
I. INTRODUCTION

The Mary Lowell Center is a long awaited and worked-for opportunity for the participating agencies and for the City of Seward. The National Park Service (NPS) and US Forest Service (USFS) will soon have a new, well-functioning facility from which to oversee administrative operations of the Kenai Fjord National Park and the Chugach National Forest. The Mary Lowell Center will also facilitate welcoming, orienting and educating visitors to the Kenai Peninsula and who will be able to access information about the natural resources, recreational opportunities, and landscapes of the region. The Center will provide an environment conducive to public education regarding the ecosystems of south-central Alaska in and around Resurrection Bay; and an environment that better supports the agencies as they manage the lands and their related resources.

The USFS and NPS are the key partnering agencies in the Mary Lowell Center, and are committed to using the Center to cooperatively provide the public with a full complement of services and programs. The Mary Lowell Center will bring together Federal, state and local government agencies under one roof where the public can find information about the south-central region of Alaska, and where professionals can convene for training and education.

The City of Seward has an opportunity to benefit from the Mary Lowell Center for the revitalization the Seward Waterfront District. The Center will concentrate currently dispersed federal jobs to the downtown area; encourage the development of additional visitor and tourist attractions; and provide a stimulus for private sector investment opportunities. The City will join the efforts of the agencies and participate in managing the Mary Lowell Center through promoting conferencing facilities for use by governmental, private or non-profit organizations. The City, partnering agencies and other interested parties are developing consensus on the management and operations of this portion of the facility.



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II. BUILDING, SITE AND ENGINEERING NARRATIVES

A. PROJECT OVERVIEW AND ARCHITECTURAL NARRATIVE

SITE

The previous phase of work (Concept Design) evaluated seven properties, plus multiple combinations of the seven properties, in terms of whether they fit the requirements for either the Mary Lowell Center or related off-street parking. In the final Concept Design Report, four parcel combinations were documented as Site Alternative #1-4.

After the completion of the Concept Design the alternatives were evaluated in an Environmental Assessment and land purchase was finalized. The parcels available for the Mary Lowell Center were those formerly known as:

1. Old Solly's Building at Fifth Avenue and Railway Avenue
2. Legend's Restaurant at Fifth Avenue and Washington Street
3. Don and Ruth Mai Residence on Fifth Avenue
4. Harbor Dinner Club on Fifth Avenue

Parcels #1 and #2 are separated by a public right-of-way, Washington Street. Parcels #3 and #4 are contiguous and can be jointly used. The Kenai Peninsula Borough and the City of Seward are considering vacating the portion of Washington Street between Fifth Avenue and the alley running north-south to the west of 5th Avenue. The benefit to the project of vacating this portion of Washington Street is the resulting contiguous series of parcels (#1, #2, and the portion of Washington in between), thereby creating an area of land that would allow development of a single structure. (See figure A-1, Relevant Properties and Figure A-2, Experiential Qualities.)

Subsequent to the land purchase, a value analysis was performed that identified a) a preferred concept which would require vacation of Washington Street and b) an alternative to be considered if the street vacation was not approved by local government. The first concept was for a single site with one building on it (See Figure A-3, Concept Alternative 2a); the second concept was for two sites with one building on each site (See Figure A-4, Concept Alternative 4). The "one site-one building" concept as compared to the "two sites-two buildings" concept, offers many advantages in terms of management efficiency; low cost shared space; benefits of adjacency to the "downtown" Fourth Avenue district; immediate visitor connection to other facilities in the downtown district; ease of identifying location and entry to the facility; visitor views to the surrounding landscape; direct relationship to the waterfront; co-location of administrative functions; vehicular and pedestrian interaction promoting public health and safety; and retainage of overstory trees on the Fifth Avenue site.

In the Schematic Design, the "one site-one building" site concept was developed into building plans and building system descriptions. Parcels #1 and #2, when combined with the partially vacated Washington Street, create a single site for the Mary Lowell Center. Parcels #3 and #4 create a separate single site for off-street agency parking, a small boiler building, and a storm water treatment swale.

