

Town of Damascus: Conceptual Redevelopment
of the Former Chevron Property



Prepared for the Town of Damascus
July 2017

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Project funding provided through a Brownfields Assessment grant through the
Environmental Protection Agency (EPA).



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The Community Design Assistance Center (CDAC)



The Community Design Assistance Center (CDAC) is an outreach center in the College of Architecture and Urban Studies at Virginia Tech that assists communities, neighborhood groups and non-profit organizations in improving the natural and built environments. Assistance is provided in the areas of landscape architecture, architecture, planning, and interior design. Working with communities, the conceptual planning and design provides communities with a graphic vision of their project that can then be used for grant applications and fundraising for the next steps toward implementation.

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Town of Damascus: Conceptual Redevelopment
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ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

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Mayor, Town of Damascus

Aaron Sizemore

Director, Mount Rogers Planning District Commission

Gavin Blevins

Regional Planner, Mount Rogers Planning District Commission
Town Manager, Town of Damascus

Tuesday Pope

Town Clerk, Town of Damascus

Mount Rogers Planning District Commission

Cardno

Environmental Consulting

and

Those who volunteered time for the betterment of their community

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PROJECT DESCRIPTION

Project Overview

The Community Design Assistance Center (CDAC) of Virginia Tech received a U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) Brownfields Assessment grant to assess and help communities develop conceptual redevelopment plans for potentially contaminated sites in southwest Virginia communities.

The EPA Assessment Grant provided funding for CDAC to help communities determine if a site was contaminated (and if so, with what) and then plan for the possible redevelopment of that site through a conceptual design and community engagement process. EPA did not require or commit communities to any cleanup if the community participated in this process.

Further, the EPA provides the following description:

“A brownfield is a property, the expansion, redevelopment, or reuse of which may be complicated by the presence or potential presence of a hazardous substance, pollutant, or contaminant.”

Through the EPA Brownfields Assessment grant, the purpose of this project was to work with the Damascus community to identify a new use for the former Chevron site at the corner of East Laurel Avenue and South Legion Street and then develop a conceptual design for the parcel.

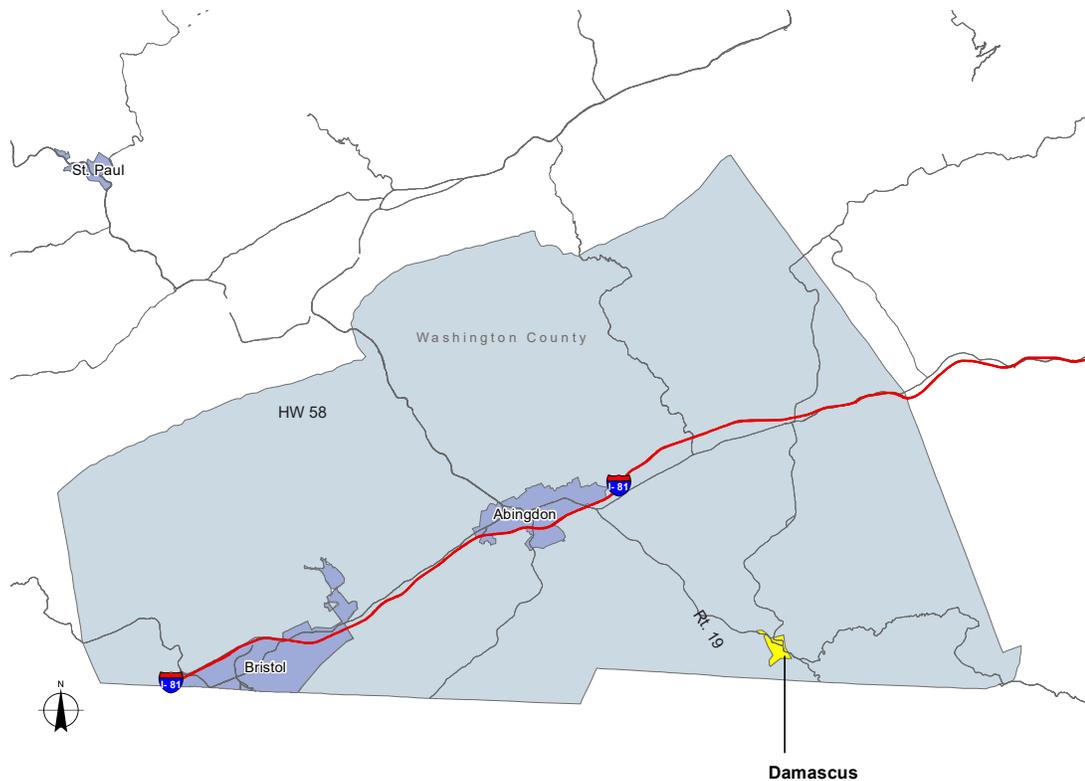
The general process involved testing the site for contaminants (carried out by Cardno, an environmental services company and CDAC's contractor for the EPA grant) and developing a concept for improving the site. The grant did not require cleanup, but rather is an opportunity to work with the community to develop conceptual designs to help create a vision for the future.

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PROJECT DESCRIPTION



Damascus, VA is located in southwest Virginia (above) in the southeast portion of Washington County (below). Damascus is about twenty minutes from Abingdon, VA and the I-81 corridor and five minutes north of the Tennessee state line via Shady Avenue.



The following pages show the location of the site within the town of Damascus along with images of the site.



Laurel Ave.- facing east



Project site- former Chevron gas station



Project site- from adjacent church



Laurel Ave.- facing west



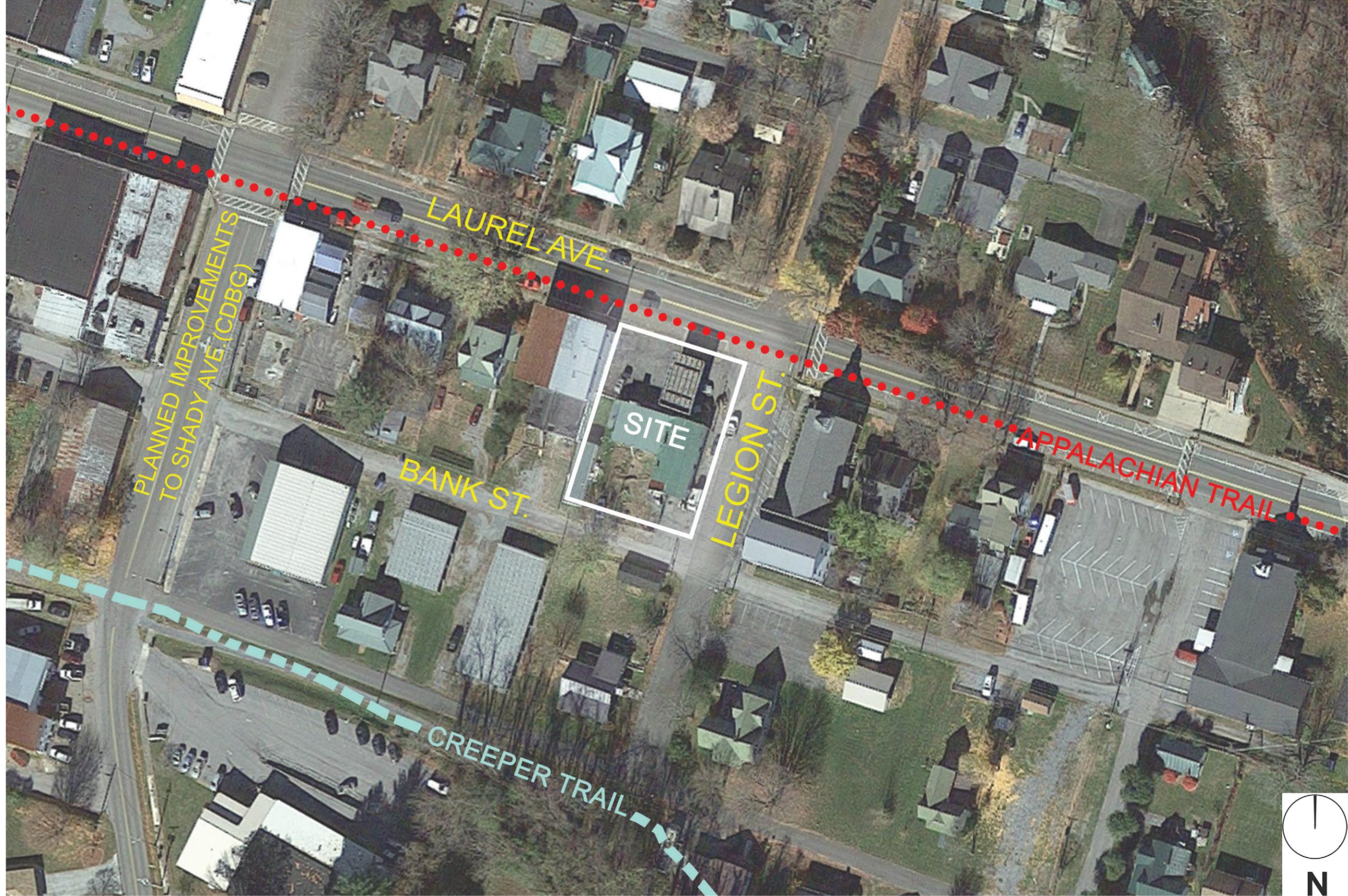
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Project Location: 1 of 2
Downtown Damascus



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Damascus: Conceptual Redevelopment of the Former Chevron Property

Project Location: 2 of 2

Downtown Damascus

PROJECT DESCRIPTION

Town Background

According to the Town of Damascus 2013 Comprehensive Plan, Damascus is located in the southeast section of Washington County. The town is 12 miles from the town of Abingdon and Interstate 81 and 28 miles from Bristol, VA/TN. Highways 58 and 91, as well as Laurel and Beaverdam Creeks, intersect within the corporate limits.

During the first half of the 1900's, the population of the town of Damascus was on the rise, peaking at 1,726 in 1950. The next forty years saw a loss of over 800 people. The 1990s and first five years of the 2000s showed slight growth, but by 2010, the population of the town had declined to 814.

Like many small towns in the planning district, Damascus has a declining commercial business district, a light manufacturing base in and around the town, and a heavily seasonal service-providing industry. The residents of Damascus are still reliant on Washington County and Abingdon, as well as areas in Tennessee and North Carolina, for jobs, consumer goods, major health care, entertainment, and dining.

The central business district is bisected by U.S. Highway 58 (Laurel Avenue in Damascus) and includes retail establishments, repair services, professional offices, banking, dining, churches, a fire station, town hall, and library. Several small dining establishments are located in the community, however, as the town continues to expand its tourism industry, there is a need for additional dining facilities that can accommodate large groups.

Over the past decade the town has strategically developed outdoor recreation as a primary engine to its local economy by focusing on the tourist experience, recreation amenities, and lodging opportunities. As a result Damascus is quickly becoming a destination for people who want to take a break from their fast-paced life in a welcoming and attractive mountain community. Once arriving, visitors will find that Damascus is the crossing of seven significant trail systems for hiking, biking, and horseback riding. The seven trails include the 1) Appalachian Trail, 2) Virginia Creeper Trail, 3) Trans-America National Bicycle Trail, 4) Iron Mountain Trail, 5) Daniel Boone Heritage Trail, 6) Crooked Road Musical Heritage Trail, and 7) Virginia's Birding and Wildlife Trail.

Damascus continues to be a desirable destination for thousands of hikers and outdoor enthusiasts, who converge on the town during Appalachian Trail Days, Fourth of July celebrations, and concerts. The tourist 'generators' create demands in hiking, biking, horseback riding, lodging, and hospitality industries.

Trail services have blossomed with businesses to meet the needs of visitors including backpacking supply stores, shuttle services, full service bicycle shops, guide service, and bed-and-breakfasts. Multiple lodging opportunities are located in the Damascus area to serve visitors and vacationers desiring a scenic mountain

PROJECT DESCRIPTION

retreat and vacation. A relatively new aspect to Damascus' tourism opportunities is motorcycle tourism. Motorcycle tourism in and around Damascus is growing, as every year more motorcycle enthusiasts travel from Damascus to Shady Valley, TN enjoying the area's natural beauty.

In 2014 – 2015, Hill Studio, a multi-disciplinary design firm in Roanoke, worked with the town of Damascus to develop a Downtown Revitalization and Improvement Master Plan. Through a process of community engagement and visioning, Hill Studio worked with the community to develop a framework for downtown revitalization.

