

A PARK TO BELIEVE IN

BENCHMARKING THE FUTURE OF TIRANA

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1. DESIGN CONCEPT

INTRODUCTION

Tensions among religions, and between religions and society, are from all times and not only far away, but also in the close environs. Currently Albania seems to be an exception within this field, where different religions peacefully coexist and are harmoniously embedded in the society.

But this coexistence is a delicate and fragile condition and even in Albania there are small signs of tensions. Therefore we should not fuel religion as an individual aspect of society, but rather subvert the peculiar character of coexistence in Albania.

We have to cherish the current embedding of religions in the Albanian society and safeguard their mutual coexistence and interconnection with educational, cultural and social functions in the future. The Boulevard serves as an opportunity to address all these issues through a Landscape project.

COUNTRY IN TRANSITION

Albania is a country in full development, holding an enormous energy. During the recent decades, a lot of eras passed and many challenges for the far and near future started to be defined.

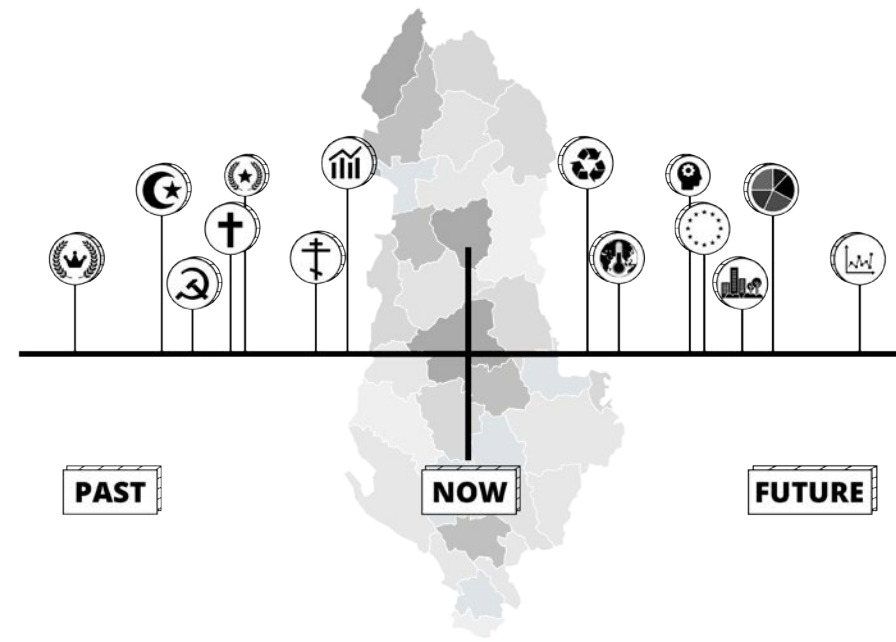
BACKBONE OF THE NATION

All historical tokens of this Albanian journey are represented along the boulevard. Together with all sacred places of the different religions, the boulevard symbolizes the **historical coexistence of religions, government and society**.

One can say the boulevard embodies all dynamics of Albanian society. The axis connects the major historical tokens of the Albanian national identity. Stretching from Petrela, cutting through Tirana via Mother Theresa and Skanderbeg square, all the way to the historic town of Kruja. The axis spatially determines not only Tirana, but the entire region. More recently, plans have been made to extend the axis towards the North, giving substance to the connection between the historical and the informal settlements around it. Today the axis embodies the fundamental contemporary values of Albanian society. Some of the most important cultural and educational institutions can be found along the axis and in the main squares at the two ends. The harmonic coexistence of the major monotheistic religions is represented by the presence of their sacred places. Moreover, the central area collects most of the governmental buildings, allowing for the celebration of an only recently achieved democratic regime.

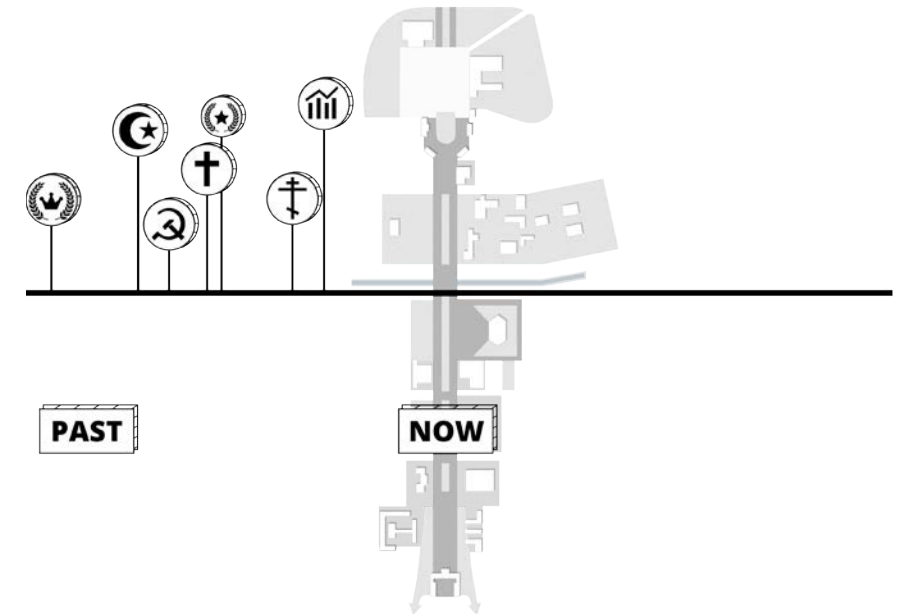
COUNTRY IN FULL DEVELOPMENT

PAST ERAS AND FUTURE CHALLENGES



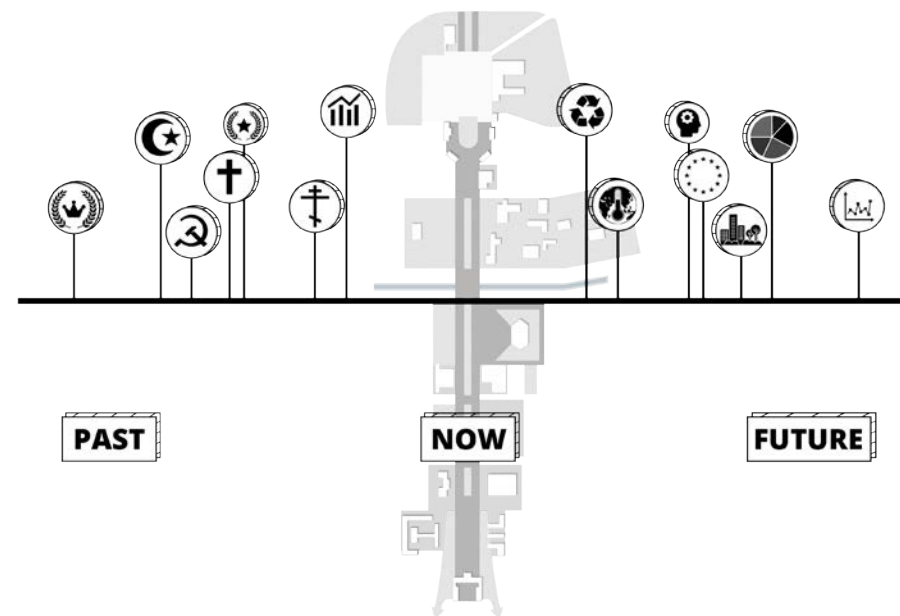
REMEMBRANCE OF THE PAST

COLLECTION OF HISTORICAL TOKENS



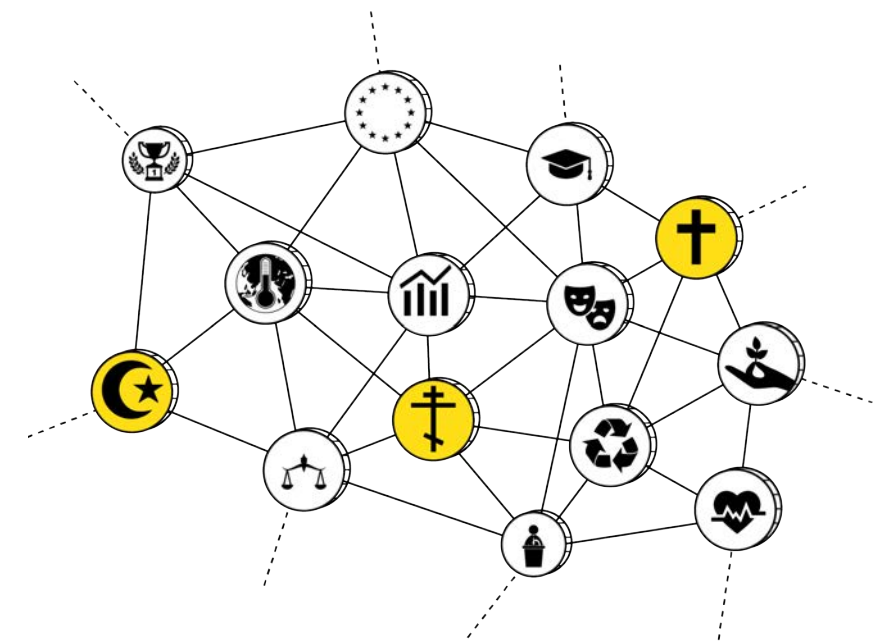
BENCHMARK FOR THE FUTURE

INTEGRATE NEW CHALLENGES



DESIGN FOR COEXISTENCE

EMBED RELIGION IN SOCIETY



PERSPECTIVE INSTEAD OF REFLECTION: PARK TO BELIEVE IN!

The boulevard should not only symbolise and collect achievements of the past, nor should it become a space exclusively dedicated to historical celebration. But most importantly it should not become a sheer celebration of the existing coexistence, at the risk of being soon a remembrance of the past. It should develop an inspiring perspective on how to capitalize all current dynamics and energy and embed coexistence in the city of the future. **Instead of a park of believes, it has to be a park to believe in!** To believe in the future. To believe in Albania, because that's what Albanians do.

2. DESIGN STRATEGIES

BENCHMARK: TIRANA OF THE FUTURE

The redevelopment of the centre of the city should set the standard for Tirana of the future, representing all existing and chased values of the Albanian society and giving substances to Tirana's development towards a sustainable and social inclusive city.

Therefore the design strategy looks to the future also in relation to fundamental issues that are currently at the centre of important discussions concerning cities' sustainable development. From this perspective, the Park object of the competition becomes an occasion to address global urbanization issues regarding water, health, mobility, energy and waste. Landscapes can sustain and regenerate ecosystem services (benefits provided by natural ecological processes, like air cooling and filtration, water management etc.) while offering spaces for social interaction education and leisure activities (psychological wellbeing). Following this logic the Park Martyrs of the Nation is an opportunity to adopt a more sustainable approach toward urban design, using landscape as a medium for the city's future development. Starting from its historical core, Tirana can become the example of a sustainable city where landscape's resiliency guarantees a healthy and aesthetically pleasing environment.

SYSTEMS

The parks become green and blue engines, integrating all measures to climate proof the city and transform it into a healthy place. The Boulevard axis and related parks serve as a platform for society, allowing for the celebration of past, current and future heroes. Moreover they become the infrastructural engine of the city, establishing pedestrian and bike networks, becoming the connector of a future public transport system.

