

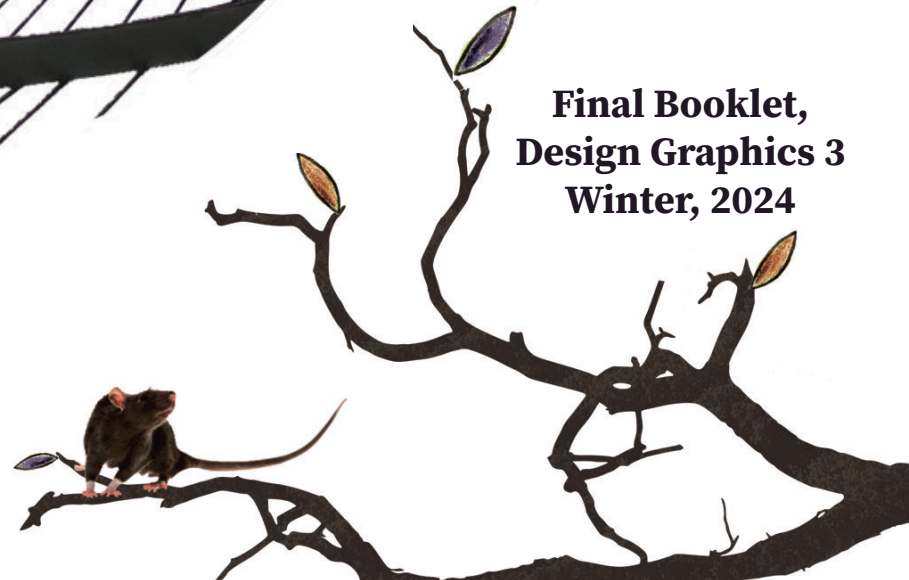


# Duality in Design

**Final Booklet,  
Design Graphics 3  
Winter, 2024**

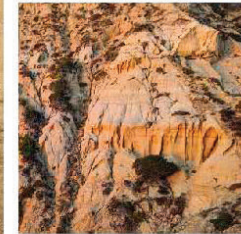
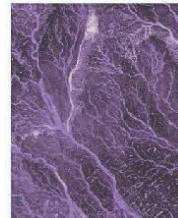


Mitch Miller



**“Every act in life yields pairs of opposites in its results. The best we can do is lean toward the light and toward these harmonious relationships.”**

**- Joseph Campbell**

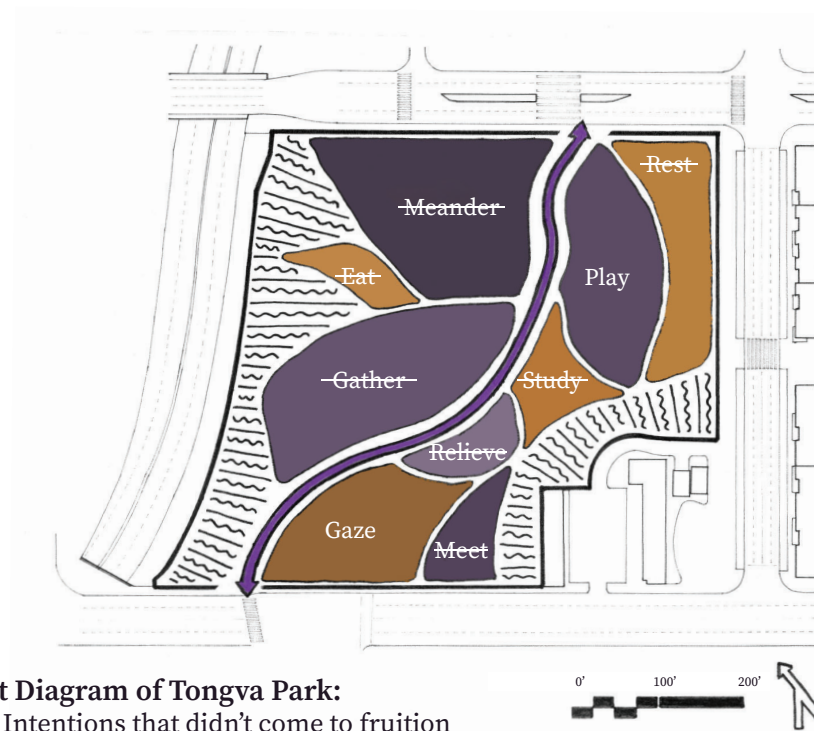


# Introduction

Duality is when two aspects of something contrast and oppose each other.