The purpose of the process and plan was to work with the community to envision a revitalized downtown area and to “identify ways to enhance public and private properties and expand business opportunities to make Damascus a year-round destination for outdoor recreation.” One of the sites identified in the plan for improvements is the former Chevron gas station located at the corner of East Laurel Avenue and South Legion Street. The community visioning and planning process recommended the gas station be removed and a new structure be built with a restaurant on the lower floor and low to moderate income (LMI) apartments on the second story.

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The Community Design Assistance Center and Cardno worked with the Town and the local community to further refine the ideas initiated by Hill Studio for the reuse of the Chevron station site. The CDAC team developed two alternative conceptual designs for the site, presented the concepts to the community for feedback, revised the concepts, then presented the final conceptual designs to the community.

The CDAC's conceptual designs helped provide a refined vision for the site and a crucial next step toward obtaining private and public investments.

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PROJECT DESCRIPTION

Site Visit



The CDAC team considers possible ways to leverage plans for a new visitor center near the project site. The new visitor center will highlight the Appalachian Trail that runs through downtown Damascus.

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CDAC students and Cardno representative Joe Morici (left) meet with Town Manager Gavin Blevins (center) to learn about local needs during an initial visit to Damascus.

DESIGN PROCESS

The design process began with an initial visit and meeting with stakeholders on December 1, 2016. During that visit Gavin Blevins, Damascus Town Manager, gave the CDAC team a tour of the town and explained where other existing town initiatives were taking place. Following this tour, the Town invited key stakeholders to share their initial thoughts and concerns that the former Chevron site could address. Photographs, early sketches, and input from the stakeholder group, combined with mapping, created a comprehensive inventory of the existing conditions found at the site.

Once back in Blacksburg, the CDAC team studied the inventory to understand various trends and patterns in Damascus that could be incorporated into the design. Known as a site analysis, certain limitations and opportunities influenced what design recommendations would be most appropriate for the site. The team returned to Damascus on February 23, 2017 for a community input session. Participants had the opportunity to tell the CDAC team about community projects that were on-going and suggest specific activities they would like to see on the project site. Suggestions for potential site uses provided by community members included a brewery, indoor climbing facility, restaurant, short-term lodging, retail, and/ or outdoor gathering spaces. The evening closed with enough inspiration to propel the CDAC team into case study research and the design portion of the project.

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Considering the activity interests expressed by the stakeholder group and community members, it was important to study how certain suggested activities have been implemented elsewhere. For example, many people supported to idea of an indoor climbing facility. This aligned with Damascus' outdoorsy identity and helped diversify its current seasonal economy with a year-round indoor business. To learn more about



John Johnson, owner of Crimper's Climbing Gym, shares his experiences with the CDAC team of designing and opening his indoor climbing facility in Christiansburg, VA.

DESIGN PROCESS

climbing facilities, the CDAC team visited Crimper's Climbing Gym (www.crimpersclimbing.com) in March 2017 in Christiansburg. The owner of the gym generously shared his experiences of building and operating the facility as well as suggested complimentary businesses that could occupy the same space.

With a completed inventory, site analysis, and case studies as a foundation to base the design decisions on, the student designers created two preliminary conceptual designs for the former Chevron site. The preliminary conceptual designs were presented to the community on March 21, 2017. Participants were invited to provide feedback on the designs. Due to the diversity of feedback, the team revised both concepts rather than refining them in to one final concept. The two final conceptual designs were presented to the community on April 18, 2017.

The concepts and descriptions can be found on the following pages.

Meeting notes from the input sessions and community presentations can be found in the Appendix.

PART 1: FINAL CONCEPTUAL DESIGNS

FINAL DESIGN CONCEPT 1: LODGING + RETAIL SPACES

Design Description

Concept 1 encompasses approximately 11,000 sq. ft. of flexible retail space on the first floor and a bed & breakfast-type business on the second floor. The simple L-shaped building helps define the edge of Legion Street while creating a courtyard that opens onto Laurel Avenue.

The courtyard can be used for multiple outdoor activities including music performances, outdoor exhibitions, and other community events to support the town's community and economic needs. Retail spaces on the first floor are divided into multiple bays or rooms. These bays can be combined to create larger retail spaces depending on the potential type of business. Some suggested uses for the retail spaces were "Soap and Suds" for the hiker population, artisan studio, or a restaurant. A porch wraps around the first floor serving as an outdoor sitting area for the restaurant. The porch also continues around the building along Legion Street to attract users of the Creeper Trail.

The second floor is dedicated to bed and breakfast-type accommodations for hikers or families that vacation in Damascus. Both single rooms and double rooms for families accommodate a variety of visitor lodging needs.

The building was designed to celebrate the eclectic nature of the town, with splashes of colors inspired by surrounding buildings and artwork found in the community. The facades of the new building offer artistic opportunities for murals and helps transform this site into a resource for the town and its visitors.

Perspectives and a floor plan are included on the following pages.



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Damascus: Conceptual Redevelopment of the Former Chevron Property

Final Design Concept 1: Lodging + Retail Spaces

Perspective 1: from Laurel Ave.

Concept 1 uses an L-shaped building to engage both Laurel Ave. and Legion St. The inner courtyard is a welcoming space for the community with shaded seating areas and colorful plantings along the sidewalk. Flexible parking along Legion St. invites food trucks to periodically visit the redeveloped site, encouraging a creative and tasteful business growth. The courtyard can be adapted to host special events such as an outdoor movie as seen on the far right wall in this perspective.



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The inner courtyard provides a unique outdoor gathering opportunity with small fire pits and umbrella patio seating. Space for one or more local businesses is located on the first floor while short-term lodging, such as a bed & breakfast, can be found on the second floor with balconies.

Damascus: Conceptual Redevelopment of the Former Chevron Property

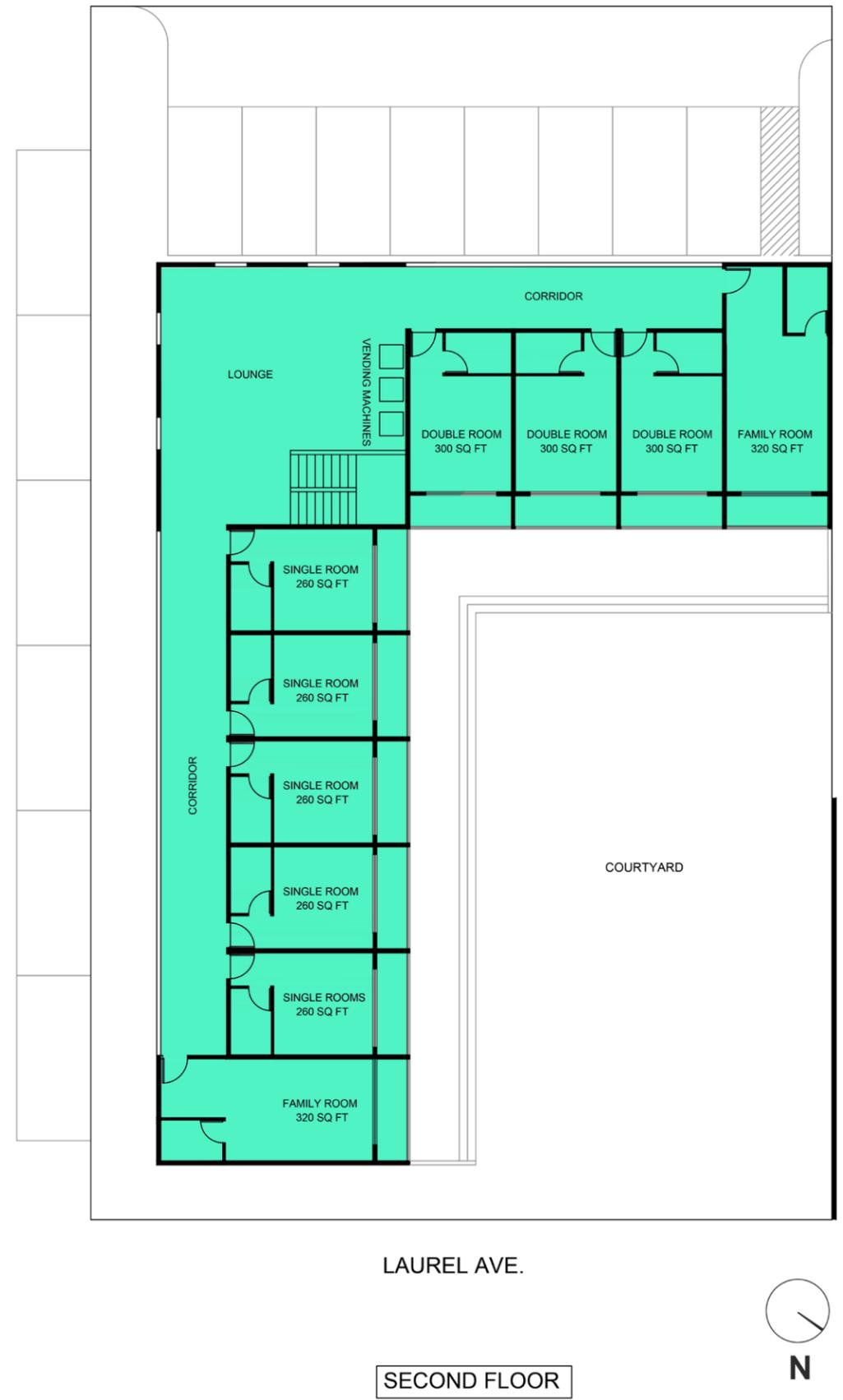
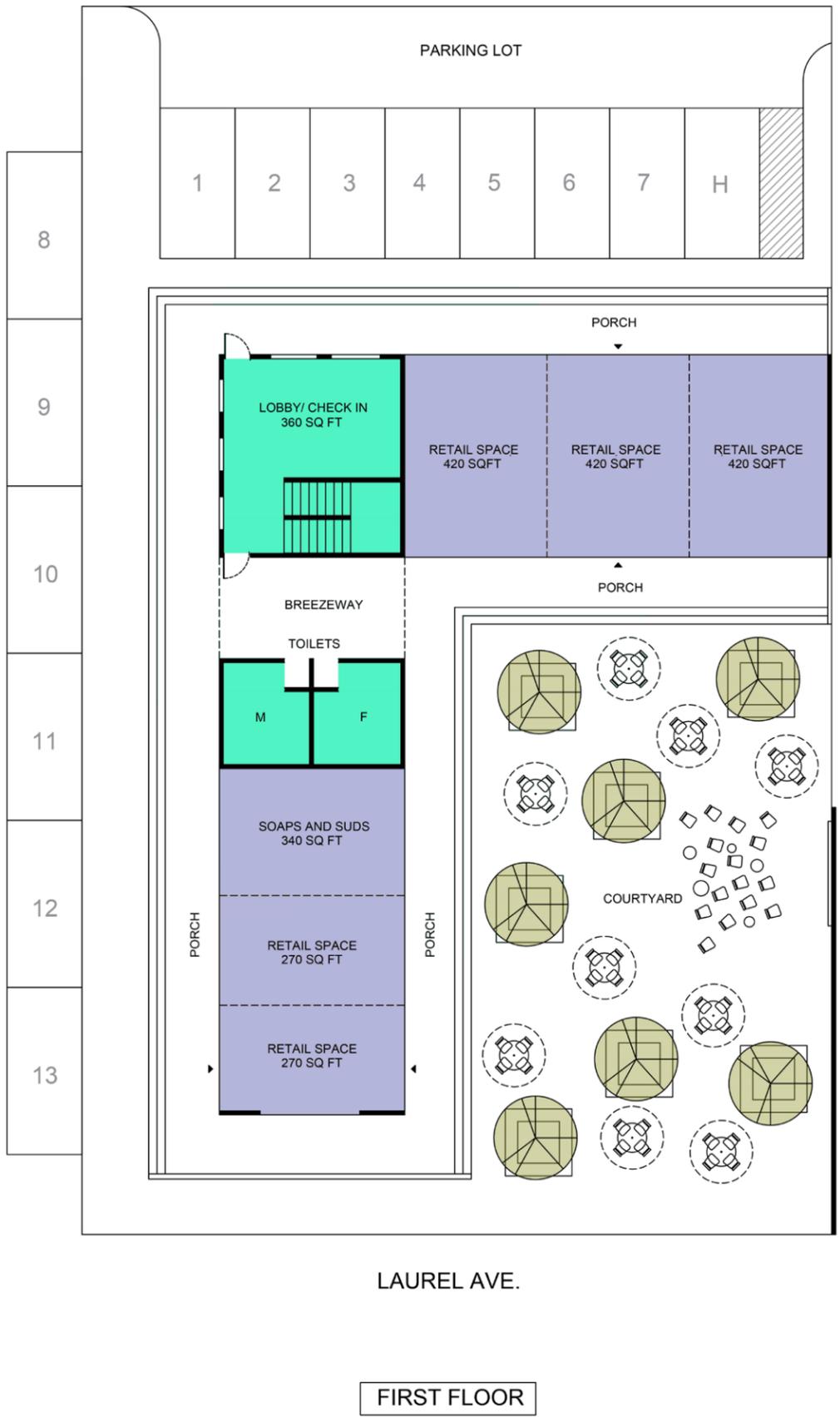
Final Design Concept 1: Lodging + Retail Spaces

Perspective 2: Inner Courtyard

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**Final Design Concept 1: Lodging + Retail Spaces
Floor Plan**





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CONCEPT 1

LEGEND

- LODGING
- RETAIL
- COURTYARD

Damascus: Conceptual Redevelopment of the Former Chevron Property

Final Design Concept 1: Lodging + Retail Spaces

Isometric: Program Diagram

FINAL DESIGN CONCEPT 2: RETAIL + MULTI-PURPOSE SPACES

Design Description

From the feedback the team received during community meetings, it became clear the community would benefit from a second conceptual design that was flexible enough that it would help potential developers realize the site's potential.

