

APPENDIX F-LOCAL COOPERATION

Board of County Commissioners

Hernando County



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April 1, 2002

PD-PN Tracy Leaser
Department of the Army
Jacksonville District Corps of Engineers
P. O. Box 4970
Jacksonville, FL 32232-0019

Dear Ms. Leaser:

Please be advised that at the Hernando County Board of County Commissioners' meeting held on March 12, 2002, the Board unanimously approved their support of the Hernando Beach Dredge Project and authorized this letter expressing the Board's support for the project.

As requested, this letter of support indicates Hernando County's willingness to participate in this Federal project and the selected plan, as presented by the Army Corps of Engineers. The Board has a financial plan in place to assume their share of the cost for this project.

Respectfully,

Hannah M. "Nancy" Robinson
Chairperson

cc: Board of County Commissioners
Dick Radacky, County Administrator
Charles "Pat" Fagan, Parks and Recreation Director

**Hernando County Port Authority
6400 Shoal Line Blvd.
Spring Hill, Florida 34607**

March 7, 2002

Department of the Army
Jacksonville District Corps of Engineers
P.O. Box 4970
Jacksonville, Florida 32232-0019

Attn: Ms. Tracy Leaser
Planning Division
Coastal/Navigation Section

Dear Ms. Leaser:

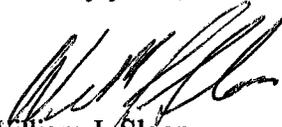
You had requested that the Hernando County Port Authority issue a statement of support for the selected plan for the Hernando Beach Navigation Study. The plan calls for a 13,500-foot long channel with a project depth of 6 feet mean lower low water constructed with one foot of required over depth due to rock and one foot of allowable over depth. The channel is to have a bottom width of 85 feet with side slopes at about 1:3.

The Hernando County Marine Industry Council has already informed you that the new channel cannot be less 75 feet wide and a depth of 6 feet at mean low tide. A compromise to these dimensions would negate the benefits to the fishermen and commercial interests. The selected plan as presently proposed will meet the requirements of commercial interests.

The Hernando Beach Coast Guard Auxiliary has also informed you that the proposed specifications in the selected plan would be a significant improvement to meet the recreation needs of boaters in that area.

Since both the commercial and recreation needs will be greatly enhanced, the Hernando County Port Authority supports this project. Our support is based on the criteria presented in the selected plan and the concurrence of both the commercial and recreation interests.

Sincerely yours,



William J. Sloan
Chairman
Hernando County Port Authority

APPENDIX G-PUBLIC INVOLVEMENT

Public Involvement Strategy

Hernando Beach Study, Public Involvement Strategy

This public involvement strategy, for the Hernando Beach Continuing Authorities Program Section 107 navigation study, includes the following:

- An analysis of the major issues likely to be addressed in the planning process,
- An identification of agencies, groups and individuals most likely to be interested in the action under consideration,
- An assessment of the level of public interest likely to be generated by the actions under consideration,
- A description of the preliminary consultation activities that led to the development of the public involvement approach, including the agencies, groups and individuals consulted,
- An identification of the public involvement expertise and effort that may be needed from various organizational units,
- The determination of the appropriate review points at which to evaluate the structure and function of the public involvement program, and
- A plan of sequential public involvement activities integrated with the planning and decision-making process and the development of planning reports.

Introduction. Corps of Engineers' Engineer Regulation 1105-2-100, Appendix B, states the goals and objectives of public involvement and coordination:

The goal of public involvement and coordination is to open and maintain channels of communication with the public in order to give full consideration to public views and information in the planning process. The objectives of public involvement are 1)to provide information about proposed Corps activities to the public; 2)to make the public's desires, needs, and concerns known to decision-makers; 3)to provide for consultation with the public before decisions are reached; and, 4)to consider the public's views in reaching decisions.

Analysis of major issues. The major issues anticipated for the study are costs, issues between commercial fishermen and residents, and the environment.

