DEPARTMENT OF THE ARMY
MOBILE DISTRICT, CORPS OF ENGINEERS
P.O. BOX 2288
MOBILE, ALABAMA 36628-0001

REPLY TO
ATTENTION OF:

JOINT PUBLIC NOTICE

U. S. ARMY CORPS OF ENGINEERS
MOBILE DISTRICT

ALABAMA DEPARTMENT OF ENVIRONMENTAL MANAGEMENT

NEW WORK CONSTRUCTION
AND
MAINTENANCE DREDGING AND PLACEMENT ACTIVITIES
MOBILE HARBOR NAVIGATION PROJECT
MOBILE COUNTY, ALABAMA

Interested persons are hereby notified that the U. S. Army Corps of Engineers, Mobile District proposes to conduct new work and maintenance dredging activities associated with the Mobile Harbor navigation project.

We request the recipient of this notice to review the proposed action as it pertains to water quality, relative to Section 404(b)(1) of the Clean Water Act and the Marine Protection, Research and Sanctuaries Act. We also request comments on any other potential impacts.

WATERWAY AND LOCATION: Mobile Harbor and the Gulf of Mexico, Mobile County, Alabama.

DESCRIPTION OF ENTIRE AUTHORIZED PROJECT: The existing Mobile Harbor, Alabama navigation project **(Figure 1)**, consists of the following:

a. A 57′ x 700′ channel from the Gulf of Mexico for about seven miles to Mobile Bay;

b. A 55′ x 550′ channel from the mouth of Mobile Bay for a distance of approximately 29 miles to the mouth of Mobile River, including a passing lane two miles long and 625′ wide at mid-bay;

c. A 55′ x 750′ x 4,000′ anchorage area just south of McDuffie Island;

d. A 55′ x 1,500′ x 1,500′ turning basin opposite McDuffie Island;

e. A 40′ deep channel with the width varying from 700′, near the Mobile River mouth, to 500′, near the new Cochrane Bridge (U.S. Highway 98), a distance of about six miles;

f. A 40′ x 800′ - 1,000′ x 2,500′ turning basin opposite the Alabama State Docks between river miles 1.0 to 1.5;

g. A 40′ x 1,000′ x 1,600′ turning basin just south of the new Cochrane Bridge;

h. A 25′ x 250′ x 16,000′ channel within Chickasaw Creek;

i. A 27′ x 150′ channel (Arlington-Garrows Bend Channel) from Mobile Bay Channel westerly for 1.6 miles to a 800′ x 600′ turning basin and continuing for 1.1 miles to a 250′ x 800′ turning basin in Garrows Bend west of McDuffie Island;

j. A 40′ x 400′ channel (Theodore Ship Channel) from the main ship channel in Mobile Bay to the shoreline, a distance of about 5.3 miles, including a 300′ x 1,200′ anchorage area, and a 40′ x 300′ x 10,000′ landcut section, a 42-acre, trapezoidal shaped turning basin that is 40′ deep, continuing with a 12′ x 100′ x 6,500′ barge channel, with a 300′ x 300′ turning basin at the western terminus of the channel.

The authorized dimensions of all segments of the Mobile Harbor Project have not been constructed. The depth of the bay channel is 45′ and the outer bar channel is 47′. Each of these areas are maintained to a depth that is 10′ less than the authorized depth. Several additional features of the authorized project have not been constructed at this time. The turning basin and anchorage areas, that would be located south of the mouth of the Mobile River have not been constructed, and the bay channel and the bar channel have not been widened. These channels remain at 400′ and 600′ wide, respectively.

In addition to the Congressionally authorized channel dimensions providing for navigation, two sediment basins in the Mobile River and one sediment basin in the bay channel have been previously approved and have been constructed to provide improved channel maintenance efficiency. Each of these basins are several thousand feet long and have depths about 10 feet lower than the existing navigation channel bottom. The basins decrease frequency of dredging to provide a more cost effective and reliable channel.

