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Wilmington's new waterfront cleared a significant hurdle Thursday, Feb. 7, when the harbor commission approved permits for the transfer of 7.4 acres of DWP property to the Port of Los Angeles.

"This is a step in (the development of) the Wilmington waterfront which we've all been waiting for," said Michael Galvin, director of Waterfront and Commercial Real Estate for the Port of Los Angeles. "It's been 10 years in the making."

Thursday's action provides a "right of entry" agreement between the port and the Los Angeles Department of Water and Power.

The property, adjacent to the areas being re-purposed to give Wilmington a recreational waterfront and gateway at Avalon Boulevard, includes two tanks just north of Banning's Landing Recreational Center.

The Urban Land Institute, called in for a waterfront consultation in 2017, stressed that ideally both tanks would be moved to clear more space for new development.

But the tank relocation issue was always complicated.

Current plans call for DWP to take down the eastern tank this spring. The western tank will stay up for now because DWP needs it for a redevelopment project at the power station there. Plans call for "masking" it or painting it with the community's input.

"It's taken a long time but this is a big lift," said Commissioner Anthony Pirozzi. "Like the development for the (San Pedro) Public Market, everyone will believe it when they see it. But this to me was the hardest piece (on the Wilmington side)."

The plans call for a seaside makeover that could dramatically transform the water's edge in Wilmington, which has long taken the brunt of impacts from the industrial Port of Los Angeles.

Using Banning's landing as a hub, the envisioned waterfront will feature a shaded picnic pier, elevated viewpoints, a pedestrian bridge and promenade, along with commercial areas and open public recreation space.

A gateway connection to link Avalon Boulevard as part of the overall development is also planned.

The Wilmington Waterfront Park was opened in 2011, providing what was the first piece of the waterfront puzzle conceived in 2009.

Designs for the primary waterfront area have been in the works for the past few years.

The two-year construction project is scheduled to begin at the end of this year.