COMMON THREAD

CONNECTED BY COMMUNITY - ADAPTED FOR LIFE

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Albuquerque's housing stock is largely designed for traditional family households, offering limited accessible, affordable, and adaptable options as residents age. As households transition from families to one- or two-person homes, changing physical and financial needs can force residents to leave their established neighborhoods. Missing-middle cottage housing offers an opportunity to address this housing gap while preserving independence, social connections, and access to familiar community resources.

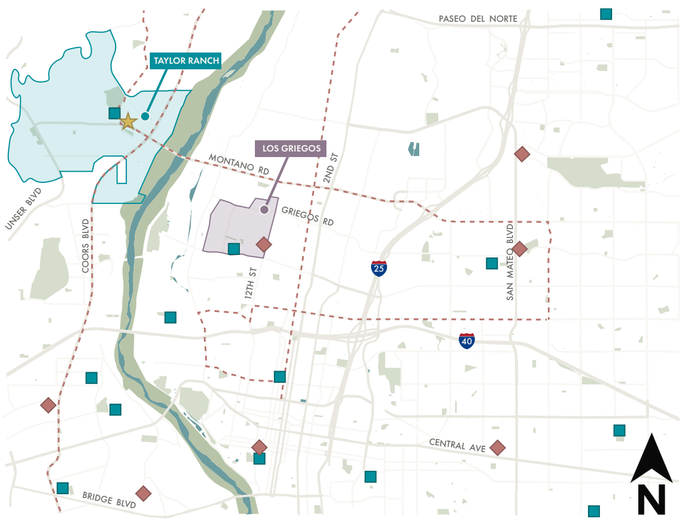
Aging in place requires a community capable of evolving alongside its residents. Our approach integrates social connection and adaptability at every scale: leveraging existing neighborhood resources to support multigenerational living, creating shared spaces that foster relationships, and designing flexible cottages that accommodate changing needs. Together, these strategies allow residents to maintain independence and meaningful connections as their lives evolve, rather than requiring them to adapt to a fixed housing model.



DENSE DEVELOPMENT
Land in walkable neighborhoods near community resources are already densely populated with homes.

LIMITED VACANT LOTS
Small vacant lots limit the opportunity for cottage developments to provide sense of community and diversity.

UNDERUTILIZED LAND
Large R-1 church parking lots offered opportunities for cottage housing within established communities.



01 | SEARCH

Citywide community anchors.

TAYLOR RANCH
A personally familiar newer neighborhood with larger single-family housing.

LOS GRIEGOS
A personally familiar established neighborhood with smaller-scale housing.

■ Community Center ◆ Senior Center ★ City Owned Site ---- City Bus Routes

RESOURCES WITH REACH

A comparison of neighborhood resources within walking distance of potential sites.

NEARBY RESOURCES	TOTAL RESOURCES 0 - ¼ MILE		¼ - ½ MILE		½ - 1 MILE	
	3	22	21	17	35	29
Health & Wellness Medical, Dental, Vision, Fitness, Pharmacy	2		2	1	6	10
Goods & Services Retail, Postal, Personal Care, Laundry, Senior Services	4		3	2	4	8
Community Community & Senior Center, Library, Worship, Food Pantry	2	5	3	2	4	2
Parks & Rec Park, Pool, Playground, Walking Trail	1		4	5	4	2
Food Grocery, Meats, Restaurant, Take Out, Cafe	2		4	1	1	1
Mobility Bus Stops, Bike Lanes, Pedestrian Crosswalks	1	6	4	6	9	5
Schools Elementary, Middle, High School, Daycare	2		1		7	1

