

An aerial photograph of a city, likely Los Angeles, showing a dense urban grid. A large, irregularly shaped area in the center-right is highlighted in a semi-transparent green color. This area follows a path that curves around a large, flat, open space, possibly a park or a large lot. The surrounding city is composed of numerous buildings, streets, and trees. The overall tone of the image is muted, with a light greyish-green background.

# **The Bowtie Parcel Master Plan**

**UCLA Landscape Design 6: Concept Development  
Instructor: Steven Chavez, PLA**

**Summer 2023**

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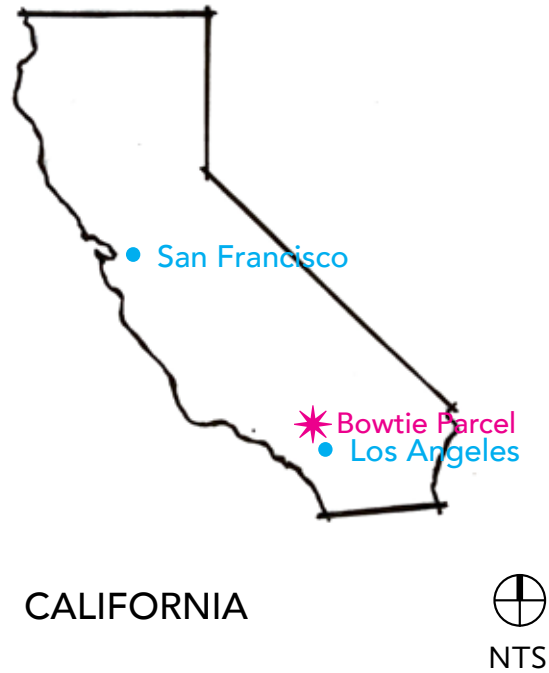
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# OVERVIEW AND HISTORY



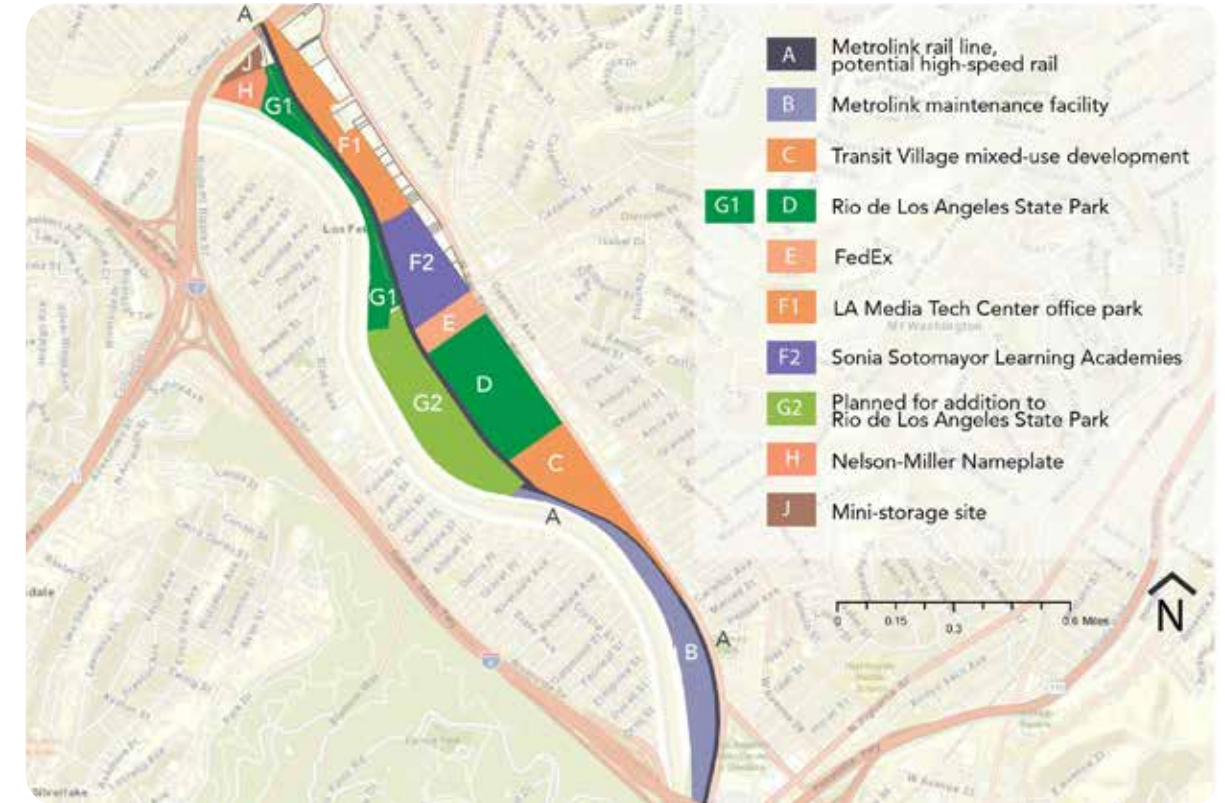
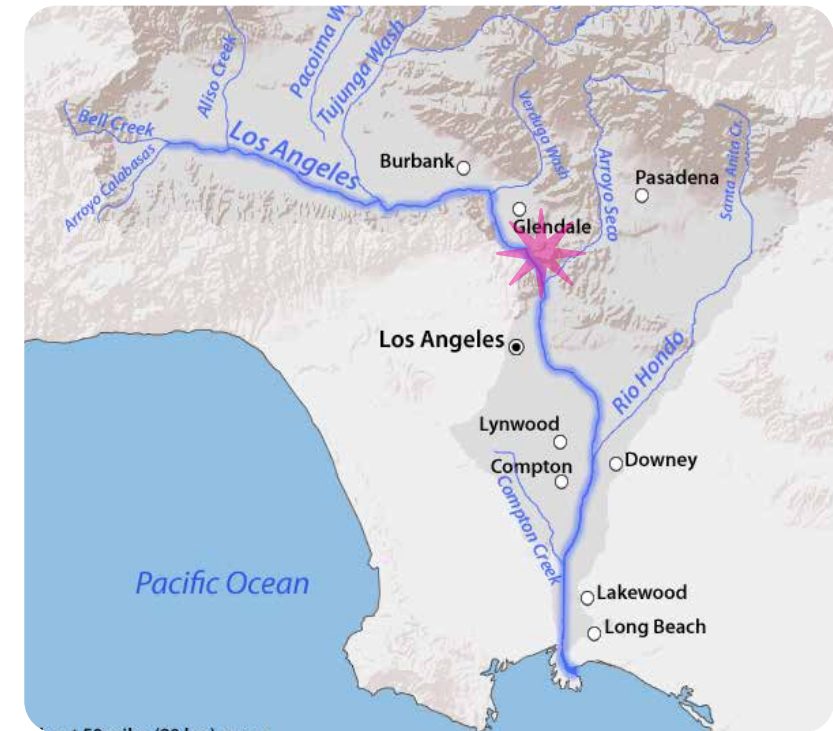
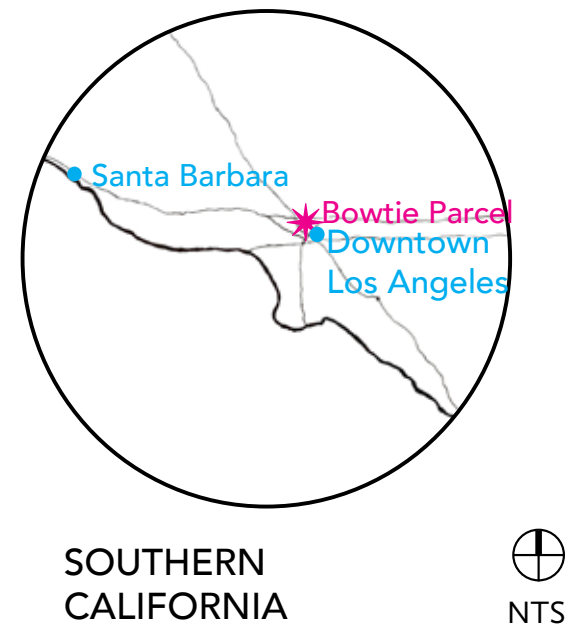
## THE BOWTIE PARCEL 2899-2853 Kerr Street, Los Angeles, CA 90039

**THE BOWTIE PARCEL** is an 18-acre riverfront site about midway down the Los Angeles River. A long and narrow strip that is pinched in the center, the Bowtie is **currently overgrown and neglected**, but is emblematic of the city's recent past and full of potential for the future.

Part of the Tongva's territory prior to Spanish and American annexation, the Bowtie ebbed and flowed with the LA River and the city's industrial tides. The **river's path was historically unpredictable**, a characteristic that became increasingly undesirable with the rapid development of Los Angeles in the early 20th century. Consequently, the river was **channelized following the devastating floods of 1938**.

For most the twentieth century, the Bowtie was part of a larger site that functioned as the **railyard for the Southern Pacific Railroad**. Today the Bowtie is a post-industrial lot owned by the State of California. It has the fortune of being situated **adjacent to the soft-bottomed portion of the LA River channel** -- a stretch that is lively and active with wildlife and trees, as well as visitors who walk and bike along the paved path on the other side.

