



## Channel Modification Frequently Asked Questions

### **Why is widening and deepening the navigation channel important to the Northwest?**

Maritime trade plays a crucial role in our region's economy and identity. The Coos Bay Navigation Channel serves as a key connection to transport Oregon goods to market. As one of the largest coastal deep water ports on the west coast, our navigation channel is an outstanding economic and commercial asset that serves to connect Oregon businesses to international markets. As older vessels are being replaced with much larger and more efficient ships, it is paramount that the Coos Bay navigation channel be modernized to accommodate the growing global fleet. Widening and deepening the channel will provide the necessary infrastructure to ensure that Oregon industries can remain competitive in global markets and retain critical Oregon jobs and economies. Providing a larger channel that allows shippers to use larger shipping vessels translates to reduced shipping costs and decreased environmental impacts. In order to support existing shippers and competitively position ourselves to entice new shippers to the area, the navigation channel needs to be deepened and widened to accommodate larger vessels, as well as to allow for future economic growth in the region.

### **What is the history of this project?**

The navigational channel was deepened to its current depth of -37 feet in 1998. In 2006, the Port began to explore opportunities to deepen and widen the existing channel. Preliminary terminal design and studies of the Coos Bay Federal Navigation channel were initiated. From 2006 to present, the Port worked with various consultants and the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers on feasibility studies and preliminary engineering and design for the channel modification.

### **What are the proposed modifications to the existing navigation channel?**

The Port is designing the proposed channel modification project with the following elements:

- a. Both Widening and deepening of the channel are proposed by dredging the navigation channel from approximately .8 miles west of the channel entrance to approximately river mile (RM) 8.2. Proposed channel modifications would not extend beyond the existing railroad bridge at RM 9. The existing navigation channel has an authorized width of 300 feet from river mile 2 to river mile 9, and an authorized nominal depth in the same area of -37 feet. The channel is wider and deeper in the entrance. The proposed navigation channel would have a nominal width of 450 feet from river mile 2 to river mile 8.2 and an authorized depth in the same area of -45 feet.
- b. A vessel-turning basin at the upper end of the proposed channel modification: The proposed vessel-turning basin is 1,400 feet long and 1,100 feet wide, with an authorized depth of -37 feet.
- c. Relocation of aids to navigation: The revised channel shifts the centerline alignment of every reach from the entrance range through the Jarvis Turn. This will require relocating all corresponding range markers and the relocation of fixed and floating channel markers.

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**How long will the dredging project last?**

Once dredging begins in the navigational channel, it is anticipated that the project may take up to three years to complete.



**What areas are being dredged?** Dredging will take place from .8 miles offshore of the channel entrance to river mile 8.2, displayed in the area in red on the map to the left.

**What type of equipment will be used?**

This project will utilize a broad range of dredging methods. The types of dredging equipment that will be utilized for the project are still being evaluated.

*Pictured left – proposed channel modification footprint*

**Where will the dredged material be placed?**

Dredged materials are proposed to be deposited off shore in a site designated by the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers and Environmental Protection Agency. Alternatives for offshore disposal sites are currently being evaluated.

**Will the Port test the material in the channel before dredging?**

Sediment characterization was completed as part of the preliminary feasibility work leading up to the preferred project design.

**Will the project provide beneficial use of the dredged material?**

The Port is working with resource agencies to explore and evaluate potential beneficial use options.

**Does the project affect any oysters or essential fish habitat?**

Dredging will only occur up to river mile 8.2 (near Roseburg Forest Products). Oyster beds in the navigation channel are not directly adjacent to the proposed dredging footprint. Potential impacts will be analyzed as part of the project.



**What impact is the improved channel expected to have on the community?**

The Port anticipates that the project will result in significant positive impacts to the community. Local businesses and employment are expected to benefit as a result of larger vessels being able to transport greater volumes of cargo to and from the Port of Coos Bay and the State of Oregon more efficiently.

**How will impacts to the community be addressed during dredging?**

Methods and alternatives to reduce impacts during dredging operations will be evaluated and implemented as defined by the agencies. The Corps performs annual maintenance dredging in the existing channel today. The volume of material and duration of the work will be increased, but the impacts to the community will likely remain the same.

**Will the deepening and widening of the navigation channel have any impact on land above the high-water mark surrounding the channel?**

This will be analyzed as part of the project.

**What is the estimated cost of the project?**

Current cost estimates for this project are approximately \$350-\$400 million. Funding for this project will be provided through both public and private funds.

**What channel design alternatives were considered?**

A number of alternatives were identified during the initial design and engineering work, including deepening in one foot increments from the current channel depth. The preferred plan includes deepening the channel to -45' and widening to 450' in most channel reaches. Deepening and widening the channel to -45' by 450' wide will accommodate larger vessels, which translates into less vessel calls because more goods can be transported on a single vessel. This reduces environmental impacts and reduces shipping costs.

**What if the channel is not improved?**

Over time, if the channel is not modified, international maritime business will continue to decrease due to draft constraints. The region's connection to global markets will diminish – affecting our economy, jobs, and quality of life in our region. Businesses and the labor force dependent on shipping and bulk industries will be most affected.

**What regulatory approvals are still pending? Is there an opportunity for the public to comment?**

There are still a number of approvals and permitting steps that need to be completed before the project can move forward. Public participation and comment opportunities as defined by federal laws will be followed by the Corps during development of the Environmental Impact Statement and during Corps permitting processes. that will be defined and published by the USACE and other regulatory agencies as

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a part of the Environmental Impact Statement and during Corps permitting processes. At several stages in the EIS process, the Corps will host public meetings to provide information about the EIS process, answer related questions, and gather community input and comment regarding the EIS. Information about the initial NEPA scoping meetings will be posted on the Port of Coos Bay's Website:

[www.portofcoosbay.com](http://www.portofcoosbay.com)

The website will include additional information on the regulatory approval, federal authorities and other project details.

### **Who can I contact with questions?**

For questions regarding this project, please contact Margaret Barber, Director of External Affairs and Business Development for the Port of Coos Bay, at 541-266-3713 or by email at

[mbarber@portofcoosbay.com](mailto:mbarber@portofcoosbay.com).

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