(me)tsä

VAASA-FINLAND

EUROPAN 17 - Living cities

(me)tsä

(me)tsä emerges from the union of two Finnish words: “me” (us) and “metsä” (forest), which embrace the inclusive and resilient spirit of the project. We view forests as constantly changing living organisms where non-living and living species coexist in interdependence, establishing a self-sufficient and sustainable community that is deeply aware of its nearby environment. Based on these principles, (me)tsä addresses contemporary housing requirements from a 21st-century architectural perspective.

The project is thoughtfully connected to its surroundings through green and safe bike and pedestrian pathways, creating car-free areas within the project site. It incorporates snowmelt and stormwater management infrastructure as an integral part of its urban landscape, ensuring public spaces function as infiltration or evacuation systems when necessary.

With a keen understanding of the environmental impact of construction, the project reduces CO2 emissions by implementing industrialized and prefab timber and CLT elements. This results in a low energy consumption architecture during its lifetime, while also exhibiting excellent performance in variable climatic conditions of Vaasa.

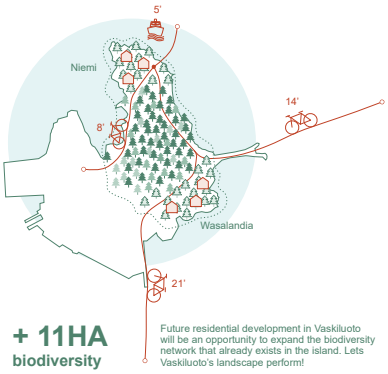
A living organism

Learning from forests, the project is conceived as a **resilient ecosystem** that adapts to changing conditions over time, not only during its lifetime but also during the design process. Before the phased implementation, we propose an open **Phase 0** for negotiation, participation, and design. Since its conception, a multidisciplinary team composed of municipality representatives, promoters, neighbors' associations, cooperatives, and planning technicians will gather to tackle the challenges that a constantly changing habitat requires. An open **participatory process** will encourage a sense of identity and belonging to the place. To ensure the success of the project, four committees will be established, each responsible for different aspects: housing, shared spaces, mobility, and public areas. Each of these aspects will be approached from different cross-cutting perspectives: inclusivity + equity, biodiversity + landscape, and sustainability + circularity. During phased implementation outdoor spaces and facilities will be shared with the current **camping** till it finds a new location. Besides, as part of natural and gentle topography, **parking facilities** will be implemented in each phase.

To infuse a sense of **identity and belonging** with the surroundings, future inhabitants will actively participate in planting and transplanting labours, contributing to the growth of their new forest during the phased implementation. As the project unfolds, the forest will flourish in tandem with the community it embraces, serving as a living testament to the beauty of a shared vision brought to life.

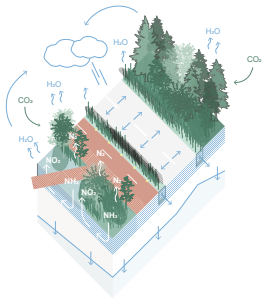
Like a living organism, several architectural and infrastructural systems, such as water drainage and transportation pathways, coexist and interwine, generating interactions and enriching the landscape. Additionally, flexible and versatile public spaces and housing types will adapt to contemporary lifestyles and changing needs.

(më)tsa, like a forest, emerges as a resilient ecosystem that is constantly changing and evolving, hosting all living creatures and fostering spontaneous interactions of all kinds.



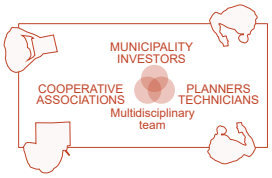
+ 11HA
biodiversity

Future residential development in Vaskiluoto will be an opportunity to expand the biodiversity network that already exists in the island. Lets Vaskiluoto's landscape perform!

