

The Bowtie Parcel Master Plan

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OVERVIEW AND HISTORY

The Bowtie Parcel is an abandoned parcel within a strip of land adjacent to the Los Angeles River between Glassell Park and the Frogtown area in Los Angeles. It was called Taylor Yard, named after J. Hartley Taylor who once owned the property and later owned by the Southern Pacific Railway and used as a train and freight switching facility.

HISTORY

When the Portola expedition reached the Los Angeles River on August 2, 1769, it was described as a “green, lush valley” with a “very full flowing, wide river” and a “riot of color” in the hills. Because this date was the annual feast of the Our Lady of the Angels of Porciuncula, they called this location and the river, “El Rio y Valle de Nuestra Senora la Reina de Los Angeles de la Porciuncula”, later shortened to Rio de Los Angeles. This exact location is thought to be very near or at the Taylor Yard site which the Bowtie Parcel is within.

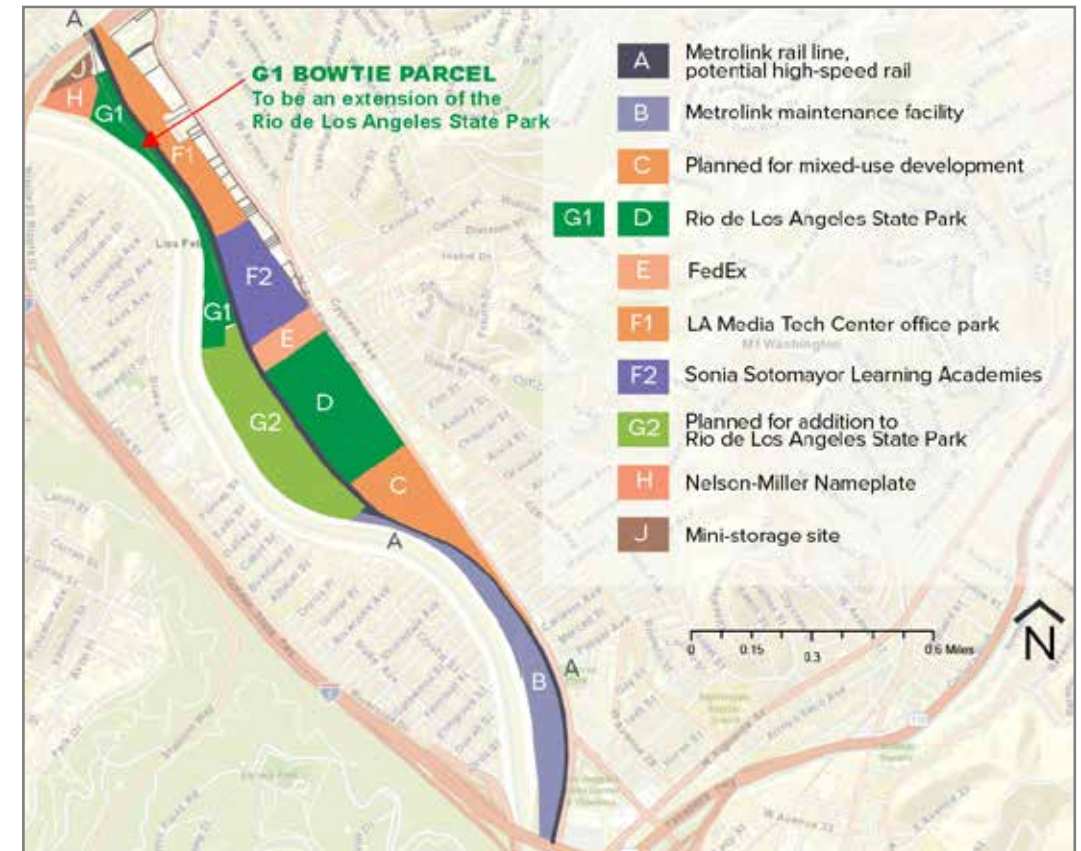
This land was granted to Jose Maria Verdugo in 1784, and after California was admitted to the Union in 1871, the land was subdivided in 1881 and sold to Andrew Glassell, Alexis Jeffries, Harriet Atwater Paramour, and others. Early development in the area consisted of agriculture, a few homes along Figueroa Street and summer cottages in the hills overlooking the Arroyo Seco. Mount Washington began attracting artists in the 1890’s.

In the late 1890’s, J. Hartley Taylor obtained the site where he owned and operated Taylor Grocery and Taylor Milling Company. He raised oats, barley, hogs, and pigeons, and sold feed.

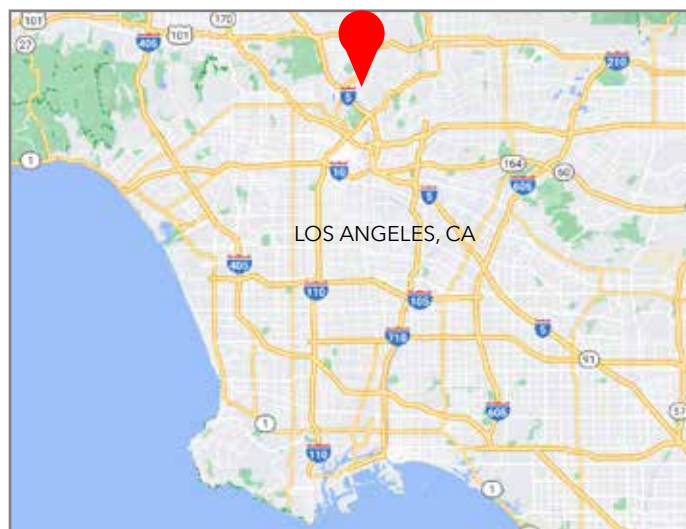
In the 1920s, the property became a rail yard, and in the 30’s the south turntable, machine shops, and other related buildings were constructed. The site was heavily used as a freight switching facility until the 1960s when the north-south trains were rerouted through the Cajon Pass. In 1985, Taylor Yard closed as and hundreds of jobs were lost in the local community.

The land and the land was parceled and sold by Southern Pacific, and in 1992 Parcel B was developed as a Metrolink Facility. Public outreach was conducted and future development began to be imagined.

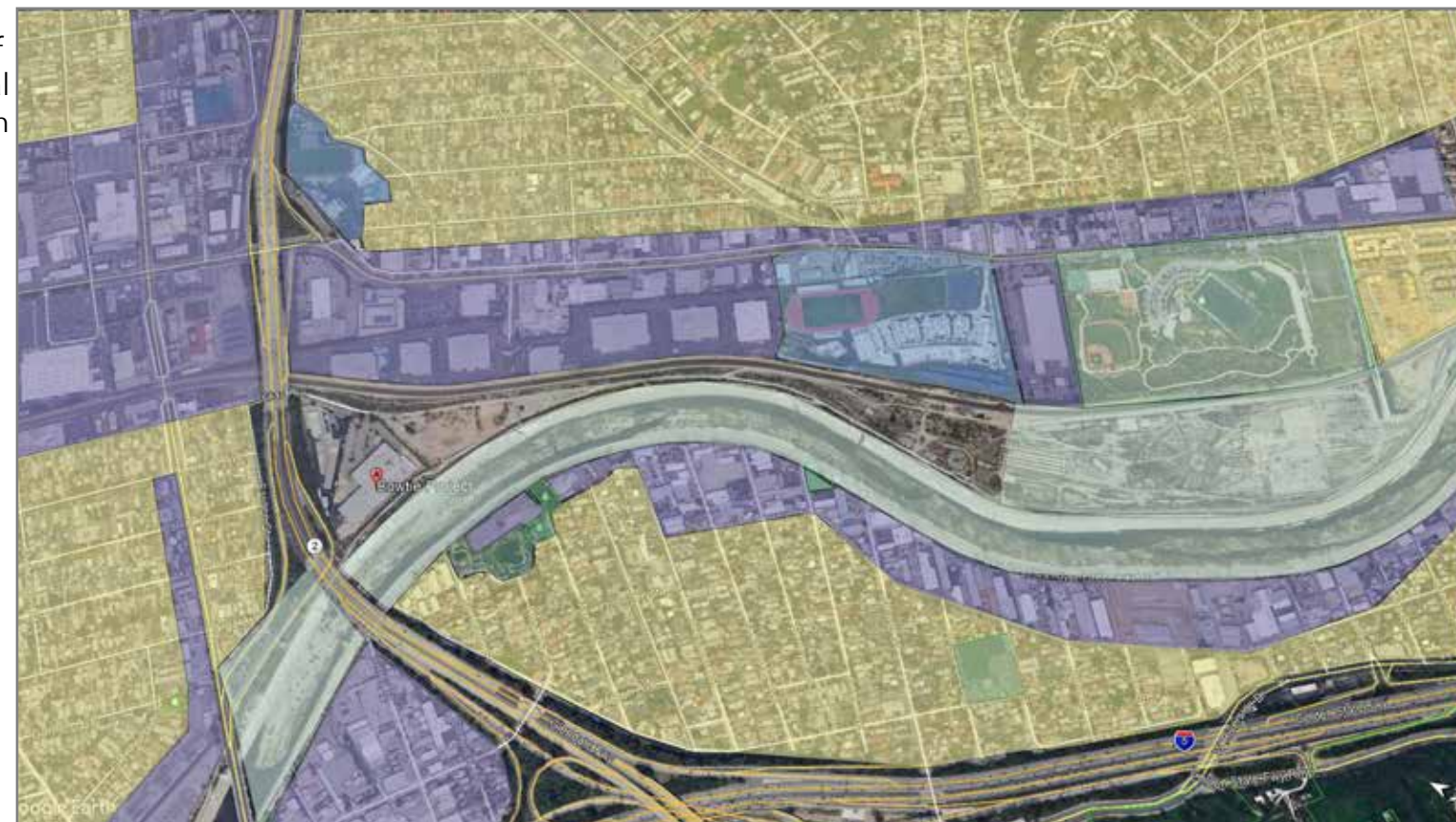
The 18 acre Parcel G-1, also known as The Bowtie Parcel because of it’s shape, was acquired by the state in 2003. Since that time, several studies for it’s use have been completed. Proposed uses range from something “iconic” for the Olympics to adding it to the Rio de los Angeles State Park, which is the current projected use. It is largely abandoned and occasionally used for events and camp outs.



