

Parque Cesar Chavez

a vision report for Sea Mar Community Health Centers

September 2001





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credits

The authors of this vision report would like to thank all those who have contributed to the Parque Cesar Chavez project:

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introduction

background

In 1993, the greatest Hispanic American hero this nation has ever had passed away. Cesar Estrada Chavez was a man of uncommon courage. He championed the rights of Mexican farm workers—people who were afraid of speaking out for fear of losing their jobs and being deported. His efforts and achievements for farm workers in this country are examples of humanity that touched many. His constant toil was challenging boundaries and bridging gaps based on race, education, and social status. To have a park dedicated to him on what had once been farmers' fields of the Duwamish floodplain is a fitting memorial. Honoring Cesar Chavez—one of the first voices against environmental pollution—will remind us of the need to respect the earth.

The Hispanic community and South Park are grateful that King County and the City of Seattle have designated the corner of Cloverdale Street and 7th Avenue to his legacy and memory. The importance of this project far exceeds its size. We believe it can serve as a model for the integration of community, culture, and craft in an urban neighborhood. The design process presently underway has brought together an artist of international acclaim, Jesus Moroles, with members of a locally and internationally respected landscape architecture firm, Jones & Jones, to help the community create a vision for Parque Cesar Chavez.



photo: Tina Dickey

in this Vision Report

This Vision Report describes the conceptual design for Parque Cesar Chavez.

Approach (p.03)

This section describes a set of principles the design team used to guide all aspects of the project. These principles are focused on the themes of community, craft, and culture. It briefly introduces the character of South Park and its history, public artwork, and people.

Conceptual Design (pp.04-13)

Comments from the community helped select a preferred alternative that was refined to become the conceptual design. This section describes the inspiration for the forms and their use and illustrates the design in plan and section. Seven major areas of the park are described in greater detail through imagery, narrative, and illustrative sections.

Implementation (pp.14)

This section considers further design and construction of the park. The preliminary cost estimate describes the complete project envisioned by the community. "Next Steps" addresses how the park will come to life through community actions up to and during construction. Potential resources for material and labor donations and funding sources are listed to complement the City of Seattle Large Fund Grant.

approach

Community

Cesar Chavez inspired a worldwide community of conscience. His achievements for the farm workers of Central California were powerful gestures of humanity that span cultures and generations. His examples of leadership through action, humility, subtlety, and awareness guide us in our efforts to build a community place of inspiration. People working together through a participatory design process build a special relationship with each other and a place. Neighbors have been encouraged and empowered to create their park. In its creation and its enjoyment, Parque Cesar Chavez will be a common ground where community members come together to communicate and collaborate.

This park is important to the South Park neighborhood. Proximity to the Community Center, Concord School, the 14th Avenue retail area, Marra Farm, and South Cloverdale Street place it within easy access of visitors on foot, by bus, and by car. Outstanding sculpture, curving seatwalls, vine-covered trellises, and prominent vegetation will make the park at 7th and Cloverdale a landmark at the geographic center of the neighborhood. The park will become a gateway welcoming visitors into downtown South Park.

Culture

Listening, learning, sharing, and teaching are the tools on which a culture, or living history, depends. Cesar E. Chavez embraced many cultures through the powers of social justice and civil action. His legacy is understood and celebrated in the design of the Cesar Chavez Park. Activities in the park are focused on social interaction. Seatwalls throughout the park offer places to sit and talk, listen, or watch as visitors play the musical stones. The Kiosko offers a place to perform. The Ramada draws passers by off the sidewalk into the park, through the sculpted landscape, and back to their path.

South Park embodies diverse cultures. Families and businesses, industries and individuals work together to understand and improve their environment, safety, and education. We have listened carefully to stories of South Park and thoughtfully woven the essence of the park into the neighborhood's cultural fabric. Our design responds to the desires, concerns, and wishes of those who will use the park.

