


# The Commons

A Future of Home Lab Prototype







**We are concerned about** the tendency to create ‘specialized’ and congregated arrangements for people with developmental disabilities that often perpetuate their exclusion and marginalization.

There is currently a lack of housing options that are affordable, accessible, and meaningfully support the social inclusion of people with developmental disabilities.

Additionally, people with developmental disabilities and their supports are frequently left out of conversations surrounding housing. Now, more than ever, there is a need for housing and support models that are co-created with people with developmental disabilities and their supports.

# The Idea

- An urban, mixed-use, co-housing development designed to support the social inclusion and independence of people living with developmental disabilities
- An intentional community that brings together people living with developmental disabilities and those who are not, as neighbours and allies
- An inclusive, affordable and accessible place to live

# Key Features

1. 99 units in a variety of private unit designs accommodate a diversity of community members—from singles, to couples/roommates, and families.
2. Shared common spaces for shared meals, activities, celebrations and collaborative work: community garden, courtyard and playground, meeting room, exercise room, ball court, and a common house with kitchen, dining room, living area, games room and terrace.
3. Revenue generating retail spaces such as laundromat, cafe, and grocery
4. An enforced occupant ratio of 20% people living with developmental disabilities on AISH and 80% other; the 80% subsidizes the rent of the 20%, making it affordable for those living on AISH
  - About 20 units for people living with developmental disabilities
5. On-site support staff for people living with developmental disabilities, made possible through the pooling of PDD funds and provided by a local disability service organization
6. On-site community coordinator/facilitator