- » GREEN & BLUE ENGINES
- » SOCIETAL PLATFORM
- » CONNECTOR



I. SECURE THE FUTURE

GREEN AND BLUE ENGINES

II. STAGE THE FUTURE

PLATFORM FOR SOCIETY

III. SHARE THE FUTURE

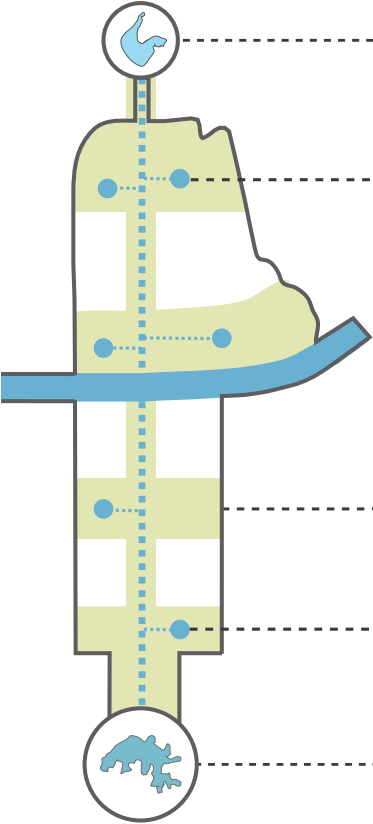
CIRCULATION CATALYST



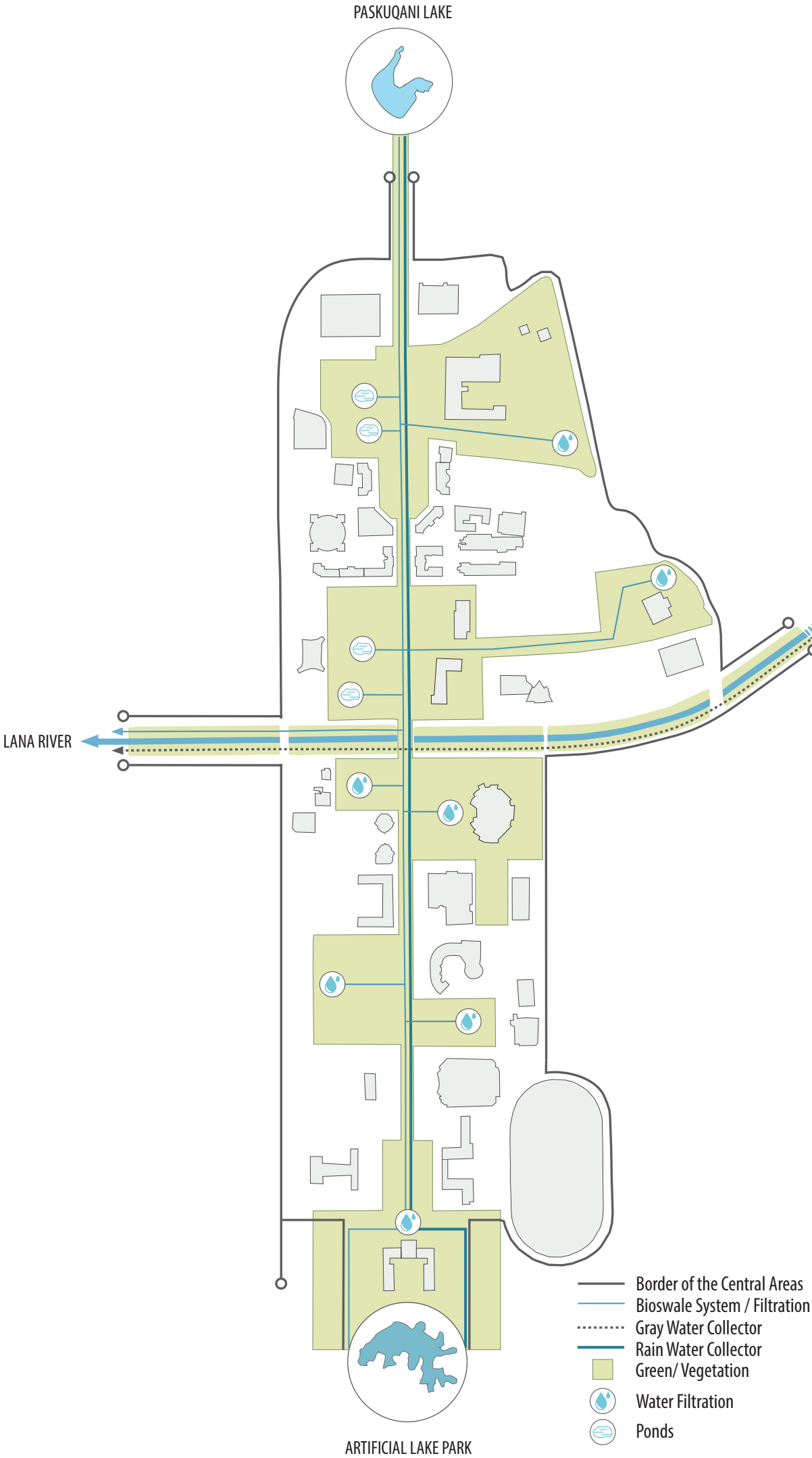
GREEN & BLUE ENGINES

The parks are climate proofing the city, reducing its environmental impact, transforming it into a healthy place to live in. Water is drained and infiltrated through rain gardens and permeable pavements, to reduce the rainwater runoff. Surface water is filtered by collecting it in ponds with water-purifying vegetation. Rainwater can also be temporarily stored in water retention basins located in the squares, to prevent overflow during heavy rainfall and, more in general, to release the pressure on the Lana River. Moreover by separating rainwater collection from the municipal sewer system, and isolating the latter from the Lana River bed with a sunken piping system, the runoff water can be reused for watering parks and gardens instead of mixing it up with black waters that end up in waste water treatment facilities or, even worse, are directly discharged into the sea.

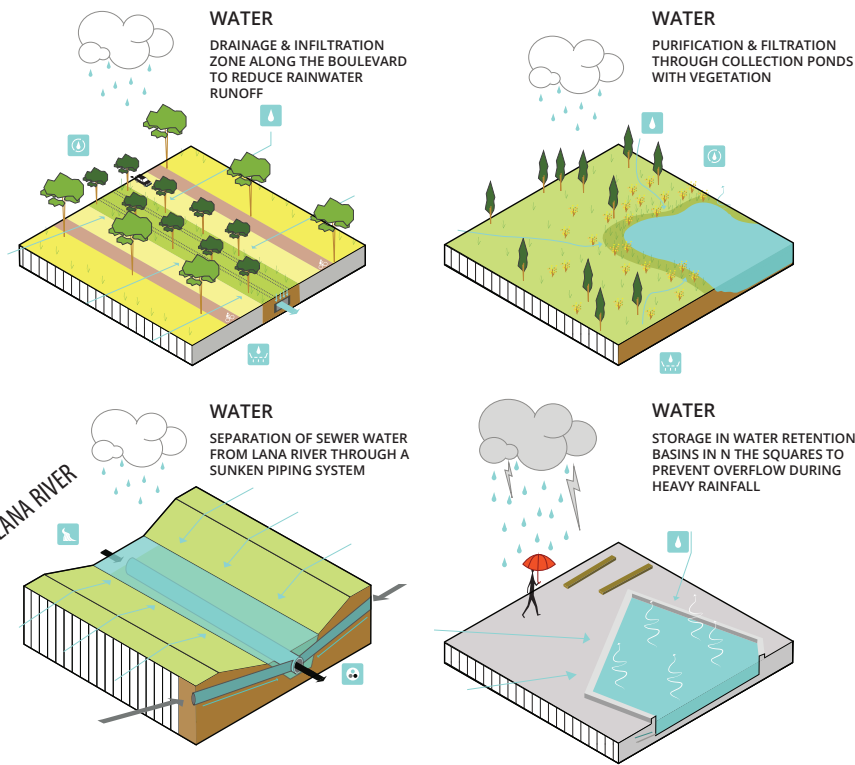
New green permeable surfaces are introduced to limit the amount of waterproof and highly heat absorbing surfaces, which are the main causes of Urban Heat Island effect in the city. New vegetation is added, to capture CO2, improve the air quality in the city and mitigate the temperatures through evapo-transpiration processes of plants. A huge variety of trees and shrubs, attracting insects and animals, improves the urban biodiversity.



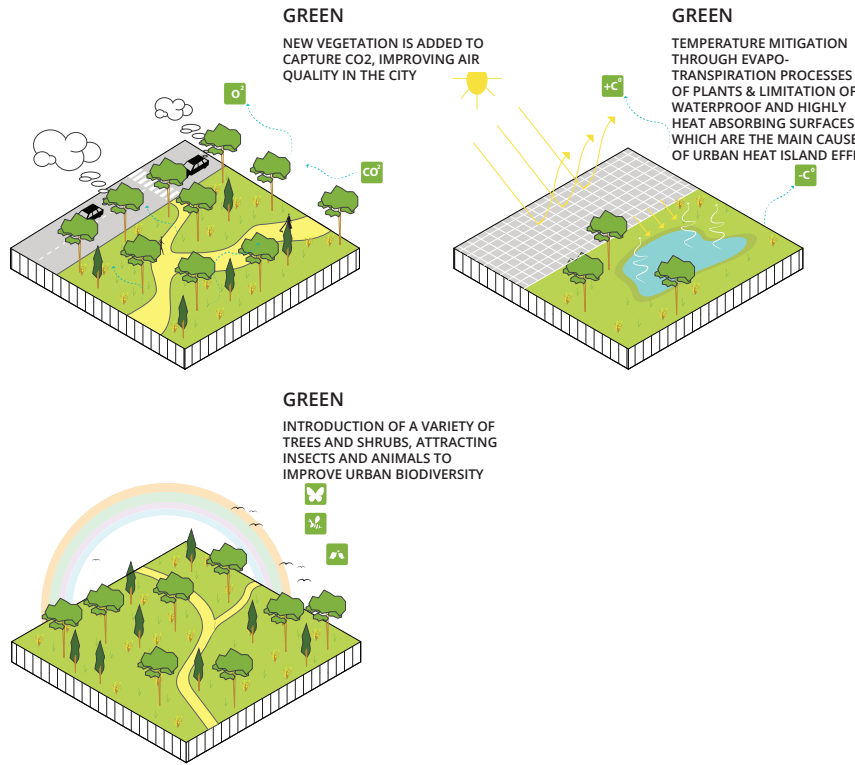
VEGETATION, WATER AND BIOSWALE SYSTEMS



WATER



GREEN

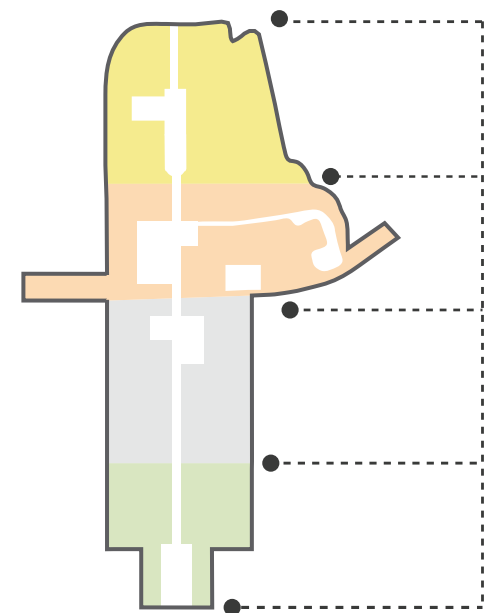


SOCIETAL PLATFORM

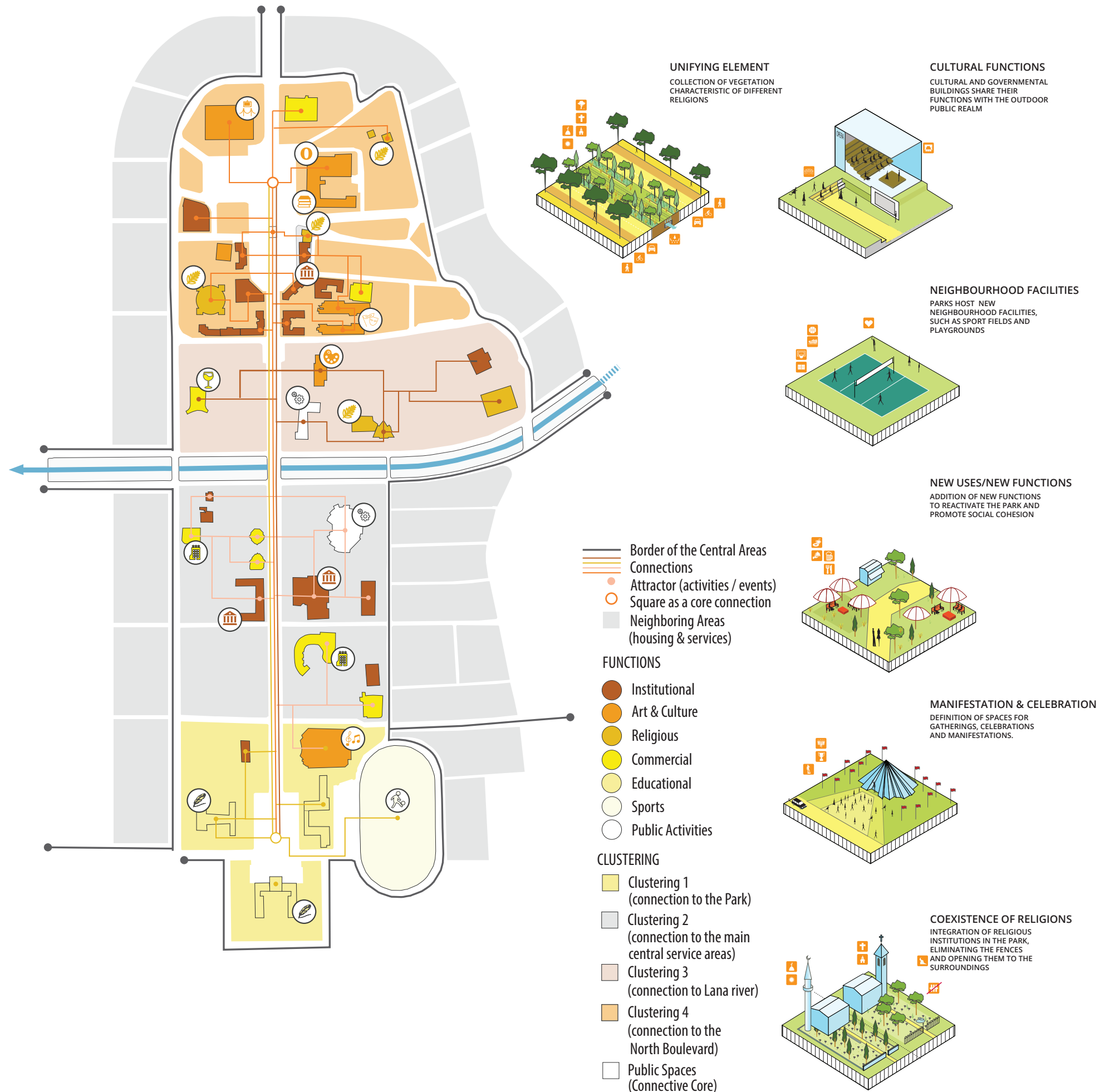
The parks become the platforms of the society. Therefore, the connection between the cultural and governmental buildings is strengthened, sharing their inside functions with the outdoor public realm. The parks host neighbourhood facilities, such as sport fields and playgrounds. They attract new uses and functions. They provide space for festivities and manifestations, for the celebration of old heroes and the creation of new ones. The coexistence of all religions is celebrated by integrating the religious buildings and their outdoor premises with the parks.

