

The Great Wall of Los Angeles

Tujunga Wash, Valley Glen (Los Angeles River watershed), San Fernando Valley, California



Pre-1700s

Indigenous Land

For thousands of years, the land is home to the Tongva people. The river system provides food, water, and trade routes.

Late 1700s

Spanish Colonial Period

Area becomes part of the Spanish mission system; Indigenous populations are displaced and decimated.

1930s-1940s

Urbanization & Channelization

After devastating floods, the Los Angeles River and Tujunga Wash are encased in concrete by the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers to control flooding.

1930s-Present

Ecological Degradation

Concrete infrastructure leads to habitat loss, declining biodiversity, and disrupted groundwater recharge.



1974

Birth of the Great Wall of Los Angeles

Concept proposed by artist and activist Judith F. Baca, working with the City of LA and Army Corps of Engineers.



1976-1983

Painting the Mural

Painted by hundreds of youth and community members, the work spans half a mile, illustrating the often overlooked histories of California.



1980s-2000s

Recognition & Preservation

Becomes a nationally recognized monument to social justice. The site remains ecologically degraded, but interest grows in revitalizing the wash.



2010s-2020s

Environmental Restoration Efforts

Plans emerge to revitalize the Tujunga Wash, restore natural habitats, and create accessible green space integrating flood management with ecological restoration.



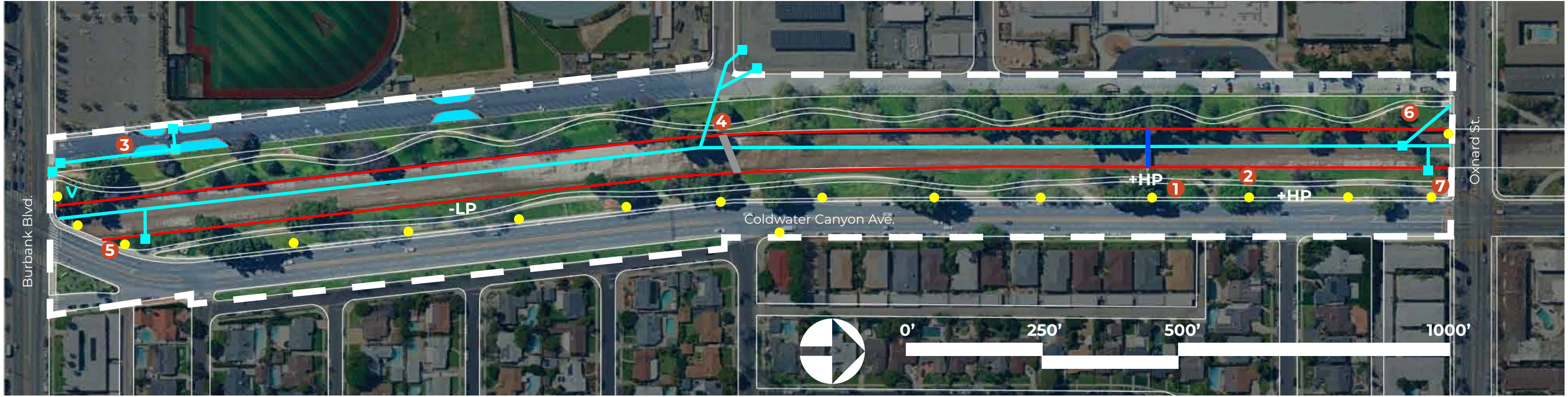
2023-Present

Great Wall Expansion Project

Led by Baca, mural to expand by 350 feet. Project includes revitalized park space, improved environmental features, digital access, and youth programming.

Key

- Street light
- Storm drain
- ▾ Stormwater infiltration
- ∨ Water valves
- Chain-link fence
- Bridge
- Elevated water pipe



Ecosystems

River wash (middle), coastal sage scrub (west), grassland flower fields (east)

Average temperatures

Hottest: August, avg. 91/65 °F
 Coolest: December, avg. 65/46 °F

Prevailing winds

Winter: N
 Spring: W

Summer: S
 Santa Ana: E, NE

Rainfall

Year avg.: 13.4"
 Wettest/driest: Feb. 3.3", Jul. 0"







100yr Composite Flood Hazard

LAOC 100yr composite flood hazard

- < Ankle (0.03 - 0.11 m)
- Ankle - Knee (0.11 - 0.45 m)
- Knee - Waist (0.45 - 1.0 m)
- Waist - Head (1.0 - 1.7 m)
- Over Head (> 1.7 m)

Key

-  Tree cover
-  Noise
-  Summer sun
-  Winter sun

Opportunities

1. Cultural landmark (Great Wall mural)
2. Mature trees provide shade
3. Concentration of storm runoff for potential use



4. Linear open space available
5. Potential for expanded green space in under-served area
6. Ecological and cultural heritage



7. Proximity to public transportation (Orange Line)
8. Adjacent college and high school campuses



Constraints

1. Chain link fence blocking view of mural
2. Drainage canal dividing site in two
3. Large water delivery pipe

4. High temperatures and UV factor
5. Concrete storm drain infrastructure quickly drains potentially beneficial stormwater
6. Some large trees in declining condition

7. Noise pollution from Coldwater Canyon Blvd.
8. Flooding potential

Goals

1. Provide views of mural for people of all heights and abilities.
2. Slow, spread and sink water on site.
3. Block traffic impacts from Coldwater Canyon Blvd.
4. Create opportunities for recreation and adventure that complement the mural viewing experience.
5. Improve connectivity between Metro rail, bus routes, park and neighboring communities.
6. Maximize canopy by conserving healthy trees and replacing problematic ones.
7. Collect runoff from added paving.



