

Our proposal, The STEM, is located in Arena Green East between Guadalupe Freeway (SR-87) and the remainder of Guadalupe River Park. It is the latest addition to this remarkable urban open space. To avoid design conflicts with the SAP Arena and Google's future development we chose to leave Arena Green West undisturbed and available for future community use. The Guadalupe River Park represents community, history, and local initiative while SR-87 symbolizes 'freeway', commerce, and connectivity to California and the world. Our proposal engages both with its feet on the ground of the park and its head in the clouds over the freeway.

The STEM is designed around four key elements: Wall, Water, Roots, and STEM.

The Wall, located between the Guadalupe River Park and SR-87, is a billboard that announces the design elements on both sides, A link between the dualities of the local and global, pedestrian and automotive, the established and the new.

The Water symbolizes San Francisco Bay and the California coast. It is the underlying nutrient for this community, all living things, and the flow of ideas.

The Roots, composed of landscape, hardscape and buildings, of paths, plazas, a museum, and support services, provide the foundation for growth.

The STEM represents the botanical world with acknowledgement to the Valleys' agricultural history and all growing things, as well as the acronym of the contemporary curriculum...Science, Technology, Engineering, & Mathematics. The S.T.E.M. is the foundation of the Valleys' recent past and future possibilities. The STEM is a 200-foot tower in the park's Southeast corner. Made of stainless steel, the structure is meant to evoke the original San Jose Light Tower, which once stood just six blocks away. That tower culminated in a point, with a single light at the top, representing what, at the time, was the peak of technological development. Ours is that tower flipped over, turned on its head, the light is the beginning, symbolizing new ideas...rooted in our community, the foundation of inventiveness. The STEM, starting at the base and widening as it soars upward, opening itself to new possibilities—to the future and to technological developments we can't yet imagine. The STEM rooted in the past—on land that was once home to agriculture—we imagine it as a symbol of the core of the community and its recent achievements, yet still growing, still changing and still becoming. As you walk or drive by, it ought to catch you by surprise and give you a little spark of wonder.