



URBAN DESIGN
PORTFOLIO

VARUN SHAH

CONTENTS

01

RECONSTRUCTING MYTHEMES

West Oakland, CA
UC Berkeley
Graduate Thesis

02

HOUSING THE VALLEY

Salinas, CA
UC Berkeley
Studio project

03

EDUCATE ELEVATE EMPOWER

Richmond, CA
UC Berkeley
Studio project

04

LIVING WITH WATER

Chennai, India
Designing Resilience in Asia
Competition entry at NCK University, Taiwan

05

EVERYTHING UNDER THE BRIDGE

Ahmedabad, India
CEPT University
Studio project

06

IDEAL CITIES

Sprietenbach Zürich, Switzerland
ETH Zürich
Studio project

07

PROFESSIONAL WORK

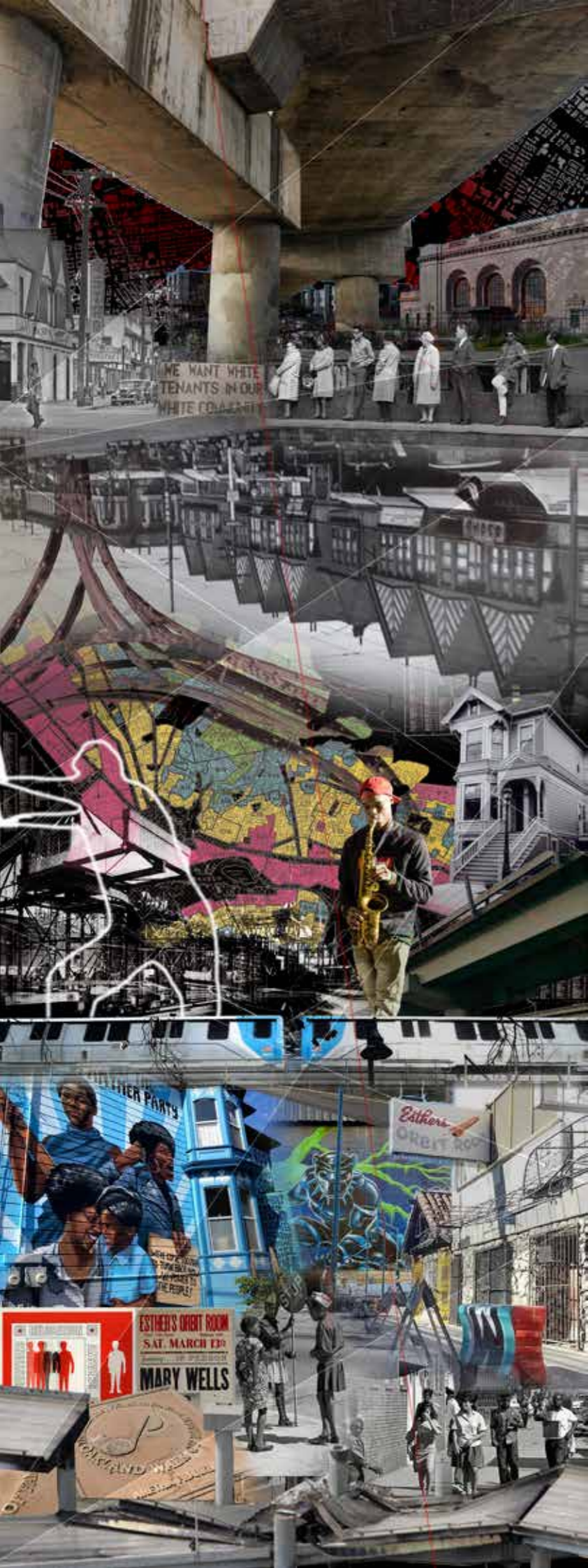
Mumbai, India
RMA Architects
Projects

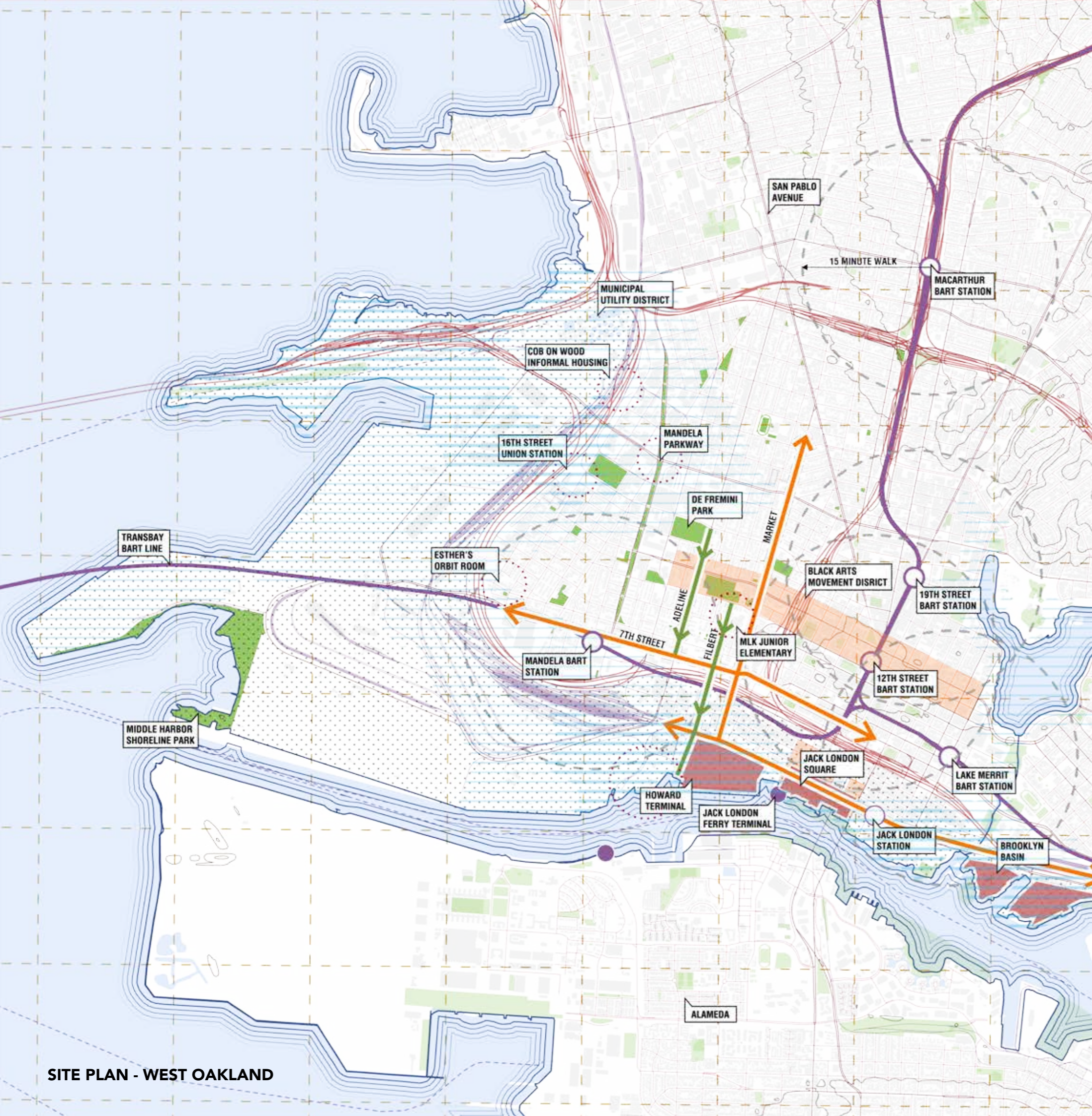
01

RECONSTRUCTING MYTHEMES

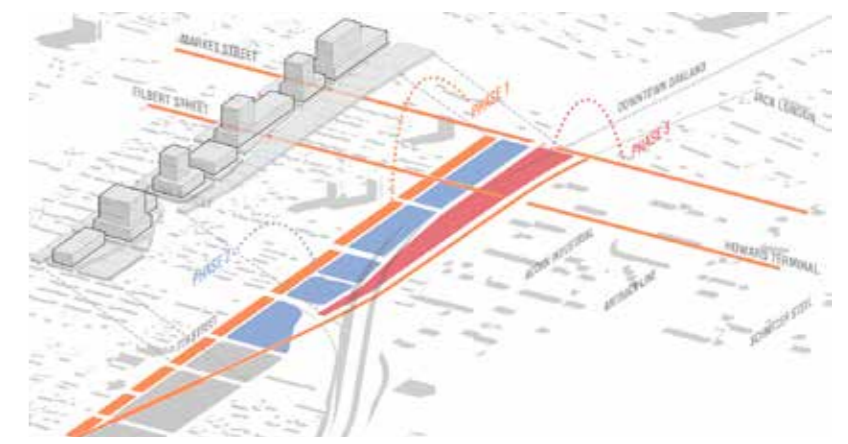
A case of West Oakland

A mytheme as I interpret it, is a fundamental unit of narrative structure, small stories playing out at different scales, that collectively build a mythology. At the city scale, urban mythemes are a set of prevailing notions of how urban situations in the city are looked at from the outside and create an identity for those on the inside.

