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THE NATIONAL PARK SERVICE AND GREAT RIVERS GREENWAY TEAM UP ON KEY FIRST STEP IN DEVELOPMENT OF THE CENTRAL RIVERFRONT PROJECT

The Central Riverfront reconstruction project is a vital component of the CityArchRiver 2015 riverfront redevelopment plans

St. Louis, Mo., May 8, 2012... The Great Rivers Greenway District and the National Park Service today announced they have teamed up to examine the potential environmental, cultural, and social impacts of Great Rivers Greenway's planned Central Riverfront project. This is a key first step in the proposed project, which aims to improve the safety and accessibility of the Mississippi Riverfront and Gateway Arch grounds for visitors and tourists, creating an enhanced corridor that will provide for every practical mode of transportation to be accommodated, including pedestrians of all ability, bicyclists, cars, buses and trams. The Central Riverfront project is part of CityArchRiver 2015's plans to revitalize the Gateway Arch grounds in time for the 50th anniversary of the Arch's completion in October 2015.

The design plans call for a multi-modal transportation infrastructure corridor along the heavily traveled Leonor K. Sullivan Blvd. between the Jefferson National Expansion Memorial and the Mississippi River in downtown St. Louis, from Chouteau Ave. on the South to Biddle St. on the north. It includes plans to elevate Leonor K. Sullivan Blvd. out of the Mississippi River floodplain and create a bike trail that will run along Leonor K. Sullivan from Chouteau Ave. to Biddle St., where it will connect with Great Rivers Greenway's existing North Riverfront Trail. The south end of the trail will provide access to the southern portion of the Mississippi River Greenway, ultimately connecting with the new City of St. Louis Soulard Connector, another trail in Great Rivers Greenway's planned region-wide system of high-quality greenways, parks and trails known as The River Ring.

The potential impacts of the proposed project need to be evaluated in accordance with the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) and the National Historic Preservation Act (NHPA.) Recognizing efficiencies to be gained, the National Park Service will incorporate this project into the environmental assessment they are currently preparing pursuant to NEPA for other projects related to the CityArchRiver 2015 initiative. The National Park Service and Great Rivers Greenway will also coordinate on meeting requirements of the NHPA.

"Looking at the environmental, cultural and social impacts of the park and riverfront projects together allows for a holistic evaluation and enables us to better analyze the degree and impact of the change," said Tom Bradley, Superintendent of Jefferson National Expansion Memorial.

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GRG and NPS Team up on key first step in Central Riverfront project

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The project is at the 20% schematic design phase, and as part of the compliance process, the National Park Service and Great Rivers Greenway will share more details on the proposed plans and will welcome public input when the environmental assessment is released for review.

“We are excited to be one step closer to embarking on such an important project, not just for the Arch Grounds, but for the entire region,” said Susan Trautman, executive director of Great Rivers Greenway. “Leonor K. Sullivan, which is heavily used by tourists and local commuters, is an important transportation corridor for downtown St. Louis and for the future of the Arch grounds. We believe the environmental assessment process will help improve our proposed reconstruction project, which when complete, will serve as an important connector to many of our region’s parks, trails, greenways and historic sites, while greatly enhancing the front door to our region.”

For more information, visit http://parkplanning.nps.gov/jeff_revitalization_ea, which will be updated when appropriate to include information about this aspect of the project and its status.

About the National Park Service:

Established in 1916, the National Park Service cares for special places saved by the American people so that all may experience our heritage. Jefferson National Expansion Memorial commemorates the 19th century role of St. Louis as the Gateway to the West and includes the Gateway Arch and the Old Courthouse. For further information, visit www.nps.gov/jeff.

About Great Rivers Greenway:

The Great Rivers Greenway District is a public organization established in November 2000 with the passage of the Clean Water, Safe Parks and Community Initiative in St. Louis City, St. Louis County and St. Charles County. The organization is developing an interconnected system of trails and greenways to make the region a better place to live. For more information, visit www.grgstl.org.

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