



The Bowtie Parcel Master Plan

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OVERVIEW AND HISTORY

Officially a part of Rio de Los Angeles State Park, the Bowtie parcel is an 18 acre strip of land located on the east bank of the Los Angeles River in north east Los Angeles. Historically, this property was part of Taylor Yard, the former headquarters of the Southern Pacific Railroad. Once a bustling railyard and major local employer, Southern Pacific closed the facilities in the late 1980's and began parceling the land for future sale. After rail operations shut down, advocates, including nonprofit organizations, community groups, and government agencies, all worked to ensure the land found its way into public hands with a vision to revitalize 100 acres of the area into publicly owned park space. This collective vision is managed by the 100 Acre Partnership.



TIMELINE:

PRE-1700s: The Tongva occupy the region for centuries.

1769: Portola Expedition records first written words about Los Angeles, including the Los Angeles River.

1771: San Gabriel Mission is completed.

1781: El Pueblo de Los Angeles established. Settlers build a willow pole dam across the Los Angeles River.

1784: 36,000-acre land grant made to Jose Maria Verdugo, includes area that becomes Taylor Yard.

1835: Secularization of missions brings first great land rush to split lands into individual rancho grants.

1847: The Treaty of Guadalupe Hidalgo is signed and the Mexican-American War ends. California is ceded over to the United States and S. C. Foster is appointed mayor of Los Angeles.

1870s: Residential development spreads out from downtown Los Angeles due to expansion of railroads and Silver Lake Dam.

1876: Southern Pacific Railroad line is completed.

1877: Taylor family settles on east bank of Los Angeles River and begins selling farming surplus.

1881: Land where Taylor Yard is located is subdivided and used for agriculture and housing. Taylor family opens general store and milling company at Taylor Yard.

1908: Company and land become known as "Taylor Yard."

1913: Water from the Owens River is diverted to Los Angeles.

1920s: Taylor Yard undergoes major development, including the South Turntable and machine shops.

1925: Taylor Yard becomes a major rail yard facility.

1938: Los Angeles River floods during a four-day storm. In response, Los Angeles River is channelized in concrete, resulting in fixed course.

1949: Taylor Yard diesel shops built along river to service Southern Pacific's growing fleet of diesel powered engines.

1960: Southern Pacific Railroad reroutes trains to the Cajon Pass instead of through Los Angeles.

1985: Taylor Yard closes its long-standing purpose as a freight switching facility.

1992: Parcel B developed as Metrolink maintenance facility. Intensive public outreach about the future of Taylor Yard is conducted. The first Taylor Yard Area Planning and Urban Design Workshop is held.

1992-93: Several studies are completed such as: Multi-Use Study on the Los Angeles River at Taylor Yard prepared for the Los Angeles County Department of Public Works; Taylor Yard Development Study prepared for the Los Angeles County MTA; and the Taylor Yard Planning and Urban Design Workshop prepared by the American Institute of Architects.

1997: Over half of the rail is vacated, resulting in development of the FedEx facility on Parcel E.

1998: Legacy Partners proposes a 49-acre business park at the northern end of Taylor Yard. No master plan was ever implemented, and the property was sold piecemeal. River Through Downtown Conference produces a mixed-use plan for the site.

2000: Parcel D is proposed for warehouse development. Community opposed development and 'Coalition for a State Park at Taylor Yard' is formed, led by The River Project. Proposition 12, the Statewide Park Bond bill, is passed. Governor Gray Davis approves \$45 million to acquire Taylor Yard as a state park.

2001: State acquires Parcel D for State Park development.

2002: The California Coastal Conservancy completes a feasibility study on the opportunities and potential uses at Taylor Yard's Parcel G-2.

2003: State acquires an additional 18 acres at Parcel G-1.

2014: California State Parks and Clockshop partner to activate Parcel G-1 with art and cultural programming and name it The Bowtie Project.

2019: Governor Gavin Newsom approves California state budget that includes \$500K for an initial design proposal for the new State Park at Parcel G-1.

2019: The City of Los Angeles, California State Parks, and The Mountains Recreation and Conservation Authority (MRCA) sign a Letter of Intent to form the "100-Acre Partnership at Taylor Yard" (Partnership)

April 24, 2020: The Nature Conservancy (TNC) and California State Parks sign an agreement to collaborate on a 2.5-acre Bowtie Demonstration Project

This timeline is adapted from Noemi Despland-Lichtert's "Parcel G" research presentation. Additional information was provided by California State Parks.

