

HISTORIC CORE COMMUNITY PARK:

From Vacant Space to Urban Oasis

By transforming a downtown parking lot into an urban park, this project will demonstrate how Landscape Architecture can be employed to improve access to open green space, enhance community cohesion, and create habitat in an urban setting while employing sustainable development practices.



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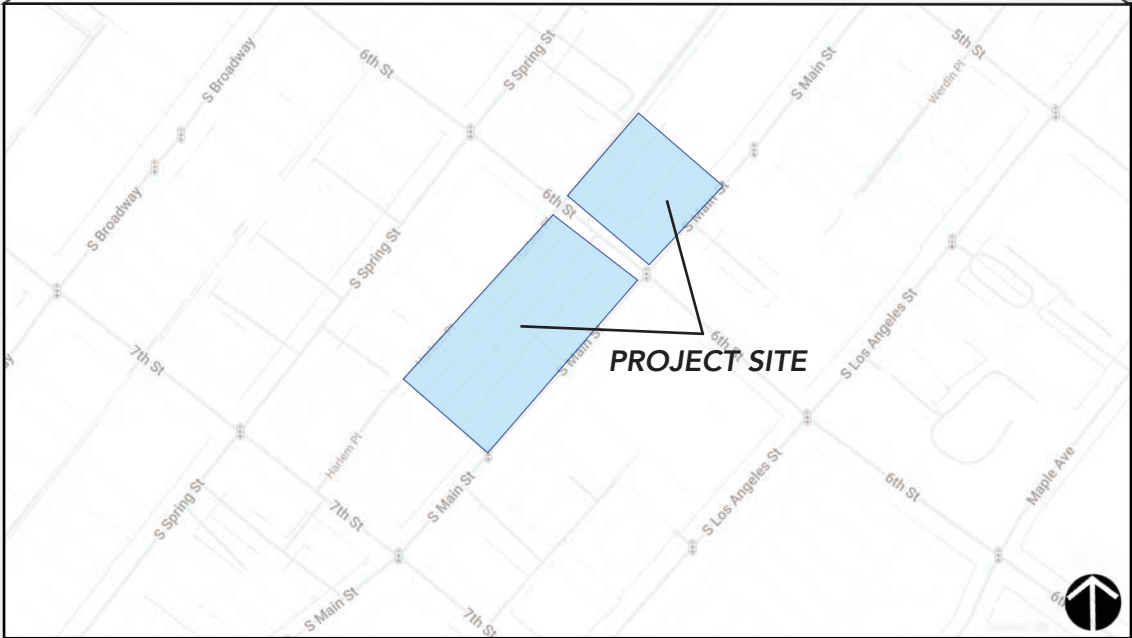
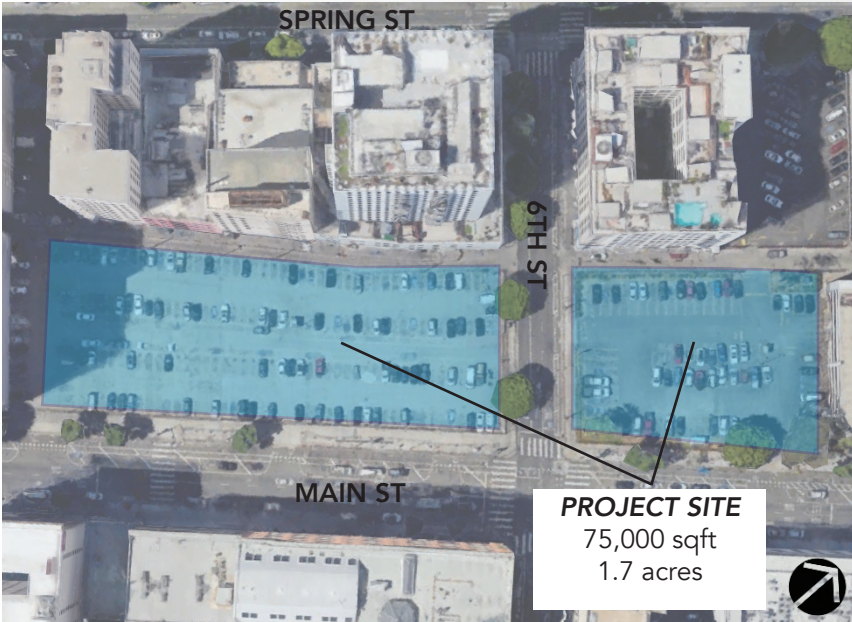
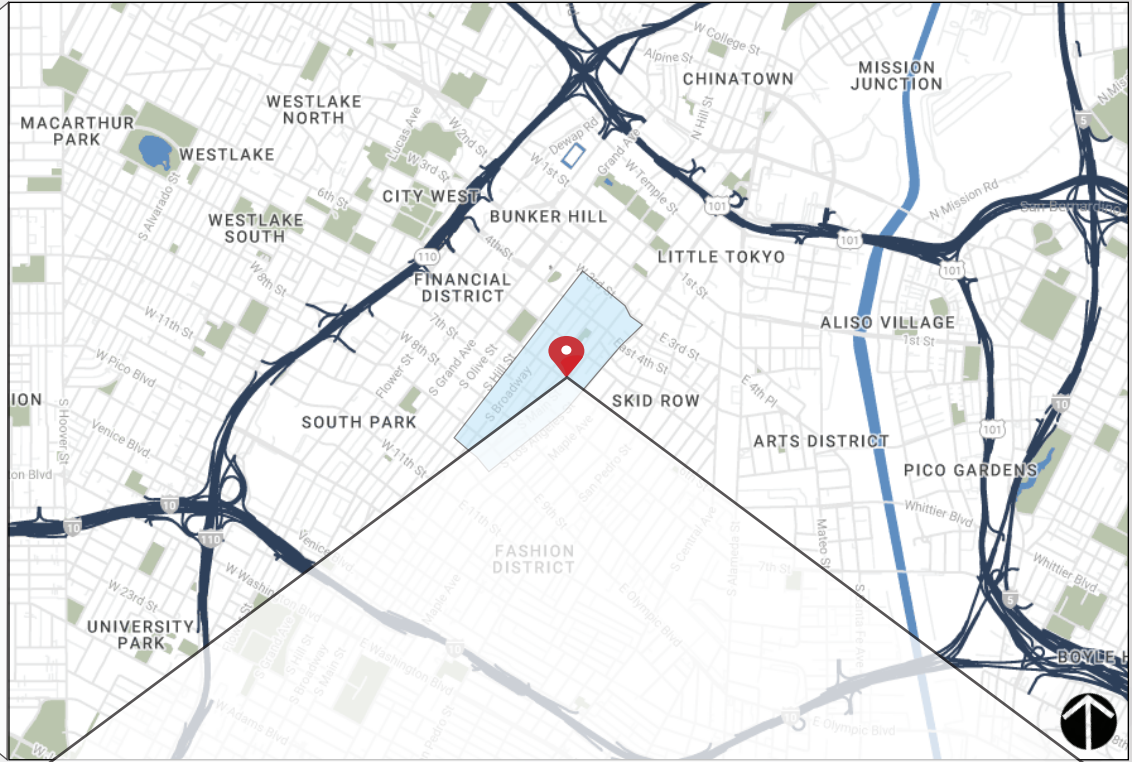
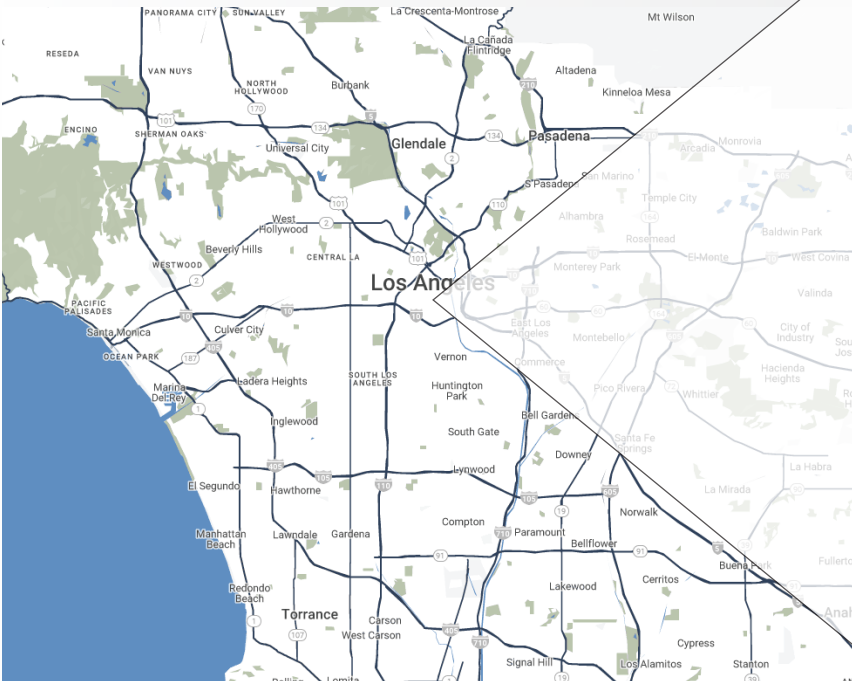
PERSONAL STATEMENT

After several years of working as an Environmental Professional, I recognized that Landscape Architecture offered a career path which would utilize my artistic passion and problem-solving skills. I enrolled in the UCLA Extension Landscape Architecture program as the first step in switching career paths. Over the past three years, this journey has been nothing short of transformative, enabling significant personal growth. Through this capstone project, I delved into addressing challenges prevalent in Los Angeles, allowing me to propose innovative solutions.

I look forward to a career in Landscape Architecture where I can apply the skills I've gained from this program to enhance the lives of individuals and serve as a steward of our environment.



SITE LOCATION



PROJECT JUSTIFICATION

Due to the location and context of this site, a conventional, street-level park is not necessarily the best solution to the deficiencies of this area. The existing need for parking which the site currently satisfies as well as the future needs of a growing community must be considered in addition to the need for park space in this area. Additionally, the architectural character of this area is defined by large buildings in the Beaux Arts and Classical Revival styles featuring ornate facades and extensive paving. By elevating the park space, continuity with these aesthetic elements can be accommodated on the substructure, while also accomplishing the goals of increasing green space and promoting sustainability and livability in the area by creating park above.

By elevating the park over the existing parking lots, the parking land-use can be maintained for the time being, but the resulting space below the park would be available for conversion to mixed use in the future when and if personal vehicles become less prevalent. The creation of the elevated park could potentially be phase 1 of a larger endeavor to revitalize Historic Core by increasing resident-focused amenities.

By elevating the park, the architectural elements of surrounding buildings could also be carried into the project by creating facades and architectural elements on the substructure of the park which are cohesive with those of the surrounding buildings. Elevating the park also allows for a design which spans 6th street, creating a continuous park from the northern parcel to the southern parcel without vehicular conflict. The existing parks in the historic core have issues with limiting access after hours. This issue is usually addressed by installing tall fences which create an uninviting, cage-like environment. By elevating the park, access points would be limited to elevators, and stairways which would allow for access control without the need to encase the park in fencing. This would create a more pleasant environment with unobstructed views and a more conventional park-like experience for users.

By elevating the park, users can be removed from the urban environment and be allowed to experience an oasis of greenery and the architectural character of the surrounding area can be maintained while significantly changing the utility of the space.



Sales Force Transit Park is a green cap over a multi modal hub in the heart of San Francisco. The building below fits seamlessly with the surrounding architecture, while the park above offers a reprieve from city life.

PROJECT JUSTIFICATION: ADDRESSING COMMUNITY NEEDS

INCREASE GREEN SPACE

Los Angeles ranks 47th among major U.S. cities in terms of park access. Downtown Los Angeles in particular, is heavily paved, vertically developed, and lacks open green spaces.

A well-planned public park in Historic Core would provide a much-needed public gathering space in the heart of the neighborhood. The addition of green space can have a significant impact on social outcomes and public health, promoting community engagement, physical activity, and social cohesion.



PROMOTE LIVABILITY

Research has shown that access to green space can have a positive impact on mental health and well-being, reducing stress levels and improving mood. Additionally, the presence of parks and green spaces can foster a sense of community, promoting social cohesion and enhancing neighborhood identity.

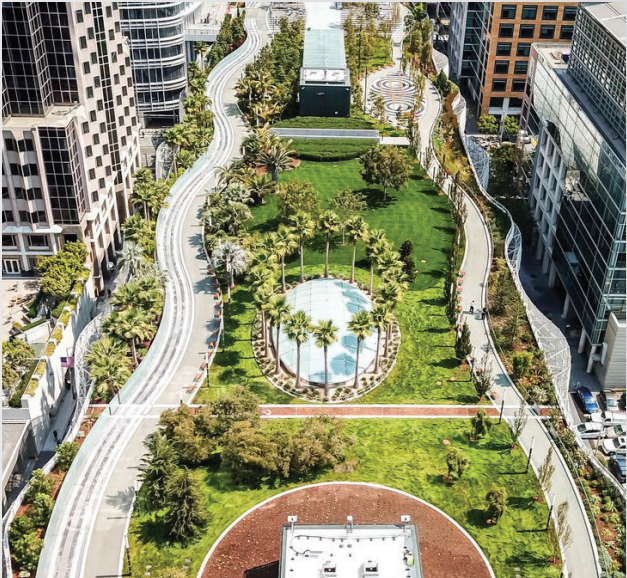
With limited green space available in this densely populated urban center, a park would provide an important gathering space for the community, offering opportunities for socializing, and physical activity as well as a space for users with dogs to recreate with their pets.



PROMOTE SUSTAINABILITY

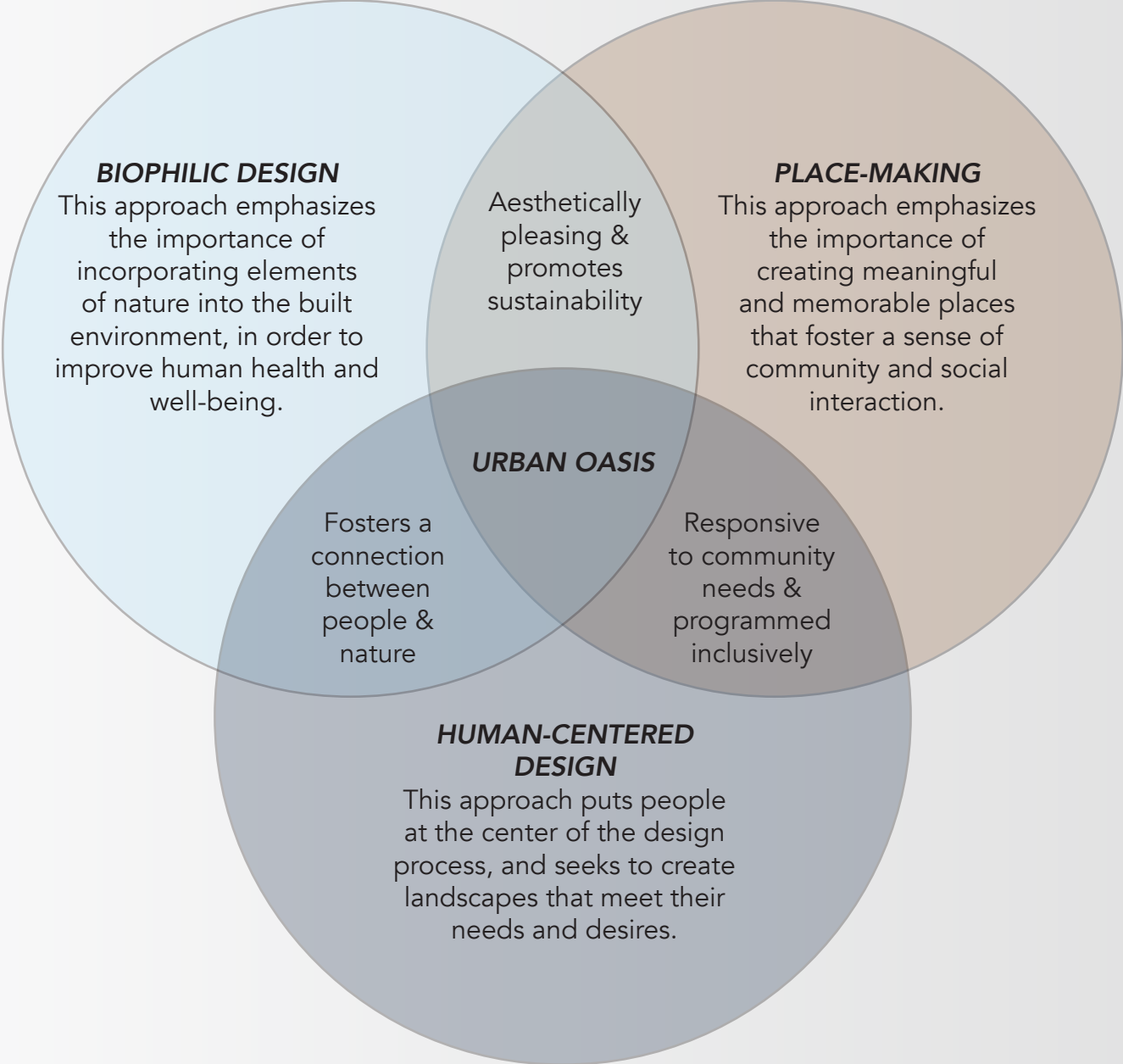
A study conducted in 2014 by the City of Los Angeles Bureau of Engineering estimated that approximately 52% of the land area in downtown Los Angeles is paved.