Architecturally, it is very common to find 20th century architecture in Damascus and the surrounding areas. After listening to the town residents, the team sought to develop a design that was sensitive to and complimented the existing building styles found in the community. The facades are decorated with bricks and pilasters (rectangular columns). Proposed material and color choices balance the new building with the rest of the town. Doors and windows are placed according to the interior division of rooms. In the rear portion of the building, where the three-story multi-purpose room is located, two-story high windows provide sufficient daylight to the inside of the building.

There are retail spaces and a three-story multi-purpose space on the ground floor. The retail spaces are flexible and can be subdivided into smaller stores. The main entrance to the multi-purpose space is located on Laurel Avenue. The multi-purpose space could be used as an indoor climbing gym or banquet hall.

There is a rooftop terrace above the second floor, that can be accessed through the multi-purpose room. During town parades or other events like Trail Days, this would be an unique opportunity to have an overall view of the town and the surrounding mountainous landscape. Otherwise, the rooftop terrace is envisioned to be as solely for the use of those in the building.

The public space available in this concept helps anchor the street corner by engaging traffic and pedestrians along both Laurel Avenue and Legion Street. A new sidewalk connects hikers and cyclists from the Creeper Trail to the downtown area via Legion Street.

A perspective and floor plan are included on the following pages.



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Concept 2 is a two-three story structure that anchors Laurel Ave. and Legion St. Several retail spaces are located along Laurel Ave. while a large, flexible space is located in the rear. Those visiting the building will find a unique roof-top experience along Laurel Ave., capturing beautiful views of the surrounding mountains and people walking below.

Damascus: Conceptual Redevelopment of the Former Chevron Property

Final Design Concept 2: Retail + Multi-Purpose Spaces

Perspective 1: Corner of Laurel Ave. and Legion St.



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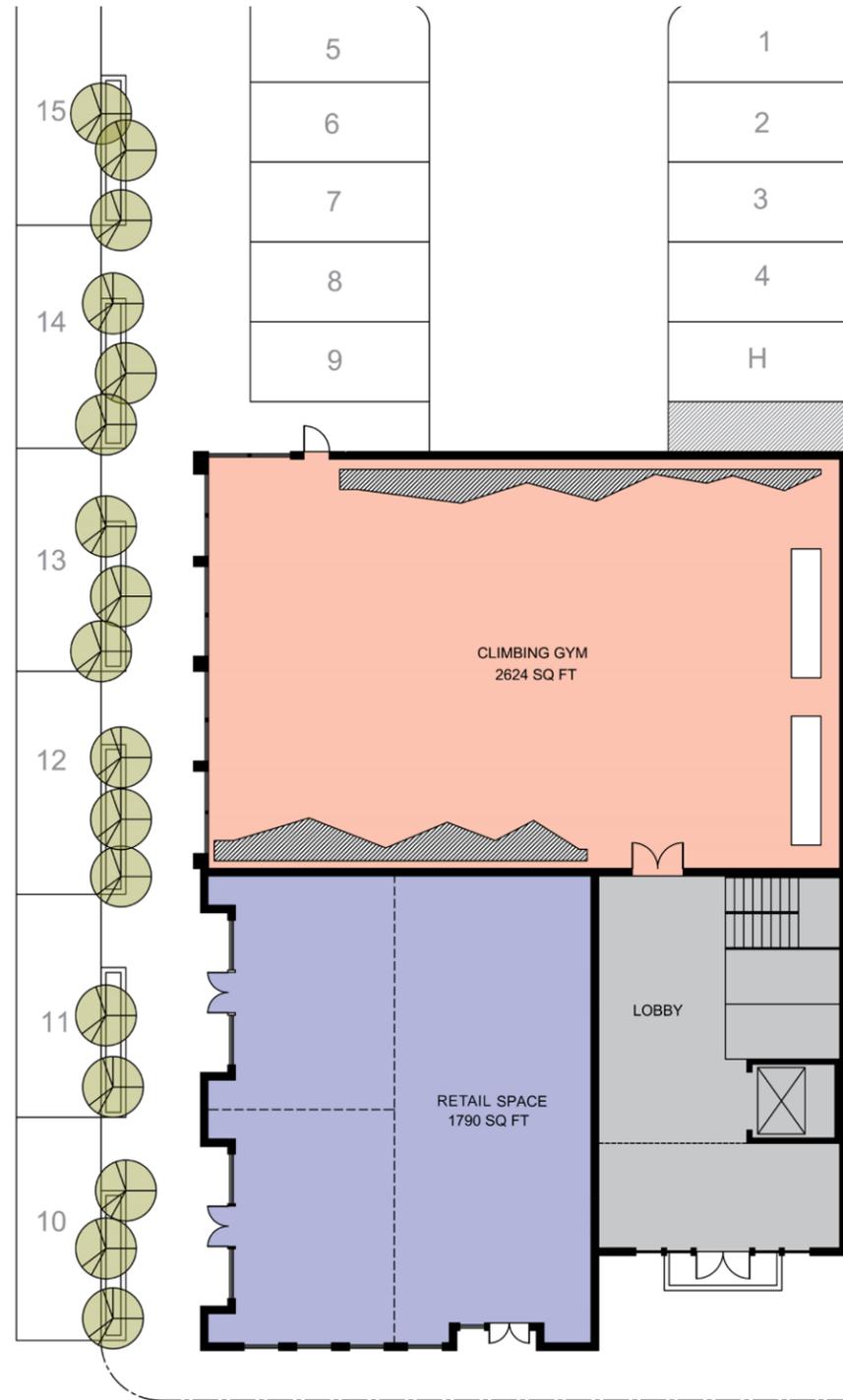
Concept 2 provides the opportunity for several new businesses with additional store fronts along Laurel Ave. A welcome lobby with large glass windows is also located on Laurel Ave. seen in the perspective above on the right hand side.

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Final Design Concept 2: Retail + Multi-Purpose Spaces

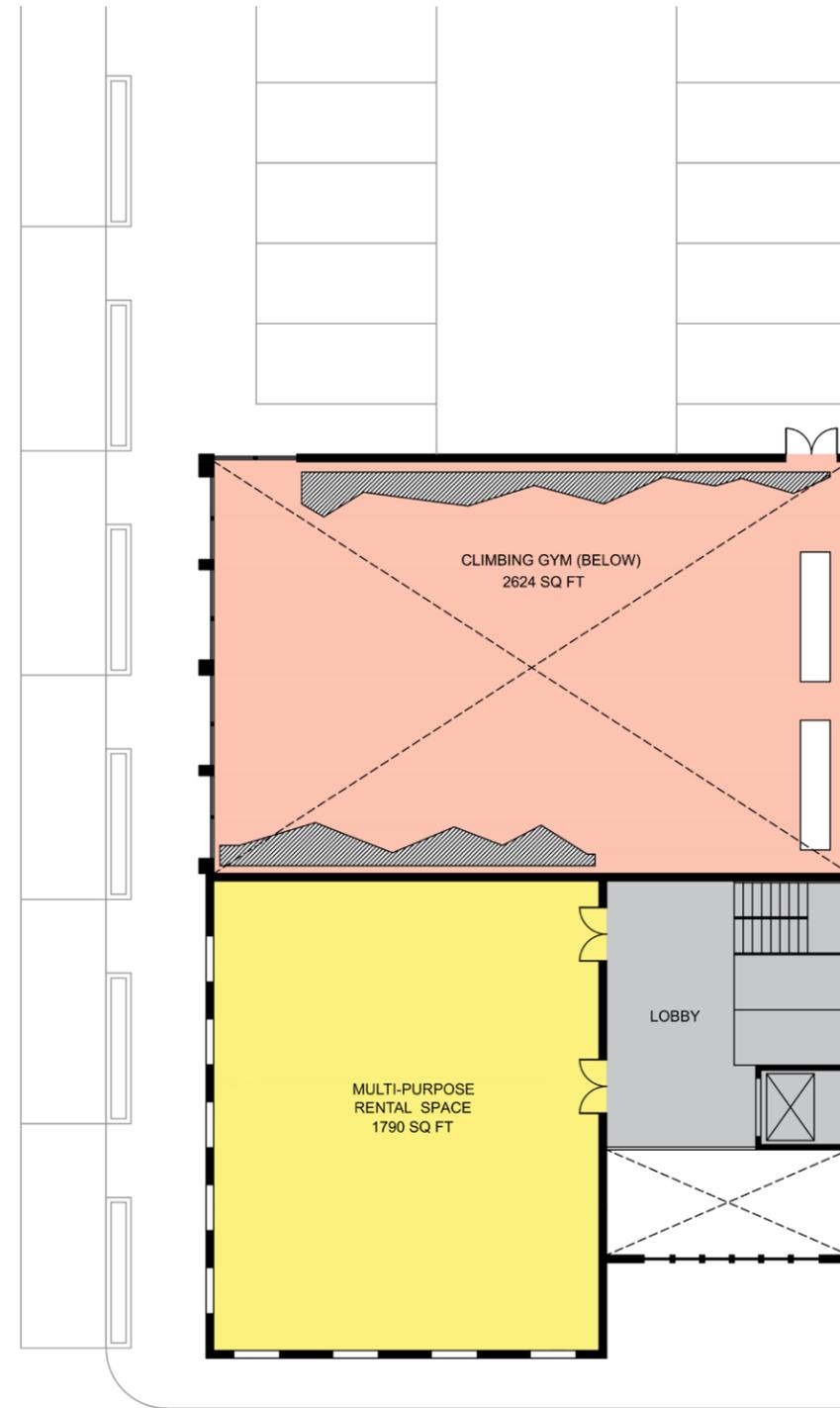
Perspective 2: from Laurel Ave.

