

URBAN CONFLUENCE is **COMMUNITY PLATFORM**

PROJECT STATEMENT

The brief of this project calls for an urban confluence. We argue that this confluence should grow out of the connections between Silicon Valley and the widely diverse--and often underrepresented--communities that make up the city of San Jose. Rather than invest in a structure aimed solely at tourists and international branding, our proposal seeks to create a unique community platform focused on bringing together both local residents and visitors to forge new connections between the neighborhood, the city, and the world.

This proposal begins from the premise that the most important function of an urban icon is to anchor, support, and sustain surrounding communities and social diversity. This belief has only been reinforced, with devastating effect, by the events of the past few months. In an age of increasing partisanship and uncertainty, it is all the more important that our urban icons serve as vital social and ecological infrastructures, providing a key focal point for inclusive communities and engagement that cuts across societal divides.

We mean “community platform” in a very literal sense: this project has been designed as a machine for facilitating community activity and engagement. It consists of a tower of stacked spaces, each uniquely shaped to support different activities and organizations. This stacking allows each program to function independently while also fostering collaboration and informal interactions across different programs. Building systems, from structure to circulation, have been designed to allow maximum flexibility so that the platform can evolve alongside this community process. We have suggested some possibilities for this stack, but the precise composition should be determined through a rigorous process of community engagement that continues long after construction is complete.

The project is carefully sited in the park to maximize its engagement with this already vital public space and ecological corridor. It is situated at the south-east corner of the site to provide easy pedestrian and vehicular access, ensure high visibility from the surrounding park, roads, and city, and serve as a buffer to freeway noise and pollution for the park. The building works in concert with the park, incorporating net zero strategies, mass timber construction, sensitive lighting, community gardens, and habitat and food sources for pollinator species. Together, they will create a highly active platform for community engagement and serve as a model for a new kind of social infrastructure for San Jose and beyond.