

A bright spot on the waterfront

Seattle-based lighting designer wants to make Grant Street Pier a destination



Lighting designer Charles Stone speaks to the crowd Tuesday afternoon as participants gather before a tour of the Vancouver Waterfront. (Amanda Cowan/The Columbian)



Charles Stone and firm Fisher Marantz Stone are designing the lighting of the Grant Street Pier. LED lights will shine up onto the mast and be installed in the guard rails. (Amanda Cowan/The Columbian)



Developer Barry Cain, left, checks out the view while leading a tour Tuesday afternoon of the Vancouver Waterfront construction site. (Photos by Amanda Cowan/The Columbian)



Stephen Mileham of LRS Architects, center, holds artists' renderings of the future Vancouver Waterfront while joining a tour of the construction site Wednesday afternoon.

By [Troy Brynelson](#), Columbian staff writer

Published: October 12, 2016, 9:54 PM

The hope for the impending waterfront is, of course, to be a bright spot for Vancouver.

Architect Larry Kirkland designed the Grant Street Pier, which will be the centerpiece of Waterfront Park, but Charles Stone is the one tasked with making it shine. The Seattle-based lighting designer gave a presentation Wednesday of his vision for the pier, which he will design with members of his firm, Fisher Marantz Stone.

“I hope people get a great postcard shot (of the pier) that everybody says ‘Wow, this was cool, where did Vancouver come from?’ That’s what you want,” Stone said.

The 90-foot-long pier will open in 2018. Seventy-foot cables connect the pier’s pathway with a cantilever designed to look like the mast of boats that sailed the Columbia River. Renderings presented by Stone show bright, white LED floodlights shining up the mast. LED lights are also installed in the guardrail, lighting the footpaths.

“We wanted to celebrate it as a public place where people can go and experience it,” said Kevin Frary, an associate principal with Fisher Marantz Stone.

At the end of the day, Stone and company — including officials with Gramor Development — want the waterfront to lure people even at night. They want drivers on Interstate 5 and people flying out of the Portland International Airport to see the pier in the dark.

The role of the lighting designer, Stone said, is to mix public need with lighting arrangements that are inviting and memorable. When asked what sorts of experience he hopes people walk away with, Stone said, “somewhere between ‘this is safe right here, let’s come back tomorrow, honey,’ and magical romance and, of course, ‘can we go in that store?’ All of those things. All of those things are important whether you’re a little village in some little place or Manhattan.”

In addition to the pier, the firm will light a nearby water feature called Headwater’s Wall, Waterfront Park and blocks nine and 12, which are being developed by Gramor.

The hourlong presentation Stone delivered was a crash course on lighting history. He began in the early days of oil lamps and rudimentary, electric light towers. He ended with talks of the rise of LED lighting, which he likened to a tsunami.

“It’s going to be safe and it’s not going to obstruct the views,” he said. “The mast is going to be celebrated, and the water is going to be given a tip-of-the-hat, and I think it’s going to be magical.”

Around 50 people attended, some of whom were architecture students. Barry Cain, president of Gramor Development, also led a walk-through of the pier construction beforehand.

According to Cain, Stone joined the project at Kirkland’s recommendation. The 61-year-old has been in the lighting designing business for 35 years. Fisher Marantz Stone also has worked on Burj Khalifa in the United Arab Emirates, the Washington Monument in Washington, D.C., and the “Tribute in Light” dual pillars at the former site of the World Trade Center buildings.

Copyright 2016 Columbian.com. All rights reserved. Use of this site constitutes acceptance of our user agreement.