

Good afternoon. Thank you for the opportunity to speak today.

My name is Jim McConnell, I live in Harbour Landings in Cortez, and I am president of the HOA for Harbour Landings. We have 57 homes.

There are 6 existing boat ramps within a few miles of Cortez. Collectively they have space available for 179 boat trailers. We keep hearing that there is a severe boat ramp shortage. Where is the evidence? Where is the documentation? Our visits to those facilities show that those ramps are not full. Most of the time they are at 30-50% of their current capacity. We have included photo documentation in our presentation material.

The obvious question is: "What is the current utilization of those ramps?"
How many days a year are those ramps at capacity?

Has the county ever looked at installing a smart information system that tracks usage and availability? We have all seen parking garages and rest areas along the interstate that routinely monitor and report facility availability. There are APPS for everything these days.

What is the basis for the county deciding that they need to spend money for additional boat ramps? If that reasoning is because Manatee County has a large number of registered boaters, that fact alone does not tell the complete story. Manatee county also has a large number of docks, lifts, and marinas. Those boat owners may not even own a boat trailer. Do we really need to spend money on additional boat ramps?

Have the existing ramps been optimized? It would be a lot less expensive to optimize an existing facility than it would be to build a new facility.

However, for the sake of argument, let's say that the data shows that a new boat ramp is warranted. The next question is, where is the best place to put it? Cortez Road already has a significant traffic problem. With 4,600 new homes being built at nearby Sea Flower and thousands more on the way, those traffic problems will only get worse. Why in the world would you deliberately plan to build a new facility at the far end of that gauntlet?

If a new boat ramp is necessary, locate it where it doesn't make an existing problem worse.

We understand that the total initial investment to put boat ramps at this site is around \$20 million, in addition to an annual maintenance cost. Manatee County has roughly 458,000 residents. If the new ramp can serve 50 boat trailers a day, that means the \$20 million investment only serves 0.01% of the county's residents. And, IF it is fully utilized on Saturday's during the summer and on Holidays, that only represents 5% of the time. So, we now have a \$20 million investment serving 0.01% of the population for only 5 % of the time. That does not sound like smart development, or a good use of taxpayer dollars.

Instead, develop a facility at the Seafood Shack site that fits the location, fits the site, and one that generates tax dollars instead of consuming them.

Thank You for listening.