

Wilmington waterfront plans make headway

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It's been a long time coming. And there are still issues to resolve.

But after languishing on the drawing boards for nearly a decade, a [dramatic makeover](#) of Wilmington's waterfront is [making headway](#), with a final design report due for release within a week and a tentative completion date now set for October 2020. Many hope it also opens the door for more improvements throughout Wilmington.

"This is just the beginning," said David Arian of the Los Angeles Board of Harbor Commissioners.

Envisioned is a seaside expanse that would radically alter the Wilmington water's edge, long dominated by industrial uses. Using Banning's Landing Community Center as the hub, the visitor-friendly venue would feature a shaded picnic pier, elevated viewpoints, a pedestrian bridge and promenade, commercial areas and open public recreation space.

Construction is expected to begin in October 2018 and take about two years.

Los Angeles harbor commissioners were given an update at a special meeting last week in Wilmington. The Urban Land Institute recently served as part of a technical assistance panel in nailing down design elements for the project over the course of two days.

Among the more pressing issues ahead: reaching an agreement that will clear away two tanks on DWP property just north of Banning's Landing.



“ULI felt that the DWP tank issue was a huge, hugely important thing to resolve quickly, but if we couldn’t resolve it we should move forward as best we could,” Mike Galvin, director of waterfront and commercial real estate for the Port of Los Angeles, told board members.

Working around the tanks by providing a “skinnier” project in that one area, however, strikes many as compromising the overall project, he said.

“I think we’re on a good path” toward getting the tanks removed, Galvin said.

Other points covered in the presentation included:

- The intersection of Harry Bridges Street and Avalon Boulevard is viewed as a center for commercial development, perhaps including a job training center and parking facilities. The idea is to enhance daily use of that area that will then also provide more activity during the week for the Wilmington Waterfront Park.
- The goal also is to create a natural flow that will draw people south toward the waterfront and the promenade, which will be the primary anchor for the project.
- The development will include “great gathering spaces” and view spots, said Hugo Cisneros, a civil engineer with the port and project manager of the Wilmington Waterfront. Other features will be plazas, a play area, a youth sailing center and swing seating overlooking the the waterfront.
- A pedestrian bridge will be used as the entryway to the development.

The design portion of the project is about 80 percent complete and will be finished by May 2018. A groundbreaking is expected in October 2018.

More community meetings also will be on tap, port officials said.

A public art component also will be included and the city is now seeking artists who wish to compete. Applications listing artist qualifications are due Monday, and it is anticipated that three or four artists ultimately will be chosen. They then will be asked to submit specific proposals for the development, probably within the next several months, according to the city’s Department of Cultural Affairs. Information can be found at www.lawaterfront.org and at www.culturela.org/.