Open Gateway

A Linear Park for West Los Angeles

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UCLAx Capstone Studio
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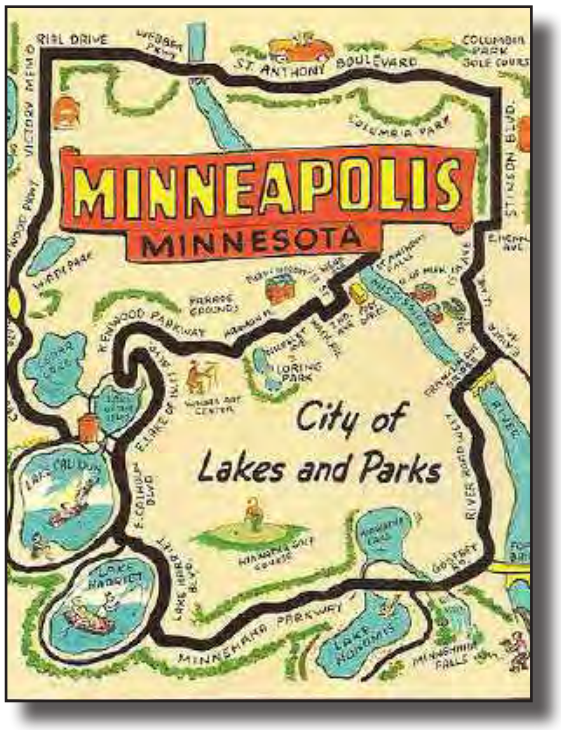
Personal Statement

One of the best parts about growing up in the Twin Cities is access to the Grand Rounds, a system of parkways that encircle and traverse the city of Minneapolis. These green corridors comprise of paths, footbridges, woodlands, lakeshores and riverbanks. While each stretch has its own name and identity, one can walk or bike the parkways of Minneapolis uninterrupted for some 51 miles.

It wasn't until I began the UCLAx program that I discovered that the Grand Rounds were designed by a single landscape architect named Horace W.S. Cleveland, one hundred and thirty years ago. Cleveland was a pioneer of landscape architecture, and incredibly forward thinking in his designs. Even in the 1880's, he prioritized preserving natural landscapes in these parkways as much as possible. His ecological approach is a crucial reason that many of the riverbanks, creeks and waterfalls around Minneapolis remain in their natural state. Cleveland incorporated bicycle paths into the plan, reflecting an emerging bicycle craze at the time. Those paths remain an essential part of the park system—and a principal reason why Minneapolis is known as one of the most bikeable major cities.

I have been a resident of Los Angeles for twenty years now, and feel fortunate for the world class parks we do have. But the Minnesotan in me has always wished that LA had parkway system that would allow people to move from place to place without the need for cars. The city would benefit from tree-lined corridors that puncture the urban morass and allow the city to breath. In 1930, the renowned Olmsted Brothers collaborated with Lanscape Architecht Harland Bartholomew on a commission to draw up conceptual plans for such a parkway system, one that replicated the success of Boston's "Emerald Necklace". That plan, entitled *Parks, Playgrounds, and Beaches for the Los Angeles Region* was regrettably never brought to fruition.

My daydreams of a scenic byway in Los Angeles is what motivated me to undertake this design. My Capstone Project envisions how we might convert a single street into a park. That may sound quaint in comparison, but then again, it must begin with a single street.



The Grand Rounds, Minneapolis' interconnected Parkway System (far left)

The Olmsted / Batholomew Associates conceptual plan for parkways across Los Angeles County (left)

Acknowledgements

I want to express my sincere gratitude to our Capstone supervisor, Meg Rushing Coffee. Her wisdom and guidance made this project attainable, and I have learned so much from her in the last seven months.

Profound thanks to all of my instructors throughout the program for sharing their experience and expertise. I walk through the world more aware because of you.

Thank you to Stephanie Landregan for helming this remarkable, multidisciplinary Landscape Architecture program and for embodying everything it is strives to teach. You have left artists and stewards in your wake.

I also want to recognize the neverending support I received from my wonderful family—my parents, my siblings, my wife and her family. You are the reason I was able to open up this new chapter. I love you.

Finally, thank you to my classmates. Your kindness, brilliance and talent has been a source of inspiration and delight.

Project Statement

Los Angeles faces a shortage of public park space, ranking 90th among the largest 100 U.S. cities, according to studies conducted by the Trust for Public Land. Only half of Angelenos live within a 10-minute walk of a park.[1] While there is an ongoing effort to expand access to green space, limited land availability is perhaps the most formidable obstacle.[2]

This project seeks to create a new public green space in a park-deprived area of West Los Angeles by transforming Gateway Boulevard, a high traffic street, into a linear public park.

Converting Gateway Boulevard into a linear park will encourage **community** connection, enhance neighborhood **health**, and contribute critical **green infrastructure** to a city on the front lines of a changing climate.

By trading a street for a park, and demonstrating the positive impact, this project could serve as a model for future park development in Los Angeles.

Project Location

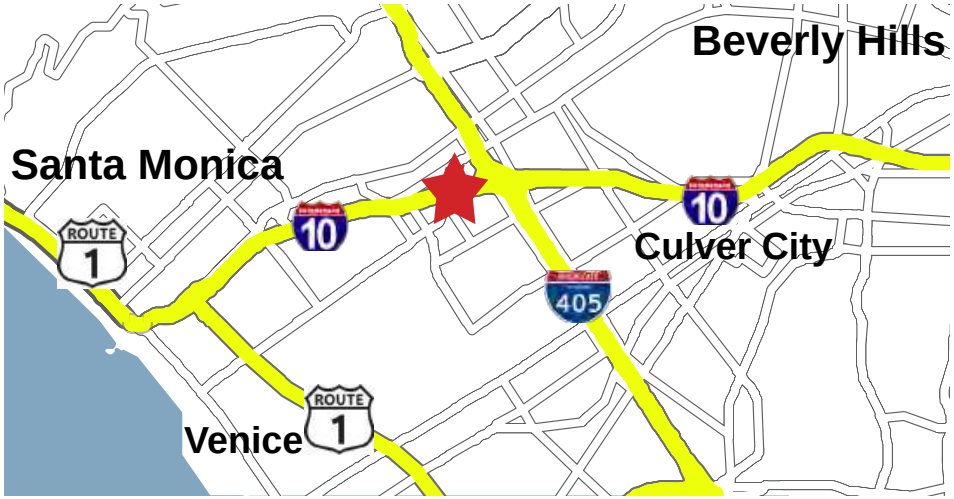
Los Angeles' West Side

Project Location

The project site is located in Los Angeles, California, just west of I-405, and bisected by I-10. The site limits are located both in the Sawtelle neighborhoods and Mar Vista neighborhoods.

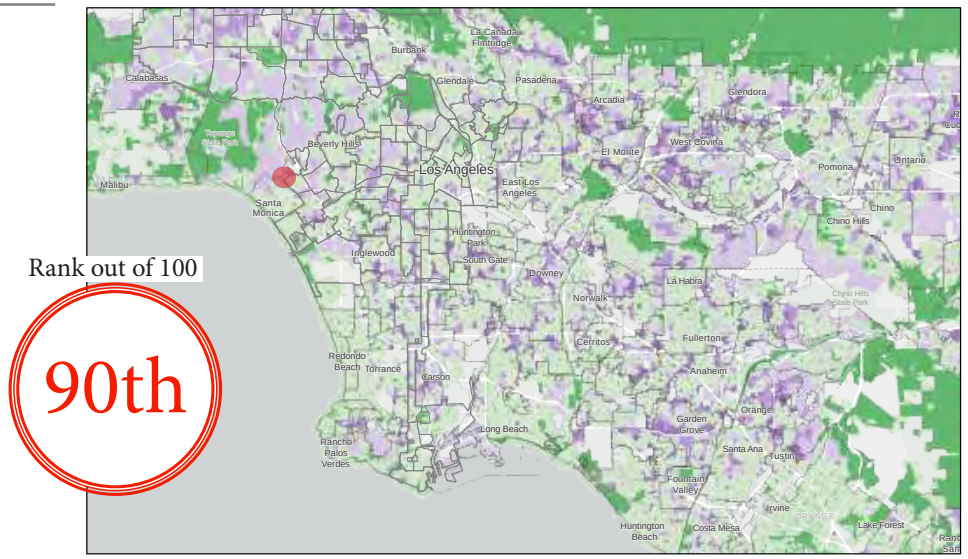
Gateway Boulevard is a diagonally running street that connects Pico Boulevard on the North to Ocean Park Boulevard on the South.

Since 1964, Gateway has been bisected by the 10 Freeway via an overpass.[18]



Why Here?

- The Trust for Public Land recently ranked the city of Los Angeles 90th in its annual Park Score ratings of the largest 100 metropolitan areas, attributing it to "decades long trend of divestment in city's green spaces".[1]
- The TPL reports that 1.5 million Angelenos reside more than 10 minutes walking distance from a green open space.[1]
- A TPL study identifies a number of high priority areas for new parks based on health, equity and climate metrics.[1]
- One such high priority area is located in the southest corner of the Sawtelle neighborhood in West Los Angeles.[1]

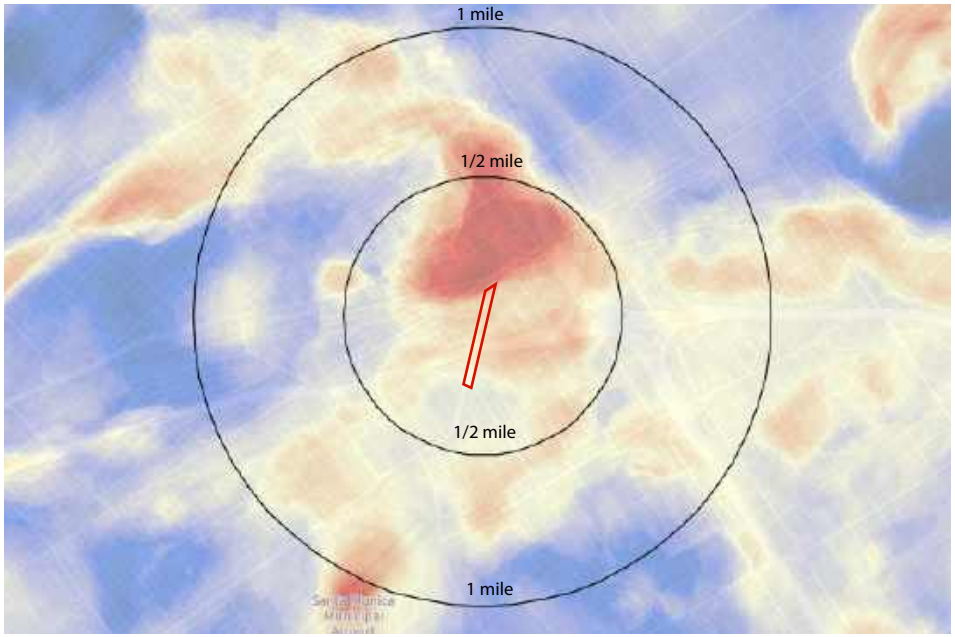


Priority Area for New Parks

Priority Areas for New Parks
- Very high priority
- High priority
- 10-minute walk service area
- Park with public access

1:30,000
0 0.2 0.4 0.8 mi
0 0.33 0.65 1.3 km

Urban Heat Islands



- Areas of very high heat
- Areas of high heat
- Areas of moderate heat index
- Areas of low heat

0.4 0.8

Project Justification

If this linear park were built, an additional 19,000 residents would be within walking distance of an open green space[2]

Social Connection

- Studies show that time spent in outdoor common spaces is related to stronger social cohesion. The presence of a new park will draw residents out of their homes and contribute to tighter bonds, which lead to safer, healthier and happier communities. [9] [11]

Public Health

- There is robust research linking access to public parks to positive health outcomes. Park space offers opportunities for exercise and physical activity, which affects cardiovascular health. More time spent in parks and green spaces can prevent or alleviate mental health issues like depression, anxiety and feelings of loneliness. [4] [5] [9] [10] [11]

- This area of West LA is transected by two freeways—the I-10 and the I-405—and two major thoroughfares in Pico and Olympic Blvds. According to the California Office of Health Hazard Assessment, and the area's Pollution Burden rates in the 89th percentile. Pollution Burden is an index that measures a combination of factors including ozone, diesel particulate matter, and PM2.5 particles, all of which are linked to heart and lung diseases, along with other adverse health factors. [12]

Environmental Sustainability

- Replacing concrete with trees, plants, and permeable surfaces will address the heat island effect by providing increased shade and heat absorbtion. [7]

- Park space allows the increased opportunity for stormwater management practices, such as bioswales and rain gardens that infiltrate water back into the water table. [6]

- Stormwater capture is a priority for the city of Los Angeles, as water scarcity increasingly becomes an issue. This project site offers an opportunity to integrate a stormwater capture facility. [6]

Economic Development

- The presence of a park could boost property values by 5%, according to estimates by the Trust for Public Land. [11] [13]

- Proximity to park will also encourage new housing development, which is vitally needed in Los Angeles. The park's location near public transit and commercial zones make it the ideal place for new housing projects. [8]

- A new park will attract park visitors from other neighborhoods that wouldn't otherwise visit, and increased foot traffic will allow for business opportunities and increased revenue along the corridor. [13] [14]

- A local park can host festivals, markets and events, bringing additional boosts to the local economy. [13]

Pacific Gateway

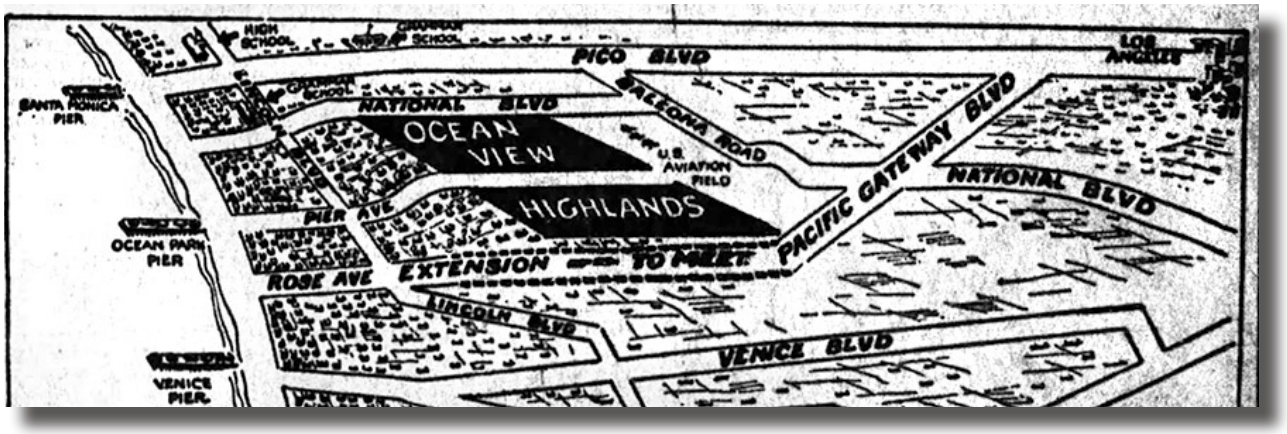
Gateway Boulevard was built in 1924 as the first phase of a plan by Hugh Pomeroy, the county planning commissioner, to create a shortcut between two key Westside neighborhoods: Sawtelle and Venice. [16]

The street was originally named **Pacific Gateway Boulevard** for this reason, because it would connect West LA residents to the nearby beaches. [16]

The plan envisioned that the Gateway connection to take place via a Rose Avenue extension, but that failed to happen. In 1938, extension was finally completed, instead connecting to Ocean Park Boulevard. [16]

Interstate 10 was completed in 1965, bisecting Gateway Boulevard with a freeway overpass. The construction of that overpass is visible in the picture at right (1962). [18 22]

Sawtelle was annexed by Los Angeles in 1922, with bordering Mar Vista following in 1927. [20 21]



1927

1934

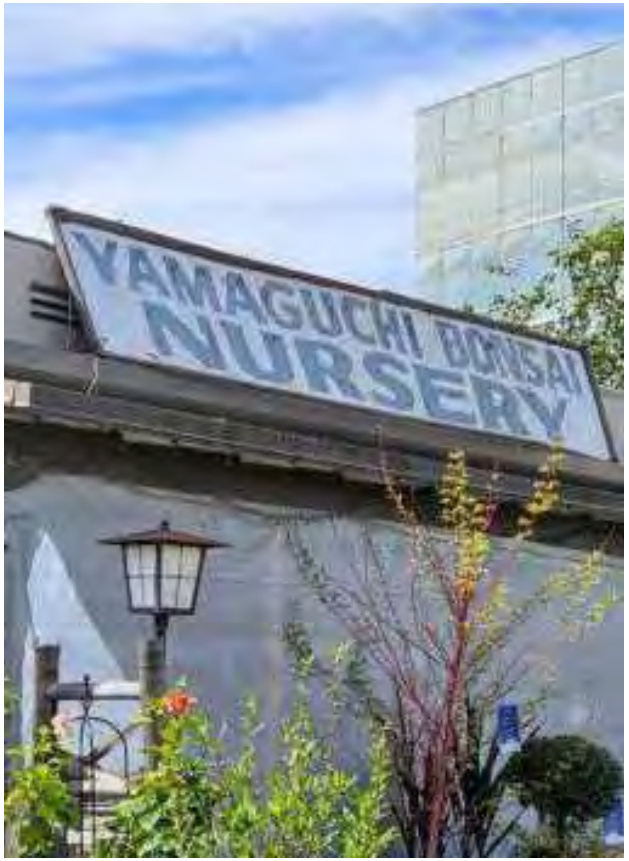
1941

1962

Lima Bean Farmland

Prior to 1924, the majority of Mar Vista, including the land surrounding Gateway Boulevard, was farmland. The main crop was lima beans, which thrived on the rich soils and foggy summers. The Lima Bean was brought to the US from Peru in the late 19th century, and quickly became a profitable crop that helped feed the nation during World War I. The end of the Lima Bean era came as residential development rapidly changed the character of LA's west side, and farmers shifted focus to other crops, such as strawberries. [19]

Sawtelle Japantown



The Sawtelle neighborhood became an enclave for Japanese immigrants beginning in the 1920's. Many were farmers, but a significant portion worked as landscape gardeners in nearby neighborhoods like Beverly Hills. Japanese owned plant nurseries sprang up, some of which remain in business. Japanese residents of Sawtelle were interned at Manzanar during World War II, but many returned after the war and continued to build the neighorhood. Today, Sawtelle retains a vibrant Japantown, teeming with restaurants and shops. [20] [21]

Mar Vista Gregory Ain Tract

Originally a farming community, Mar Vista saw rapid growth after World War II. In 1948, architect Gregory Ain designed a groundbreaking development of 52 modernist homes known as the Mar Vista Tract. The homes were mean to be simple, affordable, flexible, and forward looking. Lush and communal outdoor areas were designed by the legendary Landscape Architect, Garrett Eckbo. The Mar Vista Tract was designated as the city's first designated historic district, recognized for its innovative design. It remains largely intact in 2025. [15] [17]

Site Context

Citizens Charter School is spread over several buildings.

St. Joan of Arc Church

Multi-Unit Residential

The 10 Freeway Underpass is part of the project site

Shopping Center at Gateway and Barrington.

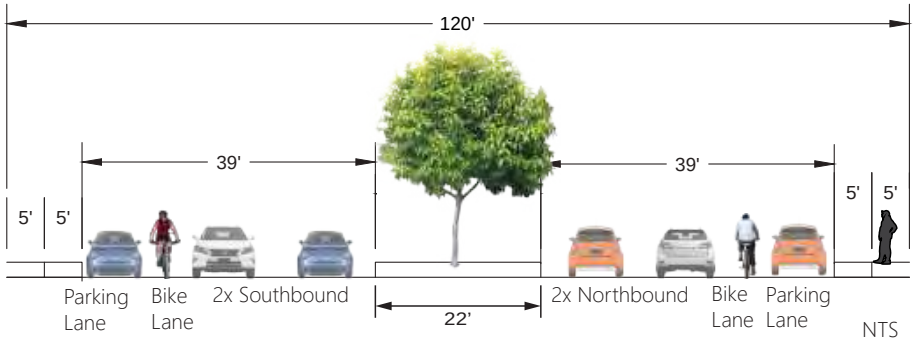
0 250′ 500′

Site Context

Gateway Blvd is one mile long in its entirety. This project will focus on the segment between Pico Blvd and Barrington Avenue, which is 1/3 mile long.

