



Creative Placemaking

with the The International District Community
Albuquerque New Mexico

The Design of a Story Plaza

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*Creative Placemaking with the
Albuquerque International District
Community*

*School of Architecture + Planning
University of New Mexico
August 2016*

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Project Partners

City of Albuquerque
UNM School of Architecture + Planning
Story of Place Institute
Littlelobe
Albuquerque Metropolitan Arroyo and Flood Control Authority
Bernalillo County
The International District in Albuquerque

*This project was made possible through an Our Town Grant
from the National Endowment for the Arts*

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Introduction

For many years Albuquerque's International District (formerly known as the 'War Zone') was defined by crime, poverty, drugs and violence. Residents and community leaders and organizers believe that these challenges can be overcome by the real and potential assets of the neighborhood and its people. They have actively worked to transform the district into a new reality with a new image.

With the intent to help build community capacity and community pride in Albuquerque's International District through arts engagement, community-based design, and the development of a community plaza/story garden, the City of Albuquerque partnered with the UNM School of Architecture and Planning (SA•P), Littlelobe, the Story of Place Institute, the Albuquerque Metropolitan Arroyo and Flood Control Authority (AMAFCA) and Bernalillo County. The City of Albuquerque Cultural Services Department took the lead in coordinating the project.

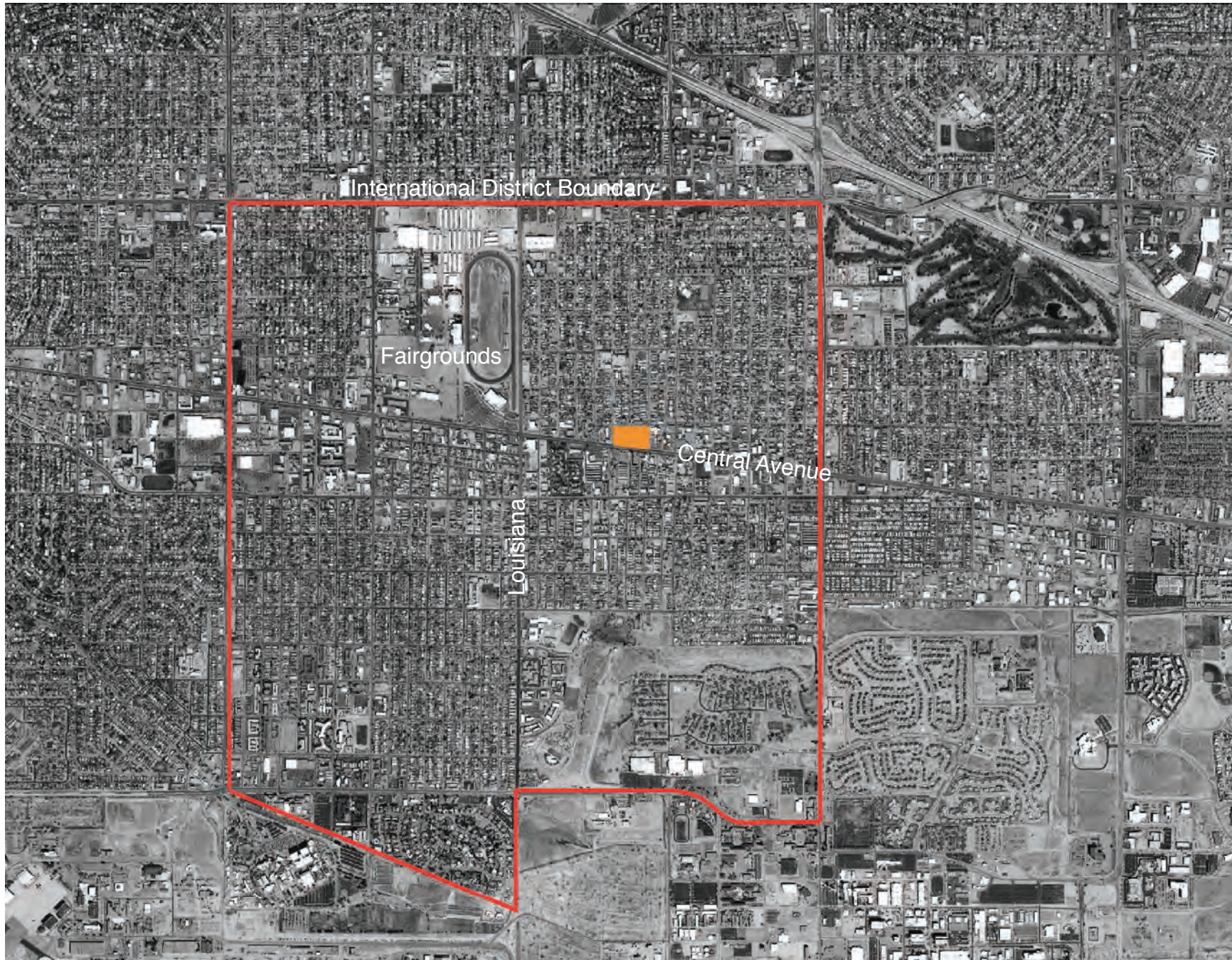
In the first phase of the project, Littlelobe facilitated a community arts engagement process with 5 professional artists collaborating with 50-80 community members over a period of 7 months. At the same time, the Story of Place Institute (SoPI) created a document of stories of the International District using archival documents, field research, and in-depth interviews.

In the second phase of the project, the UNM School of Architecture and Planning went through a process of designing a 'Story Plaza' for the International District. In the initial design stage, general concepts for the Story Plaza were developed for two alternative sites with faculty and graduate student assistants from the School of Architecture + Planning along with internationally known guest artist Buster Simpson. The idea of the 'Story Plaza' is to create a place that celebrates the unique community of the International District and represents the neighborhood as an inspiring portrait of people and place. Residents and visitors will enjoy a vibrant and beautiful gathering space that encourages fellowship and understanding, and serves as a hub for the district.

The final selection of a site was ultimately influenced by AMAFCA's need for temporary water storage, and the CABQ Libraries need for a site to construct a new library in the International District. The site that fulfilled the criteria for the project is a two square block piece of land on the North side of Central Avenue between San Pablo Street and Charlston Street, currently the site of the Caravan East nightclub.

In the next design stage second year graduate Landscape Architecture students focused on the Caravan site for one of their studio projects in Spring 2016. Nineteen different site design proposals were generated in the studio with the primary site elements being the Story Plaza, the new 25,000 square foot library with parking, and a storm water detention basin with a capacity of approximately 20 acre feet. At the end of this process a jury of eight people from the City of Albuquerque (Cultural Services, Planning and Libraries), AMAFCA and Littlelobe selected two of the projects for further development. The nineteen designs are shown in the appendix of this document.

For the final phase the project principal investigators worked with four graduate Landscape Architecture students during the summer of 2016 to further develop the two selected designs. These two projects are the focus of this report.

