

City of Arcata
Valley West Neighborhood




October 2025

Neighborhood Center Assessment

Prepared for



Prepared by

 HousingTools

**SALAZAR
ARCHITECT**



Table of Contents

	Page
Introduction and Background	1
Community Engagement	7
Programming and Services	12
Site Inventory	19
Financial Analysis	53
Conclusion and Recommendations	67
Exhibit A: Community Engagement Report	
Exhibit B: Conceptual Context Plan	
Exhibit C: Site 1 (Preferred) – 4800 Valley West Blvd.	
Exhibit D: Site 2 – 4755 Valley West Blvd.	
Exhibit E: Site 3 – 4700 Valley East Blvd.	
Exhibit F: Site 1 Programming Diagram – 4800 Valley West Blvd.	
Exhibit G: Site 2 Programming Diagram – 4755 Valley West Blvd.	
Exhibit H: Site 3 Programming Diagram – 4700 Valley East Blvd.	
Exhibit I— Community Values Chart	

Introduction and Background

Purpose of the Assessment Report

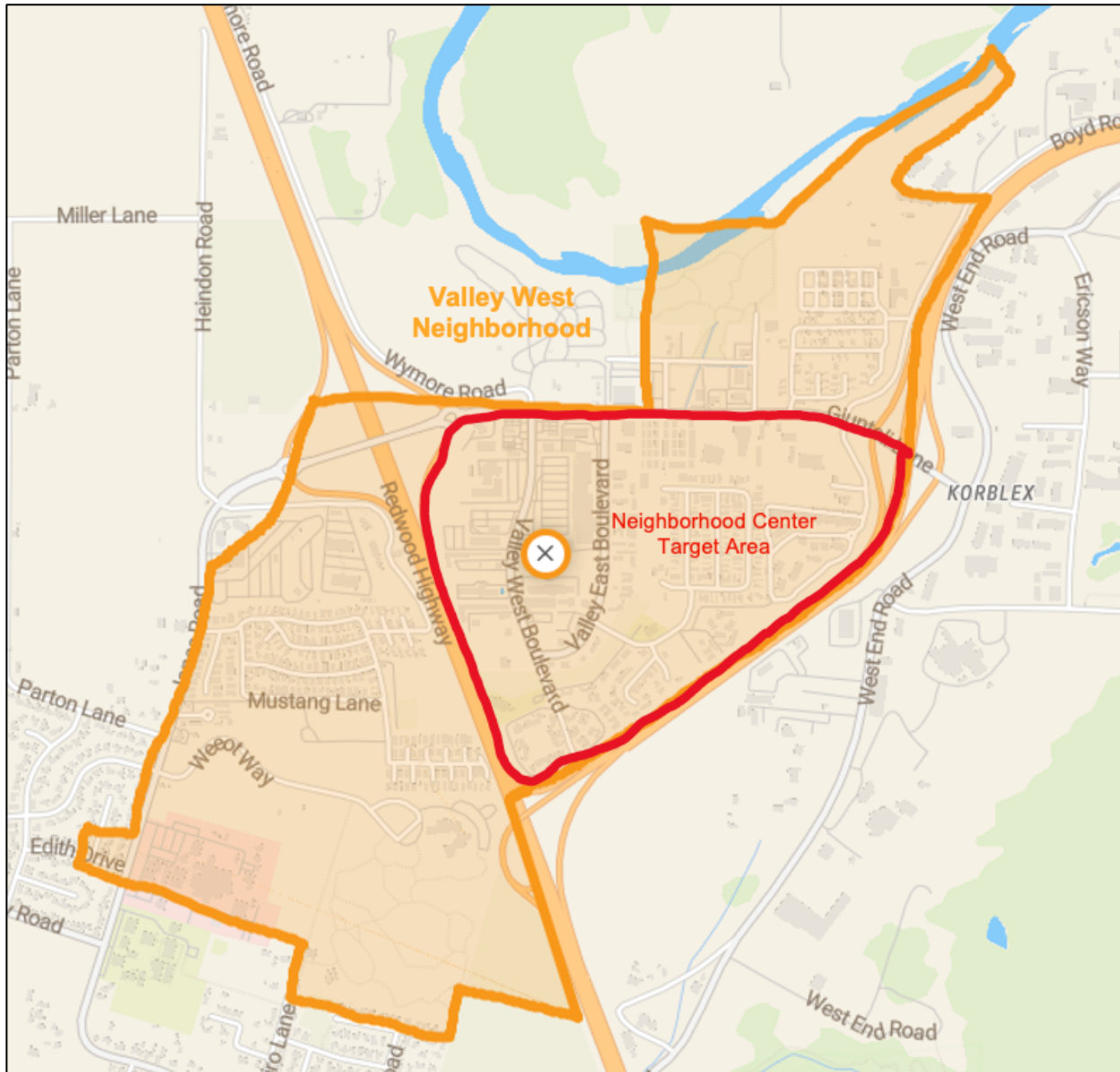
This Assessment Report is intended to provide the City of Arcata with the key information needed to make informed decisions regarding the development of a Neighborhood Center in the Valley West neighborhood. It summarizes:

- Community input on needed programming and services from Visioning Sessions, focus groups, an online survey and community partner interviews;
- The results of an assessment of various sites for current conditions and feasibility;
- A financial analysis of costs and resources associated with the development and operation of a Neighborhood Center; and
- Recommendations and conclusions for the City's consideration.

Geographic Orientation

The Neighborhood Center Study Area is the core of the Valley West neighborhood, which is located in north Arcata and is bounded by US Highway 101 to the west, State Route 299 to the south/southeast, and the Mad River to the north. See Figure 1 below for a map of the Valley West neighborhood highlighted orange, and the Study Area outlined in red. US 101 and SR 299 serve as major barriers to local travel and isolate residents, creating de facto geographic barriers to accessing services outside the neighborhood. There are a mix of uses within the neighborhood: commercial, residential and light industrial. Housing is characterized predominantly by multi-family units and mobile homes. The Valley West Shopping Center is the hub for retail activities within the neighborhood and most of Arcata's hotels, motels and fast-food restaurants are located within the neighborhood. Pacific Union School is in the Valley West Neighborhood, in the southwest corner and west of Highway 101, but it is not in the Study Area.

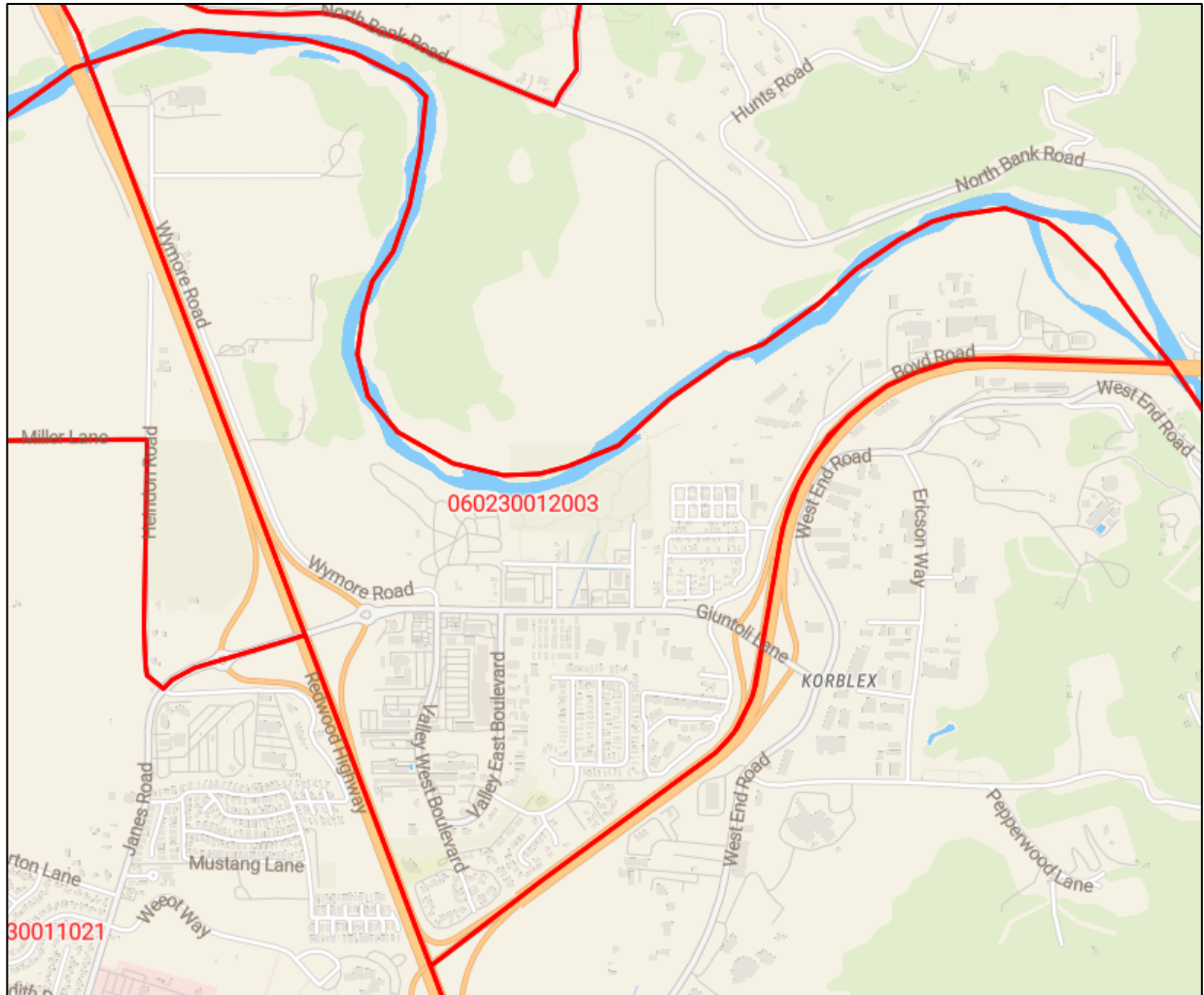
Figure 1: Valley West Neighborhood and Neighborhood Center Assessment Study Area



Demographic Background

Much of the Valley West neighborhood, and all of the Neighborhood Center Study Area, is located within Census Tract 12, Block Group 3 (see Block Group 3 Map below).

Figure 2: Map of Census Tract 12, Block Group 3



Some key demographic findings for Block Group 3 include:

- Population is 1,817 (9.64% of the City), while the City of Arcata is 18,857 (2020 Decennial Census)
- 30.88% of population is Hispanic or Latinx (Ethnicity), compared to 15.99% for the City of Arcata (2020 Decennial Census)

Valley West Neighborhood Center Assessment

- 49.75% of population is White alone and not Hispanic or Latinx (Race), compared to 68.32% for the City of Arcata (2020 Decennial Census)
- \$24,697 Median Household Income is the second lowest Block Group in the City (2018-2022 ACS)
- 52.38% of households earn less than \$25,000 (2018-2022 ACS)
- 35.71% of Families have income below the Poverty Threshold, the highest of any Block Group in the City (in 2023, the national Poverty Threshold for a family of four was \$27,750) (2018-2022 ACS)
- 14.35% of Families are in Deep Poverty (50% of Poverty Threshold), highest of any Block Group in the City (2018-2022 ACS)
- Median Household Income is 42.67% of the Area Median Income, the second lowest Block Group in the City (2018-2022 ACS)
- 51% of renters are Housing Cost Burdened, highest of any Block Group in the City (2018-2022 ACS)
- 59.71% of Renter Households are Severely Cost Burdened (50% or more of income), highest of any Block Group in the City (2018-2022 ACS)
- 52.09% of units are in small apartment buildings; 23.17% are in mobile homes; 12.66% are in single family detached homes (compared to 69.81% in single family detached homes for the County and 57.32% in single family detached homes for the State) (2018-2022 ACS)
- 27.98% of households own their home (2018-2022 ACS)
- 13.34% of population has a bachelor's degree, lowest of any Block Group in the City (2018-2022 ACS)
- There are no SNAP (Cal Fresh) retail locations in Block Group 3 (2023 USDA)

Previous Planning Efforts

In recent years, the City of Arcata has begun to make the Valley West neighborhood a priority for community planning and improvement through the 2014 Economic Development Strategic Plan, the West End Specific Plan and the City's updated General Plan 2045. The City partnered with Cal Poly Humboldt students in the Environmental Science and Management Department in 2021 to prepare a set of "Planning Recommendations for Valley West Community Resource Center and Park" which identified community needs and opportunity sites within the neighborhood. These recommendations were prepared in collaboration with Comunidad Unida del Norte de Arcata (CUNA) and Cumbre Humboldt as key community partners.

Neighborhood Center Assessment Authors

The titles and roles of the authors of this Valley West Neighborhood Center Assessment are listed below, who were contracted by the City of Arcata. Throughout this report, the authors are referred to as the "Consultant Team".

Figure 3: Neighborhood Center Assessment Authors

Firm	Roles
Housing Tools	Prime Contractor; Primary Author and Editor; Community Engagement; Programming and Services Assessment; Financial Analysis
Salazar Architect	Facilitate community visioning sessions; Site Inventory; Conceptual designs
LACO Engineering	Civil engineering assessments for Site Inventory
Terrain Landscape Architecture	Landscape Architecture and site improvement designs for Site Inventory
Chris A. Hess, Consultant	Community Engagement facilitation
Raruti Comunicação e Design	Community Engagement social media and outreach design; document design

Brief Overview of the Assessment Report

This Assessment Report is organized by the sections described below.

Community Engagement: This section describes the various efforts to engage residents and community organizations within the neighborhood to solicit their input on needs and priorities for a Neighborhood Center.

Programming and Services: The Programs and Services Analysis summarizes the input from the Community Engagement in terms of the highest priorities identified for programming and services, and describes potential community partners and agencies to deliver those services.

Site Inventory: The Site Inventory evaluates the top three Neighborhood Center sites identified in the Valley West Neighborhood with a description of the improvements that would be required, including accessibility improvements. This analysis includes: a review of proximity to existing neighborhoods and services; site characteristics such as size, existing improvements, topography, street access, and supporting infrastructure; zoning and general plan designations and impacts on the building envelope (setbacks, height, parking, open space); and environmental constraints such as flood zone, wetlands, coastal protections, and noise. The sites are compared with one another by a criteria of alignment with community needs, development feasibility, and financial feasibility.

Financial Analysis: The Financial Analysis covers the following topics for sites identified in the Site Inventory: 1) development costs; 2) potential development sources; and 3) recommended financial structures. Building characteristics and operational plans of similar Neighborhood Centers in the region are included as points of comparison. The Financial Analysis then projects operational costs and potential funding sources for the priority site. The analysis also highlights potential financing roadblocks and strategies to mitigate them.

Conclusion and Recommendations: This final section provides a concise summary of the entire report, along with key recommendations to the City for next steps.

Community Engagement

Introduction

Community engagement was a central element of the Valley West Neighborhood Center Assessment, as it is critical to understand what types of services and amenities will be of greatest value to Valley West residents. Efforts were made to reach neighborhood residents through a variety of activities, as summarized below.

Community Engagement Activities

- *Two in-person, community-wide visioning sessions*— conducted in English and Spanish, and held on February 1st, 2025 at the CUNA Resilience HUB (Woodsman Hall, 4700 Valley East Boulevard)
- *Five online focus group sessions*—
 - Valley West residents (April 19 and 26, 2025)
 - Queer Humboldt Staff (April 24, 2025)
 - Individuals from the Wiyot and other Indigenous Tribes of Arcata (April 3 and 24, 2025)
 - Social services providers (May 6, 2025)
- *Community-wide survey*— conducted December 4, 2024 through May 1, 2025 using paper copies, QR codes, and online software; provided in English and Spanish

The Social Services Providers' focus group was organized to obtain input on the services the organizations provide and how those align with the input received from the community. The online and paper survey was widely distributed in English and Spanish, with a focus on outreach to Valley West residents.

This chapter reports on common themes and the programs and services that participants identified across these outreach efforts. Also included is a general summary of space types that would be needed in the Neighborhood Center based upon the highest priorities identified through this process. A further refinement of these space types will be addressed in the Programming and Services Chapter.

Outreach

The Consultant Team conducted comprehensive community engagement to maximize citizen participation in development this Neighborhood Center Assessment. A particular focus was placed on outreach to Valley West residents and the Latinx community in Valley West. Towards that aim, the Consultant Team's community engagement strategy relied on connections with community organizations and associations that are active in Valley West. Two key Valley West entities that collaborated with the Consultant Team in these efforts were CUNA and Cumbre Humboldt, both of whom have strong roots in the Valley West neighborhood and the local Latinx community. The Consultant Team also leveraged the City's existing relationships with other local entities, contact lists, and its social media infrastructure and internet presence.

Valley West Neighborhood Center Assessment

Below is a summary of outreach methods that were employed to encourage participation in the community engagement activities described in this chapter. Detailed engagement summaries and definitions of each of the Community Values considered in the Community-wide Visioning Sessions can be reviewed in Exhibit A and to this document.

Outreach Methods

- *Community-wide Visioning Sessions—*
 - City social media posts in English and Spanish
 - Flyers in English and Spanish posted throughout the neighborhood and distributed via email by the City, CUNA and Cumbre Humboldt
 - In-person visits to Valley West businesses on January 31 and February 1 (about 40 businesses were visited)
- *Focus Group Sessions—* reached out directly to target entities (CUNA, Cumbre Humboldt, Queer Humboldt, Wiyot and other Indigenous Tribes of Arcata, and service providers via email
- *Community-wide Survey—*
 - Paper copies distributed by CUNA, Cumbre Humboldt, and City of Arcata
 - Advertised via emails and flyers by CUNA, Cumbre Humboldt, and City of Arcata
 - Conducted survey at an open house at an affordable housing complex in Valley West neighborhood
 - Month-long advertisement in the El Lenador newspaper
 - Direct mailing of the survey to mobile home parks in Valley West
 - In-person visits to Valley West businesses on January 31 and February 1
 - City social media posts in English and Spanish

Photos taken by Salazar Architect at the community-wide visioning sessions are shown below.



Valley West Neighborhood Center Assessment



Community Engagement Summary

Below is a summary of the highest priority Community Values, programming, and spaces for the Neighborhood Center as expressed by participants in the various community engagement activities. See Exhibit A for definitions of each of the Community Values considered in the Community-wide Visioning Sessions.

Visioning Sessions and Focus Group Input

Sustainability, and Arts and Culture, were the most consistently mentioned Community Values overall in the visioning sessions and focus groups, followed by Resilience and Community Wellness. These values indicate that residents would like sustainability to be a core of design and construction, and that the designed space should foster the unique arts and culture of the Arcata area, provide a safe gathering space for residents to pursue all forms of wellness, and strengthen resilience through thoughtful design and planning to accommodate the needs of the community in times of disasters.

The top programming and space choices that were voted on or mentioned at least 6 times in the visioning sessions and focus groups included:

- Covered outdoor space
- Informal meeting space
- Classes/Workshops
- Events Room
- Food pantry
- Community kitchen
- Adult Education
- Community garden
- Showers
- Art Gallery Space

When weighted for Valley West Residents and Spanish speakers, the top choices included:

- Covered outdoor space
- Showers
- Library
- Community garden
- Community kitchen
- Medical support
- Food pantry
- Informal meeting space

Community-wide Survey Input

Classes and Programs	
Needed most (English):	Youth and Teens Programs
Needed most (Spanish):	Youth and Teens Programs, ESL courses, Library Branch
Would be used most frequently (English):	Library, Public WiFi/Computer Lab, Youth and Teens Programs, Adult Life Skills
Would be used most frequently (Spanish):	ESL courses, Library Branch, Youth and Teens Programs, Volunteer Led Homework Help, Public WiFi/Computer Lab

Valley West Neighborhood Center Assessment

Recreational Spaces	
Needed most (English):	Youth and Teen recreation, Weight and Cardio, Music Venue, Group Exercise
Needed most (Spanish):	Weight and Cardio, Youth and Teen recreation, Group Exercise, Music Venue
Would be used most frequently (English):	Weight and Cardio, Group Exercise, Music Venue
Would be used most frequently (Spanish):	Weight and Cardio, Group Exercise, Pre-school and Daycare, Youth and Teen Recreation, Music Venue

Site Amenities	
Needed most (English):	Community Garden, Police Substation, Public Bathrooms
Needed most (Spanish):	Community Garden, Public Bathrooms, Community Information Board, Meeting Rooms for Civic Groups
Would be used most frequently (English):	Community Information Board, Community Garden, Transit Information, Community Services Board
Would be used most frequently (Spanish):	Community Garden, Business Incubator Space, Transit Info Board, Community Services Board, Public Bathroom

Social and Health Services	
Needed most (English):	Food Pantry, Dental Clinic, Medical Clinic, Extreme Weather Shelter
Needed most (Spanish):	Medical Clinic, Dental Clinic, Vision Clinic
Would be used most frequently (English):	Dental Clinic, Food Pantry, Medical Clinic, Vision Clinic, Counseling, Benefits Assistance
Would be used most frequently (Spanish):	Medical Clinic, Summer Lunch for Kids, Benefits Assistance, Dental Clinic, Showers, Mental Health

Programming and Services

Introduction

This chapter explores the feasibility of programs and services prioritized through the community engagement activities, and recommends ways that they might be implemented. The first step in this process was to list the prioritized programs and services, and match them to local agencies that may be able to partner with the City to deliver them. After potential partner agencies were identified, strategies for implementation of the programs and services at the Neighborhood Center were investigated. These opportunities were discussed in the focus group with service providers on May 6, 2025, and interviews held with service providers.

