



THE CRANEY ISLAND CONNECTION

CRANEY ISLAND EASTWARD EXPANSION NEWS AND INFORMATION

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craney island eastward expansion RECEIVES VIRGINIA DEPARTMENT OF ENVIRONMENTAL QUALITY permit approval

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THE CRANEY ISLAND CONNECTION IS PUBLISHED MONTHLY UNDER THE AUSPICES OF THE VIRGINIA PORT AUTHORITY AND THE U.S. ARMY CORPS OF ENGINEERS, TO PROVIDE READERS WITH REPORTS RELATED TO THE DEVELOPMENT OF THE EASTWARD EXPANSION OF CRANEY ISLAND. ARTICLES PRINTED HEREIN ARE FOR INFORMATIONAL PURPOSES ONLY. WE INVITE READERS TO COMMENT ON ARTICLES AND SUGGEST FUTURE TOPICS FOR CONSIDERATION.

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This month the Craney Island Eastward Expansion reached another exciting milestone. The project received Virginia Department of Environmental Quality (DEQ) permit approval. The Virginia Water Protection Permit (VWPP) will authorize construction of both the expansion and mitigation plan components. It was the last permit required to allow project construction to begin. Receipt of the DEQ permit makes The Port of Virginia the only East Coast port with substantial permitted expansion plans in place.

On March 11, 2010, Virginia Governor Bob McDonnell announced the news as critical to the success and completion of the project and future growth of The Port of Virginia. According to the Governor, "The economic impact of this permit approval goes beyond Craney Island. This project will generate thousands of jobs and millions more in revenue for the Hampton Roads area and to the state." Construction of the Craney Island Eastward Expansion alone will generate nearly 2,000 jobs with estimated wages of \$37 million. With all the environmental permits in place, the project team now looks to energize funding streams that will facilitate the start of construction.

VWPP IN DETAIL

As mentioned above, the VWPP will allow construction of both the Eastward Expansion and the project's mitigation plan components. In developing the mitigation plan for the Craney Island Eastward Expansion, environmental experts considered local sites along the Elizabeth and James Rivers which would benefit from significant environmental improvement. The selected projects will restore a 3 mile section of the southern branch of the Elizabeth River to a healthy and productive aquatic ecosystem.

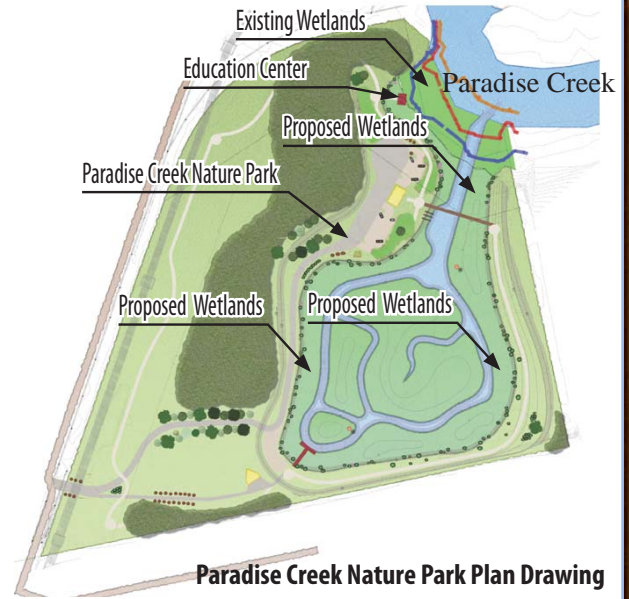
The mitigation plan will use sediment cleanup, wetlands creation, and oyster reef restoration to compensate for unavoidable environmental changes caused by project construction as well as to revitalize Elizabeth and James River habitats. The plan uses a landscape approach to restore large sections of river habitat. Construction of the various mitigation plan components will be phased over the next several years.

Paradise Creek Mitigation

The Virginia Port Authority (VPA) and the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers are collaborating with the Elizabeth River Project (ERP) on a major component of the Craney Island Eastward Expansion mitigation plan. The project partners will conduct wetlands creation and extensive excavation at the site to support development of the Paradise Creek Nature Park.

Craney Island Eastward Expansion project engineers are currently designing the wetlands basin, which will involve excavation of about 310,000 cubic yards of material from vacant lot adjacent to Paradise Creek. The excavation includes the construction of tidal channels, slightly over 11 acres of low and high marsh vegetated wetlands, and grass-covered slopes and terraces.

After the excavation is complete, ERP will develop Paradise Creek Nature Park. When complete, the 40-acre park will include tidal gardens, a tree-canopy boardwalk, a Victory Pavilion, earthworks sculpture and other artwork, kayak and canoe trails, a 2-mile interpretive trail, outdoor classrooms, and science labs.



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Wetlands Restoration

As a result of decades-long industrial and residential development, wetlands acreages in the Elizabeth River watershed have been severely reduced. The VWPP allows wetland creation and restoration, across nine locations within the Elizabeth River's Southern Branch. Restored wetlands act as a natural buffer to filter run-off. The selected wetlands locations reconnect to a variety of riverine, wetland, and upland habitats. Wetlands construction at Paradise Creek will be the first mitigation project.

Oyster Reef Creation

The VWPP will also allow oyster reef creation across seven locations, including the Lafayette River. The sites selected were prioritized because historically, they have supported natural oyster populations. Oyster reefs provide a habitat for oysters, which are central to the health of the Elizabeth River and greater Chesapeake Bay. They provide significant ecological benefits by acting as a natural water filtration system and providing a habitat for more than 300 aquatic species.

