

Citizens Are Stepping Up to Stop the Coronado Bridge ‘Suicide Machine’

By George Mullen, Bill Walton & Jack McGrory



The San Diego-Coronado Bridge has seen over 450 suicides over the years. Photo by Chris Stone

In late 2023 we proposed a simple, yet viable “Life Screen” to stop what we called the [Coronado Bridge Suicide Machine](#).

Our proposed Life Screen can be installed within one month’s time and for less than \$45,000.

We concluded our 2023 article with this community challenge:

"In a civil society our number one priority must be to protect, preserve, and save the lives of our citizens. If San Diego, Coronado, and Caltrans think the expense of a one-year barbwire barrier test is too burdensome, we will pledge \$9,000 if four like-minded citizens / groups will match us."

Today, we are pleased to announce that we have received more than enough matching pledges to privately fund this Life Screen. This is due to the goodwill and generosity of our fellow citizens who always rise to the occasion when called upon.

This is an ongoing humanitarian catastrophe that demands action. More than 450 of our brothers and sisters have jumped to their deaths since the Coronado Bridge opened in 1969. In recent years, we have averaged 15 suicides and 35 bridge shutdowns (traffic meltdowns) annually.

We would like to briefly highlight a few of our selfless fellow citizens who have stepped up to match our \$9,000 pledge:

- [Larry Turner](#) – Larry was the first to step up. He is a person driven to solving problems, not empty talk. He is a 2024 San Diego Mayoral Candidate, an active duty San Diego Police Officer (2015 to present), a retired Lieutenant Colonel in the United States Marine Corps (1992 - 2015), and a [Sunbreak Ranch](#) team member. Larry stated, *"I'm in, thanks, I've pulled too many off the bridge and seen too many who we didn't."*
- [Wayne & Nancy Strickland](#) – Wayne is a retired Captain of the Coronado Fire Department who in his career retrieved many of the Coronado Bridge suicide victims from the bay. Wayne said, *"I just wish CalTrans would do this quick; it is an easy solution to save lives."*
- [Save Our Heritage Organization \(SOHO\)](#) – Executive Director Bruce Coons reached out because SOHO is focused on saving lives and preserving the historic architecture of our beautiful Coronado Bridge. After the SOHO Board voted on the matter, Bruce wrote to us saying, *"We are in! Unanimous vote."*
- [David Rahill](#) – David is a graduate of Coronado High School and retired from Avaya. David explained, *"I loved your article, and agree completely. I want to financially contribute to your solution."*
- [Scott Aurich](#) – Scott is the #1 realtor in Coronado with a passion for helping others. Scott stated, *"Yes, I will pledge \$9k if it helps get something done."*

We would like to thank these pledgers (along with the unmentioned others) for their humanity and their commitment to solving this civic tragedy that will save the lives of many of our troubled fellow citizens.

Clearly though, none of these pledgers should have to come up with money from their pockets to fund this. This is why we pay taxes — to fund necessary projects that are in the public interest.

CalTrans, City of Coronado, City of San Diego, these are the entities who should be funding this project with taxpayer dollars. But because we don't want any more excuses to stand in the way of taking action and saving lives, we are willing to make these pledges anyway.

A retired commercial airline pilot of 25 plus years wrote to us with these insightful words:

"Our training described suicide as a small explosion, which is not confined to just that one person, but spread quickly throughout the friends, relatives and co-workers also, and has far reaching effects on many. Your simple solution to our bridge problem, especially at the value compared to the other more radical and costly endeavors should be at least given a test before we choose either of the competing plans. Thank you to you and your team for pursuing that goal. Worthy work. Hope is never a four-letter word."

Suicidal thoughts are often impulsive and fleeting. Without an easy impromptu life-exit handily available, studies have shown that 90 percent of our troubled Coronado Bridge jumpers will [regain control and live out productive and fruitful lives](#).

In a cost-benefit analysis, \$45,000 for the opportunity to save 150 persons every 10 years, end the incessant bridge shutdowns, and eliminate our suicide public relations nightmare is a huge win.

If this test fails to stop or materially reduce the number of bridge suicides, we can easily and cheaply remove the Life Screen. There is no downside to the test. Why not at least try?

What say you, [CalTrans](#) and CalTrans [District 11 Director Gustavo Dallarda](#)?

What say you, Coronado [Mayor Richard Bailey](#) and [Coronado City Council](#)?

What say you, San Diego [Mayor Todd Gloria](#) and [San Diego City Council](#)?

Maintaining a status quo that enables another 450 of our troubled brothers and sisters to perish-by-suicide on our bridge is unacceptable. Please visit [Stop Coronado Bridge Suicides](#) to learn more.

Let's get this one-year test of the Life Screen underway to bring forth a speedy end to this humanitarian catastrophe.

What say you, powers-that-be?

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