

A Backdrop to Life



- CHARACTERISTICS
- + gardening culture
 - + unhealthy riverbed
 - + limited access to nature



+ water treatment facilities cannot clean water alone



- THREATS
- + metals from industry & agriculture
 - + erosion
 - + endangered ecosystem
 - + disconnected

Design Statement

This project is a multidisciplinary learning experience with architecture and landscape architecture, with the site location found to be in the metropolitan area of Barcelona. The site is currently under study as part of Ri-connect, a European network that works to redesign infrastructure in order to reconnect cities to their landscape and community. The goal of this project is to reclaim forgotten identities as our site is a forgotten neighborhood outside Barcelona, between the municipalities of Ripollet and Cerdanyola del Valles. These two municipalities are separated by two rivers; the Ripoll and the Riu Sec, these rivers isolate the neighborhood in between. The national roadway, N-150, also runs through this area and serves as an active roadway whether that be through transportation or pedestrian friendly. By reconnecting these urban fragments to the landscape, it will provide opportunities to break the isolation of this neighborhood by bringing new interventions to these communities.

The municipality of Ripollet is separated by the Ripoll River, a vital water source that is threatened by the proximity of industrial zoning, agriculture runoff, and lack of biodiversity. The municipality has ignored the river for so long that the citizens took it upon themselves to engage with the river through informal gardens that line the river, however this is not a sustainable location for these activities because of pollutants and erosion problems along the river bed. The lack of connections to the river also separates the city as there are limited points to get across the Ripoll River and the C-58.

Southwest of Ripollet is the municipality of Cerdanyola del Valles, which has begun limited engagement with the Riu Sec that connects to the Ripoll River. There are more circulation pathways throughout the area including bike paths, bus paths, and points to cross the Riu Sec. Cerdanyola del Valles also has a major connection to the Serra de Collserola Natural Park that has green terrain that people can explore through hiking, biking, bird watching and other activities. The project dwells on the questions of identity and memory by reviving new urban public space that is environmentally sustainable and community driven.

