

Public Scoping Comment Analysis on the **Preliminary Alternatives**



General Management Plan and Environmental Impact Statement Jefferson National Expansion Memorial St. Louis, Missouri

EDAW, Inc.

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Public Scoping Comment Analysis

The following is a preliminary interpretation of the public comments received during the public scoping period. Comments were collected in the following formats:

- at public meetings held in St. Louis on June 25 and July 1, 2008, comments were recorded anonymously on flip charts, completed comment forms were collected in drop-boxes, and verbal comments were transcribed by a court reporter;
- comment forms, letters, architectural drawings, and miscellaneous planning documents were received by mail; and
- emails and web entries were gathered via the Planning, Environment, and Public Comment (PEPC) system.

Approximately 700 correspondences were gathered and analyzed. Thirty-eight of the correspondences received were form letters that followed one of three formats (identical correspondence, correspondence with identical content (is talking points) and the public comment form filled out identically). Eighty letters were received from organizations (government, business, professional associations and civic). The majority of the letters from organizations and all of the form letters were in support of a museum on the Arch Grounds. As a result of the call for public input, 6 detailed drawings were submitted by local residents, artists and architects. For the purpose of analysis, these illustrated suggestions for redesign/redevelopment of the Memorial were not included as comments on the Preliminary Alternatives. Comments were analyzed for this report if they were postmarked by July 14 or received via PEPC by July 16.

Methodology

To analyze the public comments, representative categories were developed from the planning issues identified during internal scoping work sessions. These were documented in Newsletter Number One published in June 2008. The same categories were established for general comments as well as for each preliminary alternative. Comments were then coded in PEPC according to the category to which they most closely correlated:

- Program/Visitor Services
- Connectivity/Urban Interface
- Resource Stewardship/Design Integrity
- "For" Development
- "Against" Development
- Access
- Security
- East St. Louis
- Operations
- New Ideas for Alternatives
- Miscellaneous/Unrelated
- Planning Process

After being sorted in PEPC, each category of comments was further reviewed to identify specific trends and new suggestions related to the Preliminary Alternatives. The majority of the comments received did not reference a particular alternative. Rather, the comments generally referenced a specific service, amenity, and/or type of development or connector the commenter supported or opposed. Fewer than seventeen percent (17%) of the comments received made reference to a

particular alternative, but those that did seemed to state a preference for or against an alternative, based on the presence or absence of a new attraction within the grounds along Memorial Drive.

The seven hundred eight (708) pieces of correspondence received came in the form of letters, park comment forms and web entries on PEPC. In order to analyze these correspondences, we considered a single thought within every correspondence to be a comment. Therefore, a correspondence could generate more than one comment for analysis. Approximately six hundred (600) people attended the two public open houses and provided around fourteen hundred (1400) public remarks that were recorded at the flip charts during the open houses. These remarks cannot be attributed to any one person since they were collected anonymously. Each public remark recorded on a flip chart was also considered to be one comment for analysis purposes. Because of this, the seven hundred eight (708) pieces of correspondence and the flip chart remarks generated twenty-eight hundred (2800) comments that were analyzed for this report. The total number of correspondences and comments are not indicative of the number of individuals who provided public feedback due to the fact that any one person or correspondence could have generated multiple comments and individual authors of the correspondences could not always be identified. That being said, the number of respondents is thought to be around eleven hundred (1,100).

The following summary of comments is provided to outline the major groupings of comments, along with examples of specific comments to illustrate the trend. Where possible, the number of comments that were received in a specific area is noted.

General Trends

Program/Visitor Services

One hundred twenty-three (123) comments requested more activities and amenities on the Arch grounds and at the Memorial, in general, to enliven the park and increase visitation. Suggestions for activities and amenities included, among others: walking tours, concerts, travelling sculpture displays, outdoor movies, picnic tables, amphitheatre, walking paths, restrooms that can be accessed without going through security, bike paths and places to sit and watch the river. Over 100 comments were received requesting better access to food and refreshments (restaurants, cafes, push carts) on the Arch grounds, while a much smaller number of comments (11) were received opposing the addition of restaurants and expanded food service. Thirty-five (35) comments were received specifically referencing the desire for more programming at the North and South Nodes of the Memorial. A variety of suggestions were offered to draw more people to the nodes: cafes, restaurants, theatres, museum, visitor center and gardens. Additionally, comments reflected a desire to have the current underground museum facilities updated, renovated and potentially expanded.

