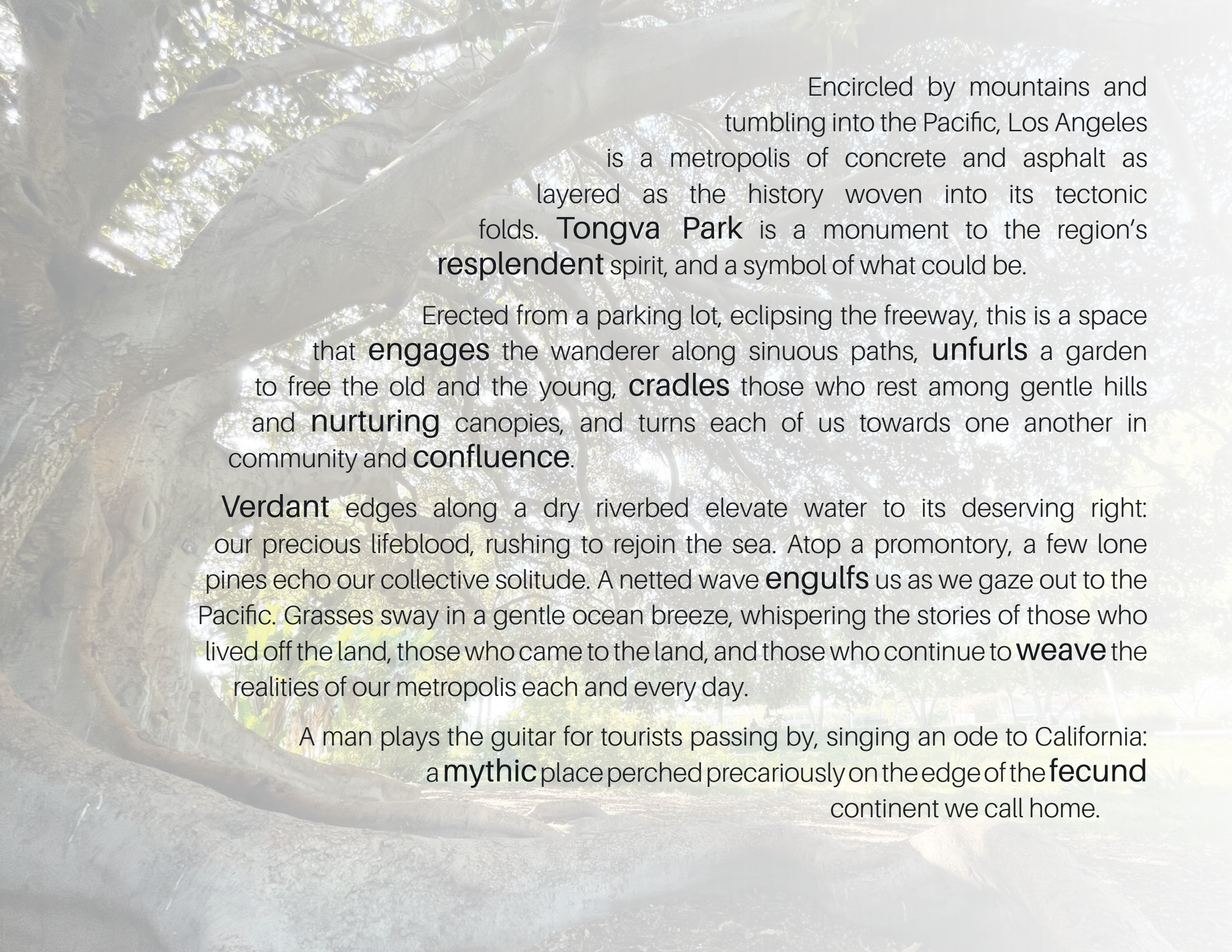




# TONGVA PARK

Design Graphics III  
Spring 2022  
Jesse Woltal



Encircled by mountains and tumbling into the Pacific, Los Angeles is a metropolis of concrete and asphalt as layered as the history woven into its tectonic folds. **Tongva Park** is a monument to the region's **resplendent** spirit, and a symbol of what could be.

