



LOCAL NEWS



Natl. Park disagrees with Slay, Danforth on Arch grounds

06:21 AM CDT on Thursday, August 30, 2007

[Statement from National Park Service](#)

[Statement from Congressman William Lacy Clay](#)

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ST. LOUIS (KMOV) -- A study released Wednesday by a foundation headed by former Senator John Danforth said St. Louis should have a world-class riverfront -- but needs part of the Gateway Arch grounds to do it.

The National Park Service says in a statement that it "respectfully disagrees."

The Danforth Foundation is hoping to convince the federal government to give up some of the 91 acres of the Jefferson National Expansion Memorial where the towering monument to westward expansion sits.

Danforth says St. Louis is wasting two of its most valuable assets -- The Arch itself and the city's position on the Mississippi River. He says the Arch, quote, "stands in splendid isolation."

The study was conducted at the request of Mayor Francis Slay. He calls development of the riverfront and a plan to better connect the Arch to downtown a major priority.

The proposal would impact both sides of the river.

There are no elaborate models or drawings this time around.

After two years and \$2 million, the Danforth Foundation's study says without more space, there can be no revamping of the St. Louis Riverfront.

The St. Louis Riverfront, bordered by the Poplar and Eades - is perhaps the city's most underutilized attraction.

What to do about it has been debated for years, and the subject of the just released Danforth Foundation Study.

Devoid of attractions and prone to flooding - the area east of the Arch grounds can't be realistically developed.

To the west, I-70 and Memorial Drive are formidable barriers to pedestrians, let alone development, leaving the Arch grounds an island to themselves.

The Arch grounds are part of Congressman Lacy Clay's district.

In his first public comment he told News 4: "The loss of a portion of a national park, even for a worthy public purpose, is a serious matter that will require extensive public discussion and community engagement."

Senator Danforth admits his controversial plan won't go anywhere without strong support from the public.

It's a different stance than he took nine years ago, when he pushed a much more ambitious, far-reaching plan and guaranteed its success.

The plan was called St. Louis 2004 and Danforth claimed it would make the St.

Louis-region a model for the rest of the nation.

In its final report St. Louis 2004 concluded it had helped spread a positive spirit about St. Louis throughout the region.

There is a sad irony though; the building where the rally was held in 1998 has been out of business since 2000.

The building ever since has been empty.

Attracting new businesses may still be the ultimate way to revitalize downtown.

Nine years ago former Senator Danforth was the leading cheerleader for a campaign he promised would transform the St. Louis region by 2004.

The plan called for everything from cleaning up the environment to making St. Louis the leading technology center in the country, to ending government fragmentation.

Almost a decade later however, Missouri and Illinois can't even agree on a new Mississippi River Bridge despite the fact more than \$200 million in federal funding could soon be withdrawn.

In a book on the 2004 effort organizers admit they failed in key areas.

Wednesday Senator Danforth pointed to two of the modest successes, downtown revitalization and a park and trail system linking five-counties in Missouri and Illinois.

Here's what KMOV.com users are saying

Yes, but keep Frankie 'the puppet' Slay out of the picture completely.

You would not make a development at the Lincoln Memorial. This is just another way for people to get more money.

Why muck up the nice, landscaped grounds along the Riverfront with commercialization? These politicians, Danforth and Slay, are spouting what their business contributors want them to say, to sell the idea of development: which of course means money in their pockets. Leave the Arch grounds and the Riverfront alone stop trying to sugarcoat your real agenda with

going on about how great the Riverfront would be - "world class". We don't need "world class" on our riverfront. We are simple folks here in Missouri, lots of trees, nice view of the River, low key. Let's keep it that way and be true to ourselves.

We should be very careful about what is allowed on the arch grounds. It should be tasteful and necessary to the development of a world-class riverfront.

Looks good like it is. Tell Danforth to stay in retirement. Waste our taxpayers money on someone others useless profit making project.

Senator Danforth has gotten senile in his old age and has forgotten his Republican values. Wanting to have government grab beautiful property to give to people who will desecrate the area with bars and stuff is not what we need to 'improve' the St. Louis area.

Too doggone many people want rip up every blade of grass around and build something. There are plenty of other places that could stand some redeveloping. Once land is ripped away from a park it's NEVER put back either.

There is plenty of property available for a new marina and other businesses on the river front w/o having to take it away from a National Monument.

The Arch belongs to the public, not the greedy St Louis developers and politicians. All American taxpayers paid for the park and will get nothing in return if it is used for commercial development. That is the only thing St Louis is interested in anyway.

On the face of it this sounds like a good idea. What worries me is the giving away of Federal land, which belongs to all U.S. citizens, to private investors. What will they give away next?

The arch grounds are fine just the way they are. Let's concentrate on improving homes, building businesses and supporting law enforcement and public safety personnel to decrease crime. Then maybe we could plant a flower or two by the arch.

There are things that could be done such as buying the boat from the Casino Queen and placing it on the waterfront as a restaurant or improving other nearby areas and so forth. To invade park land is a reckless idea. The grounds are stunningly beautiful and if they were taken by the city they would look like other nearby areas which are not so pretty. Ok, and it is obvious that there is not a market at this point for this type of development and it would be another failed plan that would become a negative in the lore of downtown St. Louis.

Yes. It sounds like it would turn a VERY boring place into a nice place. I'm always for change. Let's use land that is basically useless.

The Gateway Arch grounds are like our little Central Park, I think it is the only piece of green grass and trees that is left in downtown. The land was set aside by the people of this nation. I don't think it should be taken away for purposes of GREED.....

We definitely need an aquarium, world-class, and that would be the best location. We also need a covered walkway over traffic to

the Arch grounds. I'm not sure about the need for much in the way of restaurants and other development, and I wouldn't want over ten acres at the very most to be taken from the National Park. Also: ONLY UNDERGROUND PARKING!

We should be like Austin. It is just beautiful. Put in some canals etc. This would make the city a destination.

Isn't this a National Monument? Leave it as it is restore or use the warehouses north of Laclede's Landing. Hire a police force that will enforce the laws and provide public safety.

They can't take care of what we already have so don't add more.

The arch grounds are boring. All there is to look at is the Arch. Put an aquarium or disney board walk put something for the kids and the adults to enjoy.

Please don't turn this beautiful landmark into another "sideshow" with commercial development. The next thing you know MO will try to claim "eminant domain" and take it.