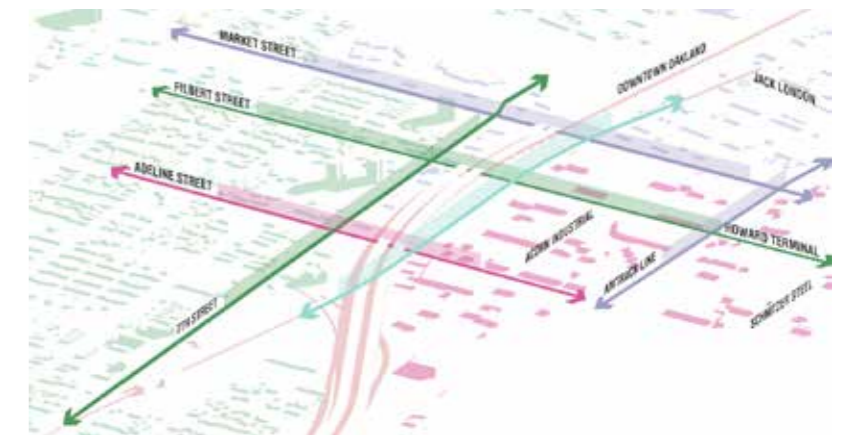




SITE PLAN - WEST OAKLAND



PHASING DIAGRAM

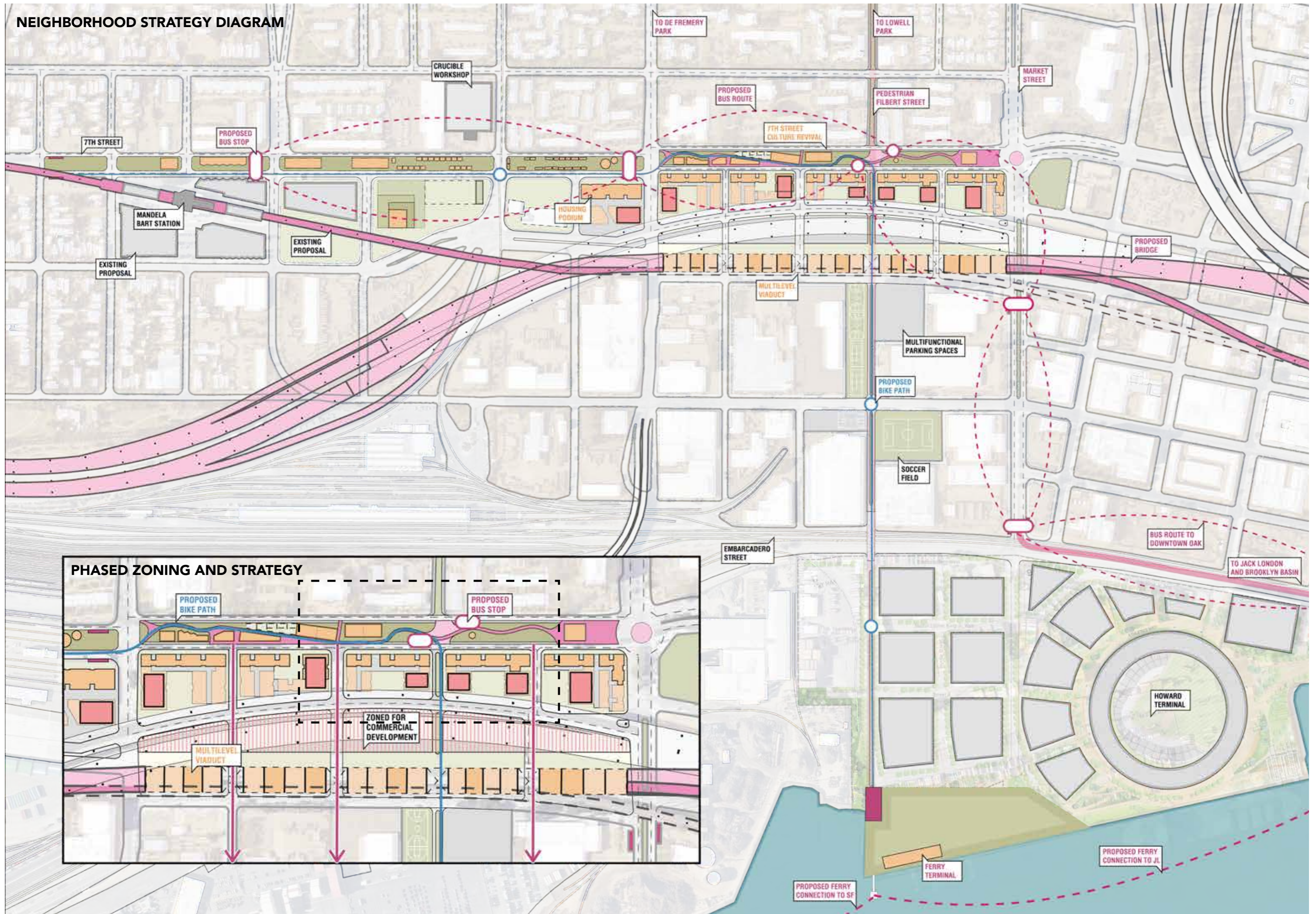


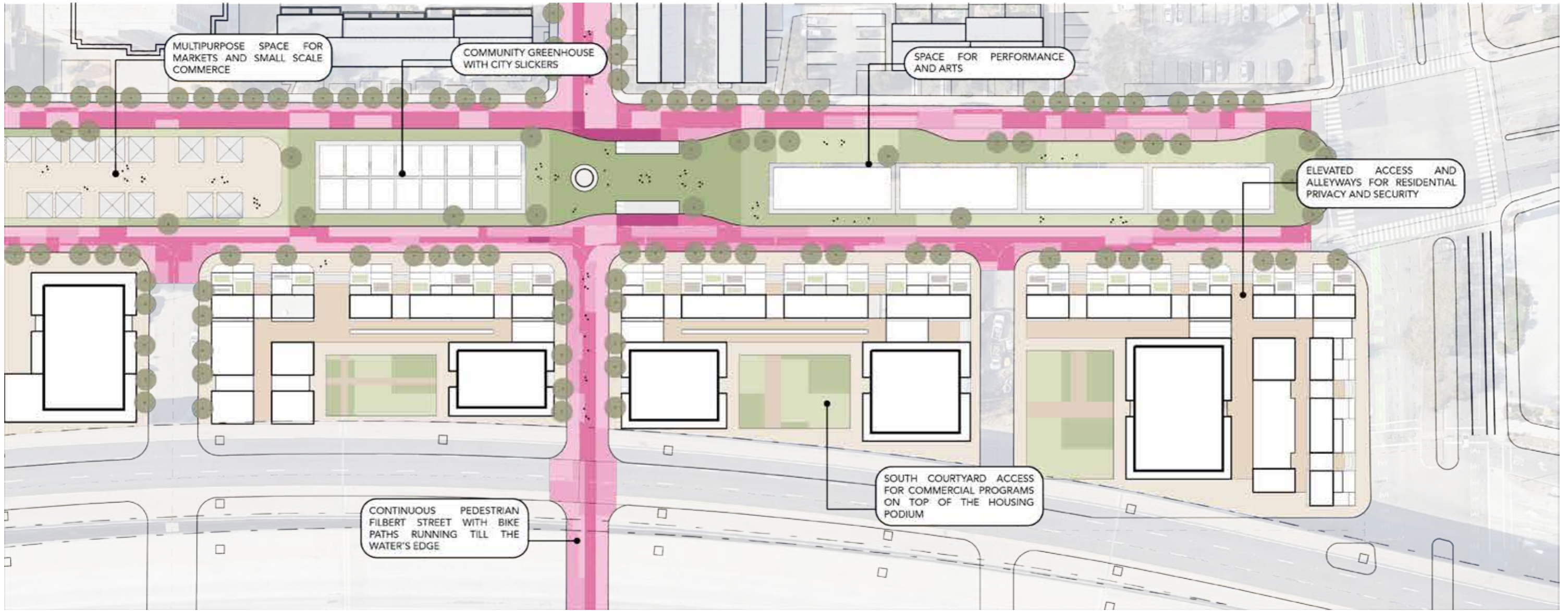
NETWORKS AND CONNECTIONS

A dense set of hard boundaries are put in place disconnecting access to the bay, deactivating the ground plane and setting the stage for development to ignore the neighborhood. The Nimitz freeway along with the Bart line, sets up a zone of deactivated land that constricts the once cultural center, 7th street expansion toward the south. The presence of the port and the Acorn industrial zone to the south further adds to this disconnect with the bay and large development projects along the Howard Terminal. All of this happens in the background of severe contention between agencies in authority and informal housing settlements on public land. Leaning into these contradictions, frictions and tensions, an alternative to current operating narratives are proposed, that start to connect upcoming development in a way that benefits the community. The larger intent is to reclaim land, reclaim air and reclaim a mental image. To accurately imagine a reality that reshapes the urbanism of West Oakland, it is important to identify and take advantage of the key actors, financial drivers, stakeholders and the intended users for the proposal.

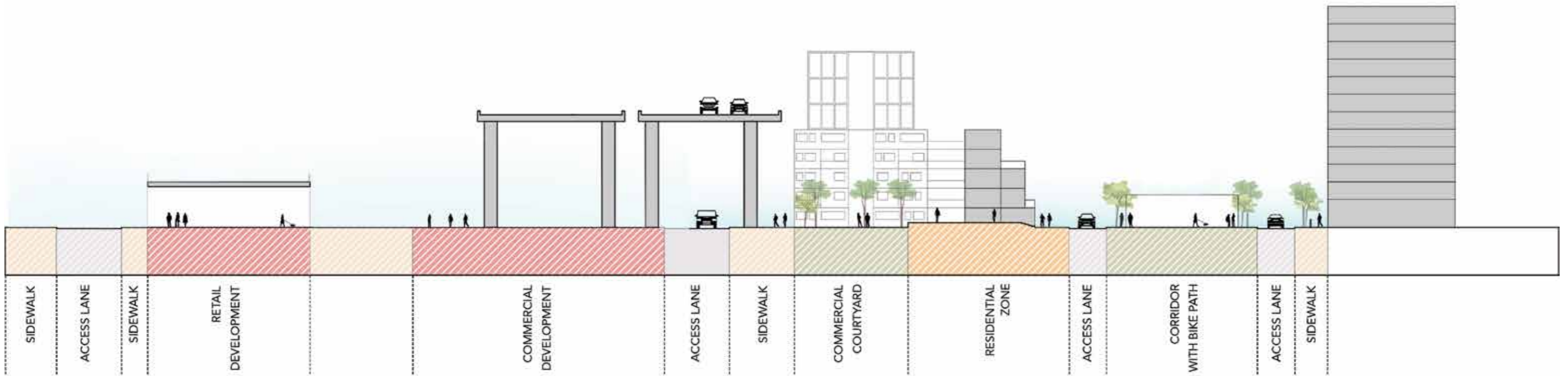
Through these measures, a restorative future for West Oakland is imagined, that allows for selected sites to function as portals, funneling development money and opportunity to the community.

