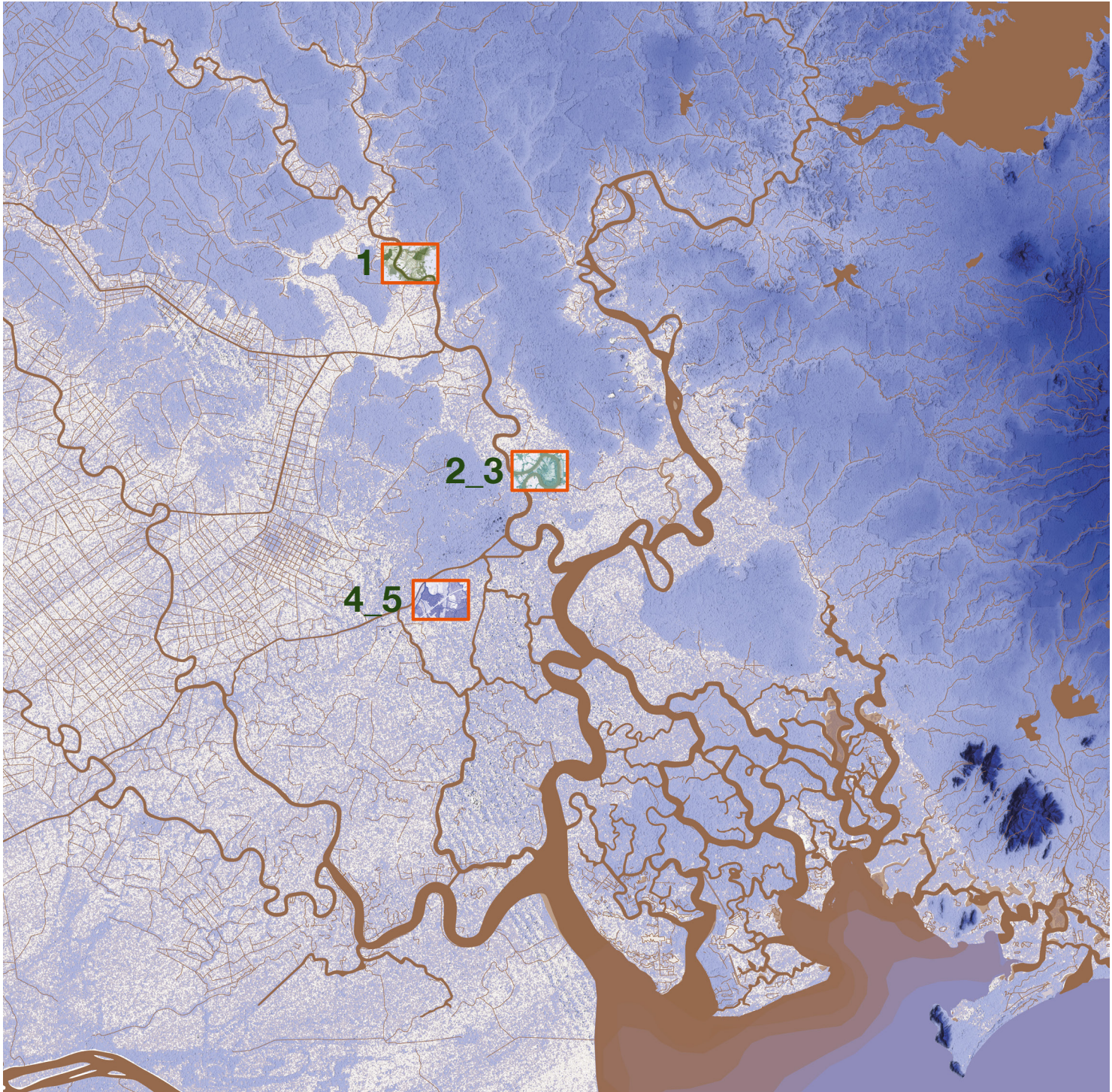
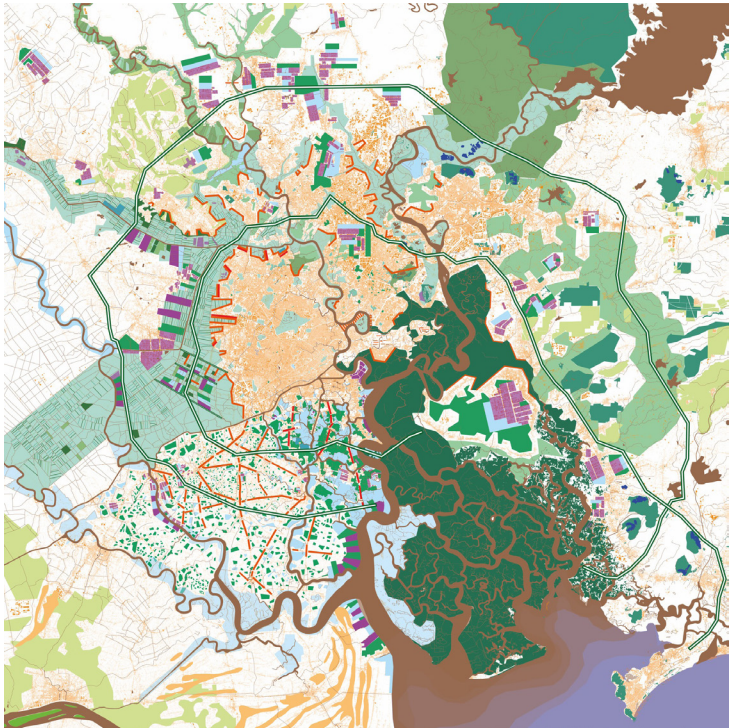
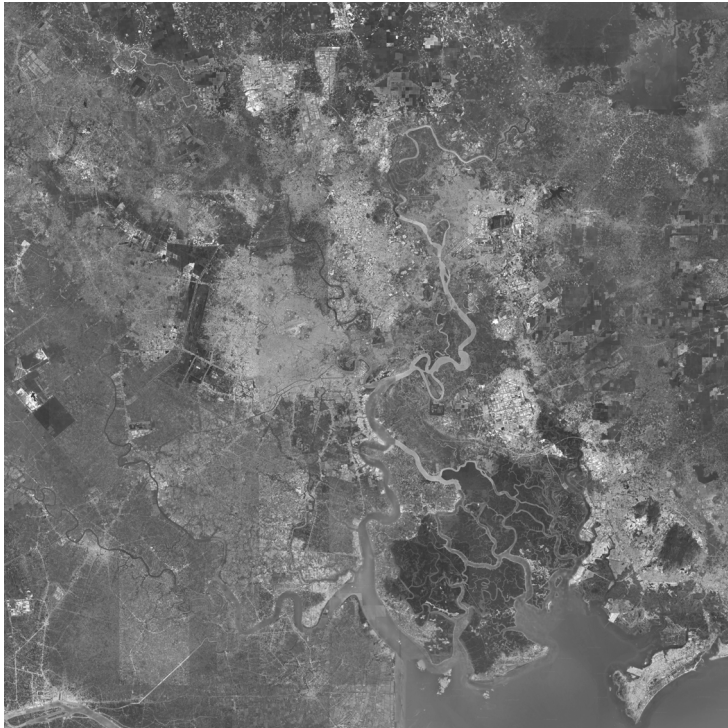




