AZUSA WILDERNESS PARK

Mackenzie Doyle
Landscape Design 7 | Spring 2025

SITE HISTORY

TONGVA

The region was originally inhabited by the Tongva people 10,000 years ago. The Gabrielino/Tongva established a village (Asuksa-nga) near the confluence of the San Gabriel River and the foothills of the San Gabriel Mountains. Indigenous tribes thrived within the canyon, which also served as a travel and trade corridor, connecting the coast to the desert.

MEXICAN ERA (1841)

In 1841, the Rancho el Susa land grant was awarded to Luis Arenas, establishing the first Mexican establishment in Azusa. In 1844 it was sold to Henry Dalton, an English merchant, who renamed it Rancho Azusa de Dalton. Dalton developed the land extensively, planting vineyards and constructing facilities like a winery and flour mill.

CITY OF AZUSA (1887)

Following the Mexican-American war, California becomes part of the United States and the City of Azusa was founded in 1887 and incorporated in 1898. During the following period of rapid urban development, the city transitioned from agricultural use to suburban residential expansion.

EXPANSION (2024)

The San Gabriel Mountains National Monument was expanded in May 2024 by 106,000 acres, bringing its total protected area to 452,000 acres. **Azusa Wilderness Park** sits at the entrance of the National Monument and serves as an important ecological buffer, public access point, and community education space. The park began as 3 acres but has grown to 70 acres through grants and land acquisitions by the Watershed Conservation Authority.

SPANISH COLONIZATION (1770)

The arrival of Spanish settlers and the establishment of Mission San Gabriel Arcángel resulted in forced labor and significant suffering of the Tongva people. The Spanish arrived with the goal of converting the Tongva to Christianity, integrating them into Spanish colonial society, and asserting control over their land and resources.

GOLD RUSH (1854)

Gold was discovered in the San Gabriel Canyon, leading to the rapid development of a town called El Doradoville at the fork of the San Gabriel River. The town served 2,000 miners, who had staked claims along the canyon's east fork, and roughly $12 million in gold was extracted. The town was later destroyed by flooding in 1861 and 1862.

NATIONAL MONUMENT (2014)

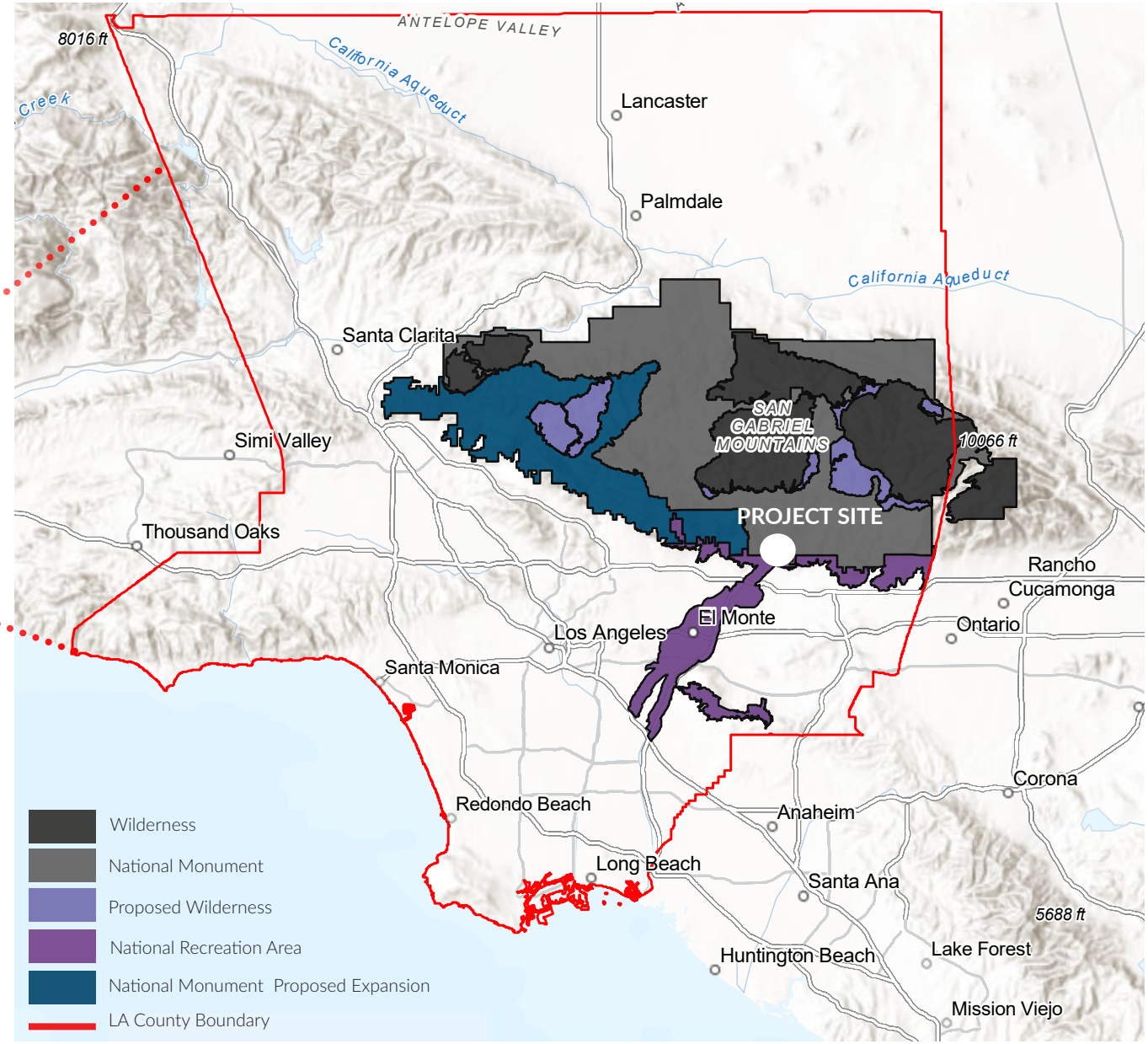
The San Gabriel Mountains National Monument was designated by President Barack Obama on October 10, 2014. The monument encompassed approximately 346,000 acres of land in the San Gabriel Mountains and surrounding areas, with the goals of preserving the region's unique ecosystems, protecting wildlife habitats, and safeguarding cultural and historical sites.

SITE LOCATION

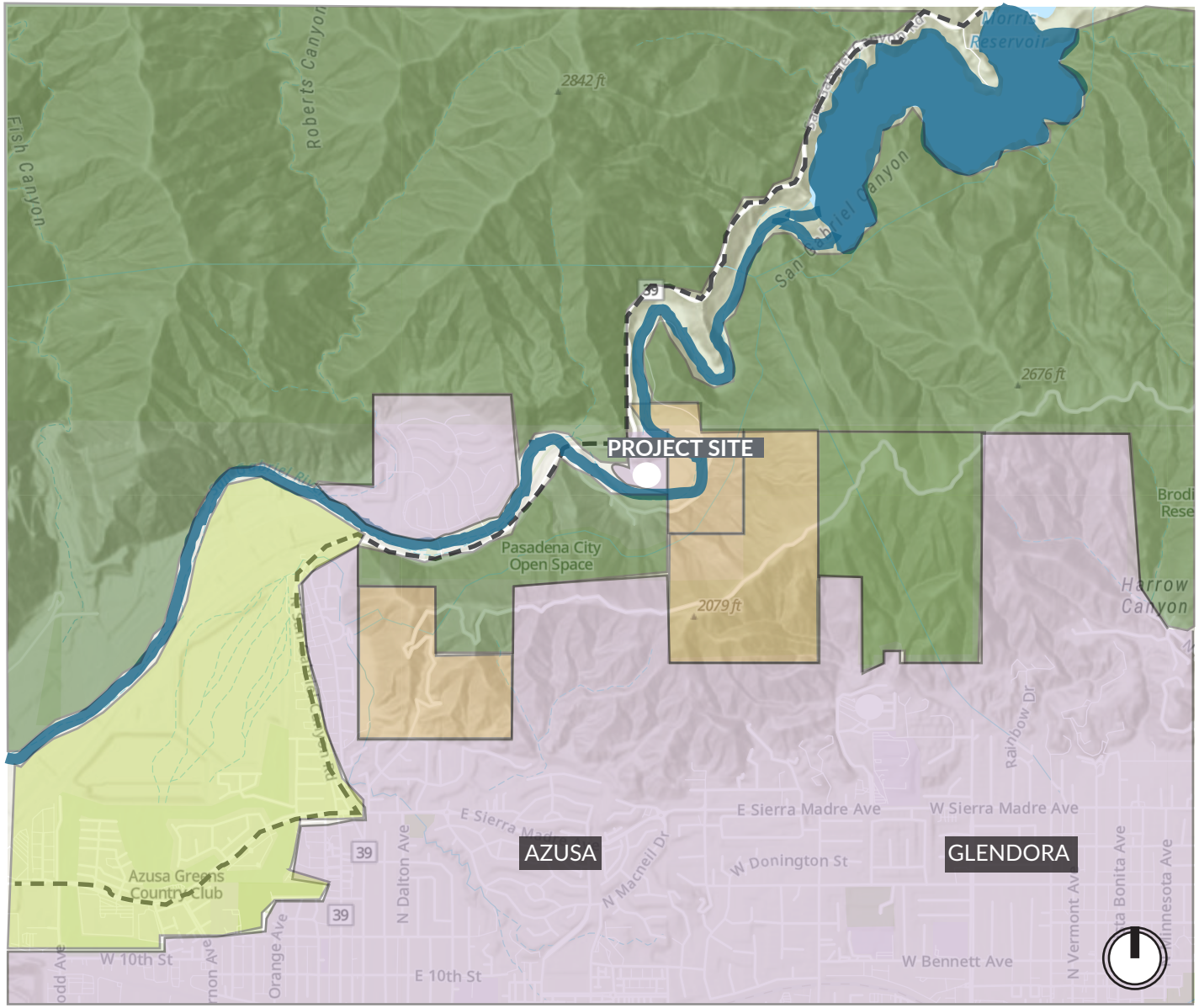
The project site is located in Azusa, CA, within Los Angeles County. The site, an expansion of the Azusa Wilderness Park, is situated on the southern edge of The San Gabriel National Monument.

The San Gabriel National Monument was established in 2014 by President Barack Obama under the authority of the Antiquities Act of 1906, which allows presidents to protect significant natural, cultural, and historic sites.

A National Monument is a protected area in the United States that is designated with the goal of preserving significant features and resources. The goal of National Monuments is to safeguard these places for future generations while allowing for public access, recreation, and education.



SITE ANALYSIS

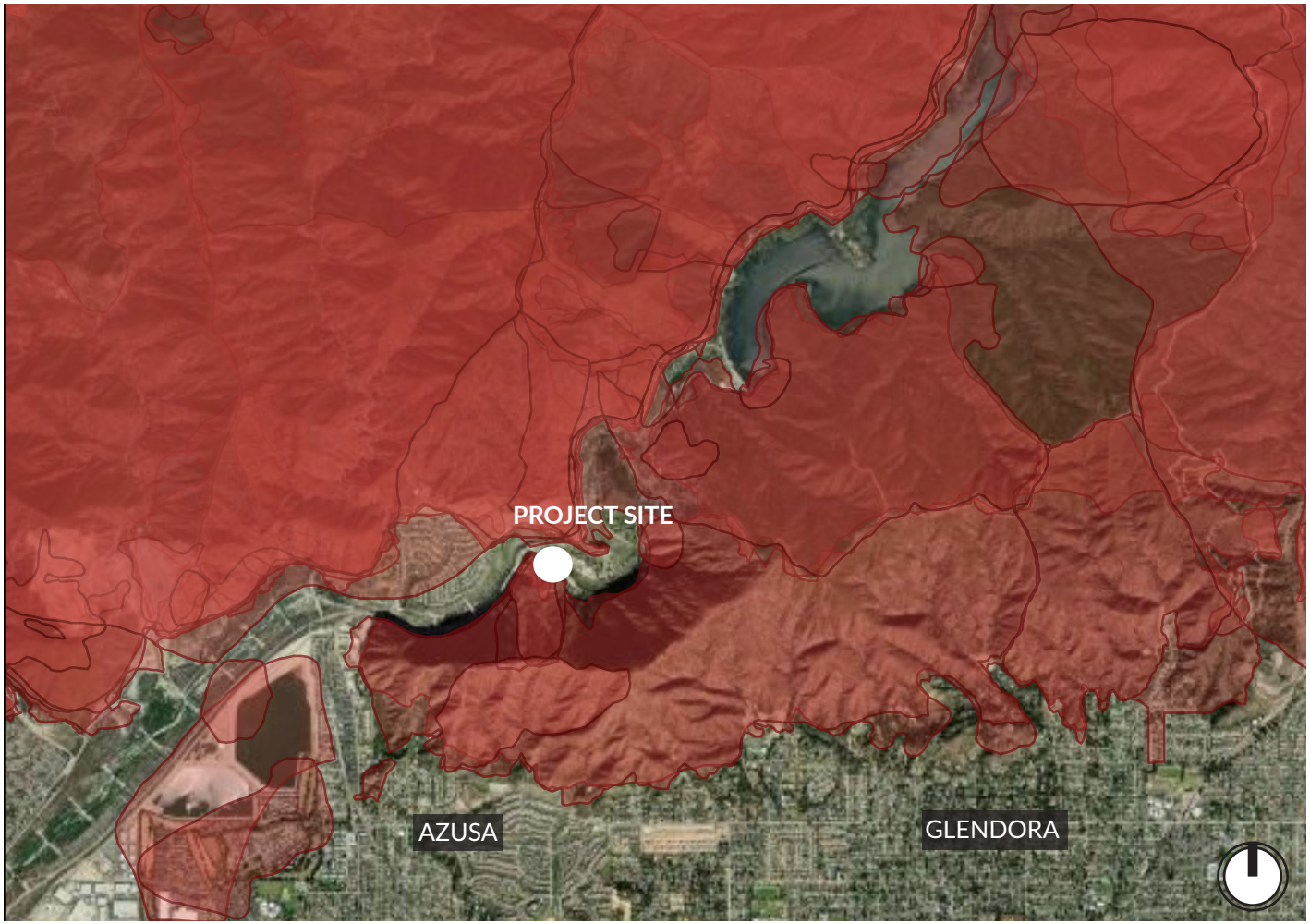


LAND USE AND ZONING

The project site is surrounded by a variety of land uses. To the north, it is primarily bordered by open space, while to the south it adjoins the residential communities of Azusa and Glendora. Situated within Los Angeles County, the site is accessible to approximately 9.6 million county residents. Moreover, nearly 15 million people live within an hour's drive of The San Gabriel Mountains National Monument. The area attracts many seasonal visitors who come for the scenic drives and a wide range of outdoor activities.

DEMOGRAPHICS

The neighboring community of Azusa, CA has a population of around 50,000, the majority of whom are Hispanic. The median age is 33, but the city is also home to many multi-generational families and college students from Azusa Pacific University. The site programming should cater to a range of ages and interests.



HISTORIC WILDFIRES (1900 - 2025)

The project site is located in a region with an extensive history of wildfire activity. Over the past 75 years, repeated fire events have impacted the surrounding mountainsides, highlighting the importance of designing for fire resilience.

Wildfire is a natural and historically essential part of the ecosystem in the San Gabriel Mountains, and native vegetation has both adapted to and evolved alongside fire. Natural fire intervals occur every 30-100 years and allow ecosystems to regenerate and maintain biodiversity. Modern human impact, rapid development, and fire suppression techniques have disrupted this cycle. The increase in frequency and intensity of wildfires has lead to a loss of native vegetation and rapid growth of invasive species which, in turn, fuel the fires.

We can design with this context in mind, while also respecting natural fire processes, by implementing strategies such as defensible spaces, fire-resistant materials, and vegetation management.

Historical Fire Burn Area

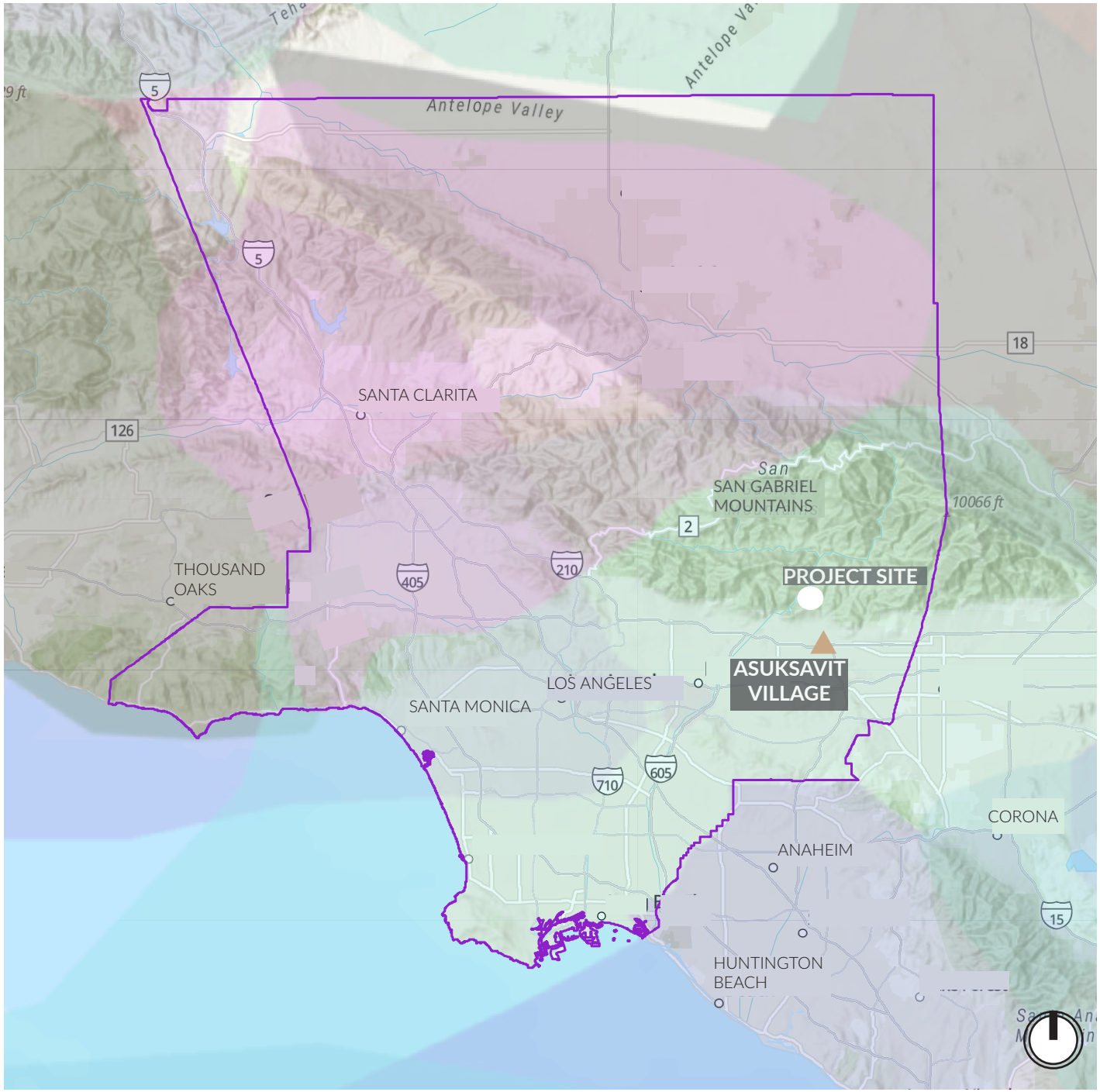
Historical Fire Perimeter

CURRENT WILDFIRE HAZARD POTENTIAL SCORE

- Very High Risk
- High Risk
- Moderate-High Risk
- Moderate Risk
- Low Risk

CURRENT WILDFIRE RISK

The project site sits within and is surrounded by areas deemed as moderate-to-high fire risk by the U.S. Forest Service's wildfire hazard potential (WHP) score. This score depicts the relative potential for high-intensity wildfire that may be difficult to manage.