NEIGHBORHOOD STRATEGY DIAGRAM

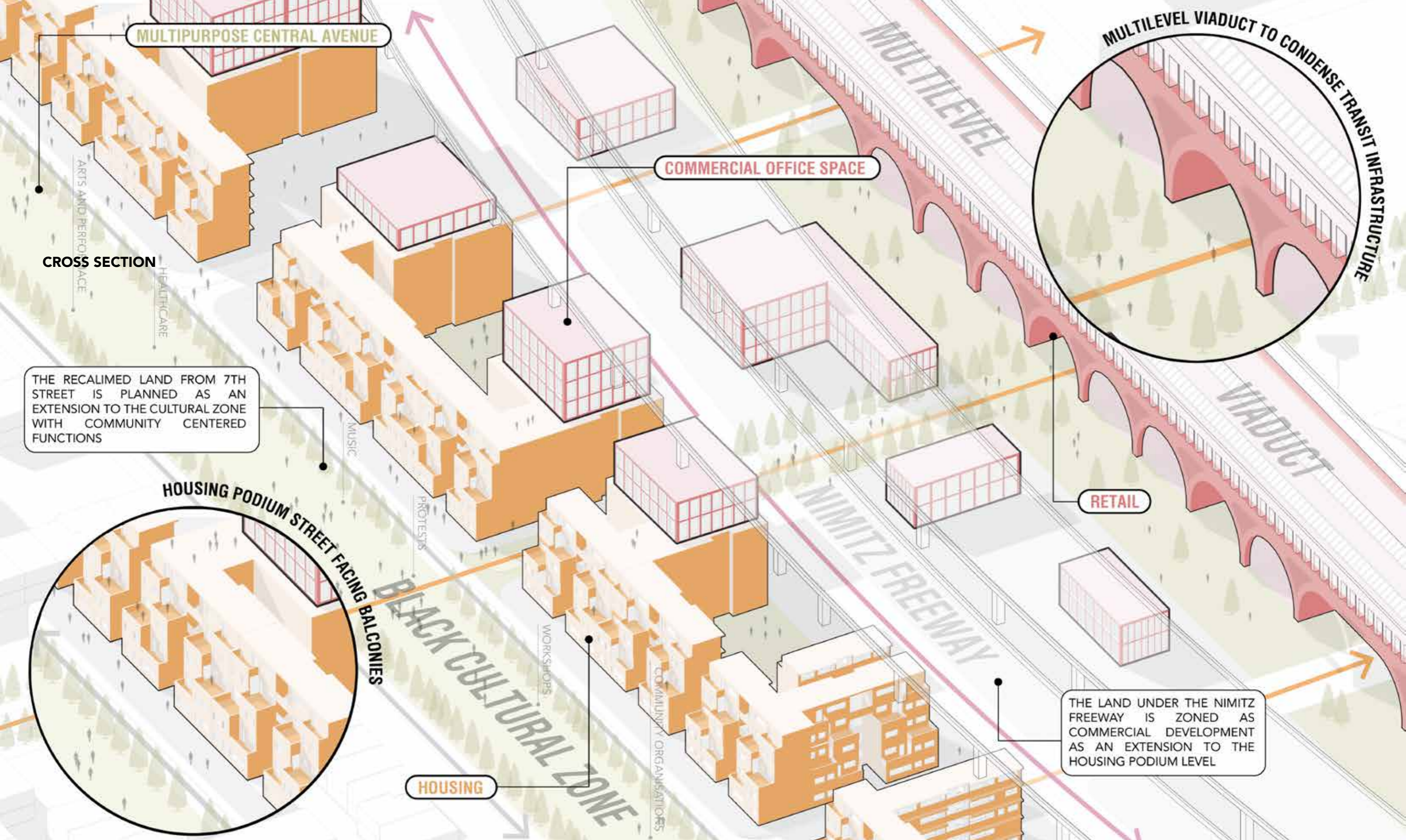




PLAN



CROSS SECTION



HOUSING THE VALLEY

Temporality as a housing solution for Salinas Valley

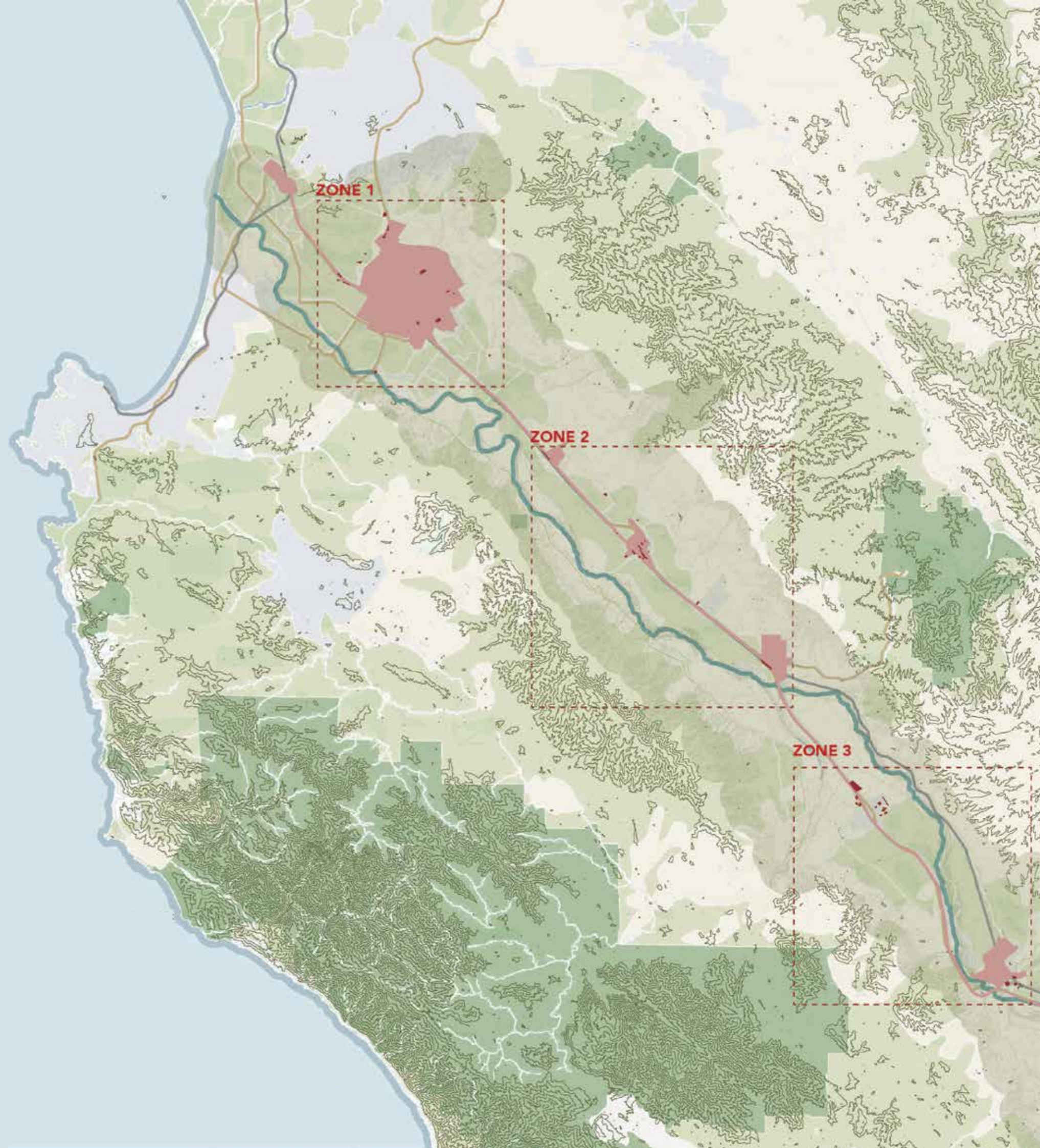
Site - Salinas, CA

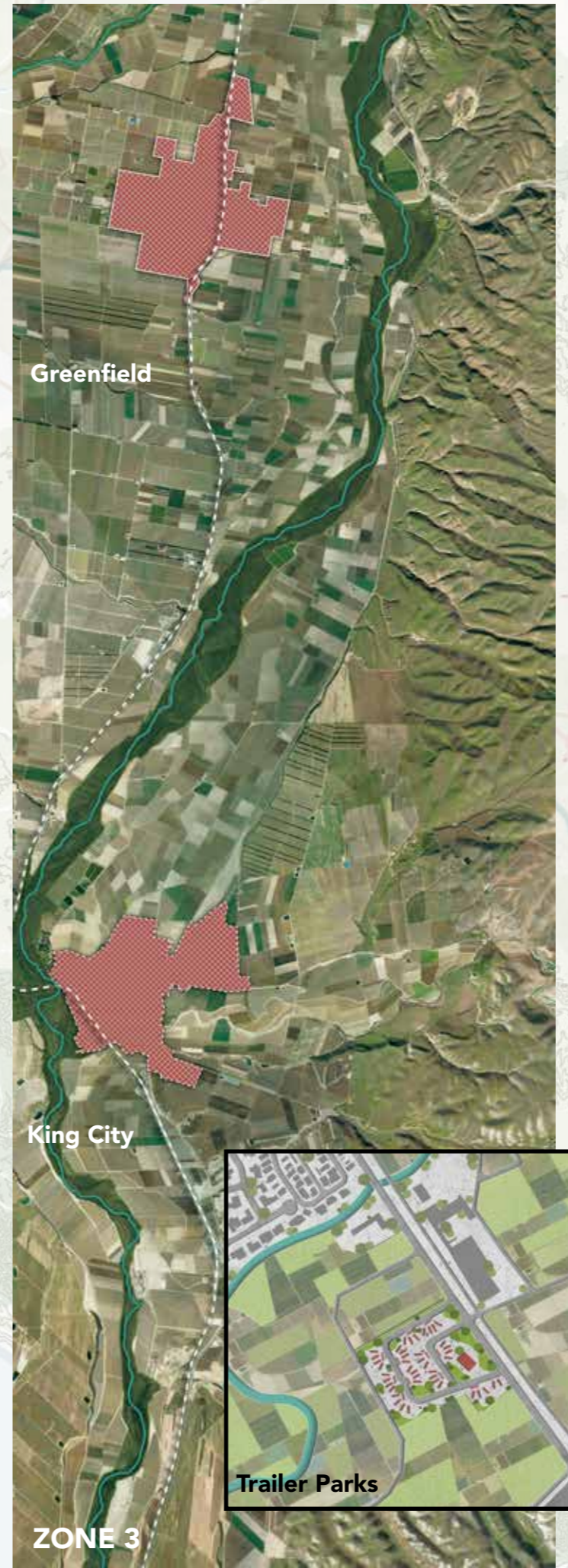
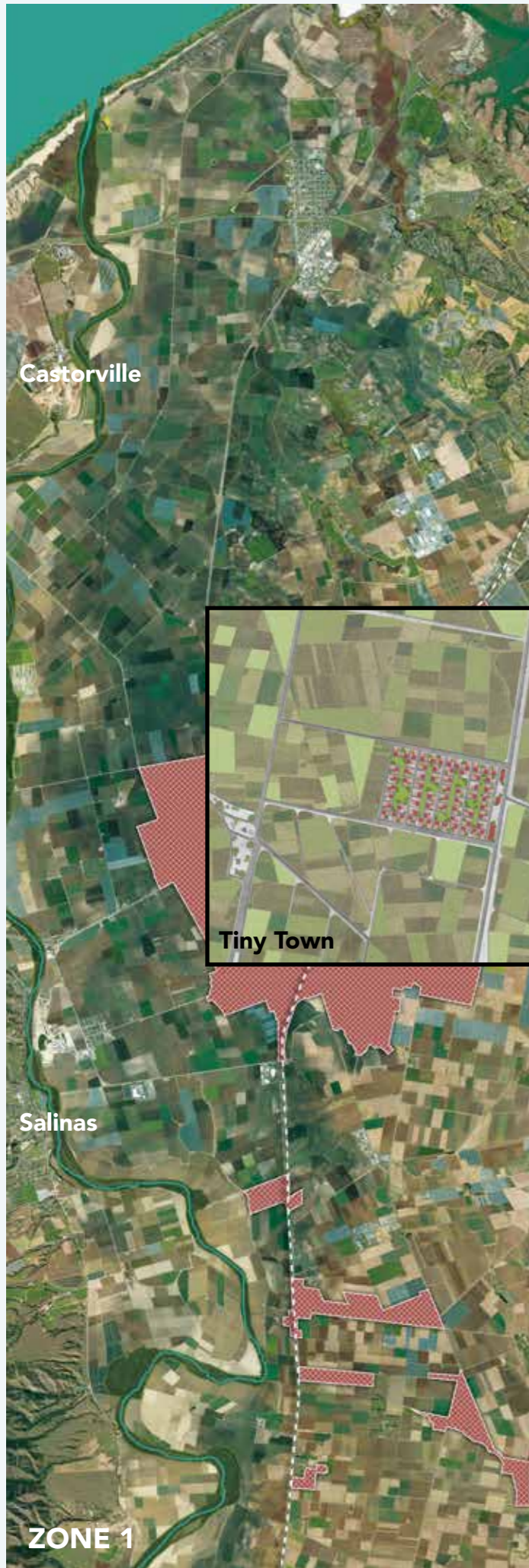
Re-imagining the nature of housing across the Salinas valley

In the Salinas valley, as a rural enclave stretching 90 miles, this problem takes a different shape. In this setting within a landscape of operations, the unhoused are pushed to the peripheries of the cities to make them aesthetically purified for tourists. The affordable housing crisis makes visible the strong dichotomy between the abundance of food and the scarcity of housing. It is with this concern that we have imagined an alternate way of housing in the valley



SECTION ANALYSIS

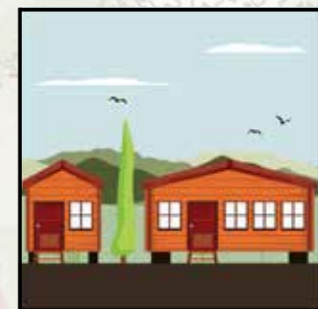




Motels



Tiny Towns



Modular Homes



Tents



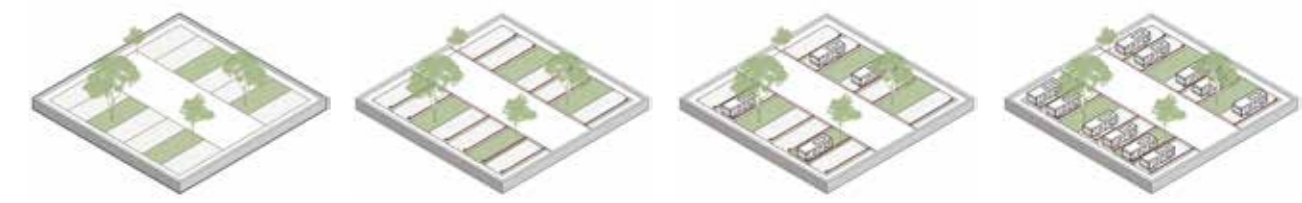
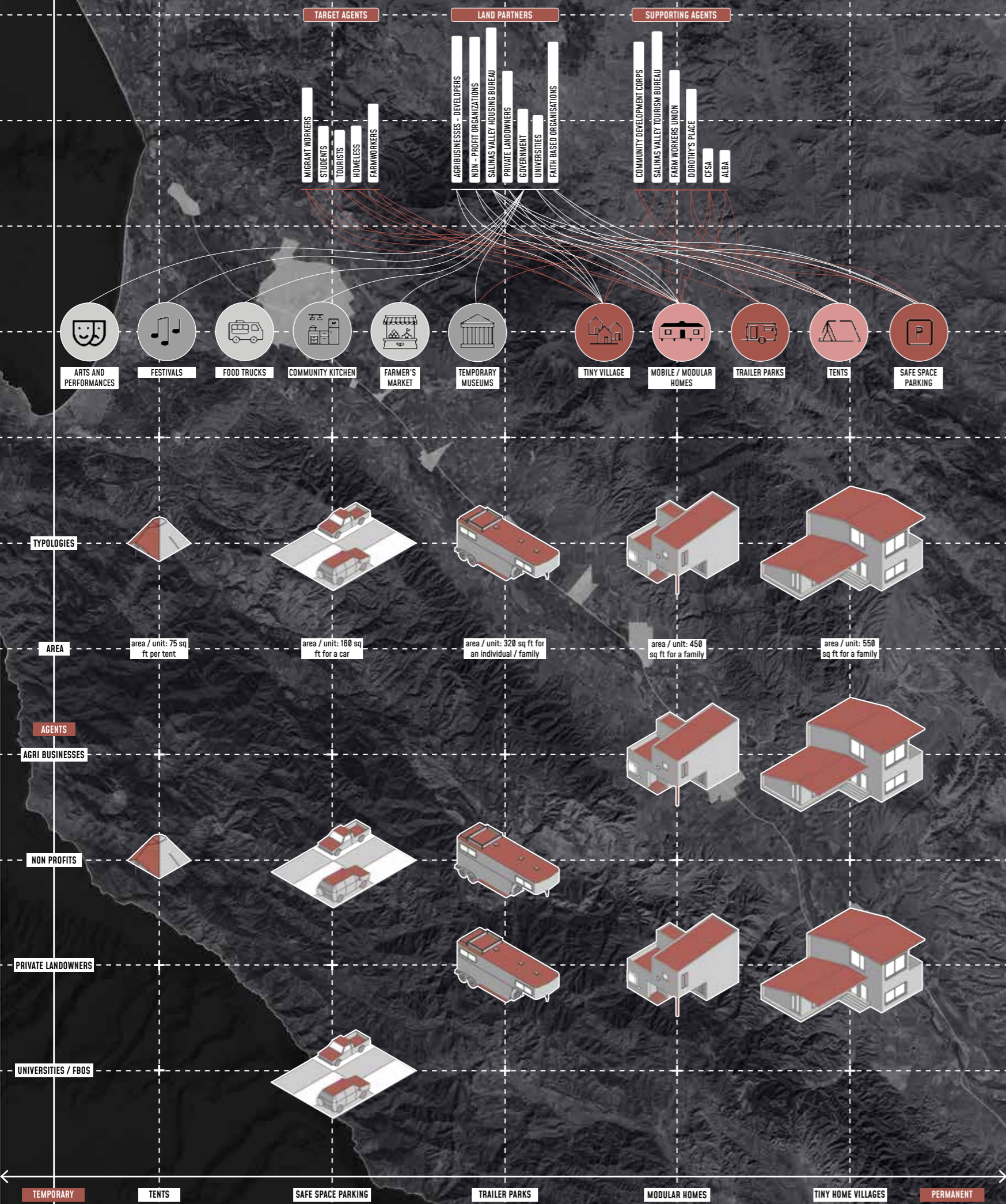
Trailer Parks