Craft

The line between art and landscape has been blurred. Carved and chiseled granite forms punch out of terraces of crushed granite, drawing visitors into the park. Water works its way through shallow channels in a flat plane of granite that is a base for musical columns of granite. Granite chips, remaining from the construction of the park, are the tools with which the columns are played.

Cesar Chavez championed the cause of people who work the land. South Park, in the Duwamish River floodplain, has a rich farming history and today has a thriving urban gardening community. Equally important to those agrarian legacies is the cultivation of the social systems that nurture the park and the community. Artful places are built on strong collaborations between designers, artists, craftspeople, and the community. Sustainability is not about high technology. Sustainability is about simplicity. Parque Cesar Chavez will be built from materials that endure with the people who will steward the place.



photo: Tina Dickey

conceptual design

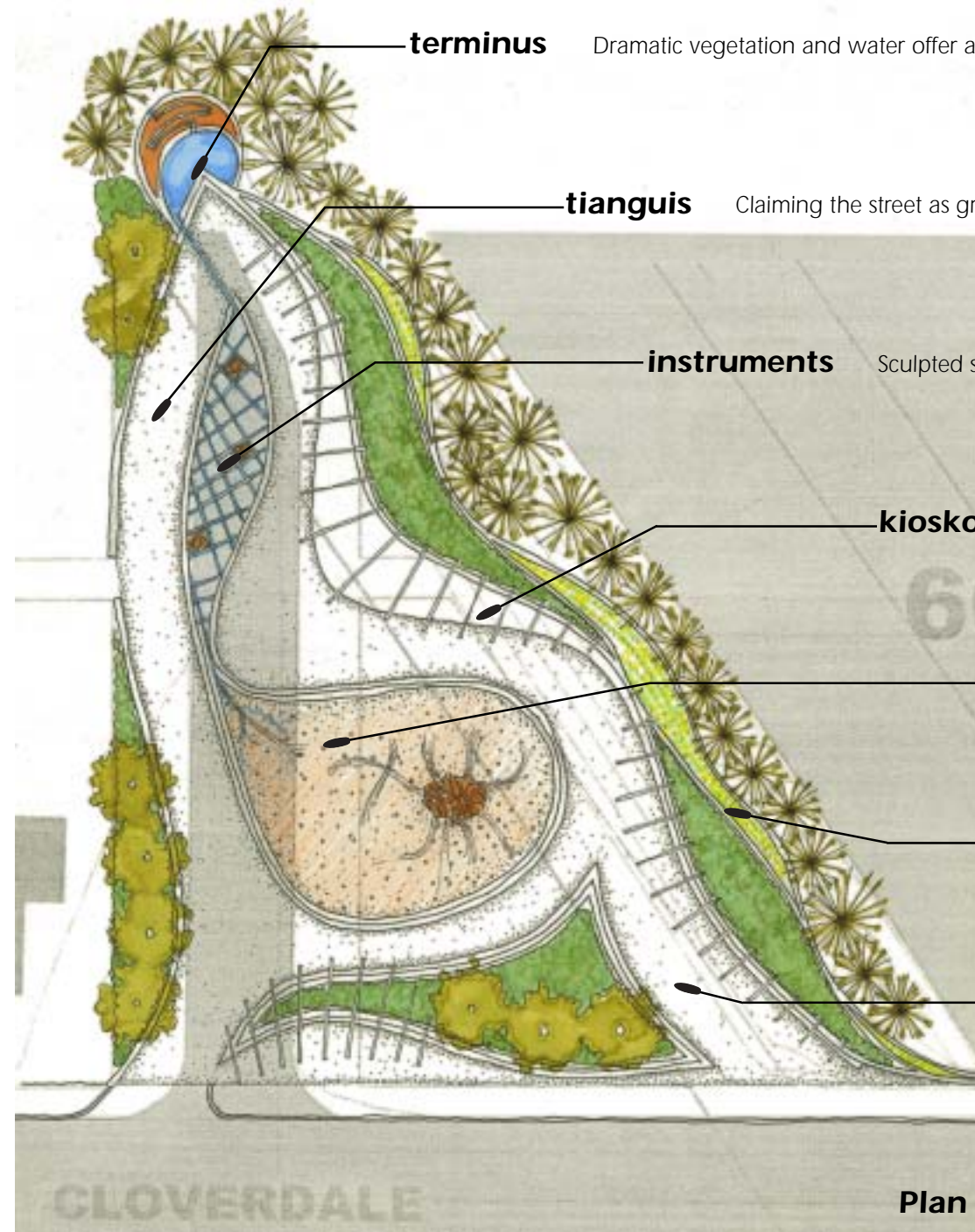
concepts

To commemorate this man, whose compassion embraced those beyond the reach of his arms and the sound of his voice, Parque Cesar Chavez is a memorial in form and action. The park is a gathering place where paths of life cross. The community comes together here to build the park and cultivate their strength, bridging gaps in their own community. The park is a setting for learning together and working together to shape common ground. The diversity of shapes and textures that rise from the earth reflect the variety of people touched by Cesar's spirit. It will remain a project of perpetual attainment and realization, growing with the hopes and dreams of the community.