SITE LOCATION AND CONTEXT



STATE OF CALIFORNIA



CITY OF LOS ANGELES



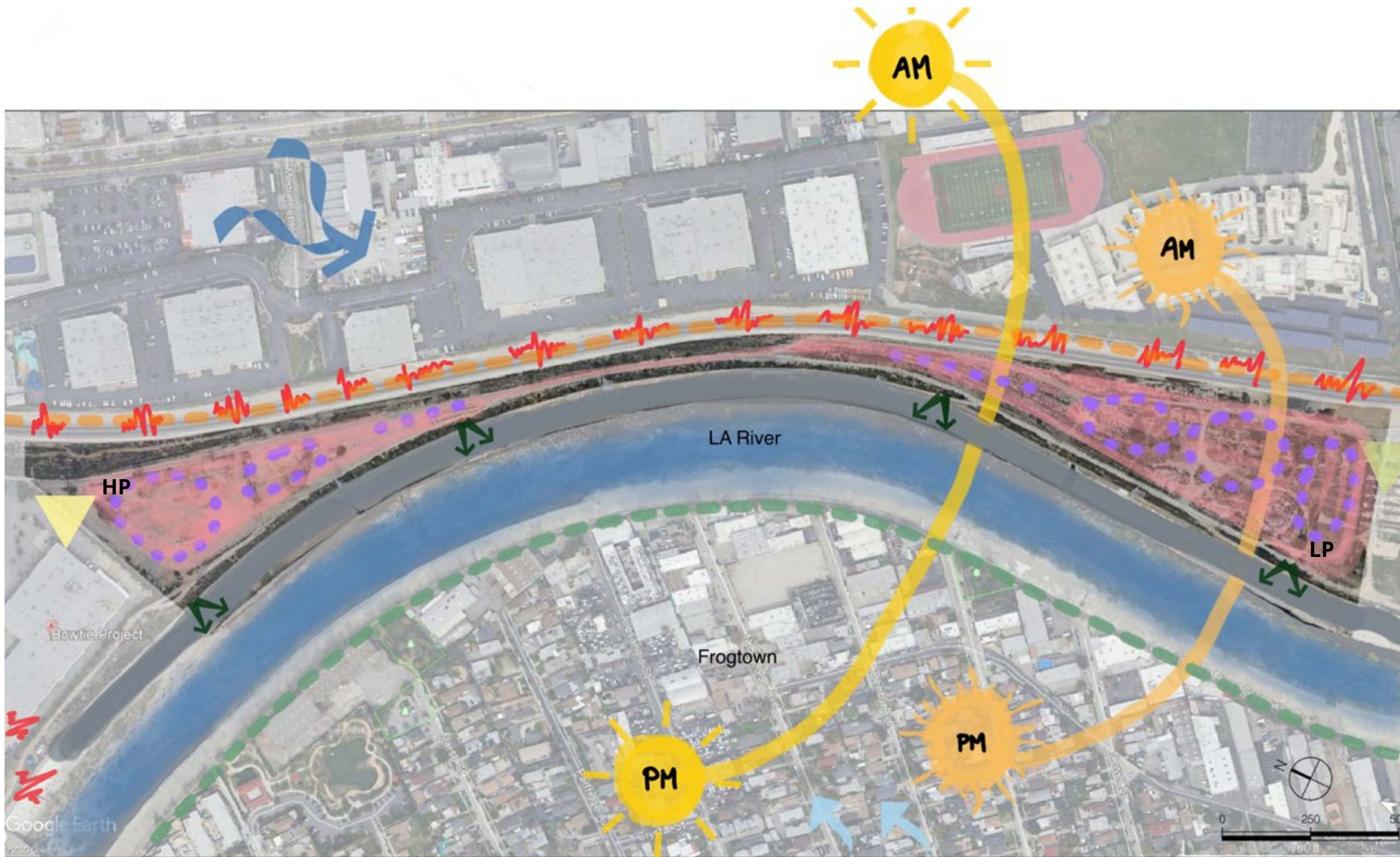
SITE LOCATION

The site is situated on a slightly sloped, abandoned open space. It is flanked on the NE by train tracks and on the SW by the channelized Los Angeles river. It currently only has one, difficult to access, pedestrian entrance. The surrounding areas include a mix of commercial businesses, a school, a state park, residential areas and land that has plans for future development.
















CONTEXT MAP

SITE ANALYSIS



LEGEND

-  Loud Noise
-  Summer Sun Arc
-  Winter Sun Arc
-  Flow of Water
-  Primary Entrance
-  Secondary Maintenance entrance
-  Prevailing Winds
-  Seasonal Santa Ana Winds
-  Train Tracks
-  Los Angeles River Greenway Trail
-  Hot, Open, Unshaded areas
-  Concrete embankment
-  Poor soil conditions
- HP** High Point
- LP** Low Point

SITE OBSTACLES



- A Parking and access:** The park has one main access point with no signage or easy to recognize markers. Parking is non-existent except on streets in surrounding neighborhoods.
- B Noise levels:** The site is extremely loud due to the train track bordering the NE side, and the traffic noise from the I-2 freeway. When the train is going by, it is difficult to talk to your neighbor. The high tension lines also produce a low humming noise.
- C Safety:** Due to the entrance/exit and the general state of the site, it does not feel safe for visitors. The paths are meandering and although there are some art installations to see, there is little visibility across the site and lots of trash. The rail line is dangerous because of high speeds and the low, flimsy, chain link fencing offers limited protection.
- D Soil conditions:** The soil is very hard, compacted and contains toxins at levels that require mitigation. The soil is compacted due to the railyard's heavy machinery and contamination was caused by the railroad and all of its accoutrements. The area is a wild mix of mostly invasive plants and some CA natives (some of which are thriving).
- E Narrow Center:** The property narrows at the center and due to its proximity to the rail line, this could pose a hazard for safety. Visitors can walk North or South, yet because of the physical barriers of the train line and the river, it would be difficult to get out in case of an emergency.

- F Crime:** there has been a varied history of street gangs in this area since the 1930's. Gangs were known to commit a number of crimes on the site including: murder, assault, drug trafficking, robbery, extortion and drive-by shootings. Gang tagging is prominent in the area and today, the Elysian Valley has an overall grade of B- for crime and safety.
- G Connectivity:** Despite being surrounded by major streets and highways, the site is almost entirely inaccessible by car or public transit. It also does not provide any safe access to the river or across it to Frogtown.
- H Abnormal Shape:** The odd shape and limited accessibility makes it a difficult site to explore. Because there is little to no shade, the land gets incredibly hot, especially during the summer.
- I Tree poor:** Hot and unshaded, the site lacks any tree canopy and has large amounts of concrete and asphalt remnants, thus contributing to the heat island effect.
- J Obstructed Views and air:** The huge, unsightly power lines have an electrical hum that is an irritant. And the air quality is poor due to the surrounding freeway traffic.
- K Pollution:** Storm drains run under the site feeding into the already contaminated, channelized LA River.

SITE OPPORTUNITIES



- 1 Accessibility:** Provide better access to the site via multiple entry points, clear signage, with adjacent parking. This is a great chance to utilize green technology for covered parking.
- 2 Ignite all the senses:** The site can be much more enjoyable by mitigating the noise through creating a series of spaces that use plants as natural sound buffers but also designing structures in a way to organize the experience. Using the natural slope, building walkways and planting berms can provide interest and clear borders.
- 3 Clean:** Bioremediation with a strong emphasis on restoration to the natural riparian habitat. This will allow for a cleaner, safer and more natural setting.
- 4 Connections:** With many urban amenities surrounding the site, connections can be made to commercial, residential and educational institutions to the NE. Additionally, across the river to frogtown and the Los Angeles River Greenway Trail. A network of walking and biking trails can create a destination for the local community.
- 5 Bowtie Shape:** The shape provides a unique opportunity to offer engaging programming for all types of public from the surrounding community and beyond the Elysian Valley.

- 6 Rest and respite:** By providing a large tree canopy, visitors will be able to not only enjoy the flora and fauna but also find respite from the heat. Strategically placed amenities could offer multiple drinking water and restroom stations.
- 7 Views:** Views across the river and to the mountains can be highlighted by expert planning and engineering walkways and spaces to highlight them.
- 8 Health:** By providing access to spaces where the visitor can exercise and play, we can help promote a healthy lifestyle and combat childhood obesity.
- 9 Reclaim:** Planting more trees and climate appropriate plants, will not only give the benefit of heat mitigation, but will also naturally clean and filter the storm water going into the LA River. The reclamation of the existing space will create an abundant green space and re-introduce pollinators and animals that have otherwise long gone.

