



# VLORA WATERFRONT PROMENADE

URBAN DESIGN COMPETITION FOR AN URBAN INTERVENTION IN VLORA  
WATERFRONT PROMENADE

FW9003



## VLORA WATERFRONT PROMENADE

This design proposal consists in a first phase of the logical extension of the existing boardwalk and broadening of the typical vegetation of Vlorë. Extending the trees of Soda Woods over the full 5 km long coastline not only creates a harmonious whole, but also a unique and specific identity for the coastal town, typical of Albania's Mediterranean landscape. The 'Aleppo Pine', a pine native to the Mediterranean region, has a thin stem and a broad but flattened crown, thereby preserving the view onto the sea at all times and offering shade for all kinds of activities

underneath the trees (sunbathing, sports, parking ...). In a later stage, certain areas can be tackled in a more focused way, for example through the creation of new white beach areas, sports grounds, swimming areas and water parks, a pier and a marina, new hotels, a floating island, ... This design proposal is open to interpretation and extremely flexible in sequencing and implementation: an instrument of urban intervention in the urban coastal area of Albania, in order to serve as a model.









## PROMENADE – TREES

The design proposes the construction of a smooth white concrete boardwalk which varies in width over the entire 5 km-long coastline. The boardwalk is at its widest in more urban areas, thus creating a distance from the highway. The promenade narrows to 4 meters in the more natural areas to minimize impact on the landscape.

More importantly, along the promenade, the local species 'Aleppo Pine' are planted, creating with a minimum of effort a structure that considerably enhances the spatial quality of the waterfront. The existing trees of the Soda Woods will be extended on the entire coastline to create not only a harmonious whole, but this will also create a unique and specific image for the Albanian coastal city. The plantation is done alternately just along the promenade, sometimes closer to the beach, sometimes in large

quantities and sometimes widely spread, depending on the specificity of the area of the coastal strip. The row of trees forms a visual and acoustic barrier along the highway, but the thin tree trunks of the 'Aleppo Pine' have a pervious quality and the view onto the sea is preserved at all times.

The specific local conifer (a pine native to the Mediterranean region) also has a broad crown and is somewhat tilted by the wind, thus giving shelter for all kinds of activities. In the summer, the wide treetops of the conifers provide shade, in winter they protect from the cold wind. The conifers serve as excellent umbrellas, as parking, or as a canopy on arrival in the port. The consistent extension of the wood is a first implementation that leads to an immediate beautification of the coastal band.







## PHASING

The consistent extension of the Soda Woods, together with the construction of the promenade along the coast is the first implementation that leads to an immediate beautification. Obviously, the first phase involves the application of urban furnishing elements and network infrastructure too: resourceful positioning of benches, showers, rubbish bins, road signs and lighting (built into the pavement or hung in the trees).

