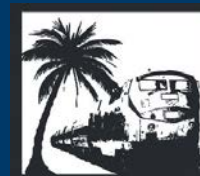


NORTHRIDGE VILLAGE GATEWAY VISION



Northridge Sparkle



NORTHRIDGE
SOUTH
NEIGHBORHOOD COUNCIL

INTRODUCTION

The Northridge Gateway Vision is a project proposal to improve the southern entrance into the core of Northridge. Chosen by Southern Pacific Railroad as a location for a train station, due to local well, the Northridge Village historic core was developed in the early 1900s and the railroad underpasses were installed in the 1960s. Since the 1960s the southern entrance has become worn and erosion has occurred at the historic well location. Northridge South Neighborhood Council, Northridge Sparkle and Council District 12 have been actively working over the past several years to improve the Reseda commercial corridor and this Vision is another piece to enhance their efforts.

OBJECTIVE

To create an entrance to Northridge Village at the Reseda and Parthenia intersection that welcomes both drivers and pedestrians with an aesthetically pleasing landscaping treatment that also protects the railroad from erosion damage.

GOALS

While the main purpose is to protect against erosion from the historic well by creating retaining walls, the design will also welcome visitors to Northridge Village with signage, drought-tolerant landscaping, and shading through the usage of canopies and shade trees.

PROCESS

The following steps were taken to ensure that this plan included local neighborhood feedback to create a design that will be welcomed by the community.

- Researched the existing conditions and history of the Northridge Village area.
- Performed surveys of area residents and users via on-street and on-line surveys.
- Hosted an open house at Joyce's Coffee Shop that was attended by residents.
- Met with Northridge South Neighborhood Council and Northridge Sparkle leaders several times to ensure the vision was on-target.
- Produced this final vision.

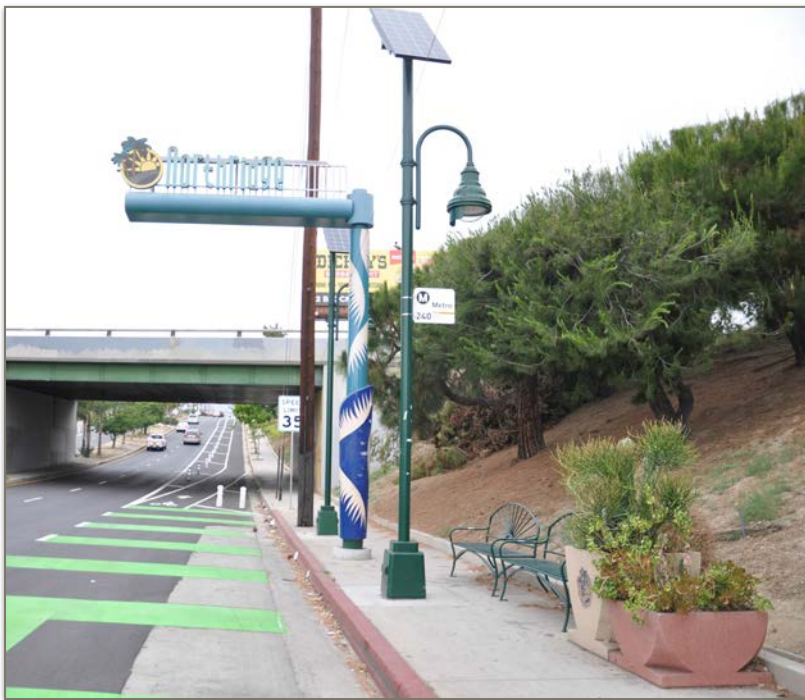
LOCATION OF THE NORTHRIDGE VILLAGE GATEWAY VISION

Northridge is in the heart of Los Angeles' San Fernando Valley. It was originally develop because of a historic well that was beneficial for freight trains. The study area is the triangular northeast corner of Reseda and Parthenia (shaded in orange).



EXISTING CONDITIONS

The historic well is at grade with the railroad track. Since the underpass was constructed in the 1960s, erosion has occurred along the slopes creating gullies as deep as four feet. The installation of retaining wells will protect against erosion damage to the railroad tracks.



This view looking north along Reseda shows the updated bike paths installed as part of the City of Los Angeles' Great Streets program, and also the difficult to read Northridge sign and the overgrown and run down landscaping.

HISTORY

Historical Background of Northridge

Development of Northridge began with the arrival of the Southern Pacific Railroad.

1874

Southern Pacific Railroad first laid tracks through Northridge

1908

Zelzah Train Station at the northwest corner of what's now Parthenia Ave. & Reseda Blvd. Across the street from the station was a water well. That's where the town got its name. In the Bible, Zelzah is the name for Oasis

Faith Bible Church, the first church in Northridge. It was built nine years after the Southern Pacific Railroad first laid tracks through Northridge, which was then known as Zelzah Station.



