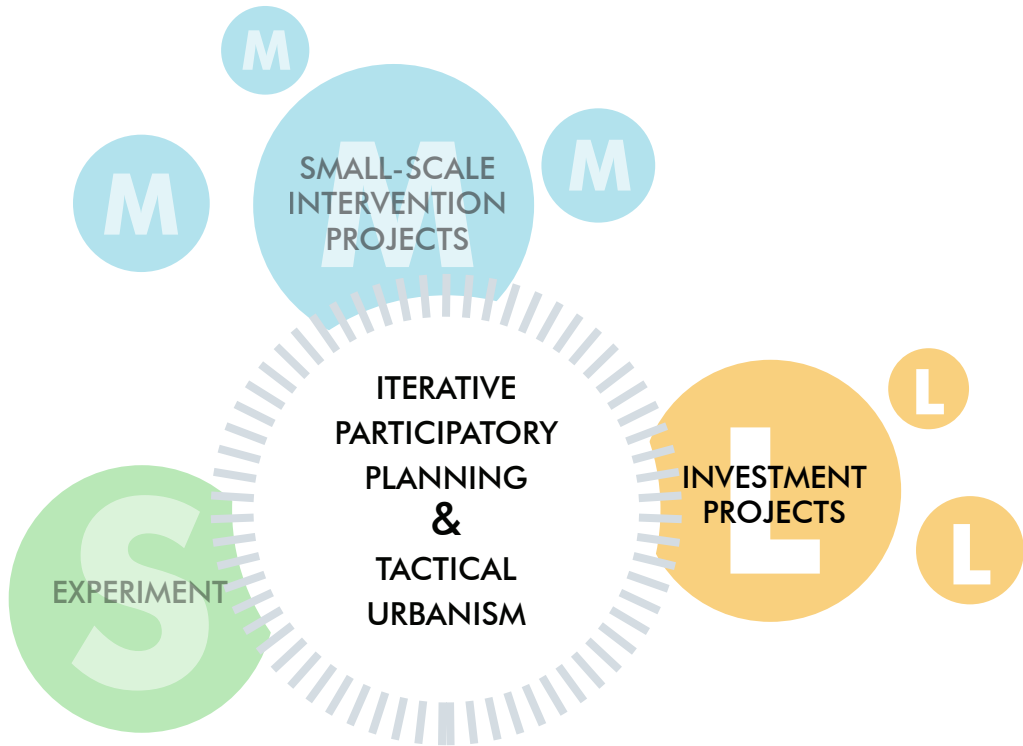


Integrated Urban Development for Zugdidi Urban Lab

INVESTMENT PROJECTS

Prioritized Projects

During the project development process, four projects were prioritized as key interventions for the city. Among these, the riverfront gathering spaces and the transport hub are identified as investment projects due to their scale, complexity, and long-term impact. While the transport hub also includes a small-scale intervention concept, it is presented here in its broader capacity as a strategic investment project, addressing large-scale spatial reorganization and infrastructure improvements.



Gathering Places Along River



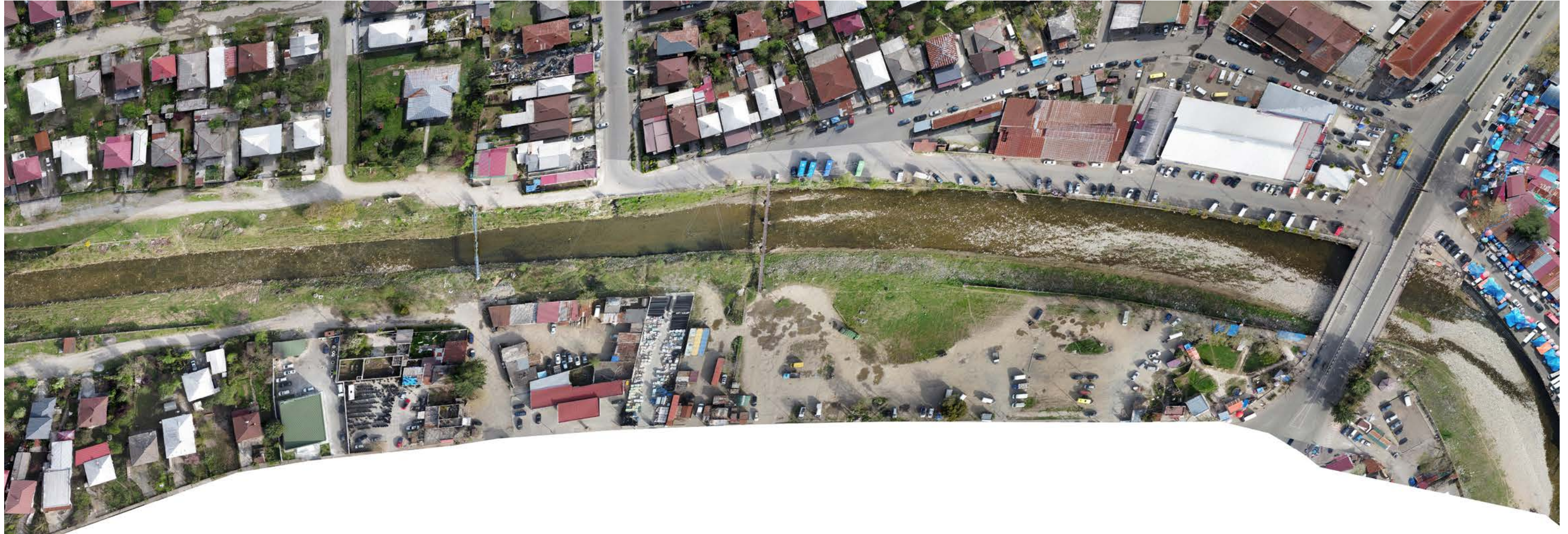
Transport Hub



INVESTMENT PROJECT 01

GATHERING PLACES ALONG THE RIVER

Context



The Chkhoushia River is a significant but underutilized asset in Zugdidi, with the potential to become a vibrant corridor for public life. Currently, the river remains largely neglected, with limited accessibility and few spaces for people to gather or interact with the water. Much of its banks are either abandoned or occupied by misplaced functions that fail to engage the surrounding community. In some areas, steep banks and the absence of barriers or proper sidewalks make the riverfront unsafe and uninviting, further discouraging use.