By transforming an underutilized, parking lot into a park, this project will reduce the urban heat island effect, improve air quality, and promote biodiversity. The concept of an elevated park as a superstructure over the existing parking lot would maximize efficient use of space in a sustainable manner.

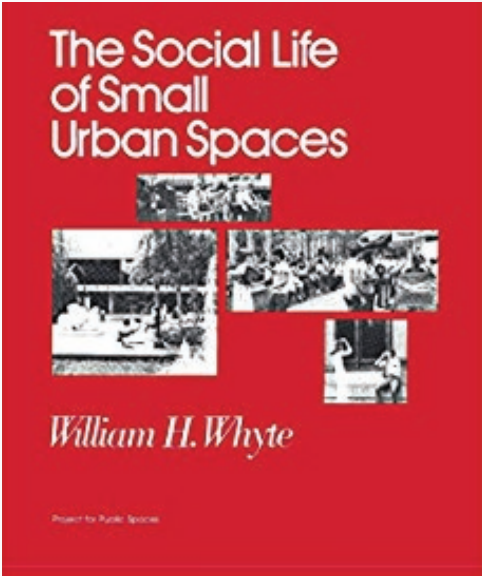


DESIGN METHODOLOGY

DEFINING PRINCIPLES

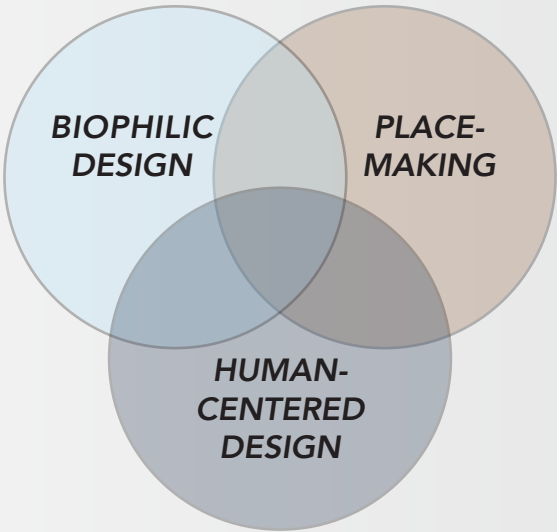


DESIGN METHODOLOGY



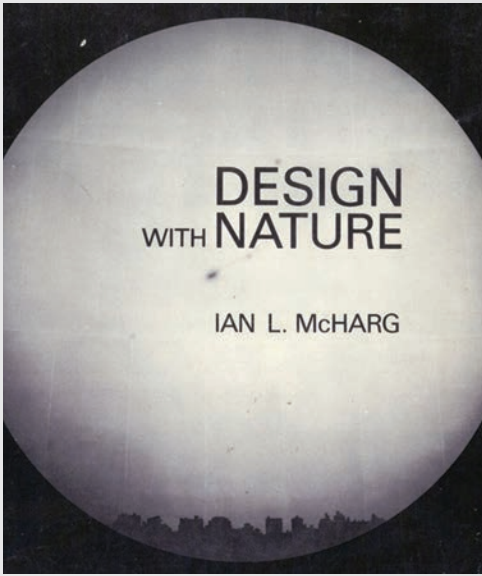
“The Social Life of Small Urban Spaces”
William H. Whyte

This book & accompanying film explore the ways in which people use and interact with public spaces in cities, providing insights and recommendations for creating more successful and vibrant urban environments. Whyte’s approach to analyzing spaces has been applied to the project site and was used to inform the design process.



DESIGN GOALS:

- **SUSTAINABLE**
- **FUNCTIONAL**
- **CONTEXT-SENSITIVE**



“Design with Nature”
Ian McHarg

McHarg’s book emphasizes the importance of incorporating ecological considerations and principles into the design of the built environment to create sustainable and resilient landscapes. These principles were employed in this urban context which is devoid of natural landscapes in order to enhance the site context and add ecological value and social value.

SITE LOCATION



SITE CONTEXT

Located in the heart of Downtown Los Angeles, the Historic Core Neighborhood is known for its mix of historic buildings as well as a growing number of contemporary developments. Many historic buildings in this area have been re-purposed as residential properties bringing new residents, diners, and sightseers to the area. This neighborhood is also bordered by the Financial District, Little Tokyo, and Skid Row, making Historic Core a crossroads for a diverse group of users.

The lot chosen for this project is currently used as a surface parking lot which spans approximately 12,000 square feet and is currently owned by a private company. There have been several proposals for development on the site in the past, including a mixed-use residential development, and a commercial building.

PROJECT STATEMENT

This project aims to address the unintended consequences of urbanization in a downtown setting including: overcrowding, lack of green space, and social isolation.

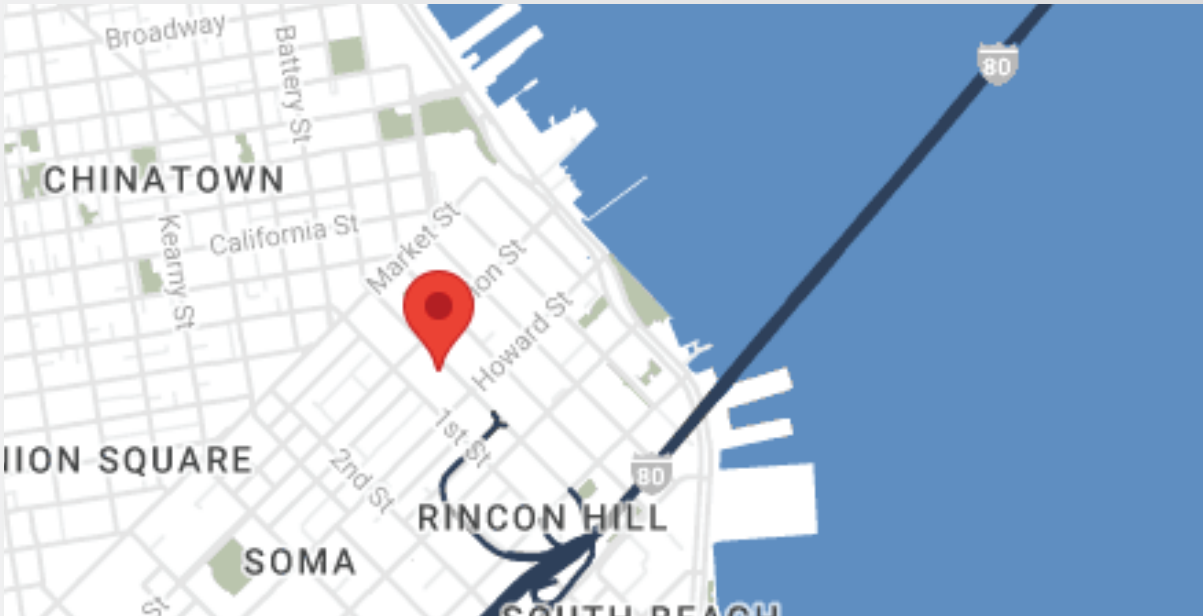
By transforming a downtown parking lot into an urban park, this project will demonstrate how Landscape Architecture can be employed to improve access to open green space, enhance community cohesion, and create habitat in an urban setting while employing sustainable development practices.



DESIGN PRECEDENTS: SALESFORCE PARK

SALESFORCE PARK, SAN FRANCISCO CA

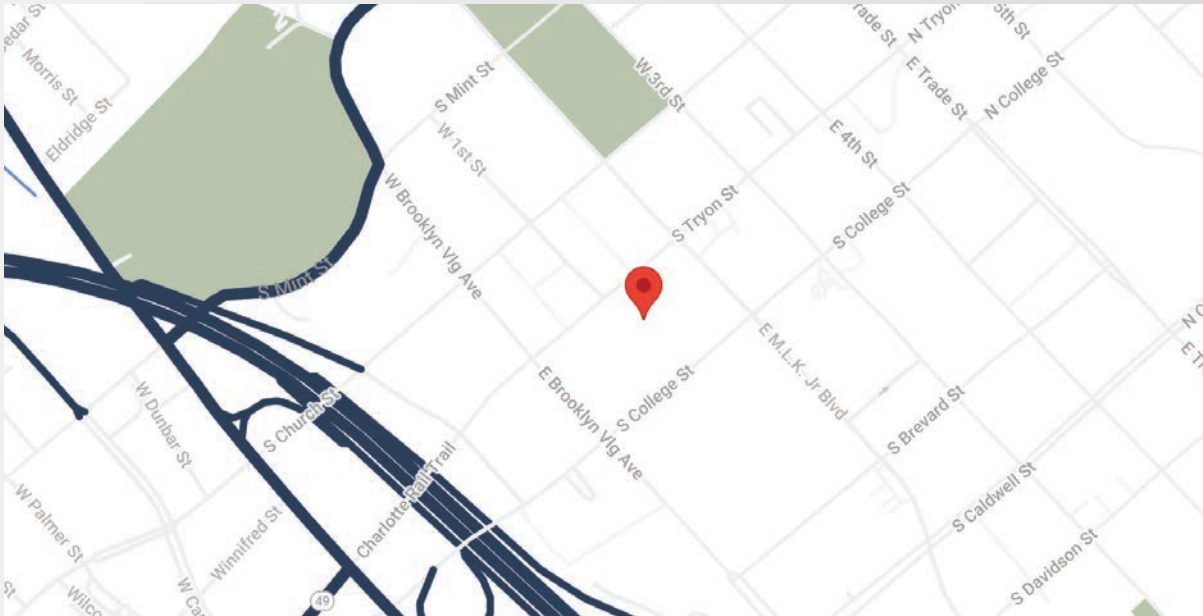
Salesforce Park, nestled amidst the bustling streets of San Francisco, is a true urban oasis and a testament to the city's commitment to green spaces. Located above the Salesforce Transit Center, this elevated park is a 5.4-acre haven in the heart of the city. Its importance as an urban refuge cannot be overstated. In a metropolis known for its fast-paced lifestyle and towering skyscrapers, Salesforce Park offers a serene escape. With its landscaped gardens, tranquil water features, and a rich variety of plants, it provides a breath of fresh air for both residents and visitors.



DESIGN PRECEDENTS: THE GREEN

THE GREEN, CHARLOTTE NC

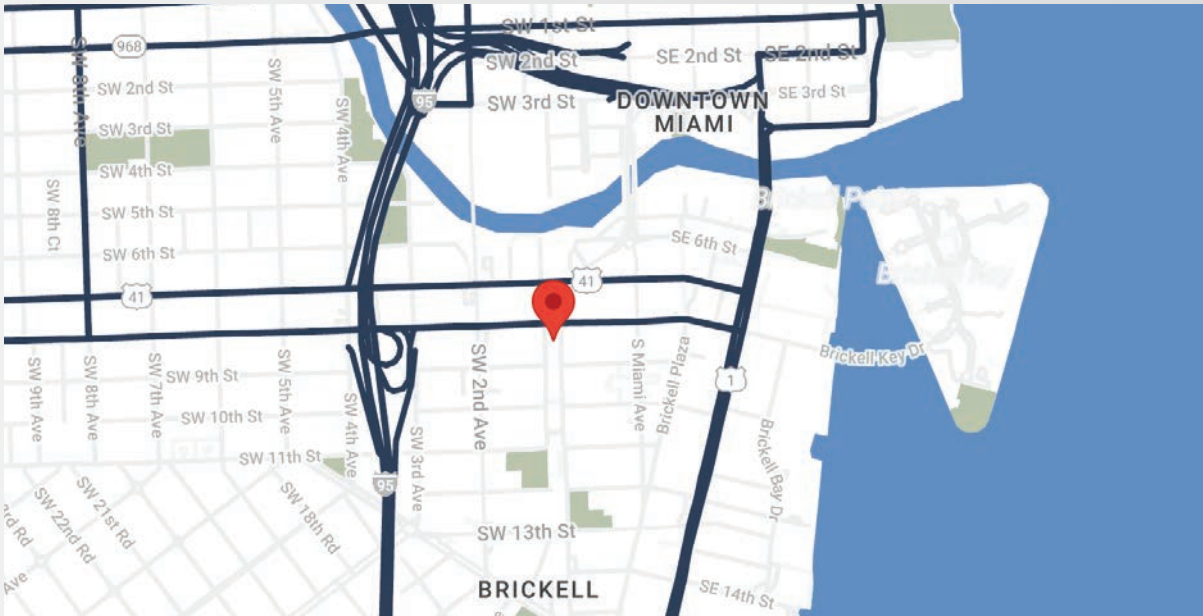
The Green is a 1.5-acre downtown park, surrounded by 60,000 square feet of retail and office space. This location was formerly occupied by a surface parking lot & was transformed into an urban greenspace. Restaurants and retail shops open to the park from a European-style arcade. The park provides an open green space for the community to enjoy and also allows for flexible programming and ephemeral art installations.



DESIGN PRECEDENTS: BRICKEL BACKYARD

BRICKEL BACKYARD, MAIMI FL

Part of a larger project, 'The Underline', the Brickell Backyard is a half mile portion of a larger 10-mile linear park in Miami. This first phase of the project includes a river room, separate biking and walking paths, a dog walk, native grasses and trees, an urban gym, as well as soccer and basketball facilities. It also features an area dubbed 'The Promenade' which is an urban stage with a plaza for cultural and wellness programming and community based events.