Erected from a parking lot, eclipsing the freeway, this is a space that **engages** the wanderer along sinuous paths, **unfurls** a garden to free the old and the young, **cradles** those who rest among gentle hills and **nurturing** canopies, and turns each of us towards one another in community and **confluence**.

**Verdant** edges along a dry riverbed elevate water to its deserving right: our precious lifeblood, rushing to rejoin the sea. Atop a promontory, a few lone pines echo our collective solitude. A netted wave **engulfs** us as we gaze out to the Pacific. Grasses sway in a gentle ocean breeze, whispering the stories of those who lived off the land, those who came to the land, and those who continue to **weave** the realities of our metropolis each and every day.

A man plays the guitar for tourists passing by, singing an ode to California: a **mythic** place perched precariously on the edge of the **fecund** continent we call home.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

SOWING SEEDS: CELEBRATION & REVERENCE

Project History . . . . . 4  
Site Context . . . . . 5

DISSECTING THE EXPERIENCE

Design Concept . . . . . 9  
Tree Canopy . . . . . 11  
Pedestrian Circulation . . . . . 13  
Water Systems . . . . . 15  
Seating . . . . . 17

CAPTURING THE ESSENCE

Illustrative Plan . . . . . 21  
Enlargement & Section View. . . . . 22  
P1: View Over Scrub Mound. . . . . 23  
P2: View Through Coral Tree Canopy . . . . . 24