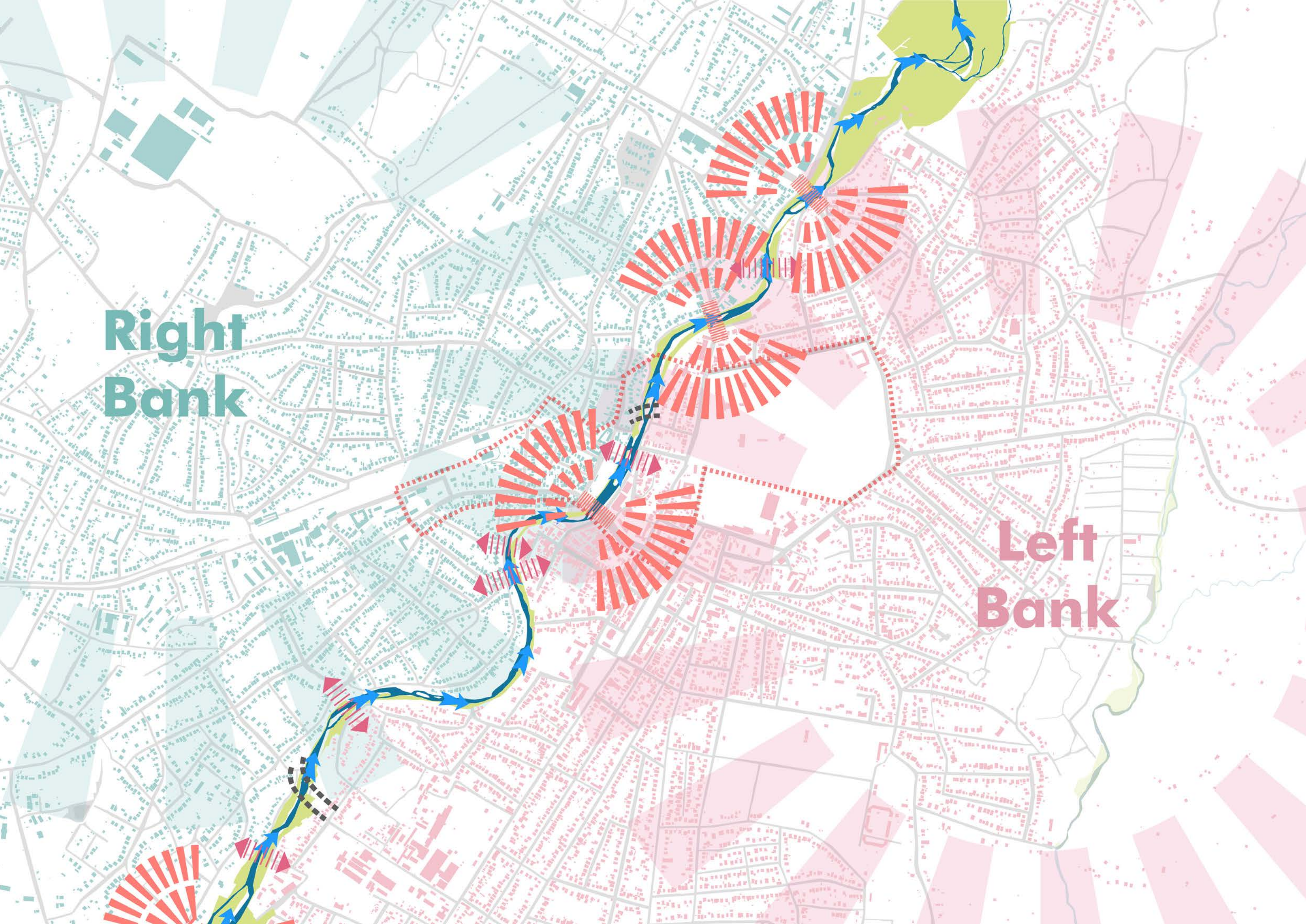
Creating well-designed gathering spaces along the river would activate this corridor, transforming it from a neglected edge into a functional and enjoyable public realm. By improving infrastructure, providing safe and comfortable access, and introducing areas for leisure, social interaction, and community events, the river can serve as both a local destination and a connector within the wider city fabric.

The site's potential is reinforced by its size, its strategic connections to surrounding neighborhoods, and the clear need for public spaces in Zugdidi. Thoughtful interventions along the river would not only reclaim an overlooked part of the city but also help unify the surrounding areas, connecting previously fragmented sections of Zugdidi into a cohesive neighborhood. In this way, the project creates both a vibrant riverside corridor and a stronger sense of community, turning the river into a central spine for urban life.



**Right
Bank**

**Left
Bank**



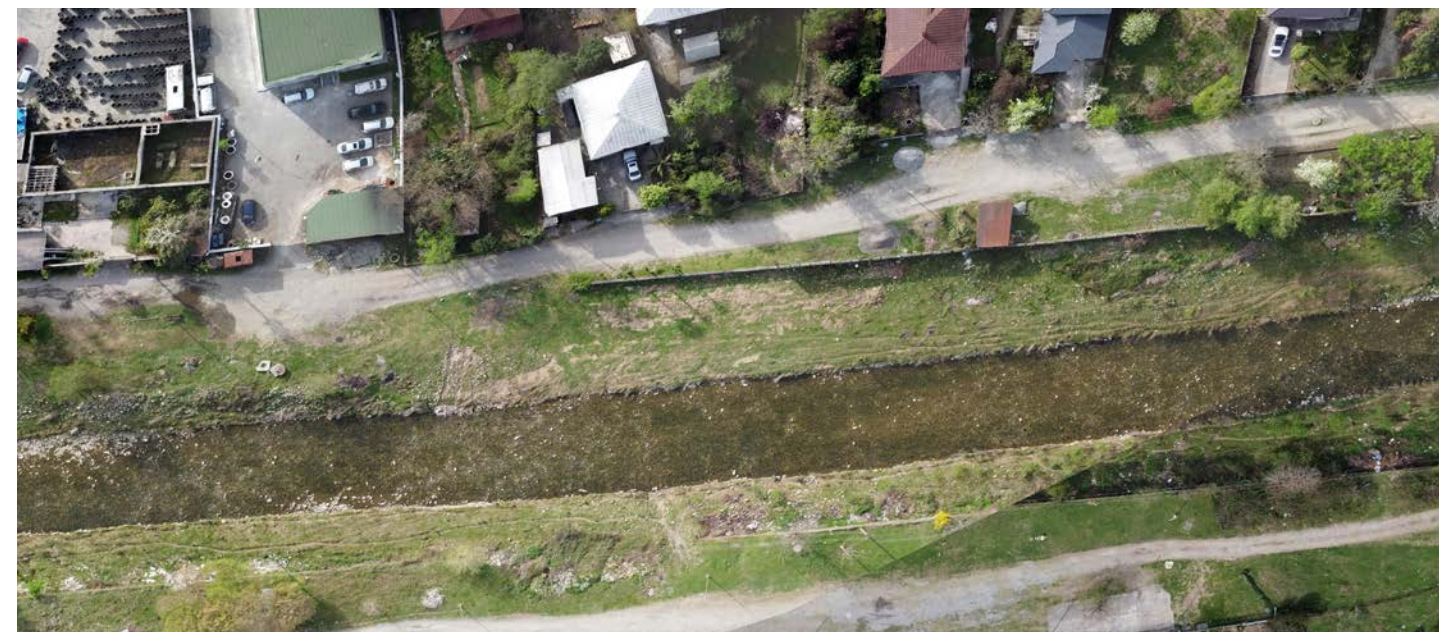
Site Analysis

The intervention area along the Chkhoushia River stretches from one car bridge to the next, forming a continuous corridor that can be understood in three distinct sections.

