

HAUSKA TAVATA!

The Lahti Sports Centre stands as a site of remarkable potential—rich in history, framed by natural beauty, and already an integral part of the city's sporting and cultural identity. Yet today, the experience of the site does not fully reflect the ambition of Lahti's evolving urban vision, particularly in light of its growing reputation as a leader in sustainable development and inclusive city-making.

At present, the spatial and experiential qualities of the site are challenged by a strong emphasis on car infrastructure. Much of what could be a vibrant, human-scaled environment—offering seamless access to green spaces, sports facilities, and social amenities—is visually and functionally dominated by expansive parking areas. This condition is especially noticeable on approach: from Satamaradanpolku, where pedestrians are flanked by parking on one side and industrial fencing on the other; or from Salpausseläntä, where the arrival lacks the welcoming qualities expected of a central civic space.

When parking lots are empty, the site opens up, but this reveals a different issue: **a lack of spatial coherence and clarity.** Circulation is ambiguous, and sightlines offer little guidance. Key elements, such as a nearby bridge or forest pathways, appear disconnected from one another in both form and intention. The result is a public space that risks feeling fragmented and uncertain, rather than intuitive and inviting.

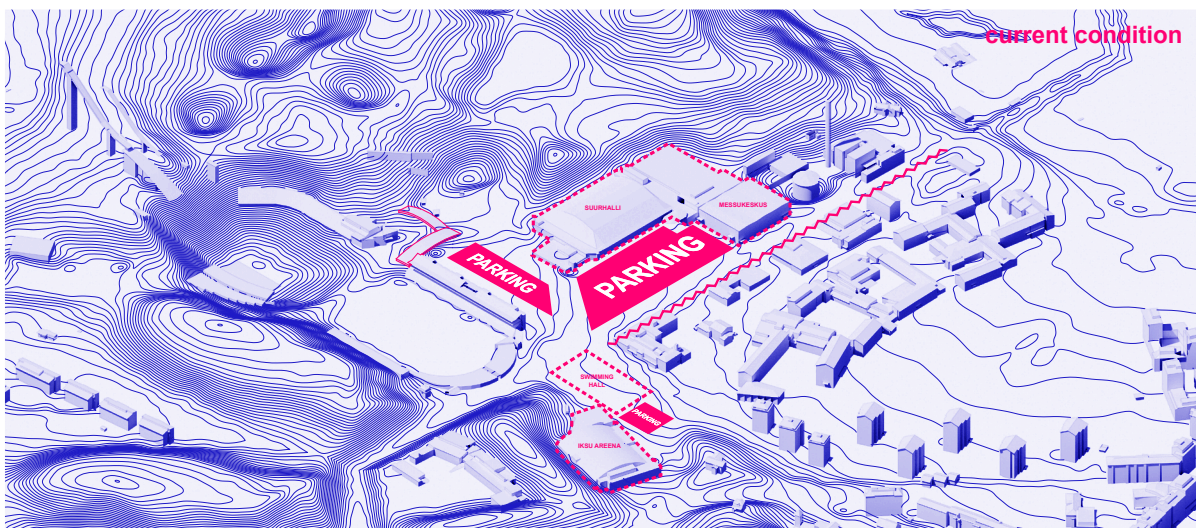
The distribution of amenities further contributes to this fragmentation. Facilities are scattered in a way that can dilute social interaction and limit the site's capacity to support events or everyday use beyond specific, scheduled activities. Parking needs become hyper-localized, and **the opportunity for shared experience—so critical to the spirit of sport and community—is diminished.**

As Lahti increasingly develops into a university city, the opportunity arises to reimagine the site as a more inclusive environment. Currently, its programming tends to cater to a relatively narrow user group, limiting its appeal and accessibility to younger audiences and to informal or spontaneous modes of use. Introducing new layers of activity—social, cultural, recreational—could allow the site to support a more vibrant everyday life and create stronger connections across different user communities.

More broadly, the current spatial configuration may unintentionally act as a barrier to accessing both the Centre's amenities and the forested landscape beyond. The prioritization of parking and the dispersal of functions inhibit the site's potential to become a cohesive, active public realm—one that invites lingering, interaction, and discovery. As Lahti looks ahead to the 2029 Nordic World Ski Championships, there is a unique opportunity to elevate this site into a forward-thinking, inspirational venue—not only through infrastructure upgrades, but through enhanced spatial legibility, aesthetic quality, and inclusivity of use.

