FLOW – Playful Passage: A Joyful Journey Through Lahti's Sports and Culture

Project Description

At the heart of Lahti's evolving urban landscape, the FLOW - Playful Passage initiative reimagines the Lahti Sports Centre as a dynamic, inclusive, and joyful public realm. This visionary project celebrates the city's natural assets, invigorates its sports and public spaces, and breathes new life into underutilized industrial buildings - bridging the vibrant city center with the expansive Salpaus Geopark.

Figure 1- Sport Urbanism

Sport Urbanism: A New Approach

Sport urbanism is the guiding philosophy behind this transformation. Moving beyond traditional sports facilities, sport urbanism integrates physical activity and recreation into the very fabric of urban life. In Lahti, this means creating multifunctional spaces where sports, culture, and everyday activities intersect.

Key principles include:

- Multifunctionality: Combining sports with gardens, markets, and cultural venues to maximize use and attract diverse communities.
- Accessibility: Ensuring all facilities are easily reachable by walking, cycling, or public transport, making the site welcoming to everyone.
- Community Involvement: Engaging local residents in the design and management of spaces, fostering a strong sense of ownership and belonging.

- Sustainability: Integrating green infrastructure and promoting environmentally friendly practices throughout the site.

Project Phases

1. **2025–2029: Landscape Infrastructure & Visual Orientation**

- Enhance the site's landscape and improve visual connections from Veikko Kankkosen reitti to the southern side.
- Lay the groundwork for future playful and functional elements.

2. **2029–2035: Playful Park & Water Sports Center**

- Finalize a new, vibrant park with outdoor sport spaces of all sizes.
- Complete the new water sports center and landmark pedestrian bridge, creating a playful, joyful journey through the site.
- Redevelop the northern side into a cultural hub at the site of the old power plant.

3. **2035–2040: Public Participation & Mixed-Use Development**

- Open discussion spaces for public participation from the outset.
- Explore the potential to rebuild the Lahti Expo Center as a mixed-use destination, ensuring the built environment meets the evolving needs of locals and visitors.

Vision for the Future

The **FLOW – Playful Passage** project is set to become a landmark of urban innovation, where sports, culture, and community life flow seamlessly together. By embedding playful, accessible, and sustainable features, such as a mega pedestrian bridge, skating park, and cultural hub, the site will offer a joyful journey for all who visit. This transformation will not only strengthen social cohesion among Lahti's residents but also position the city as a leader in sport urbanism and community-driven urban development.

DESIGN STRATEGIES:

REINFORCE natural resources:

- Enhance connections to the Salpaus Geopark, Salpaus ridge trails, and the Häränsilmän kettle, leveraging the area's unique landscape and biodiversity.
- Promote year-round outdoor activities by improving access, signage, and amenities, making nature an integral part of everyday recreation and events.

REIMAGINE sport facilities with sport urbanism:

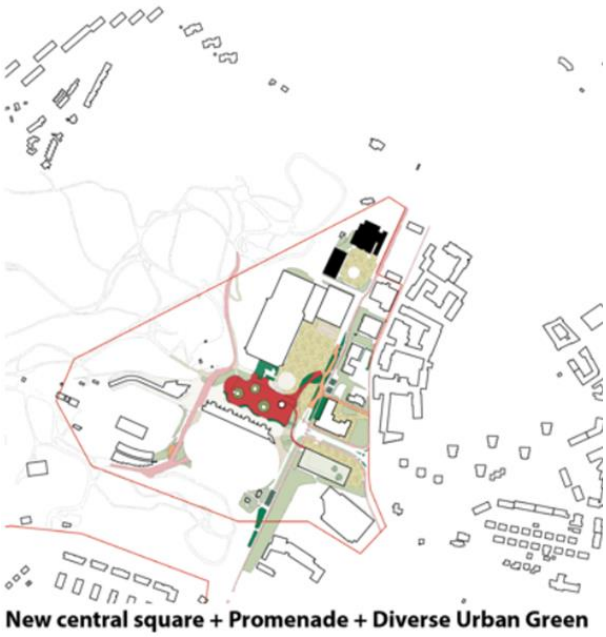
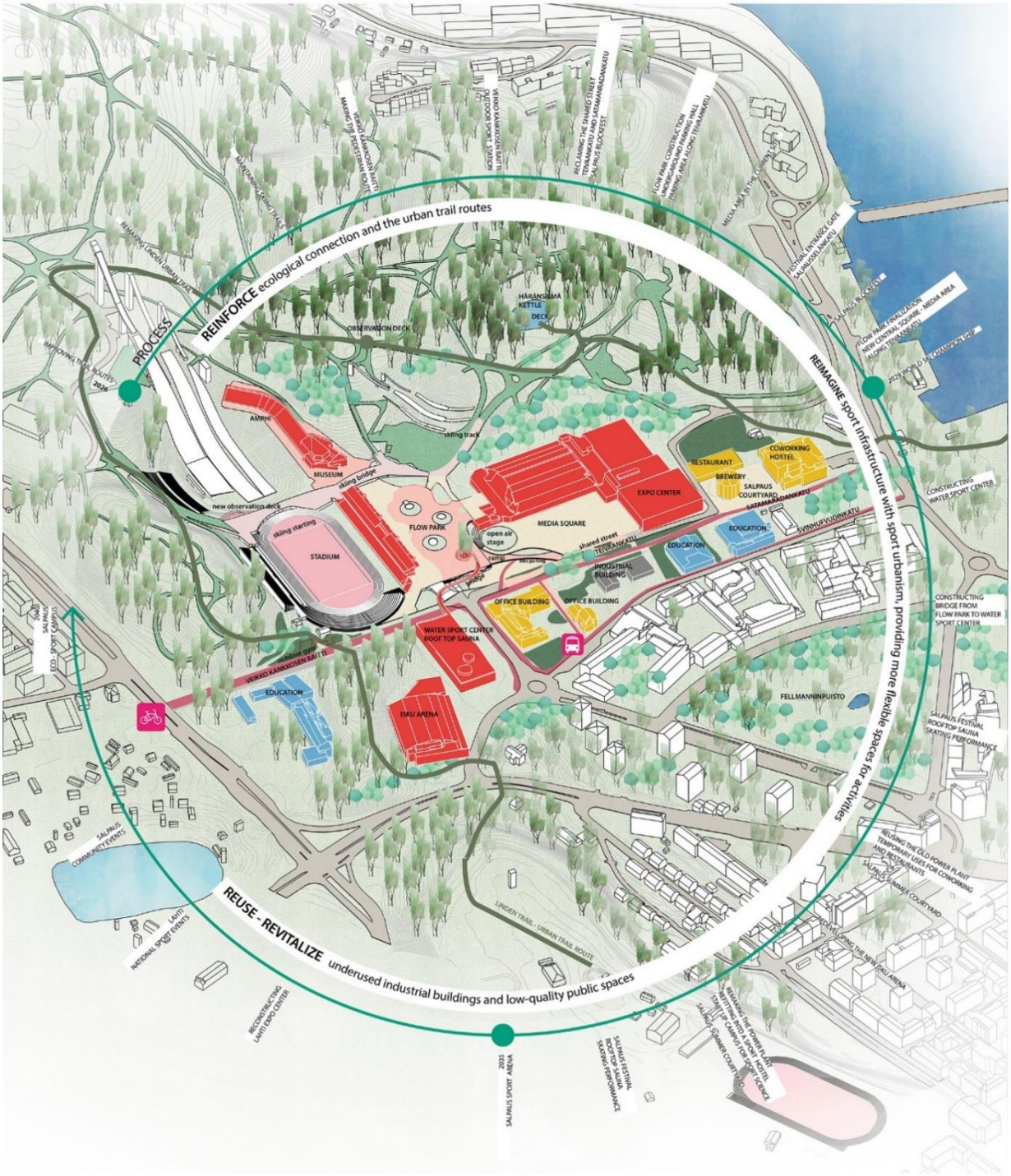
- Diversify transport options by introducing a new bus stop, bike lanes, and a bike bridge as a new landmark entrance to the area.
- Activate public spaces with pocket gardens, urban farming, and outdoor sport zones along new and existing routes, fostering a vibrant, healthy community atmosphere.
- Integrate new facilities such as a parking hall with a rooftop skating park and a water sports center with a rooftop sauna, ensuring the area meets the needs of both locals and visitors while supporting everyday activity and major events.

REUSE the Old Power Plant as a Cultural Hub

- Transform the underused power plant into a dynamic cultural hub, blending heritage with new uses such as a hostel, co-working spaces, and event venues.
- Encourage creative industries and community initiatives to animate the site, making it a destination for both culture and innovation.

Foster synergy between sports, recreation, and culture, reinforcing the area's identity as a lively, inclusive urban edge.

Infiltration of Routes and Flows


New central square + Promenade + Diverse Urban Green

PHASING DEVELOPMENT