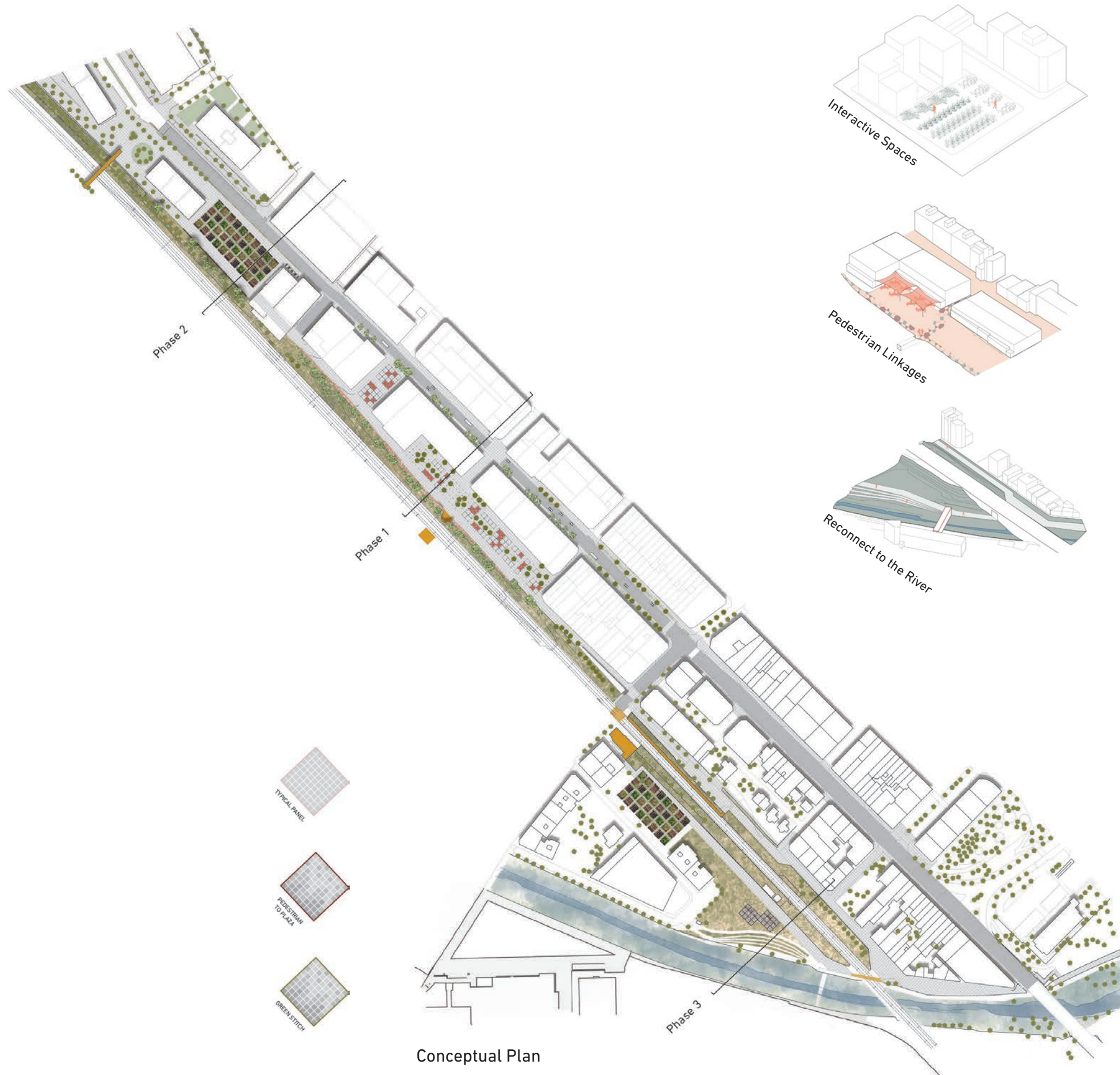


Design Concept

A backdrop to life entails the ideas for implementing interactive spaces, pedestrian linkages, reconnection to the river and city engagement. From previous analysis, we found that agriculture, art, culture and the river are all vital pieces to the Ripollet and Cerdanyola neighborhoods. Our goal was to implement the idea of turning backs into fronts through materiality and passive devices. The design promotes a cohesive solution that is flexible, adaptive and sustainable. It responds to the existing problems stated by the people and builds positive experiences. We wanted to bring attention to the spaces that might be missed or were underdeveloped. We did this through creating a pedestrian pathway alongside the railway and the N-150 to serve as a promenade that links the separate areas of interventions that will tie together as one.

These separate areas of interventions we have categorized as phases, that will theoretically hope to transition the forgotten neighborhood into a memorable one. The first phase consists of transitioning a parking lot into a plaza. This space we've imagined to be flexible, and consist of a transformable structure