

The Great Wall of Los Angeles Park Master Plan

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

Summer 2025

Tate Tilles-Perrine

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OVERVIEW AND HISTORY

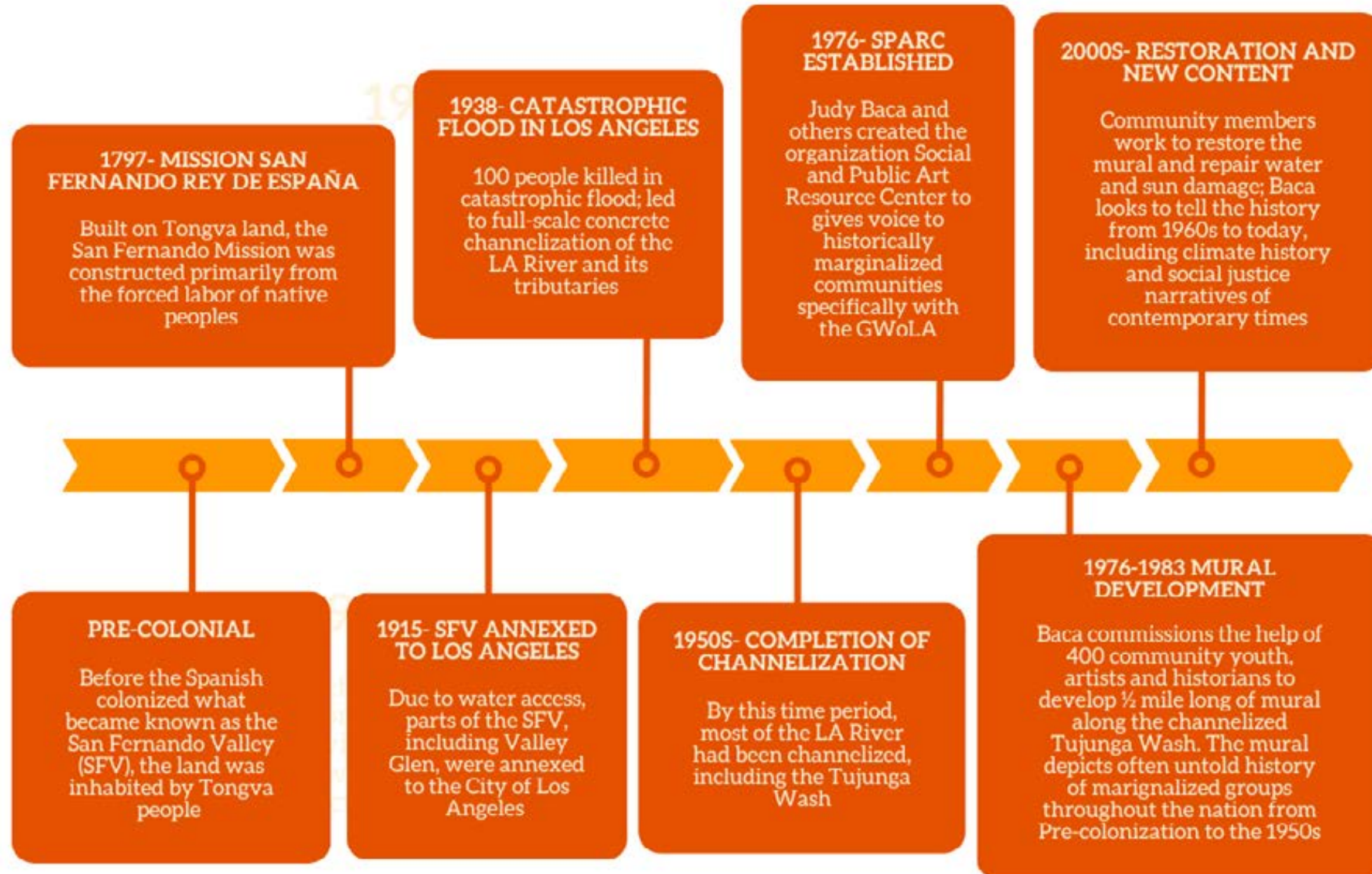
The Great Wall of Los Angeles spans the length of one half mile within the basin of a portion of the Tujunga Wash between Oxnard Street and Burbank Blvd in the city of Valley Glen, CA. Added to the National Registrar of Historic Places in 2017, the Great Wall of Los Angeles tells the too often overlooked history of marginalized groups in California, and nationally. Led by Judith Baca, 400 community members, youth, artists and historians worked together over a decades time to paint the extensive mural. Baca worked hard to unite community groups who otherwise had kept their distances between one another through stereotypes, racism and class differentiation. Through her work, and the establishment of SPARC (Social and Public Art Resource Center), she and others were able to help people move past cultural and racial differences and to see the value in accurately telling the history of these groups of people.

Initiated by SPARC and community groups in the late 1970s and early 1980s, the land surrounding the mural began to improve. With the planting of trees and shrubs, the development of bicycle and walking paths, and the desire to draw more and more people to view the mural, SPARC led the changing of the greenbelt into a community resource. In the 2000s, the parkland surrounding the mural gained further community involvement, tree restoration, and the vision for an even more sustainable landscape in the future.

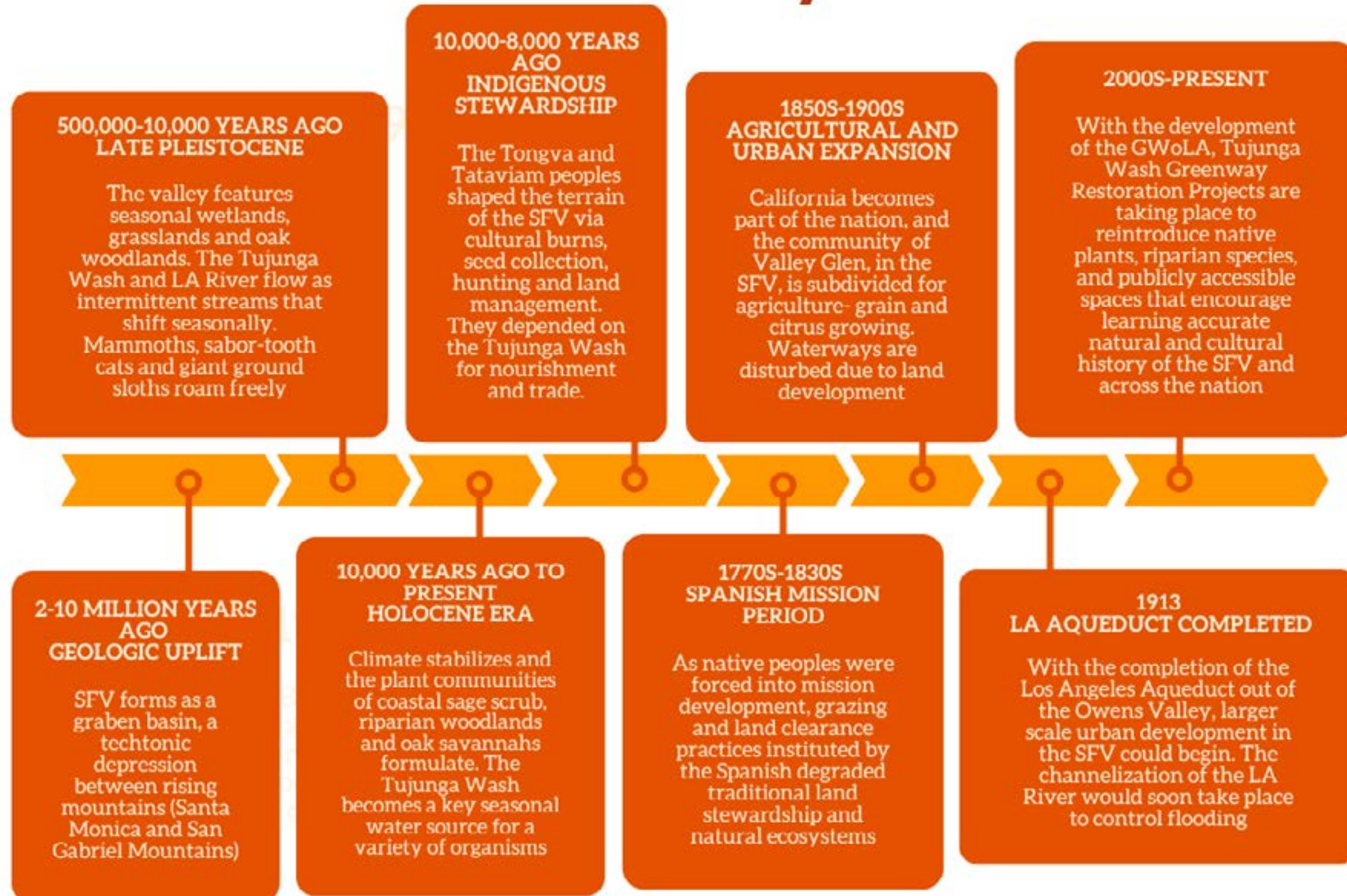
Since 2021, major upgrades were planned and funded under the LA River Master Plan and the Great Wall of Los Angeles Greenway Project, including stormwater management, walking/biking trails, shade trees, lighting, and interpretive signage. This redevelopment is ongoing.



