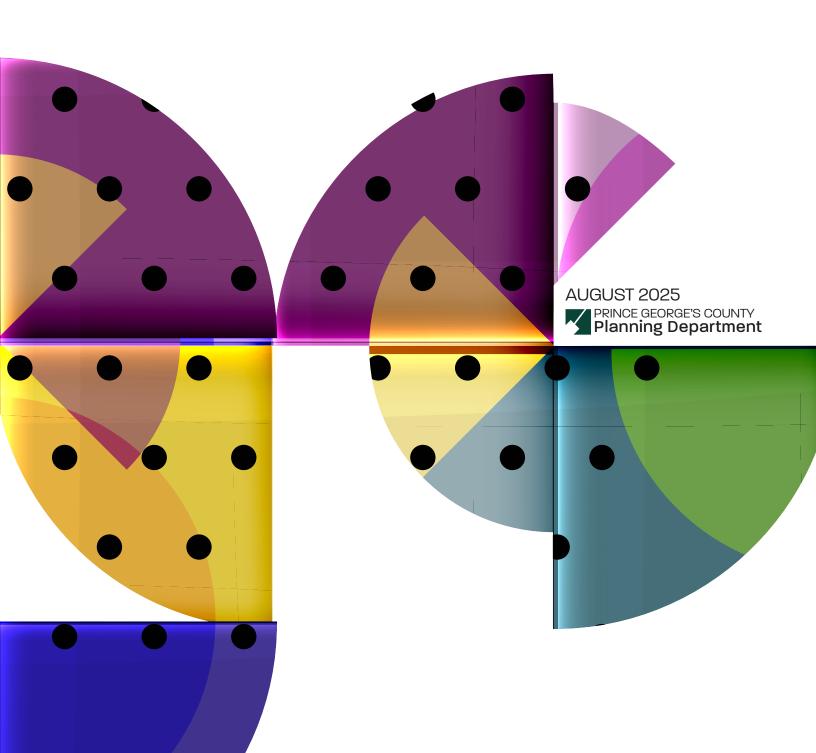
Community Center Feasibility Study

FOR THE TOWN OF COTTAGE CITY



Abstract

Date August 2025

Title Community Center Feasibility Study for the Town of Cottage City

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This document is a Community Center Feasibility Study for the Town of Cottage City, a municipality in Prince George's County, Maryland, incorporated in 1924 (Planning Area 68, Councilmanic District 5). In winter 2023, the Town applied to the Prince George's County Planning Department's Planning Assistance to Municipalities and Communities (PAMC) program to fund a community center study for a recently purchased site. PAMC funding was approved by the Prince George's County Planning Board on July 27, 2023, and the project kicked off October 10, 2023. The study analyzes aspects of the site selected by the Town, identifies the Town's programmatic needs and potential users; provides conceptual site plans and floor plans; and estimates costs for construction and operation. This feasibility study is aligned with and builds on observations, recommendations, polices, and strategies in the 2014 Plan Prince George's 2035 Approved General Plan and the 2009 Approved Port Towns Sector Plan.

Community Center Feasibility Study

FOR THE TOWN OF COTTAGE CITY



August 2025

The Maryland-National Capital Park and Planning Commission

Prince George's County Planning Department 1616 McCormick Drive Largo, MD 20774

www.pgplanning.org

The Maryland-National Capital Park and Planning Commission

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The Maryland-National Capital Park and Planning Commission (M-NCPPC) is a bicounty agency, created by the General Assembly of Maryland in 1927. The Commission's geographic authority extends to the great majority of Montgomery and Prince George's Counties: the Maryland-Washington Regional District (M-NCPPC planning jurisdiction) comprises 1,001 square miles, while the Metropolitan District (parks) comprises 919 square miles, in the two counties.

The Commission has three major functions:

- The preparation, adoption, and, from time to time, amendment or extension of the General Plan for the physical development of the Maryland-Washington Regional District.
- The acquisition, development, operation, and maintenance of a public park system.
- In Prince George's County only, the operation of the entire county public recreation program.

The Commission operates in each county through a Planning Board appointed by and responsible to the County government. All local plans, recommendations on zoning amendments, administration of subdivision regulations, and general administration of parks are responsibilities of the Planning Boards.

The Prince George's County Planning Department:

- · Our mission is to help preserve, protect and manage the County's resources by providing the highest quality planning services and growth management guidance and by facilitating effective intergovernmental and citizen involvement through education and technical assistance.
- Our vision is to be a model planning department of responsive and respected staff who provide superior planning and technical services and work cooperatively with decision makers, citizens, and other agencies to continuously improve development quality and the environment and act as a catalyst for positive change

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The County Council has three main responsibilities in the planning process: setting policy, plan approval, and plan implementation. Applicable policies are incorporated into area plans, functional plans, and the general plan. The Council, after holding a hearing on the plan adopted by the Planning Board, may approve the plan as adopted, approve the plan with amendments based on the public record, or disapprove the plan and return it to the Planning Board for revision. Implementation is primarily through adoption of the annual Capital Improvement Program, the annual Budget, the water and sewer plan, and adoption of zoning map amendments.

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Map 1. Site plan of proposed project area



Project Background

Cottage City is an incorporated municipality and one of the Port Towns of Prince George's County, Maryland. The Port Towns comprise properties contained within the municipal boundaries of Bladensburg, Colmar Manor, Cottage City, and Edmonston, all located within Subregion 2 and Councilmanic District 5. (The Towns of Cottage City, Colmar Manor, and Edmonston are in Planning Area 68 and the Town of Bladensburg is in Planning Area 69.) Cottage City has a diverse population of approximately 1,250 people. It is characterized by bungalow and cottage-style dwellings, parks on the Anacostia River, and scenic open spaces that make the town a desirable place to live. It has easy access to Washington, D.C. and other cultural, educational, and economic centers, such as the Gateway Arts District and the University of Maryland, College Park.