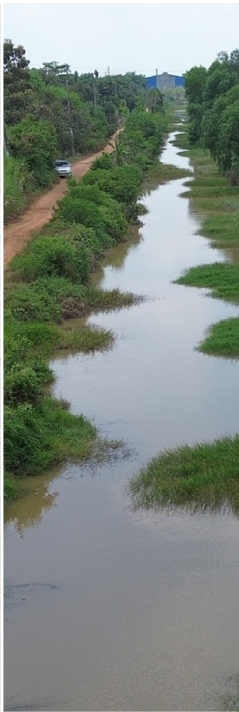
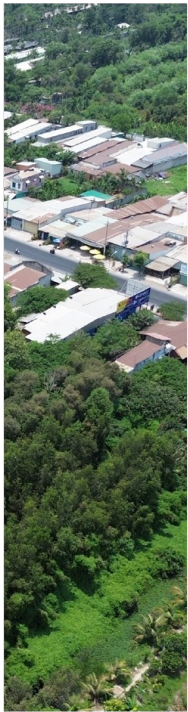
The projects chosen were developed within a larger group project envisioned by 14 international post-graduate students in the Master of Human Settlements and Master of Landscape, Urbanism and Planning programs. The studio's methodology combined large-scale territorial analysis and design, 2-weeks of intensive fieldwork, relief models and develop across scales in section. A metropolitan park system for 100 x100 km was collectively developed by the students. A total of 6 sites (3x5km each) were investigated in groups of 2-3 students. Each site had a significant open space that was threatened by run-of-the-mill development. Students developed a component of the metropolitan park system (the first part of project titles) and socio-ecological urbanism strategy (the second part of project titles). Individually, students developed a 1.5km-long transect and a zoom-in section perspective. All sites worked with the following premises: 1] no land filling (only cut/ fill for the landscape reconfiguration); 2] only native vegetation; 3] population growth continues at 2,6% annually; necessity of new housing on every site. Five individual projects chosen were part of three groups. The selection criteria emphasized the radicality of proposals across scales. They were as well chosen for the quality of visual representation, and the group's engagement, learning spirit, and critical approach to landscape urbanism.

HO CHI MINH CITY METROPOLITAN PARK SYSTEM

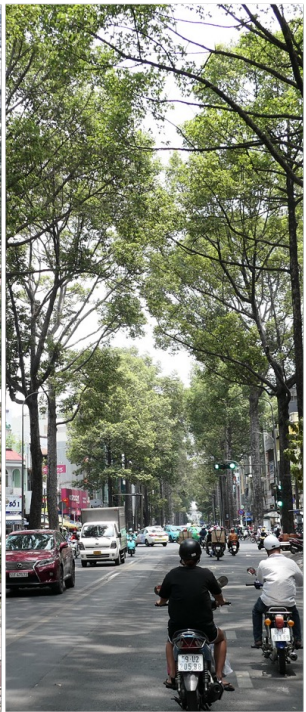
Ho Chi Minh City (HCMC), a tropical megacity of 10 million in Viet Nam, faces critical environmental vulnerabilities, including flooding, heat, and a severe lack of public green space (only 0.55 m² per capita). The region is bordered by ecologically vital landscapes like the Thầy Cai-An Hạ canal system and the UNESCO-listed Cần Giở Mangrove Biosphere Reserve. However, they are under threat from industrialization and real estate speculation. The studio explored alternatives—shifting development to higher ground, building with new typologies within wetlands, and integrating local ecological knowledge. A water-vegetation metropolitan park network was developed a “mega sponge,” cleaning stormwater, enhancing biodiversity, and providing essential public space. At the same time, the water-vegetation system are more than ecological and public space assets—they frame the rampant development of expanding mega-city for a livable, climate-adaptive future.



Thầy Cai-An Hạ canal system



HCMC CORE URBAN AREAS



Can Gio Biosphere Reserve



Country/City	Leuven, Belgium
University / School	KU Leuven
Academic year	2024-2025
Title of the project	Ho Chi Minh City Metropolitan Park System
Authors	Ramachandra Mettu, Dimitrios Ziogkas, Santiago Ocampo Palacio, Juan Diego Martinez Otalvaro, Joseline Gabriela Carrion Astudillo

1_SAIGON RIVER FLOOD PARK. DENSIFIED FLOODPLAIN.



