

Good afternoon. My name is Marc Havens, and I am a resident of Cortez.

I'd like to address the matter of data gathered via surveys conducted by both Manatee County and our coalition. With \$20M of taxpayer dollars at stake, we believe it critical that a decision of this magnitude be based on relevant facts and robust data.

Firstly, we have concerns about the data you collected and its relevancy. Through an online survey and several in-person meetings, you collected a total of 967 responses. It's not clear how many responses were duplicated by individuals participating in both. Using the current estimated 458,000 people residing in the county, you collected feedback from .002% or 2/10ths of one percent of constituents, a statistically insignificant response rate. Furthermore, only two-thirds of survey respondents indicated they reside in Manatee County.

Of those surveyed, 347 (53%) responded with a recreational boat ramp as a top three choice and 98 (15%) favored a commercial ramp. At the in-person meetings, where over half live twenty miles from the site, 55 (18%) prioritized boat ramps. Collectively, 500 people, or 52%, favored boat ramps. 160-180 respondents conditionally favored boat ramps – are those included in your totals? What are their conditions? No context on the infrastructure and safety challenges associated with boat ramps on this residential site was provided in the survey or in-person meetings. Given the benefit of all relevant information, responses may have been different.

Further, many survey respondents, including my wife and I, found it challenging to put responses in the desired priority order, which may have incorrectly placed boat ramps as a higher priority than intended.

Finally, despite the Seafood Shack having successfully operated on the site for decades, you inexplicably omitted the option of a restaurant in your survey, though it was included in the focus groups. This is both inconsistent and unscientific.

By comparison, our survey went to 327 homes within a mile of the site. Since this group will be most impacted by your decision, their feedback should carry greater weight. 305 of 327 homeowners responded – a response rate of 93%. Just 1% favored a boat ramp with 99% opposed.

In summary, given the extremely small sample size of constituents who responded to your survey with no context provided, and the overwhelming opposition indicated in our survey, there is no “consensus” supporting a boat ramp.

When a reporter asks you to justify your vote in favor of spending \$20M of taxpayer money for a new boat ramp in a residential neighborhood, are you going to answer, “well, 500 of my 458,000 constituents wanted one.” I suspect if you polled your constituents and simply asked the question “what should the county do with \$20M,” a boat ramp in Cortez would appear nowhere on their radar.

Thank you for your time.