

A PLACE CALLED “GROWTH”

– regeneration through contextual evolution

RECLAIMING WATER ECOLOGY AS CIVIC IDENTITY

The Campols site has continually served Lisbon's infrastructural backbone through its monumental water systems and hidden drainage tunnels. The proposal reframes this utilitarian history into a public ecological narrative, treating water not as a buried system, but as a driver of civic life and environmental resilience. By revealing and celebrating the water logic of the site, seasonal wetlands to sponge landscapes, the proposal redefines invisible infrastructure into quality livable experiences.

This begins with the unfolding of the site as an ecological gradient: from forested hills in the west to lowland wetlands in the east. This topographic and hydrological reality shapes the programmatic strategy through dense reforestation buffers, rain-fed wetlands and community gardens operate as green infrastructure and social armatures. Thus, this proposal does not “design nature”. It facilitates spatial, ecological and social performances.

‘A Place called Growth’ supports water retention, reduces heat island effects, and builds layered biodiversity through the design green framework. Beyond performance, the proposal invites human participation. Water becomes visible and tactile again, through stepping ponds, water yards, rain gardens, and filtering bridges. These elements are not spectacles; they are slow, porous interventions that cultivate awareness, interaction, and stewardship.

THE BRIDGE AS PROTOTYPE: CIVIC INFRASTRUCTURE THROUGH COLLECTIVE ACTION

The core of this intervention presents a two-stage process for a bridging strategy which binds spatial regeneration with social agency.

In Stage 1, a lightweight pedestrian bridge is constructed using CLT timber and a modular, participatory system. Locals co-build the bridge engraving names into each plank; enabling creation in connectivity and collective memory. This methodology draws directly from precedents like ZUS's Luchtsingel in Rotterdam, but reinterprets it into the Lisbon context with its steep topography, presence of water and an adjacent train station.

This bridge is intentionally impermanent, a prefigurative infrastructure that functions both symbolically and practically, grounding the site within a collective narrative of transformation. Once its role

is complete, it is disassembled and its material reused as pergolas, pavilions, benches, and decks, dispersing memory across the site, embedding the process of change into the material fabric of the neighborhood.

Stage 2 proposes a permanent bridge: a sculptural, and infrastructural object that filters water and choreographs flows between Campolide Station and the future urban park. This bridge consolidates movement and water management which symbolises a new urban contract between ecology, infrastructure, and public life.



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REGENERATION IN LAYERS LANDSCAPE, HOUSING, MOBILITY, ECONOMY

The Campolide site is not a blank slate. It is fragmented and vulnerable yet full of latent value. The project proposes a multi-layered regeneration strategy that ensures each intervention is performative, affordable, and inclusive.

Landscape regeneration begins with soil nourishment and water retention: pioneer species establish a new ecology, while sponge parks manage runoff and reduce downstream pressure. This gradual process is paralleled by a modular planting and construction rhythm, allowing nature and architecture to co-evolve over time.

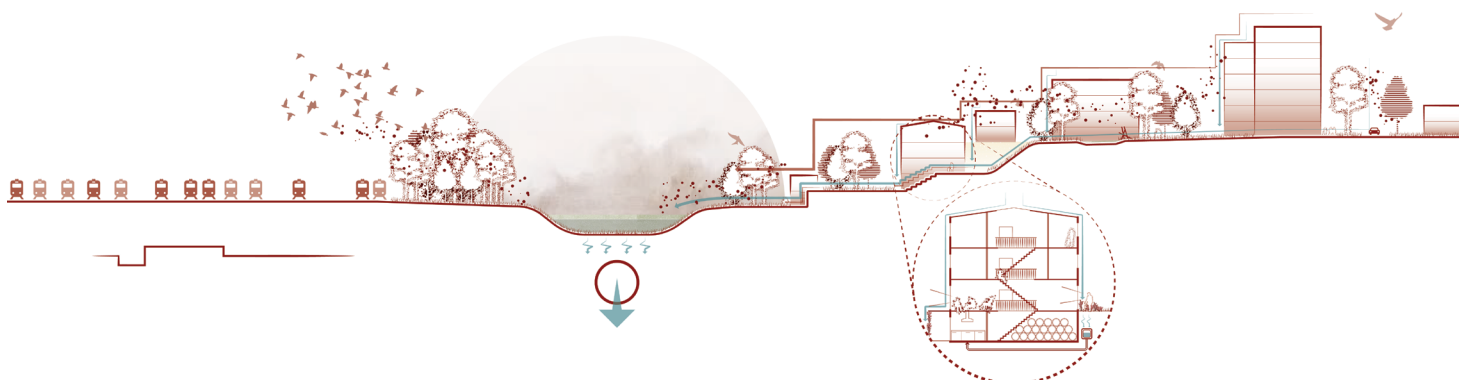
Housing regeneration is structured through a dual system of spatial logic and governance: a deliberate contrast between the market-oriented edge and a more spontaneous, collectively produced interior. Along Rua de Campolide, a stronger urban frontage is developed, “developer’s edge”, where carefully curated housing typologies generate profit through density and visibility. Here, private developers are invited under a profit-sharing model, where a portion of surplus value is directly reinvested into the site’s public infrastructure, ecological systems, and social programs. This edge serves as a financial engine, but also as an architectural buffer, enabling the rest of the site to unfold under different terms.

