

FRAMING A MODERN MASTERPIECE

THE CITIES · THE ARCH · THE RIVER **2015**

Stage 1: portfolio

SOM

BIG

HARGREAVES
ASSOCIATES

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URS

OUR CHALLENGE

When the Jefferson National Expansion Memorial was completed in 1968, the citizens of St. Louis embraced it, but the significance of the original vision and its connection with the region has eroded over time.

This problem is not written on a blank slate. A series of complex challenges are embedded into the economic, social, and cultural vitality of the region. We will approach the problem by extending the rich carpet of the public realm, engaging multiple initiatives, drawing upon existing resources, and producing highly visible, affordable, and useful change.

UNDERSTANDING THE LARGER PICTURE

UNTIL RECENTLY, MAJOR PARTS OF ST. LOUIS AND EAST ST. LOUIS HAVE BEEN DESIGNED IN ISOLATION FROM ONE ANOTHER AND FROM THE RIVER.

MAPPING THE “GREY ZONE”

CURRENTLY, THE AREA SURROUNDING THE ARCH IS A GREY ZONE. PERCEIVED AND PHYSICAL BARRIERS SEPARATE AND HOLD BACK EFFORTS TO RECONNECT THE CITIES TO THE RIVER.

RE-CONNECTING THE REGION

NEW CONNECTIONS OF MANY KINDS – PEDESTRIAN, VEHICULAR, NATURAL, VISUAL, AND PROGRAMMATIC – WILL BE ESSENTIAL TO KNITTING THE ST. LOUIS ARCH SITE BACK INTO THE DAILY LIVES OF VISITORS, RESIDENTS, AND BUSINESSES. IT IS IMPERATIVE FOR BOTH CITIES TO LEVERAGE THEIR COLLECTIVE RESOURCES TO CREATE REAL URBAN CONNECTIONS TO THE MISSISSIPPI RIVER.

OUR DESIGN PROCESS

The outcome of this competition is about much more than itself. It has the potential to amplify all other pieces in play to extend the beauty and harmony of the site, set the stage for development, propel the shift to alternative ways of getting around, and promote a more sustainable future for both cities and the region.

It is very difficult to approach this problem and separate the issues of urban design, landscape, art, architecture, sustainability, and engineering. That is why we have formed our team around the indissoluble blend of local and international thinking.

We understand the need to get into this project very quickly. We have already begun to identify the questions that should be answered in the design process. Our approach will embrace and advance the challenges inherent in this project, and we will keep the goals of the community at the center of our design.

We are very excited by the opportunity to test our initial hunches. A visionary solution needs to be grounded in reality, taking all of the issues into consideration.

Define the problem.
Ask questions.
Test ideas.

For the purposes of this initial proposal, we have put forward some early questions in how we may begin to reposition and rethink the problem.

OUR QUESTIONS

How do we reposition and rethink the problem?

THE CITIES

What if we re-envision two cities as one with the Arch at the center?

THE RIVER

What if we change the way that people interact with the Mississippi River?

THE ARCH

What if we look at the Arch as the gateway between the region's past and its future?

THE GROUNDS

What if we re-imagine the grounds as a catalyst for investment in tourism, business, and ecology?

THE NETWORKS

What if we rethink the transportation systems as a single hub for rail, cars, boats, bicycles, and pedestrians?

THE STORY

What if the site were to tell a story of the region's history and innovation?