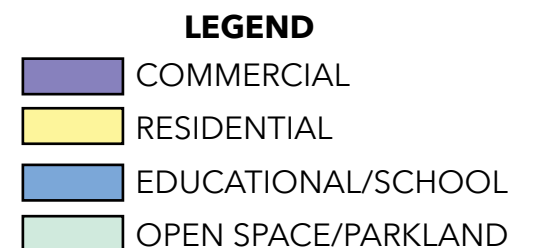
PARCELS WITHIN TAYLOR YARD SITE



LOCATION OF BOWTIE PARCEL



BOWTIE PARCEL CONTEXT



SITE HISTORY TIMELINE

- CULTURAL
- BIOLOGICAL
- PHYSICAL



Tongva occupy the area

Pre 1700

1781

El Pueblo de los Angeles established



1847

Mexican-American war ends, California is ceded to U.S. S.C. Foster appointed mayor of Los Angeles

1870s

Residential development spreads out from downtown Los Angeles, Southern Pacific Railroad is completed



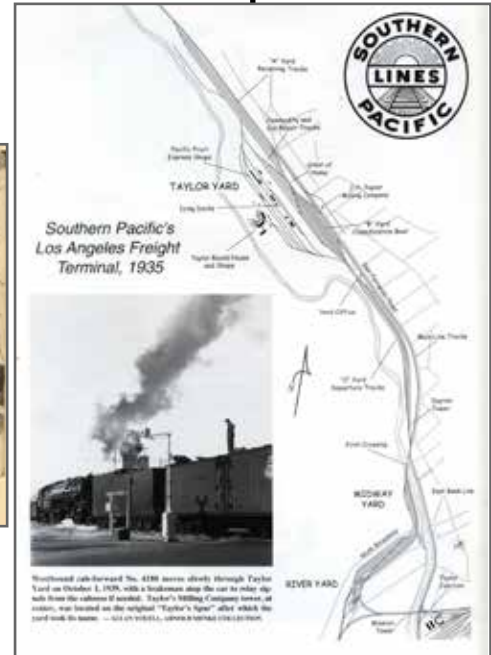
1877-1881

Taylor Family settles on east bank of LA River, land is subdivided and used for agriculture and housing



1908

Taylor Yard is established



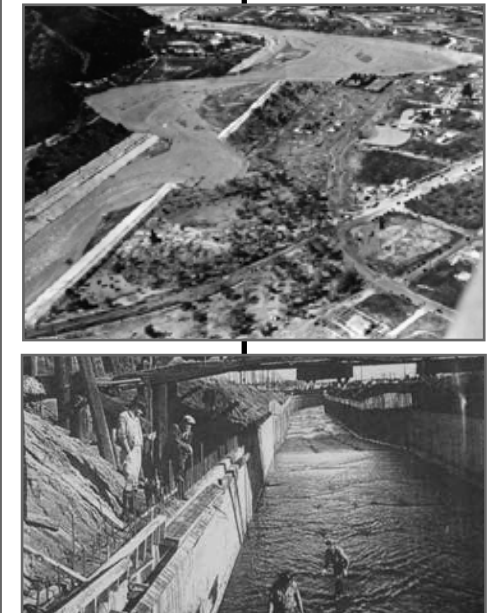
1920s

Taylor Yard becomes more developed, South Turntable is built and it becomes a major rail yard facility



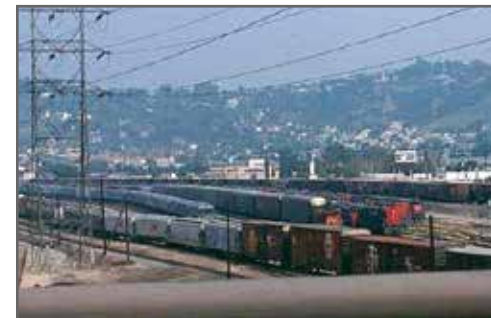
1938

Los Angeles River floods and river is channelized in concrete



1985

Taylor Yard closes as a freight switching facility



1992

Parcel B is developed as a Metrolink maintenance facility



1997

FedEx facility is developed on Parcel E



2001-2003

State acquires Parcel D for State Park development and additional 18 acres at G-1 (the Bowtie Parcel)



2020-2022

Bowtie Park awarded \$5M through federal Outdoor Recreation Legacy Partnership. Construction may begin as early as 2023.

CA State Parks and Clockshop hold community listening process for Bowtie.

The Nature Conservancy and CA State Parks sign agreement to collaborate on 2.5 acre Bowtie Demonstration Project.



SITE INVENTORY

PARCEL SIZE and DESCRIPTION: The site is an 18 acre narrow strip between Los Angeles river and railroad tracks. The ground is mostly gravel and abandoned pavement with grasses and some palms scattered throughout. Pavement has been tagged with spray paint, and graffiti appears on residual walls and structures.

CURRENT USES: Site is vacant, occasionally used for events such as camp outs, art exhibits, or as a live music venue

PRIOR USES: Railroad yard

TOPOGRAPHY: Site is generally flat (elevation 360'), sloping downward to river approx 20-30 feet to waterline (elevation 340').

SOILS: Multiple contaminants of concern (CoC) have been identified, groundwater is known to be contaminated with volatile organic compounds (VOCs) including chlorinated solvents. Fill material has been encountered at the Bowtie Parcel approx 7 feet below ground surface. From 7-35', native soils and sediments consist of sands and silty sands with minor discontinuous clayey sands.

GEOLOGICAL: Alluvium filled valley resulting from erosion of surrounding hills and alluvial fans and deposition of sediment by Los Angeles River, underlaid by non-water bearing bedrock.

HYDROLOGY: Groundwater depth ranges from 20-33' below ground surface. Groundwater flows south toward the adjacent Los Angeles River.

VEGETATION: site is overgrown with grasses (fountain grass) and weeds; fountain grass appears to have been planted adjacent to the river. California and Mexican fan palm trees are found in clusters throughout the site.

UTILITIES: There are no utilities serving the site, however there are large power lines running through the site adjacent to the river.

