

Coronado Bridge lighting moving to design phase

By Roger Showley

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The lighting of the iconic San Diego-Coronado Bridge will move into its second phase next week with nearly a half-million dollars allocated for detailed design work.

The [San Diego Unified](#) Port District board on Tuesday is set to approve \$481,717 for the design team and Caltrans to fine-tune the lighting plan and hold public workshops to collect ideas as well. The money is coming from donations and port tenants' public art budgets.

The project, in the works since 2006, is expected to cost up to \$10 million and be completed in time for the bridge's 50th birthday two years from now.

"It's a moment, after many years, to now be spending money to get the bridge lit," said port Commissioner Marshall Merrifield, who restarted the project when he chaired the board last year.

In recent months, he has been meeting several times a week with businesses and individuals to raise funds and has collected cash and pledges totaling \$1.2 million.

"They immediately see how a public lighting, public art display on the bridge every evening would add to the waterfront and be an expression of hopes and dreams and celebrate what San Diego wants to accomplish," Merrifield said. "It's a chance to really be part of that. You don't get a chance too many times ... to do something for the region for how we see ourselves and how we look at the world."

A gala is planned for next June and a GoFundMe page will be set up for individuals to participate, he said.

British artist Peter Fink won the design competition in 2010 to light the bridge and met with port officials earlier this year to restart the implementation process.

His design envisions lighting the bridge supports and roadway. Officials have spoken of being able to change colors, program a nightly light show and synchronize the display with performances at the San Diego Symphony's summer concerts on Embarcadero Marina Park South.

“Our main aim is to finalize the concept of the bridge lighting in sufficient detail to determine the creative and practical issues, as well as cost and strategy for detail design and realization,” Fink said in an email.

“As considerable time has passed since the competition win, this Phase 2 review will allow consideration of the new lighting and control technologies, as well as more detailed review of the best and the most cost-efficient way of implementing and tendering (bidding) the project in Phases 3 and 4.”

He said it will take about four months to refine the design and submit new renderings of possible options.

Studio Fink is also a consultant to companies signed on to redevelop Seaport Village. Randy Robbins, a principal with **AVRP Studios**, the lead architectural design firm, said the lighting of both projects will be coordinated.

Merrifield expressed confidence that funds necessary to proceed will be pledged or in hand by the third quarter of 2018. Bids could then be advertised to start installation thereafter. There will be no need to tap public agency budgets or charge a toll on the bridge, he said. The amount needed to be raised will be determined once the project cost is verified.

“This (fund-raising) campaign can be sized appropriately,” Merrifield said.

Already, he said, a gala fund-raising event is scheduled for June 13, 2018, at the Marriott Marquis hotel next to the San Diego Convention Center.

“It will be a coming-out party for public art and a fund-raising opportunity as well,” he said. “Folks and organizations can buy tables and have a wonderful opportunity to celebrate the bridge.”

A GoFundMe page will be posted online to encourage donations, large and small, and there may be an outreach to businesses and nonprofits statewide and nationally.

Besides Fink Studio, the port is working with two other design firms, [Speirs + Major Associates](#), also in London, and [Buro Happold Engineering](#) in Los Angeles.

All three firms showcase various bridge projects on their websites, some offering spectacular lighting effects that have become more feasible and economical with the use of LED technology and computer-show programming software.

Studio Fink, which will receive up to \$230,000 is responsible for updating the design and creating a new set of photorealistic, computer-generated renderings to illustrate what’s possible.

Its representatives also are expected to attend design workshops and participate in onsite mockup tests on the bridge.

Caltrans will receive up to \$251,717 to review the designs and help the port prepare documents for an environmental impact report and submissions to the California Coastal Commission.

Merrifield said the lighting project can be installed without interfering with now-dormant plans to add a pedestrian walkway under or alongside the bridge.

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The San Diego Association of Governments had investigated that possibility earlier this year and concluded that it could cost up to \$210 million to add pedestrian access.