #1: Replace the entire canal with a new 24” pipe it could be included in the letter. After some discussion from the Commission, all were in agreement and Cooper added to include a piece about asking the Council to pursue grants to help fund the project to help with some financial burden to the citizens. Sohl moved to approve the letter with the additions of adding a statement of support for Alternative #1 which can be fiscally responsible if the City pursues grants for this project. Buck provided a second for the motion. After some discussion, a vote was taken with all members in favor. Beigel-Coryell will work with staff and Chair McGinnis to get the letter ready for submittal into the Council packet for consideration. Sohl also plans to personally write a letter to the local newspapers in support of Alternative #1. The Commission thanked Smitherman and Caldwell for their hard work on this project.

### 6.2. Commission Monthly Column in Sneak Preview

- June – Water Conservation/Supply (Water Sub-committee and Smitherman – April 15)
- July – Paper Reduction Use (Moore – May 13)
- August – Virtual Net Metering (Green/Beigel-Coryell – June 17)
- September – Climate Equity (Koopman/co-author from community – July 15)
- October – CPAC Joint Commission article (McGinnis/CPAC members – August 19)
- November – Leaves and Composting Options (Rosenthal – September 16)
- TBD – Pilot program for Straws on Demand, Juicebox Electric Car Charger, and addressing consumption emissions articles.

Beigel-Coryell introduced that Smitherman wrote an article titled “Train Your Landscape to be Water Wise” for the June Sneak Preview publication and asked if the Commission had any comments or changes. After some discussion, Buck moved to approve the article with Cooper seconding the motion. A vote was taken with all members in favor and the motion passed.

### 6.3. CEAP Outreach & Marketing Discussion

- *Empower Ashland (Draft)*

Green introduced the Empower Ashland outreach plan which was conceived by the Climate and Energy Action Plan Implementation Committee (CEAP 2.0) after the Climate and Energy Action Plan (CEAP) called for creating a public outreach plan. Green was hopeful that there would be funding to implement the marketing plan, but now he is hoping the Commission and a hiring of an AMERICORP volunteer for eleven months will be able to implement this plan.

The first goal of the plan is to education residents that about the CEAP, encourage them to read it, and take some type of action listed in the plan. The City's role would be to help with carbon calculations and taking an inventory of greenhouse gases within City limits. Five target audiences were introduced: (1) Local Contractors, (2) Ashland Youth, (3) Surrounding Car Dealerships, (4) Owners of Buildings (both residential and commercial), and (5) Campaign Stakeholders. Objectives of the plan included creating a branded online presence, using print and online media, and facilitating of public events. Actions to achieve these objectives include: creating an Empower Ashland website and social media campaign, sending a postcard or mailer to all Ashland households, writing an educational correspondence, identifying community stories of local climate action, writing an article series about climate action, presenting to the public and campaign stakeholders about CEAP, and facilitating meetings with groups already taking climate action.

- *Discussion/ next steps*

Green asked the Commission what they would like to take on from Empower Ashland.

*Sommer arrived at 7:21 p.m.*

Beigel-Coryell asked to continue this discussion to the next meeting when the goals discussion will occur. She also mentioned that the Sub-committee proposed by Moore could take on some of these tasks of the plan. Moore asked for clarification on what items the Commission versus the Sub-committee would handle. She emphasized that the Empower Ashland outreach should be discussed as a primary goal of the full Commission. Cooper was interested in joining this new Sub-committee with Moore. Buck asked if the goal setting should be held off until after the new Climate Commission is created and the amendment to the Conservation Commission's charge goes into effect. Green stated that he would ask for help with the Empower Ashland plan regardless of the outcome of Council's decision on the new Climate Commission and the amendment to the Conservation Commission. It was in agreement to continue this conversation under the goal setting to the next meeting. Staff will resend out the Empower Ashland questions and Green will connect with the new Sub-committee about the plan.

*Sohl left at 7:35 p.m.*

Cooper asked if Commissioners who anticipate being absent could call into the meeting. Green will check with the Legal Department to see if there are any issues with quorum and voting via phone.

### 6.4. Sub-committee updates

- *Water*

Buck met with Smitherman and Ciara Marshall, Water Resources Technician, and stated that there will be a laundry to landscape workshop in late summer.

- *Waste Prevention*

Beigel-Coryell announced that there are now four people on the Sub-committee which is the maximum allowed. They are planning on dividing tasks. Koopman and Rosenthal are working on the Straws on Demand program expansion and Beigel-Coryell and Buck will be working on the reusable take out boxes program. Multiple downtown businesses are participating in the recycling baskets and the Sub-committee is looking at expanding it further. Beigel-Coryell will get a map or address list to Green of current trash cans without one.

Green mentioned working with a representative from GoBox for a low tech proposal for the reusable to go boxes. The low tech proposal would include tokens instead of a smartphone app for exchanging the boxes. GoBox will be sending some tokens and a proposal in the mail to Green.

- *Air Quality*

The Sub-committee has not met from last meeting, but Sommer updated that Ashland School District has purchased more equipment for the maintenance department.

*6.5. Plastic Wrapped Marketing Papers Discussion*

Beigel-Coryell asked to continue this item to the May meeting as Hanks was absent and not able to give an update on the City's contact with Rosebud Media.

