

**Project Statement:**

San Jose deserves an icon worthy of the natural beauty of the Santa Clara Valley. Currently, the low-lying urbanized areas form a stark contrast to the magnificent framing of the surrounding mountains. This site offers an opportunity to add an additional icon to this dynamic landscape, one that establishes a connection to these mountains and the sky, a place that can lift visitors up from the horizontality of urban living to the complexity and ever changing beauty of nature. Currently, the site is fragmented, forcing visitors to walk along busy streets from one side of the park to another. Spanning across the Los Gatos Creek and the Guadalupe River, the San Jose Sky Garden serves as a living bridge. Silicon Valley is a place to connect present and future without disregarding the past, the same way that the living bridge connects the west and east sides of the site. On the living bridge, humans have an opportunity to learn more about the unique flora and fauna which exist in the area's ecosystem without interfering with the fragile habitats below. The bridge includes a variety of green infrastructure features and is powered by renewable energy sources, creating a vibrant and sustainable gathering space that also speaks to the area's limitless potential. The living bridge adds dozens of trees to the area, creating critical new habitat for bird species and facilitating new opportunities for bird watchers and visitors to learn more about the region's species. The tree canopy also maximizes carbon sequestration, contributing to the site's carbon offsets. The porous material of the walkways and various green plantings capture and filter rainwater to reduce storm water runoff, and feed retention systems which facilitate a more sustainable watering regimen during periods of drought. The structure's design also creates passive cooling, minimizes urban heat island effect, and creates pleasant shaded lawn areas for visitors on either side of the bridge. The bridge provides an opportunity for two opposite views: an expansive panorama to the north which, take in the full panorama of the Bay Area and the many inspiring geographies which drive the innovation economy. The bridge also creates an interior view and amphitheater, which draws attention to the confluence of two rivers and inspires visitors to reflect on the natural beauty right in front of them. As a striking park by day or an illuminated crescent ridge at night, Sky Mountain is a true icon for the future of the region.