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PUBLIC NOTICE NO. FP97-MH09-02

DESCRIPTION OF PROPOSED ACTION:

New work construction and maintenance dredging and placement activities are proposed for the Mobile Harbor navigation project. Approximately 1,300 feet of the upper Mobile Harbor Channel would be dredged to a depth of -49 feet, mean low water (MLW). The proposed project site is located between Little Sand Island and McDuffie Island (Station 99+50 and Station 112+50). Approximately 150,000 cubic yards of material would be dredged and deposited in the proposed Sand Island Beneficial Use Area and/or the Mobile North Ocean Dredged Material Disposal Site (ODMDS) **(Figures 1 and 2)**.

New work construction activities would be conducted by the project's sponsor, the Alabama State Docks (ASD). The ASD has requested water quality certification and concurrence with coastal zone consistency from the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers Regulatory Branch and the Alabama Department of Environmental Management, Public Notice Number AL97-01100-U.

The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers is requesting water quality certification and concurrence with coastal zone consistency for the proposed new work since the channel proposed for deepening is under the auspices of the Mobile Harbor Federal navigation project and Federal funds would be utilized to reimburse the ASD for the Federal share of construction costs. The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers would conduct maintenance dredging of the channel on an as needed basis in conjunction with the overall maintenance plan for the Mobile Harbor navigation project as described in previous public notices FP95-MH07-02 and FP97-MH08-02.

COASTAL BARRIER RESOURCES ACT (CBRA) CONSIDERATIONS: The Mobile District has determined that the proposed use of the Sand Island Beneficial Use Area (**Figure 1**) for maintenance dredging activities associated with the Mobile Harbor navigation project would qualify as an exemption under Section 6(a)(2) of CBRA. In compliance with the CBRA the proposed action is being coordinated with the U.S Department of the Interior, Fish and Wildlife Service (FWS) by this public notice.

WATER QUALITY CERTIFICATION: Pursuant to the Clean Water Act, state water quality certification is required for the proposed action. Water quality certification has been requested from the Alabama Department of Environmental Management (ADEM) for a five (5)-year period. A decision relative to water quality certification will be determined by ADEM after completion of the required comment period for this public notice.

COASTAL ZONE CONSISTENCY: Pursuant to the requirements of the Coastal Zone Management Act (CZMA), concurrence with the Mobile District's determination of coastal zone consistency has been requested from ADEM. The Mobile District has determined that the proposed action is consistent with the Alabama Coastal Program to the maximum extent practicable. A decision relative to concurrence with coastal zone consistency will be determined by ADEM upon completion of the required comment period.

USE BY OTHERS: The proposed action for the Mobile Harbor navigation project is not expected to cause any significant land use changes in the adjacent areas. Use of waters within the proposed beneficial use site include commercial fishing and shrimping and recreational boating. Material will be placed in such a manner as not to impede navigation.

NATIONAL ENVIRONMENTAL POLICY ACT (NEPA) CONSIDERATIONS: In accordance with the requirements of the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) impacts associated with navigation improvements for the Mobile Harbor navigation project were addressed in an Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) dated October, 1980. In addition, a supplemental EIS dated December 13, 1985, was prepared to address impacts associated with the offshore placement (Gulf Disposal Area) of dredged material from construction of navigation improvements and channel maintenance activities, and for the designation of an offshore placement site(s). The Record of Decision implementing the harbor improvements was signed January 8, 1987. The EIS and Supplemental EIS were coordinated with all applicable Federal, state and local agencies and the interested public.

An environmental assessment (EA) has been prepared to address impacts associated with the proposed dredging and placement activities. Appropriate revisions will be incorporated into the final EA if information is received during the coordination process that would indicate the need to revise the assessment. Copies of these documents are available for review in the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, Mobile District Office, Planning and Environmental Division.

SECTION 404(b)(1) EVALUATION REPORT: Water quality impacts associated with the proposed action have been addressed in an evaluation report prepared in accordance with guidelines promulgated by the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) under Section 404(b)(1) of the Clean Water Act. A draft Section 404(b)(1) evaluation report has been prepared to address any potential impacts associated with the placement of material in the

proposed beneficial use placement area. Appropriate revisions will be incorporated into the final report if information is received during the coordination process that would indicate the need to revise the draft report.

MARINE PROTECTION, RESEARCH AND SANCTUARIES ACT (MPRSA): In accordance with Section 103 of the Marine Protection, Research and Sanctuaries Act, the proposed transport of dredged material for the purpose of placing it in ocean waters has been evaluated. A section 103 Evaluation Report has been prepared and is available for review. It has been determined that the proposed placement will not unreasonably degrade or endanger human health, welfare or amenities of the marine environment, ecological system or economic potentialities. In making this determination, the criteria established by the Administrator, EPA, pursuant to section 102(a) of the MPRSA have been applied.