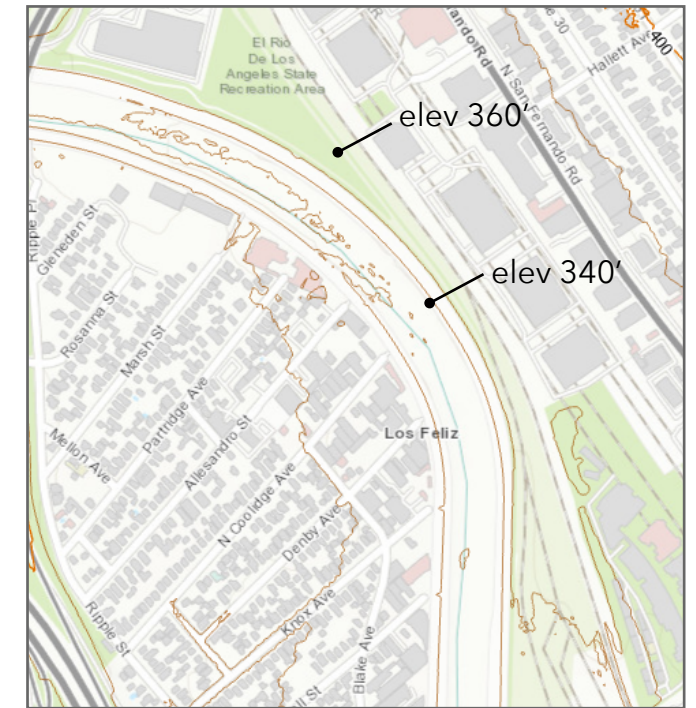
STRUCTURES: no improved or functioning structures exist, however, small decorative structures, some may be used as seating, were installed as a project in 2016. One of the former railroad turntables still exists at the south end of the parcel.

SUN EXPOSURE: The site is primarily exposed with no shade trees or structures.

CLIMATE: The climate is a typical Southern California/Mediterranean climate. The site is far enough from the coast to experience sun for most hours of the day with fog occurring in spring to early summer. Prevailing winds are from the west from winter through mid-summer with seasonal winds from the northeast from late summer through fall.



Entry to the Bowtie Parcel, example of gravel and vegetation



Contours



View into Los Angeles River



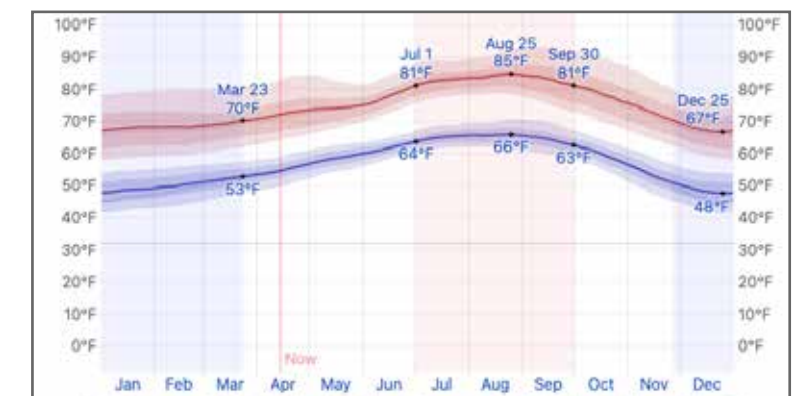
Power Lines



Remaining Turntable Structure



Art Project Structures



Los Angeles Average Temperatures

SITE ANALYSIS

Informal access from street and river foot path, no other access points exist

No pedestrian circulation hierarchy

Site is flat, river slopes into riverbed

Noise from passing railroad trains

Views into river and across into Frogtown

Views into mountains at Griffith Park and Forest Lawn

Views into mountains at Mt. Washington and Elysian Heights

SUNSET ZONE 23



LEGEND

- ←---→ VEHICULAR CIRCULATION
- ←---→ PEDESTRIAN CIRCULATION
- ★ PRIMARY ACCESS
- VIEW SIGHT LINES
- 📶 NOISE SOURCE
- 🌊 PREVAILING WINDS
- 🔥 SEASONAL WINDS
- ⊠ POWER LINE TOWER
- ↔ WILDLIFE CORRIDOR

Sun path at Summer Solstice

Average wind speed between 5.2 - 8.7 mph

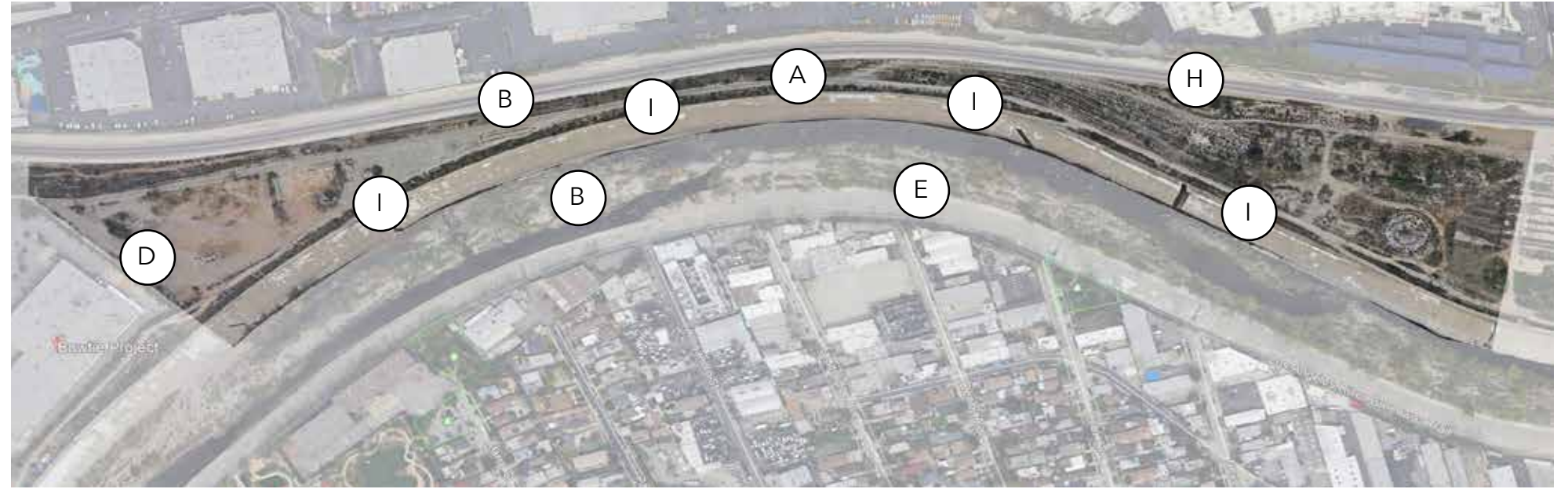
Sun path at Winter Solstice

Existing turntable structure

SITE CONSTRAINTS

The Bowtie Parcel is constrained by:

- (A) **SHAPE:** the long and narrow shape of the site will constrain circulation and uses. The narrowest point at the center is less than 100 feet wide.
- (B) **LIMITED ACCESS/BOUNDARIES:** The site is bounded by the river on the western edge and the railroad tracks on the eastern edge. This constrains where and how the site can be accessed and provides accessibility challenges.
- (C) **LACK OF PUBLIC TRANSPORTATION ACCESS:** There are currently no bus stops or public transportation access points within a safe walking distance to the site.
- (D) **LACK OF PARKING:** Currently there is no parking for the site.
- (E) **FLOOD RISK:** The river in it's currently controlled state is safe from flooding, but any redevelopment must take the flood risk into account.
- (F) **SOIL CONTAMINATION:** Although the soil was cleaned up and certified in 1997 the Dept. of Toxic Substance Control (under Cal-EPA) for unrestricted development, a 2019 Soils Report shows the existence of several Volatile Organic Components (VOCs).
- (G) **SOIL MAKEUP:** soil consists of gravelly sand with fill material in the top 7 feet. Remediation will be required for landscape planting material.
- (H) **ADJACENCY TO RAILROAD:** In addition to cutting off accessibility to the site, the noise from passing trains occurs throughout the day and evening.
- (I) **POWER LINE STRUCTURES:** The large power line towers block views into, across, and down the river and are unsightly. They also must be accessible for maintenance.