Behind this urban wall, in the inner terrain of the slope, lies a looser building field: a context of acupuncture rehousing, material reuse, and co-operative construction, where existing residents stay in place and build over time. Instead of a fixed masterplan, the project proposes a guided framework for self-production—supporting adaptable structures, modular infill, and community-led upgrades. Housing here grows incrementally and inclusively, absorbing local energies, skills, and temporal rhythms. The result is a plural, evolving morphology, not a signature development, but a living, co-produced urban landscape.

Economic regeneration follows the same dual logic as the spatial structure: a strong commercial interface along the city street, and a slower, more embedded productive landscape behind it. Along Rua de Campolide, the development edge supports higher-intensity commercial programs including small-scale retail, food outlets, services, and co-working hubs that capitalize on urban visibility and pedestrian traffic. These spaces serve both new and existing residents while generating rental income that feeds into the site’s circular funding model.

In contrast, the inner slope of the site fosters hyperlocal, low-threshold economies: cooperative gardens, material reuse stations, community kitchens, and informal repair workshops. These are not polished commercial venues, but productive commons, and infrastructures of resilience where people access shared tools, space, and know-how. Here, economic activity is grounded in exchange, mutual aid, and adaptability, allowing existing residents to participate in the transformation of the site as users and economic actors

Mobility regeneration rebalances the site’s fractured street network. Rua de Campolide is softened into a one way street with more space for life; Avenida Gulbenkian is partially pedestrianized to strengthen the link between the station and public park. New mobility hubs consolidate bike repair, cargo bike rental, and shared e-mobility. The street becomes a space of dwelling, rather than a place of transition.



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IDENTITY AS PROCESS FROM RURAL MEMORY TO URBAN COMMONS

Campolide carries a layered identity; a rural history rooted in self-sufficiency, small-scale agriculture, and hillside cultivation; and a present marked by infrastructural fragmentation, underinvestment, and spatial disconnect. This design proposal aims at reconciling these timelines, rather than a compromise. Public space becomes the medium through which this reconciliation occurs. It is imagined not as static landscaping or decorative green, but as a commons, and spaces that are co-designed by the community, co-stewarded through collective action, and used for a multitude of civic, social, and ecological functions. The memory of cultivation re-emerges in contemporary forms: plant nurseries tied to the reforestation process, water-efficient irrigation systems integrated into the site's hydrology, and food-sharing infrastructure that bridges private production and public benefit.

Architecturally, this ethos translates into typologies that are humble, open-ended, and responsive. Instead of iconic, permanent structures, the proposal favors modular and low-tech elements, like adaptable frameworks that evolve with use. These are not buildings of spectacle, but of social resonance: structures that shelter activity, participation, and incremental change. Their simplicity is intentional, offering dignity through flexibility and legibility through restraint.

Simultaneously, Campolide is repositioned within Lisbon's larger territorial and ecological ambitions. The new park is not conceived as an endpoint or a landmark, but as a spatial connector. It acts as an infrastructural hinge between Monsanto Forest Park, the city & the urban waterfront, between the rail lines and the slope, between buried hydrological systems and newly visible community life. It is a park of flows rather than boundaries, hosting not only recreation, but education, cultivation, repair, and play.