Sediment Remediation

Finally, the VWPP will allow sediment remediation (or clean-up) of contaminants and pollutants from the river bottom to encourage the growth of plants that provide nutrition and allow various marine life to thrive. Sediment clean-up of contaminants and pollutants from the river bottom encourages the re-establishment of bottom dwelling organisms that provide nutrition to fish and various other aquatic organisms. The selected sediment clean-up sites are located at Scuffletown Creek, Republic, and Money Point.

Next Steps

The design phase of the Craney Island Eastward Expansion is 90% complete. With the recent receipt of the DEQ permit, the project is authorized to begin construction. While the Craney Island Eastward Expansion has cleared its major regulatory hurdles, current economic conditions may temporarily postpone the start of large-scale construction, until additional funding streams are available.

Nevertheless, the project team is moving ahead conservatively with the schedule based on the economic climate and construction on various aspects of the project will begin soon. One of the first construction projects will be wetlands creation at Paradise Creek, as discussed in the article above.

Conclusion

Receipt of the DEQ permit makes The Port of Virginia the only East Coast Port with substantial permitted expansion plans in place. As a result, the Port of Virginia further solidifies its position as a growing Port—well on its way to becoming the premier destination for East Coast cargo. The Craney Island Eastward Expansion will ensure continued development in maritime and intermodal sector, which will spur regional economic growth, create jobs, and support the import and export of goods for the benefit of all Virginians.

The National Gateway

The National Gateway is a multi-state public private partnership seeking to create a state-of-the-art freight rail route between Mid-Atlantic ports and Midwestern markets. The project is poised to create significant environmental benefits, including lower emissions and reduced fuel consumption. CSX Corporation, the railroad company behind the National Gateway, has announced that the Chesapeake Bay Foundation, The Conservation Fund and the Ohio Environmental Council have joined the over 100-member coalition of supporters. The endorsement of these leading environmental groups confirms the significant environmental benefits of the \$850 million public private partnership, which will create a highly efficient doublestack rail route between Mid-Atlantic ports and the Midwest.

By facilitating the greater use of freight rail for the long-haul movement of goods, the National Gateway will save nearly 2 billion gallons of fuel and eliminate 20 million tons of carbon dioxide from the atmosphere. Additionally, it will decrease truck traffic on the nation's highways by over 14 billion miles, reducing congestion and highway maintenance costs.

"The National Gateway is an example of how a transportation solution can have positive impacts on environmental and energy goals," said Roy A. Hoagland, vice president for environmental protection and restoration, at the Chesapeake Bay Foundation. "Freight rail projects like the National Gateway can play an important role within the transportation system to move goods more efficiently and in a manner that will improve our overall environment and quality of life." The National Gateway helps the environment by allowing freight cargo to be double-stacked on trains.

Double-stack clearances allow trains to carry nearly twice as much freight on the same number of trains. Already, trains can move a ton of freight more than 436 miles on a single gallon of fuel, making rail transportation three times more fuel-efficient than over-the-road alternatives. A recently released report from the Federal Railroad Administration confirms that double-stack freight rail transportation is up to five times more efficient than motor carrier transportation.

By clearing existing rail routes for double-stack freight trains, the National Gateway will convert over 14 billion highway miles

to rail and enable shippers to better utilize the environmental advantages of rail transportation, reducing CO2 emissions by almost 20 million tons and fuel consumption by nearly 2 billion gallons.

The National Gateway project will invest over \$840 million to increase tunnel clearances, raise bridges and develop new intermodal terminals along existing rail corridors to support the movement of double-stacked rail containers. These infrastructure investments will support the increased use of freight rail, the most environmentally-friendly way to move goods on land.

In addition to infrastructure upgrades, all facilities built or expanded to support the National Gateway will exemplify a commitment to environmental stewardship and serve as a catalyst for future economic development opportunities in the surrounding regions.

The National Gateway supports the Craney Island Expansion by providing shippers cost-effective freight movement options. Moreover, it will strengthen the economic vitality of the Mid-Atlantic region by creating the transportation infrastructure necessary to capture increased rail traffic resulting from cargo growth at The Port of Virginia.

The project allows double-stacked intermodal rail traffic to utilize modern, high-technology operating methods. Electric crane systems will be used where possible in order to ensure that each facility is safe and environmentally-friendly.

To date, the project has received \$393 million in funding commitments from freight transportation company CSX Corporation and its affiliates. Partner states are expected to fund \$191 million, with an additional \$258 million requested from the federal government. In addition to governors and other state and local officials across six states, more than three dozen members of Congress, three port authorities, and a large number of global shippers, ocean carriers, business organizations and environmental groups have pledged their support for the National Gateway. For more information, visit: www.nationalgateway.org

Article used courtesy of The Virginia Port Authority Maritimer

Public Outreach Update

One goal of the Craney Island Eastward Expansion project team is to keep the public aware and informed about its purpose and methodology, as well as to provide status updates on its design and construction. This is done through many outlets, including *The Craney Island Connection* monthly newsletter, the project website, www.craneyisland.info, and face-to-face interaction with the public.

This year the project team has seen a great deal of interest in the project from community groups. Jodie Love, the Virginia Port Authority's Community Relations Coordinator, has presented to several regional civic leagues, including Shorewood Civic League, Churchland Senior Club, Wise Beach Civic League, and Hosiers Oaks Civic Leagues.

Ms. Love has also given presentations about the history, present operations, and future of The Port—including CIMT—to students from Hickory and Great Bridge High Schools, the Hampton Roads Chamber of Commerce Junior Leadership Group, and students at the University of Maryland. Additionally, in a global outreach opportunity, Love also presented to a group of public administration officials from Hunan Province, China participating in an executive training program at Old Dominion University.

If your group is interested in hearing a presentation on the Craney Island Eastward Expansion, please contact us at (757) 628-8222 or ciconnection@craneyisland.info.



Shorewood Civic League



Churchland Senior Club

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