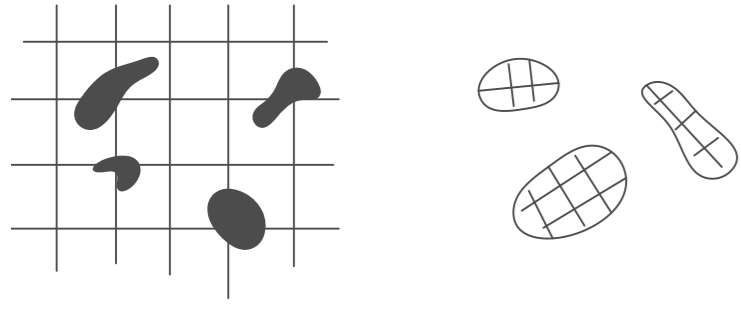


RD642 Turku (FI) Landscape as a city - city as an island



Turku's deep connection to nature

Despite this deep connection to nature, Turku's urban fabric has historically followed a rigid grid. By this urban-centric approach to city development natural systems were overridden: the banks of the Aura River straightened, the Varsoja stream canalized. Yet, again and again, rocky outcrops disrupt this order. These breaks in the grid, clearly visible in historic city plans, also manifest spatially in Turku's urban structure, creating distinctive places where the built environment enters into a direct relationship with the natural landscape.

Shift the paradigm

We see these ruptures not as disruptions, but as spatial and cultural assets. Places where Turku becomes specific and all of its complex processes tangible.

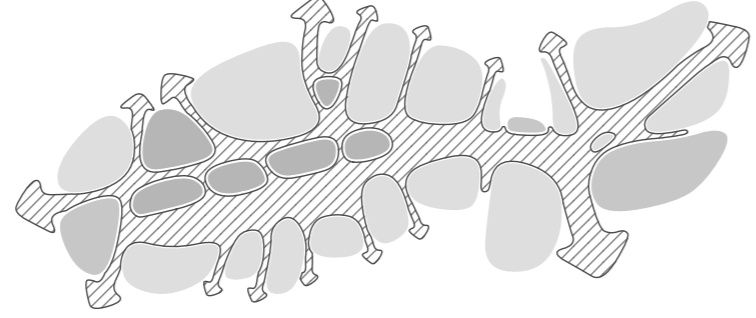
As the rocky hills break the continuity of the city's layout we propose to invert this urban-landscape relationship along the Varsoja. The basis of our design is the creation of a landscape framework in which formations of architecture act as archipelagic entities. Architecture acts not as object - but as mediator - between urban and ecological systems. With nature as the "masterplan" and new urban forms (that we define through the concept of the neighbourhood archipelago) serving as experiential anchors of the archipelago, a key landscape center emerges along the Varsoja corridor. This new green core shapes and moderates the city's future growth, strengthening the dialogue between Turku and its natural setting.

A green core for the neighborhood

Urbanization in Vähäheikkilä accelerated after its annexation to Turku in 1939, with the growth of public facilities, industries, and housing. Today, Vähäheikkilä is a heterogeneous district, mixing older housing, businesses, services, and vacant plots, illustrating a gradual evolution lacking a comprehensive strategy, which raises the question of its future within Turku's urban growth.

Rather than viewing fragmentation as a problem, we propose to embrace it as a new urban reality and a potential asset. This collection of distinct "islands" — neighborhoods, districts, or iconic buildings — each has its own identity and function. Every island is designed or preserved to reinforce its unique character and collective identity, rather than being

being homogenized by city-wide planning. They are not isolated, but reconnected through this new green core, which acts as connective element — the final piece of a puzzle.