1910

Aerial view of Northridge, then known as Zelzah. Number 1 is Reseda Blvd., number 2 is the Southern Pacific Depot, and Number 3 is Parthenia Street.

1917



View of Reseda Blvd. The community was originally known as Zelzah.



1918

The name Zelzah was changed, when a group of patriotic residents voted to change the name to North Los Angeles.

1920



1929

At the suggestion of Carl Dentzel, a local resident and Director of the Southwest Museum in LA, North Los Angeles became Northridge Village and then shortened to Northridge.

Paving of Reseda Blvd., a political triumph for citizens

1930



1938

1961

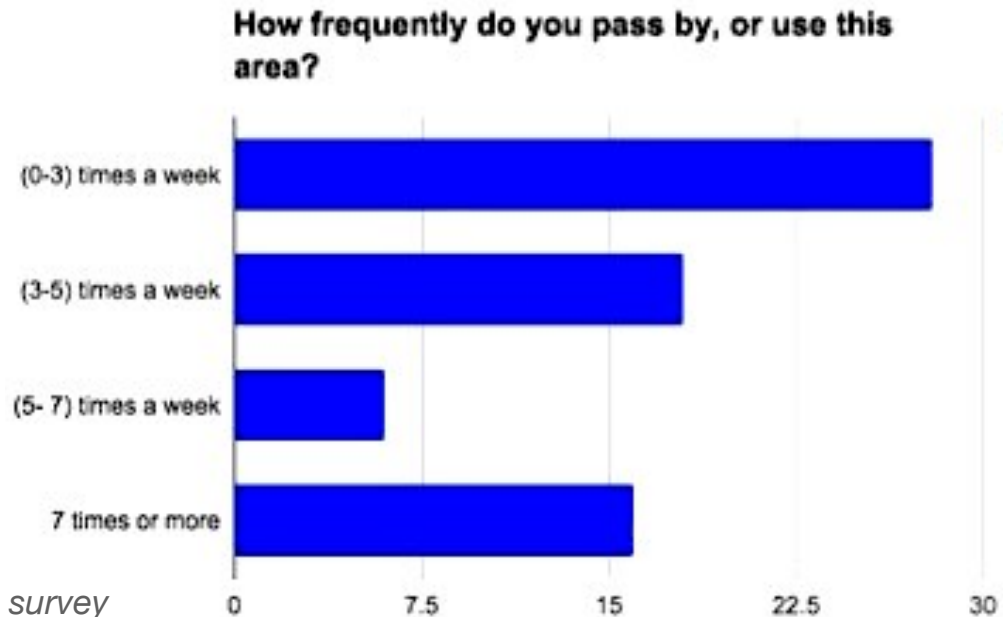
The Depot was torn down and the construction of the underpass began.

PHOTONIA UNDERPASS— It was a big day for Northridge when the underpass on Parthenia at Reseda was finally completed. The railroad runs across the bridge.

Photos and facts referenced from Early Views of San Fernando Valley (Water&PowerAssociates Romantic History of Northridge Bicentennial Edition (Northridge Chamber of Commerce)

SURVEY AND RESULTS

A survey with both multiple choice and open-ended questions was collected by asking passing pedestrians and Northridge South residents and friends through on-line surveys (60 responses). The survey had both resident and non-resident responses and the survey results were similar between the two groups.



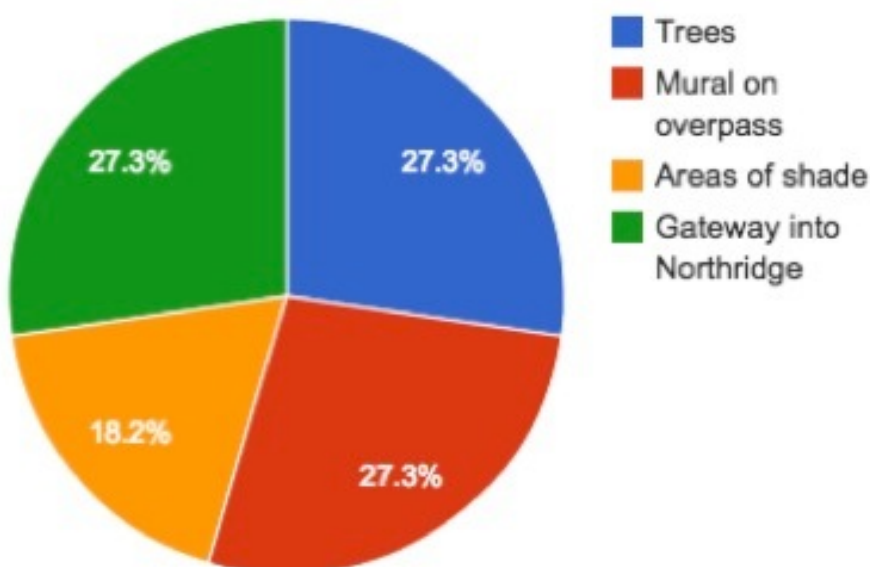
Around a third of the survey respondents pass by at least 5 times per week. The rest pass by less frequently, but are concerned with the image of the area.

