

# START IT UP!

How the Seaholm Waterfront Can Get Back to Work for Austin

Studio Gang





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## How the Seaholm Waterfront Can Get Back to Work for Austin

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Cover Image: South Facade  
Seaholm Intake Building  
1950.

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IN PARTNERSHIP WITH



The Trail  
Foundation



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# Introduction





# Awakening Potential

## The Seaholm Waterfront



The Seaholm Power Plant and Intake Building, 1951

Momentum is building to bring new life to the Seaholm Waterfront in Austin, Texas. Citizens, civic leaders, philanthropic organizations, and stakeholder groups are working to align their ideas into a shared vision and plan for action that awakens this collection of dormant civic assets and makes a place that invites the entire city to engage with the waterfront and one another.

The three-acre Seaholm Waterfront comprises a park, trail, and buildings perched on the edge of Lady Bird Lake in downtown Austin. With the recent adaptive reuse of the nearby Seaholm Power Plant into commercial office space, the adjacent waterfront awaits a renewal that embraces fresh civic purpose and local desires for recreation and public life.

The Waterfront's vacant Intake Building occupies an enviable position as the only building that touches both land and water along the Ann and Roy Butler Hike-and-Bike Trail, a system of parks and paths that serves 2.6 million visitors per year. The Intake Building was once used to pump water from the lake to cool turbines in the decommissioned Power Plant located just north of the site, serving as an engine that helped power an entire city. **It is poised for a revival that values its attributes and puts the building back to work with a new civic ambition.**

In 2017, The Trail Foundation, Austin Parks Foundation, and the Austin Parks and Recreation Department engaged Studio Gang to propose how to revitalize the Seaholm Waterfront. **The result is this Conceptual Design Study that embraces the character of the buildings and site; promotes restoration of the landscape and waterscape; builds on local knowledge and experience; amplifies sustainability; and joins the city and its waterfront at a new confluence of inclusive community infrastructure.**

The Study does not focus on one design solution; rather, it provides several options that respond to the ambitions expressed by Austinites and the latent opportunities inherent in the buildings, grounds, and trail in the hope of awakening the Seaholm Waterfront to a new and celebrated civic life.

# How can dormant infrastructure be a celebrated part of civic life?



# Listening and Learning

## Research and Engagement



Community Open House, September 2017

To arrive at a deep and expansive understanding of the Seaholm Waterfront, from its ecology and history to its urban context and recreation potential, the Studio Gang team and its partners conducted significant research, investigating the site and its relationship to the city, reviewing past plans and current efforts, meeting with community members, and interviewing key stakeholders. The team sifted through these findings to arrive at design principles and specific ideas for the buildings, grounds, and trail that are presented in this document.

To further engage the community, the team organized meetings, workshops, open houses, pop-up interactions, special events, technical reviews, panel discussions, and surveys, among other means and methods.

Specifically, to expand the nature and geography of outreach to Austinites, three online surveys were conducted over the course of the six-month study. Developed in partnership with Civic Collaboration and Go Collaborative, the surveys reached more than 800 respondents and provided an array of insights and suggestions to bring new life to the waterfront and especially to the Intake Building.

A critical aspect of the Seaholm Waterfront is its contribution to the story of Austin's growth and change, captured visibly in the historic and utilitarian character of the Intake Building. With this in mind, the Study connects the building's past functions to new possibilities, while honoring its historic features that serve as markers of the identity and legacy of the waterfront.

Due to these research and engagement efforts, the study responds to Austin's aspirations for a waterfront that offers a variety of experiences; reflects local preferences that may change over time; provides the comforts of shade, food, and drink; negotiates activity and tranquility; supports creativity and culture; provides access to the water; and celebrates the city's vitality and civic life.

41 on-site workshops, presentations, open houses, and technical reviews  
+  
+1100 online survey responses

### 2017 ENGAGEMENT DATES

#### MAY

Seaholm Waterfront Press Event at City Hall: Project is launched, APF/TTF partnership is announced, Major Adler voices support

Planning Partners Meeting #1

Seaholm Waterfront Open House #1: The community shares ideas about what they would like to do at the Seaholm Intake Building and surrounding parkland.

Survey conducted as a follow up to Open House #1 asks the community, 'What do you want to do at the Seaholm Waterfront?'

#### AUGUST

Asian American Focus Group

#### SEPTEMBER

African American Focus Group

Hispanic Community Focus Group

Technical Advisory Group Meeting #1 & Design Community Salon

Planning Partners Meeting #2

Seaholm Waterfront Open House #2: Initial findings are shared and feedback is gathered on potential activities and uses of this unique civic asset.

#### OCTOBER

Survey conducted as a follow up to Open House #2 asks community to provide feedback on activities and uses presented at the open house (September 23- October 31).

#### NOVEMBER

Planning Partners Meeting #3

Technical Advisory Group Meeting #2

#### DECEMBER

Seaholm Waterfront Open House #3: Three proposed design options are shared with the community to gather feedback to help refine the final design options.

Survey conducted as a follow up to Open House #3 asks community to provide feedback on designs and programming presented at the open house.



# Designing A New Future

## Principles and Process



Models in progress in the Studio Gang Shop, 2017

This Conceptual Design Study illustrates how the Seaholm Waterfront can become a celebrated part of civic life in Austin. It centers on three components of the waterfront: the Intake Building, the Grounds that surround it, and the Trail that traverses the site and connects it to the city along both shores of Lady Bird Lake.

Many of the Study’s proposed ideas, from water access and boardwalk overlooks to event infrastructure and cafe spaces, reflect suggestions that came directly from Austinites. Combined with research, building and site analysis, ecological studies, expert advice, historic preservation guidance, and urban design, the Study provides design options that work to preserve the character of the waterfront’s signature assets—the Intake Building, Lake Bird Lake,

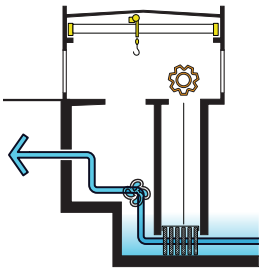
Studio Gang

Butler Trail, and heritage landscapes—but also position the waterfront for a new future as a recreational, cultural, and community-oriented resource.

The need to both preserve and strengthen the waterfront, while also orienting it to civic life, requires design that can flexibly accommodate a wide range of uses, remain open and inviting throughout the year, and respond to the recreational and cultural life of Austin, which will continue to evolve as the city grows and changes over time. With this in mind, the design options consider what might occur “any day” of the week, “now and then” in a month, and “on occasion” during a year to ensure balance across the demands for program and events that the waterfront will be challenged to address.

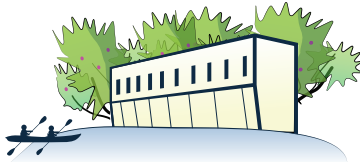
Six design principles guide the Study’s recommendations. Developed through research, engagement, analysis, and experience, they serve as touchstones to ensure that the Study achieves the ambitions that Austinites have for the Seaholm Waterfront.

Finally, the Study offers paths for phased investment, starting with urgent and simple moves and leading to more dynamic changes that breathe new life into the Seaholm Waterfront.



### DISCOVER WHAT’S THERE

Look for inspiration from the Intake Building and site and the unique components of its design. Repurpose past functions for a new future.



### EMBRACE HISTORIC INTEGRITY

Identify the character-defining features of the Intake Building for preservation and reimagine what the balance of these features could become.



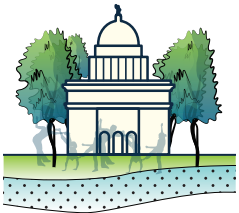
### RESTORE AND DIVERSIFY ECOLOGY

Implement native planting strategies to restore the landscape and lake edge. Supplement the existing heritage trees to create areas of shade and microclimates.



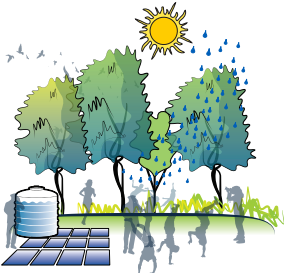
### LISTEN TO COMMUNITY + EXPERTS

Build on the diversity and knowledge of the people who know the city best by including residents and local experts in an inclusive engagement and design process.



### CONVERGE CITY, TRAIL, AND LAKE

Network with nearby assets, such as the new Central Library, to connect the city, trail, and lake. Work to cross-pollinate programs and activities.

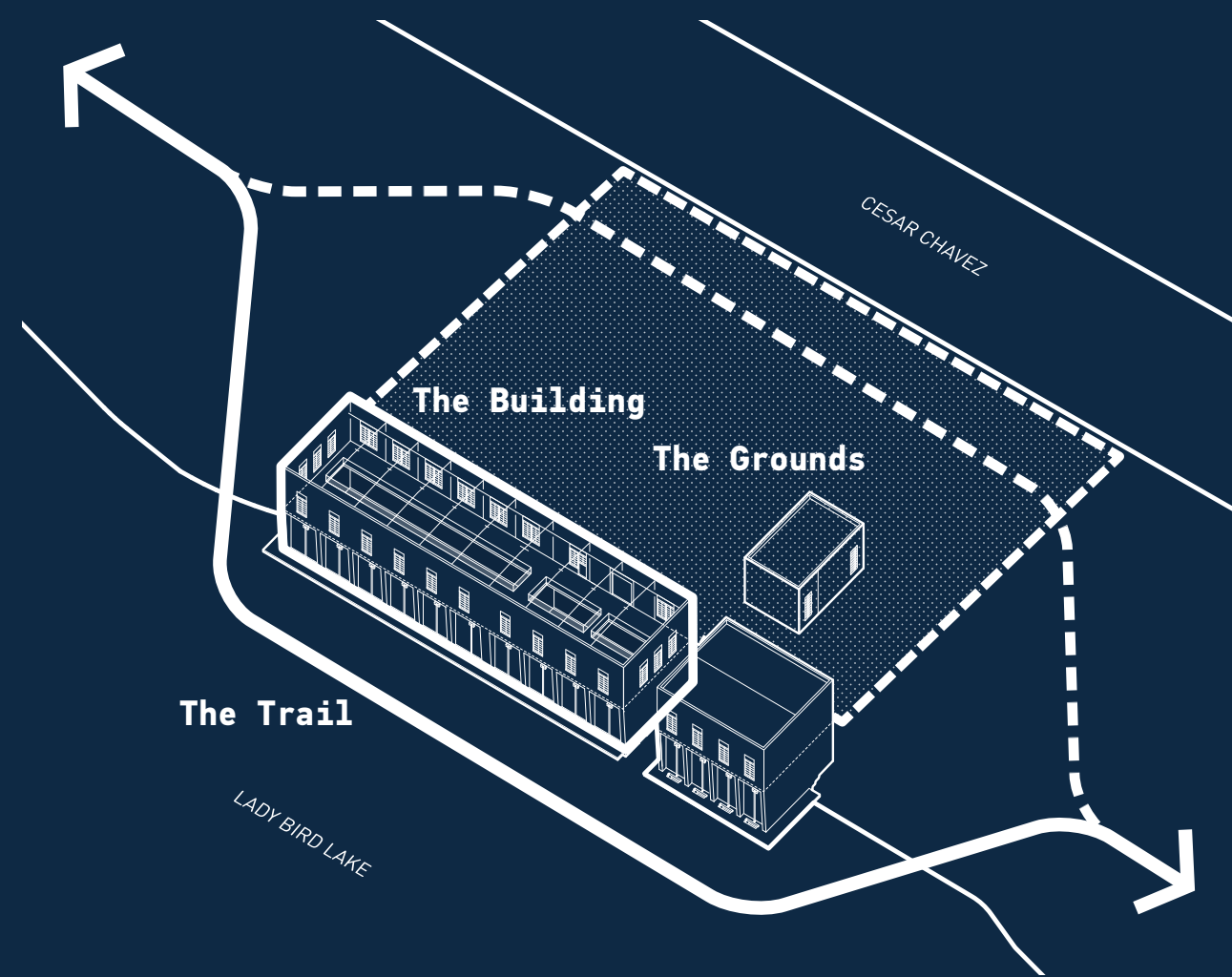
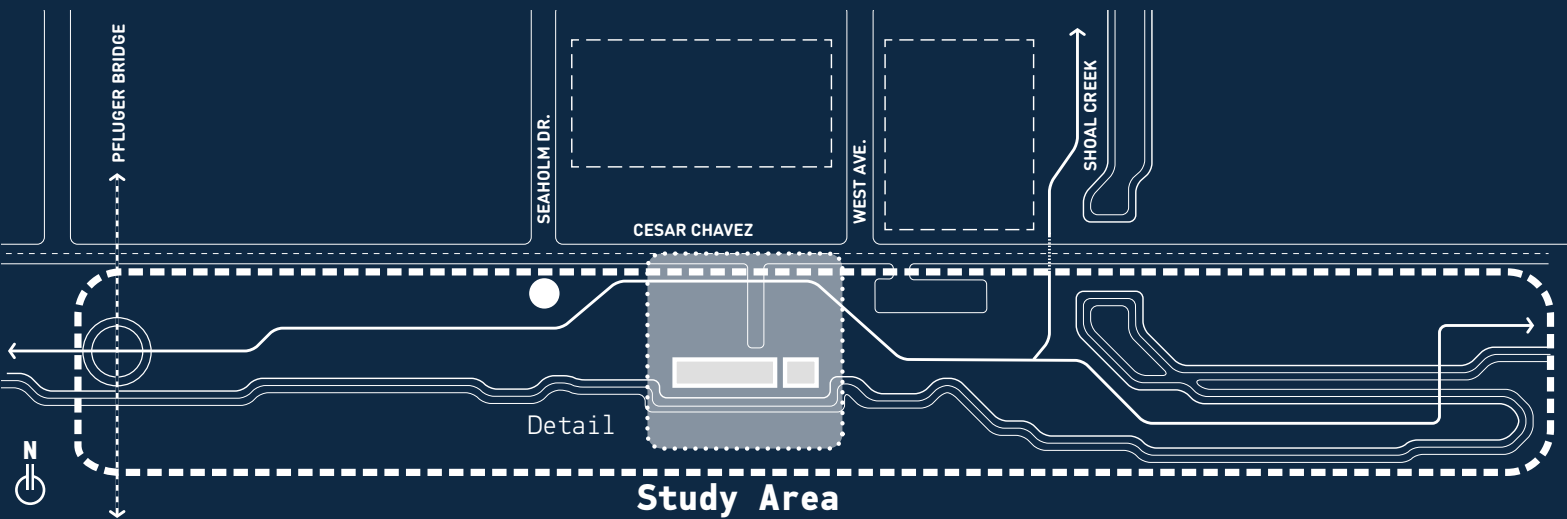


### BUILD IN SUSTAINABILITY

Build sustainable principles into both design and operational models. Explore ways that native landscape and ecology can be linked within the design and consider opportunities to support revenue generation.



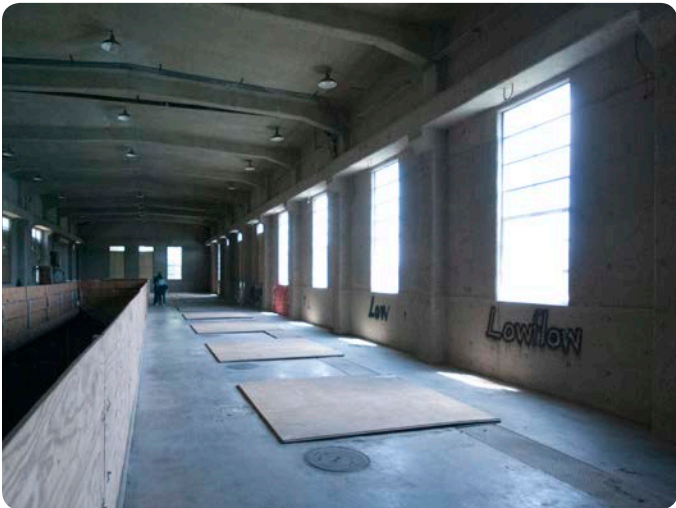
# START IT UP!





# The Building

## A Dormant Infrastructure



Currently the Intake Building is an empty shell, June 2017.

The Seaholm Waterfront and the iconic Seaholm Intake Building have a story to tell. The Conceptual Design Study explores the idea of the building as a machine and this can be furthered through an exploration of interpretive strategies. The Seaholm Waterfront tells the story of the transition from industry to recreation. The major role of energy generation both past and present is also a leading theme. These stories can be told in a variety of ways ranging from exhibits, interpretive signage, programming and public art.

The Intake Building has remained relatively unchanged since an expansion in 1955, although the

### WHAT'S NEEDED

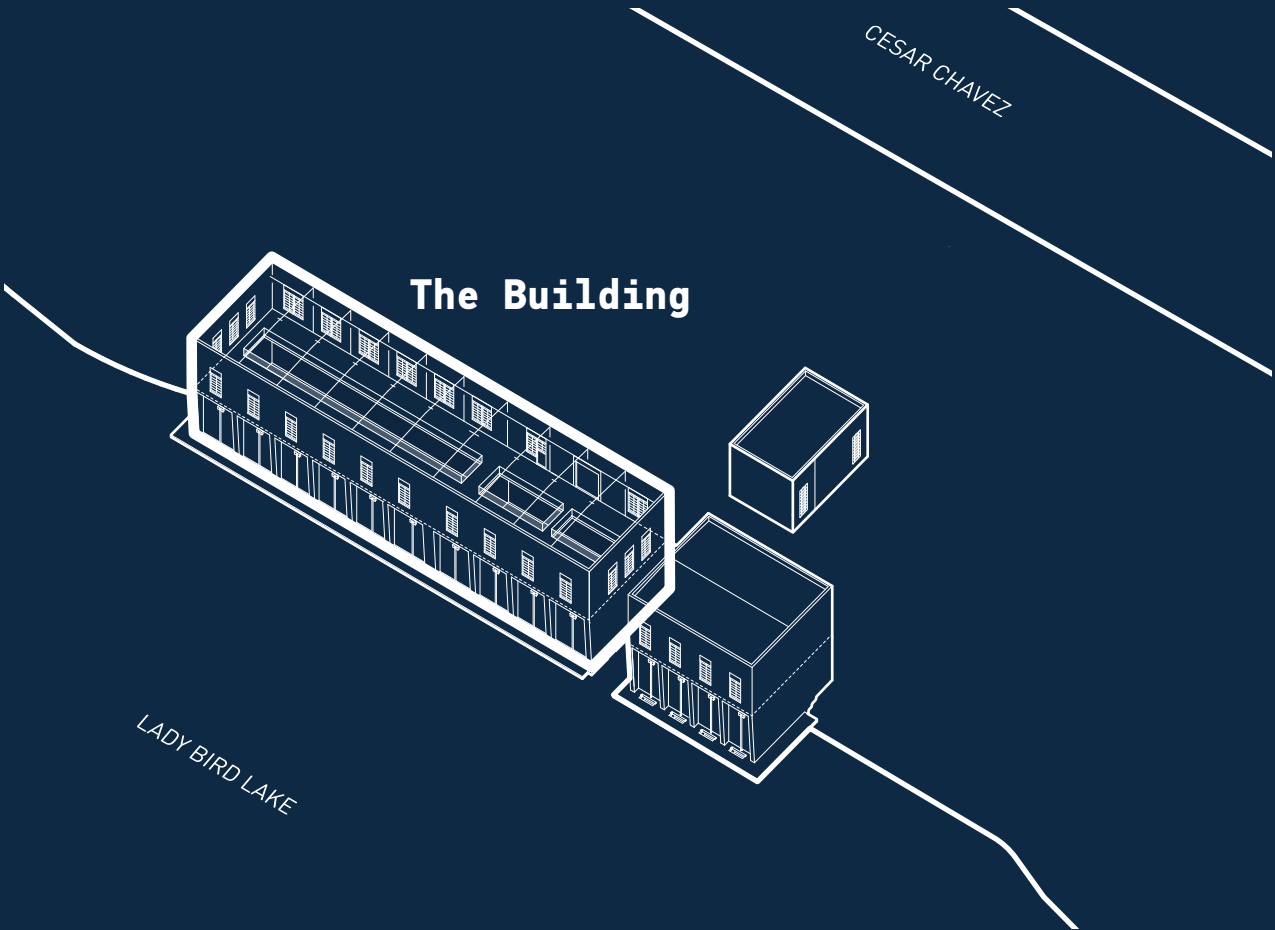
**COMFORT:** Cooling and ventilation for inhabitants, seating

**SERVICES:** Food and drink, interpretive exhibit, restrooms, storage, kitchen, office

**OPENNESS:** Transparent openings, indoor-outdoor experience, waterfront dock

**CONNECTIVITY:** Network site to adjacent assets, expand the trail, bring in new programs

industrial machinery has since been removed. Its interior demands preservation yet can also be leveraged for new flexible uses. The main level, once called the Operating Floor, is a large rectangular volume with an abundance of natural light. Large openings make the floor difficult to use; however, if these opening were creatively covered, the space could be used for many different types of gatherings and activities. Formerly, a 5-ton gantry crane was used for moving and accessing the pumps in the lower level. Reinstalling a gantry crane could offer a unique artifact of the building's past and also assist in moving partitions and furniture for flexible uses.



5.5<sub>k</sub>

size of the main floor in square feet

50'

height of south facade rising out of Lady Bird Lake

5 tons

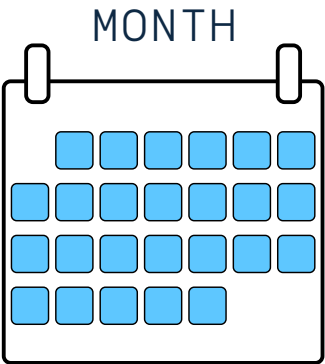
load capacity of the original gantry crane



POSSIBILITIES

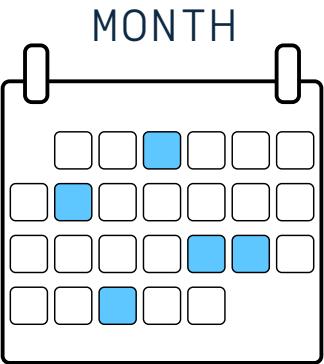
# Open and Flexible

Over the course of a month, the Intake Building could accommodate a wide range of programs and events, from occasional to any day of the week.



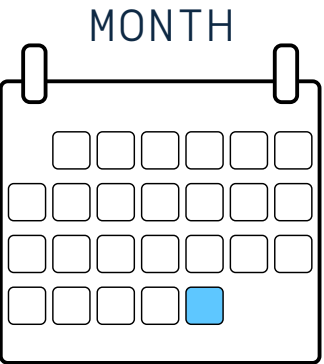
## ANY DAY

Day-to-day events would allow for casual gathering in large and small groups.



## NOW AND THEN

The flexibility of the Intake Building would allow for multiple events to take place at one time.



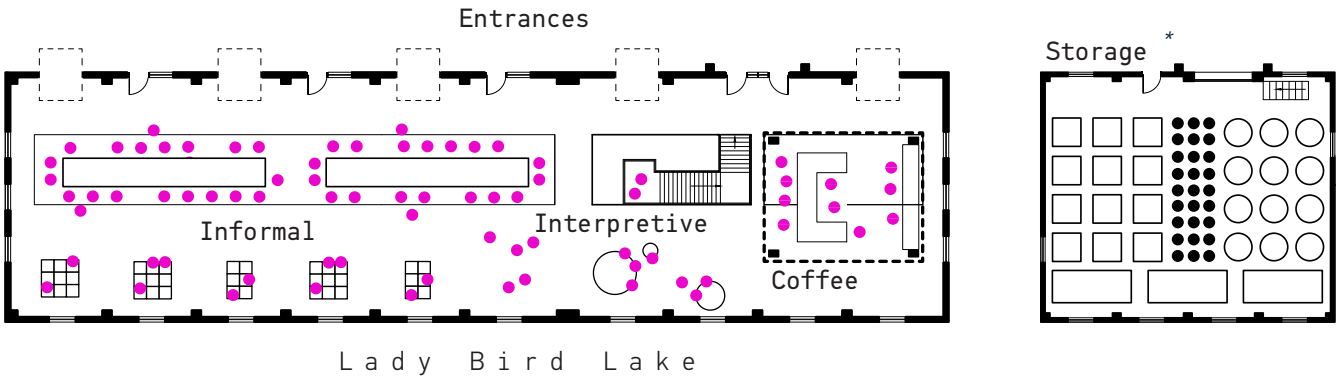
## ON OCCASION

The Intake Building would be able to accommodate one large event.



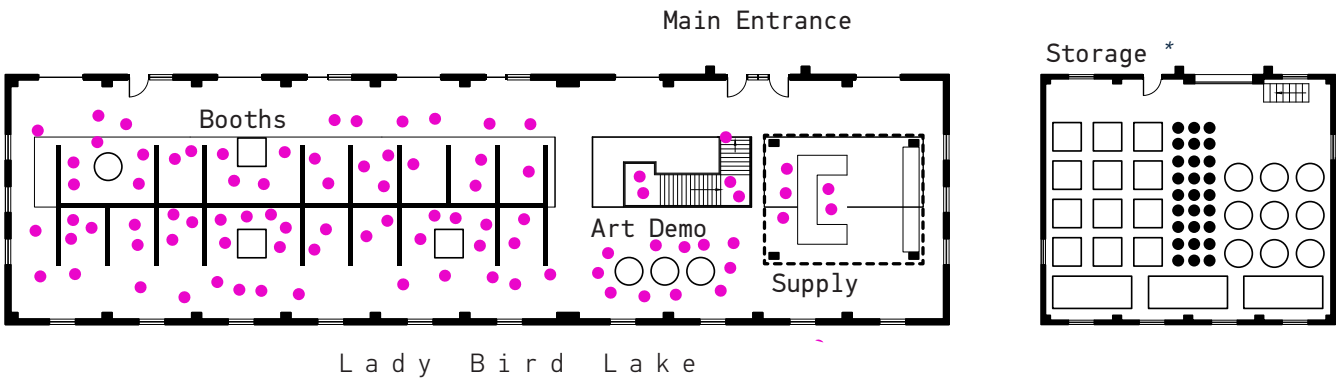
ANY DAY

ANY DAY events could happen each day of the week. The building and site can be designed to make the space easy and flexible.