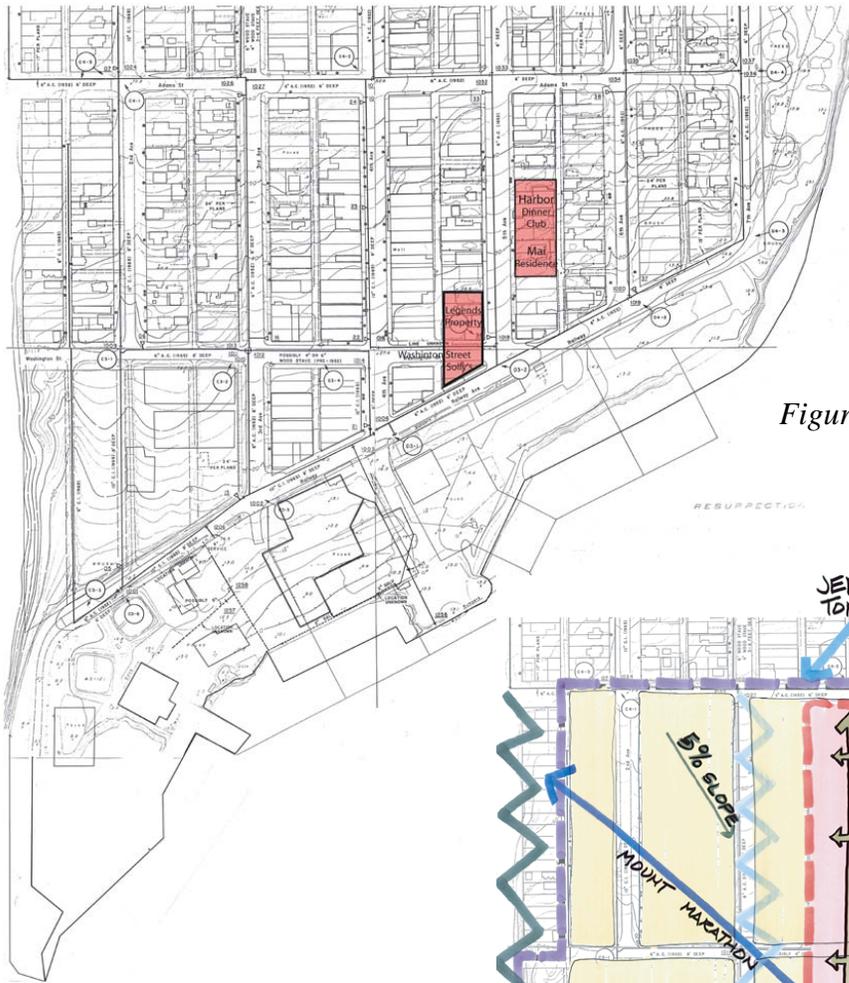


Figure A-1: Relevant Properties, Seward

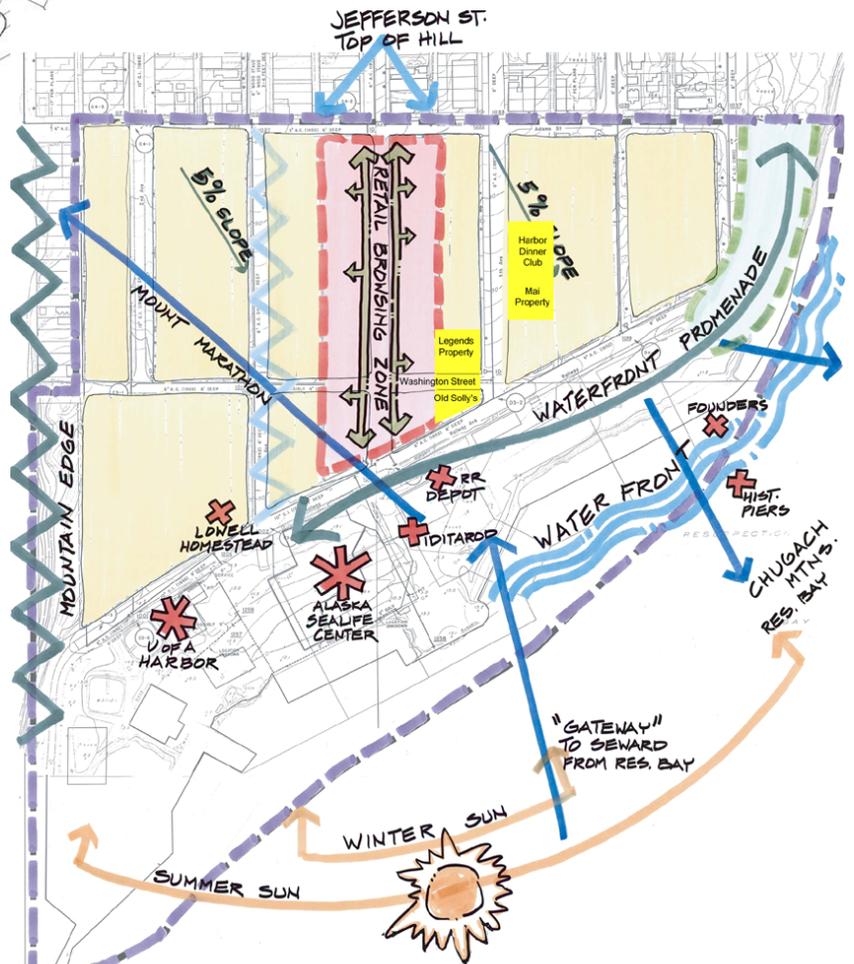


Figure A-2: Experiential Qualities, Waterfront District

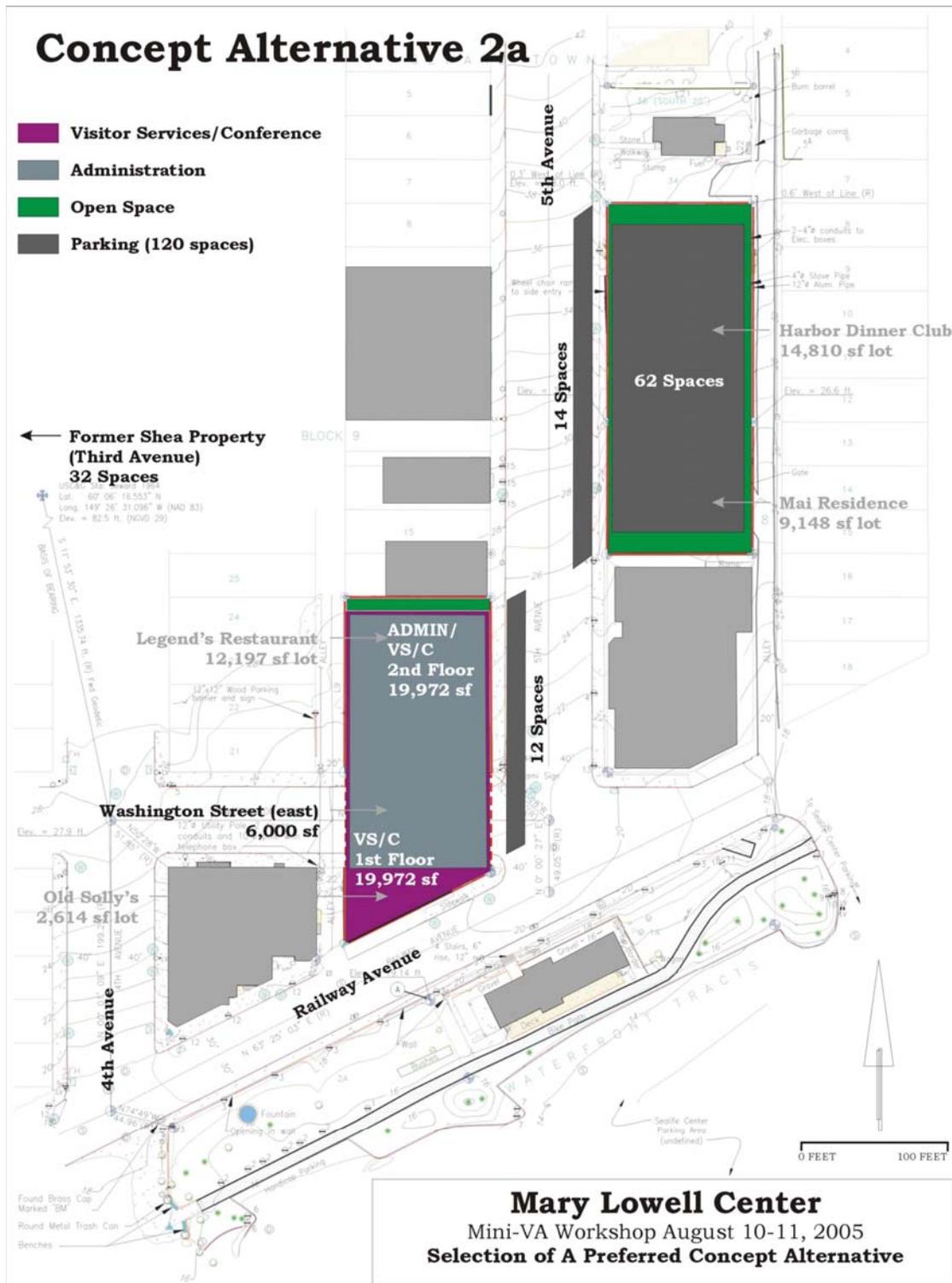


Figure A-3: Concept Alternative 2A

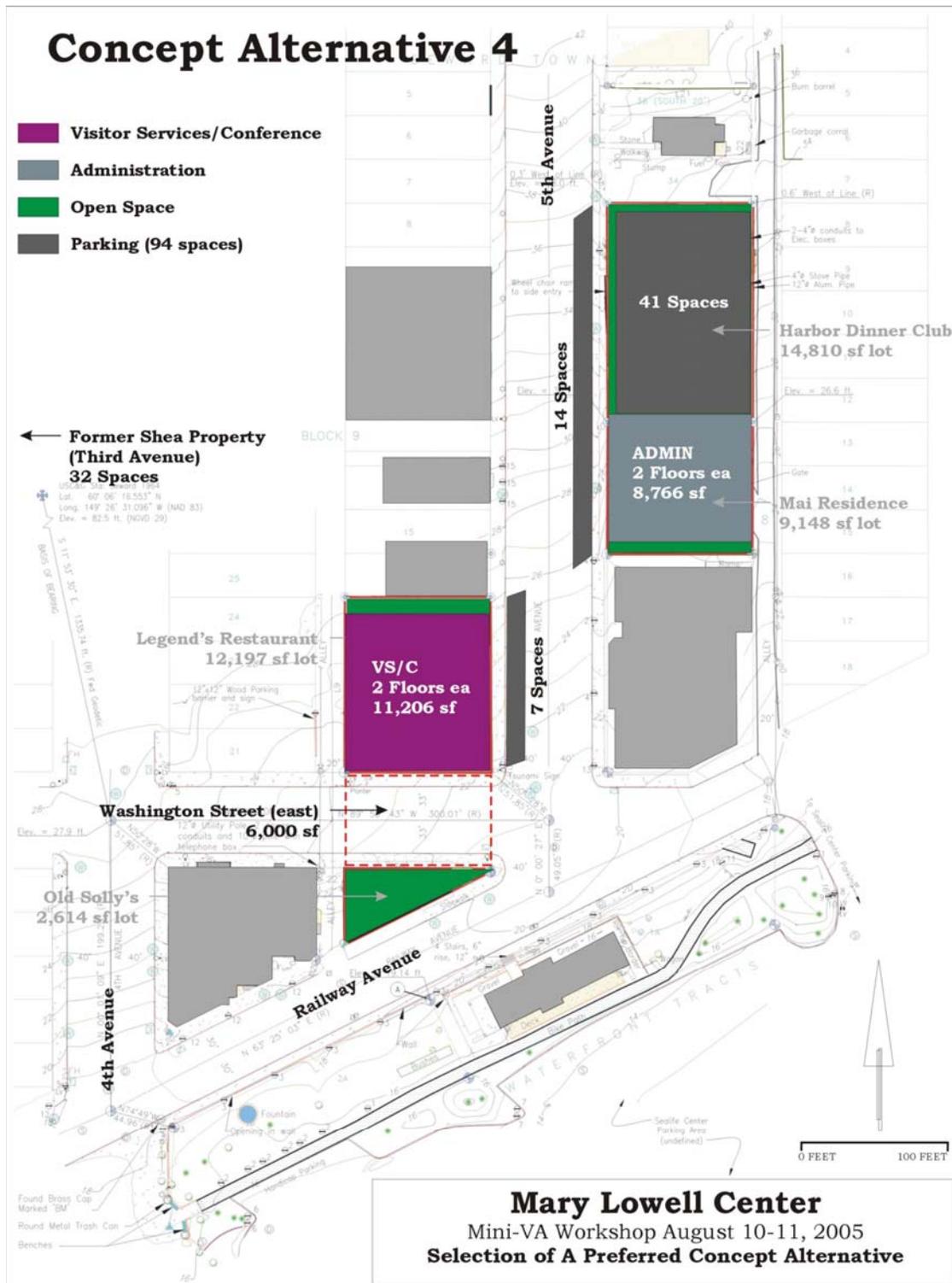


Figure A-4: Concept Alternative 4



FACILITY PROGRAM (See also Appendix A, Facility Program)

NPS, USFS and the City of Seward developed an initial Facility Program based on the expected uses of the Seward Multi-Agency Center. Building uses for agency administration include reception, enclosed and open plan work areas, meeting rooms, and various storage and support spaces. Uses for visitor services include orientation information, trip planning, interpretive exhibits and film, and gift shop. Conferencing uses vary in size and scale, from large catered dinner events to small “break out” meetings. A multi-purpose classroom is included in support of public, administrative and visitor service uses.

The partnering and participating agencies, along with other organizations or companies using the Mary Lowell Center as a venue, are each targeting services to particular audiences. For Administration Services, the customers are expected to be cooperating agencies and organizations, as well as miners, fuel wood cutters, and special use permit holders. Visitor Services’ user groups will likely include package tour groups, individual tourists, local residents, and professional associations. For Educational Services, target customers will be local school groups, public programs users (adults, children, and families), researchers, and government employees participating in training or seminars.

The Facility Program includes an allocation of area for each space plus for common spaces such as horizontal circulation, vertical circulation, building system spaces and exterior walls. The building area based on the Facility Program of individual rooms and spaces grouped by six main building users is:

NPS Administration:	3,475 square feet
USFS Administration:	3,816 square feet
Law Enforcement:	1,784 square feet
Agency Shared Spaces:	3,748 square feet
Visitor Services:	11,805 square feet
Conferencing:	6,578 square feet

Building systems, circulation and exterior walls
8,048 square feet

NPS Initial Facility Program total gross area (all rooms, shared spaces, common spaces and exterior building walls)

39,254 square feet

One of the primary work goals of the Schematic Design phase is to create building plans that meet the Facility Program requirements for individual rooms, spaces and total gross area. The building area based on the building plans and grouped by six main building users is:

NPS Administration:	3,076 square feet
USFS Administration:	3,171 square feet
Law Enforcement:	1,662 square feet
Agency Shared Spaces:	3,969 square feet



Visitor Services: 7,648 square feet
Conferencing: 5,889 square feet

Building systems, circulation and exterior walls
16,023 square feet

SD Building Plans total gross area (all rooms, shared spaces, common spaces and exterior building walls)
41,438 square feet

An analysis of the difference between Facility Program area and Building Plan area identifies five significant changes that have been made during the SD phase of work. These changes have been in consultation with key members of the NPS, USFS and the City of Seward team representatives. The significant differences in program area are:

1. Area Reductions: NPS and USFS reevaluated projected permanent and seasonal staffing needs and decided to delete or scale down the number of enclosed offices and workstations.