Priority Programs from Community Engagement Process

Figures 10 and 11 below shows programs and services prioritized by participants in community engagement activities, and local agencies the City can potentially partner with to deliver these programs. Those areas identified as “high priority” were both consistently mentioned throughout the various modes of community engagement and received the highest number of votes overall. Those areas identified as “medium priority” were not consistently mentioned and received fewer votes overall.

Figure 4: Programs and Services Identified as High Priority through Community Engagement

Area of Focus	Programs/Services	Agencies
Food Insecurity and Community Building Around Food	Community Garden Community Kitchen Food Pantry and CSA Box Distribution Farmer’s Market	North Coast Grower’s Association The Humboldt Permaculture Guild Food for People Centro del Pueblo
Medical, Dental and Mental Health Services	Telehealth Appointments Mobile Medical and Dental Van	Changing Tides Family Services Open Door Community Health Humboldt County Public Health and Behavioral Health
Recreation	Youth and Teen Programs Weight and Cardio Room	City of Arcata Recreation Department Boys and Girls Club
Education	English as an Additional Language	English Express Empowered Humboldt
Community Resources	Branch Library Computer Lab/WiFi Community Information Board Community Services Board Transit Information	Humboldt County Library City of Arcata

Community Events	Social events Cultural programs Covered Outdoor Space for People to Meet and Use Flexibly	City of Arcata CUNA Cumbre Humboldt Queer Humboldt Wiyot Tribe Equity Arcata Centro del Pueblo
------------------	---	--

Figure 5: Programs and Services Identified as Medium Priority through Community Engagement

Area of Focus	Programs/Services	Agencies
Arts	Art Gallery Space Art Instruction Classes Arts and Crafts for Children and Youth Music room Music Performance Venue	City of Arcata Recreation Boys and Girls Club Outer Space Arcata Arcata Arts Institute Arcata Playhouse/Playhouse Arts
Families with Children	Childcare Space Family Support Services	Changing Tides Family Services First Five Humboldt Northcoast Children's Services Arcata Family Resource Center
Adults	Adult Life Skills Benefits Assistance Business Incubation and Development Senior Programs	Humboldt County Health and Human Services Changing Tides Family Services North Edge Arcata Chamber of Commerce Humboldt Senior Resource Center

Existing Programs that Address High Priority Areas and Their Potential Role in the Neighborhood Center

The following are active organizations and programs that operate within the City of Arcata and/or within Humboldt County that could expand their reach to the Valley West Neighborhood through the use of the Neighborhood Center.

Participated in Service Providers Focus Group

The first four groups below are those who participated in the Service Provider Focus Group and offered input on how they could offer programs through the proposed Center and what type of space they might need.

North Coast Grower's Association (NCGA): NCGA operates Farmer's Markets throughout Humboldt County, offers a Harvest Box CSA program for individuals and households to receive fresh produce from multiple farms each week through the Food Hub, works to expand household access to fresh produce at Farmer's Markets through CalFresh, and offers classes on cooking and nutrition and training on growing fruits and vegetables. The NCGA participated in the Service Providers Focus Group and indicated they could use the Neighborhood Center for distribution of the CSA Harvest Boxes to offer cooking and nutrition classes and potentially as a site for a rotating Farmer's Market. They noted that Valley West residents do not have easy access to these services now due to transportation barriers and that a Neighborhood Center would help them to reach these residents. The types of space that would be helpful to them would be a community kitchen, indoor food pantry, and both indoor and outdoor space for distribution of CSA Food Boxes.

Changing Tides Family Services: Changing Tides Family Services offers a wide range of child care, behavioral health, disability and community/social services. These include:

- Family Empowerment Services: Behavioral Health Support Services, Early Childhood Mental Health Services, Intensive Care Coordination, Therapeutic Behavioral Services Intensive Home-Based Services, Supervised Visitation Services
- Special Needs Services: Supported Parenting Program, In-Home Respite Services, Respite Plus & Skills Acquisition Services, Early Start Family Resource Center
- Childcare Services: Alternative Payment, CalWORKs Stages 1, 2, and 3, Family Child Care, Home Education Network, Emergency Foster Bridge Child Care, Early Head Start-Child Care Partnership
- Resource and Referral Services: Free Child Care Referrals, Capacity Building & Professional Development for Child Care Providers, Quality Counts California, CalFresh Parent Services, Child Care Food Program

Changing Tides participated in the Service Providers Focus Group and indicated they could offer all of their Family Empowerment Services at the Center, as well as direct people to the other resources they offer and those in the community. They noted that transportation barriers are an issue for Valley West residents, so offering services at a Neighborhood Center would be very beneficial. They indicated they would need a small office to meet with parents, a child-friendly space with toys and activities, and ideally some type of outdoor playground would be beneficial.

211 Humboldt: 211 Humboldt offers 24/7 resource and referral information to all residents. By dialing "211", residents can speak to a live resource specialist who can help with a wide variety of needs such as:

- Find food pantries or information about CalFresh.
- Locate child care, parenting classes, or after-school programs for children.
- Get information on transitional and low-income housing in Humboldt County.
- Access information on programs for low-income families and individuals such as free tax preparation assistance, (VITA/EKS).
- Get assistance in locating local clinics and hospitals or help with transportation to medical appointments both in and out of Humboldt County.

Valley West Neighborhood Center Assessment

- Get connected to mental health and substance abuse addiction resources, such as counseling, drug and alcohol programs, and safe and sober housing
- Find support for seniors and persons with disabilities and much more

211 Humboldt participated in the Service Providers Focus Group. While they would not offer in-person services at the site, they could assist by providing flyers and brochures about their services and participate in presentations/classes regarding connecting with community services. They noted that some Valley West residents may not be aware of their services.

Queer Humboldt: Queer Humboldt serves 2S/LGBTQIA+ individuals through community education, mental health services, micro- grants/mutual aid, the North Coast Two-Spirit Project, networking, and resource sharing. Queer Humboldt participated in the Service Providers Focus Group. They indicated they could offer youth groups, Queer Joy events (focused on arts and resilience), art or cooking classes, book discussions (Queer Centered), as well as on-site case management. They indicated they do serve students and lower-income individuals in Valley West and having a Neighborhood Center would improve accessibility to their services for those individuals. They would need access to a small office for case management, kitchen for cooking classes, and classroom for other services.

Additional Potential Organizational Partners

While these groups did not participate in the Service Providers Focus Group, they are known community organizations within Arcata, and some of them currently provide services in the Valley West Neighborhood and at other Neighborhood Centers operated by the City. Organizations like CUNA, Cumbre Humboldt and the Wiyot Tribe participated in both the Visioning Sessions and other focus groups.

The Humboldt Permaculture Guild: The Humboldt Permaculture Guild (HPG) is a group of food producers, business owners, builders, educators, and permaculture designers who share a belief in resilient communities, regenerative lifestyles, educating the community, stewardship of natural systems, local seed development, natural building, conservative water, and energy use. As part of its mission, The Humboldt Permaculture Guild aims to provide platforms for networking and to foster social gatherings and events. With the community's input on the Wellness Values of Sustainability and Resilience in both the design and implementation of programs at the Neighborhood Center, the Guild could assist in implementing the community's vision and values.

Food for People: This is the food bank for Humboldt County, working to eliminate hunger and improve the health and well-being of the community through access to healthy and nutritious foods, community education and advocacy. The Mobile Produce Pantry is a refrigerated truck full of fresh fruits and vegetables that drives to specific locations across Humboldt County on a monthly schedule, setting up a free farm stand-style produce distribution. The fresh fruits and vegetables available from the Mobile Produce Pantry come from a variety of sources, including purchases from local farms. Food for People staff provide CalFresh information and application assistance on site to help participants afford to purchase fresh fruits and vegetables at local stores and farmers' markets over the rest of the month. With many residents having limited access to transportation and being low income, the Mobile Produce Pantry could facilitate access to fresh, nutritious produce that is free, stretching limited incomes and providing greater variety.

Valley West Neighborhood Center Assessment

Open Door Community Health: Open Door Community Health operates as the County's Federally Qualified Health Center, serving individuals and households who are low-income and covered by Medi-Cal. While they do have a clinic in Arcata, it is located approximately 3 miles to the south of the Valley West neighborhood and on the west side of Highway 101; therefore, some residents may not have transportation to access services at the clinic. One of the primary services they might be able to offer is telehealth services, so that residents could see a doctor or nurse practitioner without the need to travel beyond the neighborhood.

Humboldt County Public Health Department: The Public Health Department offers a wide range of health services, from vaccinations to tobacco education. They do not however operate a Public Health Clinic in Arcata. The Healthy Communities Division helps communities create social and physical environments that make the healthy choice the easy choice for everyone, such as working with local grocery stores to increase healthy food options. They also offer health education on topics such as nutrition, tobacco use, maternal health and childhood lead poisoning. This Division may be able to help organize health fairs, bringing important health screening and information to the neighborhood's residents.

Boys and Girls Club: The Boys & Girls Clubs of the Redwoods is a youth development program for children ages 6 to 18. One of their core offerings is an after-school program where children can get assistance with homework, have a nutritious snack and engage in fun activities. They also offer other recreational activities. This is a huge benefit to working parents. The Boys and Girls club may be able to help facilitate signing up children from the Valley West Neighborhood for their services and may be able to work with the City and the public school in the neighborhood to bring recreation programs to the Neighborhood Center.

English Express Empowered Humboldt: English Express' mission is to support personal and social change for the English language learner community in Humboldt County. Their English classes are designed for adult non-native English speakers who wish to improve their English language skills for personal, professional or academic purposes. They also offer citizenship classes, preparing people for the civics test, naturalization interview and help filling out the necessary forms. Their potential role would be offer these services to the residents of the Valley West Neighborhood at the Center.

Humboldt County Library: The Arcata branch of the public library may be able to help facilitate the stocking of books and magazines at the Neighborhood Center, as well as connection to library volunteers to offer reading circles for children and helping adults learn to read.

CUNA: CUNA, Community United of North Arcata, is a grassroots, bilingual project to build a better-represented Valley West/North Arcata. CUNA is currently leasing the Woodsman Hall building in the Valley West Neighborhood and through programming and events at that site, has begun the efforts and momentum to provide a gathering place for the Valley West residents. They will continue to be a significant part of any Neighborhood Center, in terms of planning and programming.

Cumbre Humboldt: Cumbre Humboldt is dedicated to seeking and promoting educational and enriching opportunities for Latinx families and individuals throughout Humboldt County. Cumbre Humboldt works extensively with individuals and households in the Valley West Neighborhood and may be interested in contributing to cultural activities and programming at the Center.

Wiyot Tribe: The City of Arcata occupies part of the ancestral territory of the Wiyot peoples known as Goudi'ni. The Wiyot Tribe are a federally recognized tribe and sovereign nation. During a meeting with the Wiyot Tribe about the proposed Neighborhood Center, they indicated they could develop cultural programming to offer the residents, language classes and assist with the naming of the building and consultation on incorporating Indigenous design into the building.

Equity Arcata: Equity Arcata is a partnership between the City of Arcata, Cal Poly Humboldt, local businesses and members of the community working to make Arcata a more inclusive and welcoming environment for People of Color. Equity Arcata working groups collaborate under the collective impact model in order to achieve social change. As a partnership-based advocacy group working to support community dialogue on issues of equity, the Neighborhood Center could provide a hub for support groups and community building through shared meals, and arts/cultural programs.

Centro del Pueblo: Centro del Pueblo is dedicated to creating inclusive and supportive environments for Indigenous Migrants and the Latinx community. They offer organic produce through the CSA model (with crops grown at Bayside Farm), operate a Youth Empowerment Program, and focus on educating immigrants about their rights and advocating on their behalf. This organization is already working within the neighborhood and a Neighborhood Center could provide an additional venue for community events sponsored by the organization.

Recommendations Based on the City's Experience Operating Neighborhood Centers

The City of Arcata currently operates two Neighborhood Centers— the Arcata Neighborhood Center and the D Street Center. The City staff who oversee these facilities and manage the rental of the facilities were interviewed for this report. They provided feedback that can be used to inform the City's planning for programming and space in the Valley West Neighborhood Center. Below is a summary of feedback from the Neighborhood Center operators.

Programming and Space: What Works Well?

- Sports/recreation
- Summer and sports camps
- Arts program
- Collaboration with First Five Humboldt (play center)
- Dance classes/group
- Large rental space for private groups
- Good audio-visual system: screen, speakers, plug-and-play connection, etc.
- Space for food trucks

Programming and Space: What are the Greatest Challenges/What Do You Need More of?

- Need more storage: tables, chairs, toys, books, portable stage, AV equipment, sports equipment, maintenance supplies, etc.
- Limited Parking and loading space
- Flexibility to create separate spaces within a large space; need breakout rooms
- Kitchen with more amenities, including a freezer

Valley West Neighborhood Center Assessment

What would you recommend for a new Neighborhood Center in terms of physical layout or programming?

- Plenty of storage
- Larger hall or gym for multipurpose activities
- Mix of large and small breakout rooms
- Multipurpose room that can be subdivided
- Play center for toddlers
- Youth programming
- Arts programming
- Playground or outdoor play space
- Recreation space
- Kitchen
- Space for special events, such as birthday parties
- On-site parking, loading space
- May need air conditioning, or at least adequate airflow and ventilation

Conclusion

The City has extensive experience in the operation of existing Neighborhood Centers that can be drawn upon to inform the design and programming of the Valley West Neighborhood Center. It is clear from the agencies that attended the Service Providers Focus Group that they understand and have experience with the barriers to service that Valley West residents currently experience, and that many of them are ready to offer needed services at a neighborhood site to address these barriers. In addition, the City has established partnerships with agencies that currently offer successful programs at the existing Neighborhood Centers.

The City should consider establishing pilot programs that address the High Priority areas identified, scaling them to be appropriate for the Valley West Neighborhood. Depending upon the location selected for the Neighborhood Center, there is also a tremendous opportunity to provide for outdoor programming, such as a community garden, playground, covered outdoor space and open green space.

Site Inventory

Introduction

The Consultant Team conducted an inventory of potential sites for locating a Neighborhood Center in the Valley West neighborhood in Arcata. Preferred sites selected for in-depth site assessment have adequate space and appropriate zoning to accommodate a facility with all, or most of, the prioritized interior and exterior spaces as identified in this report. This section includes a description of the methodology used for the site assessment, a description of sites that were analyzed, an analysis of preferred sites, and a recommendation of the preferred site and next steps toward exploring its development.

Methodology

Selection Criteria

Salazar Architect reviewed the properties that were available within the Study Area, which was bounded by the triangle between Highway 101, Route 299 and thoroughfare Giuntoli Lane. See Figure 6 for site area of study boundary dashed in red.

Figure 6: Valley West Neighborhood Center Study Area Map



Valley West Neighborhood Center Assessment

To meet the pre-selection criteria, the site had to be:

- Located within the Study Area as shown in Figure 6 above;
- Have public transportation within walking distance (500 feet);
- Have a commercial zoning designation; and
- Be available for purchase by the City.

Site Visits

The Consultant Team was coordinated by James Coles from Housing Tools and included Alex Salazar and Ernestina Fuenmayor from Salazar Architect; Natalie Mendez and Rodney Wilburn from LACO (Civil Engineering); Piper Von Chamier from Terrain (Landscape Architecture), and Delo Freitas and Sara Channel from the City of Arcata. The team visited four sites during the morning of Friday January 31st, 2025 and was able to determine preliminary preferences for the possible sites. The team toured the sites listed below. See Figure 7 below for site locations within the area of study.

Figure 7: Potential Site Locations



Street level photos of the four sites visited are provided below in Figures 8-11.

Figure 8: Site 1 (Vacant Lot South of Mall, 4800 Valley West Blvd.)



Figure 9: Site 2 (Former Laurel Tree School, 4555 Valley West Blvd.)



Figure 10: Site 3 (Woodsman Hall, 4700 Valley West Blvd.)



Figure 11: Site 4 (Vacant Lot, Removed from Consideration, 4633 Valley West Blvd.)



The 4633 Valley West Blvd site was removed from consideration after the visit due to the following conditions:

- More than 50% of the site is covered with debris from construction (a dump site) and the other 50% has a creek and apparent wetlands; and
- The site is next to the highway and is very narrow.

Community Input

The Consultant Team asked participants to vote on the three most important Community Values in the visioning sessions and focus groups. The three most voted and mentioned values were Sustainability, Arts and Culture, and Safe & Healthy Environment. Figure 12 below is a bubble diagram representing these values and how they connect with the program developed for schematic designs based on community input.

Figure 12: Community Values, Programming, and Spaces (See Exhibit I for an enlarged image)



Community Values were voted on during in-person workshops in February 2025

Participating Groups:

General Public
Valley West Residents
Valley West Latinx Residents

Programming

After listening and gathering all the data from these engagements, the consultant team created a building and site program for the Neighborhood Center that included spaces that were prioritized by the community. The Salazar team then allocated square footage to these spaces, with some determined by the number of users and/or code requirements. With this information, the team was able to determine the building and outdoor space square footage, as well as make recommendations to the City for necessary improvements to reach the goal of building a Neighborhood Center.

Valley West Neighborhood Center Assessment

Results pointed to a clear need for a food pantry, a community kitchen, classroom areas, daycare, storage, and large community rooms inside the building. And for the outdoor areas, the community wanted cover areas, spaces for sport, playground, and community garden. All of these were incorporated as possible within these proposals.

The total square footage (SF) of a building that would include the areas shown in Figure 13 below is approximately 18,000 SF. The following is a breakdown of the program by use: Community, Staff, and Maintenance/Services.

Figure 13: Programming Space Needs

Programming Area	Area per Room (Square Foot)
Community Areas	
Reception desk/Lobby/Art Gallery/Community-Educational Resources Wall	140
Childcare for 15 kids and 5 teachers; dedicated restroom; dedicated playground	2,100
One (1) classroom/computer lab (10-15 people)	300
Four (4) classrooms/meeting rooms of 20-30 people (could be combined into a large multipurpose room with folding walls): <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Adult education, including Language classes, business literacy, citizenship path, etc. • Tutoring • Social and educational programs for seniors • Workshops/mom and child activities 	1,600
Community/event room and performance stage	1,200
Two (2) small study spaces/music rooms (1-2 people)	80
Two (2) quiet room/nursing/mom room	200
Community kitchen- commercial grade to teach cooking classes	1,000
Food pantry	1,800
Indoor recreation space/gymnasium	1,500
Exercise room (30 people)	1,500
Library	750
Six (6) gender neutral restrooms (depending on programming decisions, this number can vary)	420
Two (2) individual showers	140
Staff and Workplace Areas	
Two (2) Offices	300
Printing/Office supply	100

Valley West Neighborhood Center Assessment

Service Areas	
Janitorial	90
Mechanical Room	150
Electrical Room	200
IDF room/server room/IT	120
Bike storage	150
Storage	1,200
25% Circulation (In the two-story options, this percentage might increase due to the need for elevator and stairs, depending on the design and second floor program.)	3,700
Outdoor Program: While there are similarities in all sites for the outdoor areas, due to site restrictions and limitations, each site has specific square footage and areas that will be described below with each property.	

