

San Jacinto Plaza REDESIGN

The El Paso Historic Landmark Commission
Revised Concept Recommendation for the
proposed redesign of San Jacinto Plaza
El Paso, Texas August 11, 2011

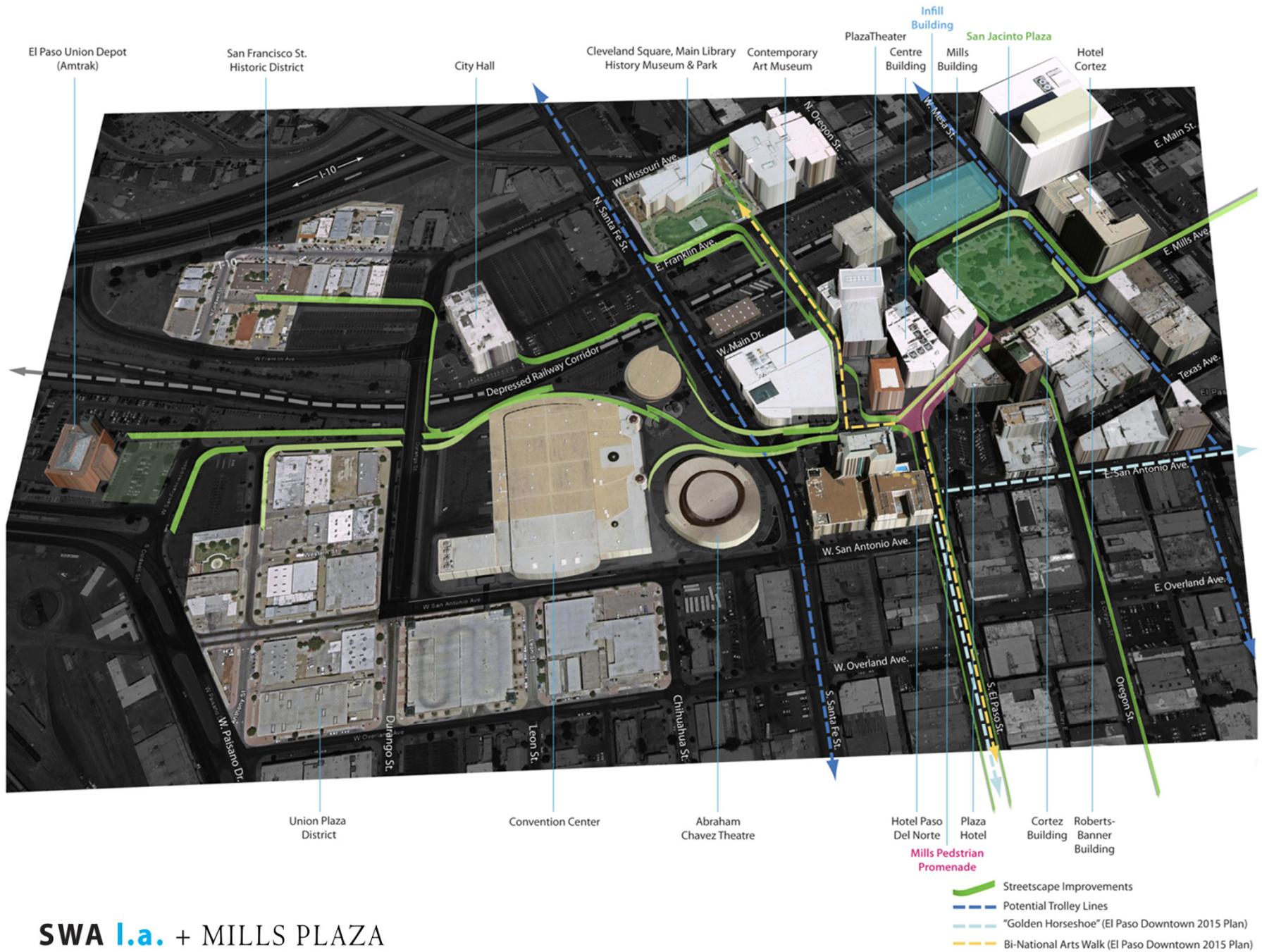
City of El Paso / Mills Plaza

SWA

landscape architects + outreach



why redesign?