**7. New Business**

None

**8. Wrap Up**

*8.1. Items to be added to next agenda*

- *BPA Update - Adam*
- *Public Meeting Law - Adam/Risa*
- *City Operations/Administration update – Adam/Stu*
- *Council update*
- *Goal Setting discussion - 2019-2020 - James*
- *Laurel Street Cottages Net Zero Presentation – Mark Knox*

Beigel-Coryell asked if there were additional items not listed or discussed to be added to the list. No Commissioners had additions. Green had one update that the American Association for Advancement of Science Pacific Division is holding a meeting in Ashland on June 18. It will continue to June 21 or 22 as a sustainable event. Green will send Commissioners information if they would like to attend. Beigel-Coryell adjourned the meeting at 7:50 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,  
Elizabeth Taylor,  
Executive Assistant

**Action Items:**

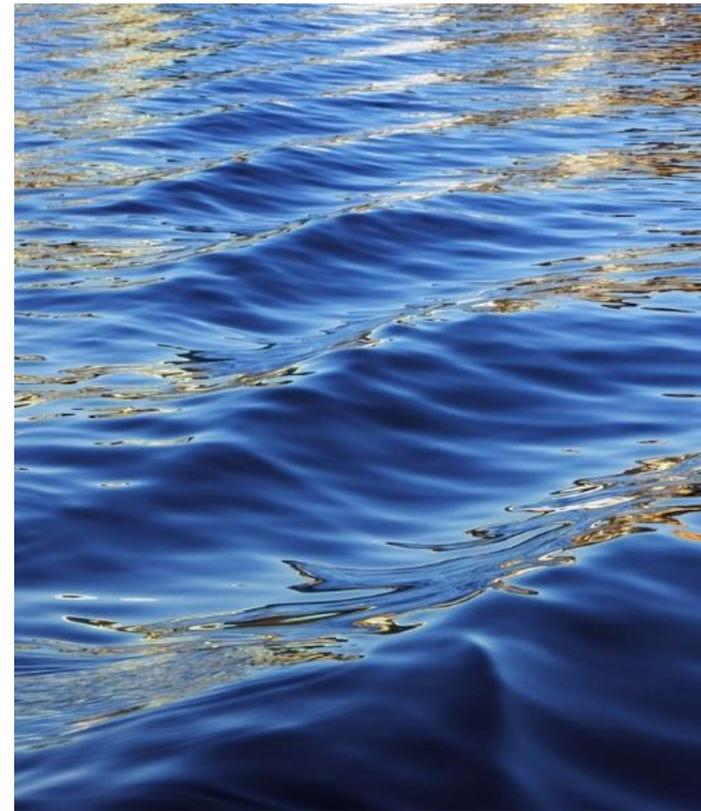
- Beigel-Coryell will work with staff and Chair McGinnis to get the Ashland Canal letter ready for submittal into the Council packet for consideration.
- Staff will resend out the Empower Ashland questions and Green will connect with the new Sub-committee about the plan.
- Green will check with the Legal Department to see if there are any issues with quorum and voting via phone.
- Beigel-Coryell will get a map or address list to Green of current downtown trash cans.
- Green will send Commissioners information if they would like to attend the American Association for Advancement of Science Pacific Division's meeting in Ashland for June.