The first section, located around the market, is the most chaotic. Both riverbanks are surrounded by informal bus stations, creating disorganized traffic patterns and unsafe conditions for pedestrians. Infrastructure is minimal, and the area lacks clear paths, seating, or amenities, making it a space that is difficult to navigate and visually cluttered.

The second section serves as a transitional zone, linking the active market area to adjacent residential neighborhoods. A pedestrian bridge marks a key point in this section, highlighting its potential as a critical connector for foot traffic. Despite this, the riverbanks on either side are poorly maintained and underutilized, with little attention given to safety, accessibility, or public use. The contrast between the bridge's importance and the surrounding neglect underscores the need for targeted interventions that enhance connectivity and usability.

The third section runs through residential areas, where the riverfront is almost entirely abandoned. There is no formal road or defined path along the water, and wild vegetation dominates the landscape. Even while walking along the river, visitors cannot fully experience or appreciate it, as the space is disconnected, unsafe, and uninviting. Across the corridor, these three sections reveal a gradient of use and neglect—from chaotic activity near the market to complete abandonment near residential areas—demonstrating the urgent need for coherent planning, improved infrastructure, and the creation of engaging public spaces along the river.



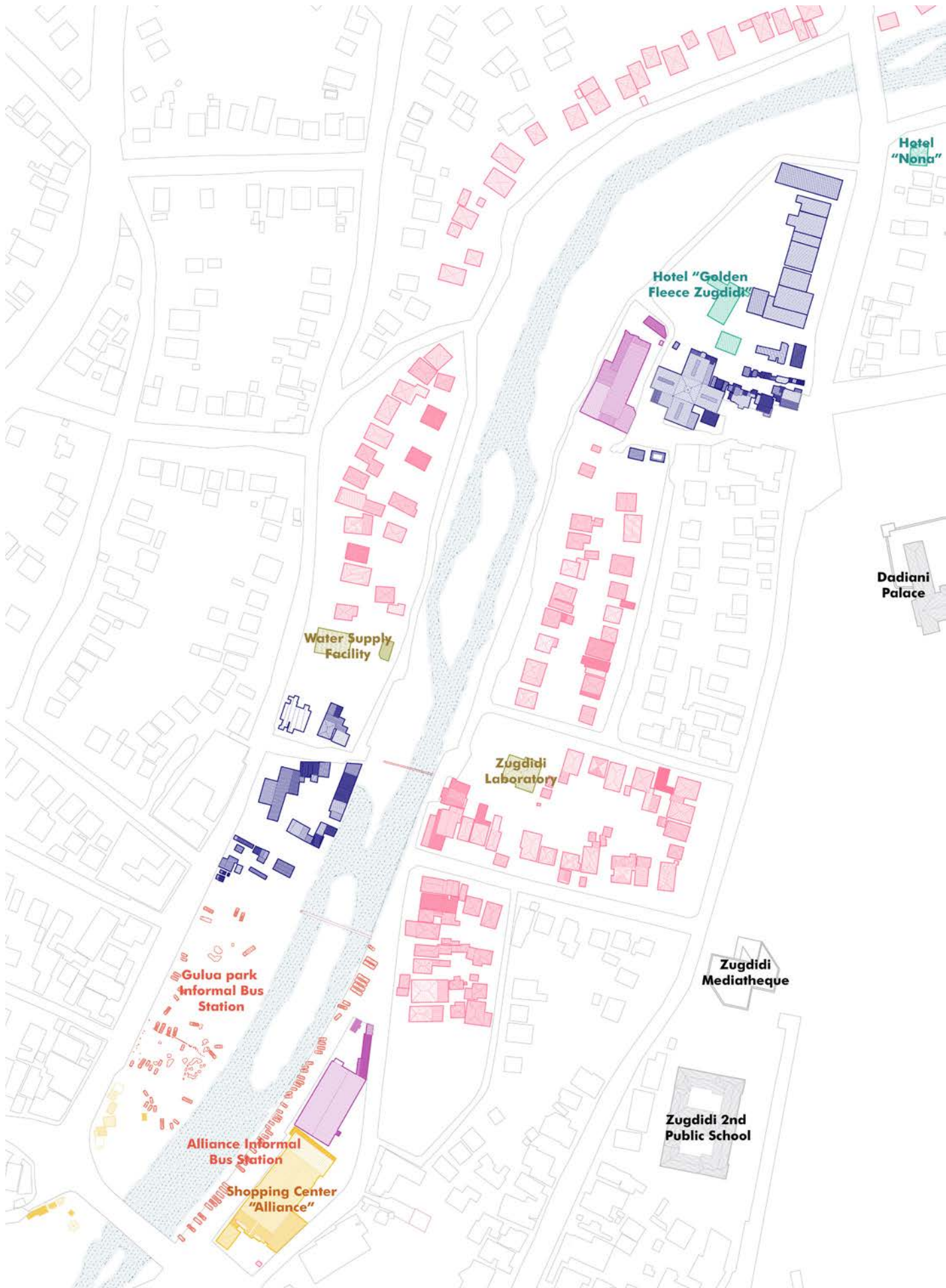
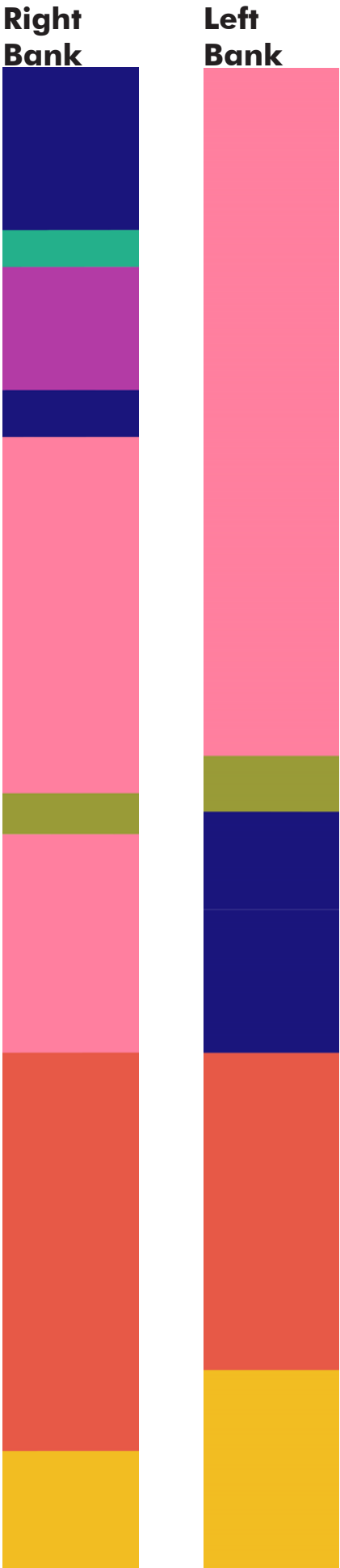
River Corridor Functions

The Chkhoushia River corridor is predominantly surrounded by residential functions, which form the backbone of the neighborhood. However, there are also activities that do not align with the riverside setting, such as auto parts sales and construction material storage. These uses further indicate that many property owners and businesses do not recognize the river’s potential as a valuable urban asset.

