

## **MVVA TEAM**

### **Framing A Modern Masterpiece**

**Michael Van Valkenburgh Associates**

**Steven Holl Architects**

**Greenberg Consultants**

**Uhlir Consulting**

**HR&A Advisors**

**Guy Nordenson and Associates**

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**Project Projects**

The City + The Arch + The River represents a tremendous opportunity to reimagine and rejuvenate the relationship between an iconic American monument and its city. With the addition of the proposed acreage on the east bank of the Mississippi, the Jefferson National Expansion Memorial will double in size, quadruple in extent, and transform from a riverfront park into a park with the nation's mightiest river at its center. The MVVA team's approach to The City + The Arch + the River would be to look to this tremendous expansion of territory, program, and experiential range as the inspirational impetus that guides our thinking about potential developments within the existing National Park grounds, the connections between the park and the city, and the relationship between the region and the river.

Before it is extended eastward, the Memorial needs to be better anchored to the population center to its west. Guided by the opportunity and necessity for change presented by the expansion of the Memorial, the extensive public outreach undertaken as part of the 2009 National Park Service's General Management Plan, and the preservation recommendations of the 1996 Cultural Landscapes Report, the MVVA team would blend creative urban design with financial planning and park programming to develop a framework for transforming the use of public and private lands surrounding the National Park, as well as suggesting functional and accessibility improvements within the grounds. One possibility might be to bridge the gap between the city and the Memorial by building over the central portion of the highway, thus creating a foundation for new buildings or recreational attractions that would support the vitality of the National Park, create new revenue for the city, and allow the park to become a stronger economic engine for its neighbors.

The expanded scope of the Memorial offers excellent

opportunities to highlight the nuanced cultural and natural history of the riverfront. The MVVA team would create physical, economic, and programmatic connections between the Memorial grounds, the riverfront, and the neighborhoods immediately up and downriver. In order to draw more activity from these neighborhoods into the park, the team would explore the potential for programming initiatives that could increase the use of the park periphery while requiring only minor physical transformations. The MVVA team will also reconnect the Memorial with the history that inspired it, perhaps by transforming portions of the north and south ends of the Memorial grounds in order to improve access and visibility to Laclede's Landing to the north and Chouteau's Landing to the south. The team's design approach to changes in these areas will be governed by the Parks Service's cultural landscape rehabilitation guidelines.

In the MVVA team's 21st-century vision for the Memorial, a visit to the Arch will be the first stop in a trip out across the Mississippi River, along the high-mounded levee on the east bank, with its landscape of working barges and boxcars, to the Mississippi River Overlook and river-based programming and ecological interventions on the new 100 acre site, and then back along the historic cobbled slopes and working waterfront of the west bank. New modes of transportation and points of access will be necessary on both sides of the river and at its crossings. While we would not shy away from new structures, or major transformations where necessary, the MVVA team's initial approach would be to look for ways to leverage existing site assets, including the ecology and dynamics of the river, Malcolm Martin Park, the Gateway Geyser, the historic Eads and MacArthur Bridges, and the dramatic presence of the Arch itself, to play new roles in sustaining a dynamic relationship between the city, the Arch, and the

river. We believe that this unique set of conditions has the potential to interweave history, urbanity, and the natural environment to create an inspiring introduction to the greater St. Louis region.

The United States Geological Survey and the Army Corps of Engineers have released a list of critical ecosystem objectives for the Mississippi, including reducing erosion, restoring floodplains, and opening side channels to promote biodiversity. Many of these objectives were unrealized elements of the original Saarinen-Kiley plan; the MVVA team would make them centerpieces of its design. Our team has a well-established relationship with the Army Corps of Engineers, knowledge of the requirements of a working river, and experience working with the City of St. Louis on municipal storm water and sanitation issues. We also already have quantitative models of the river that provide a detailed representation of local hydrodynamics.

The Mississippi is undammed and free-flowing all the way from St. Louis to the Gulf of Mexico. The expansion of the Memorial to the east presents an ideal opportunity to offer a level of interaction with the Mississippi that is not possible on the heavily urbanized western bank. The east bank could dynamically complement, rather than replicate or imitate, the attractions on the Missouri side. River water could be diverted into this area, allowing for the introduction of recreational calm water zones and ecological interventions. The one hundred new acres of National Park land could be united with the civic programming of Malcolm Martin Memorial Park to herald a renewed commitment to the ecological health and cultural importance of the largest river system in North America.

It will take the alignment of many government agencies, public groups, and private individuals to realize the community's ambitions for a Memorial that spans both the river and Memorial Drive. To

achieve this consolidation of interests, the MVVA team plan will offer a clear, implementable, and affordable direction forward. Small projects with big impacts—such as a re-design of the small green in front of the courthouse to better represent the city as the foreground to the Arch—can be achieved in the near term, even as large-scale infrastructure projects are funded, permitted, and completed over the course of several years. The MVVA team would start The City + The Arch + The River competition with careful observation, data collection, and analysis aimed at testing and refining our own initial assumptions about the project, as well as those that have been articulated by the community and the sponsor organization.

Led by Michael Van Valkenburgh and Matthew Urbanski, the MVVA team will be a fully integrated collaborative effort that draws on the design and planning expertise of firm leaders, such as Steven Holl and Chris McVoy of SHA, Guy Nordenson, Ken Greenberg, Tim Dekker of LimnoTech, John Alschuler of HR&A, and Jamie Carpenter, and collaborators like Ann Hamilton, Elizabeth K. Meyer, and Ed Uhler. Balancing resourceful engineering, common-sense economic development, and inspiring aesthetic interventions, the strong commitment of the MVVA team reflects our optimism that The City + The Arch + The River is on target to meet and exceed the ambitious goals that have been set by the National Park Service, State and City agencies, and the community.