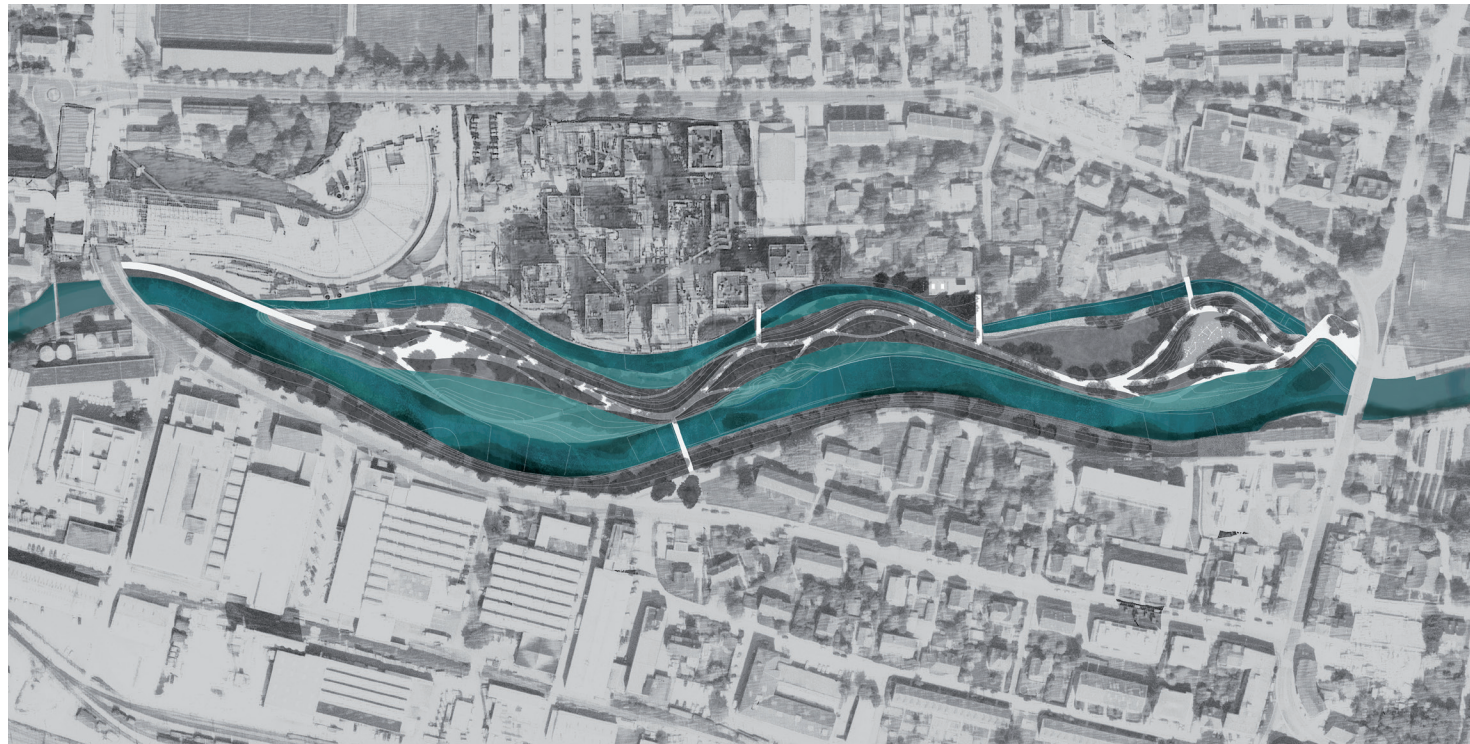