Limited spaces exist within the municipality for residents to gather for community uses or indoor recreation. To address this concern, in winter 2023 the Town applied to the Prince George's County Planning Department's Planning Assistance to Municipalities and Communities (PAMC) program to fund a feasibility study for a new community center. PAMC funding was approved by the Prince George's County Planning Board on June 27, 2023, and the project kicked off October 10, 2023.

The PAMC program is offered by The Maryland-National Capital Park and Planning Commission (M-NCPPC), Prince George's County Planning Department, Community Planning Division, Neighborhood Revitalization Section. The program's purpose is to assist in protecting and implementing the County's approved plans, recommendations made in Planning Department studies, and strategies and action items in approved Maryland Sustainable Communities action plans. The program provides technical planning services at no cost to municipalities or community organizations using Prince George's County Planning expertise, and/or funds consultant services approved by the Planning Board. PAMC projects benefit municipalities and communities that may have limited planning

1 Source: https://www.cottagecitymd.gov/about

resources but are committed to revitalizing and enhancing their communities.

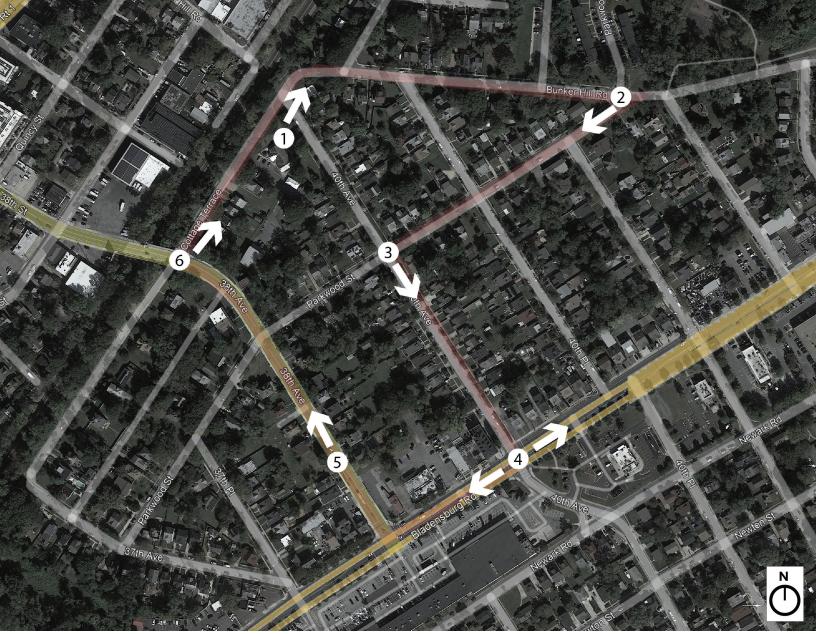
This feasibility study is aligned with and builds on observations, recommendations, and policies and strategies in the 2014 Plan Prince George's 2035 Approved General Plan (Plan 2035) and the 2009 Approved Port Towns Sector Plan. Plan 2035's Public Facilities Policy PF2 (p. 239) states, "Invest in public facilities to catalyze economic development and revitalization, stimulate employment growth, and strengthen neighborhoods." Public Facilities Strategy PF1.1 (p. 238) states, "Encourage colocation of compatible and complementary public facilities, such as libraries and community health centers, and services where colocation improves service delivery and optimizes intergenerational and intercultural use." A Port Towns Sector Plan objective (p. 83) states, "Organizations, municipalities, and agencies all contribute toward operating and maintaining places where recreational facilities and activities occur."

Study Goals

The Community Center Feasibility Study had four major goals:

- Analyze the current conditions of the selected site including environmental and development considerations.
- Engage Town leaders and administrators to identify the Town's programmatic needs and potential users for the proposed community center
- Create conceptual site plans and floor plans that address the identified needs and constraints.
- **Estimate** the costs for construction and operation.

The study incorporated data from the County, input from Town officials and administrative staff, as well as analysis by the consultant. Town stakeholders included the Town of Cottage City Commissioners, the Town's Chief of Police, and the Town Manager.



GOOGLE MAPS

The project team's walking tour route explored Cottage City as well as the proposed site.

Existing Conditions

The project team conducted a walking tour with M-NCPPC staff and the Town Manager in October 2023. The tour visited the proposed site and explored Cottage City, which includes residential smaller-scale streets and larger commercial areas. The purpose of the tour was to gather insights into the neighborhood's context, site conditions, and the built environment and streetscape characteristics.



NEIGHBORHOOD DESIGN CENTER

The walking tour included the former Town Manager and the project team.

NEIGHBORHOOD DESIGN CENTER



NEIGHBORHOOD DESIGN CENTER



NEIGHBORHOOD DESIGN CENTER

Cottage City has diverse building types, most dating between 1914 and the 1980s.

Neighborhood Context and Town Characteristics

A study of the Town's housing, commercial buildings, and streetscape was conducted, focusing on identifying key characteristics and patterns within the neighborhood. The analysis considered various contextual elements such as architectural styles, building materials, landscape features, and the overall aesthetic of the area to ensure the design of a community center would integrate with the existing community fabric.

Cottage City contains a variety of buildings constructed from 1914 to the 1980s. Many of the buildings are one- to one-and-one-half-story dwellings with varying levels of detailing and styles. Bungalows, which characterized many suburban neighborhoods developed in the early twentieth century, are the predominant architectural style throughout the community. Other popular twentieth-century styles are present, including Craftsman, Spanish Revival, Modern Movement, and Colonial Revival.

The topography of the neighborhood is flat north of 37th Avenue, and dwellings have small setbacks from the street. A strip of commercial development is located along Bladensburg Road. Except for a few large warehouses, many buildings are former dwellings adapted for commercial use. The sole public building in Cottage City was constructed in 1987 and contains municipal administrative offices and the police department headquarters.

HOUSING

Cottage City has a variety of small-scale housing typologies, each with different levels of architectural detail.