2. Area Reductions: The conferencing meeting rooms decreased in area because the design criteria of conferencing - to seat at tables 300 conference attendees in one large space - was determined through plan sketches to require less space than was initially programmed in the NPS Facility Program.
3. Area Reductions: The visitor services auditorium was deleted because the film could be shown in any one of the conference meeting rooms plus the multi-purpose room if the identical A/V equipment was specified in each space. The decision to delete the auditorium space was further supported by additional findings: a) moveable and storable risers for chair seating could be used in lieu of fixed rake seating; b) the business plan for conferencing primarily plans to attract large conferences in fall-through-spring session, thus allowing the visitor film to show in one of the meeting rooms during the summer when visitor attendance is highest.
4. Area Increases: The initial Facility Program used 10% of program area to calculate area required by circulation. The estimate of circulation did not account for two project specific constraints: a) the size and shape of the preferred site requires a multi-floor building; b) the goal of separating public from agency spaces requires two side-by-side independent building zones. Multiple floors create duplication of horizontal circulation, vertical circulation, and some amenities (e.g. rest rooms and other common spaces); and the functional constraint create a duplication of some elements that were initially planned to be shared between agency and public use.
5. Area Increases: The initial Facility Program used 5% of program area to estimate area required by walls. The rule-of-thumb ratio appears not to have estimated a very low wall area, by not accounting for the high number of rooms and the complex relationship between room adjacencies in the Mary Lowell Center.

DESIGN

Schematic Design is the initial design phase where floor plans, sections, elevations and building systems are created. Schematic Design builds on the site alternative analysis, space planning and functional diagrams done in Concept Design.

Concept Design relied heavily on the *Seward Waterfront Study* which identified potential sites for the Center, considered how the investment of a significant public building could benefit downtown Seward and its waterfront, and recommended city planning development strategies that would strengthen the image and identity of Seward.

Concept Design also relied heavily on the client-authored *Facility Program* and its descriptions of the purpose of the Center and its identification of a multitude of goals that the design must achieve.

Mary Lowell Center Schematic Design, Concept Design and the *Seward Waterfront Study* in turn, utilized the planning and design efforts for a Multi-Agency Center in the 1990s.

In each of these efforts public participation was sought. All of the design sessions were open to public drop-in attendance; each effort included public meetings and presentations to community groups and City Council. Planning and design is a process of making decisions, testing or evaluating those decisions, and then altering the original decision in light of new information and input. Planning and design is an iterative process that eventually moves from big ideas to resolved details. Comments, suggestions, requests and requirements – whether from interested citizens, local governmental or building neighbors or building users – have been included into the base of information upon which planning and design decisions are made.