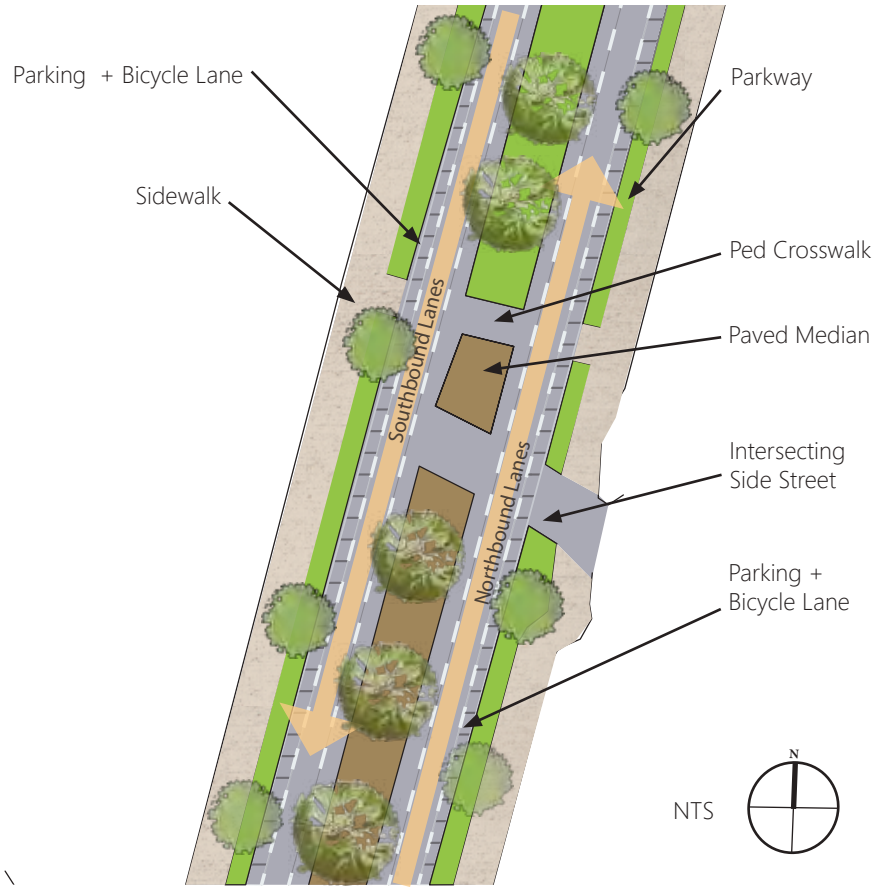
Square Feet	Total Width (incl. sidewalks)
169,250	120’
Acres	**Total Length**
3.89	1/3 mile

Boulevard Section



Existing Conditions

Typical Stretch of Boulevard



Primary Users

Given area demographics, the typical user of this park is a renter 30-50 years old, primarily white, but often hispanic or asian. Up to 25% of locals are immigrants. The users are college educated, and generally upper middle class. While that is the main demographic of the neighborhood, a new park in West Los Angeles would benefit a wide array of people in the community [23]:

Local Residents

For the 19,000 residents in this area, the nearest park is a 20 minute walk. [1]

Kids of All Ages

There are 11 schools within a mile of this project site, including one school directly on Gateway Boulevard.

Bikers and Runners

A linear park would draw bikers and runners from the Expo Bike Path, allowing connection and exploration.

Senior Citizens

An estimated 4500 senior citizens would be in walking distance of a welcoming place to exercise and socialize.[23]

Goals and Objectives

Goals

Community Connection

Neighborhood Health

Green Infrastructure

Objectives

- Create a destination that can host events and gathering
- Design spaces for lounging, seating, and interaction
- Incorporate a children's play area for neighborhood families
- Integrate areas for food trucks
- Include a small dog park

- Introduce walking paths and bicycle lanes that encourage movement
- Add shade trees and plantings to ameliorate the heat island effect.
- Include exercise equipment stations to encourage physical fitness for local residents
- Include community gardens, shown to improve diet and mental health

- Take advantage of city storm drain system for large scale stormwater capture and management
- Install curbs cuts, permeable pavers, and raingardens to divert and infiltrate stormwater
- Install green barriers along overpass to reduce air pollution
- Integrate clean energy infrastructure to mitigate costs of operation

Potential Programming

Community Connection

Event Lawn
5000 square feet
Flexible space for playing and Gathering

Picnic / Food Vendor Area
1500 sq ft
Feeding neighbors and relationships

Small Dog Park
2500 sq ft
A place for friends and companions

Splash Pad
1500 square feet
Fun and cool in the LA heat

Neighborhood Health

Class I Bicycle Path
1/3 mile
Connecting to the Expo Bike Path

Pollinator Garden
5000 sq ft
Gardens provide a myriad of health benefits

Children's Playground
1500 sq ft
Getting parents and children outdoors

Community Exercise Equipment
700 sq ft
Fitness with no annual contract

Green Infrastructure

Underground Stormwater Cistern
80,000 cubic feet
Subterranean Cistern

Rain Gardens
10,000 sq ft
Diverting water and creating natural irrigation systems

Permeable Plazas
5000 sq ft
A place for friends and companions

Planted Barriers
500 Linear Feet
Placed Along Freeway Overpass

Potential Influences

Trust for Public Land / ParkScore Since 1972, the TPL has been one of the most authoritative voices regarding public park policy. It has developed a data driven approach to measuring the effectiveness of parks—a scoring system that considers area, investment, amenities, access, and equity. This project will seek to design a park that meets exceeds the TPL's measures that make for a successful park. [28] [30]

A selection of location and design measures that are scored by the TPL:

- Population within 10 minute walk radius
- Space must encourage informal public use (e.g., the public is encouraged to walk through and stay awhile)
- Space must encourage at least one 'park-like' activity such as socializing, enjoying nature, or play/exercise
- Park design must address safety from crime and physical hazards
- Benefits for the city beyond the boundaries of the parks
- Park Amenities prioritized, measured, and scored by the TPL: playgrounds, restrooms, recreation / senior centers, splashpads, sportsfields, basketball courts
- Equity: The park is scored based on the percentage of people of color and low income households within a 10 minute radius.

City of LA Urban Design Principles This handbook used by LA's department of city planning focuses on 3 primary goals for any urban design project: mobility, health, and resilience with ten guidelines to achieve this. Any design will seek to address these principles to align with the objectives of the city. The ten guidelines [29]:

1. Promote a safe, comfortable and accessible pedestrian experience for all.
2. Carefully incorporate vehicular access such that it does not degrade the pedestrian experience.
3. Design projects to actively engage with streets and public space and maintain human scale.
4. Organize and shape projects to recognize and respect surrounding context.
5. Express a clear and coherent architectural idea.
6. Provide amenities that support community building and provide an inviting, comfortable user experience.
7. Carefully arrange design elements and uses to protect site users
8. Protect the site's natural resources and features.
9. Configure the site layout, building massing and orientation to lower energy demand and increase the comfort and well-being of users
10. Enhance green features to increase opportunities to capture stormwater and promote habitat

Design Precedents

Monon Boulevard & Midtown Plaza

LOCATION
Carmel, Indiana

CLIENT
City of Carmel

YEAR COMPLETED
2019

PROJECT TYPE
Linear Park, Neighborhood reneweal

SIZE
7.4 acres, 6 blocks

BUDGET
$32 million

AMENITIES
Lounge Areas, Bicycle path, City Plaza, Connects to Greenway, game courts

DESIGN TEAM
Rundell Ernstberger Associates
Crossroad Engineering, LHB Engineering, RLR Associates, White Construction

KEY TAKEAWAYS [26]

- Transforms a former industrial area into a vibrant urban center.
- Park includes pedestrian and bicycle paths, gathering spaces, benches and landscapes.
- Includes parking and slow lane for local traffic.
- Stormwater collection system that services entire midtown area, and which satisfies the park's irrigation needs.
- Park has resulted in $175 million in private investment in the area

Design Precedents

New Orleans Convention Center

LOCATION
New Orleans, LA

BUDGET
$65 million

CLIENT
Ernest N. Morial Exhibition Hall Authority

AMENITIES
Event lawns, walking paths, road diet, shuttle stops, public art

YEAR COMPLETED
2020

DESIGN TEAM
SMM, MAEDR

PROJECT TYPE
Road Diet, Public Plaza, Public Park

SIZE
7.5 acres (1 mile in length)

KEY TAKEAWAYS [24]

- A similarly sized site (120' wide).
- 2 lanes of traffic eliminated to create a public linear park at the edge of a convention center.
- Flexible spaces that accommodate a wide range of programmatic activities for both the convention center and New Orleans.
- All stormwater will collected and cleaned on-site through the use of green infrastructure
- Bus, taxi and rideshare terminals assist visitor access.
- 200 additional trees planted

Design Precedents

Before

After

East Campbell Avenue Underpass

LOCATION
Campbell, California

CLIENT
City of Campbell

YEAR COMPLETED
2016

PROJECT TYPE
Freeway Underpass Renovation

SIZE
11,000 square feet

BUDGET
$4.85 million

AMENITIES
Pedestrian Path, Lighting / Art work / Native Plantings

DESIGN TEAM
Biggs Cardosa Associates

KEY TAKEAWAYS [27]

- Project renovated an existing Highway underpass. Existing sidewalk was quite narrow: 4' across. W
- Design retained existing structural framework, but carved out more space for pedestrians.
- This was achieved by excavating 4,700 cubic yards of dirt from the side embankments and installing a retaining wall.
- The sidewalk was widened to 26 feet on each side of the underpass, for 11,000 square feet of space of additional space.
- Artistic lighting installations that depicts locally grown produce was installed, along with wayfinding and signage.
- An array of stepped planters and stormwater drainage were included in the final design.
- LED lighting and camera surveillance are installed for safety precautions.

Design Precedents

Culver Steps

LOCATION
Culver City, Los Angeles

BUDGET
$35 Million

CLIENT
Hackman Capital Partners, City of Culver City

AMENITIES
Lounge areas, shade structures, transit access, creative hardscaping, underground parking

YEAR COMPLETED
2020

DESIGN TEAM
SWA, Ehrlich Yanai Rhee Chaney Architects

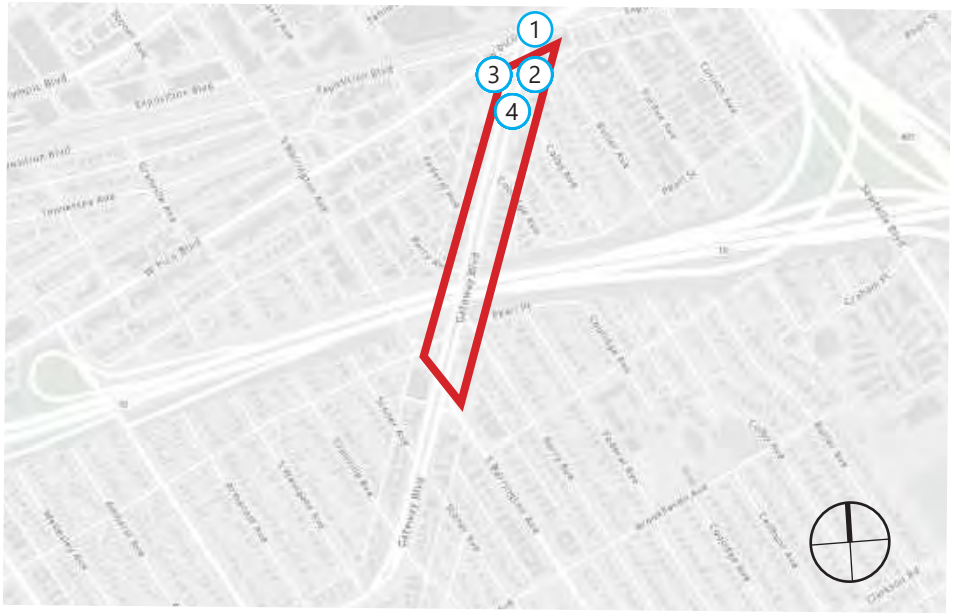
PROJECT TYPE
City Plaza, Mixed Use Site

SIZE
2.5 Acres

KEY TAKEAWAYS [25]

- Project includes 350 parking stalls in an underground structure.
- Formerly a street, this small park encourages socializing, gatherings and events
- Shade, seating, lawns, and new trees were all included in the new design.
- By 2023, the economic impact was an estimated $150 miilion

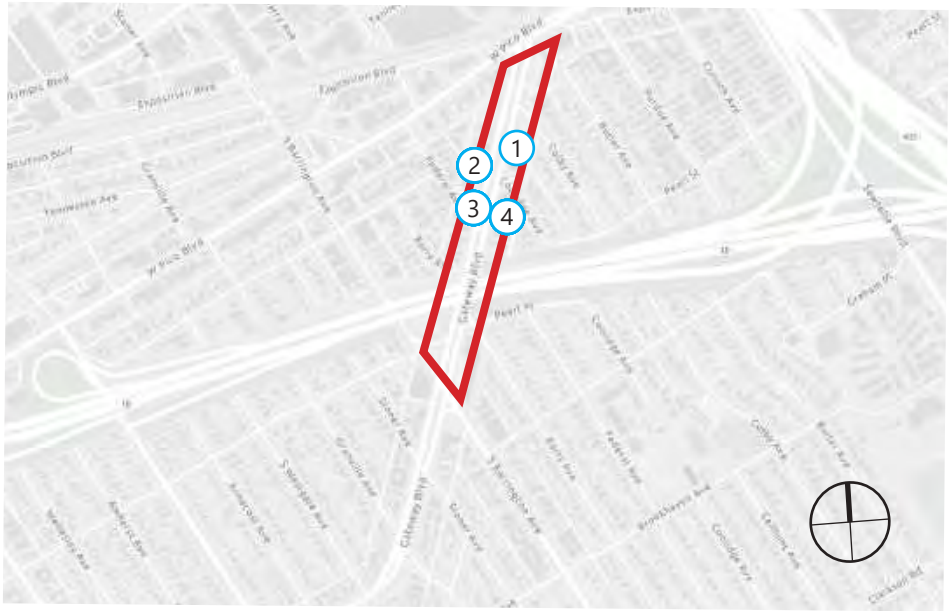
Existing Conditions: Gateway Blvd / Pico Blvd



Notes

1. Intersection of Gateway and Pico, looking northbound. View of Expo Line.
2. Car mechanic businesses in strip mall on Gateway, just south of Pico.
3. Citizens of the World Charter School Building on Gateway
4. Typical view of Parkway trees on Gateway Boulevard, all of which are New Zealand Christmas trees.

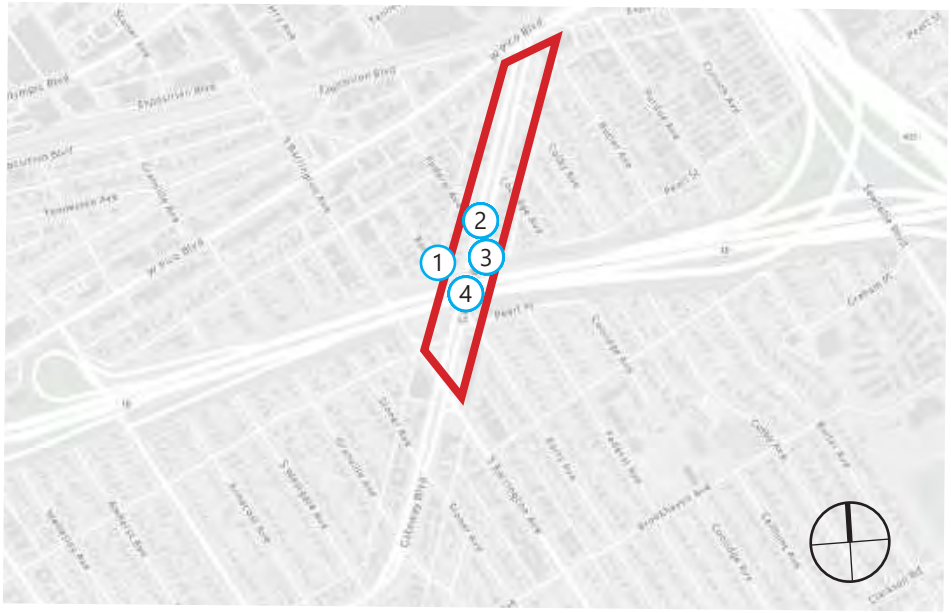
Existing Conditions: Gateway Blvd / Coolidge Ave



Notes

1. Joan of Arc Church
2. Citizens Charter School, Second Building and School Yard
3. Southbound Sidewalk along Gateway, looking towards 10 Freeway
4. Typical multi-unit residentail complex, and center median, at Coolidge and Gateway.

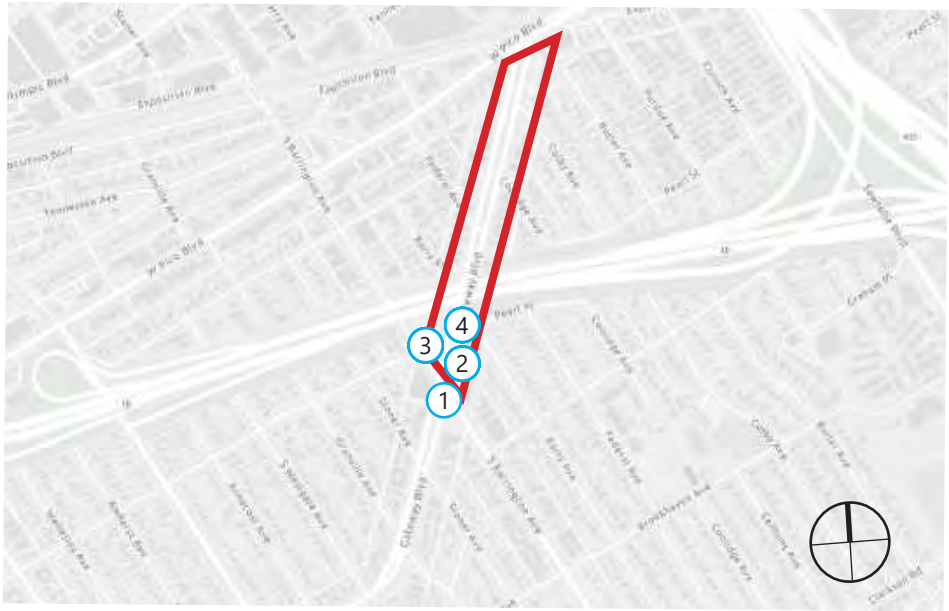
Existing Conditions: Gateway Blvd / Coolidge Ave



Notes

1. Freeway ROW at Gateway and Barry Ave
2. Concrete divider looking southbound at 10 Freeway
3. Sidewalk / parkway conditions looking northbound just north of 10
4. Looking southbound under 10 Freeway underpass. The right of way narrows by 20' under freeway, eliminating parkways.