Cultural History-GWoLA



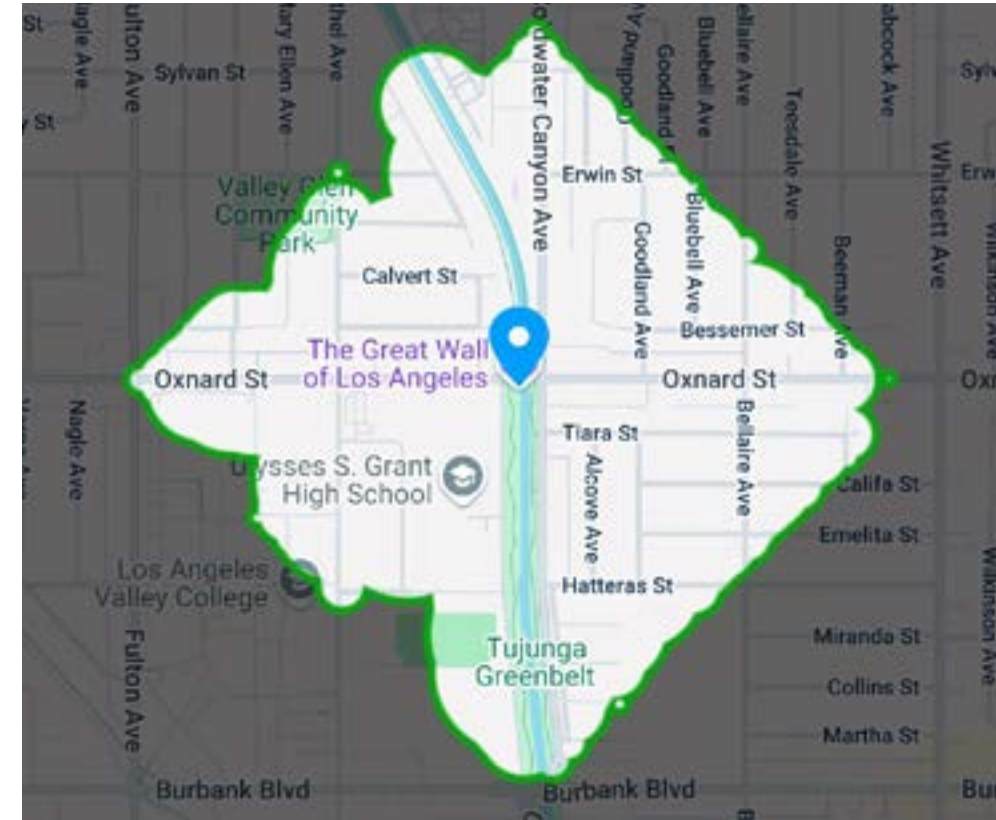
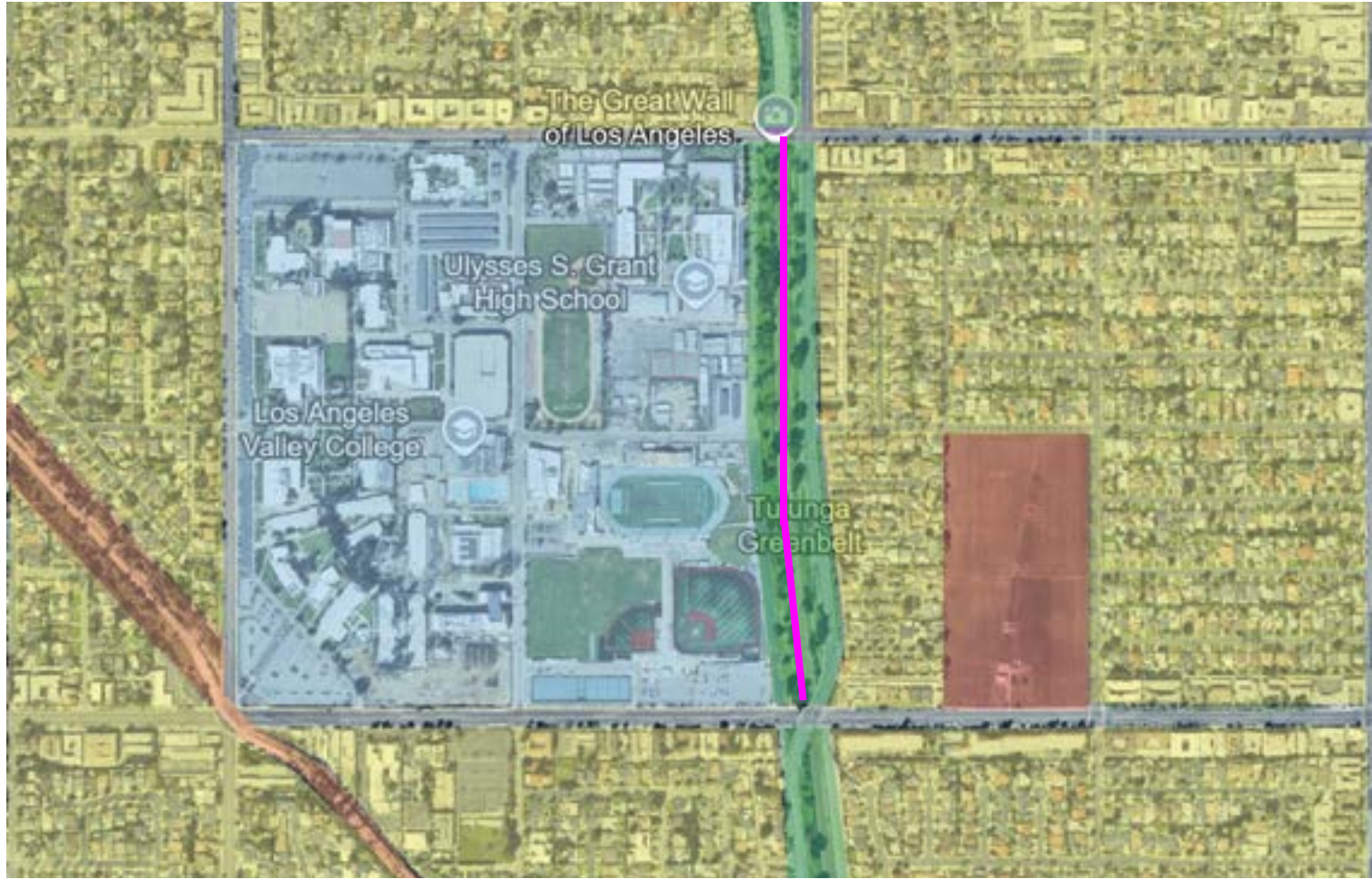
Natural History-GWoLA



SITE LOCATION



SITE CONTEXT



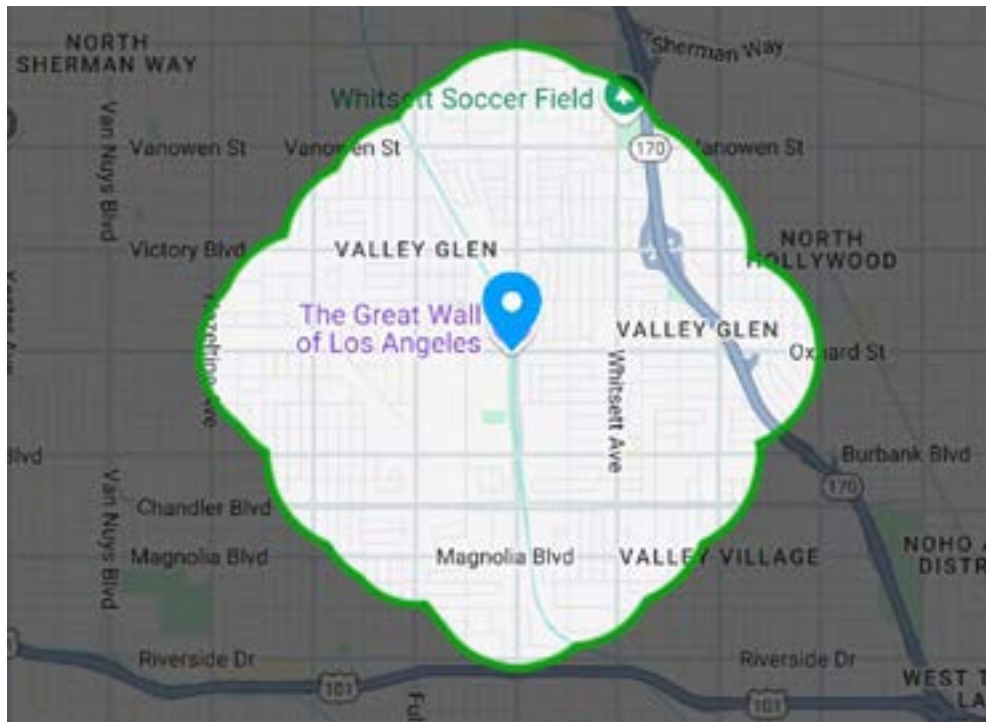
LEGEND

- Residential area
- Radio transmission site (KSPN)
- G line bus route w/ parallel bikeway
- Tujunga Greenbelt
- Educational facilities (Ulysses S. Grant High School/Los Angeles Valley College)
- Great Wall of Los Angeles
- Radial 10 minute distance from Great Wall of Los Angeles