What emerges from this reflection is not a critique of past intentions, but a recognition of future possibilities. With thoughtful reconfiguration, the Lahti Sports Centre could exemplify how natural landscapes, public space, and civic identity can come together in a sustainable, human-centred way. The latent potential of the site is considerable: **to be a destination in its own right—layered, flexible, and alive throughout the year.**

In this light, we propose not a rejection of what is, but an invitation to build upon it—**unlocking the full potential of this extraordinary site through a design vision that addresses today's limitations while embracing tomorrow's opportunities.**





What follows is the re-imagination of the Lahti Sports Centre—a bold yet respectful response to the challenges outlined. At the **unique intersection of city and forest**, this site already holds layered potential, but here it is restructured to become a clearer, more inclusive, and vibrant civic landscape. In order to blend the two territories the intersection is utilized, simultaneously giving rise to new conditions along its connective axes.

At the heart of the proposal is a radical yet practical **consolidation of indoor sports facilities**. By bringing together the existing Suurhalli with a new water sports centre and a multipurpose arena, all joined via a linear connecting volume, the site gains clarity, accessibility, and programmatic synergy. This integrated spine not only simplifies movement but strengthens the architectural identity of the area. The new multipurpose arena anchors the composition and creates, in relation to the stadium, a defined entrance to the broader site. Its flexible configuration allows the short façades to open fully, enabling permeability across the site for large-scale events, expositions, and festivals.

Mobility is reimagined through the introduction of a **multimodal transport hub** at one edge of the site, paired with a carefully placed open-air parking area at the other. This combination allows for the elimination of oversized surface parking within the core, creating a car-free zone where both human scale and green and blue infrastructure can thrive. What was once car-dominated becomes a landscape for people—**transforming hard infrastructure into spaces that invite gathering, movement, and rest**. During major events, the ground floor of the mobility hub, along with its adjacent plaza, serves as a flexible media and broadcast area, reinforcing the site's role as a contemporary venue for international attention.

Along Satamaradanpolku, the edge condition is activated through a **pedestrian-oriented boulevard**, newly framed by parallel rows of trees. These continuous lines of greenery visually and experientially extend both into the city—reaching as far as the central square—and into the forest, merging urban and ecological rhythms into a singular experience. On one side of this boulevard, a landscape rich in seasonal programming unfolds; on the other, a series of small-scale retail units extend the existing urban fabric from Svinhufvudinkatu. Together, they foster a lively everyday environment that invites informal use and social exchange.

This newly redefined central area is shaped by a **constellation of pavilions**—an outdoor auditorium, a café, an ice rink, an outdoor gym, a “selfie” tower, and shaded rest areas—that together create a rhythm of destinations. These are spaces designed to foster spontaneous social encounters year-round, nestled into a terrain shaped for both utility and delight. A small river threads through the landscape, providing essential **stormwater management and reinforcing the connection to the site’s natural hydrology**. This stream ultimately flows into the kettle hole at Teivaanmäki, the site’s lowest point—marking a symbolic and functional convergence of landscape and infrastructure.

Looking ahead, the **Teivaanmäki Power Station is respectfully reimaged as a wellness center**, extending the site's programmatic range while retaining its industrial heritage. It houses amenities such as a hostel, outdoor pools, and wellness spaces—including the playful insertion of a “rave silo,” imagined as both a cultural nod and a dynamic venue for evening activity. The center's proximity to the new swimming hall creates a wellness corridor with potential synergies across health, leisure, and community programming.

