

**MEETING SUMMARY**  
**Turning Basins Widening Study**  
**Community Stakeholder Informational Session #2**  
**January 12, 2022, 6-7:30pm**  
Via Zoom Teleconference

Approximately 60 attended

**MEETING OBJECTIVES**

- Provide the community with an overview of the draft Integrated Feasibility Report and Environmental Assessment (IFR/EA)
- Gather community stakeholder feedback on the draft IFR/EA

**Project Team Attendees and Presenters:**

Port of Oakland: Bryan Brandes, Laura Arreola, Andrea Gardner, Jan Novak, Justin Taschek, Jason Garben Edwin Draper

US Army Corps of Engineers (USACE): LTC Kevin Arnett, Karen Baumert, Tessa Beach, Eric Joliffe, Erika Powell, Courtney Anderson, Jin Yang, Art Laikram

Facilitator Team: Surlene Grant, Debbie Schechter

**Introductions, Welcome and Meeting Purpose**

Facilitator Surlene Grant of Envirocom Communications Strategies introduced herself and welcomed everyone to the meeting. She reviewed the meeting objectives, agenda, and format. The meeting is the second of two community meetings regarding the turning basins widening project. The purpose is to provide an overview of the Draft IFR/EA and to hear feedback from community members. It is a public information meeting, not a meeting to receive formal public comment on the environmental document. Comments on the IFR/EA should be submitted by email or mail.

Lt. Col. Kevin Arnett, USACE District Commander, thanked everyone for attending. Bryan Brandes, Port Maritime Director, spoke about the Port's partnership with USACE. He explained that turning basins are critical infrastructure to allow vessels to turn around. The Port is now receiving vessels that are triple the size for which the turning basins were designed, resulting in maneuvering restrictions and delays. Widening of the turning basins will allow efficient movement of vessels in the Port and alleviate congestion.

**Attendees**

Surlene reviewed a diverse list of organizations in attendance and mentioned representatives of elected officials from the Oakland City Council, Alameda City Council and Alameda County Board of Supervisors. Agency representatives from the Bay Area Air Quality Management District, the Bay Conservation and Development Commission and the US Environmental Protection Agency also attended.

**Background Recap**

Laura Arreola, Port Community and Stakeholder Engagement Manager, explained that the first community stakeholder meeting on the turning basins project was held on August 23, 2021 to introduce the study and potential project and receive community stakeholder input on information and engagement. The timing of the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) and the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) processes are not occurring simultaneously, thus community engagement for CEQA is to come and will build upon this study's ongoing community engagement.

Justin Taschek, Turning Basins Project Manager, explained that the widening study is in its second year of an anticipated 10-year overall process to complete improvements. At the August meeting, the Port received community input on environmental concerns, how to minimize construction impacts to community stakeholders, what information is important and how best to keep the community informed. Community members also stressed the importance of having frequent and regular updates on the project and minimizing jargon. These comments have informed the project.

Justin explained that turning basins allow vessels to make a U-turn so that they can tie up at berths on the appropriate side and plug into electricity. The Port has one turning basin in the outer harbor and one in the inner harbor. The Port is now receiving vessels that are too long for its turning basins.

### Study Overview

Karen Baumert, USACE Plan Formulator, explained that the Feasibility Study is being conducted in partnership between USACE and the Port. The purpose is to determine if there is a technically feasible, environmentally acceptable, and economically justified recommendation for federal participation in a navigation improvement project for the Inner and Outer Harbor turning basins in the Oakland Harbor. If there is, then USACE will make a recommendation to Congress for federal participation in the project and will request project funding.

### Integrated Feasibility Report and Environmental Assessment (IFR/EA) Overview

Karen Baumert described the feasibility study process and timeline. The study is required to be completed in three years with a \$3 million budget. The study team has been evaluating an array of alternatives and has tentatively selected a plan for additional analysis. The study is in the alternative evaluation and analysis phase. The draft IFR/EA Report was released on December 17, 2021 and the public review period ends on January 31, 2022. Comments on the plan will be reviewed and evaluated. The next step is to prepare a final IFR/EA with more detail on the recommended plan. The goal is to make a recommendation to Congress in May/June 2023. Then, Congress would decide if additional funding is authorized for design.