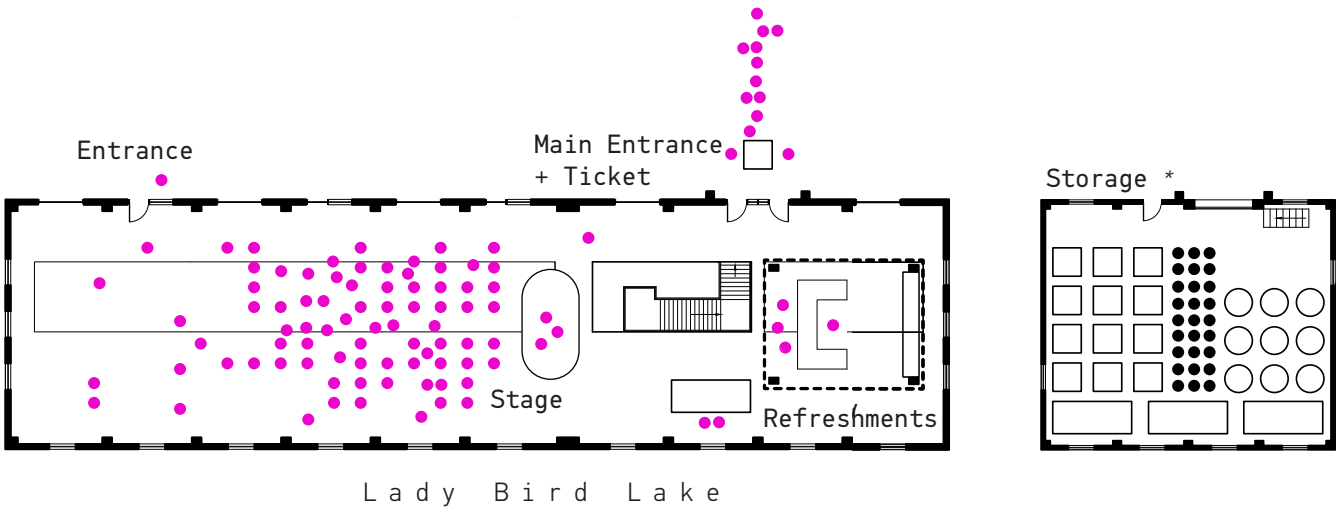
NOW AND THEN

NOW AND THEN activities could take advantage of this new flexibility, allowing for periodic signature programs and events.

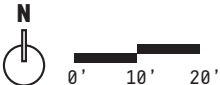


ON OCCASION

ON OCCASION events would be less common but could take advantage of the building's ability to accommodate large gatherings.



\*Building B is not inhabitable due to overhead power lines.





## ANY DAY

The Intake Building will host meet ups and gatherings, with free WiFi and a place to grab a snack and a coffee.





## ANY DAY

The Intake Building will be open for people to come in and work individually or collectively. Unique elements from the building's past will be on display for people to experience.





**NOW AND THEN**

The Intake Building will be able to accommodate larger events simultaneously, such as an art fair and youth art camp.





**ON OCCASION**

Large events can be held at the Intake Building, with support services located outside.





# The Grounds

## Extend the Intake to the Outside



The north side of the Intake Building has a large yard with activation potential.

At the completion of the Intake Building’s second phase of construction in 1955, a “front yard” condition of nearly 150 linear feet was created between the building and Cesar Chavez. Since that time, the yard has been very seldom used. A collection of heritage oak trees occupy the yard, while the Ann and Roy Butler Hike-and-Bike Trail occupies the edge on Cesar Chavez. In an effort to take pressure off the Intake Building from housing amenity and service programs, a series of design options offer a range of ideas of how the “front yard” could take on some of this responsibility.

### WHAT’S NEEDED

**COMFORT:** Areas of shade, places to sit, gathering space, landscape microclimates, protect on site heritage tree

**AMENITIES:** A place to get a coffee and a snack, restrooms, community room

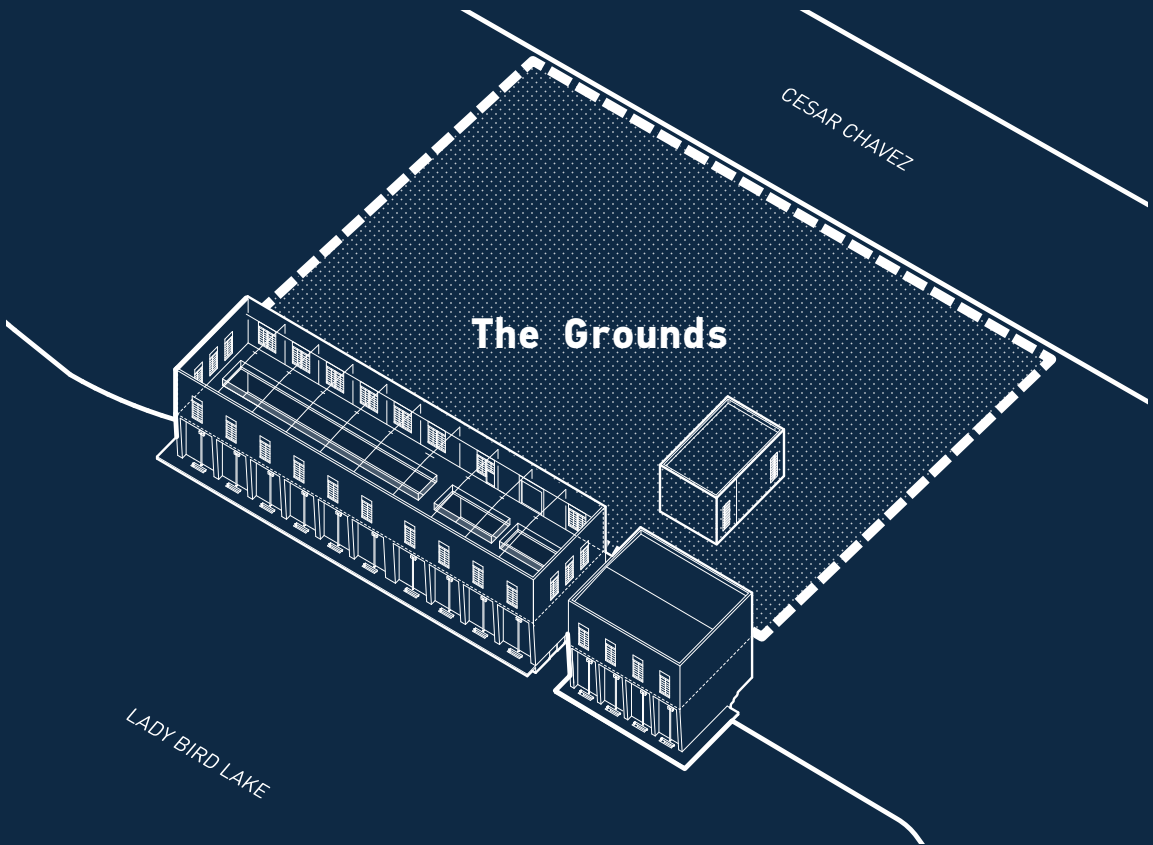
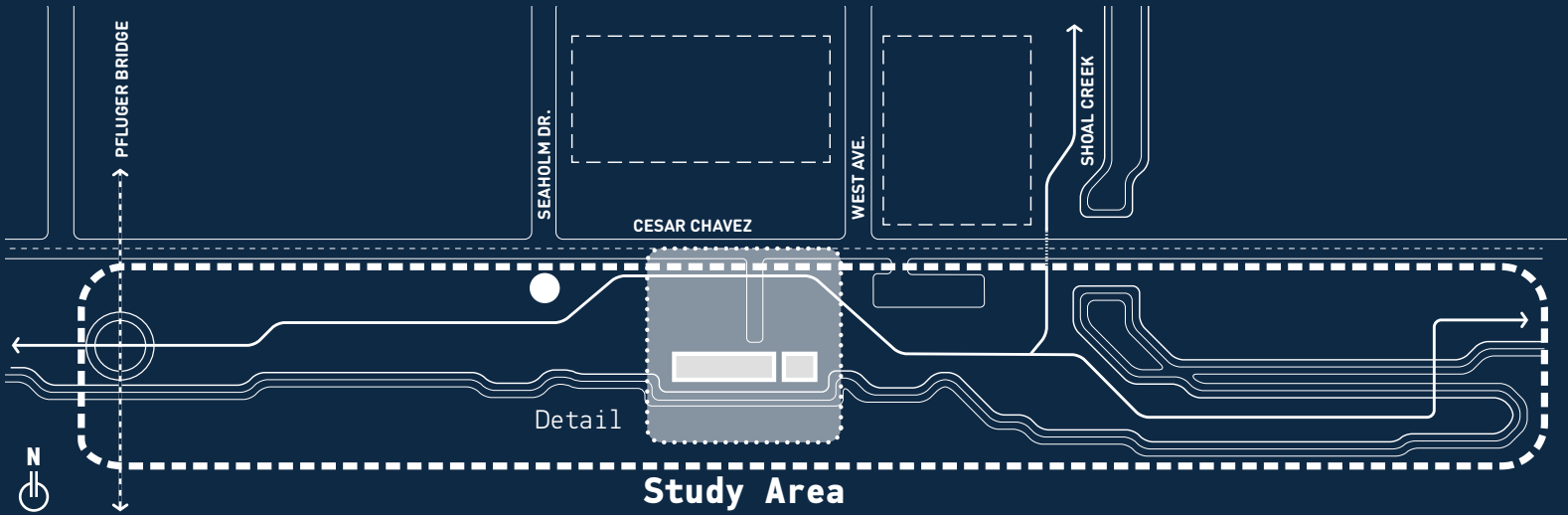
**ACTIVITIES:** A multigenerational play space, water access, views of Lady Bird Lake

### DESIGN OPTIONS

**THE PORCH YARD** adds a porch to the north side of the Intake Building and a softscape veil that blocks noise from Cesar Chavez.

**THE COURT YARD** places a new structure away from the Intake Building to create an interior courtyard along Cesar Chavez.

**THE GARDEN YARD** creates a lush outdoor plaza with a new pavilion that has service and program functions.



3 acres of site area

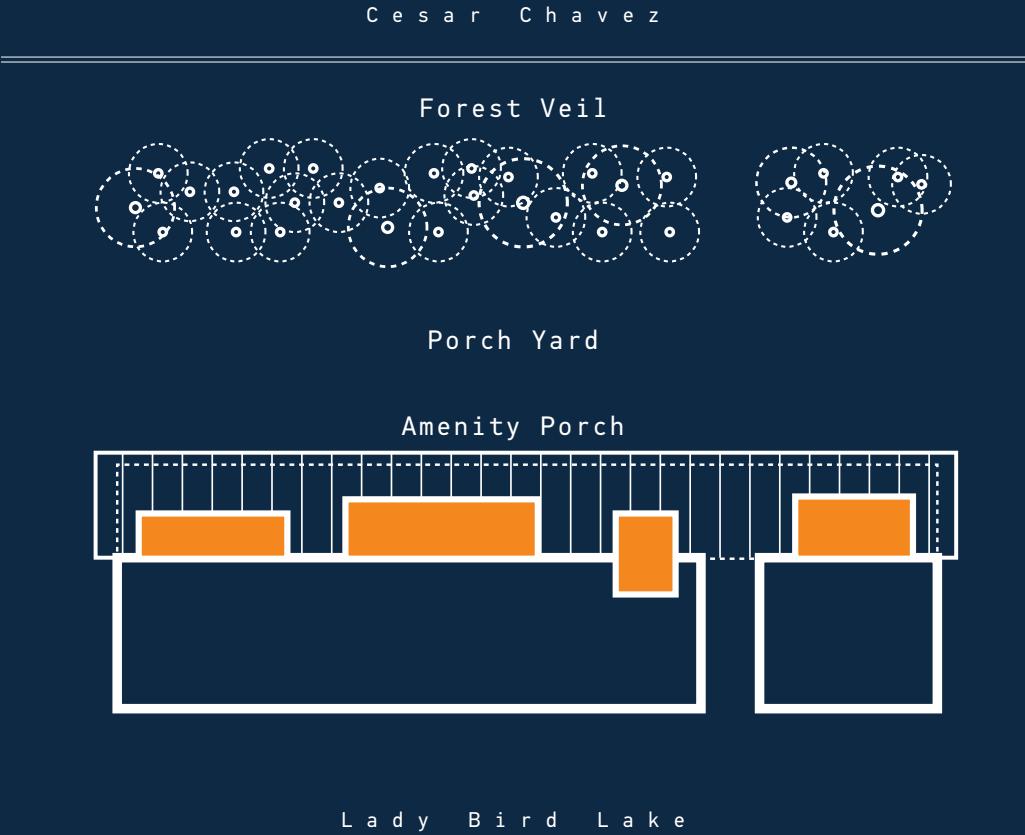
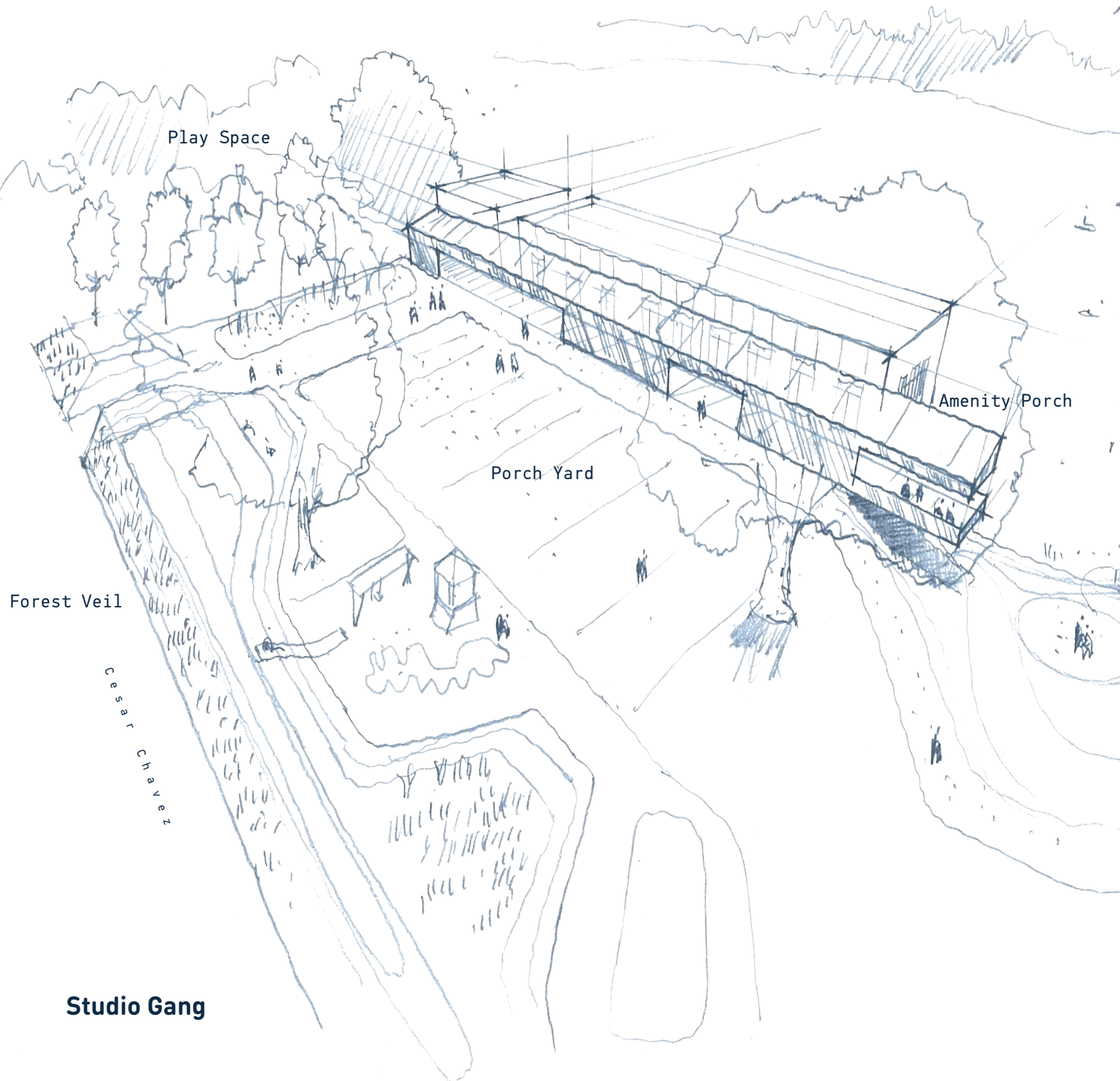
67 years of dormant potential

6 pipes connect the Intake Building to the Power Plant

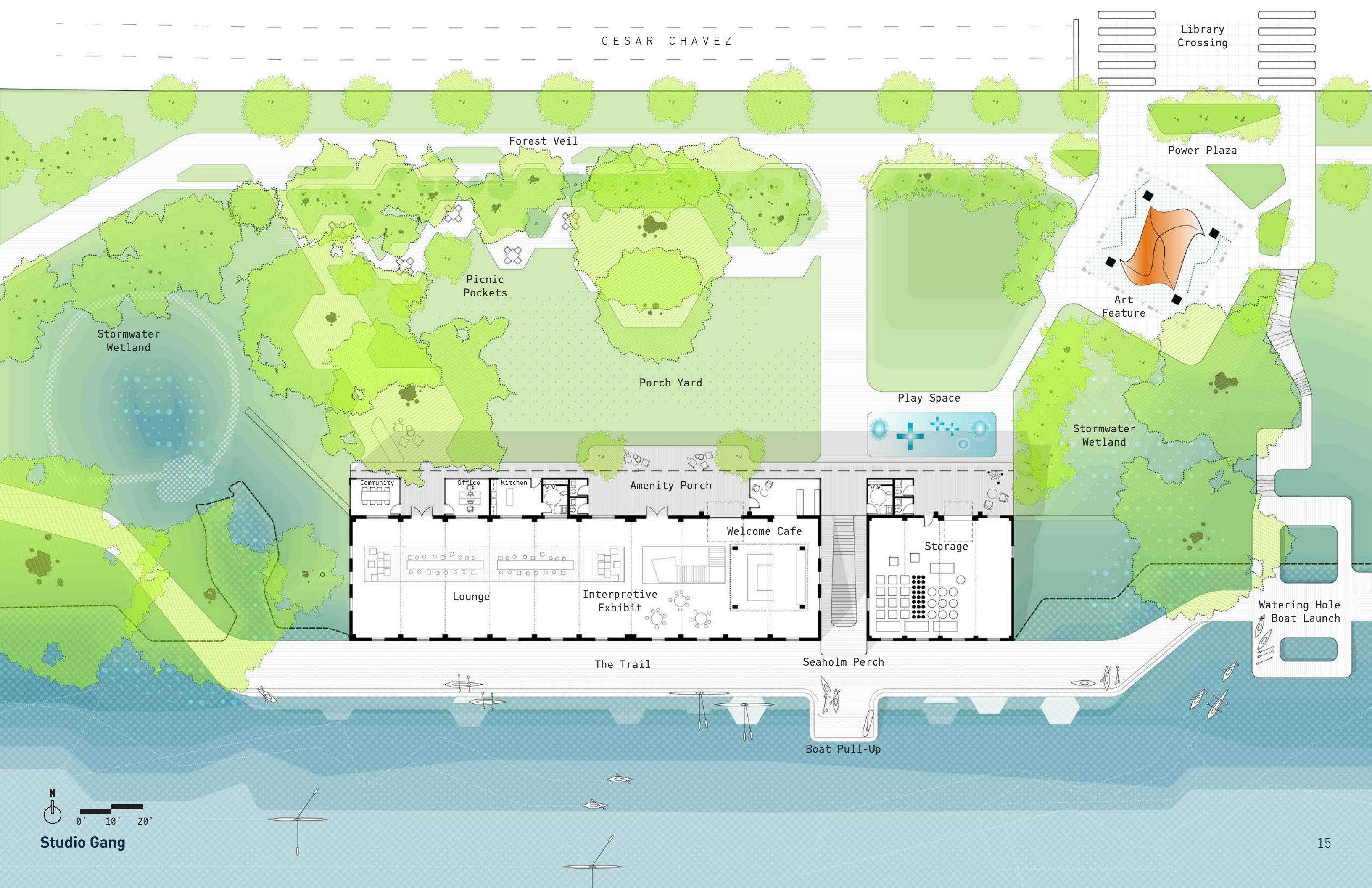


# The Porch Yard

Service and amenity programs are placed in a porch that wraps the north face of the Intake Building. The Porch looks out onto the Porch Yard, which is protected from Cesar Chavez by a lushly planted Forest Veil. The Porch Yard can be used for large gatherings or smaller day-to-day group meetings.











Storage

Welcome  
Cafe

*\*Roof removed for clarity*

Amenity Porch

Play Space

Porch Yard

Forest Veil

Picnic Pockets



Noise from Cesar Chavez is reduced with a dense planting of trees. The Porch Yard provides a large open space for gathering and events.





The Amenity Porch wraps around the Intake Building. In between, a perch leads people to views of the lake.





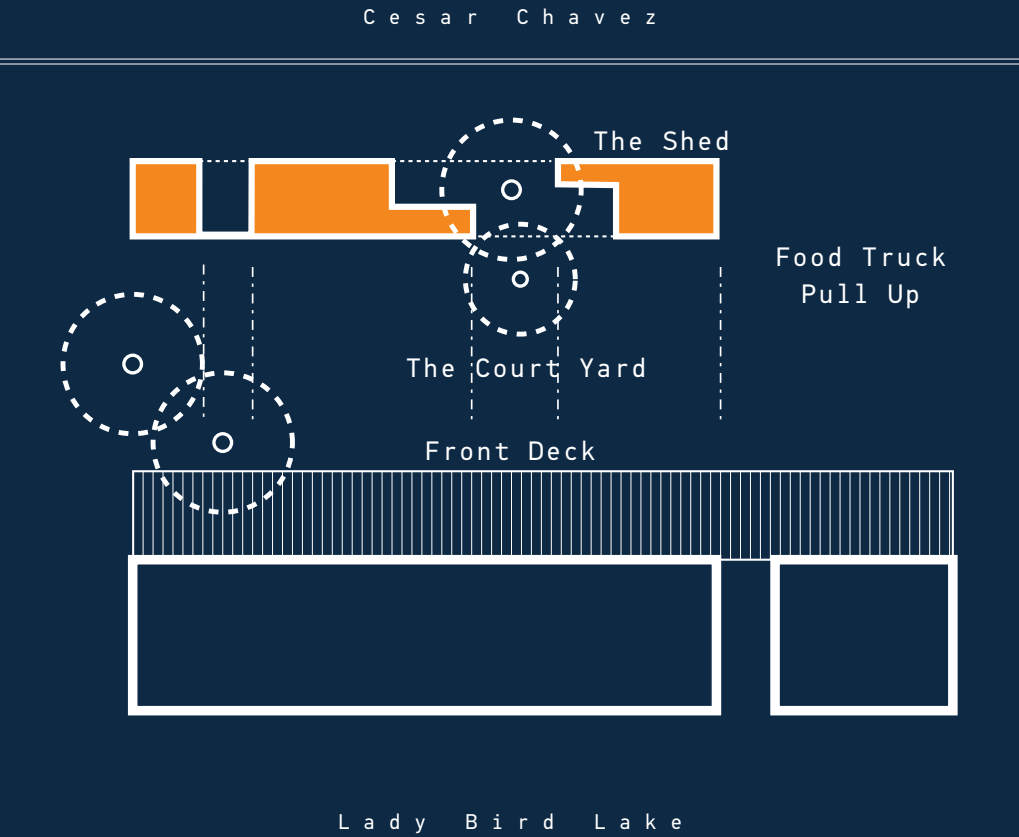
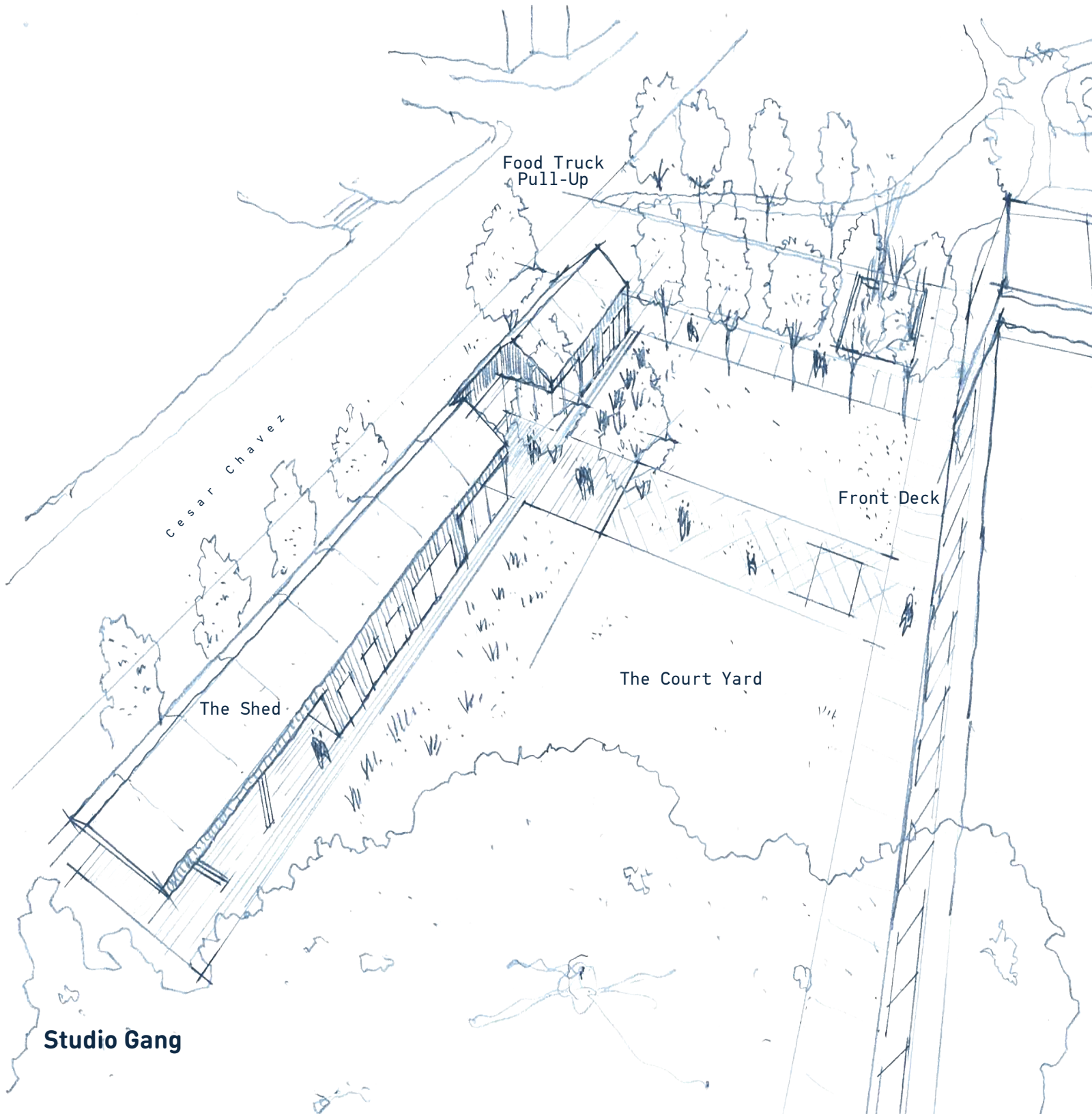
The Power Plaza links the pedestrian crossing at the new Central Library to the Intake Building. The existing power tower is clad in artwork, making it a focal point of the Eco-District.





# The Court Yard

To take pressure off the Intake Building, all amenity and service programs are placed in the Shed. A safe and open Court Yard is created between the Shed and the Intake Building.