These complex and contradictory situations pose no simple solutions. This booklet is an exploration of the contrast between design intentions and outcomes using Tongva Park in Santa Monica as an example.

Inevitably, with all design, no matter how much a designer considers context and does their research, there will be unintended consequences.



Concept Diagram of Tongva Park:  
Concept Intentions that didn't come to fruition



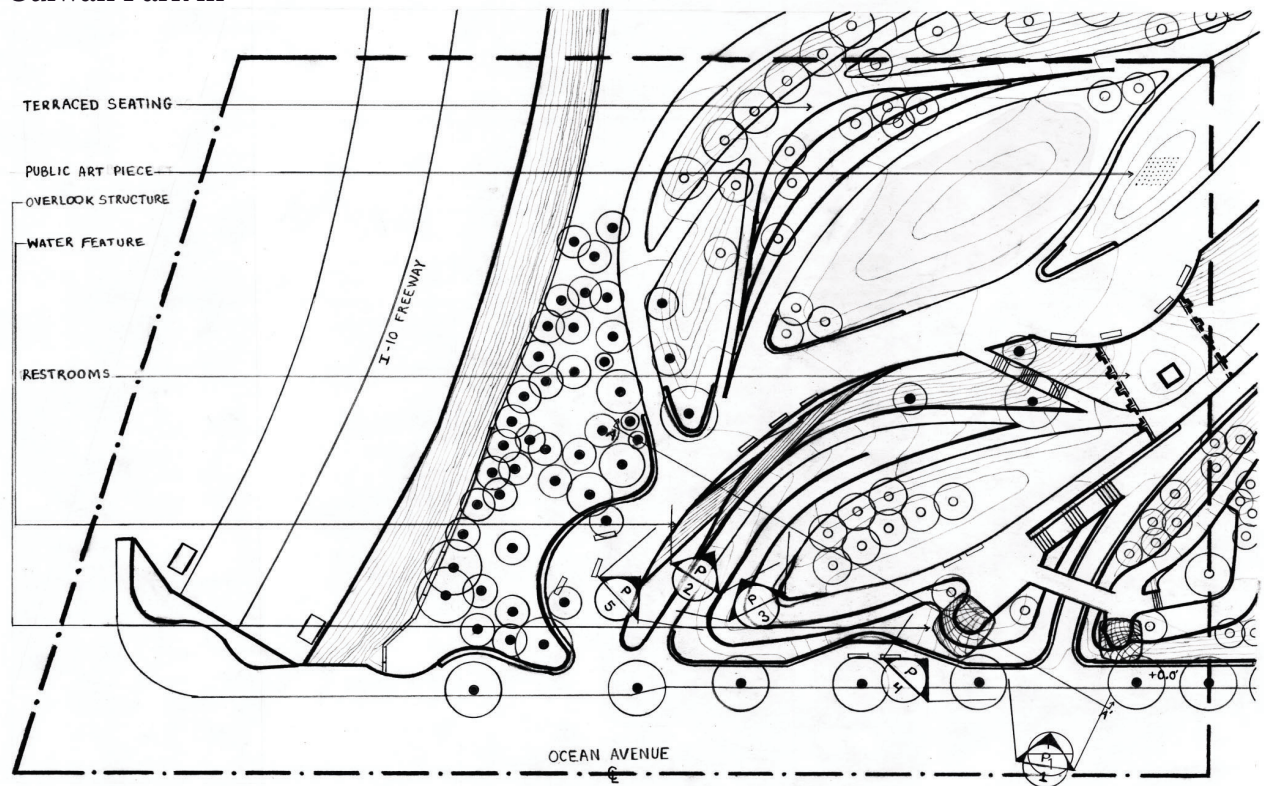


# Site Background

Tongva Park was completed in 2013. This 7.4 acre park is located just one block from the beach in sunny Santa Monica, California. It was previously a parking lot. It is bordered by Interstate Highway 10 to the north, iconic Ocean Avenue to the west, Santa Monica City Hall to the East, and a 5-story, mixed-use condo complex to the south called The Waverly, which was also built in 2014.

