

SUMMARY REPORT

COLLECTIVE EFFORTS

BUILDING RESILIENT COMMUNITIES IN THE
LOWER LOS ANGELES RIVER CORRIDOR

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606 Studio 2017

DEPARTMENT OF LANDSCAPE ARCHITECTURE

College of Environmental Design • California State Polytechnic University, Pomona

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PROJECT OVERVIEW

Over the last decade, cities around the world have shown renewed interest in reclaiming urban waterfronts as a means of revitalizing public space and developing multi-functional green infrastructure for social and ecological benefits (Batten, 2012). The Los Angeles metropolitan area, home to 15 million residents, and its relationship to the Los Angeles River, is one such example. Once a tapestry of meandering streams, arroyos, and washes, today the LA River is an inaccessible, fully engineered flood-control system with much of its original ecological function lost (Gumprecht, 1999). Plans for the river's revitalization have emerged over the past 20 years, ranging from complete floodplain restoration to the creation of waterfront development, parks, and wildlife habitat (Fletcher, 2008). While these proposals provide a broad vision for the river's future, they do not necessarily include provisions for the specific needs of individual communities. The first step toward the sustainable revitalization of the river is building social and economic

capacity in disadvantaged neighborhoods, specifically along the Lower LA River. Doing so will provide these communities with greater opportunity to voice their support for local improvements that fit within the context of the existing master plans while still reflecting their own community-specific interests. This project demonstrates the potential for community-based design-build projects to draw neighborhoods together in pursuit of common goals while improving local quality of life.

The 606 Studio teams worked with residents in the neighborhoods of Jackson Park and South Wrigley in Long Beach, California to develop neighborhood-scale vision plans that address community-specific landscape improvement needs. The teams worked collaboratively with residents to generate three to six plans for spaces in each of the neighborhoods with an emphasis on creating a dialogue with residents about how the landscape can serve both social and ecological functions.



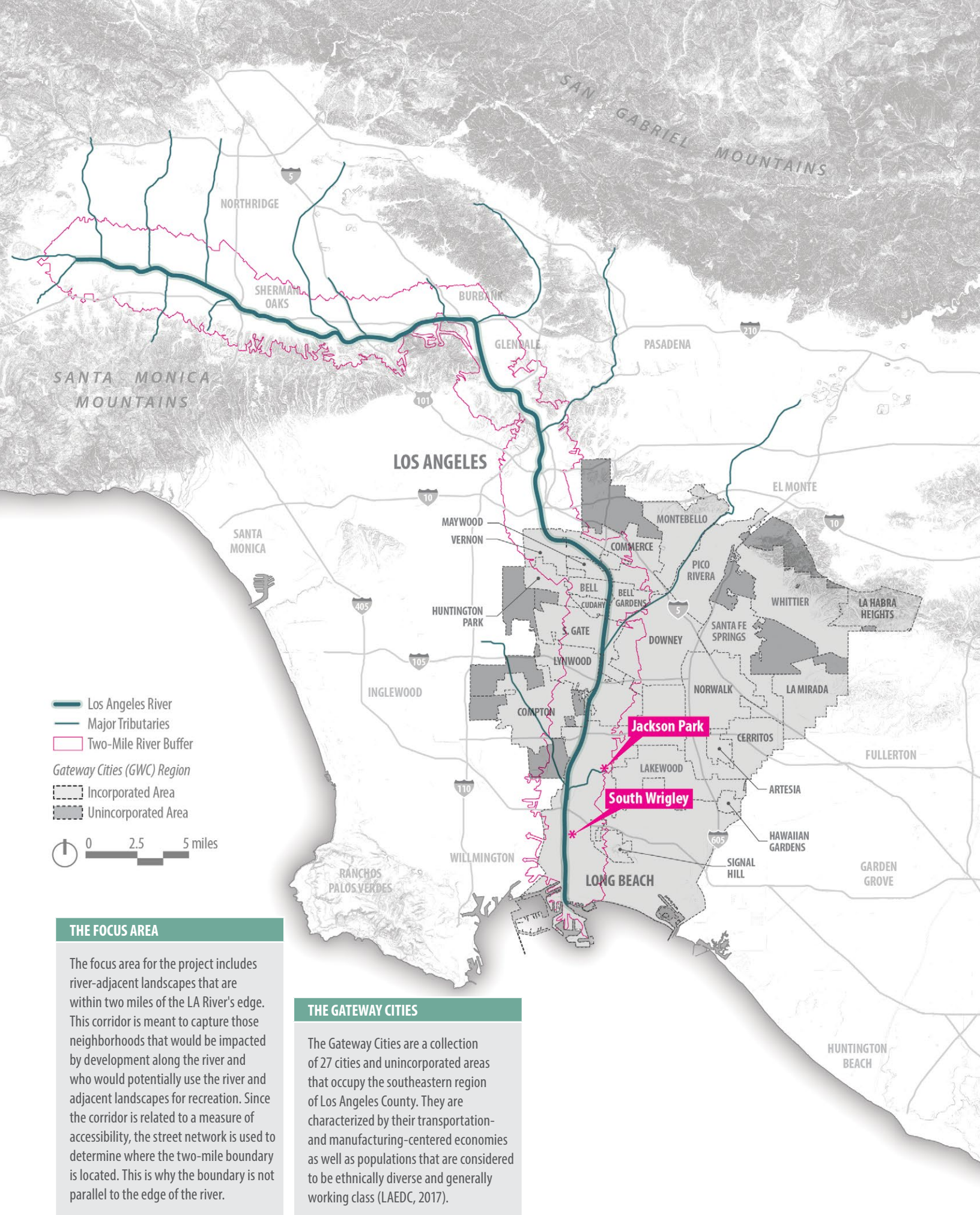


FIGURE 1 Gateway Cities Region

MEET THE TEAM

Collective Efforts utilized participatory design strategies to engage residents in creating projects that directly address their needs and resonate with the culture and character of their neighborhood. Participatory design and the Los Angeles River is vital to the development and revitalization of the Gateway Cities, specifically in neighborhoods surrounding the Lower LA River. Many neighborhoods within the Gateway Cities are home to predominately working class, lower-income families, and are often ignored during the traditionally top-down design and planning process (606 Studio, 2016). Participatory design engages these residents in articulating their own vision and their own designs, generating improvement plans that respond more effectively to their community-specific needs.

Community involvement in the participatory design process can create the momentum essential to building community capacity (Chaskin, 1999). Developing community capacity can lead to citizen-driven neighborhood organizations or citizen advisory groups that give communities the skills, resources, and experience to pursue active change in their neighborhoods (Mayer, 1995).

It is important for public projects to be relevant to local communities to make the most of investment dollars. By involving community members throughout the development process, agencies can ensure the final designs include elements that residents are likely to use. Similarly, when a community is engaged throughout the design process they are more likely to take ownership of the project and are less likely to damage or vandalize site amenities (Milburn, 2017).

Finally, by involving residents at all stages of the design process, residents can share valuable insights throughout the programming, goal setting, inventory, and site analysis stages to allow for design solutions that are more appropriate to the neighborhood's context (Hester, 1984).

CONSERVATION CORP OF LONG BEACH (CCLB)

The Conservation Corps was identified to participate in *Collective Efforts* through allied organizations involved in development efforts surrounding the LA River with a goal of working with youth residents who are rooted in their neighborhood and share the perspectives of the local community. The hope was that involving these community members would also build long-term future environmental stewards while providing exposure for at-risk youth to urban planing, landscape architecture, and other fields oriented toward sustainable development.

ANTHONY TAUFI

Anthony and his family settled in West Long Beach and eventually he moved in with an uncle living in the Wrigley neighborhood, where he still lives today. Anthony holds belts in Judo and Ju Jitsu, has Gold and Silver Gloves in boxing, and studies both Muy Thai and traditional kickboxing. Anthony's infectious personality and local knowledge of the Wrigley community was a boon to the project team and resulted in higher neighborhood turnout at meetings and build days.



LARRY HALL

Larry joined the CCLB in July of 2016 and was on schedule to earn his high school diploma in spring of 2017. While at CCLB, Larry has studied writing, painting, photography and tattoo-artistry. He has also written, directed and produced his own videos. Larry enjoys creating things with his hands and likes the idea of building something to better the community. Larry is planning on enrolling at Cal State University, Long Beach and sees himself enhancing his artistic skills as a filmmaker or photographer.



JAYCOB BEACH

Born with cerebral palsy, Jaycob was attracted to the CCLB because he knew students who had excelled there and felt like community work would be a good fit for his interests. Having grown up in the nearby Bixby Knolls section of Long Beach, Jaycob was familiar with Jackson Park and its residents. During door-to-door outreach efforts, Jaycob struck an easy rapport with residents. His ease with the community helped the project team build relationships with Jackson Park residents.



606 STUDIO

Each year, the 606 Studio completes one or more capstone projects for the landscape architecture graduate program at California State Polytechnic University, Pomona. The 606 Studio has nearly 45 years of award-winning service work focused on helping municipalities, non-government organizations, community organizations, and other agencies to solve complex problems resulting from relationships between human and natural systems. 606 Studio projects apply advanced methods of analysis and design to address significant issues concerning resources of both the physical and social environment, with broad implications that go beyond project site boundaries.

PROJECT GOAL

The *Collective Efforts* project engaged communities along the Lower LA River Corridor in a dialogue about the river and its associated open spaces to identify priority neighborhood landscape improvements that address stormwater runoff (water quality, quantity and temperature, including pollutant mitigation) and ecological systems. These improvements will also enhance the link between existing river parks and their neighborhoods and create multi-functional green infrastructure that concurrently addresses the need for (1) recreation and leisure spaces to improve quality of life and physical health, and (2) environmental improvements that provide ecosystem services such as stormwater management, carbon sequestration, and wildlife habitat.

PROJECT METHODS

Canvassing involves systematically going door-to-door in a neighborhood or district, engaging the residents of each house or discussing strategically designed questions, sharing information and closing with a request for involvement, donation, or action.

Field Observations are used to survey the existing conditions of each site or neighborhood. The project teams used field observation to develop a better understanding of neighborhood characteristics such as street conditions and pedestrian amenities. The teams documented observations using photography, notes, and Global Positioning System (GPS) devices.

Data Mining included the use of government documents and websites, research by subject matter experts, and a variety of quality non-academic resources to find relevant information. The project team used primarily internet sources for the data mining process.

GIS Mapping and Analysis was used to describe and analyze demographic and geographic information about the area and neighborhoods.