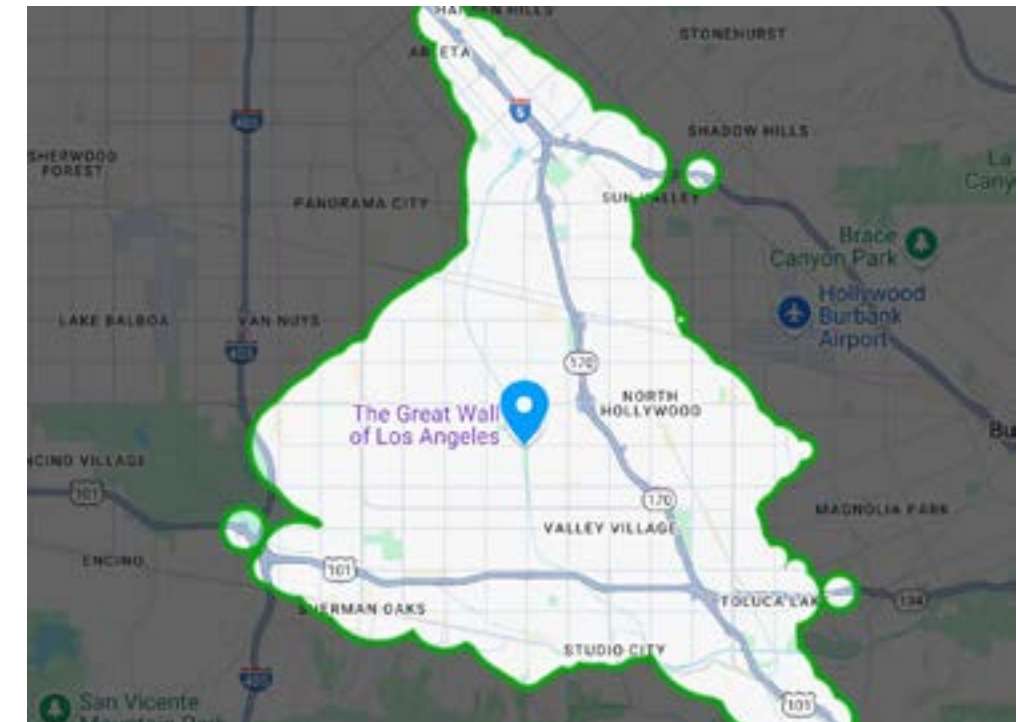
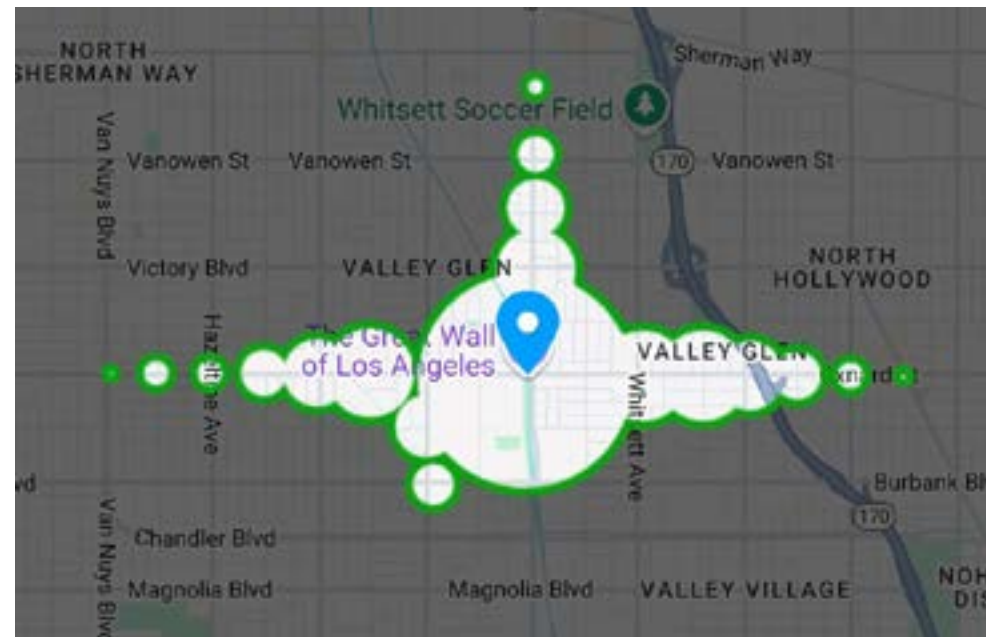
Within 10 minute walk from the Great Wall of Los Angeles

Within 10 minute bike from the Great Wall of Los Angeles

Within 10 minute drive from the Great Wall of Los Angeles

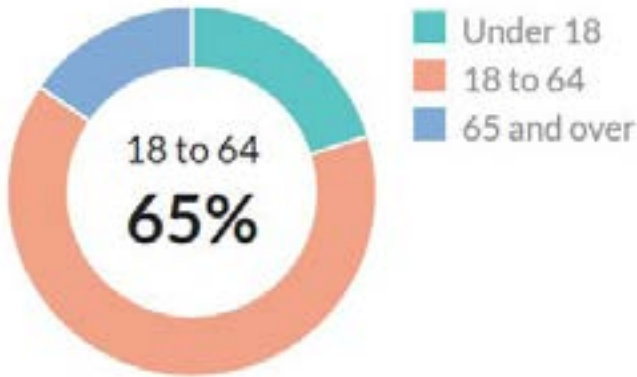


Within 10 minute bus from the Great Wall of Los Angeles

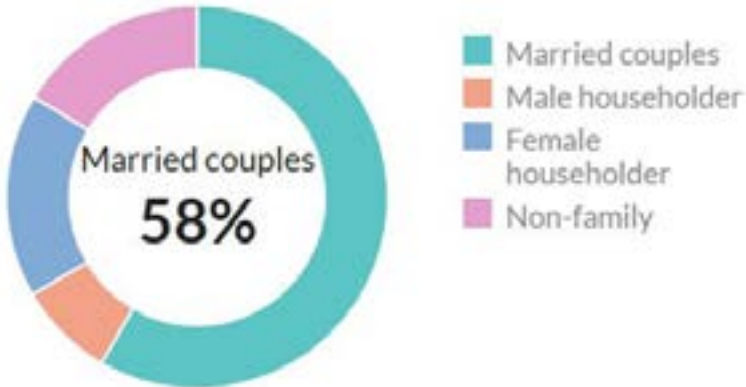


DEMOGRAPHIC DATA

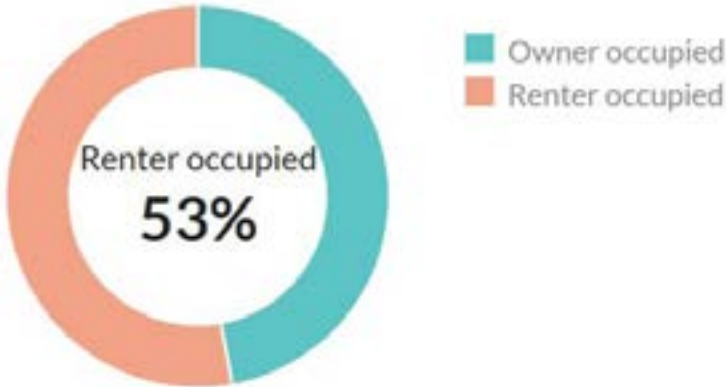
Population by age category



Population by household type



Ownership of occupied units



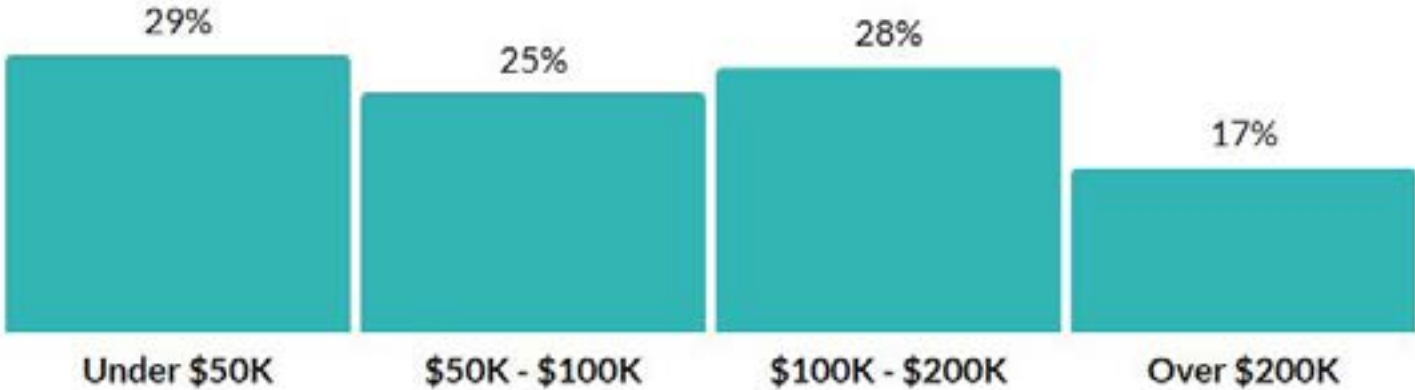
\$90,176

Median household income

a little higher than the amount in Los Angeles County: \$87,760

a little less than the amount in California: \$96,334

Household income



CENSUS DATA (2023)

- According to the Census Reporter, the population of the San Fernando Valley is 1,815,801
- The San Fernando Valley constitutes 438.1 square miles
- Racial demographics include:
 - Hispanic or Latino (any race): 42%
 - Non-Hispanic White: 39%
 - Asian: 11%
 - Black or African American: 4%
 - Two or more races: 4%
 - Other races: 1%
- 13.2% of the population is below the poverty line
- The mean commute time to work for people is 30.7 minutes; 67% of people who do so travel alone
- 38.2% of the population are foreign born; 46% of which are from Latin America

<https://censusreporter.org/profiles/06000US0603792785-san-fernando-valley-ccd-los-angeles-county-ca/>

SITE INVENTORY



Climate: Mediterranean

USDA Plant Hardiness Zone: 10a

Sunset Climate Zone: 18



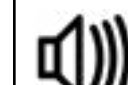




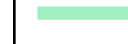
Sun direction (highest solar angle): in summer, the solar noon angle is $\sim 80^\circ$ above horizon (nearly overhead but slightly south); in winter, the solar noon angle is $\sim 33^\circ$ above horizon (low in the sky)

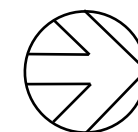
Prevailing winds: Southwest (especially in spring and summer)