This park was designed by Field Operations. A landscape architecture firm founded by James Corner in New York City. They have been designing world class parks around the world for the past 30 years. Their other projects include Navy Pier in Chicago, The High Line in Manhattan, and Guiwan Park in Shenzhen, China.

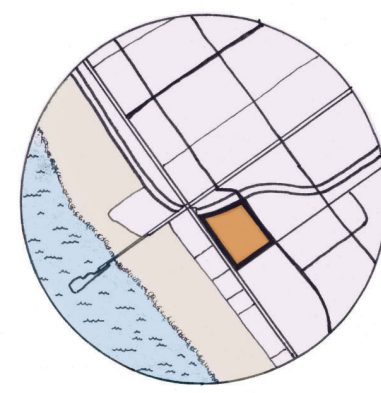
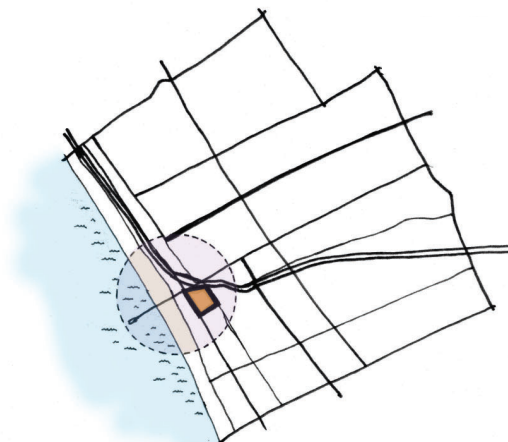
The park was chosen to be named Tongva Park after it was designed and built. This was to honor the Native American people who existed in that region for around 2,000 years.





# Site Location

1615 Ocean Ave., Santa Monica, CA













## Santa Monica, CA

Population: 87,341  
Median Resident Age: 41  
Median Household Income: \$94,906  
Median House Value: \$1,690,815  
Median Gross Rent: \$3,595/month  
69 % White, 9% Asian, 5% Black, 17% Latino  
Unhoused Population: +/- 1,000 people

Average Annual Rainfall: 13.5 inches  
Average Daily High Temperature: 70 degrees F



-  RESIDENTIAL
-  COMMERCIAL
-  HOTEL
-  UNIVERSITY
-  PARKING
-  MIXED-USE
-  MUNICIPAL
-  SITE
-  PUBLIC PARK
-  BEACH



# Site Highlights



Art Installation

Amphitheater

Water Feature

Tot Lot

Restrooms

Viewing Area

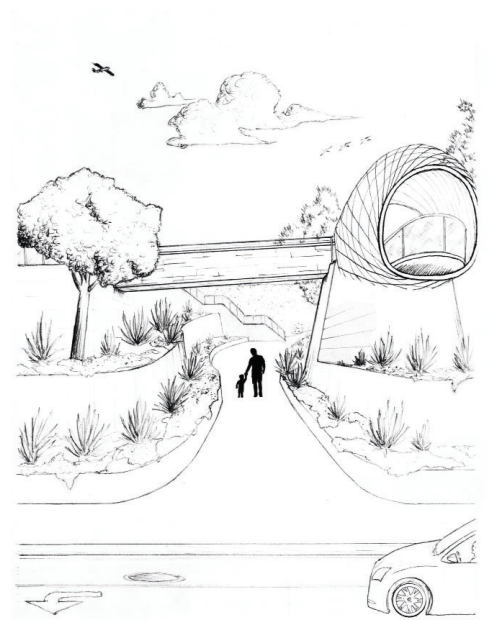
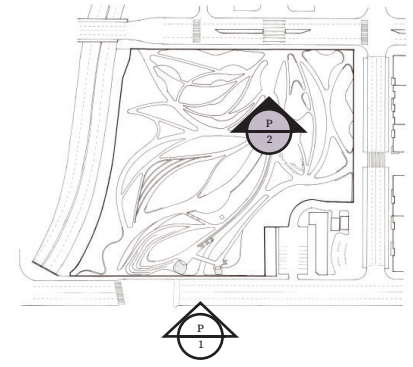
OCEAN AVE

