



WATERWAYS
COUNCIL, INC.

Inner Harbor Navigation Canal Lock Replacement



Waterways Council, Inc. is the national public policy organization advocating a modern and well-maintained national system of ports and inland waterways.



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Location

Just off of the Mississippi River in the New Orleans Industrial Canal, a vital link in the Gulf Intracoastal Waterway system.

Existing Structures

The current lock, completed in 1921, is 31.5 feet deep by 75 feet wide by 640 feet long.

Annual Tonnage and Projected Traffic Growth

2007 tonnage at Inner Harbor Navigation Lock totaled 16.8 million tons of commerce. The leading commodities were refined petroleum products, chemicals and coal.

Summary of Problems

The current lock is too small and congested to accommodate the existing traffic and causes delays to the navigation industry.

Corps of Engineers Actions

Construction began in January 2001 with demolition and site preparation contracts and is ongoing. There were no funds requested for FY 10 or FY 11 for this project.

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Project Description

The Inner Harbor Navigation Canal (IHNC) Lock Replacement project is located in the southeastern portion of Louisiana, within the city limits of New Orleans, in the Inner Harbor Navigation Canal (Industrial Canal). The project was authorized by the Rivers and Harbors Act of 1956 (original authorization) and the Water Resources Development Acts (WRDA) of 1986 (re-authorizing the project and established cost sharing requirements) and 1996 (authorizing the Community Impact Mitigation Plan). The existing lock, completed in 1921, is 75 feet wide x 640 feet long x 31.5 feet deep and is too small to accommodate the existing traffic. The average delay to the navigation industry is 11 hours, but can be as much as 24-36 hours on many occasions. The canal can't be shut down for long periods of time without major impacts to the navigation industry. The proposed recommended plan provides for a deep draft lock, 110 feet wide x 1200 feet long x 36 feet of draft. The lock construction would be accomplished using a pre-fabricated, float-in method, that involves building five lock modules of concrete and steel at a remote location and floating them to the north-of-Claiborne-Avenue site. This method allows for construction in a highly congested urban area with no residential relocations. By-pass channels will be built to allow navigation to continue during construction.

Transportation Importance to the System

The IHNC Lock is a vital link that connects the Mississippi River to the Gulf Intracoastal Waterway (GIWW) in New Orleans, Louisiana. Approximately 67% of the traffic through the lock travels down the Mississippi River from the major rivers feeding into the Upper Mississippi and heads east along the GIWW or vice versa. The traffic through this lock transports some of the nation's most important commodities. In 2008, over 50% of the Lock's cargo traffic included shipments of petroleum, coal and industrial chemicals. An average of at least 950 jobs annually can be created as a result of construction of this project. The project will have significant, wide-ranging, positive economic impacts to the city and the state, as has been the case with similar projects in other areas.

Project Funding History

The deep-draft lock is estimated to cost \$1.263 billion. The cost of a lock sized just for inland navigation (110 feet wide by 900 feet long by 22 feet of draft) will be cost shared 50-50 between the Inland Waterway Trust Fund and the regular Corps appropriations. The remaining costs for the recommended plan will be cost shared 65-35 between the Corps and the Port of New Orleans. Included, as part of the inland navigation increment, is the \$40 million for a Community Impact Mitigation Plan. Some of the existing utility owners will have to pay for their own relocations, as they are non-compensable. Construction funds were first appropriated at the end of FY 01.

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Impact of Constrained Funding

Funding shortages and legal battles over the past few years have slowed down work on the project, increased costs, and will affect the completion of the project. Having zero funds in the President's Budgets over the last several fiscal years severely impact the project. In the future, if the project is funded at a constrained rate and not the efficient (capability) level, project completion could be delayed beyond 2030. There were no funds requested in FY 10 or FY 11 for this project.

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