



The Great Wall of Los Angeles Park Master Plan

UCLAx LD6: Concept Development / Instructor: Steven Chavez, PLA

Summer 2025

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

Pre Design

Overview and History.....	2-6
Site History Timeline.....	7
Site Inventory.....	8
Site Analysis.....	9-10
Site Constraints.....	11
Site Opportunities.....	12
Precedent Case Study 1.....	13
Precedent Case Study 2.....	14
Precedent Case Study 3.....	15

Design Development

Design Alternative 1.....	16
Design Alternative 2.....	17
Design Alternative 3.....	18

Final Design

Master Plan Concept.....	19
Inspiration.....	20-21
Master Plan.....	22
Site Section 1.....	23
Site Section 2.....	24
Perspective 1.....	25
Perspective 2.....	26
Walkthrough Video.....	27
Model Photos.....	28

OVERVIEW AND HISTORY



Seismic upshift created the Santa Susana, Santa Monica, and San Gabriel mountain ranges. From there, the ocean receded. What is now known as the Los Angeles River traveled the lowest points of this upshift. Erosion of soils from the mountain ranges created alluvial plains. These plains allowed for the storage of snowmelt from the mountains, and thus the groundwater basins were formed. In the Elysian Valley, the LA River flowed above ground due to shallow bedrock. In others, it flowed below ground only to surface during heavy rain events where the topsoil would get saturated.

The LA River was not static, meaning that it did not always follow the same path. Some years it would flow towards the ocean on the north side of the basin and empty at Ballona Creek, others it would cut south through what is now Downtown Los Angeles and Long Beach. Everything was connected by seasonal and intermittent streams, wetlands, and woodlands.

Due to the major floods in the 1930s and growing urbanization, the United States Army Corps of Engineers and the LA County Flood Control District set upon to channelize the LA River. This has had a devastating impact on our ecology, climate, health, and communities. Most notably, to the Ventureño Chumash, Fernandeno Tataviam, and Gabrielino Tongva, whose lives were entwined with that of the river. The San Fernando Valley is the present-day starting point of the Los Angeles River, and it is fed by streams and stormwater channels.

The Tujunga Wash Storm Channel starts in San Gabriel Mountains and flows south, connecting to the LA River in Studio City.

Valley Glen is located in the South Valley District of the San Fernando Valley. It was part of both Van Nuys and North Hollywood until 1998. Came about through anti-graffiti beautification project, and the desire to unite a diverse, yet similar, community. Valley Glen is the home of the Great Wall of Los Angeles, which is the world's longest mural at 2.754 ft long.

Valley Glen

- Was part of both Van Nuys and North Hollywood until 1998. Came about through anti-graffiti beautification project, and the desire to unite a diverse, yet similar, community.
- South Valley district of San Fernando Valley.
- Community: 2000 Census
 1. 45,072 population
 2. 42% White, 41.9% Hispanic, 5.3% Asian, 5.1% multiple race, 4.1% African American, 0.4% other race, .2% Native American, .1% Pacific Islander

San Fernando Valley

- Community: Centered around lineage, sovereign.
- Under Spanish occupation, renamed "Fernandeno." Village names are still present in Tujunga, Paoinga, Kawénga and Tupá'nga.
- 1784: Corporal Jose Maria Verdugo establishes Rancho San Rafael.
- Spanish Colonization turned the Valley into missions, farms and ranches.
- Predominant crop along Tujunga Wash was wheat and peach orchards, due to the high ground water level.
- LAVC 105 acres



Local Ecosystems and Plant Communities

- The Tujunga Wash Storm Channel occupies space that was the convergence of 3 ecosystems: Riparian, Coastal Sage Scrub, and Southern Oak Woodland. Riparian ecosystems are classified by water availability. They are found where water collects and/or flows, like marshes, streams, and rivers. Riparian ecosystems host the largest diversity of life, including plants, animals, and microbes. Amphibians and some reptiles require that almost constantly moist environment to breed. Many birds also rely on Riparian areas for migration. They are also habitat connectors, allowing for passage between other plant communities. Because so much water passes through Riparian zones, any chance of cleaning the water before it percolates into the ground or flows into the ocean depends on the plants, or more accurately the roots, that inhabit the banks. You will find unique plants that aren't found in any other ecosystems in California because of their exposure to water.

- Historically, the San Fernando Valley also sits on Southern Oak Woodland and Coastal Sage Scrub plant communities, outside of its Riparian habitat. These two ecosystems work together and overlap. Coastal Sage Scrub is defined by its lack of tall trees and very shrubby, scrubby plants at lower elevations. It is active all year, and even though the dormant period is summer through fall when there is little to no rainfall, there is always something growing, blooming, or fruiting. Coastal Sage Scrub is entirely unique to California's coastal regions, with the biggest concentration in LA County.

- Southern Oak Woodland is characterized by its location as well as having an abundance of different Oak species, primarily Coast Live Oak. Southern Oak Woodland occurs between San Diego and Santa Barbara. In some areas it is met with Chaparral, or other forests and woodlands. In some cases, like in the San Fernando Valley, the plant communities completely overlap.



Southern Oak Woodland

Riparian

Costal Sage Scrub

Fire Ecology

Many of the plants in these communities require fire for their health. Fire clears dead brush, as well as allowing some plants to get pruned back and grow healthy from the base. Some seeds may only germinate in fire. The ash that is produced by fire is high in potassium, which is an important nutrient for most plants.



Mammals That Should be Found on or Near Site



Grizzly Bear
Ursus arctos horribilis
*Endangered, no longer in California



Black Bear
Ursus Americanus



Western Pipistrelle
Pipistrellus hesperus



Raccoon
Procyon lotor psora



Bobcat
Lynx rufus



California Mountain Lion
Puma concolor californica



Spotted skunk
Plesiodon skiltonianus



Coyote
Canus latrans

Birds That Should be Found on or Near Site



American Kestrel
Falco sparverius



Merlin
Falco columbarius



Cooper's Hawk
Accipiter cooperii



Great Horned Owl
Bubo virginianus



Rufous Hummingbird
Selasphorus rufus



Blue-gray Gnatcatcher
polioptila caerulea



Spotted Towhee
Pipilo maculatus



Yellow Rumped Warbler
Setophaga coronata

Animals That Should be Found on or Near Site



American Kestrel
Salix lasiolepis



Big Leaf Maple
Acer macrophyllum



California Buckeye
Asclepius californica



Holly Leaf Cherry
Prunus ilicifolia



Greenbark Ceanothus
Ceanothus spinosus



Chamise
Adenostoma fasciculatum



Hillside Gooseberry
Ribes californicum



California Sun Cup
Camissoniopsis bistorta

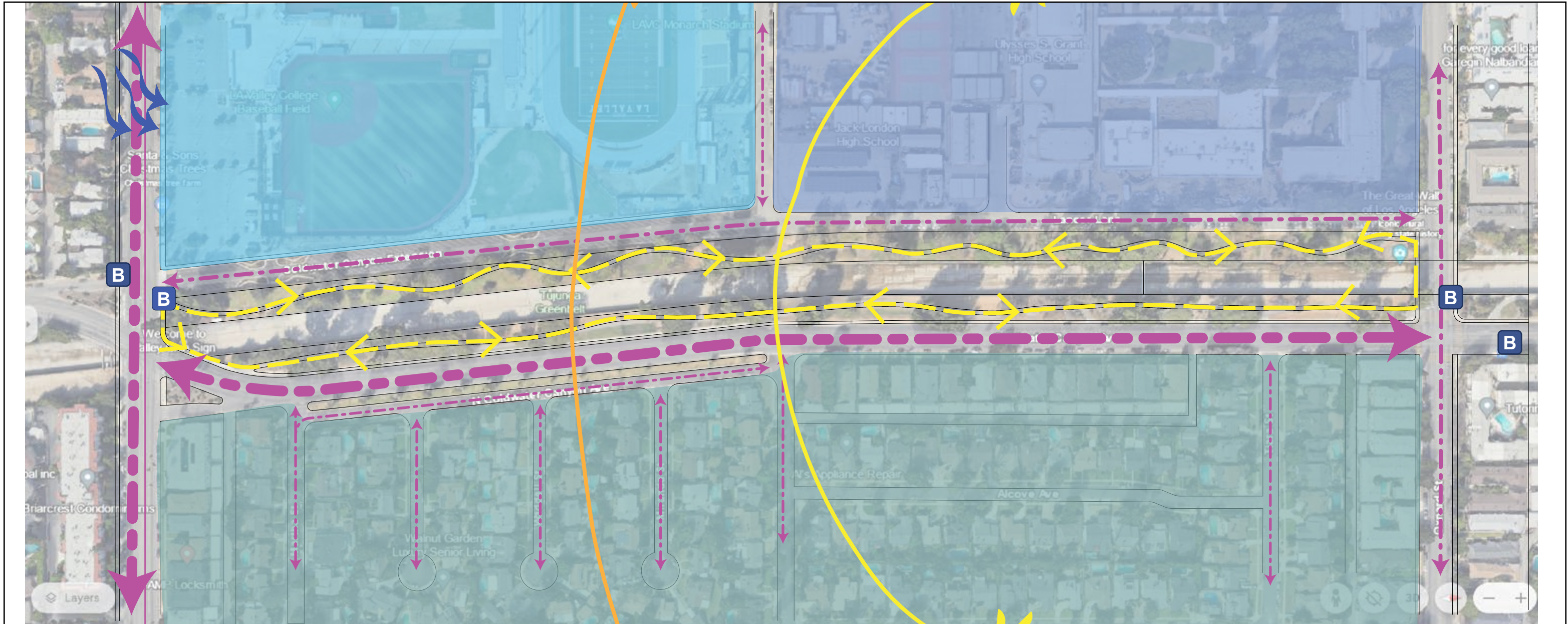
SITE HISTORY TIMELINE



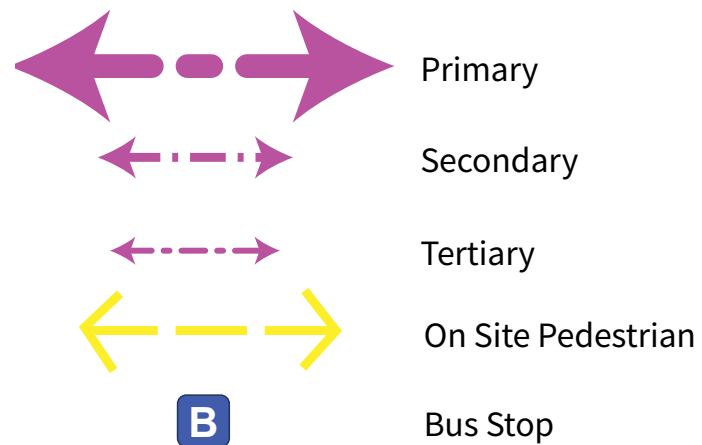
68 Mil years ago, Chatsworth Formation created 5,000 ft below sea level.	2,000 BCE-700CE Uto-Aztecans emigrated to the LA Basin, either absorbing or displacing the previous peoples.	1784-1846: Land was granted under Spanish and later Mexican rule to (mostly) soldiers, forming a gentry class known as "Rancheros." Ranchos were often worked by the Tribal Citizens who had worked at the missions.	1848: The United States "acquires" what is now California. Ranchos are subdivided	1913: Los Angeles Aqueduct was built, providing water to Los Angeles County from the Sierra Nevadas.	1949-1951: Los Angeles Valley College was founded and later moved to its current location in Valley Glen.	1974: Judith F. Baca contacted by Army Corps of Engineers to beautify the Tujunga Wash Flood Channel.	2011: Restoration on The Great Wall begins.
40,000-10,000 years ago: People of northeast Asia cross the Bering Strait and migrate south. People from South American migrate north.	1769- First Spanish colonies.	1846: Governor Pio Pico granted the 116,858 acre estate of Rancho Ex Mission San Fernando to Eulogio F. de Celis. it is later split into 2 parts.	1873: After the San Fernando Valley was divided between the Lankershim ranches and Maclay-Porter lands towns started such as Burbank, San Fernando, and Toluca to appear.	1921-Mexico gains independence from Spain.	1950s-Tujunga Wash was channelized for flood control.	1976-1983: The Great Wall continued to be worked on, including by 80 youths who had been referred to Baca by the criminal justice department.	2023: Mural expansion begins. Slated for completion in 2027.



