

CHAPTER 3. PROJECT DESCRIPTION

This chapter provides a description of the proposed La Brea Tar Pits Master Plan (project), including the project location and setting, the project objectives, and a description of project characteristics and design features. This chapter also includes a description of intended uses of this EIR, including required agency actions and coordination requirements.

La Brea Tar Pits is an active paleontological research site located within Hancock Park in the city of Los Angeles (Figure 3-1 and Figure 3-2). La Brea Tar Pits, the George C. Page Museum (Page Museum), and associated facilities, are owned by the County of Los Angeles (County) but are managed by the non-profit Los Angeles County Museum of Natural History Foundation (Foundation). The Foundation's role is to carry out all County services including public access and programming, administration, and operation for the County of Los Angeles Museum of Natural History (Museum of Natural History),¹ including La Brea Tar Pits and the Page Museum. The County is the Lead Agency under CEQA for this EIR; the Museum of Natural History is a County departmental unit.

The Foundation proposes a redevelopment, or “reimagining,” of the 13-acre La Brea Tar Pits site, including the Page Museum and portions of the surrounding Hancock Park. The proposed project is the *La Brea Tar Pits Loops and Lenses, Master Plan and Concept Design*, prepared for the Foundation and the County and referred to as the La Brea Tar Pits Master Plan (Master Plan, Weiss/Manfredi 2023). The project includes a reimagined site design, expansion, and upgrades for the Tar Pits complex, including renovations to the Page Museum. The Master Plan is included as Appendix B.

The project site is located at 5801 Wilshire Boulevard in Los Angeles. The project site is adjacent to the Los Angeles County Museum of Art (LACMA).

3.1 PROJECT LOCATION

The 13-acre La Brea Tar Pits site is located within the eastern and northwestern portions of the 23-acre Hancock Park (Assessor's Parcel Number [APN] 5508-016-902) at 5801 Wilshire Boulevard. The project site includes 13 acres of the eastern and northwestern portions of Hancock Park and is directly adjacent to LACMA; both LACMA and the Foundation are responsible for managing separate and distinct portions of the 23-acre Hancock Park, with the Foundation responsible for the 13-acre project site and LACMA responsible for the remainder of the site to the south and west of the project boundaries. LACMA's facilities are not included in the project.

The project site is located approximately 5.5 miles west of downtown Los Angeles and approximately 8.6 miles east of the Pacific Ocean. It is bounded by West 6th Street to the north (an approximately 1,200-foot-long frontage), South Curson Avenue to the east (an approximately 830-foot-long frontage), Wilshire Boulevard to the south (an approximately 500-foot-long frontage), and LACMA to the west (an approximately 250-foot-long frontage). The area surrounding the site is known as the Miracle Mile neighborhood of the city of Los Angeles.

¹ In accordance with Chapter 2.94 of the Los Angeles County Code and various other operating agreements, the County Museum of Natural History is a department of the County and has administrative charge and control over all County matters relating to history and science, and shall also include the administration of Hancock Park (except that area of said park devoted to the Los Angeles County Museum of Art [LACMA]), and the care, safeguarding, and maintenance of all exhibits, equipment, and structural improvements directly relating to exhibits, the administration and maintenance of LACMA, and other property hereafter acquired for or devoted to history and science.

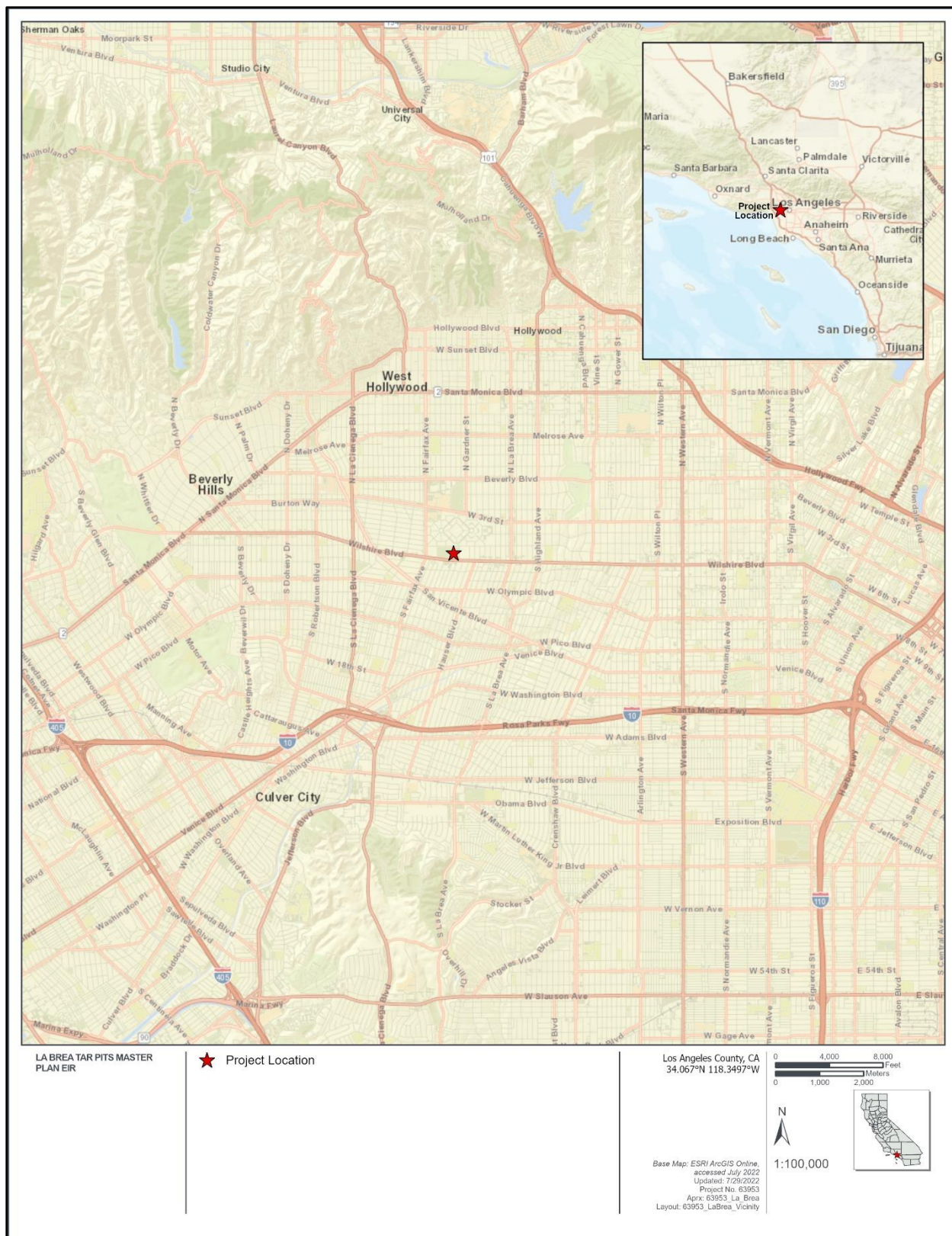


Figure 3-1. Project vicinity map.



Figure 3-2. Project location map.

Primary regional access to the project site is provided by Interstate 10, which runs east-west less than 2 miles south of the project site. The major arterials providing regional and subregional access to the project site vicinity include Wilshire Boulevard, La Brea Avenue, and Fairfax Avenue. The project site is well served by public transit. Specifically, the Los Angeles County Metropolitan Transportation Authority (Metro) 20 and 720 bus lines on Wilshire Boulevard and the Metro 217, 218, and 780 bus lines on Fairfax Avenue all stop within half a block of the project site.