1 times or more

Area's best characteristics

The responses to the area's best characteristics from both multiple-choice and open-ended questions are shown below. The high response to the enjoyment of the trees and areas of shade will be incorporated into the vision by ensuring that new landscaping includes tree and shade elements. Other responders appreciated that the area is the gateway to the Northridge Village and the historic importance of the well. The murals along the Reseda underpass that show both the historic past and the current state of Northridge and were identified as strong visual components to the area. During the vision design, continuing with historic aspects of Northridge will be considered based on these responses.

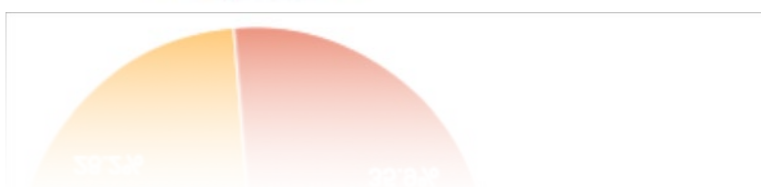
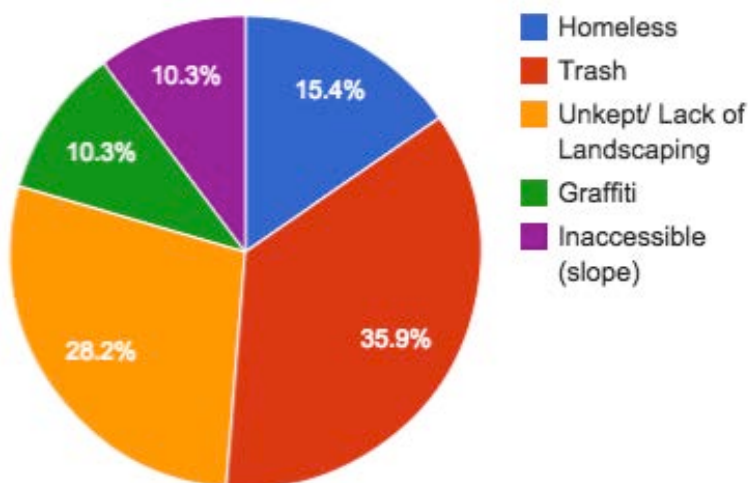
- Very lively.
- No billboards or businesses.
- The Northridge oasis sign.
- Historic interest as a point of water availability.
- Some good restaurants.
- Uncluttered.
- Shortcut to pass Reseda/Nordhoff nightmare.
- Its busy with traffic.



Area's worst characteristics

The responses to the area's worst characteristic focused on the unkempt and rundown quality of the area. While Northridge Vision has utilized many volunteer hours to remove graffiti and trash and provide landscaping services, the current design is inadequate to provide for high quality aesthetics. The vision must provide simple landscaping that will be low maintenance, visually interesting, and be more difficult to access so that graffiti, trash and homeless people have more difficulty accessing the railroad track area.

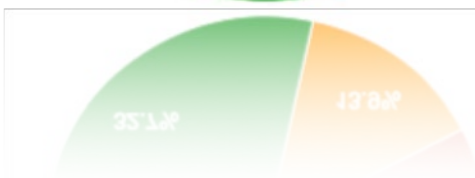
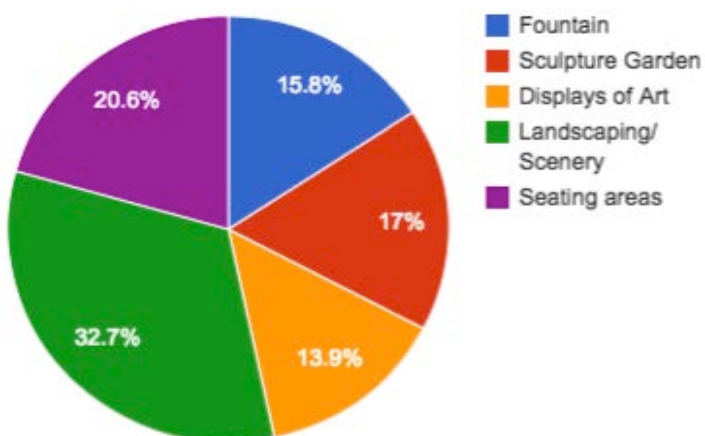
- Gloomy and unsafe.
- Lack of seating and shade.
- It looks run-down and outdated.
- Excess loose dirt.
- Lack of lighting at night.
- Dangerous intersection.
- Ugliness, noise, and traffic.
- Lack of visual interest.
- Commercialization.