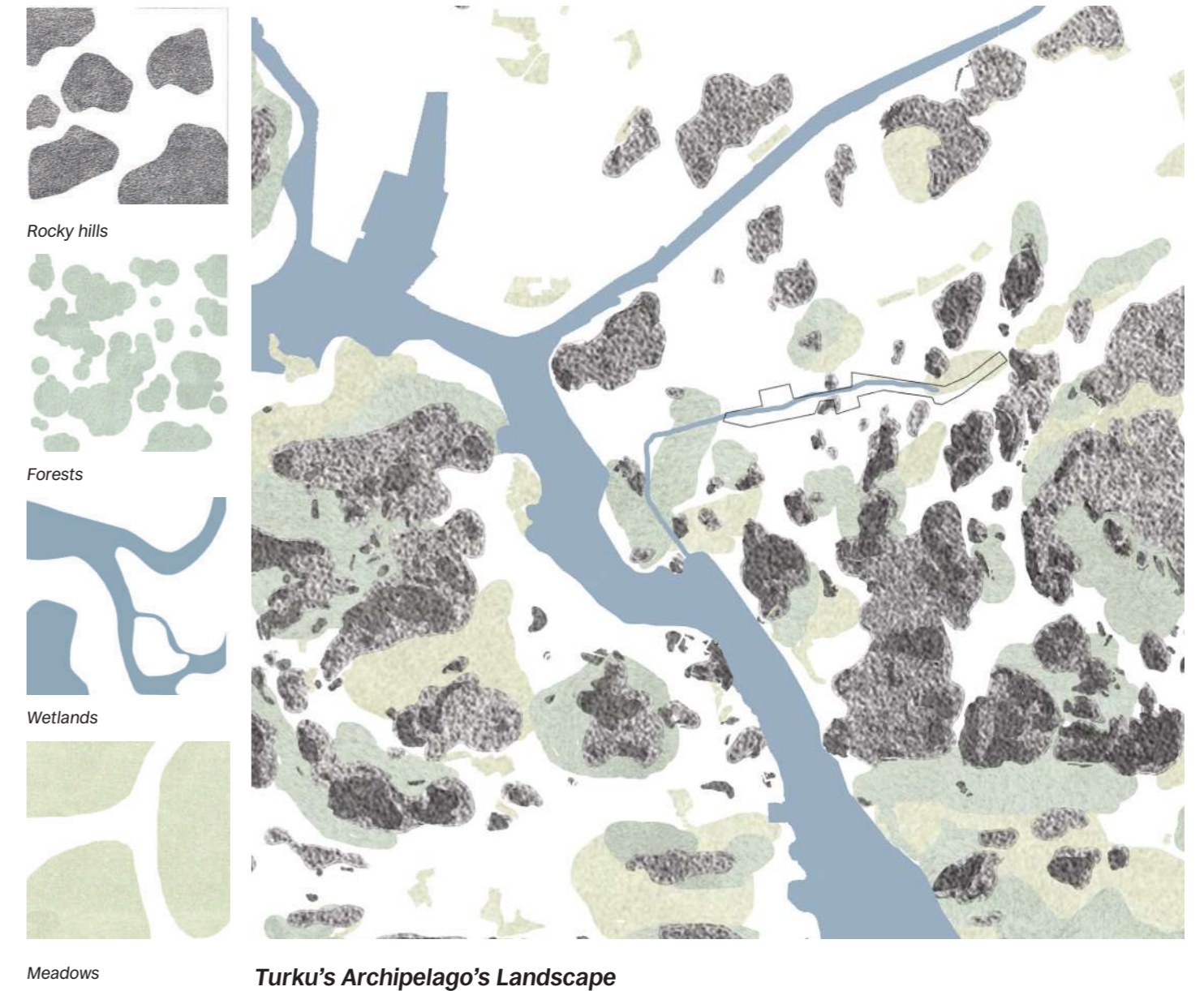
Landscape integration

We take the landscape forward design of the Varsoja area as an opportunity to make different components of the archipelago tangible and interweave them with one another. In doing so, we integrate the site into the existing ecological corridors and strengthen its landscape coherence within the Turku archipelago. To this end, we identify the following characteristic natural and urban phenomena: Rocky Hills, the Forests, the Wetlands, the Meadows, the built environment

