

# SAN JUAN HARBOR, PUERTO RICO

## Navigation Improvement Study



The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, Jacksonville District is starting a feasibility study and environmental impact statement concerning possible navigation improvements to San Juan Harbor, Puerto Rico. The Corps will work in partnership with the Puerto Rico Port Authority, which owns, operates, and manages facilities for cargo and cruise vessels at the harbor.

San Juan Harbor is located on the north coast of Puerto Rico and is the island's principal port. The majority of the commonwealth's waterborne cargo and cruise ships pass through the harbor, handling more than 75 percent of the Commonwealth's non-petroleum waterborne commerce.

To meet increasing demands of the growing global economy, the shipping and cruise industry continues to progress to larger, more efficient vessels. The completion of the Panama Canal expansion in 2016 will allow mega cruise ships to transit the canal. The new Panama Canal will soon be able to handle vessels with a maximum length of 1,200 feet, width of 160 feet, and draft of 50 feet.

The Corps of Engineers is tasked to seek navigation improvements such as deepening and/or widening channels to accommodate existing and future vessel movement, and resolve navigation restriction problems. Corps' engineers

and scientists are using the best technologies available to make ports more cost-efficient.

San Juan Harbor currently suffers from some known shipping inefficiencies due to limited channel width and restrictions that don't allow two-way traffic. Certain sizes of container and cargo vessels can't exit the port through the Graving Dock area due to limited depth and width, and have to turn and transit near the Army Terminal, which creates delays with incoming ships using the same channels. Cruise ship docking has also reached its full capacity.

The study will assess the feasibility of implementing harbor improvements such as deepening and/or widening the channels. Such improvements are intended to accommodate existing and future vessel movement, resolve navigation restriction problems, and present opportunities for economic development.

The Corps of Engineers and the Puerto Rico Ports Authority signed an agreement Sept. 16, 2015 to officially start the study. The Corps is initiating the feasibility phase by drafting the project management plan and executing a Feasibility Cost Sharing Agreement with the San Juan Port Authority. A public scoping meeting is set for Nov. 5, 2015 in San Juan.

# SAN JUAN HARBOR NAVIGATION STUDY

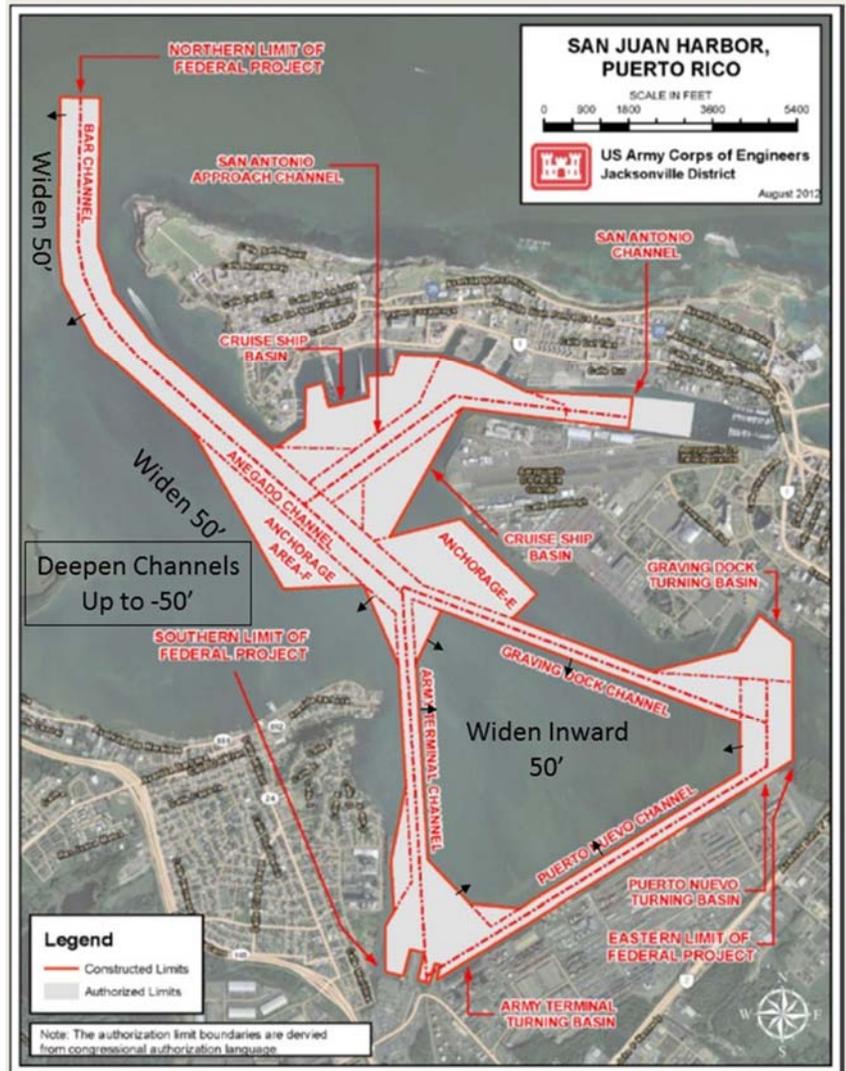
## Scoping & Study Details

The scoping process starts prior to preparation of the environmental impact statement and is intended to aid in determining the scope of the analysis and significant issues. This process is also intended to help identify alternatives and information needed to evaluate alternatives.

The San Juan Harbor includes six navigation channels. The project depths lessen moving into the harbor: the deepest is -56 feet at the entrance and the shallowest is -36 feet at Graving Dock Channel. The cruise ship channels are even less deep, ranging from -30 feet to -36 feet.

One potential alternative is to widen the main channels by 50 feet and deepen them up to 50 feet. The Corps will also evaluate lesser increments of widening and deepening. The Corps anticipates the dredged material may be suitable for placement in the Ocean Dredged Material Disposal Site located a few miles from the harbor entrance. Some material may also be suitable for placement in dredged holes or for other beneficial purposes.

Jacksonville District will develop and evaluate a matrix of alternative plans to produce a recommended plan for improvements to San Juan Harbor. This process will include the appropriate level of engineering, economic, and environmental analyses to identify all possible benefits and impacts associated with the projected navigational improvements.



The Corps welcomes views, comments and information about environmental and cultural resources, study objectives and important features within the described study area, as well as any suggested improvements. Letters of comment or inquiry should be addressed to the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, Attention: Planning Division, Environmental Branch, P.O. Box 4970, Jacksonville, FL 32207-8175.

For additional information or questions, please contact Paul DeMarco at [paul.m.demarco@usace.army.mil](mailto:paul.m.demarco@usace.army.mil) or 904-232-1897. Information is also available at the Jacksonville District website located at [http://www.saj.usace.army.mil/About/DivisionsOffices/Planning/EnvironmentalBranch/EnvironmentalDocuments.aspx#Puerto\\_Rico](http://www.saj.usace.army.mil/About/DivisionsOffices/Planning/EnvironmentalBranch/EnvironmentalDocuments.aspx#Puerto_Rico).

