

How can inner city harbour basins function as public space in order to stitch disassociated districts into a continuum and to re-establish the relation between city and river?

THE CONNECTING WATERSCAPE

PROBLEM STATEMENT

The area around the Maashaven in Rotterdam South is short of larger recreational public space, which is a drawback to attract starters and young families to this socially segregated area. Like in many other Northern European cities, the harbour currently divides successful and the deprived neighbourhoods and awaits a new function now the previous industry and trade dominated relation between city and river disappears.

RESEARCH QUESTION

The question on top of this poster comprises two hypotheses: that water can function as public space and that creating public space is a valid strategy to reconnect disassociated districts.

VISION

Design research such as literature study, plan analysis, comparative study and a scenario study have led to a vision for this area. Firstly the Maashaven should be better embedded in the local slow traffic network and become better visible in the already well established city scale traffic network. Secondly it should provide a new shared identity to stitch the surrounding districts together. This will be done by offering a unique program at several strategically chosen public spaces and the water that attract all desired user groups and by providing every neighbourhood with an address at the waterfront again.

DEVELOPMENT PLAN

The development plan proposes to transform the Maashaven into a recreational water landscape in which recreational activities and ecological recovery are closely intertwined and together create a new identity.

Three clusters embed the Maashaven on city scale: A leisure cluster of Speelstad ('Play City') and the relocated SS-Rotterdam at the Meuse-tunnel; an extension of the current Maassilo creative factory with outdoor activities and a water-transfering; and an urban beach at the Katendrechtse Pols as first place where people can really approach the water in the centre of Rotterdam.

A new bridge, high enough for most inland ships, physically reconnects the old slow traffic network between Katendrecht and the Tarwewijk. Along this reconnected slow traffic route many public spaces of importance on the neighbourhood scale are located. At the Maashaven quays two new ones will be added to this string of pearls. They will provide the two neighbourhoods with a remarkable address at the river.

The Maashaven is shallowed as far as shipping movement allows because shallowing is one of the major requirements for a recovering ecosystem and at the same time provides opportunities for recreation. The diverse activities are distributed over the area according to residents' preferences and the zones created by differences in water depth. Furthermore the middle part of a floating park forms one of the steps in the purification process of urban runoff water that would damage both recreational activities and ecological recovery. Together with floating community gardens close to the quays and more natural floating islands further away, this park forms a green oasis in the rather stone Old South district.

The strategic interventions will have an initiating role in the transformation of this area. Besides, they together cover all uncertainties from the scenario study and address

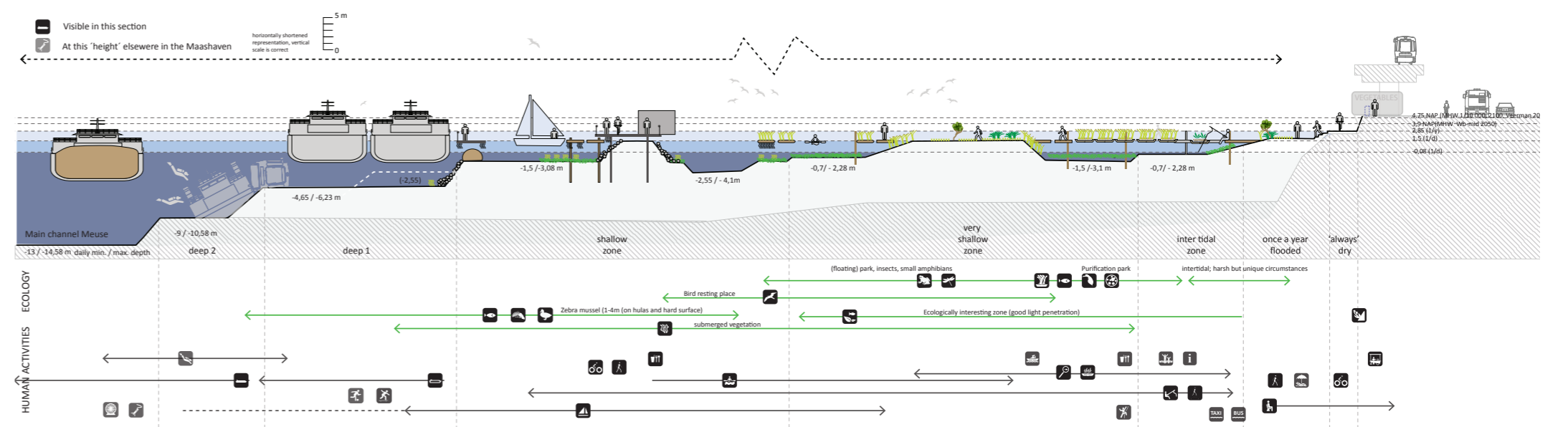
all resident groups. The Katendrechtse strand is very well connected in the city scale network and will put the Maashaven on the map again relatively fast. The bridge is expected to have the highest impact on district scale by reconnecting Katendrecht and the Tarwewijk with the same intended effect as the Rijnhaven bridge and on a larger scale the Erasmus bridge once did. The Brielsekades are intended as crucial on the neighbourhood scale as address at the Meuse for the Tarwewijk.