Precipitation rate: annual average is 13"/year

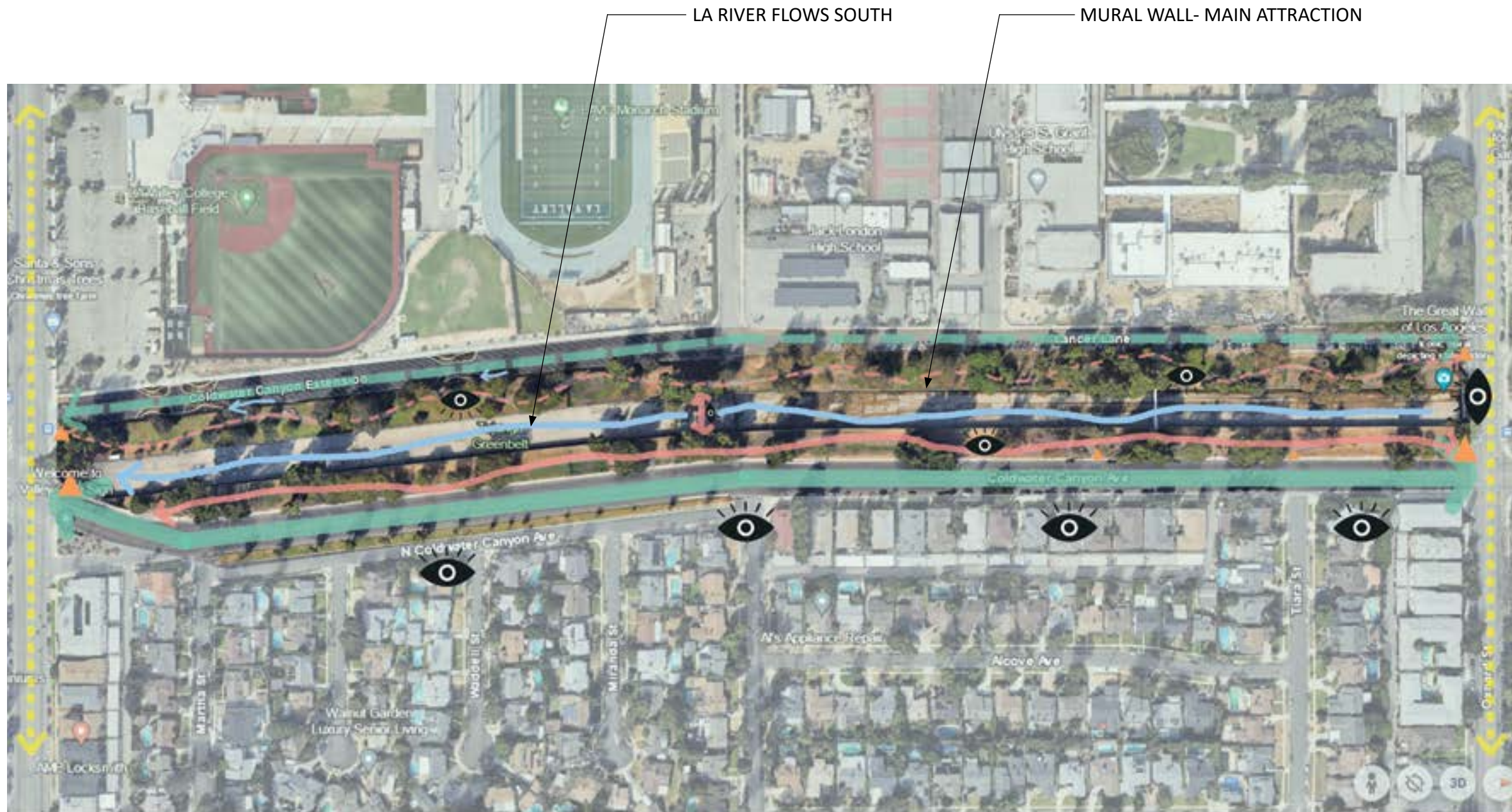
Noise: predominant noise comes from the intersections of Oxnard Street and N Coldwater Canyon Ave, and Burbank Blvd and N Coldwater Canyon Avenue

LEGEND

-  Sun Direction
-  Prevailing Winds
-  Noise
-  Street Parking
-  Bus Stop
-  LA River
-  Bioswale
-  Existing trees



SITE ANALYSIS



LA RIVER FLOWS SOUTH

MURAL WALL- MAIN ATTRACTION









Views: the main attraction to the park, which is viewable along Coldwater Canyon looking west, and Lancer Lane looking east, is the Great Wall of Los Angeles. .

Access Points: the main access points to the park are located at the intersections of Oxnard Street and Coldwater Canyon Ave, and Burbank Blvd and Coldwater Canyon Ave. There are smaller access points where Lancer Lane meets Oxnard Street and Burbank Blvd. There are two firelane access points along Coldwater Canyon Ave.

Vehicular Circulation: the primary vehicular circulation is along Coldwater Canyon Ave. The secondary circulation would be along both Oxnard Street and Burbank Blvd. The tertiary circulation is along Lancer Lane by the high school and college.

Pedestrian Circulation: there are two pathways in the park, one primary pathway that is paved, and one secondary pathway that is made of DG. Both run parallel to the LA River.

LEGEND

-  Views
-  Access Points
-  Drainage
-  Primary Pedestrian Circulation
-  Secondary Ped. Circulation
-  Primary Vehicular Circulation
-  Secondary Vehicular Circulation
-  Tertiary Vehicular Circulation

SITE ANALYSIS- FLOODING

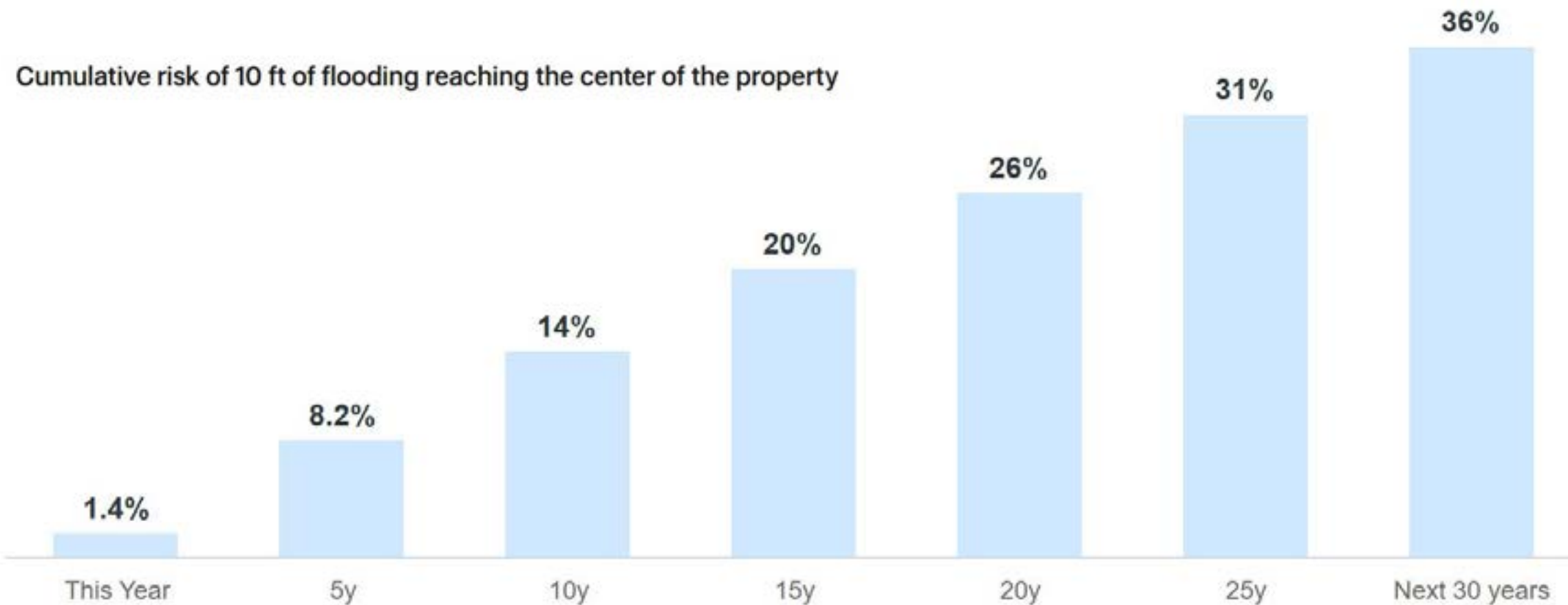
Risk of Flooding Over Next 30 Years

This year	Next 15 years	Next 30 years
1.4%	20%	36%

Over the next 30 years, this property has a **36%** chance of **10 ft** of flood water reaching the center of the property. The Flood Factor is higher than 99% of properties in the city of Los Angeles.

Depth of flooding:

Cumulative risk of 10 ft of flooding reaching the center of the property



The risk of flooding on this site is greater than in other parts of Los Angeles, due to immediate proximity to the LA River. While the percentage of water reaching a height of 10' may be minimal, it is interesting to see that in the next 30 years, that the percentage will grow. This is due to the extremity of weather events with the futher onset of climate change by 2055. When it will rain, it will pour and create a greater flood risk to the area than current times.



https://firststreet.org/property/12900-oxnard-street-van-nuys-ca-91401/610030563_fsid/0?mapbox_flag=true

SITE ANALYSIS- HEAT/AIR QUALITY

Major HEAT FACTOR

Greater Valley Glen has major risk from heat. This is due to "feels like" temperatures increasing, and because 100% of homes in Greater Valley Glen have a major Heat Factor®.



Minimal Minor Moderate Major Severe Extreme

Major AIR FACTOR

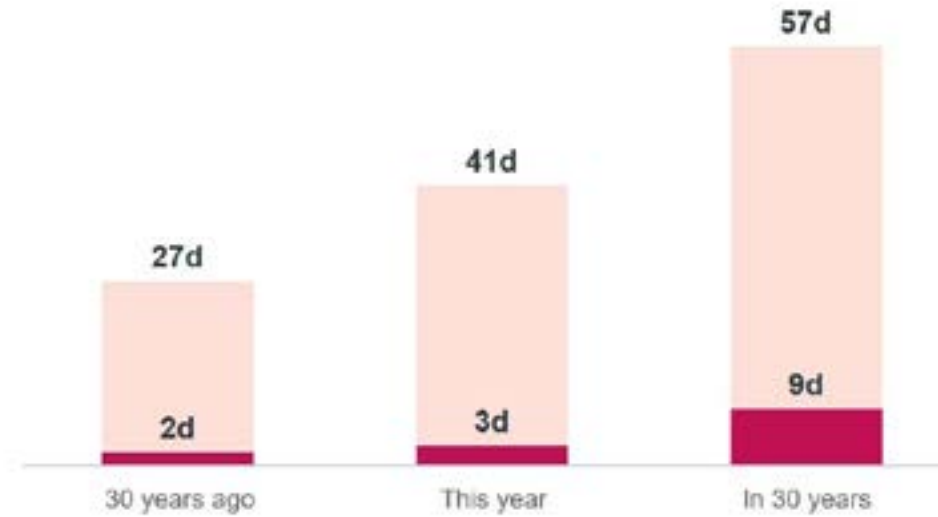
Greater Valley Glen has a major risk from air quality. The number of poor air quality days with an Air Quality Index AQI > 100 in Greater Valley Glen will be higher in 30 years. Based on the the number of poor air quality days, Greater Valley Glen has better air quality than 77% of neighborhoods in California.



