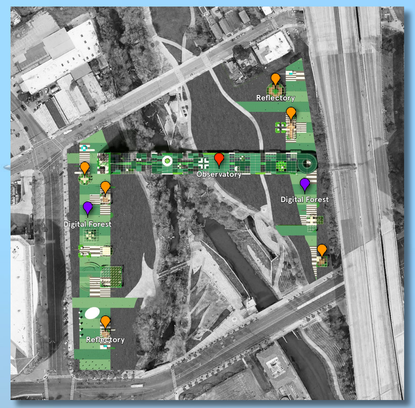
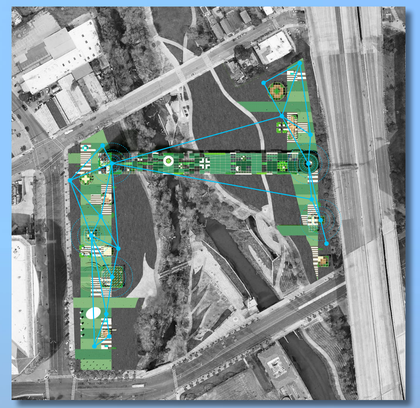


Elements

The proposal consists of three elements that respond to public life in a digital world: a distributed Digital Forest, Reflectories, and an Observatory.

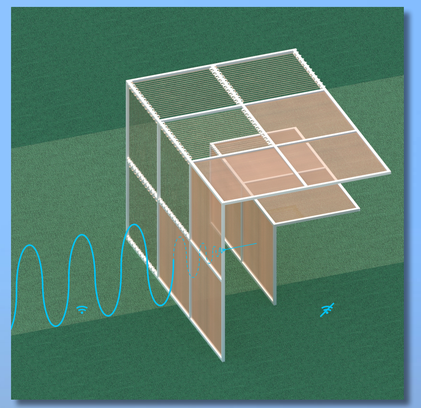
Site Circulation

The proposal creates a pedestrian connection between downtown San Jose to the east and the proposed development to the west, while integrating important existing riverfront elements of Guadalupe River Park.



Public Wireless Mesh Network

Routers are installed on pavilions and trees throughout the proposal to provide free wireless internet, promoting access to digital technology for San Jose's communities.



How the Reflectories Block Signal

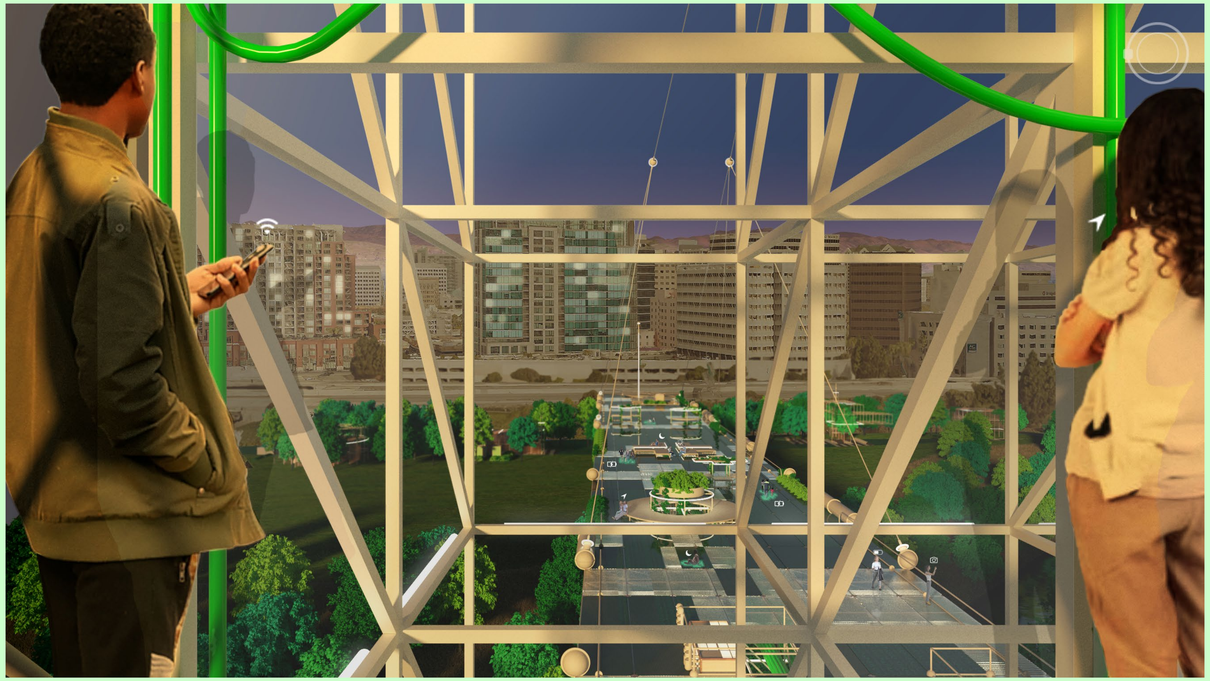
The holes in the mesh enclosure are sized to attenuate the transmission of electromagnetic waves.

