WINTER 2025
GRESHAM

ARCH 484/584: ARCHITECTURE STUDIO
SCHOOL OF ARCHITECTURE AND ENVIRONMENT

Vision for Gresham – A Communal Space for Gresham's Multi-Cultural Communities

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UNIVERSITY OF OREGON
CITY OF GRESHAM OREGON
SCI Sustainable Cities Institute
SCYP Sustainable City Year Program

Acknowledgments

The author would like to acknowledge and thank the City of Gresham for making this project possible. We would also like to thank the following City of Gresham and Gresham Barlow School District staff for their assistance and contributions that were instrumental to the completion of this report.

Ashley Miller, Community Development Director, City of Gresham

Eric Schmidt, City Manager, City of Gresham

Dr Araceli Farias, Multilingual and Bilingual Education, Gresham Barlow School District

Leah H, Kendra L, Amy W, Staff Members, Gresham Barlow School District

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Iliana Tovar, Director of Facilities and Office Operations, Meyer Memorial Trust

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About SCI

The Sustainable Cities Institute (SCI) is an applied think tank focusing on sustainability and cities through applied research, teaching, and community partnerships. We work across disciplines that match the complexity of cities to address sustainability challenges, from regional planning to building design and from enhancing engagement of diverse communities to understanding the impacts on municipal budgets from disruptive technologies and many issues in between.

SCI focuses on sustainability-based research and teaching opportunities through two primary efforts:

1. Our Sustainable City Year Program (SCYP), a massively scaled university-community partnership program that matches the resources of the University with one Oregon community each year to help advance that community's sustainability goals; and
2. Our Urbanism Next Center, which focuses on how autonomous vehicles, e-commerce, and the sharing economy will impact the form and function of cities.

In all cases, we share our expertise and experiences with scholars, policymakers, community leaders, and project partners. We further extend our impact via an annual Expert-in-Residence Program, SCI China visiting scholars program, study abroad course on redesigning cities for people on bicycle, and through our co-leadership of the Educational Partnerships for Innovation in Communities Network (EPIC-N), which is transferring SCYP to universities and communities across the globe. Our work connects student passion, faculty experience, and community needs to produce innovative, tangible solutions for the creation of a sustainable society.

About SCYP

The Sustainable City Year Program (SCYP) is a yearlong partnership between SCI and a partner in Oregon, in which students and faculty in courses from across the university collaborate with a public entity on sustainability and livability projects. SCYP faculty and students work in collaboration with staff from the partner agency through a variety of studio projects and service- learning courses to provide students with real-world projects to investigate. Students bring energy, enthusiasm, and innovative approaches to difficult, persistent problems. SCYP's primary value derives from collaborations that result in on-the-ground impact and expanded conversations for a community ready to transition to a more sustainable and livable future.

Community partnerships are possible in part due to support from U.S. Senators Ron Wyden and Jeff Merkley, as well as former Congressman Peter DeFazio, who secured federal funding for SCYP through Congressionally Directed Spending.

About City of Gresham

The City of Gresham is located on the traditional territory of the Chinookan people. In 1851, the Powell brothers settled the area and it would be known as Powell's Valley until the creation of the Gresham post office in 1884. The economy ran mostly on agriculture with trains running between Gresham and Portland every hour. In 1904, the city elected Lewis Shattuck as its first mayor and in 1905 officially incorporated.

Gresham is the fourth largest city in Oregon with a population of just over 110,000 people. Gresham is bordered to the west by Portland, the largest city in the state, and is located near both the Columbia George National Scenic Area and Mount Hood, the highest point in Oregon. It has a wide variety of neighborhoods including: the Civic Center, known for its active transportation network, rapid transit connections, and residential, commercial, and retail mix; Historic Downtown, which offers a walkable blend of shops, restaurants, and service businesses; and Rockwood, one of the youngest and most diverse neighborhoods in Oregon. It offers community farmers markets, history museums, and several historical landmarks. Gresham's residents care deeply about their heritage as a homestead and agricultural community and are committed to building a vibrant future. Today, Gresham is a dynamic, innovative, and rapidly growing city with a mutual desire and drive to thrive.

Course Participants

GRADUATE STUDENTS

Sara Fernandez
Andrew Halpin
Tanzila Haque Zerin
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August Stolba

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Course Description

ARCH 484/584 ARCHITECTURE STUDIO

This course guides students through design projects requiring comprehensive and integrative study over a wide range of project options. Course components include individual criticism, group discussions, lectures and seminars by visiting specialists, and public review of projects.

Executive Summary

The City of Gresham aims to reinvigorate community life by enhancing access to inclusive, engaging, and youth-friendly public spaces. Gresham is Oregon's fourth largest city and has a relatively young population. The city has a shortage of community facilities that support social interaction across age groups and cultural backgrounds. This collaboration between University of Oregon Architecture students and the City of Gresham explored how the built environment could catalyze the social vitality of different ethnic communities, activate Gresham Main City Park, and foster civic identity. Based on the needs identified by Gresham City Council, students proposed the construction of a community center at 150 East Powell Boulevard in Gresham. Studies examined residents' day-to-day experiences, analyzing how people engage with space and identifying opportunities for inclusive design. Students emphasized the role of architecture and urban design in inviting community members into shared spaces while also responding to the diverse needs of the population.

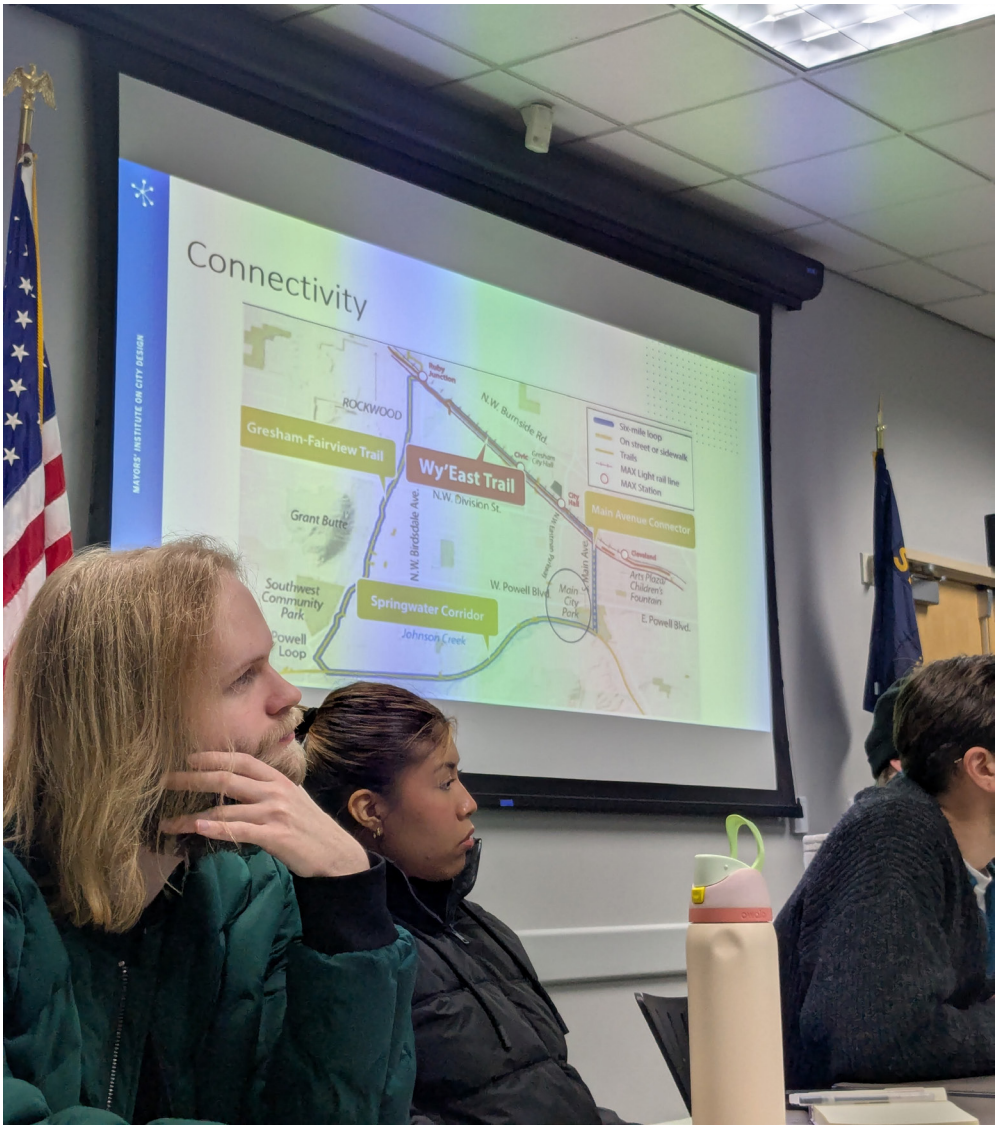


FIG. 1

Gresham City Council meeting.

Credit: Zerin, Tanzila Haque

Design proposals varied, reflecting the wide range of priorities identified through student research. Several projects focused on youth-oriented centers and a sports arena with flexible programming. In contrast, others addressed food access, responding to the city's desire for more restaurants and communal dining opportunities. While some recommendations emphasized smaller, more intimate outdoor or semi-outdoor spaces that promote informal gatherings and neighborhood-level connection.

Recognizing the diversity of Gresham's residents, students also proposed spaces that prioritize privacy and support for vulnerable populations. These included meditation rooms, healing gardens, and reflective areas that foster wellness. Across all proposals, students worked to balance broad community goals with the nuanced, everyday needs of individuals and families. During this project, students critically engaged with archives, community resources, and the urban context to generate thoughtful, actionable design ideas. Their work reflects how civic architecture and public space can support a more connected, vibrant, and inclusive community.

FIG. 2
Site Visit.
Credit: August Stolba

Introduction

The key goal of the partnership between the University of Oregon's School of Architecture and Environment Design Studio and City of Gresham is to align with the Downtown Gresham Conceptual Framework Project by creating a vibrant, small-scale, walkable downtown.
The conceptual framework envisions Downtown Gresham as a walkable neighborhood that weaves together the rich history of Main Street with the vibrancy of the Transit Center. It features a range of activated public open spaces at various scales, offers diverse housing options, and fosters entertainment, community-focused commerce, and an entrepreneurial spirit. As part of the community, this framework seeks to strengthen the social and economic fabric of Downtown Gresham. Gresham seeks to activate the Main City Park and design a community center that elevates inclusivity, ensures people feel safe, and serves Gresham's diverse ethnic communities and city residents. Gresham is home to a rich demographic, with over 30% of its population identifying as Hispanic, Asian, and from other ethnically diverse backgrounds. However, the city currently lacks a unified communal space where these communities can gather, celebrate culture, and feel represented.

University of Oregon Architecture students engaged in a participatory design process to address this need, envisioning a community center that serves both as a cultural anchor and a physical connector to Gresham's natural assets, including the Gresham Main City Park, Johnson Creek, and the Springwater Corridor Trail. Through site visits, interviews, landscape surveys, and partnerships with local schools, libraries, architects, and forums, students explored how public space can better serve Gresham's communities.

The design site plays a crucial role in bridging the gap between urban life and the area's stunning natural surroundings, particularly Gresham City Park, which is perceived as disconnected from the urban fabric. The student proposals offered insightful recommendations on how to strengthen this connection with the park. Some proposals emphasized reinforcing Gresham's civic identity through making the building a city statement by introducing civic-oriented spaces, while others focused on fostering a more socially inclusive and blended community through design interventions that camouflage the building with the landscape.

These visions collectively aim to re-establish Downtown Gresham as a dynamic, connected, and community-orientated place. The project integrates direct input from residents through interviews and community archiving, ensuring the final design is informed by the voices of those who will use it. The Vision for Gresham project centers on creating an inclusive, community-driven space that reflects the city's diverse cultural fabric. This collaborative process promotes equity and builds lasting connections between people and places.

building experience

FIG. 3

An initial sketch of the Gresham Community Center.

Credit: Micah Gamlen

Initial Research

SITE ANALYSIS

Site Visit, Land Surveys, Structural Analysis

To prepare for the design, students spoke to Eric Schmidt, Gresham City Manager, Ashley Miller, Gresham Community Development Director, and Gresham Barlow School District teachers. They toured several buildings including: Meyer Memorial Trust, Multnomah County's Holgate Library, and the Redd Event Center to see how spaces can support inclusive community gatherings. Each student group also researched specific aspects of the space to include:

- Data collection, data analysis, and report presentation
- Climate research through climate consultant and studio (sun, wind, shadow, fire, microclimate)
- Soil and hydrology survey, and topographic survey
- Gresham community history, local businesses, and communal activity research
- Demographic research (use patterns, activities, events, social-economic engines)
- Built environment and road connectivity, urban infrastructure, transportation analysis (spaces & connections, building patterns, materials, legal constraints)
- Building codes and standards analysis
- Sensory observation of the landscape (views, sounds/noise, smells, haptic sensations (touch & movement), and wayfinding for varied users)
- Ecological and habitat corridor research
- Site visit (sketching, communication designer tour, taking photographs, City Council Meeting, high school, and Public Library visits)
- Structural analysis (part of the design phase)
- Design process

SITE VISIT

To prepare for the design, students spoke to Eric Schmidt, Gresham City Manager, Ashley Miller, Gresham Community Development Director, and Gresham Barlow School District teachers. They toured several buildings including: Meyer Memorial Trust, Multnomah County's Holgate Library, and the Redd Event Center to see how spaces can support inclusive community gatherings. Students summarized their site visit using sketching, photography and written notes.

FIG. 4

At the Meyer Memorial Trust, Facilities Manager Iliana Tovar explains planning choices and exterior finished to the class.

Credit: Zerin, Tanzila Haque

FIG. 5

Students examine finishes in the Meyer Memorial Trust building.

Credit: Zerin, Tanzila Haque

FIG. 6

Students examine the custom furnishings for children in the newly renovated Midland Library on a tour led by Karim Hassanein of Colloqate Design.

Credit: Zerin, Tanzila Haque

FIG. 7

Midland Library exterior playground

FIG. 8

Visit to the Redd Event Center, hosted by architect Jeffrey Maas of Urban Patterns.