ROOF

- · Gabled roofline
 - · Flat roof
 - · Dormers
 - · Chimneys

FAÇADE

- · Porch/patio
- · Arched entrances
- Small- to medium-sized openings
- · Steps to main entrance

MATERIALS

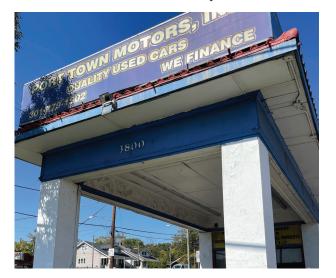
- · Siding
- Stucco
- · Concrete or brick base

GENERAL NOTES

- · Majority are 1-2 story single-family dwellings (bungalow)
 - · Set back from the street
- · Residential buildings come in a variety of styles

COMMERCIAL

The main commercial businesses of Cottage City are located mostly in converted dwellings along Bladensburg Road. Businesses include barbershops, nail salons, restaurants, auto shops, and warehouses.











- · Gabled roofline
 - · Flat roof

FAÇADE

- · Overhangs/Awnings
 - · Light fixtures
 - · Mailboxes
- · Single-door entrance



MATERIALS

- · Brick
- · Stucco



- · Main commercial strip is along Bladensburg Road
- · Variety of building typology
- · Houses converted to commercial uses (1-2 stories)
 - Warehouses
 - · Variety of signage typology

STREETSCAPE

Cottage City has a semi-pedestrian-friendly streetscape with plenty of green buffers protecting people from parked or driving cars. There are also sidewalks throughout the town in good condition.







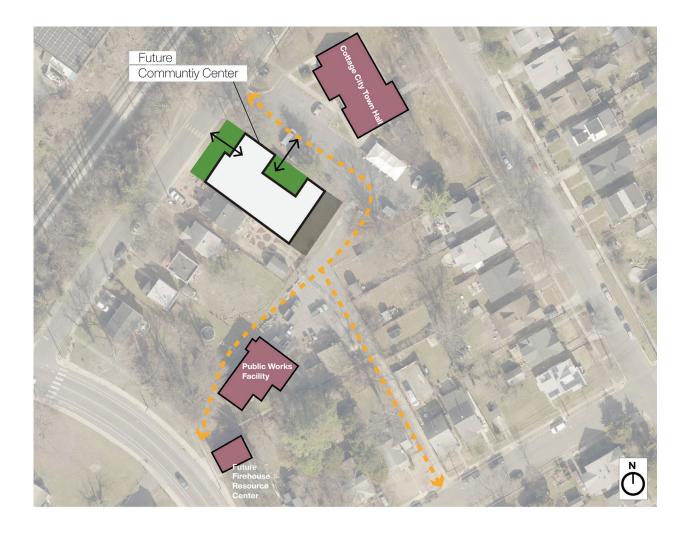


LANDSCAPE

- · Plant beds
- · Planters
- Some residential streets have a significant tree line while other streets lack greenery
- Landscape buffer between street and entrance to residential or commercial building

OTHER FEATURES

- Fencing variety of sizes and materials wood, metal, chain-link
 - · Consistent setbacks from road
- · Parking along both sides of road in residential area
- · Variety of sidewalk widths (average of 3-4 feet)
 - · Trash receptacles in various locations



Site Context

The proposed site, recently purchased by the Town (3813 Cottage Terrace), consists of Parcels 7 and 8, Tax Account 0126862, comprising 0.24 acre (10,454 square feet). The site is adjacent to the Town Hall. One lot is currently vacant, while the other is improved with an abandoned dwelling. A community center at this location would create a cohesive community campus.

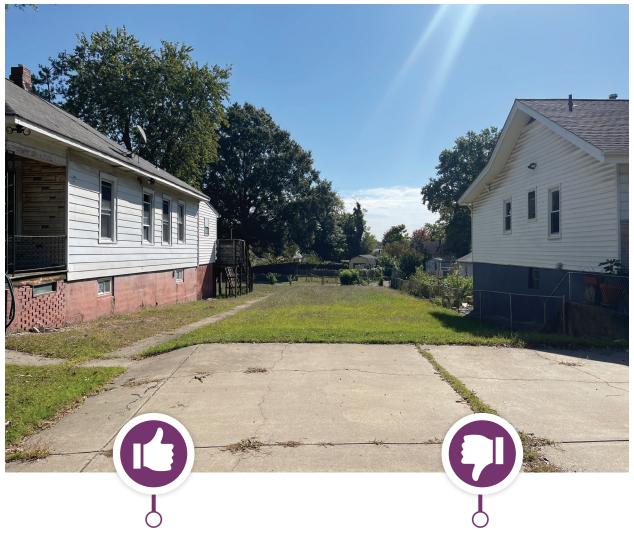
Currently, the Town Hall (3820 40th Avenue) serves as a space for Town administration and the police department. The Town plans to adapt the old firehouse at 3801 38th Avenue into a community resource center. Together, these developments will enhance the Town's ability to serve its residents by providing centralized and accessible spaces for gatherings, resources, and activities. The community center site is located proximate to the Town Hall and the future firehouse resource center, ensuring convenient access to shared parking and creating a unified network of community services.

Zoning and Development Review Analysis

The selected site is currently zoned RSF-65 (Residential, Single-Family), which permits singlefamily residential and other uses compatible with single-family residential uses. As a municipality, the Town of Cottage City is not subject to the Zoning Ordinance; however, development of the site by the Town will be subject to mandatory referral review. This is a review procedure where public sector development projects, including those by federal, state, and local governments, as well as public and private utilities, are evaluated by the Planning Board. To support the review, submission materials such as a narrative description, site plans, sketches, and photographs are required. For additional information, see the Mandatory Referral Review Process webpage at pgplan.org/mandatoryreferral.

Site Analysis

A comprehensive analysis was conducted to evaluate existing site conditions to ensure the community center design effectively addresses site advantages and constraints.