Main actions:

- Connection between institutional buildings
- Connection with cultural functions
- Integrating neighbourhood facilities
- Creating a platform for manifestations and celebrations



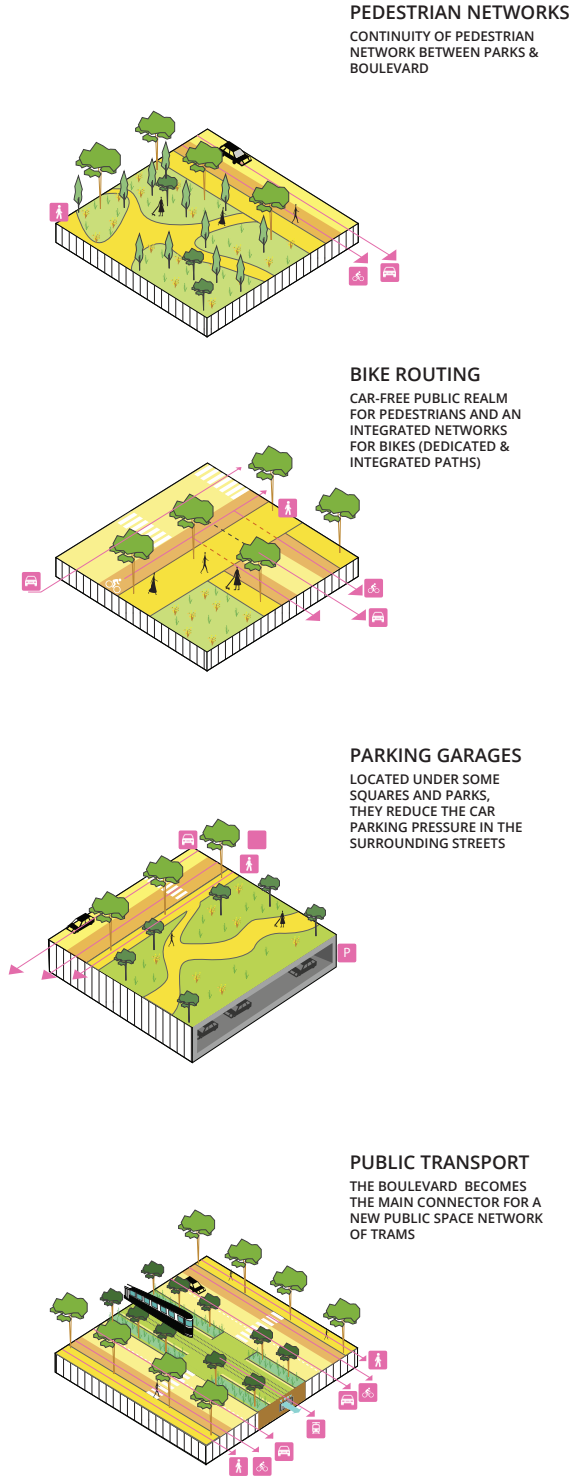
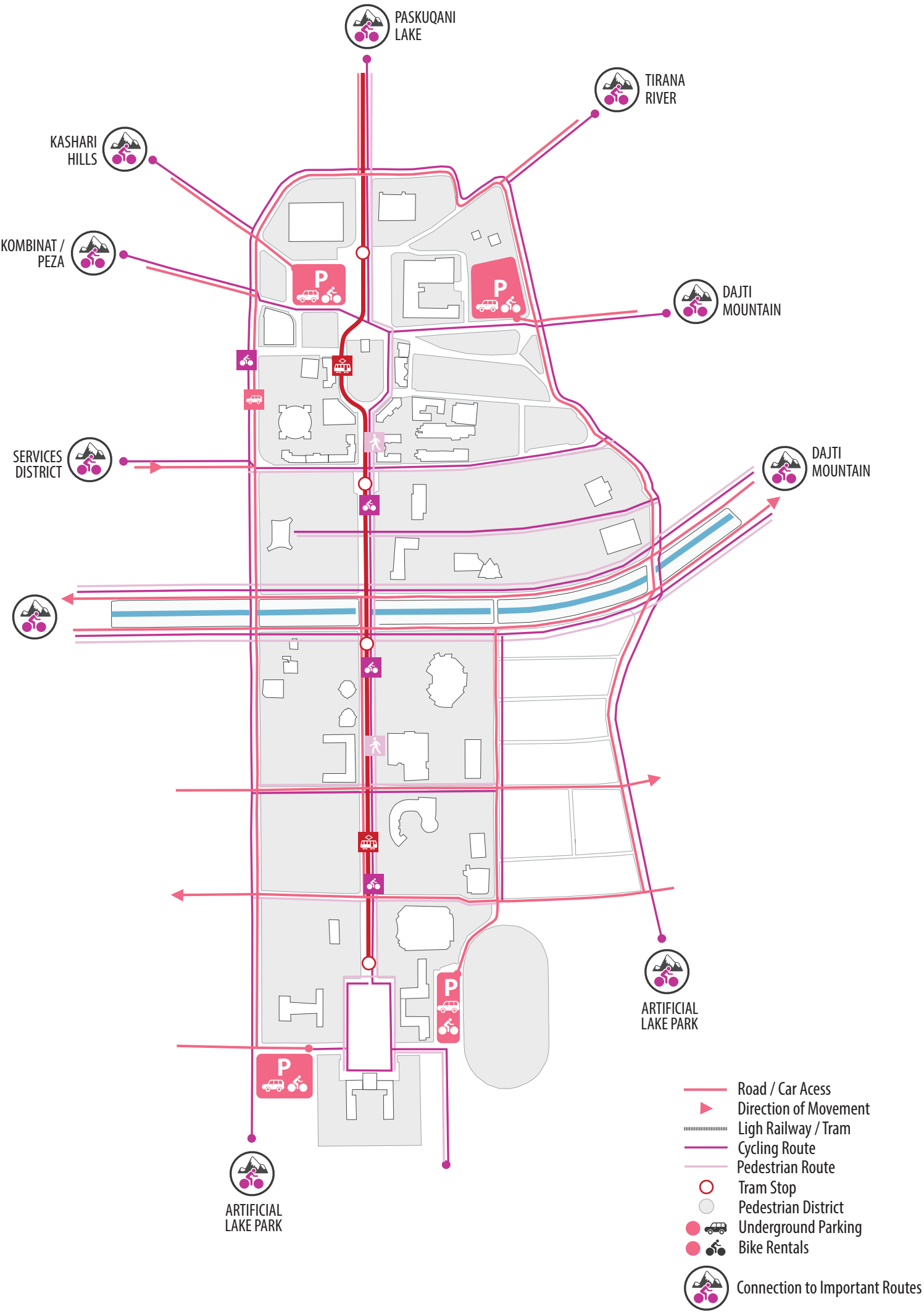
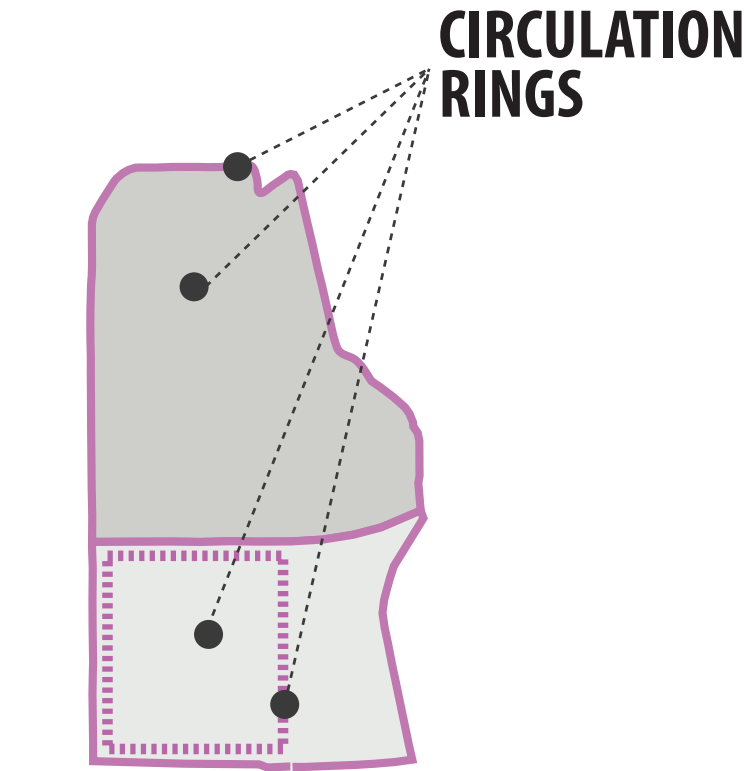
FUNCTIONAL CLUSTERING WITH A DISTINCTIVE PUBLIC CORE



CONNECTOR

The axis and the adjacent parks guarantee car-free public realm for pedestrians and an integrated networks for bikes. The Boulevard becomes the main connector for a new public space network of trams. Underneath some of the parks, parking garages are situated, to reduce the car parking pressure in the surrounding neighbourhoods.

- Main actions:
- Pedestrian networks
 - Bike routes
 - Public Transport system
 - Parking garages



3. DESIGN ELABORATION

NO GRAND PLAN

The scale of the project requires an integrated process, involving different parties. Therefore, it is set up as a master-plan, consisting of independent projects and frameworks on different scales.

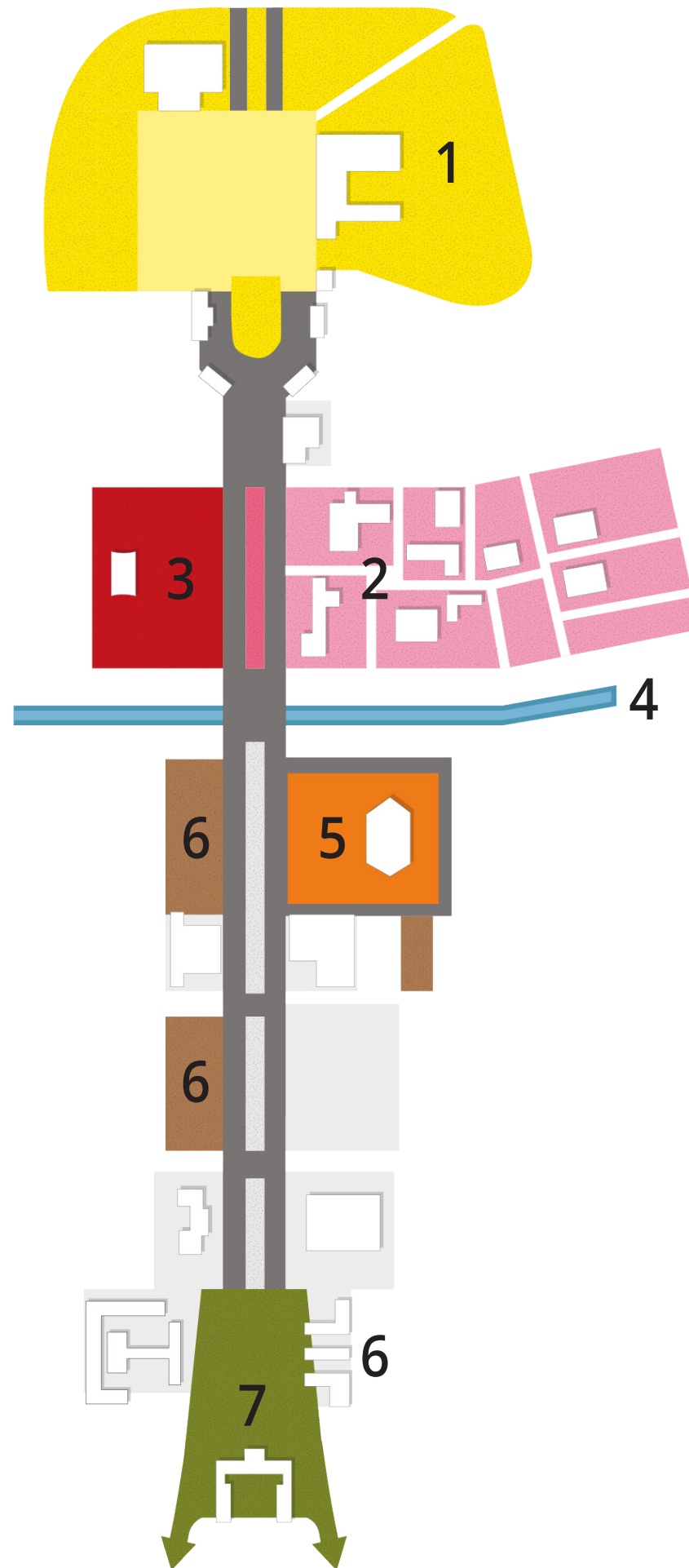
Each projects requires collaboration with specific stakeholders. They can be develop separately of phased. But they share one ambition: creating the “park of the future” in Tirana.

