

"Everybody needs  
beauty as well as  
bread, places to play  
in and pray in, where  
nature may heal and  
give strength to body  
and soul alike."

John Muir

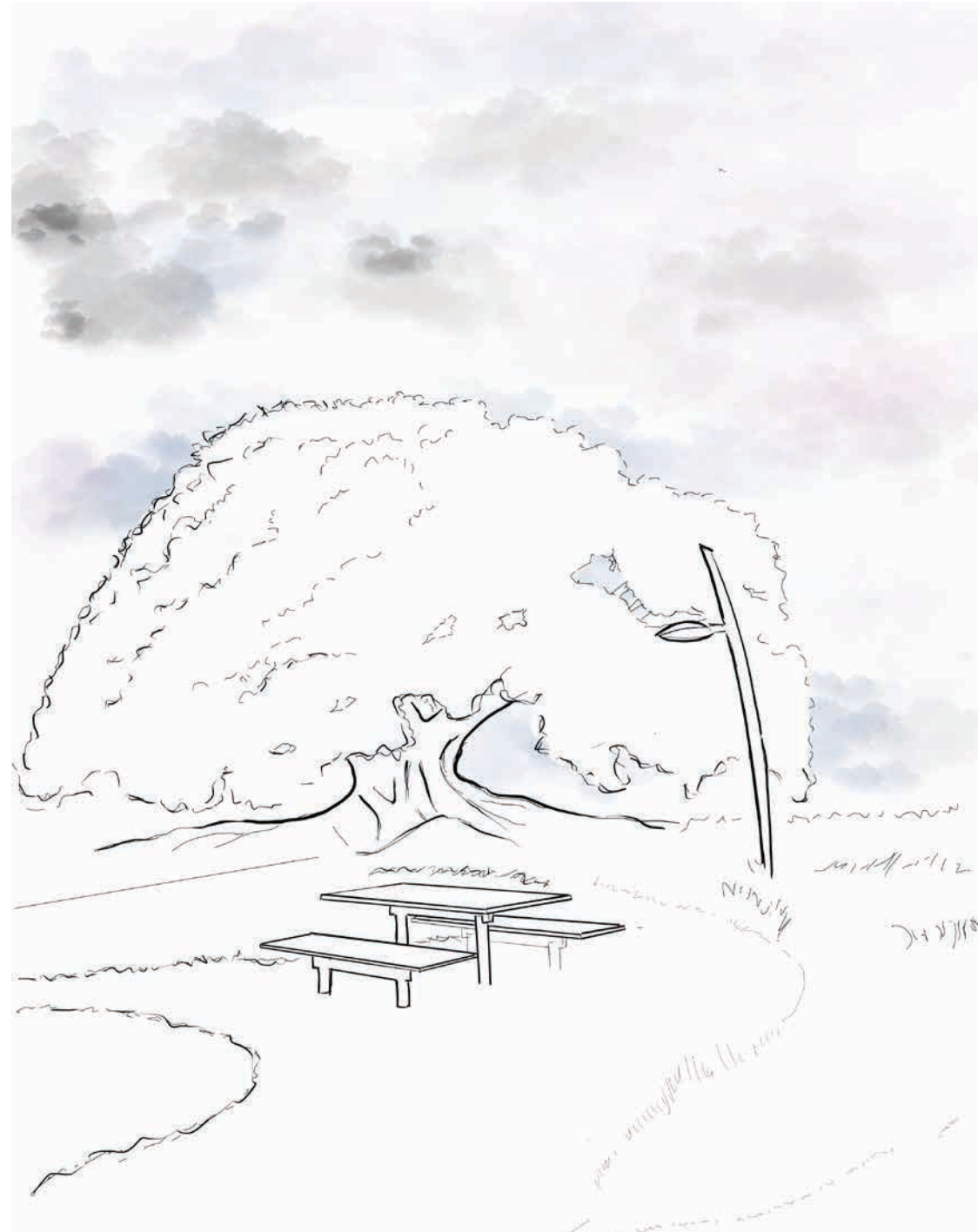
## TONGVA PARK

DESIGN GRAPHICS 3 | SPRING 2022  
MARILENA LEWANDOWSKI



CONTENTS

Although this work could be viewed as a collection of materials, for which it is advisable to have a table of contents, I would very much rather you read it as a story and engaged in following its flow. As such, I urge you to dive deep into it! I am thrilled you have chosen to travel alongside me for a short part of your journey! Here we go...



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## INTRODUCTION

I developed the materials used in this booklet in the first 3 terms of Year 1 of the Landscape Architecture course I am currently undertaking at the UCLA Extension.

In Design Graphics I, I worked exclusively with pencil and vellum and studied a quarter of the park (the southern corner) in detail.

In Design Graphics II, I worked with pen, trace, markers, and colored pencils to analyze and illustrate the site graphically. Use of pencil and vellum forbidden.

In Design Graphics III, I used Photoshop, InDesign, Procreate and AutoCAD to create new material, modify and render my existing material from DGI and DGII, and assemble this booklet.

Studying the park over 3 consecutive terms enabled my thinking to develop and my research to go in depths and directions I had not originally envisioned. It also gave me the opportunity to visit and explore the park in different seasons. A visit in October has a much different feel to it than a visit in May.

With every visit I would observe new things, make more connections between observations, and leave with more questions.

It is fair to claim that I know more about this 62 acre park than any other piece of land in the world. A lot of it had to be left out from this booklet but I hope you find some value in what has been included and how it has been presented.



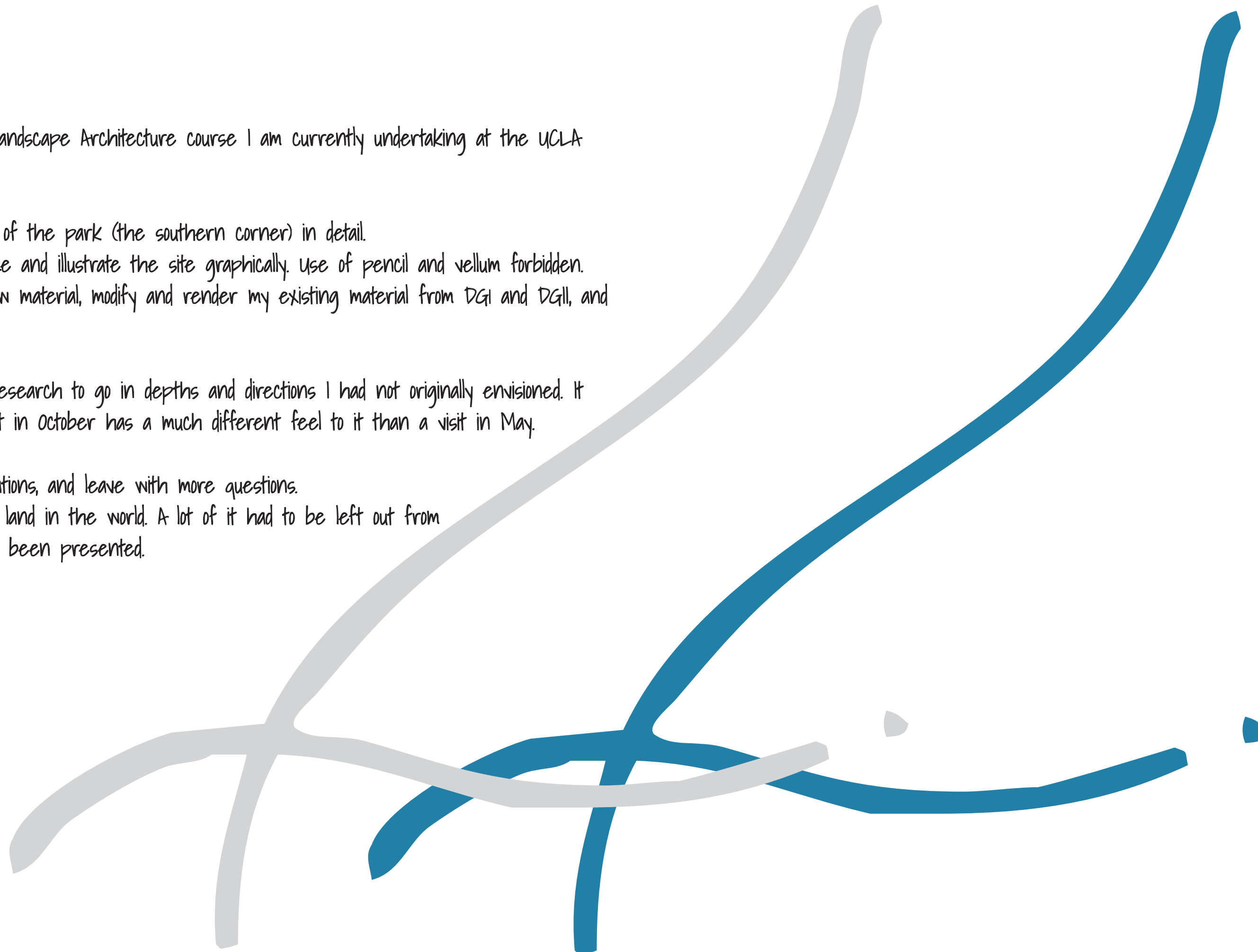
## PREMISE

I will start with the premise that if we are present and pay attention, then we can experience life not in moments isolated from one another but rather as a continuum where every experience, feeling, or thought is connected to another.

The design of our physical world; the extent to which spaces are built to reflect and respond to environmental, historical, and cultural elements, can strengthen this connection just as it can also weaken it.

For me, the case of Tongva Park is interesting in this respect and I will try to share with you my experience of the park and my view of how some aspects of its design strengthen this connection whilst others hinder it.

I chose not to use any photos of the park and opted for using my sketches instead in an attempt to create some distance and convey how I have experienced the site and how it has impacted me.



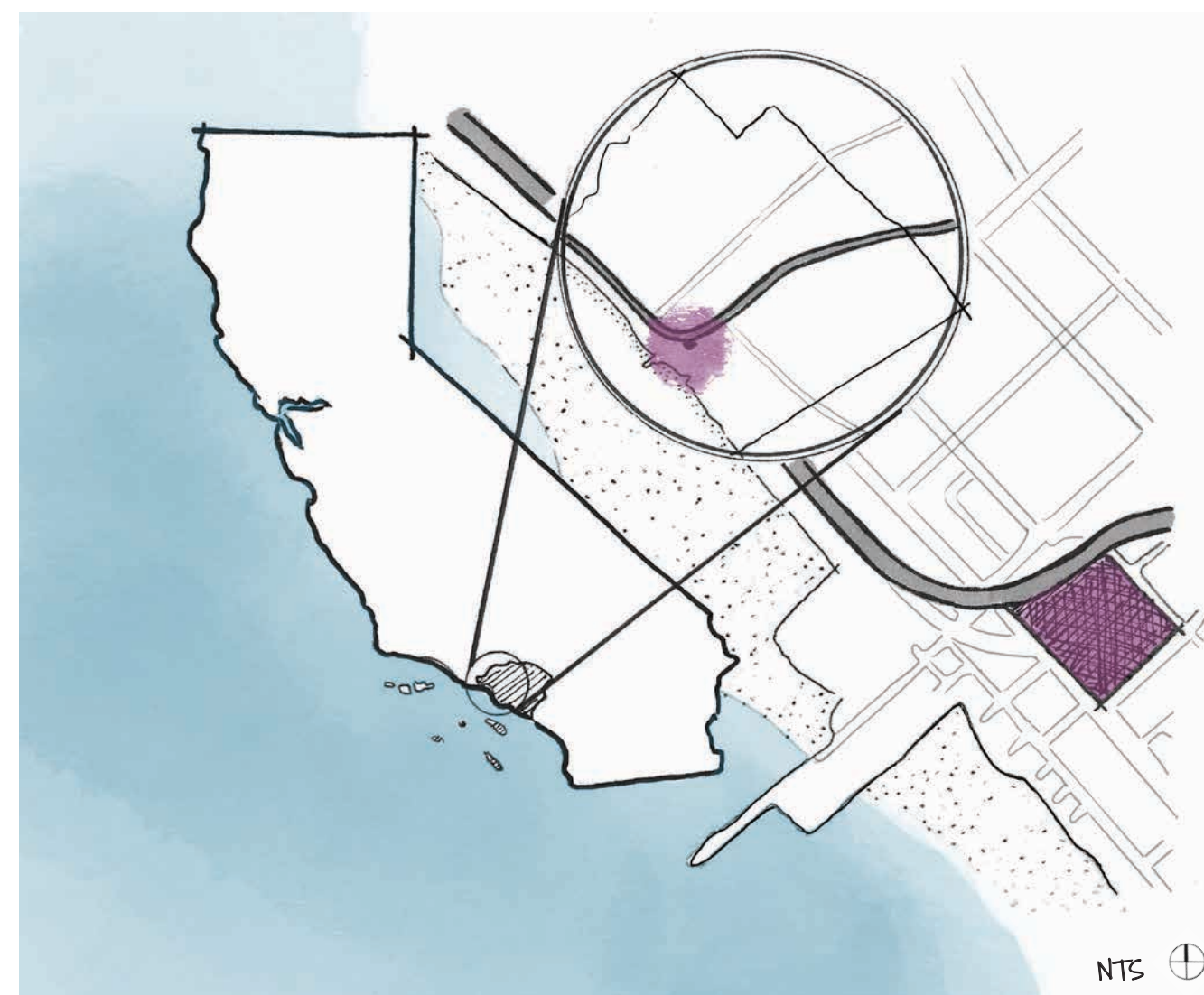


# CONNECTION



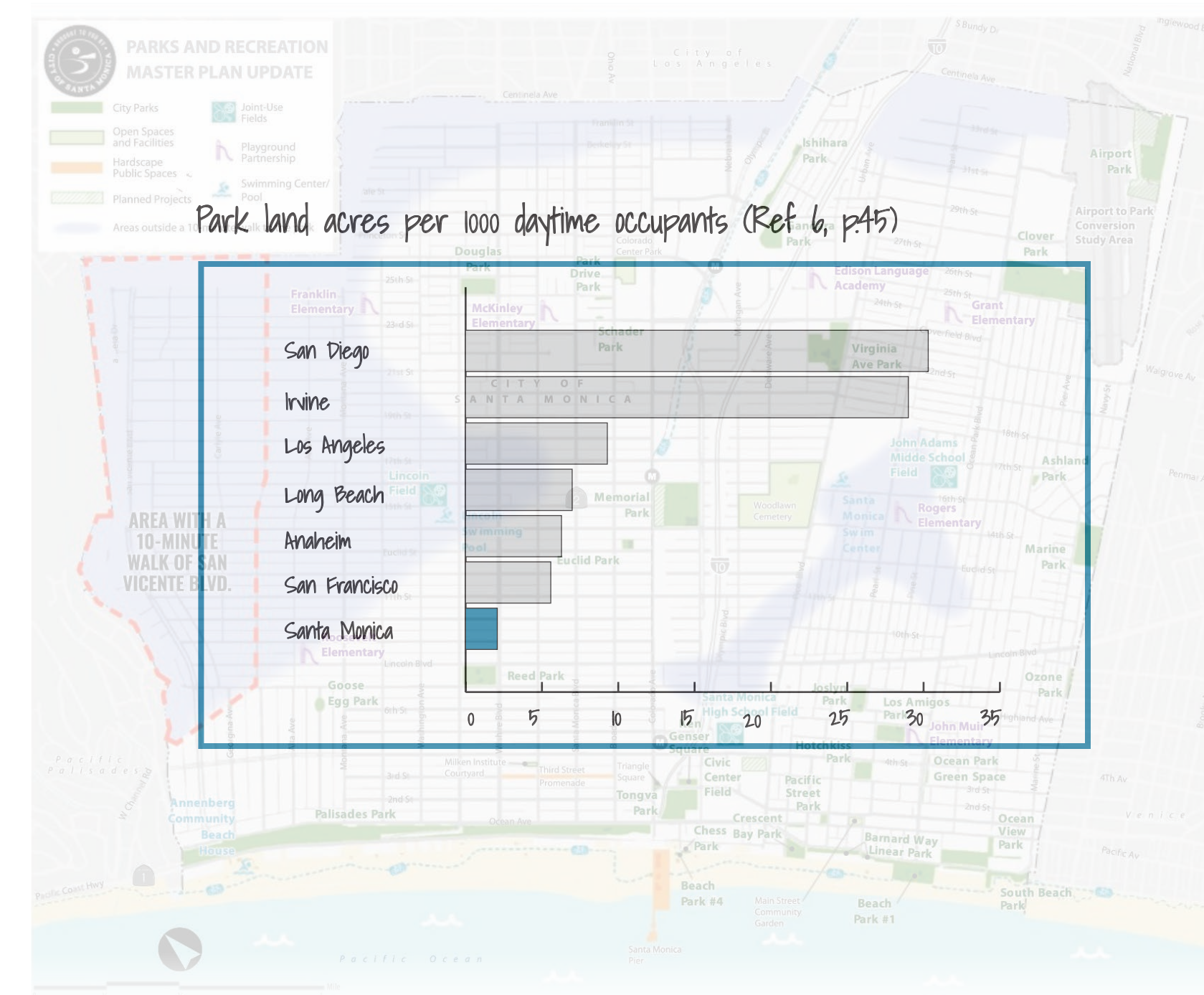
## i. LOCATION

The site is located in southern California, across the Santa Monica pier.



