PGCMLS Commons:
Beltsville Life Lab

the
Neighborhood
DesignCenter

Project Address: 4319 Sellman
Rd, Beltsville, MD 20705
Project #: 3705
13th, July 2022

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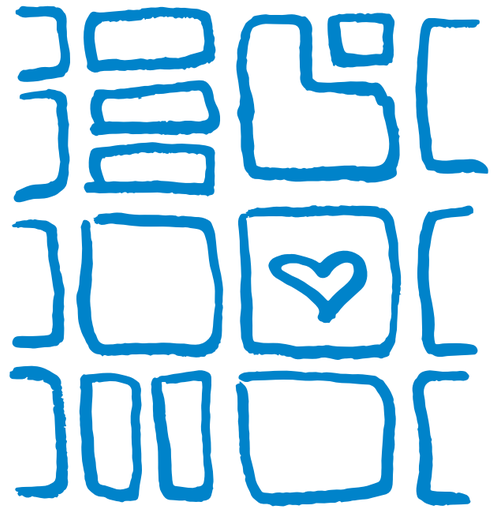

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NDC Volunteers: Simi Marinho, Alejandro Finol, Amthul Ibramsha, Cheryl Dixon, Feyi Quadri, Kim Gabosch, Lindsay Nier

NDC Staff: Sophie Morley, Angelica Arias

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Introduction

This report captures the final concept designs and collaborative process for Beltsville Life Lab, part of the Commons, and initiative of Prince George's County Memorial Libary Service (PGCMLS).

The Neighborhood Design Center partnered with PGCLS with the support of a volunteer team from Gensler to develop concept designs that transform existing spaces located inside the Beltsville, Largo, Kettering and Oxon Hill Libraries as part of The Commons initiative. The designs seek to embody the vision of The Commons to connect community in physical and virtual space for library users to create, explore, inspire and realize together. Each space will provide services specific to community needs at the different locations, a description of Beltsville Life Lab is below:

Beltsville Life Lab
The Life Lab will be an innovative career center with key partners including Employ Prince George's, Prince George's County American Job Center, Financial Empowerment Center at Prince George's Community College and Maryland Multicultural Youth Centers. Programs and resources will include multilingual workforce training programs, professional apparel program, professional development library, 1:1 career coaching, job fairs and recruitment events, citizenship services and advanced technology classes.

The team worked closely with library leadership, staff and stakeholders, convening workshops to explore different options for the space, ensuring that the spaces are asprational but also practical.

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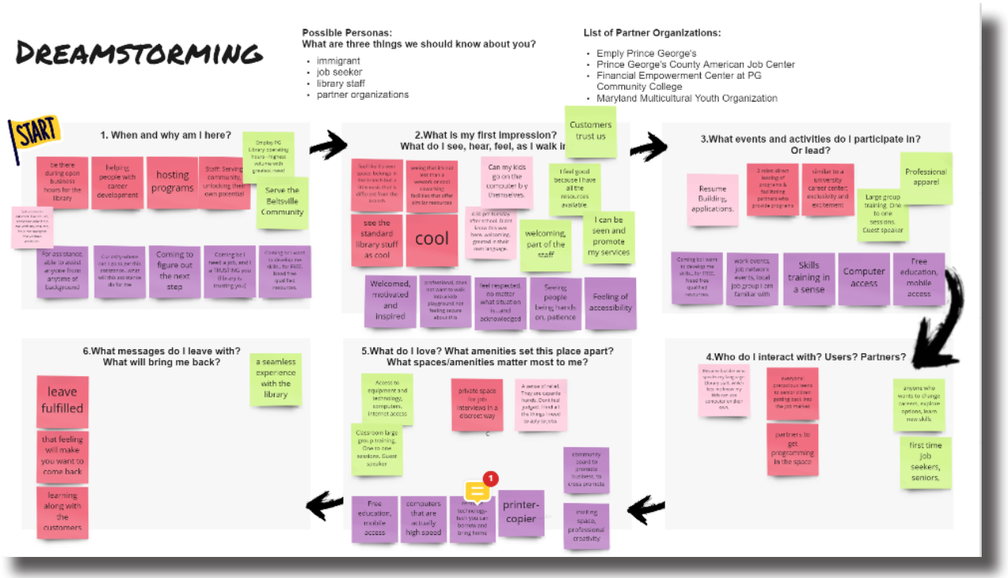
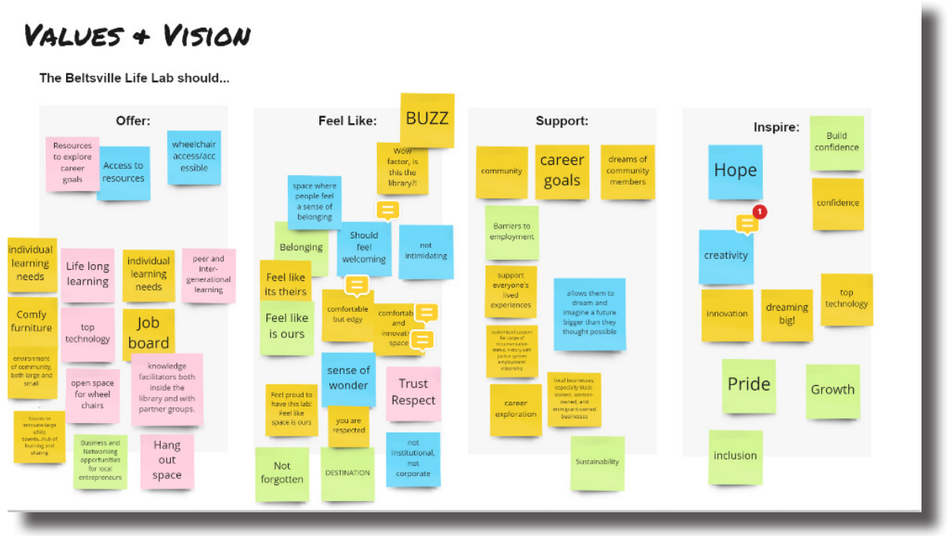
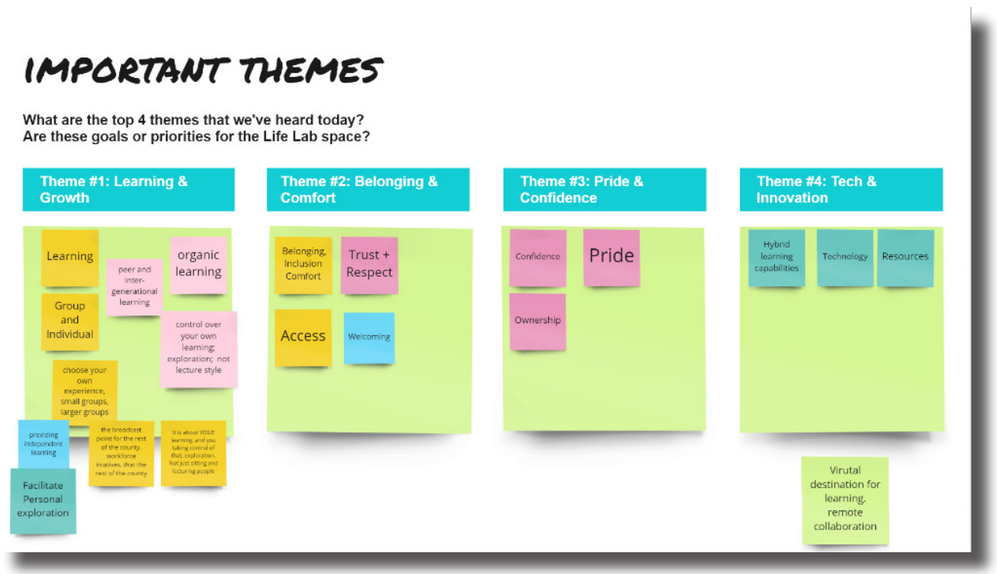
First Stakeholder Meeting

Visioning Activities







Prior to this presentation, two stakeholder conversations occurred. The first one was with the larger PGCMLS leadership team, NDC, and Gensler. The focus group visioning session included activities to ideate and establish goals of what the Beltsville Life lab would be.