ADVANTAGES

- Connections: A sidewalk along its Cottage
 Terrace frontage provides a connection to
 the surrounding area and creates a street link
 between the site and the Town Hall. There
 are additional opportunities for enhanced
 connections between the community center site,
 the Town Hall, the Public Works facility, and the
 Firehouse Resource Center as shown in Map 2.
- **Topography:** The site is relatively flat, with slope from front to back of approximately three feet. (The slope appears steeper because the current dwelling is raised on a brick podium.)

CONSTRAINTS

- Limited Parking Space: The available area onsite is insufficient for accommodating parking needs, which will require alternative solutions, such as shared parking arrangements with the Town Hall and/or reliance on public transit and pedestrian access.
- Narrow Width: The site's narrow configuration limits flexibility in building layout and outdoor space design.





PHOTOS BY NEIGHBORHOOD DESIGN CENTER

Community members provided feedback through engagement activities during the March 2024 community workshop at the Cottage City Town Hall.



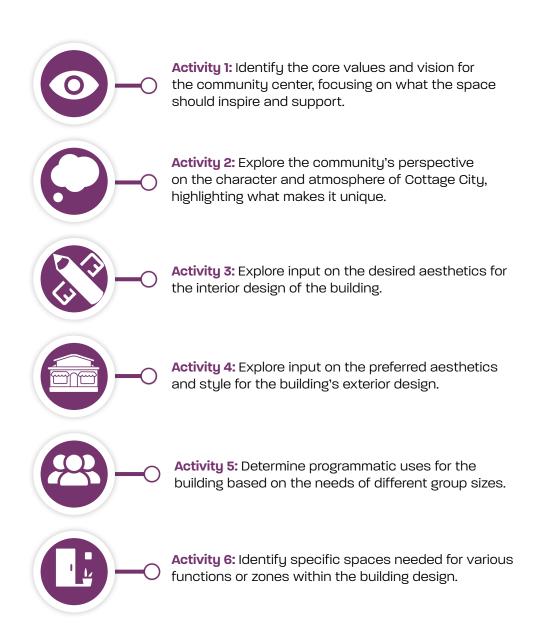


Workshops and Visioning

The engagement goal for this project was to build a shared vision for the center among Town Staff and Town Commissioners. If the project moves forward, the Town will engage with the Cottage City community at large.

In March 2024, the project team hosted a workshop with Cottage City Town Staff and Town

Commissioners to present an overview of the project, share findings from the existing conditions analysis, and collaboratively envision the new community center. Participants engaged in a series of visioning activities designed to explore the programming needs and inform the preferred architecture style for the building. The workshop included six activities.



Function and Design

Engagement revealed the workshop participants believed their community center should express the community's artistic, colorful, and modern spirit while serving as a hub for creativity. It should feature green spaces, flexible meeting and rental areas, and parking that can be shared with other Town facilities. The center should be able to accommodate activities such as wellness classes, workshops, and year-round events for all ages. In addition to spaces for small

groups, large gatherings, and community events, a kitchenette, sensory garden (a garden that stimulates the senses of sight, smell, sound, taste, and touch) classrooms, and multipurpose spaces should be included. The center should foster partnerships with local organizations to provide diverse programming and resources.

The following are all responses gathered during engagement activities:



Cottage City's spirit is:

- · artistic
- minimal
- · colorful
- natural
- modern



The Cottage City
Community Center should
include:

- a sustainable green space
- parking that can also be accessed by individuals visiting the firehouse resource center
- meeting spaces
- · rental spaces



The Cottage City
Community Center should
support:

- accessibility to community members of all ages
- Port Towns meetings
- · artist workspaces
- guest educators
- · recreation activities
- year-round activities for everyone (indoor)
- [Cottage City]
 residents who currently
 use Colmar Manor
 community center
- classrooms for workshops (cooking, wellness, language)
- a farmers market
- partnerships for the garden programming
- programming for in-house staffing in partnership with nonprofits and M-NCPPC



The Cottage City Community Center should **look**:

- bright
- · modern
- industrial
- open
- · flexible



ISTOCK

Building Uses

SMALL GROUP (3-9 PEOPLE)

- · Skills Classes
- · Support Groups
- Yoga Wellness Studio
- Language Classes

MEDIUM/LARGE GROUP (10-20 PEOPLE)

- Fitness Classes Craft workshops
- Cultural Celebrations
- · Small gym/weight room
- Swimming Pool
- · After school programs
- · Pool tables, ping pong
- · Computer gaming
- Resource area (books)
- · Indoor court for recreation

COMMUNITY EVENTS (21+ PEOPLE)

- Festivals
- · Farmers Markets
- Live Music
- Black History Month events (museum and field trip)

Programming Spaces

SMALL GROUP

- Kitchen (1)
- Office (2)
- Game room (1)

MEDIUM/LARGE GROUP

- Meeting/Conference Room (1)
- Flexible Classroom (1)
- Sensory garden/Zen meditation garden (1)
- Computer Lab (1)

COMMUNITY EVENTS

- Multipurpose room (1)
- Outdoor area/parking lot

SERVICE/SUPPORT

- Lobby (1)
- Restrooms (quantity is dependent on building capacity)
- Storage (quantity is dependent on building capacity)
- Mechanical Room (1)

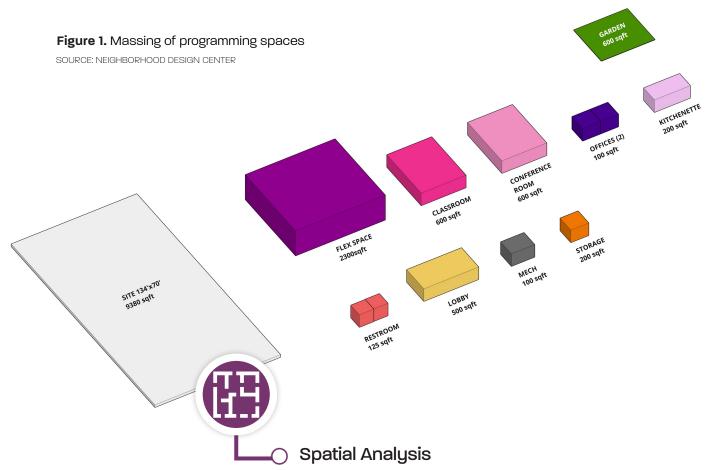
Vision Statement

The Cottage City Community Center will be a **vibrant and inclusive hub** that fosters connection, creativity, and well-being for residents and visitors of **all generations**. Rooted in our community's unique spirit, the center will offer spaces for **learning** and cultural enrichment.