LEGION STREET



FIRST FLOOR

LEGION STREET



SECOND FLOOR

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Final Design Concept 2: Retail + Multi-Purpose Spaces

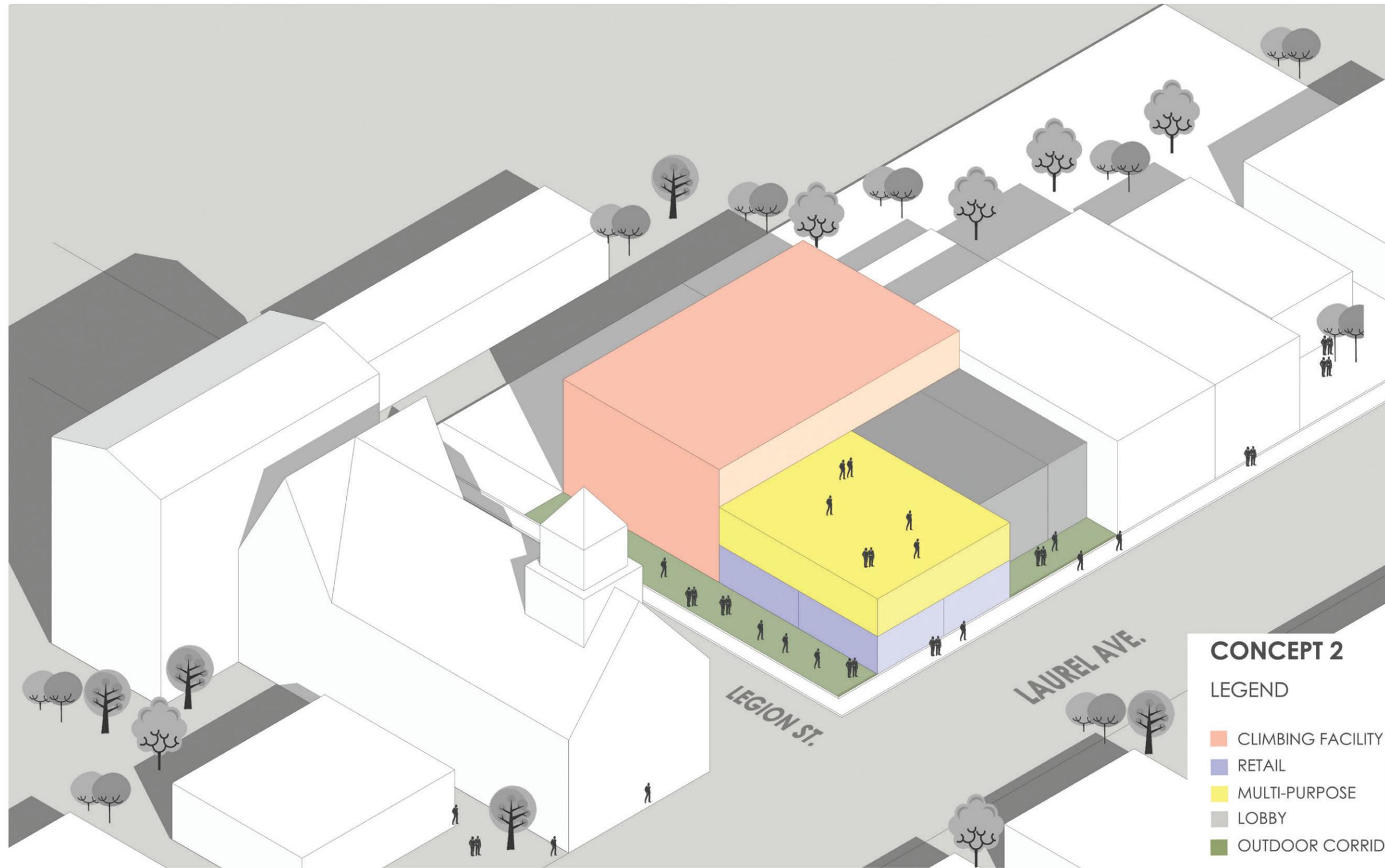
Floor Plan



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CONCEPT 2

LEGEND

- CLIMBING FACILITY
- RETAIL
- MULTI-PURPOSE
- LOBBY
- OUTDOOR CORRIDOR

Damascus: Conceptual Redevelopment of the Former Chevron Property

Final Design Concept 2: Retail + Multi-Purpose Spaces

Isometric: Program Diagram

PART 2: SITE INFORMATION

INVENTORY AND ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT

Design Strategy and Building Context

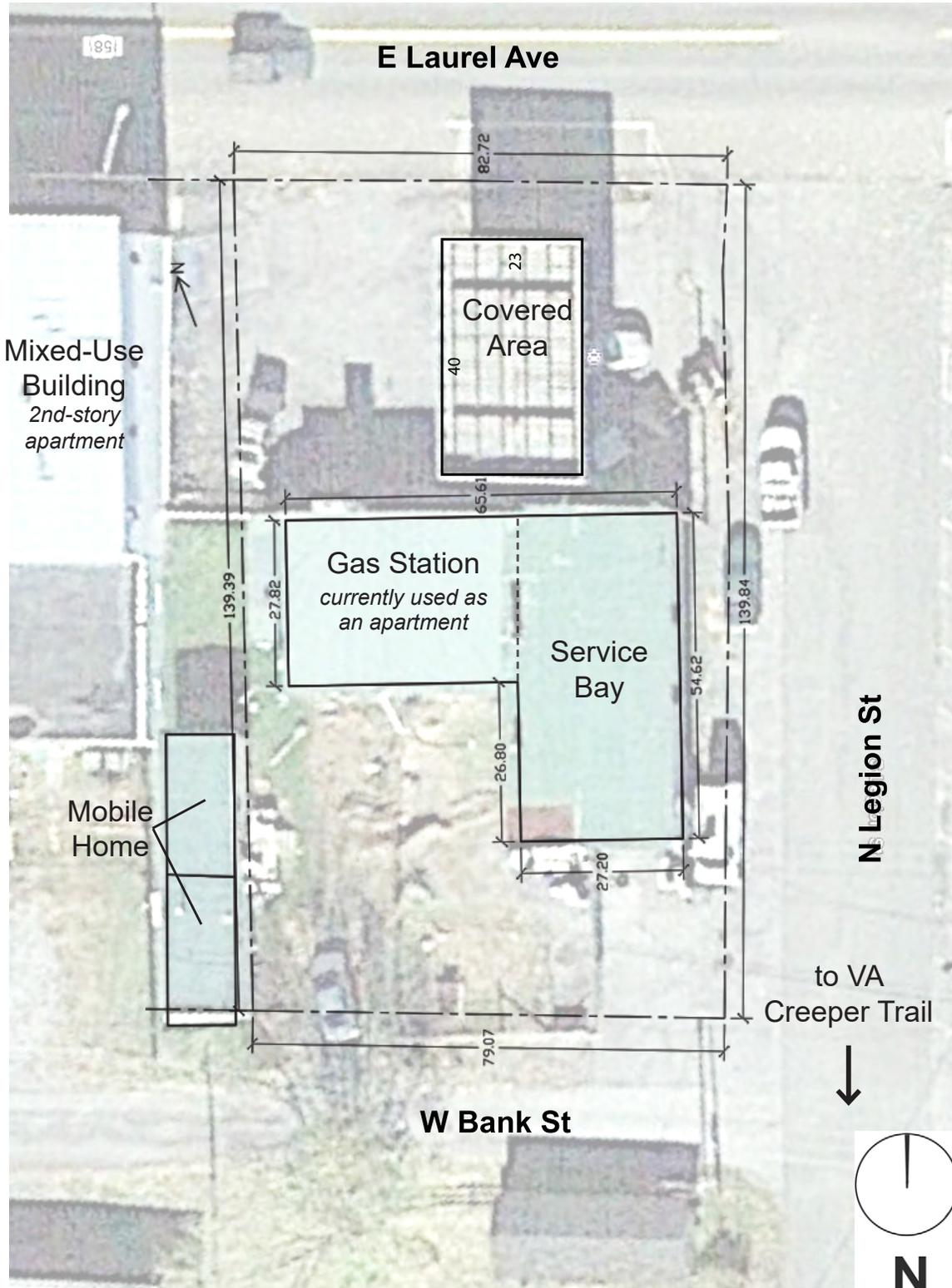
The site is the former Chevron gas station, at the corner of Laurel Ave. and Legion St. After the Chevron closed, property owner opened an auto repair shop. The property is still used for that purpose and is also used for parking bike shuttles, both on an intermittent basis.

Located in downtown Damascus, the site is in close proximity to several “bed and breakfast” businesses, retail and outdoor equipment shops, and bike rental shops. The Virginia Creeper National Recreation Trail is three blocks away or about a five minute walk down Legion St.

During the first meeting in Damascus with stakeholders, some business owners expressed their concerns for not having enough parking space in downtown. The team calculated the number of nearby parking spots, which suggested there were enough parking spots in the downtown area.

INVENTORY AND ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT

Approximate Size of Existing Structures



INVENTORY AND ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT

Environmental Assessment Executive Summary

The following is an executive summary of the Phase I Environmental Assessment for the former Chevron property located at 132 East Laurel Ave. in Damascus. The assessment was completed by Cardno, Inc. and submitted to CDAC on February 15, 2017. The full Phase 1 assessment report and Phase II assessment report (once completed) can be obtained through the Town Manager's office with the Town of Damascus:

Gavin Blevins, Town Manager
gblevins@mrpdc.org
276-475-3831

"Cardno, Inc. (Cardno) was retained by the Community Design Assistance Center at Virginia Tech (the Client) to perform a Phase I Environmental Site Assessment (ESA) of the Former Chevron (the Property) located at 132 East Laurel Avenue in Damascus, Virginia (Figures 1 and 2). The Property encompasses approximately 0.15 acres located in Damascus, Virginia. The Property is improved with a 2,436-square-foot building and paved parking areas. Cardno performed the Phase I ESA in accordance with federal standards and practices as codified in the Code of Federal Regulations (CFR) at 40 CFR Part 312, including amendments effective December 23, 2008, and in conformance with the scope and limitations of American Society for Testing and Materials International (ASTM) Standard Practice for Environmental Site Assessments: Phase I Environmental Site Assessment Process, Designation: E1527-13 and ASTM Standard Practice for Limited Environmental Due Diligence: Transaction Screen Process, Designation: E1528-06.

As part of this Phase I ESA, Cardno performed visual inspections of the Property; reviewed federal, state, and local regulatory records; investigated historical uses of the property, and potential sources of environmental contamination of the parcel; and conducted interviews with local agency personnel to evaluate whether recognized environmental conditions (RECs) or conditions indicative of releases and threatened releases of hazardous substances on, at, in, or to the property [40 CFR Part 312.20(e)].

Cardno has performed this Phase I ESA in conformance with the scope and limitations of ASTM Practice E1527-13. Any exceptions to, or deletions from, this practice are described in Sections 1.4 and 10 of this report.

This assessment has revealed evidence of the following RECs for the Property:

- Past Property use, including fuel storage, automotive fueling and light automotive maintenance (oil changes, tire work, etc.), is considered a REC. As such, solvents, gasoline, diesel, kerosene, motor oil, and various cleaning products were used and may have impacted the Property;
- Discrepancies were noted in the underground storage tank (UST) closure

INVENTORY AND ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT

documents and between the UST closure documents and the owner interview. The owner reported a 1,000-gallon kerosene UST that Farmers Construction reported as containing gasoline. The diesel dispenser reported in the 2004 UST closure documentation was not mentioned by the owner during the January 10, 2017 site visit conducted by Cardno. The dates of diesel dispenser closure samples appear inconsistent, and the sampling method for the five-foot below ground surface (bgs) sample for the diesel dispenser appears to be improper. These discrepancies are considered a REC for the property. Additionally, TPH-DRO analytical results (4,330 mg/kg and 295 mg/kg) appear elevated.

- Stained areas in and around the garage bays, secondary containment for aboveground storage tanks (ASTs), former dispenser islands, and west side of parking area are considered RECs for the Property;
- Weathered paint was observed on the exterior of the Former Chevron Building constructed in 1931. Due to the age of the building, this condition may be considered a REC for possible lead in soils surrounding the Former Chevron Building at the Property;
- As water staining was observed on unpainted cinderblock in the south garage bay, the garage bay doors do not appear to seal out weather and poor housekeeping conditions were prevalent; there appears to be potential for mold at the Property; and
- Based on the date of the building's construction (prior to 1960), Asbestos Containing Materials (ACMs) may be present at the Property. In Cardno's opinion, a Phase II ESA is warranted to further assess the RECs identified for the Property, including conducting an asbestos survey and a lead based paint survey. Further, the owner should consider improving the secondary containment for used oil and fuel oil ASTs on the south side of the Property, as well as immediate recycling of accumulated used oil, improved handling of used oil in proper containment, and improving housekeeping throughout the Property.

Conclusions and opinions presented in this assessment are based solely on the information derived from the study sources and references cited in this document and are to the limitations of the sources and methods employed. Except as specified herein, this Phase I ESA report is for the exclusive use of the Client, its officers, directors, employees, and authorized representatives.