The second, informal, stakeholder meeting was with Marisa Strakovsky, Librarian III at the Beltsville Branch. Marisa provided incredibly valuable feedback and more detail about the potential users of the space, concerns anticipated, and specific program needs that should be accommodated.

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When you're in the Life Lab, the space should feel...**welcoming** and have a sense of **belonging**.

The users of the Life Lab should feel **proud** to have this space and feel **confident** it is theirs' to use.

The Life Lab should facilitate **learning** and **growth** opportunities for users that are unique and individual to them.

The Life Lab should feel **innovative** and allow hybrid learning with **technology** offered in the space.

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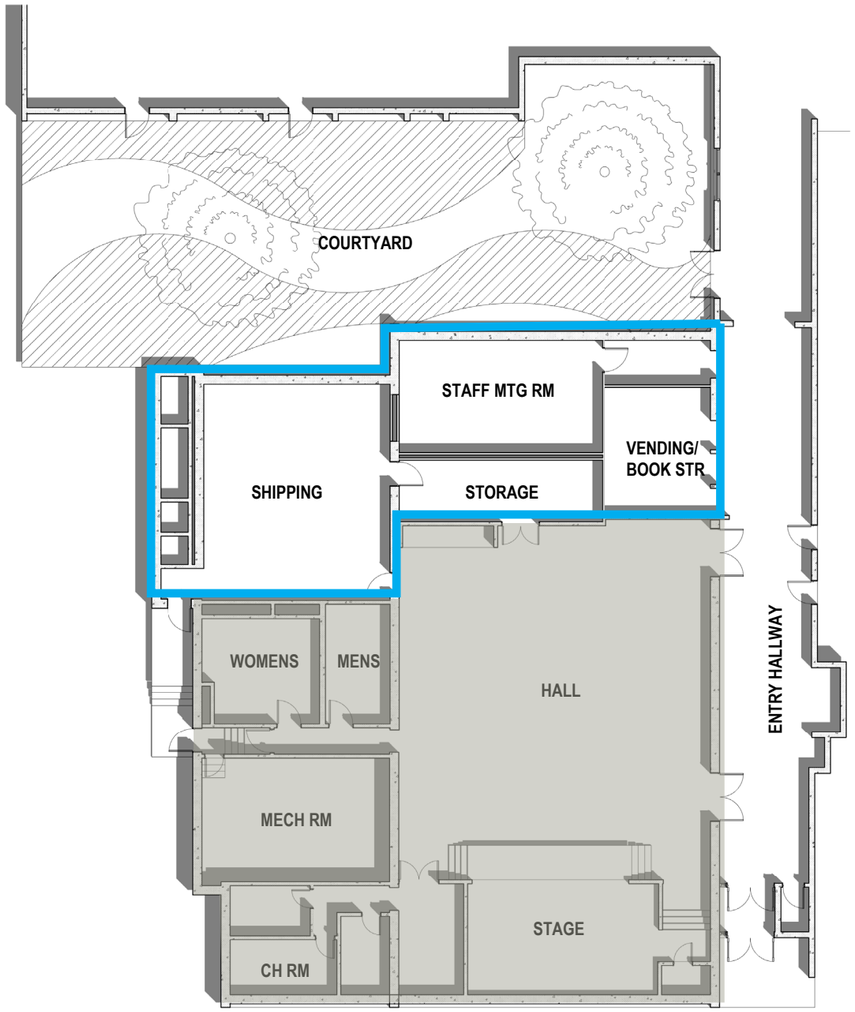
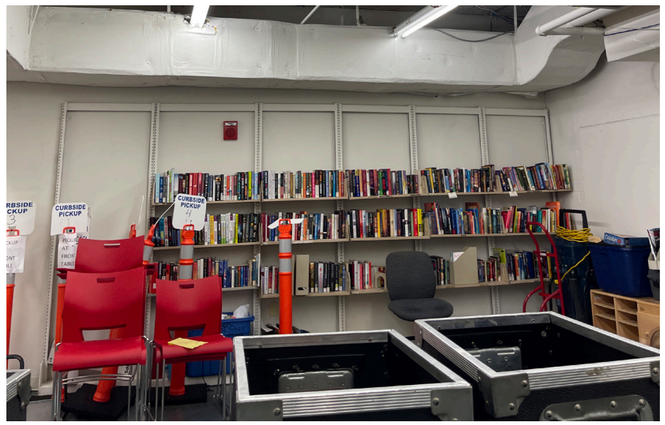
Existing Conditions Analysis



The future space for the Life Lab is currently Back-of-House and service areas. The finished spaces consist of the staff meeting room and vending/book storage area. The storage area and shipping room are unfinished.



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Key Challenges

Spatial Challenges

- Lack of natural light
- Large overhead HVAC equipment presence
- Structural elements creating two separate “rooms”
- Utility elements located in space that are unable to be relocated

Programmatic Challenges

- Disconnected from main library
- Security concerns with storage of collateral and technology
- Children will need area in space to wait while parents are users
- Staffing in space resulting in limited hours of operations
- Level of technology required relative to user needs and capabilities

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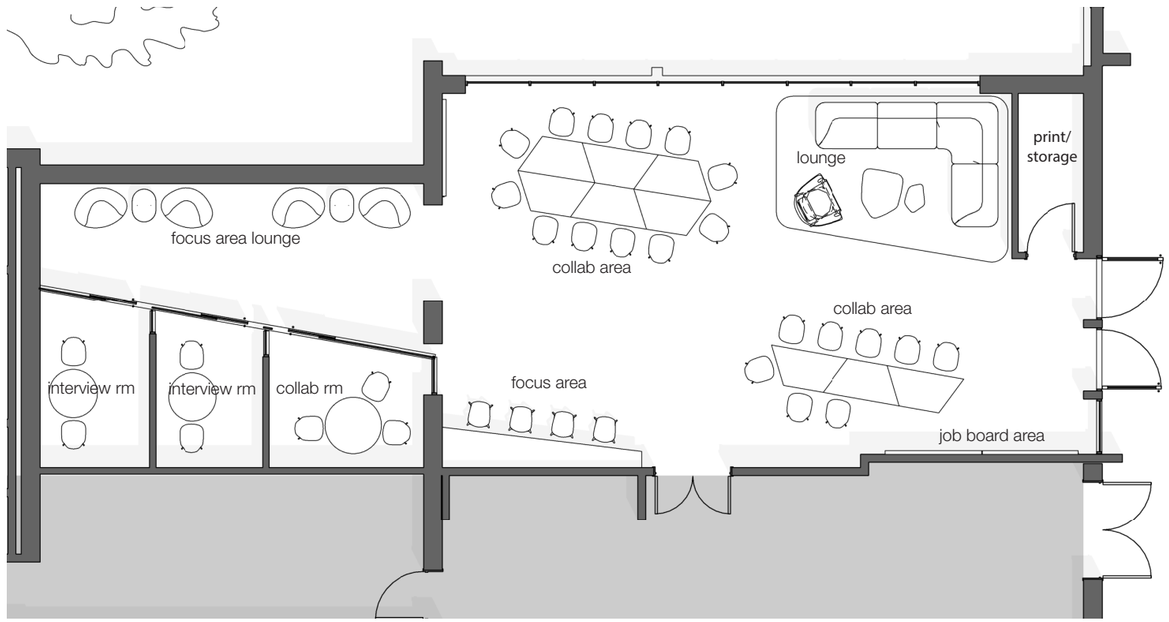
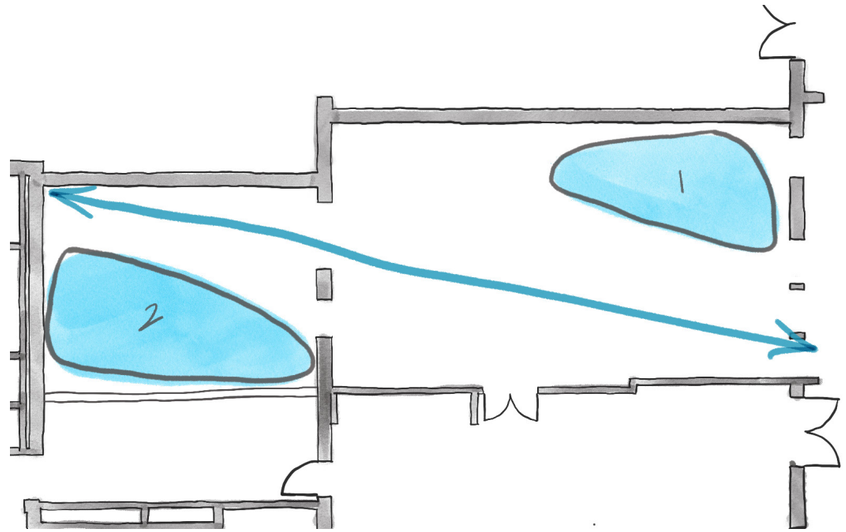
Second Stakeholder Meeting

