Canals in Ocean City, Maryland
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Background

• 64 canals in Ocean City
• Longest is approximately 4,400 lf
• Most created in the 60’s and early 70’s
  – Bulkheads built in wetlands or water.
  – Canals dredged and spoil used to create fast land for development.
Canal Issues

• Siltation
  – Usually at mouth and end
• Pollution
• Low Oxygen/Flushing
• Lack of Ownership/Responsibility for upkeep.
Lack of “ownership”
Who was Responsible?

- Ocean City Code Section 106-44 stated:
  "The owner of any real property abutting landward or channelward of any canal, lagoon, basin or other waterway shall maintain said waterway as follows:"

- But the code also contained a provision for costs to be allocated based on the benefactors of any maintenance project.
I’d Like My Ocean City Canal Dredged/Cleaned up.
How did I go about it?

1. Petition the Mayor and Council
2. They refer it to the Board of Port Wardens who…..
3. Conducts a study, holds public hearings, takes testimony then returns a report to the Mayor and Council that makes the following “findings of Fact”

   1) The project area and who benefits.
   2) The scope of the project
   3) Will the project promote the public welfare.
   4) Total estimated cost of the project.
   5) Do the benefits justify the cost.
   6) Allocation of the costs.
   7) Time schedule for completion
4. The Mayor and Council then hold another public hearing and decide to accept, modify, or reject Board of Port Wardens Findings.

5. The Mayor and Council then obtain the permits for the work and direct the abutting property owners to proceed with the work.

6. Mayor and City Council also require payment for all design, engineering and permitting costs from the property owners.

7. And finally………
It has actually happened (once)
Steps Ocean City Is Currently Taking

- Much stronger and creative approaches to Private Stormwater Management during new construction and re-development.
- Street inlet and outfall retrofits to reduce run-off pollution.
- Program to encourage stormwater disconnects for existing construction.
History

- 2005-2006 DNR surveyed every canal and provided the results to Ocean City.
- 2006 – 2007 Ocean City tabulated the results, calculated the average depth of each canal and ranked the canals in order of priority based on average depth.
- 2008 City Council changed code to take control over canal dredging and authorized initiating a canal maintenance program.
- April 2009 Phase 1 canal dredge permits submitted
Survey Results

- Canals ranked 1-5 based on depth:
  - 1 avg depth < than 2’
  - 2 avg depth 2’-3’
  - 3 avg depth 3’-4’
  - 4 avg depth > 4’
  - 5 all depths > 4’

- Priority 1: 3 canals
- Priority 2: 11 canals
- Priority 3: 18 canals
- Priority 4: 17 canals
- Priority 5: 11 canals

- 4 canals surveyed have no current marine use
Proposed Dredge Program

- Establish an authorized (minimum) depth
  - Ocean Pines uses 3’ for their canals
- Goal to bring all canals to a minimum depth of 3’.
- Canals grouped together based on depth ranking and geographic proximity.
- Bulkheads along canals scheduled for dredging must be in good repair
Dredge Program Continued

• Dredge to a 4’ depth to allow for fill in.
• Dredge contractors advise they can dredge around 200 cy/day and would not want to commit to much more than 90 days per year. Target is therefore 15,000 cy per year maximum. (pending funding)
Dredge Program - Phase 1

- Year 1-2: Hitchens/Trimper, 52\textsuperscript{nd}, 25\textsuperscript{th} & 24\textsuperscript{th}
- Year 2-3: Old Landing South Channel, Old Landing/Winter Harbor, Old Wharf/Channel Buoy, Winter Harbor/Old Wharf
- Year 3-4: Tern/Plover, 53\textsuperscript{rd}/54\textsuperscript{th}, Tern East Channel.
- Total volume estimated at 38,000 cy
Private Slips

- City will only pay to dredge a public channel in each canal.
- There are private boat slips along every canal that may also need to be dredged.
- These are included in the permit application.
- Will allow property owners to “piggy back” on dredge contract at their cost + waiver.
- Additional Approx 10,000 cy
Dredge Program Phase 2

• After 2-3 years, the next tier canals will be re-assessed for phase 2 and beyond
• Loop Rd, Seaward/Windward, Peach Tree
• Salt Spray/Dory Finger, Sea Captain/Laurel, Jamestown Rd.
Proposed Disposal Sites

• Phase 1
  – Beach (Best Material) unlimited capacity
  – Fill Northside Park Lagoon to −5 (moderate) 15,000 cy
  – County Landfill (poor material), limit based on county

• Future Sites: Beach/Landfill +
  – Re-establish wetland mitigation island at Loop Rd.
  – Private West Ocean City Wetland Mitigation Sites identified by Coastal Bays
  – Dog Island Future Corps Project
Current Status

• Maintenance dredging of some outfalls was added to the permit (1,000 cy)
• The permit process is on-going
• Bulkhead evaluations were completed
• Council has yet to include any funding for this work nor to determine funding source
• Disposal sites for material not suitable for the beach will be critical for future phases.