Location:
SE Spokane Street and Oaks Parkway Portland, OR 97202

Amenities & Activities
Accessible Restroom, Picnic Tables, Boat Dock, Riverfront Views, Dog Off-leash Area, Paths (Paved), Paths (Unpaved)

Size
8.2 acres

Acquired
1969

Architects
Walker Macy



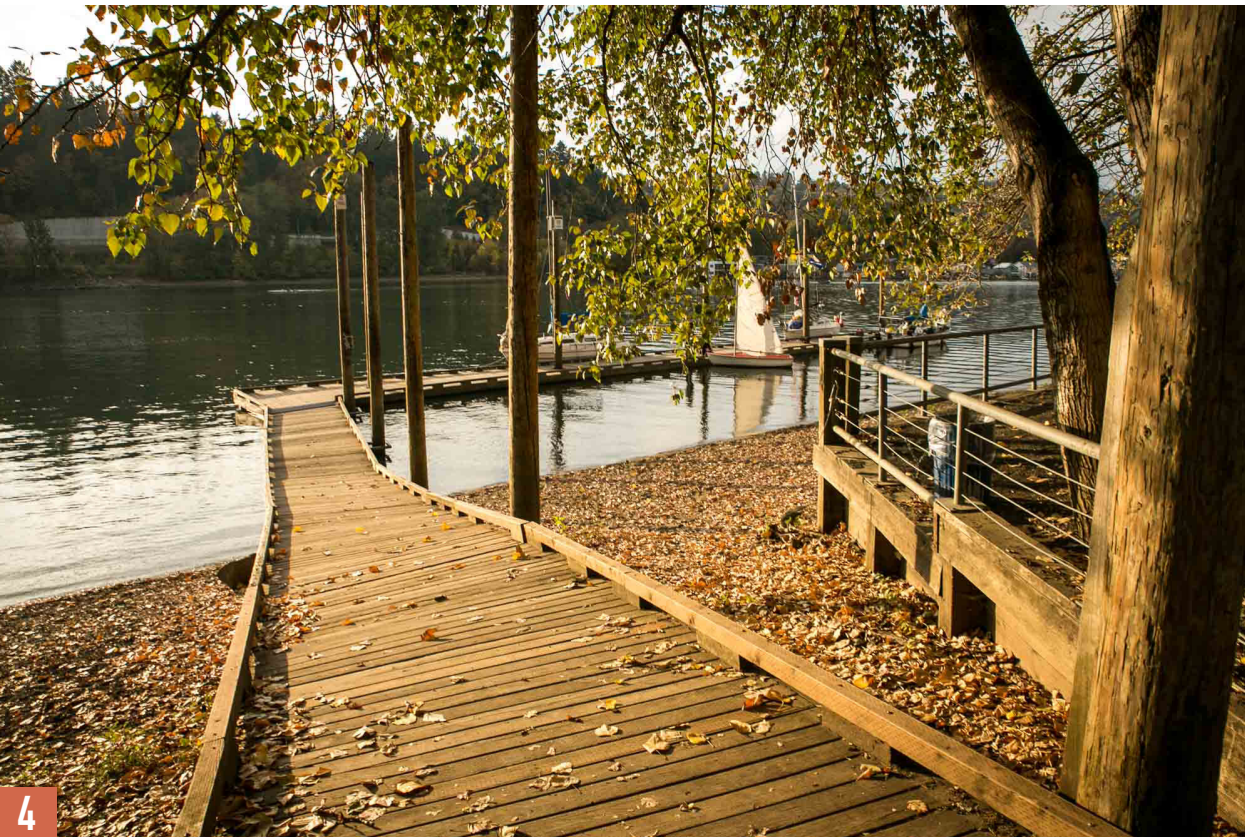
1
Elevated boardwalk wetland trail.



2
Asphalt loop around great lawn.



3
Framed views of the river and nearby Sellwood Bridge.



4
River access amenities such as dog-friendly beach and boat dock.



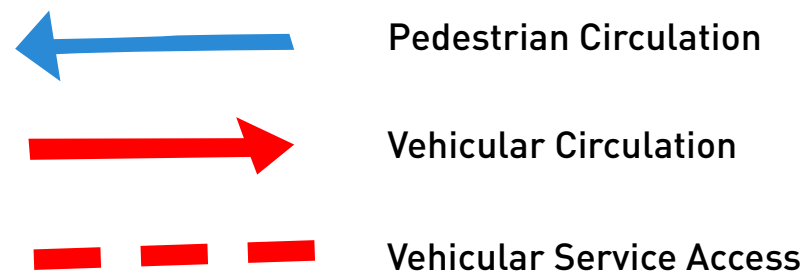
Connectivity to regional bike network.

