

TONGVA PARK

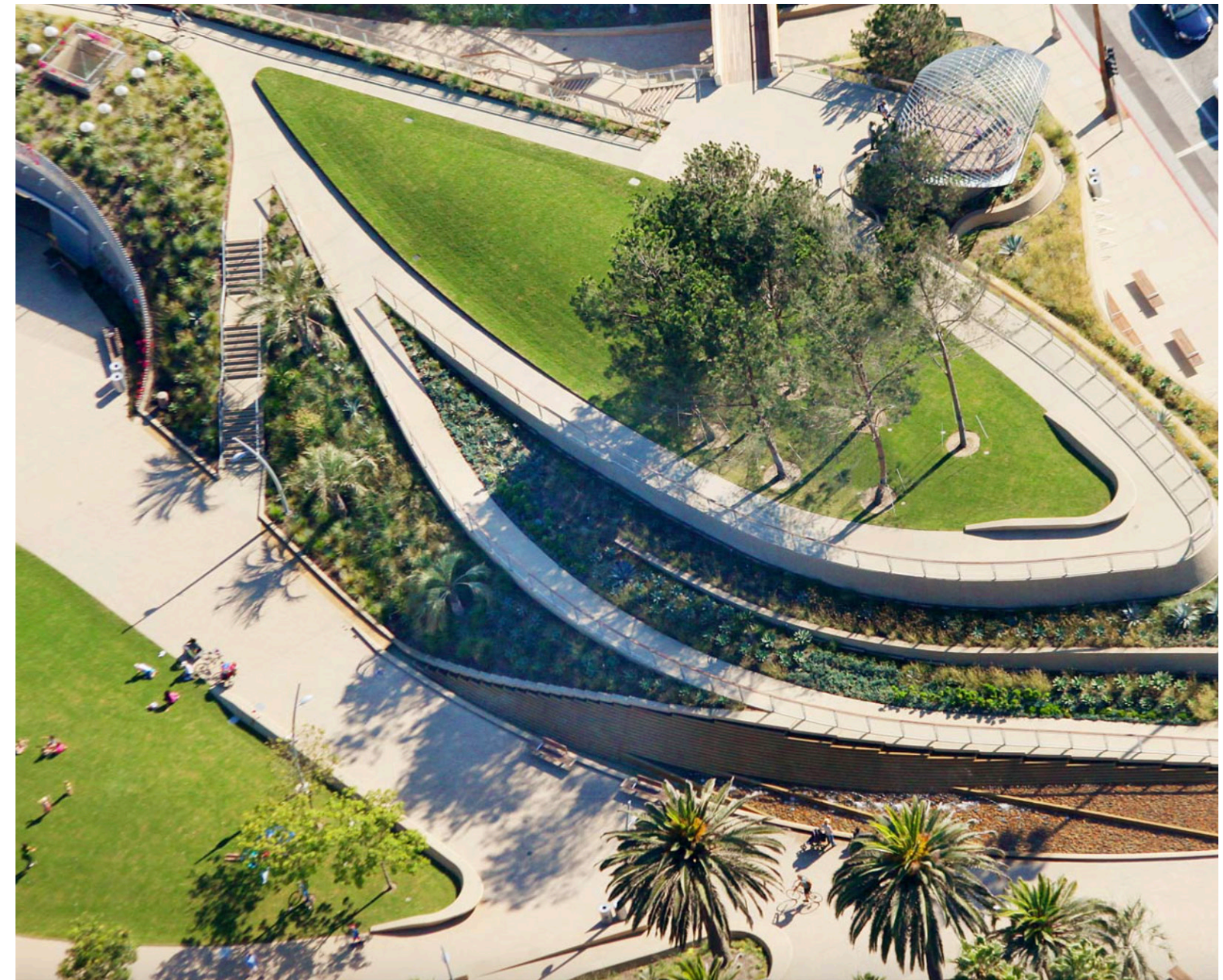
santa monica, california

LEELOO GILET
DESIGN GRAPHICS 3
WINTER 2023



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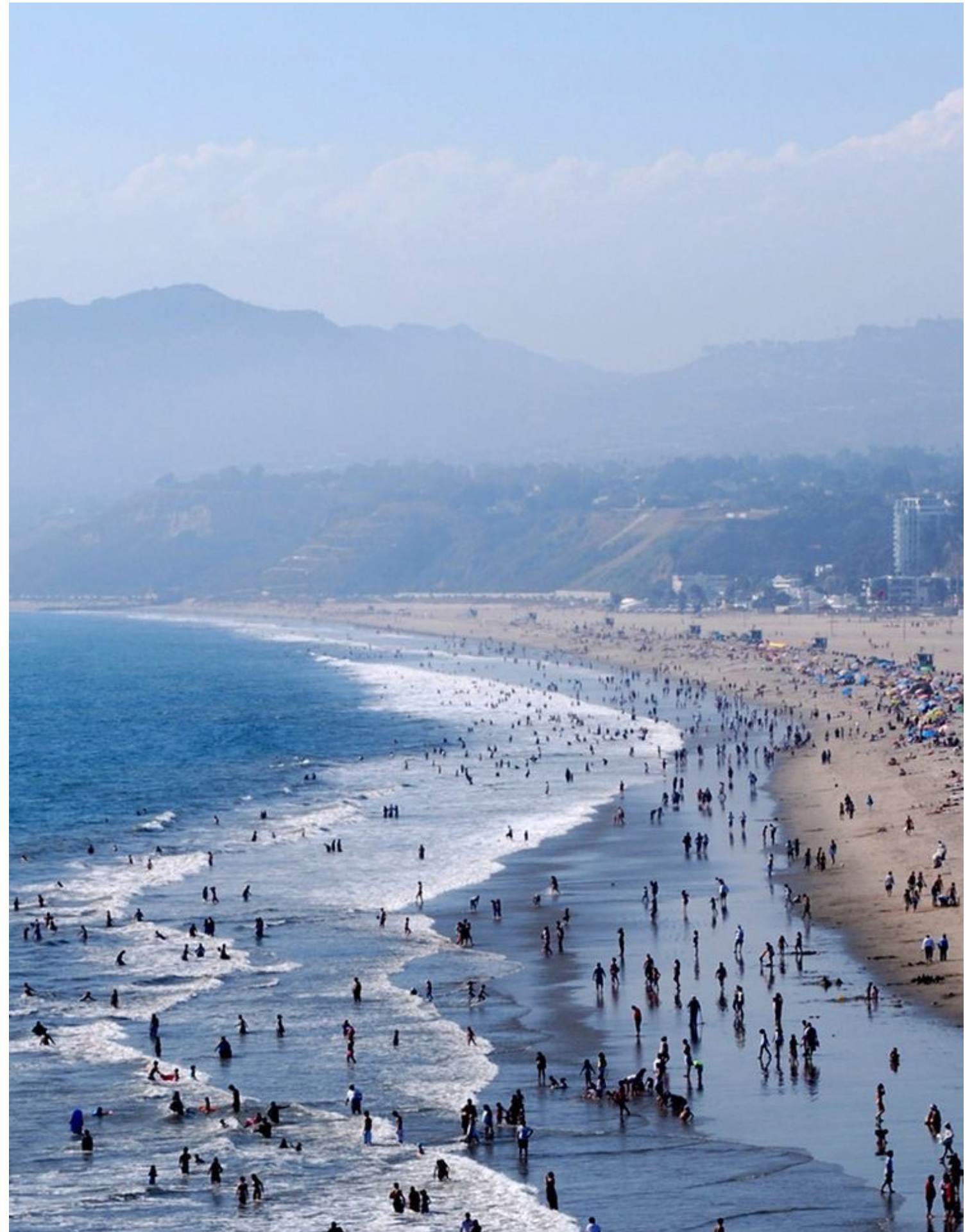


INTRODUCTION

Tongva Park was designed by James Corner Field Operations to reflect the natural landscape of the region and to highlight the cultural history of the Tongva people, the indigenous inhabitants of the Santa Monica Bay area.

