

Project Statement

Silicon Valley is a place of innovation, risk-taking, and endless possibility. Spirit of Light celebrates that spirit, paying homage to San José's impressive past while looking towards the city's promising future.

Its name refers in part to the ghostly presence of the San José Light Tower in the void between the two forms, which is in the light tower's shape. The tower was a highly visible symbol of the city for 34 years before its collapse and defined San José as a city unafraid of embracing the future, which still holds true today. The void is also oriented towards the intersection of Market and Santa Clara Streets, which is where the tower once stood. In this way, it acknowledges the achievements of the past while framing a view of San José's modern skyline.

The dramatic upward motion of the forms is inspired by the graph of Moore's Law. Gordon Moore was a key figure in the development of the silicon semiconductor from which Silicon Valley got its name. His predicted exponential development of the semiconductor through Moore's Law symbolizes San José and Silicon Valley and the limitless, ever-growing creativity and innovation that defines the region.

Spirit of Light is an interactive monument, activating spaces along all its sides. The larger form, which rises 200 feet into the air, sweeps down towards the south and existing trails, creating pleasant and accessible seating for users at its base. From the north, this form can be entered where users will discover a small Visitor Center inside, brightly and beautifully lit by a narrow window that extends above them. Here, they may find information on activities or events in and around the park or small free exhibitions on the history of innovation in San José. The smaller form has an opening in the middle, allowing access into the round plaza from the north. The sunken plaza in the middle of the forms is dramatically lit by thousands of hanging LED lights. While the lights add drama and beauty to the monument and make it a highly visible and interesting space at night, they also represent the bright minds and endless creativity of the people of San José. The lights are not suspended over the riparian corridor nor point up, thereby keeping environmental disturbance to a minimum. They will be powered by small solar panels that will be placed discreetly onsite.