The fundamental decisions that shape the current design for the Mary Lowell Center are described below.

City and Site Design

360-Degree Building – Within the Seward Waterfront area, the site location, size and orientation gives added prominence and visibility to the Mary Lowell Center such that each façade of the building must be equally well-designed to face the community and current or future neighboring buildings. See Figure A-5.

- The portion of the Mary Lowell Center terminating Washington Street has at the street level a 40-foot long wall for public art installation, a 16-foot window wall with views into trip planning, and a 20-foot entry wall that during the summer months retracts into the Mary Lowell Center creating open-ended passage way with views of the Chugach Mountains beyond. The inner passage wall has a 32-foot photo mural and text giving the chronology of the City of Seward. At the second level the conference rooms have large windows that look west down Washington Street and the mountain beyond.
- The façade fronting Railway Avenue is main public face to the historical Depot and waterfront park and the views of Resurrection Bay. The inner

passage from Washington Street connects to a corner plaza at the intersection of Railway Avenue and Fifth Avenue. The gift store faces onto the corner plaza. Pushed out toward Railway Avenue is the single story multi-purpose room with a roof terrace which has a view arcing from the Chugach Mountains to Mount Marathon.

- The façade fronting Fifth Avenue has as the primarily feature windows through which pedestrians can see agency staff working year round. During the winter, lights from the office space will glow conveying a sense that the building and the downtown area are full of people.
- The north face of the building is setback from the property line to allow for a 12-foot pedestrian passageway. The pedestrian setback creates a mid-block cut through from Fifth Avenue to the alley. It is hoped that the City can create a complementing pedestrian link from the alley to Fourth Avenue to facilitate people walking east-west without having to walk full block lengths in the north-south direction.

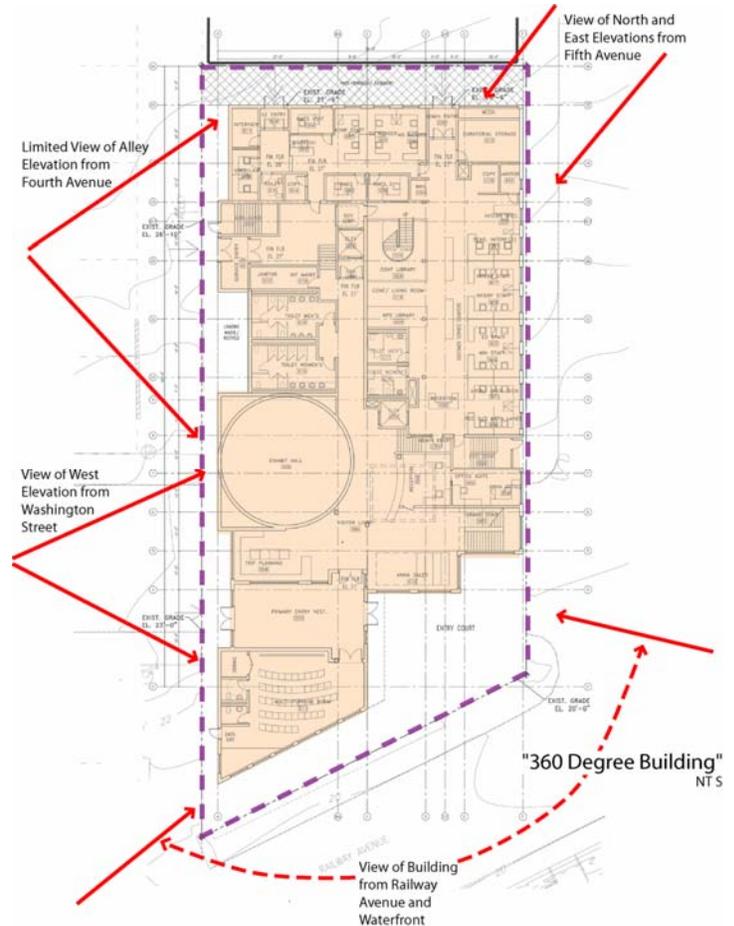


Figure A-5: 360 Degree Building

Building Scale and Character – The intent of the of the design for the Mary Lowell Center is to maintain the historic scale and character of downtown Seward. See Figure A-6.

- The existing building scale in Seward is presently a combination of one, two, and three-story, predominantly wood structures that provide a consistent image of a small town downtown. The Mary Lowell Center is made of building masses that are one-story (multi-purpose room), two-story (the exhibit hall and conferencing rooms), and three-story (agency offices); the exterior façade is combinations of panel, plank, shingle and board siding.

- The existing downtown buildings, each different than the next, contribute to the character and charm of Seward. The buildings are not “slick” – they have differences, blemishes, need some paint, are interesting and show their history – it’s a one hundred year old American small town downtown. The Mary Lowell Center intends to promote quality design while demonstrating diversity of design in its parts to keep celebrating Seward’s character.
- The Mary Lowell Center will provide many opportunities for public art on its exterior and interior spaces. The art will further connect the building to the people and lands of the Kenai Peninsula.



Figure A-6: Rendering

Public Venue – Pushed out toward Railway Avenue is the multi-purpose room, designed to be used either independently, or in conjunction with visitor and conference programs. The multi-purpose room can operate during hours that the rest of the Mary Lowell Center is closed and can host public and private community meetings. The room is zoned for separate access, heating and ventilation so as to minimize the operational costs for off-hours use of the Mary Lowell Center.

Pedestrian Access – The siting of a multi-story building on this site allows a portion of the site area to be given over to pedestrian walkways, pass-throughs and an entry plaza. Just as the building can be viewed from a 360 degree vantage, it can also be accessed by foot from all sides. See Figure A-7.

- The entry plaza faces both Fifth Avenue and Railway Avenue, providing a civic space with views of the Bay. From the west, visitors can approach via Washington Street, and during the summer pass through the open entry court. The alley also provides service access and garbage/recycle pick up, but a 5-foot pedestrian path runs along the alley for ease of movement north to south.
- At the North side of the building, a pedestrian pass-through provides a shortened block and allows public movement from the east to west. A staff entry and dedicated law enforcement entry allow for efficient movement of staff from the parking lot across Fifth Avenue. Locating these entries on the north easement will also limit confusion on the part of visitors who are looking for a Fifth Avenue entrance. They will be directed to the south entry, where all functions of the building can be accessed.

