

SMITHGROUP

THE NEW ERA OF WORK FOR PEOPLE & PLANET



INTRODUCTION



There is no mistaking that the world has changed. The way we live and work is evolving. On a global scale, we see the implications of our unchecked footprint on the planet. We are pushing the boundaries of what our planet can handle environmentally. These indicators bring a new appreciation of the impacts our workplaces have on the planet, but also on the individual's experience, health, and wellbeing within the new workplace ecosystem.

The global circumstances created by COVID-19 and the three-plus years of remote or hybrid work have brought a number of topics into clear focus:



HYBRID WORK

Hybrid work, in some form, is here to stay for most organizations.



SHIFTING DYNAMICS

The employee-employer relationship has changed; work-life balance reigns.



TECHNOLOGY

Technology enables most knowledge workers to effectively work remotely.



UNIQUE NEEDS

Individuals have unique needs and challenges that can be improved by flexibility.

Simultaneously, companies and institutions have been contemplating what type of organization they will be in the future. As such, important considerations have been percolating:

- While we know the **real estate market has forever changed**, only time will tell us how much. Leases signed prior to the pandemic will be incrementally coming due across the next decade.
- **Environmental, Social, Governance (ESG)** topics have shifted from being the focus of special interest groups to becoming mainstay priorities for the entire organization.
- Institutions and organizations have committed to **energy-related carbon reduction goals**.
- The challenges of **affordable housing** are exacerbated in many key markets. This has resulted in further adoption of remote work for some organizations.

A SHIFTING LANDSCAPE

With these changes still in flux, SmithGroup's Workplace leaders, strategists, designers, and engineers, alongside 16 national real estate executives, convened to contemplate the notion that workplace environments could be both people-focused – fostering creativity and innovation, supporting mental and physical wellbeing, attracting and retaining talent – and do good for the planet, all at the same time. In fact, what if the only way to achieve these goals was through a holistic People + Planet focused workplace strategy and design?

Through that lens, our most recent Client Advisory Board sought to discover the following:

What key attributes related to community, experiences, health and wellbeing, and linkages are common regardless of generation? How do we address them now and in the future?

How do these key considerations flex and evolve based on the real estate approach at hand: renovate existing space, lease renewal, or building a new facility/campus?



KEY ATTRIBUTES

What key attributes related to community, experiences, health and wellbeing, and linkages are common regardless of generation and how do we address them now and in the future?



COMMUNITY

Regardless of generation, certain key attributes related to community are important for individuals' wellbeing and overall satisfaction including relationships, a sense of belonging, affordability, and design justice. Here's how we can address them now and in the future:

RELATIONSHIPS

Foster Social Connections. Create opportunities for individuals to interact and form meaningful relationships within the community. This can be achieved through community events, shared spaces, clubs, and interest-based groups.

Encourage Collaboration. Promote collaboration and cooperative initiatives that bring people together, such as community gardens, co-working spaces, and volunteer activities. These activities foster a sense of camaraderie and strengthen social bonds.

AFFORDABILITY

Affordable Housing. Prioritize the development of affordable housing options to ensure that everyone can find suitable and affordable places to live within the community.

Mixed-Income Neighborhoods. Promote the creation of mixed-income neighborhoods that offer a range of housing options, enabling individuals from diverse socio-economic backgrounds to reside in the same community.

SENSE OF BELONGING

Inclusive Spaces. Design and develop inclusive spaces that welcome people from diverse backgrounds. This includes public areas, community centers, and gathering places that reflect the values and needs of the entire community.

Celebrate Diversity. Embrace and celebrate the cultural, ethnic, and generational diversity within the community. Organize multicultural events, festivals, and activities that allow people to share their traditions and learn from one another.

DESIGN JUSTICE

Participatory Design. Involve community members in the design and planning process of public spaces and community projects. Ensure their voices are heard and their needs and preferences are taken into account.

Equitable Distribution. Pay attention to the equitable distribution of resources, amenities, and infrastructure within the community. Address disparities and prioritize underserved areas to ensure fairness and accessibility for all residents.



EXPERIENCES

Certain key attributes related to experiences, including continued learning, workplace ecosystems, fluid schedules, and autonomy, are valued by individuals across generations. Addressing these attributes can contribute to a fulfilling and engaging work environment.

CONTINUED LEARNING

Learning Opportunities. Provide ongoing learning and development opportunities for employees of all generations. This can include workshops, seminars, online courses, mentorship programs, and access to educational resources.

Skill Enhancement. Support employees in acquiring new skills and adapting to changing technologies and industry trends. Encourage a culture of continuous learning and provide resources for upskilling and reskilling.