IT'S IN THE DETAIL

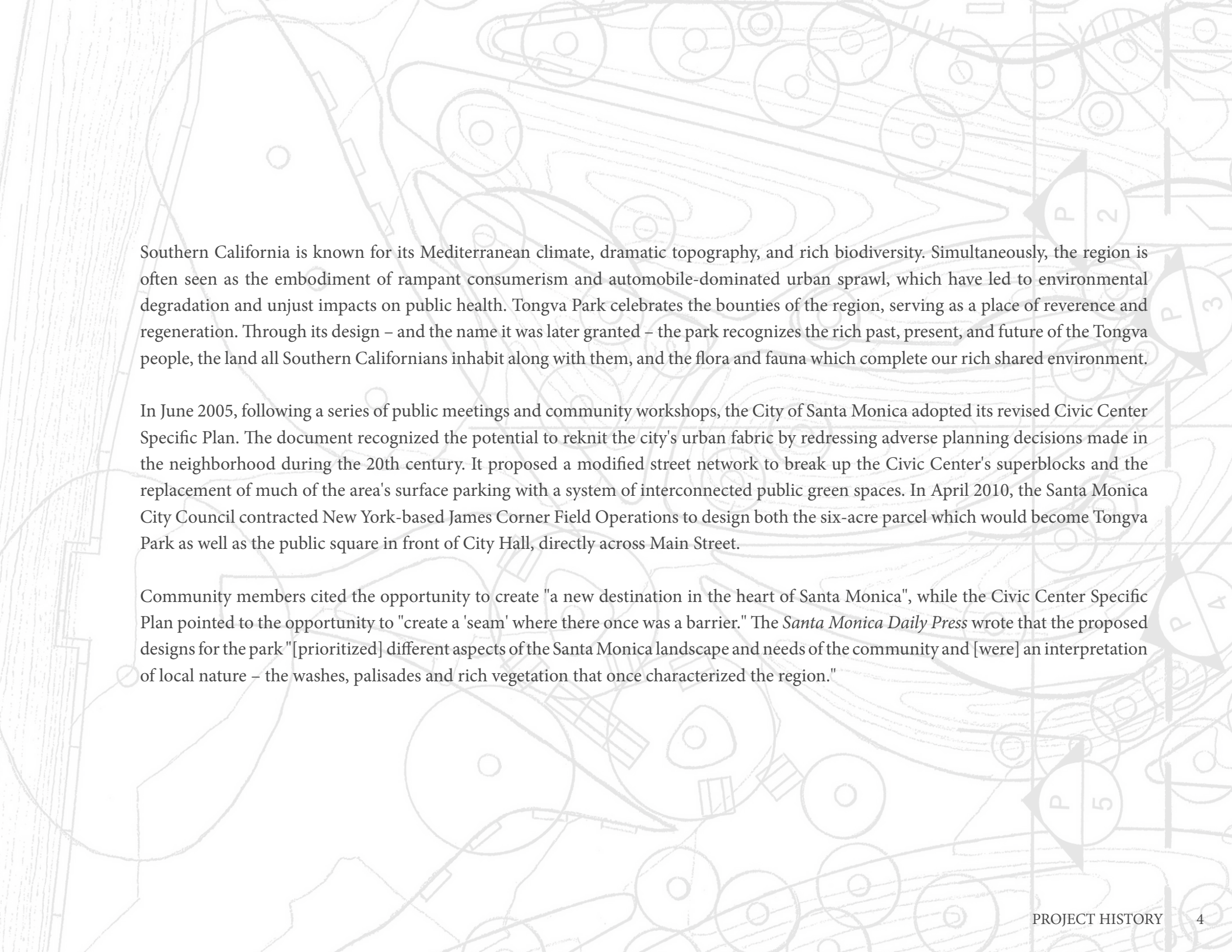
Planting & Built Materials . . . . . 27

THE JOURNEY BEGINS HERE

Student Biography & References. . . . . 30



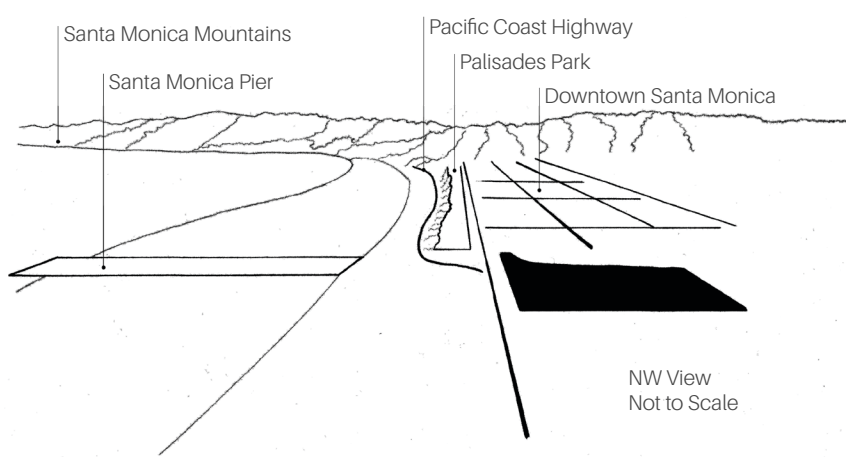
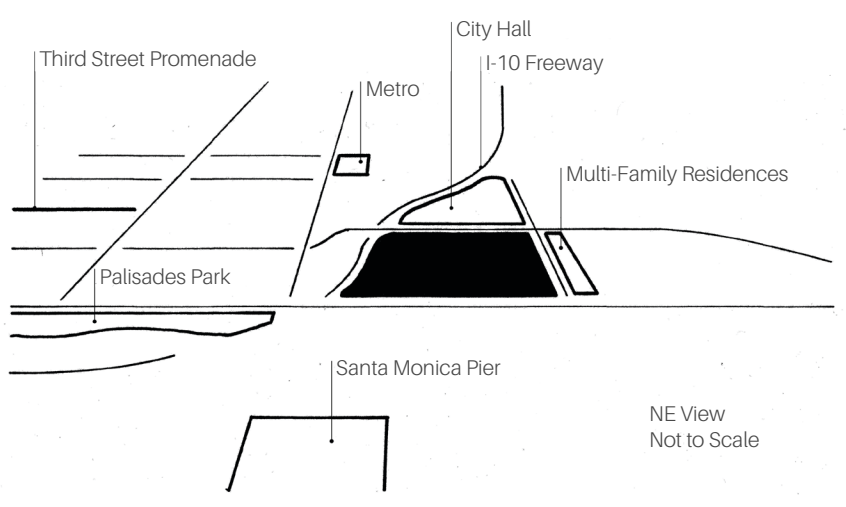
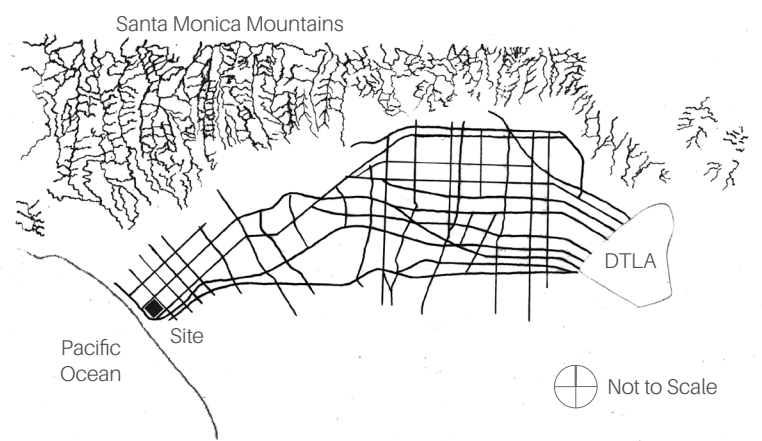
**SOWING SEEDS:  
CELEBRATION  
& REVERENCE**