In addition, Metro is currently constructing an extension of the Metro system D Line (formerly known as the Purple Line), providing three new heavy-rail subway stations along Wilshire Boulevard, which will serve the project site (Metro 2022). The new stations will be located at Wilshire Boulevard/La Brea Avenue, Wilshire Boulevard/Fairfax Avenue, and Wilshire Boulevard/La Cienega Boulevard. They are slated to open for service in 2024.

3.2 EXISTING SETTING

3.2.1 Surrounding Land Uses

The La Brea Tar Pits project site is surrounded by a variety of commercial uses, museums, residential buildings, and schools.

The project site is bounded by the Park La Brea Pool and multi-family residential uses to the north across West 6th Street, commercial and residential uses to the east across South Curson Avenue, the Craft Contemporary Museum and other museum and commercial uses south across Wilshire Boulevard, and museum and commercial uses to the west. LACMA is located to the south and west of the project site, including its Pavilion for Japanese Art and the future David Geffen Galleries, a building that is currently under construction to replace four of LACMA's older buildings. Beyond LACMA's facilities to the west are an outdoor public art installation and the Academy Museum of Motion Pictures.

The closest sensitive land uses to the project site are off-site residential uses located 50 to 150 feet from the project site. The nearest school to the project site is Fusion Academy Miracle Mile, a private learning institution for middle school and high school-age students, located approximately 0.12 mile away, and the nearest daycare is Michal Daycare located approximately 0.28 mile away.

3.2.2 Project Site Background

The project site is located within the former Rancho La Brea, a 4,439-acre Mexican land grant given to Antonio Jose Rocha and Nemisio Dominguez in 1828. Rancho La Brea consisted of approximately 4,500 acres of land in current-day Wilshire's Miracle Mile neighborhood, Hollywood, and parts of West Hollywood. In 1860, Rancho La Brea was deeded to Henry Hancock and eventually subdivided and developed. The first published mention of the occurrence of extinct fauna and fossils at Rancho La Brea was made by William Denton in 1875. In 1902, the Salt Lake Oil Field was discovered, which is the source of long-term seepage of crude oil to the ground surface within the project site. In 1913, George Hancock gave the County the exclusive right to excavate fossils and specimens for a 2-year period within and around the asphaltic deposits of the site. The largest and best documented collections at that time were made between 1913 and 1915. During this period, 96 sites were excavated, yielding well over 750,000 specimens of plants and animals.

The County acquired Hancock Park in 1924, through a donation by George Hancock (Natural History Museums of Los Angeles County 2022). Recognizing the site as scientifically valuable, Hancock donated the site under the condition that the County would develop the park as a scientific monument known as La Brea Tar Pits. After Hancock Park was established in 1924, little in the way of formal excavation was

accomplished for the next 45 years (Natural History Museums of Los Angeles County 2022). In 1969, the Rancho La Brea Project began by resuming excavation of a major deposit of fossils in Pit 91 that had been discovered in 1915. In 1960, a portion of the land within Hancock Park was dedicated to the creation, development and maintenance of the LACMA campus.² Over several decades, the LACMA portion of the site has been altered and undergone expansion. In 1975, philanthropist George C. Page donated funds to construct an on-site museum within the La Brea Tar Pits portion of Hancock Park. The Page Museum opened to the public in 1977.

Currently, Hancock Park is registered as California Historical Landmark No. 170, and La Brea Tar Pits is a U.S. National Natural Landmark (California State Parks 2022). The asphalt seeps at La Brea Tar Pits are the only actively excavated urban Ice Age fossil dig sites in the world (Natural History Museums of Los Angeles County 2022).

3.2.3 Existing Project Site Conditions

As described above, the project site includes 13 acres of the eastern and northwestern portions of Hancock Park and broadly encompasses what is known as La Brea Tar Pits, which includes the Page Museum (Figure 3-3). As shown in Figure 3-3, the existing two-story Page Museum is located within the eastern portion of the project site. The first floor of the museum is set into a large earthen berm which opens onto the Central Green, which is a 28,000-square-foot multipurpose grass lawn to the west of the Page Museum. At the top of the earthen berm on the second floor is a 30-foot-wide rooftop covered viewing platform which surrounds the first-floor central atrium courtyard.

The project site contains multiple fossil quarries, commonly called “tar pits.” The tar pits (Pits 3, 4, 9, 13, 61, 67, and 91) are within the northwestern portion of the project site. These tar pits are fenced and include informational placards. Pit 10 is not open for public viewing as it is within the research facilities enclosing Project 23.³ Numerous small tar seeps (an upwelling of asphaltum to the ground surface) are spread throughout the project site.

To the south of the Page Museum is the Wilshire Boulevard entrance and the largest asphaltic feature on the grounds of Hancock Park, the Lake Pit. The Lake Pit, which is the result of asphalt mining operations dating to the late 1880s, is one of more than 96 mining and paleontological excavation pits that once filled the park. In 1967, statues of Columbian mammoths were put on display in the Lake Pit, conveying the struggle prehistoric fauna encountered when accidentally entering a tar deposit. The statues remain there today, along with an approximately 8-foot-high fence surrounding the Lake Pit for safety and security purposes. A comfort station, with public restrooms, picnic benches, and vending machines, is adjacent to the Lake Pit to the west.

Oil Creek, a historic ephemeral creek supported by underground drainage, runs from the northeast by the parking area off South Curson Avenue to the southwest through the project site. The entirety of Hancock Park is enclosed with an 8- to 10-foot-high metal fence that serves to secure the site by providing full closure of Hancock Park when La Brea Tar Pits, Page Museum, and LACMA are closed in the evenings.

For additional information on the current site conditions, refer to Chapter 4, Environmental Setting.

² Originally part of the Los Angeles Museum of History, Science, and Art, which opened in 1910 in Exposition Park, LACMA was established in 1961 as a separate, art-focused institution.

³ Project 23 is an active fossil recovery site. In 2006, the LACMA began work on a new underground parking garage. During the course of construction, 16 new fossil deposits were discovered, including an almost-complete skeleton of an adult mammoth. Construction was halted, and 23 large wooden boxes were built around each fossil deposit (hence the short-hand descriptor, “Project 23”). These boxes and numerous buckets of fossil material were moved to the Project 23 current location for recovery. Adjacent covered research and storage areas support the ongoing fossil recovery.

