

PORT AUTHORITY OPENS NEWLY RENOVATED AND VASTLY IMPROVED BICYCLE AND PEDESTRIAN WALKWAY ON NORTH SIDE OF GEORGE WASHINGTON BRIDGE AS PART OF COMPREHENSIVE ‘RESTORING THE GEORGE’ PROGRAM

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North Walk Improvements Part of Key Project to Replace Original Steel Suspender Ropes in Agency’s \$2B ‘Restoring the George’ Program

Improvements to North Walk Dramatically Improve Bike Access and Include New Safety and Security Features, Widened Accessible Approach Paths and Areas Around Towers, Spacious Entry Plazas and New Viewing Platforms; Provides First-Ever Access to Wheelchair, Stroller Users

South Walk to Close Feb. 15 to Accommodate Immediate Start of Work to Replace All Steel Suspender Ropes on Bridge’s South Side; South Walk Also to be Redesigned with Similar Safety Features and Accessibility

The Port Authority of New York and New Jersey today opened the newly renovated and fully accessible north walk of the George Washington Bridge, significantly improving the experience for bicyclists, pedestrians, and users with mobility challenges. Replacement of the bridge’s northside original steel suspender cables and associated closure of the path below the cables as part of the agency’s \$2 billion Restoring the George program created an opportunity for the Port Authority to overhaul the path, including the replacement of the 171 access steps with gentler widened accessible approach paths to allow seamless connection from adjacent streets.

“We must ensure our bridges and walkways are welcoming, safe and accessible for all cyclists and pedestrians,” said **New York Governor Kathy Hochul**. “The George Washington Bridge is a vital link between our states, and these improvements are critical to ensuring everyone can experience the unparalleled views.”

“The opening of the newly renovated north walk marks a significant milestone for the historic Restoring the George program,” said **New Jersey Governor Phil Murphy**. “This unprecedented investment in one of the most important bridges in the world will more efficiently connect communities on both sides of the Hudson. The vital safety improvements unveiled today will especially benefit pedestrians and users with mobility challenges by providing safe and equitable access to the George Washington Bridge.”

While replacing key cables on the bridge’s north side, the Port Authority concurrently renovated and made improvements to the bridge’s 1.5 mile north walk. The renovation of the north path widened known chokepoints around the bridge’s towers, added enhanced security and safety features, and removed the stairs that previously inhibited direct bike access and prevented users with mobility challenges from reaching the span.

Brand new gracefully curving, gently sloping, and widened accessible approach paths have been built from street level to the bridge main span to provide much easier and more convenient access for bicyclists and pedestrians as well as to meet modern accessibility standards with grades that do not exceed five percent.

The newly rehabilitated north walk also features two new open-air viewing platforms, known architecturally as belvederes, to provide a meeting or resting space for bicyclists, pedestrians, and tourists; on the New York side, one offers expansive uninterrupted views of the Hudson River and the Palisades, and on the New Jersey side, the belvedere provides head-on views of the bridge’s upper level and New Jersey tower.

“The opening of the vastly improved north walk marks an important milestone in the Restoring the George program,” said **Port Authority Chairman Kevin O’Toole**. “While we invest in and strengthen the bridge for the next century of cars and trucks, we are also enhancing the experience for the pedestrians and cyclists and drawing our communities closer together.”

“The George Washington Bridge serves hundreds of thousands of people on foot and bicycle every year, and these upgrades to the north walk will tremendously improve the experience,” said **Port Authority Executive Director Rick Cotton**. “These renovations showcase the Port Authority’s commitment to public access and safety at our facilities, by providing vastly improved and widened approach paths to better serve pedestrian and bicyclist connectivity, as well as assure they are accessible by all.”