Location:
 Los Angeles, CA
 Venice Blvd. & Pacific Ave.

The Historic Venice Canal District in Los Angeles, California consists of four parallel canals linked by a perpendicular canal at each end forming a rectangle approximately 900' by 1100'. A fifth canal, the Grand Canal, stretches over 1.5 miles from the District to the harbor at Marina del Rey.

The Canal District is lined with private homes except for a small pocket park on one corner. Vehicular access is provided by Dell Ave, which crosses the canals from NW to SE via four mixed use vehicular and pedestrian bridges, and alleyways behind the homes. There is pedestrian circulation throughout, including on both sides of the canals and via pedestrian bridges that connect the banks from NW to SE and NE to SW.

The Grand Canal features native habitat restoration along it's banks, as well as nature trail along part of it's northern bank, and a raised wooden observation platform where the canal meets the harbor.



1950's era Venice Canal District.



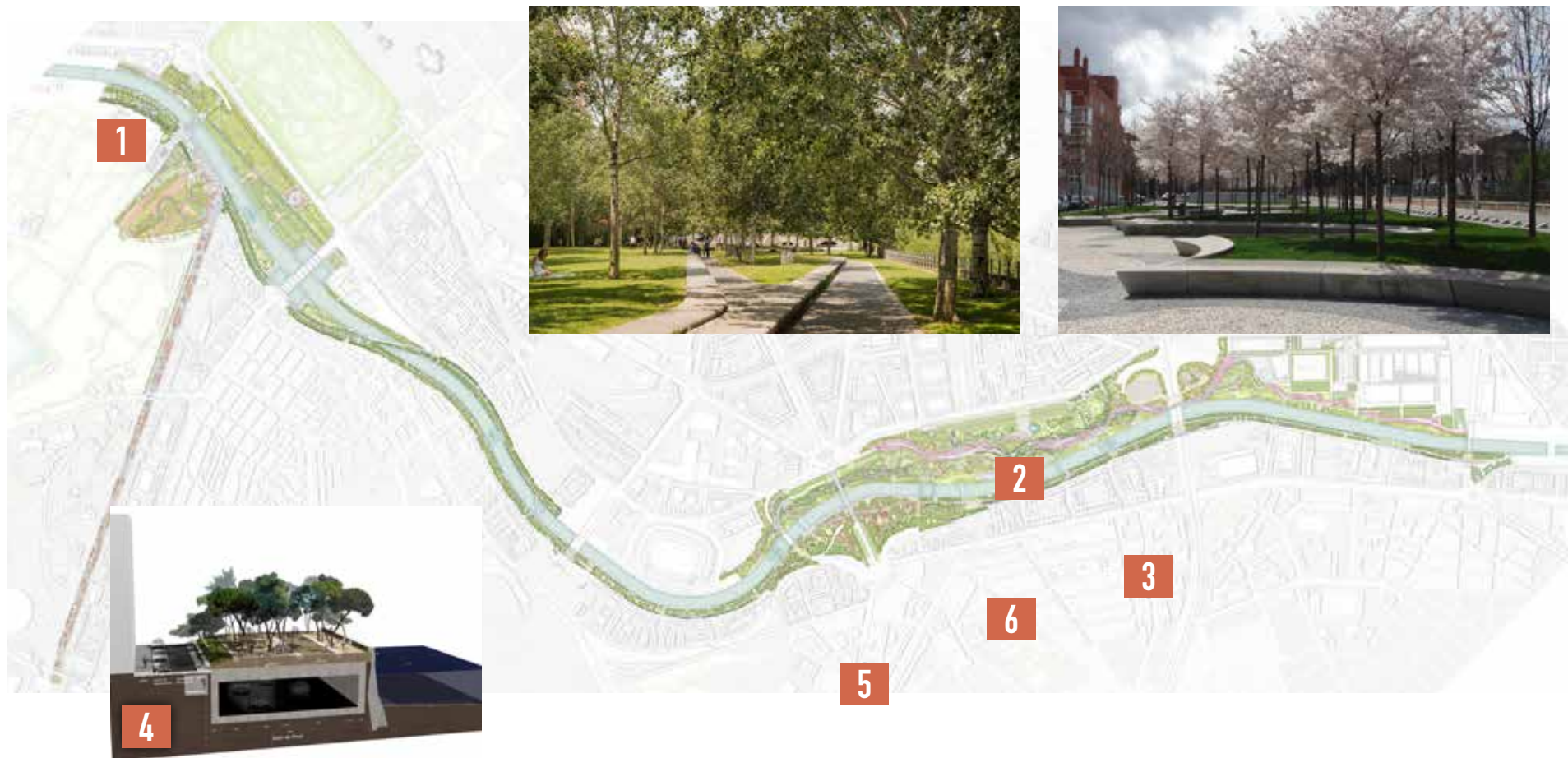
Construction for 1991-93 renovation project.