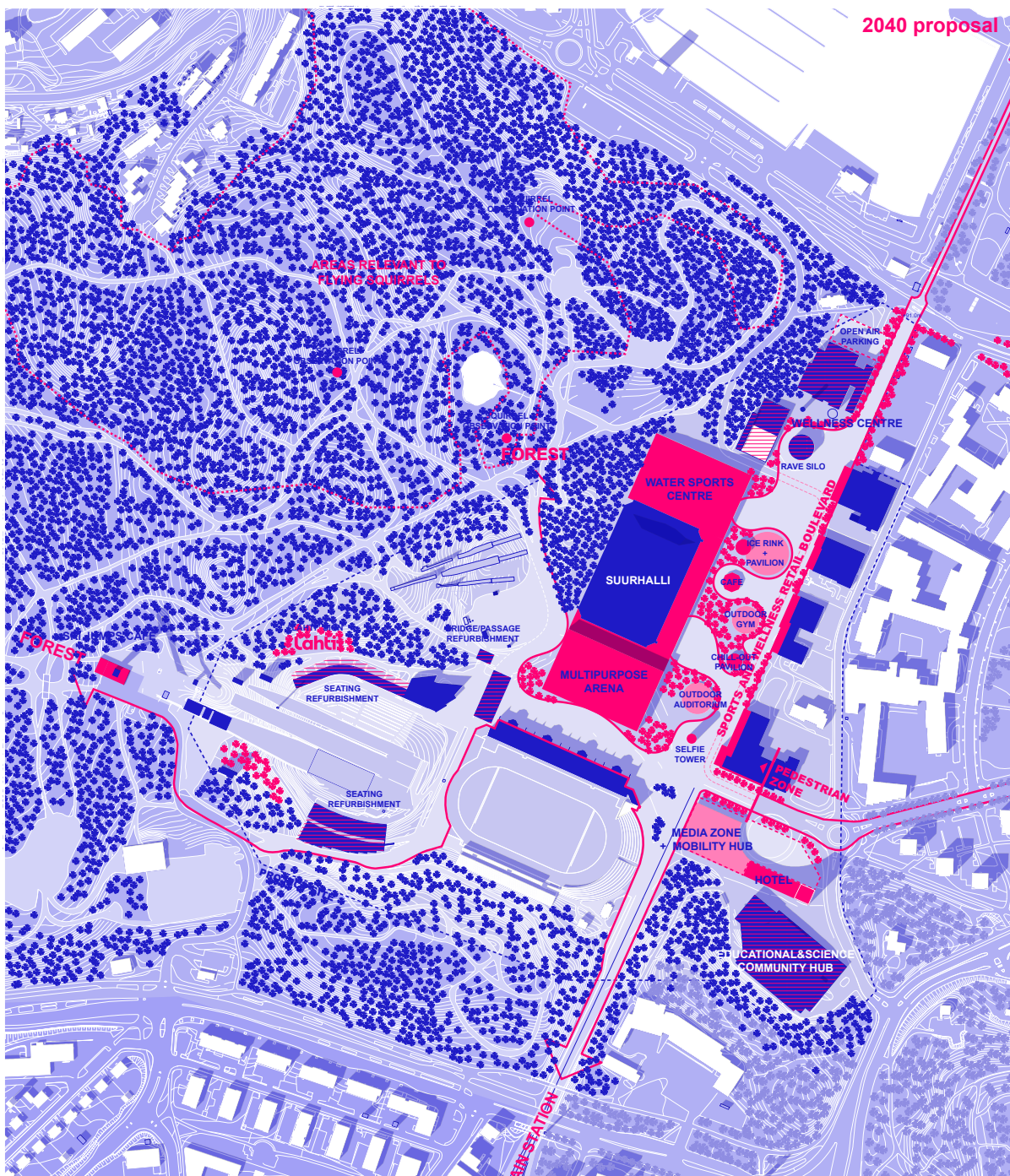
The existing **Isku Arena finds new life as a science and education hub**, aligned with Lahti's growing identity as a university city. Rather than becoming obsolete, it adapts to serve future generations, offering continued value even as the new arena takes on the primary role for professional sports events.

A new hotel, strategically connected to the mobility hub, offers **panoramic views of the site and ski jumping competitions**. With conference spaces integrated into its lower levels, the building adds a layer of functionality and hospitality that supports year-round activity. Its seamless access to car, bus, rail, and cycling infrastructure ensures strong connectivity with the broader urban context.

Smaller, considered interventions throughout the site further reinforce orientation and visual identity—enhancements that benefit both visitors on site and remote viewers of streamed events. The ski slope seating and entry bridge are unified through a distinct blue color palette, and a prominent, equally blue “Lahti” sign reinforces place identity along with “Welcome” signs installed on the entry bridge. Vegetation is added near the slopes to enhance the seasonal aesthetics, and the opening from the ski museum to the children’s ski area is redesigned for both clarity and visual appeal. Atop the hill, a small café at the base of the largest ski jump provides a year-round destination and capitalizes on the panoramic views from the viewing deck.

To foster a deeper connection with the surrounding forest ecology, **designated observation points** are introduced to allow visitors to quietly observe the local flying squirrel population—a gesture of coexistence that ties the recreational with the ecological.

Altogether, the proposal sets a framework for a sustainable, inclusive future for the Lahti Sports Centre—where the boundaries between city, sport, and nature blur in service of human experience. This vision preserves the site’s legacy while adapting it for evolving social and environmental needs. **It is a place where forest and city interlock, not in opposition, but in a dynamic and forward-thinking balance.**



The 2029 FIS Nordic World Ski Championships present a rare chance to bring the future vision of the Lahti Sports Centre into the present through a **bold, tangible prototype**. More than a showcase of sport, the event becomes a full-scale testing ground for ideas that will shape the site's transformation toward 2040.