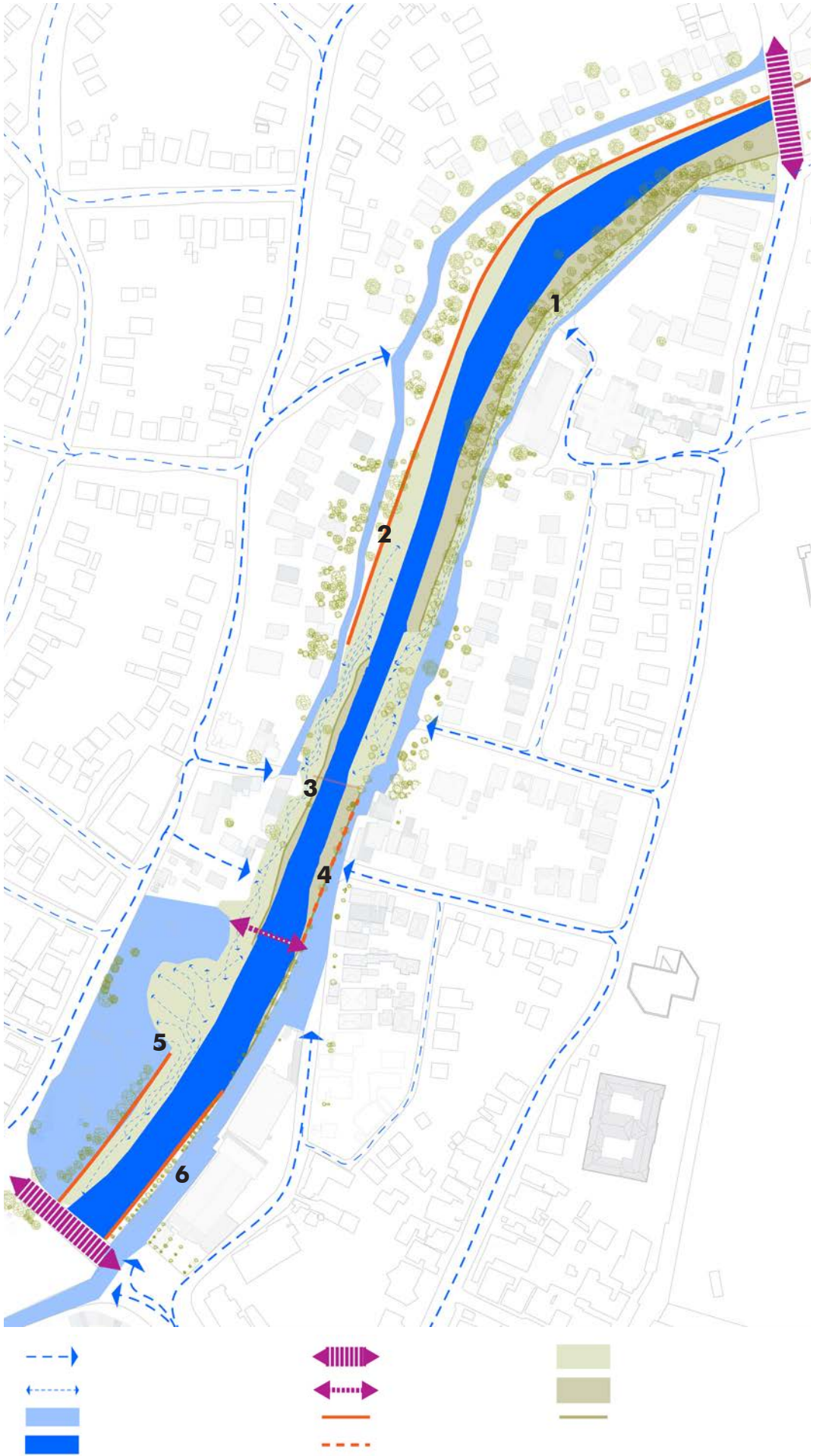
In the southern section, both banks are occupied by informal bus stations and storage spaces, which dominate the area and reduce accessibility and visual appeal. Despite this, there are several key institutional and cultural functions in close proximity to the river. Three major buildings—the Mediatheque, the local school, and the Dadiani Palace, a primary tourist destination—are situated near the water, highlighting the corridor’s potential as a civic and cultural spine.

The mixture of residential, civic, and informal commercial activities along the river demonstrates both opportunity and challenge. While the residential and cultural functions suggest a basis for public engagement, the misplaced commercial uses and informal infrastructure currently limit the corridor’s accessibility, legibility, and potential as a cohesive public space. Thoughtful interventions could leverage the existing civic and residential presence to create a continuous and inviting riverside corridor that integrates daily life, culture, and recreation.

- Individual Housing
- Auto Services and Shops
- Retail Shops
- Technical Facilities
- Hotels
- Informal Bus Station
- Storage / Warehouse



Accessibility



Accessibility is the greatest challenge along the Chkhoushia River, shaped by a variety of barriers that both limit movement and present opportunities for intervention. One of the most prominent obstacles is wild vegetation, which currently blocks access in several areas but also has the potential to be transformed into attractive green spaces or informal recreational zones. Physical barriers further restrict connectivity, with the northern section dominated by a massive concrete wall that separates the river from an undeveloped area. This wall isolates the adjacent land, making it difficult to design interventions that effectively link the riverfront to the surrounding urban fabric. The river itself presents a natural barrier in certain sections, where steep banks or abruptly changing terrain make access challenging. Additional obstacles include existing concrete walls, metal fences, and the informal bus stations that line parts of the corridor. Together, these features fragment the riverfront, interrupt circulation, and limit the usability of the space. Understanding these barriers is crucial for designing interventions that enhance accessibility while respecting existing conditions. Some obstacles, like vegetation, can be leveraged as assets, while others—such as the concrete wall and bus station areas—require careful planning to integrate the river into the broader neighborhood and create continuous, safe, and inviting connections for pedestrians.

Current Layers

River Layer



Vegetation Layer



Upper/Edge Layer



Chkhoushia River corridor is based on understanding the site in layers, each of which responds to the river's seasonal dynamics and the surrounding environment.

The first layer is the river itself, which naturally experiences fluctuations and occasional flooding. The second layer is the immediate green buffer surrounding the river. This zone is partially affected by seasonal flooding and therefore cannot host permanent structures throughout its entirety.