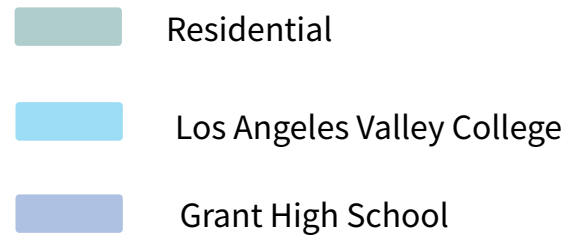
SITE INVENTORY



Vehicular Circulation

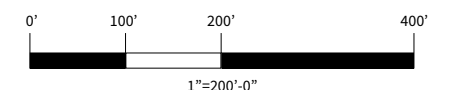


Context

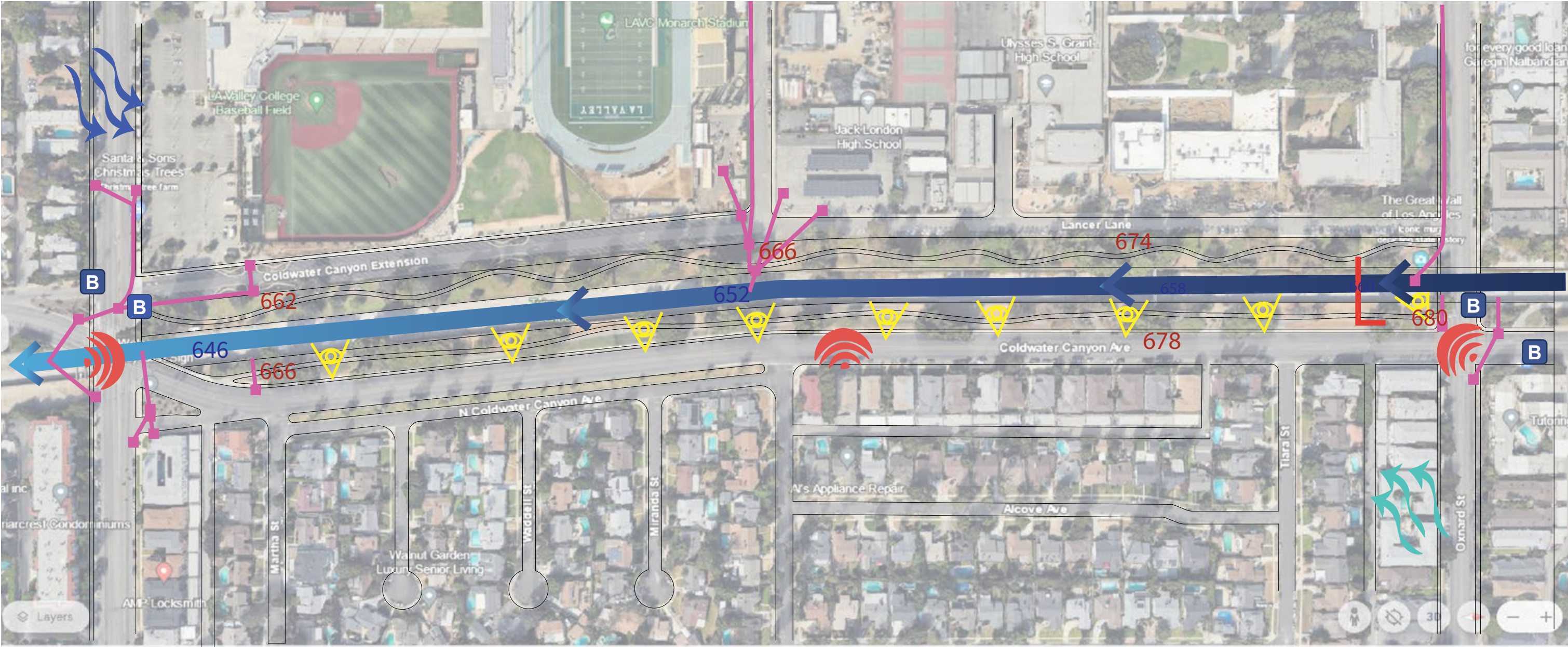


Weather and Climate

Hottest Day Low-High: 65F-92F
 Coldest Day Low-High: 45F-64F
 Rainfall: 15"
 Rainy Month: February



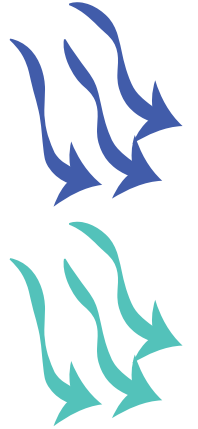
SITE ANALYSIS



- Municipal Water Pipe
- XXX High Points
- XXX Low Points
- Storm Drain Pipes
- Storm Drain Inlets
- Storm Channel Flow

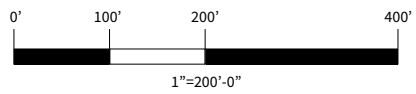


Views



Prevailing Winds

Seasonal Winds



DATA MAPS

Geology



6/30/2025

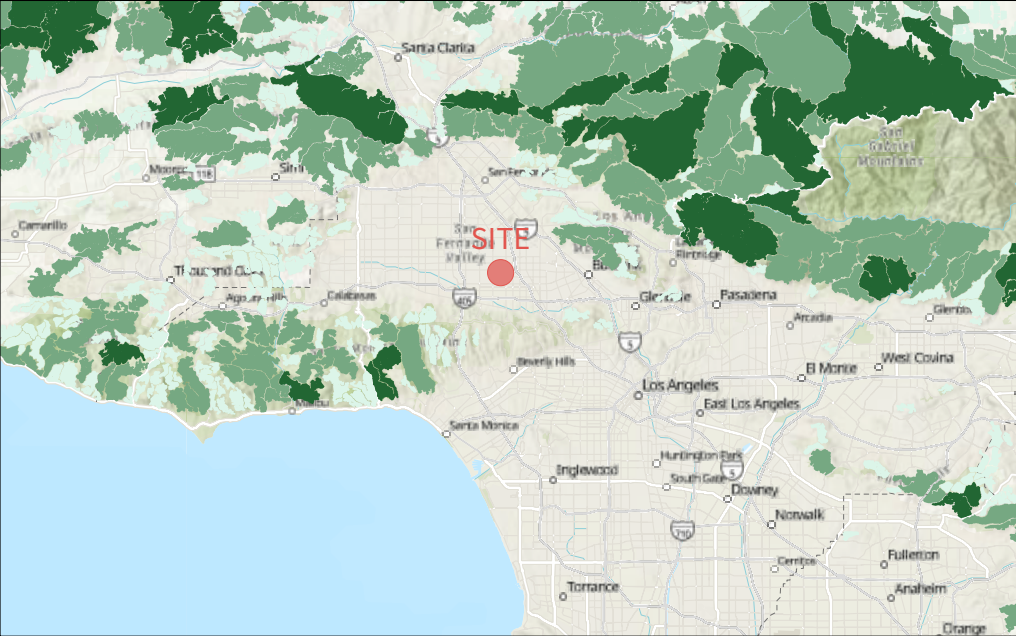
State Geologic Map Compilation – Geology

- Igneous and Metamorphic, undifferentiated
- Igneous, intrusive
- Igneous, volcanic
- Metamorphic, gneiss
- Metamorphic, sedimentary clastic
- Sedimentary, clastic
- Unconsolidated, undifferentiated
- Water
- World_Hillshade

Scale: 1:288,895 (0 to 8 miles / 0 to 13 km)

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

Intact Habitat Cores



6/30/2025

Intact Habitat Cores (2023)

- Good 1.60 - 3.31
- Better 3.32 - 4.12
- Best 4.13 - 4.50

World_Hillshade

Scale: 1:577,791 (0 to 16 miles / 0 to 20 km)

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

Pollinator Species Richness



6/30/2025

2020 Imperiled Pollinators: Species Richness

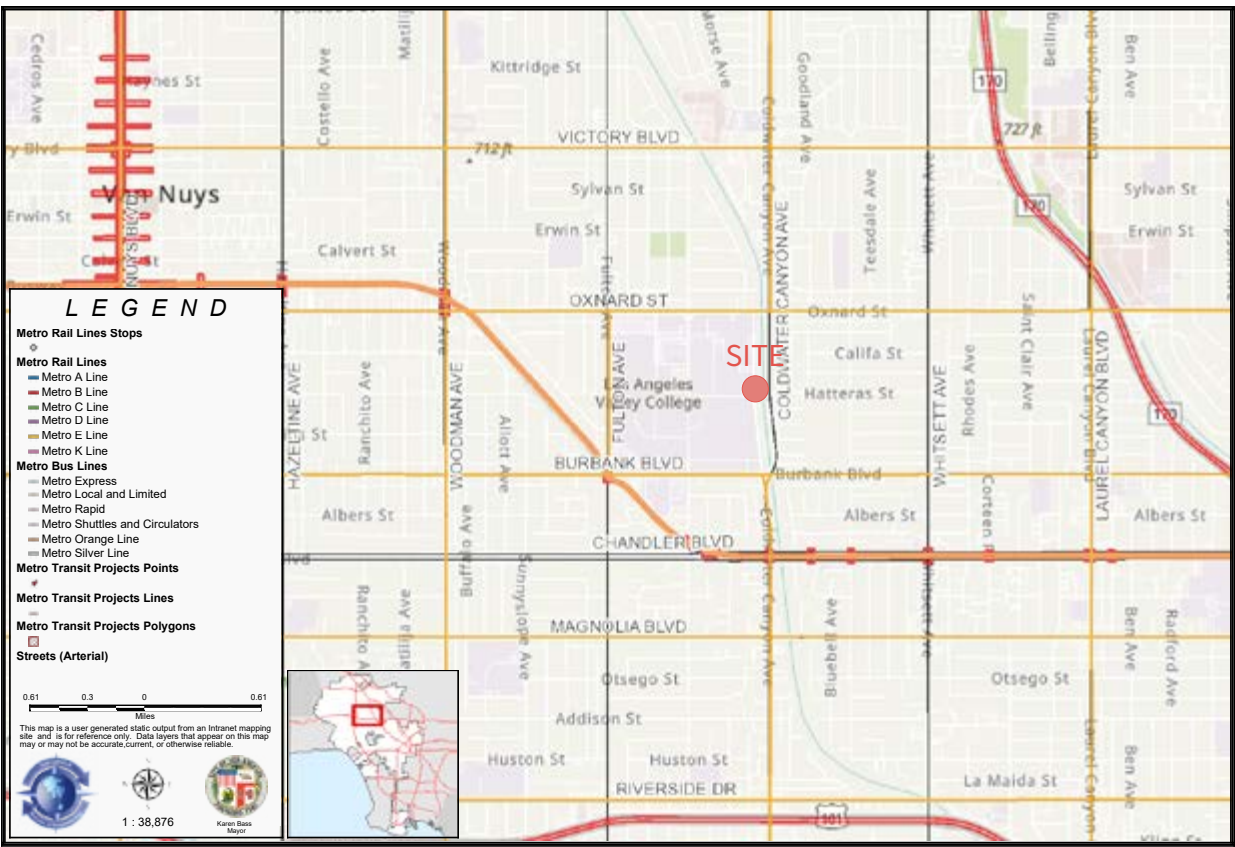
- 0
- 1
- 2
- 3
- 4
- 5

World_Hillshade

Scale: 1:577,791 (0 to 16 miles / 0 to 20 km)

Sources: Esri, CGIAR, USGS, NatureServe Network 2020, Sources:

Metro Service Map



LEGEND

- Metro Rail Lines Stops
- Metro Rail Lines
 - Metro A Line
 - Metro B Line
 - Metro C Line
 - Metro D Line
 - Metro E Line
 - Metro K Line
- Metro Bus Lines
 - Metro Express
 - Metro Local and Limited
 - Metro Rapid
 - Metro Shuttles and Circulators
 - Metro Orange Line
 - Metro Silver Line
- Metro Transit Projects Points
- Metro Transit Projects Polygons
- Streets (Arterial)

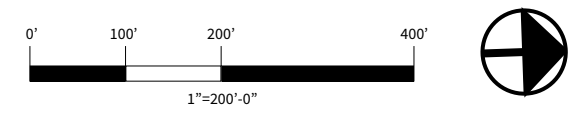
Scale: 1:38,876

This map is a user generated static output from an Internet mapping site and is for reference only. Data layers that appear on this map may or may not be accurate, current, or otherwise reliable.

