

PROJECT ACTION MEMO

Port of Tacoma Commission



Item No: 6D
Meeting Date: 10/15/24

DATE: October 7, 2024
TO: Port of Tacoma Commission
FROM: Eric Johnson, Executive Director
Sponsor: Jason Jordan, Sr. Director, Environmental and Planning
Project Manager: Norman Gilbert, Engineering Project Manager II
SUBJECT: Middle Blair Maintenance Dredging MID 101692.01

A. ACTIONS REQUESTED

- 1) Request project authorization in the amount \$4,000,000 for a total authorized amount of \$4,000,000, for work associated with the Middle Blair Maintenance Dredging, Project ID #101692.01.
- 2) Request Port of Tacoma (POT) Commissioners dedicate Section 2106 / Harbor Maintenance Tax (HMT) funds to fund the full eligible costs of this project.

Strategic Plan Initiative: EV-1, EV-2

B. SYNOPSIS

Sediments have accumulated at locations on the east side of the Blair Waterway opposite of Washington United Terminals (WUT) impacting unrestricted transit of container vessels along this section of the waterway. To transit unrestricted, container vessels must “light-load” or cranes at WUT must boom up. Both situations impact the ability of the terminals to handle cargo. A maintenance dredge is required to restore unrestricted transit along the waterway.

C. BACKGROUND

Sediments have accumulated at critical locations from the “Knuckle” northwest to an area approximately even with Lincoln Avenue, posing a navigation hazard to vessels transiting that reach of the waterway. This issue requires the terminal operator of Pierce County Terminal (PCT), Everport Terminal Services, to “light-load” vessels or wait for WUT to boom up their container cranes. As a result, Everport Terminal Services has lost one of their two lines of service. This critical impairment to operations is causing safety hazards, risk of vessel damage, and economic losses for the Port and the NWSA tenants; therefore, maintenance dredging to restore waterway and terminal operations to full capacity is needed.

Due to this urgent need to restore safe navigation, the sediments posing navigational hazards have been sampled, are currently being analyzed, and preliminary results have been provided.

The preliminary results suggest that due to low levels of dioxin/furans, some if not all the material will need to be disposed of upland. An upland dewatering facility will be required. Staff is evaluating options for this facility at the Arkema Manufacturing site or the NWSA licensed West Hylebos Terminal. Staff is also evaluating upland disposal locations including the local landfill and other Port properties.

Sediment characterization was needed to allow for the Dredge Material Management Program (DMMP) to determine suitability for disposal. This sampling work was authorized and completed under a separate project and is part of the Blair Waterway Deepening project.

The project location has been previously dredged to -47ft Mean Lower Low Water (MLLW). Due to elevated dioxin/furan levels, from the preliminary sediment test results, the project will perform a maintenance dredge to a minimum depth of -48ft MLLW and will allow for up to a 2ft over-dredge allowance. This will provide for compliance with the DMMP antidegradation requirements. All or portions of the dredged sediment will require upland disposal. Staff are currently working on requesting clarification of this with the DMMP.

This project is intended to be packaged for construction with the Northwest Seaport Alliance (NWSA) PCT Maintenance Dredge project that has been authorized earlier this month.

D. PROJECT DETAILS

The scope of the project is to complete a maintenance dredge addressing “high spots” that impact the project area. The scope of work under this authorization is to bid and construct the maintenance dredging.

The scope of work includes:

- Bidding of Public Works maintenance dredge construction contract
- Perform maintenance dredge construction project
- Close out project and permits

Schedule:

Advertise for Bid	Late October/Early November
Open Bids	Early/Mid- November
Notice of Award	End of November
Substantial Completion	By February 14, 2025
Final Completion	March 14, 2025

E. FINANCIAL SUMMARY

Estimated Cost of Project

The total project cost including all stages is estimated at \$4,000,000.

Estimated Cost for This Request

The total estimated cost of the Construction for this project is \$4,000,000. If the cost of this estimate is anticipated to exceed the authorized amount, additional Commission authorization will be requested.

Estimated Sales Tax

The total estimated sales tax to be paid to local and state governments for this project is \$375,000.

Cost Details

Item	This Request	Total Previous Requests	Total Request	Total Project Cost	Cost to Date	Remaining Cost
CONSTRUCTION	\$4,000,000	\$ 0	\$4,000,000	\$4,000,000	\$ 0	\$4,000,000
TOTAL	\$4,000,000	\$ 0	\$4,000,000	\$4,000,000	\$ 0	\$4,000,000

Source of Funds

The current Capital Investment Plan (CIP) allocates \$4,000,000 for this project.

Staff has confirmed that this project is the disposal of contaminated soil associated with the dredging in the channel is HMT eligible and will be funded from the Port’s 2024 Section 2106/Harbor Maintenance Tax funds. As of October 2024, the Port’s HMT/2106 funds balance is shown in the Table below:

Funds	Balance
2106	\$3,300,000
HMT	\$23,590,000
Combined Total	\$26,890,000

Financial Impact

The project costs amounting to \$4,000,000 will be capitalized as a dredge asset. As it is classified as a dredge asset, no depreciation will be applied.

F. ECONOMIC INVESTMENT/JOB CREATION

Completing this project will return unrestricted transit along the Blair Waterway which will relieve impacts to terminal operations and maintain current jobs.

G. ALTERNATIVES CONSIDERED AND THEIR IMPLICATIONS

Alternative 1) Do nothing. Impacts to terminal operations will remain.

Alternative 2) This request. Eliminating the impact to transit of cargo along the Blair Waterway and expends Port HMT funds.

Alternative 2 is the recommended course.

H. ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACTS/REVIEW

Permitting: This work will require 404/Sec10 permits from the USACE, 401 Certification from Ecology, Site Use Authorization from WDNR, Hydraulic Project Approval from WDFW, and formal exemptions from the City of Tacoma. This work has been consulted with the Puyallup Tribe. The Federal permitting timelines are tight, but the agencies are aware of the urgency of the work (PCT Maintenance Dredge and Middle Blair as a package) and are working towards our timelines.

Remediation: Sediment was tested, and preliminary dioxin/furan results do not meet open water disposal screening levels. The levels are below industrial levels for upland use.

Stormwater: Upland work is associated with this effort and any dewatering efforts will be closely coordinated so as not discharge impacted water into surface water without proper treatment

Air Quality: No new emissions will be generated by this work except short-term emissions during the dredging work.

I. PREVIOUS ACTIONS OR BRIEFINGS

None.

J. NEXT STEPS

Bid and construct the maintenance dredge.