PROJECTS:

1. THE OPERA GARDENS
2. THE GREEN CAMPUS
3. THE URBAN BEACH PARK
4. LANA RIVER PARK
5. THE PLATFORM FOR THE FUTURE
6. NEIGHBOURHOOD PARKS
7. THE GATEWAY TO THE PARKS

THE BOULEVARD

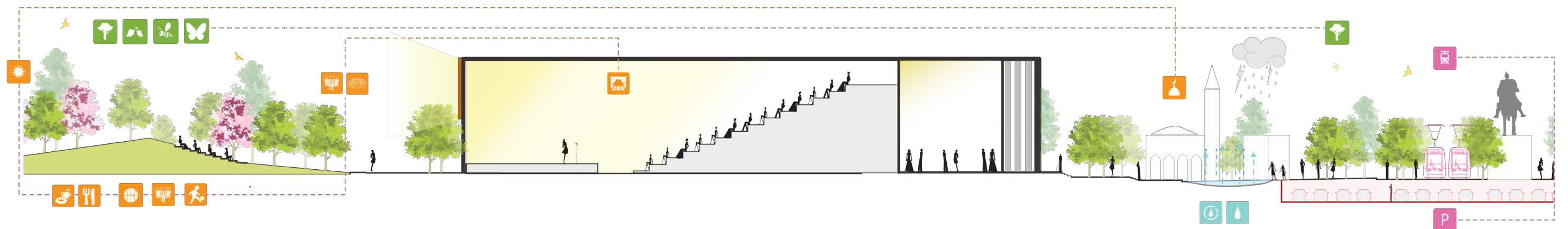
URBAN FURNITURE COLLECTION



THE OPERA GARDENS

PROJECTS

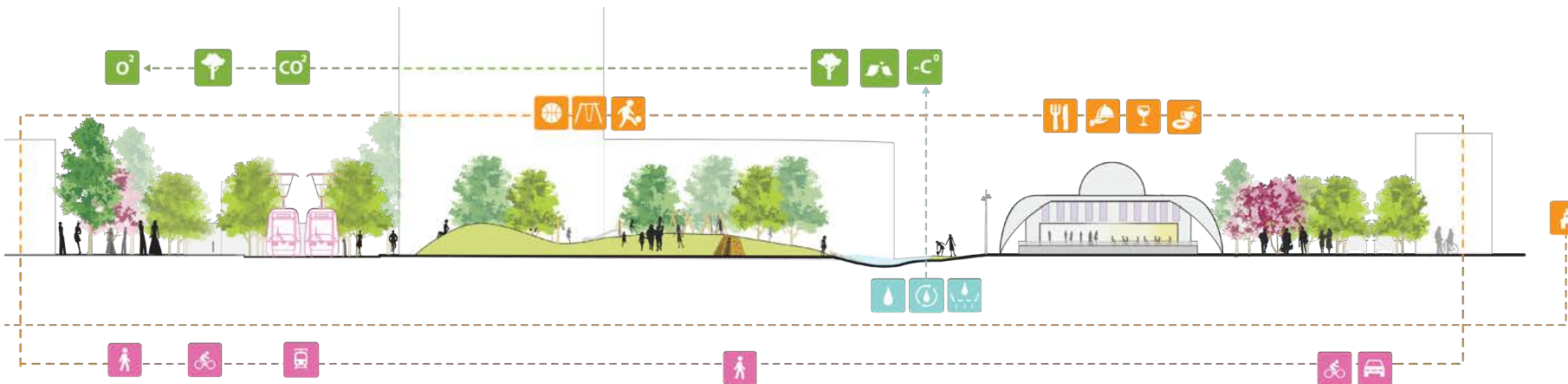
The National Historical Museum, the Palace of Culture, the Puppets Theatre and the Ministerial Complex are lined up around the monumental Skanderbeg square. Around the urban void, the proposal foresees a green belt with performance spaces in direct contact with the Opera and the Museum. Skanderbeg square can temporarily retain water, releasing the pressure on the Lana River during heavy rainfall. The green belt enriches heavily the biodiversity. The park adjacent the Opera is focused on creating performance spaces, linking the opera to the public realm. The landscape is manipulated to articulate flexible performance spaces and offer a variety of spatial conditions that allow for several types of performances to occur at the same time and to be protected from the disturbance of the adjacent car road. Under both the square and the new park, underground parking garages are located. Their location close to bike sharing stations, tram stops and pedestrian areas is strategic to promote the use of soft mobility systems and free the center from car traffic.



THE GREEN CAMPUS

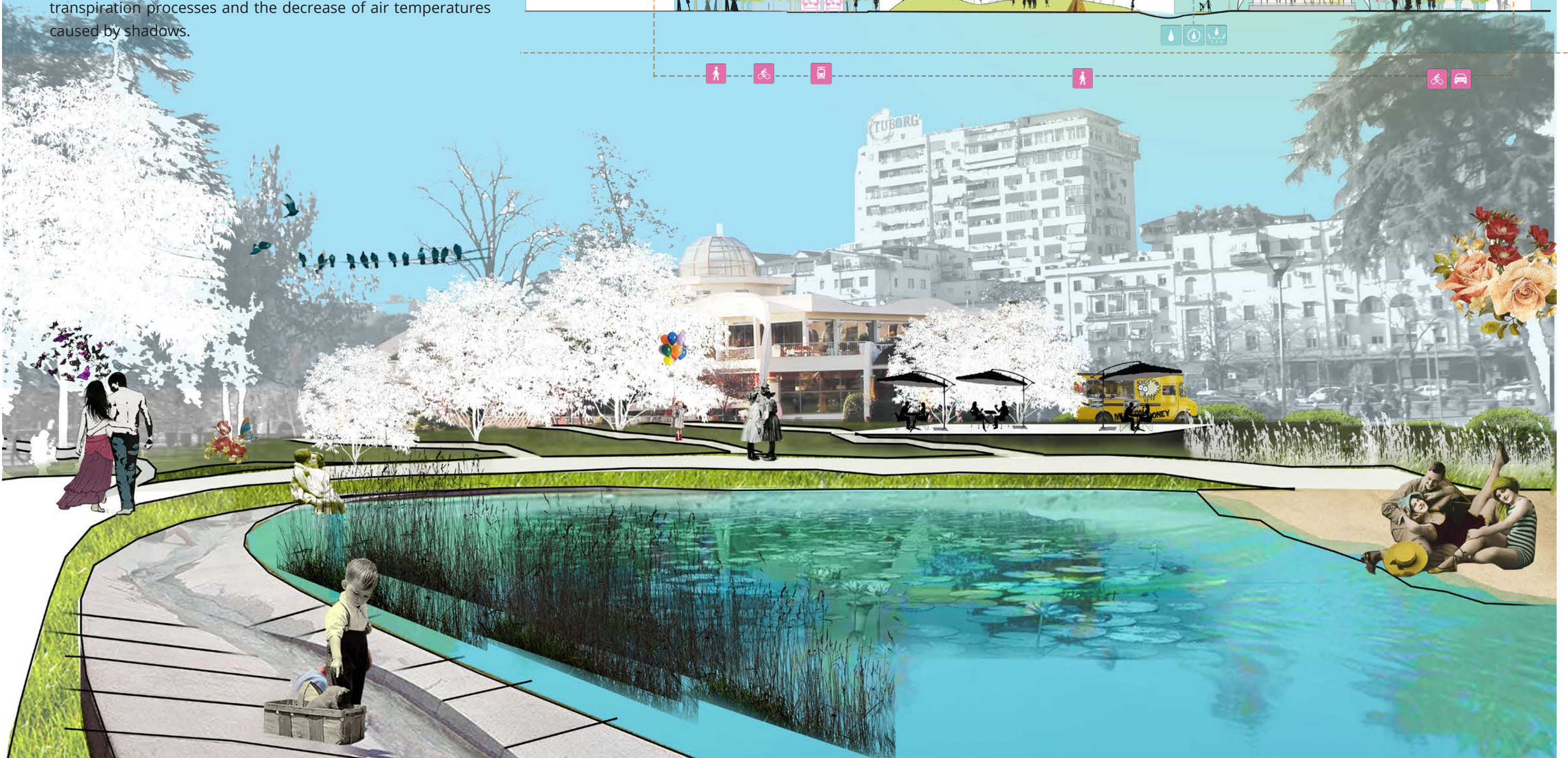
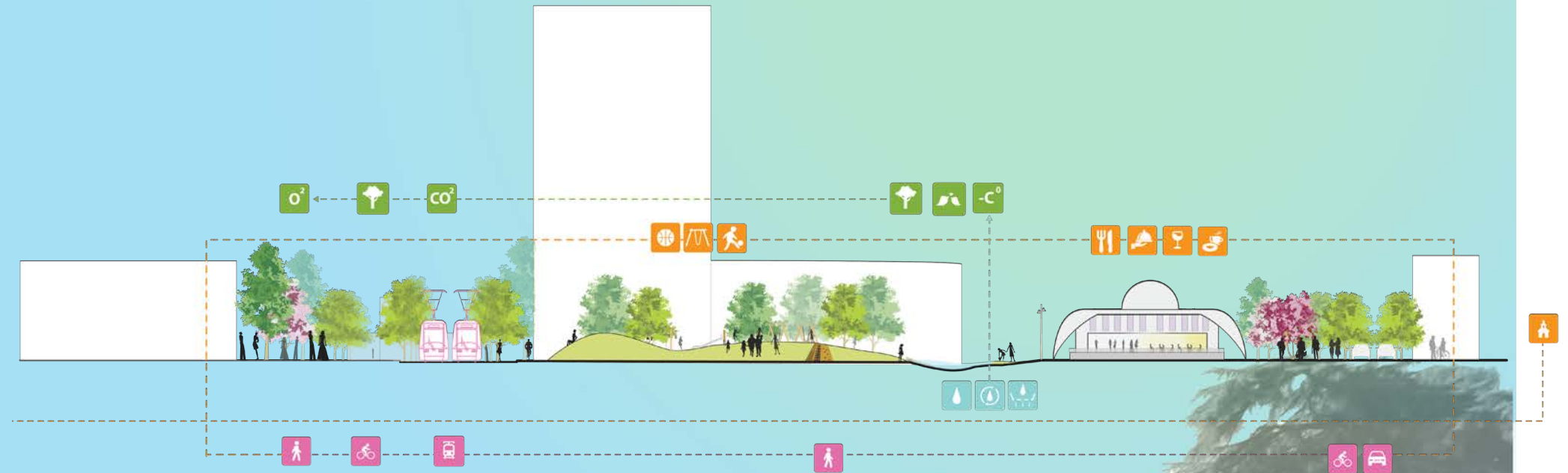
PROJECTS

A small scale network of paths creates a permeable green campus, opening new paths and reestablishing lost connections between Skanderbeg square and the existing pedestrian road Rruga Murat Toptani and linking the different functions in the cultural quarter. Within this system small plazas offer protected seating areas.



PROJECTS

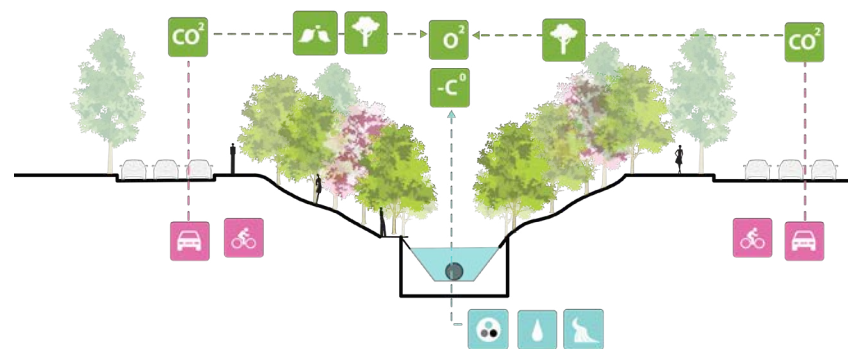
The proposed upgrade of the existing park with the Taivan center, foresees new topography, pick nick and relaxation areas, and collection ponds with water fileting vegetation - 'wadi' – where the rainwater can be naturally cleaned before it infiltrates into the ground. Also the introduction of additional trees will contribute to the purification of the air and the mitigation of summer high temperatures - through evapo-transpiration processes and the decrease of air temperatures caused by shadows.



THE LANA RIVER PARK

PROJECTS

A new sunken piping system along the Lana River can allow the separation between sewage system and water from the river. Moreover, to improve the possibilities to experience the water, the river's water level can be raised by positioning two dams. A walking path along the waterline, seating areas on the slopes and small stalls with food/drinks enables to use this park as a recreational area.



THE PLATFORM TO THE FUTURE - THE PYRAMID

PROJECTS



The pyramid is stripped, and transformed into a covered auditorium. The space around the Pyramid is activated and transformed into a place where spectacles, celebrations and manifestations happen. A paved amphitheater forms the monumental connection between the Pyramid and the boulevard. The pyramid is embedded in a green décor. The underground floor is converted into a multifunctional space for fairs, restaurants and bars. The multifunctional interior of the pyramid is directly connected to the space outside, the latter can serve as an extension of the interior space when needed.

NEIGHBOURHOOD PARKS PLAYGROUND

PROJECTS

These parks improve the facilities in the immediate surroundings and the adjacent neighborhoods, providing sport fields, playgrounds and places to relax and stay. These parks are not heavily designed, they adapt to the existing situation, simply upgrading them and adding specific program and facilities.

Neighborhood Park – Meditation: permeable surfaces and new vegetation are added; it is transformed into a monumental space dedicated to the statues of the three brothers.

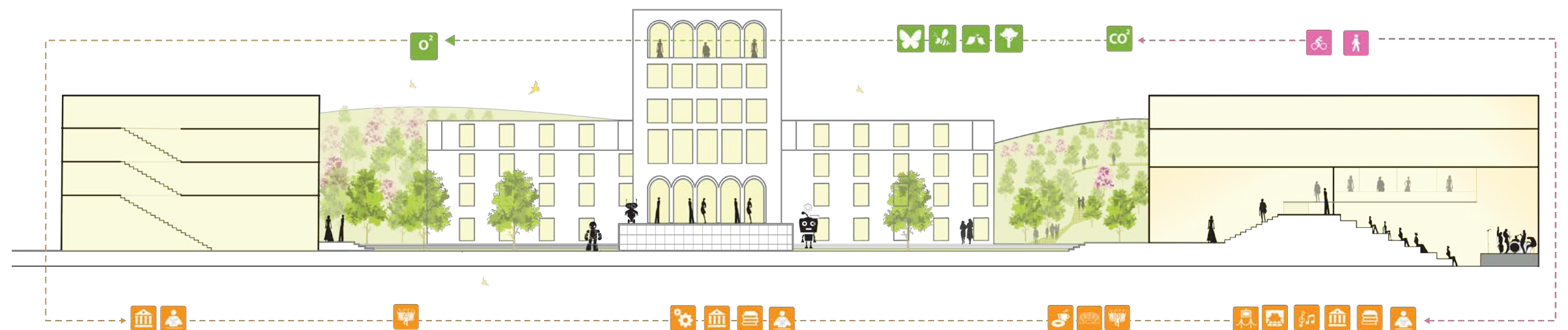
Neighborhood Park – Playground: new playground, flowers and furniture area added; existing paths are connected to the neighborhoods pedestrian networks.

Neighborhood Park – Sports: new sports fields and facilities are added, but the space remains flexible so that it can also become a gathering space to watch soccer games projected on the exterior wall of the stadium.