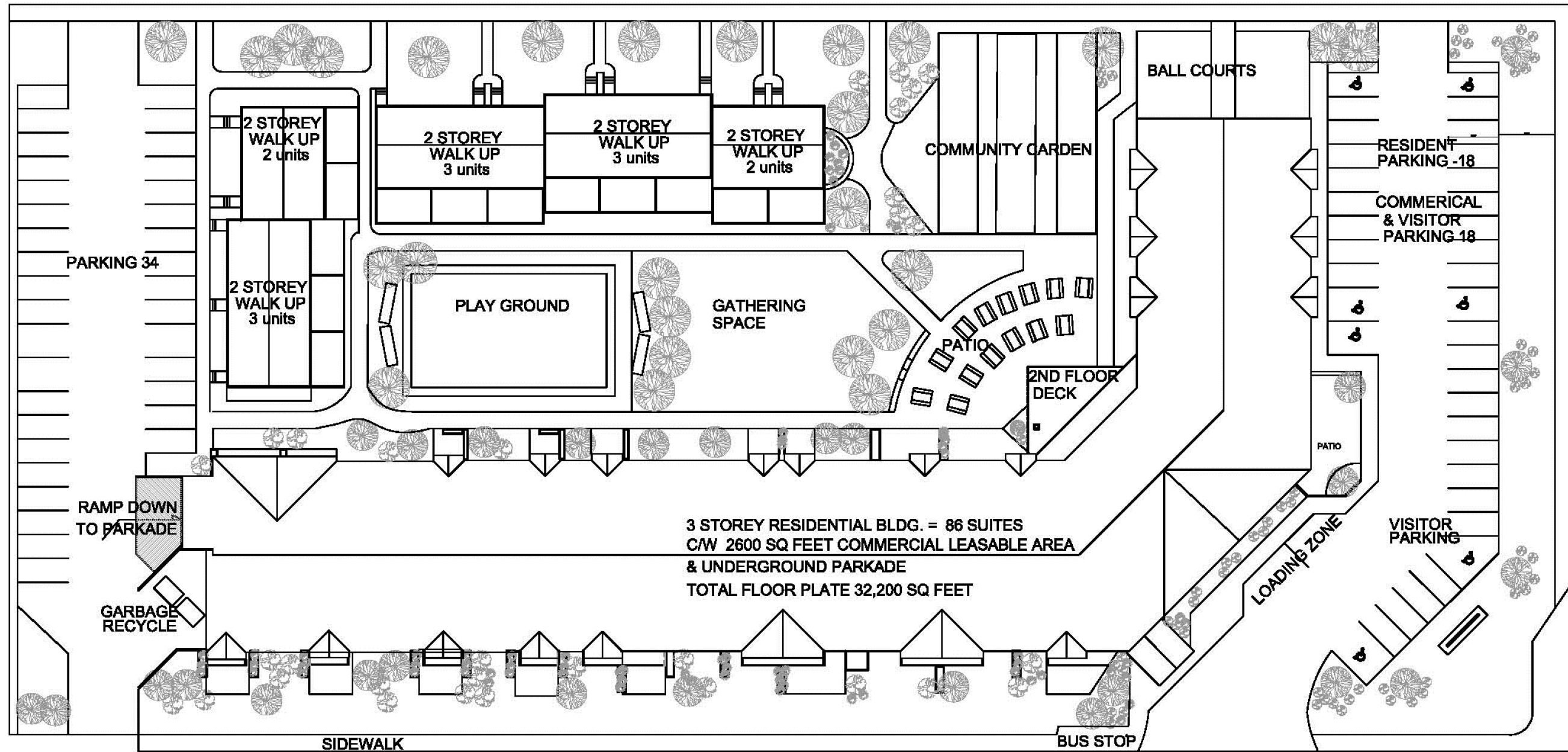
## Required Human Resources

- Part-time community facilitator
- 3 on-site, full time support workers



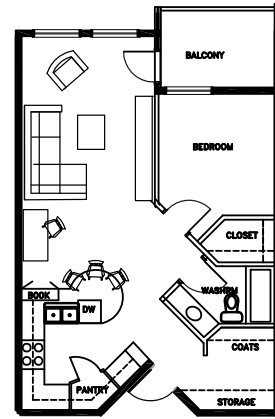
# Design Thoughts

## Site Plan

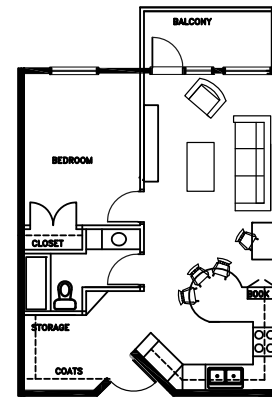


# Design Thoughts

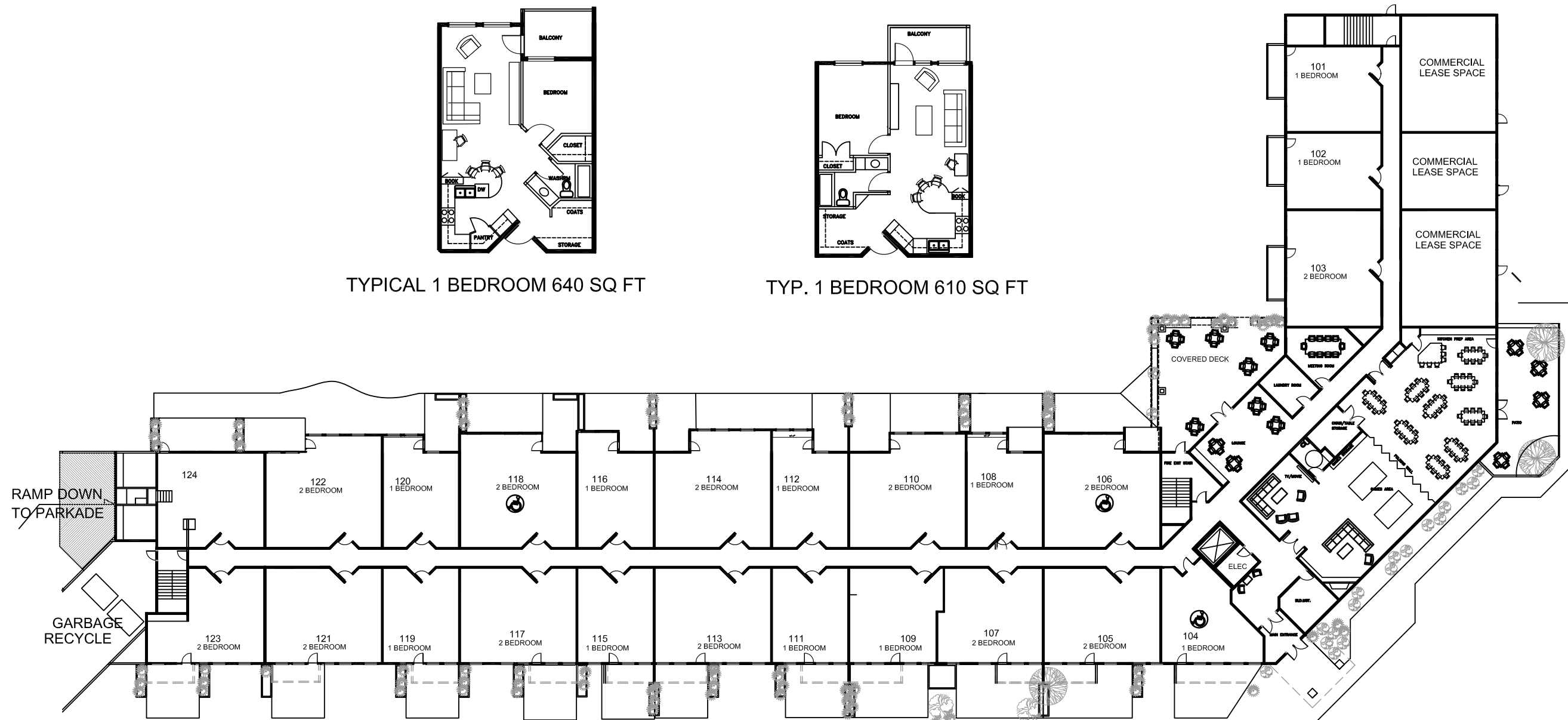
## Main Floor



TYPICAL 1 BEDROOM 640 SQ FT



TYP. 1 BEDROOM 610 SQ FT

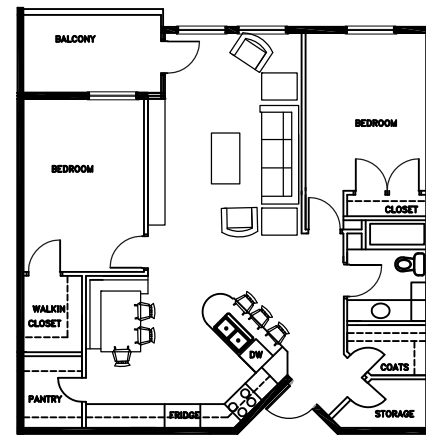