## Ashland Canal Piping Project

### *Community Meeting*

January 31, 2019



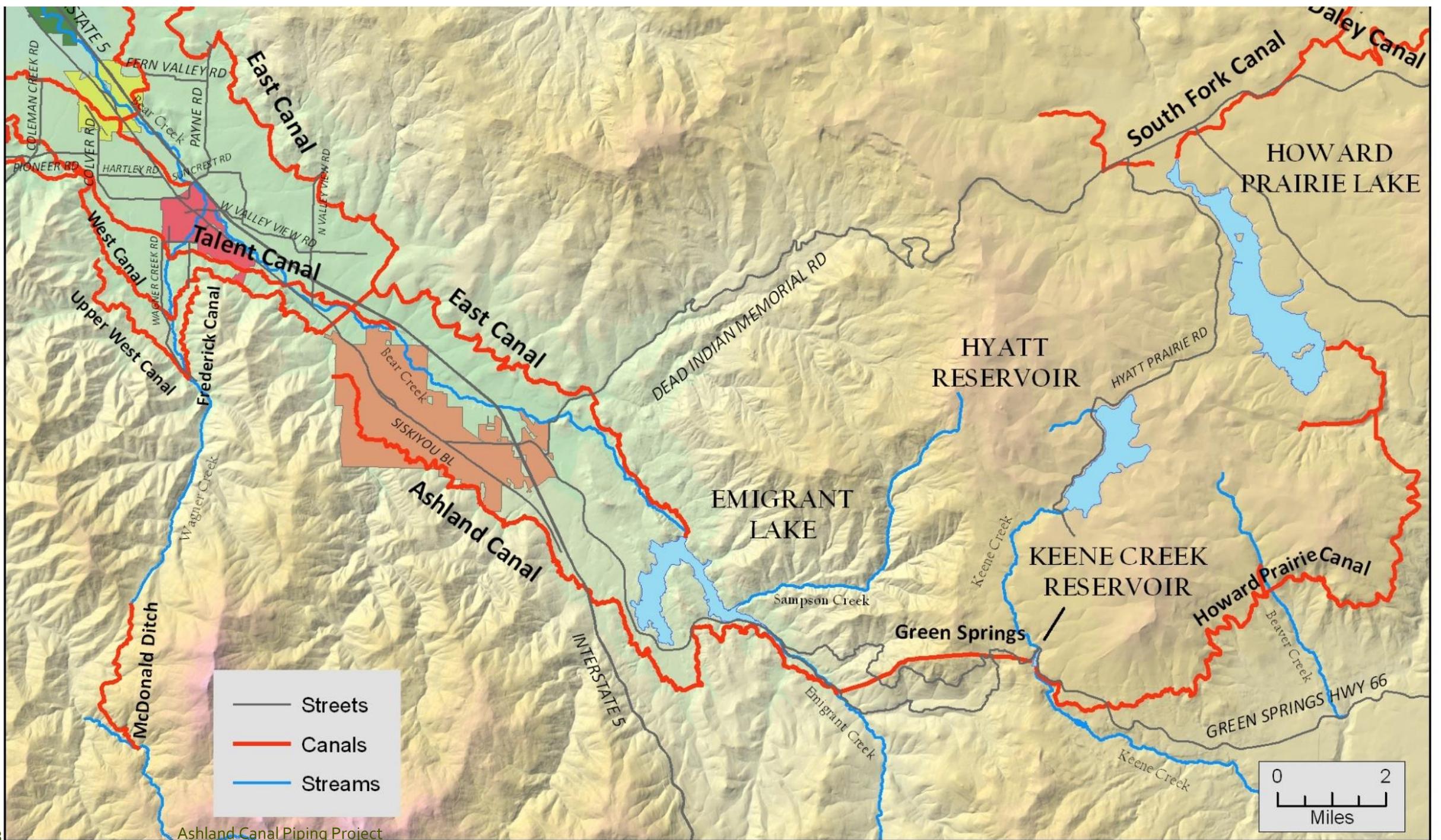
# PROJECT PURPOSE & BENEFITS

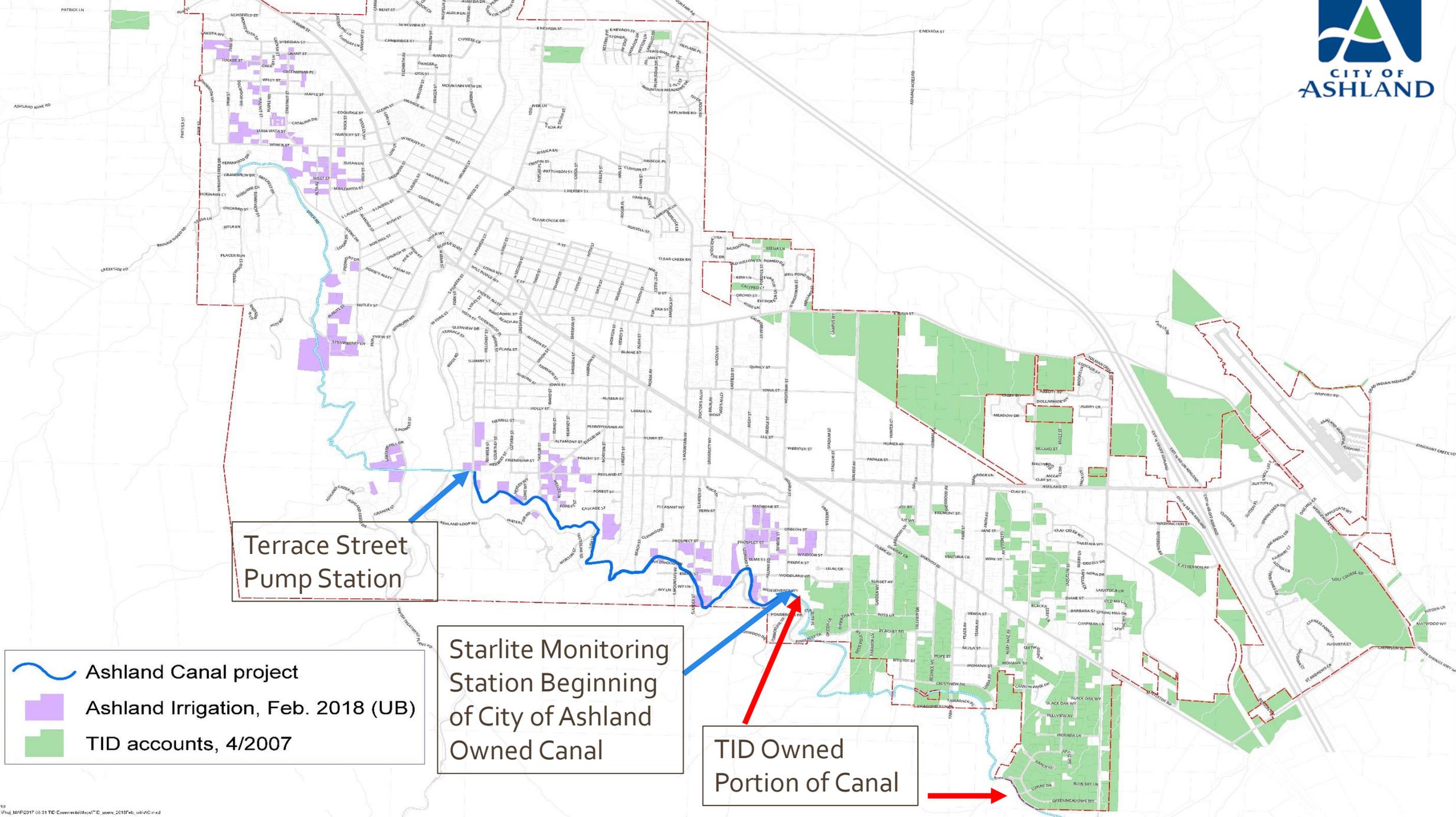
## Purpose:

- Replace 10,700 feet of open-channel irrigation canal from Starlite Place to Terrace Street with below-ground pipe(s) to improve the water quality in Ashland Creek and to assist the City's goal for overall water conservation.