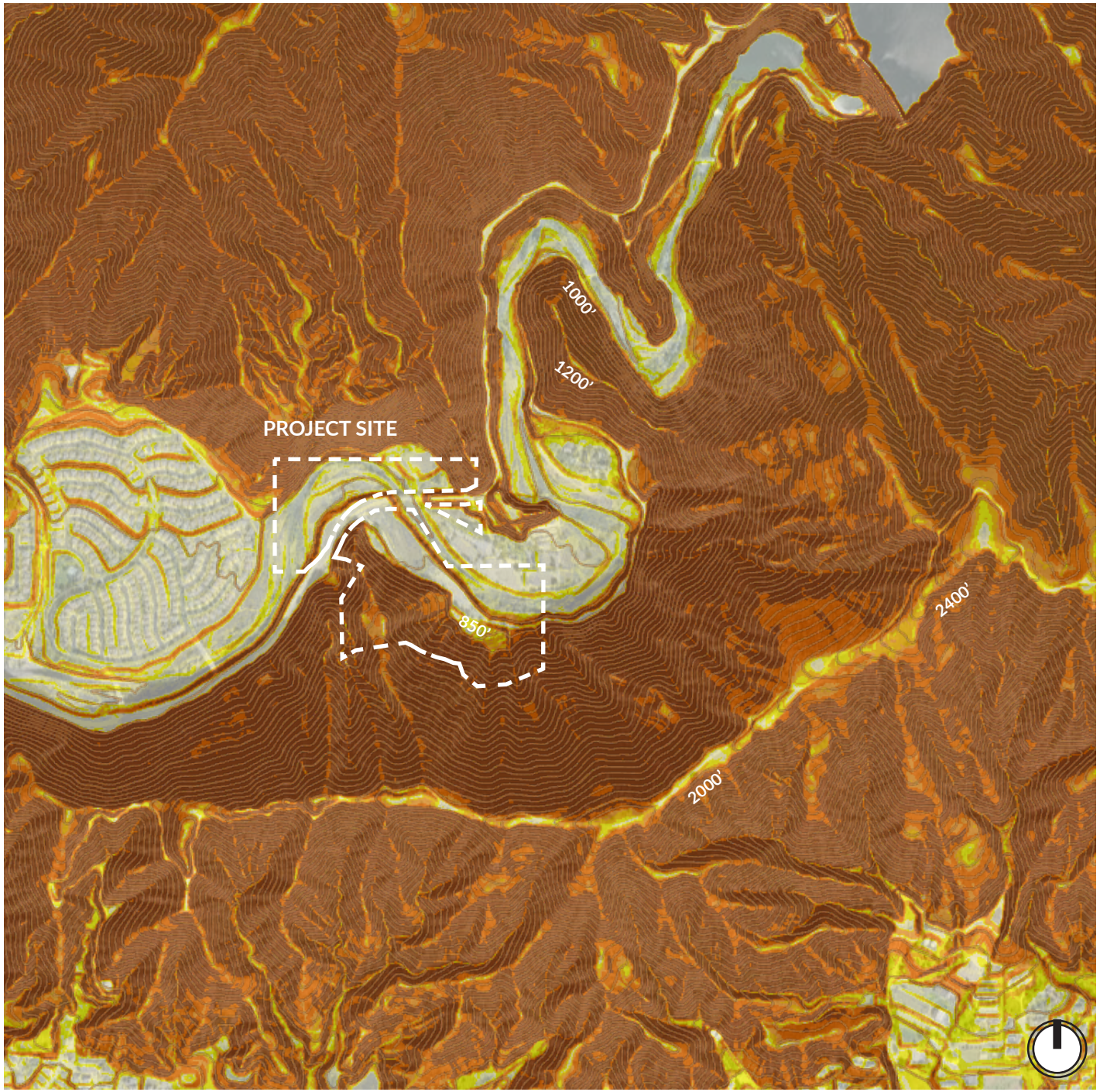
LA COUNTY INDIGENOUS TERRITORIES

Los Angeles has a rich and deeply rooted Indigenous history that long predates the city's founding. This map offers a visualization of LA County's Indigenous heritage by depicting the Indigenous land territories, as well as the prominence of overlapping tribal areas. The region is the homeland of the Tongva people, who have lived in what is now the Los Angeles Basin for thousands of years. They called their territory Tovaangar, meaning "the world" or "the land."

Azusa Wilderness Park is part of the territory of the Gabrielino-Tongva Tribe, The nearby village of Asuksavit (now known as Azusa) was a significant settlement, serving as a trade hub and gateway to other mountain clans such as Japchivitam and Amutskupeatam. Asuksavit is considered one of the oldest documented villages in LA County.

As we look at developing this land, it is important to honor its rich cultural history, protect cultural sites, and engage with its current Indigenous presence.

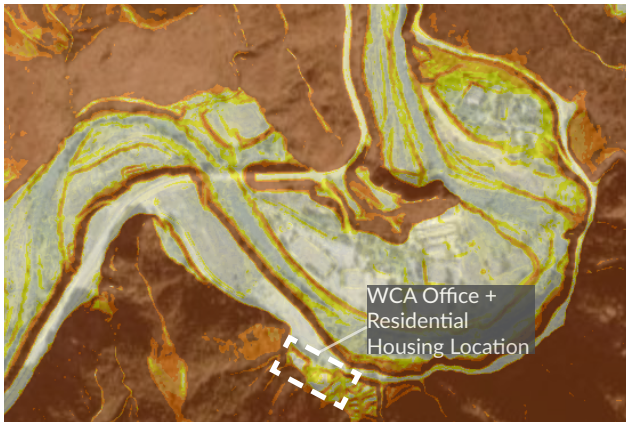
- Tongva (Gabrielino)
- Fernandeño Tataviam
- Acjachemen (Juaneño)
- Ventureño Chumash
- LA County Boundary



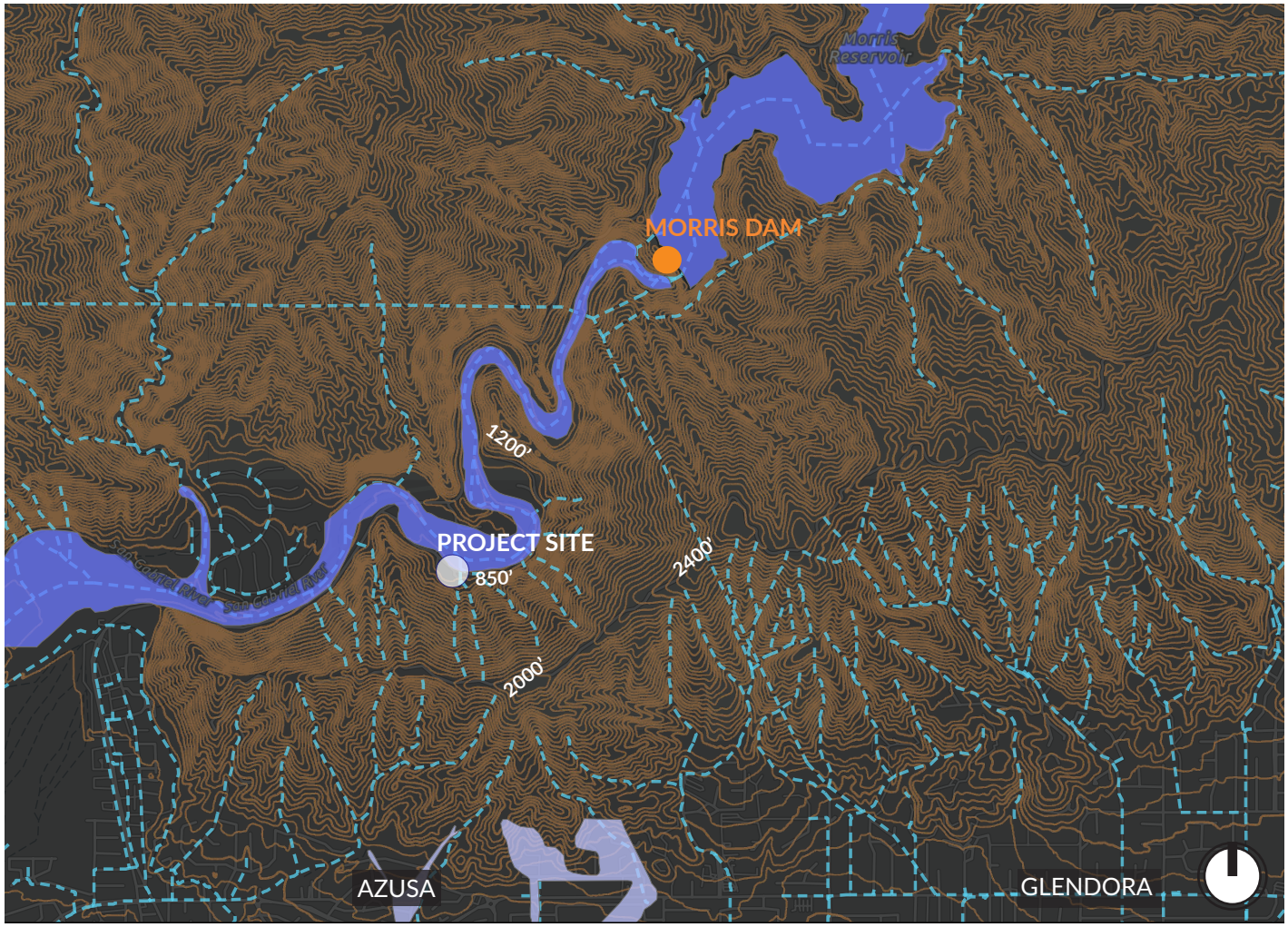
SLOPE STEEPNESS

Slope steepness is a critical factor in assessing the safety of surrounding areas, particularly in relation to erosion, runoff, and landslide risk. Wilderness areas that experience frequent wildfires and heavy rains are especially vulnerable to landslides, as fires can destroy the vegetation that stabilizes slopes. The project site is surrounded by very steep slopes, especially behind the WCA offices and residential units at the south end of the property. Water and debris from these slopes could flow into the site, leading to flooding, soil erosion, and damage to trails and structures. In addition, steep surrounding slopes can influence views, wind patterns, and site accessibility.

A CLOSER LOOK...



- Very Steep (31°- 90°)
- Steep (21° - 30°)
- Moderately Steep (16° - 20°)
- Gently Steep (11° - 15°)
- Strongly Sloping (6° - 10°)
- Gently Sloping (3° - 5°)
- Flat/ Nearly Level (0 - 3°)
- 50' Contours



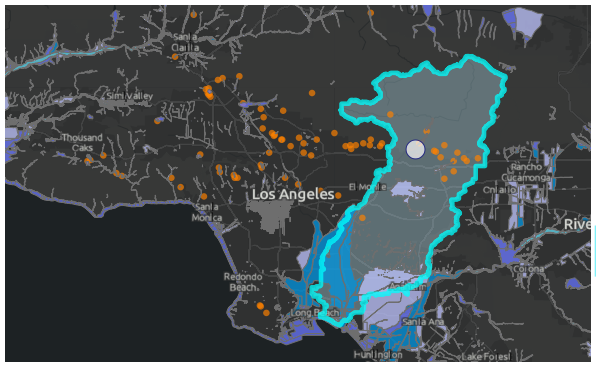
FLOOD HAZARD MAP

FEMA's Flood Hazard Areas identify zones with varying levels of flood risk based upon frequency of expected flooding. A 1% Annual Chance Flood zone (often called the 100-year floodplain) means there is a 1% chance that a significant flood will occur each year. A 1% Annual Chance Flood Hazard zone is considered high risk, while a 0.2% Annual Chance Flood Hazard represents moderate risk.

Two dams sit upstream of the project site along the San Gabriel River (Morris Dam and San Gabriel Dam), which can alter natural river flow patterns and increase flood risk due to potential overtopping.

The site is also located within a floodplain and is surrounded by steep slopes that can contribute to increased runoff and drainage issues.

- 1% Annual Chance Flood Hazard
- 0.2% Annual Chance Flood Hazard
- Water Flowlines
- 50' Contour



- San Gabriel Watershed Boundary
- Dams in LA County
- Project Site

SAN GABRIEL WATERSHED

The San Gabriel Watershed spans 689 square miles and plays a vital role in providing water supply, groundwater recharge, and habitat for Southern California's diverse ecosystems. The watershed is highly managed, with extensive flood control systems including dams, debris basins, and channels.

Primary Vehicular Circulation

Secondary Vehicular Circulation

Bike Path

Hiking Trail

Bridge

Trail Head

Route 39

Main Site Entrance Point

VEHICULAR CIRCULATION + TRAILS

Recreation in The Monument

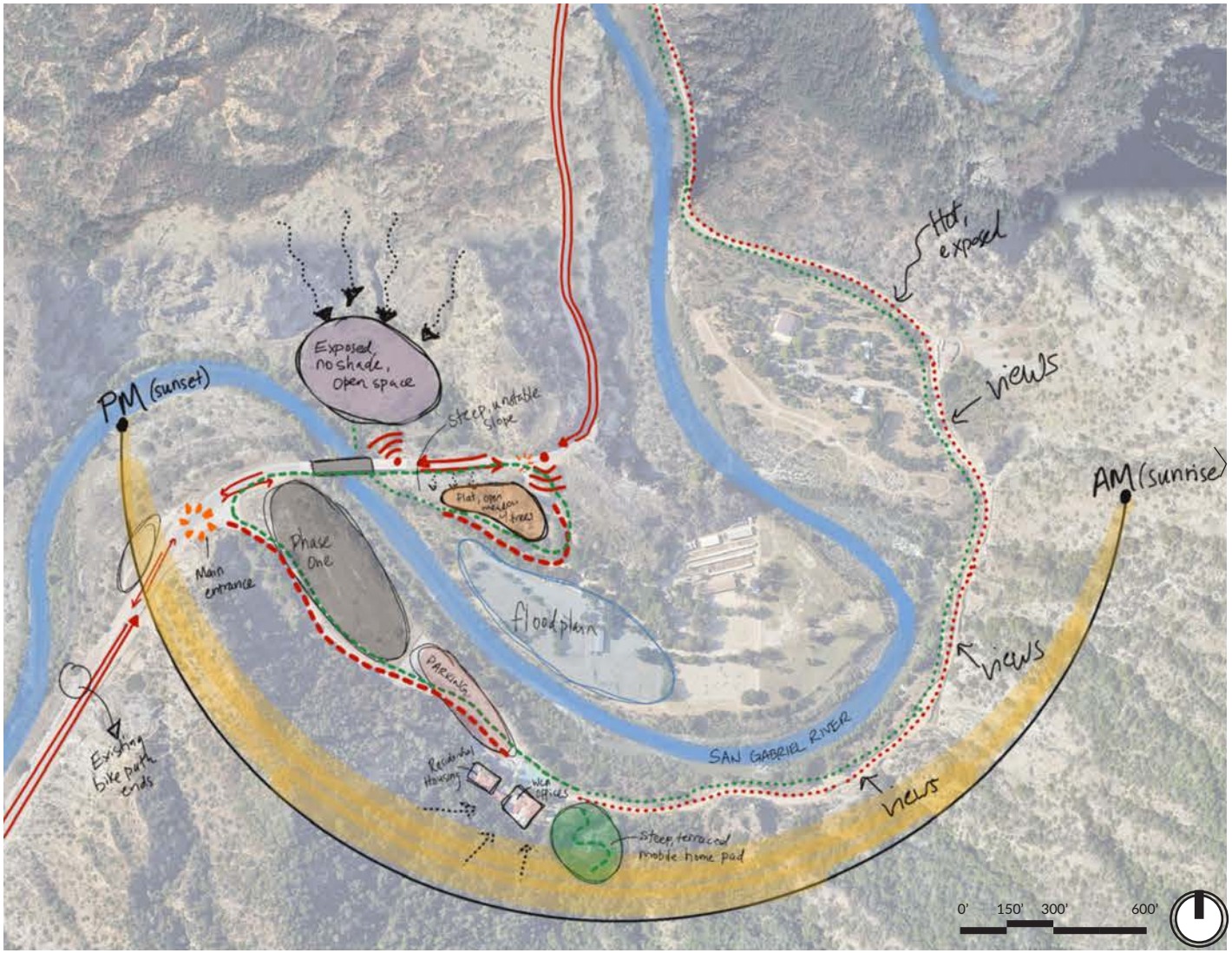
San Gabriel National Monument, located northeast of Los Angeles, spans parts of the Angeles and San Bernardino National Forests. Its accessibility and wide range of recreational opportunities — including hiking, camping, mountain biking, climbing, fishing, and winter sports — make it a popular destination for outdoor enthusiasts from across Los Angeles and Southern California.

Heavy Vehicular Traffic

Route 39, which passes through the project site, serves as a major access route into the southern portion of the Monument. It is heavily used by recreational visitors, local residents, U.S. Forest Service personnel, and motor vehicle enthusiasts seeking scenic drives along the winding mountain roads. Within a 20-minute drive of Azusa Wilderness Park, there are three trail heads with limited parking, often located precariously along the shoulder of the busy roadway. This creates challenges for both safety and access.

The Gateway

Azusa Wilderness Park serves as an important gateway, bridging the transition from urban Los Angeles to the San Gabriel wilderness. Implementing a shuttle system to connect visitors with popular attractions could reduce vehicular congestion, enhance pedestrian safety, and protect sensitive ecological areas.