Credit: Zerin, Tanzila Haque

FIG. 9

Sketches capture the contrasting paths on Main Street (left), viewing Johnson Creek in Main City Park (center) and the stairs down from the site to the park.

Credit: Zerin, Tanzila Haque

SITE ANALYSIS

As part of the pre-design phase, small student groups researched specific aspects of the site, collecting and analyzing data, then sharing a report to the class. The categories included

Human Factors

- Gresham community history, local businesses, and communal activity research
- Demographic research (use patterns, activities, events, social-economic engines)

Natural Environment

- Ecological and habitat corridor research
- Climate research through climate consultant and studio (sun, wind, shadow, fire, microclimate)
- Soil and hydrology survey, and topographic survey

Built Environment

- Road connectivity, urban infrastructure, transportation analysis (spaces & connections, building patterns, materials, legal constraints)
- Building codes and standards analysis

Sensory Environment

- Observation of the place (views, sounds/noise, smells, haptic sensations (touch & movement), and wayfinding for varied users.

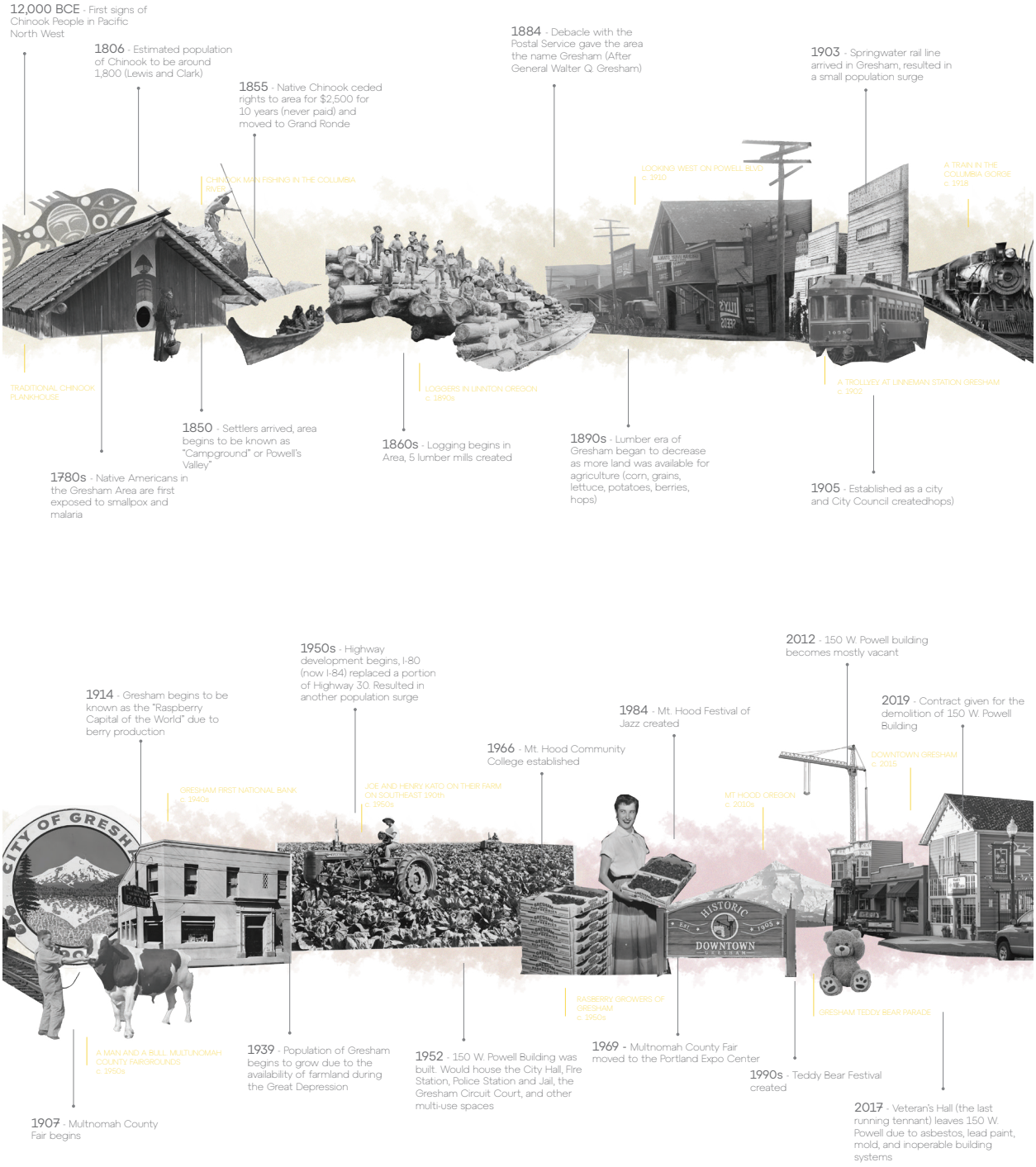


FIG. 10

Timeline of Gresham's history

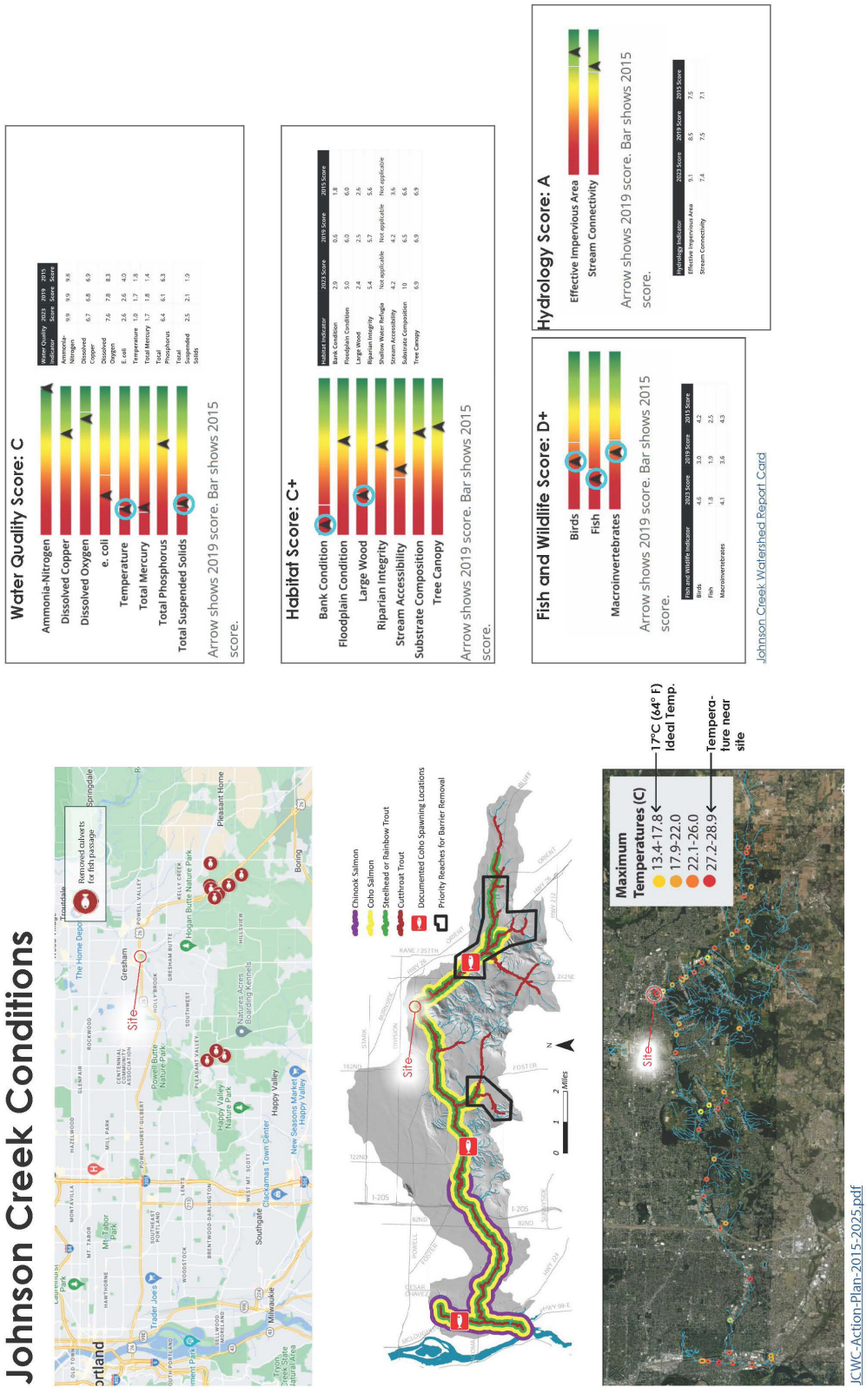


FIG. 11

Our site abuts Johnson Creek that flows through the north edge Main City Park to Portland. In addition to providing an aesthetic amenity to city residents, it has been a spawning ground to coho salmon. This data shows that the stream is too hot and water quality poor for fish, birds and microinvertebrates to thrive.

Credit: Andrew Halpin

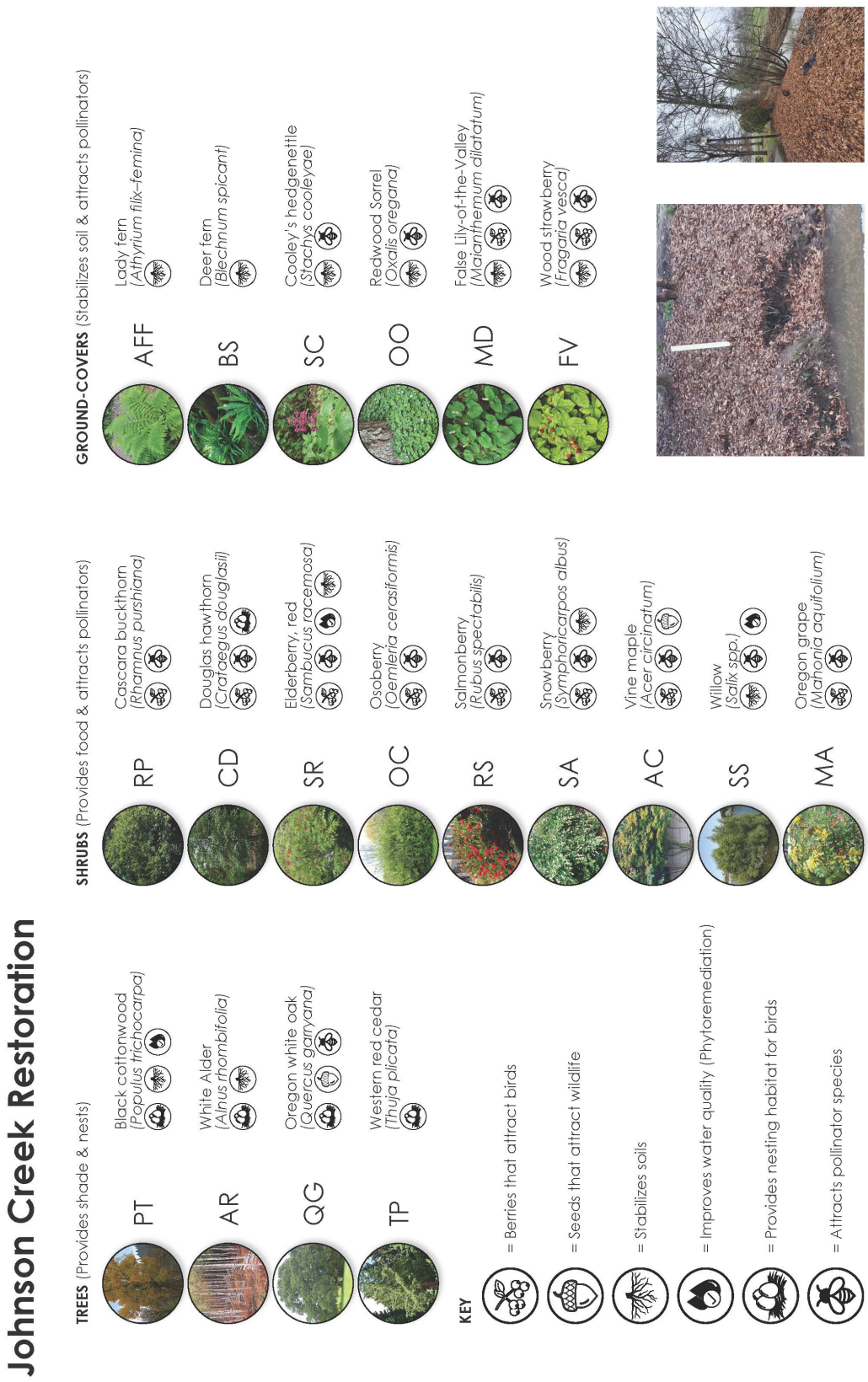


FIG. 12

Flora and fauna of the Johnson Creek restoration.

