

PROJECT STATEMENT

Inspired by the ideas of confluence and flow, of waters, transportation, information and people, The Meander is a celebration of the rivers and the city. A hybrid of landscape and architecture, park and building, its energetic form playfully engages both. By abstractly representing a river, it foregrounds the hidden waterways and presents a renewed Arena Green.

The site is Arena Green West. Bounded by three public streets, the west side is well-connected to Downtown, and well-positioned to meet the future as the area becomes a vibrant, mixed-use neighborhood. With a defunct carousel, outdated playground, and open lawn, the west side needs activation and rejuvenation. Dense groves of trees occupy much of the Autumn Street frontage, forming a dark, uninviting canopy that obscures the rivers. Locating the Meander on the west side is an opportunity to reimagine the more public face of Arena Green.

A continuous flowing experience over 1000 feet long, the fluvial form twists and turns as it journeys through the park, on the ground and in the air. The aerial promenade, 15 to 20' above the surroundings, is spectacle and theater, a stage to see and be seen. The ground surface rises to meet the elevated path, integrating it with the park, and the rolling terrain is reminiscent of the Santa Clara Valley hills. Lifting the ground creates five pavilions linked by the path. Two enclosed pavilions, one facing the city and other looking to Confluence Point, are programmed. The City Pavilion is the social hub, with a café, lounge, gift shop, restrooms and informational kiosks. A passage connects from the sidewalk to pedestrian bridge and Confluence Point. The River Pavilion, devoted to the river system's natural ecology and cultural history, features interactive/tactile displays, classroom/lecture space, office and restrooms. The three remaining pavilions are flexible public spaces, ready for staging pop-up exhibits/festivals or take-overs by yoga/fitness groups and school classes. A grove of solar trees generate energy for the pavilions.

The Meander is set in a restored ecological landscape of riparian meadows and groves of sycamores and willows. The pesticide/fertilizer free meadow, planted with a diversity of native plants, filters runoff to improve the rivers' water quality. This natural landscape and the meandering form recall the once vast, wandering path of the rivers.