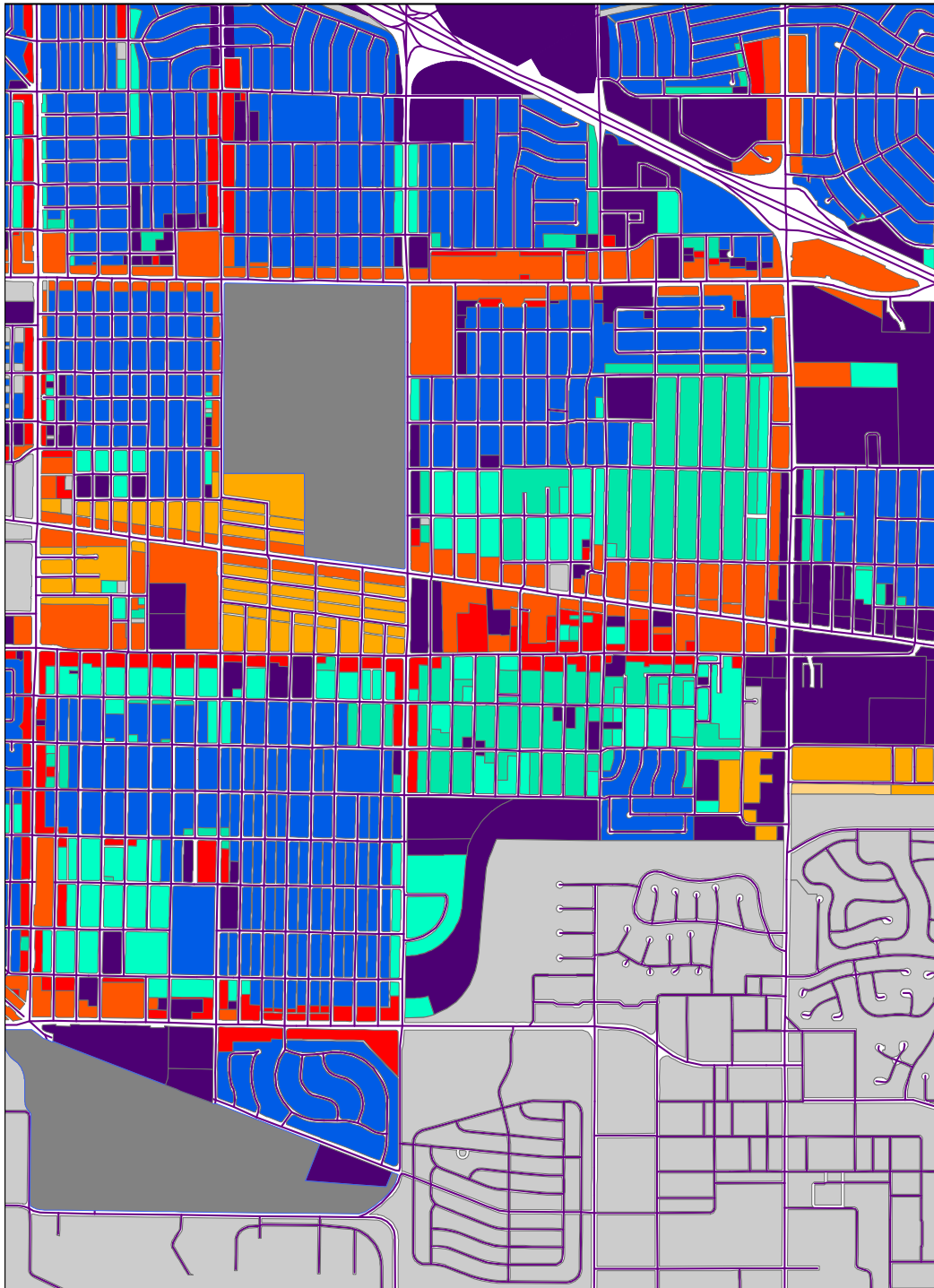


The International District Boundary + Project Site

The International District

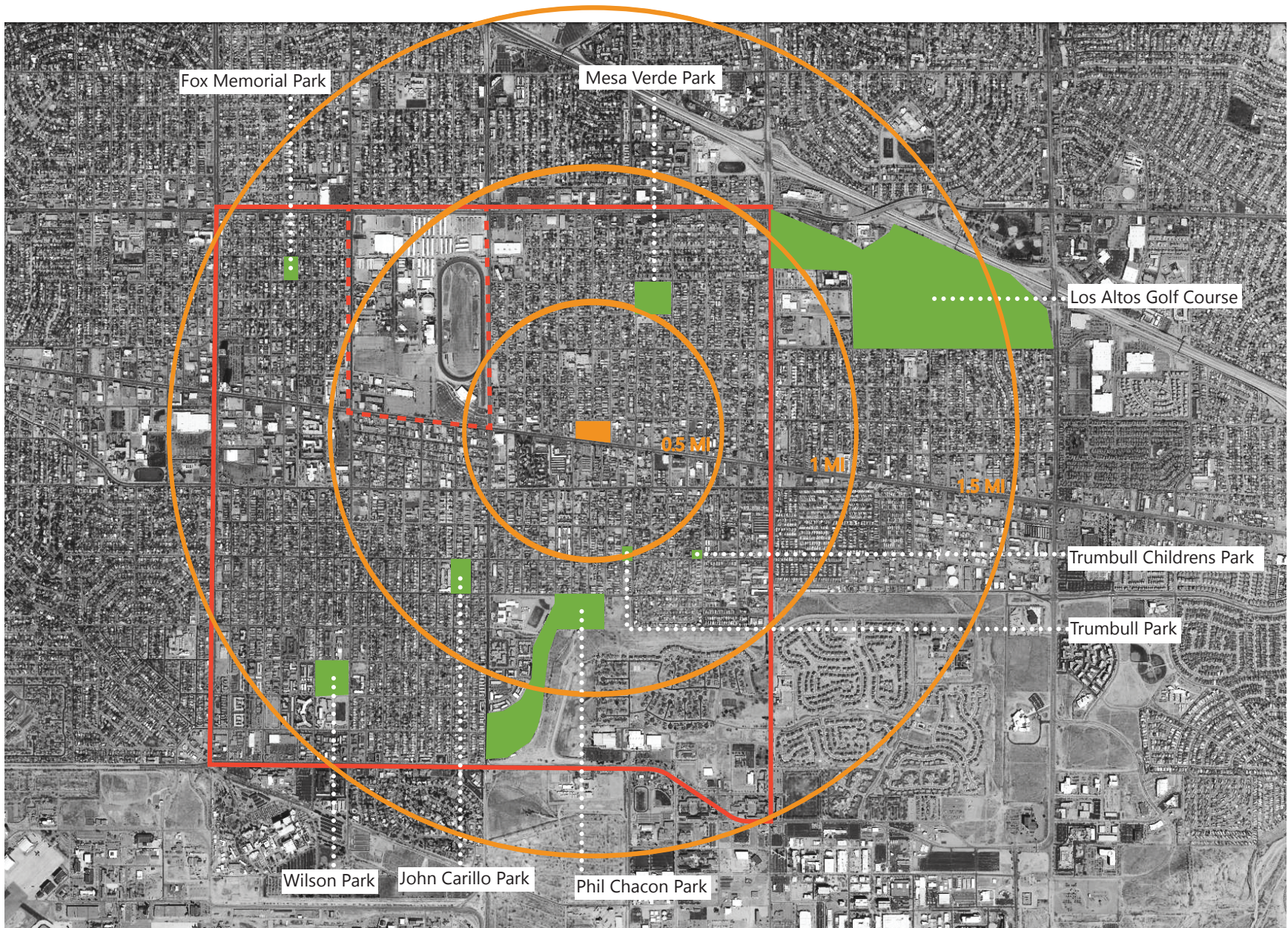


Neighborhoods in the International District



- commercial**
- single family residential**
- multifamily residential**
- other**

Zoning



Public Parks in the International District

The Site



Site Location and Major Storm Drains



Land Use in the Area Around the Site

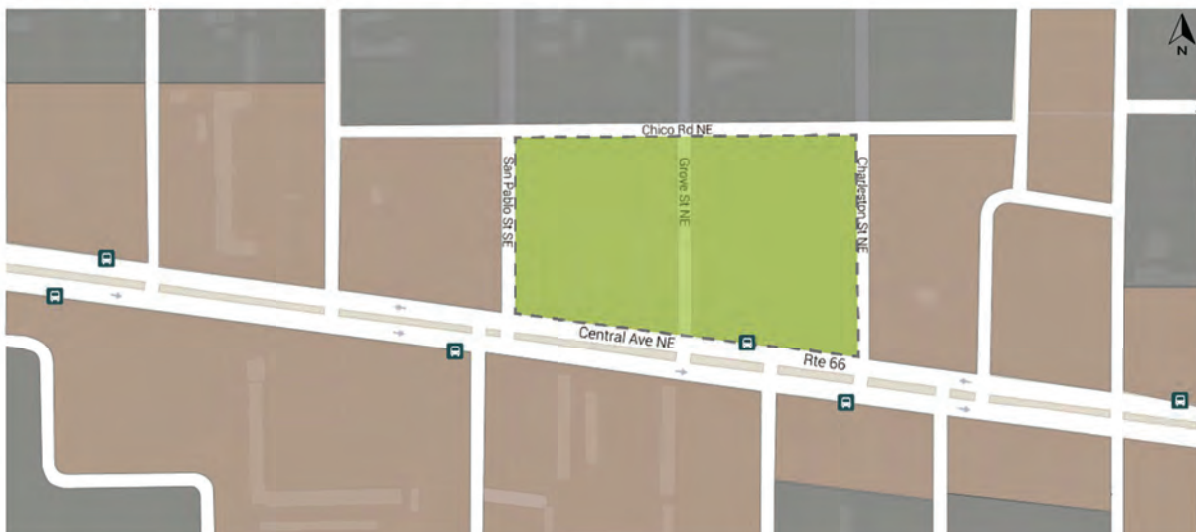
GENERAL ZONING

- Site
- Commercial zone
- Residential zone

The site is surrounded by different types of zoning, primarily residential and commercial.

A residential neighborhood, with a variety of multistory apartments and single floor houses is north of the site.

The primary uses along the Central corridor are commercial. This transitions to Residential zoning in a fragmented manner, typically within one block.



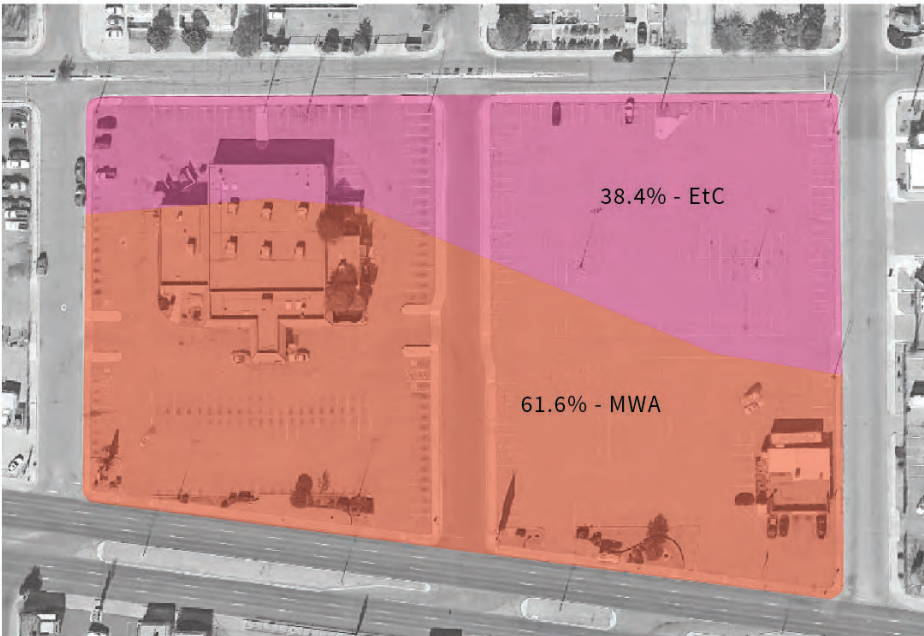
Zoning in the Area Around the Site



Site Area

Lot 1: 97,150 Sq. Ft
 Lot 2: 112,308 Sq. Ft
 Road: 11,648 Sq. Ft

TOTAL= 221,106 Sq. Ft.



Soils

EtC - Embudo Tijeras Complex
 Sand 77%
 Silt 14.7%
 Clay 8.3%
 pH 8.2

MWA - Madurez-Wink Association
 Sand 67.4%
 Silt 15%
 Clay 17.6%
 pH 8.4



Topography

2' contour interval



Character

Initial Design Stage

Design Charrette

In the initial Design Stage a 5 day design charrette focused on preliminary ideas for two sites that had been identified as potential locations for the story plaza. At the time the two

primary program components were the story plaza and a component that would address AMFCA's needs and opportunities. The library had not yet been identified as a partner. The two sites were a two square block area on Central Avenue between Grove and Charleston streets (the current home of the Caravan East nightclub), and a site on the South-West corner of Central and San Pedro.

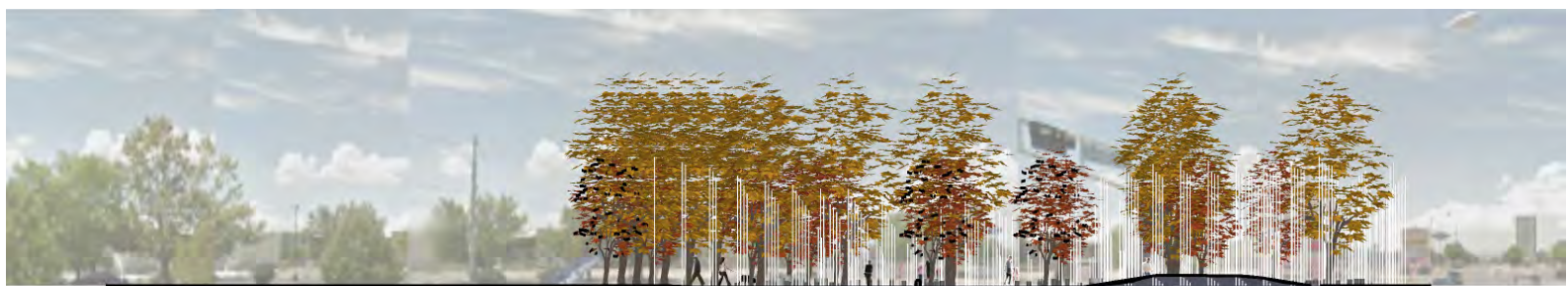


International District Story Garden Plaza Preliminary Design Concept



Caravan East Site

San Pedro Park is composed of:
metal tubes set on a grid
artificial trees
seating
a raised berm
an open space for events/markets
metal posts are not only an art installation, but function as a structure for shade cloths, and provide light at night.



Central - San Pedro Site

Final Design Stage

Program

Story Plaza

This part of the program needs to be well integrated into the site layout and can occupy more than one area. The space should be flexible to accommodate a variety of activity types including performance, festival gatherings, markets, food trucks and celebrations. It should incorporate elements that reflect and celebrate diversity, unity, identity fellowship and community. Its presence should be felt on Central Avenue and should help to give strong identity to the site.

International District Library

The regional library is to be a 25,000 square foot building. In addition to traditional library functions, the facility is to be an important community resource, with varied programming and events for people of all ages. Entries/exits should be limited, and good oversight/visibility within the building is important. There should be 100-110 parking spaces provided.

NOTE: This study is focused on a site design. A detailed space planning/programming/design for the library building was not a part of this process.

Storm Water Detention Basin

The need for 400 acre feet of temporary water storage in the International District region will be spread out among several sites. On this site the basin will receive water from the Dallas storm drain, one block to the East. The inlet from the Dallas storm drain would enter the site at 25' below grade. Based on the available space on the site the design goal is to accommodate around 20 acre feet of temporary storage. The goal is to create a basin landscape that is accessible to the public, and that can incorporate multiple uses.