Credit: Andrew Halpin

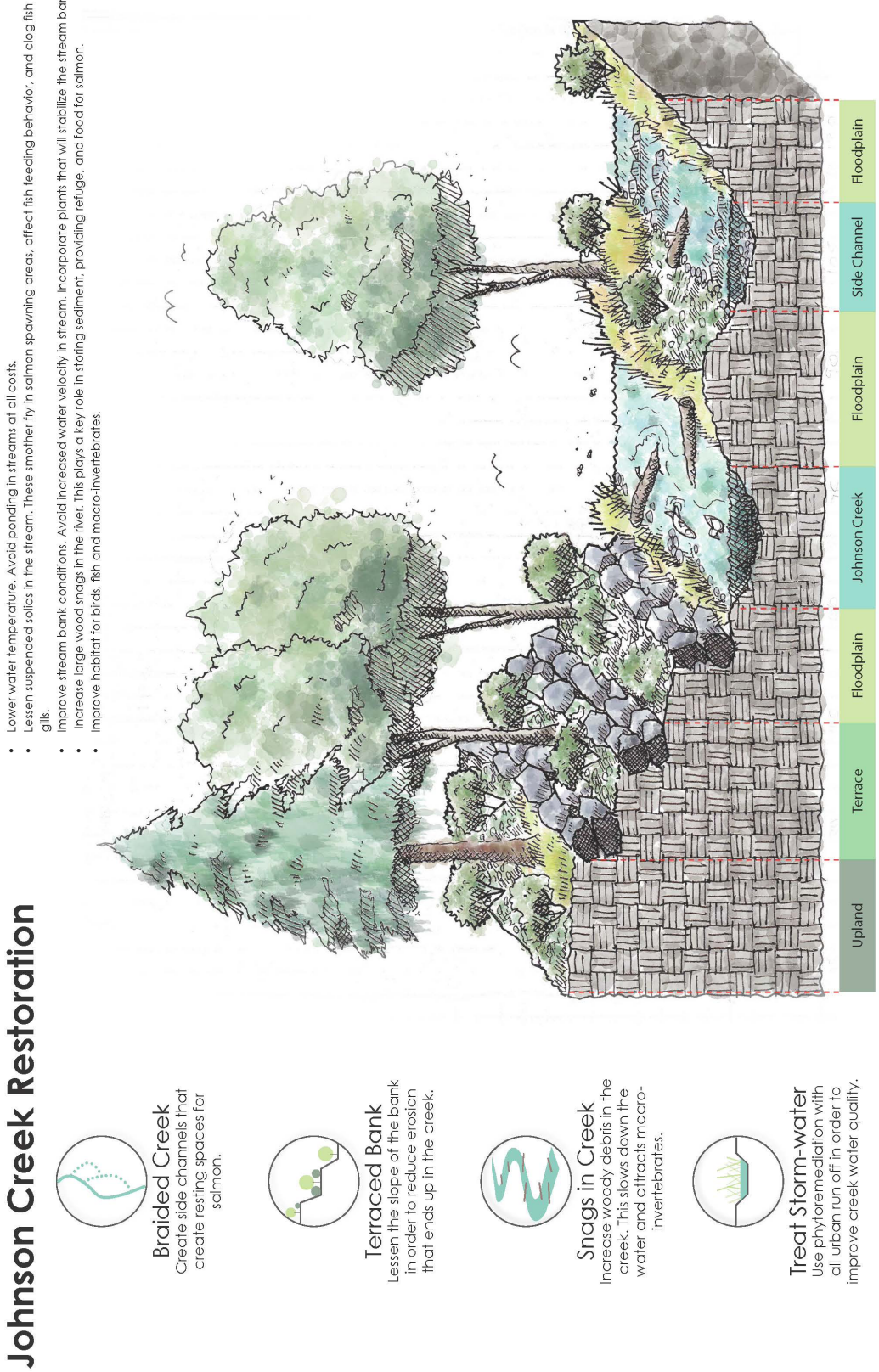


FIG. 13

This drawing shows how Johnson Creek's streambed could be amended to provide better habitat for fish, bird and microinvertebrates.

Credit: Andrew Halpin

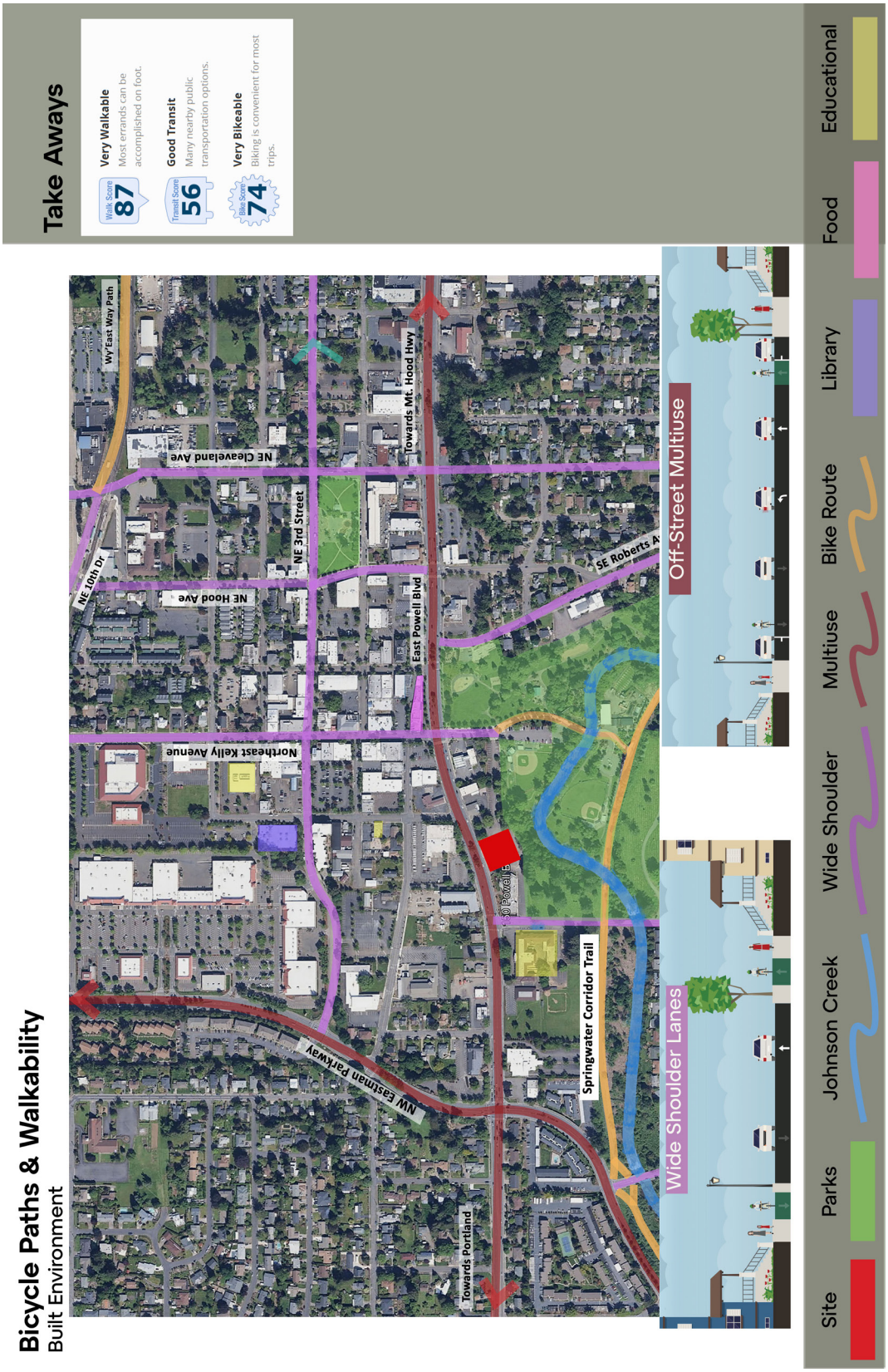


FIG. 14

Map shows that the site (in red) is well serviced by routes for cars and bikes, but is not very convenient from public transportation: key at bottom.

Credit: Sara Fernandez

FIG. 15

Icons show locations of activities in Main City Park, that could complement community center activities just to the north.

Credit: Raman Bajwa

SITE ANALYSIS

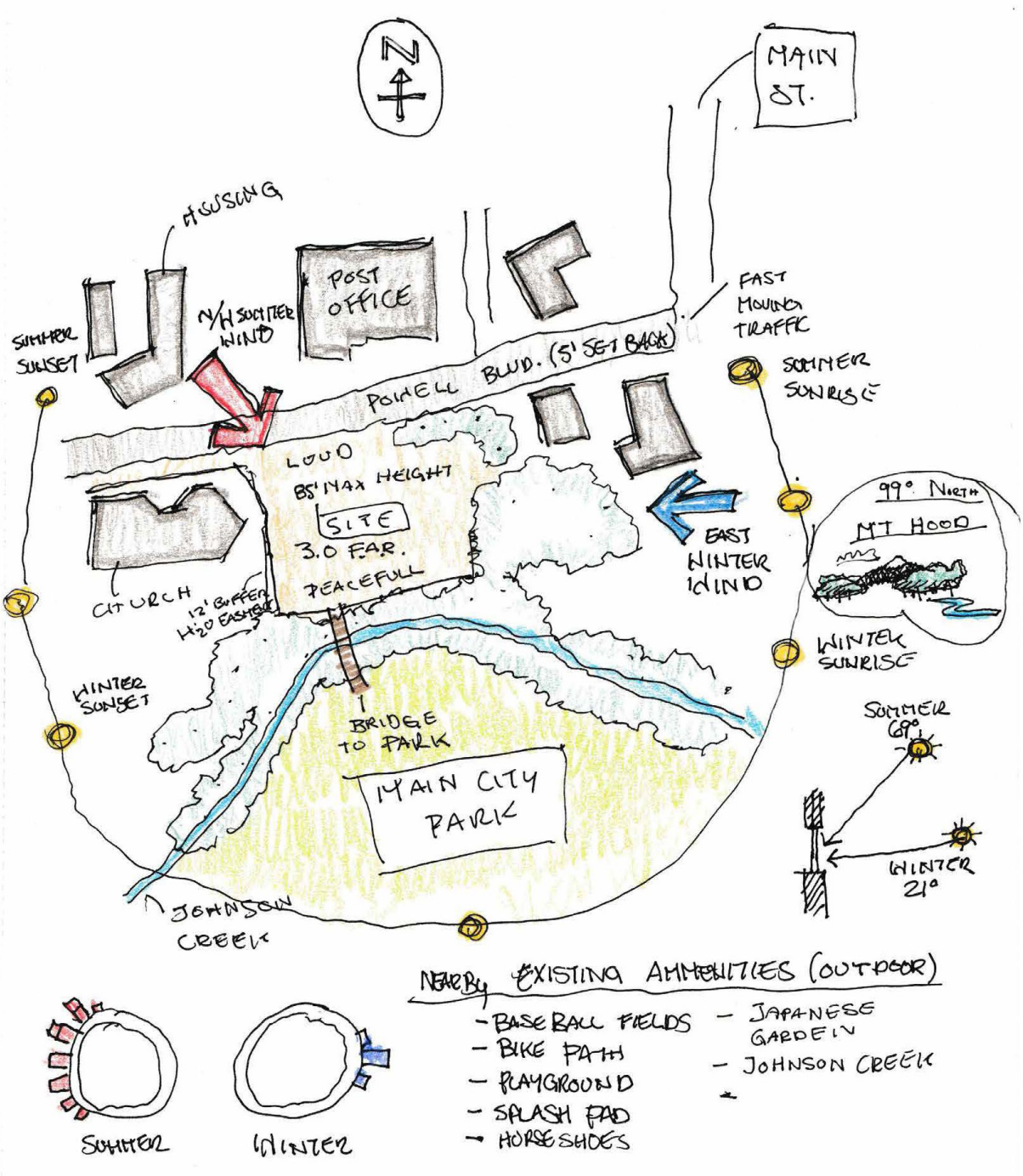


FIG. 16

Site Analysis.

Credit: Andrew Halpin

Design Standards / Guidelines

Built Environment

Design Principles:

- Provide a Vibrant Mix of Uses.
- Create a Vibrant Public Realm.
- Create strong connections between Plan Districts and Sub-Districts.
- Context Sensitivity.

Table 4.1151(B)(9): Primary, secondary, accent and prohibited materials

USES	DCC	All Development	Multifamily Residential & Townhouse
P: Primary Material			
S: Secondary Material			
A: Accent Material			
N: Prohibited Material or Prohibited Fencing Type			
RESIDENTIAL			
Single Detached Dwelling	NP		
Duplex	L[1]	P	P
Triplex	L[1]	P	P
Quadplex	L[1]	P	P
Townhouse	P	P	P
Cottage Cluster	NP		
Multifamily[2]	P[3]	P	P
Elderly Housing	SUR	P	P
Manufactured Dwelling Park	NP	P	P
Residential Facility	P	P	P
Residential Home	NP	P	P
Affordable Housing	P[4]	A	P
COMMERCIAL			
Auto-Dependent Use	NP	P	P
Business and Retail Service and Trade	P		
Clinics	P	S	P
Commercial Parking	L[5]		
Daycare Facilities	P	S	S
Live/work	P		
Major Event Entertainment	SUR		
Mini-Storage Facilities	NP		
Outdoor Commercial	NP	S	S
INDUSTRIAL			
Construction	NP	S	S
Exclusive Heavy Industrial Uses	NP		
Industrial Office	NP	P/S	P/S
Information Services	P		
Manufacturing	L[6]	A	A
Miscellaneous Industrial	NP	S	S
Trade Schools	NP	S	S
Transportation/Distribution	NP	A	A
Warehousing/Storage	NP[11]	N	N
Waste Management	NP	N	N
Wholesale Trade	NP	N	N
INSTITUTIONAL USES			
Civic Uses	SUR	Plastic or vinyl fencing	N	N
Community Services	SUR	Chain link fencing	N	N
Medical	SUR	Notes:		
Parks, Open Spaces and Trails	L/SUR[12]	[4]Metals shall be of a size, thickness and detailing that will remain free of visual defects and visual distortion such as oil canning, ski sloping and shadowing.		
Religious Institutions	P			

Take Aways

Key regulations:

- 85 ft max height (8ft Extension for architectural elements)
- Maximum 5 ft Setback, No minimum
- 0.35 Minimum FAR, 3.0 MAX (Up to 4.5 with bonuses)
- Minimum 15% of area Landscaped (20% w/ drought resistant canopy trees)
- 6ft Stepback for each floor above 35 ft
- >30,000 sqft needs at least 2 masses of building volumes

Key Strategies:

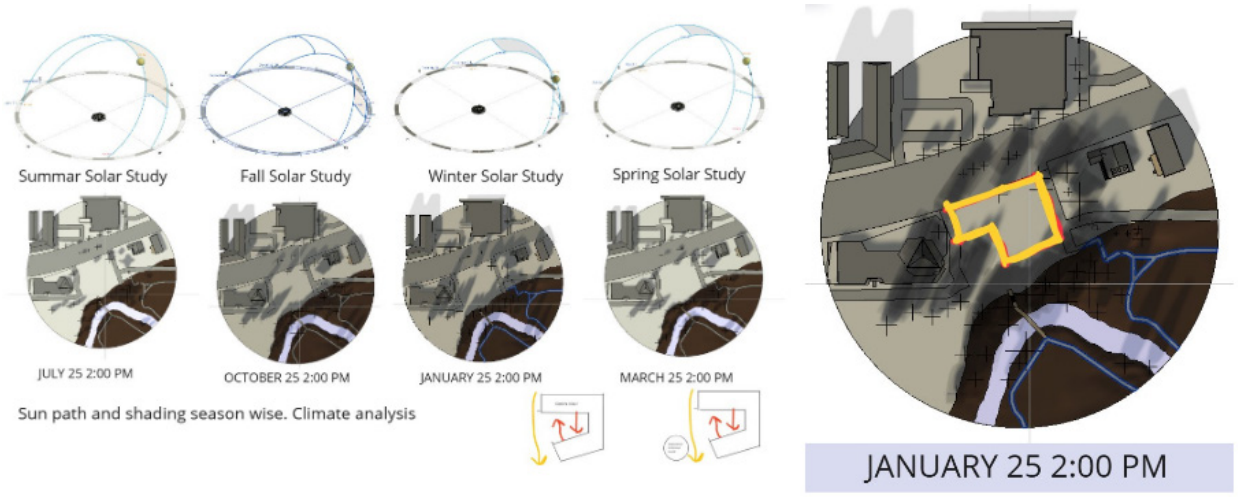
- Water Conservation
- Passive Energy efficiency
- Building materials need to be high quality, durable and attractive

More Info in DCC file

FIG. 17

A summary of design guidelines and code restrictions from the City of Gresham's Downtown Plan District Design Manual (Section 4.1100) including permitted building types, materials and setbacks.