TABLE 1 Summary of Project Methods

PHASE 1: Community Outreach and Engagement	PHASE 2: Neighborhood Vision Planning	PHASE 3: Final Project Implementation
Develop community outreach and engagement strategies	Solidify committee of community leaders	Identify range of potential projects for final build days
Learn about community priorities and concerns	Adapt community outreach and engagement strategies	Evaluate options with community and develop plans for construction
Identify and recruit interested community members	Inventory neighborhood conditions based on community priorities	Construct final project with community members
Engage community members with initial build project	Facilitate community design workshops	Identify strategies for long-term implementation of vision plan
RESULT: Immediate improvement that demonstrates intent of project and initiates community ownership	RESULT: A set of three to six concept plans that represent the community's vision for the neighborhood	RESULT: Built project that reflects community priorities and generates momentum for long-term landscape stewardship

FIGURE 2 Objectives and Outcomes of Project Phases

PROJECT METHODS

Community Meetings included activities and breakout groups to identify goals, priorities and decisions about the community and neighborhood.

Steering Committee Meetings involved gathering community participants who were part of the leadership committee to guide the project. They were used to prepare for other meetings, workshops, work days, etc.

Design Workshops were used to develop and refine designs, supported by materials and activities that allow participants to conceptualize the implications of designs and to ultimately make decisions regarding design selection.

Build Days consisted of community maintenance or construction efforts directed at implementing ideas developed in the design workshops.

TABLE 1 Summary of Project Methods (continued)

PROJECT METHODS

A number of methods were used by the 606 Studio to gain a better understanding of the study region and project areas. Some of the methods relied heavily on working with community members to identify their specific preferences and priorities for enacting change in their neighborhoods. This includes methods such as canvassing, interviews, community meetings, and steering committee meetings. Additional methods were more data-driven, such as GIS mapping and analysis, and were used primarily to conduct the regional inventory (**Table 1**).



REGIONAL INVENTORY

The project utilized an issue-driven approach to regional inventory and analysis. Instead of completing an exhaustive and comprehensive review of all available data sets for the region, *Collective Efforts* focused on key issues that were central to understanding the context of the neighborhoods where the project took place. The issues were identified through integrating residents' perspectives expressed during community outreach with input from the project teams. Through this process, regional history, air quality, open space needs and demographics rose as the defining factors in framing the goals and intent of *Collective Efforts*.

LA County was used as a baseline for comparison. Data for the Gateway Cities was used to support analysis of the conditions of the study region. Historically the Gateway Cities have been home to the manufacturing, transportation and logistics enterprises that feed and fuel the business and residential centers of Southern California. This concentrated industrial



INVENTORY TOPIC	FINDINGS
History	The channelization of the LA River and the development of the I-710 Freeway corridor have contributed to the disenfranchisement of communities in the Lower LA River Corridor.
Land-use and Demographics	Neighborhoods in the focus area tend to have a higher concentration of industrialized land-uses, lower median incomes, lower levels of education attainment, higher population density, and higher densities of minority residents.
Hydrology and Water Quality	The landscapes associated with the Lower LA River Corridor have greater amounts of impervious surfaces, higher runoff volumes and flow rates, and the region has a higher concentration of permitted point-source polluters.
Air Pollution	Air quality issues are dispersed equally throughout the region, but communities in the focus area experience higher rates of air pollution-related diseases such as asthma, suggesting a lack of pollution mitigating landscapes.
Regional Open Space Opportunities	Access to open space is consistent throughout the region, but neighborhoods in the Lower LA River Corridor have significantly less park acres per 1,000 residents and in some cases more poorly maintained park facilities.
Habitat Conditions	The large patches of open space that are necessary for providing habitat for many species are not available in the focus area and there is a general lack of biodiversity.
Plans, Policies, and Regulations	There are several plans and policies that impact communities in the focus area, however many are either too broad in scope, too general in their provisions, and/or are not directed at making community-specific landscape improvements.

TABLE 2 *Summary of Regional Inventory Findings*

activity has resulted in disproportionate air pollution, water contamination, and habitat degradation and less available open space. Communities in the focus area had an average of two acres of parkland per 1000 residents, approximately one-eighth of the park acreage available to residents in the Upper LA River Corridor. The lack of open space is exacerbated by the channelization of the LA River and development of the I-710 Freeway. These twin dividers cut many communities in half and make parks and open spaces, including the river itself, inaccessible to many residents.

The I-710 Freeway also significantly increases particulate matter in the area, particularly because it is the main conduit for the diesel inter-modal trucks serving the harbors of Long Beach and Los Angeles. The cumulative impacts of these many sources of air pollution are demonstrated by the higher hospitalizations for asthma and cardiovascular disease in the Lower LA River Corridor. Comparative analysis of the tree canopy along the River also reveals that the communities of the Lower LA River most impacted by pollution have very few trees to help mitigate pollution.

Communities in the Gateway Cities have higher rates population density, poverty, families with female householders, and Spanish speakers and lower rates of educational attainment than LA County. There is a significant imbalance between the environmental needs of the communities of the Lower LA River and their capacity to respond with economic resources.

NEIGHBORHOOD SELECTION

The Long Beach branch of the Conservation Corps (CCLB) volunteered to work collaboratively with the 606 Studio to provide a unique leadership opportunity for interested Corps Members (CMs).

The 606 Studio worked with the CCLB to identify representative neighborhoods in Long Beach where the project would take place (**Figure 4**). The 606 Studio was split into two teams, which provided the opportunity to select two project areas and allowed the teams to document how the same participatory design methods would yield different results depending on the specific context of the community.

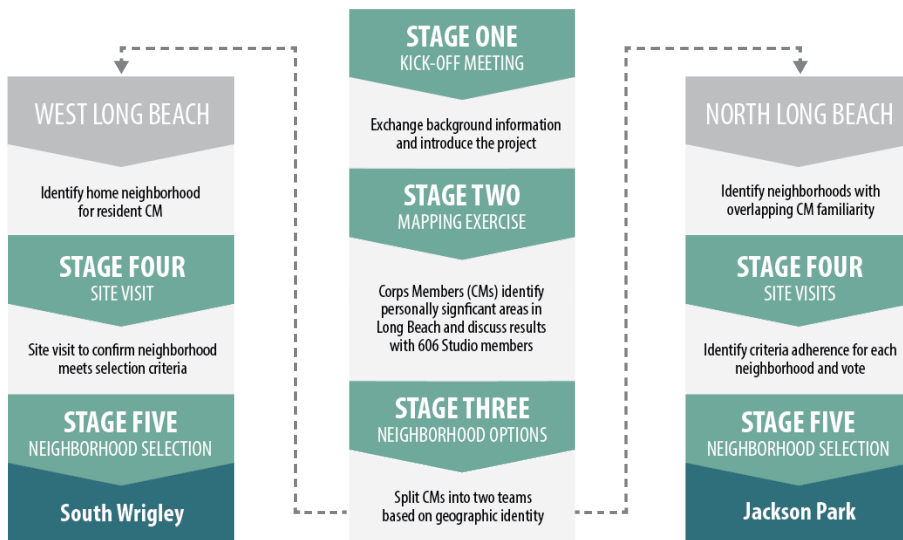


FIGURE 3 Neighborhood Selection Process

NEIGHBORHOOD/STUDY REGION	BLACK	ASIAN	WHITE	HISPANIC*	BELOW POVERTY	MEDIAN INCOME
South Wrigley	20 %	11 %	32 %	56 %	25 %	\$36,900
Jackson Park	13 %	26 %	27 %	45 %	19 %	\$49,000
Lower LA River Corridor	10 %	7 %	41 %	75 %	22 %	\$44,500
Gateway Cities	8 %	9 %	47 %	68 %	17 %	\$54,800

TABLE 3 Summary of Neighborhood Demographics



Key Map

- █ Project Area
- █ Potential Neighborhoods
- █ Two-mile River Corridor

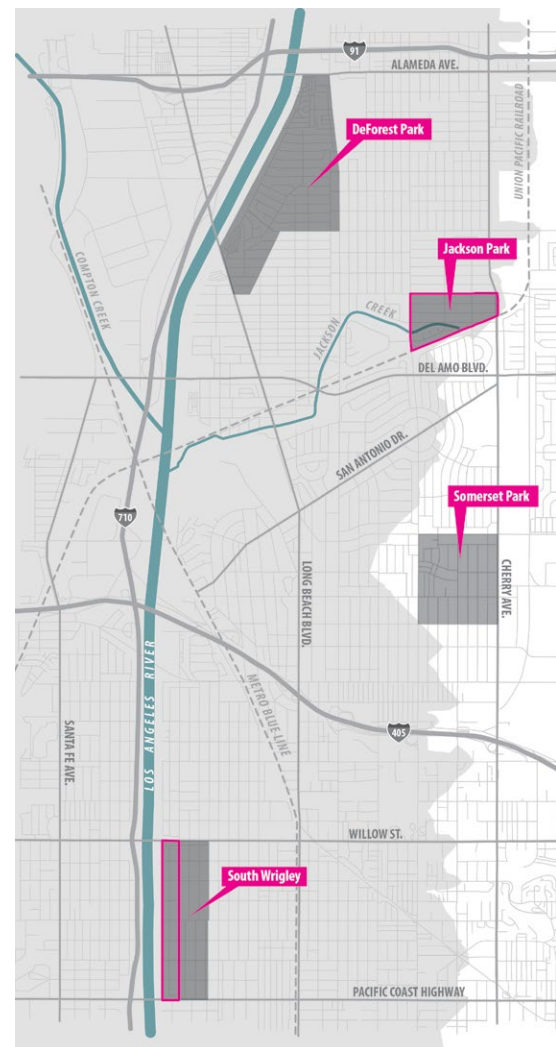


FIGURE 4 Neighborhood Options and Final Selections

SOUTH WRIGLEY

The South Wrigley community is comprised of primarily Hispanic and middle- to low-income working-class residents. The neighborhood is located in West Long Beach directly adjacent to the eastern edge of the LA River between Pacific Coast Highway (PCH) and Willow Street. It covers approximately 410 acres and encompasses primarily residential land-uses with commercial land-uses concentrated along the perimeter of the neighborhood, except along the western edge where it meets the river.

After completing extensive outreach efforts, the team compiled and analyzed results for trends and reoccurring themes to identify topics for the neighborhood inventory. Inventory results argued for concentrating improvements along the river's edge and highlighted the need for design solutions that provide increased safety and better access to social and recreational amenities while promoting opportunities for habitat creation, stormwater management, and pollution mitigation.