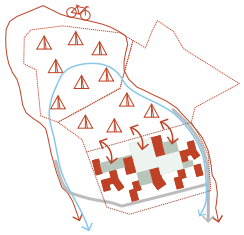


VASKILUOTO MASTERPLAN

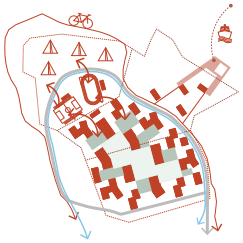
2024 **PHASE 0** NEGOTIATION AND DESIGN



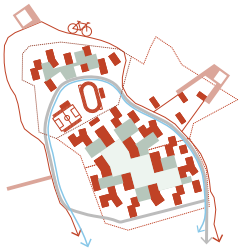
2035 **PHASE I** HOUSING 26350 m²



2040 **PHASE II** HOUSING 23680 m²



2045 **PHASE III** HOUSING 4210 m²



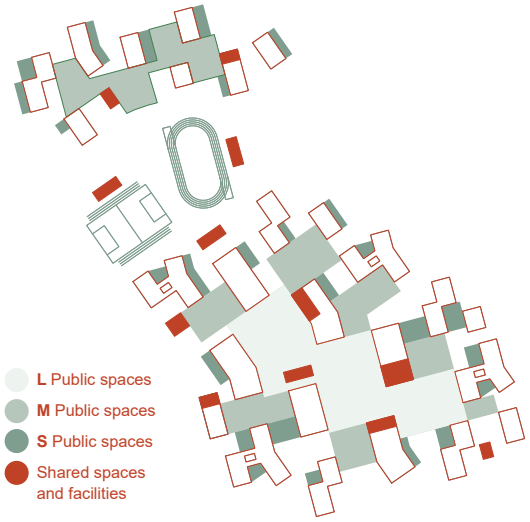
Coexistence and biodiversity

A **new hybrid** territory emerges, fostering a harmonious coexistence of multiple species in a spirit of equity and inclusivity. The project artfully blends different realities, where the elderly and young, leisure and work, natural and artificial elements, as well as non-living and living creatures coexist.

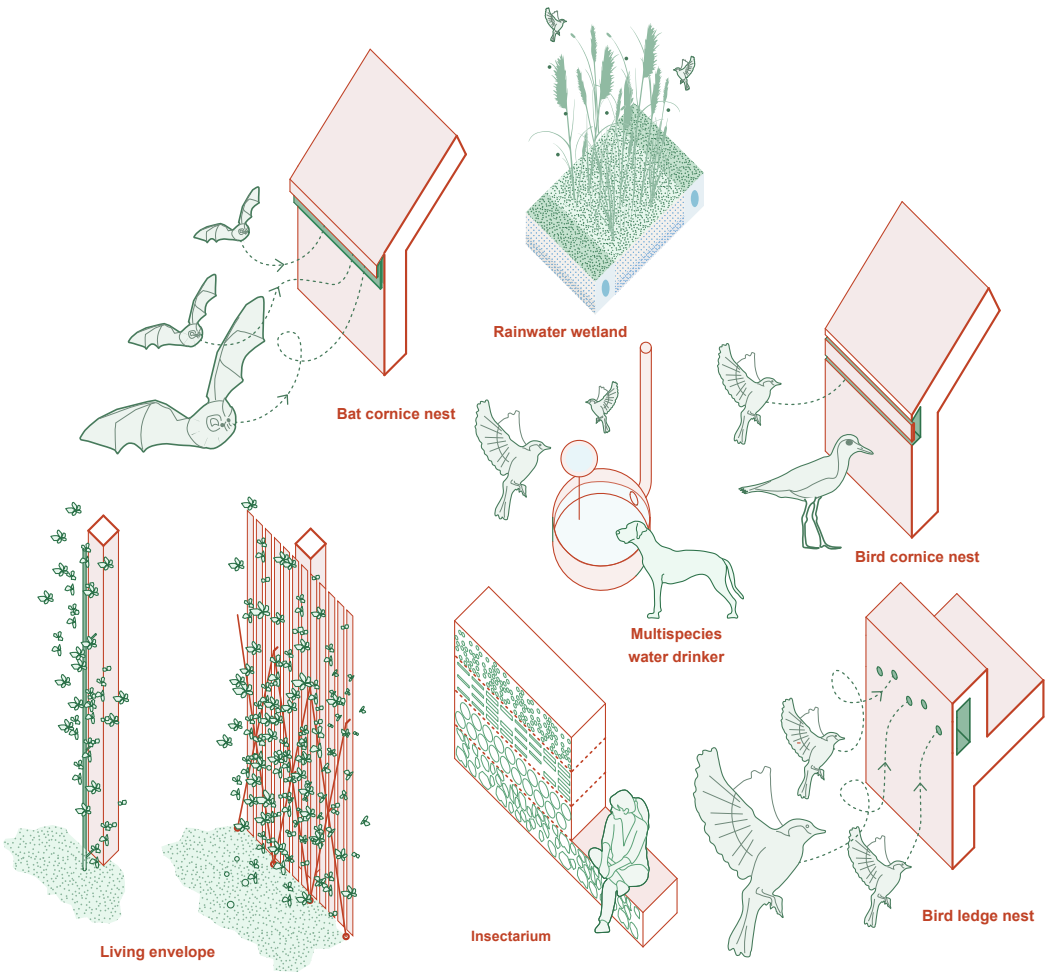
Public space is conceived as a series of interconnected squares that follows a privacy gradient and a fractal organization. This layout encourages a wide range of possible interactions both planned and spontaneous. The dynamic nature of the project enables it to host a myriad of activities simultaneously from grand events like concerts and local product markets, held in spacious **L** areas, to intimate gatherings and private gardens found in the **M** and **S** courtyards. Communal **rooftops**, reminiscent of elevated squares, have been strategically placed to offer panoramic views of the surrounding forest and shoreline, providing a serene retreat for visitors and residents alike.