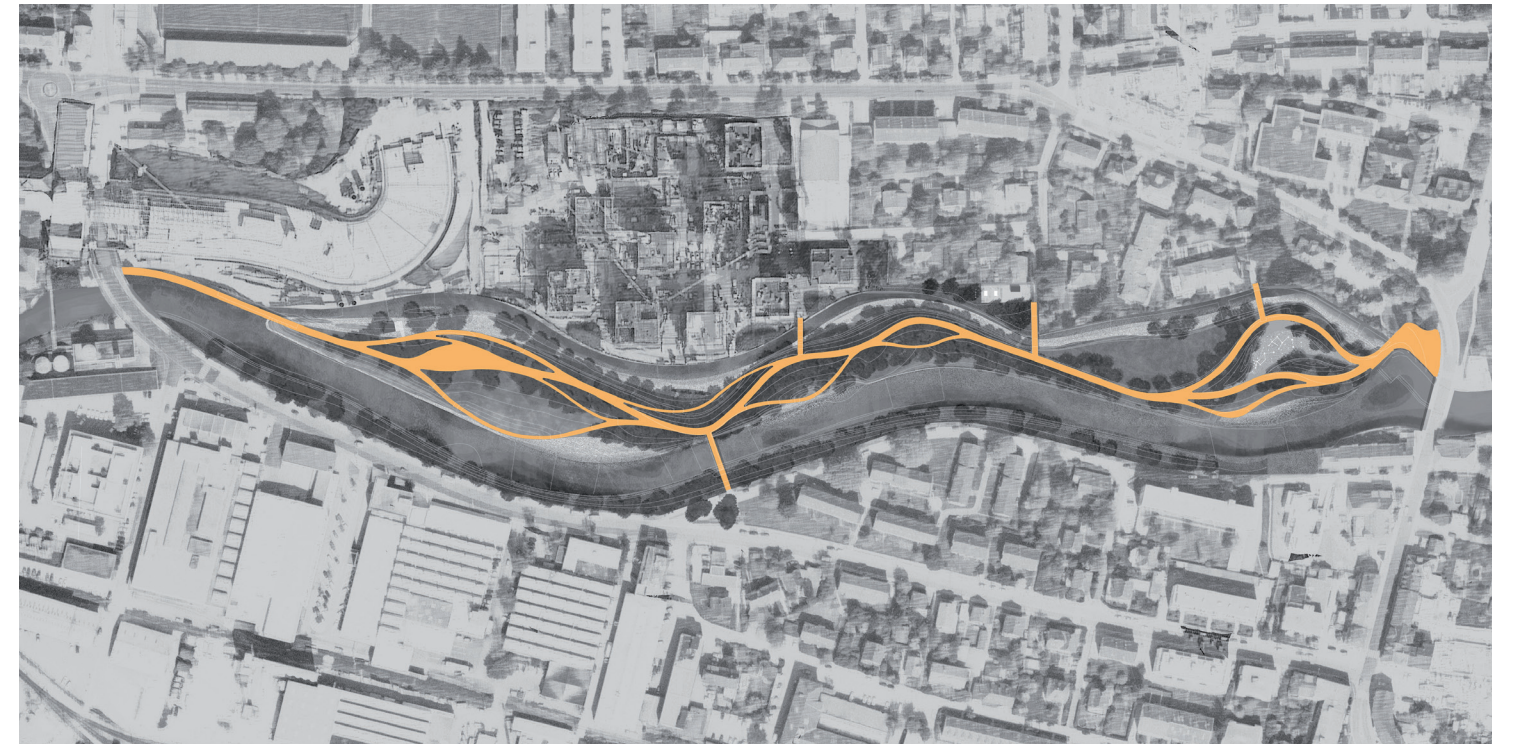