MAIN ST





# Site Perspectives



# Strengths

## Unique Curvilinear Design

Santa Monica, and cities in general, are mostly made up of 90 degree angles. Boxes upon boxes laid out in a grid. Corner and his firm did a beautiful job of creating hardscape and softscape that is completely curvilinear. The core motif of this park is the eye-shaped mound.





# Weaknesses

## Highly Paved

With the complex, curvilinear hardscape comes an immense amount of concrete paving over what could have been planted space. There are many paved pathways through the park that are largely underutilized. The divided hardscape creates many 'hiding spaces' for the unhoused population to pitch up for the day. This lack of visibility creates a space that does not feel safe.

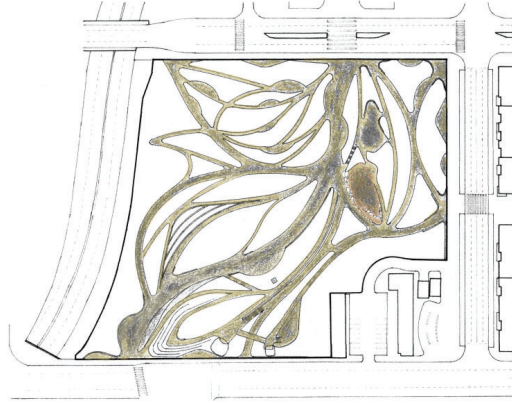


Diagram of Paved Surfaces 

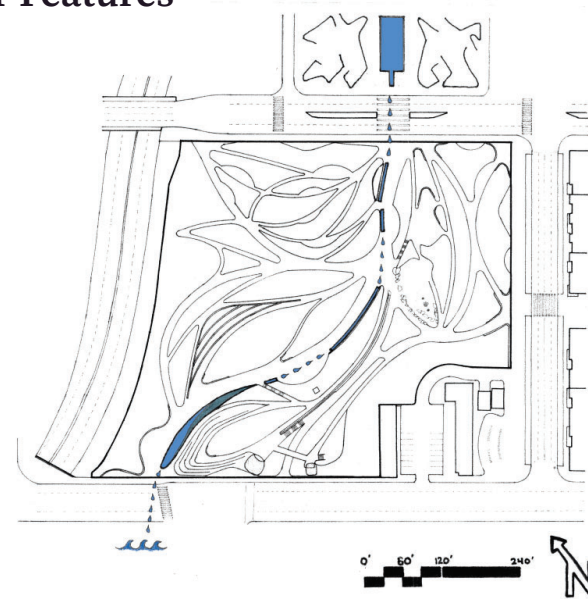


# Positives



This park can be seen as the front yard of Santa Monica City Hall. The entrance of City Hall features a large, tiered water feature. Then, as one moves through the main path of Tongva Park westward, they are greeted with unique water features on both side. The sound and colors of these water features create a multi-sensory experience.

