



Port of Gulfport Expansion Project Environmental Impact Statement Proposed Action and Alternatives



The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers Mobile District (USACE) is preparing the Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) for the Port of Gulfport Expansion Project, Harrison County, Mississippi, for the Department of the Army Permit Application 01768. The EIS will assess the potential environmental impacts associated with the construction and operation of the project proposed by the permit applicant, the Mississippi State Port Authority (MSPA). The purpose of the proposed Port of Gulfport Expansion Project is to expand the Port footprint to provide a facility that is capable of increasing throughput at the Port to stimulate economic growth.

Proposed Action

The project proposes expanding the Port's current footprint by filling approximately 300 acres of open-water bottom in the Mississippi Sound to construct wharfs, bulkheads, terminal facilities, container storage areas, intermodal container transfer facilities, and a breakwater of approximately 4,000 linear feet. The project also proposes dredging a turning basin. The expanded footprint and turning basin will provide the necessary space to accommodate additional tenants. The proposed expanded port facility will be elevated 25 feet above sea level to provide protection against

future tropical storm surge events. (Note: a separate Port Restoration Project is elevating the current Port facilities to 25 feet to provide more protection for the existing Port area.)

The EIS will evaluate the potential impacts of the proposed project, connected actions, and alternatives. The EIS will also assist USACE in deciding whether to issue a Department of the Army permit.

Alternatives

The EIS will examine the impacts from the proposed action in three alternatives: the No-Action Alternative, implementing the proposed action to achieve medium efficiency, and implementing the proposed action to achieve maximum efficiency and throughput.

No-Action Alternative

Under the No-Action Alternative, the Port would continue to operate without the proposed expanded facilities. The Port would be capable of an annual throughput of 250,000 to 400,000 twenty-foot equivalent units (TEUs). Under the No-Action Alternative, the Applicant's purpose and need for the project would not be met, reducing the potential to stimulate economic growth within the region.

Alternative 1: Revised Expansion at Medium Efficiency

Alternative 1 would revise the port facility as described in the proposed action to achieve a medium level of efficiency and throughput. Specific features of Alternative 1 include:

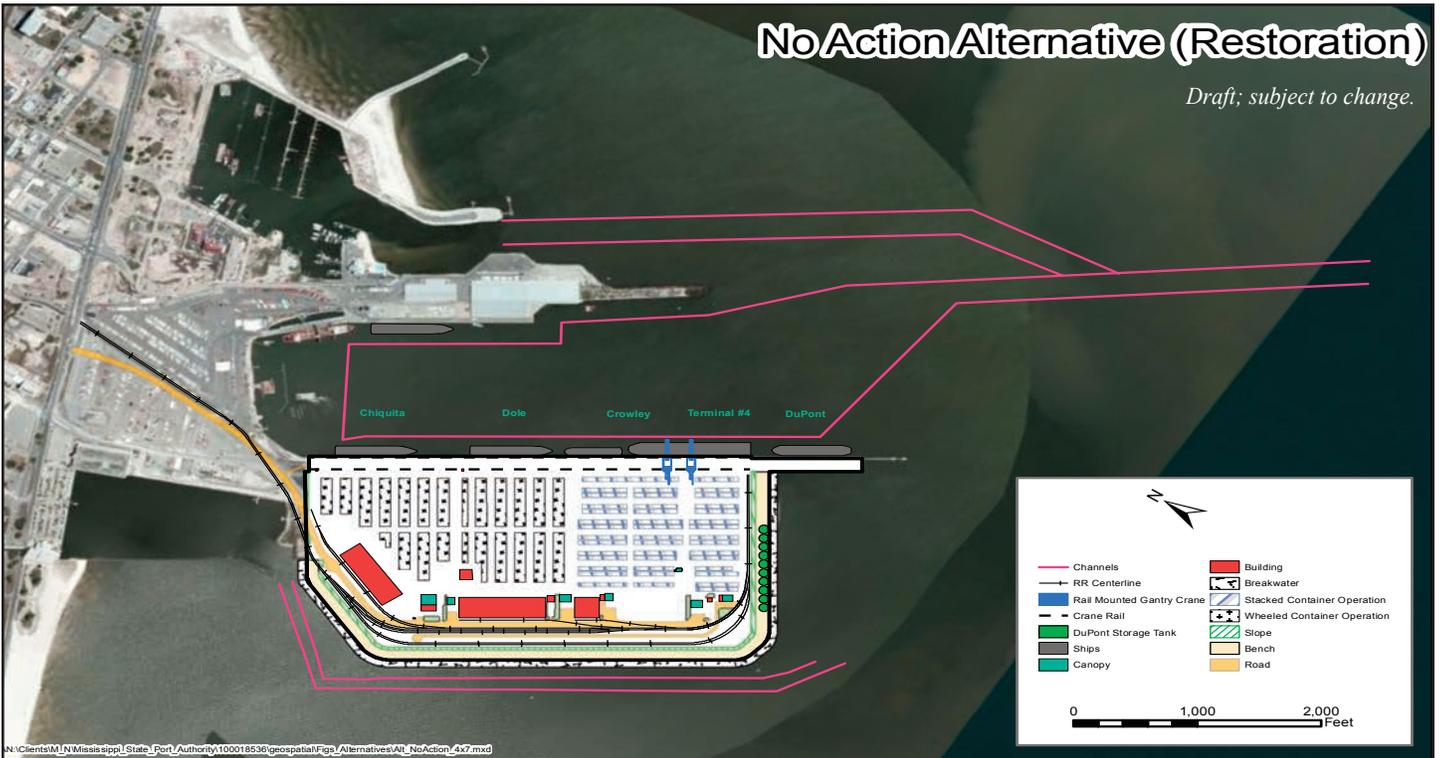
- Adding approximately 160 acres to the West Pier
- Adding approximately 15 acres to the East Pier
- Filling approximately 9 acres in the North Harbor
- Expanding the existing turning basin to the south by dredging approximately 85 acres adjacent to the expanded West Pier and the existing navigation channel
- Adding a 4,000-linear foot breakwater on the eastern side of the navigation channel
- Implementing moderate reconfiguration and automation.