• HOW WOULD YOU LIKE TO SEE THIS LAND USED?

The respondents were most interested in seeing the area have increased landscaping and aesthetics, as shown from the third of respondents wanting landscaping/scenery and open-ended responses discussing terraces, native landscaping, and drought tolerant plantings. A desire for increased seating continues the vision of towards a more park-like setting. Adding art to the area was of interest and continues with the interests the public has with the Reseda murals. In terms of themes, 62% of respondents preferred a historic motif over a modern interpretation of the area. So the vision will focus on a drought-friendly design with greenery and allowing areas for art to be displayed.

- Soft-scape with drought tolerant plantings, featuring well timed bloom cycles.
- Native landscaping/hummingbird and butterfly attractants.
- Levelled to make room for a park.
- As a scenic visual representation of Northridge.
- Flowers, plants, greenery, benches.
- Sustainable plants on the hillside, decorative stones in the median.
- Park, add some tables.
- Cleaned up but not built up.
- Terraced and planted, with public art.






NORTHRIDGE VILLAGE GATEWAY OPEN HOUSE

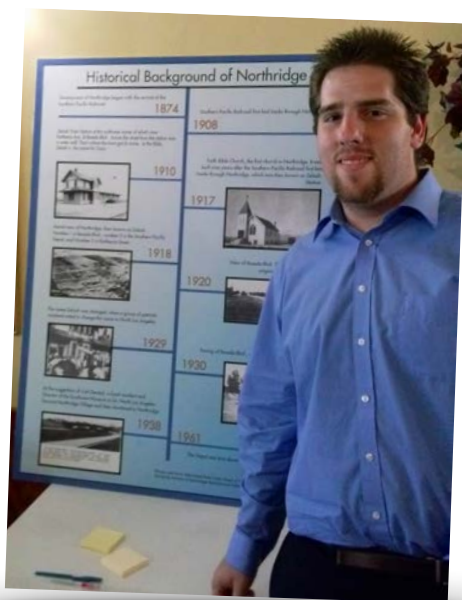
An Open House was held on April 1, 2015 at Joyce's Coffee Shop to obtain feedback from the public regarding proposed design concepts that were being considered for this vision. Northridge South Neighborhood Council, Northridge Sparkle, and the Urban Planning Students of Northridge did e-mail blasts to advertise this event. Over the two-hour period there were approximately 15 visitors that provided feedback. First they were shown the history of the area, then shown the results of the surveys, then possible designs and themes for the vision. Finally, as they were interacting with us, they were taken to a 3-D model with sand that could be sculpted so that they could further play and suggest ideas.

Northridge Village Gateway Open House
April 1, 2015
Joyce's Coffee Shop

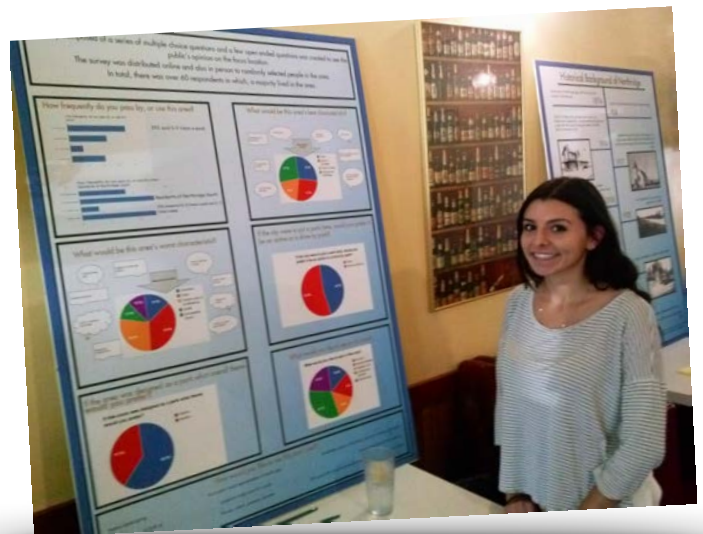
1PM
Joyce's Coffee Shop
8826 Reseda Blvd
Northridge, CA
(Enter From Parking Lot)

Students of the Department of Urban Studies and Planning are working with Northridge Sparkle and Northridge South Neighborhood Council on researching and presenting possible designs for the entrance of Northridge, at the intersection of Reseda and Parthenia.



