

## **Revised – Amended**

**To: All Harbor Island Owners**  
**From: Harbor Island Owners Association Board of Directors**  
**Subject: Special Assessment**

### **INTRODUCTION**

The Board of Directors of the Harbor Island Owners Association unanimously recommends that owners approve a special assessment to pay for a badly needed capital project, the major repair to the Ocean Marsh Bridge. This memorandum provides the basic information about this project. The engineering studies that demonstrate the need for these repairs are available for your review on the HIOA website. **The special meeting to consider this proposal will be held on May 12 at 9:00a.m. in the Community Center. If you cannot attend that meeting, please complete the attached mail ballot and return it to HIOA by 4:00pm on May 10, 2018. The covenants require a quorum of 60% of all owners, so it is important that you either attend in person or return your ballot.**

We strongly recommend that you read those reports as soon as possible to understand our needs. When you do, you will understand why it is critical to undertake this project now. The experts we have contacted conclude, and the Board agrees, that delaying repairs will lead to further deterioration and ultimately far more costly work as the bridge would have to be replaced at an estimated cost of \$1,200,000 or more. Thus, the Board has decided to proceed with repairs to the bridge, and the question is one of how it is to be financed.

The total cost of this project, as estimated by our engineering firms, will be about \$612,300, or about \$975 for each of our 628 properties. The Board is keenly aware of the financial losses owners have suffered because of Hurricanes Matthew and Irma and of the other assessments many of you face. Nevertheless, the work must be done. A special assessment will allow it to proceed without impairing the reserves that we need to maintain for future infrastructure projects. If the special assessment is not approved, we will have to look at other funding alternatives, many of which will be less palatable than what we are proposing here.

In order to make the special assessment more manageable, owners will have the option to pay the total amount over two years at \$487.50 per year, to be billed at the same time as the usual assessment. Owners who choose to pay in full at the beginning of the first year will receive a 5% discount.

### **BACKGROUND**

Repairing the Ocean Marsh Bridge is our primary infrastructure priority at this time. The bridge connecting Ocean Marsh to the rest of the Island, like the bridges on Harbor Drive, was built elsewhere over 35 years ago. The original developer transported it from some unknown location and placed it in its current location around 1985. As far as we can tell, it was not designed for a coastal climate. The bridge has aged poorly, with continuing damage from salt water and salt

air. Last year's hurricane exacerbated the damages. Both engineering firms that inspected it warned that if the bridge is not replaced or repaired promptly, we might have to impose further weight limitations on it. That could interfere with building and remodeling of Ocean Marsh houses. Further deterioration could force the closure of the bridge, cutting off Ocean Marsh from Harbor Drive.

The Board considered both repair and replacement. We decided to move forward with repairs at a cost of about \$612,300.00. The engineering firm we selected informed us that repairs and continued maintenance will extend the life of the bridge for as much as 20 years. Doing nothing is simply not an option. Without action, the bridge will continue to deteriorate and ultimately fail. The load bearing capacity of the bridge was reduced following its most recent inspection. There is degradation in the load bearing beams at the abutments on both end and the bents (the structures in the Marsh). The structural components of the bents also have cracks and concrete spalling. The bridge will continue to degrade at an indeterminate but accelerated rate if these conditions are not addressed. Further, the degradation could migrate to the midspan of the beams; if this occurs, the repair option will no longer be available, and we'll be forced into the more expensive replacement option.

Fortunately, the proposed repair work is common in process and scope. We intend to proceed with it in order to avoid the greater expense of bridge replacement.

## **CONCLUSION**

The Board spent many hours considering the options available to us. After doing so to the best of our ability and with the advice of the best engineers we could find, we all agree that this special assessment proposal is the most economically sensible approach HIOA can take. That is why we unanimously recommend that you approve it.

We would be happy to answer any questions you have about this proposal. Please feel free to email or call us.

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