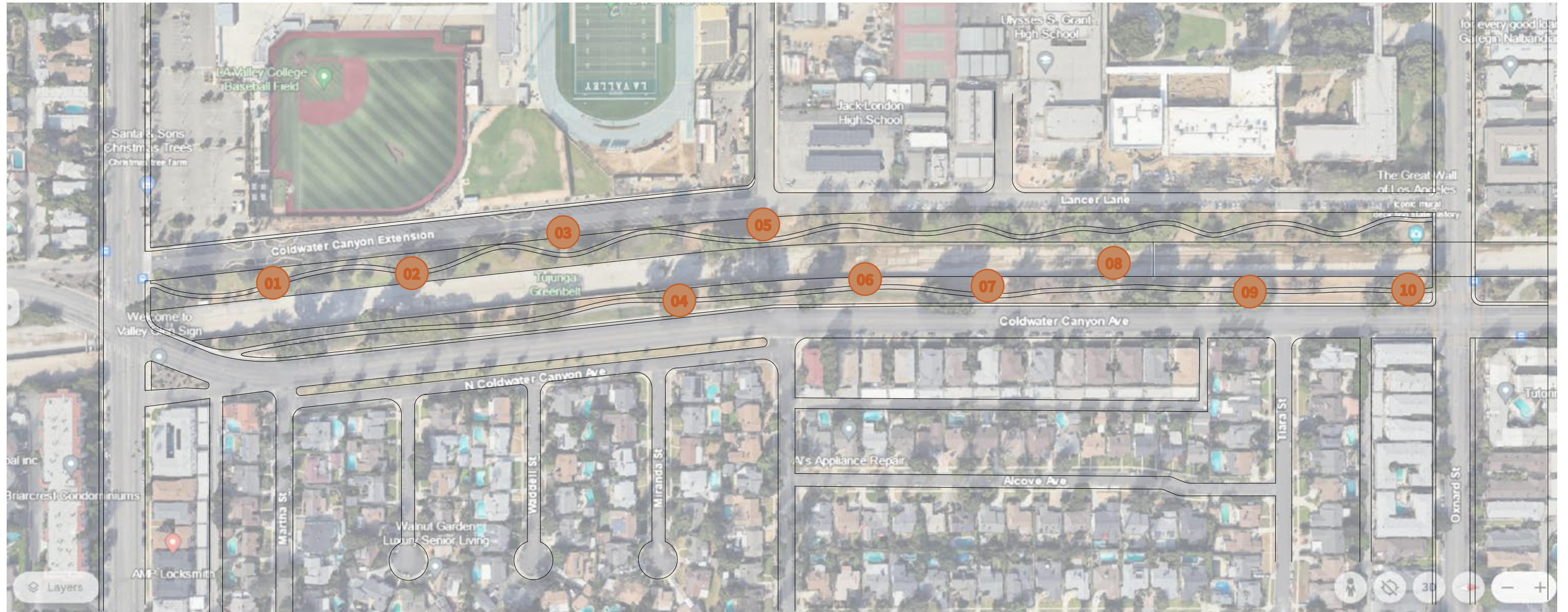
SITE CONSTRAINTS



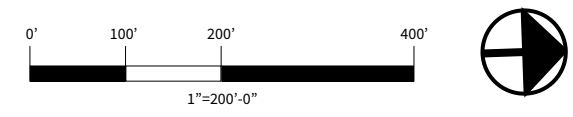
- | | | | |
|----|---|----|----------------------------------|
| 01 | Not much biodiversity. | 06 | Tall, ugly fence, |
| 02 | Can't get close to mural. | 07 | Large, ugly water pipe |
| 03 | Very little water retention | 08 | Tree roots have damaged path. |
| 04 | Not many places to sit. | 09 | Large, leaning trees are unsafe, |
| 05 | Long sides are disconnected throughout. | 10 | Narrow, tight site. |



SITE OPPORTUNITIES



- 01** Native plant community garden.
- 02** Bring public community art to foreground.
- 03** Capture and/or slow storm water.
- 04** More spaces to sit and commune.
- 05** Kiosks for local artisans.
- 06** Update fence to flow with artwork.
- 07** Small amphitheater.
- 08** Connecting bridges.
- 09** Mature trees provide shade.
- 10** Areas to park bikes



PRECEDENT CASE STUDY 1: Erie Basin Park

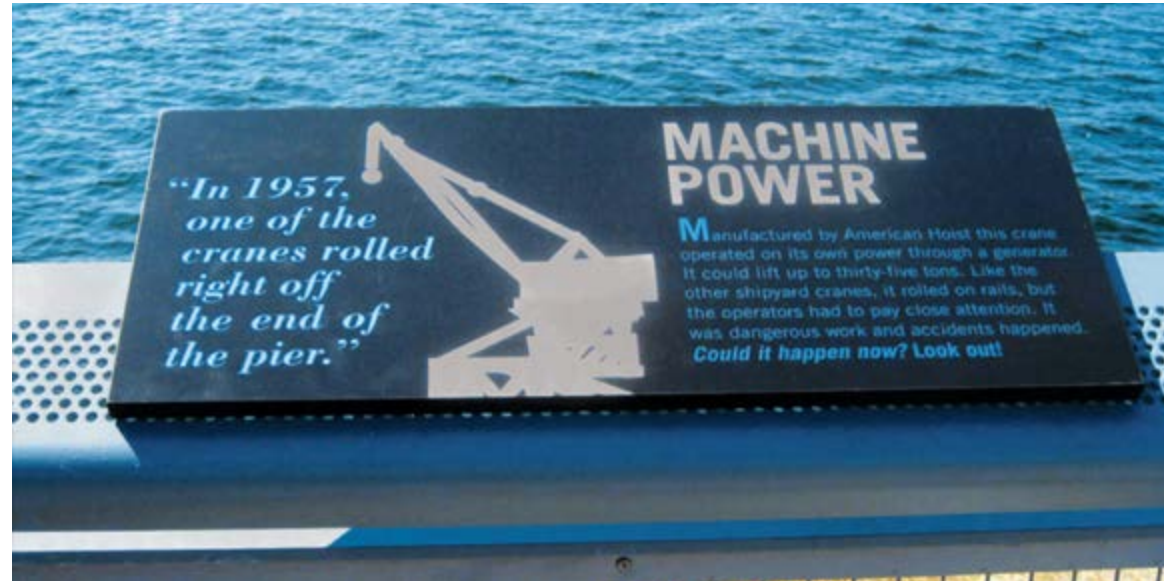
Project Information

Designed by Russell Design and Lee Weintraub Landscape Architecture
Brooklyn, New York, United States of America
7 acre Public and Private collaboration.
Client: IKEA Corporation
Built: 2008
Awards: 2016 ASLA-NY Design Award; Waterfront Center Award for Excellence on the Waterfront: Park/Walkway/Recreational.



Site History

- Former site of Todd Shipyard, which dated back to the Civil War.
- Remind visitors of the maritime history and have clear access points,
- IKEA required to build a park as stipulation for purchase of property.



What Works:

- Utilizes materials found on site for connection to history.
- Series of waterfront esplanades and seating areas.
- Free ferry where people can catch a ride to Manhattan.

What Doesn't Work:

- “Hook up spot” for neighborhood teens.
- Bushes littered with used condoms, alcohol bottles, drug paraphernalia.
- During the day, park feels unsafe and unsupervised.
- Pesticide warnings.
- Vandalism.



PRECEDENT CASE STUDY 2: Tibet Eco Garden

Project Information

Designed by Siura Studios; Anton Siura
Jakarta, Indonesia
7 hectare Public Park
Architects Studio Sae
Client: PR Awards Global Infinity
Jakarta Park and Forestry Department
2021-2022

Awards: 2023 Design of the Year; Design Singapore Design Council
Golden Pin Design Award, Spatial Design.

Site History

- Located in densely populated area.
- Former garbage dumping ground.
- Former site of wetland and small streams in disrepair. resulted in many flash floods.
- Floods bring in contaminated debris.
- Road disrupted ecological corridor.

Notable Attributes

- Active restoration of ecology along with tree conservation.
- Goal to reduce risk of flooding by naturalizing the river.
- 3 main concepts: promoting ecological function, socialization, education and recreation.
- Aims to attract diverse set of visitors through programming.
- Connections in and alongside the periphery of the park.
- Utilizes existing construction materials.
- Garden pathways replaced concrete road.
- Existing canal was de-channalized and river was re-naturalized. Naturalized streams also acts as water treatment
- active child playgrounds, passive walking and viewing areas.



PRECEDENT CASE STUDY 3: Washington Canal Park

Project Information

Designed by Rebecca Popowsky, Landscape Architect; OLIN

Architect: STUDIOS

Location:

Size: 3 acre Neighborhood Park

Location: Washington DC

Client: Canal Park Development Association

Managed by : Canal Park Inc.

Built: 2012

Awards: 2013, Engineering News-Record Mid-Atlantic, Best Landscape Hardscape Urban Development Project

2013, American Institute of Architects Washington, DC Chapter, Presidential Citation for Sustainable Design

2013, American Institute of Architects Washington, DC Chapter, Merit Award for Architecture

2013, Engineering News-Record, Best of the Best Projects, Landscape

2012, Washington Business Journal, Community Impact Award

2015, ULI Urban Open Space Award Finalist

Site History

- Site of historic Washington Canal, which connected the Anacostia and Potomac Rivers.

- Early 1900s , Washington Canal was paved over to create Canal Street.

- 2000-WC Smith formed Canal Park Development Association (CPDA), non profit organization, to secure the site for the park and oversee its development.

Notable Attributes

- Dancing fountain during summer months; ice skating rink during winter months.

- Public art

- Linear rain garden evokes past Washington Canal.

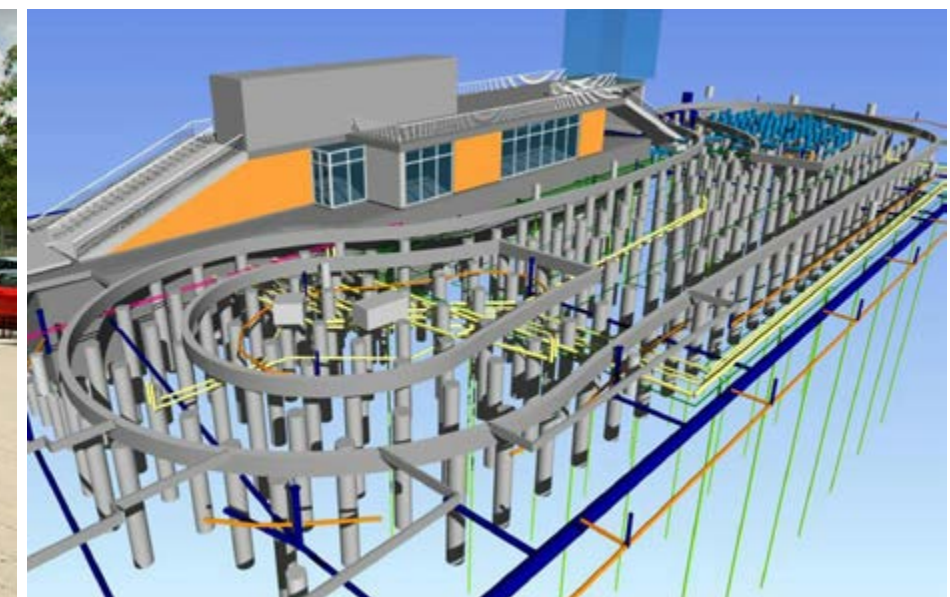
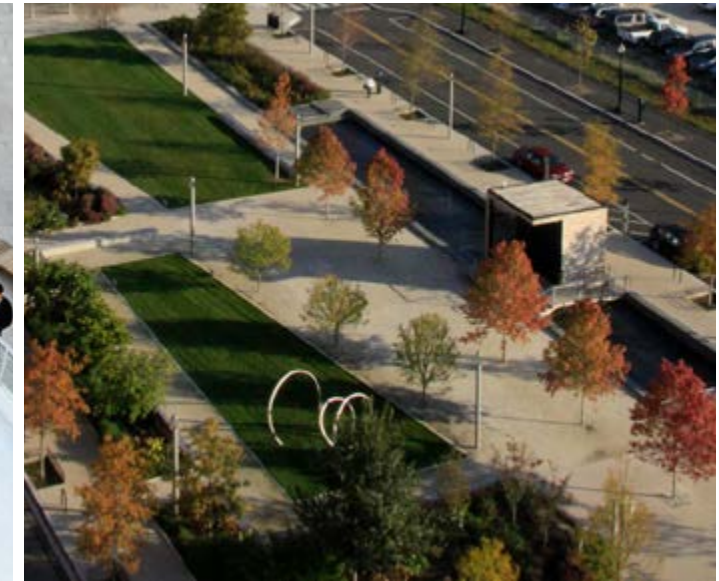
- Utilizes Low Impact Design in tree pits and bio swales to provide filtration from street storm water runoff.