Today there is a unique opportunity to transform the Bowtie into a **community and natural recreation area**, and to join it with the neighboring G2 parcel and Rio de Los Angeles State Park (the three parcels combining to form a "100-Acre Partnership"), and as part of a larger LA River revitalization plan to bring the future present for the greater region.



The 18-acre Bowtie Parcel (aka the G1 parcel) in dark green

# SITE HISTORY TIMELINE



Pre-1700s: The Tongva occupy the region for centuries

## Indigenous to Early Los Angeles:

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

**1769-1770:** Portola Expedition explores present-day California, including the Los Angeles River. El Pueblo de Los Angeles is established in 1781.

**1847:** The Mexican-American War ends. California is ceded to the U.S.

**1870s:** Residential development spreads out from downtown Los Angeles. Southern Pacific Railroad line is completed in 1876.



1769-1770: Portola Expedition explores present-day California



1920s: Taylor Yard becomes a major rail yard facility



1938: Major flooding after a four-day storm

## Taylor Yards and Channelization:

**1877:** Taylor family settles on the east bank of LA River and begins selling farming surplus. The company and land become known as “Taylor Yard.”

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

**1920s:** Taylor Yard becomes a major rail yard facility.

**1938:** LA River experiences major flooding after a four-day storm. In response, the river is channelized in concrete, creating a fixed water course.

**1985:** Southern Pacific closes its facilities and begins parceling the land for future sale.



1938-1960: Channelization of the LA River



2003: City of Los Angeles acquires the Bowtie Parcel

## Movement for Community Reclamation and Habitat Restoration:

**2000:** A coalition of 36 community organizations unite and fight to reclaim the river land for community recreation and habitat restoration.

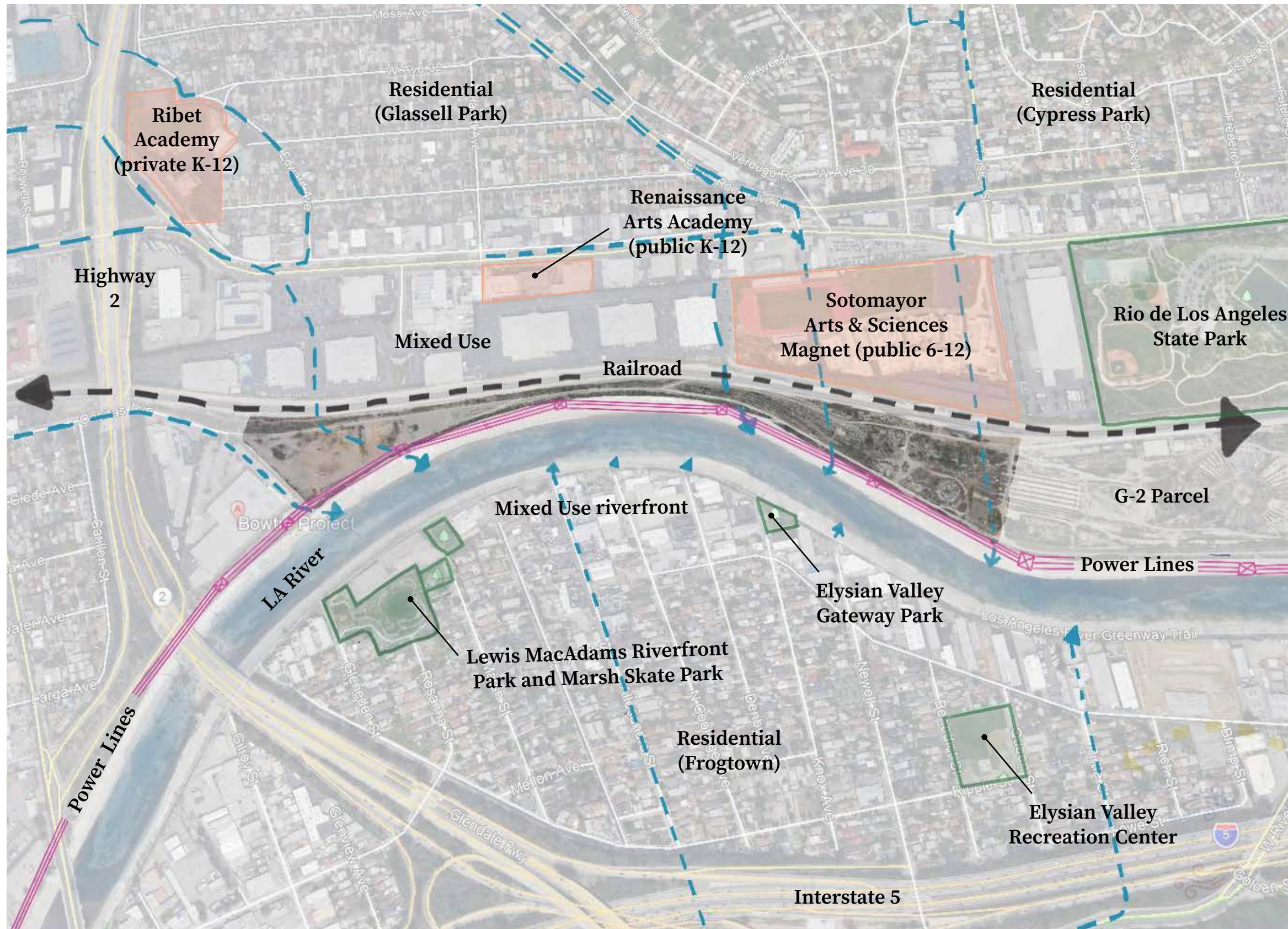
**2001:** The State of California acquires Parcel D, and develops the site into Rio de Los Angeles State Park, which opens in 2007. The State of California acquires the Bowtie Parcel in 2003 and the City of Los Angeles acquires the G-2 parcel in 2017.

**2019:** The City of Los Angeles, California State Parks, and The Mountains Recreation and Conservation Authority (MRCA) plan to form the “100-Acre Partnership at Taylor Yard” that will encompass Rio de Los Angeles State Park (40 acres), the Bowtie (G1; 18 acres), and the G2 Parcel (42 acres).