Project Selection

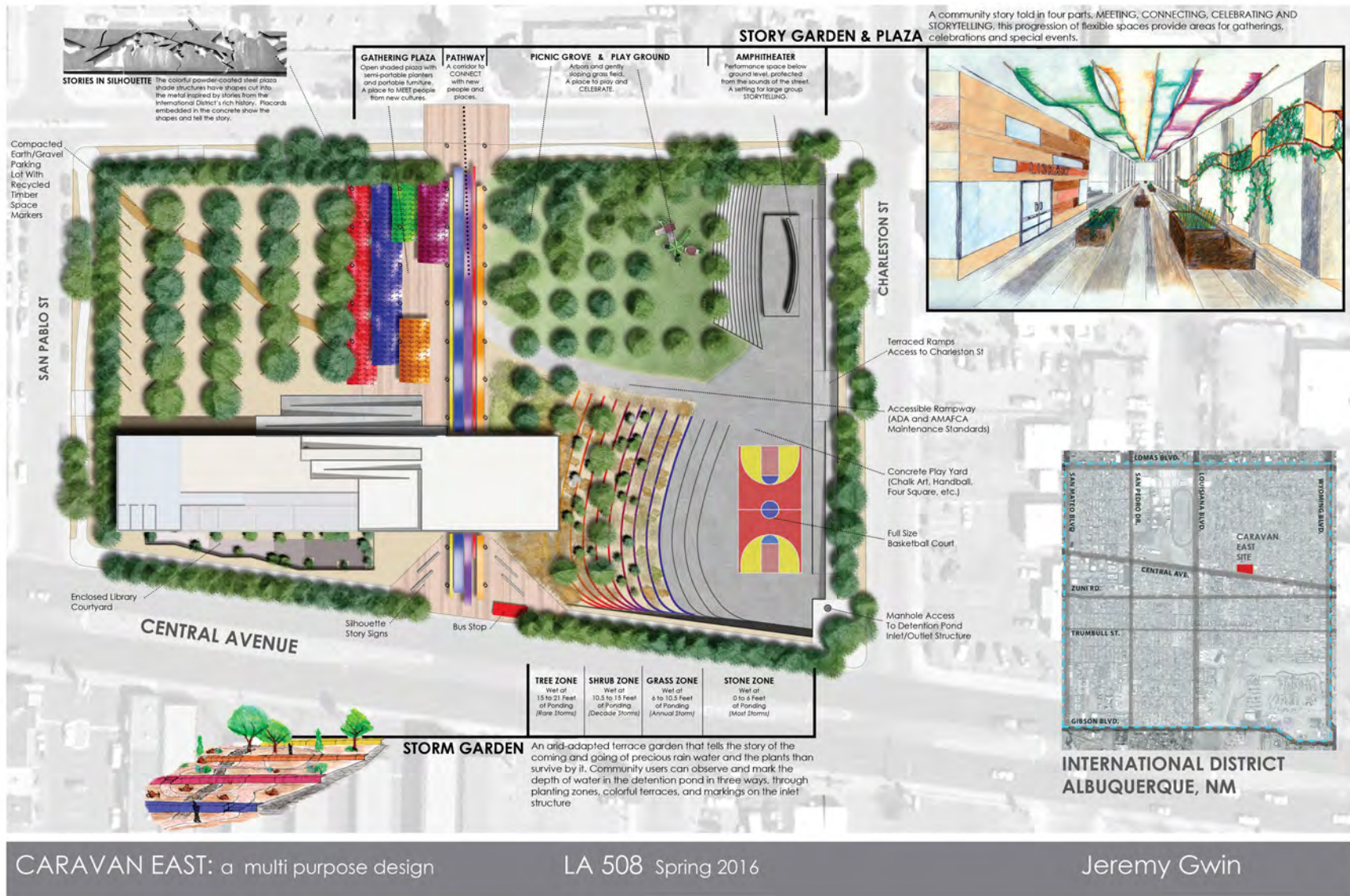
The jury that selected the two projects for further development represented the interests of the three programmatic elements that are incorporated in the site design. After reviewing all nineteen projects the ones identified in the semi-finalist group were discussed and debated relative to how well they achieved the needs of each of the site programs, and how well they integrated all three.

The two final project selections are shown on the following pages, with brief comments about what aspects the jury found to be compelling.

Design Issues

The program for the 5 acre site requires a careful organization of elements. In order to accommodate 20 acre feet of storage in the detention basin we need to occupy approximately 2.5 acres of the site. The inlet/outlet from the Dallas storm drain enters the site at 25 feet below grade. The challenge with this is to design a basin landscape to that depth that is accessible to people and that has character. While a 'hole in the ground' is more efficient for the water storage needs, it is not effective in making the basin a 'place' within this site that interacts with the other site spaces and invites human engagement.

The library building footprint will occupy .6 acres, and parking will require 1 acre. This leaves approximately .9 acres for the story plaza and other circulation as required. While the basin serves as temporary water storage, the multi-use approach means that some or all of it can also be a part of the story plaza.



In the design above by **Jeremy Gwin** the jury commented on the strong relationships among the site elements. The library building has a presence on Central Avenue and is juxtaposed with the basin by extending out over it. The covered walkway references the former street and provides a continuous shaded

space that extends through and connects all parts of the site. The active spaces in the basin, a basketball court and a performance stage, bring people into the basin landscape and connect it effectively with the site.

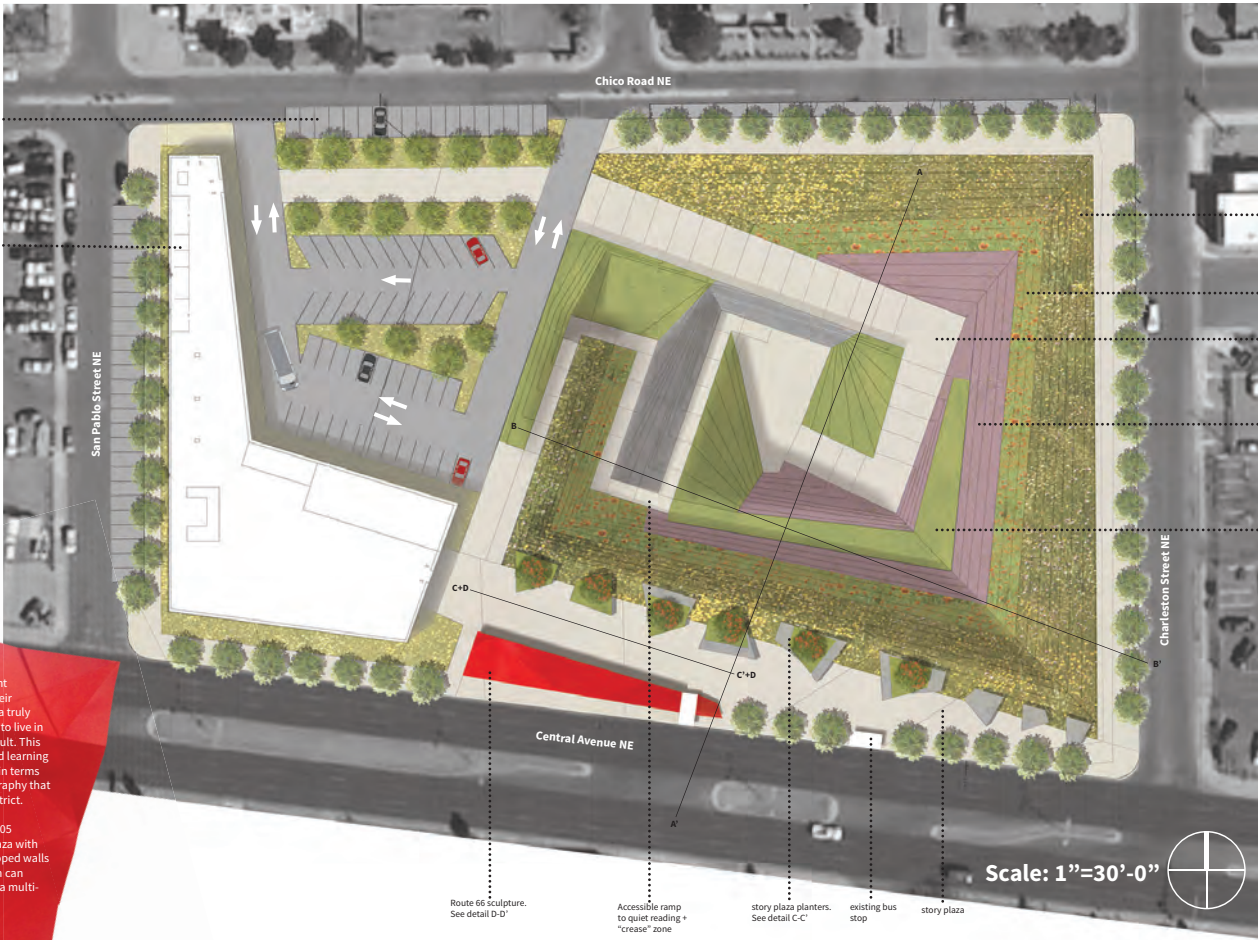


Parking for 105 vehicles
and bus access

25,000 square foot library

The International District is home to over 47 different cultures, some still undocumented. People leave their home and come to Albuquerque for many reasons; a truly commendable feat. To pack up everything you own to live in an unfamiliar climate with unfamiliar voices is difficult. This design represents unfolding; unpacking luggage and learning about different cultures. It involves transformation in terms of becoming a human sponge and a creating topography that dissolves stormwater issues in the International District.

The plan is simple: One 25,000 square foot library, 105 parking spaces (mostly on-street), an open story plaza with varying planters incorporating seat benches and sloped walls for sitting or reclining, and a 25 acre foot park which can retain a 100 year flood in the district but also act as a multi-level quiet reading zone and large event space.



high desert meadow

high desert wildflowers

AMAFCA truck
cleanout access +
strolling boulevard

drought + wet
tolerant pollinator
meadow

sod reading lawn

Route 66 Sculpture.
See detail D-D'

Accessible ramp
to quiet reading +
"crease" zone

story plaza planters.
See detail C-C'

existing bus
stop

story plaza

Scale: 1"=30'-0"

unfold + transform

Bonnie Strange

May 11, 2016

DPAC studio

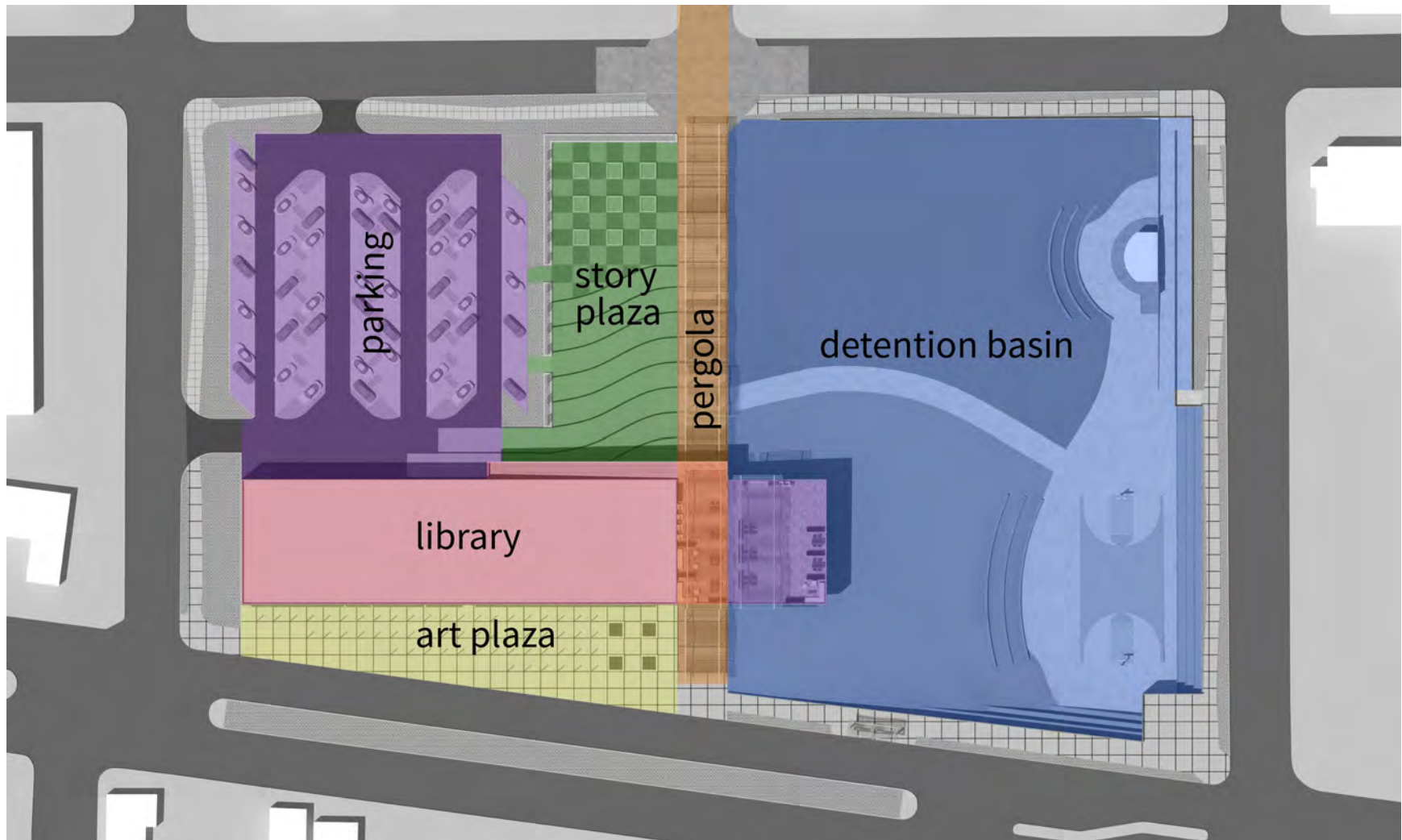
In the design above by **Bonnie Strange** the committee noted the interesting configuration of the detention basin, and the opportunity to experience the basin landscape as a 'journey'. The space along and fronting Central Avenue is an opportunity for

