robbie sims | senior project
universty of california | june 2009
landscape architecture

community open space

utilizing cornfields park as the foundation for implementing a natural urban fabric

A Senior Project
Presented to the Faculty of the
Landscape Architecture Program at the University of
California, Davis and fulfillment of the requirements
for the degree of Bachelor of Science of
Landscape Architecture

Mark Francis, Senior Project Advisor

Heath Schenker, LDA Professor, Uc Davis

David de la Pena, Urban Designer, Architect, Leed AP

Allen Folks, Principal, VP, EDAW

abstract

Today, many cities are lacking the connection between urban communities and open spaces. The city of Los Angeles is a prime example of this disconnect. In an effort to create a new open space for the city, Ruth Coleman of the Department of Parks and Recreation of California offered a design competition to Landscape Architecture across the country. Of the three finalists, Hargreaves and Associates created the most promising design. Their plan is under construction with prospective completion in 2012. This plan is good, overall, and encompasses a sense of place for the community, incorporating native California habitat and depicts the rich railroad history through modern hardscapes. The design however, feels somewhat disconnected from the land around it, making it hard to access and virtually unheard of.

The purpose of this project is to extend the design Hargreaves submitted further into the community and create areas of connection that make it easily accessible to the surrounding areas. Different design elements have been considered to appeal to the community after careful consideration. The methodology was to research, analyze, and design, creating something that helps to make the site more usable by the average patron.

First the site of Cornfields was researched thoroughly to provide historical and program knowledge to better understand the opportunities and constraints for the site. Visitations to the site were conducted to obtain knowledge about the connectivity and topography around the boundaries. To gain more insight on successful designs that would create inspiration for the design, a wide variety of small studies analyzed various open spaces worldwide. Some of these can be observed in the final document.

The design creates connections with multiple neighboring programs. These include Chinatown, Dodger Stadium, residential, trail systems, the Los Angeles River, and Industrial land, or the warehouse district. Each connection displays its own connectivity and uniqueness to that portion of the extension. The design created was done with no boundaries or limitations, just an example of how we can create an urban fabric from restored open spaces.

acknowledgements

Throughout the process of this project, I have had the opportunity to work alongside accomplished professionals and have used the knowledge I gained throughout my education at UC Davis.

Firstly, I would like to acknowledge the committee I comprised to guide me through this project. Heath Schenker, David de la Pena and Allen Folks. Thanks to their guidance I was able to comprise the project I have today. They offered me insight into areas of opportunity and constraints to my design and encouraged me to be creative and design something that I believed in.

Secondly, I would like to acknowledge Mark Francis for all of the work he has put into getting me prepared for this project and keeping me on track through the process. He allowed me to see what it takes to research and conduct a real project on real terms, and for that I thank him.

Thirdly, I would like to acknowledge all of the professors I have had here ad Davis. Without them I would have never acquired the skills to create what I have during this project. My savvy computer skills and research abilities goes out to them.

Lastly, I would like to acknowledge my class. I never would have made it out without them, they are all so talented and inspiring. Studio nights were amazing.

Thanks, much love.

project contents

figure contents

**All images are personal designs unless otherwise noted*

LOS ANGELES STATE PARK

ANALYSIS

INSPIRATION

DESIGN

KEY ELEMENTS

Special thanks to my family and friends
who have supported and shown intered in my education.
The have enahnced my drive for success.

I dedicate this project to them.

And Rose Welch.

community open space

utilizing cornfields park as the foundation for implementing a natural urban fabric

introduction

I.

introduction

QUESTIONS, OBJECTIVES, AND HYPOTHESIS

Questions

Some questions this project strives to answer are:

- What elements within a community are the most important to influence connectivity to open space?
- What inspiration can be seen in previous design that helps to create a successful extended design?
- How can this design create a connectivity of the park and community surrounding it?

Objectives

The main objective of this project is to introduce techniques for connecting open space back into the environment surrounding it, whether this be an urban, industrial, residential, preserve lands or aquatic area. These programs allow different techniques for implementing this connectivity. It is particularly important to make open spaces accessible to improve the success of a park. Cornfields is an example of an open space with a great potential for connecting the community, being surrounded by so many different communities. This extent ion and connecting drives the ambition for this project, hoping that community friendly design will create open space appreciation.

Hypothesis

I believe that this project can set an example for connecting the community to open spaces and park spaces in a successful and sensible way. It can provide inspiration and ideas for working with existing open spaces and improving their design. The finalized design will display functionality, innovative thinking, and at-

traction to the Cornfields site.

DELIMITATIONS AND LIMITATIONS

Impeding success

This project will end up contains a fair amount of delamination and limitations. One of the main limitations for the research and analysis phase is that the Cornfields park is not yet fully constructed, therefore, I will not be able to talk to patrons about their likes and dislikes in the park. Those who visit the site currently are mostly walking their dogs or jogging. This will make it difficult to document detailed observations on the functionality of the site. Although it is also a opportunity, trying to connect the land to so many different programs outside of it will possibly be a limitation for design.

The final document with include an illustrative plan but no construction documents. Because there will a time constraint limit I will not be able to provide as detailed plans as would regularly be critical to construction.

DEFINITIONS

Urban Fabric

Creating a sort of green belt system or other connective pathways and roadways that will create a link between communities.

Los Angeles State Historic Park (Cornfields)

A 32-acre park originally named Los Angeles State Park, but now called Cornfields for its rich history. Located along the Los Angeles River, south of Dodger Stadium and adjacent to Chinatown.

Inspirational Park

Parks and other open spaces that have been researched to evoke inspiration for the final design. These parks may display similar circumstances related to the transportation or land use around the site of Cornfields, or may offer interesting and intriguing elements that will try to be replicated in their own way.

SIGNIFICANCE OF THE STUDY

Importance

The extension of Cornfields will be important to the design of future community open spaces. This site, is one with amazing design, incorporating culture, region and history. By creating more successful connections to the site and access around it, this will set an example for future designs. Hopefully, designs that can be considered urban fabric.

Culture

Los Angeles houses various cultures. As you will see later, nearly five different programs border the area. These include industrial, residential, commercial, open space, and aquatic. By creating a program that will be easily accessible from each area will be achieved. Also, each area of connection must display cultural values of the community it is attached to as well as the Cornfields site. This will increase attraction and cohesion of the park and community.

Entertainment

This design will add a museum and new earth forms to the site. In addition it will provide a bridge for easier pedestrian access to Dodger Stadium. It promotes a realm of transportation that will be more environmentally friendly. It will also

bring entertainment to the community in the form of shopping and dining. The open space will hopefully connect these areas creating more pedestrian friendly spaces.

Activity

There are trails that are located in the park to the north of the Cornfields site. These trails will serve the community in an active way. They can be used as walking, running, dog walking, or bicycling trails. Adding some feature that connects these trails to the park space would help to give them more use and easier access from the community.

Transportation

The extension and design of Cornfields will connect one community to another without need for vehicular transportation. Also, the MTA line that runs through the site reduces a need for vehicles. A trolly system that runs from Cornfields up to Dodger Stadium allows for less vehicular traffic around game time.

History

The history of the site will be reflected in the restoration of the industrial area. The railroad provides inspiration for landforms and statues, as well as old industrial restoration. The stadium can be appreciated by more sports fans who can also observe the sculpture garden. Chinatown will also be incorporated in its historical sense with a traditional Chinese garden and restaurants.

Geographic

By implementing vegetation that is native to the upland, riparian, and chaparral

regions of California into the design, Hargreaves has already begun to incorporate a sustainable design. This will be continued throughout my design as I add more chaparral habitat to the trail system and wetland area through the connectivity to the river. This will continue to restore the green footprint that was originally lost in this area by the rail yard.

Ultimately, the significance of this project is to set an example for the future of urban park development. Since there are very few remaining open spaces in Los Angeles, it is becoming far more popular to redevelop and restore old areas and convert them into urban open spaces.

community open space

utilizing cornfields park as the foundation for implementing a natural urban fabric

process

II.

PROJECT APPROACH

Methodology

The first step to this project was to find a park that was located in an urban area lacking in successful open space. Los Angeles is a perfect city for this considering their lack of open space, and their increased amount of pollution and violence. After deliberating the options, the design charette and Hargreaves project caught my eye due to its location and the historical preservation as well as transit opportunities.

The first step in the design process was visiting Cornfields park, record observations, and conduct surveys. Next, the was further analyzed and the constraints and opportunities will be considered from community maps and Hargreaves' design. Following analysis, different parks around the world will be looked at for ideas and inspiration. These parks will evoke the aesthetics that are appropriate for this site, but also the collaboration of stainability and sustainability into open spaces.

Finally, the design process begins. Taking each connection into careful consideration to create a cohesion of elements that will appeal to the outside community as well as others from further distances. This plan will be delivered through multiple images; plans and blow ups.

DATA COLLECTION AND RECORDING PROCEDURES

Cornfields Research

Using the internet and the California State Parks web site, I conducted research on the history of the site as well as investigated the area around the site. I also got familiar with the proposed design that Hargreaves submitted during the design

charette, getting a hold of a number of their final presentation documents. This allowed me to learn their design objectives, conceptual thought process and its evolution, and the placement and reasonings behind the final illustration.

Site Visit

Visiting the site was very useful. Although the Hargreaves design has not yet been implemented into the landscape, I was given the opportunity to really get the feel for the area around the site and the access to it. I recorded my results here by taking notes of the areas of opportunity and constraint and the program surrounding the site. I also got a chance to take some pictures of the topography, the railway, and the bridges surrounding the site. There were not many visitors, but I created a survey form asking patrons why they liked the park what they believed was lacking. I took these into consideration while designing.

Inspirational Park Research

By collecting books from the library, flipping through Landscape Architecture Magazines, and my own personal experience visiting parks, I was able to collect a number of places that stood out to me as inspirational. I pulled images from these books and took notes on why these were important to my design. They are documented later on.

Sustainability Research

The time allotted for this project is minimal, but it would be good to discuss a few techniques that will be used in the design to make it more sustainable. Some of these include use of green roofs to restore a green footprint, use of native plan species, creating better public transportation opportunities, restoration of un-

used industrial land, and increasing pedestrian accessibility.

DATA ANALYSIS

Providing Reasoning

Most of the data that I received was in the form of written documents, whether it be from the internet, books, or planning documents for the Cornfields redesign. I based most of my project from learning about other peoples approaches were to designs and observing their successes.

I analyzed the site first hand by observing the use, the connectivity, and the opportunities around it. I also asked patrons to let me know their input on the success of the site to them and what they would like to see incorporated further into the open space. Photographs I took help to let me analyze the identity of the site and what it brings, or could have the potential to bring, to the communities bordering it. I also was given a chance to meet with the State Parks Department and discuss their goals.

In addition to this, I analyzed alternate parks, both with commonalities and differences to gain a wide perspective on the opportunities for where my design could go. All of this collection and analysis of data will go into my design and creating something that could be feasible for the location. In the final design I will point out some places where you can see these inspirations and influences in me design.

community open space

utilizing cornfields park as the foundation for implementing a natural urban fabric

los angeles state park

III.

