



Photograph by Eric Fredericks (Creative Commons)

Long Beach Bridge Renovations to be Completed by 2018

Renovations are underway to turn an integral structure linking Long Beach’s Terminal Island to the mainland into the first cable-stayed bridge in California. In an effort to accommodate larger cargo vessels, ease traffic congestion and provide bicycle lanes for residents, Long Beach agreed to initially invest \$950 million to upgrade the Gerald Desmond Bridge. The renovation will significantly raise the bridge’s vertical clearance to 205 feet, giving post-Panamax class ships and larger the room to sail through to the North Harbor area. Repairs will also be made to combat the road wear and tear that the bridge has experienced in the past 50 years.

In January 2013, the Gerald Desmond Bridge Replacement Project began with approval from harbor officials and the city of Long Beach two years prior. Complications with bridge design ballooned its budget from the projected \$950 million to nearly \$1.5 billion, delaying its year of completion from 2016 to 2018—costs increased on separate occasions to accommodate [oil field and gas pipeline relocations](#), bridge demolition and seismic safety standards.

The reconstruction has also helped to stimulate economic growth in the city: [a plan recently approved by the Board](#)

[of Harbor Commissioners](#) will allow for the employment of up to 26% of disadvantaged workers at the Gerald Desmond Bridge—unemployed, single parents, apprentices, or without a high school diploma or equivalent. The same plan will also give union workers contract preference in exchange for an agreement to refrain from causing further delays, such as striking. Once completed, operations will be transferred to the California Department of Transportation (Caltrans).

Named after Long Beach City Councilmember and City Attorney Gerald Desmond, the bridge was created in 1968 as a long-overdue replacement to a pontoon bridge used during World War II. The bridge has been designated as a National Highway System Intermodal Connector Route, of critical importance to the Long Beach and Los Angeles ports, and provides passage for 15% of containerized cargo that enters the United States.



For pressing inquiries and updates, please reach your local KWE branch for information.