SWA i.a. + MILLS PLAZA



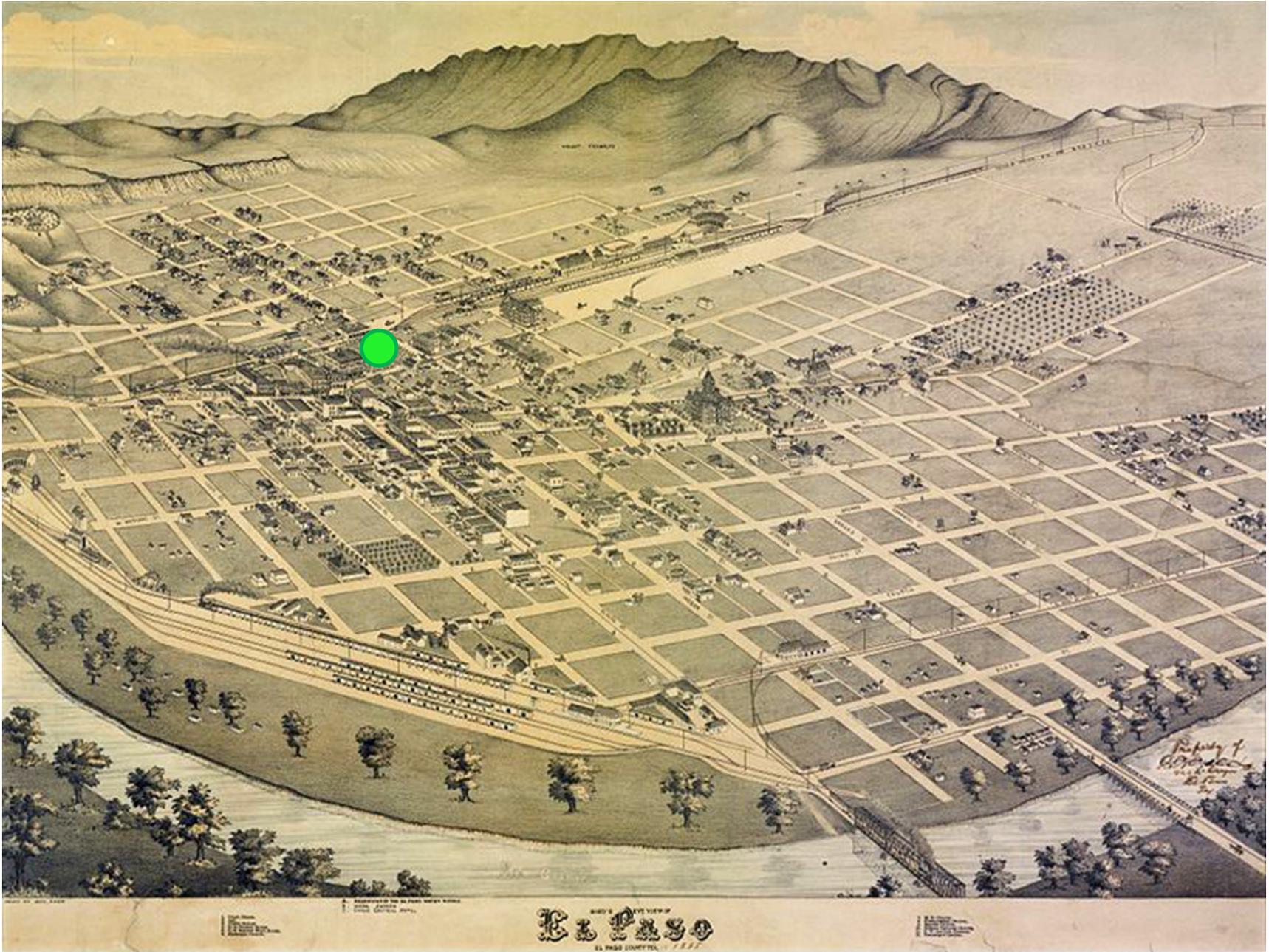




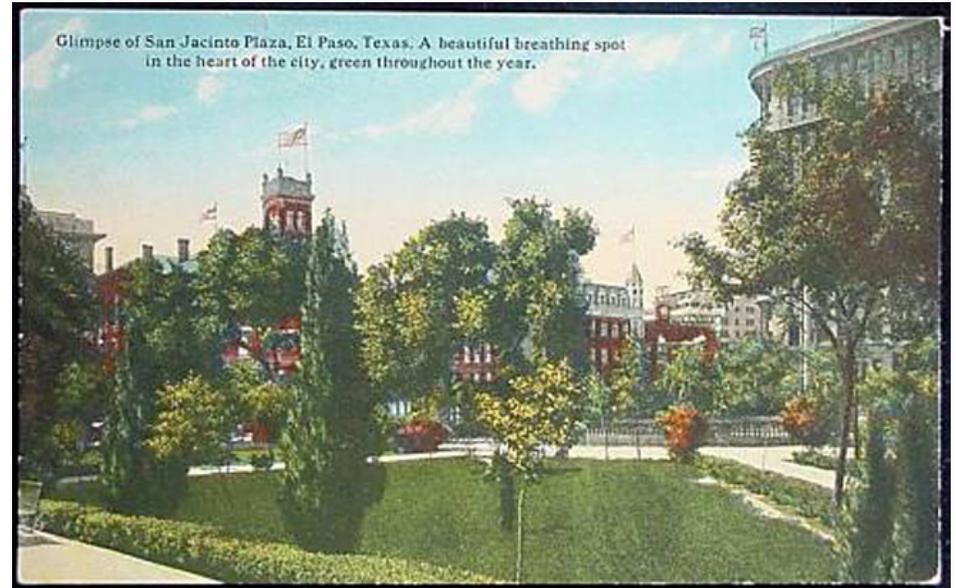
San Jacinto Plaza, El Paso today



San Jacinto Plaza, El Paso circa 1903



Historic Images of El Paso:
[Birdseye Map, 1886](#)



Vintage Postcards of El Paso:
San Jacinto Plaza circa 1910



SUNNERS - SAN JACINTO PLAZA 1909

Historic Images of El Paso:
'Sunners' in San Jacinto Plaza, 1909



Union Square, San Francisco today



Pershing Square, Los Angeles today

public workshops

building consensus

March-April, 2011



san jacinto plaza
 Community Open House
 City of El Paso
 Mills Plaza Property
 SWA Landscape Architects
 03.29.2011

make your mark!
 [what would you like to see in the promenade?]

spatial quality

lighting

planting

wayfinding

shade trees

surfaces

san jacinto plaza
 Community Open House
 City of El Paso
 Mills Plaza Property
 SWA Landscape Architects
 03.29.2011

san jacinto plaza

1

smart





san
jacinto
plaza

Community Open House

City of El Paso
Mills Plaza Property
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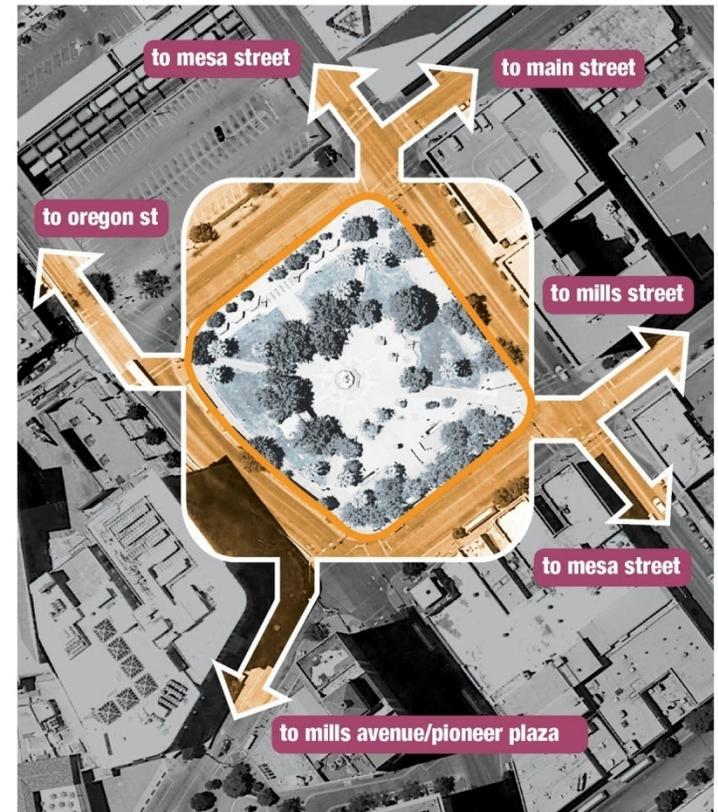
66,419 sq ft



san
jacinto
plaza

San Jacinto Plaza has been the center of downtown El Paso for over 100 years. In 1907, horse drawn carriages lined up around the Plaza. Before buses, trolleys made their daily stop at the Plaza. In the 1950s, the Plaza became a major boarding site for city buses as well as a pick-up point for private transportation. Today there are often concerts, and a traditional lighting of the city tree in the Plaza still officially begins the Christmas season in El Paso.