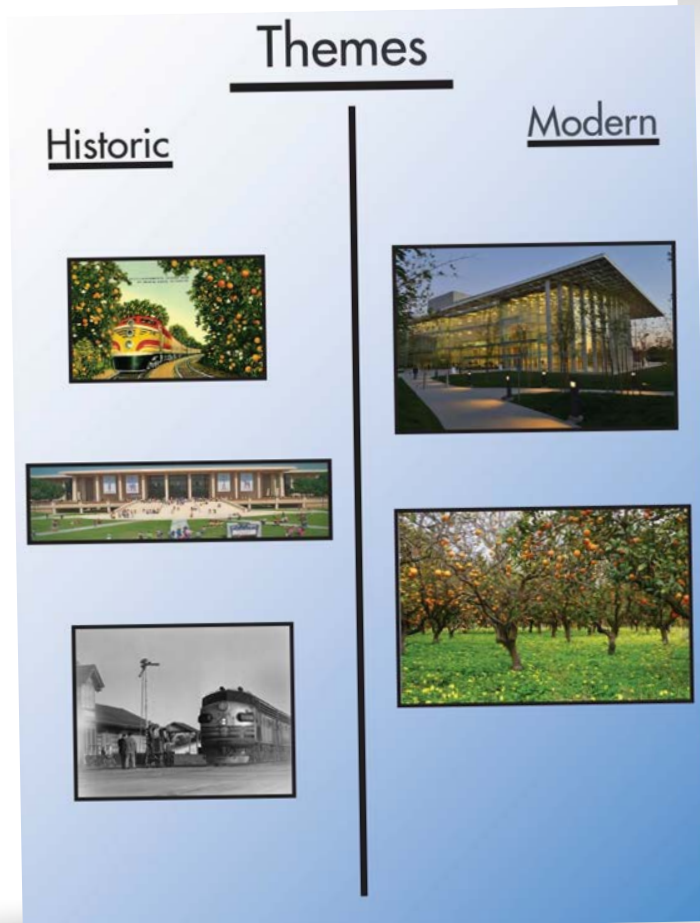


The history of Northridge was first presented so that the public would have a greater understanding of the past history, as the surveys indicated that there was much interest in the historical themes of the area.



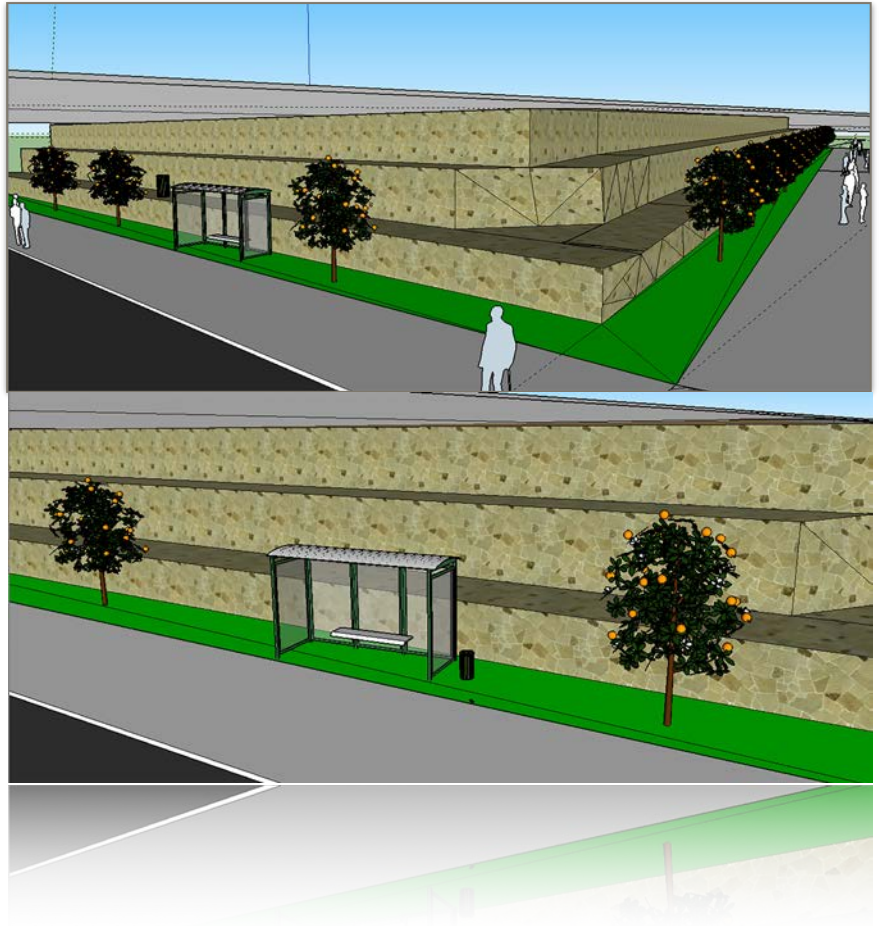
The survey results were presented to provide insight into what we already knew, so they would understand that previous feedback was being incorporated into the vision and therefore their feedback would also be incorporated.