- 80,000 Gallon underground cistern stores water for irrigation, fountain and ice rink water.

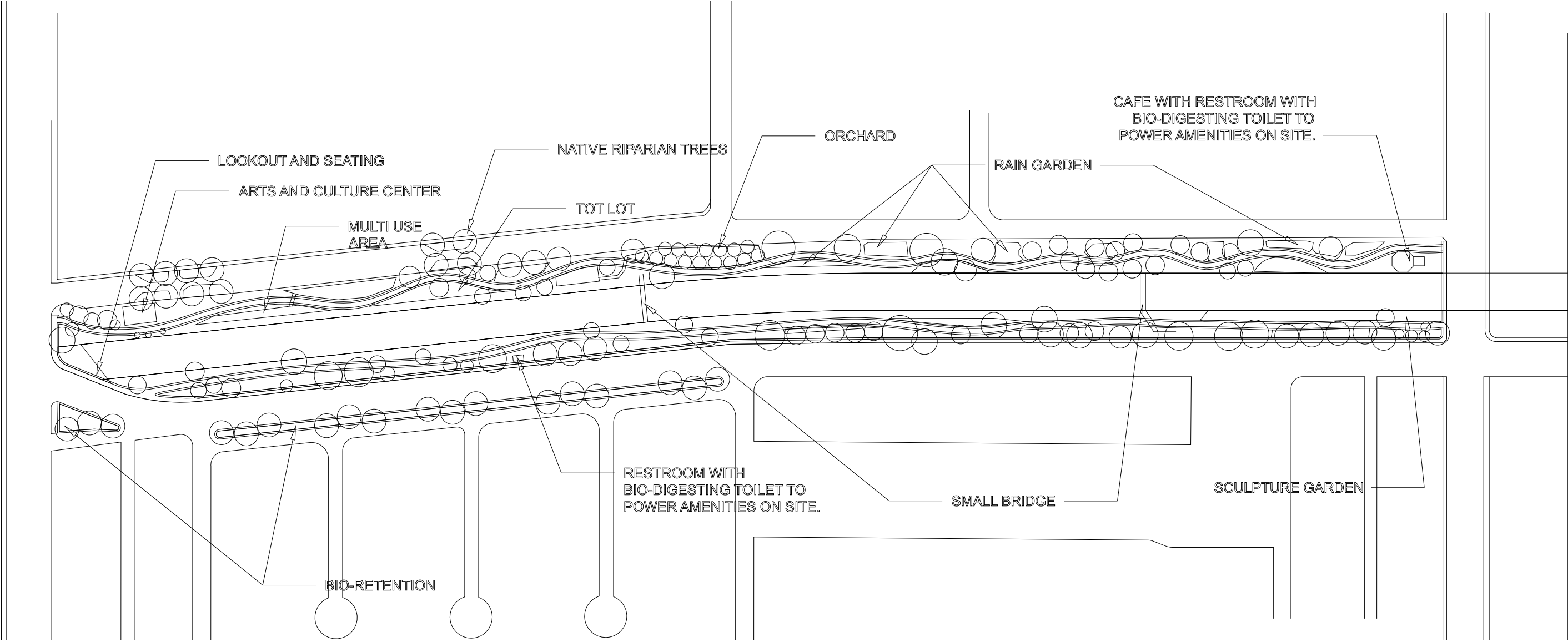
- 28 geothermal wells provide energy supply for utilities, with 37% reduction in overall energy use.

- Dark Sky Lighting

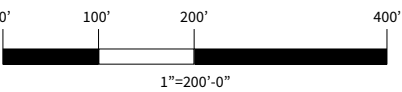
- Electric vehicle charging stations.



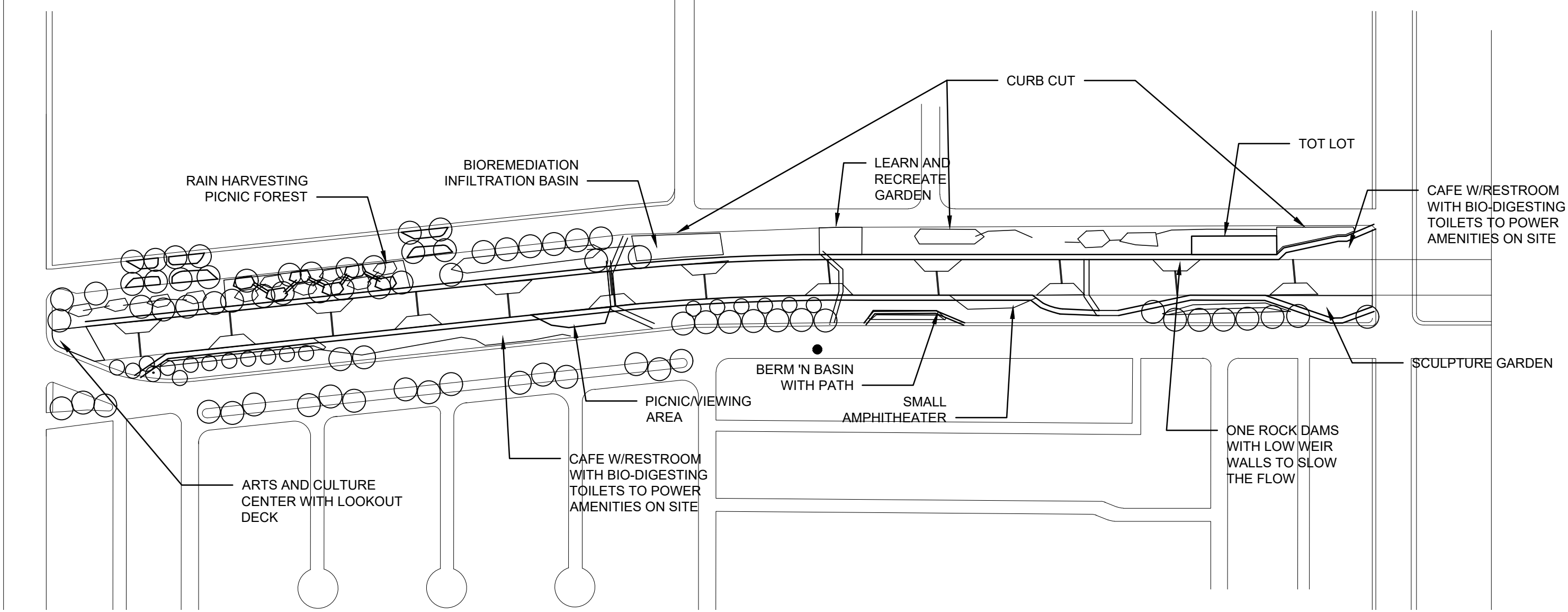
DESIGN ALTERNATIVE 1



Design Alternative 1 retains most of the existing infrastructure, adding a bridge to the municipal water pipe. A lookout was added to the Southern end of the park where there are existing cross beams. There is a Community Arts Center, cafe, and standalone restroom all with bio-digesting toilets to power amenities on site. Low impact rain gardens and bio-retention swales have been added. These are a great opportunity to get community involved, as well as incorporate academics with the neighboring schools. An Orchard has been added to provide food for the surrounding communities and schools.



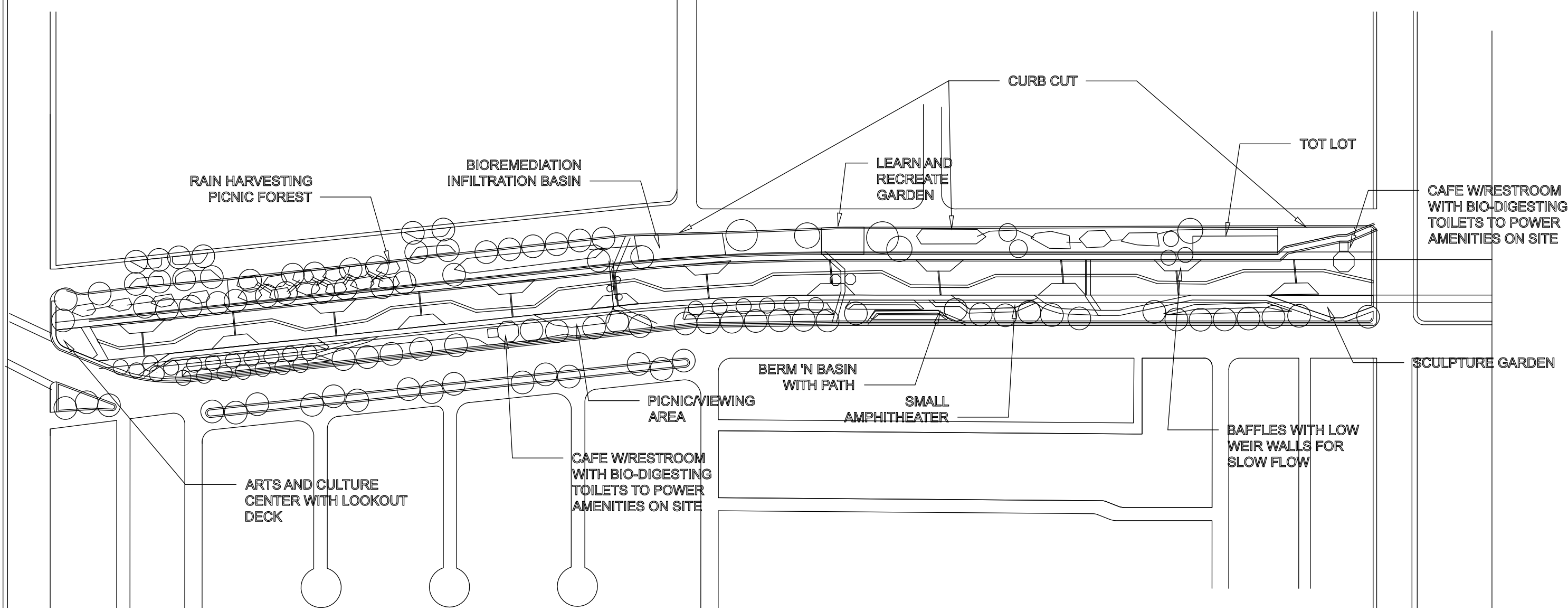
DESIGN ALTERNATIVE 2



Design Alternative 2 uses some of the added elements from Design 1, with more storm water management systems such as berm n’ basins, bio-remediation basin basin, and a rain harvesting picnic forest. Simulations baffles have been added to the channel to slow the flow during low flow activity. The simulation also provides an opportunity to teach about earthworks that can be used for storm water management in channels.