ENDANGERED AND THREATENED SPECIES: Several species listed as endangered or threatened are occasional visitors to the vicinity of the project area. The Mobile District has determined that none would be affected by the proposed action. In compliance with Section 7 of the Endangered Species Act, the proposed action is being coordinated with the U.S. Department of the Interior, Fish and Wildlife Service and the U.S. Department of Commerce, National Marine Fisheries Service.

CULTURAL RESOURCE CONSIDERATIONS: In compliance with the National Historic Preservation Act, the proposed action is being coordinated with the Alabama State Historic Preservation Officer (ASHPO). A preliminary cultural and historic resources investigation has been performed and indicates that there are no properties listed on or eligible for inclusion on the National Register that will be affected by the proposed action. It is anticipated that the ASHPO will concur with the proposed action. Copies of this notice are being forwarded to the ASHPO and the Department of Interior, National Park Service, Atlanta, GA.

FARMLAND PROTECTION POLICY ACT CONSIDERATIONS: The provisions of the act are not applicable to the proposed action since no new upland placement areas are being proposed.

EVALUATION: The decision whether to proceed with the proposed action will be based on evaluating the probable impact including cumulative impacts of the proposed activity on the public interest. That decision will reflect the national concern for both protection and

utilization of important resources. The benefits which may be reasonably expected to accrue from the proposal must be balanced against its reasonably foreseeable detriments. All factors which may be relevant to the proposal will be considered including the cumulative effects thereof; among those are conservation, economics, esthetics, general environmental concerns, wetlands, historic properties, fish and wildlife values, flood hazards, flood plain values, land use, navigation, shore erosion and accretion, recreation, water supply and conservation, water quality, energy needs, safety, food and fiber production, mineral needs, considerations of property ownership, and, in general, the needs and welfare of the people. The proposed action will proceed unless it is found to be contrary to the overall public interest.

Inasmuch as the proposed action involves the discharge of materials into navigable waters, designation of the proposed placement sites associated with this Federal project is being made under guidelines promulgated by the Administrator of the EPA in conjunction with the Secretary of the Army.

If these guidelines alone prohibit designating these proposed placement sites, any potential impairment of the maintenance of navigation, including any economic impact on navigation and anchorage which results from the failure to use this site will also be considered.

COORDINATION: Among the agencies receiving copies of this public notice are:

Region IV, Environmental Protection Agency
U.S. Department of the Interior, Fish and Wildlife Service, Daphne, Alabama
Regional Director, National Park Service
U.S. Department of Commerce, National Marine Fisheries Service, Panama City, Florida
U.S. Department of Commerce, National Marine Fisheries Service, Protected Species Management Branch, St. Petersburg, Florida
Commander, Eighth Coast Guard District
Alabama Department of Economic and Community Affairs
Alabama State Historic Preservation Officer
Alabama Department of Conservation and Natural Resources, Game and Fish Division
Alabama Department of Conservation and Natural Resources,