Design Option 1



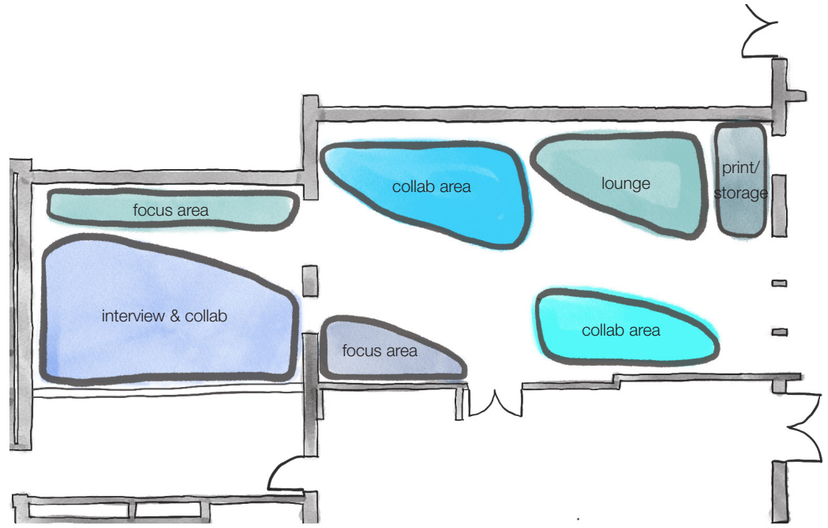


Description:

The first option presented at the stakeholder design meeting looked at optimizing circulation based on existing conditions of the space. It was designed around the concept of the “journey” to finding a job, providing a clear and linear path to the final destination point: the interview rooms. This option offered flexibility which meeting attendees noted as being important to the future programming of the Life Lab. Attendees liked design of the interview room as permanent spaces. These comments were taken into account moving towards the final concept design.

Stakeholder Comments:

- Requires a bookshelf for professional development reading material
- Add acoustic panels to meeting rooms
- Make re-arrangeable furniture is on castors.
- A staff member will be there full-time



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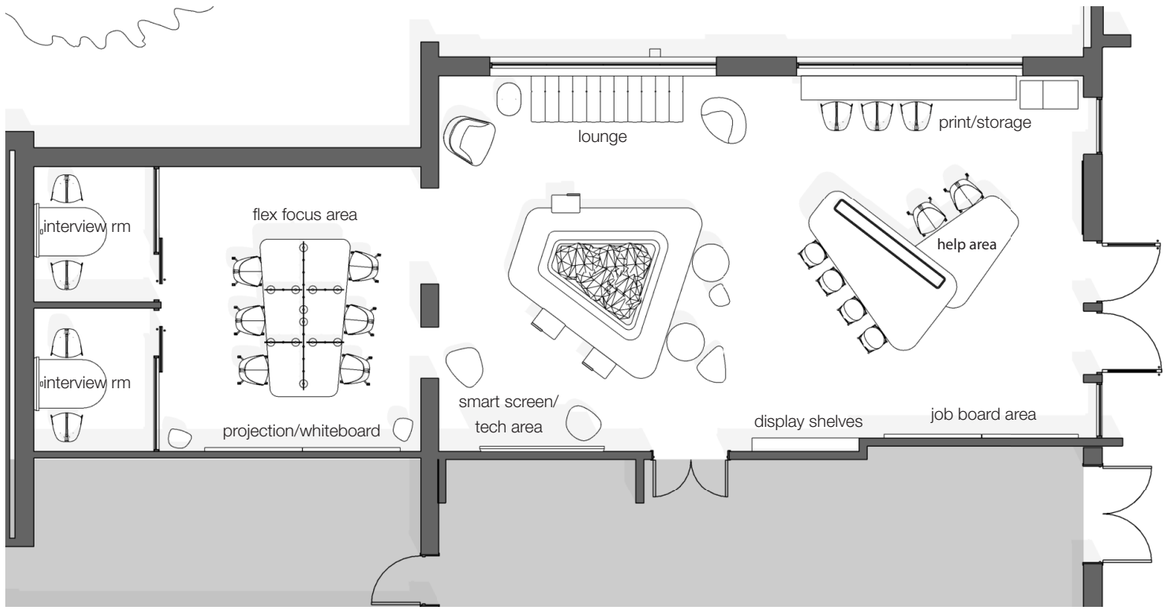
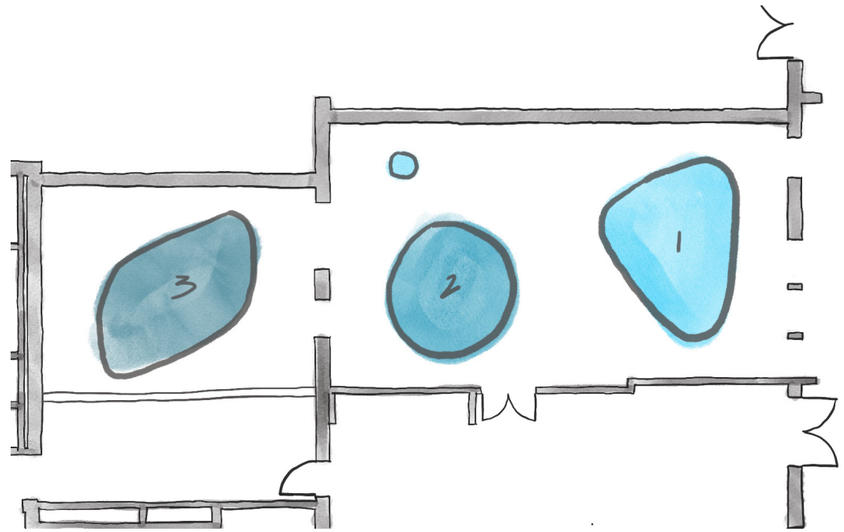
Second Stakeholder Meeting

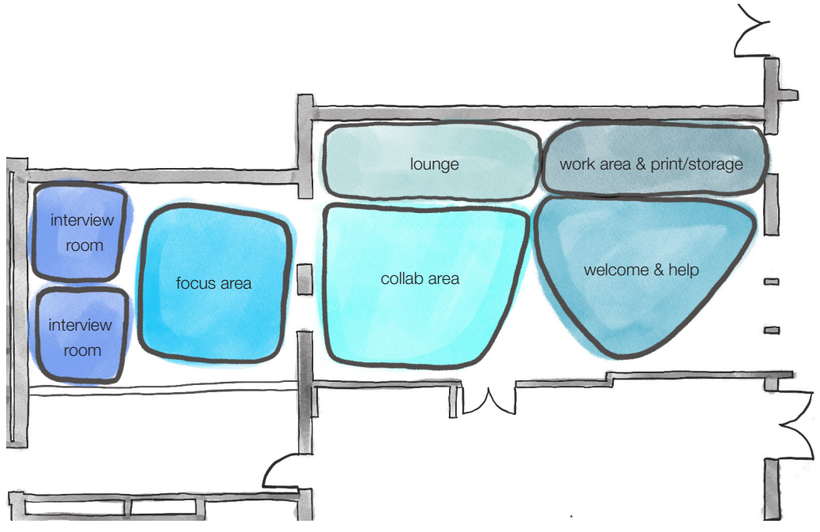
Design Option 2





Description:
The second option presented in at the stakeholder design meeting emphasized the “stepping stones” to finding employment. This option had free-flowing circulation around fixed island areas. While the first option offered mobile flexibility, this option offered flexibility in choosing seating type.
Comments from the attendees noted that they liked the first island that allowed for fixed seating. However, a permanent “help area” was not required. It was also noted that the incorporated storage was preferable to an storage room. These comments were taken into account moving towards the final concept design.