LOCATION

Los Angeles

State Historic park is located in the city of Los Angeles in the area of Central City North. Surrounding the park are a variety of diverse areas and cultures. Some of these areas are Chinatown, downtown Los Angeles, the Los Angeles River, industrial warehouses, a number of schools, medium density homes, and Dodger Stadium.

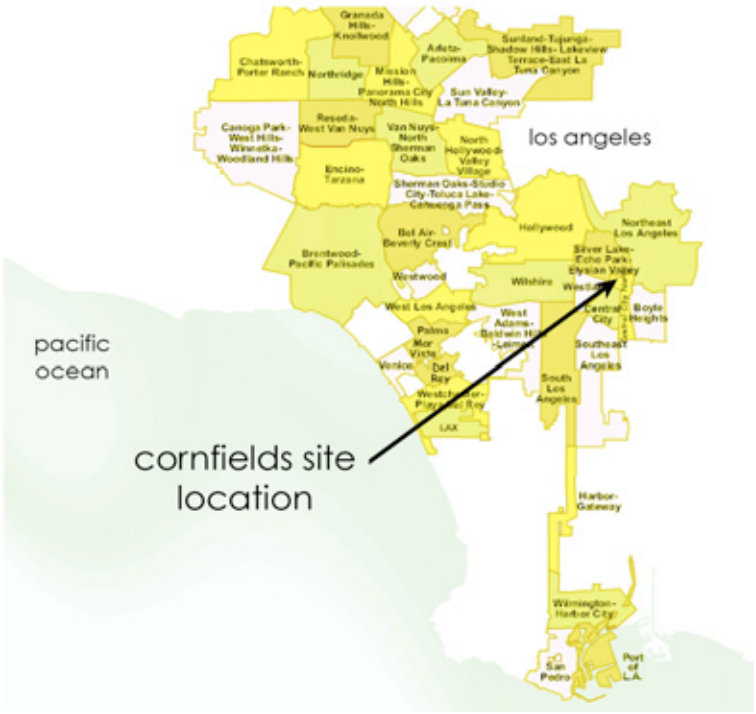


Figure 3. 1

In addition to these areas, there are also a great deal of transit opportunities filtering into the site to make it easily accessible. This includes the MTA Gold Line that runs along the northern side of the site as well as bridges connecting the land from the land east of the river to the west. Three main interstates are situated around the site. To the east runs the Golden State Freeway I-5. To the south runs the Santa Ana Freeway 10. And to the north west runs the Pasadena Freeway110.

Located on the map above is the location of how the park fits into the larger scheme in Los Angeles, where the photo to the on the following page displays it's conjunction with the river, interstates, and Dodger Stadium.

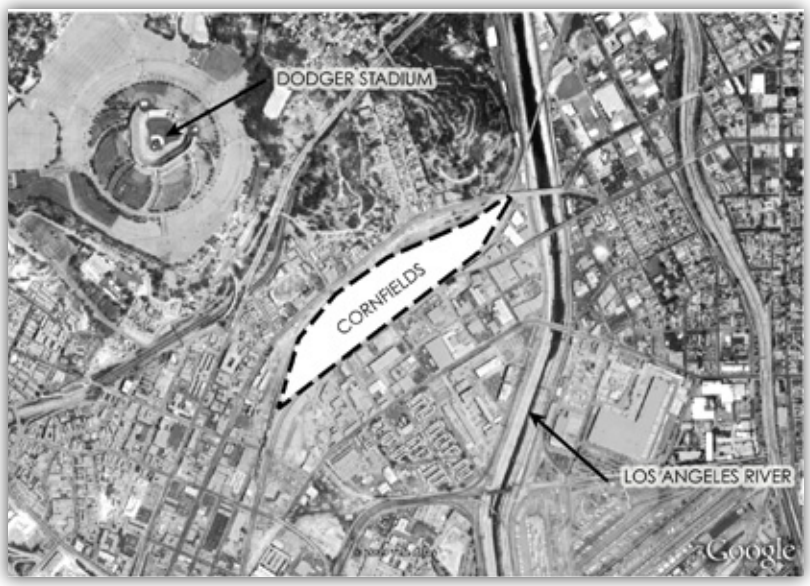


Figure 3.2

There is a lot of potential to make this site more successful than the proposed plan by creating connections and access that takes advantage of these cultural diversities and transit. Construction of bridges and green ways which connect the site would be beneficial to its success. This would allow the communities a common place for relaxation, recreation, or simple transportation from one community to another.

HISTORY

The Railyard

The site was originally home to the Tongva villages when explorers discovered the land in 1769. It has long played an important role to the city, housing the "Mother Ditch" also known as the Zanja Madre which was one of the initial drainage systems for the Los Angeles River.

Figure 3.3

Later on, the ditch was transformed into a railyard by the Southern Pacific Railroad Company. The map located on the following page shows the original loca-

tion of the railroad. However, after many years of service, in 2001, the railyard was abandoned and the State Park Department purchased the land with intentions to build a new state park. It was formally named Los Angeles State Historic Park, but also took on the nickname "The Cornfield" or "Cornfields."

Figure 3.4 (See enlargement on page 73)

This name was taken most likely for a practical reason. There are three scenarios which could lead to this naming. First, because corn seeds fell from the trains as they ran through the yard. Second, that the seeds had dispersed from a nearby mill on the southern side of the site. Or third, that bums who inhabited the site following its abandonment had planted corn as a source of food. Whichever way, the corn was left to prosper because it was a good representation of the history of California's agriculture in this area and added some historic identity to the community.

The new site of Cornfields is going to be one that keeps the history of the railway and cornfield history in tact while adding more character. One thing that the State Parks Department would like to see is the incorporation of art into the landscape. Artist Lauren Bon, a graduate from MIT and Princeton, has been assigned as

Figure 3.5

the chief artist for the Cornfields project. She has been part of interpreting "land art" into landscapes for years, and her work can be seen in many places, including Hong Kong, Belfast, Ireland, and the US. She hopes to be able to incorporate the industrial surroundings of the site with the beauty of nature in a unique way.

The State Parks Department is eager to get a newly developed park constructed for the Cornfields site to make it a successful and useful urban park. In an effort to get a design flowing, the department opened a design charette in 2006. Hopefully, the site will be constructed by 2010, although some setbacks with funding may alter the completion date.

DESIGN CHARETTE

Ruth Coleman

The 32 acre plot of land in the warehouse district was purchased by the city in 2001 to protect the overflow of industrial warehouses closer to Dodger Stadium. Shortly after in 2006, the city excavated the land and created an open space they named Los Angeles State Historic Park. However, in an effort to create a park that has a sense of place and a respect for the history of the site, the parks district called in a design charette to find a firm that would be able to introduce an innovative park that still stuck to the roots of the area.

Figure 3.6

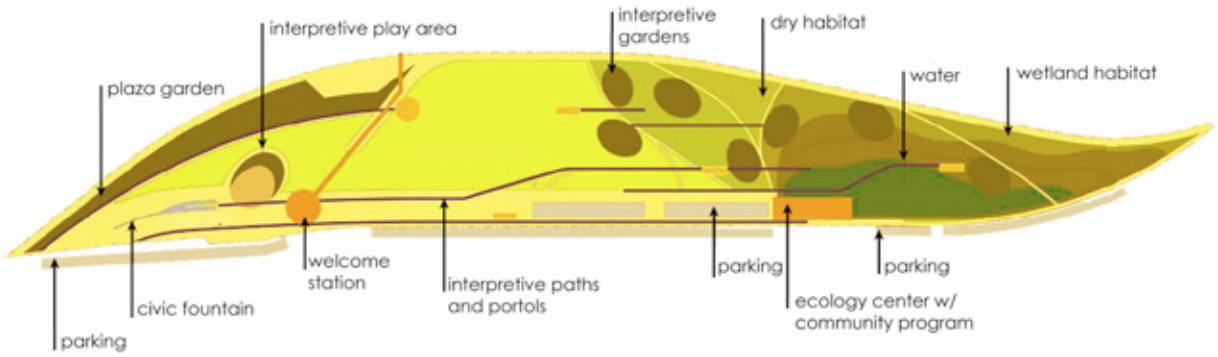
Thirty three firms were involved in the competition process and submitted their designs. A committee including the Department of Parks and Recreation officials

narrowed down the competition to three finalists. These firms include Mia Lehrer & Associates of Los Angeles, Hargreaves Associates of San Francisco, and Field Operations stationed in New York. Each design was unique in its own respect. Some harbored more grass and playing fields while others tried to tie together the history and modern plazas and bridges. Ultimately, the firm Hargreaves won the competition and construction was underway shortly. Unfortunately, the recession has effected keeping the completion process on schedule. The above photograph shows the Hargreaves Associates firm along with State Parks director Ruth Coleman, who was in charge of the design competition.

HARGREAVES DESIGN

Community, Culture, Industry

The design submitted by Hargreaves has promise. The firm's goals were to create a place that could represent the community, culture, industry, water and nature around the site. The image below displays their finalized conceptual diagram.



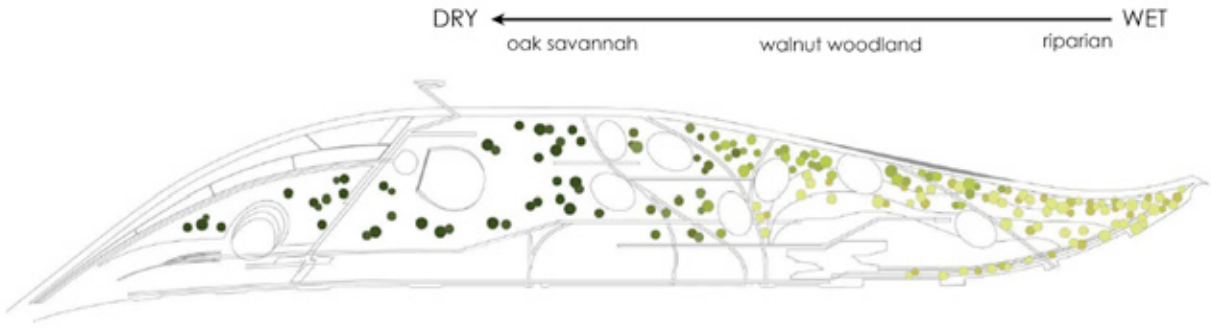
FINAL CONCEPTUAL PROGRAM DIAGRAM

(See enlargement on page 73) Figure 3.7

The different sections of the design are labeled. The plan includes gardens, open spaces, plazas, and a stage for entertainment. There is also a pedestrian bridge

to transport visitors to Chinatown into the site on the northern side. Hargreaves has also decided to incorporate an ecology center complete with a community program department. Also, they have included a welcome and information station to make patrons more familiar with the reasoning behind the design and the rich history of the site. They propose paths and portals that will connect trails through the site for easy access to all areas, whether they be open spaces, or more intimate garden features. In my design, I will consider these programs and the placement of elements like water, vegetation, and hardscape to make the most successful connection possible back into the surrounding community.

