Northeast Ohio’s Waterways: Lakefront Planning Issue Forums Summary Report Port Activities

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Date: October 22, 2002
Venue: Cleveland Browns Stadium
Moderator: Albert Jacquez, Administrator, Saint Lawrence Seaway Development Corporation
Panelists: Gary L. Failor, Executive Director, Cleveland-Cuyahoga County Port Authority
Glen Nekvasil, Vice President of Corporate Communications, Lake Carriers Association
Ziona Austrian, Director, Center for Economic Development, Maxine Goodman Levin College of Urban Affairs, Cleveland State University
Tim Donovan, Director, Ohio Canal Corridor
Stephen J. Thorp, Program Manager, Transportation and Sustainable Development, Great Lakes Commission

The following is a summary of the Lakefront Planning Issue Forum on the activities of the Port of Cleveland. The forum presented basic information about the port, including the locations of its facilities, site requirements, and regional economic impact. Several issues that will affect lakefront planning decisions, including alternative uses for the port, were also presented and are summarized below.
Fast Facts

- Water-based transportation has been important to Cleveland’s development since Moses Cleaveland landed here in 1796.
- Construction of a breakwater began in the 1870s to protect Cleveland’s harbor.
- The Cleveland-Cuyahoga County Port Authority was established in 1968 by the city and the county, under Ohio Revised Code, Chapter 4582.
- Today, the Port of Cleveland is an international maritime center with the St. Lawrence Seaway providing access to markets worldwide.
- The Cleveland harbor is protected by six miles of breakwater and has a 27-foot deep shipping channel that allows it to accommodate all ships that can pass through the locks of the St. Lawrence Seaway.
- Shipping facilities at the Port of Cleveland include the Cleveland Bulk Terminal on Whiskey Island; Docks 20 to 32 east of the mouth of the Cuyahoga River; and 25 privately owned dock facilities along the Cuyahoga River and the Old River Channel.
- The Port of Cleveland is a destination port with 90 percent of all cargo delivered within 50 miles of the city.
- The Port of Cleveland is a designated Foreign Trade Zone.
- Primary cargoes arriving by ship to the Port of Cleveland include steel, heavy machinery, and dry-bulk cargo such as iron ore, cement, and sand.
- Cargoes shipped from Cleveland include machinery, steel, and salt.
- In 1998 the number of tons shipped through the Port of Cleveland was over 18 million.

Background

The Great Lakes Seaway System
The bi-national seaway is the largest waterway in the world, extending more than 2,300 miles from the Gulf of St. Lawrence to the head of the Great Lakes and Lake Superior at the ports of Duluth, Minnesota and Thunder Bay, Ontario.

Tug barges link the Great Lakes Seaway System to U.S. Inland Waterway and the Gulf of Mexico.

The seaway is used by a variety of commercial vessels, including ocean ships and bulk carriers up to 1,000 feet in length that call on 15 major ports in the U.S. and Canada.

Approximately 40 provincial and interstate highways and 30 rail lines link the ports to industries and consumers all over North America.

The annual economic impact of the seaway on the U.S. is 150,000 jobs, $3 billion revenue, and $2.3 billion in federal, state, and local taxes.

The Port of Cleveland
The Cleveland Harbor is protected by six miles of breakwater and has a 27-foot deep shipping channel that allows it to accommodate all ships that can pass through the locks of the St. Lawrence Seaway.

The shipping facilities at the Port of Cleveland include the Cleveland Bulk Terminal on Whiskey Island immediately west of the mouth of the Cuyahoga River; Docks 20 to 32, which
extend immediately east of the mouth of the Cuyahoga River to North Coast Harbor; and 25 privately owned dock facilities along the Cuyahoga River and the Old River Channel.

The Cleveland Bulk terminal is owned by the Cleveland-Cuyahoga County Port Authority and is used to store iron ore pellets brought to Cleveland by 1,000-foot long lake carriers and transfer them to smaller ships or rail carriers. The facility has 1,850 linear feet of open dock space and 45 acres of open bulk storage area.