It will have a design philosophy that balances modern and industrial aesthetics with the natural beauty of our environment. The community center would be a **welcoming landmark**. Its bright and open interiors will offer flexible spaces for activities, such as skills classes and support groups, as well as medium and large group events such as fitness sessions, cultural workshops, and youth programming.

Design Process

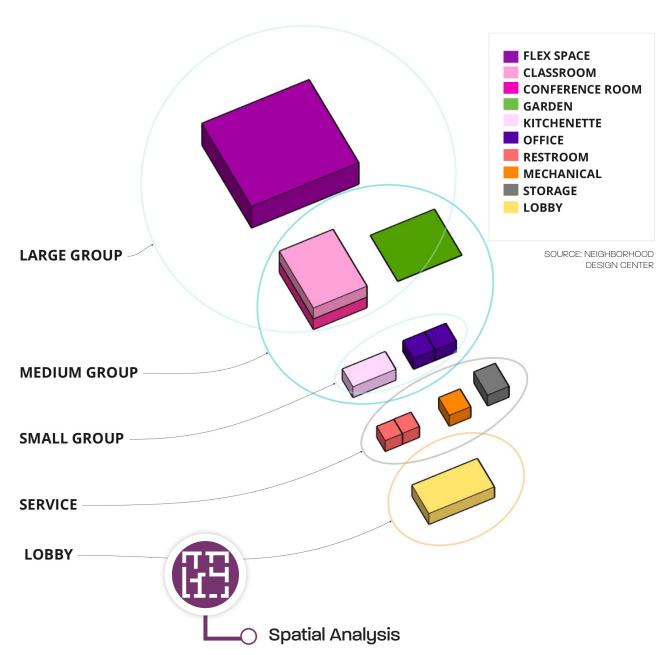
A second workshop with the Town Staff and Commissioners was held October 1, 2024. The design team presented initial layouts and cost estimates based on responses from the March session. The project team conducted a spatial analysis, exploring multiple design layout iterations to refine the overall concept. Each iteration considered stakeholder input, neighborhood context, and site opportunities and challenges, gradually progressing toward a final design option. A cost analysis provided the town with an understanding of the project's potential construction and maintenance costs.



The scale and relationships of the various spaces and uses the stakeholders envisioned were analyzed. The image above illustrates the program components and their scale relative to one another. The design includes a large flexible space, a classroom and conference room, two offices, a kitchenette, and a garden area and service spaces.

Figure 2. Representation of flexibility of programming spaces

SOURCE: NEIGHBORHOOD DESIGN CENTER

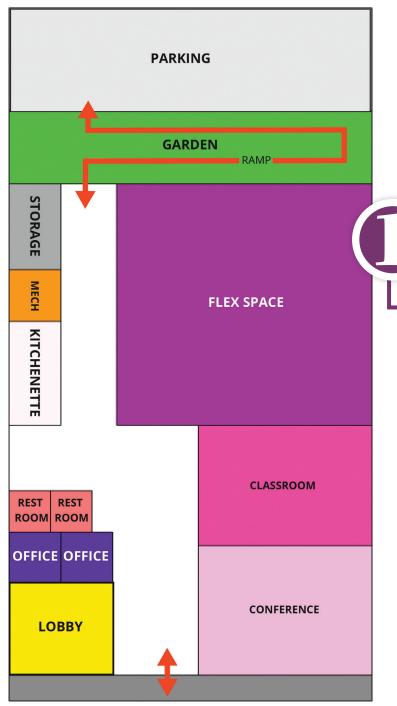


To further organize the program, building uses are organized by group size and assigned to suitable spaces. For instance, large group activities can be accommodated in the flexible space as well as the classroom and conference room, depending on the need.

Layouts Considered

Three diagrammatic building layout options were explored during the design process.

Figure 3. Single-level building layout option 1



OPTION 1

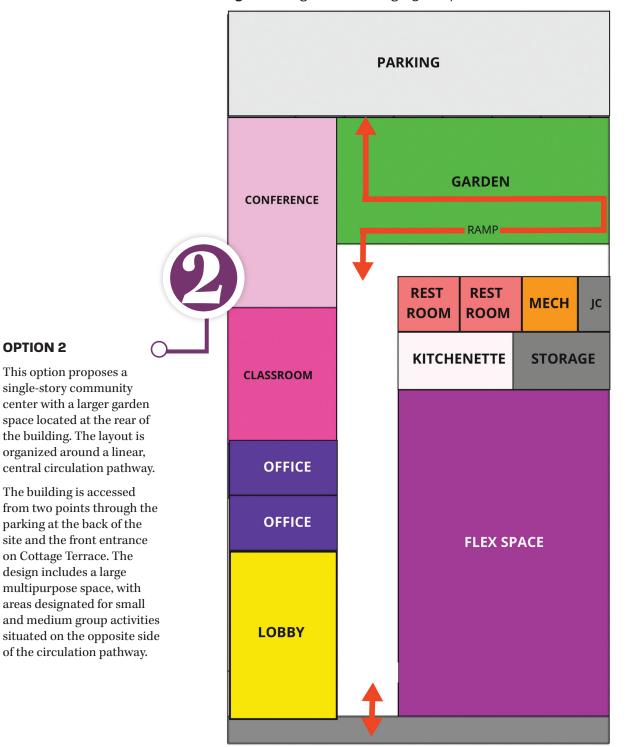
This option features a single-story community center centered on a large multipurpose space. Smaller- to medium-sized program spaces are located near the entrance on Cottage Terrace, positioned adjacent to each other. The large multipurpose space and the building's service areas can be found at the rear of the site next to the garden and parking lot. The primary goal of this layout is to enhance the connection between the parking lot and the largest space, while fostering an indoor-outdoor experience between the multipurpose area and the garden.