MAIN FLOOR

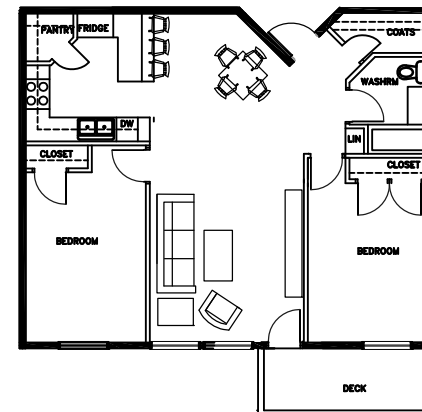


# Design Thoughts

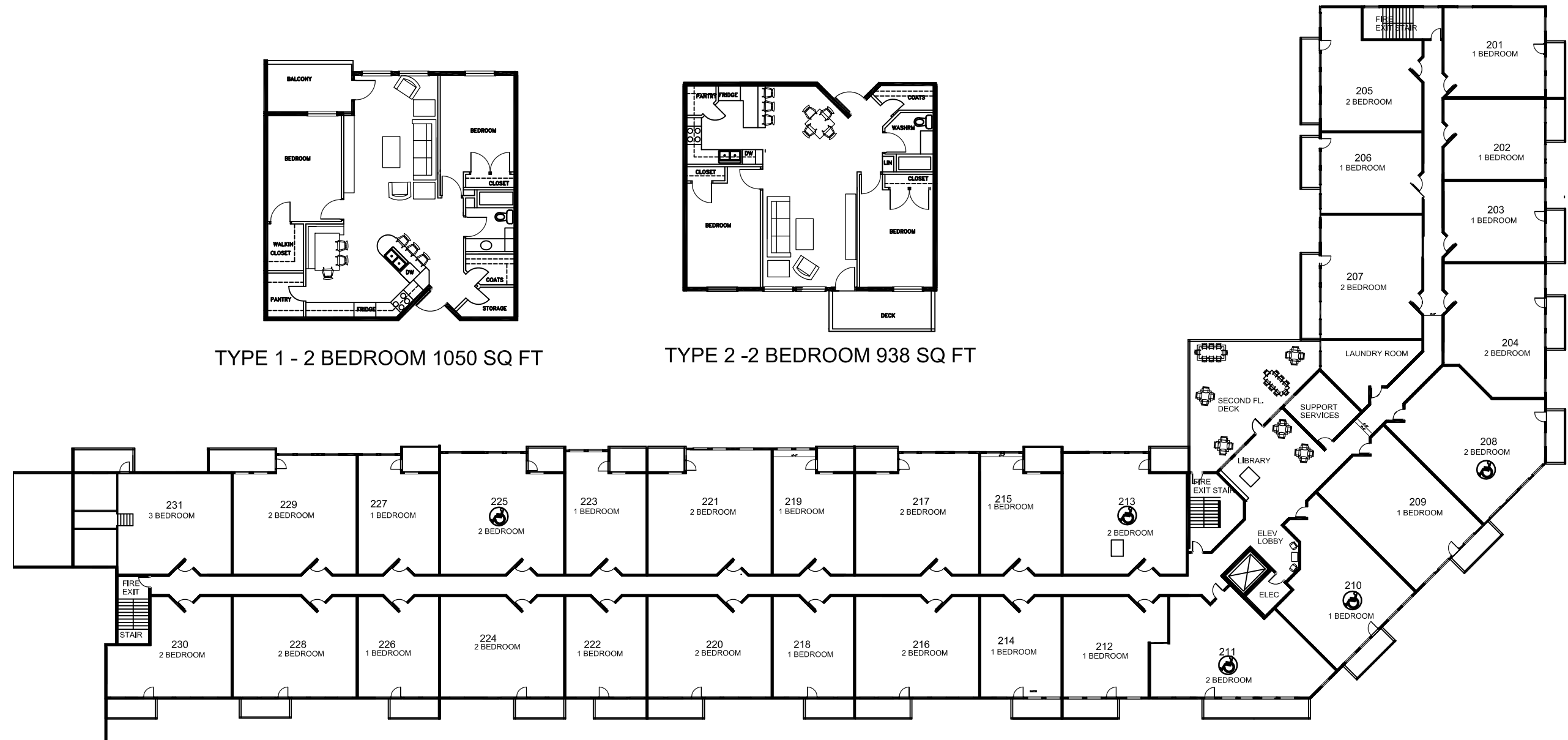
## 2nd Floor



TYPE 1 - 2 BEDROOM 1050 SQ FT



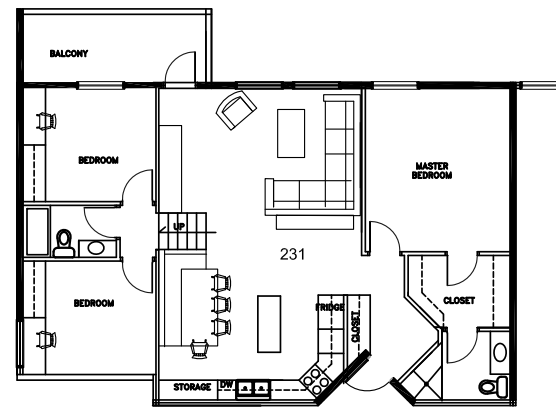
TYPE 2 - 2 BEDROOM 938 SQ FT



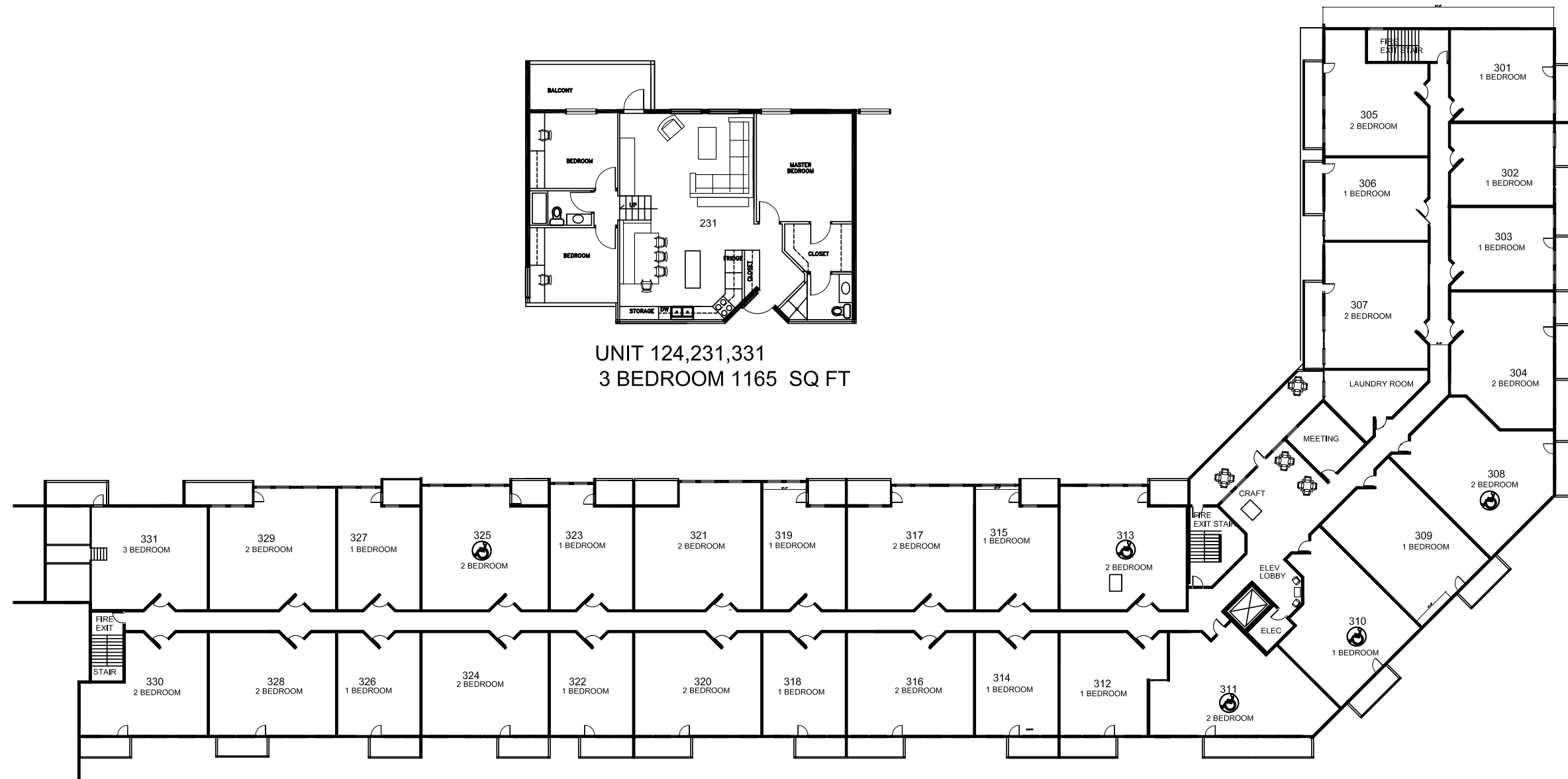
SECOND FLOOR

# Design Thoughts

## 3rd Floor



UNIT 124,231,331  
3 BEDROOM 1165 SQ FT

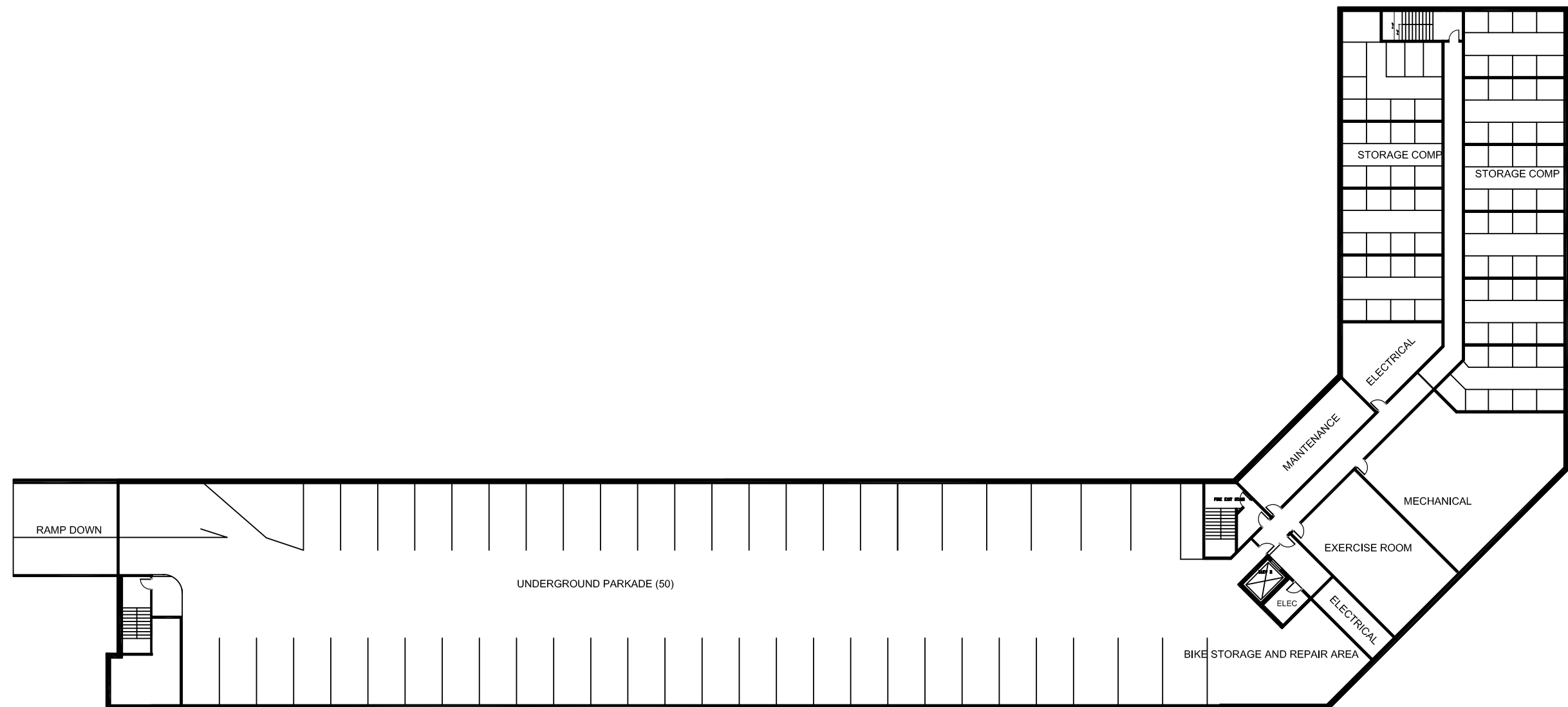