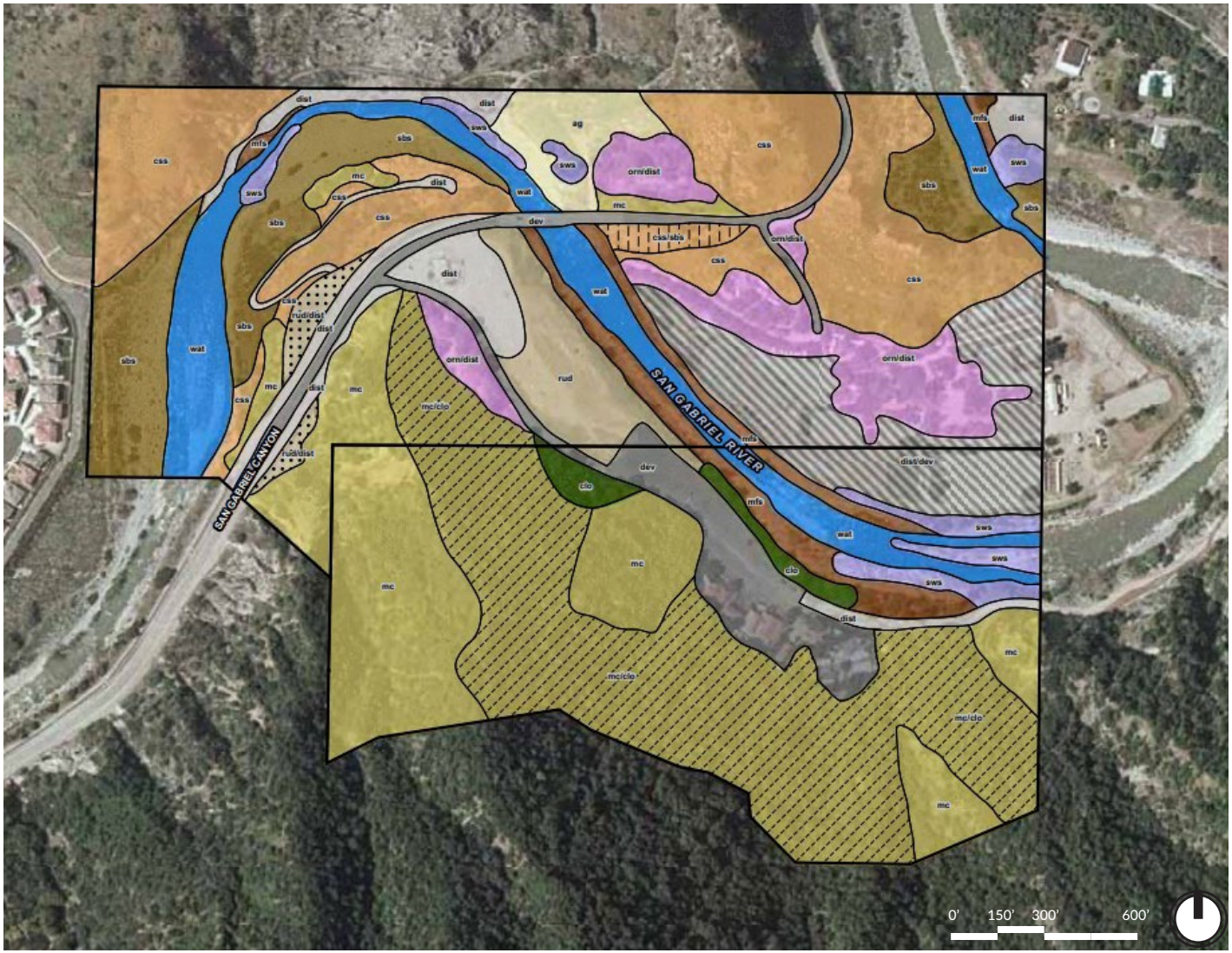
- Primary Vehicular Circulation
- Secondary Vehicular Circulation
- Tertiary Vehicular Circulation
- Primary Pedestrian Circulation
- Secondary Pedestrian Circulation
- Noise Disturbance
- Steep Slope

ON-SITE CONSIDERATIONS

During my field analysis, several key site considerations emerged. The site is relatively exposed with limited shade, which is a critical factor when planning programming and user comfort. Notable shaded areas include the elevated pads near the WCA offices and the meadow adjacent to the horse ranch. Other site zones should include shade structures or tree plantings as part of the design.

Steep slopes are present throughout the site, posing a landslide risk and indicating a need for slope stabilization measures.

The site is accessed primarily through one main entrance off of highway 39, with a secondary entrance shared with the neighboring horse ranch. However, these two entry points are divided by the river, limiting internal connectivity. Vehicles primarily pass through the site on highway 39, with secondary access roads branching into the site. Pedestrian circulation is fragmented, largely due to the river and highway 39 interrupting continuous paths.



- css - California Sagebrush Scrub
- css/sbs - California Sagebrush Scrub
- sbs - Scalebroom Scrub
- mc - Southern Mixed Chaparral
- mc/clo - Southern Mixed Chaparral/Coast Live Oak Woodland
- ag - California Annual Grassland
- sws - Southern Willow Scrub
- mfs - Mulefat Scrub
- clo - Coast Live Oak Woodland
- wat - Open Water
- rud - Ruderal
- rud/dist - Ruderal/Disturbed
- orn/dist - Ornamental/Disturbed
- dist - Disturbed
- dist/dev - Disturbed/Developed
- dev - Developed

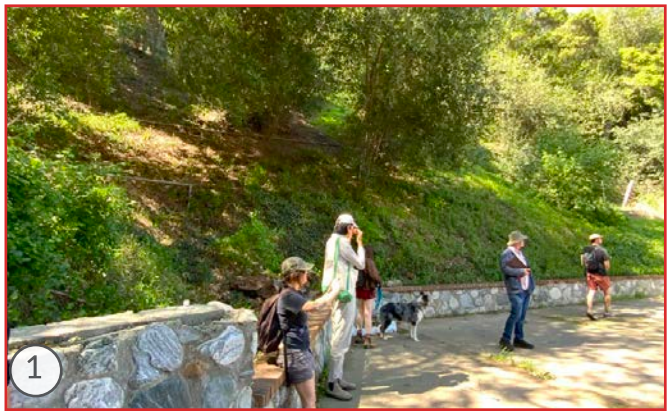
EXISTING VEGETATION

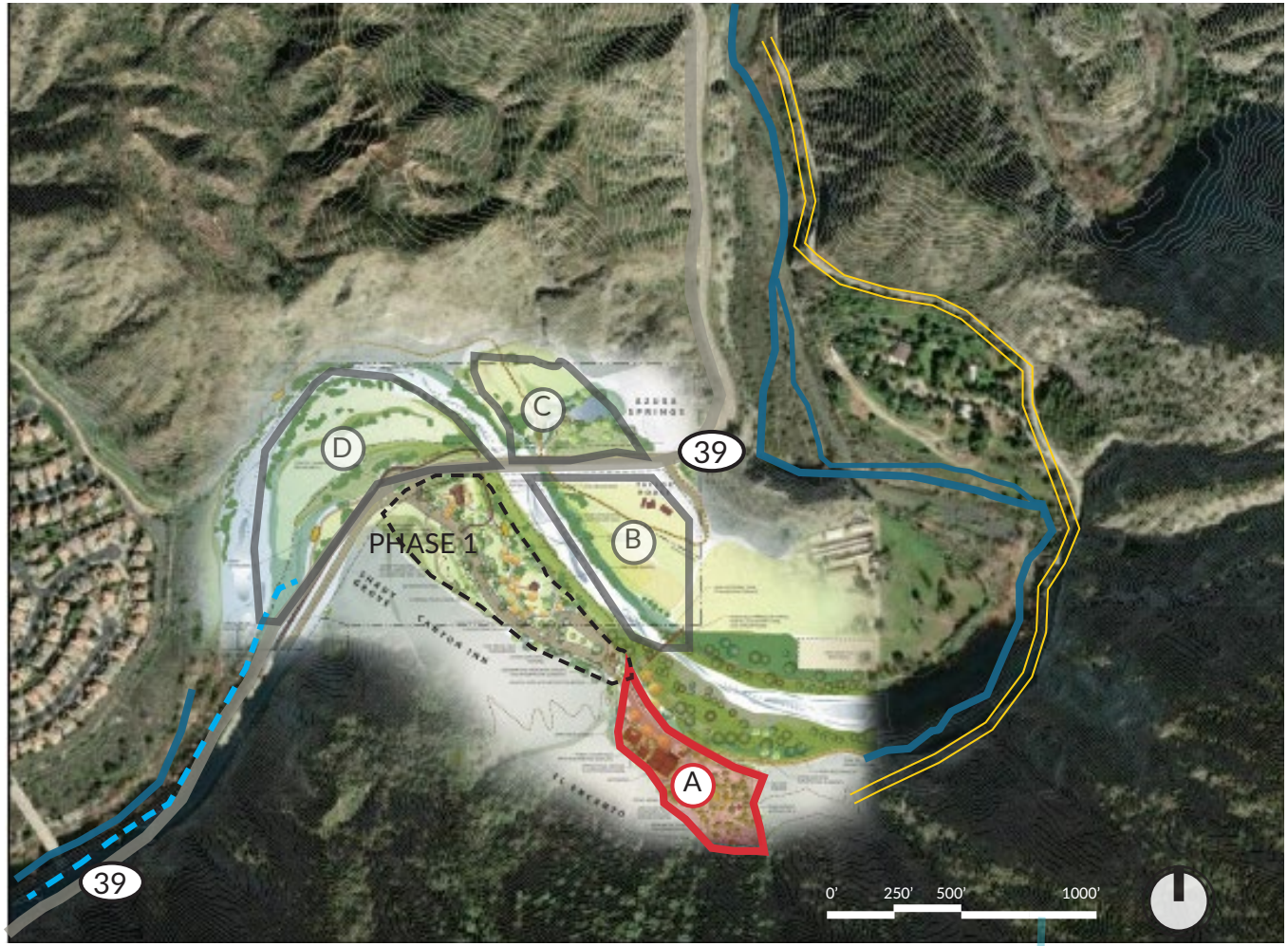
This diagram visualizes the vegetation on site and illustrates the diverse plant communities within the San Gabriel Canyon area, driven by variations in topography, soil, slope, and water. The site supports a mosaic of native planting including oak woodland, sagebrush scrub, chaparral, and riparian zones, interspersed with disturbed, developed, and non-native grasslands.

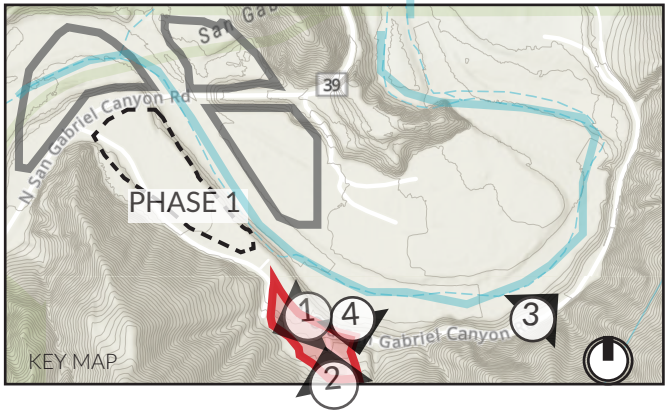
- Scrub & Chaparral: Dominant on hillsides and alluvial areas west of San Gabriel Canyon Road.
- Annual Grassland: Small patch in the north-central site area
- Riparian Habitats: Along the San Gabriel River's edges, east of San Gabriel Canyon Road.
- Oak Woodland: Intermixed with chaparral on southern hillsides.

ZONE A | FEATURES + CONSTRAINTS

- Poorly designed parking lot and vehicular circulation
- WCA offices are run down and sit at the base of a steep slope
- Abandoned mobile home terrace not currently in use
- Opportunity for view points



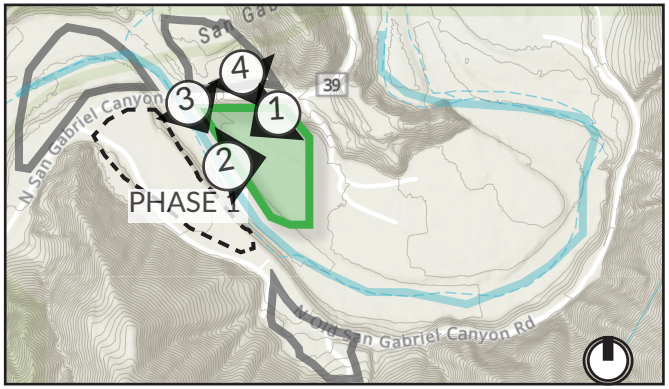




SITE CONDITIONS | ZONE B 'THE GROVE'

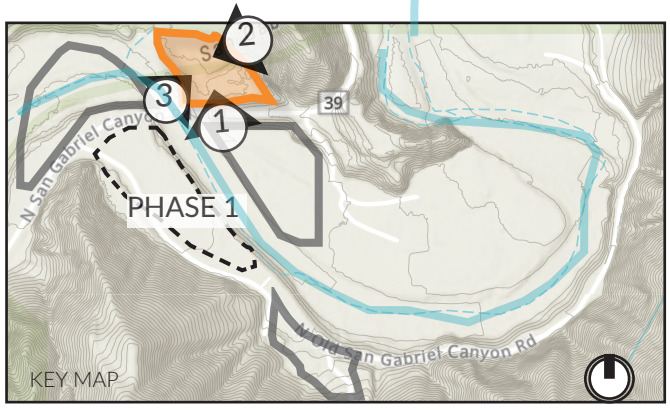
ZONE B | FEATURES + CONSTRAINTS

- Unsafe entry and disconnected from the rest of the site
- Flat grade, large open meadow with some tree cover
- Noise from highway
- Abandoned historical structures, no current programming



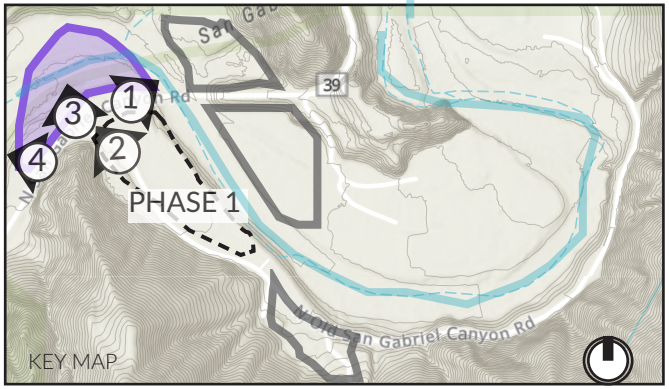
ZONE C | FEATURES + CONSTRAINTS

- Steep topography surrounding area
- Difficult to access by foot or vehicle
- Large open field with potential for gathering space
- Offers access to river at gentle grade



ZONE D | FEATURES + CONSTRAINTS

- Busy roadway creates unsafe entry point on blind corner
- Potential connection to the end of the existing bike path
- Challenging topography and landslide risk
- Difficult connection to other site areas due to tricky topography



PROJECT GOALS + OBJECTIVES

STRENGTHEN CONNECTIVITY

- Improve circulation within site with expanded trail systems and connection points
- Reconnect to the land's cultural history through Indigenous practices and education
- Program the park as a connection point and gateway to the San Gabriel Mountains

ENHANCE INCLUSIVITY

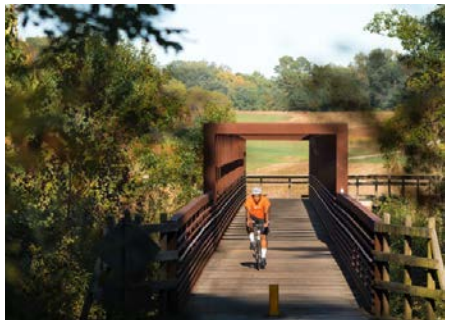
- Improve ADA accessibility throughout the site
- Create safer vehicular and pedestrian access points
- Consider low impact access to wilderness areas and the San Gabriel River

RESTORE ECOLOGY

- Fire resilience: restoration of native plant habitats, invasive plant removal, and vegetation management
- Avoid landslide areas: relocate programming and structures from landslide zones
- Water management: protect the river corridor and design to accommodate flooding

REVITALIZE CULTURE

- Support cultural programming led by local Indigenous communities
- Protect and honor culturally significant sites within the park
- Incorporate education and storytelling to share the area's Indigenous history and heritage



SITE OPPORTUNITIES + CONSTRAINTS

STRENGTHEN CONNECTIVITY | ENHANCE INCLUSIVITY | RESTORE ECOLOGY | REVITALIZE CULTURE

SITE WIDE

TOPOGRAPHY
- Steep slopes = difficult access + challenging trail design
- Elevated landslide risk

VIEW POINTS
- Elevated structures and viewing decks
- Scenic trails

CONSTRAINTS

SAFETY + ACCESS
- Unsafe pedestrian circulation within site
- Limited vehicular parking + singular access point
- No connection to site's history

THE RIVER
- Unsafe access
- Disconnects four quadrants of site
- Flood risk
- Dams alter flow patterns

WILDFIRE RISK
- History of fires in area
- Invasive plants fuel fires
- Safety considerations

OPPORTUNITIES

ACCESS + CIRCULATION
- New site access points
- Additional parking
- Increased pedestrian + multi-modal trails on site
- Slowing of through-traffic

RIVER ENGAGEMENT
- Safe access and alternative engagement options
- Safe crossing points
- Ecological restoration
- Education

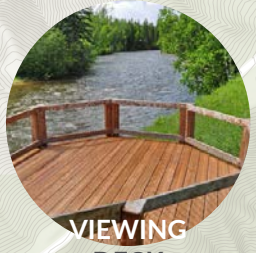
NATIVE PLANTING + ECOLOGY
- Removal of invasive plants & restoration of native habitats
- Clearing invasive plants for cultural ceremony space
- Defensible space implementation
- Native gathering gardens

UNSAFE CIRCULATION

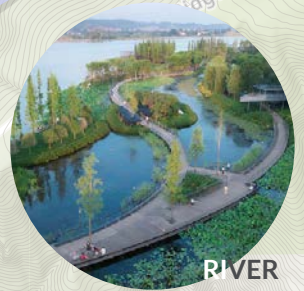
STEEP GRADES + UNSTABLE SLOPES

NO RIVER ACCESS, SPLITS SITE

MULTI-MODAL TRAILS + ACCESS



VIEWING DECK



RIVER CROSSING, LOW IMPACT DESIGN

CASE STUDIES

CASE STUDY | STORY MILL PARK

LOCATION | Bozeman, Montana
TYPE | Nature preserve // Park space // Stream restoration
DESIGNER | Design Workshop
SIZE | 60 Acres
COMPLETED | 2019

PROJECT CONTEXT + GOALS

In 2008, the Trust for Public Land acquired this foreclosure property and worked with the community to develop a park and nature preserve. The result is a 40-acre nature preserve that restored disturbed habitats and improved the East Gallatin River corridor through wetland and steam restoration. The remaining 20-acres is programmed to accommodate community gatherings and engage visitors of all ages. Project challenges include trail design in low lying areas that are prone to flooding (especially from snow melt) and dealing with hazardous historical structures on site.

KEY FEATURES + AMENITIES

trail system // play areas // restored wetland // river access // hand-illustrated educational signage // expanded wildlife habitat //

KEY TAKEAWAYS // APPLICABLE ELEMENTS

- **Multi-Modal Transportation Infrastructure:** trail network that serves as central hub for Forest Service trail systems, fishing access, and downtown connection.
- **River Access:** expanded riverfront access for multi-use recreation.
- **Low-Impact Trail Design:** designing trails with sensitivity to restoration + habitat areas.
- **Multi-generational Use:** inclusive programming that accommodates all ages.