PROJECTS

A vibrant, surreal illustration of a large, multi-story stone building with a red flag on top, framed by two large, arched structures covered in red flowers. The scene is set in a lush, green landscape with trees, a path, and various figures, including a man on a bicycle and children. The foreground is filled with a field of red poppies and butterflies.



THE BOULEVARD

FRAMEWORK

Since it's important to redevelop the Boulevard as part of a city-wide strategy on infrastructure and public transportation, the proposed strategy for the Boulevard is related and connected to the redesigned street sections of the northern part of the Boulevard. In the middle zone of the street section a tram line is introduced. This zone is used to collect the rainwater and clean it with vegetation. A sunken piping system collects the cleaned water and drains it to the Lana River.

URBAN FURNITURE COLLECTION

FRAMEWORK

To safeguard the coherency within the plan and improve the feasibility, a collection of urban accessories is designed. All made out of red colored metal. They fit with the purposes and uses of the different parks. Sculptural lampposts at Skanderbeg square; a collection of small chairs in the campus; hammocks in the urban beach; a fence around the neighborhood parks and a monumental entrance gate for the Lake Park Entrance.



4. OUTLINE SPECIFICATION & IMPLEMENTATION

ACTION PLAN

The projects can be implemented independently and in different phases.

PARTICIPATORY PROCESS

The implementation of the projects requires contribution from different stakeholders. Parties can vary from private stakeholders, residents, cultural and/or religious institutions, government, and local authorities. It is indeed important to enable these parties to contribute to the plan in order to guarantee its sustainability and secure its implementation. Moreover the division in different projects favors the organization and management of such articulated project teams, which are tailored around the specifics of each individual/independent project.

CONNECT/INVOLVE DIFFERENT SCALES

The Boulevard involves all scales, local and regional, so the strategic decisions on the boulevard should account for the above and integrate all scales of design. It’s important to embed design decisions into regional strategies: this means that traffic situation of the boulevard should go along traffic studies on the city; strategies for the Lana River should be complemented by extensive hydrological studies.

COST ESTIMATION

HIERARCHY IN INVESTMENT

The proposed approach is realistic in the sense that it takes into consideration the large financial resources needed in such a large and complex intervention. The fact that the project is divided in parts and stages allows for the prioritization of the area; combining park redesign and small scale upgrading of the existing squares and parks. This approach can also address different funding programs and benefit from private investments from developers (for example in the implementation of parking garages under the squares and parks). Last, but not least, the need for different small budgets instead of an initial grand investment is an advantage in terms of time needed to obtain results. Extending the strategy to the rest of the city: the three-pronged approach allows to connect other areas of the city to this smart landscape, relating them to the boulevard according to the three project systems: green blue engines, societal platform, and networks.

OPERA GARDENS NEW PARK + UNDERGROUND PARKING

		QUANTITY	PRIZE/m2	TOT.
1	LANDSCAPING+ SOIL INFILL WORKS	m2	7500	€ 375.000,00
2	TREES + SHRUBS	UNITS	100	€ 6.000,00
3	PAVED AREAS	m2	4200	€ 294.000,00
partial total				€ 675.000,00
4	URBAN FURNITURE	units	30	€ 6.000,00
5	ELECTRICAL AND PLUMBING	20%		€ 135.000,00
total			11830	€ 1.491.000,00
total with vat		20%		€ 1.789.200,00

URBAN BEACH UPGRADE OF AN EXISTING PARK

		QUANTITY	PRIZE/m2	TOT.
1	LANDSCAPING	m2	8000	€ 240.000,00
2	TREES + SHRUBS	UNITS	40	€ 2.400,00
3	PAVED AREAS	m2	1000	€ 70.000,00
partial total				€ 312.400,00
4	URBAN FURNITURE	Units	20	€ 4.000,00
5	ELECTRICAL AND PLUMBING (water features)	25%		€ 78.100,00
total			9060	€ 706.900,00
total with vat		20%		€ 848.280,00

GREEN CAMPUS UPGRADE OF EXISTING PUBLIC SPACES

		QUANTITY	PRIZE/m2	TOT.
1	LANDSCAPING	m2	5000	€ 30,00
2	TREES + SHRUBS	UNITS	150	€ 60,00
3	PAVED AREAS	m2	5000	€ 350.000,00
partial total				€ 509.000,00
4	URBAN FURNITURE	Units	40	€ 200,00
5	ELECTRICAL AND PLUMBING (water features)	25%		€ 127.250,00
total			10190	€ 1.153.250,00
total with vat		20%		€ 1.383.900,00

FUTURE PLATFORM (PYRAMID) UPGRADE OF THE EXISTING SQUARE

		QUANTITY	PRIZE/m2	TOT.
1	LANDSCAPING+ EXHAVATION WORKS	m2	6000	€ 50,00
2	TREES + SHRUBS	UNITS	120	€ 60,00
3	PAVED AREAS	m2	6000	€ 70,00
partial total				€ 727.200,00
4	URBAN FURNITURE	Units	10	€ 200,00
5	ELECTRICAL AND PLUMBING (water features)	25%		€ 181.800,00
total			12130	€ 1.638.200,00
total with vat		20%		€ 1.965.840,00

GATEWAY TO THE PARK NEW PARK

		QUANTITY	PRIZE/m2	TOT.
1	LANDSCAPING+ SOIL INFILLING WORKS	m2	7000	€ 50,00
2	TREES + SHRUBS	UNITS	250	€ 60,00
3	PAVED AREAS	m2	2000	€ 70,00
partial total				€ 505.000,00
4	URBAN FURNITURE	Units	40	€ 200,00
5	ELECTRICAL AND PLUMBING	25%		€ 126.250,00
total			9290	€ 1.144.250,00
total with vat		20%		€ 1.373.100,00

NEIGHBOURHOOD PARKS UPGRADE OF AN EXISTING PARK + UNDERGROUND PARKING

		QUANTITY	PRIZE/m2	TOT.
1	LANDSCAPING	m2	3000	€ 90.000,00
2	TREES + SHRUBS	UNITS	40	€ 2.400,00
3	PAVED AREAS	m2	3000	€ 210.000,00
partial total				€ 302.400,00
4	URBAN FURNITURE	Units	50	€ 10.000,00
5	ELECTRICAL AND PLUMBING	20%		€ 60.480,00
total			6090	€ 675.280,00
total with vat		20%		€ 810.336,00

BOULEVARD UPGRADE OF THE EXISTING SQUARE

		QUANTITY	PRIZE/m2	TOT.
1	LANDSCAPING	m2	8500	€ 255.000,00
2	TREES + SHRUBS	UNITS	400	€ 48.000,00
3	PAVED AREAS (PEDESTRIAN AND CYCLING)	m2	16500	€ 1.320.000,00
partial total				€ 1.623.000,00
4	URBAN FURNITURE	Units	10	€ 200,00
5	ELECTRICAL AND PLUMBING (water features)	25%		€ 405.750,00
total			25410	€ 3.653.750,00
total with vat		20%		€ 4.384.500,00

5. TEAM

TEAM COMPOSITION + MEMBERS

The consortium is composed by professionals and researchers that cover a wide range of competences in architecture, planning and urban and landscape design, and it is aimed at offering a holistic approach toward landscape and urban design. POLIS University is a young, ambitious and engaged quality research-led university, supporting a focused range of core disciplines in the fields of architecture, urban planning, design and environmental management. Since its establishment in 2006, **POLIS** promotes scientific excellence and innovation and aims at building a critical mass prepared to face Albania's development needs and challenges. **METROPOLIS** is an Albanian architecture, planning, and urban and landscape design practice established in 2007, which has its roots in the city planning activities of a civil society organization that has been operating since the early '90s in planning and development projects for formal/informal settlements in Tirana's suburban area. The team brings together talented experienced architects, interior designers and town planners, who operate on multiple scale projects. **FELIXX LANDSCAPE ARCHITECTS & PLANNERS** is a Rotterdam based office for proactive landscape architecture, established to advice on the new environmental challenges. The office operates within the fields of environmental design and spatial studies, and is currently involved in a large number of projects throughout Europe and Asia. The office collects an enthusiastic team of landscape architects, designers and ecologists with a common passion: contributing to a more sustainable environment. **G & A** was established in September 2004. Since its inception this company was engaged in the design and supervision of road infrastructure, water supply and sanitation works, supervision and testing of numerous project implementations. Accumulated experience, equipment, human resources and information available to the company, allows it to have an advantaged position as a valuable collaborator for any engineering, architectural or urban project.

POLIS UNIVERSITY

INTERNATIONAL SCHOOL OF ARCHITECTURE & URBAN DEVELOPMENT POLICIES

Laura Pedata; Architect
Besnil Aliaij; Urban Planner

Assistants:
Eranda Janku
Dea Buza

Interns:
Enrico Profido
Caterina Spadoni

FELIXX

LANDSCAPE ARCHITECTS & PLANNERS

Michiel Van Driessche; Landscape Architect
Deborah Lambert; Landscape Architect
Marnix Vink; Landscape Architect
Willemijn van Manen; Landscape Architect
Laura Spenkelink; Landscape Architect

METROPOLIS I.t.d

ASSOCIATED, ARCHITECTURE & PLANNING

Sotir Dhamo; Architect, Urban Planner

Interns:
Edon Bardoniqi
Viola Deti
Shega Erebara
Jona Osmenaj
Megi Ylli
Sadmira Malaj
Greta Kukeli
Zaimir Shkëmbi

G&K

PROJEKTIM-SUPERVIZIM DESIGN SOFTWARE

Dilaver Oshafi; Engineer
Spartak Tumani; Engineer



felixx LANDSCAPE
ARCHITECTS
& PLANNERS

MetroPOLIS
Associated, Architecture & Planning



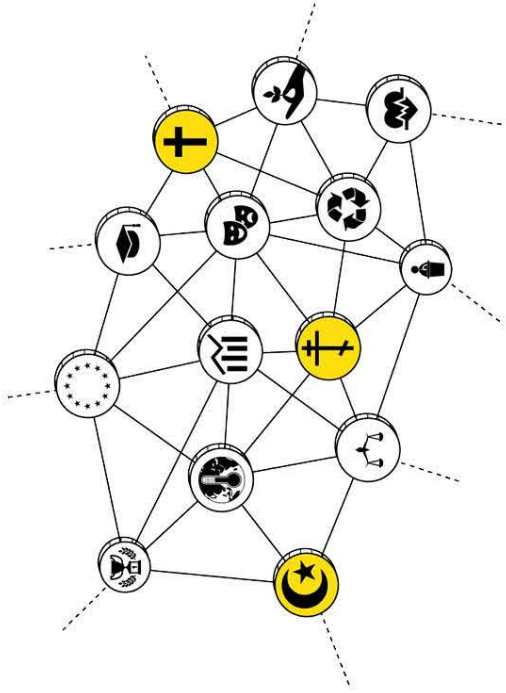
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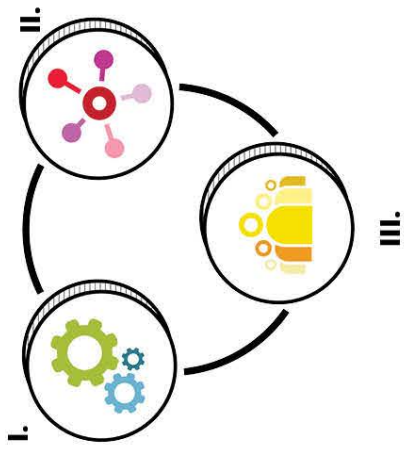
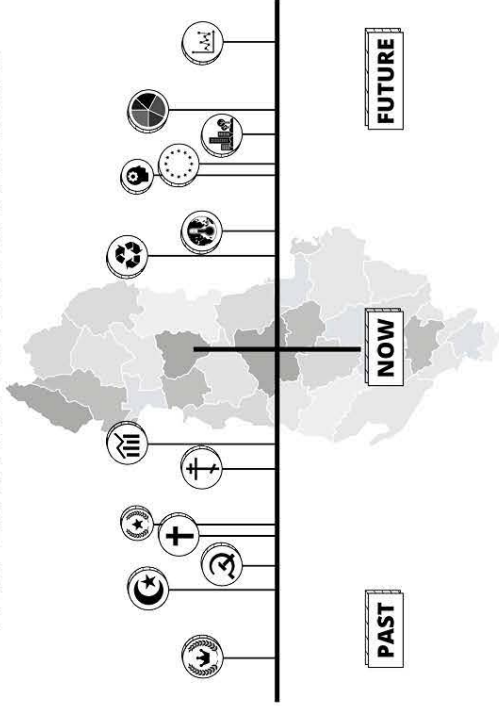
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COUNTRY IN FULL DEVELOPMENT