## Benefits:

- Minimize water pollution and health risks in Ashland Creek
- Reduce water loss due to seepage and evaporation
- Maximize water resource – *Right Water Right Use*
- Protect drinking water resources



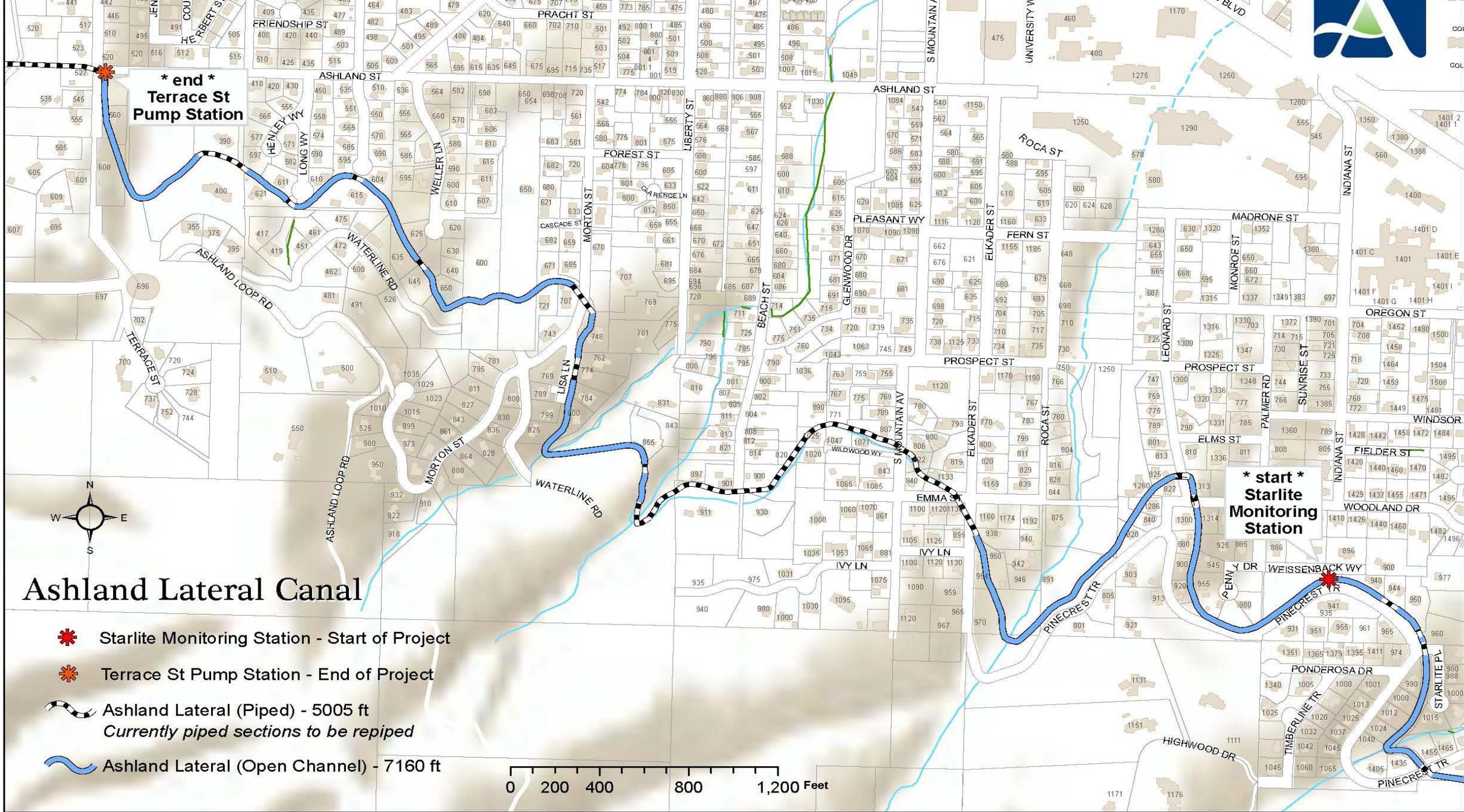


Terrace Street  
Pump Station

Starlite Monitoring  
Station Beginning  
of City of Ashland  
Owned Canal

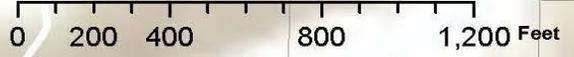
