

Project Statement

The site of Urban Confluence is unique in its dual character: a separation sitting as an urban island between different areas of San Jose and an aggregator that attracts both a local and regional public, due to its proximity to Highway 85.

As a monument to Silicon Valley, our proposal reflects on the diversity of talent that makes this region a global campus for innovation, and at the same time recognize the intrinsic values of the site and communities from which it emerges. Our design attitude combines iconic form to give ode to innovation, while adopting a light attitude to the site on which it stands, to encourage the continuity of existing programs and an organic formation on new ones, rather than a rupture in the site's history.

Our proposal starts by layering the site with a civic element—a circular promenade - that creates a new dynamic on the site: linking the three parts of the site to become literally a pedestrian confluence. Rather than redefining the ground entirely, the promenade becomes a simple addition with three ground interventions that inscribe it in its urban context.

The promenade mutates into a light bridge over the two rivers', touching minimally the trails below to create connections, and giving access to all existing landscapes and activities on site.

In three instances, the promenade ascends into arches of varying heights, to address the two scales of the monument — architectural and urban. The arches are situated at strategic points, reinvigorating the existing land uses at their ground through urban squares that serve as the arches' entry points, and providing invaluable viewing promontories at their top from which people can see and be seen from the city. Two of the arches are accessible via escalators and stairs, leading to their respective viewing platforms; while the highest arch is accessible via funicular elevator leading to a two-levels viewing deck.

The landmark presents itself as an irradiating object at its three peaks that slowly disintegrates in a multitude of pixels at its base. It offers San Jose a new visual addition to its nightscape that gives value to the cityscape at the urban scale, while breaking down to locally lit surfaces at its ground.

What emerges is a new public realm that is unified yet provides a diverse range of scales and publics that can form naturally, mirroring the different synergies that makes Silicon Valley.