“The current museum really needs to be updated to current standards and should be done so in a manner that allows it to change overtime to meet educational needs of the public on the topic of westward expansion and territory acquisition.”

“I just found out last year the Old Courthouse was part of the park. It is one of the neatest buildings and should really be capitalized on.”

“It takes so long to admire the Arch from outside, visit the top, and see the Museum that one becomes very hungry; having a quick lunch would make the experience much more ‘visitor friendly’. Going to Laclede’s Landing is too far and takes too long, particularly with children.”

Connectivity/Urban Interface, Access, Parking and Wayfinding

Connectivity Respondents were highly supportive of improved connectivity that includes safe, pedestrian-friendly access to downtown (60 comments), the riverfront (20 comments) and the neighboring areas of Laclede's and Chouteau's Landings (31 comments). Specific comments about the type of "connector" across Memorial Drive and the benefits of a connector were noted in about twenty-five percent (25%) of the comments, though some comments reflected a concern with the cost of providing for some of the options. In total, over 100 comments noted a need to implement some form of an at-grade pedestrian lid to help create a pedestrian friendly crossing, cut down on noise from the interstate and help to create a visual and physical connection between the Old Courthouse and the Arch Grounds. On a related point, a number of comments (14) specifically expressed an interest to have the Metro Link station at Eads Bridge, between the North Node and Laclede's Landing linked to the Arch grounds with a walkway or other type of connection. On the other side, twenty-eight (28) respondents were against any kind of at-grade lid, citing impracticality and expense.

"You know, there's only certain places you can access the Arch. And for a visitor to St. Louis, they really have to kinda look around and figure out how to get over there."

"I'm very, very supportive of anything we can do to connect the Arch and downtown. I don't know why it hadn't been done a long time ago. I think it's very important for our city. I think it's very important for tourists to be able to tour from the Arch ground to the downtown area and be able to utilize both."

"We like the idea of improving the connection between the city here and the Courthouse and the Arch grounds so that pedestrians can move from here, cross over the roads and interstates, and land on the grounds without having to endure traffic and the hazards of traffic. Probably some kind of lid over the interstate so that it cuts down on the noise -that is hazardous."

"Covering the highway is going to create a traffic hazard if there's accidents down in this tunnel. They don't have that much pedestrian traffic to go across to justify building an overpass."

"[The] Senior citizens I take on trips complain about going to the Arch on Metro Link because they have to go down stairs, across streets. If they would build a connection -- a walkway connection with minimum steps -- hopefully, no steps at all -from the bridge to the North Overlook, it would eliminate the...steps and cracks."

Access Comments reflected a concern that the Arch Grounds need to become more handicap accessible, more easily navigable for older adults, and comply with ADA standards. Where comments were received on the need for improving ADA accessibility at the Memorial (down to the riverfront and into the visitor center and museum under the Arch), there was unanimity that the Arch Grounds must be more universally accessible and more easily navigable for older adults. Specific focus areas noted include: access from the parking garage, access to ponds, access ramp to riverfront, grand staircase, the Old Courthouse, and the Museum of Westward Expansion.

"I'm concerned to make sure that it's accessible...so we can all, as disabled people, can participate with the rest of the community. That's very important to me, and I think that's got to be taken into consideration... universal design should be included so that anybody can use it and it doesn't show it as being used just by disabled people; that it's used by everybody."

"Improvements to N/S staircase. Very difficult to handle/navigate. Changing height of each step is a problem."

Parking Comments were received both for and against keeping parking on the Arch Grounds. The majority of the comments were in favor of maintaining parking on the Arch Grounds, whether at the current location in the North Node or in a different location. Comments received regarding the green roof on the top of the North Node (above parking) were in favor of adding it.

“Removing parking would have serious impact on visitors - is already far away.”

Wayfinding Respondents expressed a desire for more directional signage to inform visitors where attractions are within the Park and downtown and for more interpretive signage to describe the Arch Grounds history.

“The Arch and Arch grounds should be identified with maps and directories at both ends and in the middle. Most immediate is signage at every Metro Link station, parking garage and street in the downtown area with a map "you are here" and directory of all attractions.”

“Explain Arch grounds history with signage or skeletal community.”