The site is bordered by a river on the east and by commercial uses on the west. Therefore, Hargreaves decided to follow the natural flow of the terrain corresponding to this through their design. These different terrains are also representative of the habitat in California. Because they are using native species, their design will be more sustainable. The plan below shows these habitats in orientation to the site.



HABITAT COMMUNITIES ACROSS THE PARK

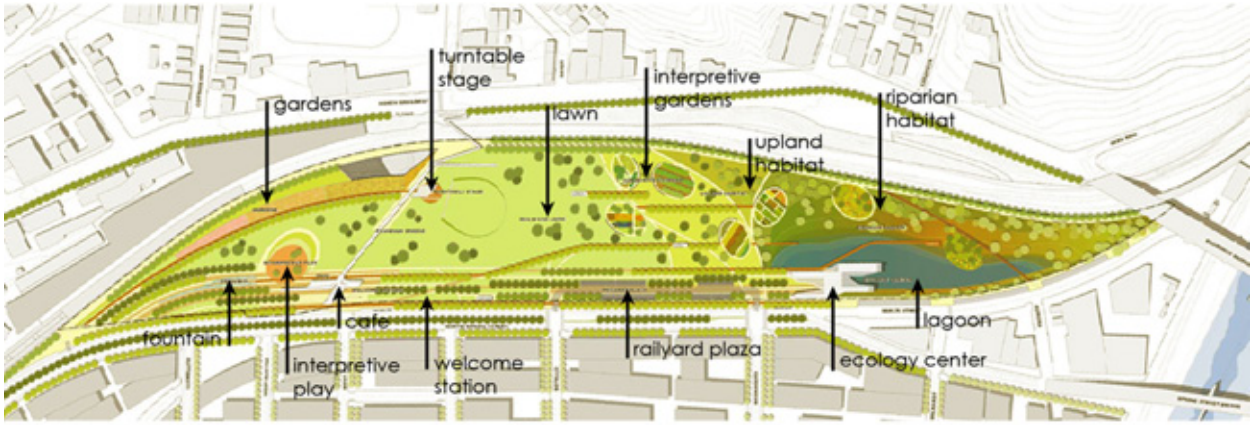
(See enlargement on page 75) Figure 3.8

As is pictured, the area goes from a wet riparian habitat with trees and shrubs like the white alder, or white birch that grow along the water through a walnut woodland and then to an area that is drier and more dense, housing species like oak

trees which are more draught tolerant.

Also, by connecting the site to the Los Angeles River, they will be able to use the water to create a sustainable pumping system through the site. Not to mention, they will be able to form a retention basin along the eastern side of the site.

After conceptual mapping and analysis of the geography and sustainability of the site, Hargreaves came up with their final illustrative plan. The image below shoes this plan and the elements it contains.



FINAL ILLUSTRATIVE PLAN

(See enlargement on page 75)Figure 3.9

The final plan for the Hargreaves design is successful as an individual plot of land. However, how it corresponds with the surrounding community is not as cohesive as it could have been. Some elements that have been added since the conceptual phase of the project include a railroad plaza connecting one side of the site to another. A turntable stage that mimics the old placement on the railyard property. A fountain has been incorporated along the pedestrian bridge to tie in the concept of water from one end to the other. An additional fountain marks the entrance of the site from the southwestern side. The ecology center footprint, along

with the small cafe are the main buildings on the site. The ecology center will provide opportunity for education, but not on the railroad history itself. The design does however, incorporates the terrain of California and organic feeling with the roughness of the railroad in a modern way. This is one element I will be strongly focusing on.

Figure 3.10

The Hargreaves design is appropriate and encompasses some great elements to bring culture, habitat, stainability, and identity to the site. However, the way that it is situated into the landscape allows little connection to the surrounding program. I believe that this site can be connected into the community better, this is what the objective of my project will be.

The following images are some of those provided by the Hargreaves team during their final design presentation. They are perspectives taken from multiple places surrounding the site. These are good examples to show the feeling of the site.

Figure 3.11

Figure 3.12

Figure 3.13

Figure 3.14

community open space

utilizing cornfields park as the foundation for implementing a natural urban fabric

analysis

IV.

LAND USE

Cornfields' Community

The land use in this area of Los Angeles is extremely diverse, much like the city itself. The community is mostly characterized by residential spaces and industrial land. This district is one which is lacking in accessible open spaces, besides the park space surrounding Dodger Stadium. The land use program surrounding the site contains opportunities and constraints for the Cornfields site.

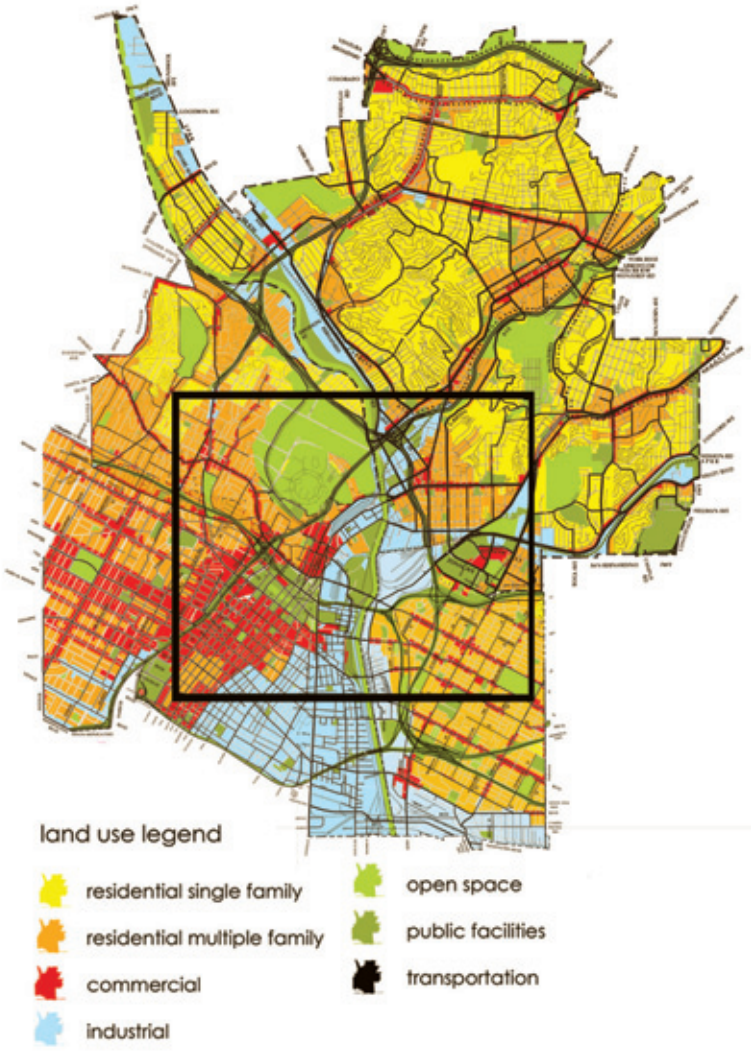


Figure 4.1

Opportunities

This site contains a wide variety of programs outside of its boundaries. This creates a good potential to design a park space that acts as a fabric connecting the communities. However, Hargreaves design somewhat overlooks these potentials, being that they have strict building boundaries.

To the south, industrial land holds warehouses and some run down land ready for reconstruction. To the east runs the Los Angeles River, complete with an aestheti-

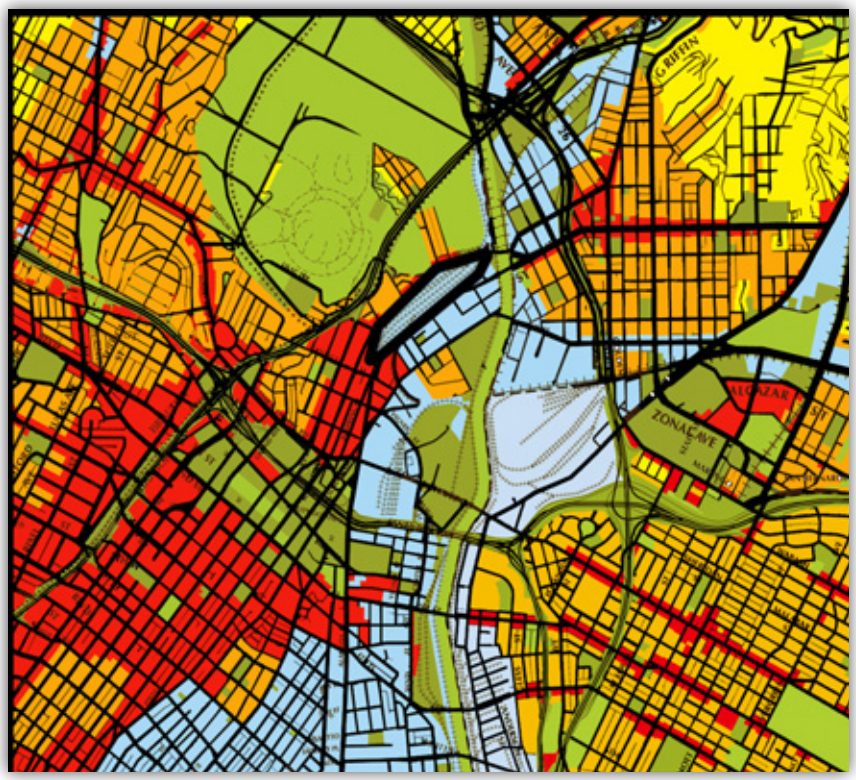


Figure 4.2

cally pleasing bridge. Further over the river lies medium density housing and freeway connection. In addition, there are schools and parks which will be critical in deciding the best areas for connectivity. To the northern edge of the site there lies more medium density housing, pedestrian and bicycle friendly trails, and the city's baseball stadium, home to the Los Angeles Dodgers. A private high school also lies in the direct center of the northern side of the site. And lastly, to the west, Chinatown occupies the majority of this region. Beyond this is downtown Los Angeles, an area that is under construction to become one of the more appealing identifiable locations in the city. This section of the area also is home to schools that allow a good potential program for connecting open space.

With all of these areas neighboring the site, it is only natural to attempt to use them to connect these diverse communities. The map on the previous page links together the community of Central City North, the area where the site is located, to five neighboring communities. Beginning in the north going clockwise, these include Northeast Los Angeles, Boyle Heights, Central City, and Silver Lake-Echo Park Valley.

The more enlarged map shows this location in greater detail. The site of Cornfields, or Los Angeles State Historic Park, is outlined in a thicker black, filled with blue, for industrial identity

Constraints

There are also some constraints in the land use surrounding the site. Some of these elements are associated with land forms, and some are attributed by wear and tear in the area.