DESIGN ALTERNATIVE 3

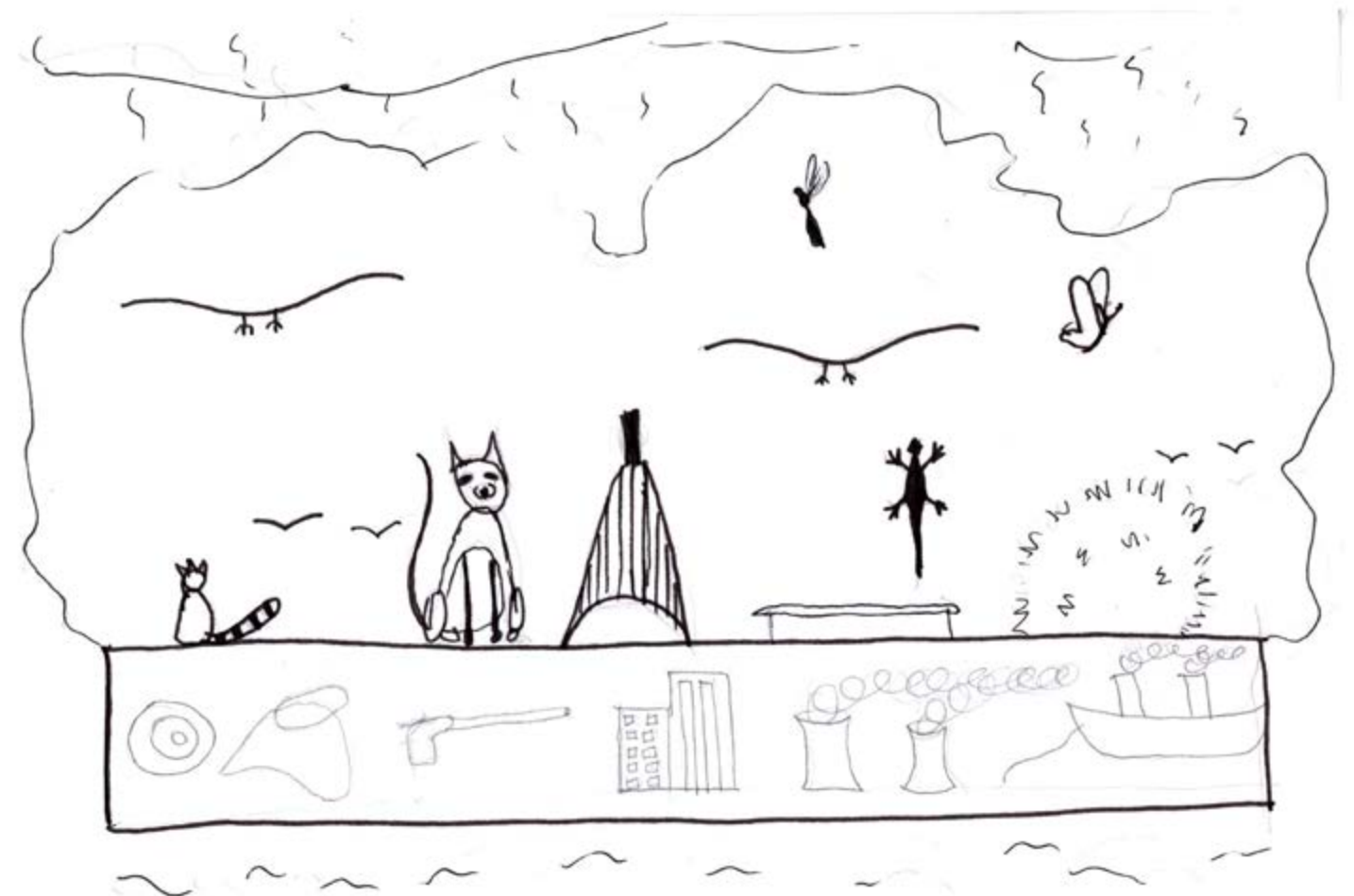
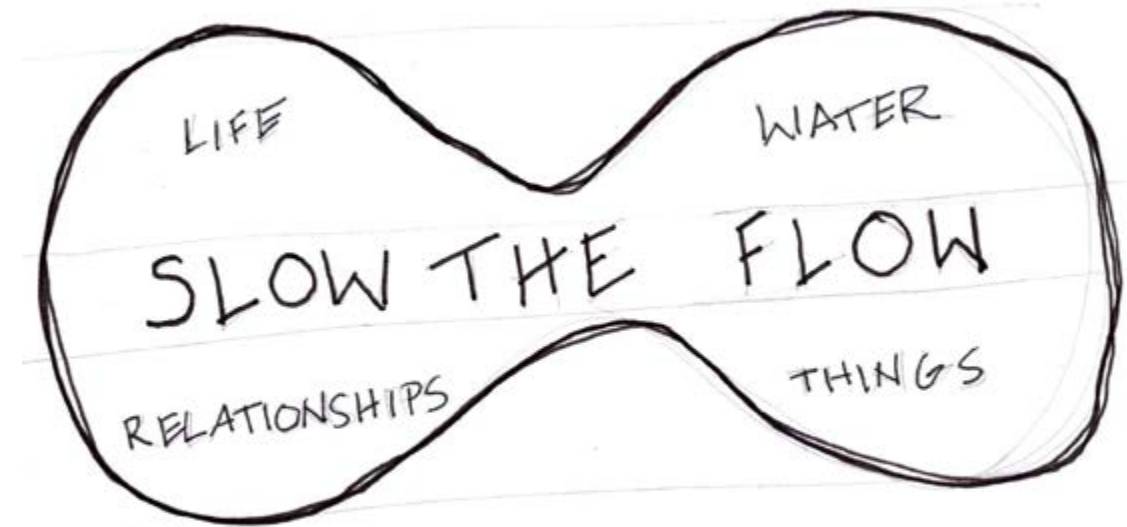
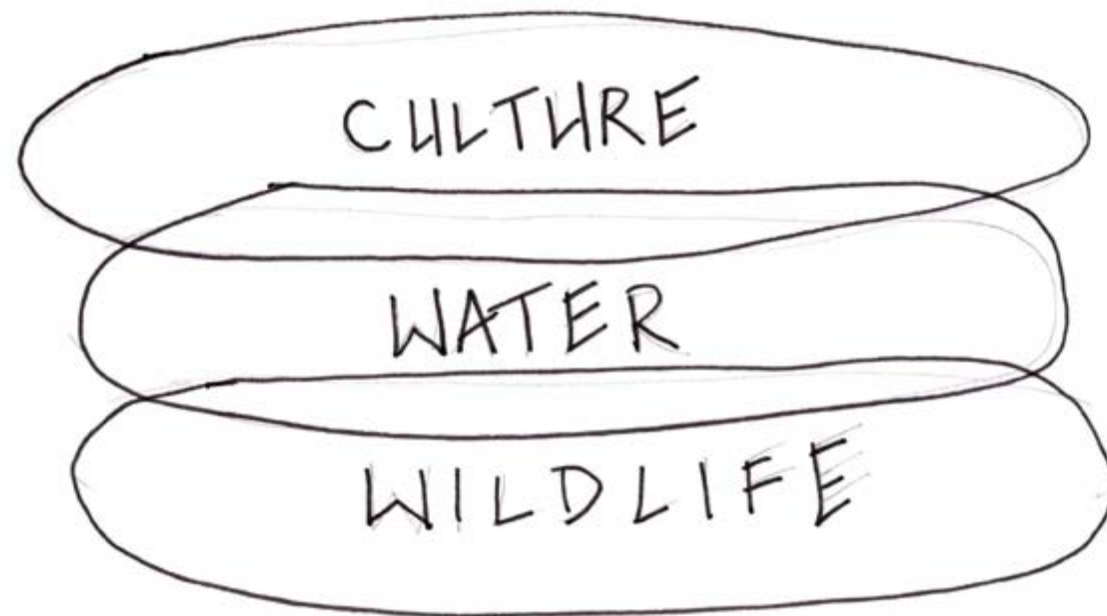


Design Alternative 3 is an extension of Design Alternative 2. A low flow channel has been added to the storm channel for low flow and to keep algae from building up on the channel floor. Weirs were added to baffles to slow the flow during light storm events. An extra Cafe with bio-digesting restroom was added to the east side of the park.

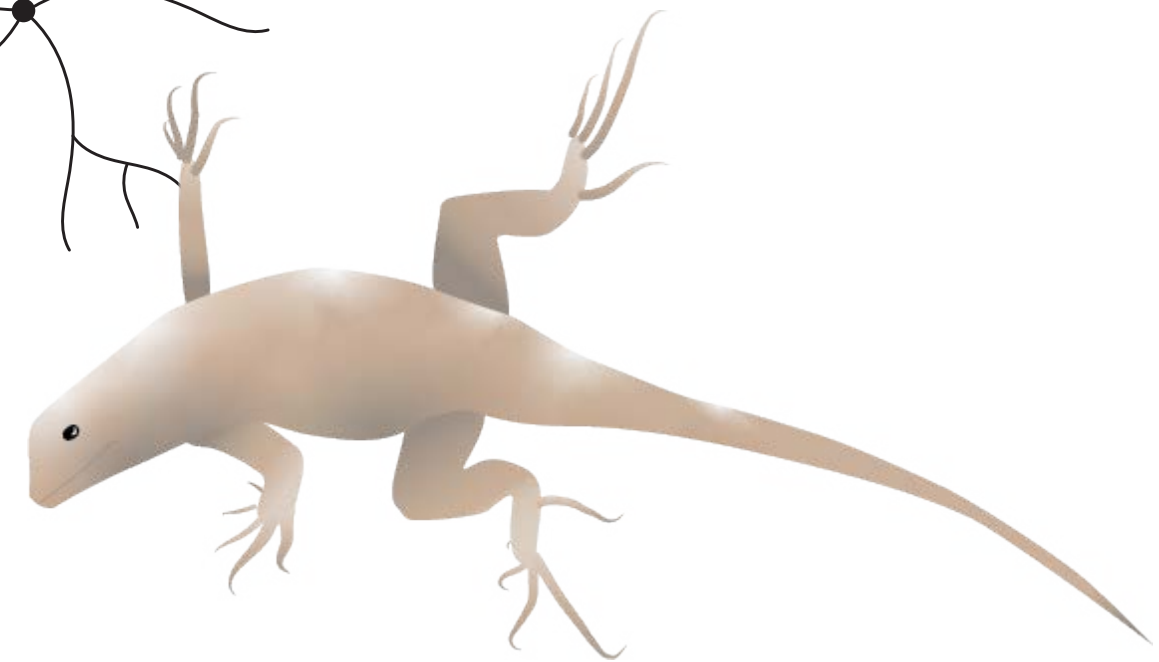
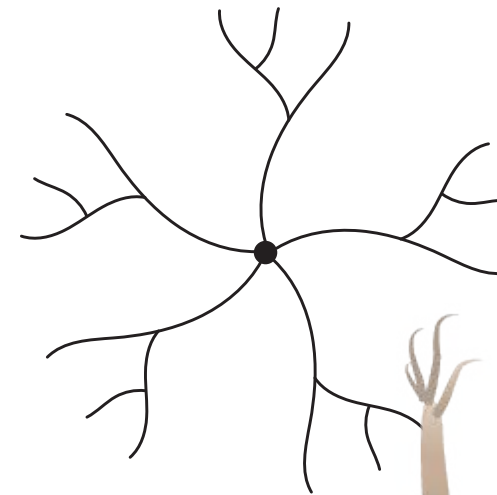
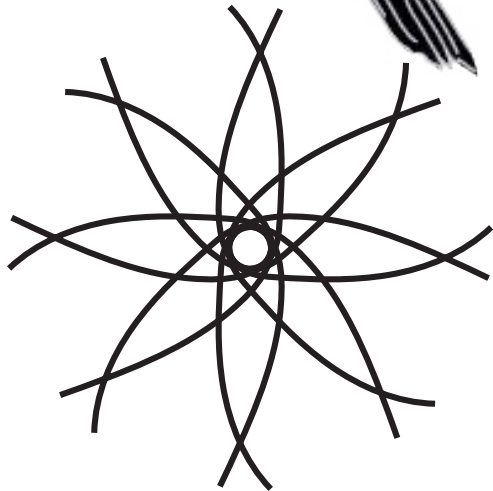