FLUID SCHEDULES

Flexible Work Arrangements. Offer flexible work options, such as remote work, flextime, compressed work weeks, or job-sharing. Allow employees to have control over their schedules to accommodate personal obligations and promote a healthy work-life balance.

Results-Oriented Approach. Emphasize outcomes and productivity rather than rigid adherence to traditional schedules. Focus on achieving goals and providing autonomy in how employees manage their time and tasks.



WORKPLACE ECOSYSTEM

Collaborative Spaces. Provide collaborative environments that foster teamwork, idea-sharing, and cross-generational collaboration. Design work spaces that facilitate communication and interaction among employees.

Diversity and Inclusion. Promote diversity and inclusivity within the workplace ecosystem, recognizing and valuing the contributions of individuals from different backgrounds, experiences, and perspectives.

AUTONOMY

Empowerment and Decision-Making. Delegate responsibilities and provide opportunities for employees to make decisions and have a sense of ownership in their work. Encourage autonomy in problem-solving, creativity, and decision-making processes.

Clear Expectations and Goals. Set clear expectations and goals, providing employees with a sense of purpose and direction. Offer guidance and support while allowing individuals to work independently and take ownership of their tasks.





HEALTH & WELLBEING

To address key health and wellbeing attributes now and in the future, it is important to engage various stakeholders, including individuals, communities, healthcare providers, policymakers, and employers. By prioritizing improved access to healthcare, promoting outdoor engagement, supporting mental stability, and fostering physical stability, we can create healthier and more inclusive environments that benefit individuals across generations.

IMPROVED ACCESS TO HEALTHCARE

Affordable and Equitable Care. Advocate for affordable healthcare options and strive for equitable access to healthcare services for all individuals, regardless of their age, income, or background.

Telemedicine and Digital Health. Embrace telemedicine and digital health solutions to improve access to medical professionals and healthcare resources, especially in remote areas or for individuals with limited mobility.

Community Health Initiatives. Support community-based health initiatives that provide preventive care, health education, and resources to improve overall wellbeing.

THE GREAT OUTDOORS

Green Spaces. Create and maintain accessible green spaces, parks, and gardens within communities, offering opportunities for individuals of all generations to engage in outdoor activities and connect with nature.

Urban Planning. Incorporate nature-friendly design principles into urban planning, such as tree planting, pedestrian-friendly pathways, and bike lanes, to encourage outdoor activities and promote a healthy lifestyle.

Environmental Stewardship. Foster a culture of environmental stewardship and conservation, promoting sustainability practices that preserve and protect natural environments for future generations.

MENTAL STABILITY

Mental Health Support. Increase awareness of mental health issues and reduce stigma through education and campaigns. Provide accessible mental health resources, counseling services, and support networks within communities and workplaces.

Work-Life Balance. Promote a healthy work-life balance by implementing policies that encourage flexibility, stress management programs, and opportunities for employees to recharge and engage in self-care practices.

Mindfulness and Wellbeing Programs. Offer mindfulness programs, wellness workshops, and activities that focus on mental wellbeing, stress reduction, and resilience building.

PHYSICAL STABILITY

Active Lifestyles. Encourage regular physical activity and active lifestyles through community fitness programs, recreational facilities, and initiatives that promote exercise and movement for all age groups.

Accessible Infrastructure. Ensure that infrastructure, including sidewalks, parks, and public spaces, is designed to be accessible and safe for individuals with disabilities, promoting physical stability and inclusivity.

Healthy Living Education. Provide education on healthy eating, nutrition, and preventive care to empower individuals to make informed choices about their physical wellbeing.

LINKAGES

It is essential to leverage technology as an enabler for connectivity, prioritize inter-generational collaboration, advocate for accessible mobility options, and create environments that nurture a sense of purpose and fulfillment. By fostering linkages through technology, connection, mobility, and a sense of purpose, organizations and communities can create inclusive spaces that facilitate meaningful interactions and empower individuals across generations.

TECHNOLOGY

Digital Inclusion. Promote digital inclusion by ensuring access to affordable and reliable technology infrastructure, internet connectivity, and digital literacy programs for individuals of all ages and backgrounds.

Technological Adaptation. Embrace emerging technologies and encourage individuals to adapt to technological advancements through training programs, upskilling initiatives, and awareness campaigns.

Digital Platforms. Utilize digital platforms, social media, and virtual communication tools to foster connectivity, collaboration, and information sharing across generations.

CONNECTION

Inter-generational Collaboration. Facilitate inter-generational collaboration and connection through mentorship programs, networking events, and knowledge-sharing platforms that enable different generations to learn from and support one another.