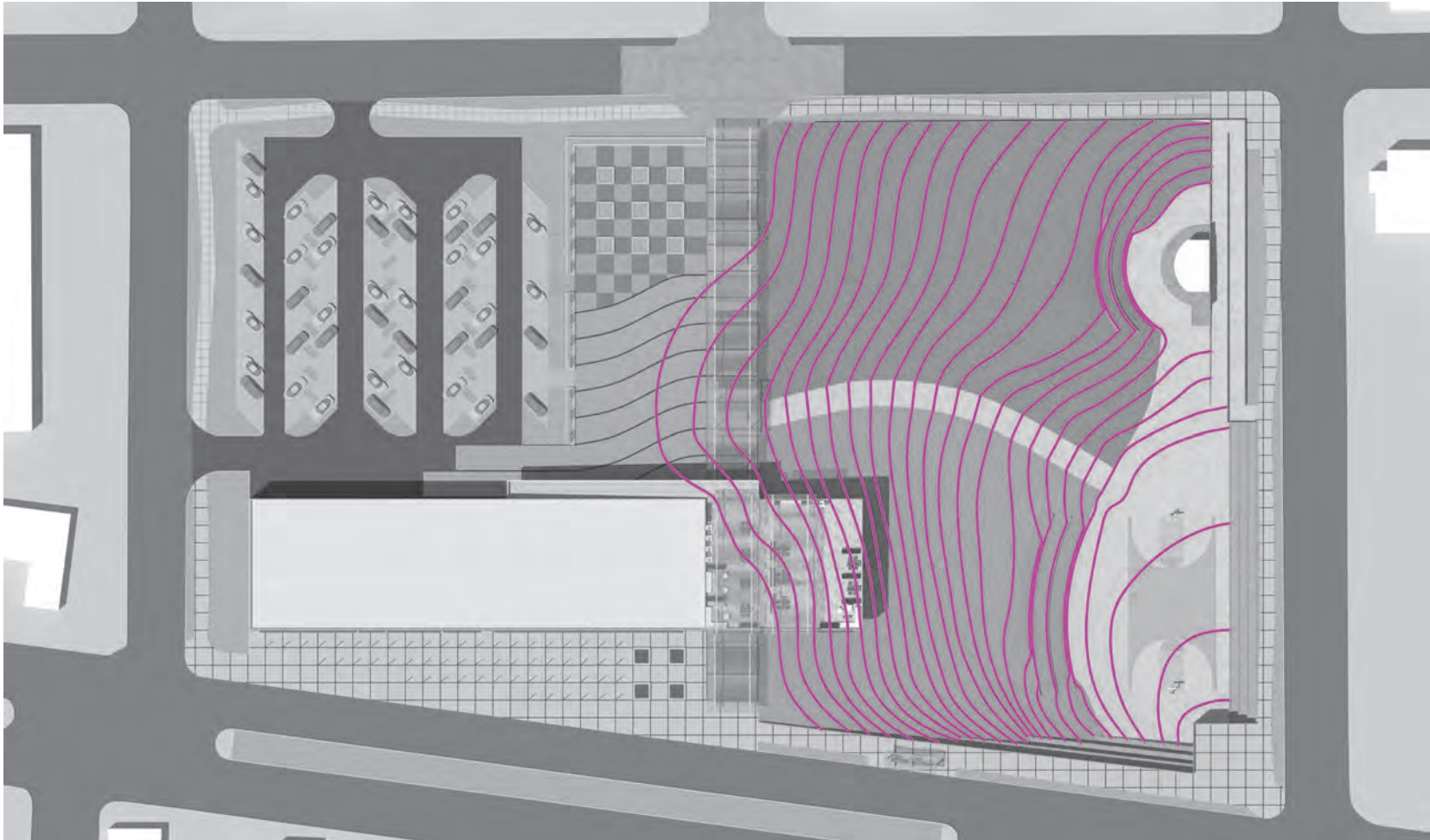
extending the plaza space and telling the stories of the District. The Jury also commented on the strong presence of the library building on Central Avenue and that the building footprint provides an effective enclosure of space that could become a part of the plaza.

Site Proposal 1

In this design the primary organizing element is the long covered walkway, or pergola, situated along the former road, and is the spine, or armature, to which all spaces on the site are connected.

Original Design by Jeremy Gwin





Site Grading

The slopes into the basin are relatively gentle and accessible, at ratios of between 1:12 and 1:10 down to the lower, active areas. In order to maximize the usable and accessible area on the slope, retaining and terracing is used on the North, East and South sides.

Site Design

The story plaza is a large open space that can accommodate a variety of events, as well as a shaded seating area under a bosque of trees on the north end. Vegetated seating walls wrap the north and west ends of the plaza and act as a buffer between pedestrian and vehicular zones. The seating wall incorporates metal grid story panels where community members can mount changing installations representing their stories and cultures. For larger events the plaza can extend out on either side into the detention basin and parking plaza. The art plaza along Central Avenue is designed with colored columns on a grid to represent symbolically both unity and di-

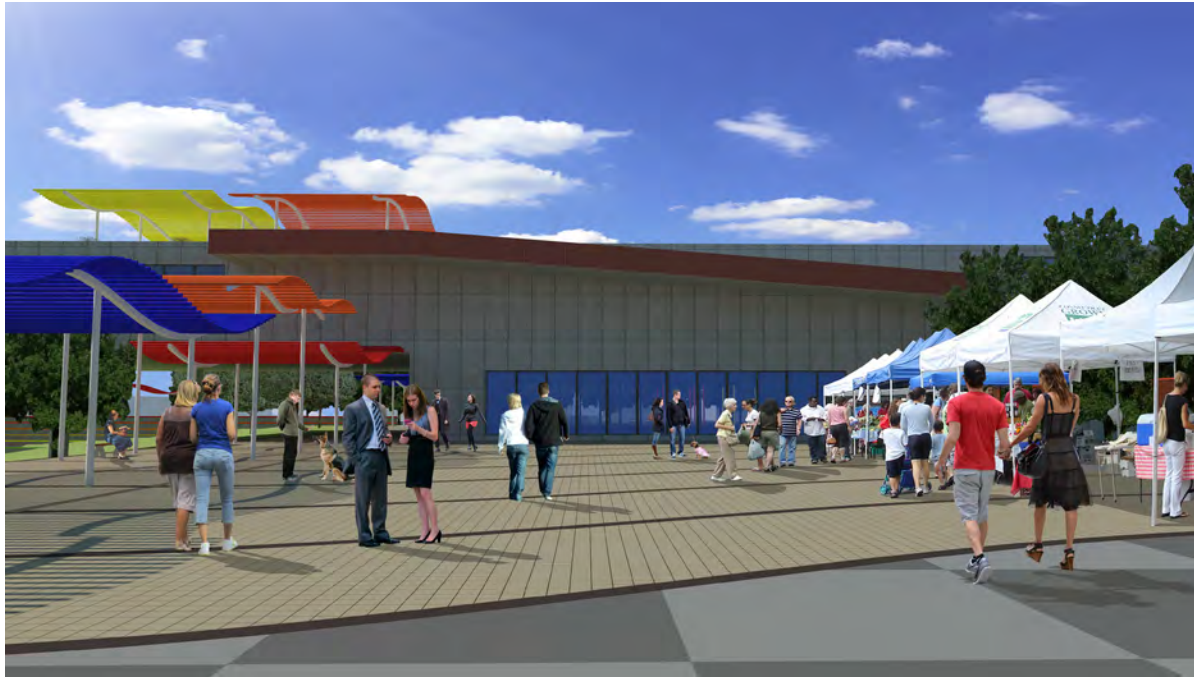


iversity in the international district. The LEDs embedded in the columns bring life to the night landscape and provide a strong presence for the site along Central Avenue.

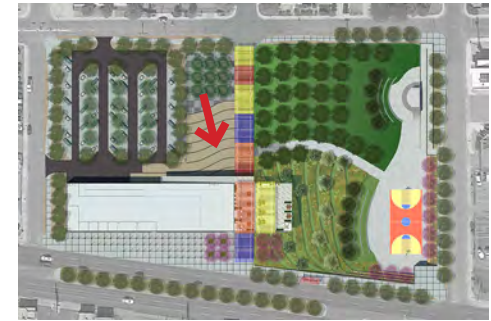
The detention basin is an active space that includes a gently sloping plane leading down to a basketball court and a performance stage. The north side has a stage for cultural expression through performance, with extended seating on the tree covered grass slope. The south slope incorporates vegetation zones and colored wall striping that mark storm water levels. The slope is planted with a grass and wildflower mix that is

mowed to create changing paths throughout the year. A basketball court is at the bottom, and the inlet/outlet structure is located at the South East corner.

The library's second story reading lounge and rooftop patio, all accessible by an open ramp system, extend over the site's central walkway and the detention basin, allowing for views to the mountains. The main entry to the library, located on the building's north side, is accessible from the parking lot and the story plaza.