2007: Rio de Los Angeles State Park opens

# SITE INVENTORY



Native plants



Railyard remnants



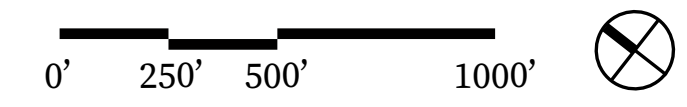
Wildlife in the river



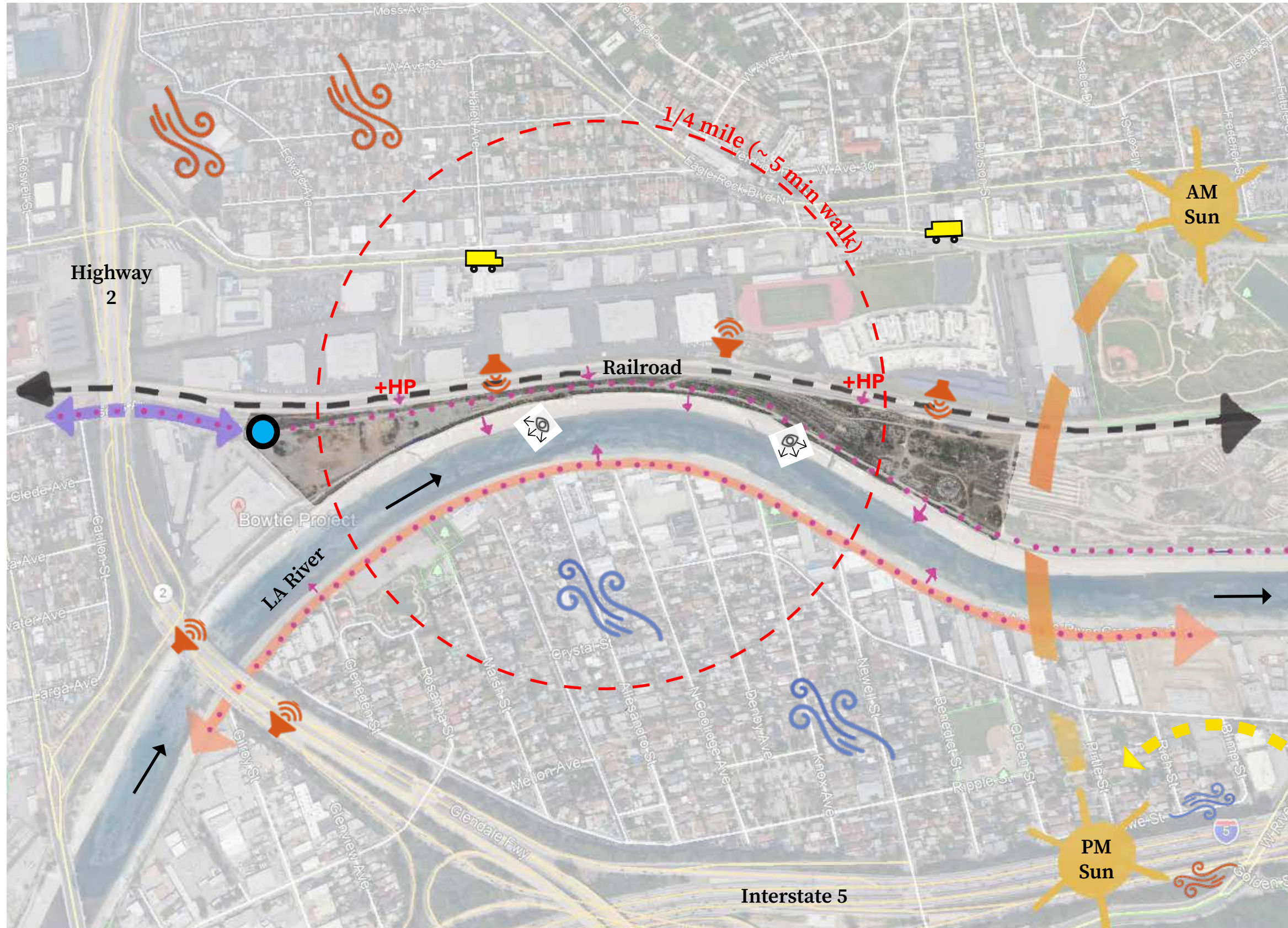
Clockshop art installations















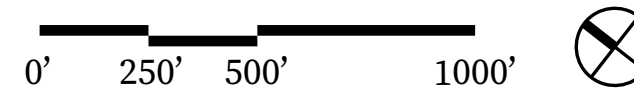
Palms and invasive grasses



# SITE ANALYSIS



-  Access Point
-  Vehicular circulation
-  Pedestrian circulation
-  Bike circulation
-  City bus route along San Fernando Road
-  High point (railroad tracks)
-  Slope direction (from railroad tracks and river channel)
-  LA River flow direction
-  Good view (upriver and south toward Elysian Park)
-  Noise (freeway and train)
-  Prevailing winds
-  Santa Ana Winds



# SITE CONSTRAINTS



**C1 Train Tracks**

- Noise from frequent trains
- Concerns for pedestrian safety
- Metal contamination from track abrasion
- Cuts off access to eastern adjacencies



**C2 Overhead Power Lines**

- Humming and zapping noise
- Ominous appearance
- Fire risk
- Blight on otherwise 360 open views



**C3 Freeway**

- Near constant auto noise from the nearby 2 freeway
- Visually unpleasant, especially during rush hour



**C4 Hemmed In**

- Limited access and parking due to highly-built surroundings
- Only access point is at the northern end (vehicular and pedestrian)



**C5 Full Sun**

- Year-round full sun due to the relatively flat nature of the site, and the lack of shade trees and tall buildings



**C6 Liquifaction Zone; Contaminated & Compacted Soil**

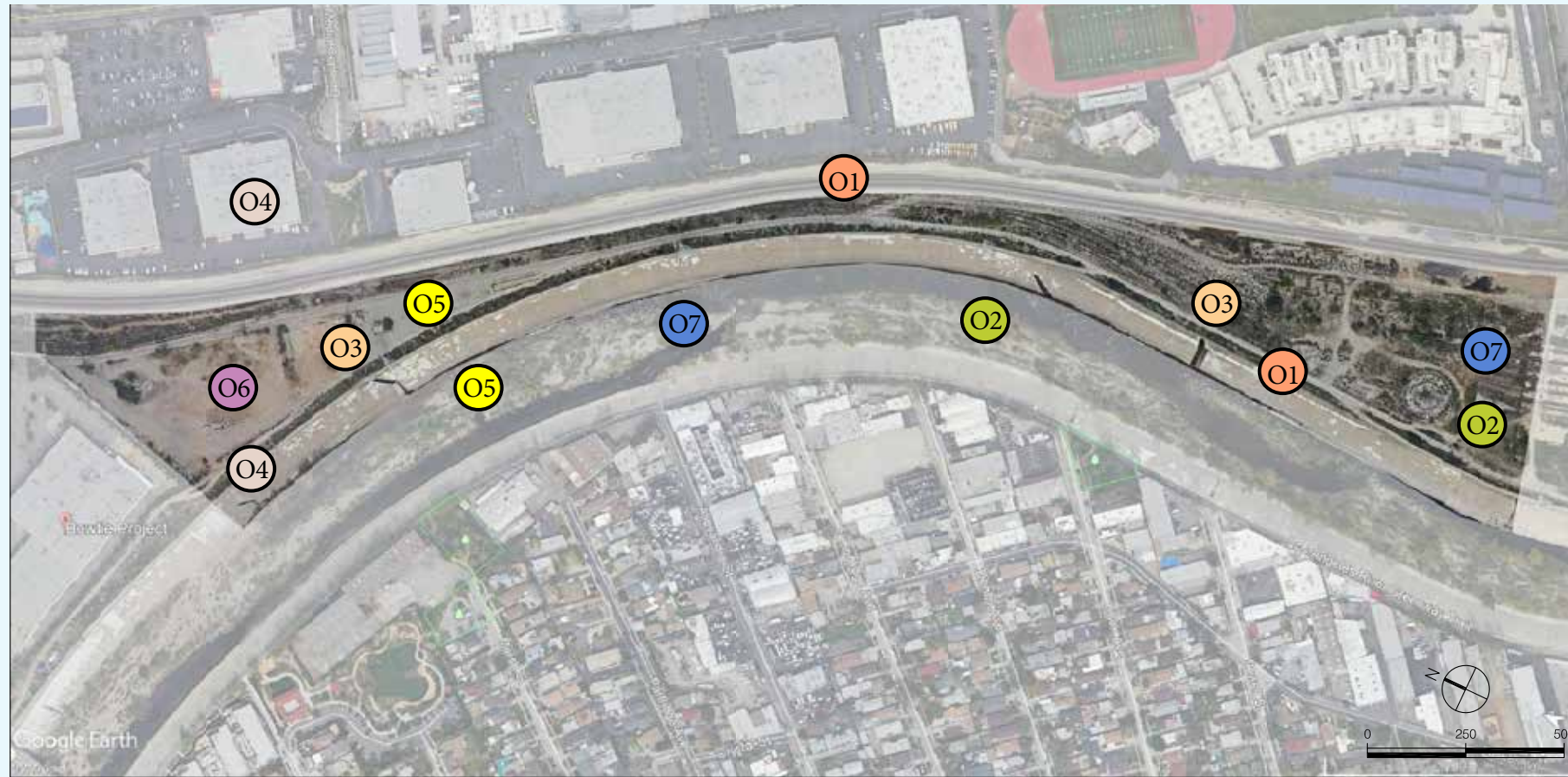
- Liquifaction limits stormwater management options
- Brownfield site after decades as a railyard; covered largely by concrete and hardy natives, invasives, and palms



**C7 Stormwater Tunnels and Outfalls**

- Stormwater tunnels run beneath the site, outfalling into channel
- Heavy stormwater after rains make the speed and volume of water unpredictable

# SITE OPPORTUNITIES



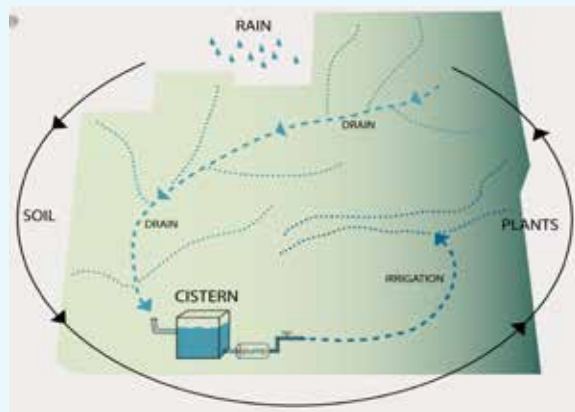
## O1 Bury and Berm

- Bury train tracks and power lines, thereby adding to usable space, increasing safety, reducing noise, and improving connections with adjacencies
- Create topography and new features over the buried lines



## O2 Improve Circulation and Connections

- Build bridges or platforms across the river
- Create pathways and greenways to the G-2 parcel and eastward toward San Fernando Road



## O3 Stormwater Management

- Capture stormwater onsite to use for irrigation
- Recharge San Fernando Basin aquifer by replacing pavement with plantings and permeable materials where possible



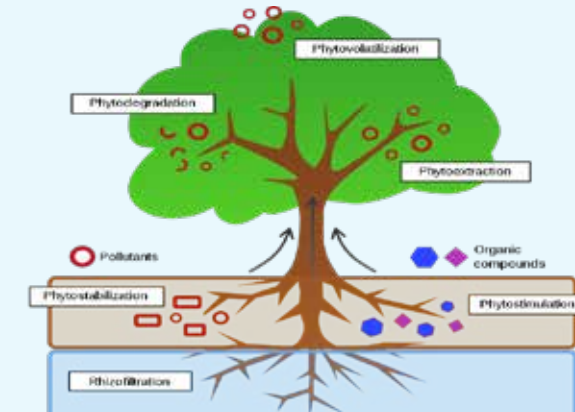
## O4 Renewable Energy

- Solar: utilize full sun exposure by installing solar panels over new buildings and parking lots
- Hydro: harness energy from stormwater flow