Preferred Sites

Selection Criteria

In addition to the initial preselection criteria listed in the Methodology section of this chapter— including location within the designated project boundary, accessibility via public transportation, appropriate commercial zoning designation, and availability for purchase— the following site evaluation criteria were applied when reviewing potential locations for a new Neighborhood Center:

- **Cost feasibility for rehabilitation or new construction** – Assessing the financial practicality of upgrading existing structures or developing new ones to meet Neighborhood Center needs.
- **Site size and configuration** – Ensuring the parcel is large enough to accommodate necessary programming, parking, outdoor spaces, and potential future expansion.
- **Proximity to community activity centers** – Prioritizing sites near schools, parks, downtown areas, and other hubs of local activity to encourage foot traffic and maximize community benefit.
- **Environmental conditions and constraints** – Reviewing flood zones, soil stability, and potential environmental hazards that could impact development or long-term maintenance.
- **Ownership complexity and acquisition timeline** – Considering the clarity of ownership, ease of purchase, and any legal encumbrances that may delay or complicate acquisition.
- **Neighborhood compatibility and community support** – Evaluating the surrounding land uses and gauging the level of support or concern from nearby residents or businesses.
- **Potential for sustainability features** – Identifying opportunities for green building practices, renewable energy use, stormwater management, and habitat preservation.

For each site under consideration, recommendations in the following areas were analyzed to determine suitability and alignment with design and sustainability goals:

Valley West Neighborhood Center Assessment

- **Architectural Design Approach** – The site’s ability to accommodate a welcoming and functional building design that reflects the character of Arcata and meets the programmatic needs of the center.
- **Landscape Design Approach** – Opportunities for inclusive outdoor spaces, native landscaping, and ecological enhancement that align with community and environmental values.
- **Sustainability Design Approach** – Capacity to integrate energy-efficient systems, low-impact development strategies, and climate-resilient design elements.

An ideal site will enable the City to develop and operate a cost-feasible, highly accessible Neighborhood Center that supports safe, inclusive, and environmentally responsible public use. The site should reinforce Arcata’s core values of sustainability, equity, and community well-being while fostering a welcoming space for diverse users and uses.

The three preferred sites were studied in detail. This included a zoning analysis, a landscape and civil engineering study, and a schematic design based on the potential programming derived from the community values. All three plans presented allow for the approximately 18,500 square feet of programming identified above. See Figure 14 below for site locations and context, and Exhibit B for a large-scale version of this figure. The site analysis discussed in this section reviews proposed development under current zoning standards, which are planned to be updated in 2026-2027 to conform to the policy guidance of the recently adopted General Plan: 2045. These changes are anticipated to allow for greater development intensity (e.g. height, Floor Area Ratio (FAR) allowance).

Figure 14: Preferred Sites – Conceptual Context Plan



Conceptual Architectural Design Approach

Exterior Design Approach

Each site has a unique shape, sizes and restrictions that affect the location of the building, the parking areas and the outdoor community spaces. The design team approached each site with the following general conceptual design strategies:

- Use a reasonable commercial building footprint depth, and massing strategies that allow for good natural daylight to reach the interiors.
- Mass the building facing the street to help create a pedestrian oriented, welcoming entry experience and contribute to the neighborhood streetscape.
- Use compact massing to contribute to future cost control, helping minimize the amount of building skin, foundations, MEP systems, etc.
- Provide well located, ample outdoor space including covered outdoor space, to allow activities all year round.
- Locate parking behind the building and away from the street.

Interior Design Approach

The conceptual interior design of the Neighborhood Center plays a critical role in fostering a welcoming, inclusive, and flexible environment that supports a wide range of community activities and programs. While each site and building layout varies, the design team applied the following overarching interior design strategies to guide the concept planning and ensure consistency in quality and values across all potential sites:

- Foster inclusivity and accessibility throughout the interior environment. This includes universal design principles, clear wayfinding, comfortable seating arrangements for all ages and abilities, and spaces that feel culturally respectful and welcoming to all.
- Prioritize natural daylight and views by orienting interior spaces to benefit from the building's massing strategy.
- The design should include flexibility and multi-functionality to accommodate diverse user groups and programs.
- Create a clear and intuitive interior layout with well-defined circulation and sightlines. Visitors should feel welcome and oriented upon entry, with easily identifiable access to key program areas such as reception, community rooms, restrooms, and support spaces.

- Use warm, durable, and sustainable materials to reflect Arcata's environmental values and reduce long-term maintenance costs. Finishes should be selected for both resilience and comfort, incorporating low-VOC materials, recycled content, and locally sourced products where possible.

Conceptual Landscape Site Design Approach

Community input from Valley West highlighted key priorities, including sustainability, arts and culture, and a safe, healthy environment. These themes formed the foundation of landscape design, which aims to create a welcoming and resilient hub that serves the current and future needs of the community. Additional guiding principles include resilience, community wellness, and universal design.

- Include key community-requested amenities such as a covered outdoor area, community garden, and community kitchen to support food access, outdoor programming, and year-round use.
- Design multifunctional outdoor spaces that support a variety of uses, including recreation, relaxation, performance, education, farmers' markets, and community gatherings.
- Encourage intergenerational activity and fitness through the inclusion of a sports court, playground, and open green space, responding to strong community interest in cardio-focused and youth/teen recreation.
- Support social interaction and community wellness, by providing features like a barbecue area, informal seating zones, and gathering nodes integrated throughout the landscape.
- Promote multimodal transportation by ensuring safe and convenient access for walking, biking, driving, and public transit—leveraging proximity to existing bus stops at all proposed sites.
- Use native and climate-adaptive plantings irrigated by high-efficiency systems to support biodiversity, reduce water use, and create a resilient, low-maintenance landscape.
- Manage stormwater on site through bioswales or rain gardens that capture and filter runoff, replenish local groundwater, and reduce infrastructure strain from new impervious surfaces.
- Design outdoor spaces for dual-purpose use—such as covered plazas or sports courts that can function as temporary shelters or resource distribution hubs during emergencies.
- Celebrate arts, culture, and local identity through outdoor learning and performance spaces, integrated public art, and culturally significant design elements in playgrounds, site structures, and landscape features.

Conceptual Sustainability Design Approach

Since the highest priority community value was sustainability and these features might not be fully integrated into the plans included in the exhibits, the following are recommendations in sustainability practices that the City can incorporate into the future Neighborhood Center.

Site

- Use bioswale gardens at larger stormwater management areas with educational signage for the public.
- Reduce hardscaping as much as possible; including minimizing parking in an area that already has many large parking lots. This will help with stormwater management and reduce the heat island effect.
- Utilize permeable and high SRI (Solar Reflectance Index) paving as much as possible.
- Use xeriscape planting strategies with native and adaptive plants to use as little water as possible while retaining a beautiful landscape aesthetic.
- Provide passive shading in the near term with awnings and overhangs and in the long term with trees.
- Shade the parking stalls with solar awnings to provide energy for the Neighborhood Center and keep cars cool to reduce use of air conditioning.
- Prioritize shared parking agreements with nearby businesses.

Building

- Utilize Passive House air sealing and thermal strategies to reduce the building demand load as much as possible.
- Right size the building and provides flexible spaces so it is not oversized.
- Use Forest Stewardship Council (FSC) lumber for the structure to ensure that wood is harvested sustainably. Consider this for the finishes as well, even though they are typically less of the overall volume of material.
- Consider Mass Timber Structure in lieu of a Steel or Concrete structural system to reduce the embodied carbon.
- Utilize semi-advanced framing techniques and a pre-cut lumber package to reduce wood waste and improve the thermal envelope.
- Provide high efficiency envelope elements, primarily focused on the glazing to reduce passive heat gain and reduce energy demand.
- Provide a green roof or a high Solar Reflectance Index roof as a backup option.
- Provide low-flow and highly efficient plumbing fixtures to reduce water demand.
- Design the buildings so that passive shading can be optimized to keep the indoor environment comfortable and well-lit while lowering energy usage.
- Utilize natural materials with third party Environmental Product Declarations for interior finishes and interior plantings to promote occupant health through biophilia. Environmental Product Declarations help ensure that product ingredients and sourcing are done responsibly.
- Ensure low or no Volatile Organic Compounds on all interior products to keep occupants healthy.
- Use durable, long lasting exterior cladding to ensure a resilient building.

Valley West Neighborhood Center Assessment

- Incorporate resiliency features so the building can serve as a hub during climate events or other emergencies. This may include a battery backup to cool particular spaces, power a refrigerator to store someone's medicine, etc.

Systems

- Use Energy Recovery Ventilation as part of the fresh air strategy to reduce energy loss via unconditioned air.
- Use high Seasonal Energy Efficiency Ratio (SEER) and Heating Seasonal Performance Factor (HSPF) rated heating and cooling equipment to reduce energy demand. These are metrics that determine the level of performance of the mechanical units.
- Install solar on the roof to supply as much of the energy needed as possible to support the annual building energy use load.
- Install building monitoring systems to ensure that it is functioning as designed and to adjust the systems to operate efficiently.
- Provide occupancy and daylight sensors to regulate lighting and reduce energy consumption.
- Provide Energy Star-rated appliances and light fixtures.
- Consider an on demand hot water system; a high efficiency electric heat pump as a secondary option to reduce energy consumption by heating water.

Site Analysis

The following table summarizes key differences in site recommendations, as discussed in detail below.

Figure 15: Comparison of Sites

	Site 1	Site 2	Site 3
Building sq. ft.	~18,000	~18,000	~17,000
Usable Outdoor Space sq. ft.	37,993	10,670	1,093
Parking spaces	36	36	22
BBQ area sq. ft.	575	550	Not proposed*
Playground sq. ft.	2,000	1,100	To use existing City Park Infrastructure*
Sport court sq. ft.	7,000	Not proposed*	To use existing City Park Infrastructure*
Covered Multipurpose space sq. ft.	700	700	Not proposed*
Garden sq. ft.	950	750	650

* Not proposed due to lot size and inadequate space

Valley West Neighborhood Center Assessment

Site 1—4800 Valley West Boulevard

This parcel is a vacant lot located south of the Valley West Shopping Center. This parcel is centrally located and large enough to fulfill the community wants for a Neighborhood Center as well as providing an alternative recreation space to Valley West Park. There is a bus stop on Valley West Boulevard that is 100 feet from the site and a bus stop on Valley East Boulevard that is 575 feet from the site. The site was identified as the preferred site by the design team.

Advantages of this site include:

- Connects to major north/south streets
- Close proximity to bus stops on both sides of the lot
- Adequate space for parking
- Centrally located
- Close to the commercial areas and the mobile home parks
- Adequate space for phased construction, which may be developed in the future with affordable workforce or senior housing, or emergency resiliency uses
- Ideal site for new construction with adequate space for prioritized uses

In this proposed site development plan, the Neighborhood Center is oriented towards the residential areas along Valley E Blvd, providing a buffer between the street and outdoor amenity spaces, and utilizing extensive street frontage on that side of the property for the building footprint. Ample space is provided that could be used for a sports court or outdoor gatherings. The West side of the property features space for larger neighborhood gatherings, such as a farmer's market, or future development. See Exhibit C and F for the proposed Site 1 development plan.

Existing Site Summary	
Current Use:	Undeveloped
Nearest Bus Stop:	100 feet away on Valley West Blvd.
Uses North of Site:	Commercial
Uses South of Site:	Hotel
Uses East of Site:	Residential
Uses West of Site:	Hotel

Zoning Summary	
Site Name:	South of Mall
Parcel Number:	507-362-055
Address:	4800 Valley West Blvd.
Zone:	Commercial General (CG)*

Valley West Neighborhood Center Assessment

General Plan Land Use:	Commercial Mixed
Neighborhood Center:	Permitted (Meeting Facility)
Minimum Lot Area:	5,000 sf
Minimum Lot Width:	50 ft.
Minimum Lot Depth:	3x the lot width
Front Setback:	10 ft. min.
Side Setback:	10 ft. min.
Rear Setback:	None (10 ft. when abutting R Zone)
Maximum Lot Coverage:	None
Proposed Lot Coverage:	81.8%
Maximum FAR:	2.0
Height Limit:	35 ft.
Notes:	Moderate to High Liquefaction Zone

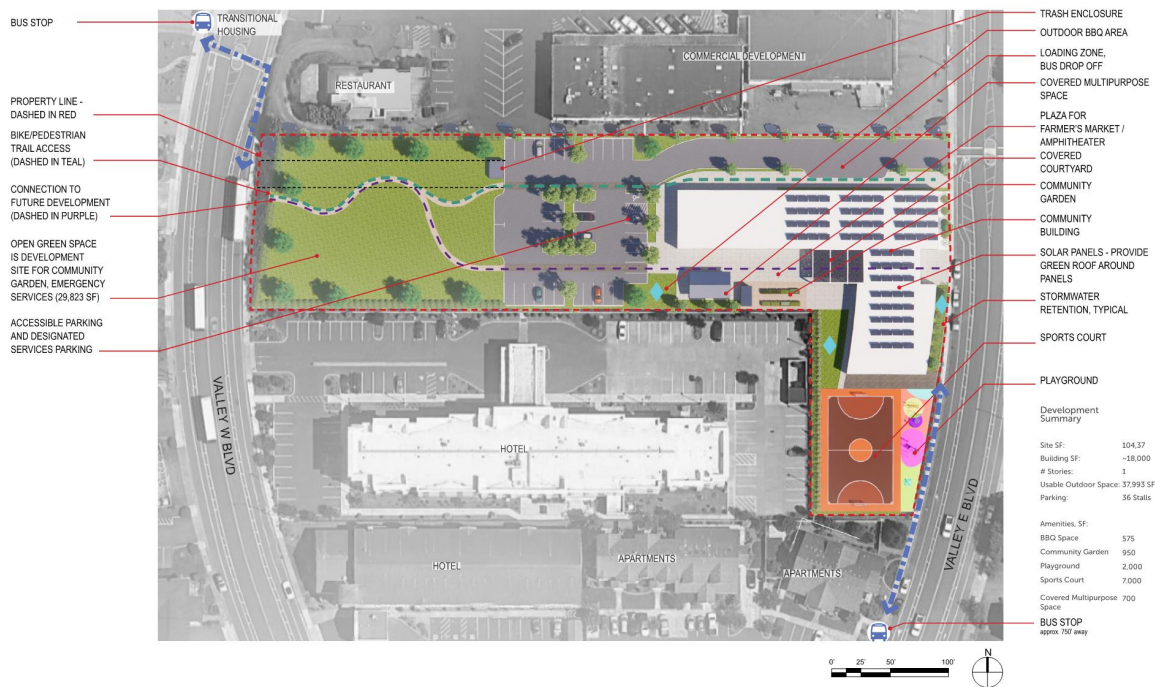
**site zoning to be updated to be brought into conformance with Commercial-Mixed Land Use adopted via General Plan: 2045.*

Proposed Development Summary	
Site Size:	2.43 acres (104,379 sf)
Building Square Feet:	~18,000 sf
Number of Stories:	1
Useable Outdoor Space:	37,993 sf
Parking:	36 min. required
Amenities:	Barbeque Space, Community Garden, Playground, Sports Court, Covered Courtyard

Proposed Building & Landscape Design

The site is centrally located, undeveloped, relatively flat, and generously sized, which are qualities that make it the preferred option by the design team for the Neighborhood Center. At 2.43 acres, this site offers ample space to accommodate a wide range of outdoor amenities, as seen in Figure 16.

Figure 16: Site 1 – Preferred – Draft Concept Site Plan



The conceptual design proposed for this site as a one-story structure with an ample covered entrance plaza. This site has an “L” shape. The design team proposed that the building follow this shape, activating the street front with a lobby and other community spaces towards the front. The building could have solar panels and other sustainable features.

Based on the previously discussed program, the design team provided this conceptual draft of a Programming Diagram (Figure 17) as a draft preliminary visual of potential relationships between spaces within the center. This proposal was informed by the design of Neighborhood Centers within the City of Arcata as well as in jurisdictions of similar size and demographics, as well as other research by the design team. This is not a design proposal, but this diagram is intended to demonstrate that the spaces prioritized during the community engagements can fit within this site.

Figure 17: Site 1 – Preferred – Programming Diagram



Adjacent to the building, plaza areas will provide flexible, multipurpose space to support intergenerational use, including performances, classes, farmers markets, barbecues, and other community events and gatherings.

To the South of the building, plans include a sports court, playground, and community garden. The West side of the property features space for larger neighborhood gatherings, such as a farmer's market, or future development. Its layout also allows for phased construction, enabling incremental development as funding becomes available.

Proposed Outdoor Programming

Farmers Market Plaza and Community Garden	2,300 SF
Covered BBQ Space and Courtyard	5,000 SF
Playground	2,000 SF
Sports Court	7,000 SF
Parking Lot	28,000 SF

See Exhibit C and F for a full-size image of the draft proposed Site 1 concept development plan and Programming Diagram.

Proposed Civil Improvements Approach

LACO, the civil engineering team, evaluated the Conceptual Plans prepared by Salazar Architects for this site. Based on the proposed concept, the following civil site and infrastructure improvements should be anticipated.

Vehicle Access and Circulation:

- Two (2) new commercial driveway approaches connecting Valley West Blvd. and Valley East Blvd.
- Bus stop and loading zone.
- New asphalt parking lot with 36 parking stalls.
- ADA accessible parking and loading, with accessible curb ramps and walkways connecting the site to the public right of way.
- Raised curb and gutter
- Internal walkways provide an accessible path of travel to the various site amenities and building access locations.

Utilities and Drainage:

- On-site storm drain collection and piping system connected to the existing public storm drainage system.
- Stormwater quality treatment systems, including but not limited to bio-retention areas, rain gardens, vegetated swales integrated into the landscape areas
- Sanitary sewer laterals connecting the building to the existing public sanitary sewer systems
- Water metered service connections
- On-site water distribution system for fire protection, including double detector check valves, fire department connections, and fire hydrants.
- Joint utility services for electric, gas, and communication services, including transformers, switch gear cabinets, and gas metering, with all utilities installed underground

Site Photos

Site photos are shown in Figures 18-21 below.

Figure 18: Looking North of Site 1



Figure 19: Looking South of Site 1



Figure 20: Looking East of Site 1



Figure 21: Looking West of Site 1



Site 2— 4555 Valley West Boulevard

This parcel is the former location of Laurel Tree Charter School and is located at the end of a cul-de-sac. It has an existing building on site. It is a suitable location for the Neighborhood Center due to its proximity to the proposed Valley West Park. In addition, it is the only parcel which currently has the infrastructure to host a Neighborhood Center.

Advantages of this site include:

- Has been used for civic/educational purposes
- Good visibility from the highway
- Bus stop nearby

During the site visit, the Salazar Architect team was able to walk to the site and enter the building. This structure is currently vacant.

The existing building is a one-story structure with multiple gable roofs. It is clad with stucco and has a crawl space. The site slopes from the east to the west drastically, and the water from the highway drains towards the building. Additions and modifications have been made to the structure through the years. It appears that the original house was raised from the ground between two and four feet, but the additions are barely raised, in some areas by only 6 inches. These multiple additions have been receiving the water draining from the parking lot and the stucco reaches the ground, absorbing water into the building.

The walls have no insulation. Further investigation is needed to determine the condition of this building. There is organic material in the gutters and areas where water drips from the roof.

Due to the building's condition and since the building is nested closer to the highway instead of the front of the lot, the architect's recommendation is that if the City wants to select this location the building should be deconstructed. Wood and other materials still in good condition can be reused in the new building or donated.