For example, the topography surrounding the site is a bit of an inconvenience when it comes to designing. Just north of the railway running through the site is a ditch, and then a hill up to the land above. Further above this dip and small incline is a larger inclination to the trails and Dodger Stadium. In addition to the topography, another constraint is the river running along the eastern side. Although this evokes good opportunities for connection, it is also a fairly unsafe and unattractive concrete ditch for the river. This is an element that would need an extensive face lift to become appealing.

If my design was being constructed, there would be more constraints than just these. The industrial area to the southern side is fairly run down, and in this case, I provided no boundaries on what I intend to do to improve this area. However, under different circumstances it would be a task to gain ownership of the land.

TRANSIT

First off, there are many freeways that connect around the site. These include Interstates 5, 110, and 10 which form a triangle around the site. Connecting to

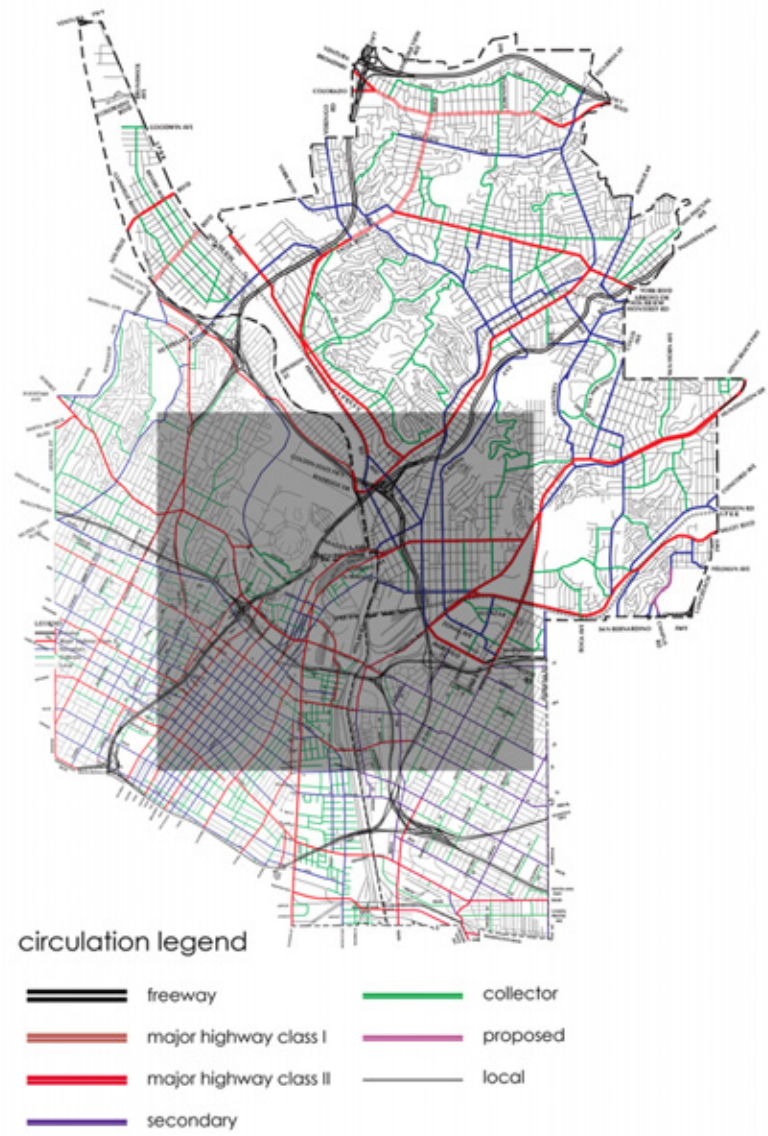


Figure 4.3

these freeways are North Broadway, which borders the north side of the site, and North Main, which runs one street to the south. Bordering the southern side of the site is North Alameda Street which turns into North Spring. These roads can be classified as freeways, major highways class two and secondary streets.

The enlarged map on the following page shows these roads in greater detail, while the legend to the right maps out the circulation color and the orientation of transportation. When looking at the more detailed map, you can see the markings of the MTA Gold Line, and other local roadways and proposed roads.

The transit surrounding Cornfields park allows many opportunities for connectivity, both on a pedestrian and bicyclists level, as well as for public transportation and other vehicular traffic. All of these will be considered in the new design for creating a successful expansion.

Opportunities

Easy access to the freeways makes it possible for the site to be able to attract people from all over the city or other people commuting on the interstate. There are major highway class two roads connecting the site on the northern and southern side that connect back to each of these highways in their own respect. The secondary roads form a suitable grid for easy access and provide a wide range of opportunities to create pedestrian and bike routes to other parts of the community.

A trail system runs along the north side of the park and the railroad MTA Line that runs through the site. The trail system would be a great connector to help this park become more accessible and incorporated with the park space to the north. Meanwhile the railroad station poses its own opportunities. Connecting the site to the train station located only a block from its boundary would provoke more people to use the system to visit the site. Also, if there were a bridge to the stadium implemented, there would be an alternate way to get to the stadium.

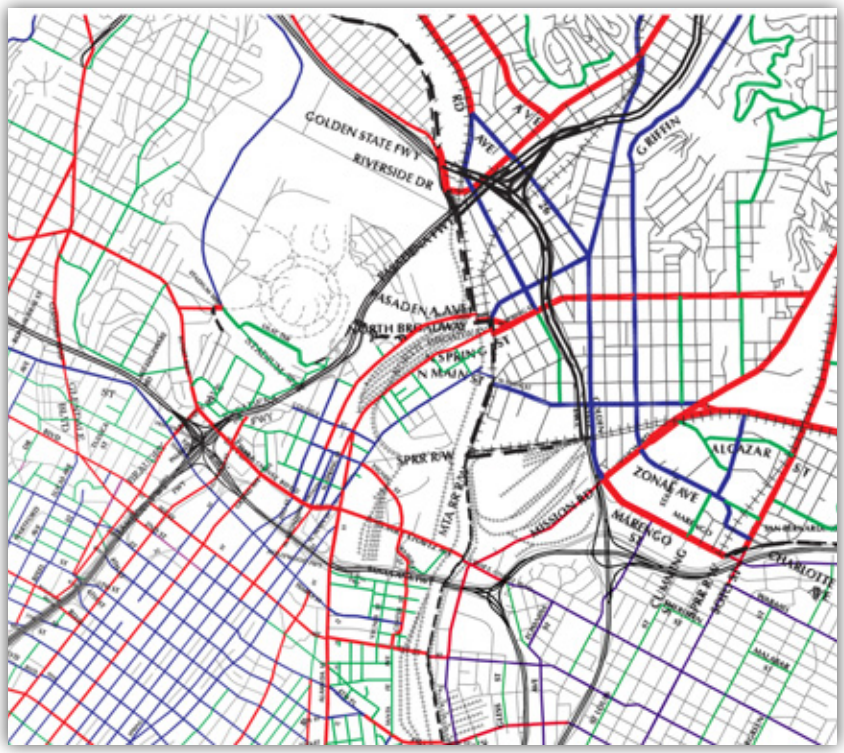


Figure 4.4

A bridge connects the eastern end of the site across the river to a residential neighborhood, and eventually I-5. This is a great opportunity to connect this side of the park across the river to many different communities. This bridge is also considered a portion of North Broadway stretching to the east.

Constraints

There are a number of opportunities provided the transportation within this site, but there are also some constraints. One of the biggest constraints, which was not solved in the Hargreaves design, is the division the railway causes through the park space. On the northern side of these tracks is a ditch and then an incline. This topography makes connectivity to this side of the site challenging. Another ditch that creates a constraint is the river. It is going to be difficult to alter this area in a successful way to make the river an enjoyable place. Now, the condition of this waterway is far from appealing.

MAPPING AND DIAGRAMS

Main Points of Access

The map to the right shows the possible places where entry from outside the sight would be optimal. The blue arrows represent places where connections will be made which have a steep topography. These places will be used for hiking trails and a trail to the ballpark, they will not

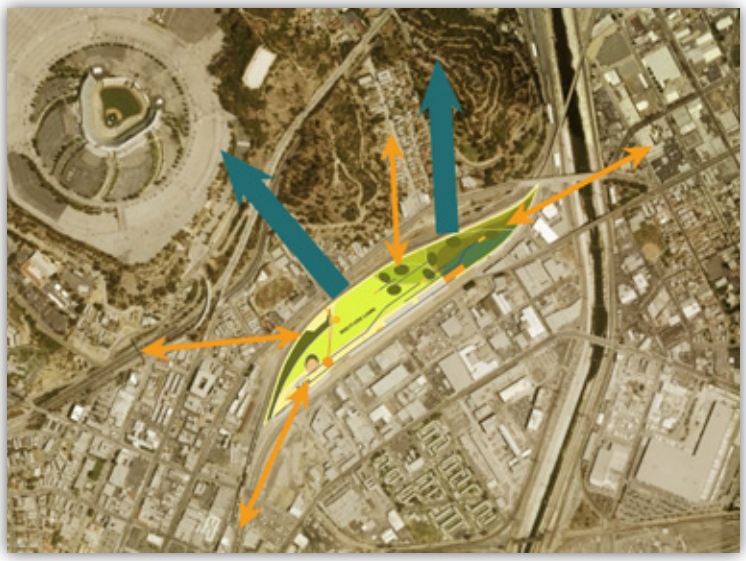


Figure 4.5

be used for regular entry from the site. These are to be completely pedestrian friendly. As for the arrows in orange, these are the locations that will be designed and improved for connectivity. These four other entrances were selected based on the land use and transit opportunities and constraints listed above.

Transportation Types

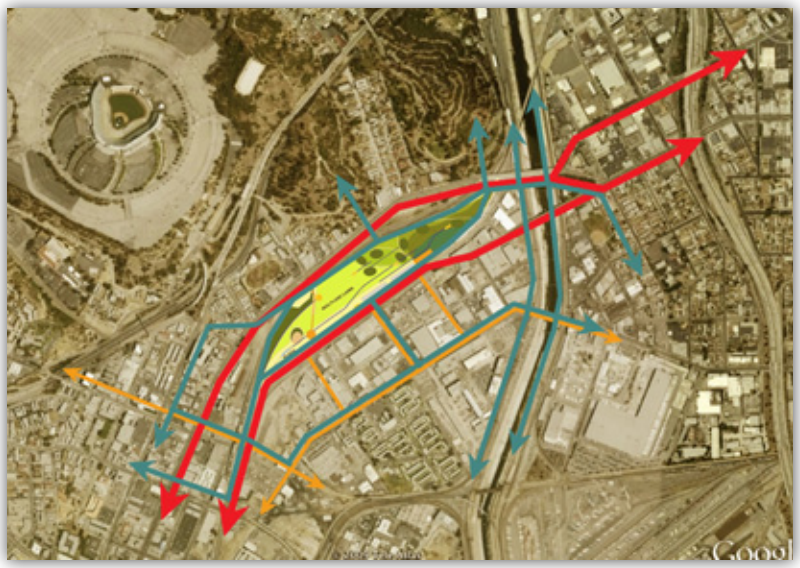


Figure 4.6

This map provides a look at the flow of arterial, secondary, and pedestrian routes in, out, and around the site. The red labels the main arterial routes, which are most likely dedicated to vehicular traffic, but also provide sidewalks for pedestrians. The secondary routes are mapped in orange. These would be used for a combination of both pedestrian and vehicular traffic. The blue route displays the main pedestrian routes in and out of the site. These routes are decided based on the trail system and elements such as the water and the train station. Also, pedestrian routes to schools and Chinatown will be implemented.

community open space

utilizing cornfields park as the foundation for implementing a natural urban fabric

inspiration

V.

inspiration

EXAMPLES OF INFLUENCIAL DESIGNS

INTRODUCTION

Open Space Design

The following are parks that I have researched through the design process and are inspirational to my design. Most of them bring something unique to the table that I think would add great character and functionality to the site I will implement while creating an identity for this community in Los Angeles. These places are located around the world and are known for their originality and success. The following selections display pictures from the parks as well as a brief description of why they are good models.