SITE CONTEXT

PARKING STRUCTURES

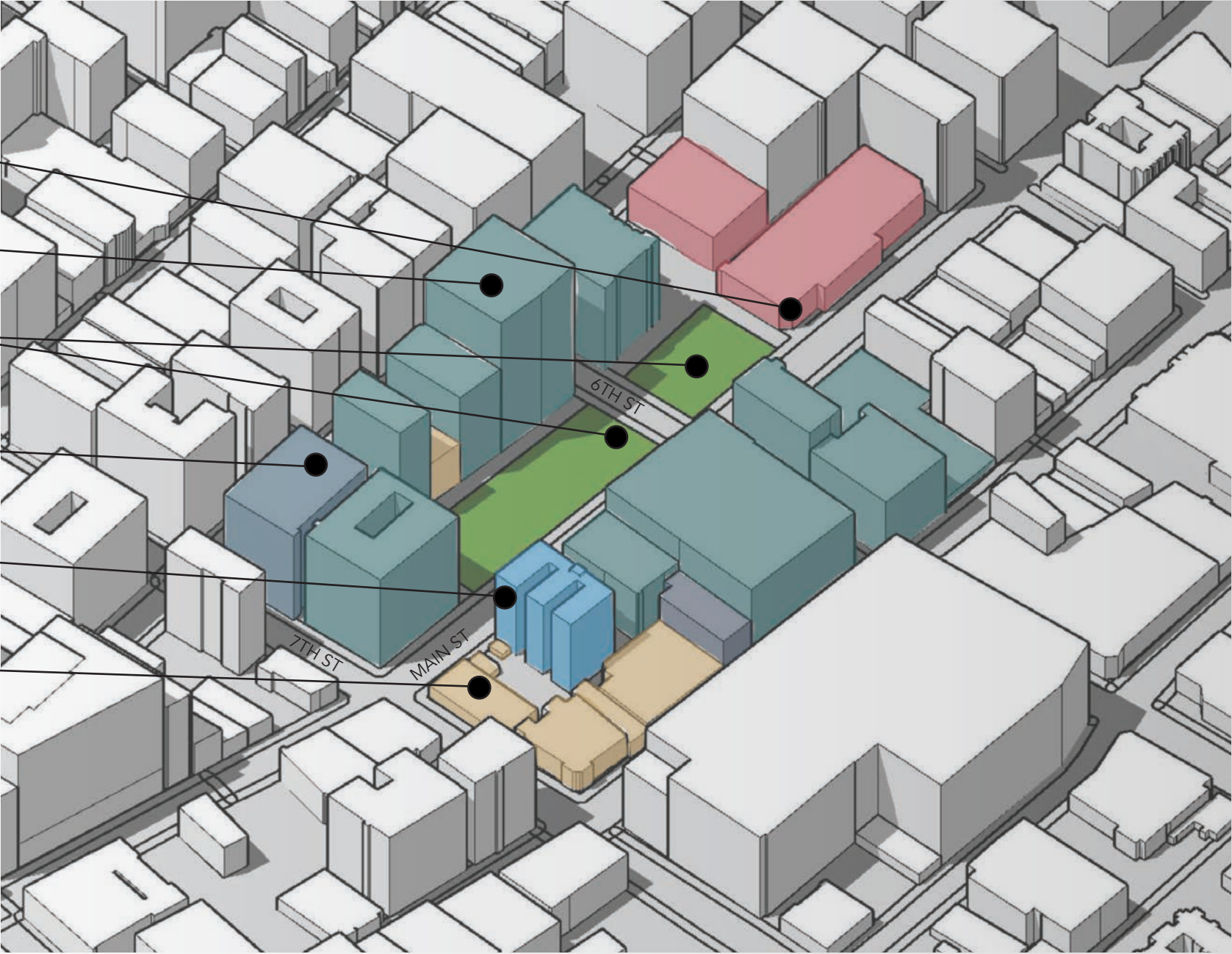
MIXED-USE

PROJECT SITE
CURRENTLY
SURFACE PARKING

RESIDENTIAL

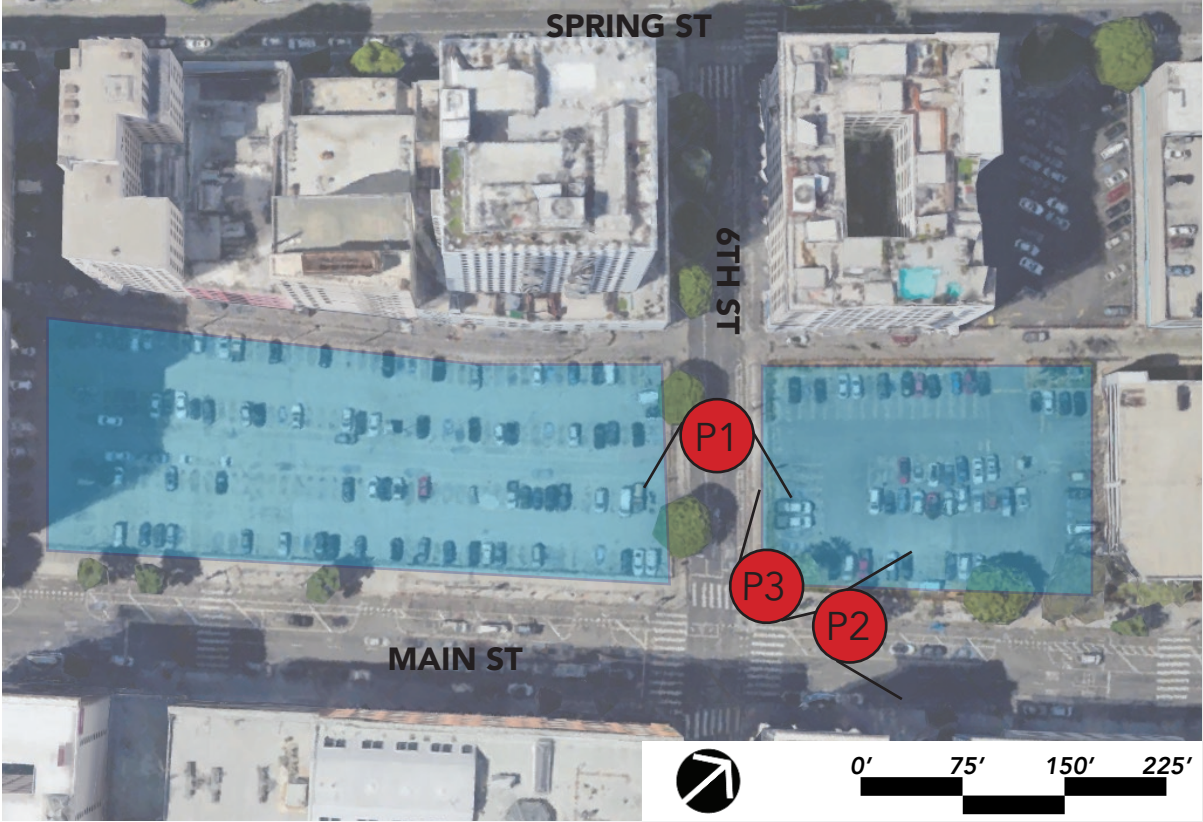
HOTEL

RETAIL



0' 100' 200' 300'

SITE CONTEXT: SITE PHOTOS



USER GROUPS: INTENDED USERS, CLIENTS & STAKEHOLDERS

LOCAL RESIDENTS



DAILY COMMUTERS



An urban park would serve to benefit local residents, daily commuters, unhoused individuals, and tourists alike. The proposed park would play a pivotal role in enhancing the city's livability, inclusivity, and attractiveness while demonstrating a commitment to the well-being of all its inhabitants and visitors.

UNHOUSED POPULATION



TOURISTS

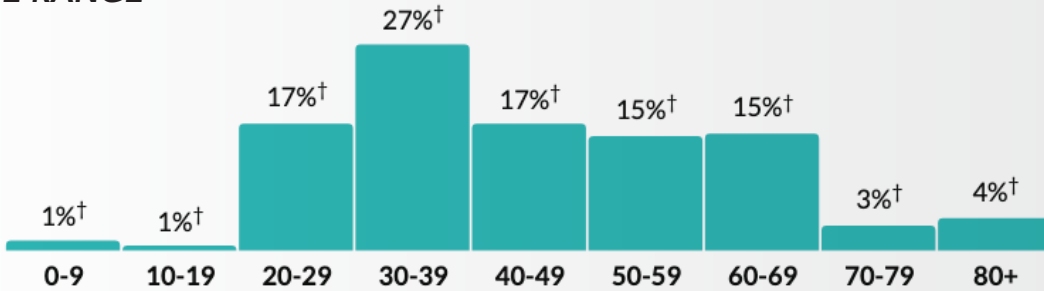


USER GROUPS: INTENDED USERS, CLIENTS & STAKEHOLDERS

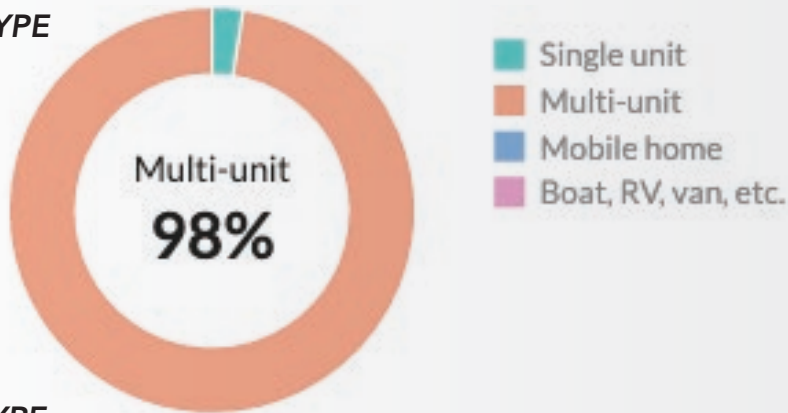
DATA COLLECTION

The proposed project site lies within the 90013 Zip Code which includes a portion of the neighborhood known as Skid Row as well as the Arts District. Data was gathered from this area in the 2020 Census. The following data sets illustrate the type of potential users which the proposed project would serve.

AGE RANGE



HOUSING TYPE



HOUSING TYPE

The residents of 90013 Zip Code reside overwhelmingly in Multi-unit Housing Developments with limited outdoor space.

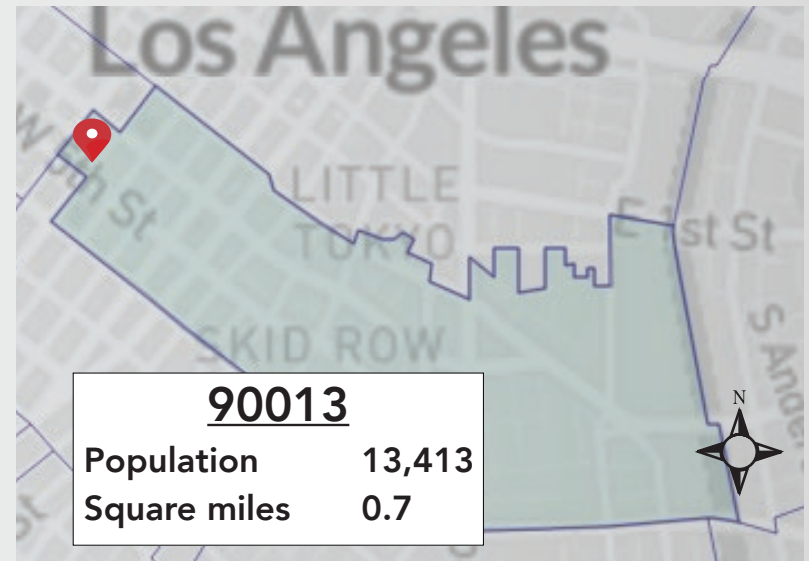
PROXIMITY-BASED USERS

This area includes many government and private office buildings which draw many workers to the area during the workweek. These users would also benefit from increased green space in the area.

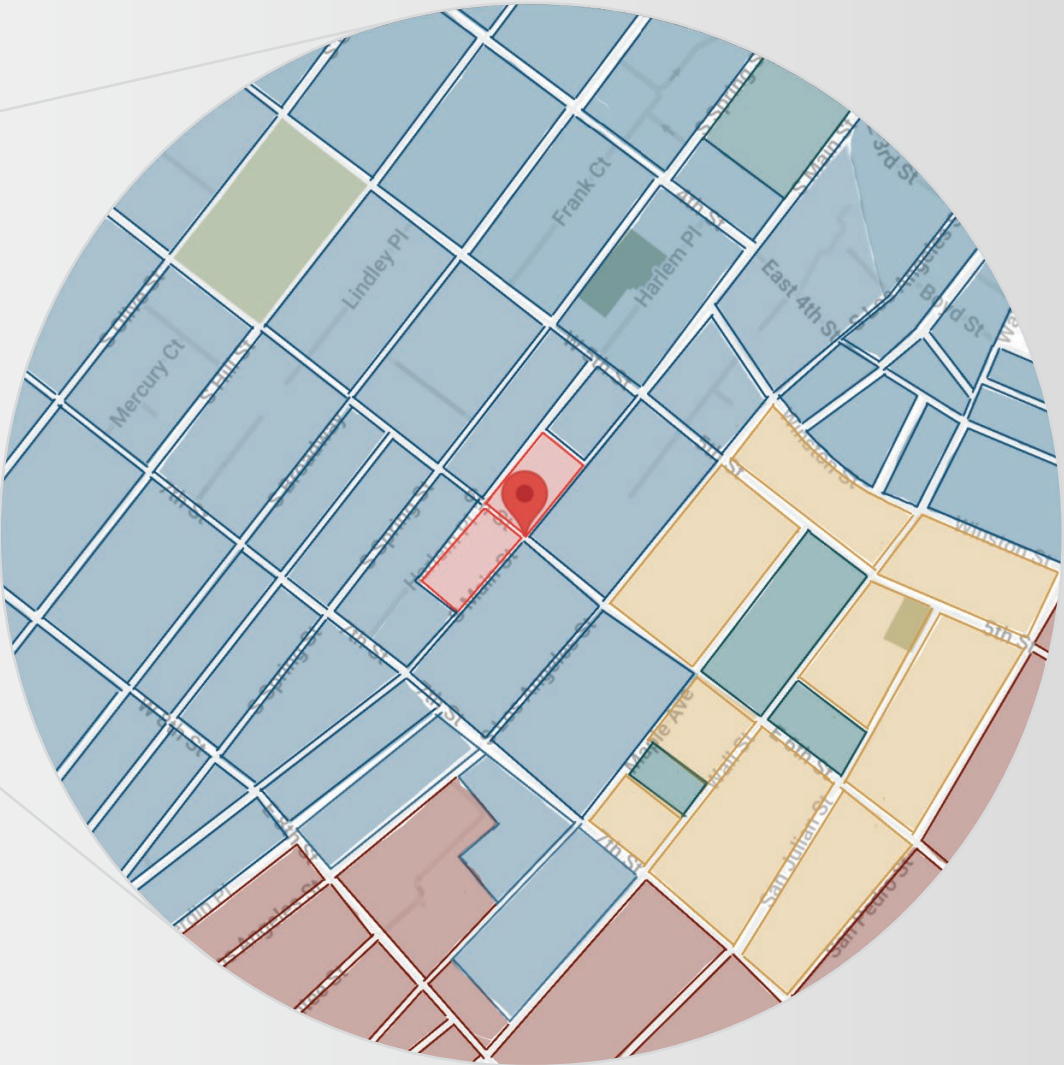


PROXIMITY-BASED USERS

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SITE ANALYSIS: ZONING

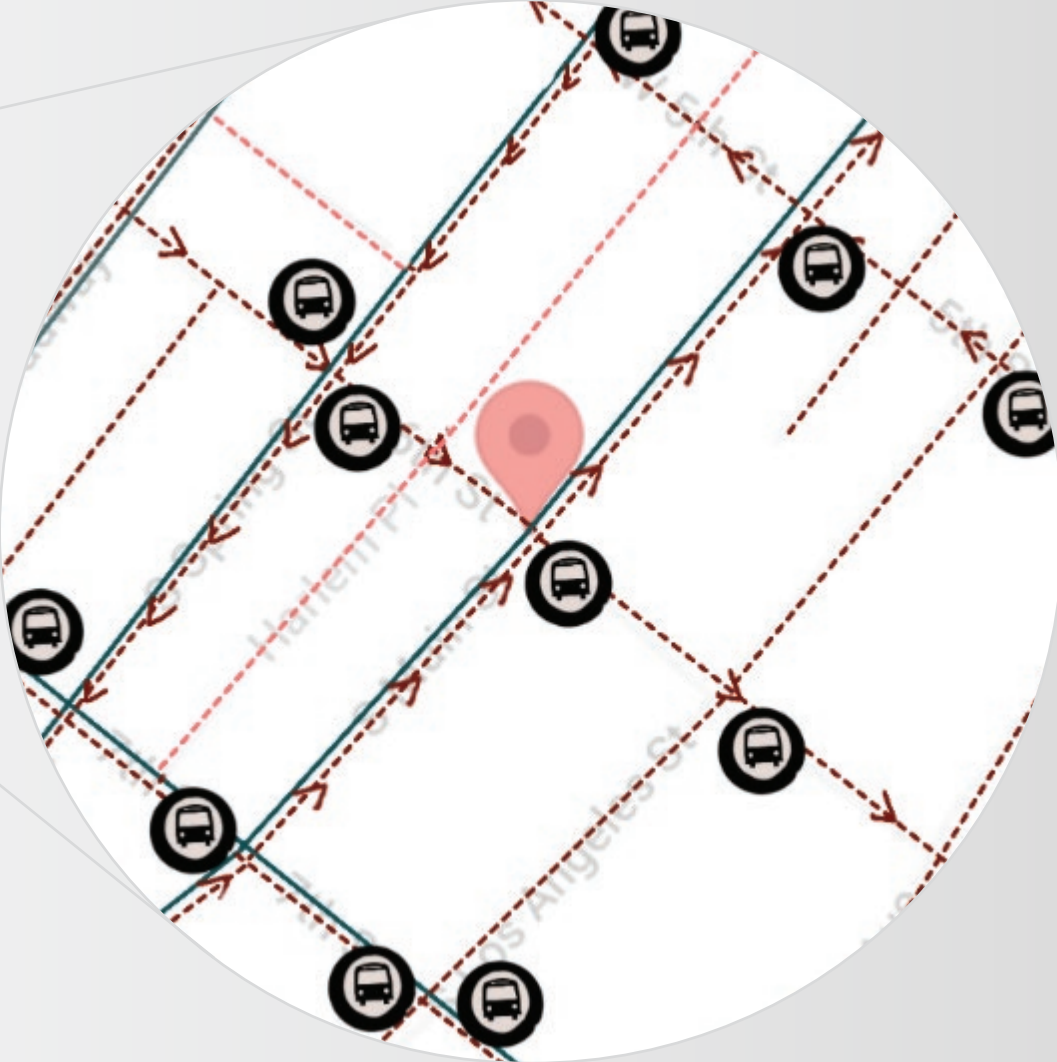
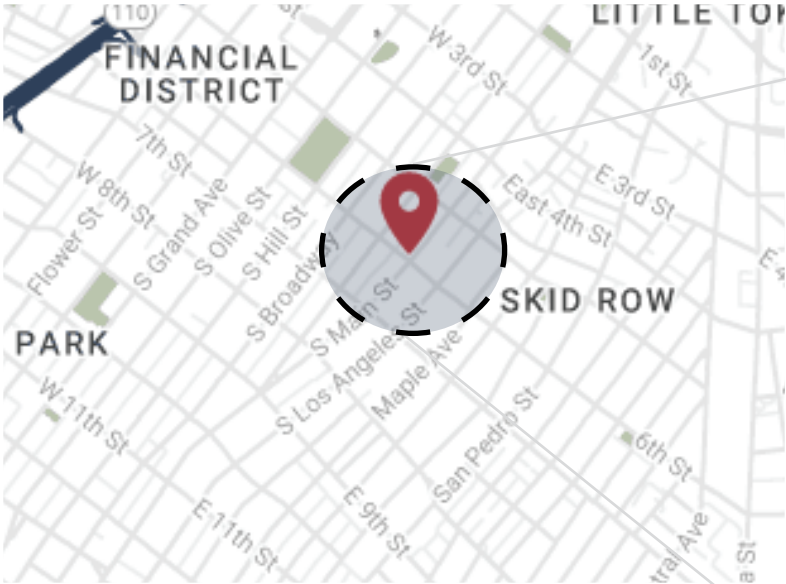


ZONING/LAND USE

The area surrounding the project site is zoned mostly as "C2-Commercial" which includes mixed use buildings, converted historic buildings, retail and commercial buildings. The areas to the south include some light industrial zoning as well as some publicly owned buildings and areas zoned for high density housing. With the exception of Pershing Square, there is no designated open space within a 15-minute walk from the project site.