Valley West Neighborhood Center Assessment

Existing Site Summary	
Current Use:	Charter School (vacant)
Nearest Bus Stop:	225 feet away on Valley East Blvd.
Uses North of Site:	Public park
Uses South of Site:	Residential
Uses East of Site:	Residential
Uses West of Site:	Highway

Zoning Summary	
Site Name:	Former Laurel Tree Charter School
Parcel Number:	507-361-002
Address:	4555 Valley West Blvd.
Zone:	Commercial Visitor Serving (CV)*
General Plan Land Use:	Commercial Mixed
Neighborhood Center:	Use not allowed (rezoning required)
Minimum Lot Area:	10,000 sf
Minimum Lot Width:	80 ft.
Minimum Lot Depth:	3x the lot width
Front Setback:	None
Side Setback:	None
Rear Setback:	None (10 ft. when abutting R Zone)
Maximum Lot Coverage:	None
Proposed Lot Coverage:	73.7%
Maximum FAR:	2.0
Height Limit:	45 ft.
Notes:	Moderate to High Liquefaction Zone

**site zoning to be updated to be brought into conformance with Commercial-Mixed Land Use adopted via General Plan: 2045.*

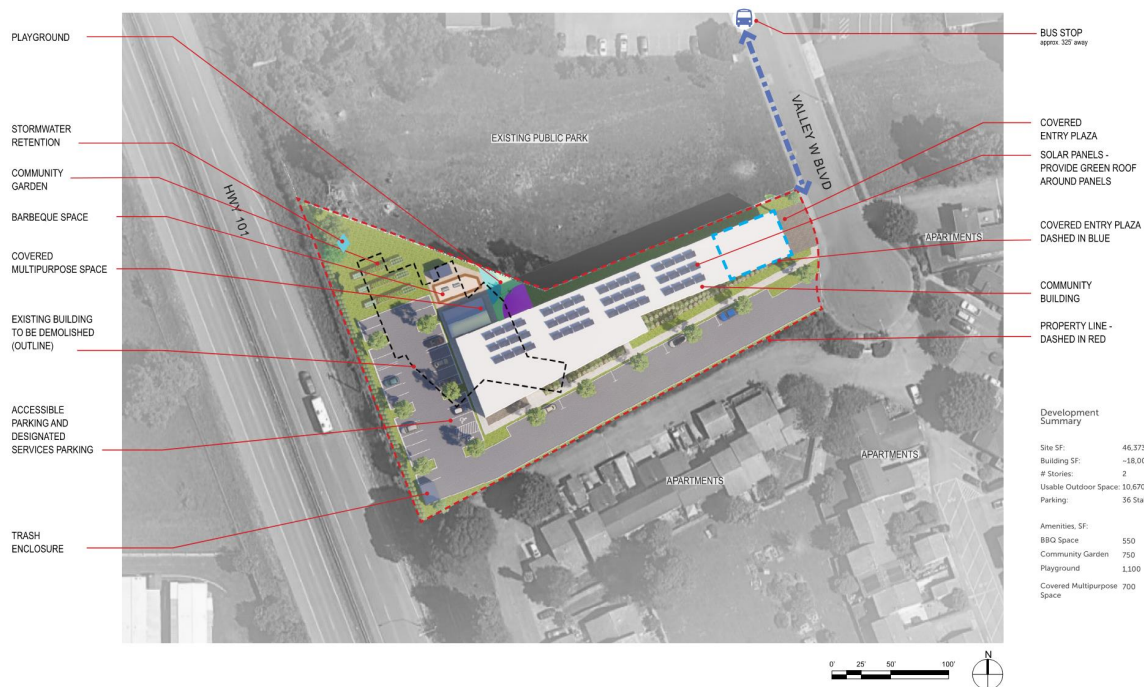
Valley West Neighborhood Center Assessment

Proposed Development Summary	
Site Size:	1.34 acres (46,373 sf)
Building Square Feet:	18,000 sf
Number of Stories:	2
Useable Outdoor Space:	10,670 sf
Parking:	36 (49 required by existing zoning code, but rezone will be required)
Amenities:	Barbeque Space, Community Garden, Covered Courtyard, Playground

Proposed Building & Landscape Design

Site #2 is complex. The 1.34-acres includes an existing structure—a former school building with significant water infiltration issues—that would need to be demolished or deconstructed to make way for the new Neighborhood Center. It is also adjacent to a highway and is narrow, making it inefficient and difficult to develop. See Figure 22 . North of the site is Valley West Park’s open green space, which could be used as additional, seasonal green space for the Neighborhood Center. Neighborhood Center

Figure 22: Site 2– Draft Concept Site Plan



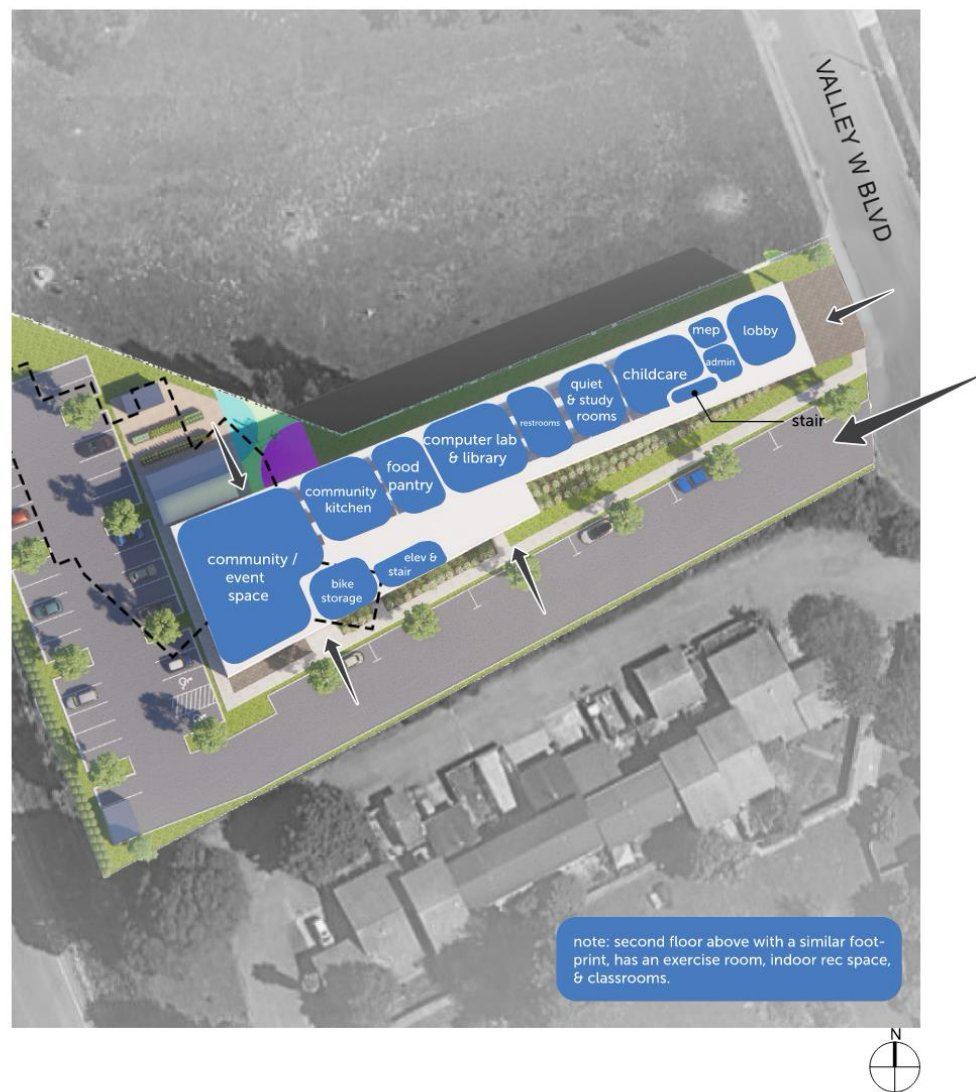
The proposed two-story Neighborhood Center has a large, covered entry plaza. The building would face the street to activate it as a welcoming place. This covered plaza can be used for mobile clinics,

Valley West Neighborhood Center Assessment

community events, or just as a waiting area protected from the elements. This building would need an elevator and stairs to access the second floor.

The design team provided this conceptual draft of a Programming Diagram in Figure 23, as a draft preliminary visual of potential relationships between spaces within the center. As in Site 1, this proposal was informed by the design of Neighborhood Centers within the City of Arcata as well as in jurisdictions of similar size and demographics, as well as other research by the design team. This is not a design proposal, but this diagram is intended to demonstrate that the spaces prioritized during the community engagements can fit within this site.

Figure 23: Site 2 – Programming Diagram



Valley West Neighborhood Center Assessment

The site presents several challenges, including existing grading and drainage issues that will need to be resolved as part of development. The sloping terrain will require regrading and careful attention to accessibility to ensure the site is welcoming and functional for all users. New planting areas will be designed to support on-site stormwater management, a priority given the parcel's existing drainage pattern. Proposed central outdoor amenities include a covered plaza and barbecue area, a community garden, and a playground. Highway 101 runs along the western edge of the property, so the site design located the parking along this edge and will incorporate noise buffering and visual screening to improve comfort and aesthetics.

See Exhibit D and Exhibit G for the enlarged proposed Site 2 development plan and Programming Diagram.

Proposed Outdoor Program

Community Garden	1,393 SF
Covered BBQ Space and Entry Plaza	15,043 SF
Playground	1,106 SF
Parking Lot	21,368 SF

Proposed Civil Engineering Approach

LACO evaluated the Conceptual Plans prepared by Salazar Architects for this site. Based on the proposed concept, the following civil site and infrastructure improvements should be anticipated.

Vehicle Access and Circulation:

- Upgrade the existing commercial driveway approaches connecting to Valley West Blvd.
- Upgrade the existing asphalt parking lot with 36 parking stalls.
- ADA accessible parking and loading, with accessible curb ramps and walkways connecting the site to the public right of way.
- Raised curb and gutter.
- Internal walkways to provide an accessible path of travel to the various site amenities and building access locations.

Utilities and Drainage:

- On-site storm drain collection and piping system connecting to the existing public storm drainage system.
- Stormwater quality treatment systems, including but not limited to bio-retention areas, rain gardens, vegetated swales integrated into the landscape areas.
- Upgrade or install new sanitary sewer laterals connecting the building to the existing public sanitary sewer systems.
- Upgrade existing water metered service connection.
- On-site water distribution system for fire protection, including double detector check valves, fire department connections, and fire hydrants.

Valley West Neighborhood Center Assessment

- Joint utility services for electric, gas, and communication services, including transformers, switch gear cabinets, and gas metering, with all utilities installed underground.

Site Photos

Site photos are shown in Figures 24-32 below.

Figure 24: Looking North of Site 2



Figure 25: Looking South of Site 2



Figure 26: Looking East of Site 2



Figure 27: Looking West of Site 2



Figure 28: Existing School Building – South Side



Figure 29: Existing School Building – North Side



Figure 30: Existing School Building – East Side



Figure 31: Existing Park Tables and Benches



Figure 32: Highway Adjacent to Property



Site 3— 4700 Valley East Boulevard

This site consists of two parcels with the existing Woodsman Hall building place between both sites. The site is located at the intersection of Valley East Boulevard and Hallen Drive.

Advantages of this site include:

- Has been used for civic/educational purposes
- Local community has a connection with this site
- Next to the basketball court and playground which allows for some activities to connect to and use the park as an extension
- Bus stop nearby

Existing Site Summary	
Current Use:	Woodsman Hall (currently used)
Nearest Bus Stop:	250 feet away on Valley East Blvd.
Uses North of Site:	Residential
Uses South of Site:	Residential
Uses East of Site:	Public park
Uses West of Site:	Medical offices

Zoning Summary	
Site Name:	Woodsman Hall
Parcel Number:	507-362-025, 507-362-026
Address:	4700 Valley East Blvd.

Valley West Neighborhood Center Assessment

Zone:	Residential High Density (RH)
General Plan Land Use:	Residential High Density (RH)
Neighborhood Center:	Use permit required
Minimum Lot Area:	6,000 sf
Minimum Lot Width:	30 ft.
Minimum Lot Depth:	None
Front Setback:	10 ft. min.
Side Setback:	10 ft. min.
Rear Setback:	5 ft. min.
Maximum Lot Coverage:	70%
Proposed Lot Coverage:	78% (variance required)
Maximum FAR:	None
Height Limit:	35 ft.

Proposed Development Summary	
Site Size:	Combined parcels are 0.49 acres (21,456 sf)
Building Square Feet:	16,010 sf
Number of Stories:	2
Useable Outdoor Space:	1,093 sf
Parking:	18 (31 required –variance required)
Amenities:	Barbeque Space, Community Garden

During the site visit, the Salazar Architect team was able to walk to the site and enter the building. This structure is currently being use by CUNA, a local Latinx organization.

The building is in good condition; this modern building has a gable roof with a distinguished entry roof line that gives character to the building. The structure had a condition assessment study done by the City, and besides the foundation crack indicated in the report, water leaks and damage seem to have been repaired. In April of 2024 the City requested an *Asbestos Survey and Lead Painting Sampling* by Brunelle and Clark Consulting. The findings indicated that there is asbestos in the walls and ceilings of the interior of the building, and probably in the electrical conduits and panels. The report indicates that asbestos containing material must be abated prior to any renovation or demolition activities that would disturb the asbestos containing materials.

However, this building is too small for the desired program and community needs. Salazar recommends the deconstruction of the structure and reuse of the many wood features on the existing building. This specific building is a display of the woodwork and skills of woodworkers of the area. Entry elements and

Valley West Neighborhood Center Assessment

inside panels and other features should be reused in the proposed building if the City decides to select this site.

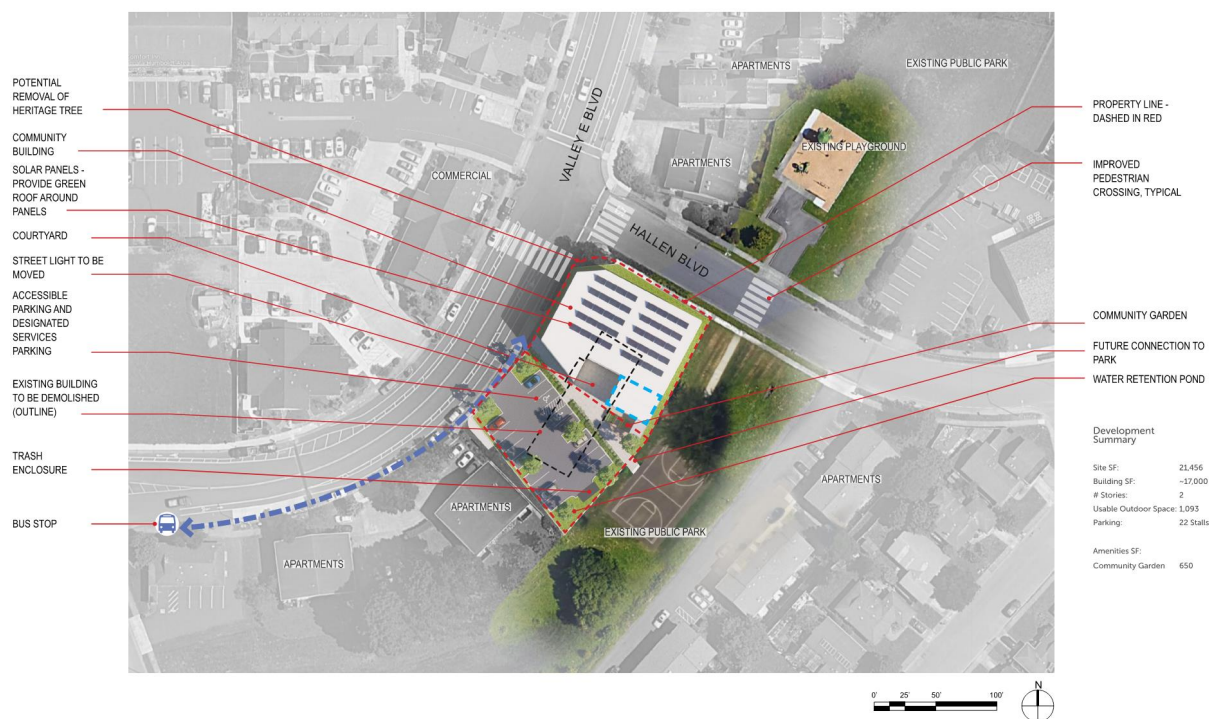
Proposed Building & Landscape Design

The existing building on site is also too small to meet the community's needs and project goals and would therefore be deconstructed and replaced. Redevelopment will also likely require the removal of a large tree and the relocation of an existing streetlight.

This is the smallest of the three sites, consisting of two combined parcels with a combined area of 0.49 acres. The City may choose to merge the site with the adjacent park to meet planning code requirements.

The proposed new two-story Neighborhood Center, on a corner lot, faces the streets and allows for a modest amount of on-site parking. Given the limited space, a small outdoor court at the back allows for amenities including a barbecue area and small community garden.

Figure 33: Site 3 – Draft Concept Site Plan



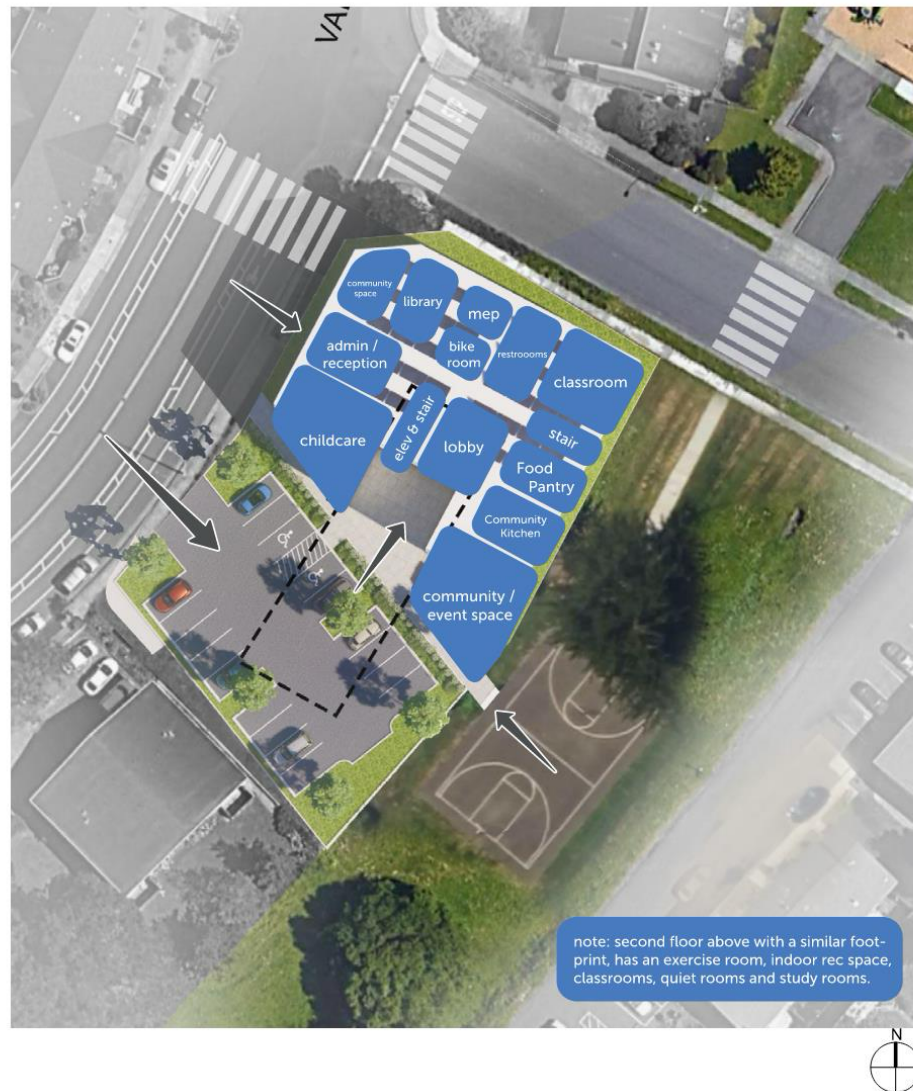
While compact, the site has potential for enhanced pedestrian connectivity to adjacent Valley West Park, creating the experience of a larger, integrated community space. The City park currently features a basketball court directly adjacent to the site, and a playground just to the northeast, across Hallen Drive.

