

Proposed Project Mitigation Plan
Inner-Harbor Navigation Canal Lock Replacement

Introduction

Enclosed in the following pages is a proposed social mitigation plan for the IHNC Lock North of Claiborne Replacement alternative. This plan is the result of an intensive community participation program that brought together community leaders from the neighborhoods adjacent to the canal to address project issues that would impact the community. Their charge was to develop a plan that spoke to what was really needed to maintain the viability and create the opportunity for renewal in these important neighborhoods in conjunction with this major public works project.

The intent of this plan is to provide a framework for greater community discussion. The feasibility of this plan is contingent on its recognition by the communities concerned that it represents their needs and interests. The plan will therefore be refined through a public hearing process that will allow for comment and refinement based on community input.

Based on community input the North of Claiborne site was developed as the primary site for consideration for this project. This alternative's key feature is that it requires no residential displacement in order to construct the lock. This alternative also calls for a low-level St. Claude Bridge replacement, and float-in lock construction that minimizes noise disruption to adjacent neighborhoods.

This mitigation plan is designed to be an integral part of the project. Therefore the replacement of the IHNC Lock at the North of Claiborne site includes the implementation of the final mitigation plan.

Evolution of the Community Planning Process

Recognizing that lock construction at the Industrial Canal site will have a significant impact on the surrounding community, both House and Senate Appropriations Committees, in their reports accompanying the 1991 Appropriations Bill, directed the Corps to establish a community involvement process to solicit community views and input on the project. After earlier efforts to bring the community leadership together proved problematic, the District Engineer established a neighborhood working group composed of representatives of the adjacent neighborhoods associations, business groups, local government representatives the Corps and local sponsor. The working group's function is to exchange information, solicit community views and advise the District Engineer on matters pertaining to the project.

Beginning in August 1991 and continuing through the remainder of the year, the Corps convened a series of meetings of the neighborhood working group to discuss the alternative construction plans that had been developed and to investigate the range of social mitigation requirements as a prelude to the development of a social mitigation plan. The working group discussed the potential for a mitigation plan that would include substantial, community-wide participation in infrastructure enhancement as a form of pre-project benefit for residual impacts which could not be directly mitigated. However, community opposition to the site alternatives presented precluded the development of a comprehensive community mitigation plan. Members of the working group asked the Corps why a location in the Industrial Canal North of Claiborne Avenue was not presented as an alternative construction site since it had the potential to significantly reduce project related impacts. The previous North of Claiborne design estimates showed lock construction at this location to be more costly and required a lengthy closure of the Industrial Canal to navigation. Community representatives felt that this alternative required further study since it might offer the least objectionable alternative. They also voiced objection to a mid-rise replacement bridge at St. Claude Avenue, asserting that only a project including a low-level St. Claude Avenue bridge could possibly gain community acceptance. As a result of these deliberations, the Corps agreed to further investigate the prospect of constructing a replacement lock north of Claiborne Avenue and a low-level replacement bridge at St. Claude Avenue.

The Corps undertook the design of the north of Claiborne option from January 1992 to June 1993. This new plan consist of a float-in lock design, a low rise double bascule bridge at St. Claude Avenue and two bypass channels for navigation. Also during this design period the Corps determined that the social impacts associated with the previous construction alternative was not amenable to full direct mitigation and that even an extensive program of general mitigation would be insufficient to restore to the community a level of satisfaction and well-being that prevailed prior to construction. Therefore the previously considered option was judged to be un-implementable and no longer met National Economic Development (NED) criteria as a candidate plan. As a result, the North of Claiborne Avenue Plan represents the only plan with the potential for an implementable construction alternative for a replacement lock on the Industrial Canal. The construction plan that the Corps developed for the North of Claiborne Avenue site either eliminates or substantially reduces major project related impacts in the areas of displacement of people, construction-related noise and traffic congestion.