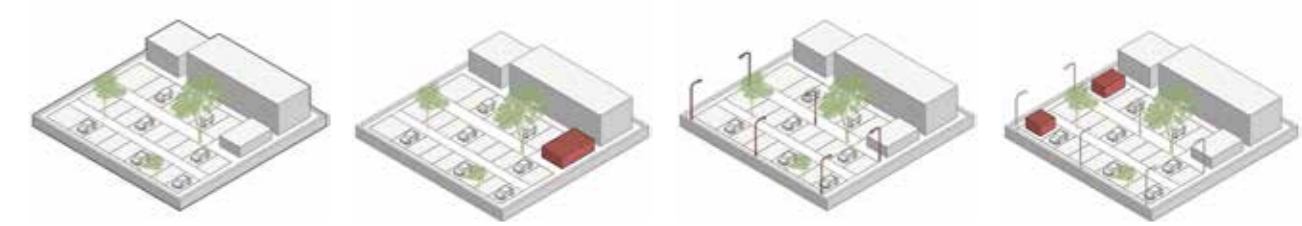
Food Trucks

ZONE 3

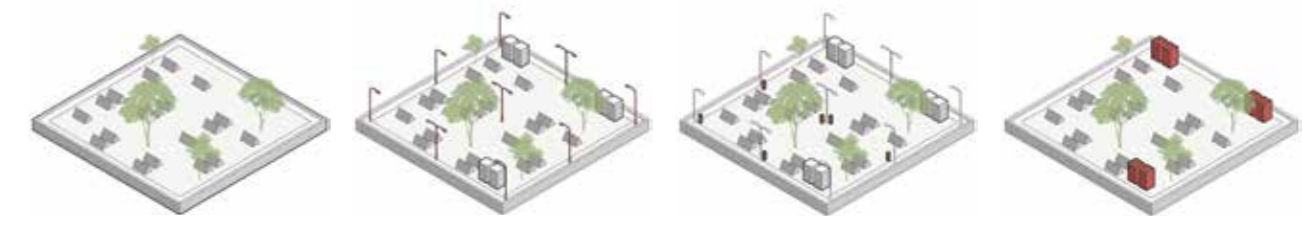
MATRIX OF TEMPORAL HOUSING DISTRIBUTION ACROSS PROGRAMS, PEOPLE AND SITES



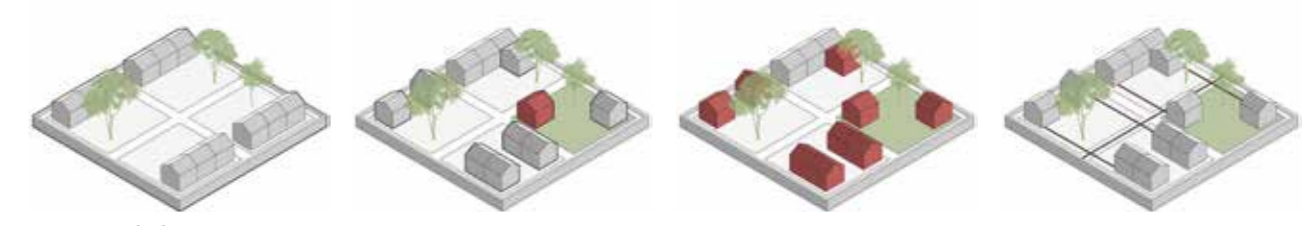
Trailer parks



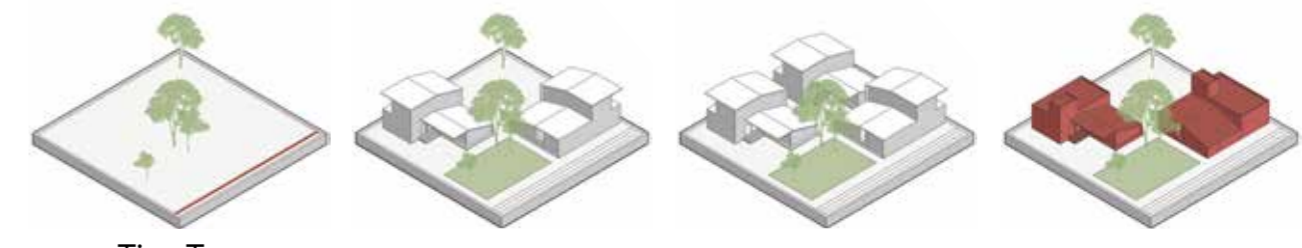
Safe Space Parking



Tent Grounds



Modular Homes



Tiny Town



Community gathering space



Flexible units accommodating for variable family requirements



Trailer park housing street with space for expansion



Village community center and streetscape



Modular housing street with green spaces folding around

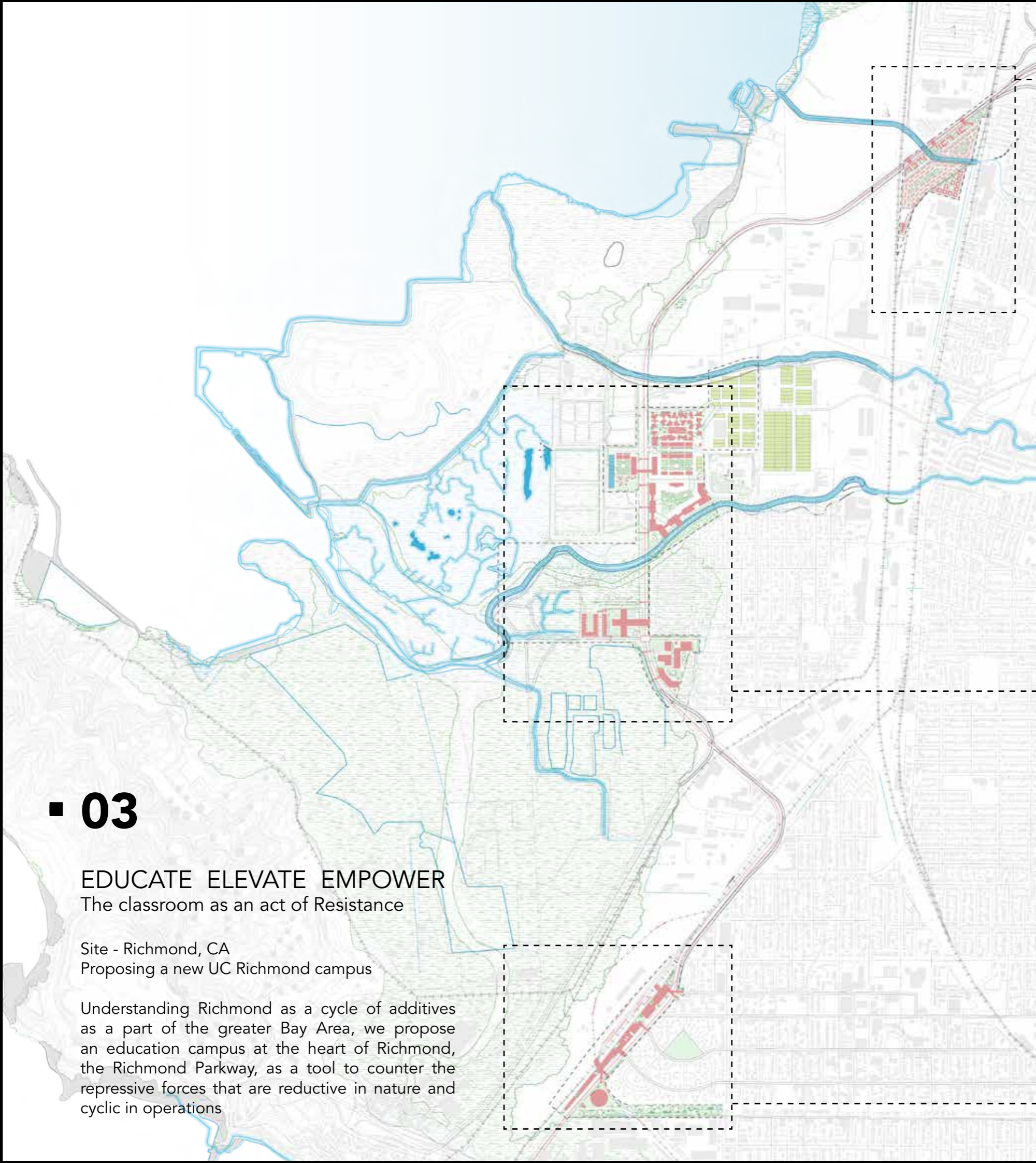
03

EDUCATE ELEVATE EMPOWER

The classroom as an act of Resistance

Site - Richmond, CA
Proposing a new UC Richmond campus

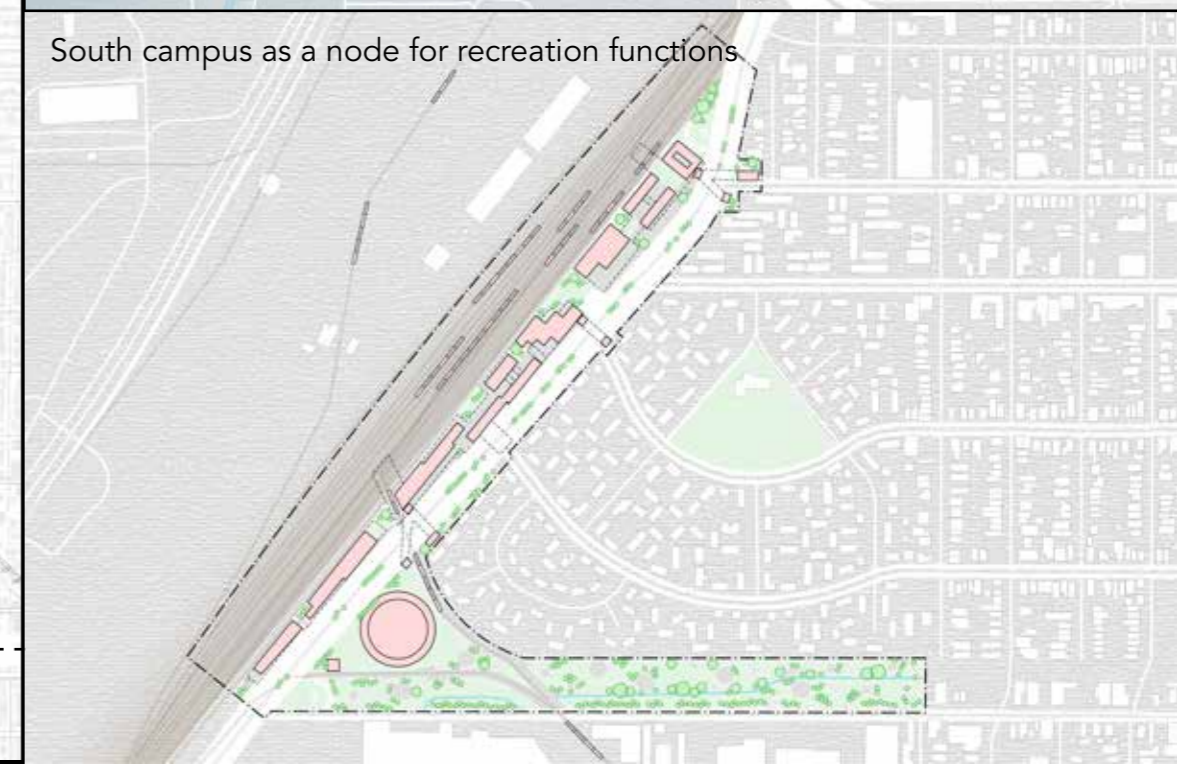
Understanding Richmond as a cycle of additives as a part of the greater Bay Area, we propose an education campus at the heart of Richmond, the Richmond Parkway, as a tool to counter the repressive forces that are reductive in nature and cyclic in operations



North campus as the primary housing node

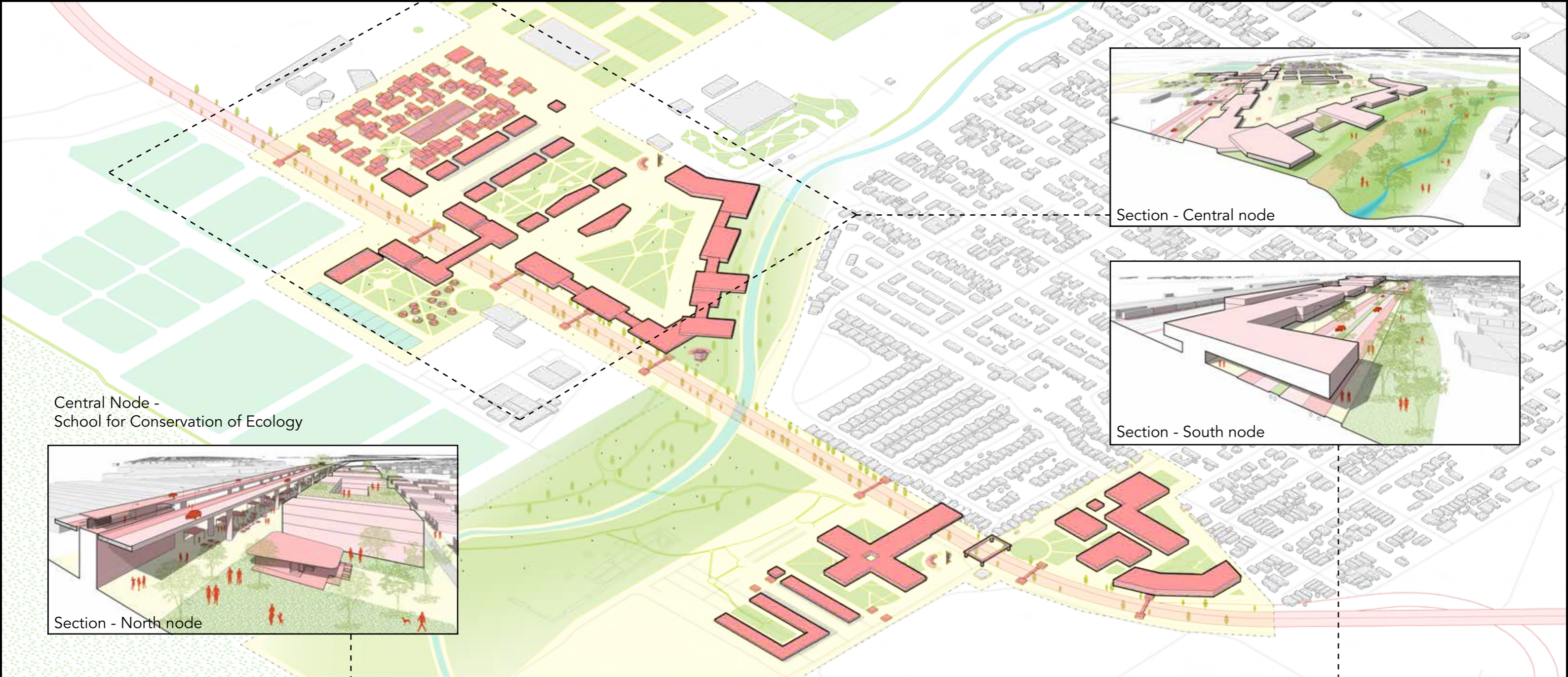


Central campus as a node for ecological interventions

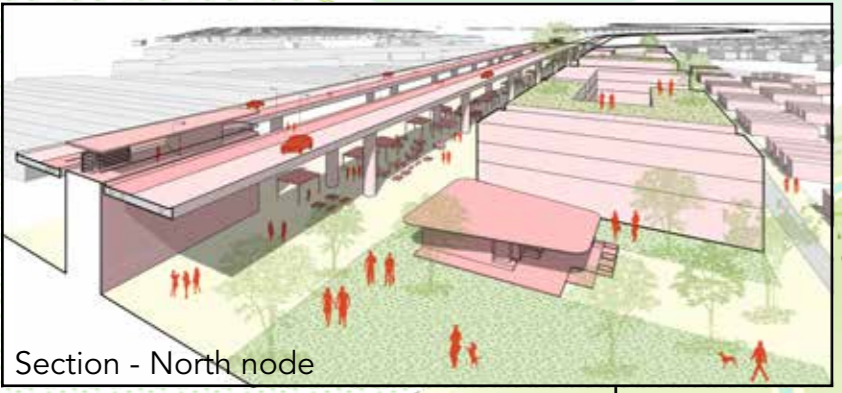


South campus as a node for recreation functions

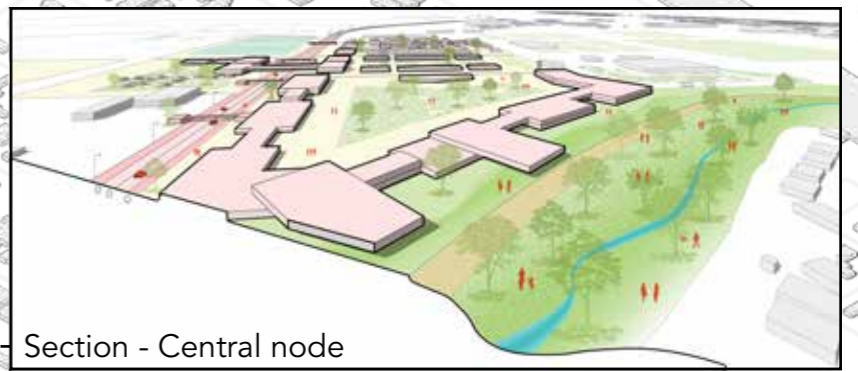




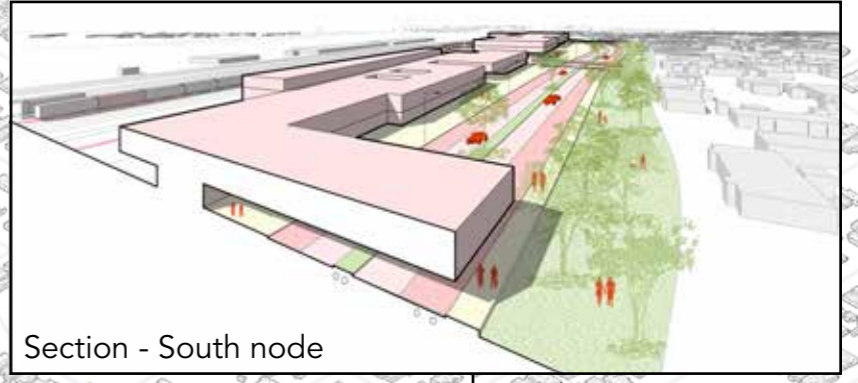
Central Node -
School for Conservation of Ecology