Stakeholder Comments:
- Incorporate a living/green wall
- Having the meeting area next to the interview could create sound issues
- The help desk should not look institutional or formal.
- Try to incorporate more flexible seating and collaboration spaces



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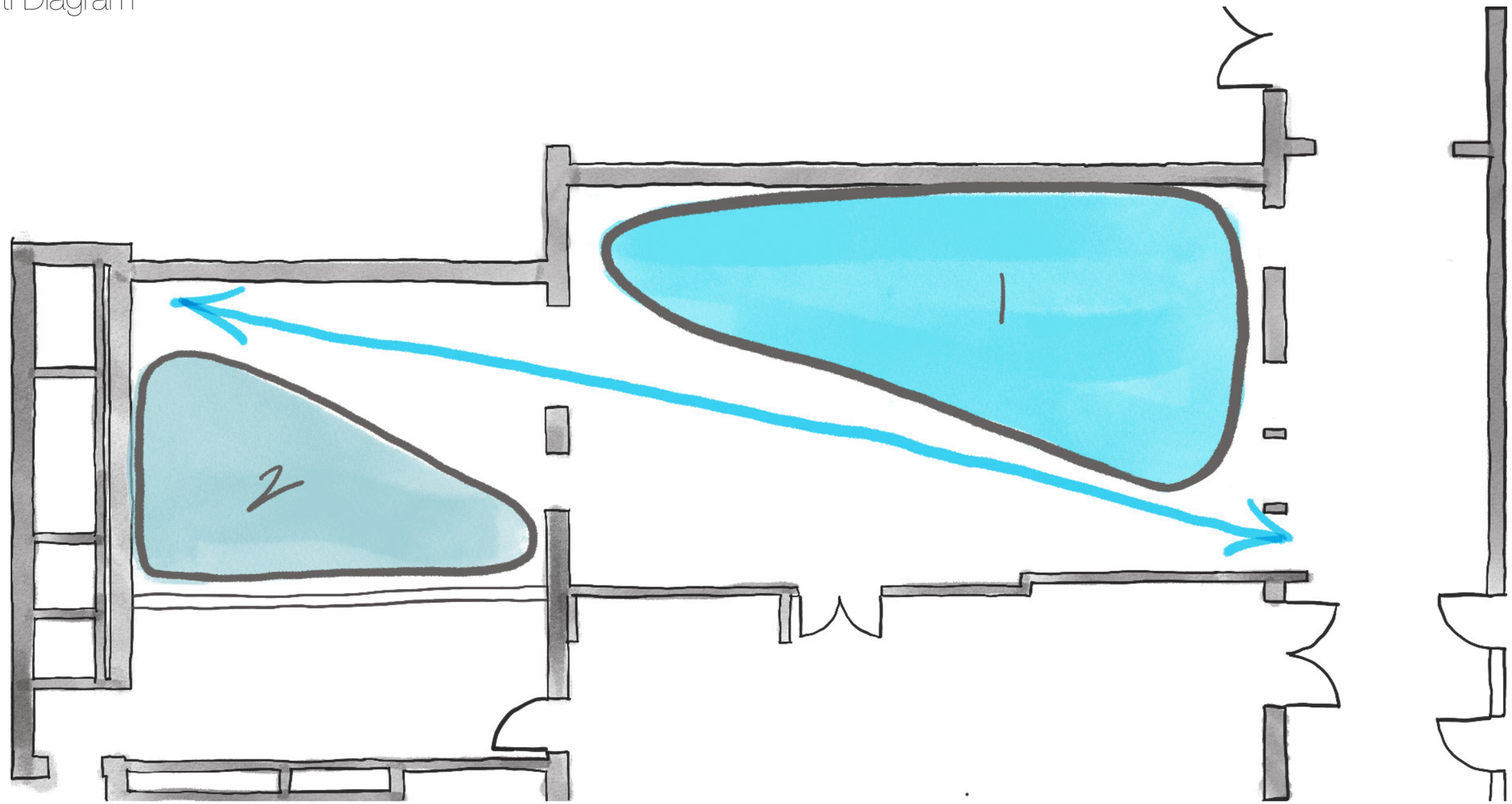
Final Concept Design

Parti Diagram



Description:
Reviewing the comments from the previous stakeholder design meeting, the parti of the space remains largely the same as Option A. It continues to be designed around the concept of the "journey" to finding a job, providing a clear and linear path to the final destination point: the interview rooms.

The available space has structural limitations that cannot be altered. These restrictions dictate access points into and throughout the space; looking at these two access points an axis can be established diagonally across the space. This axis serves as the main and direct circulation path from the entrance to the back room.

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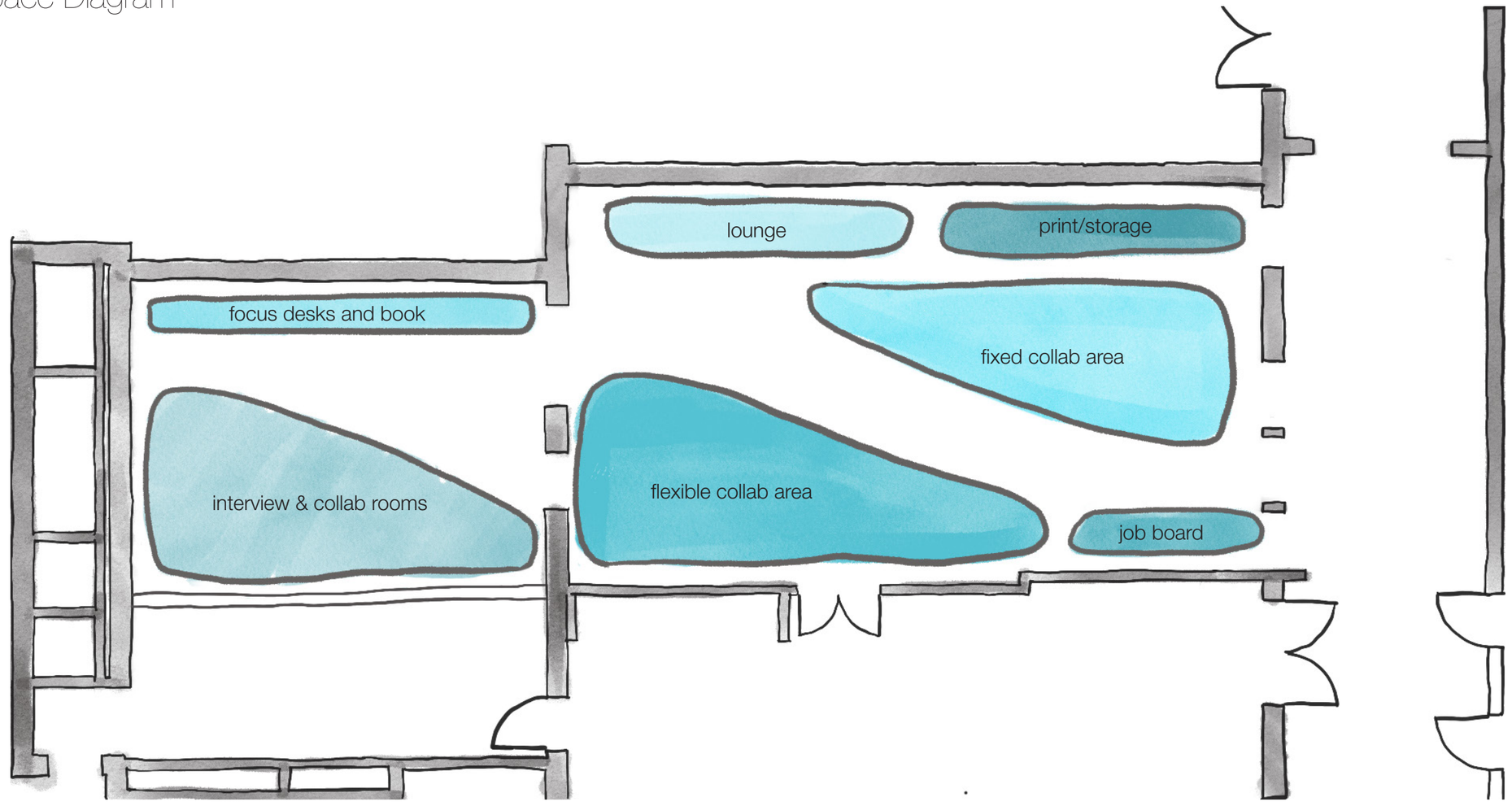
Space Diagram



Description:
Keeping in mind the central diagonal axis, the program spaces populate outside of it. However, there is a now a balance of both fixed and flexible spaces

The more collaborative spaces are immediately off of the main-hallway. The spaces requiring more privacy and focus areas are located further into the space to avoid foot traffic that may float into the Life Lab. This takes into account acoustic concerns from circulation and programming in the space.