PRECEDENT CASE STUDY 1 : CHICAGO RIVERWALK

Location: Chicago, IL

Client: Chicago Department of Transportation

Designer: Sasaki

Size: 3.5 acres

Age: Phase 1 completed in 2009 (by others),
Phase 2 completed May 2015, Phase 3 completed Oct 2016

The Main Branch of the Chicago River has a long and storied history that in many ways mirrors the development of Chicago itself. **Once a meandering marshy stream, the river first became an engineered channel to support the industrial transformation of the city.** Following the **famed reversal of the river**, in which the city reversed the flow of the Main Branch and South Branch to improve sanitation, architect and urban planner Daniel Burnham introduced a new civic vision of riverside promenades with the addition of the Wacker Drive viaduct. The goal of embracing the river as a recreational amenity seemed impossible years ago **given the river's high levels of pollution.** Since then, the role of the river has been evolving with the Chicago Riverwalk project—an initiative to **reclaim the Chicago River for the ecological, recreational and economic benefit of the city.**

Having lived in Chicago for 9 years from 2008-2017, I was able to watch the development of the river first hand. When I first moved there, the river was seen as a dirty and polluted waterway that we only paid attention to once a year on St. Patrick's Day when the famous river is **dyed a vibrant green color.** Since the Riverwalk Project, the riverfront has become a bustling destination for visitors and locals. The design intent was to develop this 25' wide linear park where **each block takes on the form and program of a different river-based typology.** These are: The Jetty, the Water Plaza, the River Theater, the Cove, the Marina. This project provided many engineering obstacles which were resolved with thoughtful resolutions. To create the continuous path at river level, stitching the series of rooms together, underbridge connections were designed to carry pedestrians below Chicago's iconic bascule bridges. These structurally independent elements shield passers-by from the open roadways above and envelope the space with light and movement.

ASSETS: Creates a sense of place by bringing visitors to the river's edge.
Interest and visual difference with each block as orientation can be difficult under the bridges.
A commitment to habitat rehabilitation on an industrial/urban waterway.
Commercial businesses and city benefits by bringing tourists to an otherwise undesirable edge.

TRADE-OFFS: Do the separation of blocks as "rooms" provide a cohesive sense of community? Or does it feel disjointed and disorienting?
Is the riverwalk a true representation of the city and it's residents or does it feel out of place in a city with such a rich history?
Are the "habitat restoration" efforts enough? One small block does not seem sufficient to benefit the entire river system.



PRECEDENT CASE STUDY 2 : PARRAMATTA PARK

Location: Sydney, Australia

Client: Parramatta City Council

Designer: Mcgregor Coxall, New Park Pavilion by Sam Crawford (2022)

Size: 85 Hectares

Age: Officially became a national park in 1917.

Parramatta Park is a **major urban park and historic site** in Parramatta in Western Sydney, Australia. It was gazetted as a public park in 1858 on the site of the former Parramatta Government Domain over 99.5 hectares. It was gazetted as a National Park in 1917.

The park is a part of the territory of the Darug people, who called it Burramatta, and has remnants of the Cumberland Plain Woodland. It is **historically and archaeologically significant** and has been used for recreational purposes throughout the 19th and the 20th century. The remains of aboriginal occupation can be seen within the park and various artifacts of the era have been retrieved from the vast green space.

In 1860 the extension of the Main Western railway line divided the park and necessitated the demolition of Governor Macquarie's stables. In 1913 some of the park was annexed for the construction of Parramatta High School. In 1981, eight hectares was transferred to the Parramatta Stadium Trust. In the early 1950s motor racing was held on the roads running through the park. In June 1954, the Steam Tram & Railway Preservation Society laid a short section of railway track. Its depot was destroyed by an arson attack in June 1993, and the track was lifted in December 1998

The present parklands straddle the Parramatta River on the western edge of the Parramatta central business district. The Park's trustees made improvements throughout the latter half of the 19th century – **planting avenues of trees and building gatehouses, carriageways, bridges and pavilions**. A key part of the Trustee's role was to care for the many monuments, memorials and historic sites in the park. The Trustees also **planted Australian native species**. While the park's formal gardens – the Rumsey Rose Garden and the Murray Gardens – continue to be restored and maintained, the **focus on reviving native vegetation and regenerating the banks of the river continue**. Ecological evidence dating back to the earliest periods of the British colony show their the clearing of land for farming left it weed infested for decades and also **caused large amounts of soil to be deposited as sediment into the river systems**.

After building the park and then implementing a **biodiversity strategy**, Parramatta Park is a place for the community to connect with and enjoy the natural environment. Parramatta Park Trust aims to maintain the park as a **haven for native flora and fauna** including the Grey-headed Flying-fox (one of the world's largest bats with a breeding camp located on the banks of Parramatta River). It is one of 11 historic places that combine to form the **World Heritage –listed Australian Convict Sites**.

Water has been a critical feature of the Park, the main waterways being the Parramatta River, Domain Creek and Murray Garden Creek. Parramatta River flows through the Park and was vital to the survival of the Darug Nations Burramattagal Tribe who used the river to fish for food and for fresh water.

ASSETS: Huge park with programing for the entire family.

Complete with gardens, a pavilion with cafe, amenities, playground, picnic areas, lots of shade canopy, a stadium, historical buildings, gatehouse, memorials, artifacts and tributes to the native people.

Very pedestrian, and bike friendly encouraging the community to engage.

Great Biodiversity strategy and habitat rehabilitation effort.

TRADE-OFFS: Because the park is so big, I wonder if it is truly a reflection of the community and it's history. Often sometimes the identity of such a large space can get lost.