PAST ERAS AND FUTURE CHALLENGES



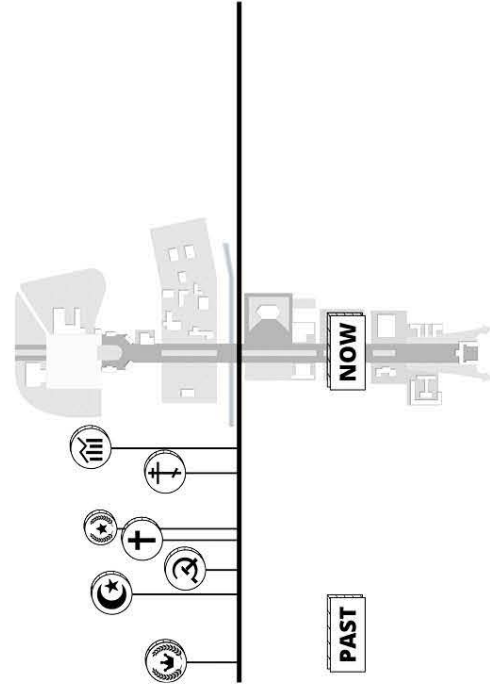
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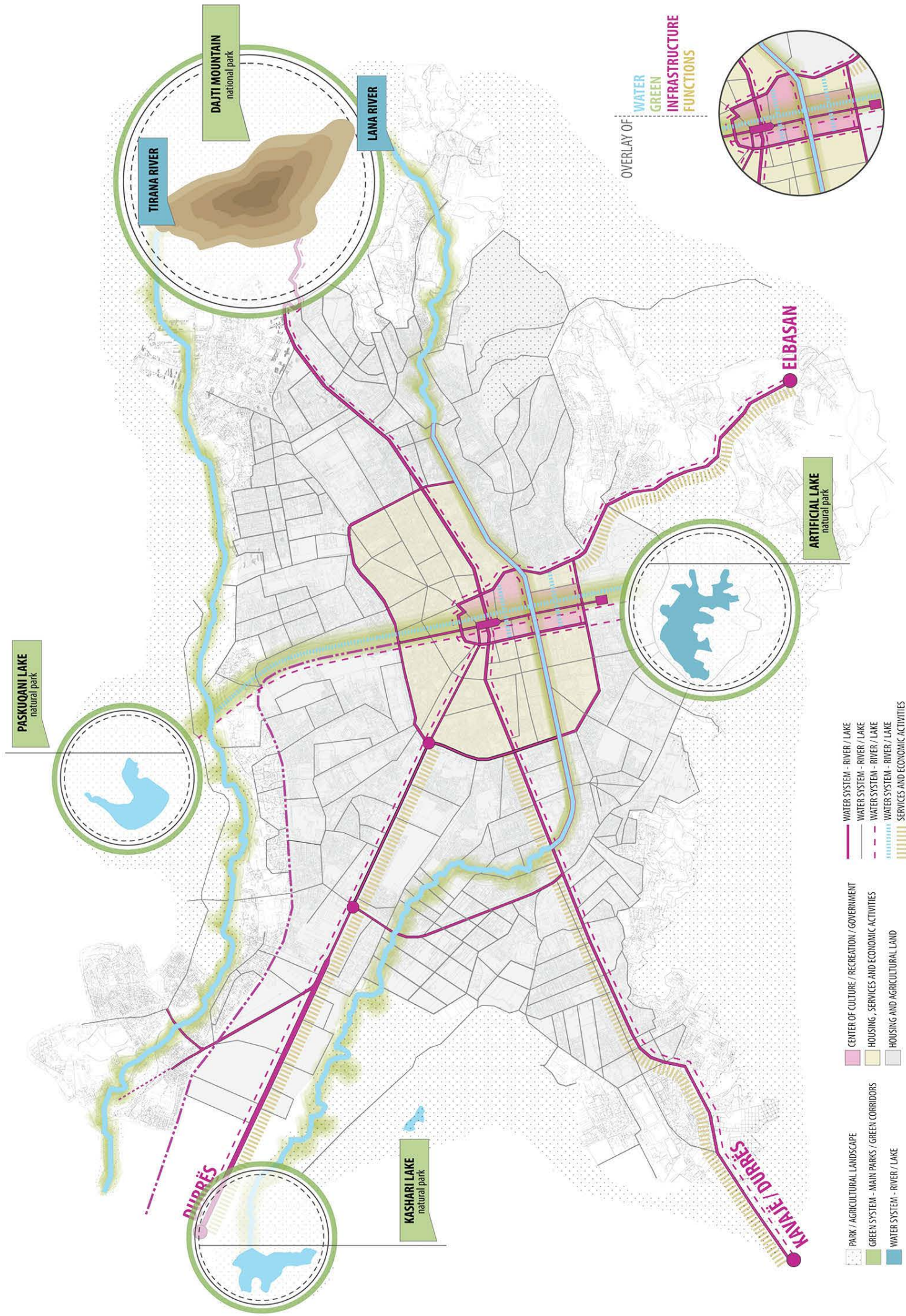
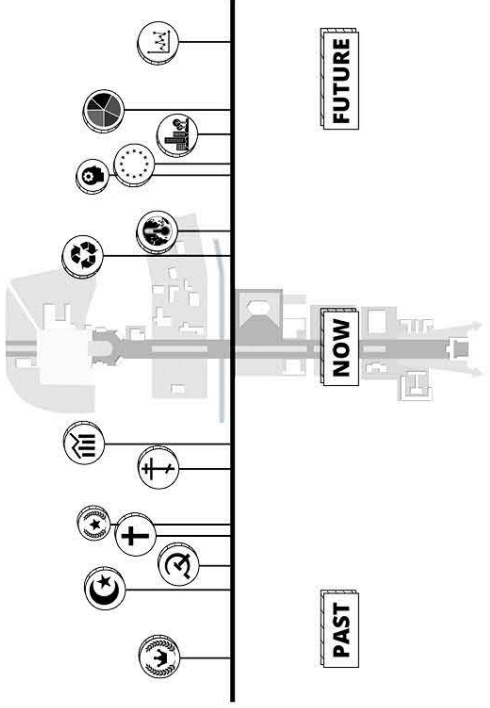
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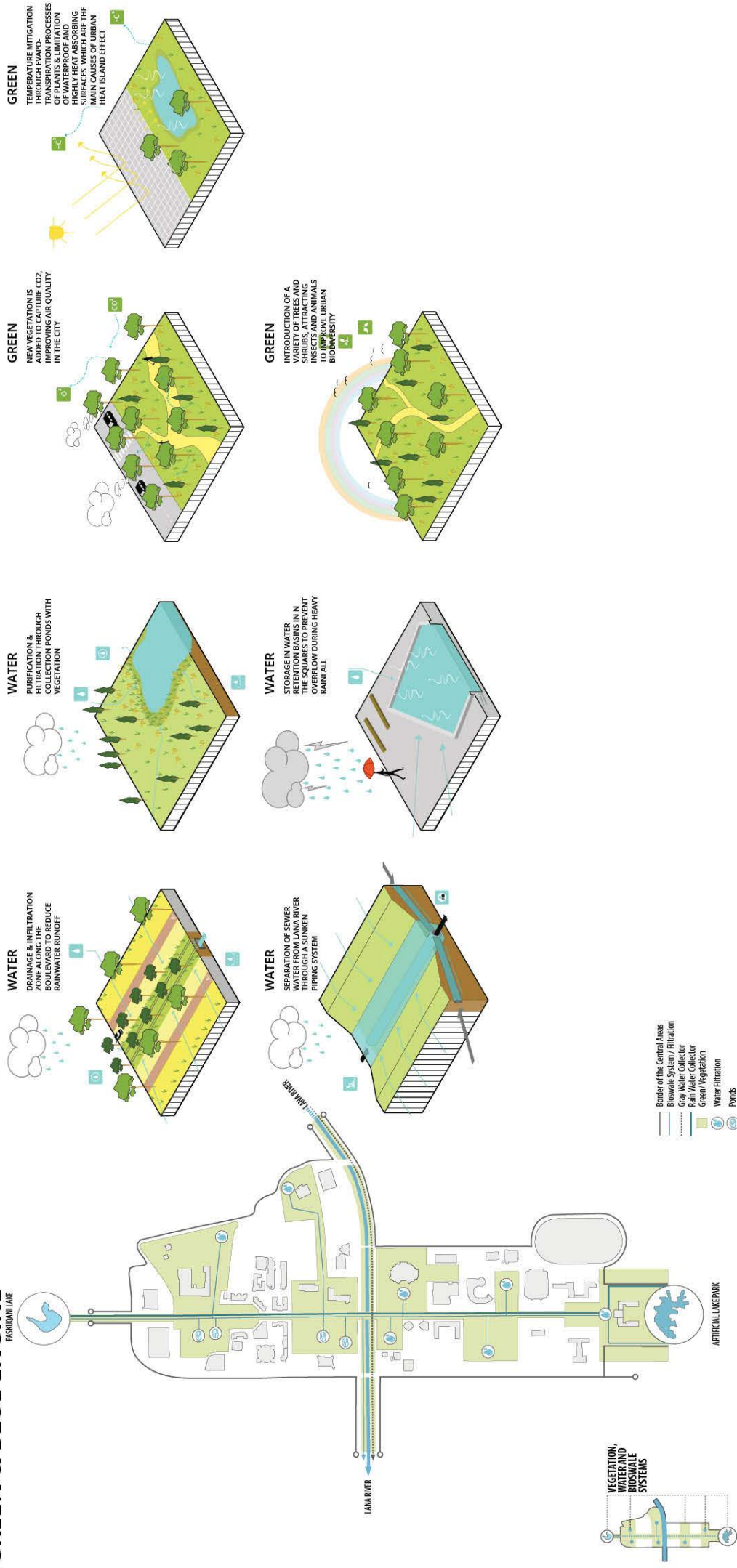