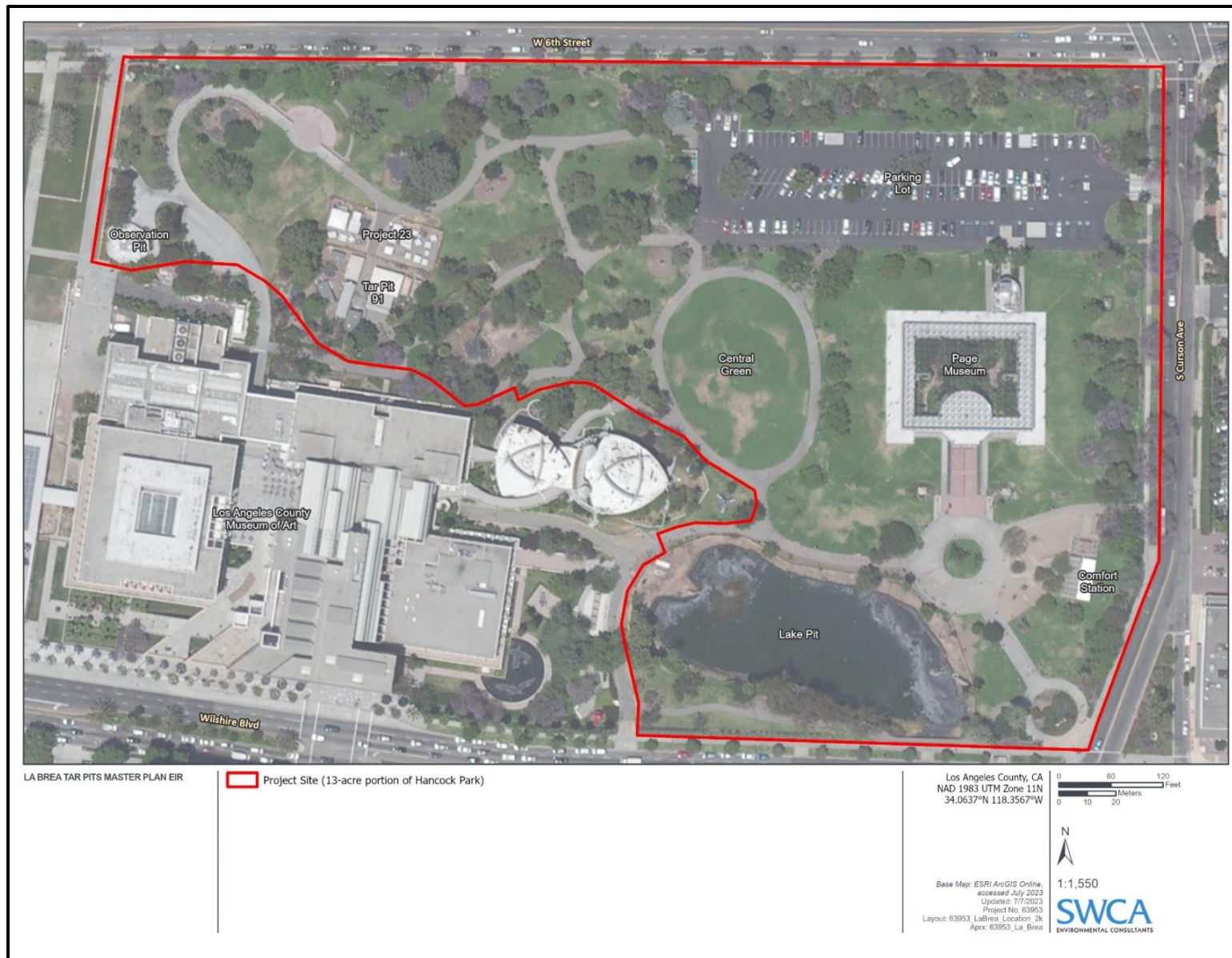


Figure 3-3. Existing site—Page Museum and Hancock Park.

3.3 PROJECT OBJECTIVES

Section 15124(b) of the State CEQA Guidelines states that a project description shall contain “a statement of the objectives sought by the proposed project,” and further states that “the statement of objectives should include the underlying purpose of the project.” The Los Angeles County Museum of Natural History, as a departmental unit of the County, and the Foundation have identified the following objectives for the project:

1. Renovate and expand the existing museum structure to address deferred maintenance of the building envelope and systems, to meet modern seismic, electrical, building code standards, and universal design standards, and to meet sustainability goals consistent with the County’s sustainability plan (County of Los Angeles 2019; County of Los Angeles 2024).
2. Provide expanded collections storage facilities that enable access for scientific research, and preserve, protect, and allow future growth of the museum’s world-class collections.
3. Provide expanded state-of-the-art laboratory research facilities to accommodate internationally significant and advanced research in paleontology.
4. Provide state-of-the-art exhibition facilities and learning environments within the park and museum to enrich the visitor experience and to support active educational and public programming.
5. Improve access and entry for different visitor types, increase connections between the museum and the park, as well as support increased visitation, special events, and revenue-producing amenities within the park and museum.
6. Expand the museum exhibits, educational classrooms, collection spaces, offices, and laboratory research facilities in one unified, cohesive facility, with the fewest impacts to historical resources possible.
7. Create a central entrance to the museum facilities to enhance the visitor experience of the museum and Hancock Park.
8. Preserve and protect the National Natural Landmark—La Brea Tar Pits—to allow access for future research and excavation, support cultural and educational interpretation, and enable the ongoing natural processes of the asphaltic seeps.
9. Redesign and renovate the Hancock Park community park green space as an expression of the goals of the County of Los Angeles’s General Plan Conservation and Natural Resources Element and the City of Los Angeles’s Open Space and Conservation Elements of the General Plan, to increase sustainable landscape and site design, to support passive recreational use, to increase the legibility of this important cultural destination, and to enhance connections to the quickly evolving Miracle Mile neighborhood.

3.4 PROPOSED PROJECT

The project would result in renovations and upgrades throughout the project site. The project would result in a reimagined site design, expansion, and upgrades for the Tar Pits complex and the 13-acre portion of Hancock Park, including renovations to the Page Museum (Figure 3-4). Table 3-1 provides a summary of the project components; more detail on the project components is provided in the following sections.

Table 3-1. Project Components Summary

| Project Component | Description |
|--|--|
| Page Museum Renovations | Renovate existing building within the same footprint (approximately 63,200 square feet). |
| New Museum Building | Construct a new two-story, 40,000-gross-square-foot (gsf) museum building northwest of the Page Museum, including two new theaters. The construction of the new museum building would require the removal of vegetation in the footprint of the new building. |
| Wilshire Gateway | Renovate the existing entrance to La Brea Tar Pits at Wilshire Boulevard and South Curson Avenue with shaded canopy and new welcome pavilion. |
| 6th Street Gateway | Renovate the existing entrance at the northwest corner of West 6th Street and the entrance to the LACMA service drive with shaded canopy and new welcome pavilion. |
| Tar Pits (Pits 3, 4, 9, 13, 61, 67, and 91; Project 23) | Renovate the existing facilities at all the tar pits in the northwestern portion of the project site. These renovations would require the removal and replacement of some vegetation, although the exact amount and nature of the vegetation removal and enhancements have not been determined at the time of this report. |
| Pedestrian Path and Recreation Areas | Reconfigure the existing pedestrian pathways on-site into a continuous paved path linking existing features on the project site. Provide improvements to the Central Green. Establish a children's play area, picnic areas, and a possible future small dog park. |
| Circulation and Parking | Relocate the parking lot approximately 50 to 70 feet to the north. The size of the parking lot (63,000 square feet) and the number of parking spaces would not change. The shifting of the parking lot on the northern side of the project site may require removal or relocation of the trees between the existing parking lot and West 6th Street. If these trees need to be removed or relocated, they would be either moved to another location within the 13-acre project site or replaced elsewhere within the project site. Add new landscaping and vehicle access lanes to the parking lot. Establish a new school drop-off/loading area approximately 215 to 230 feet long on South Curson Avenue adjacent to the Wilshire Gateway picnic area. |
| Landscaping Concept Plan | Establish three distinct landscaping zones encircled by a looping pedestrian path. More than 330 trees are currently on the project site. The project would require removal and replacement and/or relocation of between 150 and 200 trees. The planting strategy includes the planting (introduction or relocation) of a similar number of trees as would be removed. It is preliminarily estimated that <u>up to</u> 10 percent of the 150 to 200 trees to be removed would be relocated rather than replaced. Create three biofiltration areas for stormwater management. |

3.4.1 Page Museum Renovations

The project would include renovation of the existing Page Museum to allow for enlarged exhibition space, additional storage, a ground floor café, and retail space (Figure 3-5). The vegetation in the existing central atrium of the Page Museum would be removed. The central atrium would be renovated to provide additional exhibitions, an additional classroom, and visible laboratory space (Figure 3-6). The renovation would also allow much of the collection space to be reorganized and enlarged to provide better display of the collections to the public. The enlarged storage for the collections would accommodate up to 2,000 cubic feet of additional storage. In addition, space for visiting researchers and approximately 17 new employees would be added.



