

Elevated Blaze Project Statement

“**Elevated Blaze**” is both a wayfinding device and an illuminated icon, knitting the urban surrounds with the confluence of the Los Gatos Creek and Guadalupe River. The low-lying topography, natural habitat, and city structures provide a basis by which to give rise to the majestic crest of the “Blaze”, as though the prow of a massive ship fording through the landscape. The design consists of two parts: the elevated “Blaze” walkway and the “Grid Field” of trees and poles.

Located above the heart of the park, the walkway rises in the form of an ADA compliant slope, interacts with the undulating valleys and river confluence as part of, yet also distinct from, the surrounding context. The structure is clearly visible from along the flight paths of neighboring Mineta San Jose International Airport. The simple yet strong form creates a powerful visual beacon without challenging the aviation restriction.

The cresting “Blaze” is supported by a grid field of poles from within the permitted eastern and western zones of the park, elevating it across the Riparian Corridor. Regularly stationed viewing platforms along the rise position visitors in the greater surrounding context. On the southwest end, visitors overlook the intersection of N. Autumn Street and W. Santa Clara Street, the future activity corridor for Google campus. On the southeast end, the viewing platforms exploit the tension between several distinct yet overlapping urban and natural thoroughfares. Towards the north, the gradual tilt-up design forms a simple yet complex middle ground which mediates among the sky, flight paths, river, trees, and earth. At the highest viewing platform, the walkway paths converge to a cantilevered overlook presenting the river confluence and the opportunity to acknowledge the arrival and departure of airplanes.

Constructed with the same reflective titanium cladding as the underside of the “Blaze”, the “Grid Field” of trees and poles on the eastern and western sides invites visitors to gather, move, and stroll. Meeting the lighting requirements for Aviation and the Riparian Corridors and alluding to the historical San Jose Electric Light Tower, the poles act as “Illumination Towers” while also producing an “Irrigation Fog” deployed with high-pressure nozzles channeling stormwater diverted from the river into an evocative mist similar to the often low-hanging clouds of the valley. “Elevated Blaze” creates an icon diurnally visible from afar, as though floating above the ground, and - at night - as a luminous beacon.