that will provide sheltered space for a market, an art gallery, and gathering for the community. Another important element of our project is the gabion wall, we imagine placing these throughout the neighborhood and using different materials in relation to our previous site analysis. For the first phase, we want to use gabion walls as retaining walls and fixed elements to serve as benches for seating. The gabion walls will be filled with bricks recycled from the surrounding demolished buildings that were abandoned and separating the community.

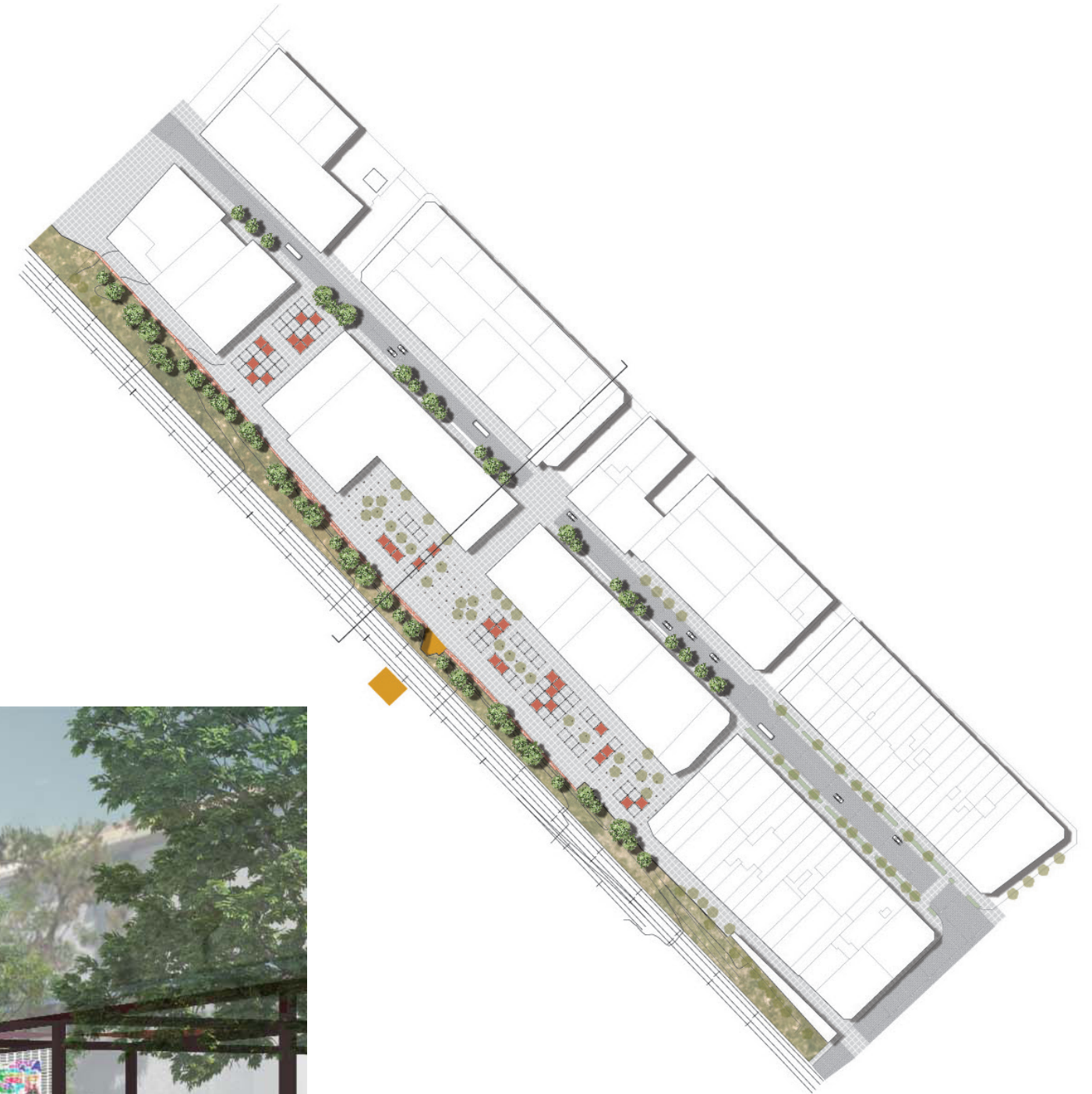
The Catalan tile is also used throughout the pedestrian pathway that continues through the entire length of the neighborhood. In the second phase, a community garden will be implemented and the use of the gabion walls will be continued as seating and insect hotels. By creating a small habitat for the insects out of reeds and sticks native to the area, it allows for opportunities for pollination to occur at the gardens. For the third phase, reconnecting to the river Rui Sec was crucial. This brings nature to the public realm while defining the topography of the landscape through hard and soft elements native to the region.