Southern California is known for its Mediterranean climate, dramatic topography, and rich biodiversity. Simultaneously, the region is often seen as the embodiment of rampant consumerism and automobile-dominated urban sprawl, which have led to environmental degradation and unjust impacts on public health. Tongva Park celebrates the bounties of the region, serving as a place of reverence and regeneration. Through its design – and the name it was later granted – the park recognizes the rich past, present, and future of the Tongva people, the land all Southern Californians inhabit along with them, and the flora and fauna which complete our rich shared environment.

In June 2005, following a series of public meetings and community workshops, the City of Santa Monica adopted its revised Civic Center Specific Plan. The document recognized the potential to reknit the city's urban fabric by redressing adverse planning decisions made in the neighborhood during the 20th century. It proposed a modified street network to break up the Civic Center's superblocks and the replacement of much of the area's surface parking with a system of interconnected public green spaces. In April 2010, the Santa Monica City Council contracted New York-based James Corner Field Operations to design both the six-acre parcel which would become Tongva Park as well as the public square in front of City Hall, directly across Main Street.

Community members cited the opportunity to create "a new destination in the heart of Santa Monica", while the Civic Center Specific Plan pointed to the opportunity to "create a 'seam' where there once was a barrier." The *Santa Monica Daily Press* wrote that the proposed designs for the park "[prioritized] different aspects of the Santa Monica landscape and needs of the community and [were] an interpretation of local nature – the washes, palisades and rich vegetation that once characterized the region."



Santa Monica is an iconic coastal community on the western edge of the Los Angeles Basin. The city is located at the terminus of several cross-town bus routes, a metro line, as well as Interstate 10; it is also a key stop along the Pacific Coast Highway. Renowned for its scenic cliffs, beachside mountain views, and bustling pier, Santa Monica is a hotspot for locals and tourists alike. In 2019, the city hosted over eight million visitors, half of whom came from abroad.



Entrance to Santa Monica Pier



Marvin Braude Bike Trail

Tongva Park is sited in the middle of this active community, linked to key destinations such as the Santa Monica Pier, cliffside Palisades Park, and downtown Third Street Promenade. It is directly across the street from Santa Monica City Hall, serving as a connection between the city's civic core and the beach that puts it on the map.



Palisades Park



Third Street Promenade

As one of the top-rated cities in the United States for cycling, a rich network of transit, bike, and pedestrian infrastructure is enhanced by wayfinding signage guiding visitors around the park vicinity. Tongva Park's undulating design and dense plantings cradle visitors, masking the interstate and providing a buffer against busy Ocean Avenue.



Tongva Park along the I-10 Freeway



Vendors at Ocean & Colorado




DISSECTING  
THE  
EXPERIENCE



*T*hrough diagramming, we learn about the park  
and the interrelated systems which contribute to  
our sense of place within it.