Figure 3-4. Conceptual site plan.



Figure 3-5. Proposed museum ground-floor building program.



Figure 3-6. Visual simulation: Page Museum renovation.

The second floor of the Page Museum would contain a multipurpose space. An outdoor café would be located next to these spaces on the center terrace on the west side of the Page Museum. The existing Page Museum entrance would be converted to an educational group and tour entrance, which would be connected to a new school drop-off area on South Curson Avenue. The project would add extensive sustainability features to the Page Museum, including enhanced daylighting, rainwater collection leading to bioswales, and rooftop solar photovoltaic panels.

3.4.2 New Museum Building

The two-story new museum building would be located to the northwest of the Page Museum, in an area currently occupied by a portion of the parking lot. As described below in Section 3.4.9, the parking lot would be shifted from its current position to the northeast. The building would be approximately 40,000 gsf and would increase the total museum square footage to 104,000 gsf. The new museum building would include an extended central lobby, exhibit spaces, two theaters, a mechanical equipment room, research and collections laboratories, administration spaces, and a loading dock. The new building would have a maximum building height of 30 feet when measured from the terrace level and up to 60 feet when measured from the finished floor of the new building.

To reduce the risk of birds striking or colliding with the building, new construction would include deterrent features on glass barriers, windows, and building elements likely to present imperceptible barriers for avian species. These features would include ceramic frit patterns and/or other features that meet the criteria from the American Bird Conservancy for bird friendly glazing.

The Page Museum and new museum building would be continuously connected on the first floor (see Figure 3-5). The first-floor central lobby would face southwest toward the Central Green and branch off into the Page Museum to the east and the new museum building to the west. An updated retail space and café would be located off the lobby and look out over the Central Green.

The buildings would be disconnected on the second floor, which would rise above the earthen berm. Interior staircases would lead to the upper floors and the two separated facilities would be accessible through sloped outdoor walkways from the Central Green.

There would be pedestrian entrances leading into the central lobby from the Central Green and from the parking lot. The façade of the new museum building would be constructed using nonreflective materials, consistent with the exterior materials of nearby buildings, and would rely on protective coatings such as anti-graffiti coatings or scratch-resistant films to reduce the potential for vandalism. The new museum building would also include safety measures including surveillance cameras and security lighting.

3.4.3 Wilshire Gateway and Lake Pit

The project would renovate the existing entrance to La Brea Tar Pits located at Wilshire Boulevard and South Curson Avenue. A large, shaded canopy would stretch down Wilshire Boulevard and curve around to South Curson Avenue to create a new welcome pavilion and shaded entry plaza; this would provide orientation, spaces for gathering and queuing, and restrooms (Figure 3-7). A picnic area would also be located under the shaded canopy.

A pedestrian bridge and walking path may be constructed over the Lake Pit. If constructed, it would include interpretive signage and explanations related to the former industrial heritage of the site. Other features may be incorporated into the Lake Pit area (e.g., around the shore) to enhance the visitor experience and improve management of the lake. Directly to the east of the Lake Pit, a new garden

bioswale would be installed to manage stormwater and would include vegetation related to the Pleistocene era.

A school drop-off area on South Curson Avenue would lead directly to the education museum entrance, enabling the management of student tour itineraries that are distinct from general museum visitors and other tour groups.

3.4.4 6th Street Gateway

The project would renovate the existing entrance at the northwest corner of West 6th Street and the entrance to the LACMA service drive. Like the Wilshire Gateway, a shaded canopy and welcome pavilion would provide orientation, legibility, and amenities. The intent of this entry is to provide a visible point of arrival from the residential communities to the north, providing access to the different destinations at the Tar Pits site, including play areas, picnic areas, seating, and interpretation zones at the protected tar seeps.

3.4.5 Tar Pits

The project would renovate the existing facilities at all the tar pits in the western portion of the project site. The existing fencing around Pit 9, Pit 13, and Pits 3, 4, 61, and 67 would be removed. The project would construct clearly defined viewing areas around each of the tar pits, with improved pit protection zones and fencing, seating, and interpretive signage.

The project would relocate the wooden fossil boxes, research facilities, and ongoing excavation associated with Project 23 to space within and adjacent to the new museum building. The temporary storage and research buildings adjacent to Project 23 would be demolished or repurposed within the project site.

Pit 91 would continue to be a key research and interpretation destination in the park. The project includes the demolition of the current viewing station overlooking Pit 91. In addition, a shaded outdoor classroom, a canopy, built-in seating, and a possible support structure would be constructed (Figure 3-8 and Figure 3-9). While excavation at Pit 91 could be completed in a few years, the site would be maintained and enhanced to support future excavation and educational opportunities. In addition, the new support facilities at Pit 91 would continue to support temporary excavation sites at adjacent Pit 10 or other future field sites.

3.4.6 Pedestrian Path and Recreation

The project would reconfigure the existing pedestrian pathways on-site into a continuous paved pedestrian path linking the existing elements of the site: the Lake Pit and Wilshire Gateway in the southeast, the Central Green, museum, and tar seeps, and the 6th Street Gateway in the northwest (Figure 3-10). The pathway would be a series of three interconnected loops (see Figure 3-10 and Figure 3-11). Each of the three loops would contain distinct themes and programming.

The Central Green would be at the center of the project site, directly southwest of the Page Museum and new museum building (see Figure 3-4). This large common grass lawn provides a setting for community activities, recreation, events, and public gathering. The project would improve the infrastructure to create a drivable path for food trucks to access the Central Green.

To the west of the 6th Street Gateway, the project would add a children's play area, picnic areas, and a possible small dog park. Vegetated berms around recreation areas would create seating areas and elevated vantage points.



Figure 3-7. Visual simulation: Wilshire Gateway.



Figure 3-8. Visual simulation: Pit 10 and Pit 91 outdoor classroom.



Figure 3-9. Visual simulation: Pit 91 interior.