SOURCE: NEIGHBORHOOD DESIGN CENTER





Figure 4. Single-level building layout option 2

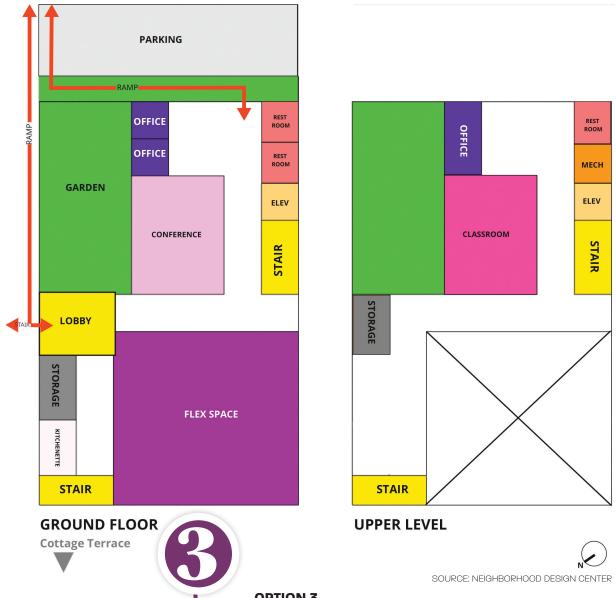


Cottage Terrace



OPTION 2

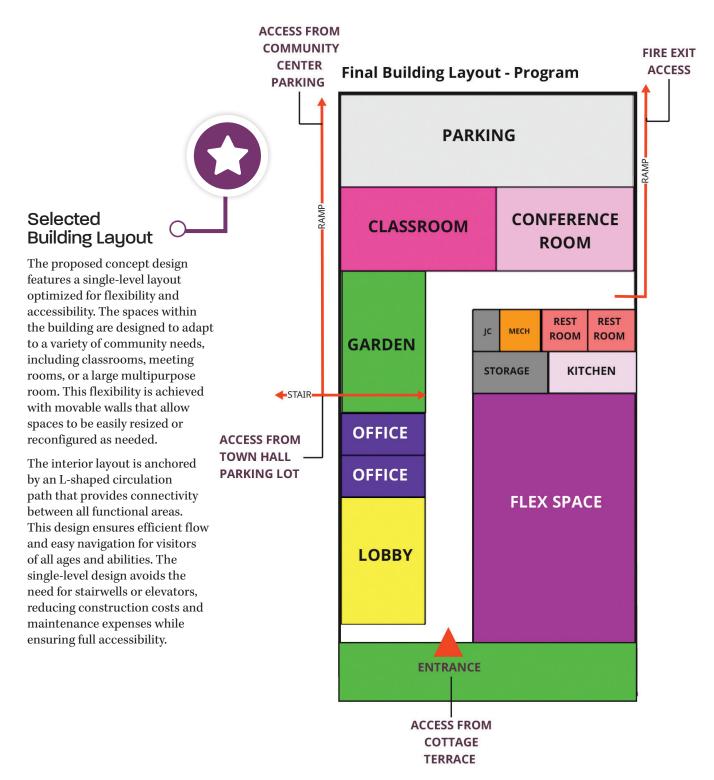
Figure 5. Two-level layout option



OPTION 3

This layout envisions a two-story community center designed to accommodate a variety of programming needs. It features an expansive multipurpose space, along with a larger conference and classroom space on each level, providing increased capacity for meetings and group activities. While this design offers the most functionality and flexibility, it is also the most expensive option due to its larger square footage and the complexity of the sitework required for a multilevel structure. The garden and outdoor green space are thoughtfully positioned on the southeast side of the building, creating a visual connection with the nearby Town Hall. Parking is located at the rear of the site, ensuring accessibility while preserving the front of the building for pedestrian access.