- C2- Commercial**
- PF- Public Facilities Zone**
- R5- Multiple Dwelling Zone**
- OS- Open Space**

SITE ANALYSIS: ACCESSIBILITY



CIRCULATION/TRANSPORTATION

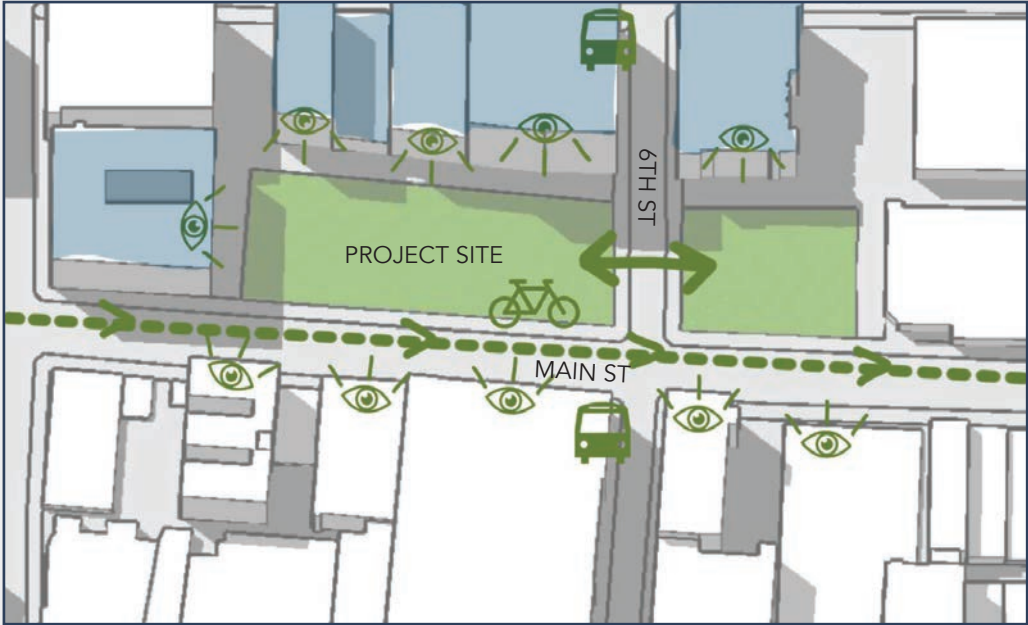
Many of the streets in the vicinity are one-way vehicular routes designed to reduce congestion during peak hours. Less-busy streets are two-way and several alleyways service the large buildings in the area providing off-street access. There are protected bike lanes on Main street and Spring street as well as an unprotected designated bike lane on 7th street. There are also transit stops for multiple bus lines on almost every street corner, making this a busy area for users on multiple modes of transit. All streets in the area are flanked by 8-foot sidewalks with crosswalks and ADA-curb ramps.

- > -> -> One-way street
- - - Two-way street
- Bike route
- - - Alleyway

OPPORTUNITIES & CONSTRAINTS:

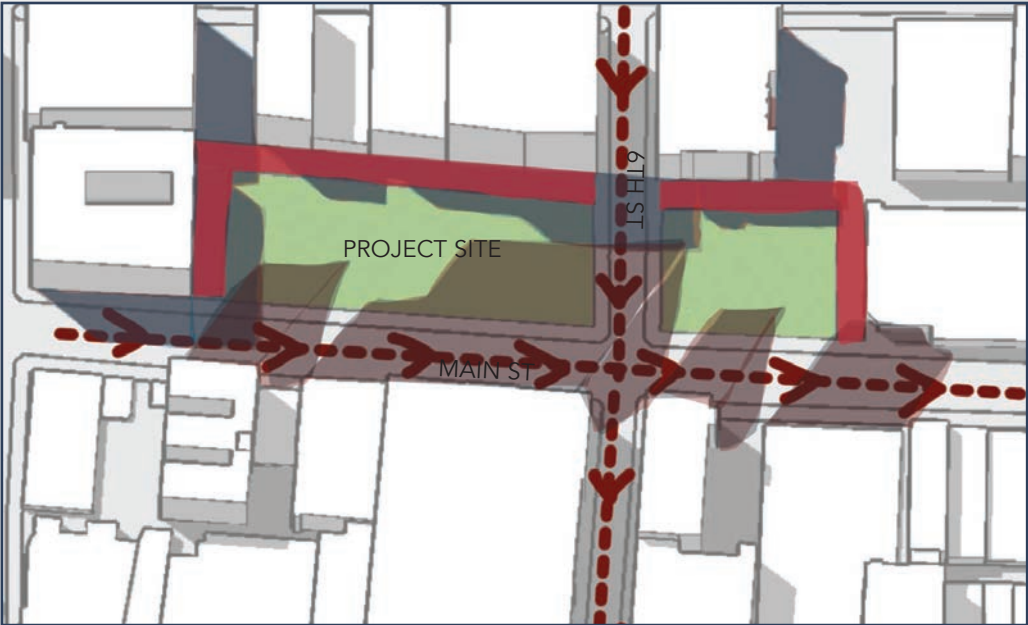
OPPORTUNITIES

- Adjacent protected bike lane
- Nearby bus stops
- Existing bike share facility
- Potential for rain water harvesting from adjacent buildings.
- Opportunity to span 6th street to connect parcels.
- Large open space with no existing structures.
- Accessible via multiple modes of transportation (bus, bike, car, pedestrian)
- Located in a densely populated area - many potential users.
- Strong Architectural Style exists in project vicinity - opportunity for aesthetic continuity & enhancement of community character.



CONSTRAINTS

- Heavily shaded site in early morning and late afternoon
- One-way traffic (fast moving)
- Adjacent alleyways create a liminal space between the site and surrounding structures. Bordered and transected by 6th & Main streets - Noise and pedestrian/vehicular conflict.
- Lack of interesting views at ground level - site is enclosed by large structures.



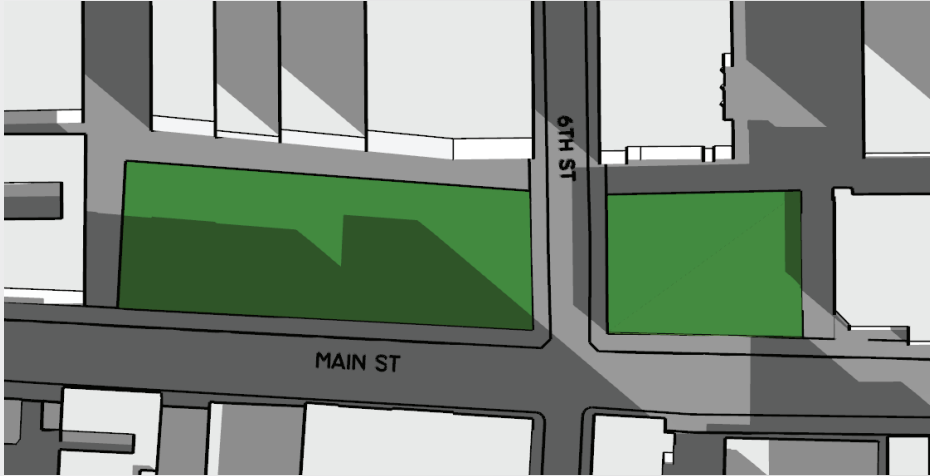
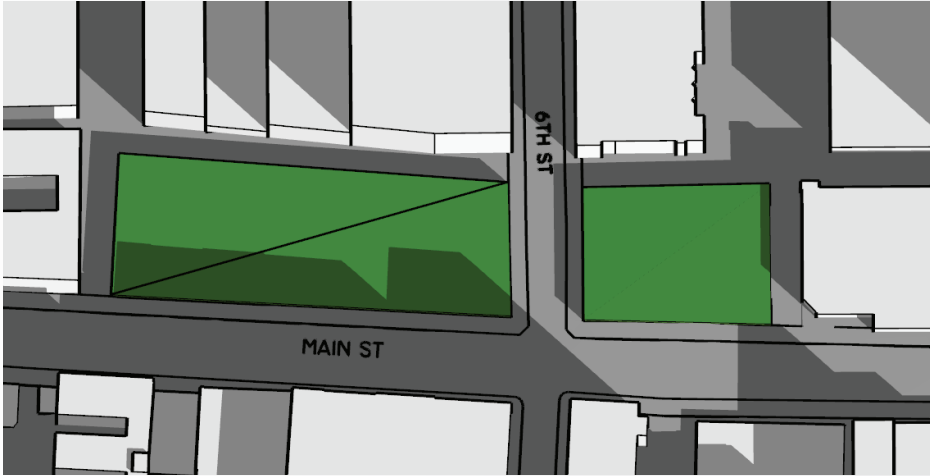
OPPORTUNITIES & CONSTRAINTS: SUN STUDY

ELEVATED SITE

GROUND LEVEL SITE

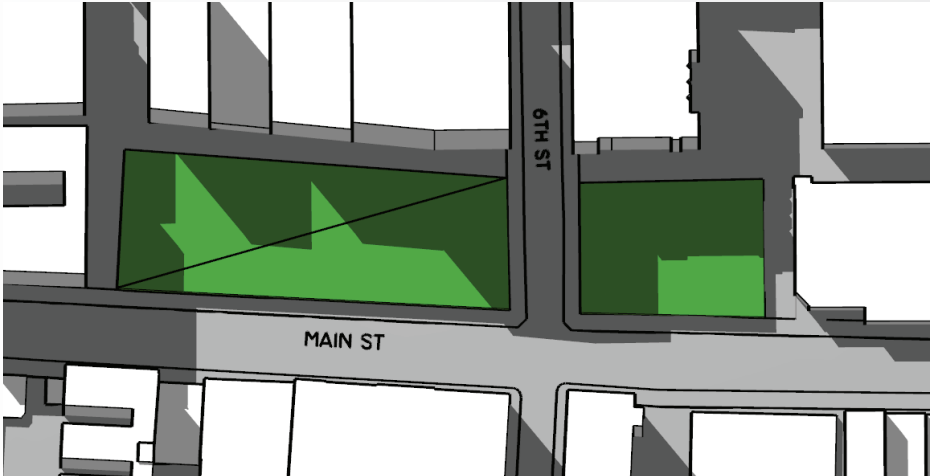
7AM

7AM



3PM

3PM



By elevating the proposed park, the site can benefit from maximized sun exposure in a shady area, while also creating the opportunity to span 6th street & separate pedestrians from the traffic at the street level.



PROJECT GOALS:

INCREASE OPEN SPACE



Provide an opportunity for users to experience a naturalistic environment in an urban setting.

ENHANCE COMMUNITY COHESION



Create opportunities for social interaction and community events which foster safer, happier communities.

CREATE HABITAT



Create a habitat island for pollinators, birds and other transitory species passing through the downtown area.

OBJECTIVES:

CREATE A SUSTAINABLE, FUNCTIONAL & CONTEXT SENSITIVE DESIGN IN AN URBAN SETTING.



Enhance the surrounding community by transforming an under-utilized space into a hub for social connection, urban habitat, and educational opportunities in a context-sensitive manner.

PROGRAM

PASSIVE RECREATION



DEMONSTRATION POLLINATOR GARDENS



FUNCTIONAL AMENITIES



COMMUNITY EVENT SPACE



LUNCHTIME GATHERING SPACE



WILDLIFE HABITAT



DESIGN METAPHOR: URBAN GRID



URBAN GRID

Inspired by the street grids, interlocking neighborhoods, disjointed ecosystems, and patchwork nature of Los Angeles, the Urban Grid is a design metaphor which references the nature of this city and its inhabitants

METAPHOR EXPRESSION



Mixed programming



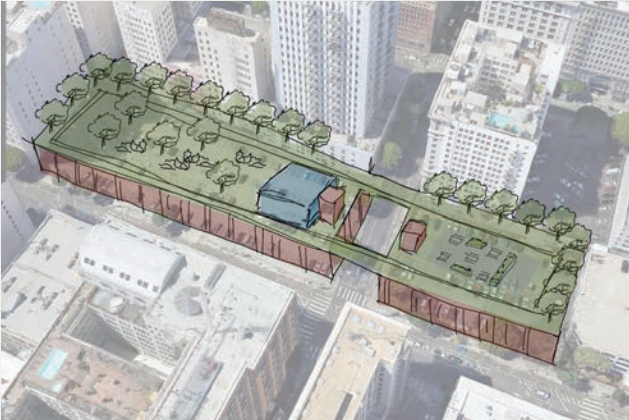
Linear & symmetrical spatial organization

DESIGN DEVELOPMENT: EXPOLRATION OF DESIGN CONCEPTS

CONCEPT 1



CONCEPT 2



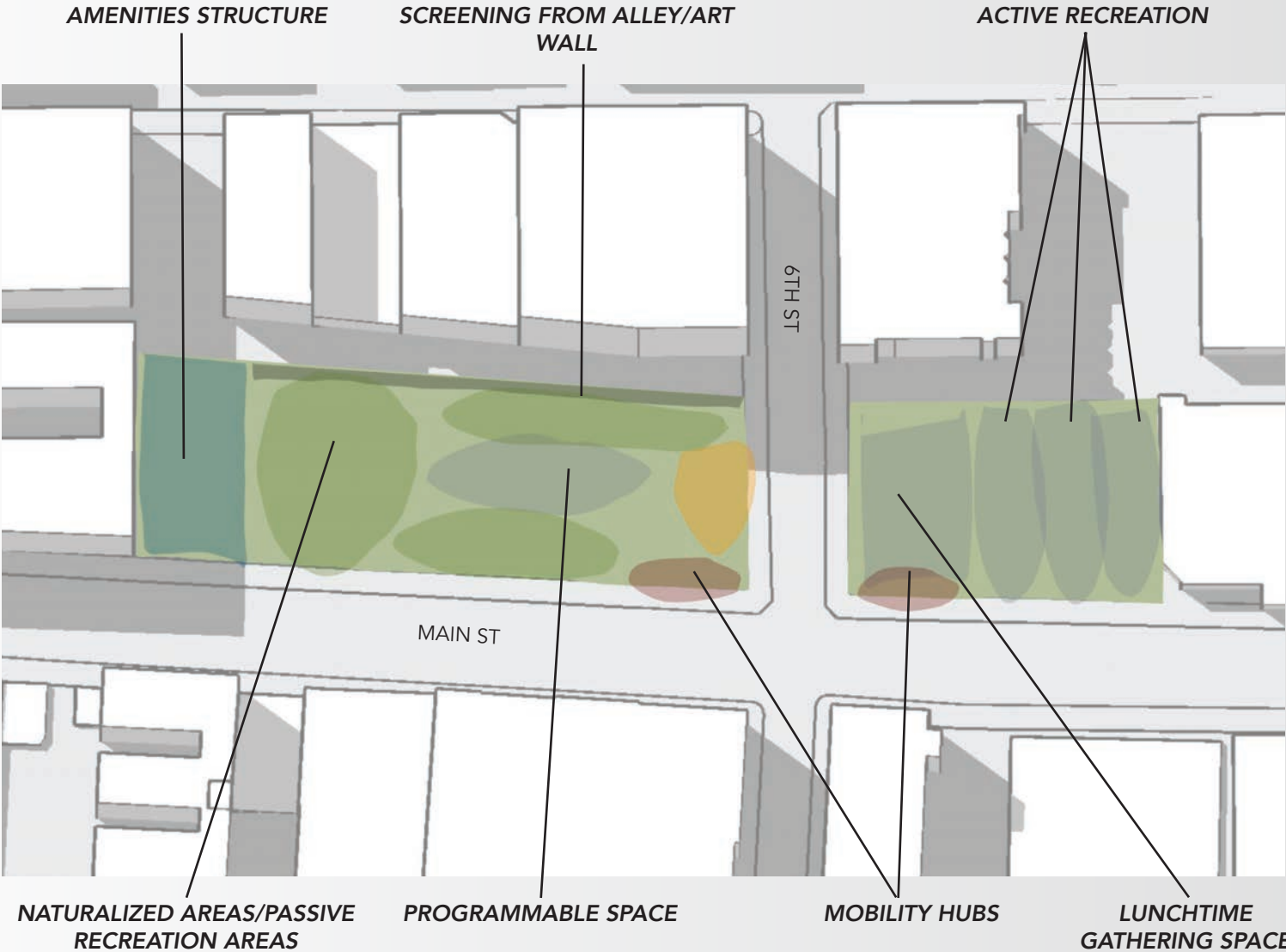
CONCEPT 3



Three design concepts were explored to understand which design choices would best suit the site, purpose, and need of the project. The following pages detail each design alternative.