CONCLUSIONS

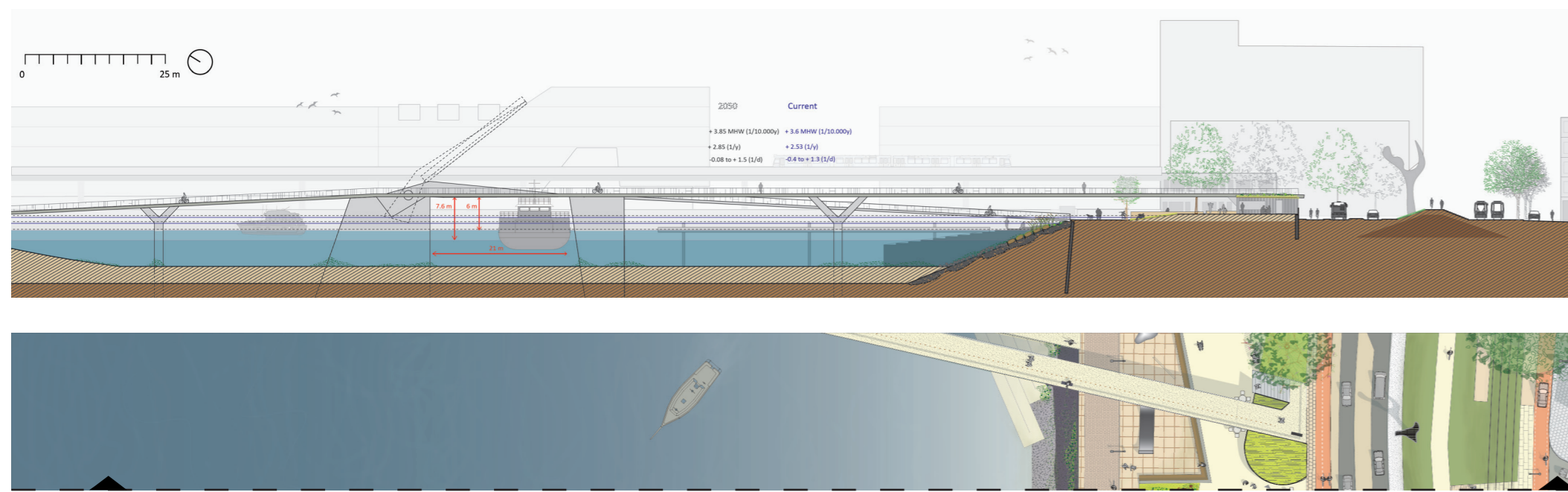
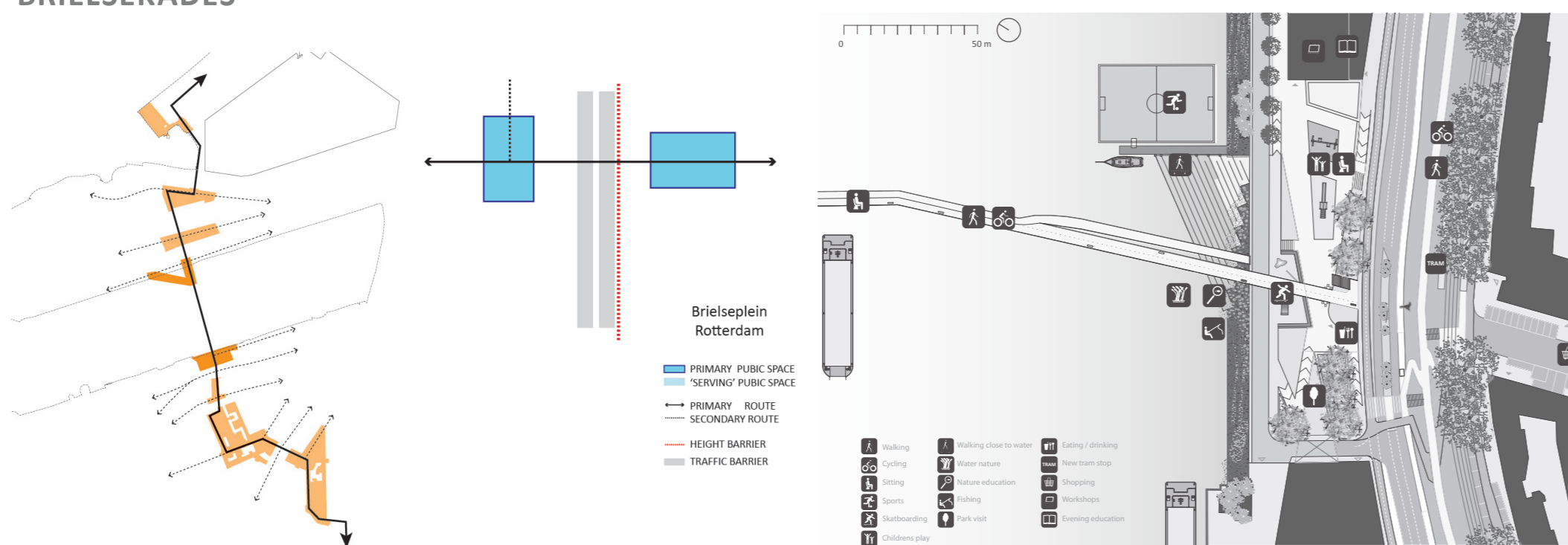
Firstly, transforming a harbour basin into public space depends largely on the design of a selection of spaces at its edges. Nor the whole basin, nor all quays should be made public.