PRECEDENT CASE STUDY 3 : RHEINPARK DUISBURG

Location: Duisburg Mitte, Duisburg, Germany

Client: City of Duisburg

Designer: Atelier Loidl

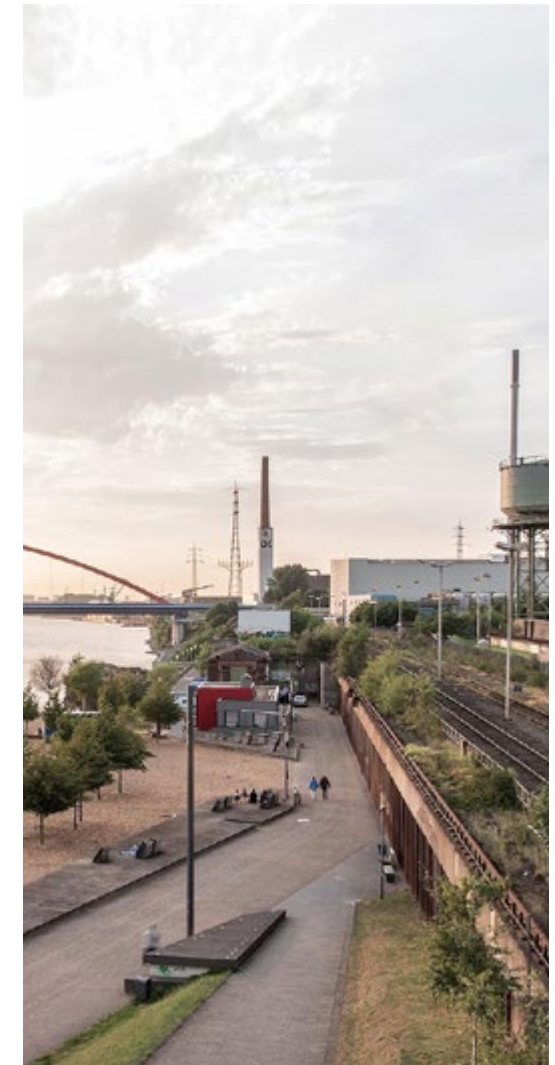
Size: 24 Hectare

Age: 2009

The subsequent use of the Thyssen-Krupp steel mill in Duisburg-Hochfeld created the opportunity to turn the property, which had been **used for industrial purposes for 150 years, into a lively leisure park on the river**, thus **strengthening Duisburg's profile as a city on the Rhine**. All the design approaches serve to **strengthen the perceptibility and experience of the river landscape**. If the topographic relationships (incisions, prominences) between the park and the Rhine are examined, a type of folded landscape can be seen in which the existing railway tracks (which were intrusive until now) can be viewed as the comforting link in the search for the horizontal line. The folded landscape, i.e. the interplay of varying high and low places, let a number of different spaces and utilizations develop. **Historically, industrial buildings lined up next to brick buildings** and quay walls and for the people who lived only a few hundred away, **the river was visible - but not tangible**. With the RheinPark and the planned new district RheinOrt, Duisburg has moved a little closer to the Rhine, the river is becoming closer to the city. The urban development goal "Duisburg on the Rhine" decided in 2003 enables a new experience with the "RheinPark" project and, in perspective, with the "RheinOrt" urban quarter, **a new relationship with the Rhine, very close to the city**. Around 60 hectares of **former industrial space** in the southwest of Duisburg city center have been further developed so far: the parks of the RheinPark stretch one and a half kilometers along the bank from the Kultushafen in the south to the Bridge of Solidarity in the north. Around a third of the total area, on which old industrial plants still stand today, is planned for residential and commercial use in the RheinOrt district. The corresponding design also envisages offices and non-disruptive trades such as laboratories, small businesses and space for start-ups. There will also be lots of green space. Five higher buildings with eight or twelve floors mark the RheinOrt from afar and set a visible landmark. Around 4,000 people are expected to live here by 2034 and more than 5,000 jobs will be created. **Work on the second phase of construction has begun**. The first construction phase of the park directly on the Rhine was opened in 2008. The park is now being completed in five further construction phases and the residential and commercial quarters are being built and connected to the grown Hochfeld district.

ASSETS: The former industrial space has been transformed into a usable, green space. The design strengthens the connection to the rhine and will hopefully start to capitalize on bringing the city and community to the river's edge. It is an urban park in conjunction with an urban area complete with skate park, street art opportunities, undulating vistas creating choice views and a connection to the railway.

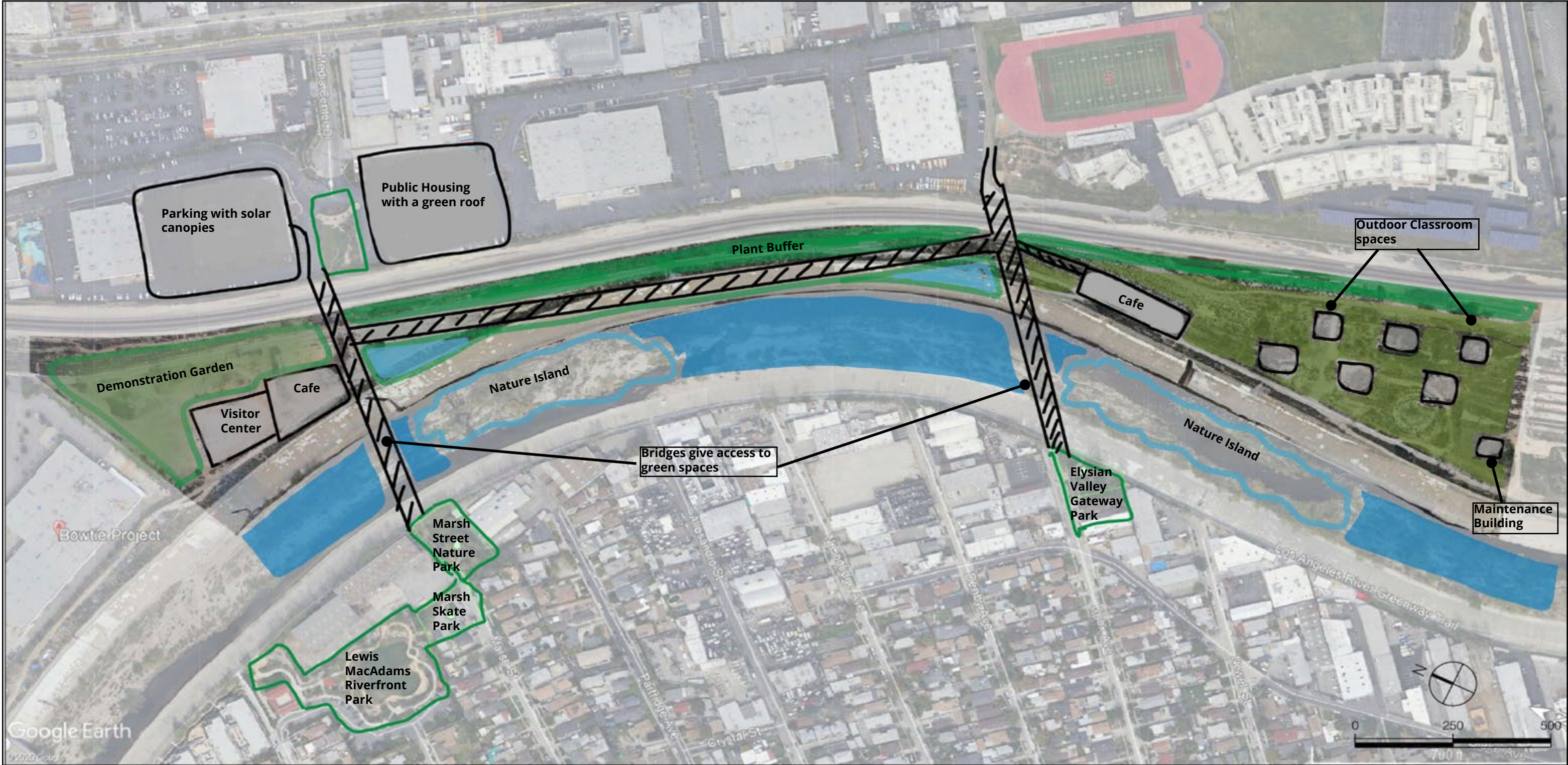
TRADE-OFFS: Although it is clear the plan is an urban response to an urban problem, it seems that there was a missed opportunity to create a thriving habitat in an effort to repair the land. There is a lot of open grass, but only choice tree canopy. It does not feel very inviting or warm. (But maybe that was the intent?)