Minor Moderate Major Severe Extreme

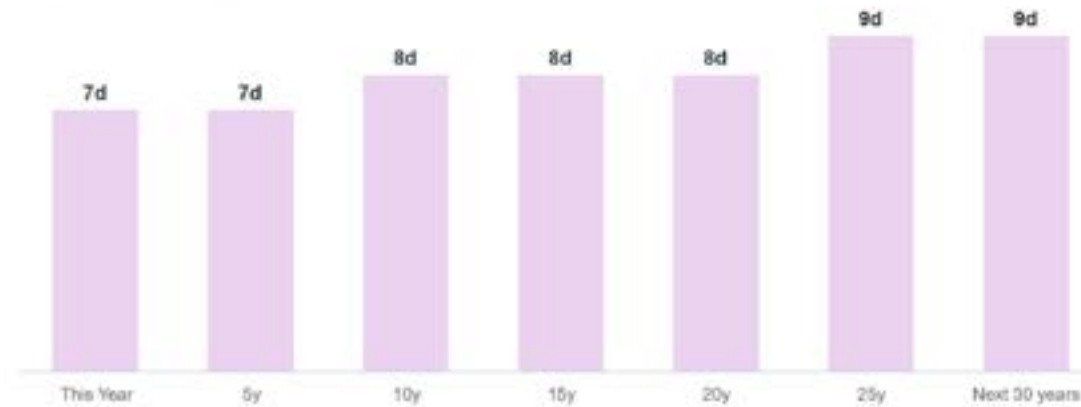
Number of Days per Year

Health caution: 90-100°F Dangerous: >100+°F



Over the next 30 years, in a bad year this area will experience a 28.6% increase in the number of poor air quality days where the Air Quality Index (AQI) exceeds 100.

Number of poor air quality days



This level of exposure may cause coughing, difficulty breathing, inflammation to airways, worsen lung diseases, or asthma attacks.

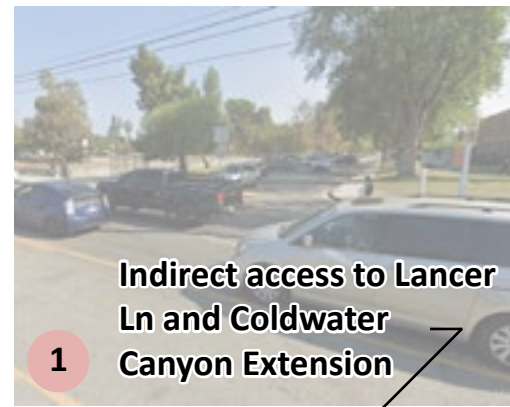
Both heat factor and air factor will be considered major in the coming decades. Notably the number of days that are characterized by dangerous heat will triple in the next 30 years.

The number of days categorized with poor air quality will increase over the next 30 years. With continued housing development in the San Fernando Valley, the deterioration of air quality is imminent.



https://firststreet.org/property/12900-oxnard-street-van-nuys-ca-91401/610030563_fsid/0?mapbox_flag=true

SITE CONSTRAINTS



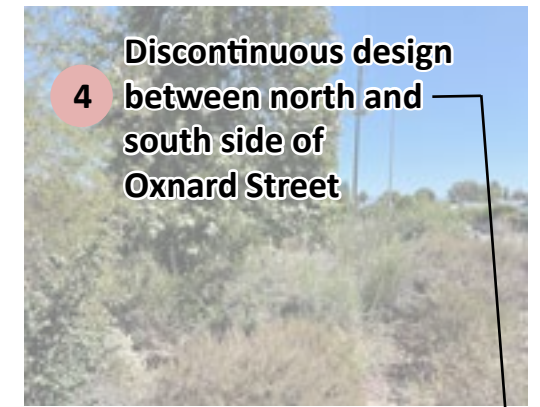
1 Indirect access to Lancer Ln and Coldwater Canyon Extension



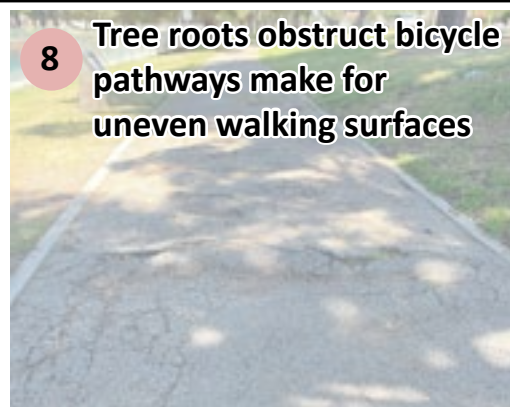
2 Limited accessible seating in the park



3 Pockets of the park are unshaded/uncovered—including nearest bus stops



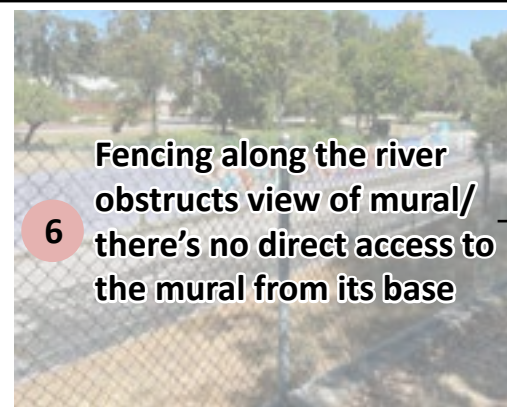
4 Discontinuous design between north and south side of Oxnard Street



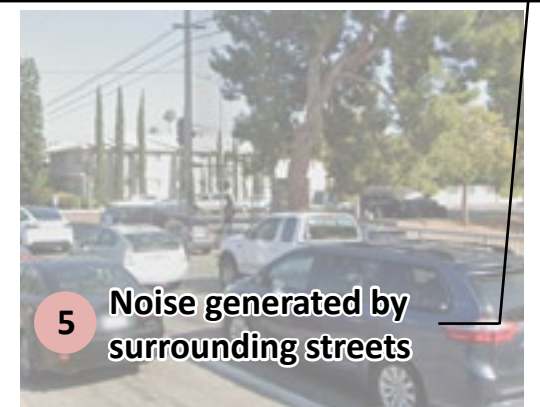
8 Tree roots obstruct bicycle pathways make for uneven walking surfaces



7 LA River is channelized with concrete



6 Fencing along the river obstructs view of mural/there's no direct access to the mural from its base

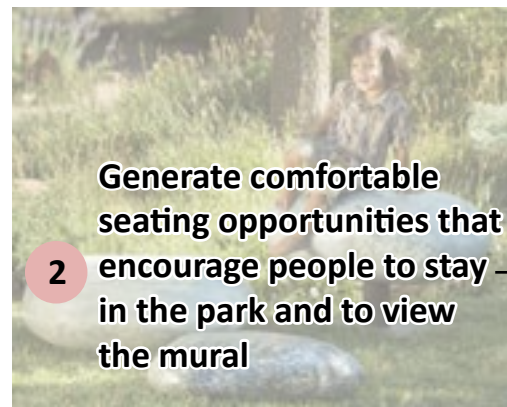


5 Noise generated by surrounding streets

SITE OPPORTUNITIES



1 Improve wayfinding signage to facilitate ease with vehicular and pedestrian access



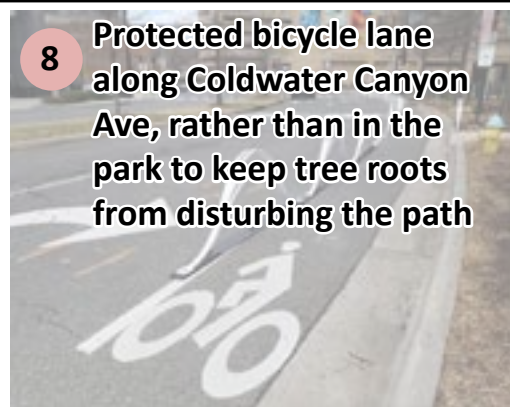
2 Generate comfortable seating opportunities that encourage people to stay in the park and to view the mural



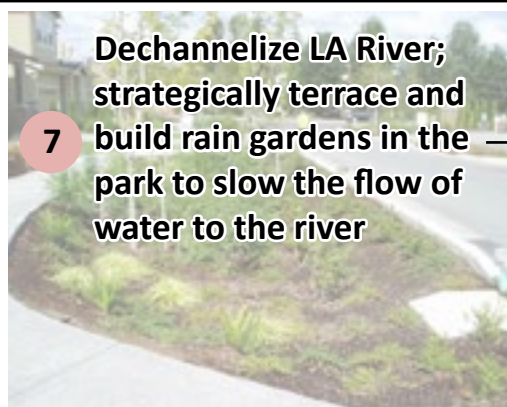
3 Establish greater tree canopy coverage or shade structures, including over the nearest bus stops