For this Site 3, the design team proposed this conceptual draft of a Programming Diagram in Figure 34, as a draft preliminary visual of potential relationships between spaces within the center. As in Site 1 and 2,

Valley West Neighborhood Center Assessment

this proposal was informed by the design of Neighborhood Centers within the City of Arcata as well as in jurisdictions of similar size and demographics, as well as other research by the design team. The diagram below is not a design proposal, but this graphic is intended to demonstrate that the spaces prioritized during the community engagements can fit within this site.

Figure 34: Site 3 – Programming Diagram



See Exhibit E and H for the draft proposed Site 3 development plan and programming diagram.

Proposed Outdoor Program

Courtyard and Community Garden	1,568 SF
Parking Lot	5,760 SF

Proposed Civil Engineering Approach

LACO evaluated the Conceptual Plans prepared by Salazar Architects for this site. Based on the proposed concept, the following civil site and infrastructure improvements should be anticipated.

Vehicle Access and Circulation:

- Upgrade the existing commercial driveway approaches connecting to Valley East Blvd.
- Upgrade the existing asphalt parking lot with 18 parking stalls.
- ADA accessible parking and loading, with accessible curb ramps and walkways connecting the site to the public right of way.
- New Mid-Block crosswalk across Hallen Blvd to connect to existing park.
- Raised curb and gutter.
- Internal walkways to provide an accessible path of travel to the various site amenities and building access locations.

Utilities and Drainage:

- On-site storm drain collection and piping system connecting to the existing public storm drainage system.
- Stormwater quality treatment systems, including but not limited to bio-retention areas, rain gardens, vegetated swales integrated into the landscape areas.
- Upgrade or install new sanitary sewer laterals connecting the building to the existing public sanitary sewer systems.
- Upgrade existing water metered service connection.
- On-site water distribution system for fire protection, including double detector check valves, fire department connections, and fire hydrants.
- Joint utility services for electric, gas, and communication services, including transformers, switch gear cabinets, and gas metering, with all utilities installed underground.

Site photos are shown in Figures 35-43 below.

Figure 35: Looking North of Site 3



Figure 36: Looking South of Site 3



Figure 37: Looking East of Site 3



Figure 38: Looking West of Site 3



Figure 39: Woodsman Hall- West Side



Figure 40: Existing Basketball Court East of Site



Figure 41: Existing Fence at East Side of Property



Figure 42: Woodsman Hall- North Side



Figure 43: Woodsman Hall- South Side



Financial Analysis

Introduction

Neighborhood Centers are multi-faceted and receive frequent use, and therefore require a significant financial investment for their construction, and a consistent on-going financial commitment for their operations. A long-term, well-conceived funding plan must be put into place to support their development. This Financial Analysis chapter estimates costs for development and operation of a Neighborhood Center on each of the sites described in Site Inventory chapter. It then explores potential funding sources and strategies, based on a review of budgets for other Neighborhood Centers and a review of the City of Arcata budget. The chapter concludes with an identification of most feasible funding sources for further investigation.

Development Costs

Budgets for Neighborhood Centers that are in development or recently constructed in other California cities were reviewed to provide a general framework for total development costs. There is a great amount of variation in cost between these Neighborhood Centers, based on types of amenities included, size and cost of property, and geographic location. A total of 10 Neighborhood Center budgets were reviewed that are in development or were constructed in 2021 or later. The total building square footage for these Neighborhood Centers ranged from 8,000 to 64,000 square feet. The total cost ranged from \$12 million to \$77 million, with a per square foot cost of \$667 to \$3,008. The most comparable Neighborhood Centers to the proposed Valley West Neighborhood Center are listed in Figure 44 below. These Neighborhood Centers were selected based on similarity to the sites proposed in the Site Inventory chapter, and geographic location in terms of population and economic conditions.

Figure 44: Total Development Costs of Comparable Neighborhood Centers

City	Date Built	Funding Sources	Features	Cost	Size (SF)	Cost/SF
Porterville (Pop. 62,623)	2025	Prop 68 grant, State Clean California grant, ARPA funds, local Measure R funds	Gym; youth center; racquetball court; adjacent new park	\$12M	18,000	\$667
Gonzales (Pop. 8,647)	Complete design in summer 2025	City Measure X taxes; Community Foundation capital campaign; County; State; City General Fund; USDA Loan	Library; teen lounge and lab; fitness room; conference room; consultation rooms; offices; lounge/game room; marketplace; homework center	\$21M	8,000	\$2,625
Santee (Pop. 60,037)	Start construction in August 2025	City General Fund; City impact fees; donations	Events space; multipurpose room; program rooms; kitchen; outdoor amphitheater	\$23.5M	12,500	\$1,880
Average				\$18.8M	12,833	\$1,724

Sources: Cities of Porterville, Gonzales, Santee; Population figures are from the 2020 Decennial Census

The costs outlined above provide a broad outline of potential costs. A model was developed to estimate costs more specifically for the conceptual sites described in the Site Inventory chapter using the metrics listed in Figure 45 below. The per square foot costs were applied to the square footage estimates provided for each site in the Site Inventory chapter.

Figure 45: Per Square Foot Cost Estimates

Cost Item	Cost Per Square Foot	Source
Community Building	\$430-\$1,270	Clarix Design Build
	\$430-\$850	HomeGuide
	\$657	BigRentz Reports
Uncovered Plaza	\$3-\$8	Bloomberg
Covered Plaza/BBQ Space	\$50-\$60	Bloomberg
Playground Surface	\$16-\$25	HomeAdvisor
Playground Equipment	\$150-\$300	Worlds of Wow
Playground Installation	20% of Equipment	Worlds of Wow
Sport Court	\$4-\$17	HomeGuide
Parking Lot	\$3-\$8	CA Inspectors
Demolition	\$12-\$18	CommLoan

Valley West Neighborhood Center Assessment

A summary of cost estimates for each of the preferred sites is shown below in Figure 46. Costs for each site have a Low and High estimate. It is more likely that costs will be closer to the High estimate, as the High estimates are closer on a per square foot basis to comparable Neighborhood Centers in other California cities that are in development or recently completed. The Design and Engineering Costs are estimated at 8% of construction costs. The Other Soft Costs are estimated at 1% of all other costs.

Figure 46: Estimated Costs of Preferred Sites

	Site 1- South of Mall		Site 2- Laurel Tree		Site 3- Woodman Hall	
	Low	High	Low	High	Low	High
Acquisition	\$806,310	\$806,310	\$862,281	\$862,281	\$305,603	\$305,603
Acquisition/Site SF	\$7.72	\$7.72	\$18.59	\$18.59	\$14.24	\$14.24
Demolition			\$160,110	\$192,132	\$56,745	\$68,094
Demolition/SF			\$15.00	\$18.00	\$15.00	\$18.00
Building	\$12,467,700	\$15,139,350	\$15,468,600	\$18,783,300	\$10,592,400	\$12,862,200
Building/SF	\$700.00	\$850.00	\$700.00	\$850.00	\$700.00	\$850.00
Site Improvements	\$871,624	\$1,149,494	\$1,265,301	\$1,510,032	\$88,176	\$111,424
Site Improvements/SF	\$19.46	\$25.67	\$32.51	\$38.80	\$10.74	\$13.58
Total Construction	\$13,339,324	\$16,288,844	\$16,733,901	\$20,293,332	\$10,680,576	\$12,973,624
Design/Engineering	\$1,067,146	\$1,303,108	\$1,338,712	\$1,623,467	\$854,446	\$1,037,890
Other Soft Costs	\$152,128	\$183,983	\$190,950	\$229,712	\$118,974	\$143,852
Total Cost	\$15,364,907	\$18,582,244	\$19,285,954	\$23,200,924	\$12,016,344	\$14,529,063
Total Cost/SF	\$862.66	\$1,043.30	\$872.75	\$1,049.91	\$794.10	\$960.15

SF is square feet of proposed building improvements; Site SF is square feet of acquisition site

Property cost for Site 1 was based on an appraised value of \$806,310. The property costs for Sites 2 and 3 were based on an average cost per square foot of improvements of two comparable properties currently listed for sale as shown in Figure 47 below. The average price per improved square foot used for the cost estimates was \$80.78.

Figure 47: Comparable Properties with Improvements

Address	Parcel No.	Zoning	Asking Price	Building SF	Price/SF	Date Listed
1215 Giuntoli Ln.	507-301-075	IL	\$699,000	10,000	\$69.90	3/3/25
2830-2842 F St.	010-242-004	MU	\$1,100,000	12,000	\$91.67	8/1/24
Average				11,000	\$80.78	

The estimated total development costs of the three potential sites range from \$12.0 million to \$23.2 million, with per square foot costs of \$794 to \$1,050. Site 2 is the most expensive option, on a total cost and per square foot cost basis, because it has the largest building area, a large 15,054 square foot covered patio area and BBQ space, and requires demolition of the existing 10,674 square foot structure. Site 3 is the least expensive option, on a total cost and per square foot cost basis, because it has the smallest building area, the smallest non-building site-improvements area, and does not include a playground. Site 1 is at the mid-point cost point among the three scenarios, with the second largest building area, the

largest non-building site improvements area, and no demolition costs. Site 1 also includes a sports court, which the other sites do not have, and the largest playground area and largest parking lot. Site 1 estimated costs range from \$15.4 million (\$863 per square foot) to \$18.6 million (\$1,043 per square foot).

Development Funding Sources

Neighborhood Centers are funded by a variety of sources that can be placed in the following categories: city, state, federal, nonprofit foundations, and Community Development Finance Institutions (CDFIs). Construction is usually financed by municipal or state bonds. If a municipal bond is not funded, the California Infrastructure and Economic Development Bank (IBank) could potentially provide low-cost public financing with loan terms up to 30 years. A list of potential funding source categories is shown in Figure 48 and a list of potential funding sources are shown in Figure 49. Below is a description of each of the funding categories.

City of Arcata

Potential City of Arcata sources include: general fund, reserves, impact fees, Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) Program Income, and voter-approved tax measures. Some cities dedicate a portion of public facilities impact fees charged to new development to help fund Neighborhood Centers. This could be explored by the City. CDBG Program Income may be available through grant or loan repayments on programs administered by the City. Approval from the State Department of Housing and Community Development (HCD) would be required for planned re-use of Program Income toward a Neighborhood Center. The City could also apply to HCD for new CDBG funds that include Neighborhood Centers as an eligible use.

The City of Arcata has passed two voter-approved tax measures that may be considered as funding sources- Measures H and F. Measure H is a 0.75% sales tax projected to generate \$2.6 million annually for emergency and climate change response, homelessness, mental health, and infrastructure. Measure F is a 3% tax collected on utility bills generating about \$900,000 annually for a variety of services, including affordable housing, economic development, and park maintenance.

State of California

The State of California administers various grant programs that may be potential funding sources for the Valley West Neighborhood Center, as shown in Figure 43. Some programs have a dedicated source of state revenue, and others are programs that administer federal allocations. There are three different State programs that address Recreation, which was a focus area of community engagement input, including: Proposition 68 funds, Land and Water Conservation Fund, and Clean California Grant Program. The Land and Water Conservation Fund also addresses the Food Insecurity focus area. The Clean California Grant Program also addresses the Community Resources focus area.

Federal

The primary federal funding source that may assist Neighborhood Centers is the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) Community Facilities Direct Loan & Grant Program. Areas within the City of Arcata are designated as a Rural area by USDA and are therefore eligible for financial assistance. This USDA program funds community facilities in rural areas, including Neighborhood Centers, prioritizing smaller and low-income communities. The Neighborhood Center that is currently in pre-development in Gonzales, Monterey County, received a USDA loan of \$9.8 million.

Community Development Financial Institutions (CDFIs)

CDFIs can assist the financing of Neighborhood Centers in a number of ways. If they are federally certified they may access grant and loan programs through the U.S. Department of Treasury. If they are State of California certified they may access grant and loan programs through the California Department of Insurance. CDFIs may also combine grant assistance and loans with favorable terms to assist projects. In addition, CDFIs are often helpful resources by connecting Neighborhood Centers with other financing programs and potential business donors. Local CDFIs include North Edge (formerly Arcata Economic Development Corporation) and Redwood Region Economic Development Commission. The Rural Community Assistance Corporation (RCAC) is also a statewide CDFI and nonprofit corporation that provides financing resources to rural and indigenous communities throughout California, and they offer Community Facility Loans.

Foundations and Local Fundraising

Nonprofit foundations often assist in raising funds for Neighborhood Centers, and as nonprofit 501(c)(3) organizations they offer tax benefits to donors. This can take the form of a focused capital campaign that may include business sponsorships and naming rights. Foundations may also pool capital campaign donations with larger private donations and endowments. Humboldt Area Foundation and Headwaters Fund of Humboldt County are two foundations in the local area that may be able to assist. Humboldt Area Foundation has a mission to improve the health and well-being of communities in Humboldt County, while Headwaters Fund supports economic development in Humboldt County.

Figure 48: Potential Source Categories

Funding Source	Description
City of Arcata	Funds within the control of the City of Arcata.
State of California	Funds within the control of the State and allocated to localities competitively.
Federal Government	Funds within the control of the federal government and allocated to localities competitively.
Community Development Financial Institutions (CDFIs)/Nonprofit Finance Corporations	Financial institutions that are statewide and federally accredited to provide community and economic development benefits to underserved communities. They receive funding through the State Department of Insurance (COIN Program) and the United States Treasury Department (CDFI Fund).
Foundations and Local Fundraising	Local initiatives to raise funds from the community, offering tax deduction benefits as a 501(c)(3) organization.

Figure 49: Potential Funding Sources

Funding Source	Description
City of Arcata General Fund	City funding source that may be allocated to a variety of City functions as included in the adopted annual budget.
City of Arcata Reserves	City reserve funds that are not currently allocated to specific line items.
City of Arcata Residential Construction Tax (Impact Fee)	Tax charged on new development permits and collected for expansion of public facilities.
City of Arcata Measure H	Voter-approved 0.75% sales tax projected to generate \$2.6 million annually for emergency and climate change response, homelessness, mental health, and infrastructure
City of Arcata Measure F	Voter-approved 3.0% tax on utility bills, generating about \$900,000 annually; used for a variety of services, including affordable housing, economic development, park maintenance, and senior programs.
City of Arcata CDBG Program Income Funds	Arcata is not a HUD federal entitlement jurisdiction, but may have program income funds that can be allocated to a Neighborhood Center.
State Dept. of Parks and Recreation, Proposition 68	Funds creation of new parks and recreation opportunities in underserved communities across California.
State Dept. of Parks and Recreation, Land and Water Conservation Fund	Funds acquisition or development of land to create new outdoor recreation opportunities for the health and wellness of Californians.

Valley West Neighborhood Center Assessment

State Department of Housing and Community Development, Infill Infrastructure Grant	Funds public infrastructure associated with development of infill affordable housing. No funding is currently available.
State Dept. of Transportation, Clean California Grant Program	Funds streetscape improvements, parks, pathways, and transit centers to restore pride in California's public spaces in underserved communities.
California Infrastructure and Economic Development Bank (IBank), Infrastructure State Revolving Fund	Low-cost financing to local government entities for infrastructure projects, with loan terms up to 30 years.
U.S. Dept. of Agriculture, Community Facilities Direct Loan & Grant Program	Provides funding to develop community facilities in rural areas, including Neighborhood Centers, prioritizing smaller and low-income communities.
North Edge Community Development Financial Institution	Provides community development financing to Del Norte, Humboldt, Mendocino, Lake, Siskiyou, and Trinity Counties.
Redwood Region Economic Development Commission	Collaboration of Humboldt County communities dedicated to expanding economic opportunity.
Rural Community Assistance Corporation (RCAC)	A nonprofit corporation that provides community development financing resources to rural and indigenous communities throughout the Western region of the U.S., including Community Facility Loans.
Humboldt Area Foundation	Programs include Humboldt Health Foundation, which has a mission to improve the health and well-being of Humboldt County communities.
Headwaters Fund of Humboldt County	Operates a Community Investment Fund for large infrastructure projects, and a competitive grants program to support economic development in Humboldt County.
Local Fundraising Campaign	Many Neighborhood Centers have been partially funded by local fundraising campaigns, which may include naming rights for various rooms and amenities within the Neighborhood Center. The fundraising campaigns are often coordinated through a local community foundation.

Figure 50 below shows High Priority Areas of Focus, as identified in the Community Engagement and Programming and Services Chapters, and their alignment with the goals of some funders listed above, with an X mark indicating the nexus. Structuring certain Programming and Services, and a physical design that accommodates them, may provide pathways for securing competitive funding. In particular, the two State Department of Parks and Recreation grant programs and the State Department of Transportation Clean California Grant Program can potentially fund construction of recreation spaces such as a teen room, exercise room, sport court, and/or playground, as well as a community garden, farmer's market, pathways, public transit connections, and or transit information signage or information boards. The Governor's Office of Emergency Services Hazard Mitigation Grant program can potentially fund food

pantry services and food distribution in preparation for natural disasters, and methods to distribute information about hazard mitigation preparation and services.

Figure 50: Funding Sources and High Priority Areas of Focus

Funding Source	Food Insecurity	Recreation	Education	Community Resources
State Dept. of Parks and Recreation, Proposition 68		X		
State Dept. of Parks and Recreation, Land and Water Conservation Fund	X	X		
State Dept. of Transportation, Clean California Grant Program		X		X
North Edge Community Development Financial Institution			X	X
Redwood Region Economic Development Commission			X	X

Voter-approved tax measures have been a key piece of funding for many Neighborhood Centers in California. A strategy for the Valley West Neighborhood Center could involve setting aside a portion of Measure H or Measure F funds to repay a municipal bond that is used to finance construction. An alternative method would be to pass a new measure that funds the Valley West Neighborhood Center exclusively, or in combination with some other uses. Figure 51 below is list of voter-approved tax measures that were used to help fund Neighborhood Centers in comparable communities. The most common tax source is a 0.5%-1.0% sales tax, which tends to raise more funds than the other most commonly used tax source, a utility users tax.

Figure 51: Voter-Approved Tax Measures Used to Fund Neighborhood Centers

City	Measure	Tax Source	Income	Uses
Mammoth Lakes (Pop. 7,191)	R	0.5% sales tax	\$2M in FY 2024-25	Capital projects, incl. parks and recreation facilities and programs
	U	2.5% utility users tax	\$923,000 in FY 2024-25	Mobility, recreation, arts and culture facility construction and operations
Gonzales (Pop. 8,647)	X	0.5% sales tax	\$336,000 in FY 2024-25	Capital projects, primarily the Neighborhood Center
South Lake Tahoe (Pop. 21,330)	S	1.0% sales tax	\$7.8M in FY 2024-25	Fire prevention, emergency response, infrastructure
	P	2.0% transient occupancy tax	\$3.4M in FY 2023-24	Neighborhood Center construction

Sources: Town of Mammoth Lakes, City of Gonzales, City of South Lake Tahoe; Population figures are from the 2020 Decennial Census

As major public facilities that require significant up-front capital, most community facilities require financing with a municipal bond. For bonds with a 30-year term, AAA-rated municipal bonds currently have interest rates that average about 4.50%; AA-rated municipal bonds are currently averaging about 4.75%; and A-Rated municipal bonds are currently averaging about 4.95% (Raymond James Weekly Interest Rate Monitor, Municipal Market Monitor, FMS Bonds Inc). Figure 52 below shows bond amounts financing the Site 1 estimated costs, and annual principal and interest payments for municipal bonds that have a fixed interest rate of 4.50%, and a fixed interest rate of 4.95%.

Figure 52: Municipal Bond Financing Scenarios for Site 1

	Low Cost Estimate (4.50% interest)	Low Cost Estimate (4.95% interest)	High Cost Estimate (4.50% interest)	High Cost Estimate (4.95% interest)
Bond Amount	\$15,364,907	\$15,364,907	\$18,582,244	\$18,582,244
Interest Rate	4.50%	4.95%	4.50%	4.95%
Term (Years)	30	30	30	30
Annual Payments	\$943,275	\$993,820	\$1,140,793	\$1,201,921

Valley West Neighborhood Center Assessment

Drawing upon the information gathered on potential funding sources, various financing scenarios for the Site 1 High Cost Estimate with a 4.70% interest rate are listed below in Figure 53. Below is a description of each scenario listed in the table. The ultimate financing structure may be a combination of all of these scenarios.