Visitors can enjoy stunning views of the ocean and the Santa Monica Mountains, walk along the meandering paths, relax in one of the many seating areas, or climb the unique play structures.

With its stunning design, ample green space, and thoughtful attention to sustainability, Tongva Park is a must-visit destination for nature lovers and park enthusiasts alike.



TONGVA HERITAGE

The Tongva people, also known as the Gabrielino-Tongva, are original inhabitants of the Los Angeles Basin and the Channel Islands of California, with a history that dates back over 7,000 years. Their ancestral territory spanned over 4,000 square miles, from the San Gabriel Mountains to the Pacific Ocean.

The Tongva lived in small, self-sufficient communities. They were skilled hunters, gatherers, and fishermen who lived off the land and the sea, utilizing a variety of tools, such as bows and arrows, nets, and traps. They also had a complex system of trade and exchange, which allowed them to obtain resources that were not available in their immediate area. The Tongva people were known for their skilled craftsmanship, particularly in the production of baskets, which were made from a variety of materials, such as reeds, grasses, and roots. These baskets were not only functional but also had great cultural significance. They were used for storage, transportation, and ceremonial purposes, and were often decorated with intricate designs and patterns. Basketry is a sacred art form that has been passed down through generations, and it is a tangible representation of the Tongva's connection to the natural world.

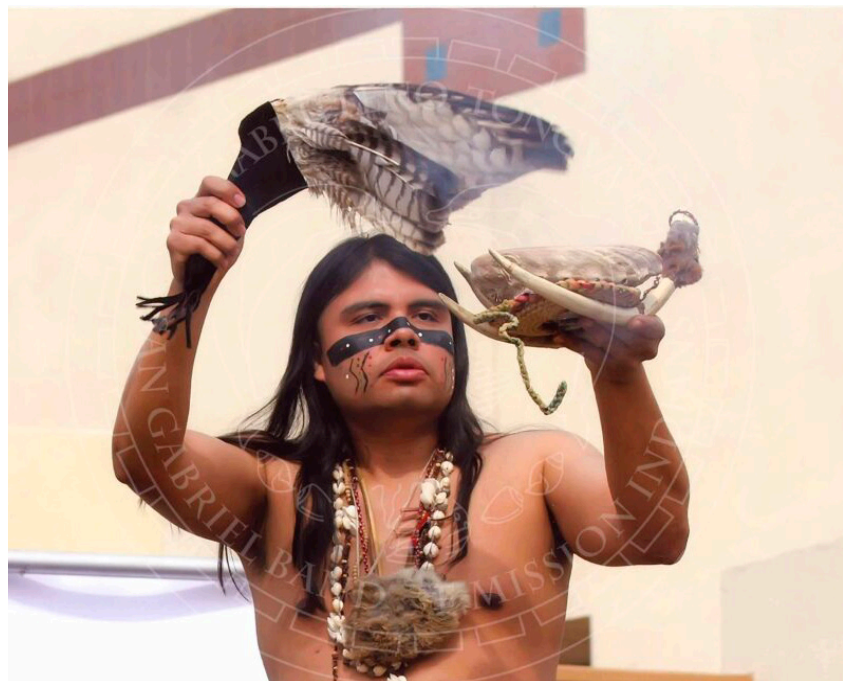
Unfortunately, the arrival of European colonizers in the late 18th century brought significant changes to the Tongva way of life. They were forced off their ancestral lands, and their population was decimated by disease and violence. The Tongva were pressured to adapt to new ways of life and, in many cases, lost touch with their cultural heritage.



E'KWA'SHEM: "WE ARE STILL HERE"

Today, the Tongva people are still present in Southern California, although their numbers are small. They are continually working to preserve and revitalize their traditions, language, and way of life. Despite the challenges of colonization, the Tongva people continue to protect their customs and contribute to the region's cultural diversity.

In recent years, there has been a growing movement to recognize and honor the Tongva people's contributions to the region's history and culture. Various organizations and initiatives have been established to promote the Tongva cultural heritage, including the Gabrielino-Tongva Tribal Council, the Tongva Language Committee, and the Tongva Park.



TONGVA HERITAGE

The Tongva have a rich cultural heritage that includes a deep connection to the natural environment. They believe that all things in nature are connected and interdependent, as such they respect and honor the natural world. They have a rich spiritual tradition that is intimately tied to the natural world. Their ceremonies, songs, and dances are performed in honor of the earth, sky, and sea.

One of the most significant aspects of Tongva culture is their use of plants. They have an extensive knowledge of local flora and fauna and used plants for medicinal, ceremonial, and culinary purposes. In particular, White Sage (*Salvia apiana*) is deeply connected to their spiritual and medicinal traditions, and it continues to be a significant part of their way of life today. They also have a complex system of plant classification that reflects their deep understanding of the natural world and their sophisticated knowledge of the environment. It is a testament to their resilience, adaptability, and ingenuity, and it continues to influence modern ecological and cultural practices.



