

The Great Wall of Los Angeles Park Master Plan



JOAQUIN MURRIETA

SOJOURNERS 1868

UCLAx LD6:
Concept Development
Instructor: Steven Chavez, PLA
Summer 2025

Kristin Byrd

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Pre Design

Overview and History.....	2
Site History Timeline.....	3
Site Inventory.....	4
Site Analysis.....	6
Site Constraints.....	7
Site Opportunities.....	8
Precedent Case Study 1.....	9
Precedent Case Study 2.....	10
Precedent Case Study 3.....	11

Design Development

Design Alternative 1.....	12
Design Alternative 2.....	13
Design Alternative 3.....	14

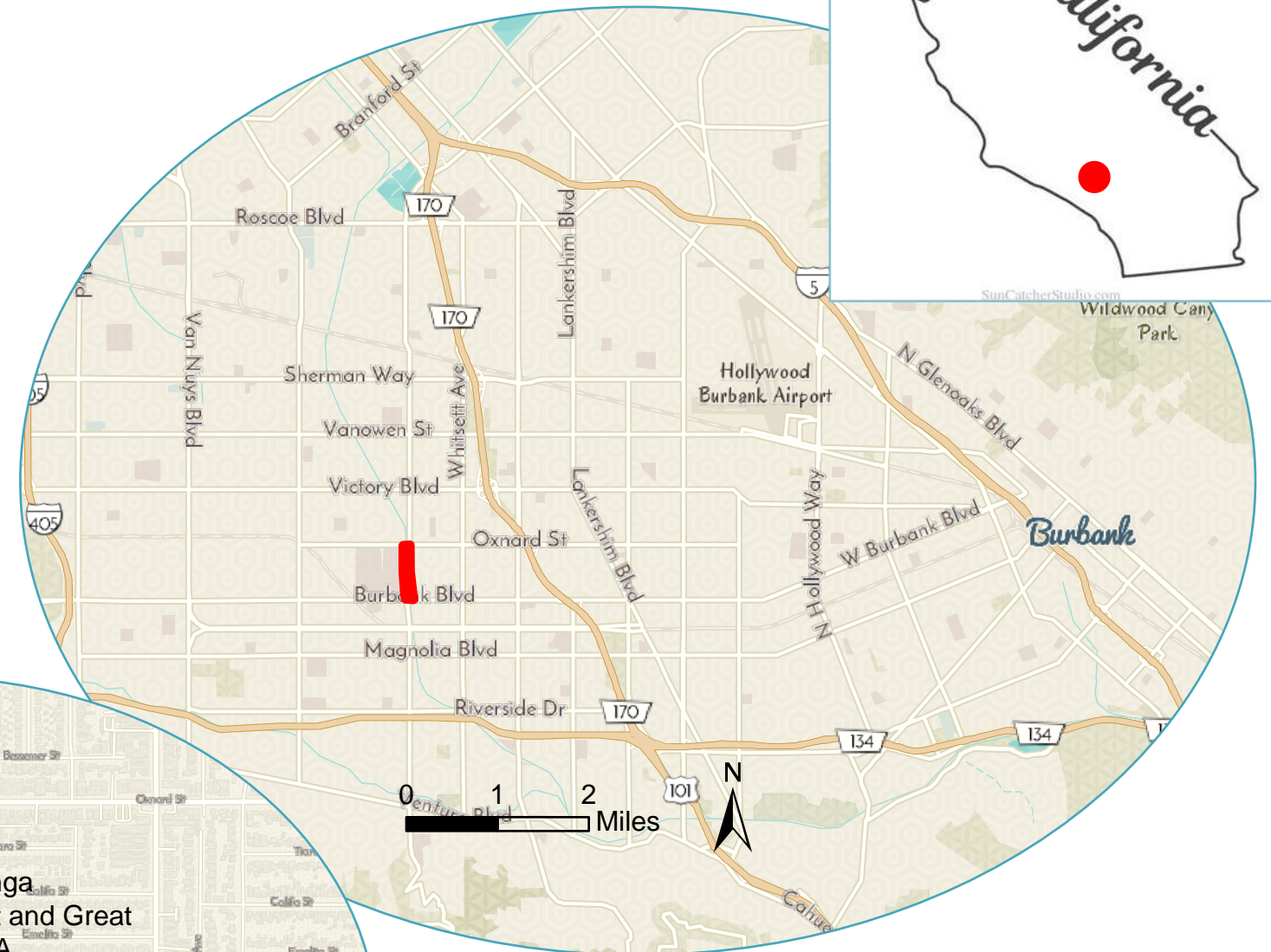
Final Design

Master Plan Concept.....	15
Master Plan.....	16
Site Section 1.....	17
Site Section 2.....	18
Perspectives.....	19
Walkthrough Video.....	27
References.....	28

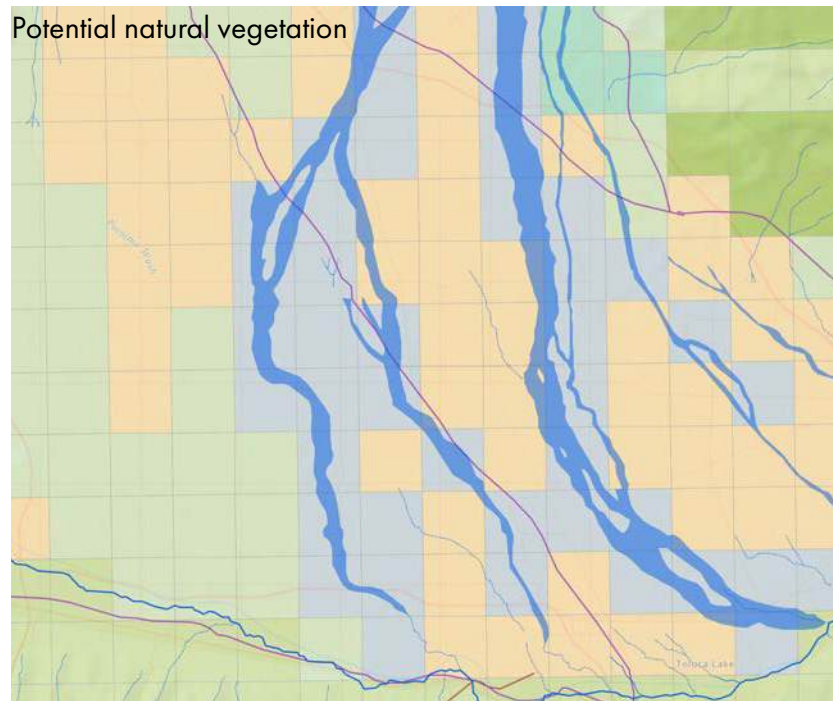
OVERVIEW AND HISTORY

The Tujunga Wash was historically a 13-mile long intermittent stream that ran north-south through the San Fernando Valley and was surrounded by grasslands and flower fields. This region was originally settled by the Tongva, Tataviam, and Chumash people over 7000 years ago. Today, the Tujunga Wash is a 9-mile flood control channel built in the early 1950s that connects with the Los Angeles River. The flood control channel runs through the Valley Glen neighborhood of Los Angeles. Surrounding land use is primarily residential. Demographics are approximately 43% white; 42% Hispanic; 5% Asian; 4% Afro-American; 0.2% Native American; and 0.1% Pacific Islander.

The longest mural project in the world, the Great Wall of Los Angeles was started in 1974 by Judith Baca. Painted together with community youth, the mural, which extends one half mile along the concrete walls of the Tujunga Flood Control Channel, depicts California's history leading up to the 1950s. Just north of the mural is the Tujunga Wash Greenway and Stream Restoration Project, which created a 15-acre riparian habitat along 2.5 miles of the channel as part of the Los Angeles River Revitalization Master Plan. The project was designed to attract migratory birds and increase wildlife movement, recreation, and education. Today, plans are in place to expand the Great Wall of Los Angeles ½ mile opposite the current wall that will include histories from the 1960s to the 2020s.



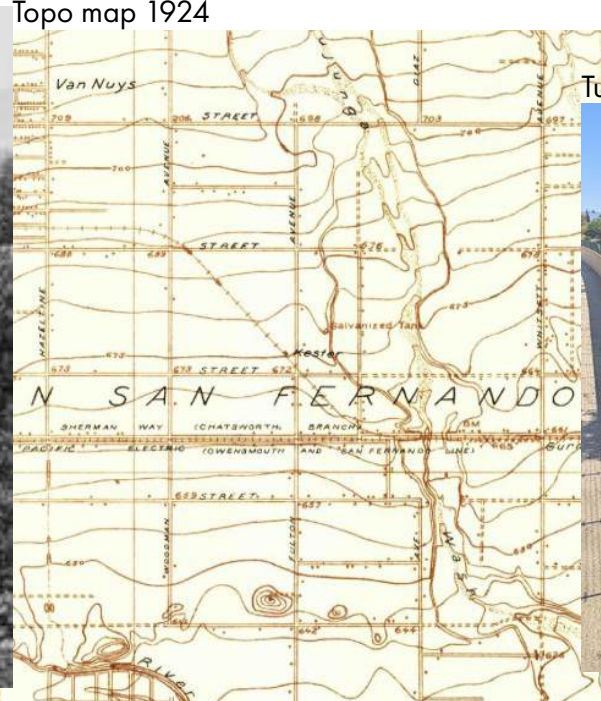
SITE HISTORY TIMELINE



Potential natural vegetation



Orchards 1894



Topo map 1924



Tujunga Wash Greenbelt



Topo map 2012

7000 yrs BP
The Tongva, Tataviam, and Chumash people inhabit the San Fernando Valley