## O5 Restore Wildlife and Habitat

- Plant native trees and shrubs to attract wildlife, improve soil, buffer noise, and provide shade
- Re-establish riparian strand and marsh habitat, and provide a boost to the Pacific Flyway



## O6 Phytoremediation

- Plant native trees and shrubs to decompact the soil and remove toxins and pollutants



## O7 Develop Verticality

- Increase river access by terracing
- Create spaces in the air with treehouses and bridges, which will create shade below



# CASE STUDY 1: CRESCENT PARK, NEW ORLEANS (MISSISSIPPI RIVER)



## Overview

- Opened in 2018. 20-acre, 1.4-mile long park that wraps around the outside curve of the well-known ‘crescent’ bend of the Mississippi River. Formerly the site of surplus wharves and derelict railroad sidings (low-speed track section).
- Landscape designed by Hargreaves Associates. Park was the first phase of a 6-mile riverfront master plan to redevelop the crescent from its former focus on oil & gas and shipping to one of civic engagement and community.
- Characterized by pedestrian and bicycle circulation, bridges over railroad tracks, at-grade flood gate opening, native plants, dog park, and event spaces.

## Noteworthy

- Lovely, arc-ing paths that follow the lines of the old rail tracks. Successfully preserved industrial vibe, without being heavy handed. Great open river views.

## Could Be Improved

- Limited access. Only 3 entrances (2 bridges and 1 floodgate that can be opened and crossed), which seems too few considering the park is 1.4 miles long. One of the three access points (the “rusty rainbow bridge”) is stairs only. More entrances and accessibility might spur development on the other side of the tracks, which appears a mix of residential and commercial/warehouse.



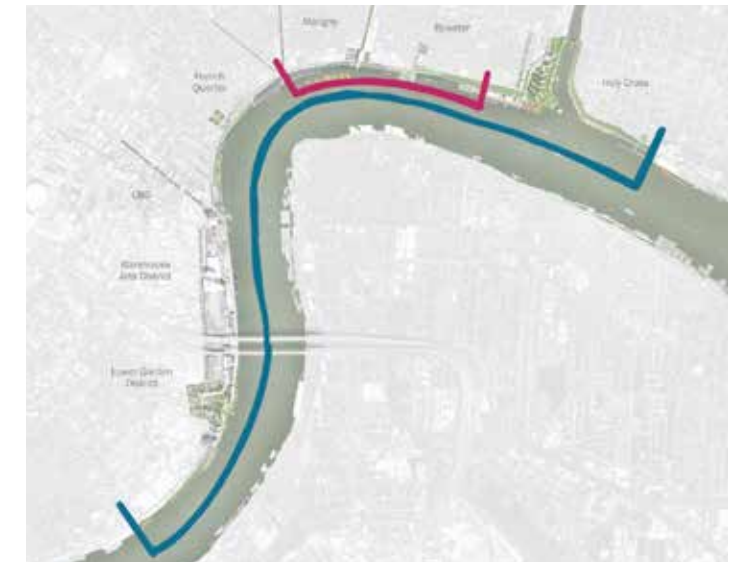
‘Rusty rainbow’ bridge over railroad tracks



Wharf repurposed as rentable, open-air event space



Bridge with stairs and elevator



Crescent Park (pink; 1.4 miles) and larger contemplated riverfront redevelopment (blue; 6 miles)

# CASE STUDY 2: ALBION RIVERSIDE PARK, LOS ANGELES (LA RIVER)



## Overview

- Opened in 2019. 10.6 acres. Formerly the Ross Swiss Dairy distribution center.
- Located in Lincoln Heights neighborhood. Adjacent to the LA river, railroad tracks, power lines, the Spring Street Bridge, and the Downey Recreation Center.
- Primarily active recreation, with an outdoor classroom and picnic areas.
- Contaminated soil removed and remediated
- Stormwater management includes bioswales, bio-retention basins, and permeable paving in parking areas. Stormwater runoff from approximately 300 acres diverted from stormdrains and used onsite for irrigation or infiltrated into the groundwater. 100% of on-site runoff will be captured onsite.

## Noteworthy

- Fullscale stormwater management plan is good example for future LA river parks
- Multiple access points for the community, including connection under the Spring St Bridge to the rec center's swimming pool
- Playground and sports facilities meet need for this densely populated neighborhood

## Could Be Improved

- Additional shade elements (sails, pergolas, etc) or water feature to beat the heat
- Since the designers (understandably) chose not to focus on the river and railway views, query whether park should be more street facing, with parking situated along river/railroad or more internal in the park



Plantings obscuring view of river and train tracks



Aerial view, looking toward downtown



Curb cuts and bioswale

# CASE STUDY 3: SUGAR BEACH, TORONTO (LAKE ONTARIO)



## Overview

- Opened in 2010. 2 acres. Designed by Claude Cormier + Associes Inc (CC+A). Formerly a surface parking lot in a faded industrial area. Part of larger lakefront development.
- Located on Lake Ontario opposite Redpath Sugar Refinery. 3 distinct parts: (1) urban beach (meant for relaxing and leisure, no access to water); (2) a plaza with mounds; and (3) diagonal tree-lined promenade with maple-leaf shaped water features.
- Contaminated soil remediated

## Noteworthy

- Instagrammable, playful design, set against highly urban backdrop of industrial sugar cranes and skyscrapers. Memorable destination with thriving social program that is a key jumpstart of a carefully-planned re-emerging neighborhood of pedestrian-focused streets and new condos and businesses.

## Could Be Improved

- Design doesn't appear to have a strong cultural connection to the area or nod to the history of the neighborhood.
- While land access is good, would be nice to have access to the water (ferry, pedal boats, neighborhood boat taxis, etc).

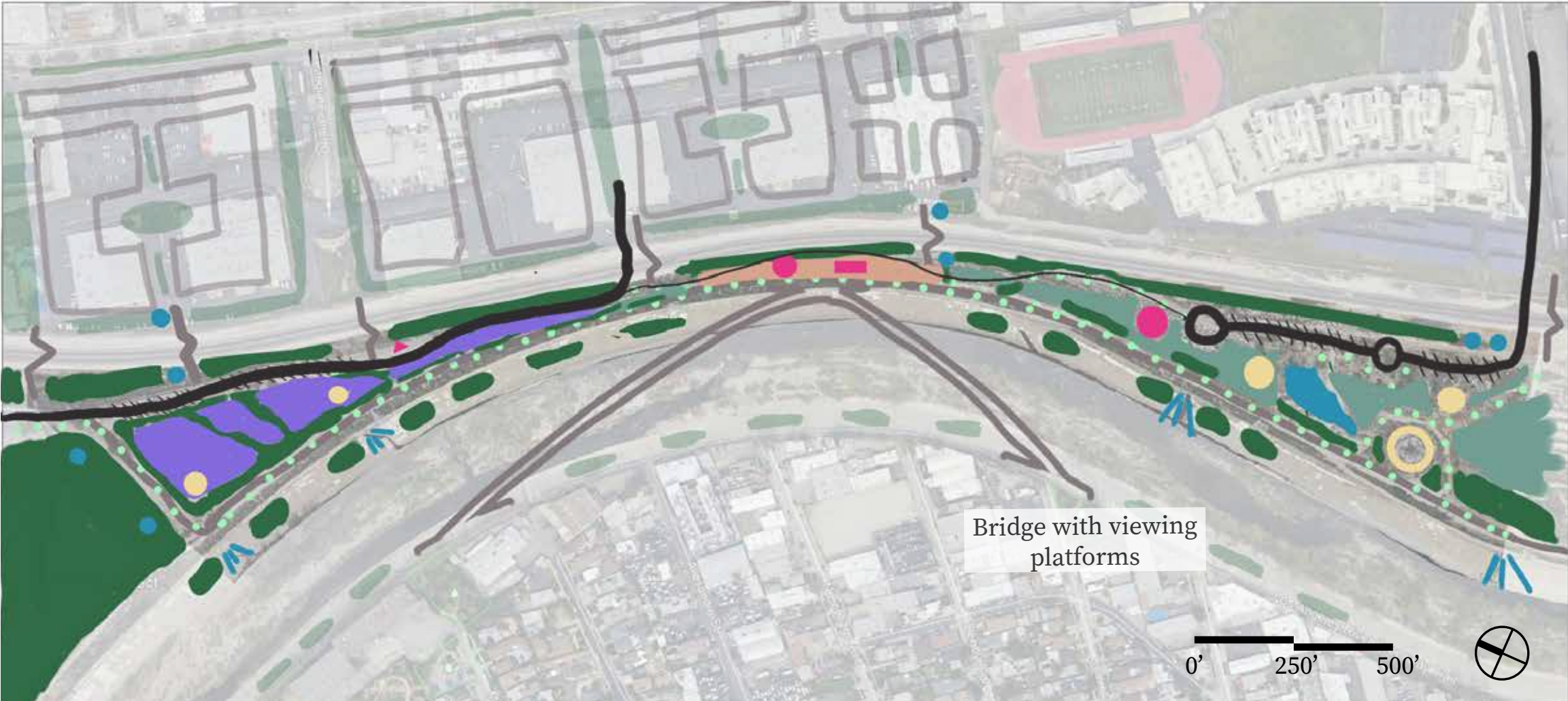


Double-sided movie screen on a barge for summertime movie series



Strong shapes define different park areas

# DESIGN ALTERNATIVE 1: MUSCLE BEACH EASTSIDE



## OVERVIEW

**A lively and inclusive park with sports, beach, food trucks, and music venues**

**Access:**

- Sling-shaped bridge connects to two parks across the river
- Pedestrian bridges over train tracks

**Stormwater Management:** Above-ground cisterns; water then to be used for irrigation

**Renewable Energy:**

- Hydroelectric generator in each stormdrain
- Solar panels on all new buildings

**Parking:** Two angled-space parking lots that will accommodate food truck and farmers' market party nights. Both parking lots are connected to roads that go under the train tracks.