BIG QUESTION	RESULTS
Who lives here?	The neighborhood is predominately Hispanic and working class, as is the entire Lower LA River Corridor. There are two existing neighborhood associations that are not representative of the community demographics. Residents take pride in their neighborhood diversity, variety of front yard landscapes, and local wildlife.
What is the community's relationship with the Los Angeles River?	Some residents use the trail for recreation, but others do not due to concerns about homeless encampments. A few residents did not know they could access the river trail in their neighborhood. Many of the perceptions surrounding the river are negative due to the association with homelessness and security issues.
What are the existing assets of the neighborhood?	There are many undeveloped spaces along the edge of the river, however due to their current conditions many residents are uncomfortable with the idea of using these spaces.
What are the immediate needs of residents in terms of improving their quality of life?	Residents are primarily concerned with issues of homelessness, lack of safety, and illegal dumping.
Where should the community improvement projects be located?	Neighborhood issues are concentrated in areas along the river. Improvement projects are preferred in locations that are already used by community members, and in areas near river entrances where increased use was perceived as a benefit.
How can the project team engage the community in making design decisions?	Residents were engaged by design questions and their responses directed the project team to include elements and focus on priorities that were unique to the community members and might not have otherwise been a primary focus of the design work.

TABLE 4 South Wrigley – Project Questions



The project team used interviews to learn more about the neighborhood and garner support for the project. Interviews were conducted with representatives from local neighborhood organizations as well as with representatives from the district council office. Interviews were conducted with the following: the Long Beach District 7 Chief of Staff, the founder of Wrigley is Going Green (WiGG), two Wrigley Area Neighborhood Alliance board members, and a Wrigley Association member.

NEIGHBORHOOD INVENTORY

Conducting a neighborhood inventory provided a foundation for ensuring plans were reflective of community-specific issues. The inventory topics were determined based on results from community meetings, interviews, outreach efforts, and design workshops.



Residents expressed a strong sense of community identity, and the team investigated how the identity of the community members living in the project area might be different from the Wrigley area as a whole. Residents living in the project area also expressed enthusiasm for do-it-yourself landscape improvements, representative of the vibrancy and diversity of the community.

There are many open spaces between the homes of residents and the river levee where visibility is low, with little lighting, and inadequate maintenance and waste removal. This had discouraged use by community members and allowed homeless encampments and delinquent behavior. Safety and security are a priority for local residents, whose complaints are typically related to neglected landscape maintenance, illegal dumping, homelessness, and the associated perception of increased crime.



The primary environmental concerns are the impact of pollution from the I-710 Freeway and surrounding roadways, as well as the deteriorating habitat conditions in the project area. Most of the open spaces in the neighborhood are close to major roadways, and residents have identified that noise and air pollution are a concern. Some residents expressed concern that neighborhood landscapes lacked adequate habitat conditions to support local wildlife.

DESIGN PROCESS

The design process was divided into three project phases: Community Outreach and Engagement, Neighborhood Vision Planning, and Final Project Implementation.

The purpose of the initial project phase was to establish a foundation for the participatory design process by building relationships with community members and becoming familiar with the project area. The team used canvassing, two community meetings, a steering committee meeting, and build days to complete the phase objectives.

The second phase consisted of developing community-based designs for three to six sites within the project area that would collectively constitute the Neighborhood Vision Plan. The team used canvassing, steering committee meetings, and community design workshops.

During the last project phase the concept designs were finalized and a build project was completed that reflected the goals and priorities of the neighborhood vision plan. The project team used steering committee meetings, interviews, and build days to complete the phase objectives. The team was also required by the City to remove the benches that were completed during the first project phase, which impacted the final outcome of the project.

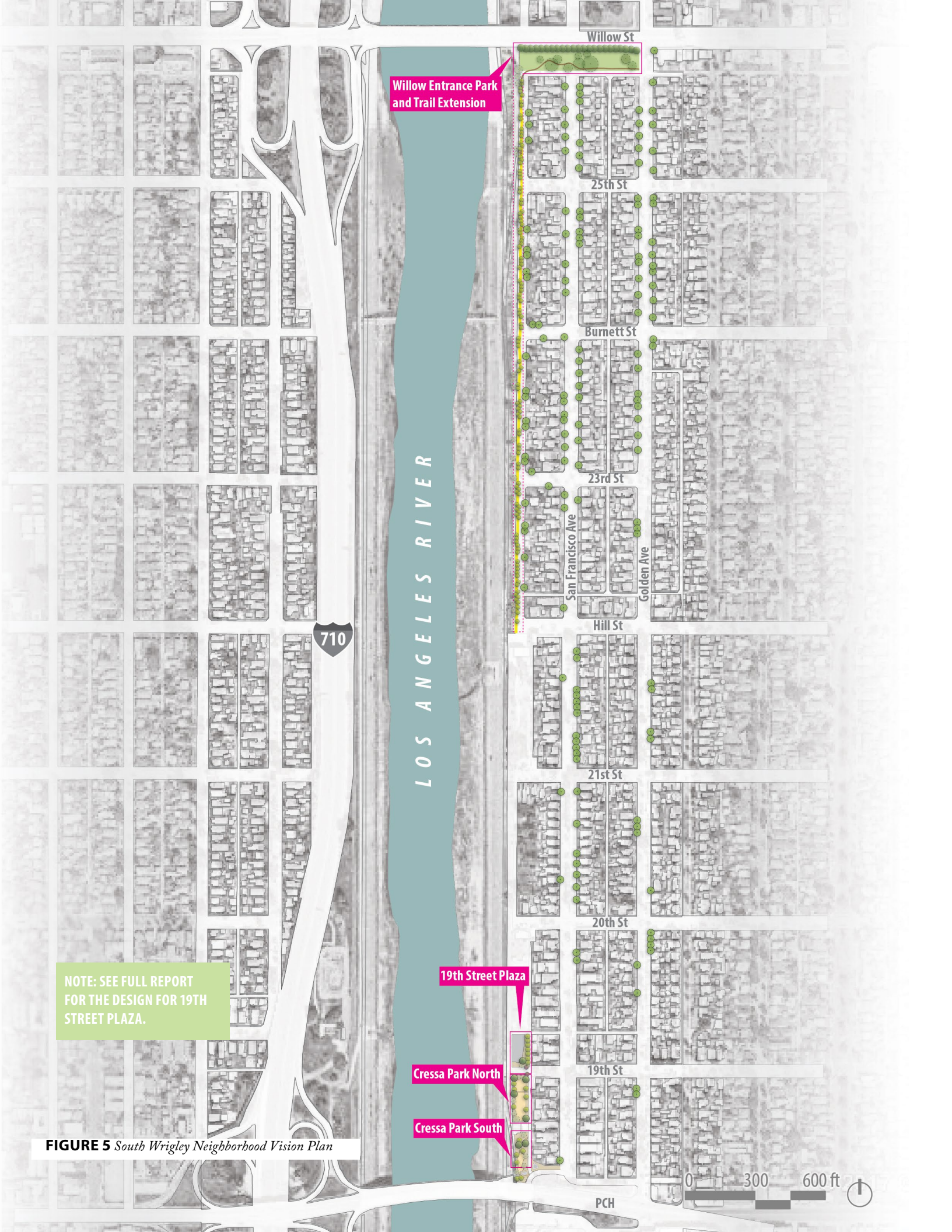


SOUTH WRIGLEY NEIGHBORHOOD VISION PLAN

The neighborhood vision plan is a conceptual plan for making improvements along the Lower Los Angeles River in the neighborhood of South Wrigley (**Figure 5**). The vision plan focuses on four community-identified site-specific projects (**Table 5**). The community decided upon guidelines for two thematic projects that are meant to be applied generally throughout the neighborhood and ultimately establish connections between the site-specific projects (**Table 5**).

NAME	EXISTING CONDITION	PROPOSAL
Willow Entrance Park and Trail Extension	An open space that features existing trees and a sloping edge that meets the sidewalk at Willow Street. This is the largest and most visible open space available to residents, and there are no lights, pedestrian amenities, or trash cans. The slope along the northern edge is eroding due to lack of plant cover and wet-season flooding.	Take advantage of the existing trees and provide a meandering pathway through the park. Include lighting and trash cans. Terrace the slopes to prevent erosion and create a dry creek bed that meanders alongside the pathway to encourage interaction with stormwater features. Include planting and bollards to define the edge of the space.
19th Street Plaza	The end of 19th Street is the most visible vacant land and open space along the edge of the river. Debris and overgrown weeds characterize the landscape and a broken basketball hoop is mounted to the fencing of the river levee. There are issues with people loitering in their vehicles during evening hours.	Activate this space as a catalyst for creating a sense of community ownership over river-adjacent landscapes. Include a multi-purpose court that accommodates basketball, four square, and hopscotch. Provide lighting, seating, and trash cans. Develop a skate park that directs stormwater into bioretention areas. Create bulb-outs that prevent parking at the end of the street and help define the space.
Cressa Park North	Once a flourishing native habitat with a meandering decomposed granite pathway, Cressa Park is now an overgrown and unused space that attracts illegal trash dumping and homeless encampments. It is located next to the river levee just south of the 19th Street Plaza. There is a perimeter chain link fence, lighting, trash cans, and seating.	Create a useable space that enhances the surveillance and accessibility of river-adjacent landscapes by installing a community dog park. Create separate areas for small and big dogs, as well as perimeter seating, trash cans, lighting, bioswales, dog play equipment, water fountains, and double entry gates.
Cressa Park South	The southern portion of Cressa Park is separated from Cressa Park North by a storage garage. All the same existing conditions apply, but illegal dumping is worse due to proximity to the highway underpass. Native plants and trees are present, but weeds dominate.	Re- create the character of the original park by providing a pathway through native plant habitat. Create low impact uses by installing exercise equipment. Define the entrance to the park with a row of trees and vegetation and install a new pedestrian river access gate to allow residents access to the river trail without having to go under the highway. Include bioretention areas to deal with runoff from PCH and the adjacent river levee.
Landscape Improvement Plan	Many of the public landscapes throughout the area are overgrown and poorly maintained. The project area is also located in a 'habitat zone' along the LA River.	Develop a plant palette that improves the aesthetic quality of the neighborhood and reinforces the neighborhood identity. Include recommendations for plants that have low-water and maintenance requirements and provide habitat for local birds and pollinators.
Street Improvement Plan	There are three main streets in the project area. One street has dangerous traffic speeds, another has issues with flooding and road cracking, and the third has low-visibility leading to crime and illegal trash dumping.	Develop recommendations that address the issues on each of the streets to create a safer pedestrian environment and more effective strategies for managing stormwater.

