

## PRESS RELEASE

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*President & CEO, Fort Vancouver National Trust*

*Steering Committee Chairman, Community Connector Invitational Design Competition*

### **Selected design concept for Vancouver Community Connector Announced; Project will reconnect Fort Vancouver National Site to downtown Vancouver**

Vancouver Community Connector Invitational Design Competition Manager, Donald Stastny of StastnyBrun Architects, has announced that the design concept submitted by Gustafson Guthrie Nichol/Allied Works Architecture Team has been selected. The Team's design concept was chosen by a Jury comprised of distinguished professionals from across the United States.

The boards of the selected design concept will be on display this week through Friday, October 23 at the Fort Vancouver National Trust office inside the General O.O. Howard House, 750 Anderson Street, Vancouver, WA. The display boards will be available for viewing from 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. For information, call the Fort Vancouver National Trust, 360-992-1800.

The competition was between four outstanding design teams and was initiated to develop a conceptual design for a Community Connector that seeks to meet federally mandated mitigation requirements. This mitigation is triggered by the planned widening of I-5 in proximity to the West Barracks area of the Fort Vancouver National Site, which will occur in conjunction with the Columbia River Crossing (CRC) project to replace the I-5 bridge over the Columbia River.

Stastny noted that the four design teams were charged with interpreting the vision for the Community Connector in a 60-day time period. "During this short time period, the teams rose to the challenge of creating design concepts that address the goal of mitigation through defining the reconnection of the historic area of Vancouver to its developing downtown. The goal of the competition was to select a design team and a design concept that will be the starting point for ongoing dialog and evolution of the Community Connector."

Through a rigorous evaluation of the design concepts by means of both written materials and oral presentation, the Jury made a unanimous selection of the exceptional proposal by the Gustafson Guthrie Nichol/Allied Works Architecture Team. Stastny noted: "The Jury also commends the other three teams for their thoughtful and innovative design concepts and extends their gratitude for each team's contributions in helping define what the Community Connector project could be."

The design concept will now be formally presented to a number of stakeholders, including City of Vancouver, Fort Vancouver National Trust, National Park Service (NPS) and the Columbia River Crossing project. Matt Ransom, Transportation Project Manager for the City of Vancouver, noted: “Selection of the design team and their Community Connector design concept is a first step in realizing the community’s long standing vision of re-connecting across I-5. With a design concept in hand, City staff will initiate more detailed coordination with the CRC designers and engineers during the CRC planning and engineering phases. Starting this coordination work now will be much more cost effective than waiting until after the CRC’s highway engineering plans are completed and then having to incorporate a required mitigation concept after the fact.”

Ransom also pointed out that the short time frame did not allow the teams to produce a detailed design, engineering, or cost estimate: “This was not the goal of the competition. The competition was to select a concept, a vision, which will serve as the starting point for this project. It was to identify a team that developed what the Jury concluded to be the best conceptual approach for mitigation.”

To help provide input with respect to mitigation, the Jury included Hank Florence, NPS Historic Architect and Manager of External Cultural Programs for the Pacific West Region, who served at the request of NPS Director Jonathan Jarvis. In addition, all the designs were evaluated within a framework outlined by NPS Archaeologist Douglas C. Wilson, PhD with respect to the impact of the CRC project: “A critical element of the Community Connector project is its ability to mitigate potential adverse effects to the cultural resources of the Fort Vancouver National Site, particularly those associated with the encroachment impacts and constructive use of the site’s properties, specifically the Barracks and Post Hospital. The Community Connector may serve as mitigation for the cultural resources, including the architecture and cultural landscape, which is legally required under Section 4(f) of the National Highway Act and Section 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act.”

In making its selection of the Gustafson Guthrie Nichol/Allied Works Architecture Team’s design concept, the Jury issued the following statement:

“As the most powerful and elegant resolution of the desires set forth in the Competition Manual, the design by Gustafson Guthrie Nichol/Allied Works Architecture Team best responds to the vision of the Community Connector. It appropriately respects and celebrates the cultural history of Vancouver, truly connecting the Fort Vancouver National Site to the City. It reinforces the historic entry to the Site and restores the potential of the parade ground as a regional amenity.

The design concept shows an understanding of the cultural history and significance of this Site. An adaptable design, it enhances the amenities on both sides as they are currently and as they could evolve into the future. It reintegrates the Post Hospital, making it a focal point of the picturesque landscape and features other adjacent historical structures.

The design concept provides a clarity and richness worthy of the vision of the project. It shows a spirit of place that is specific and appropriate for the Northwest. It honors the seasons and biology of the Pacific Northwest landscape and includes an elegant, yet practical, use of water.

The design concept by the Gustafson Guthrie Nichol/Allied Works Architecture Team is a poetic and thoughtful treatment of the community's wish to reconnect the City of Vancouver to its historic area. It shows a knowledge and practice of universal design and integrates its principles elegantly and seamlessly. The design represents the result of a collaborative design process that the Jury hopes would continue throughout the project.”

While the design concept advanced by the Jury is fundamentally focused on federal mitigation requirements, competition Steering Committee Chairman and Fort Vancouver National Trust President Elson Strahan credited the NPS for supporting this approach: “The Trust certainly applauds the NPS in seeking a mitigation solution that not only helps to protect and enhance our cultural resources but also makes a tremendous contribution to the economic development of the region and serves as the welcoming gateway for Washington State.”

### **Vancouver Community Connector at a Glance**

#### ***Design Teams:***

- Danadjieva & Koenig Associates / HNTB Team
- Gustafson Guthrie Nichol | Allied Works Architecture | ARUP | Beliz Brother
- Hood Design Studio with Diller Scofidio + Renfro | Buro Happold | Atelier Ten
- Mayer/Reed | OLIN | Janet Echelman | Holst Architecture | Michael R. McCulloch | KPF Consulting Engineers | NC3D

***Competition Manager:*** Donald Stastny, FAIA FAICP, StastnyBrun Architects, Inc.,  
Portland

#### ***Jury:***

- Roger Boothe, Director of Urban Design, City of Cambridge, Massachusetts
- Hank Florence, NPS Historic Architect and Manager of External Cultural Programs for the Pacific West Region
- Richard Haag, Dean Emeritus, Dept. of Landscape Architecture, University of Washington
- Daniel Hunter, Co-director, Access to Design Professions
- Pat Jollota, Mayor Pro Tem, City of Vancouver, and published historian
- Michael Pride, Associate Professor, University of Cincinnati School of Architecture and Interior Design
- Don Wagner, Southwest Regional Administrator, Washington Dept. of Transportation
- Matt Ransom, Transportation Project Manager, City of Vancouver, Ex-Officio

- Elson Strahan, President & CEO, Fort Vancouver National Trust, Ex-Officio

***What is the Community Connector:*** For more than a century, historic Fort Vancouver was connected to and had a strong interaction with downtown Vancouver. This bond was severed more than 50 years ago when Interstate 5 was constructed. The Community Connector Project will reconnect the Fort Vancouver National Site with downtown Vancouver. Because of construction impacts of the Columbia River Crossing (CRC) project to rebuild the I-5 Bridge between Vancouver and Portland, mitigation is required under federal law. In its comments to the draft environmental impact statement published by the CRC project, the National Park Service, Fort Vancouver National Trust and the City of Vancouver each noted that required mitigation must provide improved connections between downtown Vancouver and the historic site, including an expanded pedestrian overpass at Evergreen Boulevard.