CASE STUDY | SOUTH PLATTE RIVER CORRIDOR

LOCATION | Adams County, Colorado
TYPE | Watershed Restoration // Environmental Planning
DESIGNER | Design Workshop
SIZE | 17 mile stretch of river
COMPLETED | 2023

PROJECT CONTEXT + GOALS

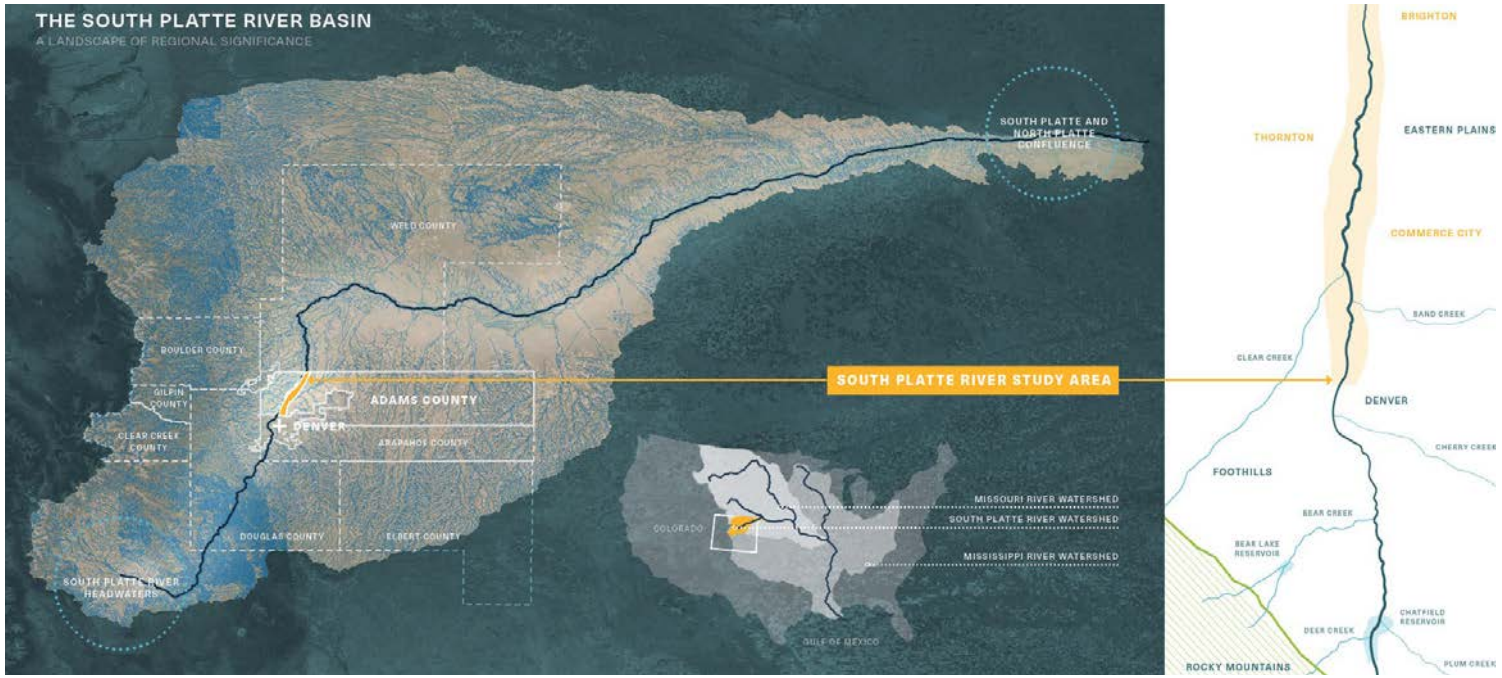
"Reclaiming the South Platte" addresses the ecological and social challenges of a 15,270-acre section of the South Platte River corridor. Historically, the river served as a vital resource for Indigenous communities. Over time, the river's floodplain was subjected to extensive sand and gravel mining, leading to the degradation of natural habitats and the release of hazardous dust into the air. This project provides a 20-year vision plan focused on ecological restoration, flood protection, and public access + recreation.

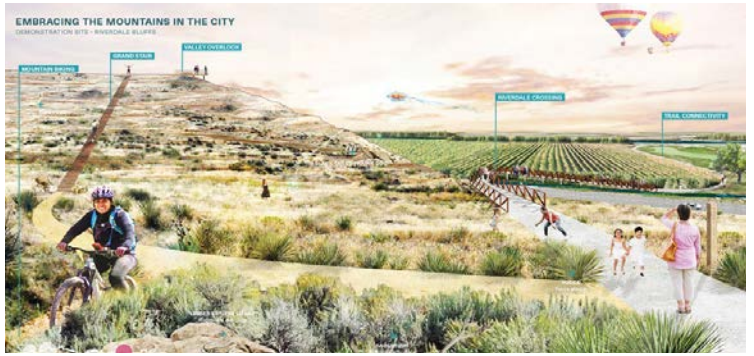
KEY FEATURES + AMENITIES

extensive multi-use trail system // riparian + wetland habitat restoration // floodplain restoration // river access points // open space // stormwater management systems // invasive species management // river recreation // bank stabilization

KEY TAKEAWAYS // APPLICABLE ELEMENTS

- **Recreational Access:** river recreation and low-impact multi-use trail systems.
- **Citizen Science:** engaging community through stewardship and educational programs.
- **Expansive Connections:** rethinking connection points within site and to the broader community.
- **Inclusive Programming**: addressing a diversity of recreational needs for all (fishing, mountain biking, equestrian, nature play, performance arts, and more).





CASE STUDY | CACHE CREEK NATURE PRESERVE

LOCATION | Woodland, California
TYPE | Nature preserve // Restored wetland
DESIGNER | Cache Creek Conservancy + Jan T. Lowrey
SIZE | 130 Acres
COMPLETED | 2000

PROJECT CONTEXT + GOALS

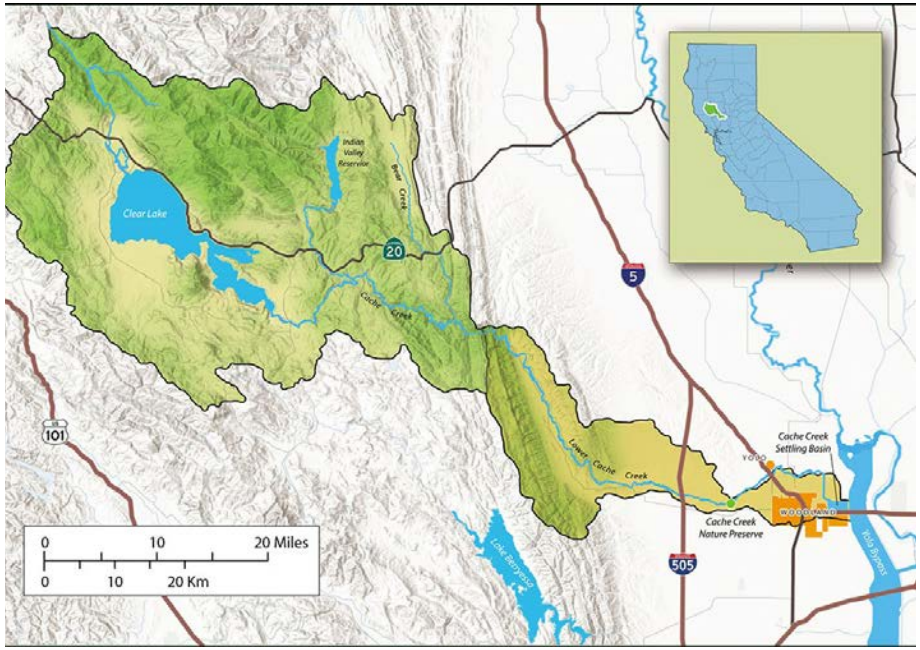
This project is a model of ecological restoration and community-centered conservation. Once a disturbed gravel mining site, the land was reclaimed in the late 1990s through a collaborative effort by the Cache Creek Conservancy and Yolo County. The transformation involved habitat restoration, including native riparian zones, oak woodlands, wetlands, and grasslands. The project's goals are to restore regional biodiversity, provide environmental education, and honor the cultural heritage of the local Indigenous Patwin people. The preserve serves as a hub for ecological research, outdoor learning & public engagement. One of the main project challenges was balancing natural river flow restoration with flood control.

KEY FEATURES + AMENITIES

trail system // tending and gathering garden // visitor center // boardwalk // amphitheater // native grasslands // riparian forest // habitat restoration //

KEY TAKEAWAYS // APPLICABLE ELEMENTS

- **Multi-Use, Low-Impact Design:** "light touch" design of trails and infrastructure.
- **Ecological + Cultural Restoration *As One:*** ecological restoration as a form of cultural healing.
- **Cultural Land Stewardship:** The *Tending + Gathering Garden* - a collaboration between the native community and conservancy. A model for land stewardship and plant use practices of California's Indigenous peoples (cultural burn demonstrations, Leok Po).



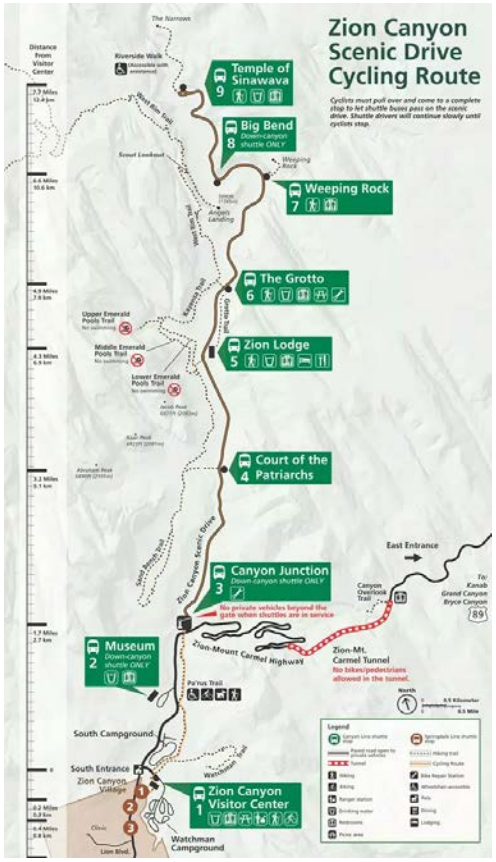
LOCATION | Southwestern Utah
TYPE | National Park
JURISDICTION | National Park Service
SIZE | 229 square miles
ESTABLISHED | 1919

PROJECT CONTEXT + GOALS

Zion was established to protect the dramatic canyons and unique desert ecosystems of southwestern Utah. Its design and management prioritize both ecological preservation and a meaningful visitor experiences. Key goals include minimizing human impact through innovative strategies like the shuttle systems, controlled trail access, and sustainable infrastructure. The park offers diverse programming—from ranger-led hikes to partnerships with Southern Paiute tribes that honor Indigenous history and land stewardship. Zion is a model for balancing recreation, cultural heritage, and environmental resilience. The park successfully navigates challenging topography to integrate ADA-accessible trails throughout the site.

KEY FEATURES + AMENITIES

multi-use trail system // campgrounds // shuttle buses // protected wilderness areas // vistas // Riverside Walk //



KEY TAKEAWAYS // APPLICABLE ELEMENTS

- **Equitable Access:** ADA accessible trails throughout site.
- **Access Management**: implementing strategies (like the shuttle system and timed entry) to prevent overcrowding and encourage preservation.
- **Cultural Heritage Integration:** collaborating with Indigenous communities to incorporate cultural narratives and education

CASE STUDY | WEST POINT FOUNDRY PRESERVE

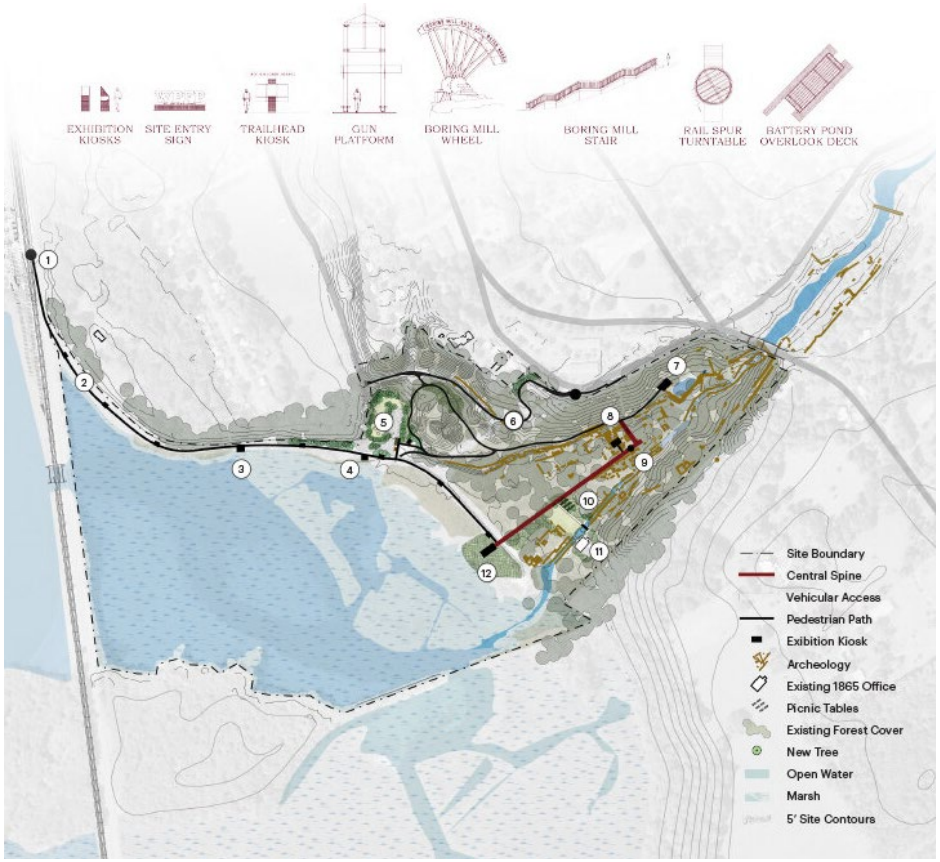
LOCATION | Cold Spring, NY
TYPE | Nature Preserve // Park + Open Space
DESIGNER | Mathews Nielsen Landscape Architects
SIZE | 87 Acres
COMPLETED | 2013

PROJECT CONTEXT + GOALS

Once an active industrial site, this landscape was abandoned and gradually reclaimed by woodland, eventually transformed into a preserve that honors both its industrial past and ecological resurgence, deeply rooted in its relationship with water. The design thoughtfully weaves historic pathways and former rail lines into a network that guides visitors through remnants of industrial structures and archaeological features, revealing layers of history while nurturing the site's ongoing ecological restoration. A key project challenge was the remediation of heavily contaminated soil.

KEY FEATURES + AMENITIES

trail system // wayfinding signage // interpretive sculptures //archaeological preservation // marsh path + overlook //



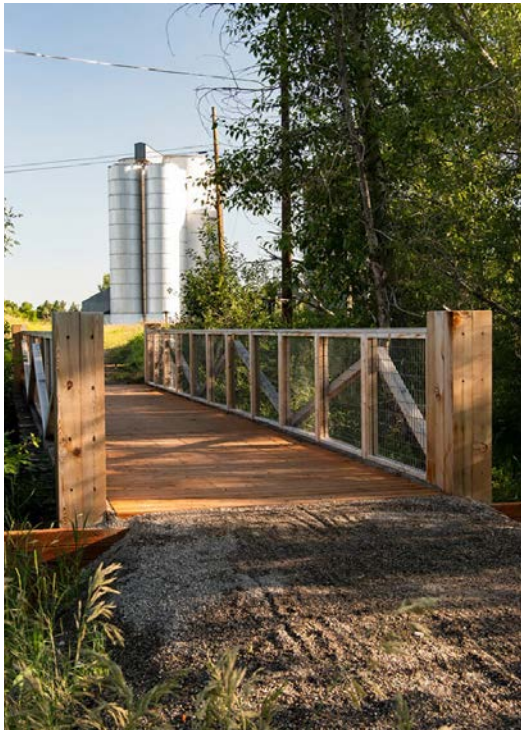
KEY TAKEAWAYS // APPLICABLE ELEMENTS

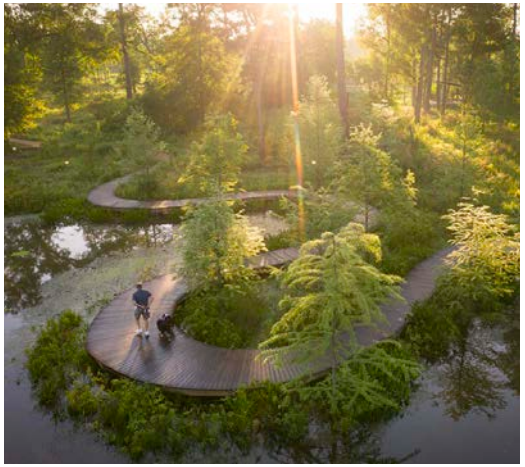
- **Cultural Sensitivity:** creating new access while preserving heritage.
- **Protected Access:** incorporating interactive features without compromising archaeological integrity or disturbing sensitive areas
- **Natural Harmony:** preserving and embracing natural processes and systems.
- **Interpretive Engagement:** using interpretive signage and educational wayfinding to inspire visitor engagement.
- **Adaptive Reuse:** restoration of abandoned structures.

PRECEDENT IMAGERY

INTERPRETIVE SIGNAGE // WAYFINDING // OUTDOOR EDUCATION

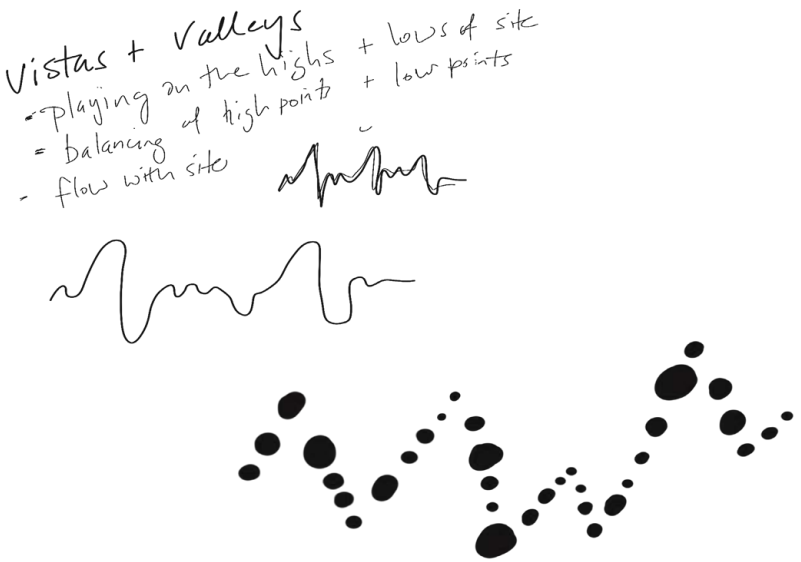
PRECEDENT IMAGERY



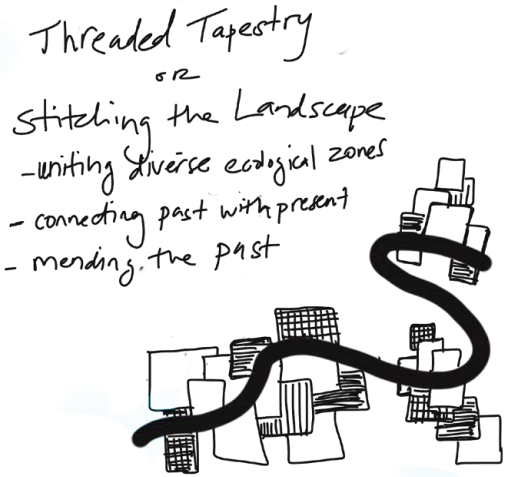


WALKWAYS // BRIDGES // VIEWING PLATFORMS

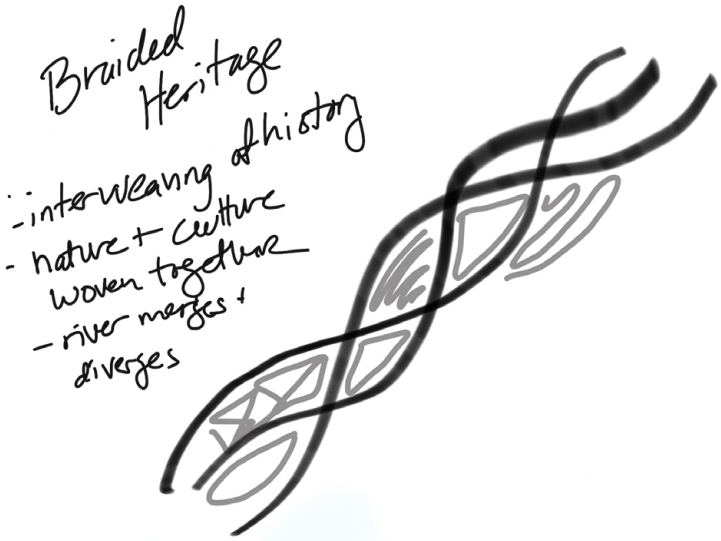
CONCEPT DEVELOPMENT



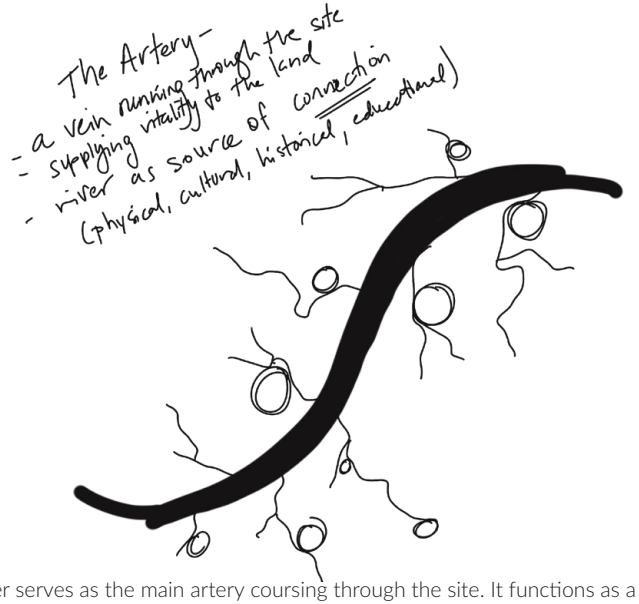
This metaphor plays with the topography of the site and explores how we experience the space through visual and physical contrasts: peaks and valleys, past and present, fire and water, sacred ceremony and tourism - and designing to cater to both ends of the spectrum.