TID Owned  
Portion of Canal

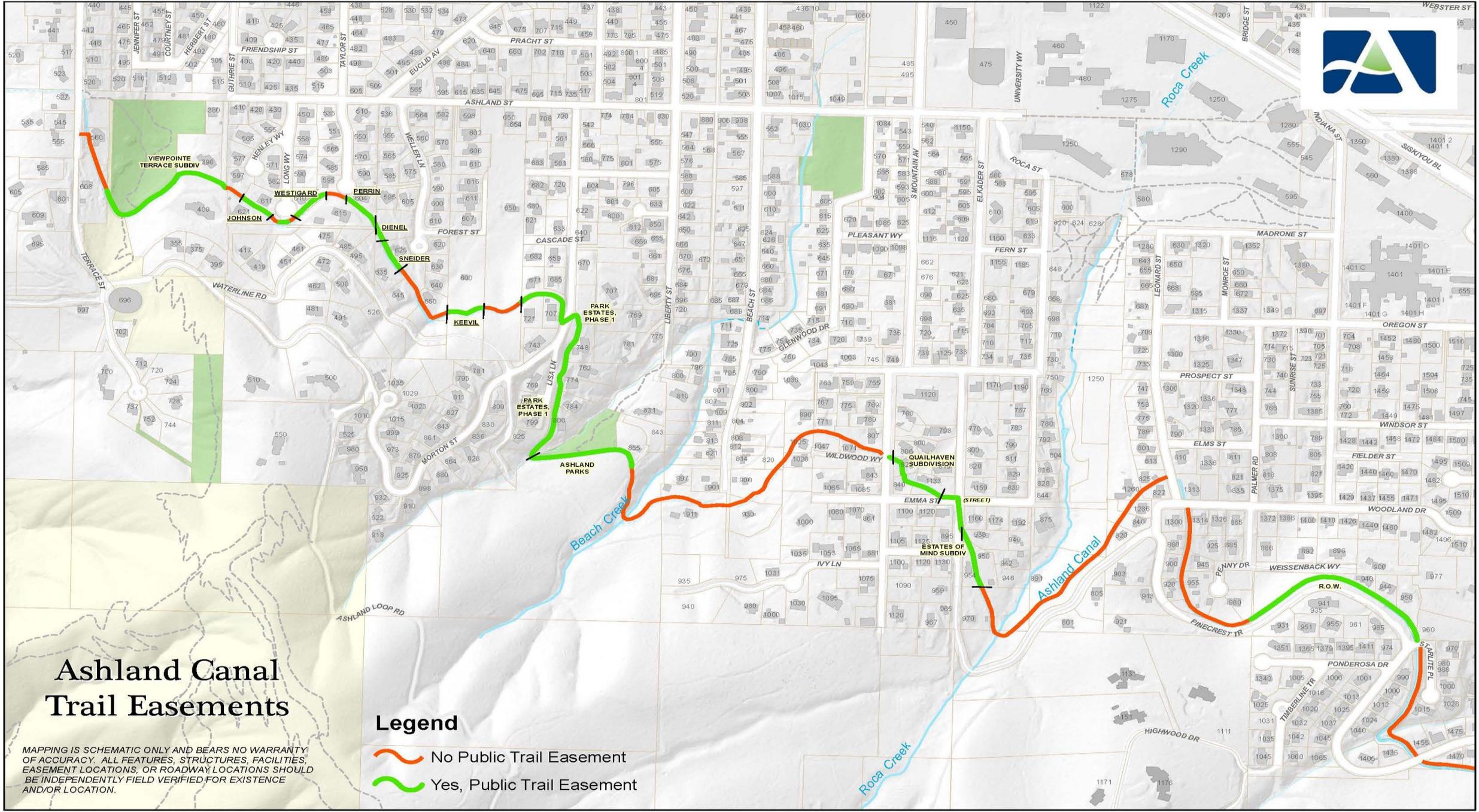
-  Ashland Canal project
-  Ashland Irrigation, Feb. 2018 (UB)
-  TID accounts, 4/2007



# Ashland Lateral Canal

-  Starlite Monitoring Station - Start of Project
-  Terrace St Pump Station - End of Project
-  Ashland Lateral (Piped) - 5005 ft  
*Currently piped sections to be repiped*
-  Ashland Lateral (Open Channel) - 7160 ft





