

UNITED STATES COAST GUARD (COAST GUARD) FINDING OF NO SIGNIFICANT IMPACT FOR THE NATIONAL COAST GUARD MUSEUM PROJECT, NEW LONDON, CONNECTICUT

The Coast Guard proposes to:

Acquire 0.34 acres of land in the City of New London, Connecticut that may be licensed to the National Coast Guard Museum Association (NCGMA) for the purpose of building a museum of approximately 80,000 square feet. Since construction of a museum would be an indirect effect of the proposed Coast Guard actions, the potential impacts of such construction and long-term operation were evaluated as part of the proposed action.

Summary of the Results of the Environmental Impact Evaluation:

Acquisition of 0.34 acres of land and construction of the proposed National Coast Guard Museum has gone through an extensive environmental assessment process to identify potentially significant impacts to the human and natural environment. As the proposed action would not only take place within the historic district of the City of New London, but also within a coastal environment including activity within waters of the U.S./State, significant consultation efforts with local, state, and federal regulatory agencies were required.

In consideration of potential impacts to cultural resources and historic properties, as well as compliance with Section 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act (NHPA), consultations were conducted with the NCGMA, Connecticut State Historic Preservation Office (CT SHPO), Mohegan Tribe, Mashantucket Pequot Tribe, and New London Landmarks regarding the effects of the undertaking on historic properties. Consultations resulted in a signed memorandum of agreement (MOA) between all parties and incorporates various design modifications and requirements agreed upon to minimize adverse effects to historic and cultural resources.

As the proposed action would take place within a coastal habitat and waters of the U.S./State, the project was reviewed and designed to remain consistent with the requirements of the Connecticut Coastal Management Act as well as to comply with state and federal requirements associated with work being performed within waters of the U.S./State. The Coast Guard also consulted with National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS) to identify potential impacts to essential fish habitat (EFH). Through consultation, the Coast Guard agreed to implement time of year restrictions for in-water work to minimize impacts. Additionally, the NCGMA consulted with Connecticut Department of Energy and Environmental Protection (CT DEEP) as well as the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (USACE) to obtain key permits and certifications required for construction. Specifically, the CT DEEP Structures, Dredging, and Fill Permit, Section 401 of the Clean Water Act (CWA), Water Quality Certification, the CT DEEP Flood Management Certificate and Exemption Request (FME) as well as an Individual Permit (IP) through the USACE for Section 404 of the CWA and Section 10 of the Rivers and Harbors Act were identified.

As part of the permitting process, the USACE consulted with the NOAA-Greater Atlantic Region Fisheries Office (GARFO) pursuant to Section 7 of the Endangered Species Act. USACE determined that the proposed action is not likely to adversely affect listed species and NOAA-GARFO concurred with the USACE's findings. Similarly, review of CT DEEP's Natural Diversity Database and consultation with CT DEEP's Fisheries Biologist determined that the proposed action will not significantly impact any fisheries and/or habitat, provided that no in-water work occur between the time of year restrictions, detailed below.

Any outstanding permits/certifications are in the final approval stage with the understanding the proposed action shall not take place until all required permits have been obtained.

Based on the analysis contained in this Supplemental Environmental Assessment and related consultations, the Coast Guard has determined there will be no significant impact to the human and natural environment as a result of the proposed action.

The following are mitigation commitments that will be implemented to reduce otherwise significant impacts:

Water Resources:

- Compliance with all conditions associated with the USACE Individual Permit for Section 404 of the CWA and Section 10 of the Rivers and Harbors Act of 1899.

- Compliance with all conditions associated with CT DEEP Structures, Dredging, and Fill Permit and the CWA Section 401 Water Quality Certificate.
- Compliance with erosion and sediment control plan, stormwater pollution and prevention plan, and stormwater management plan requirements.
- Handle, store, clean up, and dispose of petroleum products and other hazardous substances used during construction in accordance with applicable regulations.
- Development and implementation of Spill Prevention and Response Plan (SPRP).

Biological Resources:

- Approximately 3,100 SF of pier will be removed creating additional open water and aiding the benthic community.
- No in-water work will take place between the months of 01JAN and 31MAY of any given year to minimize disturbance during fish spawning period.
- Install turbidity curtains around the in-water work area to minimize potential sedimentation and turbidity.
- Wrap chemically treated piles, if used, with impact-resistant, biologically inert material.
- Conduct pile driving with a vibratory hammer to the extent feasible.
- Use a soft-start technique to allow fish species to vacate the work area before the pile driver reaches full power.
- To minimize turbidity and potential noise-related effects on fish and other marine organisms, conduct pile installation activities during low tides (if feasible based on access considerations), when water levels are at their lowest.
- To minimize the number of fish exposed to adverse levels of underwater sound, drive piles when currents are reduced (i.e., centered around slack current).