Not to Scale 



VI - Grow



IV - Rest



III - Gather



V - Nurture



II - Flourish



I - Gaze





I - Three Amigos Ficus Trees



IV - Coral Tree Canopies



V - Olive & Pine Chandeliers



II - Moreton Bay Fig



VII - Olympic Promenade



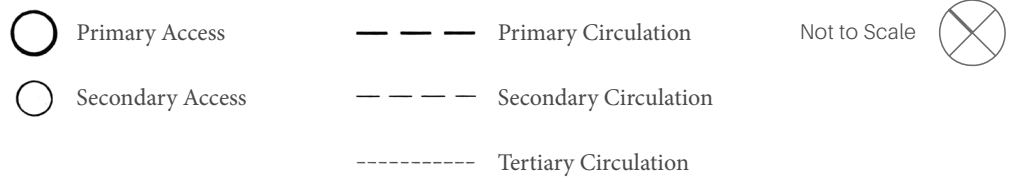
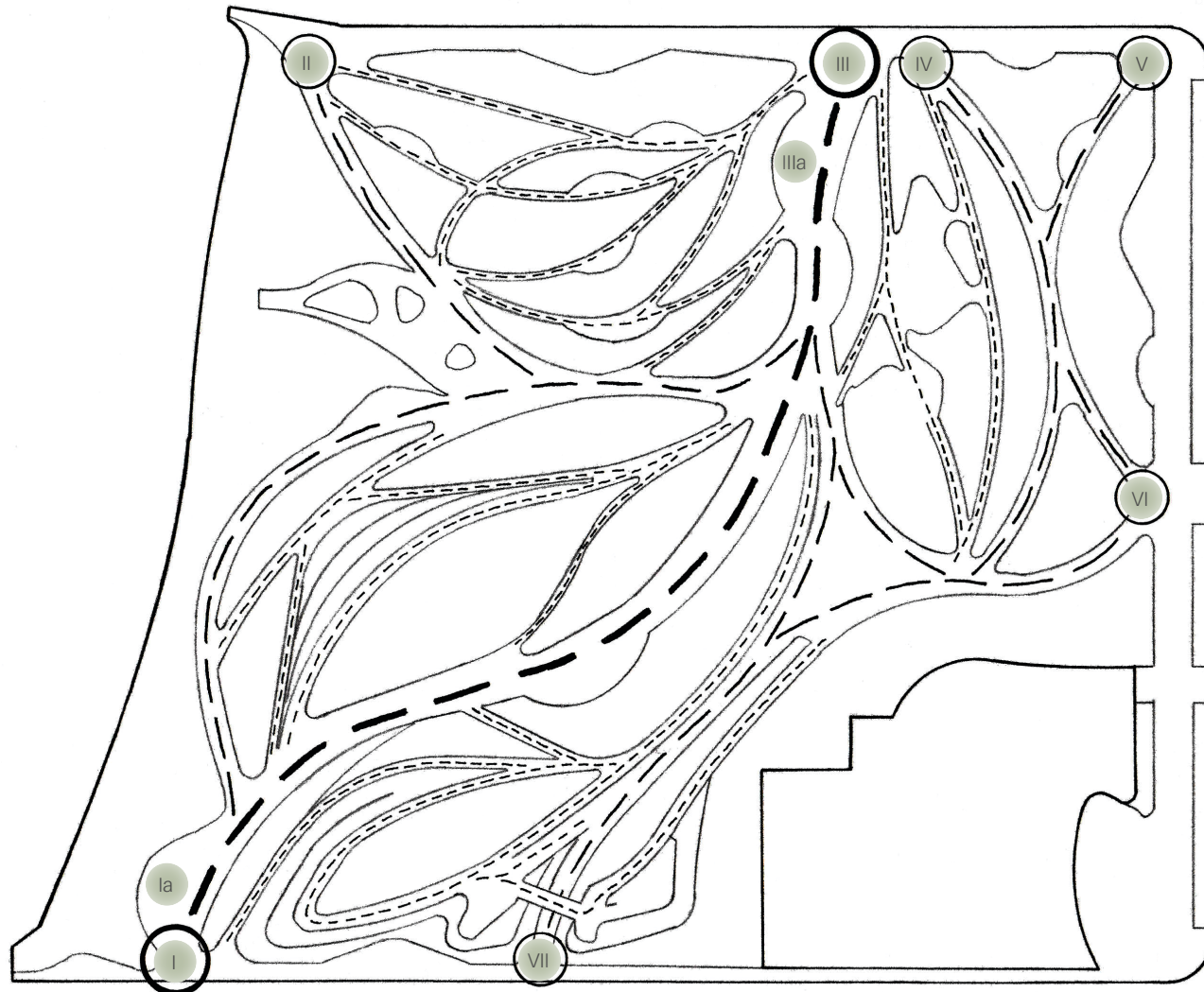
VI - Deciduous Sycamores