Development

The topic of development generated the greatest amount of comment, both for and against. Comments in favor of new development on the Arch Grounds suggested that new development would help to attract more visitors and economic activity to the grounds and to the downtown. Some respondents went so far to suggest that visitor attendance will continue to drop and no new economic benefits will be realized if nothing is done and no change occurs on the Arch grounds. Conversely, respondents who expressed concern about development thought the Arch grounds should be preserved as they are without further additions above ground and that the green space should be valued and protected by the city.

“There should be more development around the arch, especially with the economy being the way it is. It will add more jobs, tourist locations, and shopping venues. There really is no downside to this.”

“The Park!! Preserve the NHL!! Keep the green space! We need this park for a quiet, peaceful setting. Not to feed our faces! Keep the memorial managed much as it is today.”

“I am writing to express our support for the development of the Gateway Arch grounds, on which we passed a resolution of support in January. The opportunity now lies ahead of us to add a cultural destination and accessibility to the grounds for the enjoyment of generations of Americans. This development will transform the grounds into an energetic and welcoming place that will continue to attract both regional citizens and visitors from abroad to enjoy these significant assets of our community.”

“I would like to see the park remain as it was originally intended a site of reflection and contemplation commemorating Lewis and Clark and Thomas Jefferson's works to promote the expanse of the country and opportunities of expansion. I would hope that there would not be significant changes to the cultural landscape nor the historic structures, as they should be preserved for future generations.”

“If the arch grounds remain cut off, attendance will continue to drop and the City of St. Louis will continue to remain cut off from what should be its best attraction. Without dramatic change to the grounds, there will be greater resentment of the park service and a perception that the land was ill-bequeathed.”

“Jefferson National Expansion Memorial provides a needed green space for St. Louis. It would be nice if the city took on some of those characteristics instead of building more hard surfaced structures.”

Types of development suggested include a new destination museum, an aquarium, cafes, and shopping venues. The relatively few comments that were received regarding the maintenance facility were both in favor and against removing the maintenance facility from the South Node. Though other types of development were mentioned, the overwhelming item noted, both for and against, was an above-ground museum. Nearly two hundred (199 comments) were in support of an above-ground structure/museum, with thirty-three (33) of those being form

letters. Commenters in favor of a new, major above-ground attraction such as a museum noted that it should be built as a destination to attract new visitors and enliven the Arch Grounds.

"I like the idea of a museum to attract more people and to make the destination more appealing. Open up some portion of the grounds so they can be used by more people. I would also like to see restaurants cafes etc with outdoor eating around the grounds and on the river so that people would look out at the museum."

"What the Gateway Arch needs to fulfill its destiny is a new museum to complement the existing one honoring westward expansion. We must have a major destination museum or museums above ground and easily accessible to draw people to the Arch and the riverfront and keep them in the area an extra night or two."

Those respondents expressing concern about development felt preservation of open space and the cultural and historic landscape for future generations was important. Frequently, those that commented noted the green space on the Arch grounds adds to a visitor's experience of the Memorial, and is an integral part of the Memorial's integrity and has inherent value (32 comments). Others did not believe another museum is needed on the Arch grounds and that the addition of above-grade structures may block views of the Arch and take away from much needed open space in the downtown area. Many indicated that commercial development does not belong on the Arch Grounds and that new development should occur outside the Park boundary in the surrounding city (76 comments).

I have concerns that if development takes place at the memorial to further economic opportunities for St. Louis the historical significance of this site will be lost. The power of a memorial is in its remaining separate from the setting which surrounds it. That separation is particularly important when the memorial's placement is in a metropolitan area. Exploring economic opportunities within the memorial can all too easily make the site a part of St. Louis rather than a place where American history is remembered.

We would urge that commercial activities be promoted around the perimeter of the park. That's where the local people can reap the benefits of doing business and selling things to the tourists boosting the economy. The answer is not to bring commercialization into the park. It's rather to let the people who are drawn to the park by the Arch filter out into the community and do their business there because the local businesses around the perimeter of the park don't want people inside the park competing, and they shouldn't be.