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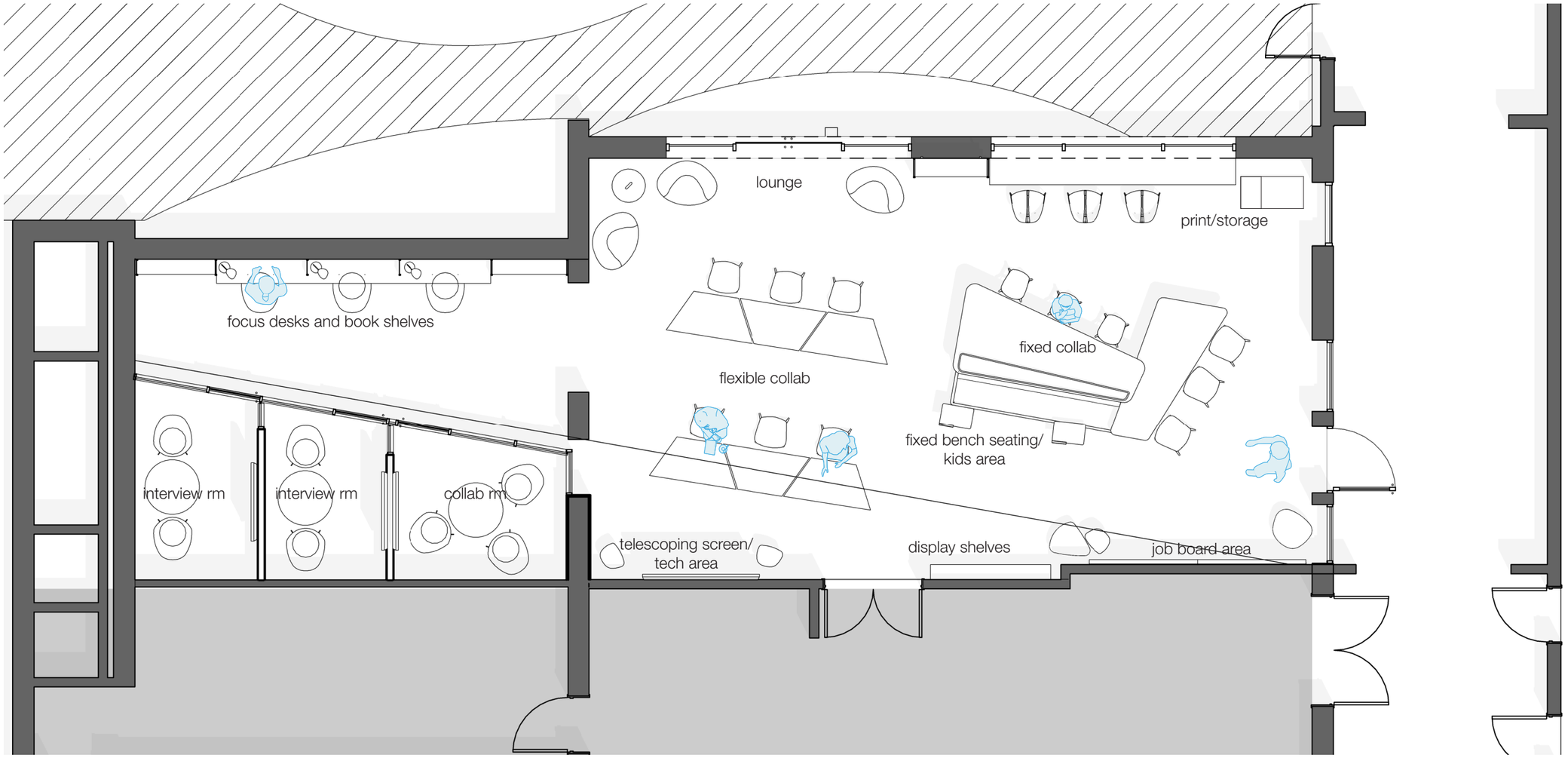
Final Concept Design

Overall Plan



Description:
This option in plan remains very close to what the concept diagram envisioned; a space with direct and open circulation. This design offers both fixed and flexible furniture helping create “zones” in the space. It offers reconfigurable flexibility with furniture allowing for numerous and specific activities.

There is no designated welcome or help area, and relies on those staffing the space to indicate their presence. The fixed collaboration seating in the front can be a temporary touchdown for staff. The fixed bench seating area provides additional seating to view programming in the tech area, but also an open waiting space for children.

Stakeholder Comments:
- Electrical outlets needs to be incorporated throughout especially at flexible seating locations
- Make sure finishes and materials are durable
- Consider automatic shades for the windows
- Look into incorporating virtual attendees
- Replace job board with screen that has curated slideshow of events.
- Consider making the fixed collaboration table flexible.
- Pull gradient throughout entire wall and make the rooms have a specific color/gradient