Community Engagement. Encourage active participation in community activities, volunteering opportunities, and social initiatives that foster connections, build relationships, and bridge generational gaps.

Workplace Culture. Foster a positive and inclusive workplace culture that values diverse perspectives, encourages teamwork, and promotes open communication across different generations.



PANEL DISCUSSION: PEOPLE, PLANET, PERFORMANCE

From left: Moderator: SmithGroup Studio Leader, Matt Dumich; AllSteel's Senior Workplace Advisor and Author, Kelly Colon; Arizona State University's Clinical Associate Professor of Architecture & Co-Director Center for Innovation, Philip Horton; and JLL's Executive Director of Engineering Solutions, Hetal Lee.

MOBILITY

Accessible Transportation. Advocate for accessible transportation options that cater to the needs of individuals of all generations, including reliable public transit, safe walking and biking infrastructure, and transportation services for people with mobility challenges.

Remote Work and Flexibility. Embrace remote work and flexible scheduling options that allow individuals to balance their personal and professional lives while reducing the need for excessive commuting.

Sustainable Mobility. Promote sustainable transportation alternatives, such as carpooling, cycling, and electric vehicles, to minimize environmental impact and enhance mobility options.

SENSE OF PURPOSE

Meaningful Work. Create opportunities for individuals to engage in meaningful work aligned with their interests, skills, and values. Encourage a sense of purpose by highlighting the positive impact of their contributions.

Personal Development. Support personal development and growth by offering training programs, career advancement opportunities, and continuous learning initiatives that help individuals find purpose in their professional lives.

Social Responsibility. Foster a sense of social responsibility by promoting corporate social responsibility initiatives, sustainability practices, and community engagement efforts that allow individuals to contribute to a greater cause.

REAL ESTATE CONSIDERATIONS

Real estate decision-making is a critical undertaking for organizations seeking to optimize their physical infrastructure. These decisions have long-term implications that can significantly impact the efficiency, functionality, and overall success of a business or institution. Whether it involves revitalizing an outdated office, negotiating lease terms for an existing space, or embarking on the design and construction of a brand-new campus, careful consideration of key factors is essential to ensuring informed and strategic choices. The following outlines several critical aspects to consider when making that evaluation.



NEEDS ASSESSMENT

Understand the specific requirements and objectives of the organization. Conduct a thorough needs assessment to identify the functional, operational, and aesthetic requirements for the space, providing a clear direction for decision-making.



FINANCIAL ANALYSIS

Evaluate the financial feasibility of different options. This involves considering factors such as budget constraints, return on investment, operational costs, and potential cost savings associated with renovation, lease renewals, or new construction.



MARKET RESEARCH

Conduct a comprehensive analysis of the real estate market. Examine market trends, property availability and values, rental rates, and emerging opportunities to ensure alignment with the organization's goals.



FLEXIBILITY AND SCALABILITY

Anticipate future growth, changing needs, and technological advancements. Create adaptable spaces that can accommodate evolving requirements so the organization can remain agile and responsive to future challenges and opportunities.



SUSTAINABILITY AND ENERGY EFFICIENCY

In the modern era, sustainable practices are critical considerations. Incorporate environmentally friendly design principles, energy-efficient technologies, and sustainable building materials to lower operational costs, reduce the environmental footprint, and contribute to a healthy work or community environment.



LEGAL AND REGULATORY COMPLIANCE

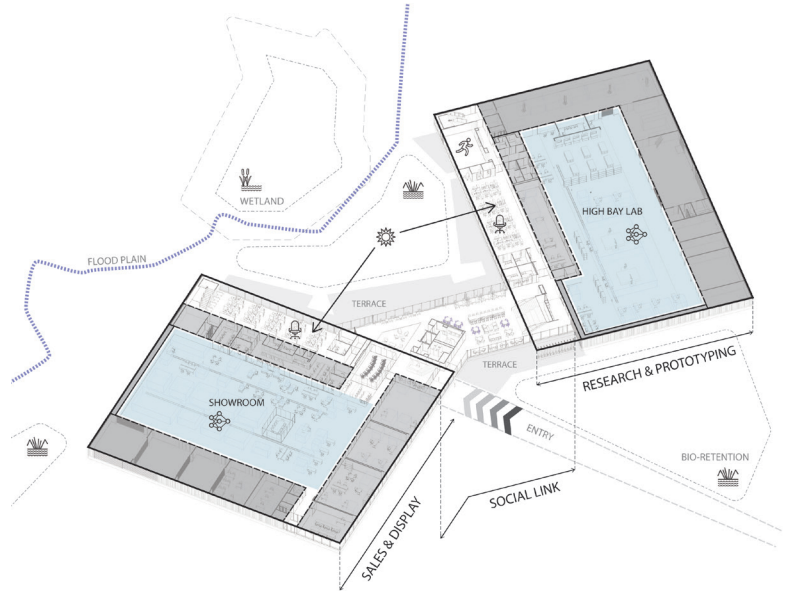
Comply with local building codes, zoning regulations, permits, and other legal requirements. Understand and address these obligations from the outset to streamline decision-making.