Credit: Gabriel Alvarado



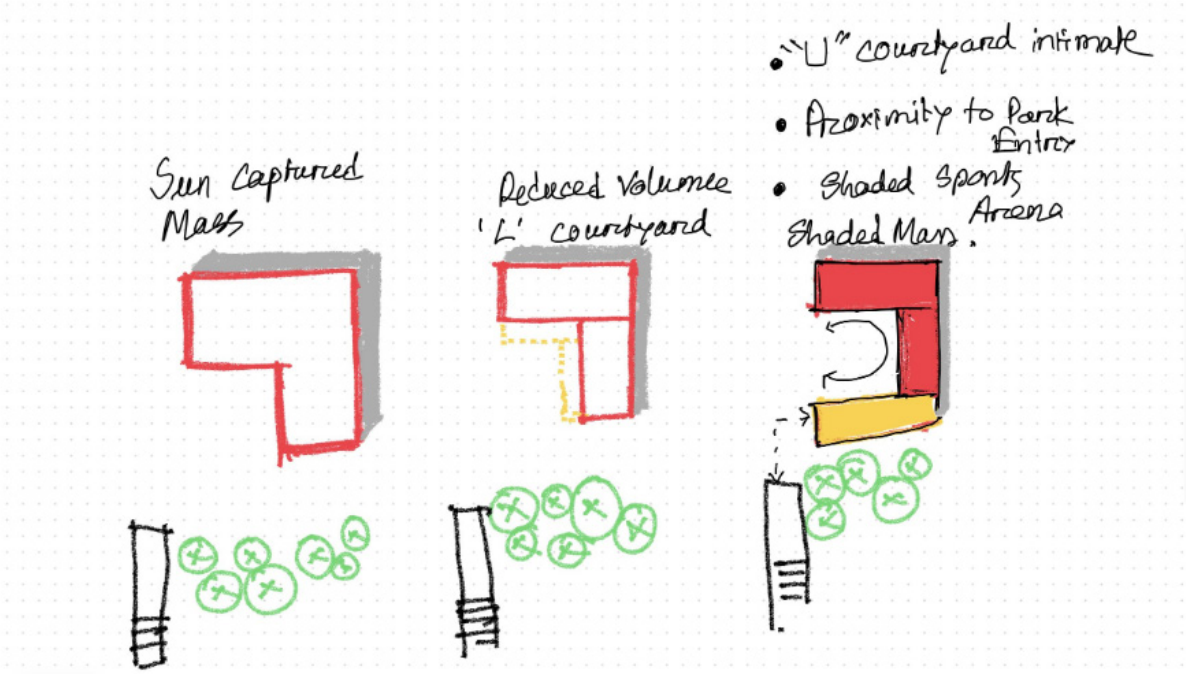


FIG. 18

Solar shading analysis and parti diagrams showing possible building footprints to maximize natural lighting.

Credit: Zerin, Tanzila Haque

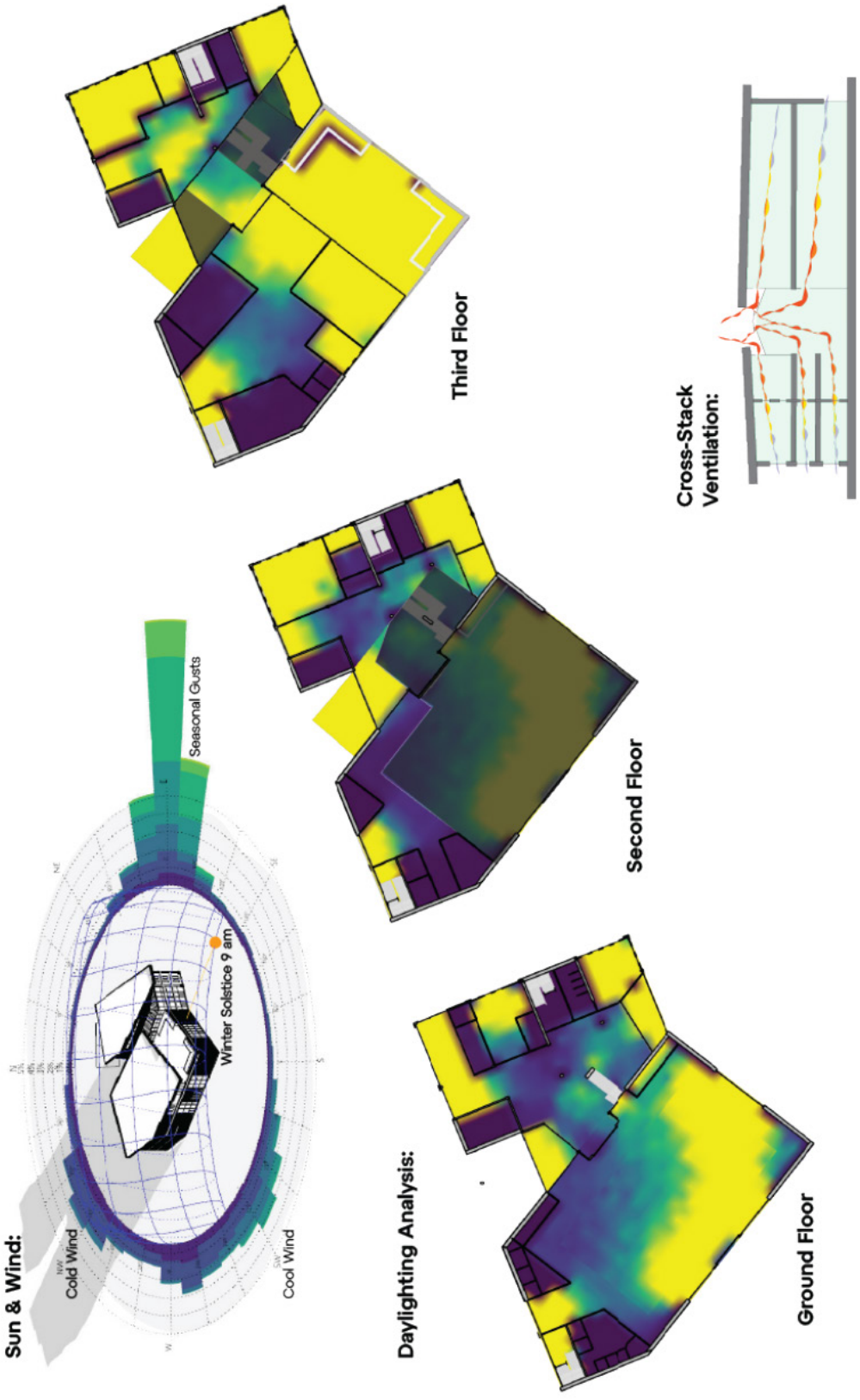
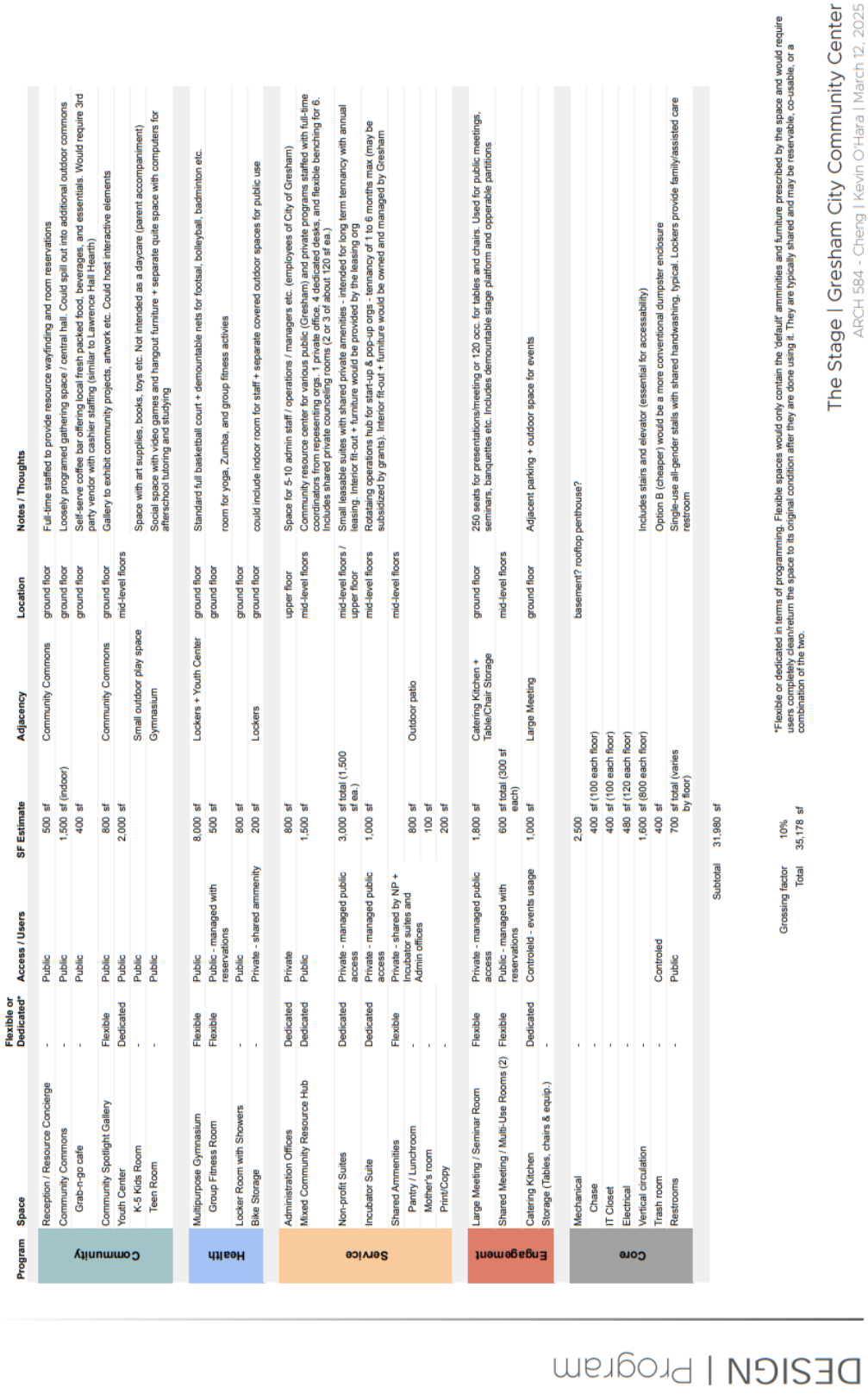


FIG. 19

Solar analysis with plans showing how daylighting would be distributed inside the a building proposal.

