

Delaware Valley Regional Planning Commission (DVRPC)

Urban Waterfront Action Group (UWAG) Meeting Notes
Tuesday, August 24, 2021

Participants:

Applicant and Consulting Teams

Anthony DeVincenzo, Paul Ferry, Anthony DePasquale, S.T. Hudson Engineers; Michael Fluehr, Greenwich Terminals; Lisa Magee, Philadelphia Port Authority

Agencies

Randy Brown, Matt Waldron, Pennsylvania Department of Environmental Protection / Coastal Zone Management Program (PA DEP / CZM); Jim Boyer, U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (USACOE); Keith Hanson, Maggie Saga, National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS); Lebaron Lenard-Palmer, City of Philadelphia Department of Planning and Development; Josh Lippert, City of Philadelphia License and Inspections, Zac Nemec, Pennsylvania Sea Grant; Sue Patterson, Philadelphia Water Department; Pat Quigley, PAQ Inc.; Sean Greene, DVRPC

Meeting Summary:

Trestle Bridge from Packer Avenue Marine Terminal to Publicker Site

This was an online meeting requested by S.T. Hudson Engineers to discuss a proposed trestle bridge across an unnamed inlet of the Delaware River to link the Packer Avenue Marine Terminal to the Greenwich Terminals adjacent to the Walt Whitman Bridge in South Philadelphia.

S.T. Hudson provided the presentation, which included plans for the project, prior to the meeting and their presentation is available in the UWAG project database.

Paul Ferry, S.T. Hudson, presented the background and purpose of the project, which is to construct a bridge between the Greenwich Terminals property and the Packer Avenue Marine Terminal. The bridge will allow freight movements between the two terminals and eliminate the need for trucks to use Columbus Avenue to travel between terminals.

Anthony DiVincenzo, S.T. Hudson, presented the site conditions and engineering plans for the proposed bridge. The bridge will cross tidal mudflats on an inlet of the Delaware River and span approximately 580 feet and be approximately 40 feet wide. Anthony's presentation included construction details and sequencing for the bridge. The bridge will be constructed using floating barges and will consist of girders sitting on concrete filled pilings. The bottom of the new bridge will be approximately 15 feet above the mean high tide line. The project will demolish an existing roadway on the Packer side of the inlet and reconstruct the shore armoring on the Publicker

side of the inlet with riprap. A portion of the old Pier 109 S pilings will need to be removed to accommodate the new bridge.

Josh Lippert, City of Philadelphia L&I, asked if the Limit of Moderate Wave Action (LiMWA) and Special Flood Hazard Area (SFHA) lines were on the plan maps. Josh noted that the LiMWA is an important component to identify the limits of wave action from storm surge. Anthony and Josh discussed the difference between the Mean High Tide and LiMWA Lines. Paul responded that the plans will include the LiMWA and SFHA lines.

Randy Brown, PADEP, mentioned all plans will require a floodplain consistency letter from the City.

Randy and Josh asked who the project sponsor and permit applicant would be. Anthony responded that the applicant is Greenwich Terminals LLC, the operator of the facility which is owned by PhilaPort.

Randy highlighted the need to identify the regulatory boundaries of the project and advised the applicants to include a narrative of the alternative designs considered for the project. He noted that the permit review will consider why this design was selected when potential upland alternatives were available. Randy then asked about the square footage of the bridge deck area and the height of the bridge above mean high tide.

Anthony answered that the deck areas would be 23,000 ft² and that the structure would be a high deck structure with the beams being approximately 15 feet above the medium lower low water line and approximately 10 feet above the mean high tide line. He explained that the design was selected to improve operations and reduce the impacts of truck traffic on Columbus Boulevard and improved the safety and efficiency of operations. Anthony noted that existing buildings and outfall impacted the selected design. Anthony explained that there was not submerged aquatic vegetation on the mudflats.

Randy stressed that the descriptions of the alternatives analysis will be critical as the present project crosses valuable habitat where there may be upland alternatives. Randy noted that the shading from the new bridge may be a concern as well as the loss of potential habitat from removing piles from the old pier. Randy explained that this project will require a full Joint Permit and the relevant state and federal resource agencies would comment on the application.

Jim Boyer, USACOE, explained that this project would most likely need to be permitted by the US Coast Guard. The Army Corps would permit any fill in the areas as long as the Coast Guard permitted the bridge. As the lead federal agency, the Coast Guard would coordinate comments from the federal resource agencies including comments from the NMFS. The state requirements would remain the same regardless of who the lead federal agency is.

Keith Hanson, NFMS, explained that the project will impact anadromous fish habitat and that there may be time restrictions on construction to reduce the impacts. Keith reiterated that the alternative analysis is important to demonstrate how impacts on habitat were mitigated.

Keith also noted that shading from the bridge is considered an adverse impact on the habitat and that the piles of the bridge may impact the long-term viability of the mudflats. Keith advised that the project will likely require mitigation for the shading, noting that the analysis would probably consider the 2D impacts of the bridge on shading. Keith also noted that compaction and scour from the construction sequence should be considered in the mitigation plans. Keith will provide the project team with contacts at the endangered species office at NMFS.

Matt Waldron, PA DEP / CZM, explained that if the Coast Guard permits the bridge and the Army Corps permits the bank stabilization and fill, then the project would require a coastal zone consistency finding. Matt noted that typically waterfront development projects require some kind of public access but since these are secure facilities, they will be exempt from that requirement.

Josh Lippert, City of Philadelphia, explained that city ordinance prohibited construction seaward of the mean high tide line and that constructions seaward of the LiMWA line required construction to meet the FEMA Zone A standards. Josh confirmed that this applied to new piers. Josh explained that the applicants would need to seek a variance to the building codes adopted in 2018 for construction seaward of the mean high tide line. If the building permit was denied the applicant could appeal to the Board of Building Standards for a variance. Josh also noted that License and Inspections would require a pre-application meeting before the applicant submitted a building permit application.

Randy highlighted that the state review would require a floodplain consistency finding from the City.

Sue Patterson, PWD, explained that this ordinance was required by FEMA in order for Philadelphia to participate in the federal flood insurance program.

Sean Greene, DVRPC, relayed a message from the Philadelphia City Planning Commission that there is a gas pipeline that crosses under the Delaware River in the vicinity of this project. Anthony explained that they are aware of the TransCo Pipeline and know its location.

This concluded the project review portion of the meeting and the meeting adjourned at 11:25 am.