## COMPARATIVE CONTEXT

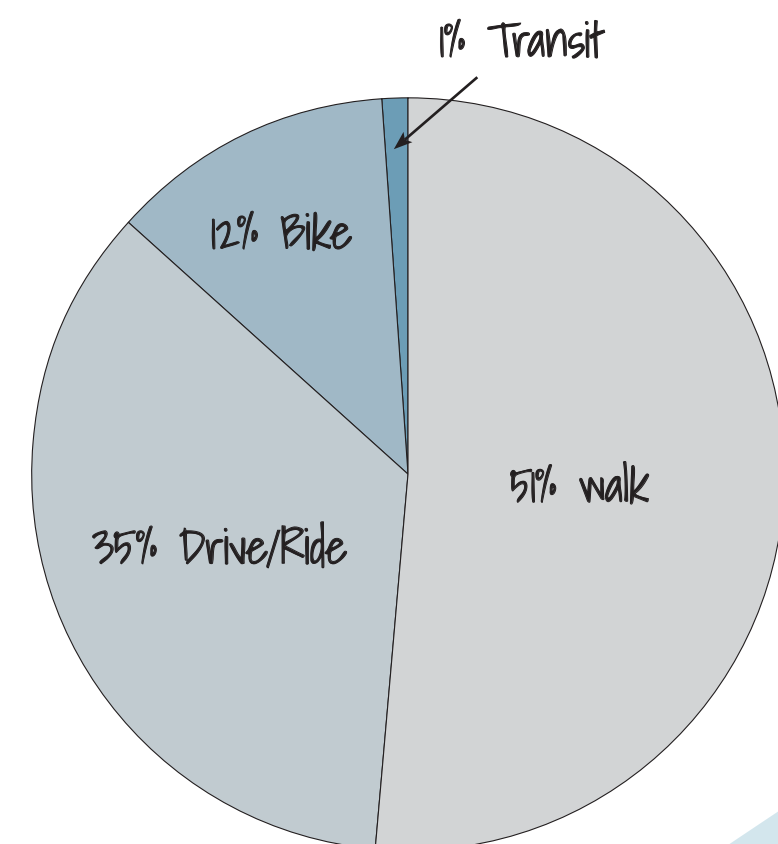
Parkland is quite limited in Santa Monica as compared to other cities in California. This makes the need for a well-designed space even more pressing.



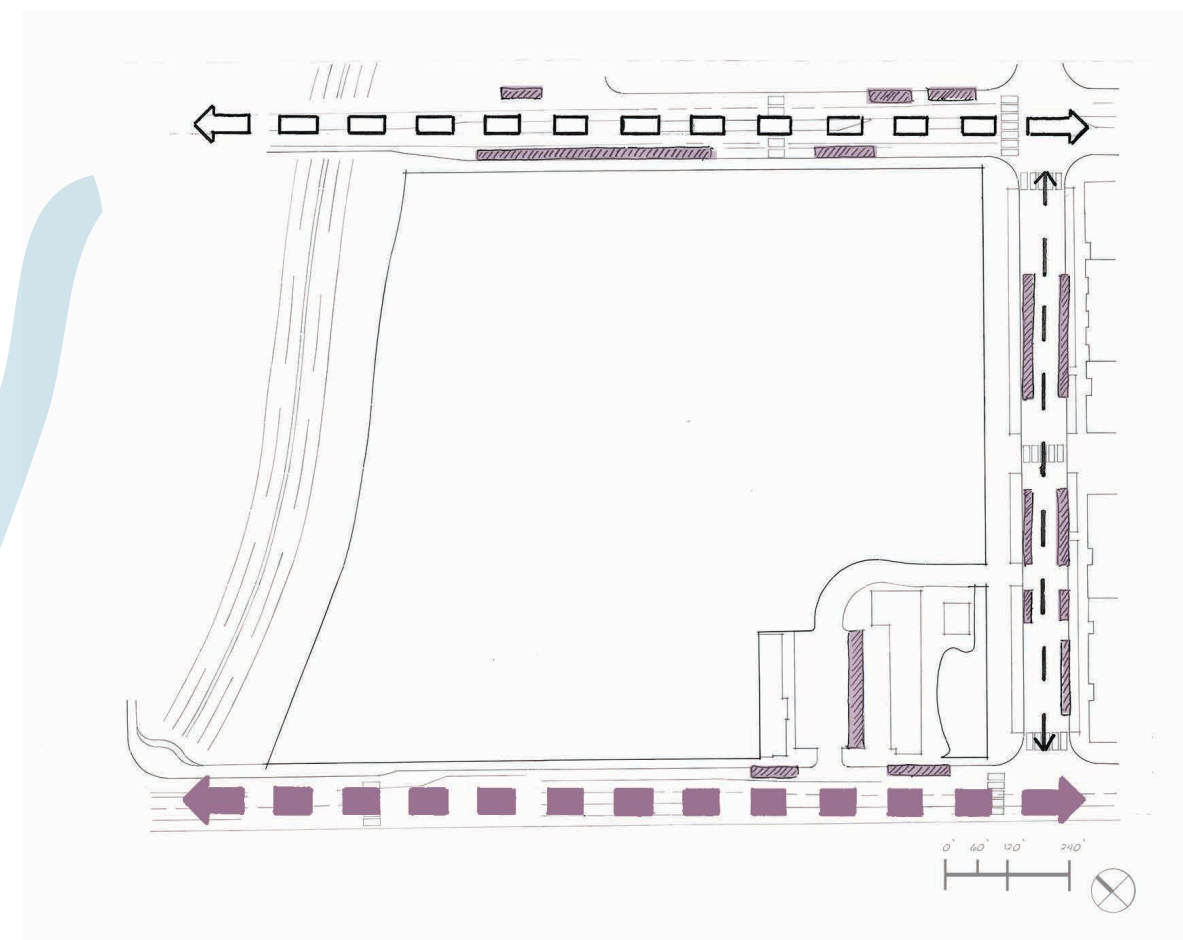


## ii. CIRCULATION

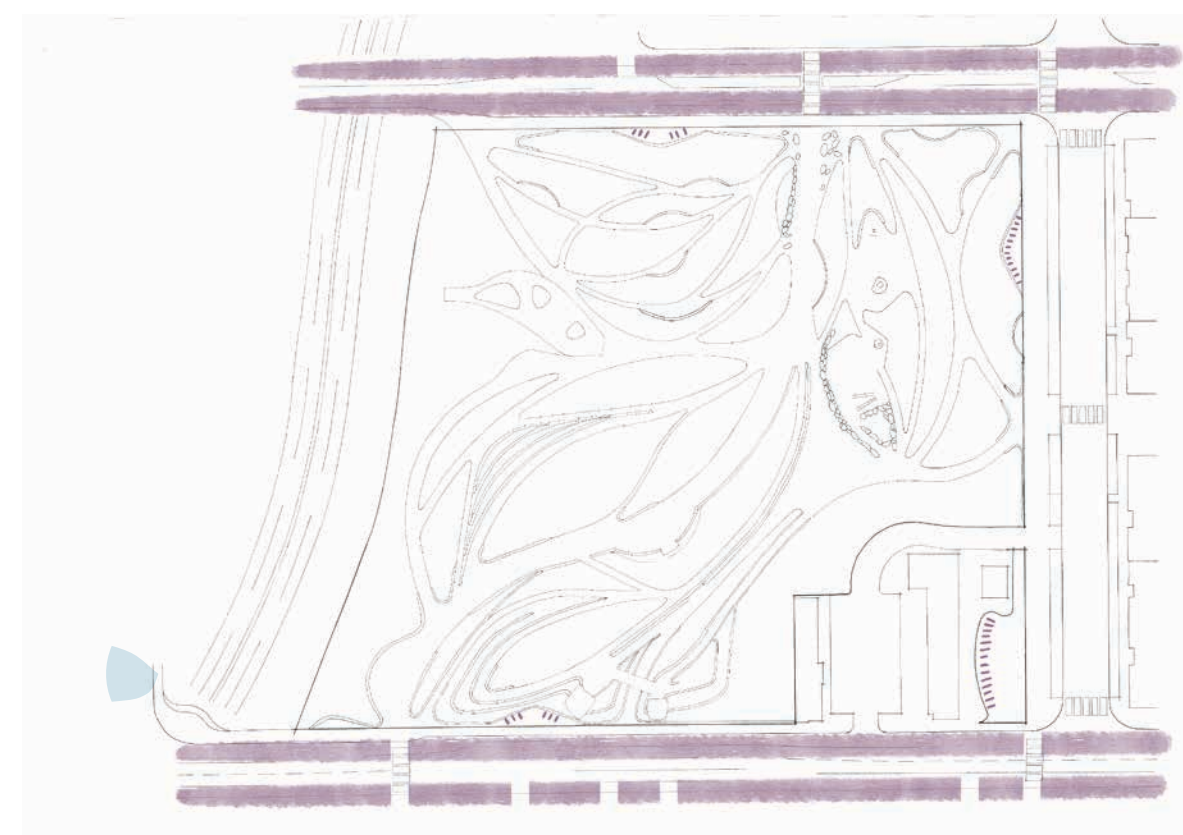
How do Santa Monicans get to parks?



In a 2019 Santa Monica Parks + Recreations Assessment Report (Ref 6, p. 27), a significant number of participants stated that they drive or cycle to parks, hence the choice to analyze vehicular circulation + parking places as well as bicycle lanes + racks. The site is easily accessible via both media.



VEHICULAR CIRCULATION + PARKING

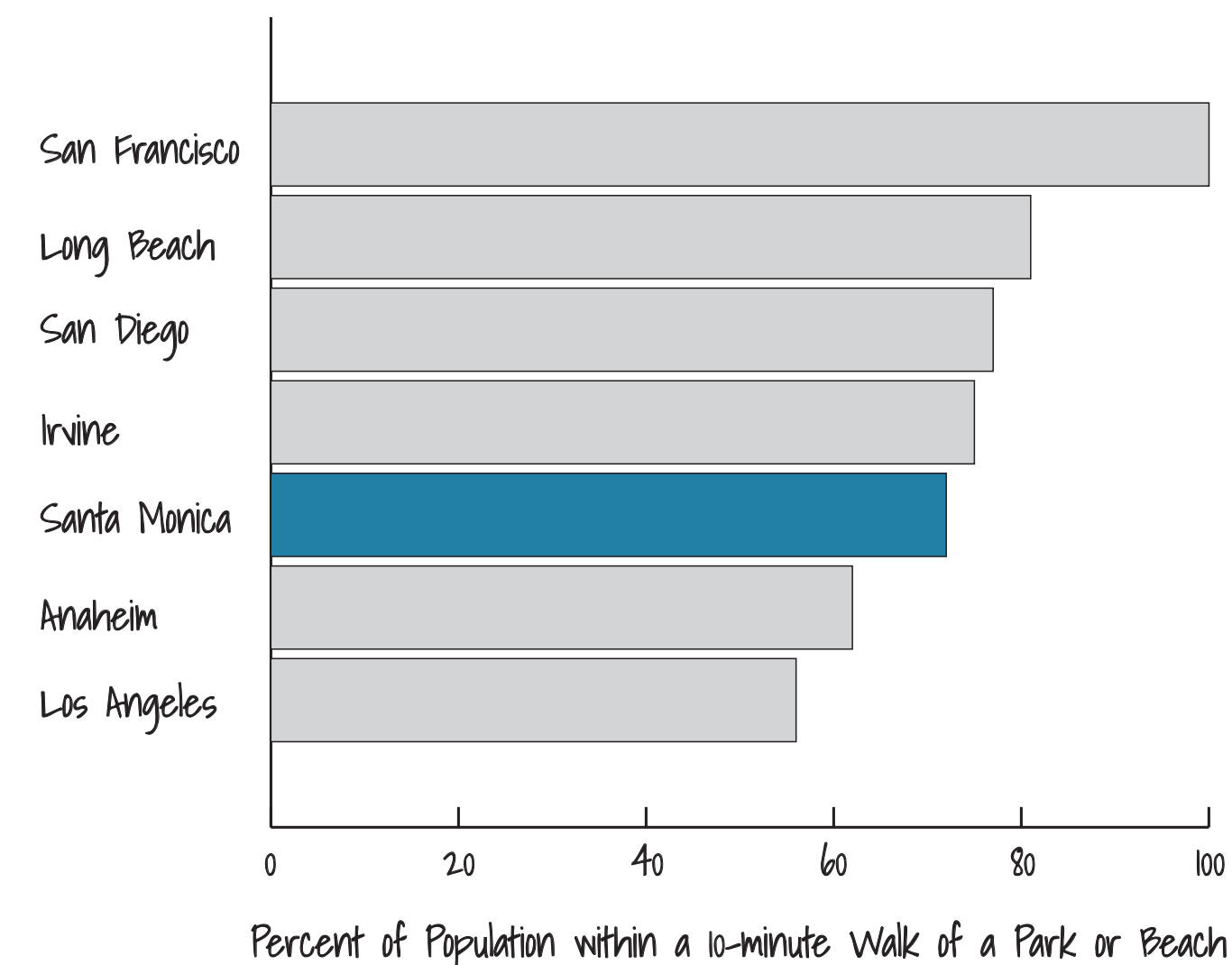


BICYCLE LANES + RACKS

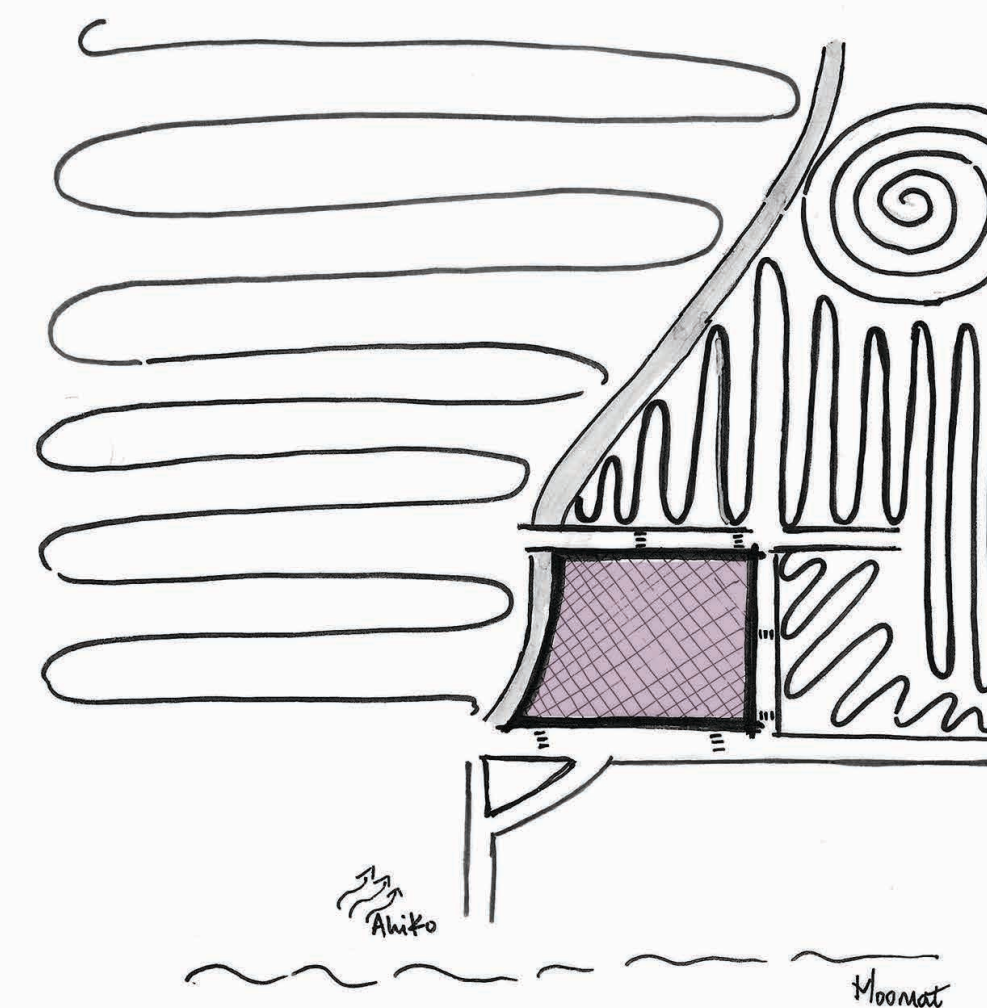
## iii. CONTEXT

Even though Santa Monica has less park land on a per capita basis, it has a good 10-minute walk park access.

This is approximated by a half-mile distance. (Ref 6, p.47)



The majority of Santa Monicans stated they walk to parks. This makes Tongva Park's proximity to the residential complex, commercial district, and the Santa Monica high school, an ideal location.