Threaded tapestry explores the site as a patchwork of diverse landscapes, ecosystems, and cultural stories woven together by the river, as the thread of the site. The thread connects diverse ecological zones where alpine desert meets riparian river + wilderness meets the urban expansion. It also works to tie the past to the present.



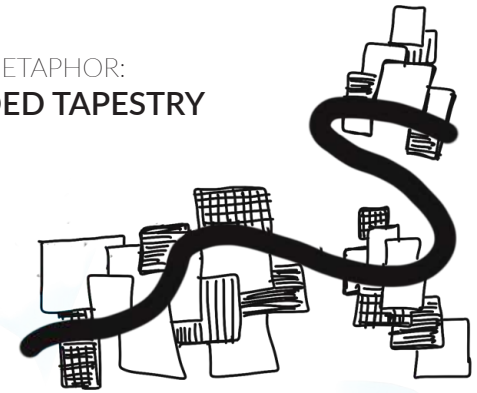
The site lies at a powerful confluence: the San Gabriel River, ancestral Tongva lands, post-colonial development, and modern urban communities. Rather than telling a single story, the park holds many currents, each carving its own path but all shaping the same land. The river both literally weaves through the site and connects the various design area and metaphorically connects the land to its past.



The river serves as the main artery coursing through the site. It functions as a vital source of both life and connection -- connecting the various development zones that are scattered around it/ connecting either side of the site / connecting the present to the indigenous history of the land through ceremony and education.

DESIGN METAPHOR:

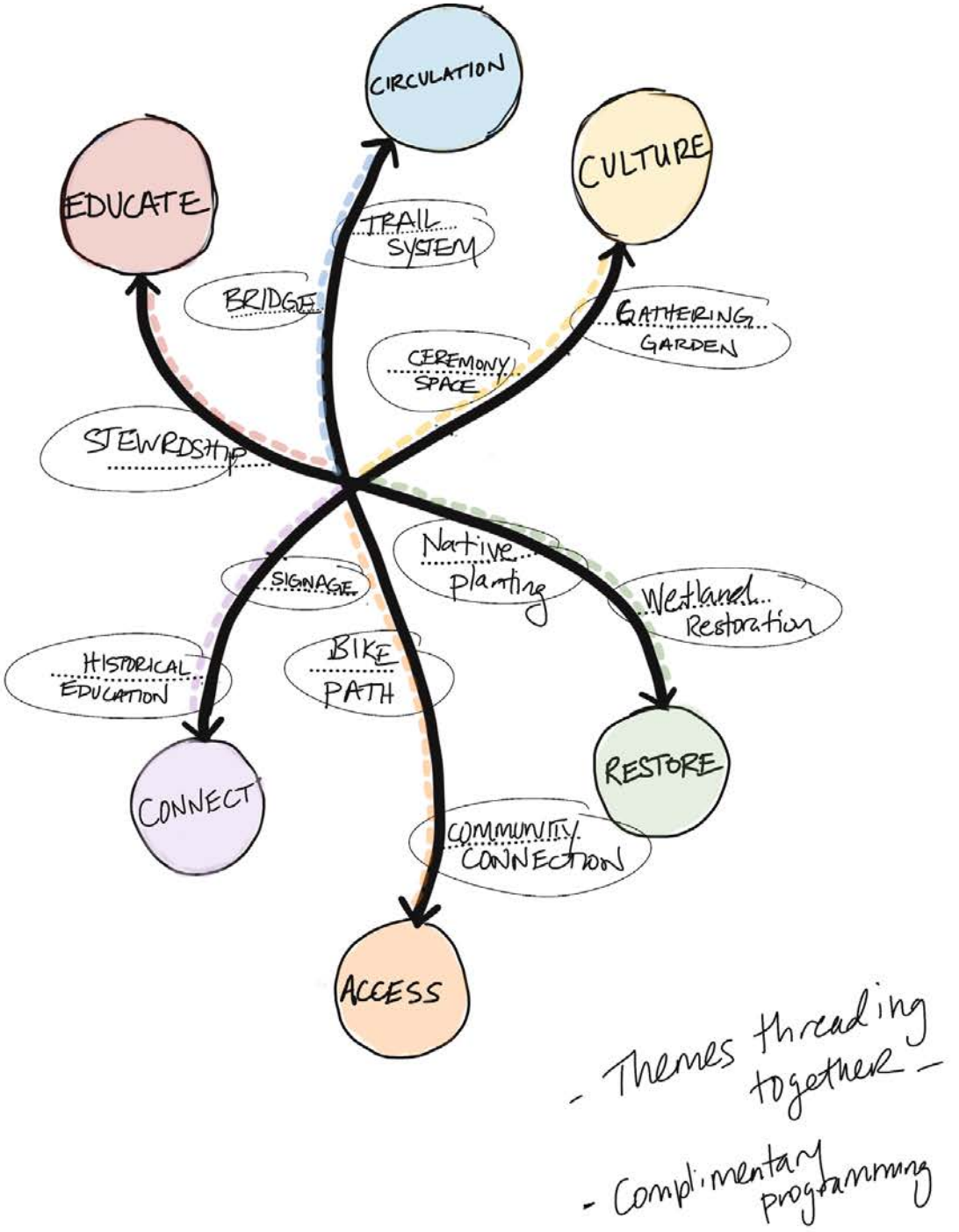
THREADED TAPESTRY



This concept explores the site as a patchwork of diverse landscapes, ecosystems, and cultural stories woven together by the river, as the thread of the site. The thread connects diverse ecological zones where alpine desert meets riparian corridors, and wilderness interfaces with urban expansion — while also linking the site's past to its present.

Design goals are "threaded" into the site as complementary elements, represented through complementary colors. The concept explores how these elements balance and blend, so that they don't stand starkly on their own but blend seamlessly together into a cohesive whole.

Additionally, this concept considers how physical infrastructure, such as trails and circulation systems, can support thematic layers like culture and education. Through signage, wayfinding, and gathering spaces, the physical and thematic elements are interwoven to create a unified experience.

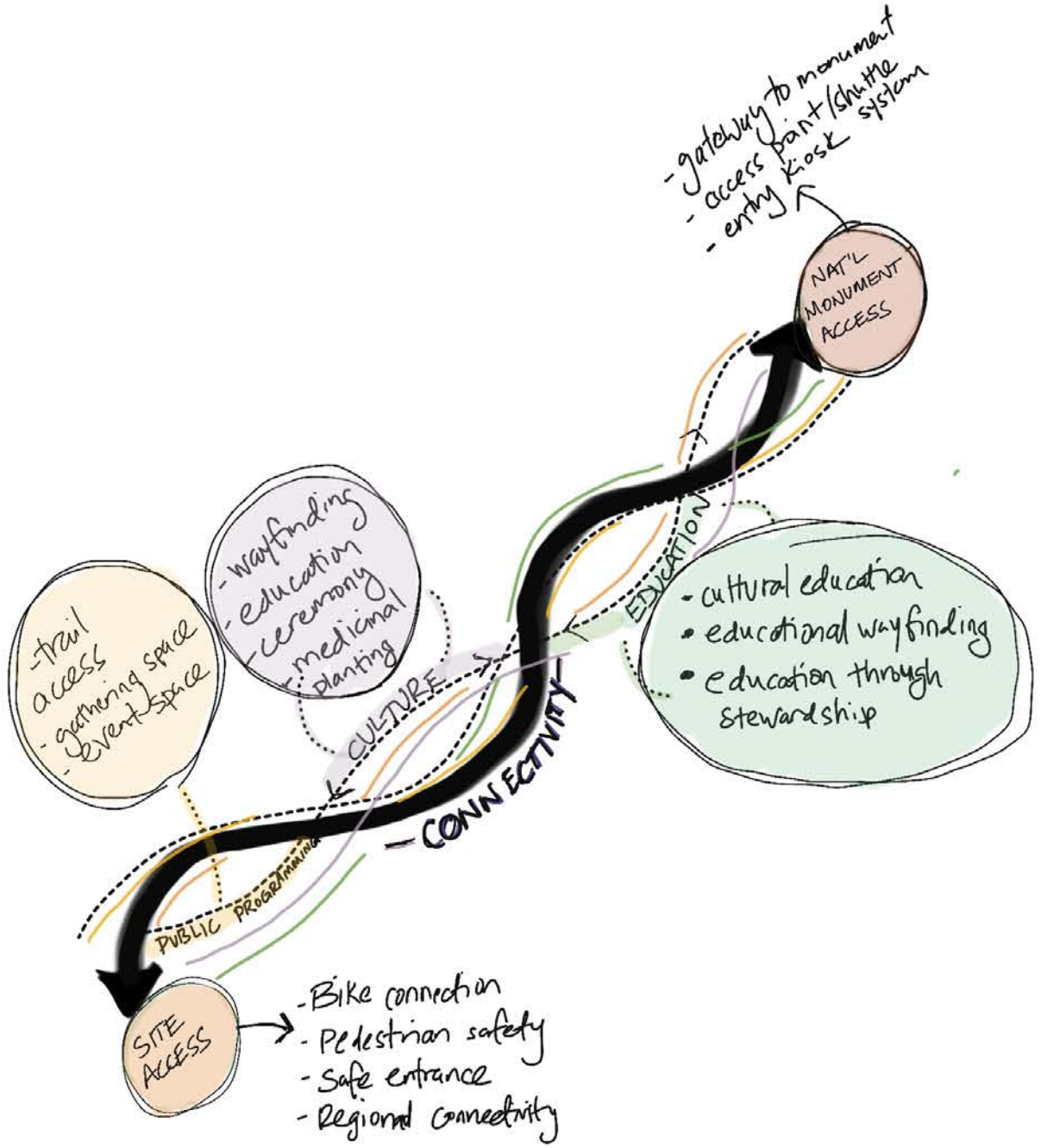


DESIGN METAPHOR:

BRAIDED HERITAGE

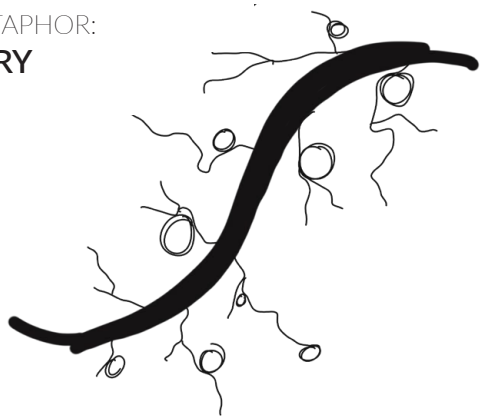
The site lies at a powerful confluence: the San Gabriel River, ancestral Tongva lands, post-colonial development, and modern urban communities. Rather than telling a single story, the park holds many currents, each carving its own path but all shaping the same land. The river physically weaves through the site, linking diverse design areas, and metaphorically connects the land to its history.

This concept views key project elements—like ecology, culture, and access—as distinct but intertwined currents that flow alongside one another, sometimes crossing and always influencing the whole. Instead of isolating functions, they area braided throughout the site. More concretely, this approach is expressed through multiple layers of circulation and connectivity as a central feature of the site, with a primary spine complemented by secondary branching paths. This trail system guides visitors to the site's various distinct program areas both on site and more regionally, serving as a gateway/ monument entrance and connecting Azusa to the National Monument.



DESIGN METAPHOR:

THE ARTERY



In this concept, the San Gabriel River serves as the main artery coursing through the site. It functions as a vital source of both life and connection. The central theme, which runs along the artery, is CONNECT: connecting both sides of the site, linking scattered development zones, bridging the present with the Indigenous history through spaces for ceremony, storytelling, and education, and tying the urban edge of Azusa to the National Monument.

To realize these connections, site programming branches off from a central corridor, envisioned as the main trail spine that parallels or traces the river. This spine acts as the primary flow of movement and orientation for visitors. From this artery, a network of secondary footpaths—conceptualized as "veins"—extends into various program areas, facilitating access and enriching the visitor experience. These pathways serve both functional and symbolic roles, representing the flow of culture, community, and ecology through the site.