Country/City	Leuven, Belgium
University / School	KU Leuven
Academic year	2024-2025
Title of the project	Saigon River Flood Park. Densified Floodplain.
Authors	Ramachancra Mettu



Title of the project	Saigon River Flood Park. Densified Floodplain.
Authors	Ramachancra Mettu
Title of the course	Landscape Urbanism Spring Studio
Academic year	2024-2025
Teaching Staff	Prof. Kelly Shannon, Nhung Pham
Department / Section / Program of belonging	Master of Human Settlement (MaHS) & Master of Urbanism, Landscape and Planning (MaULP)
University / School	KU Leuven, Belgium

Written statement, short description of the project in English, no more than 250 words

Saigon River Flood Park. Densified Floodplain, Thu Dau Mot. The Saigon River Flood Park is more than a recreational space—it is a spatial framework for future urbanism along the Saigon River flood plain. It redefines flood management not as an engineering problem but as a landscape opportunity, where water is absorbed, stored, and celebrated. The project reconnects historical waterways and creates two monsoon basins (on each side of the Saigon River), capitalizing on its upstream location. They serve as enormous reservoirs for irrigation during dry seasons. The excavated soil is repurposed to establish new tropical tree corridors and repair fragmented ecological systems. The site’s large productive landscape of rice fields and orchards is strengthened, and a large part of new urbanity is concentrated in a linear system along the open space structure. Urban soak-scapes are developed across multiple scales to manage runoff from higher elevations. There is also strategic and clustered urban densification within productive forests (orchards). All development is conceived as an alternative to densifying both the riverfront and the floodplain while incorporating a gradient of public spaces and wetness. Rather than imposing fixed boundaries, the design promotes a negotiated edge between urban and rural, wet and dry, built and wild. Views from the buildings are choreographed to maximize the notion of living within a productive tropical landscape. Public gardens are developed at grade and as well within the verticality of housing towers, weaving an array of private open spaces also developed sectionally.

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1_SAIGON RIVER FLOOD PARK. DENSIFIED FLOODPLAIN.



Massive planned urbanization



Productive open spaces under threat



Relentless earthworks



If you build it, will they come?



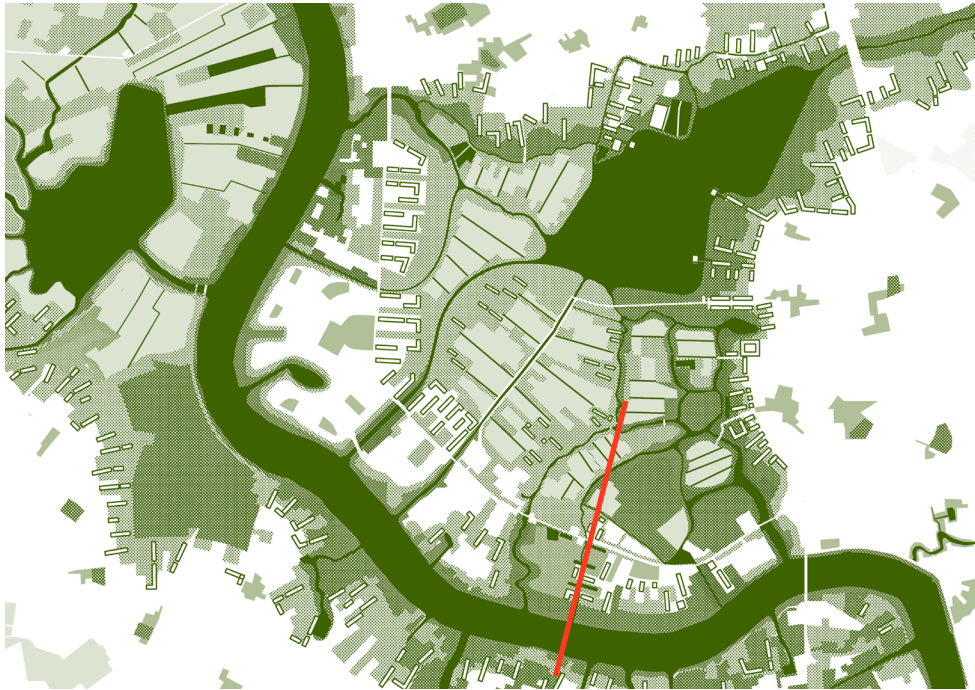
Waterways have been disturbed and ecologies fragmented



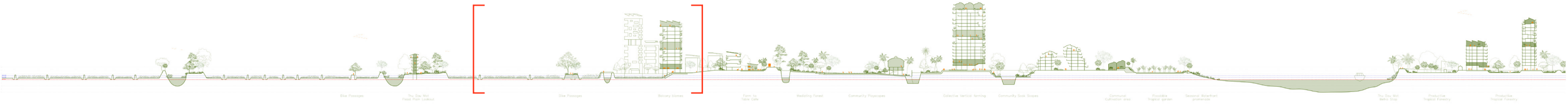
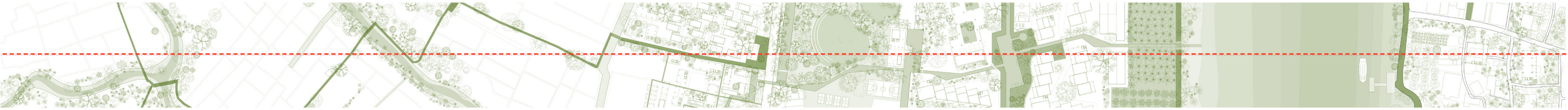
Waterways restored to structure were to build and where to not build

Country/City	Leuven, Belgium
University / School	KU Leuven
Academic year	2024-2025
Title of the project	Saigon River Flood Park. Densified Floodplain.
Authors	Ramachandra Mettu

1_SAIGON RIVER FLOOD PARK. DENSIFIED FLOODPLAIN.