1890s
Orchards prevalent among the braided washes

1915
The San Fernando Valley joins the city of L.A.

1950s
Channelization of Tujunga Wash

2007-2012
Tujunga Wash Greenbelt created

2024
Plans to expand Great Wall of Los Angeles

1700s
Region dominated by riverwash, CA grasslands and flowerfields

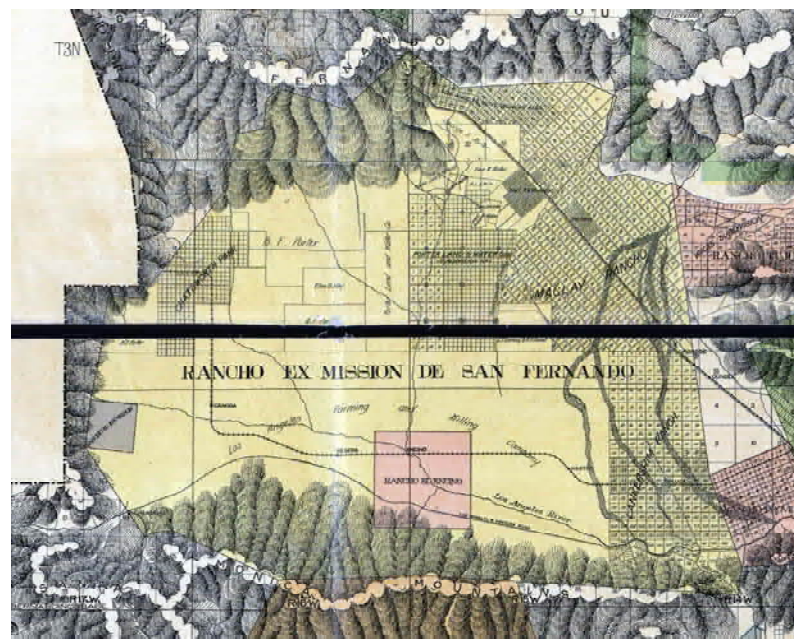
1797
Mission San Fernando Rey de España founded

1913
Owens Valley water brought to San Fernando Valley

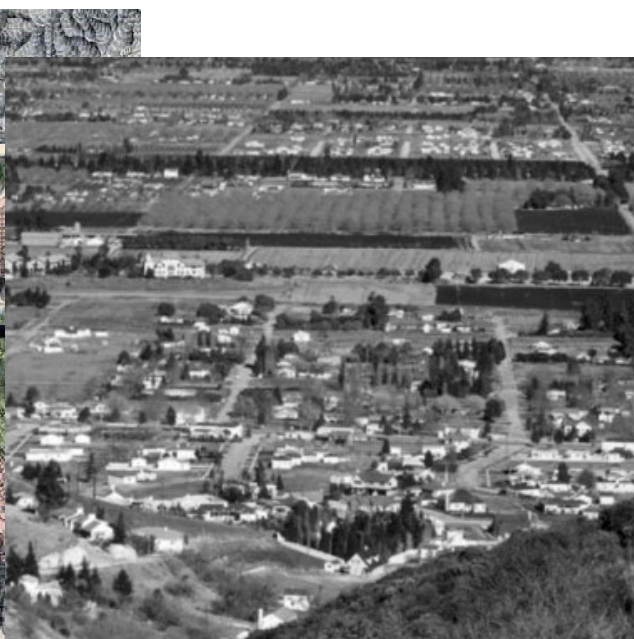
1945
Beginning of housing boom in San Fernando Valley

1976-1983
Judith Baca's Great Wall of Los Angeles painted

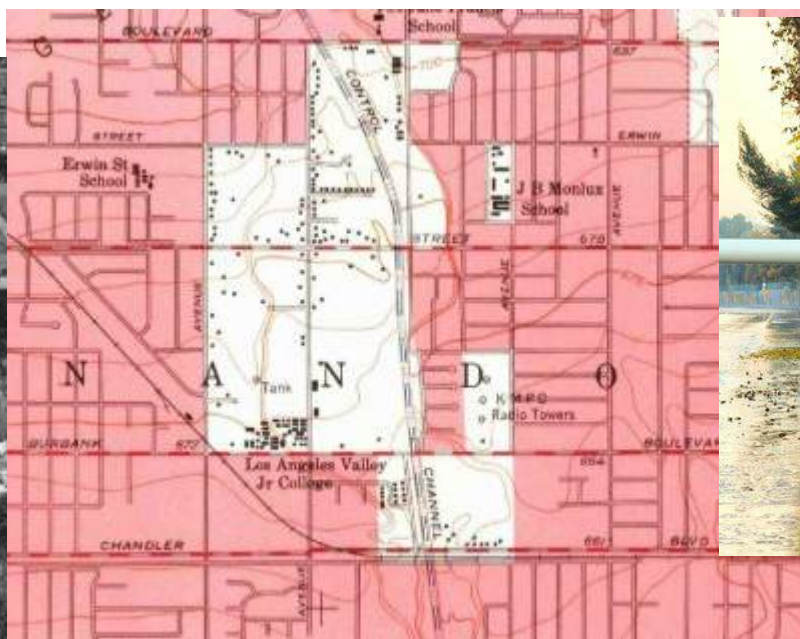
2009-2011
Great Wall of Los Angeles restored