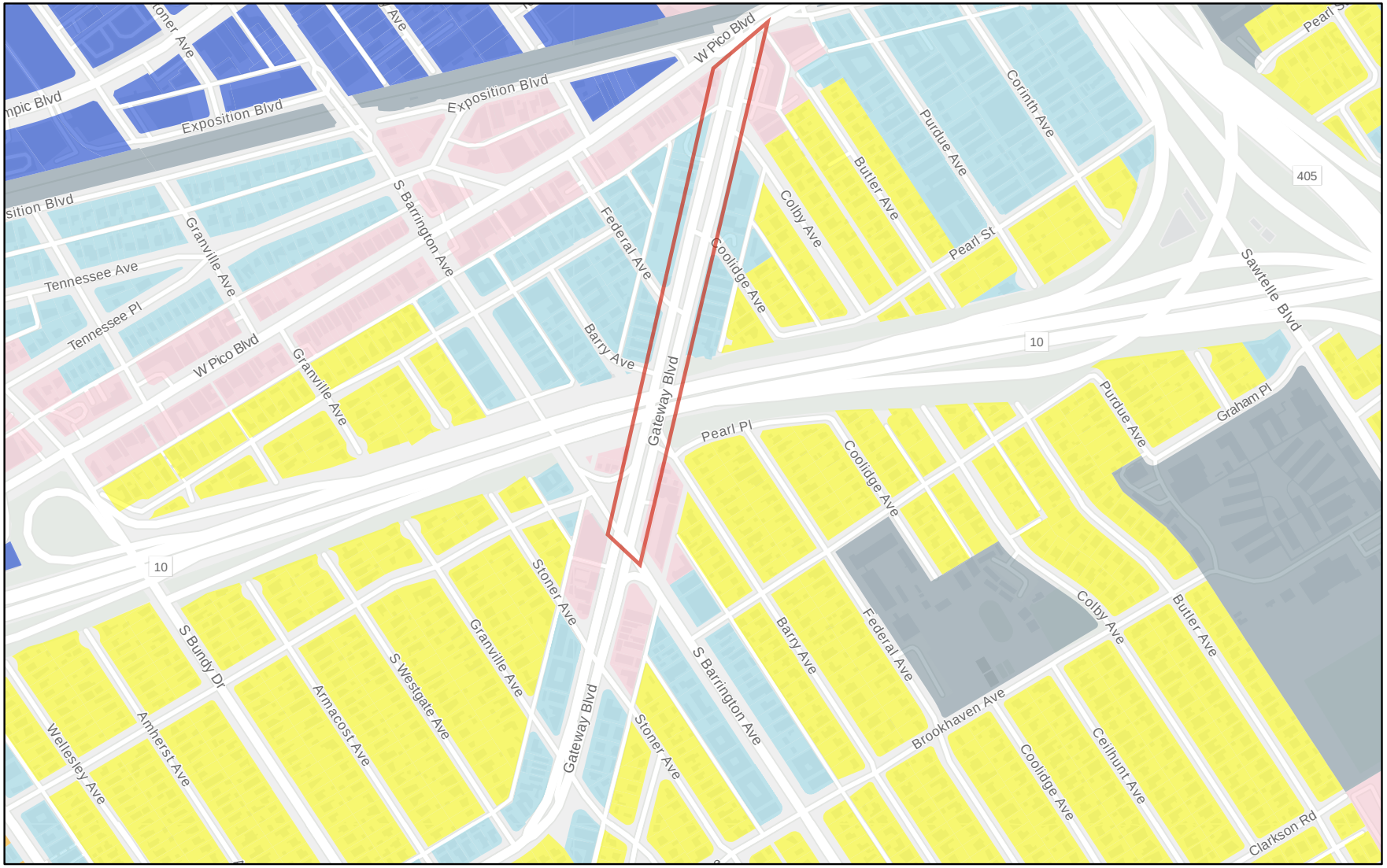
Existing Conditions: Gateway Blvd / Coolidge Ave



Notes

1. Intersection Gateway Bld and Barrington Avenue, commercial & residential
2. Shopping Center on east side of Gateway and Barrington Avenue
3. Triangular median on West Side of Gateway and Barrington.
4. Gateway Boulevard, looking north at 10 freeway overpass.

Area Zoning



LEGEND

- Single Family Residential
- Multi-Family Residential
- Commercial
- Schools
- Industrial

1:7,500

0 0.05 0.1 0.2 mi

0 0.07 0.15 0.3 km

Sources: Esri, TomTom, Garmin, FAO, NOAA, USGS, (c) OpenStreetMap contributors, and the GIS User Community, Sources: Esri, TomTom, Garmin,

Area Demographics

Population

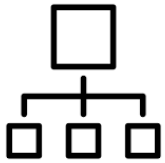
27,553 Total Residents
39.8 Years Median Age

Income and Housing

$129,703 Median Income
7% At or below poverty line
50% Renters
30% work from home
24 minute average commute to work

Stakeholders

- LA City / County
- Sawtelle Neighborhood
- Mar Vista Neighborhood
- Caltrans / State
- Local Residents
- Local Businesses



Jurisdictions

Neighborhood Councils:
Sawtelle, Mar Vista Westside

City Council Districts:
CD11

Community Plan Area: Sawtelle, Palms-Mar Vista-Del Rey

Area Planning Commision:
West Los Angeles APC

Freeway ROW:
State of California

Race:

White: 57%

Hispanic: 16%

Black / AA: 3%

Asian: 18%

Native: 0.5%

Other: 6%

Age:

0-19: 19%

20-39: 33%

40-59: 25%

60-79: 19%

80+: 5%

Foreign Born Population

25% Foreign Born Persons

Europe: 20%

Asia: 45%

Latin America: 21%

Africa: 8%

Oceana: 1%

Other: 6%

Education

70.6% Bachelor's Degree or Higher
33.6% Graduate Degree

*All data from
2020 Census Data Maps [4]
ZIMAS [40]

Priority Area for New Parks

Priority Areas for New Parks

- Very high priority
- High priority
- 10-minute walk service area
- Park with public access

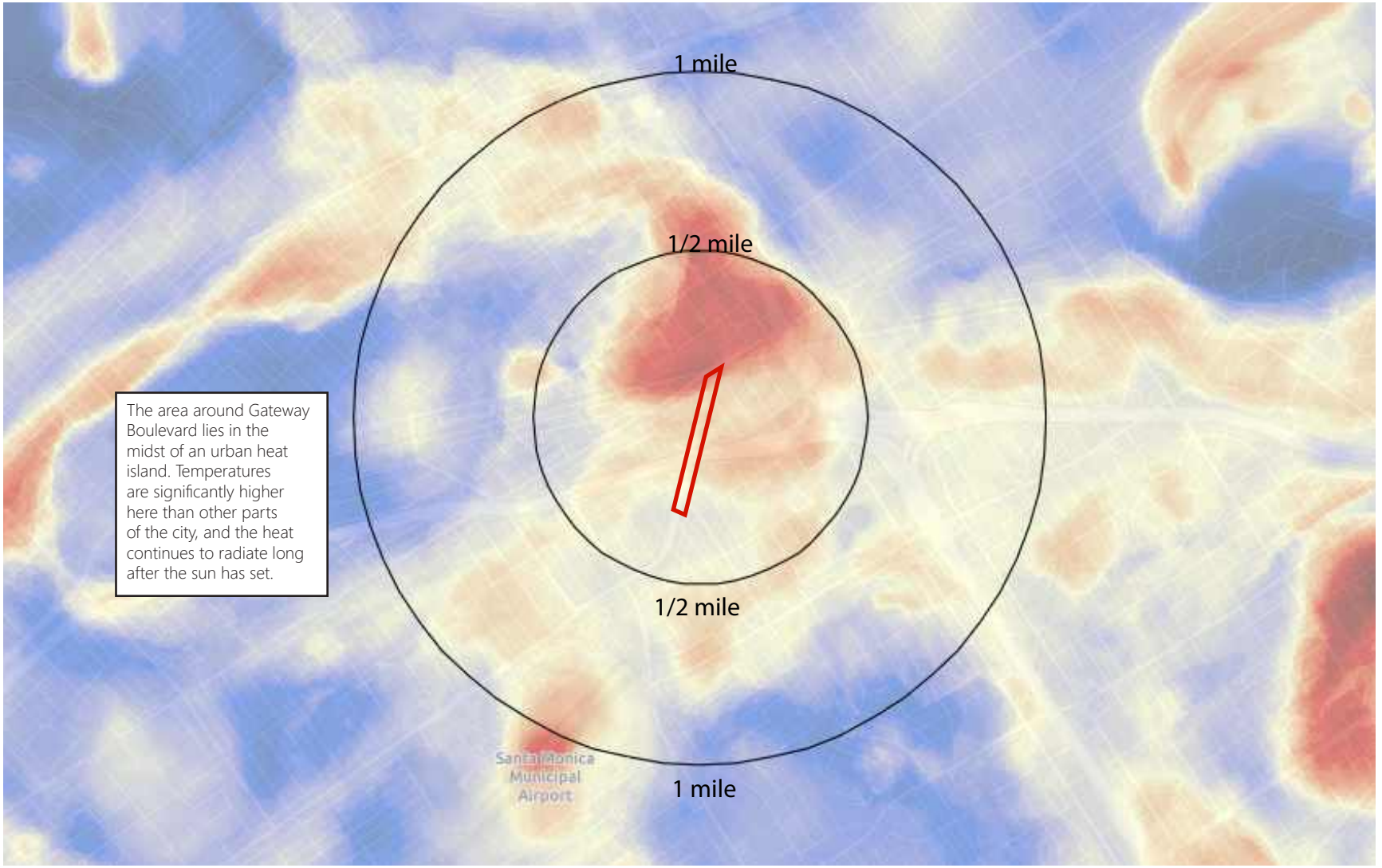
1:30,000

0 0.2 0.4 0.8 mi

0 0.33 0.65 1.3 km

Sources: Esri, TomTom, Garmin, FAO, NOAA, USGS, (c) OpenStreetMap contributors, and the GIS User Community, Sources: Esri, TomTom, Garmin,

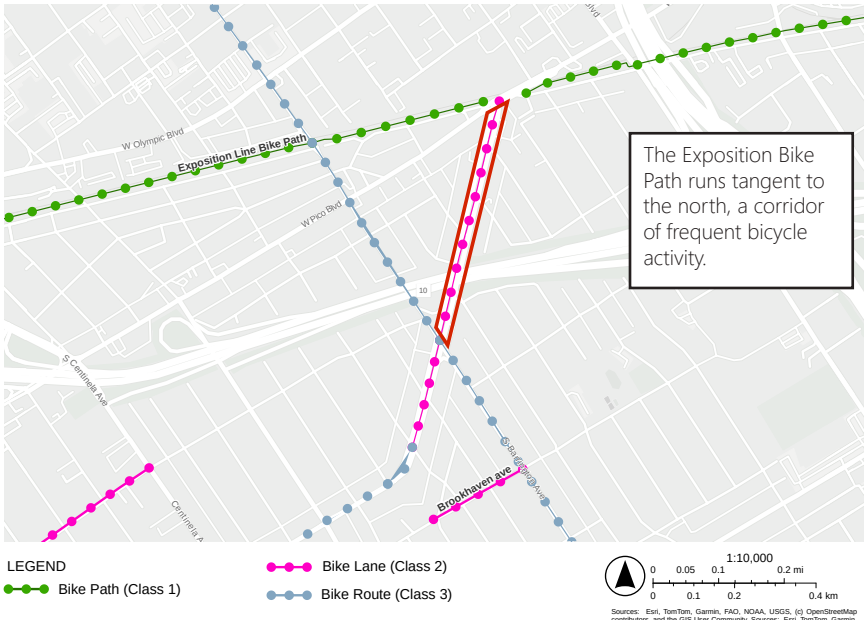
Urban Heat Islands



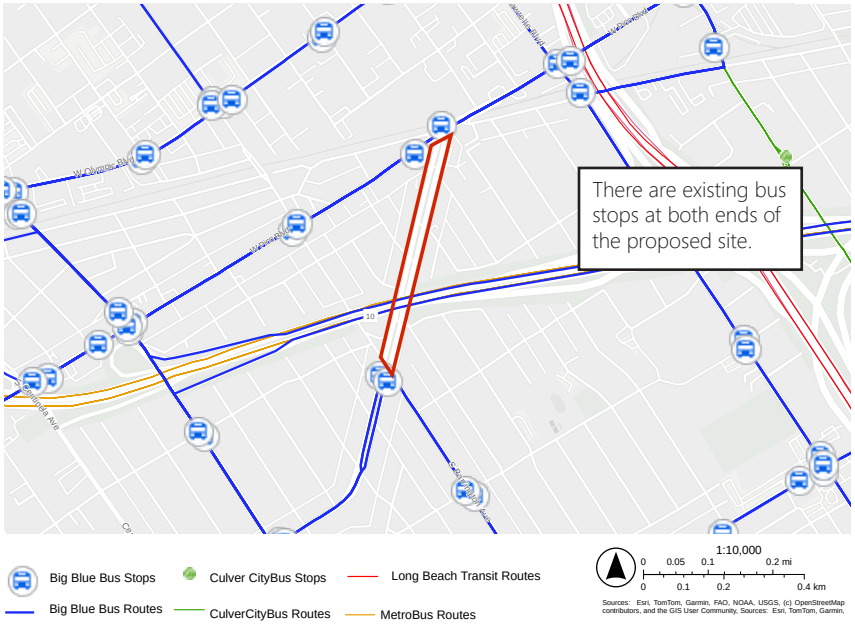
Site Analysis: Community Connection

Nearby Schools

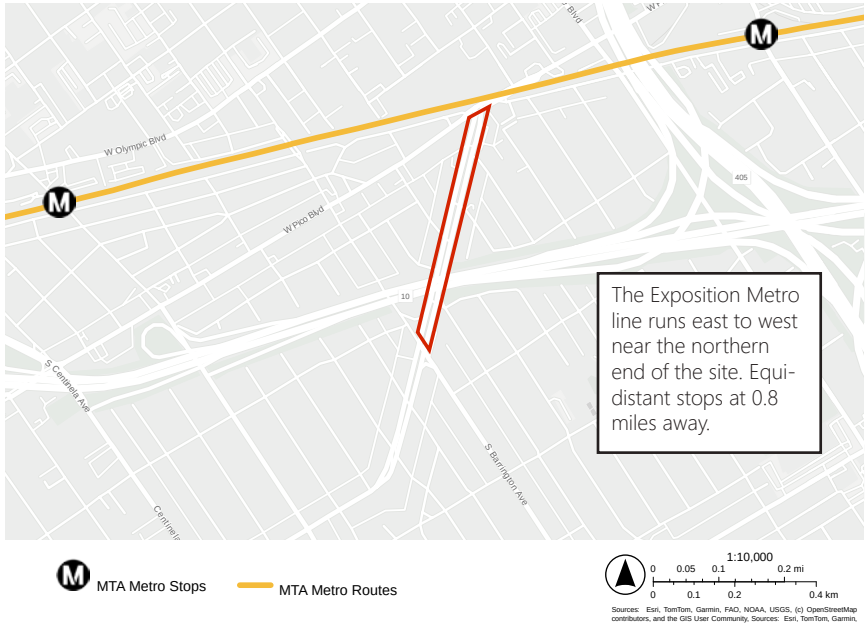
Bicycle Paths



Bus Lines

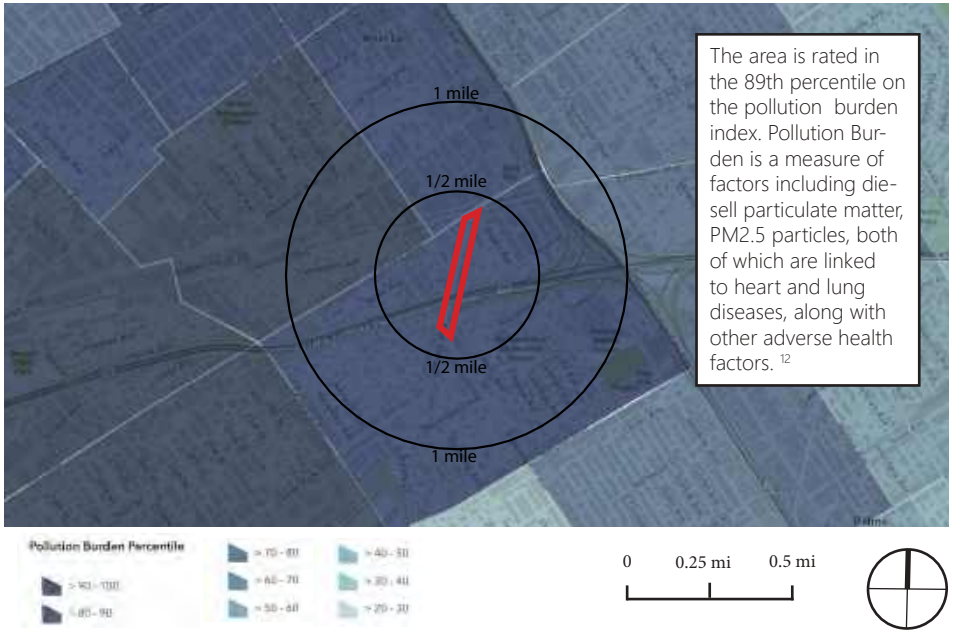


Rail Lines



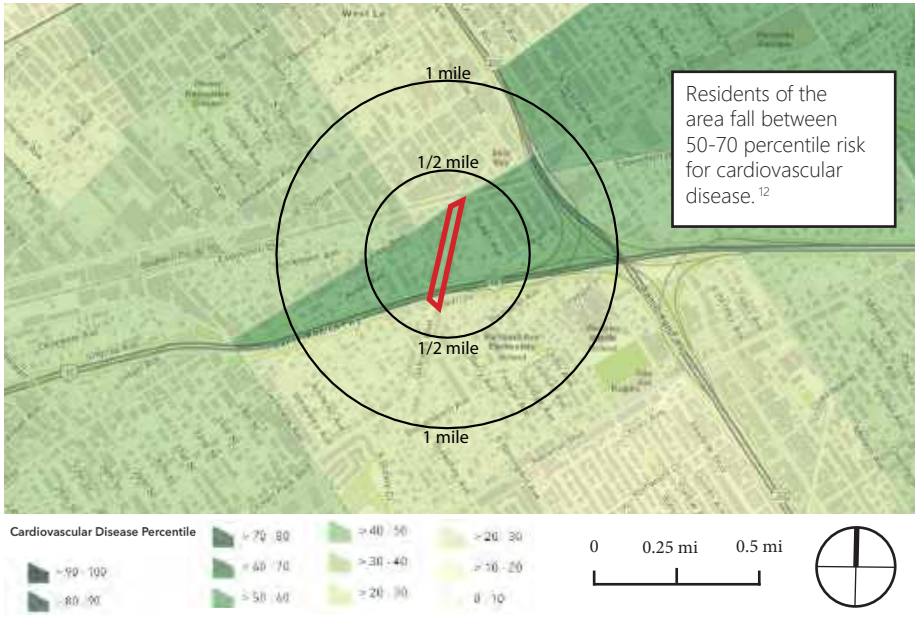
Site Analysis: Neighborhood Health

Pollution Burden



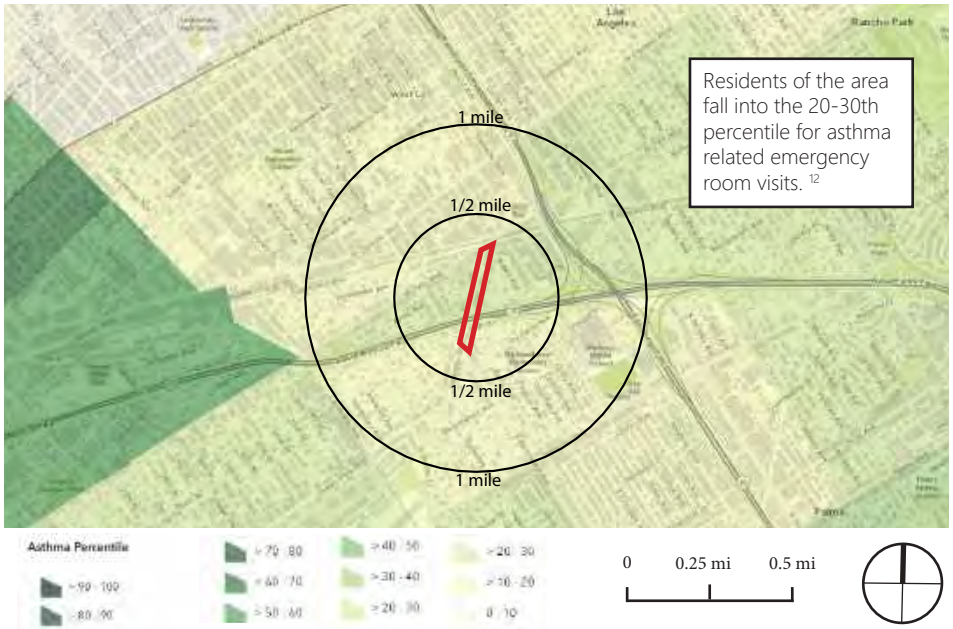
The area is rated in the 89th percentile on the pollution burden index. Pollution Burden is a measure of factors including diesell particulate matter, PM2.5 particles, both of which are linked to heart and lung diseases, along with other adverse health factors. [12]

Cardiovascular Disease



Residents of the area fall between 50-70 percentile risk for cardiovascular disease. [12]

