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Press Release

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[Bridges & Tunnels](#)

IMMEDIATE

Bronx-Whitestone Bridge:\$192.8 Million Contract Awarded for Major Reconstruction at Bronx Approach

MTA Bridges and Tunnels has awarded a \$192.8 million contract to replace and widen the roadway and supporting structure of the Bronx approach at the Bronx-Whitestone Bridge, which connects the Bronx to Queens and Long Island.

The four-year project will be divided into three stages, and work will begin before the end of the year, although no permanent lane closure will be required until early-to-mid 2010. Even during the lane closure period, five lanes will still be available in the peak direction through the use of a movable barrier. There are approximately 120,000 daily crossings over the Bronx-Whitestone Bridge. Conti of New York, LLC, is the contractor.

"The approach roadway is reaching the end of its useful life, and this construction project is central to maintaining the integrity of the 69-year-old Bronx-Whitestone Bridge for many decades to come," said David Moretti, Acting President of the agency.

The entire 1785-foot long elevated Bronx approach will be replaced from the ground up with a completely new structure, including foundations and 15 double-arch concrete piers to support a widened roadway constructed of steel girders and concrete deck. A key component of the upgrade is the widening of the structure to provide 12-foot lanes and proper shoulders that meet present-day width standards—a major improvement on the existing circa 1930s narrow-width roadway lanes. The planned structure has been designed to carry current traffic loads and meet contemporary seismic criteria. The number of travel lanes on the approach will remain the same at three in each direction when construction is completed.

"We are sensitive to our customers here and at the Throgs Neck Bridge, which is also under construction, so lane closures will be closely coordinated to minimize customer inconvenience," explained Vincent Montanti, Facility Engineer at the Bronx-Whitestone.

The initial stage of the Bronx approach project involves construction of the new piers and foundations, and removal of the median barrier. That work will last approximately a year-and-a-half, beginning by end of 2008. Because this work will be performed underneath the existing roadway there will be no impacts to traffic, with the exception of temporary lane closures during off-peak hours for removal of the median and installation of the temporary movable barrier.

The second major stage of the project—expected to about last two-and-a-half years—will feature demolition of the existing roadway, lane by lane, and construction of the new roadway superstructure. This work includes permanent lane closures for approximately one year beginning in early-to-mid 2010 in order to construct the roadway portion closest to the anchorage. During this period five lanes of traffic will be maintained through use of the movable barrier during peak hours with three lanes in the peak rush-hours direction. When the work near the anchorage is complete, six lanes of traffic will be maintained during peak hours.

"We will continue our practice of reaching out to local elected officials and community groups to keep residents informed, and alert them in advance to planned lane closures," explained Ray Webb, General Manager of the bridge.

The third major stage, which is expected to be completed over the final four months of the project, will involve demolition of the existing piers and final site improvements such as landscaping and draining upgrades.

The 2,300-foot long, 74-foot wide suspension span was the fourth longest in the world when the bridge opened to the public a day before the New York World's Fair drew its first crowd to Flushing Meadows Park on April 30, 1939. In 1947, stiffening trusses were added to guard against high winds, and the bridge was converted from four to six lanes.

Starting several years ago, a series of projects was undertaken at the Bronx-Whitestone to extend the life of the bridge by reducing the load on the span's cables. In 2004, the heavy trusses were removed and lightweight wind fairings were installed, which made the span aerodynamic and restored the sleek appearance of the bridge. In 2007, the original concrete roadway was replaced with a stronger and lighter steel orthotropic deck. Further improvements in the past year included the complete re-painting of the towers, main cables and suspender ropes, as well as installation of tower flood-lighting, which will enhance the Bronx/Queens skyline view. This current project to replace the Bronx approach is a continuance of the overall effort to upgrade the structure.

MTA Bridges and Tunnels' facilities, which connect the five boroughs of New York City, are the Robert F. Kennedy (formerly Triborough), Throgs Neck, Bronx-Whitestone, Henry Hudson, Verrazano-Narrows, Cross Bay Veterans Memorial and Marine Parkway-Gil Hodges Bridges, and the Queens Midtown and Brooklyn-Battery Tunnels.



The Bronx-Whitestone Bridge links the Bronx to Queens, Long Island.