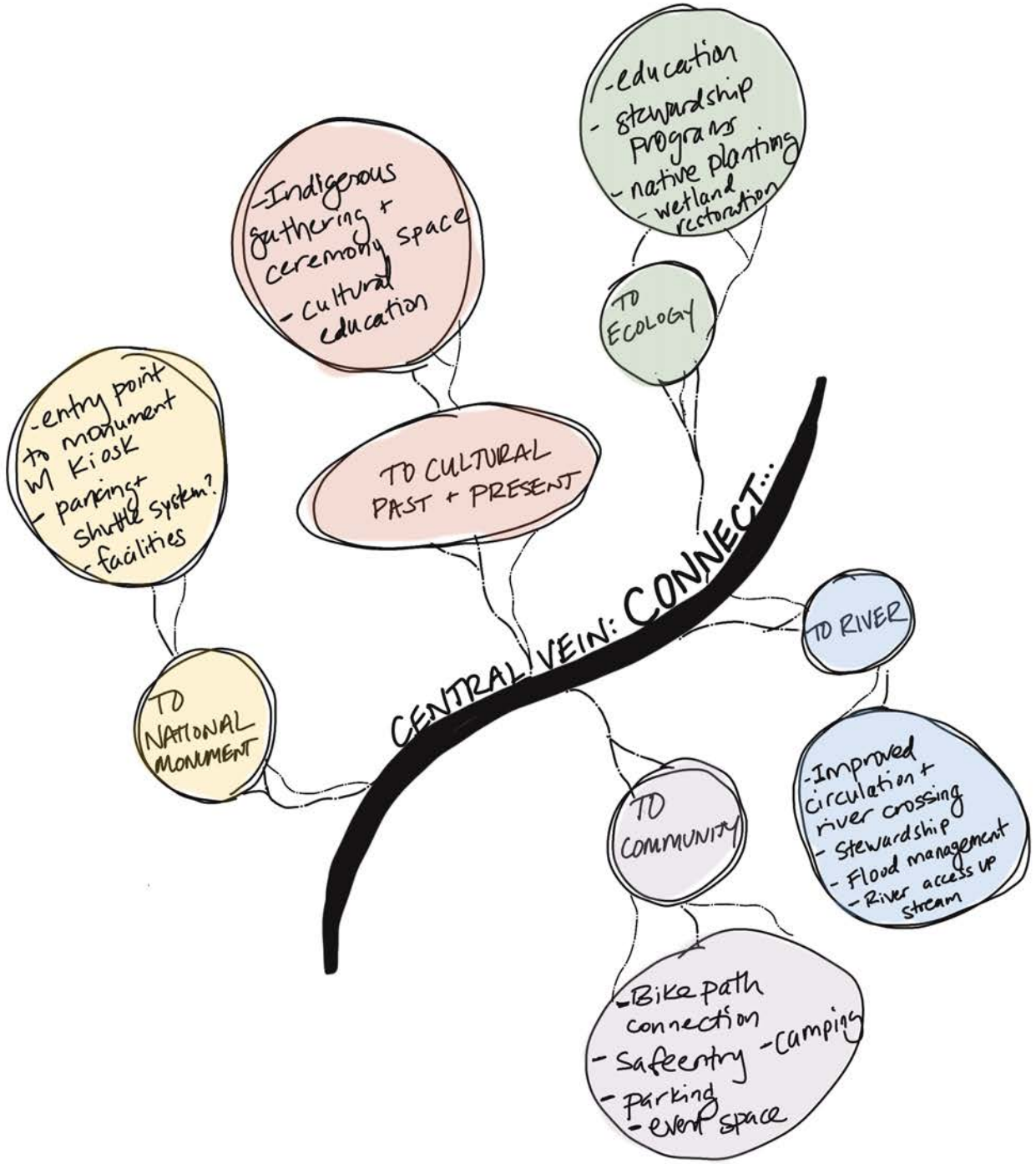


DIAGRAM 1

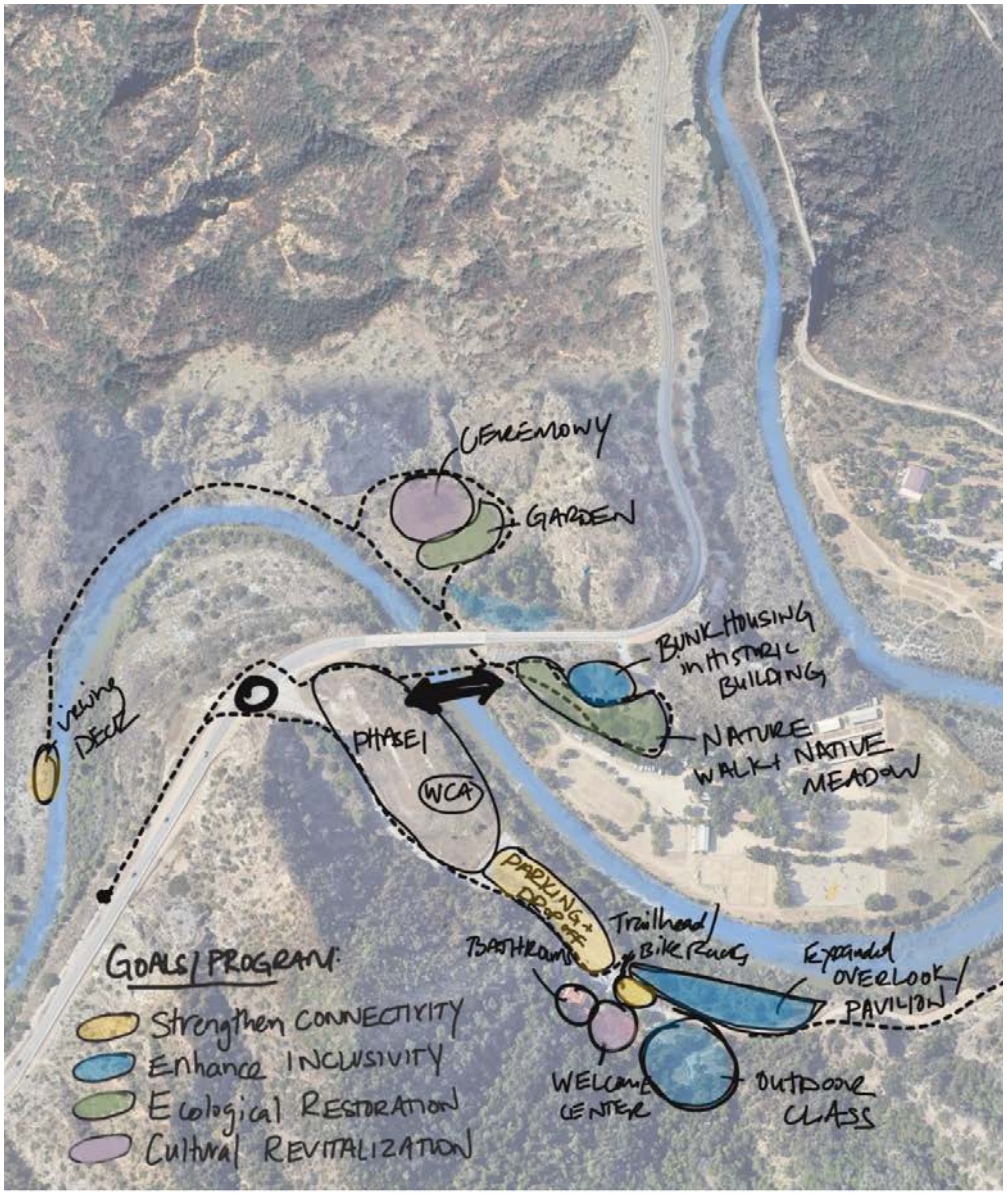
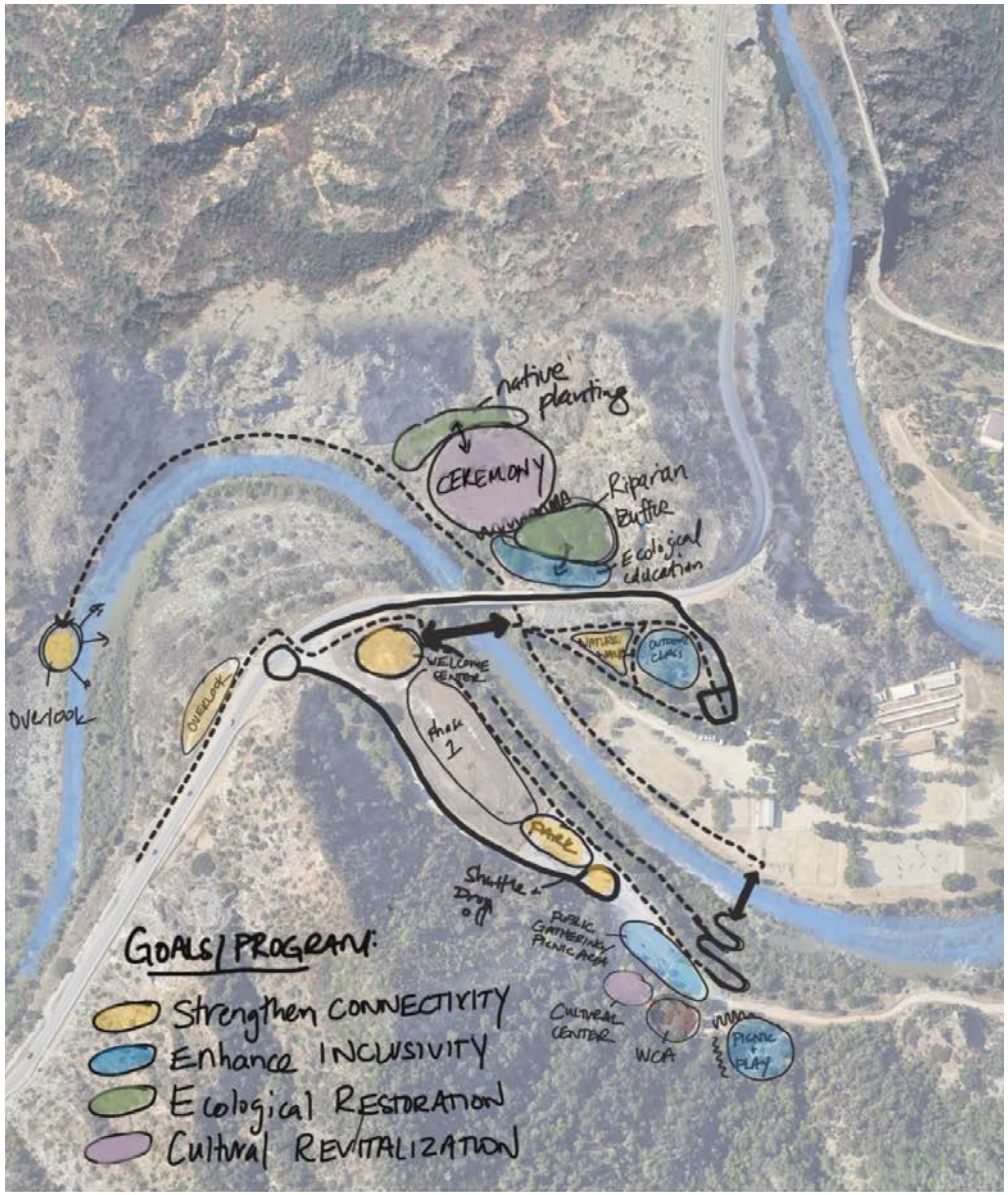
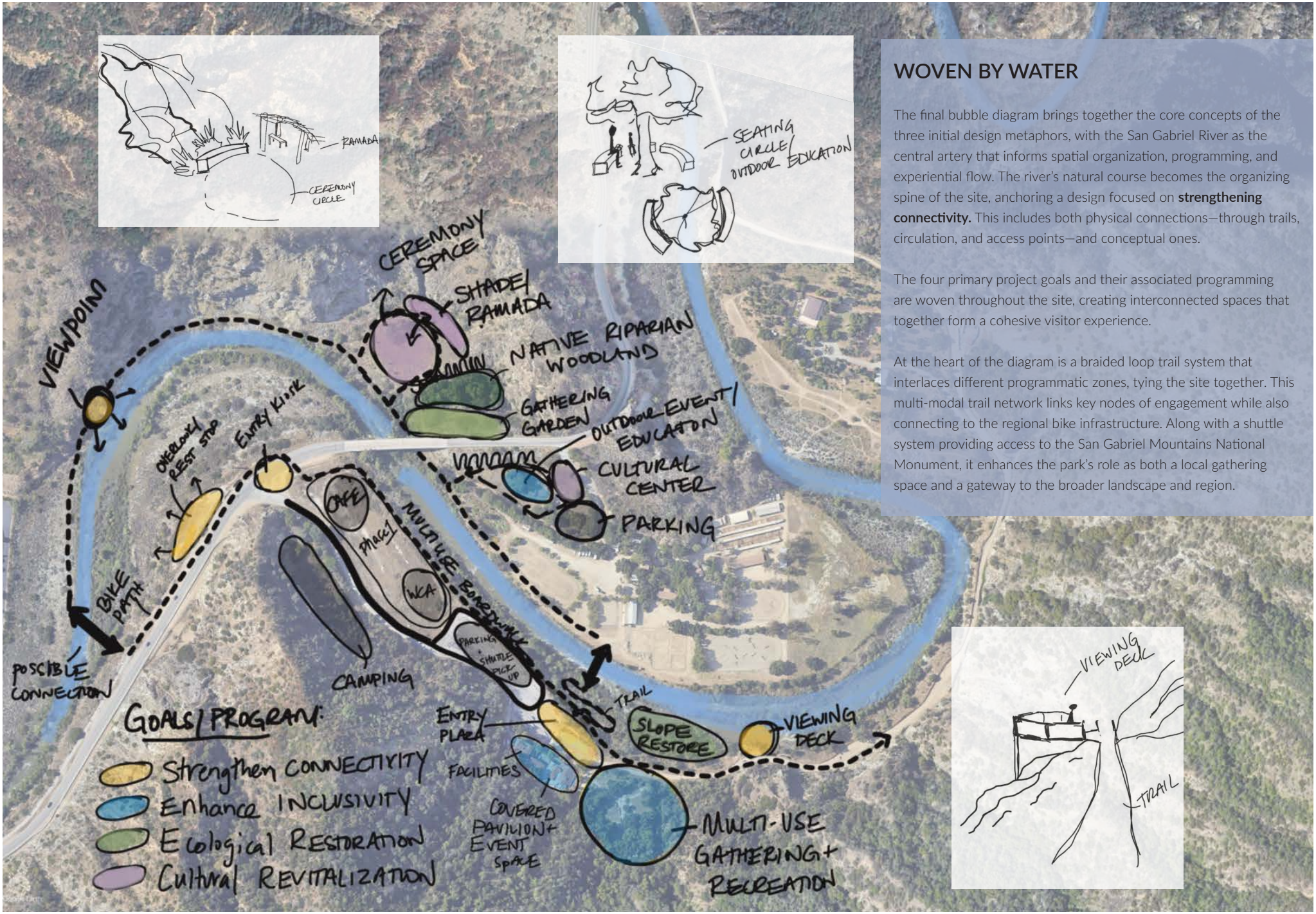


DIAGRAM 2





WOVEN BY WATER

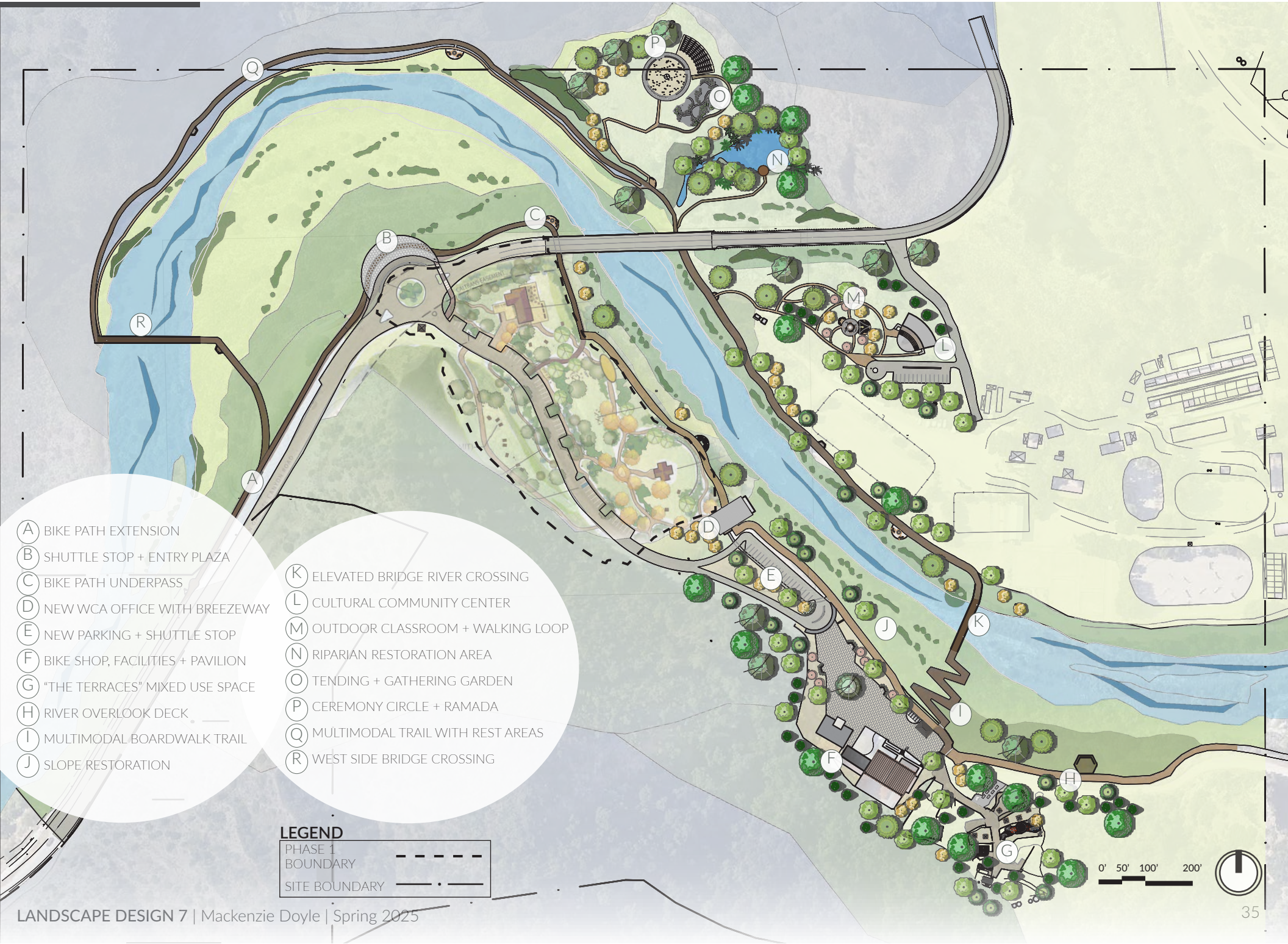
The final bubble diagram brings together the core concepts of the three initial design metaphors, with the San Gabriel River as the central artery that informs spatial organization, programming, and experiential flow. The river's natural course becomes the organizing spine of the site, anchoring a design focused on **strengthening connectivity.** This includes both physical connections—through trails, circulation, and access points—and conceptual ones.

The four primary project goals and their associated programming are woven throughout the site, creating interconnected spaces that together form a cohesive visitor experience.

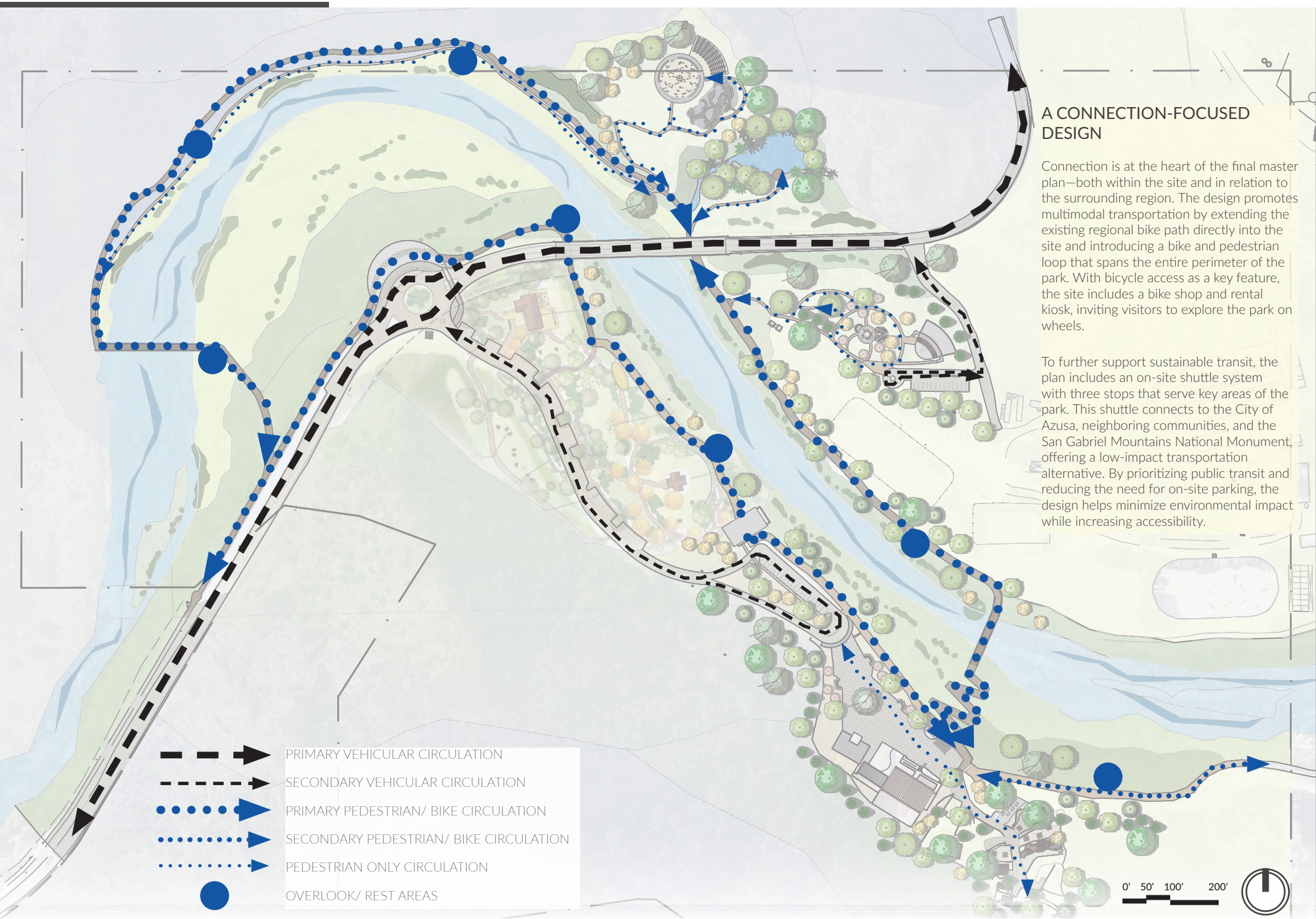
At the heart of the diagram is a braided loop trail system that interlaces different programmatic zones, tying the site together. This multi-modal trail network links key nodes of engagement while also connecting to the regional bike infrastructure. Along with a shuttle system providing access to the San Gabriel Mountains National Monument, it enhances the park's role as both a local gathering space and a gateway to the broader landscape and region.