context map



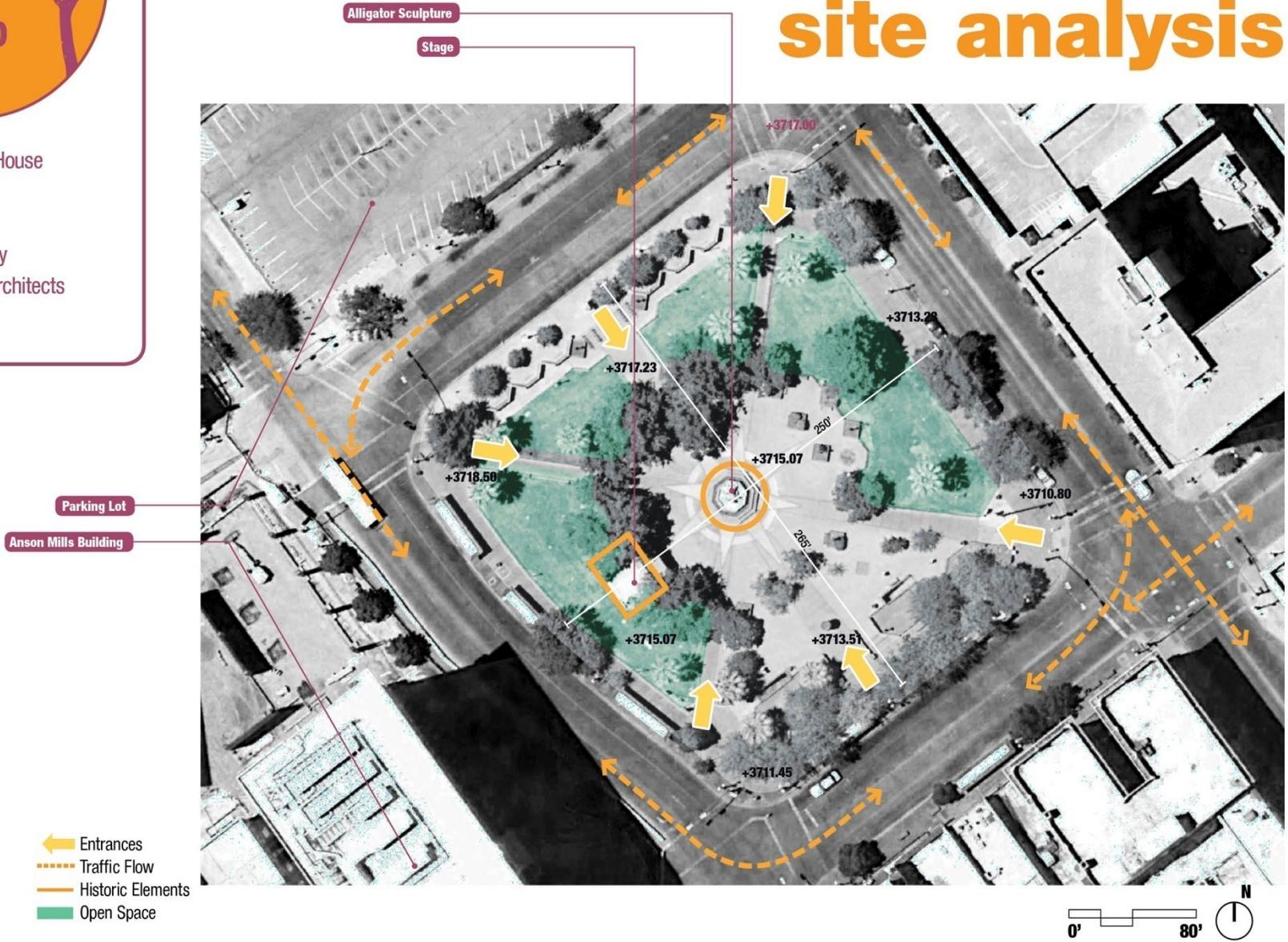


san
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plaza

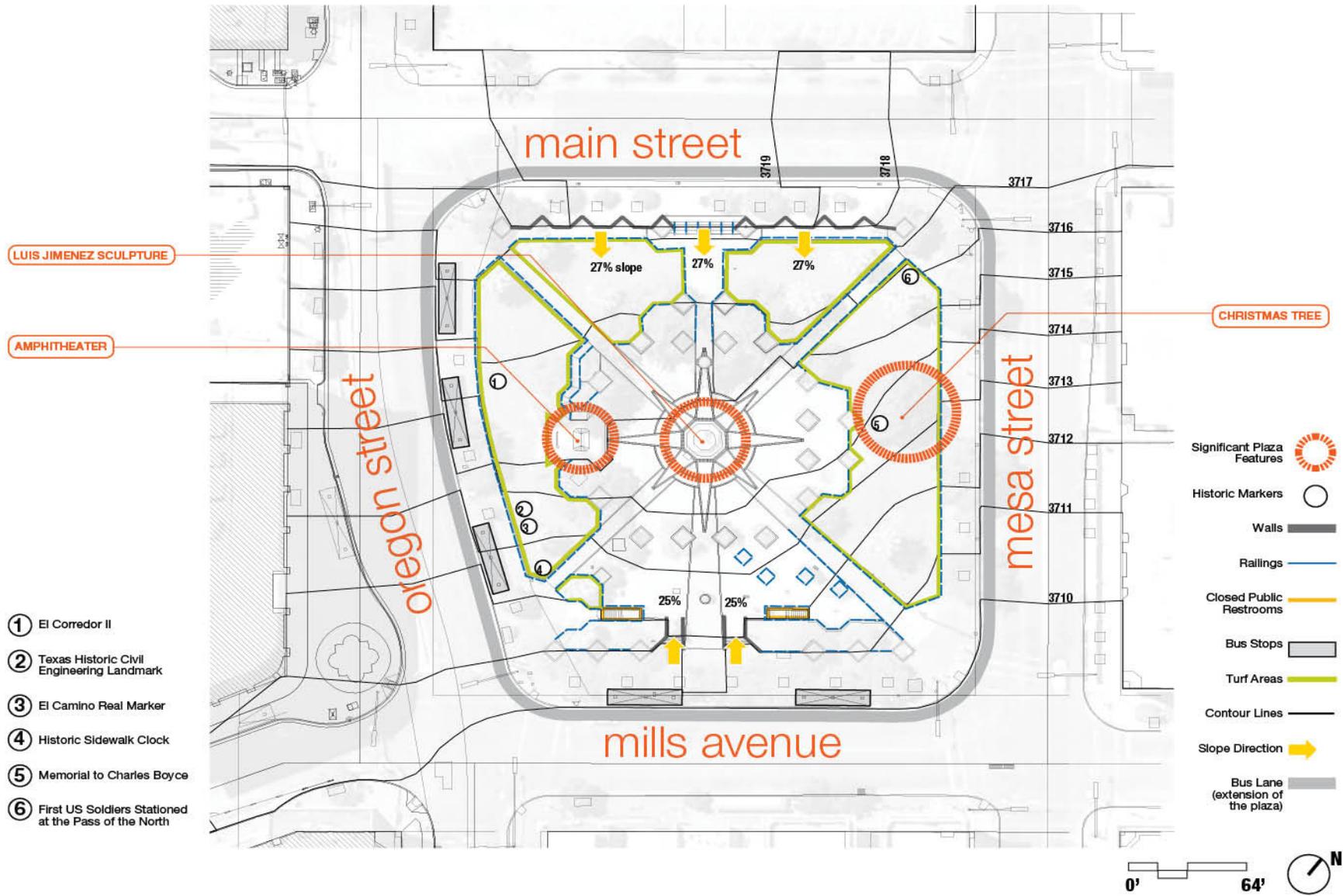
Community Open House

City of El Paso
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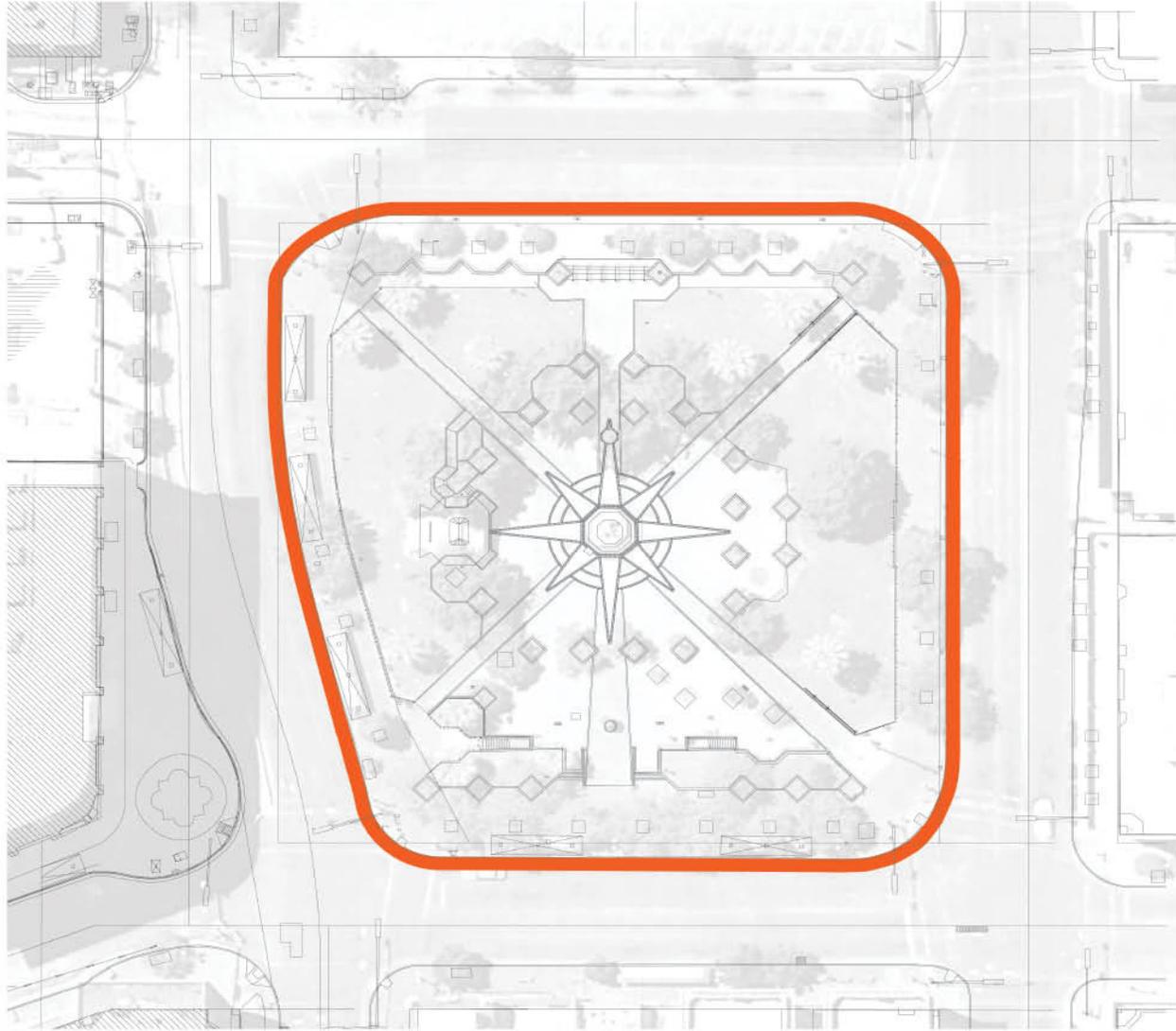
site analysis



