

Houston Ship Channel Expansion **Project 11**

As the local advocate of the Houston Ship Channel, Port Houston supports the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers as they dredge the Channel to maintain its size. Currently, dredging is also underway to expand the Channel, work known as Project 11. This expansion is critical to maintaining the safety and efficiency of this major economic engine.

What is dredging?

It's the excavation of sediments and other material from a water environment.

There are three types of dredges:



Hopper



Mechanical



Hydraulic

What happens to the dredged material?

- Approved dredged material is placed in designated dredged material placement areas (DMPAs) or used for other environmentally acceptable purposes. The DMPAs are required to maintain and improve the Houston Ship Channel.
- For maintenance dredging, the USACE takes regular samples in the Channel and provides those sampling results to the EPA. It only places dredged material in placement areas if the sampling results show it meets the required regulatory guidelines.
- The materials to be dredged for construction of Project 11 in the vicinity of the Pleasantville, Channelview, Galena Park, and Port Houston neighborhoods are predominantly native (never-dredged or in-situ) clay soils, which the USACE has sampled and analyzed following the guidelines and protocols to confirm they are proper for placement in confined upland disposal facilities and that any runoff or effluent maintains surface water quality standards as regulated by the Texas Commission on Environmental Quality (TCEQ).
- Testing of dredged materials in the Houston Ship Channel does not fall under the jurisdiction of Port Houston. The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) and the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (USACE) have developed a framework supported by documents, guidelines, and manuals to confirm that dredged materials placed at inland placement areas are safe and environmentally sound.
- The USACE's analysis of dredged materials has followed all applicable legal and regulatory requirements.
- Many of the dredged material placement areas have been incorporated into neighborhood landscapes.



Photo taken from East Clinton DMPA site

How is Port Houston prioritizing the environment as part of dredging efforts?

Port Houston has prioritized making sustainable choices. For example, Project 11 includes one of the cleanest available dredges capable of completing construction and nearly 100% of the non-silt material dredged from the Galveston Bay portion of the project will be beneficially used to create and enhance local habitat. In total, Port Houston and the USACE will use most of the dredged material from Project 11 to create 800 acres of marsh, 324 acres of replacement oyster reef pads, and 10 acres of bird islands. Once the project is complete, regional air quality is also projected to improve due to a reduction in vessel nitrous oxide emissions of up to 7%, because of increased vessel efficiency and reduced congestion.

The Houston Ship Channel supports \$439 billion in statewide economic value and 1.54 million Texas jobs.

Port Houston's role in dredging the channel allows for continued commerce today and also for the future prosperity of the region.

