March 30th Q&A

Michael Wong, USACE: Does this public comment period also serve as a Section 106 comment.

Rhiannon Kucharski, USACE: No, there will be a separate section 106 consultation period when consultation starts.

Michael Wong, USACE: If the study is finished on time like we're estimating for the summer of 2026, what then is the process for approval and funding?

Rhiannon Kucharski, USACE: So, yes, our target by finishing in summer of 26 is to be on time for the Water resources development act of 2026. Which is where Congress is the core it's authority to do things. That's where they can name off from, you know, our direction basically constructions or studies such as this, and so we would get authorization based on our approval or chiefs reports that the team talked about and then once we have that approval, they appropriate funding, so, as soon as funding would be fiscal year, 27 funding if we get an approval on time of 2026. If they don't pick us up in the immediate order, water resources, development act does occur every 2 years. So, the next opportunity would be the water resources development act of 28. And then finding a fiscal year, 2029. But that's what the process looks like. And I do encourage, you know, if you're supportive or just kind of thoughts to share those also with your congressional representatives, you know, they are very interested, they gave us this project as a complete a community based ad in a bill. And so that is why we were able to gather the funding for the study from them. So, the entire delegation is very interested in this project.

Paula Bendor: Will there be any private company mostly harbor users weighing in on these plans and will also be expected to contribute funds?

Nick Emelio, USACE: So, we are in consultation with the harbor users group, as part of our economic analysis as well as our plan formulation efforts. The way that Corps studies and Corps projects work private companies will not be expected to contribute funds. The Corps of Engineers and the Department of Transportation harbor division will be funding jointly both the study and the construction on the project, thank you.

Rhiannon Kucharski, USACE: And I will just add to that follow that that stakeholder group, you know, the users in and around the harbor, be them homeowners, people renting people in business locations, businesses that need to move through and use the harbor all are very important in key stakeholders for us to hear from. And we are all paying for this study as taxpayers, right federal and state taxpayer. So this is our tax dollars hard at work.

Manuel Kuloloio: I had the honor to sit on the Hawaii Department of transportation harbors 2050 masterplan. Is what our 2050 master plan proposing is it tracking with the timeline that you're proposing. Are we on track or are we behind?

Niko Salvador, HDOT harbors: we are on the same planning horizon as the Army Corps Modification study here on Honolulu.

Rhiannon Kucharski, USACE: The core looks out 50 years so I would actually say our planning horizon goes out. Roughly probably did, what 2075 team to 2075 so, yes, we are consistent with one another. Another nuance I will describe is just as you saw in the photos. Or the maps that we chose, the federal project are they in water component to the harbor and the land components are the state components. right? So there are discussions in the master plan that relate to both. And then we just, it's a question of jurisdictions, right? The state has jurisdiction on the land side and the federal government has jurisdiction within those projects boundaries in the water.

Manuel Kuloloio: If at any point we're not tracking I don't know how long you'll be still with the Army Corps of Engineers. Would you please let me know that we're falling behind ok?

Rhiannon Kucharski, USACE: Everyone is nodding north and South. And well, could you please make sure that you sign up for our communications list.

Manuel Kuloloio: No problem.

Rhiannon Kucharski, USACE: Awesome

Manuel Kuloloio: Because I do, I do not want to see this critical, most critical infrastructure of Hawaii. Yeah, yeah even though you're not part of a 106 yet. I'm joining today, because I don't know. I want early consultation, so we don't have the kind of drama that youved you've been having at Ala Wai canal and I don't want the same kind of drama that we had to go to go through when there was previous dredging in the harbor do you understand what I'm saying?

Rhiannon Kucharski, USACE: Yes, sir

Manuel Kuloloio: Because when you ask me 4 bullets. Oh, how do you use this work? Play, worship, cultural, I'm not going to get into that today. I can write an opine on that, but all I'm seeing is. Please support our state of Harbor's division. Okay. And if we're falling behind track. Let us know, so we can push. Okay.

Rhiannon Kucharski, USACE: Absolutely, and I think important that everybody knows that all 4 projects are partnerships. The Corps is not doing anything by itself we always operate and partnership with a local partner. So, the partner transportation Harbor's division is our partner. We are on this team together we are doing the work for this project together. In lock step with one another we are one team. So, they will be in the know about everything at the same moment. We know those things. And we will be updating the project website and providing updates as regularly as possible. So, we really appreciate all those comments. Thank you very much.

