

The Partnership Process: Proactive Approaches



December 5, 2007
The Four Gates Company

The Story







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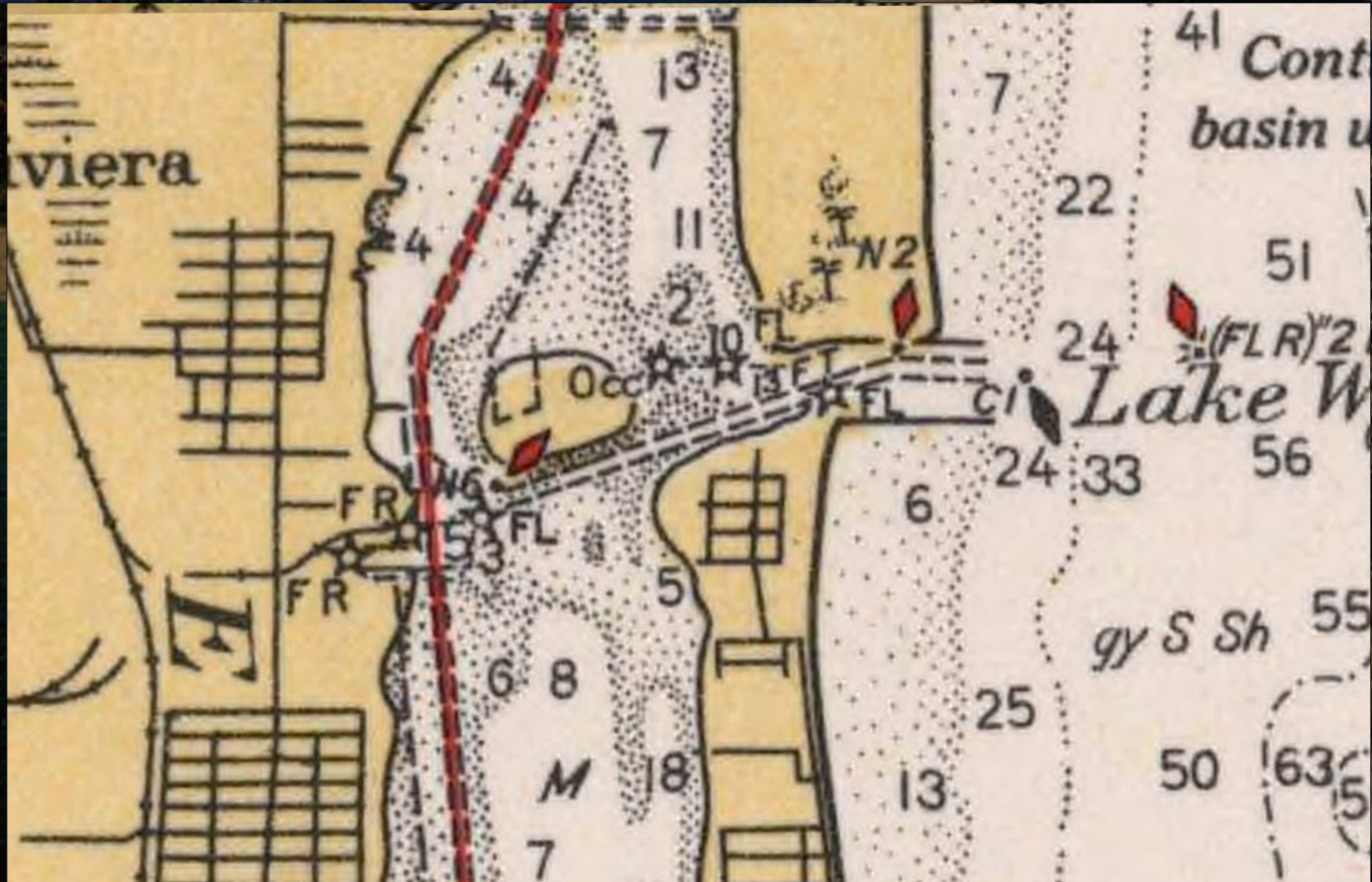
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