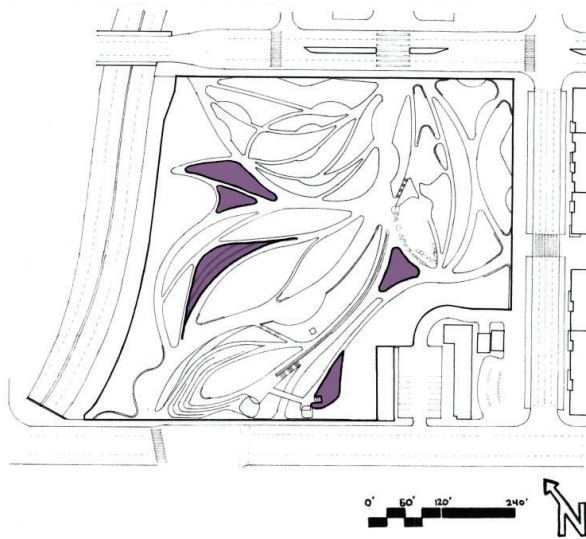
## Water Features





# Negatives

## Limited Gathering Spaces



Perhaps the most tragic unintended consequence of the design for this park is that it does not encourage community interaction. It is so fragmented and planted. This has created a space that lies empty. No matter the day of the week or time of the year, this park is a bit of a ghost town. The amphitheater looks onto the restrooms and is never used.

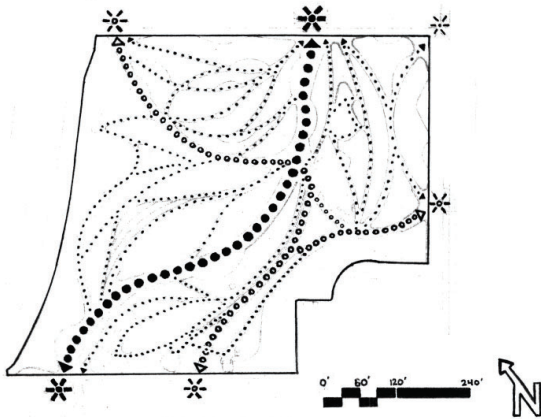


# Benefits



## Scenic & Spacious Central Path

The main walkway from Santa Monica City Hall not only features multiple water features, but an elegant sculpture, interesting light posts, and ample benches. This central pathway is often the only part of the park people see.



### Pedestrian Circulation

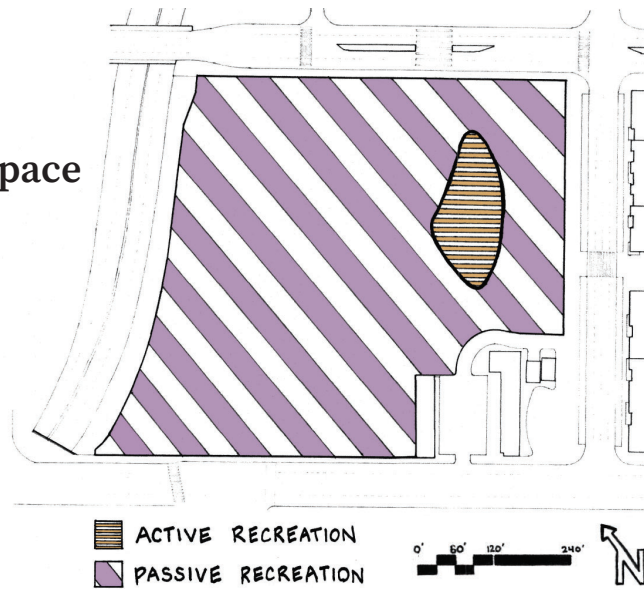
- ▲ PRIMARY
- SECONDARY
- ⋮ TERTIARY
- ✱ PRIMARY ACCESS
- ✱ SECONDARY ACCESS
- ✱ TERTIARY ACCESS





