

Project Description

Project Identity and Location:

Rudolph Park, Lawndale, California

Purpose of Project:

The City of Lawndale sits in a region of Southern California known for its lack of access to parks and nature. Prior to the construction of Rudolph Park the city (with a population of 32,769) had only one park within its borders. The Trust For Public Land (TPL) and From Lot to Spot (FLTS) combined forces to identify this 1.44 acre parcel, begin working with the community to understand their needs, and securing a funding grant from California State Parks to help to realize the new park. The community identified a desire for green space, natural play, fitness facilities, an amphitheater, a climbing wall, a restroom, and fitness equipment. Our role was to take all of the program elements and weave them together into a compelling composition...one that tells a story about Lawndale that adds value to the experience of the park

Role of Landscape Architect

Lawndale sits where the coastal dunes once met the inland prairie...a land characterized by a unique topography of dunes and vernal pools. The park reintroduces the neighborhood to the dunes and prairie that once formed their landscape and the hills that frame the region. The park is divided into three zones: The Dunes includes sand and water play with whimsical, oversized beach umbrellas; The Prairie includes an open, gently rolling grass lawn and amphitheater bordered by meadow grasses. The Hills adds an element of verticality with an overlook deck and climbing wall amongst native oak woodland plantings. The finished product is something the neighborhood has never seen before. Almost every element is custom designed. The playful topographic design allows the visitor to traverse high and low spots and highlights the low-impact storm water strategy. To enter the site, one crosses over a vegetated swale and infiltration basin. We led a team which consisted of an architect, civil engineer, electrical engineer, geotechnical engineer, playground consultant, mosaic artist, play sculpture fabricator, and construction manager.

Significance

The community now has a spot to gather and play outside...a well shaded oasis of green amidst miles of concrete and asphalt. Celebrations can be hosted, there are places to exercise or cross paths with neighbors. Childhood development is facilitated through unprescribed play with sand and water. Much of the park is shaded by trees and structures which provide cooling and improve the quality of life of the immediate neighbors by reducing heat island effect. Ultimately, this is a tranquil place, quietly improving the lives in its local community. Rudolph Park redefines what a park can be and serves as a reminder that landscape architecture has the power to improve the quality of life of our neighbors.

Special Factors

The two non-profits, City, and users combined to make a fairly complex client constituency. Engaging the community in tile-making and planting led to an even greater pride and ownership of the park.