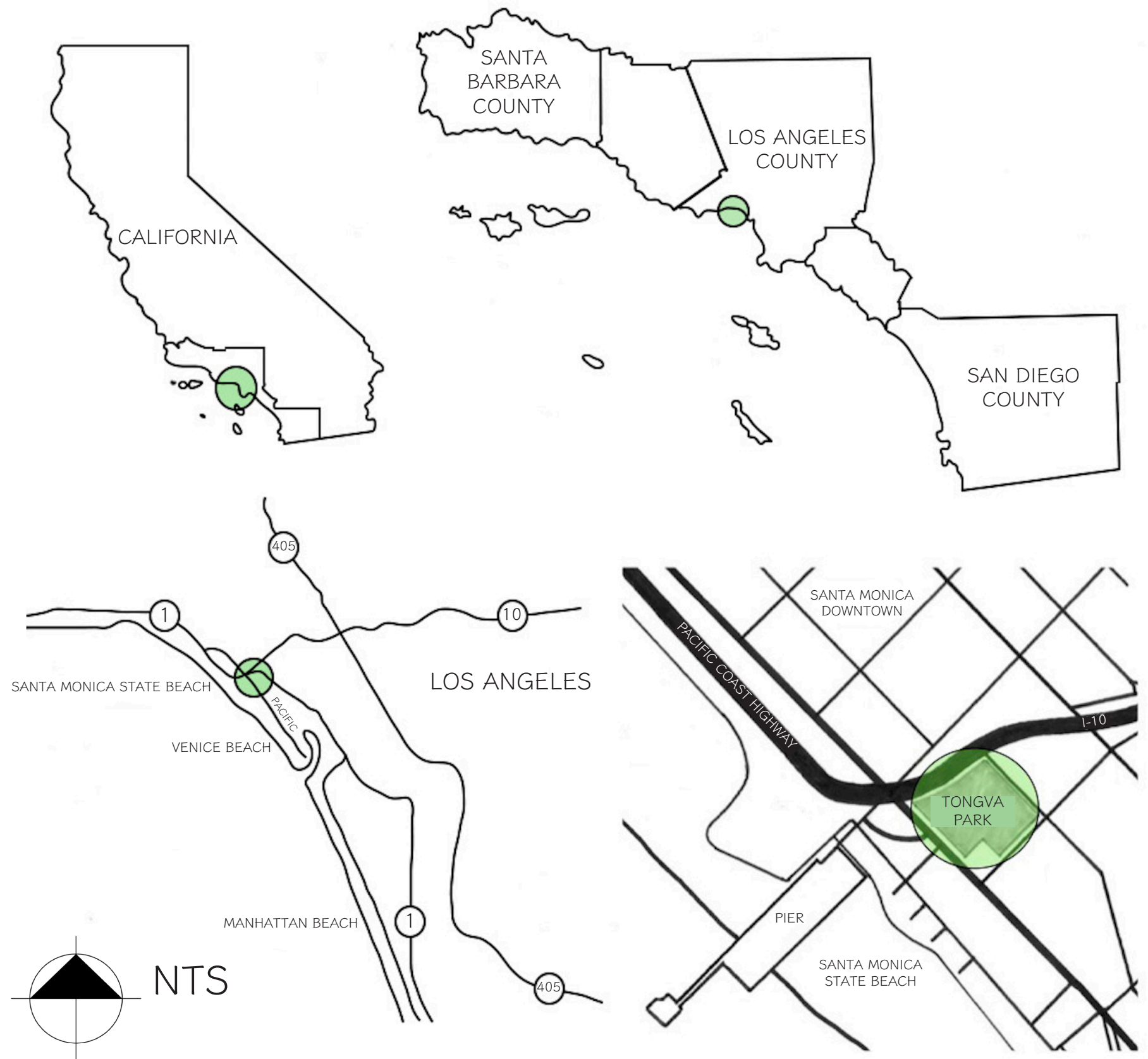




LOCATION

Tongva Park is located in the city of Santa Monica, which is situated in the western part of Los Angeles County, California, in the United States. Santa Monica is bordered by the Pacific Ocean to the west, the city of Los Angeles to the east, the city of Beverly Hills to the north, and the city of Culver City to the northeast.

The park's unique geographic setting connects it to both the Pacific Ocean and the Santa Monica Mountains. The park's location near the ocean provides stunning views of the coastline. To the north and east lie the Santa Monica Mountains, which also provide a scenic backdrop for park visitors to enjoy.

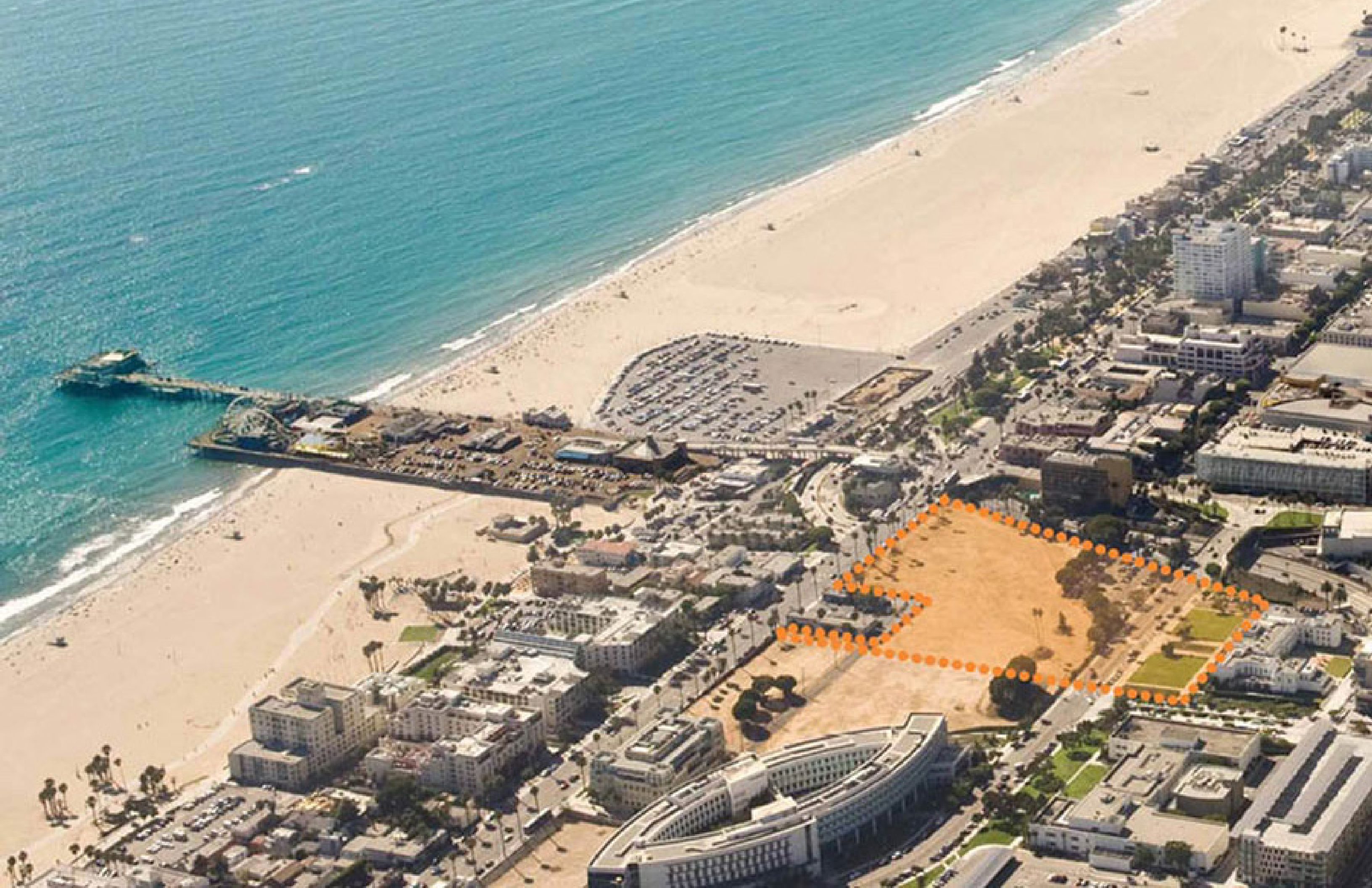


CONTEXT



Tongva Park is situated in the heart of downtown Santa Monica, on a former parking lot adjacent to City Hall. The park is bounded by Ocean Avenue to the west, Main Street to the east, and Olympic Drive to the south. The park is also adjacent to the Santa Monica Pier and the Pacific Ocean, which provides stunning views of the ocean and the coastline.