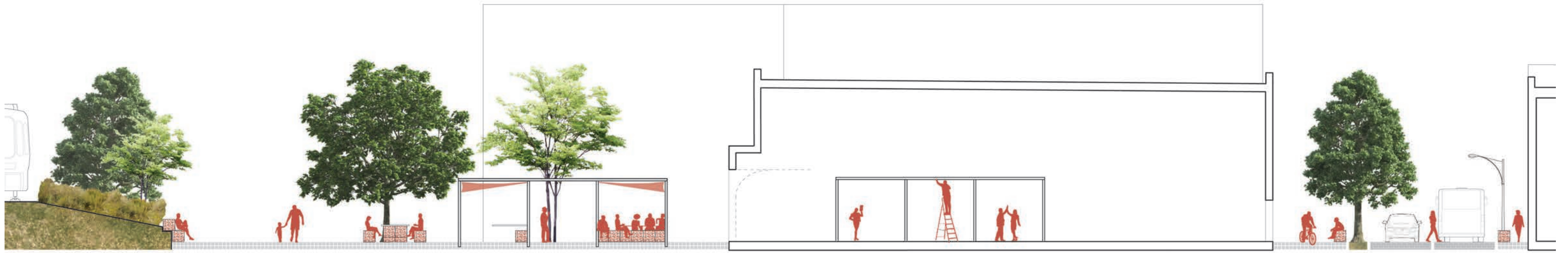


Conceptual Plan

Phase 1

Plaza, Shared Street & Pedestrian Pathway





Phase 1: Section through Plaza and N-150



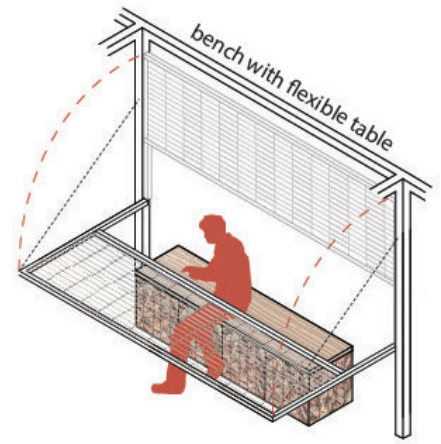
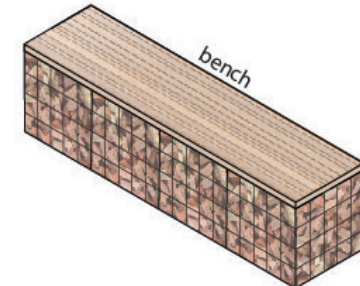
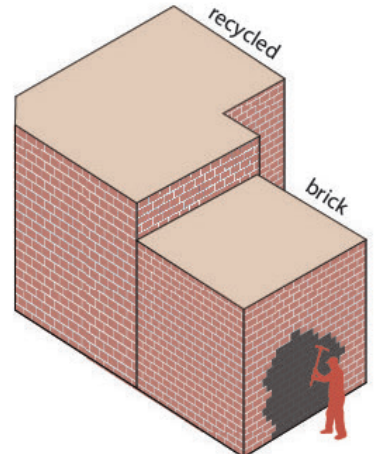
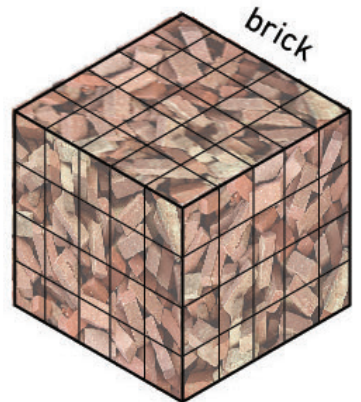
materials