The flexibility of space provides opportunities for a variety of community activities, including festivals, markets, and performances. The park also offers simple amenities, like sheltering the bus stop and quieting the noise of Cloverdale Street and Highway 99. A combination of welcoming places and shared experiences will encourage stewardship of this park, cultivating a safe and comfortable refuge by day or by night.

"...he would follow a river up until it became a tiny stream in the forest, and there he could rest..."

—Tina Dickey



terminus Dramatic vegetation and water offer a visual endpoint for long views into the park.

tianguis Claiming the street as ground for farmers markets and fiestas.

instruments Sculpted singing stones can be played.

kiosko Sheltered bandstand for larger performances and events.

teatro Sunken stone amphitheater for informal performance and play.

hillside Terraced slope to provide green backdrop for park.

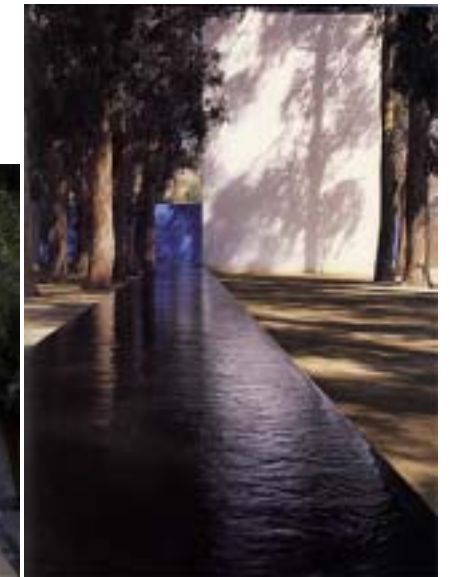
ramada Vine-covered walkway for strolling and seat wall for contemplation.

Terminus

Dramatic vegetation and water offer a visual endpoint for long views into the park.

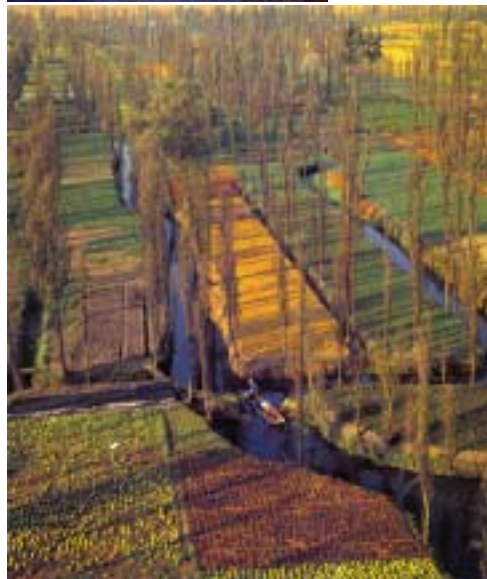


The first time I saw this fountain I was immediately drawn to it. It just asks you to dip your fingers in and watch the ripples expand away from your touch. I envy my neighbors who get this sparkling fountain as a welcome home greeting every night as they go to turn down the alley to their garages. It has made me wonder if maybe there are other places in South Park that might benefit from something like this. I think I will look around....



