

Beyond the Pedestal

This project transcends boundaries by transforming a site of exclusion into a dynamic commons. Redefining how we engage with contested monuments by honoring history without glorifying harmful figures. It celebrates the diverse Afro-Creole Maroon heritage, bridging cultural divides and fostering social inclusion. By blending urban space with natural wetlands, it erases lines between past and future, ecology and culture, reflection and activation, thus creating an inviting, resilient public space that encourages community interaction, cultural exchange, and collective healing.

Harmony Circle is reimagined as a living landscape of resistance and refuge. Once a traffic-bound monument centered around an object of division and disruption, the site now invites reflection through exploring a reuse of the existing pedestal through deconstruction. A fractured pedestal rests partially submerged in a constructed wetland—no longer a platform of dominance, but an offering to memory and a symbol of renewal and moving forward. Native cypress and swamp grasses rise around the broken pieces, recalling the protective landscapes that sheltered the Maroon communities.

Paths meander like the evasive trails of the swamps, encouraging quiet exploration and evoking the hidden histories of freedom seekers. A circular refuge pavilion, inspired by Maroon shelters, stands lightly among the trees. Being higher in elevation, the landscape integrates bioswales and constructed wetlands to manage stormwater and restore ecological function, echoing the resilience of those who thrived in the margins.

Cobbles, lawn amongst streetcar tracks, and native materials give history and context to a once out-of-place landscape between one of the busiest urban nodes in the city. A place for office workers to take their lunch breaks, pedestrians making their way through the city, or catering to the masses every year during Mardi Gras, the design seeks to bring all of its past lives and stories to meet the functions of today.

Sketch of the Past



Site timeline etched inside representing Harmony Circle, Maroonage Culture and New Orleans history



1937 Construction Documents

Belgian Stone Pavers

Views

- A The Fallen Pedestal
- B The Refuge Pavilion
- C Shady Plaza

Re-mediate

BIOSWALE
POCKET WETLAND
HABITAT

CARBON CAPTURE

NATIVE ECOLOGY
WATER

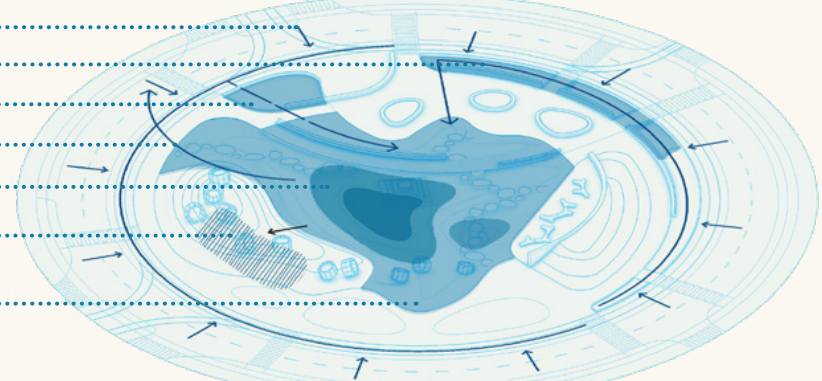
Re-reflect

STORYTELLING
RESPITE
SITE TIMELINE

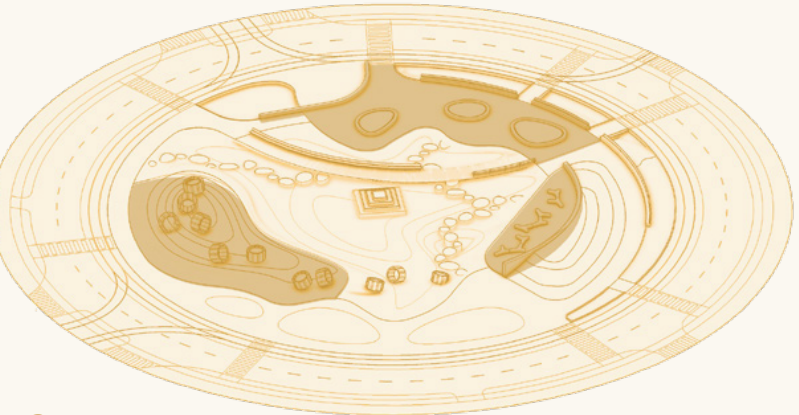
Re-claim

DECONSTRUCTED PEDESTAL
PEDESTRIAN PLAZA
KART KIOSKS

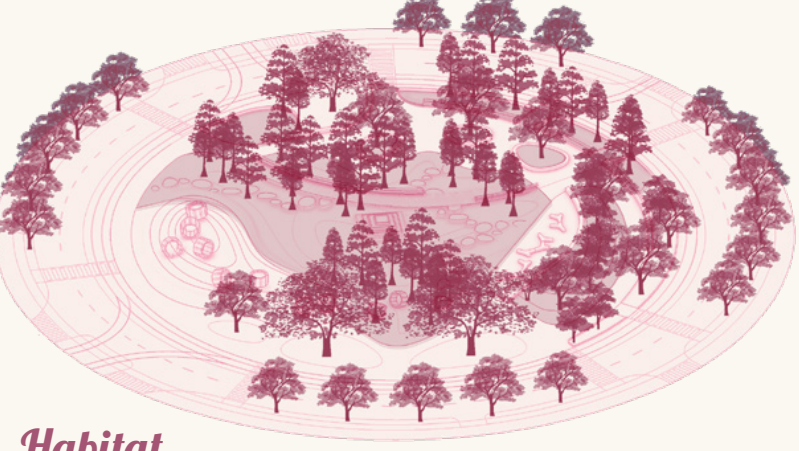
Re-juvenate



Water
Stormwater Captured
• Pre-Development = 6.98 million gals/yr
• Post-Development = 13.79 million gals/yr

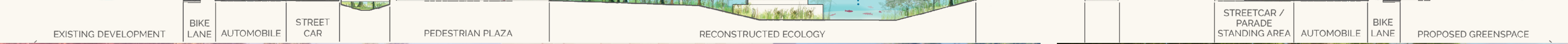


Community
• Introduction of gathering space
• Art / Storytelling integrated into prominent pedestrian space
• Introduction of mobile kiosks for economic revitalization



Habitat
Carbon Captured
• Pre-Development = 424 lbs CO2/yr
• Post-Development = 1,189 lbs CO2/yr

Section A-A'



EXISTING DEVELOPMENT BIKE LANE AUTOMOBILE STREET CAR PEDESTRIAN PLAZA RECONSTRUCTED ECOLOGY PROPOSED GREEN SPACE DEVELOPMENT

Roof form and structure echo protective forest canopies

Cypress wood roof celebrates the organic, hand-built nature of Maroon shelters in the wilderness

Existing pedestal base deconstructed, "sinking" into the landscape

Posts evoke handmade stilt structures common in Maroon settlements

"Storytelling benches" - community space inspired by the practice of passing down family and ethnic history through generations

Maroon Trail - Hidden path meandering through the wetland

Balanced Native Wetland System by supporting a full food web and mimicking natural wet-dry cycles

The Refuge Pavilion uses rustic materials to honor Maroon communities and reflecting their resilience, and deep ties to the swamp

Future phases of the project will engage local residents, artists, and cultural historians to co-create interpretive elements and ensure the space reflects the lived experience of the community

Fallen Pedestal Piece

Shady Plaza

Proposed Mix-use Development

Hidden maroonage cultural symbols
Historical Cobble Stone
Historically Used Belgian Stone Pavers
Bioswale