III - Fanfare of Palms



VIII - Shaded Micromobility





II - Sculptural Ficus Doorway



III - East Entrance; Window to City Hall



IIIa - East Vestibule



IV - Diverging Paths



V - Boulders Break the Way



Ia - West Vestibule



VI - Into the Woods






I - West Entrance; Invitation to the Beachgoer



VII - Gateway to Ocean



 Water Feature  
 Swale

Not to Scale 





VI - Blossoms in a Meadow



VII - Emerging Grasses



III - Flowing Arroyo



V - Jumping Waters



IV - Verdant Arroyo



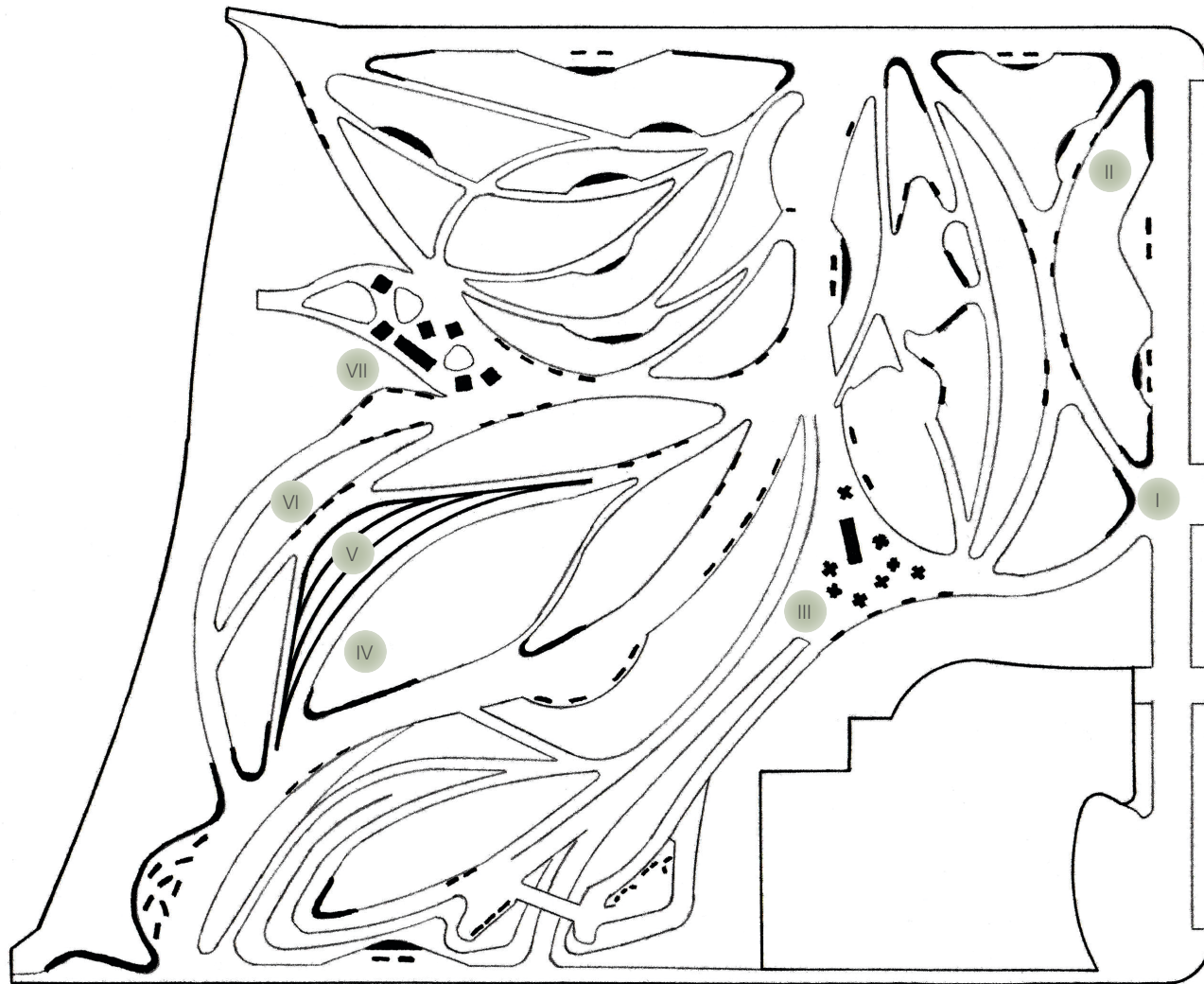