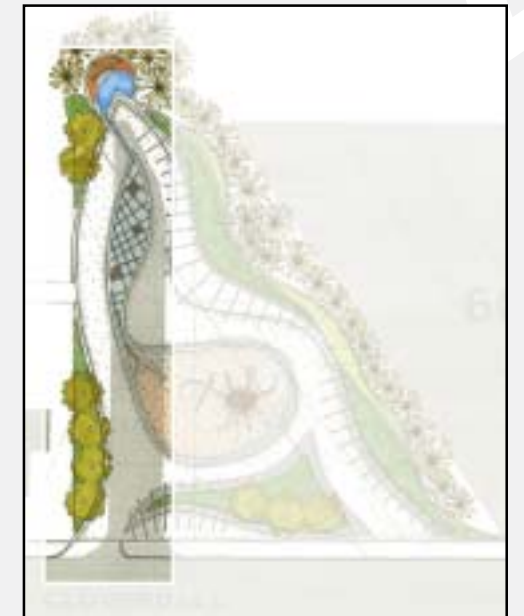
tianguis

Claiming the street as ground for farmer's markets and fiestas.



This used to be a street that only seemed good for parking. It did not go anywhere. Now it seems to be the main weekend destination in the neighborhood.

Between the farmers market on Saturday morning to the festivals on some weekend nights, this place has become the liveliest park in our neighborhood. Even my friends from work come from other neighborhoods to the market on weekends. They bring their kids, and we all picnic in the park after we do our shopping. There are so many different kinds of places to sit, in the shade or in the sun, out of the way or in the heart of everything that we all end up spread out over the park. Fortunately, we can keep an eye on the kids from pretty much anywhere.



instruments

Sculpted singing stones can be played.



Tonight was amazing. I never thought stones could be musical instruments, let alone imagine I would see all my neighbors together playing them in a concert. Jesus Moroles, the sculptor and conductor for the evening, was very patient with all of us.

After working so hard together, I think we all feel this was the perfect way to open the park, and I know it is something none of us will soon forget.

As I help pick up after the opening barbeque, I sense that even sitting there now, the stones exude a presence and almost seem to be humming on their own with the energy from tonight.



kioska

**Sheltered bandstand for
larger performances and events.**



I have lived across the street from this park since before it was dedicated. It is amazing to me how many different performances and events I have seen on that stage since it was built. This little corner went from being a place dominated by traffic and noise to a place where the traffic had to shout to be heard over the voices of the community. I am proudest of the park when I see the school groups come and gather on the stage to learn about Cesar Chavez from their teachers.



Sunken stone amphitheater for informal performance and play.



Sitting in the sun on these steps down into the earth, I am surprised by how quiet this place seems even though I know that there is traffic rushing by on two sides of the park. As my shoes squeak slightly on the chips of rock at my feet, I remember the day of the opening of the park.

My family and neighbors we knew, as well as some we didn't, helped make these chips by taking off the last slices of stone from the sculpture that now surrounds us. Now my kids show their friends how to play them like musical instruments.

I have watched this space since our neighborhood worked together to build it. The shadows play across the surface of the sculpture as the seasons change. When it rains, you can see little rivulets of water gather and rush towards the bottom of this depression. The water disappears there. I wonder where it goes...