Asthma



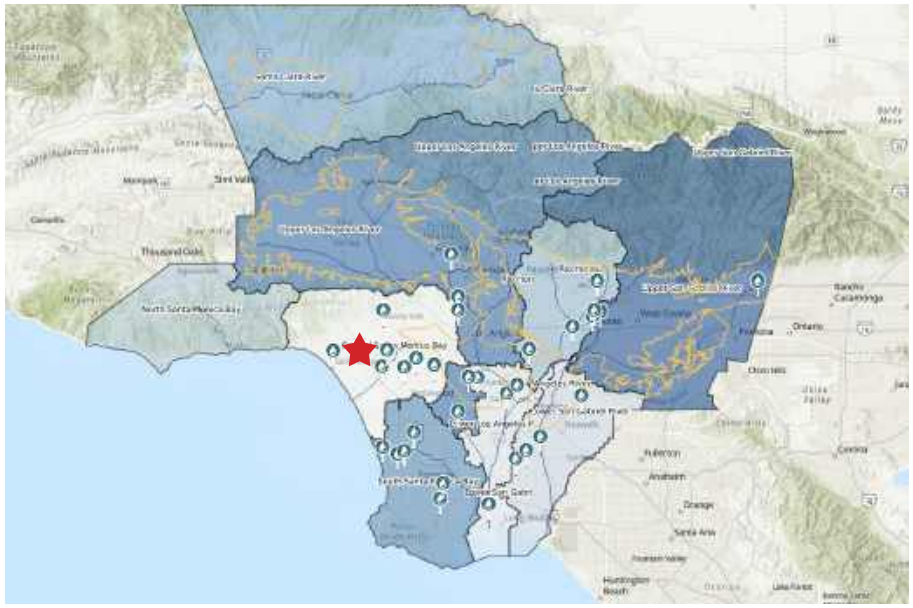
Residents of the area fall into the 20-30th percentile for asthma related emergency room visits. [12]

Low Birth Weight

Residents of the area fall into the 70-80th percentile for low birth weight. [12]

Site Analysis: Stormwater Infrastructure

Regional Stormwater Infrastructure Sites

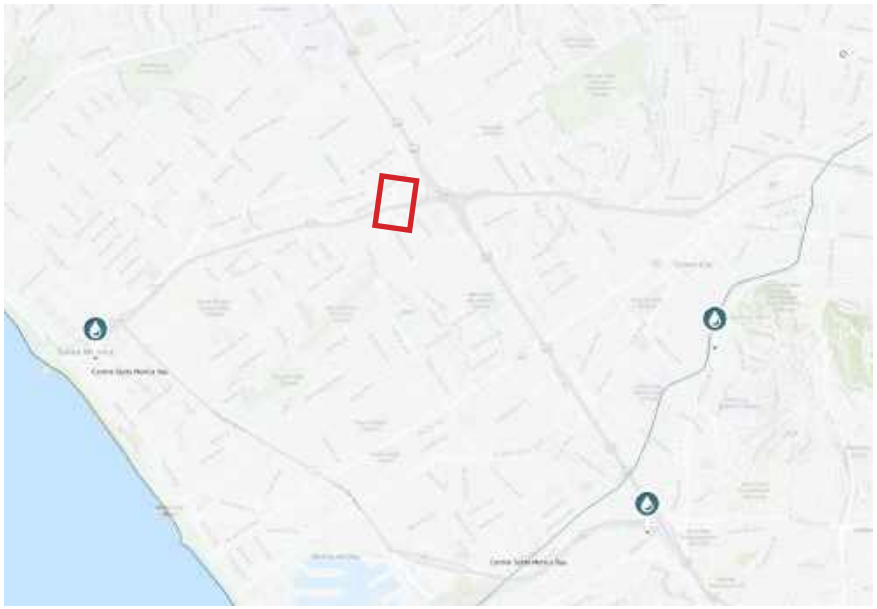


Stormwater Infrastructure Site

Los Angeles County is working to reduce reliance on imported water through a variety of methods, including stormwater capture, water conservation, recycled water, and groundwater remediation. A number of large scale stormwater capture sites, shown above, are operational, under construction, or recently approved. [32] [33]

Large-scale stormwater capture typically takes the form of spreading grounds, often engineered as reservoirs, controlled green spaces, and wetlands. These efforts can alleviate local flooding, improve water quality, improve local parks, provide social and economic benefits, and reduce urban heating. [32] [33]

West LA Stormwater Infrastructure Sites



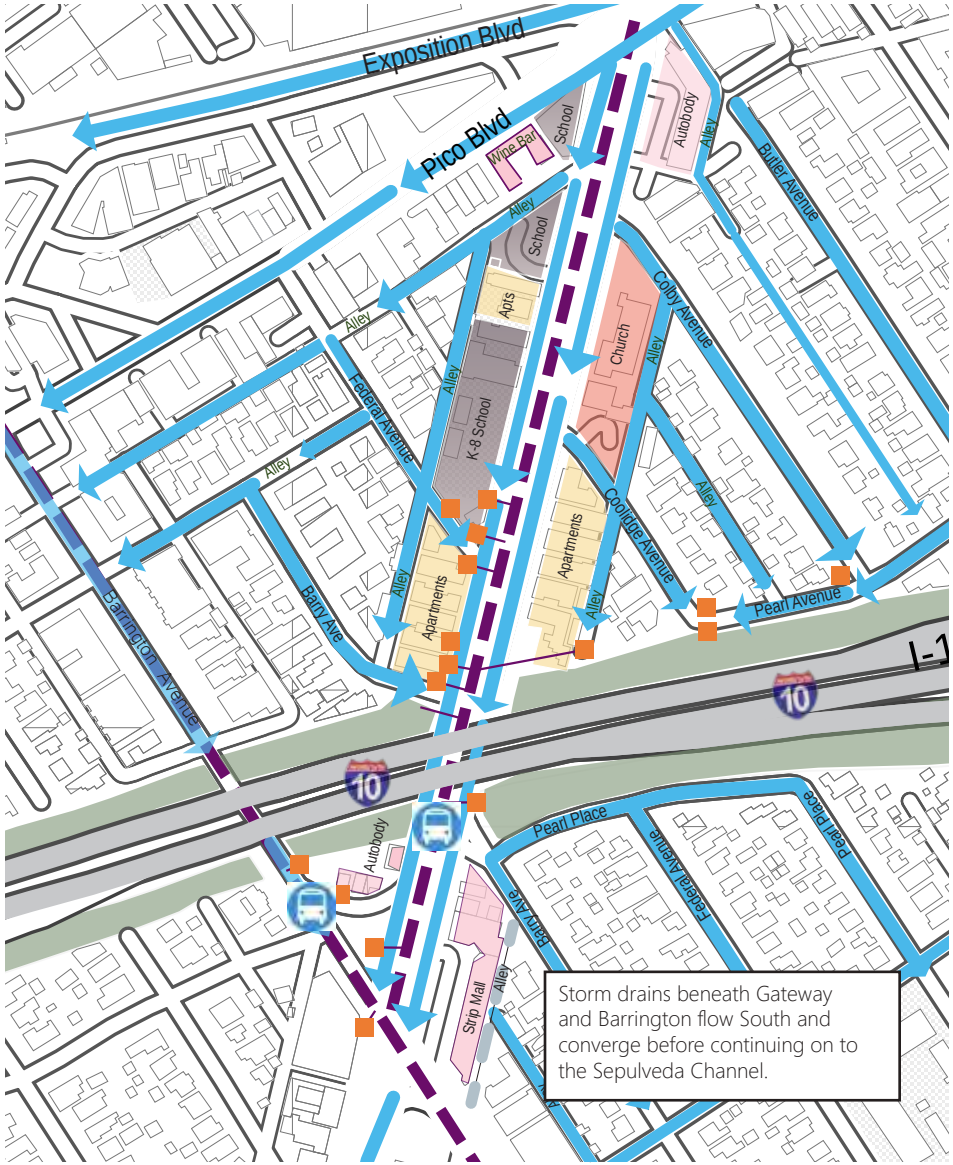
Stormwater Infrastructure Site

There are four stormwater infrastructure sites in West LA, and only one--in Santa Monica--is for collection. The rest are for diversion or infiltration. [32]

The Santa Monica Sustainable Water Infrastructure Project (SWIP) consists of a 1.5 Million gallon cistern, constructed underneath's a City Hall parking lot. It collects water from an 88 acre area, which would otherwise funnel to the ocean. The facility has the ability to treat half a million gallons a day for reuse or replenishment back to the water table. That equates to 20% of Santa Monica's total water use. [31] [36]

Site Analysis: Stormwater Management

Site Stormwater Flow

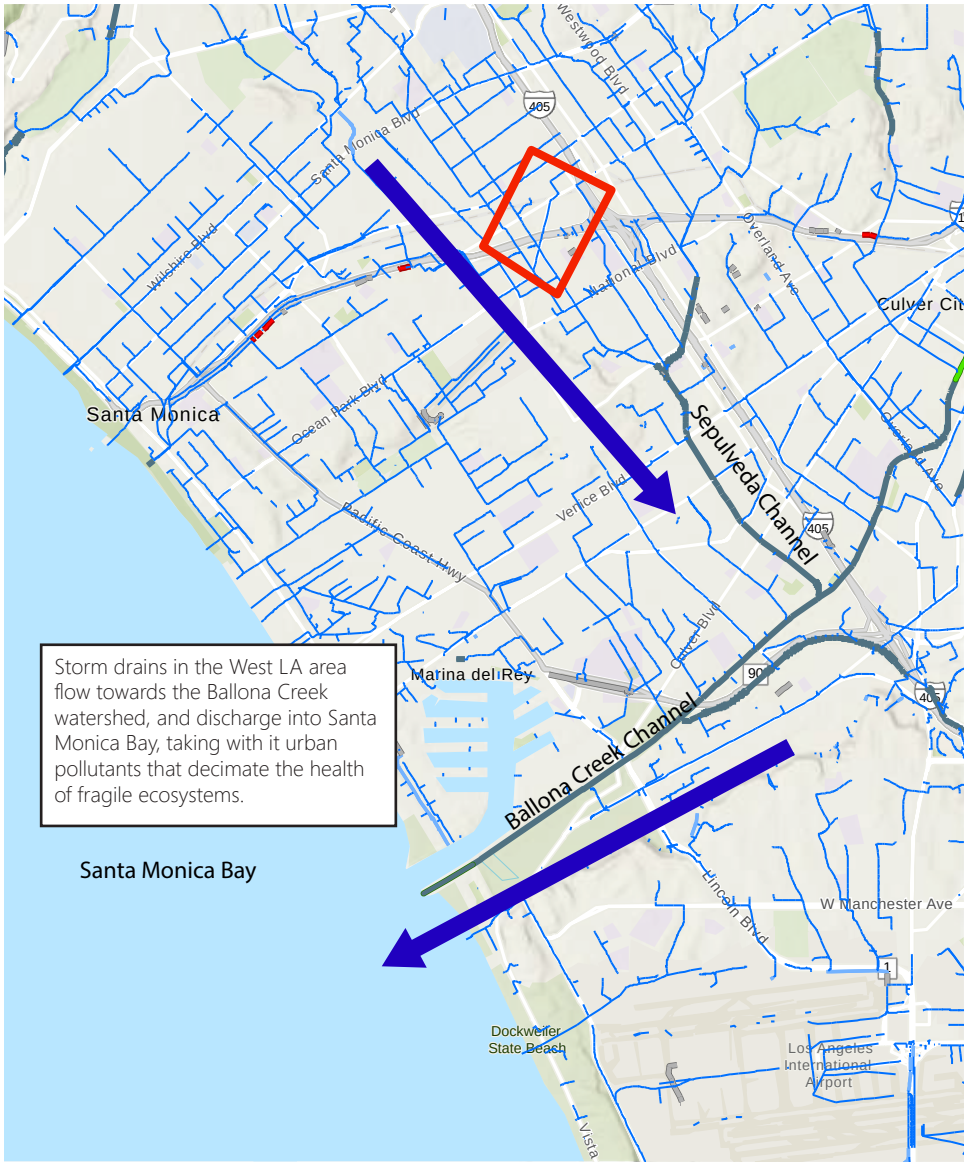


LEGEND

- Water Flow Direction
- Storm Drain
- Storm Drain Inlet

0 250′ 500′

Area Stormwater Flow



LEGEND

- Storm Drains
- Open Channels
- Water Direction

1:80,000

0 0.5 1 2 mi

0 0.75 1.5 3 km

Site Analysis: Air Pollutant Mitigation

There are a number of exciting technologies in development that aim to remove dangerous particulate matter from the air, including microalgal facades photocatalytic paint, and Co^2 sequestering concrete. [34 37 41]

However, this project seeks to implement a version of green infrastructure that, for now, shows the most robust evidence of efficacy: Green Barriers, which utilize a dense congifuration of plants to mitigate air pollutants.

Plants remove air pollutants via three methods: [35]

- Absorbtion. Co^2, No^2 and volatile organic compounds are absorbed through the leaf stomata
- Deposition: Particulate matter, such as PM 2.5, becomes attached surface of leaf. This effectively takes the the particle out of circulation and washing away with the next rain.
- Dispersal. Whatever pollutants are not absorbed or trapped may be dispersed and made less concentrated by a green barrier.

Types of Green Barriers [34]

Plant Facade

Vines or climbing plants adhere to a mesh or trellis framework, creating a barrier. Some maintenance.

Living Wall

Made up of panels, textiles, or modules that house and nourish the plants. High maintenance, intensive.

Standard Hedge

Rows of trees or hedges planted along the roadway. Low Maintenance.

Pollution Fighting Plants [35]

Below is a selection of plants shown to be effective at removing particulate matter from air, largely due to leaf characteristics like roughness, hair-like structures, and presence of wax. It is also crucial to select low-water, climate-appropriate species that do not release high levels of volatile organic compounds (VOCs), which can contribute to smog formation.

Shrubs / Vines [35] [38]

Hedera helix
English Ivy

Thuja occidentalis
Arborvitae

Cotoneaster franchetii
Gray Cotonester

Sambucus nigra
Black Elderberry

Thymus vulgaris
Thyme

Trees [35] [38]

Celtis reticulata
Neatleaf Hackberry

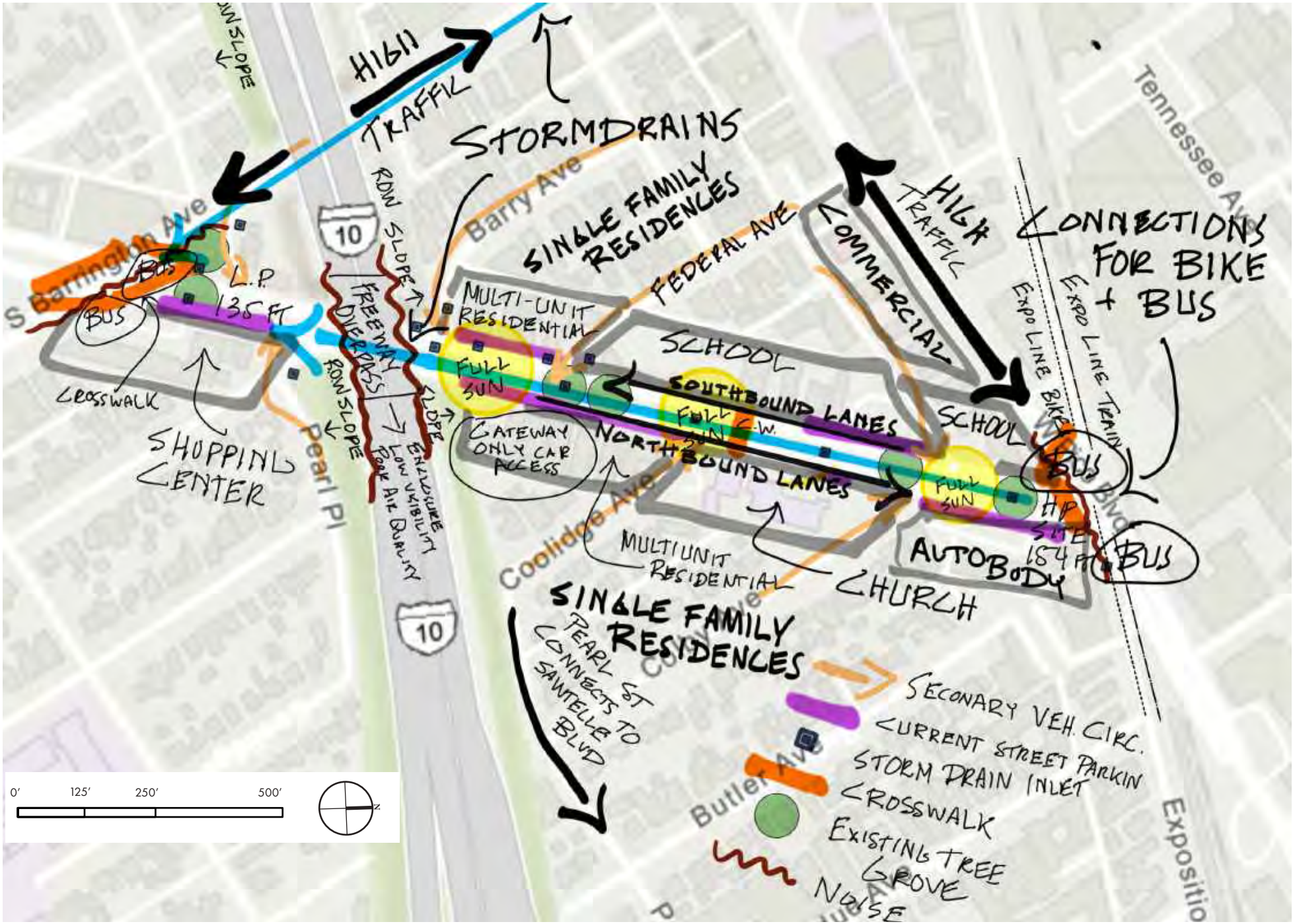
Platanus racemosa
Western Sycamore

Pinus Coulteri
Coulter Pine

Quercus agrifolia
Coast Live Oak

Geijera parviflora
Australian Willow

Site Analysis



Opportunities

Connection | Health | Green Infrastructure

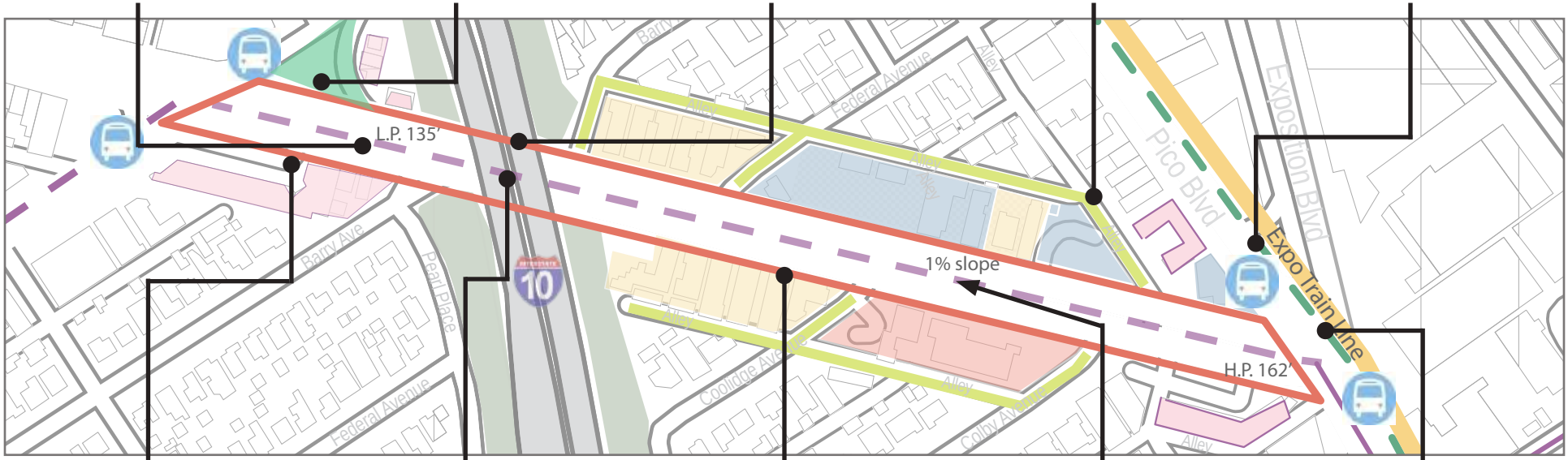
Low point of site is adjacent to city storm pipe, carrying stormwater that could potentially be captured

Planted traffic island and adjacent turn lane can be pulled into site limits and utilized as park space.