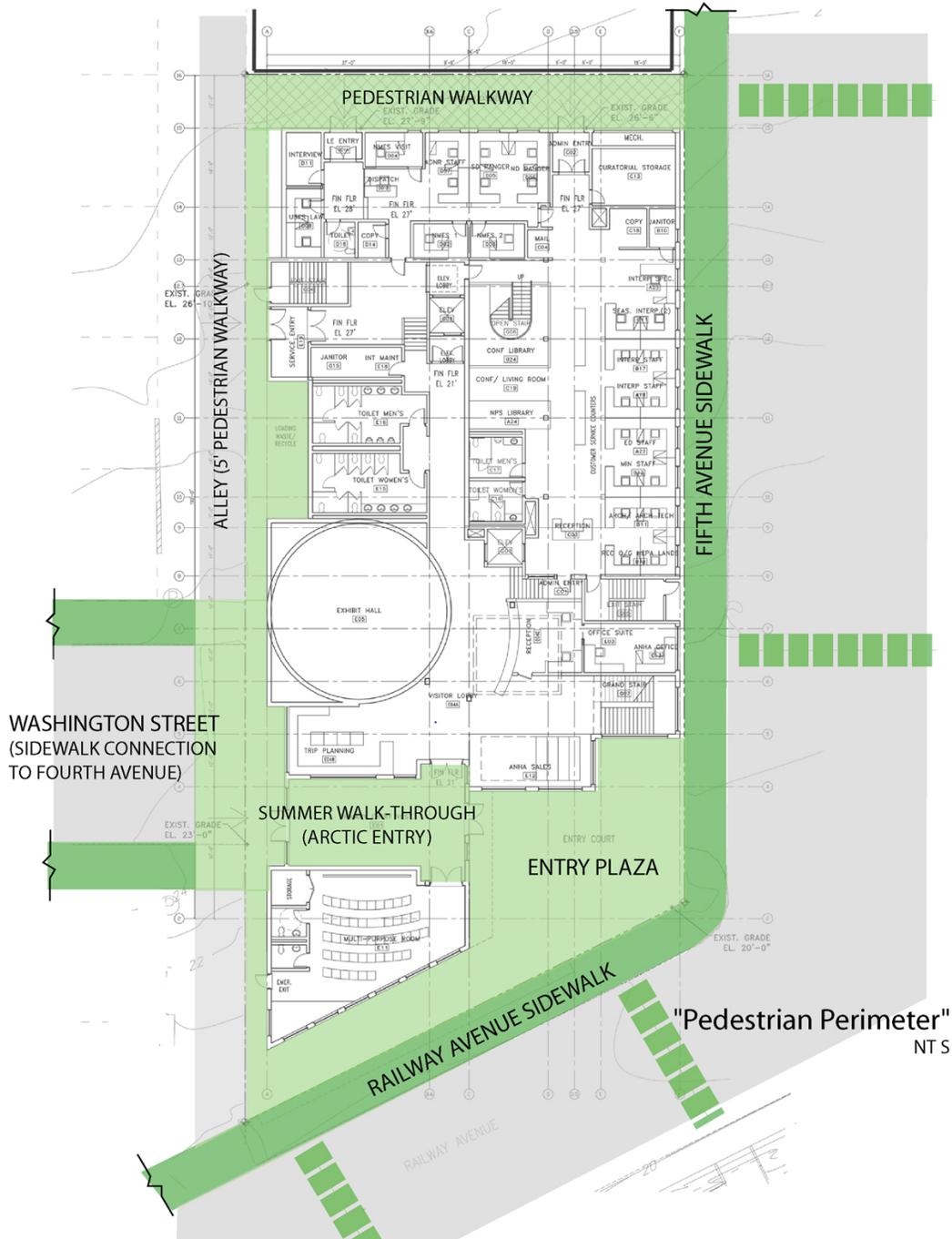


Figure A-7: Pedestrian Perimeter



Building Design

“One Stop Shopping” – The public enters the building at the main lobby from where they can immediately access the information desk, trip planning, agency help desk, exhibit hall, gift store and toilets; or, the stair or elevator to the film and conference meeting rooms on the second floor.

Design Outcomes:

- The lobby is adjacent to trip planning, exhibit hall, gift store, public toilets, and stair/elevator circulation to the film and conference meeting rooms on the second floor. The lobby has a line-of-sight to the multi-purpose room.
- The focus of the lobby is a main desk area that is a large enough to allow front desk staff to greet visitors. It is adjacent to staff work spaces so that the number of staff at the front desk area can increase or decrease as visitation varies.
- The lobby requires wayfinding signage to identify significant visitor spaces, and to indicate which portion of the front desk area is for general information and which portion is for agency contact. The agency contact area can be staffed, or can direct visitors to a telephone that assists the public in contacting a specific agency staff member.

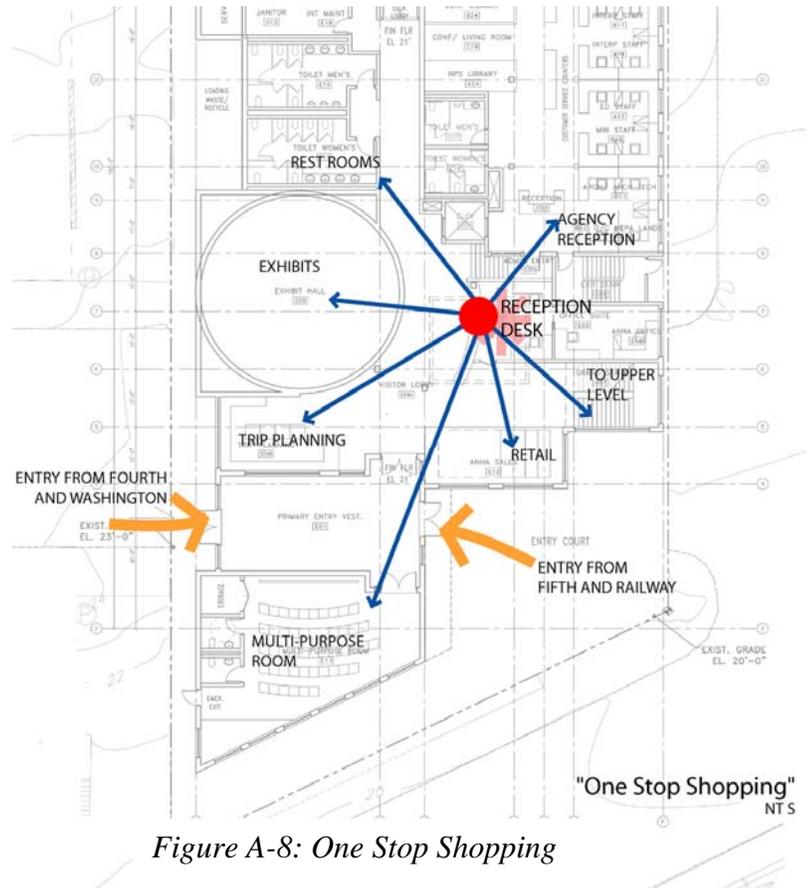


Figure A-8: One Stop Shopping

Interlocking “L’s” – Program spaces for the public and program spaces for the agencies share the same exterior walls of the building; however, the two types of spaces are internally separated to better provide for unique needs of each group (i.e. operating hours, security, information technology systems, maintenance).

Design Outcomes:

- Both public and agency spaces have needs for convenient and direct access between the outside and the inside. The public access is from Washington Street or Railway-Fifth Avenue corner. The agency access is from the

pedestrian pass-through on the north side of the building. The law enforcement component of the agencies has a dedicated entry at the northwest corner of the building due to security requirements. The service entry which supports both public and agency spaces is off of the alley where public and agency space join to use common exit stairs and service elevator.

- The lobby main desk area has line-of-sight observation for stairs to a landing with an electronically controlled entry to the agency reception desk. The lobby elevator has a swipe card opposing door that allows for accessible access to the agency reception desk.
- Exception - The second floor public spaces (conferencing and film viewing) share two exit stairs and an elevator and a service elevator with agency office spaces. The exit stairs will use locked doors and swipe cards to control entry to agency floors. The lobby elevator uses a swipe card opposing door to allow for accessible access to the agency reception desk; the service elevator uses a swipe card access to the basement and office floors.

The following plan diagrams (Figures A-6, A-7 and A-8) illustrate the relationship between the agency uses and visitor uses on the first and second floors.

Multi-story Building – A multi-story building is required in order for the Facility Program (39,254 square feet) to fit the site (20,811 square feet); furthermore, a basement and a three-story agency space allow for an entry open space on the site.