Captain Ed Enos, Hawaii Pilots Association: This goes back to Paula's question and I think all the first time users that are fully, it's more of the improvement in a lot of weight. So was just texting to one of the math and currently their new ships, you know, we have to pay close attention to loading so they just barely make the maximum drafts coming in. So any improvements that deepen the water wise, the channel side, as we all know are saying that the maritime of users largely all and the public should know that.

Rhiannon Kucharski, USACE: Can you describe a little for the benefit of prosperity for the recordings, the challenges navigating through that entrance and through the coral there. You know, the team mentioned whether conditions being a factor, but the average person to public may not understand what we mean by that. Would you mind sharing a little bit of what it's like to try and navigate the ship into this harbor and then through the harbor.

Captain Ed Enos, Hawaii Pilots Association: So, the challenge today, I think everybody maybe like the photos that you have of the overall harbor showing the waterways has over aerial view. I think that helps to the public to think about that waterway hasn't changed much as it was, I don't know, 50, 75, 100 years ago. We really haven't changed the waterway really much. And yet the ships that are going in here today quadruple in size. How long they are, how wide they are, how big they are, cruise ships, container ships. What we're doing today? What this project is about. We're really trying to play catch up with what we're already doing. So the ships that are going down that Kapalama channel there in the middle of that, both bodies of water the ships are getting wider and wider and in the waterway itself is the same. It hasn't changed and as we transit from the main basin in front of the Aloha Tower in front of the other basin. The wind is blowing out the valley are hitting the ships sideways. It's kind of like driving down the freeway at 70 miles an hour and the high winds getting pushing against your car. Well imagine the same thing for a big container ship, tanker, or cruise ship. So, we're being pushed sideways with the less safe water to move around in. It's a constant safety issue for navigating around for everybody. And so again, you know, this project is about trying to make the whole waterway safer and why is that important? Because that you know, these are all the ships that are again bringing our food and our energy and everything we need here. It doesn't take much to you know, perhaps costs problems where a ship goes aground or what we saw with the Suez canal. Oh, that's all. If that happened in Hawaii, notonly people on Oahu don't get food but all the neighbor islands, because the margins go here, right? Everything comes to your first and then it goes to the neighborhood islands.

So, everybody, even on Kauai, Maui, and the Big island, they have to be concerned about this to. So, any problems that happen in Honolulu Harbor, it impacts the entire state. The project is funded by the pointed out the federal project, the state. And everybody in the state benefit, not just people on Oahu. I think we can think about so it's a challenge. It already is. So, this project will make things better for the parents users for everybody and it'll improve the efficiency of economic flow of how to avoid, you know 20, 30, 40, 50 years out.

Rhiannon Kucharski, USACE: Thank you I thought that was great to get a full pilot perspective, you know, on actually operating navigate in this area and it's my understanding not just that inner skinny channels. But the approach down Fort Armstrong that wind and weather also affect you and then

you're threading the needle through coral. And could also run a ground on coral on the approach in that channel as well I've heard that when you all spoke before. So I just wanted to make sure those things were shared. And even beyond what you said, these goods are not only going out to Oahu, but also American Samoa and Guam and the commonwealth of the northern Marianas Islands. We recently went and met with all their Department of Transportation, and most of them ask them what's going on with that Honolulu Harbor project? Because that means to be a functioning, safe, efficient harbor, because that's also how they get their food and their fuel in their medicine to it.

Captain Ed Enos, Hawaii Pilots Association: I always like to bring this up because I think it's vitally important from a funding standpoint. Everybody thinks about obviously civilians getting our stuff from Costco, Home Depot, and Safeway and everything else. But everything that the military in Hawaii needs comes here, so. If a master or a patient ship or anybody else block the channel there so there's no cargo moving. That means the Marines, Army, Coast Guard, Navy,, Air force, everybody is impacted by that. In terms of trying to get people to understand the value of the project, in terms of funding and prioritizing it. You know, this serves the military not just the civilian population of Hawaii. Everything the military needs comes to Hawaii on a U. S. flag contact that's on the West Coast. That's right here in Honolulu Harbor. I'm talking about stuff in the maybe exchange, you know, she got her helicopter spare part, whatever a Navy ship needs, electronics on a Coast Guard vessel. All the stuff that those guys need comes here too. So, when you guys are trying to advocate for your project. It's important to get to the military to understand. This serve that as well not just the civilian population. So there's like, 1.3Million people there. At any given point in time, there is 100,000 military forces. So this project benefits everybody.