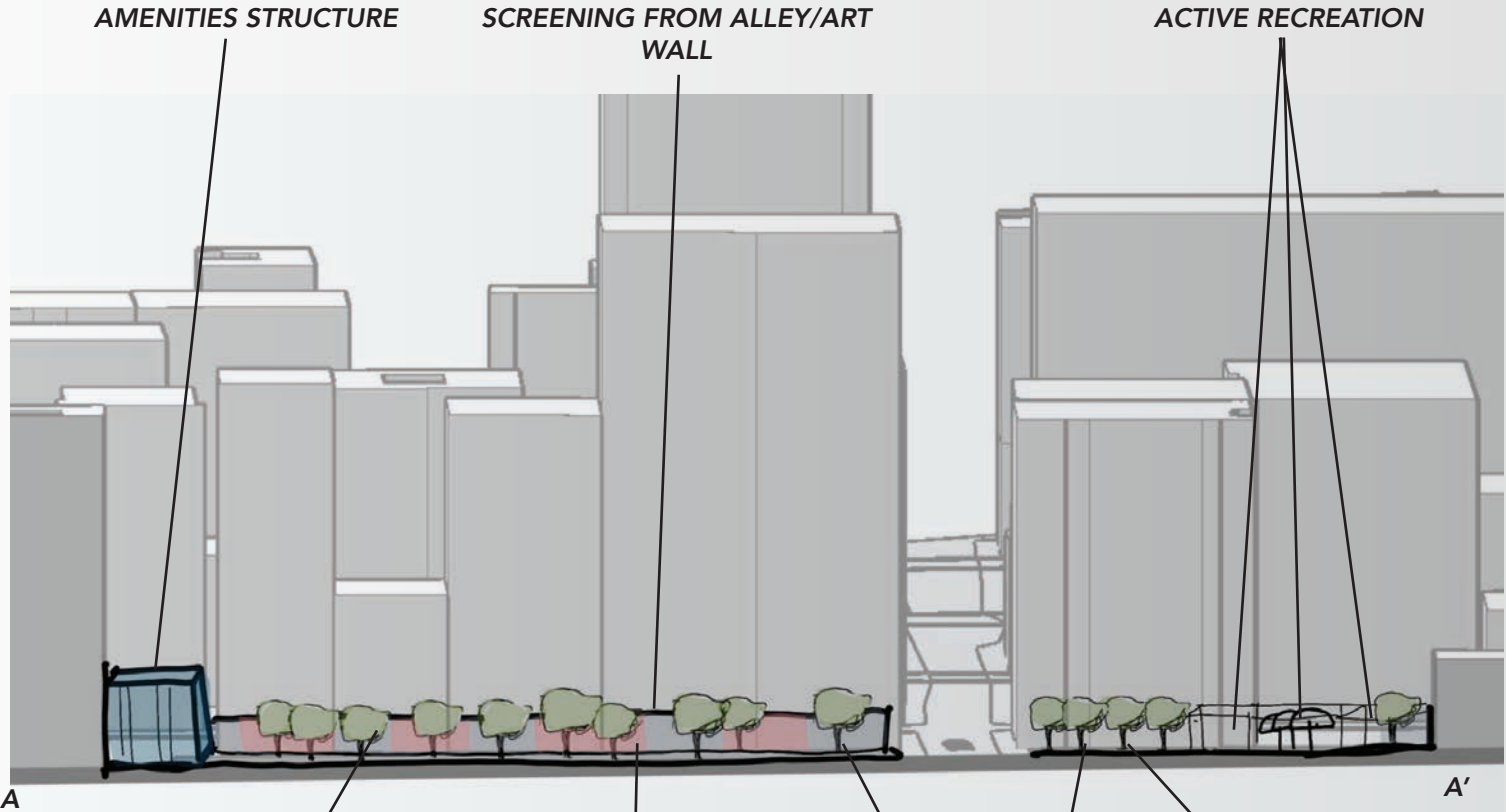
CONCEPT 1: BUBBLE DIAGRAM

ACTIVE & PASSIVE ZONING CONCEPT



CONCEPT 1: SECTION

ACTIVE & PASSIVE ZONING CONCEPT



NATURALIZED AREAS/PASSIVE RECREATION AREAS

PROGRAMMABLE SPACE

MOBILITY HUBS

LUNCHTIME GATHERING SPACE

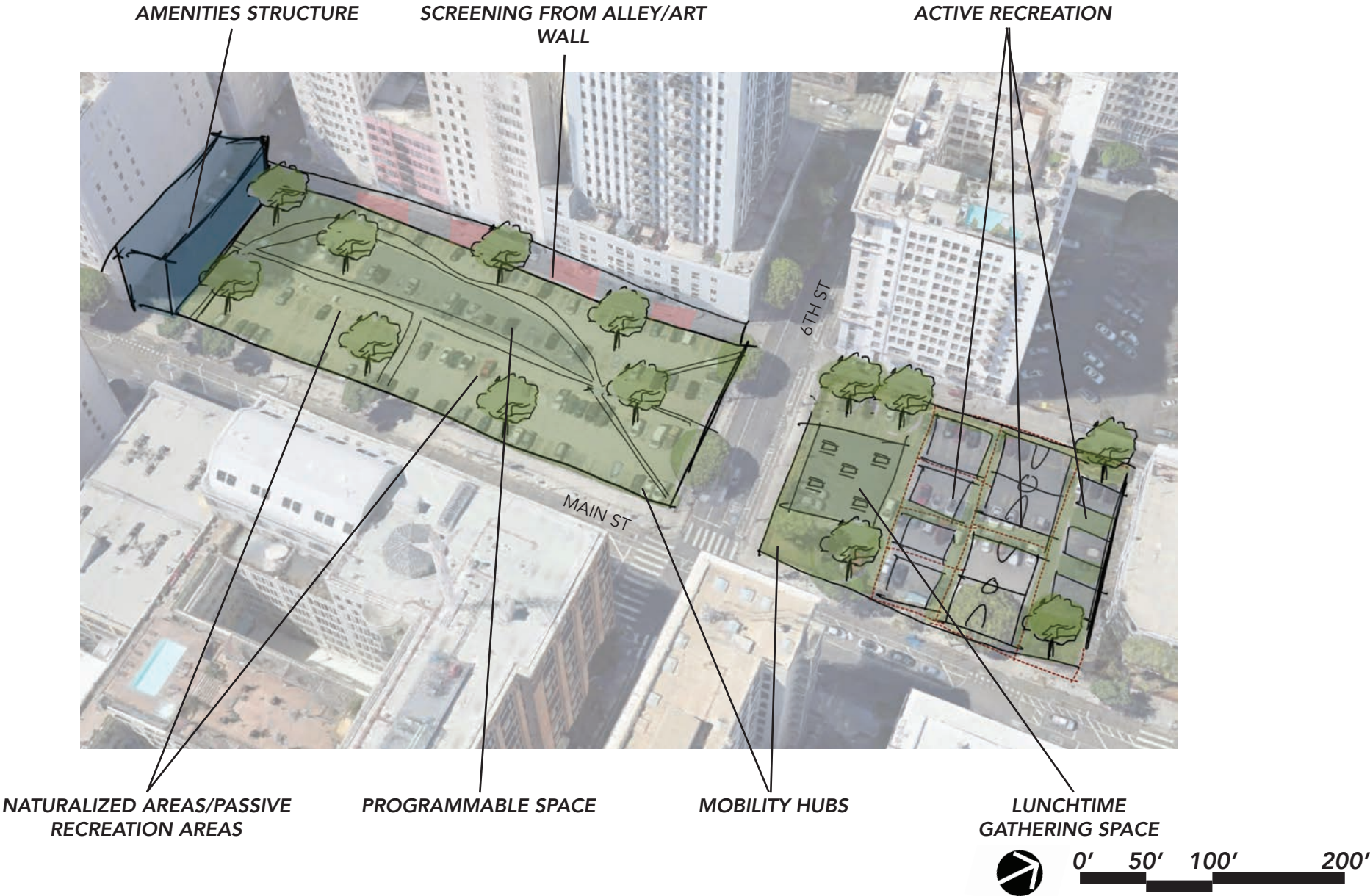
AMENITIES STRUCTURE

SCREENING FROM ALLEY/ART WALL

ACTIVE RECREATION

CONCEPT 1: VIGNETTE

ACTIVE & PASSIVE ZONING CONCEPT



CONCEPT 1: INSPIRATION IMAGES

ACTIVE & PASSIVE ZONING CONCEPT

ACTIVE RECREATION



LUNCHTIME GATHERING PLACES



ARCHITECTURAL



VEGETATION



PROGRAMMABLE SPACE



COMMUNITY EVENT SPACE

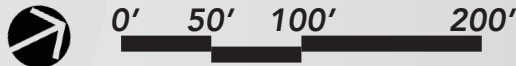
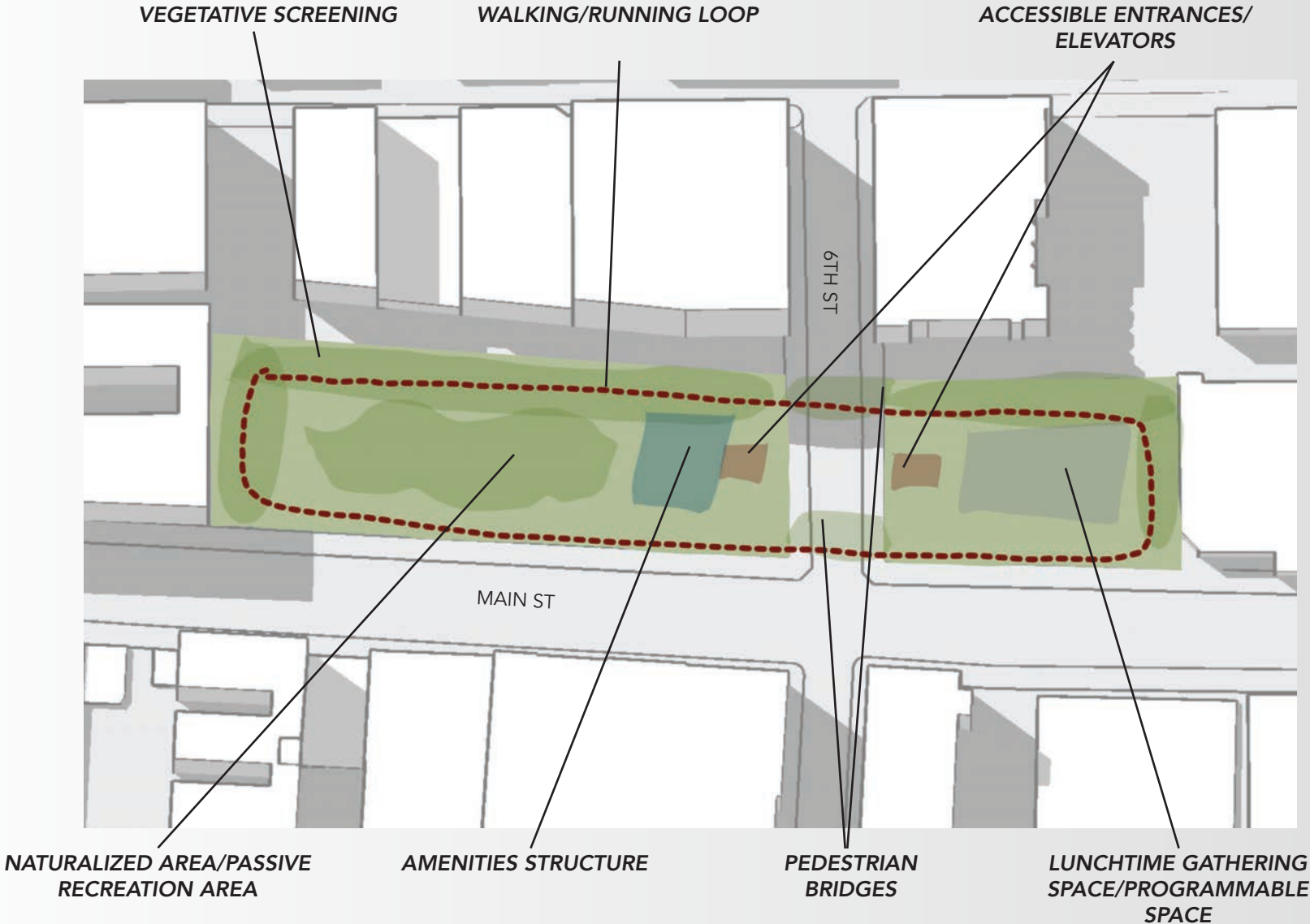


FEEL



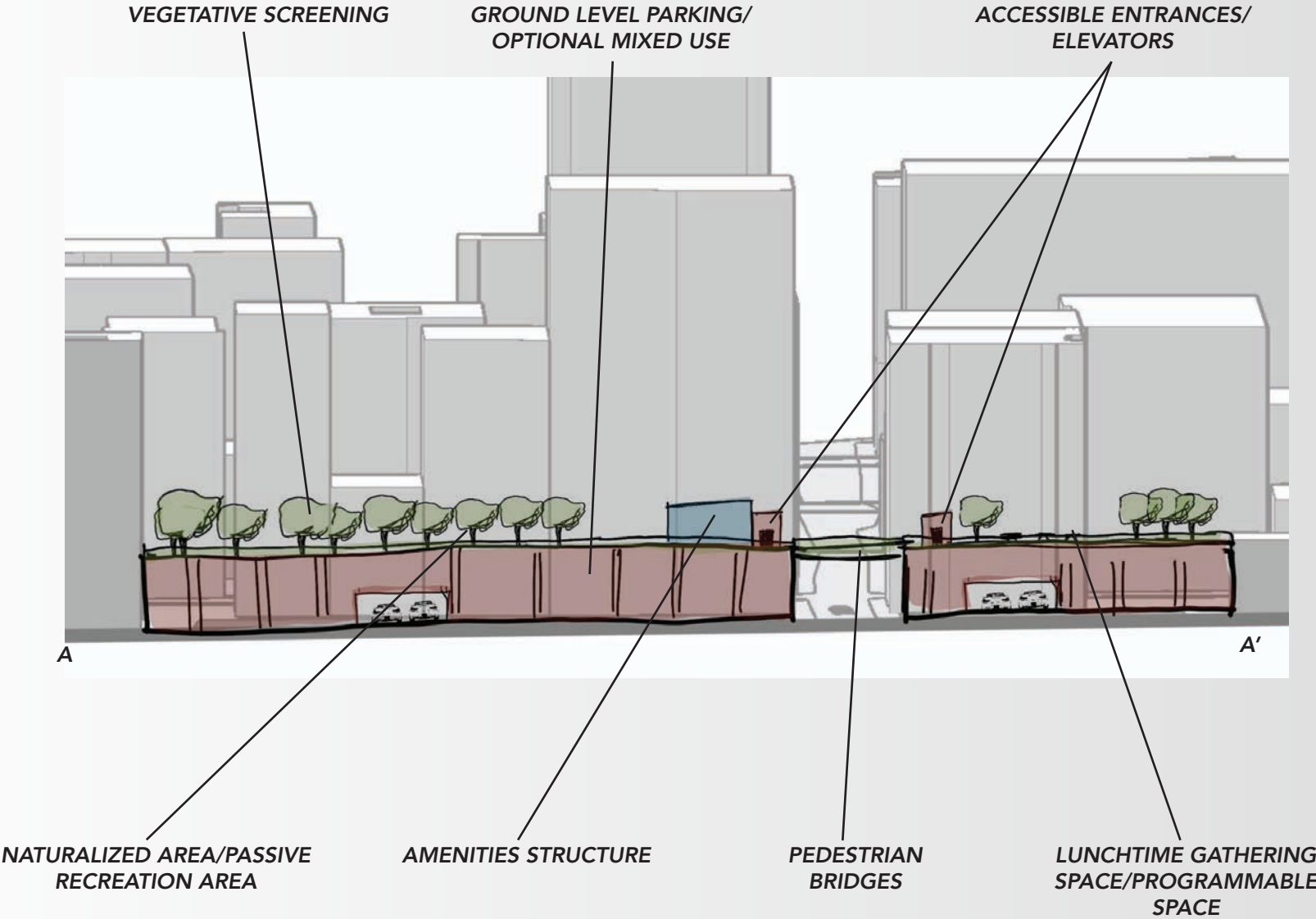
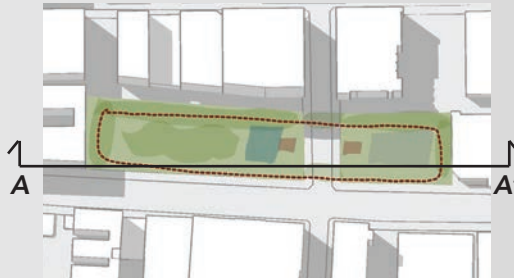
CONCEPT 2: BUBBLE DIAGRAM