CONTEXT DIAGRAM

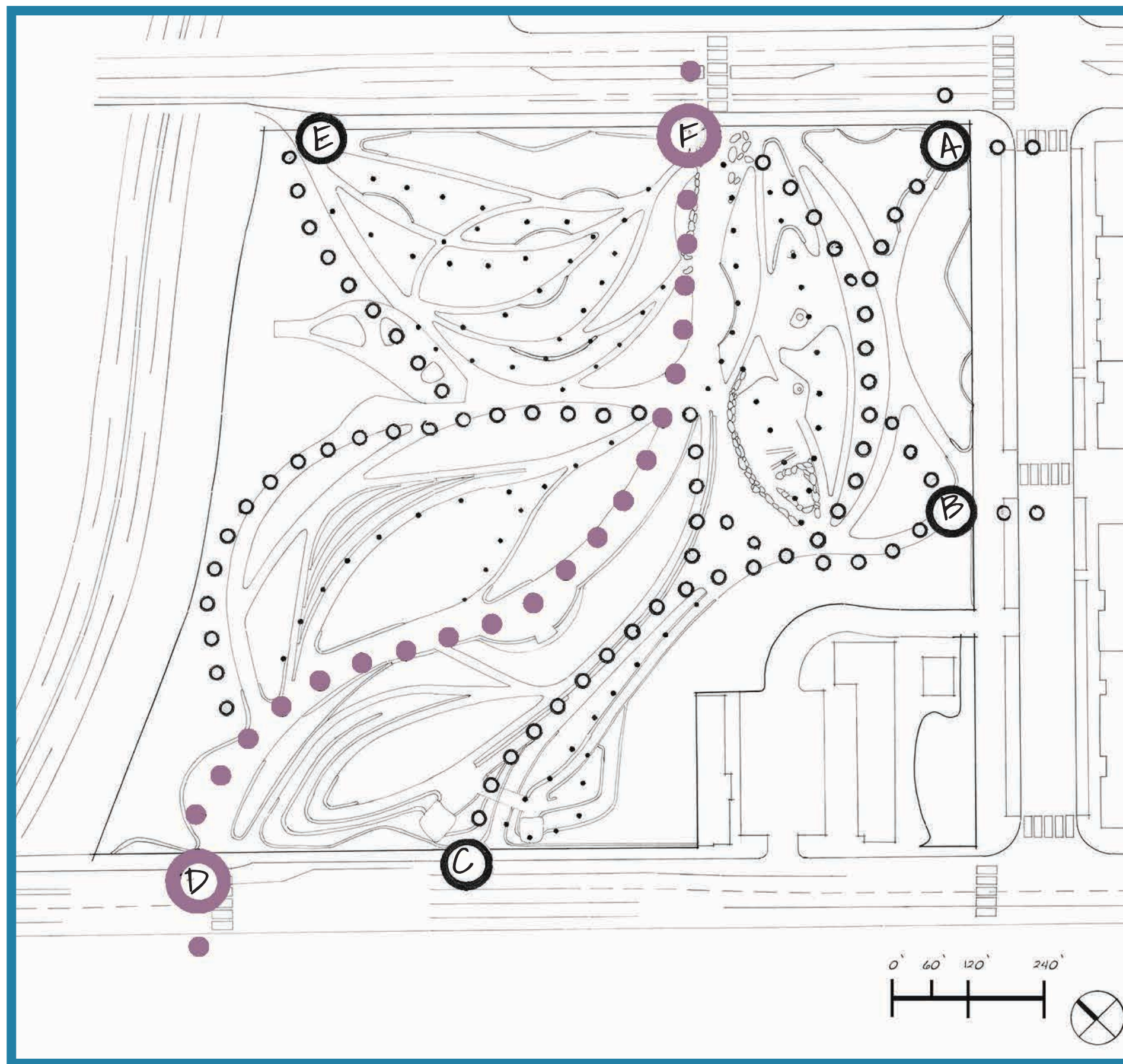
M CIVIC  
 @ INSTITUTIONAL  
 Z COMMERCIAL  
 w RESIDENTIAL



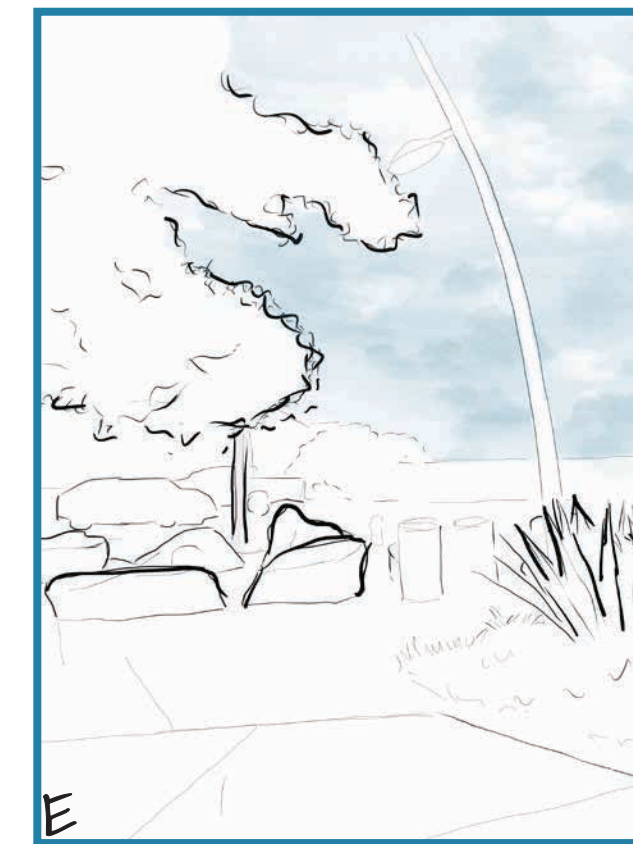
# iv. ACCESS

The park entrances on Main Street (A) and on Olympic Drive (B) allow for easy access for the high school students and residents of the area respectively.

The main entrance of the park on Main Street is on a vertical axis with the City Hall entrance across the street thus forming another connection between the park and its surroundings.



PEDESTRIAN CIRCULATION & ACCESS POINTS

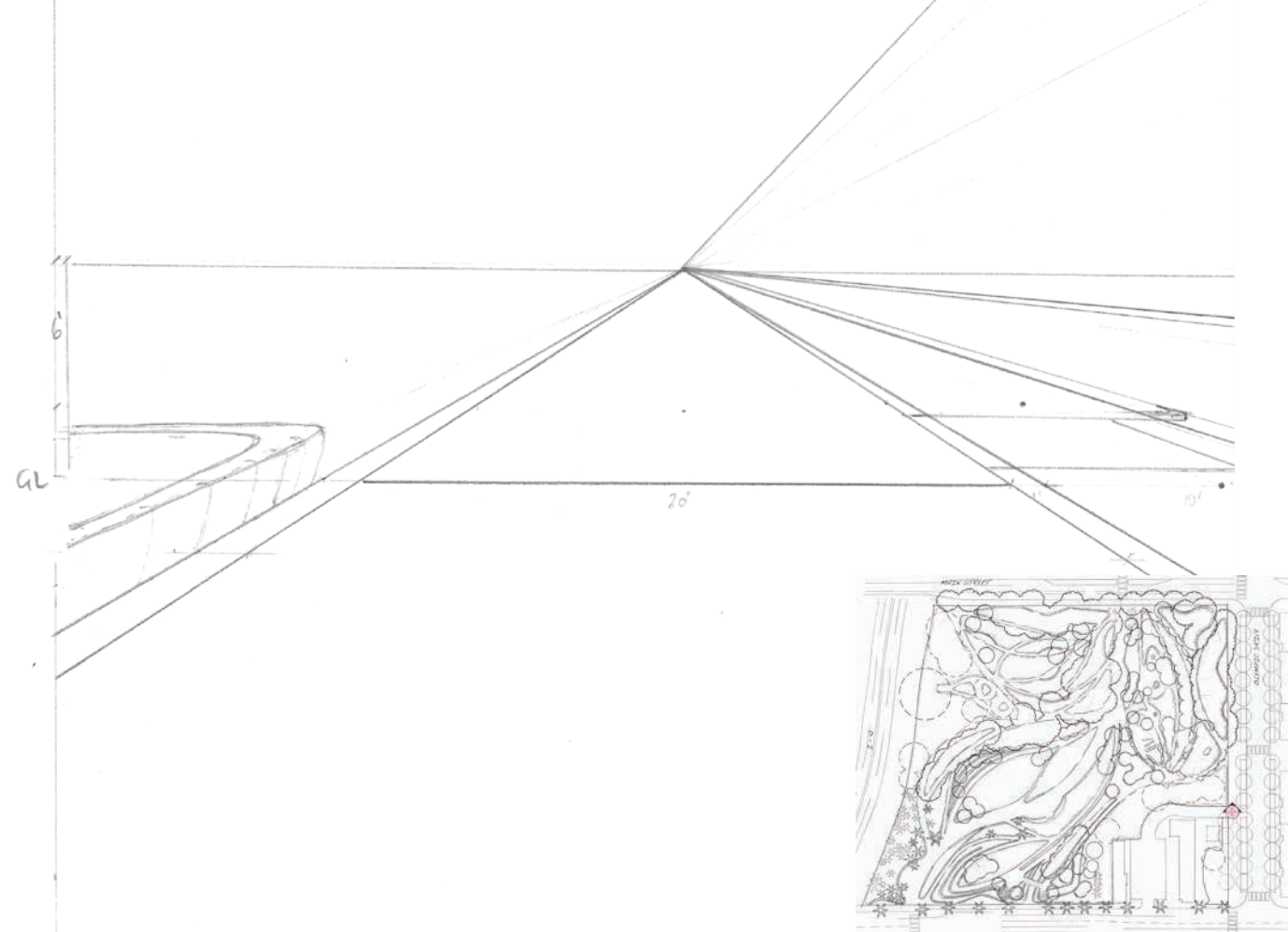




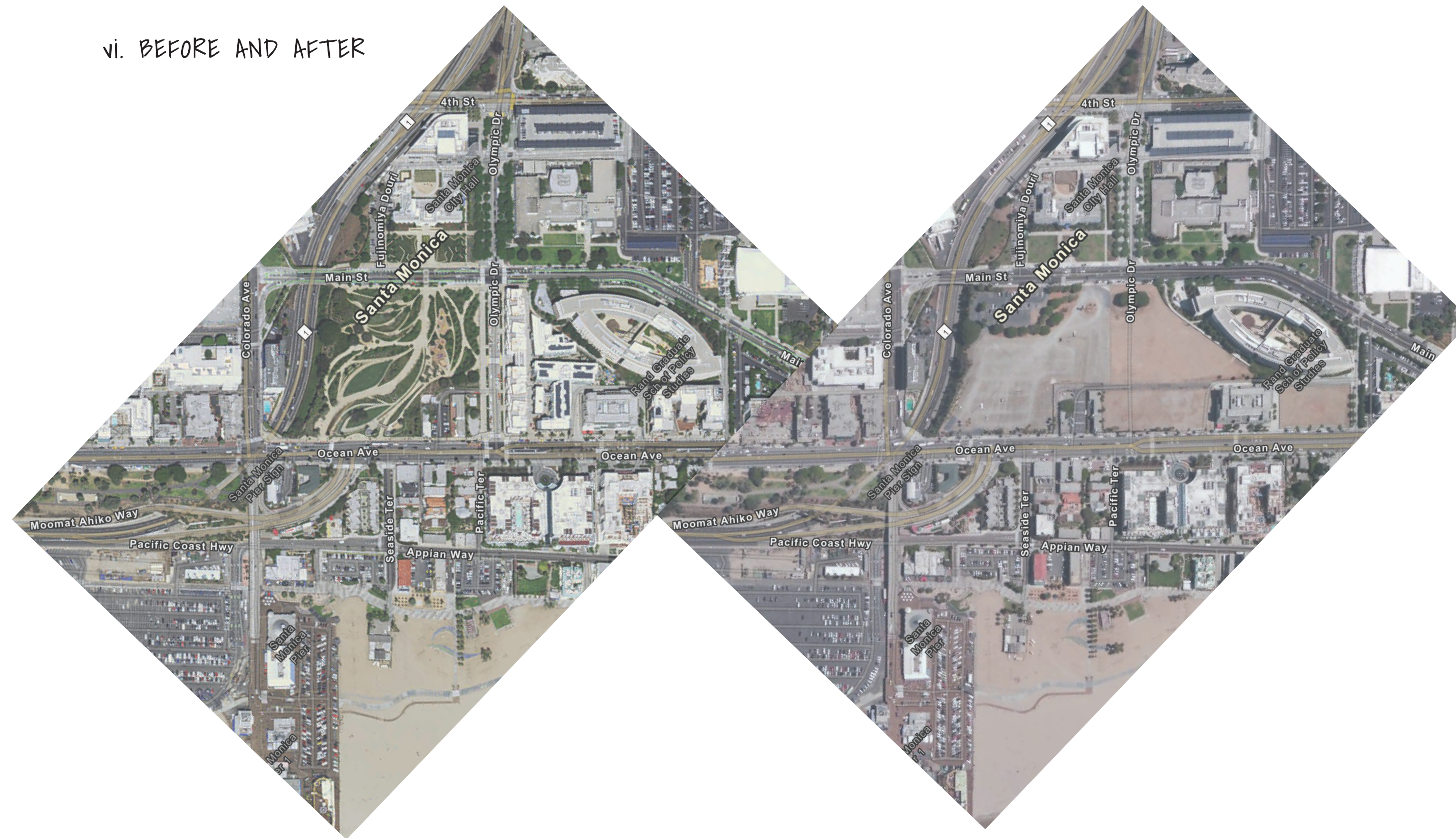
## V. THE VILLAGE AT SANTA MONICA

On Olympic Drive, the park is overlooked by 'The Village at Santa Monica'. This is an urban mix of condominiums, income-restricted rental apartments, retail space and walkable plazas and gardens.

The entrance of the park on Olympic Drive is a response to the development across the street as is the placement of the playground area in close proximity to this entrance.



## vi. BEFORE AND AFTER



Before being cleared for Tongva Park, the site was dominated by the RAND Corporation's parking lot. (Ref 10)





## vii. THE HILLS & VIEWS

To create the park's lookouts, infill soil was taken from construction sites around the city, tested to ensure safety, and sculpted to create accessible slopes for the site. (Ref 4)

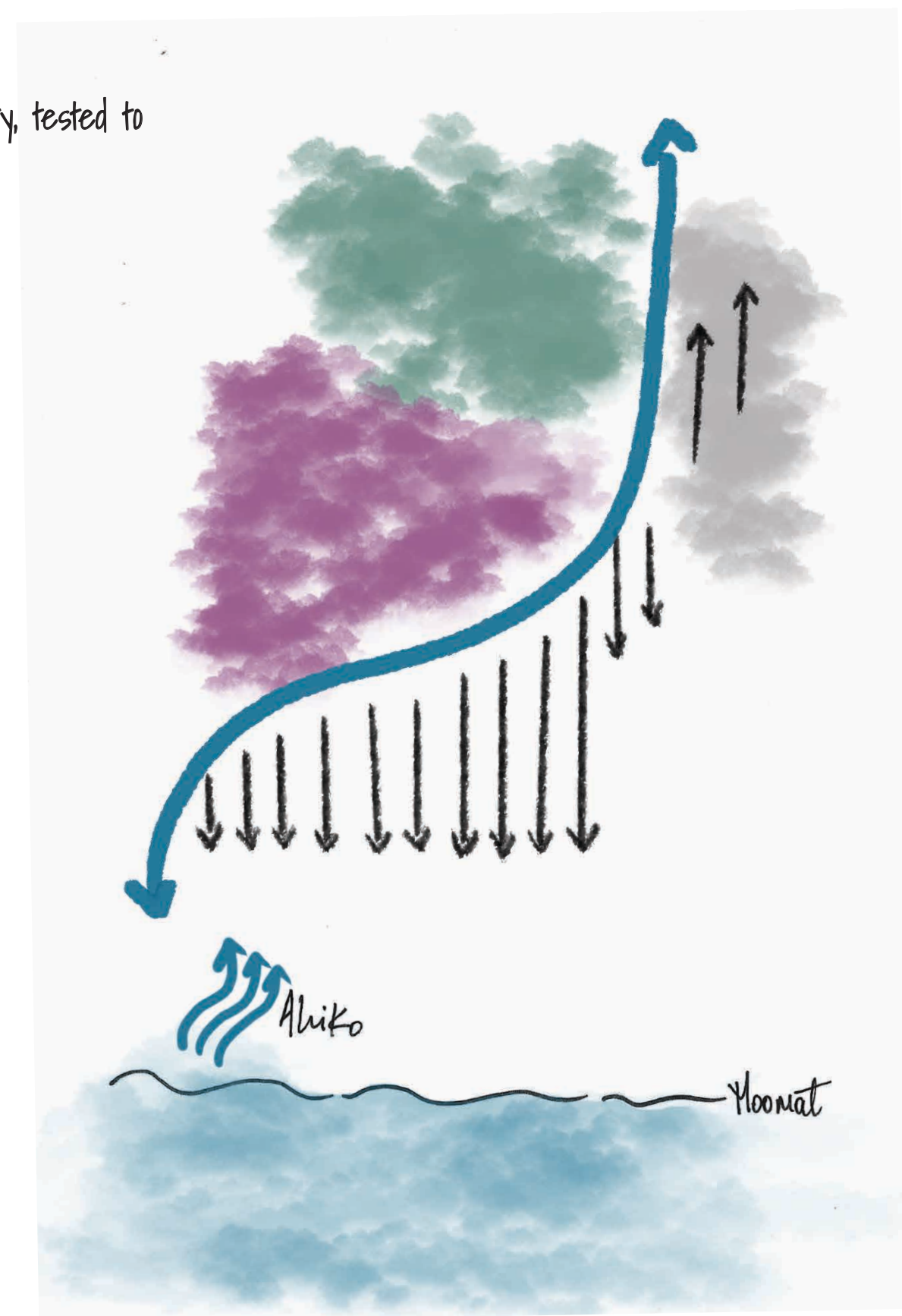
"Dramatic rising and falling topography reinforces the fluid pathway system and organizes the site into four thematic hilltop areas, each calibrated to a different primary use and experience:

The Garden Hill is defined by a series of seating alcoves and intimate display gardens that showcase seasonally dynamic plants.