Design Outcomes:

- The basement is used for public and agency support rooms, storage rooms and building system rooms. The basement is also used for law enforcement rooms that require special security or privacy; however, the law enforcement rooms must have a private connection to the law enforcement offices on the first level and be secured from other basement circulation.
- USFS and NPS have decided to organize their staff not by agency affiliation but by work affinities across both agencies for interdepartmental learning and communication. The public services staff is on Level 1 and closest to the public entry and reception, the administrative staff is on Level 2, and the “chiefs” responsible for line management tasks are on Level 3.
- The public space component of the program has relatively few rooms but have a high proportion of large-sized rooms that require high ceilings. The visitor-related spaces are located on Level 1, and the conference-related spaces are located on Level 2. The interpretive film can be shown in any of the conference meeting rooms or the multi-purpose room, depending on the expected visitation, conference schedule, and other management issues.

Figures A-9 and A-10 illustrate the sectional relationships between the building uses.

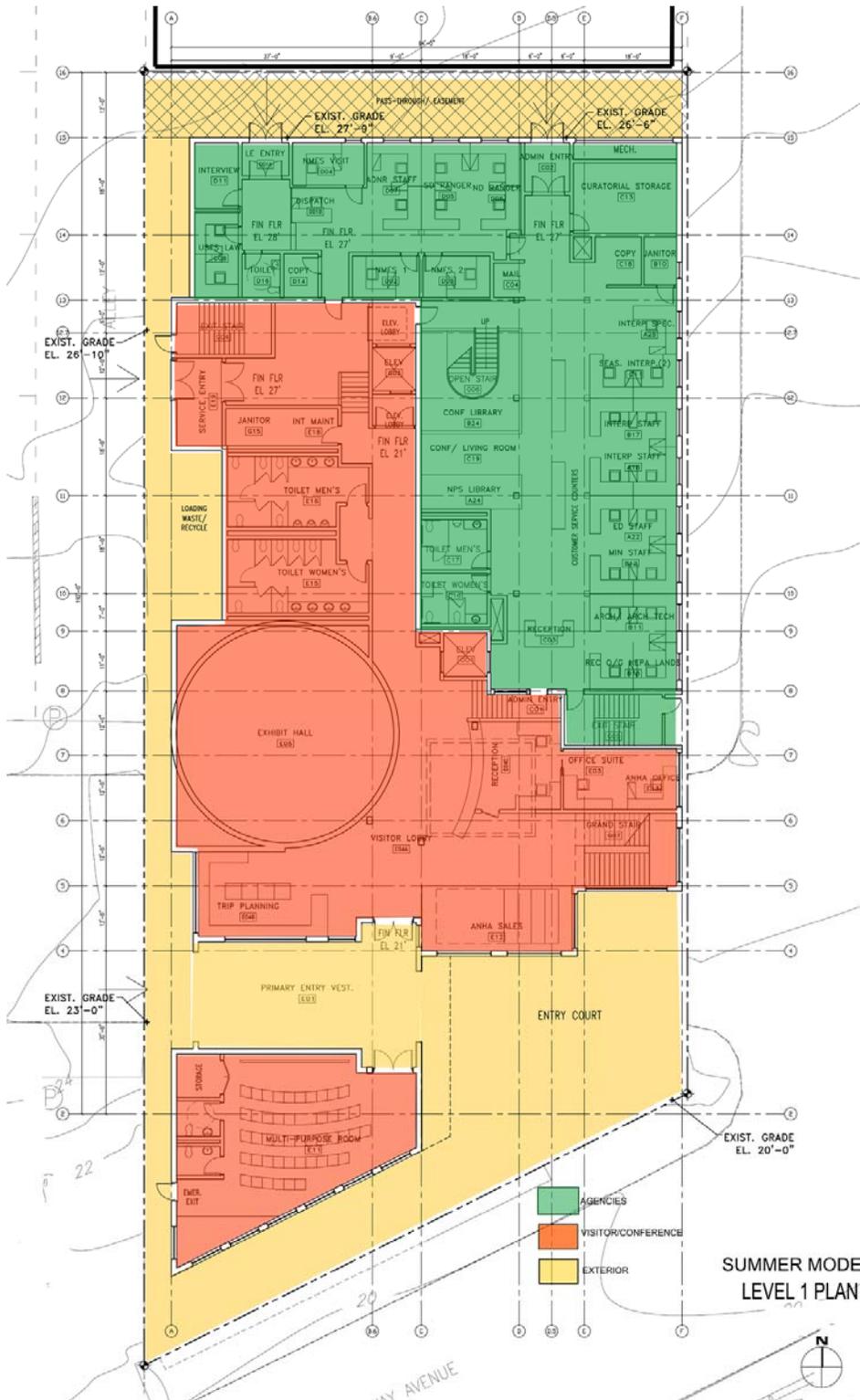


Figure A-9: First Floor Plan, Summer



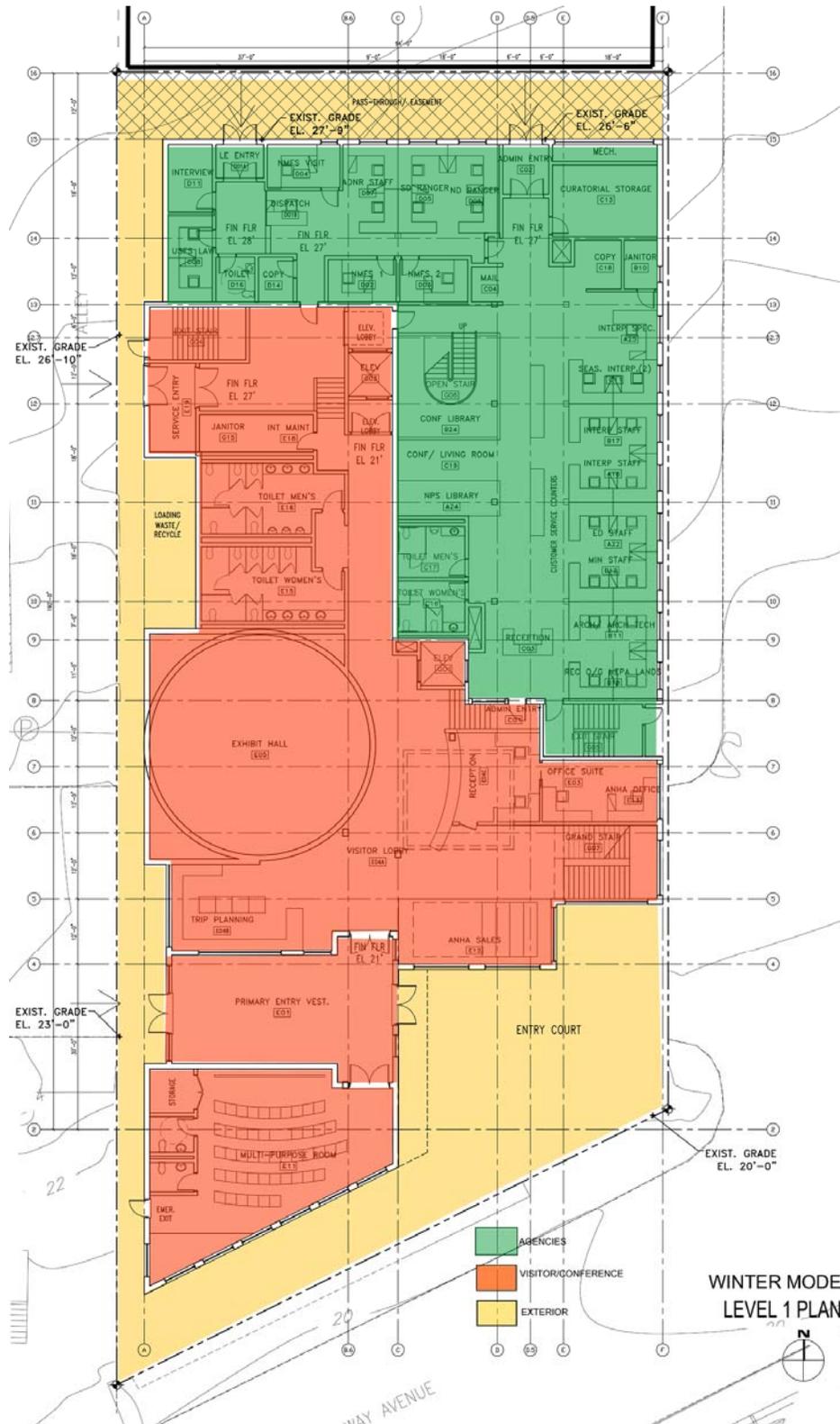


Figure A-10: First Floor Plan, Winter



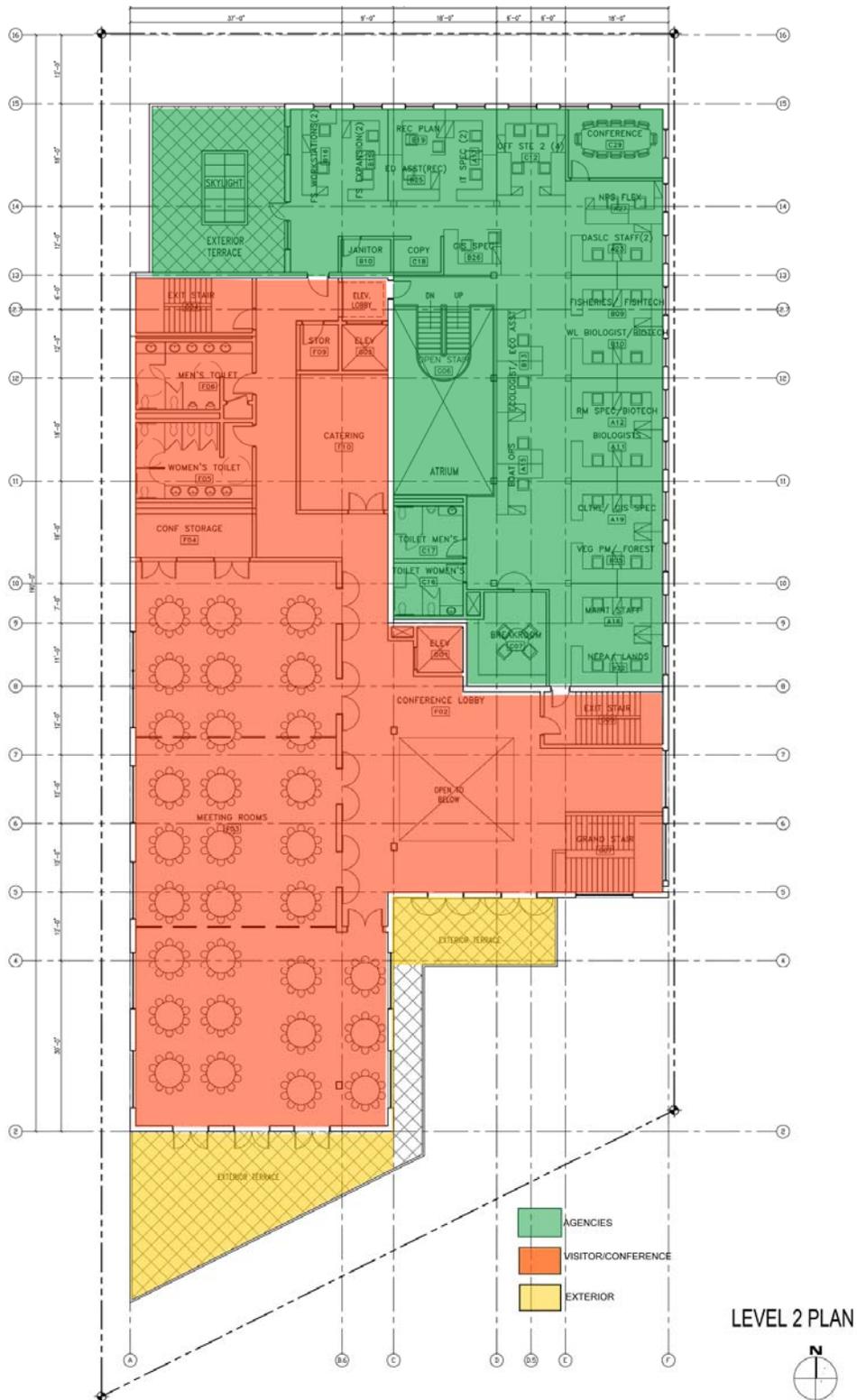


Figure A-11: Second Floor

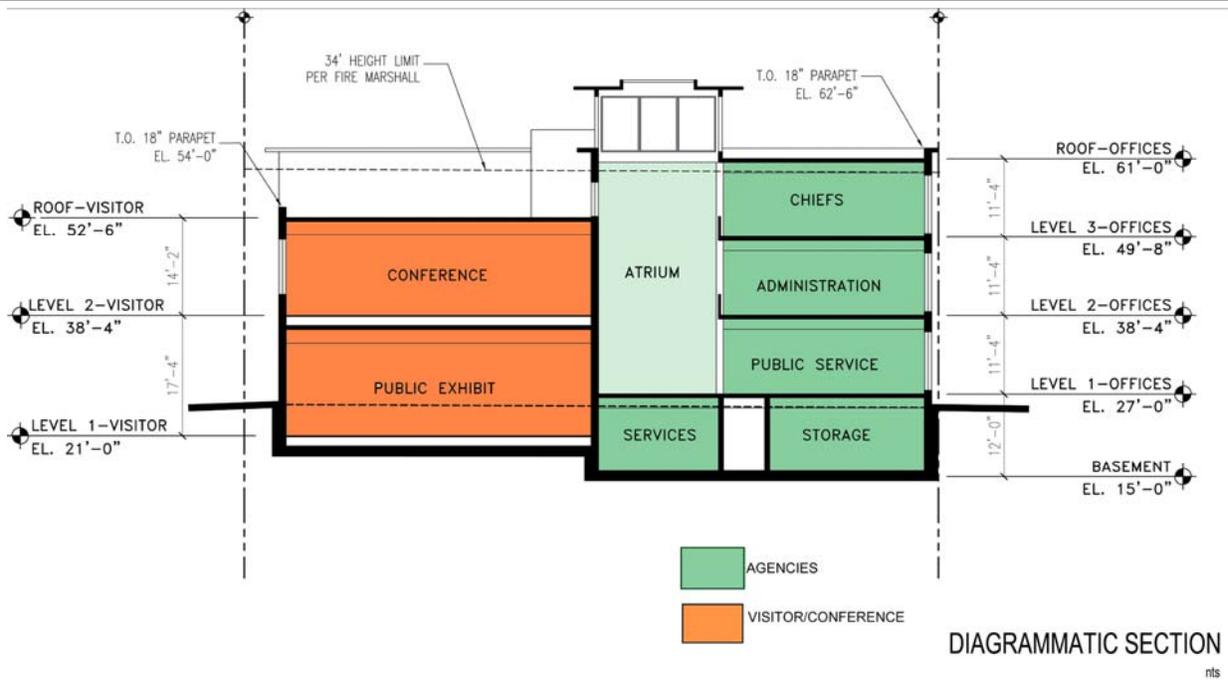


Figure A-12: Cross Section (East-West)