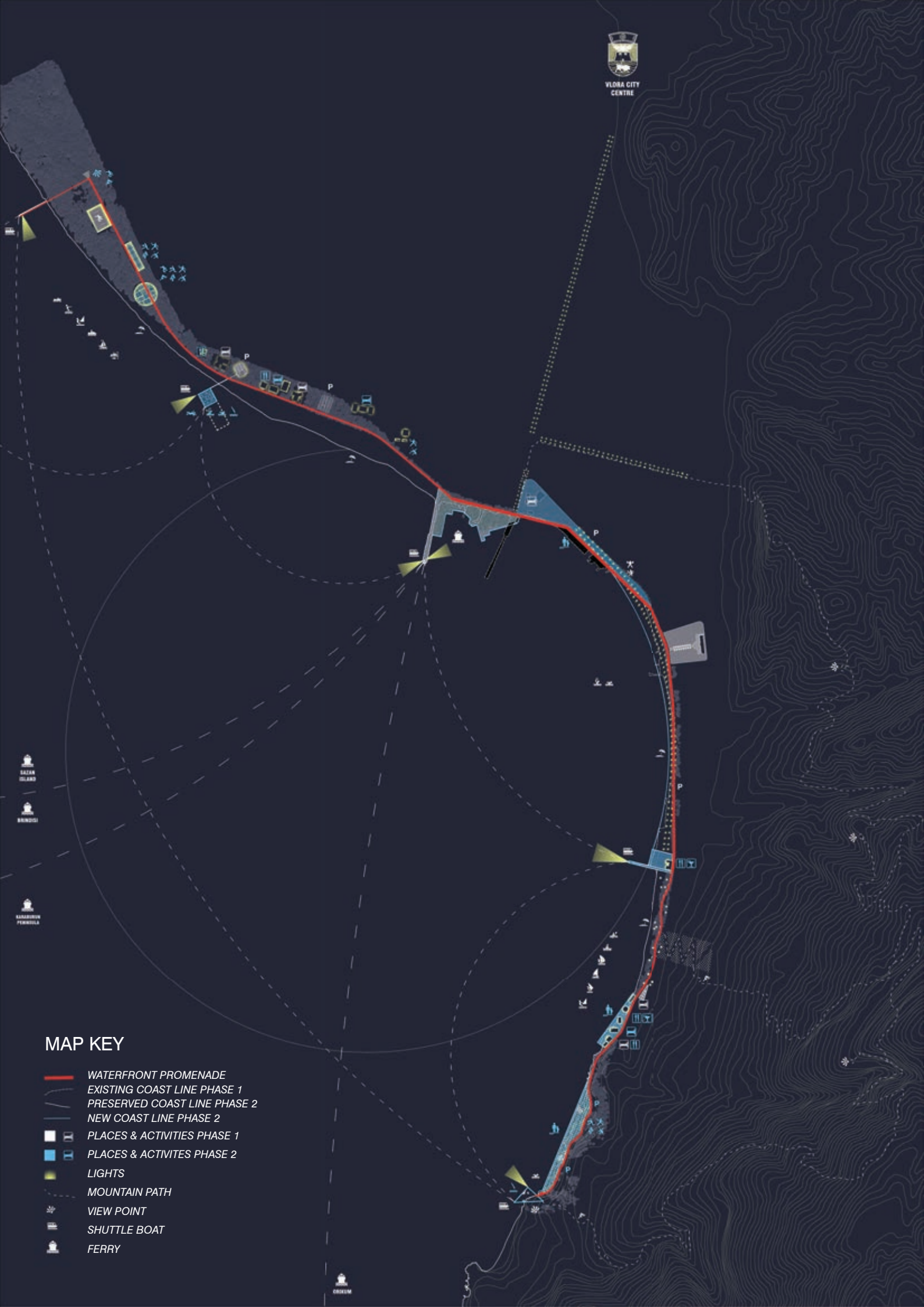
The implementation of the first phase of (part of) the pontoon at the southern tunnel is important for the immediate improvement of the quality of the coastal strip. This walkway of 3 to 4 meters wide only accessible to pedestrians has a triangular shape into the water, continuing into stairs which lead over the tunnel to the mountains behind. This relatively simple construction also serves as a diving board and access to the sea, a mooring place for boats, a viewing point, and as a gateway to the hiking trail in

the mountains. It is a launching platform to both the sea and the mountains.

The interventions of the first phase are enhanced by the operations in a possible second or third stage. Certain areas can be focused on to achieve the transformation of the entire waterfront experience, for example by creating a new white beach, central parking along the roads, sports grounds, swimming areas and water parks, a pier and a marina, new hotels, a floating island ...

