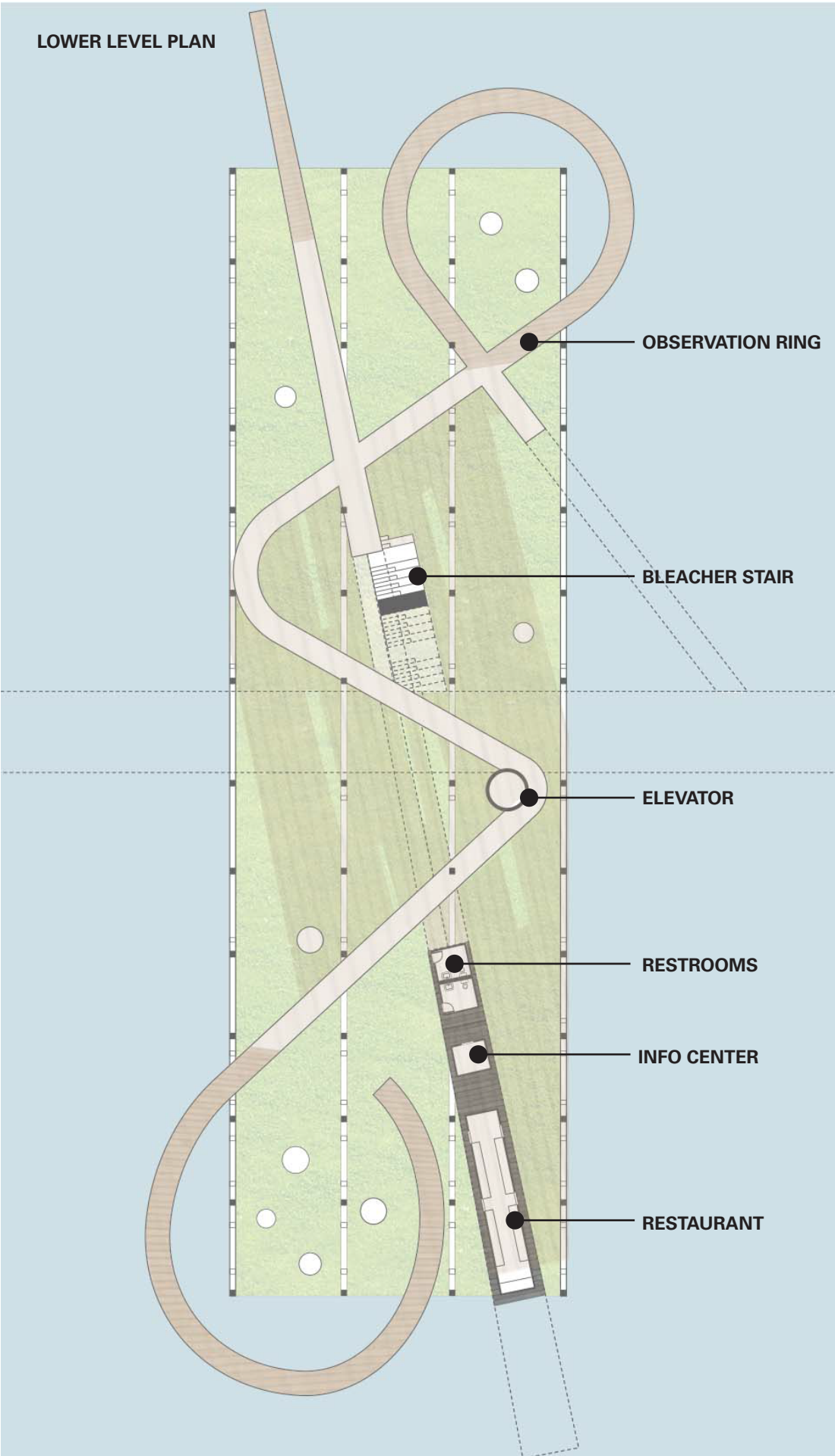
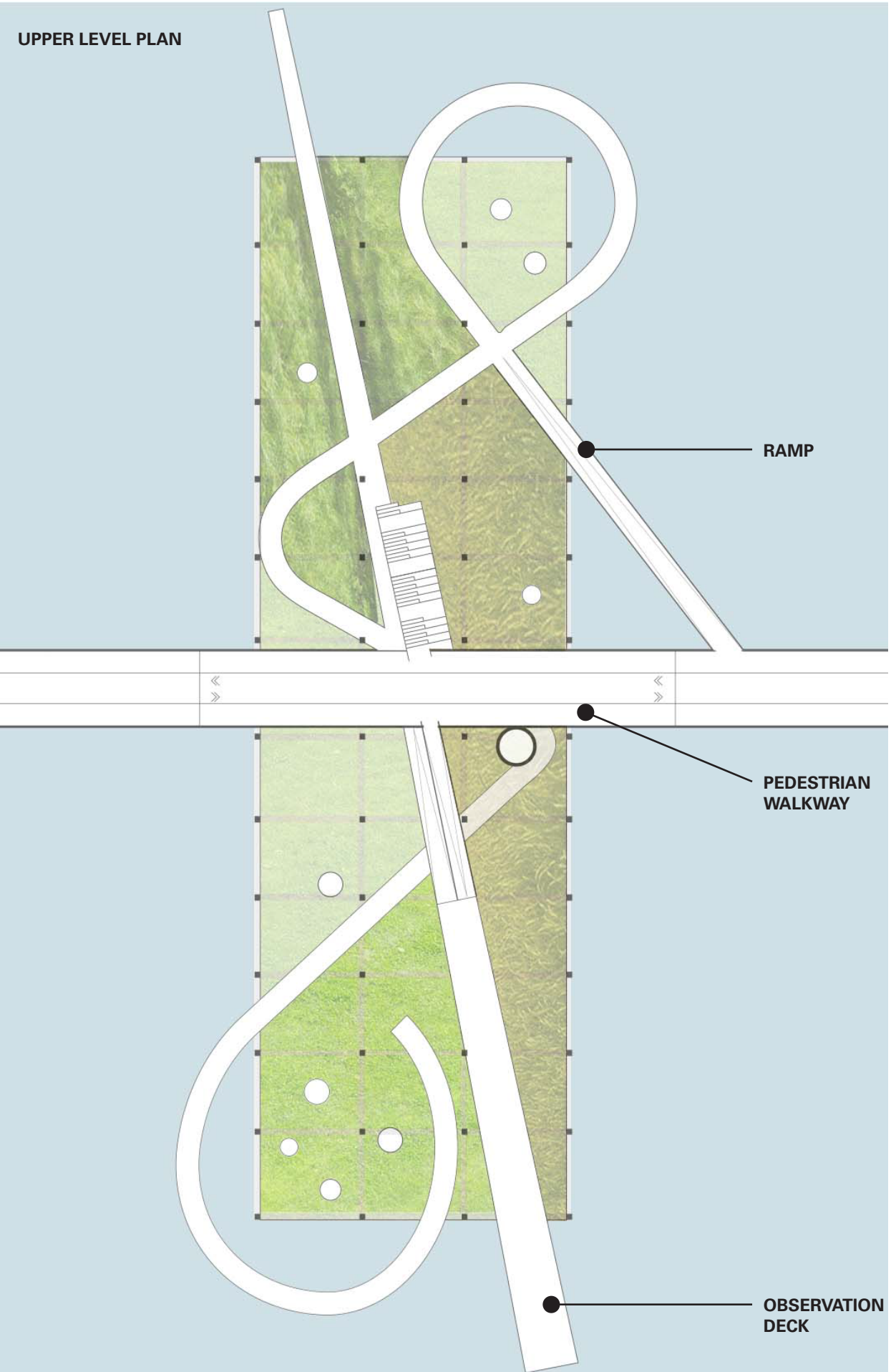
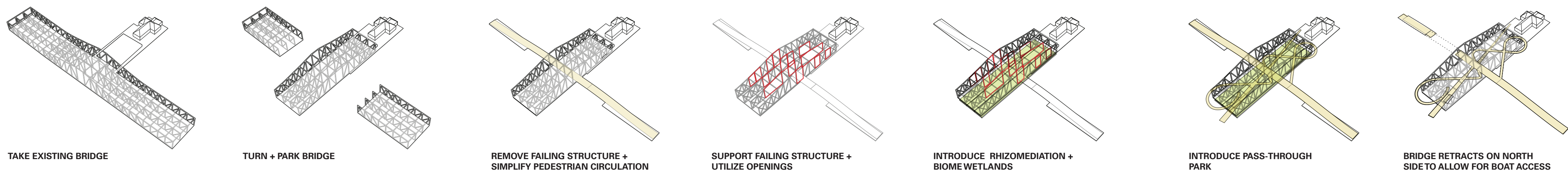