DESIGN IDEATION 1

Direct Access to Education:

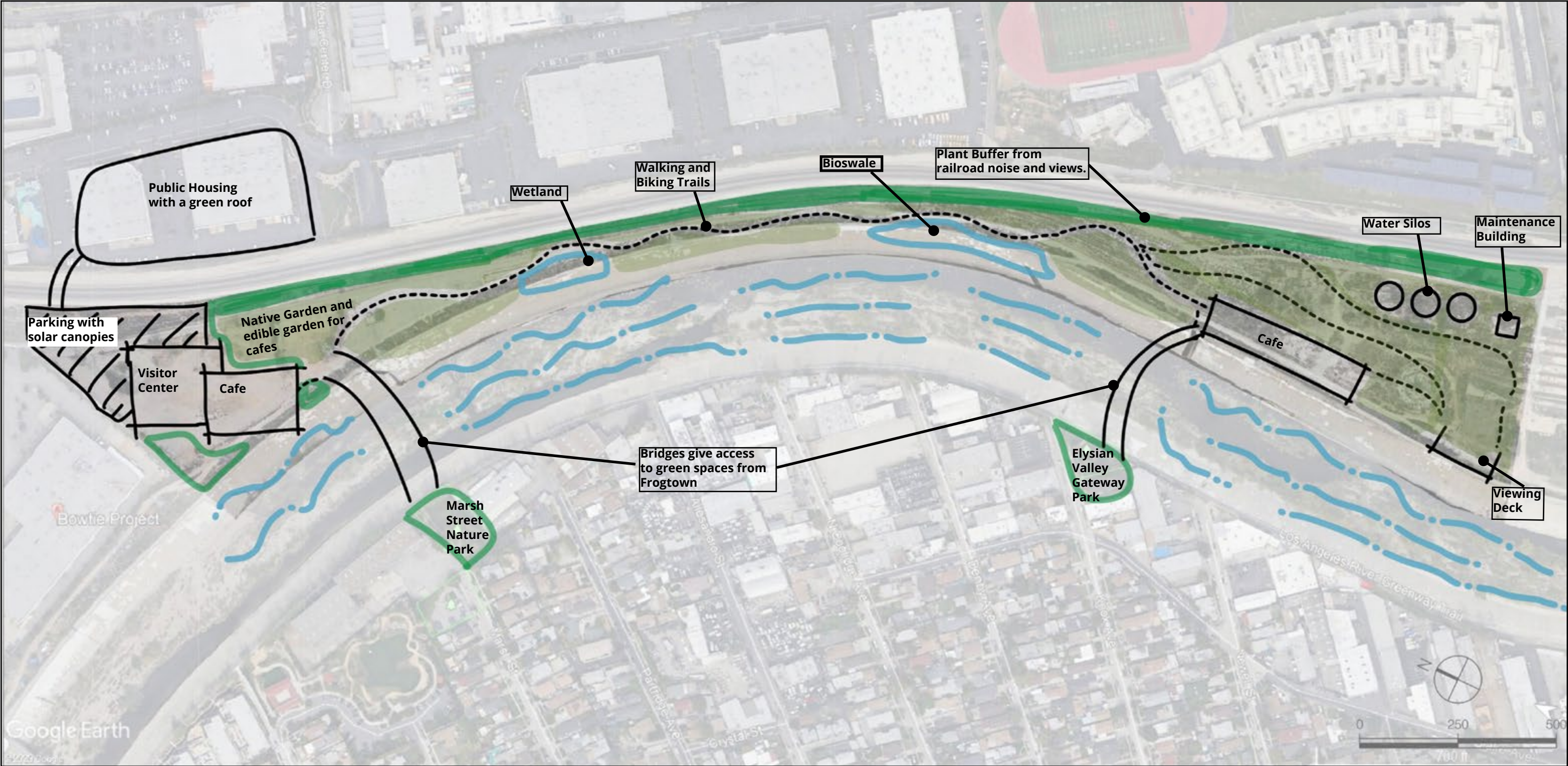
This design focuses on a space for educational endeavors and passive recreation. Because of the proximity to a school and residences it felt important to create a place where not only students but also the community at large could come to learn, rest and be inspired.



DESIGN IDEATION 2

Natural Garden Walk:

With a focus on ecological restoration and minimal land intrusion, this design aims to create a natural haven for the community. By using plants for bioremediation this area will become a thriving host for plants and animal life that has long been gone from this urban watershed. As the most low impact design of the three this option utilizes above ground silos for water retention and onsite irrigation.



DESIGN IDEATION 3

For the love of Community:

Varied programming makes sure that there is something for everyone in this community inspired design. The Elysian Valley population is very diverse and needs a space where everyone can come to enjoy the amenities. With an amphitheater that holds farmer's markets on the weekends, a large community center, gardens, a playground, 2 cafes, a centralized visitor center and bridges connecting to both the North and South ends of the site, this parcel has it all.



MASTER PLAN CONCEPT

The concept for the Bowtie Parcel Master Plan is based on 3 guiding principals.

ACTIVATE

To activate the community. Bringing people into the space through a variety of programming for all ages. With a large centralized hub, easy parking access, a fun playground and many different biking and hiking trails, there is really something for everyone in the family. A native garden and rotating art exhibit assist in offering interest year round. We aim ignite the senses through smells, beautiful sights, interesting textures and tastes.

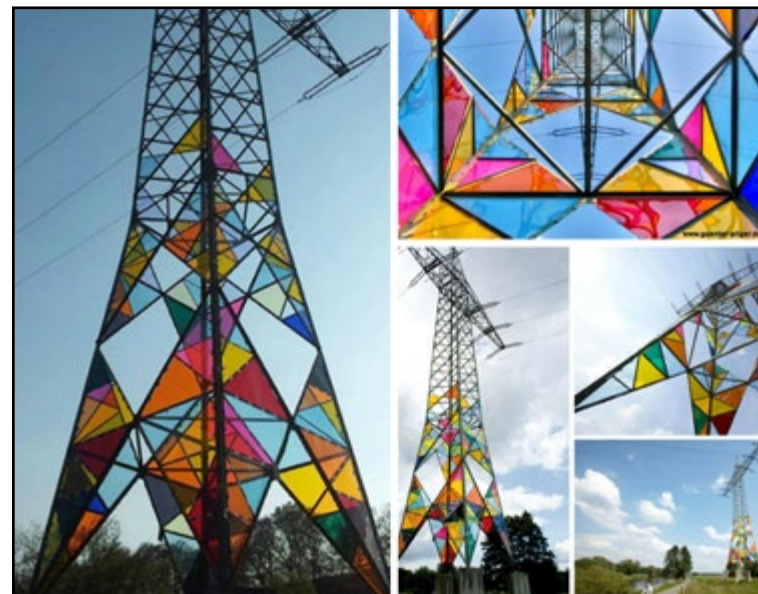
ELEVATE

What was a once abandoned, barren land has a chance at new life. By drawing visitors in for a simple afternoon lunch or for an energetic rhomp, we aim to fill new lungs into this unused space. The hope is that eventually the G-2 parcel will also be developed thus furthering the lives of Angelenos and additionally, furthering the mission to revive the LA River. This would a special stopping spot on that route for the local community and visitors alike.