(C) NEAREST BUS STOPS ACROSS RAILROAD TRACKS



(G) GRAVEL TOPSOIL



(I) POWER LINE STRUCTURE

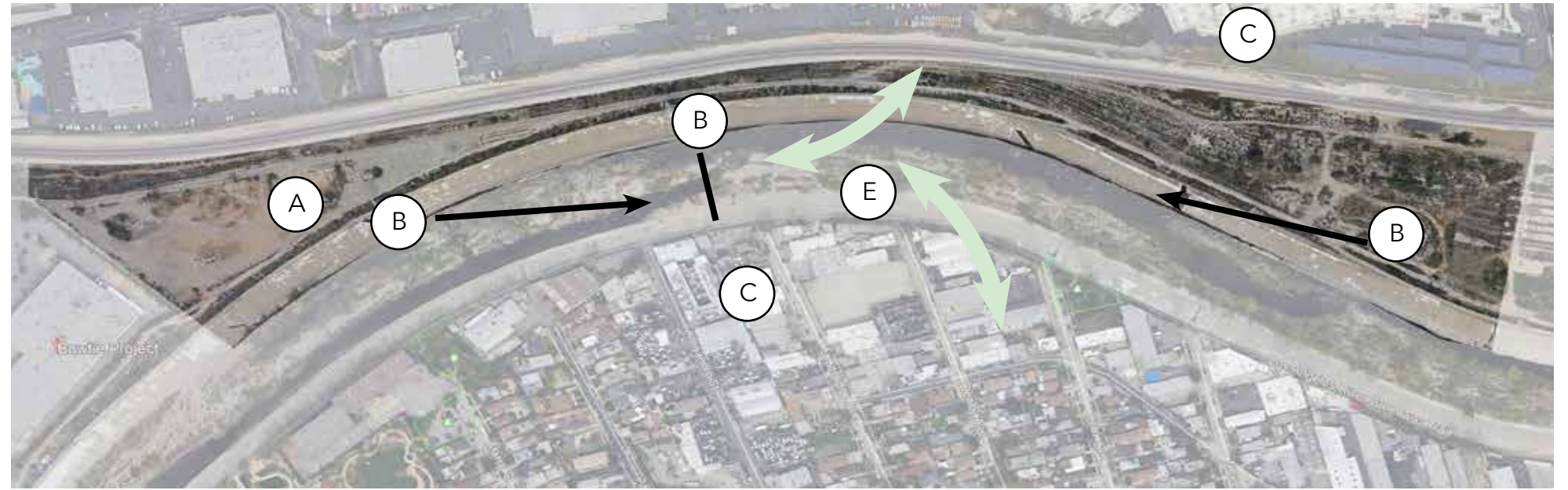


(I) VIEW OBSTRUCTED BY POWER LINE STRUCTURE

SITE OPPORTUNITIES

The Bowtie site provides many opportunities for redevelopment:

- (A) **SIZE:** The large 18 acre site allows for diverse programming
- (B) **VIEWS:** The site has opportunities for views into the river as well as into the mountains of Griffith Park, Mt. Washington, and Elysian Heights.
- (C) **LOCATION:**
 - **River adjacency** provides opportunity for programming that includes water activities as well as the healing and peace that comes from being close to water.
 - Adjacency to **amenities of Frogtown** including restaurants and cafes, improved river trail and bike path, and residences.
 - Adjacency to **school** provides opportunity for teaching of river habitat and wildlife
 - Adjacency to FedEx and other **industrial facilities** provide opportunity for the site to be used by employees for strolling, picnicking and relaxation during breaks and after work.
- (D) **FLAT SITE:** allows opportunity for improvements without heavy grading.
- (E) **WILDLIFE CORRIDORS:** The site is within wildlife corridors between Griffith Park, Arroyo Seco, and Elysian Park.
- (F) **CULTURAL ADVOCACY:** the community, including the city and state, is committed and interested in developing this site in a sustainable manner which they can enjoy
- (G) **CLIMATE:** the Southern California climate allows outdoor programming and for the site to be used throughout the year



(B) VIEW TO MT. WASHINGTON



(B) VIEW INTO RIVER



(B) VIEW TO GRIFFITH, ELYSIAN PARK



(C) FLAT SITE

PRECEDENT CASE STUDY 1: EAST RIVER WATERFRONT ESPLANADE, NEW YORK CITY

Designed by: SHoP Architects, Ken Smith Workshop Landscape Architect

Client: City of New York, NYC Economic Development Corp., NYC Dept of City Planning

Design Year: 2004, **Completed:** 2019

Size: 321 acres/1.5 mile

Description: Waterfront site sits partially beneath elevated highway and partially over water on a marine platform structure and includes reconstruction of two piers and designated structures for retail, dining, and entertainment.

Programming includes:

- Continuous public esplanade for bicycles and pedestrians
- Dog run
- Exercise platforms
- Play areas with swings and ball courts
- Skateboard area
- Seating
- Fishing balconies
- Stepped tidal area
- Mussel habitat demonstration area

What Works:

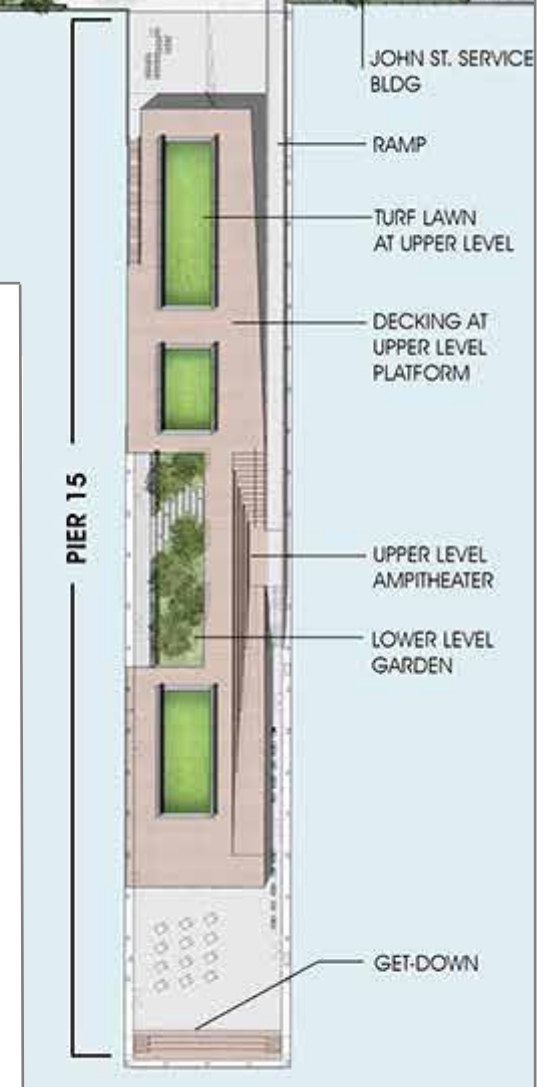
- Integrated programming in an urban setting
- Step-down seating area allows visitors to get near the water; bottom steps are submerged at high tide
- Landscaped green space within
- Views across river
- Multiple access points and continuous, connected circulation for both pedestrians and bicycles
- Incorporates educational spaces

What Doesn't Work:

- Safety at night
- Winter weather is cold, snow is not cleared
- Overhead highway is noisy



ESPLANADE UNDER HIGHWAY



STEP-DOWN AT LOW TIDE



STEP-DOWN AT HIGH TIDE



TWO STORY PIER



SEATING AREA

PRECEDENT CASE STUDY 2: RIVERBANK PROMENADES ALONG THE SPREE, BERLIN

Designed by: Gruppe F Landscape Architecture and Planning

Client: Berlin Government District

Design Year: 2002 - 2004, **Completed** 2009

Size: 1.4 ha/3.5 acres

Description: Riverside promenade on north side of Spreebogen River in Berlin. Berlin cobblestones were reused to preserve character of the original promenades. Railings were avoided to enable close-up experience of the river using granite benches, low railings, and sloping riverbank as safety barriers.

Programming includes:

- Continuous connecting river path for bicycles and pedestrians
- Seating
- Open space adjacent to river

What Works:

- Provides an alternative path for pedestrians and cyclists close to the river
- Multiple access points from street above
- Views of river and cityscape

What Doesn't Work:

- Minimal plant material, predominately concrete and stone are used which create heat in summer and a cold, stark, brutal feel
- Minimal programming
- Overhead street is noisy



PROMENADE FROM ABOVE



FAST LANE FOR BIKES



GREEN SPACE UP CLOSE TO RIVER'S EDGE



COBBLESTONE PATHWAY

PRECEDENT CASE STUDY 3: LOS ANGELES/WILMINGTON WATERFRONT PROMENADE, LOS ANGELES

Designed by: Sasaki Studio, Studio MLA

Client: Port of Los Angeles

Design Year: ~2017, Under Construction

Size: 10 acres

Description: The nine-acre Wilmington Waterfront project is part of a multi-phased port project connecting to two other park spaces. The Waterfront Promenade will be located at the end of a land bridge path abutting the harbor. Here, Sasaki and Studio MLA are working to craft an interconnected series of plazas, piers, and restaurants, including a four-acre event space and playground. A below-grade section of the park will contain a cluster of accessible bathroom facilities. The park includes a central lawn and plaza fronting the ocean, with active uses located at the site's corners. The central plaza area gives way to rough-hewn boulders that step into the water.