Looking towards the library building from the plaza

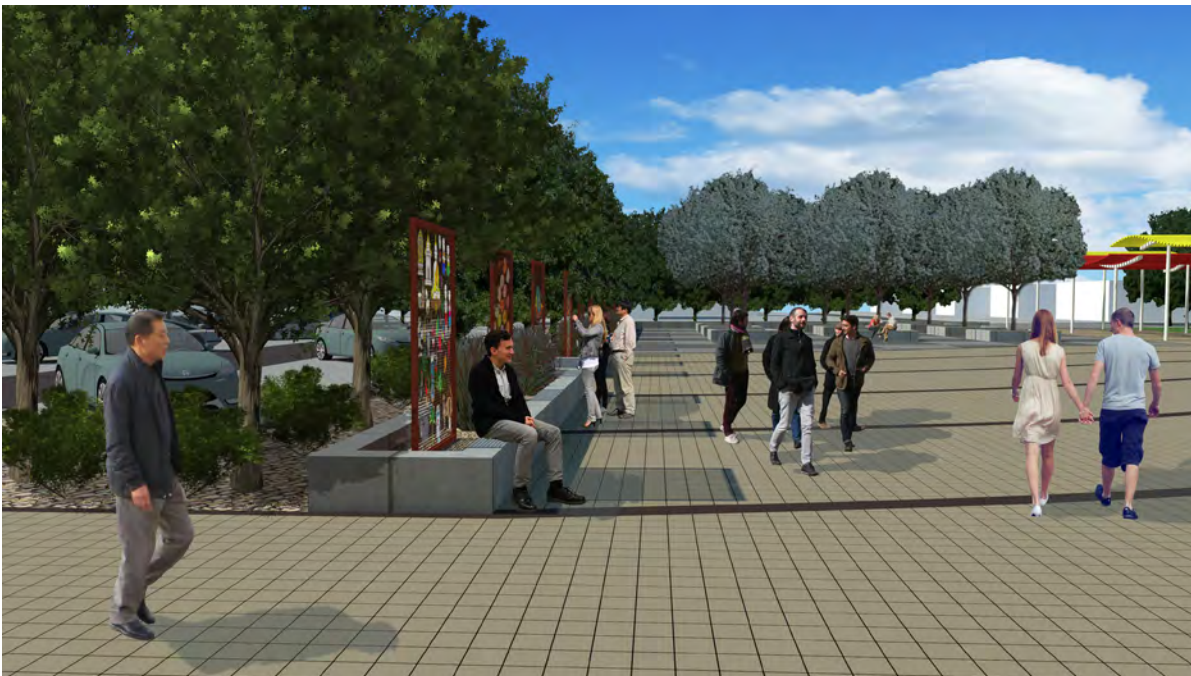
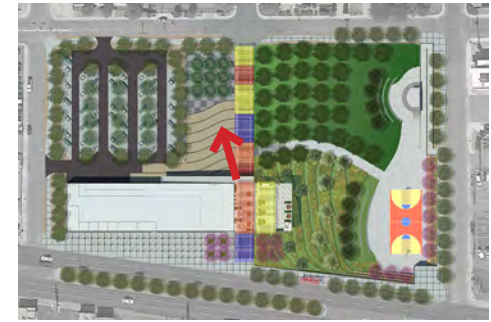


Looking into the bosque of trees at the north end of the plaza



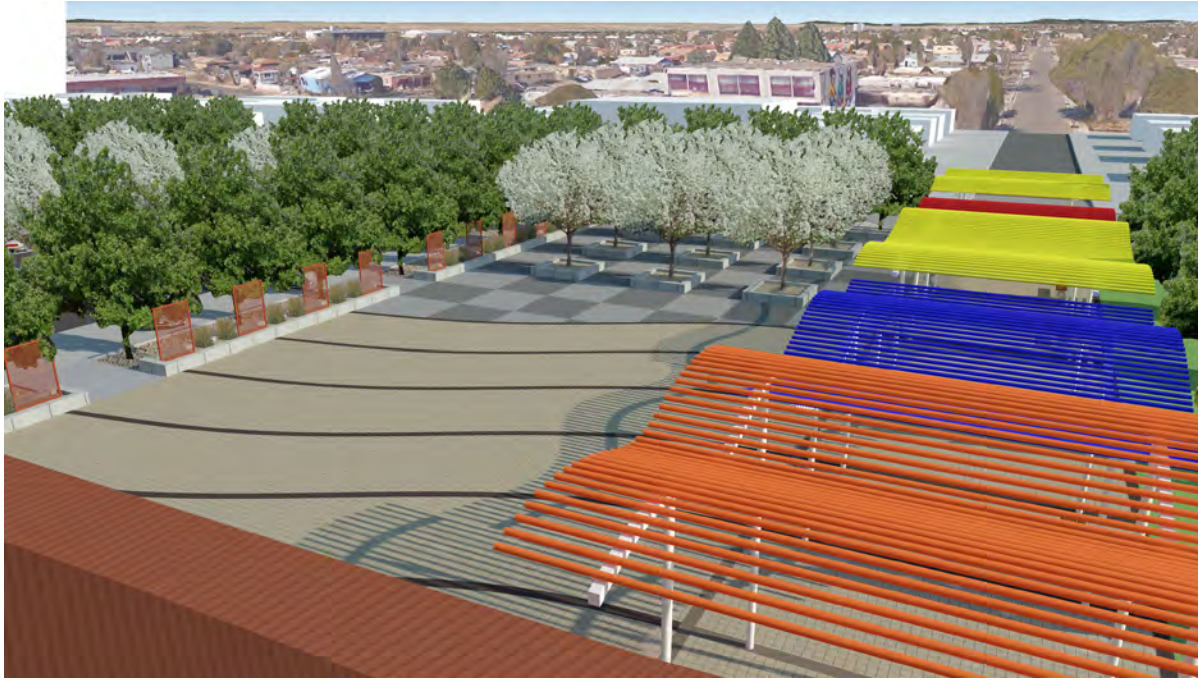


Looking into the plaza from the edge of the pergola showing the panels along the west edge to be used for rotating installations



Looking to the north east into the plaza towards the bosque

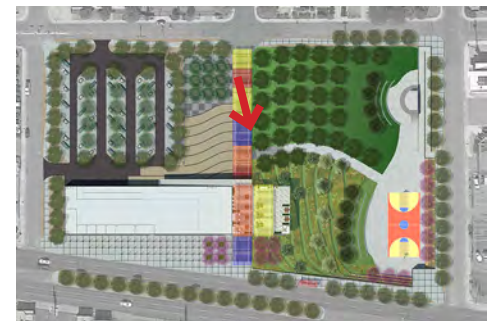




Looking down into the plaza from the roof terrace

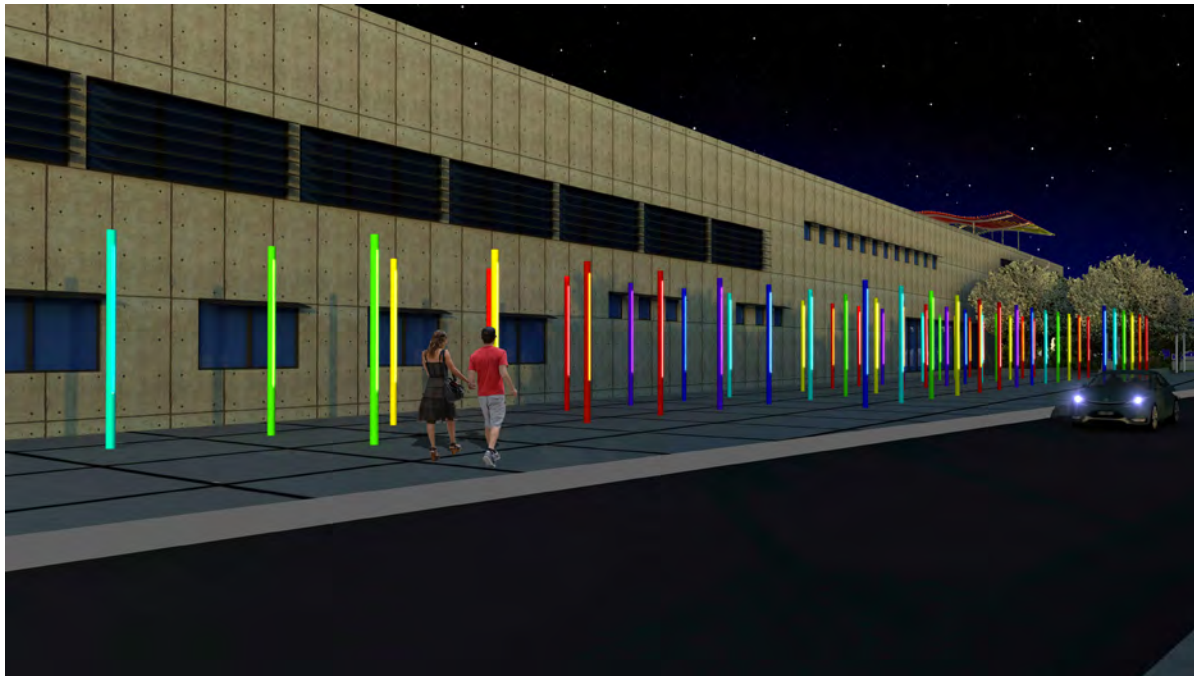
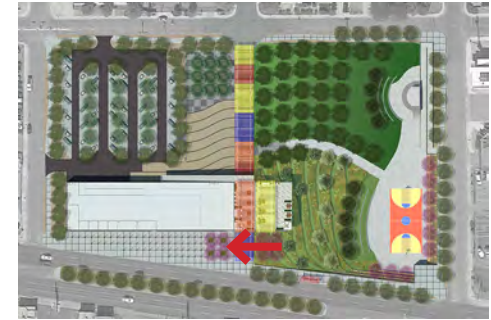


Looking towards the library building from under the pergola





Walking west along Central looking towards the column forest



The column forest at night with LEDs





Walking west along Central looking towards the library



Looking south towards the basketball court at the bottom of the basin





Looking from the bottom of the basin in front of the stage up towards the library

