



2022 AAPA LIGHTHOUSE AWARDS – COMMUNICATIONS

Classification #11: Special Events

South Waterfront–Pier J Bike and Pedestrian Path Opening Event

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Summary

Special events are one of the mainstays of the Port of Long Beach's outreach efforts – both events produced directly by the Port and sponsoring events produced by other organizations throughout the community. Planning and hosting in-person events has been extremely difficult if not impossible over the last two years because of the COVID-19 pandemic. However, as the COVID situation eased somewhat in early 2021 and vaccines became available, it was possible for the Port Communications and Community Relations team to cautiously begin planning in-person outdoor events. The first of these was the opening of the South Waterfront–Pier J Bike and Pedestrian Path in May 2021 – National Bike Month – and the accompanying inaugural bike ride. Since the new path sits on both City and Port land, the Long Beach Harbor Department and the city's Public Works Department partnered with various agencies to create the pathway, extending the city's vast network of bike trails and linking the Port of Long Beach to the 24-mile-long Los Angeles River Bike Trail. Approximately 75 people, including speakers, officials, news media and bicyclists, attended the live event, and viewership was greatly augmented via an extensive social media campaign and a video distributed following the event. The new pathway is not only a boon for those who embrace greener forms of transportation and the amazing vistas afforded by the California coastline, but it also provides an opportunity to showcase newly completed infrastructure projects and offer a glimpse of the nation's second-busiest seaport at work.



The Port of Long Beach

1

Communication Challenges and Opportunities

Background

The Port of Long Beach is one of the world's premier seaports, a gateway for trans-Pacific trade and a trailblazer in innovative goods movement, safety, environmental stewardship and sustainability. As the second-busiest container seaport in the United States, the Port serves 175 shipping lines with connections to 217 seaports around the world, handles trade valued at \$200 billion annually and supports 2.6 million trade-related jobs across the nation. That includes more than 575,000 jobs in Southern California and one in five jobs in Long Beach. Through day-to-day efforts by labor and terminal operators, the Port is processing record amounts of cargo, with 9.38 million twenty-foot equivalent units (TEUs) in 2021 – the busiest year in its history – and 2022

is trending toward raising the mark yet again. Goods moving through the Port of Long Beach reach every U.S. congressional district.

The Port is governed by the Long Beach Board of Harbor Commissioners, and managed by the staff of the Long Beach Harbor Department. Mario Cordero, a former harbor commissioner, then Chairman of the Federal Maritime Commission under President Barack Obama, has served as Executive Director of the Port of Long Beach since 2017, leading a team of 500. The Port operates as a landlord, develops shipping terminals and leases them to its tenants. The Commission guides the Port's ongoing capital improvement program, currently a plan to invest \$2.6 billion over the next 10 years to upgrade Port facilities, protect the

environment, increase revenue and enhance competitiveness. Projects include roadway, waterway, wharf and rail improvements to speed cargo flow and reduce traffic. The Port generates revenue through leases and cargo operations. The Port's budget for the 2022 fiscal year is \$622.4 million, and no taxpayer revenue is used to pay for Port operations and salaries.

The Port of Long Beach is proud of its top-notch customer service, state-of-the-art infrastructure and operational excellence. In 2019, 2020 and 2021 industry leaders named it "The Best West Coast Seaport in North America." Founded in 1911 with a single municipal dock at the mouth of the Los Angeles River, today the Port encompasses 3,200 acres with 35 miles of waterfront, 10 piers, 80 berths and

72 gantry cranes. Nearly 40 percent of seaborne cargo imports to the United States pass through the San Pedro Bay ports of Long Beach and Los Angeles. The complex handles more containers per ship call than any other port complex in the world.

The Event

Special events are one of the mainstays of the Port of Long Beach's outreach efforts – both events produced directly by the Port and sponsoring events produced by other organizations throughout our community. Of course, planning and hosting in-person events has been extremely difficult if not impossible over the last two years because of the COVID-19 pandemic. During the pandemic, the Port mounted several socially distanced events, including "Twilight Cinema" – a

drive in movie series; food distribution for people affected by COVID; and the grand opening of the Port's landmark new bridge in October 2020, featuring a three-level parade of vehicles, boats and vintage planes, and a video program involving minimum crew and participants.