Identification of agencies, groups and individuals most likely to be interested in the action under consideration. The agencies most likely to be interested in the study include U.S. Coast Guard, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, National Marine Fisheries Service, Florida Department of Environmental Protection, Southwest Florida Water Management District, Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission, Florida Marine Patrol, Hernando County Board of County Commissioners, Hernando County Port Authority, Hernando County's Marine Industry Council and Withlacoochee Planning Council. The groups most likely interested in the study include National Audubon Society, the local Hernando

County chapter of the Audubon Society, other environmental groups, and Hernando Beach homeowner's groups. Individuals most likely to be interested in the study include commercial fishermen and residents.

Assessment of the level of public interest. The level of public interest in the study is expected to be high due to commercial, residential and environmental factors.

Description of consultation activities. Based on public involvement and coordination efforts for studies in the Tampa Bay area, it was determined that extensive consultation activities would be best for the Hernando Beach study. In the Tampa Bay area there exist forums for public involvement and coordination such as Tampa Bay Regional Planning Council's Agency on Bay Management. No such group exists in the Hernando Beach area. Because no such group exists and effort would need to be made to bring interested parties together. It was decided that this effort would include a scoping meeting, frequent site visits, meetings and other communication, such as electronic mail, with interested parties, and a public meeting to announce the recommended plan at the time the report went out for public review.

Identification of the public involvement expertise. Due to possible conflict between commercial fishermen and residents, a high level of public involvement expertise would be required. This level could be achieved through the inclusion in study meetings of Corps of Engineers' trained staff and knowledgeable, experienced, contractors.

Determination of the appropriate review points to evaluate the structure and function of the public involvement program. Appropriate review points for evaluating the public involvement program are at the time of the scoping public meeting, during plan formulation as plans are revised and at the time of the public meeting to announce the recommended plan.

A plan of sequential public involvement activities integrated with the planning and decision-making process and the development of planning reports. The following list serves as the plan of public involvement activities:

- Scoping public meeting
- During plan formulation; updates to the Hernando County Board of County Commissioners
- Recommended plan public meeting

The following table summarizes the public involvement (meetings) for this study:

| Public involvement | |
|---------------------------|--|
| Date | Action |
| September 1994 | Field trip by Corps to see project area |
| June 1997 | Town hall meeting |
| July 1997 | Meeting with Board of County Commissioners |
| August 1997 | Town hall meeting and meeting with Board of County Commissioners |
| April 1998 | Meeting to discuss FCSA/PSP |
| June 1998 | Site visit with resource agencies |
| February 1999 | Meeting with Board of County Commissioners |
| March 1999 | Site visit by Corps study team |
| February 2000 | Meeting with Board of County Commissioners |
| April 2000 | Meeting with commercial fishermen |
| May 2000 | Town hall meeting |
| June 2000 | Stakeholders meeting |
| August 2000 | Site visit with U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service |
| December 2000 | Site visit with resource agencies |
| June 2001 | Meeting with Board of County Commissioners |
| June 2001 | Site visit with Corps' Waterways Experiment Station research personnel |

A concerted effort was made to bring the public, particularly the resource agencies, into the plan formulation. The transcript from the scoping public meeting as well as written comments received around that time, follows.

Transcript, 4 August 1997 Public Meeting

BOARD OF COUNTY COMMISSIONERS
HERNANDO COUNTY

SPECIAL MEETING
OF
AUGUST 4, 1997

The Hernando County Board of County Commissioners met in Special Session in the Hernando Beach Coast Guard Auxiliary Building, 4340 Calienta Street, Hernando Beach, Florida, on Monday, August 4, 1997, at 7 p.m. Members present were Ray Lossing, Chairman; Paul H. Sullivan, Vice Chairman; Barbara "Bobbi" Mills, Pat Novy, and Hannah M. Robinson, Commissioners. Staff members present were: Charles Hetrick, County Administrator; Robert Bruce Snow, County Attorney; R. Alan Holbach, Public Works Director; and Judy S. Korbus, Secretary.

The meeting was called to order at 7 p.m. by Chairman Lossing.

Comm. Novy arrived after the meeting began.

