

the common green

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as a New Urban Ecosystem*



Project Abstract

*Zagreb (hr)
EUROPAN 18 - Re-sourcing*

constellation city

The Common Green proposes a sustainable, polycentric, and connected urban strategy for the outskirts of Zagreb. It envisions a network of small, open communities that, despite their autonomy, form a constellation of new centres defined by identity, character, and a commitment to ecological development. The project is conceived as a model of centrality within a future network of developments that, through mutual reinforcement, will shape a cohesive and resilient urban fabric.

The project's first premise is to conceive the natural landscape as a form of infrastructure: an active framework that informs and generates the urban landmark. At a larger scale, the ambition to connect southern Zagreb through a network of green corridors is reinforced by a conceptual urban design approach. These ecological links are conceived as structural elements that can be seamlessly integrated into future urban developments, promoting biodiversity, sustainable mobility, and environmental continuity.

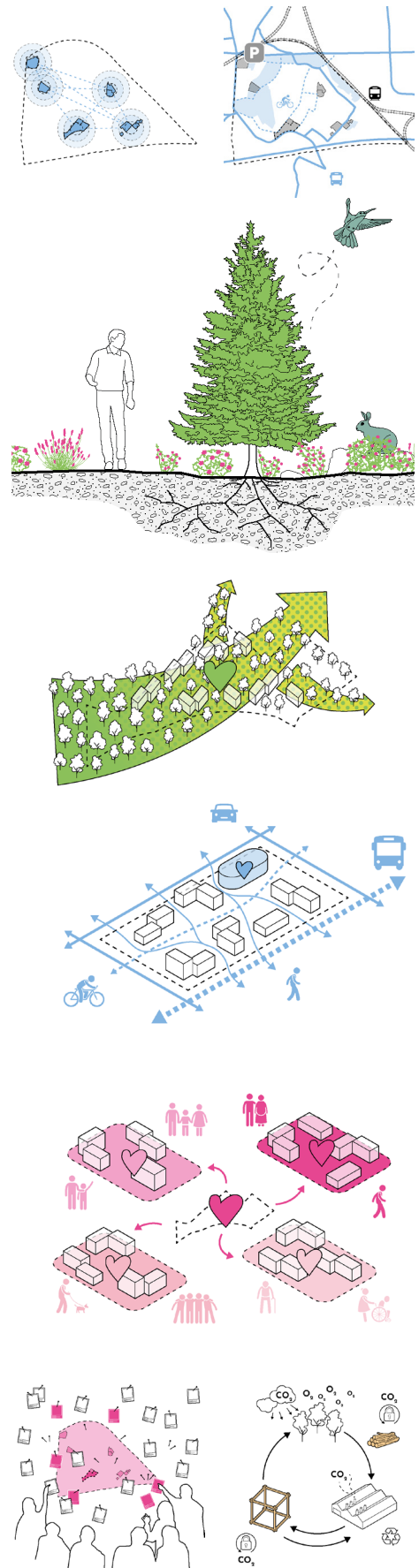
On the other hand, the landscape becomes the foundational layer that organises spatial framework, shaping relationships, and fostering ecological continuity across the new development. The design is articulated through a series of gardens with varying degrees of ownership and stewardship, reinforcing the notion that the natural environment is a collective responsibility.

These green spaces invite collective care and stewardship, reaffirming nature's role as a common good within community life. Preserving existing biodiversity and recognizing all agents—both human and non-human—is essential to grounding urban planning in the site's unique character. This inclusive approach ensures a sensitive response to the ecological context and supports long-term environmental resilience.

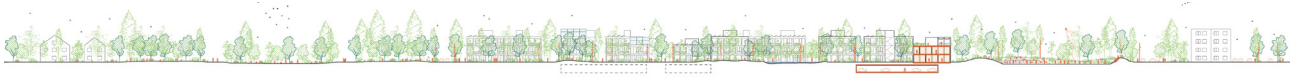
A gradually structured circulation system is essential for prioritizing pedestrians within interior spaces and ensuring safe, sustainable mobility throughout the new neighbourhoods. By establishing a clear hierarchy of streets—each defined by its level of urban impact—the proposal creates a district that breathes, protects itself, and promotes a more livable, resilient urban environment. This approach encourages the use of public transport and supports non-polluting modes of mobility.

In peripheral residential areas shaped by sprawling development, it is essential to foster a sense of community and identity that encourages cooperation, mutual care, and meaningful relationships among residents. The project supports this by offering inclusive workshops with local inhabitants and organizations to define priorities, build agreements, and develop consensus-based solutions throughout the design and implementation phases.