Arnold Lui, DOT: I'd like to expand on Captain Eno's explanation of the challenges faced when the enter into Honolulu Habor. The graphic that we saw doesn't really represent the true situation. It was representing the alternatives but really what Captain Enos endures is essentially entering into Honolulu Harbor essentially like a cul-de-sac. They have to enter into Honolulu harbor and reverse park, every vessel that we bring in. So, we can't so, it, you know, so it's really not a free flowing harbor and I just wanted to kind of add ons to Captain Enos' challenges that shared with. Thank you

Rhiannon Kucharski, USACE: Our fishing fleet is kept in Honolulu Harbor. They have their area around pier 38 and so our smaller vessels also have to navigate. In many cases where there's only one way allowed traffic at a time and navigate in the waters with these very large vessel and avoid any kind of collisions or unsafe conditions. And our fishing community is also extremely vital right. To our state and in our diet as well into traditional practices. Then, of course, the Coast Guard, I know they're not here today, but for this may not know we do have Coast Guard facilities. Right on Sand Island, which is that island that you see there in the center of when we were. Would anyone from the Coast Guard just like to speak to your use of the harbor and anything that you want us to know, or to be on this recording for prosperity.

Jordan Bogden, USCG: Yeah, Hi there. Good evening. This is Lieutenant Commander Jordan Bogden. I'm with the U.S. Coast Guard, civil engineering unit Honolulu. So, I'm on the mission support side of the house here. We oversee all the people that are a construction. And the environment, the programs out here, I would defer to our operational partners. I'm not sure if I have the right folks on the line to speak to our daily use or long term use of them of the harbor as it speaks to operations.

Wade Thomson, USCG: Hello this is Lieutenant Commander Wade Thomson with waterway management division in Sector Honolulu. Thank you for continuing to include us in these meetings. My interest in my office is regarding the ace navigation. Any movements, you know, any significant hardships and requirements for the harbor users that would involve shifting ATONS or adding and subtracting would obviously be a concern with us. So we look forward to being involved as this project moves forward, so we can address those issues.

Rhiannon Kucharski, USACE: For the good of the order could you define ATONS.

Wade Thomson, USCG: My apologies ATONS, aids to navigation both in the water and on the land that help the waterway users navigate their way into and out of the channel.

Rhiannon Kucharski, USACE: Repairs are another occurrence that happens in the harbor, right? We do have a repair area for, I believe both in water and dry dock work. Is that correct Niko? So, this is also a critical area where ships come to get repaired. Would anyone on the team like to talk at all about the use of the harbor or subsistence use and why that's important.

Nick Emelio, USACE : Alright, so I'm just speaking to be substances of the harbor and why that's critical. As, you know, we are a remote area . And so we are dependent on ships coming into Honolulu Habor to serve the rest of the Pacific. We've been looking into whether Honolulu Harbor can be classified as a remote inconsistent harbor. That is still underway. There are some specific legal definitions that we have to meet. But really what we're talking about when we talk about subsistence is the fact that. There really is only 10 to 14 days worth of food on on island before we have shortages. So any damage or any grounding in the entrance channel that limits goods going in and out of the harbor is going to disproportionately fall on what we call economically disadvantage communities. So, if you think about families may not be able to afford they may not have the space to store food or supplies in their houses. May not be able to pay increase prices when they are shortages. These are going to be the families that are going to be hit hardest by the by disruptions in the supply chain. We're looking at specifically at those families and children as well, as part of our economic analysis and those are going to be some of the factors that we take into consideration when we ask Congress to justify this project.

Arnold Lui, DOT: I was just thinking about this stuff we've been calling an entrance channel, just an entrance channel but it really is an entrance slash exit channel. And perhaps maybe we should continue to call it that throughout the duration of the study just to emphasize that is just one way in and one way out.