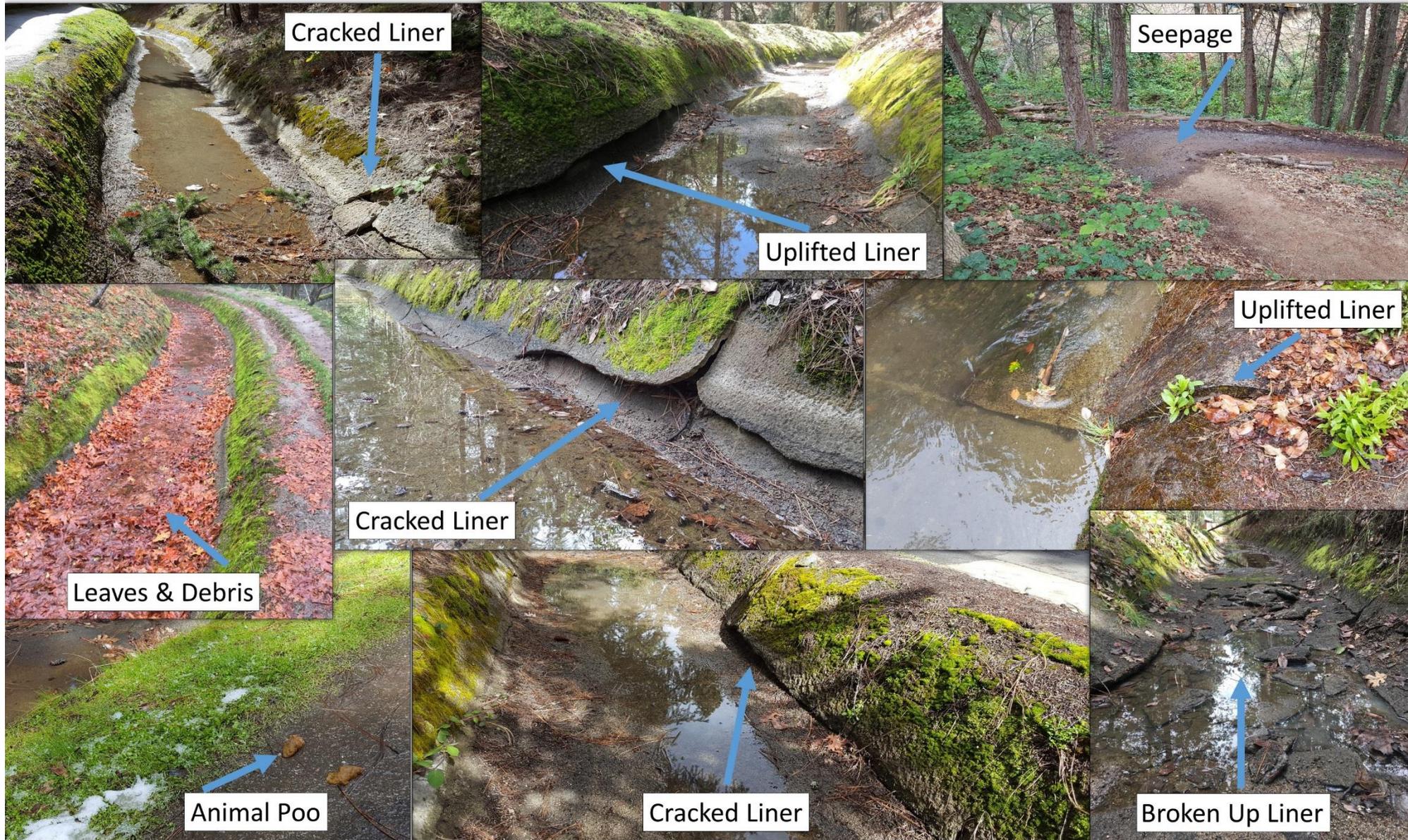
# Ashland Canal Trail Easements

## Legend

-  No Public Trail Easement
-  Yes, Public Trail Easement

MAPPING IS SCHEMATIC ONLY AND BEARS NO WARRANTY OF ACCURACY. ALL FEATURES, STRUCTURES, FACILITIES, EASEMENT LOCATIONS, OR ROADWAY LOCATIONS SHOULD BE INDEPENDENTLY FIELD VERIFIED FOR EXISTENCE AND/OR LOCATION.

# Ashland Canal Maintenance Issues



# ARTISTIC REPRESENTATION OF COMPLETED PROJECT



Artistic Representation of Completed Ashland Canal Piping Project (ACPP)

# WORK COMPLETED

## *Public Outreach*



- Neighborhood Meeting
  - March 6, 2018
- Neighborhood “Backyard Visits”
  - 20 on-site interviews
- Community Meetings
  - April 18, 2018
  - January 31, 2019
- Parks Master Plan Open House
  - May 2, 2019
- Canal Tour (ACAG and staff)
  - November 13, 2018
- Ashland Canal Advisory Group
  - April 2, 2018
  - October 9, 2018
  - December 20, 2018
- City Source Articles
- TV & Radio Interviews
- Project website
- Email notification list (70 citizens)
- Meetings, emails and phone communications with community members



# FEEDBACK & INPUT

- Impacts on vegetation
- Aesthetics of water “feature”
- Not a community priority
- Impacts on wildlife
- Homeowner access during construction
- Water efficiency / quality
- Disturbance and removal of homeowner bridges, fencing, rocks, driveways, etc.
- Project costs
- Trail Access
- Drainage
- Wildfire
- Privacy
- Property Values



# ASHLAND CANAL ADVISORY GROUP

## Members

- Ashland Water Advisory Committee
- Tree Commission
- Conservation Commission
- Historic Commission
- Homeowners along the canal
- Community members
- Ashland Trails Association

### Additional Consultants

- WISE project representatives
- Siskiyou Bio Survey
- SOU Biology
- City of Ashland Fire
- Parks Department
- GIS Department

# PROJECT WORK COMPLETED



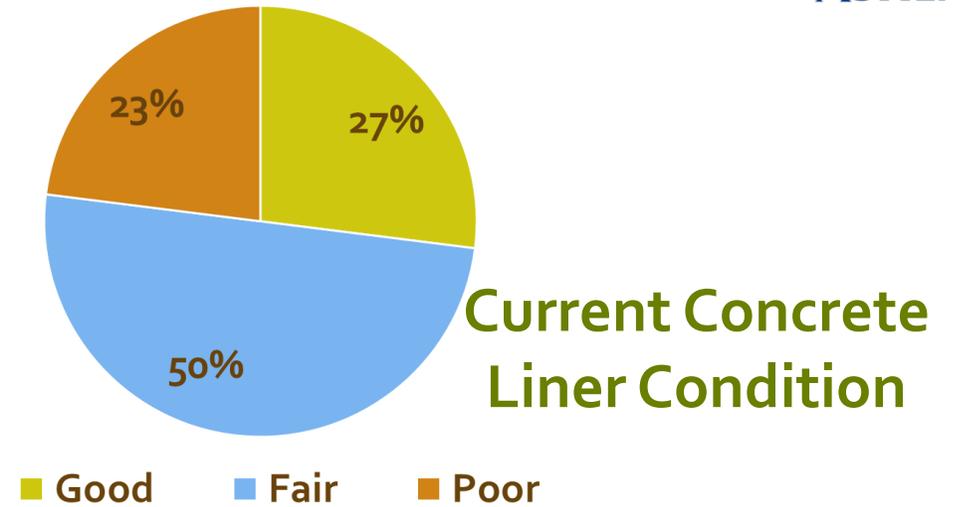
- Preliminary engineering phase (survey and field work)
- Hydraulic Analysis
- Water Quality Testing
- Natural Resource Analysis
  - Wildlife
  - Wildfire
  - Vegetation
- Water Loss Study
- Alternatives Analysis
- Southern Oregon University Biology Analysis



# WATER LOSS/SEEPAGE STUDY

## Methodology – Ponding test

- Measures how fast water seeps from the canal into the ground.
- Three ponding tests were conducted between Starlite Place and Elkader Street.
  - 100 foot section of canal tested in each of the three rated canal conditions



## Results

- Total flow rate loss during an irrigation season is estimated to be 23%.
  - 21% seepage; 2% evaporation
  - Does not include transpiration
- Equivalent to 190 acre feet or 61,911,690 gallons per season (or 62 million).