The built volumes are not conceived as hermetic entities; rather, their layout is designed to maximize openness toward the surrounding environment. This approach enhances the experience of living within a community embedded in nature, while optimizing sunlight exposure, natural ventilation, and the quality of public spaces. The entire construction process aims to use local materials and assembly systems, minimizing the carbon footprint and aligning with ecological standards.



urban wilderness



The Common Green envisions a landscape where urbanism and nature are seamlessly integrated. Green infrastructure is conceived as an active agent in shaping the urban fabric—structuring public space, supporting biodiversity, managing water, and improving microclimatic conditions. This approach fosters a more porous, adaptive, and resilient environment, making the relationship between human life and the natural world a core element of daily experience. The urban development begins with the recognition of the natural terrain as the foundational layer upon which the project is built. From this starting point, a grid system is introduced, based on principles of compact parcel organization, to maximize the permeability of green spaces and ensure generous, accessible public commons.



The housing units are organized into small clusters of paired buildings, interlocked to ensure each dwelling receives ample sunlight, optimal orientation, and effective cross ventilation. Green spaces are carefully defined by a system of higher-capacity roads positioned along the perimeter, allowing for efficient circulation around the site while minimizing vehicular presence at its core. Within the development, pedestrian flows are prioritised and vehicle access is limited to emergency, delivery, and maintenance services. Each cluster shares an underground car park that serves the residential units and includes storage rooms and visitor parking spaces. This strategy eliminates surface-level traffic, creating a safer and more pedestrian-oriented neighbourhood.

The ground floors of the buildings accommodate dwellings with private, unfenced gardens that merge into the wider green fabric of the site. At strategic locations, ground-floor commercial units are introduced with direct access from the street -one per cluster- fostering interconnection between clusters and encouraging social exchange among residents.

To the south lies the Park, featuring recreational areas, children's play spaces, and a small retention pond, that responds to seasonal floods. To the north, the Public Plaza hosts a social centre and sports facilities. These two anchors are linked by a central green corridor -a linear park running through the neighbourhood's longitudinal axis, conceived as its ecological and communal heart. The perimeter roads are designed as green buffers planted with tall, evergreen species that create a protective green belt embracing the neighbourhood. Towards the interior, medium-sized deciduous trees are introduced to provide shade in summer while allowing sunlight to reach the dwellings in winter. Native species are prioritised to ensure low-maintenance requirements and ecological responsibility in the landscape design.



housing for all

Typological diversity is articulated through a radical grid structure that enables an open and flexible spatial configuration. This framework allows for a wide range of housing arrangements and adaptive growth. The housing units have been conceived with high standards of typological flexibility, both in their interior organisation and external configurations. This flexibility allows for a sustainable and inclusive development model, capable of accommodating diverse ways of living and evolving needs over time. It also fosters the emergence of shared community spaces, encouraging social interaction and enabling future transformations as the neighbourhood grows and adapts. The grid also provides fluctuations in the distribution and location of commercial units.

The buildings within the development are designed for dry-assembly construction using engineered timber systems. This method ensures cost-efficiency, speed, and flexibility, while significantly lowering the environmental impact. Timber enables lightweight, adaptable structures that support sustainable and circular building practices aligned with long-term resilience.

As the urban plot design is settled to maximize façade opening possibilities, the building grid also reflects this decision. The light structure combined with the pairing between the buildings allows all housing types to have cross ventilation and double -or triple-orientation, with logias or balconies that enhances the housing connection with exterior nature.

The urban fabric is articulated through gardens with varying degrees of ownership and management, emphasises the idea that the natural environment is a shared responsibility. These green spaces invite collective care and stewardship, reinforcing the role of nature as a common good within the life of the community.

The Common Green expands the notion of urban design beyond its spatial dimension to embrace the regenerative potential of architecture as a social, ecological, and material practice. Responding to the European 18 theme RE-SOURCING, the project activates the site's latent resources -soil, vegetation, microclimate, community dynamics, and local knowledge- as drivers of transformation.

While the proposal focuses on a proximity scale, its systemic logic can be extended to the wider territory, offering a replicable and scalable model for polycentric growth in peripheral contexts. The integration of water-sensitive design, soil permeability, and green continuity aligns with the principles of the sponge city and addresses climate risks from the ground up.

Moreover, the project introduces a culture of constructive consciousness and circularity by prioritising timber-based prefabrication and dry-assembly systems using local resources. This material strategy goes beyond carbon reduction to enable a metabolic vision of the city, where buildings can adapt, evolve, and be reconfigured over time. At the social level, the emphasis on typological diversity, gradual densification, and shared governance mechanisms reinforces an inclusive and participatory urban environment.

By weaving together natural systems, ways of life, and constructive intelligence, *The Common Green* positions itself as a framework for rethinking the periphery as a space of care, proximity, and ecological agency.