Freeway Underpass provides shade and protection

Side roads and back alleys could be improved to allow for vehicular access to the majority of buildings, even if Gateway were shut to traffic

Proximity to existing public transportation hubs offers access at North and South ends. Enhanced bus stops could become part of design.



Retaining some vehicular access allows businesses on Gateway to operate as usual, while increasing foot traffic and offering amenities to park goers.

Freeway overpass offers surfaces and right of way from which to build green barriers to mitigate freeway noise and pollution.

Closing Gateway Blvd to traffic, either partly or entirely, would allow for construction of a linear park.

Surface stormwater flow along Gateway offers the opportunity to incorporate a system of rain gardens and bioswales into design.

Linking the park to nearby expo bike path could invite bicyclists from all over the west side of LA.

School
Church
Apartment Building
Business
Expo Bike WPath
Expo Train Line
Bus Stop
Storm Pipe

0' 125' 250' 500'

Constraints

Connection | Health | Green Infrastructure

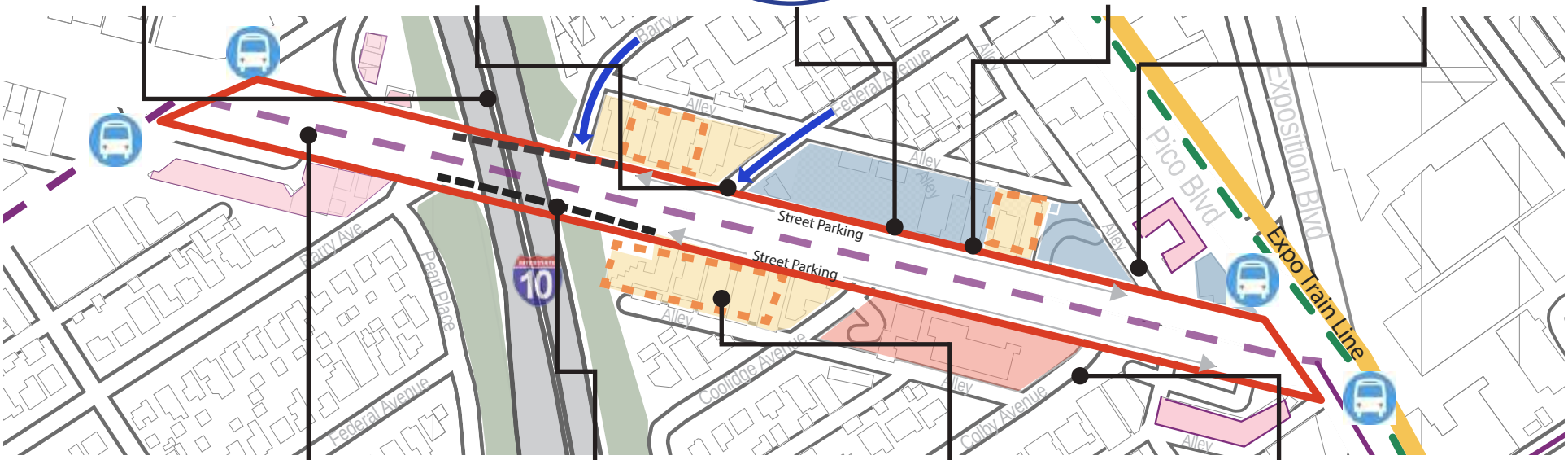
Presence of freeway overpass presents a variety of challenges such as noise, pollution, visibility, enclosure—all of which complicate health and safety.

Surface stormwater flows onto site from adjacent side streets. Design must incorporate solutions.

Visitors and residents regularly park along Gateway. Approximately 80 street parking spots.

Narrow extents of the Boulevard limit the scope of programming and pedestrian circulation. be considered.

Necessary to maintain vehicular access to school. Design should account for dropoffs, pickups, and parking lot access.



Given existing stormdrain system, water collection must take place beneath site

Blvd Right-Of-Way narrows under bridge by 20 feet, limiting space for sidewalks and constraining space for park

Some buildings only have direct street access from Gateway, which would be lost if all vehicular traffic is eliminated. Denoted by:

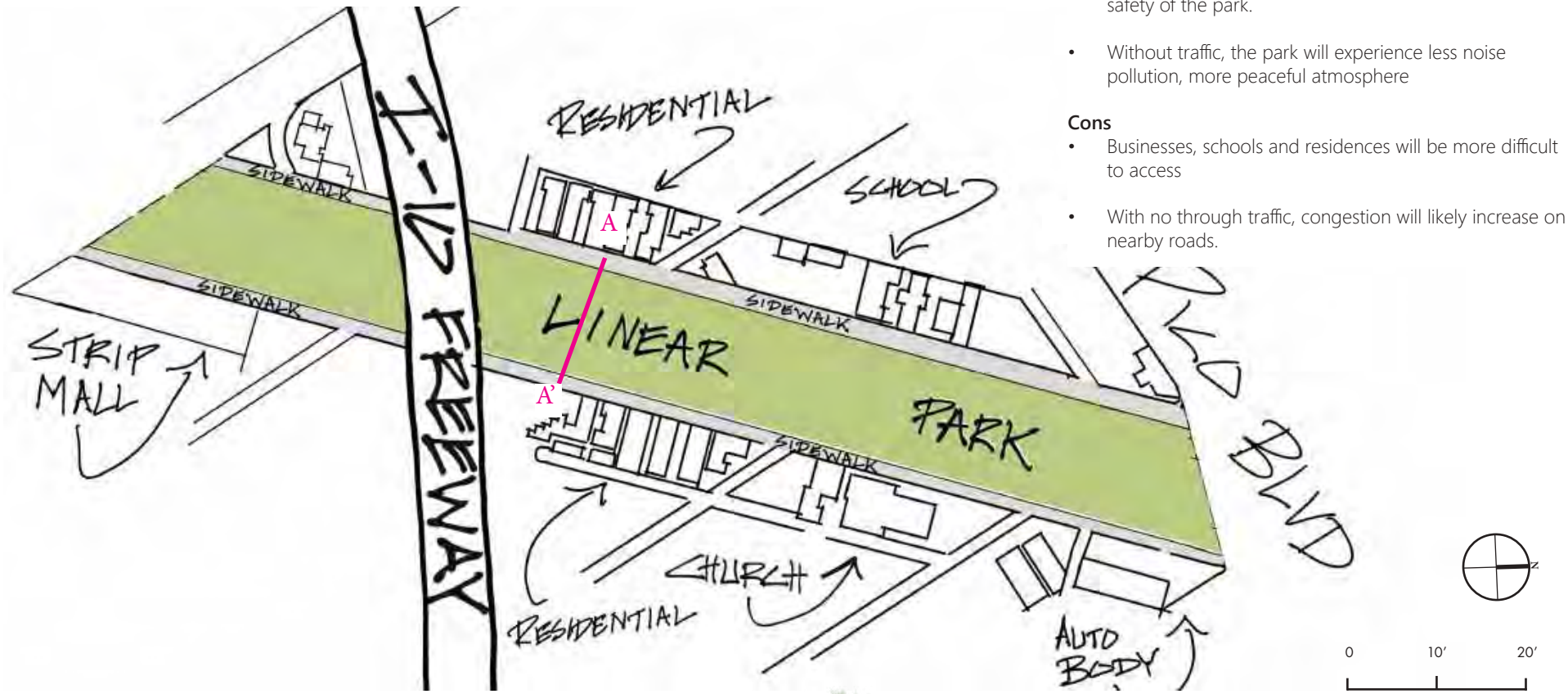
Adjacent neighborhood roads funnel onto Gateway. Careful consideration required for new vehicular circulation

School
Church
Apartment Building
Business
Expo Bike Path
Expo Train Line
Bus Stop
Storm Drain

0′ 125′ 250′ 500′ N

“No Traffic / Park Only”

Entire width of Gateway is turned into a linear park

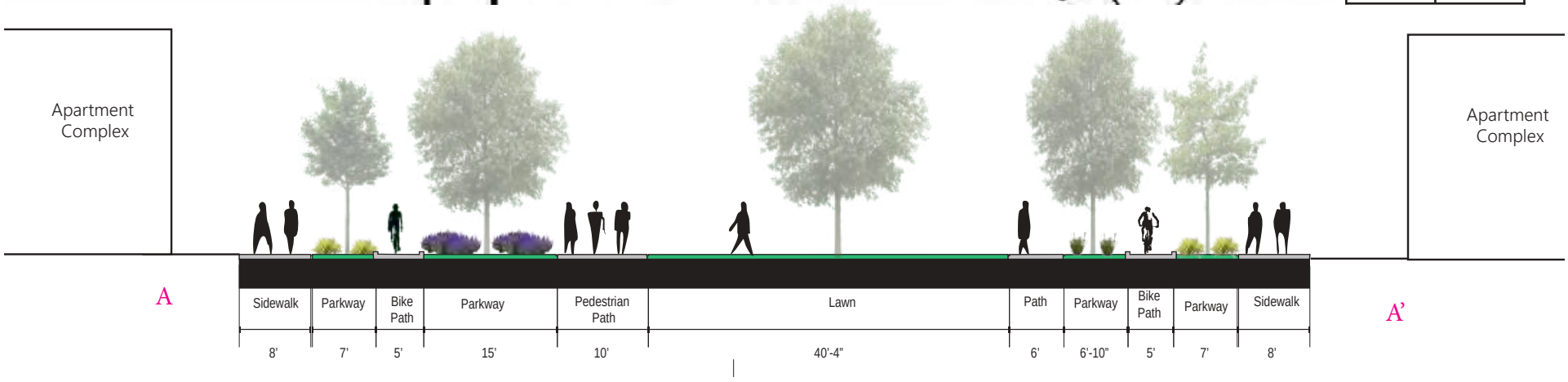


Pros

- Cars are eliminated entirely, which frees up more space for park programming, and enhances the health and safety of the park.
- Without traffic, the park will experience less noise pollution, more peaceful atmosphere

Cons

- Businesses, schools and residences will be more difficult to access
- With no through traffic, congestion will likely increase on nearby roads.



“Bi-Lateral Traffic”

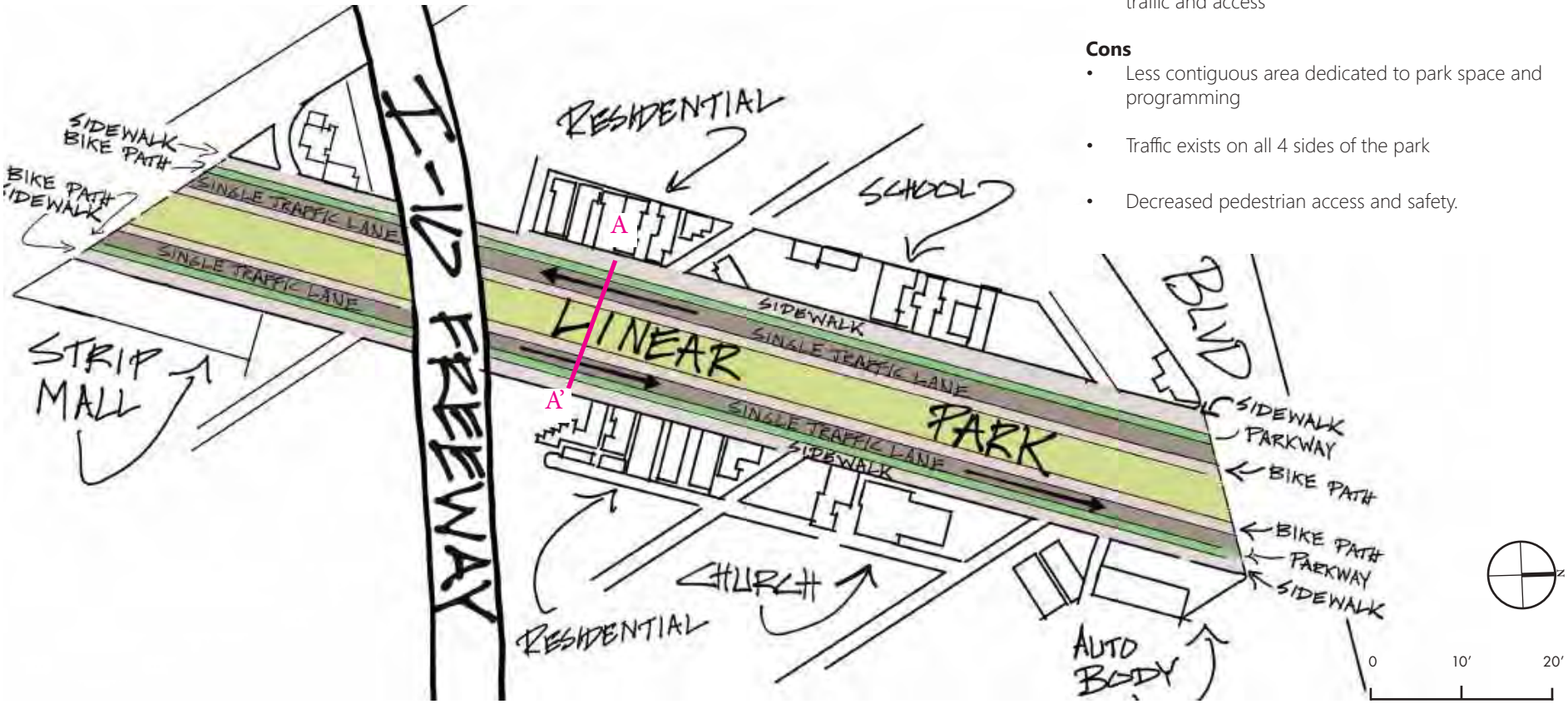
One lane of traffic on each side of linear park

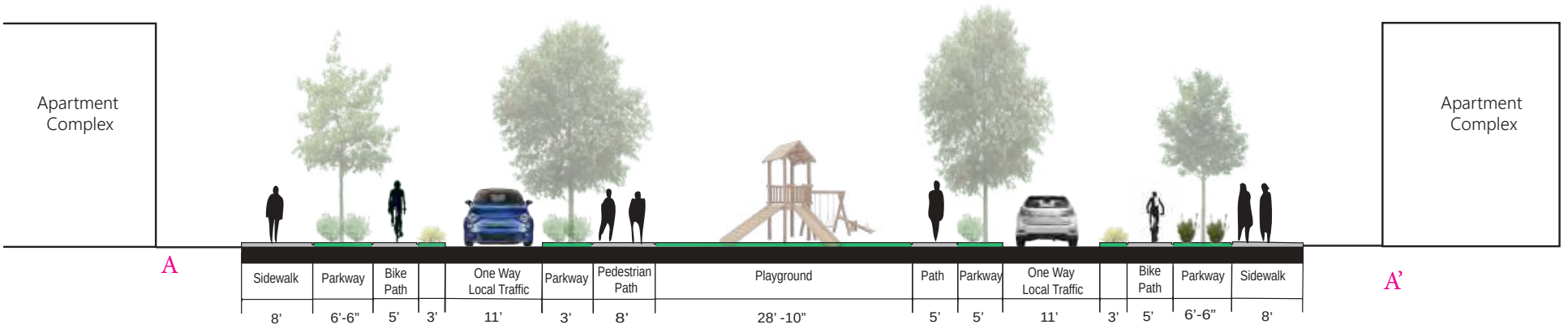
Pros

- Allows reduced--but complete--vehicular access to local residents and businesses, minimizing adverse effects to traffic and access

Cons

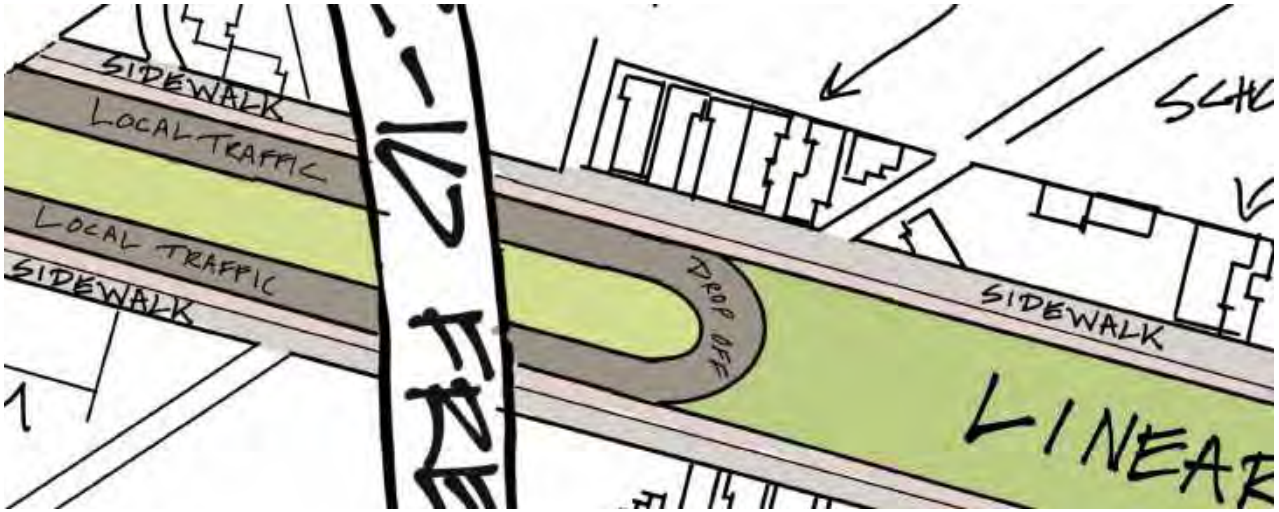
- Less contiguous area dedicated to park space and programming
- Traffic exists on all 4 sides of the park
- Decreased pedestrian access and safety.