# E. COLI BACTERIA STUDIES

## Water Sampling Sites

Starlite Place Monitoring Station



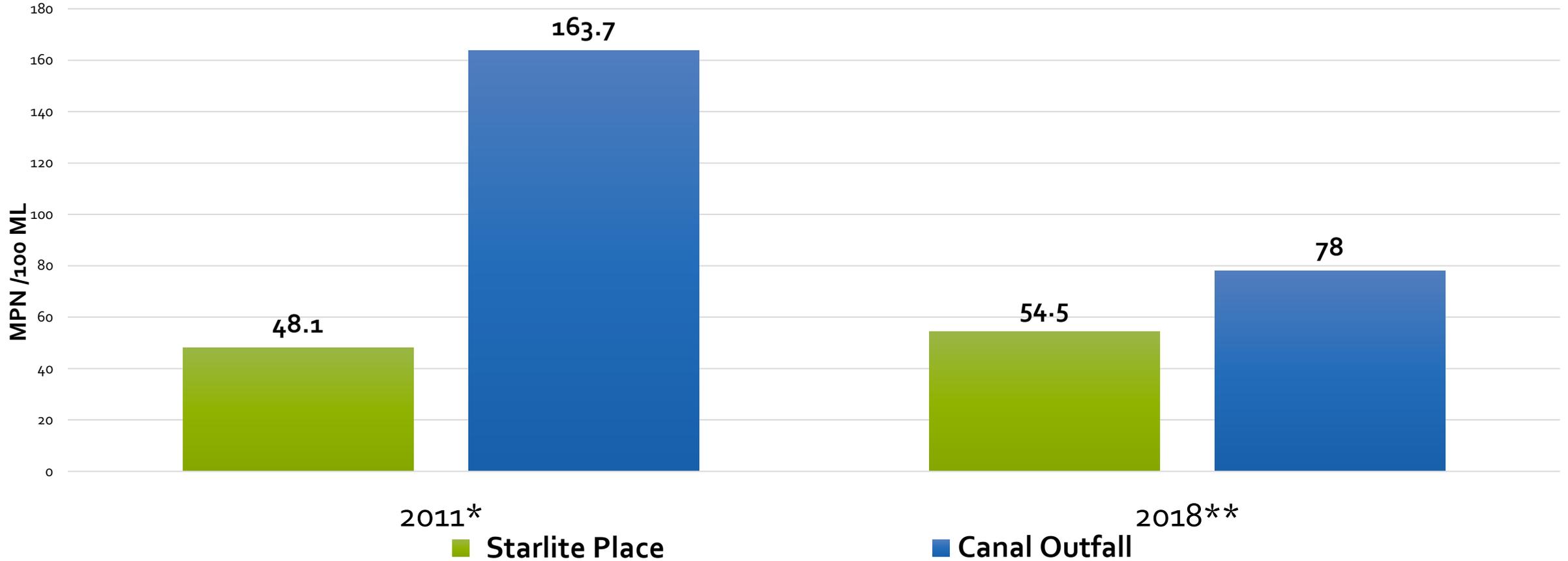
Ashland Creek – Ashland Canal Outfall



# E. COLI BACTERIA STUDIES



## Ashland Canal E. Coli Bacteria Comparison



All figures are geometric mean. All units are MPN/100 ML  
\*2011 data from Rogue Riverkeeper Ashland Creek Bacteria Study (62 samples taken)  
\*\*2018 data from City of Ashland and RVCOG (30 Samples taken)

# NATURAL RESOURCES

## Wildlife – SOU Biology

- Evaluate wildlife use and impacts from piping
- The canal does not function as a riparian corridor for wildlife.
- Wildlife shift to alternate water sources during the irrigation “off season.”
- Attractive Nuisance

## Fire

- The piped canal corridor can be used as an improved fuel break to increase wildfire resilience.
- Allows better access if there were a fire in the area



# NATURAL RESOURCES

## Ecological Analysis – Siskiyou Bio Survey

- Evaluate risks to existing vegetation
- Identify mature trees at risk from piping
- Propose mitigation measures and recommendations

## Findings

- Seepage has created an unnatural environment
- Douglas Firs are less resilient than pines and hardwoods
- Trees below the canal are larger than others in the watershed



# VEGETATION SURVEY RESULTS



Decades of water seepage has significantly altered the habitat around the canal creating an unusual abundance of large Douglas Firs. It is uncommon to find trees of these sizes upslope of the canal.



Large numbers of specimen trees occur near the canal. The quantities of large sizes are unusual in such a concentrated area.

# ALTERNATIVES

## Alternative Criteria

- Meet design criteria of 7.2 cfs (cubic feet per second flow rate) minimum for flow and a maximum upstream water elevation of 2,327.05 feet.
- Alternatives 1-3 assume the City will apply for grant funding as appropriate and/or secure additional funds from the DEQ as necessary

## ALTERNATIVE #1

### Replace the entire canal with new 24" pipe

- Reduce pollution inputs into Ashland/Wrights/Bear creeks from the canal
- Maximize water resources
- Remove trees within the existing easement (approximately 285 trees)
- Requires the most excavation (includes removing piped sections)

**ESTIMATED INITIAL CAPITAL COST: \$3,095,000**

## ALTERNATIVE #2

### Replace only the open canal with a new pipe and rehab the existing large piped sections:

- Reduce pollution inputs into Ashland/Wrights/Bear creeks from the canal.
- Maximize water resources
- More expensive than alternative 1, requires less tree removal (approximately 260 trees)
- Higher costs due to more fill required, larger pipe, etc.

**ESTIMATED INITIAL CAPITAL COST: \$3,950,000**

## ALTERNATIVE #3

### Replace the existing concrete liner and rehab the piped sections:

- More expensive lifecycle costs (including repairs to the liner, debris cleanout, etc.)
- This alternative does not address the water quality elements of project but will help with water efficiency
- Tree removal quantities will be similar to other options to protect the investment in the new liner (approximately 260 trees)

**ESTIMATED INITIAL CAPITAL COST: \$2,429,000**

## ALTERNATIVE #4

### Do Nothing

- Does nothing to remove pollutants from Ashland/Wrights/Bear creeks
- Water loss will increase as the liner and piped sections continue to degrade
- Deferred tree maintenance will continue to increase (increased fuel load)
- Safety of the canal and downstream properties could be compromised

#### ESTIMATED COST:

- Ongoing operations and maintenance costs would continue (currently \$50,000 annually)
- Deterioration will continue and repair costs will increase.