ELEVATED PARK CONCEPT



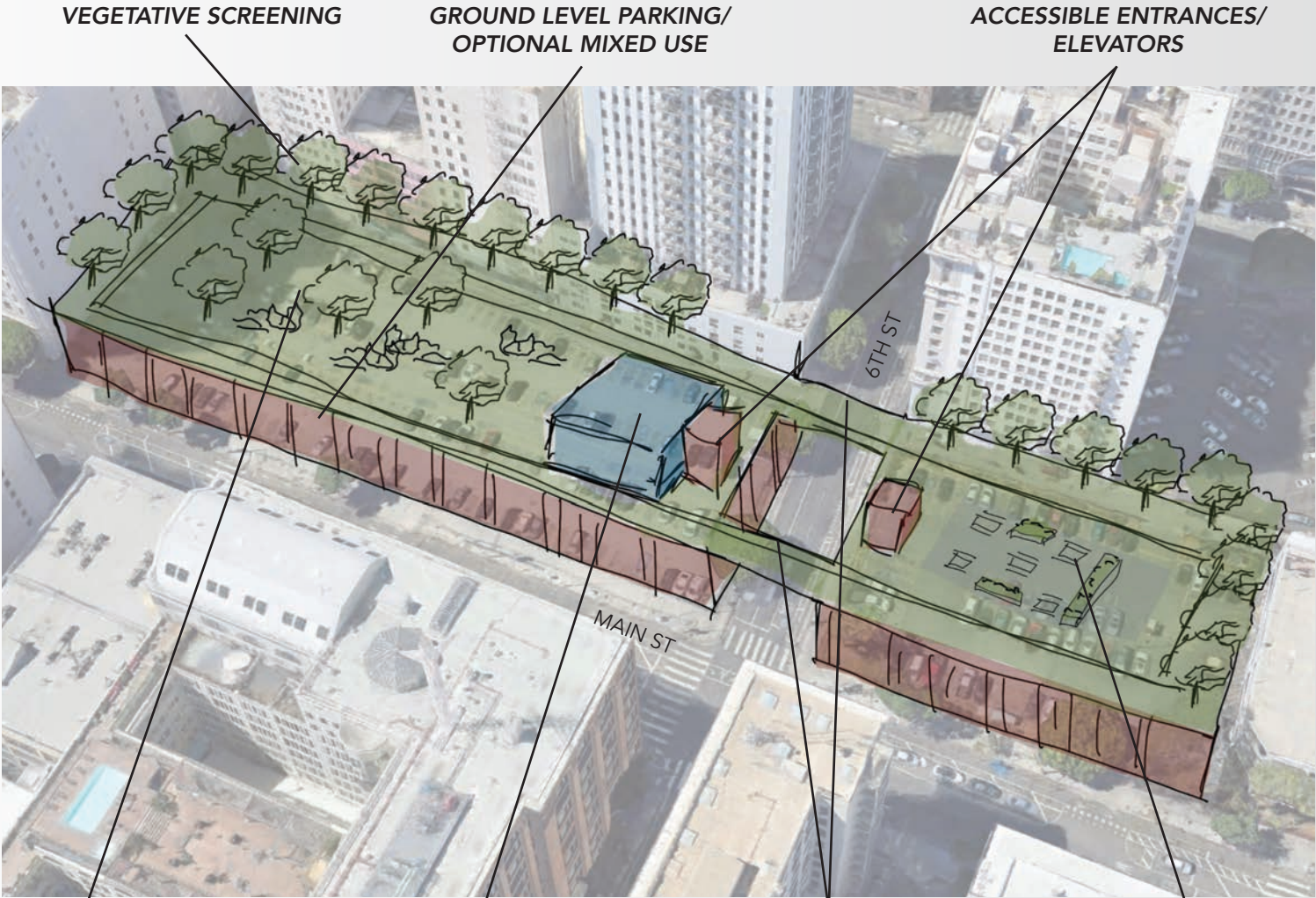
CONCEPT 2: SECTION

ELEVATED PARK CONCEPT



CONCEPT 2: VIGNETTE

ELEVATED PARK CONCEPT

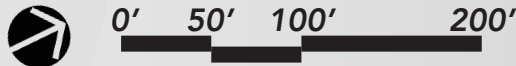


NATURALIZED AREA/PASSIVE RECREATION AREA

AMENITIES STRUCTURE

PEDESTRIAN BRIDGES

LUNCHTIME GATHERING SPACE/PROGRAMMABLE SPACE



CONCEPT 2: INSPIRATION IMAGES

ELEVATED PARK CONCEPT

URBAN REPRIEVE



WALKING PATHS



ARCHITECTURAL



VEGETATION



PASSIVE RECREATION



LUNCHTIME GATHERING SPACE

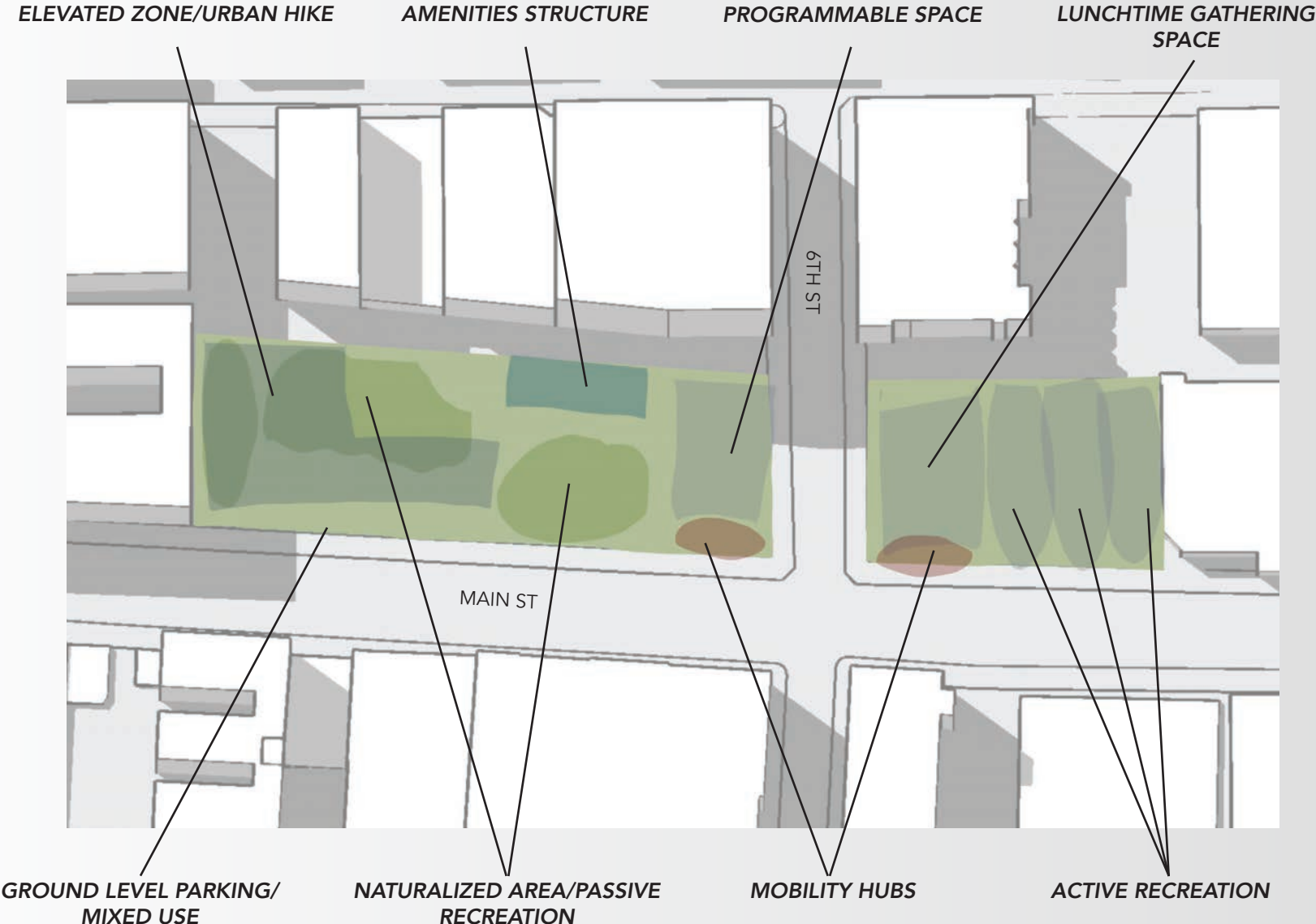


FEEL



CONCEPT 3: BUBBLE DIAGRAM

URBAN HIKE CONCEPT WITH ACTIVE AND PASSIVE ZONING

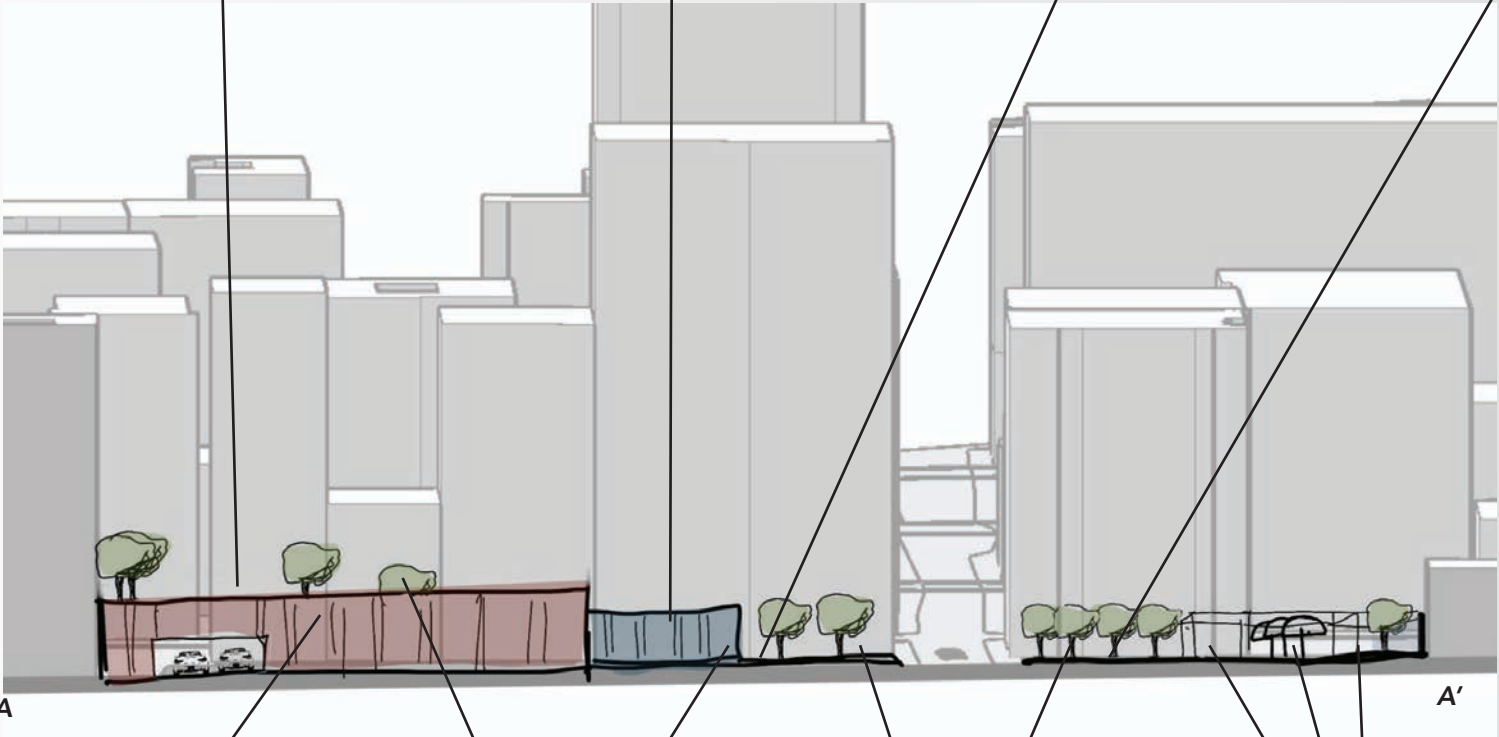


CONCEPT 3: SECTION

URBAN HIKE CONCEPT WITH ACTIVE AND PASSIVE ZONING



ELEVATED ZONE/URBAN HIKE AMENITIES STRUCTURE PROGRAMMABLE SPACE LUNCHTIME GATHERING SPACE



GROUND LEVEL PARKING/
MIXED USE

NATURALIZED AREA/PASSIVE
RECREATION

MOBILITY HUBS

ACTIVE RECREATION



CONCEPT 3: VIGNETTE

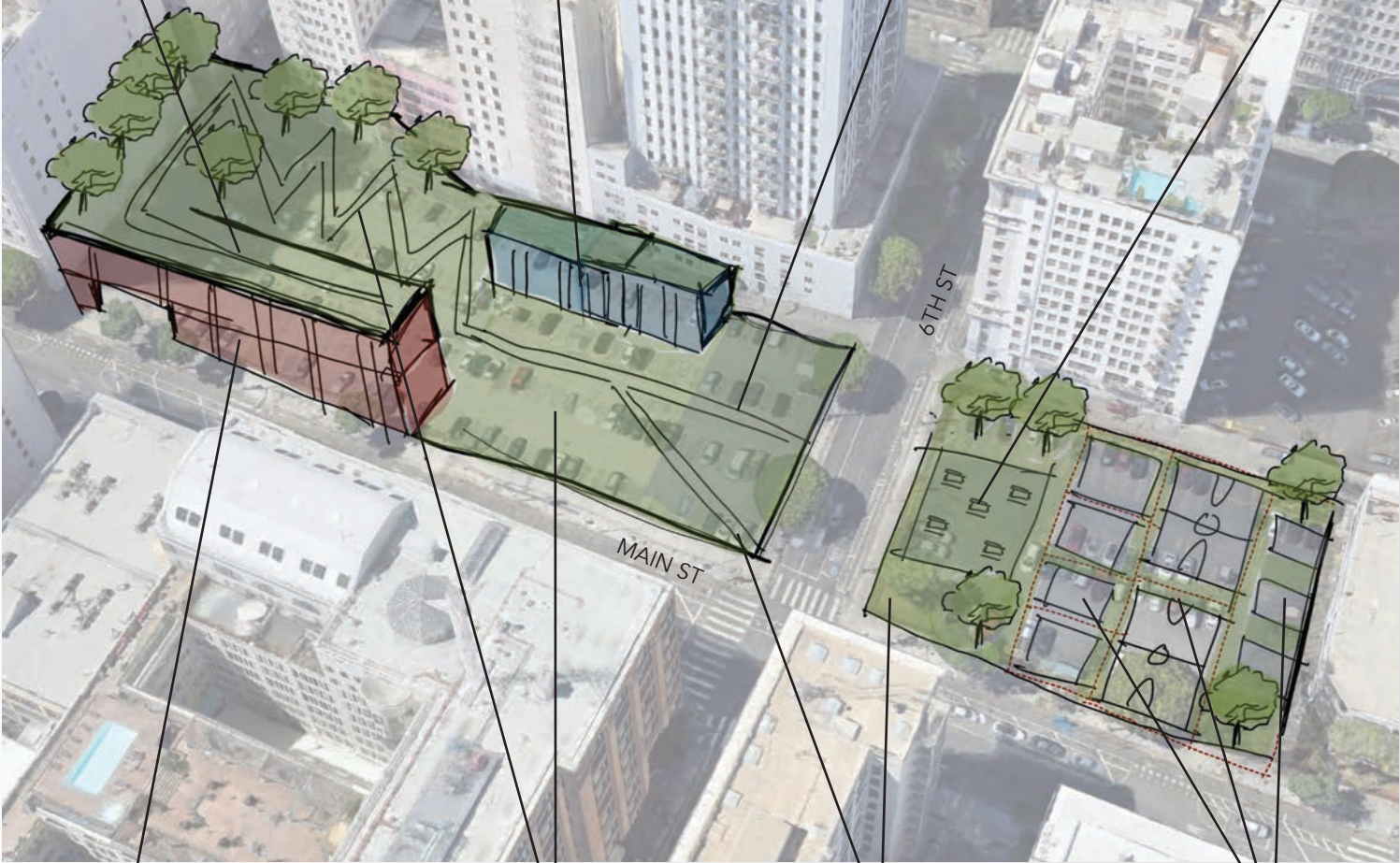
URBAN HIKE CONCEPT WITH ACTIVE AND PASSIVE ZONING

ELEVATED ZONE/URBAN HIKE

AMENITIES STRUCTURE

PROGRAMMABLE SPACE

LUNCHTIME GATHERING SPACE



GROUND LEVEL PARKING/
MIXED USE

NATURALIZED AREA/PASSIVE
RECREATION

MOBILITY HUBS

ACTIVE RECREATION



0' 50' 100' 200'

CONCEPT 3: INSPIRATION IMAGES

URBAN HIKE CONCEPT WITH ACTIVE AND PASSIVE ZONING

WALKING/HIKING PATHS



LUNCHTIME GATHERING PLACES



ARCHITECTURAL



VEGETATION



PASSIVE RECREATION



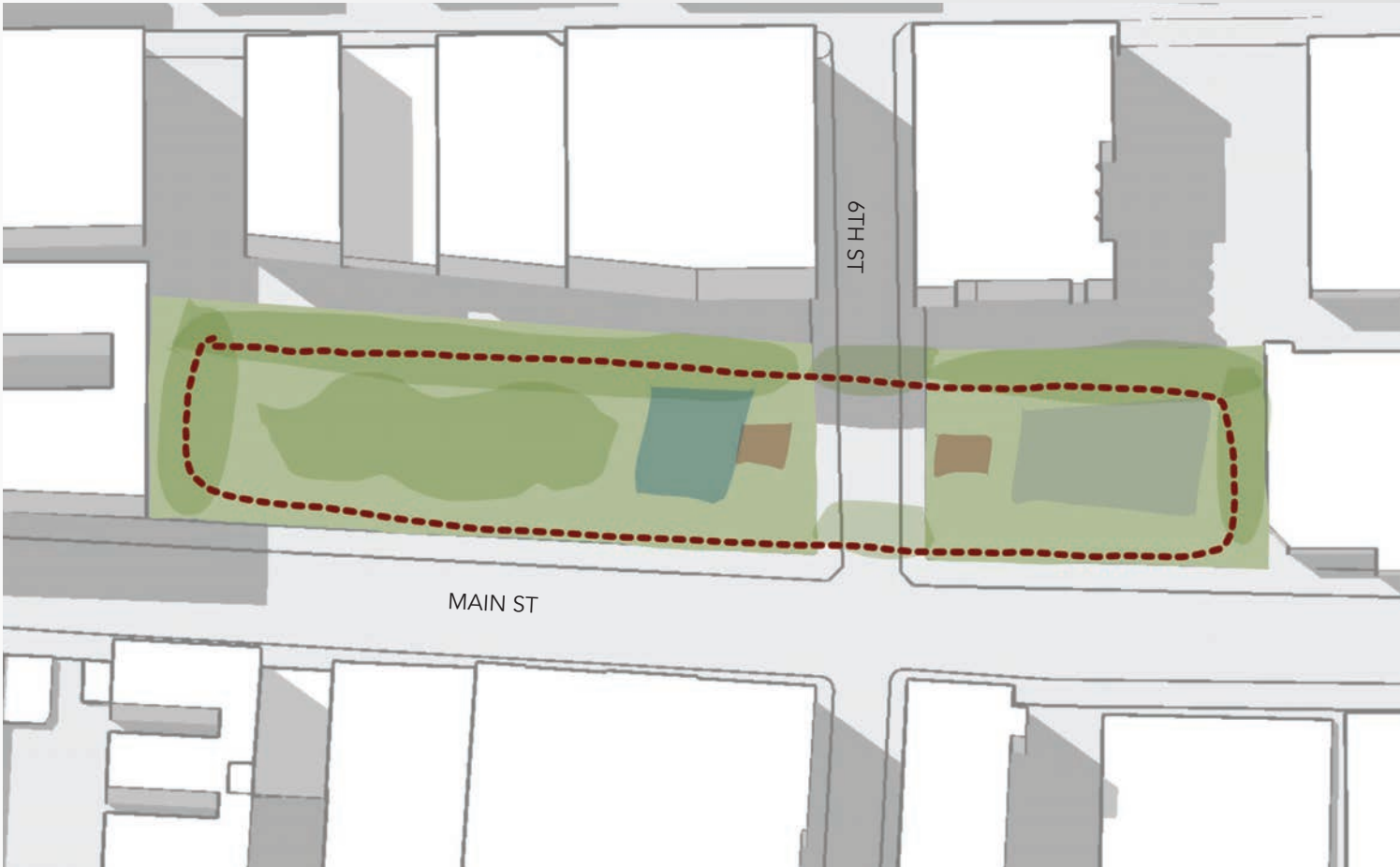
ACTIVE RECREATION



FEEL



ALTERNATIVE SELECTION:



Concept 2 was selected to be developed further due to the many advantages which are captured by elevating the entire park. This concept was the most suited to the type of park that is appropriate for this area and set of users.