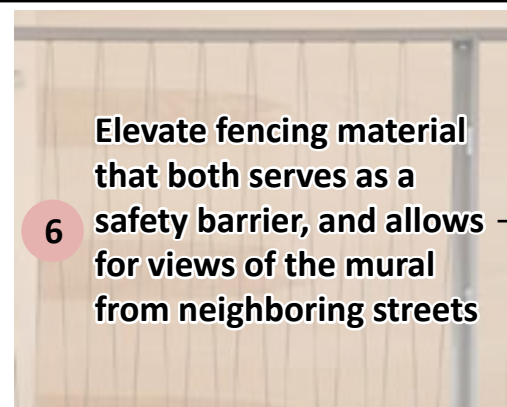
4 Development of wildlife corridor that reflects plant palette on north side of Oxnard Street



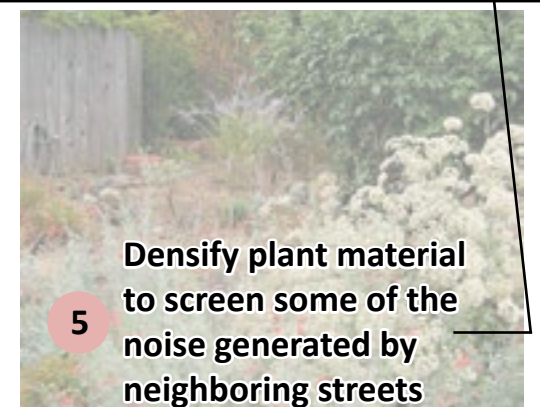
8 Protected bicycle lane along Coldwater Canyon Ave, rather than in the park to keep tree roots from disturbing the path



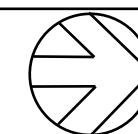
7 Dechannelize LA River; strategically terrace and build rain gardens in the park to slow the flow of water to the river



6 Elevate fencing material that both serves as a safety barrier, and allows for views of the mural from neighboring streets

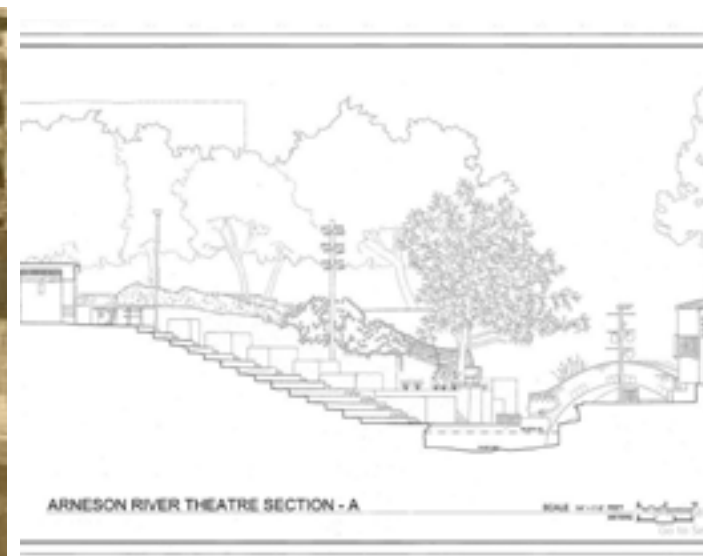
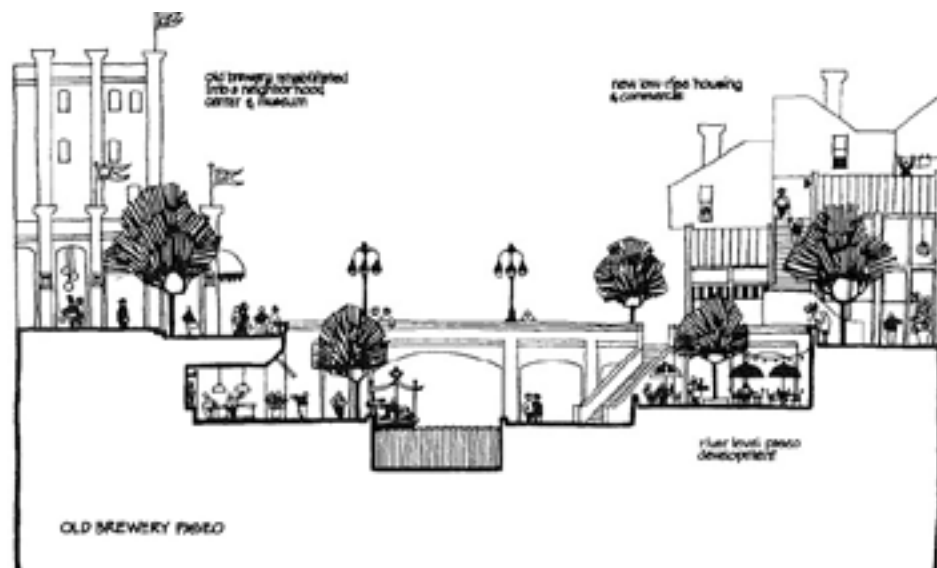
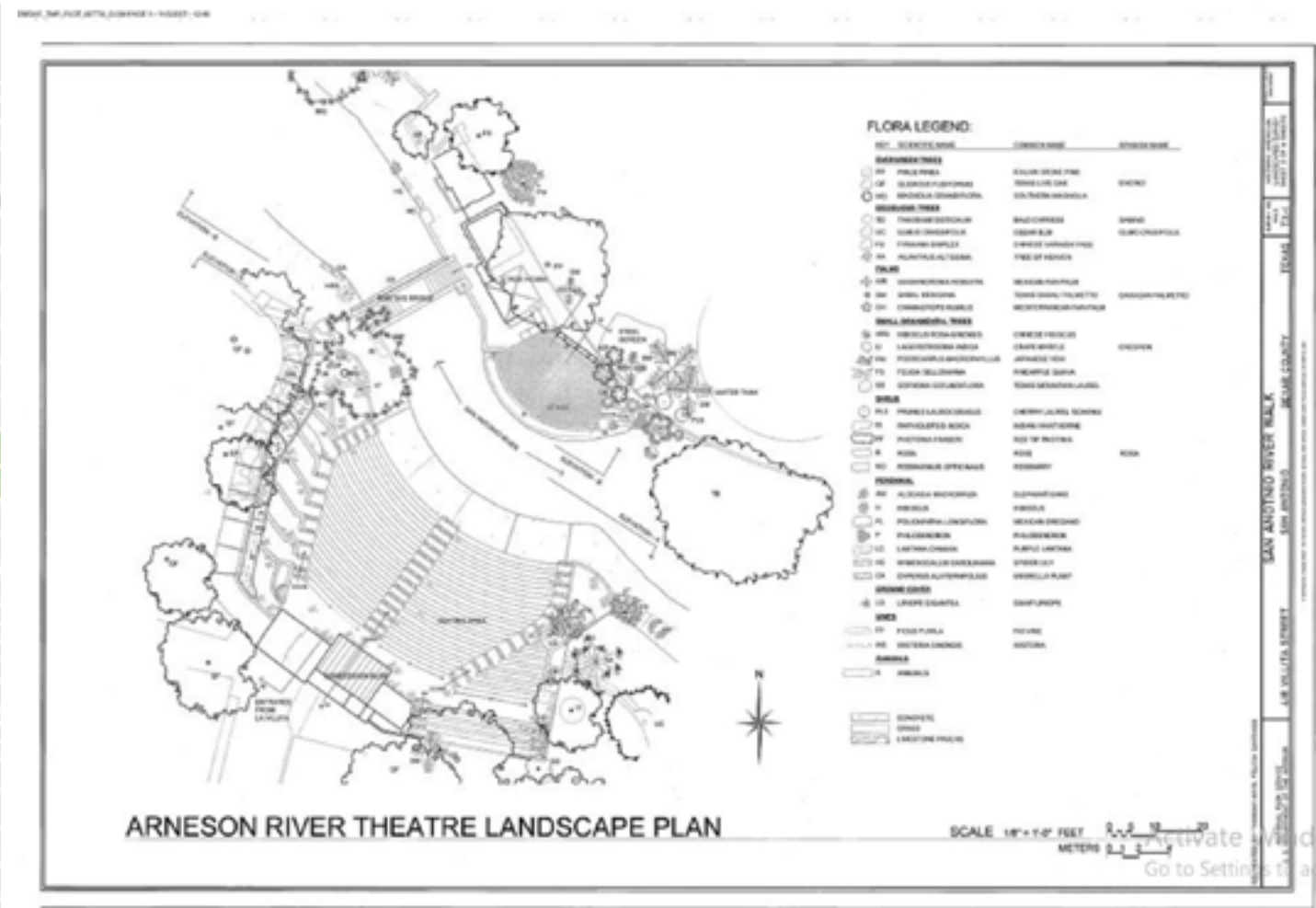


5 Densify plant material to screen some of the noise generated by neighboring streets



0' 150' 300' 600'

PRECEDENT CASE STUDY 1: SAN ANTONIO RIVER WALK



The San Antonio River Walk is a 15 mile long stretch of river that cuts through the heart of downtown San Antonio. The origins of its development trace back to the 1920s when a large rain event led to a massive flood of the San Antonio River. As a result, two major flood control methods were instituted to maintain water levels throughout the River Walk- bypass tunnels and detention basins. Both of these methods divert and retain stormwater that otherwise engorge the San Antonio River. These engineering methods allow the “sunken gardens” of the San Antonio River walk to flourish economically, socially, and ecologically.