Figure 6. Selected Layout Option



SOURCE: NEIGHBORHOOD DESIGN CENTER

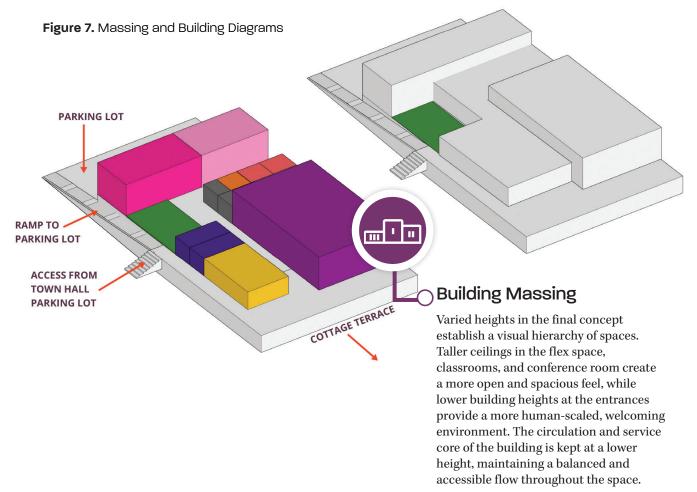
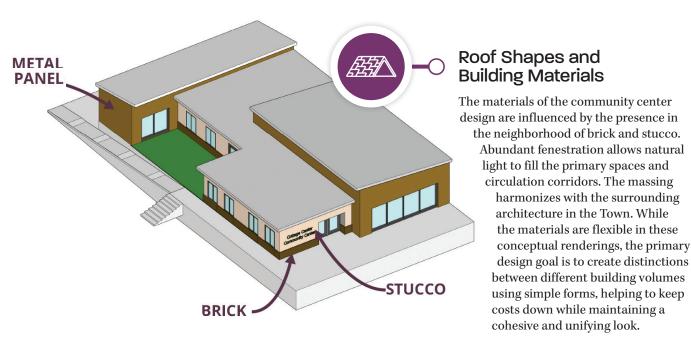
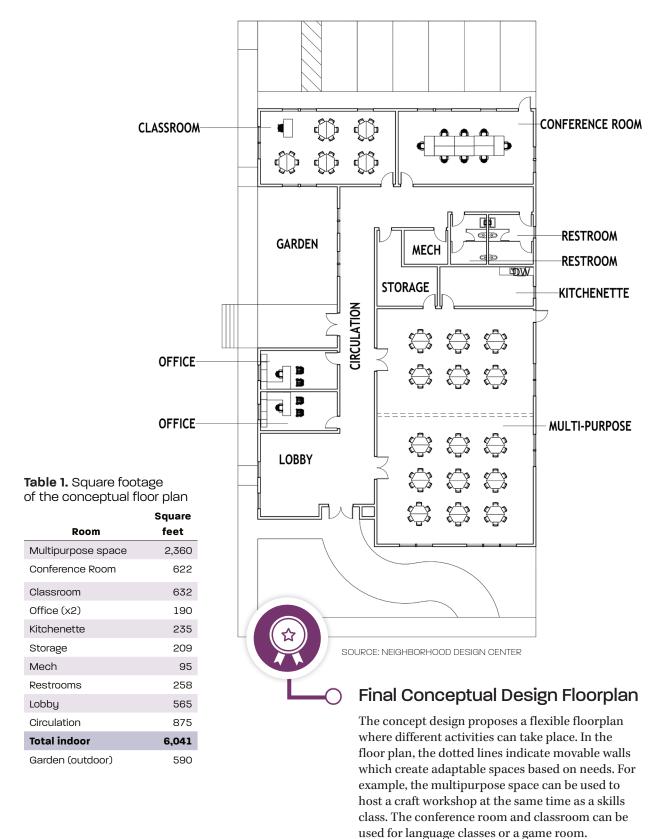


Figure 8. Roof shapes and building materials



SOURCE: NEIGHBORHOOD DESIGN CENTER

Figure 9. Conceptual Floor plan



Cost Analysis

The average cost per square foot to build a small community center in Maryland can vary based on several factors, including the location, design, materials used, and specific features of the community center. The average cost per square foot used here is based on a one-story commercial building in the eastern region of the United States. A more detailed cost analysis will be necessary if the project moves forward in order to consider changes in industry standards and materials costs.

Table 2. Sample Building Cost Analysis

	Cost per sq foot	Cost
6,041 square feet, avg subtotal	\$350	\$2,114,350
Contractor Fees	\$75	\$453,075
Architectural Fees	\$24	\$144,984
Total		\$2,712,409

SOURCE: NEIGHBORHOOD DESIGN CENTER

Additional Costs

Other costs to consider include demolition and sitework. There will also be a variety of maintenance costs including utilities, cleaning and janitorial services, repairs, landscaping, for the Town to consider. Details of cost estimations can be found in the table below.

Table 3. Additional Costs Estimate

Utilities \$2-\$3 \$12,000-\$15,000 Cleaning and Janitorial Service \$1-\$2 \$6,000-\$12,000 Repairs and Maintenance \$1.5-\$2.5 \$9,000-\$15,000 Landscaping \$0.50-\$1 \$3,000-\$6,000 Insurance \$1-\$2 \$6,000-\$12,000 Security \$0.50-\$1 \$3,000-\$6,000 Building manager/ staff varies Total \$39,000-\$66,000		Cost per sq ft annually	Total Annual Cost
Janitorial Service \$1-\$2 \$6,000-\$12,000 Repairs and Maintenance \$1.5-\$2.5 \$9,000-\$15,000 Landscaping \$0.50-\$1 \$3,000-\$6,000 Insurance \$1-\$2 \$6,000-\$12,000 Security \$0.50-\$1 \$3,000-\$6,000 Building manager/ staff varies	Utilities	\$2-\$3	\$12,000-\$15,000
Maintenance \$1.5-\$2.5 \$9,000-\$15,000 Landscaping \$0.50-\$1 \$3,000-\$6,000 Insurance \$1-\$2 \$6,000-\$12,000 Security \$0.50-\$1 \$3,000-\$6,000 Building manager/ staff varies	•	\$1-\$2	\$6,000-\$12,000
Insurance \$1-\$2 \$6,000-\$12,000 Security \$0.50-\$1 \$3,000-\$6,000 Building manager/ staff varies	•	\$1.5-\$2.5	\$9,000-\$15,000
Security \$0.50-\$1 \$3,000-\$6,000 Building manager/ staff varies	Landscaping	\$0.50-\$1	\$3,000-\$6,000
Building manager/ varies	Insurance	\$1-\$2	\$6,000-\$12,000
staff	Security	\$0.50-\$1	\$3,000-\$6,000
Total \$39,000-\$66,000	0 0	varies	
	Total		\$39,000-\$66,000

SOURCE: NEIGHBORHOOD DESIGN CENTER



M-NCPPC

Cottage City has an active community and an annual celebration of the town.

Next Steps



FACILITATE INCLUSIVE COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

Conduct interactive community meetings, surveys, and workshops to gather input on key design preferences, addressing the community's needs and preferences for a single level versus a two-level building. These engagements should ensure broad participation, including residents, local organizations, and other stakeholders to build consensus and align the design with community priorities.



EVALUATE THE LOCATION

Based on feedback from the community, assess the feasibility of retaining the community center at the currently proposed site or relocating it to a more advantageous location, such as the existing Town Hall site. A comparative analysis of site benefits, accessibility, and future expansion potential should guide this decision-making process.



REFINE CONCEPT DESIGN AND UPDATE COST ANALYSIS

Incorporate community input and location considerations into the concept design, ensuring alignment with both practical and aspirational goals. Following this, conduct a follow-up comprehensive cost analysis to reflect changes in scope, materials, and location. The updated analysis will provide a realistic foundation for financial planning.