This is a place where identity is not imposed, but performed over time. Through hands-on participation—planting days, communal workshops, stewarding collectives, and local assemblies, the transformation of Campolide becomes a shared narrative. Not designed for its residents, but grown with them. Not planned in isolation, but co-authored through care, trust, and collective action. The resulting neighbourhood does not simply regenerate, but it remembers, adapts and prepares for the future.

CIRCULAR DEVELOPMENT: GOVERNANCE & PHASING FOR EQUITY

The regeneration framework is not merely spatial, but it is temporal, social and procedural. It unfolds not with grand gestures, but with a carefully phased development logic, where time is treated not as a constraint, but as a collaborator. The transformation begins with civic activation and ecosystem repair. In this first phase, the site's damaged topography and social fragmentation are addressed through visible, accessible actions: a modular timber bridge is co-built to reconnect the fractured slope; soils are repaired and pioneer plantings begin to stitch a new ecological layer; existing housing is stabilized and upgraded, not erased. Simultaneously, pilot economic programs, such as a tree nursery, a tool-sharing repair hub, and a communal kitchen emerge as modest yet powerful catalysts of public life and ownership.

As the community stabilizes and ecological systems begin to perform, the second phase drives housing and mobility. The temporary bridge is replaced by a permanent structure, no longer just a connector, but a civic landmark in its own right. Housing densifies incrementally along the newly activated edges, offering a range of typologies without displacing existing residents. A new station square opens, linking the urban rail to the everydayness of the site. The mobility system integrates a green spine incorporating a network of shaded pedestrian paths and bicycle routes to rewire the neighbourhood into Lisbon's broader mobility system.

The final phase of consolidation and cultural infrastructure commences only once the site is socially embedded and ecologically resilient. Heritage buildings are adaptively reused as public or cooperative institutions. The park reaches full maturity, no longer a backdrop but a generator of programs, play, and participation. The circular economy model is fully operational, reinvesting land value gains from developer participation into social and environmental assets. At this point, development no longer dictates transformation; it becomes a byproduct of trust, care, and shared authorship.

This temporal choreography ensures that what grows here is not just built form, but civic capacity. High end architecture comes later, if at all. The priorities for livability are shared systems in spaces, tools and governance. Developers are not the initiators, but late entrants. At this stage, the process of development is authorised by the city with prioritisation of their goals and intentions for the future.

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GROWTH, REWRITTEN FROM SCAR TO SEED

“A Place Called Growth” offers more than a spatial intervention, it unfolds as a strategic and socially attuned design framework; a system that recognises regeneration as a layered participatory process rather than a stagnant masterplan. The design initiates upon the current situation: the massive infrastructural presence of Lisbon’s underground water systems, the dramatic and sacred topography of Campolide’s slopes, and the quiet persistence of local life across informal paths, backyards, and repair shops. These conditions are not erased or paved over, they are used as fertile ground. Building upon this terrain, the proposal introduces what has long been missing: visibility for what lies hidden, porosity for what has been cut off, and structures of care for what has been neglected.

Rather than designing an image of the future, the project establishes the conditions for collective authorship, for urban transformation that grows from trust, tempo, and terrain. The ambition is not acceleration, but attunement: slowing urban change to the pace of ecosystems and local residents. The measured growth index takes into account the strengthen processes in livable futures rather than built area deliverables. This is

an urbanism of stewardship, where architecture is a framework for maintenance, not monumentality.

In this context, growth is redefined. Not as horizontal sprawl or vertical speculation, but as deepening the civic soil. Not extraction of land value, but investment in collective capacity. Not the spectacle of transformation, but the quiet momentum of care, and a new form of ownership shared between residents, city agencies, and natural systems. The project doesn’t simply outline a renewed neighborhood, it rehearses a new social contract for Lisbon’s future developments: incrementally, inclusively, and with a long-term vision.

Campolide can become a living precedent of regenerative, climate-adaptive, socially inclusive and economically circular neighborhoods. ‘A Place called “Growth”’ tackles from within the intricacies of the site with the core belief of collective intention.