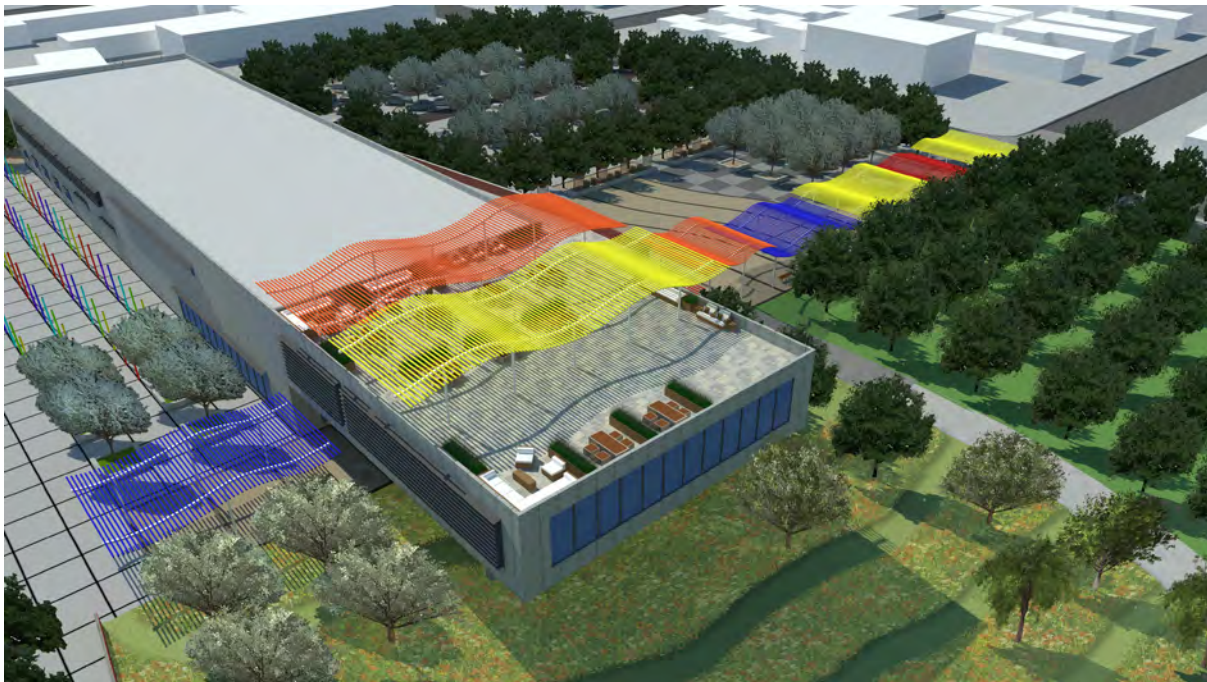


Looking down into the bottom of the basin from the sidewalk along Chico Road





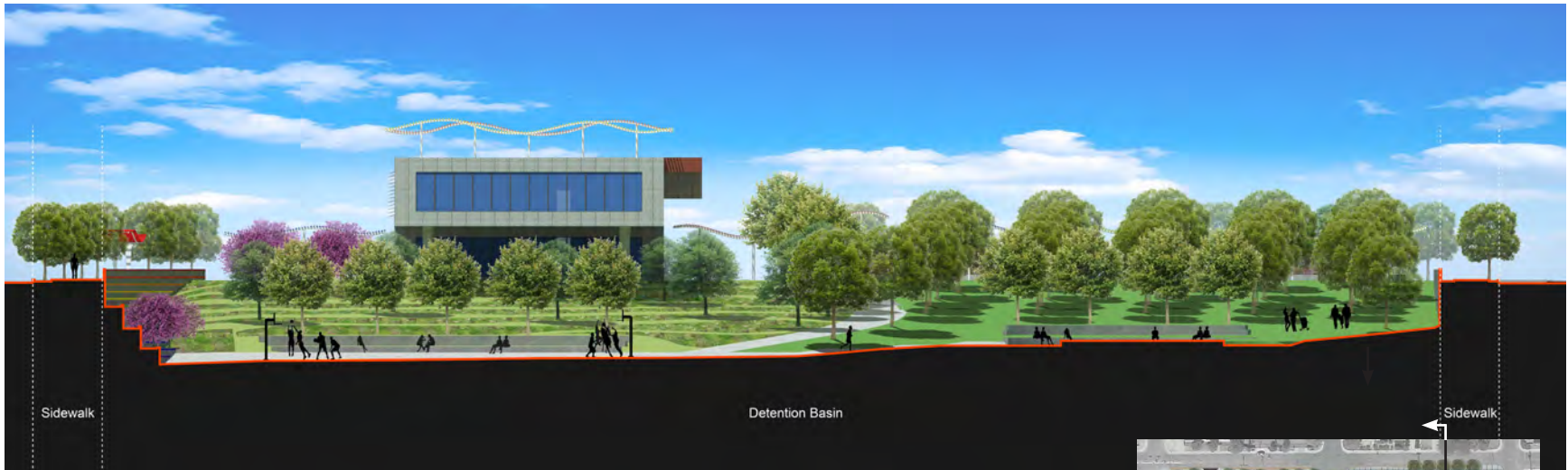
The roof terrace



Aerial view looking North-West



East-West section looking South



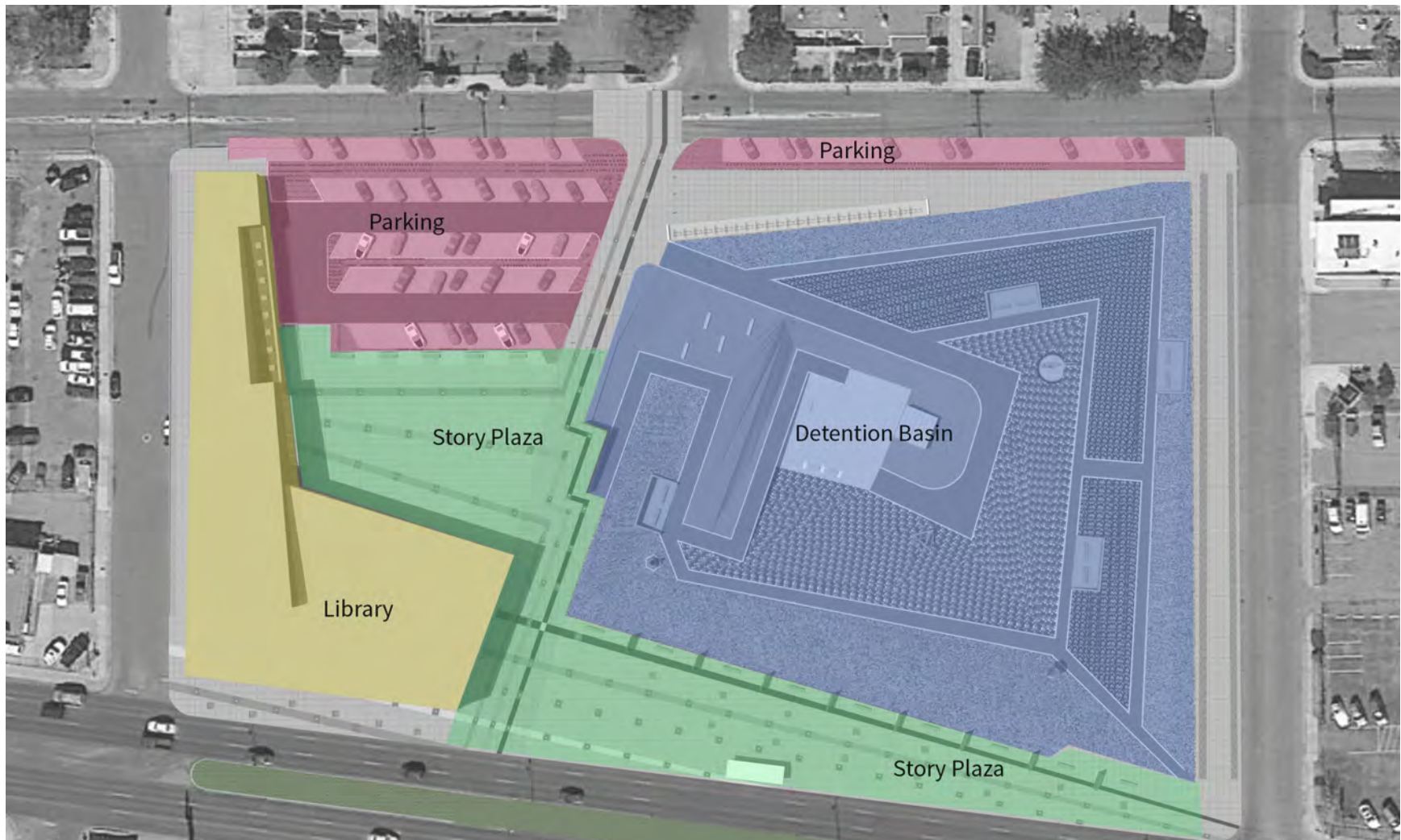
North-South section looking West

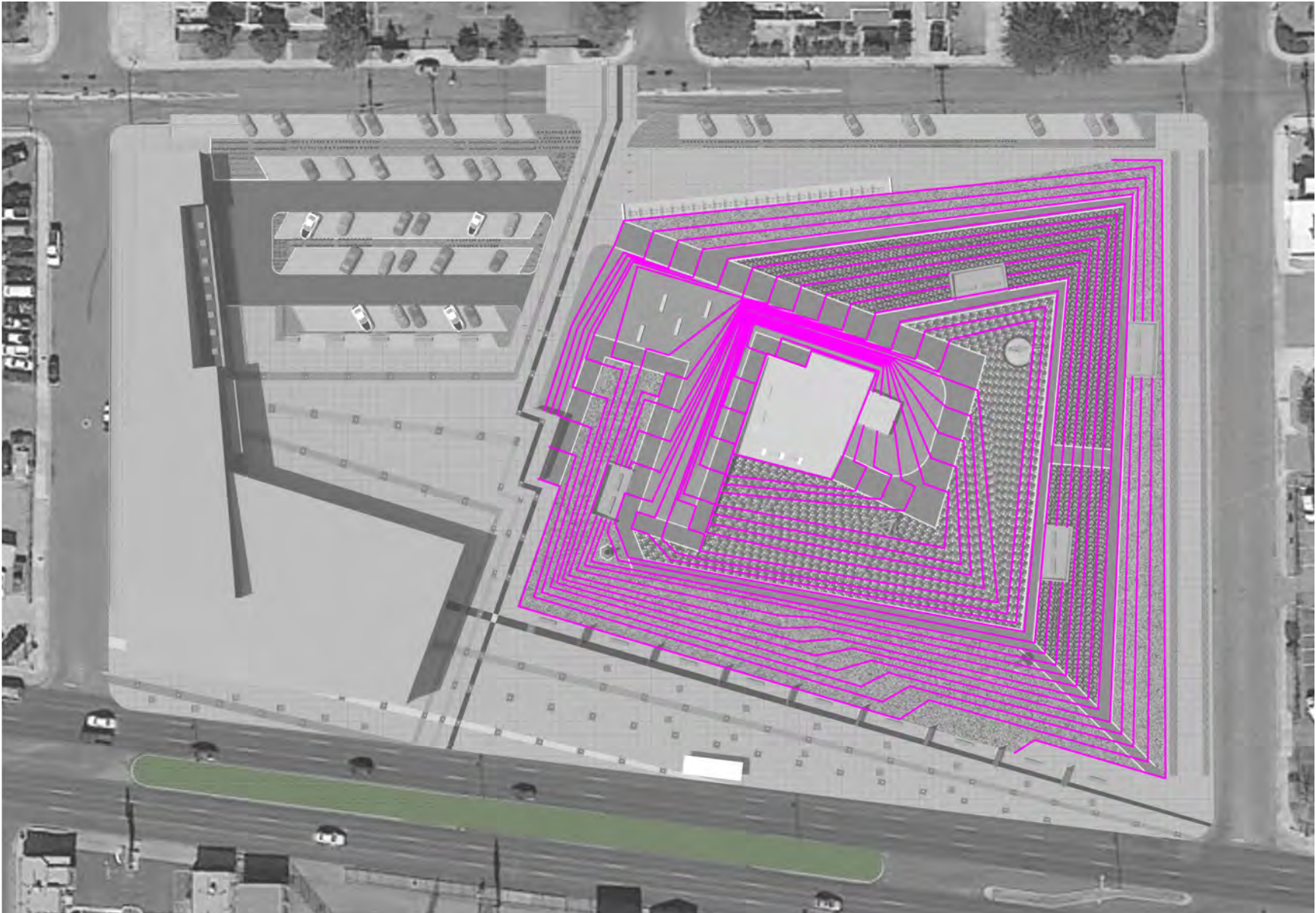


Site Proposal 2

In this design the primary organizing element is a geometry that interlocks the different zones, allowing the journey through the site to unfold

Original Design by Bonnie Strange





Site Grading

The complex grading in the basin enables a series of paths and layers. The walking slopes down into and along the basin edges are relatively gentle and accessible. Landings and seating areas punctuate the gradient. The diversity of the journey is enhanced by slopes that range from steep retained areas to gentle drops.



Site Design

The story plaza area is a large open space that can accommodate a variety of events, including markets, festivals and performances. A shaded seating area with seating walls and trees lines the north side of the plaza. Gridded metal story panels act as installation surfaces where community members can mount changing expressions of their stories and cultures. The plaza also extends along Central Avenue where quotes from residents of the district are etched into lit steel panels. Stripes in the paving with surface lights lead into the main plaza area.

The detention basin is accessible, and experienced as a journey through different planting textures and art installations as the geometry 'unfolds' itself. It is a passive space for strolling along pathways, viewing and sitting. The bottom of the basin is the quiet center. The inlet/outlet structure is also located in this space.

The L-shaped one story library, with a presence on Central Avenue, embraces the main plaza area, which leads into the art park basin.