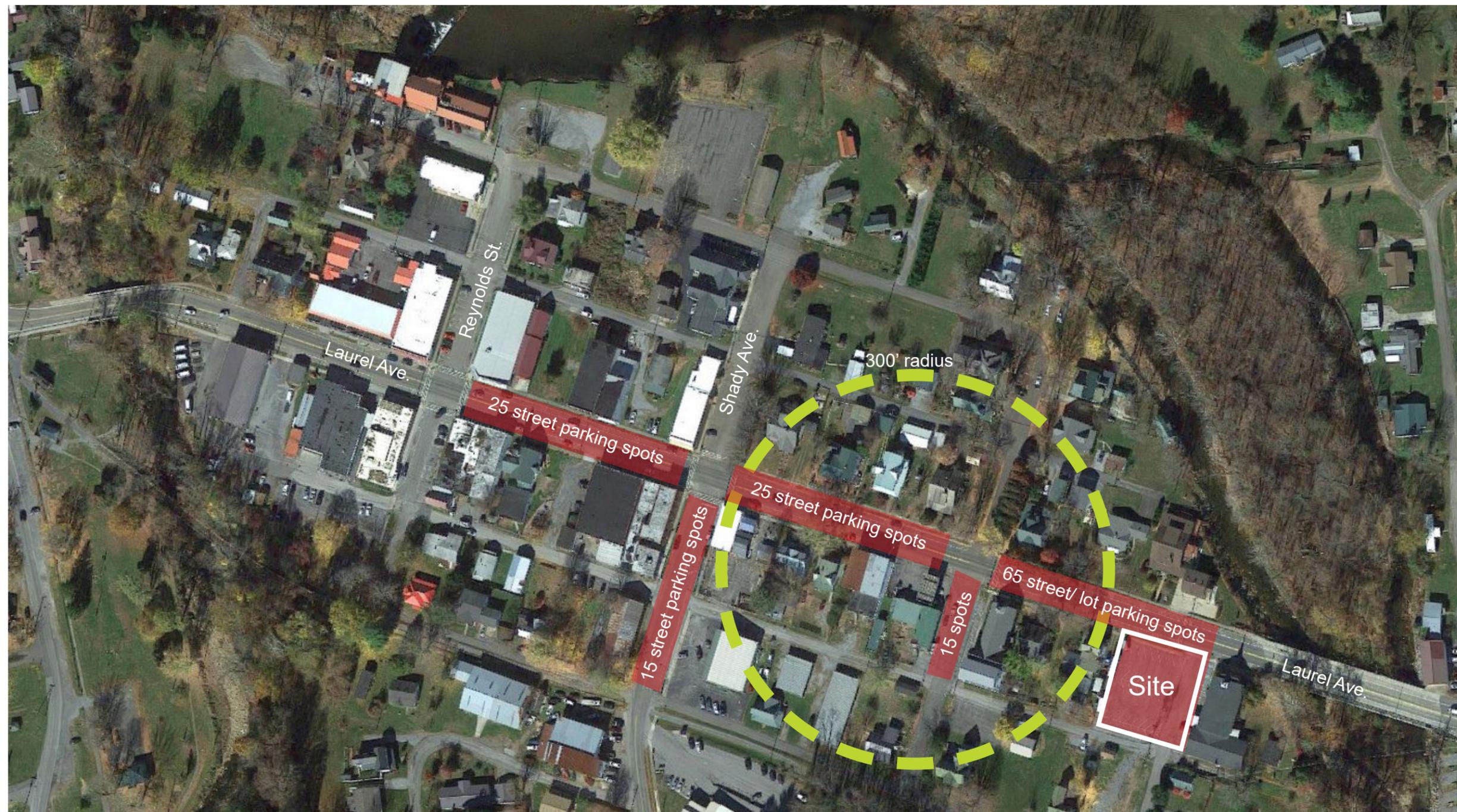
Cardno recommends that this Executive Summary be used solely as a broad overview of environmental conditions found at the property. This Executive Summary should not be used in lieu of reading the entire Phase I ESA report.”



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The “Brewery + Performance” concept would require 25 parking spots.

The “Climbing Facility + Cafe” concept would require 35 parking spots.

There are approximately 100 existing parking spots within 300’ of the project location.

Note: Washington County, VA Code of Ordinances minimum parking space requirement:

“Commercial building” other than dwellings shall provide at least one parking space per 200 square feet, which may be located as far as 600’ away.

Damascus: Conceptual Redevelopment of the Former Chevron Property

Parking Study
Downtown Area

**PART 3:
PRELIMINARY
CONCEPTUAL DESIGNS**

PROCESS OF PRELIMINARY DESIGN

Prior to completing the final conceptual design, the team developed two preliminary design concepts based on comments at initial community meetings. At these meetings community members expressed their concerns for the lack of off-season activities in town as well as a need to bolster business opportunities during winter season.

During the February 23 community meeting, town residents and the CDAC team exchanged ideas about what could be best for the town. Participants used flip charts to capture the discussion for future reference. The team received the main design characteristics from the input session. The two concepts which got the most votes were 1) brewery with music venue; 2) bouldering wall and place for local/youth activity. Some residents believed that the only brewery with live music performance venue in Damascus was too far away from downtown area. Other residents thought there should be more youth-friendly activities in town. Many thought there needed to be activities to draw people to town during the off season.

The CDAC team then developed two very different concepts both in use and architectural styles. One incorporated the brewery and the other a climbing gym. CDAC also researched case studies from other communities to provide a sense of what was being proposed.

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The concepts were presented in a community meeting held on March 21st. Community members provided helpful feedback that the CDAC team used later to develop their final conceptual designs.

The following pages include the initial concepts and precedent images.

PRELIMINARY DESIGN CONCEPT 1: BREWERY + PERFORMANCE

Design Description

Preliminary concept 1 encompasses 2644 sq. ft. which is divided into three parts: 1) the brew house at the back, 2) a tasting room that can accommodate up to about 85 people, and 3) an outdoor area for various outdoor events during the summer. The outdoor space can be used for fire pits or transformed into an ice rink during the fall and winter.

A roof overhang extends around the building to mimic the typical industrial flat roof of the existing closed gas station. A proposed porch wraps around the entire building serving as additional outdoor sitting space. The outdoor plaza is designed to be a multi-functional space that supports year-round activities such as an outdoor beer garden, performance area, fire pits, bmx bike display, or an ice rink during the winter.

The proposed design preserves existing architectural elements of the gas station while giving Damascus an exciting addition to its downtown.



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Concept 1 reflects the architecture of the existing gas station and plentiful outdoor gathering space. The outdoor plaza can serve as an outdoor beer garden with fire pits, a performance area, or an ice rink in the off-season. Hanging, decorative lights can help extend activities to provide an enjoyable evening outdoors.

Damascus: Conceptual Redevelopment of the Former Chevron Property

Preliminary Design Concept 1: Brewery + Performance

Perspective: Corner of Laurel Ave. and Legion St.



Outdoor seating with pergola and hanging outdoor lights



Outdoor seating with seasonal fire pit option



Screen partition using wooden slats



Elevated building base with overhanging canopy



Wooden screen and deck with wooden canopy



Outdoor seating with stone walkway and picnic tables



Outdoor seating with food buffet and hanging lights



Restaurant seating under pergola with vines



Outdoor seating with lawn, border walkway, and umbrellas



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Damascus: Conceptual Redevelopment of the Former Chevron Property

Preliminary Design Concept 1: Brewery + Performance

Case Studies



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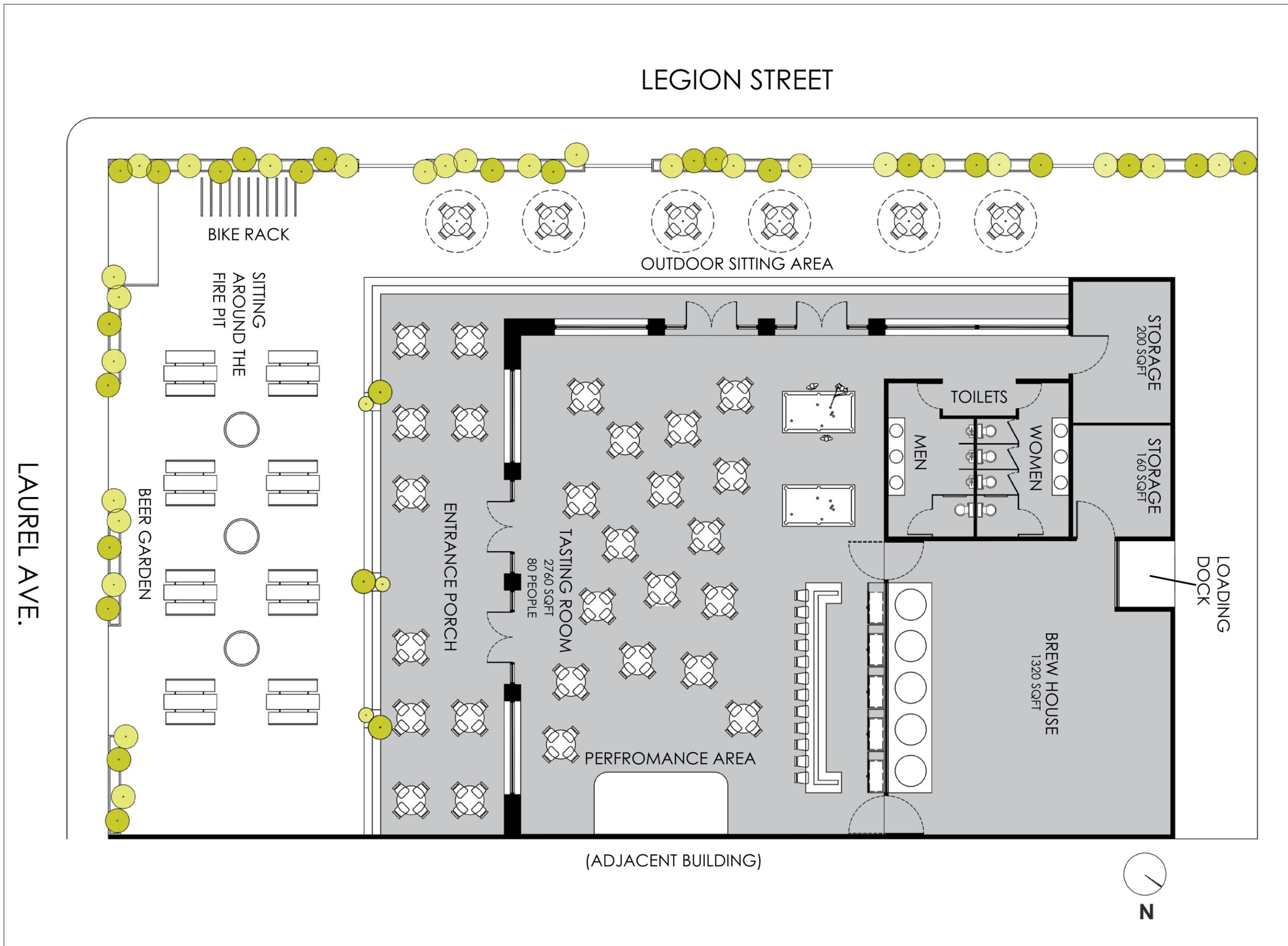
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Damascus: Conceptual Redevelopment of the Former Chevron Property

Preliminary Design Concept 1: Brewery + Performance

Floor Plan



LEGION STREET

LAUREL AVE.