14 The Discovery Hill is a play space for children, offering a range of discovery experiences and settings with hill slides, a water play, and custom play structures embedded into a shaded landscape. The Discovery Hill also provides views of the City Hall.

The Observation Hill offers the best views of the ocean and neighboring vicinity culminating in two distinctive shell-like overlooks that frame iconic views and vistas of Santa Monica and the ocean.

The Gathering Hill provides open space for people to come together, recreate, and gather on a large multi-purpose lawn with seating terraces and an informal picnic area." (Ref 5)



Discovery



Gathering



Garden



Observation



Two observation decks by Ocean Avenue, elevated at 18', provide views of the Pacific Ocean thus forming another connection between the park and its context.



From the playground area there are views of the city's low-slung white "Deco Moderne" City Hall on Main Street. The building was completed in 1939 as a Public Works Administration project. James Corner's firm has also redesigned the one-acre park in front of the City Hall. The new Ken Genser Square, named for a popular former mayor and city councilman, was designed to serve as a more formal civic space than Tongva Park. (Ref 1)





# viii. WATER STORY - THE BIG IDEA

There is also a connection made between the City Hall and the ocean along the park's vertical axis. This is achieved through the use of two water features at the main entrances on Ocean Avenue and Main Street. One can imagine the water flowing from Ken Genser Square outside City Hall through the park and down to Ocean Avenue. From there one can easily imagine the connection to the Pacific Ocean via Moomat Ahiko Way.

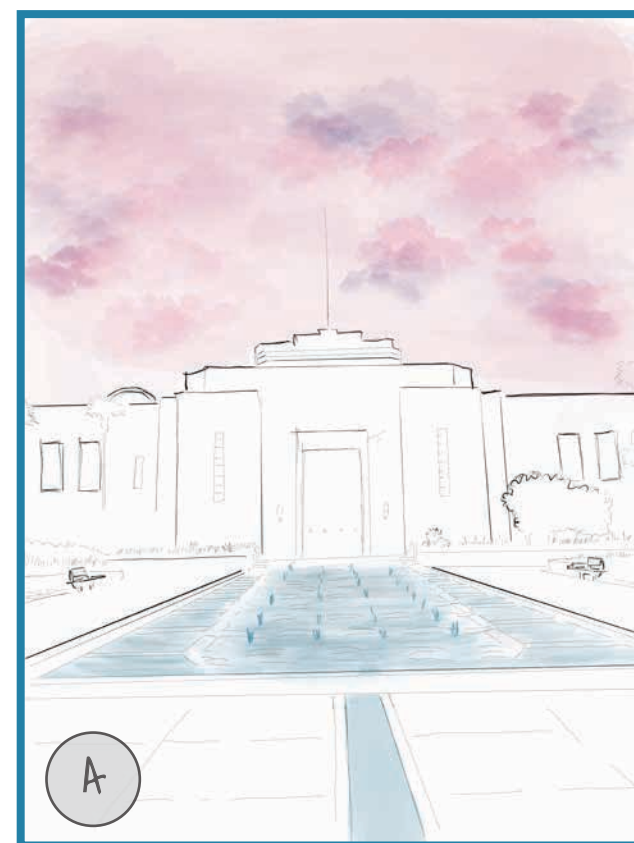
"When we looked at old photographs, we saw that this used to be an arroyo, where rivers washed down to the bluffs to the water," said Lisa Tziona Switkin, an associate partner at James Corner Field Operations. "The sweeps and curves were inspired by the Southern California landscape." (Ref 1)

This idea of the water story, is also the concept behind my parti.

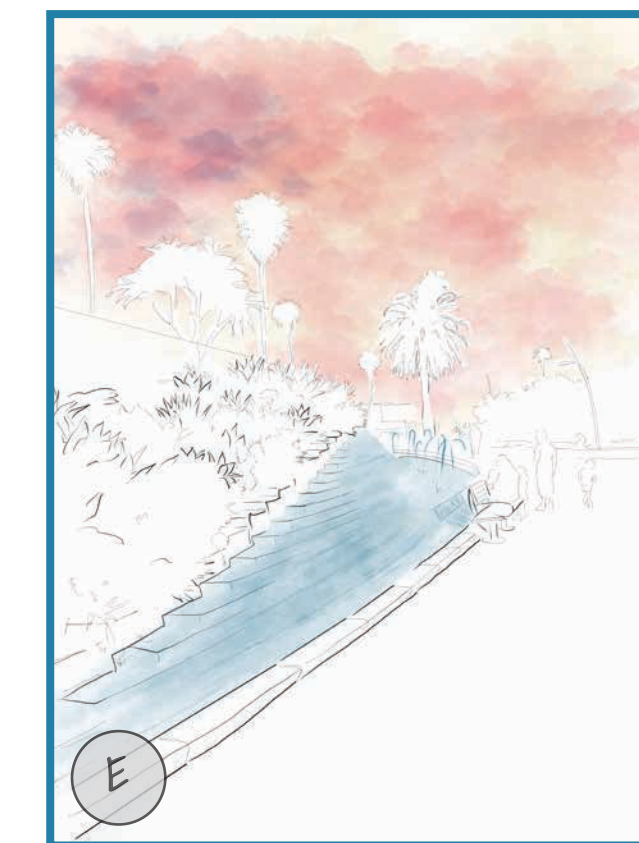
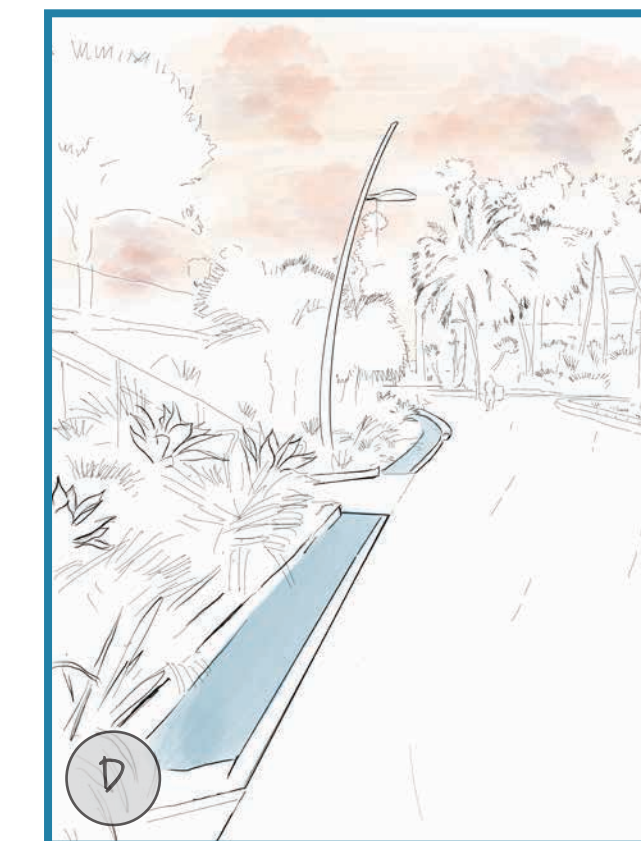
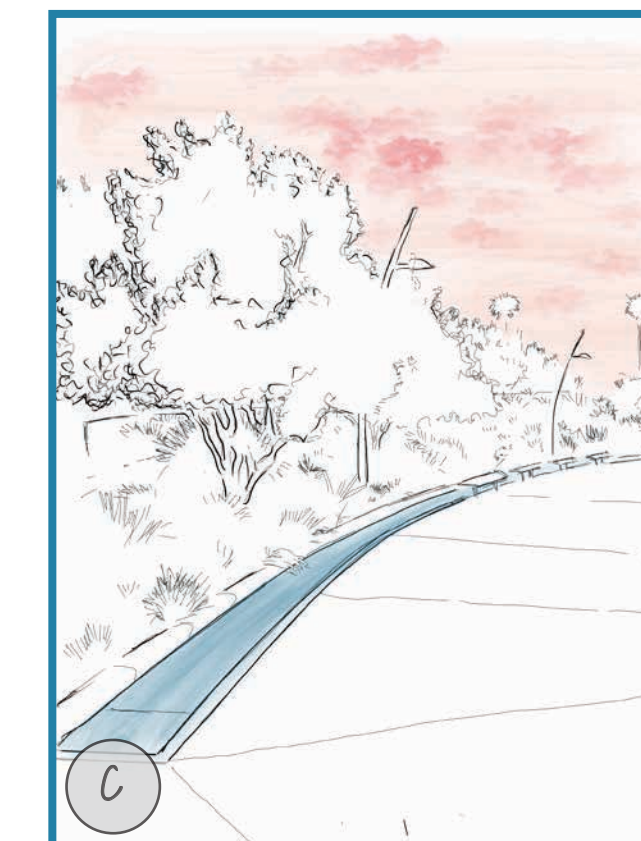
The horizontal line represents the Pacific Ocean.

The vertical line represents the flow of water through the park connecting City Hall to the ocean.

The curve with the arrowhead is making reference to the direction of prevailing winds coming from the ocean front - Moomat (Ocean) Ahiko (Wind).



WATER STORY

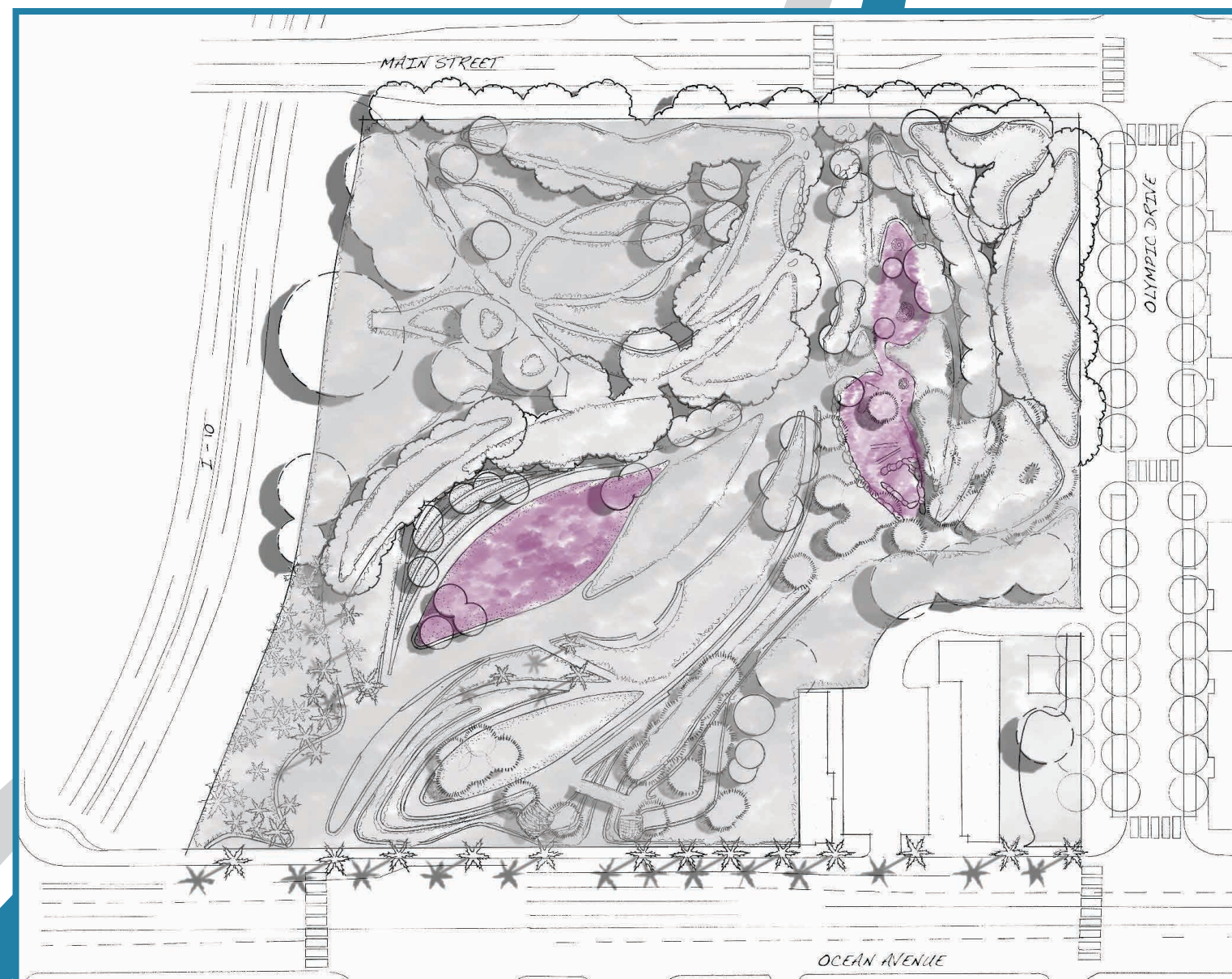


"The rivers flow not past, but through us, thrilling, tingling, vibrating every fiber and cell of the substance of our bodies, making them glide and sing." - John Muir



## ix. RECREATION

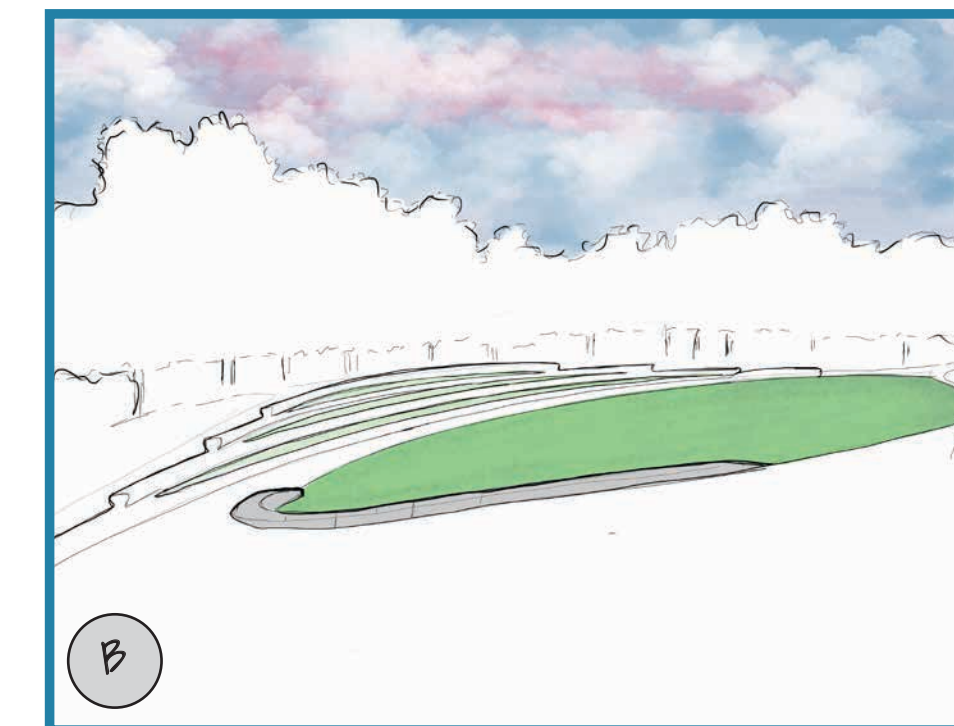
Social benefits of public spaces are valued by residents many of whom cite activities involving social interaction amongst their favorite park activities. These include: bringing kids to play, having a picnic, walking furry friends, and exercising.