Looking into the plaza



Looking to the East from in the plaza towards the end wall that contains the space. The wall has a map of the world etched into it with origins of the various resident groups in the district identified





Walking East along Central looking at a story panel



Walking West on Central towards the library entry





Walking East on Central along the Central Avenue plaza. The bus stop has been moved closer to the library entry



Night view looking West on the Central Avenue plaza showing pavement lights and lit story panels





Looking East along the Chico Road pedestrian way



Walking West on the Chico Avenue pedestrian way with bike racks to the left and angle parking along Chico to the right





Walking West on Central Avenue beside the basin and towards the library

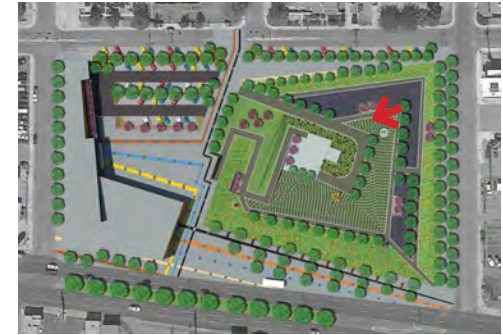


Looking west along Charleston Street and to the corner pathway leading down into the basin





In the basin sculpture garden looking towards the library

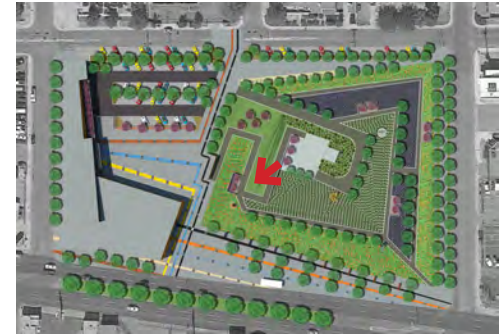


Walking into the basin sculpture garden from the corner of Central and Charleston

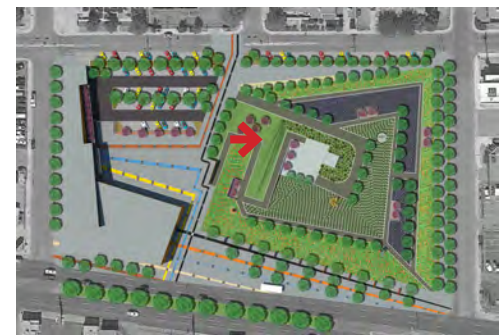




Tall grass meadow with wildflower meadow in the distance, in the basin sculpture garden



Walking down into the basin sculpture garden





Looking South-East over the site from the library terrace



Aerial view to the South-East



East-West section looking South



North-South section looking West



Conclusion

In both proposals the three main programmatic spaces have a robust and meaningful presence, and are spatially integrated. The plaza, in both cases, is a flexible space that can accommodate a variety of uses, and also extends out onto Central Avenue to present a strong identity for the site.

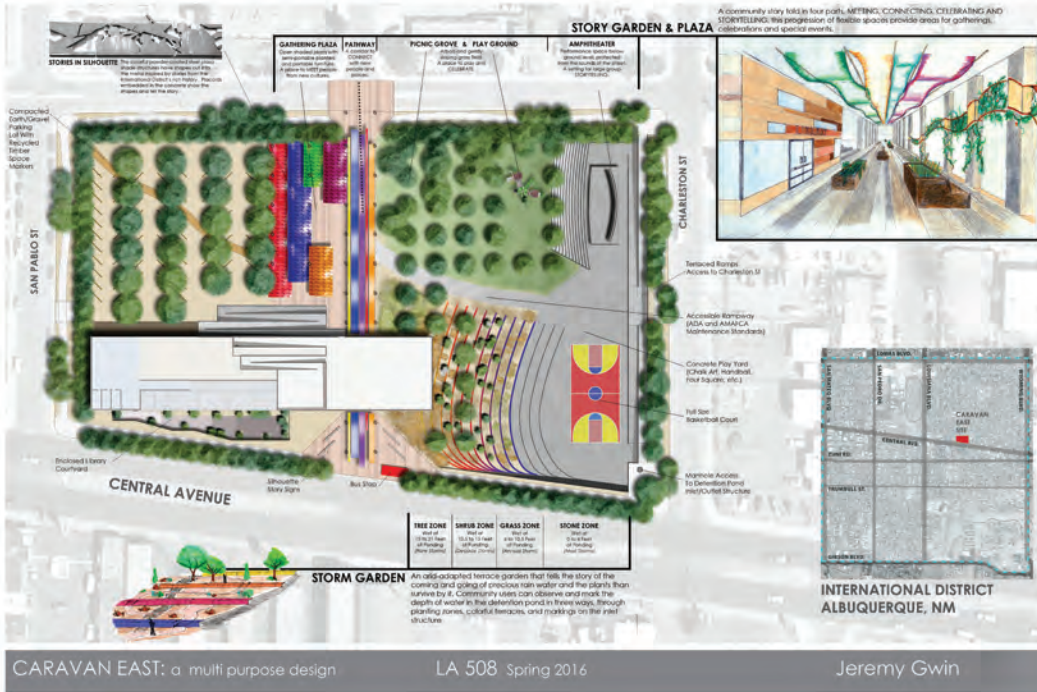
In proposal 1 the basin landscape is an active space, with a performance stage and a basketball court drawing users down to the lower plane of the basin.

In proposal 2 the basin landscape is a passive space incorporating textured planting zones and art installations to be discovered as one journeys through the space.

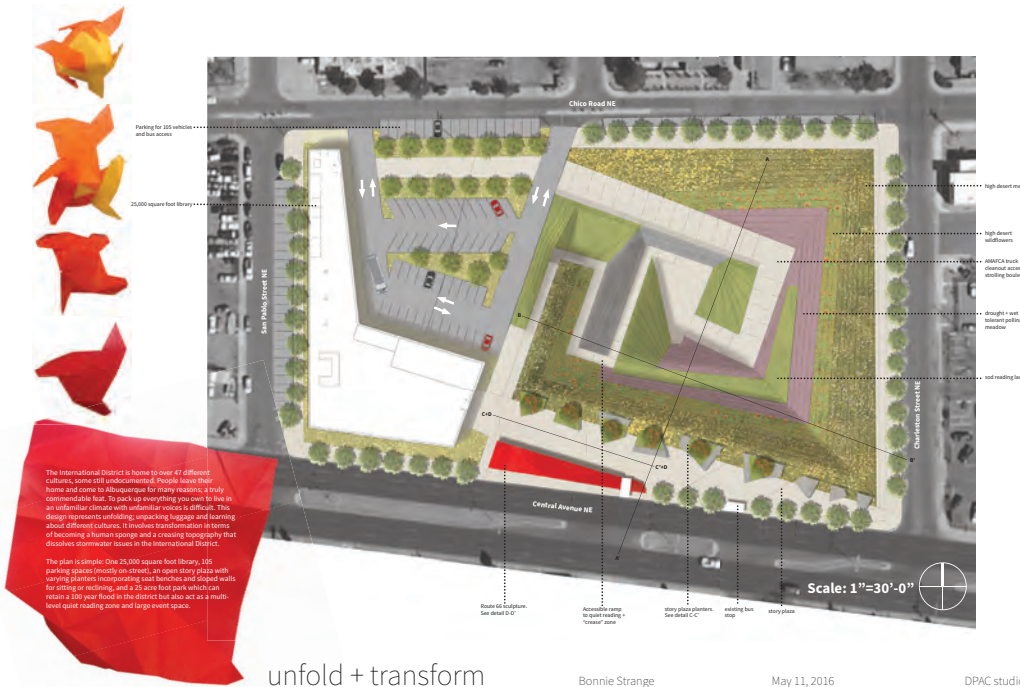
Because of its size and location along Central Avenue the Caravan East site is an ideal location for the development of this project.

Appendix

*Nineteen projects from students in Landscape
Architecture Design Studio LA 508*



Jeremy Gwin
Landscape Architecture



Bonnie Strange
Landscape Architecture



CARAVAN EAST: a multi purpose site design LA508 Spring 2016 Dylan Goyer

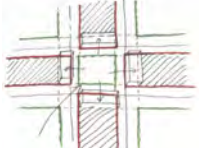
Dylan Goyer
Landscape Architecture



Satya Rakurty
Landscape Architecture

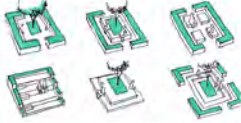


PARTI - ROOM



The site is at Caravan East which is in the International District. The proposal is designing a library, a story plaza and a detention pond, and each function has specific requirements. I start with the function of the Library. I try to design some outdoor reading spaces which can emphasize the gathering place. Therefore, I have the part of "Story Plaza". Close to the site, I create a checkboard and have some square spaces, and I design different types of reading space and put them into those square spaces. Each reading unit is independent, at the same time, it connects with public place, so people can walk through the site and find their interesting spaces for reading. According to the framework, then I set the library, parking lot and detention pond on the site and make them fit to the idea. Without the detention, the basin provides playing facilities for children and running road for neighbors. The parking lot uses permeated bricks, so stormwater can through the surface and be collected.

UNITIES



PROCESS



LAYOUT

CARAVAN EAST: a multi purpose site design

LA 508 Spring 2016

Jiangchen Zhu

Jiangchen Zhu

Landscape Architecture



Site Plan
Scale: 1"=30'

CARAVAN EAST: a multi purpose site design

LA 508 Spring 2016

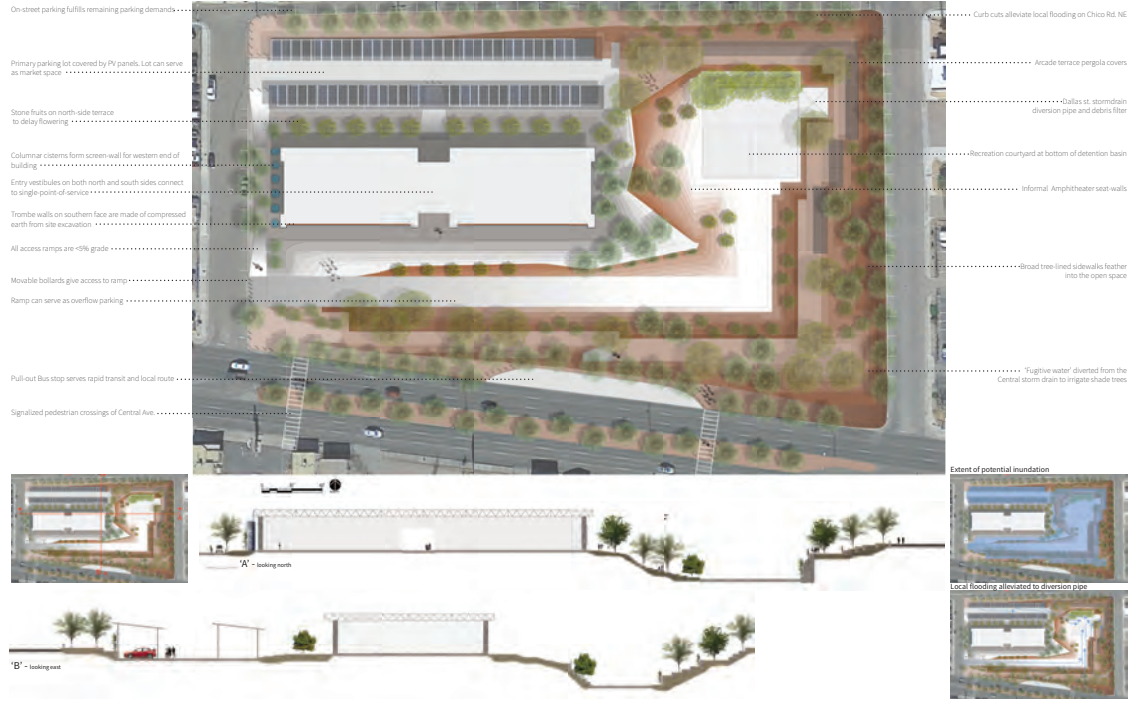
Timila Shrestha

Timila Shrestha

Landscape Architecture



Brian Griffith Landscape Architecture



Philip Taccetta Landscape Architecture



Mackenzie Greene-Powell Landscape Architecture



Mo Convery Landscape Architecture

Community Link

A diverse mix of activities, multiple activities and community interaction. The project has zones with different characters, but all connect and relate to each other.