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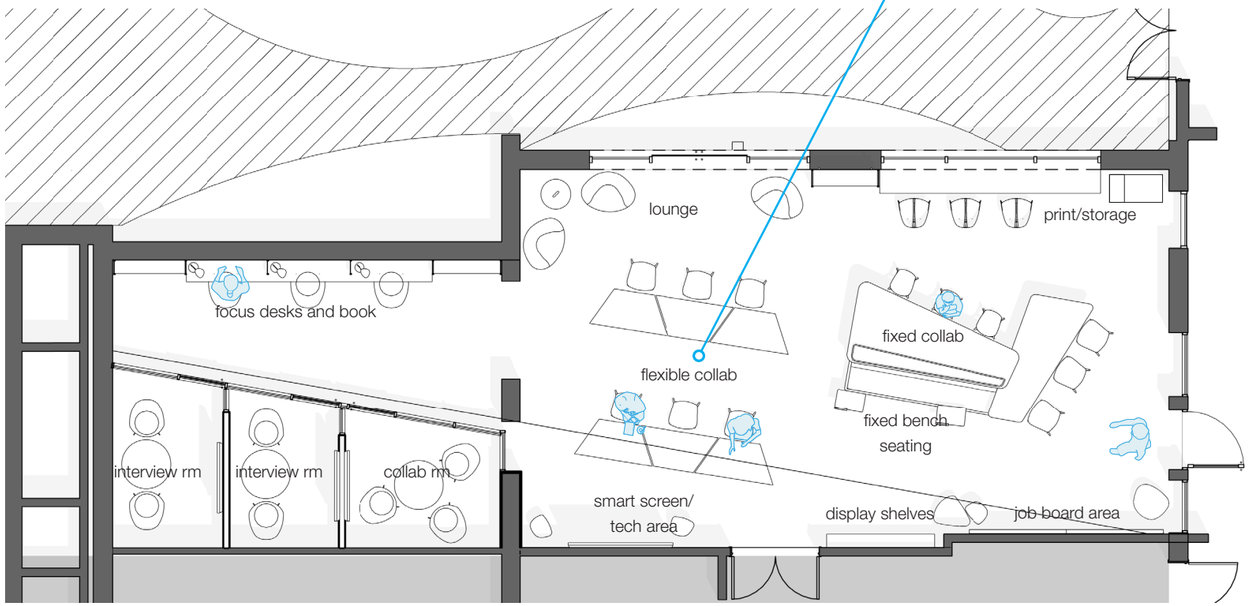
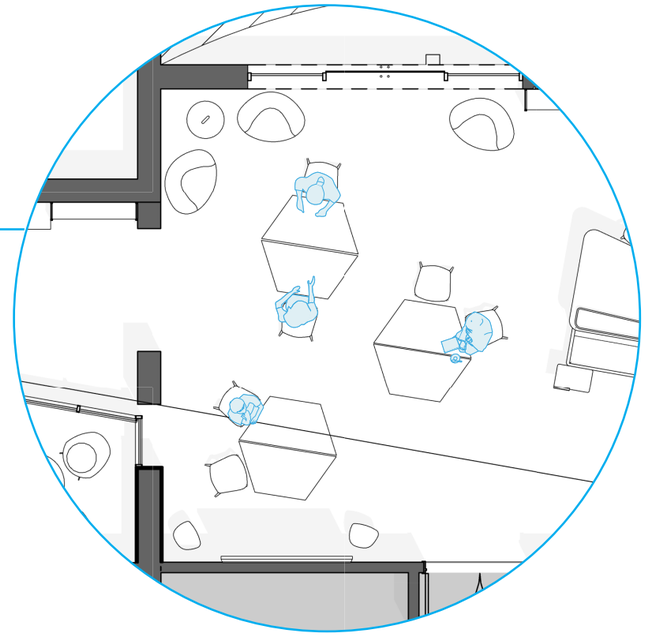
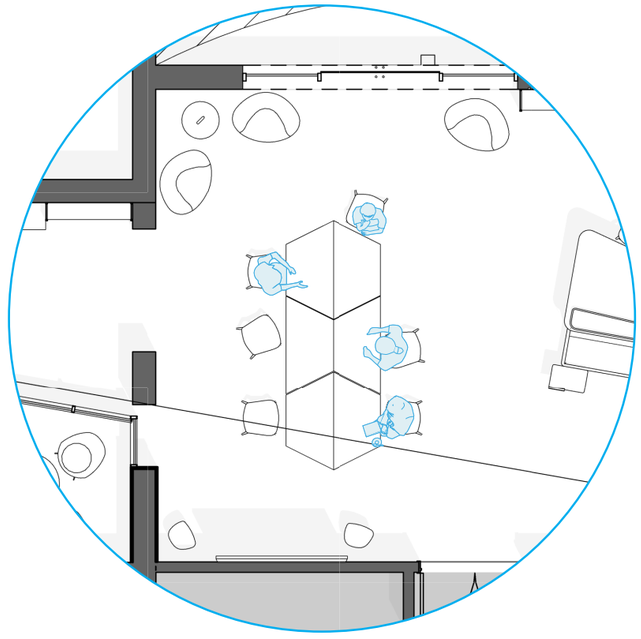
Flexible Collaboration Options



presentation layout



small group layout



large table layout

Description:
These plans indicate how the flexible collaboration area can be arranged.

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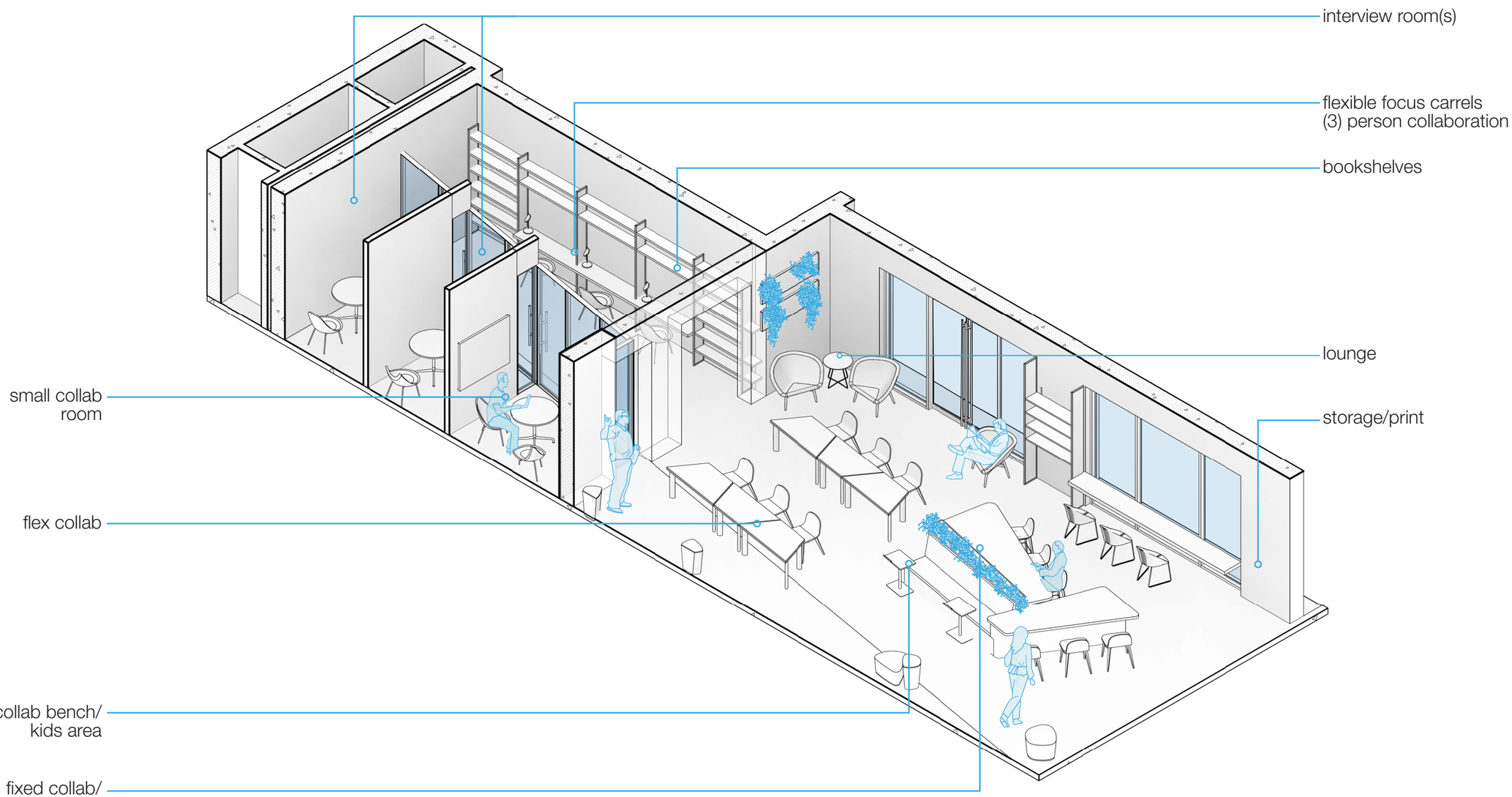
Axon View 1