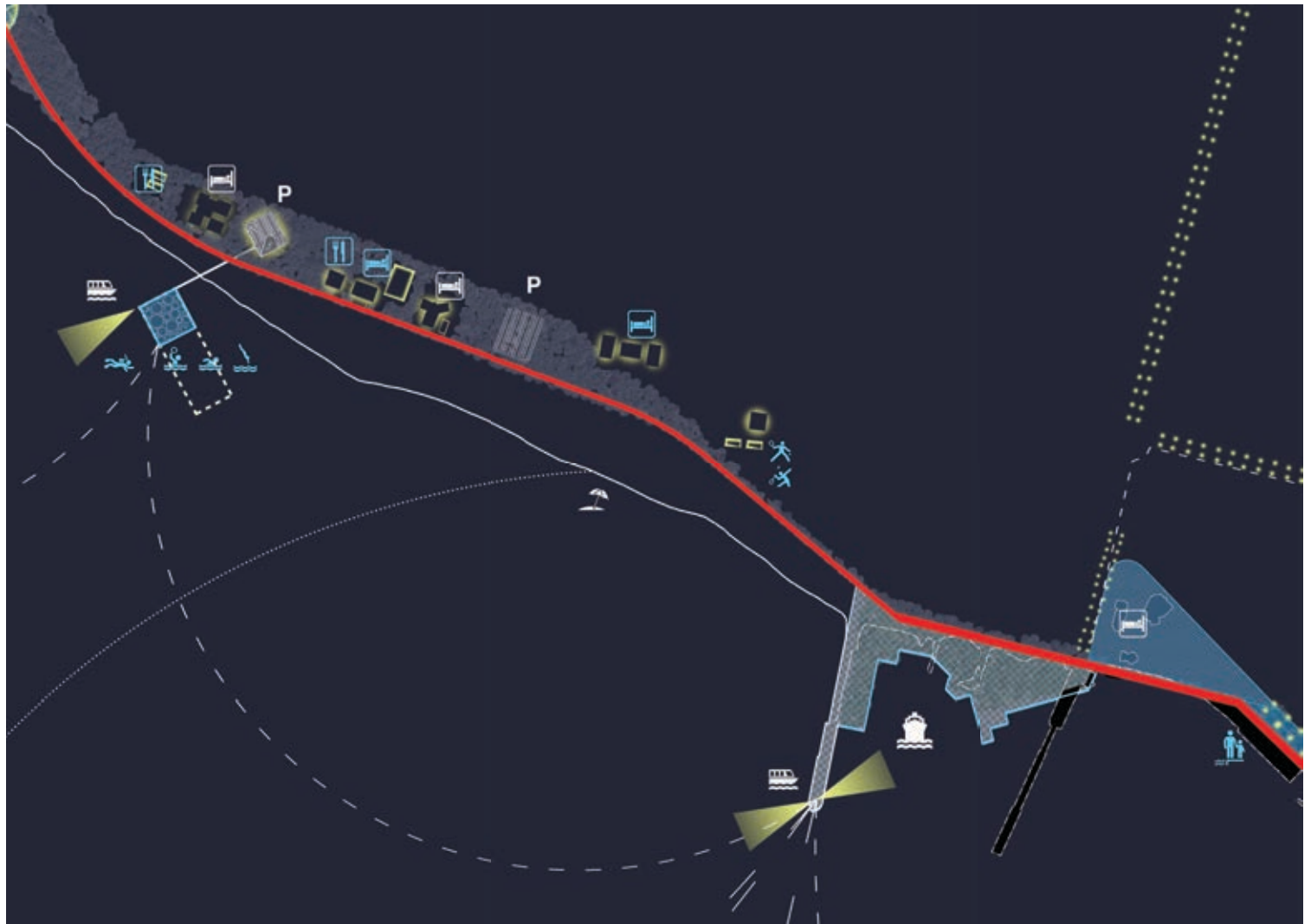
To clarify the whole project (phase 1 and 2) to the public, the design proposal can be explained in an informative 'project pavilion': it clarifies the use of the type of trees and the project on the basis of photographs, sketches and plans. This project pavilion is to be executed in the first implementation phase.





## MAP KEY

- WATERFRONT PROMENADE
- - - EXISTING COAST LINE PHASE 1
- PRESERVED COAST LINE PHASE 2
- - - NEW COAST LINE PHASE 2
- PLACES & ACTIVITIES PHASE 1
- PLACES & ACTIVITIES PHASE 2
- LIGHTS
- MOUNTAIN PATH
- \* VIEW POINT
- SHUTTLE BOAT
- FERRY