PURPOSE

The purpose of the workshop was to obtain public input regarding the possibility of the County entering into a feasibility cost-sharing agreement with the US Army Corps of Engineers (Corps) for the dredging of the Hernando Beach (HB) Channel.

Port Authority - Hernando Beach Channel - Approval to Participate in Feasibility Cost-Sharing Agreement With US Army Corps of Engineers for Study of Possible Dredging

Public Works Director R. Alan Holbach reviewed that the Hernando Beach (HB) Channel was originally constructed by the developer of the subdivision in the 1960s at a width of 60 feet with 45 degree side slopes and had a design depth of 6 feet at mean low water level. The canal had been maintenance dredged in 1978 and 1983.

Mr. Holbach stated that the problems noted within the channel were that it was relatively narrow and had sharp, blind turns that made it difficult to navigate. He stated that it contained rocks that jutted above the channel bottom. He advised that the solutions to the problems would be to widen, deepen and straighten the channel.

Mr. Holbach reported that the Army Corps of Engineers (Corps) had been requested by Congress to study navigational problems within the HB Channel. He stated that Congresswoman Karen Thurman had funds allocated for a preliminary assessment of the channel and the feasibility of the Corps' involvement. He continued that the Corps had conducted a preliminary analysis and based upon that analysis had offered to enter

into a contract with the County for that feasibility study.

Mr. Holbach detailed that the feasibility study would include the Corps' initial assessment regarding the viability of the project in conforming to Federal requirements; performance of engineering studies to determine project alternatives; and evaluation of spoil disposal alternatives. He noted that based upon all of the findings, a report would be prepared that would be presented to the Board for approval of cost-sharing for the dredging of the HB channel, assuming that it met the initial criteria for Federal involvement.

Mr. Holbach reported that the cost sharing for the feasibility study was a 50/50 split between the County (estimated at \$316,000) and the Federal Government. He continued that the cost sharing arrangement for construction would be 80/20 which the County responsible was between \$400,000 to \$600,000. He advised that State Senator Ginny Brown-Waite had made \$100,000 available to offset study costs which could be used for the feasibility study costs. This would reduce the County's contribution to \$216,000. He stressed that the figures that had been quoted were estimates and that the County would be obligated to pay 50% of the actual costs.

Comm. Sullivan questioned who had submitted the estimate of \$400,000 for spoil disposal.

Mr. Holbach responded that the estimate was based on discussions with the Corps. He stated that if it was possible to use existing spoil islands the cost would be reduced.

Comm. Robinson inquired as to whether there were any Boating Improvement funds that were not committed.

Mr. Holbach explained that the Board had previously opted to utilize approximately \$115,000 from the Waterway Maintenance budget for this fiscal year for the project. He stated that there were approximately \$65,000 to \$75,000 in unobligated Florida Boating Improvement Program (FBIP) funds at this time. He stated, however, that some of those funds would be utilized for waterway maintenance and certain Community Service activities, including maintenance of boat ramps. He noted that the FBIP generated approximately \$24,000 per year.

Ms. Tracy Leeser, Technical Study Manager, introduced Mr. Tim Murphy, Chief of Navigation Section and Osvaldo Rodriguez, Project Manager of the Corps. A slide presentation was used to explain the details of the proposed Hernando Beach Channel Dredging Project.

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Ms. Leaser stated that the County needed to make a decision regarding whether to proceed with the HB Channel Dredging Project. She advised that the Corps was available to provide assistance if the County chose to proceed.

Ms. Leaser explained that the desired outcome of a Federal channel for HB was a wider, deeper and straighter channel that would be safer and cause less vessel damage. She added that it was also intended to make commerce more efficient. She explained the meaning of a Federal Channel. She stated that a Federal Channel at HB was expected to be entirely maintained by the Federal Government including periodic dredging to clear the channel if it would shoal and upkeep of navigation aids such as markers.

Ms. Leaser stated that the idea of a Federal Channel was originated by the County. She advised that \$100,000 had been set aside in the Federal budget to be used for the reconnaissance phase of the project.