DIGITAL_COMMONS

Urban Confluence Silicon Valley Proposal 2020

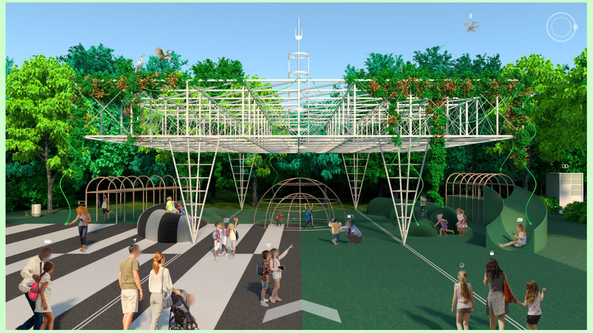
What does it mean to build an icon for the 21st century public? How do we engage – or disengage – from public life in a context of ubiquitous digital technology, global pandemic, social distancing, and ever-present telematic connectivity? If public life in the 21st century extends to the digital sphere, how can urban design support equity and access to digital technology?

Digital Commons is a catalytic proposal for San Jose that responds to public life in a digital world. Designed to provide an iconic image from above – for the airplane passerby or the Google Earth flaneur – the proposal consists of three parts. To the east and west are two zones that complexly intertwine nature, culture, and technology, exploring connection and disconnection within urbanity and digital life. Spread across these zones are a distributed *Digital Forest*, in which trees work together with new pavilions to provide free public wifi through a wireless mesh network. Visitors navigate a lushly forested landscape, but enhanced with pervasive digital connectivity. Pavilions throughout sponsor a diversity of physical and online activities, while providing stations to plug in, sit down, and charge up. Nestled within the *Digital Forest* are enclosures called *Reflectories*. These spaces afford the rare opportunity to disconnect. Each *Reflectory* is clad in a mesh enclosure through which cellular signals cannot penetrate. Designed in varying sizes and configurations, individual *Reflectories* afford space for deliberately offline activities ranging from meditation, to conversation, to group discussions. At the center of the proposal is an area called the *Observatory*. Comprising an expansive elevated platform that bridges the Guadalupe River and an immense elevator tower, the *Observatory* explores the various ways that we see and are seen in today's digitally expanded public sphere. The elevator stops at grade to load passengers before travelling 200' into the air to provide dramatic views of the surrounding urban context, and finally lands at platform level. The platform is designed in accordance with the pixel-logic of the digital image. From some altitudes, it appears to blend into the surroundings as a seamless aerial image. While from others, the cellular logic of the platform surface becomes clear – appearing as a low-resolution glitch in a hi-res context. From the platform, occupants are afforded views of the riparian zone below, while one's motion along an energy-harvesting kinetic floor activates dynamic lighting visible from the surroundings, the air, and even digital satellite.



1: View from Elevator Looking East Two room-sized elevators transport passengers 200′ into the air to afford aerial views of the proposal, the riparian zone below, and surrounding San Jose.

Site Plan The ground plane organization is inspired by the pixel-logic of the digital image, with colors and tones sampled from Google Earth. From some altitudes, the proposal blends into the surroundings, while from others, the cellular logic of the platform surface becomes clear – appearing as a low-resolution glitch in a hi-res context.



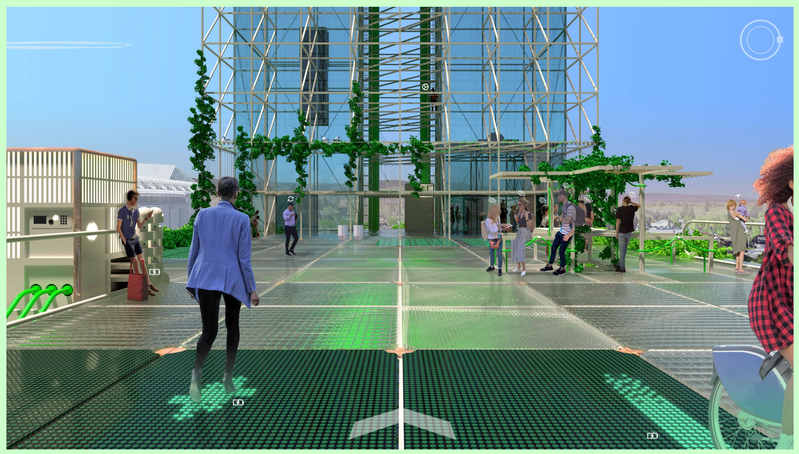
2: View of Movable Pavilion Pavilions within the Digital Forest are lush with foliage and technology, providing a myriad of opportunities to connect digitally and physically.

3: Large Batteries The kinetic floor on the Observatory and photovoltaic cells across the site harvest energy that is stored in batteries and used for site lighting and for powering visitors' devices.

4: Group Discussion Inside of a Reflectory Reflectories provide spaces to connect with others without the myriad distractions created by ubiquitous technology.

5: View Looking into a Reflectory The mesh enclosures around the Reflectories create dappled light inside, and sand floors inhibit speed and dampen urban noise.

6: Senior Technology Training in the Digital Forest By combining vegetation and technology, the Digital Forest will attract visitors from across generations and constituencies.



7: Energy-harvesting Observatory Bridging the riparian zone, the Observatory connects the east and west of the site, providing a large public space for gathering on a kinetic floor that illuminates and harvests energy from the motion of visitors.

8: View next to a Reflectory and Looking Toward the Ramp Cells within the rubber ground plane pattern sometimes thicken to provide spaces for sitting or lounging, or to reveal places for visitors to plug in their devices.