Programming includes:

- Active recreation lawn
- Playground
- Event space
- Promenade and seating along river
- Water accessibility for boat boarding
- Overlook

What Works:

- Accessible to people who don't easily have access to open space
- Land bridge will provide access and grand entrance
- Uses drought tolerant plantings
- Adjacent to community center

What Doesn't Work:

- Palm trees used as plant material don't provide as much cooling canopy or CO2 absorption as other choices
- Limited accessibility/long walk over land bridge
- Artificial turf
- Heavily industrial context near port and rail, including noise and air pollution



AERIAL VIEW OF PROMENADE PARK



PLAYGROUND



PROMENADE ALONG WATER



EVENT SPACE LAWN



CENTRAL PLAZA

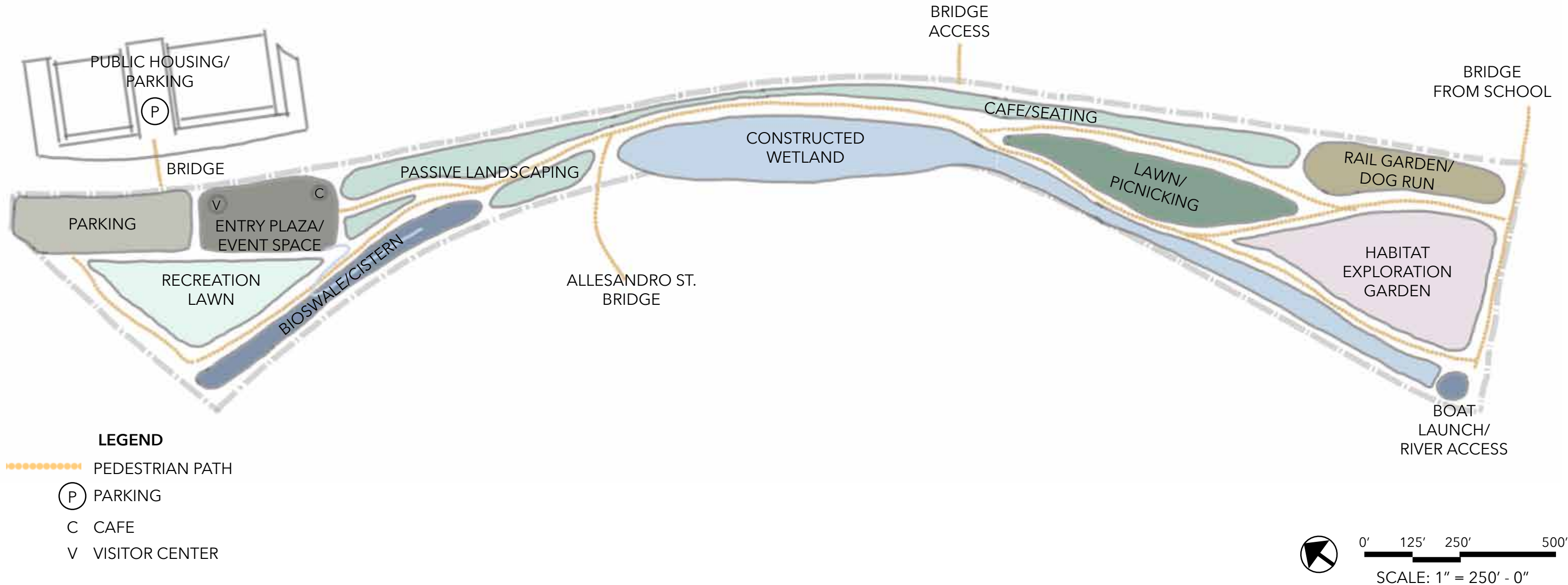


BRIDGE TO PROMENADE

DESIGN ALTERNATIVE 1 - ORGANIC WETLAND

The Organic Wetland design is the simplest of the three alternatives. Organic curves define the pedestrian path and the outlines of the wetland and landscaped areas, utilizing the river shape as inspiration. Programming is inspired by nature and incorporate activities that bring the visitor closer to an organically natural experience.

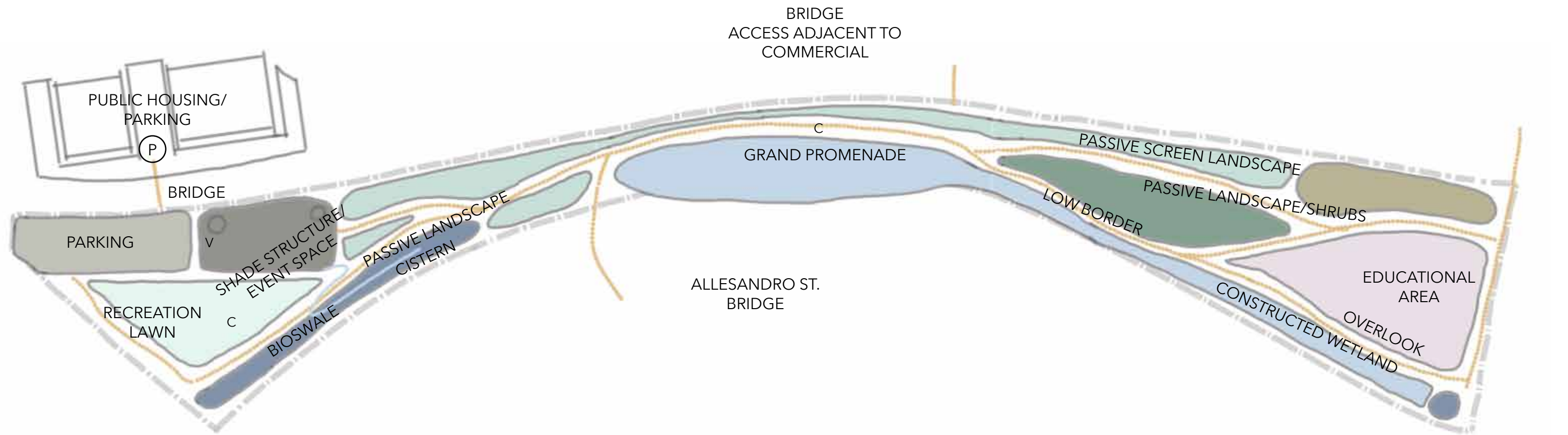
- Parking for 75 cars is located at the north entry, accessible from Casitas Ave.
- Access to the site is minimal, utilizing bridges or crossings across the railroad tracks and one bridge from Frogtown at Allesandro Street where The Spoke Bicycle Cafe is located. An access point into the site is also convenient to the public/social housing located adjacent to the north end.
- An entry plaza and event space is located near the parking where the Visitor Center and Cafe are also located, easily accessible to the entry.
- The recreation lawn is located also in this northern section that may be used for active recreation activities and events.
- A bioswale drains storm water from the parking area, entry plaza, and lawn and is stored in a cistern that may be used for irrigation or other uses.
- A curved pedestrian path meanders from the entry plaza down through the site between landscaped areas.
- The second cafe is located in the center of the site, accessible by bridge to the neighboring San Fernando Road commercial and residential areas beyond.
- The constructed wetland is adjacent to the river, providing habitat and views into the river.
- A garden incorporating historical rails within the landscaping and a dog run are located near the south entry.
- A habitat restoration is located near the school for educational use.
- Access to the river is provided at the southern tip for kayak launching and river exploration.



DESIGN ALTERNATIVE 2 - GRAND PROMENADE

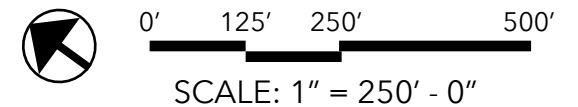
The Grand Promenade design is focused around a central promenade accessible from both San Fernando Road and Frogtown, giving Angelenos access to the river and views to both the north and south. Pedestrian pathways, hardscape, and landscape lines are more formal and straight, accentuating the bowtie shape.