II - Cascading Waters



VIII - Rugged Swale



I - Source Flows towards the Sea



+ ■ Picnic Tables  
 — — Benches

Not to Scale ⊗



VII - An Invitation to Gather



VI - Subtle Repetition



II - Pause Beneath the Trees



I - Walls that Welcome



III - A Picnic in the Park



V - Amphitheater in the Clearing

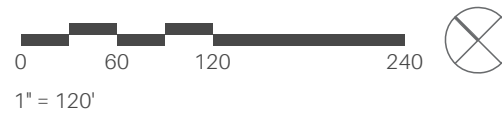


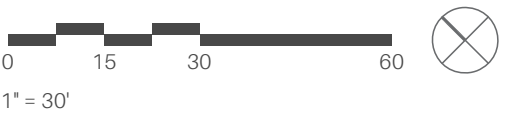
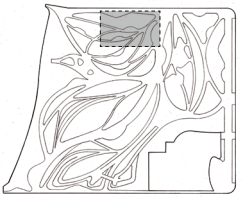
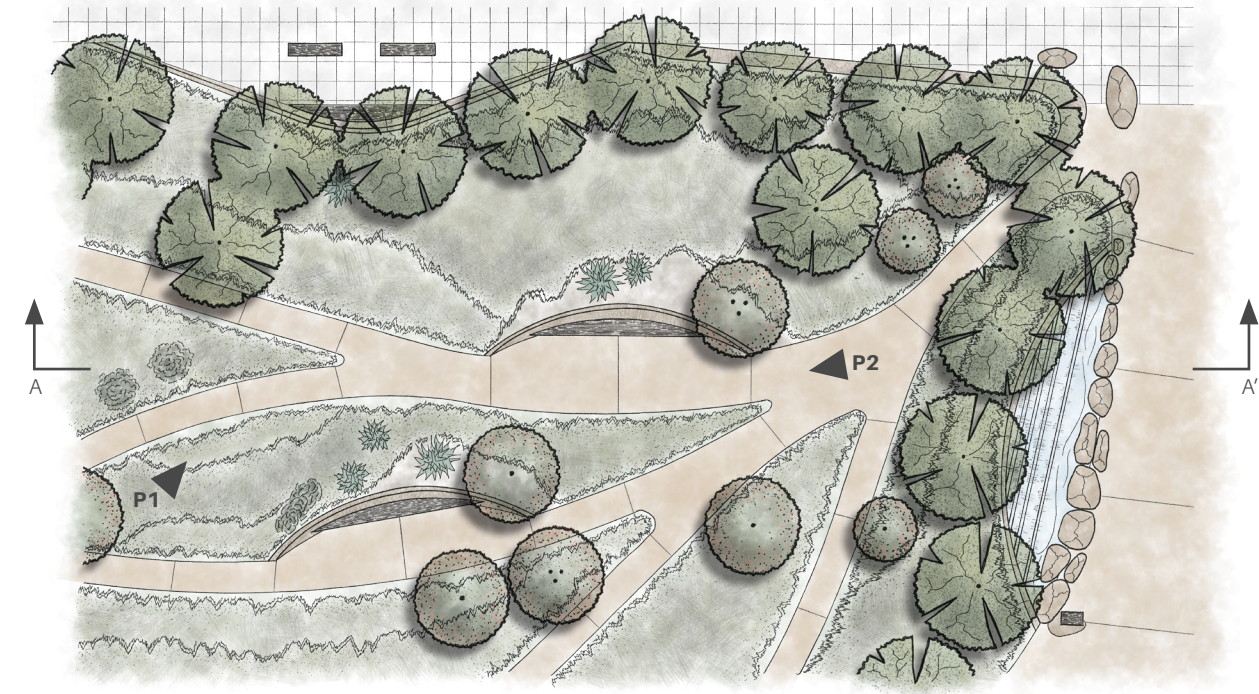
IV - View of Sweeping Seats



