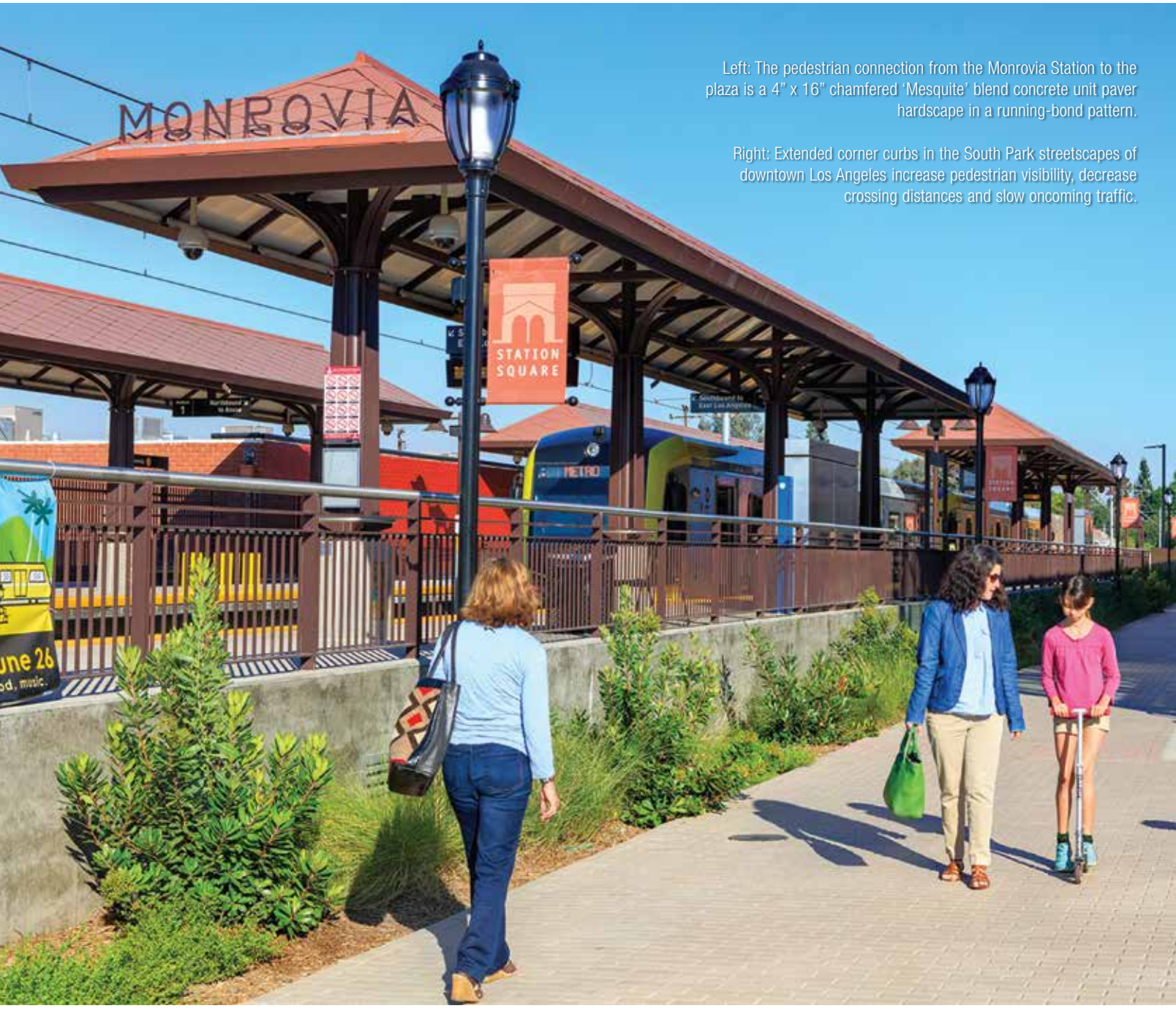
AHBE Landscape Architects Revitalizes Southern California Streetscapes

Case Studies: South Park Streetscape in Downtown Los Angeles and Monrovia Station Square Transit Village



Left: The pedestrian connection from the Monrovia Station to the plaza is a 4" x 16" chamfered 'Mesquite' blend concrete unit paver hardscape in a running-bond pattern.

Right: Extended corner curbs in the South Park streetscapes of downtown Los Angeles increase pedestrian visibility, decrease crossing distances and slow oncoming traffic.

Two projects by Los Angeles-based firm AHBE Landscape Architects—the award-winning South Park streetscape in downtown Los Angeles and the Monrovia Station Square Transit Village in the city of Monrovia—serve as examples of how streetscapes and open spaces can reinvigorate an urban community. At both projects, AHBE provided design solutions that respond to the communities' growing desire for more engaging and sustainable living. The design solutions prioritize pedestrian safety to encourage activity, which in turn promotes neighborhood interaction. In keeping with AHBE's commitment to sustainable design, the streetscape designs at both projects use stormwater infiltration, among other sustainable strategies.

The South Park streetscape planters were specifically designed to infiltrate a "10-year" rainstorm. The sidewalk drains to the central planters. Rainwater flowing from the street into the gutters is also diverted into the infiltration planters via cuts in the curb.