Scenario 1 (New Tax Measure and Measure H): This scenario entirely finances development costs with voter-approved tax measures, including a new quarter-cent measure that provides about three-quarters of the revenue needed to pay bond costs, with the rest of the bond pay-off coming from about 12% of annual Measure H revenue.

Scenario 2 (Measure H): This scenario entirely finances development costs with Measure H revenue, estimated at about 45% of annual revenue.

Scenario 3 (Capital Campaign): This scenario seeks to minimize the bond amount by maximizing up-front capital funding from a broad range of sources, including City, federal, state, CDFIs, and local fundraising. This reduces the annual payment on the bond from \$1,167,781 to \$520,489, which would equate to about 20% of annual Measure H revenue. Alternatively, the annual bond payment could be paid with other City sources.

Other Potential Finance Structures: USDA, RCAC, or IBank may replace or supplement bond financing with loan programs that are directed to rural and low-income communities for facilities. These entities provide low-interest direct loans, grants, and loan guarantees.

Figure 53: Capital Financing Scenarios for Site 1 High Cost Estimate

	Up-front Capital Sources	Up-front Capital Amounts	Annual Financing Costs/Sources	Annual Amounts
Scenario 1 (New Tax Measure and Measure H)	Bond Amount	\$18,582,244	Bond Annual Pmt	-\$1,167,781
			New Voter-Approved Tax Measure (0.25% sales tax)	\$866,666
			Portion of Measure H Revenue (est. 12%)	\$301,115
Scenario 2 (Measure H)	Bond Amount	\$18,582,244	Bond Annual Pmt	-\$1,167,781
			Portion of Measure H Revenue (est. 45%)	\$1,167,781
Scenario 3 (Capital Campaign)	Bond Amount	\$8,282,244	Bond Annual Pmt	-\$520,489
	City Funds (General Fund/Reserves/Impact Fees/CDBG)	\$300,000	Portion of Measure H Revenue (est. 20%) and/or other City Funds	\$520,489
	State and Federal Grants	\$8,000,000		
	CDFIs	\$1,000,000		
	Fundraising Campaign	\$1,000,000		

Prioritized Funding Sources

Funding Sources that have the greatest feasibility for the Valley West Neighborhood Center are listed and described below. It is recommended that the City further investigate potential application for these funds in the coming year.

State Department of Parks and Recreation, Proposition 68: This program authorized \$4.1 billion in bonds to fund parks and recreation statewide, including \$725 million for creating and improving parks and recreation in underserved communities, put in place by Proposition 68. There is about \$10 million available in this program, per the California Natural Resources Agency.

State Department of Parks and Recreation, Land and Water Conservation Fund: This is a federal program that is administered by the State of California. It is permanently funded at about \$900 million annually nationwide from surplus federal property sales and oil and gas lease revenues, with unappropriated balance remaining from previous years. As of the end of fiscal year 2024, \$22.3 billion was unappropriated. (Congress.gov)

State Department of Transportation, Clean California Grant Program: This program is supported by State general funds annually and has consistently received funding. In the 2025-26 budget, \$25 million has been allocated. (State of California Budget)

U.S. Department of Agriculture, Community Facilities Direct Loan & Grant Program: This program received an allocation of \$18 million in the 2025 budget, which is a reduction from previous years. The City would need to reach out to the Community Programs Specialist at the California Rural Development State Office to pursue a funding application. (Congress.gov)

Local Foundations: The City should reach out to the Humboldt Area Foundation and Headwaters Fund of Humboldt County to explore potential fundraising and capital campaign strategies, and opportunities to co-apply for grants.

Rural Community Assistance Corporation (RCAC): In addition to providing financing for community facilities, RCAC can provide guidance on structuring financing and other possible funding sources. RCAC works with rural communities across the Western United States and has extensive practical experience providing technical assistance in planning for public facilities.

Local Community Development Financial Institutions (CDFIs): North Edge and Redwood Region Economic Development Commission can be important partners in accessing State and Federal CDFI grants and loans, and in developing a financing plan for the Neighborhood Center. It is recommended that the City reach out to them early in the planning process.

Operational Costs

Annual costs for operating Valley West Neighborhood Center Site 1 were projected for this analysis. In order to estimate these costs, the City's adopted Fiscal Year 2026 budgeted expenses for operating City facilities was reviewed. The City facilities included in this review included: Arcata Neighborhood Center, D Street Neighborhood Center, City Hall, Arcata Library, Judo Hut, Arcata Transit Center, Redwood Lodge, Arcata Marsh Interpretive Center, Redwood Lounge, and Larson Park Gazebo. Park maintenance costs were not included in the review.

The total interior square footage of all the facilities listed above was calculated in order to arrive at an operations cost per square foot. The total FY 2026 budget for administration and operations of the facilities is about \$1.1 million (about \$16 per square foot). If capital expenses are included in the budget, the total is about \$2.2 million (about \$32 per square foot).

Figure 49 below shows projected annual operating costs for Site 1. The following line items were calculated by multiplying that line item's per square foot cost derived from the FY 2026 budget for all the City facilities listed above, by the 17,811 interior square footage of Site 1: Utilities, Janitorial Supplies, Taxes & Other Fees, and IT Services & Maintenance.

The following line items were calculated using the same formula as described above, and then multiplying the total by 75% to account for reduced costs for newly constructed improvements: Professional Services, Equipment Maintenance, Building Maintenance, and Furniture & Equipment.

For Landscape/Hardscape Maintenance, a \$0.31 per square foot metric taken from the California Department of Real Estate HOA Operating Cost Manual (2024 update) was multiplied by 37,993 square feet of Site 1 outdoor space.

The line items for staffing are shown in Figure 54 below, and were calculated by taking the current City hourly wages for associated positions and multiplying the hourly wages by projected hours worked operating the Valley West Neighborhood Center. Employee Benefits were estimated by multiplying the total projected wages of both positions by 25%.

Figure 54: City Staff Assigned to the Valley West Neighborhood Center

Staff Position	Hourly Wage	FTE	Annual Hours	Total
Maintenance Worker	\$23.21	1.0	2,080	\$48,277
Recreation Supervisor	\$26.83	0.5	1,040	\$27,903

The Replacement Reserve Deposit was calculated by applying metrics from the California Department of Real Estate HOA Operating Cost Manual (2024 update) to Site 1 improvements based on their useful life of 5-20 years. A contingency calculated at 3% of all operating costs except the Replacement Reserve Deposit was added to the budget.

The total annual cost estimate to operate the Site 1 Valley West Neighborhood Center comes out to \$240,788, with a monthly cost of \$20,066 and a cost per interior square foot of \$13.52. By comparison,

Valley West Neighborhood Center Assessment

total operating costs for all of the City facilities included in this analysis in the FY 2026 budget are \$16.29 per square foot of improvements, not including capital expenses. A slightly lower cost per square foot for the Valley West Neighborhood Center is reasonable for newly constructed improvements in comparison to much older improvements for most of the other City facilities. The projected total cost of annual Valley West Neighborhood Center operations is 22.2% of the City FY 2026 budget to operate all the City facilities included in this analysis. These projections will need to be updated to account for inflation, based on when the Neighborhood Center is complete and ready for operation.

Figure 55: Projected Valley West Neighborhood Center Operating Budget for 2026

Cost Item	Annual Cost	Monthly Cost	Annual Cost/SF	Pct. of Total Cost
Utilities	\$50,738	\$4,228	\$2.85	21.07%
Professional Services	\$7,811	\$651	\$0.44	3.24%
Janitorial Supplies	\$9,614	\$801	\$0.54	3.99%
Equipment Maintenance	\$2,403	\$200	\$0.13	1.00%
Building Maintenance	\$6,309	\$526	\$0.35	2.62%
Site & Landscape Maintenance	\$11,778	\$981	\$0.66	4.89%
Furniture & Equipment	\$4,506	\$376	\$0.25	1.87%
Taxes & Other Fees	\$1,816	\$151	\$0.10	0.75%
IT Services & Maintenance	\$12,501	\$1,042	\$0.70	5.19%
Maintenance Worker	\$48,277	\$4,023	\$2.71	20.05%
Recreation Supervisor	\$27,903	\$2,325	\$1.57	11.59%
Employee Benefits	\$19,045	\$1,587	\$1.07	7.91%
Replacement Reserve Deposit	\$32,216	\$2,685	\$1.81	13.38%
Contingency	\$5,871	\$489	\$0.33	2.44%
Total	\$240,788	\$20,066	\$13.52	

The Professional Services line item includes work orders for plumbers, electricians, HVAC, alarm, pest control, lock & keys.

The Janitorial Supplies line item includes cleaning supplies, toilet paper, paper towels, trash bags, and light bulbs.

The Equipment Maintenance line item includes appliance and fixtures repairs and replacements.

The Building Maintenance line item includes roof, window, flooring, plumbing, and lighting supplies, and HVAC repairs.

Operational Revenue

Potential operational revenue sources include rental fees, revenue from Measures G and/or H, revenue from a new sales tax measure, general funds, and grants and donations. Figures 56 and 57 below show two scenarios for funding the projected annual operating budget of \$240,788. While not shown in these scenarios, grants and/or donations could provide a portion of funding, including the CDBG grant funds, local foundations, and private donations.

Scenario 1 shows revenue coming from rental fees, Measure G funds, and Measure H funds. The rental fees were estimated by taking per square foot rental fee revenue generated by the Arcata Neighborhood Center (\$3.41) and multiplying this by the interior square footage of Valley West Neighborhood Center Site 1 (17,811) to arrive at \$60,795. The remaining \$179,993 was split equally between Measure G and Measure H funds at \$89,997 each.

Scenario 2 shows revenue coming from rental fees in the amount of \$60,795 and revenue from a new sales tax measure in the amount of \$179,993. As estimated in the Capital Funding Sources section, a new 0.25% sales tax measure would generate about \$866,666 annually, and therefore the funding amount shown in Scenario represents about 21% of estimated revenue generated from the new sales tax measure.

Figure 56: Scenario 1 Operational Revenue (Existing Tax Measures)

Revenue Source	Amount	Revenue/SF	Pct. of Total Revenue
Rental Fees	\$60,795	\$3.41	25.25%
Measure G	\$89,997	\$5.05	37.38%
Measure H	\$89,997	\$5.05	37.38%
Total	\$240,788	\$13.52	

Figure 57: Scenario 1 Operational Revenue (Existing Tax Measures)

Revenue Source	Amount	Revenue/SF	Pct. of Total Revenue
Rental Fees	\$60,795	\$3.41	25.25%
New \$0.25 Sales Tax Measure	\$179,993	\$10.11	74.75%
Total	\$240,788	\$13.52	

Conclusion and Recommendations

The need for a Neighborhood Center in the Valley West neighborhood is clear. Geographically, the Valley West neighborhood is isolated from the rest of the City of Arcata, and therefore has limited access to many of the amenities that other residents enjoy. As the neighborhood is predominantly low-income, residents could benefit from publicly available amenities and services. It also presents an opportunity to build upon local assets and social ties that have already been established to enhance the community.

Community engagement activities described in this report identified the following high priority Community Values for a new Neighborhood Center in Valley West. These values provide a guide for the planning process. Below is a description of each prioritized Community Value, and a listing of proposed amenities, design features, and services/programming that can address that value.

- *Sustainability:* Aims to minimize the negative environmental impact of buildings by prioritizing energy efficiency, resource conservation, and the use of eco-friendly materials. It's a design approach that considers the local climate and ecology as well as indoor environmental conditions.
 - *Amenities:* community garden, community kitchen
 - *Design Features:* energy efficient building envelope and materials, passive shading, solar system, efficient electric heat pump, lighting with occupancy and daylight sensors, energy efficient appliances, xeriscape plantings, educational signage and/or design features
 - *Services/Programming:* farmers market
- *Arts & Culture:* A recognition that architecture, imbued with artistic and cultural elements, acts as a powerful expression of a society's values, traditions, and history. In the context of a Neighborhood Center, it acknowledges the pivotal role that such a building can play in terms of providing space for artistic expression and cultural celebrations and fostering a sense of belonging.
 - *Amenities:* art gallery space, library, classes/workshops.
 - *Design Features:* resident participation in building artwork (paintings, tilework, sculpture), decorative motifs and naming that pay homage to local culture and Native American tribes.
 - *Services/Programming:* art classes, art gallery presentations, music concerts, writing and computer classes, dancing and other art representations.
- *Resilience:* The implementation of design strategies which increase a building's capacity to withstand and recover from unexpected events, including natural disasters and changing environmental conditions. It also refers to the use of a building as part of a community's resiliency response to disasters, such as providing shelter during times of emergency.
 - *Amenities:* food pantry, medical clinic, public WiFi, meeting spaces
 - *Design Features:* battery backup for electrical system; engineer for flood resiliency in grading, storm drainage, and building elevation; engineer for fire resiliency in building materials and landscaping design; information board/kiosk with emergency information; flexible large space that can serve as emergency shelter space with accompanying hygiene facilities (bathrooms and showers).
 - *Services/Programming:* CSA food box distribution, emergency planning events/classes

Valley West Neighborhood Center Assessment

- *Community Wellness:* Emphasizes designing spaces that positively impact the physical, mental, and social well-being of people within a community. This involves creating environments that encourage social interaction, promote physical activity, and foster a sense of connection with nature.
 - *Amenities:* exercise room, medical clinic, food pantry, community garden
 - *Design Features:* usable and attractive outdoor spaces; sustainable, low off-gassing building materials; maximize natural light in the building; optimal air ventilation
 - *Services/Programming:* mobile medical and dental visits, telehealth appointments, cooking classes/gatherings, farmers market, exercise classes/workout groups, youth and teen programs

It should be noted that there was varied input from the community on whether the offering of services at the Neighborhood Center should be solely on recreation-type services for neighborhood residents (both youths and adults), or whether to include broader community services, such as access to behavioral health case management, telehealth, and other family support services. Within this later category there were also varied opinions about providing services to individuals living within the neighborhood who are unhoused, such as meeting with a housing navigator and using facility showers (if those are installed as part of a Resiliency strategy). There is acknowledged tension about the impacts that unhoused individuals are having on the neighborhood, including camping, trash/debris, disruption to businesses, etc. Encampments frequently occur along the Mad River, and in recent years, two housing projects that serve formerly unhoused individuals were built in the neighborhood. As a result, many neighborhood residents report that they feel unequal and undue impacts of homelessness, compared to other areas of Arcata.

From the focus group with the social services providers, it was clear that they perceive a tremendous benefit to offering broader social services at a Neighborhood Center in Valley West, due to the unmet needs of the residents, and transportation challenges that result from lack of income and geographic isolation. Offering a broader array of social services would help to address income and resource disparities, along with social determinants of health and well-being. Some of the providers did feel that being able to use the center to provide services to unhoused individuals would be made easier and very beneficial to those individuals. It should also be noted that due to the low-income status of many of the currently housed residents in the neighborhood, some of them may be at risk of homelessness or otherwise precariously housed and could also benefit from these types of services.

In order to navigate this challenge, it is recommended that the City pursue the following:

- Utilize and leverage the work of the Homeless Services Working Group within the City to discuss the needs of unhoused individuals within the neighborhood, how outreach and services are currently provided, and any plans to address encampments. It would be helpful to know if any of homeless service providers are pursuing State funding such as HHAP to develop a Housing Navigation Center in Arcata. A Housing Navigation Center would be the best location for unhoused individuals to receive services, since they are designed to be operated on a daily basis to respond to the immediate needs of unhoused individuals with trained and qualified staff. Housing Navigation Centers also usually offer temporary shelter, which could help to address concerns about the impacts of unsheltered individuals. HHAP funds in recent years have been distributed to both Humboldt County and the Humboldt Housing and Homelessness Coalition in annual funding rounds. It would also be beneficial to understand if Humboldt County has applied or plans to apply for the Encampment Resolution Fund through State Housing & Community

Valley West Neighborhood Center Assessment

Development Department. The purpose of these discussions is to gather information about the current status of homelessness within the neighborhood and plans to formally address it, which can then be further communicated to neighborhood residents and used to inform the City's decisions.

- Determine as early as feasible whether to provide design flexibility for the Neighborhood Center to be used as a shelter during emergencies/disasters, which would include shower facilities. Depending upon the status of the development of a Housing Navigation Center, the City will need to make a decision as to whether or not it would of benefit to open the center to expanded uses. If so, the City could work with a local homeless services provider to schedule supervised use of the Neighborhood Center for case management and use of the shower facilities.

The Site Inventory and Financial Analysis conclude that the vacant Site 1 (South of Mall) is the optimal site for the Neighborhood Center. This site is centrally located, and adjacent to two bus stops and retail amenities. It provides adequate space to develop a one-story building with prioritized features, as well as ample outdoor space for a public plaza, community garden, playground, sport court, and parking. Its central location and size provide the greatest potential for the Neighborhood Center to function as a true gathering place for farmers markets, concerts, and other events. In this way, it could function as the true heart of the neighborhood and a place of community identity.

After this assessment is shared with Arcata residents and reviewed by the City Council, the following next steps are recommended in order to realize this important project.

1. Explore options for entering into a long-term contract for purchase of Site 1. This may involve a long-term lease, or purchase contract, with financing from an entity such as a local Community Development Financial Institution (CDFI) or Rural Communities Assistance Corporation (RCAC).
2. Convene a "Strategic Planning Group" that meets regularly and develops both a Financing Plan and an Operational Plan. Key considerations of this group should be:
 - a. Whether the Neighborhood Center will also function as a "Resiliency" center, with design flexibility to offer shelter and bathrooms/showers during disasters;
 - b. Decisions on the scope of programming to be offered, in consideration of the discussion on page 68. Programming could be rolled out in phases, but the ultimate scope of programming does impact the design considerations and size of the building; and
 - c. Further refinement of an operational and capital budget, using the preliminary example and template developed for this assessment.
3. Begin researching potential development and funding strategies.
4. Community engagement suggests that the Valley West area would benefit from community placemaking and increased perception of safety. The following recommendations are made to ensure the Neighborhood Center speaks to these needs and integrates with the full spectrum of the Valley West community:

Valley West Neighborhood Center Assessment

- a. Ensure that local cultural groups and associations are included in discussions of final design and programming. From the community engagement, it is clear that a number of different community groups would potentially be interested in offering cultural programming and services at the Neighborhood Center and can advise on design elements and art that will ensure the center is welcoming and comfortable.
- b. Include spaces within the Neighborhood Center that accommodate the building of community relationships, such as a commercial kitchen for cooking classes, and large flexible spaces that can accommodate gatherings and dances.
- c. Consider a community art project to engage residents in “ownership” of the Neighborhood Center. Invite persons of all ages to create works of art which reflect their vision of/for the neighborhood and its residents. Incorporate the art into the decoration of the center.
- d. Once the Neighborhood Center has been operational for a year, engage users of the center in a survey to get their feedback on their experiences and suggestions for improvement.

EXHIBIT A: COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT REPORT

The following data provides additional detail as summarized in the Community Engagement Section of the Valley West Neighborhood Center Assessment.

Visioning Sessions

Two community-wide visioning sessions were held on February 1, 2025 at the CUNA Resilience HUB in the Valley West neighborhood, also known as Woodman Hall (4700 Valley East Boulevard), with the first session held in English and the second session held in Spanish. The purpose of the visioning sessions was to identify the values, or themes, that should guide the design of the Neighborhood Center, and prioritize types of spaces for the Neighborhood Center that align with those values.

Event Setup and Participation

The first session was attended by Valley West residents, general public participants who live in Arcata and other Humboldt County neighborhoods, and as well as Spanish speakers. The session was conducted in English with Spanish language translation provided to Spanish speakers. Participants gathered around seven round tables in the main hall, with Valley West residents at three of the tables and other participants at four of the tables. The second session was conducted in Spanish with English translation provided to English speakers. Participants gathered around two tables in the main hall, with Valley West residents at one table and City Staff at the other table. In all, 36 people participated in the first session and 7 people participated in the second session. In both sessions, 20 Valley West residents participated, of which 5 were Spanish speakers.