site analysis

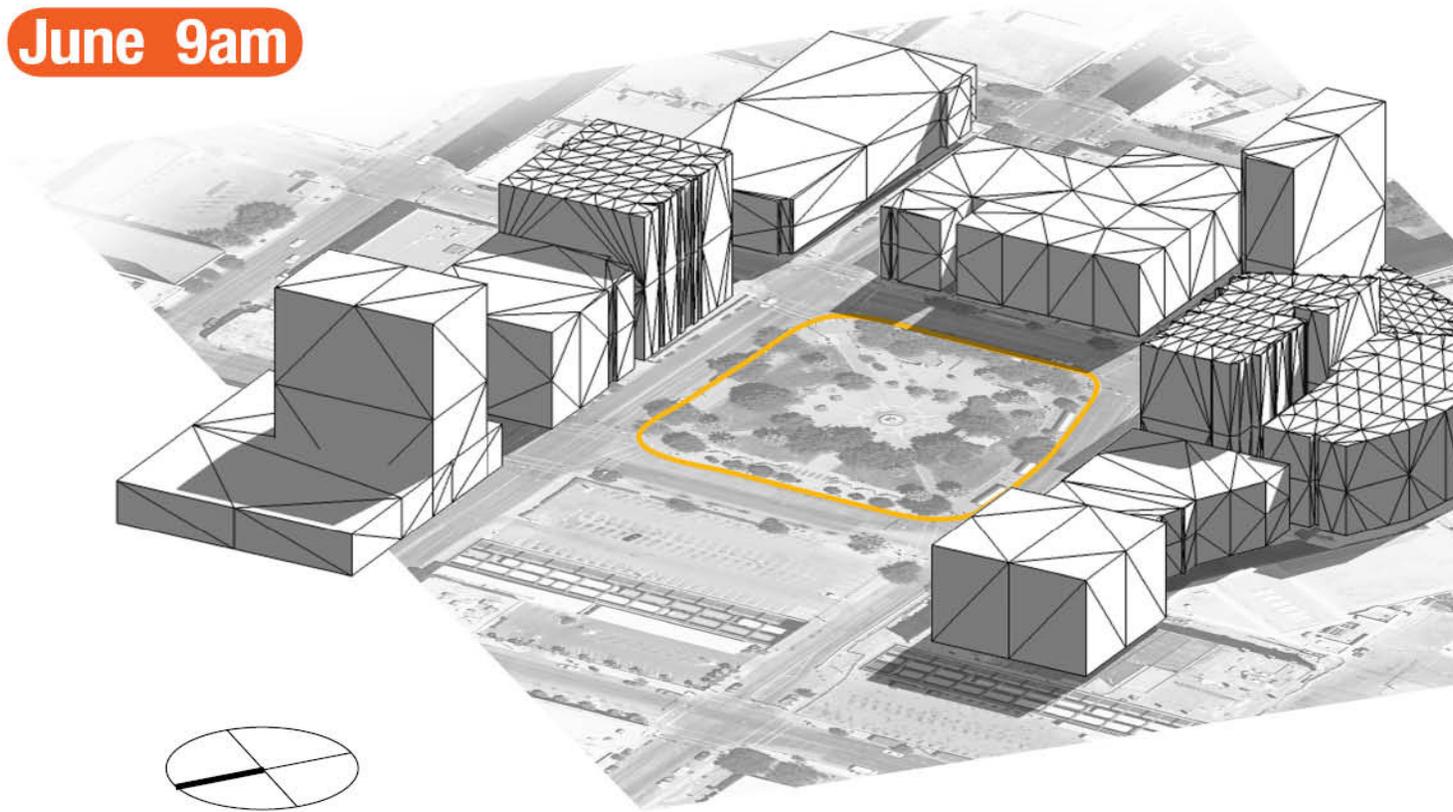


reclaim the bus lane



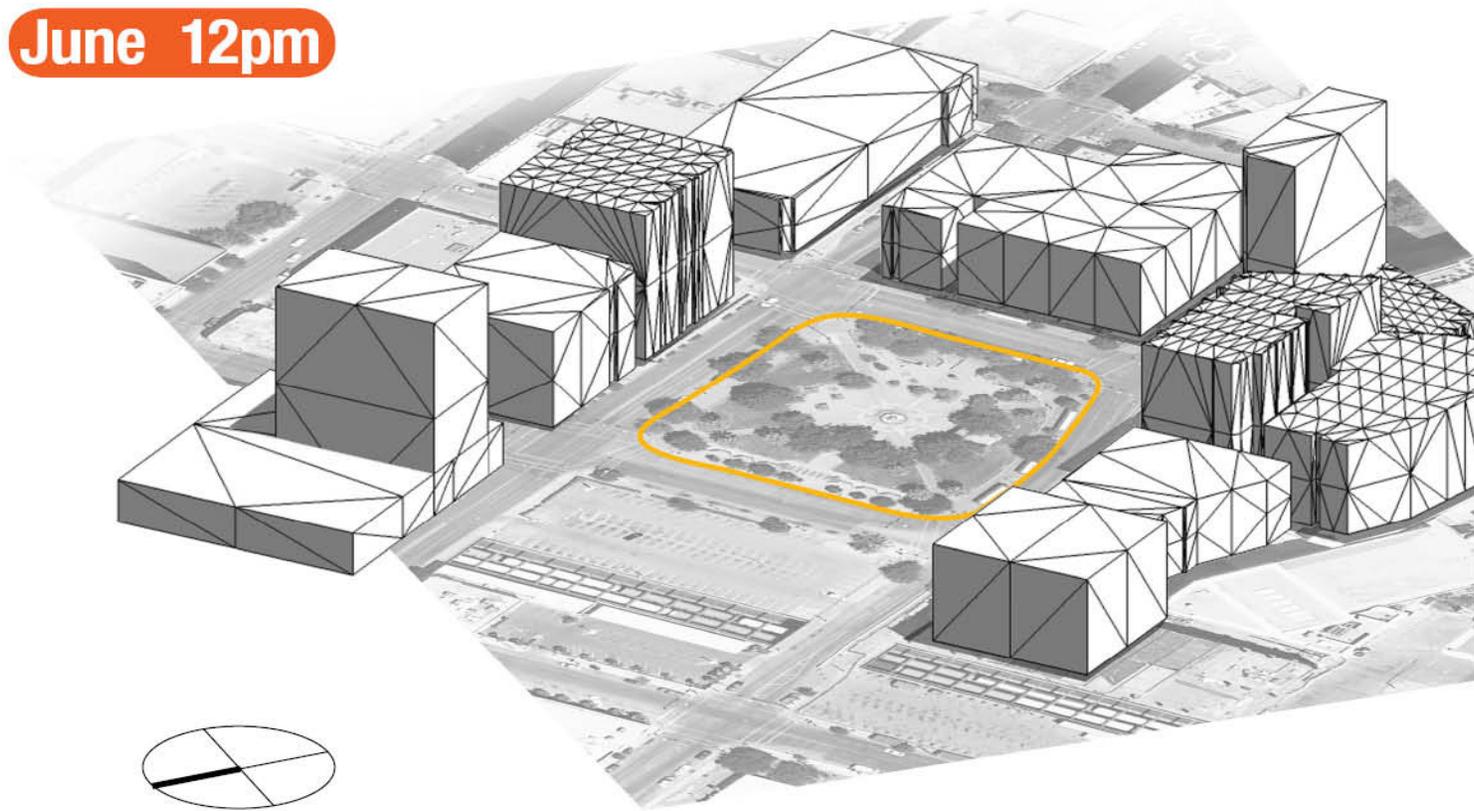
site analysis

June 9am



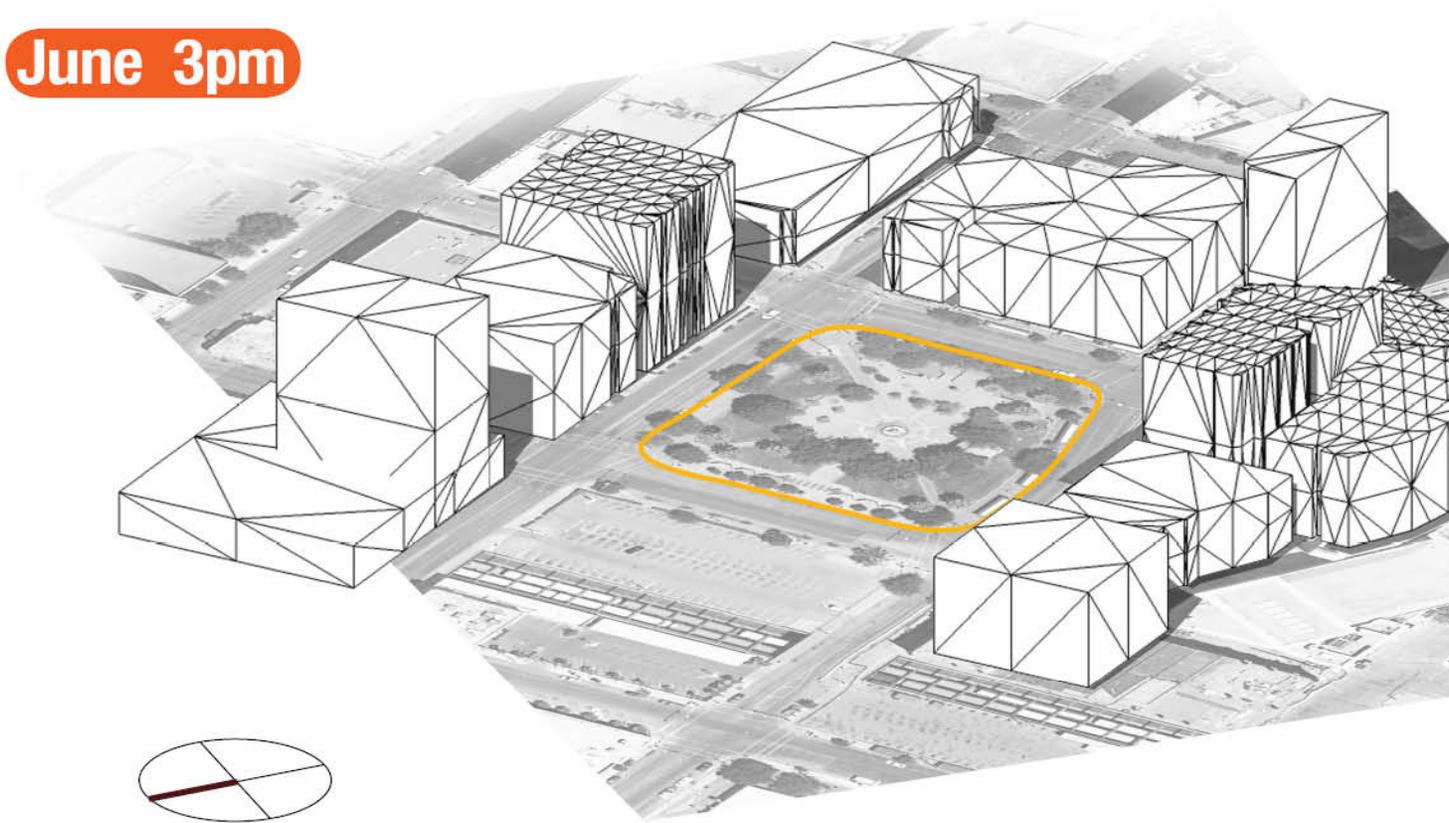
site analysis

June 12pm



site analysis

June 3pm



Existing streetscape



10' of elevation change



historic markers



fences and walls



restrooms



Existing Alligator Sculpture



stage



Spatial Quality

1. Shade trees
2. Seating
3. Planting
4. Surfaces
5. Wayfinding

Program

1. Lighting
2. Small events
3. Water features
4. Public Art
5. Large events

...we also recorded...

1. Farmers market
2. Create a simple, everyday park
3. Place to gather with friends and family
4. Open flexible space
5. Recall the live alligators
6. Bring color to the plaza
7. Make it playful for children
8. Bring a sense of nature
9. Crowd control an issue for large events
10. Restrooms!

The redesigned
San Jacinto Plaza
is envisioned as an *urban respite*

A simple everyday destination that speaks to the past as well as the future.
A flexible space where multiple activities can occur simultaneously.
A place for families with children.

A new 'spark' in the City.

A new platform for public life that includes a colorful large scale alligator sculpture, an amphitheatre, a flexible lawn space, shade trees, an interpretive panel depicting the history of the City, restrooms, colorful planting, water features and divergent paths.







Main Street

Oregon

Mesa

Mills Avenue





CHALLENGES TO EXHIBITING ALLIGATORS IN THE PLAZA

1. Exhibit must be at the highest 2011 standards for large reptiles

- Proper water filtration for pool(s)
- Basking areas as well as shade (4-5,000 sq ft)
- Heated areas in the winter
- Off exhibit holding areas for care as needed
- Operation and maintenance cost not in current zoo budget

2. It must absolutely keep the animals safe and secure

- No access possible by the public
- No ability to throw things into the habitat
- Security personnel at night 7 days a week