- Parking for 75 cars is located at the north entry, accessible from Casitas Ave.
- Access to the site utilizes bridges or crossings across the railroad tracks and one bridge from Frogtown at Allesandro Street, where The Spoke Bicycle Cafe is located. An access point into the site is also convenient to the public/social housing located adjacent to the north end.
- An entry plaza with a shade structure and event space is located near the parking where the Visitor Center and Cafe are also located, easily accessible to the entry and public housing.
- The recreation lawn is located also in this northern section that may be used for active recreation activities and events.
- A bioswale drains storm water from the parking area, entry plaza, and lawn and is stored in a cistern that may be used for irrigation or other uses.
- The pedestrian path leads from the both ends of the site to the Grand Promenade.
- The second cafe is located in the center of the site, accessible by bridge to the neighboring San Fernando Road commercial and residential areas beyond.
- The constructed wetland is adjacent to the river, providing habitat and views into the river.
- A habitat restoration is located near the school for educational use.



LEGEND

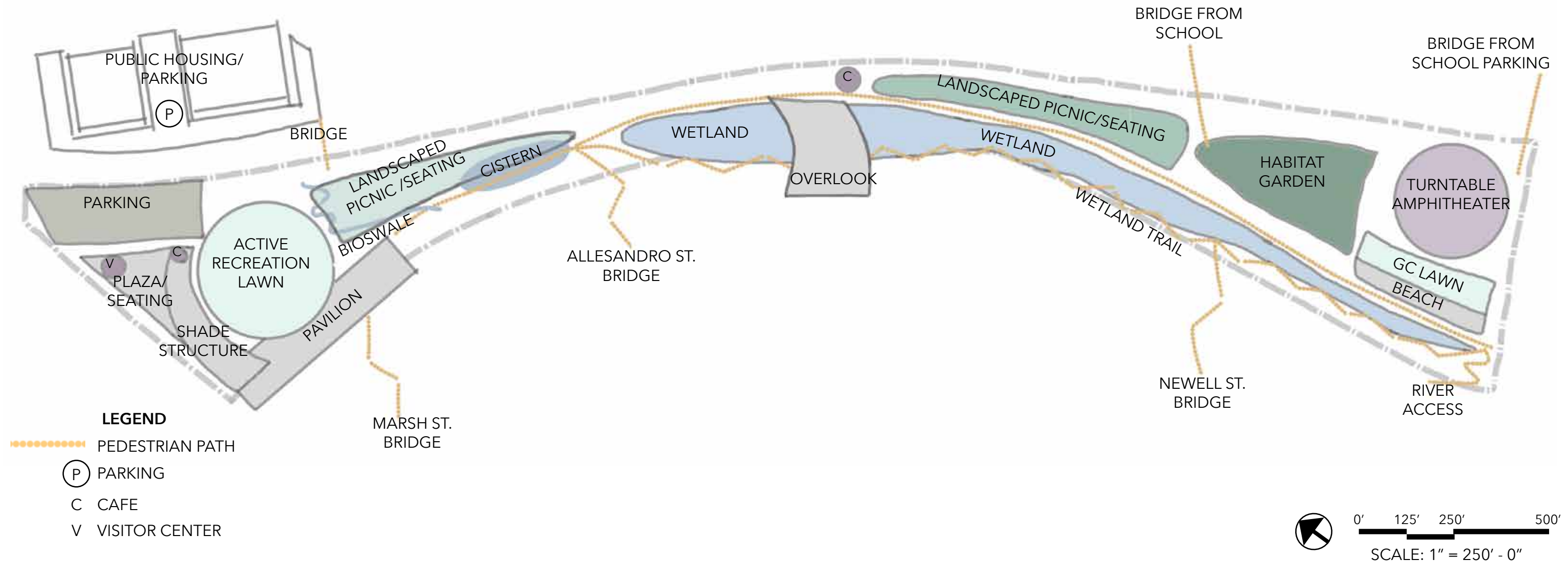
- PEDESTRIAN PATH
- (P) PARKING
- C CAFE
- V VISITOR CENTER



DESIGN ALTERNATIVE 3 - MODERN WETLAND

The Modern Wetland is the most comprehensive of the three design alternatives. It incorporates modern, sweeping curves contrasting with straight and zig zagging lines for a contemporary but natural vibe. The site focuses on a central overlook that cantilevers out over the constructed wetland and the river trail. Circular shapes for the active recreation lawn and amphitheater are reminiscent of the Taylor Yard turntables.

- Parking for 75 cars is located at the north entry, accessible from Casitas Ave.
- The site has multiple access points: three bridges or crossings across the railroad tracks and three bridges from Frogtown at Newell Street on the south, Allesandro Street where The Spoke Bicycle Cafe is located, and at Marsh St near the skate park.
- An entry plaza and event space is located near the parking where the Visitor Center and Cafe are also located, easily accessible to the entry.
- The recreation lawn is located also in this northern section that may be used for active recreation activities and events.
- A bioswale drains storm water from the parking area, entry plaza, and lawn and is stored in a cistern that may be used for irrigation or other uses.
- A pedestrian path meanders through the center of site between landscaped areas in addition to a wetland path adjacent to the river.
- The second cafe is located in the center of the site, accessible by bridge to the neighboring San Fernando Road and is also adjacent to the central overlook.
- The constructed wetland is adjacent to the river, providing habitat and views into the river.
- A habitat garden is located near the school for educational use.
- The circular Turntable Amphitheater is a tribute to the Taylor Yard turntable and is accessible from the south entry and shared school parking. This venue is also available for school events.
- A beach and river access at the southern tip may be used also for active recreation such as beach volleyball and kayak launching.



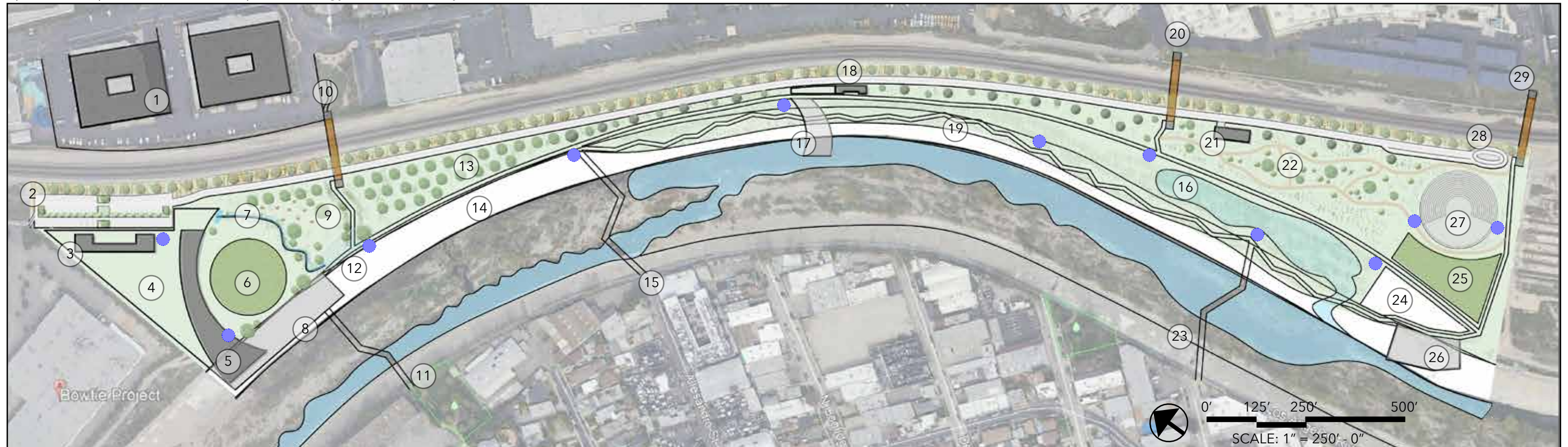
MASTER PLAN - MODERN WETLAND

The final concept is the Modern Wetland which combines modern, sweeping curves contrasting with straight and zig zagging lines for a contemporary design that brings neighboring residents, students, workers, and visitors into nature. The site focuses on a central overlook that cantilevers out over the constructed wetland and the river trail. Circular shapes for the active recreation lawn and amphitheater are reminiscent of the Taylor Yard turntables.

This plan sinks the train tracks so that bridges from the adjacent housing and school are only 10 feet above grade; additionally this lessens the train noise. The high voltage cables have been buried, eliminating the eyesore of the towers. The constructed wetland will be developed using practices and standards where available for preventing liquefaction. A bioswale at the north end of the site drains storm water from the parking area, entry plaza, recreation lawn, and picnic area and routes it into a cistern for later irrigation use on the site. The wetland utilizes a wide area planted with grasses and riparian shrubs for filtering, with additional infiltration occurring along the length of the river as the water flows through the wetland downstream.