Food Truck  
Pull-Up

Power Plaza

Art  
Feature

Stone  
Stair

Stormwater  
Wetland

The Shed

Community  
Room

Kitchen

Office

The Stage

The Court Yard

Tree Deck

Play Space

Stormwater  
Wetland

Front Deck

Welcome Cafe

Lounge

Interpretive  
Exhibit

Storage

Watering Hole  
Boat Launch

The Trail

Seaholm Perch

Boat Pull-Up



0' 10' 20'

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Play Space

Storage

Welcome  
Cafe

Heritage  
Oak Stage

The Court Yard

The Shed

Front Deck

Community Room

WiFi  
Work Spot

Studio Gang

Roof removed for clarity

22



Between the Intake Building and the Front Deck, a public Court Yard can host a wide range of events and programs.





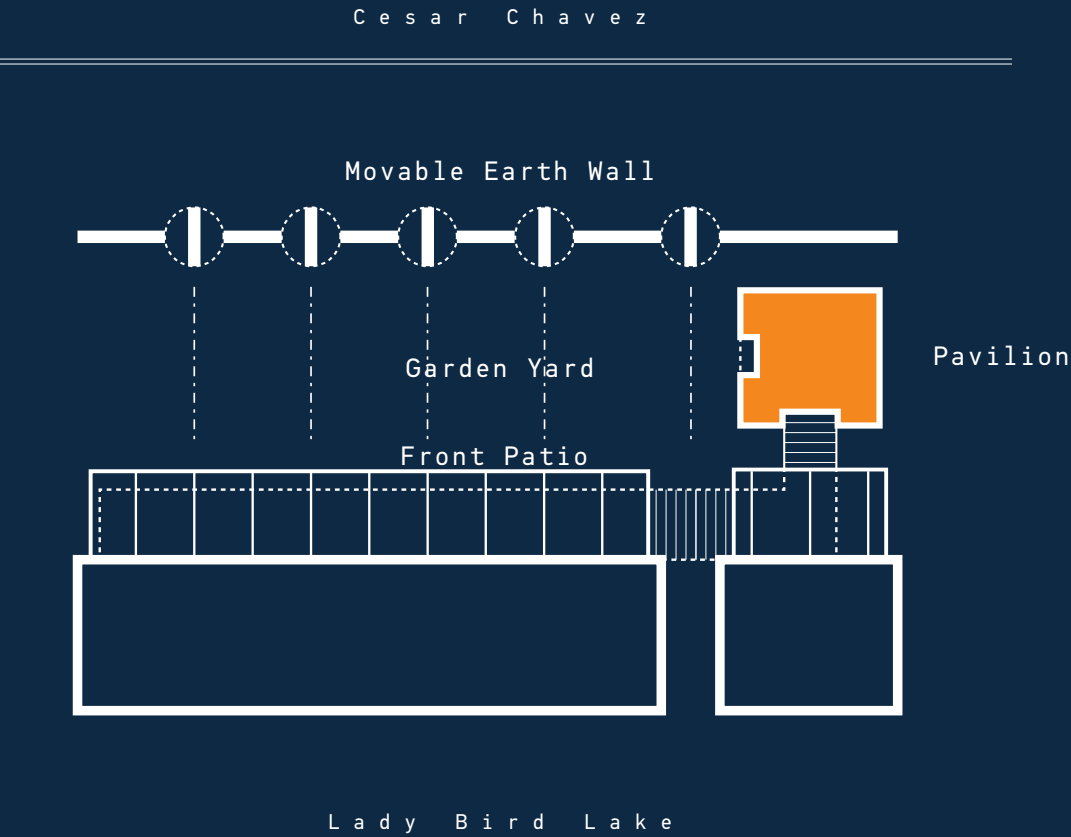
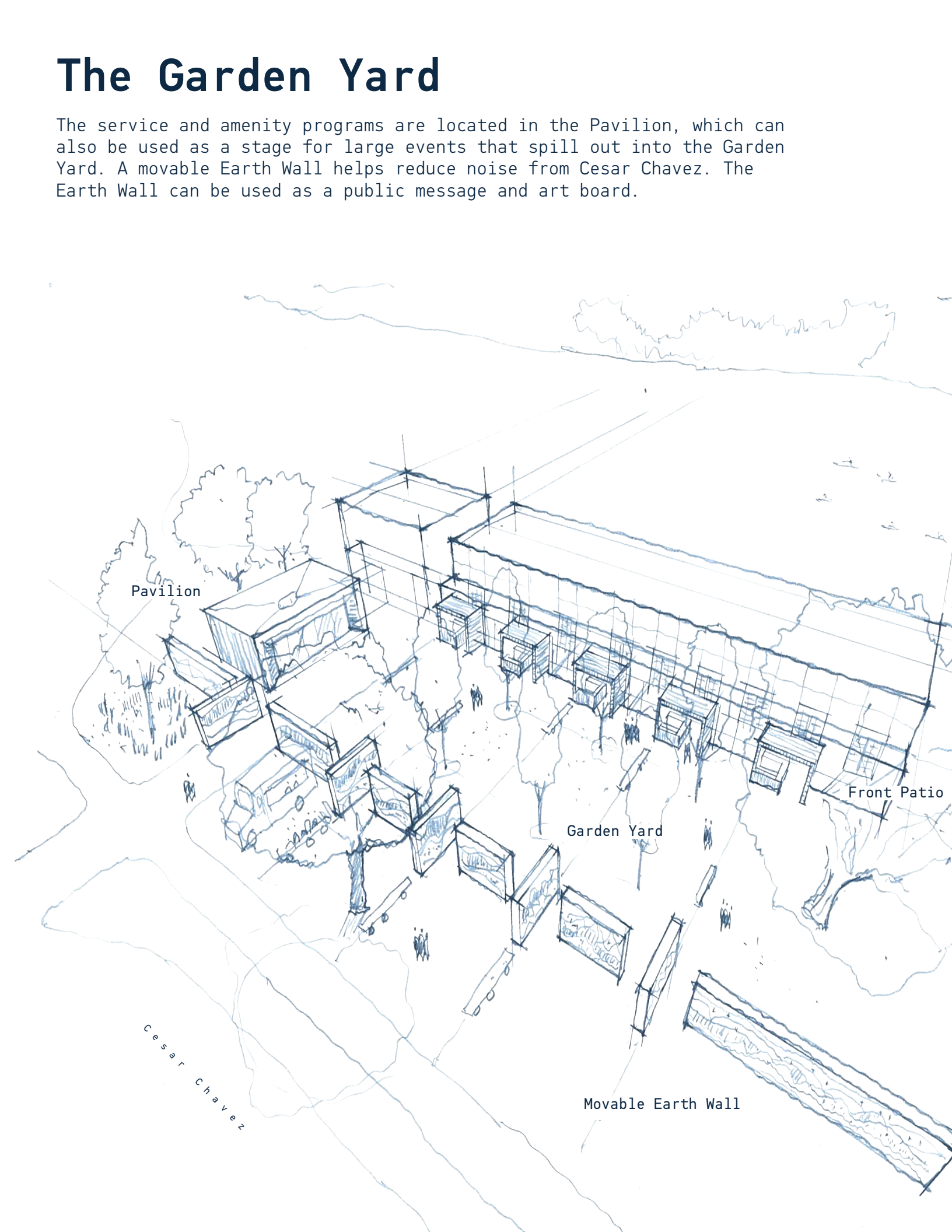
The Trail runs along the water's edge to provide an up-close experience of Lady Bird Lake. The water's edge becomes a tranquil space to sit and look out on the lake.



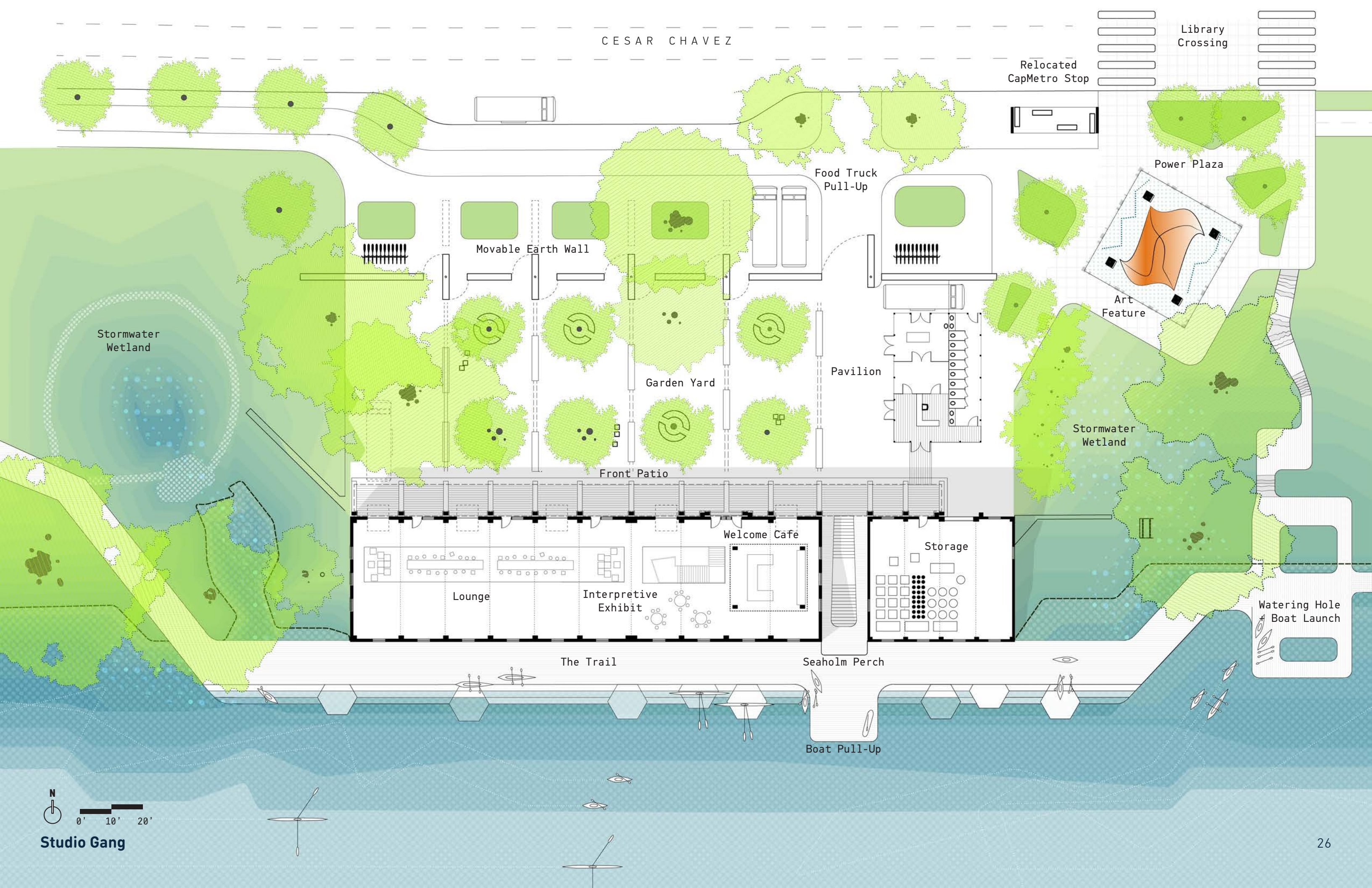


# The Garden Yard

The service and amenity programs are located in the Pavilion, which can also be used as a stage for large events that spill out into the Garden Yard. A movable Earth Wall helps reduce noise from Cesar Chavez. The Earth Wall can be used as a public message and art board.







CESAR CHAVEZ

Library Crossing

Relocated CapMetro Stop

Power Plaza

Art Feature

Stormwater Wetland

Watering Hole Boat Launch

Food Truck Pull-Up

Pavilion

Garden Yard

Front Patio

Welcome Café

Storage

Lounge

Interpretive Exhibit

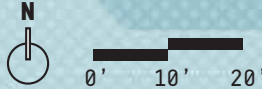
The Trail

Seaholm Perch

Boat Pull-Up

Movable Earth Wall

Stormwater Wetland







Storage

Welcome  
Cafe

*\*Roof removed for clarity*

Front Patio

Pavilion

Food Truck  
Pull-Up

Garden Yard

Movable Earth Wall

Studio Gang





Facing the Garden Yard, the open Front Patio allows people to sit and relax and look back on the city. The Garden Plaza hosts various civic events and programs with the support of the Pavilion.



The Trail runs along the edge of Lady Bird Lake where people can experience a diverse array of landscapes and ecology. There are various places, such as the Watering Hole, to pull up a kayak or paddleboard and to relax and enjoy the location on the water.





# The Trail

## The Heart of Austin

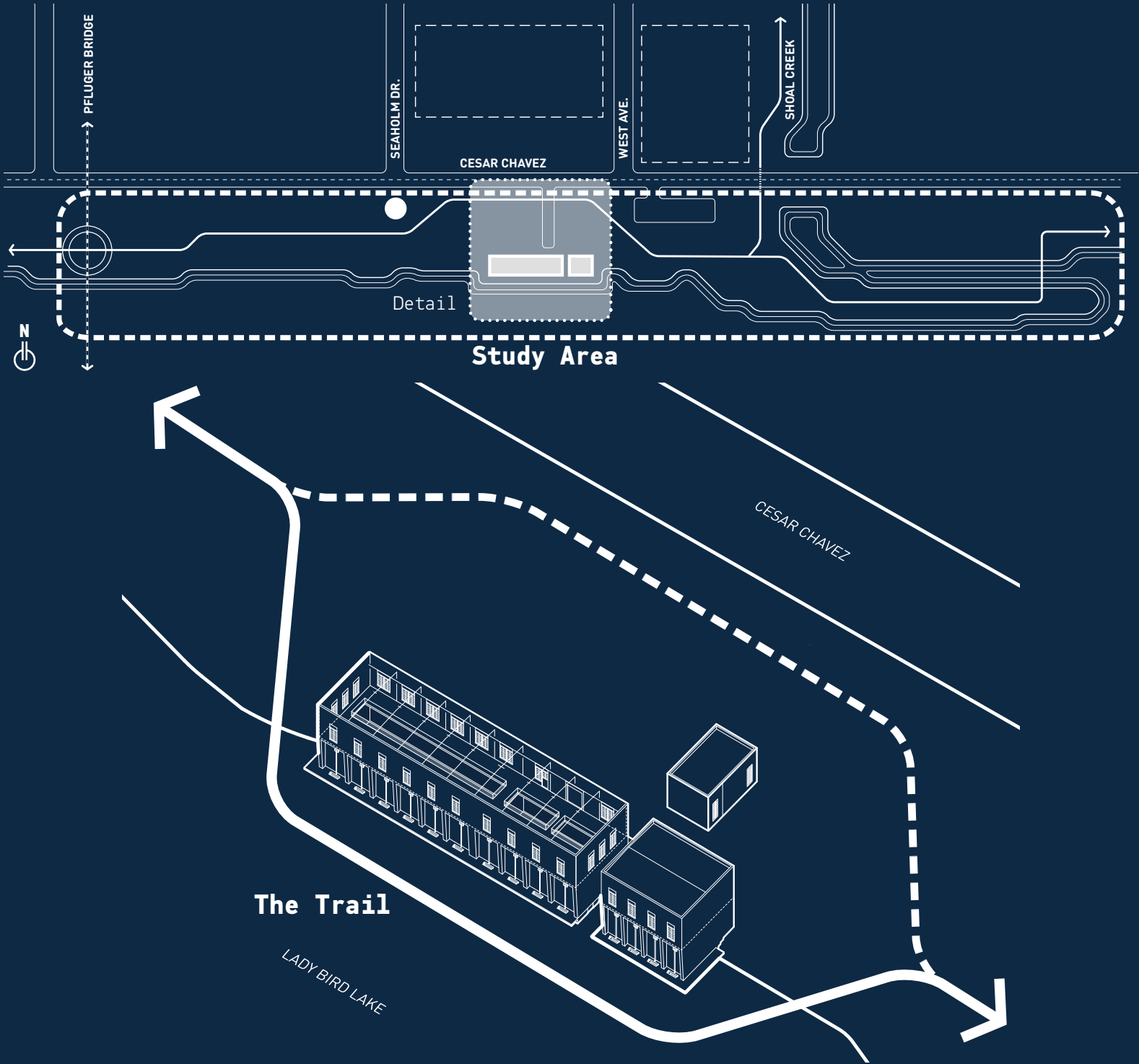


The Ann and Roy Butler Trail, June 2017

The Ann and Roy Butler Hike-and-Bike Trail is a lush urban recreation path that stretches nearly 10 miles and serves more than 2.6 million people per year. Passing directly to the north of the Intake Building, the Trail represents the best of what Austin has to offer—outdoor recreation, scenic views of Lady Bird Lake, natural landscapes, and a diverse mix of people—and has great potential for future use. Public input supports relocating the Trail to the south of the Intake Building.

### WHAT’S NEEDED

- ACCOMMODATION:** Bikers, runners, walkers, commuters, birders, nature lovers, and others
- ENHANCEMENT:** Unique moments to stop and rest along the trail
- RESTORATION:** Preserve and establish conditions for native landscapes and ecology



2.6 million  
visitors a year to the trail

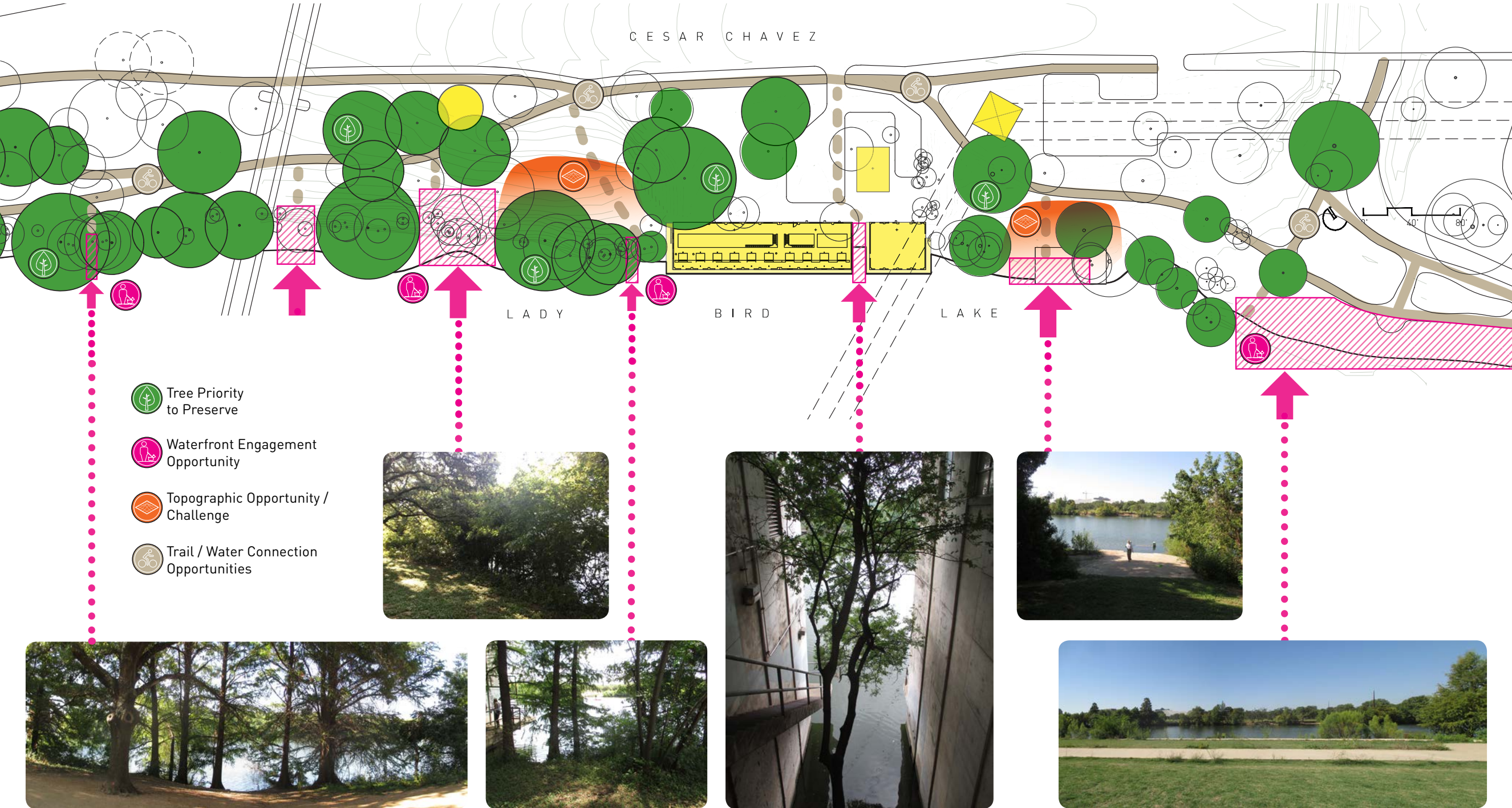
66%  
of people use the trail for  
WATER SPORTS AND RECREATION

10 miles  
the length of the trail



# Site Analysis

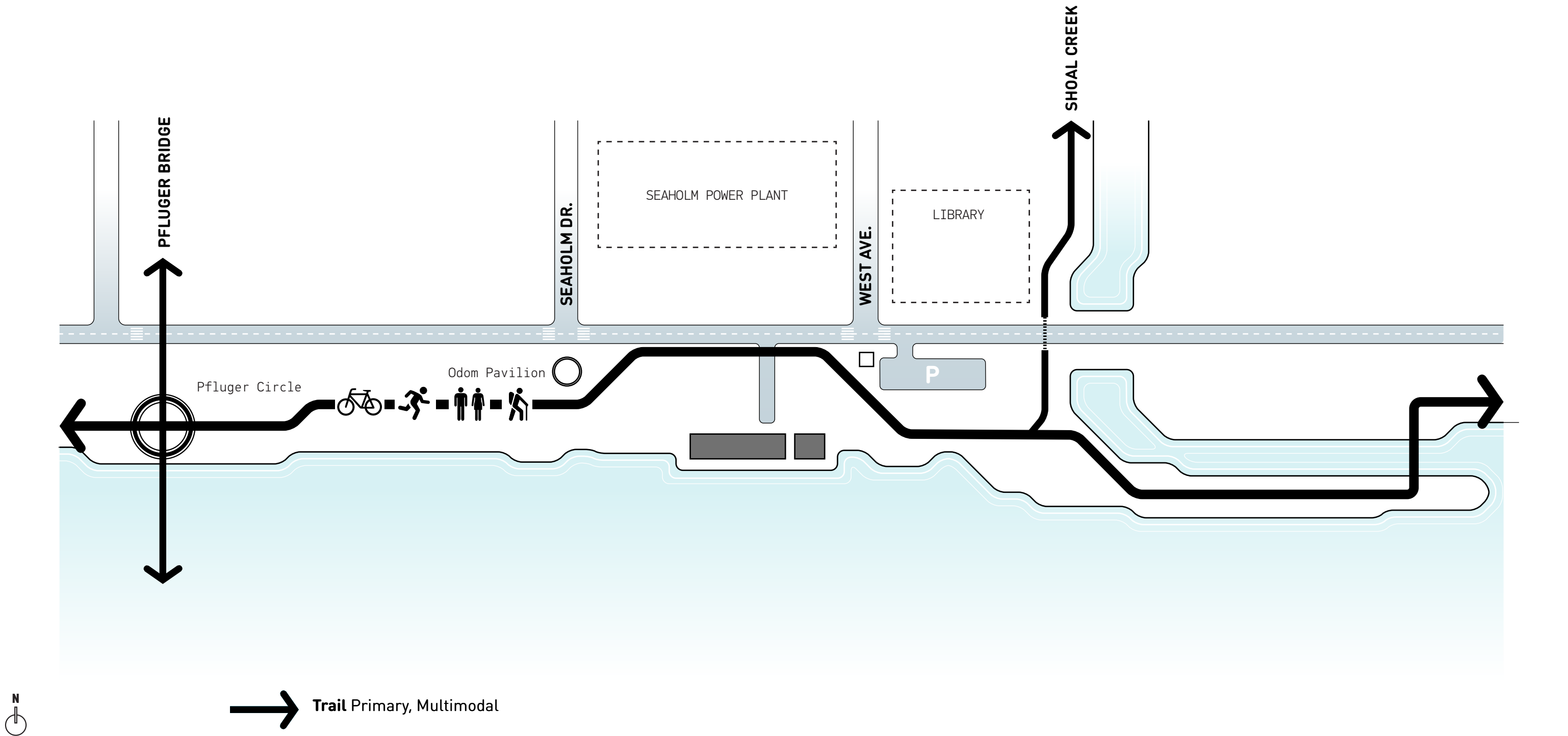
Careful inventory of existing conditions helps define opportunities and constraints across the Seaholm Waterfront. While select species of trees measuring 24 inches or greater in caliper size are deemed “heritage” by city standards, there are many more trees that do not meet the protected criteria but are still worth preserving. Conversely, there are invasive species that should be removed. Following this analysis, opportunities to maximize views to the waterfront present themselves logically.





# Existing Trail Condition

Currently the Trail pushes away from the lake up to Cesar Chavez and creates safety concerns. The Pfluger Bridge and Shoal Creek provide great north connections up into the city.