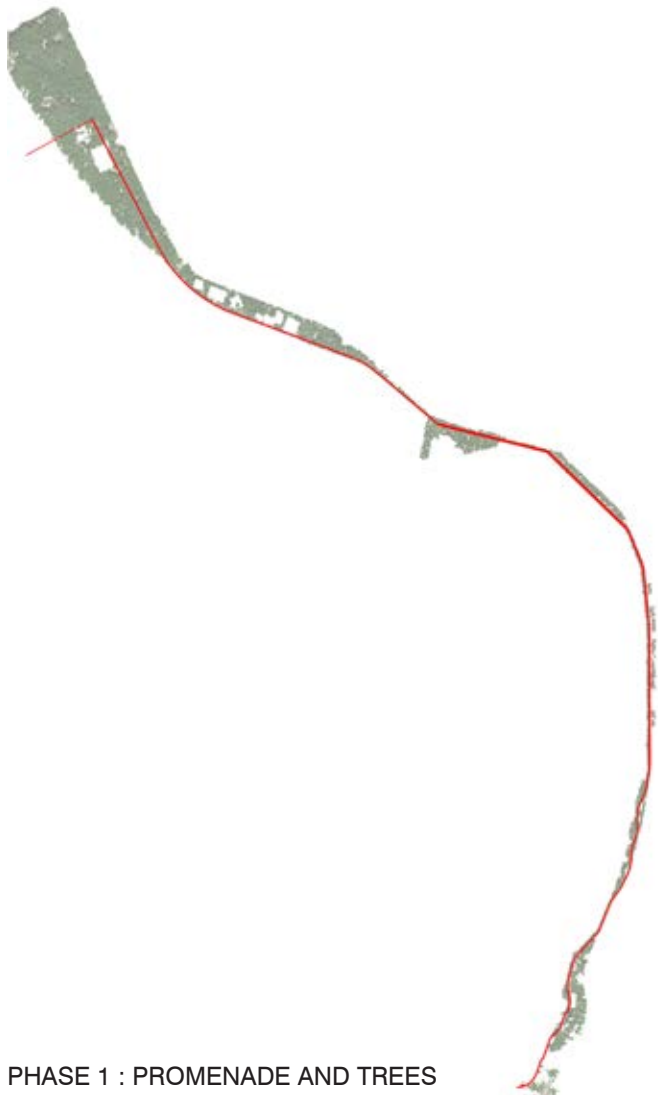


## FLEXIBILITY

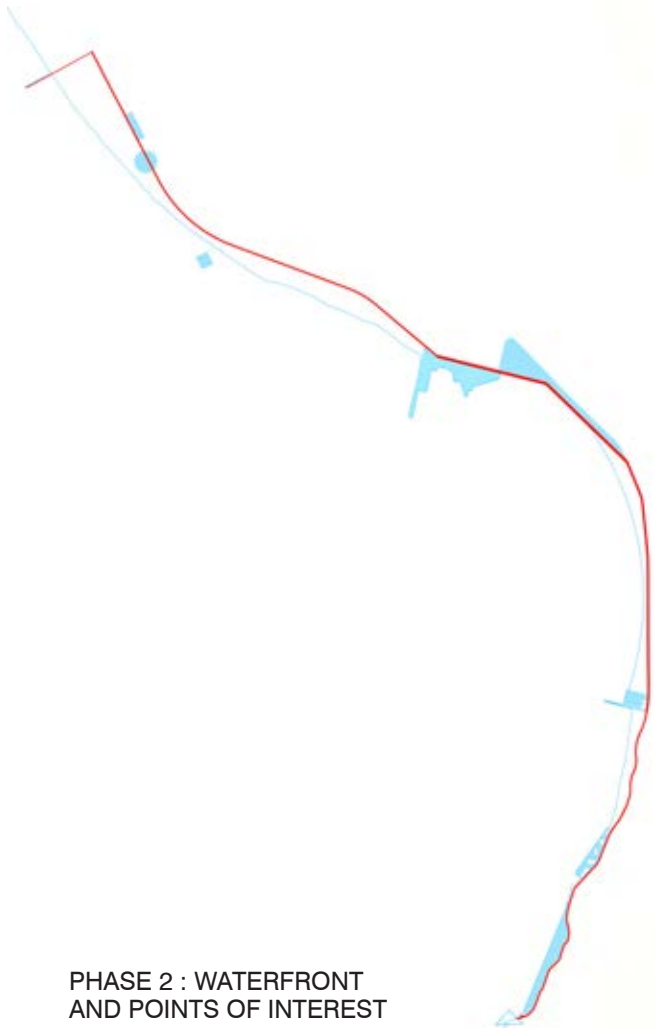
The design proposal is open to interpretation and extremely flexible. It is an instrument of urban intervention in the coastal area of Albania in order to serve as a model. It is at all times adaptable depending on financial capacity, timing, and needs of the Ministry of Urban Development, the Municipality of Vlora and the collective public opinion. 'Ad hoc' decisions can be made regarding whether and when certain areas are being tackled. In this respect, the decisions to be made regarding the accessibility of the coast by car don't have a great impact on the

current design proposal: both the plans for a national bypass to avoid traffic in this segment, or the plans for an alternative municipal street that will make a traffic -free area in the South Segment possible, can be incorporated in the design proposal. The (illegally) built houses and hotels in the area along the existing highway are not an obstacle for the project. These properties can be largely maintained, and possibly be legalized according to the wishes of the competent authorities.