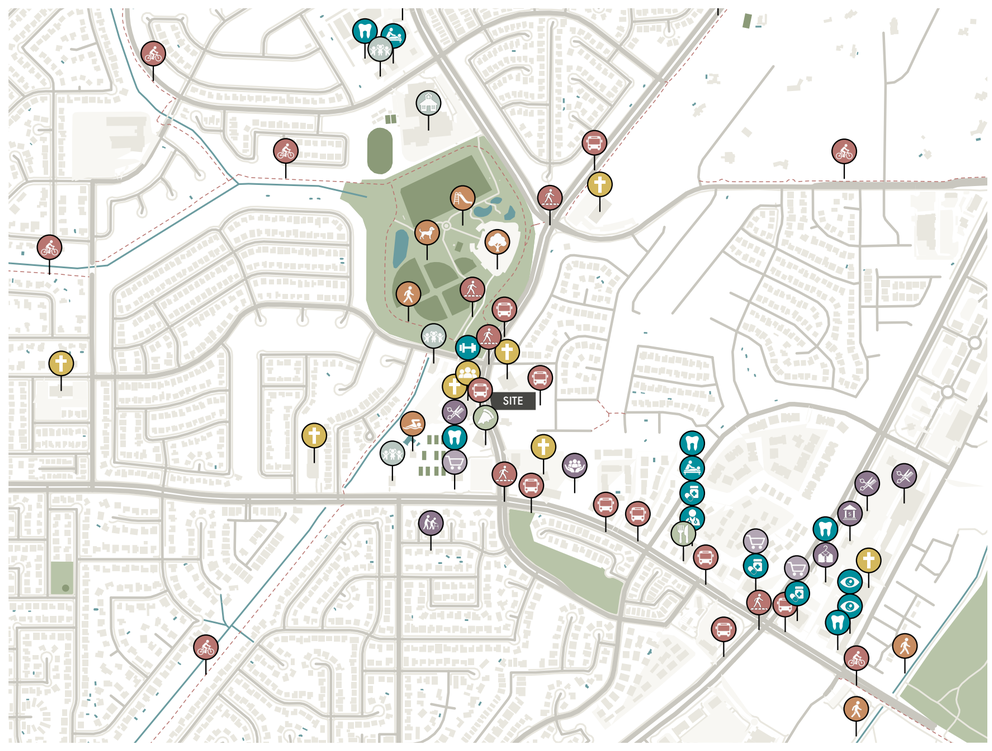
02 | ANALYZE

Los Griegos vs. Taylor Ranch

TAYLOR RANCH
Greater concentration of resources within a ¼ mile and more social connections.

LOS GRIEGOS
Less resources and most are located beyond ½ mile walking distance.