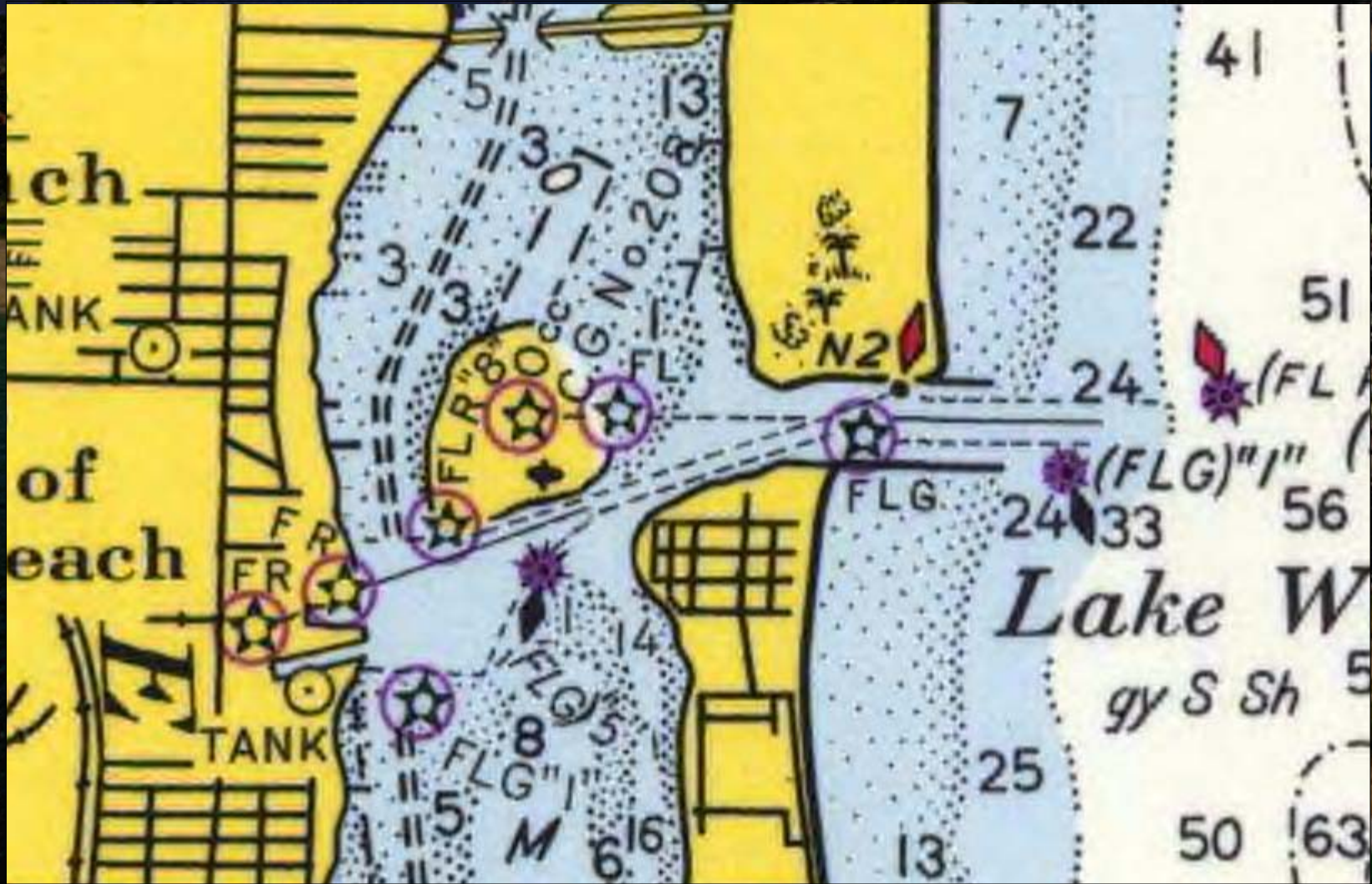
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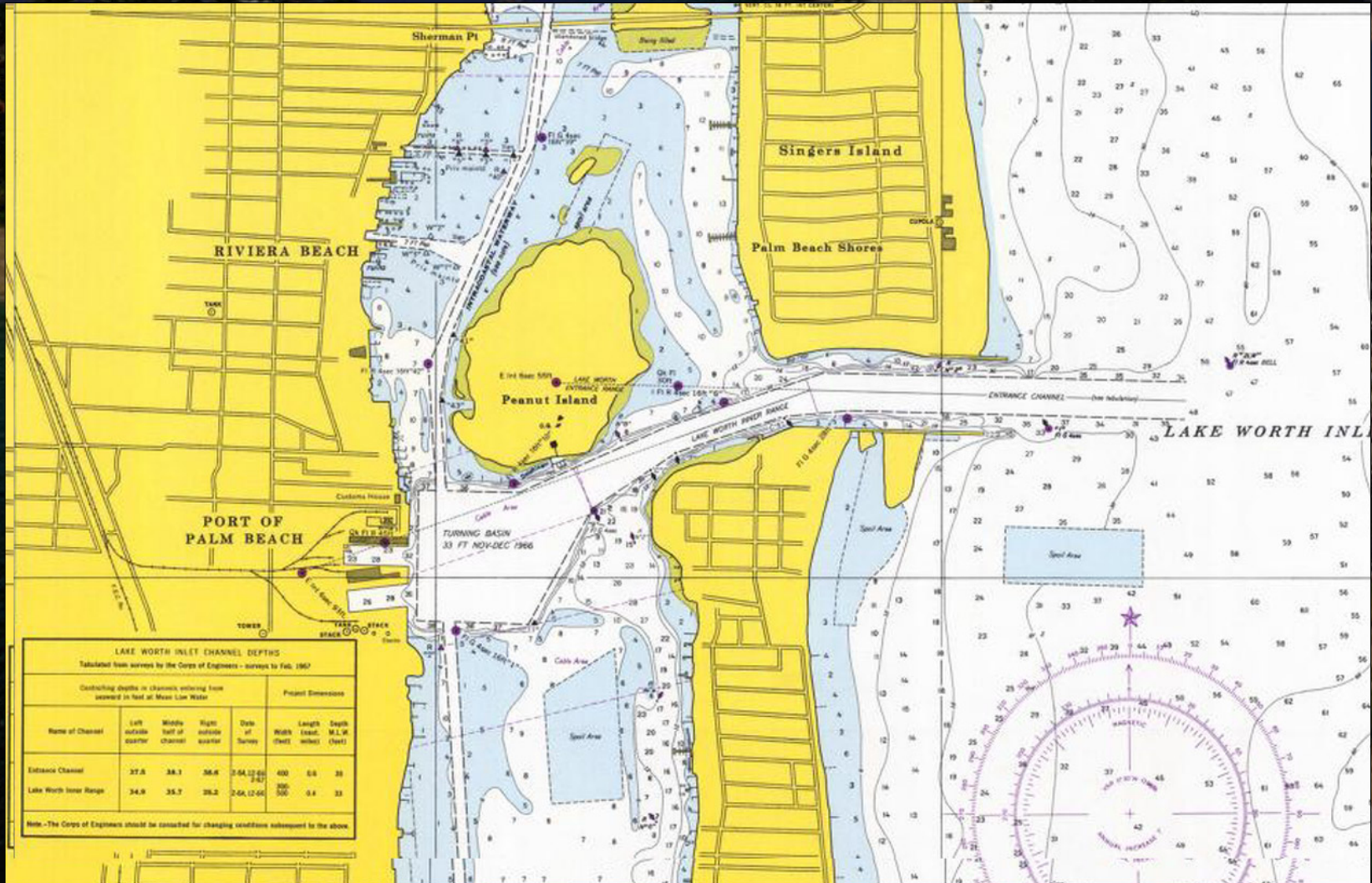