The outstanding component of the North of Claiborne option was to develop a comprehensive plan to identify and mitigate for a array of social and cultural impacts. This was the task the working group was asked to assist the Corps with. Meetings of the working group with this focus began in August 1993.

Developing the North of Claiborne Avenue Site Mitigation Plan

The previously developed social mitigation plan did not address the North of Claiborne site. It also lacked any community input. It was determined at an early stage in this planning process that community input was essential to any consensus plan. The methodology employed to develop the plan was to conduct a series of meetings to develop issues and dissect the previously developed mitigation plan. Each section of the previous plan was discussed and a new set of criteria established in each of the categories. This six month process' goal was to develop a draft mitigation plan, addressing community concerns, that could be presented to the greater community for review and comment.

The result of this process has been a mitigation plan that is more sensitive to community concerns and deals with the issues the community considers important. The plan follows the same format as the previous plan to insure that all of the developed issues were addresses as well as the new issues.

The primary construction related mitigation measures as stated earlier in this document are:

1. No Residential Displacement - This option does not require that any residential structures be acquired for lock or bridge construction.
2. Reduced Construction Noise - Construction noise will be reduced by employing the following construction techniques:
 - A. Prefabricated float-in lock design.
 - B. Soil-founded design that reduces the magnitude of pile driving.
 - C. Noise suppression measures on-site.
 - D. Limited pile driving for the Claiborne Avenue bridge upgrade.
 - E. Reducing pile driving associated with replacement of St. Claude low-level bridge.
 - F. Contractors will have contractual obligation to insure that construction noise does not exceed specific, measurable levels at identifiable distances from the construction site.

3. Traffic Congestion - The potential for traffic congestion is minimized through the following features of the construction plan:
 - A. Minimize the duration of bridge closures during replacement by replacing the St. Claude bridge with a low-rise bridge and minimal time for reinforcing the Claiborne Avenue Bridge foundations.
 - B. Staging construction activity on the west side of the canal away from residential areas and assigning construction-related traffic to specific routes to minimize traffic congestion in adjacent communities.
 - C. Creating a commuter detour route along Florida Avenue corridor to minimize commuter traffic using streets in residential areas.
 - D. Implementation of a comprehensive traffic management plan that incorporates all traffic control measures to maintain to the maximum extent possible the current levels of service for public transportation, emergency service, school transportation, vehicles and pedestrians.

The scope of the social mitigation plan for the North of Claiborne Avenue option concentrates on the areas of concerns identified by the community. The format of the plan is similar to the previously developed plan in that it covers the same general topic areas. The major difference is that this plan was and is a product of community involvement and input. The plan elements are:

A. Social

1. Population

a. pre-construction

- direct mitigation towards those most impacted.
- take community development program to community in as many methods as possible to generate as much comment as possible.
- give residents as much notification as possible of construction.

b. during construction

- provide the opportunity for continued local input.
- restrict hours of truck hauling.
- store construction equipment in the industrial area on the west side of canal and not in residential areas.
- shorten the construction period without extending the work day for pile driving.

- construct low rise bridge at St. Claude and eliminate access loops to reduce displacement.
 - for safety, use barges to transport construction materials; restrict truck hauling to roadways used exclusively to construction traffic.
 - improve enforcement of speed limits on neighborhood streets.
- c. post-construction

2. Community and Regional Growth

- a. pre-construction
- b. during construction
 - channel Community Development Block Grants to lower ninth ward area (none currently).
 - same as mitigation for population.
- c. post-construction

