



**US Army Corps
of Engineers®**

Seattle District

Notice of Preparation

Environmental & Cultural Resources Branch
P.O. Box 3755
Seattle, WA 98124-3755
ATTN: (EN-ER)

Public Notice Date: November 7, 2014
Expiration Date: N/A
Reference: EN-ER-14-06
Project Name: Seattle Harbor Navigation
Improvement Project

Interested parties are hereby notified that the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, Seattle District (Corps) plans to prepare, pursuant to the National Environmental Policy Act, an environmental assessment (EA) for the Seattle Harbor Navigation Improvement Project. The Corps will analyze alternatives for navigation improvements to the East and West Waterways of Seattle Harbor, including potential deepening of these waterways. To remain a competitive port of call among Pacific trade routes, the Port of Seattle, a major gateway for containerized traffic, must have sufficient depth of water for partially loaded vessels to call and to take on additional cargo.

AUTHORITY

The proposed feasibility study is authorized by Section 216 of the Flood Control Act of 1970 (33 USC 426 et seq.) as amended. The statute authorizes review of the operation of projects constructed by the Corps in the interest of navigation and other purposes when found advisable due to significantly changed physical or economic conditions, and then report recommendations to Congress. The Port of Seattle is the local sponsor.

PROPOSED ACTION

The Corps has initiated the plan formulation process and will consider structural and non-structural measures that address problems in the study area and meet the planning objectives of the study. Initial alternatives include deepening the East and West Waterways up to -55 feet mean lower low water (MLLW). Further analysis will include evaluation of all reasonable alternatives to address problems and opportunities, including an evaluation of the No Action Alternative.

The purpose of the project is to achieve transportation cost savings to and from Seattle Harbor.

ANTICIPATED IMPACTS

The Corps' preliminary analyses of the principal effects to resources in the study area included fish and wildlife resources, historical and cultural resources, and tribal, economic, and real estate considerations. Some of the potential impacts already identified to resources during the Reconnaissance Phase include the following:

- potential underwater noise disturbance to fish, marine mammals, and diving birds during dredging
- potential change to upstream extent of the salinity gradient in the Duwamish waterway
- risks associated with contaminated sediment and turbidity during dredging
- disturbance to and mortality of bottom-dwelling fish and invertebrates

- need for coordination with local tribes prior to and during construction to avoid impacts to fisheries

All potential impacts will be analyzed during the alternatives evaluation phase and disclosed in the EA.

EVALUATION

The Corps has made a preliminary determination that the environmental impacts of the proposal can be adequately evaluated under the National Environmental Policy Act through preparation of an EA. Preparation of an EA addressing potential environmental impacts associated with the Seattle Harbor Navigation Improvement Project is underway.

The Corps invites submission of comments on the environmental impact of the proposal and issues for consideration in the EA. The Corps will consider all submissions received throughout the scoping phase of the EA. The nature or scope of the proposal may be changed upon consideration of the comments received. The Corps will initiate an Environmental Impact Statement (EIS), and afford all of the appropriate public participation opportunities attendant to an EIS, if significant effects on the quality of the human environment are identified and cannot be mitigated.

Submit comments to this office, Attn: Environmental & Cultural Resources Branch to ensure consideration. In addition to sending comments via mail, comments may be e-mailed to SeattleHarbor@usace.army.mil. This Notice of Preparation can be found at the following website:

<http://bit.ly/SeattleHarborGI> under “*Seattle Harbor Notice of Preparation of Environmental Assessment*”. Requests for additional information should be directed to Nancy Gleason at 206-764-6577 or the above e-mail address.

PUBLIC MEETING

The Corps and the Port of Seattle will host a Public Information Meeting. Members of the public are invited to attend to learn about the proposed project and to provide feedback on issues they believe the Corps should evaluate during the alternatives evaluation process.

Date: Wednesday, November 19, 2014

Time: 5:30pm – 7:30pm

Location: South Seattle Community College – Georgetown Campus
Room C110 – Gene Colin Education Building
6737 Corson Avenue South
Seattle, WA 98108