

Collaboration and innovation, respect and inclusiveness, are some most important values that the city of San Jose can praise; to design a building that builds civic pride, I started right from them. What stimulates collaboration and innovation more than a place like a square? What encourages respect and inclusiveness more than nature that is diverse and equal by definition?

So I combined these: a plaza and a forest. I multiplied these elements to further enhance the quality of the city. I turned the plazas into ramps and the slabs into hanging gardens to take some of the beautiful landscapes into the anthropic environment of the city. And I discovered that this mixture created opportunities for new spaces and relationships.

The project leaves intact all of Arena Green features, it is located just to the north of the site and it respects the environment setting back from the river and spanning only two narrow bridges over it. Two entrances are designed to activate more secluded areas like West Saint John St and the space along the highway. To the East is located the core with lifts and stairs, as well as the majority of the commercial activities: a covered square at the ground level where is also located a farmer market, a restaurant at the first level, a bar at the second and a panoramic terrace at the third.

The borders of the ramps are characterized by colored LED panels all along their length except for the portion above the river; they are dimmable and programmable for artistic representations or any other purposes; this creates a unique look that emphasizes the shape of the ramps. To achieve a net-zero energy design the footprint of the building is designed to collect rainwater, vast areas of the ramps are dedicated to photovoltaic panels and the energy is stored in underground batteries which can ultimately help the national grid too.

While traveling along the ramp will immerse people into landscapes, visiting the commercial activities will give the impression of being in a forest thanks to the multitude of columns located here. Climbing the ramps to the top terrace or simply enjoying a dinner at the restaurant, is one of the ways this project makes people discover the city, the landscapes, and new connections between them and with the territory. The project enhances the environment creating a true icon for the future of San Jose.