**Habitat:**

- Carbon-sequestration forest and tree-lined spaces next to new housing.
- Shade trees and native gardens and meadows in the park.

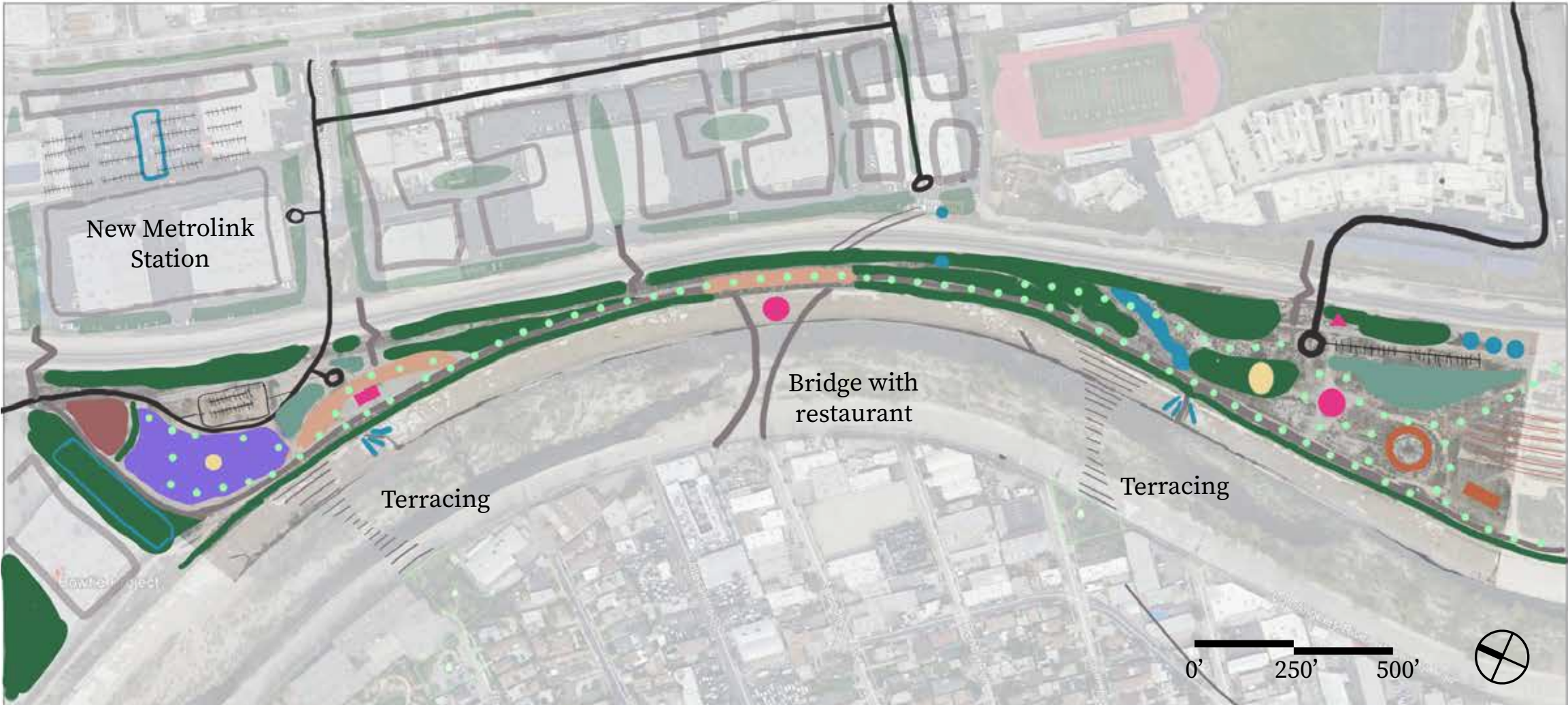
**Recreation:** Large sports area to include beach volleyball, swimming pool, tennis courts, exercise equipment, playgrounds, and a gym for basketball and volleyball

**Cultural:** Multiple music and performance spaces

## LEGEND

	Bridge		Visitors' Center		Trees
	Pedestrian crossing over train tracks		Restaurants		Shrubs and meadows
	Vehicular circulation		Maintenance structure		Primary pedestrian circulation
	Angled parking		Constructed wetland		Sports/beach/playground
	Bike path		Above-ground cistern		Plaza
	Commercial structure		Hydroelectric generator in storm drain		Gym/ Pavillion/events structure
	Low-income, senior, refugee housing				

# DESIGN ALTERNATIVE 2: NEXT STOP: THE BOWTIE



## OVERVIEW

**A new Metrolink station makes the Bowtie a hub for local activity**

**Access:**

- New Metrolink station makes commuting easier and brings more visitors to the area
- Bowtie-shaped bridge with restaurant and terracing connect across the river

**Stormwater management:** Above-ground cisterns and underground retention basins -- water then to be used for irrigation

**Renewable energy:**

- Hydroelectric generator in two stormdrains
- Solar panels atop all new buildings

**Parking:** Two parking lots connected to roads that go under the train tracks

**Habitat:**

- Carbon-sequestration forest and tree-lined spaces next to new housing
- Shade trees and native gardens and meadows in the park

**Recreation:**

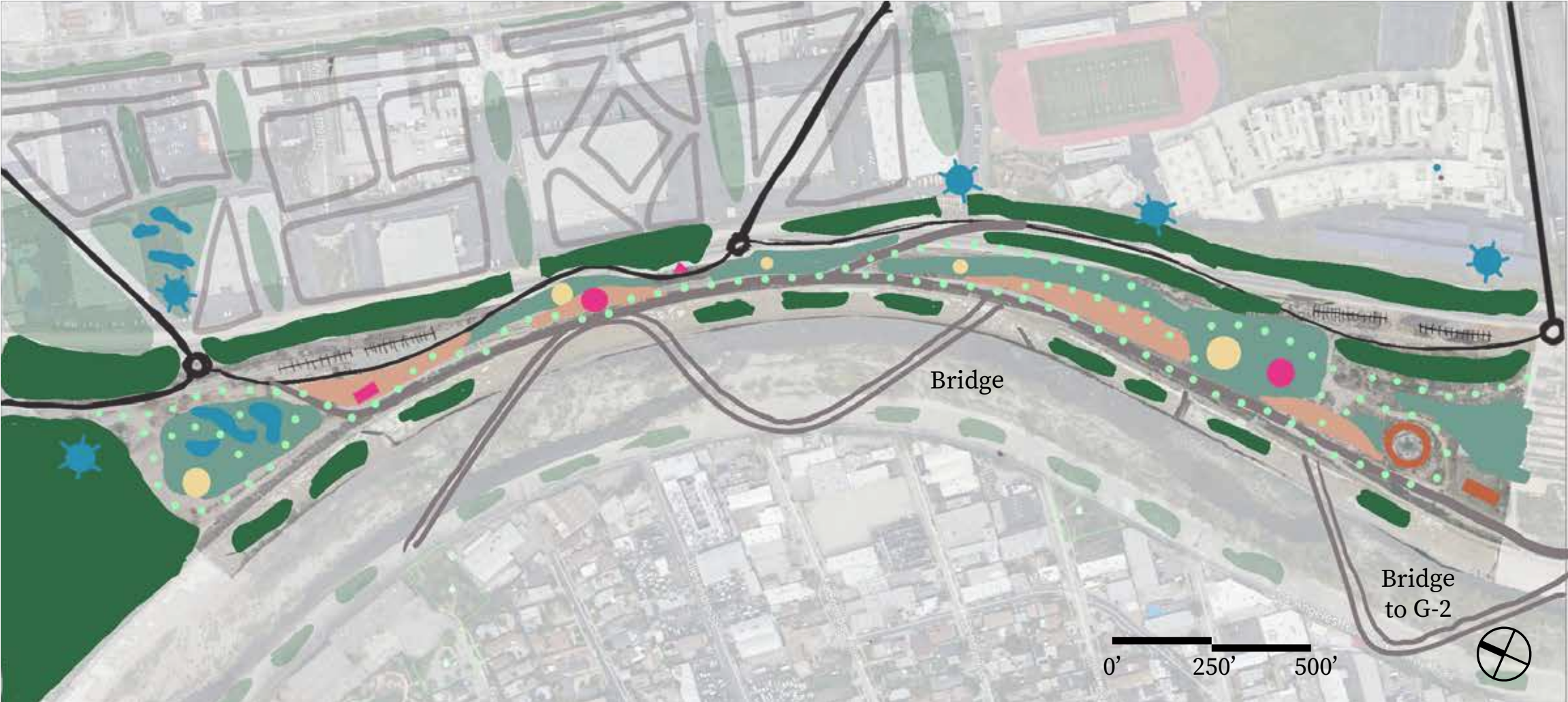
- Dog park
- Active recreation area with swimming pool and tennis courts