THIRD FLOOR



# Design Thoughts

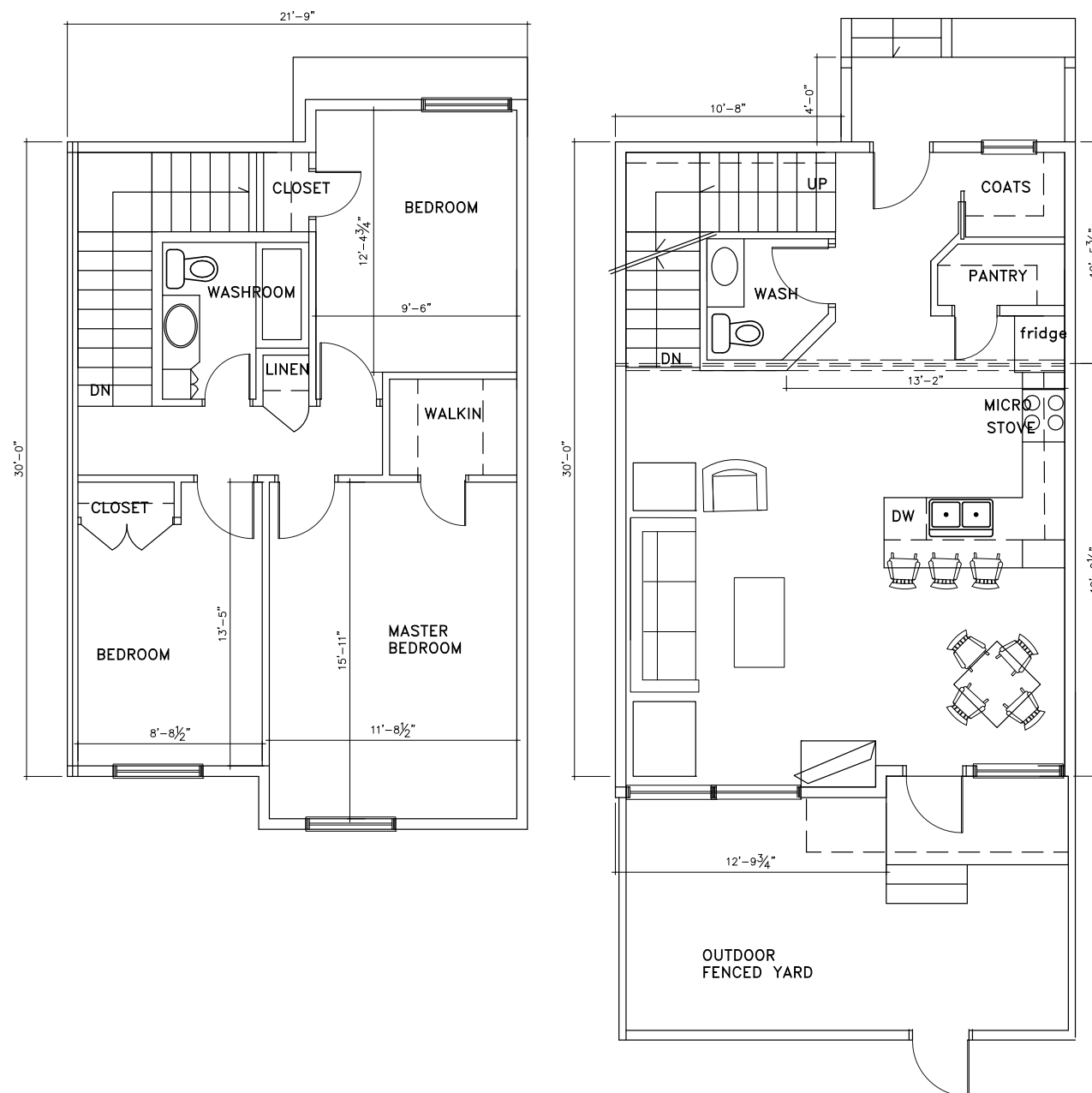
## Basement



BASEMENT PLAN

# Design Thoughts

## Two-Storey Walkup





# Life at the Commons



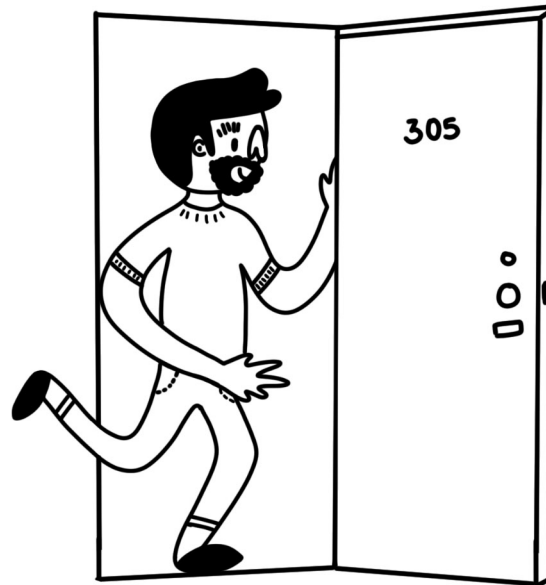
## **Meet Karim.**

Karim is a very active young man who loves to swim and be in nature. He has been living in a one-bedroom suite in the Shared Community Development for about a year. Before living here