

Council Meeting, November 19
Issue: Piping the Ashland Canal

Let's see where we are after nine months of meetings and conversations.

First, over time at least 1,000 residents have signed petitions, attended council meetings, and spoken or written about why the city should not pipe the Ashland canal. This is much more than a NIMBY issue; it is about our community's shared asset – the open, Ashland canal.

Second, the city's project is to pipe two miles of the canal to save water and to eliminate Ecoli from the canal. The cost will be at least \$5 million given that the engineers four existing constraints were not solved nor were the 31 areas of ecological concern addressed fully in the budget or planning. Of course, the city presents a final estimate of costs only with the final engineering report.

Third, the loss due to piping is significant. Three hundred trees, ecosystems and fauna along the century old canal will be destroyed. In addition to this, property owners will see major construction changes in their yards, along with structural property changes to their homes due to the piping. The quaint path along the canal will become an access road with little or no shade for those two miles according to the documents on the city's website. The canopy will be destroyed.

Fourth, there is an alternative to this destruction. It is the use of the canal liner shotcrete on steroids that prevents water loss. Shotcrete stops the seepage at one fourth the cost or \$1 million. Maintenance on a shotcrete canal isn't required for at least 25 years when the cost will be somewhere around \$100,000 per mile according to Robinson Concrete Pumping. This alternative stops the seepage of TID raw water. Destruction of a century old environment is avoided with shotcrete as well as avoiding the serious disruption of 100 families along the canal.

Finally, Ecoli is not an issue; we have to learn to live Ecoli with or without a pipe. The 1.2% evaporation loss of raw water provides a humidity barrier for the canal trees and for the water shed just beyond it. We'll have a trail with a canopy not a service road along the canal.

Therefore, vote no for piping and take up the citizens alternative of shotcrete. A community shared asset – the open Ashland canal - is at stake. Remember who you represent and serve, the people of Ashland.

Dr. Carol Voisin, Ashland