BIKE RACK

SITTING
AROUND THE
FIRE PIT

BEER GARDEN

OUTDOOR SITTING AREA

ENTRANCE PORCH

TASTING ROOM
2760 SQFT
80 PEOPLE

PERFORMANCE AREA

(ADJACENT BUILDING)

TOILETS

MEN

WOMEN

BREW HOUSE
1320 SQFT

STORAGE
200 SQFT

STORAGE
160 SQFT

LOADING
DOCK





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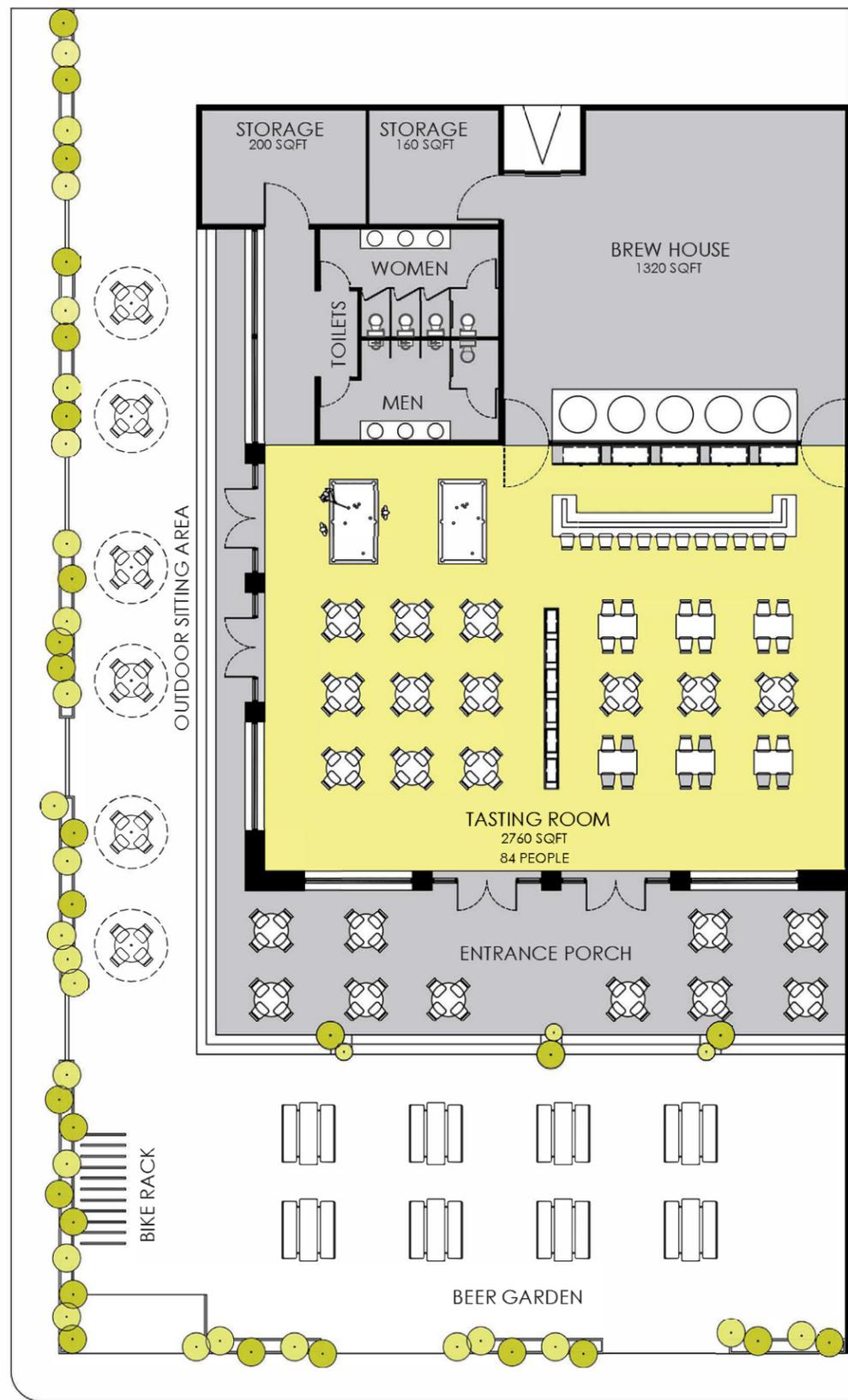
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Preliminary Design Concept 1: Brewery + Performance

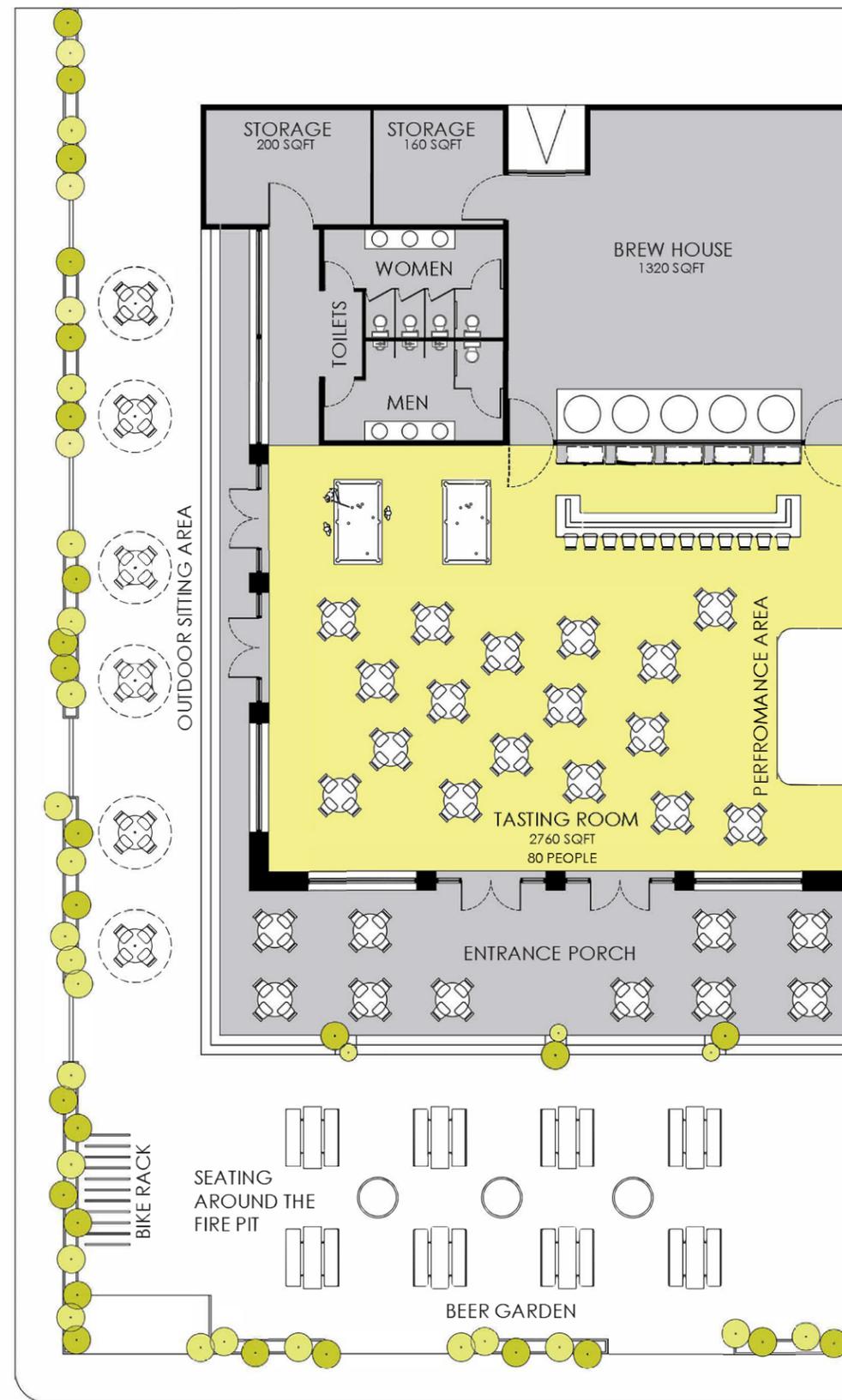
Alternative Activity Layouts for Tasting Room

LEGION STREET



LAUREL AVENUE

LEGION STREET



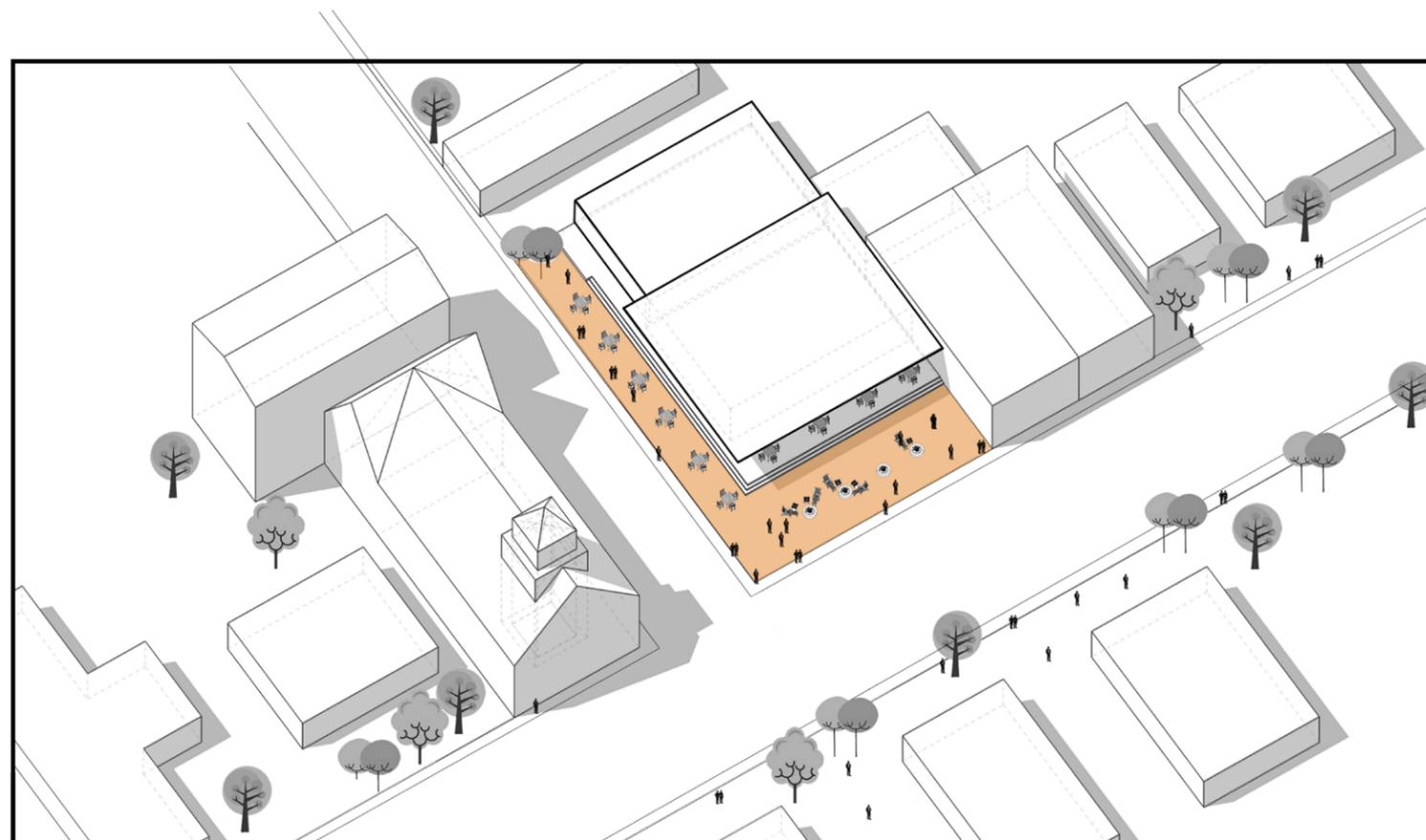
LAUREL AVENUE



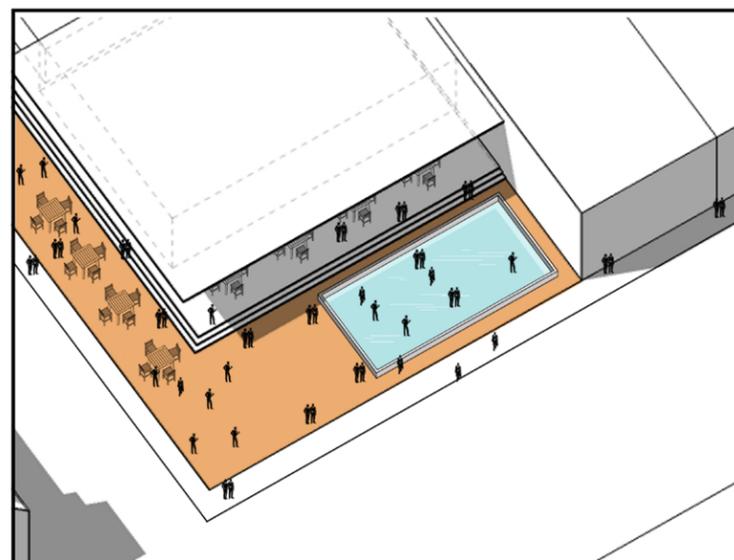
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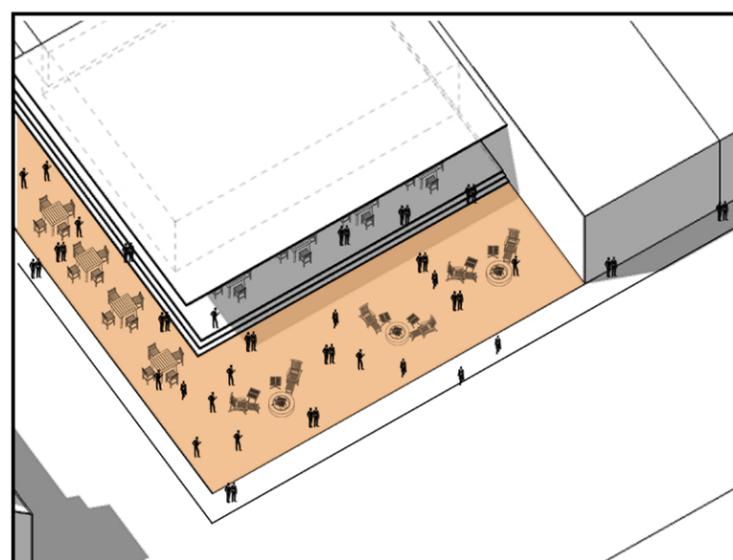
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OUTDOOR PLAZA