The site is traversed by a central trail that sits at the high point of the site, taking advantage of views into the river and into the north and south. A river trail sits lower and closer to the river and wetland. The south end takes advantage of shared parking at the Sotomayor school. Joined by a bridge is an amphitheater that may be used by the community and also by the school. Adjacent to the amphitheater is another lawn that may be used for events, and closer to the river is a beach that can also be used for volleyball. The river may also be enjoyed from the south overlook which is ample in size for events or small summer concerts. The habitat garden, close to the school, can be tended to by students or community members.

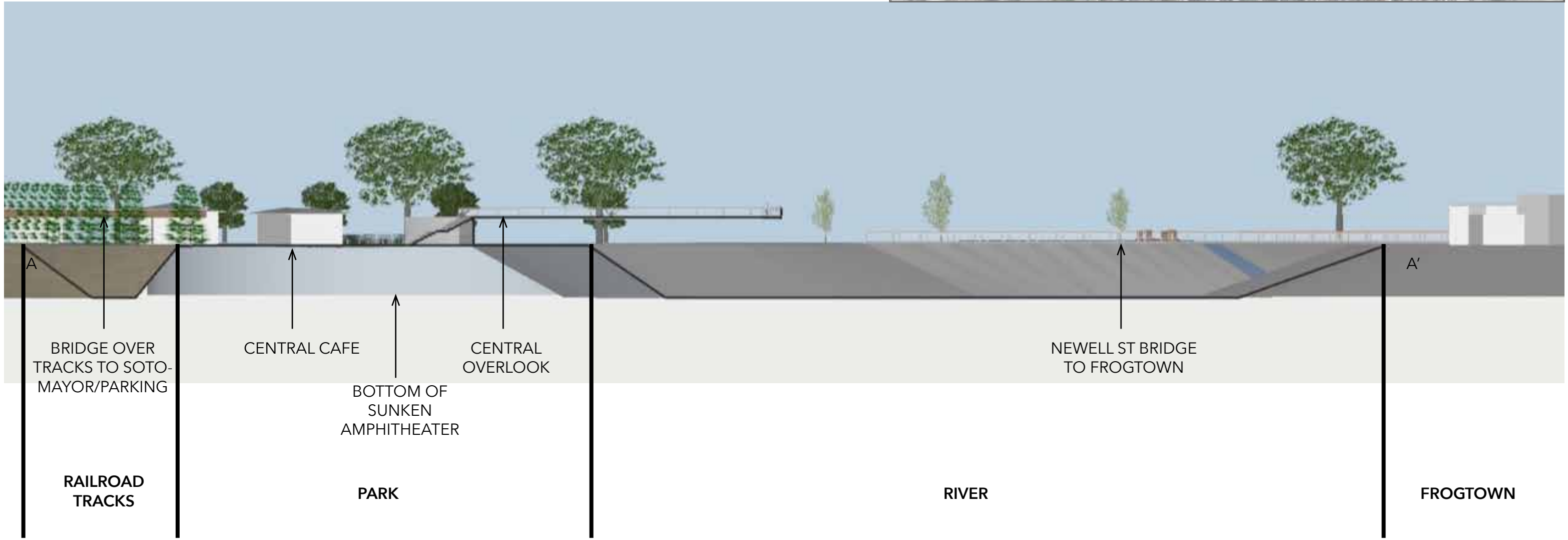
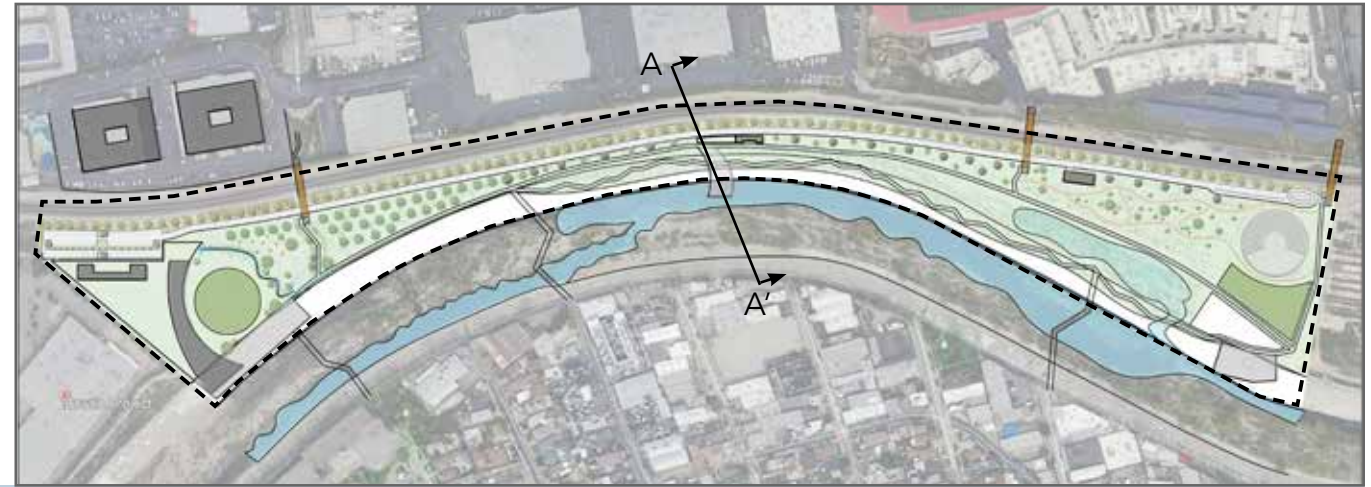
The site is accessed by vehicles on the north, with parking adjacent to the entry. An access road leads to the south end, with drop off area and parallel parking for those needing closer access to the amphitheater. Solar panels are placed on all rooftops for energy self-sufficiency.



LEGEND

- | | | | | |
|--|--|---|------------------------------------|-------------------------------------|
| ① PUBLIC HOUSING | ⑦ BIOSWALE for drainage of north end of site | ⑬ LANDSCAPED AREA / GROVE / ORCHARD | ⑲ WETLAND TRAIL adjacent to MEADOW | ⑳ RECREATION / EVENT LAWN |
| ② PARKING LOT for 75 cars and 3 ADA spaces | ⑧ PAVILION OVERLOOK | ⑭ RIPARIAN GRASSES and SHRUBS | ⑳ BRIDGE from Sotomayor School | ㉑ SOUTH OVERLOOK |
| ③ VISITOR CENTER and CAFE | ⑨ PLAYGROUND with seating | ⑮ BRIDGE from Allesandro St. / Spoke Cafe | ㉑ MAINTENANCE / STORAGE | ㉒ AMPHITHEATER |
| ④ ENTRY PLAZA with seating | ⑩ BRIDGE from public housing | ⑯ CONSTRUCTED WETLAND | ㉒ HABITAT GARDEN | ㉓ DROP OFF / ADDITIONAL PARKING |
| ⑤ SHADE STRUCTURE | ⑪ BRIDGE from Marsh Street/skate park | ⑰ CENTRAL OVERLOOK | ㉓ BRIDGE from Newell St. | ㉔ BRIDGE FROM SHARED SCHOOL PARKING |
| ⑥ CENTRAL RECREATION / EVENT LAWN | ⑫ CISTERN | ⑱ CAFE with patio seating | ㉔ BEACH | ● DRINKING FOUNTAINS |