Venice Canal District in the 1920s.



Upgraded canal with pedestrian walkways, native saltbrush landscaping and new bridge.



1. The Manzanares River during the Renaissance Era. Note the royal palace up on the hill in the background.
2. Another section of the river in the 2000s with the former highway. Note historic dam N°8 with clock tower in the bottom right corner.



3. Close up of dam N°8 with new pedestrian bridge.
4. Motorway re-routed though tunnel.

Location: Manzanares River, Downtown Madrid, Spain

Size: 300 acres

Opened: 2011-2015

Architects: Ginés Garrido, Porras La Casta, Rubio & Álvarez-Sala, and West 8



Grand entrance with leaf motif parterres at the historic Toledo Bridge crossing. New Pasarela Bridge in the background.

"Playa de Madrid" splash pad urban beach. Note Dam N°8 in the background.

Strategic Spot Intervention

Targeted, relatively low-impact interventions add points of interest to the existing park structure, providing a linear park experience rich with trails, skate spots, outdoor fitness areas, and playgrounds.

1. Protected bus stops.
2. Bike lanes with traffic calming measures for safety and reduced noise

3. Skate spots
4. Seating
5. Restrooms (central)
6. Storm infrastructure
7. Viewing mounds (built with cut spoils from rain garden swales)
8. Framed views, bread crumbs, spontaneous experience.
9. Augmented Reality app brings the mural to life, providing closer views, context, and an activity top help users to engage with the park

10. Stormwater retention throughout.



Sky River

A suspended bridge follows the entire length of the park over the middle of the channel, providing views of the mural on both sides. The East bank of the park is partially converted to a bike path, gaining some ground from Coldwater Canyon Blvd. The bike path runs on a slightly elevated berm, and plating along the bike path shields the pedestrian area from bike traffic and road noise. Plazas on each end of the park offer a grand

entrance and connection node to park entrances, and an interpretative center with restrooms punctuates the middle of the space, where the Sky River bridge meets the existing bridge across the channel. Other cross connections along the length of the park offer on and off ramps from the Sky River throughout the space.



Coldwater Park

Coldwater Canyon Blvd. is routed through a tunnel, recaliming the space formerly occupied by the roadway with a bike path, sports fields/courts/courses, a technology training center affiliated with the college, and diverse native rain gardens.

mounds along the channel for views of the mural. Now that surface traffic is gone, you can hear water running in the riverbed below. The combination of planted stormwater swales, running streams with reclaimed water, generous riparian tree cover, and the viewing mounds give the feeling of being in a canyon as you meander through the shaded topography.

Cut material is used to create





Legend

Gateway Plaza 


Levee Bikeway 

Mound 

Swale 

Bridge (existing) 

Bridge (new) 

Tree (existing) 

Tree (new) 