Docks 20 to 32 are owned by the Port Authority and the city of Cleveland with the Port Authority or contracted operators managing shipping activity. The docks, which include over 7,500 linear feet of space, are used for the storage of cement and materials that can be stored outside and steel and machinery cargos that depend on the facility’s 417,000 square feet of warehouse space.

The privately owned dock facilities are located along 6.7 miles of navigable shipping channels from Lake Erie to the ISG Steel facility south of I-490.

The Port of Cleveland is a destination port with 90 percent of all cargo delivered within 50 miles of the city.

The Port of Cleveland is also a designated Foreign Trade Zone, which allows importers to bring in foreign merchandise without paying customs duties or excise tax while the merchandise is at port.

Primary cargoes arriving by ship include steel, heavy machinery, and dry-bulk cargo such as iron ore, cement, and sand. Cargoes shipped from Cleveland include machinery, steel, and salt.

**Issues for consideration in the planning process**

**The economic impact of the Port of Cleveland to the region’s economy**

Ziona Austrian: A recent economic impact analysis indicates that the Port’s maritime operations make an ongoing contribution to the regional economy and have played a strategic role in the regional development of businesses.

In 1998, 4,800 jobs were created due to the port activities in Northeast Ohio. Spending impact (the value of goods and services that have been produced in Northeast Ohio because of the port activities) was estimated at $441 million in 1998.

Income impact (the additional earnings by employees in Northeast Ohio as a result of port activities) was estimated at $156 million in 1998.

The total tax impact of port activities in 1998 was $66 million, $10 million of which was paid to local governments and $11 million paid to the state of Ohio.

All of the impacts occur each year that the port is in operation and increase or decrease depending on the total amount of cargo shipped per year.

Glen Nekvasil: An estimated 5,000-6,000 jobs in the city of Cleveland can be attributed to the port.
The future viability of Great Lakes shipping and its impact on port operations

Glen Nekvasil: 2001 was a slow year for shipping, but the industry is healthy and the future is promising. Iron ore is still the number one cargo in Cleveland and the hope is that with the International Steel Group’s acquisition of LTV’s former facility, the steel industry will rebound.

Steve Thorp: Water use by manufacturers is on a downward trend due to changes in production levels for particular products, technological changes in manufacturing processing, and cost reduction efforts in compliance with environmental regulations. Although the long-range prospect of an increase in Great Lakes shipping holds some promise, it is doubtful that the industry will rebound any time soon.

Tim Donovan: The industry will maintain its current capacity rather than grow significantly in the future.

Consolidation of the port facilities

Gary Failor: Any plans to consolidate or relocate the port facilities should consider the Port’s three necessities: water, transportation infrastructure, and land, and the impact on the community in terms of cost and future growth opportunities.

Tim Donovan: Consolidate some of the docks and relocate them to the west side of the former LTV Steel plant where the Innerbelt study has recently suggested placing a direct access freeway ramp.

Alternative uses for the waterfront

Glen Nekvasil: The shipping industry is very important to Cleveland and, in order to remain competitive, certain conditions must continue to exist. Any redevelopment plans must ensure that large ships can continue to navigate the river and must consider the tremendous cost of moving any major facilities.

Tim Donovan: Growth opportunities lie in the recreational uses of the Cuyahoga River Valley, particularly the unused areas between the south end of the Flats and the north end of the Cuyahoga Valley National Park. Productive areas in the valley can remain productive and commercial and recreational uses can coexist in partnership. The re-greening of the Cuyahoga Valley will create interesting places to live within an exciting city.

Steve Thorp: The changes in industry that have affected the Great Lakes waterfronts have given rise to the possibility of alternative uses that may affect revitalization and environmental protection. As U.S. and Canadian communities “take back their waterfronts,” former industrial lands are being converted to residential and open green space. Environmental conditions have improved as planners seek to strike a balance between commercial and recreational uses of the waterfront.

Urban populations have also increased as developers have seized the opportunity to construct attractive living spaces near the water’s edge. Cities such as Duluth, Minnesota and Superior, Wisconsin serve as examples of this trend.