Ms. Leaser detailed the process, time frame and costs for the HB Channel, as follows: 1) reconnaissance phase - completed by September 1997 - cost estimate of \$100,000; 2) feasibility phase - completed by September 1999 - cost estimate of \$632,000 (\$316,000 Federal and \$316,000 County); plans and specifications phase - completed by September 2000 - no cost estimate given; and construction phase - completed by September 2001 - cost estimate of \$2 - 3 million (\$1.6 to 2.4 million Federal and \$.4 to .6 million County). She noted that there would also be an operation and maintenance phase.

Ms. Leaser explained that the focus of the reconnaissance phase was preliminary economic justification for the project, a rough cost estimate and whether environmental concerns would hamper the project. She noted that a report had already been prepared for the HB Channel. She stated that the economic justification indicated that there was reason to recommend a Federal project based solely on commercial vessels presently using the channel. She reported that as a result of a U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service visit to scope the potential project which occurred in May 1997, the Corps had been informed that no potential environmental problems had been identified.

Ms. Leaser reported that the goal of the reconnaissance phase was to determine Federal interest, to obtain Federal commitment and to secure non-Federal sponsor intent, which was one of the remaining parts to be put in place before the feasibility study could begin and must state that the non-Federal sponsor fully understood the feasibility and construction cost-sharing responsibilities and was willing to enter

negotiations for the feasibility phase.

Ms. Leaser summarized that the HB Channel project was currently in the reconnaissance phase and a decision needed to be made by the County whether to proceed. The next phase was the feasibility portion during which time the bulk of the engineering work would be done to design an appropriate channel. She detailed that the feasibility study would consider alternatives and document those considerations. She stated that the alternatives to be studied were: 1) no action; 2) widen existing channel to 100 feet and deepen to 6 feet; and 3) widen, deepen and realign the channel.

Ms. Leaser revealed that the present feasibility plan included: a hydrographic survey; topographic surveys for possible upland disposal areas, aerial photographs, a geotechnical investigation, channel design, costs estimates, a real estate evaluation, an environmental study, and an economic evaluation.

Ms. Leaser reiterated that the costs for the feasibility phase, the plans and specifications phase and the construction phase were shared between the Federal government and the non-Federal sponsor. She stated that funding for the reconnaissance phase was \$100,000 which was contributed solely by the Federal government. She reminded those present that the funding had been set aside for use on the project by Congresswoman Thurman.

Ms. Leaser reviewed that it had been projected that funding for the feasibility study would require each participant to contribute \$316,000. It was expected that the Federal government would pay 80% of the costs for the HB Channel plans and specifications phase and construction phase. The County would be responsible for 20% of the cost of these combined phases at an anticipated cost of between \$400,000 - \$600,000. She summarized that for the total project (all phases combined) it was estimated that the Federal government would contribute approximately \$2 million and the County approximately \$800,000. She noted that all phases would occur over a period of approximately four years.

Ms. Leaser summarized the cost to the County for the various portions of the HB Channel project as follows: reconnaissance phase - no cost; feasibility phase - \$316,000, \$100,000 of which could come from the state grant; and construction phase - \$400,000 to \$600,000. She stated that the Corps understood that there was concern regarding funding for the construction phase. She mentioned that the County would have approximately two years to consider where the funding might come from. She noted that there might be funding sources available and the Corp

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would be willing to share its knowledge regarding funding.

Ms. Leaser stated that the County's responsibilities were as follows: demonstrate intent to proceed; contribute 50% of the feasibility study funds; determine sources of construction funding; and provide assistance with real estate issues including lands for dredged material disposal sites, if necessary.

Ms. Leaser detailed that Federal responsibilities were: finish the reconnaissance phase; complete the feasibility phase; communicate with the non-federal sponsor (County); and provide assistance as required.

Chairman Lossing questioned what would happen if the feasibility study recommended the project, but the County did not have funding.