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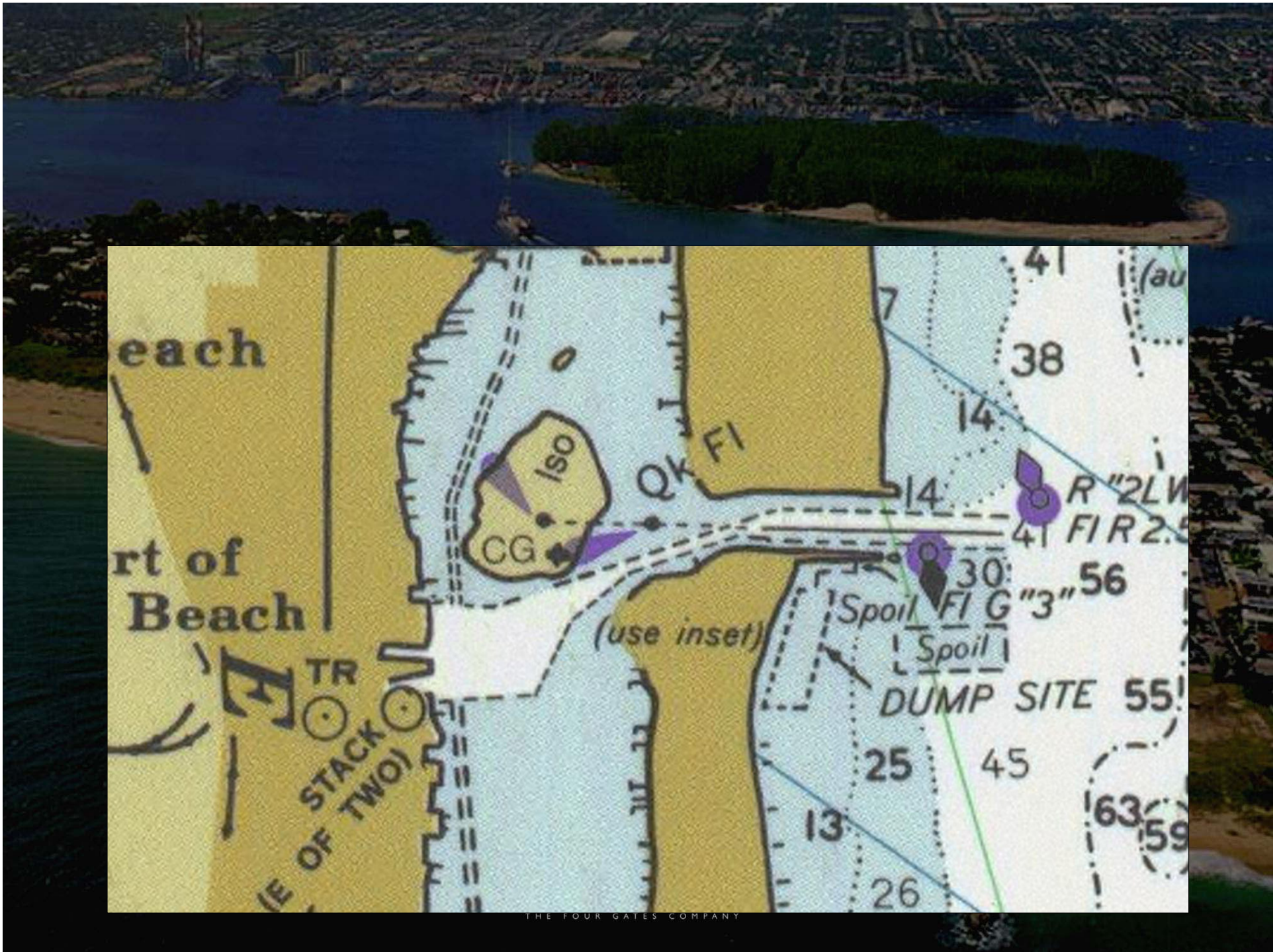
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