Credit: August Stolba



Program	Space	Flexible or Dedicated*	Access / Users	SF Estimate	Adjacency	Location	Notes / Thoughts
Community	Reception / Resource Concierge	-	Public	500 sf	Community Commons	ground floor	Full-time staffed to provide resource wayfinding and room reservations
	Community Commons	-	Public	1,500 sf (indoor)		ground floor	Loosely programed gathering space / central hall. Could spill out into additional outdoor commons
	Grab-n-go cafe	-	Public	400 sf		ground floor	Self-serve coffee bar offering local fresh packed food, beverages, and essentials. Would require 3rd party vendor with cashier staffing (similar to Lawrence Hall Hearth)
	Community Spotlight Gallery	Flexible	Public	800 sf	Community Commons	ground floor	Gallery to exhibit community projects, artwork etc. Could host interactive elements
	Youth Center	Dedicated	Public	2,000 sf		mid-level floors	
	K-5 Kids Room	-	Public		Small outdoor play space		Space with art supplies, books, toys etc. Not intended as a daycare (parent accompaniment)
	Teen Room	-	Public		Gymnasium		Social space with video games and hangout furniture + separate quite space with computers for afterschool tutoring and studying
Health	Multipurpose Gymnasium	Flexible	Public	8,000 sf	Lockers + Youth Center	ground floor	Standard full basketball court + demountable nets for footsal, bolleyball, badminton etc.
	Group Fitness Room	Flexible	Public - managed with reservations	500 sf		ground floor	room for yoga, Zumba, and group fitness activies
	Locker Room with Showers	-	Public	800 sf		ground floor	
	Bike Storage	-	Private - shared ammenity	200 sf	Lockers	ground floor	could include indoor room for staff + separate covered outdoor spaces for public use
Service	Administration Offices	Dedicated	Private	800 sf		upper floor	Space for 5-10 admin staff / operations / managers etc. (employees of City of Gresham)
	Mixed Community Resource Hub	Dedicated	Public	1,500 sf		mid-level floors	Community resource center for various public (Gresham) and private programs staffed with full-time coordinators from repesenting orgs. 1 private office, 4 dedicated desks, and flexible benching for 6. Includes shared private counceling rooms (2 or 3 of about 120 sf ea.)
	Non-profit Suites	Dedicated	Private - managed public access	3,000 sf total (1,500 sf ea.)		mid-level floors / upper floor	Small leasable suites with shared private amenities - intended for long term tennancy with annual leasing. Interior fit-out + furniture would be provided by the leasing org
	Incubator Suite	Dedicated	Private - managed public access	1,000 sf		mid-level floors	Rotataing operations hub for start-up & pop-up orgs - tennancy of 1 to 6 months max (may be subsidized by grants). Interior fit-out + furniture would be owned and managed by Gresham
	Shared Ammenities	Flexible	Private - shared by NP + Incubator suites and Admin offices			mid-level floors	
	Pantry / Lunchroom	-		800 sf	Outdoor patio		
	Mother's room	-		100 sf			
	Print/Copy	-		200 sf			
Engagement	Large Meeting / Seminar Room	Flexible	Private - managed public access	1,800 sf	Catering Kitchen + Table/Chair Storage	ground floor	250 seats for presentations/meeting or 120 occ. for tables and chairs. Used for public meetings, seminars, banquettes etc. Includes demountable stage platform and opperable partitions
	Shared Meeting / Multi-Use Rooms (2)	Flexible	Public - managed with reservations	600 sf total (300 sf each)		mid-level floors	
	Catering Kitchen	Dedicated	Controleld - events usage	1,000 sf	Large Meeting	ground floor	Adjacent parking + outdoor space for events
	Storage (Tables, chairs & equip.)	-					
Core	Mechanical	-		2,500		basement? rooftop penthouse?	
	Chase	-		400 sf (100 each floor)			
	IT Closet	-		400 sf (100 each floor)			
	Electrical	-		480 sf (120 each floor)			
	Vertical circulation	-		1,600 sf (800 each floor)			Includes stairs and elevator (essential for accessability)
	Trash room	-	Controled	400 sf			Option B (cheaper) would be a more conventional dumpster enclosure
	Restrooms	-	Public	700 sf total (varies by floor)			Single-use all-gender stalls with shared handwashing, typical. Lockers provide family/assisted care restroom
				Subtotal 31,980 sf			
				Grossing factor 10%			
				Total 35,178 sf			

*Flexible or dedicated in terms of programming. Flexible spaces would only contain the 'default' amminities and furniture prescribed by the space and would require users completely clean/return the space to its original condition after they are done using it. They are typically shared and may be reservable, co-usable, or a combination of the two.

The Stage | Gresham City Community Center
ARCH 584 - Cheng | Kevin O'Hara | March 12, 2025

DESIGN | Program

FIG. 20

Each student customized how the community center would meet the City of Gresham's needs by creating a customized program of activities and spaces to be accommodated.

Credit: Kevin O'Hara

FIG. 21

This drawing of program distribution shows how the community center could be organized to fit residents' needs in.

Credit: Andrew Halpin

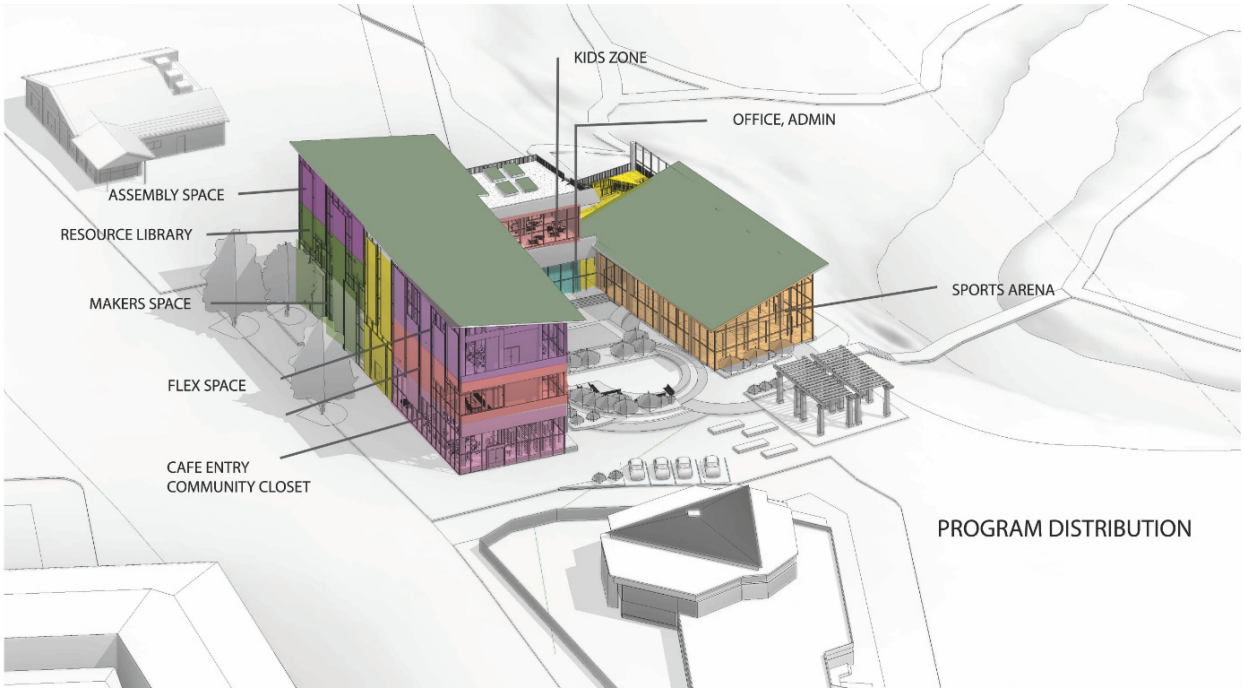


FIG. 22

This drawing of program distribution locates activities in a 3D massing model.

Credit: Zerin, Tanzila Haque

STRUCTURAL DESIGN

Once they had decided on the basic building massing, several students used Karamba software to explore how design choices would affect structural stability.

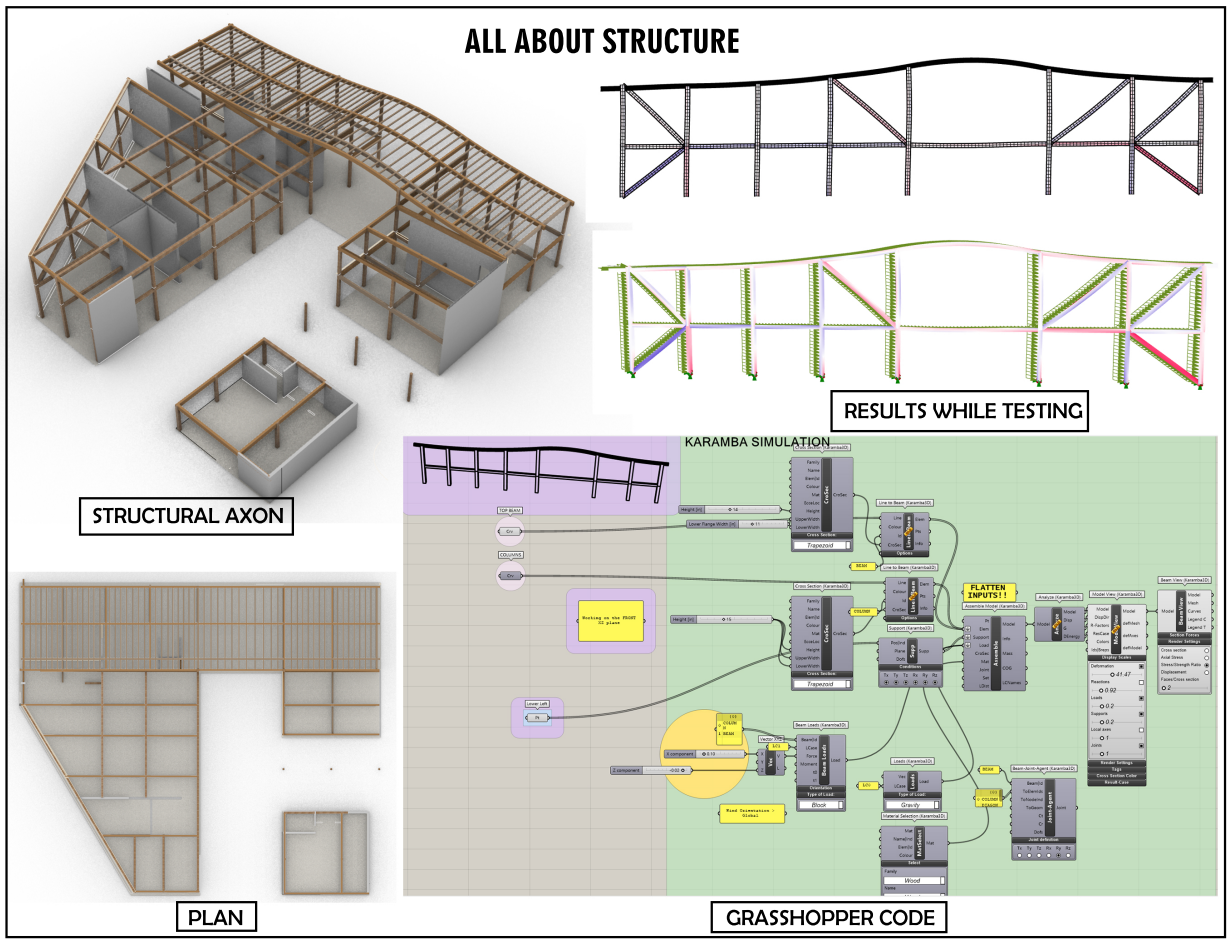


FIG. 23

Diagonal bracing and shear walls stabilize beams and columns.

Credit: Sara Fernandez

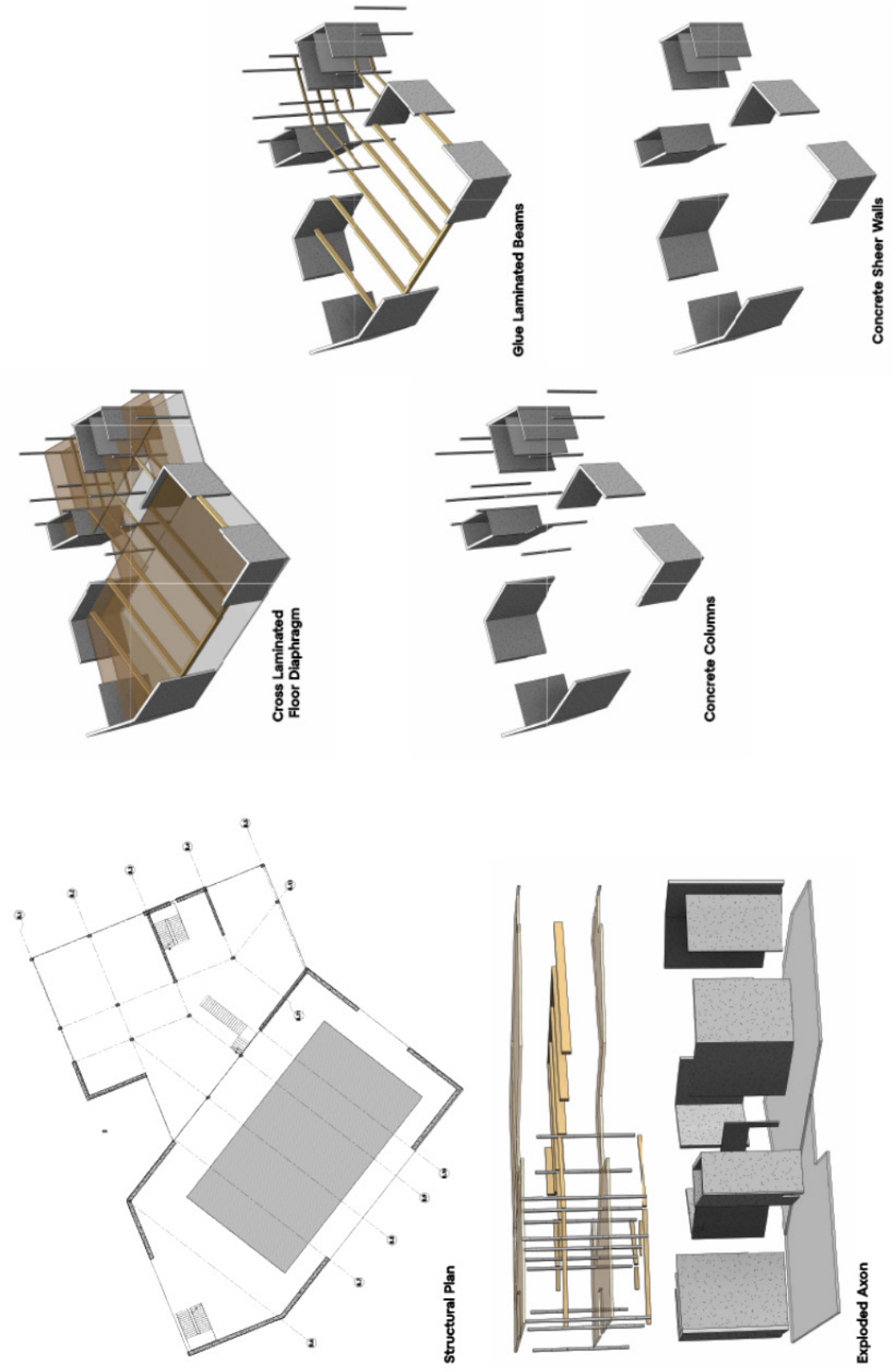


FIG. 24

Common construction elements unify the two halves of this community center, with corner walls providing stabilitly.

