CRC Infrastructure Sub-Committee

Project Identification Template and Instructions

Gulf Coast Convention Center

Project Identification Template

I. What – Project Information/Basic Facts

1. Project Scope Construct a new convention center to replace the previous Gulf State Park Convention Center that was destroyed by Hurricane Ivan in 2004. A proposed site plan has been developed and is attached. The new convention center is proposed to be built at the site of the previous convention center fronting the Gulf along Highway 182. The proposed facility would be a full service hotel/convention center that would include a hotel, restaurant meeting space and associated amenities. A conceptual plan for the proposed facility has been developed.

2. Project duration or schedule by phase and status of any work in progress: It would take approximately 2.5 years to complete construction of the convention center.

   2.1. Conceptual and Feasibility Planning, Engineering, Construction The engineering process has begun and it would take 6 months to complete the plans.

3. Estimated Cost (plus or minus 30%) $85,000,000

   3.1. Indicate level of confidence in accuracy of these estimates The estimate is based on partially completed construction plans.

II. Why – Project Description relative to Impact and Criteria

1. Identify what need, threat or opportunity that this project, study, or recommendation will address: The Alabama Gulf Coast lost its only beachside convention center to Hurricane Ivan in 2004 with the destruction of the Gulf State Park Convention Center. This project would replace the previous complex and would offer the opportunity to build a more hurricane resilient structure. The old convention center was the largest revenue generator of all the State Parks in Alabama and its revenue supported the system's other parks. Currently, Alabama loses that potential convention revenue to Florida and Mississippi. The convention center

would provide the Gulf Coast with an opportunity to attract year-round convention tourists and create a stable revenue stream for the region.

2. How does this project or recommendation address and impact the recommended evaluation criteria:

   2.1.1. Coastal Recovery: The construction of this project will enable the Gulf Coast to reclaim lost revenue created by the destruction of the previous convention center. Such a large complex can attract supporting industries such as restaurants and recreation facilities looking to capitalize on the center's year-round tourist population.

   2.1.2. Resiliency: The proposed convention center will be far more hurricane resilient than the previous convention center. There is an opportunity to construct a facility that meets all current building codes for a Category 5 hurricane.

   2.1.3. Transformational: It is proven that a convention center brings tourism to the area and generates revenue that can be used for local infrastructure and beach re-nourishment. It is also a fact that the Alabama Gulf Coast loses a tremendous amount of convention business to Mississippi and Florida. The convention center would reinvigorate the tourism industry thus producing revenue for small businesses.

   2.1.4. Regionalism: This convention center would not just benefit the Cities of Gulf Shores and Orange Beach but would be a considerable benefit for the region and state. Tax revenue would be generated for the State, while associations and industries throughout the region would have a convention destination at the beach. It would create a family friendly destination where all ages could enjoy the beach.

   2.1.5. Economic Diversification: Currently, tourism is dependent seasonal rentals of condominiums on the beach. The convention center would provide a year-round revenue sources and would allow for advertising directed at large organizations and commercial entities as well as the family vacationers. Conventions are organized based on location – great locations attract more conventions and convention attendees. The center can also attract a more diverse audience than the traditional vacationers; those people attending conventions come to enjoy the beach, but most likely would not be visiting the area without the convention.

3. Project Economics: The solid, long term benefits include permanent jobs related to the business of running the convention center. Small businesses who supply services to the center such as food, cleaning, office products and maintenance will benefit from the additional

tourists. People attending conventions require a different small business than the typical beach-going family.

4. Identify Direct Project benefits to Coastal Alabama, including avoided costs, consequence of "No Build" alternative: As a year-round rather than seasonal industry, the convention center would provide numerous jobs, continuous economic growth, and quality of life improvements due to its stable economic impact. If this project were not built, millions of convention and tourist dollars would continue to go to other states.

   4.1. Impact on employment, job training and development, both short term and permanent: If this project is approved, the impact would mean immediate jobs for local surveyors, engineers, and architects. It would also generate hundreds of construction jobs over an approximate two year period. Long-term service jobs would be created in the hotel, food, maintenance and convention businesses.

   4.2. Oil spill mitigation outside of claims process Not applicable

5. Identify Indirect benefits and costs

   5.1. Collateral Benefits to the objectives of Healthy Environment, Healthy Economy and Healthy Society (subjective responses allowed): The continuous revenue of the Convention Center would boost the economy, resulting in a higher standard of living, better healthcare, better housing and improved public service for residents and tourists. The center will attract large industries and associations that can produce higher tax revenues for Baldwin County and the Cities of Gulf Shores and Orange Beach.

   5.2. Collateral Costs or impacts to the objectives of Healthy Environment, Economy and Healthy Society (subjective responses all): As currently designed, the Convention Center is being proposed as a green project. As such, the impacts will be minimal and will be less than the previous site. Since the center will produce a diversified and stable revenue stream, there will be no negative impacts to the economy or society.

   5.3. Connectivity and Linkage to other projects or initiatives: Does this project complement or compete with other projects? What other projects would be precluded if this project is funded? This project does not compete with other projects in the area. The convention center would compliment all other projects proposed in the area. The beach renourishment project could attract more conventions to the center and the improved access and traffic capacity offered by the Baldwin Beach Express would give more incentive for conventions to be held on the Alabama Gulf Coast.

III. Who/How – General Information

1. Name and contact information for Entity, Collaboration or Person submitting project or recommendation nomination.

   1.1. Entities and communities sharing a common threat or need are encouraged to collaborate for a joint/combined project submittal to raise the profile of the issue and solution to be addressed. Also please indicate the level of community support or resistance and hurdles to collaboration.

   The State of Alabama, Baldwin County and the Cities of Gulf Shores and Orange Beach are in strong support of this project. Local businesses are also in support of the project.

2. Identify Sponsoring Entity for oversight and accountability if different from above.

   2.1. Existing or to be created? Baldwin County Commission

   2.1.1. If to be created, what parties or interests must be involved and what level of effort is required to do so? The Baldwin County Commission, the State of Alabama and the Cities of Gulf Shores and Orange Beach would be involved in the project.

   2.2. Describe governance, organizational capacity, availability of skills, experience of sponsoring entity to implement the Project: The Baldwin County Commission has substantial expertise to facilitate such a project and would coordinate with other local, state and private agencies for assistance.

   2.3. Project complexity: Hurdles and barriers to project implementation, completion and sustainability. Identify regulatory issues. Environmental concerns would need to be addressed with the design of the convention center. The beach mouse, sea turtles and other environmental impacts would be accommodated in the design of the facility.

3. Identify any known or anticipated administrative, regulatory, or legislative action that would be required at either the local, state, or federal governmental level. This is a State Park Project and as such would require normal regulatory approvals. The site is cleared and the final environmental impacts would need to be evaluated as plans are developed.

4. Requested funding from Coastal Recovery Fund (CRF) $85,000,000

5. Identified potential funding sources other than the CRF The State of Alabama has been identified as a potential funding source.

5.1. Leverage or multiplier on CRF investment: matching funds, public or private No private funds are known, but the State of Alabama may provide some form of matching.

5.2. Public Private Opportunities, user fees, Federal funds, private foundation grants, bonding capacity, etc. No opportunities for other funding sources have been identified.

6. Forecast of ongoing maintenance or operating costs and source of funding if not self sustaining: This would become a self sustaining project from the year-round revenue generated by the operation of the convention center.