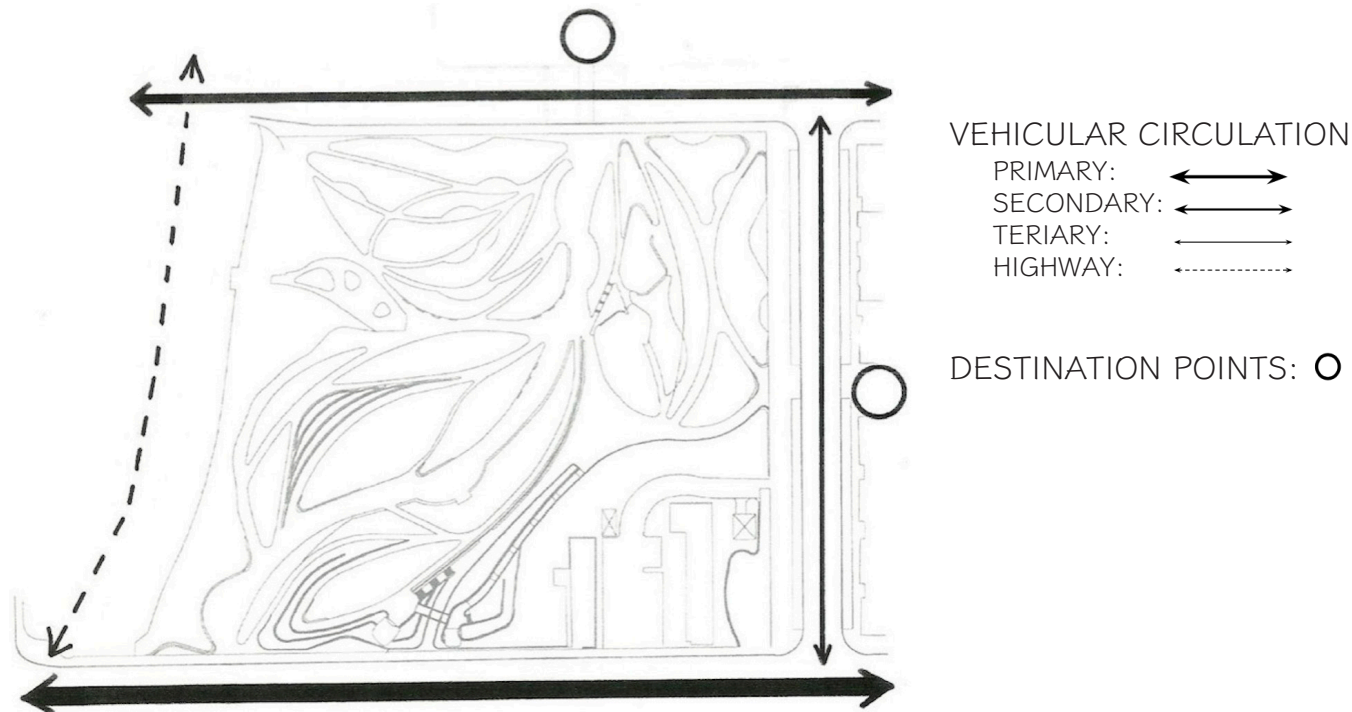
The park's location in downtown Santa Monica makes it easily accessible to visitors and residents alike, as it is situated near several major roads and highways, as well as public transportation options, including buses and the Metro Expo Line light rail. The park is also within walking distance of numerous restaurants, shops, and other amenities in downtown Santa Monica.