Under Alternative 1, the Port would be capable of an annual throughput of 1.2 million TEUs.

The Inland Port Concept was included in the 2003 and 2007 Port Master Plans but was dropped from consideration as part of the Proposed Expansion Project based on public input. Thus, the proposed expansion does not include an inland port.

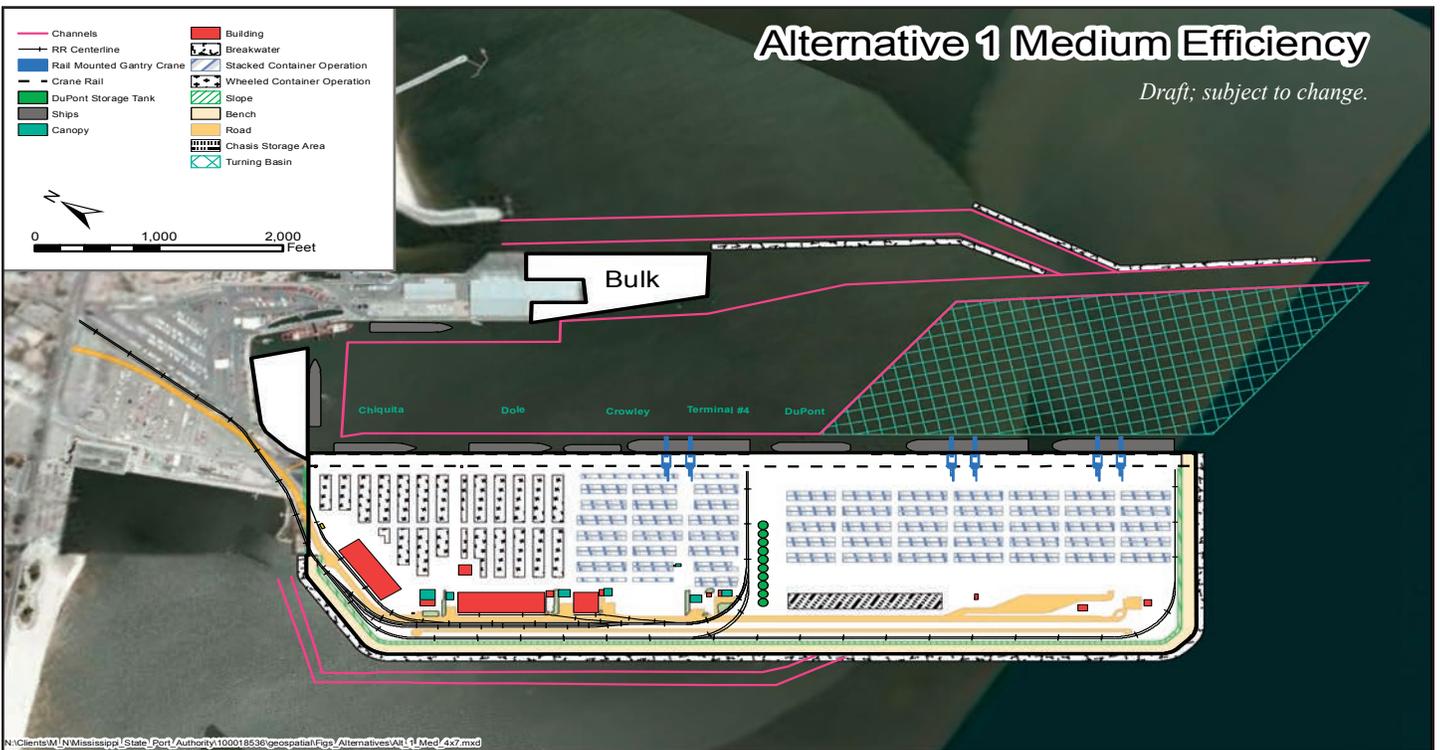
No Action Alternative (Restoration)