LA County 1898



San Fernando Valley 1939

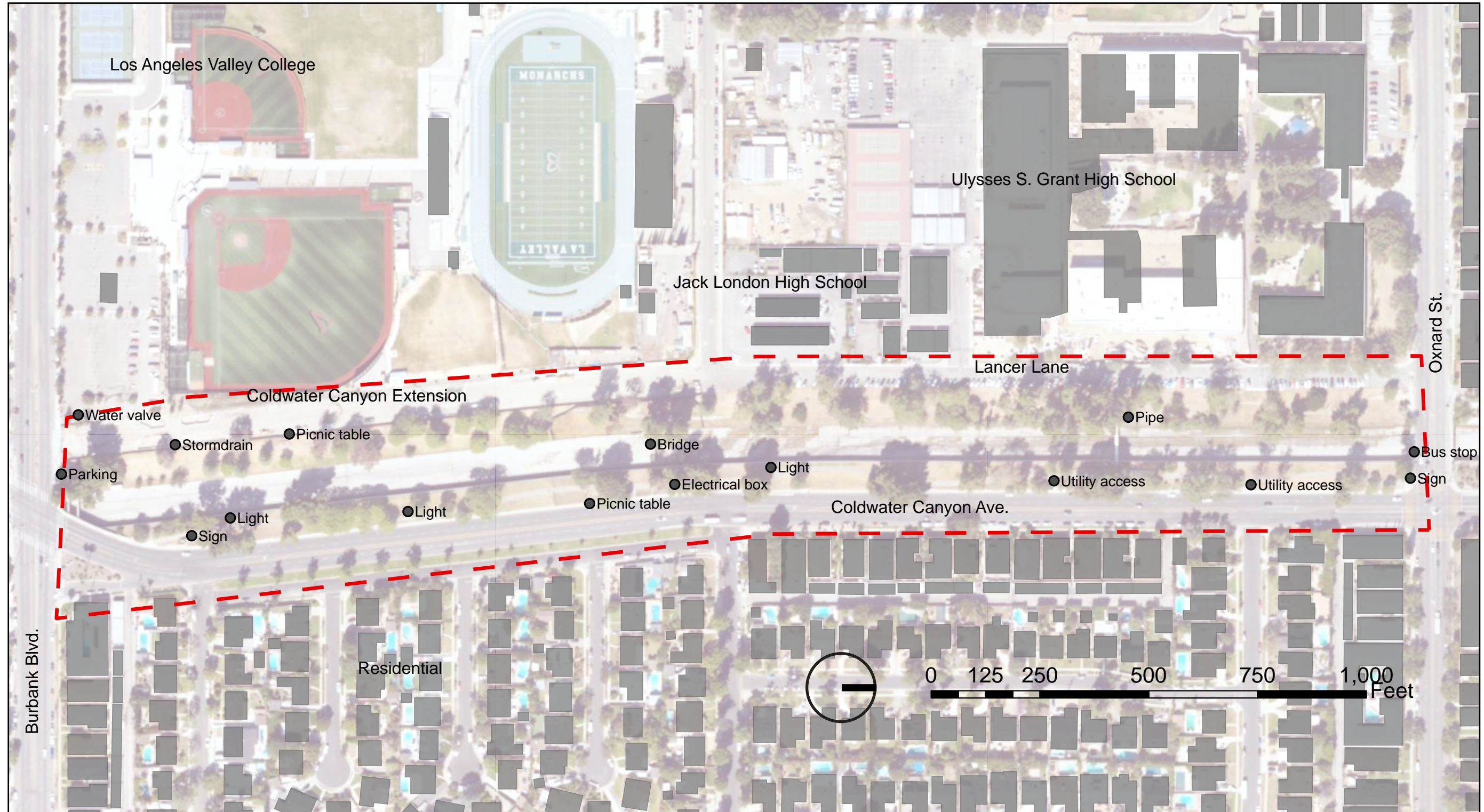


Topo map 1953

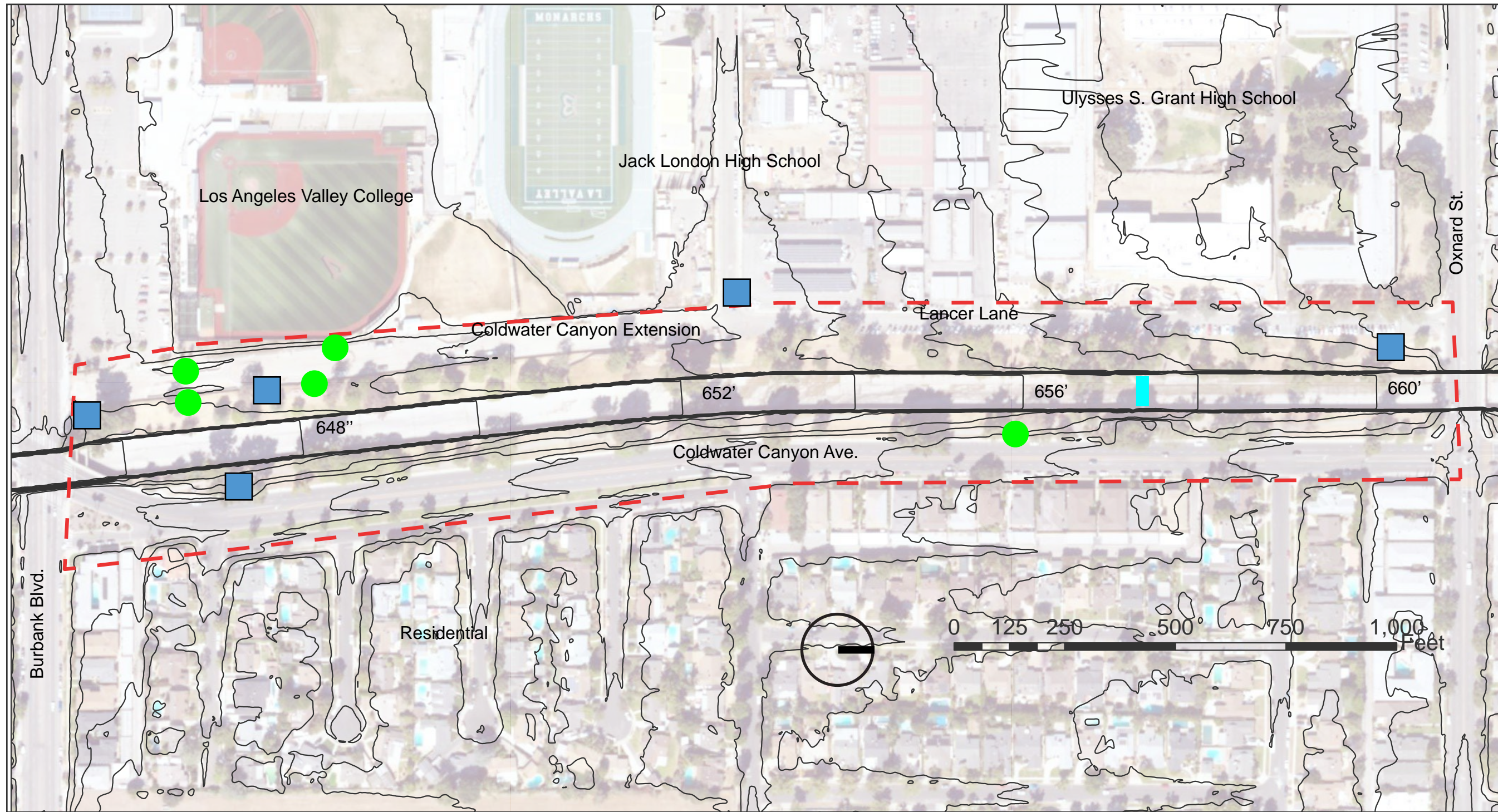


Great Wall of Los Angeles

SITE INVENTORY - NATURAL AND BUILT FEATURES

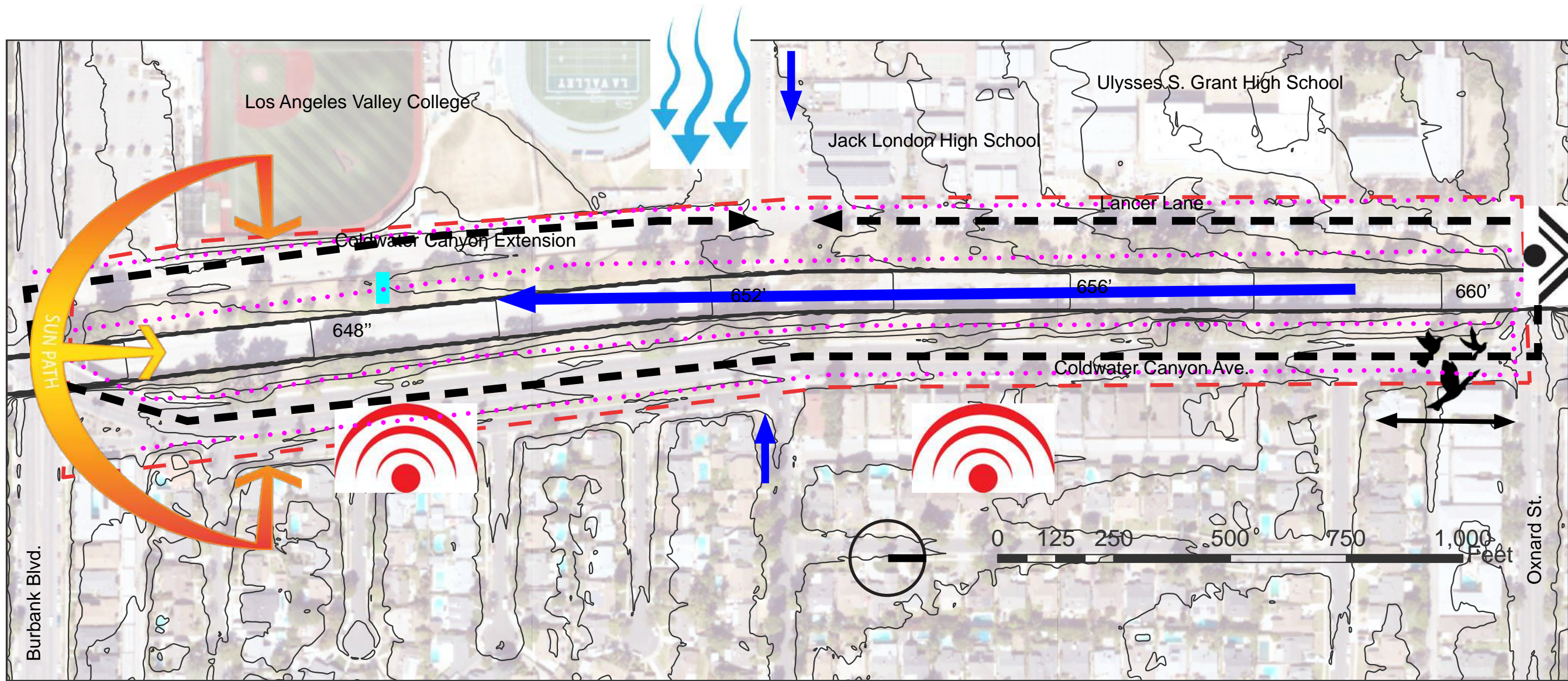


SITE INVENTORY - TOPOGRAPHY AND HYDROLOGY



- Legend
- 2ft Contours
 - - - Project Boundary
 - Stormdrain
 - Water pipe
 - Rain garden

SITE ANALYSIS



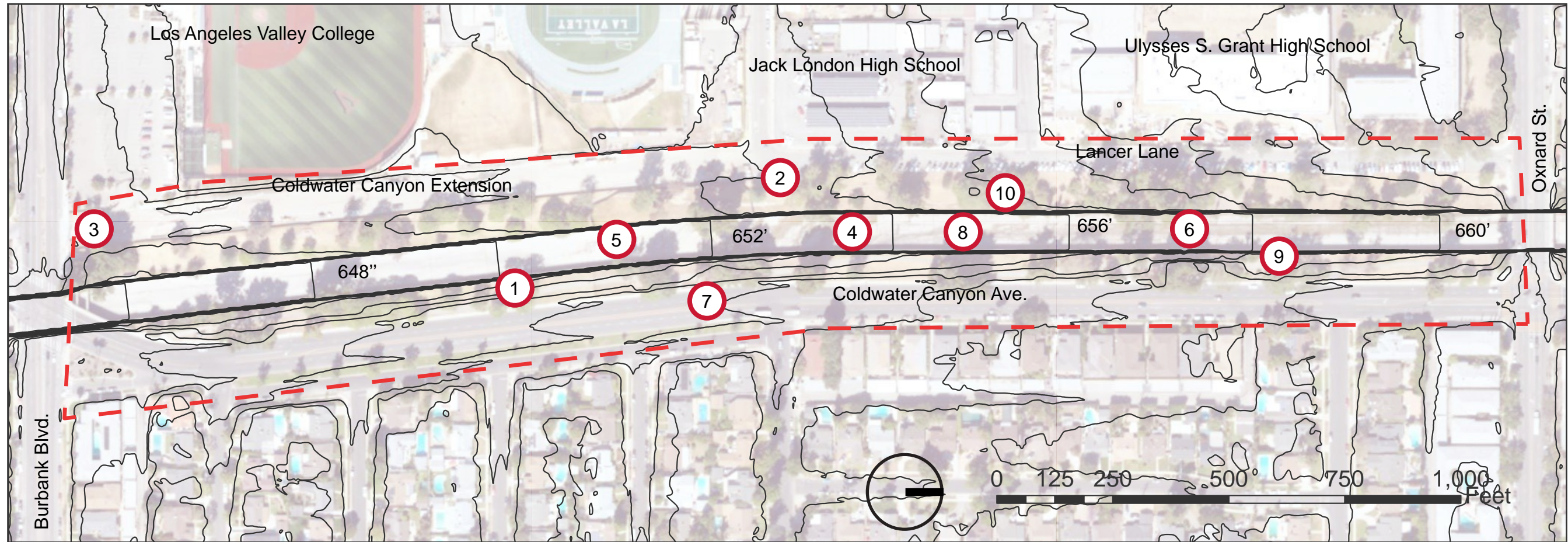
- Legend
- 2ft Contours
 - Project Boundary
 - Views
 - Noise
 - Sun Path
 - Water flow
 - Ped. Circ.
 - Traffic Circ.
 - Prevailing winds
 - Wildlife movement



Soils: Tujunga Series Alluvial sandy loam
 Sunset zone: 20 - cool winters in Southern California

Weather: summers are short, hot, arid, and clear and the winters are long, cool, wet, and partly cloudy. Over the course of the year, the temperature typically varies from 45°F to 91°F and is rarely below 37°F or above 101°F.