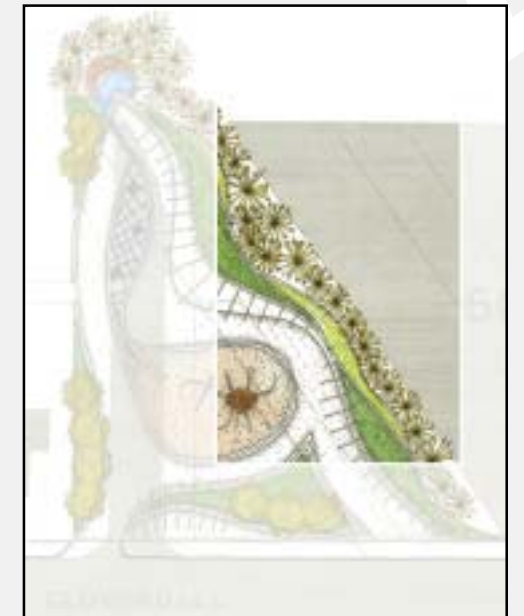
hillside

Terraced slope to provide green backdrop for park.



I had been thinking about it for awhile—why was it that I enjoyed this park so much more than I was expecting. I realized that it was right next to both Cloverdale and 99, and I thought this place would be too loud to be a relaxing place to hang out. The combination of the dense tree stand on the terraced hill slope with the barrier of the living arbor have helped create a white noise of leaves rustling that makes the traffic sounds disappear. The trees have also brought birds to the park, which add their music to it all.

This place has become a refuge for our community in so many ways.