Draft; subject to change.



Alternative 1 Medium Efficiency

Draft; subject to change.



Alternative 2: Revised Expansion at Maximum Efficiency

Alternative 2 would revise the port facility as described in the proposed action to achieve maximum efficiency and throughput. This alternative includes the proposed actions in Alternative 1 but also includes reconfiguration of the Port layout, modification of tenant layout and levels of automation. Under Alternative 2, the Port would be capable of an annual throughput of between 1.7 and 2 million TEUs.

Special Studies

USACE is conducting several special studies to support the EIS. These studies will provide additional data for use in evaluating the impacts from the proposed action.

The studies include:

- Gulf Sturgeon/Essential Fish Habitat – including benthic sampling and tagging and monitoring gulf sturgeon to determine if sturgeon are crossing Port facilities and potential related impacts

- Traffic – evaluating existing conditions and potential road and rail traffic impacts from the proposed action
- Air emissions – estimating air contaminant emissions from project construction and operation
- Environmental justice – expanding community analysis considering air quality, traffic, noise, and job creation
- Market/economics – including container volume projections through 2060 and extensive economic impact evaluation of jobs and revenue generation.

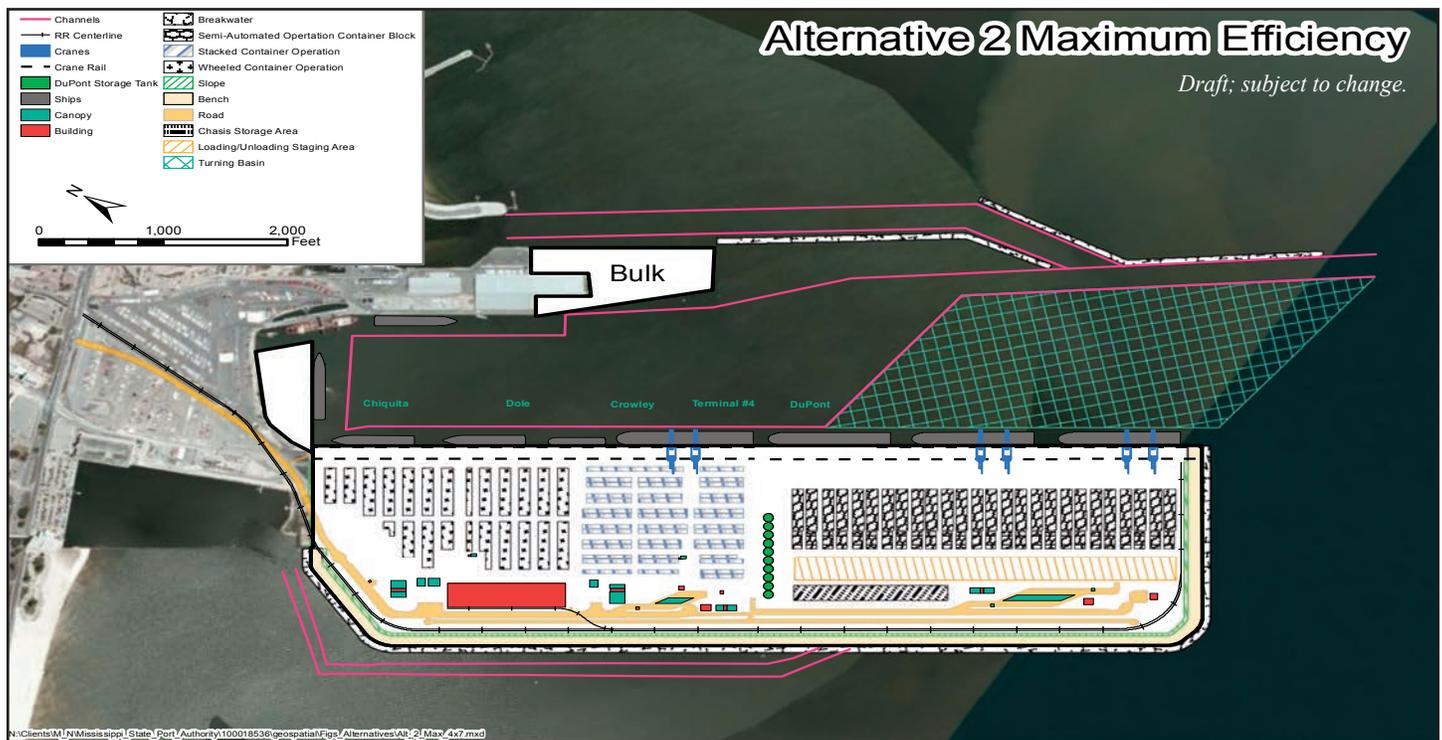
Public Involvement

The scoping period for the EIS was held in early 2011. A scoping report summarizing the results (including interagency and public meetings, comments received, and consultations) was issued in June 2011.

Comments received during the scoping period are presented in the “Expansion Project Environmental Impact Statement Scoping Report” located on the project website (www.portofgulfporteis.com).

The USACE is hosting a public workshop to provide an opportunity for those interested to learn more about the project including the scope, alternatives under consideration, and related actions. The workshop will include an information poster session and a formal presentation. An open house will follow during which time project personnel will be available throughout the meeting room to discuss the proposed project. Formal comments will not be taken as part of this workshop. The next formal public comment period will occur in conjunction with issuing the draft Environmental Impact Statement. However, if you are interested in commenting you may still do so via the project website:

www.portofgulfporteis.com



Relevant Projects