SITE CONSTRAINTS



1



Narrow spaces

2



Sun exposure and heat

3



Parking access difficult

4



Flooding potential

5



Concrete river bottom

6



Water pipe crossing channel

7



Traffic noise

8



Poor water quality

9



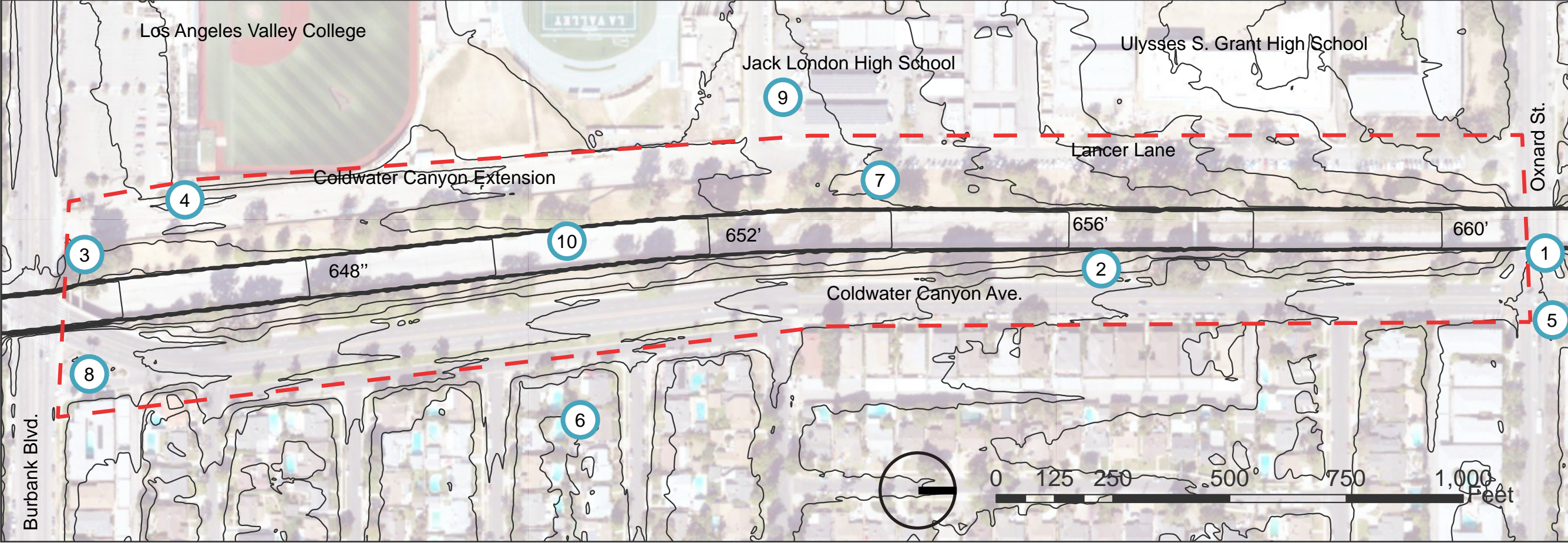
Chain-link fences

10



Shrubs blocking mural view

SITE OPPORTUNITIES



1



Bus stop/public transport

3



Water valve on site

5



Restored greenway to north

7



Bike/pedestrian trails

9



Programming with schools

2



Electrical source

4



Rain garden/groundwater recharge

6



Residential area with visitors

8



Signage for education

10



Mural and other art

PRECEDENT CASE STUDY 1: LITTLE ISLAND, NY

SITE OVERVIEW

Landscape architect Signe Nielsen: We likened this to a leaf floating in the water: a green oasis floating in the river. This unique park was created out of a vision to repair and reactivate Pier 54, which was damaged by Hurricane Sandy. Little Island is a maritime botanic garden with over 400 species and 66,000 planted bulbs supported by 132 precast concrete "pots" each on a concrete column and piles. The park includes meandering paths and stairs for exploring, three entertainment spaces and a lawn.

SUCSESSES

Each corner represents a different microclimate and supports biodiversity and pollinators. The park's flora provide year-round color. It is climate resilient by being elevated. It was inspired by Japanese strolling gardens that include borrowed views. Pedestrian circulation routes center on accessible slopes that lead to vistas that are intersected by stairs and boulders. The park provides extensive arts programming and replaces the entertainment function of Pier 54.

AREA FOR IMPROVEMENT

It is difficult to critique this unique space. The lawn is fairly extensive. Wayfinding is somewhat difficult, but that sense of surprise may have been a goal.

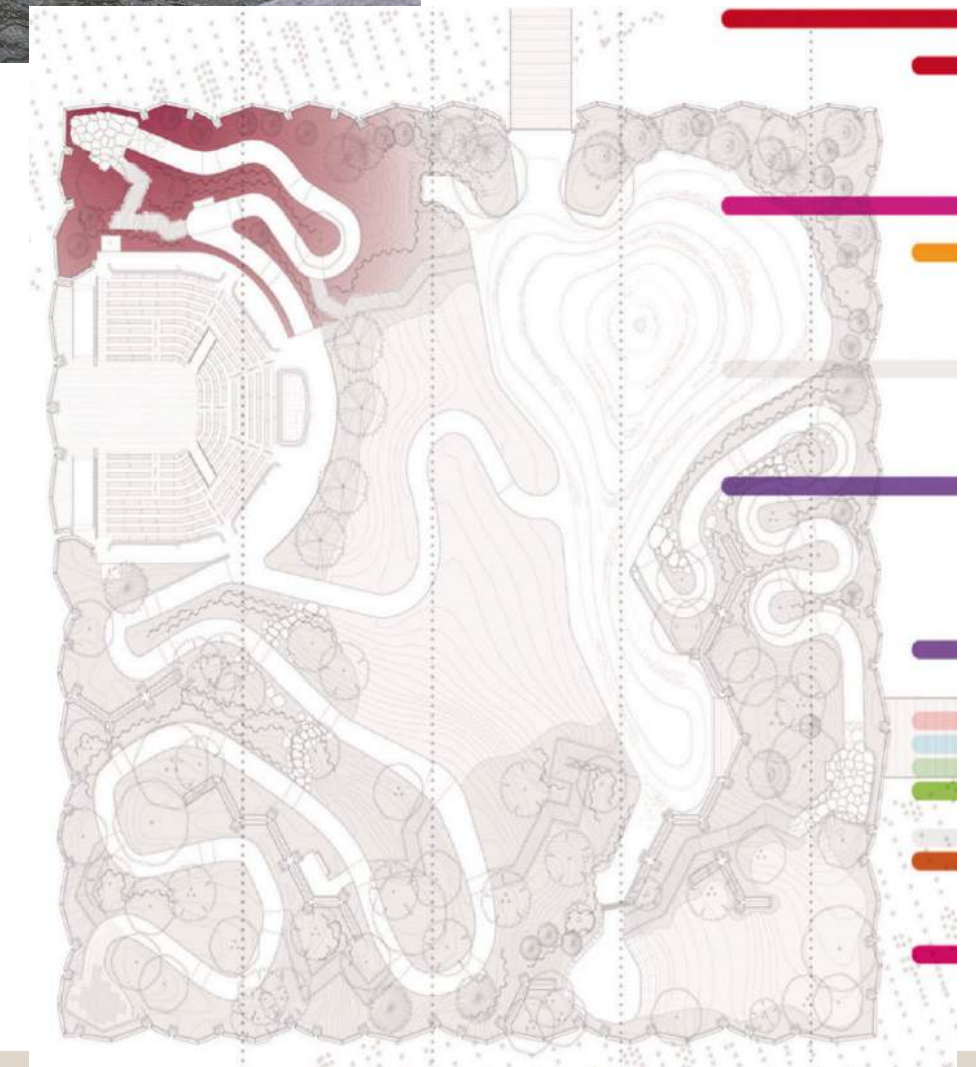


YEAR BUILT: 2021

SIZE: 2.4 acres

BY: Heatherwick Studio and MNLA

FUNDING: Diller-von Furstenberg Family Foundation



REFERENCES:

- https://mnlandscape.com/projects/Pier_55
- <https://littleisland.org/explore-the-landscape/>
- Landscape Architecture Magazine March 2025
- SCAPE Magazine #2 2021

PRECEDENT CASE STUDY 2: WILMINGTON WATERFRONT PARK AND PROMENADE, LA

SITE OVERVIEW

The Waterfront Park and Promenade are part of a master plan to create a natural buffer between the Wilmington neighborhood in Los Angeles and the heavily urbanized Port of LA. The Park was built on a brownfield site and includes areas for informal play, community events, and sports fields. The Promenade spans 1300 linear feet and includes The Landing, a high point and overlook, upland walkways with coastal planting, a lawn, and Tidal Steps, showcasing the changing tides with tidal pools, and a Picnic Pier, which brings people out onto the water.

SUCSESSES

The parks provide open space for the underserved and park-deprived Wilmington community. The Park provides community open space and helps protect against pollutants originating from the port with a landform elevated 16 feet. The Promenade provides waterfront access and many amenities like lighting, signage, public seating, bike racks and drinking fountains. It was planted with hundreds of mature trees, many native plants and provides habitat for aquatic wildlife.

AREA FOR IMPROVEMENT

A bridge between the neighborhood and the Promenade is being built. There could be other easier access points between the parks and the neighborhood.

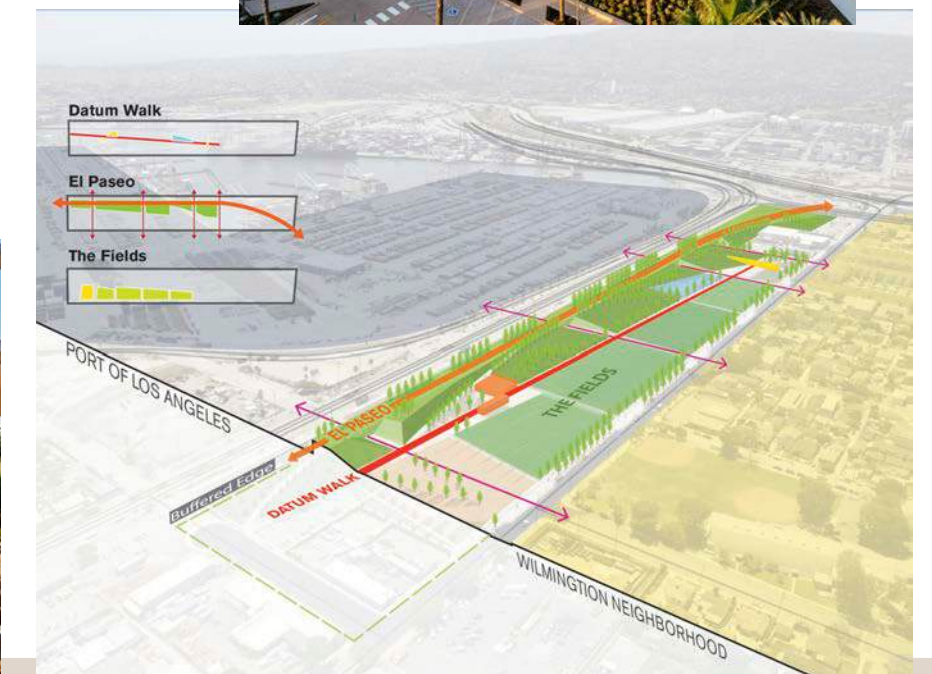


YEAR BUILT: Park: 2011,
Promenade: 2024

SIZE: Park: 30 acres, Promenade:
10 acres

BY: Sasaki, Studio-MLA

CLIENT: Port of Los Angeles



REFERENCES:

- <https://www.sasaki.com/projects/wilmington-waterfront-promenade/>
- <https://www.archpaper.com/2024/02/sasaki-nine-acre-wilmington-waterfront-promenade-amid-heavy-industry/>
- <https://worldlandscapearchitect.com/new-wilmington-waterfront-promenade-a-gateway-to-the-pacific-ocean-and-a-haven-for-angelenos/?v=0b3b97fa6688>

PRECEDENT CASE STUDY 3: TUJUNGA WASH GREENWAY, LA

SITE OVERVIEW

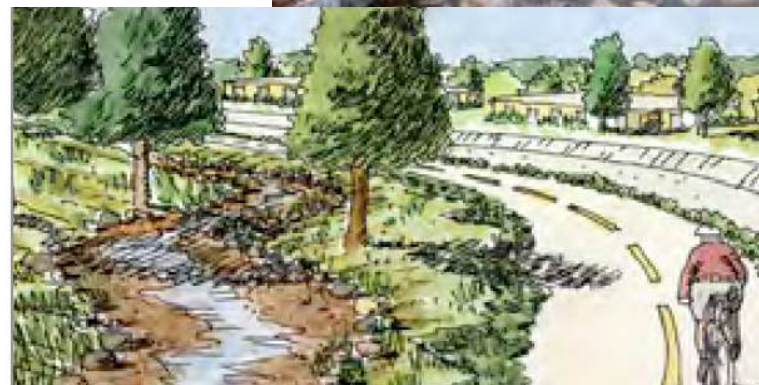
The Greenway Project was part of the Los Angeles River and Tujunga Wash Master Plan. A main goal was to restore some of the wash's natural functions along the side of the flood control channel. A naturalized streambed was created that is fed by up to 325,000 gallons of water per day diverted from the flood control channel. A 8-foot high fence was installed along some adjacent properties and a new iron gateway was installed to address concerns about safety. There is active maintenance at the site. Ongoing outreach helps to explain seasonal changes.