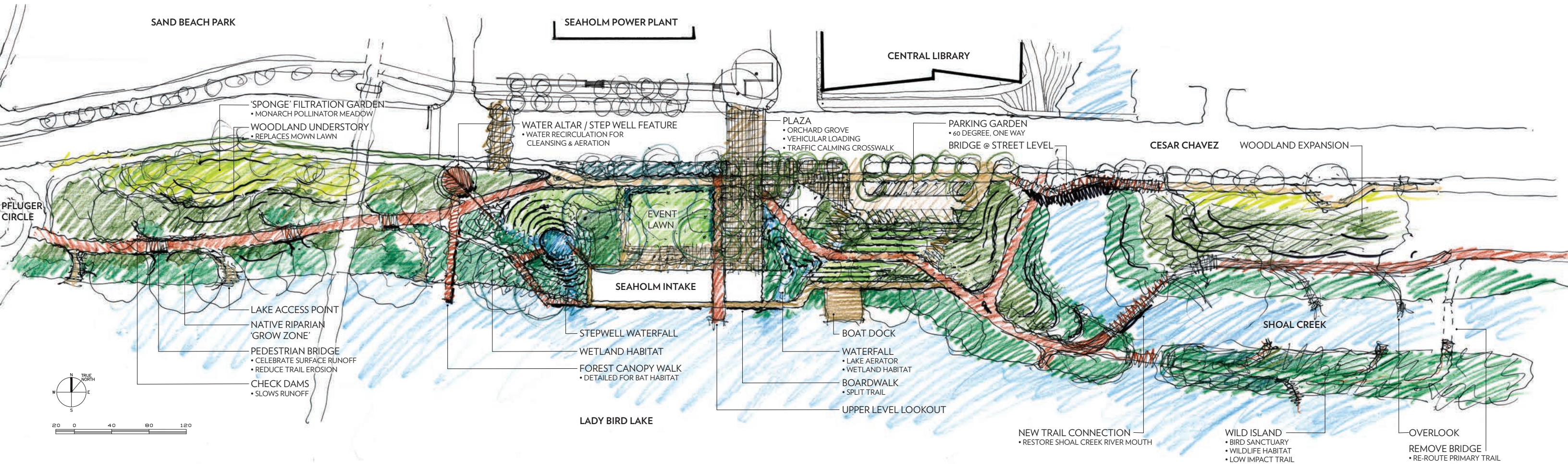
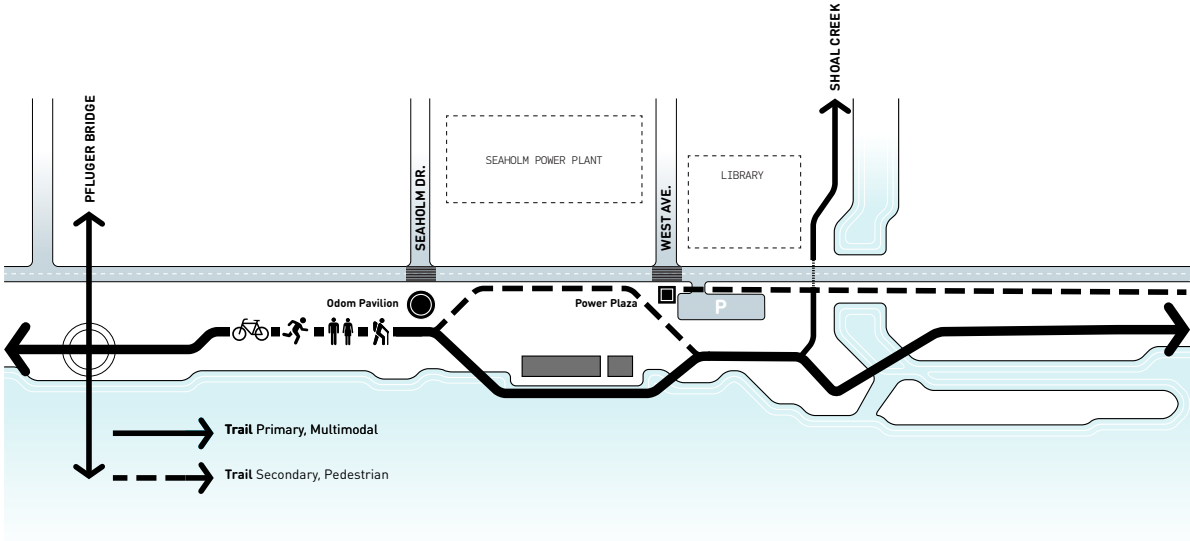
DESIGN

# Option A

Taking cues from Seaholm Intake's original purpose, one concept conceives of pulling lake water through the building and out into the landscape to create an amenity for the Trail by way of a bio-filtration water feature. Steep inclines flanking the Intake Building present opportunities for natural, topographic, amphitheater-like spaces that help facilitate the flow of water where they occur. Similarly, strategically placed gardens designed to receive stormwater runoff from hardscape can filter particulates and cleanse rainwater before reaching the lake. These

water-harvesting interventions also provide opportunities to expand wetland habitat further into the Trail.

Additionally, allowing Shoal Creek to revert to its natural course has many benefits. Namely, the peninsula would no longer flood during storm events. If the Trail were re-routed, the new "island" could become a less populated wetland and bird sanctuary, while the land between Cesar Chavez and Shoal Creek could be activated by Trail use.



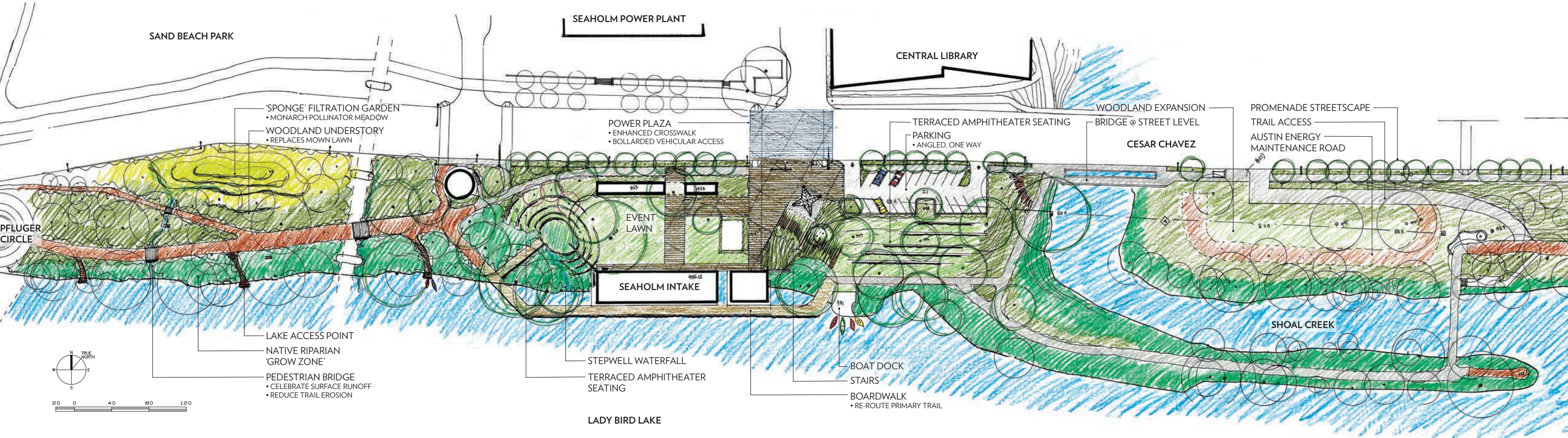
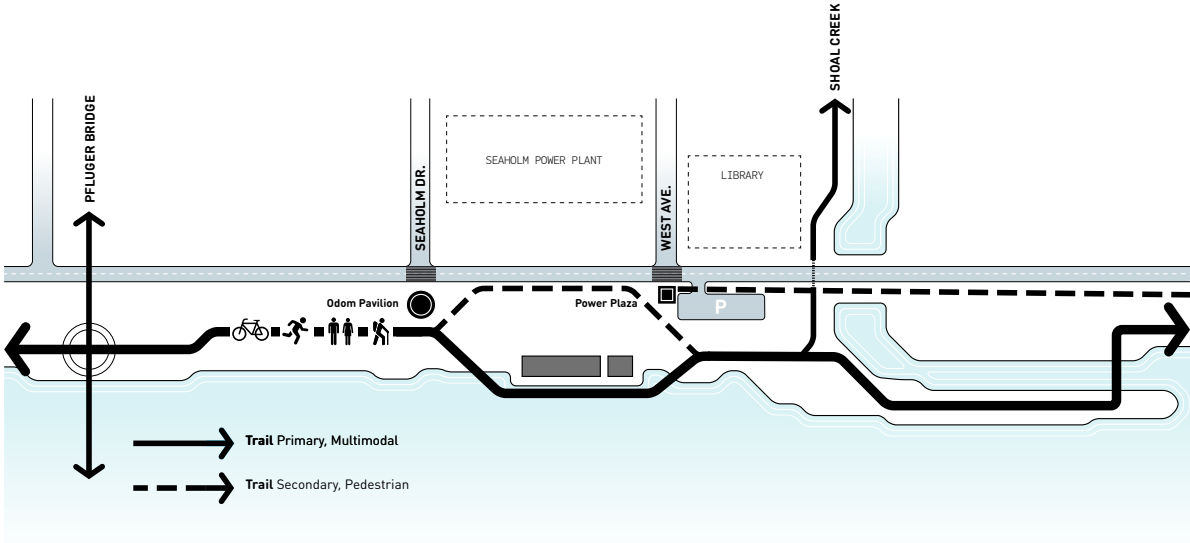


DESIGN

# Option B

This alternate option takes many design cues from Option A, but has a lighter touch. Waterfront access points are designed to direct foot traffic and simultaneously protect native habitat. Pedestrian bridges along the Trail emphasize and celebrate surface stormwater as it crosses the site, thereby introducing riparian plantings closer to the Trail and reducing erosion by carrying drainage under the decomposed granite path. Terracing of the steeply graded hillsides creates passive lookouts over the water.

Graphically enhanced crosswalks provide traffic-calming measures and pedestrian wayfinding for this newly activated zone. In this version, Shoal Creek and the Trail are left in their current configuration, while the Trail stays low across the front of the Intake building, becoming a boardwalk over the water. Secondary paths take Trail users to the new Cesar Chavez Promenade at street elevation.





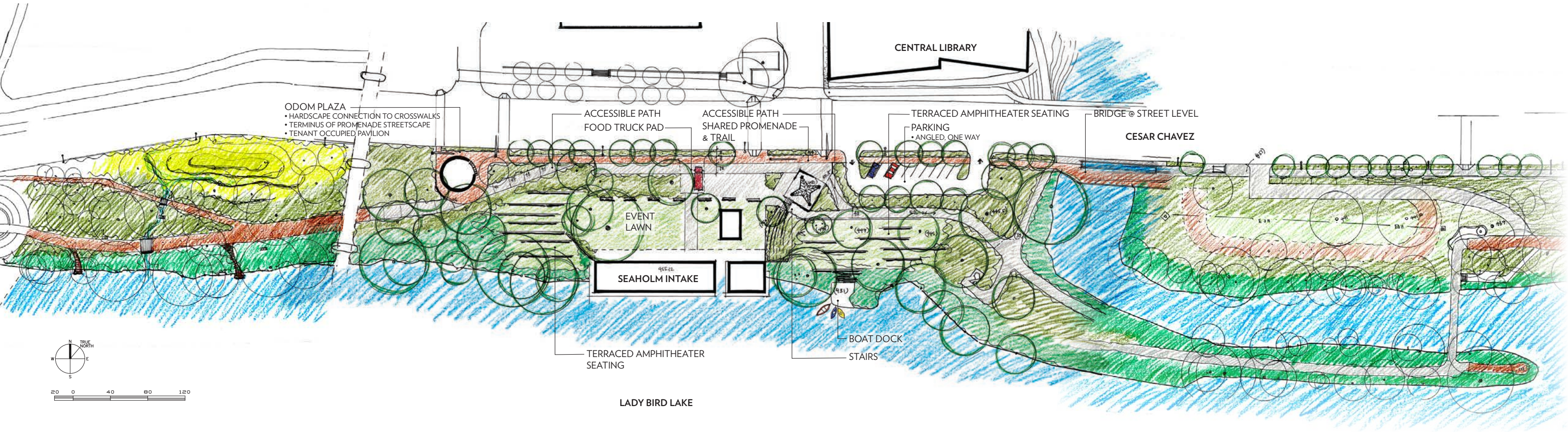
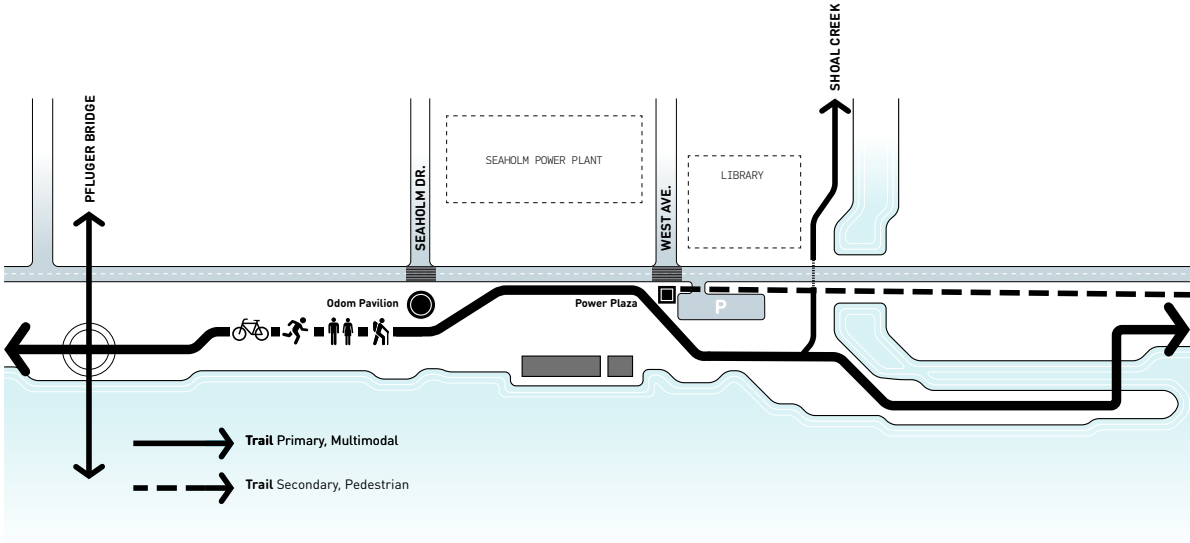
DESIGN

# Option C

This option imagines a Trail that does not go out over the water, but rather shares a widened space with the Promenade along Cesar Chavez. Accessible paths navigate the topographic changes to engage the new Power Plaza, Intake Plaza, and Odom Pavilion Plaza. Terraced passive seating continues to provide views over the lake, with boat-docking opportunities at the water's edge. Hardscape design at

street level has a flexible-use configuration to allow for occasional food-truck parking and maintenance access.

All three options propose reconfiguring the existing parking lot to make better use of the space, introduce shade trees, and continue the Promenade connection into the new Intake Plaza.







**WATER ACCESS POINT**

Recognizing Trail users' desire to engage the waterfront, the provision of designated access points in turn protects adjacent native habitat. Hardscape improvements provide wayfinding, reduce trail erosion, and celebrate the path of water. Small docks can also offer boat tie-offs, allowing these nodes to become multimodal in nature.





**DRY AMPHITHEATER**

Recirculating lake water through a new cascading water feature brings the cooling properties of wetland habitat and riparian plantings to the site. Capitalizing on natural topography, built terraces provide passive seating, a makeshift performance stage, or an outdoor classroom environment.





WET AMPHITHEATER





**TRAIL AT ODOM PAVILION**

Natural drainage—normally hard-piped straight out to the lake—is allowed to flow across the site, slowing runoff, trapping pollutants, and creating ecological benefits. Bridging over these ephemeral flows protects the trail from erosion. In the background, the Odom Pavilion is reimagined as an accessible and active amenity to the Trail.



# Steps Forward for the Trail

**PHASE 1 - WEST WATERFRONT**

The West Waterfront, from east of Pfluger Circle to the Odom Pavilion, is a logical first step in the Seaholm Waterfront improvements. The space is largely vegetated, with a mature tree canopy and few structures. Ample opportunities exist for ecological restoration; woodland expansion; improved stormwater management; native landscape enhancements; trail enhancements; invasive species removal; erosion mitigation; hardscape improvements; and water access improvements. The plan of action articulated here is aligned with numerous city plans, including Imagine Austin, the Urban Forestry Plan, the Climate Protection Plan, and the Invasive Species Management Plan. The result of these efforts will be a landscape with healthier native plant communities, improved ecological function, enhanced resiliency, and a better user experience.

The Urban Forest and Natural Area Management Guidelines denote the area edging the lake and Shoal Creek as woodland and calls for woodland expansion for most of the area, which recognizes its ecological characteristic as a low-lying floodplain terrace. The exception is the area in front of the Intake Building, where a more formal landscape is planned. The West Waterfront is ideal for expanding woodland and woodland enhancement for a more biodiverse, aesthetically pleasing environment for Trail users that allows them to interact with the flora and fauna of central Texas. Enhancement will create more shade and allow for views of the lake framed by a cathedral-like canopy of bald cypress, pecan, American elm, green ash, oaks, and other native trees. In addition to expanded tree canopy, woodland enhancement calls for a diverse understory and herbaceous layer throughout the study area, with species as recommended within the guidelines.

Stormwater-management interventions along with erosion mitigation are critical for the area. Within the study area, there are seven erosion issues identified by the Natural Area Management Guidelines that include rill erosion, sheet erosion, trampling, and informal trails. These should be addressed in Phase 1 through the use of green-infrastructure techniques within the landscape; formalization of the user experience at the lake edge where erosion and trampling are prevalent; and the decommissioning and restoration of informal trails. Additionally, existing traditional storm-water-management

infrastructure provides opportunities for conversion to amenities that help create a robust, diverse, and aesthetically pleasing central Texas native landscape. These themes are addressed with the wetland enhancement areas shown on either side of the Intake Building in the accompanying schematic.

The “sponge area” between Pfluger Bridge and the Odom Pavilion allows for greater capability of infiltration of water into the landscape. Throughout the study area, small and large green infrastructure projects will include grading alterations to reduce water flow across the Trail; pedestrian bridges/grates to allow water to move under the Trail; grading alterations to lengthen the path of water flowing across the landscape; and bioswales, rain gardens, and “creeklets.” Erosion areas mitigated through linear hardscaping will also include appropriate plants, such as Lindheimer Muhly, eastern gamma grass, Cherokee sedge, and rough leaf dogwood. These interventions will reduce erosion while creating a more diverse, resilient landscape for trail users to enjoy.

Along with improvements that reduce erosion of the Trail and subsequent maintenance costs, the formalization of water-access points will result in less informal use along the Trail system and less disturbance to tree roots, and ultimately provide for a more compelling experience for Trail users. In turn, this allows surrounding areas to host more robust riparian flora. Plants around formal areas should be at a density and height level (at least 2') that dissuade informal use. Visual cues, such as path edging, would repeat along the DG trail, signaling an access point at the water's edge and separating Grow Zones from the pedestrian zones. Some of these trail openings might also lend themselves to boat docking.

To restore the landscape and allow for robust native plant communities, invasive species found throughout the site must be managed. Within the study area, there are nine recorded invasive species of concern, with fifty-four areas of establishment. Of these, Arundo, Sweet Autumn Clematis, Johnson Grass, Chinaberry, Chinese tallow, and elephant ear are of greatest concern. Priority for improvements should include removal and treatment of these invasives per the recommendations in the Natural Area Management Guidelines.

Lastly, the Odom Pavilion has the opportunity to be a revenue generator in the form of a tenant-occupied space that will not only activate this dormant structure but justify upfront expenditures. Interventions would maintain the integrity of the original structure while bringing it up to ADA-code compliance and any other necessary updates to allow the Pavilion to be occupied.

In total, the West Waterfront has an opportunity to be a model landscape for the whole of the Butler Trail in keeping with the Urban Forestry and Natural Area Management Guidelines produced by the Siglo Group. These are relatively low-cost improvements to the larger undertaking of the Intake Building but will significantly increase the ecological function of the landscape and help to educate and signify the eminent improvements to the rest of the Waterfront. The proposed Phase 1 improvements outlined here could be replicated throughout the Trail as funds become available.

**PHASE 1 - PARKING LOT**

In keeping with the Trail improvements defined for the West Waterfront, the area east of the Intake Building to Shoal Creek are mostly vegetated; therefore, this area could lend itself to similar restoration, green infrastructure, erosion control, and invasive-species management as previously described. Improvements would include the reduction and enhancement of the surface parking lot, regrading along the downward slope where the topography prohibits much Trail use, and upgrading the existing concrete foundation at the water's edge for a boat launch.

Specific improvements, such as the streetscape and crosswalk in this location, as well as the power-pole foundation, might be held off until Phase 2 depending on stakeholder support and the final design direction at this critical node. Integration into the city's Great Streets design concepts is also a high priority.

**PHASE 2 - AMPHITHEATER**

Items that are more expensive or are tied to the long-term improvements of the immediate Intake site should be developed as funds and scheduling permits. The amphitheater, proposed for the natural topographic bowl just west of the Intake Building, is one such improvement that is inextricably tied to the design of the building. The forest boardwalk off the Pavilion, new boardwalk out over the lake, and the

recirculating stream, which is proposed as part of the amphitheater, will also come with a higher price tag and could be installed as funds become available.

**PHASE 2 - STREETSCAPE**

City agencies have greater influence over the final design of the streetscapes in general and, for that reason, streetscape improvements are proposed as part of Phase 2. More time will allow a greater consensus with the final outcome and also ensure they are in keeping with the other improvements occurring at the Intake Building, Parking Lot, and Shoal Creek.

**PHASE 2 - SHOAL CREEK PENINSULA**

The design team is proposing opening Shoal Creek at its natural river mouth for a number of reasons. During rain events, the creek follows this natural path, cresting the banks of the man-made peninsula. Providing an opening here would bring the creek's path back to its natural state pre-Seaholm and reduce upstream flooding. Doing so would require new bridge crossings, which could benefit both sides of the creek's banks. By allowing the peninsula to naturalize, this new island could become a wetland habitat and birdwatching sanctuary, pushing Trail users back to the north of the peninsula and recapturing what is an underutilized part of the Trail between Cesar Chavez and the creek. A new, wider pedestrian crossing is also envisioned at Cesar Chavez for safer bike and pedestrian traffic. These alterations allow for the implementation of the Natural Area Management Guidelines.



# Next Steps

Moving Toward Action and Implementation





# Next Steps



The Intake Building from Lady Bird Lake, August 2017

**Continue coordination and integration with nearby projects:**

- Cesar Chavez Promenade project coordination
- Austin Central Library
- Green Water Treatment Plant Redevelopment
- Shoal Creek Trail connections

**Activate the parkland through inclusive installations and limited events**

**Present study to City Council and relevant Boards and Commissions in 2018**

**Secure funding to begin early phases of ecological restoration**

**Secure funding to bring existing building up to code**

**Select elements from each design based on public input to create a final recommendation**

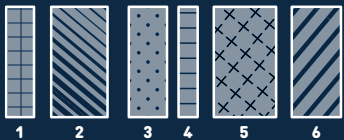
**Explore partnership models**

**Study operational and maintenance models for sustainable building operations**



Activation

**FINISH**



Phases



Pop-Up!



Partnership



Clean & Green

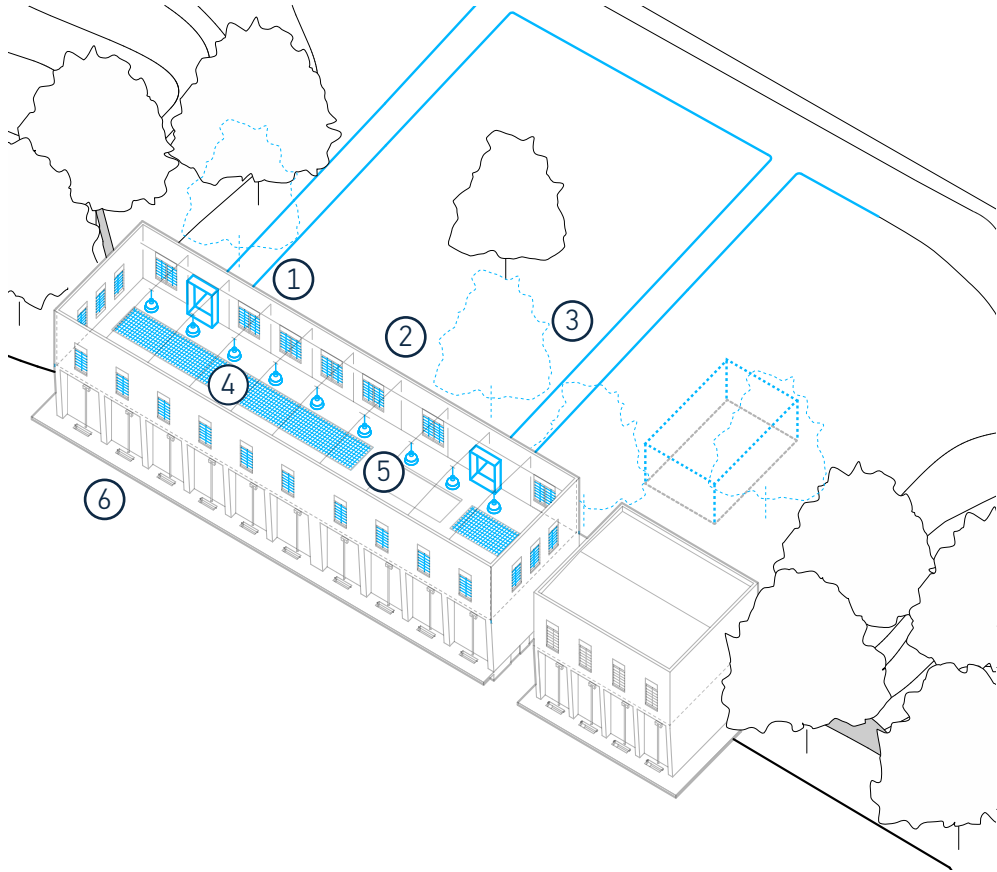


Mission & Management

**START**



# PHASE I

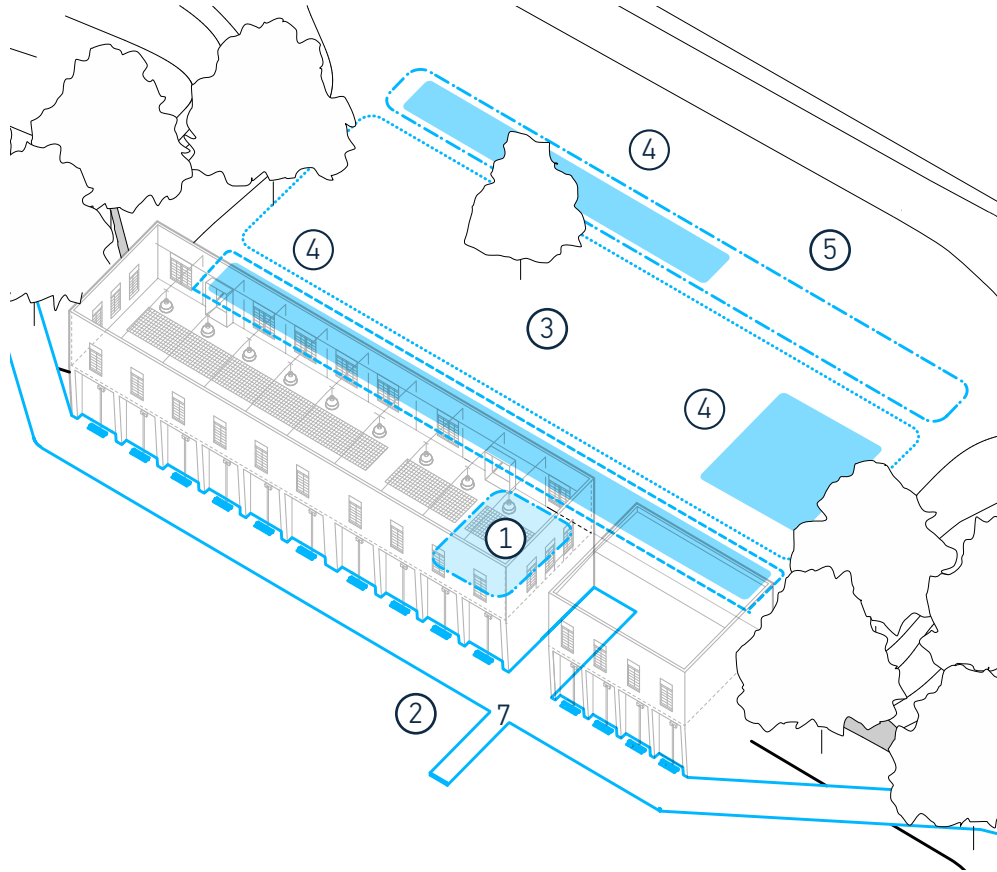


## START IT UP

Make the Intake Building safe and inhabitable for small programs and events by updating the building for code-compliant occupancy.