# Drawbacks

## Lack of Active Space

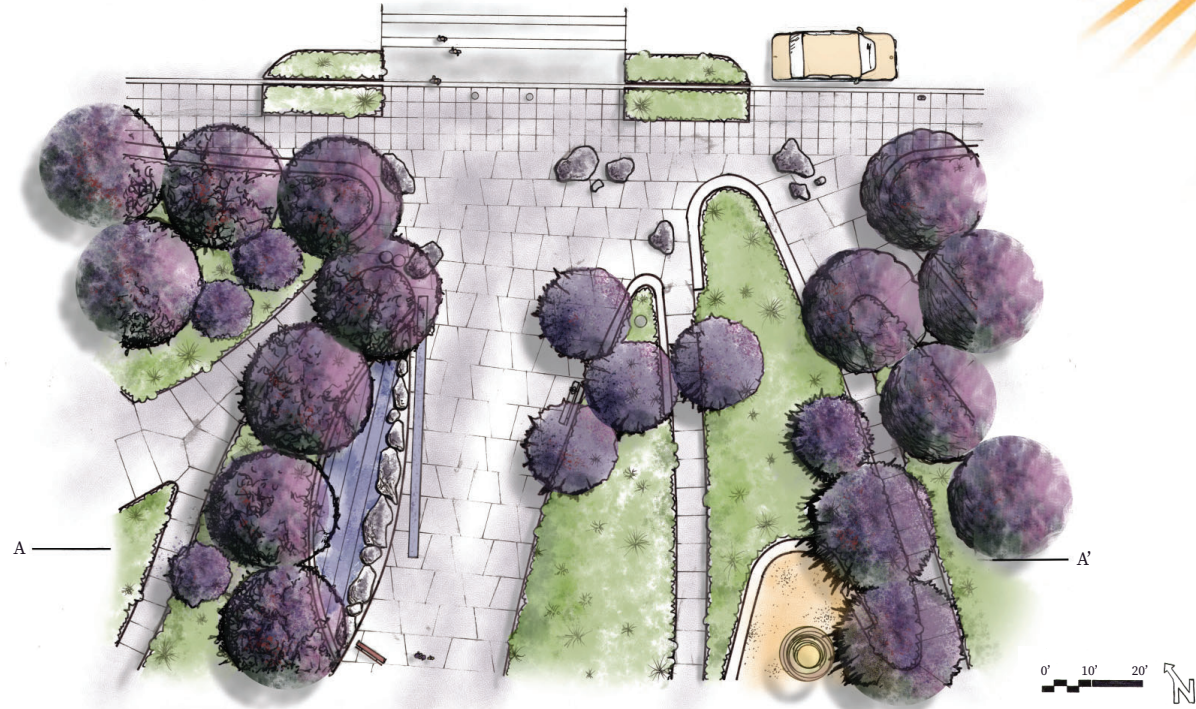
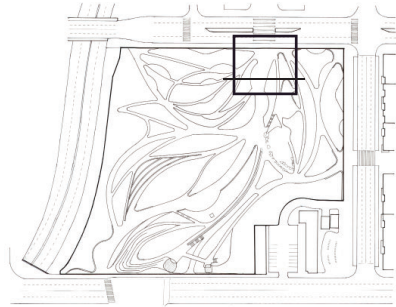


Only about 10% of the total area of this park is dedicated to active recreation. That would be the Tot Lot. It is tucked away in the trees. So, it is shady and cooler in the summer. This playground is the most utilized portion of the park. In a city that is full of people living active lifestyles with year-round near-perfect weather, this overall park design ignores the needs of the community that surrounds it.





# Park Advantages



## Interesting Elevation:

Corner's team did an excellent job of creating vistas and diverse elevations throughout the park. The elevation range in the park is over 20 feet.





# Consequences



Just as this page feels lonely, Tongva Park feels the same.