Central to this prototype is the **landscape ribbon**—originally a swirling, connective terrain, now reimagined as a mesh-like architectural screen. Stretching between the ski jump arena and Suurhalli, it serves as both a spatial divider and identity marker, guiding movement while offering glimpses into the activity within.

Within the redefined Suurhalli zone, a **vibrant public landscape** emerges. A constellation of pavilions, kiosks, and temporary installations activates the area, turning the Championships into a broader celebration of public life, with cultural programming, food, and interactive experiences.

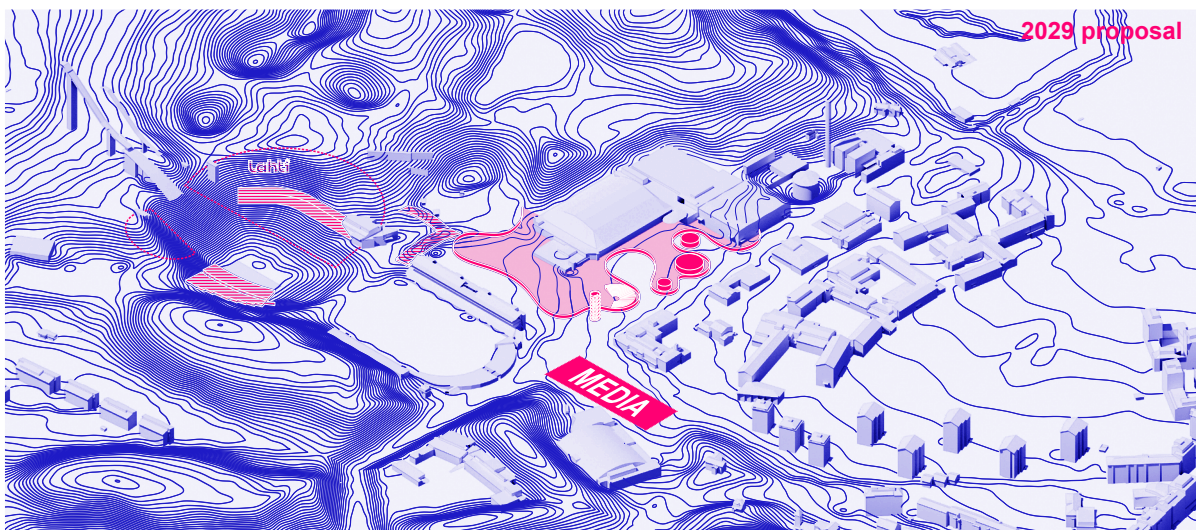
The prototype also lays permanent groundwork. Two key elements of the long-term vision—the outdoor auditorium and selfie tower—will be constructed as **lasting civic features**. Positioned on underused parking space, they introduce a new rhythm of use and signal the site's evolution - the selfie tower offering an immediate overview of the site upon arrival.

To reinforce identity and orientation, several smaller interventions are realized: a distinctive blue palette unifies the entry bridge and ski slope seating, the “Lahti” hillside sign is installed, and access points—such as the route from the Ski Museum to children's slopes—are redesigned for clarity and flow, along with the “Tervetuloa” sign atop the entry bridge.

To support the operational needs of the Championship, a **dedicated media zone** is established just outside the primary competition area, adjacent to ISKU Areena. This strategic placement preserves the **core site for public enjoyment**, while offering direct proximity and seamless functionality for press, broadcasters, and event organizers.

Together, these interventions mark the beginning of long-term transformation. More than temporary fixtures, they are adaptable, scalable instruments of change—**ensuring the 2029 investment lays a strong foundation for the future**.

This is Lahti's moment to lead—to show how a major event can spark enduring urban renewal. The future begins now. Let's build it—together.



Hauska tavata embarks on a bold vision to shape the future of Lahti's Sports Shrine—**reimagining it as a vibrant, inclusive, and sustainable urban landmark**. What was once a parking lot becomes a living landscape, inviting people to connect, reflect, and experience the space anew. A simple thoroughfare transforms into a welcoming boulevard, setting the stage for movement and community.

At the core is integration: sports, culture, and daily life converge in flexible, innovative ways. Existing structures are reactivated with purpose—hosting wellness, learning, and community programs. A new hotel rises not just for visitors, but as a symbol of Lahti's growing appeal and commitment to dynamic urban life.

This is more than a redesign—it's **the activation of what is there**. By weaving together local networks and underused potentials, the project forges new connections, new experiences, and a renewed identity for the city. A place once passed through becomes a destination.

Hauska tavata!—nice to meet you, finally.