

Draft Environmental Assessment of the Comprehensive Port Improvement Plan Available for Review

Public Meetings Scheduled for October 18th and 20th

The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA), U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (USACE), and Federal Highway Administration (FHWA), acting as Federal co-lead agencies, have completed preparation of the Draft Environmental Assessment (EA) for the Comprehensive Port Improvement Plan (CPIP) for the Port of New York and New Jersey. The agencies invite you to review and comment on the Draft CPIP EA and to participate in upcoming public meetings at which the study's findings will be presented and discussed.

The public meetings (for which directions are available at www.cpipeis.com) are as follows:

October 18, 12:00 – 2:00 PM

New York Metropolitan Transportation Council
199 Water Street – Conference Room
New York, New York

October 20, 12:00 – 2:00 PM

North Jersey Transportation Planning Authority
1 Newark Center – Conference Room
Newark, New Jersey

The Draft EA will be posted on the CPIP website (www.cpipeis.com) on or about October 3rd. Written comments on the Draft EA should be mailed no later than November 9th, the close of the public comment period, to: Grace Musumeci, Chief, Environmental Review Section, United States Environmental Protection Agency, 290 Broadway, 25th Floor, New York, NY 10007-1866.

The Comprehensive Port Improvement Plan: The CPIP is a port-wide plan that is intended to serve as a framework for the future development of the Port of New York and New Jersey, over the next 60 years, in an environmentally sustainable, economically enhancing, and financially viable way. The Plan addresses future cargo demand, port capacity, and potential future port improvements for the Port, as a whole, and for seven of its terminals. The Port sites in New York that are considered in the CPIP are Howland Hook Marine Terminal in Staten Island and Red Hook/North Brooklyn Container Terminal and South Brooklyn Marine Terminal in Brooklyn. The Port sites in New Jersey that are considered in the CPIP are Port Newark Marine Terminal in the City of Newark; Port Elizabeth Marine Terminal in the City of Elizabeth; Port Jersey (Global Marine and Auto Marine Terminal) in the City of Jersey City; and The Peninsula at Bayonne Harbor in the City of Bayonne.

The CPIP forecasts that the capacity in the entire Port will be sufficient for several decades for all cargo types, and that implementation of port improvements is not required in the near-term.

Port-related truck traffic will continue to grow, but it will continue to be a small percentage of total traffic, with port-related traffic increases most evident in future decades on local connector roads serving the seven port sites. CPIP forecasts also indicate that there is sufficient suitable acreage in New Jersey near the port sites to accommodate future warehousing demand while avoiding the need to use areas of wetlands or other environmentally sensitive areas.

Therefore, the CPIP defines four alternative conceptual, long-term scenarios for port improvements and associated transportation improvements. Each of the alternative scenarios defines a different combination of uses at each of the seven port sites and overall port-wide arrangements of uses that would collectively be sufficient to handle future cargo-handling needs to the year 2060, the CPIP forecast horizon year. The CPIP does not define specific actions or projects that would be necessary to implement any of the scenarios, because future decisions about the scope and timing of individual port site improvements will be dictated both by capacity needs and market forces.

The Environmental Assessment: The Draft CPIP EA provides a qualitative analysis of the types of potential impacts that may result with the CPIP's conceptual long-term port-improvement scenarios. On the basis of this environmental review, the EPA, USACE, and FHWA have determined that future projects that may be proposed to implement the CPIP may have environmental impacts and would be required to undergo applicable environmental review processes. Therefore, the Draft CPIP EA also identifies the types of environmental reviews that may be required of port-improvement projects that may be proposed in the future.

The EA identifies potential impacts that may result with each of the scenarios related to: property acquisition; adjacent and nearby roadways; regional air quality; nearby noise-sensitive uses; nearby historic resources; on- and off-site hazardous materials; nearby open space and parks; on- and off-site protected species and special habitats; water quality; on- and off-site aquatic habitat; and minority and low-income populations that may be disproportionately affected by adverse impacts. Based on the qualitative evaluation conducted for the EA, all of the future scenarios would likely result in some degree of impact related to most of the categories considered.

The qualitative assessments documented in the Draft CPIP EA do not provide the basis or rationale for recommending a preferred alternative scenario. However, CPIP-related port-improvement projects that may be proposed in the future will be subject to federal, state, and/or local environmental reviews, depending on the particulars of each project. Initially, future projects can follow the analyses outlined in the EA, but with project- and site-specific details and with updated information that is available at such time as those environmental reviews are undertaken. The Draft CPIP EA provides methodologies for assessment of various environmental impact categories as guidance for future environmental reviews; these will need to be reviewed against environmental regulations and guidance that are in force at such time as the environmental reviews are undertaken, and updated, as necessary.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION: Visit www.cpipeis.com