Three relevant projects have already been permitted at the Port and in the surrounding area. They include the Port of Gulfport Restoration Project, the MDOT I-310 Project, and the KCS Rail Improvements Project. Additional details of each project is provided below.

Each project serves an independent purpose from each other and the Port Expansion Project, and are therefore not considered connected actions.

In order to take these three projects into consideration during the EIS alternatives analysis, the evaluation of impacts assumes that the three projects have been constructed as described and approved according to the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) documentation for each project. As none of these is likely to be completed by the date of publication of the EIS, future projected conditions from approved NEPA documentation will be used to aid in the description of future conditions, as appropriate.

1. Port of Gulfport Restoration Project

- Purpose: Provide for long-term recovery of the operating capacity of the Port, provide protection against tropical storm surges, establish solid infrastructure foundation for future operations
- HUD funding approved in 2009 and 2010 for construction
- Increase Port footprint by 84 acres
- Increase elevation of West Pier to +25 feet mean sea level (msl)
- Realign road and rail services on the Port facility
- Ongoing construction from 1998 permit (interrupted by Hurricane Katrina)

- Accommodate between 250,000 and possibly up to 1 million TEUs annually.

2. I-310 Project

- Purpose: Provide a more direct, controlled access route between US 90 and I-10
- Approved in 2003 and under construction in northern portion
- Funded through a combination of state, federal, and local sources
- Approved plans show elevated connection with the Port facility at 29th Street
- Included in the Gulf Coast Regional Plan and considered in Mississippi Department of Transportation No-Build scenarios for future planning efforts.

3. KCS Rail Improvements Project

- Purpose: Support local and state economic development plan by improving rail access and efficiency to the Port and other users; promote energy efficiency; and improve safety for nearby residents
- Approved in 2011
- Funded through a TIGER Grant from the U.S. Department of Transportation, state funds, and private funds
- Upgrade 67.5 miles of rail to accommodate double-stacking and allow speeds up to 49 mph from Gulfport to Hattiesburg
- Install new track, cross tie renewal, grade-crossing renewal, turnout renewal, signal crossing updates, bridge maintenance, new siding, yard renewal.

Port of Gulfport Expansion Project

Public Workshop

Thursday, August 9
5:30-8:00 p.m.
Westside Community
Center
4006 8th Street
Gulfport, Mississippi

For More Information

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