BENCHMARK FOR THE FUTURE

INTEGRATE NEW CHALLENGES



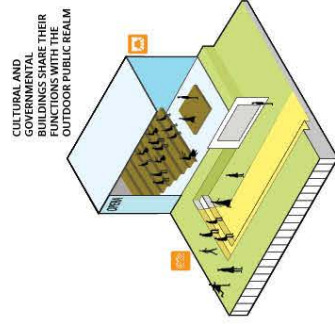
GREEN & BLUE ENGINE



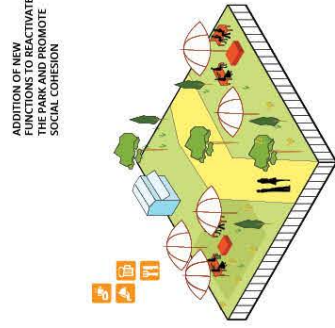
SOCIETAL PLATFORM



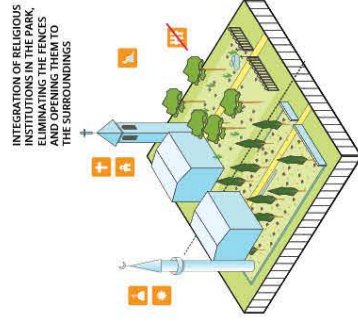
CULTURAL FUNCTIONS



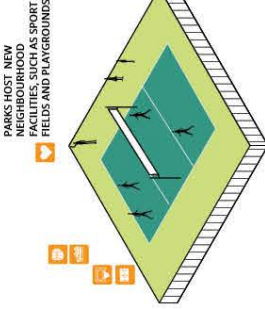
NEW USES/NEW FUNCTIONS



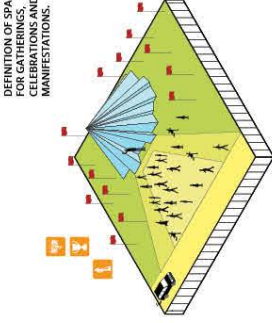
COEXISTENCE OF RELIGIONS



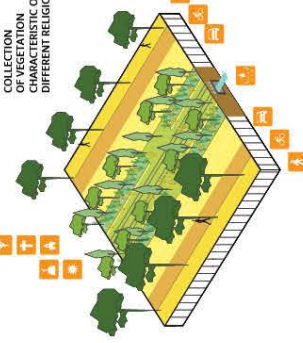
NEIGHBOURHOOD FACILITIES



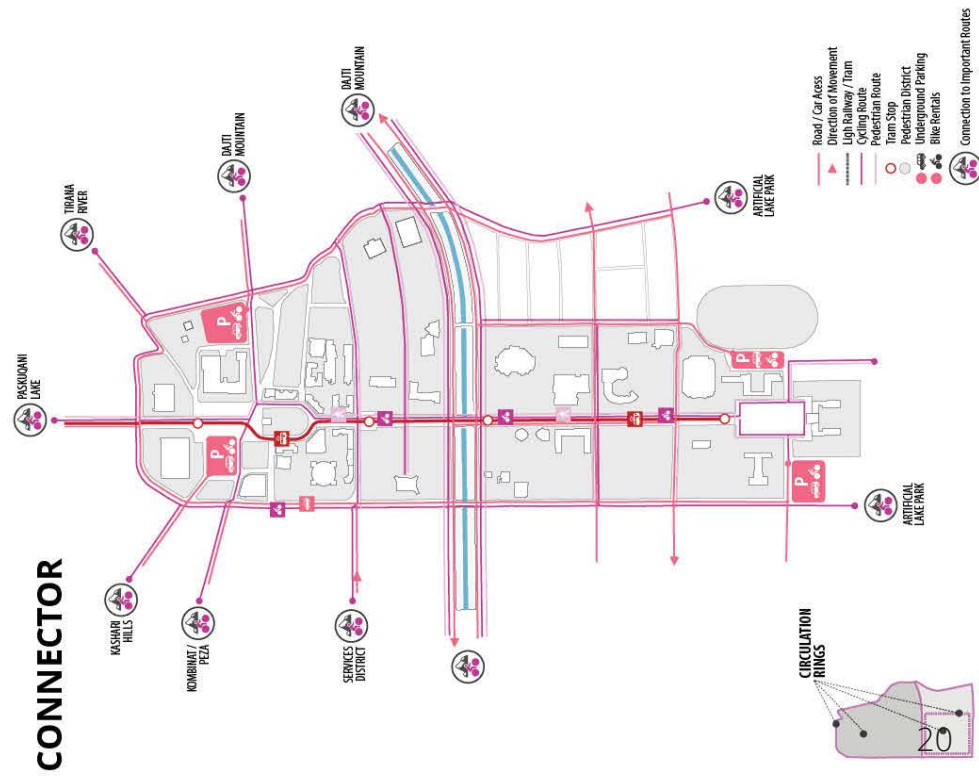
MANIFESTATION & CELEBRATION



UNIFYING ELEMENTS



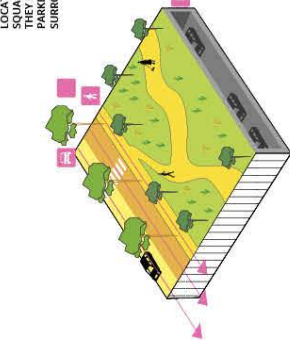
CONNECTOR



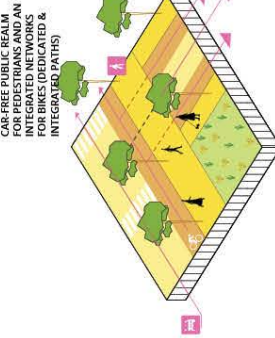
PEDESTRIAN NETWORKS



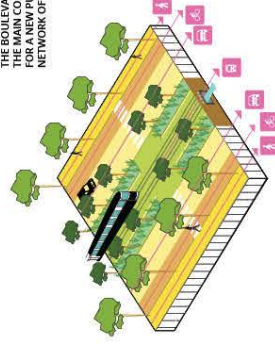
PARKING GARAGES

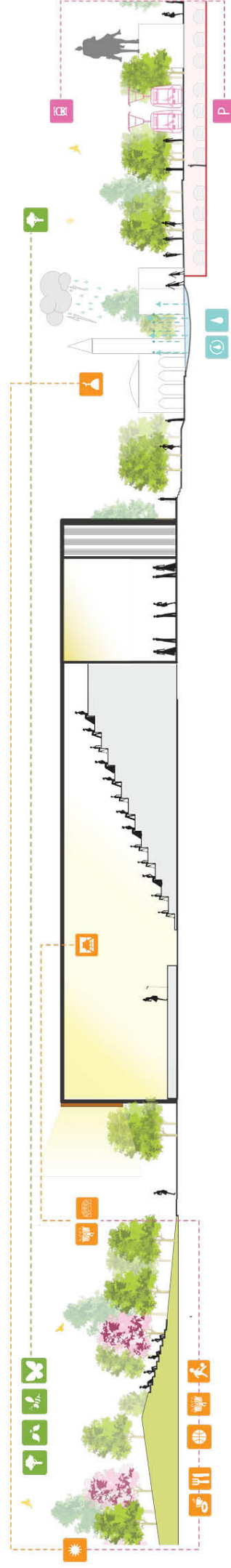


BIKE ROUTING

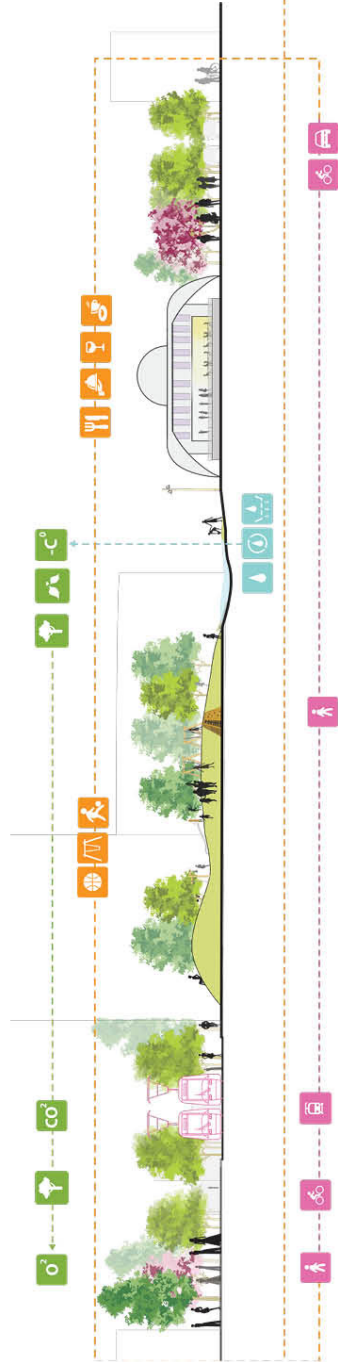


PUBLIC TRANSPORT

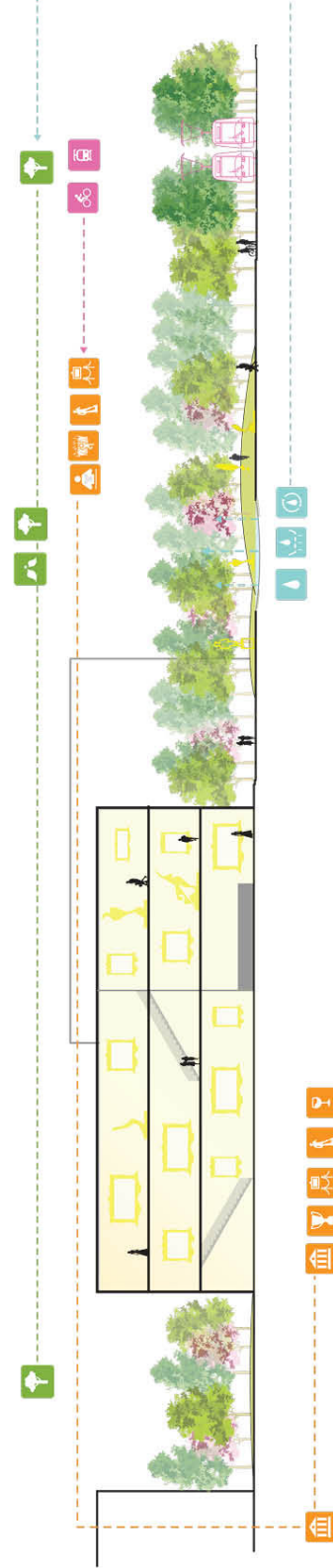




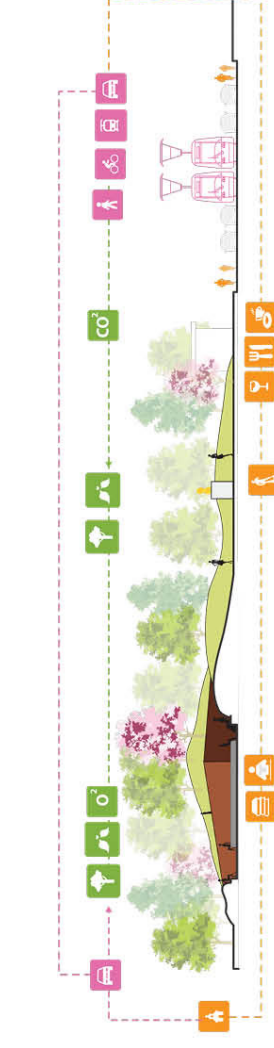
1. OPERA GARDENS - SECTION A - SCALE 1:300



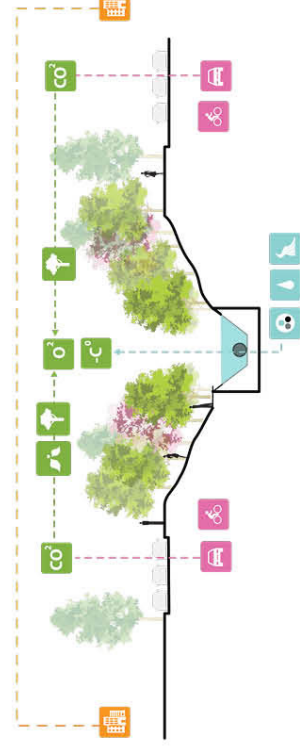
3. URBAN BEACH PARK - SECTION B - SCALE 1:300



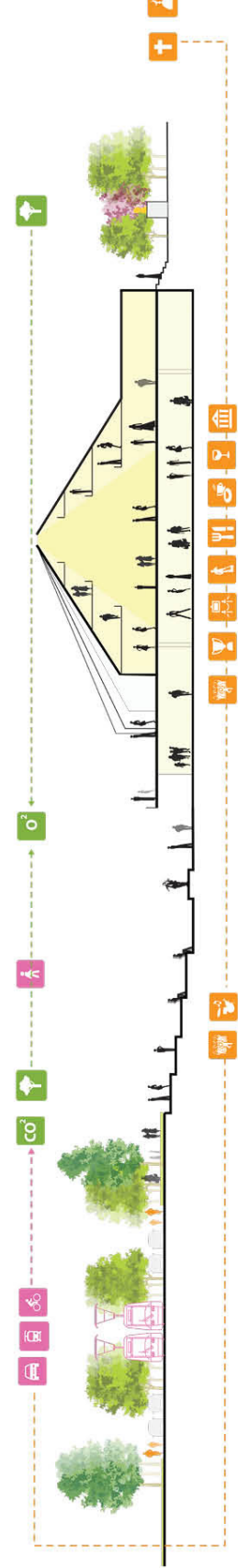
2. GREEN CAMPUS D - SECTION B - SCALE 1:300



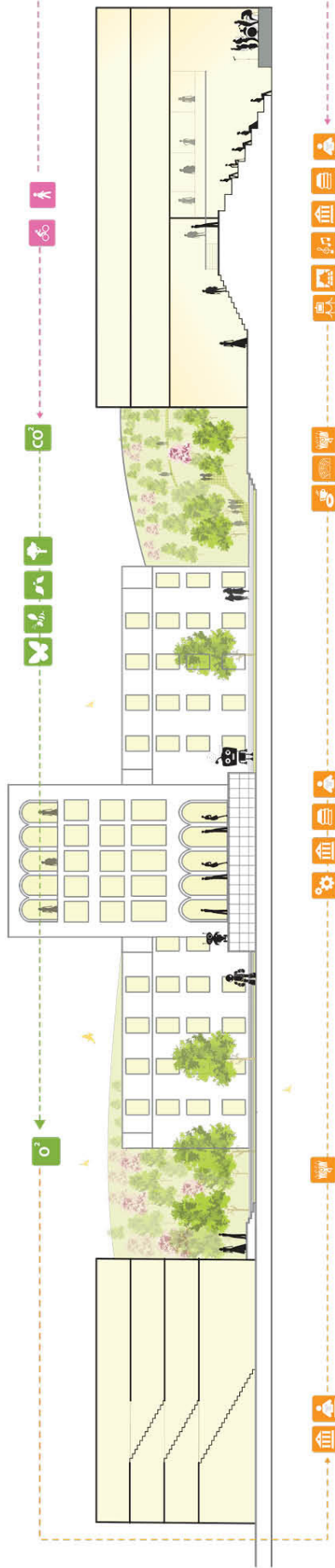
6a. NEIGHBOURHOOD PARK/MEDITATION GARDEN - SECTION D - SCALE 1:300



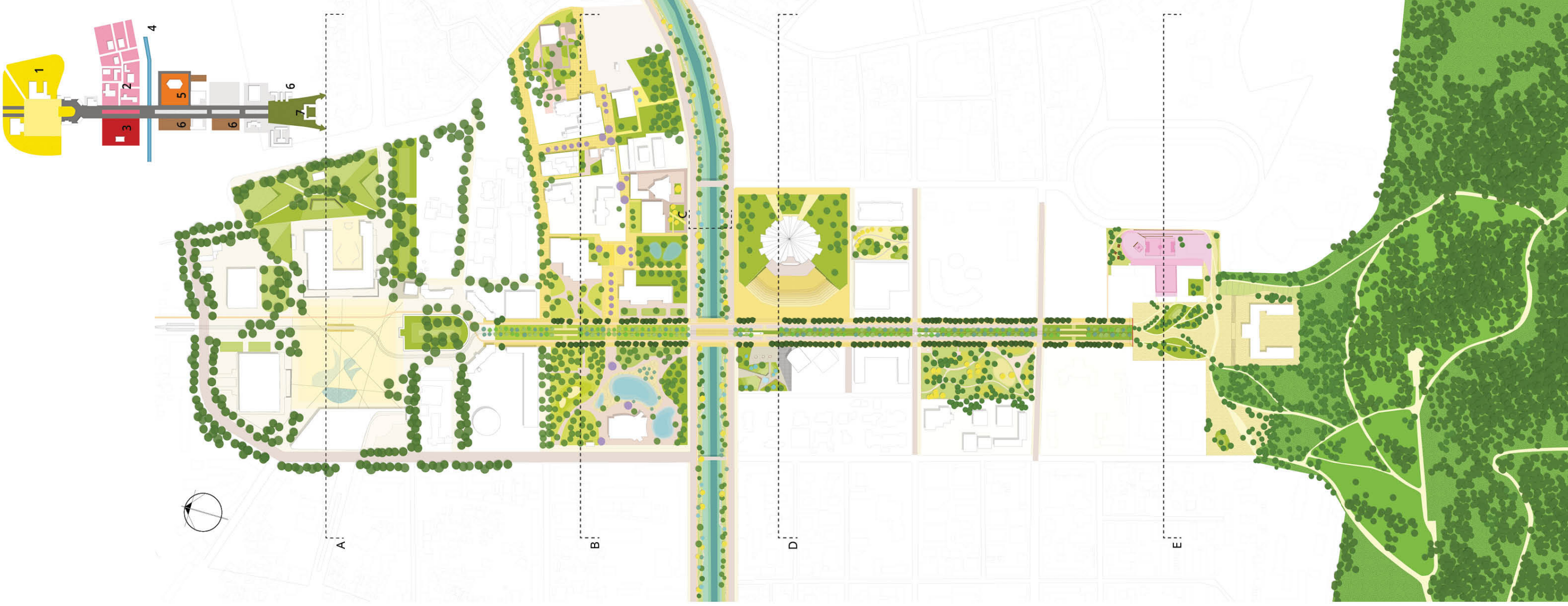
4. LANA RIVER PARK - SECTION C - SCALE 1:300



