
YOUR LETTERS TO IMAGINE ST. LOUIS

Revive the Gateway Mall plan

Downtown St. Louis has historically been a leader of visionary projects, and must be again in this new millennium if it is to be recognized as one of the great cities in the world.

Regarding downtown specifically, there have been at least three symbols of vision in the last two centuries to build upon: Eads Bridge (1874), the Wainwright Building (1890) and the Gateway Arch (1965).

Eads Bridge was the largest bridge of its time, and was heralded as an engineering achievement with its pioneering use of steel and record-depth foundations.

The Wainwright Building, designed by the well-known office of Adler & Sullivan, was one of the first multistory buildings to archi-

tecturally express the logic and nature of stacked floors with a vertical emphasis to which the term "skyscraper" is now applied, and is still a lesson to the world on how to build tall.

The most recognizable symbol of vision that points to the future for St. Louis is of course the Jefferson National Expansion Memorial, our Gateway Arch. The miracle of this structure lies not only in its precise tolerances and many engineering accomplishments, but in the faith and trust this city had in building not just a gateway to the West, but to the future.

Standing as a modern *arc de triomphe*, the Arch represents the triumph of progress over nostalgia, and compared to the other nostalgic proposals for this monument, St. Louis took a giant leap of faith

in what has now become, like the Eiffel Tower, the symbol of the city.

These three symbols, along with the Great River (the whole genesis of the city) and the strong sense of community, are reason enough for renewed enthusiasm and commitment to finish planning and executing the great axis from the Arch through the Old Courthouse, Kiener Plaza, the Civil Courts Building and beyond, that was started but abandoned.

Perhaps the following vision offers a glimpse of an idea, of the tremendous opportunities this important project can provide, to inspire this community to invest energy and creativity toward a dream:

Imagine a beautiful, noble axis extending from the Arch to Union Station and beyond, which might

be called Lewis and Clark Boulevard (a fitting name for this journey west).

Imagine amenities for the people's enjoyment and pride such as great symbolic fountains that tell stories, beautifully-kept gardens (coordinated with the Missouri Botanical Garden) with paths for walking and shade trees for sitting or lunching, public plazas for gathering and entertainment, shops, restaurants, cafes, jazz clubs, and a multipurpose skating rink that can also be a roller rink or dance floor with a bandstand!

There would be festive lights in the trees and colorful banners hung to announce events and holidays, all of this on a powerful axis rivaling Paris! Lewis and Clark Boulevard could be a good-time place that generates revenue and jobs for thousands, as well as at-

tracting international visitors!

Although, in the past, St. Louis has been criticized for being conservative, the three symbols mentioned, as well as other historic landmarks, demonstrate convincingly the community's optimistic hopes for the future in building significant, bold new structures!

Now is the time, during peace and prosperity, to continue planning and implementing, in phases, this historic project for more than a city to be proud of, but for all people who unite for the common good.

Perhaps Gateway to the Future could become the new city motto to inspire such positive and necessary change.

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