Rhiannon Kucharski, USACE : Yeah, like having a one way street into all of Hawaii and the territories. Everything coming in one way, one at a time. Major backup you can just imagine the traffic. And only in this case with ships and not cars. But I think that helps us visualize. Thank you Arnold. I mean, what this is really like, right for getting the goods that we need that we all rely on. And I believe it's something like over 8% of the foods that we need cannot be sourced locally correct? And needs to come from off island. 80% of all good must get sourced elsewhere because they did not come from here, but that's important. Okay, also, I think, due to our limited land size and capacity right they're not a lot of storage options for us to warehouse a lot of extra things in case of emergency, right and here.

Arnold Lui, DOT: And there's a name for that in the industry calls it's just in time shipping. There's no big warehouses. There are some but not enough. So, a lot of these business is basically use our container yards as their warehouse.

Rhiannon Kucharski, USACE : But someone told me sometimes the food comes right off the ship straight to truck it onto Costco like within hours. Or Foodland, target Safeway, or wherever, wherever you get your goods. No preference on the store. Just giving examples.

Joe Colstra: Just a curiosity that hasn't been a big accident cause problems. Currently, what is the plan B?

Rhiannon Kucharski, USACE : Another duty I am apart of is our Harbor channels response team for Honolulu District for federal harbors and we actually did have an emergency. And I wouldn't call it big and it still shut down harbor. We had a personal pleasure craft a sailboat that was in poor maintenance that wasn't tied up properly. We had it float into our entrance and exit channel and sink. And it shut down our ability to allow safely any passage in or out of that channel. And we were very blessed and very fortunate that the harbor had a contractor already at working the harbor that was able to come and pull into the side under water. To, at least free up some ability to pass because wasn't there a food ship or two food ships. There was a massive container ship full of food ready to come landside and unload.

Arnold Lui, DOT: And that was me we were delayed about 4 hours.

Rhiannon Kucharski, USACE : Well that was a miracle that it was only 4 hours, right? Because it was small craft, because the contractor happened to be already mobilized in the area, they could pull it aside, and then they came back and also pulled it out, and then harbor has an area where they can actually put this stuff, so we'll try to find the owner and figure out. What to do with this thing? But if we have a Suez canal happen, I don't know if you saw that in the news where the ship got wedged in the canal. Right. We don't have canal wall. You may not think of this like you can now, but. That area is dug out of the coral and through the land is a canal and a ship could get stuck between coral heads and get wedged in there. And the pilot has told me and if I speak wrong, you just call me out with the guys but they told me they often come in getting pushed sideways. So, they can't really threading that needle dead center with the waves and the wind are pushing them and they're trying to come in. Almost cornered and not get stuck and so we only allow local pilots who really know these oceans. We don't allow right? Is this correct pilots from elsewhere? To try to attempt that so they send out a local pilot who joins that group. Temporarily to then pilot this condition. Because it is so unique in particular and also very specific to be able to do safely. So that is definitely something that we would like to look at addressing to make that Less harrowing every time ship needs to come in and out.

So, that's what we're looking at with that. Right is we want to look at an emergency plan other than that current inland outlet. Historically that Kalihi channel had a moveable ridge that could be used as an alternate if something were to happen. Right, right now, because it has that fixed in place bridge. We cannot not even a small fishing vessel can get under that right now. And you as a member as well, you can go drive over that. And then go enjoy Sand Island, and take a look for yourself. But that bridge is very low and so we are looking at. Could we create a second entrance exit there as the backup in case, something would happen. Right. We're also looking at widening in that entrance and exit channel so that we can allow for two way traffic. That way, maybe, you know, something does go down on in one lane maybe at least we could other lane that could be open and passable. If we were able to widen it enough. So, when we say those are the alternatives those are all the various things, right? We're going to consider. And we have looked at what are the other options in the state. We don't really have another harbor of this size set up the handle very large container ship, right? Taking containers on off for goods. We have smaller harbors that can take from our smaller barges and smaller vessels. But not to this side, so, you know, really, I think we focus right now on the fastest response we could possibly have if something gets done. Right to get it out. That I think is one of the reasons, or one of the things that keeps a lot of us awake at night. You know, come to fruition so that we can have more resilience and more safety for the harbor and the whole pacific really.