The third layer comprises the upper portion along the river, including existing roads and adjacent areas that remain dry year-round. This permanent layer provides the foundation for consistent activity and lighter interventions, such as seating, walking paths, and small-scale recreational structures.

Proposed Design

The proposed project for the Chkhoushia River corridor translates the conceptual three-layer structure into a set of practical, phased interventions aimed at improving accessibility, usability, and the overall quality of the riverside environment.

The project envisions the development of a continuous recreational corridor along the river, combining landscape design, public space improvements, and mobility interventions. Key components include the creation of seating areas along the riverbanks, terraced open-air platforms, and viewpoint belvederes overlooking the river, offering new opportunities for rest, gathering, and engagement with the landscape.

A central aspect of the project is the improvement of accessibility along the river corridor. This includes the rehabilitation of adjacent streets, the introduction of pedestrian walking paths, and the establishment of a continuous circular promenade route that connects different parts of the area and encourages everyday use.

The project also addresses connectivity across the river, proposing the rehabilitation of the existing pedestrian bridge as well as the construction of a new crossing near the planned community center, strengthening physical and functional links between both sides of the corridor. It is important to emphasize that the presented concept and spatial organization represent a preliminary development framework. Prior to implementation, it is essential to conduct a comprehensive environmental assessment of the river corridor, including flood risk analysis and hydrological modeling.

Implementation Priorities

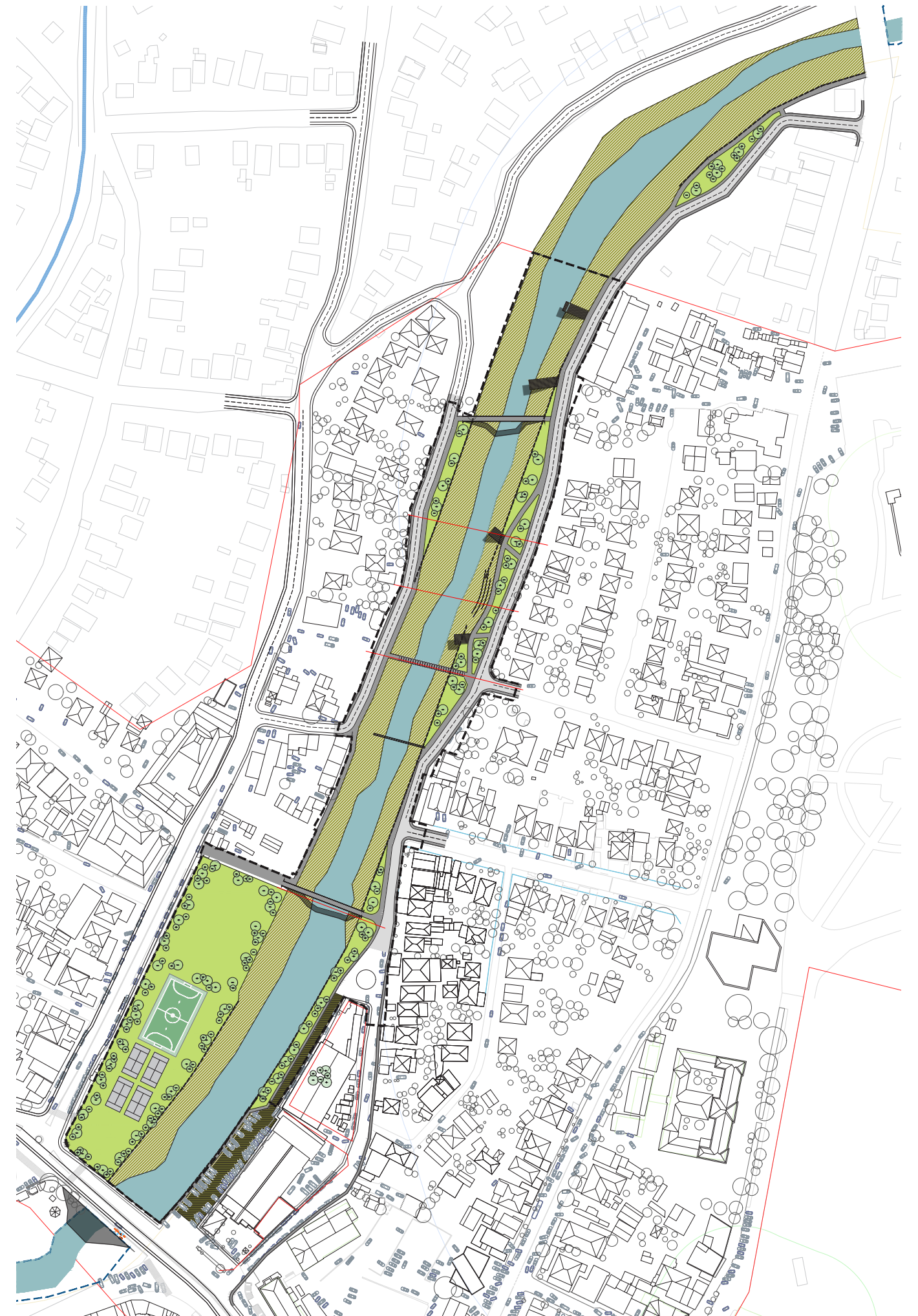
The project is structured in several phases to allow gradual implementation:

1. Primary river corridor development within the Neighborhood Concept (NC) project boundary (northern section).

2. Gulua Park development, functioning as a recreational, sports, and leisure green extension of the river (blue) corridor.

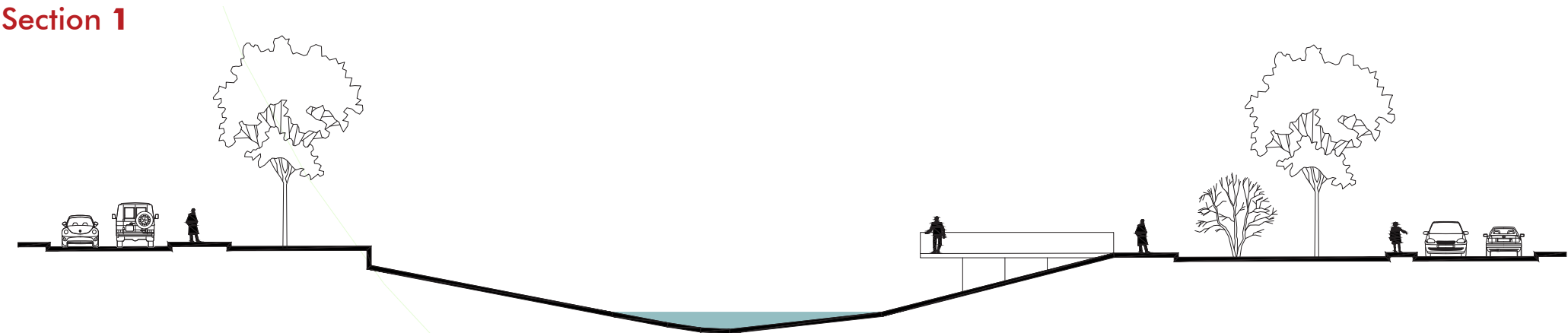
3. Northern extension of the river corridor, expanding the continuous landscape system.