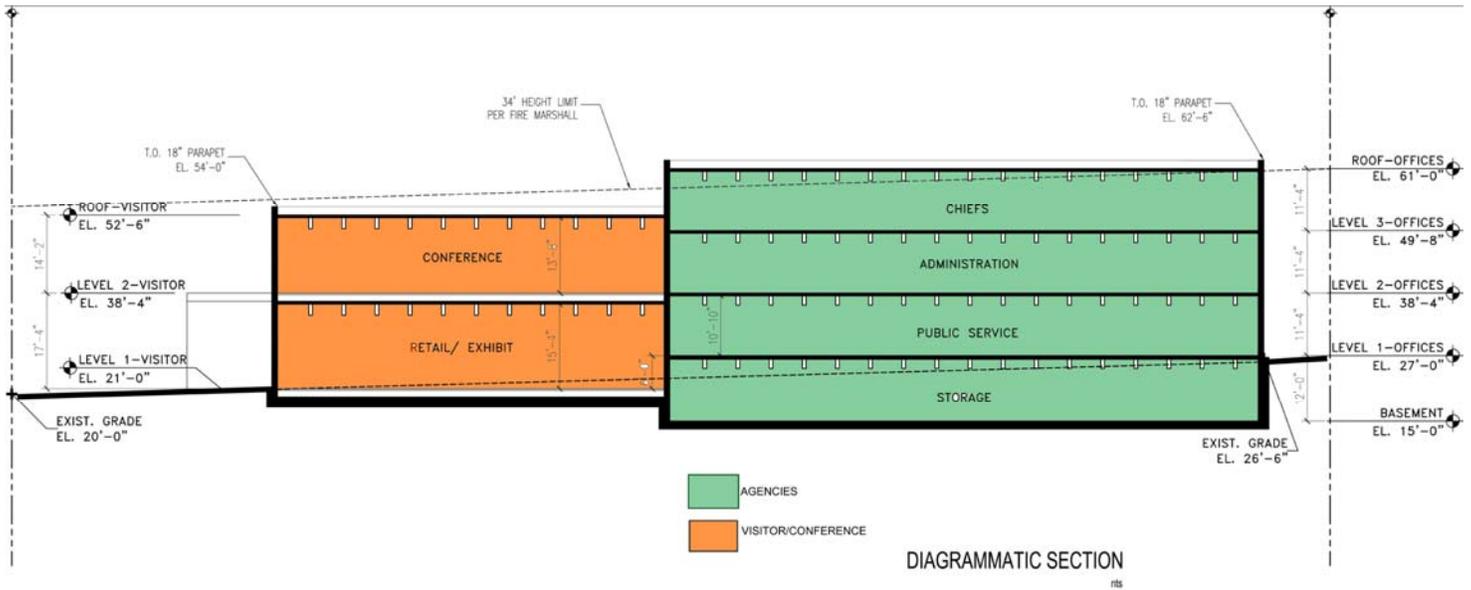


Figure A-13: Longitudinal Section (South-North)

Building Systems Design and Cost

A series of design decisions can be seen to relate to the project's initial costs, life cycle costs, and sustainable design goals. Some of these key decisions are listed here, and are detailed fully in the engineering narratives that follow.

No Chiller – Seward's climatic data revealed that the outside air temperature is sufficiently moderate over the summer to allow natural ventilation to provide cooling without air-conditioning or chilled water cooling.

- The dynamic yearly range of climatic conditions in Seward has implications for the building envelope as prime mediator between outside and inside environmental conditions.
- Perimeter operable windows and a central atrium will allow warm air to escape out of the building during summer months, pulling cooler outside air in through the open windows.
- Thermal mass will be added to the building to absorb the added heat on days when the outside air temperature is greater than 63 degrees. This heat will be expelled out of the building during the night.

Building Atrium – An atrium space is provided in the agency office area as well as in the public area in order to increase the distribution of daylight and natural ventilation, and to enhance the connections between the visitor and conference levels and between the three agency levels.

- The atrium will require design and building operations strategies to prohibit winter time cold air from flowing down from the clerestory skylights to the occupied spaces.
- In addition to its daylight and natural ventilation performance, the atrium space is also an opportunity for public art and environmental art using lighting, fabrics and hanging sculpture.

Sustainable Design - Choices in materials, water conservation, energy efficiency, building systems, and indoor air quality will be made to meet the USGBC's LEED™ 2.2 framework for green building along with standards, codes and regulations from local, state, federal jurisdiction and other professional organizations.

Renewable Energy – A renewable energy fuel source will be used to provide heating water for all building areas.

- Fish oil and wood chip have been identified as potential sources of fuel in the Seward area. The design provides for a wood chip fired boiler located on the Fifth Avenue parcels known as the Harbor Diner Club and the Mai Residence. The boiler room incorporates a wood chip storage area, and will require

periodic truck delivery of wood chips. The alternate fuel source to a renewable energy source is propane gas, which requires a storage tank.

Initial and Life Cycle Costs – The estimate of anticipated costs is a primary concern. Materials and building system have been selected to address both initial construction costs and life-cycle costs.

- Materials have been selected for long-term durability, and building systems have been selected for efficiency in performance and simplicity in operations. Estimating costs need to account for portions of the initial investment being “paid back” through consideration of life cycle performance and reduced ongoing operating, energy and maintenance costs.

Exhibit Design

Interpretive Story – The story begins with the formation of the region and the resulting glaciers, watersheds, forests and wildlife. It proceeds through the arrival of Alutiiq and then European people in Seward, and the resources that attracted them. The exhibit story culminates with a description of the agencies who now manage our public lands and resources. See Figure A-14. See also in this report Section III-A, Interpretive Approach.

- The environment of natural landscape segments include scenic diorama pieces of a glacier, nunatak, spruce forest, Lowell cabin, railroad trestle, archeological dig and fishing scene.
- The environment made or marked by human hand includes the encircling architectural wall and its graphic surface treatment, several freestanding graphic ‘kiosks,’ and cutaway graphic surfaces that expose the side of diorama pieces and ‘story surfaces’ with text, embedment, images and discovery elements.

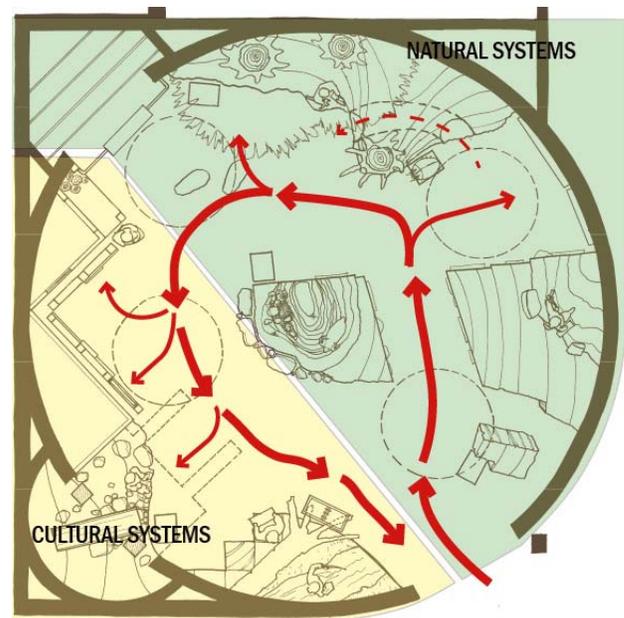


Exhibit Gallery Diagram
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Figure A-14: Exhibit Gallery Zoning

End of Narrative