

Summary of MDOT MPA's Environmental Justice Activities

The MDOT MPA has been engaging and partnering with communities throughout the Baltimore region for over 30 years through our Dredged Material Management Program (DMMP), Planning and Environmental Management programs. Many of our communities are underserved or disadvantaged, and MPA's activities advance stakeholder inclusion, local environmental enhancement, and socially responsible decision-making. Examples of MPA's activities include:

- **Inform, Engage, and Invest Strategy** - MPA's model outreach approach helps to develop and foster relationships with communities throughout Baltimore, including in areas where Port terminals or transportation corridors are located. Through "Port 101" presentations, terminal and facilities tours, and other opportunities to dialogue, MPA works to establish a shared understanding of the needs, concerns, and priorities with community representatives. Twice each year, MPA hosts terminal tours that an opportunity to see the Port up close. When possible, MPA builds relationships through community engagement at public events and volunteer opportunities. Finally, when appropriate, MPA will often invest time and resources to provide technical and other support to communities to help advance mutual goals.
- **Linking Communities to Port-related Jobs** - The Port of Baltimore (POB) is one of the largest job creators and MPA has been a strong advocate of creating linkages between employers and prospective employees from neighborhoods throughout Baltimore. MPA and the Baltimore Port Alliance (BPA) collaborate on developing and distributing facts sheets about available Port-related training and job resources. In 2019, MPA supported BPA's first Hiring and Career Expo that helped connect 215 perspective employees with more than 30 Port businesses and organizations. The 2020 Expo is scheduled for the Fall.
- **Partnerships within the Port Community** - MPA leverages the support of the greater maritime community by coordinating public engagement events with the BPA. MPA co-chairs, the BPA's Environmental and Education and Outreach Committees, with which we have participated in neighborhood cleanup events, assisted with community gardens at Filbert Street in Curtis Bay and Madeira Street in East Baltimore, and helped to plant trees near St. Helena in Dundalk.
- **DMMP Stakeholder Engagement, Community Outreach and Environmental Education** - Local stakeholders, community representatives and environmental advocates are a crucial voice in decisions made about the long-term sustainability of the DMMP. Specific examples include the: Citizens Advisory Committee (CAC), Harbor Team, Masonville CAC, Cox Creek Citizens Oversight Committee (COC), Hart Miller Island COC and the Pearce Creek Implementation Committee. Each of these groups afford citizens and stakeholders the opportunity to share feedback and engage in transparent information sharing as part of the planning, operation and implementation of the Port's DMMP, including construction of containment facilities, mitigation, and reuse of dredged material. Working directly with community members ensures more efficient and cost-effective program development and allows MPA to respond to air and water quality concerns and invest in related community improvements.
- **Environmental Education** - Each year MPA's Environmental Education program works directly with students and teachers in schools around the State providing field trips to the various dredged material placement sites, classroom programs and through the Terrapin Head Start research initiative. The environmental education team recently created and launched a [virtual](#)

[platform](#), to provide Port related lessons and activities to educators and parents statewide, who are home schooling their students due to the COVID-19 pandemic. The MPA Environmental Education team members are able to provide professional development to educators themselves, which has a direct effect on teachers being able to earn continuing education units, a requirement of the Maryland State Department of Education (MSDE). These lesson plans focus on dredging, dredged material management, and Port logistics, and the environmental education program activities also serve as a [teacher's guide](#) so that Maryland educators can readily see how the lessons align with MSDE standards for comprehensive learning around the Chesapeake Bay, watershed studies, and ecology.

- **Masonville Cove Public Access and Environmental Education Center** - MPA and the Masonville Cove Partnership recently celebrated 10-years of serving the adjacent communities of Brooklyn, Curtis Bay, Cherry Hill and Baybrook. MPA's partners, the Living Classrooms Foundation and National Aquarium, offer a variety of environmental education programs to students and citizens in the surrounding neighborhoods, including free and engaging experiences in the Environmental Education Center. MPA continues to explore cost-effective solutions to improving public access to the site through implementation of a Federal Lands Access Program (FLAP) grant, in partnership with US Fish & Wildlife Service, for a multimodal trail to the site.
- **Fleming Park Innovative Reuse Grant** - In 2019 MPA awarded an MDOT Secretary's Grant to the Turner Station Conservation Team to advance the proposed Fleming Park Shoreline Beneficial Use Restoration project through the permit application phase. This project, when implemented, will be the first example of beneficial use of Harbor channel dredged material within the Harbor area, providing this community with multiple benefits including flood risk protection, shoreline restoration, coastal resiliency, aquatic ecosystem and water quality improvements as well as enhanced waterfront recreational opportunities.
- **Air Quality Improvement Programs** - MPA has been highly successful in seeking federal and state air quality improvement grants to reduce the emission of criteria air pollutants associated with Port activities. With these funds, MPA implements air emission reduction programs. The POB Dray Truck Replacement program helps dray truck owners upgrade their older vehicles with cleaner, more efficient models to reduce diesel emissions locally and regionally. The Cargo Handling Equipment Upgrade program helps eligible Port businesses improve their fleet while reducing emissions from heavy duty diesel engines. MPA has also been a recipient of funds from the Volkswagen settlement that will further improve our fleet of diesel equipment. Many of the communities with whom MPA has developed strong relationships regularly provide letters of support for our grant applications, strengthening these applications and making them more competitive and more likely to be funded.
- **Urban Forestry Partnership** - MPA has partnered with the local non-profit Bluewater Baltimore to plant trees throughout Baltimore City to improve stormwater, air, and quality of life in these communities. To date, 1,500 trees have been planted through this partnership

Middle Branch – The MPA is a partner in the Middle Branch Waterfront Parks master planning process, which is actively working with the City of Baltimore, Parks and People Foundation, the South Baltimore Gateway Partnership and surrounding communities to integrate justice, equity, diversity and inclusion

(JEDI) principles into the master plan, outreach and engagement processes and the ultimate design and implementation of the project.

Contact:

Jill Lemke, manager of strategic planning and special projects

jlemke@marylandports.com

410-385-4445