Location: San Antonio, Texas; Bexar County; along the San Antonio River

Stretch: 15 miles divided into three core sections (Museum Reach, Downtown Reach, Mission Reach)

Architect/Landscape Architect: Robert H. H. Hugman (original architect); Ford Powell & Carson + HDR, LPA, Inc., and RVK Architecture (among others)

Amenities: riverfront shops, retail offerings, hotels, restaurants, Arneson River Theater, gondola and boat rides, missions (including The Alamo), museums, biking/walking/hiking trails, wetlands and public art

Successes:

- **Depth:** The River Walk is sunken 15-20' below street level in the Downtown Reach, away from vehicular activity
- **Income:** The River Walk generates economic gains with its many offered amenities/ attractions that bring visitors to its riverfront
- **Beauty:** The views shift as one walks/floats/hikes down the river from theater spaces to natural beauty, interesting architecture and frequent users of the space
- **Ecology:** In recent decades, more emphasis has been placed on ecological restoration of the river; hundreds of acres of riparian habitat have reconstituted the river banks attracting local wildlife and restoring ecosystems

Areas for Improvement:

- **Disjointed:** While in recent decades there has been concerted efforts towards restoring the ecology along the San Antonio River, the Downtown Reach remains to have a concrete-lined bottom
- **Decorative barriers:** public art and theater spaces have not always been afforded to this project; before the Museum Reach was developed, little money was available for decor
- **Colonial POV:** This project largely celebrates colonial history, with the Spanish Colonial Revivalist architecture of many of the Downtown Reach buildings, and the inclusion of the Mission Reach

PRECEDENT CASE STUDY 2: LA RIVER GREENWAY TRAIL- STUDIO CITY



Location: Studio City, CA; San Fernando Valley; between Whitsett Avenue and Coldwater Canyon on the north side of the river bank

Stretch: 1/2 mile long; bridges a gap between two existing sections that form 5 miles of continuous trailway

Landscape Architect(s)/Partners: Studio MLA (formerly Mia Lehrer + Associates), Land IQ, Community Conservation Solutions (CCS), VCA Engineers, INC., and Owen Gabbert Designs

Amenities: native plants, educational signage, dirt walking trails, swales, multiple access points, and protective fencing along river's edge

Successes:

- **Corridor:** the trail connects established trails, creating a continuous planted trail system that is unfractured by development. This generates an ecological corridor for wildlife
- **Enrichment:** the trail enriches the San Fernando Valley with outdoor activities and natural beauty. The San Fernando Valley is considered park poor, with only 1 acre of parkland/1000 residents (lower than the national average), this stretch brings more opportunity for residents and visitors to experience the natural ecology of the region
- **Stormwater Management:** the use of native plant species, swales and land formation has helped to slow the flow of water into the LA River. These important features help to clean water that ultimately joins the river

Areas for Improvement:

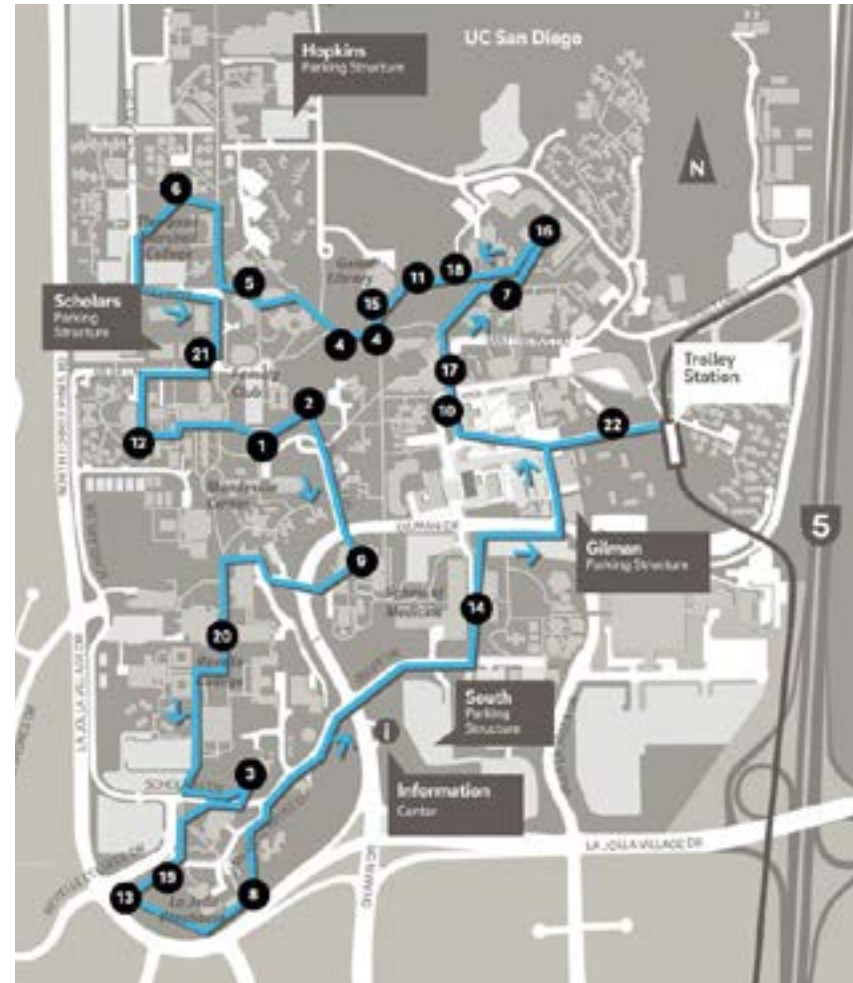
- **Mirrored trailway:** there is no formal trailway system on the southern side of the river in the Zev Yaroslavsky stretch of greenway
- **Bi-lingual signage:** the signage is written in english, which doesn't cater to the large number of spanish speakers who inhabit the San Fernando Valley
- **Bridging sides:** there is no pedestrian bridge to get to the river's south side. One must exit the trail entirely, and walk along a city street to get to the otherside. The need to exit the trail removes people from the lived ecological experience, and reintroduces noisy urban life



The LA River Greenway Trail in Studio City is also known as Zev Yaroslavsky Greenway Trail, named after Zev Yaroslavsky, a former City Council member (5th District) and County Supervisor (3rd District) who was a committed civil servant dedicated to environmental stewardship and cultural investment. The trail bridges the gap between existing portions of the LA River Greeway, from Whitsett Avenue to Coldwater Canyon, and creates a continuous five mile long stretch, which is the longest trail stretch in the San Fernando Valley. This stretch is committed to the establishment of native habitat for plants, animals and insects alike. It's also rich in educational signage that helps its users understand important ecological history of Los Angeles.

PRECEDENT CASE STUDY 3: STUART COLLECTION AT UCSD

- 1 Niki de Saint Phalle
Sun God, 1983
- 2 Robert Irwin
Two Running Violet V Forms, 1983
- 3 Richard Fleischner
La Jolla Project, 1984
- 4 Terry Allen
Trees, 1986
- 5 Nam June Paik
Something Pacific, 1986
- 6 Ian Hamilton Finlay
LUNDA, 1987
- 7 Bruce Nauman
Vices and Virtues, 1988
- 8 William Wegman
La Jolla Vista View, 1988
- 9 Jackie Ferrara
Terrace, 1991
- 10 Michael Asher
Untitled, 1991
- 11 Alexis Smith
Snake Path, 1992
- 12 Jenny Holzer
Green Table, 1992
- 13 Elizabeth Murray
Red Shoe, 1996
- 14 Kiki Smith
Standing, 1998
- 15 John Baldessari
READ/WRITE/THINK/DREAM, 2001
- 16 Tim Hawkinson
Bear, 2005
- 17 Barbara Kruger
Another, 2008
- 18 Do Ho Suh
Fallen Star, 2012
- 19 John Luther Adams
The Wind Garden, 2017
- 20 Mark Bradford
What Hath God Wrought, 2018
- 21 Alexis Smith
Some Old Paradise, 2021
- 22 Ann Hamilton
KAHNOP - TO TELL A STORY, 2023



The Stuart Collection at UCSD is a collection of 22 permanent art installations that span across the university's campus. Beginning with its first work in 1983, Niki de Saint Phalle's Sun God, the Stuart Collection at UCSD has become world-renown not just the pieces themselves, but how intricately the artworks are tied to the landscapes throughout the campus. Many of the pieces were built on-site, given the specific environmental conditions around which they were developed. Many art pieces are reflective of the school's research institutional values and those of contemporary art. Many of the pieces seem to defy immeasurable engineering required for their longevity, and continue to inspire wonder to all.

Location: UC San Diego campus; 9500 Gilman Drive, La Jolla, CA 92093

Stretch: the works span the 1200 acres of land owned by UCSD

Landscape Architect(s)/Partners: while landscape architects are not considered artists in the Stuart Collection, their work greatly influences the development of some of the art pieces; Spurlock Landscape Architects and Land Studio were integral to the landscape architecture at UCSD

Amenities: interactive art, walkable pathways between pieces, accessible auditory engagements, proximal to restaurants and restrooms- stops along the way between works

Successes:

- **Use of land:** the art pieces are spread across the campus which leads the viewer to fully experience the property; this gives context to the changing microclimates of the 1200 acres, and how the artists used the unique landscape to influence their work
- **Attraction:** the art serves as inspiration for students, faculty and visitors alike. The world-renown works seek to enhance public life by celebrating culture, knowledge, and solutions to complex challenges experienced in the natural world
- **Engagement:** many of the pieces inspire thought, sensoral stimulation and physical use of the work itself. Works like Robert Fleischner's La Jolla Project, encourages people to sit, breathe and enjoy the gravity-defying slab-like granite pillars

Areas for Improvement:

- **Span of art:** because the works span the entire campus, it can be a lengthy visit (in distance and time) to explore each work. The campus is also very topographically diverse, so seeing all the art may not be accessible to all
- **Eucalyptus:** notably the campus was once a eucalyptus grove, many of which trees still exist on campus; I'd like to see the incorporation of more native plant species, and cultural heritage unique to what's now known as La Jolla, CA that can be celebrated in the work of incoming installations

DESIGN ALTERNATIVE 1: BREATH

This design alternative emphasizes the importance of breath when traveling through the space. With dense plantings of native plants, especially grasses that catch the wind and trees whose leaves simmer with passing gusts, this plan focuses on air quality and beauty. It also has three bridges that allow for movement, and platforms where people can pause to view the mural.

LEGEND

- Existing trees
- New native trees
- Native meadows and grassy ground covers
- Rain gardens
- Buildings
- Pedestrian circulation/ wood platform seating



DESIGN ALTERNATIVE 2: FOOD FOR ALL

This design alternative emphasizes food for all with its many growing spaces. There are places to grow fruits and vegetables, as well as native plants that provide important food for local wildlife. There are also ample seating areas that focus on gathering people together to enjoy one another, as well as chow down on the mural's deep content.