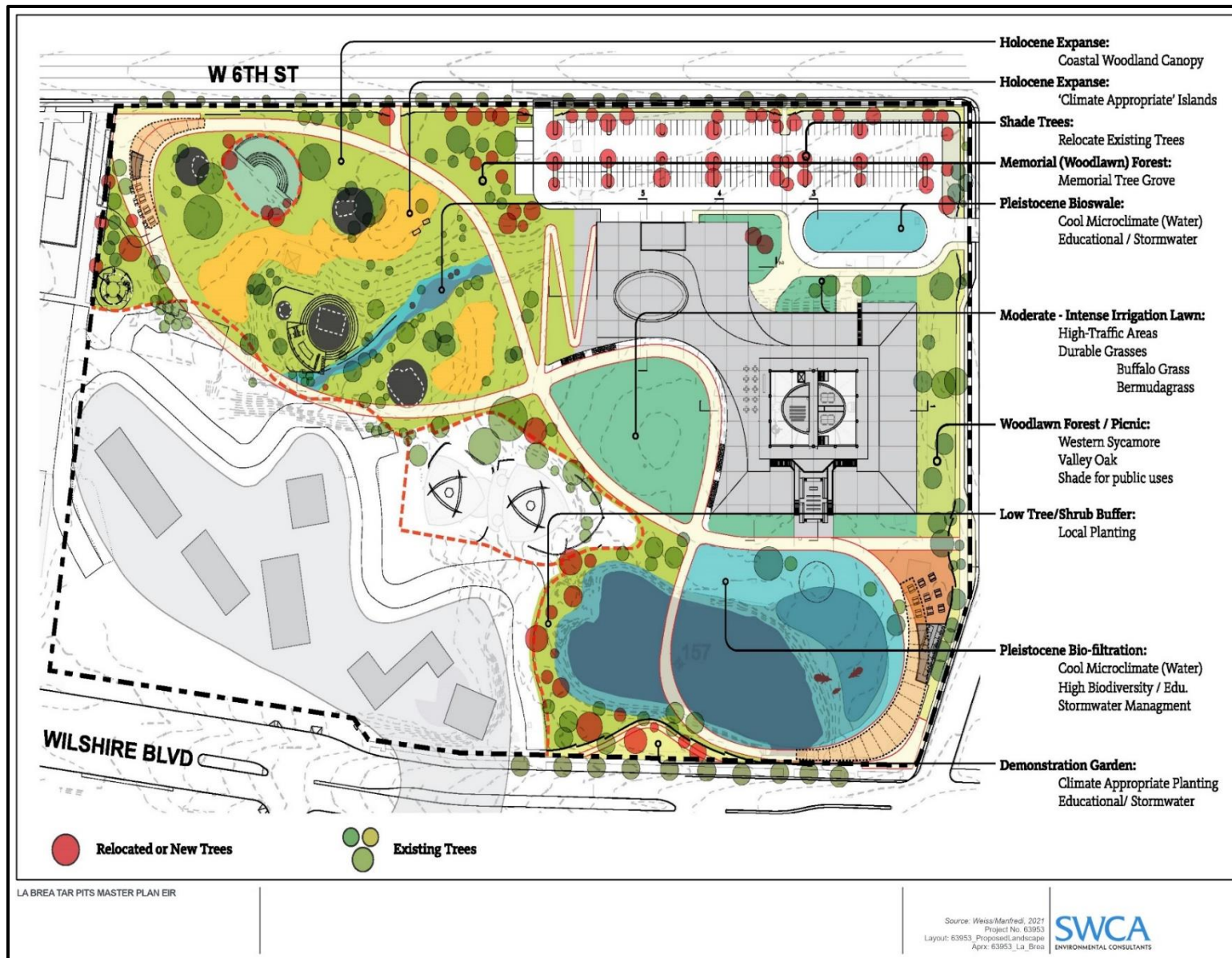


Figure 3-10. Proposed landscaping concept.



Figure 3-11. Visual simulation: pedestrian pathway.

3.4.7 Landscaping

As shown in Figure 3-10, the planting and landscaping concept for La Brea Tar Pits would be divided into three distinct zones encircled by the looping path system. Each loop of the pedestrian path would have a theme that represents different geologic epochs—Pleistocene in the southeastern loop, Holocene in the northwestern loop, and Anthropocene in the central loop (Figure 3-12 through Figure 3-14).

The Pleistocene Garden, located directly east of the Lake Pit, would be approximately 10,000 to 11,000 square feet in size, and incorporate a biofiltration area to help manage stormwater. It would be planted with herbaceous and woody species and the mammoth and mastodon sculptures currently located in the Lake Pit would be relocated there. The western loop would consist of a Holocene landscape with climate-appropriate native plantings to ease water consumption, ensure appropriate maintenance, and promote sustainable growth. A forested woodland consisting of Torrey pine and coast live oak would be planted with the intention of providing a focal area and shade. The western loop also contains Oil Creek, which would be developed into a biofiltration zone for stormwater management and would be planted with sequoia and Monterey pine trees in wetter pockets.

The woodland forest zone of the western loop would be extended along the park's peripheral edges (northern, southern, eastern, and western) to provide shade to the picnic areas and the parking lot to the north. Tree species are expected to include Torrey pine, coast live oak, western sycamore, and valley oak and would support the development of a unified canopy across the site. A 6,000 to 7,000-square-foot biofiltration area would be located within the center of the vehicular drop-off loop to manage stormwater flows from the parking lot.

3.4.7.1 Tree Removal, Relocation, and Planting Strategy

More than 330 trees are currently on the project site. The project would require removal and replacement and/or relocation of between 150 and 200 trees. The planting strategy includes the introduction or relocation of a similar number of trees as would be removed. It is ~~preliminarily~~ estimated that up to 10 percent of the 150 to 200 trees to be removed would be relocated rather than replaced. The relocated trees would be from existing locations within the project site. New plantings would be consistent with the planting and landscape concept and plant palette included in the La Brea Tar Pits Master Plan. New plantings would be selected for resilience to disease and with consideration for their ability to create shaded areas at the park. Trees that would be removed include non-native trees and/or trees that are diseased or are not in good health. Species such as the western sycamore and California buckeye would be preserved, unless they are diseased or in locations where new built features are planned (e.g., the pathway, museum expansion, and shifted parking lot on the northern side of the project site). Trees could be relocated to other locations of the 13-acre site if the trees are healthy and if it is determined through the more detailed design process that relocation is feasible. ~~It is preliminarily estimated that 10 percent of the 150 to 200 trees to be removed would be relocated rather than replaced.~~

