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Press Release

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[Bridges & Tunnels](#)

IMMEDIATE

Major Deck Reconstruction Complete As Cross Bay Bridge Marks 40 Years of Service

An upgraded new roadway, reconstructed ramps and a smoothly surfaced pedestrian path are ready right on schedule at the Cross Bay Veterans Memorial Bridge, just in time for the busy summer season and, by coincidence, the bridge's 40th birthday.

The bridge's deck and ramps were due for an overhaul, having weathered four decades of use by some 7.5 million vehicles each year in the harsh salt-water environment of the Rockaways. The three-year \$57 million project kicked off in July 2007, with El Sol of Maspeth, Queens serving as contractor.

"Before and during construction the Authority was especially mindful to work out lane and ramp closures that would have the least impact on the community," explained Bridges and Tunnels President Jim Ferrara. There were no ramp closures during summer months, between Memorial Day and Labor Day, to accommodate beach-related traffic. The traffic detours during closures were carefully coordinated with Community Board 14, in order to minimize inconvenience to residents.

"We are always mindful of our Broad Channel and Rockaway neighbors," said Adrian Moshe, Facility Engineer for both the Cross Bay and Marine Parkway–Gil Hodges Memorial Bridges. "During the period when the popular walkway had to be closed, we arranged free shuttle service seven days a week."

Other elements of the construction involved replacement of the asphalt overlay and application of a waterproof membrane (*see photo*); rehabilitation of the large concrete girders, and replacement of the deck joints, which allow for contraction and expansion of the bridge. New concrete barriers and railings along the sidewalk were installed, in addition to a new fire stand pipe that can supply water directly to the span in the event of fire.

"A big 'thank you' to our customers and local residents for their patience during this important project," said Ed Wallace, General Manager for the agency's two Rockaways crossings.

The Cross Bay Bridge is a high-level fixed bridge with a concrete deck that allows marine traffic to cross under without the need for a lift; in contrast, neighboring Marine Parkway Bridge has a lift span. In 1970 the current bridge replaced the old Cross Bay Bridge, a low-level drawbridge built in 1939. The Cross Bay Bridge spans over Beach Channel and connects the Rockaways, Broad Channel and the Jamaica Bay Wildlife Refuge to the rest of Queens.

Cross Bay Bridge Basics:

- Construction started: August 1967; Opened to traffic: **May 28, 1970**
- **Six** lanes of traffic; **three** in either direction; **one** pedestrian walkway
- Total length between abutments: **3000 feet**
- Clearance above water: **55 feet**
- Annual number of vehicles in **1940: 3.4 million**
- Annual number of vehicles in **2009: 7.5 million**

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 agency is the largest toll authority in the nation, helping 800,000 vehicles and more than a million people reach their destination each day.



BEFORE: Cross Bay Veterans Memorial Bridge during construction, with waterproof membrane being applied;



AFTER: newly paved roadway.