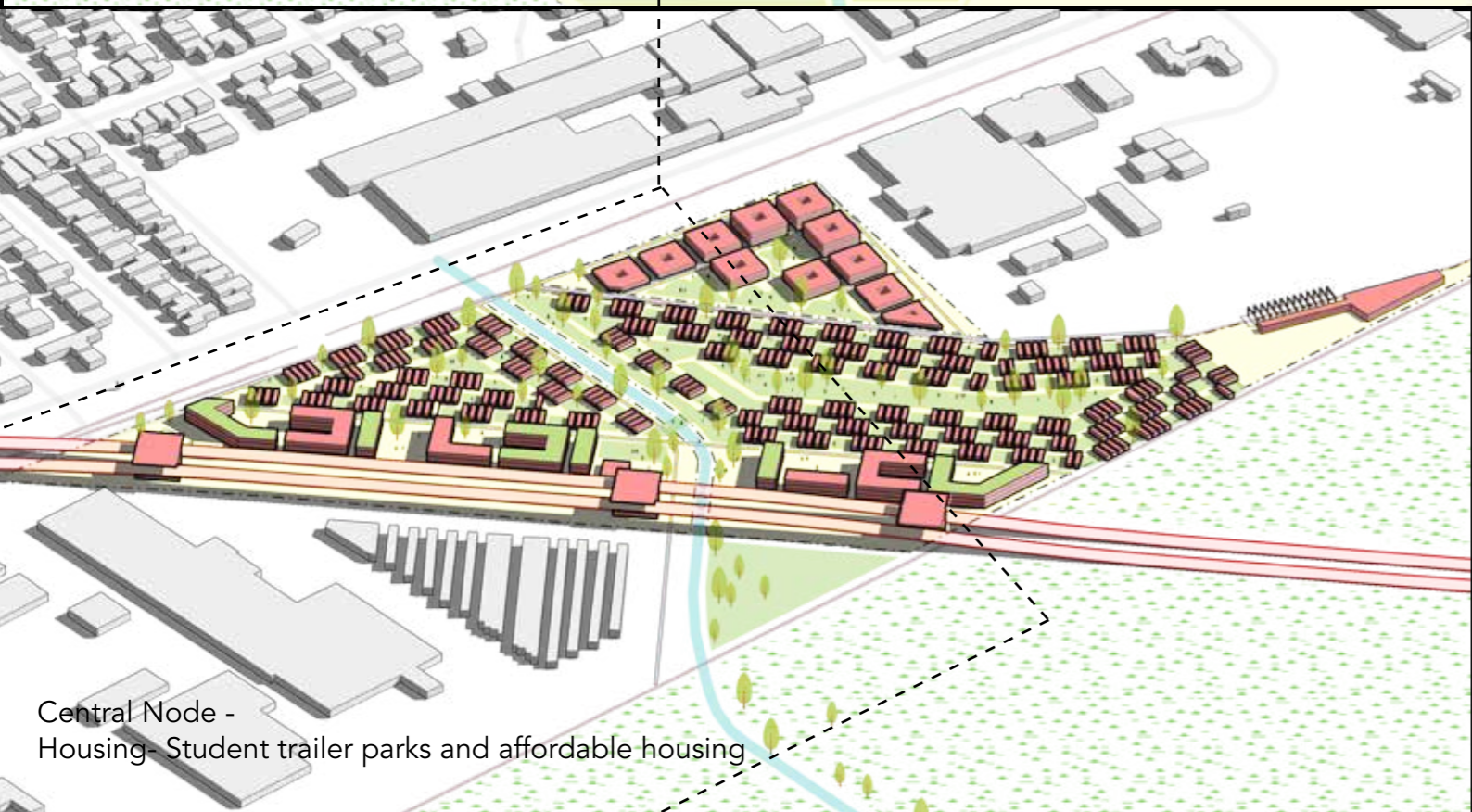
Section - North node



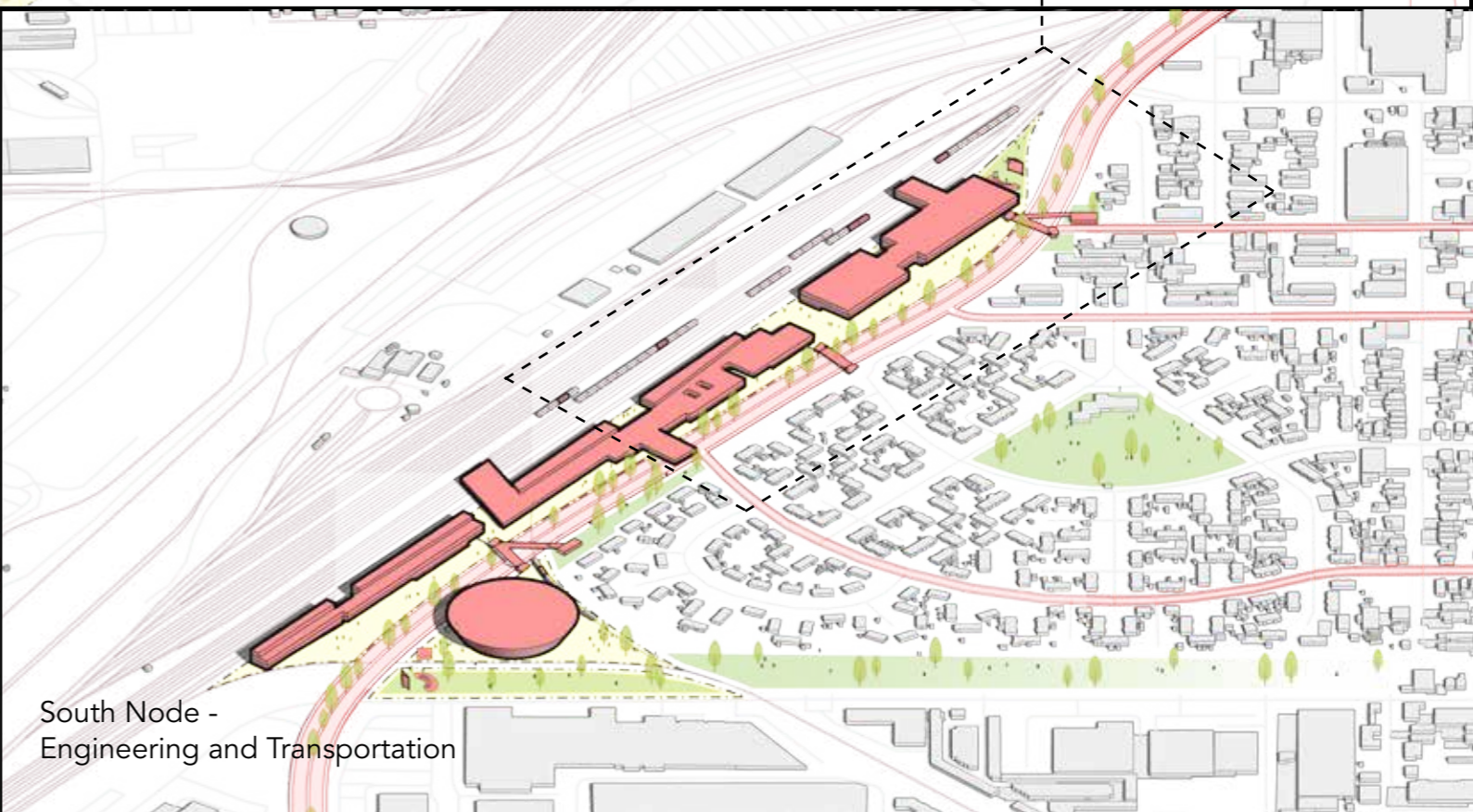
Section - Central node



Section - South node



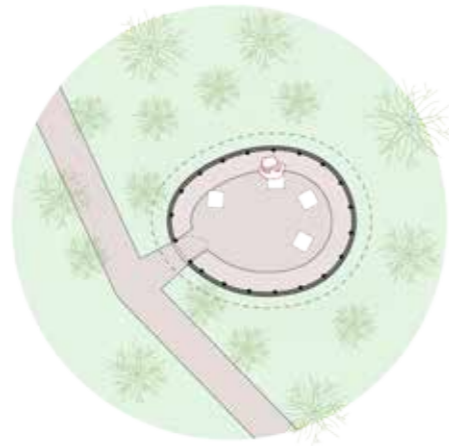
Central Node -
Housing- Student trailer parks and affordable housing



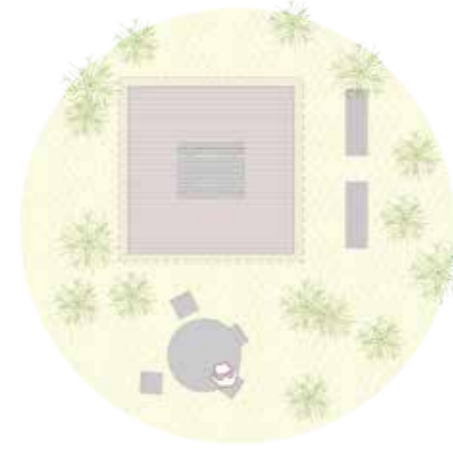
South Node -
Engineering and Transportation



Co - Working Pods



Farmer's markets



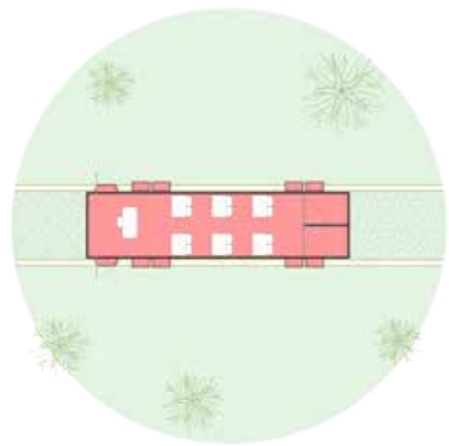
Billboards



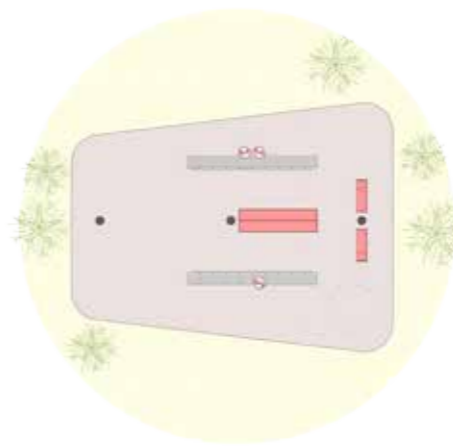
Rest Stops



Mobile Class Rooms



Bus stations



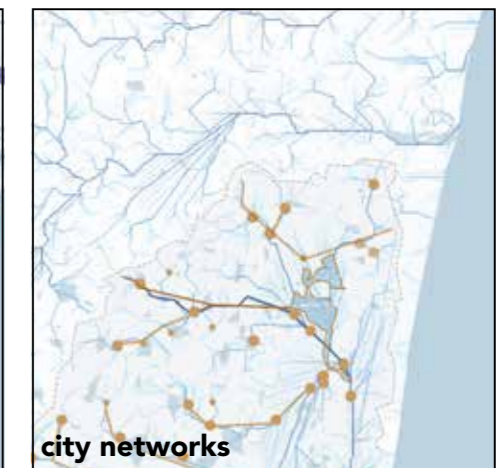
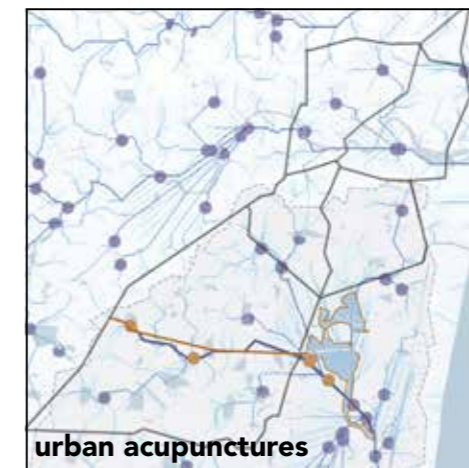
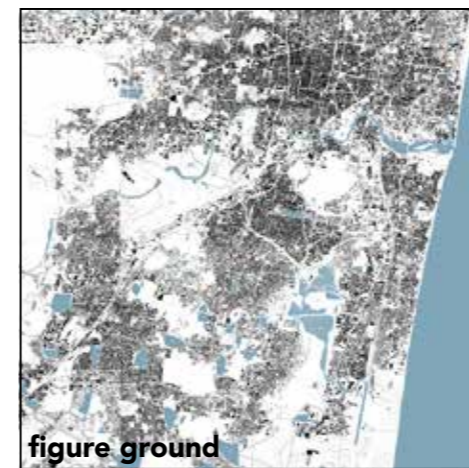
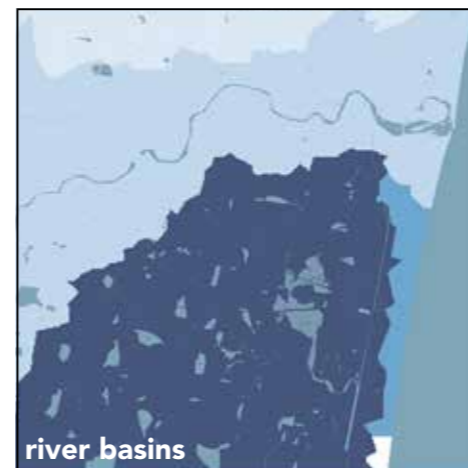
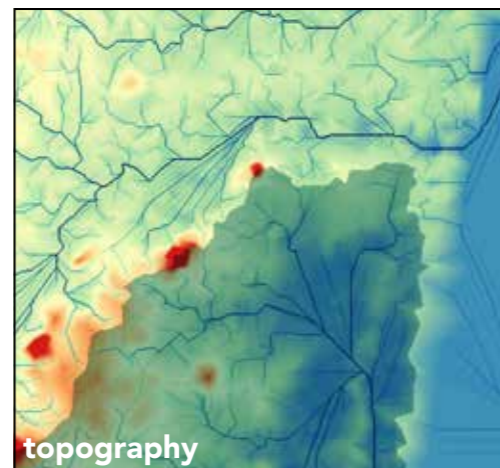
04

LIVING WITH WATER Urban Solutions for Chennai

Site - Pallikarnai Marsh and Metropolitan city of Chennai
2019 DRIA Competition selected group entry, Taiwan

The city of Chennai faces two extreme vulnerabilities related to water excessive un-manageable rainfall and water scarcity. The city is growing ignoring the natural topography which further exacerbates these problems.