■ Los Griegos Neighborhood ■ Taylor Ranch Neighborhood



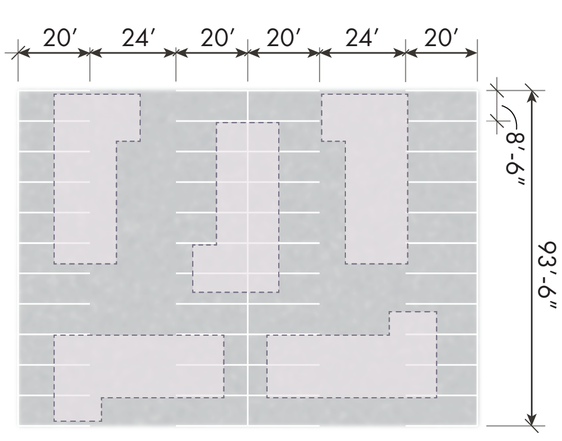
Design Process & Discoveries

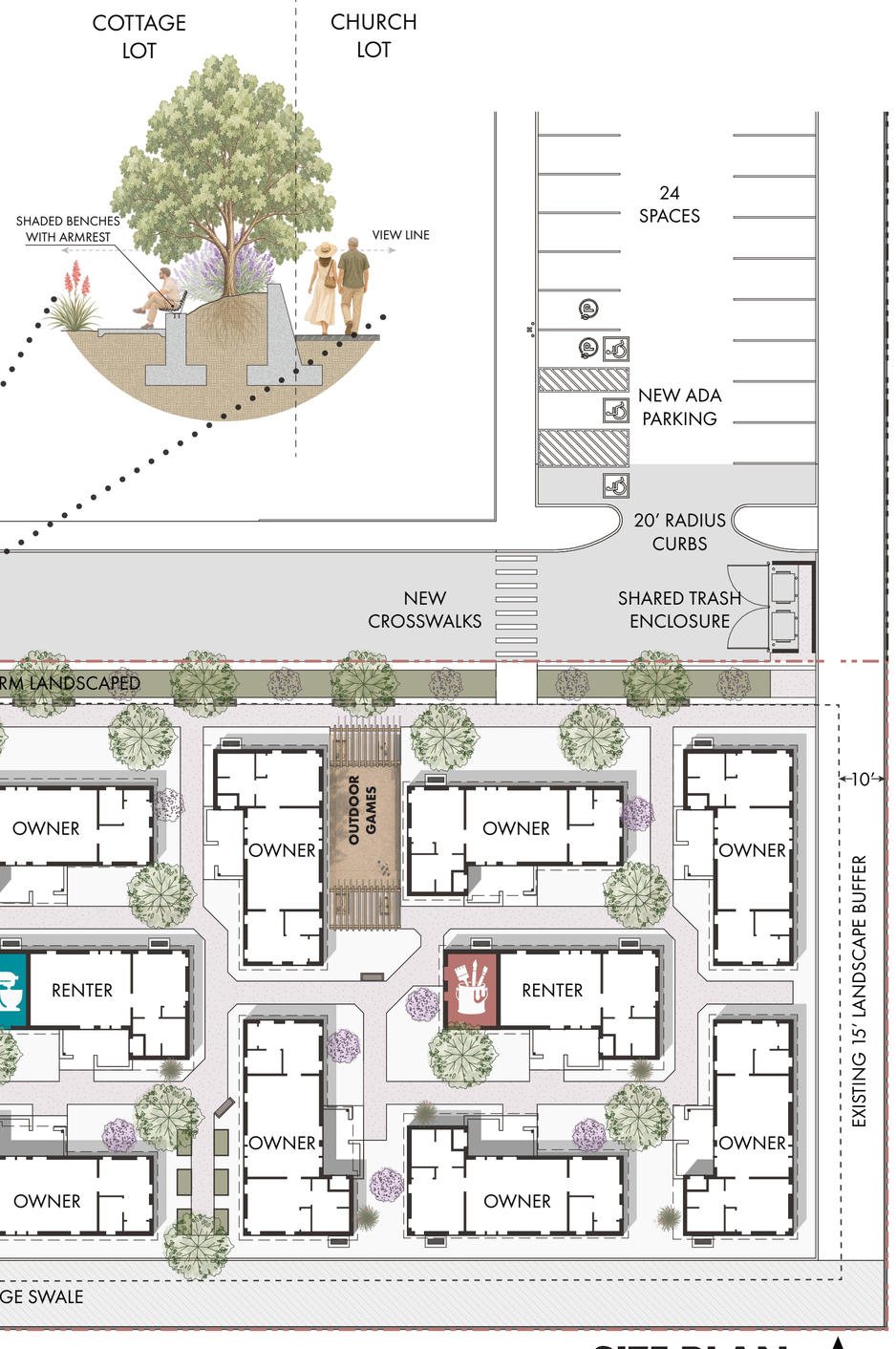
Our search for walkable neighborhoods revealed that established communities with strong amenities offered little vacant land. Rather than displace residents, we explored underutilized properties, identifying an oversized church parking lot with nearly three times its required parking. Cross of Hope Church, a 4 acre R-1 lot, offered an opportunity to introduce housing within an established neighborhood while adapting existing land to new needs by subdividing the unused portion of the parking lot into a 1.3 acre lot for cottages.

We prioritized the site's proximity to a community center, park, and public pool, emphasizing social interaction and active living as foundations for long-term well-being. Inspired by cohousing precedents, a proposed land-lease partnership allows the church to retain ownership while generating revenue, and residents to share resources, reduce housing costs, and establish meaningful connections with their neighbors.

Architectural Response Site

The site is located in a Major Transit Area and is exempt from IDO parking requirements. The design proposes shared parking between the church and cottage users and increases the number of accessible parking spaces. The site is organized into five-cottage neighborhood clusters, each designed to fit within the dimensions of a conventional double-loaded parking module, approximately eleven parking spaces deep. Each cluster includes a central one-bedroom, rentable cottage with shared storage, establishing a small-scale social hub within the larger community. This modular approach allows clusters to be replicated across underutilized parking lots of varying sizes, transforming excess pavement into housing while reducing heat island effect.
At Common Thread, three clusters are arranged with distinct shared storage amenities and outdoor gathering spaces, creating smaller opportunities for connection within the larger cottage community.

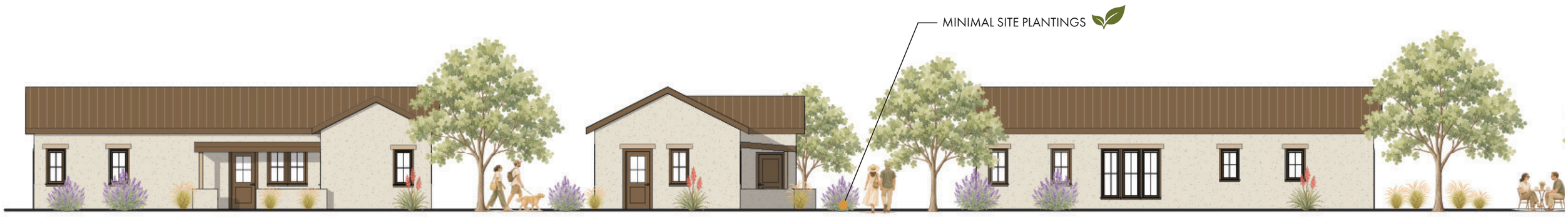




SITE SIZE: 1.3 ACRES 59,170 SF
USABLE OPEN SPACE: 32,670 / 59,170 = 55%
1BR COTTAGE: 705 SF X 3
2BR COTTAGE: 910 SF X 12
TOTAL RESIDENTIAL GROSS FLOOR AREA: 13,305 GSF