As the COVID situation eased somewhat in early 2021 as vaccines became available, it was possible to cautiously begin planning some in-person outdoor events.

The first of these was the opening of the South Waterfront–Pier J Bike and Pedestrian Path in May 2021.

Bicycle infrastructure has been a priority for the city of Long Beach over the past few years and the Port's Communications Division collaborated

with the city's Public Works Department on the opening of this project, which links the Port of Long Beach to the 24-mile-long Los Angeles River Bike Trail.

Following COVID-19 safety precautions, celebrating the opening of this project with an outdoor event and bike ride was an excellent, relatively small-scale and safe way to reconnect in person with city partners and with bicycle advocacy groups, who closely follow developments in the Port and are tuned to environmental issues. A video and news release allowed the Port to share the event with a wider audience, and a survey prepared by the Port's Transportation Planning Division was promoted in conjunction with the event in order to gauge the public's response to the new bike path.



A cyclist rides along the Pier J Bike and Pedestrian Path in a photo captured by drone.

2 Complementing the Overall Mission

Building the South Waterfront–Pier J Bike and Pedestrian Path was tied to three of the six goals of the Port’s Strategic Plan:

- Develop and maintain state-of-the-art infrastructure that enhances productivity and efficiency in goods movement;
- Improve the environment through sustainable practices and the reduction of environmental impacts from Port operations and development;
- Broaden community access to Port-related opportunities and economic benefits.

Expanded bicycle and pedestrian access to the Port has always been highly sought after by the local community. Long Beach riders and walkers/runners enjoy many miles of coastal and near-coastal pathways, and anything that increases that experience is always welcomed. In addition, having cyclists and pedestrians on a safe, clean, pleasant path inside the Port provides the perfect opportunity to show off the Port’s environmental achievements as well as the vast scale of new and improved infrastructure withing the working Port, highlighting the Port’s efforts to remain competitive within the industry and fulfill its role as a major economic engine and source of employment for the community.



Public restrooms, blue building, are one of the features of the South Waterfront–Pier J Bike and Pedestrian Path.

3

Planning and Programming Components

Goals/Objectives

- Celebrate the opening of the bike path, an important piece of community-accessible infrastructure inside the Port of Long Beach, during May as part of the city's celebration of National Bike Month;
- Hold an outdoor event adhering to COVID-19 precautions, making one of the Port's first in-person events since 2020 as safe as possible;
- Connect with Long Beach's bicycling community, an active group that eagerly follows news of any new cycling/pedestrian paths under construction, especially the yet-to-be-opened path over the new Long Beach Bridge;
- Follow the formal ceremony with an inaugural opportunity for local cyclists attending the event to experience the new path;
- Highlight the Port's commitment to improving the environment and being a good community partner;
- Share that it's not "just a bike path," but also includes restrooms, bicycle racks, two observation platforms and signage about the Port's biodiversity;
- Share construction requirements, including widening the roadway and building retaining walls, plus installing a bio-filtration median and landscaping;
- Thank officials and workers who made the path a reality;
- Further reinforce the Port's commitment to the environment and the community by producing a video of the event to share with the wider community and distributing pre- and post-event materials to both social and traditional media outlets and on the Port's website;



Riders along the path can see the Long Beach skyline, the harbor and Port operations including on-dock rail and cargo movement at our Pier G and J terminals.

- Conduct a survey among attendees and other audiences to solicit feedback about the new path;
- Gather photo and video assets (including drone footage) to add to the Port's archive for use in subsequent Port videos and events, especially the annual State of the Port address;
- Welcome a live audience of about 75 people;
- Attain local media coverage for the opening of the event and attain a social media reach of at least 7,500 on each of the Port's platforms;
- Present the event within a \$10,000 budget.