Other north walk improvements include:

- Accessible approach path widened to between 11 and 14 feet, with grades of up to a maximum of 5 percent
- Safety features such as enhanced security fencing, sidewalk pavement markings, bicycle-friendly rub-rails, improved lighting, and wayfinding signage
- Modifications of corners at and around the bridge towers allowing cyclists to navigate without dismounting, as previously required

With the opening of the north walk, the Port Authority will close the bridge’s south walk at 12:01 a.m. on Feb. 15 in order to accommodate the immediate start of work to replace every steel suspender rope on the bridge’s south side. The replacement of all 592 steel cables that suspend from the bridge’s four main cables and hold up the bridge’s two roadway levels is the largest and most impactful project of the agency’s \$2 billion Restoring the George program to rehabilitate, repair or replace nearly every component of the world’s busiest vehicular bridge.

The replacement of every suspender rope and handrail and the rehabilitation of the bridge’s four main cables are essential to the bridge’s state of good repair. As the New York City and New Jersey region’s primary Hudson River crossing for large commercial trucks, the bridge is a crucial link in the regional interstate highway network.

Work to replace the bridge’s original steel suspender cables began in September 2018 with the ropes on the north side. Once new suspender ropes were in place, cutting edge acoustical monitoring and dehumidification systems were installed on the main cables. The painstaking process of inspecting and cleaning the main cables, as well as the one-by-one replacement of each steel suspender cable on the bridge’s north side, was completed in 2021.

Work carried out on the north side suspender cables and the sidewalk will be replicated on the bridge’s south side. The work is expected to be completed in approximately four years, during which pedestrians and bicyclists will share use of the newly opened north walk.

Once the south walk’s construction is complete, bicyclists and pedestrians will each use separate walkways. Pedestrians will have dedicated use of the south walk, while bicyclists will exclusively use the north walk.

The other projects in the Restoring the George program include:

- The rehabilitation of steel main cable strands in the bridge’s New York and New Jersey anchorages (completed in 2017)
- The pavement rehabilitation of the lower level’s eastbound roadway on the main span and access roads (completed in 2016)
- Replacement of the Palisades Interstate Parkway helix ramp and rehabilitation of the upper-level roadway over Hudson Terrace and the New Jersey anchorage (completed in 2020)
- Rehabilitation of the Trans-Manhattan Expressway’s median barrier and water system, and repair of concrete fire-proofing encasement on steel columns (ongoing)
- Rehabilitation of the 178th and 179th street ramps, bus ramps and bus turnaround, and construction of new street-level sidewalks on Cabrini Boulevard to the New York anchorage (ongoing)
- Replacement of roadway finger joints and 32 deck panels at the two towers (ongoing)
- Rehabilitation of upper-level eastbound roadway pavement (ongoing)
- Rehabilitation of existing piers and abutments on the Center Avenue and Lemoine Avenue bridges (ongoing)
- Rehabilitation of lower-level steel, paint removal and replacement of movable maintenance platforms (ongoing)
- Rehabilitation or replacement of components of the Fort Washington Avenue, Broadway, Wadsworth Avenue, St. Nicholas Avenue, Audubon Avenue, and Amsterdam Avenue bridges over the Trans-Manhattan Expressway (yet to begin)

“The opening of the George Washington Bridge North Walk marks a significant step forward in the ‘Restore the George’ project,” said **Congressman Adriano Espaillat (NY-13)**. “I am pleased to see the Port Authority’s continued commitment to the ongoing maintenance needs of the 90-year-old historic crossing. Along with improved conditions for drivers, I am delighted to see updated accessibility ramps included in the renovated pedestrian ramps. This bridge is an important step towards giving all New Yorkers access to more of our beautiful city.”

“The North Walk provides incredible views of the Palisades Cliffs, Hudson River, and New York City,” said **New Jersey State Senator Gordon M. Johnson**. “Now that the North Walk is ADA compliant, people of all abilities can enjoy the views and see the best of what our region has to offer.”

“For the first time ever, the North Walk is accessible to all New Yorkers who want to take in the incredible vistas or cross the bridge without a car,” said **Manhattan Borough President Mark Levine**. “The Restoring the George program is key to making the bridge safer and a more accessible feature of life Uptown.”