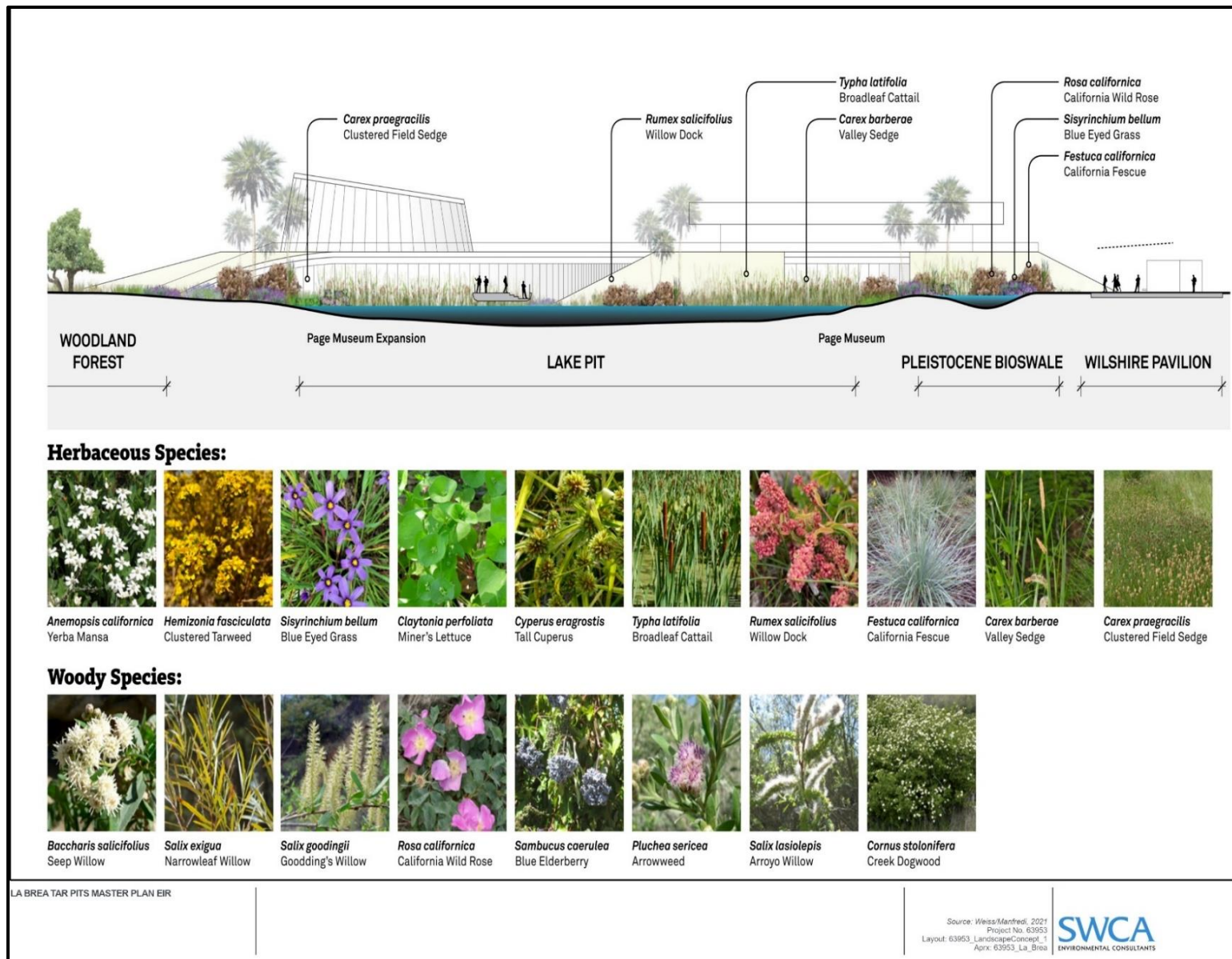


Figure 3-12. Landscape concept: Lake Pit and Pleistocene bioswale.

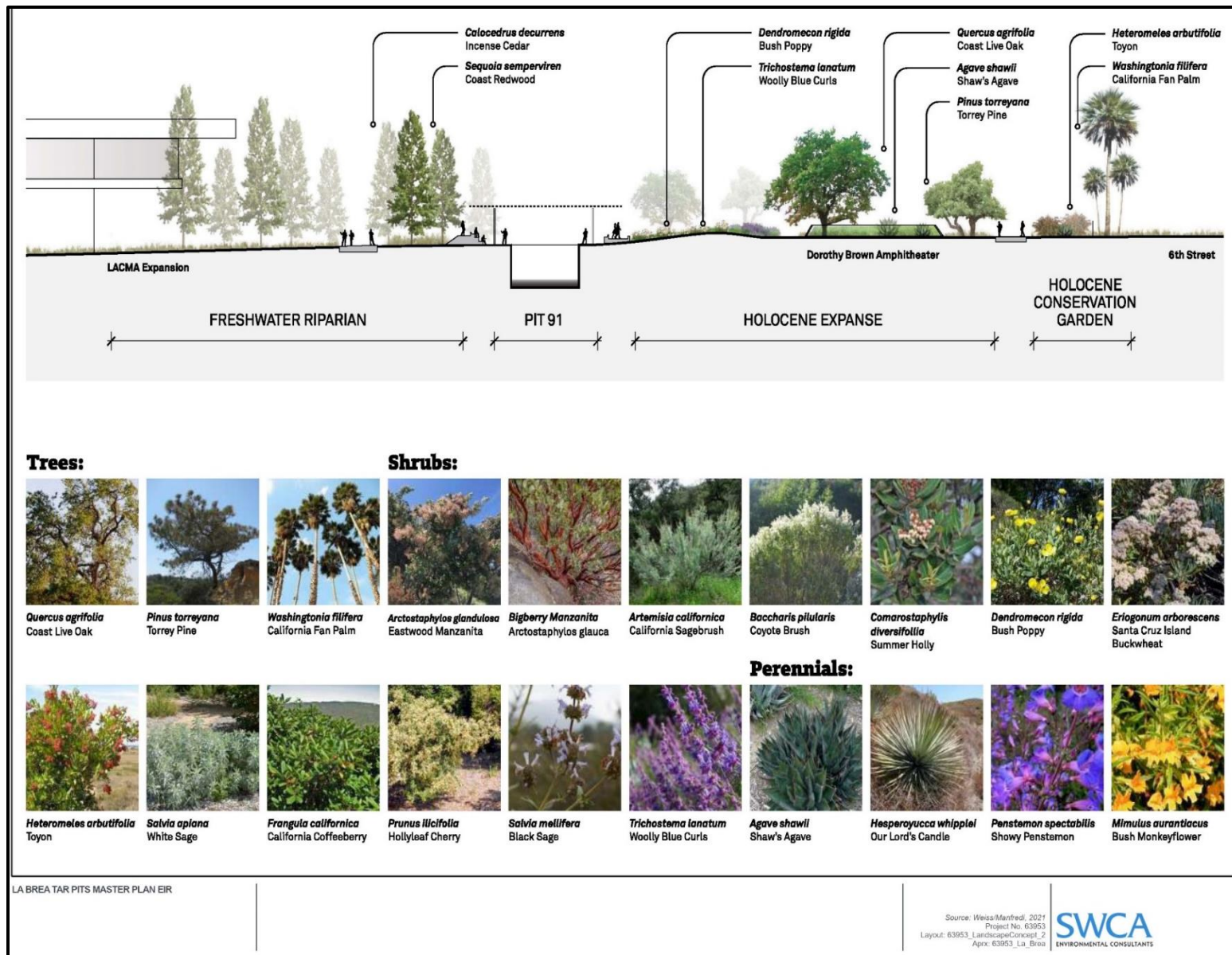


Figure 3-13. Landscape concept: late Pleistocene-Holocene.

