

**SEASPORT HARBOR NAVIGATION IMPROVEMENT PROJECT
GENERAL INVESTIGATION
FEASIBILITY PHASE
REVIEW PLAN**

**NEW ENGLAND DISTRICT
(July 2007)**

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1. PURPOSE

This Review Plan is for the Searsport Harbor Navigation Improvement Project, Maine, General Investigation (GI), Feasibility Study. The purpose of the plan is to ensure the quality and credibility of assessments and solutions for the navigation improvement investigation and potential project.

The plan defines the review process and team members. This review plan was developed jointly and agreed upon by New England District and the National Deep Draft Navigation Planning Center of Expertise (DDNPCX).

2. BACKGROUND

The Searsport Harbor Navigation Improvement Project is sponsored by the Maine Port Authority, a division of the Maine Department of Transportation (MEDOT).

The scope of the Searsport Harbor Feasibility study and NEPA documents will include problem identification, alternatives formulation, alternatives analysis, engineering design, cost estimates, environmental assessment, economic cost-benefit assessment, and identification of the recommend plans of improvement and determination of Federal interest. It is envisioned that if justified the Corps process will lead to Congressional authorization and appropriations necessary to construct the project.

The Corps review process includes review of technical aspects of the decision document, NEPA documents and their constituent analyses through an approach called “Independent Technical Review” (ITR). ITR is a critical examination by a qualified person or team that was not involved in the day-to-day work of the investigation. In general, current Corps policy for decision documents to be approved at Headquarters is that the PCX be involved in establishing the review plan and review team, and that reviews be conducted by Corps specialists outside of the performing District. In some special cases where the risk and/or magnitude of the project are high an external peer review maybe be recommended (EPR). External peer review refers to review conducted outside of the Corps of Engineers.

This review plan is in accordance with the provisions of Corps of Engineers policy outlined in EC1105-2-408, dated 31 May 2005, entitled “Peer Review of Decision Documents” and the 30 March 2007 Memorandum from Major General Don T. Riley on Peer Review Process.

3. APPLICABILITY

The documents to be reviewed by the technical review team are the Feasibility Report, NEPA document, and related technical and supporting appendices.

4. REFERENCES

- CECW-CP, Memorandum dated 30 March 2007, “Peer Review Process”
- EC1105-2-408, “Peer Review of Decision Documents”, dated 31 May 2005
- ER1105-2-100, “Planning Guidance Notebook”, dated 22 April 2000, and Amendment #1 to Appendices F & G, dated 31 January 2006

5. PROJECT DESCRIPTION

Searsport Harbor is located in upper Penobscot Bay, about 106 miles northeast of Portland, Maine, in Waldo County. Penobscot Bay is located about mid-way along the Maine coast and is the largest of the many bays in the State. Searsport Harbor is divided into two portions. The western area of the Harbor contains the municipal landing and mooring areas for the local commercial fishing fleet and seasonal recreational fleet. The eastern part of the Harbor includes Mack Point, the location of the Harbor’s deep draft cargo terminals, and the western shore of Sears Island.

This project concerns the Mack Point port, the principal deepwater commercial port north of Portland. The existing Federal project, authorized by Congress in 1962, and completed in 1964 consists of a channel 35 feet deep at mean lower low water (MLLW), extending from Penobscot Bay to the piers at Mack Point. Existing facilities at Mack Point include two petroleum terminals operated by Sprague Energy and Irving Oil Company, and the State of Maine’s newly reconstructed public cargo terminal.

The new state pier is accessed by road and by a spur of the Bangor & Aroostook Railroad. The State pier serves multiple shippers handling imports of salt, gypsum, coke, tapioca, and wood chips. Waste paper from the northeast and mid-west is received by rail for export. The State is marketing the pier for expanded imports of wood chips for the area's paper mills and autos. The pier was also recently used to transfer prefabricated structural assemblies shore and onto rail for large windmills for power generation project.

Mack Point is also the site of a former US Air Force fuel depot that received tanker deliveries of jet fuel and others fuels for storage on site and transmission by pipeline and truck to the former Air Force Base at Loring, Maine. The facility has been turned over to the State for reuse.