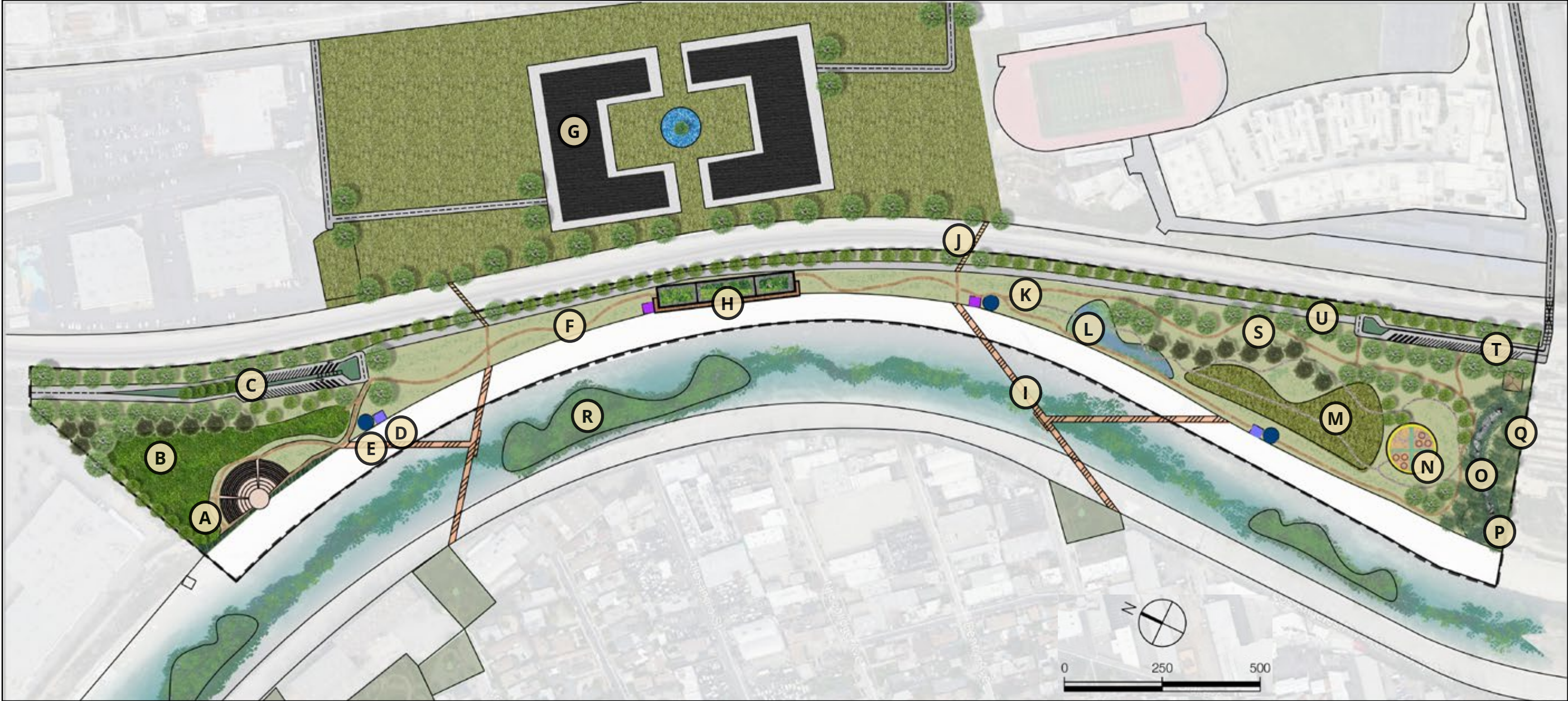
CELEBRATE

The long history of this former Taylor Yard space deserves to be celebrated. By bringing back native vegetation, improving the soil, having a plan for water runoff and bringing people back to the land, we are able to celebrate what was, and what is to come. In highlighting local art, we are also keeping a newer history of the guerilla art movement alive and well.