- Moving animals into a secure night holding area is not practical

3. Best design under these conditions would be a building

- Much like an aquarium exhibit
- Costs will be prohibitive

4. Other major challenges

- Distance from the necessary resources and support of the Zoo
- Animal care staff during the day, 7 days a week
- Animal care costs would not be able to currently be absorbed by the Zoo
- Must be a natural day/night lighting cycle (no evening security lighting)

design considerations

LOS LAGARTOS:

The last report prepared by Conservator Shelly M. Smith, Conservation Services, states that the decorative and protective coatings on the piece are failing. The surface is chipped and scratched throughout from damage due to environmental erosion and vandalism. The sculpture has been located in an outdoor water fountain for about 16 years and is showing accelerated deterioration caused by the combined effects of ultraviolet light (UV), infrared radiation (heat), water erosion, and mineral and biological deterioration. The conservator's recommendation is to re-site the sculpture in either a dry outdoor environment or to move it indoors into a climate controlled environment.

Sean McGlynn, Director
Museums and Cultural Affairs Department



The El Paso Historic Landmark Commission

8/11/2011

Refinement of conceptual design
for the proposed redesign of
San Jacinto Plaza by SWA

interpretation



San Jacinto Plaza, El Paso circa 1903



San Jacinto Plaza, El Paso circa Today

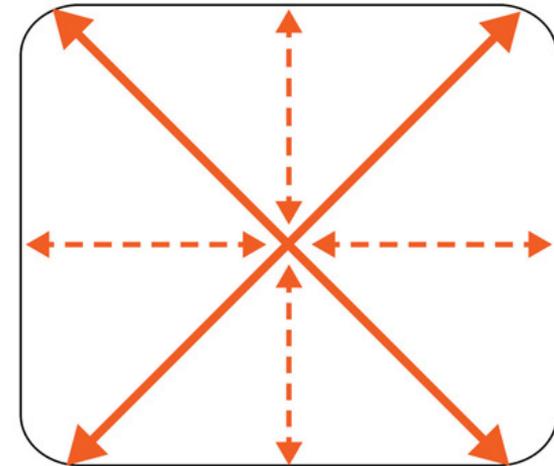
San Jacinto Plaza today still has vestigial remnants of its historic beginnings (axial pathways, fountain, seating) yet elements of change are obvious more paved areas, more tree species, a stage, etc. San Jacinto's incremental change is a reflection of the change that has occurred in the city over the years. This redesign effort will examine a more robust change that looks at the plaza in its new context as well as the inherent need for more vibrant programming and identity.