Credit: August Stolba

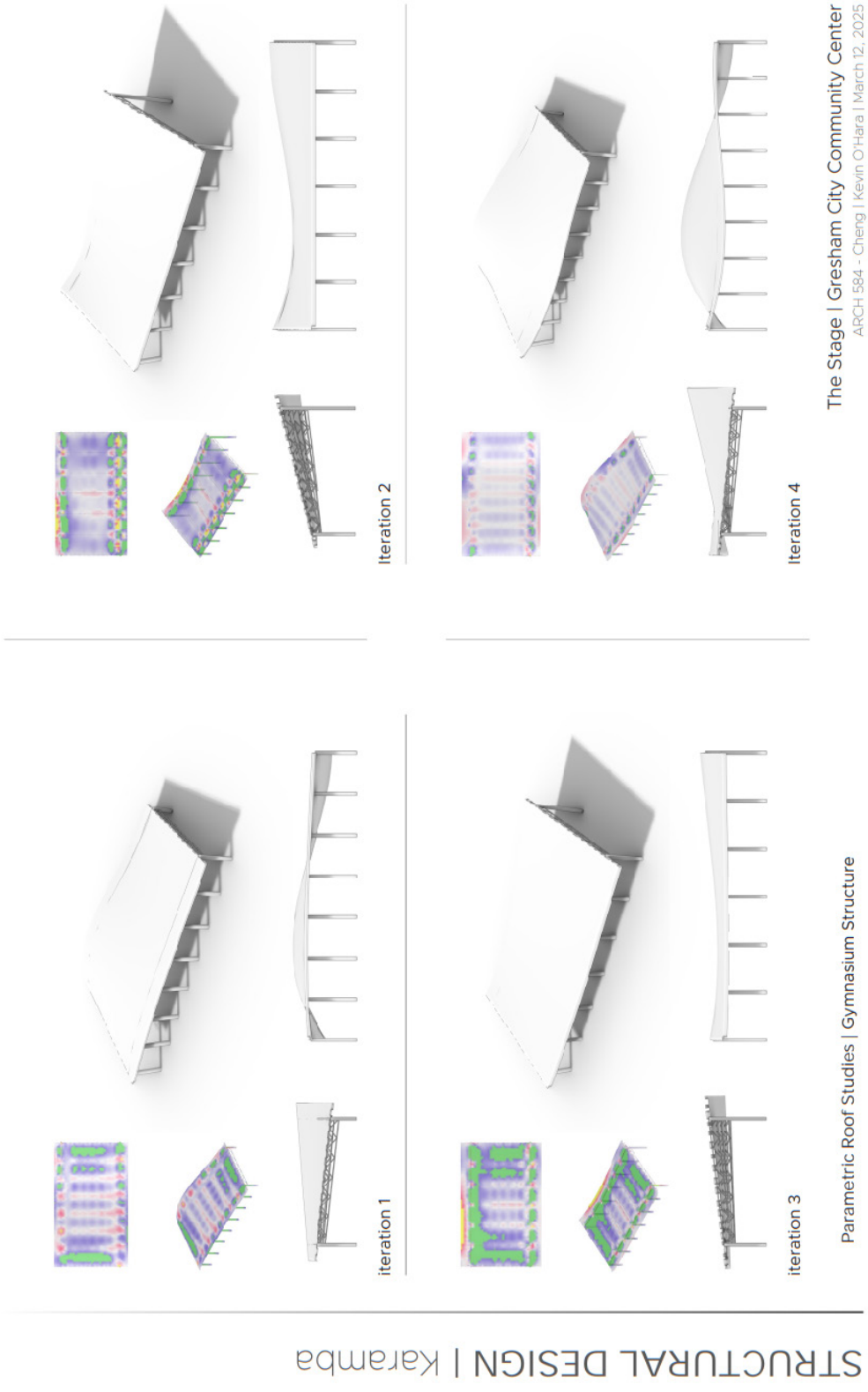


FIG. 25

Parametric design provides adjustment of curved roof expression with feedback on stress distributions.

Credit: Kevin O'Hara

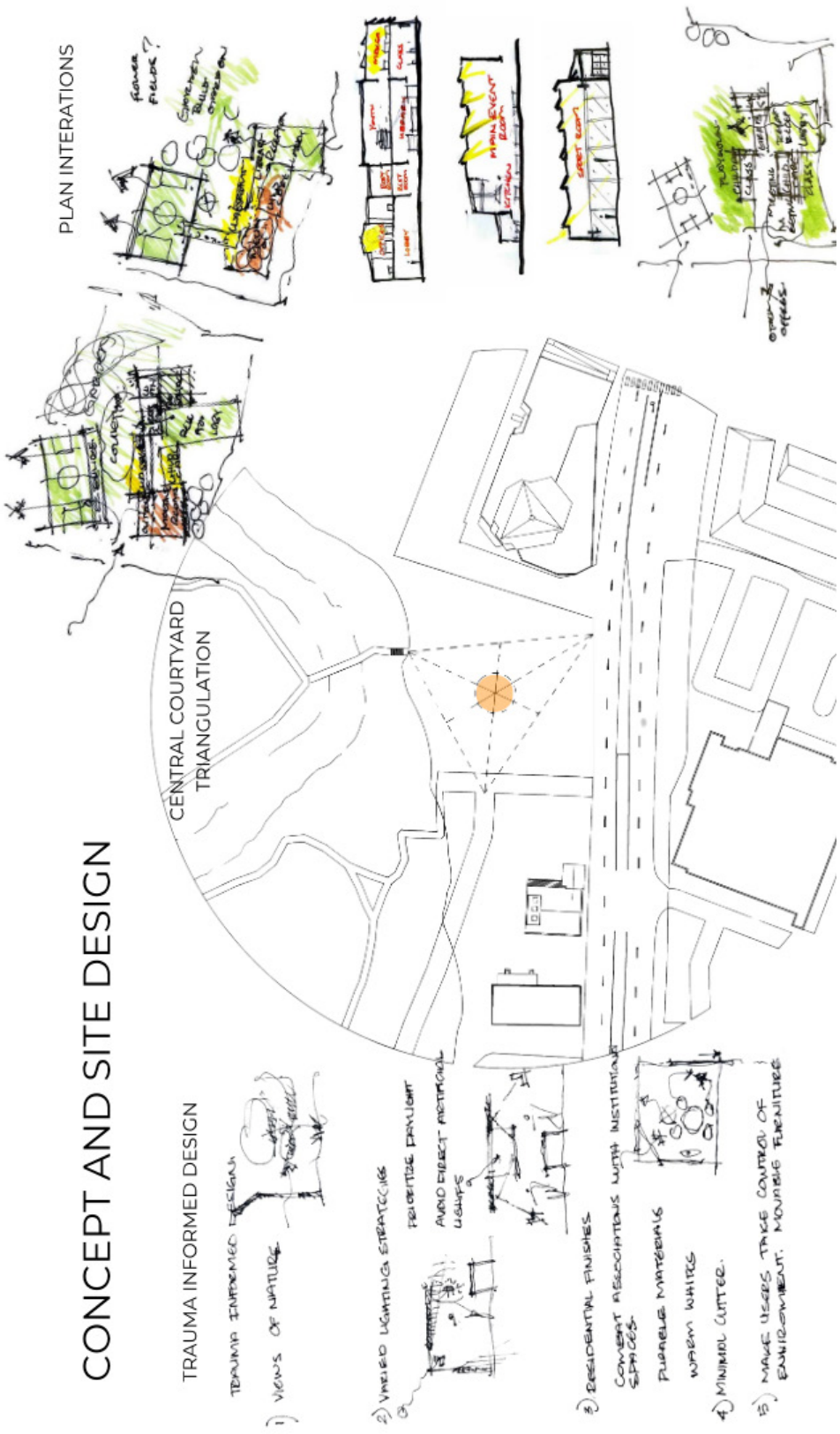


FIG. 26

Concept

Credit: Gabriel Alvarado

Recommendations

Architecture students conducted extensive research and community engagement to develop the following recommendations. Students drew insights from the Gresham Priority Survey, Gresham Latino Network, Gresham City Council, and other archival data, including the Gresham Public Pedestrian Summary. The findings were also informed by the Gresham Downtown Master Plan, Downtown Plan District Design Manual, Conceptual Framework Plan, specific public meeting summaries, and feedback from community engagement efforts shared by the Gresham City Council. The goal was to create a built environment that fosters connectivity, walkability, and inclusivity while addressing specific community needs.

DEDICATED ASSEMBLY AND MEETING SPACES

To support social and community engagement, students recommend creating dedicated assembly spaces that can be used for various gatherings, such as cultural events, community meetings, and public forums. Dedicated assembly spaces support cultural events, public meetings, and programs for all ages, offering neutral ground for diverse communities. Flexible designs like mezzanines or courtyards adapt to changing needs, while also activating surrounding areas and boosting local engagement. Assembly spaces varied in design, with some students designing double- or triple-height entrance lobbies. Others extended these areas into flexible rooms that could also function as auditoriums. Several proposals included multi-purpose spaces and meeting rooms. In the proposed youth centers, some students incorporated mezzanines to serve as dedicated assembly spaces for the younger generation. Additionally, some assembly areas were envisioned as open-air, food court-style spaces, integrated into indoor courtyards. These spaces should be flexible and adaptable, allowing for different group sizes and activities. In addition to larger assembly rooms, incorporating smaller meeting rooms would provide opportunities for intimate, smaller-scale interactions.

Atrium Third Floor

Atrium Second Floor

FIG. 27

Atrium assembly place.

Credit: August Stolba

FIG. 28

Interior assembly.

Credit: Zerin, Tanzila Haque

FIG. 29

Interior prospective from the main entrance.

Credit: Gabriel Alvarado

FIG. 30

Interior view from the main entrance.

Credit: Jessica Zedrick

FIG. 31

Assembly space.

Credit: Micah Gamlen

FIG. 32

Alternative assembly space.

Credit: Madison Coultrap and Sam Baranski

SMALL COURTYARDS AND OUTDOOR SPORTS COURTS

Integrating small courtyards and outdoor sports courts into the design will provide spaces for active recreation and relaxation. Integrating courtyards and outdoor sports courts creates essential spaces for recreation, rest, and community interaction. These areas enhance the user experience by offering visual relief, guiding circulation, and supporting diverse activities across age groups. They act as transitional zones between the building and park, encouraging movement and engagement. Thoughtful landscaping and flexible programming make these spaces inclusive, dynamic, and vital to the overall design. Students recommend that these areas should be accessible to people of all ages and could feature seating areas, greenery, and play structures. Students debated the extent to which sports facilities should be incorporated in the community center lot versus in the adjacent park. The outdoor sports courts can cater to various age groups, fostering a sense of community and well-being through active participation. Including outdoor courtyards and recreation spaces can create breathing room between the building masses, fostering a sense of spatial intimacy within the community center. These open areas provide a moment of pause and guide movement toward the Main City Park. The courtyards, along with designated spaces for food trucks and communal gatherings, support open-air activities such as performances and outdoor play. Some student proposals also incorporated thoughtful landscape elements to enhance these experiences. This approach reflects the idea that the community center should offer more than just enclosed or semi-outdoor spaces—it should provide a variety of spatial experiences. By combining small-scale outdoor areas with larger public spaces like the park, and integrating semi-outdoor and indoor environments, the proposed designs aim to deliver a layered, immersive, and inclusive experience for all users.

FIG. 33

Potential courtyard design.

Credit: Gabriel Alvarado

FIG. 34

The courtyard provides a focal gathering space that welcomes residents to the Main City Park.

Credit: Gabriel Alvarado

FIG. 35

Secondary courtyard design.

Credit: Zerin, Tanzila Haque.

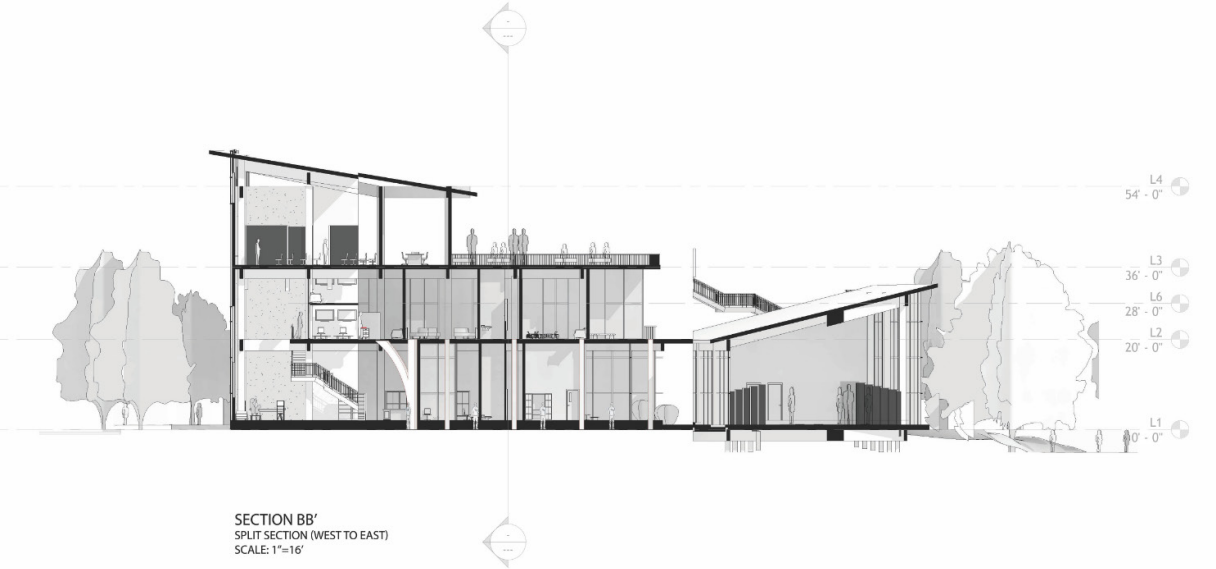


FIG. 36

Sectional perspective of Vision for Gresham.

Credit: Zerin, Tanzila Haque

FIG. 37

Courtyard design.

Credit: Micah Gamlen

FIG. 38

Courtyard section.