UNION POINT PARK

Oakland

Figure 5.1

This park is located close to home, in Oakland. It is one of the parks I have gotten to visit since attending UC Davis. Located along the waterfront, with a great amount of industrial and marina history, the site is similar to Cornfields. Some of the decor in this park is the remnants of old elements of the dock and marina. It is important to the success of a restored site to keep some of the history in tact. This is something that I would like to incorporate on the Cornfields site by incorporating the industrial buildings and railway.

TECNOPARQUE

Azcapotzalco, Mexico City

This park is the building block for the transition from industrial land to low income housing. The industrial area surrounding Cornfields is somewhat similar. Its main function is to try and restore the air quality in the Valley of Mexico. Permanent jobs will be created throughout its center to make a more balanced economy for the area. This park is particularly appealing to me for their incorporation of water, architecture, and space for relaxation or dining. This is a good example of the ambiance I wish to achieve on the riverfront of the Cornfields expansion.

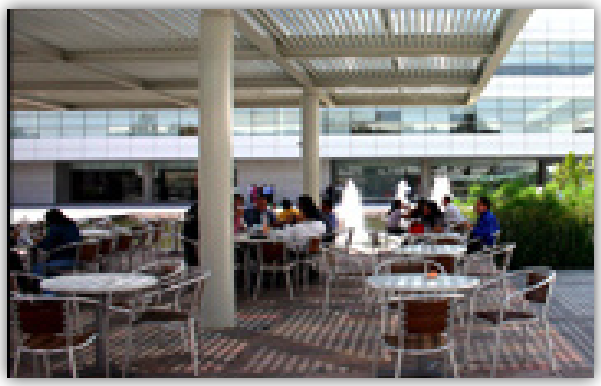


Figure 5.2

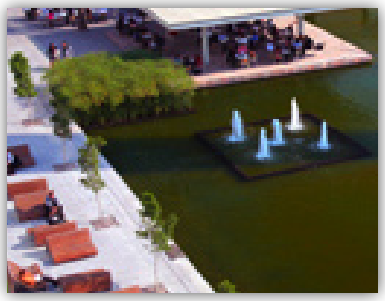


Figure 5.3

XOCHIMILCO ECOLOGICAL PARK

Xochimilco, Mexico City

This park is a project focused on the idea of contemporary environmental restoration. The land has been used for both recreation and productive land uses, somewhat like the plans for Cornfields with their gardens. An element that I enjoy from this landscape is their connection from the land to the water through industrial fountains. This

Figure 5.4

Figure 5.5

water feature, or something similar to it, could increase the aesthetics of the Los Angeles River in a way that still symbolizes the industrial history of the area.

VORWORT/FAZIT

Germany

Figure 5.6

These parks, located in Germany, exemplify a successful redesign of old industrial buildings, an area that is located to the south of Cornfields. Unfortunately, writing in the book and online is for the most park only in German, so it was difficult to research. Regardless, there are amazing pictures for two parks named Vorwort and Fazit. The incorporation of industrial remains into a functional park is extraordinary. The first photo are taken in the Fazit park. This space uses bright colors to enhance the industrial detailing of the buildings. It also contains a restored warehouse for performance arts. The alternate photo contains a circular seating bench surrounding an elaborate plaza space, this is located at Vorwort. It is important in my design that I incorporate city events with the park, on the site, or further beyond it.

Figure 5.7

CANAL DE LA CORTADURA

Tempico, Tamaulipas

Figure 5.8

This project was implemented to improve the land surrounding Cortadura Canal, an area that was once polluted by a petroleum boom in the area. The canal connects a lagoon back into the Rio Panuco River and the Gulf of Mexico. Some elements located in the project are a music center and large park. Although the Cornfields site is not located along a canal, it is located near a large river with a great potential for connection to the community. Aesthetically, this park is modern and simplistic. It allows a visitor to enjoy the beauty of the canal. Perhaps an alternative like this one would make the Los Angeles a little more pleasant to patrons.

Figure 5.9

PASEOS DEL CARMEN

Playa del Carmen, Quintana Roo

Located in the Caribbean Riviera, this shopping community is successful and upscale, much like the shopping that could be found in various parts of Los Angeles county. Making a bar scene, and some nightlife

Figure 5.10

would help to add to the Cornfields site an idea of the culture of the city. I believe that creating this type of walkway would be perfect for the entry into Chinatown. This modern design is also extremely modern, a feeling that Los Angeles is developing in their new downtown sector.

CENTRAL TRAIN STATION PLAZA

Muragame, Japan

Figure 5.11

I believe that when attempting to connect communities, it would be ideal to offer something that is unique to both places. This will attract the opposite side and lead to success of the project. This train station in Japan offers an incorporation of both the railway and industrial aspect along with the waterway neighboring the site. This water sculpture pictured tis an inspiring element that would be a great connector for these areas of Cornfields while also incorporating a modern styling; very characteristic of the new Los Angeles area.

JAMISON SQUARE

Portland, Oregon

Figure 5.12

This park, located along Portland's River District was part of a design competition to provide and improved area for new housing and offices. It is located near the Pearl Arts District, which makes its innovative design suitable for the area. The focal point for this park is definite-

ly the water flow and arrangement of the central fountain. When water is on, the fountain mimics a beach and waves with a slope that provides access to the water. Further away is a grassy haven perfect for relaxation and activity. When the fountain is turned off, or lowered, it provides seating for a rather shallow amphitheater. I enjoy this quality of multiuse, something that I will be hoping to incorporate into my design. Also, the idea of bringing the feeling of a beach community to the center of Oregon is an innovative way to attract more users of the space.

Figure 5.12

TRIANGLE PARK

St. Louis, Missouri

This park is a source of inspiration because it is also located along side a set of railway tracks. The way that the organic geometries compliment the modern and straight geometries in the site is particularly interesting. Some of the main elements located within the park are use of a fountain plaza complimented with multiple stainless steal walls. These walls allow privacy to the orchid planted outside of them. A linear path connects the transit station to the fountain plaza with welcoming chairs and the serenity of the orchid. These elements complement each other well.

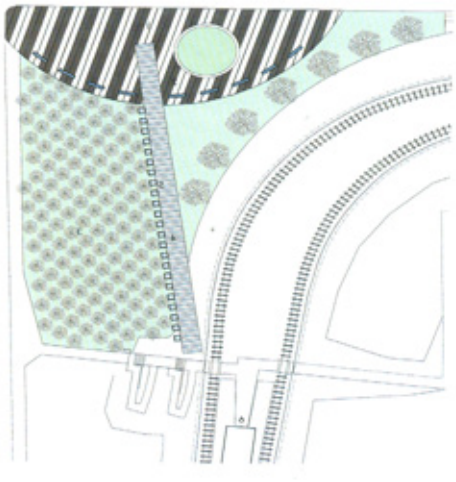


Figure 5.13

NASHER FOUNDATION SCULPTURE CENTER

Dallas, Texas

Figure 5.14

This park is inspiring on all different levels. It incorporates an intense appreciation for the arts, displaying one of the worlds most important private collections of modern sculpture. Holding nearly thirty sculptures, both those which can be removed and replaced as well as permanent sculptures, it is truly a unique and innovative park. In order to make a noise barrier for the museum, water fountains encasing water lilies run along the main street, Olive Street, and make the park a more enjoyable place to appreciate artwork. Located on the edge of the garden is an art museum. One thing that drew me to this park in general was the structure of this center. It includes a sunken auditorium, this can help with energy conservation.

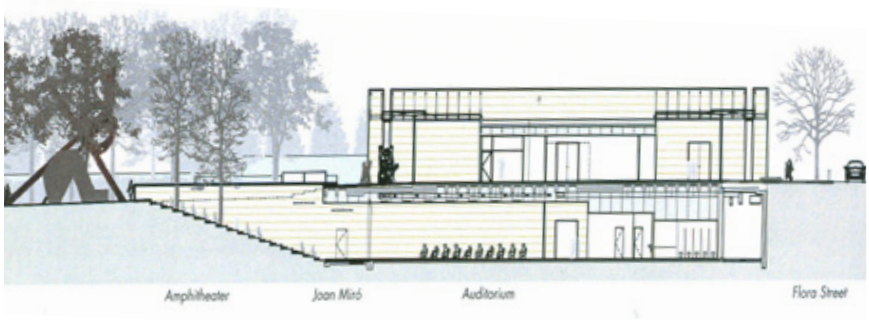


Figure 5.15

HASLAM'S CREEK RECONSTRUCTION (MILLENNIUM PARK LANDS)

Sydney, Australia

These park lands, located in Sydney, are an example of a large scale restoration project. This was carried out prior to the 2000 Olympic Games which were constructed in the center of the area. Something that is enjoyable about this project

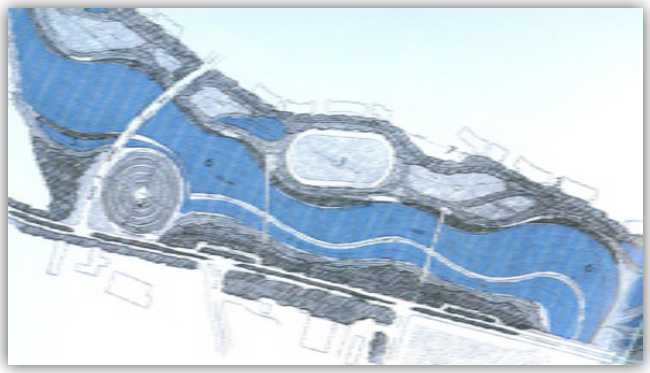


Figure 5.16

is that the landforms are still extremely organic and true to the topography of the site, however, they mesh well with the newly constructed Olympic Center. One aspect of the park lands that is inspirational is the area called Haslam's Creek. This areal runs through the center of the site and provides a great view for some of the sporting stadiums. The way this water is divided in a modern, yet still organic flow is interesting. Also, it is a good example of bridging over the water, something I will incorporate into my design.