Dense housing towers amidst the productive landscape



1_From the Saigon River to the belly of the productive landscape

2_3_SAIGON CENTRAL PARK. DEMOCRATIZATION OF RIVERFRONTS.



Country/City	Leuven, Belgium
University / School	KU Leuven
Academic year	2024-2025
Title of the project	Saigon Central Park - Democratization of Riverfronts
Authors	Dimitrios Ziogkas, Santiago Ocampo Palacio



Title of the project	Saigon Central Park. Democratization of Riverfronts.
Authors	Dimitrios Ziogkas, Santiago Ocampo Palacio
Title of the course	Landscape Urbanism Spring Studio
Academic year	2024-2025
Teaching Staff	Prof. Kelly Shannon, Nhung Pham
Department / Section / Program of belonging	Master of Human Settlement (MaHS) & Master of Urbanism, Landscape and Planning (MaULP)
University / School	KU Leuven, Belgium

Written statement, short description of the project in English, no more than 250 words

Saigon Central Park. Democratization of Riverfronts, Thanh Da. The peninsula (cutoff by an underutilized canal) is conceived as HCMC’s Central Park, accessible only by motorbike and boat. Portions of the large re-constituted floodplain park (like the Saigon River) are recreational, while other parts remain productive (with agri- and aquaculture) and still other areas are only for non-human species. The canal is reconfigured as a space for super high-density development of mixed-use towers elevated on stilts and connected by elevated public decks and sky gardens, offering panoramic views and climate-sensitive adaptation to rising temperatures. It counterbalances preservation of the territory’s unbuilt ecological core. Water is reintroduced as a public space and sponge for the monsoon season rains. A “barcode system” was developed for the remainder of the urban areas, perpendicular to the Saigon River and anchored to higher land along existing dyke-roads. New forest and water urbanism systems of medium-rise, high-density development alternates with neighborhood parks of tropical vegetation and wetlands parks for storm-water retention. The pattern enables a rhythm between built and unbuilt spaces. Infill development addresses informally appropriated space between buildings, with accessible vegetated rooftops, encouraging small-scale urban agriculture and rainwater collection. The southern area of Thanh Da is reforested with mangroves to host biodiversity, cleanse water, and operate as a sponge for seasonal floods. Buildings are conceived as elevated structures on stilts, with open ground floors that allow water to flow and people to circulate. Orientation and brise-soleil strategies further improve climatic comfort and environmental performance.

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2_3_SAIGON CENTRAL PARK. DEMOCRATIZATION OF RIVERFRONTS.



Thanh Da Peninsula



An existing mosaic of tropical gardens



One of the last remaining open spaces in the rapidly expanding city



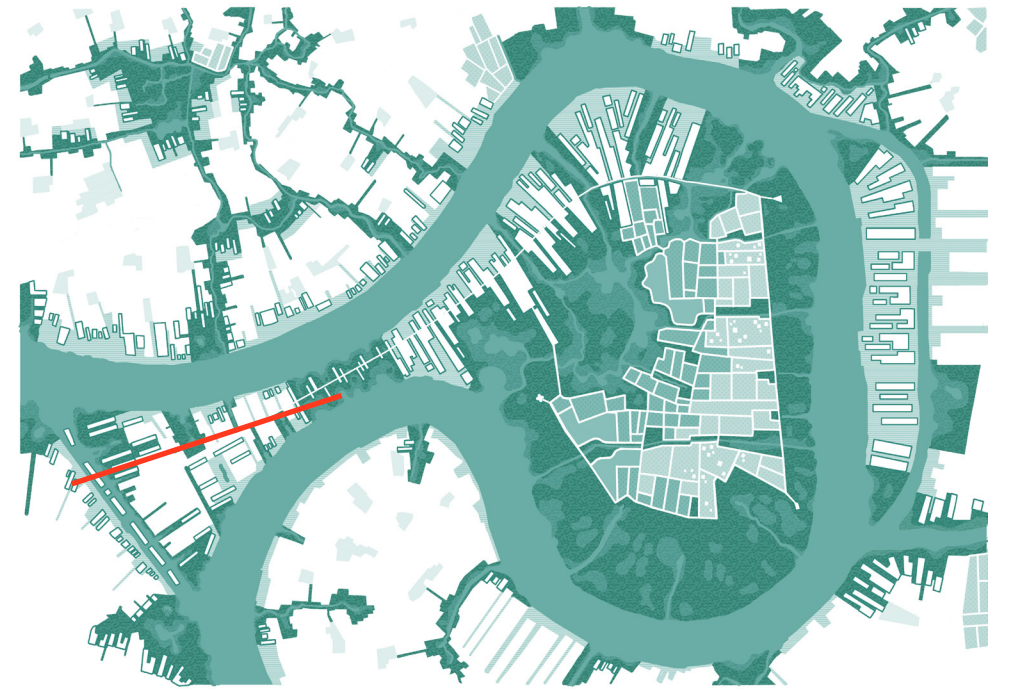
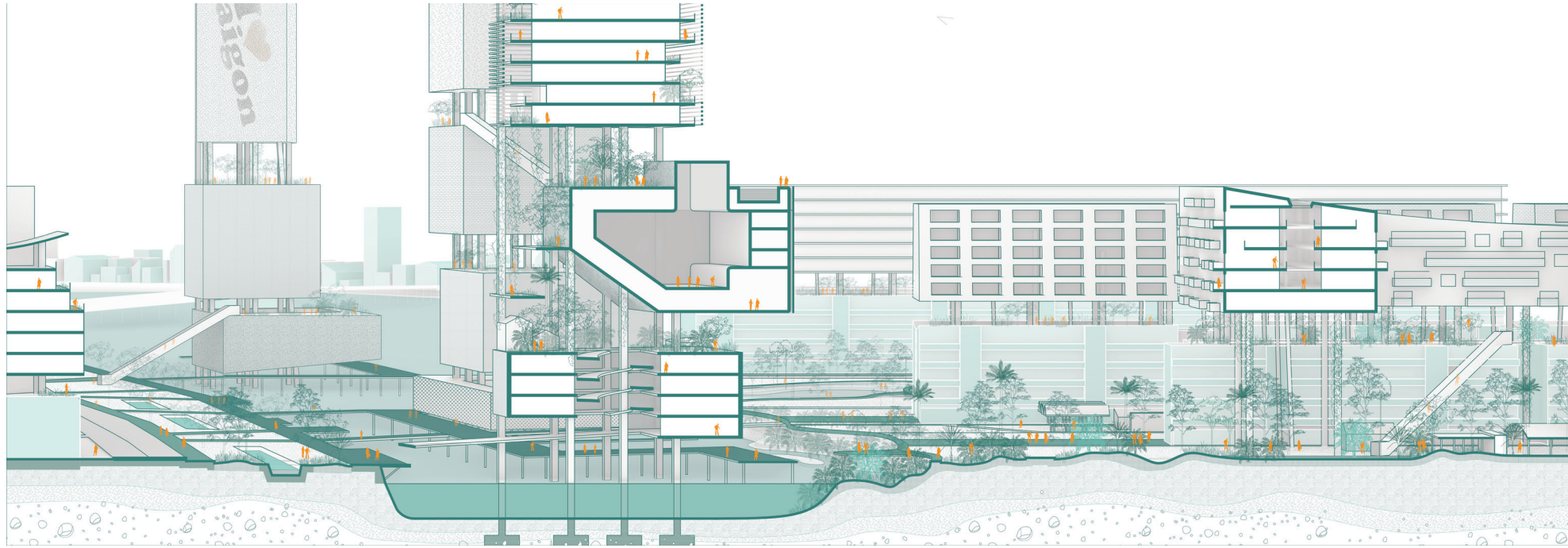
Micro-topographies are still evident in the peninsula's low land