National Historic Preservation Act (Section 106):

- Consultation conducted with NCGMA, CT SHPO, Mohegan Tribe, Mashantucket Pequot Tribe, and New London Landmarks resulted in a MOA that incorporates various requirements and design modifications that minimize potential impacts to historic properties.
 - The segment of the bridge that connects to the southern edge of the museum will be curved, providing new protected views of Union Station from three sides.
 - The museum site will be located as far to the north as possible to maximize views of Union Station from the water.
 - A glass corner added at the entrance to the museum on the south to dematerialize the building at the corner closest to Union Station and to maximize views of the water from the train platform, as well as views of the train station from the water.
 - Building panels utilized on the exterior of the museum will be light colored terra cotta to contrast in color with Union Station's brick, and also to refer back to more traditional materials used at the turn of the twentieth century.
 - Curated display panels will be permitted on non-glass walls of the pedestrian bridge and museum connector. The Coast Guard will work with exhibit design contractors to determine the appropriate historic Coast Guard content for the museum connection segment. While the NCGMA will work with the consulting parties to determine an appropriate theme for the balance of the pedestrian bridge.
 - The museum building's west facing wall is designed to be visually quiet and neutral, to remain simple and non-distracting in order to provide a neutral backdrop to Union Station when viewed from Parade Plaza.
 - Museum naming with lighting may be included on the west wall, the architecture and signage on the west side of the museum building will remain plain (with the exception of the museum connector).

- If properties are discovered that may be historically significant, the Coast Guard identifies unanticipated effects on historic properties, or upon inadvertent discoveries of archaeological site/s or human remains during the site development, the Coast Guard shall consult with SHPO or Tribal Historic Preservation Officer (THPO).
- Comply with requirements of the Native American Grave Protection and Repatriation Act.

Floodplain Management:

- The proposed undertaking lies within both flood zones AE and VE, so the museum will be constructed in accordance with the more restrictive requirements of the National Flood Issuance Program (NFIP), applicable to construction of new buildings within VE zones.
- Completion of the eight-step process in accordance with Executive Order (EO) 11988 (Flood Management).
- Conditional Letter of Map Revision (CLOMR) submitted to FEMA.
- CT DEEP License (202201997-FME), Flood Management Certificate and Exemption Request Approval (FME) issued. Project shall comply with all Terms and Conditions of FME License, 202201997-FME.

This Finding of No Significant Impact (FONSI) is based on the Coast Guard prepared supplemental environmental assessment (SEA), which has been determined to adequately and accurately discuss the environmental issues and impacts of the proposed project and provides sufficient evidence and analysis for determining that an environmental impact statement is not required.

I reviewed the SEA, which is the basis for this FONSI, and submitted my written comments to the Proponent.

21 JUL 2022	<i>Andrew Haley</i>	<u>Chief, Office of Environmental Management</u>	
Date	Andrew S. Haley Environmental Reviewer ¹	Title/Position	Warrant Level III

I reviewed the SEA, which is the basis for this FONSI, and submitted my written comments to the Proponent.

21 JUL 2022	<i>Andrew Haley</i>	<u>Chief, Office of Environmental Management</u>	
Date	Andrew S. Haley Senior Environmental Professional ¹	Title/Position	Warrant Level III

In reaching my decision/recommendation on the Coast Guard's proposed action, I considered the information contained in this FONSI and considered and acknowledged the written comments submitted to me from the Environmental Reviewer(s). Based on the information in the SEA and this FONSI document, I agree that the proposed action as described above, and in the SEA, will have no significant impact on the environment.

21 JUL 2022	<i>M. M. DEAN</i> <i>REAR ADMIRAL, U.S. COAST GUARD</i>	Rear Admiral Director Governmental and Public Affairs	
Date	Proponent ¹	Title/Position	

¹ The individual that signs as the Proponent cannot also sign as Environmental Reviewer or Senior Environmental Professional. All signatories must be Coast Guard military or federal employees. Contractors must not sign Coast Guard environmental planning documents.