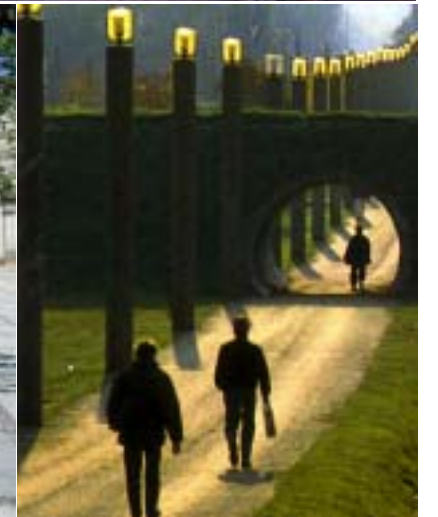


ramada

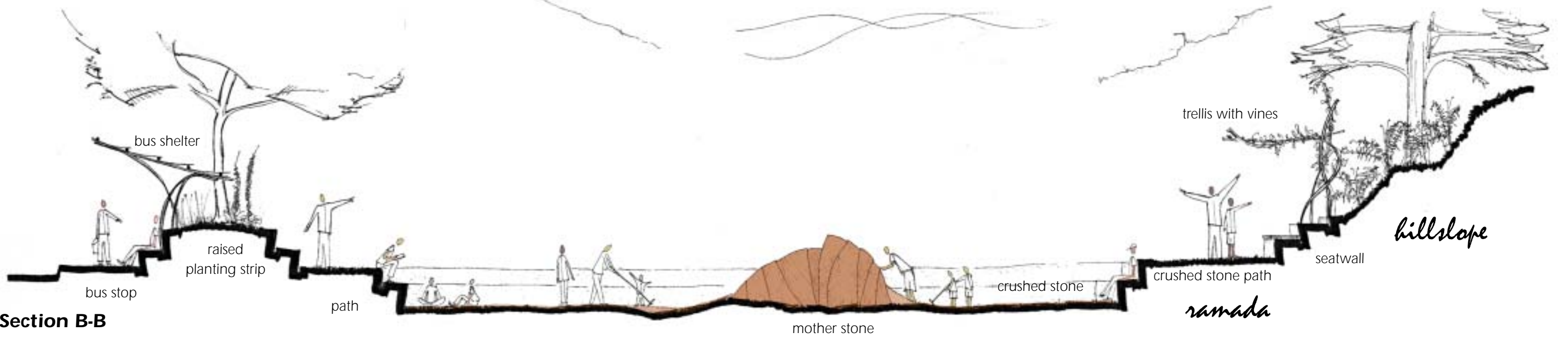
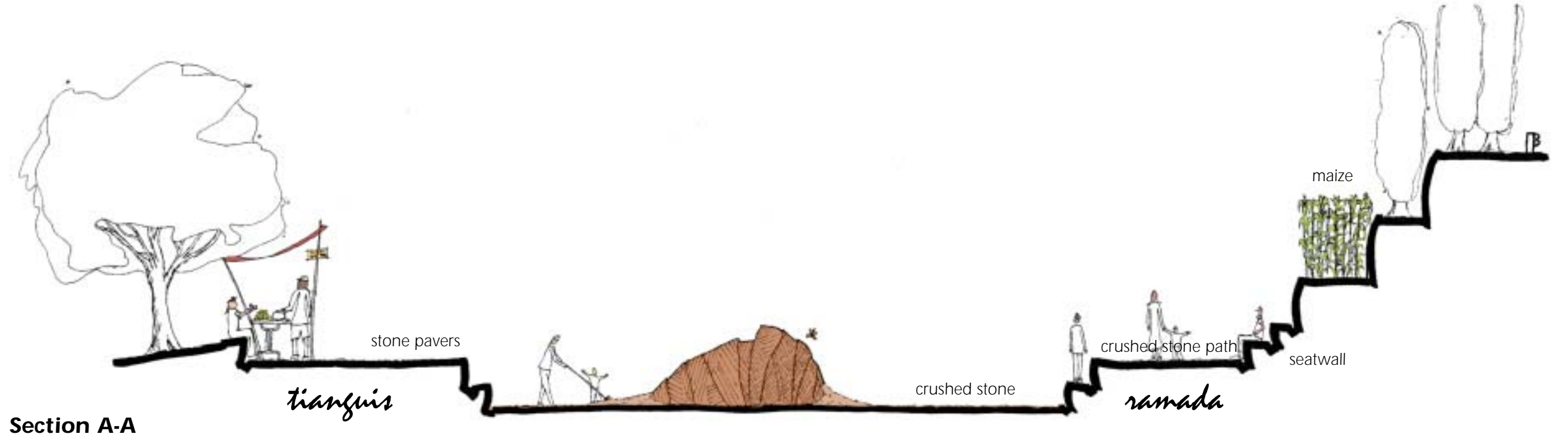
**Vine-covered walkway for strolling
and seat wall for contemplation.**