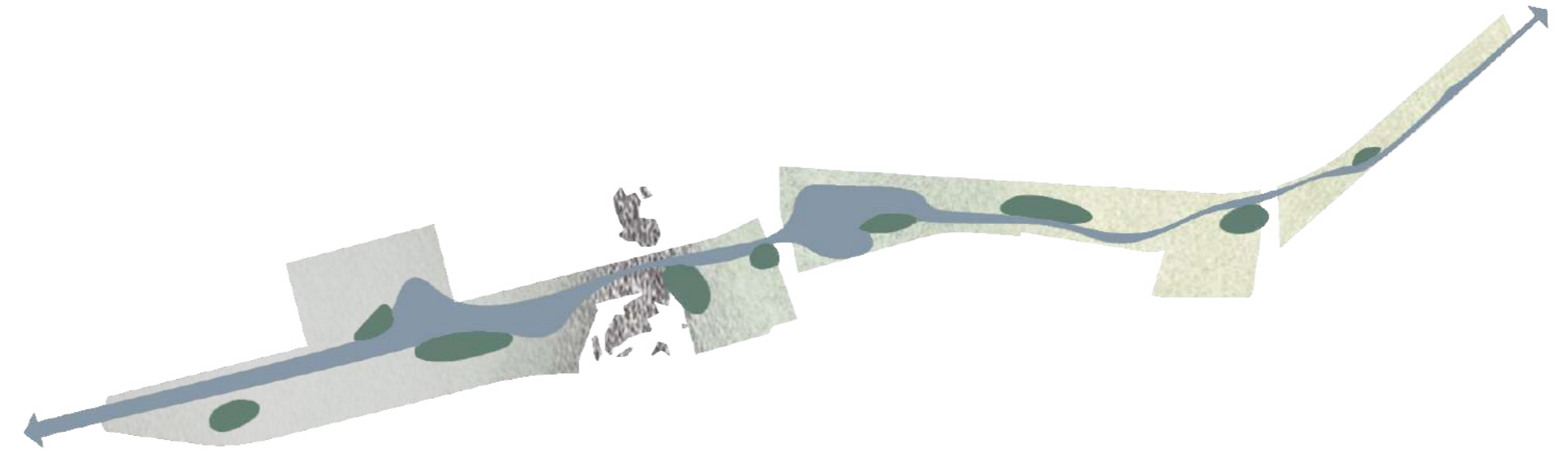
The competition site is a patchwork of the different landscapes characteristic of the Turku archipelago. By reopening the buried canal, we aim to enhance these diverse landscapes. The stream serves as the backbone of the project, reconnecting the various biotopes.

Enhancing biodiversity

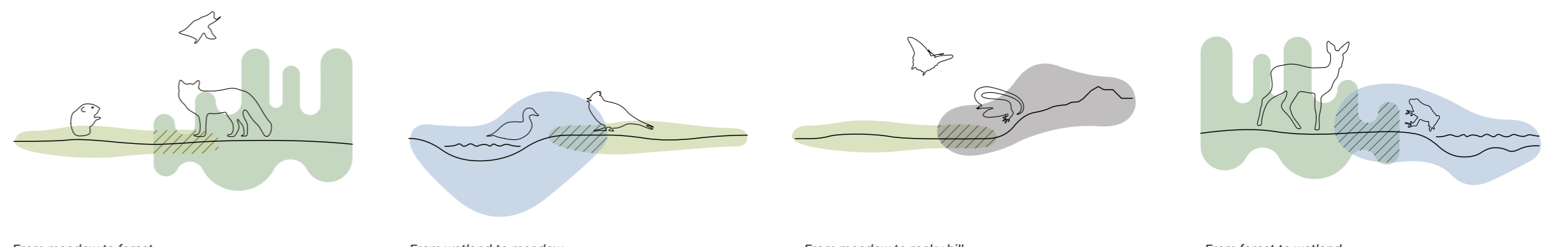
Ecotones are the intersection of two different types of habitats. Edge effect is a theory in ecology that finds that the biodiversity and ecological function is enhanced at habitat edges. These edges - Ecotones - act as sites from where biodiversity can access different types of habitats and resources. In our design, we use the same principle and attempt to create multiple edges in the site. The four habitats mentioned above - forest, wetland, rocky landscape, and meadow - are connected through these edges, which serve as representative transitions between the different biotopes. They feature denser vegetation, adapted to the habitats they link.



Turku's Archipelago's Landscape



Varsoja as a reconnecting element between fragmented landscapes



From meadow to forest

From wetland to meadow

From meadow to rocky hill

From forest to wetland

Ecotones



Illustration of the area 1:1500