INSPIRATIONAL IMAGES



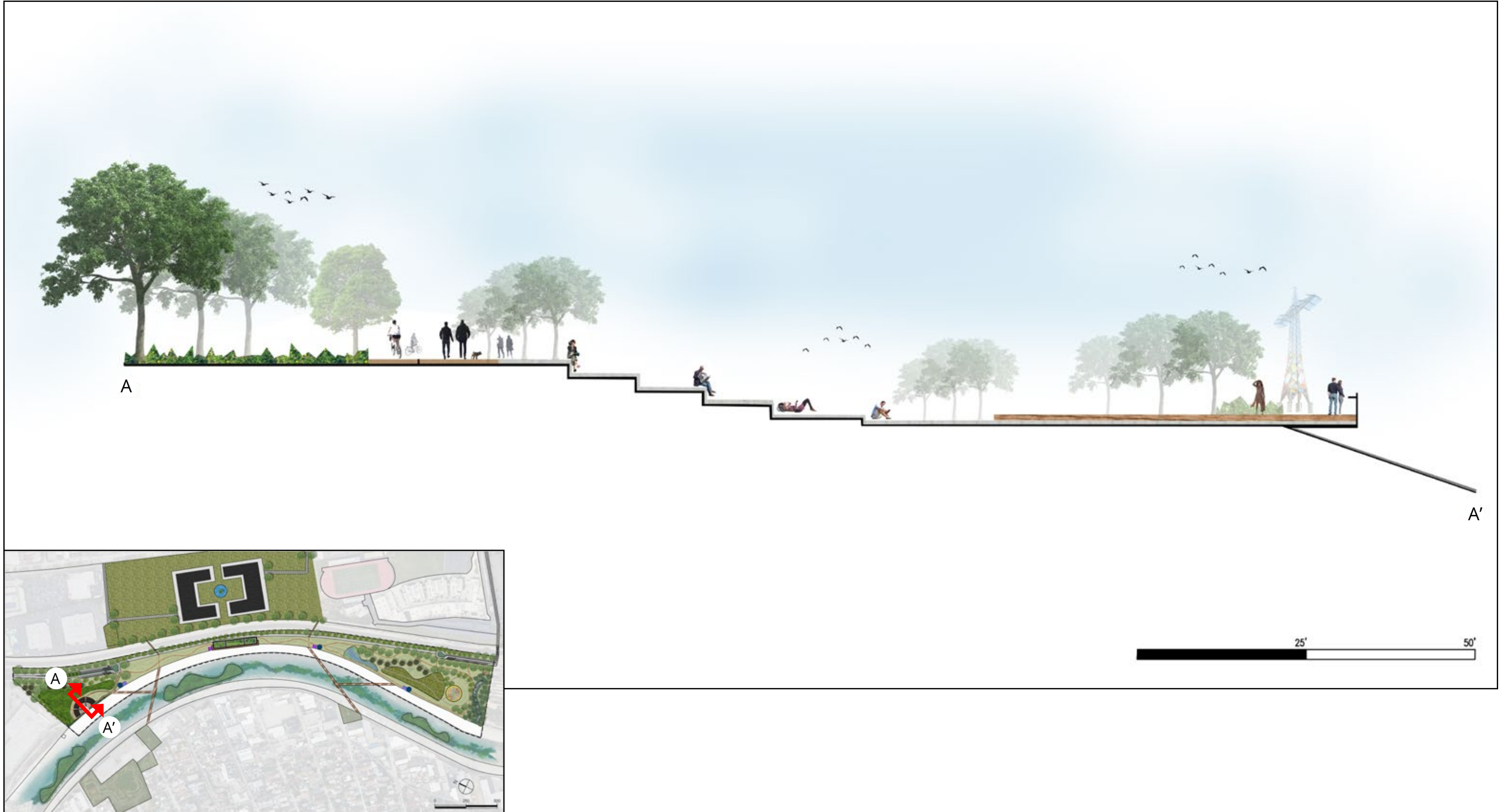
MASTER PLAN



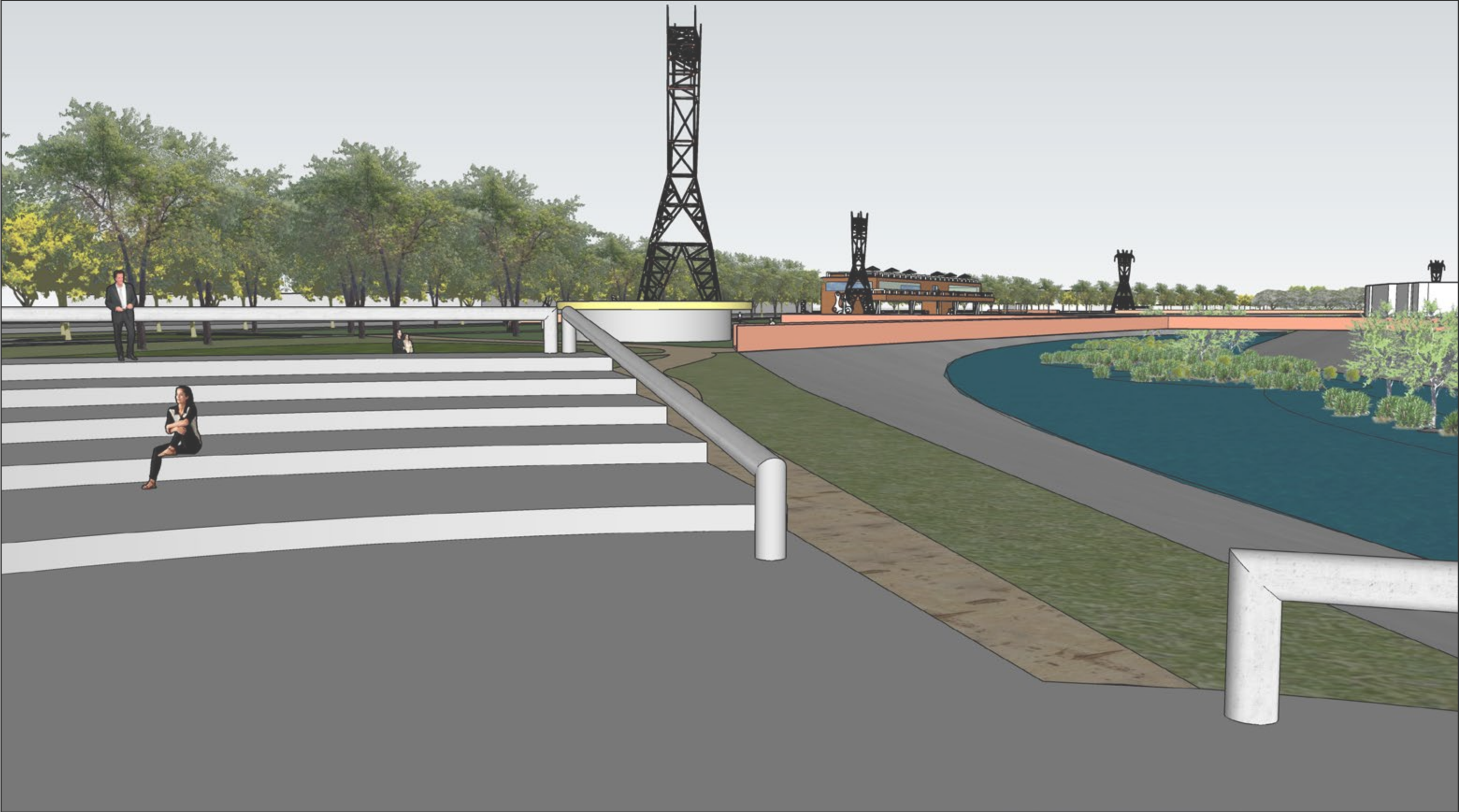
LEGEND

- (A)** Outdoor amphitheater
- (B)** CA Native Demonstration Garden
- (C)** Shaded parking with handicap access
- (D)** Electrical Towers turned into structural art.
- (E)** Restroom and drinking water facilities near each tower. Gives strong visual reference.
- (F)** Art walk and rotating exhibit of local artist's work.
- (G)** Public housing with Solar panels, water feature and park-like green space.
- (H)** Main building features 2 cafes on either end of a visitor center with a wrap around viewing deck. Seating is available amidst the rooftop vegetable garden which helps supply the kitchens. Structure stands on pilotis to allow for water infiltration, minimal soil disturbance and shade.
- (I)** Bridges include pedestrian and biking lanes with connections to existing green spaces in Frogtown. The bridge viewing decks invite visitors to interact with the river from above through riparian trees/ planting.
- (J)** Pedestrian bridges lead to the public housing, surrounding park and provide better access to San Fernando Road.
- (K)** Walking and biking trails
- (L)** Educational, constructed wetland.
- (M)** Shaded picnic and park space
- (N)** Sunken children's playground repurposed from old train turntable.
- (O)** Bioswale
- (P)** Underground cistern
- (Q)** An Orchard helps to support the cafes and water infiltration. Possible educational value for local schools.
- (R)** Eco islands that have been planted and built up to support and enhance existing plants.
- (S)** Strong tree canopy helps to mitigate heat island effect.
- (T)** South access shaded parking lot provides direct access to San Fernando Road and is closer to the park and playground areas for families.
- (U)** Utility access road

