



PORTCORPUS CHRISTI®

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Port Corpus Christi Celebrates Commencement of World Class Cable Stayed Bridge Construction with State and Federal Officials

Corpus Christi, Texas, USA – Along with State and Federal Officials, Port Corpus Christi is excited to announce the beginning of a truly momentous project. With a symbolic turning of the dirt the official U.S. 181 Corpus Christi Harbor Bridge Replacement Project is set to begin. The groundbreaking ceremony took place at the Solomon P. Ortiz International Center on the afternoon of Monday, August 8, 2016, in the shadow of the current Corpus Christi Harbor Bridge.

The U.S. 181 Harbor Bridge Replacement Project will result in the longest precast concrete cable-stayed span in the United States, the third largest of its kind in the world. The height of the new Corpus Christi Harbor Bridge will allow some of the world's largest ocean-going vessels entrance to the Inner Harbor at Port Corpus Christi. With a draft of 205 feet, the current Corpus Christi Harbor Bridge could fit underneath the structure of the proposed new Harbor Bridge.

The six-lane structure with shoulders is scheduled to be completed in 2021 for about \$930 million. Funding is being provided locally by Nueces and San Patricio Counties, and Port Corpus Christi as well as state and federal sources and includes a 25-year maintenance agreement with the developer.

"I would like to congratulate TxDOT, the City of Corpus Christi and the Port of Corpus Christi on this achievement," said **Governor Greg Abbott**. "Today's groundbreaking marks an important step in Texas' goal of creating a 21st century infrastructure system that gives us an advantage on our global competitors. As one of the largest bridge projects in Texas history, the Corpus Christi Harbor Bridge will lead to an expansion in commerce, ultimately creating more jobs and enhancing Texas' standing as an economic powerhouse."

The governor was joined in the groundbreaking event by U.S. Sen. John Cornyn, U.S. Rep. Blake Farenthold, Texas State Sen. Juan Hinojosa, Texas State Rep. Todd Hunter, Texas Transportation Commission (TTC) Chairman Tryon Lewis, members of the TTC, and Port Corpus Christi officials on the plaza of the Solomon Ortiz Center under the current Harbor Bridge.

“TxDOT is improving safety and connectivity in the area with a new bridge that is world-class in engineering and design,” **Chairman Lewis** said. “TxDOT employees and their partners have developed a project that is an outstanding combination of innovation, beauty and functionality.”

Port Corpus Christi Commission Chair, Charlie Zahn, said, “The groundbreaking of the new Harbor Bridge marks the beginning of a new milestone for the Port and the Coastal Bend region. The new bridge will enhance the port's competitiveness in global trade. We look forward to continue working together with TXDOT and FlatIron Dragados to assure the success of the project.”

The planned bridge will provide a clearance of 205 feet over the Corpus Christi Ship Channel and replace the existing steel-coated, six-lane bridge that lacks shoulders. With a clearance of 138 feet, the existing bridge, built in 1959, prevents larger ships – including the much larger ships passing through the newly-expanded Panama Canal – from accessing the port. Hurricane evacuation and safety is improved with the addition of inside and outside shoulders and the new design features a full-length pedestrian walkway.

Flatiron/Dragados was awarded the design and construction contract for the replacement bridge. The bridge will have a main span of 1,655 feet and will span the entire width of the ship channel. Its two main towers will be 538 feet tall. When completed, the Harbor Bridge will have the longest precast concrete cable-stayed span in the United States. Using the precast option will keep the ship channel open to freight shipments while the new bridge is under construction. The precast concrete structure also provides greater durability over the existing steel structure in the corrosive coastal climate. When the new bridge is completed, the older Harbor Bridge will be demolished.

In addition to the bridge construction, the project includes construction of a new interchange at I-37, U.S. 181 and SH 286 (Crosstown), reconstruction of about 1.6 miles of I-37, reconstruction of about 1 mile of SH 286 and demolition of the existing bridge.

About TxDOT

The Texas Department of Transportation is responsible for maintaining 80,000 miles of road and for supporting aviation, rail, and public transportation across the state. Through collaboration and leadership, we deliver a safe, reliable, and integrated transportation system that enables the movement of people and goods. Find out more at txdot.gov. “Like” us on [Facebook](#) and follow us on [Twitter](#).

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About Port Corpus Christi

As the primary economic engine of the Coastal Bend, Port Corpus Christi is the 5th largest port in the United States in total tonnage. Our mission; to “Leverage Commerce to Drive Prosperity.” Our vision; “To be the energy port of the America’s.” Strategically located on the western Gulf of Mexico, with a straight, 45’ deep channel, Port Corpus Christi provides quick access to the Gulf and the entire United States inland waterway system. The Port delivers outstanding access to overland transportation with on-site direct connections to three Class-1 railroads and uncongested interstate and state highways. Port Corpus Christi is protected by a state-of-the-art security department and an award-winning Environmental Management System. With outstanding management and operations staff, Port Corpus Christi is clearly “Moving America’s Energy.” <http://www.portcorpuschristi.com/>

*Port Corpus Christi is a member of **START (South Texas Alliance for Regional Trade)**, a collaborative effort that highlights business opportunities in South Texas in the manufacturing, energy, aerospace, international trade, military, and other sectors and the related strategic support provided by Port San Antonio, Port Corpus Christi, and Port Laredo. <http://www.southtexastrade.com/>*

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Texas Gov. Greg Abbott provides opening remarks.