The current conditions and two other design conditions with both step planter and scalloped walls were presented, along with a three-dimensional rendering of the step planters. There was significant interest in the step planters, and the scalloped walls were appreciated because they kept trees and made the appearance of natural California canyons.



The themes that were included were the CSUN library design, the historic orange groves, and the railroad station. There was a high interest in orange groves and having those represented in the final project.

One of the designs suggested was a simple stair steps that would create a clean image, could be planted on each layer, and included orange groves. These designs were conceptualized from original discussion with the Northridge Neighborhood Council and the survey results.



While considering the input of the participants at the Open House, the sculpting sand model was utilized to come up with alternative ideas. This sand model is equivalent to the computer generated designs shown above.

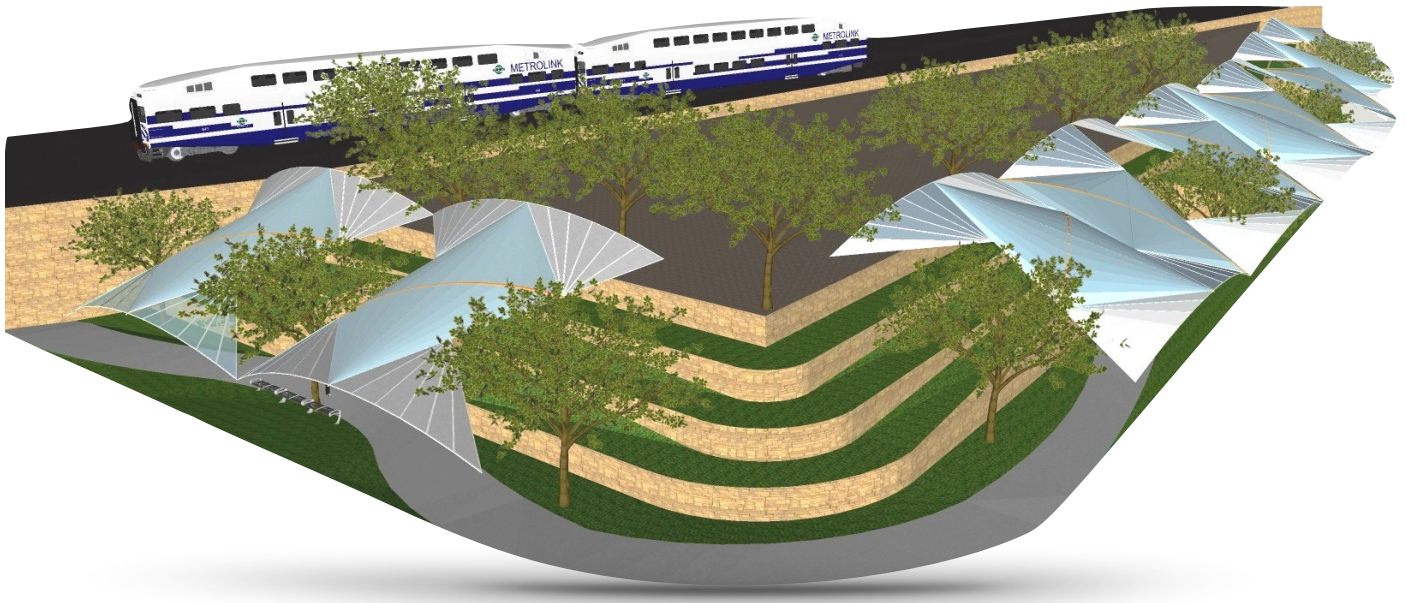
From the Open House, a design with curvy steps that create pedestrian shade refuges became the focus. The feedback also focused on a historical interest, with orange trees being an important item that was repeatedly suggested. With the curved steps, a sidewalk can be created to allow pedestrians to walk into the landscape and be away from the busy street traffic. The trees then protect the pedestrians with shade creating an interesting walking environment.