Mr. Murphy responded that when the feasibility study was completed, there was a period of time during which the plans and specifications were being completed and during which the County could get its funding in order. He advised that the economics of the project would be good for a couple of years. He stated, however, that a quick reanalysis would need to be done to ensure that the economics were the same. He stated that this happened quite frequently.

Comm. Sullivan questioned whether there was any way to expedite the entire process.

Mr. Murphy replied that it would be hard to complete the feasibility study any sooner than two years. He noted that a year was allocated for plans and specifications, which could be shortened to a few months. He added that construction should only take a few months, once construction commenced. He estimated that the time frame could be reduced by approximately one and one-half years.

Comm. Sullivan questioned whether the construction plans would be done by the Corps or a local firm.

Mr. Murphy responded that normally, the Corps preferred to do the plans and specifications itself utilizing standard specifications.

Comm. Mills inquired as to whether there would be a cost to the County for a reanalysis, if it was necessary.

Mr. Murphy answered that after the project was authorized, the County would be responsible to pay 20% of any costs for reanalysis. He estimated that they could do a reanalysis for less than \$100,000.

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Comm. Mills stated that the total cost of the study was over \$600,000 which, since it was funded by Federal, State and County monies, would be borne by all of the citizens. She noted that if at the end of the study the Corps determined the project was not feasible, over \$600,000 would have been lost.

Mr. Murphy agreed. He commented that based upon past experience, he did not believe project justification would be a problem. He added that he felt sufficient economic benefits were justified by commercial fishing alone.

Mr. Murphy responded to questioning by Comm. Mills that the possibility always existed that Federal funds would not be available for funding of the maintenance of the HB Channel.

Mr. Bill Eaton spoke in favor of the HB Channel project. He commented that present conditions were hazardous.

Ms. Susan Harmon understood that part of the funding for the project could come from in-kind services that the County performed with the Corps.

Mr. Murphy agreed.

Mr. William Gibbard questioned how deep the HB Channel would be dredged.

Mr. Murphy responded that the depth was an economic consideration that would be determined by usage. He estimated that the present channel would be deepened no more than three to four feet. He stated that some advanced maintenance would probably be done which would deepen the channel slightly more to allow for shoaling.

Mr. Joe Giordano, president of the Hernando Beach Property Owners Association, stated that their board strongly encouraged the Board to enter into a channel dredging agreement with the Corps. He commented that he did not think that the boaters would disagree with a reasonable user fee.

Mr. Albert Lyons stated that the HB Channel was acutely in need of being dredged. He was opposed to the involvement of the Federal Government in this project. He stated that he would be willing to make a contribution in the form of a special tax assessment in order to eliminate the involvement of the Federal Government.

Mr. Roland Fortier supported the HB Channel project. He noted tha

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since a State grant was available in the amount of \$100,000 and \$115,000 was available in waterway maintenance funds, only \$101,000 more was needed.

Mr. Ray Erickson stated that he normally would not want the Federal Government to provide anything, but supported this project as it would return money to the community.

Mr. John Karpiscak clarified for the Corps that the HB Channel started at Day Beacon 1 and continued to Day Beacon 64. He questioned what would happen to the maintenance of the navigational aids. He also inquired whether the depth of the channel from Marker 40 to Marker 64 would change. He indicated the location of Marker 40 on a displayed map.

Mr. Murphy stated that the initial reconnaissance report included dredging from the yellow area on the map out to deep water and into the Gulf. He explained that if it was found that there was more of the HB Channel than had been considered, it would be investigated. He added that if the navigational aids were considered part of project, the US Coast Guard would maintain them. The Corps would keep the channel dredged.

Mr. Karpiscak questioned whether the County would continue to maintain the navigational aids that were not located directly within the channel.

Mr. Murphy replied that as part of the feasibility study, the US Coast Guard would conduct a study of the navigational aids needed for the channel. He stated that if the Coast Guard considered those aids currently owned by the County as needed, and they met Coast Guard standards, they would adopt them and/or install standard lights.

Mr. Karpiscak felt that commercial boaters should pay a proportionate share of the project costs based on channel usage. He suggested that a citizens' committee be formed.