process

materials

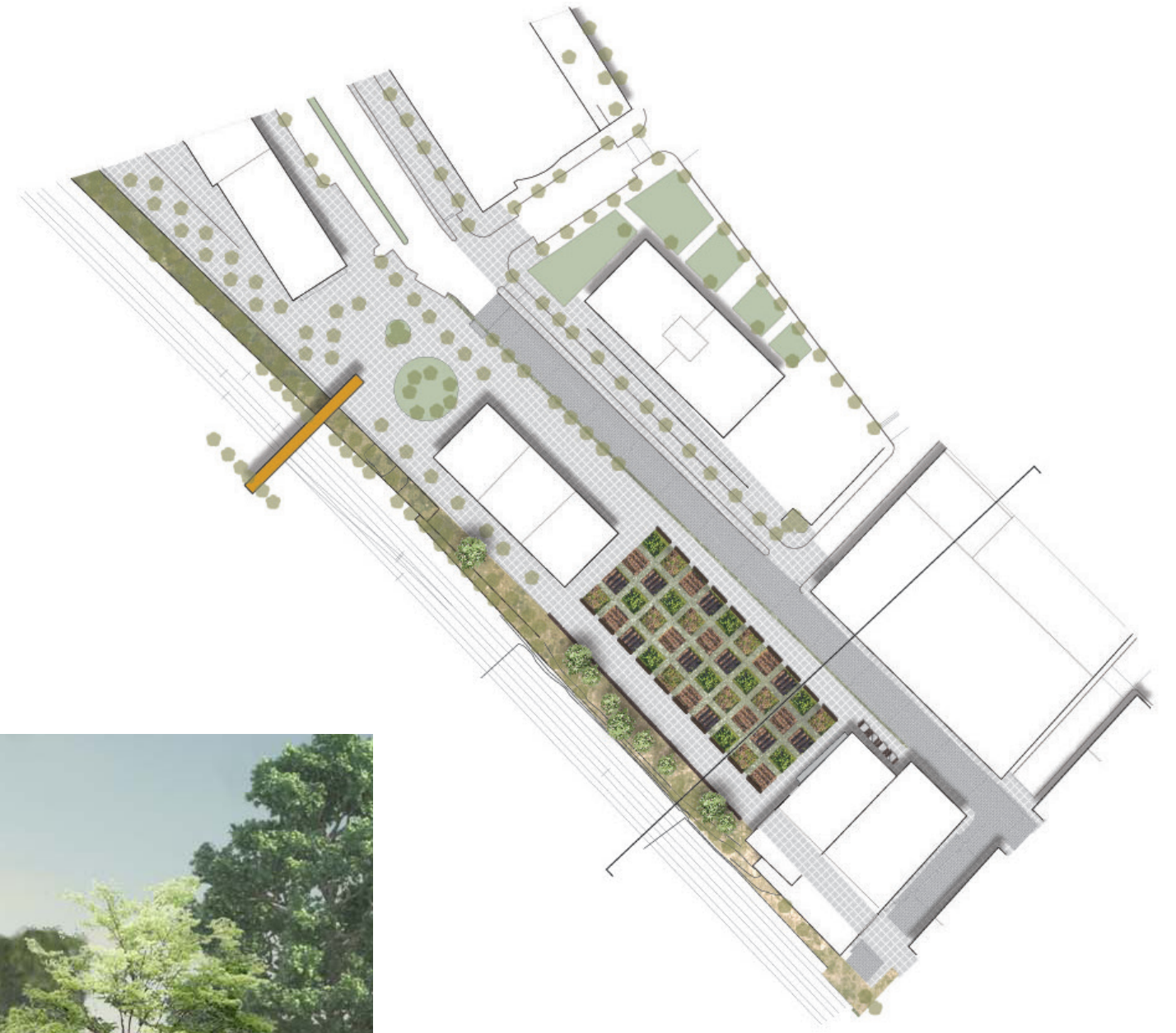
use

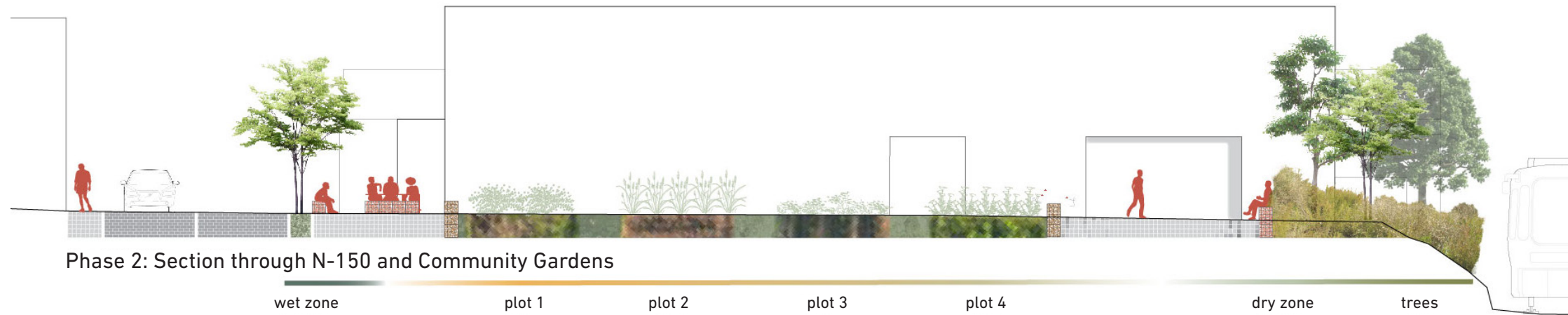
industry



Phase 2

Community Garden, Shared Street & Pedestrian Pathway

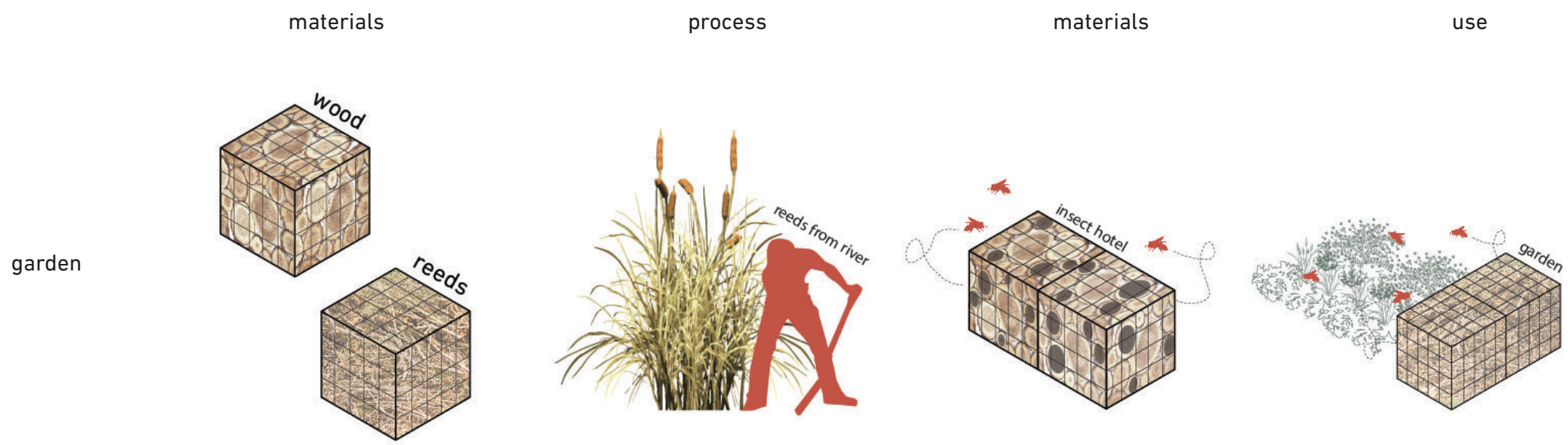




Phase 2: Section through N-150 and Community Gardens



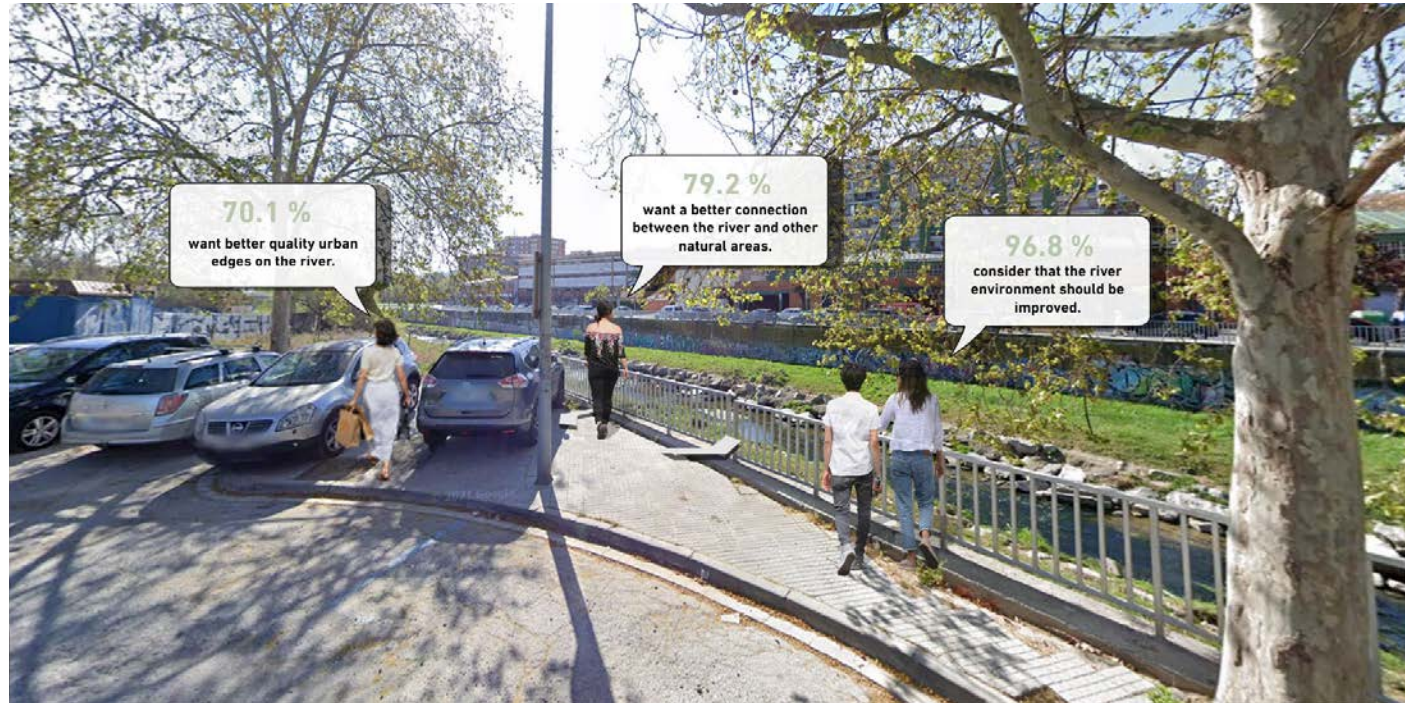
PLOT 1	PLOT 2	PLOT 3	PLOT 4	DRY ZONE	WET ZONE	TREES
Nightshades Tomatoes	Umbelliferae Carrots	Compositae Lettuce	Legumes String Beans	SWEET AUSSUM (Alyssum maritimum)	HAIRD RUSH (Juncus inflexus)	Algeria pines (Pinus halapensis)
Papaya	Celery	Chenopodiaceae Swiss Chard	Cauliflower	FALSE YELLOWHEAD (Ostrichia viscosa)	YELLOW RICE (Iris pseudacorus)	Downy Oaks (Quercus pubescens)
Aubergine	Parley	Gourds Cucumber		VIPER'S BUGLOSS (Echium vulgare)	UMBRELLA SEDGE (Cyperus alternifolius)	Olive Trees (Olea europaea)
	Liliaceae					
Onions				BORAGE (Borago officinalis)		Sweet Bay Trees (Laurus nobilis)
Tomatoes						Wild Cherry Trees (Prunus avium)
						Southern Nettle Trees (Celtis australis)