SUCSESSES

The site infiltrates up to 118 million gallons of water from the flood control channel and recharges the San Fernando groundwater basin. It increases the ratio of park space per 1000 residents by 21%. The park reduces landscape water by 70-80% by using all native plants. Saves \$8000-\$20,000 per year in irrigation costs. There is a pedestrian/bike path lining the stream. Plants can help revegetate downstream areas.

AREA FOR IMPROVEMENT

Monitoring data is needed to determine project success and improve future designs. Sediment needs to be removed to increase infiltration.



YEAR BUILT: 2007

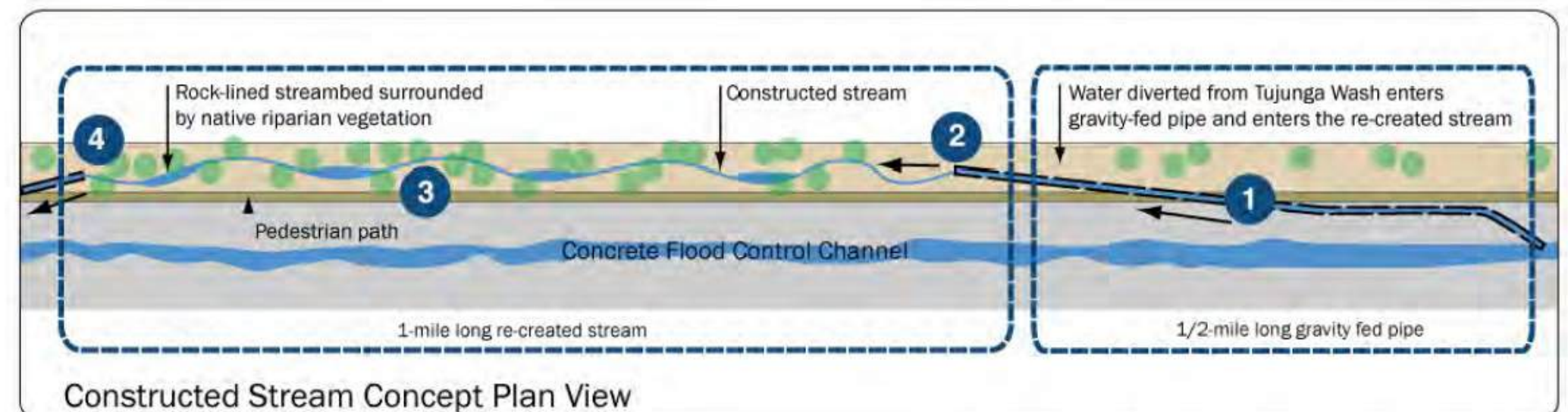
SIZE: 16 acres

BY: Mountains Recreation & Conservation Authority

PARTNERS: LA County Flood Control District, LA County Dept. of Public Works



HOW THE TUJUNGA WASH STREAM RESTORATION WORKS



REFERENCES:

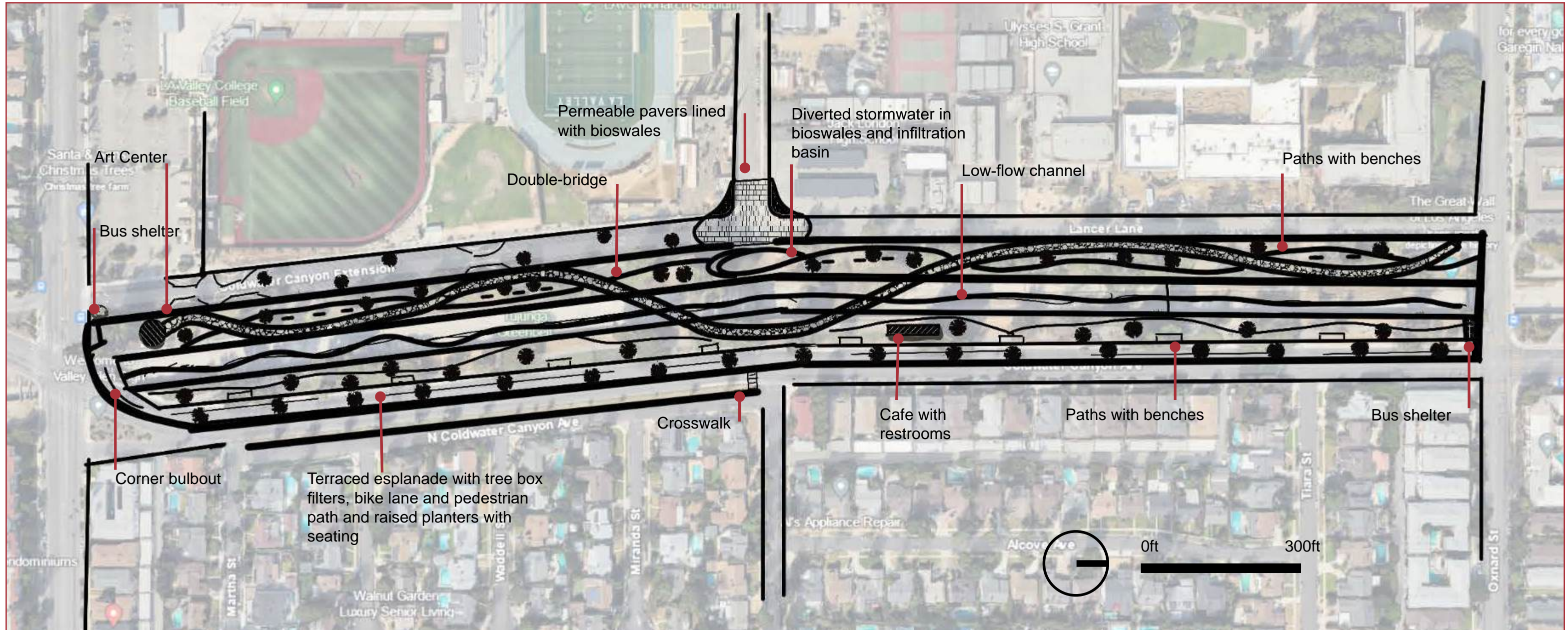
Tujunga Wash Greenway and Stream Restoration Project | Landscape Performance Series

Harvesting Urban Drool - Rainwater Harvesting for Drylands and Beyond by Brad Lancaster

<https://mrca.ca.gov/wp-content/uploads/2018/06/MRCA.TWash-brochure-.pdf>

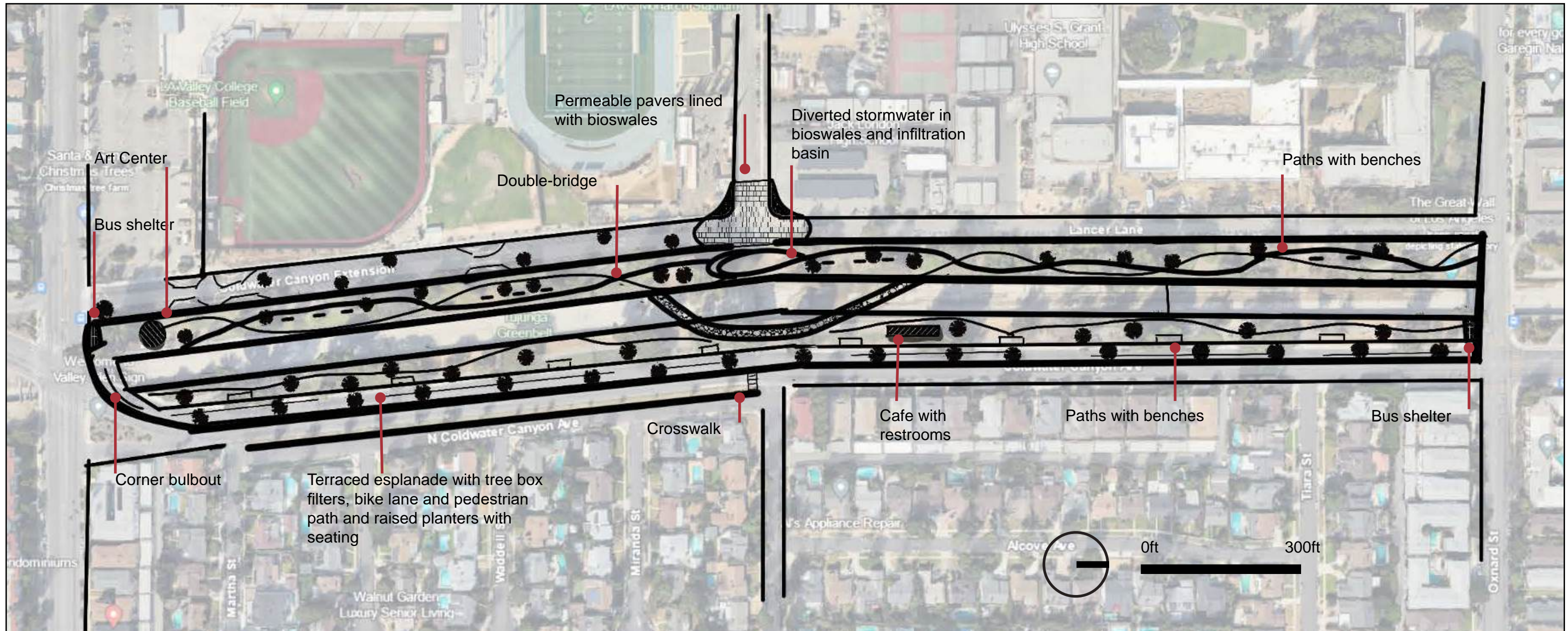
DESIGN ALTERNATIVE 1 - HIGH BUDGET

THE BRAIDED PATH - Paths intertwined with bioswales to divert and treat stormwater. Vegetated low flow channel to improve water quality. Broad terraced esplanade to create space for bikes and pedestrians.