**Cultural:** Pavillion and event spaces. Train museum and train ruins.

## LEGEND

	Bridge		Visitors' Center		Trees
	Pedestrian crossing over train tracks		Restaurants		Shrubs and meadows
	Terracing		Maintenance structure		Primary pedestrian circulation
	Vehicular circulation		Constructed wetland		Sports and playground
	Parking lot (covered by solar panels)		Above-ground cistern		Plaza
	Bike path		Hydroelectric generator		Pavillion/events structure
	Commercial structure		Underground detention basin		Dog park
	Low-income, senior, refugee housing				Train museum and structures

# DESIGN ALTERNATIVE 3: TILDES AND TOWERS



## OVERVIEW

**By burying train tracks and power lines, the park is more connected to the community. A nature-oriented space for passive recreation.**

**Access:**

- Tilde-shaped bridges connecting across river and to the G-2
- Buried train tracks means easy access from Glassell Park and Cypress Park
- Buried train tracks for safety and unobstructed 360 degree views

**Stormwater management:** Water towers on the Glassell Park-side of the intersection of the train tracks and stormdrains

**Renewable energy:** Solar panels over both parking lots and atop all new buildings

**Parking:** Two parking lots at opposite ends of the park

**Habitat:**

- Carbon-sequestration forest, constructed wetland, and tree-lined spaces next to new housing
- Shade trees, native gardens and meadows, and large wetland and native gardens and meadows

**Recreation:** Passive recreation with paths for exercise or walking meditation

**Cultural:** Multiple pavilions and event spaces. Train museum and train ruins.

## LEGEND

	Bridge		Visitors' Center		Trees
	Vehicular circulation		Restaurants		Shrubs and meadows
	Parking lot (covered by solar panels)		Maintenance structure		Primary pedestrian circulation
	Bike path		Constructed wetland		Plaza
	Commercial structure		Water tower		Pavillion/events structure
	Low-income, senior, refugee housing				Train museum and structures

# MASTER PLAN CONCEPT

The goal of the master plan, entitled **“Next Stop: The Bowtie”**, is to create a vibrant riverfront space that **supports the well-being of all generations and abilities** and draw visitors, both local and regional, to year-round outdoor activities, diverse plant and animal life, and the future-forward repurposing of a post-industrial site. With these goals in mind, the plan will:

## Prioritize Access and Safety

- **Bury railroad tracks and power lines**
- **Add a new train stop** at the center of the Bowtie Parcel to serve existing community, new housing, existing schools, and the anticipated 100-acre greater park
- Visitors’ Center, restaurants, and recreational facilities ensure there is **staff throughout the day**

## Create an Eastside Destination

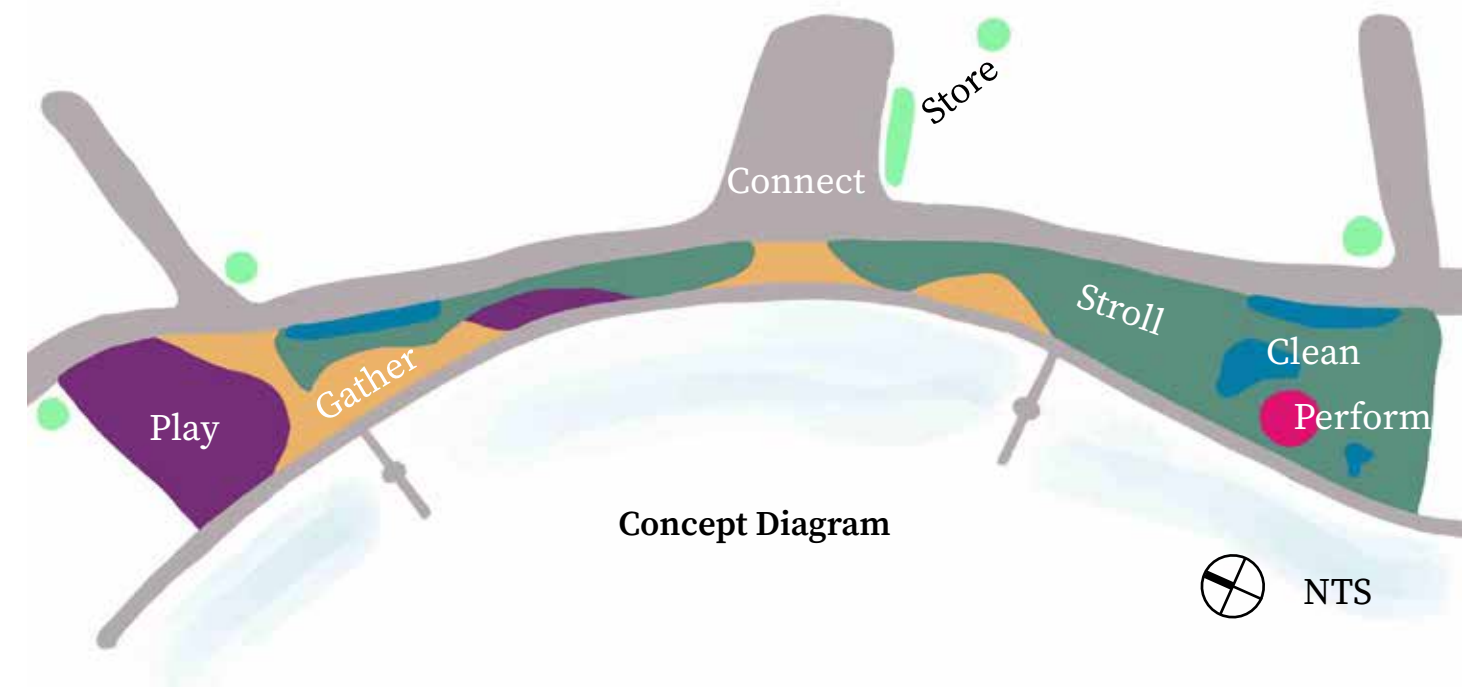
- **Riverfront “beach”** with views of the river and easy access to the LA River

## Create an Intergenerational, Community Hub

- Active recreation: add sports facilities not already available at Rio de los Angeles State Park, such as **tennis courts, pools, and bike rental**, which can be used by nearby schools for P.E. and sports teams
- Passive recreation: **picnic areas, gentle walking paths, and shady pavilions**
- **Robust social programming**, including farmers markets, food truck nights, free performances and movies, free dance and fitness lessons on the plaza, and other community events

## Redeem Soil, Restore Native Plants, Provide Shade, Store Water, and Generate Energy

- **Plant natives** and other plant species to **detoxify soil on the floodplain**. Create **shady greenstreets**.
- Build **watertowers and underground cisterns** to capture stormwater. Watertowers double as **beacons** for the park and river access. Solar-powered pumps bring stormwater up the towers during the day, while hydro energy is generated in the evening when water is released for drip irrigation. Build **lined bioswales and wetlands** to clean stormwater before it reaches the outfalls.
- **Install green roofs and solar panels** on rooftops and over parking lots



Meadows and train tracks



Elevated spaces



Riverfront “beach”



Open, shady pavilions



Shaded walkways (elevated over wetlands)

