

rio iluminado

river illuminated

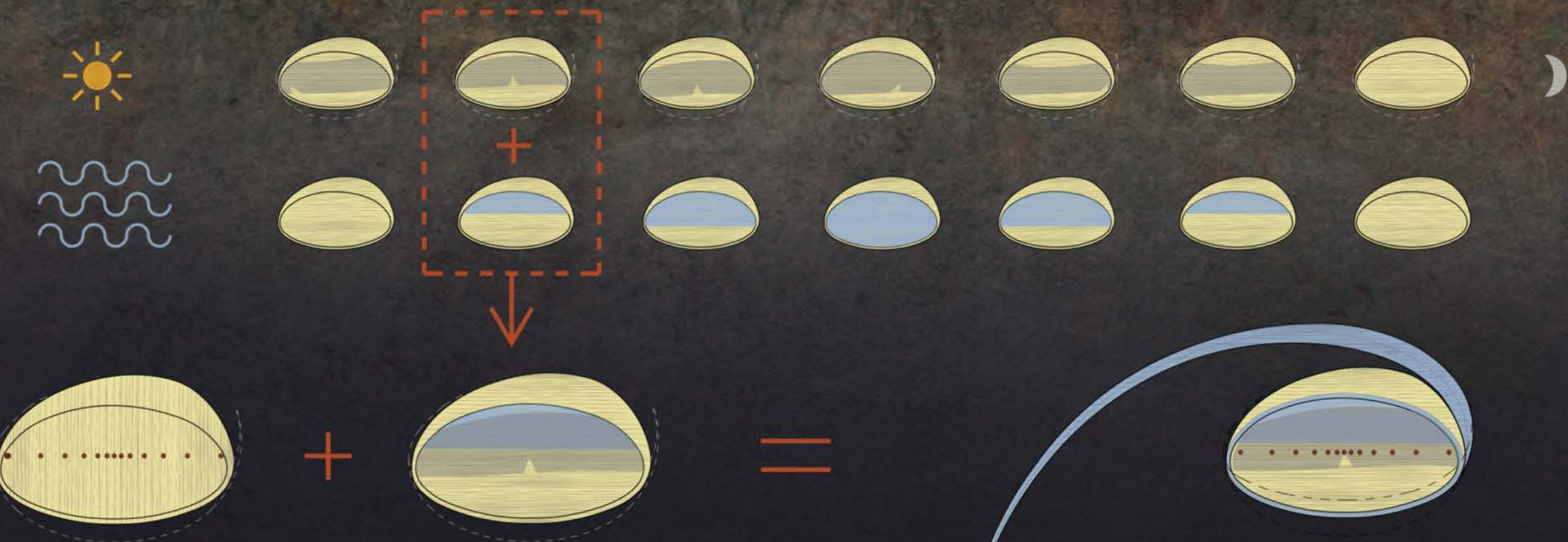


Solar Cycles

annual cycle

January		
February		
March	EQUINOX	→
April		
May		
June	SUMMER SOLSTICE	→
July		
August		
September	EQUINOX	→
October		
November		
December	WINTER SOLSTICE	→

diurnal cycle



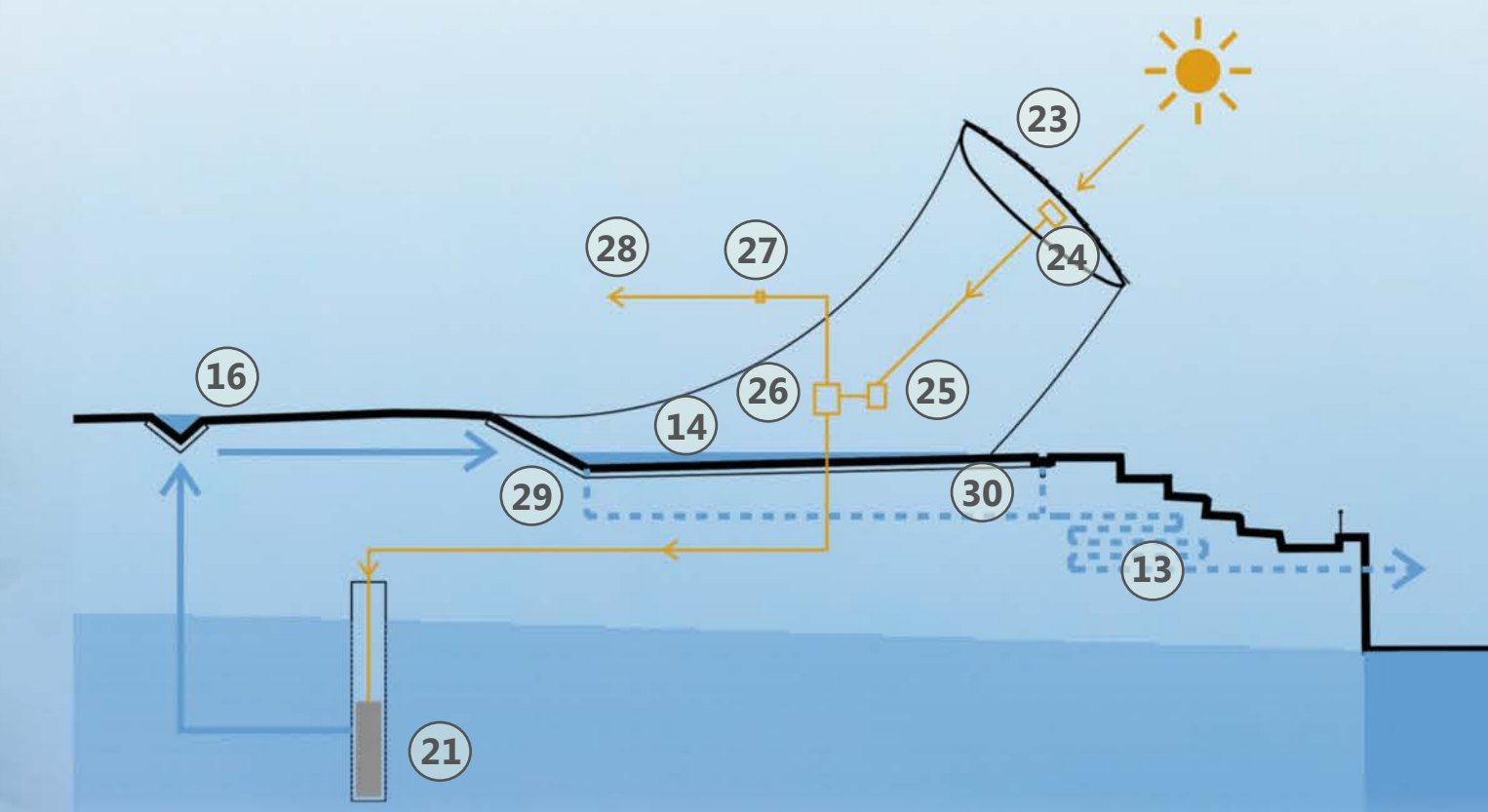
Inset cast glass shapes, circular and oval prisms, mark the path of the sun across the surface at the equinoxes and the solstices.



