DEPARTMENT OF THE ARMY
NORTH ATLANTIC DIVISION, US ARMY CORPS OF ENGINEERS
FORT HAMILTON MILITARY COMMUNITY
BROOKLYN, NEW YORK 11252-6700

JAN 11 2008

REPLY TO
ATTENTION OF

CENAD-PSD-P

MEMORANDUM FOR Commander, New England District, ATTN: CENAE-EP-P

SUBJECT: Review Plan Approval for Portsmouth Harbor and Piscataqua River Navigation Improvement Project

1. Reference:

a. EC 1105-2-408, Peer Review of Decision Documents, 31 May 2005.

b. Memorandum, CECW-CP, 30 March 2007, subject: Peer Review Process.

2. The enclosed Review Plan for the Portsmouth Harbor and Piscataqua River Navigation Improvement Project has been prepared in accordance with the referenced guidance.

3. The Plan has been made available for public comment, and any comments received have been incorporated. It is being coordinated with the Deep Draft Navigation Planning Center of Expertise of South Atlantic Division, which is the lead office to execute this Plan. The Plan currently does not include external peer review.

4. I hereby approve this Plan, which is subject to change as study circumstances require, consistent with study development under the Project Management Business Process. Subsequent revisions to this Plan or its execution will require new written approval from this office.

Encl

Joseph R. Vietri
Chief, Planning & Policy Community of Practice
Program Support Division
Programs Directorate

PORTSMOUTH HARBOR AND PISCATAQUA RIVER NAVIGATION IMPROVEMENT PROJECT GENERAL INVESTIGATION FEASIBILITY PHASE REVIEW PLAN

NEW ENGLAND DISTRICT
(October 2007)

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1. PURPOSE

This Review Plan is for the Portsmouth Harbor and Piscataqua River Navigation Improvement Project, New Hampshire and Maine, General Investigation (GI), Feasibility Study. The purpose of the plan is to ensure the quality and credibility of assessments and solutions for the navigation improvement investigation and potential project.

The plan defines the review process and team members. This review plan was developed jointly and agreed upon by New England District and the National Deep Draft Navigation Planning Center of Expertise (DDNPCX).

2. BACKGROUND

The Portsmouth Harbor and Piscataqua River Navigation Improvement Project is sponsored by the Pease Development Authority, New Hampshire.

The scope of the Portsmouth Harbor and Piscataqua River Feasibility study and NEPA documents will include problem identification, formulation of alternatives, analysis and screening of alternatives, engineering design, cost estimates, environmental assessment, economic cost-benefit assessment, determination of Federal interest, and identification of a recommend plan of improvement. It is envisioned that if justified the

Corps process will lead to Congressional authorization and appropriations necessary to construct the project.

The Corps review process includes review of technical aspects of the decision document, NEPA documents and their constituent analyses through an approach called "Independent Technical Review" (ITR). ITR is a critical examination by a qualified person or team that was not involved in the day-to-day work of the investigation. In general, current Corps policy for decision documents to be approved at Headquarters is that the Planning Center of Expertise (PCX) be involved in establishing the review plan and review team, and that reviews be conducted by Corps specialists outside of the performing District. In some special cases where the risk and/or magnitude of the project are high an external peer review maybe be recommended (EPR). External peer review refers to review conducted outside of the Corps of Engineers.

This review plan is in accordance with the provisions of Corps of Engineers policy outlined in EC1105-2-408, dated 31 May 2005, entitled "Peer Review of Decision Documents" and the 30 March 2007 Memorandum from Major General Don T. Riley on Peer Review Process.

3. APPLICABILITY

The documents to be reviewed by the technical review team are the Feasibility Report, NEPA document, and related technical and supporting appendices.

4. REFERENCES

- CECW-CP, Memorandum dated 30 March 2007, "Peer Review Process"
- EC1105-2-408, "Peer Review of Decision Documents", dated 31 May 2005
- ER1105-2-100, "Planning Guidance Notebook", dated 22 April 2000, and Amendment #1 to Appendices F & G, dated 31 January 2006

5. PROJECT DESCRIPTION

The Piscataqua River forms a portion of the state boundary between Maine and New Hampshire. Portsmouth Harbor, located at the mouth of the river, is about 45 miles northeast of Boston Harbor, Massachusetts. The existing Federal project includes a 35-foot deep channel, generally 400 feet wide, extending from deep water in Portsmouth Harbor to a point approximately 6.2 miles upstream. The existing project as modified by WRDA86 also includes: widening the bends at several locations; a 1,000 foot emergency maneuvering area between the Memorial and Maine-New Hampshire lift bridges; channel widening upstream of the Maine-New Hampshire Bridge; a 950-foot wide turning basin upstream of Boiling Rock; and an 850-foot wide turning basin at the head of the project.

Study of the existing Portsmouth Harbor and Piscataqua River navigation project was directed by Section 437 of the Water Resources Development Act of 2000 (WRDA 2000), as quoted below.

> *"The Secretary shall conduct a study to determine the feasibility of modifying the project for navigation, Portsmouth Harbor and Piscataqua River, Maine and New Hampshire, authorized by section 101 of the River and Harbor Act of 1962 (76 Stat. 1173) and modified by section 202(a) of the Water Resources Development Act of 1986 (100 Stat.4095), to increase the authorized width of turning basins in the Piscataqua River to 1,000 feet."*

The existing width of the upper turning basin is too narrow for efficient and safe handling of existing and future commerce. This portion of the existing Federal project consists of an 850-foot wide turning basin 35-foot deep at the head of the deep draft channel. In accordance with the limited purpose of the Congressional language, the feasibility study will focus on evaluating alternative measures to widen the turning basin to improve navigational efficiency and safety. Project implementation costs are not expected to exceed $12 million.