he had lived in a house with a supportive roommate and before that had always lived with his parents. However, what he really wanted was to live independently and have his own space to call home.



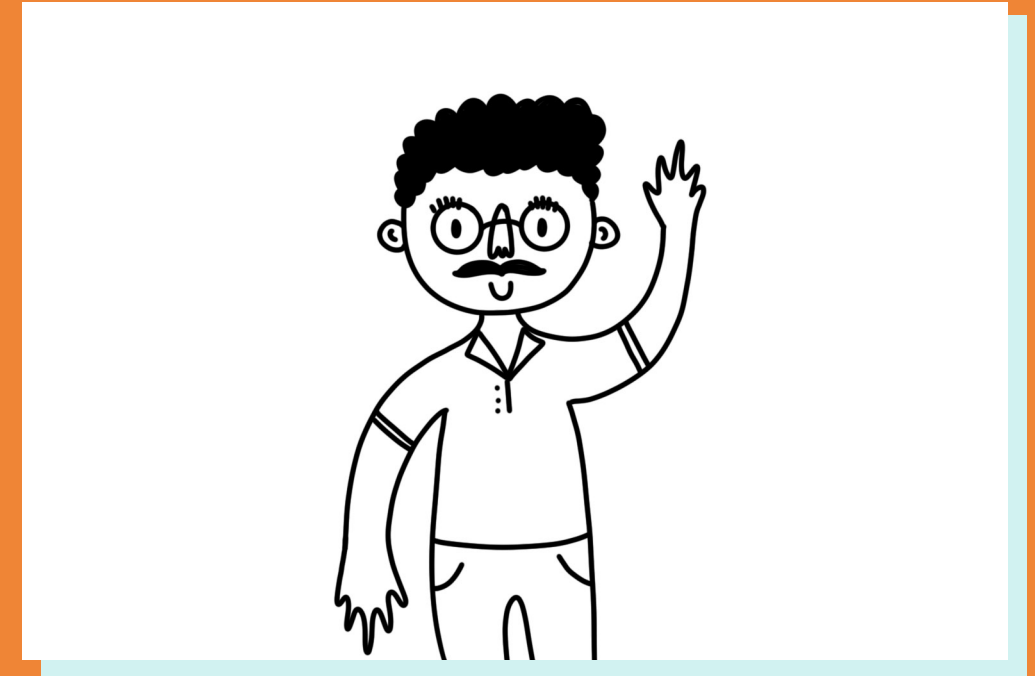
### 8 AM

Karim wakes up, brushes his teeth, prepares some breakfast in his one bedroom suite and scrolls through social media to see what's happening with his friends and family.