Target Audiences

- Local, state, and national elected officials
- Long Beach cycling community
- Local and regional environmental groups
- Long Beach business community
- Long Beach residents and community organizations
- Port tenants and customers
- Port contractors and vendors
- Unions and longshore workers
- Board of Harbor Commissioners
- Port Teammates (Executives, Directors & Staff)
- Members of the news media
- Regulatory agencies
- Educators and students



The inaugural ride along the path following the opening ceremony, May 23, 2021.

4

Actions Taken and Communication Outputs Used

Overview

In April 2021, the Port of Long Beach Engineering Division contacted the Communications Division to share that the Pier J Bike Path was essentially complete and nearly ready to be unveiled to the public.

On April 28, a kickoff meeting for the opening event, led by the Communications Division's Community Relations team, was held with representatives from the Port's Maintenance, Government Relations, Engineering and Security divisions, along with members of the City's Public Works Department. At that meeting and a few subsequent meetings over the next few weeks, the date, location and structure of the event were planned: names and order of speakers; requirements for equipment A/V rental, videography, photography, security, setup and takedown, etc. Communications wrote and distributed a Communications Plan and a Task Checklist to guide the project (available in the Links section at the end of this entry).

The Communications Division graphics team produced an invitation, including a map to the event site, and the invitations were distributed by the Port and Public Works to a limited number of City and Port officials and staffers, as well as a local cycling group, Velo Allegro, encouraging them to attend the ceremony and participate in the inaugural ride.

To maximize exposure for an event with a relatively small number of in-person attendees (around 75 people), a video was made of the event featuring aerial drone footage. A social media plan was put in place to both feature the event and inform the public that the bike path was now open to the public. A media advisory was issued and a joint news release with the city's Public Works Department was also distributed.

Event

The event was scheduled for Sunday, May 23, 2021, at 10 a.m. during the city of Long Beach's celebration of National Bike Month.



Cyclists, media and other attendees gather for the opening of the Pier J Bike Path, May 23, 2021.

Along with the path itself, the central visual point of interest for the event was a 12-foot-high by 12-foot-wide truss that served as a “ceremonial gateway” to enter the new bike path. The gateway design featured the event name, date and the names and logos of the Port’s partners in path construction (L.A. Metro, Caltrans, Public Works and the City of Long Beach), as well as the Port’s logo. The gateway also served as the location for the traditional ribbon cutting (complete with giant scissors) and as an archway for the cyclists to pass through at the beginning of their ride.

Speakers at the event:

- Eric Lopez, Director of Public Works – Master of Ceremonies
- Rahul Sen, Policy Director, Office of Councilwoman Cindy Allen, Long Beach Council District 2
- Frank Colonna, President, Long Beach Board of Harbor Commissioners

- Sharon L. Weissman, Commissioner, Long Beach Board of Harbor Commissioners
- Mario Cordero, Executive Director, Port of Long Beach

Following the speeches and ribbon cutting, the inaugural ride began and the event concluded.

Video/Photos

Crews from LBTv, the city’s television service, were on hand to capture the event for both the Port and city. Aerial drone footage of the inaugural ride was captured for use in both the video promoting the opening of the path and for later Port video needs, including the 2022 annual State of the Port address.

A roughly two-minute video was produced for use on Port social media channels and the Port’s website, as well as for use on LBTv’s channel and website. The video featured all the event’s speakers, highlights of the path including signage describing the



Local officials prepare to cut the ribbon. From left: Eric Lopez, Director of Public Works; Rahul Sen, Policy Director, Office of Councilwoman Cindy Allen; Harbor Commissioner Sharon L. Weissman; Harbor Commission President Frank Colonna; Mario Cordero, Executive Director, Port of Long Beach.

Port’s biodiversity, and footage of the ribbon cutting and ride. The video was released on YouTube, social media and the Port’s website the day after the event on Monday, May 24. A Port contract photographer was on hand to capture images of the event for use with a news media release, also issued on the 24th.

Media

A media advisory was distributed to the Port’s media list (approximately 215 recipients) on the Thursday before the event, and a reporter/photographer from the Long Beach Post and camera crews from local TV channels NBC4, Fox11, KTLA5 and KABC7 were in attendance to cover the live event.