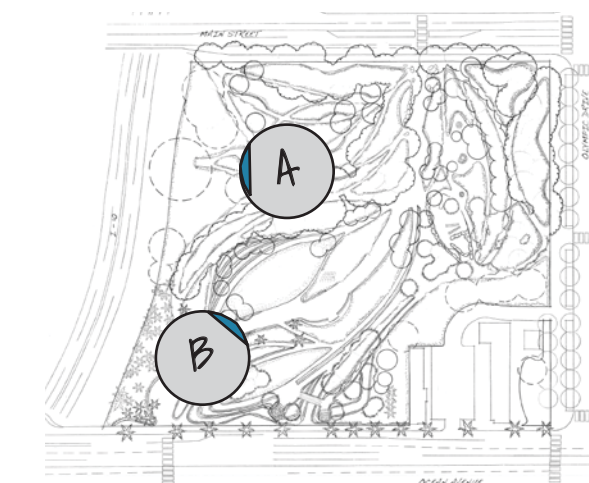
Active Passive



Picnic tables in the park, with several tables in shaded areas, provide opportunities for meeting with friends and family outdoors. The importance of such spaces has been felt by most people in cities during the COVID-19 pandemic.



The amphitheater area is being used by visitors for exercising, meeting with friends, leisurely sport activities as well as more organized community events.

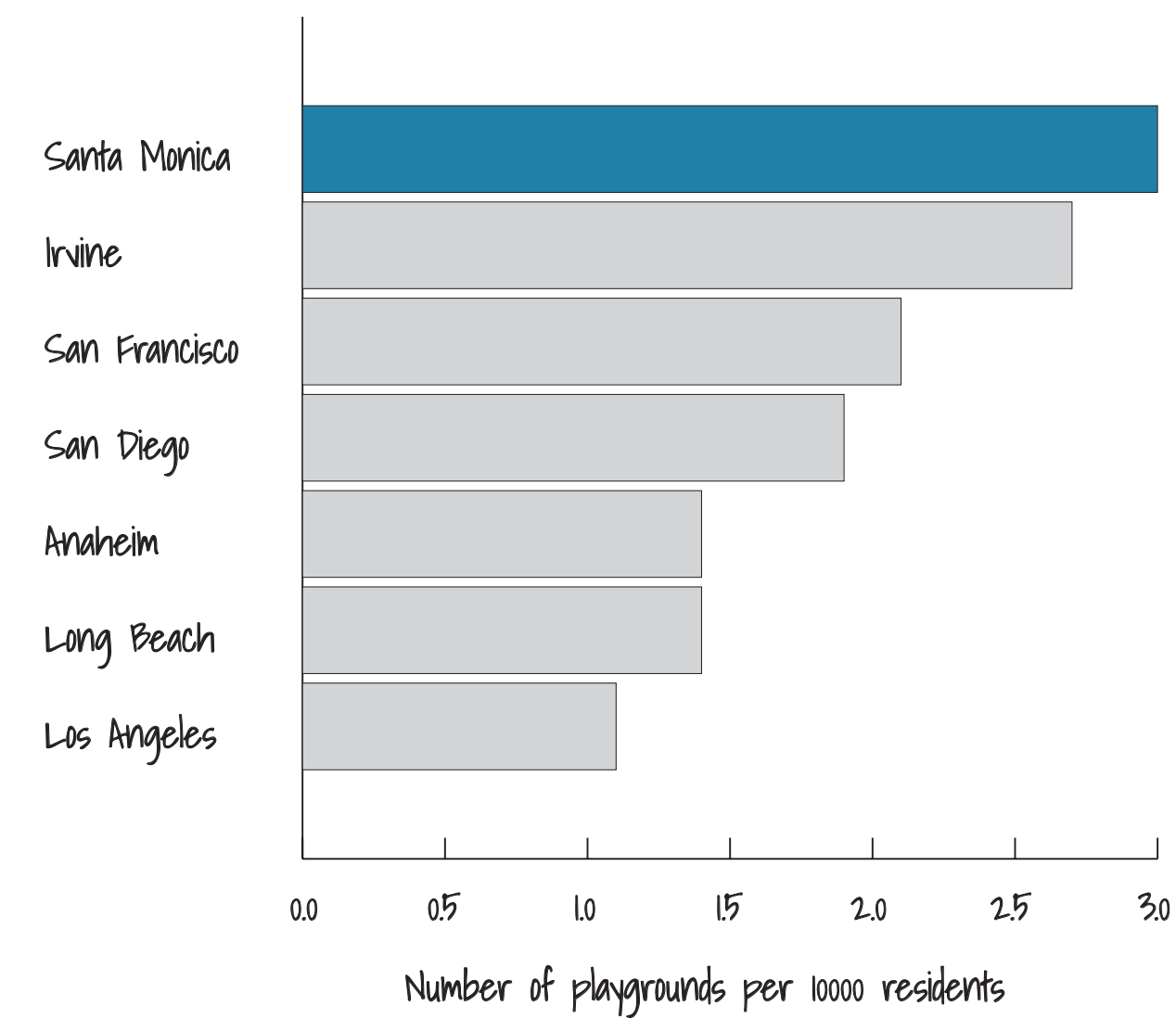




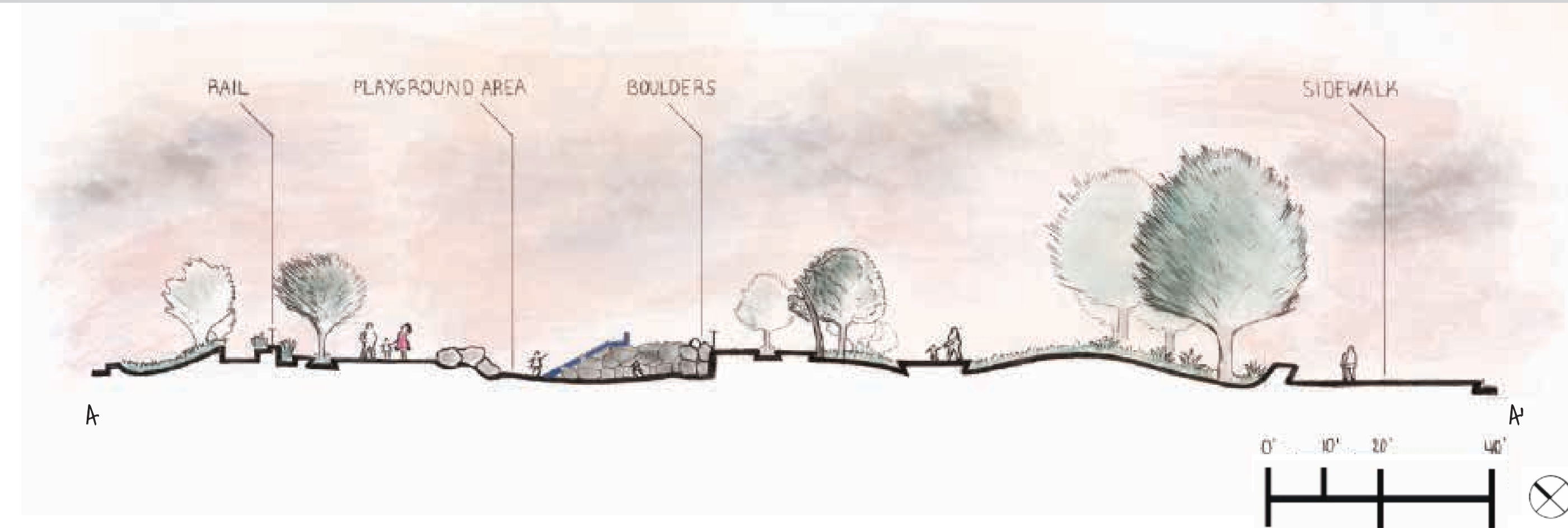
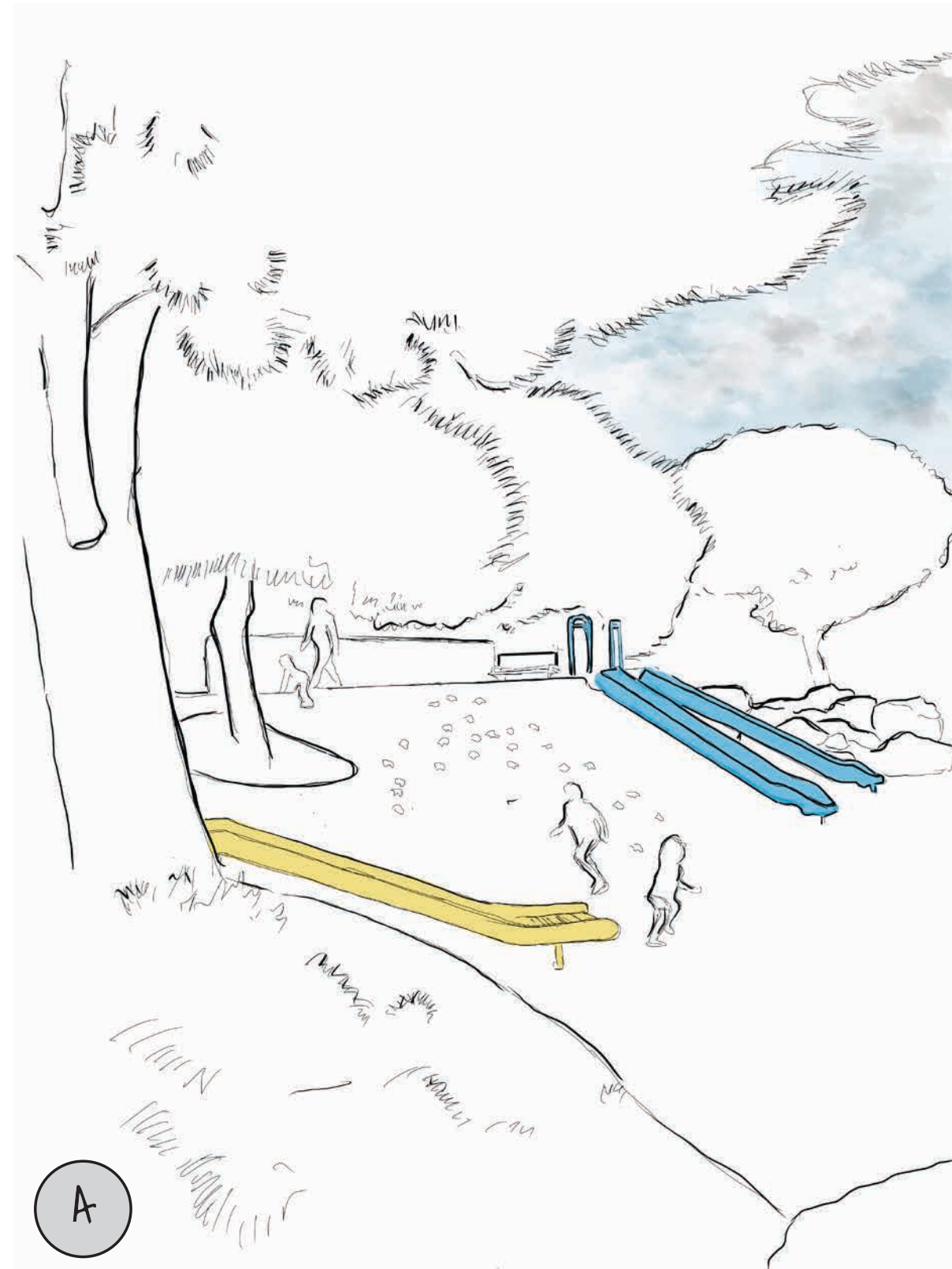


## x. PLAYGROUND

Santa Monica has more playgrounds per capita than any of the six peer cities (Ref 6, p 51).



The playground features slides, Splash pads and climbing structures.



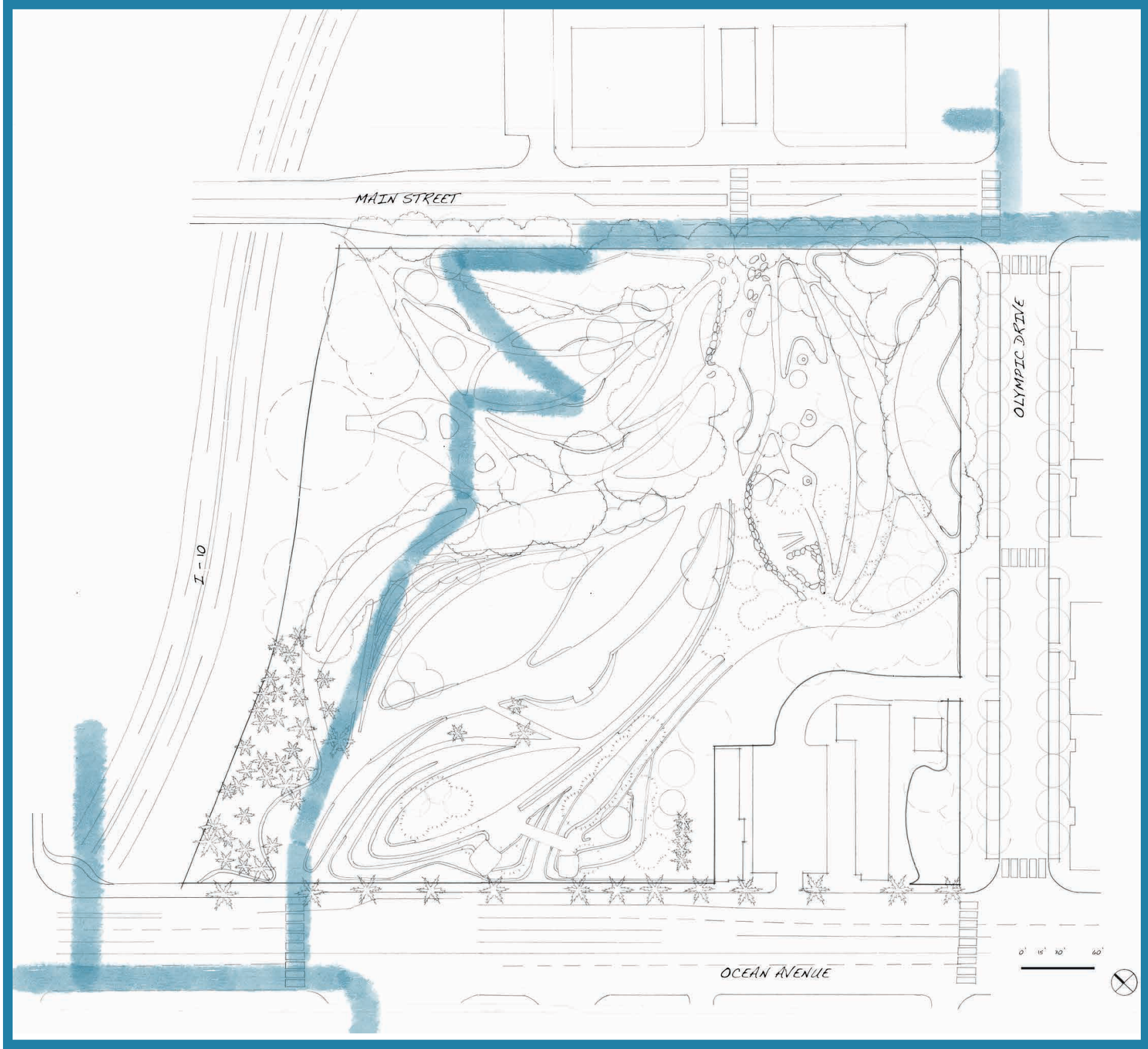


xi. WATER

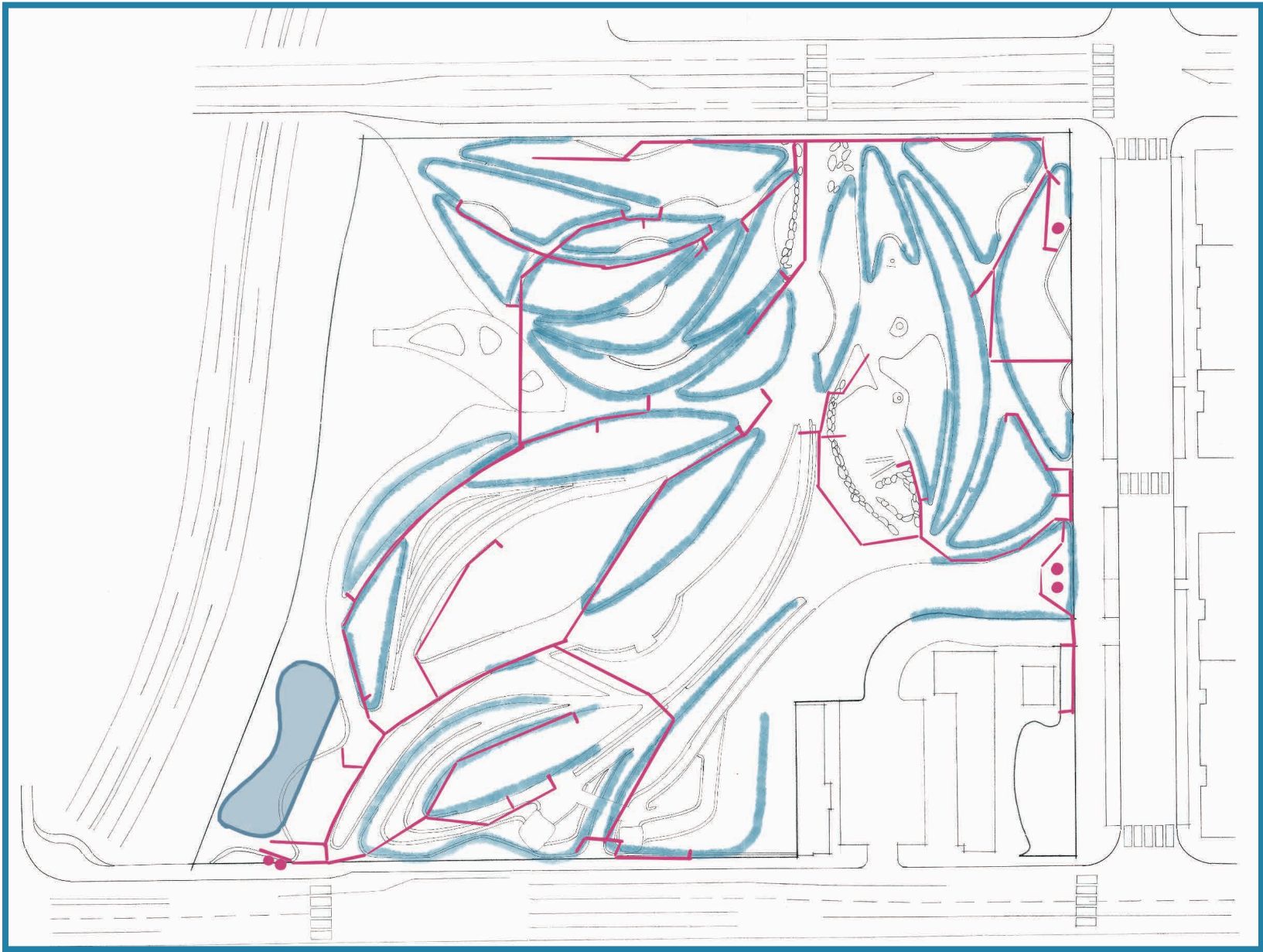
Water shortage is one of the main environmental challenges facing southern California.