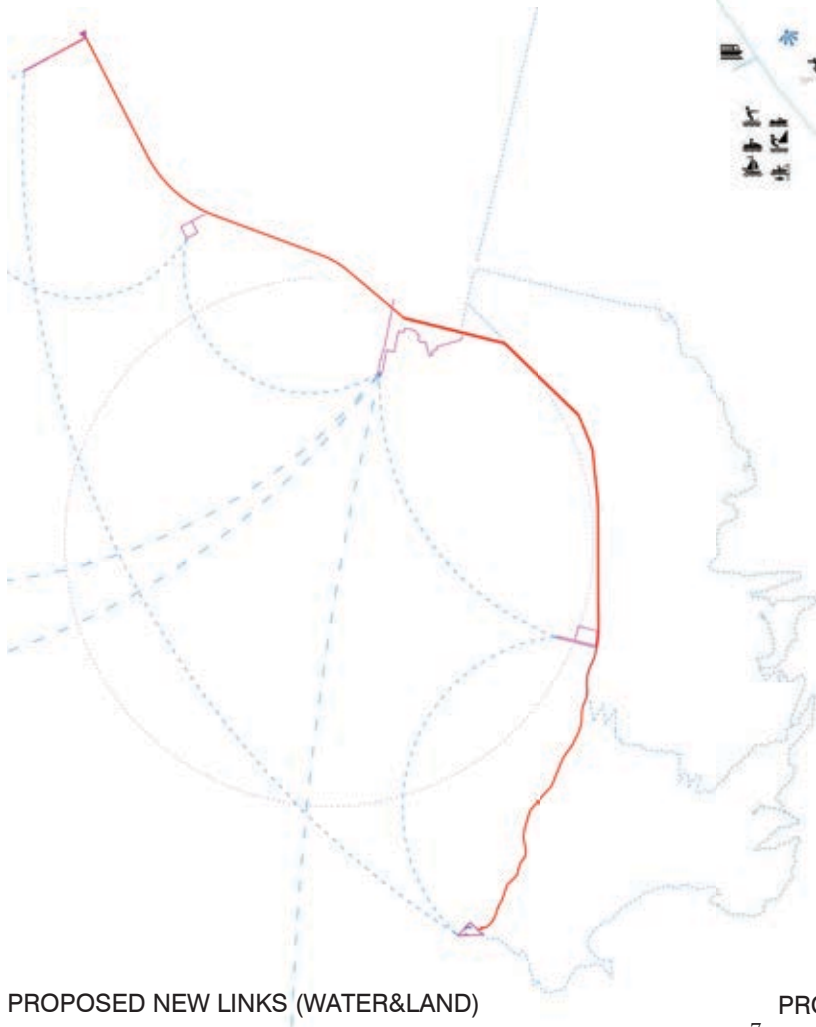




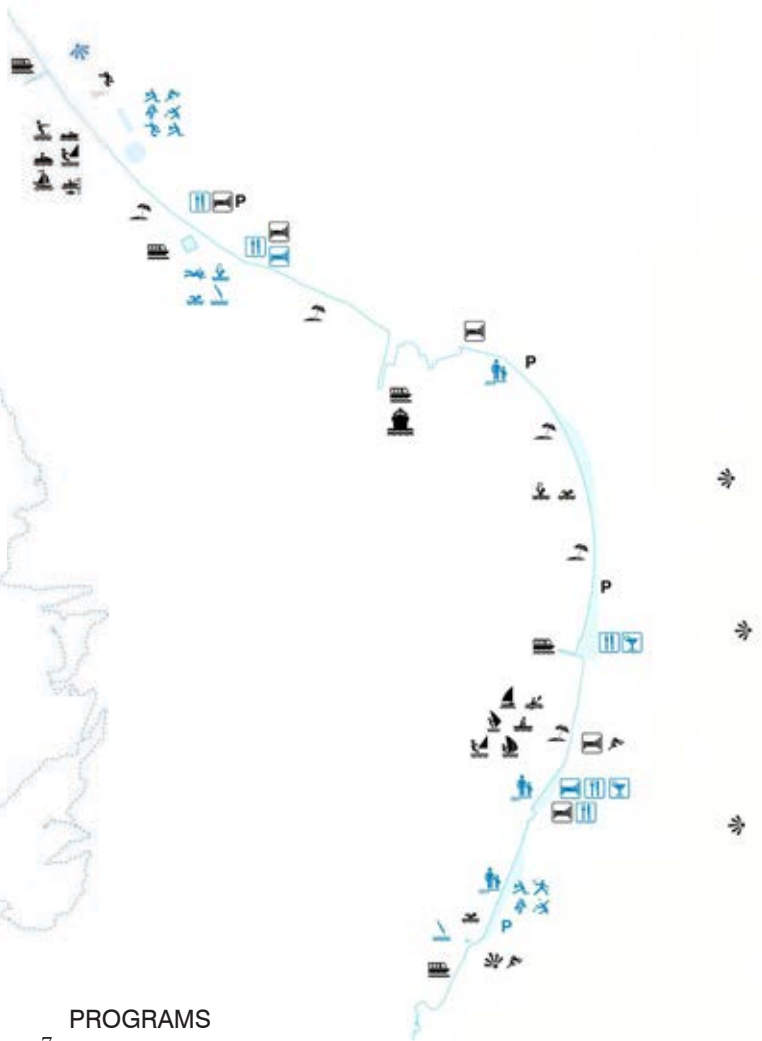
PHASE 1 : PROMENADE AND TREES



PHASE 2 : WATERFRONT  
AND POINTS OF INTEREST



PROPOSED NEW LINKS (WATER&LAND)