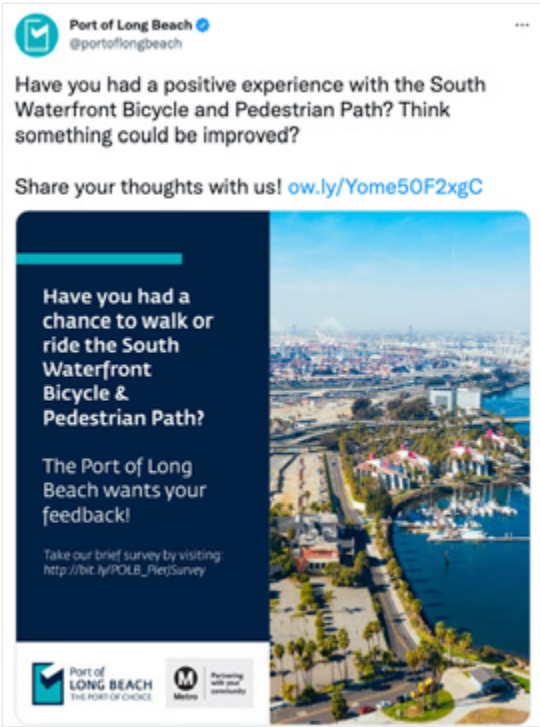
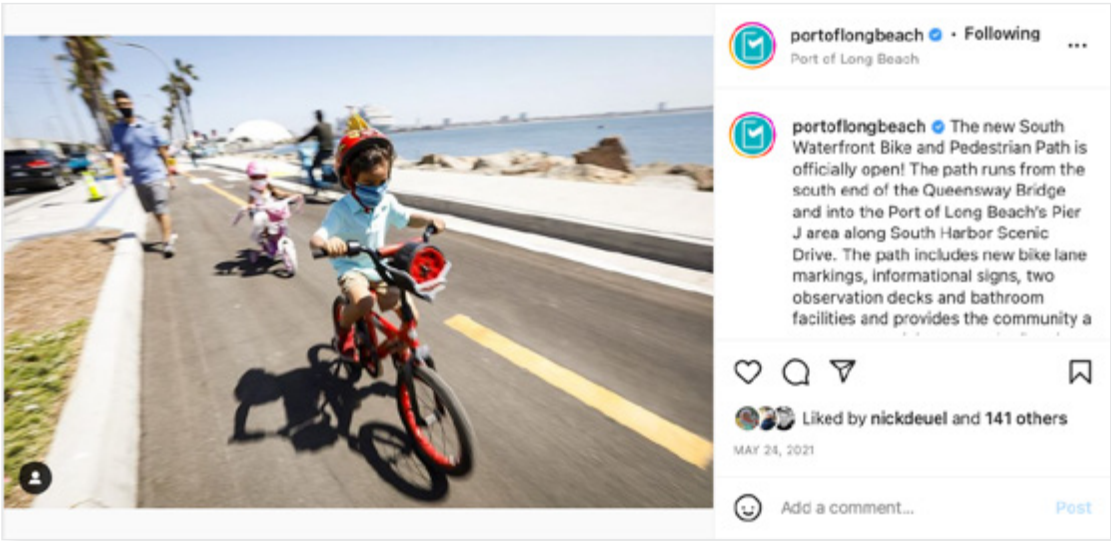
On Monday, May 24, a news release on the opening was distributed to the Port’s News and Info and Community lists, approximately 7,000 recipients. The release was posted, along with the video and a photo gallery, on the Port’s website.

Survey and Social Media

A survey, prepared by the Port’s Transportation Planning Division, was promoted in the news release about the event and in the extensive social media campaign surrounding the event, which ran from May 18 to June 30, 2021. Along with sharing the news of the path’s opening, posts on Instagram, LinkedIn, Facebook and Twitter reminded people to share their opinions via the survey, which was open from May 19 to July 6. The video of the event was also shared via Facebook on May 27.

Cost

Budget for out-of-pocket expenses for the event was \$10,000, with a final expenditure of \$7,357 (most of which was for set up/takedown of the archway and the associated graphics, along with photography), not including staff time, which is budgeted elsewhere. Video costs were covered under the Port’s yearly memorandum of understanding with LBTv, which is essentially handled as staff time.