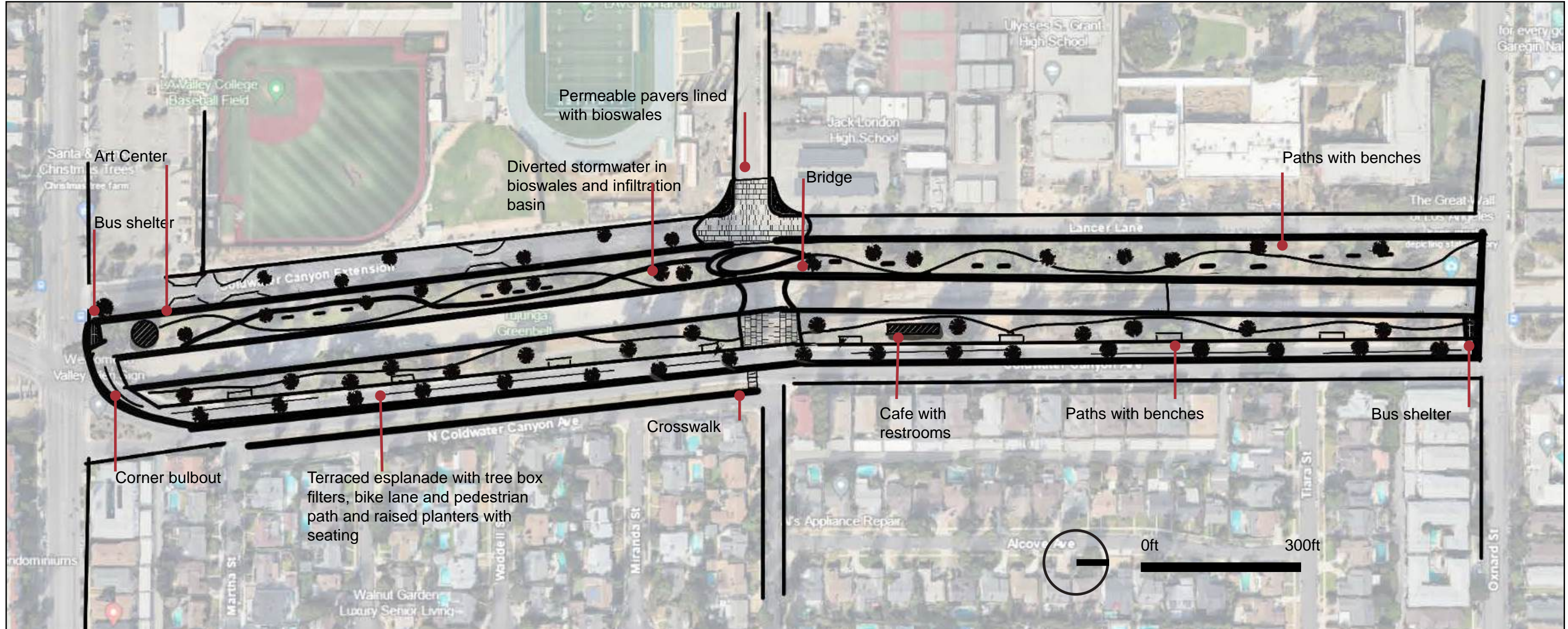
DESIGN ALTERNATIVE 2 - MEDIUM BUDGET

RESTORED GREENWAY - Extended stream channel from Tujunga Wash Greenway. Broad terraced esplanade to create space for bikes and pedestrians.



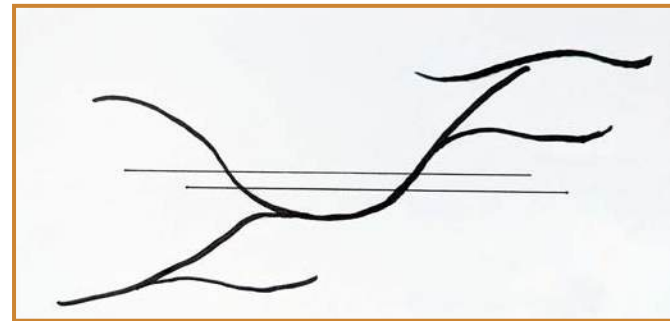
DESIGN ALTERNATIVE 1 - LOW BUDGET

BACK IN TIME - Fewer natural stormwater treatment. Reduced new tree planting. Single bridge. Broad terraced esplanade to create space for bikes and pedestrians.



BRAIDED TIME

BRAIDED TIME is a place that honors the people and events that have overlapped, crossed or collided over time. Similar to these interwoven histories, the park pays tribute to the braided streams of the historical Tujunga Wash that meandered across the San Fernando Valley. The park design reflects these shared patterns of human and natural history by providing a space for people to meander through a timeline and pause at works of art that reflect events in history. The park also restores some of the natural functions of the historical Tujunga Wash, by including areas for water to slow and infiltrate the ground.

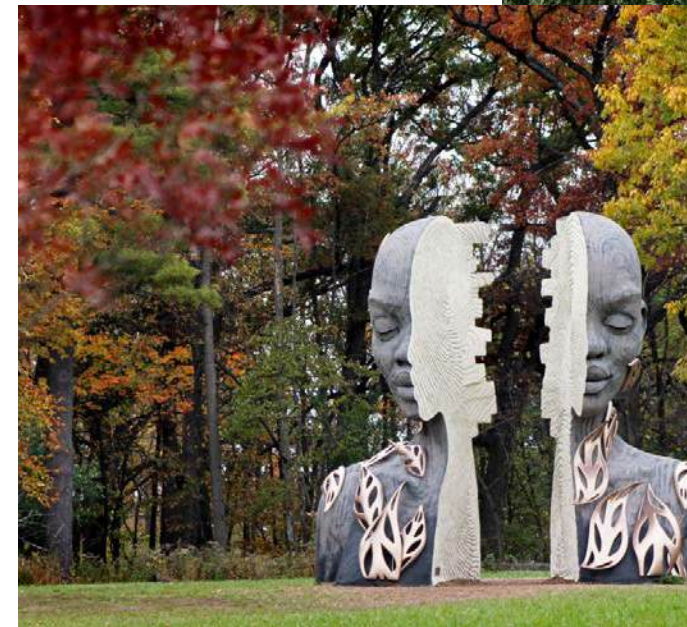


The main objectives of BRAIDED TIME are to:

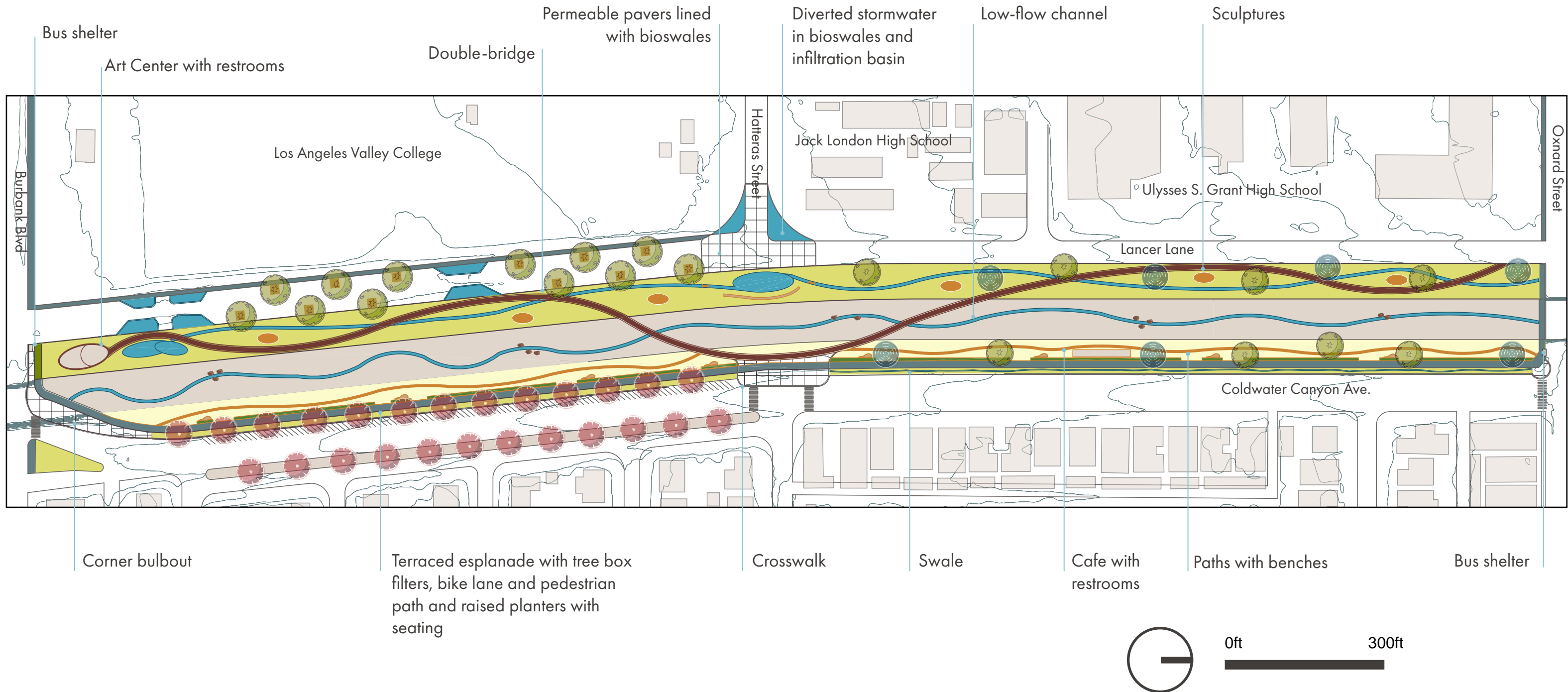
1) **Expand the cultural connection to the Great Wall of L.A. mural.** Meandering paths and bridges provide multiple vantage points to view the mural and connect with **sculptures** by underrepresented California artists. On the west side, a boardwalk leads to an **Art Center** that also showcases artwork from diverse California communities. **Plazas** on the east and west side provide spaces for events. A **cafe** is near the east plaza.