TABLE 5 Overview of South Wrigley Thematic & Site-specific Projects as Determined by Participants



Willow Entrance Park and Trail Extension

Willow St

25th St

Burnett St

23rd St

San Francisco Ave

Golden Ave

Hill St

21st St

20th St

19th Street Plaza

19th St

Cressa Park North

Cressa Park South

PCH

0 300 600 ft



NOTE: SEE FULL REPORT FOR THE DESIGN FOR 19TH STREET PLAZA.

FIGURE 5 South Wrigley Neighborhood Vision Plan

SOUTH WRIGLEY LANDSCAPE IMPROVEMENT PLAN

The landscape improvement plan is applicable to residential homes and public landscapes. Both residents and public agencies can incorporate and promote greywater and rainwater gardens while also providing habitat, improving aesthetic quality, and creating a sense of neighborhood identity. The community's priorities are the neighborhood entrances at Willow Street and Pacific Coast Highway where they intersect with Golden Avenue. **Table 6** makes recommendations for various plants that address each of the plan objectives. Many of these plants are already present in residents' front yards and help reinforce community identity.

STREET IMPROVEMENT PLAN

There are a number of strategies that can be used to address the street improvement objectives. **Table 7** summarizes the tools that can be applied for each objective.

TABLE 6 *Landscape Improvement Plan - Plant Recommendations*

PLANT RECOMMENDATIONS	
Low-Maintenance	Heavenly bamboo (<i>Nandina domestica</i>), Mock orange (<i>Pittosporum spp.</i>), New Zealand flax (<i>Phormium tenax</i>)
Drought Resistant	Rock purslane (<i>Calandrinia spectabilis</i>), Foxtail agave (<i>Agave attenuata</i>), Trailing lantana (<i>Lantana montevidensis</i>), Rosemary (<i>Rosmarinus spp.</i>), Yarrow (<i>Achillea spp.</i>)
Street Trees	Jacaranda tree (<i>Jacaranda mimosifolia</i>), Camphor tree (<i>Cinnamomum camphora</i>), Gold medallion tree (<i>Cassia leptophylla</i>)
Erosion Control	Wild lilac (<i>Ceanothus spp.</i>), Prostrate acacia (<i>Acacia red olens</i>), Prostrate rosemary (<i>rosmarinus prostratus</i>), Gazania (<i>Gazania spp.</i>)
Habitat & Foraging	Sage (<i>Salvia spp.</i>), Toyon (<i>Heteromeles arbutifolia</i>), Milkweed (<i>Asclepias spp.</i>), Manzanita (<i>Arctostaphylos spp.</i>), Tree mallow (<i>Lavatera assurgentiflora</i>)
Infiltration Areas	California grey rush (<i>Juncus patens</i>), Deergrass (<i>Muhlenbergia rigens</i>), Yarrow (<i>Achillea spp.</i>), Berkeley sedge (<i>Carex divulsa</i>)
Carbon Sequestration	Pine trees (<i>Pinus spp.</i>), Oak trees (<i>Quercus spp.</i>), London plane tree (<i>Platanus x acerifolia</i>)
Security	Red yucca (<i>Hesperaloe parviflora</i>), California grey rush (<i>Juncus patens</i>), American century plant (<i>Agave americana</i>), Beavertail cactus (<i>Opuntia spp.</i>)

LANDSCAPE IMPROVEMENT PLAN DESIGN OBJECTIVES

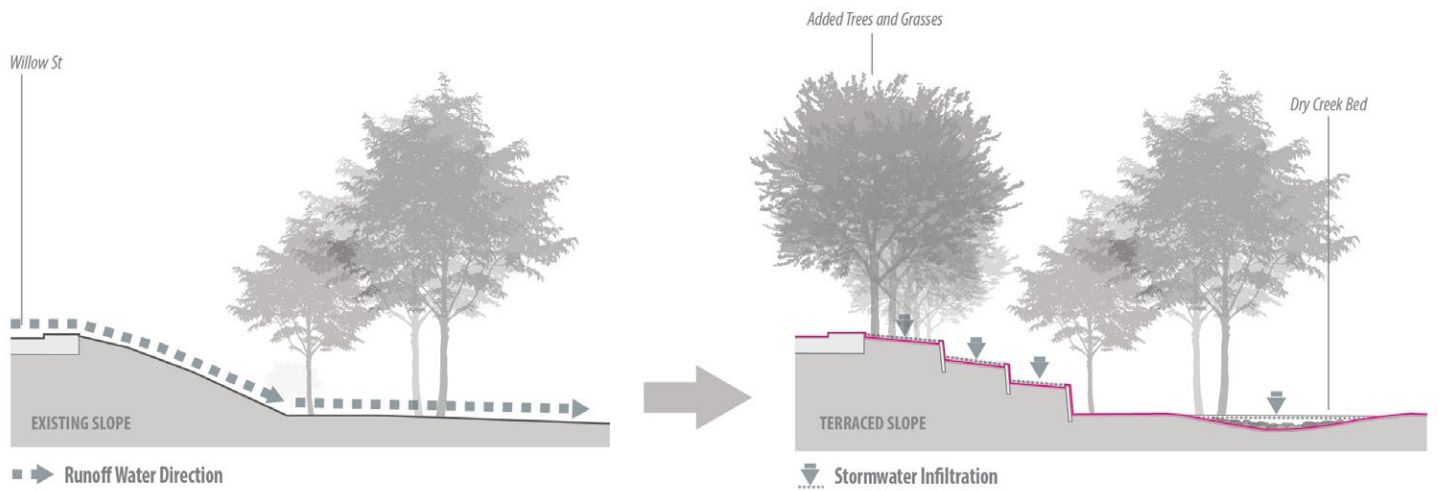
- Incorporate low water use plants to reduce irrigation needs
- Use low maintenance plants to reduce maintenance costs
- Use low growing plants to maintain visibility throughout open spaces
- Preserve existing palm trees to maintain neighborhood identity
- Plant shade trees between palms to increase canopy cover along streets
- Plant sloped medians, river trail embankments, and road easements to prevent erosion
- Use a vibrant and diverse plant palette to reflect neighborhood identity
- Select a variety of plants to meet the habitat needs of local birds and pollinators
- Plant trees along the river levee to increase privacy for residents
- Plant trees along the river levee to reduce the impact of air pollution from I-710 freeway
- Create bioretention areas to filter and clean runoff
- Use plants to deter homeless encampments

STREET IMPROVEMENT PLAN DESIGN OBJECTIVES

- Implement traffic calming strategies on Golden Avenue to improve pedestrian safety
- Use retention and infiltration techniques to reduce flooding on San Francisco Avenue
- Promote design strategies that improve safety and security on De Forest Avenue

TABLE 7 *Street Improvement Plan - Design Features and Tools*

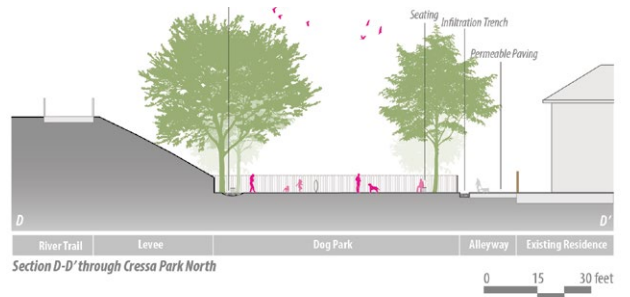
DESIGN FEATURES AND TOOLS	
Traffic Calming	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Vibrant crosswalks for high visibility and sense of community identity • Speed feedback sign to remind drivers of their current speed • Speed bumps near entrances • Bulb-outs to narrow the streets
Stormwater Management	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Curb-cuts along planting strips to allow for stormwater infiltration • Replacing street edges with permeable paving
Safety and Security	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Create opportunities for recreation in river-adjacent areas • Narrow roadway to discourage on-street parking and in-car loitering • Create vegetation buffer between roadway and Los Angeles River Trail • Add pedestrian amenities to encourage use and promote ownership



WILLOW ENTRANCE PARK SLOPE TERRACING

FIGURE 6 Willow Entrance Park and Deforest Trail Extension – Concept Plan, Terracing Diagram, and Sections

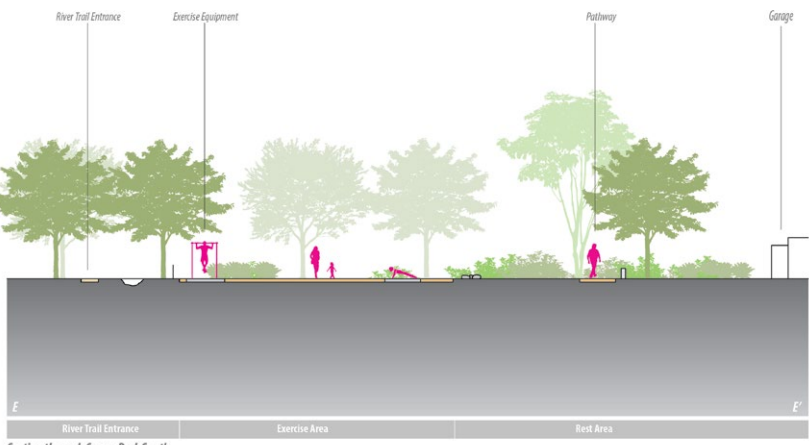
CRESSA PARK NORTH



- 1 Double Entry Gate
- 2 Bioretention Areas
- 3 Play Equipment
- 4 Alley Improvements