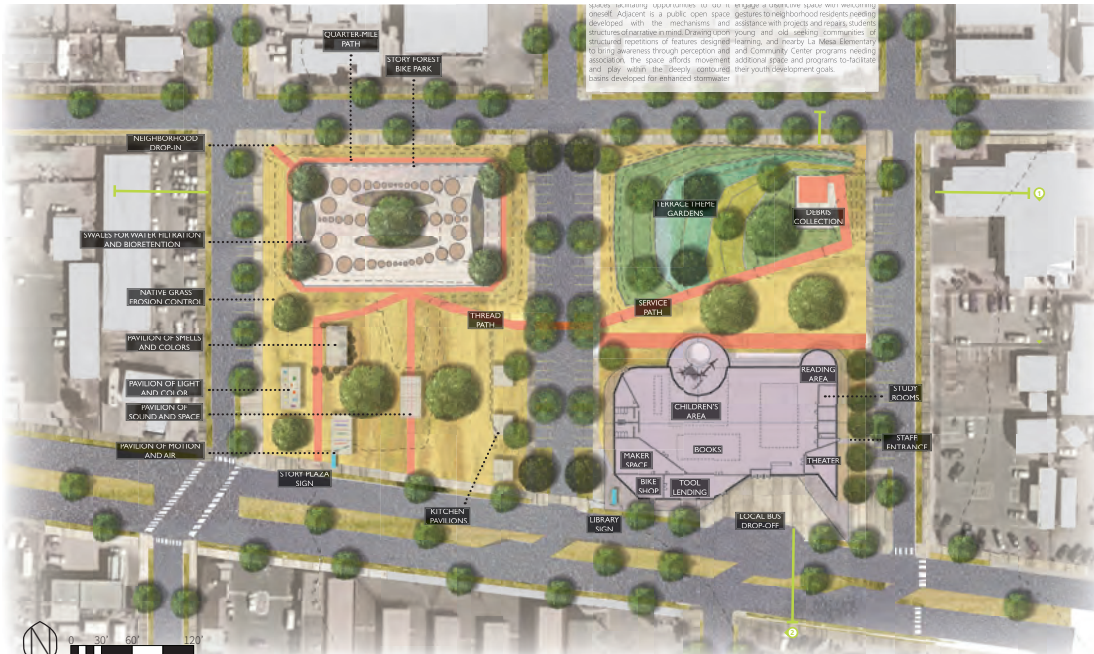


CARAVAN EAST: a multi purpose site design

LA 508 Spring 2016

Rodolfo Mariscal

Rodolfo Mariscal Landscape Architecture



CUENTI MUNDI Story Garden, Library, and Stormwater Detention Facility

LA 508 Spring 2016

Ted Weber

Ted Webber Landscape Architecture

of this design, parking area, detention pond and library were required by the government. The design idea is how to connect different elements in the design, like people, plaza, library also the unique communities.



Render Plan

CARAVAN EAST : a multi purpose site design

LA 508 Spring 2016

Siqian Rong

Siqian Rong Landscape Architecture

Library east

Albuquerque, N.M. University of New Mexico, Masters of Landscape Architecture
Studio DPAC. Al Simon
Alonzo L. Twitty

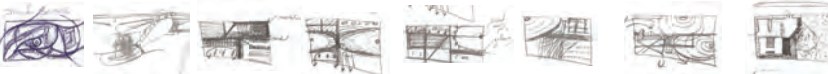
Site Approximates
Library ___25,000 sq ft
Detention Pond Max Capacity ___18 acre ft
Parking Capacity ___110 spaces 35,000 sq ft
Plaza and Story Garden ___14,000 sq ft
Total Site ___217,800 sq ft. (5 acres)

Project Proposal
Propose to re-design the Caravan site: changed in total from the existing parking lot to a library space that has an exterior program which follows: a detention pond, plaza, story garden and parking lot. I envision this 5 acre lot mainly as an area for a detention pond; that artistically composed with interactive stone walkways, over flow filters, accented stone walls, nesting filter view stones, Islamic water stream, a view deck and relief sub ponds. The plaza and story garden space will be proportionally separated on the site to enhance the spatial experience. Different garden types will incorporate the concept of nesting for a more collaborative site, that educates the community and changes the physical state of feeling through landscape types like a Chinese stroll garden. The library will be nested by having an inner shell as glass that's covered by a metal facade. This will allow light to penetrate into the building, reusing water. This design in total will add character to the area and reconnect the International district to the world surrounding it.

Project Concept

Nesting - The idea of different cultures being all in one neighborhood by agency, financial status or family ties, can be viewed as cultural nesting to one place or environment. In creating a site where this concept will not only exist but allow for the diversities of the different cultures to pour into each other by social interaction. The broad materials of world cultural studies that the library will provide along with the world wide web will be accessible to the public.

Process work

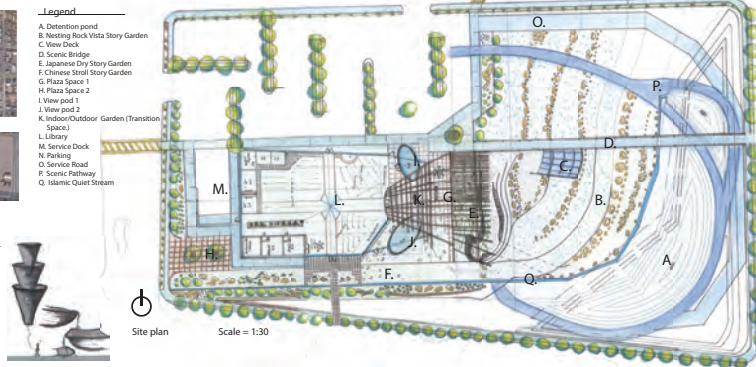


Final Design



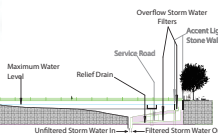
Legend

- A. Detention pond
- B. Nesting Rock Vista Story Garden
- C. View Deck
- D. Scenic Bridge
- E. Japanese Dry Story Garden
- F. Chinese Street Story Garden
- G. Plaza Space 1
- H. Plaza Space 2
- I. View pod 1
- J. View pod 2
- K. Indoor/Outdoor Garden (Transition Space)
- L. Library
- M. Service Dock
- N. Parking
- O. Service Road
- P. Service Pathway
- Q. Islamic Quiet Stream



Site plan Scale = 1:30

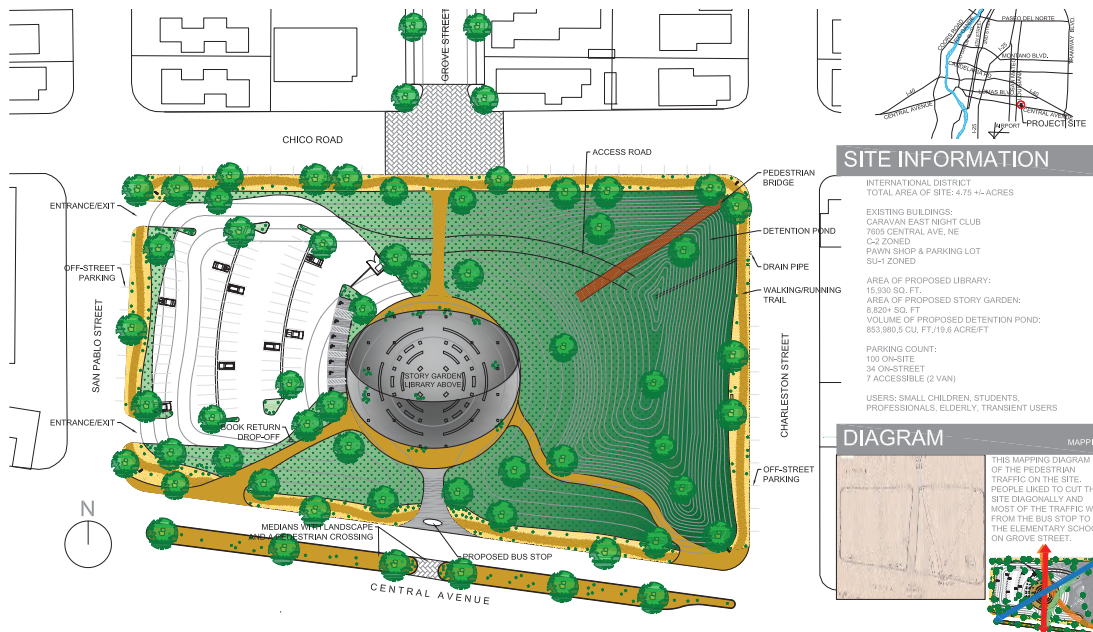
Section AA



Alonzo Twitty Landscape Architecture



Cynthia Jacobs
Landscape Architecture



Vanessa Funston
Architecture



SITE PLAN- Total area 5 Acre and library built up space 23500 sq.ft, Plaza- 1.7 Acre

SCALE- 1:30

CARAVAN EAST: Multipurpose site design

LA 508: Spring 2016

SINDHURI PATLLOLA

Sindhuri Patllola
Architecture

VERB.

1. PREPARE & USE (LAND) FOR CROPS OR GARDENING.

- BREAK UP (SOIL) IN PREPARATION FOR SOWING OR PLANTING.

2. TRY TO ACQUIRE OR DEVELOP (A QUALITY, SENTIMENT, OR SKILL).

- APPLY ONESELF TO IMPROVING OR DEVELOPING (ONE'S MIND OR MANNERS).



"CULTIVATION TO THE MIND IS AS NECESSARY AS FOOD TO THE BODY."

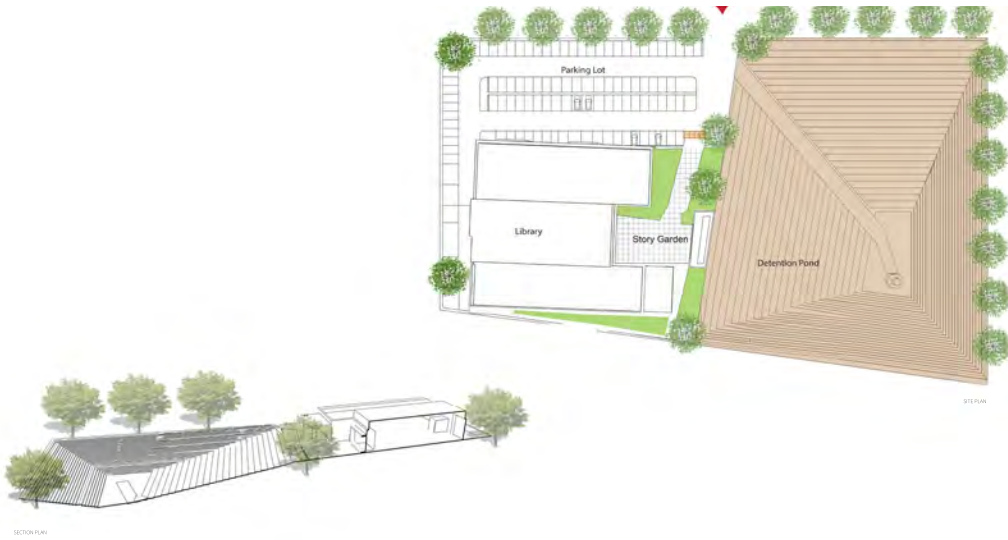
MARCUS TULLIUS CICERO

"Musing takes place in a kind of meadowlands of the imagination, a part of the imagination that has not yet been plowed, developed, or put to any immediately practical use...time spent there is not work time, yet without that time the mind becomes sterile, dull, domesticated. The fight for free space — for wilderness and public space — must be accompanied by a fight for free time to spend wandering in that space."

Rebecca Solnit, Wanderlust: A History of Walking



Whitney Phelan
Community + Regional Planning



CARAVAN EAST : a multi purpose site design

LA 508 Spring 2016

EMMANUEL NKURANGA

Emmanuel Nkuranga

Community + Regional Planning