

RECOMMENDATIONS

As the District Engineer, I have considered the significant environmental, social, and economic effects, the engineering feasibility, and the input received from the neighborhood working group, the navigation working group, and the general public and have determined that the recommended plan presented in the report is in the overall public interest.

Considering the long history of this project and the sensitivity, risks, and uncertainty associated with this analysis, I recommend that a new lock be constructed in the IHNC, north of Claiborne Avenue, subject to such modifications thereof of the Commander HQUSACE (Chief of Engineers) and the Assistant Secretary of the Army (Civil Works) may deem appropriate. The recommended plan provides for:

- a. Construction of a new lock 110 feet wide by 1,200 feet long by -36 feet (NGVD) deep, north of Claiborne Avenue, using a pre-cast, floated-in concrete technique,
- b. Construction of a temporary bridge at St. Claude Avenue and replacement of the existing St. Claude Avenue bridge with a new, low-level double bascule bridge, and modification of the Claiborne Avenue bridge to accommodate higher stages of the Mississippi River,
- c. Construction of lay areas for vessels waiting to transit the lock,
- d. Construction of a temporary navigation by-pass channel around the construction site of the new lock and a temporary navigation bypass channel around the existing lock during its demolition,
- e. Construction of extensions of the Mississippi River flood protection and hurricane protection levees and floodwalls,
- f. Implementation of the community impact mitigation plan to ensure that the communities affected by the project are properly and adequately compensated to mitigate for project impacts.

This recommendation is also made with the full understanding that the neighborhood working group and members of the general public who live near the project site remain strongly opposed to the project.

The total first cost for the overall project is currently estimated at \$463.1 million for the shallow-draft lock and \$68.3 million for the deep-draft increment, totaling \$531.4 million. The average annual operation, maintenance, and replacement cost for the recommended plan is estimated at \$1.4 million. The Federal government will operate and maintain the new lock.

I believe that the North of Claiborne Avenue Plan is the only viable solution for lock replacement and represents the culmination of many years of effort to replace the lock while minimizing project impacts. Any further study of alternatives is deemed cumulative, and I feel that it is time to commence replacement, or discontinue work on this project. If the replacement plan is not initiated based on this document, I recommend that we commence with extraordinary maintenance plans for the existing, undersized lock, to avoid unforeseen and lengthy lock closures in the future.

The recommendations contained herein reflect the information available at this time and current departmental policies governing the formulation of individual projects. It does not reflect program and budgeting priorities inherent in the formulation of a national civil works construction program nor the perspective of higher review levels within the executive branch. Consequently, the recommendations may be modified before they are transmitted to Congress as proposals for implementation funding. However, prior to transmittal to the Congress, the Port of New Orleans, the State of Louisiana, and other states, interested Federal agencies, and other parties will be advised of any modifications and will be afforded an opportunity to comment further.

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District Engineer