NEW BUILDING OR CAMPUS

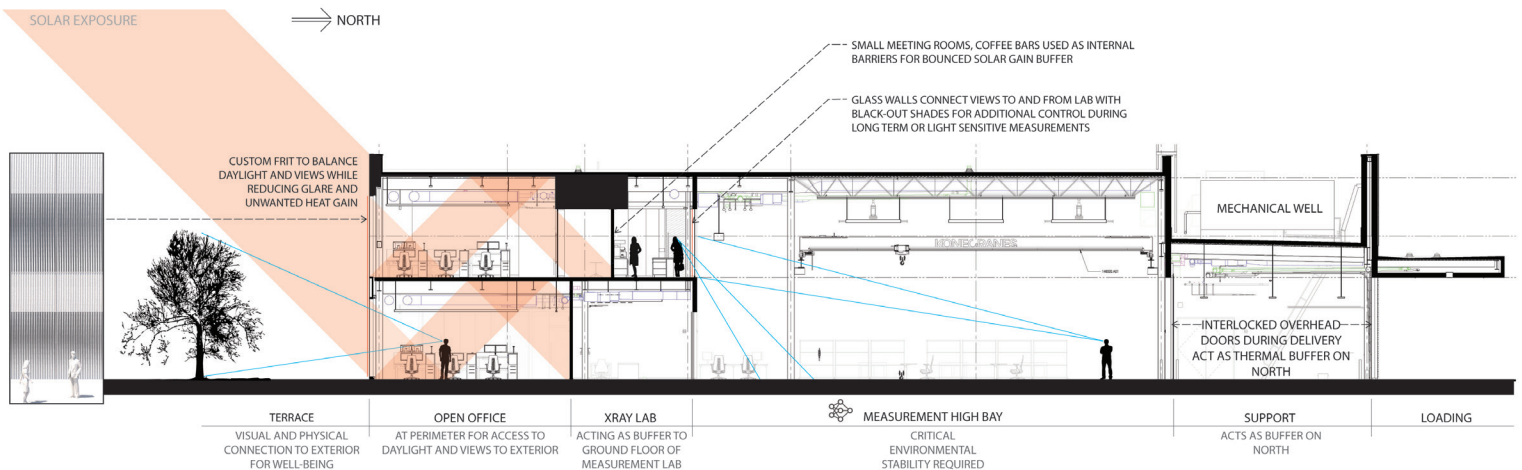
ZEISS QUALITY EXCELLENCE CENTER

ZEISS, a manufacturer of optical systems and optoelectronics, recognized the need to consolidate their five offices into one location. Blending ZEISS'S business model and technical needs with workspace efficiency and collaboration, SmithGroup designed a facility that balances the needs of both the client and the employee. As employees and clients journey past the thoughtful landscaping and window walls featuring work-on-display, they enter the facility at the main social and collaboration space, with product on the left and secure labs on the right. The openness and sophistication of the facility and site design accentuates the customer experience, solidifies the ZEISS brand, and offers employees multiple indoor/outdoor spaces for collaboration and impromptu interactions -- all of which come together to provide an effective working environment.



THE GREAT OUTDOORS

The building layout was heavily influenced by existing, natural site features. Existing wetlands were retained, and a low-impact storm water detention system enhances the outdoor environment. Four above-ground detention ponds manage stormwater from larger rain events while providing increased habitat and biodiversity. Large flat roof footprints offer expansive photovoltaic arrays, decreasing dependency on local fossil fuel consumption by approximately 70%. Direct connections to an exterior terrace courtyard bring the existing wetland resource up to the building.





RELATIONSHIPS & SENSE OF BELONGING

A large gathering space fosters social connections, encourages collaboration and reinforces the workplace culture.



EQUITABLE DESIGN

By organizing office environments around the courtyard, daylight is abundant and accessible for all, promoting physical and mental wellness while connecting people back to the existing wetland natural resource beyond.



PHYSICAL STABILITY

ZEISS machines measure to such small tolerances that the environment in which they work needs to be extremely stable. Critical lab zones remain internalized within the building footprint, while a combination of architectural massing and engineering systems work hand-in-hand to mitigate potential temperature swings over time.