LEGEND












- Existing trees
- Fruiting trees for humans and wildlife
- Vegetable growing spaces
- Buildings
- Pedestrian circulation
- Native ground covers and shrubs
- Rain gardens



DESIGN ALTERNATIVE 3: REVERBERATION

This design alternative celebrates cultural gathering spaces, public art, and bicycle and pedestrian safety. It invites people to spend time in the park, both via passive and active programs. This design is high budget for its hardscape transformation and large wide bridge.

LEGEND

 Food giving trees (humans and wildlife)	 Rain gardens
 Existing trees to remain	 Native ground covers and shrubs
 Public art space	 Bicycle path with bordered bollards
 Covered cultural space	 Wide bridge with shade covering and look out points
 Buildings with adjacent landings	 Seating areas
 Pedestrian circulation	



MASTER PLAN CONCEPT STATEMENT

The master plan **honors the miracle of breath**: the simple movement that unifies awareness and the automatic. The chosen design does so by densifying plant material to enhance air quality. Evergreen native trees, life-giving native shrubs, and breath-mimicking native grasses filter particulates in the air and lessen the impact of surrounding vehicular use. Layered in the landscape, the varieties of plant material, in their heights and sizes, make for easier breathing throughout the park.

The plan incorporates many active spaces that give visitors the chance to observe their breath pulsing at varying rates. Enhanced pedestrian circulation, and the inclusion of a protected bicycle lane along Coldwater Canyon Avenue allow users to have a visceral connection to their breath. There is even space for people to grow fruits and vegetables in the park, a lovely active past time for all community members to enjoy.

There are multiple instances of shaded spaces throughout the plan that designate cultural celebration zones. These zones honor the rich cultural diversity of the San Fernando Valley that breathes life into the park and that brings communities together. Whether through dances, rituals or even just spaces in which to share meals, these cultural zones create connection.















Additionally, the design gives people the opportunity to use their breath as a means of processing history. There are many covered spaces to sit and view The Great Wall of Los Angeles and the infrequent water flowing through the channelized river. Visitors are encouraged to remember that throughout history, breath is what has helped humanity heal, even as it has continued to wound itself.

This design was inspired by the depicted milagro behind these words. It's an offering to the community of San Fernando Valley; an appreciation for its commitment to honoring history, accurately.



MASTER PLAN: HONORING BREATH

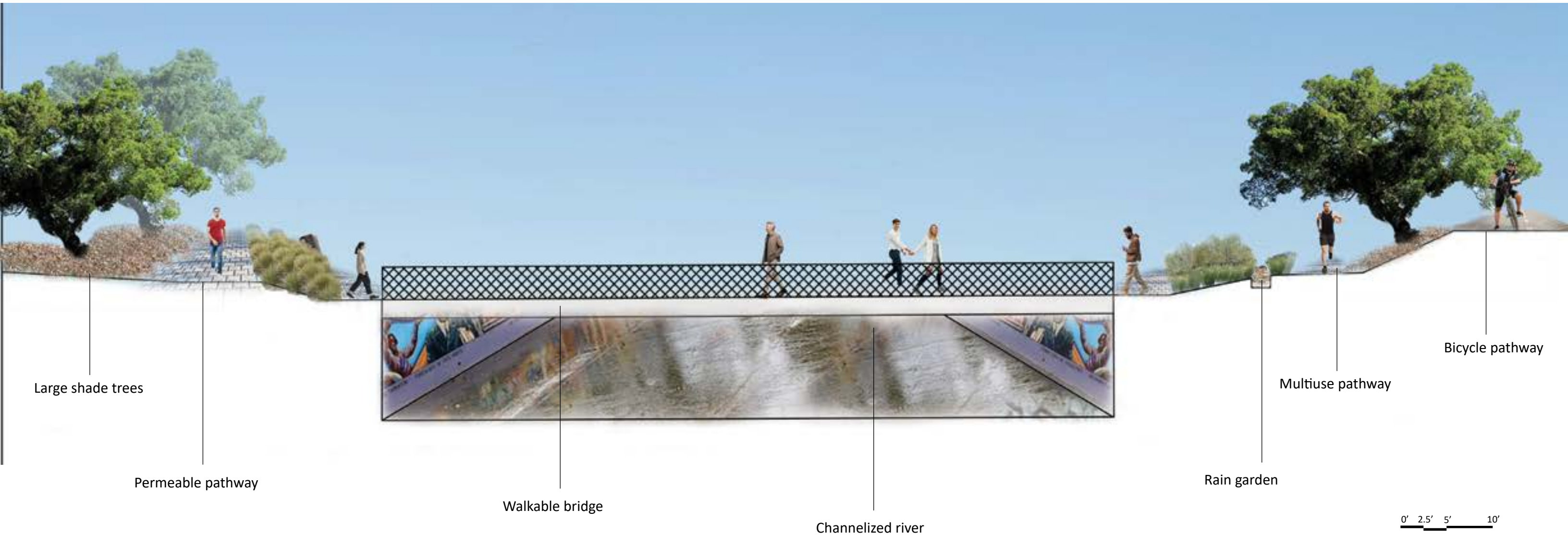
The master plan combines all three concept plans. It honors breath in the rhythm of plantings, pedestrian and wheeled movement, communal motion and air quality enhancement. The breath is revered again and again in each design choice, and reminds visitors how breath is the foundation for digesting history and making way for what's to come.

LEGEND			
	New native tree species		Rain gardens
	Existing trees to remain		Riparian grasses
	Public art piece		Meadow
	Covered cultural spaces and seating areas (shade sails)		Native shrubs
	Buildings with solar paneled roofing		Terraced vegetable beds
	Pedestrian circulation with permeable paving		Drinking fountain
	Mulch		
	Bicycle path with bordered bollards		



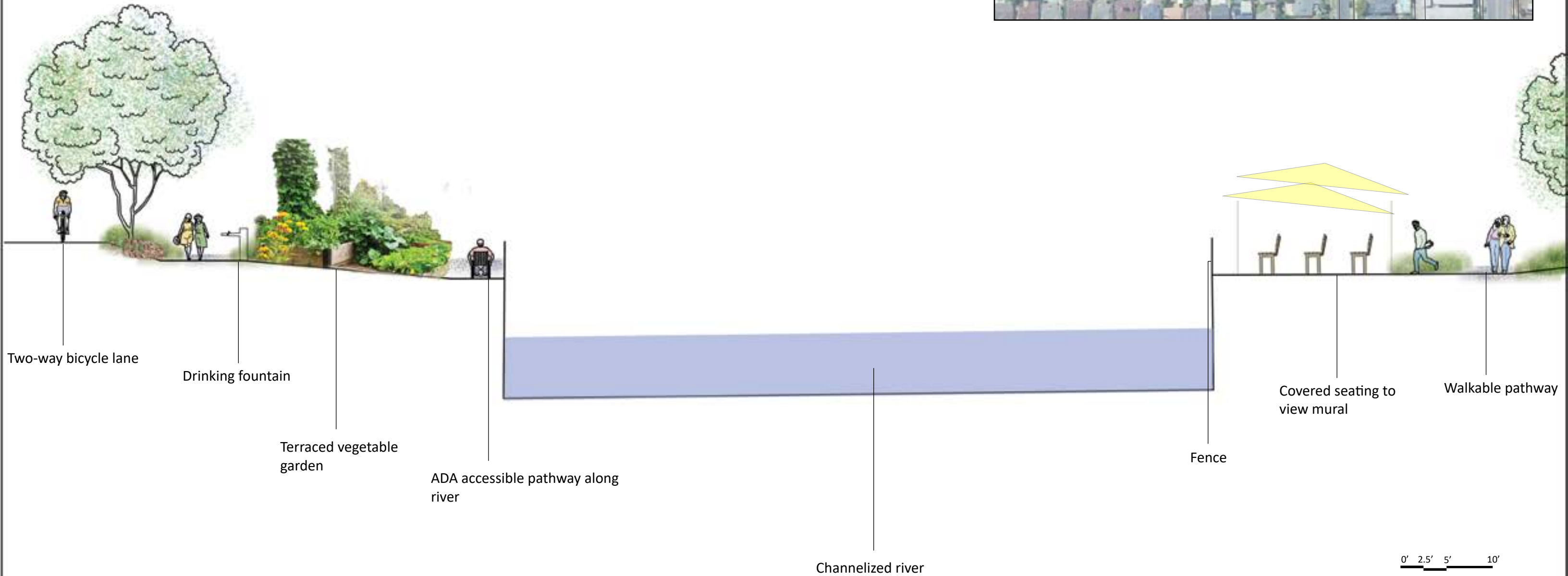
SITE SECTION 1

This section highlights the many active spaces that people can use in the park. The many permeable pathways, and crossover walking bridge allow people to move their bodies and connect to their breath. The bicycle lane is also included to show the mixed use activities in the space.



SITE SECTION 2

This section highlights additional park features such as: terraced vegetable beds usable by the public and covered seating space to view the mural. Additionally, it depicts drinking fountains and what it might be like for the channel to be filled with water.



PERSPECTIVE 1



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This perspective depicts one of the cultural spaces that exists in the park. It has shade sails that cover the dancers and stone benches on which people can sit. It is surrounded by native shrubs and existing trees that bring wildlife to the spaces as well. Lastly, there is permeable ground material that allows for moisture to settle back into the earth in a rain event.

PERSPECTIVE 2

This perspective highlights a shady gathering space that suspends over a portion of the Tujunga Wash. People are able to pause under the shade sails to rest, wait for the bus, purchase fruit or ice cream, or even look out at the mural in this part of the park. This area is meant for people to enjoy and to look to the north, where the expanse of the Great Wall of Los Angeles awaits exploration.



NTS

WALKTHROUGH VIDEO

Please view a walk view video here: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=z0DvJItATVA&ab_channel=TatePerrine

Tate Tilles-Perrine