SITE SECTION 1



PERSPECTIVE 1



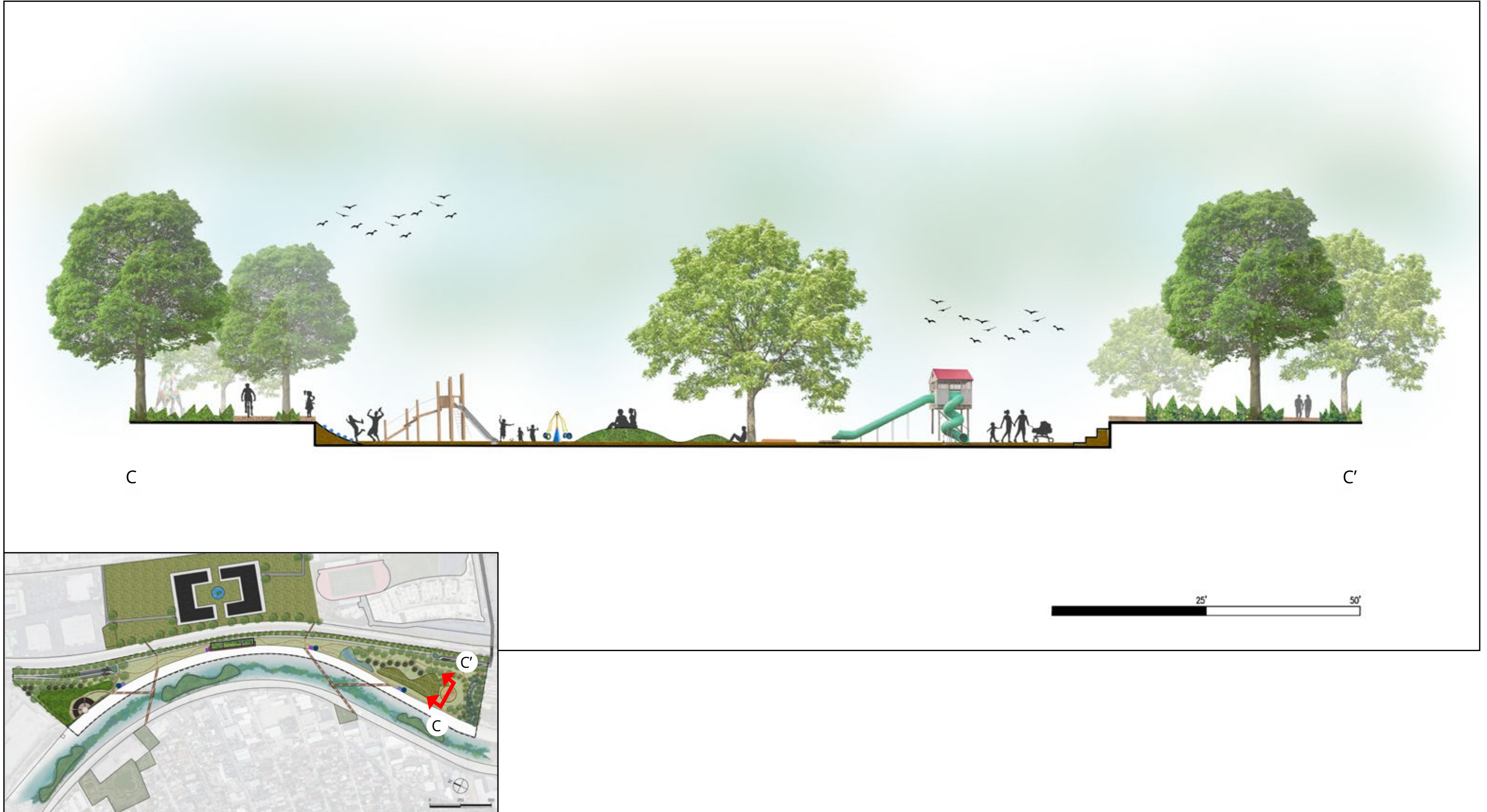
SITE SECTION 2



PERSPECTIVE 2

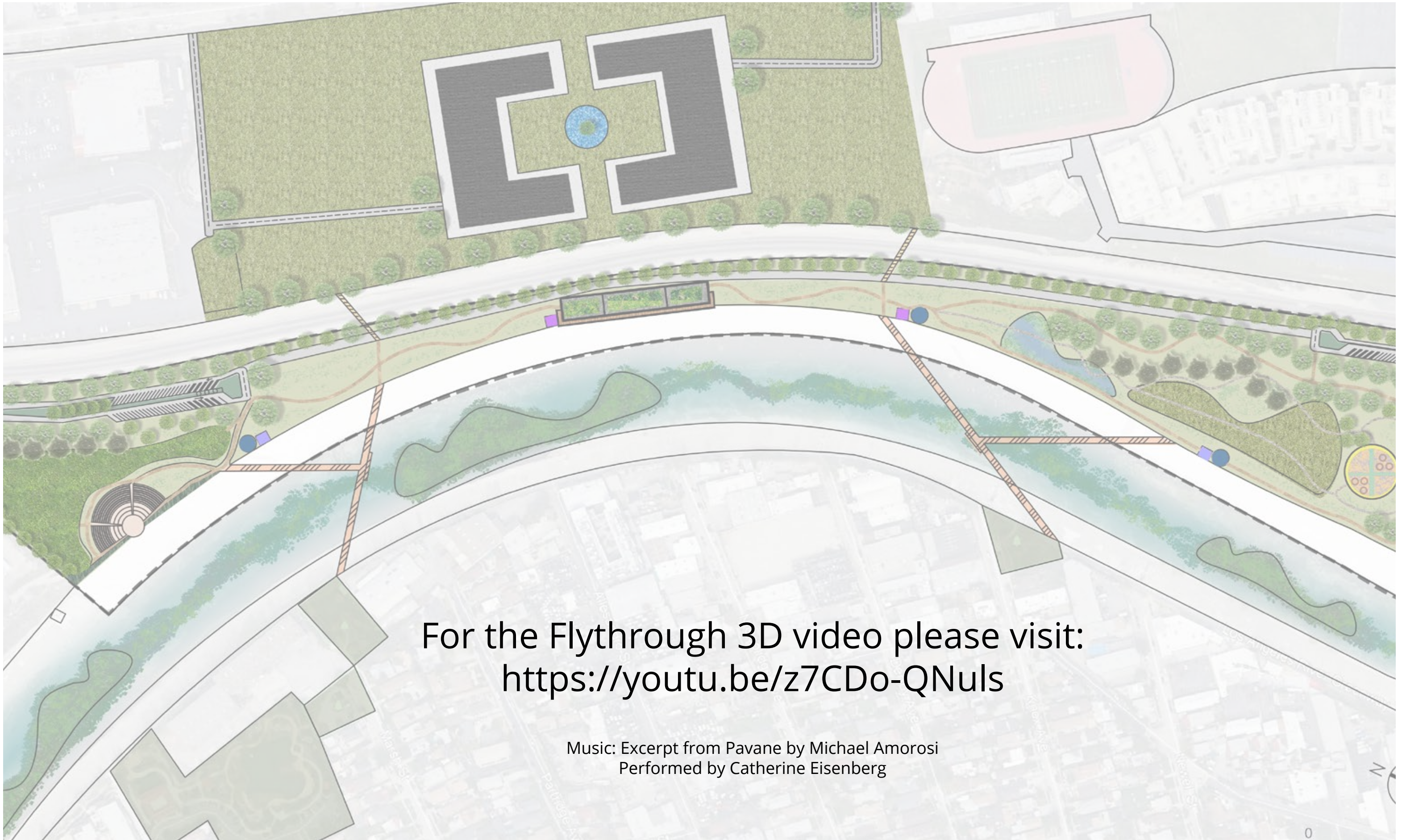


SITE SECTION 3



PERSPECTIVE 3





For the Flythrough 3D video please visit:
<https://youtu.be/z7CDo-QNuls>

Music: Excerpt from Pavane by Michael Amorosi
Performed by Catherine Eisenberg

Thank you!

