

OT News

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The QUEEN MARY sits vacant at her berth in Long Beach Wednesday, June 22, 2002. Photo: Brandon Richardson

City pushes back *Queen Mary* reopening, Plans to have some public access by year's end

by Kelly Puente ... Long Beach Post

After being shut down during the pandemic, parts of the *Queen Mary* could reopen to the public by the end of the year as the city works on critical repairs for the historic ocean liner.

Long Beach had originally anticipated a possible October reopening, but spokesman Kevin Lee said the city is still working on the ship and will soon release more details.

The aging vessel, which arrived in Long Beach in 1967, is undergoing \$5 million in safety repairs after a report last year from marine engineering firm Elliott Bay Design Group said the *Queen Mary* would need \$23 million in urgent work to stay “viable” over the next two years. A marine survey in 2016 found that the ship would need up to \$289 million in repairs long term.

In May, Long Beach removed 20 of the ship’s 22 badly corroded lifeboats, which were deemed a safety hazard and causing stress to the side shell. After receiving no qualified bidders for the lifeboats, the city demolished 14 of the boats while others were kept for historic preservation. Two of the boats remain on the ship.

Other critical repairs include improvements to the ship’s bulkheads and bilge pump systems to prevent flooding, and a new emergency generator, which includes upgrades to the mechanical, plumbing and electrical systems.

In June, the City Council approved a five-year contract with Evolution Hospitality to manage the *Queen Mary’s* hotel and operations. Evolution, a San Clemente-based hospitality company, has managed the ship’s daily operations for the past decade.

As of Sept. 15, the city has provided \$1.5 million in funding for Evolution to begin the reopening process and will provide an additional \$1 million for pre-opening improvements, officials said.

The money will come from Tidelands Operating Funds, which are city funds that can be used only in coastal areas.

As the ship prepares to welcome back visitors, the city is considering a controversial plan to shift control of the *Queen Mary* to the Port of Long Beach, which then would use its budget for larger safety repairs.

The Long Beach Board of Harbor Commissioners, which will eventually vote on the issue, in June approved contracts with Lloyd’s Register Americas Advisory Services and ABL USA to assess the ship’s condition.

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The article is being shared with the SSHSA Southern California Chapter Membership as
an update on the status of the Queen Mary.