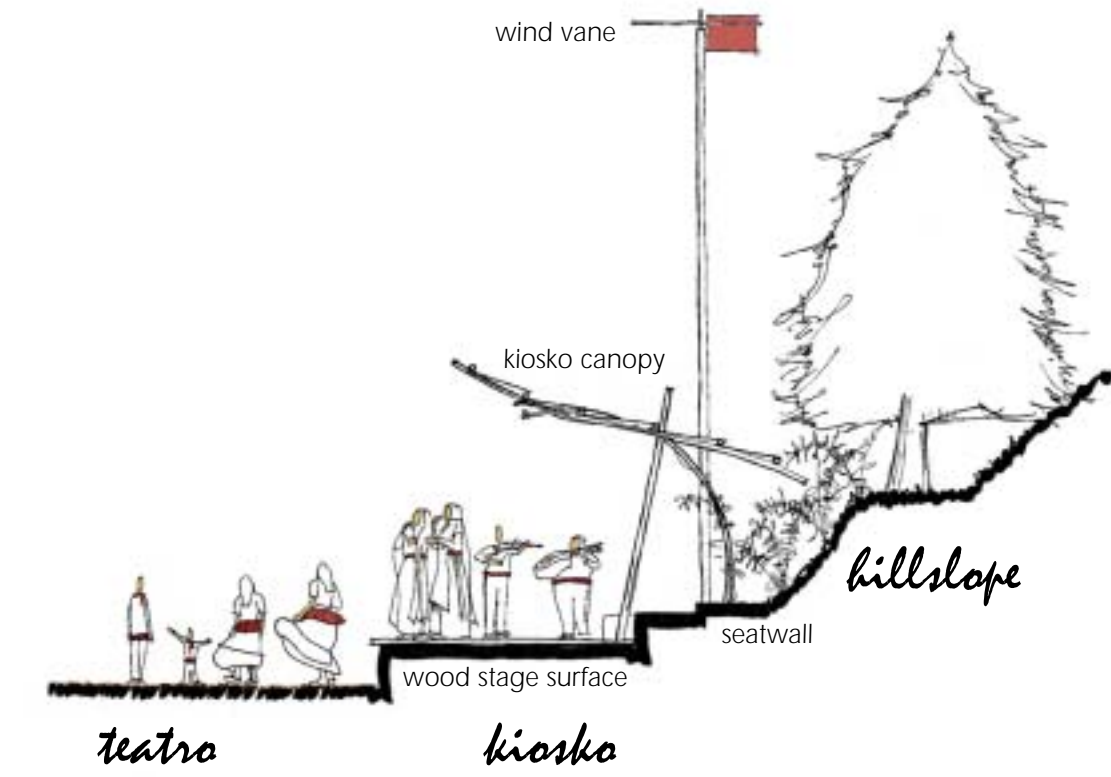
This is my favorite spot in the park. Sitting here,
I can see everything else that is going on in the park.
The dappled light shining through the vines overhead
gives this place a warm glow even though its nighttime.
I can see people's faces and I feel safe. The lights twinkle
and even with only a few people in the park it feels alive and
festive...a celebration waiting to happen.
This whole experience is definitely
a fitting remembrance of Cesar Chavez.



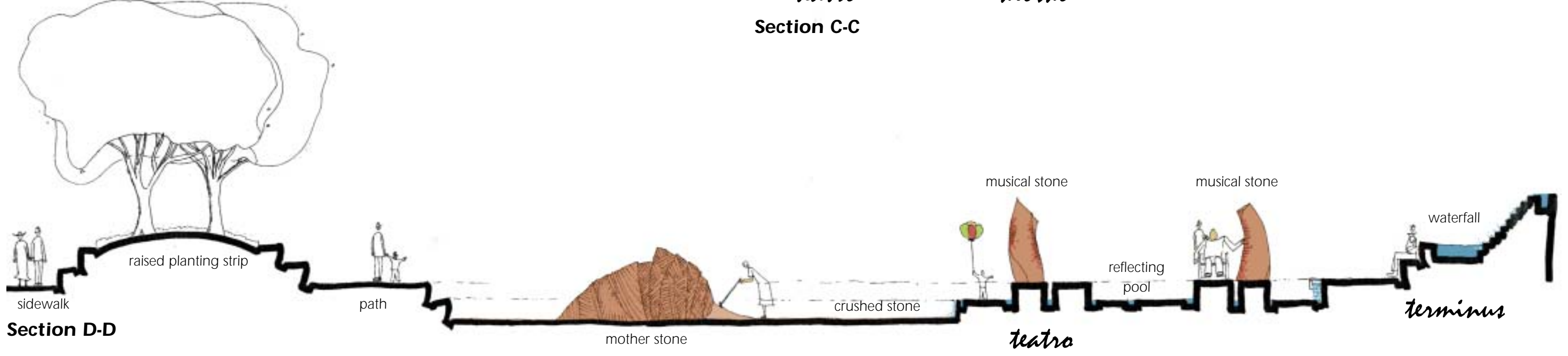
sections



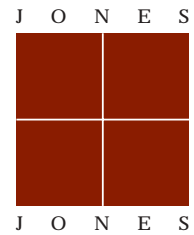
Key Plan



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Section D-D



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