Activity 1— Ice Breaking Exercise

For an ice breaking exercise, participants were asked to portray a happy memory from their childhood with materials provided on the tables. In the larger first session, two people from each table shared their memory with the larger group. In the smaller second session, each person at each table was able to share their memory. This exercise was not only an ice breaking exercise, but also allowed the team to identify the main core values the group and community. Common themes from the childhood memories included: activities in nature, sharing moments with family and friends, playing group sports, food, sense of safety, and sharing or listening to music.

Activity 2— Community Values

A poster with 10 Community Values cards (also called Wellbeing Values) were presented on each table. Community Values are the principles and beliefs that guide an individual's thoughts, feelings, and actions, ultimately contributing to their overall health and happiness. They are often personal and can vary widely between individuals, encompassing areas like relationships, personal growth, and community involvement. The field of architecture acknowledges that physical environments impact physiological and emotional states and can have a direct impact on people's sense of identity, worth, dignity, and empowerment. Each Community Value card had images and words describing each value. Three sticky dots were given to each participant to place on the values they identified with most. Below is a definition of each Community Value presented.

Biophilic Design: An architectural approach that aims to bring nature into the built environment to improve well-being and productivity.

Sustainability: Aims to minimize the negative environmental impact of buildings by prioritizing energy efficiency, resource conservation, and the use of eco-friendly materials. It's a design approach that considers the local climate and ecology as well as indoor environmental conditions.

Safe and Healthy: prioritizes the well-being of building occupants and construction workers by incorporating design and construction practices that minimize risks and promote positive health outcomes. This involves considering factors like indoor air quality, natural light, ventilation, and material selection to create spaces that are both functional and conducive to physical and mental health.

Community Wellness: Emphasizes designing spaces that positively impact the physical, mental, and social well-being of people within a community. This involves creating environments that encourage social interaction, promote physical activity, and foster a sense of connection with nature.

Resilience: The implementation of design strategies which increase a building's capacity to withstand and recover from unexpected events, including natural disasters and changing environmental conditions. It also refers to the use of a building as part of a community's resiliency response to disasters, such as providing shelter during times of emergency.

Trauma-Informed: A design approach that acknowledges the impact of trauma on individuals and aims to create spaces that promote safety, well-being, and healing

Arts and Culture: A recognition that architecture, imbued with artistic and cultural elements, acts as a powerful expression of a society's values, traditions, and history. In the context of a Neighborhood Center, it acknowledges the pivotal role that such a building can play in terms of providing space for artistic expression and cultural celebrations and fostering a sense of belonging.

Design Justice: Rethinks design processes, centers people who are normally marginalized by design, and uses collaborative, creative practices to address the deepest challenges communities face.

Informed and Inclusive: Centers on creating spaces that are accessible, welcoming, and functional for all users, regardless of their background, abilities, or needs. It moves beyond basic accessibility to

Valley West Neighborhood Center Assessment

consider a wide range of human diversity, including age, gender, culture, and physical and cognitive abilities. This approach emphasizes user research, diverse perspectives, and a commitment to social equity, ensuring that buildings foster a sense of belonging and respect for everyone.

Universal Design: Also known as inclusive design, aims to create spaces that are accessible and usable by all people, regardless of their age, ability, or other factors. It focuses on making environments that are universally usable, meaning that they cater to a wide range of needs without requiring separate adaptations or specialized designs. This approach is rooted in the idea that design should benefit everyone, not just a specific subset of users.

Figure A1 below shows a breakdown of the votes for each Community Value. The Community Values that received the most votes in the two sessions are summarized in the bullet points below.

- *Sustainability:* The most frequently selected value by all participants (31 votes), and it was also the most frequently selected value by participants that live in Valley West (12 votes). As described above, Sustainability refers to a design and construction approach which seeks to minimize negative environmental impacts and emphasizes energy and resource conservation. The community members clearly indicated their preference for this value to be fully integrated into the Neighborhood Center's design and construction.
- *Arts & Culture:* The second most frequently selected value for all participants (18 votes) and Valley West residents (8 votes). The community's acknowledged importance of this value calls for the Neighborhood Center to be a space for artistic expression, cultural celebrations and fostering a sense of belonging.
- *Resilience:* The third most frequently selected value for Valley West residents (12 votes overall and 5 votes by Valley West Residents).
- *Community Wellness:* The third most frequently selected value for all participants (14 votes overall and 3 votes by Valley West Residents).

Figure A1: Community Values Votes from Visioning Sessions

Community Value	Session 1 Total	Session 1 (VW Residents)	Session 2 Total	Total
Biophilic Design	4	2	2	8
Sustainability	28	12	3	43
Safe & Healthy	9	2	3	14
Community Wellness	11	3	3	17
Resilience	10	5	2	17
Trauma Informed	3	0	0	3
Arts & Culture	16	8	2	26
Design Justice	0	0	2	2
Informed & Inclusive	10	3	2	15
Universal Design	6	4	2	12

Attendees were asked if they were Valley West residents and/or Spanish speakers. All the participating Spanish speakers were also Valley West residents. By isolating Valley West English speaker (VW) resident votes from Session 1, and Valley West resident Spanish speaker votes, we can identify the design priorities of people who would have immediate access to the center. The percentages shown in Figure A2 below are the percentage of votes cast by Valley West residents, and the percentage of votes by Valley West resident Spanish Speakers, for each Community Value.

Figure A2: Percent of Community Value Votes Cast by Valley West Residents and Spanish Speakers

Community Value	VW Resident English Speakers	VW Resident Spanish Speakers
Biophilic Design	100%	50%
Sustainability	48%	11%
Safe & Healthy	42%	25%
Community Wellness	43%	21%
Resilience	59%	17%
Trauma Informed	0%	0%
Arts & Culture	56%	11%
Design Justice	100%	100%
Informed & Inclusive	33%	17%
Universal Design	75%	25%

VW: Valley West

Valley West Neighborhood Center Assessment

Figure A3 below shows voting results if the VW resident votes are weighted by a factor of 2 (each vote multiplied by 2). After weighting the VW resident votes, Sustainability and Arts & Culture are still by far the most favored wellness values. Community Wellness and Resilience continue to be ranked third and fourth after being weighted.

Figure A3: Community Values Votes Weighted for Valley West Residents

Community Value	Total Votes	Total Weighted Votes
Sustainability	31	46
Arts & Culture	18	28
Community Wellness	14	20
Resilience	12	19
Safe & Healthy	12	17
Informed & Inclusive	12	17
Universal Design	8	14
Biophilic Design	6	10
Design Justice	2	4
Trauma Informed	3	3

Activity 3— Programming and Services

A total of 41 cards with pictures and descriptions of possible programming and spaces within the Neighborhood Center were placed on each table. In addition, two blank cards were included for participants to add on their own. Each table discussed the merits of the cards and picked 10 cards to include in their ideal Neighborhood Center. Each table shared their selections and why the 10 selected spaces were important to them. Notes were taken on a large piece of paper for all to see.

Figure A4 below shows voting results for programming and spaces from the visioning sessions and focus groups. Highlighted rows indicate programs or spaces that were mentioned across all sessions. Figure A5 shows total votes when two times the weight was added to VW residents' votes. With the weighting, there are not many changes in preferred programming and spaces: covered outdoor space, community garden, and food pantry remained the favorites.

Valley West Neighborhood Center Assessment

Figure A4: Programming and Spaces Votes

	Session 1	Session 2	VW Latinx Focus Group	Tribal Focus Group	Queer Humboldt Focus Group	Total
Activities for kids and moms	0	1	0	0	1	2
Adult Education	3	0	1	1	1	6
Art Gallery Space	2	0	1	2	1	6
BBQ Area	2	0	1	0	0	3
Bike Room	2	0	0	0	0	2
Child centered space	0	0	1	1	2	4
Childcare	1	1	2	0	1	5
Community Garden	6	0	2	2	2	12
Community Kitchen	3	0	0	2	2	7
Covered multi-sport court	1	0	2	0	2	5
Covered Outdoor Space	6	1	2	1	2	12
Educational resources	1	0	1	1	2	5
Event Room	1	1	2	1	1	6
Exercise Room	1	0	0	2	0	3
Exterior Auditorium	2	0	2	0	0	4
Farmers Market	1	0	2	2	0	5
Food Pantry	5	1	2	2	2	12
Informal Meeting Space	3	0	2	1	2	8
Library	2	1	1	0	1	5
Medical Support	2	1	0	0	2	5
Multi-Cultural Spiritual space	1	0	0	1	0	2
Music room	1	1	1	0	1	4
Native American sweat lodge	1	0	0	0	0	1
Outdoor seating	1	0	1	0	0	2
Performance stage	1	0	1	0	2	4
Classes/workshops	2	0	1	1	2	6
Plaza	0	1	0	0	0	1
Quiet space	1	0	0	1	0	2
Reading area	1	0	0	0	1	2
Shared commercial kitchen	2	0	1	1	1	5
Shower	3	0	0	2	2	7
Shuffleboard	1	0	0	0	0	1
Social assistance	0	1	2	2	2	7
Trails or relaxing green area	2	0	0	1	0	3

Figure A5: Total and Total Weighted Programming and Spaces Votes

	Total Votes Unweighted	Total Votes Weighted
Covered Outdoor Space	7	11
Community Garden	6	9
Food Pantry	6	9
Shower	3	6
Community Kitchen	3	5
Informal Meeting Space	3	5
Library	3	5
Medical Support	3	5
Adult Education	3	4
Exercise Room	2	4
Place to have classes/workshops	2	4
Trails or relaxing green area	2	4
Art Gallery Space	2	3
BBQ Area	2	3
Bike Room	2	3
Childcare	2	3
Event Room	2	3
Exterior Auditorium	2	3
Music room	2	3
Activities for kids and moms together	1	2
Farmers Market	1	2
Native American sweat lodge	1	2
Outdoor seating	1	2
Plaza	1	2
Quiet space	1	2
Reading area	1	2
Shared commercial kitchen	2	2
Social assistance	1	2
Covered multi-sport court	1	1
Educational resources	1	1
Multi-Cultural Spiritual space	1	1
Performance stage	1	1
Shuffleboard	1	1
Child centered space	0	0

Focus Groups

The five online focus groups were with Spanish speaking Valley West residents on April 19 and 26, 2025, Queer Humboldt on April 24, 2025, the Wiyot and other Indigenous Tribes of Arcata on April 3 and 24, 2025, and social services providers on May 6, 2025.

Spanish speaking Valley West residents: The sole participant in this focus group was Lucy Salazar, Executive Director of local Latinx group Cumbre Humboldt. The session began with a personal object activity where Lucy shared her iPad, emphasizing the importance of capturing moments through photos. During the Wellness Values Card activity, Lucy prioritized safety, wellbeing, nature, cultural expression, environmental care, inclusion, and restoring community. She placed less emphasis on trauma recovery, emergency shelter, and ambiance of the building. For program priorities, her top selections included outdoor cinema, childcare, community gardens, social services, and covered recreational spaces. She emphasized the need for a covered sports recreation space due to Arcata's frequent rain. Lucy also highlighted the importance of adult education, family support resources, music and performance spaces, and a sports complex. Concerns were raised about inconsistent access to local family resource centers, regulatory burdens on the city, and the lack of safe connections like bike paths in Valley West. She emphasized that essential services like food banks must be easily accessible and safe for families.

Queer Humboldt: Queer Humboldt shared that they serve members of the LGBTQIA+ community who live in Valley West, especially students and mobile home residents who are low income. They indicated that it would be beneficial for the space to offer a community kitchen, safe creative meeting spaces, study rooms and computer lab, outdoor covered spaces and a community garden. They are interested in offering youth groups, book discussions and case management.

Wiyot and other Indigenous Tribes of Arcata: The City hosted a meeting with the Wiyot Tribe, as well as a larger meeting where other tribal entities were invited. The Wiyot Tribe shared that they would be happy to participate in the Neighborhood Center by working with the City on the naming of the Center, signage, design, and offering classes on Wiyot culture and language. The Blue Lake Rancheria's input focused on resilience, especially the idea of the Center being a location that could be used in times of disaster for gathering and shelter.

Social services providers: This focus group was attended by Changing Tides Family Services, North Coast Growers Association, 211 Humboldt and Queer Humboldt. All of the attendees are experienced in interacting with and serving residents of the neighborhood. They affirmed the area is under resourced and that residents have transportation challenges in particular that make it difficult for them to access the services they need. They felt the Neighborhood Center space should have flexibility in terms of classroom size (moveable walls or partitions), that a community kitchen would be vital to offer a space for cooking classes and community meal preparation, and that residents need access to information about community resources, so having an information/resource wall and a small library would be very helpful. All of these agencies offered to provide services, information and/or classes as appropriate.

Community-wide Survey

A community-wide survey was developed to gather input from the public on Neighborhood Center needs and priorities, and conducted from December 4, 2024 through May 1, 2025. The survey was available online and through the sharing of a QR code, using Google Forms and offered in both English and Spanish. Paper copies were provided to CUNA, Cumbre Humboldt, and the City of Arcata for distribution, and any completed paper surveys received were entered into Google Forms. Efforts made to reach both the Spanish-speaking community and Valley West residents included:

- Working directly with CUNA and Cumbre Humboldt to advertise the survey through emails and flyers;
- In-person visits to businesses located in Valley West;
- A month-long advertisement in El Leñador newspaper;
- Direct mailing of the survey to mobile home parks within Valley West; and
- City of Arcata social media posts in both English and Spanish

In total, 387 Arcata residents participated in the survey, of which 121 are Valley West residents (31% of total responses). The breakdown of the survey responses by English/Spanish and Valley West residents is as follows:

- 373 English Responses; 114 of which are Valley West residents (30.6%)
- 14 Spanish Responses; 7 of which are Valley West residents (50.0%)

Survey results from the Valley West residents' responses are shown in Figures A6 (English Speaking) and A7 (Spanish Speaking) below.

Figure A6: English Survey Results for Valley West Residents

1. How frequently would you and your family use the following classes and programs? (number of responses by frequency selected)

Class/Program	Weekly or Daily	Monthly	Several Times Per Year	Once per Year	Never
Library	23	24	24	18	17
Adult Life Skills Classes	14	18	20	19	38
Public WiFi/Computer Lab	21	13	17	14	41
Seniors Educational and Social Programs	10	13	25	12	46
Theater Classes	10	7	10	17	56
Youth And Teens Programs	15	9	13	7	64
Volunteer-led Homework Help	13	8	10	9	67
Pre-School	6	4	3	4	85
ESL Courses	2	4	3	3	87

The services and programs that respondents said they would use the most frequently are Library and Public WiFi/Computer Lab.

2. Which of these classes and programs does Valley West need most? (79 responses)

- Youth and teens programs (28)
- Adult life skills (15)
- Public Wi-Fi/Computer Lab (13)
- Library Branch (13)
- Seniors Educational Center (10)

Valley West Neighborhood Center Assessment

3. How frequently would you and your family use the following spaces for recreation? (number of responses by frequency selected)

Recreation Space	Weekly or Daily	Monthly	Several Times Per Year	Once per Year	Never
Weight and Cardio	40	21	24	7	20
Group Exercise Studio	30	27	24	5	22
Music Venue	19	27	26	12	22
Indoor Courts	19	19	16	13	37
Youth/Teen Rec Center	15	8	13	7	64
Pre-School and Daycare	10	3	4	6	79

4. Which of these recreational spaces does Valley West need most? (88 responses)

- Weight and Cardio (22)
- Youth and Teen Recreation (22)
- Music Venue (14)
- Group Exercise Studio (12)
- Pre-School and daycare (9)
- Indoor fields/courts (9)

5. How frequently would you and your family use the following site amenities? (number of responses by frequency selected)

Site Amenity	Weekly or Daily	Monthly	Several Times Per Year	Once per Year	Never
Community Info Board	34	26	24	11	13
Community Services Board	26	22	29	12	14
Community Garden	31	25	21	12	19
Transit Info	27	15	24	15	23
Civic Group Meeting Room	12	15	30	20	29
Police Substation	21	7	21	25	31
Lounge	17	16	17	20	33
Community Kitchen	12	16	21	23	36
Public Bathroom	0	12	19	18	31
Business Incubator Space	11	11	12	18	52

Valley West Neighborhood Center Assessment

6. Which of the following site amenities does Valley West need most? (82 responses)

- Community garden (29)
- Police Substation (22)
- Public bathrooms (16)
- Meeting rooms for civic groups (6)
- Community information board (4)
- Lounge (2)
- Kitchen for community groups (2)
- Community services information board (1)

7. How frequently would you and your family use the following social and health services? (number of responses by frequency selected)

Social/Health Service	Weekly or Daily	Monthly	Several Times Per Year	Once per Year	Never
Medical Clinic	17	20	34	22	16
Dental Clinic	20	17	35	17	19
Vision Clinic	17	16	23	29	23
Benefits Assistance	16	23	18	18	30
Counseling Clinic	16	19	28	13	31
Food Pantry	19	32	18	8	32
Summer Lunch for Kids	15	5	16	7	61
Extreme Weather Shelter	0	6	9	18	60
Showers	11	7	11	5	69
12-Step Meetings	11	6	7	7	74

8. Which of these social and health services does Valley West need most? (67 responses)

- Food Pantry (22)
- Dental Clinic (16)
- Medical Clinic (15)
- Extreme Weather Shelter (14)

Figure A7: Spanish Survey Results for Valley West Residents

1. How frequently would you and your family use the following classes and programs? (number of responses by frequency selected)

Class/Program	Weekly or Daily	Monthly	Several Times Per Year	Once per Year	Never
ESL	4	2	0	0	1
Library Branch	3	2	0	0	1
Volunteer-Lead Homework Help	2	2	1	0	1
Youth and Teens Educational and Recreational Programs	2	2	1	0	1
Public WiFi/Computer Lab	2	2	1	0	1
Seniors Educational and Social Programs	0	3	1	0	1
Pre-School	2	2	0	0	1
Theater Classes	0	3	1	0	1
Adult Life Skills	0	2	2	1	1

2. Which of these classes and programs does Valley West need most? (7 responses)

- Youth and teens programs (2)
- ESL courses (2)
- Library Branch (2)
- Seniors Educational Center (1)

Valley West Neighborhood Center Assessment

3. How frequently would you and your family use the following spaces for recreation? (number of responses by frequency selected)

Recreation Space	Weekly or Daily	Monthly	Several Times Per Year	Once per Year	Never
Weight and Cardio	4	1	1	0	1
Group Exercise Studio	3	2	0	0	1
Music Venue	2	3	1	0	1
Indoor Courts	1	3	1	1	0
Youth/Teen Rec Center	2	4	1	0	0
Pre-School and Daycare	3	2	1	0	1

4. Which of these recreational spaces does Valley West need most? (5 responses)

- Weight and Cardio (2)
- Youth and Teen Recreation (1)
- Music Venue (1)
- Group Exercise Studio (1)
- Pre-School and Daycare (0)
- Indoor Fields/Courts (0)

5. How frequently would you and your family use the following site amenities? (number of responses by frequency selected)

Site Amenity	Weekly or Daily	Monthly	Several Times Per Year	Once per Year	Never
Public Bathroom	1	0	5	0	0
Community Garden	1	2	3	1	0
Transit Info Board	1	2	2	0	1
Community Services Info Board	1	1	3	0	1
Business Incubator Space	1	0	4	0	1
Community Kitchen	0	2	3	0	1
Community Information Board	0	2	2	1	1
Civic Group Meeting Room	0	1	4	0	1
Lounge	1	1	2	0	1
Police Substation	0	2	2	0	1

Valley West Neighborhood Center Assessment

6. Which of the following site amenities does Valley West need most? (4 responses)

- Community garden (1)
- Public bathrooms (1)
- Community information board (1)
- Meeting rooms for civic groups (1)
- Lounge (0)
- Police Substation (0)
- Community services information board (0)
- Kitchen for community groups (0)

7. How frequently would you and your family use the following social and health services? (number of responses by frequency selected)

Social/Health Service	Weekly or Daily	Monthly	Several Times Per Year	Once per Year	Never
Dental Clinic	2	3	2	0	0
Medical Clinic	3	1	2	1	0
Summer Lunch for Kids	3	1	0	2	0
Benefits Assistance	3	0	2	1	0
Counseling Clinic	1	1	3	1	1
Food Pantry	0	2	3	0	1
Vision Clinic	1	1	2	1	1
Extreme Weather Shelter	1	1	2	1	1
12-Step Meetings	0	2	2	1	1
Showers	2	0	1	0	2