CAPTURING  
THE  
ESSENCE

*Through drawing, we come to understand the essence of a place. Specific elements stand out to our eyes; we choose to highlight some aspects and de-emphasize others.*













IT'S IN THE DETAIL

*Painting with a broad brush gets you only so far. It is when you dig into the detail that you work at scales which create experience, memory, and healing for the individual and the planet.*



Tongva Park boasts a range of tree mixes; its dense canopy is comprised of groves where sycamore, olive, pine, fig, and palm species flourish. It is in the undergrowth, however, where one can best observe the rich biodiversity planted into the park. Many of Tongva Park's 400+ plant species live down at this level. They spread their blades, leaves, and inflorescences in an act of visual theater and provide their services to the wider ecosystem by attracting pollinators and aiding in water retention.

Coastal scrub plantings, drought-tolerant grasses, and sculptural succulents take visitors through a range of environments over the course of a short stroll. Colorful blossoms punctuate the scene, each season breathing new life into the park.

The constructed materials in the park include locally-sourced exposed aggregate concrete, which give the hardscape a more natural and textured look. Wide primary paths are paved with a larger aggregate; the scale steps down to a smaller aggregate for narrower secondary and tertiary pathways.

The concrete seating alcoves and retaining walls in the park have distressed surfaces, lending them a soft and welcoming aesthetic. Focal points such as the Pacific overlooks and connecting bridge between them are highlighted through the use of sustainably forested, non-tropical hardwoods. Their weathered look visually connects them to the breath of the ocean itself.





THE JOURNEY  
BEGINS HERE



Jesse has devoted the beginning of his professional career to the betterment of public transit as a means of fostering vibrant and healthy spaces in our cities. He spent his college years strolling the tight streets and interwoven parks of Boston, finding the city's lush green spaces take on new meaning with the onset of the pandemic.

While preparing for a move to Los Angeles, Jesse developed an interest in environmental humanities; he spent much of his time pouring over readings on landscape, its history, our relationship with it, and the thinkers and practitioners who set the field of landscape architecture in motion.

Almost immediately upon moving to the west coast, Jesse enrolled in the landscape architecture program at the UCLA Extension. The program, along with his new and strikingly dramatic surroundings, have provided Jesse with fertile ground for exploring landscape, nature, and our relationship with these concepts.

Jesse is incredibly grateful to UCLA as a community institution, the dedicated professors it attracts, and the talented classmates he shares it with. Most of all, he would like to express gratitude for the late-night conversations, musical working sessions, and ever-growing bond with Marco as we engage in our design journeys together.

## REFERENCES

A special thanks to the City of Santa Monica for maintaining a publicly-available archive of the Civic Center Parks Project:  
<https://tongvapark.squarespace.com/project-library>

James Corner Field Operations. (n.d.). Tongva Park. James Corner Field Operations. Retrieved May 30, 2022, from <https://www.fieldoperations.net/project-details/project/tongva-park.html>

People for Bikes. (n.d.). City Ratings: Places for Bikes. PeopleForBikes. Retrieved May 30, 2022, from <https://cityratings.peopleforbikes.org/cities/santa-monica-ca>

Santa Monica Travel & Tourism. (n.d.). Santa Monica Tourism: Visitor Profile and Economic Impact Studies. Santa Monica.com. Retrieved May 30, 2022, from <https://www.santamonica.com/about-smtt/economic-value-of-tourism/#:~:text=2019%20Tourism%20by%20the%20Numbers&text=1.89%20billion%20dollars%20generated%20by,they%20arrived%20in%20Santa%20Monica>

