

# THE ARCHITECTS NEWSPAPER

ISMAEL BY THE SEA

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Ismael Leyva Architects selected to design waterfront park in Veracruz, Mexico.



New York-based Ismael Leyva Architects has been commissioned to design a waterfront park by the city of Boca del Rio in Veracruz, Mexico. Firm principal Ismael Leyva recently sat down with AN to discuss the project in detail. Leyva was born and raised in Veracruz. He opened Ismael Leyva Architects in 1996, but has been practicing architecture in the United States for over 30 years. When he received news that Boca del Rio was seeking an architect to design a waterfront park along its Boulevard Ávila Camacho, Leyva reached out to the city's mayor.

"I was very fortunate to be selected," said Leyva. "The mayor of the city was interviewing some architects from the United States—New York and Miami. I happened to know him so I invited him to the office, and he knew this is not the kind of work I do. I'm known for residential towers and hotels. So he came and said 'I would really like to redesign the whole boulevard,' and I told him 'I can do that for you.'"

Leyva recently unveiled his design for the long, narrow park, which snakes along the Boca del Rio waterfront for three miles. In order to make room for the park, the architects are cutting into the Boulevard Ávila Camacho, which runs along the water's edge. "We're eliminating one lane of each side of the street and increasing the width of the park," said Leyva. One of the main objectives behind creating the waterfront park is to promote recreational and physical activity among the residents of Veracruz. Leyva said he is accomplishing this by adding a bicycle path to the park and inserting several pockets of space for playgrounds and lounging areas. The park pockets are dispersed along the waterfront at intervals and are bridged by the cycling path, forming small hills. Leyva said these pockets make the landscape more organic and aesthetically pleasing. "Every time we have a curve we create these areas for recreation. Usually they are playgrounds or areas to sit around," he said.



In addition to those amenities, space in the park will also be rented to restaurants and cafés, which will supply most of the revenue necessary to maintain the park. Renderings also depicted a pier that juts into the water, with plenty of open space for recreational use. Construction is set to begin early next year and Leyva said that the park will most likely be completed by Summer 2015.