4. Aliansi bus station area transformation, reclaiming municipal land as a green public space with limited vehicular access and a pedestrian-prioritized square.

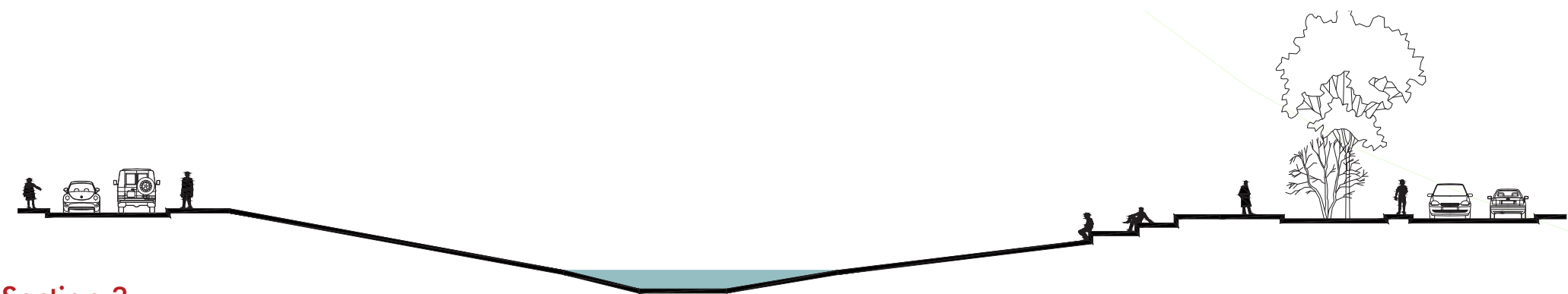


Proposed Design

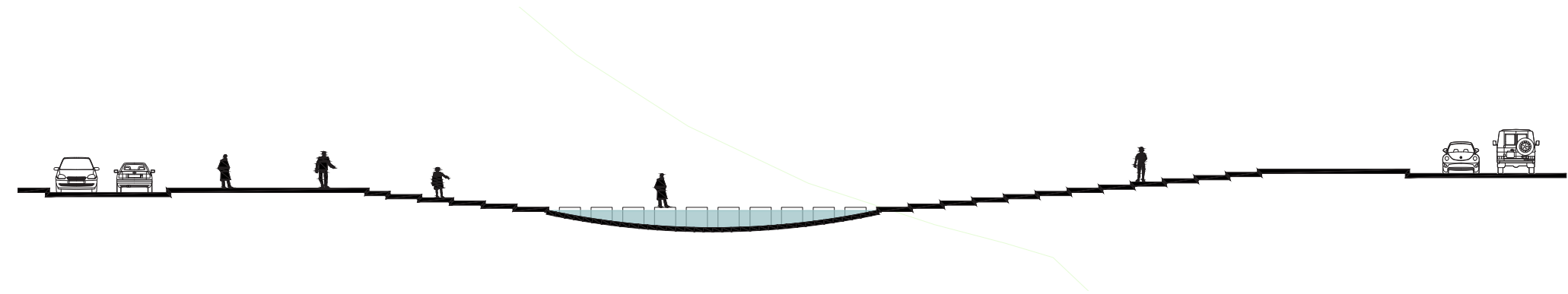
Section 1



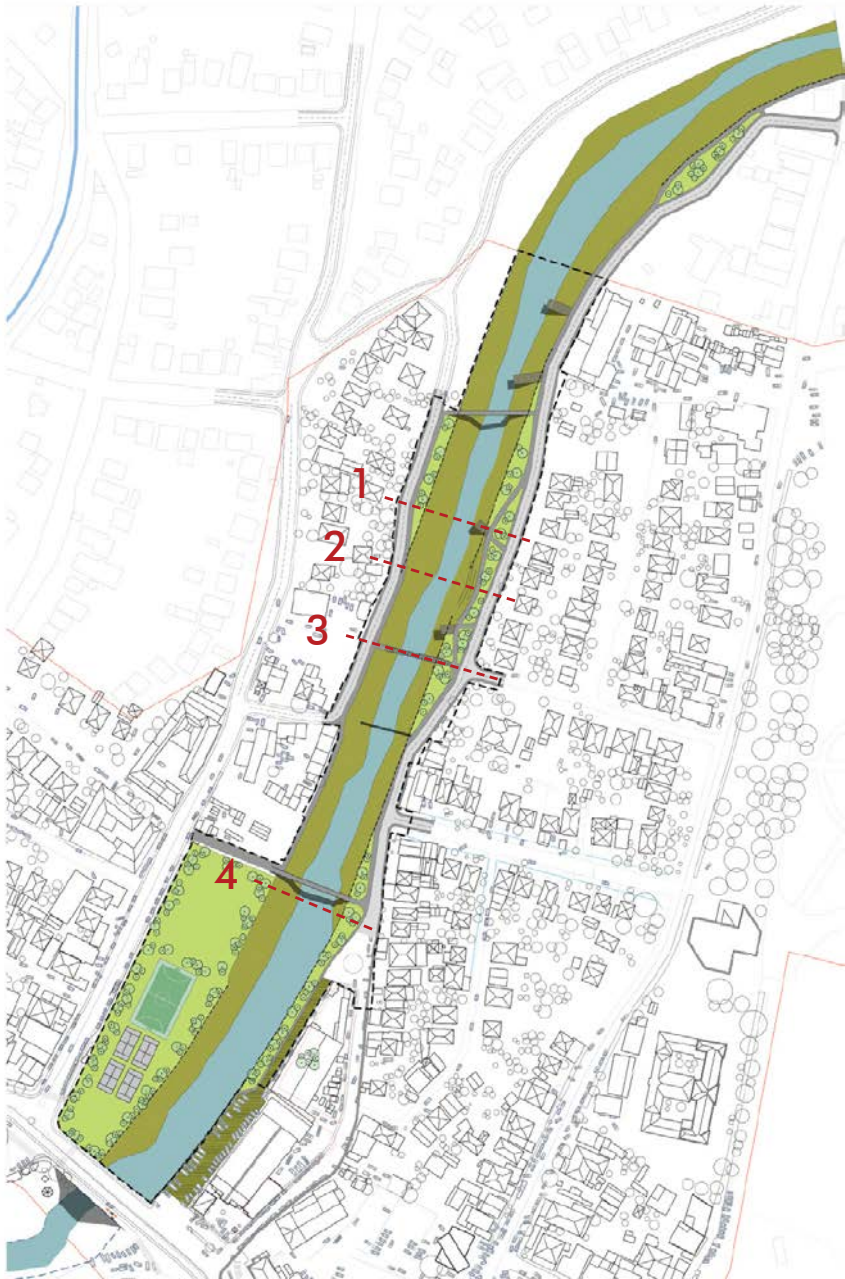
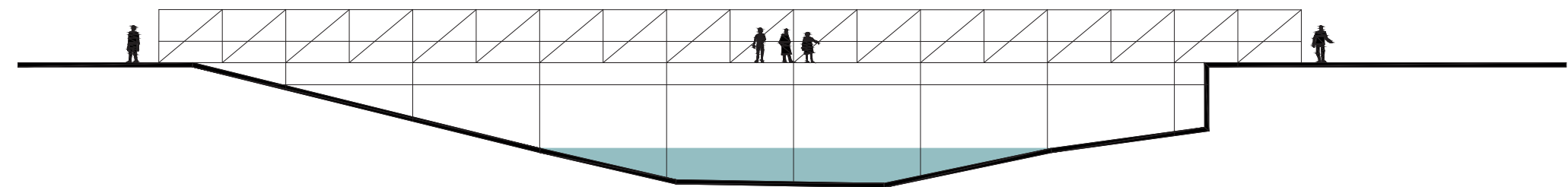
Section 2