5 Communications Outcomes and Evaluation Methods

Event

The May 23 opening event attracted about 75 attendees, including local officials, Port and City staffers and members of the Velo Allegro cycling group. The outdoor event was kept intentionally small to adhere to social distancing and masking guidelines and to be as safe as possible. This was one of the first in-person events (and the first open to any members of the general public) held by the Port since the beginning of the COVID-19 pandemic lockdowns in March 2020. Most of the attendees participated in the post-ribbon-cutting inaugural ride.

Video

The video of the opening was posted on YouTube, where to date (May 18, 2022) it has received 258 views. The video achieved much better results when it was posted directly on Facebook on May 27, 2021, where it has received 1,292 views to date.

Media

The opening event received the following coverage in local web-based and broadcast media:

Port of Long Beach unveiled a bike and pedestrian path (video)/Eyewitness news KABC7/Monday, May 24, 2021/<https://app.criticalmention.com/app/#clip/view/21d5c0bf-6db5-432a-8edc-3bea31428cee?token=22bd0e36-aaaa-43b9-a350-6133faa8ddc9>

Port of Long Beach unveiled a bike and pedestrian path (video)/Spectrum 1/Monday, May 24, 2021/<https://app.criticalmention.com/app/#clip/view/deb733dc-f773-409b-afba-1565cee777d3?token=22bd0e36-aaaa-43b9-a350-6133faa8ddc9>

VIDEO: New bike and walk path opens at Port of Long Beach's Pier J/Long Beach Post/Monday, May 24, 2021/<https://lbpost.com/news/video-new-bike-and-walk-path-opens-at-port-of-long-beachs-pier-j>

Port of Long Beach unveiled a bike and pedestrian path/Today in LA, KNBC /Sunday, May 23, 2021/<https://app.criticalmention.com/app/#clip/view/dd5fa016-9796-438e-afa6-9bod212e8bd3?token=02ed8ee9-fb2c-40e6-bo69-fcbabo7cd1eb>

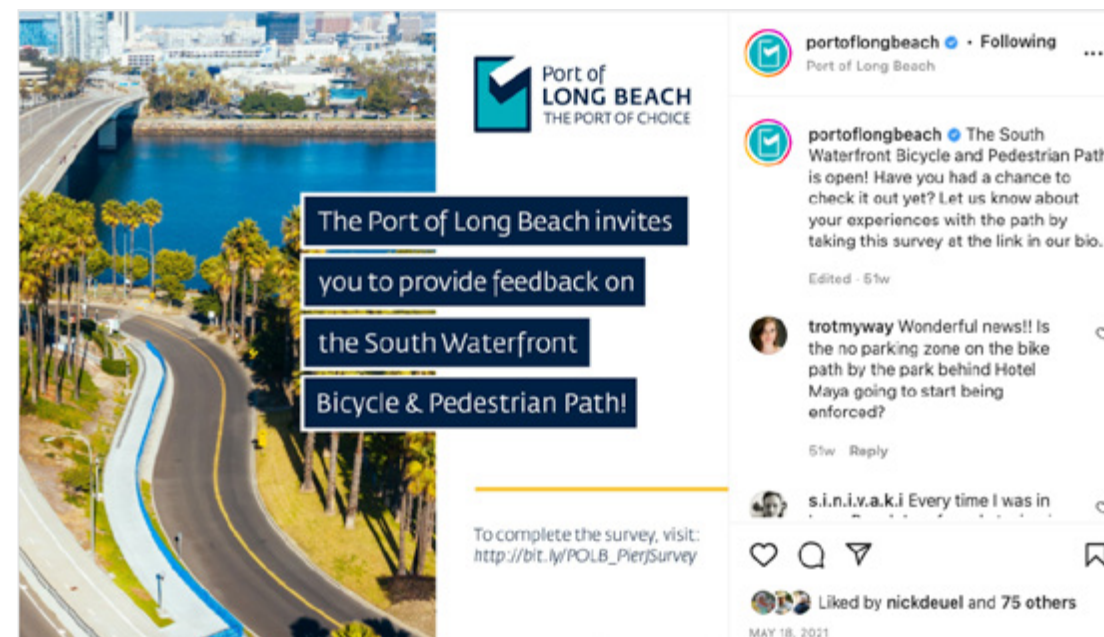
Port of Long Beach unveiled a bike and pedestrian path/ABC 7/Sunday, May 23, 2021/<https://app.criticalmention.com/app/#clip/view/72af9707-acb4-439b-a942-a8edb400cf65?token=02ed8ee9-fb2c-40e6-bo69-fcbabo7cd1eb>