REVIEW BUDGET AND DEVELOP AN IMPLEMENTATION PLAN

Collaborate with town officials and financial advisors to review the current budget considering updated costs. Develop a phased implementation plan that prioritizes critical design elements while aligning with available resources. The plan should include timelines, funding gaps, and opportunities for phased construction if needed.



INITIATE A FUNDRAISING STRATEGY

Launch a robust fundraising campaign to secure additional funding for the project. Engage local businesses, local and federal government agencies, County and state grant programs, philanthropic organizations, and community donors to support the vision. Highlight the community center's role in enhancing quality of life and fostering community engagement to gain support.

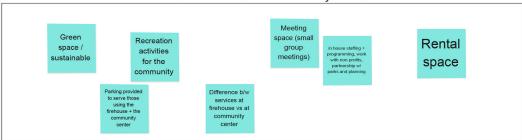


Values + Vision

Who is being served at the Community Center?

| Visitors | Young | People |

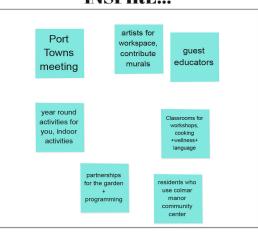
What is success for the Community Center?

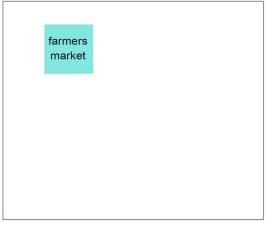


The Community Center should...

INSPIRE...

SUPPORT...

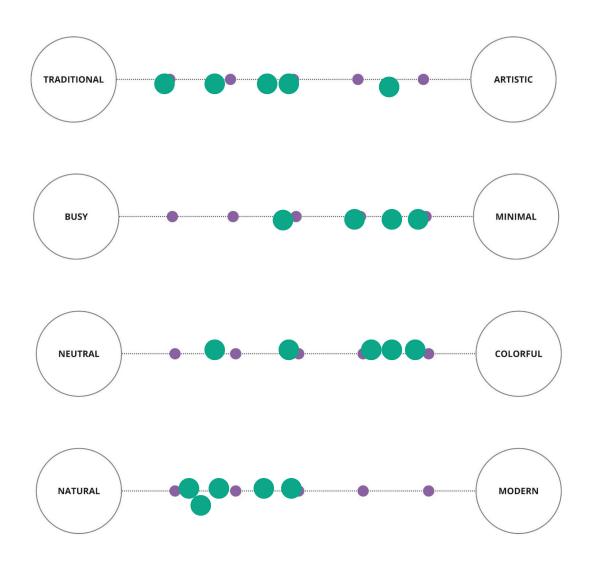




Notes: Comments/ Questions

Sense of Place

A sense of place refers to the unique and distinctive character and atmosphere of a particular location or community. **Mark the slider** to indicate which characteristic best fit your architectural vision for the Cottage City Community Center and reflect Cottage City's local spirit.



Notes: Comments/ Questions		

Interior

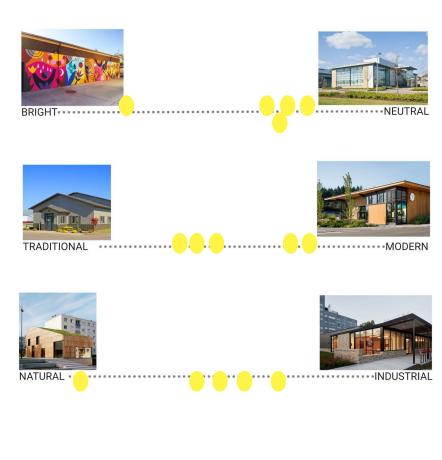
Mark the slider to indicate which characteristic best fit your architectural vision for the Cottage City Community Center Interiors.



Notes: Comments/ Questions

Exterior

Mark the slider to indicate which characteristic best fit your architectural vision for the Cottage City Community Center Exteriors.





Notes: Comments/ Questions

Building Uses

What activities happen at the Community Center? (list)

INDIVIDUAL

Meetings
 Informational services

SMALL GROUP (3-9)

Skills Classes
 Support Groups

yoga/
wellness
studio

language
classes

MED-LARGE GROUP(10-20)

 Fitness Classes Craft Workshops
 Cultural Celebrations kitchen multi-purpose room (for larger events, recreation, pool tables, ping pong) Resource with sink gaming lounging room with and Area court for aftergym/weight school computers space microwave (books) recreation room programs for kids

COMMUNITY EVENTS (21+)

Farmers Market
Performances
Career Fair

Live
Farmers
Market

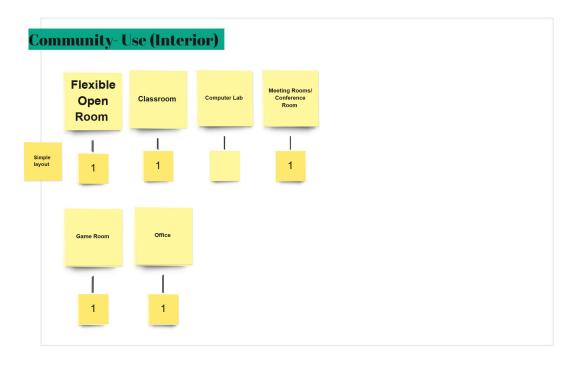
Black History
Month events
(museum and field trips)

Notes: Comments/ Questions Basement + 1st and 2n floor

Building Uses

How many of **each** of these elements are **needed** for The Cottage City Community Center?

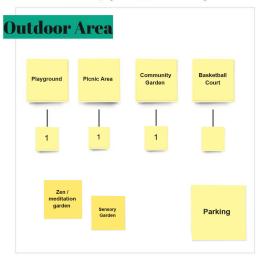
What other programmatic elements are missing?



What other service programmatic elements are missing?



How many people do you imagine using each room? What other programmatic elements are missing?



Notes: Comments/ Questions

Acknowledgments

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