2) **Improve safety and accessibility to the site.** An **ADA accessible mixed-use bike and pedestrian path** runs down a terraced esplanade on the east side that is bordered with raised planters and seating. The east plaza is built on a **street neckdown** that slows traffic on Coldwater Canyon Avenue and connects **crosswalks** to bridges and an **ADA accessible path and boardwalk**. The southern and northern corners have **bulbouts** to improve circulation and safety. **Bus shelters** are at both north and south ends, and **restrooms** are in the Art Center and Cafe. **Angled parking** is added to Coldwater Canyon Avenue, along with an allée of trees.

3) **Extend the Tujunga Wash Greenway to the north and restore hydrologic functions.** The park extends the **restored stream** 1/2 mile further south and purifies stormwater diverted from Oxnard Street. Here, the boardwalk crosses over the stream in multiple places, allowing visitors to connect with the restored natural area. The end of the restored stream meets a **rain garden** in front of the art center. **Bioswales** and **permeable pavers** capture water off of Hatteras Street. Curb cuts allow additional water to flow into an **infiltration basin**. A **low-flow channel** with vegetation and rocks flows down the center of the flood control channel, further purifying stormwater runoff. The esplanade includes a **swale** and **tree box filters**.



BRAIDED TIME



SECTION 1

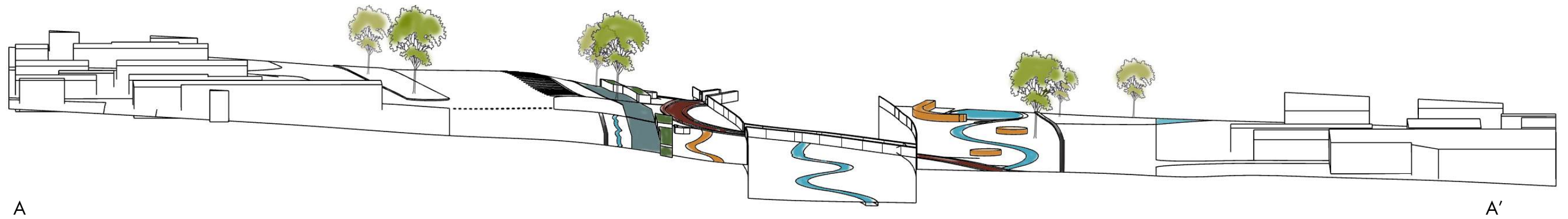
Allée on Coldwater Canyon Blvd.

Esplanade with multi-use trail, tree box filters and swale

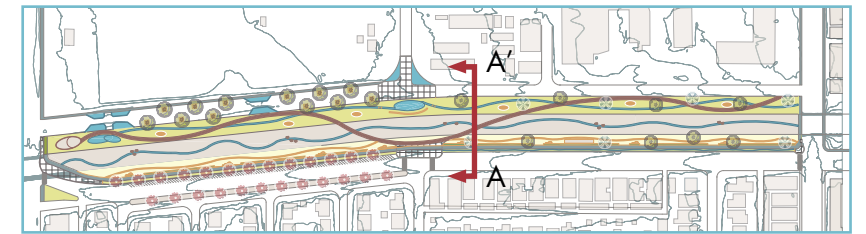
Double bridge over low-flow channel

Infiltration basin with swale and boardwalk; seating and sculpture

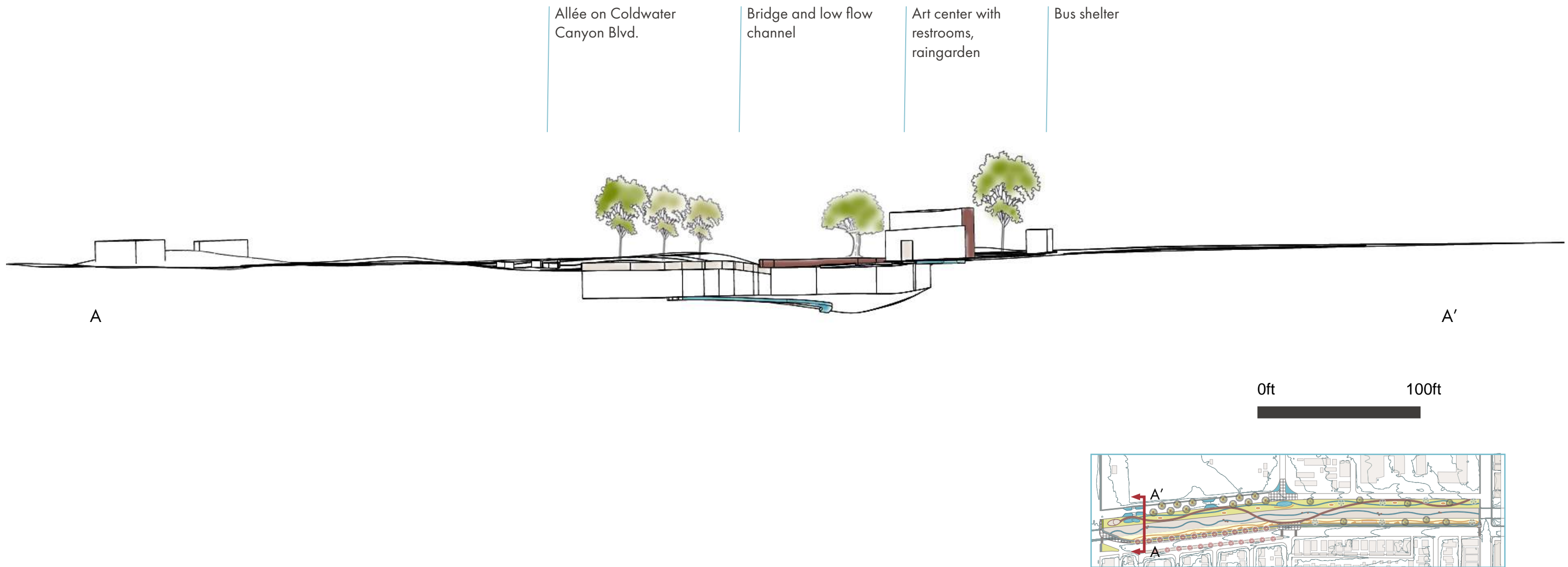
Plaza with permeable pavers; tree box filters and raingardens



0ft 100ft



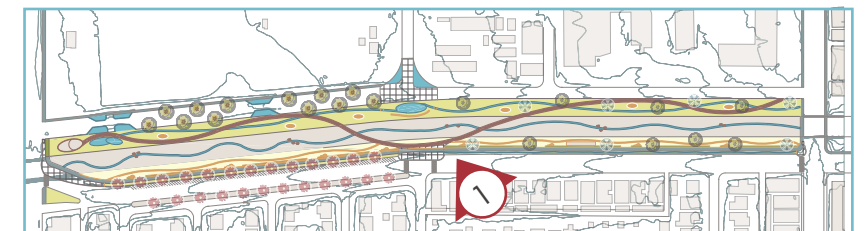
SECTION 2



PERSPECTIVE 1



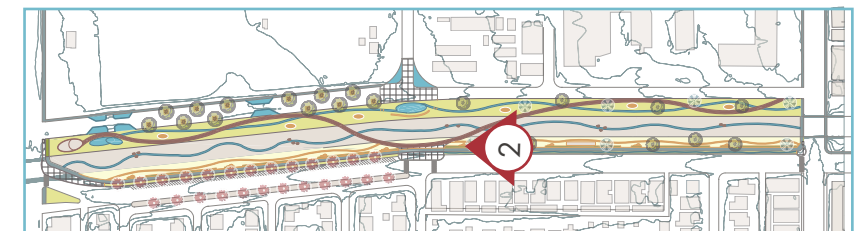
Entrance to park from Coldwater Canyon Boulevard on plaza that crosses the esplanade



PERSPECTIVE 2



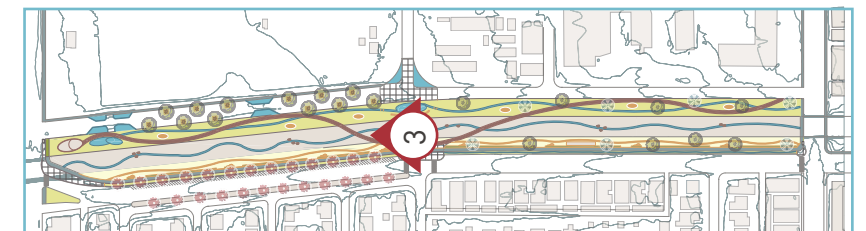
Looking south at raised planters and seating, and west toward bridge and sculptures



PERSPECTIVE 3



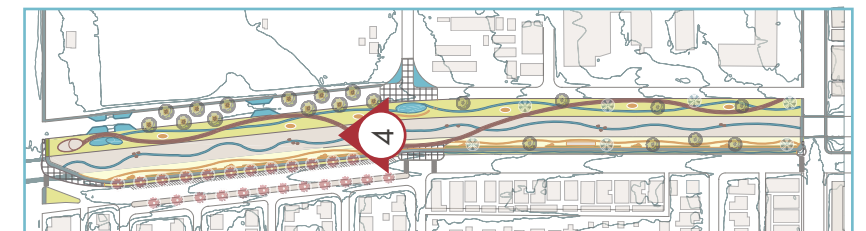
Close-up of seating on east side



PERSPECTIVE 4



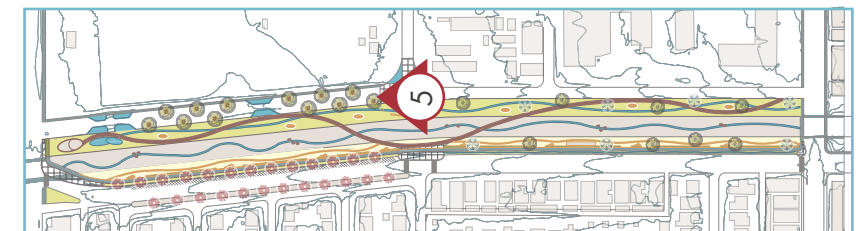
View of the vegetated low flow channel from the bridge