New bike path to open along Port of Long Beach's Pier J/Long Beach Post/Friday, May 21, 2021/<https://lbpost.com/news/new-bike-path-to-open-along-port-of-long-beachs-pier-j>

Social Media

Campaign start/end: May 18 to June 30

The social media campaign beginning May 18 and ending June 30, drew wide interest across all the Port's social media platforms, especially on Instagram, where it featured also in 10 Instagram Stories, and Facebook, where the video of the event received 6 times the number of views it received on YouTube.



6 Instagram Posts

- Likes: 402
- Comments: 18
- Reach: 12,473
- Follows: 2
- Impressions: 13,134
- Shares: 38
- Saves: 22

10 Instagram Stories

- 6,740 views

7 Facebook Posts (6 photos, 1 video)

- Reactions: 220
- Comments: 18
- Reach: 14,659
- Engagement Rate: 3.9%
- Shares: 55
- Video views: 1,292

7 Tweets

- Impressions: 10,140
- Likes: 26
- Engagements: 2,445

7 LinkedIn Posts

- Clicks: 156
- Comments: 7
- Engagement Rate: 1.85%
- Impressions: 10,521
- Reactions: 201
- Shares: 14

Survey

The survey, which was promoted on Port social media channels, via signage along the path featuring a QR code linking to the survey, and on flyers left at the nearby Hotel Maya, drew 80 responses. The survey was aimed at discovering public feeling about the bike path, rather than the opening event, but recorded responses of 76% positive experiences along the path from both cyclists and walkers, 10-14% neutral experiences, and 10-12% negative experiences. Complete survey results, along with a report on the entire project (not produced by Communications) is available below under “Links.”



Port of Long Beach Executive Director Mario Cordero, center, in L.A. Dodgers hat, prepares to lead riders through the ceremonial gateway.

Comments

"This new path leads to the L.A. River trail and it's one of the few places you can see the actual ripple tide in Long Beach and these unobstructed views."

– Eric Lopez, Director of Public Works, City of Long Beach

"We recently updated our Port Master Plan, and two of our four overall development goals were, first, to integrate our Green Port Policy with our plans for land use, and, second, to protect and enhance the coast for the benefit of all port users and communities. Doing that benefits everybody who works or does business at the Port, and is a real boon for our city, especially for those of us who embrace greener forms of transportation and the amazing vistas afforded by our part of the California coastline."

– Frank Colonna, then President (now Commissioner), Long Beach Board of Harbor Commissioners

"Long Beach has a reputation for being one of the most bike-friendly cities in America, and we couldn't be happier that this new path will offer great access to the Port. And it also gives a chance to show off our Port of the Future. We're so proud of everything that's been accomplished to modernize and innovate to stay competitive, and, at the same time protect this beautiful coastal environment."

– Mario Cordero, Executive Director, Port of Long Beach

"This is the first time we've had an in-person event like this in more than a year. My Port Communications team has done a great job reaching out to our constituents and stakeholders in a virtual format, but it's hard to beat actually being together. We still faced COVID-19 restrictions, and we couldn't welcome a huge crowd to this event, but we've compensated with a great video we're distributing tomorrow so everybody can take a look."