“Roundabout”

2 Lanes of traffic on East side of Park



Pros

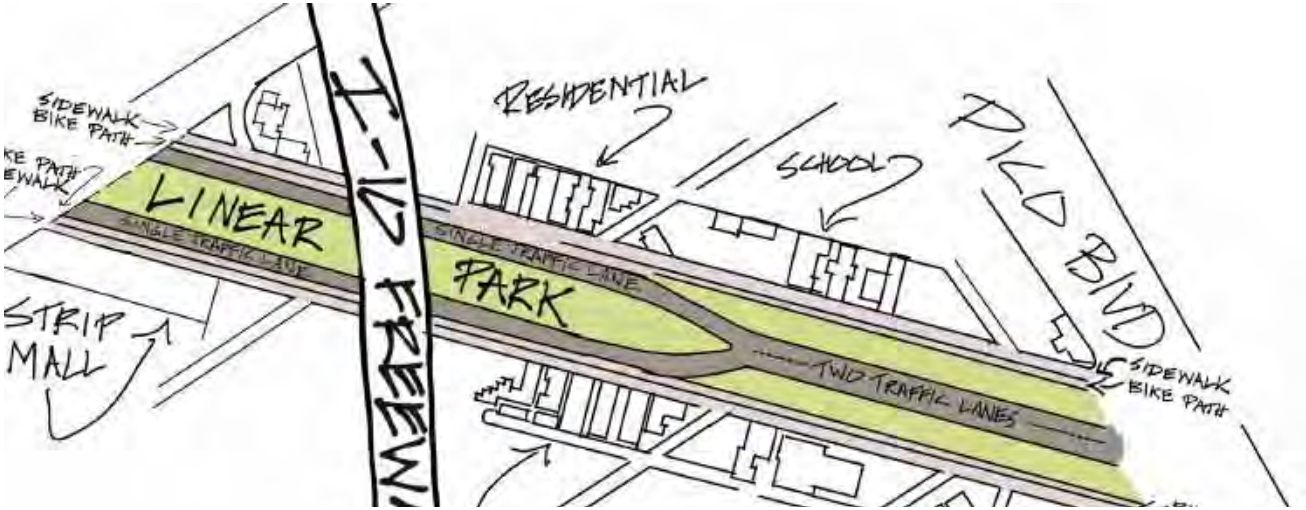
- Keeps most of park free from vehicular traffic
- Provides Gateway access to buiildings with limited alternative street access
- Allows for easy dropoffs / pickups

Cons

- Roundabout divides the park, creates an undesireable street crossing
- Roundabout monopolizes one of the park’s sunniest areas

“Traffic Fork”

Traffic forks halfway through the linear park



Pros

- Maintains through traffic for residents and businesses concerned about vehicular disruption
- Maintains Gateway access for buildings with limited alternative street access

Cons

- Streets split park into thirds, reducing potential park space
- Creates several street crossings within park

"Lateral Traffic"

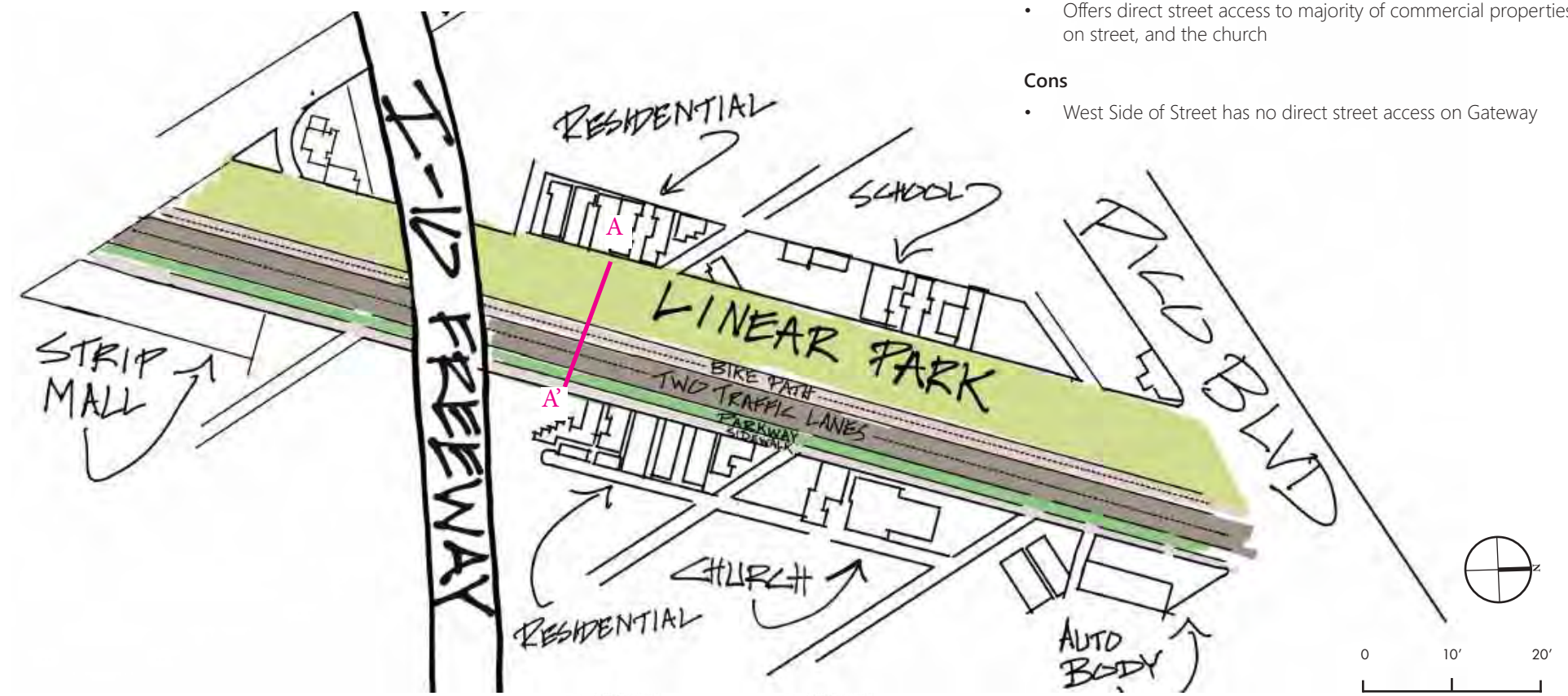
2 Lanes of traffic on East side of Park

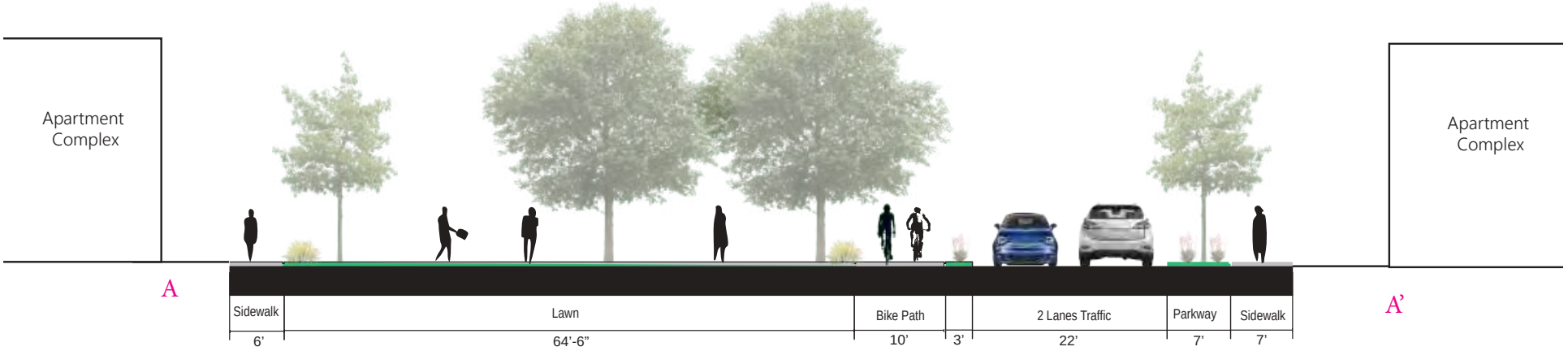
Pros

- Isolates vehicular traffic to only one side of the park--keeps parkgoers further from cars and enhances safety
- Offers direct street access to majority of commercial properties on street, and the church

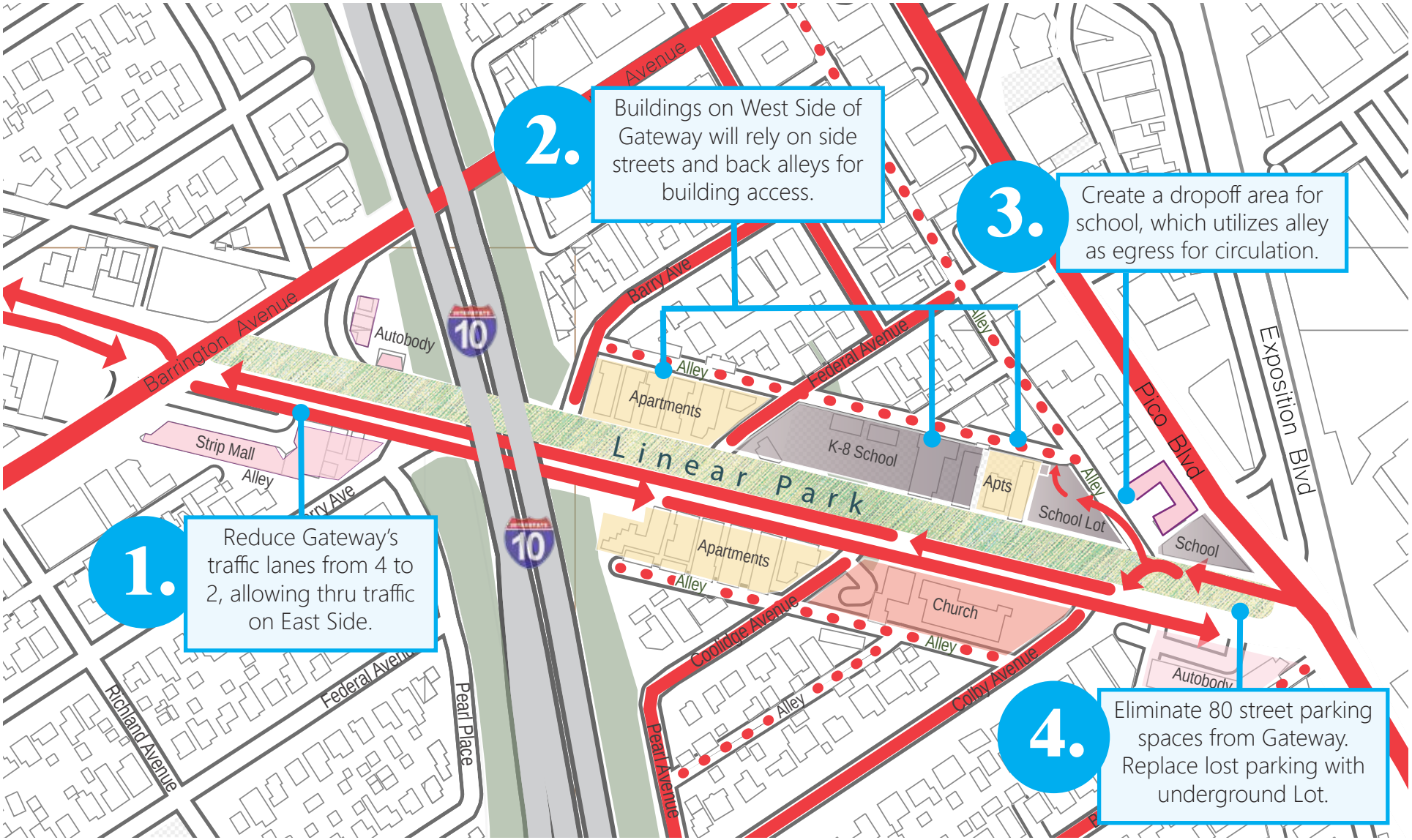
Cons

- West Side of Street has no direct street access on Gateway



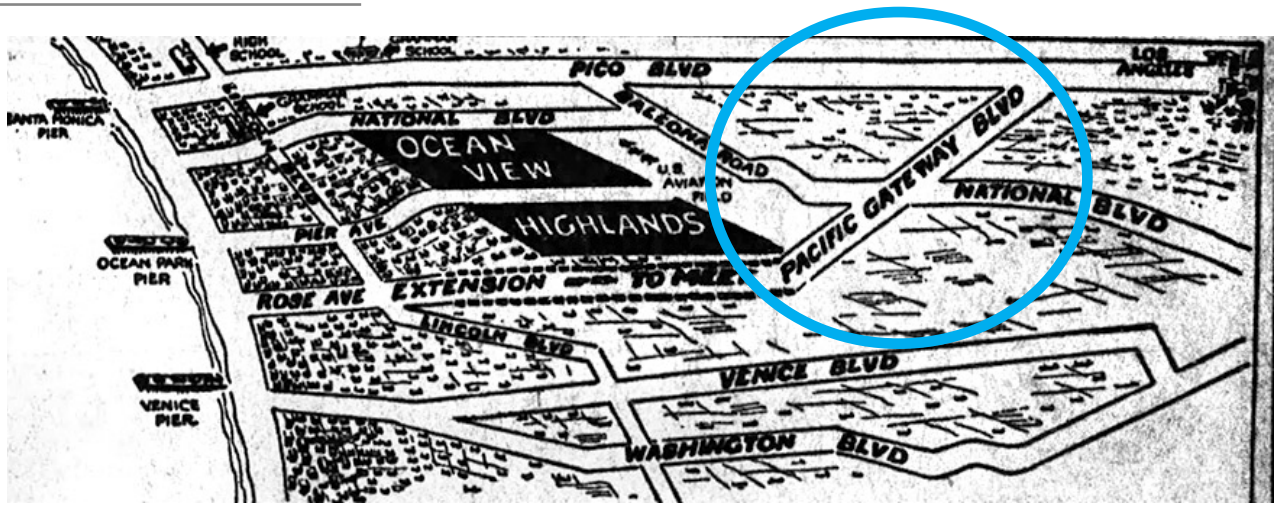


New Vehicular Circulation



Design Metaphor

Pacific Gateway

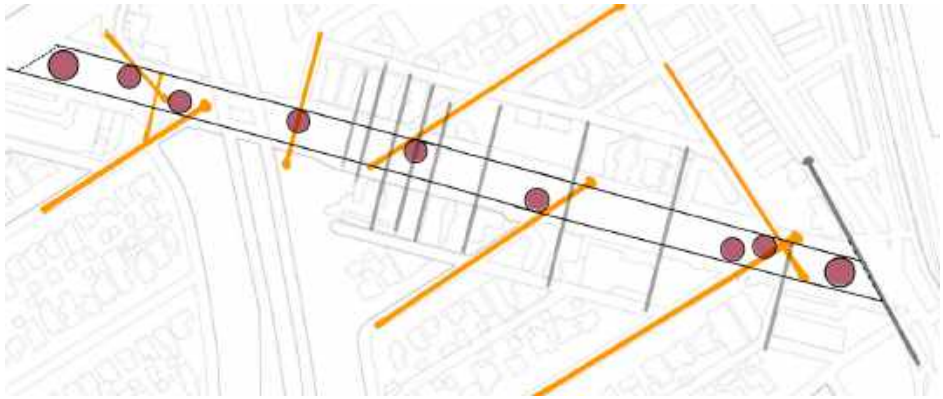


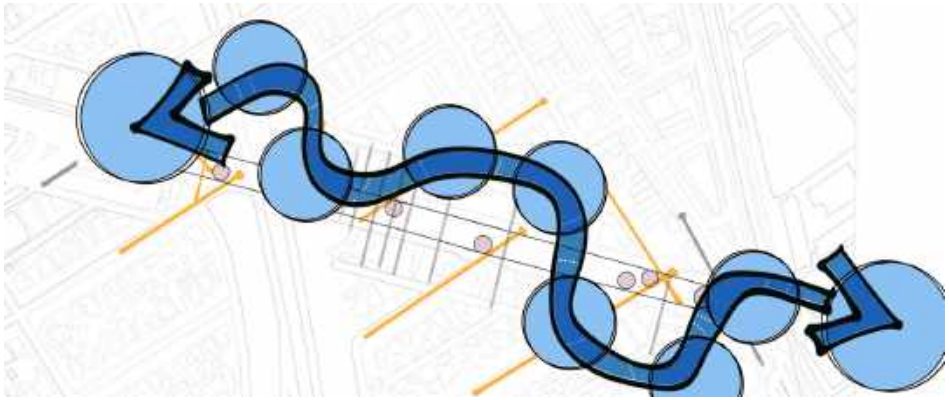
The Design Metaphor, "Pacific Gateway", roots the design in the orginal conception of the street, which was envisioned as a gateway to the Pacific Ocean.

Design Metaphor

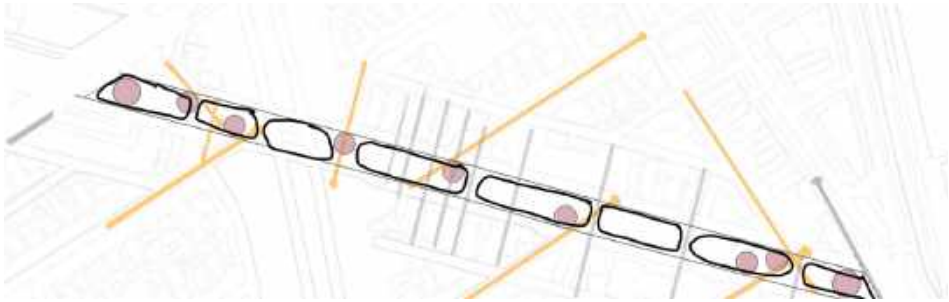
Each space in this park has, at heart, its own oceanic parti. Metaphors such as Anchors, Currents, Tidal Pools and Marinas provides a grounding for design choices. While each area is thematically unique, they work in tandem to create an end-to-end parkgoing experience.

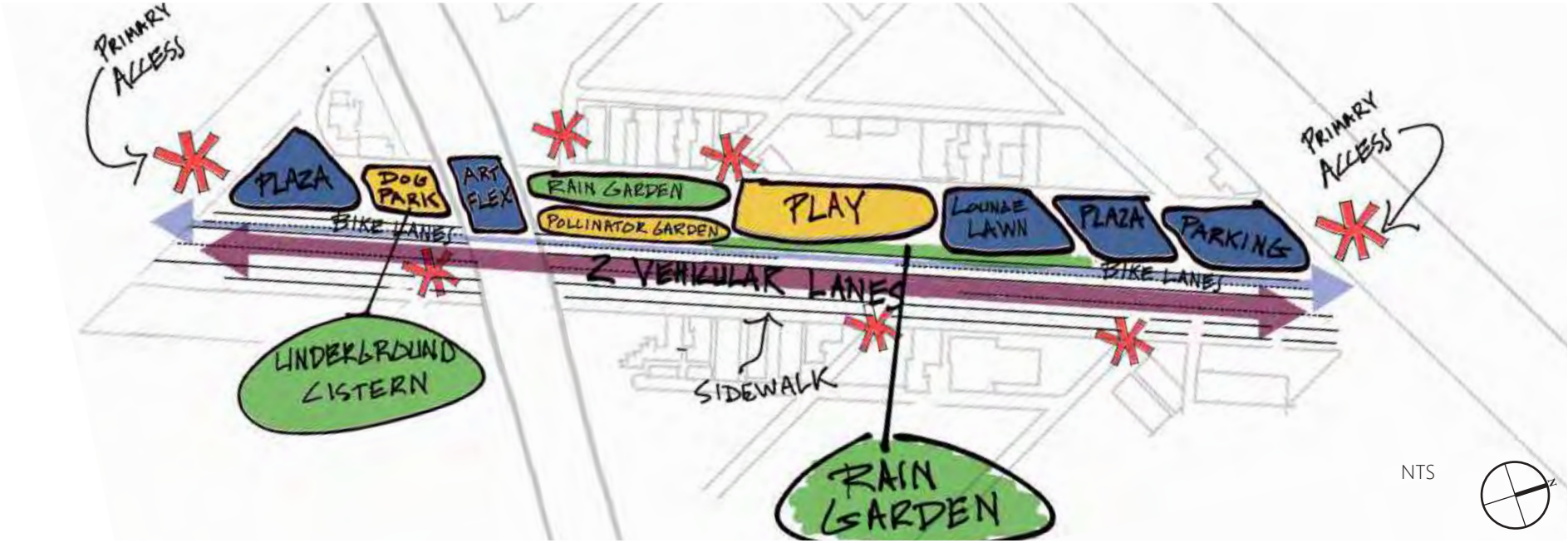
Concept Development





A dynamic design process considers the major access points, the form and mass of surrounding buildings, and potential nodes of activity. As individual spaces take shape, bubble diagrams display how programming may inhabit them.





NTS

Building Materials

The park will be designed with these materials in mind, which are sustainable, permeable, heat mitigating, and recycled where appropriate.

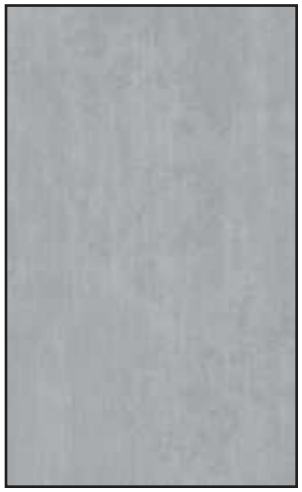
Permeable Paver
Plazas

White Cement /
limestone aggregate
Plazas

Porous Asphalt
Bike Paths

Ipe Wood Decking
Seating Areas

Decomposed Granite
Garden Paths



Soft Concrete
Benches

River Rocks
Bioswales

Pour In Place Rubber
Playground

Grasspave
Maintenance Access

Stone
Retaining Walls

Aluminum Batten
Fencing

Integral Concrete
Path

Plant Selection

Below is a sample of what the plant palette might look like. It consists of native and climate adapted species, trees that provide a shade canopy, pollutant mitgating plants, low water or drought tolerant, pollinator attraction, and plants that are raingarden appropriate for corresponding areas.