SITE SECTION 1 - CENTRAL OVERLOOK



BRIDGE OVER
TRACKS TO SOTO-
MAYOR/PARKING

CENTRAL CAFE

BOTTOM OF
SUNKEN
AMPHITHEATER

CENTRAL
OVERLOOK

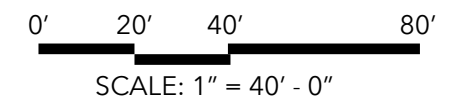
NEWELL ST BRIDGE
TO FROGTOWN

RAILROAD
TRACKS

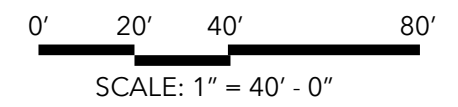
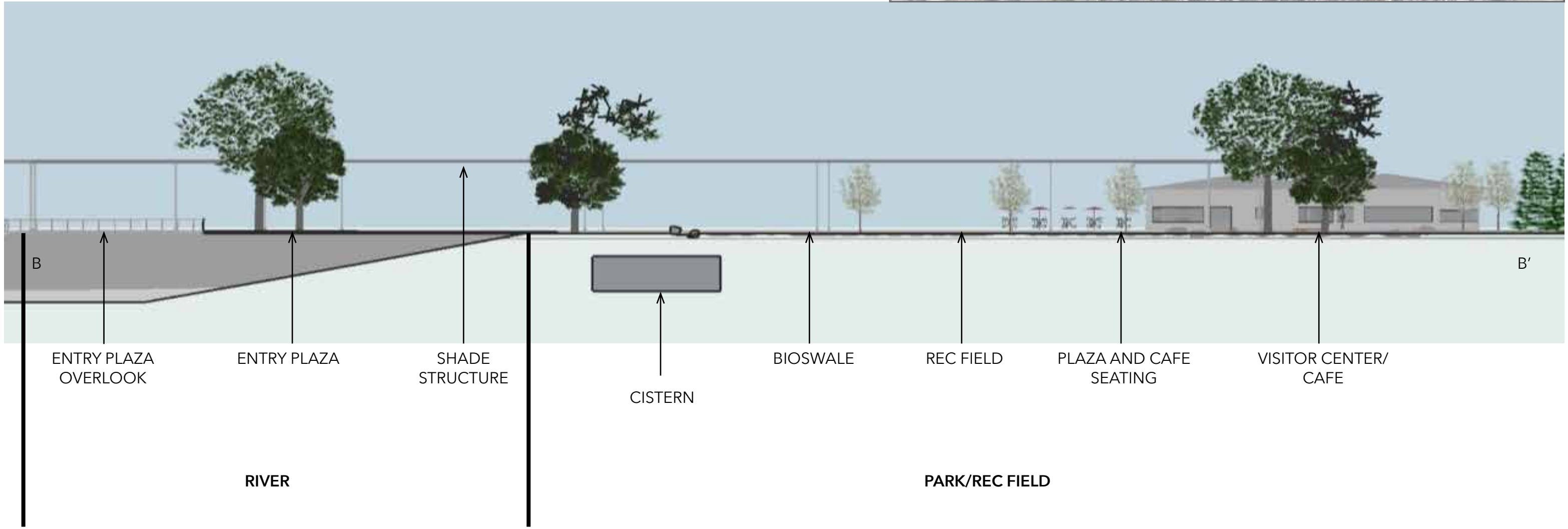
PARK

RIVER

FROGTOWN



SITE SECTION 2 - REC FIELD BIOSWALE & CISTERN

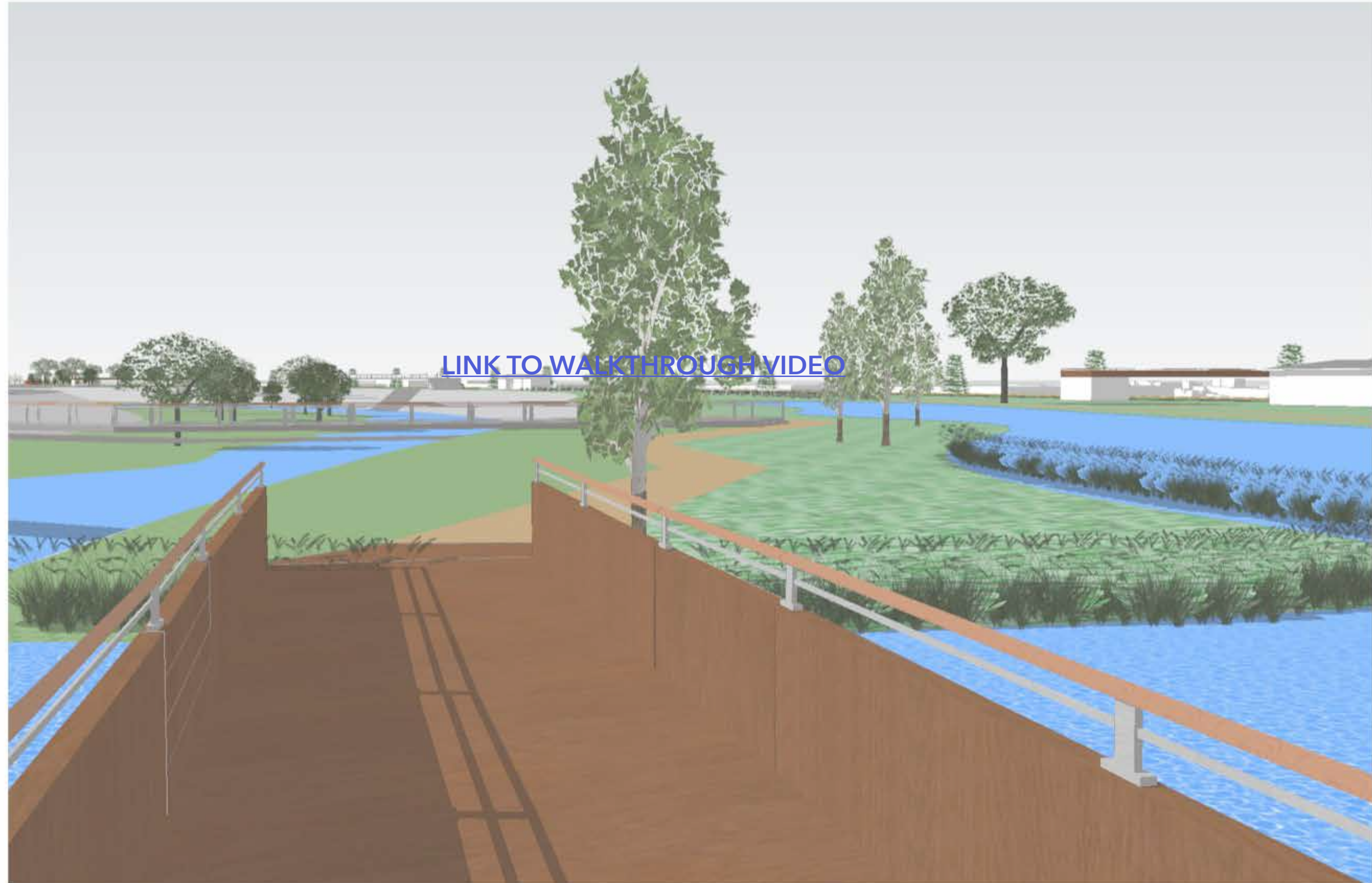


PERSPECTIVE FROM ENTRY/ VISITOR CENTER



PERSPECTIVE OF CENTER OVERLOOK





RESOURCES

Bowtie/Rio de Los Angeles State Park - http://parks.ca.gov/?page_id=30530

Community Survey Responses - https://clockshop.org/wp-content/uploads/2017/12/bowtie_survey_response_board_EN-2048x1463.png

History

<https://www.theriverproject.org/taylor-yard-landing>

<https://www.tayloryard.org/the-railroad#:~:text=The%20Taylor%20property%20became%20a,shops%20and%20other%20related%20buildings.>

https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Taylor_Yard

<https://www.kcet.org/shows/earth-focus/taylor-yard-timeline-from-abandoned-site-to-crown-jewel>

<https://www.kcet.org/shows/earth-focus/projects/taylor-yard>

<https://larivermasterplan.org/>

<http://www.junestreetarchitecture.com/blog/2016/5/17/the-bowtie-project>

<https://clockshop.org/project/bowtie-about/>

Case Study 1: East River Waterfront Esplanade

<https://www.shoparc.com/projects/east-river-waterfront/>

<http://www.kensmithworkshop.com/erw-esplanade.html>

Case Study 2: Spree

<https://gruppef.com/en/project/ran-an-die-spree/>

Case Study 3: LA/Wilmington

<https://www.sasaki.com/projects/wilmington-waterfront-promenade/>

<https://www.archpaper.com/2018/04/sasaki-mla-studio-redevelop-port-l-waterfront/>

<https://www.landscapeperformance.org/case-study-briefs/port-of-los-angeles-wilmington-waterfront-park>

Save LA River

<https://la.urbanize.city/post/three-design-options-emerge-la-river-restorations-crown-jewel>

Design Resources

Waterfront Promenade Design, Urban Revival Strategies, Andersson

Low Impact Development, University of Arkansas Community Design Center

Hunter's Point South SWA Group - <https://www.swagroup.com/projects/hunters-point-south-waterfront-park/>

Sketchup: Justin/Sketchup Essentials and Sketchup Campus

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