Rio Iluminado is a place-making sculpture that has three primary attributes. First, it uses the **sun to generate energy** and to mark the passage of the seasons, the rhythm of the day, and the movement of river-related species. Second, it **brings the river up into the park** where a broad cross-section of people with diverse abilities can interact with the water year round. And third, it playfully **reflects the river**, its species, the people, and the City, illuminating and merging the life that shares this place.

The place-making sculpture's three attributes are purposefully cyclical and visceral – temporal without the human concept of time; emotional without the need for formal knowledge. Direct experience **connects visitors to the cycles of nature** and its inherent balance and reciprocity - where humans are but one part of the whole. In reaching back to the fundamental cycles, we hope to illuminate connection and interdependence – not only among human cultural communities, but of the place, nature, and the world at large. In this way, Rio Iluminado is timeless: it is not connected to a specific era or a point in history, but to the enduring qualities that humans experience when we connect to something greater than ourselves.

CONNECT



- Legend**
- | | |
|--------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------|
| 1 Air Line State Park Trail | 13 Bioswale |
| 2 Proposed crosswalk location | 14 River Platform |
| 3 Curb cut and accessible crosswalk curb | 15 Solar Arch |
| 4 Permeable paving | 16 Viewing Terrace |
| 5 Accessible route to Rio Iluminado | 17 Restored foundation wall and railing |
| 6 Mid-length grasses | 18 Micro clover |
| 7 Earthen Building with native grass and wild flowers | 19 Tree Copse |
| 8 Main entry to Earthen Building and access to parking | 20 River Well |
| 9 Entry to kayak and gear storage | 21 Stone ledge at Bridge St. |
| 10 Bicycle racks | 22 Frameless solar collectors |
| 11 Automobile parking | 23 Array combiner box |
| 12 Begin Riparian Trail | 24 Disconnect |
| | 25 Breaker panel |
| | 26 Meter |
| | 27 To the grid/future site uses |
| | 28 Drain |
| | 29 Overflow |



Moments along the **Spiral Channel** where people can **interact with river water**.

The physical form of **Rio Iluminado** has 4 components: the **River Well**, the **Spiral Channel**, the **River Platform**, and the **Solar Arch**.

Why is it when we visit an ancient site like Machu Picchu or Stonehenge we feel something special, physical, and indescribable? In the way that one can feel the intentions of an artist radiate from the canvas without even one word of explanation from the artist herself, the places we make have the same capacity to embody and communicate a purpose – even provoke transformation. It is with this level of intentionality that we approached the site, its restoration, and the making of a new place for Willimantic.



The surface of the **River Platform** has two important interpretive design features. First, inset cast glass shapes mark the equinoxes and the solstices. Second, shot-blast murals of riverine species, both aquatic and avian, in figure-ground migration pairings, describe to the visitor the species that do inhabit the river (or we hope will inhabit the river after the dams have been removed), restoring the balance of the habitat.

ENJOY

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Site plan showing through-block **connections** between Main St. and Riverside Dr., continuation of the Air Line State Trail, and the new riparian trail.

We consistently heard from the community that the design should be forward-looking and forward-thinking, and provoke action toward what's next for Willimantic. Perhaps ironically, this prompted us to look to what is fundamentally true about the place now and has been forever: that this is a place governed by the cycles of the sun and the rhythm of nature, and that humans are part of this system. To restore and reconnect humans to this – to something which is eternal and bigger than any individual – is a gateway to creativity, inspiration, innovation, healing, and growth.

The project's priorities are to: illuminate the connection between nature and the community; generate the highest amount of energy in the smallest reasonable footprint; create a place to encourage joy and interaction, restoring a balanced, reciprocal relationship between all of the communities that occupy this place; and become a model for other communities to engage their unique assets to create an exactly-suited solution to embody the aspirations.

Section from Town Hall to the river showing the reflections that create an **ever changing mural**.

RESTORE