Pallikarnai Marsh
At the scale of the city, we identify the Pallikarnai basin to be the most vulnerable as it is the lowest flood plain of the city. From the topography maps, we extrapolate the natural water drain lines that exist in the landscape, on which the city has been built.



STORE



water gardens



sunken plazas



parks

DELAY



rain water harvesting



bicycle track



sunken public plaza

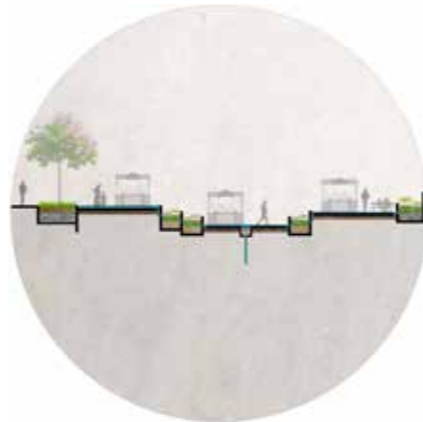
TREAT



parks



protective moat



flood-able markets

NETWORK



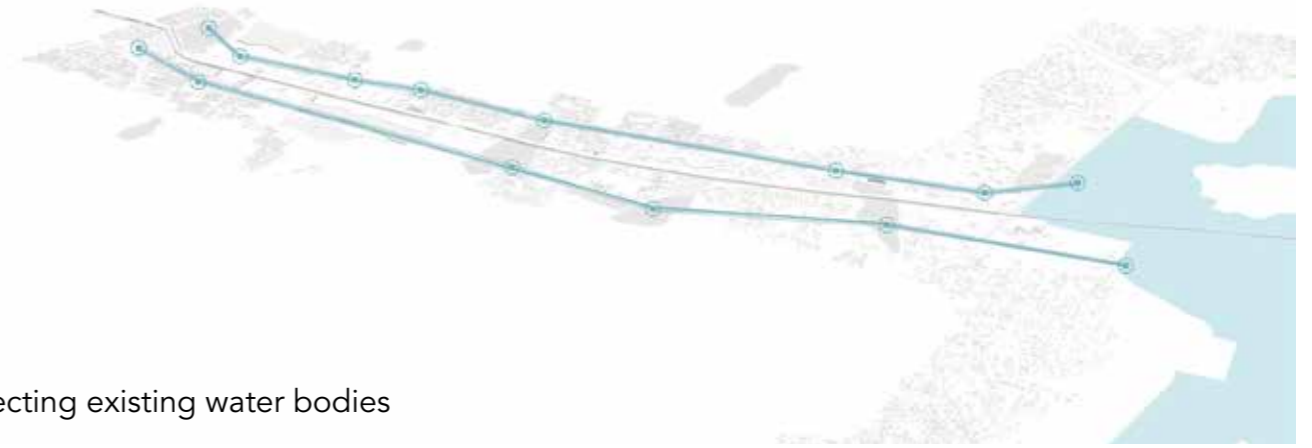
elevated walkway



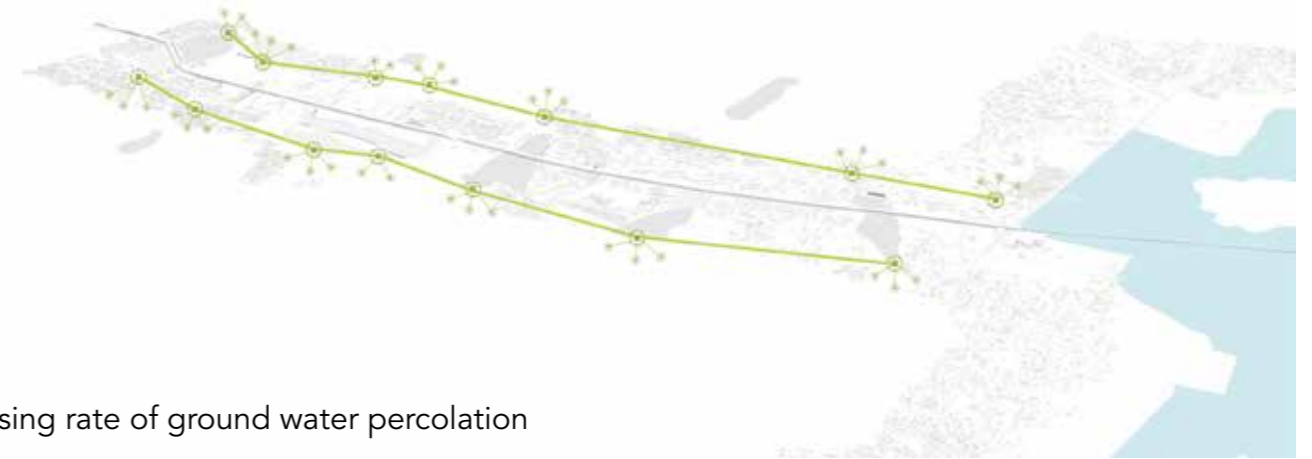
elevated walkway



multilevel waterfront



Store
Connecting existing water bodies



Delay
Increasing rate of ground water percolation

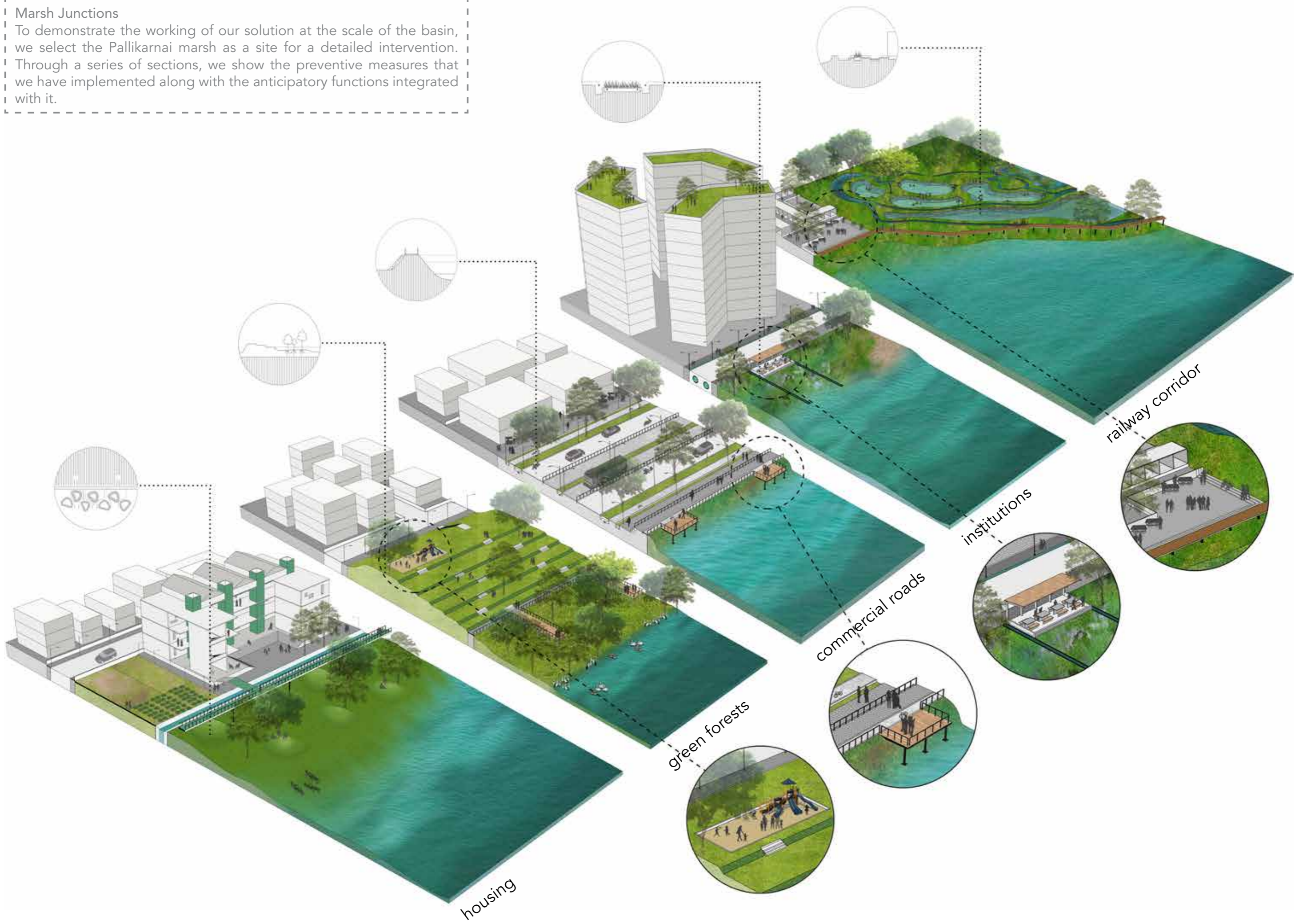


Treat
Using the corridor for water purification



Networks
Combining these strategies as a solution

Marsh Junctions
To demonstrate the working of our solution at the scale of the basin, we select the Pallikarnai marsh as a site for a detailed intervention. Through a series of sections, we show the preventive measures that we have implemented along with the anticipatory functions integrated with it.



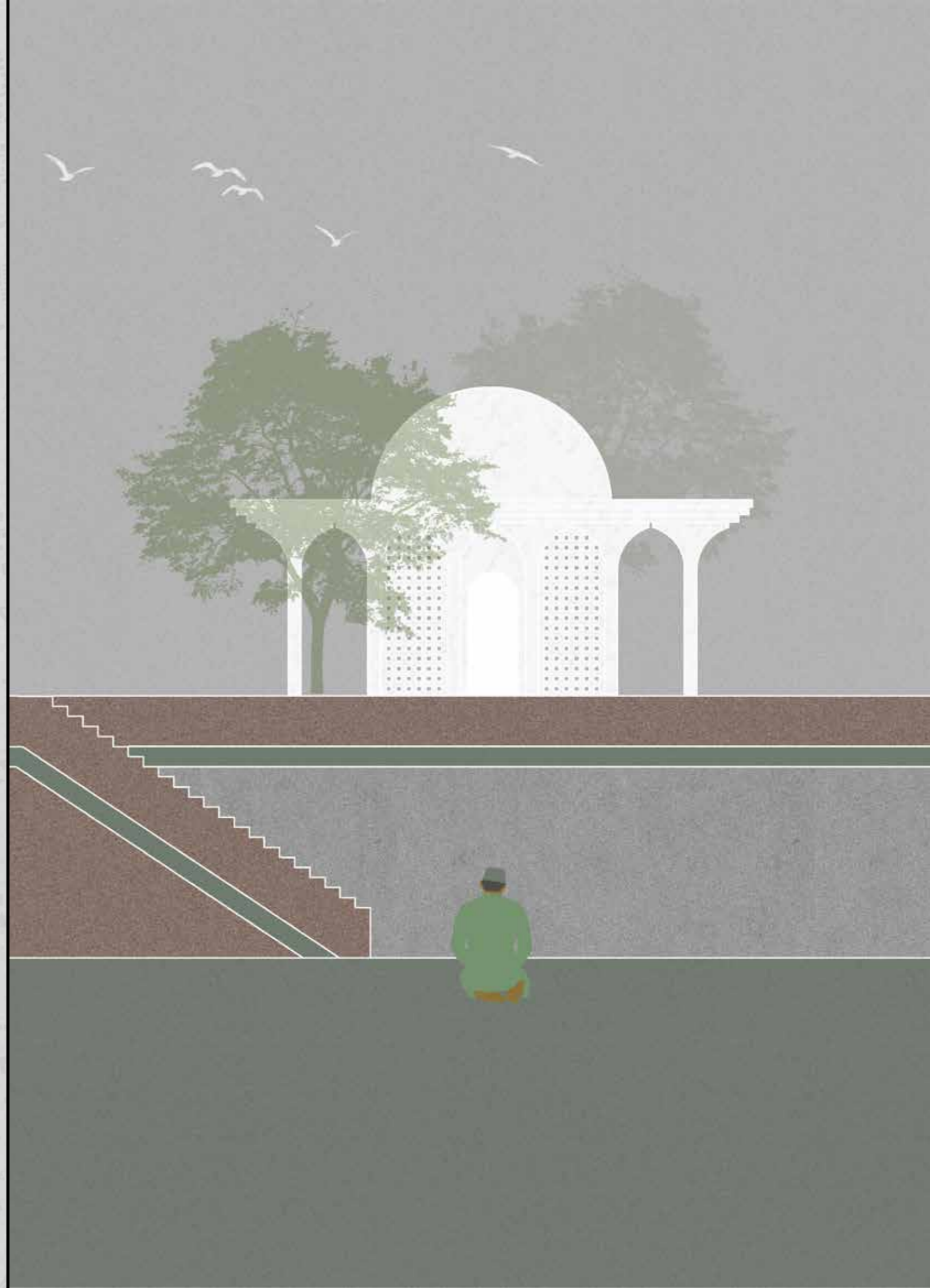
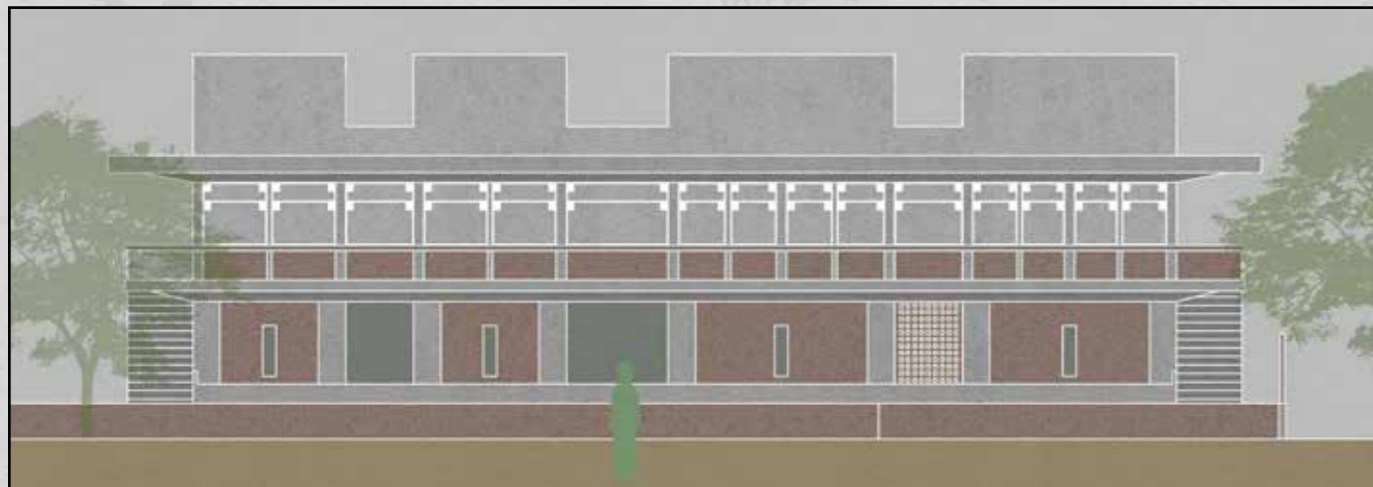
05

