

# DMMP 2020 Recommendations

## Mid-Year Report

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### **Engage directly with the Congressional delegation and other federal partners to support sufficient funding**

and constructive policies for the Corps' dredging program serving the Port of Baltimore, emphasizing the necessary funding needed for the Mid-Bay site design and for initiating construction of Barren Island in 2022 and James Island in 2024 with the goal for acceptance of dredged material by 2029. Specific focus should be made on advancing the project as authorized as a 65%-35% federal/state cost-shared aquatic ecosystem restoration project. Continue coordination efforts with the Corps at the District, Division, and Headquarters levels, the Assistant Secretary of the Army for Civil Works, and the OMB on dredging and dredged material management funding needs, approvals, and planning to meet the current growth and long-term demands of the POB as a nationally significant economic engine.

**a.** Work closely with the Corps' Baltimore and Philadelphia Districts to implement their Dredged Material Management Plans so that the plans and schedules are approved, fully coordinated, and available funding is optimized.

- MDOT MPA has engaged in several meetings with the Maryland Congressional delegation to advocate in support of federal funding for the Mid-Bay Island Project and annual appropriations for federal channels. Meets regularly with the Corps Baltimore District to provide supporting information in development of the Federal FY21 Corps Work Plan, FY22 budget, and future budgets for funding to complete design of Mid-Bay and initiate construction at Barren Island as the first increment of construction for the Mid-Bay project and seek solutions to any foreseeable challenges jointly.

**b.** Continue coordination with the Corps, NMFS and Virginia to address questions related to overwintering female crabs and the Virginia channels dredged material placement sites.

- MDOT MPA proactively scheduled meetings with the Virginia Marine Resources Commission and the Corps Baltimore District to work on securing a long-term dredged material placement site for the York SpitChannel, and continues discussions to identify various potential solutions, including beneficial use.

c. Develop a State strategy to evaluate external risks and assure the DMMP successfully adapts to changing fiscal and other circumstances while accommodating port growth and dredging needs.

- MDOT MPA provided timely and strategic input to the Congressional delegation, the ASA (CW) and HQ US Army Corps of Engineers that helped result in Corps Baltimore District receiving “new start” investigation funds in the Corps’ Federal FY20 Work Plan for the Seagirt Loop Feasibility Study, only one of six new starts funded nationally in the US Army Corps of Engineers Civil Works Program.
- With the efforts to control the unanticipated COVID 19 virus, state and federal funding concerns have elevated quickly. MDOT MPA has been able to contain costs and continually communicate key projects and important priorities to state and federal leadership in an effort to maintain funding for the DMMP.



**Work with the Corps, directly and through AAPA, to ensure favorable legislative language for the Corps navigation program and projects that benefit the Port’s Baltimore Harbor and Approach Channels project is reflected in WRDA 2020, should it be enacted.**

- Following the February 2020 submission of the annual appropriations requests, MDOT MPA has worked to engage the delegation and review and advocate for Water Resource Development Act (WRDA) priorities that benefit MDOT MPA.
- The MDOT MPA has continued frequent meetings with the Corps Baltimore and Philadelphia Districts to discuss progress on navigation program projects.
- MDOT MPA conducted an analysis of the Senate mark-up on the American’s Water Infrastructure Act of 2020 and supports language that would allow full use of the Harbor Maintenance Trust Fund. Further input is being considered to clarify language regarding the “federal interest determination” which could favorably impact the Seagirt Loop Feasibility Study.



**Focus on capacity and demand planning beyond the 20-year timeframe, including ongoing refinement of data to inform and support long-term sustainable dredged material management options including considerations related to climate resiliency.**

**a.** Incorporate into DMMP project planning and implementation the potential impacts resulting from climate change, including co-benefits from using dredged material in beneficial use projects.

- Progress is continuing under the draft 2020 Innovative Reuse and Beneficial Use Strategy as it calls for MDOT MPA to “Investigate how beneficial use of dredged material can be expanded to address Maryland’s Coastal Resiliency needs” by addressing policy, regulatory and technical issues, implementing programs and projects and enhancing education and stakeholder engagement opportunities.
- The Turner Station Conservation Teams was recently awarded an MDOT Secretary's Grant in the amount of \$500,000 to support the Fleming Park Restoration Project which involves the revitalization of a recreational asset in Baltimore County by reusing dredged material in both upland and in-water applications. The Fleming Park project will help to pave the way for beneficially using dredged material in Baltimore Harbor to address coastal resiliency challenges. Further input is being considered to clarify language regarding the “federal interest determination” which could favorably impact the Seagirt Loop Feasibility Study.

**b.** To the extent practicable, quantify carbon sequestration benefits. In project planning across MDOT MPA, recognize the carbon sequestration benefits from using dredged material in Port related infrastructure projects.

- MDOT MPA is interested in continuing to share data with the Maryland Commission on Climate Change and the University of Maryland Center for Environmental Science that could play a part in the blue carbon initiative, specifically carbon sequestration in marshes on Poplar Island.
- When appropriate, coordinate to participate in a follow-up event to “The Use of Dredged Material to Protect Low-Lying Areas of the Chesapeake Bay” workshop which recommended the use of pilot projects at appropriate locations to address the impacts of erosion and inundation from rising sea level.
- Environmental, geotechnical, hydrographic, and aerial surveys are underway as part of the Mid-Bay Pre-Construction Engineering and Design phase. The Corps Baltimore District’s project design considers varying scenarios of sea level rise as part of its risk analysis of future conditions.
- Poplar Island expansion dike construction is on target to be complete by the end of summer 2020, providing additional capacity as well as wetland, protected open water, and upland habitats.