Slow the Flow with Plants, Community, Wildlife, and Water

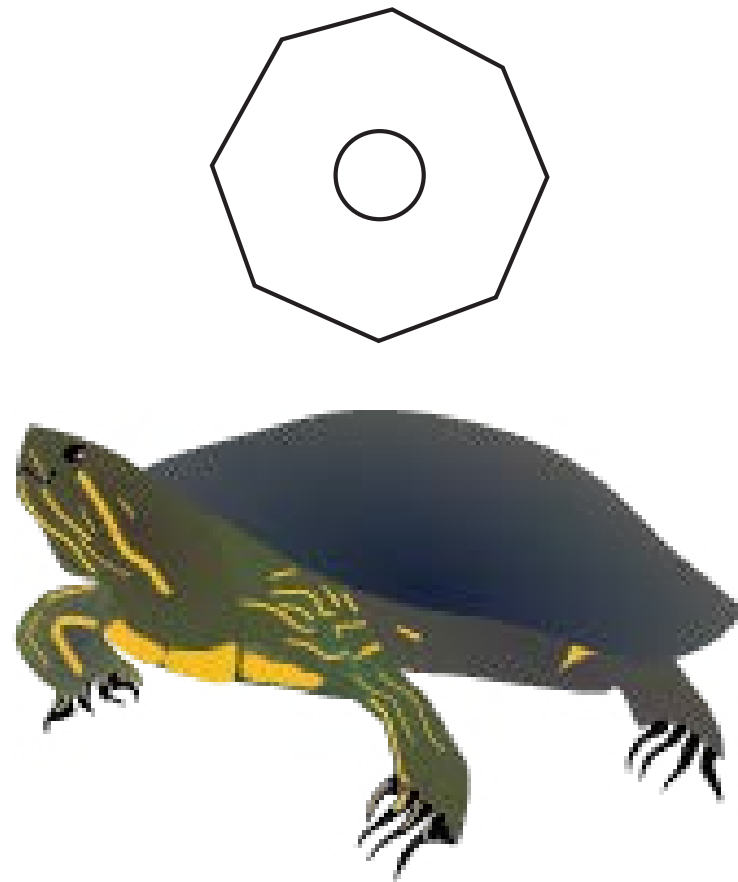
In a fast paced world, it is easy to get lost and feel detached. Detached from community, from nature, from reality. We live in a blurry haze of schedules, deadlines, bills, things. What if there was somewhere you could go that you could reconnect to what matters? What if there was a place where life slowed down so you could pay attention to history, community, family, and nature? One reason why our climate has gotten so warm and we experience such extreme droughts is because we hurry our rainwater out to the ocean, rather than allow it to percolate into the ground where it becomes available to plants. This is also true for why our stress levels are so high. Not because we don't clean and detain or infiltrate our storm water, but because we let life rush by us without stopping to observe and appreciate. Our minds and bodies are in a type of drought. At The Great Wall Community Park, we aim to rectify both the physical, metaphysical, and hydrological implication of our fast paced world. Using a whole systems approach, hugel berms, basins, swales, sediment basins, micro forests, community gardens, bio-digesting toilets, ADA amenities and places to gather, we connect all living creatures and the element that connects us all.



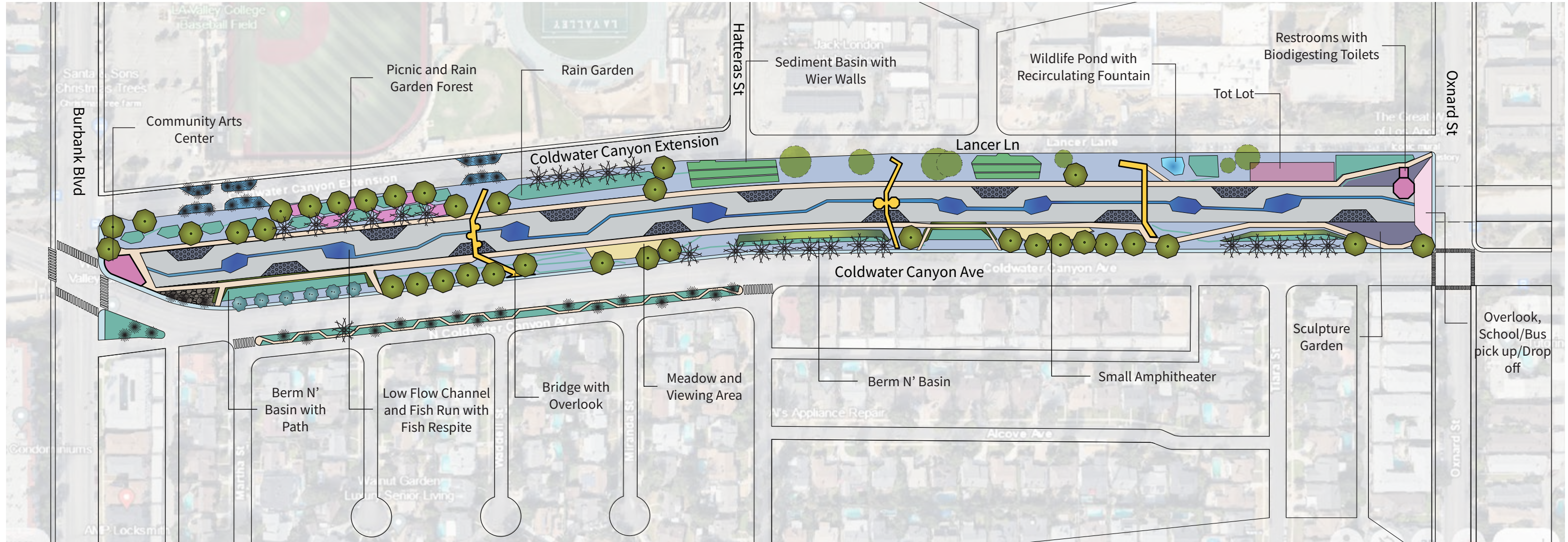
Inspiration







Inspiration



Slow the Flow



Keystone Species Trees and Large Shrubs

-  Evergreen Shrub
-  Deciduous Shrub
-  Evergreen Tree
-  Deciduous Tree



Quercus Agrifolia, Coast Live Oak, Evergreen



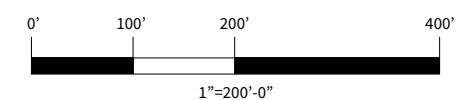
Salix Lasiolepis, Arroyo Willow, Deciduous



Prunus Illicifolia, Hollyleaf Cherry, Evergreen

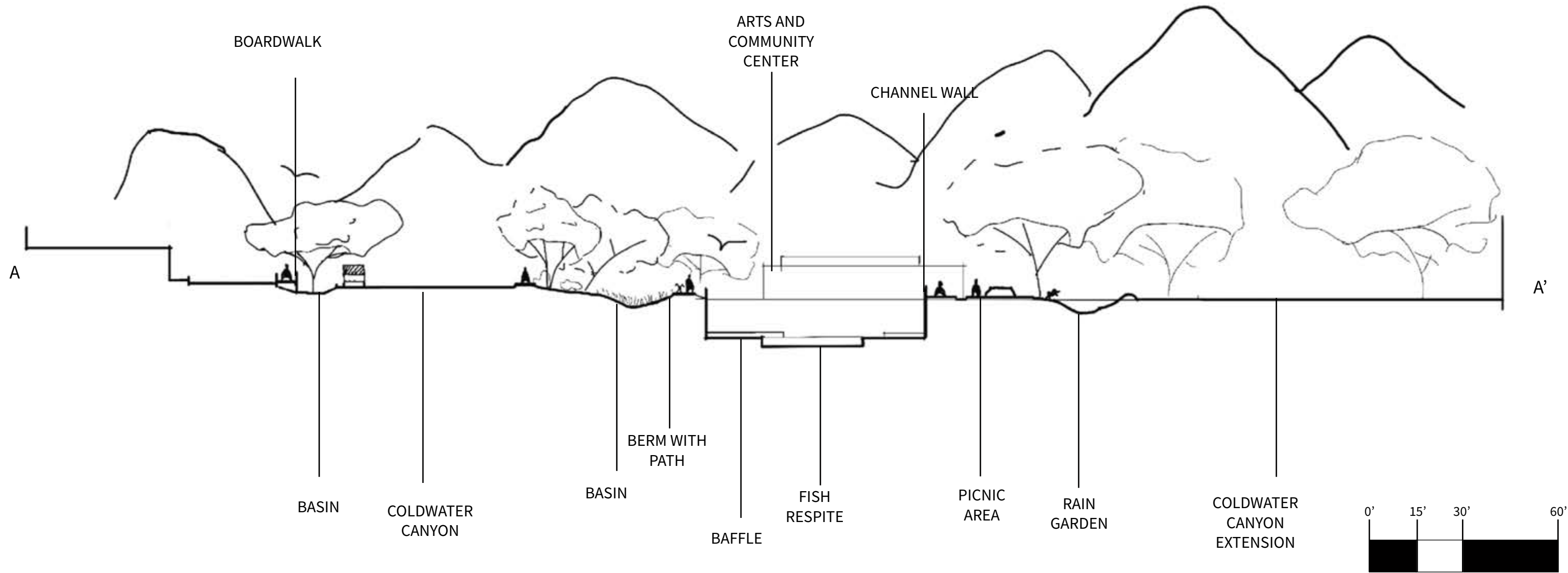
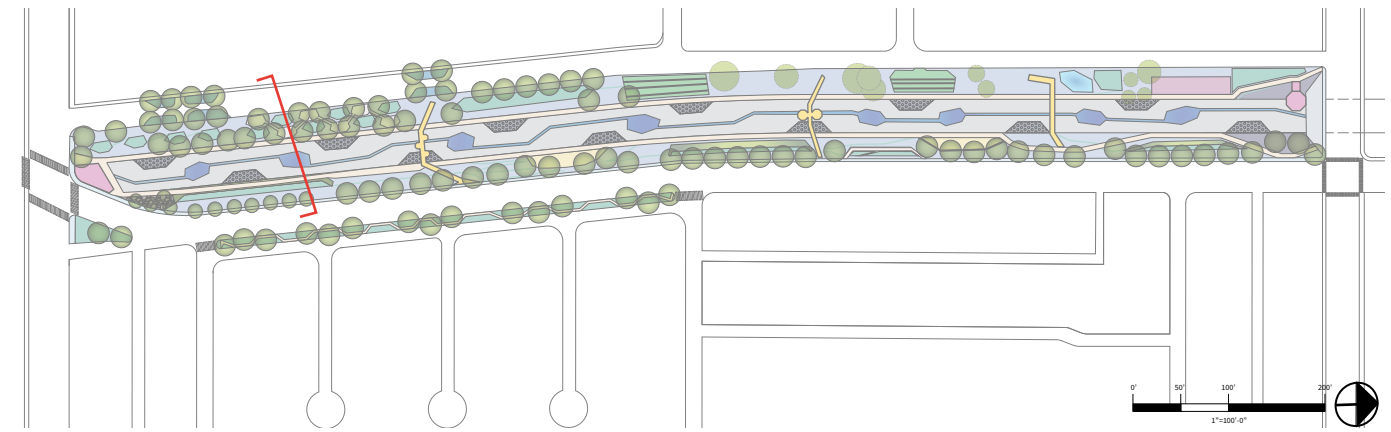