8. Which of these social and health services does Valley West need most? (11 responses)

- Medical Clinic (3)
- Dental Clinic (2)
- Vision Clinic (2)
- Mental Health (2)
- Food Bank (1)
- Social Services Guidance (1)

Valley West Neighborhood Center Assessment



Exhibit B: Conceptual Context Plan

Valley West Neighborhood Center Assessment

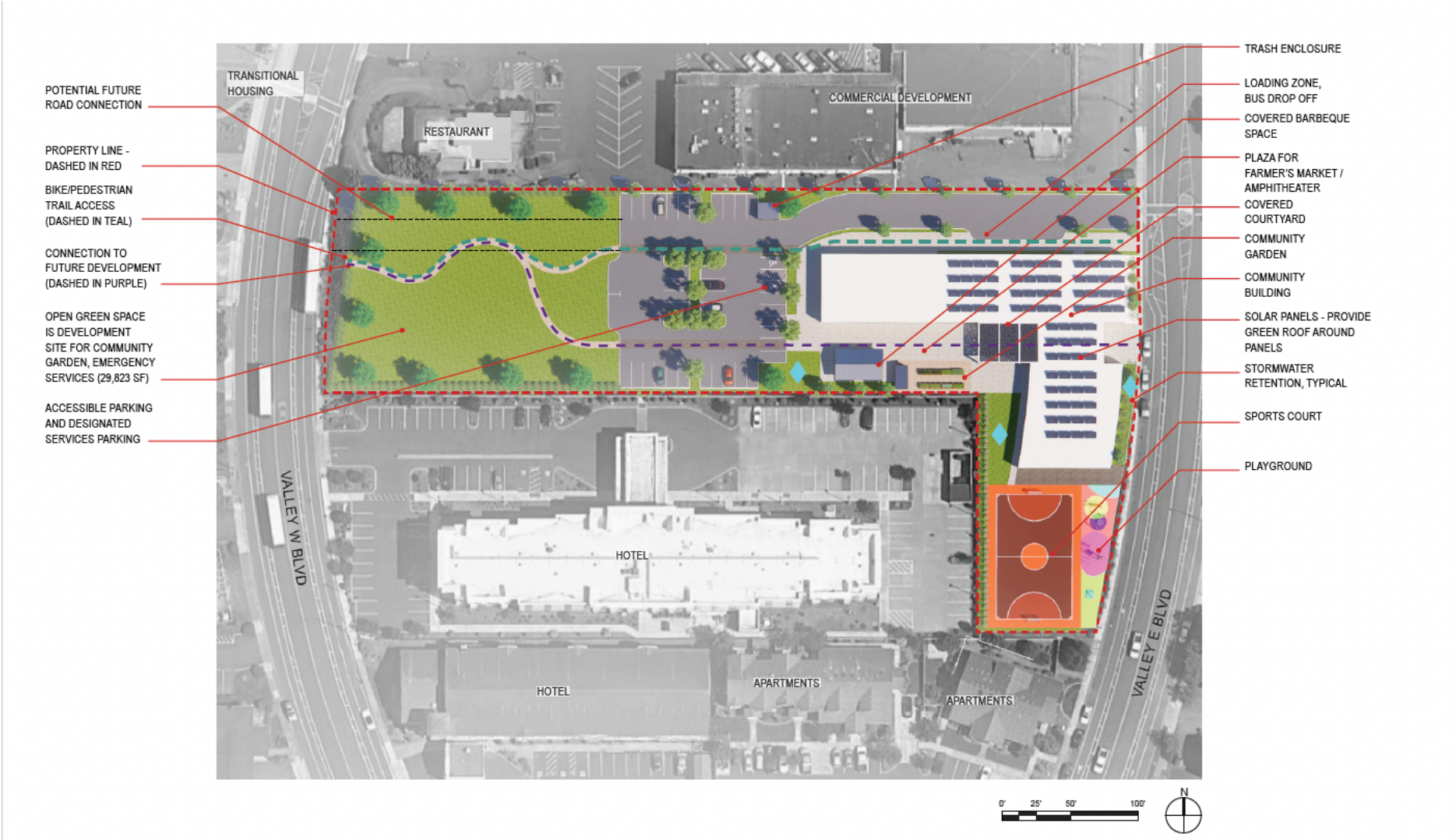


Exhibit C: Site 1 (Preferred) – 4800 Valley W Blvd

Valley West Neighborhood Center Assessment

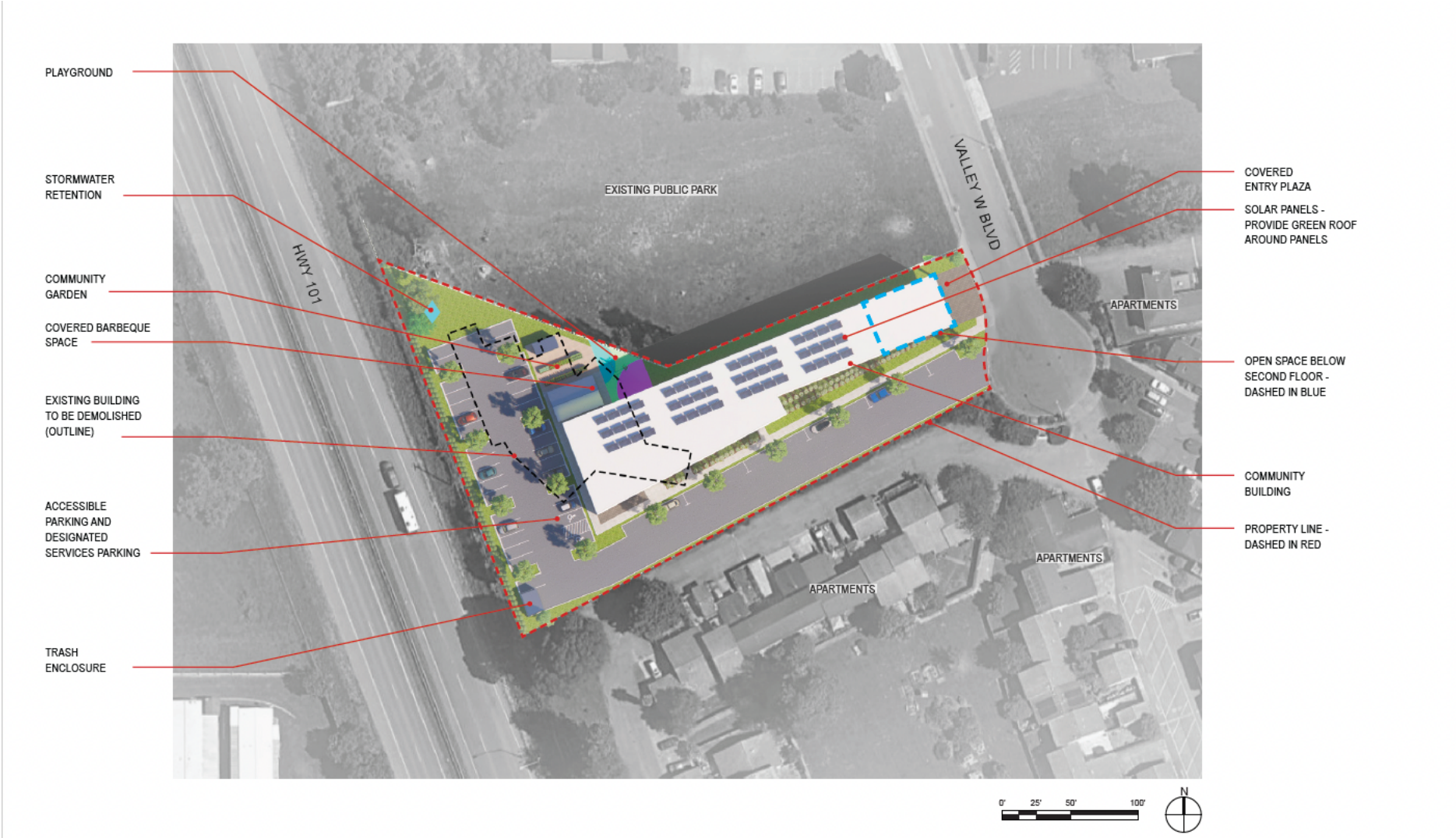


Exhibit D: Site 2 – 4755 Valley W Blvd

Valley West Neighborhood Center Assessment

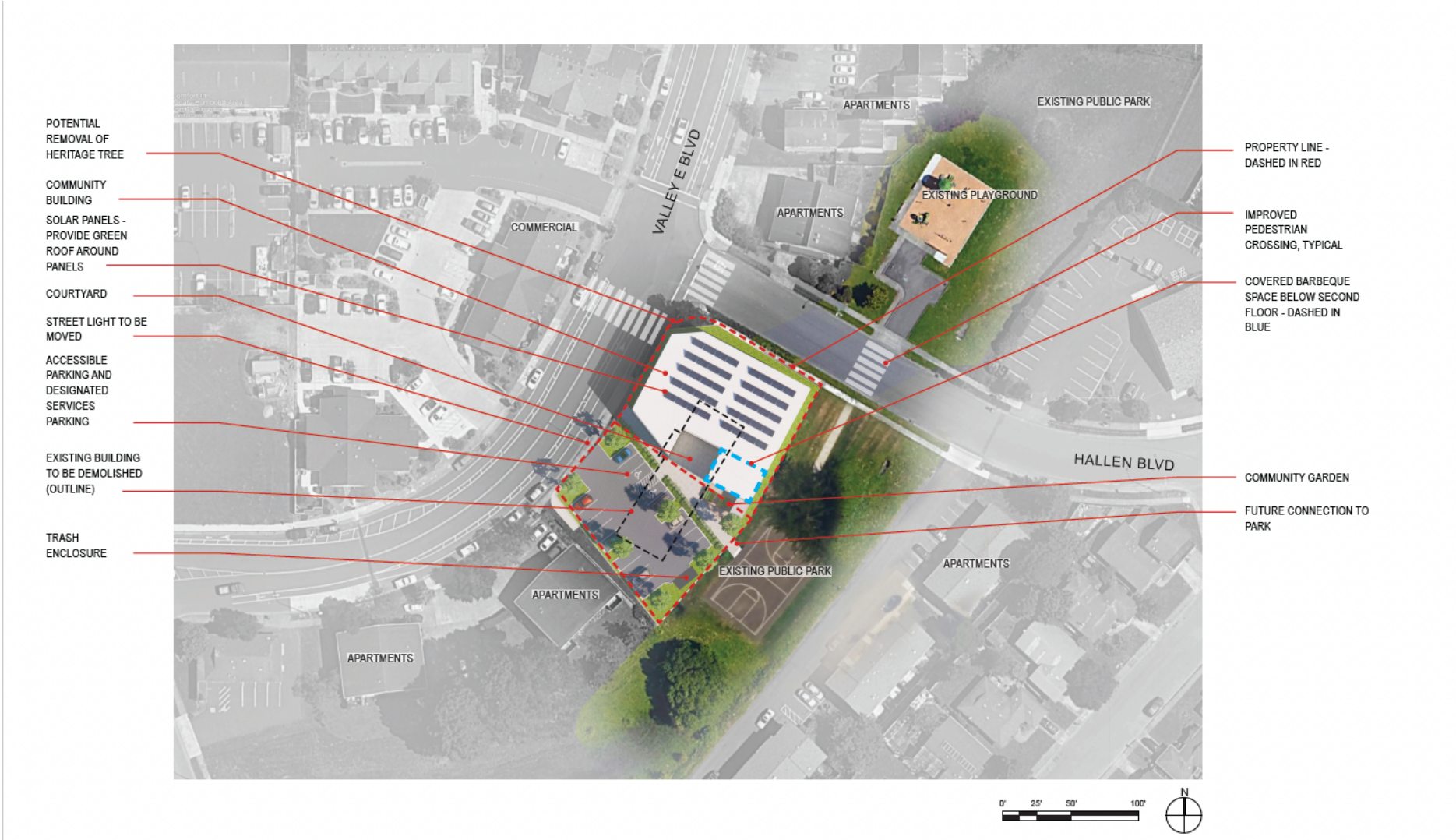


Exhibit E: Site 3 – 4700 Valley E Blvd

Valley West Neighborhood Center Assessment



Exhibit F: Site 1 Programming Diagram – 4800 Valley W Blvd

Valley West Neighborhood Center Assessment



Exhibit G: Site 2 Programming Diagram – 4755 Valley W Blvd

Valley West Neighborhood Center Assessment

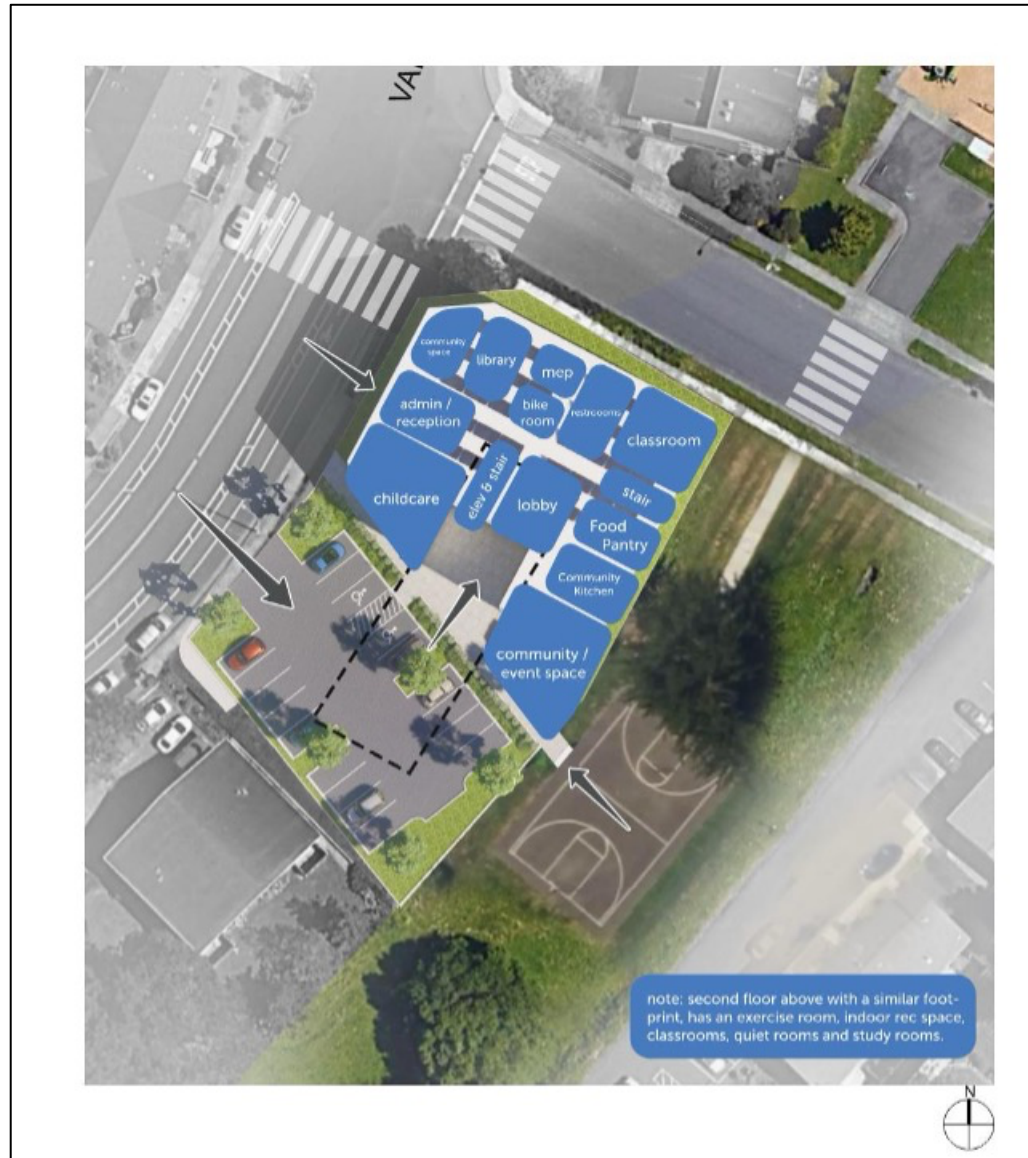


Exhibit H: Site 3 Programming Diagram – 4700 Valley E Blvd

Valley West Neighborhood Center Assessment

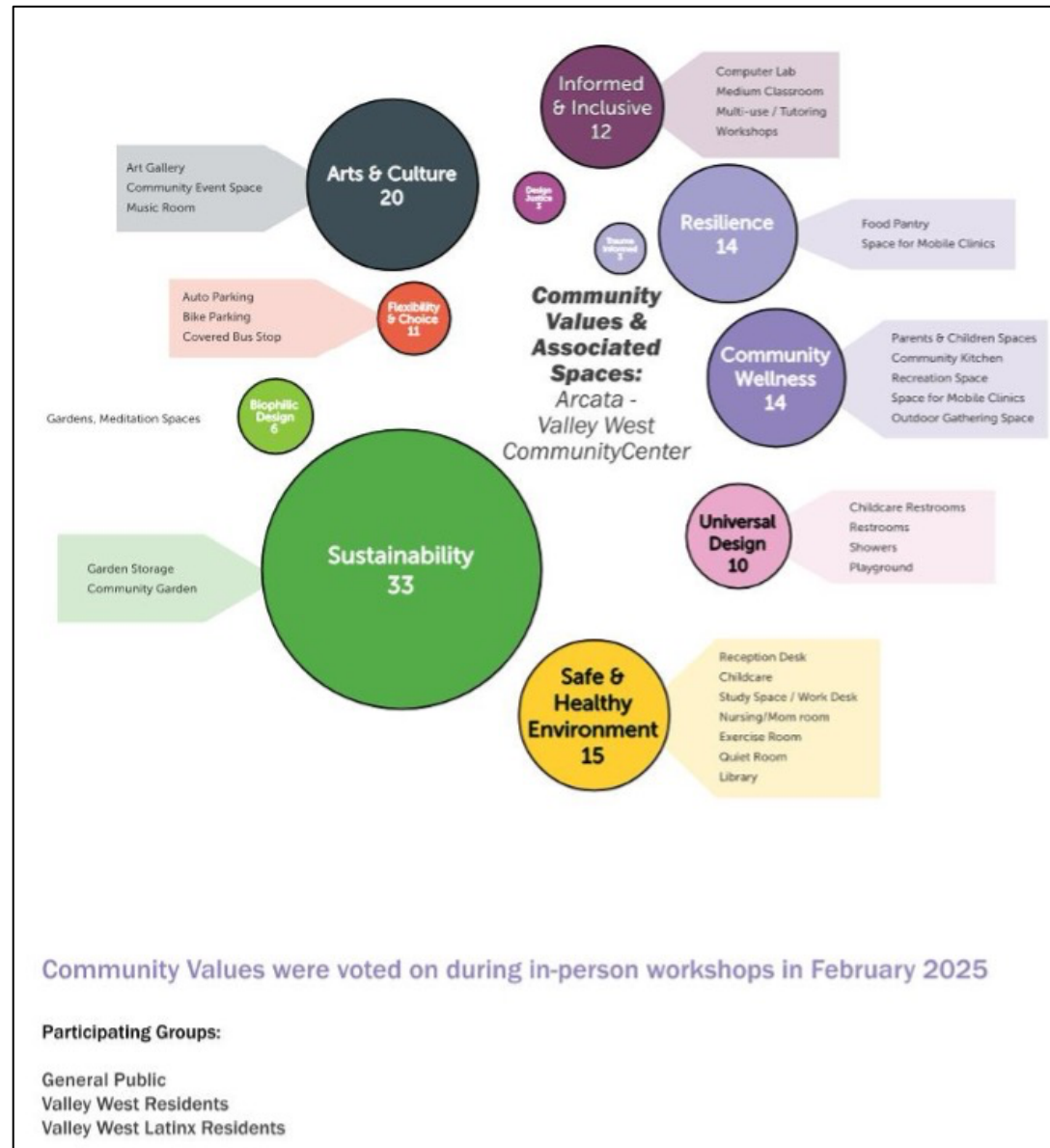


Exhibit I: Community Values Chart