



## Press Release

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### **Grand Opening Heralds Arrival of Gerald Desmond Bridge**

*New Long Beach cable-stayed bridge enhances a critical cargo route for one of the busiest U.S. ports, replacing a through-arch bridge that served the region since 1968.*

**LONG BEACH, California, October 2, 2020** — Today, a combined virtual and live grand opening will celebrate completion of the new replacement for the Gerald Desmond Bridge, a signature cable-stayed span that replaces the adjacent arch bridge that connected the Port of Long Beach (POLB) with the mainland for more than half a century.

The six-lane, 2,000-foot-long bridge crosses Long Beach's Back Channel and features a 1,000-foot-long main span between two 515-foot-high towers. The Gerald Desmond Bridge is the second-tallest cable-stayed bridge in the U.S. and the first such bridge for vehicles in California. The deck's 205-foot vertical clearance exceeds the clearance of the previous four-lane bridge by 50 feet.

WSP USA provided program management and construction management services for the Gerald Desmond Bridge Replacement project on behalf of the POLB, overseeing and managing the design-build contract. The design-build project team, SFI, consisted of a joint venture between Shimmick Construction Company, Inc., FCC Construcción S.A, and Impregilo S.P.A and included ARUP North America and Biggs Cardosa Associates as the lead designers.

“The success of the Gerald Desmond Bridge Replacement project required constant collaboration among all of the organizations, including the Port of Long Beach, Caltrans and Los Angeles Metro, with everyone sharing a singular focus on leading this project to successful delivery,” said Neal Weitman, national project management/construction management director at WSP. “It is a very proud day to be able to step back and admire the effort that went into creating such a spectacular structure.”

Work on the \$1.5 billion project began in 2013, 46 years after ground was broken for the previous bridge, which had been designed primarily for use by cargo transport and employees of the Long Beach Naval Shipyard. Over the next half century, bridge use far surpassed initial expectations and the vertical clearance became insufficient to accommodate modern Panamax and New Panamax cargo vessels.

With 15 percent of the nation's waterborne cargo transported over the Gerald Desmond Bridge every year, it serves as an essential part of the U.S. trade infrastructure, as well as providing a vital route for motorists travelling between the POLB and surrounding communities.

“The importance of this bridge cannot be understated, and not just for commuters who will feel the immediate impact of shorter travel times,” said Joseph Pulicare, WSP president of U.S. transportation. “This bridge will have a global economic impact, providing a reliable connection between one of the world’s busiest cargo ports and the rest of the U.S. awaiting delivery of those goods.”

The Friday ceremony will be broadcast live on YouTube and other social media channels beginning at 10 a.m. (PDT), and can be accessed at [www.newgdbridge.com](http://www.newgdbridge.com) or [www.polb.com](http://www.polb.com).

The new span, which will carry Ocean Boulevard traffic and connect Terminal Island to downtown Long Beach and Interstate 710 freeway, will remain closed to traffic throughout the weekend to allow time to switch over lanes connecting both ends of the bridge to existing roadways. The bridge is scheduled to be opened to motorists on Monday, Oct. 5.

The new bridge features emergency lanes on both the inner and outer shoulders in each direction to reduce traffic delays and safety hazards from accidents and vehicle breakdowns, a reduction in the previous bridge's steep grades to improve traffic flow, and a dedicated bicycle path and pedestrian walkway that features scenic overlooks. The bridge also incorporates a free-flowing, dedicated double left turn on the inside track of traffic – known as a “Texas U-turn” – that allows trucks to keep moving and not have to wait at a signal.

Once the new bridge is fully operational, plans will be prepared for the demolition of the existing bridge.

### **About WSP USA**

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