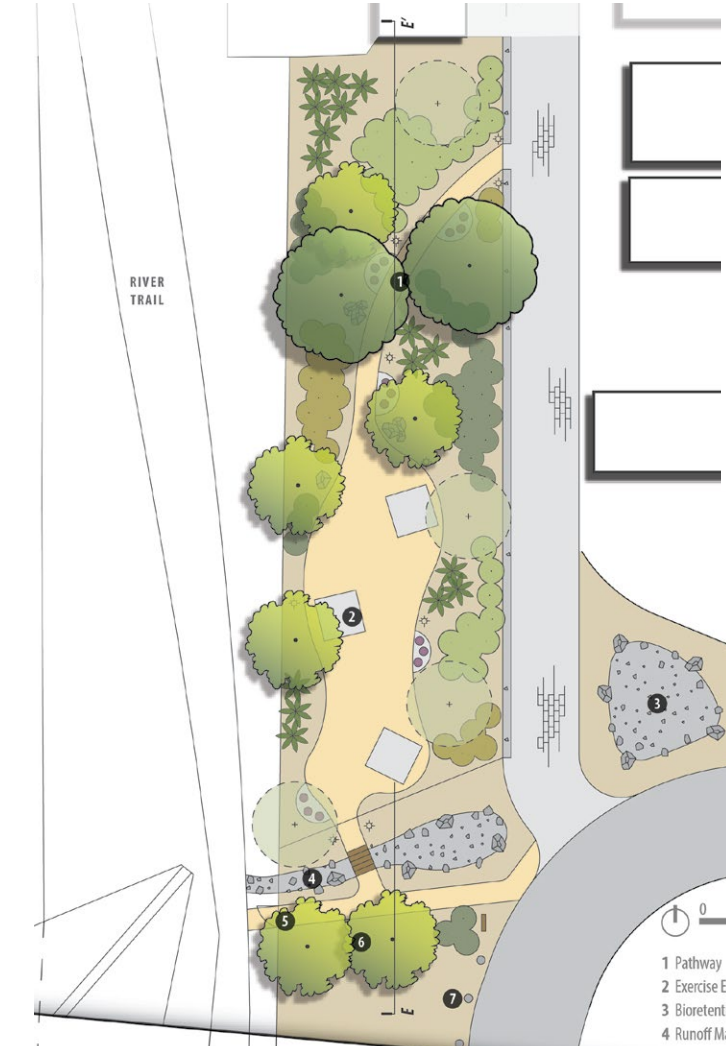
0 15 30 feet

0 15 30 feet



Section through Cressa Park South

CRESSA PARK SOUTH



0 15 30 feet

- 1 Pathway
- 2 Exercise Equipment
- 3 Bioretention Area
- 4 Runoff Management
- 5 River Trail Entrance
- 6 Tree Buffer
- 7 Bollards

FIGURE 7 Cressa Park North and Cressa Park South – Concept Plans, Terracing Diagram, and Sections



JACKSON PARK

The Jackson Park community is ethnically diverse and comprised primarily of low-income working-class residents. The neighborhood is located in North Long Beach two miles east of the LA River. Jackson Creek, a ten-foot-wide concrete drainage channel, bisects the neighborhood and continues west to the LA River.

The Jackson Park neighborhood is bordered by Market Street to the north and the Union Pacific Railroad corridor to the south. Orange Avenue forms the western border and the neighborhood extends east to Cherry Avenue. The neighborhood covers approximately 90 acres and encompasses primarily single-family homes and residential apartments with a small number of commercial properties along its periphery. Park space in the neighborhood includes Jackson Street Park as well as Jackson Street Dog Park.

BIG QUESTION	FINDINGS
Who lives here?	The neighborhood is predominantly Hispanic and low-income, with smaller communities of Pacific Islanders, Asian-Americans, African-Americans and Caucasians. This community is more diverse than most others in the focus area. Residents have low voter turnout and a significant portion of the community do not speak English.
What is the community's relationship with Jackson Creek?	Despite the chain-link fence that lines the channel, Jackson Creek is susceptible to graffiti, underage drinking, and littering. The channel is also prone to flooding. Residents consider the channel to be a nuisance and do not embrace its connection to the LA River.
What are the existing assets of the neighborhood?	Jackson Street Park presents the greatest opportunity for landscape improvements because it is central to the neighborhood and the core of community identity. There are also several vacant or underutilized areas along the edges of the neighborhood that present opportunities for improvement.
What are the immediate needs of residents in terms of improving their quality of life?	Residents are primarily concerned with issues of loitering, graffiti, and drug use around Jackson Street Park, which they perceive is a result of inadequate lighting and a general lack of amenities. Violence and crime are perceived as issues throughout the entire neighborhood.
Where should the community improvement projects be located?	Neighborhood issues are concentrated in Jackson Street Park and improvement projects are preferred in this location. Community members also prioritize making improvements to vacant and abandoned areas along the perimeter of the neighborhood. These are areas that residents see when entering the neighborhood, and improvements would help generate a more positive sense of community identity.

TABLE 8 Jackson Park – Project Questions



Through the community outreach and engagement process, the team identified the issues that were most important to the residents, which guided the neighborhood inventory process.

On-street parking is allowed throughout the area along the two-way single-lane residential roads. Major thoroughfares such as Cherry Avenue, Orange Avenue, and Market Street are wider multi-lane streets that allow for higher-speed two-way traffic. Five foot sidewalks, and three to four foot grass easements between the street and sidewalk, exist throughout the area.

The project team used interviews to gather and share information. Interviews were conducted with the Long Beach District 8 Councilmember, the Director of Long Beach Department of Parks, Recreation, and Marine, the Executive Director of City Fabrick, the Co-executive Director of LaMass, local business owner and the Executive Director of We Care Long Beach, the reverend of North Long Beach Christian Church, and residents of the Jackson Park neighborhood.

NEIGHBORHOOD INVENTORY

Conducting a neighborhood inventory provided a foundation for ensuring plans were reflective of community-specific issues. The categories were determined based on results from community meetings, interviews, outreach efforts, and design workshops.

Community members expressed concern that Jackson Street Park lacks seating, especially in areas where residents congregate, such as at the children's playground or under several of the more centrally located shade trees. Community members either sit on the lawn or bring their own chairs if seating is required at a park event.

Residents feel that the Jackson Park neighborhood is unsafe, primarily with respect to vehicle safety, crime and lighting.

Community members expressed concerns about maintenance. The broken swings in the children's playground in Jackson Street Park have been broken for several years. Infrastructure such as roads and sidewalks are not being regularly maintained.

Poor maintenance of residential areas along the exterior boundaries of the neighborhood create a sense of neglect. Trash, abandoned furniture, and debris are common in Jackson Park. The neighborhood lacks comfortable walking spaces, well

maintained tree canopy, vegetation, and signs. The community was also concerned that the Jackson Creek drainage channel is full of trash.

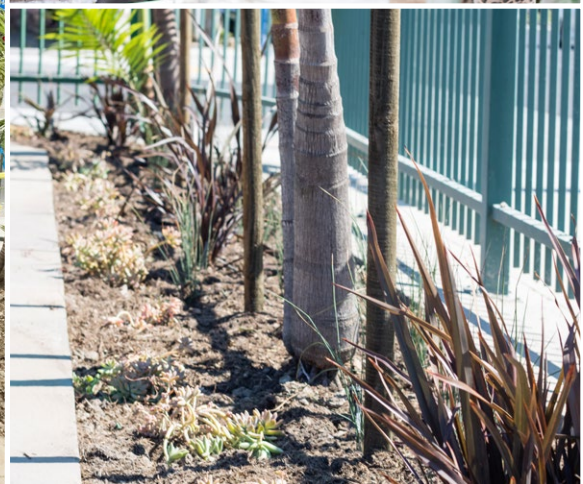
DESIGN PROCESS

The design processes was divided into three separate project phases: Community Outreach and Engagement, Neighborhood Vision Planning, and Final Project Implementation.

The purpose of the community outreach and engagement phase was to build an organized base of residents interested in improving the landscape in the Jackson Park neighborhood. The team used canvassing, community meetings, a steering committee meeting, and build days to complete the phase objectives.

The second phase involved developing community-based designs for three to six sites within the project area that would collectively constitute the Neighborhood Vision Plan. The team used canvassing, steering committee meetings, and community design workshops to complete the phase objectives.

The last project phase involved finalizing the concept designs and complete a final build project that reflected the goals and priorities of the neighborhood vision plan. The Jackson Park community also elected to establish a neighborhood association during this time so community members could continue working together to improve the neighborhood and advocate for improvements in the neighborhood vision plan. The project team used steering committee meetings, interviews, and build days to achieve the phase objectives.

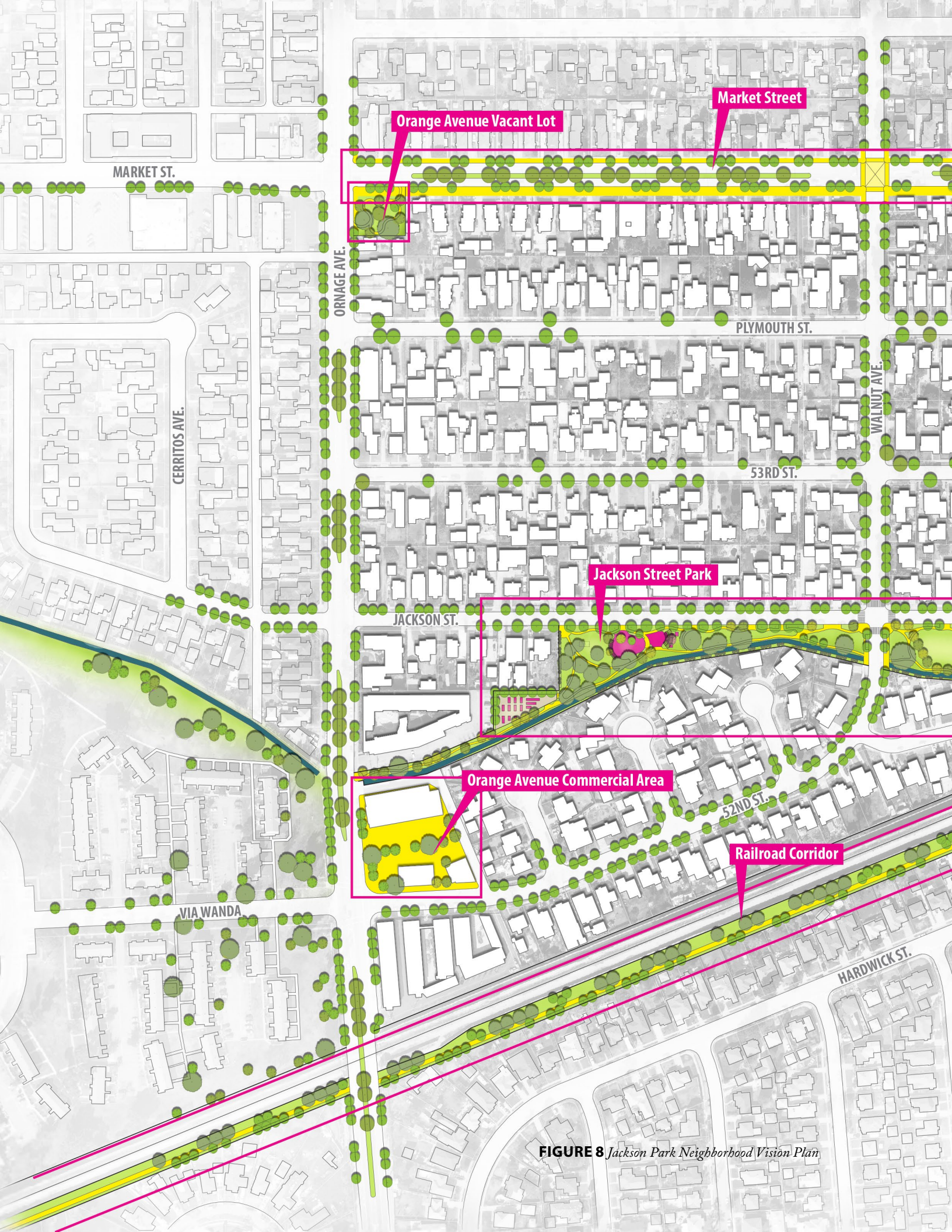


JACKSON PARK NEIGHBORHOOD VISION PLAN

The Jackson Park plan reflects specific community-developed priorities while meeting the *Collective Efforts* goal of developing multi-benefit projects that address recreational, environmental and social needs. Community meetings, design workshops, steering committee meetings, and the neighborhood inventory process guided the development of the neighborhood vision plan. The plan is comprised of five site-specific projects (**Table 9**).