Secondly, the strategy to reconnect districts cannot only consist out of public space design but also requires a good slow traffic network, a strong identity and an appealing mix of program. In the case of the Maashaven the spatial claims of industry and inland shipping, recreation and ecology showed to be compatible and can even strengthen each other. Using inner city basins for floating neighbourhoods as the municipality proposes, is rejected mainly because of its privatising effect. On the contrary, a modest amount of floating constructions for recreational, nonpermanent use can strengthen the public character of the harbour.

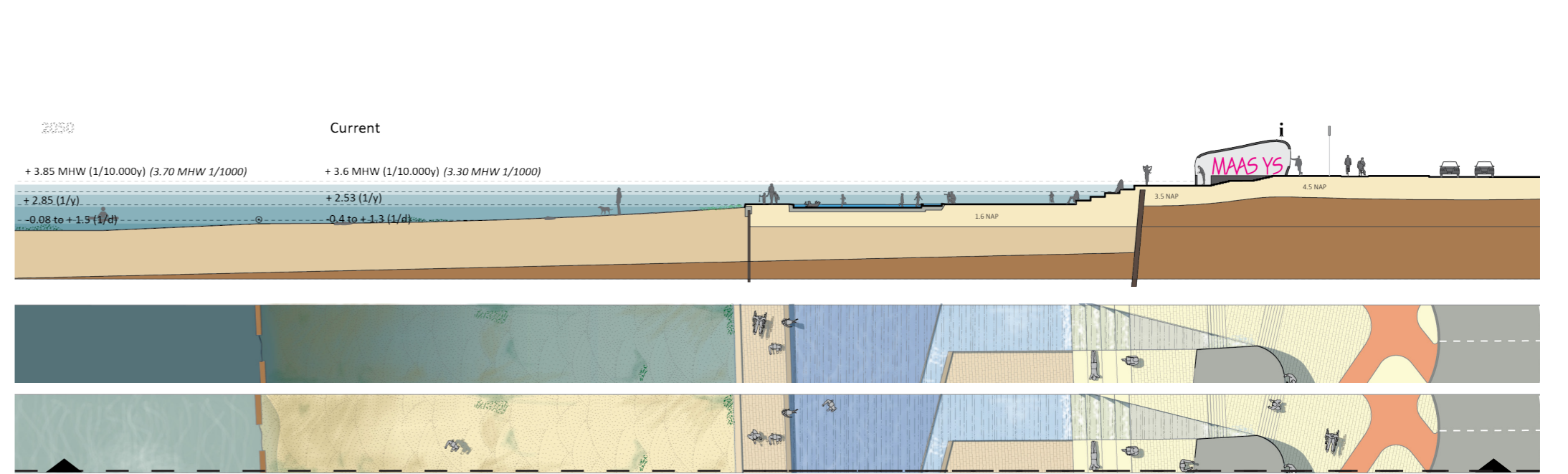
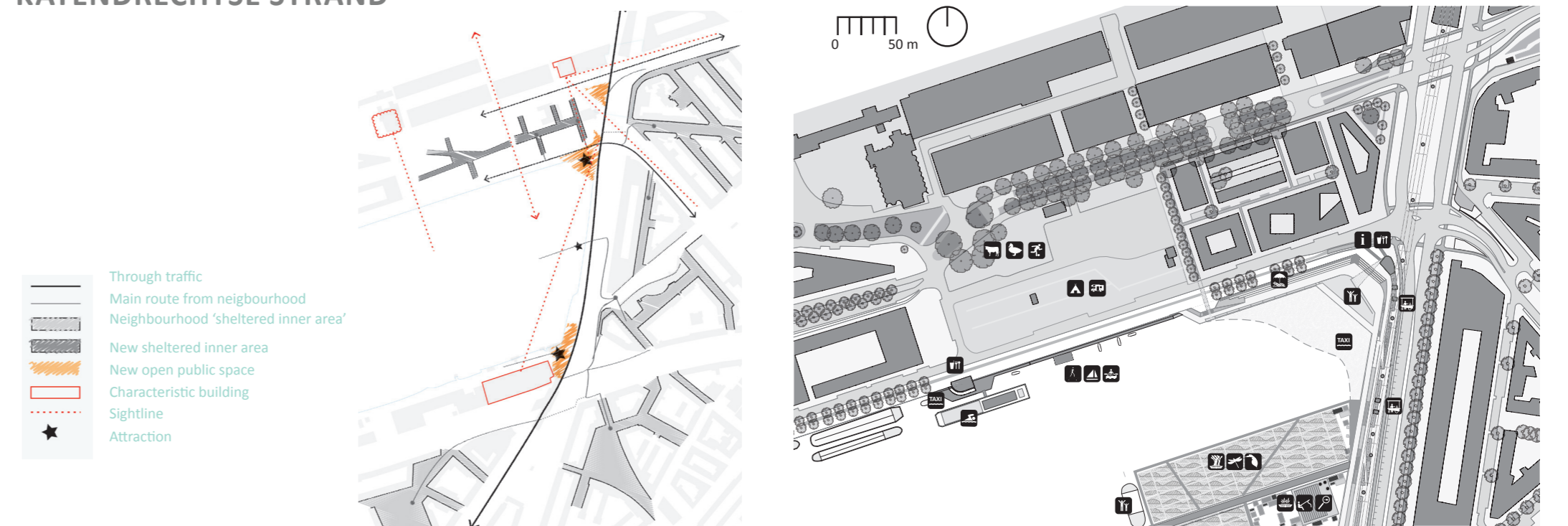
Thirdly, the relation between city and river can be strengthened by making the river and inner harbours part of the daily life of people again. For Rotterdam specifically the design showed how the relation between city and river can be strengthened on neighbourhood, city and regional scale.



BRIELSEKADES



KATENDRECHTSE STRAND



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