1. Update egress requirements.
2. Replace the windows.
3. Prune trees and remove invasive plantings.
4. Cover openings in floor.
5. Upgrade lighting fixtures.
6. Power wash and clean facade.
7. Explore partnership models for design, construction and programming.
8. Curated site activations to engage community.

# PHASE II

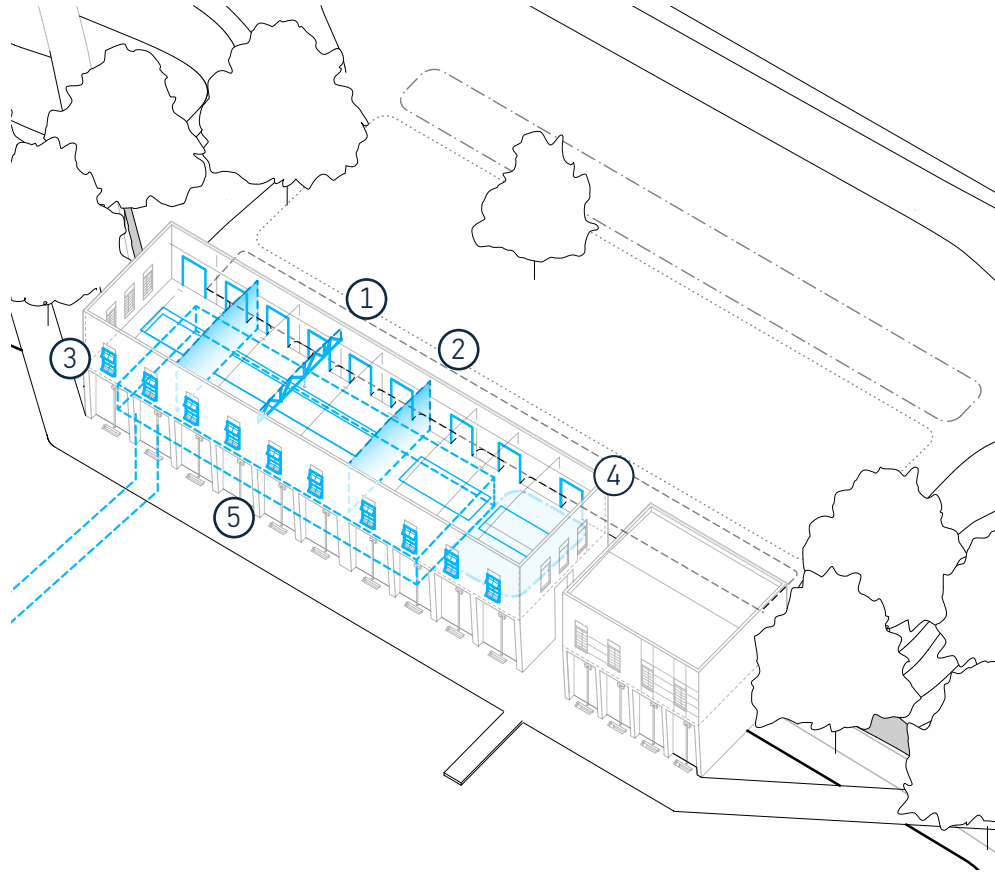


## BRING IN THE AMENITIES

Expand the capability of the Intake Building with new programs such as a Welcome Cafe, lake dock, and amenity pavilion with a kitchen, office, and restrooms.

1. Serve food and drinks at the Welcome Cafe.
2. Provide a lake dock at the water's edge.
3. Diversify the landscape and ecology in the yard.
4. Determine a location for external amenities and support structures.
5. Add a design element to block noise.

# PHASE III



## RUN LIKE A MACHINE

Bring back core elements from the building's past. Reinstall a gantry crane to assist with flexibility. Repurpose the basement as an Eco-Cooling Machine.

1. Install a new gantry crane.
2. Increase the number of openings on the facade.
3. Upgrade to high-performance windows.
4. Tell its history with an Interpretive Kiosk.
5. Use the basement for lake cooling.



# Techniques

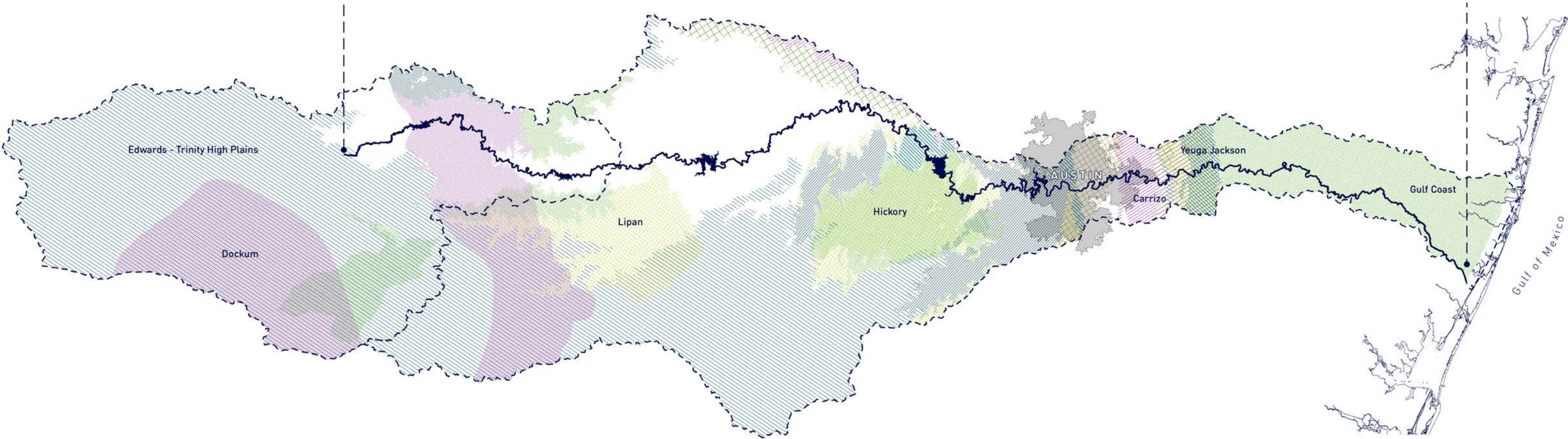
The following pages showcase a selection of information and research about the process of the work. For more information on the Seaholm Waterfront, go to [www.seaholmwaterfront.org](http://www.seaholmwaterfront.org) for more information on site history, precedents, analysis, and engagement.



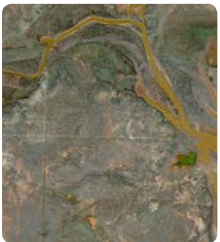


# The Colorado River Watershed

There is a diversity of ecology across the entire watershed that needs to be understood at both the macro and micro scale. The rivershed has a series of dams that control the flow and direction of water.



**GAIL**  
Borden County



**IRA**  
Borden County



**ROBERT LEE**  
Coke County



**LEADAY**  
Runnels County



**TOW**  
San Saba County



**MARBLE FALLS**  
Burnet County



**AUSTIN**  
Travis County



**NADA**  
Wharton County



**BAY CITY**  
Matagorda County

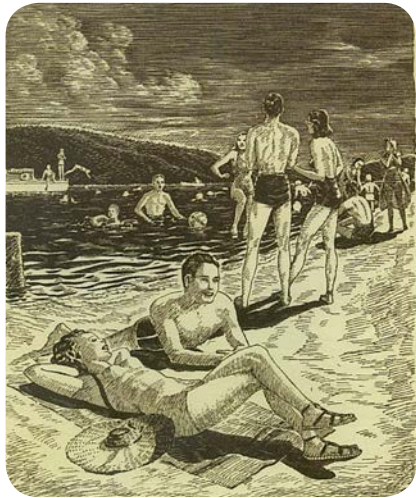


**TIGER ISLAND**  
Matagorda County

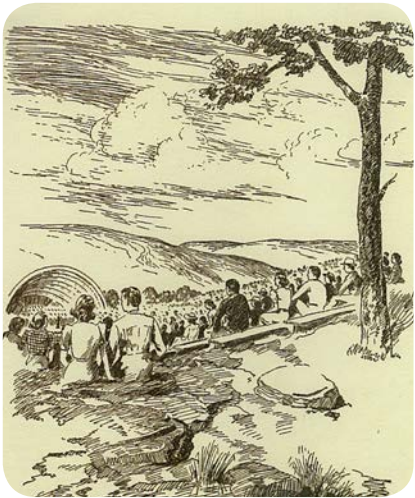


# Envisioning Potential

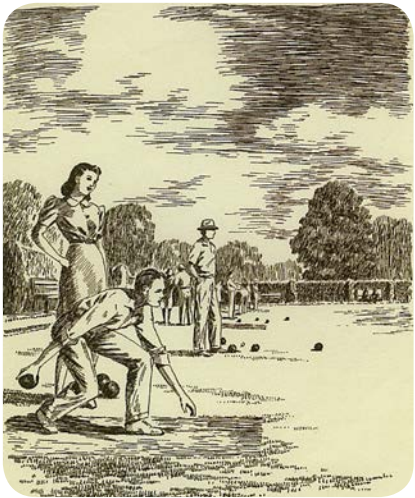
In 1941 the Lower Colorado River Authority commissioned a recreation study that envisioned a wide range of programs and activities that could occur on the lakes created by new dams on the Colorado River. This past effort remains relevant today in helping to determine how to best activate the Seaholm Waterfront.



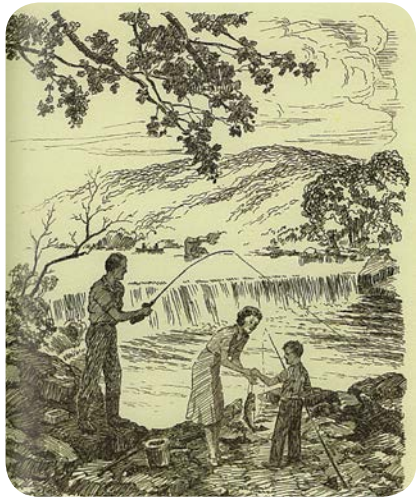
Beaches



Amphitheaters



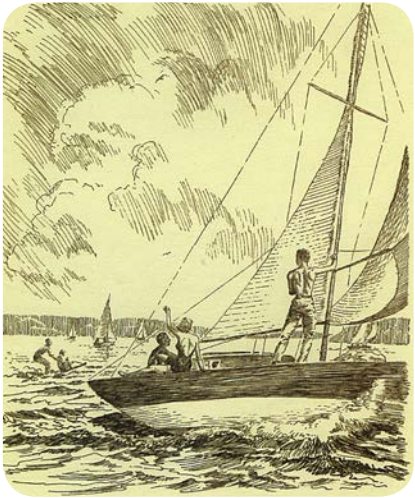
Bowling Green



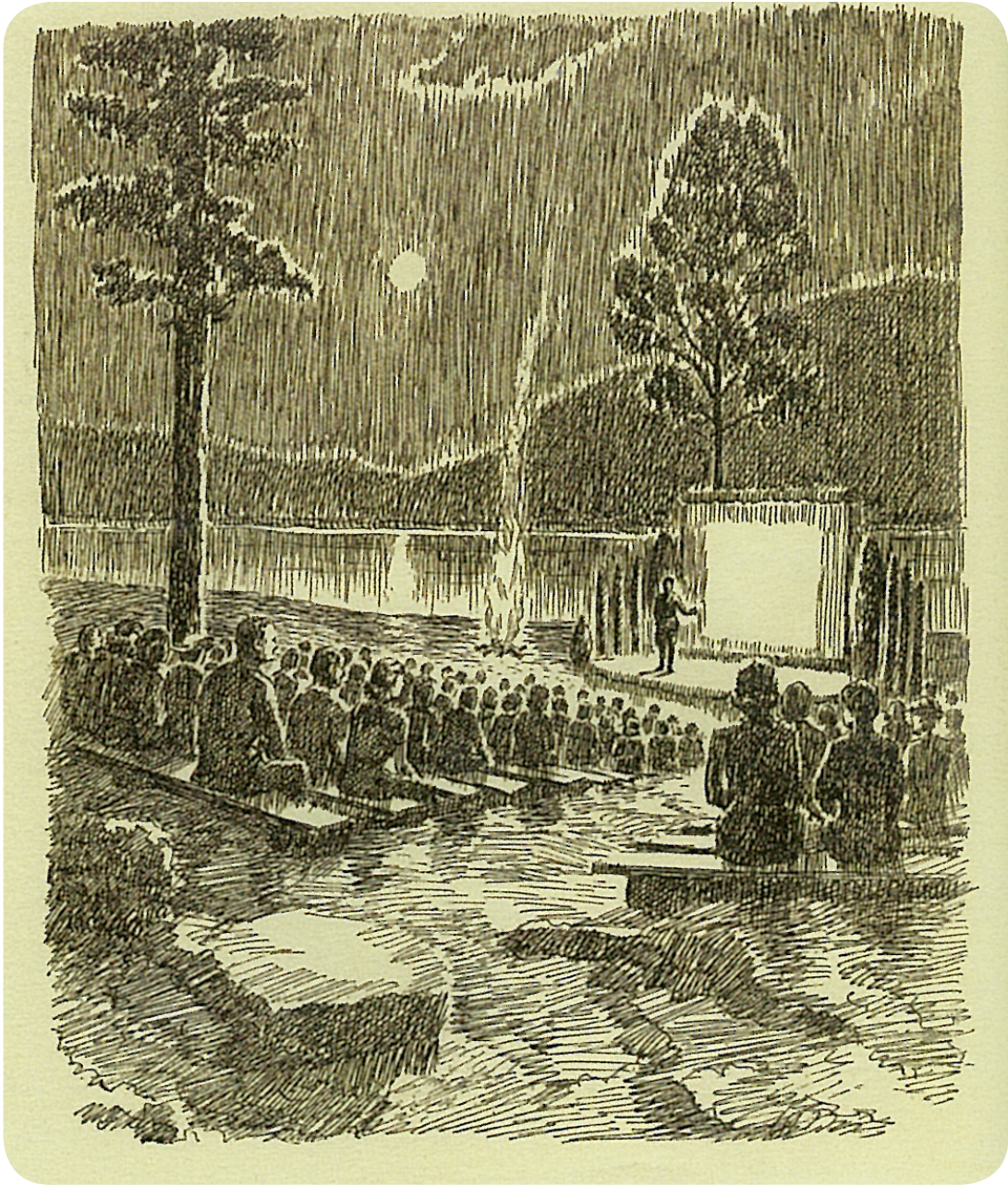
Fishing Spot



Campground



Sailing



Outdoor Classroom



# Recreation and Environmental Advocates

The activation of the Intake Building is rooted in the past work of recreation and environmental advocates in Austin.



Lady Bird Johnson  
Former First Lady of the United States and Town Lake (Lady Bird Lake) recreation advocate, pictured in front of Lady Bird Lake



Ann and Roy Butler  
Mayor of Austin Roy Butler’s wife, Ann Butler, established the Town Lake Beautification Committee.



Roberta Crenshaw  
Civic activist, philanthropist, and civic pioneer. Advocated for no motorboats on the lake.

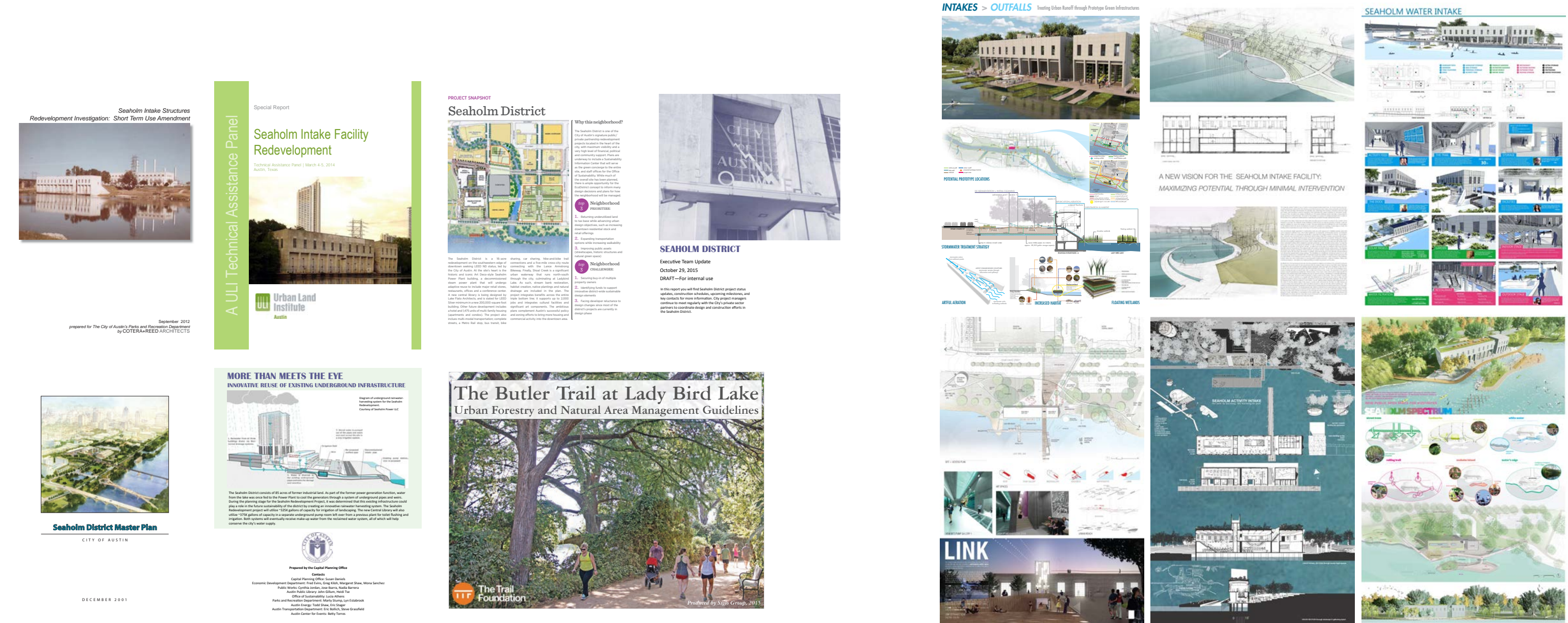


Rachel Carson  
The book *Silent Spring* outlines a case where a pesticide mishap resulted in a large amount of fish killed in Austin in 1961.



# Study the Work of Others

Past planning and design efforts served as a critical resource for the project. Key themes from these efforts were used to guide the engagement and design process for the Seaholm Waterfront.



Plans for the Seaholm District and Ann and Roy Butler Trail from 2001 to the present



# Meet and Engage

The people of Austin know their city best. To gather their input on the potential of the Intake Building, a wide range of means and methods were employed.



Community discussion at an Open House event, September 2017



Collaborative mapping at an Open House event, September 2017



Open House event at the Intake Building, December 2017



Presentation to design community, September 2017



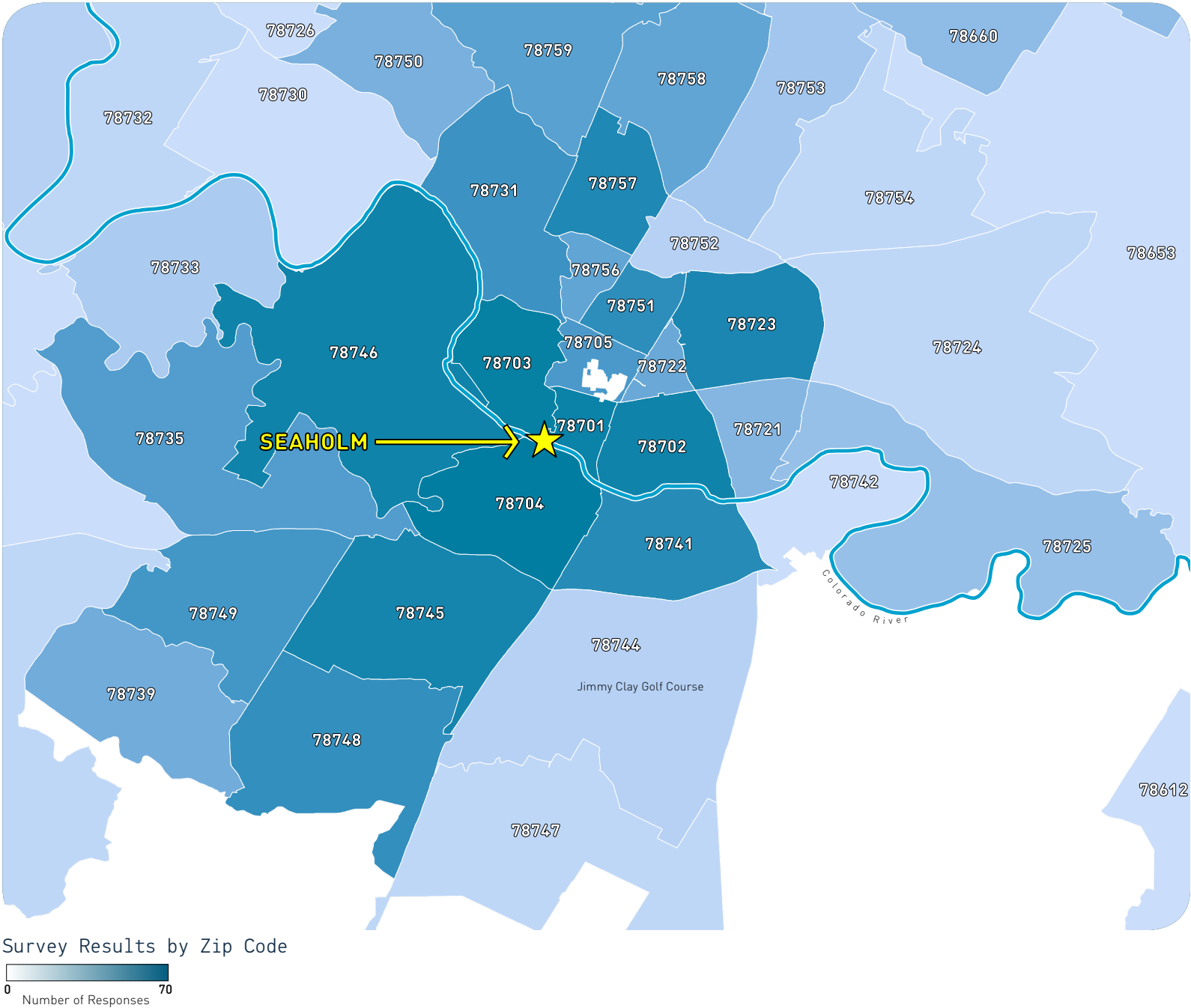
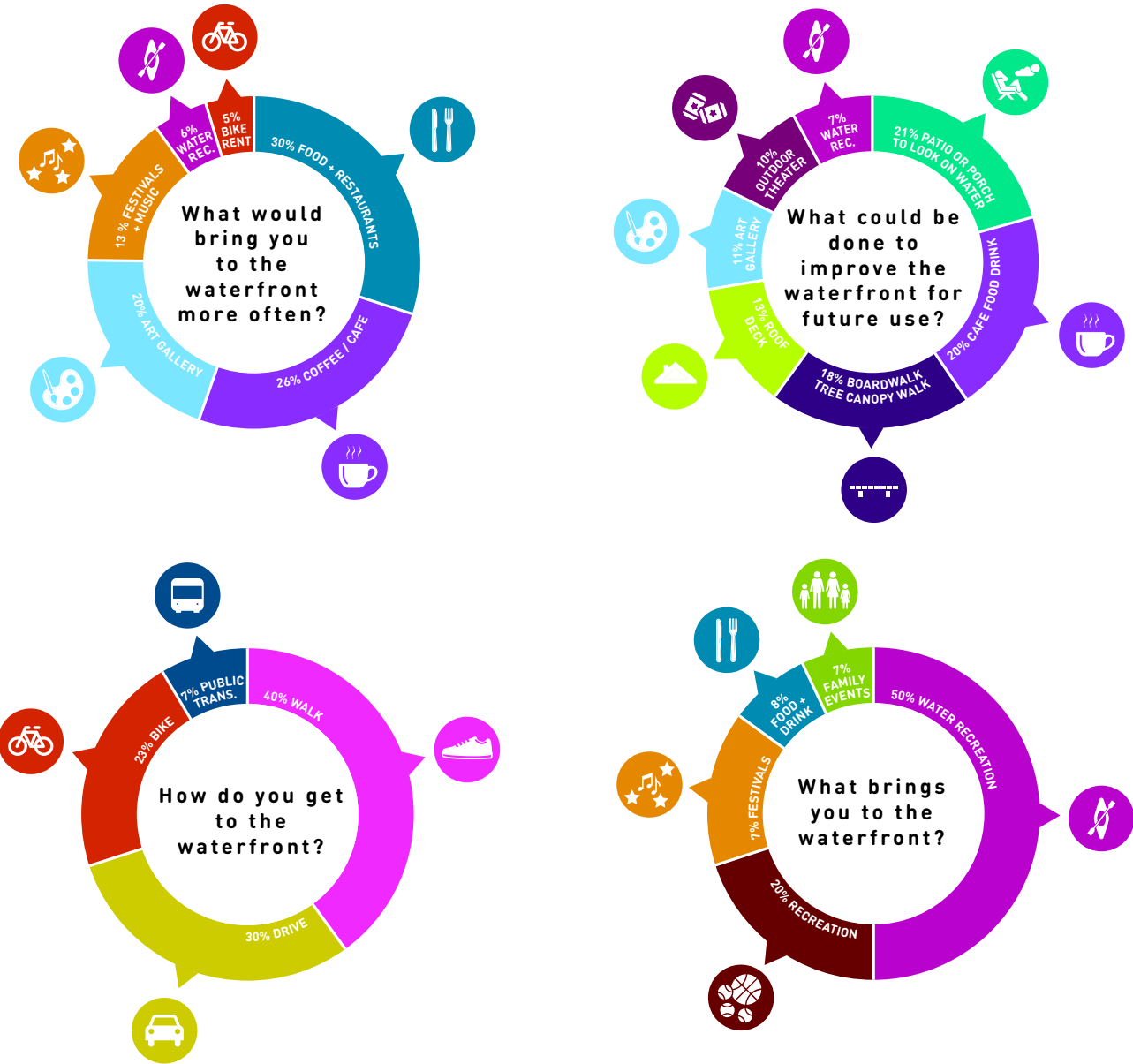
Open House and survey event, June 2017



# What Do People Want To Do?

As part of the engagement process, the team launched an online survey that received responses from people across the city on how to best activate the Seaholm Waterfront. This data was used to inform design decisions.