NAME	EXISTING CONDITION	PROPOSAL
Jackson Street Park	A centrally located 2.6-acre linear open green space with limited programming. A toddler playground is situated at the eastern edge of the site. It lacks shade and seating and requires maintenance. The park currently has no pathways for pedestrian use nor seating, its only lighting is from nearby street lamps.	Use the extensive green space for programming improvements. Address social needs by installing a picnic area, a second playground for older children, a multi-use pad for exercise, and bench seating. Improve public and environmental health by creating a jogging path, increasing tree canopy coverage and adding rain gardens and traffic calming measures at busy intersections.
Market Street	A noisy 0.54-mile multi-lane roadway with sparse tree canopy coverage and unsafe pedestrian pathways. A lack of crosswalks, traffic buffers and seating at public transportation hubs make the site uninviting for pedestrians and a collection point for trash and debris.	Improve public and environmental health by adding street trees, a landscaped median, and stormwater infiltration basins. A painted bicycle lane, widened sidewalks, bulb-outs and a mural crosswalk with a four-way traffic light can help address safety concerns.
Orange Avenue Vacant Lot	A highly visible entry site to the neighborhood covered with broken concrete, trash and weeds and enclosed by a chain link fence. Once a gas station, the 0.19-acre site needs remediation before any improvements can be implemented.	Transform the site. Make it a point of pride with public art, safety bollards and neighborhood identity signage. Install improvements such as an infiltration basin with drought-tolerant plants, pre-cast benches, LED lighting, a low wall and an adventure play area with shade.
Railroad Corridor	The site is a 15-foot wide easement spanning more than a half-mile between Cherry and Orange Avenues. It lies 18-feet below a compacted slope, and is separated by a sound wall from rail traffic and a three foot easement from existing homes. The corridor is lined with trash, has poor drainage and is a gathering place for the homeless.	Address public and environmental health concerns by connecting a 12-foot multi-direction bicycle pathway to the existing Los Angeles River Bikeway. Add stormwater infiltration and landscaped buffers to reduce noise and pollution. Install seating with solar lighting, trash receptacles and a gated pocket park to activate the space.
Orange Avenue Commercial Area	A 1.12-acre strip mall consisting of several locally-owned businesses. A neighborhood bellwether, the site offers potential for improvement but a lack of shade and vegetation, and excessive hardscape and issues with vandalism, trash and homelessness keep it from becoming a rallying point for the neighborhood.	Invigorate the site with neighborhood identity signage and building façade murals. Add shade and environmental improvements by planting trees and creating stormwater bio-swales and infiltration basins. Activate open spaces with lighting, seating and shade structures.

TABLE 9 Overview of Jackson Park Projects



Orange Avenue Vacant Lot

Market Street

Jackson Street Park

Orange Avenue Commercial Area

Railroad Corridor

FIGURE 8 Jackson Park Neighborhood Vision Plan



ROSE AVE.

CHERRY AVE.

NOTE: SEE FULL REPORT FOR THE DESIGNS FOR MARKET STREET AND RAILROAD CORRIDOR

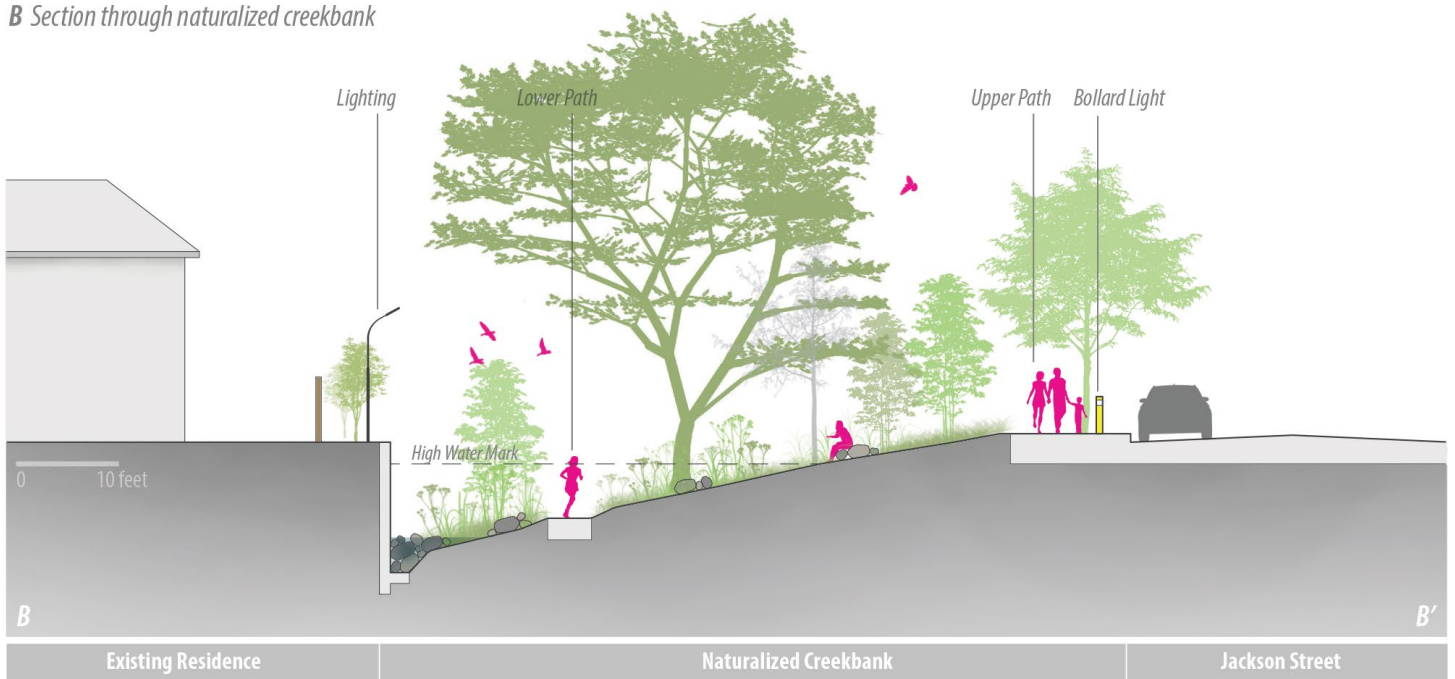




- 1 Community Garden
- 2 Path (extends west to Orange Avenue)
- 3 Seatwall (typ.)
- 4 Shade Structure (typ.)
- 5 Multi-purpose Pad
- 6 Playground (ages 2 to 5 years)
- 7 Picnic Area with Shade Structure
- 8 Naturalized Creekbank

FIGURE 9 Jackson Street Park – Concept Plan, Diagrams, and Section

B Section through naturalized creekbank

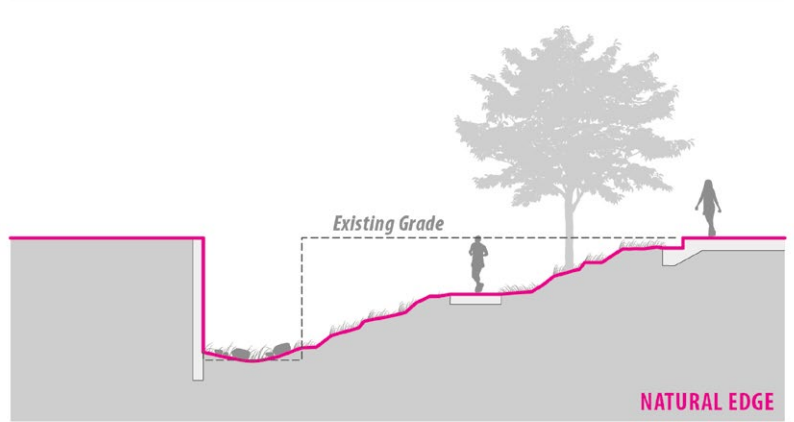
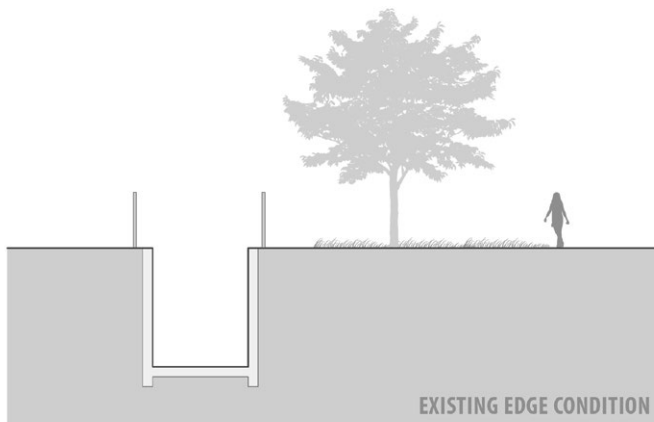
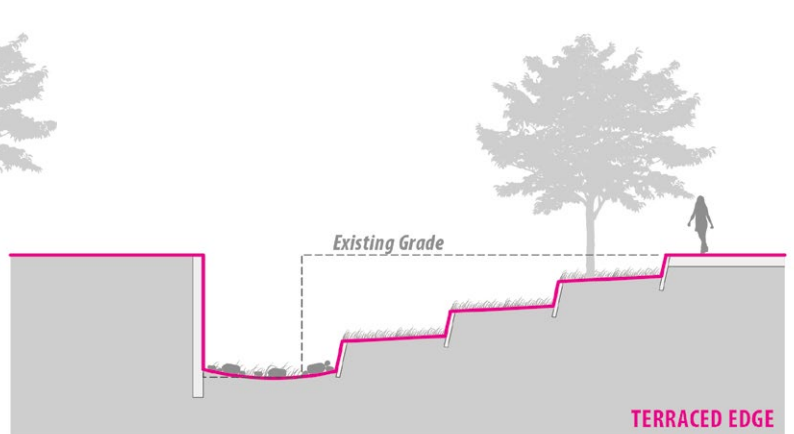
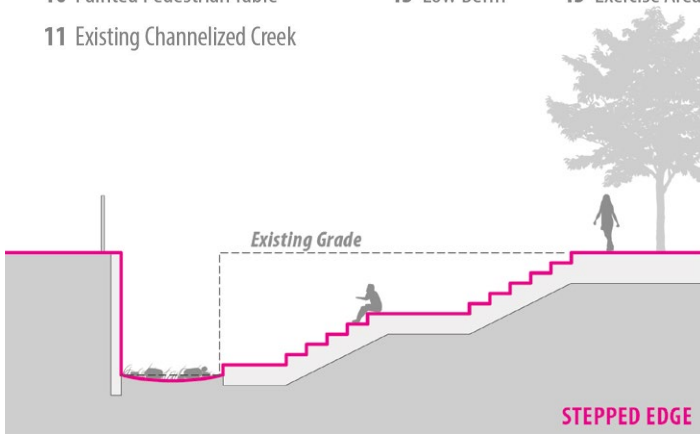