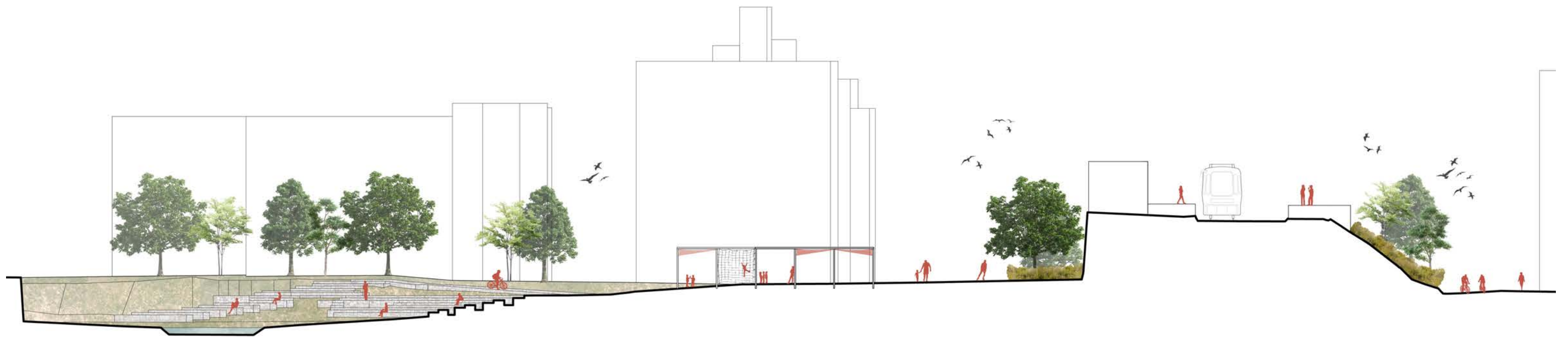


plots rotated once a year

Phase 3

Pedestrian Pathway, Riverfront, Playground & Community Garden





Phase 3: Section through Riu Sec Waterfront

gabion wall amphitheater

pathway

transformable structure - playground

pedestrian pathway to train

railway

pedestrian pathway

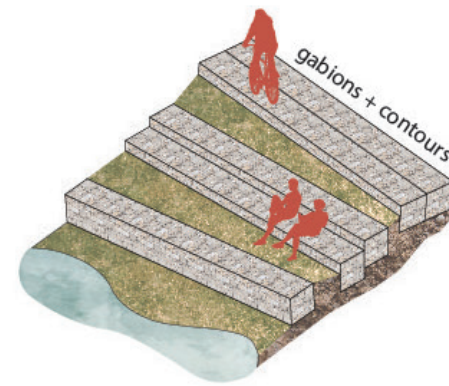
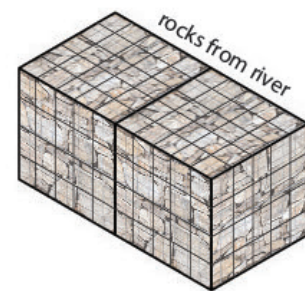
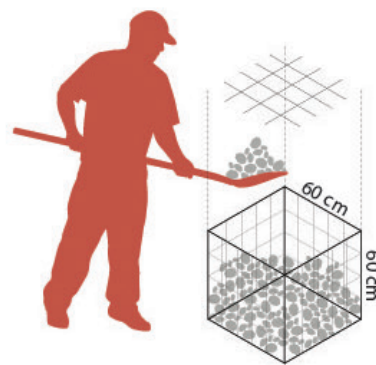
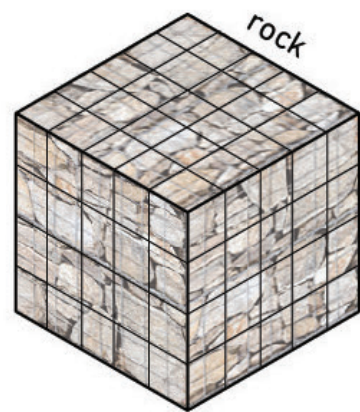
materials