GREAT PARK

Riverside, California

Although this park has not yet been completed, its design incorporates many different uses and earth forms. It can be related to the Cornfields site because of its close proximity to the freeway and for its restorative qualities. The site, that was formerly an old Marine Air Station is now going to be given a face lift. Some elements that are going to be incorporated into its design are middle and low income housing, an orchid, parkspace and other open spaces, and an organic creek-like water feature that ties the whole community together. Using the geometries of the old runways and adding more organic and linear forms

Figure 5.17

are something that Hargreaves has incorporated into their design as well. This park is inspirational for the larger picture of the community surrounding Cornfields coupled with the historic park itself.

MILLENNIUM PARK

Chicago, Illinois

Figure 5.18

This park is truly one of a kind. The 24 acre place is unique to the area and brings a sophisticated space that displays an appreciation for music, arts, architecture and landscape design. It includes an outdoor amphitheater, a number of plazas, water features and an eccentric bridge. The style of this park is similar to the new Disney Concert Hall that the Cornfields site is closely located to. But in addition to this, my main interest in the park is the bridge. Bridges are one of the main features of the connection of Cornfields to the surrounding community. This bridge is unique and inspirational, and does a great job of connecting pedestrians from the park to the neighboring sports park and the water in a unique and interesting way.

SUNDIAL BRIDGE

Redding, California

This bridge, located in Redding is another inspirational take on a modern bridge. The demand for this bridge was to connect the national trail system to the Turtle Bay Exploration Center and McConnel Arboretum. The designer, an architect and

artist named Santiago Calatrava wanted to create a bridge using the sundial for inspiration, but realized that after the construction, the sundial is slightly out of place. The only time that the dial reads the right time is on June 21, the Summer Solstice. Regardless, the design is innovative and successful for its purpose of transporting pedestrians over the Sacramento River. This is just one of the first bridges that Calatrava would go on to design.

Figure 5.19

Figure 5.20

NORTHALA FIELDS

London

Northala Fields is a sustainable design that was built in London that displays incredible earth forms. This is one of the first open spaces constructed in West London in the last century. It incorporates topography with walking trails, something that I am looking to include in the trail system in my expansion of the Cornfields site. This park does this in an extremely successful way. The park claims to be able to "mix the woman's form with earth," which can also be considered organic form.

Figure 5.21

I think that the key to any design is being able to mix geometries with organics. In addition to its forms, the site offers a completely sustainable and economically affordable addition to the implementation of open spaces.

PRAIRIE CROSSING

Washington

Figure 5.22

This newly designed bridge built in Vancouver, Washington resembles a flowing stream. It connects Historic Fort in Vancouver to the Columbia River by creating a pedestrian route over the interstate. Its innovative design is original, and although it is modern in an older community, it seems to fit perfectly into the earth forms surrounding it. This is something that I will get inspiration from when creating my walkway up to Dodger Stadium. A native plant community has also been implemented into the bridge to help give pedestrians and cyclists insight into the nature of the area and create a sustainable habitat. This is very important to incorporate into my design as well.

design

VI.

CONCEPTUAL MAPPING

Brainstorming the Design

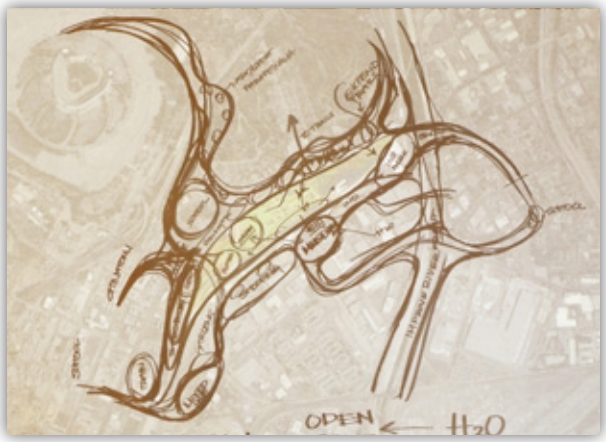


Figure 6.1

Figure 6.2

Figure 6.3

When beginning the conceptual phase of design it is important to consider the surrounding area to decide the best opportunity for connection. The first diagram to the left shows connectivity to the Stadium on to the northwest, to the existing trails on the northeast, to Chinatown on the west and southwest side, and to the industrial and Los Angeles River to the east. This diagram begins to layout the earth forms of the design and its organic flow. The second diagram displays the different elements to the program in a conceptual plan. The different areas are chucked in sections here so it becomes clear the location of each individual place. The third and last diagram shows a more detailed program mapping. Here it is possible to see where the main entrances are and some of the transportation through the site. This phase was critical to begin to understand the flow of the site and the main transportation around it.

FINAL CONCEPTUAL DIAGRAM

Deciding the Program

After creating multiple hand drawn diagrams, I developed a final to display the different areas of my design and display how they will interact with one another. The image to the right shows the different labeled areas. Some of the elements included are as follows:

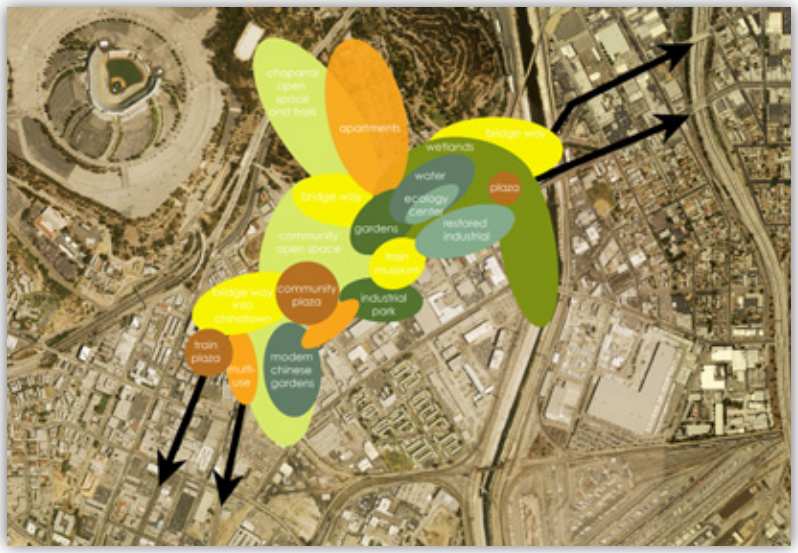


Figure 6.4

Chinese Gardens

These gardens will connect close to Chinatown to draw in visitors from this area. They will also be aesthetically pleasing from the train station located at the western side of the site. This will attract visitors using the MTA line.

Railroad Museum

Located on the middle south of the site, this museum will provide an educational purpose. This will inform visitors of the history of the railyard as well as the history of transportation into the Los Angeles area. In addition, it will provide a place for the schools surrounding the area to visit.

Commercial and Restaurants

Along the west side of the site, there will be commercial stores connecting Chi-

natown to the site for pedestrians. Restaurants will also be located along these walkways with outdoor seating to enjoy the park.

Industrial Open Space

At the far southeast side of the park there will be an extension that reflects the industrial program to the south side. Many examples of rundown industrial buildings being converted into successful open spaces have been developed in Germany. This section will incorporate grass, trail systems, and green roofs.

Grass Mounds

These mounds will connect the trail system to the Cornfields site in a unique way. They will incorporate the organic feeling of the site and connect it to the community. These parks will also serve as an aesthetic place for the railroad and allow a lesser slope into the area north of the site.

Apartments

These apartments will be located on the southwest end of the site, across the street from the Chinatown train station. They will be close to transportation and downtown. They could provide a means for further development of its kind to be implemented around the site.

Stadium Bridge

This bridge will create an opportunity to connect the park to Dodger Stadium. Transportation up this bridge will run with a trolly system taking patrons to the top. This will decrease the traffic flow during ball games and promote use of the MTA line and the park.

Sculpture Garden

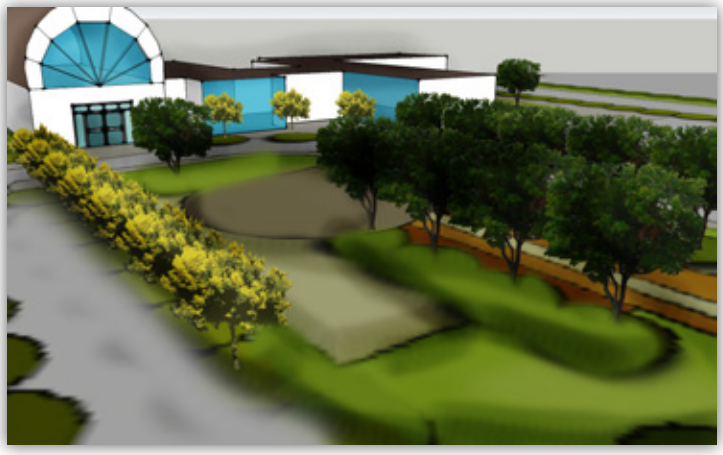
A sculpture garden located at the base of the trolly system will display local artists designs symbolizing baseball and other sorts teams in Los Angeles. This will help to incorporate the community and the ballpark together and create an enjoyable environment while people await their train.