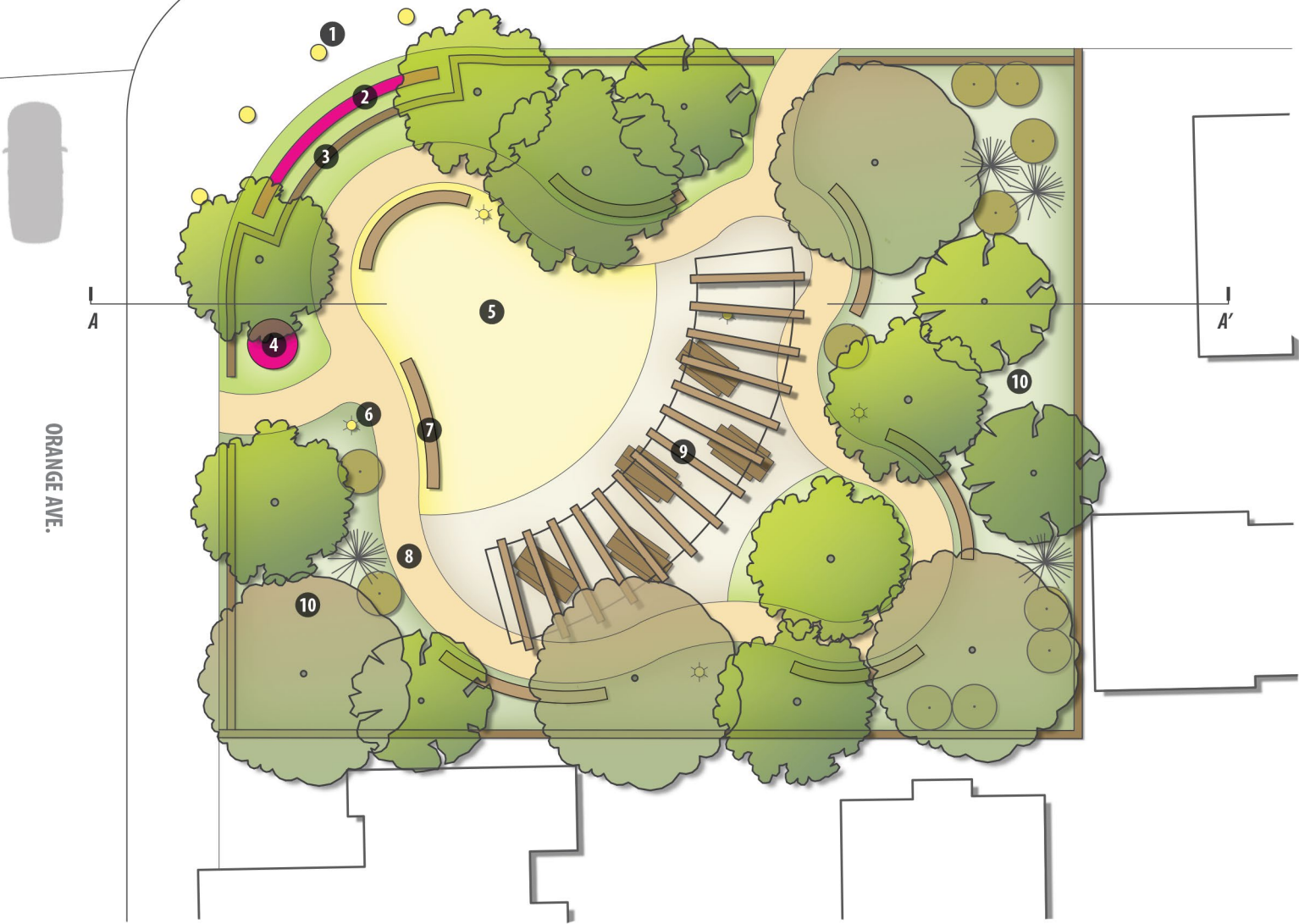


- 9 Four-Way Stop & Crosswalks
- 10 Painted Pedestrian Table
- 11 Existing Channelized Creek

- 12 Lawn
- 13 Low Berm

- 14 Playground (ages 6 to 12 years)
- 15 Exercise Area





ORANGE AVENUE VACANT LOT

- 1 Bollards
- 2 Neighborhood Identity Sign
- 3 Low Fence
- 4 Neighborhood Identity Public Art
- 5 Adventure Play Area
- 6 LED Light (typ.)
- 7 Bench (typ.)
- 8 Decomposed Granite Path
- 9 Picnic Area with Shade Structure
- 10 Infiltration Basin with Native Plants & Educational Signage

A Section

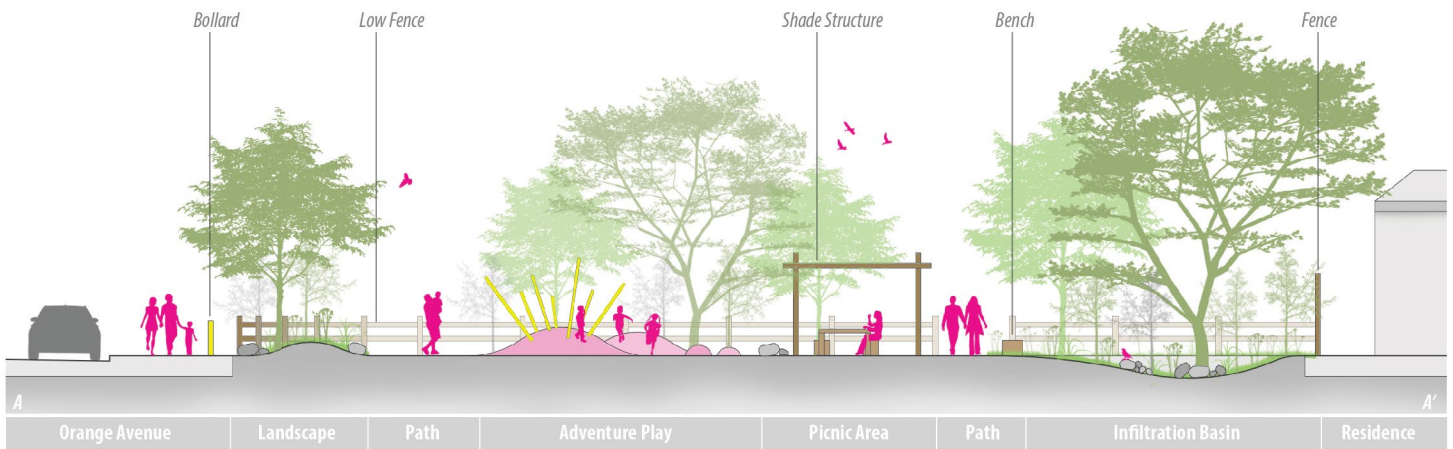


FIGURE 10 Orange Avenue Commercial Area & Vacant Lot – Concept Plan & Section



ORANGE AVENUE COMMERCIAL AREA

- 1 Building Facade Mural
- 2 Lighting
- 3 Stormwater Swale
- 4 Seating Area with Shade Structure
- 5 Stormwater Infiltration Basin
- 6 Neighborhood Identity Sign
- 7 Seating Area

A Section through Parking Lot

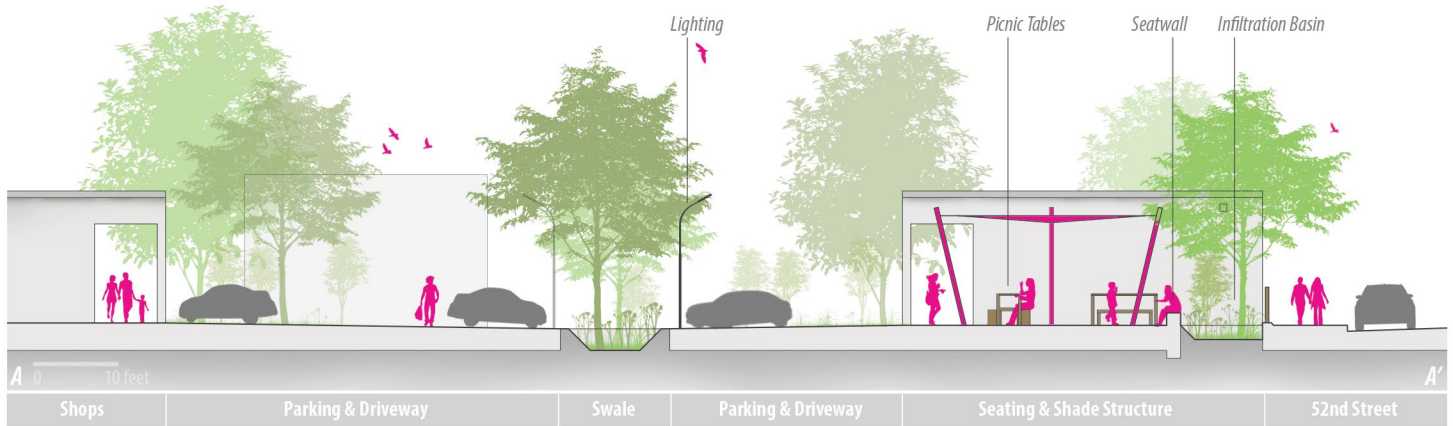


FIGURE 11 Orange Avenue Commercial Area - Concept Plan & Section

RESILIENCY TOOLKIT

Collective Efforts defines a ‘resilient’ landscape as one that is able to sustain its function over time and under stress. With limited resources to continually rebuild our environment, it is important our landscapes are built to withstand and adapt to the changing conditions around them. The 606 Studio developed a ‘Resiliency Toolkit’ to provide guidelines for public agencies and community organizations who are interested in taking a more strategic approach to the long-term durability and sustainability of public landscapes.