Mr. Mike Marlow, Mr. A.J. Croom, Mr. Paul Casenzo Ms. Shirley Johnson, Mr. Chuck Morton, Mr. Ron Anderson, Ms. Dionna McMullen, Mr. John Saittis, Mr. John Lavista, Mr. Carl Fermodick and Mr. Mark Eberly expressed support of the HB Channel project.

Mr. Holbach responded that the proposed FY 1997/98 budget called for the elimination of the two full-time positions but proposed providing the

same level of service utilizing Public Works Department employees, as necessary. He noted that a Waterway Maintenance Division would still exist.

Mr. Eberly felt that quality would be lost if the positions were eliminated.

Comm. Robinson advised that she supported the project.

Motion

Comm. Sullivan moved that the Board spend the required money, in the amount of approximately \$101,000, considering the contributions to be received from the State, to pay for the first phase of the feasibility study; seconded by Comm. Robinson.

Friendly Amendment

Comm. Robinson offered a Friendly Amendment to the Motion that the Board direct the County Administrator, in the planning of the three-year budget, to add this project to it so that the funding can be planned for the completion of the construction phase as well.

Comm. Sullivan accepted the Friendly Amendment.

Mr. Hetrick presumed that Comm. Sullivan's direction was that the County obligate \$316,000, to be taken from State grants, existing funds and additional appropriations as may be appropriate, effective October 1, in addition to the three-year planning for capital improvements projects.

Friendly Amendment

Comm. Robinson offered another Friendly Amendment that the Motion include staff investigation of any other grants that might be applied to the project.

Comm. Sullivan accepted the Friendly Amendment.

Chairman Lossing requested that Mr. Holbach investigate additional grant funding.

Mr. Holbach noted that monies had been allocated and were available for the current fiscal year. He continued that the staff would have to allocate the \$101,000 in the FY 1998/99 budget.

Mr. Hetrick clarified that funds would be carried forward.

Comm. Sullivan summarized that funds were available to pay for th

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feasibility study.

Comm. Mills stated that when the subject of the public meeting on the HB Channel was discussed at a Regular BCC Meeting, it was Comm. Robinson's suggestion that the meeting be held in the HB area in order to get citizen input. She continued that Comm. Robinson had also suggested that an additional meeting be held inland so that the rest of the population of the county could also voice their opinions. She did not believe that this would happen. She commented that she did not realize the Board was going to make a final Motion on the issue at the present meeting. She noted that there were a number of people who wished to voice their opinions who had looked forward to attending a meeting in Brooksville to do so.

Comm. Robinson responded that she recalled talking about a meeting in HB then communicating with the inland residents, but she did not think it should delay the vote.

Comm. Mills questioned why another meeting would be held if a vote was taken at this meeting.

Comm. Lossing stated that he was not certain that another meeting would be held; it would be up to the Board to make that determination.

A vote was taken on the Motion and it carried 4-1 with Comm. Mills voting Nay.

Comm. Mills explained that she had voted against the Motion because the Board had been scheduled to have two meetings and she believed a lot of the population would like to voice their opinion.

Comm. Robinson advised that some residents of HB had expressed concern to her regarding the future of their community. She stated that residents of the community would like to have a voice in the visioning of the community's future. She suggested that the County keep an open line of communication with the residents throughout the entire process of the HB Channel project.

Chairman Lossing related that on August 5, 1997, he would make a presentation at the Board meeting regarding Conversation 2000. He noted that one of the suggestions was to hold a town meeting in HB sometime after September 29, 1997. He felt that this would be an appropriate time for citizens to voice their concerns. He mentioned that he had also been considering the idea of a citizens committee to oversee some of the activities that would be undertaken by the Corps.

Mr. Holbach advised that he would contact Mr. Murphy and his staff to develop a revised feasibility agreement utilizing the current final cost estimates, which would be presented to the Board as soon as possible.

ADJOURNMENT

There being no further business to come before the Board at this time, the meeting adjourned at 8:20 p.m.

KAREN NICOLAI, CLERK

RAY LOSSING, CHAIRMAN