60 % OF COTTAGES HAVE OPTIMAL SOLAR ORIENTATION

SITE PLAN
1″ - 20′ - 0″
N



COTTAGE A ENTRY ELEVATION

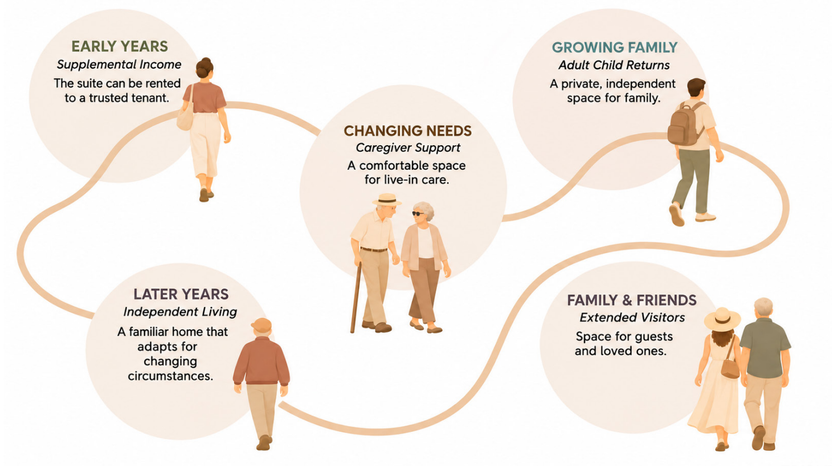
COTTAGE A/C SIDE ELEVATION

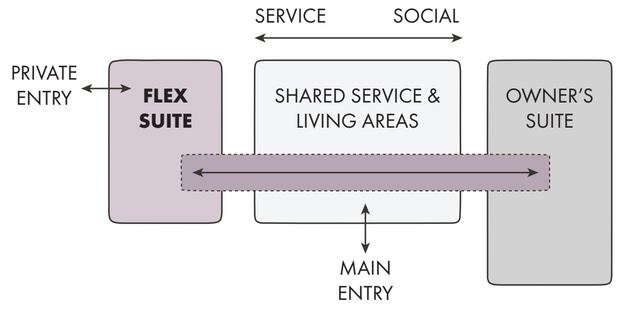
COTTAGE A/C REAR ELEVATION

COTTAGES

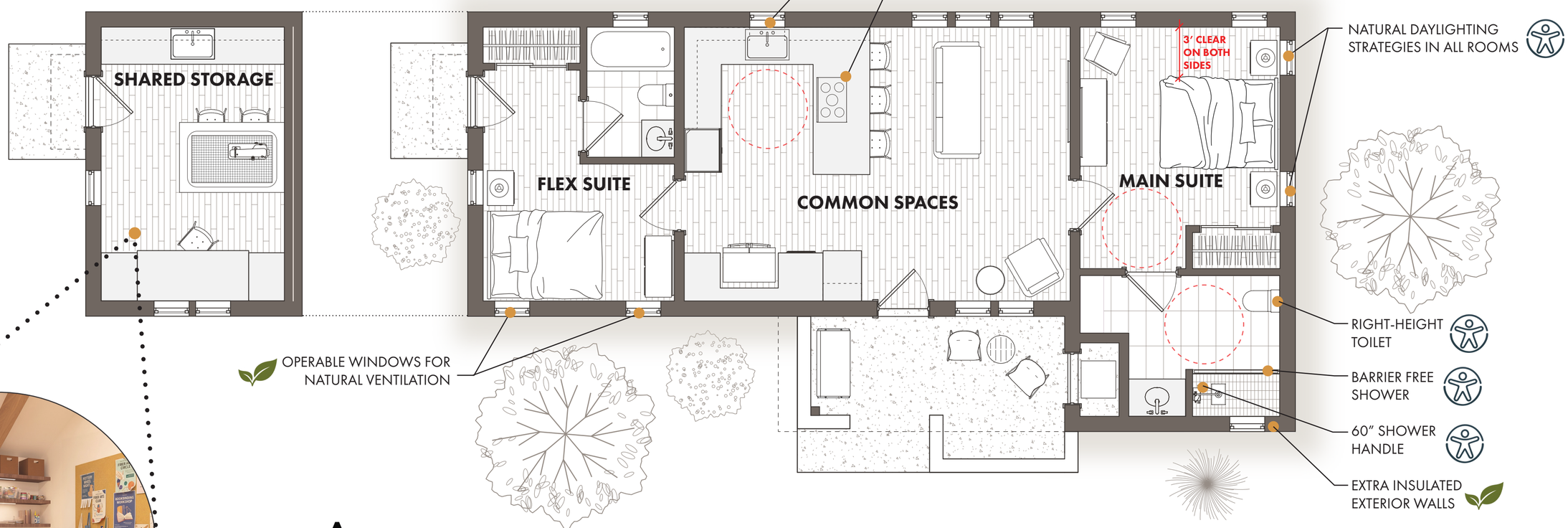
Within each cottage, adaptability extends beyond physical accessibility to support changing relationships throughout life. A flexible secondary suite can accommodate multigenerational living, provide rental income, or house an in-home caregiver, allowing residents to remain in their homes as their needs evolve.