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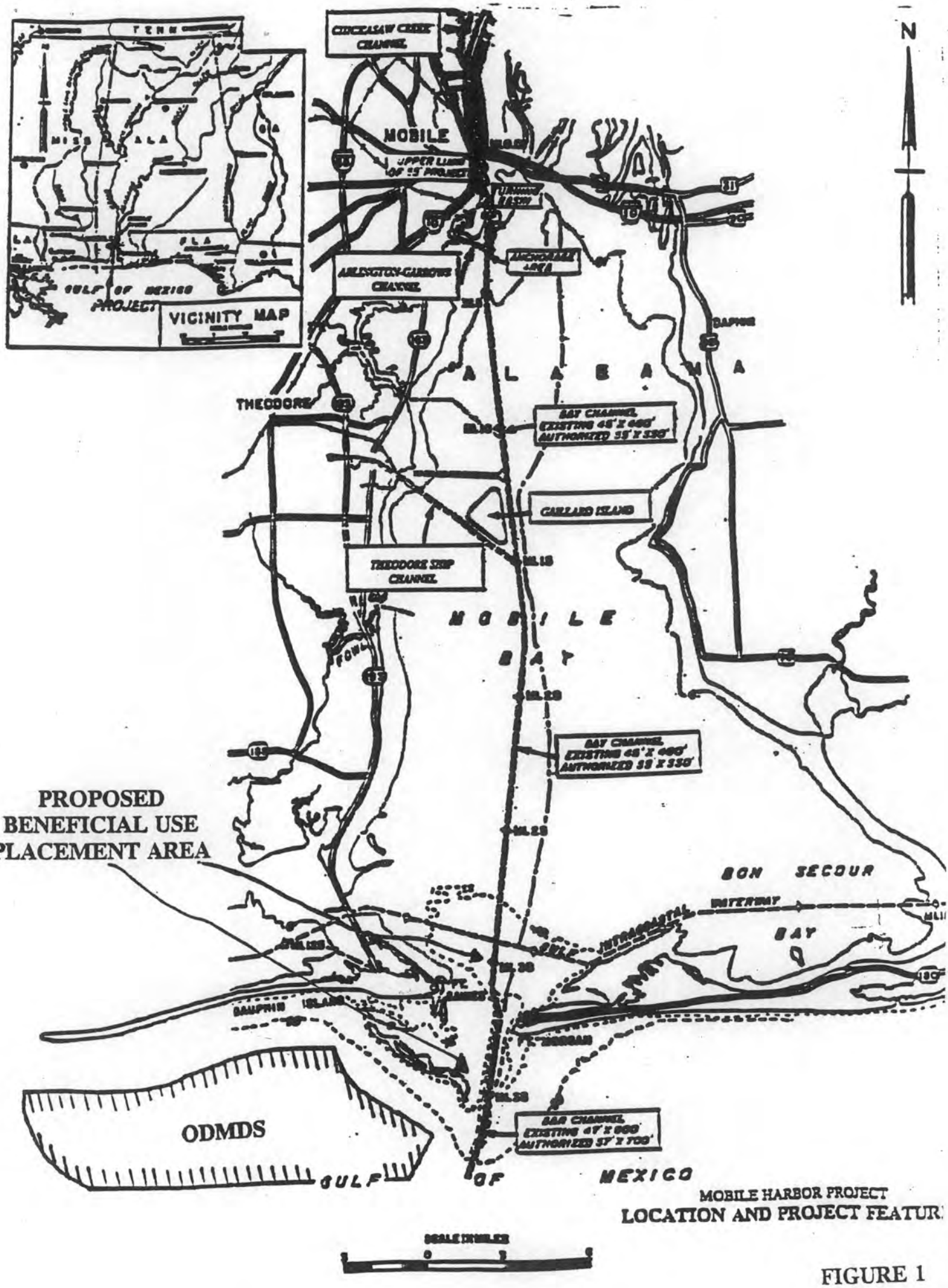
Marine Resources Division
Gulf of Mexico Fishery Management Council

Other Federal, state, and local organizations, and United States Senators and Representatives of Alabama are being sent copies of this notice and are asked to participate in coordinating this proposed action. It is requested that the information contained in this notice be communicated to any other parties who may have an interest in the proposed action.