INFORMAL AXIALITY

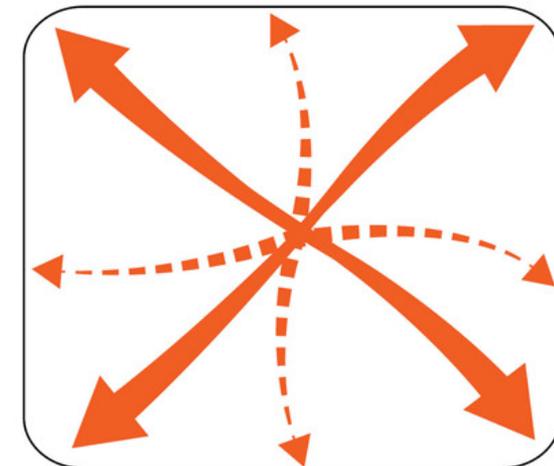
There is historical significance to the pathway alignment of San Jacinto Plaza. Our intention is to incorporate these axial alignments into a design that uses new materials, flexible shapes, and an informal layout that encourages exploration.

The responsibilities of parks and plaza's today:

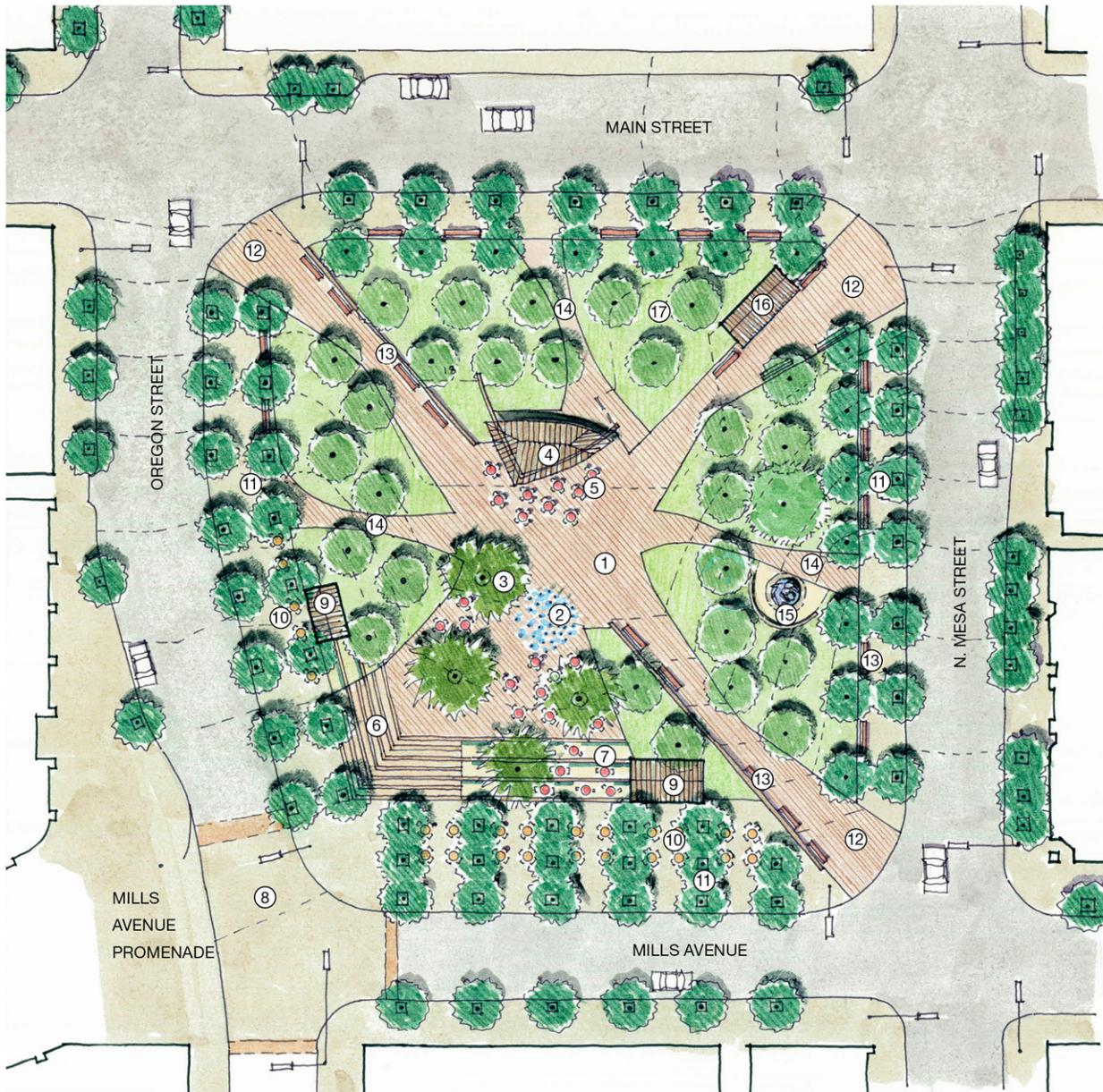
- 1) Parks/plazas with a purpose of its own, not an extension of architecture and road system.
- 2) Parks/plazas as a place to linger, to inhabit, not as a thoroughfare from one end to another.
- 3) Parks/plazas are designed not only for visual interests, but engage the public with programmed events, nature and sustainability, art, culture and history, and interactive elements seeking users' active participation.
- 4) Parks/plazas for the 21st century, envisioning and realizing dreams for the future generation



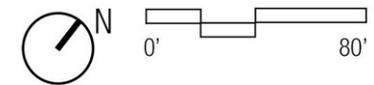
SAN JACINTO PLAZA
historic pedestrian circulation



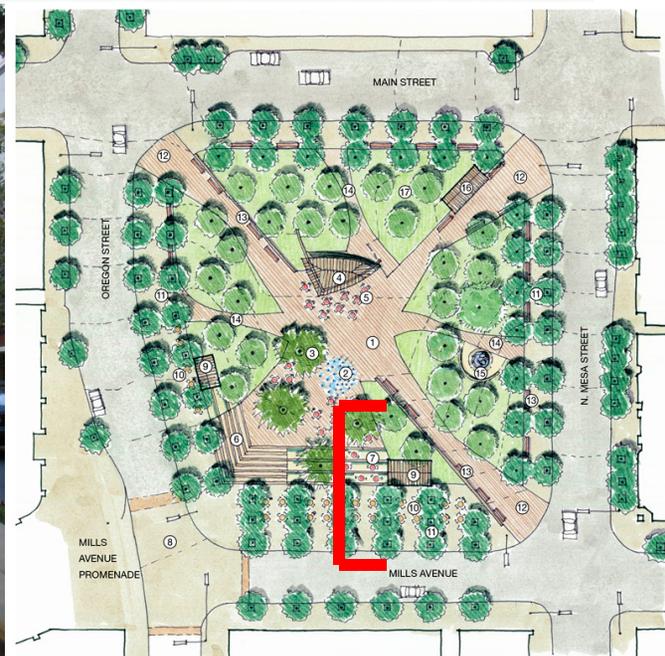
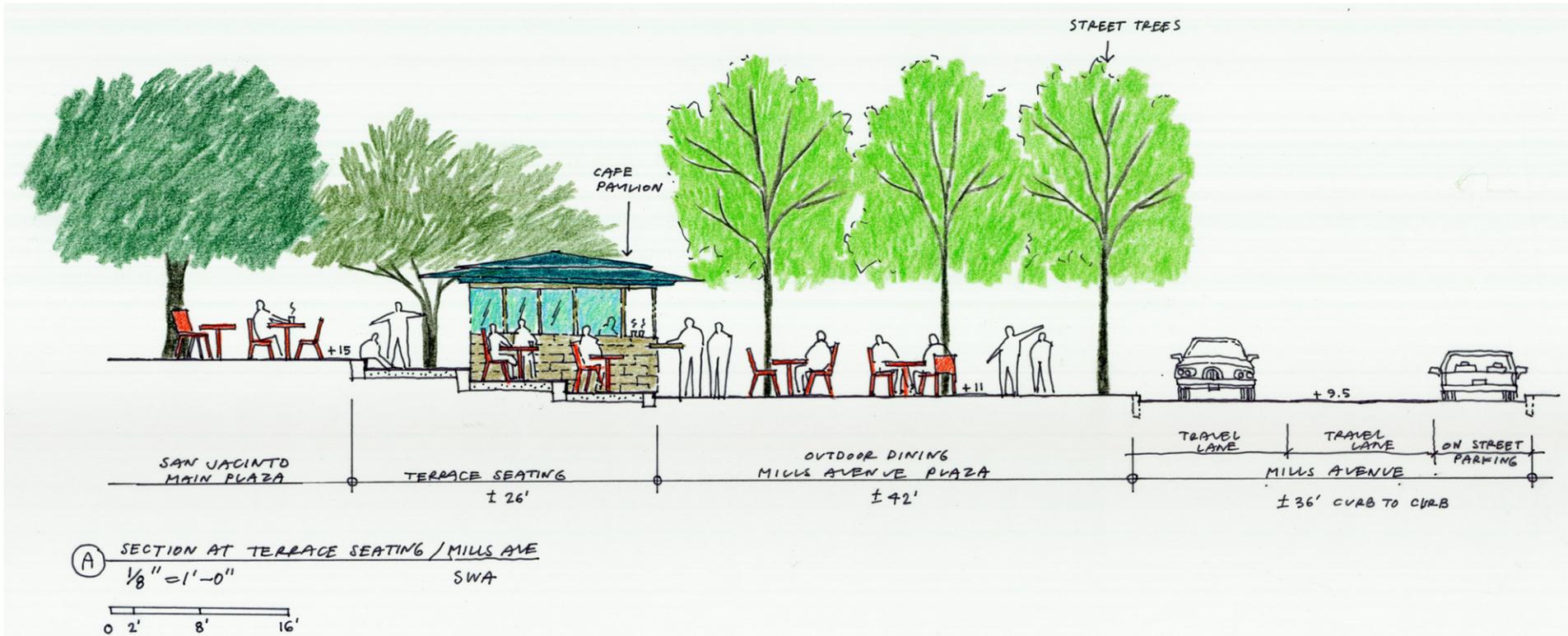
SAN JACINTO PLAZA
proposed circulation