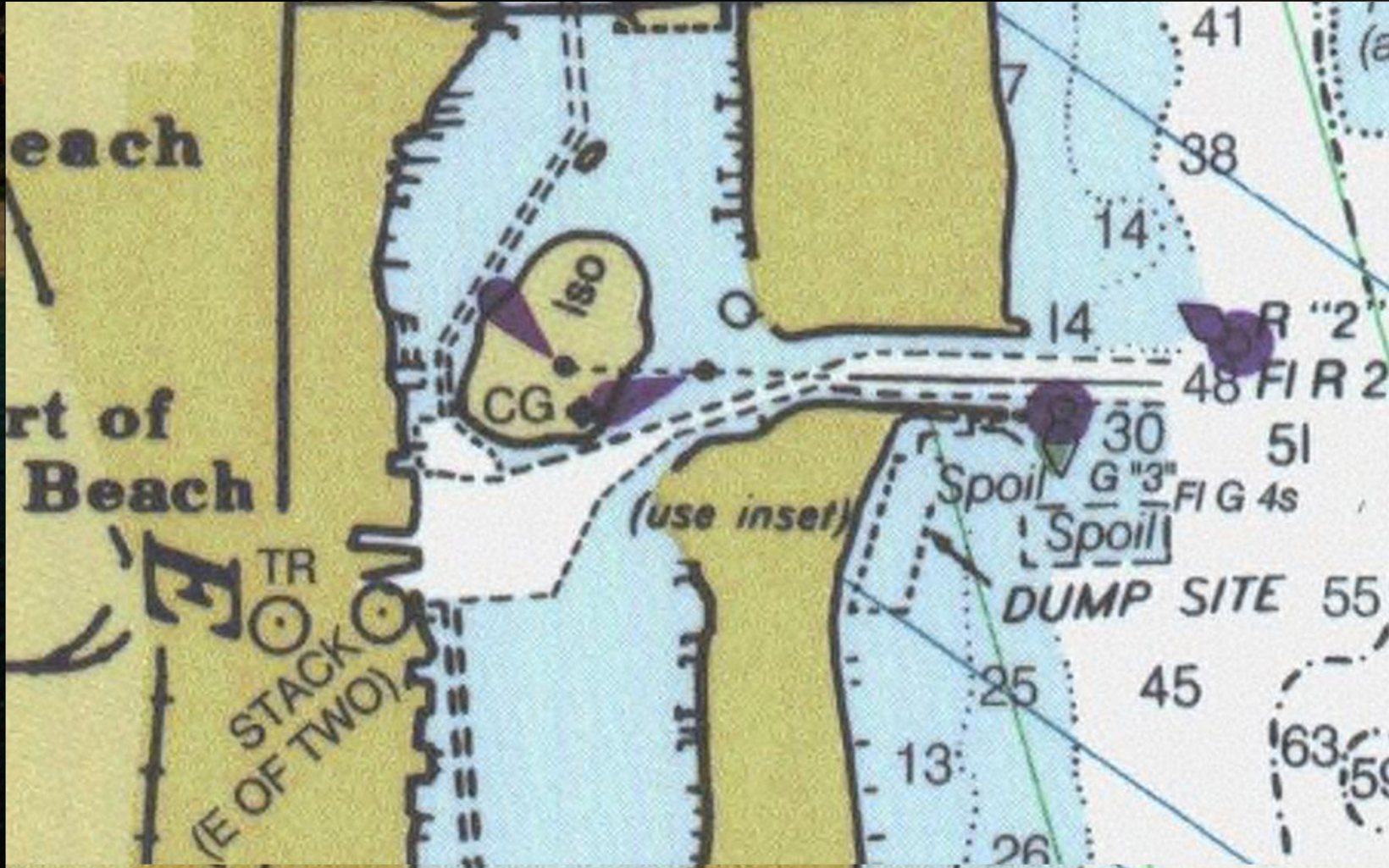
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The Players