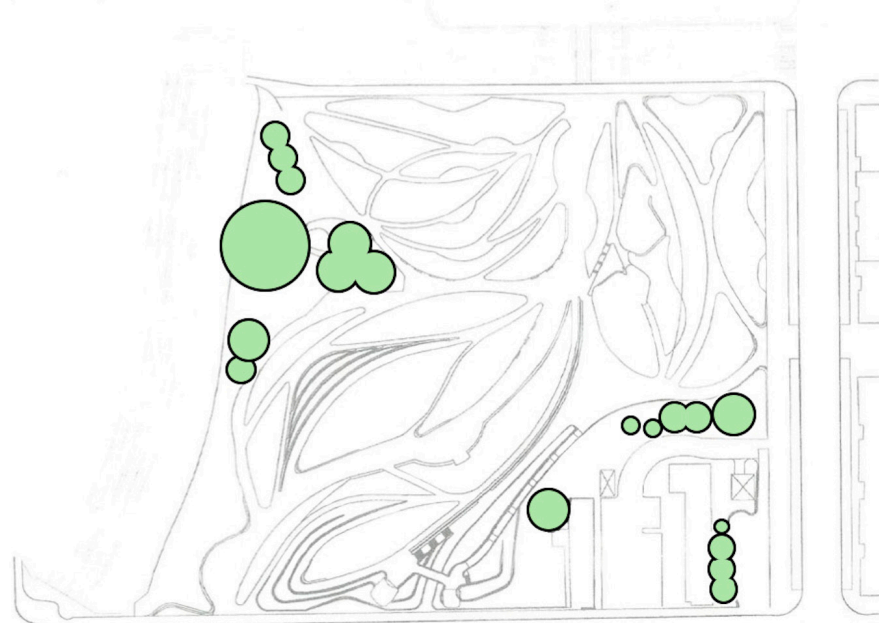


SITE ANALYSIS

VEHICULAR CIRCULATION & DESTINATIONS

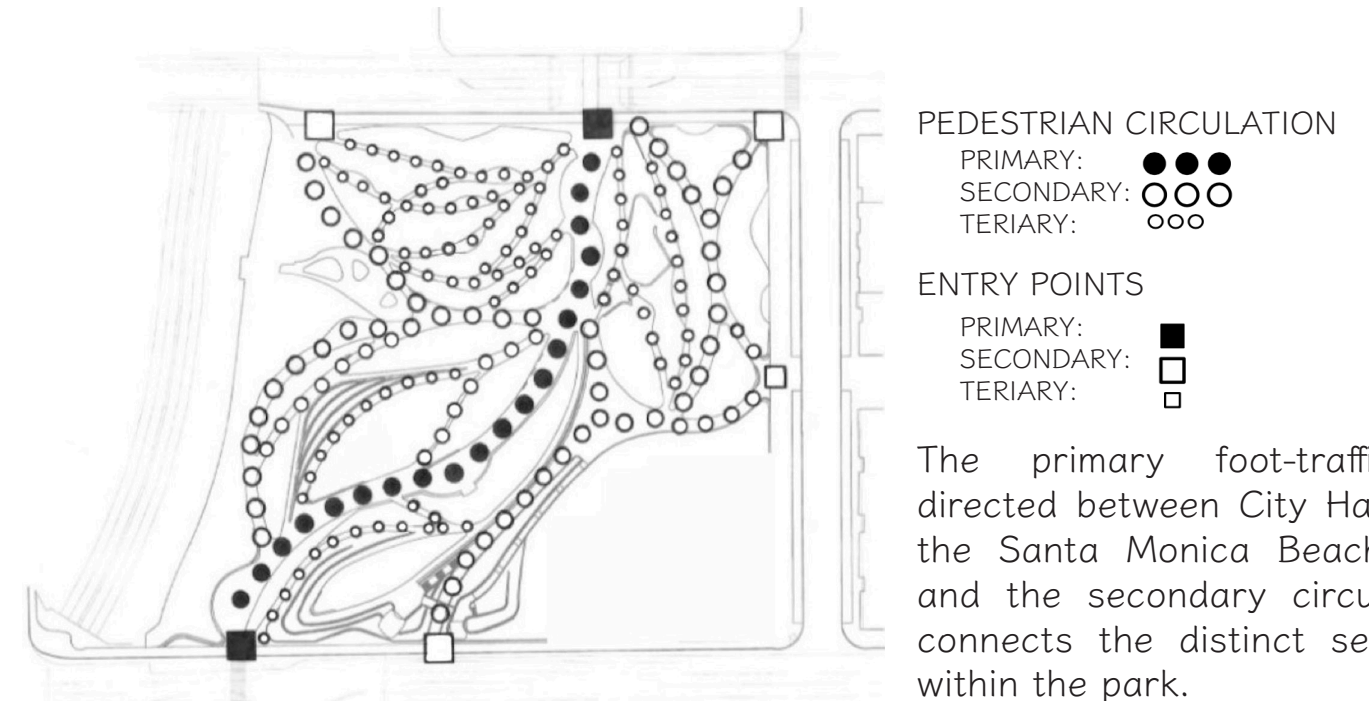


EXISTING TREES



The existing trees on the lot were preserved, though some were relocated within the site. Notable trees include "Morty," the enormous Morton Bay Fig (*Ficus macrophylla*), and the "Three Amigos", a ternary of Rusty Fig (*Ficus rubiginosa*) trees.

PEDESTRIAN CIRCULATION & ENTRY POINTS

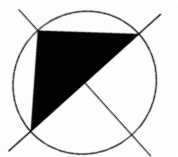


HARDSCAPE

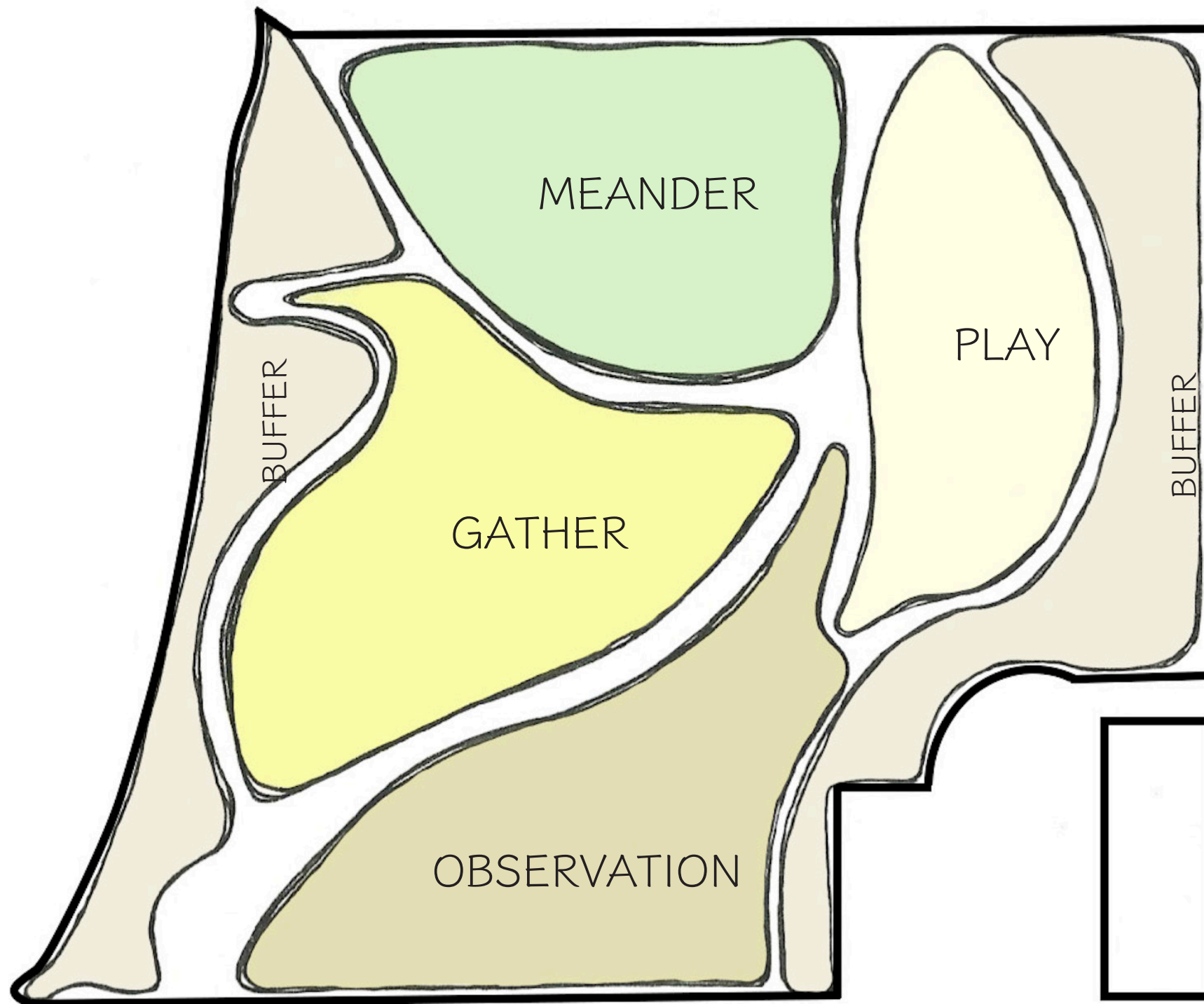


Different size stone aggregates compose the hardscape, with coarse aggregate on the primary circulation paths, smaller aggregate on the secondary paths, and fine aggregate on the tertiary paths.

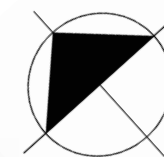
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CONCEPT



The site was designed around the concept of the arroyo, a dry creek bed formed by fast-flowing rain water. “The main pathways slope gently downward to slightly below street level and the excavated soil has been mounded to make four separate hills distributed throughout the park. When you are in this public space you are often tucked into the terrain and feel as though you are miles away from the bustle of nearby city streets.”