FINAL DESIGN

MASTER PLAN


A BIKE PATH EXTENSION
B SHUTTLE STOP + ENTRY PLAZA
C BIKE PATH UNDERPASS
D NEW WCA OFFICE WITH BREEZEWAY
E NEW PARKING + SHUTTLE STOP
F BIKE SHOP, FACILITIES + PAVILION
G "THE TERRACES" MIXED USE SPACE
H RIVER OVERLOOK DECK
I MULTIMODAL BOARDWALK TRAIL
J SLOPE RESTORATION
K ELEVATED BRIDGE RIVER CROSSING
L CULTURAL COMMUNITY CENTER
M OUTDOOR CLASSROOM + WALKING LOOP
N RIPARIAN RESTORATION AREA
O TENDING + GATHERING GARDEN
P CEREMONY CIRCLE + RAMADA
Q MULTIMODAL TRAIL WITH REST AREAS
R WEST SIDE BRIDGE CROSSING
LEGEND
PHASE 1 BOUNDARY
SITE BOUNDARY
0' 50' 100' 200'

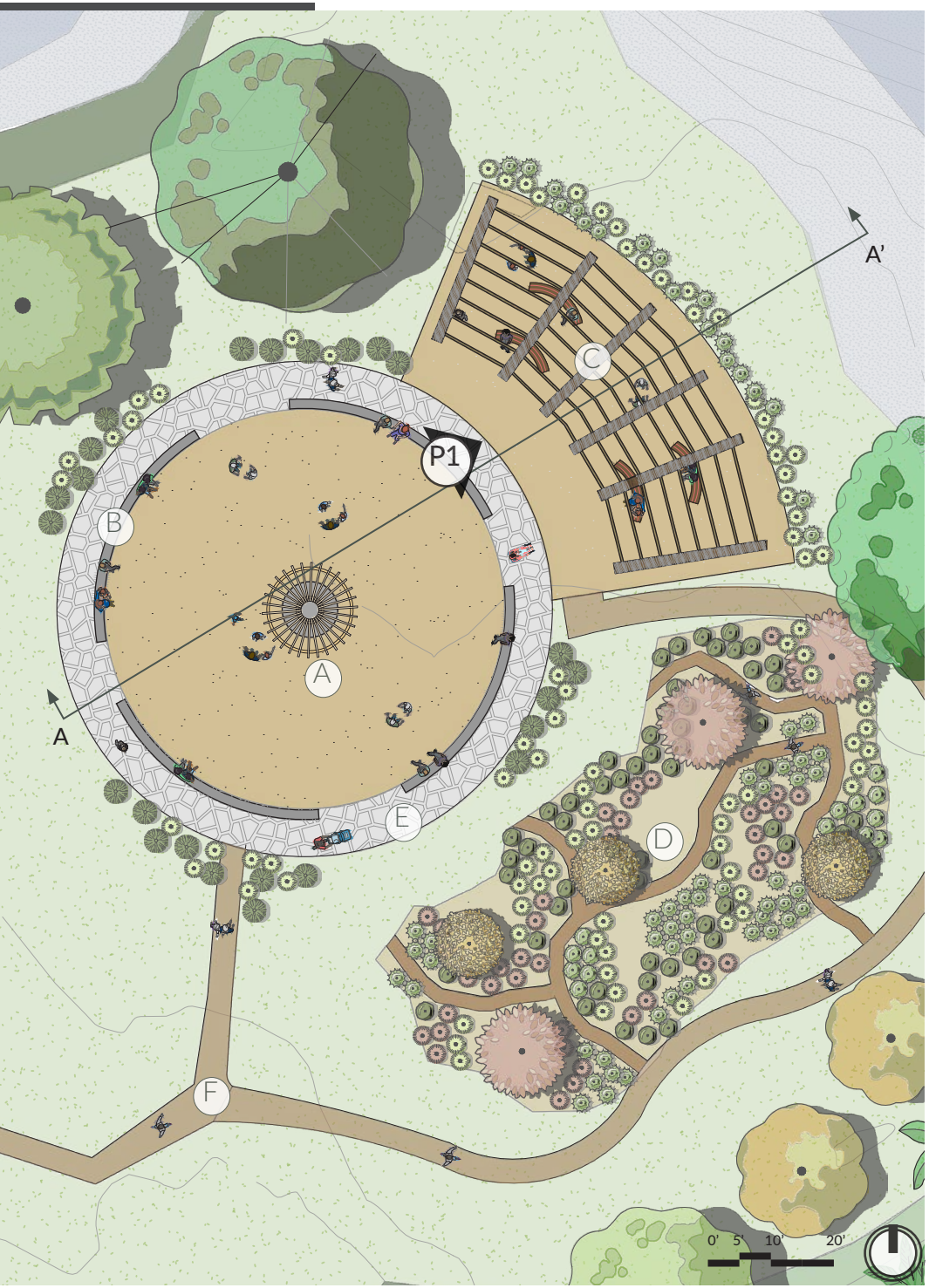
CIRCULATION DIAGRAM



A CONNECTION-FOCUSED DESIGN

Connection is at the heart of the final master plan—both within the site and in relation to the surrounding region. The design promotes multimodal transportation by extending the existing regional bike path directly into the site and introducing a bike and pedestrian loop that spans the entire perimeter of the park. With bicycle access as a key feature, the site includes a bike shop and rental kiosk, inviting visitors to explore the park on wheels.

To further support sustainable transit, the plan includes an on-site shuttle system with three stops that serve key areas of the park. This shuttle connects to the City of Azusa, neighboring communities, and the San Gabriel Mountains National Monument, offering a low-impact transportation alternative. By prioritizing public transit and reducing the need for on-site parking, the design helps minimize environmental impact while increasing accessibility.



P1

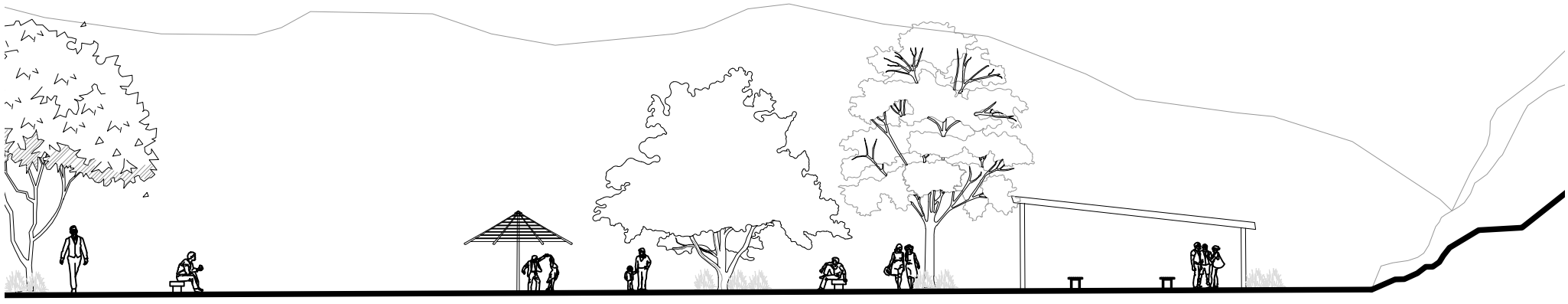
The Mesa offers a dedicated space for the local Indigenous community to gather in ceremony and reflection. At its center is a ceremonial circle accompanied by a ramada, providing shade and respite in this otherwise exposed part of the site. A tending and gathering garden supports native plantings and traditional medicinal practices, honoring cultural stewardship of the land. Access to The Mesa is limited to a pedestrian-only path, intentionally separated from the primary multimodal trail to foster a sense of quiet, privacy, and separation from recreational activity.

LEGEND

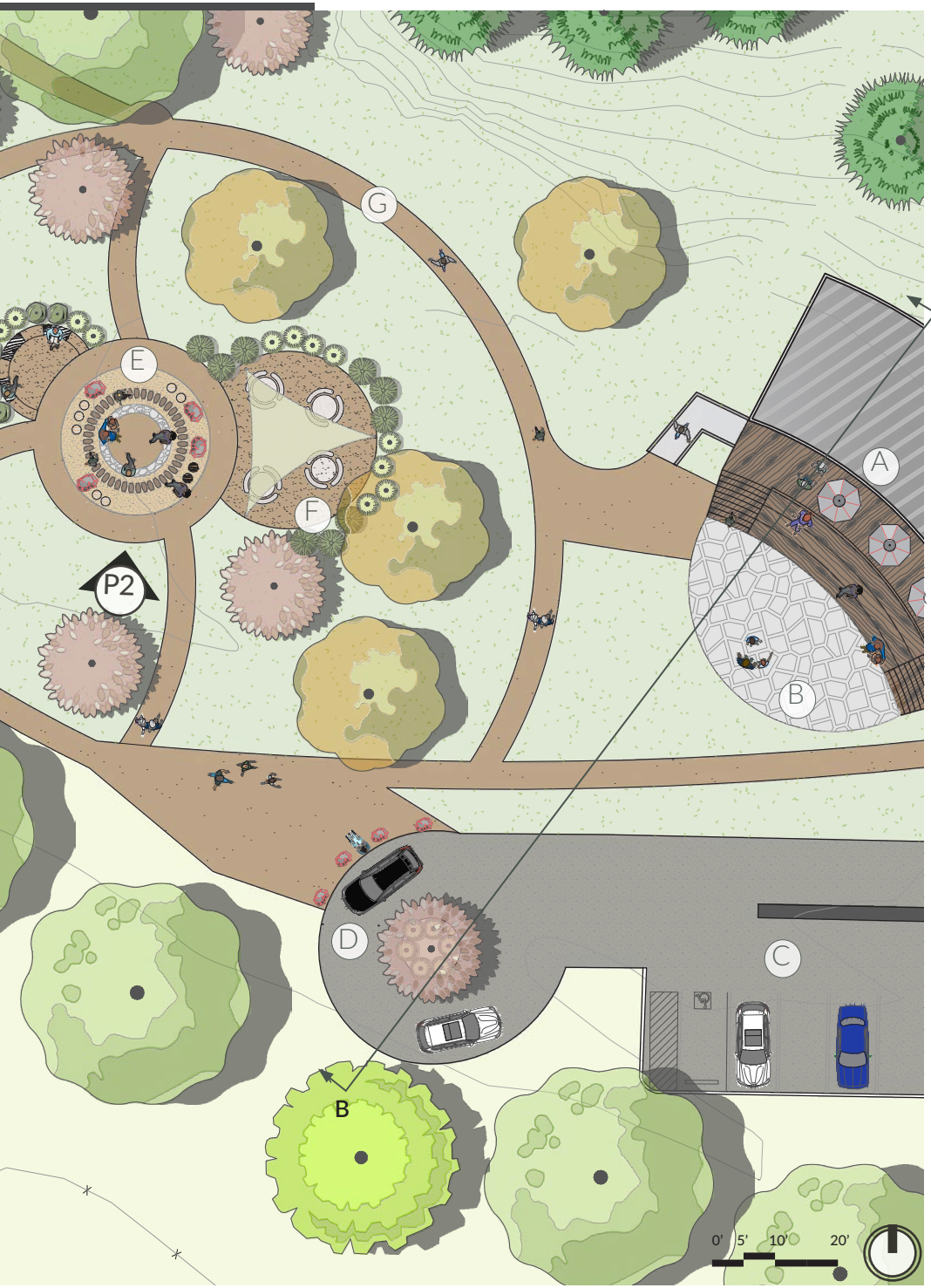
- (A) CEREMONY CIRCLE
- (B) SPECTATOR SEATING
- (C) RAMADA AND SHADED GATHERING AREA
- (D) NATIVE TENDING AND GATHERING GARDEN
- (E) STONE WALKWAY
- (F) PEDESTRIAN TRAIL

KEY MAP

SECTION | THE MESA



ENLARGEMENT | THE GROVE



P2

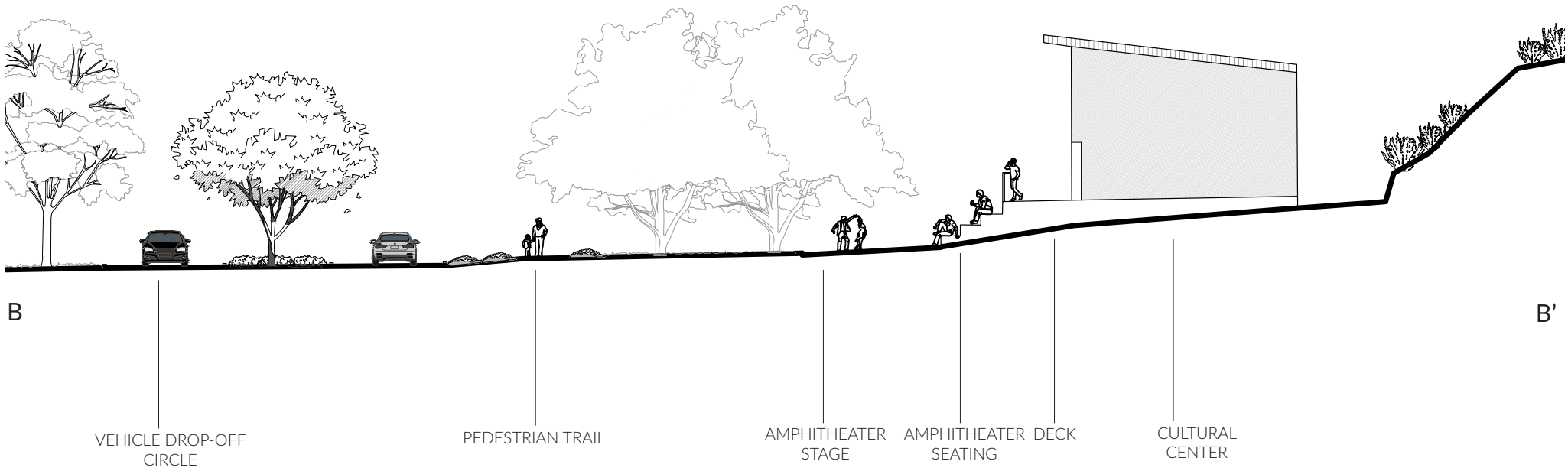
The Grove features a cultural center which offers 3,350 square feet of blended indoor and outdoor space and is designed to honor the site's rich cultural history and host community and educational events. From there, visitors are guided to an outdoor learning area that includes a sunken gathering space, a reading circle, and a shaded picnic pavilion. An organic walking path meanders through a sycamore grove, revealing secluded, shaded seating under native tree canopies. Enhanced access is provided through additional parking and a designated vehicle/ shuttle drop-off area.

LEGEND

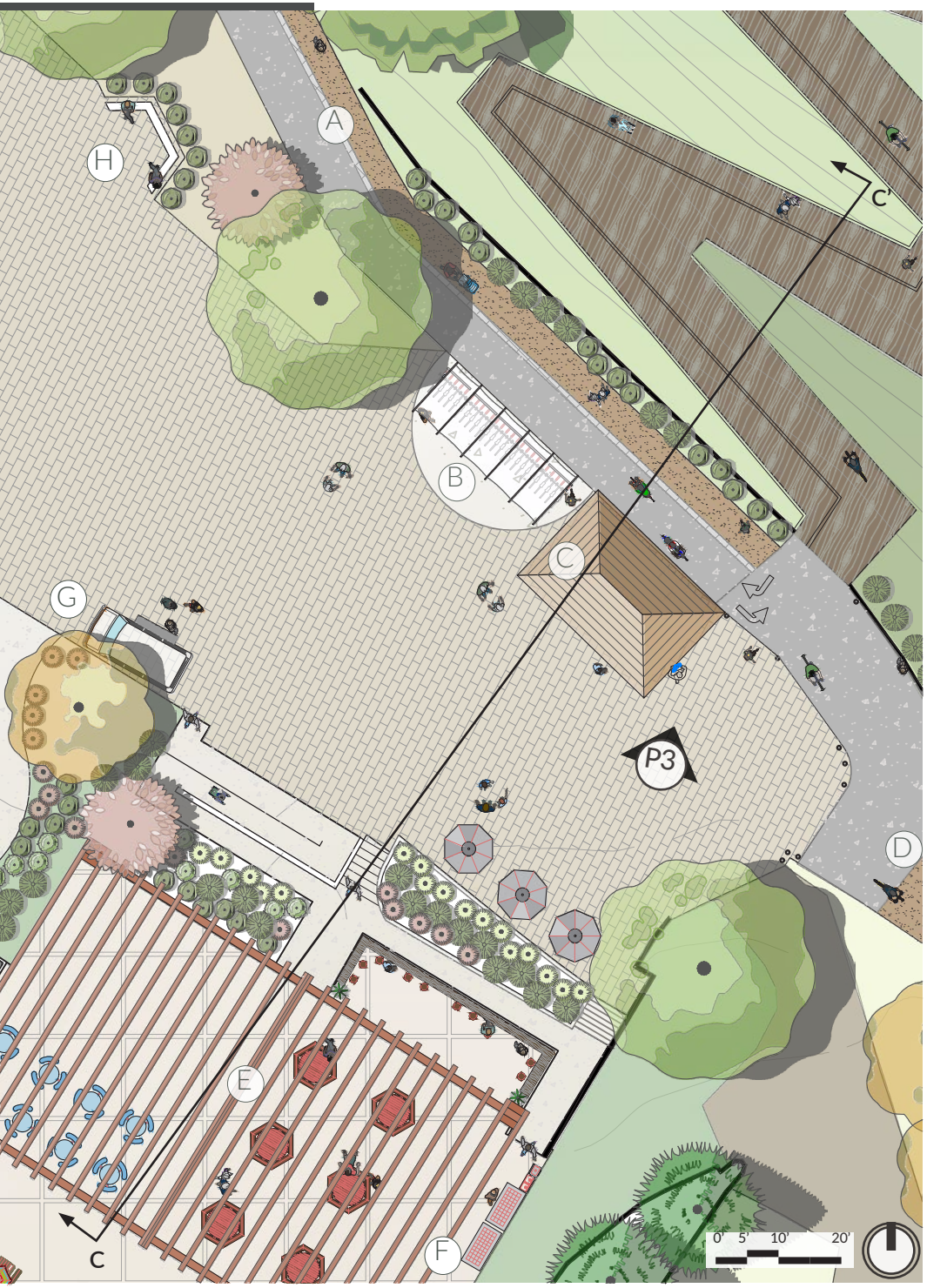
- A CULTURAL CENTER
- B AMPHITHEATER + EVENT SPACE
- C ADDITIONAL PARKING
- D VEHICLE + SHUTTLE DROP-OFF
- E OUTDOOR LEARNING AREA WITH SUNKEN READING CIRCLE
- F COVERED PICNIC AREA
- G MEANDERING WALKING TRAIL

