

ASLA SCC AWARDS 2016 - Project Description

Project: Union Station Master Plan / Los Angeles, CA

PURPOSE OF PROJECT

The Metropolitan Transit Authority (Metro) is undergoing drastic improvements in the reach and service of mass transportation opportunities throughout Los Angeles. Union Station is the hub of those improvements. The master plan guides land use and future development of Los Angeles' Union Station, including transit operations and private and/or public ground lease development, and offers an implementation strategy that includes financing/governance options and phasing.

ROLE OF LANDSCAPE ARCHITECT

The landscape architect worked with Grimshaw Architects and Gruen Associates to provide the overall framework for landscape and site design. The landscape architect developed an understanding of the rich historical significance of the iconic station and Los Angeles setting coupled with a rigorous analysis of existing conditions related to site circulation, infrastructure and neighborhood connectivity. As part of the stakeholder outreach process the landscape architect helped engage residents, property owners, neighborhood groups and organization leaders to identify current uses and circulation conditions to improve upon in the redesign. The landscape architect developed the Master Plan Open Space and Landscape Concept that will connect visitors to a "Southern California experience," where a series of meaningful outdoor spaces are rooted to the Southern California vernacular. Once realized, not only will the neighborhood have cleaner water, air, and improved civic spaces, the Union Station Master Plan will connect travelers from far beyond Southern California to the unique climatic, vegetative, and cultural landscape qualities that make Los Angeles such as sought after place to visit and live.

SIGNIFICANCE

The Master Plan respects the historic integrity of Union Station and its adjacent outdoor spaces while also offering a series of new spaces that illuminate the Southern California landscape as one moves through the site. The Master Plan provides a new paradigm – one that prioritizes the pedestrian, cyclist, and transit rider. This will accomplish Metro's goal of reclaiming safe pedestrian and cycling space for people from that previously dedicated to cars. With a series of improvements over time, already begun to be implemented, Union Station will become a world class multi-modal hub as well as a civic destination that continues to celebrate the innovation of transportation while improving the quality of life for its resident and passing-through communities.

SPECIAL FACTORS

Central to the landscape strategy is the concept development of the Forecourt area of Union Station, to restore the historic view and connection between the city and the station. This design converts an existing surface parking area along Alameda into dedicated pedestrian space, the main intent of the Plan. The Union Station Master Plan reimagines the historically auto-centric district into a multi-modal destination that restores ecological function of the landscape and invites the community into a revitalized civic destination.