

ISSUES SURFACED AT THE MEETINGS ON THE PROPOSED MR-GO, NEW LOCK AND CONNECTING CHANNELS PROJECT MITIGATION PLAN

The following is a list of key issues surfaced at the public meetings held on January 3 and 10, 1995 on the proposed mitigation plan for the IHNC lock replacement project.

- o Concern over the extensive length of construction.
- o Local elected officials position is that improvements listed in the mitigation plan can be accomplished at local and state levels and are not dependent on the lock replacement proceeding.
- o Better coordination of daily bridge operations, not having all bridges in the area raised at one time.
- o Provide medical services in the Lower 9th Ward, concern that the lock replacement project may impede or prevent residents from receiving services.
- o Uncertainty of Federal funding.
- o The economic impact of the project disproportionately benefits the shipping industry while impacting the immediate community.
- o A lot of misinformation about the lock project has surfaced, including a petition that was referenced but not submitted.
- o Concern about the impact of the new Florida Avenue Bridge on the proposed lock replacement project and on the neighborhoods of the 9th Ward, including hurricane evacuation.
- o Traffic improvements appear to be slanted in favor of St. Bernard residents.
- o Resurface Tupelo Street and add more lighting.
- o Specify proposed job training programs.
- o Provide signs on bridges to indicate when bridge is in the up position.

- o Encourage the location of a bank to provide financial services to 9th Ward residents on the east side of the IHNC.
- o Provide information and target job training for businesses slated for relocation.
- o Specify plans for relocation of the Coast Guard Station.
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Lock plan blasted

By COLEMAN WALTERS
Staff writer

About 200 9th Ward residents listened patiently Tuesday evening as executives from the Army Corps of Engineers and the Port of New Orleans told them that a massive lock replacement project on the Industrial Canal would result in millions of dollars for neighborhood improvements. The residents then one by one denounced the plan.

"You are being asked to pay for a superhighway for the rich and the super rich to get richer," one resident told the crowd at the Jackson Barracks Military Museum, drawing rousing applause.

The gathering, much like a similar hearing in Bywater last week, shows that federal and port officials face a daunting challenge in trying to convince neighborhood residents that a \$500 million construction project long needed by shipping interests also is in their best interest.

Facing stormy neighborhood opposition, the Corps of

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Lock: Residents rap plan

From B-1

Engineers years ago abandoned a construction plan that would have forced the removal of 200 households along the canal.

And in the latest phase of an effort to win neighborhood backing, the corps and port officials are discussing dozens of ideas on how to spend millions of dollars in "mitigation money."

The money could be used to improve parks and streets, give residents job training, upgrade senior houses and to improve police and firefighting services in the area, officials said.

Every effort would be made to funnel jobs created by the construction project to 9th Ward residents, officials said.

"These are things that are possible and should be looked at and will be looked at," said Pat Gallwey, planning director for the port.

Gallwey was joined at the meeting by Joe Dicharry, project manager for the corps. Dicharry emphasized that the lock project would use the latest construction technology to offset the impact

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*LOCK
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on the neighborhood. Major pieces of the new lock could be built off-site and floated into place he said.

But neighborhood leaders rejected any discussion of what the government might do in return for a project that would bring extended bridge closures and could take 12 years to complete.

New Orleans City Councilwoman Ellen Hazeur-Distance, state Sen. Jon Johnson, D-New Orleans, and state Rep. Sherman Copelin, D-New Orleans, all said government planners should accept that 9th Ward residents want the project killed despite the promise of money for improvements.

"A lot of the things you're talking about, we're doing anyway," Hazeur-Distance said, noting that the city and neighborhood activists are making progress with plans to upgrade 9th Ward parks and to add a police substation east of the Industrial Canal.

"I'm trying to understand, what is the benefit to the community. We don't own the ships that are going to be using that lock," Gallwey said.

Some neighborhood representatives said that even if a mitigation plan were created, they doubt Congress, now led by Republicans who want to cut spending, would back it up with money.

The Rev. Edmond Prevost,

president of the Lower 9th Ward Initiative, said federal officials

should go ahead and spend mil-

lions of dollars to ease poor living

conditions in the 9th Ward.

"Take some of that money and help get the families back together," he said.