This is a summary of the first survey. For summaries of the two subsequent surveys, go to [www.seaholmwaterfront.org](http://www.seaholmwaterfront.org)





# Connect with Civic Context

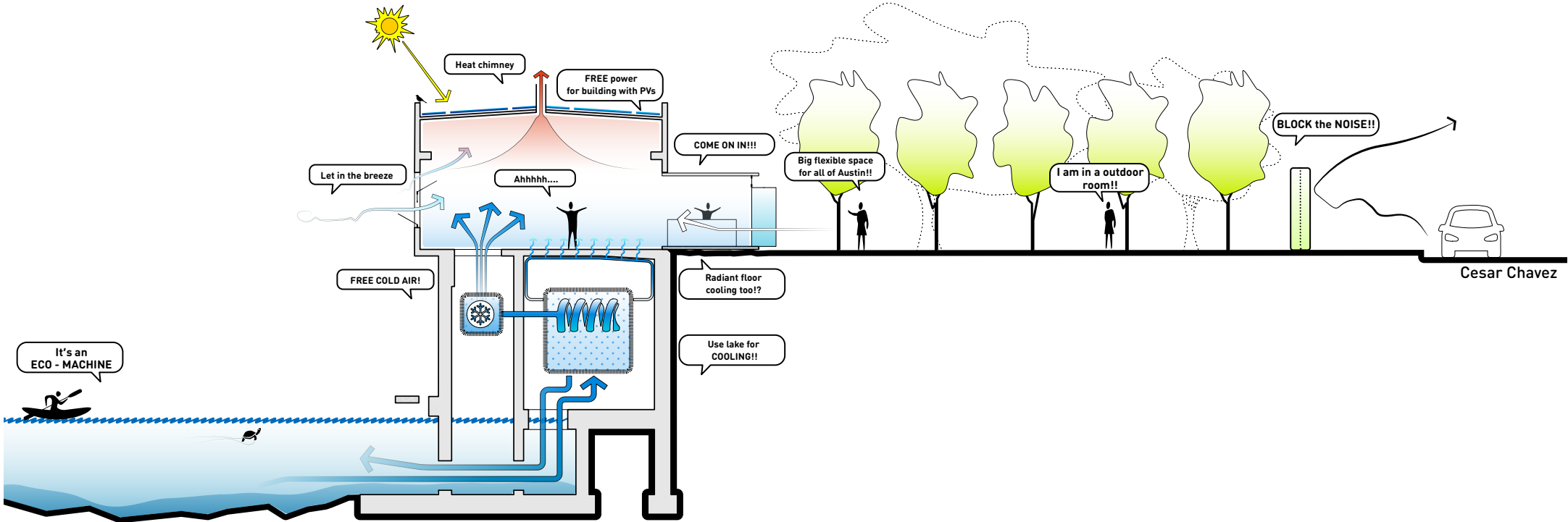
Identifying potential programs and activities across the Seaholm Waterfront site reveals possible connections to other civic assets. A great starting point is the new Central Library, which has a series of programs that could mutually benefit both assets through collaboration.



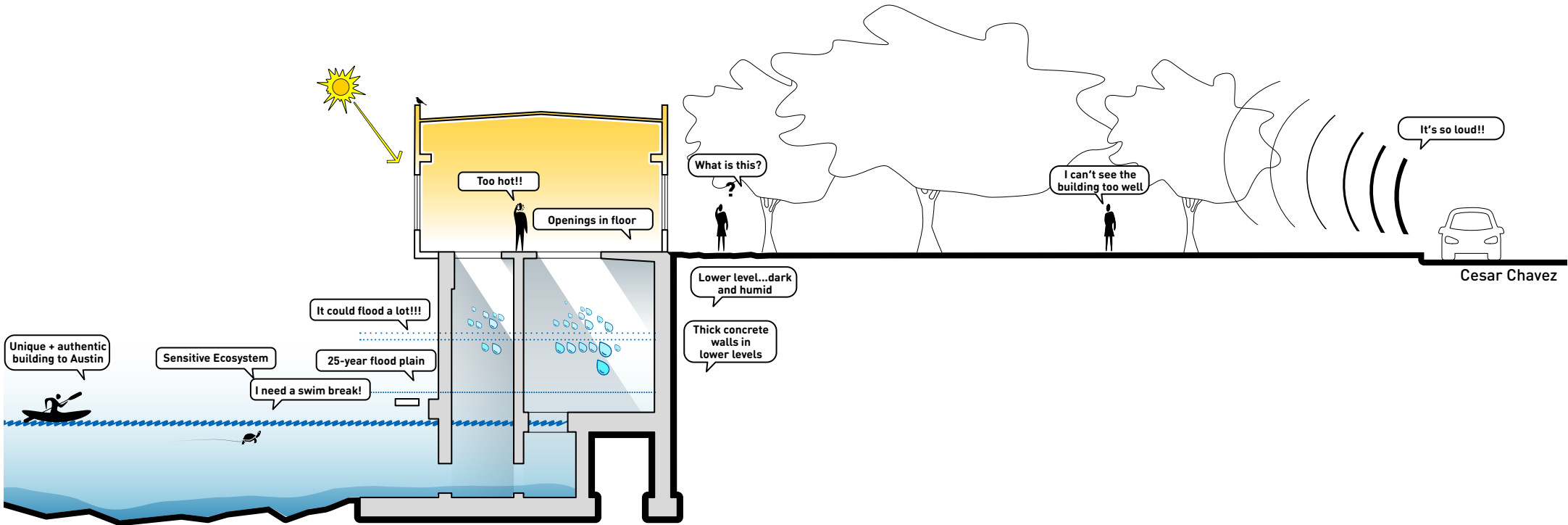


# Constraints to Opportunities

There are a wide range of site and building constraints that affect the Intake Building. By leveraging constraints as opportunities, new solutions authentic to the Intake Building make the space more comfortable.



## OPPORTUNITIES

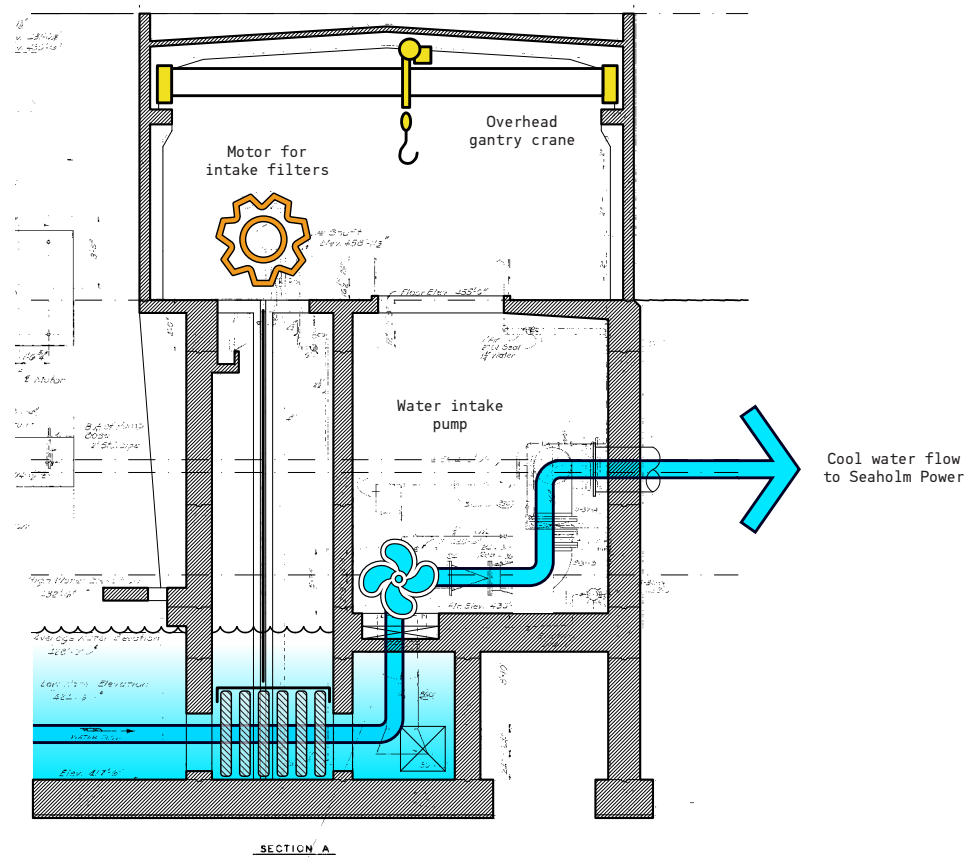


## CONSTRAINTS

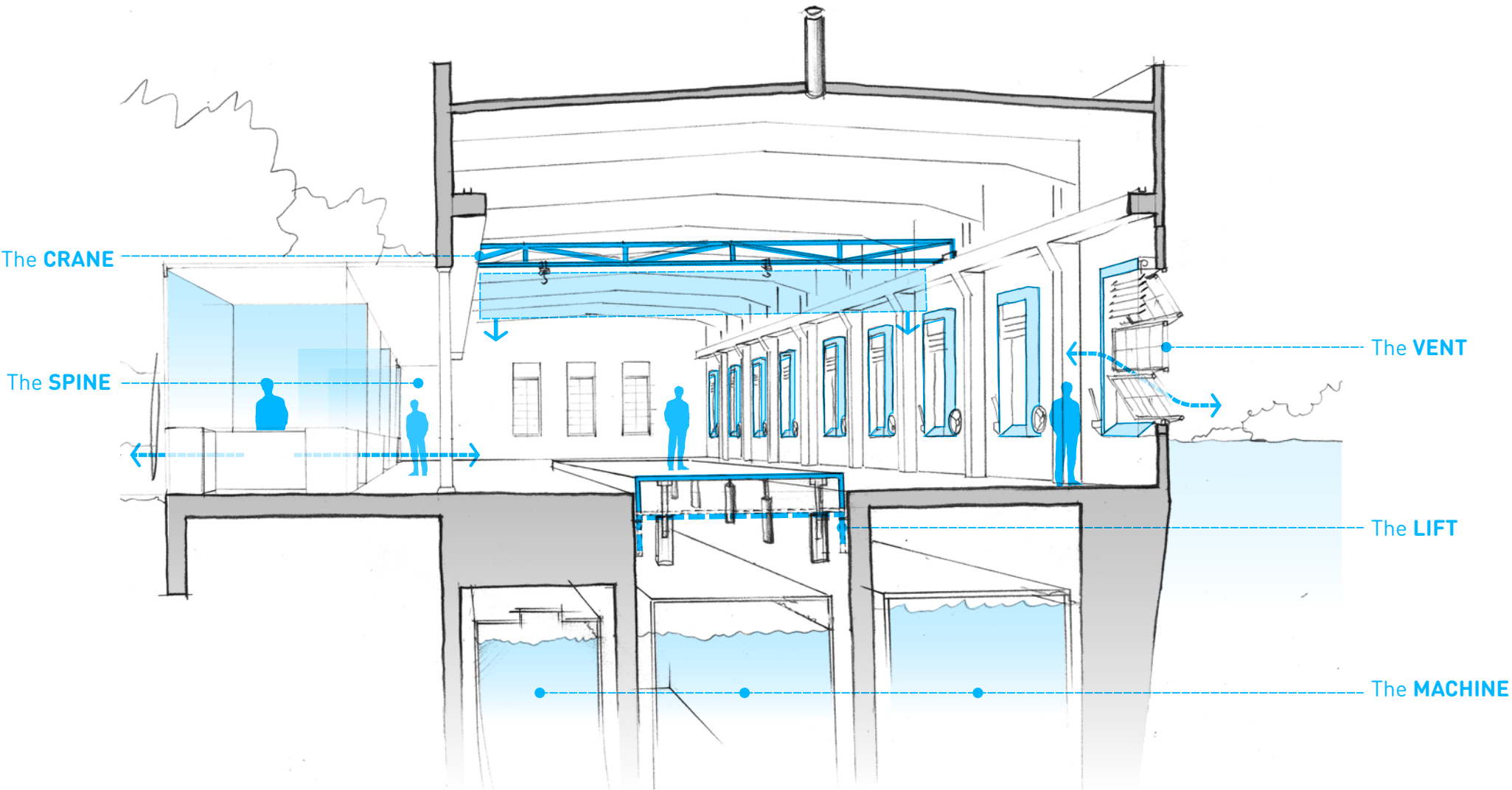


# Purpose and Possibility

The shell of the former Intake Building is highly adaptable. Its upper level is directly accessible from a flat, wide plateau off Cesar Chavez. The lower level is deep below the upper level at the water's edge and framed by thick concrete, offering a surprising opportunity to make the upper level comfortable year-round with a passive lake cooling system.



The purpose of the Intake Building was to bring in water to cool power turbines.



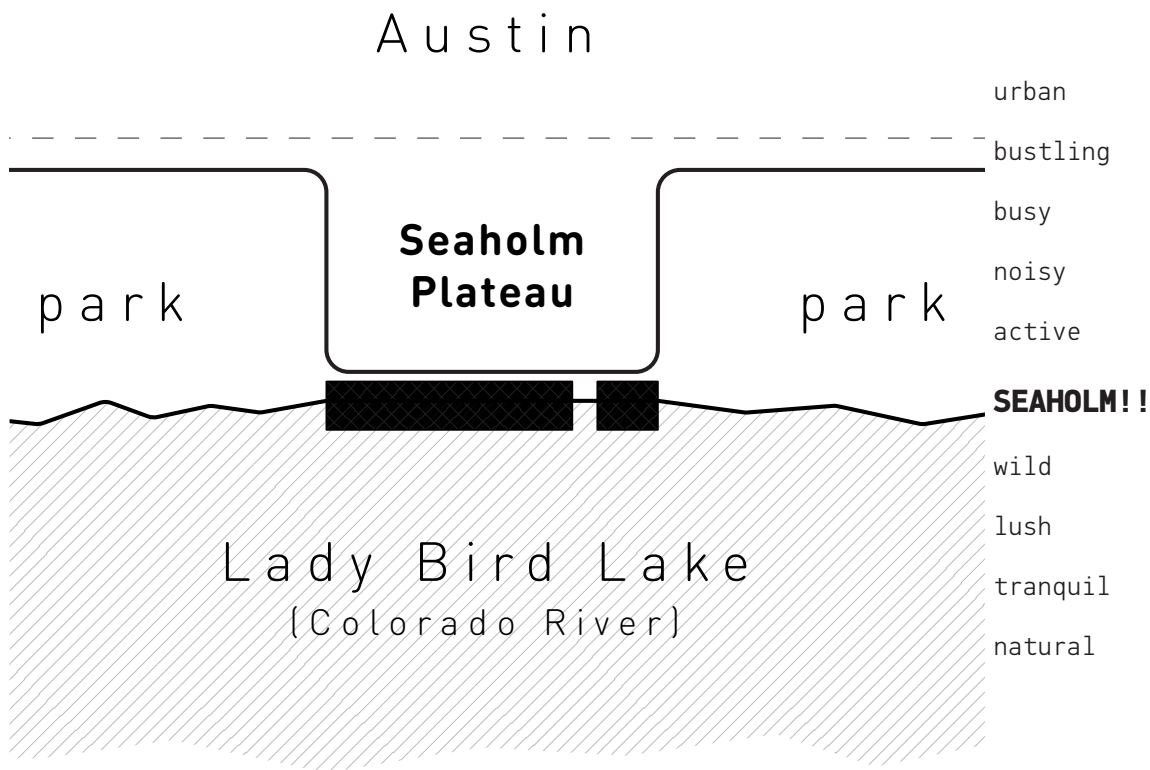
The possibility is to make a new machine with unique elements from the building's past.



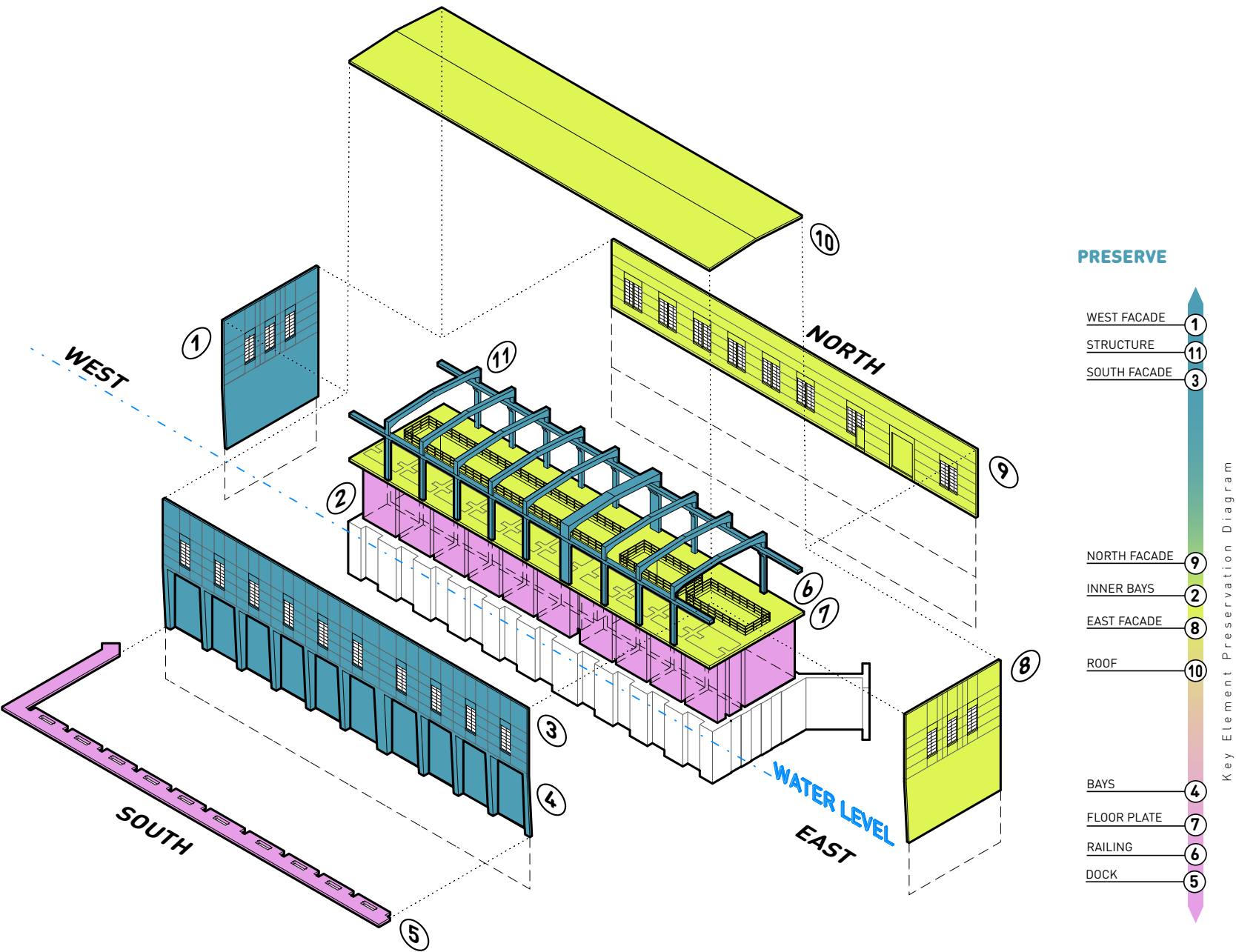
PRESERVATION

# Seaholm Intake Building and Site

The Intake Building sits directly on the edge where the city meets the lake. This condition offers a unique set of experiences from urban to natural. In addition, the building is listed on the National Register of Historic places, which requires respecting character-defining features and elements.



At the scale of the immediate site, a narrow park space is located along the edge of Lady Bird Lake. The Intake Building prominently breaks the continuous riparian tree canopy of the park. The building acts as a retention wall against the city, forming a plateau of accessible but under-utilized outdoor space.

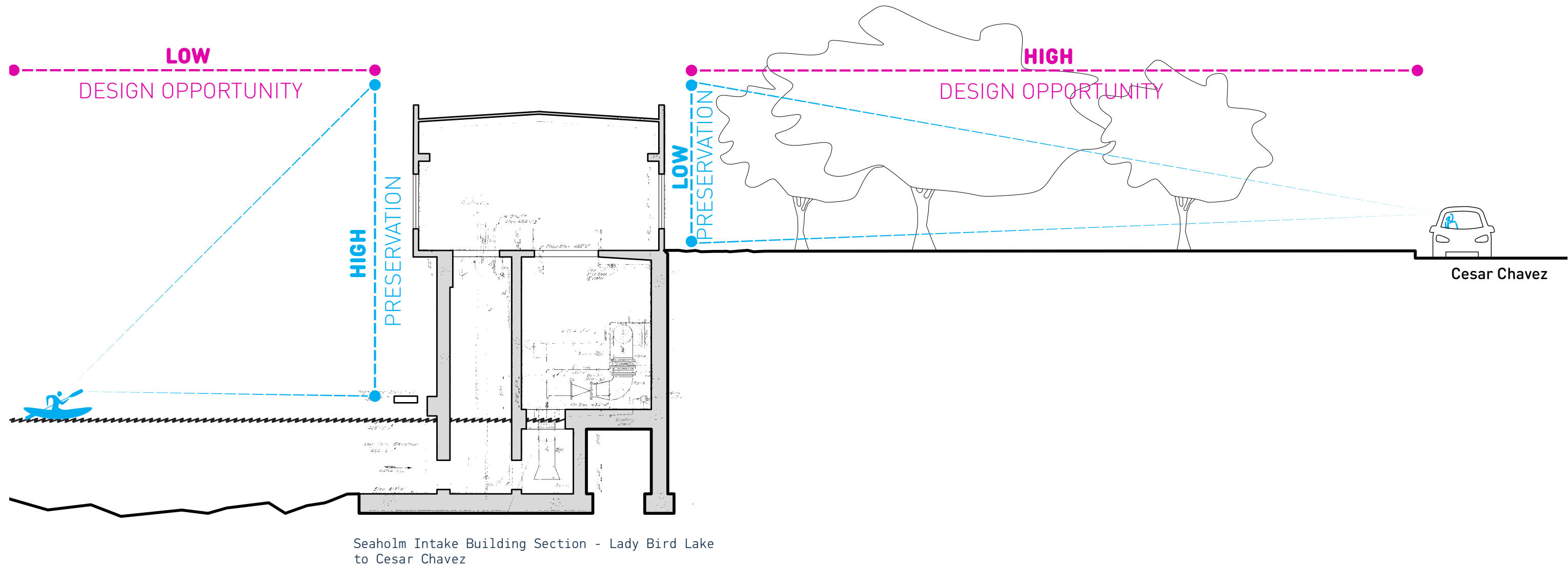


There is a range of character-defining features in the Intake Building that either need to be preserved or can be respectfully reimaged within the guidelines of the National Register of Historic Places.



# Preservation Priorities

Rising two levels out of the water, the south facade of the Intake Building is the main character-defining feature and has the highest visibility. In contrast, the one-level north facade, gently visible through a grove of heritage oak trees and a flat lawn, is open to the potential of change and respectful adjustment.