PROGRAMS





PROMENADE AT GARDEN STRIP









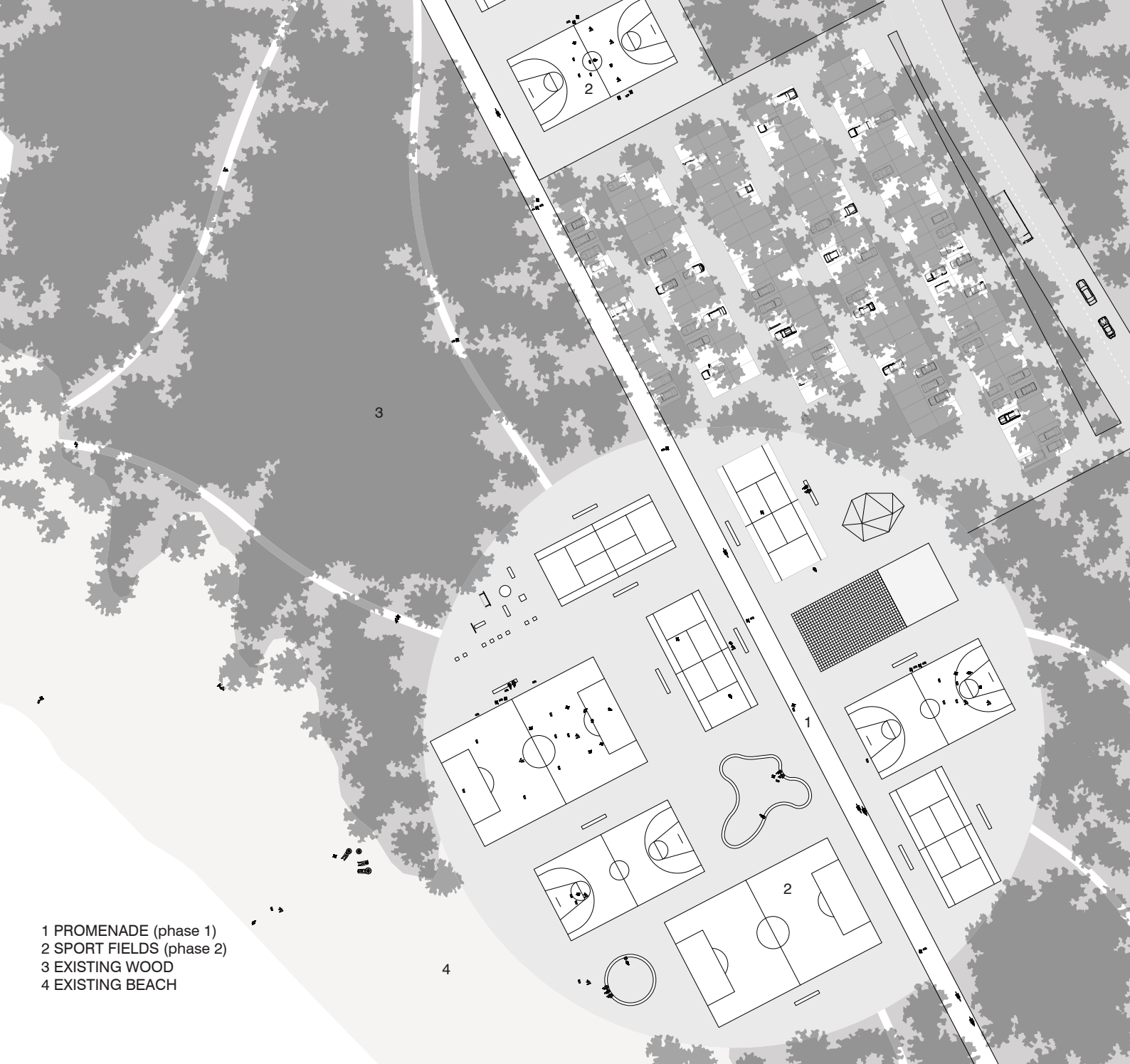
## VARIATION - SEQUENCES

The design proposal aims for an integrating, harmonizing and upgrading implementation. The consistent extension of the promenade and the typical vegetation provide harmony and unity. However, some areas can be addressed in very different ways in order to create a variety of sections prone to a range

of experiences. Most of the proposed sequences are transformations or clarifications of existing situations. From North to South we encounter the following line-up of places, each with a different tourist and/or user attraction factor:







SODA 'SPORTS' WOODS: in the existing forest with the existing football field, new sports grounds and fields are created.





AMENITIES CAMPUS: the zone with existing (illegally built) infrastructures retains a flexible interpretation: it is a campus with buildings (hotels, resorts, restaurants, car parks) looking out onto the beach. The sea provides a floating island; a platform for swimmers and a dock for pleasure boats.







- 1 PROMENADE (phase 1)
- 2 NEW WOODS (phase1)
- 3 CAR PARK (phase 1-2)
- 4 NEW HOTEL (phase 2)
- 5 EXISTING HOTEL
- 6 EXISTING BEACH

URBAN RENEWAL AREA: In this area, the plantation of conifers is narrower. This allows for the development of the urban hinterland. There is a wide beach for sunbathers.





PORT: The port occupies a pivotal role in the project. It is a tourist harbour for pleasure boats and cruise ships. Tourists are welcomed onto a grand square of marble tiles beneath a canopy formed by the tops of the planted trees.