3. Community Cohesion

- a. pre-construction
 - perform an information dissemination program with the community (what is currently happening and what the impacts of construction will be) and allow feedback to occur.
 - create a library or location for studies, reports and other information about the lock with hours convenient to residents.
 - notify residents that information about the project is available.
 - community should have the opportunity to directly express their views in written and oral form.
 - involve as many people as possible in public meetings.
- b. during construction
 - have neighborhood organizations invite Corps and Port to speak about the project at neighborhood organization meetings.
 - provide a community newsletter concerning construction of the lock.
 - hold periodic public workshops about the project.
 - establish a public information program which reports traffic situations everyday.
 - provide the community with access to learning resources that may be interrupted because of construction.
 - provide funding for a clearinghouse office at a centrally-located community center to assist in scheduling of neighborhood activities, to involve community groups in information programs, and to sponsor regular community functions.
 - offset disruption to community cohesion by creating pocket parks, open space areas and playgrounds for residents.
- c. post-construction

4. Aesthetics

- a. pre-construction

- b. during construction
 - replace green space lost from along old lock with new green space along side of the new lock.
 - provide underground wiring where possible.
 - improve street lighting in the area.
 - encourage long range comprehensive planning for the area.
 - during replacement of flood protection levee, provide alternate access to batture.
 - construct parks, open space areas, and playgrounds in the neighborhoods to replace the visual amenities created by the removal of trees along current lock.
 - rebuild an earthen levee to continue access to the batture.
 - plant trees and shrubs along Caffin and Tupelo detour routes well in advance of the project to provide visual screening.
 - produce popular histories or other interpretive materials to disseminate historical information gained during Corps-sponsored archeological research in the right-of-way corridors.
- c. post-construction

B. Physical

1. Housing

- a. pre-construction
 - construct new lock without residential displacement .
- b. during construction
 - seek funding for owner-occupied residential renovations.
 - establish a training program on how to maintain housing.
 - create a locally managed revolving housing trust fund .
 - assist in the development of a program to explain the designation of historic districts and landmarks, and the building requirements of historic districts.
 - provide assistance in obtaining financing for the purchase of owner-occupied housing.
- c. post-construction

2. Land Use

- a. pre-construction
- b. during construction
- c. post-construction

3. Public/Community Facilities and Services

- a. pre-construction
 - get corporate sponsorships for projects in the area.
- h. during construction
 - assist in the establishment of a centralized medical services facility on the east

side of the canal.

- contract for emergency transportation services for the east side of the canal during the construction period.
- minimize the impacts of project on the neighborhood drainage system.
- provide supervised playgrounds and help in the maintenance of playgrounds.
- maintain accessibility to all public services and facilities. Where necessary provide shuttle service from neighborhoods to community facilities and services for routes that span the IHNC.
- increase the number of police patrol vehicles on the east side of the IHNC during bridge closures. A temporary police substation should be set up on east side of IHNC. A federal grant or other funding source will be required.
- obtain cooperation from hospitals on east side of IHNC to accept indigent patients in emergency situations.
- provide express school bus service from a park and ride/drop off lots on east and west side of the IHNC to private, parochial and public schools on the other side of IHNC.
- modify 911 address-based directory of emergency services to compensate for bridge closures.

c. post-construction

- provide a park ranger station on the levee.
- modify the 911 address-based directory of emergency services to compensate for bridge completions.

4. Transportation

a. pre-construction

- resurface streets to be used as detour routes.
- open alternate traffic route along parish line prior to start of construction to provide through traffic time to adjust to new patterns.
- investigate the possibility of designing the St. Claude Bridge to be able to accommodate a streetcar rail line (the Federal Transit Administration has a program to expand existing rail lines, and the lock may be able to provide a portion of the local matching funds needed for extending the riverfront streetcar into the lower ninth ward).

b. during construction

- designate and strictly enforce truck routes.
- complete as much of the construction as possible off-site and barged into the canal.
- barge all construction related material to site; direct all truck traffic to corridors outside of residential area.
- add pedestrian crossings with markings and flashing lights on Caffin and Tupelo for safety.
- improve enforcement of speed limits.
- reroute transit vehicles in the study area to compensate for bridge closures.

