



## **Veterans Memorial Case for Support**

### **Vision for Town Lake and Papago Park**

From the unique beauty of its red rock buttes to the refreshing waters of its urban lake, the Rio Salado and Papago Park region boasts a rich array of cultural, historic, natural and recreational resources. With parks and museums, educational activities for children, and venues for performing arts and sporting events, the region is one of the most popular draws in the Valley of the Sun.

The cities surrounding the Rio Salado and Papago Park area - Phoenix, Scottsdale and Tempe - have a sweeping vision to transform the region into a major destination that rivals the likes of Balboa Park in San Diego. The most visible investment toward this vision came with the creation of Town Lake in Tempe. The Lake has provided recreational opportunities, created community gathering spaces and an economic impact to the community of about \$415 million which translates into better community facilities and services. Other benefits of bringing water back to the Rio Salado include; the restoration of natural habitats, new residential and economic development opportunities, and a wealth of recreational and cultural amenities for all Valley residents and visitors.

To ensure the success of the Rio Salado Project, the Rio Salado Foundation was formed in 2001. Currently in the midst of the *Water Was Just the Beginning Capital Campaign*, the Foundation has forged public-private partnerships to support the construction of cultural and recreational projects. Already completed is the Tempe Center for the Arts, Cox Children's Splash Playground at Tempe Beach Park and the relocation/reconstruction of the O'Connor House in Papago Park and the recently opened Eisendrath Center for Water Conservation and the construction of the Arizona Boathouse and Welcome Center

### **Overlook & Visitors Plaza: Ash Avenue and Bridge Abutment**

Construction of the Ash Avenue Bridge began in 1911 and was completed in 1913. As one of only two bridged crossings of the Salt River, the bridge became a major point of connection between Phoenix and Tempe, as well as the rest of the east valley. However, design and construction deficiencies caused the bridge to become obsolete within a few years. Completion of the Mill Avenue Bridge in 1931 resulted in the closing of the Ash Avenue Bridge to vehicular traffic. Although it is listed on the National Register of Historic Places, the bridge was demolished around 1990 due to safety concerns related to the construction and utilization of Tempe Town Lake.

The south abutment structure was left as a historic artifact and is now listed, along with Tempe Beach Stadium, on the Tempe Historic Property Register.

The Ash Avenue Bridge abutment is part of Tempe Beach Park, located within the Rio Salado Project Area, overlooking Tempe Town Lake. The park has been in constant use since at least the 1920s. A swimming pool and bath house were constructed, along with a baseball stadium (with stone bleachers built on the east facing slope of the south bridge approach), as part of a public works project in the 1930's.

A major rehabilitation was completed in the 1990s, allowing the park to serve as a site for special events, including the end celebration of the annual Tempe Veterans Day Parade.

The City of Tempe is committed to the preservation and rehabilitation of the abutment and its integration into the fabric and activity of the park. Concept plans have been developed which illustrate a restored structure supporting an observation platform above and housing a visitor information kiosk below.

The memorial will consist of three main areas. The veterans' parade will feature 80 silhouette panels of steel representing veterans of each service throughout history. Made of laser cut steel, they will outline marching officers, enlisted men and women in full dress and battle fatigues. The Court of Service will be an area where visitors honor veterans and see how they have served our country. The Overlook and Visitors Plaza is described in the section above regarding the Ash Avenue Bridge and Abutment.

The ultimate success of the campaign will require the generous contributions of corporations and individuals who recognize the long-term dividends of investing in our Valley's sustainability, and believe in the vision of creating a regional destination that is unmatched in resources. By supporting the *Water Was Just the Beginning Capital Campaign*, you will be shaping the future of the Rio Salado and Papago Park. Please join the Rio Salado Foundation in this vital endeavor.

For more information or how you can contribute please contact, Kim Knotter, Executive Director at 480-473-0245, or [kim@riosaladofoundation.org](mailto:kim@riosaladofoundation.org) [www.riosaladofoundation.org](http://www.riosaladofoundation.org)