EVERYTHING UNDER THE BRIDGE

A unification of the temporary

Site - Pir Mashayakh Dargah, Kalupur, Ahmedabad
A Musafirkhana as an extension to a Pir complex

The project aims to blur the social boundaries between pilgrim and refugee. It unifies the edge where Religion meets the subaltern part of the community and introduces a sense of permanence for transient inhabitation. It appropriates the traditional typology of the Musafirkhana by using the bazaar to further ingrain itself into the context and the community. It serves as an extension of the Pir and shelters pilgrims year round.

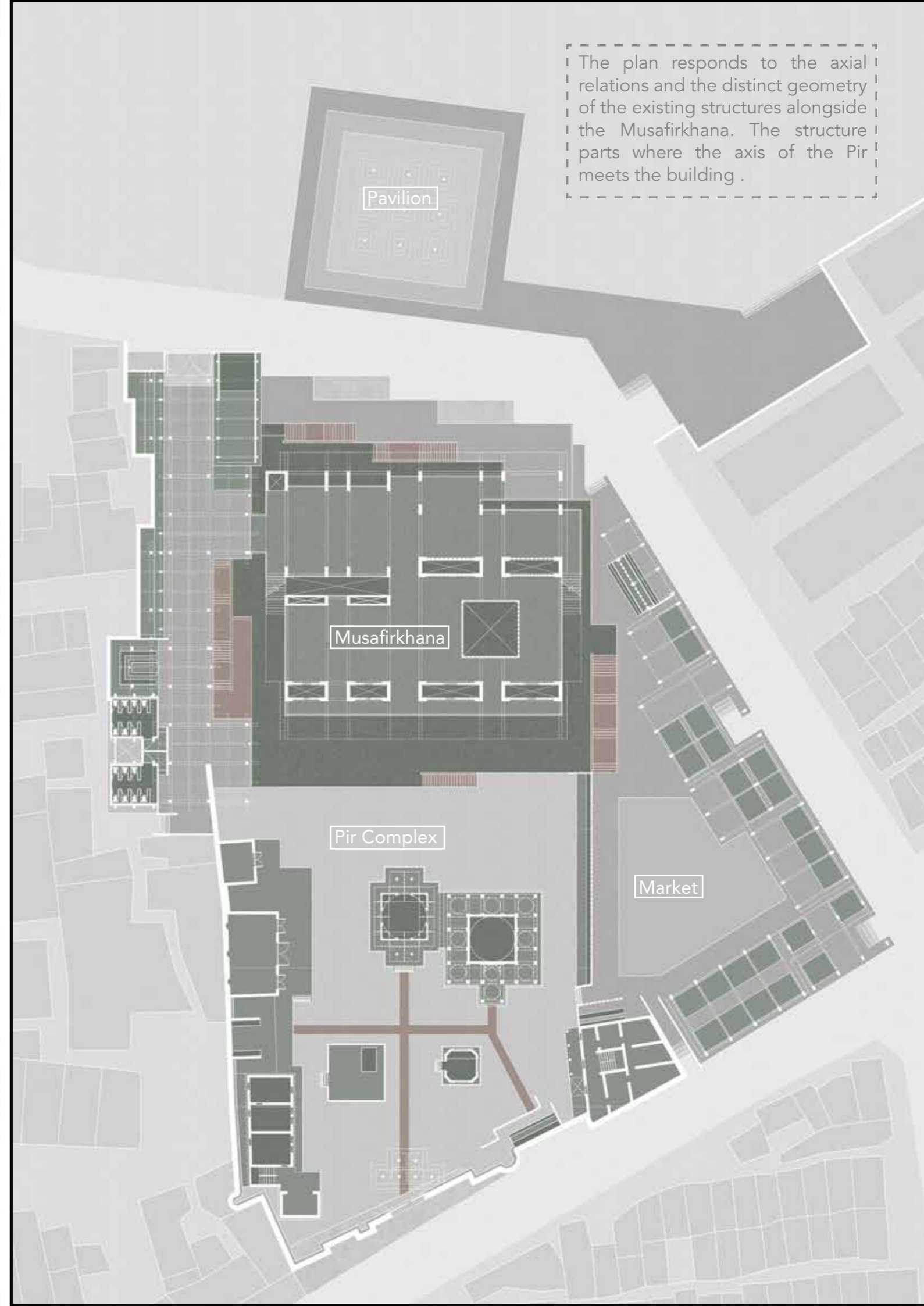




An informal market at the edge to help integrate the Pir further into the neighborhood



An extension to the Pir complex to continue the sacred axis further



The plan responds to the axial relations and the distinct geometry of the existing structures alongside the Musafirkhana. The structure parts where the axis of the Pir meets the building.

Ville Radieuse - Corbusier's proposal of Paris at the CIAM conference

06

IDEAL CITY OF CIAM

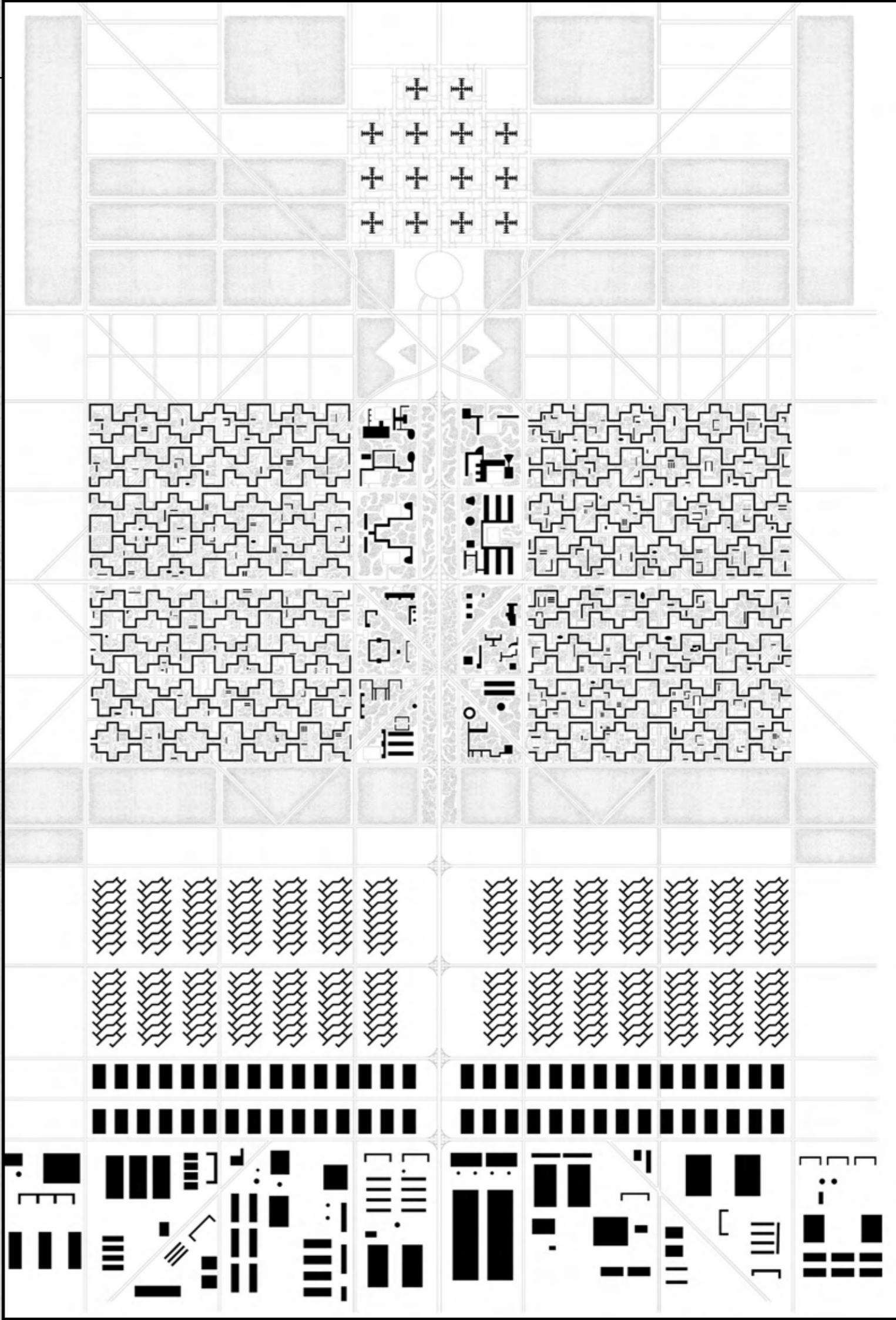
The urbanism of Le Corbusier

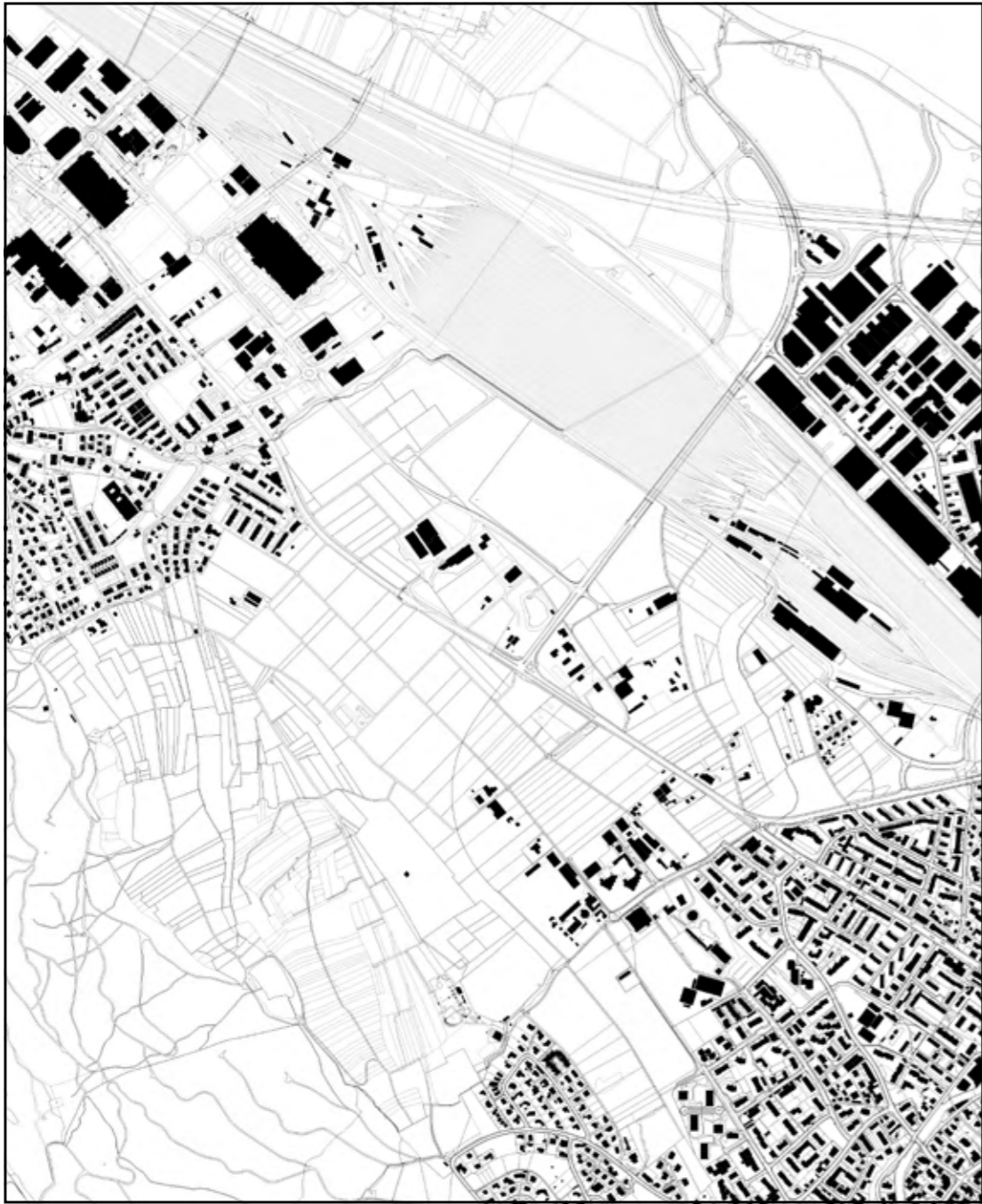
Site - Sprietenbach, Zürich Switzerland
Part of the Ideal City studio publication with Prof. Adam Caruso

The site for Ville Radieuse is the area of Sprietenbach, near Zürich. At this site, a new ideal city is designed that follows the design of Le Corbusier and is adapted to fit the scale, site and era. The project mainly deals with the urban scale and the implications of architecture at a city level. The proposal is a criticism to the failure of the original planned city.