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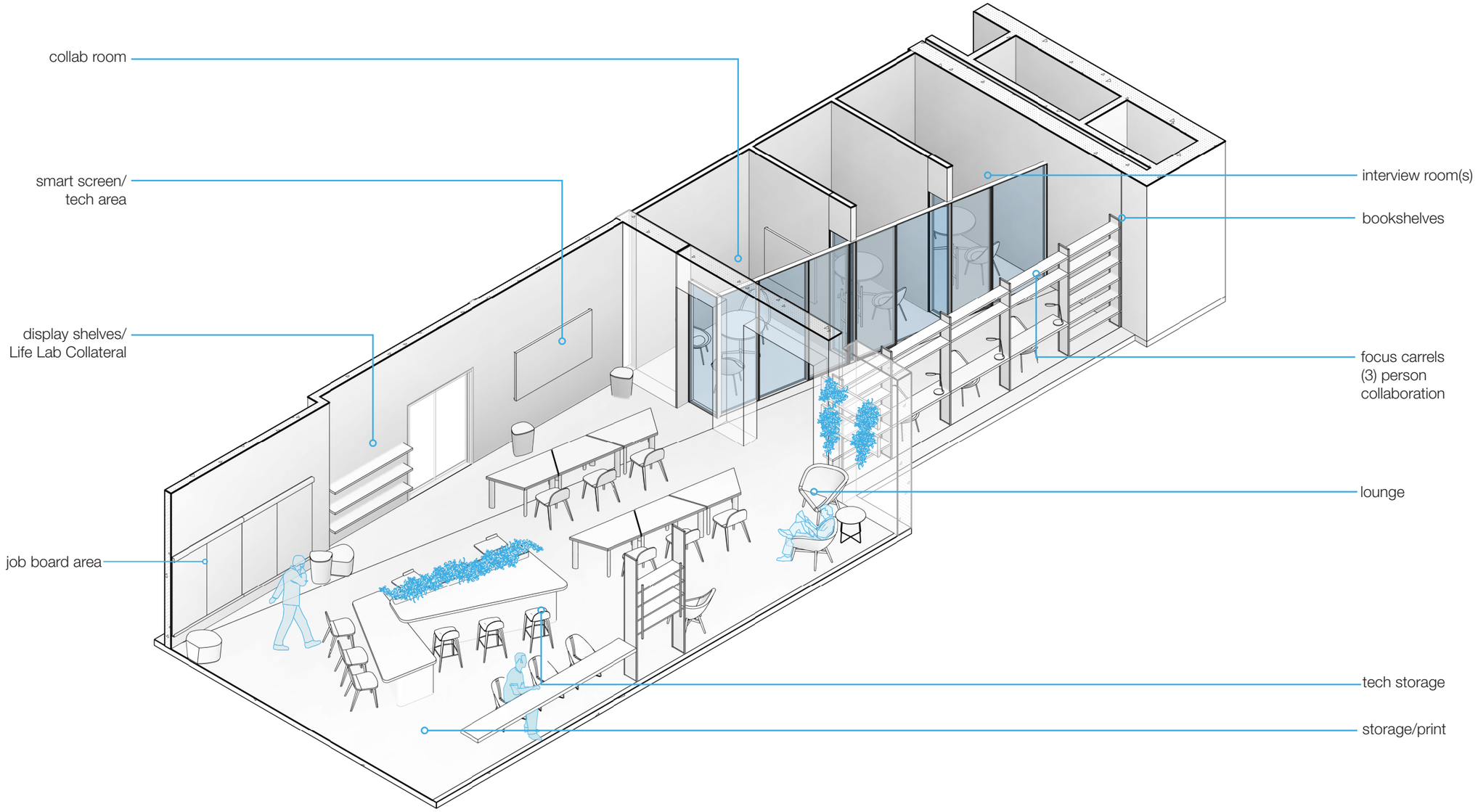
Axon View 2



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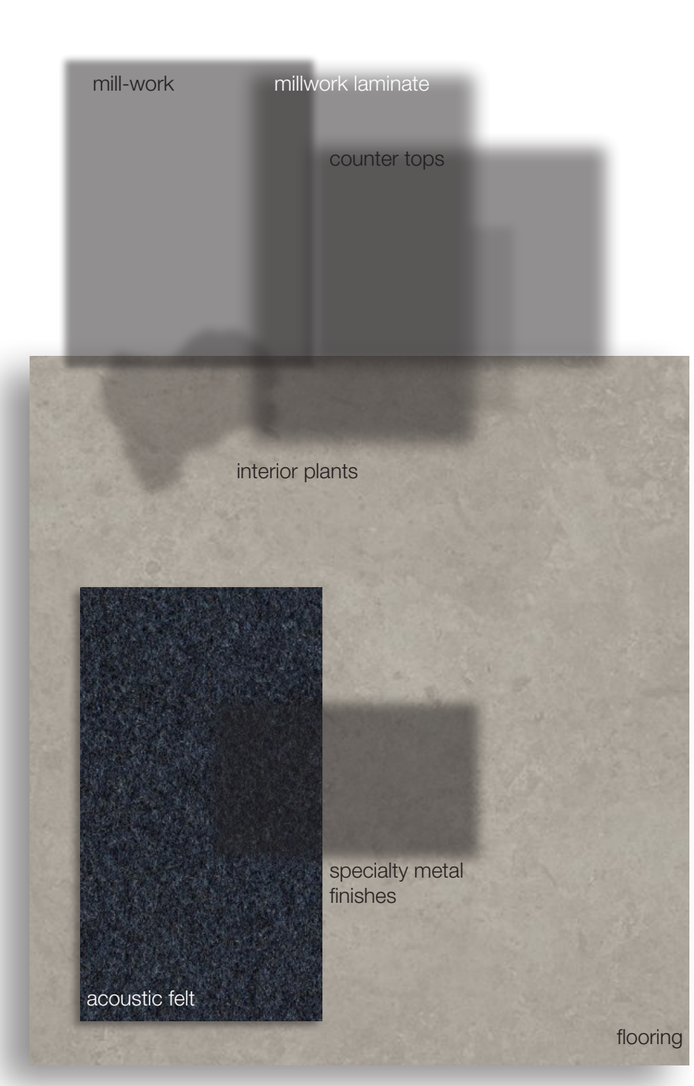
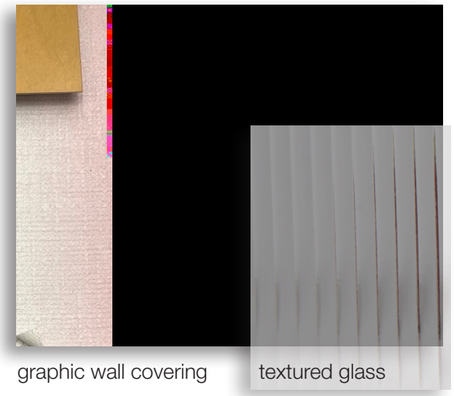
Finish Palette





Finish Concept & Application Images

Description:
The concept of “journey” also is implemented with elements of the finish palette. Wall applications of a gradient are a major focal point of the interiors, guiding users through the space. The gradient provides a sense of movement forward in their journey,

The architectural finishes are sleek, neutral, and timeless. As space needs change over time, these finishes can easily adapt to new uses. The pops of bright color play off of the existing bright colors in the main library. Since the user group of this space is primarily adults, the colors and patterns are more elevated and slightly more muted to give the space a comparatively mature palette.

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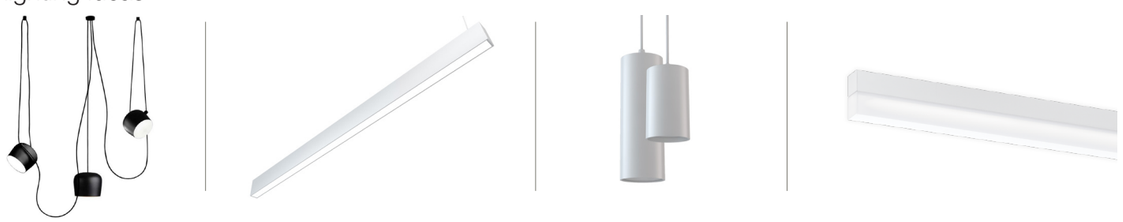
Presentation Area Rendering Materials

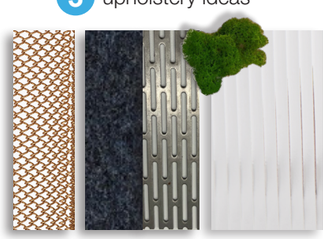
lighting ideas



1 concrete look LVT as baseline floor added

2 white oak built-ins, midnight matte laminate, quartz counter top, hardware

3 upholstery ideas



4 specialty finish ideas: bronze coil, acoustic wall covering, patterned metal, texture glass, moss