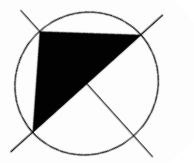


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SITE PLAN



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ILLUSTRATIVE PLAN



WATER FEATURE

GARDEN HILL

PICNIC AREA

AMPHITHEATER

GATHERING HILL

WATER FEATURE

OBSERVATION DECK

DISCOVERY HILL

HILLTOP PLAY FORTS

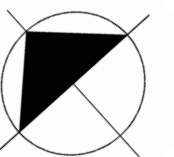
DISCOVERY PLAY AREA

PICNIC AREA

RESTROOMS

OBSERVATION DECK

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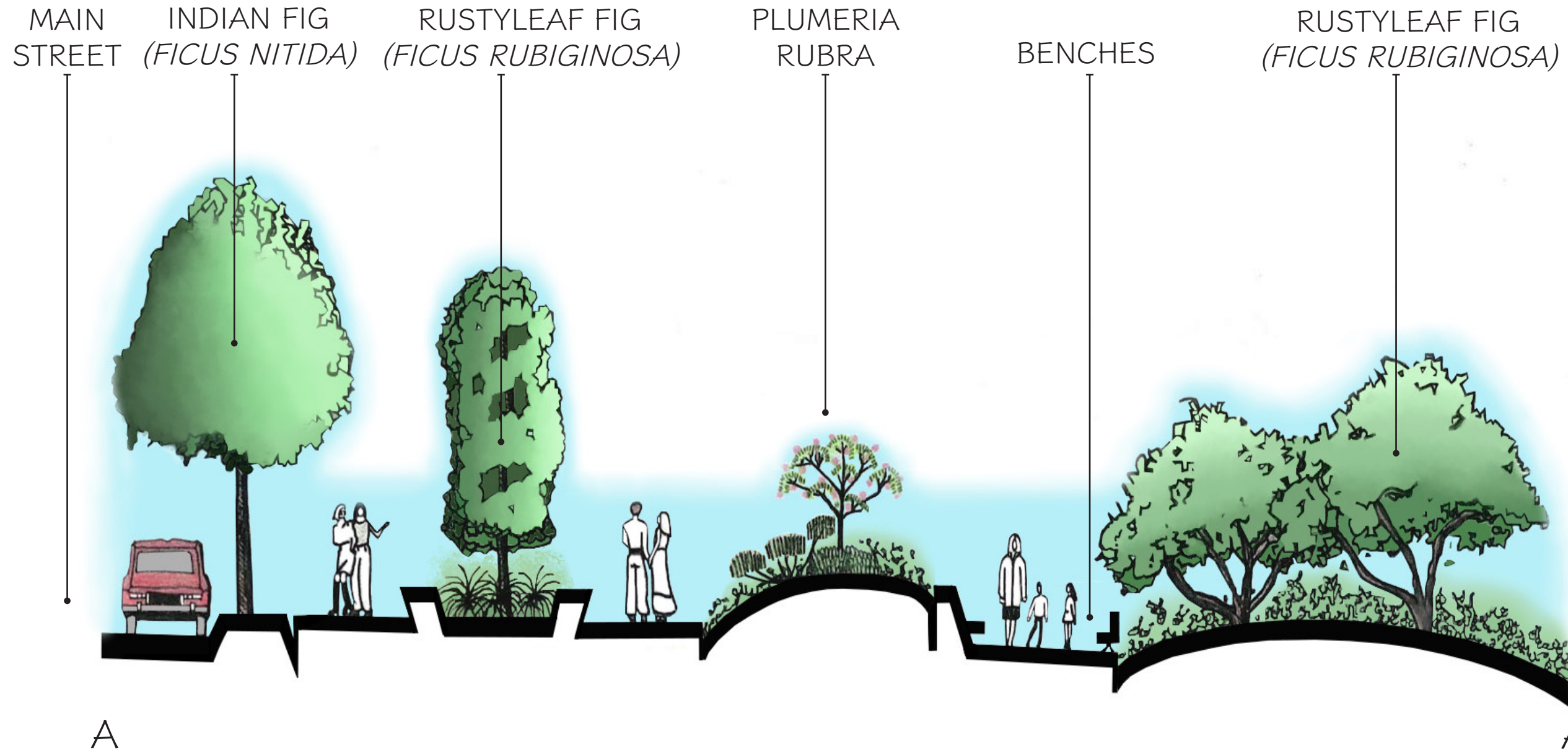
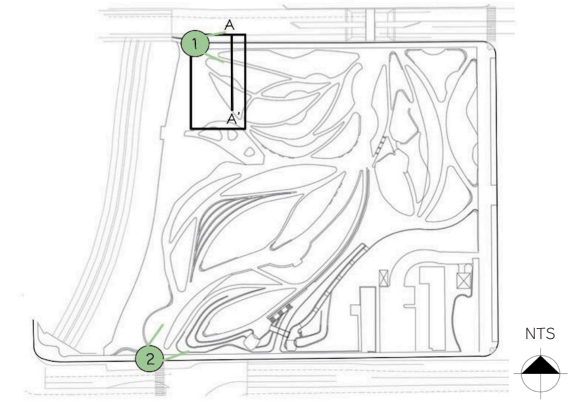
SITE ENLARGEMENT



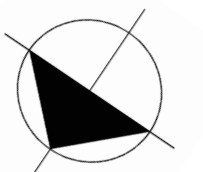
- INDIAN FIG (*Ficus nitida*)
- CALIFORNIA BAY (*Umbellularia californica*)
- BENCH
- FRANGIPANI (*Plumeria rubra*)
- RETAING WALL
- BENCH
- 3 AMIGOS (*Ficus rubiginosa*)
- DESERT MUSEUM (*Parkinsonia aculeata*)
- FLOSS SICK TREE (*Ceiba speciosa*)
- PICNIC AREA



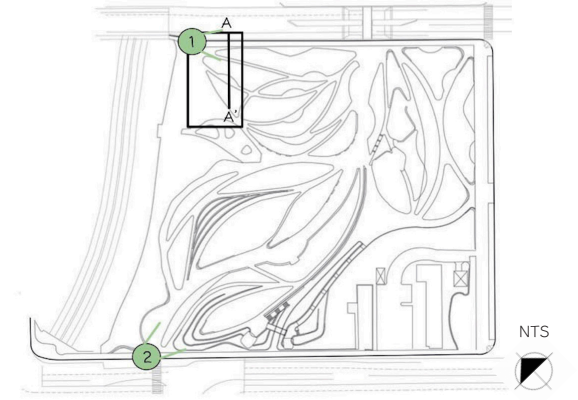
SECTION/ELEVATION



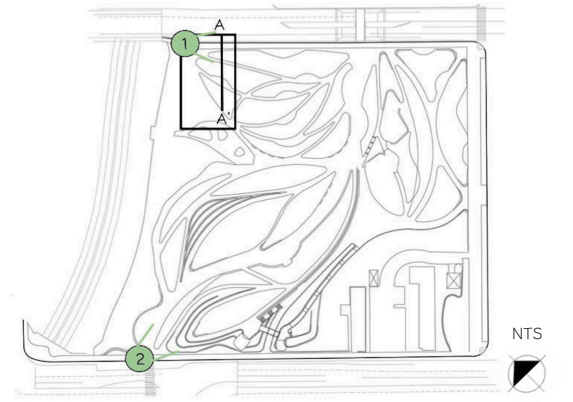
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REFERENCE PHOTOS



PERSPECTIVES



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AMENITIES

Tongva Park offers a range of amenities and attractions that are designed to provide visitors with a unique and immersive experience that celebrates the history, culture, and natural beauty of Southern California. Garden Hill, in the northwestern corner of Tongva Park, consists of winding paths through a Mediterranean plantscape. Gathering Hill, on the western edge of the park, includes a picnic area (under a canopy of large fig trees), an amphitheater, a large lawn, and a centerpiece sculpture. Discovery Hill features a second picnic area (under a canopy of pines), a children's playscape, and meandering trails through Oak and Olive tree groves. In Observation Hill, two observation decks overlook the Pacific Ocean. Underneath, there is a public restroom for community use. Another key feature of the park is the use of water elements, designed to provide reminders of the arroyo and a sense of tranquility. The park features a small pond, waterfalls, and water play areas with potable water for children to play in freely.