There are no artifacts that would be available that would be significant enough that they would cause a draw of people to come to such a museum. They don't exist. If they exist, they're already in somebody else's museum. The only thing they could come up with would be interpretive stories written on the panels on the walls and various kinds of movies and those sorts of things. We've already got those underneath the Arch

East St. Louis/Riverfront

Of the approximately 100 comments that referenced East St. Louis, many received were in favor of including the East St. Louis riverfront area within the boundary of the Memorial and for adding water taxis in the General Management Plan. Some of those commenting opposed incorporating East St. Louis into the General Management Plan and indicated that Illinois should improve its own riverfront. Opinion was unevenly split between those that felt water taxis were a good way to provide access to East St. Louis and should be included in the plans (57 comments), and those that indicated that water taxi were not a good idea (20 comments). Comments against cited as reasons: there is not enough to see in East St. Louis, the river current may be dangerous, and the presence of existing tour boats and Metro Link can be used to cross the river. Comments regarding the riverfront showed a general consensus for making improvements to the riverfront to highlight its importance and draw activity to it. Suggestions for improvement included: an aquarium, residences, removing the grain elevator and pedestrian/bike trails into East St. Louis.

"I would like to see development of...a beautiful riverfront that is connected to a park in East St. Louis by river taxis, steam boat cruises, ranger guided-environmental cruises and the like."

"East side should be aesthetically pleasing when viewed from West side."

"I like the water taxi service. It could relieve parking stress and make development on the east side easier. The stockyards and barge history would be interesting."

"The water taxi is not a good idea, too swift of current and if anything use the existing tour boats to cross the river. Very little land for a Park Service presence is needed on the East Side, work with the Parks and Rec Department that has Martin Park on a viewing and exhibit/visitor welcome center...gardens."

Alternative #1 (No Action)

The No Action alternative describes how the Memorial is managed today and is offered as a baseline from which to measure the amount of change possible under the other "action" alternatives. Even so, some expressed a desire that the Memorial be managed much as it is today in order to preserve the greenspace and peaceful setting, while keeping commercial development outside of the Park in the surrounding urban environment. Others indicated that "no action" is not the appropriate step. Twelve (12) comments were received expressly in support of Alternative 1 and twenty-eight (28) comments were received that expressed opposition to Alternative 1.

"Maintain park grounds as they are... so that we keep grounds environmentally stable, sound, strong. Inside the Arch, people can get food and amenities and see the museum, which is great. ...concern[ed] that it will be overcome with commercial development, lots of shops. That nature will be lost to entrepreneurs. Maintain nature, natural setting, place to walk safely, beauty of the Arch."

"We need change. Pedestrian access; better use of the grounds; connect to the city; connect to the East Side."

"Status quo is unacceptable. Attendance is down. No connection to downtown or the river."

Alternative #2 (Connections)

Comments received referencing Alternative 2 were both for and against the alternative. Eight (8) comments were received in support and fourteen (14) comments were received in opposition. Some comments indicated that Alternative 2 did not present enough changes, such as increased programming or connectivity improvements, while other comments favored this approach because of the minimal potential adverse impacts result of implementing Alternative 2. Some noted that, at a minimum, this alternative should be implemented, because it makes some improvements to public access without substantial adverse effects, while others expressed that Alternative 2 is not a significant enough change because it does not go far enough and it is not bold enough. There was support for the idea of "greening" the top of the parking garage. Two respondents also indicated they liked the expansion of the Memorial to East St. Louis.

"I prefer alternative 2, minimal improvements and the expansion to 50 acres in East St. Louis (for viewing the Arch & downtown St. Louis)."

"I prefer option 2 which makes some improvements to public access and to greening the garage, without substantial adverse effects, although there will apparently be some adverse as well as beneficial effects."

"This alternative is not ambitious enough - both N[orth] + S[outh] ends need to be better connected with ambitious development with bar or restaurant, family venues, great architecture. Within central western part of the park should have an amphitheater or open entertainment venue with a great architectural design to tie in with Arch (Millennium Park in Chicago)."

"This alternative won't do enough to eliminate the barrier in getting to/from the park."

Alternative 3 (Expanded Programming)

Seventy (70) comments were received in support of Alternative 3 and two were received opposing Alternative 3. Interestingly, thirty-four (34) of the comments in support of Alternative 3 only expressed support and did not give further explanation for the preference. Most of the comments that referenced Alternative 3 generally expressed a preference for expanded programming, primarily in the form of an above ground museum to create more activity on the Arch Grounds. These respondents felt a new attraction adjacent to the riverfront would create a destination atmosphere that could attract more visitors and extend their stays. Of the positive statements in favor of Alternative 3, twenty-two (22) comments indicated a desire for the above-ground attraction; four (4) respondents felt the addition of a new attraction on Memorial Drive would complement the Old Cathedral rather than harm the integrity of the Arch landscape, though no evidence was offered to support the ascertain. Supporters of Alternative 3 were in favor of a broad elevated deck over Memorial Drive as a good way to improve connectivity to downtown and liked how the North and South Overlooks were described, with the North Overlook managed to emphasize education and amenities and the South emphasizing the Memorial's landscape. The tendency among respondents, overall, was to state, positively, the alternative they supported, though a small number of comments were received in direct opposition to the above-ground museum illustrated in the alternative (8 comments).