Leymus condensatus
Canyon Prince

Platanus recemosa
Western Sycamore

Pinus eldarica
Mondell Pine

Quercus agrifolia
Coast Live Oak

Berberis aquifolium
Oregon Grape

Muhlenbergia rigens
Deer Grass

Arctostaphylos
'Howard McMinn'
Manzanita

Achillea millefoilum
Common Yarrow

Lavandula pedunculata
Spanish Lavender

Artemesia californica
California Sagebrush

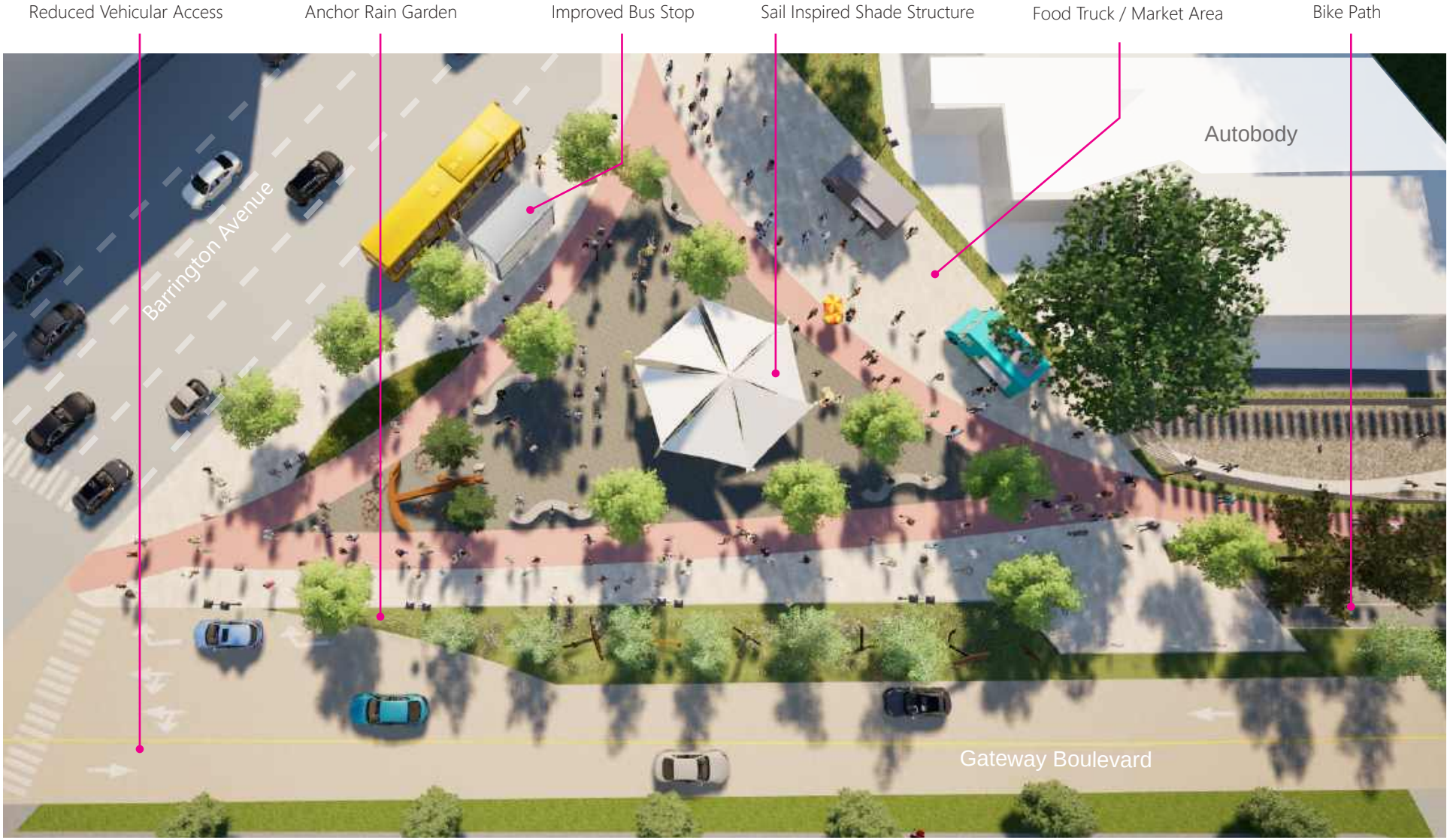
Salvia leucophylla
'Amethyst Bluff' Sage

Chitalpa tashkentasis
'Pink Dawn' Chitalpa

Site Plan | Pacific Gateway Park

Anchor Plaza | Barrington Entry

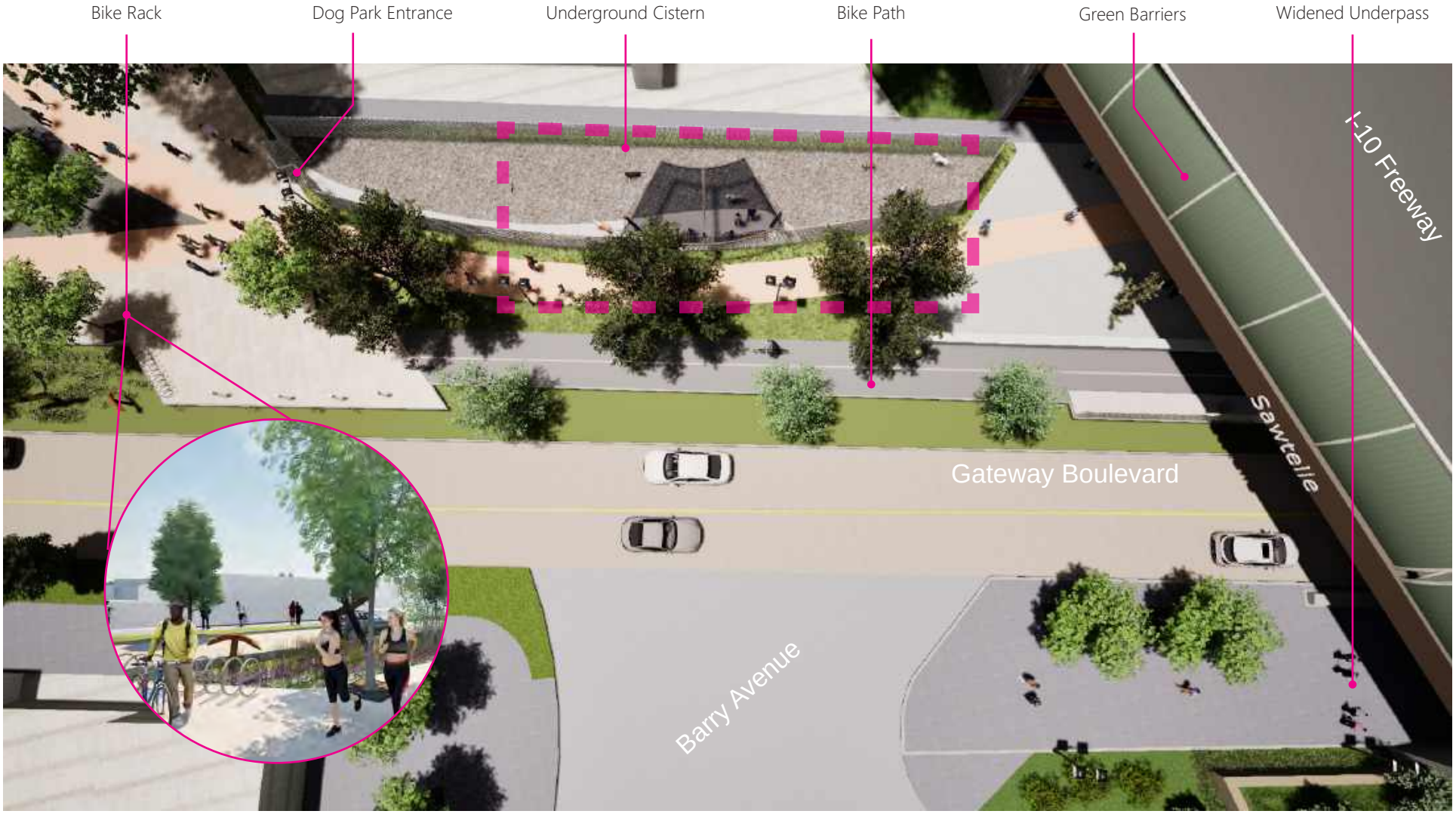
The southern plaza anchors the park with gardens, shaded seating, and maritime themed sculptures. An improved bus stop invites public access. A sail inspired shade structure, with café seating, acts as the center of activity—all atop a hardscape of permeable pavers. The plaza is designed for food trucks and markets, giving people a reason to come and congregate.



Anchor Plaza | Perspectives

Seabed | Dog Park and Bike Path

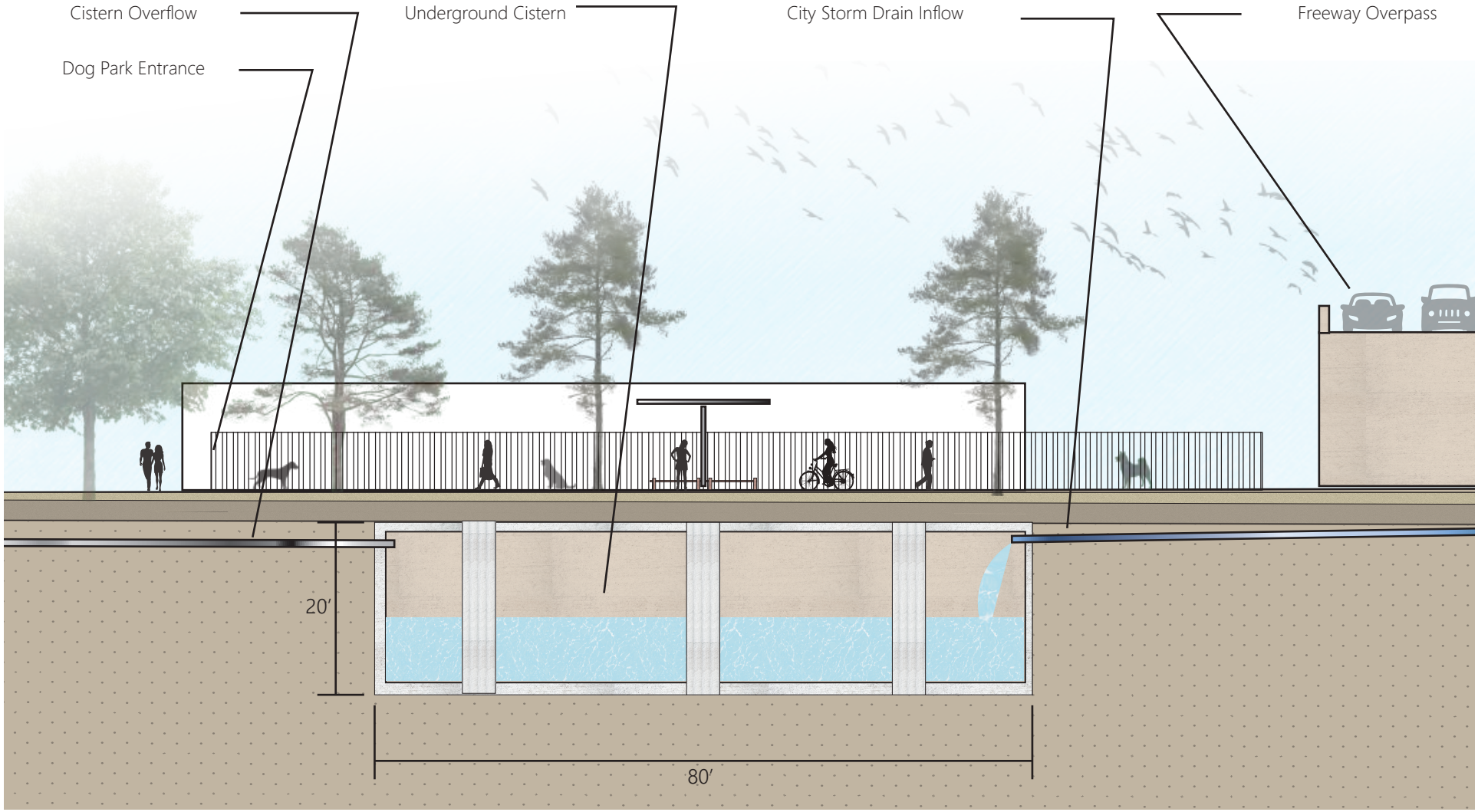
A class I bike path launches from the northern end of the plaza. A small dog park provides neighbors a place to let their companions off leash, underneath Eldarica pine trees. Green barriers line the freeway overpass, intended to reduce airborne pollutants. The boundaries of an underground cistern are indicated by the dashed line.



0′ 25′ 50′

Seabed | Cistern Section

Beneath the dog park lies an 80,000 ft^3 cistern that captures water directly from the city storm drain that runs underneath Gateway Boulevard. The cistern has a capacity to hold 600,000 gallons of stormwater for treatment and re-use.



0′ 25′ N

Seabed | Underpass Renovation

In order to address the narrow sidewalks, the underpass was excavated and widened, resulting in a safer and brighter pedestrian experience. The right-of-way has been re-graded with retaining walls. Along the top edge of the overpass, note the planted green barriers, mitigating freeway pollution and noise.

Neighborhood Boundary Sign

Green Barriers

Widened Sidewalks

Planted Retaining Walls

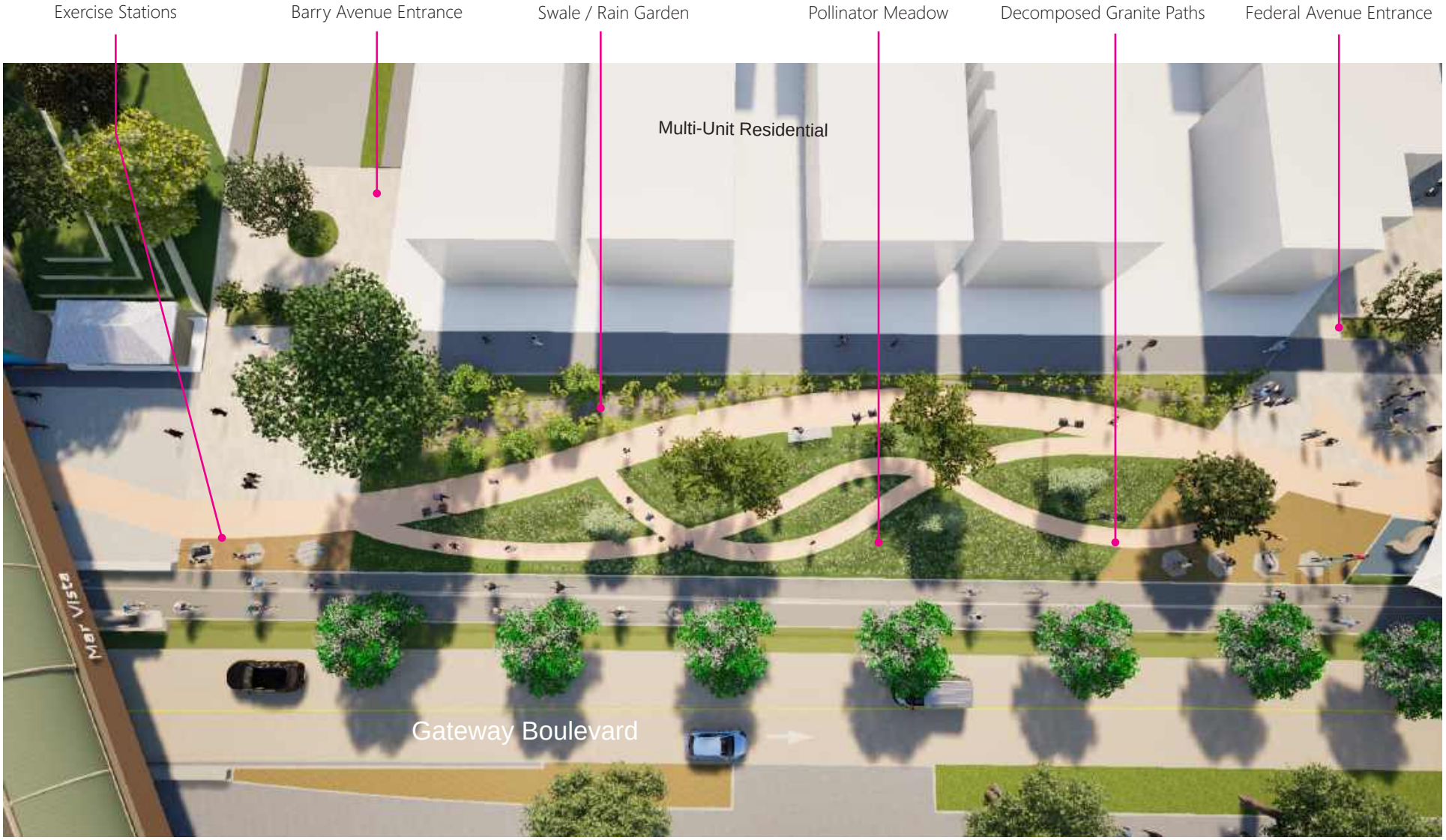
Before

Kelp Forest | Underpass Art Space

The I-10 underpass is re-envisioned as both an artistic space and an educational tribute to the kelp forests of Santa Monica Bay. It features interactive sculptures, sea urchin inspired lighting, and a nautical mural. The space offers respite from the California heat, and can double as a space for markets on a rainy day.

Local Currents | Yamaguchi Garden

A native pollinator garden, located in one of the park's sunnier spots, features undulating paths, bench seating, and exercise stations. The garden will be community focused, perhaps adopted by the local school and named in honor of Japantown's famous plant nursery.



Local Currents | Yamaguchi Garden

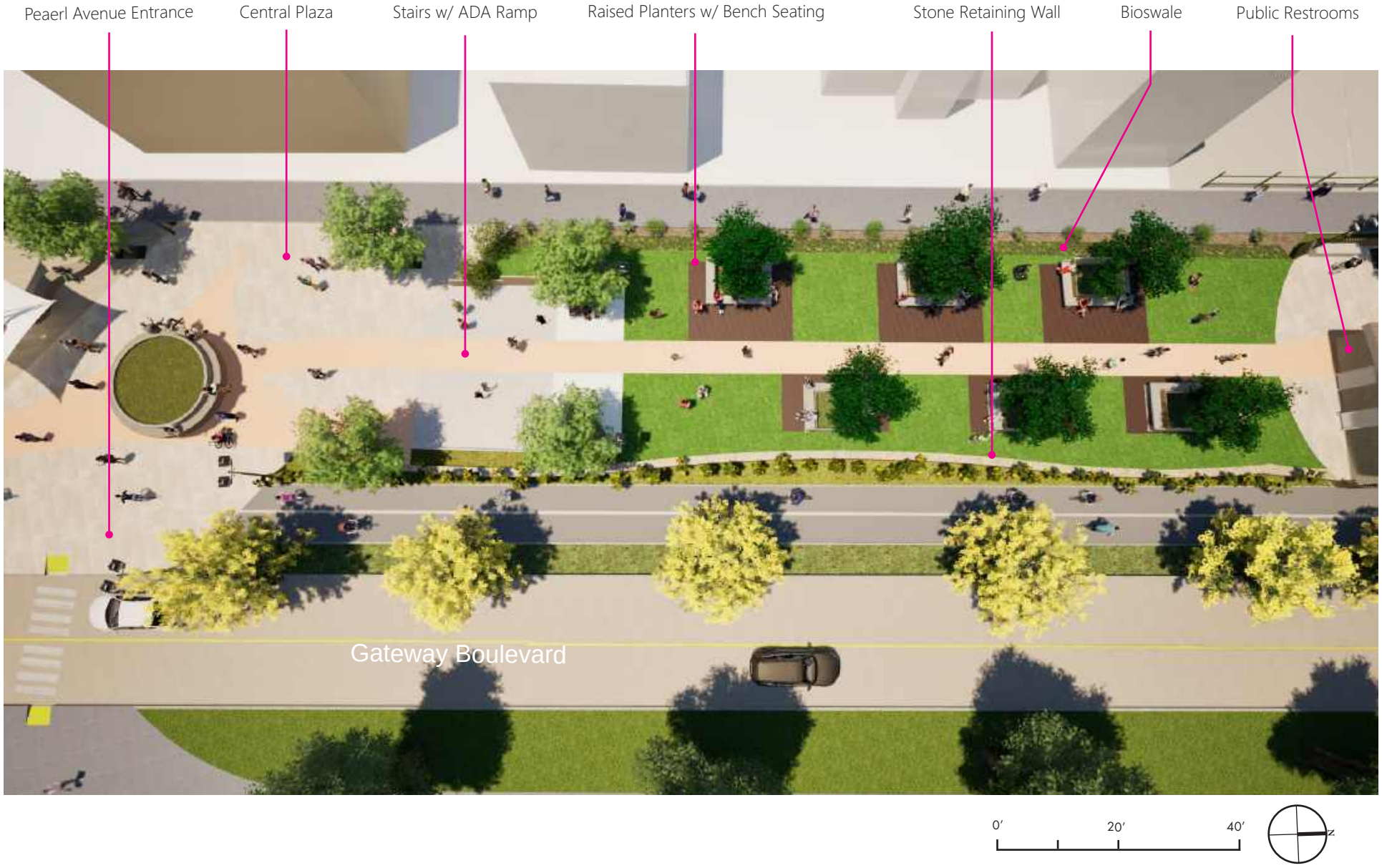
Tidal Pools | Play Area

A children's playground, picnic area, and a splash pad sit outside the K-8 school, offering kids and families an easy transition to the park after the final bell. The ability to move between these spaces is inspired by tidal pools. They are distinct areas, but spill into one another.