DESIGN DEVELOPMENT: VIGNETTE SKETCHES

CAFE AREA



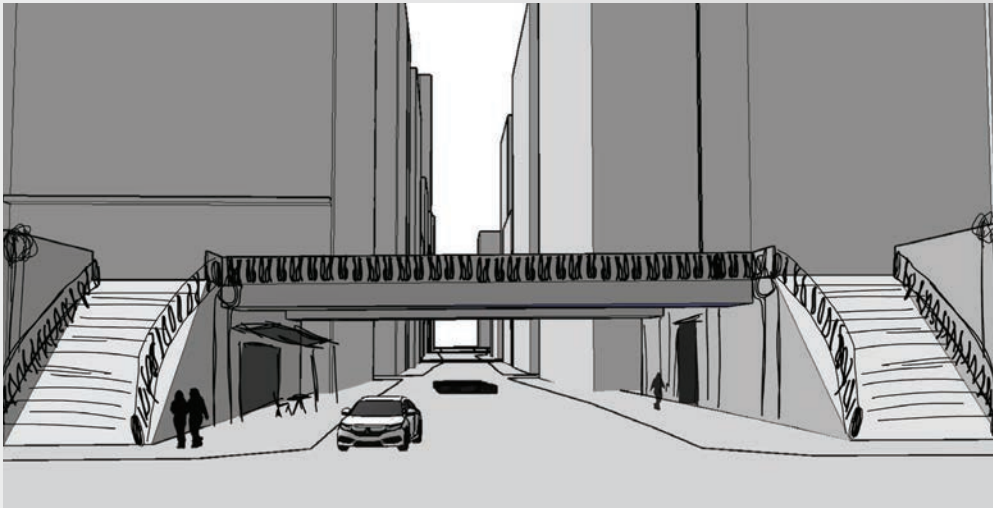
NORTH PARCEL



VIEW FROM APARTMENTS

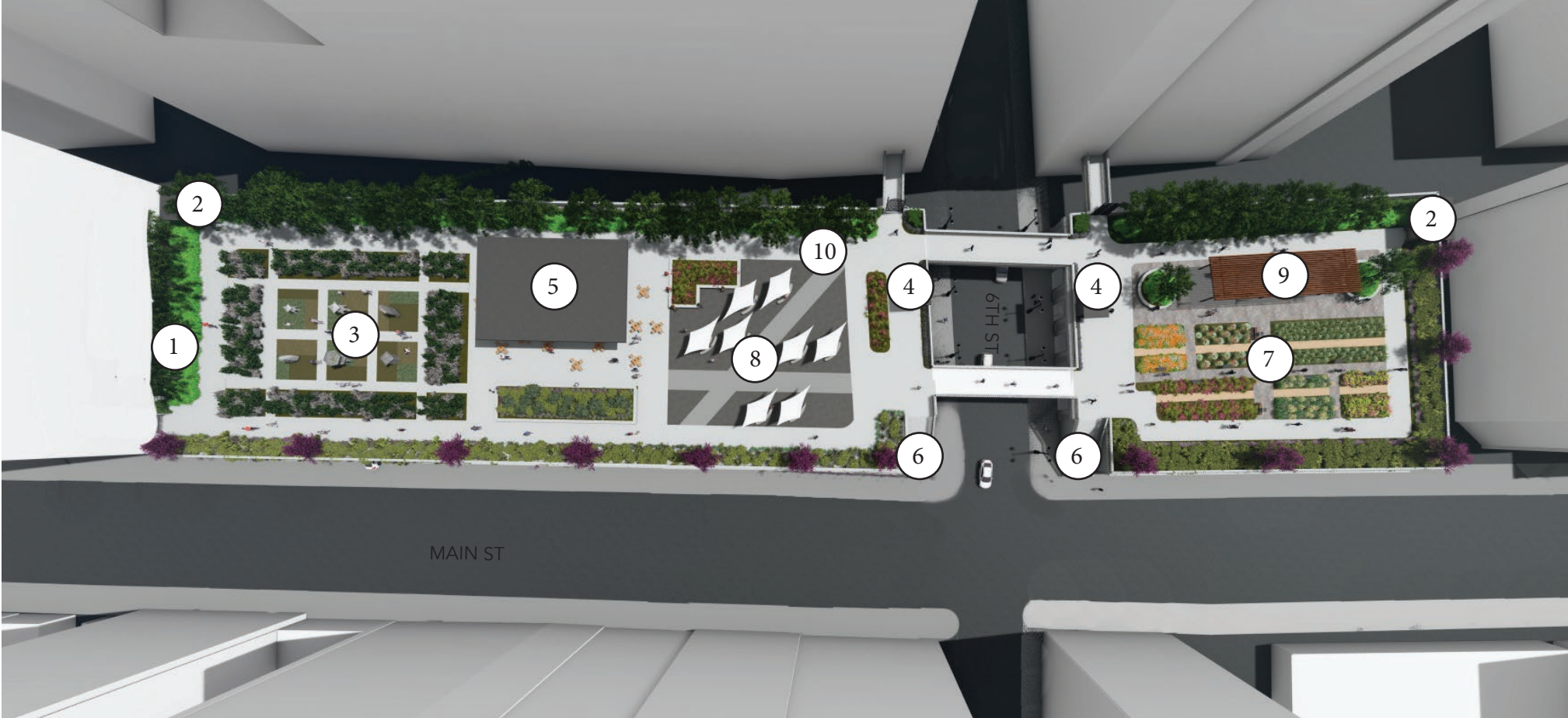


6TH STREET VIEW



Preliminary sketch studies were created to explore the feasibility of this alternative in a three dimensional space with consideration for the surrounding context.

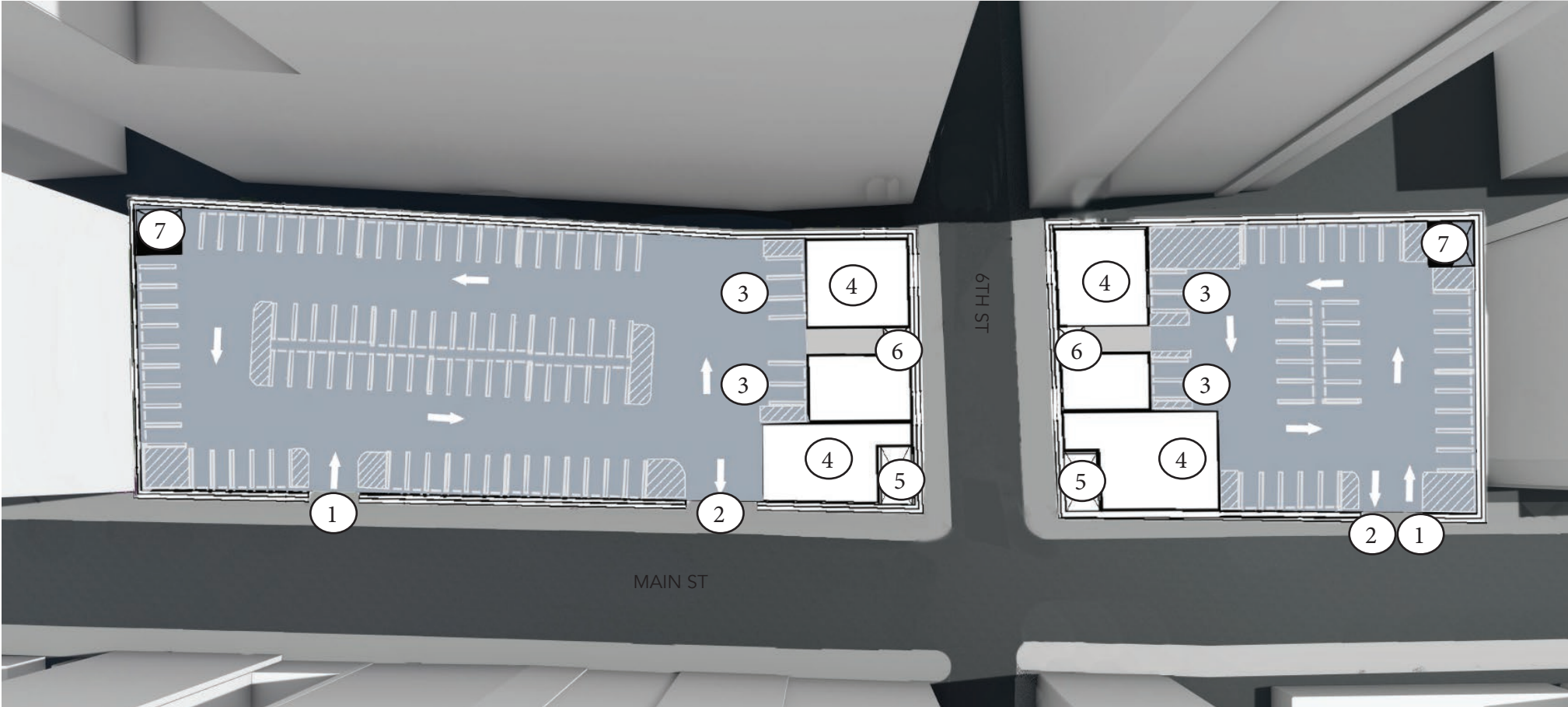
ILLUSTRATIVE PLAN:



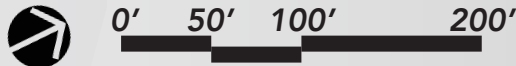
- 1 TALL SCREENING
- 2 EMERGENCY ACCESS
- 3 OUTDOOR GALLERY
- 4 ELEVATORS
- 5 CAFE
- 6 STAIR ACCESS
- 7 POLLINATOR GARDENS
- 8 FLEXIBLE SEATING
- 9 SWING SET
- 10 WALKING/RUNNING LOOP



GROUND FLOOR PLAN:



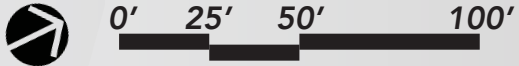
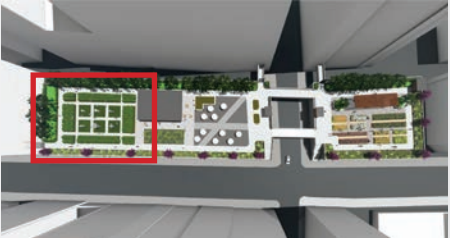
- 1 **VEHICULAR INGRESS**
- 3 **ADA PARKING**
- 5 **EXTERIOR STAIRCASES**
- 7 **EMERGENCY ACCESS STAIRS**
- 2 **VEHICULAR EGRESS**
- 4 **RETAIL/COMMERCIAL**
- 6 **ELEVATORS**



ENLARGEMENT: SOUTH PARCEL, OUTDOOR GALLERY



- 1 TALL SCREENING
- 2 EMERGENCY ACCESS
- 3 OUTDOOR GALLERY
- 4 LOW SCREENING
- 5 CAFE
- 6 APARTMENT ACCESS
- 7 SENSORY GARDEN
- 8 FLEXIBLE SEATING
- 9 ALLEY BELOW
- 10 WALKING/RUNNING LOOP



