

Floodplan: Re-grading an urban industrial waste landscape

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This project tackles multiple dimensions of an increasingly ubiquitous urban 'waste-land' condition on the Nashville riverfront: a floodplain site proximate to the downtown but on polluted ground reflecting years of accumulated contamination from neglectful industrial uses. This project re-incorporates both water and ground into new site systems as an ecologically balanced material re-use strategy. The project allows the site to flood again, bringing new wetlands that filter and manage ground water, while creating water-friendly recreation areas that also provide for an adjacent underserved community characterized by food, transit and open space 'deserts.'

The project's remediation strategy re-purposes the ground itself. References to the site's industrial legacy are made by collecting the contaminated soil/asphalt/debris on the site and forming it into distinct topographic mounds that are capped and re-surfaced. These new hills 'frame' existing found artifacts (the gas cylinders, the rail cars, the highway) by partially burying them. The mounds simultaneously echo the sites' more distant past, evoking ancient settlement mounds (with the historic low lying basin restored as well). The mounds are new faces of the site, seen from a distance and offering places from which to view the new wetland park landscape and city beyond.

Within this project, a water campaign is waged as water is also highlighted as a local material for capture, for cleaning and re-purposing where possible, and for celebrating. The site is layered with an infrastructure of water systems that bring public drinking fountains, play fountains,

spray misters (solar/motion controlled) and irrigation feeds to trail and orchard/agricultural areas. The water systems are made visible, celebrated within an armature that doubles as boardwalk, shade structure and bridge.

The MpH Platform project expands the term 'remediation' away from environmental references alone, towards other less-recognized (or mal-addressed) degraded social conditions. The low income Cayce neighborhood that lies directly east of the industrial site falls within a critical food desert, a transportation desert, and an open space connectivity desert. Elevated rates of obesity and diabetes typically found in these forgotten urban areas only underscore the need to counter these deserts with an inclusive urban action proposal. The project adds new high-density development on the high ground across from the football stadium, answering to growing economic pressures on this opportunity site, but it also cultivates low floodplain land for restorative wetland, a public fresh fruit orchard, gardens and agricultural fields. Healthy food sources are introduced that can be enjoyed by the neighboring community; new public transit connectivity that would also serve Cayce Place is introduced and sustained through the new development which would aid ridership population.

This project recognizes multiple forms of urban 'waste-land,' including the socially neglected areas in the city, and uses design to remediate and restore both environmental ecological systems and social ecologies as well.