**HYDROZONES**  
With the exception of the turf areas, the choice of drought tolerant plants results in low or very low irrigation needs.



Water for irrigation is supplied from the Santa Monica urban Runoff Recycling Facility.



**WATER MANAGEMENT**  
Bioswales at the base of most mounds are connected via storm drains to dry wells.



DISCONNECT



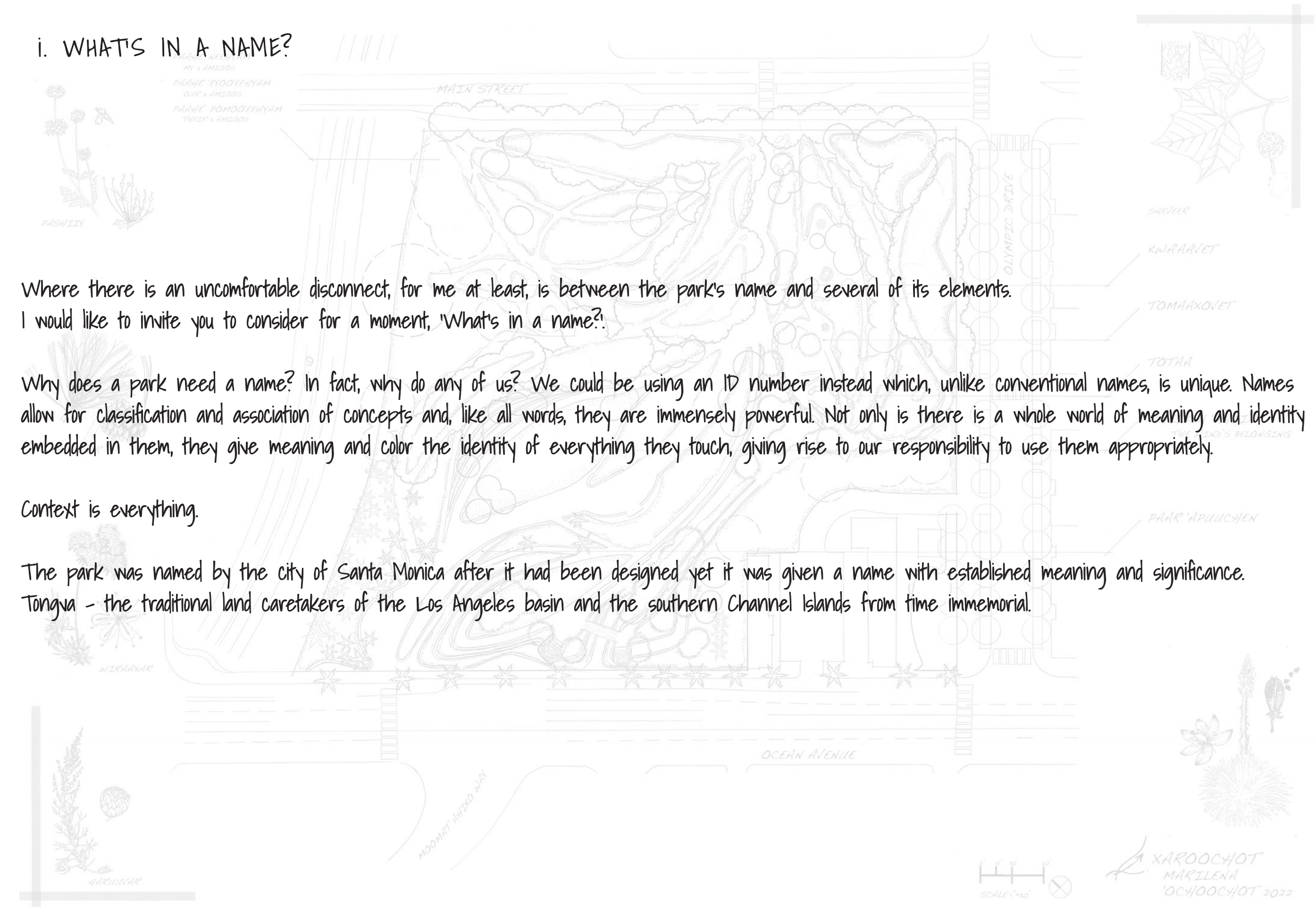
## i. WHAT'S IN A NAME?

Where there is an uncomfortable disconnect, for me at least, is between the park's name and several of its elements. I would like to invite you to consider for a moment, 'What's in a name?'

Why does a park need a name? In fact, why do any of us? We could be using an ID number instead which, unlike conventional names, is unique. Names allow for classification and association of concepts and, like all words, they are immensely powerful. Not only is there is a whole world of meaning and identity embedded in them, they give meaning and color the identity of everything they touch, giving rise to our responsibility to use them appropriately.

Context is everything.

The park was named by the city of Santa Monica after it had been designed yet it was given a name with established meaning and significance. Tongva - the traditional land caretakers of the Los Angeles basin and the southern Channel Islands from time immemorial.





## ii. TREES

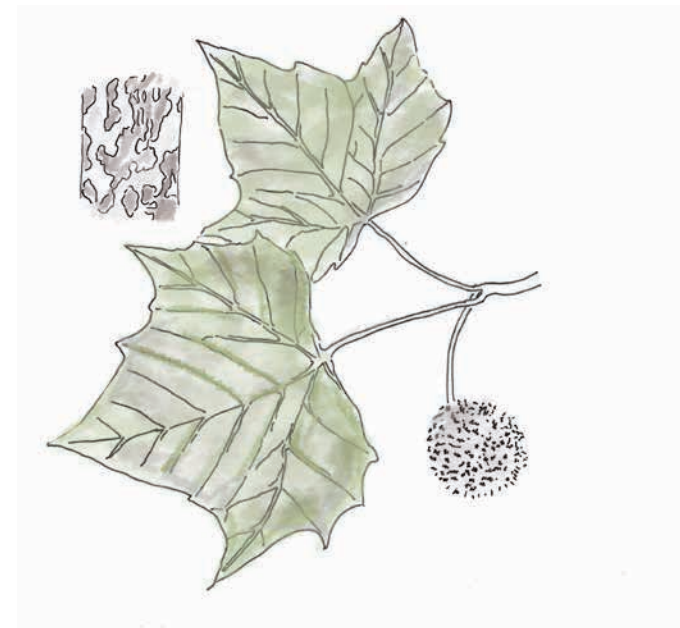
Most trees are not California natives. Only the *Platanus racemosa* (Western Sycamores) and *Pinus torreyana* (Torrey Pines) are.



### NATIVE TREES

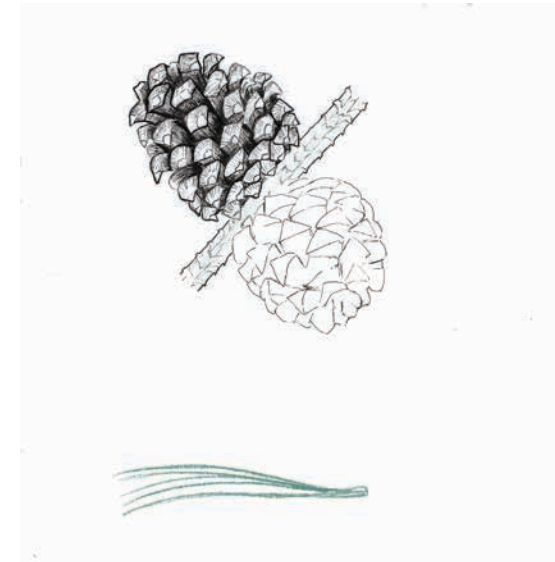
#### *Platanus racemosa*

Western Sycamores weave their way between the hills at swales and low points to frame a soft meadow interior.

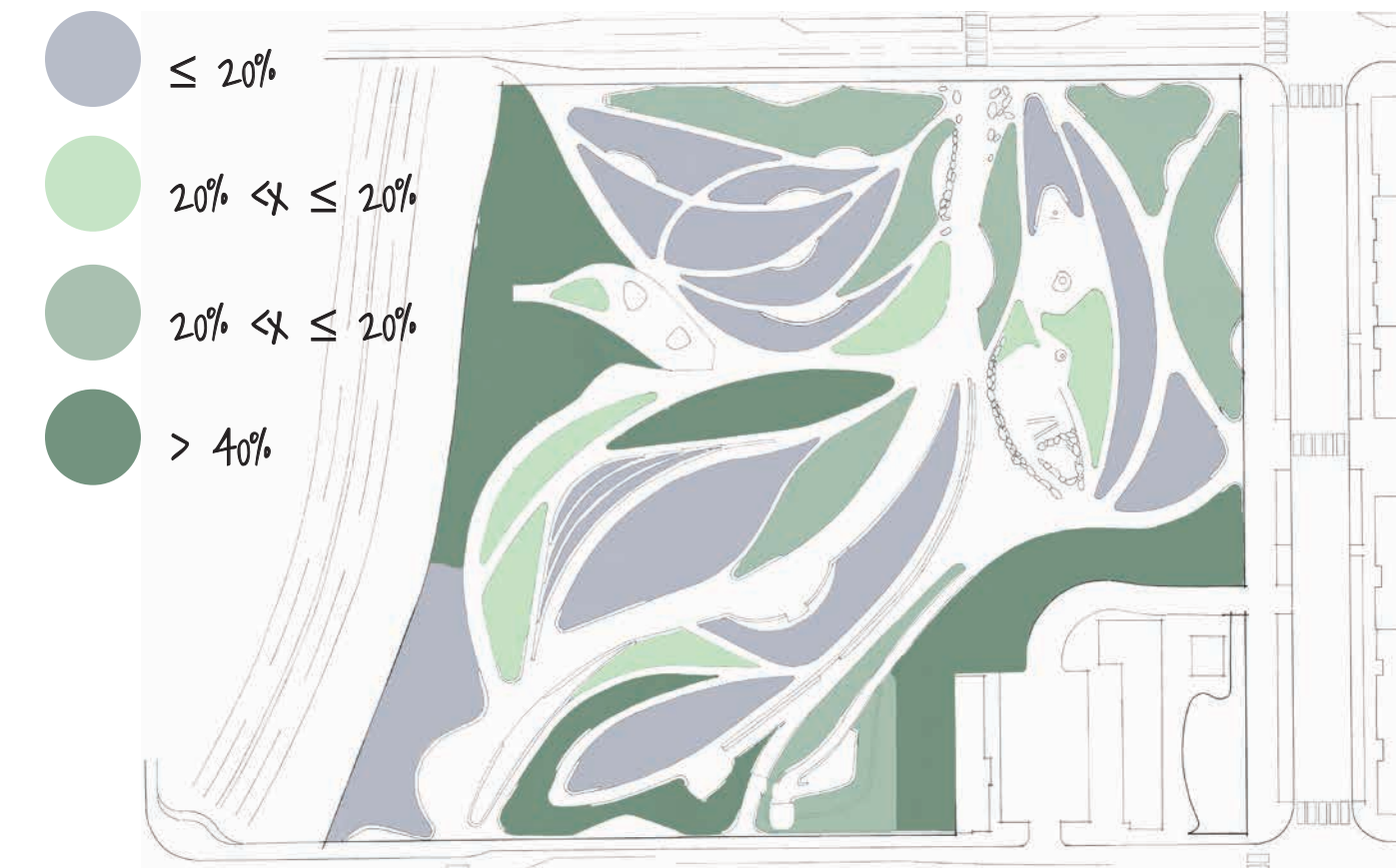


#### *Pinus torreyana*

They frame the path into the park from the secondary entrance on Ocean Avenue.



## PLANTS



Looking at the rest of the plants in each planter, the majority of plants are non-native.

The % of native plants here is calculated by dividing the number of native plants with the number of total plants in each planter. There are limitations to this approach as different plants occupy different amounts of space and some plants may be annuals whereas others are perennials.

Nevertheless, the overall picture is quite telling; there are entire areas of the park without any native plants and only one planter where the majority of the plants are native.

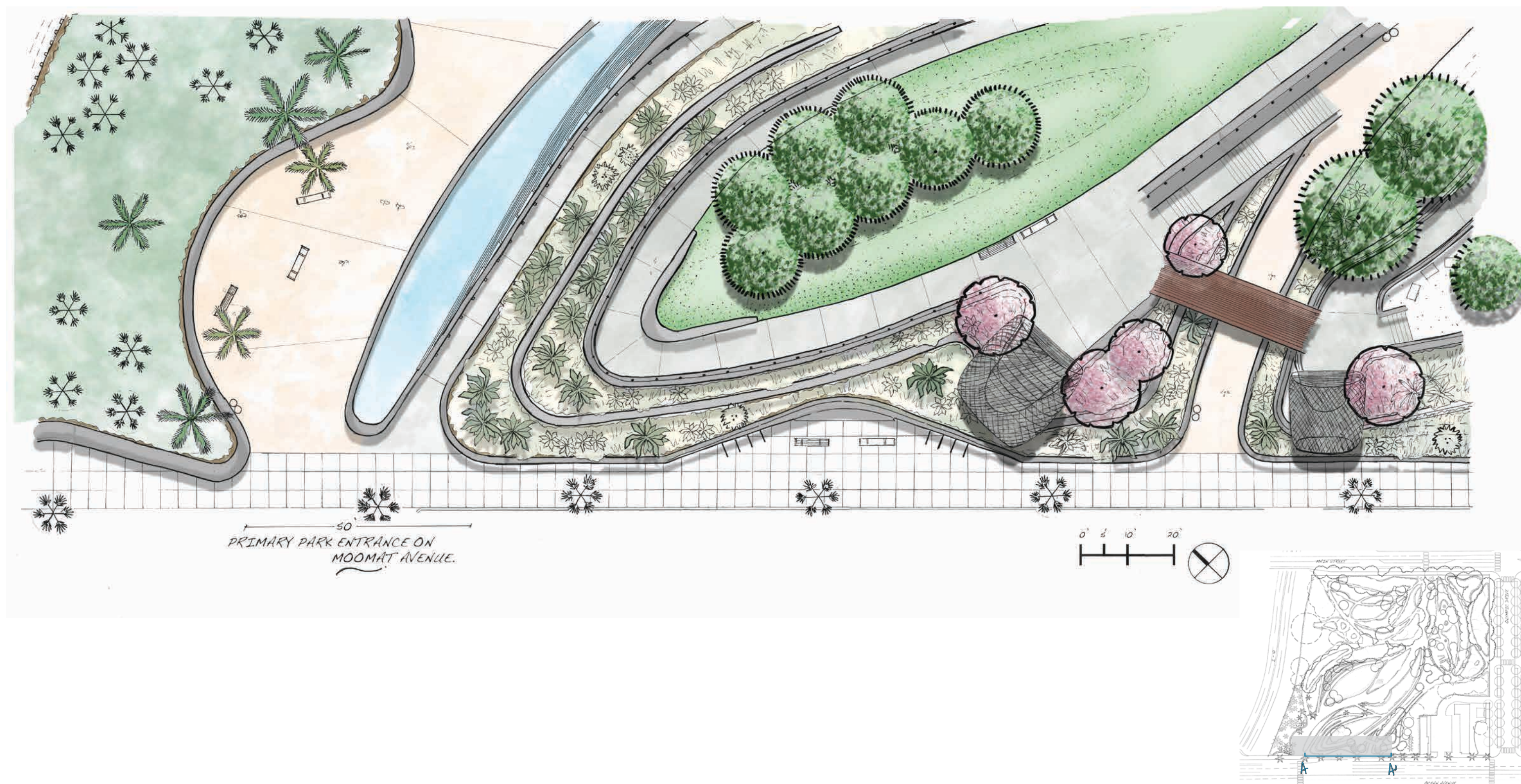
The disconnect gets even stronger when we look at planters that contain plants used by the Tongva people.