– Kerry Gerot, Director of Communications and Community Relations, Port of Long Beach

Links

Port Website
<https://polb.com/port-info/news-and-press/new-bike-walk-path-open-at-long-beach-waterfront-05-24-2021/>

Video
<https://youtu.be/tRHVaRMFWX4>

Press release/photo gallery
<https://polb.com/port-info/news-and-press/new-bike-walk-path-open-at-long-beach-waterfront-05-24-2021/>

Follow the Port of Long Beach:



Survey/Report
https://thehelm.polb.com/wp-admin/admin-ajax.php?juwpfisadmin=false&action=wpfd&task=file.download&wpfd_category_id=487&wpfd_file_id=14449

Communications Plan
<https://thehelm.polb.com/download/487/miscellaneous/14476/pier-j-bike-path-comm-plan-2021v2.docx>



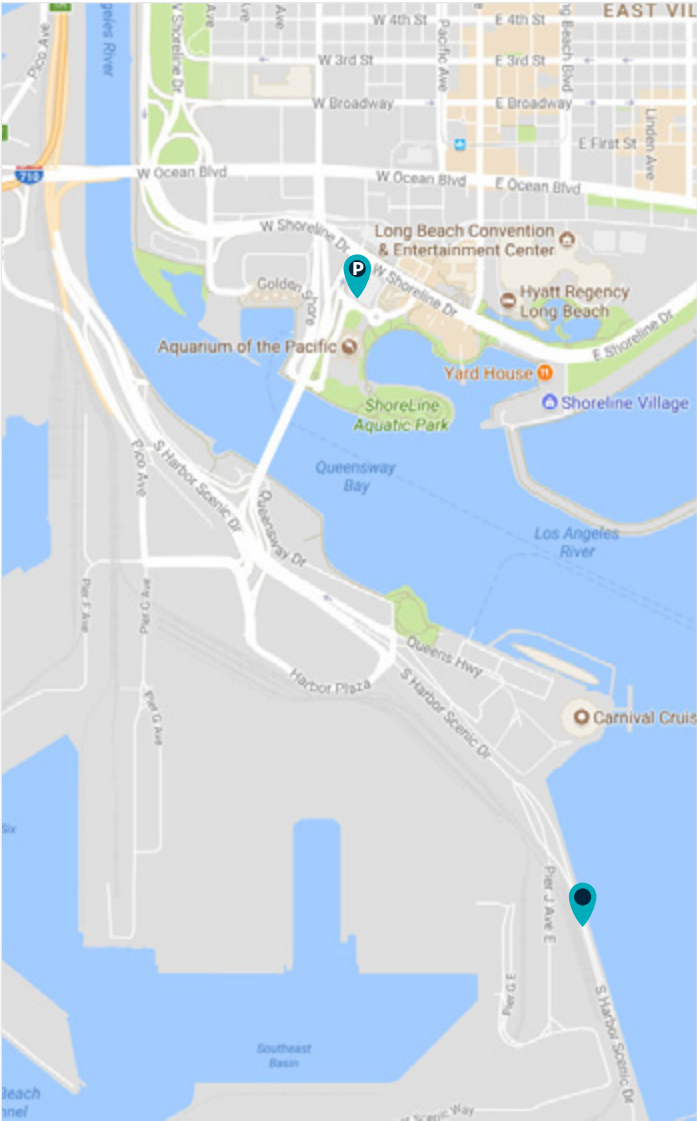
Join us for the
Grand Opening of the Pier J Bike Path

Group bike ride immediately following the event.

When: Sunday, May 23, 2021 | 10 a.m.
Where: Pier J Observation Deck

Riding/Walking Directions from Long Beach Aquarium of the Pacific
- Park/Start at Aquarium parking structure on Shoreline Drive at Rainbow Harbor (validations available at event)
- Take bike/walk path south over Queensway Bridge from Aquarium Way (adjacent to parking structure)
- Follow path over bridge to Queensway Dr.
- Follow bike path to Pier J Bike Path event

Driving Directions from Downtown Long Beach
- Take Magnolia Ave. south from Ocean Blvd.
- Stay to right, follow sign to Port of Long Beach
- Stay to left, take Harbor Plaza East, follow sign to Piers G H J East
- Turn left onto Harbor Plaza
- Turn right onto Harbor Scenic Dr.
- Stay to the right, take exit toward Harbor Scenic Dr.



The Communications Division graphics team produced an invitation, to the opening including a map to the event site.