The reconnaissance study (905(b)) report approved in August 2004 provided a preliminary analysis of navigation conditions and needs. The existing controlling depths in the Searsport channel are inadequate for existing and future vessel traffic. While the current fleet can access the Mack Point berths, a number of navigational inefficiencies exist due to existing depths, and result in higher transportation costs. Among these inefficiencies are: tidal delays, light loading of vessels, the inability to switch to larger vessels, the inability to attract liner cargo service, and limits to future imports and exports at Searsport due to channel depths restricting the size of prospective vessels. In addition, the pilots stated that the constriction mid-way between the channel entrance and the turning area requires widening to support the maneuvering of larger vessels. Without channel improvements, the commercial potential of the new State pier will not be realized and existing navigational inefficiencies will continue. There are also potential safety concerns related to maneuvering the larger ships in the current Federal channel.

The reconnaissance effort considered a channel depth of 40 feet mean lower low water (MLLW). This channel improvement would allow access for deeper draft vessels and alleviate the significant delays currently experienced while vessels wait for higher tide levels to traverse the channel. Additional improvements, incremental to this plan will be considered during the feasibility study.

There are at least two existing open water disposal sites in Penobscot Bay approved by the State and Federal resource agencies for the receipt of dredged material. Either site could be used for dredged material from Searsport Harbor. There are a number of Federal Navigation Projects located around Penobscot Bay, four of which have been maintained within the past five years using these disposal sites with no significant issues or concerns raised. Shoaling rates in most harbors around Penobscot Bay, including Searsport are extremely low, with typical maintenance frequencies of 20 to 40 years, and even longer in some instances.

6. REVIEW REQUIREMENTS AND PROJECT RISK

ITR. Pursuant to EC1105-2-408, the feasibility study and resultant documents will require review by a Corps Independent Technical Review (ITR) team assigned by the

Planning Center of Expertise (PCX) for Deep Draft Navigation. The Director, Deep Draft Navigation Planning Center of Expertise, will select this team.

EPR. The study is expected to be a straightforward navigation improvement project at an existing federal channel, it is not novel and is not precedent setting, and does not have significant economic, environmental or social impacts. The magnitude of the improvement project (under 10,000,000 dollars) and the risk associated with the study assessments and predictions is low. Thus, an external peer review is not necessary. This conclusion is supported by the PCX.

External Peer Review Decision Checklist

1. Novel subject matter? No.
2. Controversial subject matter? No
3. Precedent setting? No
4. Unusually significant interagency interest? No
5. Unusually significant economic, environmental, and social effects to the nation? No

Decision: External Peer Review is not required. Independent Technical Review by a team external to the project district will be sufficient to comply with EC 1105-2-408, Planning, Peer Review of Decision Documents, dated 31 May 2005.

7. REVIEW PROCESS

Initial Quality Control (QC) review will be handled within the Section or Branch at New England District performing the work, and by contractors submitting the results of specific field investigations and reports. Additional QC will be performed by the project delivery team (PDT) during the course of the feasibility plan formulation and evaluation process, and during preparation and assembling the draft and final Feasibility Report and NEPA documents. These District level internal checks of engineering, technical, and scientific methodology applied, computations, and assessment are standard operating procedure and normally conducted by Section Chiefs and Team Leaders.

The ITR process will include review of draft investigations of existing conditions, and determination of the without-project condition, formulation of alternative plans data and assumptions and the engineering, economic, environmental and social assessments. Real estate aspects of proposed alternatives is expected to be minimal and will not require review unless scope of real estate requirements change.

ITR review milestones will include review of preliminary documents after the PDT identifies the alternatives that will be analyzed in detail and review of the draft

feasibility report and NEPA documents after the PDT completes its selection of a tentatively recommended plan of improvement.

8. PUBLIC COMMENT

Public involvement is anticipated throughout the feasibility study. Public information and other meetings as appropriate will be held in the study area as the study progresses. Summaries of these meeting will be made available to the ITR team.

9. REVIEW COST

The cost of the ITR will be discussed with the PCX and the Sponsor, and agreed to once the ITR team is assembled. The cost of the ITR is a cost shared feasibility study item.

10. REVIEW SCHEDULE

	Start	Complete
1. Develop Review Plan, Coord. w/ PCX	May 07	July 07
2. PCX Assigns ITR Team	May 08	May 08
3. ITR of preliminary Feasibility Report/EA and PDT response and changes prior to AFB	Aug 08	Sep 08
4. ITR final check of Draft Final Feasibility Report/EA prior to CWRB briefing	Mar 09	Apr 09

11. PDT and ITR TEAMS

1) New England District PDT

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TBD- Real Estate Specialist

2) ITR Team

This team will be selected by the Director, Deep Draft Navigation Planning Center of Expertise and may include the following disciplines as appropriate.

Planning

- Plan Formulation
- Economics
- Environmental

Engineering

- H&H/Channel Design
- Geotechnical
- Cost Estimating