Shared spaces in ground floor activate public spaces, generating a mixed-use urban fabric. Different uses overlaps in time and space, enhancing interaction between the users, whilst assuring inclusivity and equity.

In this new **ecosystem**, both architecture and urbanism play vital roles as active agents. The project is designed not just for human activities but to welcome and accommodate various forms of existing wildlife such as plants, birds, small mammals, and insects, among others. Through a catalogue of architectural solutions and urban devices, the design creates spaces for breeding and resting for these inhabitants. The result is a thriving hybrid ecosystem that not only preserves **biodiversity** but actively enhances it, nurturing a thriving interdependence between all living beings.



Interconnected public space



Self-sufficient community

The building proposal aims to utilize industrialized wooden and timber systems, not only to create a flexible and adaptable housing system but also to support a sustainable construction process. Following a zero-waste management policy, the project operates as a circular economy where waste materials can be repurposed as resources, generating a self-sufficient community that includes people and other living creatures in the environment.

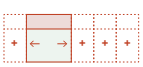
The housing types are designed as flexible and versatile systems that can adapt not only during their lifetime but also during the design process. We propose three different housing block scales depending on density, height, and gross floor area: L, M, and S.

On one hand, the “Cutout” housing types in the L Block guarantee versatility in the housing distribution and optimize the design process. The system provides housing with a variable number of rooms, adapting to the needs and requirements without modifying the building structure or installation system. Besides, the structural system allows the building to transform and adapt to future needs.

On the other hand, the “Negotiable volume” housing types in M and S blocks enhance the sense of identity and belonging by involving the user actively in the design process. Starting from a common volume, the size and number of homes are negotiable. Inside each individual volume, each neighbor can customize and adapt their home to their preferences and needs. The structural system, conceived as a support, also allows the building to transform and evolve over time.

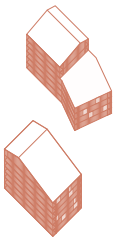
Both housing types are designed to adapt to different seasons. The terrace becomes a climatic device that allows the housing to adjust to variations in climatic conditions throughout the year. In winter, it acts as a greenhouse that accumulates and radiates heat, while in summer, the boundaries between interior and exterior disappear, promoting natural ventilation.

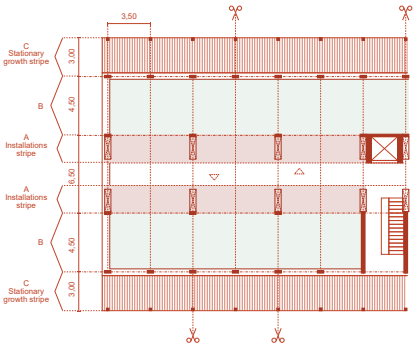
To ensure sustainable construction, we propose the use of industrialized and prefabricated systems. Wood, being naturally hygroscopic and insulating, provides excellent comfort inside the homes, both in summer and winter. Moreover, timber and CLT (Cross Laminated Timber) are efficient in prefabrication, fast in assembly, flexible, and can be re-used at the end-of-life of the building. To encourage a circular economy, we promote the use of timber and CLT systems from local and well-labeled nearby resources, not only to benefit the local economy but also to reduce CO2 emissions and optimize transportation.

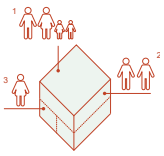


L Housing block

Density	High
Gross m2/floor	800-950m2
Heights	5-7
Public space	L-M

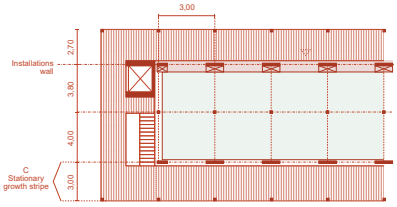






M housing block

Density	Medium
Gross m2/floor	400-700 m2
Heights	2-4
Public space	M-S



S housing block

Density	Low
Gross m2/floor	190-270m2
Heights	1-2
Public space	S