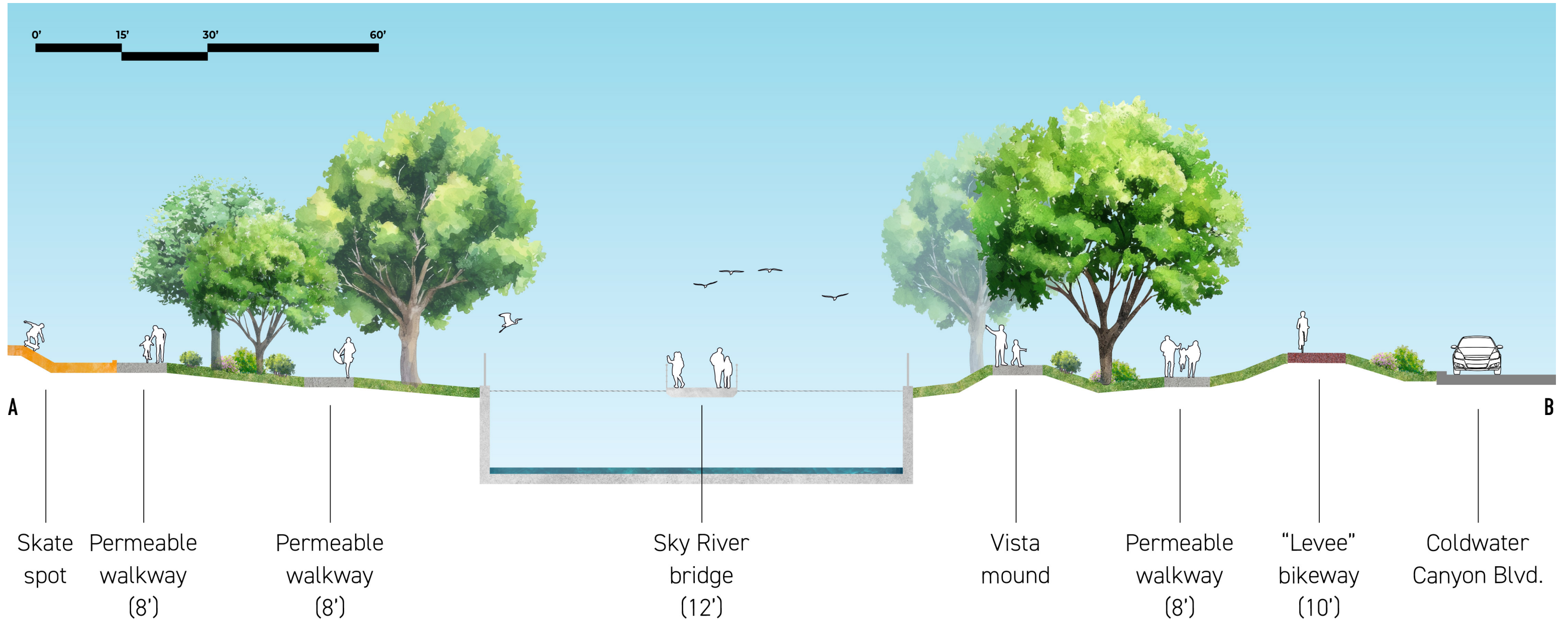
Restrooms 

Skate Spot 

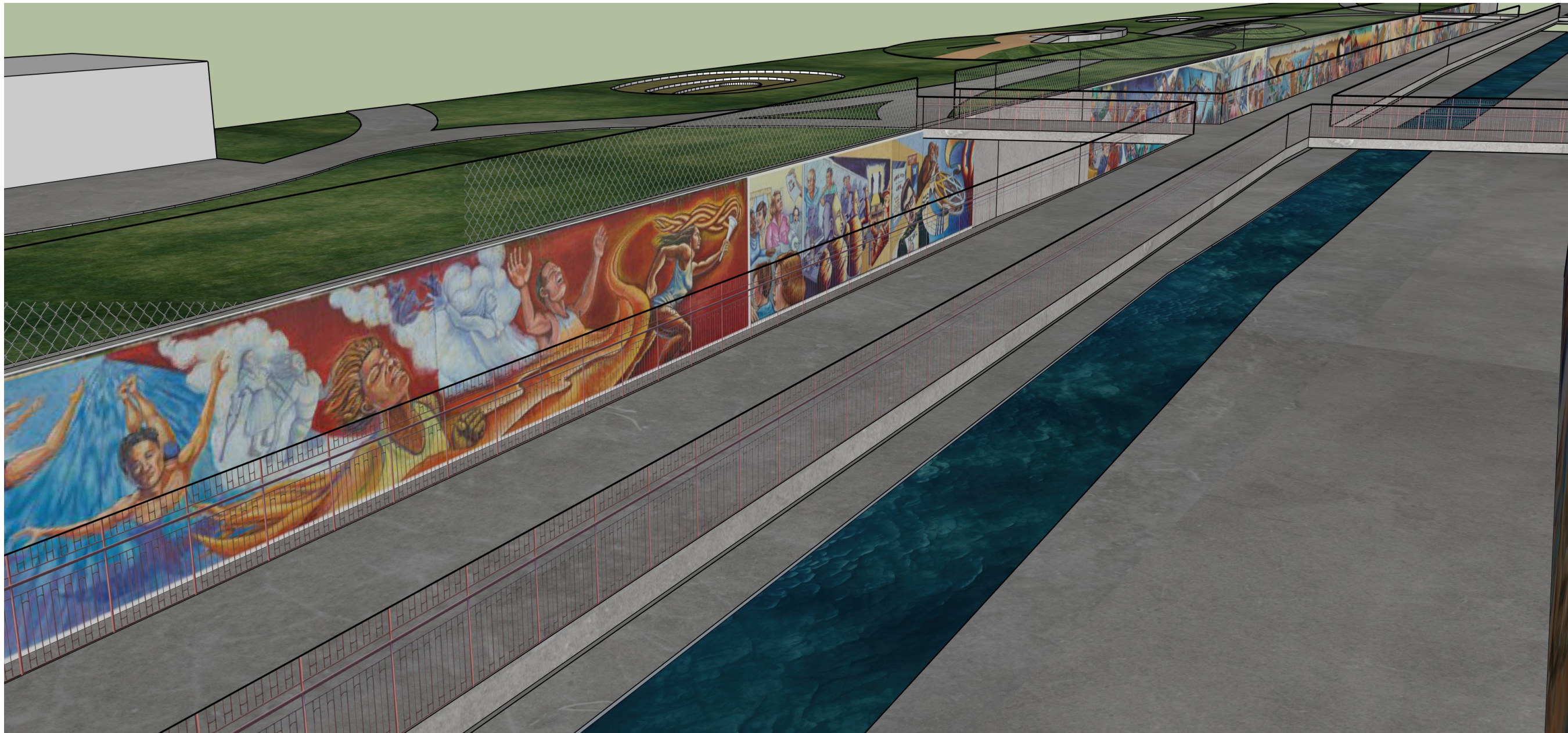
Workout Area 

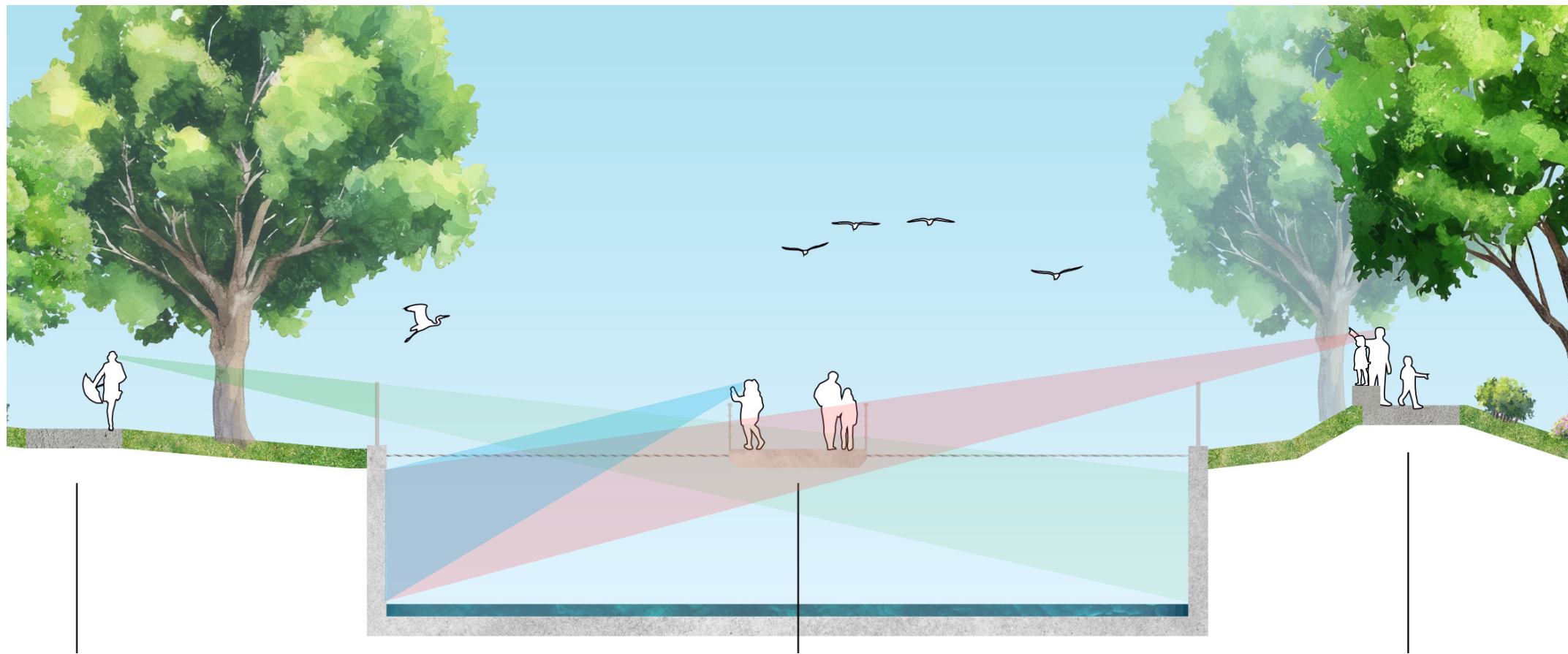
Water Pipe (existing) 

- Named for the suspended bridge that runs the length of the channel.
- Bridge and mounds designed to provide views of the mural
- Experience exploring series of valleys and depressions with views revealed around each corner
- Swales absorb runoff from existing site and paved active areas
- Spoils from swales used to build up viewing mounds
- Connectivity to Orange Line busway and bike path
- Coldwater Avenue narrowed to accommodate bikeway and slow traffic
- Former parking along Coldwater Canyon Blvd. replaced at northern end of the site.
- Crosswalks enhance connectivity with the neighborhood to the east
- Centrally located restroom facility near existing bridge.
- Mix of passive and active uses, with two skate spots west of the river and workout areas on the eastern side.