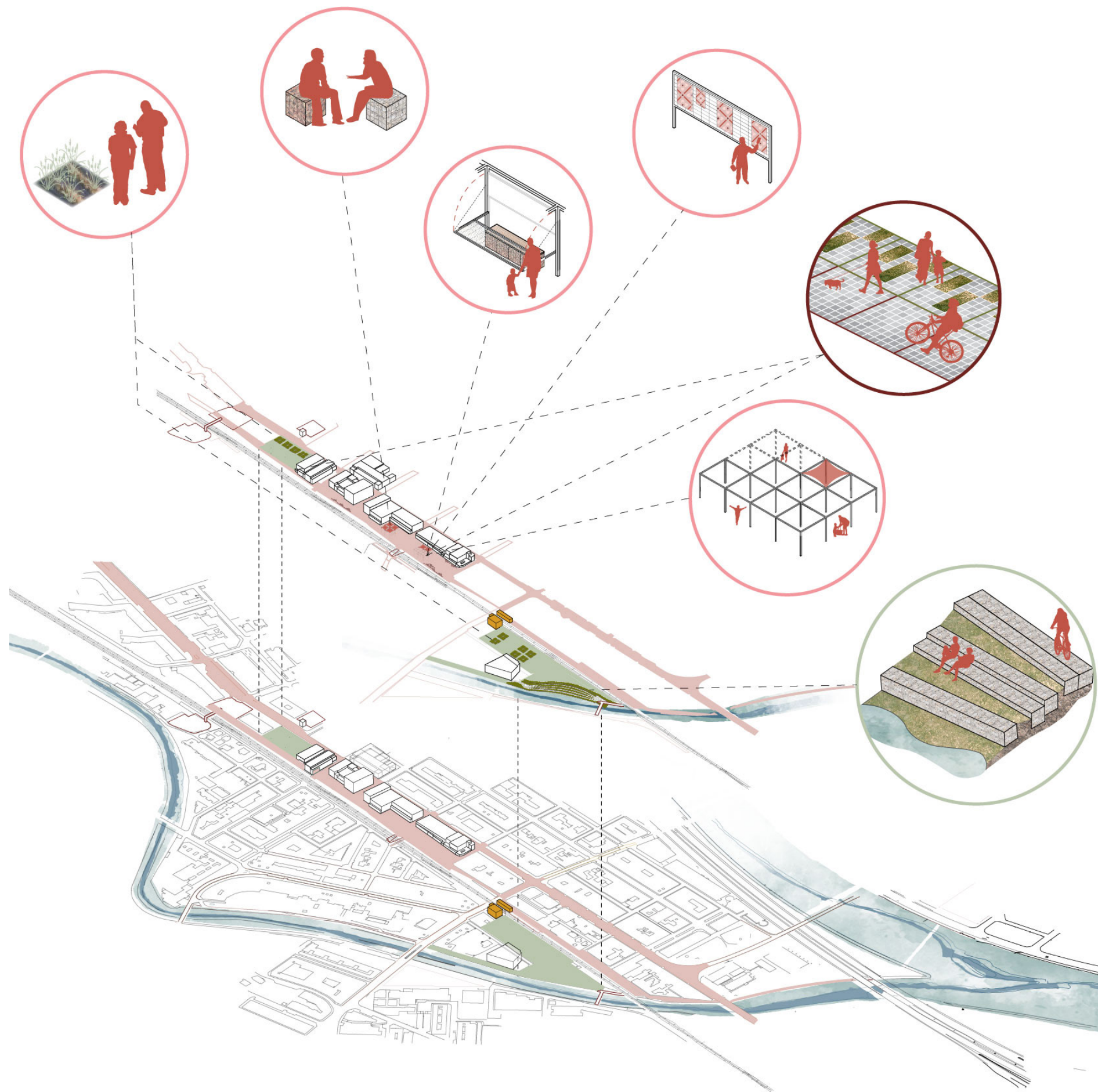
process

materials

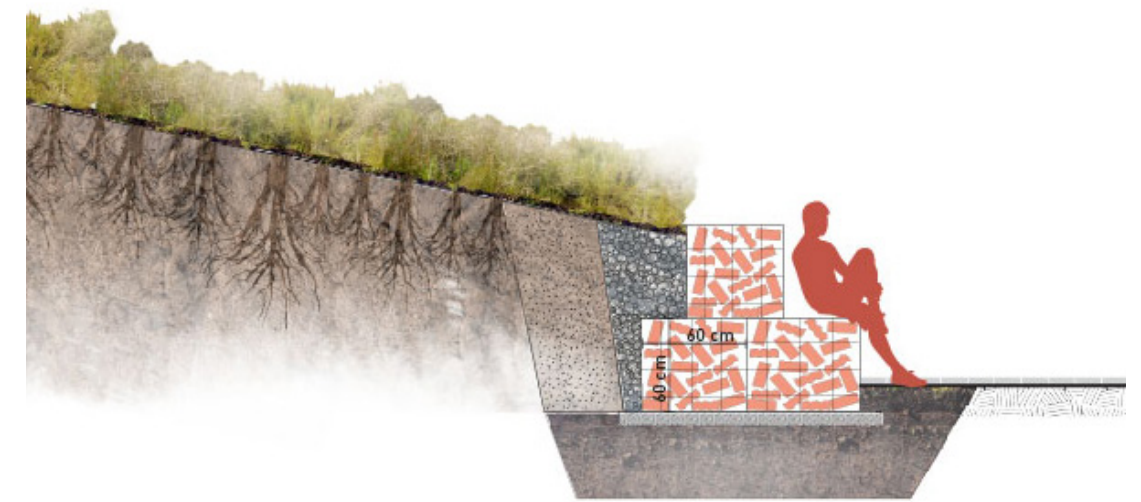
use

garden

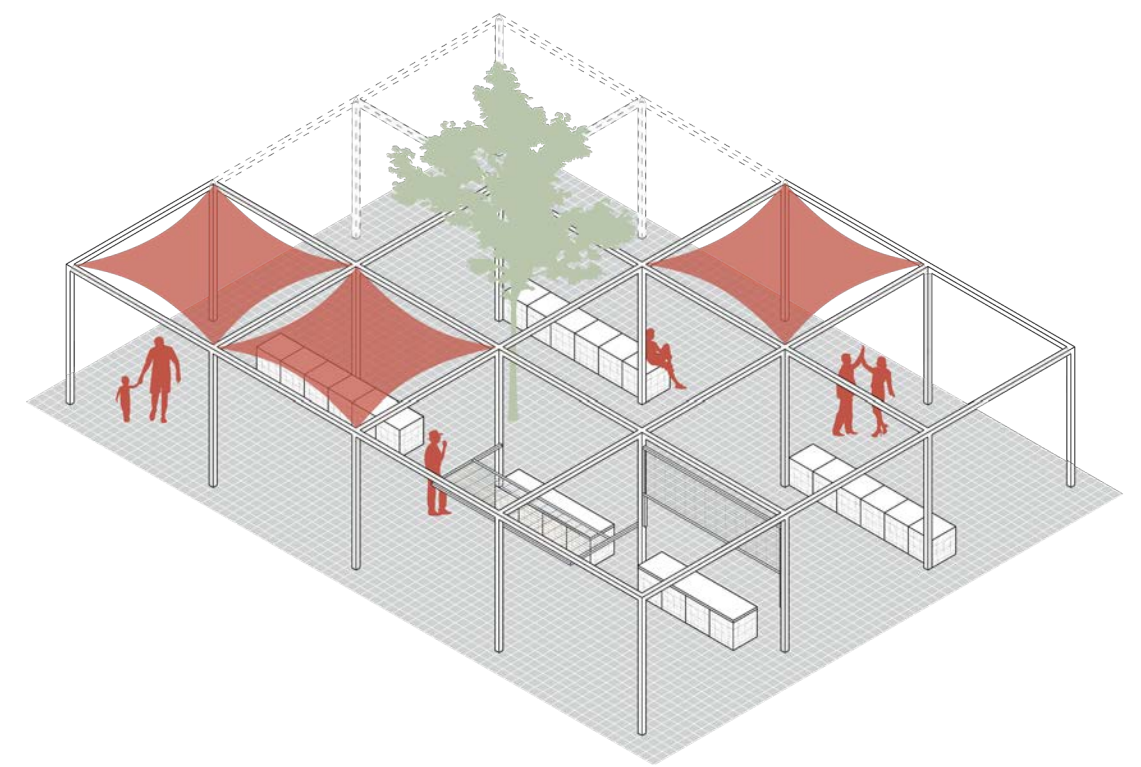




Design Elements



Detailed Gabion Wall Section



Transformable Structure