- Raising of the Masonville DMCF dike to +18' MLLW is complete and preparations have begun to raise the dikes to +30'MLLW. The final elevation of the Masonville dikes will be +42'MLLW, equivalent to the adjacent land.



**Continue to review and evaluate the 2011 Harbor Team recommendations and advance where feasible.**

Based on additional studies and more recent stakeholder feedback, the recommendations to continue to be pursued in 2020 include:

**a. Implement the Cox Creek Expanded (CCE) Project on MDOT MPA-owned property (Stage 1 Expansion) and pursue acquisition of the Tronox (formerly Cristal USA) property for CCE Stage 2.**

- Base dike widening and dike construction to elevation +36' MLLW is underway for CCE and slated for completion in February 2021. Design of the upland expansion and +60' MLLW dikes was completed in early 2020. Construction of the +60' MLLW dikes is scheduled to begin in early 2021 with anticipated completion in summer 2024.
- Community enhancement projects are proceeding in concert with the expansion project. Navigation aids have been installed in Cox Creek channels and a nature trail around Swan Creek is being designed.
- Efforts to acquire the Tronox property adjacent to the Cox Creek DMCF remain underway.

**b. Begin evaluating the potential future of CAD as a dredged material management option based on lessons learned from the pilot project.**

- MDOT MPA is conducting planning and investigative efforts to identify future Confined Aquatic Disposal (CAD) sites in the Patapsco River, based on lessons learned from the pilot project, and is developing a suite of recommendations for review by end of 2020.



**With input from the Innovative Reuse and Management Committees, review the June 2014 Innovative and Beneficial Use Strategy and update as necessary with refined goals and new action items, deliverables and deadlines.**

**a. Submit revised strategy to DMMP Executive Committee for approval by the end of 2020.**

- A 2020 Innovative Reuse and Beneficial Use Strategy was developed with input from both the Innovative Reuse and Management Committees. The Strategy will be presented to the Executive Committee for final approval at their next meeting.

**b.** Recommendations from the 2019 Workshop on the Use of Dredged Material to Protect Low-Lying Areas of the Chesapeake Bay will be considered in the strategy update.

- MDOT MPA staff and a team of advisors from the workshop explored the recommendation of forming a work group and the additional three recommendations of a web-tool, pilot projects and a regional strategy. The group evaluated the various, related activities already underway with respect to sea level rise, vulnerable shorelines and innovative/beneficial use of dredged material and determined the appropriate approach at this time was to work with those existing commissions, workgroups, agencies and organizations (federal, state, local, NGO's) in this arena as a vehicle to advance the goal of using dredged material to protect low lying areas of the Chesapeake Bay.



**Support the MPA's mission by working with all stakeholders to increase MDOT MPA's visibility and enhance the public's knowledge of MDOT MPA, the POB, port operations and dredging program, and their importance to the State of Maryland.**

Chart a clear course for increased outreach, engaging communications, meaningful educational opportunities and improved measurement of the impact of these activities:

**a.** Build and maintain respectful, productive and mutually-beneficial relationships with all stakeholders, especially with younger and more diverse audiences, as well as colleagues in the scientific and seaport industry to generate a high level of support for the MDOT MPA DMMP.

- In light of the COVID-19 virus, the education and outreach team is developing new ways to support and reach students through online learning portals, virtual classrooms and presentations, social media outreach, and other means of stakeholder engagement.
- New guidelines for providing public access to our sites are being developed to adhere to all state mandated safety protocols including social distancing in preparation for state approved phased reopening of public spaces.
- Harbor Development has successfully transitioned many of their meetings to a virtual platform with opportunities for feedback and dialogue; to date there has been robust participation by the DMMP committee members.
- In response to the need for continued virtual engagement Harbor Development will continue to find ways to create new partnerships and create meaningful virtual outreach opportunities.

**b.** Effectively engage stakeholders as partners in securing future dredged material placement sites and alternative uses that facilitate Port operations, growth and expansion.

- Community engagement and outreach efforts in Dorchester County associated with the Mid-Bay project were initiated with the release of the updated video: “Sediment to Solutions: Channeling Innovations for Beneficial Uses”. <https://bit.ly/SedimentToSolutions>
- MDOT MPA continues to develop strategic partnerships with additional community organizations to improve access to MDOT MPA sites.



**Continue to partner with the MD Department of Natural Resources on revised HMI North Cell habitat design concepts and refine the preferred design.**

Work to establish an agreement with DNR to clearly establish roles and responsibilities regarding habitat design and future management of the site.

- In coordination with the MD Department of Natural Resources (DNR) and Maryland Environmental Service (MES) a preliminary design for the HMI North Cell habitat development was developed; it includes upland, transitional and ponded habitat areas to maximize potential wildlife habitat and minimize operations/maintenance in the North Cell. Cost estimates for implementation of the design are being developed.
- MDOT MPA, MES, and DNR met in January, March and June 2020 to discuss roles and responsibilities, regarding habitat design and future management of the site. These discussions will be used in the establishment of the next Inter-Governmental Agency agreement.