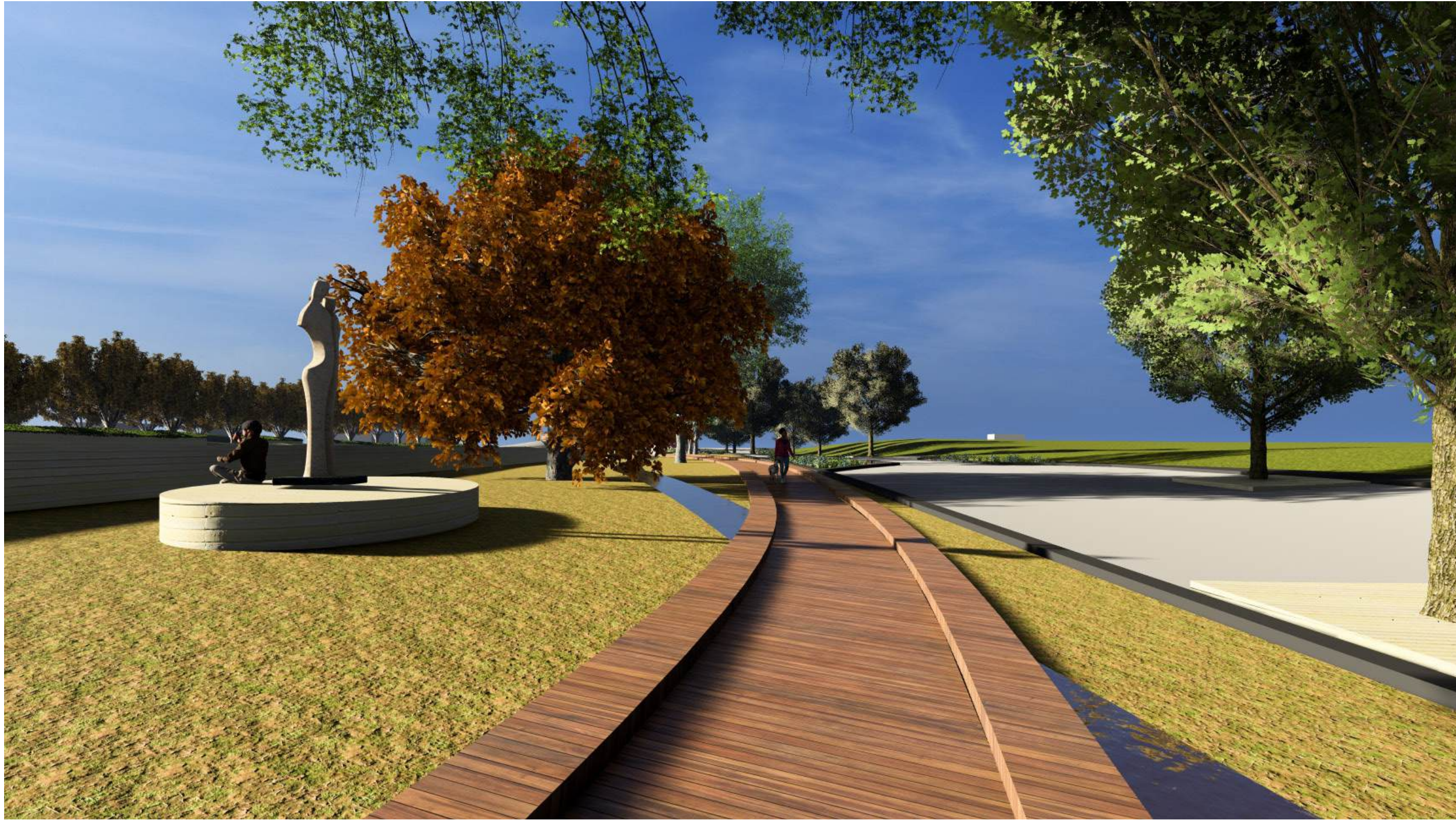
PERSPECTIVE 5



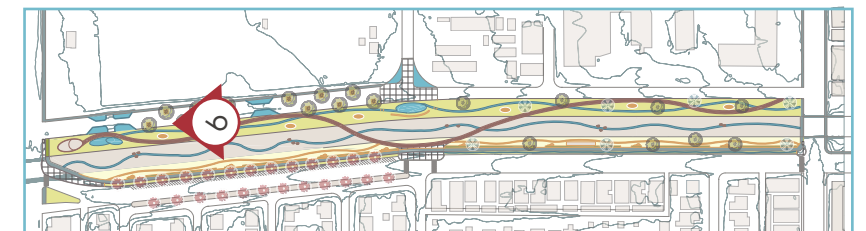
Permeable pavers and tree box filters in parking lot



PERSPECTIVE 6



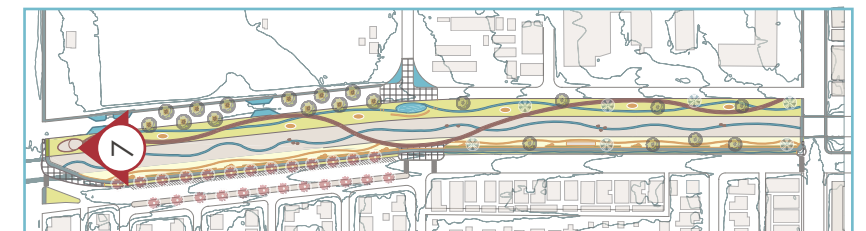
Boardwalk and swale on west side with sculptures and seating



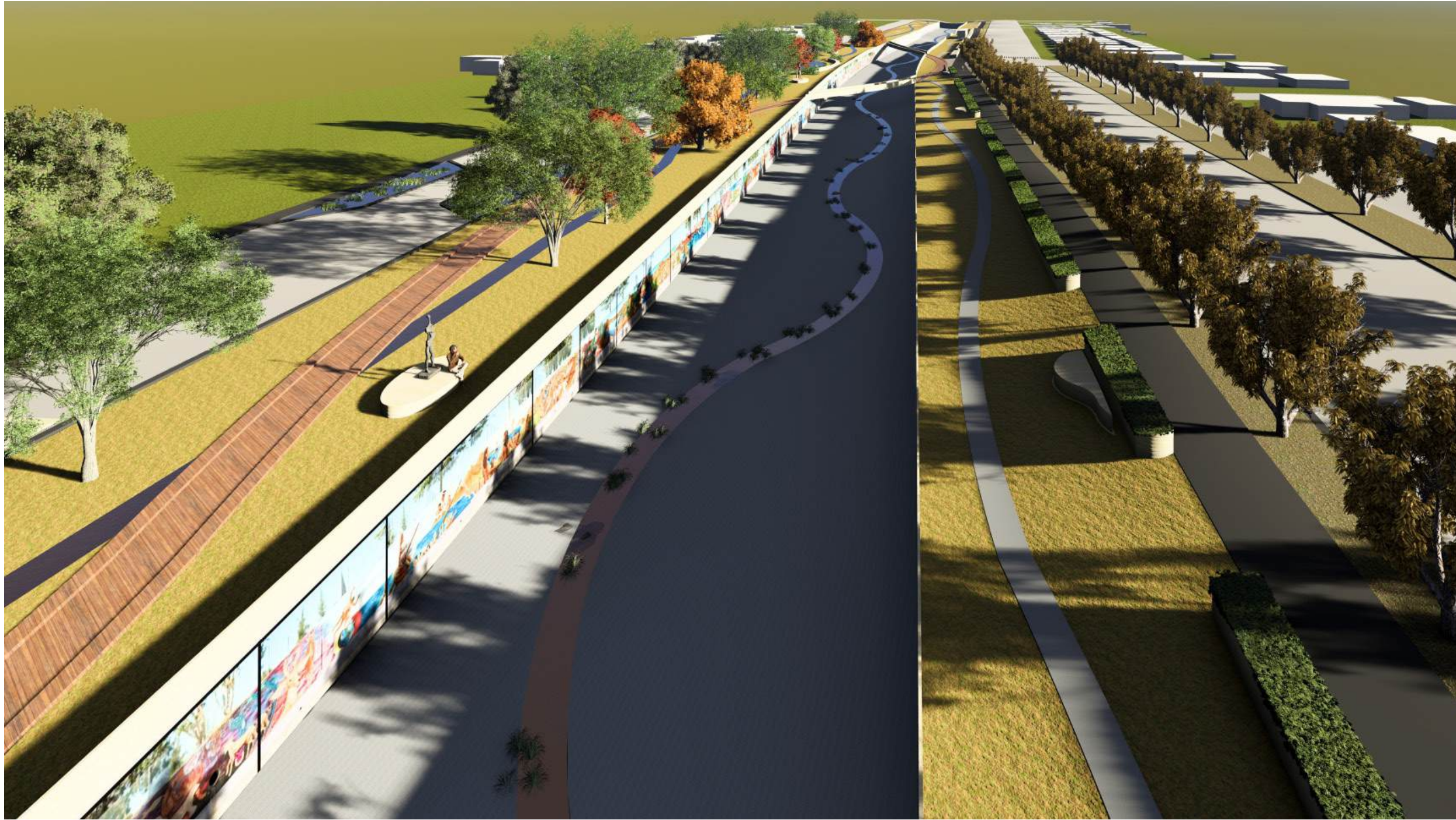
PERSPECTIVE 7



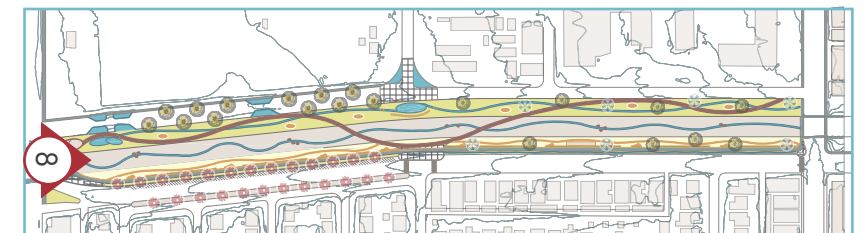
Art center with rain gardens



PERSPECTIVE 8



Overview of the park looking north



WALK-THROUGH VIDEO

Available at: https://drive.google.com/file/d/1K-RILxGH6_bPh72D0y17PPAcyvJ0UkyX/view?usp=sharing

REFERENCES

City of Los Angeles Complete Streets Design Guide, April 2025. https://planning.lacity.gov/odocument/c9596f05-0f3a-4ada-93aa-e70bbde68b0b/Complete_Street_Design_Guide.pdf

County of Los Angeles Department of Public Works. Planning and land development handbook for low impact development. 5th edition. May 2016.

Low impact development: a design manual for urban areas. University of Arkansas Community Design Center. 2010.

<https://sparcinla.org/>

<https://www.mellon.org/grant-story/great-wall-of-la>

<https://geohub.lacity.org/datasets/lacounty::lariac-contours-2ft/explore?location=34.055041%2C-118.298759%2C9.09>

<https://www.landscapeperformance.org/case-study-briefs/tujung-wash-greenway-and-stream-restoration-project>

<https://www.guggenheim-bilbao.eus/en/the-collection/works/the-matter-of-time>

Software:

Master plan: Morpholio Trace, AutoCAD, Adobe Illustrator

Sections: AutoCAD, Rhino, Adobe Photoshop

Perspectives and Video: AutoCAD, Rhino, Lumion