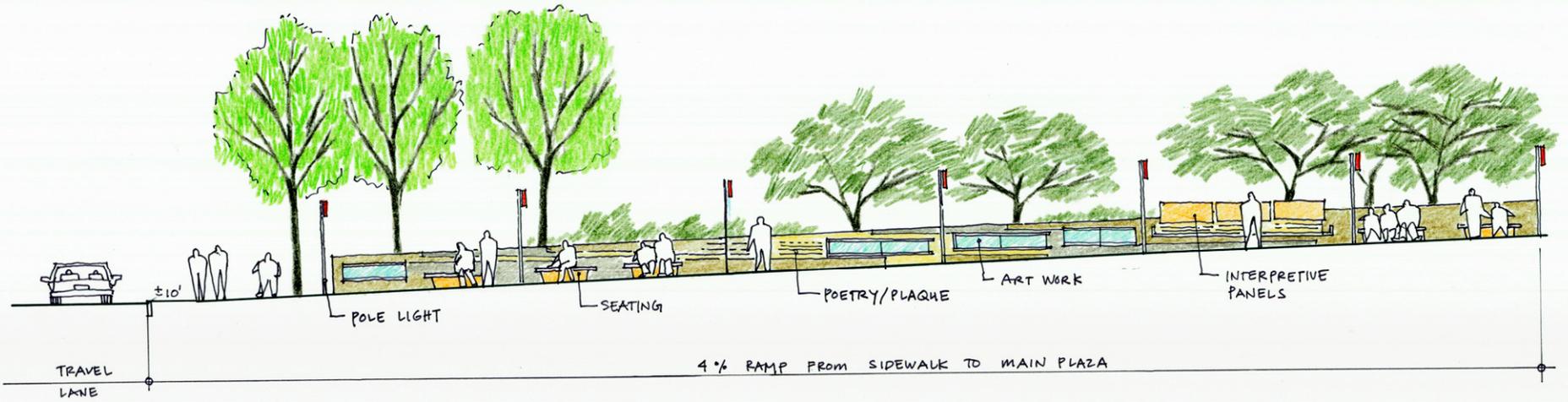


- ① Central Plaza
- ② Pop Jet Fountain/Splash Pad
- ③ Specimen Native Oaks
- ④ Stage
- ⑤ Flexible Seating/Game Tables
- ⑥ Stairway
- ⑦ Terrace Seating
- ⑧ Raised crosswalk
- ⑨ Retail kiosk
- ⑩ Outdoor dining
- ⑪ Formal tree planting
- ⑫ Historical Interpretive Walk with timeline, stories and monument plaques
- ⑬ Benches
- ⑭ East-West, North-South Cross Paths
- ⑮ New location for “Los Lagartos” sculpture (in shade)
- ⑯ Restrooms
- ⑰ Native shade trees in open lawn

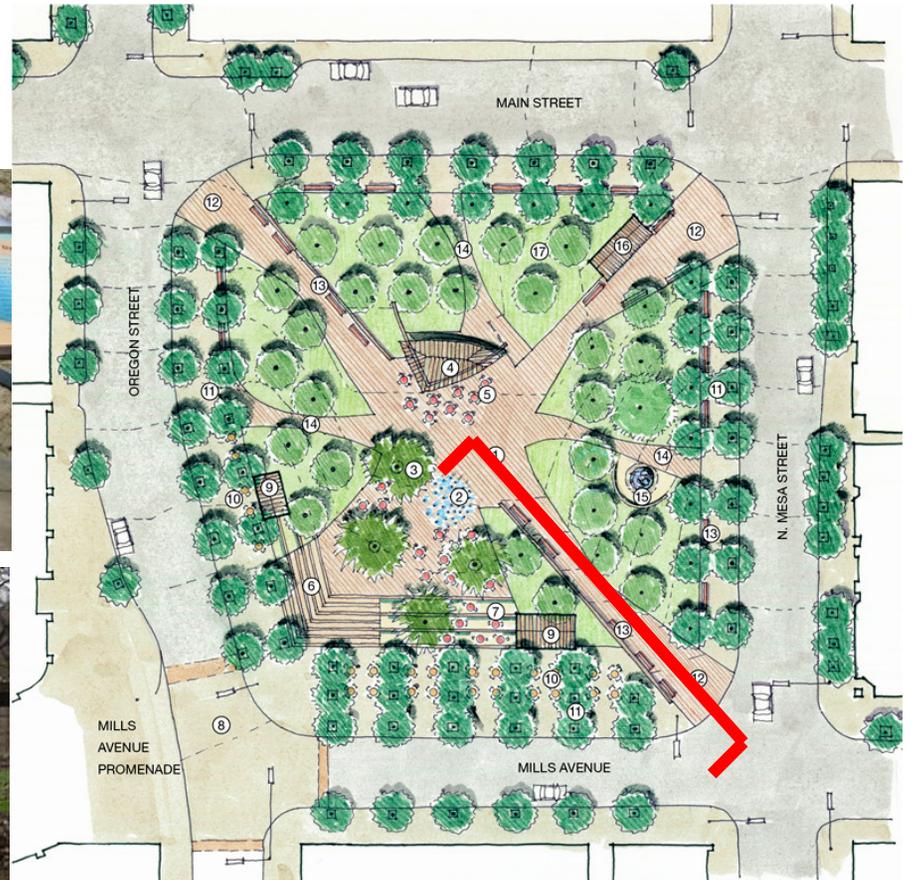
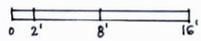