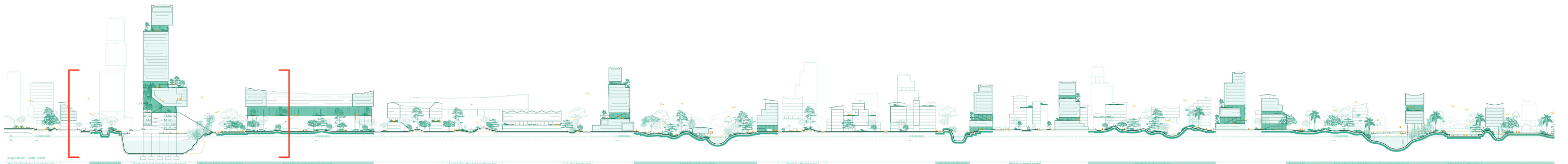
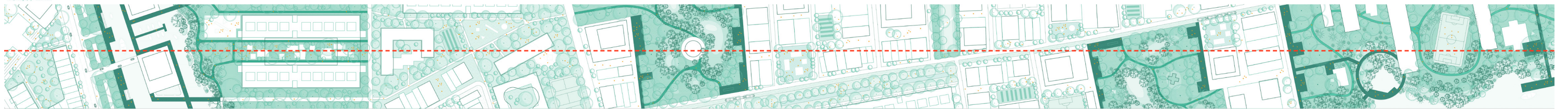
A 'bar code' system of urbanization, perpendicular to the Saigon River

Country/City	Leuven, Belgium
University / School	KU Leuven
Academic year	2024-2025
Title of the project	Saigon Central Park - Democratization of Riverfronts
Authors	Dimitrios Ziogkas, Santiago Ocampo Palacio

2_SAIGON CENTRAL PARK. DEMOCRATIZATION OF RIVERFRONTS.