They only exist in two planters by Ocean Avenue. I wanted to study the plants in these two planters in more depth. I chose to focus on planter at the base of the Observation Hill as it seemed more prominent in the park's design. Firstly, its raised terraces lead to the highest point in the park buffering the noise from Ocean Avenue and providing views to the Pacific Ocean. Secondly, its proximity to the water feature and the park's primary entrance on Ocean Avenue increase the interest in this area.

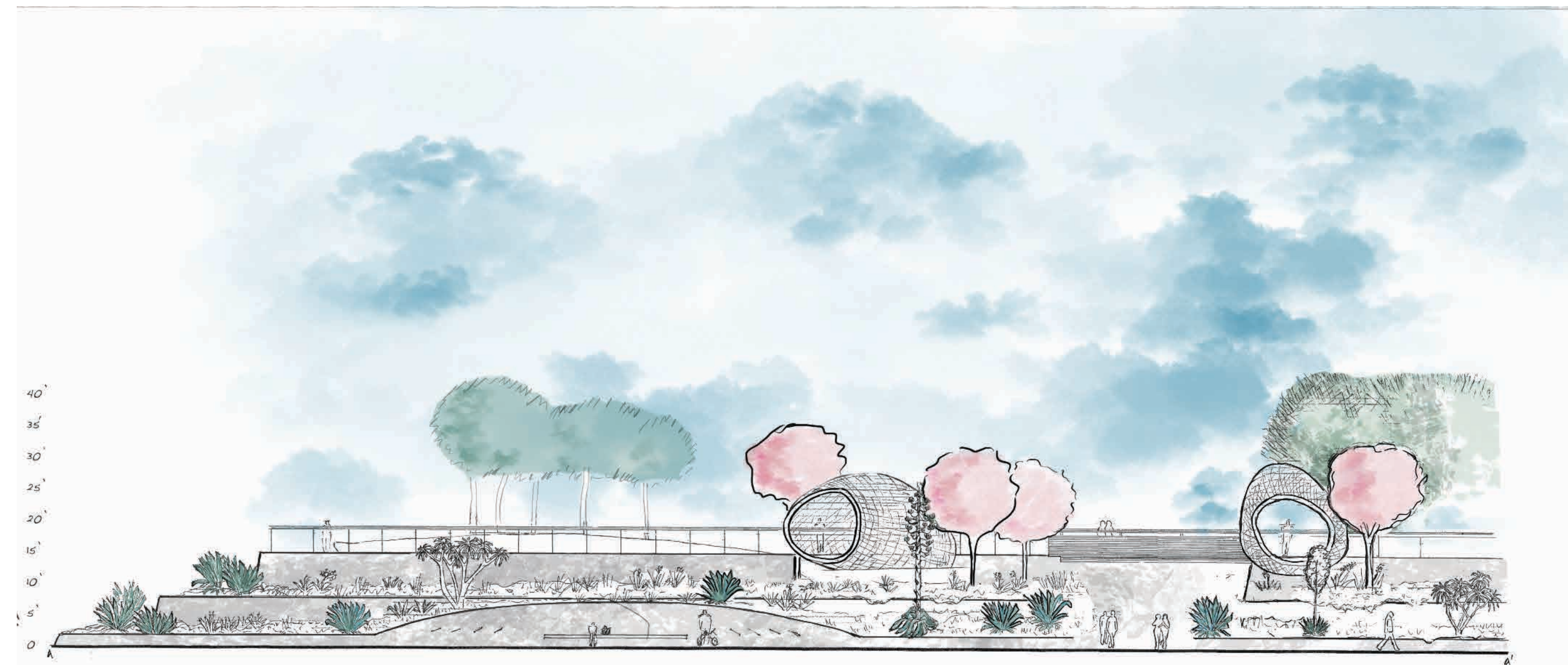




### iii. ENLARGEMENT



### SECTION









## v. PLANTS USED BY TONGVA

### Hesperoyucca whipplei 'Akoo'

#### ROOT

As Falls signals in the colder weather, all the energy in the form of sugar starches are stored in the root of the young plant. Harvesting at this time is optimal if the root is to be used as a food source.

#### STALK

During late Winter/ early Spring as the stalk shoots up, it begins storing most of the sugars there for energy for the eventual blossom formation. This is when the stalk can be harvested for a food source.

In late Summer and Fall, the stalk begins to dry out as the plant dies. The stalk center contains a pithy core that can be hollowed out so that the stalk can be used as a storage container.

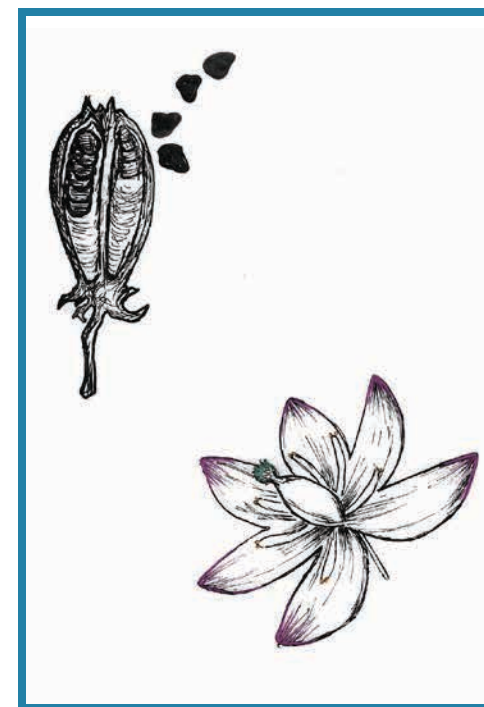
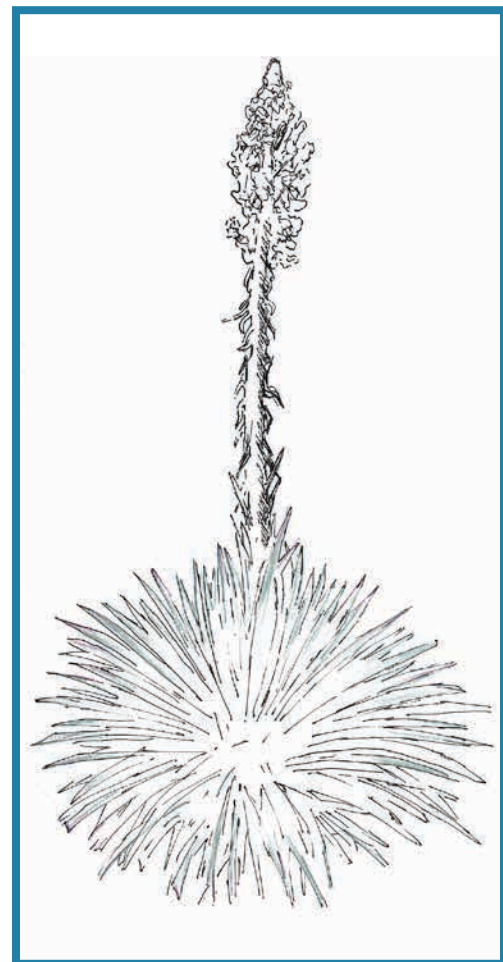
#### LEAVES

A very strong fiber for cordage can be extracted from the fresh leaves throughout the year. The fibers are processed by pounding with a smooth stone and then usually scraped with a blunt end deerbone 'knife'. The fibers are washed and the process is repeated until just the fibers remain. Items made from fibers: cordage, net bags, sandals, brushes.

**BLOSSOMS**  
Parboiled to remove any bitterness then can be used in any recipe.

**FRUIT + SEEDS**  
After blossoms have died back in late Spring, the fruits emerge and are best harvested before seeds turn black as fruit will become bitter.

The black seeds can be harvested from the fruit, sundried, then ground up into flour that can be made into a gruel.



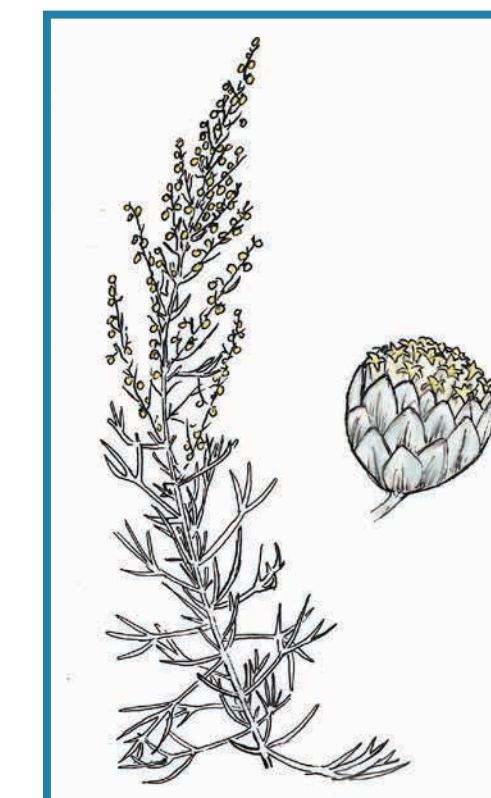
Eriogonum fasciculatum  
Wiraaxar

The Tongva make a poultice from flowers and leaves to soothe sores and wounds. Newborn babies are bathed in a mild tea made from flowers as a purifier. The flowers also make a good eyewash.

### Artemisia californica Haruuvar

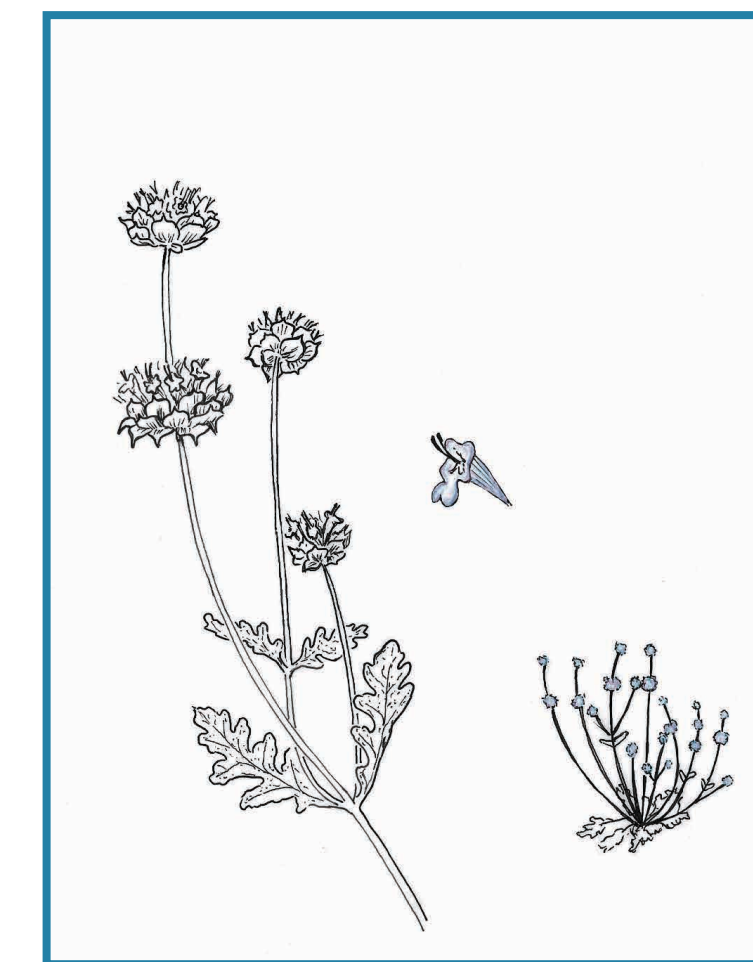
used in puberty rituals for girls and as a medicinal plant for women who, after the first menstruation, drink it as a tea for the rest of their lives. It is also used for toothaches, respiratory ailments, rheumatic pains, and to reduce fever and pain.

Its thin wire like branches can be used for basket making.



Salvia columbariae  
Pashiiy

Chia can be prepared in several ways. Seeds can be roasted and ground into flour, which is eaten raw, mixed with water to form a gruel, or used as a drink. Young shoots can be eaten raw.







## vi. TONGVA LANGUAGE

"Tell me what you see vanishing and I will tell you who you are."  
W.S. Merwin

The Tongva culture is based on an Indigenous worldview that positions humans not as the apex of creation, but as one strand in a web of life.

With colonization, Tovaangar - the world as seen through the eyes of Tongva- changed suddenly. Gradual, organic change and evolution of a language is inevitable and desirable if it is to be used in a changing world. In a world that went through such dramatic, fast, and forceful change, however, language death is one of the many tragic consequences.

With every language that dies we become poorer in our understanding and expression of our humanity, as well as in our knowledge and memory of the world.

The Tongva language is no longer used in conversations but there is an effort to retrieve and reassemble the language for a culture that still exists.

34 Language is of paramount importance. Even more so for societies with oral traditions. Oral traditions are the means by which knowledge is reproduced, preserved and conveyed from generation to generation.

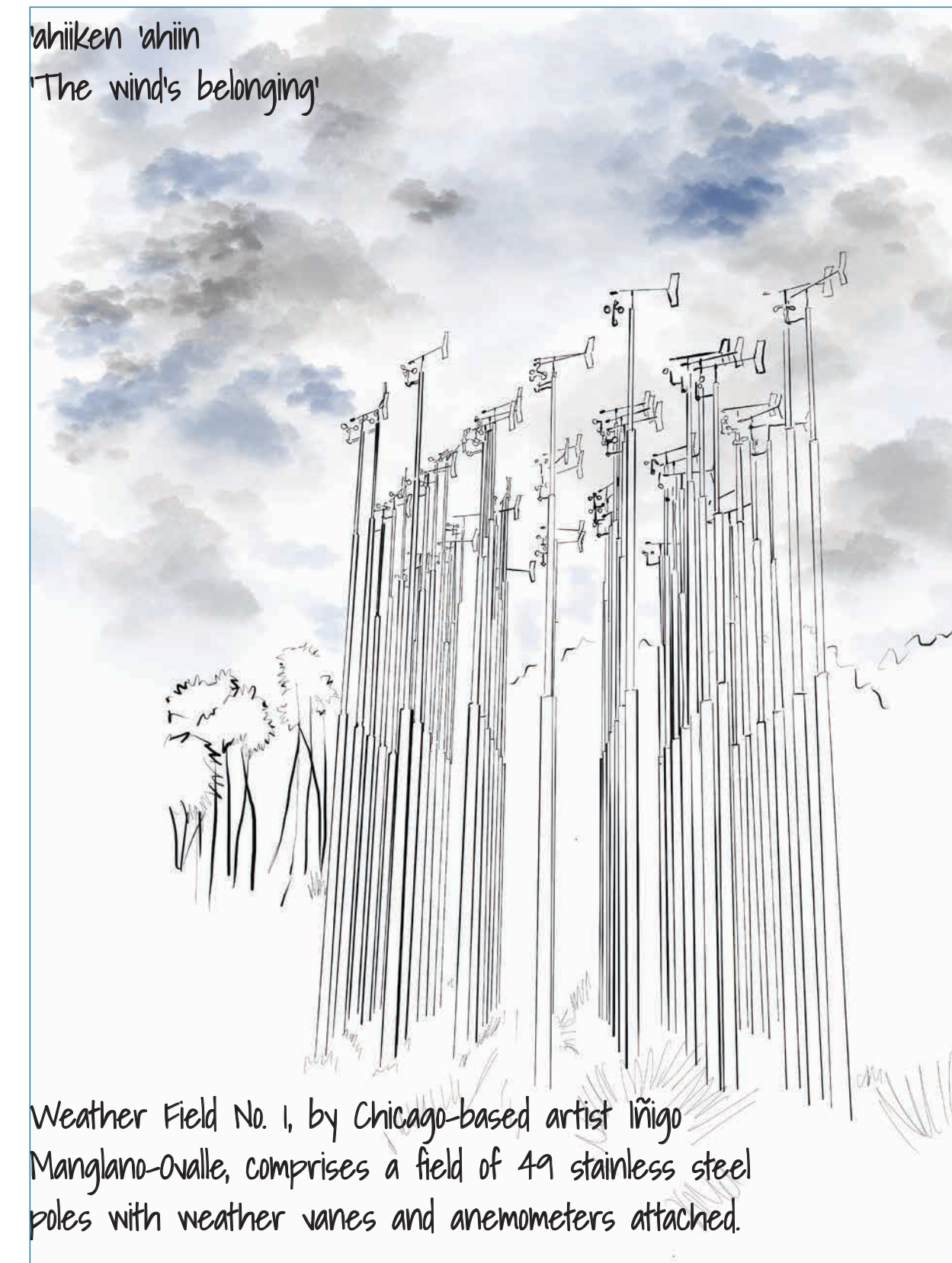
For cultures with oral traditions, the landscape often plays an important role by connecting oral histories to lived experiences. Oral traditions create a space for interacting with the environment and the landscape becomes an aid and a guide holding and shaping these collective memories.