ISLAND IN THE STREAM

The Northern Avenue Bridge offers the city an opportunity to preserve Boston's history while improving circulation within the growing Fort Point Channel area. Seeing the bridge as a living monument to the area and industry around, the proposal keeps the bridge and lets it become a destination for the city as an urban-biome.



HISTORY

In recognition of the lifecycles of Boston's industrial environment, we propose to accept and embrace the decay of the Northern Avenue Bridge. By rotating the existing bridge and "parking" it in its open position, the center span of the existing bridge becomes a new landscape on the waterfront that doesn't interfere with naval traffic. It is clear that the structural integrity of the bridge is questionable; rather than rebuild the old bridge to fulfill an old role we focus on re-stabilizing and reusing the iconic central element in a new way.

The decay of Boston's historic infrastructure need not be hidden, nor treated as a mark of shame. By allowing the bridge to rest from its century of use, it becomes a different zone—an urban biome that reimagines the steel skeleton as a frame for new growth.

MOBILITY

Retaining its function as a pedestrian bridge, the center crossway has been optimized to three lanes of traffic, a bi-directional bicycle lane in the center and two outer pedestrian lanes. While the footprint has been reduced, the bridge becomes more about drawing people to the urban biome and reimagines the Northern Avenue bridge as a destination, not an operation. Paths from the connector bridge lead downward to the new landscape, connected through several ramps, a stair that also acts as bleacher seating for performances and gathering, and an elevator to encourage all to come to this landscape. By shifting attention to the "urban biome", the new footbridge is retractable on the northern side as required by boat traffic while the fixed connection to the south binds it to the shore and makes the project an extension of the urban grid.

DESTINATION

The proposal marries two themes to create a unique space within the city. On one hand, the historical beauty of industrial structures is essential to the growth and development of Boston. At the same time, so many have fallen into disrepair or decay and require methods of removal or remediation. We propose the development of an urban biome with the goal of 'rhizoremediation', the science of using plant life to purify and remediate contaminated areas. A tray suspended beneath the bridge collects the rusted and metallic water run-off that becomes the growth medium for the plants above so as the bridge decays and disintegrates, these plants act as natural purifiers to the environment, growing from the bridge's waste. The bridge as trellis is a catalytic infrastructure for ecological revitalization within the city. We feel the Northern Avenue Bridge should continue to be a landmark and welcome the city as it moves from one phase of life to the next.