The Toolkit identifies three key components for discussing landscape resiliency: landscape stressors, landscape elements, and landscape relationships. Stressors are conditions that a landscape must be able to endure and adapt to over time, such as extreme weather conditions or vandalism. Landscape elements are the individual design components such as plant materials or site furnishings. Landscape relationships describe where things are placed on a site and how they relate to one another. To use the Resiliency Toolkit, an organization or agency would determine which landscape stressors are most relevant to their project and use the corresponding criteria to make design decisions that maximize landscape resiliency (**Table 10**).

TABLE 10 *Criteria for Selecting Resilient Landscape Design Elements*

STRESSOR	PLANT SELECTION CRITERIA	SITE FURNISHINGS CRITERIA	FACILITIES CRITERIA
Misuse and Abuse	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Debris can be easily removed • Uncomfortable to the touch • Maintains visibility into the site • Resistant to damage by humans • Tolerant of soil compaction 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Encourages users to dispose of trash • Spray-paint resistant • Discourages ‘urban camping’ • Discourages skating or grinding • Difficult to damage • Easy to clean • Easy to repair 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cannot be easily damaged • Ability to withstand regular cleaning • Easy to repair • Spray-paint resistant • Lack of hidden or low visibility areas
High Levels of Human Use	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Able to tolerate occasional impact from adjacent activities • Will not injure users • Deep root system (trees) • Slow growing trees • Fast recovery time 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Durable • Redundant • Easy to replace 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Durable • Redundant • Deep footings
Changing Use Patters	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Transplant-friendly • High branching shade trees 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Serves multiple functions • Easy to remove • Easy to recycle • Adaptable 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Serves multiple functions • Easy to remove • Easy to recycle • Easily converted to new use
Weather Extremes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Can withstand seasonal flooding • Deep roots • Low fuel potential • High water content 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Durable • Rot-resistant • Will not overheat • Will not impair slope stability • Low albedo • Can be tethered instead of fixed in place • Easily replaced 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Durable • Rot-resistant • Will not overheat • Will not impair slope stability • Low albedo • Easily repaired • Deep footings
Climate Change	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Effective at sequestering carbon • Provides shade • Able to filter and/or remove pollutants from contaminated air and water • Drought-resistant 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Will contribute to urban cooling • Locally sourced • Low-energy consumption • Reduces impacts of pollution 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Will contribute to urban cooling • Locally sourced • Promotes infiltration

LESSONS LEARNED

Implementing participatory design-build strategies is a challenging, yet worthwhile, endeavor. Each stage of the process involves a different set of tools and requires designers to be adaptable and responsive to changing site conditions, political will, client needs, and community perspectives. The complexity of this approach is something that can only be learned through a hands-on approach to learning, which makes challenges inevitable. Throughout the development of Collective Efforts, teams made note of specific challenges and documented the effectiveness of their response. Following the completion of the project, these lessons were organized into categories to help future designers. While some of the lessons can be generalized to all participatory design work, it is important to note that some lessons might be specific to this project as a result of the unique perspectives of individual investigators and the particular conditions of the neighborhoods. The audience should consider their specific situation and context when identifying appropriate strategies.

CATEGORY	LESSONS LEARNED
Community Outreach and Engagement	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Identify meeting location and date before initiating canvassing outreach. • Develop a clear understanding of project goals before going door-to-door. • Ask relevant questions to engage residents in a conversation and build a relationship. • Collect phone numbers as well as email addresses to enable direct contact with residents for later outreach. • Use alternative outreach methods such as social media and newsletters but do not rely on them for meeting attendance. • Call residents and develop relationships with them to ensure continued engagement. • If possible, identify a local meeting location early in the organizing process. • Find a private space that is consistently available at a regular time where it is easy to set up tables and chairs. • If you are having trouble finding a location, ask residents if they know of a place where they feel comfortable meeting. • Be flexible. There are always creative solutions if there are no ideal locations. • Use key questions to keep meetings and workshops focused on the design goal. • Be aware of group dynamics and find ways to encourage everyone to participate. • Encourage attendees to show up on time, but be prepared for latecomers. • Try to adhere to the agenda, but allow time for open discussion. • Create a more formal meeting setting to encourage participants to show up on time and adhere to the agenda. • Think carefully about the order of activities and how they might encourage or discourage people from participating. • Imagery is helpful for communicating goals and intentions to participants. • Outreach material can reflect the personality of the organizing team and community members. • Be brief. Use packets as a tool to support the meetings and outreach, but they should not be the main focus.
Inventory and Analysis	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Begin regional inventory as early as possible, preferably before community outreach. • Ensure the inventory creates an argument for the community work. • Use community meetings, interviews, and field observations to inform inventory focus. • Cross-reference inventory results with final designs to ensure designs are responsive to community priorities.

TABLE 11 *Key Tips for Future Participatory Design-Build Projects*

CATEGORY	LESSONS LEARNED
Working with Local Agencies and Organizations	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Involve several youth organization members to accommodate inconsistent attendance and ensure representation. • Keep in contact with staff of local agencies and organizations to maintain communication and accountability throughout the process. • When working with disadvantaged populations, recognize that young adults may not be comfortable working in their home neighborhoods. • Recognize and accommodate the complex home-work-school lives of youth partners. • Build mentor-mentee relationships with youth partners. • Identify leaders to support your efforts. • Be aware that organizations may not represent overall community demographics. • Avoid letting organizations take control of your bottom-up organizing efforts. • To maximize impact, choose neighborhoods without existing associations. • Identify city agencies that are open to the idea of community-based work prior to beginning the project. • Establish open and direct lines of communication as early as possible without potentially jeopardizing the momentum of the community efforts. • Involve residents in the conversation with city agencies as much as possible to demonstrate community will. • Keep records of all correspondence with city and council representative. • Follow-up all phone and in-person conversations with city staff and council representatives (and their staff) with emails documenting the content of the discussion as well as the times, date, and location.
Design Process	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Limit the number of exercises to ensure community members do not become weary and disengaged. • Listen to peoples' reactions as they engage with designs to understand how they perceive their neighborhood and the project site. • Provide a variety of cut-outs and tools to make the designs as interactive as possible. • Start with smaller sites to make it easier for participants to learn to think spatially. • Provide inspirational imagery and ask people to find their own images to encourage a wide range of design alternatives. • Be aware that residents tend to prioritize safety over aesthetics, design, and ecosystem services. • Provide examples, diagrams, and images to explain design features.
Build Days	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Allow residents to direct the activities. • Have a variety of activities available that people can work on simultaneously. • Always have water and snacks available. • Start construction early to avoid heat and fatigue. • Identify projects on private land early in the design process to ensure there are options for construction if public spaces are unavailable. • Choose highly visible locations to promote the project and recruit new participants. • Consider creating a third-party community-based group that is not affiliated with an established agency to address accountability.

TABLE 11 *Key Tips for Future Participatory Design-Build Projects (continued)*

RECOMMENDATIONS

The 606 Studio developed a series of policy and design recommendations based on the experience of working in different capacities with community members and local agencies. Through the application of the participatory design framework, the team discovered there are a number of barriers that slow the efficacy of the community organizing process, including the local political climate as well as the willingness and capacity of residents to engage in the development of neighborhood improvements.

GROUP	RECOMMENDATIONS
Educators	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Incorporate community-based projects into K-12 academic curriculum to promote civic engagement at a young age. • Encourage local community-based non-profits to partner with schools to create community resources.
Public Agencies	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Expedite the permitting process for small-scale community-based projects. • Be active in the community to demonstrate a willingness to build a relationship with residents. • Encourage communities to form neighborhood associations, leading to increased social capital. • Make grants and grant writing resources available to community groups. • Target remnant public and private landscapes as opportunities for developing multi-benefit green infrastructure.
Neighborhood Organizations	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Adopt and promote participatory design methods to ensure neighborhood development reflects community priorities.
Policy Makers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Hold private developers accountable for providing social and environmental amenities. • Require high-end developers to redirect revenue to community development efforts in low-income areas.
Local Business Owners	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Be an active participant in community development.
Landscape Architects	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Get involved in local government to support participatory community development initiatives.

TABLE 12 Project Recommendations

CONCLUSION

One of the objectives for *Collective Efforts* was to work with community members to create plans for multi-benefit infrastructure that addressed social needs while providing environmental services. This inherently represents a partnership between design professionals, agencies, organizations, and community members where the design experts take on the role of facilitators to integrate their understanding of regional environmental priorities with the priorities and interests of local residents. This partnership is integral to the sustainable development of neighborhoods in the Lower Los Angeles River Corridor and the key to building resilient communities.





ABOUT COLLECTIVE EFFORTS

Collective Efforts (2017) focuses on disadvantaged river-adjacent neighborhoods in the Lower Los Angeles River Corridor. Over a series of nine months, the 606 Studio engaged two Gateway Cities communities in a participatory design build process. Through the ongoing collaboration between project teams and residents, each community successfully generated neighborhood vision plans that embodied the goals of the regional planning efforts surrounding the LA River while addressing community-specific issues.

Collective Efforts resulted in a total of nine community-designed projects and the creation of one neighborhood association committed to the long-term implementation of neighborhood landscape improvements. Throughout the process, community members were engaged in a dialogue with the project teams and with each other about the role of landscapes in their neighborhoods and the potential for collaborative projects to strengthen each community's capacity to make improvements.