PLANT PALETTE: OUTDOOR GALLERY



Salvia sonomensis
Fremont's Carpet Creeping Sage



Frankenia salina
Yerba Reuma



Erigeron divergens
Spreading Fleabane



Festuca rubra 'Molate'
Creeping Red Fescue



Salvia apiana
White Sage



Ceanothus Blue Jeans
Blue Jeans Ceanothus



Lamiaceaesalvia mellifera
Black Sage

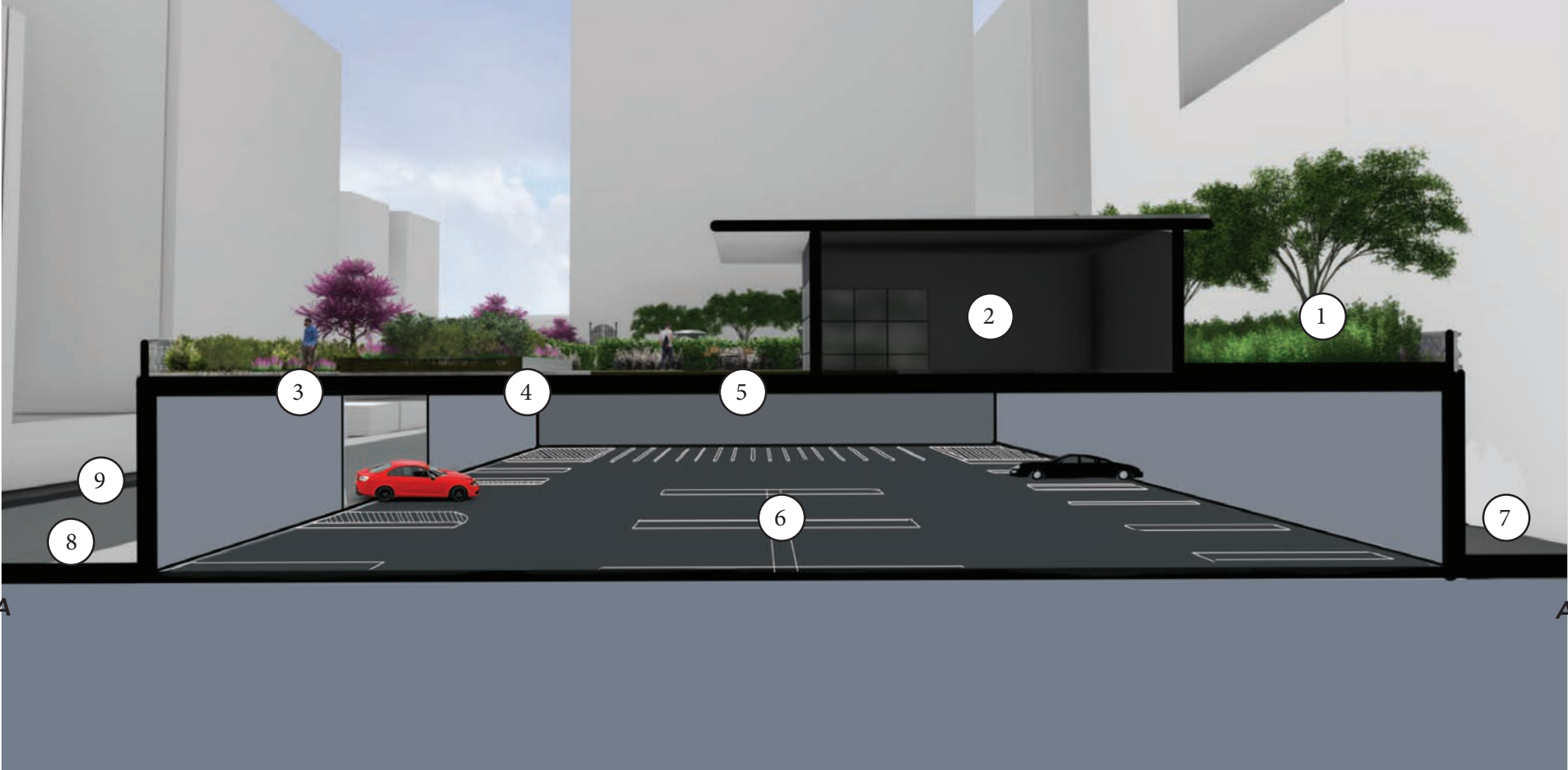


*Populus fremontii**
Fremont Cottonwood

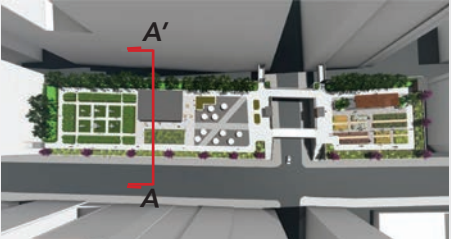


Adenostoma fasciculatum
Chamise

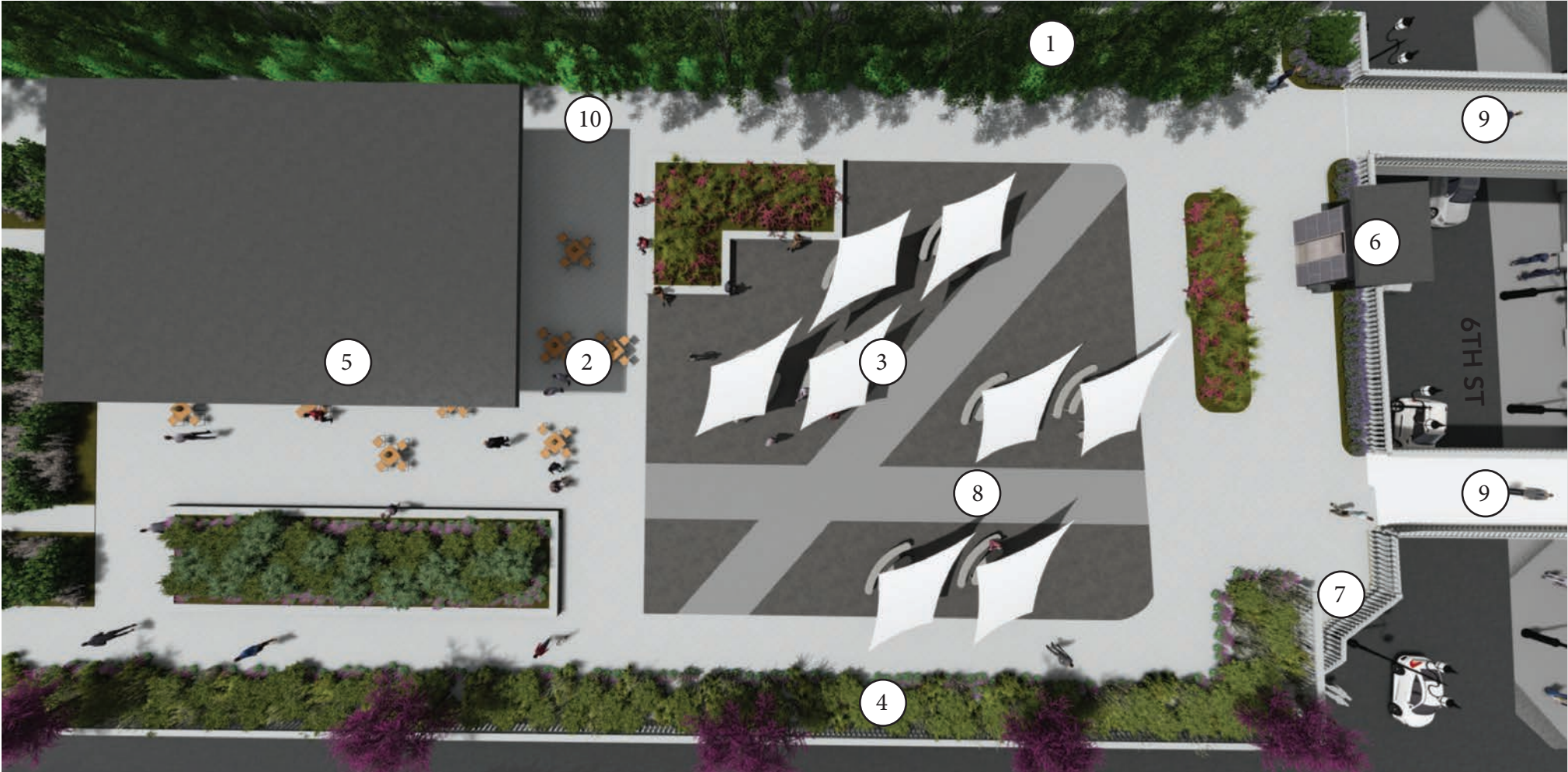
SECTION ELEVATION: SOUTH PARCEL, CAFE & OUTDOOR GALLERY



- ① TALL SCREENING
- ② CAFE
- ③ WALKING LOOP
- ④ PLANTER/SEAL WALL
- ⑤ CAFE SEATING
- ⑥ PARKING
- ⑦ ALLEY
- ⑧ SIDEWALK
- ⑨ MAIN ST



ENLARGEMENT: SOUTH PARCEL, CAFE & PROGRAMMABLE SPACE



1 TALL SCREENING

3 PROGRAMMABLE SPACE

5 CAFE

7 STAIR ACCESS

9 PEDESTRIAN BRIDGES

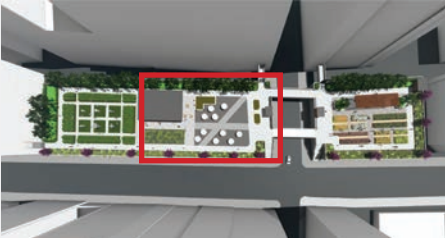
2 CAFE SEATING

4 LOW SCREENING

6 ELEVATOR

8 FLEXIBLE SEATING

10 WALKING/RUNNING LOOP



0' 25' 50' 100'

SECTION ELEVATION: 6TH STREET



1 PEDESTRIAN BRIDGES

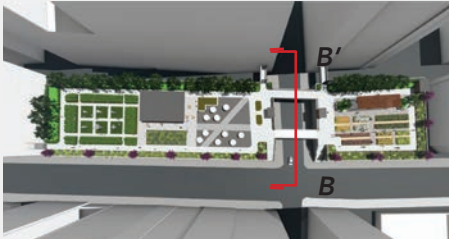
3 STAIR ACCESS

5 RETAIL/COMMERCIAL ENTRANCES

2 ELEVATOR ACCESS

4 6TH STREET

6 ALLEY



ENLARGEMENT: NORTH PARCEL, PASSIVE RECREATION & POLLINATOR GARDENS



1 TALL SCREENING

3 SENSORY GARDENS

5 WALKING LOOP

7 STAIR ACCESS

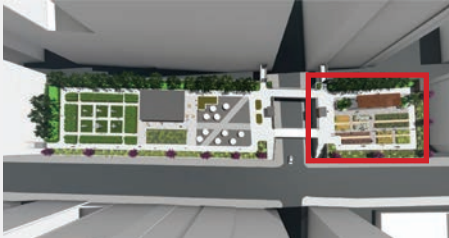
9 PEDESTRIAN BRIDGES

2 PORCH SWINGS

4 LOW SCREENING

6 ELEVATOR

8 APARTMENT ACCESS



0' 25' 50' 100'

PLANT PALETTE: POLLINATOR GARDENS



Eriogonum cinereum
Coastal Buckwheat



Eriogonum fasciculatum foliolosum
California Buckwheat



Eriogonum parvifolium
SeaCliff Buckwheat



Arctostaphylos obispoensis
San Luis Obispo Manzanita



Salvia Dara's Choice
Dara's Choice Sage



Aster chilensis
California Aster



Ribes nevadense
Pink Sierra Currant



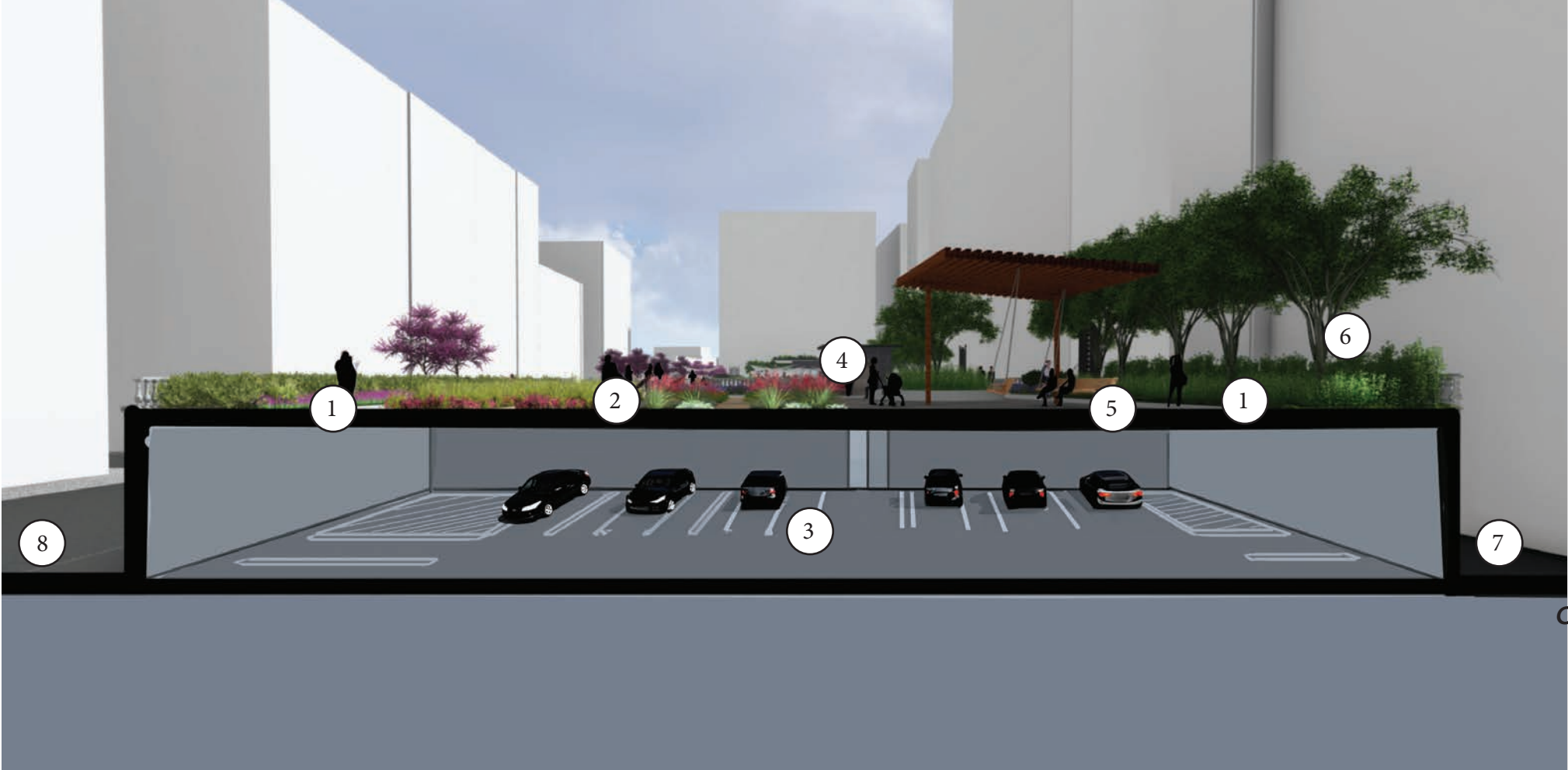
Zauschneria cana
California Fuchsia



Lonicera ciliosa
Orange Honeysuckle



SECTION ELEVATION: NORTH PARCEL



1 WALKING LOOP

3 PARKING

5 SWING SET

7 ALLEY

2 SENSORY GARDENS

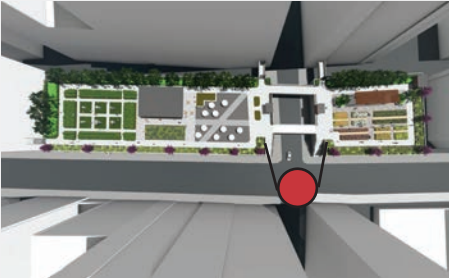
4 ELEVATOR

6 TALL SCREENING

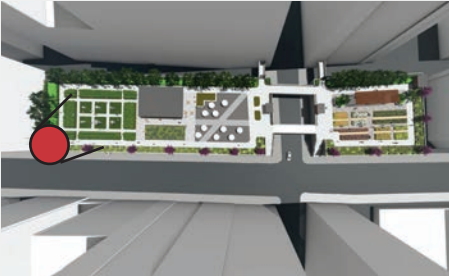
8 MAIN STREET



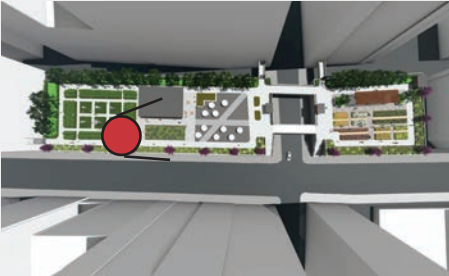
VIGNETTE: 6TH STREET VIEW



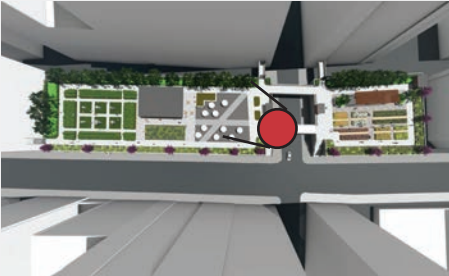
VIGNETTE: OUTDOOR GALLERY



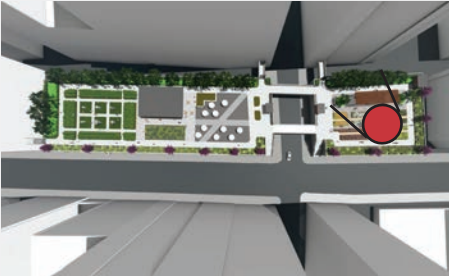
VIGNETTE: CAFE AND PATIO



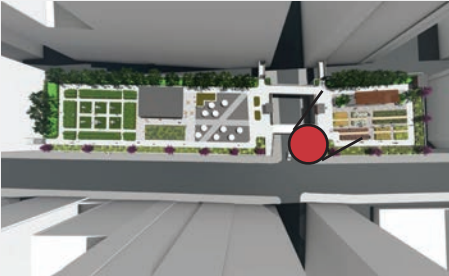
VIGNETTE: PROGRAMMABLE SPACE



VIGNETTE: PASSIVE RECREATION AREA



VIGNETTE: EDUCATIONAL POLLINATOR GARDENS



HISTORIC CORE COMMUNITY PARK

By transforming a downtown parking lot into an urban park, this project demonstrates how Landscape Architecture can be employed to improve access to open green space, enhance community cohesion, and create habitat in an urban setting while employing sustainable development practices.



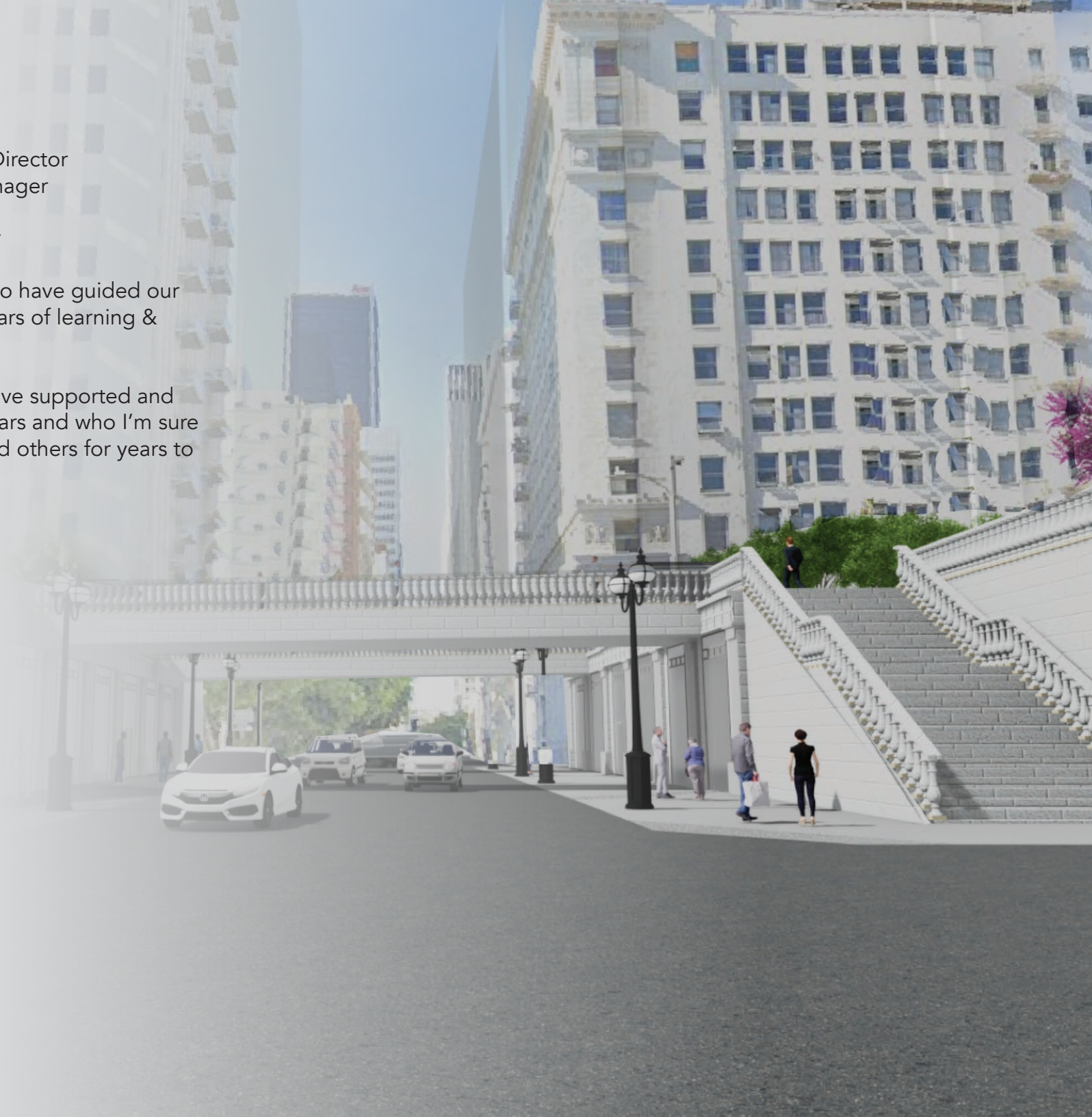
THANK YOU

Stephanie Landregan, Program Director
Melissa McDonald, Program Manager

Meg Coffee, Capstone Instructor

All of the program instructors who have guided our cohort through the past three years of learning & growth.

My wonderful classmates who have supported and inspired me for the past three years and who I'm sure will continue to inspire myself and others for years to come.



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