The design with the curvy terraces received very favorable feedback as a design that would create visual interest, allow for trees, landscaping and artwork to be displayed, and provide shade refuges at the ground level. This became the starting point for the final vision of the project.



FINAL DESIGN VISION



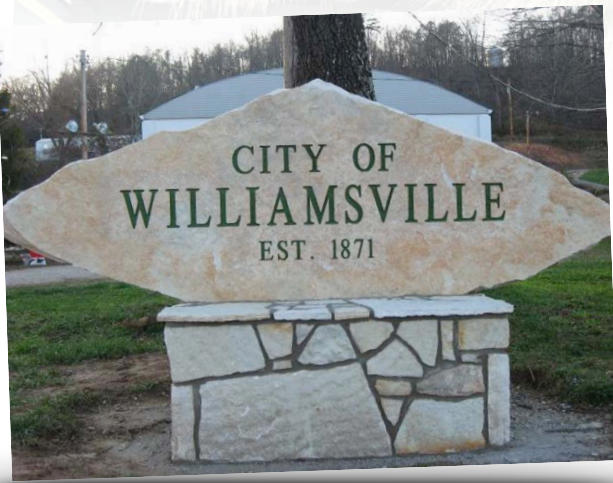
Based on the feedback, the design was created to have curved steps that creates visual interest and allows for drought-tolerant landscaping. A welcome sign is to be placed at the corner of the intersection. We are also recommending that the orange trees just be placed around the welcome sign, and that the rest of the trees be more drought-tolerant varieties that will also grow to create shade. Because the trees will be immature, we are recommending that canopies be added over the sidewalks to create shade and color interest. While the model shows them in light blue, orange and yellow could also be used to increase the

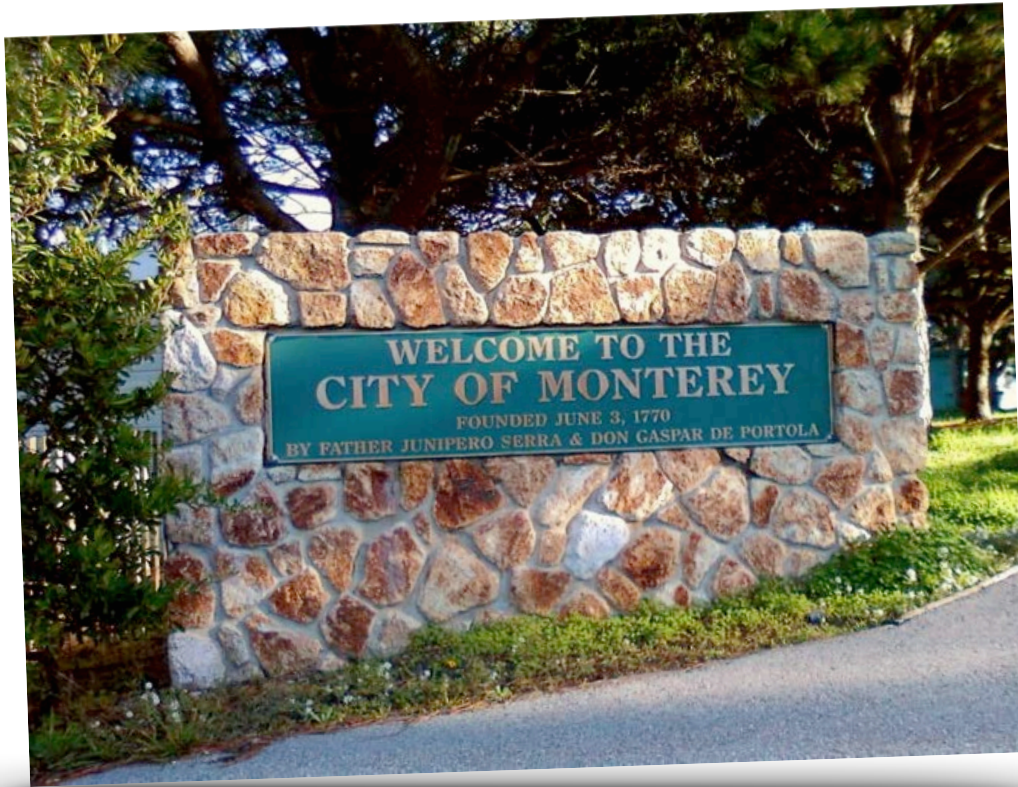
visual interest and extend the theme that LA Mas has developed for the Reseda Great Street.



EXAMPLES OF SIGNS

The pictures in this section are examples of welcome signs from neighboring cities that can be used as examples for a welcome sign to Northridge.





