



ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT FOR THE DREDGING OF PIER 11 SOUTH AT NAVAL STATION NORFOLK, NORFOLK VIRGINIA

THE PROPOSED ACTION

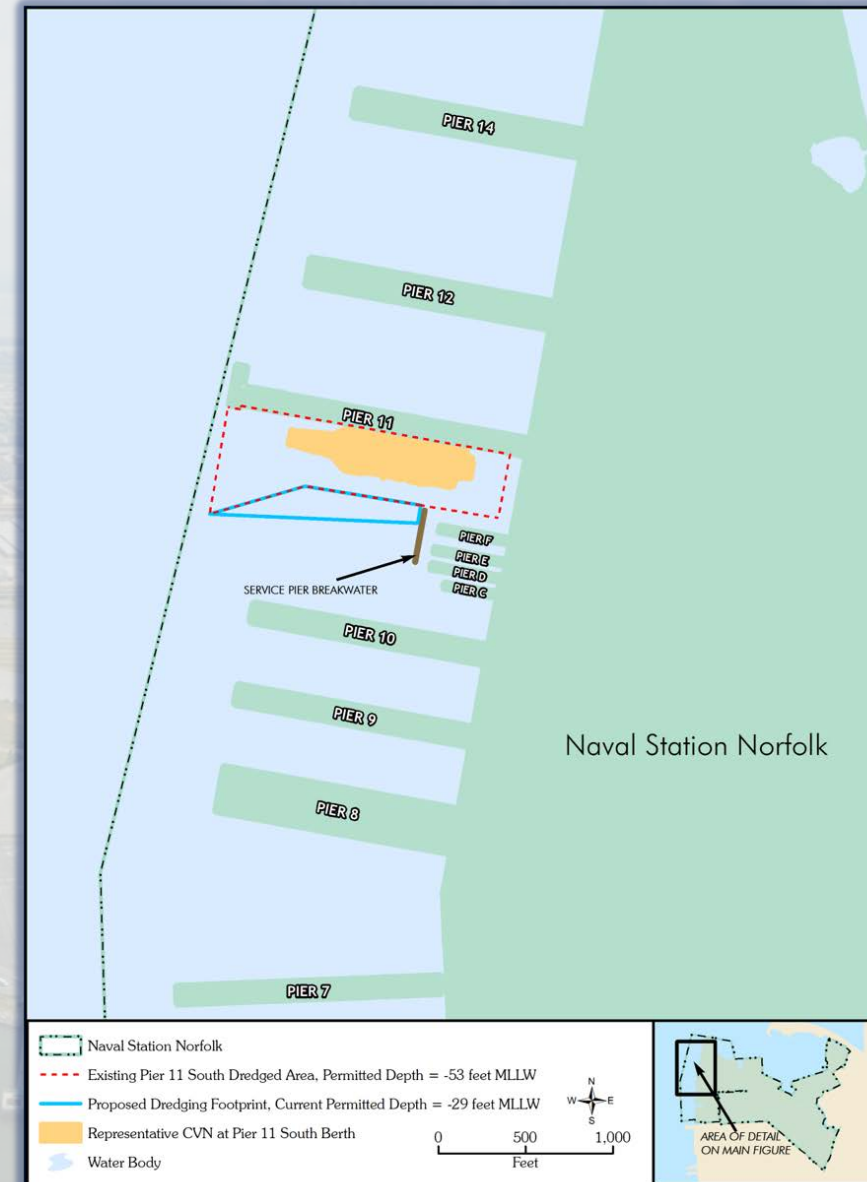
In accordance with the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA), the Navy is preparing an environmental assessment (EA) for the dredging of Pier 11 South at Naval Station (NS) Norfolk. The Proposed Action would permit the docking and undocking of nuclear-powered aircraft carriers (CVNs) at Pier 11 South by increasing the size of the area that is currently dredged to accommodate CVNs. The current dredged area is insufficient to accomplish docking and undocking of CVNs during all tide stages. At present docking and undocking can only be performed during high tide.

The proposed dredging would likely utilize a combination of hydraulic cutterhead and mechanical clamshell dredging equipment to remove approximately 145,000 cubic yards of sediment and achieve a target dredged depth of -53 feet Mean Low Low Water (MLLW) in the 16,000 square yard project area. This depth includes two feet of overdredge allowance. Depending on sediment quality, dredged sediments would either be placed at Craney Island Dredged Material Management Area or at an approved upland dredged materials handling facility.

PURPOSE AND NEED FOR THE PROPOSED ACTION

The purpose of the Proposed Action is to enable docking and undocking of CVNs at Pier 11 South at all times, regardless of tide stage.

The Proposed Action is needed to meet U.S. Atlantic Fleet operational readiness requirements. CVNs must be able to depart NS Norfolk at any time.



ALTERNATIVES

Alternatives were developed for analysis based upon the following screening factors:

- Utilize existing facilities (e.g., no new construction or alteration of fixed infrastructure).
- Minimize operational impacts (e.g., limit the time that berths are unavailable).
- Minimize environmental impacts and cost to the extent feasible.

Based on an analysis of proposed alternatives and the screening factors, the Navy is considering one action alternative, dredging the 16,000 square yard area to -53 feet MLLW, and a No Action Alternative.

Under the No Action Alternative, no dredging would occur. Pier 11 South would remain limited for use by CVNs. CVNs would not be able to dock and undock at all times. The No Action Alternative would not meet the purpose and need for the Proposed Action; however, as required by NEPA, the No Action Alternative is carried forward for analysis in the EA.

SCOPE OF THE EA

The EA presents the existing conditions at NS Norfolk and evaluates the potential consequences of the proposed action on the following resource areas: water, biological, cultural, coastal zone, air quality, transportation, and hazardous materials and waste.

The Navy is coordinating with the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, National Marine Fisheries Service, State Historic Preservation Office (Virginia Department of Historic Resources), Tribal Historic Preservation Officers, and Virginia Department of Environmental Quality.



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