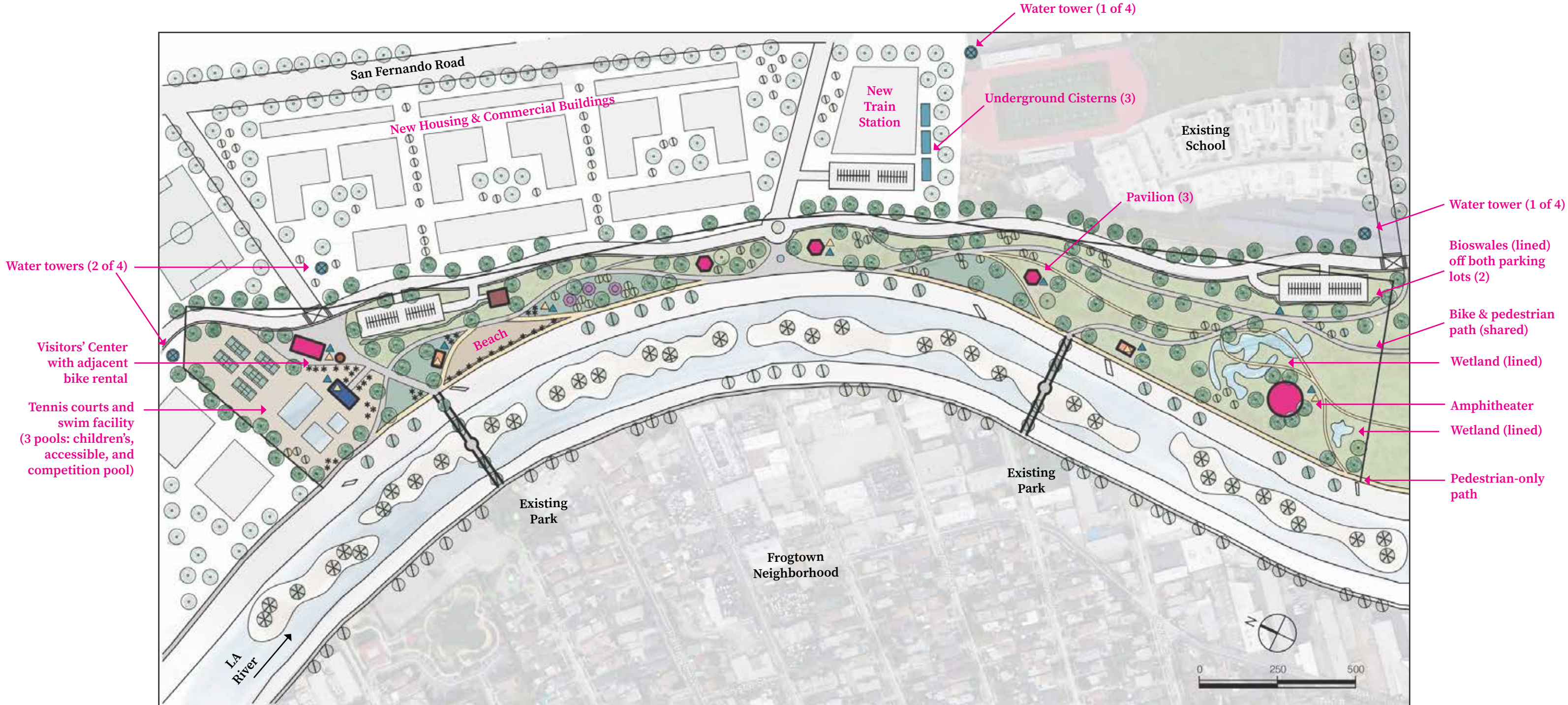


















Green roofs, and solar panels on rooftops and over parking lots



Water towers

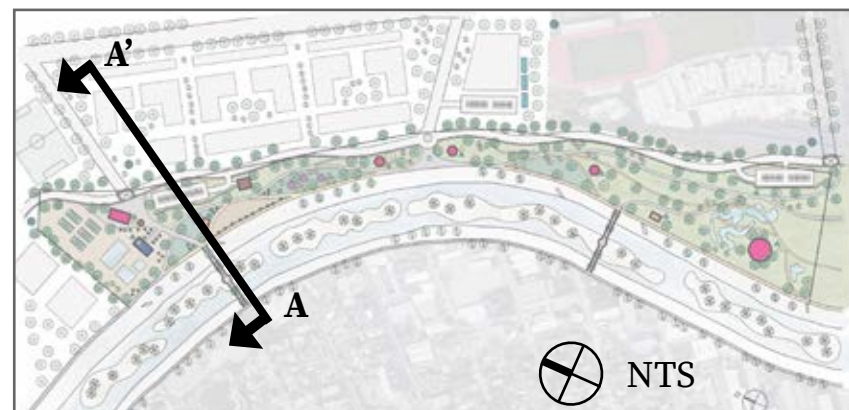
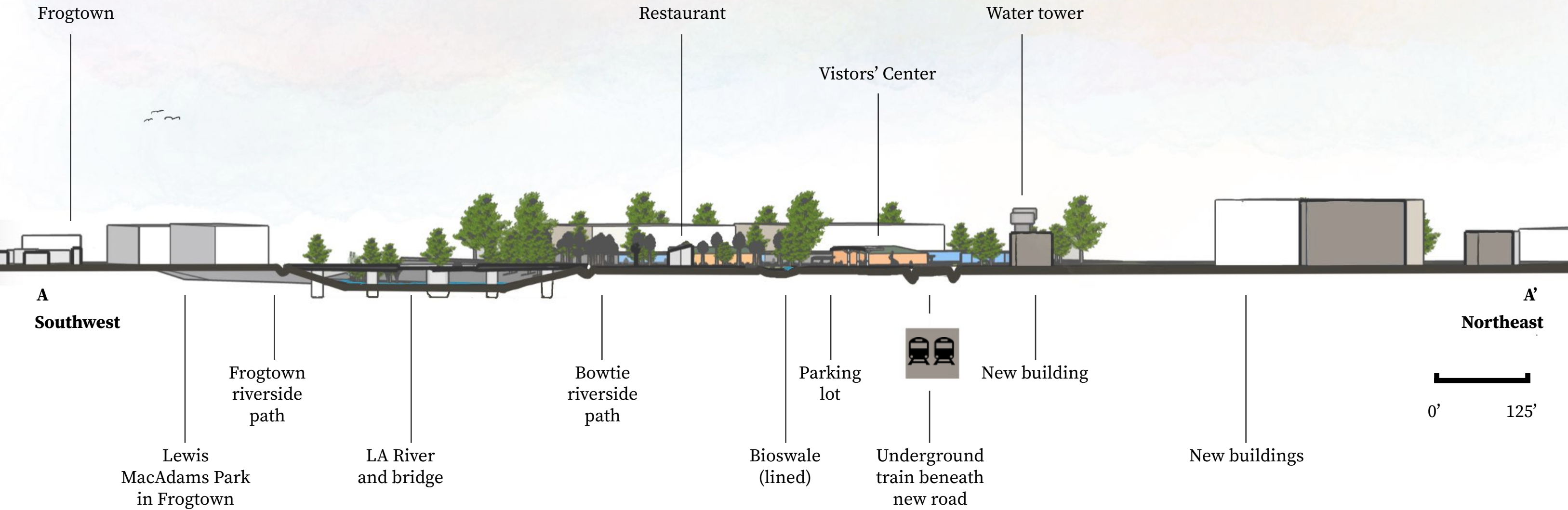
# MASTER PLAN: NEXT STOP: THE BOWTIE



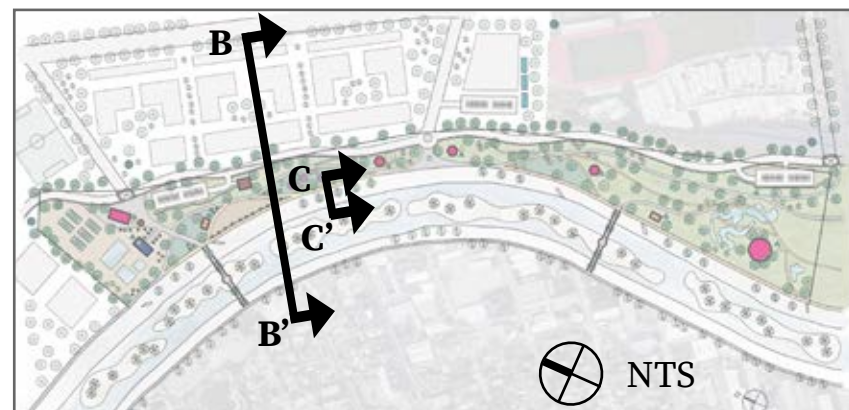
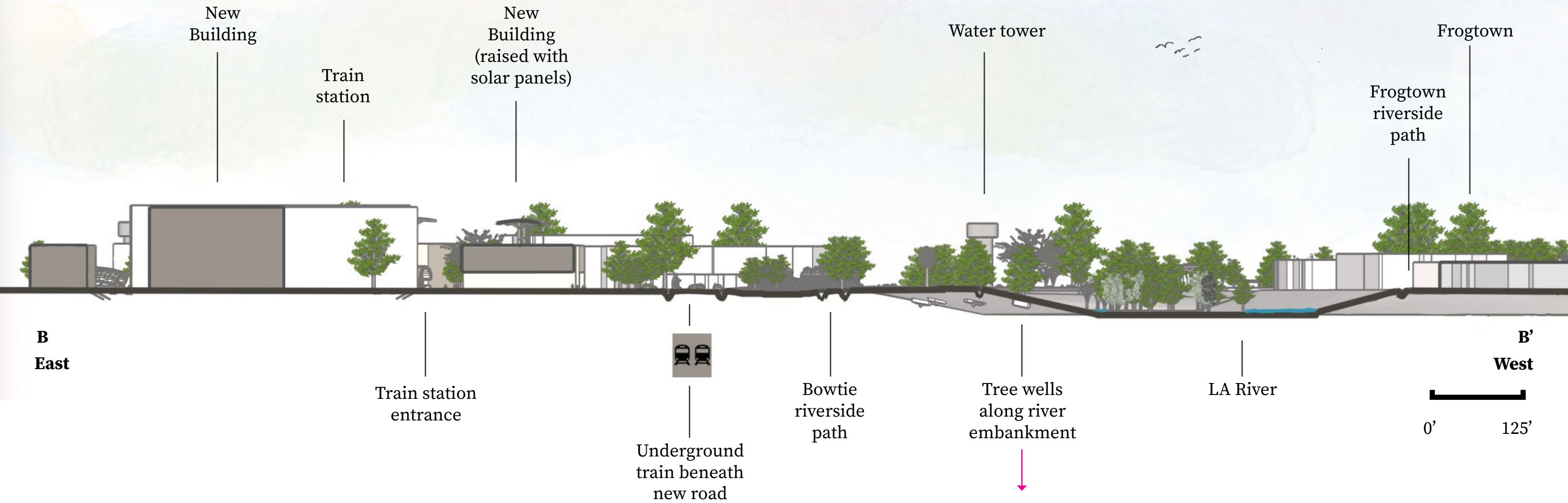
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|  Visitors' Center                             |  Pavilions (3)             |  Water Towers (4)              |  Restrooms (6)                     |
|  Restaurants (2)                              |  Playground Structures (3) |  Underground Cisterns (3)      |  Drinking Fountains (8)            |
|  Maintenance Building                         |  Bike rental               |  Bioswales (2) or Wetlands (2) |  Pedestrian-only path              |
|  Tennis equipment rental and swim locker room |  Amphitheater              |  Fountain                      |  Bike and pedestrian path (shared) |