The signs shown are made with different natural materials, which we also suggest for the Northridge sign. A stone or stucco material would coordinate the sign with the retaining walls (steps), and some bright colors with some oranges in the design will provide a pleasant and memorable entrance sign.



CANOPY EXAMPLES

The canopy style that is being proposed is called tensegrity structures. Tensegrity structures provide both shade and style to the project, so it is both aesthetically pleasing and functional at the same time. Tensegrity structures consist of strings (in tension) and bars (in compression). Strings are strong, light, and foldable, so tensegrity structures have the potential to be light but strong and deployable. Pulleys, wire, or other actuators to selectively tighten some strings on a tensegrity structure can be used to control its shape.

Tensegrity structures are structures based on the combination of a few simple design patterns:

- Loading members only in pure compression or pure tension, meaning the structure will only fail if the cables yield or the rods buckle
- Preload or tensional prestress, which allows cables to be rigid in tension
- Mechanical stability, which allows the members to remain in tension/compression as stress on the structure increases.



LANDSCAPING PLANTS AND TREES

Some of the options that could be used to landscape will be mentioned in this section, with consideration to both suggested plants based on Northridge's history and drought conditions in California.



Scenecio "madraliscae" is a succulent shrubby perennial whose light blue-green foliage creates significant visual interest. The plant grows 1 to 1 ½ feet high and 2 to 3 feet wide. The plant prefers full sun and requires little to moderate watering.



Ceanothus griseus 'yankee point' is an evergreen ground cover that spreads from 8 to 10 feet wide. It grows 2 to 3 feet tall and has clusters of blue flowers during the spring. It also requires full sun and requires little to moderate water.



Cotoneaster is an evergreen and deciduous shrub. It requires little to moderate water and prefers full sun. In spring it blooms with white to pink flowers.



Arbutus xmarina "strawberry tree" is an evergreen tree that can grow from 8 to 35 feet tall and 8 to 35 feet wide. It provides dense foliage and has small flowers and fruit. It prefers full sun and requires little to moderate water.

Quercus agrifolia "oak tree" is an evergreen tree with dense foliage that can grow 20 to 70 feet tall. It prefers full sun and requires little to moderate water. It blooms in spring with white or pinkish flowers.



Platanus racemose "California Sycamore" is a deciduous tree that grows 30 to 80 feet tall and 20 to 50 feet wide. It prefers full sun and requires moderate to regular watering.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Based on the feedback from Northridge South Neighborhood Council, Northridge Sparkle, the surveys and the Open House, the following design considerations should be included in the project.

Retaining Walls. Because of the historic wall causing long-term erosion issues, building retaining walls will allow for a permanent solution to the erosion while creating an aesthetically pleasing entrance to Northridge Village. An initial cost estimate of \$100,00 was obtained for installing the retaining walls.

Curved Walls. Having the retaining walls be curved will increase the visual interest of the area and provide shade refuges along the sidewalk. The different layers will allow for trees and landscaping to be planted and maximize the visual interest.

Curve Sidewalks. The additional of sidewalks that parallel the curved walls will allow for a more pleasant pedestrian experience. This would also allow the curved walls to be developed into seating that would be a little more removed from the street.

Shade. The feedback strongly supported increased shade in the area. While trees are preferred and provide for clean air, noise absorption, and cooling effects, the immediate building of canopies will create colorful shade structures until the trees mature.

Entrance Sign. The current sign is difficult to see and read. Residents did not like the sign. A new short entrance sign with natural materials will provide a better welcome to residents and guests.

Orange Trees. The responses indicate a great interest in having orange trees as part of the historic culture of Northridge. The placement of a few orange trees around the entrance sign will help maintain the history without creating overwhelming maintenance and watering needs

Water and Electricity. A drip water system and electricity should be provided so that the landscaping can be maintained and the entrance sign and future artwork can be lighted.

The inclusion of all these designs will create a pleasant driving and pedestrian experience while protecting the railroad from erosion damage.

Sources

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Links of photots:

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e4/2639e4c138821f9c59e9ebecf36436fe.jpg](https://s-media-cache-ak0.pinimg.com/736x/26/39/e4/2639e4c138821f9c59e9ebecf36436fe.jpg)

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crop=0px%2C66px%2C1439px%2C960px&resize=720%2C480](http://i0.wp.com/vipmedia.globalnews.ca/2014/09/09-24-welcomesigns.jpg?crop=0px%2C66px%2C1439px%2C960px&resize=720%2C480)

http://www.blackriverstone.com/images/sandblasted_stone_city_sign.jpg

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**THE NORTHRIDGE VILLAGE GATEWAY VISION WAS
DEVELOPED IN SPRING 2015 BY STUDENTS IN THE
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