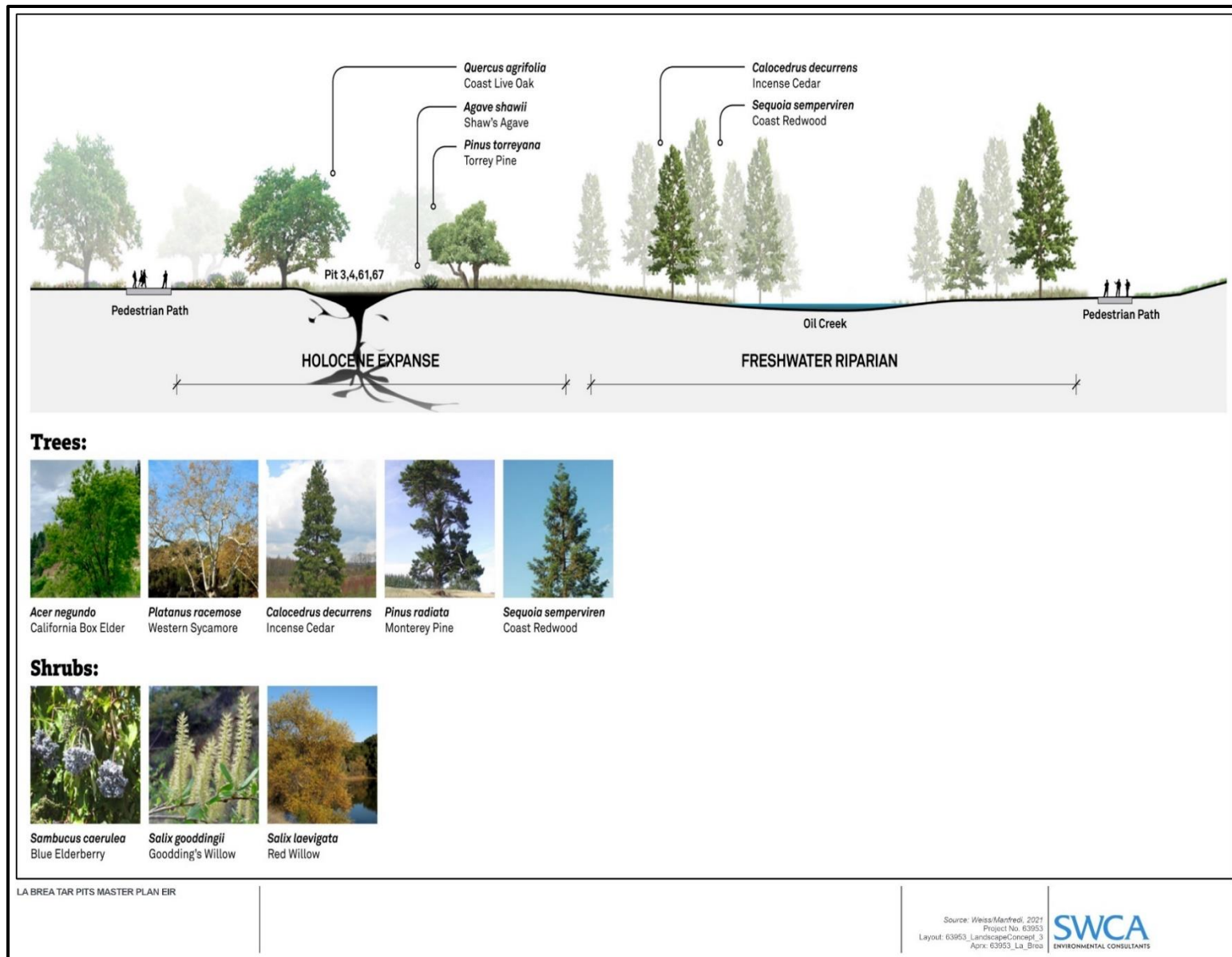


Figure 3-14. Landscape concept: Holocene and freshwater riparian.

3.4.7.2 Biofiltration Areas

The project includes three biofiltration features to manage stormwater runoff. The three features are biofiltration planters, which are shallow vegetated planters that are designed to receive and detain stormwater runoff from the building and site, filter the runoff, and eventually discharge the filtered runoff to the public storm drain system. The proposed biofiltration planters have been sized based on tributary area and are as follows:

- In the northwestern portion of the site, Oil Creek is proposed to be refurbished as a bioswale. The existing creek drainage would be cleared, lined with an impermeable liner, and partially filled with gravel subdrainage with a perforated pipe, amended soil, and plants. Runoff would be conveyed to the creek via sheet flow and existing or relocated underground pipes. After being filtered by the biofiltration media, stormwater would be collected at the bottom of the system and connected to the existing downstream stormwater system.
- In the northeastern portion of the site, the large planter within the proposed drop-off area would be constructed as a biofiltration planter. The planter would be excavated down 4 to 5 feet, lined with an impermeable liner, and filled with gravel subdrainage with a perforated pipe, amended soil, and plants. Supporting wall structures would likely be required underground (appearing at the surface as curbs), to separate the compacted soil for traffic loading and the uncompacted biofiltration media. Runoff would be conveyed to the system via sheet flow, filtered by the system, and then collected in the perforated subdrain and piped to the existing site stormwater system.
- In the southeastern portion of the site, east of Lake Pit, an in-ground biofiltration planter would be installed. The construction of this system would be similar to the Oil Creek system as described above. Subdrainage would be connected into public storm drain mains in either Wilshire Boulevard or South Curson Avenue.

3.4.8 Circulation and Vehicle Parking

The existing parking lot in the northeast corner of Hancock Park would be shifted approximately 50 to 70 feet, along the boundary of West 6th Street. The new parking lot would provide a minimum of the same amount of parking spaces as the existing parking lot (154 spaces). The project would add new landscaping and vehicle access lanes to the parking lot. A vehicular drop-off loop would facilitate vehicle circulation and visitor entry through a pedestrian entrance to the museum leading from the parking lot.

Three loading and service entrances would accommodate deliveries for laboratories, exhibition material, food service, events, and staff offices. Two of the entrances would be from the parking lot into the new museum building on the north side, and the third entrance would be from the parking lot into the Page Museum, also on the north side.

The proposed project includes a new school drop-off area from South Curson Avenue, adjacent to the Wilshire Gateway picnic area. This inset loading area would be 215 to 230 feet long to accommodate school buses. School buses would also be able to access the parking lot from South Curson Avenue and drop-off in the loading area in the parking lot.

Emergency vehicle access into the project site would be provided from the two site entrances off South Curson Avenue and off West 6th Street.

The project does not include any circulation improvements beyond the 13-acre project site.

~~The proposed project includes a new school drop-off area from South Curson Avenue, adjacent to the Wilshire Gateway picnic area. This inset loading area would be 215 to 230 feet long to accommodate school buses. School buses would also be able to access the parking lot from South Curson Avenue and drop-off in the loading area in the parking lot.~~

~~Emergency vehicle access into the project site would be provided from the two site entrances off South Curson Avenue and off West 6th Street.~~

3.4.9 Utilities

Delivery of potable water to the project site would be provided by the Los Angeles Department of Water and Power (LADWP). Proposed on-site water delivery infrastructure would include a 3-inch water line and a 3-inch fire line at the northeast corner of the site beneath the proposed parking lot, which would connect to the existing water meter in the sidewalk on South Curson Avenue (KPFF Consulting Engineers 2021). From there, the project site is served by three water mains that include two 8-inch asbestos-cement pipelines along Wilshire Boulevard and Curson Avenue, and a cast-iron pipeline along 6th Street (LADWP 2022).

Wastewater discharge from the project site is directed to the east where it connects by gravity to an existing City of Los Angeles public sewer main. The sewage infrastructure in the vicinity of the project site includes an existing 12-inch line on South Curson Avenue. The 12-inch line feeds into an 18-inch line on Wilshire Boulevard then into a 39-inch line on Crescent Heights Boulevard before discharging into a 48-inch sewer line also located on Crescent Heights Boulevard (Los Angeles Sanitation and Environment [LASAN] 2022). Wastewater generated from the new project elements, as proposed, would be conveyed from the sewer line at the northeast corner of the site beneath the proposed parking lot to the existing 12-inch sewer main along South Curson Avenue. On-site sewer lines would connect to the existing sewer main along South Curson Avenue. Detailed gauging and calculation of available sewer line capacities would be required as part of the permit process that would occur after the CEQA process, which would occur when building plans are more fully developed.