"At a minimum, a maximum version of Option #3 with a major new "destination above ground national museum" [close to the Arch], strong pedestrian connection(s) across Memorial Drive and people oriented cafes in the Arch grounds. Unlike the presently-declining visitation to the Arch, the traffic will have steadily increased and the new museum will rival the Air + Space museum in D.C. in visits."

"I'm coming to say that I like Option 3 with the connector. We think there needs to be more activity down on the Riverfront -- it's the most valuable property in the region -- and there should be things for people to do all year round and enjoy the beautiful Arch grounds."

"I feel that the Alternative number 3 is the best pick out of the bunch. The covered walkway would be very safe and it give more people the chance to access the Arch Grounds from downtown in a more convenient way. The visitor center would bring and keep people/tourists in St. Louis long which would mean more money for the city and the city's businesses."

Eleven (11) comments referenced combining elements of Alternatives 3, 4 and 5. These comments, for the most part, were non-specific, but suggestions were gleaned to move the above-ground museum to the North Node, drop the above-ground museum in favor of renovating the existing museum, consider incorporating covered walkways, the water taxi, East St. Louis, a new entrance to the existing museum, a destination restaurant at the North Node and removal of the south maintenance facilities. This group of comments indicated that parking should not be reduced in Alternative 3. Respondents thought the addition of new attractions would increase the number of visitors, but that people would not come to the new attractions if there wasn't a place to park. A fair number of comments addressed connectivity and suggested Alternative 3 incorporate a different pedestrian connector (from alternatives 4 or 5). Some of the respondents indicated the elevated deck proposed for this alternative would not be people friendly and should be at-grade for safety purposes. They also expressed concern the alternative does not address the need for pedestrian friendly access at all points around the park so

that visitors will circulate. A single comment was received to save the trees in Luther Ely Smith Square if an underground facility were to be built.

"In essence, Alternative 3 appears to be a good basis for beginning, but it wastes the "south node" on service and maintenance facilities which would appear to be better located in the presently underutilized Chouteau's Landing area."

"The 'lid' that is shown in Alternative 3 appears to be of rather modest size, but that appears to be adequate, at least to me. If Memorial Drive can be consolidated on one side of the "depressed interstate", and a modest lid constructed, I think that the public would be fully welcomed into the Memorial."

"... include East St. Louis to capture green space to insure it stays green. This may mitigate concern with building new facility in park. Then you'd have connections on all four sides."

Alternative 4 (Portals)

In general, there was support for Alternative 4 and the concept to create welcoming portals into the Memorial from all sides. Forty-three (43) comments were received in support of Alternative 4 and no comments were received against Alternative 4. Respondents liked the entrance to the museum on Memorial Drive, and felt the two pedestrian walkways would be favorable because they allow more traffic between Arch Grounds and the city. Those in support described their preference for Alternative 4 as best addressing the current facility and grounds with regards to accessibility and urban improvement needs without greatly affecting the integrity of the Arch Grounds. Comments were received in favor of incorporating East St. Louis into the boundary of the Memorial - which was seen as an important compliment to the Arch Grounds - and in favor of the water taxi. Other reasons cited included: security enhancements through the creation of a new entry; expansion of the underground museum so as not to "clog the above ground area around the Arch"; leaving Luther Ely Smith Square relatively undeveloped; the raised pedestrian walkways and wide lid over Memorial Drive for an easier connection between the Arch and Old Courthouse, and moving Old Cathedral parking underground to create more landscaped area above ground. Comments in favor of Alternative 4 also noted the alternative allowed for some expanded visitor experience opportunities at both the north and south ends of the park unit while keeping maintenance facilities and parking opportunities on-site.

"My husband and I liked the Management Alternative 4:Portals. I think it is more user friendly. It would be wonderful to have someplace on the grounds for visitors to eat and sit outside and enjoy the park setting. Being able to safely cross the street and enjoy the view would be a big plus and I think it would connect the Arch with downtown better. Taking a water taxi across the river is great. What a place to get a view of the Arch!"