5. PLATFORM FOR THE FUTURE - THE PYRAMID - SECTION D - SCALE 1:300



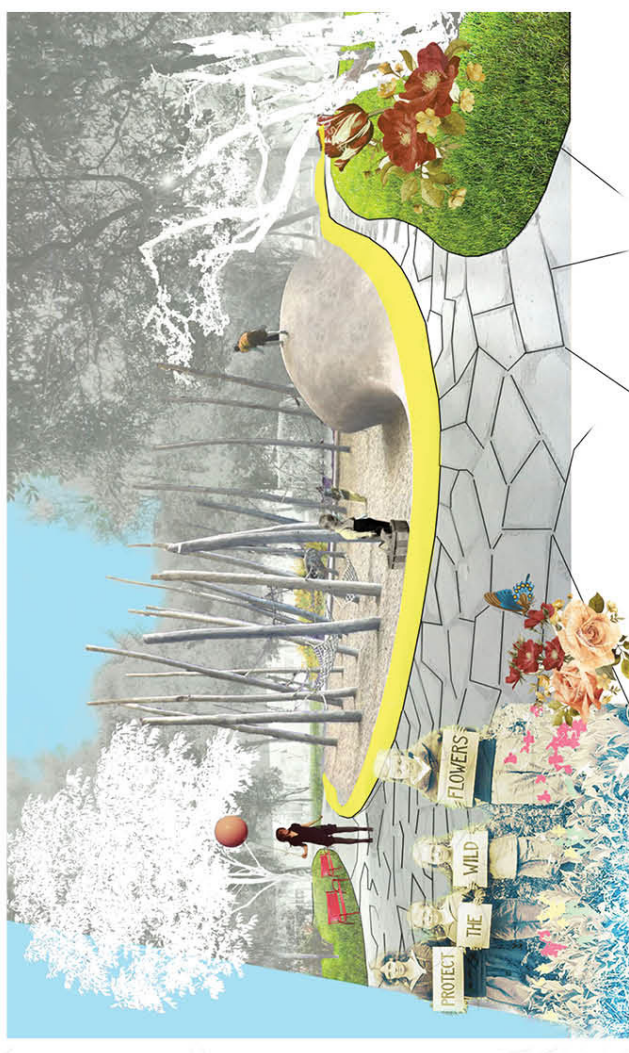
7. GATEWAY TO THE PARKS - SECTION E - SCALE 1:300



1. OPERA GARDENS

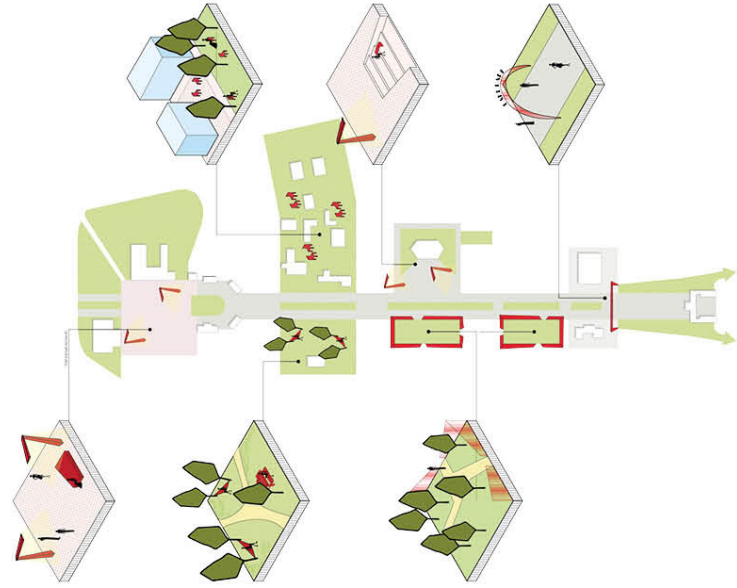


4. LANA RIVER PARK

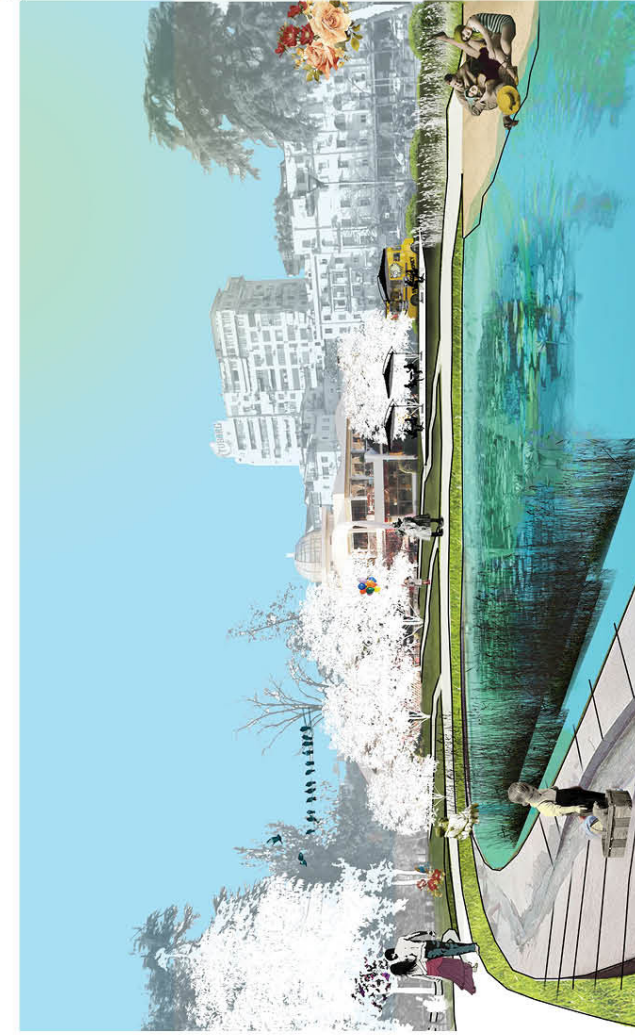


6b. NEIGHBOURHOOD PARK/PLAYGROUND





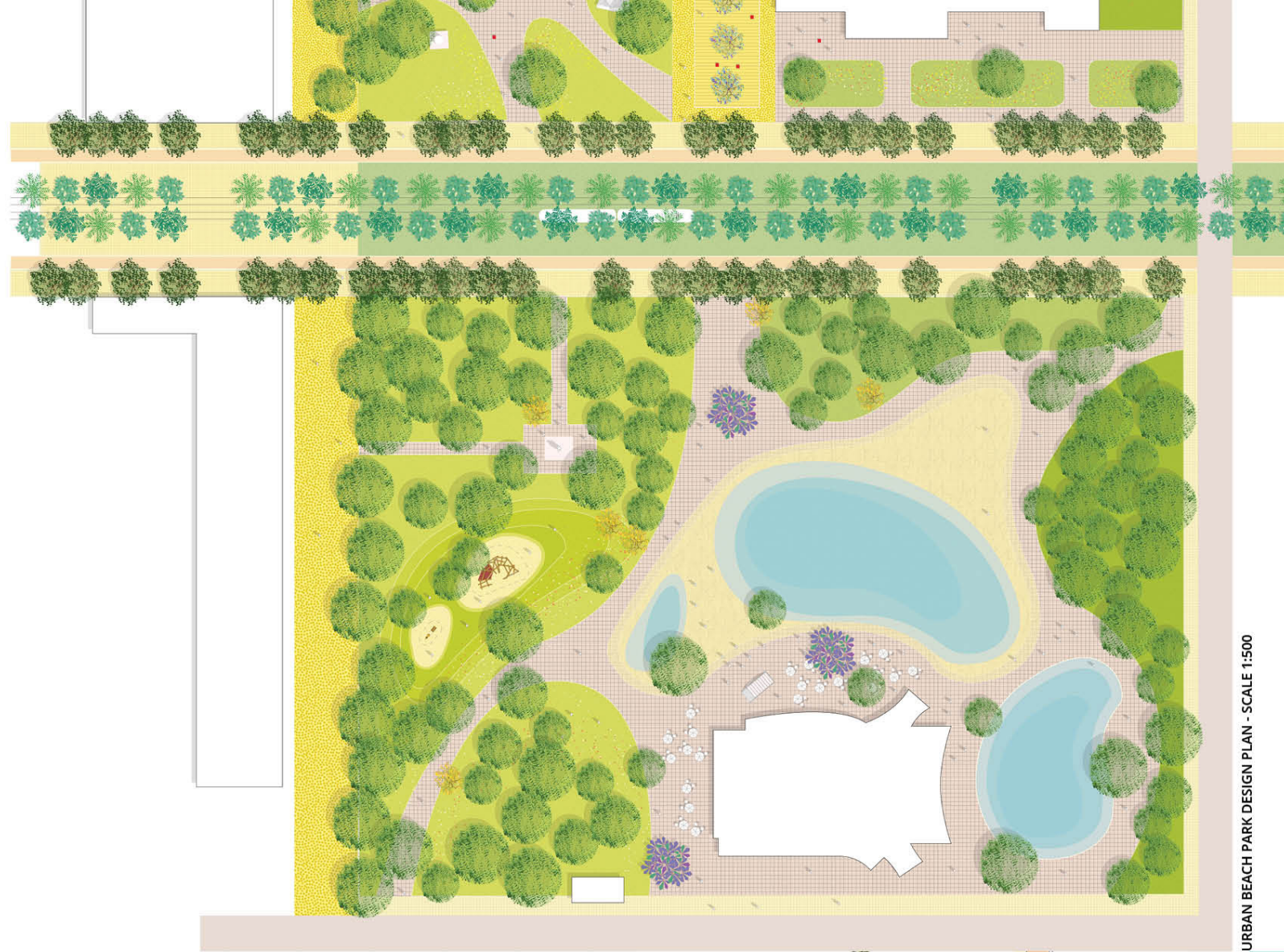
THE BOULEVARD



3. URBAN BEACH PARK



5. PLATFORM FOR THE FUTURE - THE PYRAMID



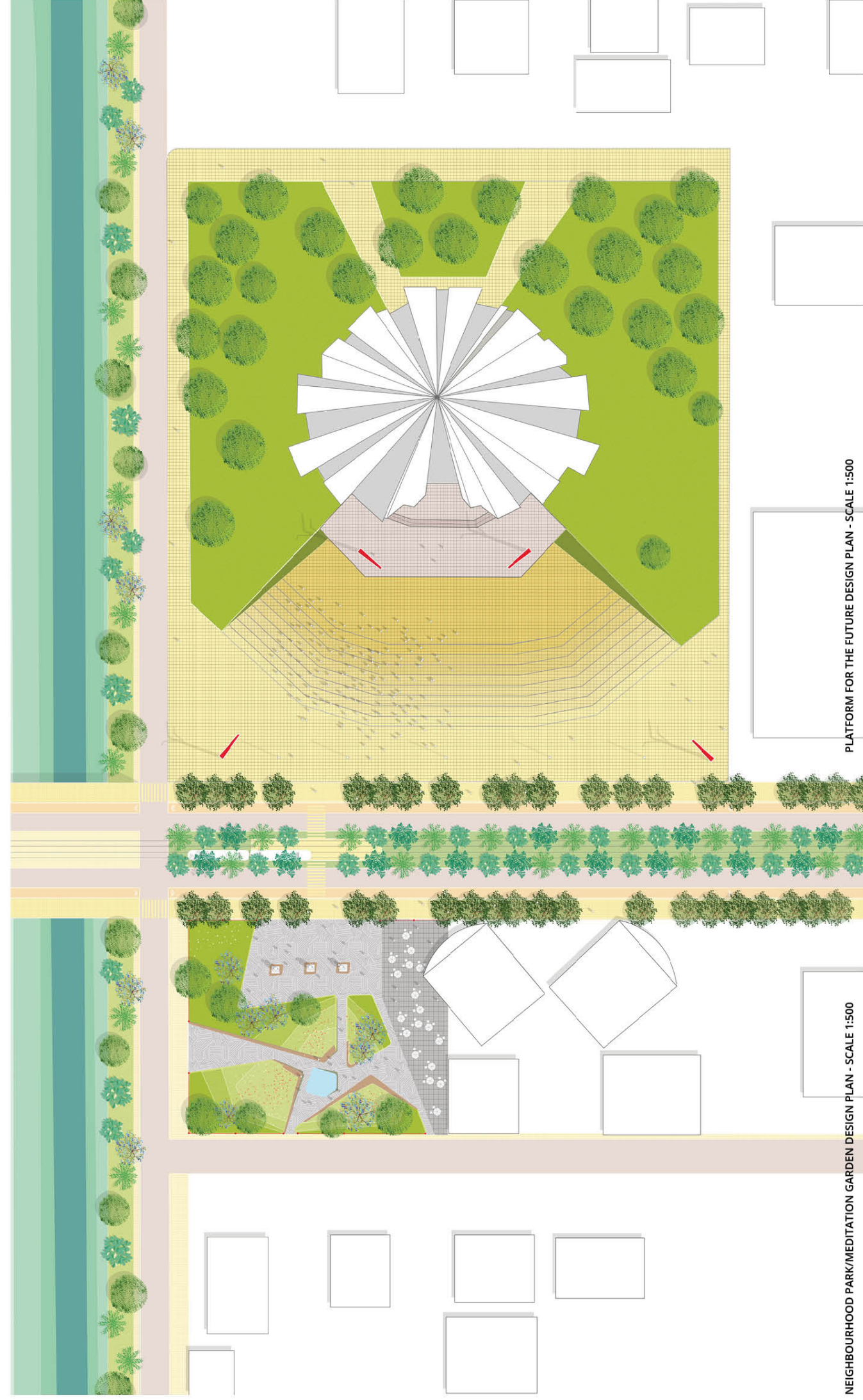
URBAN BEACH PARK DESIGN PLAN - SCALE 1:500



NEIGHBOURHOOD PARK/PLAYGROUND DESIGN PLAN - SCALE 1:500



GREEN CAMPUS DESIGN PLAN - SCALE 1:500



NEIGHBOURHOOD PARK/MEDITATION GARDEN DESIGN PLAN - SCALE 1:500

PLATFORM FOR THE FUTURE DESIGN PLAN - SCALE 1:500