Credit: Micah Gamlen

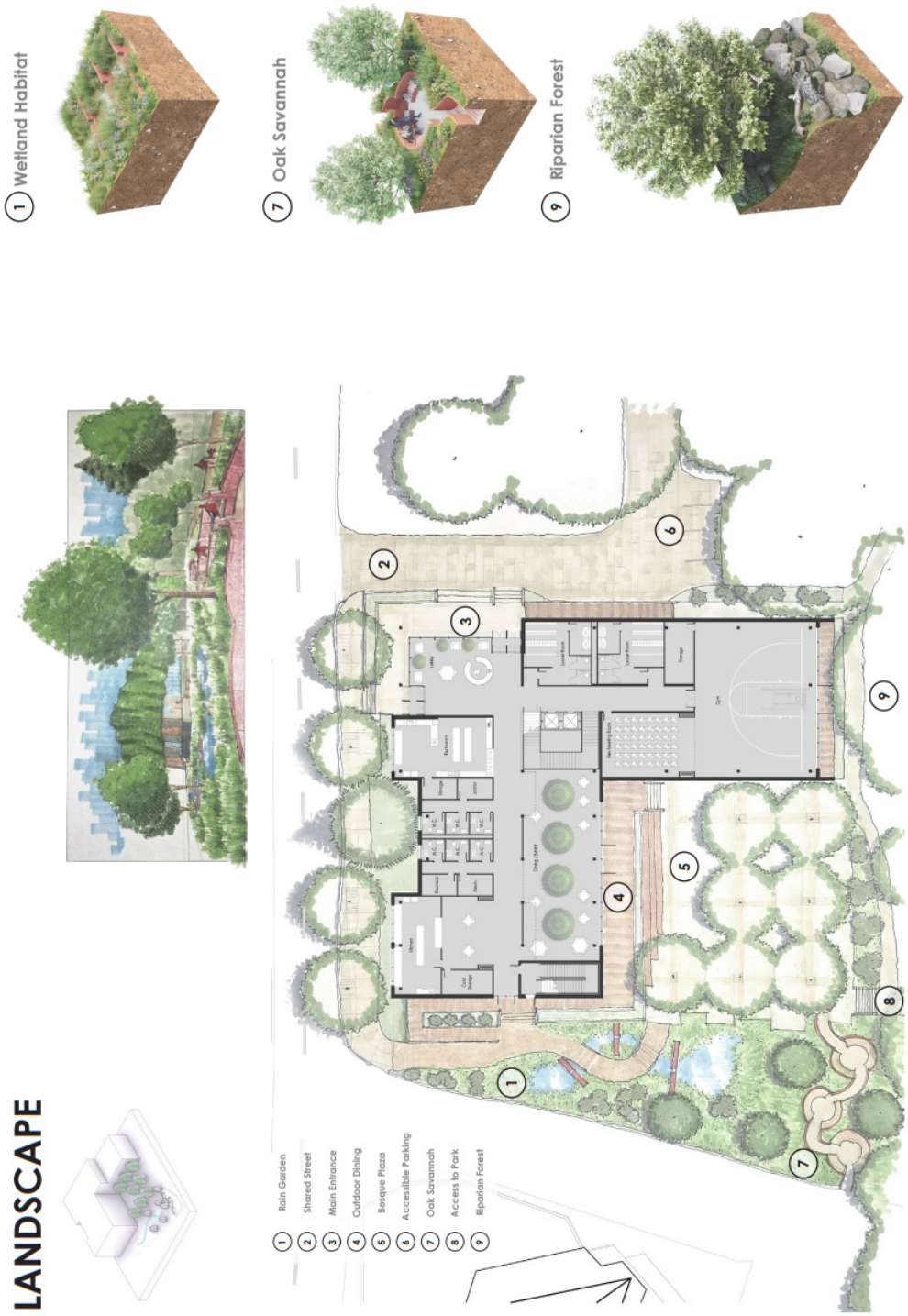


FIG. 39

Courtyard landscaping plan.

Credit: Andrew Halpin

FIG. 40

Sara Fernandez courtyard design.

Credit: Sara Fernadez

FIG. 41

Additional courtyard design.

Credit: Madison Coultrap and Sam Baranski

GATEWAY AND INTIMATE ENTRANCES

Varied entrances matter because they ensure inclusivity, addressing different user needs—public gathering, privacy, and accessibility. A bold gateway signals civic pride and openness, while smaller entries offer comfort and ease for seniors or those seeking quieter spaces. These strategies enhance both physical and psychological accessibility. They also strengthen the building's relationship with the park and community, making it more welcoming and functional for all. A bold entrance or gateway to the central park via the proposed community hub can provide a welcoming and visually striking point of entry. Additionally, creating intimate, welcoming entrances specifically designed for the elderly can make the space more accessible and user-friendly for this population. These entrances could focus on ease of access and comfort. Varied structural possibilities defined strong entrances and inviting internal atrium spaces. The design of the entry façade established a strong dialogue between the building and the pedestrian community, presenting a significant statement piece on the exterior. There was considerable discussion around the interior programming and how the scale of the entrances contributes to the overall experience. Entrances ranged from smaller, more intimate entryways to larger, primary access points. The smaller entrances were designed for individuals seeking privacy and a sense of safety—spaces that support quieter, focused activities. In contrast, the larger primary entrances were intended to be exposed for broader public engagement, welcoming larger groups and encouraging openness. Additionally, some proposals included "shared" or transitional entry points—balanced zones that draw attention without overwhelming, offering a middle ground between exposure and intimacy. These varying entry strategies reflect Gresham's diverse community needs and speak to the inclusive vision for the city's public architecture.

FIG. 42

Rendering for Powell Boulevard.

Credit: Zerin, Tanzila Haque

FIG. 43

Proposed entrance.

Credit: Micah Gamlen

FIG. 44

Front of the community center.

Credit: Madison Coultrap and Sam Baranski

FIG. 45

Building facade.

Credit: Sara Fernandez

FIG. 46

The Ark.

Credit: Fabiola Gomez-Chan

FIG. 47

Proposed entryway.

Credit: Jackson Taylor

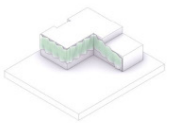


FIG. 48

Additional facade design.

Credit: Andrew Halpin

FIG. 49

Community center elevation.

Credit: Kevin O'Hara

SEPARATE YOUTH CENTERS AND ADMINISTRATIVE ENTRANCES

Separate entrances for the youth center and administrative areas enhance clarity, safety, and user experience by reducing cross-traffic and ensuring each group feels a sense of ownership. A distinct youth entry fosters identity and engagement, while separating administrative access allows for focused services like senior support and legal aid. This programming supports diverse needs without conflict, improving functionality and wayfinding.

To better accommodate the needs of different user groups, it is recommended to create separate entrances for the youth center and the administrative spaces. For instance, recognizing the significant presence of young people in Gresham, many students proposed a dedicated youth center in their designs.

Some recommendations included creating separate entrances for the youth center to establish a distinct identity, while others integrated it with café spaces or internal lobby areas to encourage social interaction. These variations reflect different approaches to making the youth center accessible and engaging. In addition, the proposed administrative spaces often included an attached help desk for senior citizens, along with dedicated areas for immigration and legal assistance. The youth center, in this context, serves as a key component in addressing the needs of a diverse population. This will ensure that each group can enjoy their respective areas without disruption while enhancing security and the overall user experience. The youth center should have its own direct access, distinct from administrative or other community-oriented spaces.

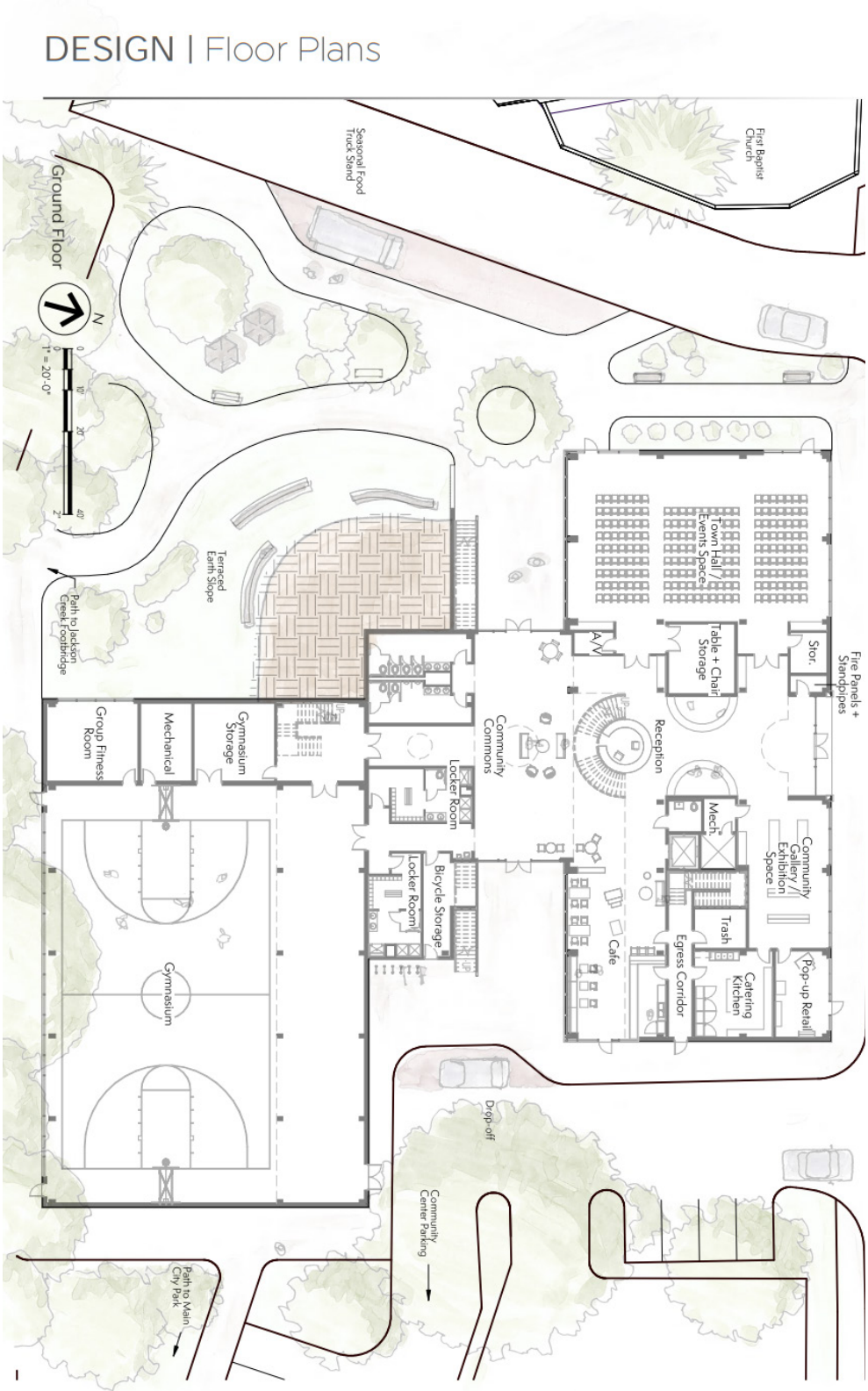


FIG. 50

Ground floor plan.

Credit: Kevin O'Hara

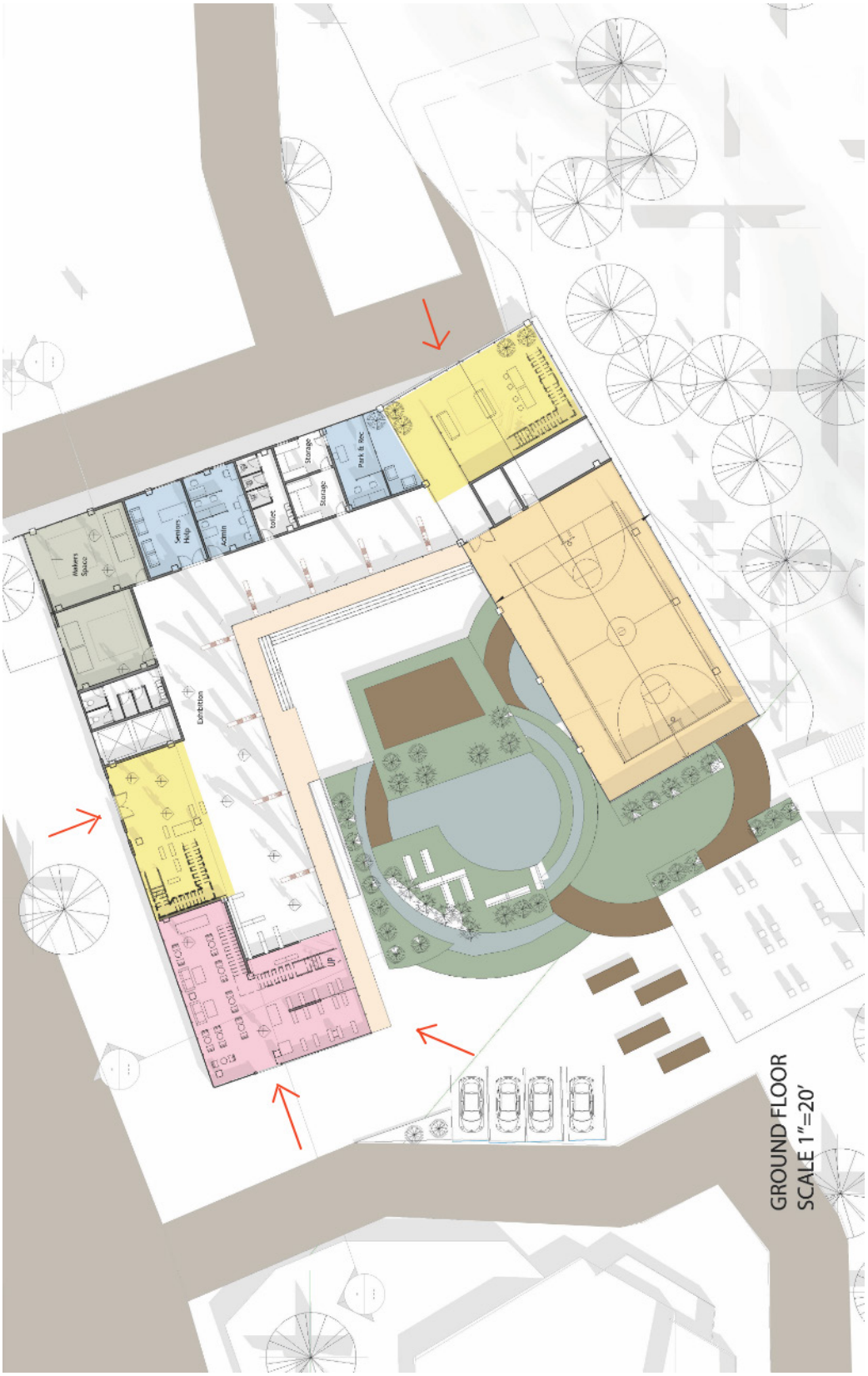


FIG. 51

Ground floor plan.

