

Coalition of Concerned Citizens of Cortez

Position Paper

Boat Ramp on Seafood Shack Property

What is the Coalition of Concerned Citizens of Cortez (CCCC)

A coalition of 327 residences (private homes and condominiums) located contiguously up to about one mile of the Seafood Shack property (area below within red lines)



- CCCC members represent approximately \$2.9M in annual tax revenue to Manatee County and are highly concerned about proposed boat ramps placed in a residential area.
- All these residents were surveyed about the impact of boat ramps and 93% responded.
- 96% are firmly opposed to boat ramps and 99% responded that they want the CCCC coalition to represent their views.

The Coalition for Concerned Citizens was originally formed in circa 2005 to successfully oppose a similar proposed County owned boat ramp project in the fall of 2005 just 20 years ago to current day.

The CCCC's objective was, and is, to protect the quality of life in the neighborhood by supporting compatible, desired neighborhood development.

CCCC Concerns Against Development of a Boat Ramp on Seafood Shack Property in the residential area of North Cortez.

1. Traffic and Congestion

• Trailer Traffic:

- Vehicles towing boat trailers require more space for maneuvering, especially when turning around and backing down the ramp. This can be difficult and dangerous on narrow, residential streets.
- Introduction of 40 to 60-foot vehicles (boat trailer + vehicle) onto our streets (119th Street, Harbour Landings Drive and 126th Street) that are not designed for such size vehicles is dangerous.
- The streets are winding and narrow and not structurally designed for heavy loads such as a boat trailer + vehicle combinations.
- The existing development of our residential community does not allow real estate for any major roadway improvements.

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- **Gridlock:** On busy days, the streets leading to the ramp can become congested with boaters waiting to launch or retrieve their boats, leading to traffic jams and blocked driveways.
- **Parking Issues:** Boat ramps require large, dedicated parking areas for vehicles and trailers. If the lot fills up, users may park illegally in the neighborhood, blocking streets, driveways, or damaging private property.

2. Safety Concerns

- **Pedestrian and Vehicle Conflict:**
 - The increased volume of large vehicles, trailers, and traffic poses a significant safety risk to neighborhood residents,
 - The area has a high volume of non-vehicular traffic consisting of residents/family/guests walking, jogging and bike riding on the local street system.
 - Many of this population are senior citizens.
 - The area has few sidewalks, no designated bike lanes, and little if any room to create these features thereby forcing these activities onto our quiet residential streets
 - Increased large vehicle traffic flow and maneuvering of large vehicles towing boats puts our residents at increased risk. There is just not enough room on the roads around us.
- **Late-Night Activity:** Ramps that are open late or 24/7 can attract unwanted activity or congregating groups that disturb the peace and raise security concerns for residents.

3. Environmental and Infrastructure Stress

- **Road Wear and Tear:** Residential streets are often not built to handle the constant, heavy load of large trucks and boat trailers, leading to faster deterioration of the road surface.
- **Environmental Impact:** High-traffic ramps can contribute to local environmental issues, such as propeller wash causing erosion at the end of the ramp, and increased pollution from vehicles.
- **Habitat Destruction and Disturbance:** The construction and continued use of boat ramps result in the destruction and disturbance of aquatic vegetation, which serves as crucial habitat for fish and other wildlife. Aquatic vegetation near boat ramps is often 27% lower than in undisturbed areas, affecting fish abundance and reducing overall habitat quality for juvenile species. Pods of manatee regularly transit the area, putting them at risk.

4. Impact on Property Values

- **Reduced Desirability:** Many potential homebuyers are actively looking for a quiet, low-traffic environment. The introduction of a busy public access point often makes the surrounding homes less desirable, which can negatively affect property values.
- **Aesthetic Impact:** A large, paved boat ramp and parking lot will detract from the residential aesthetic of the neighborhood.

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5. Noise and Disturbance

- **Engine Noise:** The sound of boat engines, especially as they are started, revved, and maneuvered around the ramp, can be very disruptive, particularly during early mornings and late evenings.
- **General Activity:** The noise from people gathering, talking, and preparing their boats at all hours can significantly reduce the peace and quiet of a residential neighborhood.

These many reasons demonstrate that boat ramps are not a compatible use of land in a residential area such as our North Cortez community. **Would YOU want a boat ramp down the street from your home?**

CCCC Supports Development Compatible with our Residential Neighborhood

The prior Seafood Shack restaurant and marina complex was a part of our community of North Cortez for over fifty years. It was compatible development and supported by our residents.

Neighborhood surveys showed the following as the most popular selection of amenities in our area:

- Waterfront Dining 94%
- Bait & Tackle Shop 71%
- Passive Waterfront (Park) 66%
- Marina 60%
- Marine Fueling station

The significant real estate that boat ramps and their associated parking will occupy precludes the addition of many of the above amenities desired by the community.

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