### 9 PM

After breakfast and some Facebook time, Karim checks the schedule that he put together with his support worker Andre, and notes that he has a quick job to do at the community garden and a shift at his part-time job at the cafe downstairs at 3pm. He decides to head to the community garden now and stop by the community mailbox on the way.



### This is Andre.

Andre works for a local service provider and is one of 3 full-time on-site supports at The Commons. Pooled PDD funds offer community members flexibility in services and greater independence in their lives.





While at the mailbox, Karim runs into Lola, a 46-year-old doctor with 2 kids who lives a couple of doors down from him.

It's been a while since Lola has connected with Karim, so she asks him if he'd like to grab a quick coffee at the cafe before his shift.



### **This is Lola.**

She moved into The Commons because she was looking for a safe, affordable and accessible place to live for herself and her children. Her family is new to the city and she thought this community would be a good way for her children and herself to adapt and create a new support system.



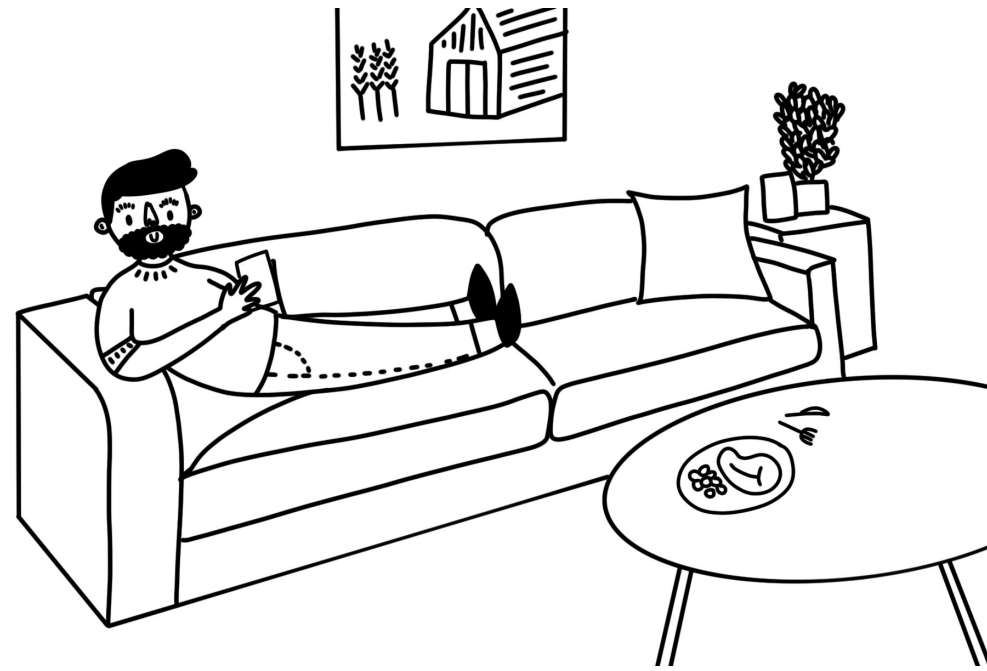
### **9:30 AM**

Karim is part of the Garden Crew in the community. This month his job is to rake the leaves with a few other neighbours who have also signed up. He loves that it connects him with his neighbours and he gets fresh veggies out of it as well! He's also taking a cooking course in the common house on Korean cuisine!

Every household that moves into the co-housing development must sign up for and complete a minimum number of hours of community volunteer work around each month. Volunteer work is managed by a community board/committee, made up of residents living with developmental disability.

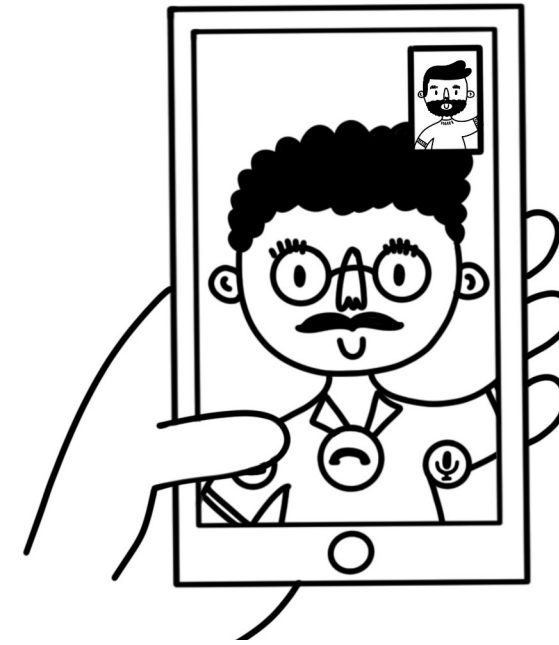
Volunteer work opportunities could include:

- Work on community board/committee
- Teach seminars
- Grow food
- Clean, lawn mow or snow blow common areas
- Help coordinating social events and activities



### **11 AM**

Karim heads back upstairs to his apartment and prepares lunch with some vegetables from the community garden. After lunch he lounges around for a bit, calls his sister, and then texts Andre to ask for assistance meal-planning and budgeting for the community pot-luck being hosted next week. Karim is in charge of making a dessert and he's thinking chocolate mousse!



