2015 Centennial – what now?

The 2015 Centennial Committee known as Balboa Park Celebration, Inc., has disbanded. Planning is now in the hands of the City. We hope that our elected leaders will find a way to celebrate the Centennial of the 1915-1916 Panama-California Exposition—the most significant event ever to take place in San Diego. With fewer than 40,000 citizens when planning began this exposition altered the course of San Diego history. Citizens pledged their own money and many worked without pay to make the exposition a success that attracted millions of visitors. Twenty years later San Diego hosted a second exposition in Balboa Park. They were able to put it together in less than a year, with several new buildings. Surely we can find a way to celebrate the Centennial in the few remaining months at a moderate cost.

It’s become clear in the last few weeks that the public wants very much to embrace the Centennial. They want to participate as individuals and groups. Let’s invite them—their creativity and enthusiasm will surprise us.

What Balboa Park needs now and for the 2015 centennial are “people activities” in public spaces: on the Plaza de Panama, the Plaza de California (outside the Museum of Man), along El Prado, in Zoro Garden, at the Spreckels Organ Pavilion, in courtyards, on lawns and gardens. Visitors to the park will happen upon groups of artists painting Balboa Park scenes, street performers, buskers, and living history characters from San Diego’s past. Let’s invite our youth groups to present 5-minute previews of the performances they are working on—costumed actors from Junior Theater, small groups of musicians from the Youth Symphony, dancers from the Civic Youth Ballet and Dance Arts. High school bands and other local music groups would welcome an opportunity to perform, whether at the Organ Pavilion stage or smaller outdoor venues. There is almost no end to volunteer activity that would liven up Balboa Park’s public spaces.

Our 2015 Contributions

The Committee of One Hundred has developed two projects for the Centennial. Restoration of the Panama-California Sculpture Court in the Casa del Prado courtyard is complete. Be sure to visit it and see what we’ve accomplished. The Panama-California Exposition Digital Archive has collected more than 10,000 images of photographs, postcards, documents, books, architectural drawings, souvenirs and ephemera. We continue to seek material to photograph or scan for a new website which will make this collection widely available.

Mike Kelly
www.c100.org
Seismic Retrofit of Cabrillo Bridge

By Cathryne Bruce-Johnson, Caltrans Media Relations Officer

The Cabrillo Bridge Retrofit and Rehabilitation Project will improve the structural integrity of the bridge; improve safety and accessibility; and preserve this historically significant bridge.

The work now being done by Caltrans resulted from analysis of the vulnerabilities of the bridge after the 2004 emergency project which replaced unsound concrete and corroded steel on the portions of the bridge that spanned across State Route 163. The lessons learned from the emergency project were that the entire structure should be analyzed in order to determine if it could benefit from the retrofitting and rehabilitation.

The analysis determined that the bridge was vulnerable to significant seismic events, that there was evidence of unsound concrete because of water damage, specifically at the crown joints, and the structure lacked safe interior access for inspection and maintenance.

Testing and evaluation of the structure by the design team showed that the mid span joints of the structure exhibited significant concrete deterioration and cracking. The first plan proposed was to grout the joints but later this plan proved impractical as no long term benefits would result. The decision was made to remove a portion of the superstructure on
each side of the joints and reconstruct the superstructure with no joint by splicing into the existing reinforcement. This plan resulted in the need to close the deck to traffic and required traffic handling and coordination during the construction period.

![Workers repair spalling inside Pier 7 North. Courtesy of Caltrans.](image)

Evaluation also showed that the structure lacked safe interior access for inspection and maintenance. The project addresses this concern by installing access portals and ladders to the series of enclosed rooms or cells that comprise the hollow bridge.

Caltrans initiated the project and wrote the cooperative agreements with the City of San Diego to define the roles and responsibilities of the city and Caltrans. The city applied for federal funding and Caltrans offered matching funds with the city to help attain the federal funding.

The project was initiated in May 2008 and approved in December 2010. A review required by the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966 (NHPA) was conducted. The total anticipated cost is $38 million funded with Federal Highway Bridge Program funds ($33.4 million) and matching state and city contributions ($4.6 million).

Unsound concrete and corroded steel is being replaced. Steel cables encased in concrete will be installed within the vertical piers and the horizontal superstructure and pulled tight in a post-tension technique. The tension added at the cables will hold the bridge sections together causing them to act as a single rigid unit thus distributing earthquake impacts more uniformly throughout and making the bridge seismically stronger.

Internally, crews are installing access portals and ladders to the series of enclosed rooms or cells that comprise the hollow bridge so that the old wood forms and accumulated debris can be removed. The new catwalks will provide convenient access for future inspections and maintenance. Other improvements include repairs to the electrical conduit that supplies the deck lights, and abutment dirt floors to repair deep ruts caused by water erosion. The outside concrete will be power washed so that the bridge will appear cleaner.

Crews closed the bridge deck to vehicles at the beginning of the year for pavement removal to work on the underlying concrete and the bridge joints. A membrane seal will be placed on the deck base to seal against water infiltration. The utilities will be moved, the drainage will be improved. A lightweight concrete will be laid and then the deck will be repaved with a sand-colored asphalt seal to more closely match the original paving. A pedestrian walkway across the bridge will remain open during construction and Balboa Park operations will continue as usual.

Much of the work on Cabrillo Bridge is done at night. Courtesy of Caltrans.

The bridge deck closure to vehicles was initially planned for four months but it is now clear that the closure will be longer. A more definitive date will be announced as the project gets closer to completion.
The Committee of One Hundred
Balboa Park Administration Building
2125 Park Boulevard
San Diego, CA 92101-4753

Cabrillo Bridge will be lighted from below as part of the current Caltrans project. Photo simulation courtesy of Caltrans.

Save the Date

Annual Luncheon Meeting
11:30 AM—1:30 PM
Friday, May 30, 2014

Guest Speaker: Bill Fulton, San Diego Planning Director

Topic: “The Future of Balboa Park in the Context of a More Urban San Diego”

Location: Balboa Park Club

Further details and reservation form will be available on www.C100.org

Our guest speaker will be San Diego’s new Planning Director, Bill Fulton. Former Mayor of Ventura, California, acclaimed author on urban planning in California, and smart-growth advocate, Fulton ran Solimar Research Group, a consulting firm and think tank dealing with land use issues. Fulton is also a Senior Fellow at the USC Sol Price School of Public Policy at the University of Southern California, where he teaches land use policy and smart growth. He is also the longtime publisher of the periodical California Planning & Development Report.