Quercus lobata, Valley Oak, Deciduous

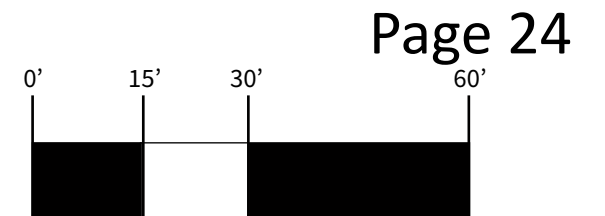
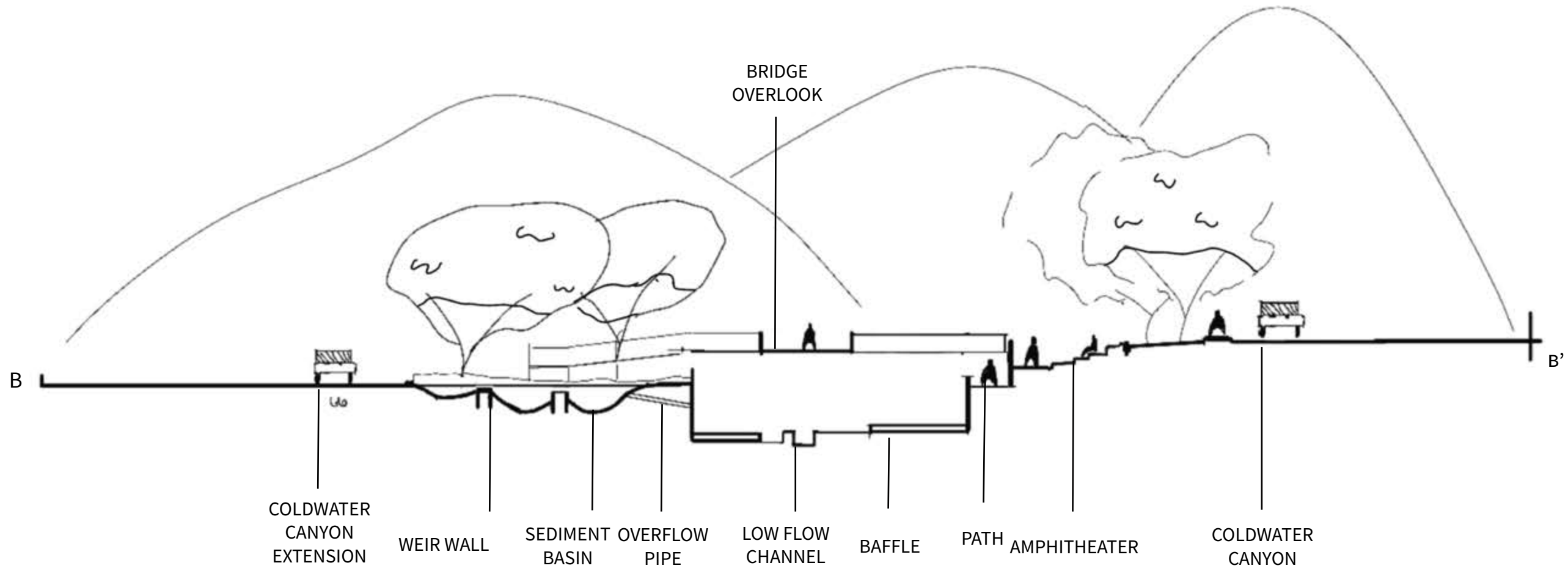
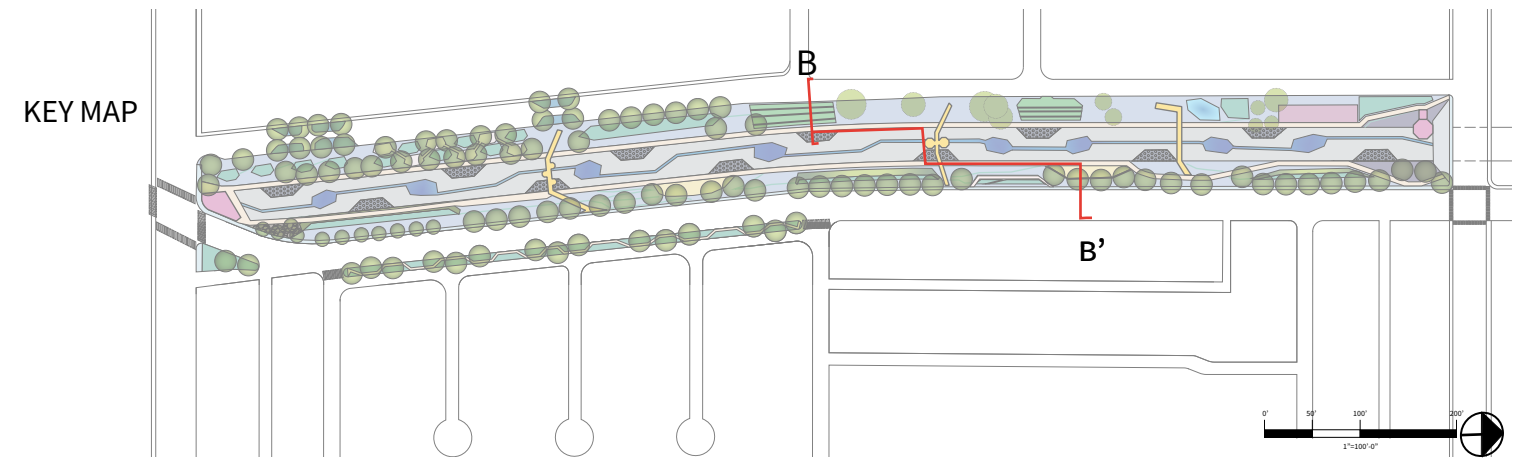


SITE SECTION 1

KEY MAP

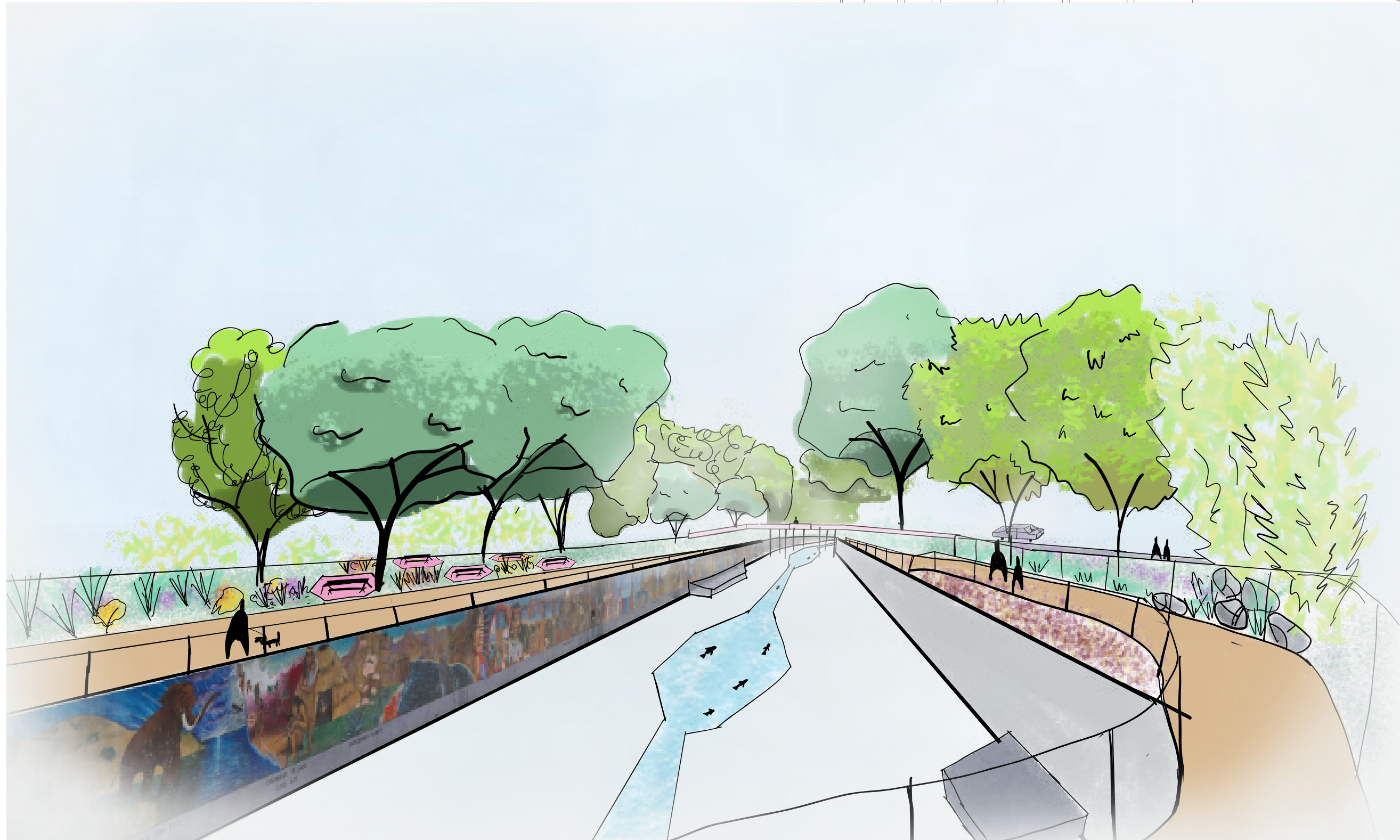
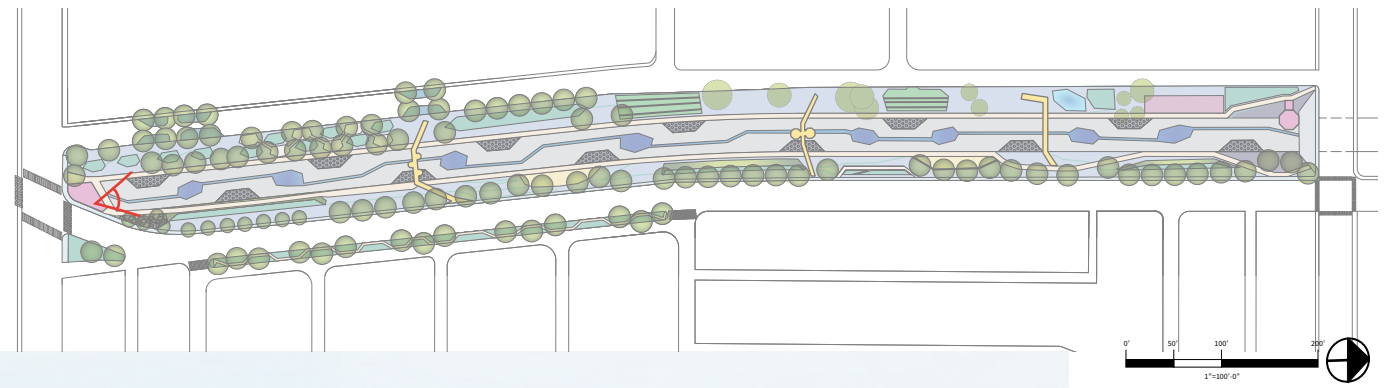


SITE SECTION 2



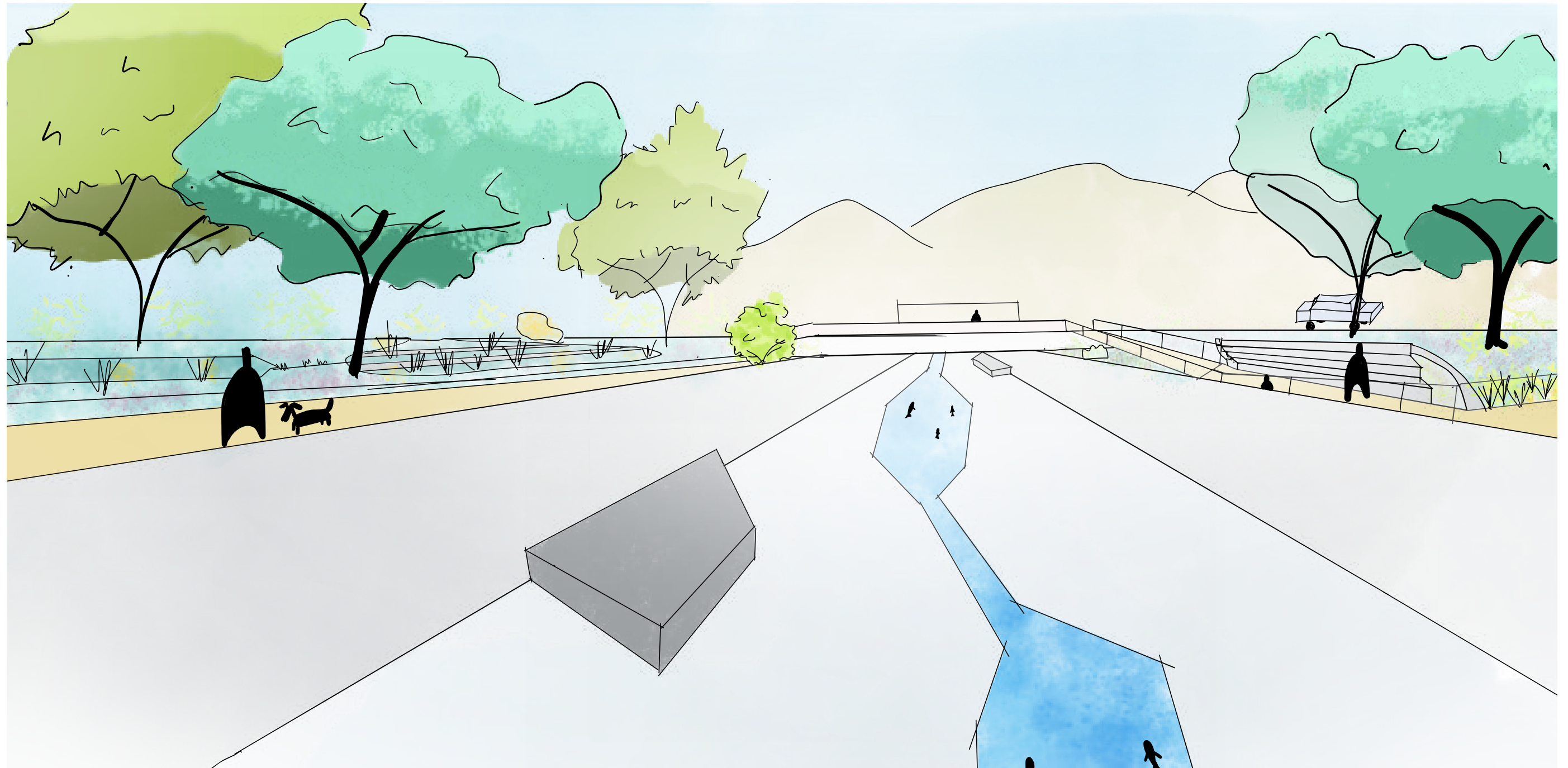
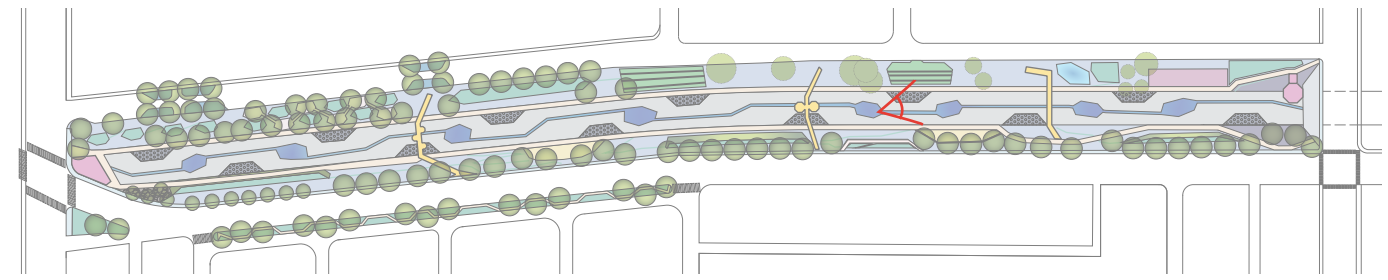
PERSPECTIVE 1