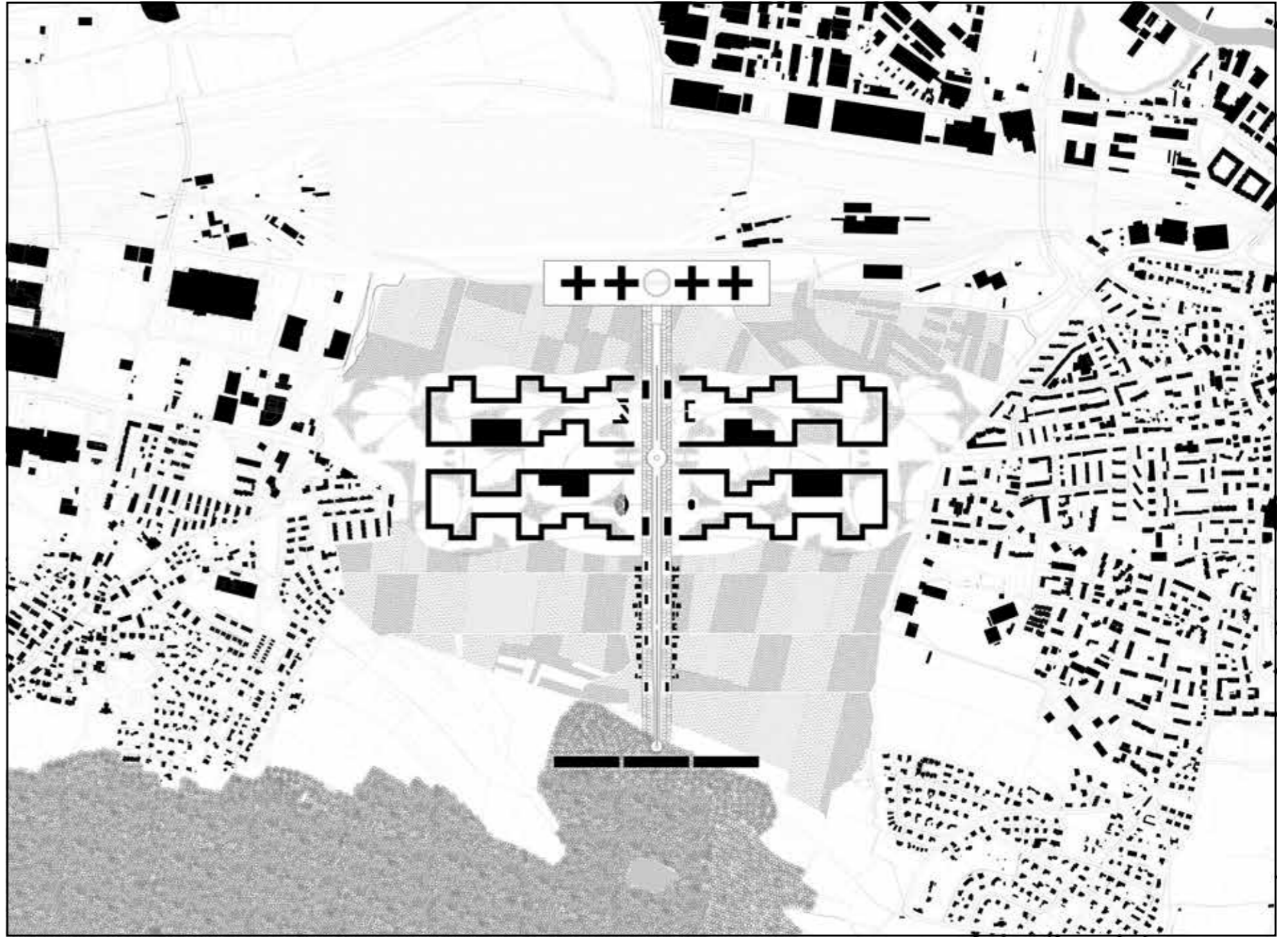


Typical interior view, Ville Radieuse

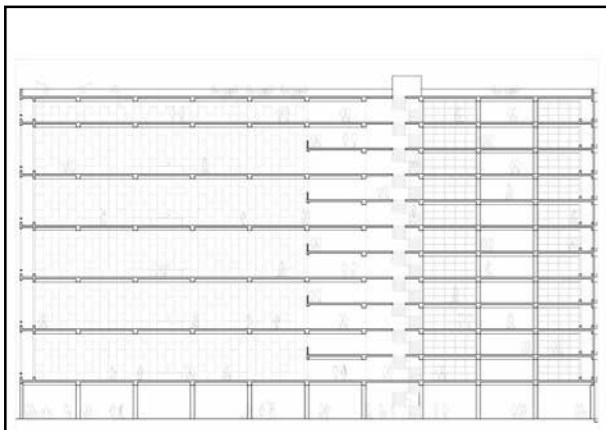




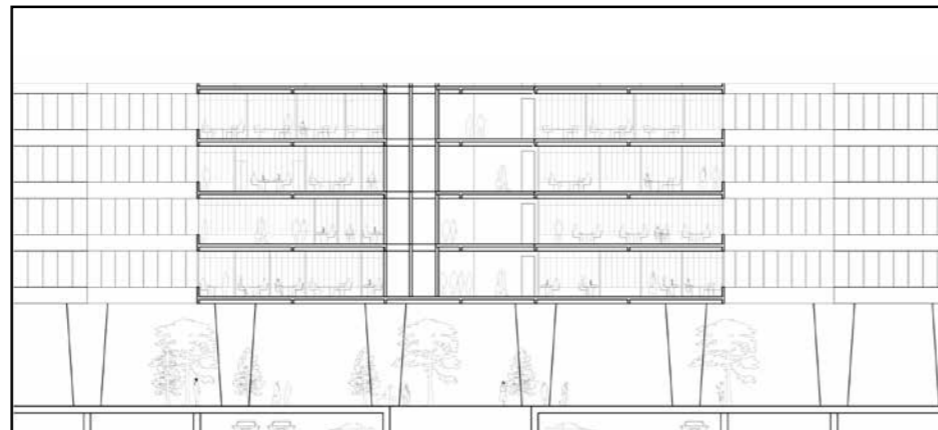
Site plan - Sprietenbach, Zürich - The open parcel of land straddles the cities of Deitekon and Sprietenbach. A perpendicular avenue connects a railway station with a dense forest intersecting the main arterial road



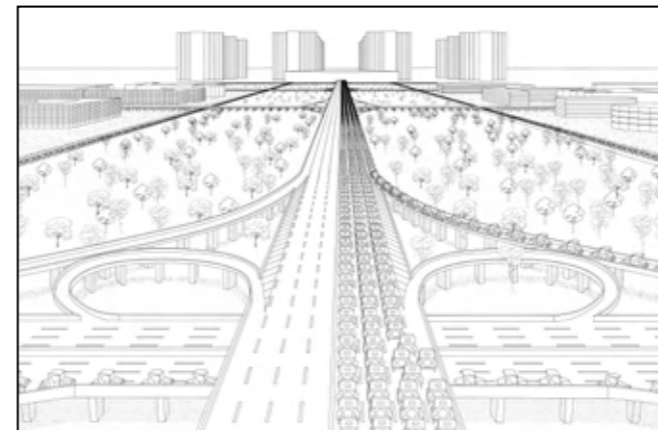
Design proposal -The interpretation of the residential zone in Corbusier's design as the lungs of the city is inherently flawed. As a reinterpretation of this concept, the primary residential zone focuses on a more integrated, collaborative design of the life in the city. The central business district of the city is connected through the primary axis that forms the recreation edge of the city.



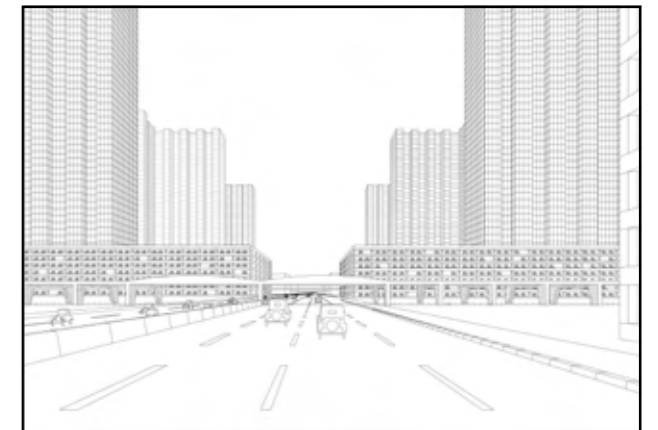
Commercial district - Office building



Housing district - Residential block



Central Spine



Connecting Highways

07

PROFESSIONAL WORK

RMA ARCHITECTS | MUMBAI

FACADE DESIGN DEVELOPMENT AND EXECUTION

As a part of a team working on a large scale educational institute, I worked on the designing and execution of front facade. A system of climate adaptive louvers was incorporated that allows the building to breathe naturally and provides flexibility for multiple uses.



9000 SQFT RESIDENCE DESIGN EXECUTION

I was the sole project architect responsible for the execution of a 9,000 sqft residential project on a 2 acre site. Using a combination of traditional materials and modern minimalist design, an efficient single floor plan was proposed that was climate adaptive, cost effective and aesthetic.

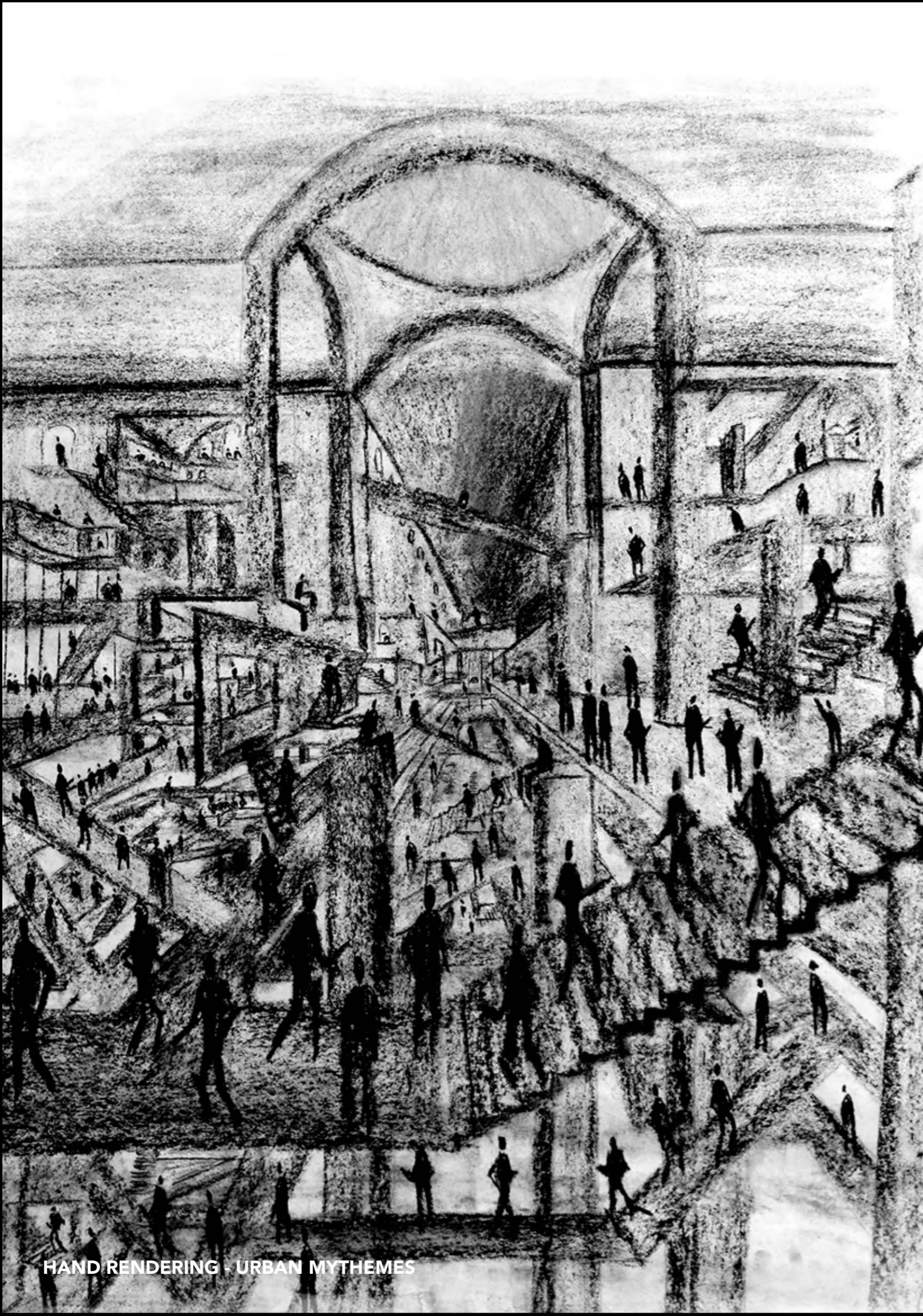


6 ACRE GOLF ESTATE AND RESIDENCE DESIGN

As a part of a team, I worked on the primary design development of a 12,000 sqft residential project on a golf estate of 6 acres. The main challenge of the project was to adapt to a major shift in the requirements post COVID.



Another significant requirement for the project was to design the landscape and the site conditions around the residence. Working in collaboration with a landscape firm, a plan that detailed the specifics of the proposal was prepared for execution.



HAND RENDERING - URBAN MYTHEMES

I am an architect and urban designer with a strong professional background, working on a broad range of projects as a part of diverse teams, supported with experiences in design spanning multiple cities, countries and continents. **My goal as an architect and an urban designer is to consciously create urban resources that balance the urgency of growth, with the need to interact sensitively with the complex realities of the city and its people.**

VARUN SHAH

shahvarund@gmail.com | 510-717-0965