Schüssinsel Biel, Switzerland



Water as designer

In a way the Schüssinsel is a flood protection embankment in the form of a park. In the event of high water the southern side of the park can be flooded. The main path on the ridge of the embankment is transformed into a waterside path. The neighbouring residential areas are thus protected from flooding.



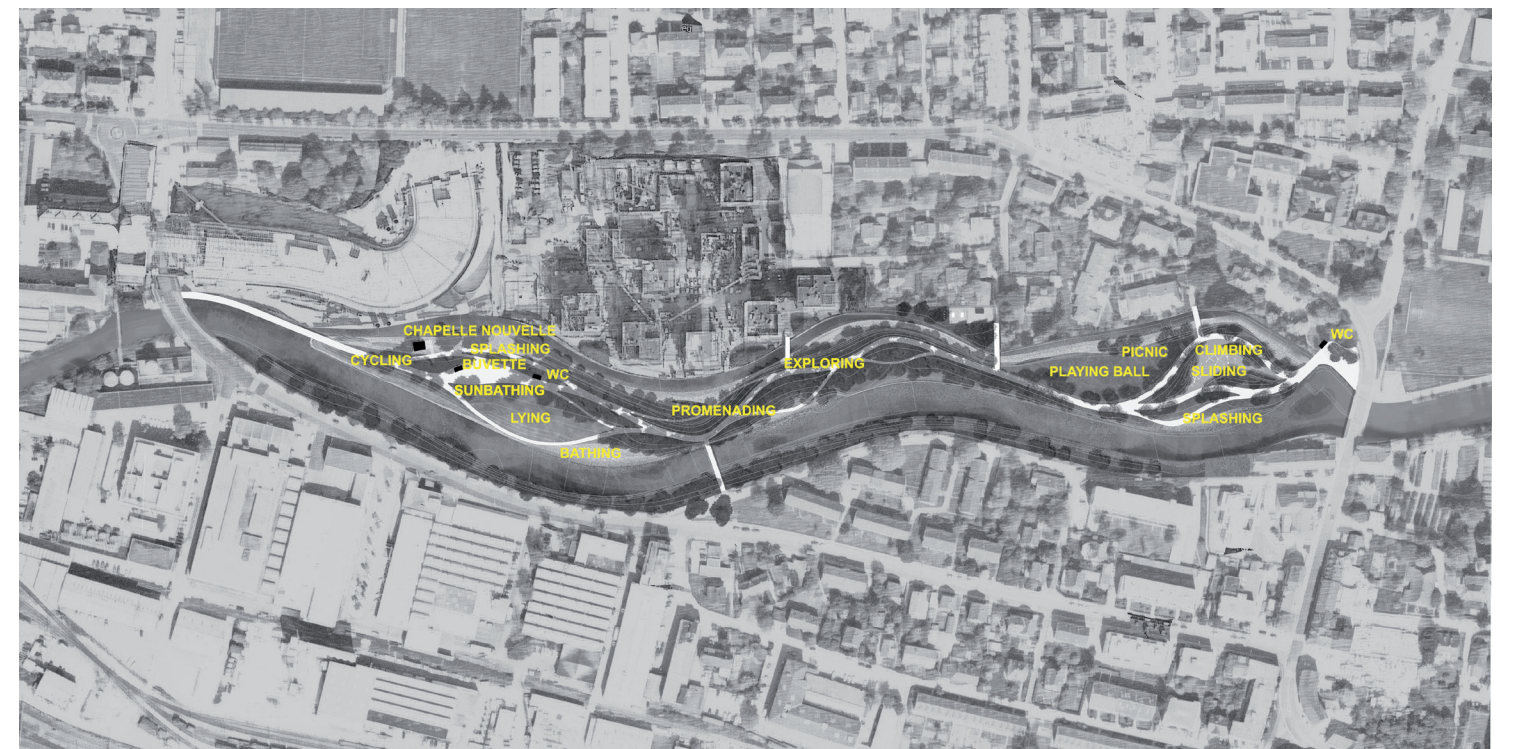
Meandering paths

The route chosen for the paths mimics the way in which a river meanders. Paths of different hierarchies make their way through swaying grasses, the cooling shade of trees, open bankside areas and natural zones. In the flood areas the paths can and are allowed to change, disappear and be supplemented with new paths. The paths across the park and the six bridges make the Schüssinsel a link between the different parts of town; they also close a gap in the supra-regional footpath and cyclepath network.



Natural Order

The combination of traditional solitary park trees with native, ecologically valuable species shapes the character of the island. While grassy area intended for rest and relaxation features solitary trees freely located – such as the common ash, swamp cypress, pecan, Kentucky coffeetree and gleditsia – the heart of the island contains native species such as small-leaved lime, common oak and bird cherry intermixed in a strict grid pattern with local specialities such as common alder and European white elm. The water can be spotted constantly between the orderly tree trunks and swaying grasses.



Biotope for people

The park can be used for many different purposes. The pebbly, shallow riverbank is an inviting place to splash about in the water, while the grassy area is perfect for lying in the sun. The playground is a wild forest of bars with compressed concrete slopes inspired by the riverbank. At the same time the bank, with varying water speeds and structures, was designed in such a way that fish and other aquatic creatures have a habitat again – so that visitors become onlookers of this urban river landscape.