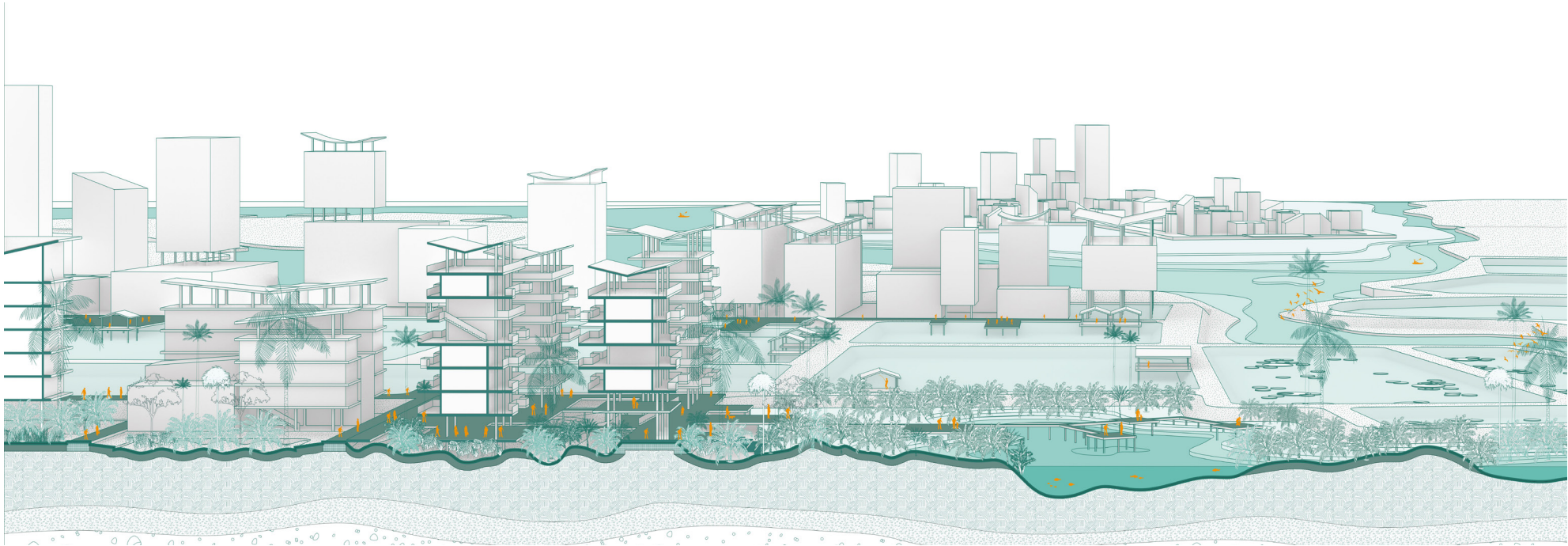


Super-dense urbanization above the redundant canal and densification of housing and public spaces

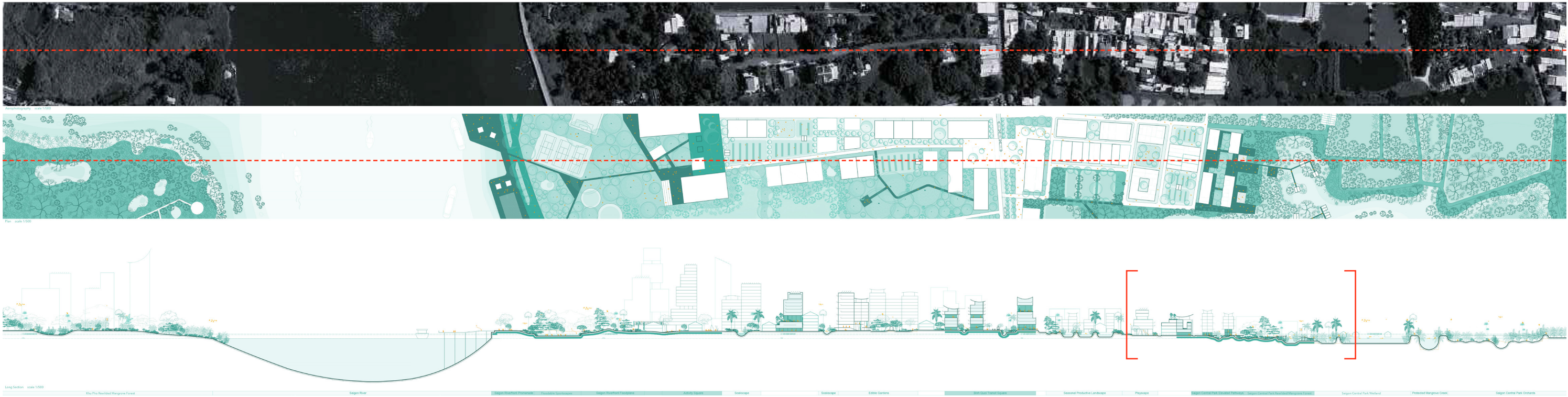


2_More urbanism and more tropical landscapes

3_SAIGON CENTRAL PARK. DEMOCRATIZATION OF RIVERFRONTS.



Medium-rise, high-density housing clusters amidst wetlands



3_Bar-code forest and water urbanization

4_5_LOTUS GARDENS & FLOODED FORESTS. RECLUSTERING TISSUES.



Country/City	Leuven, Belgium
University / School	KU Leuven
Academic year	2024-2025
Title of the project	Lotus Gardens & Flooded Forests. Reclustering Tissues.
Authors	Juan Diego Martinez Otalvaro, Joseline Gabriela Carrion Astudillo

Title of the project	Lotus Gardens & Flooded Forests. Reclustering Tissues.
Authors	Juan Diego Martinez Otalvaro, Joseline Gabriela Carrion Astudillo, Yimeng Wang
Title of the course	Landscape Urbanism Spring Studio
Academic year	2024-2025
Teaching Staff	Prof. Kelly Shannon, Nhung Pham
Department / Section / Program of belonging	Master of Human Settlement (MaHS) & Master of Urbanism, Landscape and Planning (MaULP)
University / School	KU Leuven, Belgium



Written statement, short description of the project in English, no more than 250 words

Lotus Gardens and Flooded Forests. Re-clustering Tissues, Binh Hung.The area is a western extension of Saigon South and connected to the Mekong Delta via a highway. The proposal accentuates the territory’s innate tropical wet landscapes and densifies existing urban tissues and landfilled areas. The water system is recovered as a mosaic of wetlands (and with reconstituted streams) to work as an urban sponge, while simultaneously serving as the primary backbone for new settlement clusters. A fringe forest is developed as filter between the highway and liveable spaces. Different levels of inundation modulate the use for non-humans and public space, while ground floors act as great shadows for the heat of the city and hold the vibrant urban life that characterizes HCMC. The low-lying area in the northeast is developed as a flooded freshwater forest, in the center a productive / contemplative lotus garden and in the west a semi-wild zone with a Frogland Reserve. The landscape system has areas of recreation, contemplation, strict conservation and production. A continuous network of public spaces weaves with the current context and connects to the typical Vietnamese hem network — narrow alleyways that shape everyday life — and creates opportunities for areas to grow and densify over time. Existing settlements are clustered into new neighborhood units, where densification with high-density, medium-rise structures is interwoven with existing typologies. Typologies work to sectionally create vibrant public spaces. The project creates an evolving ecological-urban framework, where settlement, biodiversity, and hydrology are interwoven into a cohesive and adaptive whole.

