

400 Word Project Statement

The Valley is an icon that is shaped by the aspirational values of the 21st century. Situated in the center of the contemporary cradle of innovation, the twin peaks of The Valley are the urban landmarks that San Jose's skyline lacks.

The Valley is comprised of two landforms emerging from the eastern and western edges of Arena Green. Named after prominent women leaders from San Jose's civic history, Vice Mayor Lola Williams and Mayor Janet Gray Hayes, Mount Lola and Hayes Hill provide new space for gathering, active leisure, biodiversity, and the sharing of history and art.

Everyone deserves access to healthy and inclusive public spaces, but the COVID pandemic has highlighted that access is not attainable for many. Instead of simply using the existing park as a site, it reimagines what Arena Green could be as a public open space. Currently, Arena Green lacks a sense of cohesion and its many features remain socially and physically disconnected. In establishing hills on either side of the Guadalupe River, the project refocuses the park towards the water at the park's center and provides quality facilities fitting the energy and growth of Downtown San Jose.

The project can be constructed to take advantage of net-zero energy principles by using the ample area of the mountains for photovoltaic panels, capturing stormwater runoff, and making use of building products which minimize their carbon footprint.

Fundamental to the proposal is that Arena Green's existing facilities do not have to be removed. Instead, we can improve what exists in the park moving bathrooms and commercial space under Hayes Hill, creating a more active street in front of the SAP Center. Simultaneously, lifting up the ground at Mount Lola allows us to keep the sports that bring people together underneath and allowing play - rain or shine. Additionally, we feel strongly that these spaces should provide improved amenities such as public washrooms and shower facilities for the homeless and vulnerable members of the community who currently rely on Arena Green for their basic needs.

The Valley is a critical asset to the local community that re-frames how residents interact with the city's urban fabric, its history, its natural amenities, and with each other. Together, it represents the dynamic spirit of the people of San Jose and provides them with a platform to view their city in a way that they have never been able to before.