# ALTERNATIVE COMPARISONS

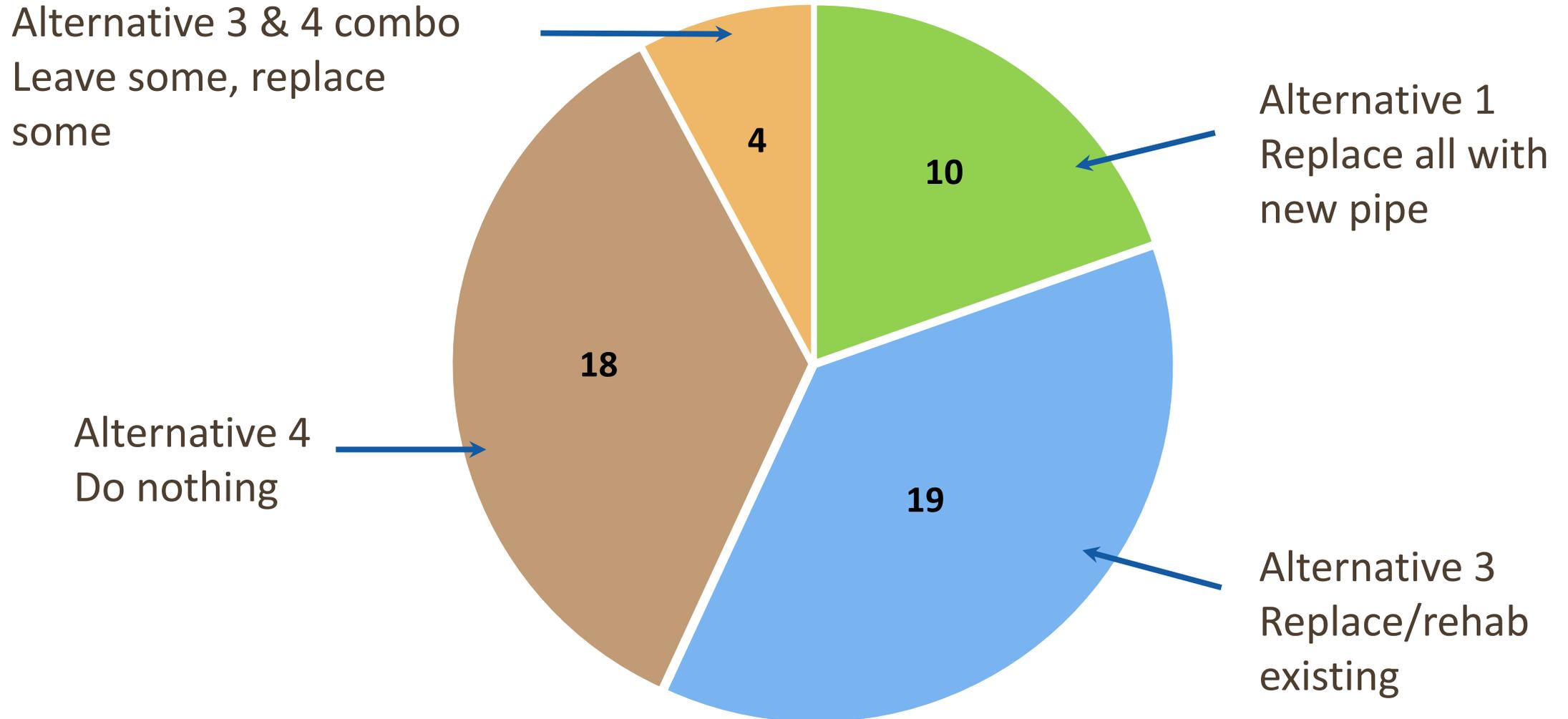
(2018 Costs)



|                            | <b>Alternative #1</b> | <b>Alternative #2</b> | <b>Alternative #3</b> | <b>Alternative #4</b> |
|----------------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|
| <b>Method</b>              | All new 24" pipeline  | 30" & 24" Pipeline    | Replace Canal Liner   | Do Nothing            |
| <b>Pipe Material</b>       | Corrugated HDPE       | Corrugated HDPE       | Concrete & Urethane   |                       |
| <b>Capital Costs</b>       | \$3,095,000           | \$3,950,000           | \$2,429,000           | \$0                   |
| <b>Annual O &amp; M</b>    | \$12,500              | \$12,500              | \$39,000              | \$50,000              |
| <b>Life of Option</b>      | 60 - 100 years        | 60 - 100 years        | 40 - 60 years         | 0 - 5 years           |
| <b>Salvage Value</b>       | \$354,280             | \$335,560             | 0                     | 0                     |
| <b>Net Present Value *</b> | <b>\$3,472,579</b>    | <b>\$4,339,897</b>    | <b>\$4,334,379</b>    | <b>\$2,442,794</b>    |

\* Life Cycle Cost / Net Present Value from Adkins Final Report p. 49

# Summary of Audience Selected Alternatives From January 31, 2019 Listening Session



# POTENTIAL GRANT OPPORTUNITIES

- Natural Resources Conservation Service
- Oregon Watershed Enhancement Board
- US Bureau of Reclamation
- Oregon Water Resources Department
- Rogue Basin Partnership

# NEXT STEPS

**Questions?**

**What have we missed?**

**What needs more clarity?**

**Interested in a canal tour?**

**Next Meeting:**

**March 5, 2019**

**Council Business Meeting**



More Information: [www.ashland.or.us/ashlandcanal](http://www.ashland.or.us/ashlandcanal)



Thank you!

*"We do not see things the way they are,  
we see them the way we are."*

*-- Anais Nin*