- 1 PROMENADE (phase 1)
- 2 GARDEN STRIP (phase2)
- 3 PLAZA ON THE SEA (phase 2)
- 4 PROJECT PAVILION (phase 1)
- 5 NEW TREES (phase 1)

PLAZA ON THE SEA: this is an open square to the quay provided with trees. It offers a superb view onto the water and leads to a zone with wide shaded gardens.

GARDEN STRIP: zone with wide shaded gardens and providing space for different functions (sports, recreation ...).





**WHITE SAND CURVED BEACH:** zone for the construction of a new, white 'Copacabana-ish' beach with a beautiful view over the sea. This section is the most classic stretch of beach and answers to an already very established urban seafront. Behind the beach the promenade continues at around 10m wide, the widest it gets along the new promenade.







VLORA PIER: the existing pier is being renovated and expanded with activities (pubs, restaurants, jetties).





**SHADED BEACH:** This is a more natural, wilder, greener stretch of beach. The trees are standing closer to the water. On the other side of the road natural landscaped stairs lead the way into the mountains behind.





- 1 PROMENADE (phase 1)
- 2 HOTEL CLUSTER (existing - phase 2)
- 3 NEW TREES
- 4 EXISTING BEACH



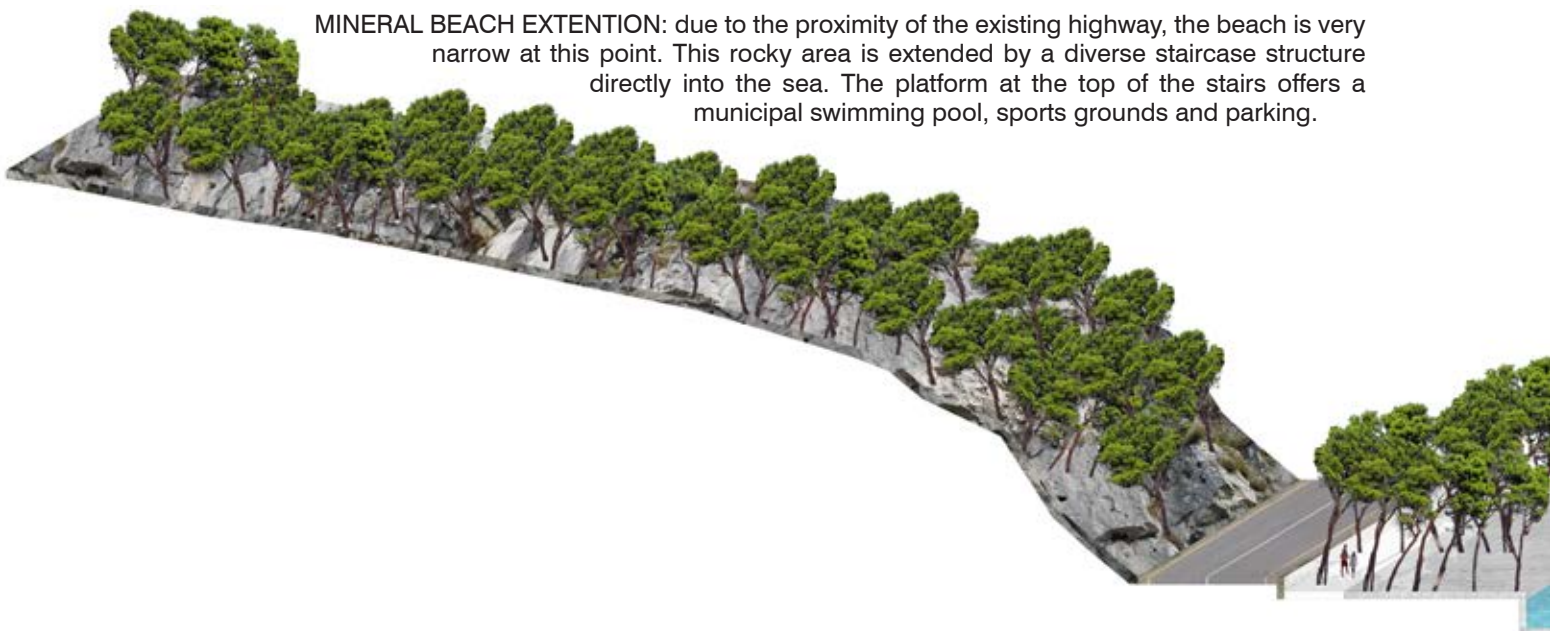
HOTEL CLUSTER: the expansion of the existing zone with hotels and restaurants needs to be structured and clearly defined by constructing a rectilinear square in the water for additional hotels behind which, the row of trees continues.