Section 3



Section 4



INVESTMENT PROJECT 02

TRANSPORT HUB

Railway Station Context



The railway station area in Zugdidi functions as the city's primary transport hub, bringing together train, bus, and taxi services. Positioned as the first point of arrival for both local and regional passengers, it serves not only as a gateway to Zugdidi but also as a connector to wider destinations. Despite its strategic role, the station's immediate surroundings lack coherent planning, resulting in a fragmented and inefficient space.

The intervention area encompasses the forecourt of the station, directly adjoining the bus terminal and taxi stands. At present, the space is dominated by an oversized asphalted surface, much larger than operational needs demand. This disproportion creates overlapping, unregulated flows between vehicles and pedestrians, generating confusion and undermining safety. What should serve as a welcoming civic square instead presents itself as a chaotic, treeless void—an environment defined by disorder rather than orientation.

The first impression for visitors arriving in Zugdidi is therefore compromised. Passengers exiting the station are confronted by an atmosphere of disarray and neglect. This is particularly critical given the symbolic importance of the station as the first encounter with the city.

Yet, within this dysfunction lies a resource: the site's sheer size offers significant potential for transformation. A more thoughtful reorganization could rebalance flows, integrate greenery and amenities, and establish a dignified entry point to Zugdidi. Beyond functional improvements, such an intervention would redefine the space as a civic landmark—efficient for transport, comfortable for pedestrians, and representative of the city's identity.



Site Analysis

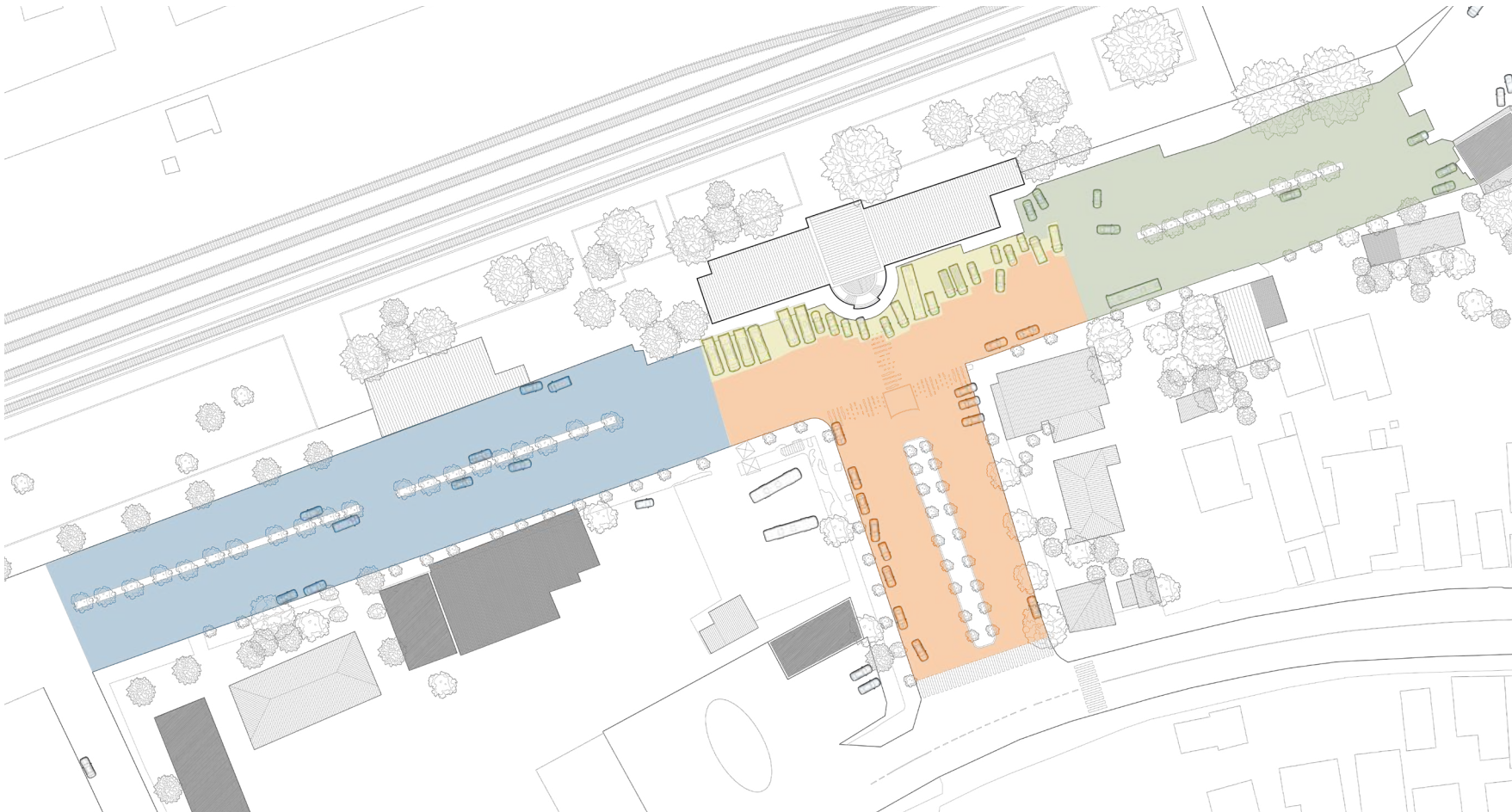
The transport hub at Zugdidi’s railway station can be understood through four main spatial fragments, each defined by disorder and lack of planning.

The first is the immediate forecourt of the station, where the bus terminal is located. Here, vehicles of all types - buses, minibuses, and taxis—are parked without distinction, creating confusion and unsafe overlaps between transport and pedestrian flows. Since this zone is the first thing passengers encounter upon exiting the station building, it strongly shapes the perception of the entire area, yet it remains the most chaotic and unresolved.