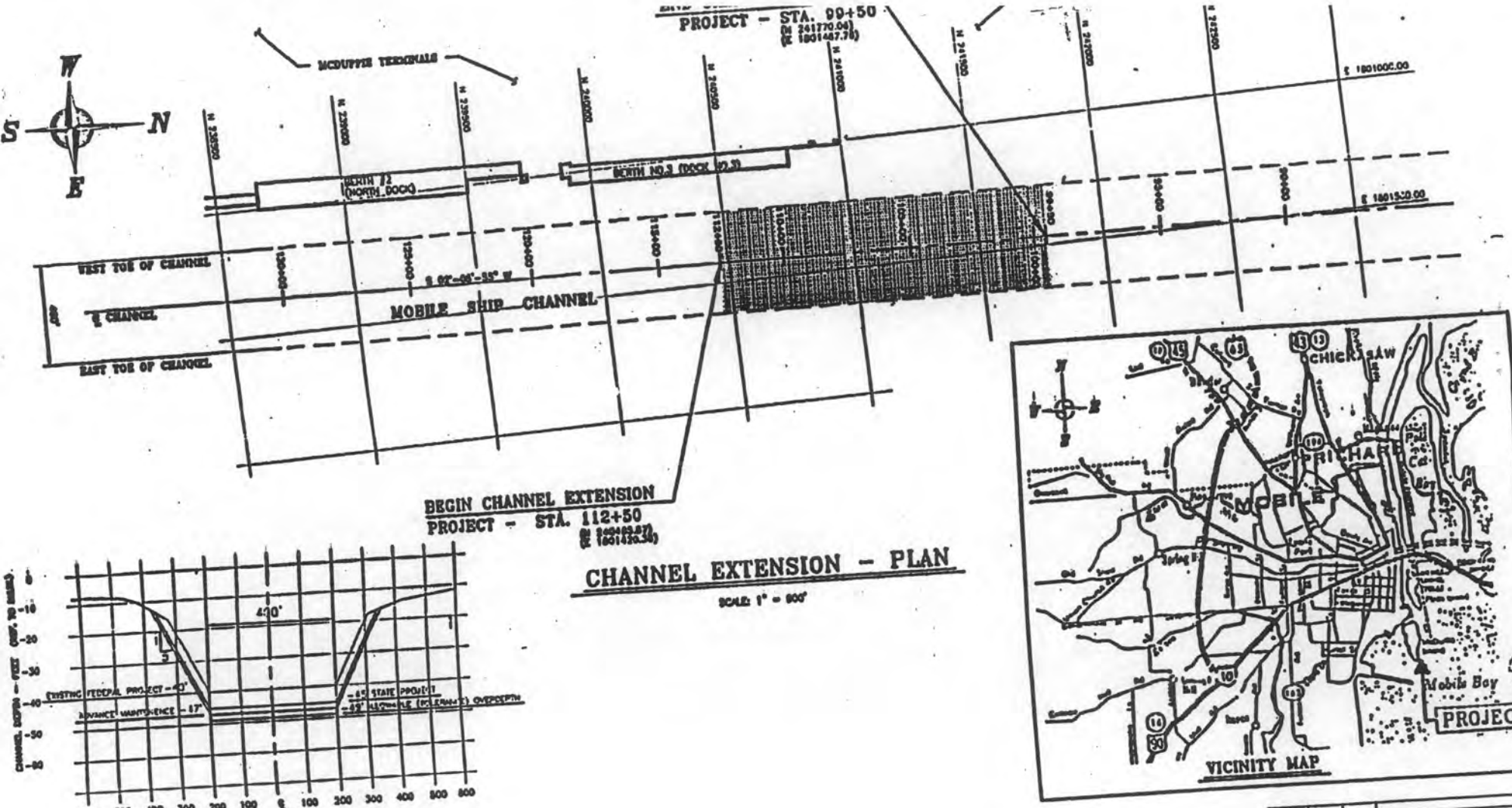
CORRESPONDENCE: Any person who has an interest which may be affected by this proposed activity may request a public hearing. Any comments or request for hearing must clearly set forth the interests which may be affected and the manner in which the interest may be affected. Correspondence concerning this Public Notice should refer to Public Notice No. FP97-MH09-02 and should be directed to the District Engineer, U.S. Army Engineer District, Mobile, P.O. Box 2288, Mobile, Alabama 36628-0001, ATTN: CESAM-PD-EC in time to be received prior to April 30, 1997. Ms. Karen H. Dethloff, telephone number 334/694-4106, may be contacted for additional information.

Curtis M. Flakes
MOBILE DISTRICT
U.S Army Corps of Engineers



MOBILE HARBOR PROJECT
LOCATION AND PROJECT FEATURE

FIGURE 1



CHANNEL EXTENSION - PLAN

SCALE: 1" = 800'

TYPICAL SECTION THRU CHANNEL EXTENSION

SCALE: N.T.S.

VICINITY MAP

LEGEND

PROPOSED CHANNEL 45' EXTENSION

500 FOOT GRID BASED ON ALABAMA STATE PLANE COORDINATE SYSTEM, WEST ZONE, NAD 1983

ALABAMA STATE DOCKS

MOBILE RIVER CHANNEL 45' EXTENSION
STA. 99+50 TO 112+50

FIGURE 2