The project team is recommending the nation's first comprehensive benefits plan which includes in addition to economic benefits, community, and environmental benefits. In short, the project team is recommending a project with additional costs that include a construction commitment for using electric dredging to minimize air quality and noise impacts to the community and a commitment for beneficial use of dredged material.

Widening improvements include new channel limits and additional bulkheading at the existing turning basins. The widening of the inner harbor turning basin impacts Howard Terminal, Alameda, and Schnitzer Steel. It requires new bulkheading for slope stability. The outer harbor turning basin widening would require dredging and would not impact any land properties. Construction will involve landside and waterside work and is expected to take 2.5 years. The project cost is estimated at \$462 million and would generate an estimated \$33 million per year in net benefits.

Eric Joliffe, USACE Environmental Lead, explained that two million cubic yards of dredged material will be removed, and all suitable material will be used in wetland restoration projects. Material not suitable for wetland restoration will be utilized at appropriate landfills. Work will begin at Howard Terminal and will subsequently move to Schnitzer Steel and then Alameda. Dredging will take place only from June to November.

Eric explained that the Feasibility Report is for planning while the Environmental Assessment (EA) evaluates potential project impacts to the environment and invites public involvement. Environmental justice is also considered. The EA determined that there are no significant impacts from the project in compliance with NEPA.

The report details avoidance and minimization measures that will be employed to prevent construction impacts from becoming significant. These include environmental work windows for dredging to limit impacts to sensitive species; use of sound attenuation during pile driving; marine mammal observers onsite during pile driving; silt curtains, if applicable, to protect species from contaminated material; construction phasing so as not to impact port operations; truck routes to avoid impacting neighborhoods and local traffic; and use of electric dredges to minimize air quality and noise impacts.

A summary of comments provided by participants is as follows:

- growth at the Port has to be responsible and considered from a complete community perspective It's important to understand how growth at the Port will impact the entire operation. Truckers need more land to handle the volume. The impacts of growth on people need to be considered
- the turning basins widening is essential to handling larger ships, ensuring the Port is viable and competitive, and preserving jobs at the Port
- the Port should hold more community meetings and communicate with West Oakland residents
- more information was requested on the impact of the project on the 4.9 acres in Alameda
- the report should consider cumulative impacts on air quality and public health and should address environmental justice. Contaminants from the project should not impact other communities.
- Participants expressed appreciation for the meeting and the information provided
- A glossary of terms would be helpful for community members
- A copy of the report was requested to be placed at the main San Leandro Public Library

### Next Steps and Meeting Conclusion

Andrea Gardner, Port Environmental Supervisor, explained that the CEQA process will likely begin in Spring 2022 with a 30-day scoping process and more public engagement. The CEQA process is similar to NEPA but it will evaluate a wider range of environmental impacts and different thresholds will be used to determine if an impact is significant. The Draft EIR is expected to be released by the end of 2022.

Tessa Beach, USACE San Francisco District, Chief Environmental Branch, noted that comments on the draft report are due by January 31, 2022 but comments that are received a few days late will be accepted. USACE can help community members navigate the document. Official public comments should be submitted in writing to: [OaklandHarborTurningBasinsStudy@usace.army.mil](mailto:OaklandHarborTurningBasinsStudy@usace.army.mil) or mailed to Mr. Eric Joliffe, 450 Golden Gate Ave., 4<sup>th</sup> Floor, San Francisco, CA 94102.

Surlene Grant thanked everyone for participating and explained that meeting materials will be available on the Port's website. Presentation slides will be provided to all participants after the meeting.

For further information, please contact:

- Justin Taschek, Port of Oakland Project Manager: [jtaschek@portoakland.com](mailto:jtaschek@portoakland.com)
- Erika Powell, USACE Project Manager: [Erika.powell@usace.army.mil](mailto:Erika.powell@usace.army.mil)

More information is available on the following websites:

- Port Project Website: [Oakland Harbor Turning Basins Widening Navigation Study - Oakland Seaport](#)
- USACE Project Website: [Oakland Harbor Turning Basins Widening \(army.mil\)](#)