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4_5_LOTUS GARDENS & FLOODED FORESTS. RECLUSTERING TISSUES.



Fragmented open space due to urbanization



Vast aquaculture as an identity of the site



Hidden tropical paradises



Massive highway disturbance



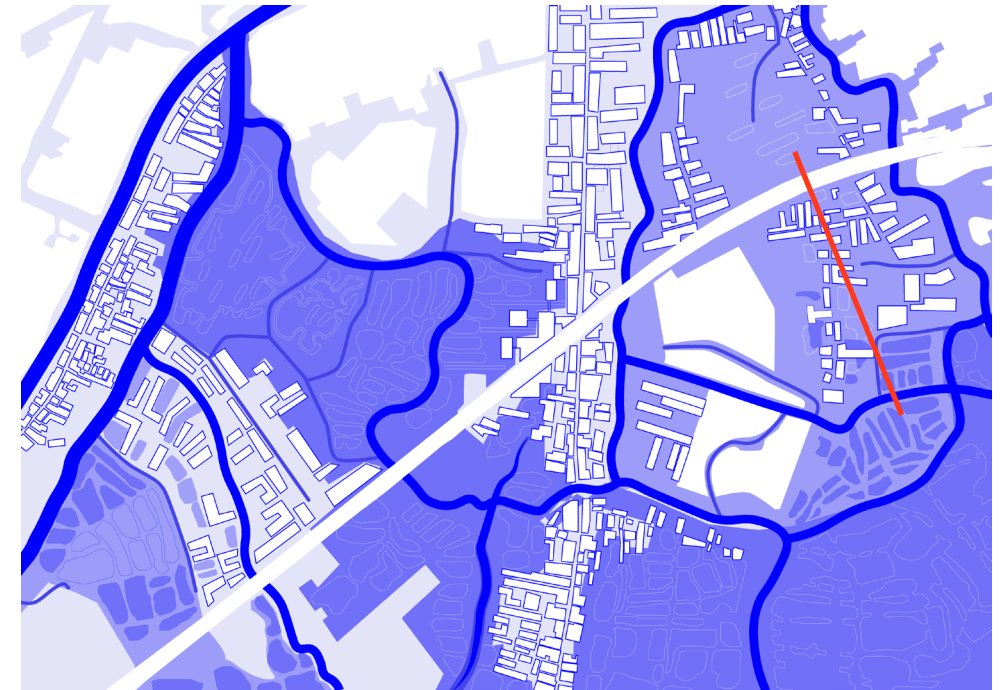
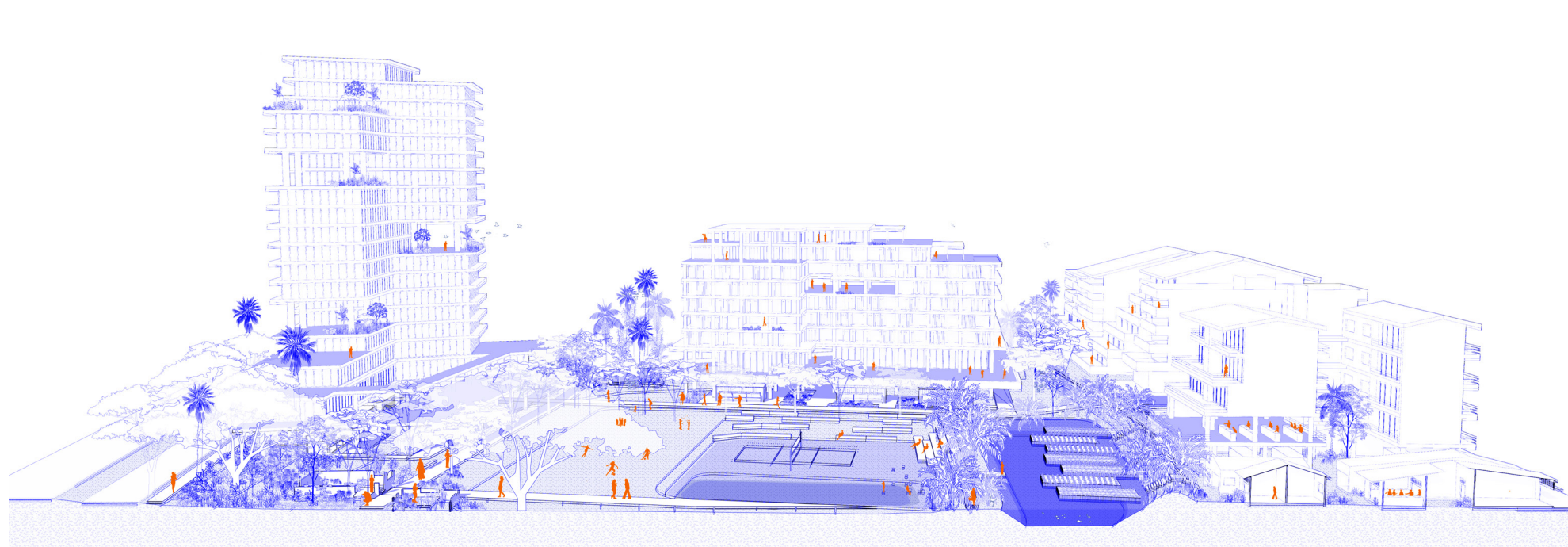
Fragmented water systems and large-landfill of a 3m-high highway dike



