



The Proposed Coke Point Dredged Material Containment Facility

A Maryland Port Administration Project



The Port of Baltimore today is one of Maryland's greatest economic generators. It is responsible for more than 14,600 direct jobs, while about 108,000 jobs in Maryland are linked to activities from the Port of Baltimore. The Port of Baltimore is also one of our nation's busiest seaports ranking 11th for dollar value of cargo and 12th for the amount of cargo handled among 360 U.S. ports. Baltimore ranks first among all U.S. ports for handling autos, farm and construction machinery, imported forest products, imported sugar,

imported iron ore and imported gypsum. The port is second overall for exported coal, imported salt, and imported aluminum.

The overall success of the port in today's highly competitive maritime trade environment is dependent on safe and reliable access via deep and well-maintained channels. Baltimore is currently one of only two East Coast ports with a 50-foot deep channel. The channel is a critical asset for bringing larger ships to Baltimore from the expanded Panama Canal that is expected to open in 2015. Providing "safe passage" of all ships through navigation channels to the Port of Baltimore is essential to success for maritime business and our region's quality of life.

How do we maintain "safe passage"?

Navigation channels in Baltimore Harbor and around the Chesapeake Bay must be routinely cleared of accumulated sediments that come from the Susquehanna River basin, the Patapsco River, shore erosion and re-suspension by tidal circulation. The process of removing sediments from the channels is called dredging and the removed sediments are referred to as dredged material. Material dredged from Baltimore Harbor channels must be placed in a confined facility, known as a Dredged Material Containment Facility (DMCF). With the closure of the Hart Miller Island DMCF, the MPA needs another site to place dredged material to keep port operations safe and thriving.

How is a new placement site selected?

The MPA and its partners are continually looking for alternative sites and technologies to manage dredged material. In Baltimore Harbor, the MPA's search for new placement options benefits from recommendations of the Harbor Team, an advisory committee of stakeholders that includes community groups, environmental organizations, local governments, and business representatives.

In 2003, the Harbor Team recommended that the MPA consider acquiring the Coke Point portion (about 300 acres) of Sparrows Point (over 2,000 acres) as a possible placement site for dredged material. Discussions about the acquisition of Coke Point in the following years have been de-

Aerial View of Coke Point



Questions?

For more information on the proposed placement site at Coke Point, please contact the Senior Project Manager for Coke Point at 410-385-4419.

For more information on the MPA's Dredged Material Management Program, please visit www.mpasafepassage.org.

laid because of several changes in ownership of Sparrows Point. As the need for the next DMCF became more urgent in 2010, the Harbor Team once again considered various alternatives and the characteristics of possible placement sites. The Harbor Team initially identified locations on Sparrows Point in addition to Coke Point, but rejected those locations as they could potentially interfere with steelmaking operations, unlike Coke Point. After careful consideration, the Harbor Team reaffirmed its recommendation of the Coke Point site in 2011.

Coke Point: The Proposed Solution to Placement Need

Coke Point on Sparrows Point lies approximately nine miles southeast of downtown Baltimore in Baltimore County. The site is about 300 acres and is zoned for industrial use. It would operate for approximately 20 years with the potential to accommodate approximately one million cubic yards (mcy) of dredged material per year.

What happens after the location is recommended?

The first step in considering any site is a formal environmental review and permitting process conducted in accordance with state, federal and local requirements.

The MPA leads the study and is assisted by outside scientists and engineers. The process includes multiple opportunities for public input. The environmental review and permitting process for Coke Point, including an environmental impact statement, is expected to take about four years. If the site is approved, construction of the DMCF will take another two years. Upon construction completion, the facility will be ready to receive dredged material. As material is placed in the new DMCF, a rigorous monitoring program will be implemented.

What happens to the dredged material?

Dredged material is deposited behind manmade structures called dikes using a carefully engineered placement and dewatering process. The land that is created can be planted or restructured for another use, such as a marine terminal. Today, two sites in Baltimore Harbor are cur-

rently used to place dredged material, Cox Creek DMCF in Anne Arundel County and Masonville DMCF in Baltimore City.

Is dredged material safe?

Yes, if it is placed in an approved and confined facility. Twenty eight years of monitoring around the Hart Miller Island DMCF (which closed in 2009) by the Maryland Department of Natural Resources and the Maryland Department of the Environment has demonstrated that placing Baltimore Harbor dredged materials in a confined facility is a safe way to manage the dredged sediments. Hart Miller Island is now being developed as a wildlife habitat. Hart Miller Island monitoring reports may be found on the Maryland Department of the Environment website at: www.mde.maryland.gov/programs/water/tmdl/water%20quality%20standards/pages/dredging-hartmillerisland.aspx.

Four years of monitoring at the Cox Creek DMCF, which is currently used for dredged material placement, confirms that placement in a confined facility is a safe way to manage dredged sediments from Baltimore Harbor. Cox Creek monitoring reports are available on request by calling the MPA at 410-385-4419 or by going to www.mpasafepassage.org and clicking on “Contact the Office” on the bottom right-hand corner of the webpage.

Designing a DMCF at Coke Point: Environmental Clean-up and End Use

The Coke Point property is impacted by past industrial contamination from the production of materials used in steelmaking. A recent study sponsored by the MPA confirmed that adjacent areas of the Patapsco River have also been affected by the contamination on Coke Point. Human and environmental risks have been identified in the immediate offshore area of Coke Point.

If the MPA chooses to move forward and succeeds in acquiring Coke Point for the construction of a new DMCF, the MPA would remediate areas within the project footprint. Onshore areas would be remediated prior to project construction. Offshore areas would be remediated in conjunction with the construction of a dike. The remediation would address degraded land and groundwater conditions, as well as degraded sediment in the footprint of the project.

In future years, a completed Coke Point DMCF may offer another potential long-term benefit for the local and regional economy by using the site as a marine terminal.

Supplemental Benefits of the DMCF Project



If the Coke Point project is approved, the environmental clean-up provided by the MPA would be a tremendous public benefit. The project would incorporate mitigation, as required by federal and state permits to offset impacts from the reduction of aquatic habitat from constructing the in-water portion of the project.

In addition, the MPA may implement environmental and community enhancements as part of the project. Many such enhancement projects have been suggested by local stakeholders. Examples completed in conjunction with other DMCFs include the planting of wetlands, stream restoration, tree plantings, and improvements to wildlife habitat. Projects that provide the best environmental and community benefits will be more likely to be considered. ■

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