ICE RINK



OUTDOOR FIRE PITS

**OTHER SUGGESTED USES FOR THE
OUTDOOR PLAZA**

- MOVIE NIGHT**
- FOOD TRUCKS**
- HAMMOCK GARDEN**
- BICYCLE RIDE INS**
- DEMO SPACE FOR OUTDOOR ACTIVITIES**
- HOLIDAY LIGHT DISPLAY**
- OUTDOOR MUSIC PERFORMANCES**

Damascus: Conceptual Redevelopment of the Former Chevron Property

Preliminary Design Concept 1: Brewery + Performance

Outdoor Activity Options Diagram

PRELIMINARY DESIGN CONCEPT 2: CLIMBING GYM + CAFE

Design Description

The design concept for an indoor climbing gym was mentioned during the February 23rd community input session where participants expressed a need for off-season business opportunities and community activities. As a result, the CDAC team visited the Crimper's Climbing Gym in Christiansburg, VA. to learn more about such a facility and what other business types could jointly operate in the same commercial space. An indoor climbing gym requires a large, tall, and unobstructed space as well as a single point of entry to enter the gym for safety reasons.

The three-story gym proposed in this concept has the potential to attract tourists and town residents year-round with people being able to passively watch the climbing action going on inside the building from the sidewalk on the outside. Large panes of glass at the corner of the building make the climbing facility visually engaging for people walking by. The colored panels on the exterior reflect the eclectic nature of Damascus.

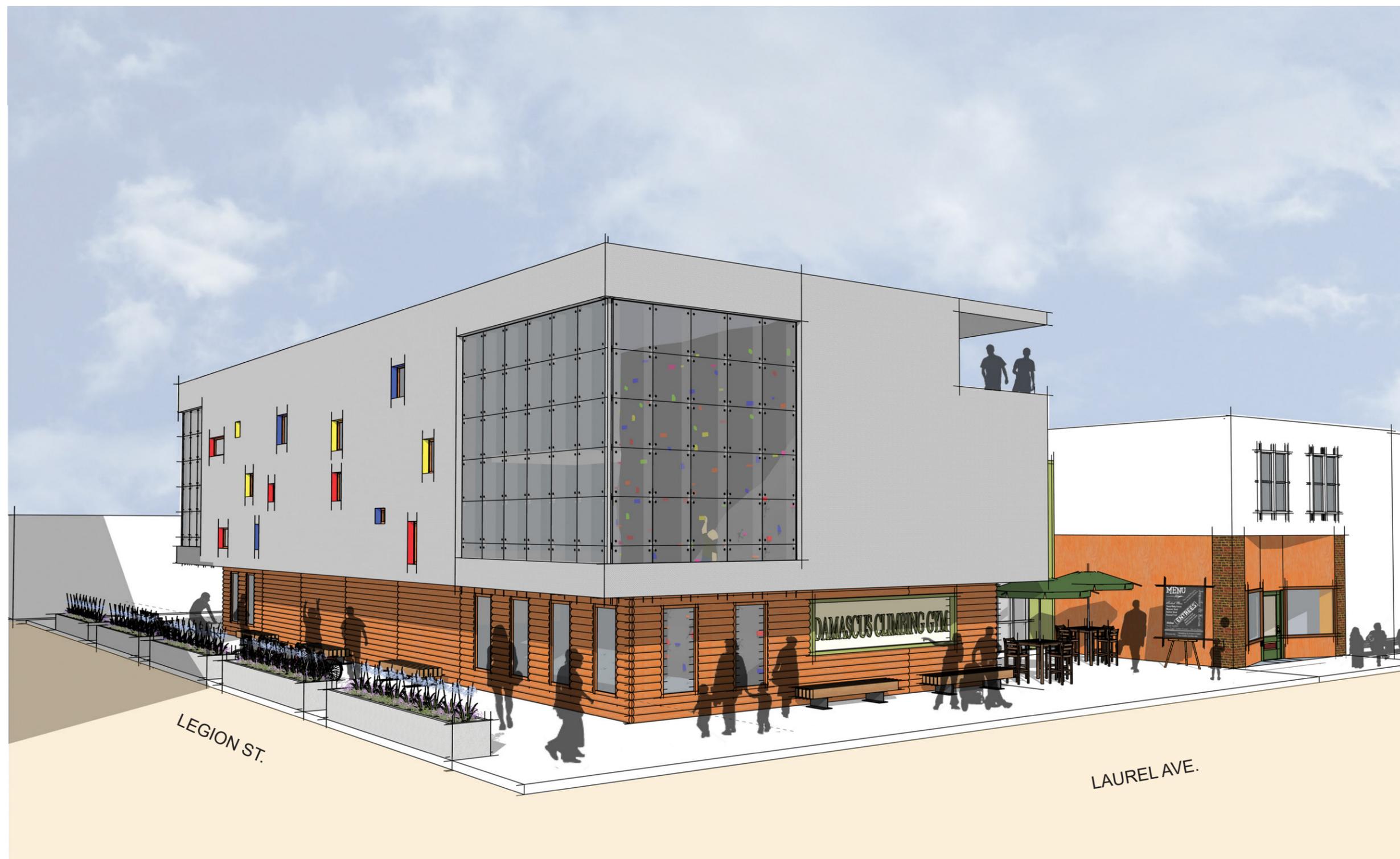
The owner of Crimper's Climbing Gym, Mr. John Johnson, recommended pairing the climbing gym with other businesses such as a coffee shop, yoga studio, or co-working space. An integrated coffee shop provides the community with another opportunity to sit and relax indoors. Climbers can also go to the coffee shop for some refreshments after exercising.



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Concept 2 creates a new large open space indoors for a climbing facility. Windows along the street allow people to look in and watch climbers throughout the day. A third-story balcony, accessible only to those using the facility, provides people with a unique perspective of Damascus' streetscape that is not found often throughout the community.

Damascus: Conceptual Redevelopment of the Former Chevron Property

Preliminary Design Concept 2: Climbing Gym + Cafe

Perspective: Corner of Laurel Ave. and Legion St.



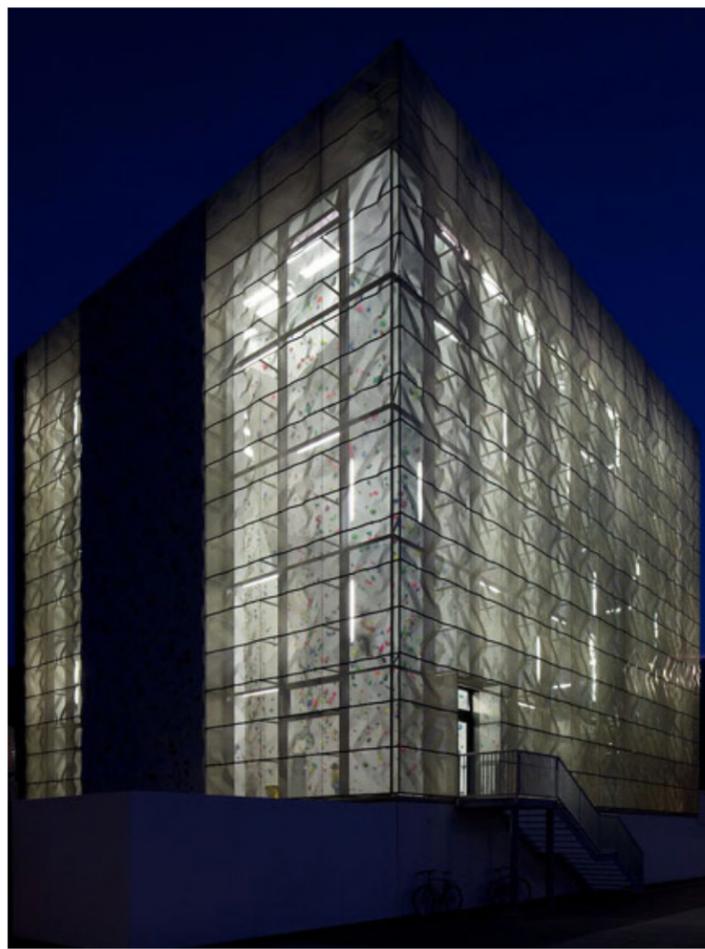
Large, glass curtain walls provide passers-by the opportunity to watch climbers



Mixed use area with coffee kiosk, sitting area, and exercise space



Large, glass curtain walls of indoor climbing gym



Large, glass curtain walls of an indoor climbing gym



Coffee shop/ restaurant seating along sidewalk



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Damascus: Conceptual Redevelopment of the Former Chevron Property

Preliminary Design Concept 2: Climbing Gym + Cafe

Case Studies



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Damascus: Conceptual Redevelopment of the Former Chevron Property