KEY MAP

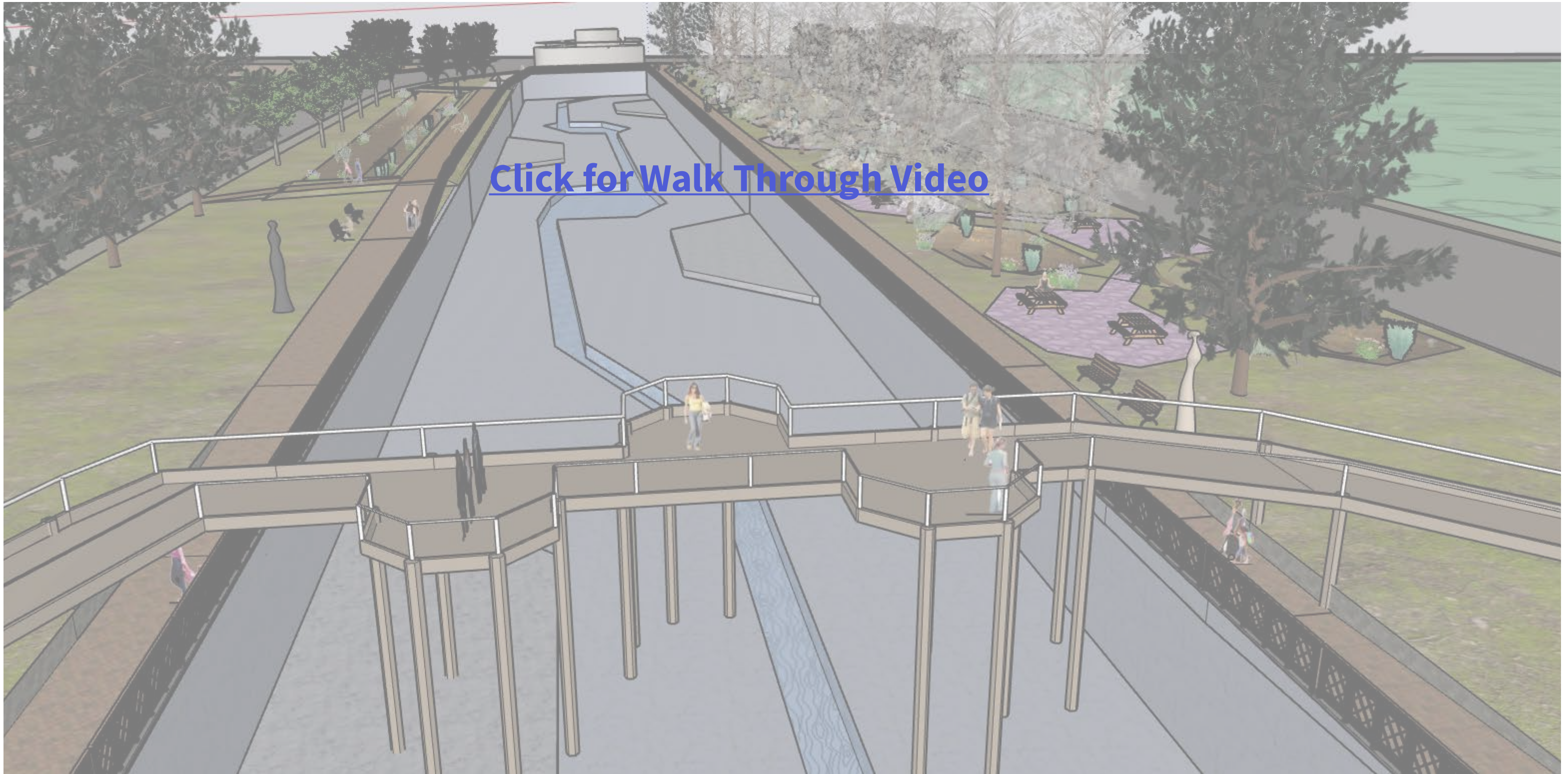


PERSPECTIVE 2

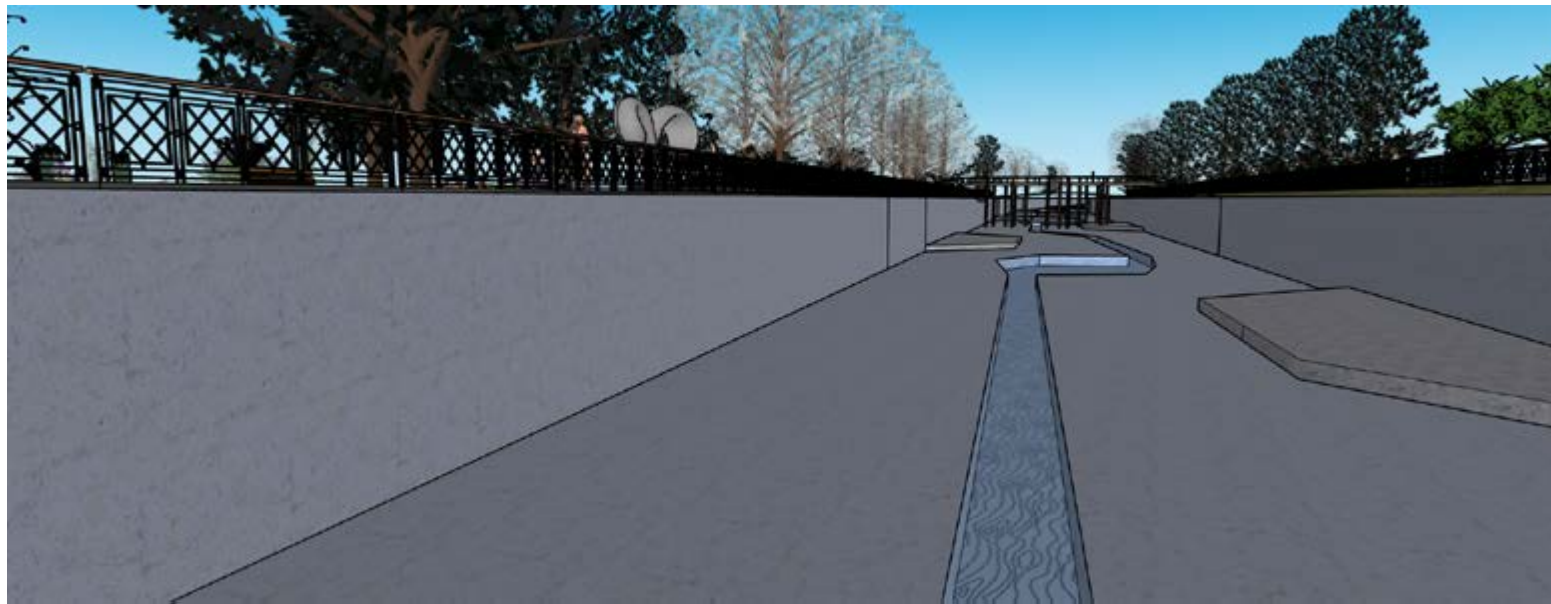
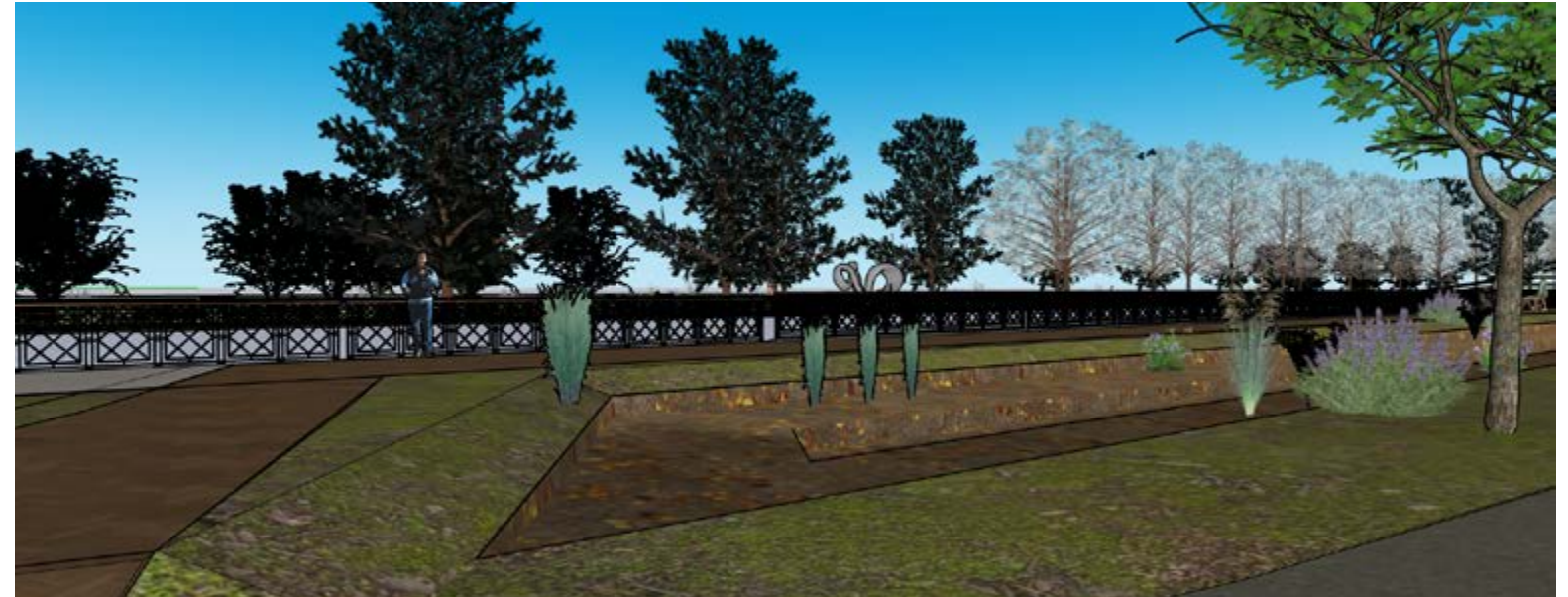
KEY MAP



WALKTHROUGH VIDEO



Model Photos



Nikki Rinehart