Tidal Pools | Play Area

Marina | Lawn

The central plaza connects via stairs to a raised lawn area with finger-dock inspired seating areas, offering safe harbor from the urban grind.



Marina | Perspectives and Section

0' 10' 20'

Beach | Visitor Arrival

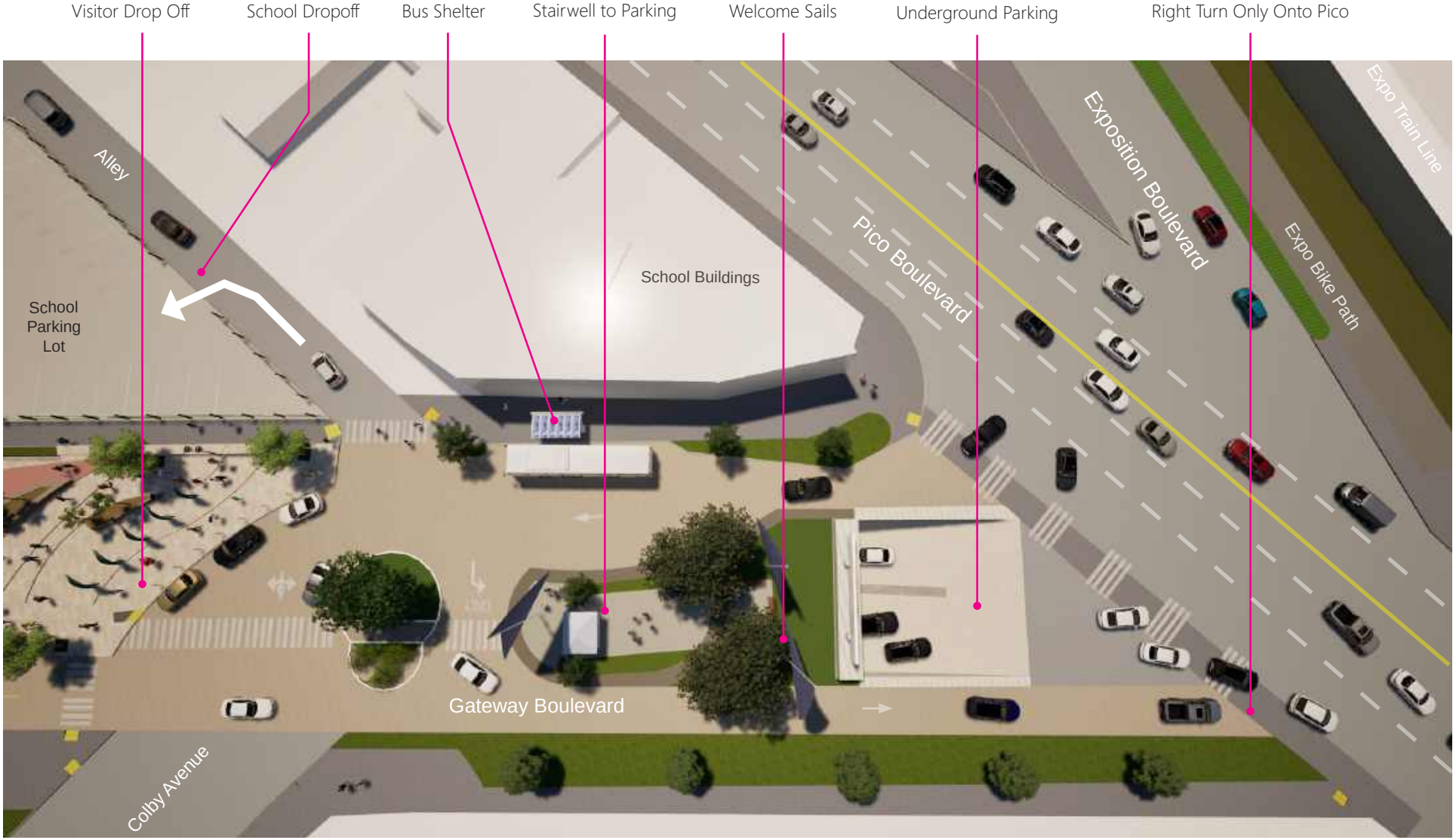
The northern plaza resembles a sandy shoreline, beckoning visitors into the park with fin-like shade structures, palm tree planters, and a cascade of steps. Meanwhile, the community center evokes the area's midcentury modern style.

0′ 25′ 50′

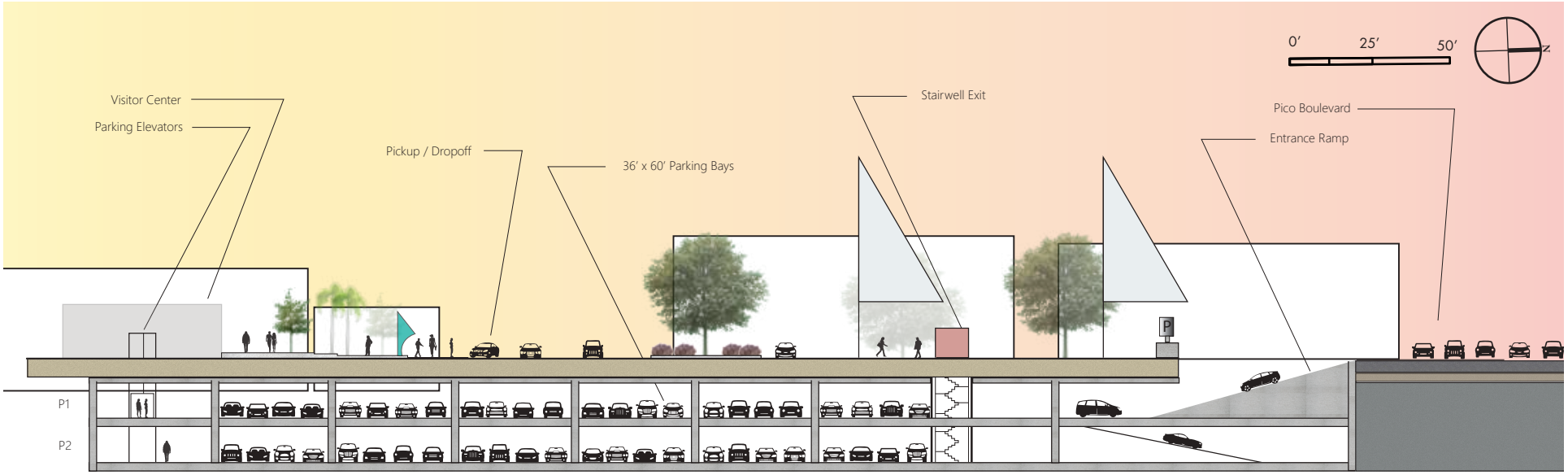
Beach | Perspectives

Terminal | Pico Entry

Terminals are typically designed around unloading, and this is no exception. There are designated dropoff areas for students, parkgoers, and city buses. An underground parking structure iaddresses the 80 lost parking spots on the street, and provides vehicular access to visitors. Traffic is designed to move slowly through this zone, but can go in either direction beyond.



Terminal | Perspectives & Section



Terminal | Perspectives

Pacific Gateway Park

Park View Looking South

Park View Looking North

Conclusion: Community Connection

Access

19,000 residents within a 10 minute walk to Pacific Gateway Park.[3]

Amenities

Dog Park, Playground, Splash Pad, Exercise Equipment [28]

Social Engagement

Community Center, Event Spaces, Volunteer Opportunities, Recreation [9]

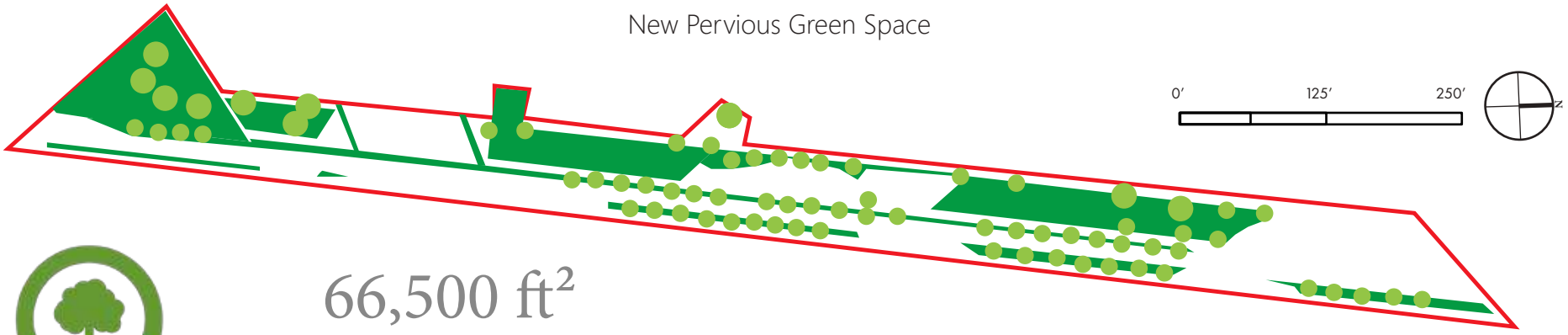
Economic Growth

Property values around parks increase by an average of 5%, More foot traffic and boosted revenue for nearby businesses [13] [14]

Priority Areas For New Parks

Conclusion: Neighborhood Health

New Pervious Green Space



66,500 ft²

Green Space Added

Over 150

Trees Added

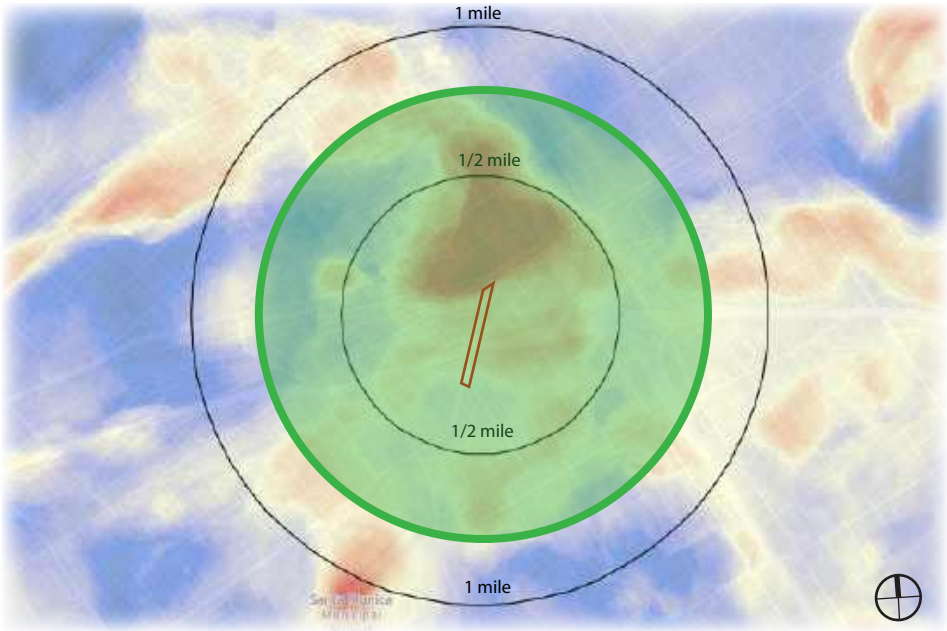
50% Reduction

Estimated reduction in Airborne Particulate Matter in immediate area [42] [43] [44]

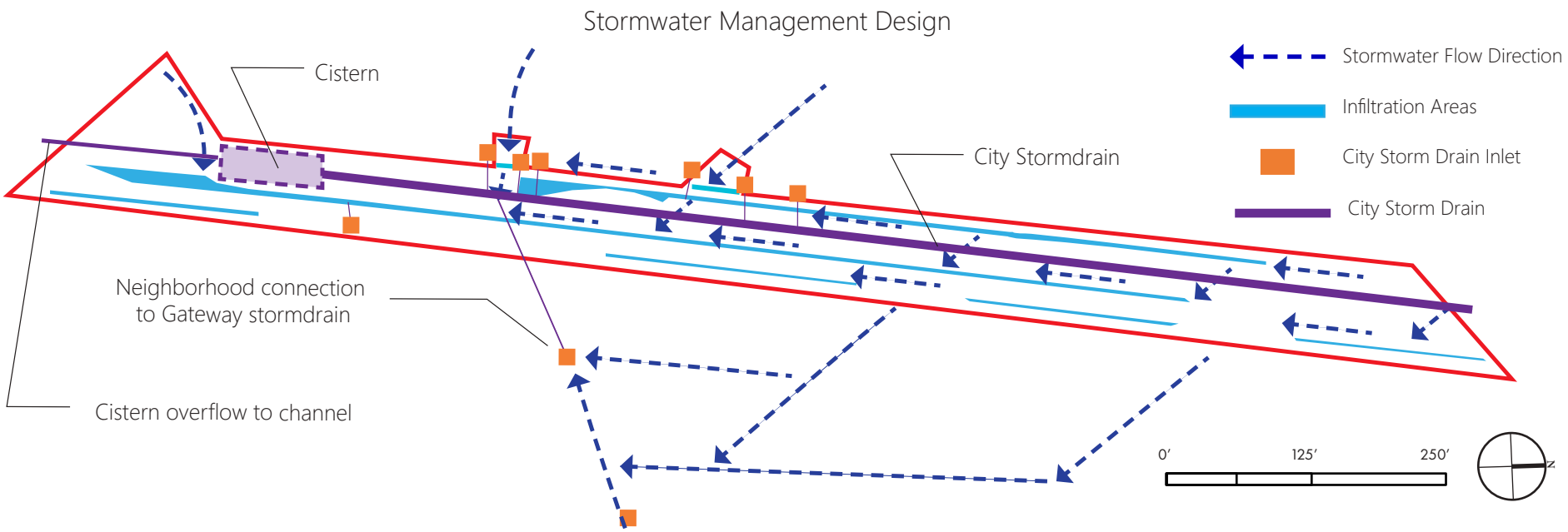
1.7° Reduction

Estimated Temperature Reduction (within a 3/4 mile radius) [45] [46] [47]

Heat Island Mitigation



Conclusion: Green Infrastructure



14,000 ft²

Dedicated Infiltration Areas
Bioswales and Rain Gardens

300,000 Gallons

Amount infiltrated on site each year

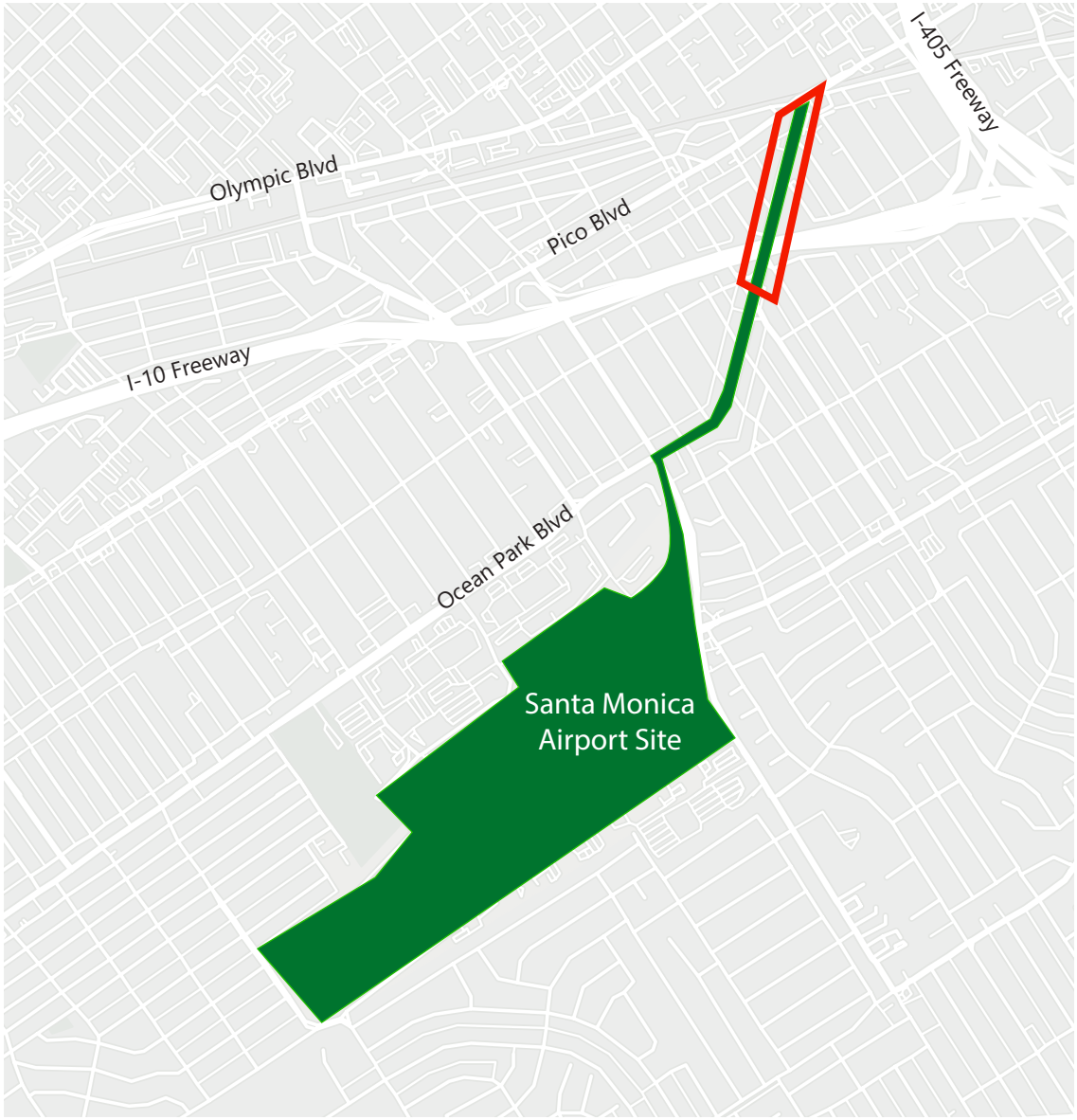
4.2 Million Gallons

Total Stormwater Collected Annually
(16 acre watershed area)

2.5 Million Gallons

Park Irrigation Requirements Annually

Future Connection



The Santa Monica Airport is slated to close at the end of 2028. The city of Santa Monica is beginning to hold community meetings on potential uses of the land, which will likely include new housing develWopments and open park space.

A linear park on Gateway could be the beginning of a west side parkway system, blazing a green belt from Pico Boulevard to the Airport Site a mile away, and perhaps beyond.

Potential Green Belt

0′ 0.25 mi 0.5 mi

N

About Me

Hello! My name is Justin Lillehei. With this book, I will complete UCLA Extension's Landscape Architecture program. I am entering the field as a second career. Or as they say in show business—my second act!

My previous life was film and television, I produced over 50 episodes of scripted TV, and developed a wide-ranging slate of projects at major studios and networks. While making my way through the UCLAx program, I have continued to produce, and remain an active member of the Producers Guild of America.

But I am looking to make an impact in the real world, a lasting one, at a crucial moment for our children.

I am optimistic about landscape architecture's role in sustainable building, ecological restoration, and social equity, but know that real change happens slowly, and only when a foundation is in place.

I spent my prior career working to achieve a creative vision, while balancing the shifting demands of budget and physical production. I look forward to continuing that work in Landscape Architecture.

I am originally from St. Paul, Minnesota and graduated from the University of Miami with a bachelor's degree in Communications. I am a father to a toddler, Miss Elodie, who is as old as my time in this program.

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