ILLUSTRATIVE PLAN

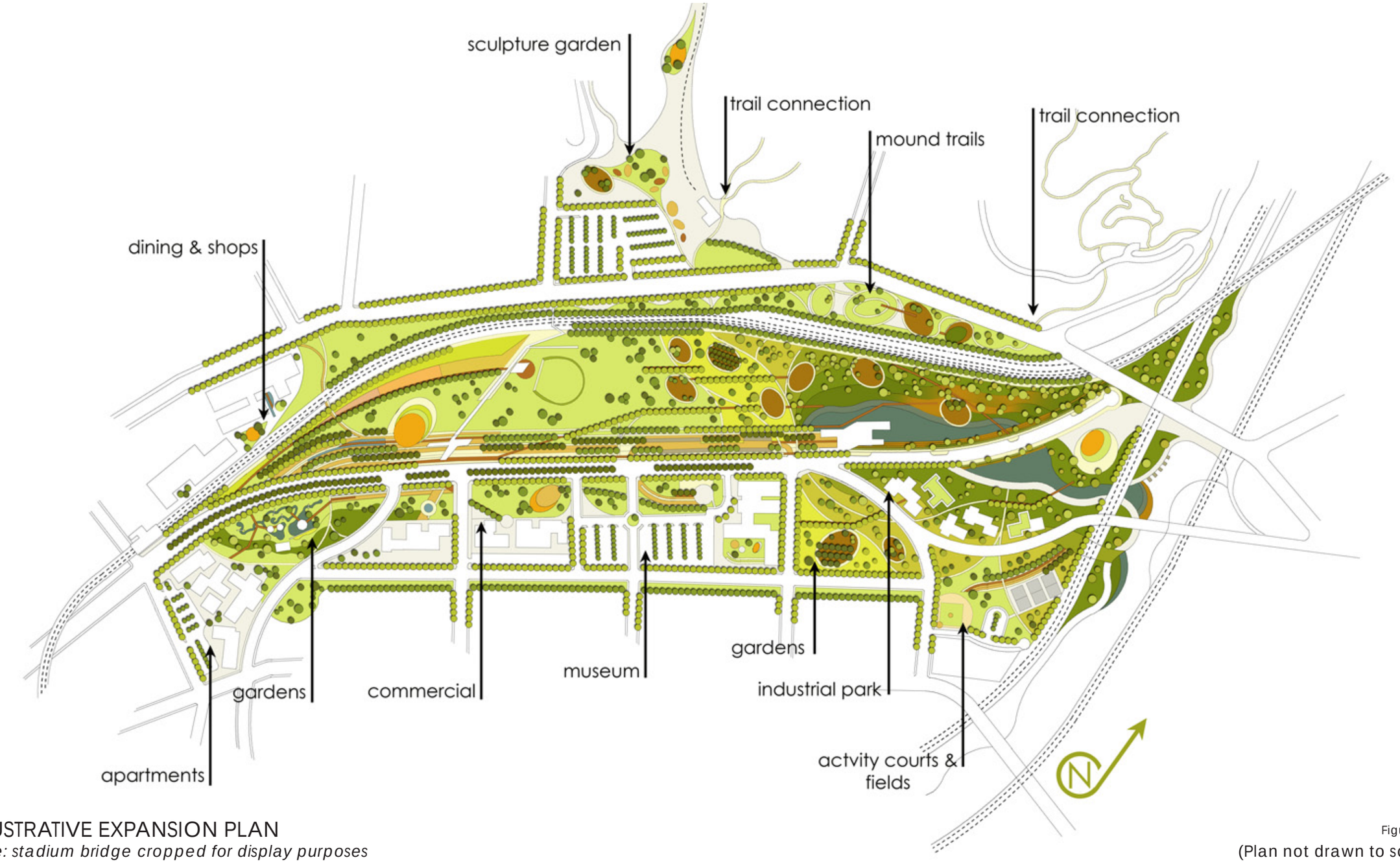
Hargreaves Extension

The illustrative plan for the new design is on the adjacent page. This plan creates connectivity to Chinatown, industrial space, residences, trail systems, the river, and Dodger Stadium. Elements within the design are labeled on the drawing.

Chinese Garden Perspective



Railroad Museum Perspective



ILLUSTRATIVE EXPANSION PLAN
Note: stadium bridge cropped for display purposes

Figure 6.5
(Plan not drawn to scale)

community open space

utilizing cornfields park as the foundation for implementing a natural urban fabric

key elements

VII.

PLACEMENT

Element Location

Figure 7.1

The map above lays out the different locations for the following blown up areas. These areas are critical points of connection to the Cornfields open space that bring a new identity to the site. These areas include the Chinese Gardens, Railroad Museum, Industrial Open Space, and the Stadium Bridge. Although it is good to see these on a more detailed level, the map above displays their placement, which is critical for their success. This effects how accessible they are for pedestrians, cyclists, and vehicles. It also shows how close in proximity they are to the community their are attempting to identify with. For example, the oval trail system in the northern area of the extension are located in close proximity to the existing trails, a neighborhood, and allow an alternate topography solution for this area.

CHINESE GARDENS

Connection to Chinese culture

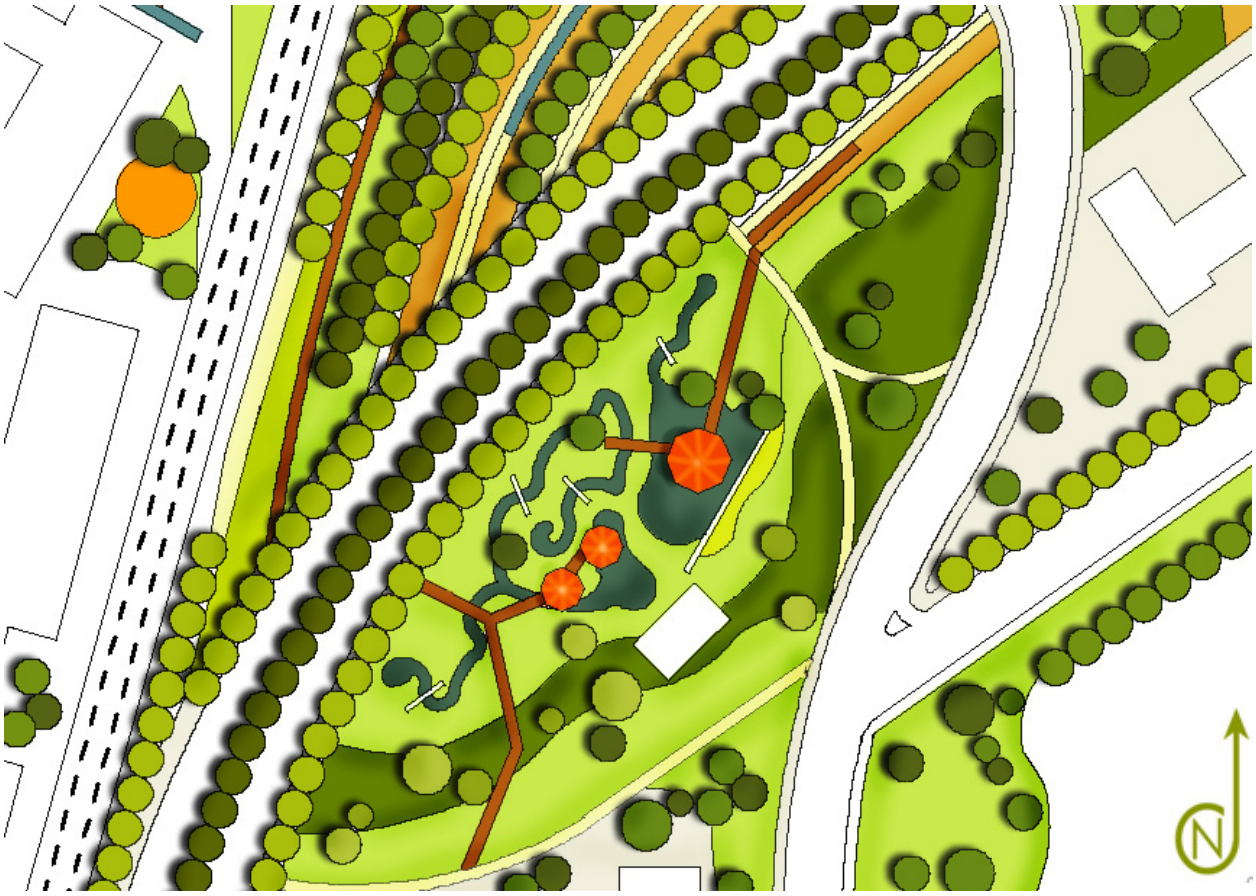


Figure 7.2

The gardens in the southern corner of the site incorporate the culture and community of Chinatown into the design. They incorporate traditional Chinese buildings with the typical flowing stream seen in Chinese landscapes. This garden gives the site a sense of serenity and improves the privacy of the apartments proposed to the south. It is also aesthetically pleasing to see from the exit of the train station, therefore evoking interest and access to the open space and its features. Bridges link Chinese pavilions around the streams and still water. The water feature ties into the river at the other end of the site, and the bridges were borrowed from Hargreaves design to create a cohesion throughout the garden.

RAILROAD MUSEUM

Incorporating History

The Railroad Museum would be a good addition to the site for visitors to learn more about the rich history of this area. The Hargreaves design offers an ecology center, there kids, and adults alike, can begin to understand the ecology of California and the importance of native habitats. This ideology is one of the main goals for the Hargreaves design. However, this museum would be very educational about the potential this area once housed. The museum is located on the south side of the site just across the street from the main railroad plaza, this is because the two are related, but also because more attraction can be drawn here to connect the two areas.

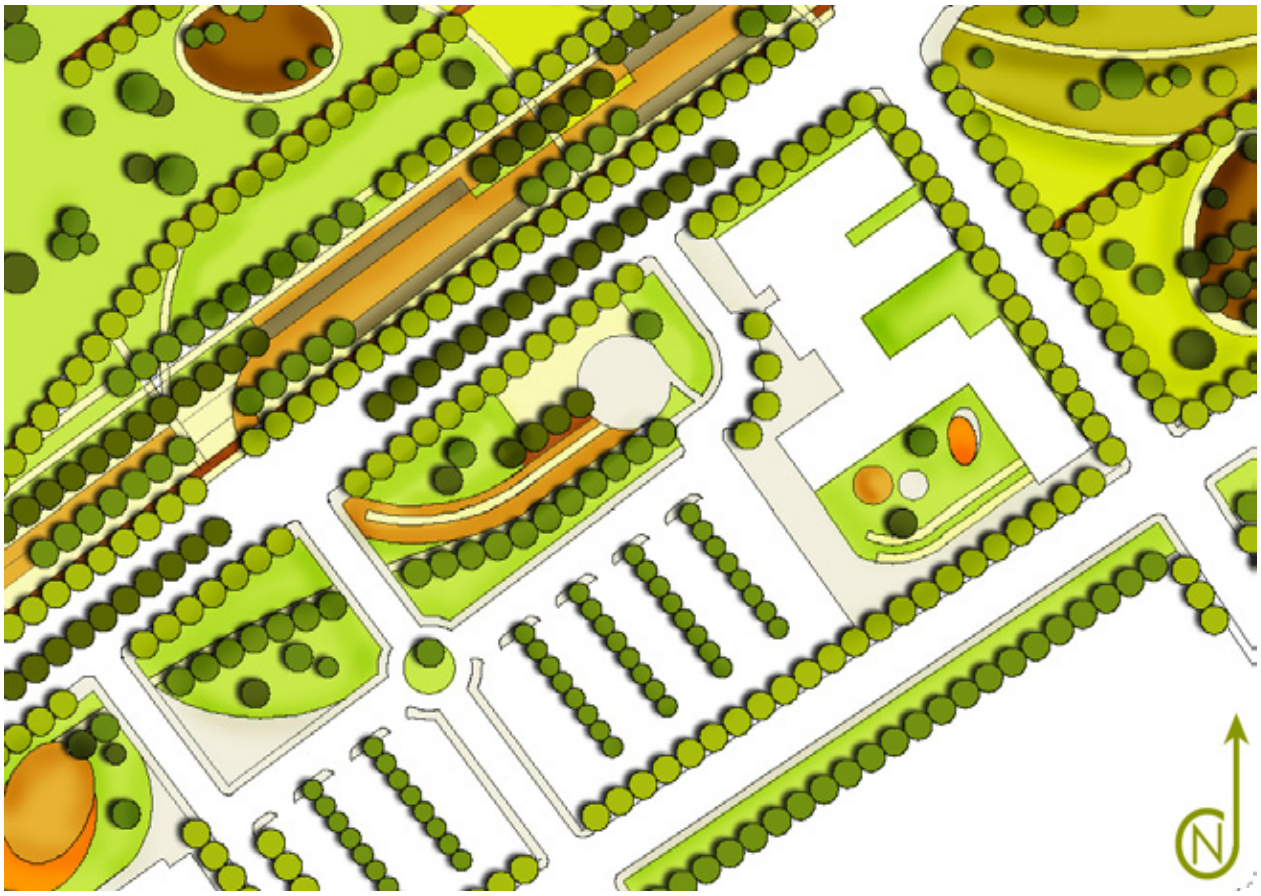


Figure 7.3

Creating New Meaning from Old Inspiration

Figure 7.4

This area located along the Los Angeles River houses many industrial buildings which are in poor condition. Because the Hargreaves design is so strong at this end of the site, there was good opportunity to keep the flow going. The landforms in conjunction with old industrial buildings have a great potential to be used as successful open space. These buildings display green roofs as of now but could have many different forms of restoration. For example, creating outdoor amphitheaters or classrooms within them would be a good option, or even a community center. In addition to these buildings, I carried over the community gardens from the Hargreaves design to create a cohesion and added sports fields for a

more active approach to the area. These fields are also accessible along the water from the trail system to the north.