**MINERAL BEACH EXTENTION:** due to the proximity of the existing highway, the beach is very narrow at this point. This rocky area is extended by a diverse staircase structure directly into the sea. The platform at the top of the stairs offers a municipal swimming pool, sports grounds and parking.







- 1 PROMENADE (phase 1)
- 2 SEA-MOUNTAIN LINK (phase 2)
- 3 MINERAL BEACH (phase 1-2)
- 4 PUBLIC SWIMMING POOL (phase 2)
- 5 NEW TREES (phase 1)

**SEA - MOUNTAIN LINK:** a triangular walkway - 3 to 4 meters wide and only accessible for pedestrians - is partly on the water and partly on land. The part in the water is a pontoon that can be used as a diving board and access to the sea, and as a mooring area for boats. The walkway continues into stairs leading over the tunnel to the mountains behind. This simple and light construction serves both as a viewing point and gateway to the hiking trail in the mountains. It is a launching platform to both the sea and the mountains.

By determining the different zones on the coast, the use of the water is also more defined and intensified. Demarcations in the water allow for diversification of use: swimmers, divers, pleasure boats, ferries, floating islands, jetties, diving boards, mooring areas for boats and viewpoints. These various 'points of interest' give structure, sequence and rhythm to the entire coastline.















## SHUTTLE FERRY

The various 'points of interest' are to be linked by an on the water ferry system. Light electric shuttle ferries enable visitors to quickly and easily reach the differentiated sections of the waterfront, while enjoying a view of the beachfront itself and of course the beautiful mountainous backdrop of Vlora. This system also allows for an intelligent approach of the parking. Vlora's topography and the existing highways often limit the available space that could be reserved for parking. By linking these areas with areas where parking space can be easily organised,

a simple solution is presented for this issue. Most parking can be organised in the amenities campus on the western waterfront section, from there tourists and visitors can get on the jetty to get to the shuttle ferry and go to the beach experience of their choice. In the second phase a car park building could be organised in the amenities campus. Smaller parking areas are maintained or created along the coast where these are compatible with the promenade, the programming and the topography.

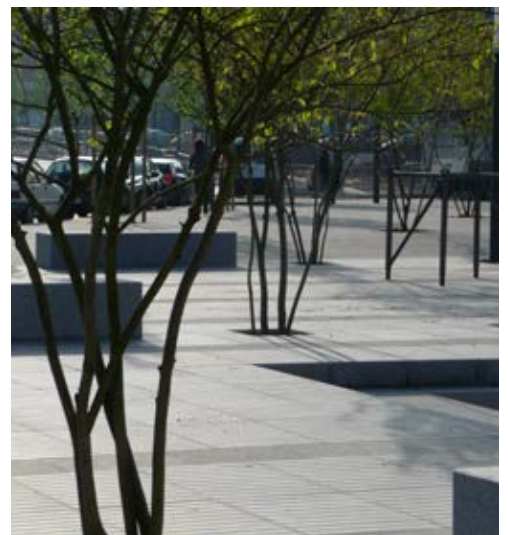
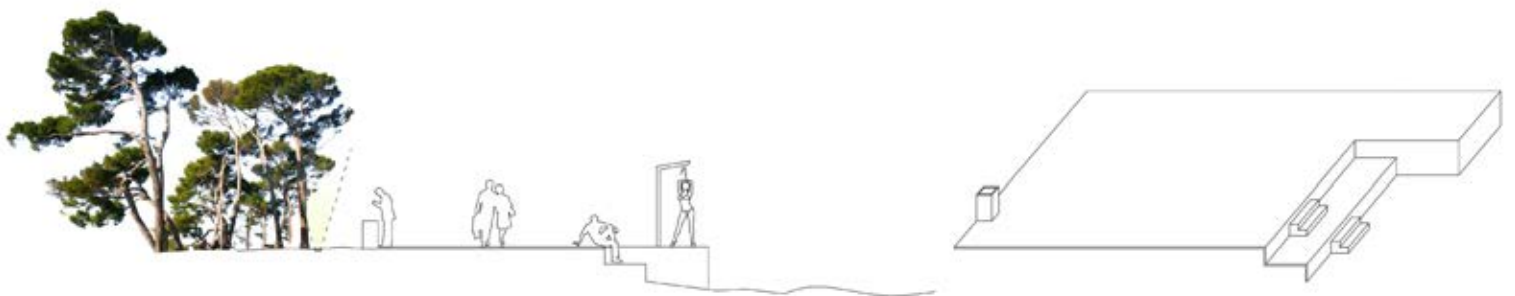




WHITE CONCRETE PATH & BENCH  
HANGING & IN-GROUND LIGHTS



CONCRETE PATH, PIC-NIC TABLE & BIN  
METAL SHOWER





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