A direct circulation spine connects the flexible suite, shared living spaces, and primary suite, establishing a clear relationship between private and communal areas. This arrangement allows occupants to maintain independence and privacy while remaining connected through the heart of the home, supporting aging in place through every stage of life.





COTTAGE PARTI DIAGRAM



COTTAGE A FLOOR PLAN

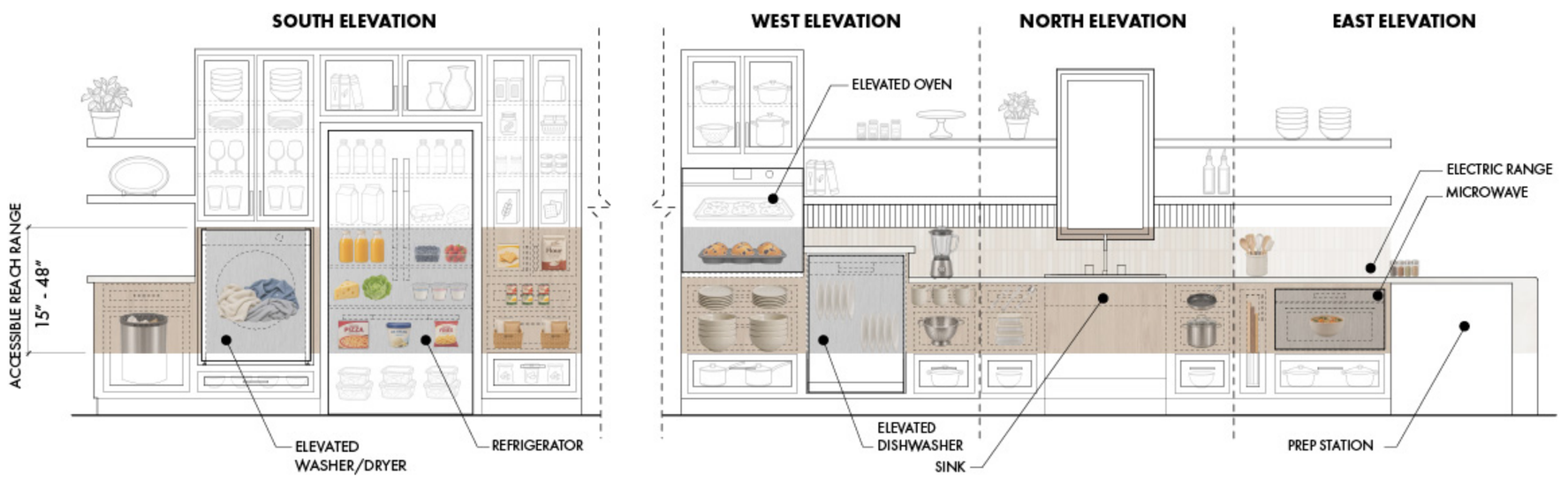
1/4" = 1'-0"



ARTS AND CRAFTS AREA



BIKE STORAGE AREA



ACCESSIBLE KITCHEN ELEVATIONS

N.T.S



INTERIOR VIEW COTTAGE A



INTERIOR VIEW COTTAGE A



INTERIOR VIEW COTTAGE A



COTTAGE B ENTRY ELEVATION

COTTAGE A SIDE ELEVATION

COTTAGE C ENTRY ELEVATION