STADIUM BRIDGE

Improving Transportation

For years, traffic in and out of sporting events has been a nightmare, and this bridge offers an opportunity to create an alternate entry into the Dodger Stadium baseball field. Something unique about this connection is at the very bottom there is a sculpture garden. This garden would be home to local artists pieces symbolizing and displaying the history of the ballpark in Los Angeles. The trolly system running up the bridge allows for more access through the MTA line, into the park, up to the stadium. This would reduce traffic and create a new attraction to the Cornfields site to draw attention.

Figure 7.5

conclusion

VIII.

conclusion

SIGNIFICANCE OF THE OUTCOME

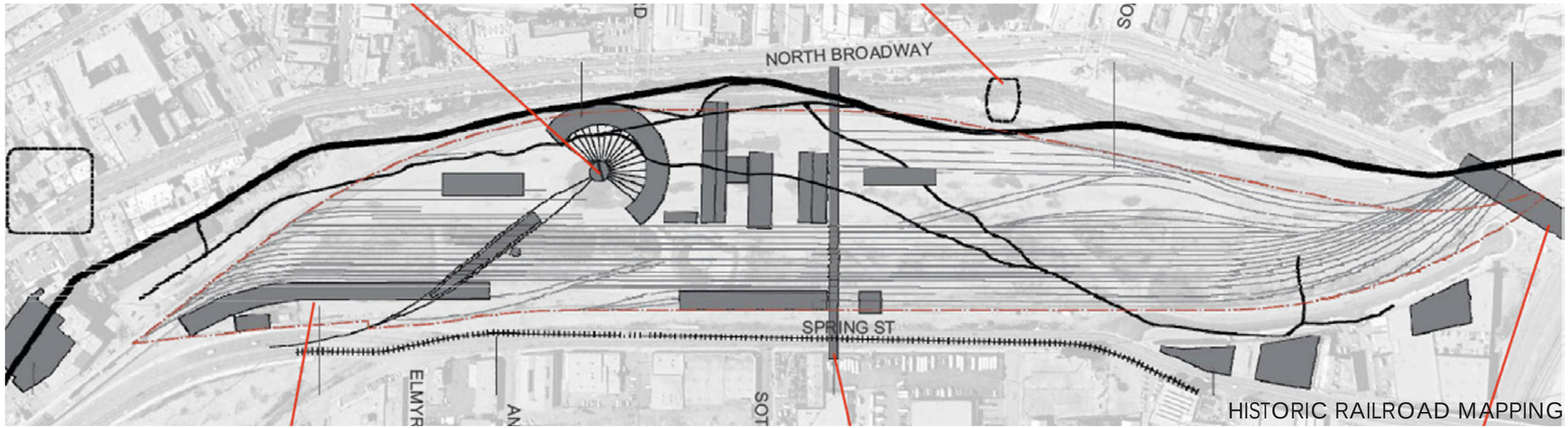
This project's goal was to provide an exmple which proves that open spaces can provide a fabric to blend communities together. The Cornfields site is a great example of a space surrounded by multiple different communities. This site is the ultimate test of whether it is feasible to use open spaces to connect these places to one another.

I believe that the design I have created was a successful one, considering all the examples I was provided with throughout my research. I have been able to see what techniques for connectivity would have worked and which ones would not. All in all I connected communities based on their cultural diversities and character and created a cohesion with the Cornfields site.

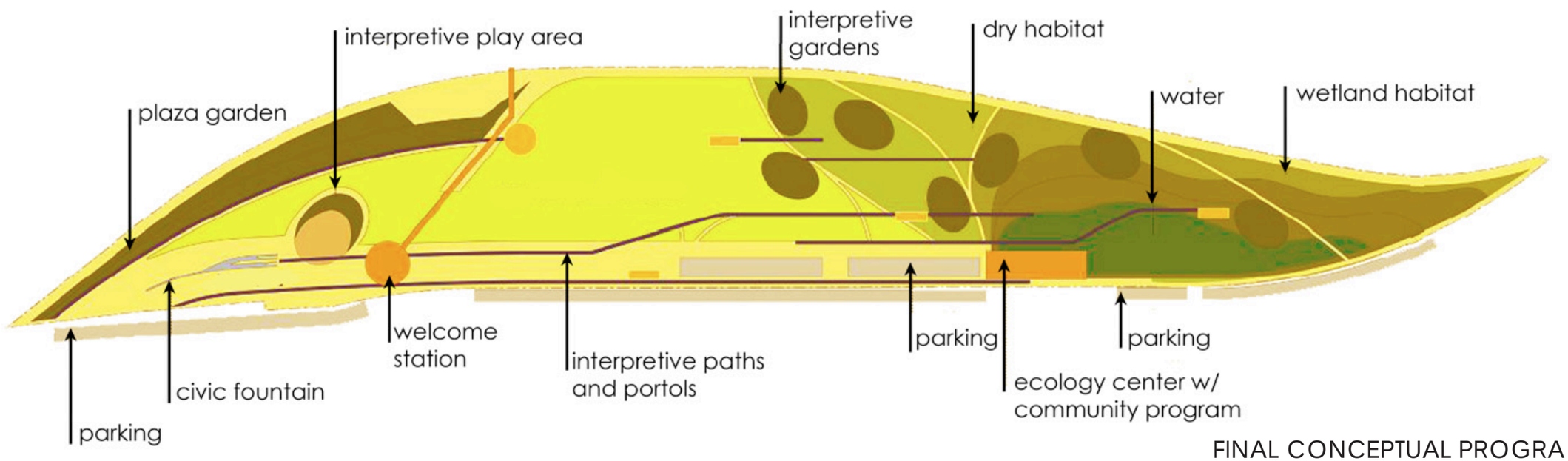
The Hargreaves design is successful, but there are more steps that could be taken to make this park into an absolute success. I believe that through this project I have given some great ideas of some ways that this can become possible.

enlargements

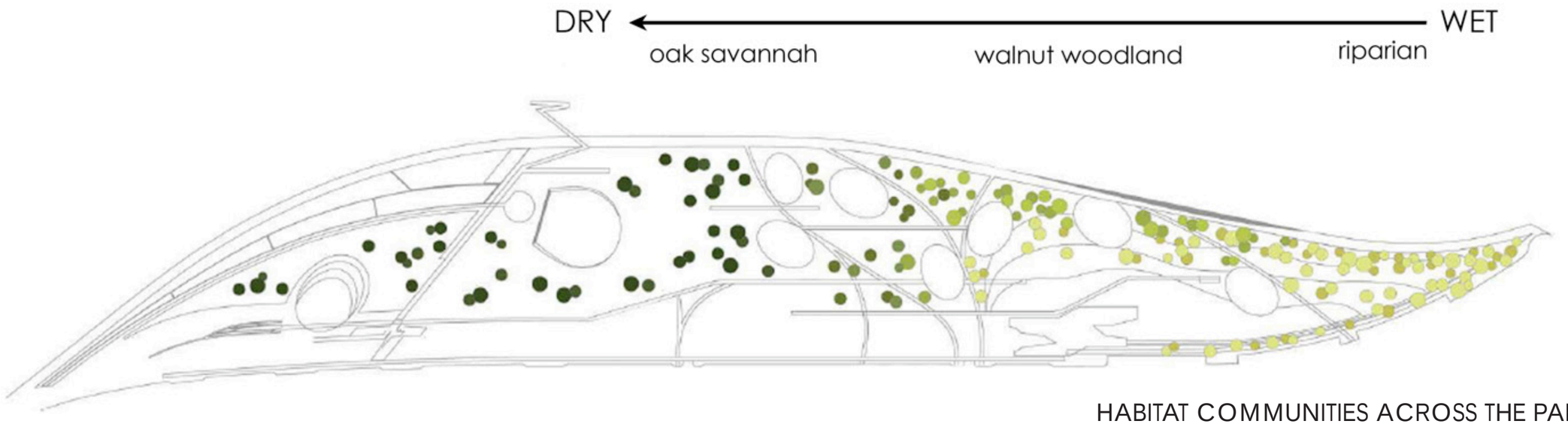
IX.



HISTORIC RAILROAD MAPPING



FINAL CONCEPTUAL PROGRAM



HABITAT COMMUNITIES ACROSS THE PARK

FINAL ILLUSTRATIVE PLAN

bibliography

x.

bibliography

Beardsley, John. Mario Schjetnan: Landscape, Architecture, and Urbanism. Washington, DC: Spacemaker P, LLC, 2007.

Coulthard, Tim. “Northala Fields Forever.” Landscape Architecture May 2009: 94-101.

Dettmar, Jorg, and Karl Ganser. IndustreieNatur. Ulmer: Verlag Eugen Ulmer GmbH & Co, 1999.

Enlow, Clair. “Prairie Crossing.” Landscape Architecture Feb. 2009: 90-95.

Hargreaves Associates. Los Angeles State Historic Park Community Workshop 3. San Francisco: Hargreaves Associates Design Team, 2008.

Hargreaves Associates. Los Angeles State Historic Park Schematic Design Documents. San Francisco: Hargreaves Associates, 2008.

“Los Angeles SHP.” California State Parks. 2005. 4 Apr. 2009 <http://www.parks.ca.gov/default.asp?page_id=22272>.

Millennium Park. 12 June 2009 <http://www.millenniumpark.org/>.

Orange County Great Park Corporation - Irvine, California - Homepage. 12 June 2009 <http://www.ocgp.org/>.

Redding, CA. 12 June 2009 <http://www.visitredding.org/sundial.cfm>.

Walker, Peter. Landscape Architecture: Defining the Craft. London: Thames & Hudson Ltd., 2005.