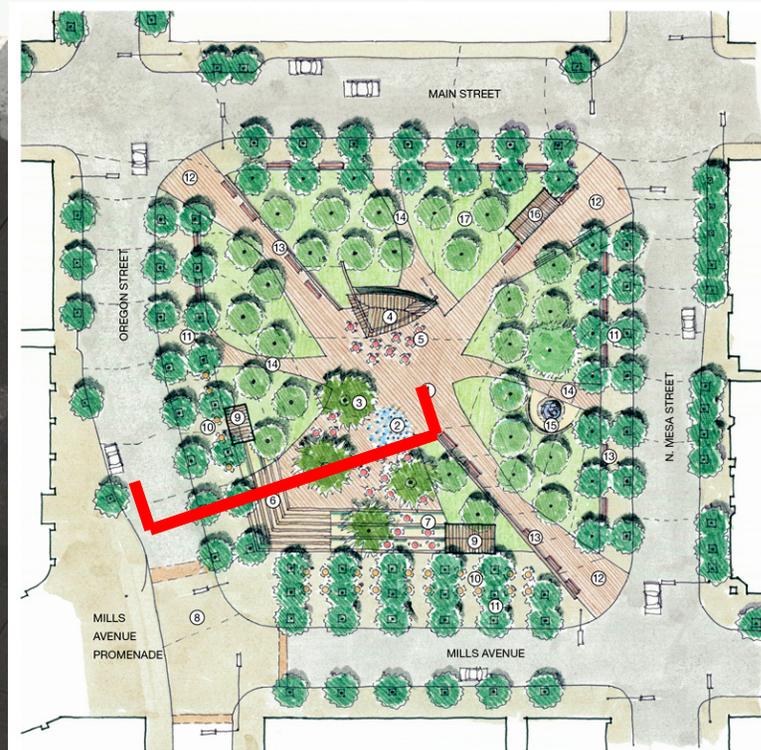
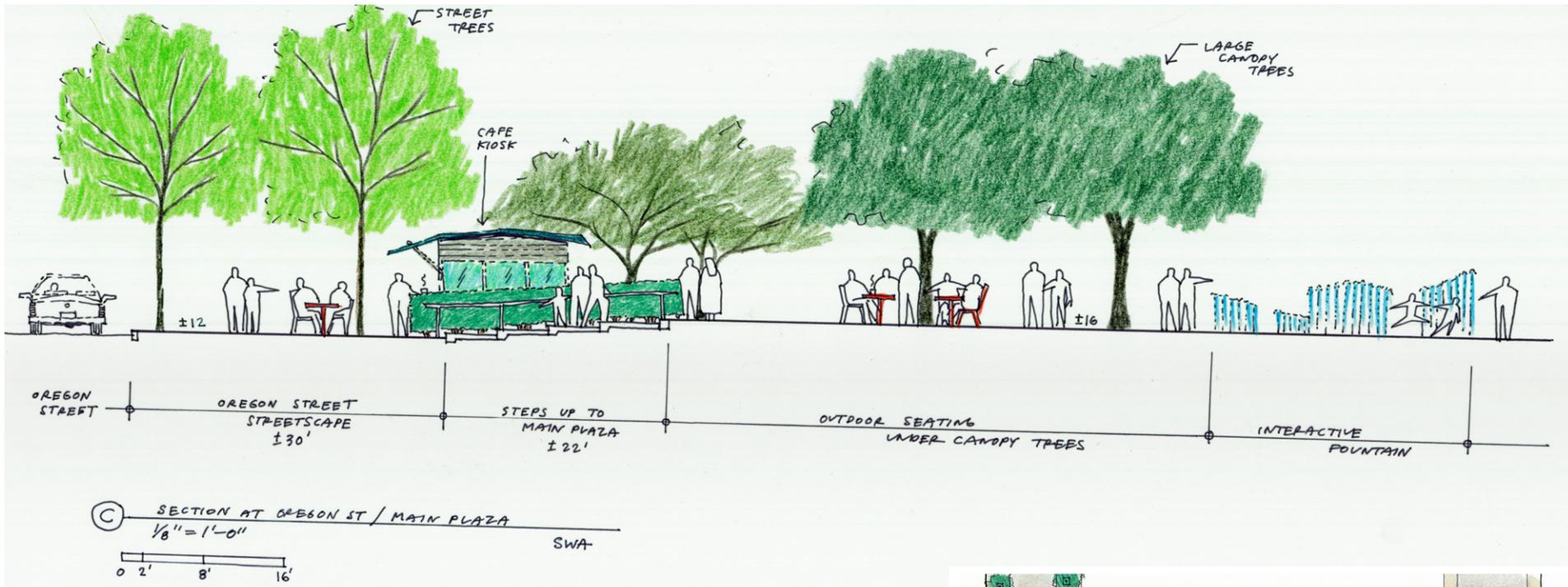
Illustrative Landscape Plan





Ⓑ SECTION AT 4% RAMP / INTERPRETIVE WALL
 $\frac{1}{8}'' = 1'-0''$ SWA







Bird's Eye Perspective looking northeast
over San Jacinto Plaza



View from the corner of Mills Ave and Oregon Street
looking into San Jacinto Plaza



View from the corner of Mills Ave and Oregon Street



View of proposed pop-jet fountain in the main plaza



View from the corner of Oregon and Main looking south
into San Jacinto Plaza



View from Mills Ave looking towards the plaza



SWA Case Study:
Lewis Street, Las Vegas



SWA Case Study:
Lewis Street, Las Vegas



SWA Case Study:
Desert Ridge Garden Walk- AZ



SWA Case Study:
Fairmont Princess, AZ



Case Study:
lighting



Case Study:
Lawn steps



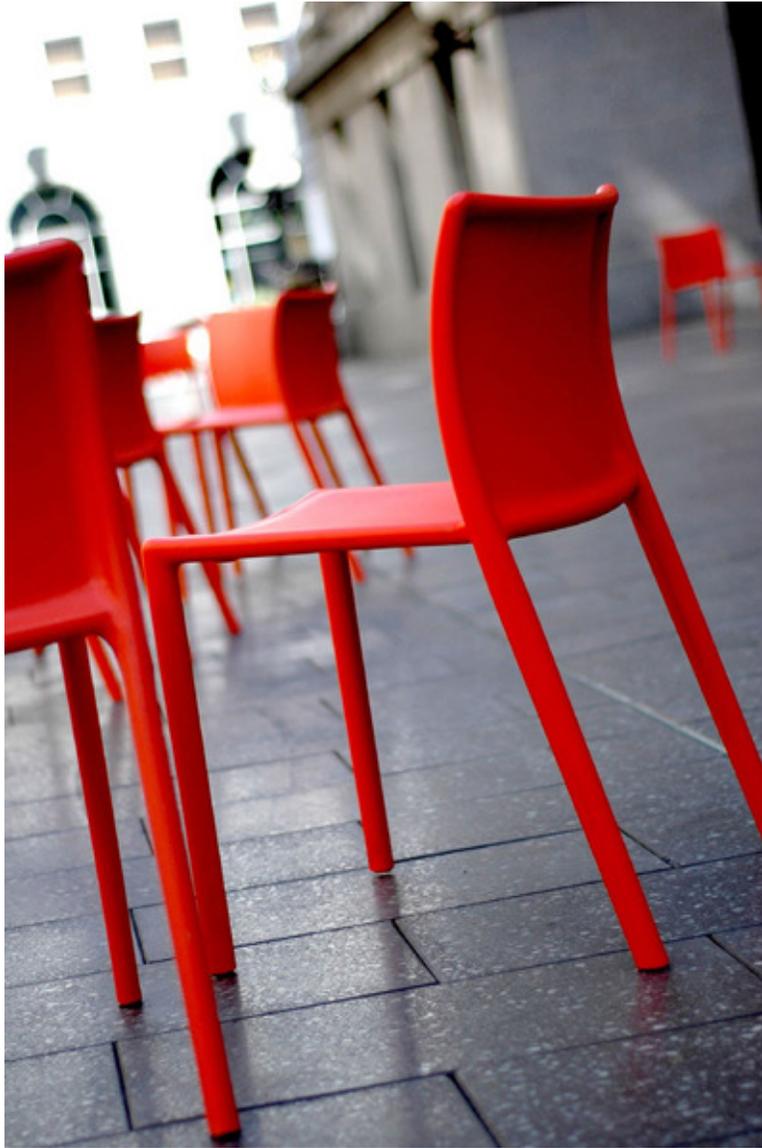
SWA Case Study:
Lawn steps – private residence



Case Study:
Nasher Sculpture Garden– Dallas, TX



Case Study:
Lawn- LA, NYC



Case Study:
Flexible Seating/ Programming- SF / NYC



Case Study:
Art Fair– Paris Park Citroen



Case Study:
Santa Fe, NM Park



SWA Case Studies:
Programming— various cities



Case Studies:
Park Programming— various cities



SWA Case Study:
San Antonio Main Plaza



SWA Case Study:
PPG Place, Pittsburgh, PA



Case Study:
Native planting



Case Study:
Native planting

[begin Sketchup model]