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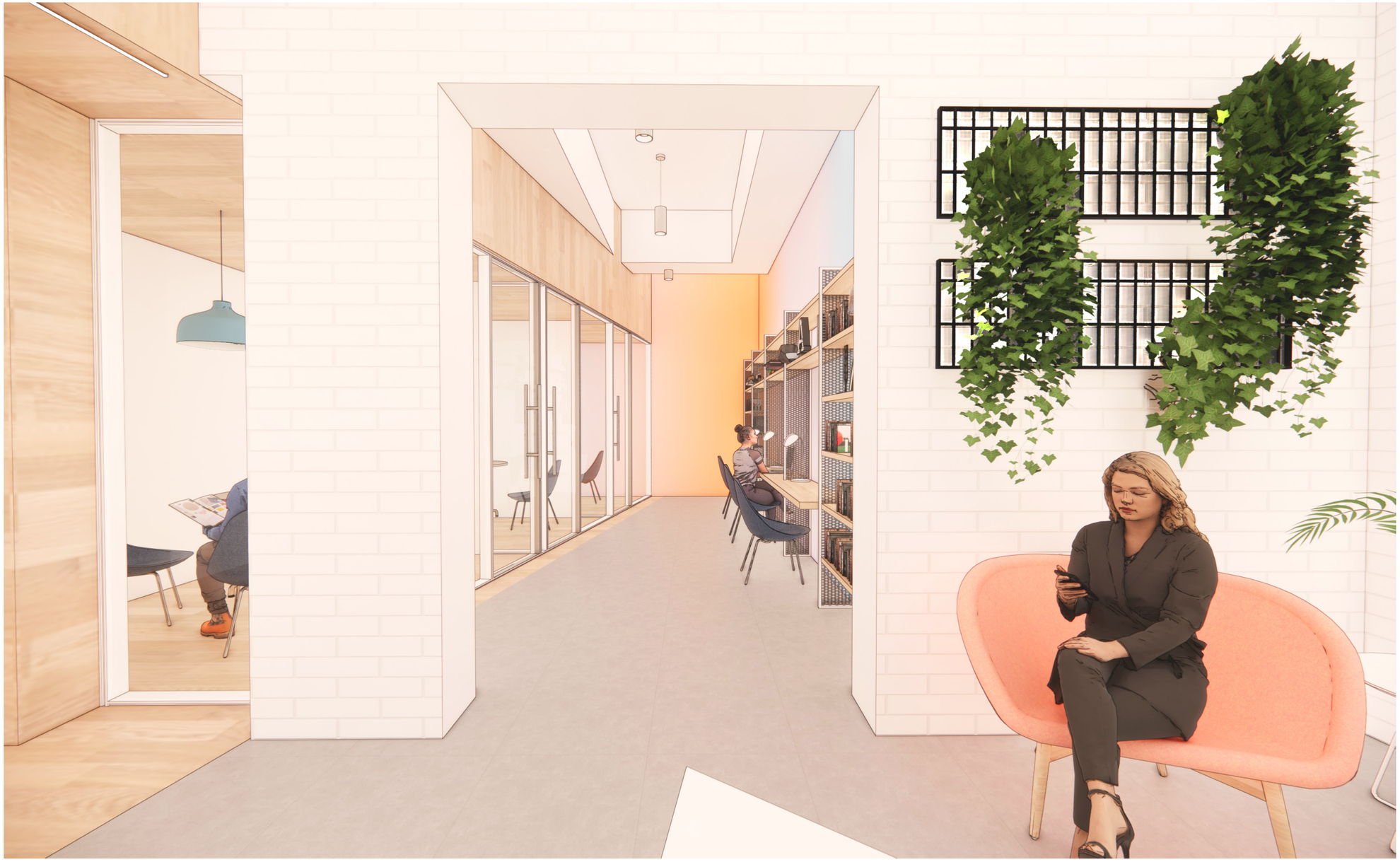
Interview Room Area Rendering



Description:
The final rendering shows the back area which contains the interview rooms along with focus study nooks. Surrounding the nooks, are industrial style bookshelves containing collateral relevant to the work and activities being completed in the Life Lab.

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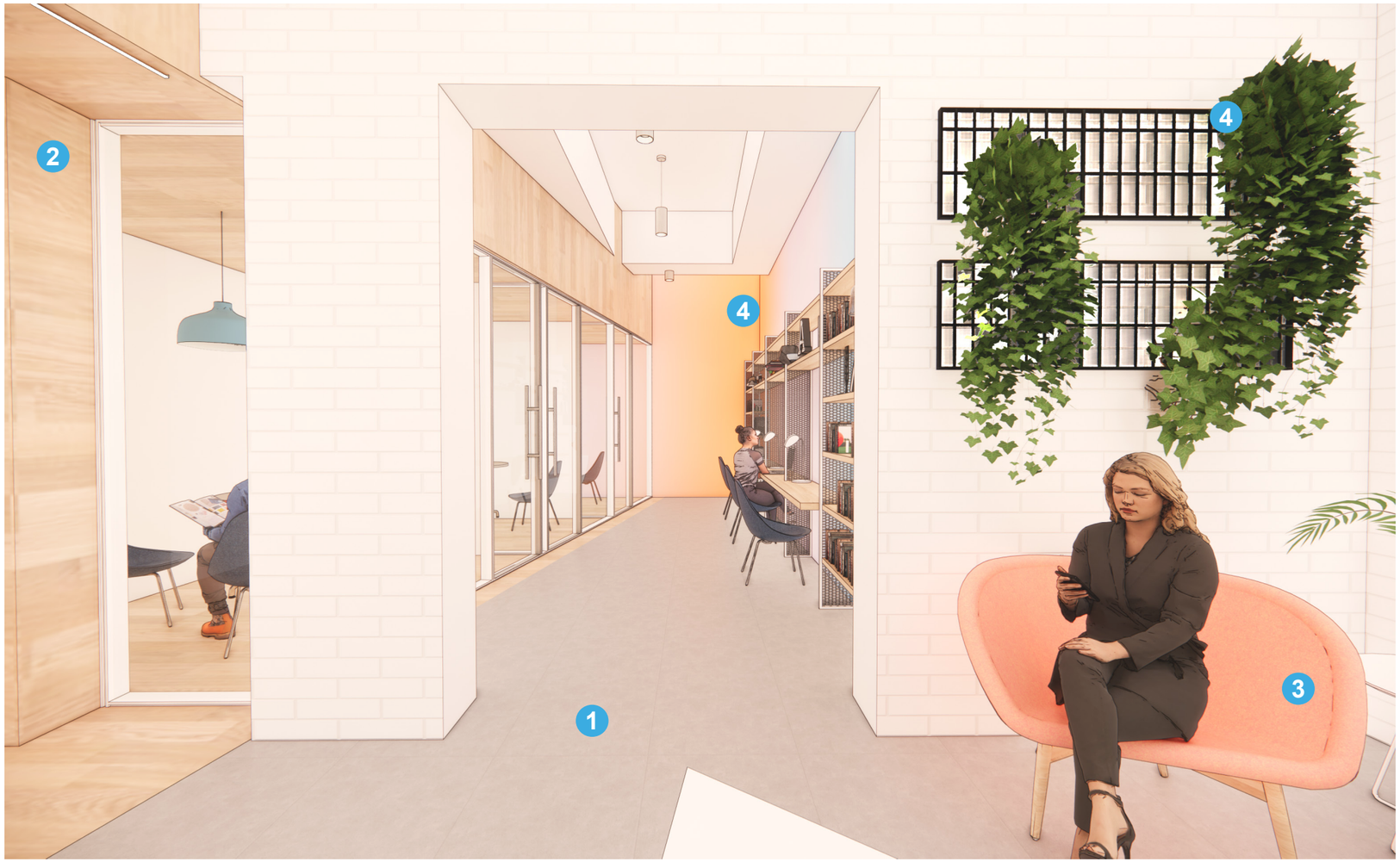
Final Concept Design

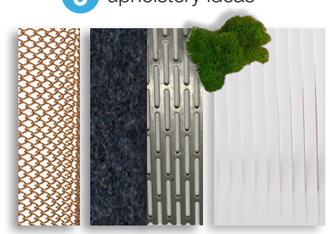
Interview Room Area Rendering Materials



1 concrete look LVT as baseline floor added

2 white oak built-ins, midnight matte laminate, quartz counter top, hardware

3 upholstery ideas



4 specialty finish ideas: bronze coil, acoustic wall covering, patterned metal, texture glass, moss

lighting ideas

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Community Design Works
CDBG funded through Prince George's County DHCD

NDC Volunteers: Simi Marinho, Alejandro Finol, Amthul Ibramsha, Cheryl Dixon, Feyi Quadri, Kim Gabosch, Lindsay Nier

NDC Staff: Sophie Morley, Angelica Arias

Prince George's County Memorial Library System

Gensler

The Commons Beltsville Branch Library

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