- install radio-controlled bus activated signals to give detour buses green signal.
 - provide park and ride station on the east side of the canal to reduce traffic and related air and noise pollution.
 - provide school bus shuttle service during the project.
 - provide shuttle service within the neighborhoods during bridge construction.
 - minimize the duration of bridge closures.
 - keep at least two bridges open to vehicular traffic at a time.
 - direct traffic to road along parish line to keep through traffic off of Tupelo and Caffin.
 - install a traffic light near base of Florida Avenue Bridge to allow local traffic to enter Florida Avenue.
 - provide intersections which allow traffic from the neighborhood side-streets to enter the main roads.
 - establish a public information program which reports traffic situations everyday (like CCC construction).
 - provide traffic light synchronization or point control of lights by police.
 - create an incident management plan that will organize tow trucks.
 - improve street lighting along detour routes.
- c. post-construction
- resurface roadways damaged because of use as detour routes.
 - encourage the continuation of park and ride stations.
 - restore four-way stop signs on Caffin and Tupelo that were removed during construction.
 - resurface roadways used to access both Claiborne and Florida Avenue bridges from affected neighborhoods when construction is complete.
 - maintain pedestrian bridge crossing over IHNC in St. Claude corridor.

5. Noise

- a. pre-construction
- pile driving noise test program to minimize noise.
- b. during construction
- use construction methods to construct lock with a reduced number of piles.
 - use pile driving machines that reduce the level of noise.
 - shorten construction period without extending work day for pile driving.
 - investigate use of the impact bored cast-in-place method of pile operations.
 - if construction related noise cannot be controlled, soundproof homes within 751 dn noise contours.
 - barge all construction materials.
 - restrict truck hauling to exclusive roadways.
 - restrict hours of truck hauling.
 - develop a public information campaign to educate residents regarding construction techniques that will be used to minimize noise levels.
 - schedule pile operations for the bridge during the summer to minimize noise impact on schools.

c. post-construction

C. Economic Impacts

1. Business and Industrial Activity

a. pre-construction

- develop a Ninth Ward Business Incubator to provide local businesses the opportunity to be involved in the construction of the lock.
- identify all possible funding sources for business development in the area.
- help stabilize current businesses.
- relocate displaced IHNC industries to other areas of IHNC or MRGO.
- relocate Coast Guard Station to another area of IHNC.

b. during construction

- provide advance notice of bridge closures.
- maintain a field office for the active project at the business incubator.
- monitor the effect of the project on Holy Cross School, with school being viewed as a business.
- provide opportunities to minority contractors (federal requirements for disadvantaged businesses).
- create a directory of local businesses .
- hire trucks from the lower ninth ward area for hauling dirt for the project.
- assist business incubator in the formation new locally run services instead of relying on services from outside of the area.
- provide advance notice of any lock closure.
- sponsor an advertising campaign for St. Claude/Claiborne Avenue businesses affected by change in traffic patterns.
- assist the Port of New Orleans in reestablishing industries on IHNC and MRGO.

c. post-construction

2. Employment

a. pre-construction

- stress the availability of job training programs in the information dissemination program.
- provide equal opportunity employment.
- publish a listing of jobs needed for construction of lock.
- train residents of the area in emergency medical services to provide the community during construction.
- establish a training program in the neighborhood for residents of the study area, to teach construction skills. Investigate federal funding to subsidize program.
- require contractors to give employment preferences to students who successfully complete the above training program.

b. during construction

- include language regarding hiring practices in construction specifications.

- mandate project contracts to hire people from the community as a part of the contracts.
- noise mitigation will lessen nuisance level for employees in area.
- see above job training program.
- assist industries in relocating so that employees can retain jobs without drastically changing their commuting patterns.

c. post-construction

3. Property Values

a. pre-construction

- assist the community in finding replacement land uses for neglected and vacant commercial properties.

b. during construction

- same as mitigation for housing.

c. post-construction

4. Tax Revenues

a. pre-construction

- tax losses will be mitigated indirectly by relocating most residents, jobs, businesses and industries within the study area.

b. during construction

- same as mitigation for business and industrial activity.

c. post-construction