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Cost halts Rubicon connection

Link to basin would have helped boaters

By OSVALDO PADILLA, opadilla@news-press.com
Published by [news-press.com](http://www.news-press.com) on July 22, 2004

Plans to connect the Rubicon Canal to the Bimini Basin have been docked for now.

some panache to the downtown area.

that would allow boats to pass from the Versailles Canal under the street and along Four Freedoms Park.

The CRA has voted to postpone pursuing the connection after an initial estimate for the project came in at \$8 million.

Another factor that played into the decision to delay the connection is a proposed multimillion-dollar waterfront project by VK Development. VK, a company in Wisconsin, is working on plans to build condominiums with ground-level shops on the west side of the Bimini Basin.

The bridge and waterway could take up to two years to build. VK could start building earlier than that.

underground utilities, tearing up roads and changing the configuration of alleyways.

"It's a shame," said Don Taft, who owns a home on the Rubicon. He and his neighbors have eagerly anticipated the enhanced waterway.

"We were looking forward to taking a boat down and parking in the basin," said Taft.

The connection was also expected to help clean up the canal.

Duckweed, an aquatic fern, often builds up during the rainy season. Boaters often complain the bloom clogs their engines. Garbage and debris also tend to build up at Southeast 47th Terrace, where the Rubicon dead-ends.

Opening the canal would, theoretically, flush the weed and debris into the basin and out into the gulf.

Taft fears a delay could put the project in jeopardy forever.

"I think it's crazy not to do it now," he said. "If you wait five years, it's no longer \$8 million, it's \$15 million."

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