### **12:30 PM**

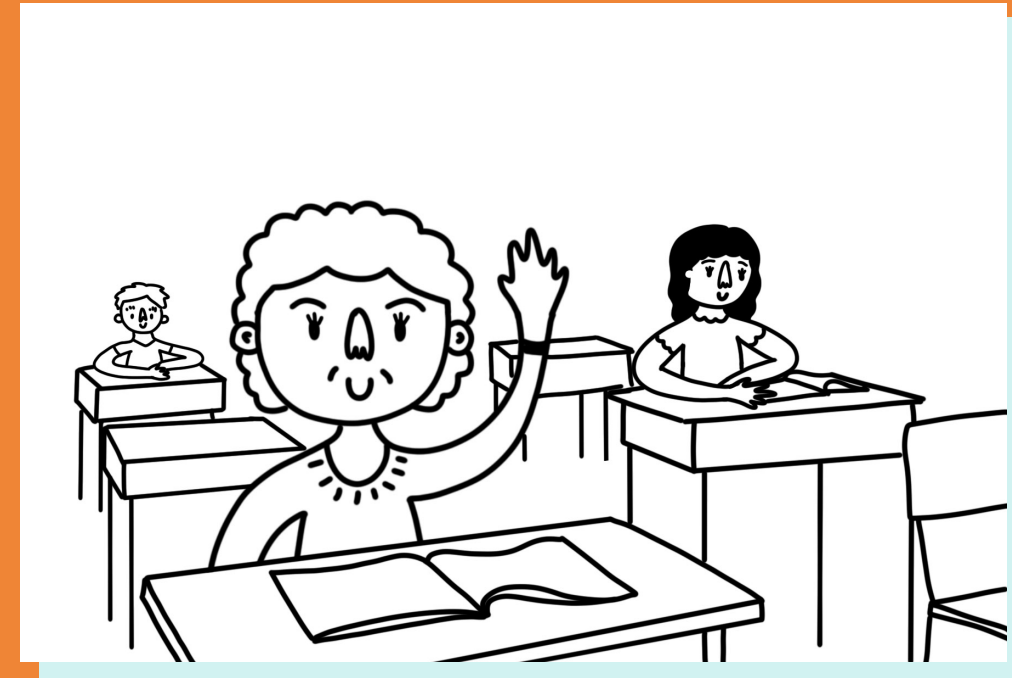
Karim has a video call with Andre in which they pick a recipe and go through the flyer for the Safeway down the street, he might as well grocery shop for the week while he is there.

While on his call, he receives a text from Lola reminding him they are to meet in a few hours. He quickly hops in the shower to freshen up and get ready for his shift and coffee date.



Karim is fairly independent but needs help with things like money management, grocery shopping, monthly throughout cleaning, and verbal cues to enter appointments on his device.

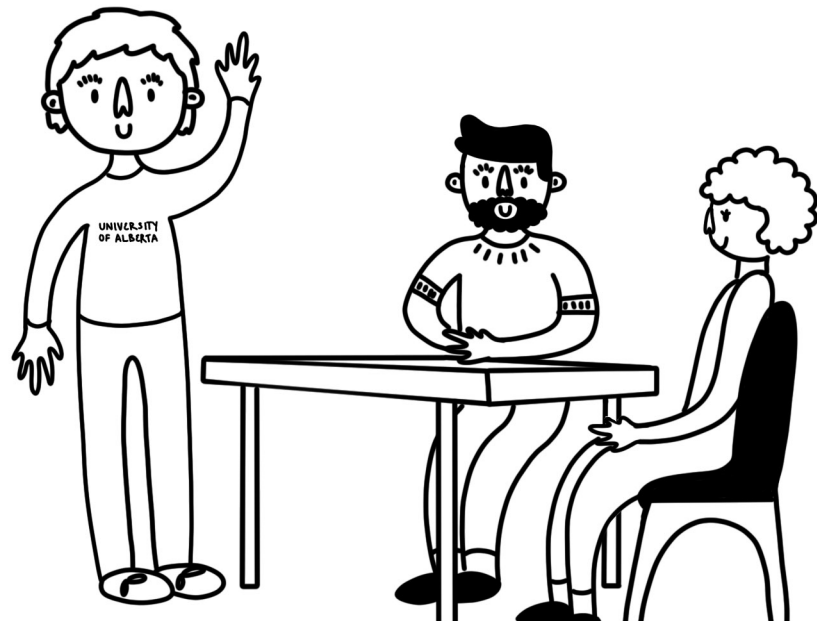
So as to not intrude too much in Karim's life, Andre and the other support workers often use phone calls, remote conferencing platforms, and text messaging to communicate with and support community members.



Lola knows Karim needs little reminders like this throughout his day. Living in his community has taught her how to interact and share space with people with developmental disabilities.

Before moving in, her family was required to take a neighbouring course—a series of seminars aimed at understanding the building, community, expectations of residents, and how to get to know your neighbours.

This could include information about mental health and wellbeing, conflict resolution, relationship building and facilitation, and/or the history of marginalized groups/oppression.



## 2 PM

Karim is having a nice catch-up with Lola, when a past neighbour, Tobias, comes through the cafe and sees Karim.

Tobias asks if Karim wants to go see the Spider-man screening with him after his shift. They are both huge comic book fans.

Karim says yes and Tobias tells him he'll come by to get him at when Karim's shift is finished at 7.



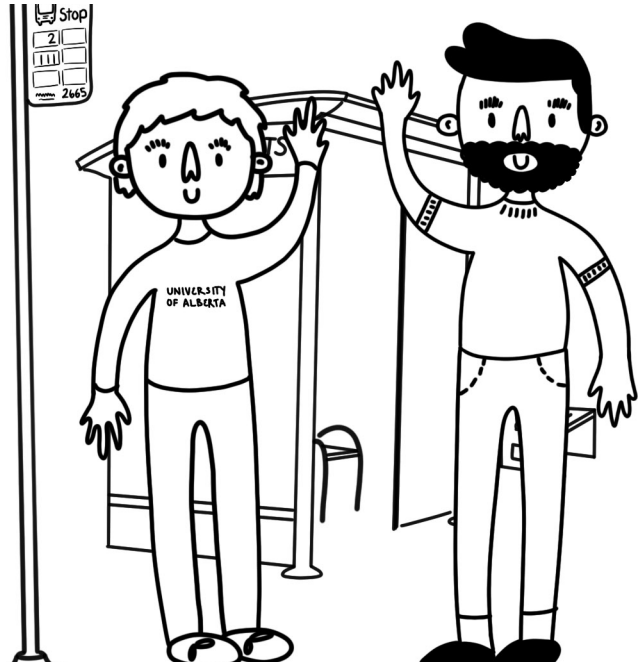
## 3 PM

Karim starts his 3-hour shift at the cafe. Most of the people he sees are familiar faces of people who also live in the building. Other customers are just from around the area or passing by on their route home.

He loves his job and the people he works with.

