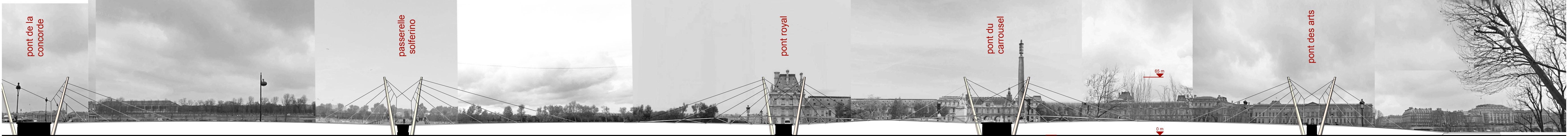




looking west to pont du carrousel



looking east from pont royal



BRIDGE: A structure spanning and providing passage over a gap or barrier, such as a river or roadway. This dictionary definition of the word "bridge" is likely to describe almost all bridge structures on earth. It also implies that the very purpose of building a bridge is defined by rationale and expediency. In our case the task on hand was to select a site and design a new bridge. But what do you do when the suggested location is a city with over 330 bridges already in existence. Do you add another one and continue to clutter the river views by stacking up more and more structures, adding more traffic light interruptions and pedestrian crossings to an already overloaded street network? Yes, we could do that. In fact we have been doing that for a long time.

There is another approach. We concentrated our area of study to the proposed stretch of the Seine River, between Pont de la Concorde and Ile de la Cite. This proposed scheme/approach could be implemented along the whole length of the river or along any part of it; or, for that matter, any river in the world. So here we have 5 crossings - there is nothing wrong with walking on any of those in order to get from one bank to another. This is a conventional city-centric circulation, where people follow a street/bridge grid that defines their route. But those grids have deficiencies. From a practical point of view they are inefficient in most cases, rarely providing optimal routes for residents and tourists. Also, as already was mentioned, these conventional bridges create obstacles for traffic and pedestrians by mixing them up at intersections. From an aesthetic point of view, the structures are very often blocking view opportunities, and more importantly do not contribute or enhance public exposure to the river with its countless scenic qualities.

Instead we are proposing a pedestrian-centric solution; a Longitudinal Crossing. The essence of the idea is a pedestrian bridge that does not cross over but spans along the river. The new bridge connects all existing bridges along this 1.5 km stretch of the river. It begins at Ile de la Cite and ends at the sidewalk of Pont de la Concorde, providing a unique pathway that boosts the efficiency of the existing crossings by providing an alternate mainline path that would disburden the river bank intersections and provide facilitated access to all destination points along the river. It would essentially change the way residents and tourists are experiencing the city. With this concept the idea of a bridge evolves from a standard utilitarian crossing into a comprehensive sustainable urban solution that addresses a number of modern day challenges like the lack of public exposure to the waterlines, traffic congestions, the lack of pedestrian oriented facilities, better integration of rivers in to the city fabric, etc. It also establishes an entirely new public realm and creates a category of experiences in a contemporary city that has never been present before. The concept of a Longitudinal Bridge is very flexible. It could span between 2 or 15 bridges across the river, without compromising any of its valuable aspects. In fact it adds endless phasing opportunities making the idea very practical for a potential implementation.