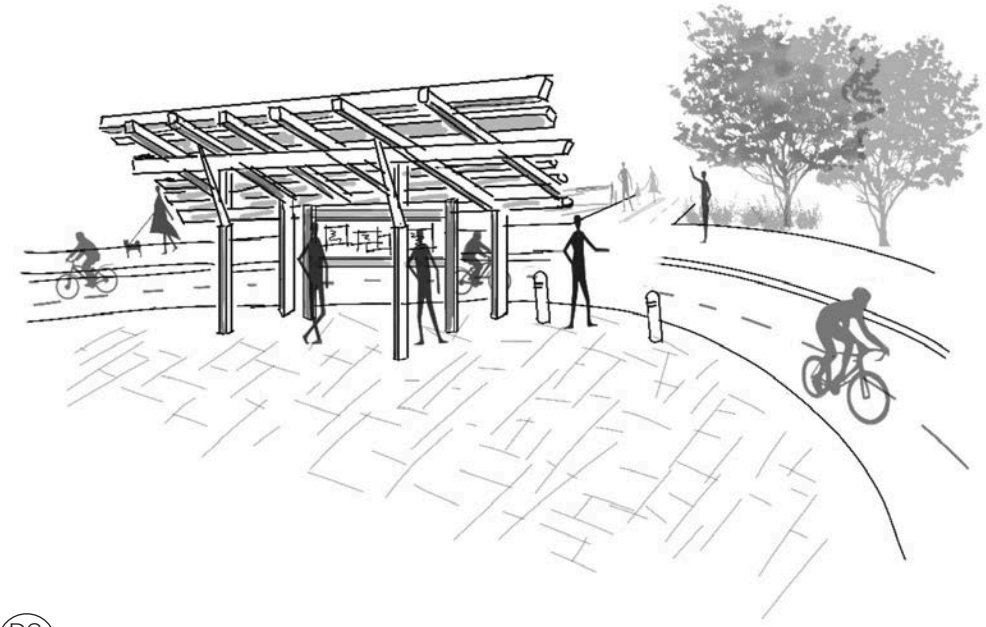
KEY MAP

SECTION | THE GROVE



ENLARGEMENT | THE HUB





P3

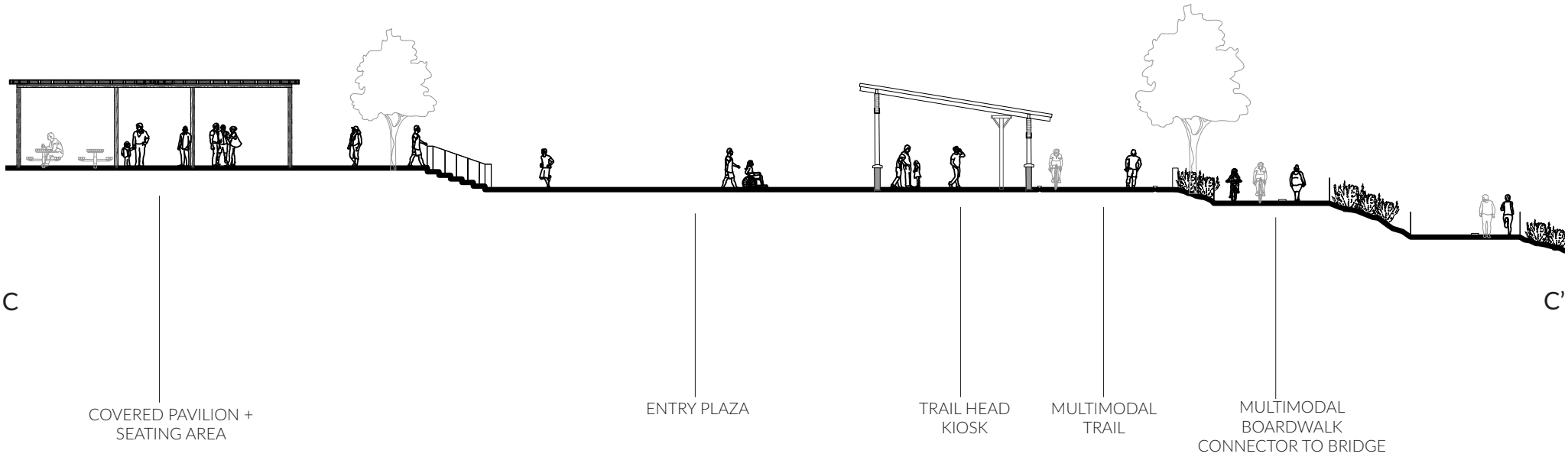
The Hub serves as a central gathering space and a key hub for recreation and transportation across the site. At its core, it functions as a multimodal transit node, connecting visitors to various trails and activity areas. The Hub features a bike rental and repair kiosk, allowing guests to explore the site on wheels, alongside a trail head kiosk, restroom facilities, and a covered pavilion equipped with an outdoor kitchen and barbecue area. This lively, accessible space supports both movement and community gathering.

LEGEND

- A MIXED USE BIKE + PEDESTRIAN TRAIL
- B BIKE RENTAL RACK
- C TRAIL HEAD KIOSK
- D RIVERVIEW TRAIL ENTRANCE
- E COVERED PAVILION, GATHERING + EVENT SPACE
- F OUTDOOR KITCHEN + GRILL AREA
- G ROTATING FOOD TRUCK
- H ALCOVE SEATING

KEY MAP

SECTION | THE HUB



P4

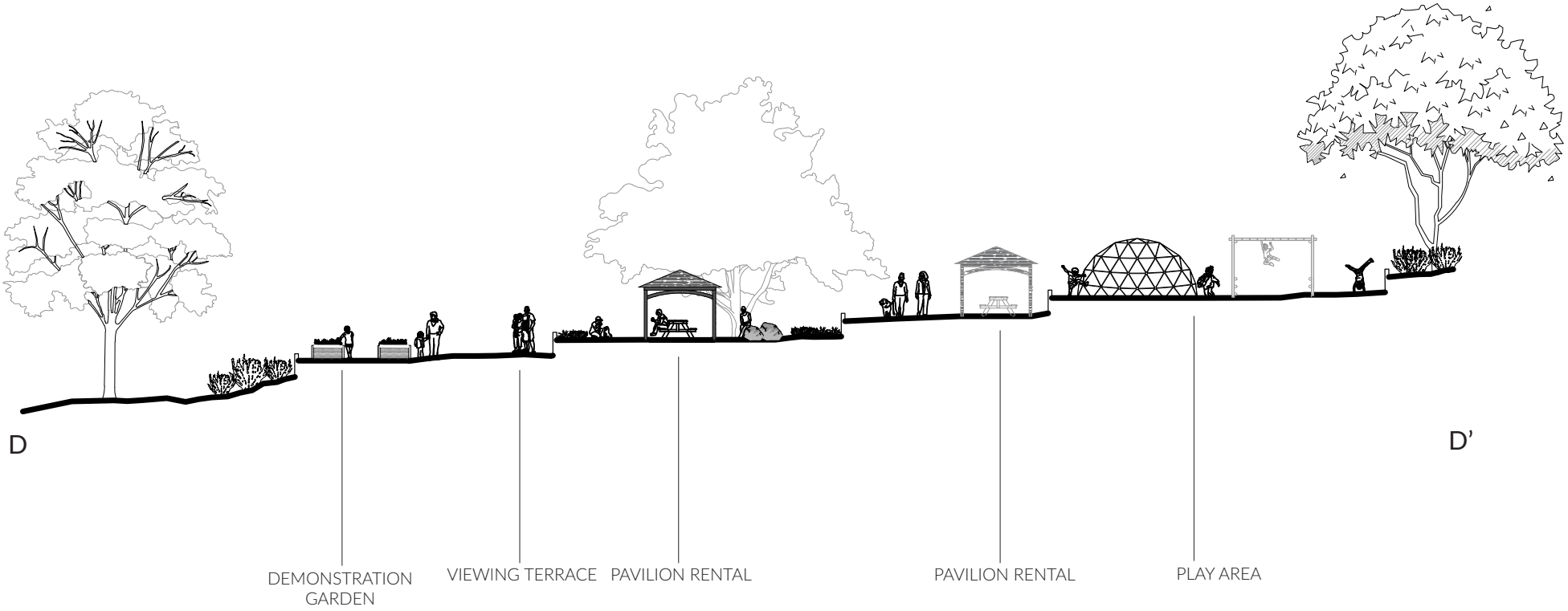
The Terraces is a dynamic space for play, exploration, and gathering across all ages. A series of terraced pads host a variety of amenities, including a demonstration garden, pavilion rentals for families, a children's play area, picnic spaces, and restroom facilities. Perched above the landscape, this space also offers sweeping views of the river and park below, making it both an active and scenic destination within the site.

LEGEND

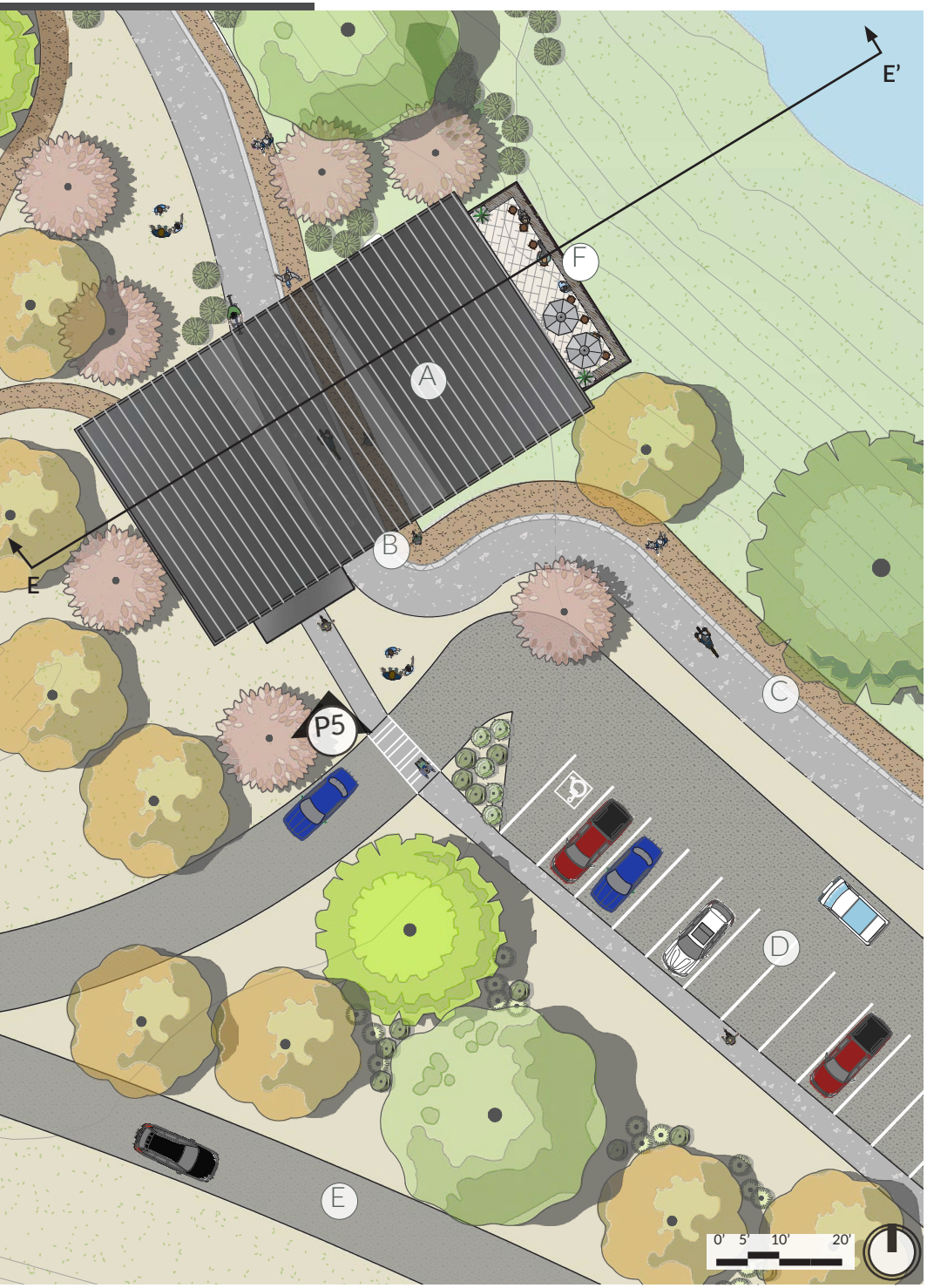
- (A) DEMONSTRATION GARDEN
- (B) PRIVATE PAVILION RENTALS
- (C) CHILDREN'S PLAY AREA
- (D) SEATING AREA WITH VIEWS
- (E) PERGOLA COVERED PICNIC AREA
- (F) PICNIC AREA
- (G) RESTROOM FACILITIES

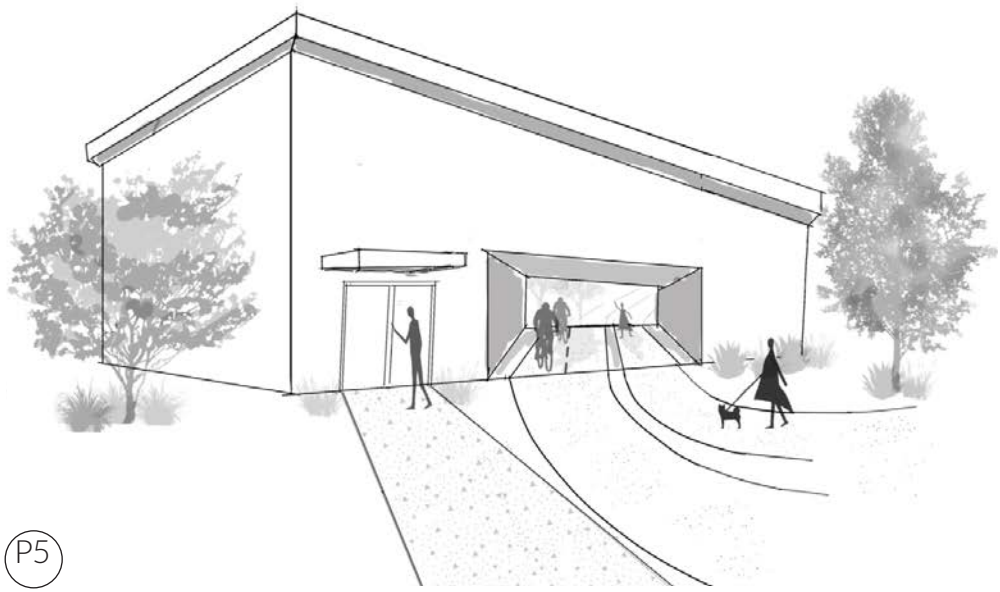
KEY MAP

SECTION | THE TERRACES



ENLARGEMENT | WCA + THE GREEN





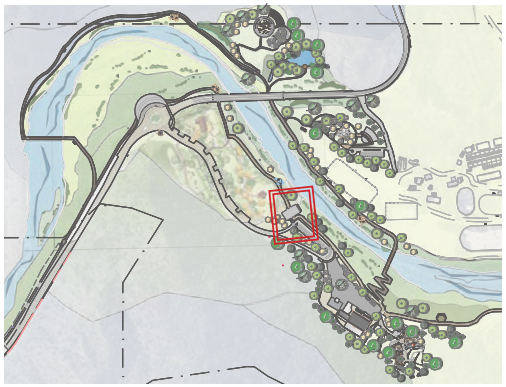
P5

The Phase Two design repositions the WCA building to a more central, accessible location within Azusa Wilderness Park. Now situated at the heart of the site, the building enjoys adjacent parking, riverfront views, and direct access to surrounding green space and trails. An elevated deck offers a place for employees to overlook the river and engage with the natural setting. A breezeway running through the building allows the primary multimodal trail to pass through, providing seamless access for WCA staff and promoting active, alternative commuting options.

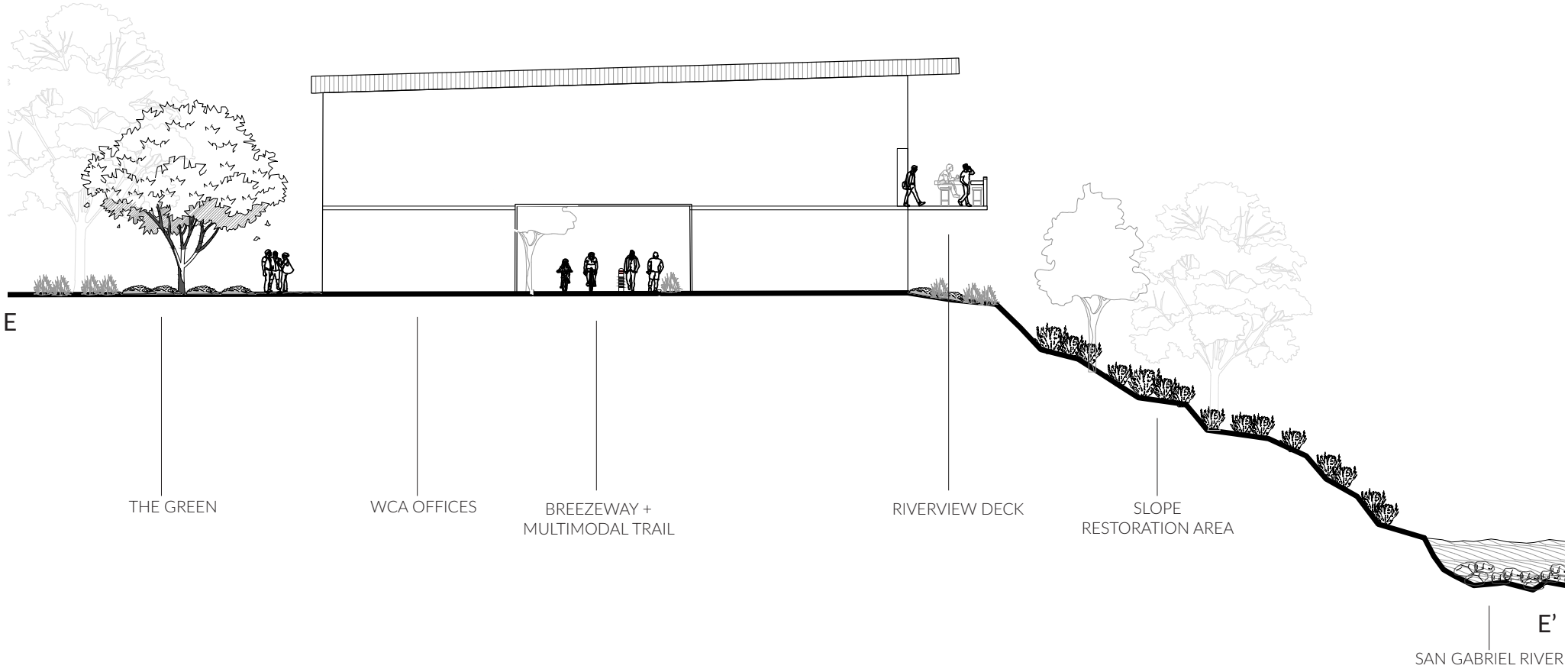
LEGEND

- A NEW WCA OFFICE BUILDING
- B BREEZEWAY
- C MULTIMODAL BIKE + PEDESTRIAN TRAIL
- D PARKING LOT
- E VEHICLE DROP-OFF CIRCULATION
- F WCA PATIO + RIVER OVERLOOK DECK

KEY MAP



SECTION | WCA + THE GREEN



GOALS ACHIEVED

STRENGTHEN CONNECTIVITY

- Extension and integration of the existing regional bike path into the site
- New multimodal bike and pedestrian trail looping around the full perimeter of the site
- On-site bike shop and rental kiosk
- Shuttle services connecting to nearby urban areas, San Gabriel National Monument, and key destinations within the site
- Bridge crossings connecting the north and south sides of site

ENHANCE INCLUSIVITY

- ADA-accessible boardwalk trail encircles the site, providing extended access
- Expanded programming serves a wide range of users and demographics
- Second site entrance and parking added on the north side of site
- Enhanced pedestrian infrastructure increases safety and accessibility throughout the park

RESTORE ECOLOGY

- Relocation of WCA offices to a less fire-prone and more centrally accessible area
- Native planting and slope stabilization efforts implemented along riverbanks to prevent erosion and support habitat health
- Establishment of a native riparian restoration area to enhance ecological biodiversity
- Protection of the river corridor through low-impact trails and bridge crossings

REVITALIZE CULTURE

- Cultural community center and event space designed to celebrate the history of local Indigenous communities
- Indigenous ceremony circle and ramada, offering a dedicated gathering space for ritual and cultural expression
- Native tending and gathering garden supporting traditional plant knowledge, medicinal practices, and community stewardship