

## **Next Steps to Address Bayonne Bridge Navigational Clearance**

The Port Authority of NY&NJ is a bi-state agency committed to ensuring a vibrant economic climate for the New York-New Jersey region. In 1931 the Port Authority built the Bayonne Bridge, which connects Bayonne, New Jersey and Staten Island, New York and sits at the entrance of the Port Authority's maritime facilities over the Kill Van Kull. Due to the increasing size of vessels, the 151-foot air draft (the distance from the water's surface to the underside of the bridge roadway) of the bridge presents a navigational challenge to some vessels today – a challenge that is expected to increase as larger ships transit the Panama Canal after its expansion in 2015. The Port Authority recognizes the importance of developing and maintaining a world-class port with deep and clear channels for vessels and the infrastructure to support the movement of cargo.

In order to address this navigational challenge, in 2008 the Port Authority commissioned the United States Army Corps of Engineers (USACE) to complete an analysis of the commercial consequences of and the national economic benefits that could be generated by a potential remedy of the Bayonne Bridge's air draft restriction. The final report concludes that despite the high cost of possible solutions, the national economic benefits (i.e. the transportation cost savings to the nation) that would result from implementing a remedy would far outweigh the costs. The total project cost of modifying or replacing the bridge could range from \$1.3 billion to \$3.1 billion and could take ten years or more to complete. This timeframe reflects the lengthy environmental permitting and public review process required for any project of this scope, the need for further studies and cost-benefit analyses (including long-term economic forecasting), engineering complexity, potential environmental and transportation impacts and the lack of funding resources currently identified. The USACE report recommended that the Port Authority undertake further planning and environmental analyses for the identification of a preferred bridge or non-bridge project alternative.

In August 2009, based on preliminary findings from this study, the Port Authority's Board of Commissioners approved providing up to \$10 million in funding to enable the agency to complete the necessary planning analyses and due diligence required to determine a preferred course of action and recommended project alternative.

Over the course of the coming months, the Port Authority will undertake an Alternatives Analysis to evaluate a wide range of potential solutions. This work will include a regional cost benefit analysis, environmental screening, the assessment of land use impacts, conceptual engineering studies, the potential additional land-side investments necessary to accommodate the new vessels and volumes of cargo, and external outreach, including consultation with concerned transportation and oversight agencies. The agency will conduct a thorough examination and comparison of the pros, cons, risks and impacts of potential solutions, including bridge replacement or modification and non-bridge replacement solutions such as modifications to vessels and incentive programs among other options.

The agency will complete conceptual engineering and environmental analyses of the various bridge modification options previously identified, such as raising the bridge deck or jacking the arch, construction of a new bridge or a tunnel, as well as other potential innovative solutions such as reconstructing the bridge to provide a movable lift section. Further, this study will assess

the costs and benefits of these options from a regional perspective, as compared to the national perspective evaluated by the USACE, and consider impacts such as port related employment, traffic congestion and potential additional land-side investments necessary to accommodate the new vessels and volumes of cargo. This information will be utilized to identify the potential environmental impacts and the relative costs and benefits of different alternatives, and refine and prioritize alternatives that may be carried forward into the federal National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) process.

The full Bayonne Bridge Air Draft Analysis completed by the United States Army Corps of Engineers is available on The Port Authority of NY & NJ's website at <http://www.panynj.gov/about/pdf/Bayonne-Bridge-Air-Draft-Analysis.pdf>.