Empty Benches

Empty Sidewalks

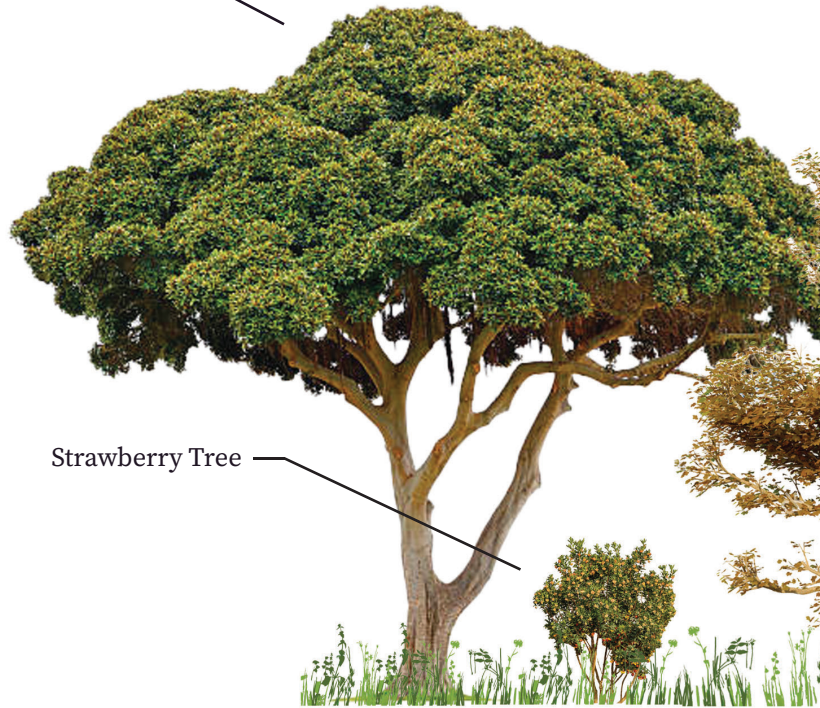
Empty Turf



# Successful Plant Species



Moreton Bay Fig



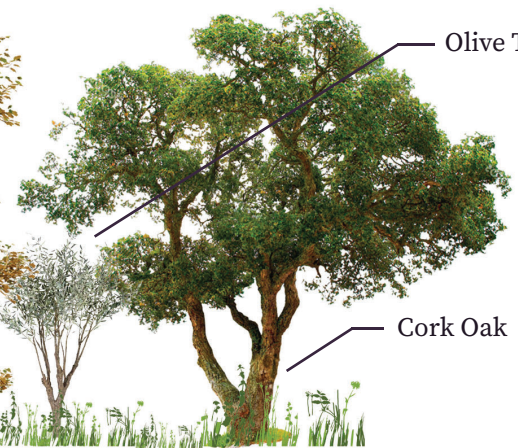
Strawberry Tree



Western Sycamore



Olive Tree



Cork Oak





# Challenging Plant Species

Stone Pine  
Top heavy and hazardous



Foxtail Agave  
Do not thrive in full sun



Canary Island Date Palm  
Highly susceptible to Rhynchophorus Weevils



# Takeaway

No matter how much research a designer does or how much experience or skill they have, their design will not always end up as they imagined. Especially when designing a city park. Cities are complex places and it is very difficult to know exactly how the public will interact with the space.

In the case of Tongva Park, James Corner's team created a daring, one-of-a-kind park design. Unfortunately, the park is noticeably underutilized today.

The unhoused population in this park is a reflection of a greater crisis happening in California. Corner may not have realized the magnitude of this problem when he designed this park. The park lies at the end of the Metro line and it is right near the beach. Therefore, the unhoused population is very large here. Designing spaces that deter those people is going into tricky territory, but this seems to do the opposite.

Tongva Park's fragmented design creates many nooks, depressions, and crannies for unhoused people to occupy. This makes it unsafe for families to explore. Perhaps, a more simple, open grassy park would have served the community better. It would have had more space for people to play sports or have picnics. The drawback to that would be a lack of shade. Just goes to show, no design is perfect....

## Citations

Tongva Park Info - <https://www.fieldoperations.net/home.html>

Santa Monica Data - Citydata.com

Satellite Image of Tongva Park - Google Earth

Duality in Architecture - Thesis by Wayne Bartels, Rice University





# Meet Mitch

**M**itch has been designing living walls, moss walls, and interior plantscapes for the past six years for commercial and residential spaces. He has always loved architecture and horticulture. He is also an open water swimmer and avid cyclist. Mitch even has a background

in the circus arts, having performed with multiple arts and entertainment companies as a professional dancer, hoop artist, roller skater, and actor. This image is meant to capture all of his sides. The dark and the light.