PROPOSAL 1: SKY RIVER - SECTION





Chain-link fence blocks sight line from path

Sky River bridge allows for close-up, unobstructed

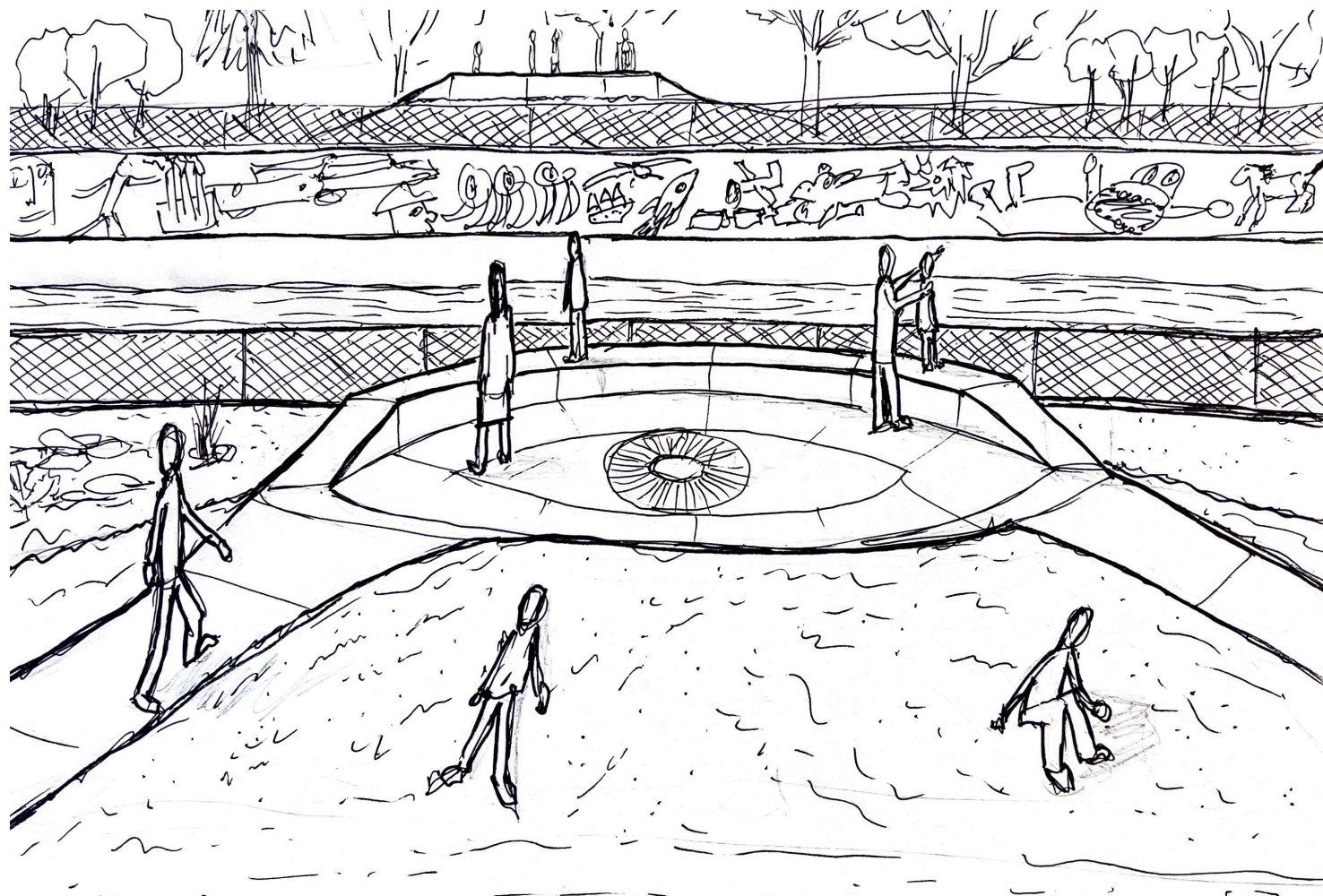
Mound with ledge provides view that is blocked by

- Sky River bridge greatly enhances views and proximity to the mural, but block views from either shore.
- Mounds enhance views without blocking them
- Bridge benefits do not justify cost and safety risks.
- **BACK TO THE DRAWING BOARD:**

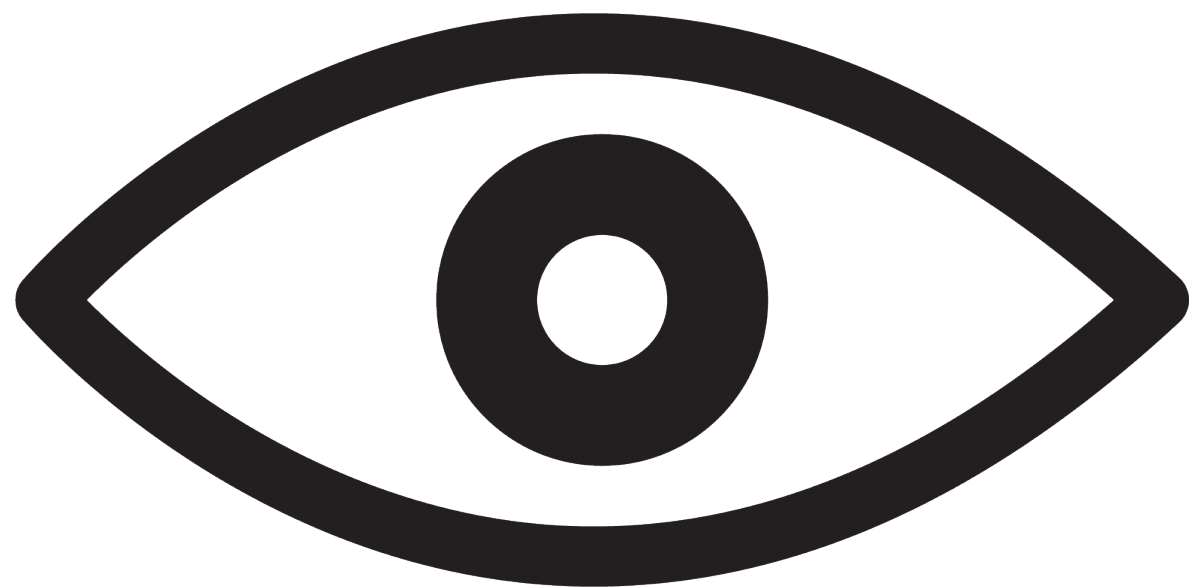
Proposal 2 will focus on the mounds and providing A Sense of History for people of all heights and abilities.

