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Major step forward for Port Dock 7 reconstruction

Taking a major step toward complete reconstruction of Port Dock 7 at the Port of Newport's commercial marina, Port commissioners authorized the selected engineering firm to begin the planning and permitting for this multi-year undertaking on Tuesday.

DOWL, a professional services firm that specializes in planning and engineering, submitted the winning proposal. It outlined their approach to the project and identified the other firms they will engage to assemble a skilled team.

Port Commissioners authorized General Manager Paula Miranda to contract with DOWL for an amount not to exceed \$300,000, which includes contingencies.

Director of Operations Aaron Bretz said the process of selecting a firm was a competitive one. Dowl, he said, "had the best mixture of detail and concept development so we could know what we are getting and what we could expect. There is also a lot of room in the proposal for us to go through public outreach and select the best alternatives."

Built in 1971 and originally used for recreational boats, Port Dock 7 is both deteriorating and poorly configured for a commercial fishing fleet with vessels that have grown larger over the years. Officials expect the replacement plan will result in a dock that looks nothing like its current form.

Mitigation of any environmental impacts will also be a vital part of the project, according to Bretz, who anticipates that items like eelgrass replacement or redesign of the public fishing pier in South Beach may be key to offsetting any impacts. DOWL will investigate all options for mitigation, gather public input, and include that work as part of the overall plan.

The planning and permitting stages for the project are expected to last 18 months, with submission of all permit applications targeted for June of 2023. The timeline allows a full year for agencies to review the permits. Although the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (USACE) will utilize a joint agency permitting process, the end result is that the project must get the blessing of USACE, as well as NOAA, Oregon Department of Environmental Quality, the Environmental Protection Agency, Oregon Department of State Lands, Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife, the state's Historic Preservation Office, local tribes, and any adjacent property owners.

Miranda said that, although the planning and permitting will last a year and a half, the completed dock is much further in the future.

"By the time we get the funding for this project, we are looking at three, four, or maybe five years to get this done," she noted.



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In other business, Port Commissioners also took action that will help improve traffic flow at the South Beach marina on major fishing weekends when traffic back-ups create gridlock. Port management was authorized to contract with Civil West Engineering to put together plans and start the permit process for an extra traffic lane inside the marina property. The additional 600-foot lane will help get traffic off Marine Science Drive.

The Commission also approved excavation work to allow for the addition of nine streetlights on the east end of the parking lot that serves Port Dock 7. The lights, which will be installed and maintained by the Central Lincoln PUD, will improve safety and security for users of the commercial marina.

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