South Park Streetscape

The site of the South Park streetscape was built by the South Group Development as part of their forward-thinking and eco-driven portfolio of work being built along the West Coast. From master plan to completion, AHBE designed the streetscape, common open space areas and residential amenity decks of three mixed-use LEED Gold certified buildings: Evo, Luma and Elleven. AHBE's design resulted in the first Green Street for downtown Los Angeles and an open space solution for promoting neighborhood interaction.

With the ultimate goal of creating a new sense of community, AHBE's streetscape design wraps around the block to encourage pedestrian activity around the area. The streetscape leaves space for outdoor seating for sidewalk cafes, and shaded benches to encourage lingering. Prioritizing pedestrian safety, AHBE included curb extensions, pedestrian lighting and crosswalks to increase pedestrian safety.

The streetscape design features planters specifically designed for stormwater infiltration and to handle a "10-year" rainstorm. During a storm, rainwater flowing from the street into the gutters is diverted into the infiltration planters via cuts in the curb, and percolates back into the ground. This system minimizes the amount of stormwater run-off into the city's system, cleans the water through a natural process and recharges the region's aquifers.

AHBE's open space design further reinforced the sense of community by creating several open space areas for the residents of the buildings. Each high-rise building includes an open courtyard space. Between the Evo and Luma buildings is a courtyard area that is open to the public during daylight hours. A rooftop outdoor living/seating/eating/cooking area is accessible to the residents of the Luma, Elleven and Evo buildings and features a pool deck and sky patio. The design of the streetscape and open spaces of the South Park project exemplifies the transformative effect that green building and landscape design can have on potentially static urban areas.

Top & Bottom, Left: Tipa trees (*Tipu tipuana*) shade the sidewalks, and 'City Sites' benches encourage pedestrians to linger in the downtown. The benches and trash receptacles are from Victor Stanley; the iron tree grates are from Neenah Foundry.

Bottom, Right: The planters in South Park were designed to infiltrate and filter stormwater runoff, and also create a safety barrier between pedestrians and the parking lane. This planter sports European grey sedge (left) and Germanica iris (right).

South Park Streetscape Team
Developer: South Group
Landscape Architects: AHBE
Architects: Ankrom Moisan, GBD Architects, Thompson Vairoda & Assoc.
Civil engineering: KPFF
Benches: Victor Stanley, 'City Sites' collection, model CBF-12
Bike racks: 'Bola'
Concrete coloring: Davis Colors
Trash receptacles: Victor Stanley, 'FC-12', Concourse Collection
Tree grates, iron, square: Neenah Foundry

'Grandma' purple flag bearded iris *(Germanica iris)*

Yakushima dwarf maiden grass *(Miscanthus sinensis)*

European grey sedge *(Carex divulsa)*

American boxwood *(Buxus sempervirens cv.)*

Above: Curbside infiltration planters and bioswales line Monrovia Station's adjacent streetscape. Desert Museum Palo Verde trees and 'Dune Sedge' (*Carex pansa*) buffer the street and sidewalk.

Right: Native plantings of 'Alamo' Mexican Sycamores and 'Scarlet Bugler' shrubs, along with 'Dos Rios' river cobbles, decorate the linear granite fountains at one end of the Monrovia Station plaza.

Monrovia Station Square Transit

About 25 miles northeast of South Park, in Monrovia, California, AHBE designed a transit plaza and adjacent streetscapes for the Monrovia Station Square Transit Village along Los Angeles Metro's Foothill extension of the Gold Line rail system—one of six new Gold Line stations that opened in 2016.

Along with being a station stop, the design encompasses nearly three acres of open space that provide the community with a venue for public events. The plaza features a wide promenade with curved seat walls beneath large oak trees. At one end of the plaza, linear granite fountains offer the subtle sound of spilling water for both appeal and noise reduction. More active features include an amphitheater and children's play area.

The 1.3 miles of adjacent streetscapes connecting to the station are also new, sustainable green streets that make the pedestrian connection to the station more inviting. Improvements include new paving and LED pedestrian lights. Suspended modular pavements below permeable pavers are also installed adjacent to the street trees to allow room for larger roots and consequently a larger shade canopy. Infiltration parkways built directly behind street curbs allow stormwater to flow from the street gutters into the infiltration planters before infiltrating into the ground.

Through AHBE's strategic design of the streetscape and open spaces in downtown Los Angeles and Monrovia, two communities now benefit from a more integrated experience, whether they are residents of one of the high rises or of Monrovia. The successful implementation of sustainable landscape design strategies at both projects serve as a reminder of the great potential of multifunctional use for mixed-use developments and transit stations alike.

'Pigeon Point' dwarf desert bloom *(Baccharis pilularis)*

'Festival™ burgundy Cordyline'

'Scarlet Bugler' *(Penstemon barbatus)*

Lenca 'Regal Mist' pink muhly *(Muhlenbergia capillaris)*

Monrovia Station Square Transit Village Streetscape Team
Landscape Architects: AHBE
Architects, Civil Engineering and Lighting & Signage: IBI Group
Contractor: MS Construction Management Group
Irrigation: Sweeney + Associates
Benches: 'Camber', black steel/ipe slats: Forms+Surfaces
Drain grates 18" x 24" "Title Wave": Urban Accessories
Litter receptacles: 'Dispatch', Forms+Surfaces
River cobbles: 'Dos Rios'