# Precedents



**Northerly Island** Chicago, Illinois, 2015  
Studio Gang



**University of Texas El Paso** El Paso, Texas, 2015  
Ten Eyck Landscape Architects



**Beloit College** Beloit, Wisconsin, 2016  
Studio Gang



**Lincoln Park Zoo** Chicago, Illinois, 2010  
Studio Gang





# Precedents



**Navy Yards** Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, 2016  
James Corner Field Operations

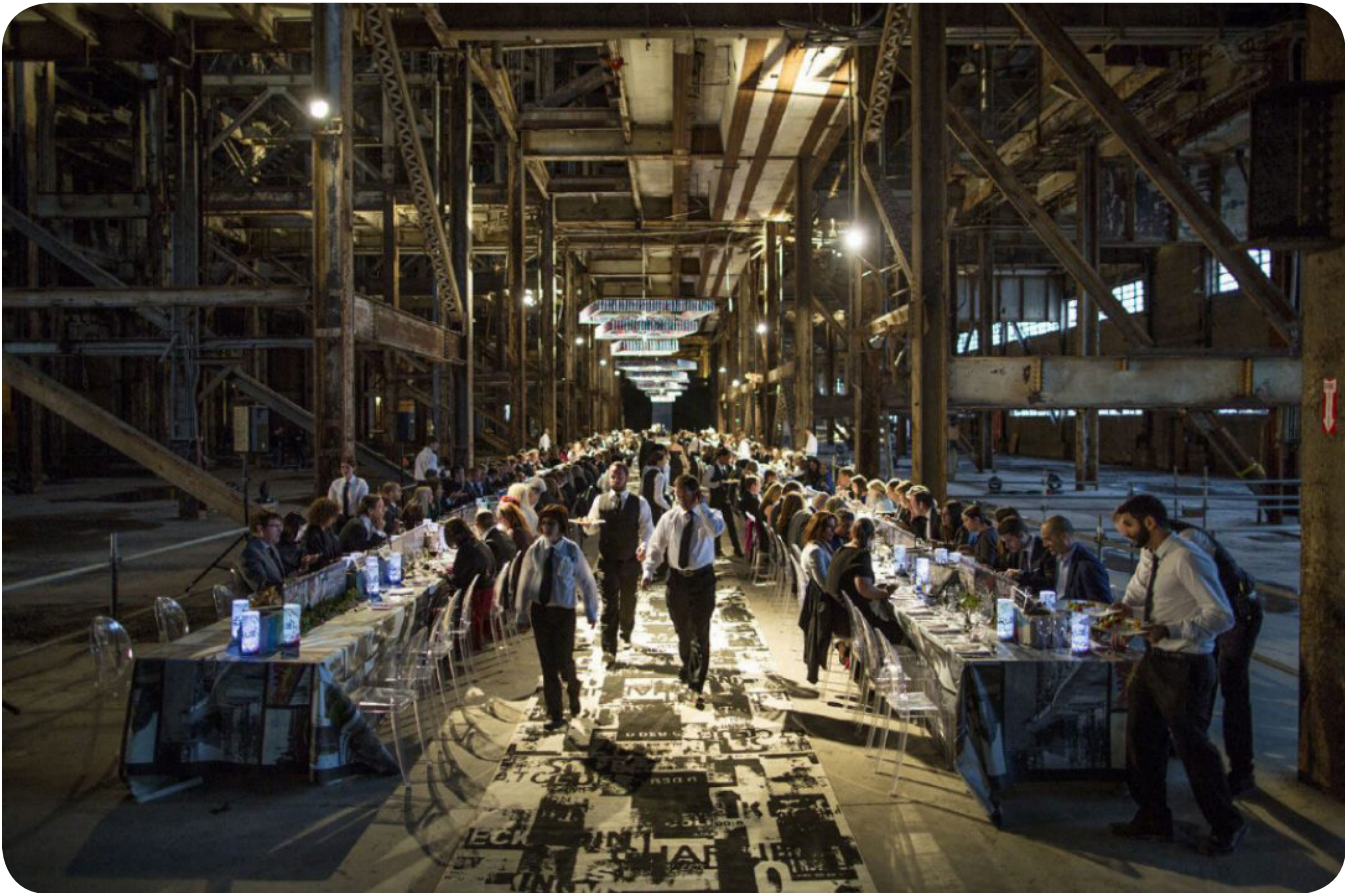


**A Path in the Forest** Tallinn, Estonia, 2011  
Transsolar & Tetsuo Kondo Architects





# Precedents



**Hearn Power Station** Toronto, Ontario, 2002  
Luminato – Toronto’s international arts festival



Studio Gang



**Tirpitz Bunker Museum** Blavand, Denmark, 2017  
BIG



**The Water Installation at the Cisterns Museum**  
Copenhagen, Denmark, 2017  
Hiroshi Sambuichi





# Precedents



**Long Dock Park** Beacon, New York, 2014  
Reed Hilderbrand

Studio Gang



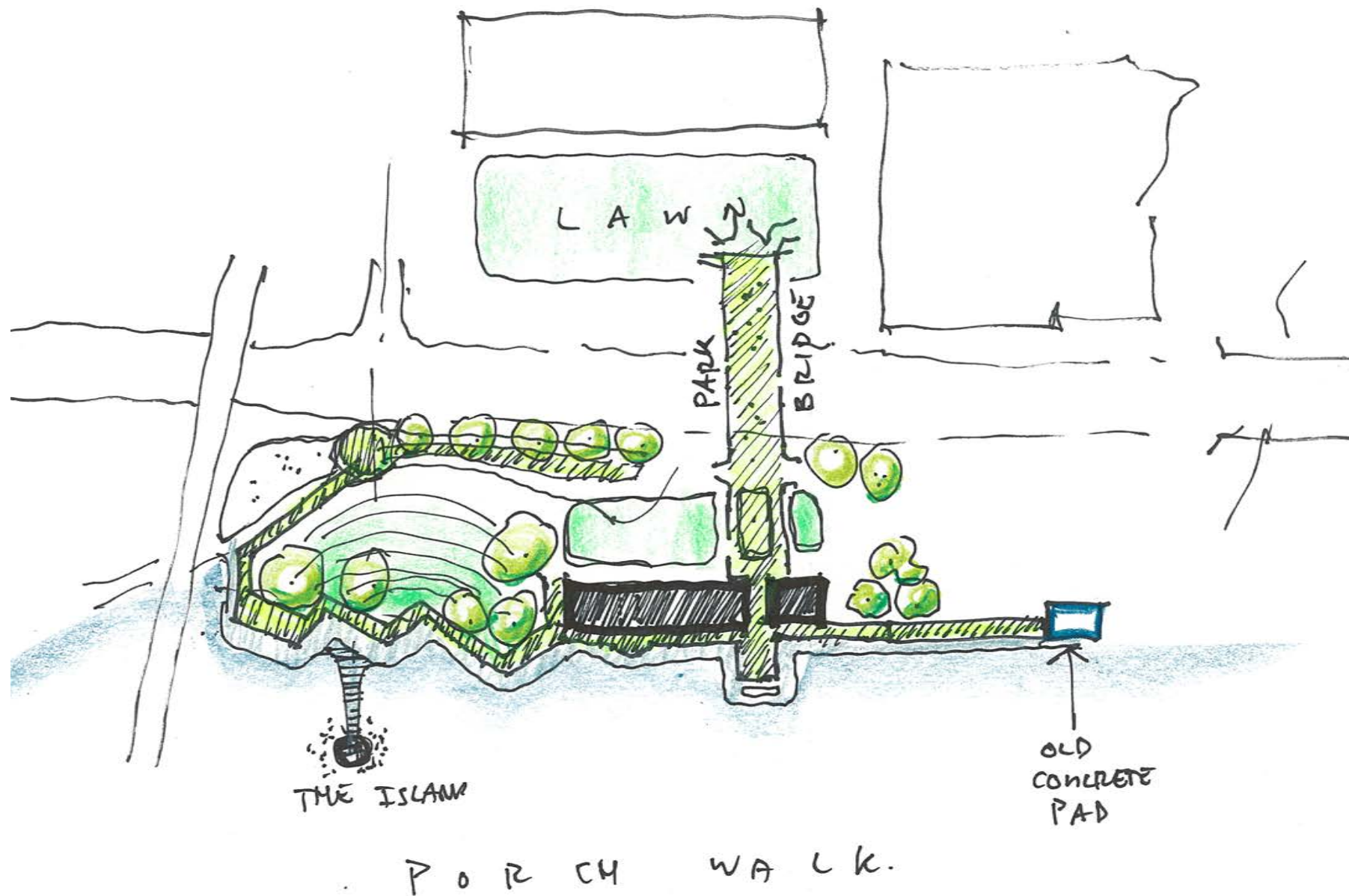
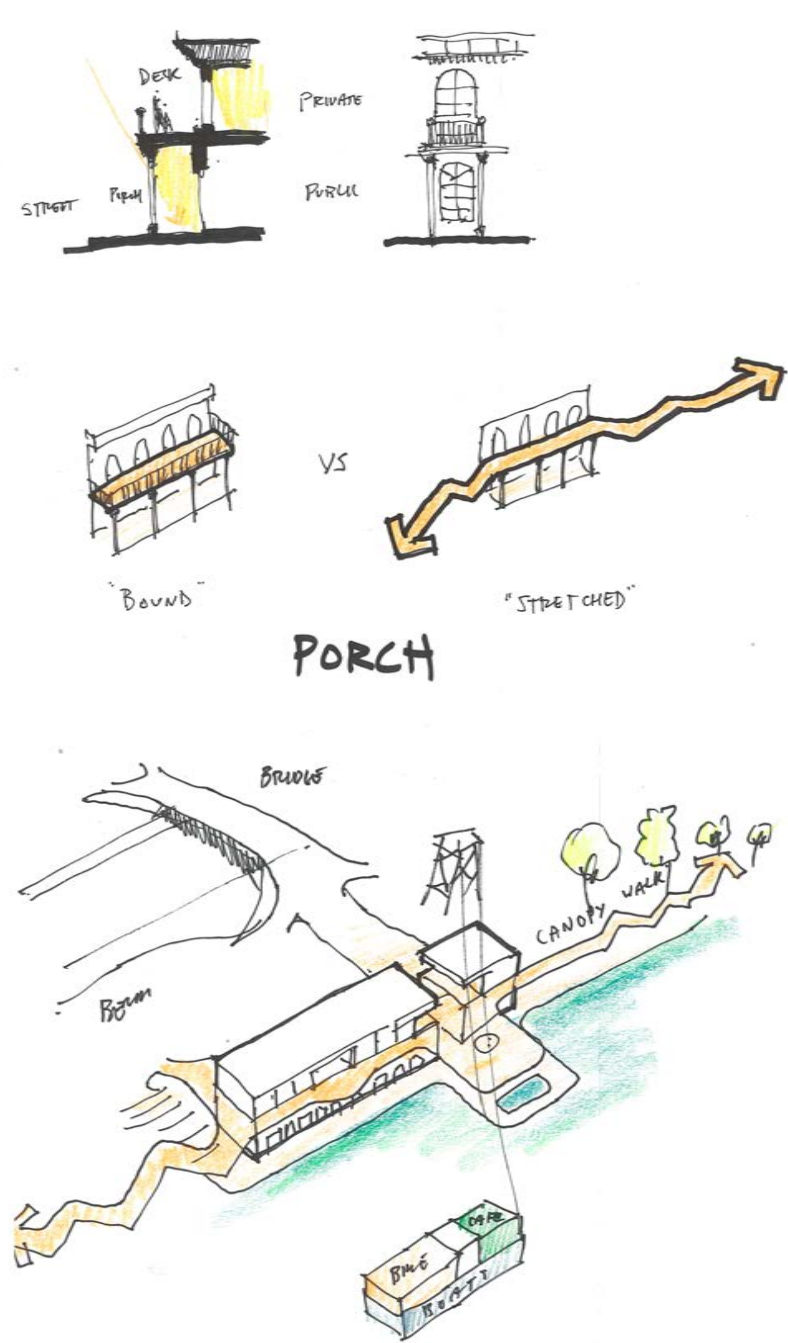
**Aarhus University Campus** Aarhus, Denmark, 1979  
CF Moller





# Concept Process

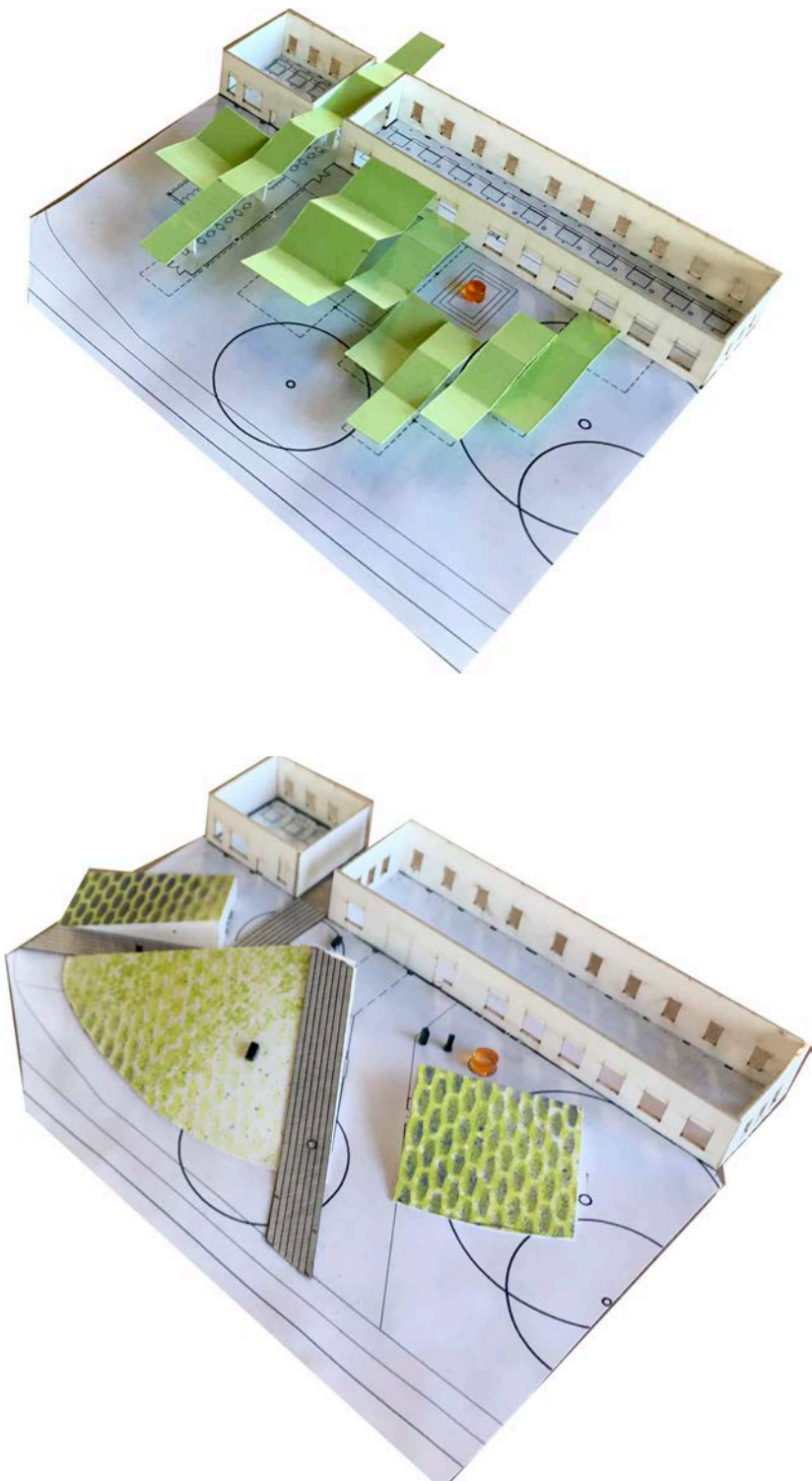
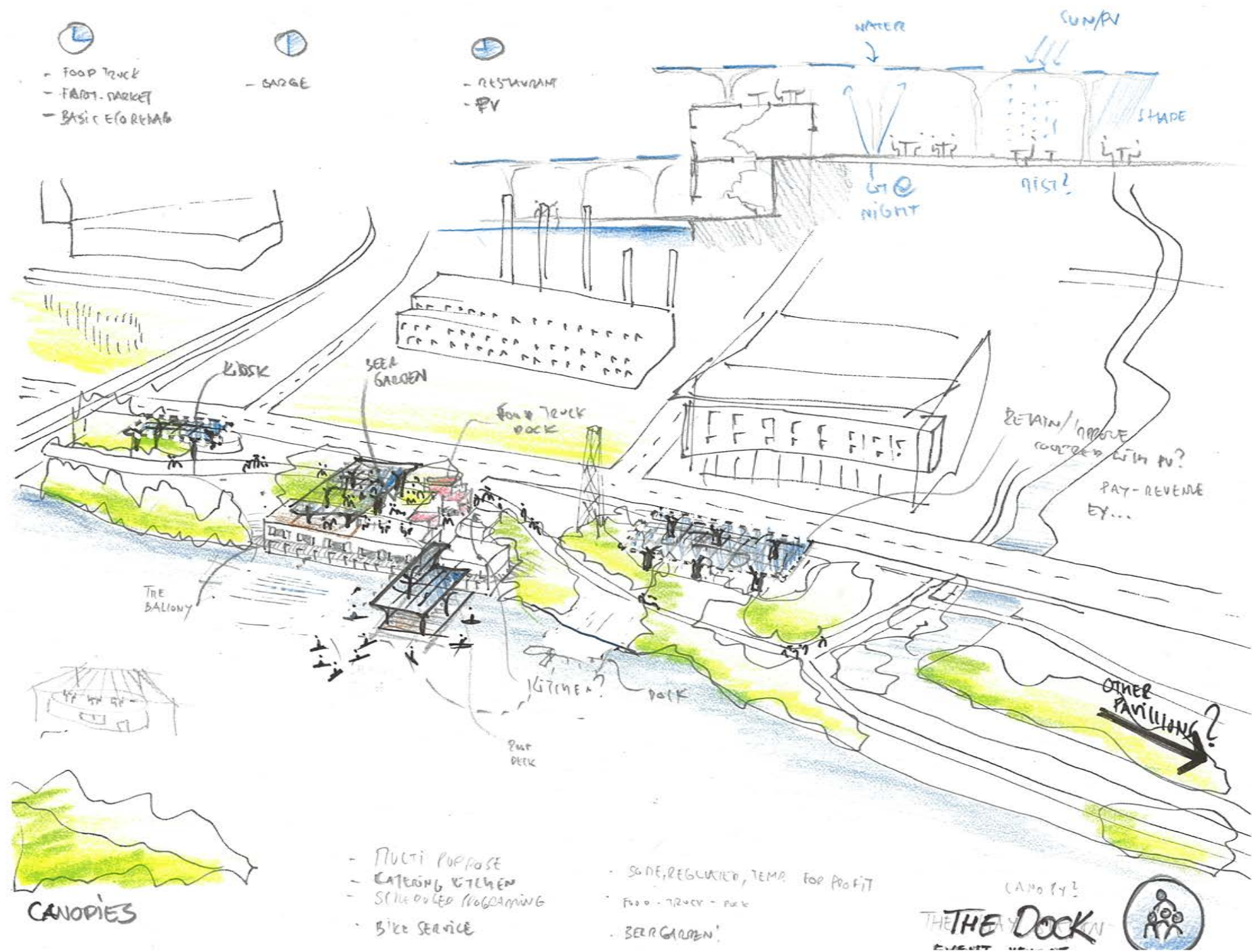
Early concept sketching explored various options for the Porch at the Intake Building.





# Concept Process

Sketches and study models of the yard between the Intake Building and Cesar Chavez explored how various architectural elements could be used to block sound and shape a new urban space.

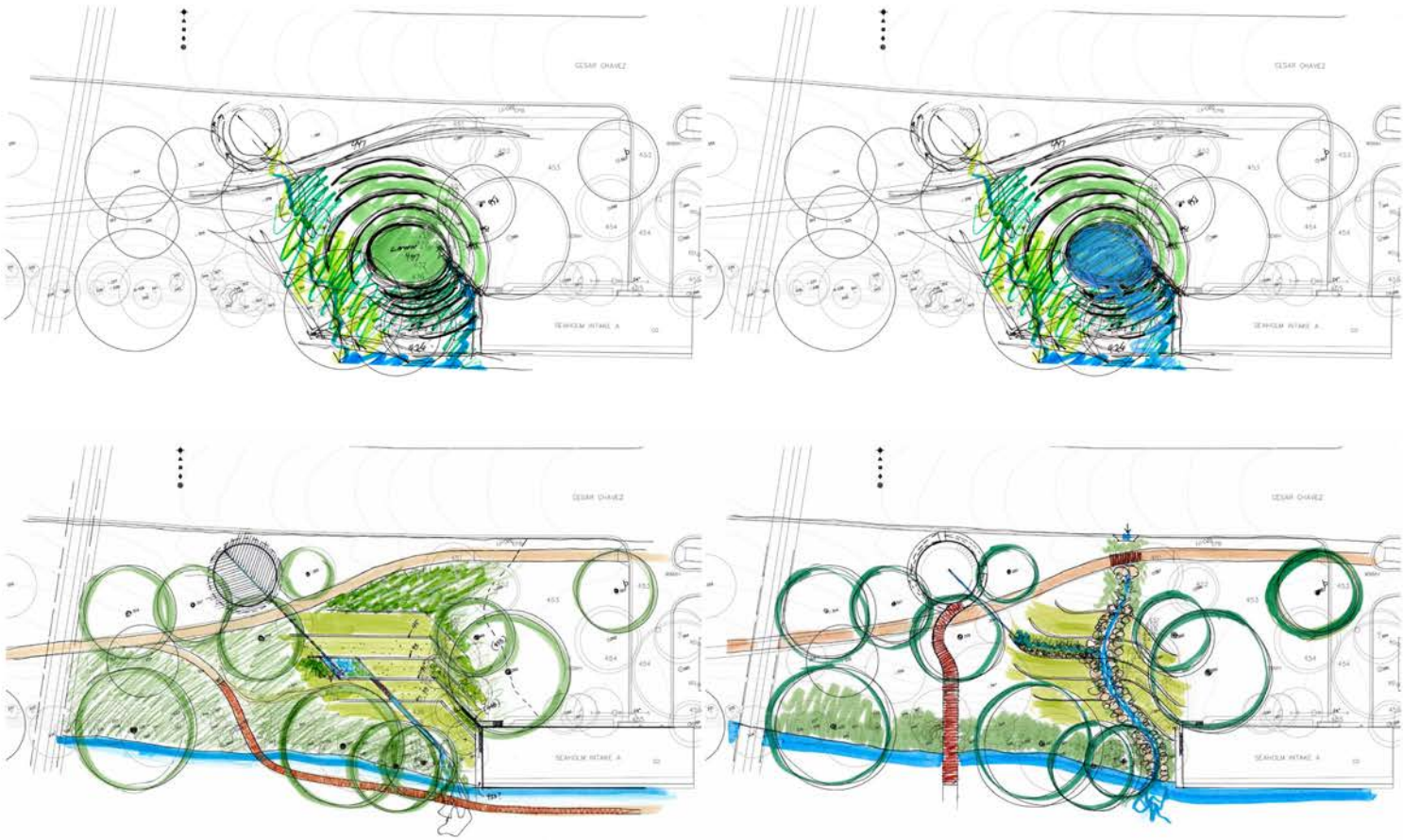


Conceptual study models



# Concept Process

These design sketches focused on the landscape and ecology design of the site and Trail.

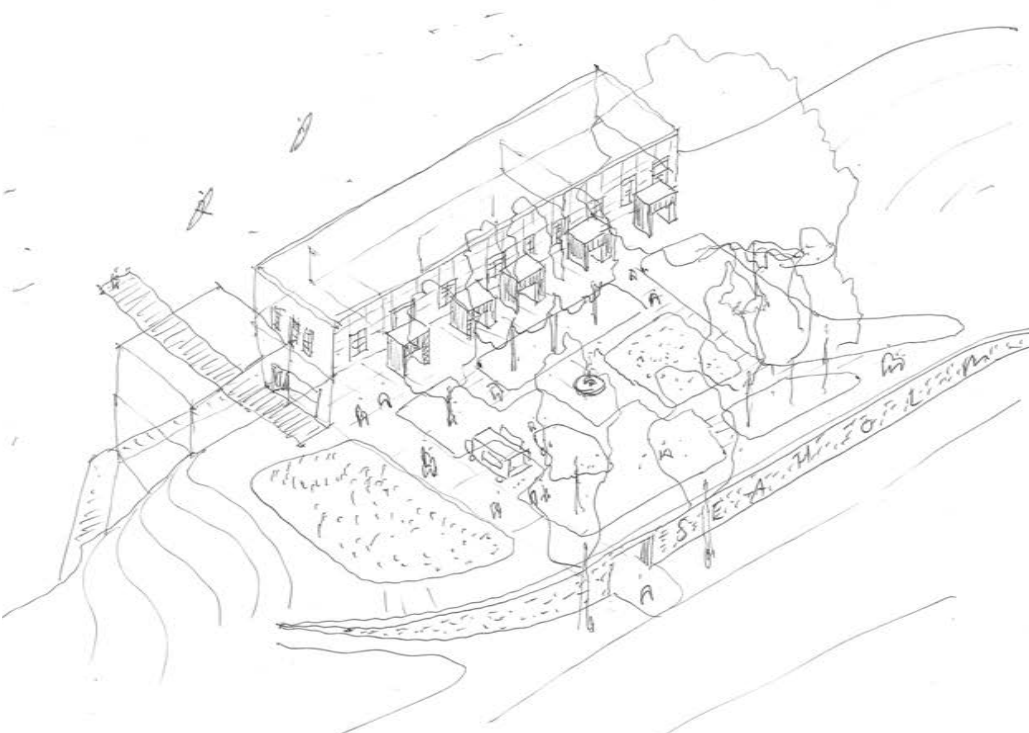


SITE STUDIES  
Seaholm Waterfront | Austin, TX  
10.27.2017



# Concept Process

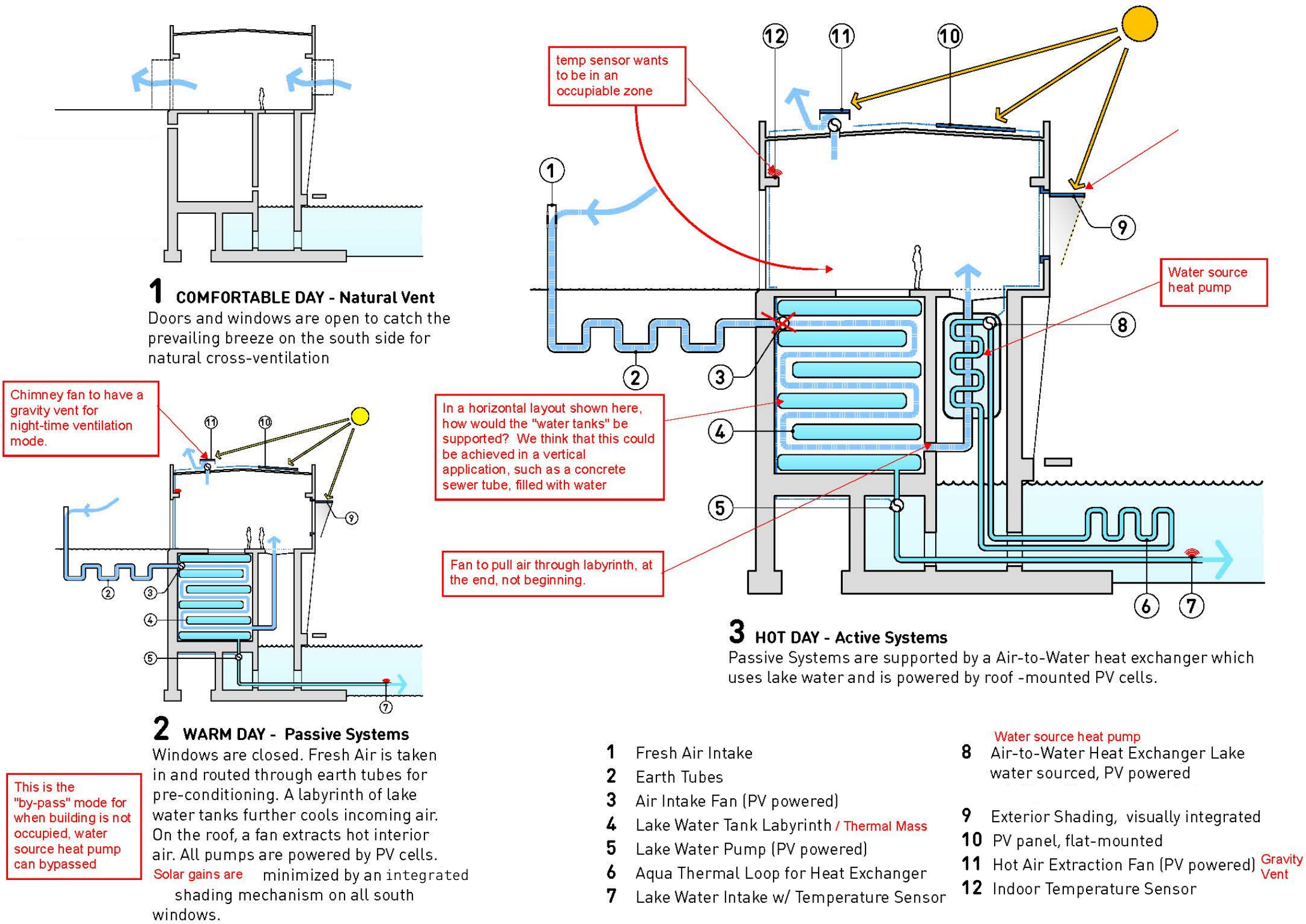
Evolutions of conceptual sketches explored how the interior of the Intake Building could be preserved and upgraded with “soft touch” elements such as furniture, lighting, and unique elements from the building’s past (crane, pumps, etc.).