PLANT SELECTION

One of the most striking features of the park is the use of plants and landscaping to create a naturalistic environment. The park is divided into several distinct zones, or hills, each with its own unique character. The planting palette was carefully selected to immerse the visitor in an exploration of the many regional plant communities. For instance, the Garden Hill and Observation Hill represent the Mediterranean vegetation biome, also known as chaparral, while the Gathering Hill symbolizes a grassland, and the Discovery Hill encapsulates an Oak woodland.





NATIVE PLANTS

In its effort to celebrate the unique natural environment of the Santa Monica area, Tongva Park features a selection of native plants. Unfortunately, the site is predominantly planted with non-natives. Of the 166 species on the plant list, only 17 are native to the state of California and only 13 are naturally found in the Los Angeles region.

Artemisia californica

Aristida purpurea

Bouteloua gracilis 'Blonde Ambition'

*Calamagrostis nutkaensis**

*Carex pansa**

Clematis lasiantha

Eleocharis macrostachya

Erigeron glaucus 'Sea Breeze'

Eriogonum cinereum

Hesperoyucca whipplei

*Iris douglasiana**

Marsilea vestita

*Pinus torreyana**

Plantanus racemosa

Salvia apiana

Salvia leucophylla 'Point Sal Spreader'

Symphotrichum chilense/*Aster chilensis*

The following pages highlight a selection of the featured native plants that are significant to the Tongva people.

* native to California, but not to Los Angeles County

CALIFORNIA SAGEBRUSH

Artemisia californica

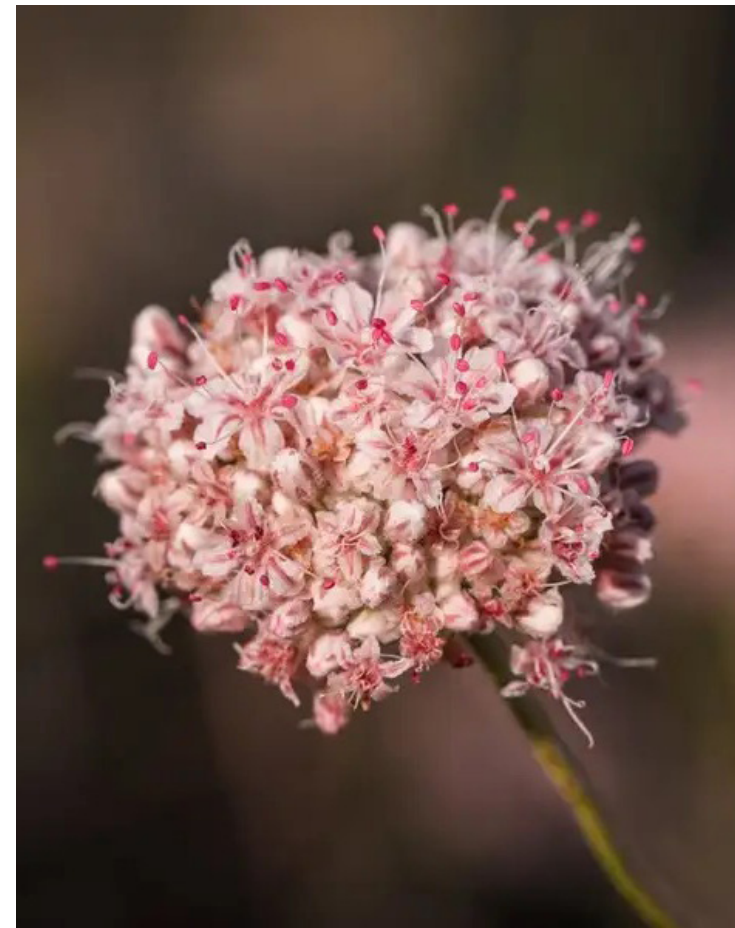
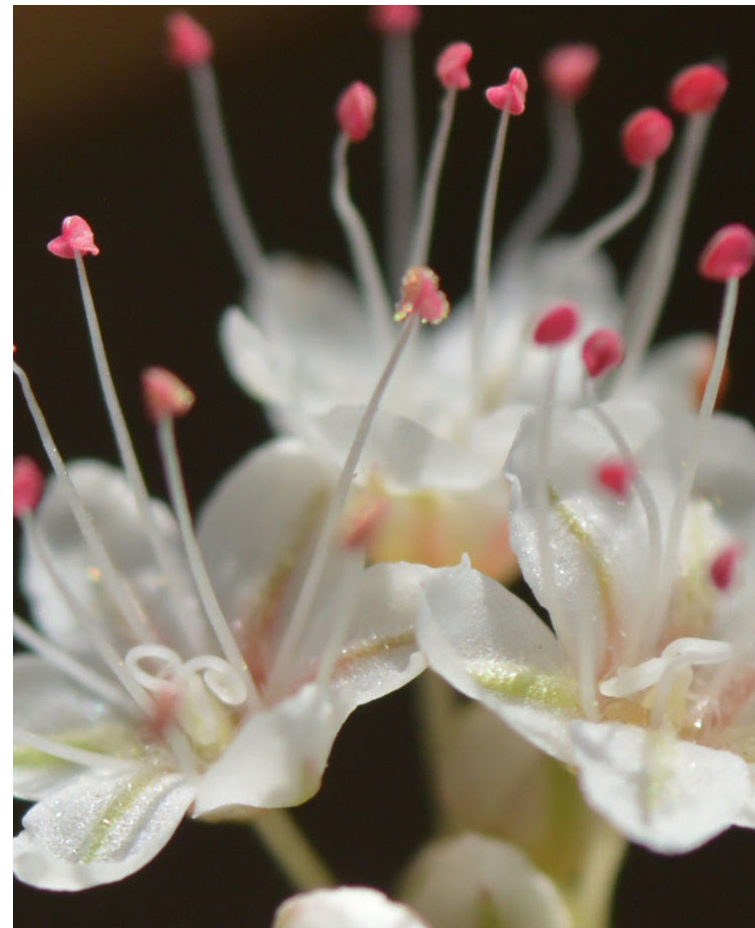
California Sagebrush, called “pawots” in Tongva, is a highly aromatic shrub of great ecological value. It is a foundation plant of the coastal sage scrub community and the preferred plant of the California gnatcatcher, a threatened species endemic to the region. Despite its name, it is not actually a sage, but a bush in the same family as the sunflower. In addition to its environmental function, the Tongva had many uses for the sagebrush. Traditionally, its thin, wire-like branches were used for basket weaving and its blossoms and leaves were hung in sweathouses for their fragrance. Additionally, it was used to treat asthma, fevers, coughs, and toothaches, or it could be packed onto burns or wounds to act as a bandage. Tongva women also used the leaves to make tea which they drank throughout their first menstrual cycle to purify themselves.



ASHYLEAF BUCKWHEAT

Eriogonum cinereum

Buckwheat, termed “wilakal” in Tongva, has small, pinkish-white flowers that bloom from spring to fall and is an important plant in Tongva culture, with a variety of uses for the community. One of the most significant uses was as a food source. The plant produces small, edible seeds that were harvested and ground into a meal, which could be used to make porridge or baked goods. Additionally, the Tongva boiled the plant’s leaves, stems, and roots into a tea that was used to treat a variety of ailments, including colds, fevers and headaches, as well as menstrual, rheumatic, respiratory, and digestive disorders. It could also serve as a general tonic, providing energy and boosting the immune system.