Preliminary Design Concept 2: Climbing Gym + Cafe

Floor Plan

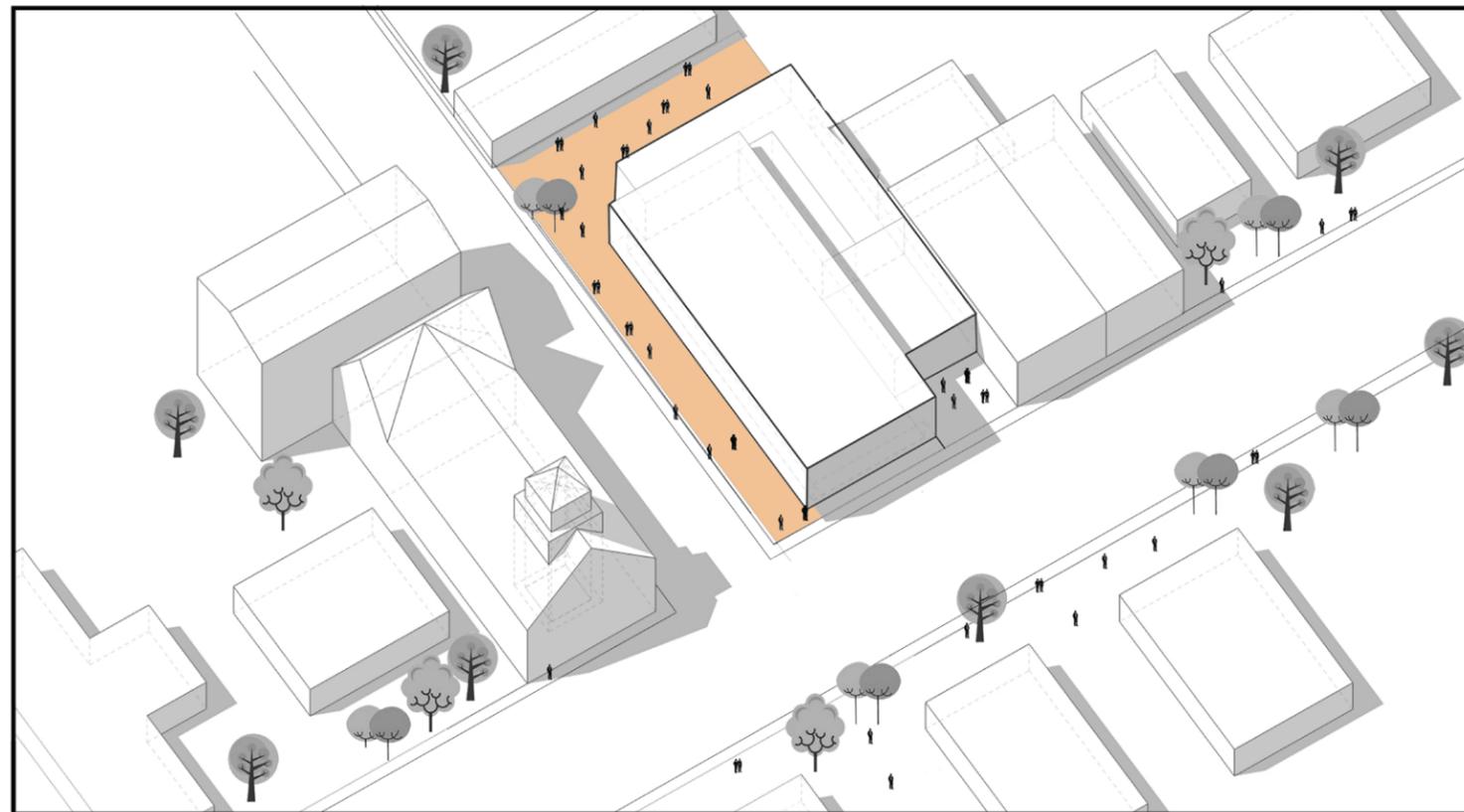




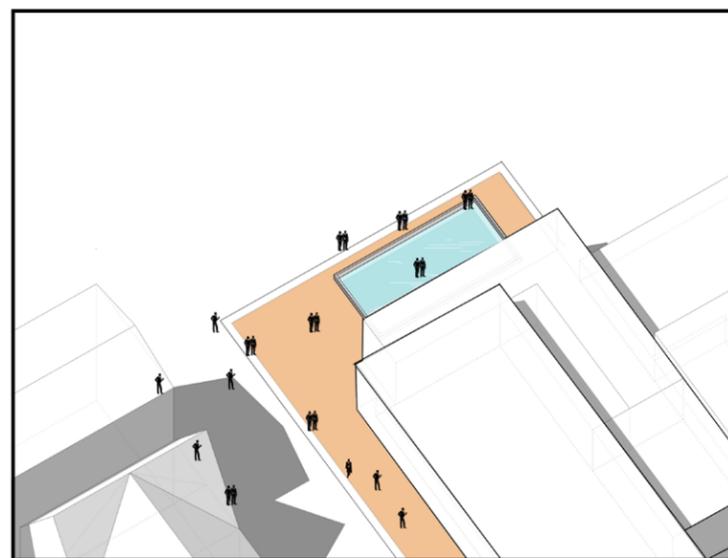
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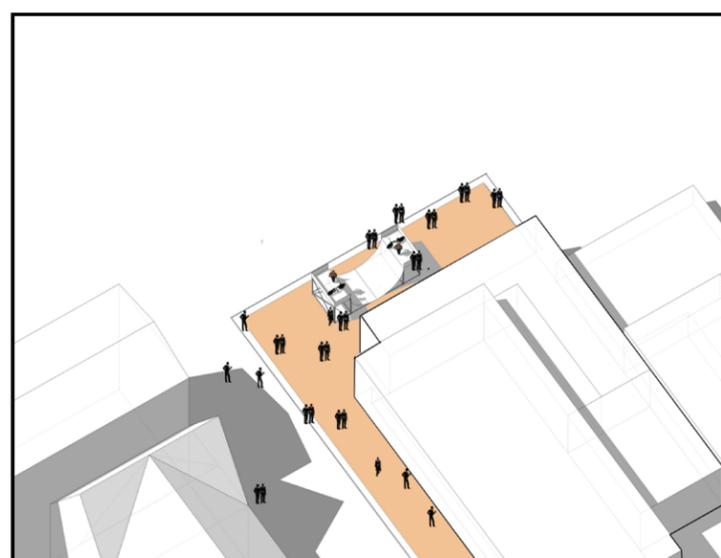
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A PLAZA LOCATED AT THE REAR OF THE BUILDING HELPS CREATE A CONNECTION BETWEEN LAUREL AVE. AND DOWNTOWN WITH THE CREEPER TRAIL, WHICH IS A SHORT WALK DOWN LEGION ST.



ICE RINK



BMX DEMO PARK

OTHER SUGGESTED USES FOR THE REAR PLAZA

- YOGA CLASSES
- DEMO SPACE FOR OUTDOOR ACTIVITIES
- MULTI-PURPOSE ROOM
- CLASSROOM FOR KIDS

Damascus: Conceptual Redevelopment of the Former Chevron Property

Preliminary Design Concept 2: Climbing Gym + Cafe

Rear Plaza Outdoor Activity Options

**PART 4:
APPENDIX**

Town of Damascus: Conceptual Redevelopment
of the Former Chevron Property

MEETING NOTES

- Skate park? Indoors?
- Ropes course
 - Base for Legion island
 - Legion island itself is not the best location for a ropes course because there are neighboring houses that would be impacted.
 - Keep ropes course concept confined to the Chevron site if pursued.
- Bouldering wall 2 votes
- Fly fishing
 - There is a lot of fly fishing along Beaver Dam and Whitetop Laurel Creeks in the winter time. How could this site tie into that?
- Note: educational components already incorporated into the programming of the incoming ATC center
- Entertainment
- Movie in the park
- Dinner and a movie 1 vote
- Live music (i.e. Floyd)
- Christmas light tours 1 vote
 - Not over the Creeper Trail because of their use restrictions but could be a possibility one or two blocks off; this site could be the start/end point of the tour somehow?
- Music and families
- Business/ retail
 - Food truck village (see suggestion submitted by email)
 - Wine tasting venue 2 votes
 - Dinner/ movie 1 vote
 - Floyd-type general store 1 vote
 - “Pops” (craft soda)
 - Brewery 3 votes
 - Distillery 1 vote
 - Trampoline center
- Off-season uses
 - Winter time teenager activity
 - Bouldering inside
- Other thoughts for the site
 - Things for youth (locals) 2 votes
 - Something to do in the evenings
 - Parking to accommodate planned growth and economic development
 - Consensus among our team and the community is that this site

Town of Damascus: Conceptual Redevelopment
of the Former Chevron Property

MEETING NOTES

is not appropriate for a parking structure after explaining
CDAC's parking study

- “Launch point” for all outdoor activities
- Overlap/ combine multiple uses
 - Indoor and outdoor
- Consider a commoditized experience (i.e. business opportunity)
for activities that people learn about the at ATC center

On-going projects and initiatives

- 2013: Beaver Dam Creek Trail extension (\$30,000)
 - Trailhead near Damascus Library
- 2013: DHCD planning grant (\$30,000)
 - Planning for downtown physical improvements
 - Economic restructuring plan
- 2015: DHCD Community Development Block Grant (\$659,000)
 - Implementation of physical improvements plan recommended
through the planning grant
 - Downtown connector trail
 - Facades
 - Streetscape
- 2016: ARC Waterfront Asset Development (\$500,000)
 - Downtown connector trail
 - Riverwalk
 - Access roadway improvements
 - Amphitheater + utilities
- 2016: POWER (\$600,000)
 - Appalachian Trail Conservancy's destination center and
educational facility
- 2016: Town acquired Damascus Motor sales lot
 - Business to be relocated just outside of town
 - Parcel to be used for future ATC destination center
- 2017: VTC “LOVE” letters construction through VTC Marketing Leverage
Program (MLP)
- 2017: Farmer's Market opening April 22 under the covering at the Damascus
Motor sales lot
 - Tim, owner of Damascus Motor Sale, is going to pull the cars back on
the weekend to allow for the market to happen

Town of Damascus: Conceptual Redevelopment
of the Former Chevron Property

MEETING NOTES

- 2017: Mountains of Music, a Crooked Road 9-day festival; June
- 2017: Creeper Fest
 - Celebrating the Creeper Trail's 30th anniversary, to be held at the Abingdon trailhead on April 29
- 2017: Yeti Run
- 2017: C-Trek run
- 2017: Completion of Community Pathway project
 - Started by vista volunteer Brady Adcock to replace the brick pavers along Laurel Ave. People can buy a brick to support the Appalachian Trail Conservancy. Project is moving into the final phases of implementation.
- 2017: Trail Town Christmas event

MEETING NOTES

Preliminary Design Presentation: March 21, 2017

Damascus Town Hall; 6-8:00pm

208 Laurel Avenue

General comments:

- Neither architecture looks like it belongs in Damascus (?)
 - Suggested that “contemporary and compatible” would be better accepted
- Need more business/ use diversity
- Simplify proposed uses, less specific, design a shell with flexible interior possibilities
- Other use concepts:
 - Food truck village
 - Food business> healthy eating oriented
 - Upper story lodging with increased access to the experience
 - Ability for unique marketing; differentiate access to the experience
 - Small business incubator; leveraging existing business assistance programs throughout the region such as the business challenges:
 - Washington County Business Challenge:
<https://goo.gl/FnDZ4A>
 - Mount Rogers Business Challenge:
<https://goo.gl/qKKdhw>
 - “Soap and Suds” where hikers can take a stay, take a shower, and wash their laundry
 - Boutique hotel: see precedents section below
- Emphasize outdoor space

Preliminary Concept #1: Brewery + Performance:

- Open space along the street edge is really nice
- Consider noise from cars and trucks along Laurel Ave.; consider adjusting orientation or building in noise screens
- Brewery is a good thing and not seasonal; “People don’t stop drinking beer just because it’s cold out.”
- Ice rink is too small

Town of Damascus: Conceptual Redevelopment
of the Former Chevron Property

MEETING NOTES

- ABC zone for alcohol consumption should be clearly defined

Preliminary Concept #2: Climbing Gym + Cafe:

- There is residential existing above proposed coffee shop; consider impacts on existing tenants
- An area for general gym and exercise use is needed
- Scale of architecture is okay (at 3 stories)
- Extend coffee shop through entire neighboring building and wrap around proposed facility

Precedents to research:

- Blowing Rock, NC
-South Marke pedestrian shopping area
<http://southmarke.com/>
- Boutique hotels nearby:
 - Damascus Old Mill
Damascus, VA; <http://damascusinn.com/>
 - Western Front Hotel
St. Paul, VA; <https://goo.gl/gDyLtA>
 - Hotel Floyd
Floyd, VA; <http://www.hotelfloyd.com/>
 - General Francis Marion Hotel
Marion, VA; <http://www.gfmhotel.com>
 - Mountain Lake Lodge
Pembroke, VA; <http://www.mtnlakelodge.com/>

Town of Damascus: Conceptual Redevelopment
of the Former Chevron Property

MEETING NOTES

Final Design Presentation: April 18, 2017

Damascus Town Hall; 6:00- 8:00pm

208 Laurel Avenue

Both Concepts

- Envision with the drawings enough information that future developers get excited about the possibilities and community support in Damascus but not so much that it is too refined to spark business creativity for the space.

Final Concept #1: Lodging and Retail Spaces:

L-shaped building, flexible retail spaces on ground floor, interior courtyard, multiple business options; second story short-term lodging

- Really like the idea of “Soap and Suds” as a business option
- Lodging upstairs is good
- Stay here (Damascus), not Abingdon
- Retail could possibly include the second story if we get really excited about this
- Truck noise is still a concern with the open court yard against Laurel Avenue. Could the design still work if it was rotated?
- Artist showcase is good for any season; small retail spaces could double as artist studio spaces too
- Overall consensus and support for this concept

Final Concept #2: Retail and Multi-Purpose Spaces:

Three-story building; smaller retail located against Laurel Avenue; larger open spaces in the back suitable for space-intensive uses such as indoor climbing, trampolines, yoga studios, meeting/ conference/ expo space, etc.

- Adjust the building so that the second-story windows of the adjacent apartment are not blocked
 - There are three windows on the side of the apartment
 - Projecting a movie on to the wall in the evenings would be okay though.
- Laurel Avenue becomes much quieter in the evenings once the logging trucks are not passing through
- Still reserved about the “one shot deal” with indoor climbing facility; it does help address seasonality