Extending beyond the bus terminal is a wide, unplanned open space that serves as the main connector between the station and the city. Despite its importance, this area is defined more by absence than presence. A narrow greening strip runs through it, but without any real function, while cars circulate freely and without order. Instead of providing orientation or comfort, the space communicates vacancy and inefficiency.

On the western side lies a disproportionately wide road, whose scale bears little relation to its actual use. Lined by abandoned buildings, it has no meaningful program or activity and often functions simply as a spillover parking area. Its emptiness underscores the underutilization of valuable urban land.

To the east, an informal parking area has formed, primarily servicing the nearby “Jibe” hypermarket. This space operates entirely outside of formal planning, further fragmenting the structure of the hub. Rather than contributing to connectivity, it introduces yet another layer of disorder.



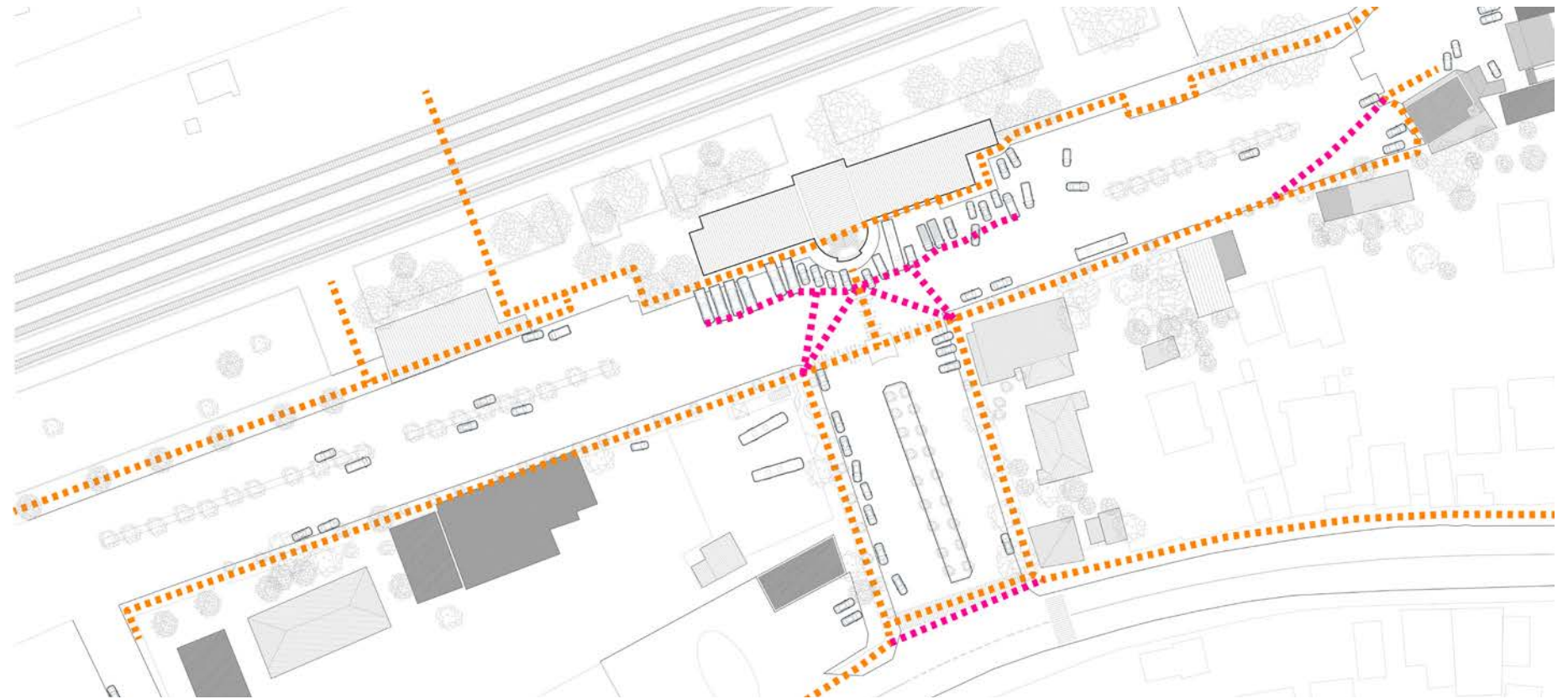
- Wide Road Without Actual Use
- Informal Parking Area and Entrance To Hypermarket
- Bus Station
- Unplanned Area In Front of the Railway Station



Site Analysis

Existing Pedestrian Circulation

Pedestrian circulation around the railway station is formally defined by sidewalks running along the perimeter of the site. In practice, however, only the front of the station is actively used, rendering much of the planned network ineffective. The main pedestrian crossing is also positioned directly in front of the station building, yet it leads into the narrow strip of greenery that divides the forecourt from the wider open space. As a result, those who cross the street find themselves stranded in an undefined zone, disconnected from the sidewalks that run along the edges. This mismatch between planned and actual circulation has led passengers and visitors to carve their own paths, moving freely across the open asphalt rather than following designated routes. The current system therefore fails both functionally and experientially: it neither guides flows efficiently nor provides a comfortable or legible pedestrian environment, while also creating danger for both pedestrians and cars.



— — — Planned Pedestrian Circulation

— — — Actual Pedestrian Circulation

Existing Traffic Circulation

Traffic circulation within the railway station area is defined not by structure but by the sheer presence of vast, unsegmented asphalted surfaces. These oversized empty spaces allow cars to move freely without compartmentalization, resulting in constant overlap between different types of traffic.

Microbuses, buses, drop-offs, taxis, and private vehicles heading toward the nearby “Jibe” hypermarket all share the same undifferentiated ground, with no clear hierarchy or organization. Parking practices mirror this condition: vehicles are left chaotically across the forecourt and surrounding areas, filling space wherever possible. Instead of supporting efficient transport operations, the current layout amplifies disorder, leaving circulation fragmented, uncontrolled, and unsafe for both drivers and pedestrians.



— — — Traffic Circulation

— — — Parked Buses And Cars

Proposed Design

The investment project at the Zugdidi Transport Hub represents a permanent continuation and refinement of the small-scale interventions. Along the pedestrian walkway in front of the station building, temporary bollards and painted markings are replaced with trees, creating a structured green corridor and removing the existing, non-functional vegetation. At the start of this corridor, a fountain provides a welcoming first impression for passengers exiting the railway station and the tourist information booth, enhancing the visual identity and civic presence of the hub.

The pedestrian walkway is paved, replacing temporary painted markings, and clearly separates pedestrian flows from vehicular traffic. On the west side, new and improved side-walks permanently frame the bus and taxi parking areas, maintaining functional clarity while creating an organized and legible space. On the east side, sidewalks and pavement formalize the drop-off and general parking zones, integrating them into the overall circulation system and providing a consistent, safe, and durable layout. Together, these measures transform the hub from a temporary organizational experiment into a structured, permanent, and welcoming transport center.