The Cafe is one of many retail spaces in the development. The idea is that retail space will generate income for the community, provide potential job opportunities for residents living with developmental disabilities, as well as bring the surrounding community into The Commons, thus making it the beating heart of the neighbourhood.

Other retail spaces might include a laundromat, and a grocery store.



### 6 PM

Karim finishes his shift and Tobias is waiting for him as promised. They walk a few metres to the bus stop and are at the movie theatre in a little over half an hour.

The movie was great!



### 10 PM

Karim is home by 10 and is exhausted from his busy day.

As he arrives home his alarm goes off on his phone to remind him to take his medication. Shortly hereafter he gets a text message from his mom making sure he took his medication and saying good night.

Karim gets ready for bed and looks forward to other activities he can get up to tomorrow.

It is imperative that the development be located in an area that is easily accessible by public transit and that makes it easy for community members to get around the city, without a vehicle.

The Commons on-site support staff is tailored towards providing support to people with developmental disabilities who require 5-25 hours of support weekly. If an individual requires additional supports, this would be required to be managed externally.

# The End.

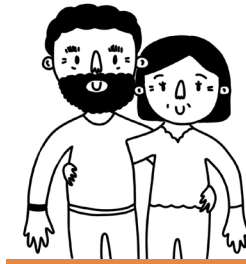


# Who Benefits & How



## Residents Living with Developmental Disabilities

- Affordable, independent living
- Flexible, on-site support
- Decreased social isolation
- More opportunities to contribute to community
- Community as natural support



## Family Members & Allies

- Peace of mind knowing that friend/loved one is supported and understood by their community
- Promise of long-term support for friend/loved one



## Residents Living without Developmental Disabilities

- Decreased social isolation
- Greater community support
- More fun
- The opportunity to support a neuro-diverse community



## Neighbours & Members of Larger Community

- More opportunities to collide and interact with people living with developmental disability
- Greater understanding of developmental disability

# How We're Testing This Idea

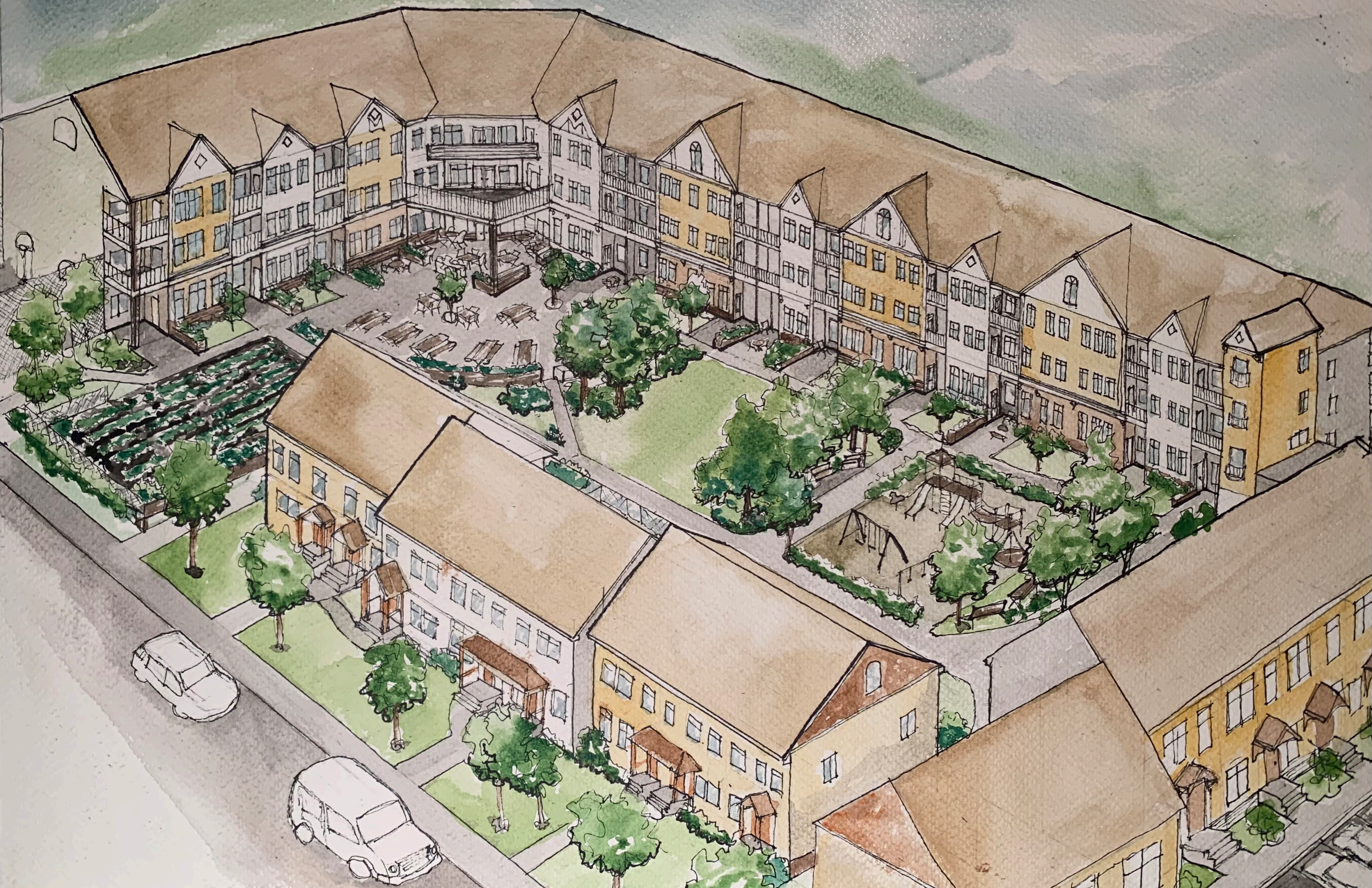
Presenting the concept to stakeholders and obtaining feedback from:

- People living with developmental disabilities
- Family members and allies of PLDD
- Similar/other co-housing developments
- Developers
- Potential NIMBYers

# What We Hope To Learn From Testing

- Who would be interested in living in such a community?
- What concerns does this concept elicit?
- What elements are attractive and to whom?
- What are we missing?
- How realistic is this concept?
- What might we add/modify/reconsider?







# Core Lab Team

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