

Executive Summary

Shipyards Creek Associates, LLC (the Applicant) proposes to rehabilitate the former Macalloy property, where the Macalloy ferrochromium alloy plant historically operated from 1941-1998. The proposed project will result in the redevelopment of this Superfund and brownfield site into an economically vibrant, Charleston-based marine terminal facility with access to existing federal shipping channels, major rail carriers, and the interstate highway system. The subject property is located at 1800 Pittsburgh Avenue in an existing industrial and commercial section of the Charleston Peninsula. It consists of approximately 74 acres of developable property fronting the western bank of Shipyards Creek.

The proposed action will replace and upgrade the former Macalloy marine terminal facility to allow waterfront access to the site via deep draft Handymax sized vessels consistent with expected needs of the shipping industry. This will include construction of a 70-foot wide by 880-foot long concrete bulk handling wharf, a 575-foot long steel sheetpile toe wall in front of an existing concrete wharf, retaining walls, and a relocated mooring area adjacent to the channel. This construction will occur in the same location as the dock which was previously used during the historical operations of the Macalloy plant, which was approximately 800 feet long by 33 feet wide.

The project will involve widening the existing authorized Upper Channel and Basin from 200 feet to 300 feet. Both the Upper Channel and Upper Basin will be deepened to -38 feet mean lower low water (MLLW) with minus one foot of allowable over-dredge. Deepening to -38 feet is consistent with the depth that Shipyards Creek was historically dredged during the 1970s-1990s. The proposed project does not contemplate dredging to a depth greater than that which was previously authorized by the Water Resources Act of 1986 and that which was historically maintained in this area.

Approximately 990,000 cubic yards of material will be dredged from Shipyards Creek to allow for construction of the preferred alternative. Dredge material will be transported to the Charleston Offshore Dredged Material Disposal Site (ODMDS). Maintenance dredging will require removal of approximately 49,000 yd³ of material annually with deposition in either the ODMDS or the Clouter Island Confined Disposal Facility.

Land based improvements will result in a marine terminal that would handle bulk, break bulk, or RO-RO cargo (but not liquid natural gas or coal), along with associated amenities (rail siding, roadway, and site improvements). These proposed improvements are consistent with the historical use of this same property, the industrial nature of this area of Charleston, and the formally recognized purpose and intent for this area to support water dependent port-based activities. This project is also supported by the South Carolina State Ports Authority.

An analysis of seven potential sites within the Charleston area was undertaken to determine the most reasonable and feasible site for this project given its purpose and need. Four on-site alternatives (including no-build) were also examined in order to facilitate redevelopment of the Shipyards Creek property. One alternative was carried forth for detailed evaluation based on minimal environmental impacts

Rail service will be re-established via construction of an industrial rail siding on the property (three, 650-ft tracks) to reconstitute the rail service which previously existed at the site from 1941 until 1998. The proposed project is expected to generate, on average, one trip per week for pickup and delivery from the Shipyard Creek terminal and may result in up to 12 additional rail cars per week which will be linked with the existing CSX train on the main industrial lead.

The majority of the traffic accessing the Shipyard Creek site will arrive or leave via Interstate 26 using the Meeting Street / Spruill Avenue interchange. From there, traffic will access the site via Pittsburgh Avenue. Traffic generated by the project will account for less than one percent (0.8%) of the 2012 SCDOT counts for annual daily traffic near the Meeting Street Bridge and less than seven percent of the 2013 vehicles per day travelling on Meeting Street in the vicinity of the site. When the Charleston Naval Complex Access Road is completed, traffic from the Shipyard Creek site is expected to shift to this route via a newly constructed interchange allowing access into the site; daily traffic will be less than five percent of total traffic anticipated on this new roadway.

Impacts to the natural environment have been considered. Most of the project area comprises cleared, previously used uplands located on dredged material deposits with little un-cleared upland habitat. An Essential Fish Habitat study has been prepared and presented for review as part of this analysis.

Water quality issues have been evaluated with consideration given to: 1) the historical characterization of Shipyard Creek's water as fully supporting designated uses; 2) proposed on-site methods for water treatment; and 3) the relatively small portion of the contribution of discharge from Shipyard Creek to Watershed 03050201. Minor decreases in Dissolved Oxygen may occur during dredging when water temperatures increase. Reductions are expected to be localized and short term and not below levels that would negatively affect marine life.

The project will result in impacts to 0.38 acre of estuarine wetlands and areas below Mean High Water. For mitigation, the Applicant proposes to purchase 4.6 salt marsh enhancement / restoration credits from the Congaree Carton Mitigation Bank.

No submerged cultural resources eligible for inclusion on the National Register of Historic Places will be impacted by the proposed project. The State Historic Preservation Office has concurred (January 13, 2014 letter).

Environmental justice issues associated with this project have been considered. The nearest neighborhood is Union Heights which is, on average, a distance of more than 900 feet from the project. Any potential negative impacts (air, noise, light, traffic) would be minimal since the existing residential neighborhood is already separated and buffered from the Shipyard Creek site by distance as well as the presence of a rail yard, Spruill Avenue, a wooded buffer, and the future port access roadway. Project impacts are expected to be positive in that nearby job opportunities would be available.