Cindy Acpal, USACE: We're also looking at building emergency operations to pass along the West side of Sand Island.

Rhiannon Kucharski, USACE : So, Cindy said we're also looking at potential emergency vessel operations crane operations. On that exterior side of Sand islands to the left side of that figure. We will look at that as part of the analysis that the team is doing.

Arnold Lui, DOT: We did look at and consider a lock and dam system. If that could be an option here.

Rhiannon Kucharski, USACE: The assessment by the engineer is that it is a very expensive and hard to maintain options and so what's considered, but we have not carried it into these alternatives that we're going to go in depth analysis on. And I know in other areas that we have challenges with mussles that likes to attach themselves to those and operations. As well as coral likes to grow right on vertical. And we're looking at movable ridges. Yes. So, in terms of options for that bridge so still need to be able to get to Sand Island. Right? We are going to look at a high bridge that that ships can move under or a movable bridge that could either move laterally or vertically to allow that to pass.

Speaker in the room: Did we look at upgrading Barber's Point

Arnold Lui, DOT: Actually, that commercial harbor was considered in a separate feasibility study. And at that time, we had to pull it. There is opportunity there at the harbor but it has its own unique challenges. A lot of our energy products go through that particular harbor and gets distributed as well. Right now it's not equipped for receiving as much container cargo that Honolulu does.

Rhiannon Kucharski, USACE: The summary of Arnold's response was that Barber's point was looked at it has different concerns. And a lot of the land size infrastructure and investments that would be needed to be able to handle container ships and very large cruise vessels are not in place and so there would be a very significant land side investment, much more significant that would be required here. To convert that to something that could be able to place a substitute for Honolulu Harbor.

Arnold Lui, DOT: It's also not a 24 hour port because of the physical challenges, it's not safe to bring in large vessels at that particular harbor.

Captain Ed Enos, Hawaii Pilots Association: The Coat Guard and the Maritime Ministry have looked at alternatives. You know, for primarily hurricane. Post hurricane, but what would you do if there's a lot of damage harbor and so, you know. Our response harbor represents an alternative is does Pearl Harbor, but you can imagine, you know. The entry crane that move all the containers on our off the ships very efficiently and rapidly. I think there's some somewhere between 5000-7000 containers a week coming to Honolulu. And without those cranes operating at some of the other harbors there is no way we're going to be able to meet that when we won't be able to move boxes anywhere near as much. But in an emergency situation obviously post hurricane you can resolve that. So that that is the challenge that we are aware of. Yeah, but, you know a plan to address that in an emergency.

Rhiannon Kucharski, USACE: So please sign up for the mailing list, send us your ideas thoughts and comments. And please help and participate in our future events like this and share information with your colleagues and your neighbors, and your friends who are affected by this harbor, and they're more than welcome to join us tomorrow. We're going to have the same event again.To be able to reach more people. So we'll be here again physically in this room and we'll be online again. Thank you very much for spending time with us and taking time out of your very busy lives comments and interact with us and thanks to everybody online. And we hope to see you and hear from you again soon. Thank you.

List of Attendees:

Kimberly Evans	FAA HNL ADO	online
Capt Ed Enos	Hawaii Pilots Association	present
Mark Hakoda	HCDA	present
Dre Kalili	HDOT	online
Niko Salvador	HDOT	present
Carol Mitsuyasu	IDPP	present
Sergio Coccitus	Jacobs	present
William F. Anonsen	TMG	online
Benjamin Reder	USACE	online
Cindy Acpal	USACE	present
Jessica Podoski	USACE	present
Jessie Paahana	USACE	present
Kimberly Otto	USACE	online
Marian Dean	USACE	present
Michael Wong	USACE	present
Nick Emilio	USACE	present
Olivia Abbott	USACE	present
Rhiannon Kucharski	USACE	present
Vera Koskello	USACE	present
Jordan Bogden	USCG	online
Wade Thomson	USCG	online
8085****64		online
Calvin		online
Celia		online
Davis Yogi		online
Jerry Fujita		online
L Lazo		online
M. Rivera		online

Manuel Kuloloio	online
Matthew Loo	online
Neil T	online
P. Pillone	online
Paula Bender	online
Roy Catalani	online
Sinclair Brown	online