

SEP 17 2018

HOW RAISING THE BAYONNE BRIDGE IS ELEVATING NEW YORK & NEW JERSEY'S SUPPLY CHAIN LOGISTICS

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Back in July 2012, the Port Authority of New York and New Jersey began eyeing a major overhaul to the Bayonne Bridge, the world's fifth-largest steel arch bridge and part of NY/NJ Route 440 connecting Bayonne, NJ to Staten Island, NY across the Kill Van Kull strait.

Given the Bridge's convenient location squarely in the middle of ship traffic routes, the objective of such a large-scale construction project was clear from the Port Authority's perspective: raise the Bridge from 151 feet to 215, in order to allow larger supply ships to pass underneath and access their marine facilities in Newark, NJ; Elizabeth, NJ; and Staten Island.

As one might expect from construction of this scale, meeting expectations hasn't always been easy. The entire project, known as "Raise The Roadway," started in 2013 and, initially, called for a 2017 finish. And while bridge work is complete enough to allow ship traffic underneath, [Raise the Roadway's expected end date was pushed back to 2019](#) just two years in.

As length of time increased, so, too, did the initial price tag, with Port Authority officials approving an overrun of \$350-400 million dollars that sent costs up from \$1.3 billion to \$1.7 billion.

Despite these somewhat common setbacks, however, has the project lived up to its billing as a solution to strengthen supply chain logistics in the New York/New Jersey area?

In a word: yes.

For starters, [according to The Jersey Journal](#), 2017 was the busiest year on record for the Port of New York and New Jersey, with cargo volume up 5.3 per cent from 2015, shattering that year's previously established highs.

The Bridge's increased navigational clearance allowed supply ships handling close to 6,710,817 TEUs ("twenty-foot equivalent units," or a standard 20-foot-long steel container transferable between ships, trains and trucks) to pass last year, which also represented an even higher TEU increase of 7.3 per cent from the previous year.

Among the most commonly moved items were heavy machinery, furniture, food and beverage, plastics and clothing. The real winner, however, has been vehicles — the Port reported a 14.3 per cent increase in car and truck imports, from 505,151 in 2016 up to 577,223 in 2017.

In addition to the heightened Bridge allowing more items to follow in and out, new types of ships have also been able to contribute to the Port's recent success. Nearly 107 Panamax cargo vessels, which carry up to 14,500 TEUs, have finally been able to access facilities, as of February 2018. Meanwhile, in August 2017, the CMA CGM Theodore Roosevelt — a ship four times larger than the Statue of Liberty — set sail on its maiden voyage to inaugurate the Bayonne Bridge, bringing in 14,400 TEUs worth of cargo in the process.

New York and New Jersey aren't the only states benefiting from these changes, either. Port officials have said that traffic volumes at other facilities along the Eastern Seaboard have increased as well, bringing "significant jobs and economic activity" to the region at large.

[According to the Port of Virginia](#), TEU volumes have increased by a yearly average of 3 percent since the Bayonne Bridge's 64-foot raise, bringing new Panamax ships into their waters as well.

In addition, larger cargo ships passing through the Kill Van Kull are starting to take on multiple stops on their respective journeys, signaling increases to both business and competition from other ports. For example, rather than stopping only in the NY/NJ area, the biggest ships passing through will more likely go on to make deliveries at two or three more stops, anywhere from Baltimore, MD down to Savannah, GA.

Other forms of transportation are reaping the rewards of the new Bridge, as well. The NY/NJ Port's ExpressRail, which provides ship-to-rail access to each of the terminals, was responsible for 567,649 container lifts last year, setting yet another record in the process. As well, construction on the Bridge has, inevitably, lead to work on the accompanying

roadway, prompting future expansion for car and truck routes.

In less than two years, overhauling the Bayonne Bridge has already resulted in numerous benefits for companies shipping goods in the Eastern United States. Supply chain logistics have been made simpler by way of easier access to significant terminals at the country's third-largest port. If these results are any indication, there's no telling what other records they'll break.

In need of supply chain logistics? Seldat has the solution.