Water and wastewater pipelines, connections, and other related infrastructure are the most significant infrastructure needs that would be implemented at the 13-acre project site. However, other more minor infrastructure needs and connections (e.g., telecommunications, electricity) would also be needed, most of which would be below the ground surface (bgs). In addition, adjustments to the current plans for the on-site infrastructure may occur through the design development and permitting process. To provide flexibility during the design development process, this analysis assumes ground disturbance related to infrastructure and utilities could occur anywhere on the 13-acre site. The parameters and assumed depths of ground disturbing and excavation activities are described in Section 3.4.10, Project Construction. Improvements beyond the 13-acre site are not anticipated to be required and, thus, have not been addressed by the project-level analysis contained in this EIR.

The Foundation would coordinate with LASAN during project permitting. Following implementation of the project, LADWP would maintain the project site's water and electricity infrastructure, and LASAN would maintain the sewer and stormwater drainage infrastructure.

3.4.10 Project Construction

Construction of the project would occur when all design and construction plans are completed and approved by the County and other required agencies. Construction activities would include demolition of the existing museum entrances, grading and excavation, and construction of new structures and related infrastructure. All construction activities, including construction staging of equipment, would be situated

entirely within the project site. Typical construction equipment would be used during all phases of the project construction and would be stored within the staging area, including excavators, dozers, backhoes, dump trucks, water trucks, sand blasters, rollers, pavers, generators, scrapers, forklifts, delivery trucks, paving equipment, cranes, and air compressors. The grading and construction phase would be the peak period of construction with the highest number of construction vehicles. The grading phase is estimated to result in up to 127 one-way truck trips (e.g., vendor, hauling) and 75 worker vehicle trips per day. The building construction phase is estimated to result in up to 24 one-way truck trips and 200 worker vehicle trips per day.

Any hazardous materials found during construction and renovation would be abated and removed during the construction process in accordance with the applicable hazardous materials standards and requirements. Due to anticipated soil conditions, on-site soils are not expected to be suitable for reuse and would need to be exported for remediation and disposal (KPFF Consulting Engineers 2021). Therefore, it is anticipated that project earthwork activities would include an estimated 53,000 cubic yards of cut/export and potentially 37,000 cubic yards of imported fill (KPFF Consulting Engineers 2023). At the time of preparation of this EIR, final engineering, design, and grading plans for the project had not been finalized. Because the project design is at a preliminary stage, the level of detail needed to determine the precise depth of ground disturbance is not known. However, the level of design that has occurred to-date allows for a general characterization of the overall ground disturbance and excavation that would be necessary for the project. The project design team worked with the Foundation and the County to characterize a “worst-case” ground-disturbance estimate, which represents the most-impactful scenario in terms of depths and amount of excavation that includes all project elements. While separate estimates for each project element (e.g., the new museum building) are not yet available, the estimate based on the worst-cast scenario provides a reasonable basis on which the potential for environmental impacts can be analyzed.

Under the most-impactful scenario, the project would maximally require excavations from 6 to 10 feet bgs. In general, the new museum building would require the most ground disturbance and excavation. While the final elevation of the foundation for the new museum building is not known at this time, it may be below the existing ground surface to provide a smooth connection to the existing Page Museum.

The expansion of the new parking lot to the north and west of the existing lot would likely also require grading and imported sediments to create a level surface as a base beneath the new surface, estimated as requiring approximately 3.3 feet or less. The pedestrian paths, recreation areas, pit renovations, and landscaping would all require shallow to moderate excavation not to exceed approximately 5 feet; deeper excavation could possibly be required for tree planting/removal, although many of the ground-disturbances for these components would be at more shallow depths (e.g., 18 inches), for example to complete smaller plantings and construct/remove pathways.

Pile-drilling could be required to construct the structural supports for the new walkway over the Lake Pit and possibly the two gateway entrances, and ground disturbances are expected to be approximately consistent with the maximum depths of 10 feet considered for the project but contained within the relatively narrow diameter of the bore and in a limited number of locations.

While certain project elements are expected to require less excavation than the new museum, this EIR assumes that excavations could occur up to 10 feet deep throughout the 13-acre project site to allow maximum flexibility as the project designs become more refined.

3.4.11 Project Operation

Once the project is constructed and operational, there could be modest changes in project operation and maintenance, which are considered in this EIR. However, much of the maintenance of the 13-acre Hancock Park would occur as it does today with no measurable changes. Due to the increase in facility square footage, a modest increase in staffing to support La Brea Tar Pits and the Page Museum is anticipated. While an exact increase in the number of staff to be added to manage the site is not known, for EIR purposes, an estimate of approximately 20 additional staff is assumed. This factor of employee growth is based on the anticipation that, in the future, the buildings would have the same ratio of employees to building square footage as is present today.

The project would result in an expected increase in visitation to the project site upon project completion. Existing visitation at the Page Museum was estimated through the effort completed for the Transportation Assessment by using attendance counts from July 2017 (see Appendix J for more detail). It is estimated that a typical summer visitation is currently around 2,000 visitors on an average weekday and 2,600 daily visitors on Saturdays. Estimated increases in visitors to the Page Museum resulting from the project have been estimated based on the increase in square footage of the museum space (67%). Using this approach, the increase in visitors on weekdays would be around 1,350 people, and on Saturdays the increase would be approximately 1,750 people. Additional visitors also currently use the park without visiting the museum; this is expected to also increase modestly with the improvements to the project site. There currently is not a quantification of this pass-through and/or passive visitation available.

The Foundation and the County do not anticipate other operational changes occurring with implementation of the Master Plan.

3.5 AGENCY APPROVAL REQUIREMENTS AND INTENDED USES OF THIS EIR

The County of Los Angeles is the Lead Agency for the project under CEQA. While the project site is located within the city of Los Angeles, it is owned by the County of Los Angeles and is proposed for uses that benefit the public. Accordingly, the project is not subject to City of Los Angeles regulatory controls. Table 3-2 summarizes federal, state, and local approvals and/or permits that may be required for the project and the agencies that are expected to use the EIR in their decision-making processes.

Table 3-2. Agency Approval Requirements

| Agency | Approval Required |
|--|---|
| County of Los Angeles | Certification of the EIR Approval of project as described in the EIR Approval of Grading and Building Plans |
| Regional Water Quality Control Board | Construction General Permit Section 401 under the Clean Water Act (potentially) |
| U.S. Army Corps of Engineers | Section 404 Permit under Clean Water Act (potentially) |
| California Department of Fish and Wildlife | Authorization under Section 1602, Lake and Streambed Alteration Agreement (potentially) |

3.6 ENVIRONMENTAL REVIEW OF SUBSEQUENT ACTIONS

This EIR is intended to expedite the processing of future development that is consistent with the La Brea Tar Pits Master Plan and with the analyses and findings of this EIR. Although more detailed final design is forthcoming, this EIR evaluates a reasonable and likely maximum development scenario that would be anticipated based on the level of information that is currently available.

If the Master Plan is approved, and when considering subsequent development, the County would be required to determine whether the final design and development plans are consistent with the parameters and assumptions described herein and would not result in new or more severe significant environmental effects or require additional mitigation. If no additional or more severe environmental effects would have the potential of occurring, the County could approve the final design and development without additional environmental review. However, if there are significant changes proposed that are not consistent with the approved Master Plan or the type and level of development analyzed in this EIR, and the County concludes that these may result in new significant environmental impacts, additional environmental review would be required consistent with the requirements of the State CEQA Guidelines Sections 15162 through 15164.

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