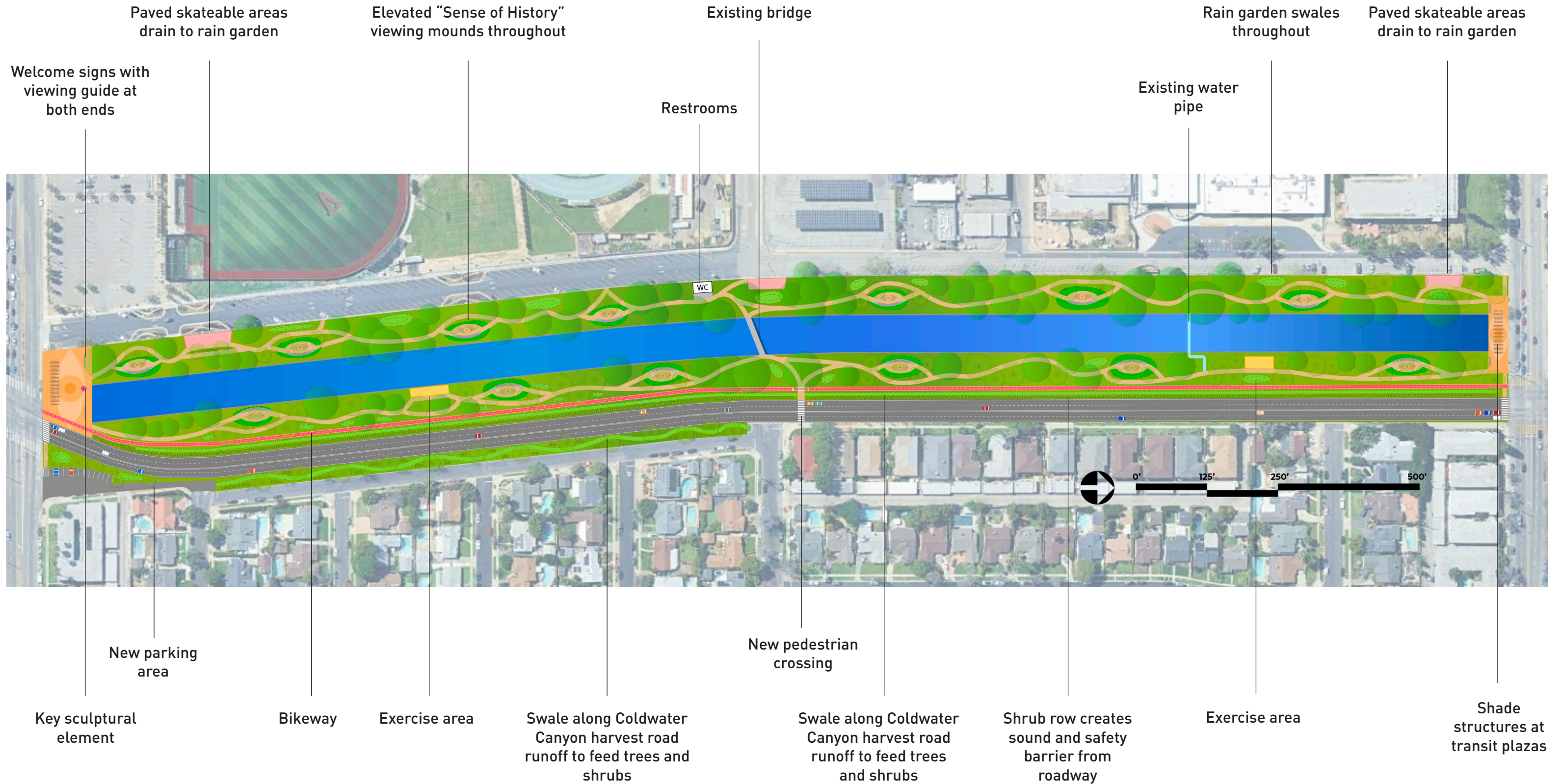


13 viewing mounds distributed along the channel banks create points of view covering the entire mural from both sides.



Viewing Mound development sketches









P5



P7



P6