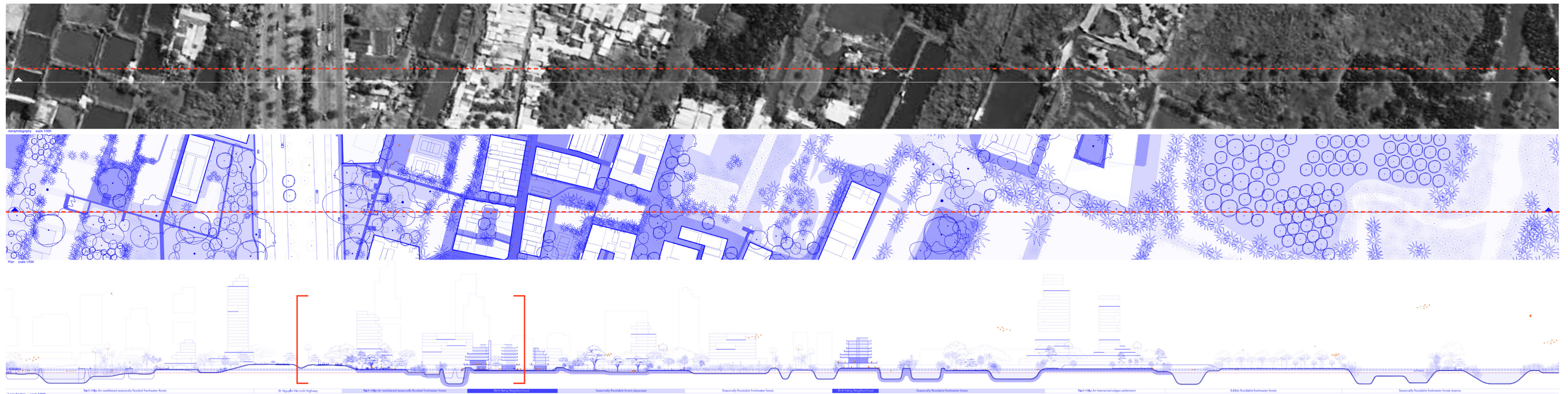
Multiplication of wetlands as structure for urban systems

Country/City	Leuven, Belgium
University / School	KU Leuven
Academic year	2024-2025
Title of the project	Lotus Gardens & Flooded Forests. Reclustering Tissues.
Authors	Juan Diego Martinez Otalvaro, Joseline Gabriela Carrion Astudillo

4_LOTUS GARDENS & FLOODED FORESTS. RECLUSTERING TISSUES.

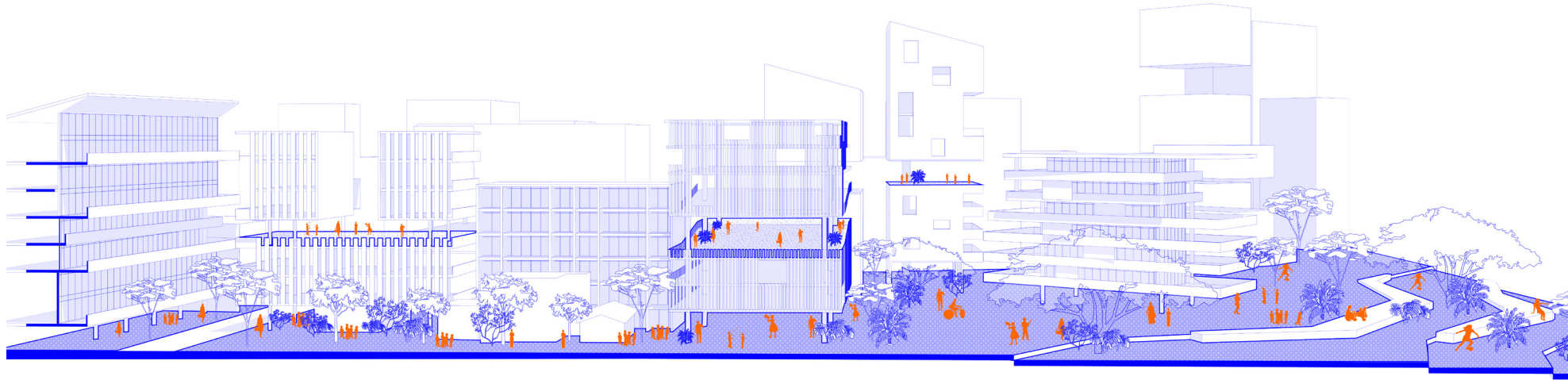


Wetland gradients create a variety of living spaces and tropical gardens

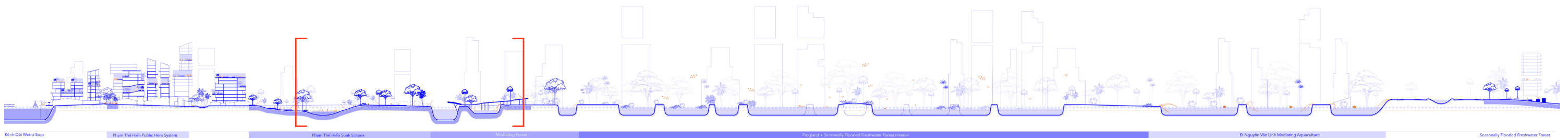
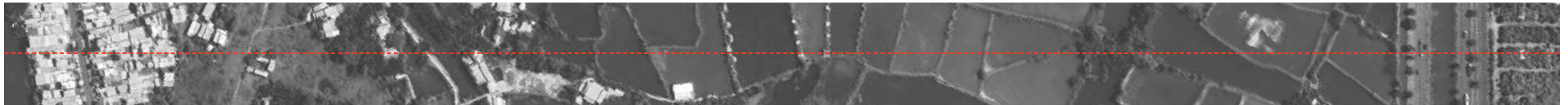


4_Flooded forests and densification and clustering of existing + new typologies

5_LOTUS GARDENS & FLOODED FORESTS. RECLUSTERING TISSUES.



Urbanism transtions in density and 'publicness' to park wetland park space



5_From the canal and 'hem' development to the Frogland Reserve