

Department of Transportation
Saint Lawrence Seaway Development Corporation
Increasing the Public Availability of
Information about Agency Operations

September 30, 2015

Table of Contents

Executive Summary	3
Congressional Reports	3
Freedom of Information Act	3
Funding Tables and Correspondence Logs.....	4
Regularly Posted Materials.....	5
New Initiatives	5

Executive Summary

The Saint Lawrence Seaway Development Corporation (SLSDC), in accordance with the U.S. Department of Transportation's (DOT) third Open Government Plan, commits to increasing the amount of publicly available information on its .gov website (www.seaway.dot.gov). In an effort to continue to improve transparency with agency information on the website, the SLSDC follows a systemic approach to ensure the ongoing release of data. This approach begins with maintaining and updating an inventory of all agency information and data on a regular basis. Each designated program office provides input into the annual inventory process, identifying any new information or data. In determining which information is in demand for posting on the .gov website, there are three important factors:

- **Mission Statement** – Posting information that directly supports the agency mission statement of “The SLSDC operates and maintains the U.S. infrastructure and waters of the St. Lawrence Seaway, while performing trade and economic development activities for the Great Lakes St. Lawrence Seaway System region. Our mission is to serve the marine transportation industries by providing a safe, secure, reliable, efficient, and competitive deep draft international waterway, in cooperation with the Canadian St. Lawrence Seaway Management Corporation.”
- **Office of Management and Budget (OMB) Directives / DOT Mandates** – Posting information the SLSDC is legally required to provide to the public.
- **Public Requests** – Posting information most frequently request by the public via Freedom of Information Act (FOIA) requests and Privacy Act requests (see: <http://www.seaway.dot.gov/publications/electronic-reading-room>).

Congressional Reports

The SLSDC has very few reports and data sets that are mandated to be posted on the website. At this time, the only Congressional report required to be on the .gov site is the Asset Renewal Program (ARP) Annual Report. Starting in 2009, the SLSDC initiated its multi-year ARP for the modernization of its infrastructure and facilities. Each of the ARP annual reports are posted on the .gov site as well as the Seaway's binational web site (see: <http://www.greatlakes-seaway.com>), shared with the St. Lawrence Seaway Management Corporation, dating back to its first iteration in 2009. Should the SLSDC receive any additional reporting requirements from Congress, the final reports will be posted on the website and any SLSDC Congressional Testimony Reports can be found on the OST website: <http://testimony.ost.dot.gov/>.

Freedom of Information Act

Freedom of Information Act (FOIA) resources can be found on the SLSDC's website and will be joined by FOIA request logs. FOIA logs will provide the following information: FOIA request

number, requestor last name, requesting firm, date logged, and the subject of the request. The benefits of a FOIA log are two-fold in that requestors are able to see what requests have been made to the agency as providing the ability for agency FOIA professionals to respond to frequently requested records efficiently and quickly. Logs will be updated on the .gov website on a quarterly basis. If no requests are received in a given quarter, it will be noted.

In accordance with 5 USC 552(a)(2), the following four categories of records ("reading room records") are publicly available without the need for a FOIA request:

- Final Opinions / Orders in Adjudicated Cases
- Specific Agency Policy Statements
- Staff Manuals and Instructions to Staff Affecting the Public
- Frequently Requested Records

Each of these four categories will be updated in the electronic reading room as applicable records become available and reviewed quarterly to ensure the most recent documents are posted. At the conclusion of fiscal year 2015, the Electronic Reading Room page will be moved from "other resources" to the main FOIA page for increased visibility and accessibility. At this time, FOIA logs from fiscal years 2014 and 2015 will be posted under "Frequently Requested Records."

Funding Tables and Correspondence Logs

Funding/apportionment tables and correspondence logs are reviewed on a case-by-case basis to determine their suitability for public viewing. Currently the SLSDC does not participate in any grant or financial assistance programs and all apportioned funds are expended from one account for all Seaway operations; therefore it is not necessary for the full fiscal year apportionment to be posted online. This practice is reviewed annually to ensure that funding sources have not changed.

Congressional or departmental correspondence is reviewed and maintained by the SLSDC's Office of Congressional and Public Relations. The agency transmits and receives a low volume of correspondence throughout the fiscal year allowing each record to be posted on the .gov website in a timely manner. All correspondence will be posted online unless it is determined via the internal review process described below, that it includes private, privileged, or other sensitive data.

All agency information to be posted online must go through an internal review process to prevent the release of private, privileged, or other sensitive data. The review process is initiated by the originating office of the document and is forwarded to the SLSDC Chief Counsel, Chief Information Officer, and Director of Congressional and Public Relations for approval to be

posted publically. If the document or record is regularly posted item on the SLSDC website and does not include sensitive data or information, it does not go through this approval process, thus providing a more timely release of agency information.

Regularly Posted Materials

The timely release of publically available information is vital to the success of the SLSDC as a service-based agency with operational, trade and economic development functions. The Great Lakes St. Lawrence Seaway communities, U.S. and Canadian stakeholders, and other industry stakeholders throughout the world depend on the most up-to-date information to be displayed on the agency website. Current releases on the website that support the agency mission to provide a safe, reliable, and efficient deep draft waterway for the industries impacting by maritime transportation include the *Seaway Compass* (quarterly news publication), marketing and promotional materials, interactive shipping maps and lock transit times, press releases, media advisories, SLSDC Administrator speeches and presentations, Great Lakes Seaway System directory, upcoming events, commercial trade statistics, and various relevant economic and trade studies. Other regularly posted items on the web support the agency's administrative goals, such as recent job announcements and annual reports.

New Initiatives

In a continued effort to improve on current disclosure practices, new information will be available online as it is created or deemed fit for public viewing. The SLSDC plans to display its records management (RM) plan online, including the RM policy and schedule. The FOIA process will only benefit and become more efficient with the posting of the records schedule as requestors can specify further the exact documents they are in search of. In addition to the RM program, new monthly reports on system reliability, administrative expenses, and financial management metrics will be posted online improving agency transparency. Each of these new items will be implemented in fiscal year 2016, with a completion date of September 30, 2016 and continually updated going forward.

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