In the words of a Tongva describing speaking the language in the wilderness:

"I'll say pakiishar - hawk - and I will feel a shift around me," he said, "as if there is a memory in the land itself that is connecting with the words." (Ref 3)

## NUANCES OF LANGUAGE

'ahiiken 'ahiin  
'The wind's belonging'



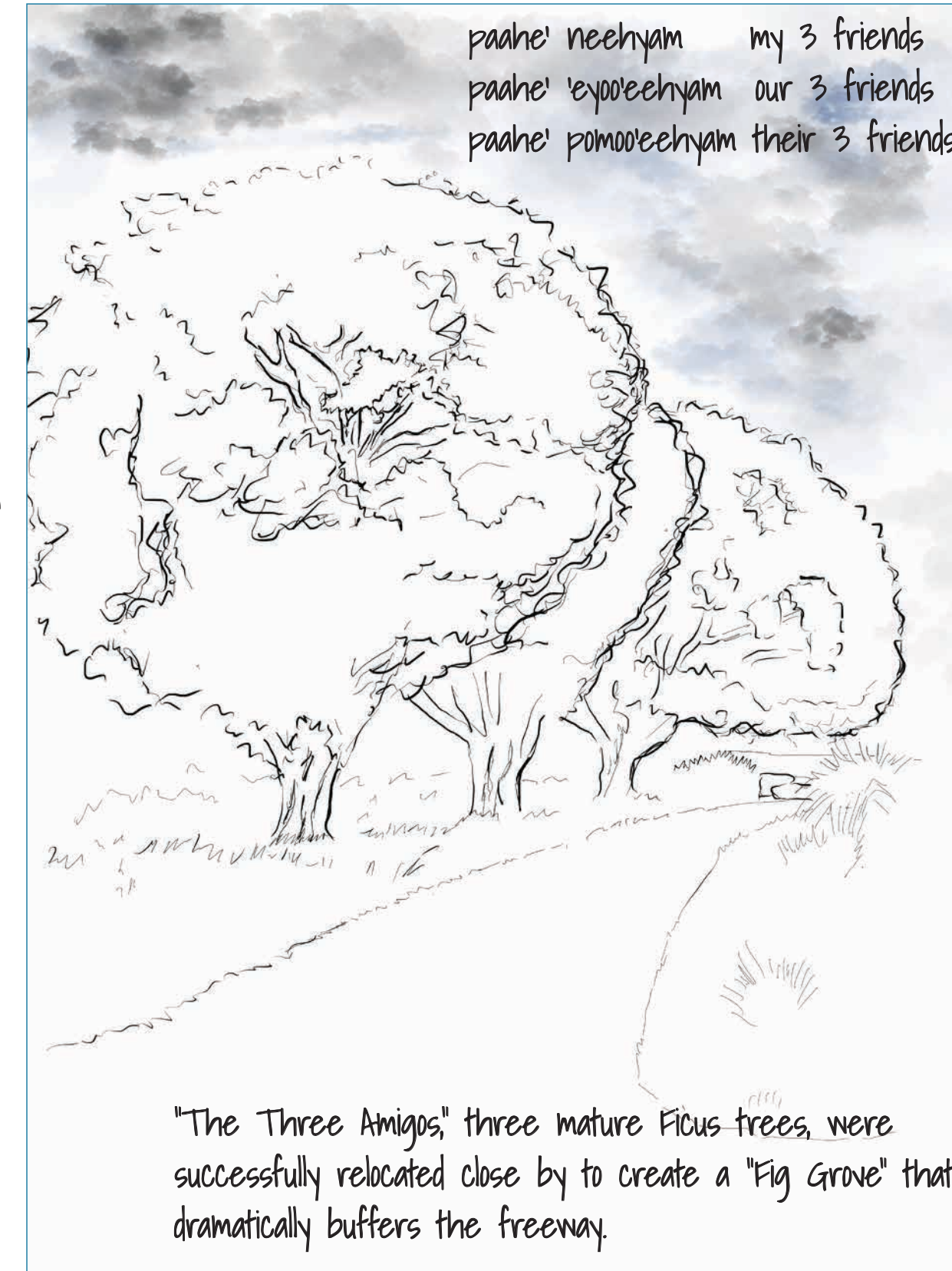
Weather Field No. 1, by Chicago-based artist Iñigo Manglano-Ovalle, comprises a field of 49 stainless steel poles with weather vanes and anemometers attached.

In the Tongva language, there is not a way to express the phrase '3 amigos' - friend is a noun that does not exist without possession.

Possessing the quality of being a friend, requires that there is someone is a friend OF.

In what ways and to which extent might one's experience of the park be different if they had not had the words, or concept, of 3 Amigos but thought of the trees as 'their' or 'our' 3 amigos?

paahē' neehyam my 3 friends  
paahē' 'eyo'eehyam our 3 friends  
paahē' pomoo'eehyam their 3 friends



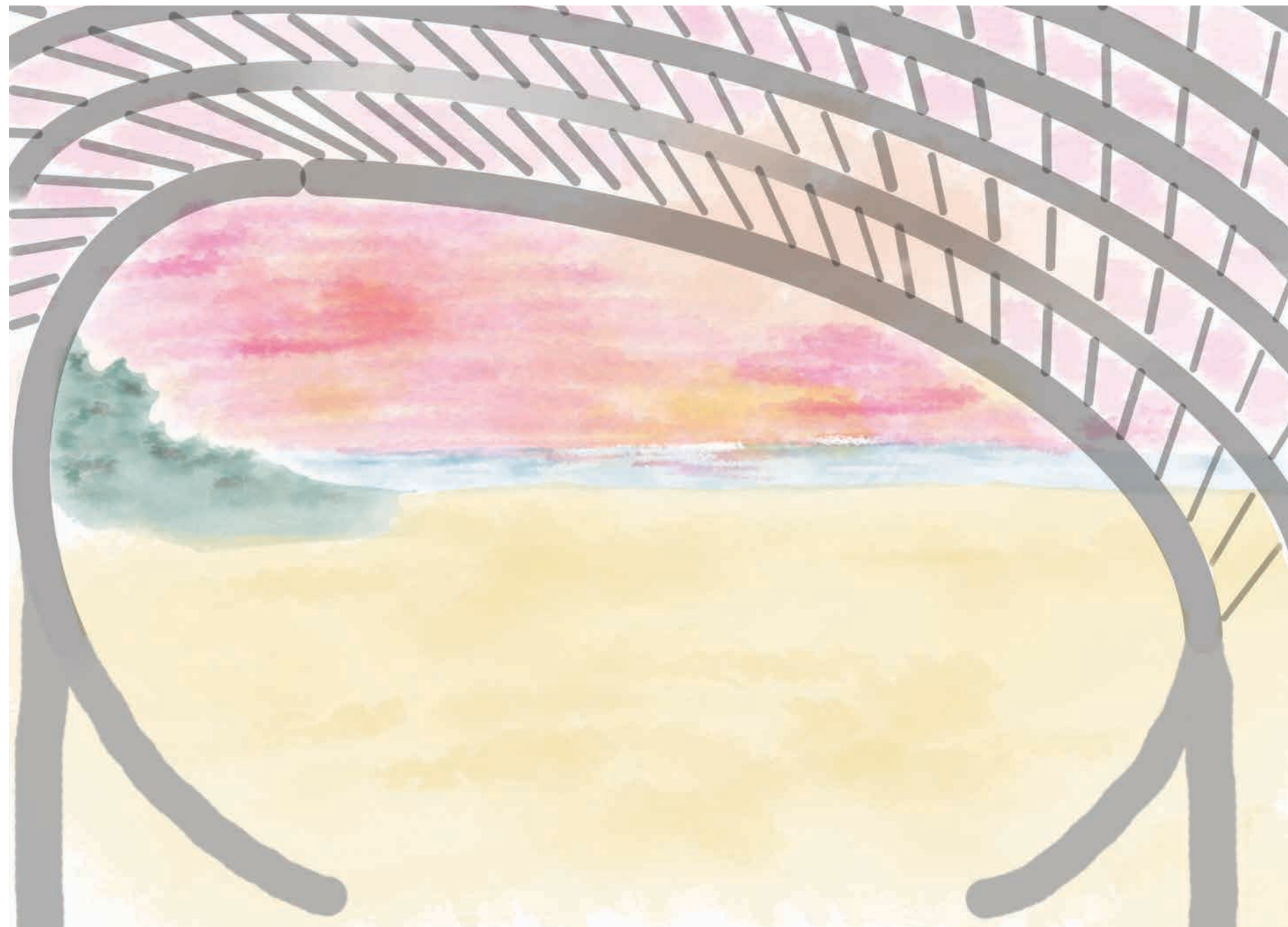
"The Three Amigos," three mature Ficus trees, were successfully relocated close by to create a "Fig Grove" that dramatically buffers the freeway.



## SUMMARY

One of the best days I had whilst studying Tongva Park was a Sunday afternoon I spent hours walking around the park trying to identify plants and spot the ones illustrated on pages 32-33.

I took the Taxonomy class last term and Sketching + Plant Identification this term and really enjoyed studying plants closely, looking at their overall form and 'zoning' into the finer details.



"I only went out for a walk, and finally concluded to stay out till sundown, for going out, I found, was really going in."

- John Muir



Close to sunset, we went up to the observation deck and peered.

And I think if one looks beyond the concrete and the asphalt and the rest of our terrible constructions and their pollution, if one focuses on the vanishing point, most of these vanish and one can begin to imagine what Tongva might have looked like and smelled like and sounded like.

And this is why I think there has been a missed opportunity to give the appropriate context so that the design of Tongva Park would reflect its name, avoiding the disconnect it now displays.



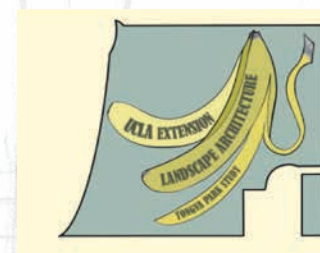
## A NOTE ON PROCESS & PROGRESS

I want to thank instructors who have focused on learning, process, and progress as opposed to pristine finished product. Although there have been several revisions and corrections of every item included in this booklet, I acknowledge that everything could be improved further.

I debated whether to include drafts and material about process. I would have liked to show my progress from DG1 to DG3 in a clearer way but due to the length of the booklet I decided not to. I do hope that the structure of this work gives some insight into my thinking process and the way I approach a project.

I look forward to continue practicing the drafting, hand-drawing, and digital rendering skills I have started developing through the Design Graphic series and to apply them in the remaining classes of my Landscape Architecture course and beyond.

I was fortunate to embark on this journey with a group of highly talented and genuinely supportive people who make this a lot of fun! Thank you

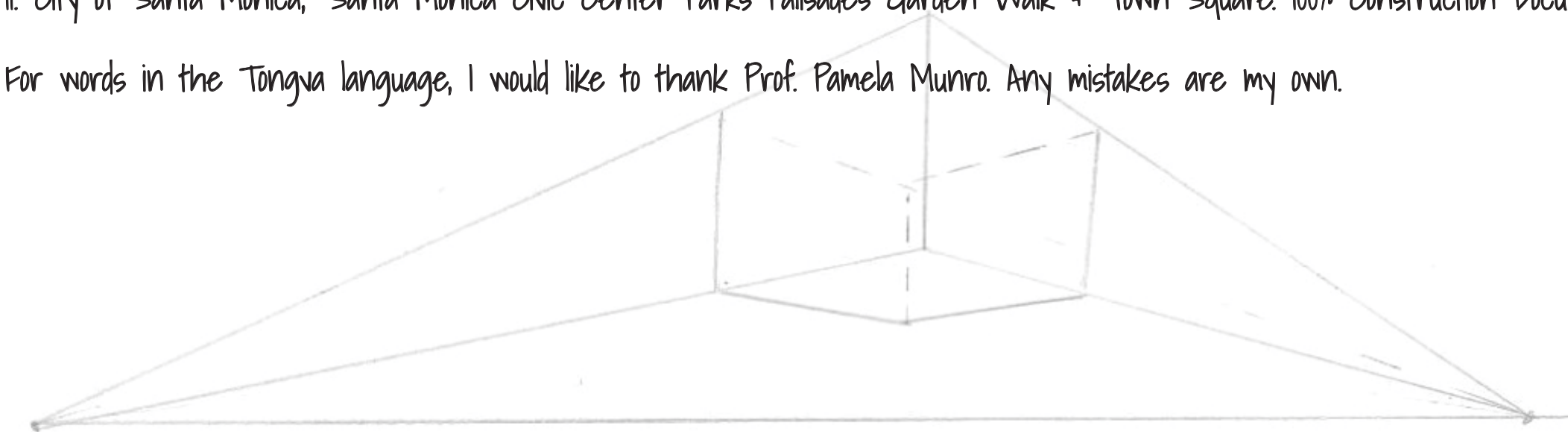


Graphic by Grace Pan + Emily Baumstinger

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1. The Architect's Newspaper, "Tongva Park in Santa Monica is Californian through-and-through", accessed 06.05.2022, <https://www.archpaper.com/2019/11/tongva-park-feature/>
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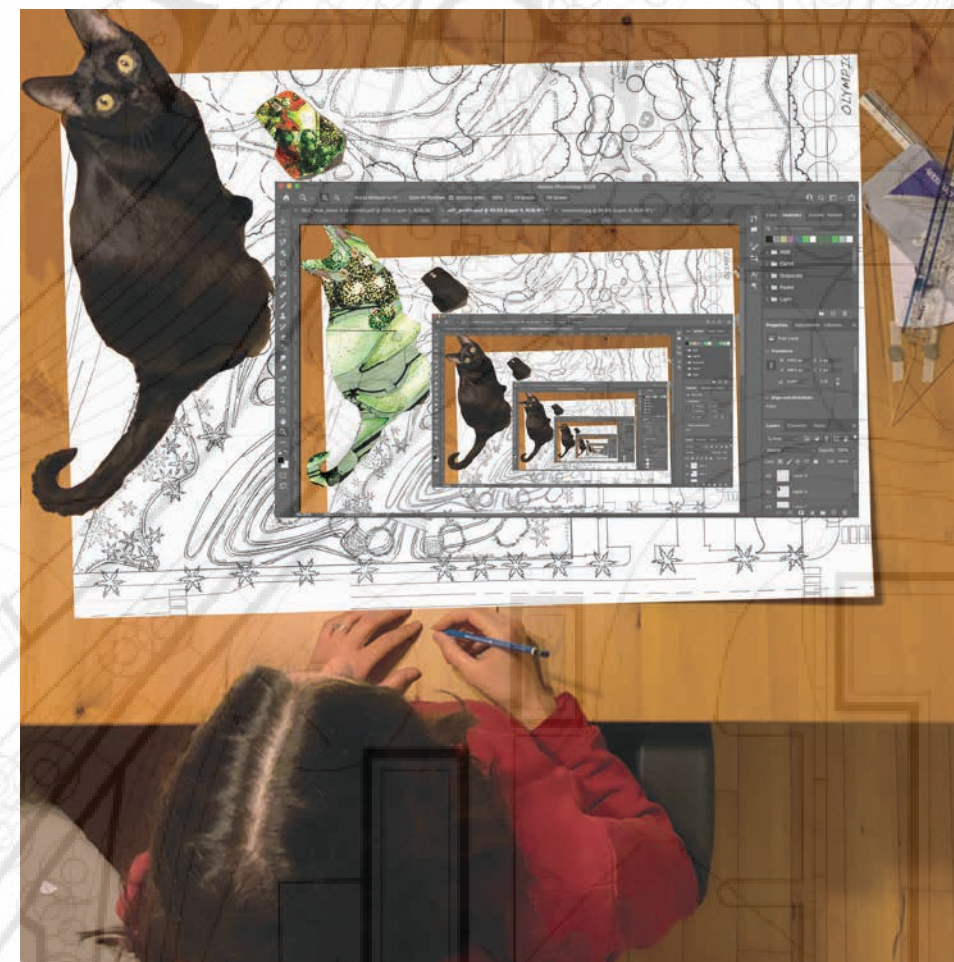
For words in the Tongva language, I would like to thank Prof. Pamela Munro. Any mistakes are my own.







## ABOUT ME



I try to tread softly  
and smell the flowers along the way.

PLAYGROUND AREA  
WATER FEATURE  
BOULDERS  
PICNIC TABLE

BENCH  
BIKE RACKS  
SPOT ELEVATION REFERENCE

3 AMIGOS  
PICNIC AREA

WIND SCULPTURE

WATER FEATURE

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PLAY AREA

BOULDER

PINUS TORREYANA

0' 10' 20' 40'  
SCALE 1"=30'

TONGVA PARK  
MARILENA  
WINTER 2022



