

BSI Canal Committee

7/5/22

I've talked about several on-going, yet currently unfunded initiatives eventually needing resolution. These are

- corner widening and
- staging lot.

The corner widening is pretty well defined, with only timing and funding still opening for resolution -- this will be addressed in the coming years, so there is not a lot of discussion needed at this time.

On the other hand, the staging lot is very controversial, with almost everyone having an opinion on one or more aspects of this issue.

For purposes of this discussion, re-stating the issue; up to this point, the city has used un-developed lots in BSI to stage wall and canal maintenance service barges. As homes are built on these open lots, there are fewer and fewer lots available for staging – eventually losing the potential of these options. Once that point is reached (in the not-too-distant future) we want to have everything in place to continue canal maintenance at the most economical cost possible.

Of course, it all comes down to location and cost, and I daresay, location is the bigger issue. It turns out, location is also a primary driver of cost as well. So lets focus on location for the moment:

From BSI's perspective, lets start with two options—inside BSI or outside BSI. As always, every decision has both good and bad associated with any possible decision----

Inside BSI

- Good
 - Closet to BSI canals
 - Lowest operating costs, since the lot is closet to the actual work
 - Most efficient use of contractor time, contractor tools, contractor movements
 - Capital cost is considered neutral (cost to purchase lot(s))
 - All things considered; land is going to be expensive anyplace on the water—so inside or outside, cost is a wash—having said that, it will still be expensive to obtain, in any case----
- Bad
 - Limited lots available
 - As time passes, and without a final decision, fewer and fewer lots are available for selection—having said that, this leads to the next issue--
 - Not in my back yard
 - If we did decide to purchase a lot in BSI—where would it be? The big question would be neighbors close to the lot approving this staging lot next to them.
 - To a certain extent, we could use landscaping, bushes, shrubbery, etc. to hide staging materials and equipment but there would always be a certain amount of exposure to surrounding neighbors.

Outside BSI

- Good
 - Potential opportunity to split capital cost(of lot) with the city or even PGI.
 - Keeps the lot out of BSI---happy neighbors!
 - Possibly a larger lot with more storage facilities and staging efficiencies.
- Bad
 - Further from BSI, thereby increasing costs to move barges back and forth to work areas
 - This can be somewhat mitigated utilizing larger barges (this being the primary driver for widening the lock and corner widening) but with the size limits of our canals, this quickly becomes key to the upper size limits on barges
 - Costs of barge movement becomes exponentially larger with the distance each barge moves. To put this in perspective, the cost to move a barge ½ mile to load/unload is twice that of merely re-positioning one within the canal at the work site.

In the meantime there could be other options that no one has thought about but may offer a better solution—if you have thoughts, we would all be interested in hearing them.. There have been a number of ideas presented and reviewed – from using a train of barges, to blimps and balloons used to cart materials to and from the jobsite (like they use in the northwest to pull logs off mountains).

I could go on but I think you get the idea. This is a very real and perplexing problem that currently has no clearcut solution. The city continues to investigate all options and I'm sure we will be hearing more on the subject in the future.

Hope your summer is going well—seems we cannot shake this Covid cloud before it mutates into some new strain---also, hoping for a break in gas prices---one can only hope!

Until next time—

Rick Daugherty, Chairman, BSI Canal Committee