



US Army Corps
of Engineers®
Seattle District

"Building Infrastructure, Not Paperwork"

Seattle Harbor Navigation Improvement Project

Area of Effort: Focus on Efficiency

Initiative: Increasing Dredging Capacity: Better Use of Simulation When Designing Navigation Projects

Background:

The project is located at the Port of Seattle, Washington, on Elliott Bay in Puget Sound, and includes the West and East Waterways. Combined with the Port of Tacoma as the Northwest Seaport Alliance (NWSA), it is amongst the largest container gateways. The NWSA is the primary deepwater competitor in the Pacific Northwest, optimized for heavy export cargo like seafood and agricultural products that require deeper drafts when fully laden. The Port of Seattle serves as a strategic gateway for American imports and exports. In addition to acting as a supply chain hub for Hawaii and Alaska, the port primarily handles transpacific cargo moving between Asia and the large population and agricultural centers in the Midwest and Northeast. The Port of Seattle serves as a critical rail hub for consumer supply lines – 70% of intermodal containers that move through the Puget Sound are destined for either the Midwest or Northeast. The current authorized depth of Seattle Harbor does not meet the industry needs of modern trans-pacific trade vessels and ships coming to Seattle often light load or experience tidal restrictions which introduce transportation cost inefficiencies into the supply chain.



Project Summary:

The project provides transportation cost savings for larger vessels calling at the Port. Currently, the West Waterway has a depth of -38 feet MLLW. Larger vessels have to wait for high tide to dock, resulting in delays and other transportation inefficiencies when arriving and departing the waterway. By accommodating more fully loaded vessels, transportation costs will decrease, ultimately leading to a more cost-efficient transportation system and improved capacity for increased trade and lower-priced goods. The project includes the deepening of the federal channels within Seattle Harbor to -56 feet MLLW and will result in the port ranking among the deepest container ports in North America, at a depth greater than competing ports in Canada. The benefit to cost ratio for the deepening of the West Waterway is 10.5, meaning that for each dollar invested in the deepening, the nation sees an economic benefit of over \$10 in return.

Status:

The project is currently in design and is scheduled for award of the construction contract in 2028.

Project Sponsor:

The Port of Seattle

Authority:

Section 1401 (1) of America's Water Infrastructure Act (WRDA) 2018, Public Law 115-270.