WHITE SAGE

Salvia apiana

White Sage, “kasili” in Tongva, is a beautiful fragrant perennial shrub that grows in the dry, rocky soils of Southern California. White Sage holds a crucial role in the cultural practices of the Tongva people. It is a plant that is deeply connected to their spiritual and medicinal traditions, and it continues to be a significant part of their way of life today. One of its most common uses is as a smudge, which involves burning the dried leaves and using the smoke to cleanse the environment and purify the energy. Smudging is an essential element of Tongva spiritual practices. It is performed to create a sacred space and to bring good luck. In addition, it has medicinal uses to treat a variety of ailments, including respiratory infections, asthma, colds, and flu. Particular symptoms it helps alleviate are sore throats, fevers, stomach aches, and tooth aches. It also serves to promote menstruation and to cleanse skin wounds or rashes. A perfumed soap can be made by rubbing fresh leaves between the palms with water. Tea made from its leaves is also believed to have a calming effect on the mind and body, and it is often consumed before spiritual ceremonies to help with meditation and prayer. Furthermore, it is an essential element in Tongva basketry.



PURPLE SAGE

Salvia leucophylla 'Point Sal Spreader'

Sage, called “paa’vor” in Tongva is an aromatic shrub, native to the California coast, known for its pleasant aroma and impressive healing properties. The Tongva people used purple sage for a variety of purposes, including medicinal, culinary, and ceremonial uses. The silvery leaves and purple flowers of the plant were often used to make teas or poultices that were applied to the skin to treat a range of ailments, such as headaches, fever, congestion, and respiratory infections. It was also used as a natural insect repellent. In addition to its medicinal uses, purple sage was also an important culinary herb for the Tongva people. The leaves and flowers were often used to flavor meats and stews, and they were also used as a seasoning for acorn meal. Purple sage was also a significant plant in Tongva ceremonial practices. The plant was burned as a sacred incense during purification rituals, and its smoke was believed to have spiritual properties that could help to cleanse the mind and body.

The particular variety featured in the park is a low-growing nursery cultivar of the species. It acts as a ground cover and is very showy while blooming.



CHAPARRAL YUCCA

Hesperoyucca whipplei

Chaparral yucca features a cluster of sharp, rigid leaves, which were utilized in various ways by the Tongva. Whole or split leaves were used for firewood and house framing. The strong fibers were used to make sandals, basketry cordage, thread for sewing, and fishing line. To retrieve and prepare the fibers, the leaves were immersed in water until the epidermal sheath and the connecting round tissue rotted away. The fibers are then buried in mud to whiten them, washed and combed. The Tongva even used yucca for natural soap. The roots contain saponin, which produces copious suds when soaked.

The heart of the plant, the apical meristem, is edible and was traditionally prepared by slow pit-roasting. The flower stalk that grows out of the apical meristem is cut while still green and tender and similarly prepared.

Apart from its uses to humans, the Chaparral yucca also has a critical ecological function, as its seed and fruit are eaten by antelope ground squirrels and its nectar is consumed by hummingbirds. Additionally, flowers are pollinated by uniquely specialized nocturnal moths, which depend on the yucca's pollen for subsistence.



WESTERN SYCAMORE

Plantanus racemosa

The Western Sycamore tree, “sheveer” in Tongva, is a large, deciduous tree with a distinctive mottled bark that peels away in patches, revealing smooth, pale bark beneath. It is common in the riparian zones of several kinds of habitat. The Tongva people used various parts of the Western Sycamore tree for different purposes. The bark was used to construct homes and sweathouses, and to make baskets, tools, and cordage.

The tree’s leaves were also used for medicinal purposes. A tea made from the leaves was used as a general remedy and tonic, or as an astringent, a diuretic, an emetic, and a blood purifier. It was also used to treat specific symptoms such as headaches, cough, fever, and body pain. Additionally, the leaves could be crushed and applied to wounds to reduce inflammation and promote healing. Similarly, the inner bark’s ooze was used externally for treating sores and rashes.

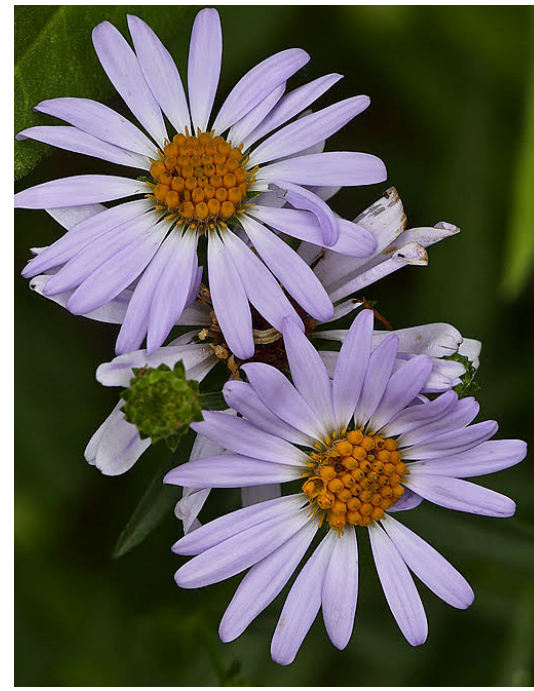
Furthermore, the Sycamore has several culinary uses. The leaves were wrapped around bread prior to baking, and the sap was boiled down to a sweet syrup, which could then be fermented into wine.

As well as its utilization by the Tongva, the Sycamore serves great ecological purpose. The fuzz from its leaves are often used by hummingbirds to line their nests. Its branched shape and dense foliage creates a favorite nesting site for raptors. Its dense shade creates a microclimate under its canopy, welcoming additional biodiversity.



SEASIDE FLEABANE

Erigeron glaucus 'Sea Breeze'



CALIFORNIA ASTER

Symphotrichum chilense
(formerly *Aster chilensis*)

DOUGLAS IRIS

Iris douglasiana





COMMON SPIKERUSH

Eleocharis macrostachya

PURPLE THREE AWN

Aristida purpurea



HAIRY WATER CLOVER

Marsilea vestita

ABOUT ME

Hello, my name is Leeloo Gilet and I am an aspiring landscape architect with a passion for creating beautiful and functional outdoor spaces. I received my Bachelor's in philosophy from Duke University in 2021 and am currently pursuing a double certificate in landscape architecture and horticulture from the University of California, Los Angeles.

My approach to landscape architecture is rooted in the belief that a well-designed outdoor space can have a transformative effect on people's lives. Whether it's creating a peaceful retreat for a homeowner or designing a public park that brings a community together, I strive to create environments that are not only visually stunning but also enhance the well-being of those who use them. In my work, I prioritize sustainability and environmental responsibility, using native plants and locally-sourced materials whenever possible to reduce the impact on the natural ecosystem. Overall, I believe that landscape architecture is a blend of art and science, and I am constantly inspired by the challenge of creating spaces that are both beautiful and functional.

Thank you for taking the time to learn a bit about me!

Sincerely,

Leeloo Gilet





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TONGVA PARK