“These improvements will expand access to the George Washington Bridge’s sweeping views of the Hudson River while dramatically upgrading the cycling experience. We applaud the Port Authority for their work to expand wheelchair and stroller access and support sustainable travel modes along what is a critical regional cycling link,” said **New York City Department of Transportation Commissioner Ydanis Rodriguez**. “DOT is committed to continuing our work expanding our bike lane network and working with sister agencies on greenways.”

“A day when we open a new, generous facility for cycling on one of our key river crossings is a good day,” said **Bike New York Director of Advocacy Jon Orcutt**. “Thank you to Port Authority Executive Director Rick Cotton and his entire team for these significant improvements.”

“Building bridges for people will protect pedestrians and bike riders, encourage more people to ride bikes, and ensure they are accessible to people using wheelchairs and other mobility aids,” said **Shawn Garcia, Uptown/Bronx Organizer for Transportation Alternatives**. “We’re glad to see the Port Authority open the redesigned North Walk, and look forward to working with leaders and community members to ensure all bridges in the area are designed for people.”

“We would like to thank the Port Authority for these significant safety improvements for cyclists and pedestrians, who are increasingly choosing to use the George Washington Bridge for both commuting and recreation,” said **Debra Kagan, Executive Director of the New Jersey Bike and Walk Coalition**. “These improvements represent a major contribution to building a safer, more accessible, and equitable active transportation network, between our two states.”

“The improved North Walk brings critical safety and access upgrades to the GW Bridge’s bike and pedestrian path, a popular route for cyclists, hikers, and all those seeking refuge from the urban landscape in the Palisades Interstate Park System’s 130,000 acres of parkland,” said **Remy Schwartz, Associate Director of Palisades Parks Conservancy**. “The new path creates direct connections to the Long Path, a 358-mile hiking trail from NYC to Albany, and numerous destination-cycling routes in New Jersey and New York. We are excited to celebrate this fitting new gateway to America’s first bi-state park system.”

“United Spinal Association celebrates the wheelchair accessibility of the George Washington Bridge pedestrian walkway, along with the Port Authority of NY/NJ,” said **James Weisman, General Counsel, United Spinal Association**. “This iconic symbol of NYC has been used by pedestrians since its opening in 1931. In 2023, it’s now accessible to everyone.”

ABOUT THE GEORGE WASHINGTON BRIDGE

The world’s busiest vehicular bridge carried 49.3 million eastbound vehicles in 2021, of which 3.9 million were trucks. It first opened to traffic in 1931, and in its first full year of operation in 1932, its original six lanes of traffic served more than 5.5 million vehicles. As traffic demand increased, the two center lanes of the bridge were paved and opened to traffic in 1946, increasing capacity by one-third. The six lanes of the lower roadway were completed in 1962. In 1963 when the George Washington Bridge Bus Station first opened, access to cross the George Washington Bridge via the pedestrian path was modified after the Lower Level was added, changing the ramp structure on and off the bridge. Last year alone, the south walk of the bridge saw over 710,000 pedestrians and cyclists cross the Hudson.

More information on the Restoring the George program is available [here](#).

More information on the redesigns of the bridge’s north and south walk is available [here](#).

The Port Authority of New York and New Jersey is a bi-state agency that builds, operates, and maintains many of the most important transportation and trade infrastructure assets in the country. For over a century, the agency’s network of major airports; critical bridges, tunnels and bus terminals; a commuter rail line; and the busiest seaport on the East Coast has been among the most vital in the country – transporting hundreds of millions of people and moving essential goods into and out of the region. The Port Authority also owns and manages the 16-acre World Trade Center campus, which today welcomes tens of thousands of office workers and millions of annual visitors. The agency’s historic \$37 billion 10-year capital plan includes unprecedented transformation of the region’s three major airports – LaGuardia, Newark Liberty and JFK – as well as an array of other new and upgraded assets, including the \$2 billion renovation of the 90-year-old George Washington Bridge. The Port Authority’s annual budget of \$8 billion includes no tax revenue from either the states of New York or New Jersey or from the City of New York. The agency raises the necessary funds for the improvement, construction or acquisition of its facilities primarily on its own credit. For more information, visit www.panynj.gov or check out the [Now Arriving](#) blog.