Credit: Zerin, Tanzila Haque

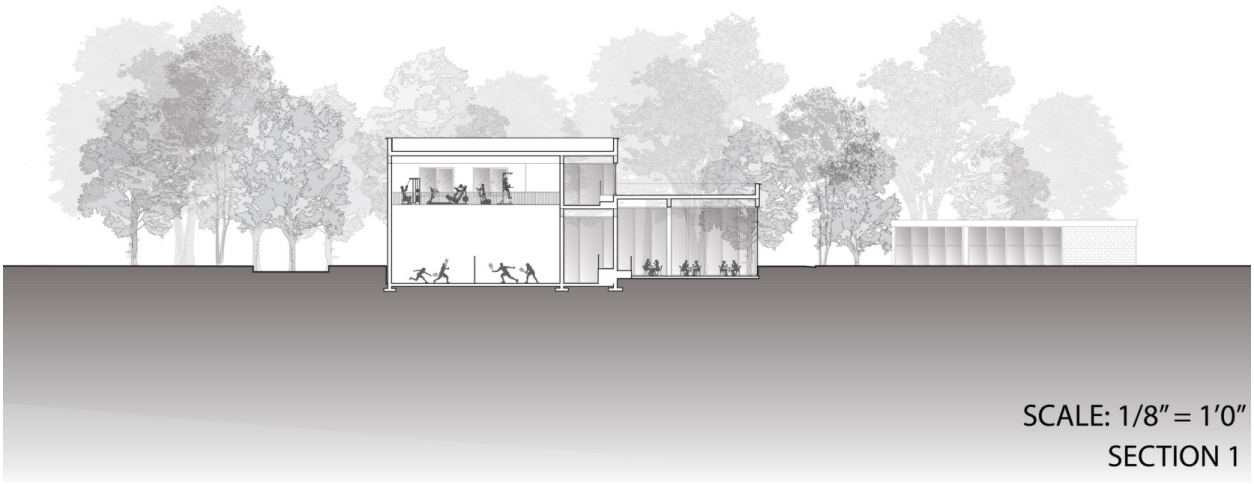


FIG. 52

Section one.

Credit: Ramen Bajwa

FIG. 53

Youth center.

Credit: Micah Gamlen

FIG. 54

Proposed courtyard.

Credit: Sara Fernandez

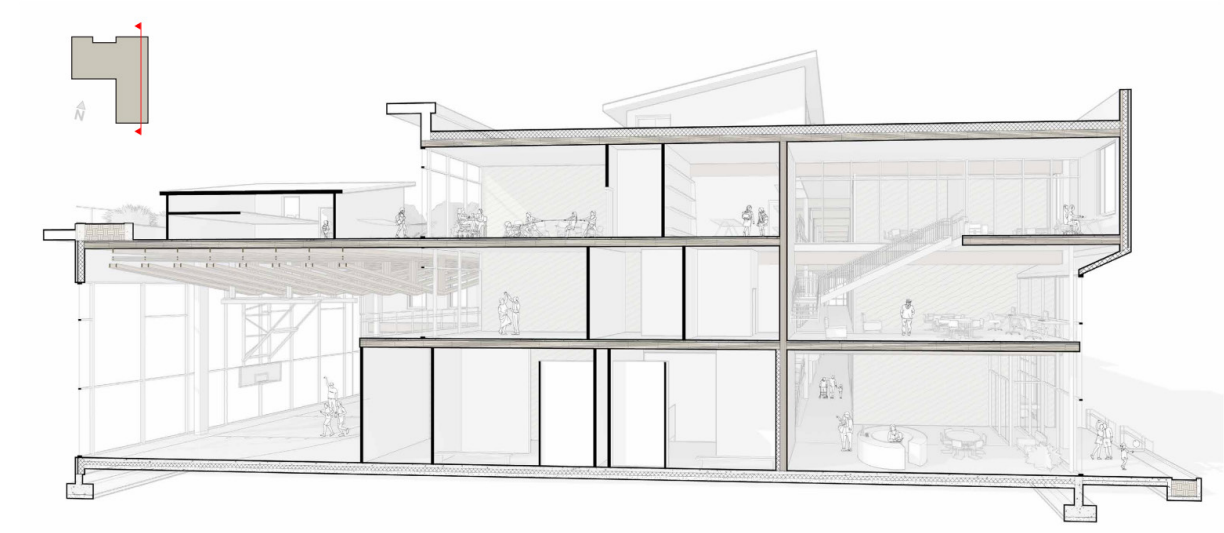


FIG. 55

Section entry.

Credit: Andrew Halpin

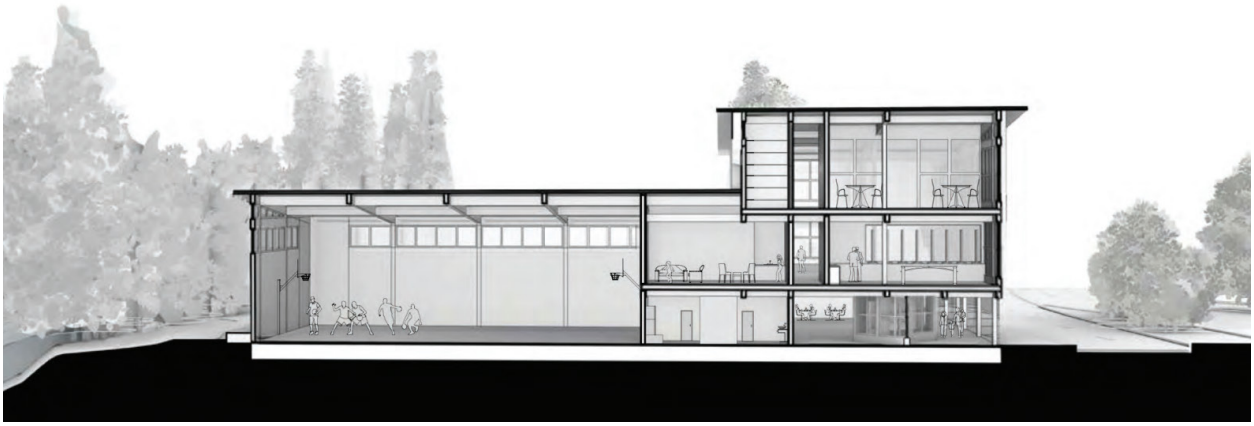


FIG. 56

Youth center entry.

Credit: Madison Coultrap and Sam Baranski

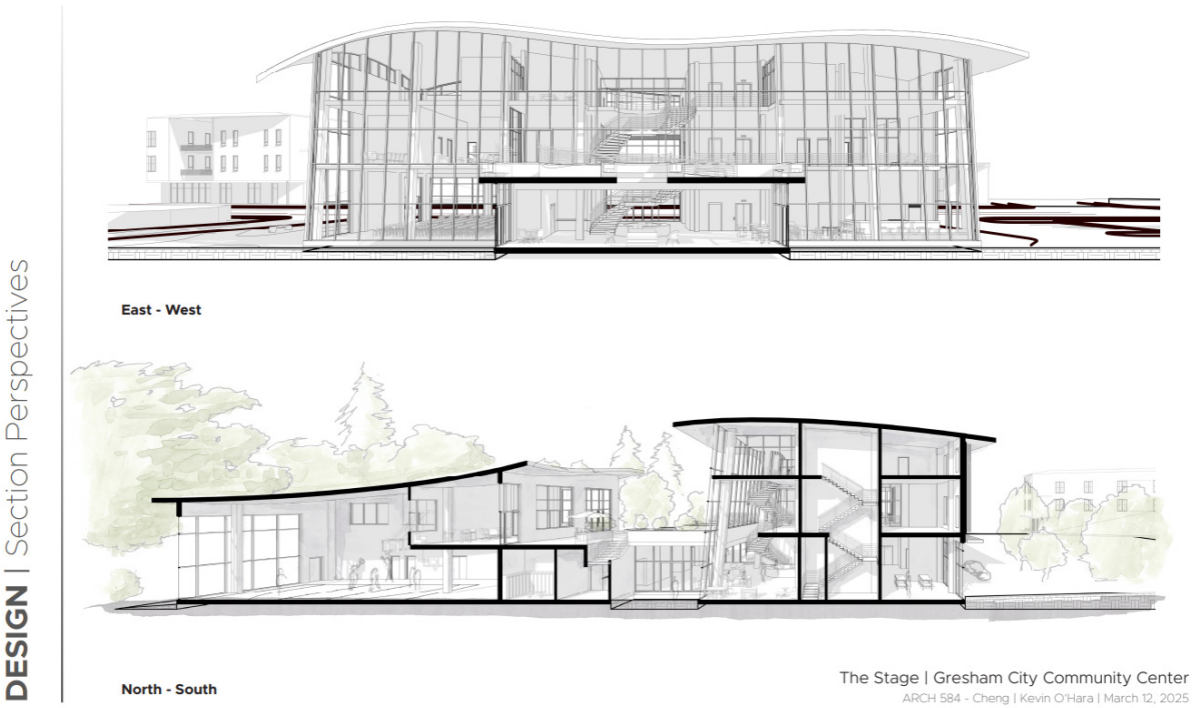


FIG. 57

Section Perspectives.

Credit: Kevin O'Hara

These recommendations aim to address the diverse needs of Gresham's residents, fostering an inclusive, walkable, and vibrant community environment. By incorporating flexible assembly areas, youth-specific spaces, and accessible entrances for the elderly, the design responds to the social and spatial needs of various user groups. Outdoor amenities like courtyards and sports courts encourage physical activity and intergenerational engagement, while the welcoming gateway and thoughtful entry points promote a sense of identity, belonging, and pride in place.

Conclusion

The Vision for Gresham project achieved its goals by developing scalable landscape designs that integrate community engagement, promote safe passage, maintain privacy, and ensure accessibility. The designs align with the Downtown Gresham Conceptual Framework and directly support the City Council's broader goals of creating a vibrant, inclusive, and walkable downtown.

Through community-driven strategies, the project introduced flexible gathering spaces, culturally welcoming entrances, healing gardens, and active recreational areas. These spaces strengthen the connection between the urban environment and Gresham's natural assets while responding to the diverse community needs.

By combining thoughtful spatial design with civic priorities, the Vision for Gresham lays the groundwork for a more connected, resilient, and inclusive city center that serves both the present and the future needs of the community.

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Appendix

SCYP Blog Post

Architecture Students Propose a Vision for Gresham's Historic Downtown

Students spinning a sculpture at the Meyer Memorial Trust on the Portland, Oregon field trip.

University of Oregon students in Architectural Design (ARCH 484/584) partnered with the City of Gresham through the Sustainable City Year Program to design concept plans for a 1.4 acres opportunity site. The goal of this project is to transform a vacant corner lot into a social and cultural magnet that bridges historic downtown Gresham and the adjacent Main City Park that connects to the expansive 21-mile Springwater Corridor trail. The project included two interdisciplinary charettes with Spatial Justice Fellow Alaa Hamid's landscape architecture students, who helped strengthen the vision for the site, considering stormwater management, community connections, education, and ecology. Hamid's students brought an understanding of Native American approaches from working on the Klamath basin in the Oregon studio sequence.

Students were tasked with ensuring their proposed two to four story building and surrounding landscape would consider Native American approaches to Nature, while providing space for civic and community gatherings, activities for all ages, and food-centered social events.

Nancy Cheng, Associate Professor in the School of Architecture & Environment, led students on an overnight site visit on January 10 to Gresham, Oregon. This experience allowed the class to meet with city officials, explore the project site and visit related buildings.

Architecture student, Madison Coultrap '27, reflected on the experience. "Getting the opportunity to meet Gresham locals and district officials, such as Ashley Miller and Dr. Araceli Farias, really embodied what the community of Gresham is like. Their input and feedback guided my peers and I in the initial programming and design development for this community center. While designing for Gresham, we were tasked to follow existing design requirements and site

limitations, which proposed a new challenge for our studio. In exploring the various facets that come with these existing conditions, I felt it was key to make this community center act as a beacon for all of Gresham's members while paying tribute to the surrounding land."

August Stolba presents work from the architecture-landscape architecture design charrette while partner Jessica Zedrick looks on.

This redesign project provides students with the opportunity to work with city stakeholders, learn about Oregon tribal values and traditions, and inspire future plans for the building.

Cheng shared her thoughts on the program's impact. "The Sustainable City Year Program provides students the chance to work on a real building site, meet the clients, and pitch ideas that could shape the site's future development.

Sara Fernandes presents to Eugene architects Randy Nishimura and Scott Clarke and Gresham client Ashley Miller.

"In the case of Gresham, our client Ashley Miller, Director of Urban Design & Planning, has been great at supplying plenty of information that make the place come to life. We're delighted to delve into recent community engagement reports to understand how to create a center that can address local needs and be welcoming to all. The city helped support a tour of not only the lovely green Gresham site but also related

award-winning buildings in the Portland vicinity – fun and inspiring!” Cheng said. Portland architects and planners also contributed community engagement documents and online feedback for the students.

This partnership between the Sustainable City Year Program and the City of Gresham represents a vital intersection between education, Oregon communities, and community-driven design, growing both knowledge and resources in the cities and for students.

“Throughout this term we were able to develop thoughtful connections between the urban landscape, historical attributes, and the City of Gresham. I am eager to present our findings and potential site proposals to the people of Gresham alongside our esteemed faculty," said Coultrap.

- Denali Herrick, SCYP Communication and Visual Media Assistant, Master's in Advertising and Brand Responsibility ‘25

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