

Commercial Small Craft Harbor

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This memorandum presents a summary of our findings related to re-establishing the Port of Gulfport as a home port for the Gulf Coast shrimper's fleet.

Pre-Hurricane Katrina Conditions

Prior to Hurricane Katrina, the Port of Gulfport provided a commercial small craft harbor on the north end of the West Pier that according to reports provided:

- Seven to nine piers.
- Berths for 40 to 60 shrimp boats.
- A small number of seafood markets.
- Limited fuel facilities.

Current Conditions (post-Hurricane Katrina)

The commercial small craft harbor was severely damaged by Hurricane Katrina and currently offers limited capability. The facility's current condition is:

- All berths and associated pilings for the shrimpers suffered damage and were removed.
- There are three berths in the harbor, all are occupied, specifically one for the pilot vessel, one for a small harbor tug, and one owned and operated by the Island View Casino.
- No fuel facility is available
- No electrical service is available.
- The outer seawall is damaged and contains significant voids; it is not being maintained nor repaired.
- There is no access to public land. The existing access is limited and is through either the Island View Casino property or through a current Port construction site and haul road. There is no parking available on Port property.
- Depths and conditions of the commercial small craft harbor and the navigation channel are unknown. Possible underwater obstructions may exist in the harbor, and silting may have occurred in both the harbor and the navigational channel during fill construction

operations. The Island View Casino has reported shallow water or obstructions. There has been no maintenance of the channel nor of the commercial small craft harbor depths.

- Temporary facilities for Port Operations, Chiquita, and Port CM firms are in the locations previously occupied by the seafood markets.
- The haul road for the 60-Acre Fill Project runs immediately adjacent to the commercial small craft harbor, thereby creating a potential safety issue.

Work Required to Provide Temporary Facilities in the Existing Commercial Small Craft Harbor (until Receipt of Fill Permit, Estimated to be Four Years)

To provide some facilities for a limited duration would require the following:

- Permitting for constructing and operating new commercial small craft harbor facilities.
- Hydrographic survey of the navigational channel and commercial small craft harbor, and dredging and removal of obstructions, as required. The scope and cost for this is unknown.
- Construction of new pier facilities and a new seawall (or significant repair to existing facilities) for an estimated six to 12 berths.
- Providing safe and secure public access, parking, and restroom facilities on Port property.
- Providing utilities, specifically power, water, wastewater, and garbage.
- Providing a public market area on Port property, with access.
- Assume no fuel facilities and ice facilities will be provided.
- Permitting will be required. Post-Katrina permitting to restore facilities has been expedited in the past. Due to the length of time that has passed, and the current permitting effort for the Port of the Future, this permitting may require as little as four months. However, it could also be significantly longer.
- Assume a minimum of 12 months for design, bid, dredging, and construction once a permit is received. The cost for this is unknown.
- The existing commercial small craft harbor will need to be demolished during the construction of the Port of the Future, as it obstructs the proposed Gulfport channel. This construction is expected to begin in four years.

Possible Alternatives for Aforementioned Temporary Facilities

- Explore the options for the City of Gulfport to provide facilities for an outdoor seafood market in Jones Park or other city property.
- Explore the options for the City of Gulfport to provide berths dedicated to shrimp boats in their newly renovated small craft harbor.

- Explore the option for slips and dockside seafood market on Island View property through an arrangement with MSPA.
- Explore the option for shrimp boats to use private accommodations, such as the former MISSCO facility.

Requirements for Permanent Facilities in a New Commercial Small Craft Harbor as Part of the Port of the Future

There are no current plans for a commercial small craft harbor in the Port of the Future. To provide long-term facilities as part of the future Port, the following tasks will need to be assigned and completed:

- Permitting, design, funding, and scheduling of construction would be required. The new commercial small craft harbor would have to be included in the environmental analysis for the PGRP.
- New facilities would have to be designed to not conflict with the proposed Gulfport channel, and any construction on the North Harbor. This would include public access concerns.
- Construction would include new pier facilities and new seawalls. Other considerations would be providing safe and secure public access, parking, and restroom facilities on Port property, providing utilities (such as power, water, wastewater, and garbage), providing public market areas, with access, on Port property, and providing fuel facilities and ice facilities, if required.
- A new navigational channel will have to be dredged to the west of the planned Port expansion to connect the new commercial small craft harbor to the Federal navigational channel. The existing channel will be covered by fill. The categorization, schedule, and cost of this channel are not known. If it is considered a Federal navigation channel the period to obtain permitting and funding will be longer.
- Assume 24 months for design, bid, dredging, and construction, as this would be a new harbor, not the refurbishment of an existing harbor. The cost for this is unknown. There would be an extended period where no facilities would be available.

Positive and Negative Aspects to Developing this Facility

Pros

- Local heritage and history are restored.
- Fresh local shrimp is available for Gulfport residents and local restaurants.
- Potential lower operating costs for shrimpers.
- Potential increase in direct and indirect jobs for the Gulfport area.
- Deeper small craft harbor facilities than adjacent marinas.
- Potential greater local support for the Port of Gulfport Restoration Program.
- Developing this facility serves as a sign of recovery for local residents.

Cons

- Delay due to required permits.
- The costs associated with this are not included in any current budgets.
- The limited duration of use of facilities prior to receipt of fill permit.
- May be difficult to justify on a cost-benefit basis.
- There is a potential safety issue due to adjacent construction activities.
- Need to provide harbor security.
- Current Chiquita and Port Operations facilities may be impacted.
- Contractor's and Construction Manager's staging area may be relocated or limited in area.
- Channel to harbor will have to be rerouted to complete the 24-acre fill.
- Channel would be rerouted again following the permitting of the future port.
- Surrounding areas of the harbor are first to be raised to +25' elevation, impacting access.
- Potential oil/fuel spills and pollution could negatively impact the PGRP program.

The information provided here is prepared for the Port Commission by the Program Manager of the Port of Gulfport Restoration based on current observed conditions of the commercial small craft harbor and the *10 Year Work Plan*. Detailed cost and schedule impacts can be developed, if requested.