"Alternative four seems to be the option which opens up a lot of growth/improvement opportunities while still honoring the history of the area. The access to the Mississippi river relates to historic connections to the water, the heartbeat of our city, and the access to the city make the arch, literally, the city's front yard. Every significant city in the world has an identifiable and solid move along its "spine" and this is the opportunity to cap the changes going on downtown with a beautiful crown."

"Expanding the museum is always a good idea to me when a story can be told better and in multiple ways to interest multiple kinds of people. I also like #4's expansion of the JNEP by an additional 70 acres into Illinois with the water taxi across the river. This does several important things to benefit the overall memorial: it establishes future controls of both sides of the Mississippi River, an important part of the overall story told at JNEP. It allows for the future development of educational and recreational opportunities so as not to clog the current boundaries of the park unit. And the water taxi is a must if boundaries are expanded to Illinois to cement the connection between the two sides of the park unit and brings in the Mississippi River as a recreational and natural part of the overall park experience."

Though there appeared to be strong support for Alternative 4, numerous suggestions for change were received. Suggestions for additions to the alternative include a restaurant, more parking underground at the Old Cathedral, a destination in East St. Louis beyond the overlook in construction, and that the expanded museum incorporate new entrance corridors around the sides, rather than from Memorial Drive. Respondents asked that consideration be given to not reducing parking capacity in the North Node, and that the North and South Overlooks be zoned as Memorial Landscape instead of Heritage Education and Visitor Amenities. Regarding connectivity, some felt that improved connections along the Eads Bridge be emphasized rather than by water taxi. A few folks indicated that including a lid over Memorial Drive along with two pedestrian bridges seemed redundant, and felt that two pedestrian bridges would limit pedestrian traffic flow. A suggestion was made to utilize a sweep of lawn instead of the bridges.

Alternative 5 (Park Into the City)

Commenters referencing Alternative 5 noted a preference for connecting the Park and the City, for activating the North and South Nodes of the Park and a three block lid. Twenty-two (22) comments were received in support of and five (5) comments were against Alternative 5. Those that commented indicated it is important the park and city be as connected and integrated as possible. They liked that parking would be removed from the park, noting that ample parking exists downtown and that, as it exists currently, the parking garage is an obstacle to getting into Laclede's Landing. On the downside, others did not think Alternative 5 should be implemented because it does not go far enough to transform the Arch Grounds, and it won't result in "enough activity on the Arch Grounds". This group of respondents also thought Alternative 5 did not address accessibility and security needs and that the idea of moving parking off-site would be politically untenable.

"I like the idea, especially the name of the last proposal ...Park Into The City...bringing the city and the national park altogether, you know, because I feel it would be so much more use."

"I favor the 3 block, at grade lid...making it even larger if possible. Having the open area of the Arch grounds flow without interruption into downtown would be a huge improvement. Beyond the lid, on both ends, north and south, the highway should be buffered with sound deflecting and absorbing materials to prevent motor vehicle noise from disturbing park visitors."

Suggestions for adding to Alternative 5 included bike access at the North Node, water taxis and the museum from Alternative 3. Commenters also requested that parking not be removed because to do so may decrease visitation and there is already a shortage of parking in Laclede's Landing. A variety of suggestions were made regarding the size and style of connector between the Old Courthouse and the Arch grounds: "the lid should be more than three blocks to provide good at grade access"; "a three block lid is too much"; "one block is sufficient because it is more in keeping with Saarinen's design"; "only a two block lid is needed"; "the lid should be included with the addition of pedestrian overpasses"; "a pedestrian overpass should be used instead of the three block lid", and "Memorial Drive should remain unconsolidated with the addition of a park in the median." Regarding the future design of a lid, suggestions were made to incorporate planters, flowers, benches and trees.

Summary

Overall, the comments favor invigorating" the Memorial and improving connections between the park and the surrounding areas, improving site accessibility, and reflect broad support for some level of development, though there is not consensus on the amount, location and type of development. Support for an above-ground attraction appears to be based on the desire to increase the tourist economy in the downtown St. Louis area, and has the strong support of the business and civic community and local governments. There is strong support as well, though not as organized, for developments that would improve upon existing facilities while maintaining the Memorial's greenspace and the character of the National Historic Landmark. The substantial amount of comment generated in this process so far is reflective of the importance of Jefferson National Expansion Memorial to St. Louis, the region and the nation.