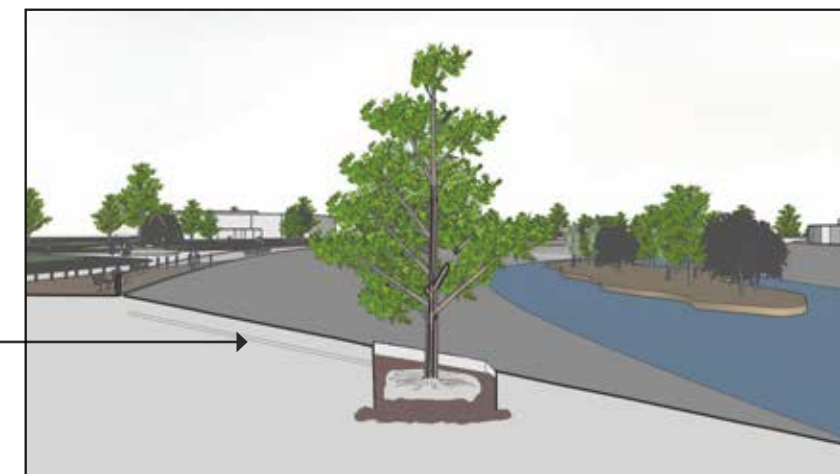
# SECTION-ELEVATION 1: BRIDGE TO FROGTOWN



# SECTION-ELEVATIONS 2 & 3: VIEW TO THE SOUTH AND TREE WELL



Tree well irrigation line. No overflow pipe needed as tree well is open at the bottom.



**C** Tree well. Minimum 6' x 8' rectangle. **C'**  
**East** Open at the bottom. **WEST**

# PERSPECTIVE 1: BIRD'S EYE FROM THE NORTHERN END



A bird's eye view from the northern end, which focuses on **active recreation and gathering areas: tennis courts, swim facilities, bike rental, beach, and playground.**

In the middle ground (from left), **water tower, parking lot with solar-panel shading, and tree-lined bridge and river banks.**

# PERSPECTIVE 2: BEACH AND PEDESTRIAN-ONLY WALKWAYS



A human-made **beach is lined with *Washingtonia filifera* palm trees** and surrounded by **pedestrian-only walkways** for safety and security.

In the background, the maintenance building (orange building with green roof) and raised multi-use building with rooftop solar panels.

# PERSPECTIVE 3: ON THE BRIDGE



The **circular part of the bridge**.

The bridge features **large trees and multiple benches**, and its **width accommodates pedestrians and bicyclists comfortably**.

In the background, a restaurant and the maintenance building (orange buildings on the left and right, respectively).

# PERSPECTIVE 4: ROTARY ENTRANCE AND TRAIN STATION



The **center of the bowtie** ( the “pinch point”) now features a **pavilion; rotary, drop-off entrance; and train station.**

# PERSPECTIVE 5: AMPHITHEATER



The Taylor Yard **railroad turntable-turned-amphitheater**.

Surrounded by trees and shrubs, and adjacent to the wetlands and picnic area, the amphitheater is a **performance, gathering, and educational space** at the quieter end of the park.

# PERSPECTIVE 6: ABOVE SAN FERNANDO ROAD

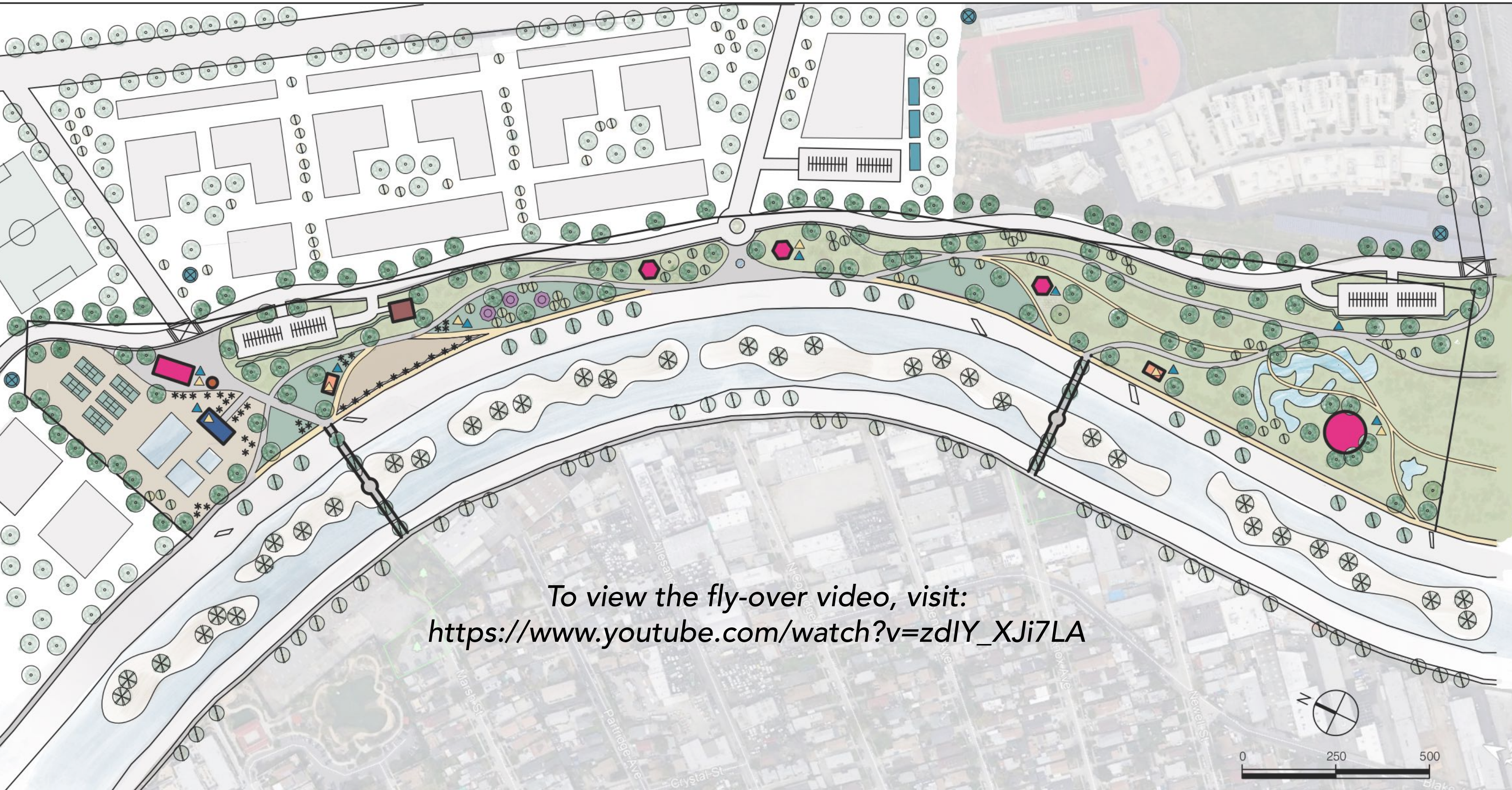


A bird's eye view above San Fernando Road, looking towards the river.

By burying the railroad and the high-tension power lines, the **park and river are open to Glassell Park, Cypress Park, and the nearby schools and businesses**, and there is an **easy exchange with Frogtown**.



# FLY-OVER VIDEO



To view the fly-over video, visit:  
[https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=zdlY\\_XJi7LA](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=zdlY_XJi7LA)

THANK YOU!

CHAN NGUYEN