

SPARK | Project Statement

Nearly 250 years ago early residents relied upon the Rio Guadalupe for everyday livelihood, to fish, irrigate farmland, power mills, and for transportation. The River ebbed and flowed, flooded, and provided exquisite habitat. As San José urbanized the floodplain, the Guadalupe River was channelized and the River Park was a bold effort to recreate a connection to its pre-urbanized past. But with much of the City's energy downtown, and limited programming, the Park struggles to attract visitors.

SPARK is the park within the Park – a new community destination, anchored by experiential art piece *Line of Light*, that reignites the River's history and showcases one of San José's most significant natural features: the confluence of Los Gatos Creek and the Guadalupe River. The new design reenergizes portions of the River Park that are currently underutilized and creates a new landmark activity node for vibrant daily programming to serve The Alameda, Diridon, downtown, and beyond. A typical daily calendar might include fitness classes, children's activities and events for seniors, readings, musical performances, and more.

At the heart of SPARK is *Line of Light* – a celebration of the genius loci: a place where sky, land, city, and water come together. Formally derived from the three-pronged faceted extrusion of the merger of two waterways, the sculpture's vertical composition of line, color, and reflection is always in a state of flux – never to be seen the same way twice. By day, the sky and surrounding park are collaged across its surface. At night, color floats unhinged from gravity or armature, pulling the sunset downward and tinting distant views. At dawn and dusk, the sky merges with linear gradients producing mirrors of pure color.

The design inserts a series of boardwalks leading visitors on a journey to connect with the River ecology and experience nature amidst park program elements that are flexible and appropriately-sized such as playgrounds, flex lawn, performance venues, picnic shelters, walking and biking paths, restrooms, and food/beverage. Along the freeway a large landform built with dirt from surrounding future constructions buffers the vehicular noise and offers new vistas of the Santa Cruz Mountains.

Conceived during unprecedented times, SPARK embraces a model for community resilience with a goal to create a place where something is always happening and everyone is welcome. As San José/Silicon Valley continue to redefine innovation in our world, SPARK celebrates the timelessness of human connection to each other and nature.