# Environment and Sustainability

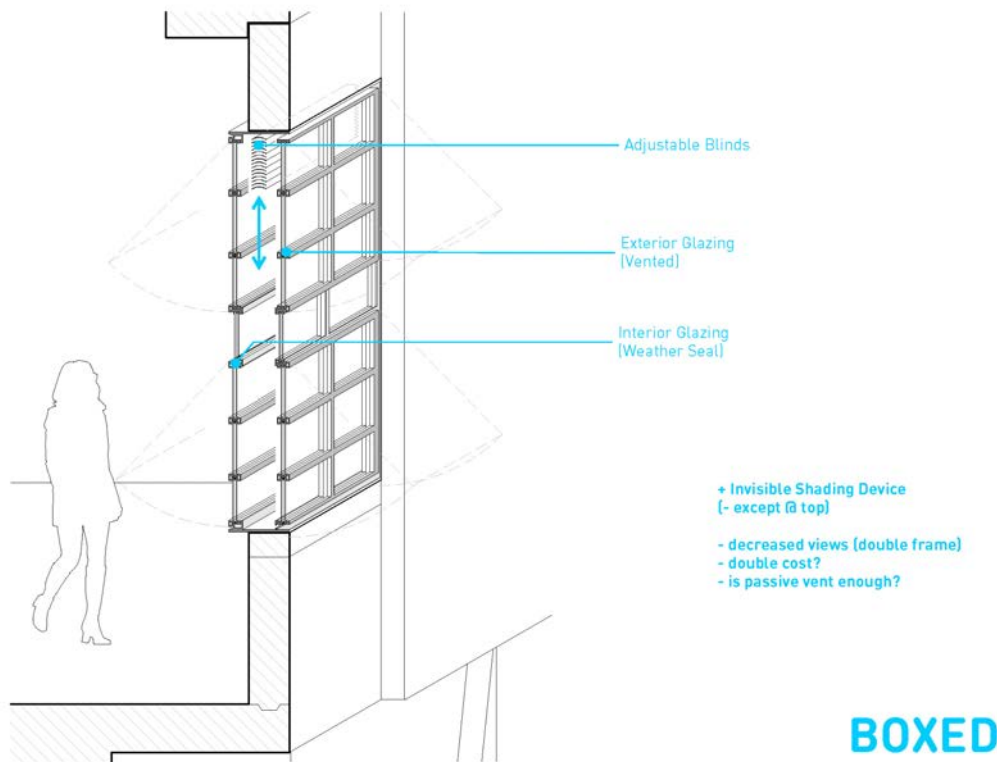
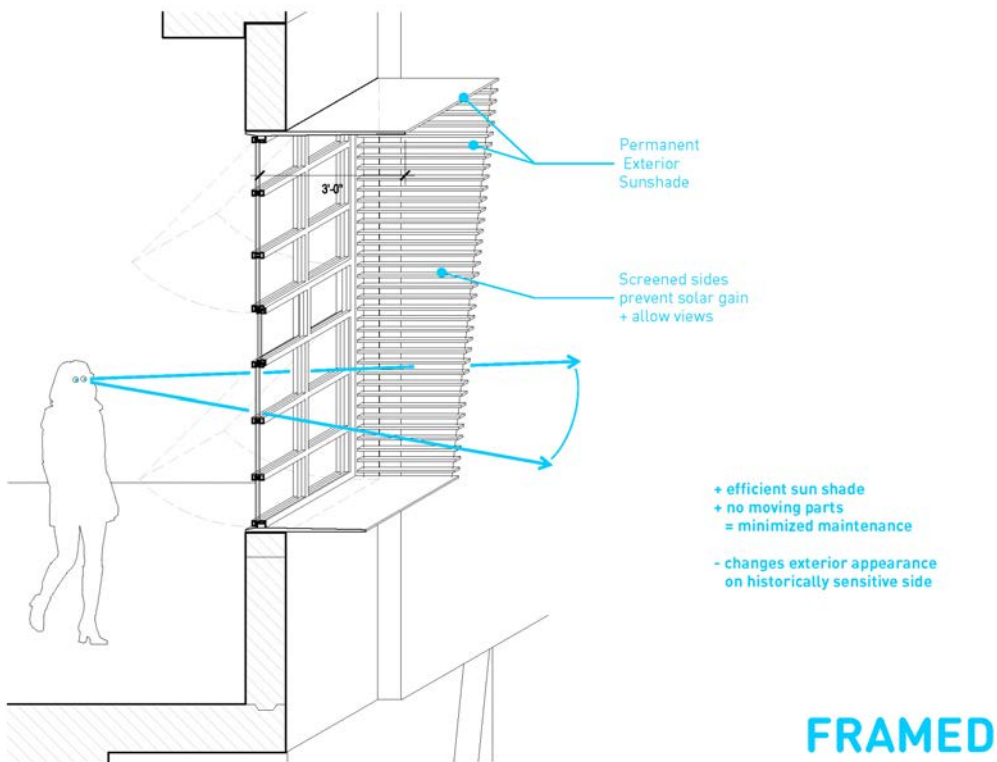
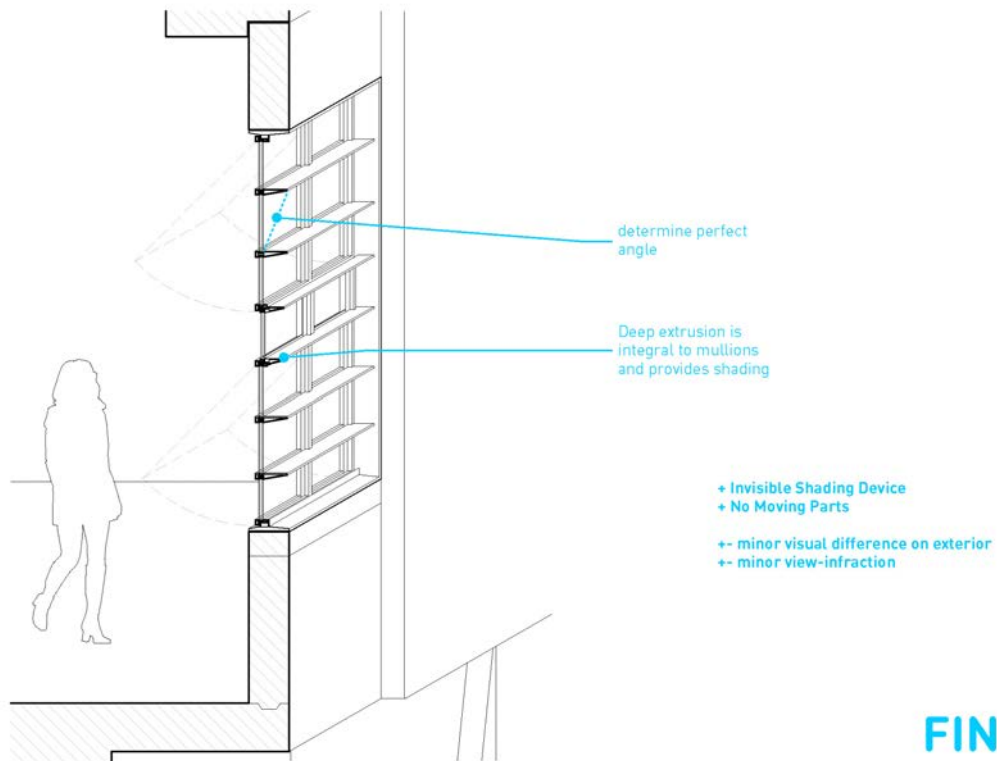
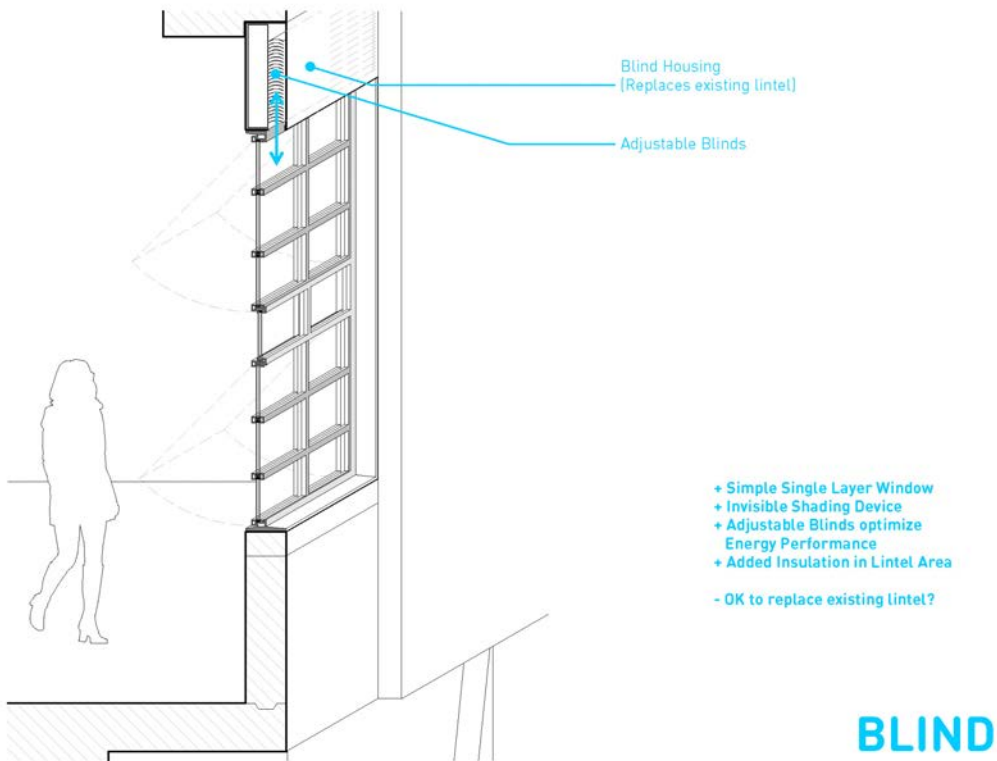
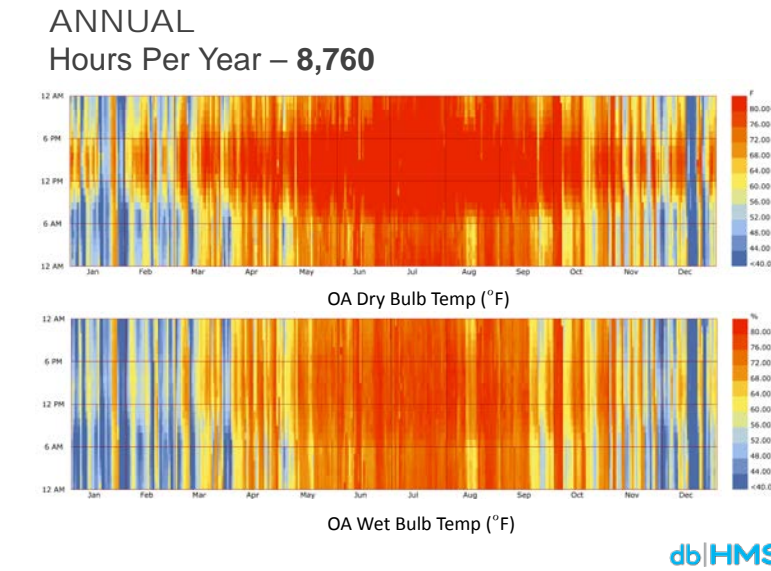
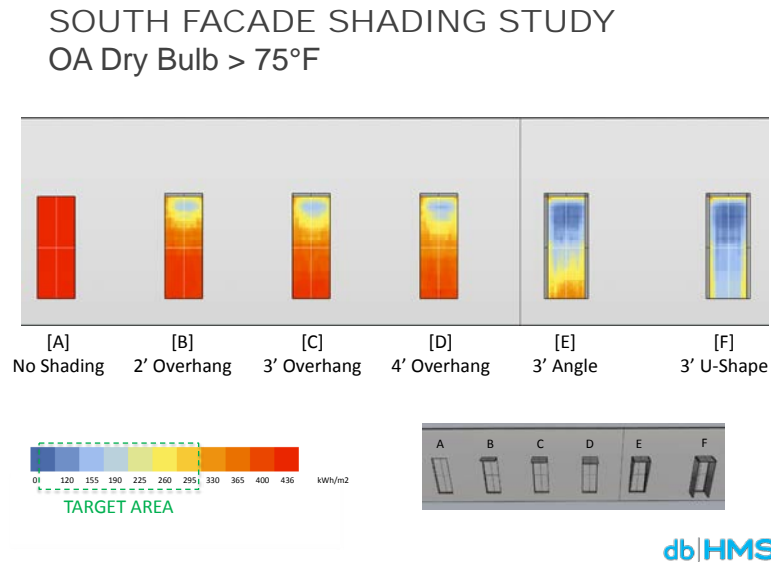
The project, developed in collaboration with dbHMS, explores various environmental strategies to make the Intake Building more comfortable and accessible for future activation.





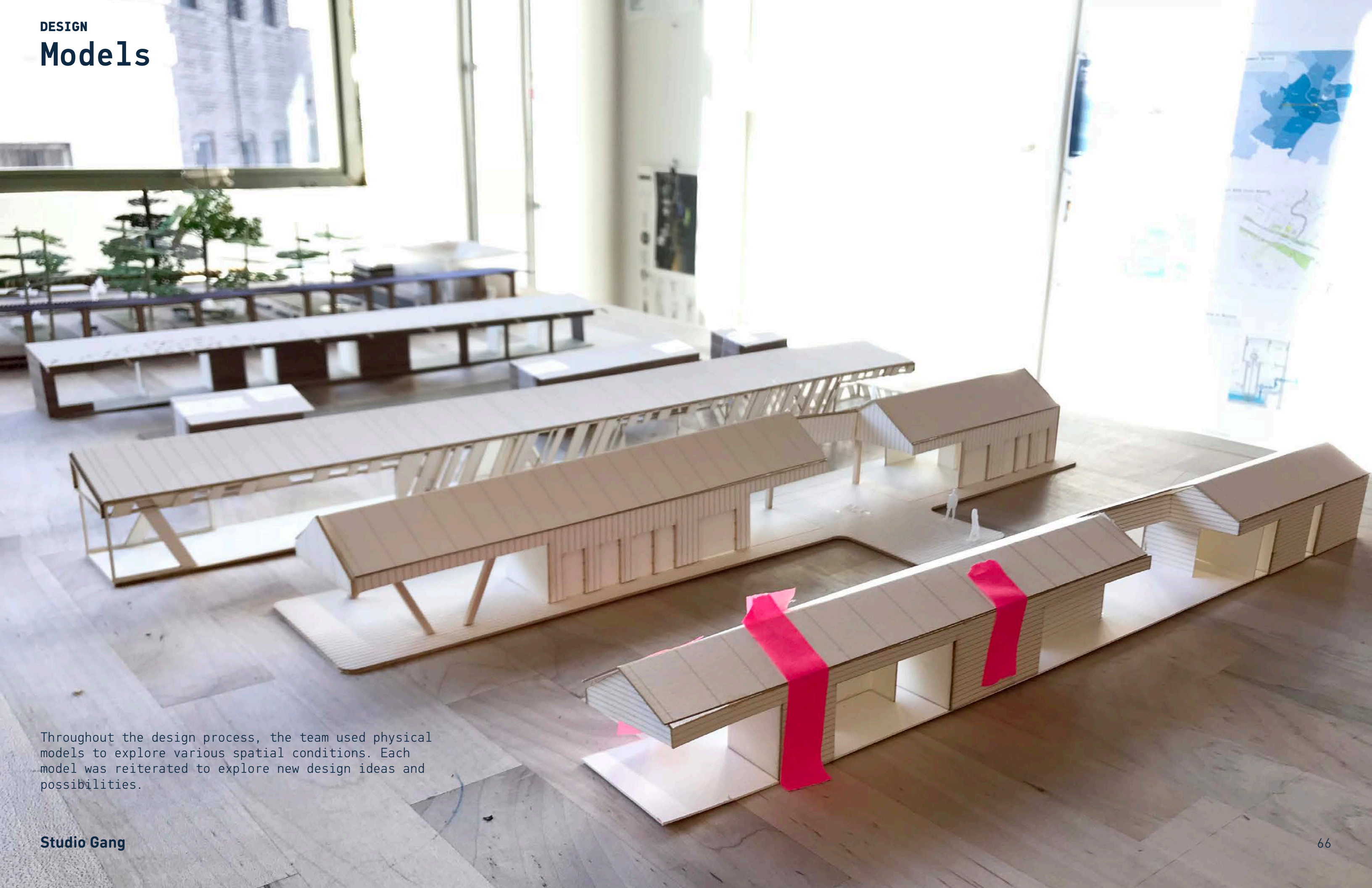
# Environment and Sustainability

Working closely with dbHMS, the team examined the south facade of the Intake Building and studied how window details could be used to reduce solar heat gain.





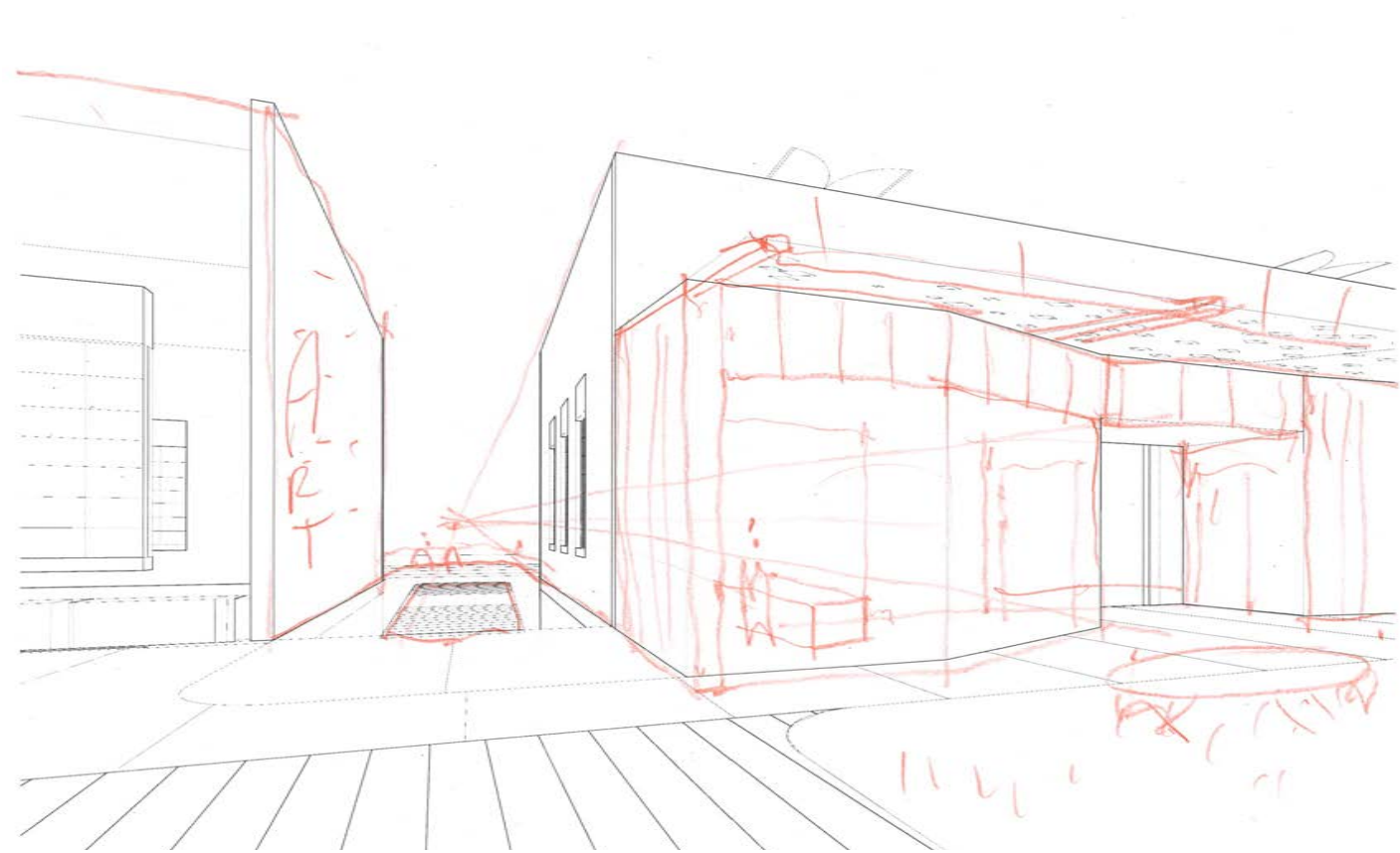
# DESIGN Models



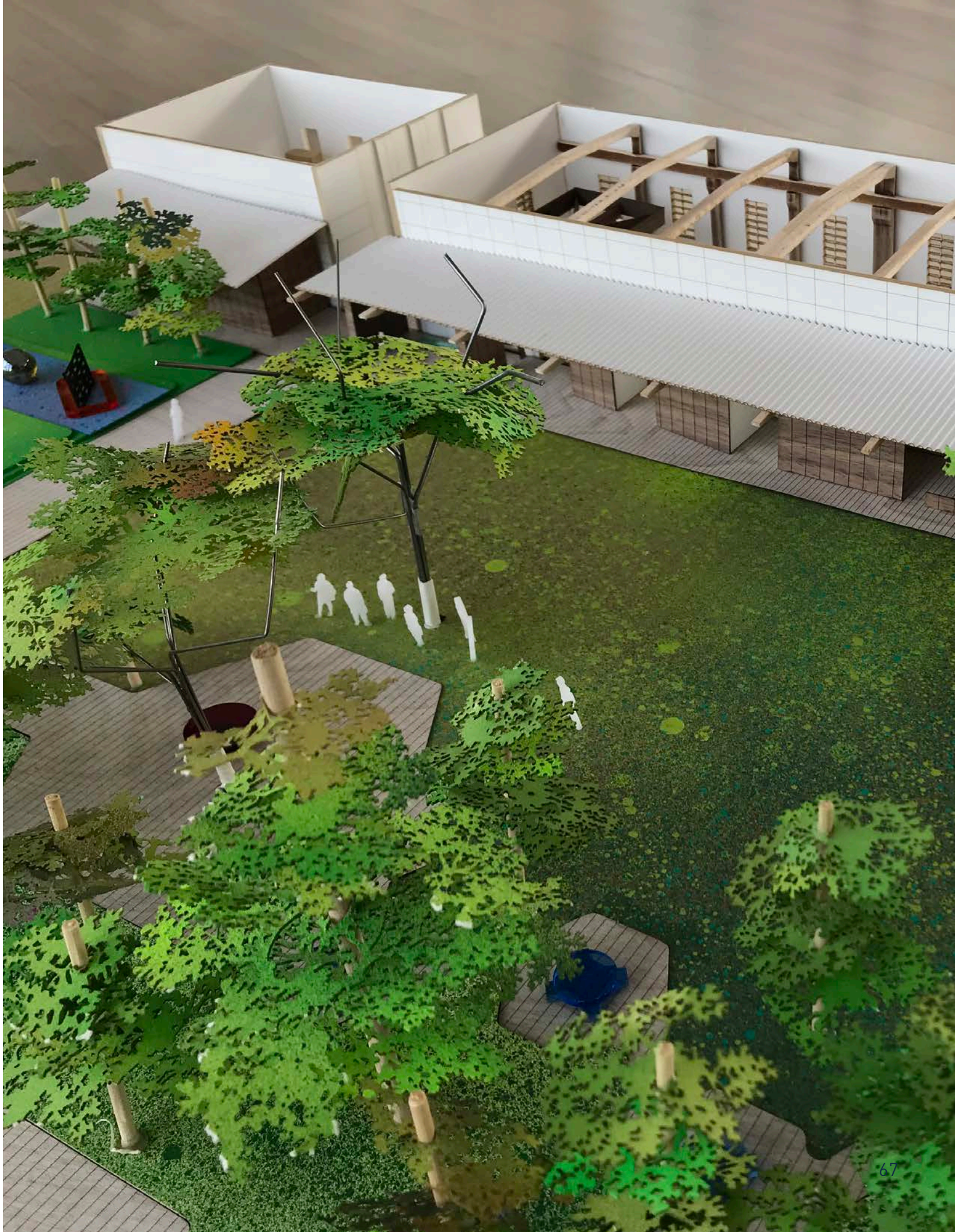
Throughout the design process, the team used physical models to explore various spatial conditions. Each model was reiterated to explore new design ideas and possibilities.



# Models - Porch Yard



Sketching and modeling to develop the scheme





# Models - Court Yard

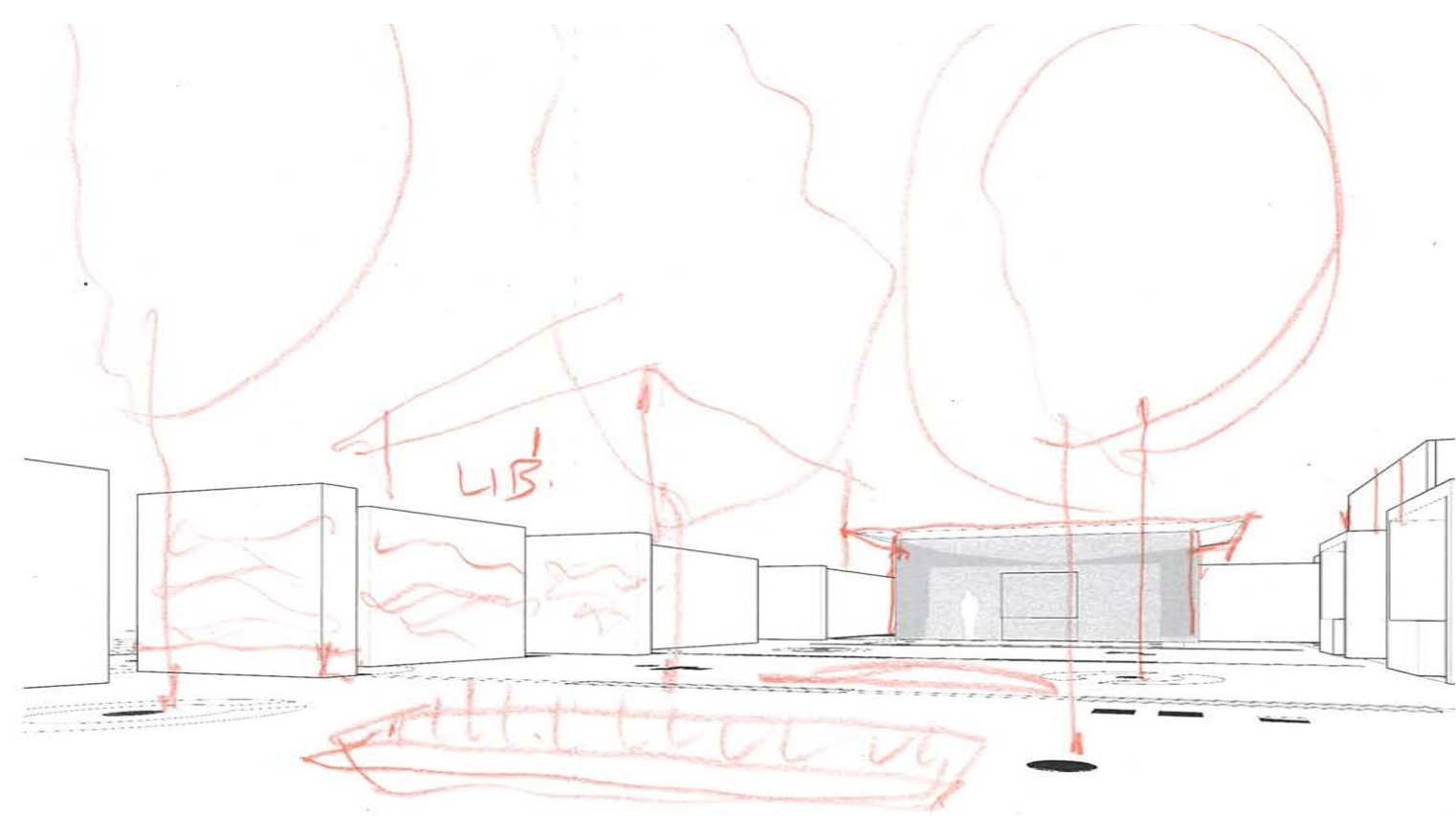


Sketching and modeling to develop the scheme





# Models - Garden Yard



Sketching and modeling to develop the scheme