The state of New Hampshire, Pease Development Authority is the local Sponsor. A Feasibility Cost Sharing Agreement (FCSA) was executed on 12 June 2006, and provides for 50-50 cost sharing of all feasibility study costs. The Sponsor's goal is to evaluate turning basin improvement options and select the plan that maximizes the commercial capability of the upper portion of the navigation channel.

6. REVIEW REQUIREMENTS AND PROJECT RISK

Initial Quality Control (QC) review will be handled within the Section or Branch performing the work, and by contractors submitting the results of specific field investigations and reports. Additional QC will be performed by the PDT during the course of the feasibility plan formulation and evaluation process, and during preparation and assembling the Feasibility Report. These internal checks of theory, guidance used, computations and methodology are standard operating procedure and the process is well established. It is unlikely that the Feasibility Report will contain any influential scientific information. The navigation improvement measures identified in the 905(b) Analysis will be evaluated using standard hydraulic, geotechnical, environmental and economic processes.

ITR. Pursuant to EC1105-2-408, the feasibility study and resultant documents will require review by a Corps Independent Technical Review (ITR) team assigned by the Planning Center of Expertise (PCX) for Deep Draft Navigation. The Director, Deep Draft Navigation Center of Expertise, will select this team. As the cost estimate must be reviewed by the PCX for Cost Estimating, the Director will also coordinate with this PCX to establish the cost estimating ITR team member.

EPR. The study is expected to be a straightforward navigation improvement project at an existing federal channel, it is not novel and is not precedent setting, and does not have significant economic, environmental or social impacts. The magnitude of the improvement project (under $10,000,000) and the risk associated with the study assessments and predictions is low. Thus, an external peer review is not necessary. This conclusion is supported by the PCX.

External Peer Review Decision Checklist

1. Novel subject matter? No. Proposed widening options would be implemented using traditional engineering methods and construction techniques.

2. Controversial subject matter? No. The proposed widening is not controversial and is supported by the Congressional delegation and the State. No controversial environmental issues have been raised by resource agencies.

3. Precedent setting? No. The proposed turning basin widening will be in accordance with established navigation guidelines and criteria.

4. Unusually significant interagency interest? No. The study is strongly supported by the state of New Hampshire, but there is no unusually significant interagency interest.

5. Unusually significant economic, environmental, and social effects to the nation? No. Although the regional economic benefits and safety improvements are noteworthy, these effects are not unusually significant nationally.

Decision: External Peer Review is not required. Independent Technical Review by a team external to the project district will be sufficient to comply with EC 1105-2-408, Planning, Peer Review of Decision Documents, dated 31 May 2005.

7. REVIEW PROCESS

Initial Quality Control (QC) review will be handled within the Section or Branch at New England District performing the work, and by contractors submitting the results of specific field investigations and reports. Additional QC will be performed by the project delivery team (PDT) during the course of the feasibility plan formulation and evaluation process, and during preparation and assembling the draft and final Feasibility Report and NEPA documents. These District level internal checks of engineering, technical, and scientific methodology applied, computations, and assessment are standard operating procedure and normally conducted by Section Chiefs and Team Leaders.

The ITR process will include review of draft investigations of existing conditions, and determination of the without-project condition, formulation of alternative plans data and assumptions and the engineering, economic, environmental and social assessments.

Real estate aspects of proposed alternatives is expected to be minimal and will not require review unless scope of real estate requirements change. Planning models used during the study will also be provided to the PCX for certification.

ITR review milestones will include planning model certification, review of preliminary documents after the PDT identifies the alternatives that will be analyzed in detail, and review of the draft feasibility report and NEPA documents after the PDT completes its selection of a tentatively recommended plan of improvement.

8. PUBLIC COMMENT

Public involvement is anticipated throughout the feasibility study. Public information and other meetings as appropriate will be held in the study area as the study progresses. Summaries of these meetings and any other significant and relevant public comments will be made available to the ITR team.

9. REVIEW COST

The cost of the ITR will be discussed with the PCX and the Sponsor, and agreed to once the ITR team is assembled. The cost of the ITR is a cost shared feasibility study item.

10. REVIEW SCHEDULE

	Start	Complete
1. Develop Review Plan, Coord. w/ PCX	May 07	Oct 07
2. PCX Assigns ITR Team Members	May 08	May 08
3. PCX Certifies Planning model (s)	June 08	Oct 08
4. ITR of preliminary Feasibility Report/EA and PDT response and changes prior to AFB	Sep 08	Oct 08
5. ITR final check of Draft Final Feasibility Report/EA prior to CWRB briefing	Apr 09	May 09

11. PDT and ITR TEAMS

1) New England District PDT

The PDT will include individuals from the flowing disciplines

Planning

Navigation Team Leader
Project Manager (Plan Formulation)
Economics
Cultural Resources
Environmental Resources

Engineering

Geotechnical Engineering
Civil Design
Cost Engineering
Hydraulic Design
Geology

Real Estate

Operations

2) ITR Team

This team will be selected by the Director, Deep Draft Navigation Planning Center of Expertise and may include the following disciplines as appropriate.

Planning

Plan Formulation
Economics
Environmental

Engineering

H&H/Channel Design
Geotechnical
Cost Estimating (PCX for Cost Estimating)