Notice of Availability
Final Environmental Impact Statement
Proposed Marine Container Terminal
at the Charleston Naval Complex
North Charleston, South Carolina

The Final Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) for the Proposed Marine Container Terminal at the Charleston Naval Complex is available for public comment. The 30-day comment period starts on the publication of the Notice of Availability in the Federal Register on December 15, 2006 and ends on January 16, 2007, unless an extension is requested and granted in writing. The South Carolina State Ports Authority (SCSPA) and the South Carolina Department of Transportation are the permit applicants for the Proposed Project, which consists of the proposed port facility and an access roadway that provides a direct connection between the port facility and Interstate 26.

Project Description

The Proposed Project consists of the development of a marine container terminal at the former Charleston Navy Base on the Cooper River in North Charleston, Charleston County, South Carolina. The proposed wharf would be 3,510 feet long, 200 feet wide, and 18 feet above MLW. Six cranes would be positioned along the wharf to service 3 berths capable of docking post-Panamax ships. The majority of the 287.5-acre terminal would be paved and used for processing and storing shipping containers, support facilities, and stormwater management facilities.

The SCSPA currently handles approximately 2 million TEU (twenty foot equivalent units), an industry standard of measurement that is equal to one twenty foot shipping container, at the Port of Charleston. The development of the proposed port facility will enable the SCSPA to handle an additional 1.4 million TEU, and in conjunction with planned improvements to existing facilities will meet their needs through 2025. The Proposed Project would result in an increase of approximately 650 marine container vessels per year in Charleston Harbor.

The construction and operation of the proposed port facility would also require the placement of fill material in 2.4 acres of freshwater wetlands, 9.6 acres of tidal marsh, and the excavation and backfilling of 56.6 acres of open water. In addition, 77.9 acres of open water between the wharf and the Federal navigation channel would be dredged to construct the berthing area and to provide deep water access to the proposed port facility. The dredged material would be placed in the existing, upland confined disposal facility located at the southern end of Daniel Island. The SCSPA has also proposed to install a sediment suspension system that would minimize the frequency of maintenance dredging of the berth.

The development of the port access roadway includes the construction of a new interchange that would affect local traffic patterns and access to I-26. Exit 218 (Spruill Avenue) would be closed and improvements to Exit 217 (Meeting Street) would need to be constructed to provide safe and efficient access to the interstate. In addition, a local connector road to Bainbridge Avenue and Spruill Avenue would be constructed to provide access to the interstate via the port access roadway. Stromboli Avenue would be reopened between Carner Avenue and Spruill Avenue to improve future traffic flow, and the portion of Meeting Street that is located northwest of Stromboli Avenue would be closed to through traffic. Traffic that currently uses this portion of Meeting Street would be rerouted to Carner Avenue using existing streets.

The Proposed Project is expected to generate an average of 7,700 daily vehicle trips at full capacity, the majority of which would be container trucks that use the proposed access roadway to travel between the port facility and I-26. The construction and operation of the proposed port access roadway and local connector road would require the placement of fill material in 0.34 acres of freshwater wetlands and 1.97 acres of tidal marsh. In addition, the development of the access roadway would require impacts associated with clearing and the placement of piles to construct elevated sections of the roadway that cross freshwater wetlands and tidal marsh and two bridges that cross Shipyard Creek.

The proposed mitigation plan includes a number of different activities to offset unavoidable impacts associated with the Proposed Project, such as full compensation for businesses and properties that experience direct impacts, environmental monitoring during construction, the construction of noise barriers, tidal marsh restoration, funding for the preservation and enhancement of Morris Island and other aquatic resources on the Cooper River, funding for oyster restoration in Charleston Harbor, supplemental safety measures at existing rail crossings in the adjacent community, transportation improvements along Meeting Street to help accommodate future local traffic, and a number of community programs.

Final Environmental Impact Statement

Comments that were received in response to the draft EIS and at public information workshops and stakeholder meetings were provided to the SCSPA and the SCDOT and will be considered in our overall evaluation of the Proposed Project. The final EIS includes a number of updates and revisions that were made to the Proposed Project, additional studies that were conducted, text changes, and responses to comments. These changes include the following: Alternative 1D was identified as the proposed access roadway, SCSPA and SCDOT submitted modifications to their permit applications, the proposed mitigation plan has been revised and expanded, and air quality analyses, traffic analyses, and sediment analyses have been completed.

The final EIS will be available on December 15, 2006, for public review and comment online at www.PortEIS.com, or by request on compact disc. Hard copies of the document will be available for public review at the following locations:

Sterett Hall
Building #180
Charleston Naval Complex
North Charleston, South Carolina 29405

Charleston County Library
Cooper River Memorial
3503 Rivers Avenue
Charleston, South Carolina 29405

Charleston County Library
Main Branch
68 Calhoun Street
Charleston, South Carolina 29401

Town of Mount Pleasant
100 Ann Edwards Lane
Mount Pleasant, South Carolina 29464

Charleston City Fire Station 18
235 Seven Farms Drive
Daniel Island, South Carolina 29492

Otranto Road Regional Library
2261 Otranto Road
North Charleston, South Carolina 29406

City of North Charleston
4900 Lacross Road
North Charleston, South Carolina 29406

City of Charleston
75 Calhoun Street
Charleston, South Carolina 29403

Charleston County Library
John L. Dart
1067 King Street
Charleston, South Carolina 29403

Mount Pleasant Regional Library
1133 Mathis Ferry Road
Mount Pleasant, South Carolina 29464

Dorchester County Library
76 Old Trolley Road
Summerville, South Carolina 29485

Comments on the final EIS should be submitted to the Corps of Engineers in one of following ways.

Project Website: www.PortEIS.com
Project Hotline: 843-971-7970
Letters addressed to:

Mr. Nathaniel I. Ball, Project Manager
Charleston District, Corps of Engineers
69A Hagood Avenue
Charleston, South Carolina 29403

Please direct your request for copies of the final EIS, copies of the project newsletter, extension of comment period, or questions concerning this public notice to the Project Manager, Mr. Nathaniel I. Ball at (843) 329-8044 or toll free at 1-866-329-8187.