Palm Beach

- One of wealthiest communities in the nation
 - 4 out of Florida's 10 billionaires
 - \$15 billion in real estate
- Powerful with means to assure that their voice will be heard
- Not happy with inlet management



The Port



- Not happy with inlet management either
- Shoaling major disruption to navigation
 - Daylight, high tide, tug-assisted limits
- Frustrating the port's growth

Palm Beach County

- Larger role
 - Economics and environment
 - Support port and beach nourishment
 - Participate in sand management responsibilities
 - Go-to environmental advisors for agencies
 - Want a voice in how decisions made
- History of bad blood between Town and County
 - Litigation on responsibilities, including financial responsibilities

The USACE

- Responsible for management of inlet
- Not always successful in getting sand to beaches or keeping inlet open
- Host of lingering, unresolved management options
- Balancing between Port , Town and County
- Atmosphere of litigation



The Facilitation



The Challenge

- **Three powerful, important entities who disagreed about inlet management**
 - Technical disagreement about execution of management options
 - Policy disagreements
 - Funding disagreements
 - USACE virtually immobilized on long range solutions
 - Threats of litigation
- **Manifestation**
 - No one was successful

Winds of Change

- Late summer of 2004, Port of Palm Beach saw several major phenomena:
 - New Port Director
 - Two hurricanes which caused devastating shoaling and beach erosion
 - Emergency dredging needed
- Extent of disagreements became clear
 - Temporary solution not enough when litigation loomed
 - Port Director reactivated a little used Memorandum of Agreement

The Tri-Party Coalition

- Port of Palm Beach, Palm Beach County and Town of Palm Beach
- USACE as Partner
- Facilitated Meetings
- Goal: Consensus-built approach to inlet management issues

Approach

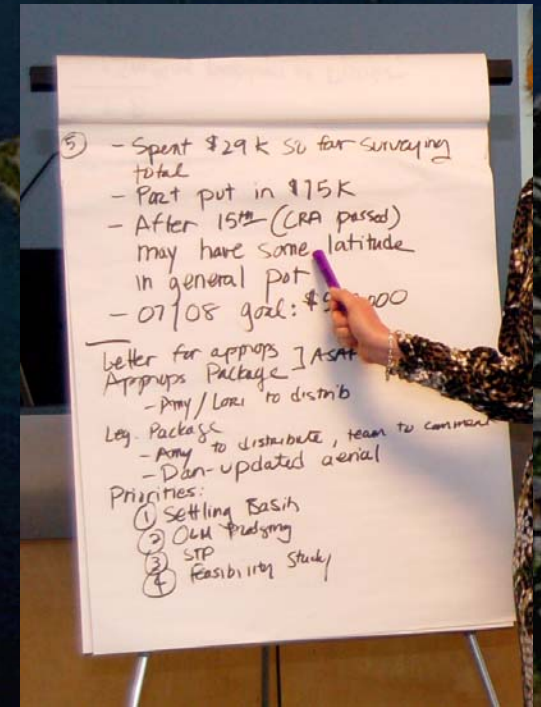
- Role of Facilitator: Neutral problem-solver
 - Understanding of consensus-building techniques
 - Understanding of federal harbor project issues, USACE, environmental permitting and coastal processes
 - *Not the technical expert*
 - *Neutral on issues, but shared experience*

Setting the Stage

- Extensive Preparation
 - Interviews with key players
 - Review of documents
 - *Understand issues and perspectives*
- Got agreement on agenda and expectations before first meeting
- Did not try to resolve issues outside of meeting

First Meeting

- Extent of disagreement wasn't overstated
- However, areas of agreement were in fact, self evident:
 - Preserve navigation
 - Protect beaches
 - Protect environment
- How to achieve goals became the topic
- As soon as this was established, group began to work together



Collaborative Process

- Management Solutions
 - Intensive policy and technical dialog
 - Special studies commissioned and incorporated into process
 - Every member had responsibilities and was accountable
 - Eventually, we all agreed on the specific solutions and goals
 - Dialog outside of meetings very important
- Policy Implementation
 - Developed a legislative and funding agenda
 - Second year that the coalition has presented together in Washington, D.C. to delegation

Benefits

- **Coalition of allies**
 - Powerful force from which each benefit technically and politically
- **Future ramifications**
 - Port/USACE embarking on expansion study
 - Coalition is basis for open communication and dialog on issues

Why Did it Work?

- Strong leadership
 - Coalition members smart, engaged and consistent
 - USACE committed to process and producing result
 - Technical issues could be resolved with modest compromises
- Members could show success on home front – the coalition means good business
- Follow-Through
- Meetings continue
 - Members involved and communicating
 - Serves as a proactive forum for new and evolving issues



Facilitation Can't Solve Everything

- Start process too late
- Lack of commitment in leadership and staff
- Expectations too high
 - Time and results
 - Often neutralization of opposition best hope
- Intentions and information withheld
- Technical basis unsound or disputed

Summary

- **Facilitation can be a good tool for problem-solving**
- **It can be used in challenging circumstances, or as a regular consensus-building tool**
- **In severe situations, other types of collaborative processes might be needed**
- **Facilitation is a process**

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