LINKAGES & TECHNOLOGY

Special care was taken to develop rhythm, cadence and coordination of all building systems. Exposed ceiling conditions and long span structures allow for long term flexibility and resilience where market sectors and the machines themselves are constantly changing with technology and computation.

NEW LEASE

L. PERRIGO NORTH AMERICAN HEADQUARTERS

As a leading provider of health and wellness products, Perrigo aims to make lives better. Its new headquarters embodies the message 'Be Well' and promotes Perrigo's self-care culture. Health aspects are prioritized through an array of work environments and strategically located destinations. Housed in Michigan State University's Grand Rapids Innovation Park, the headquarters includes a dedicated main floor lobby and workspaces on floors 8-10.

COMMUNITY

A large gathering space fosters social and community connections, encourages cross-functional collaboration, and reinforces workplace culture and engagement.





WORKPLACE ECOSYSTEMS

Driven by wellbeing, the office offers individuals a choice in work settings. Ideation spaces celebrate community and encourage cross-functional collaboration, while quiet recharge areas offer space for focus and restoration. The central work zone connects teams and offers interchangeable modules that provide for future flexibility.

MOBILITY

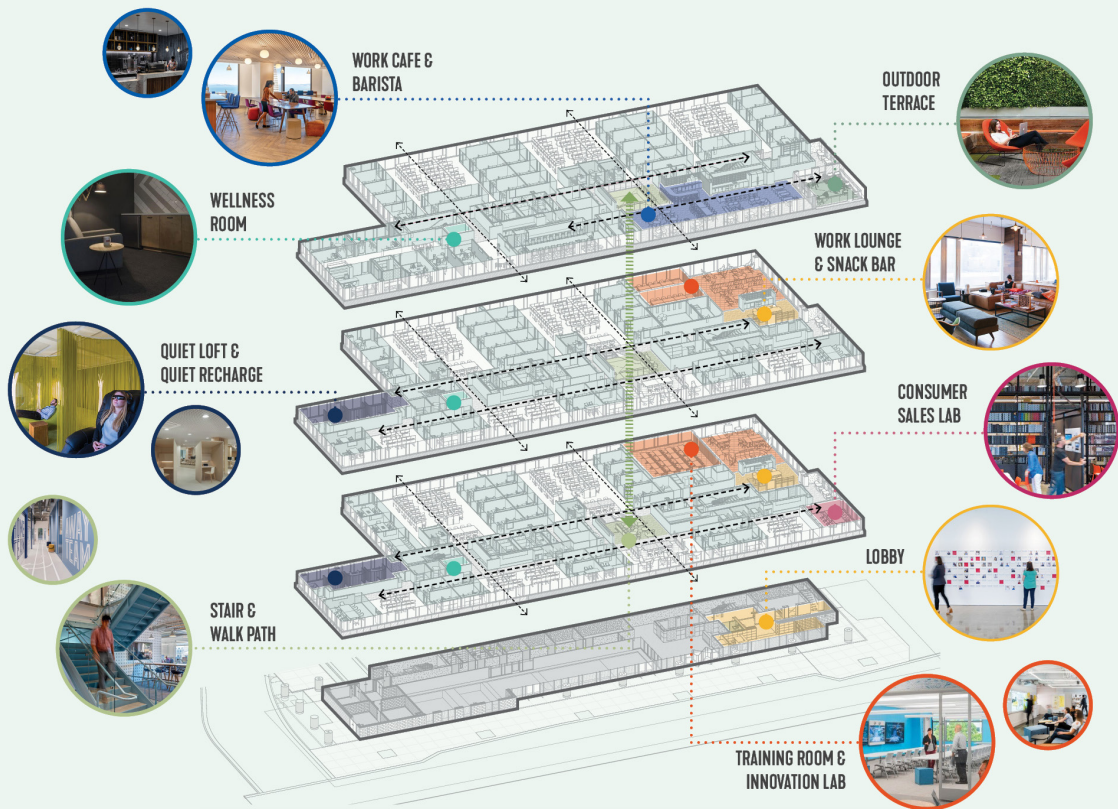
Located within this world-class healthcare destination, public transportation is readily available on almost every corner. Neighborhood amenities are vast with access to food, retail, housing, and sports and entertainment venues.



HEALTH & WELLBEING

Equitable access to daylight and expansive views drive a bright, airy character. The communicating stair is placed at the heart of the floorplan, establishing it as a hub of collection and connection. The stair's mural is designed to give subtle impressions of movement and change with the perspective of each viewer.

Honoring their diverse consumers, Perrigo's new Medical Mile presence sets the stage for innovation and engagement with MSU researchers, as well as greater access to healthcare for its employee base.

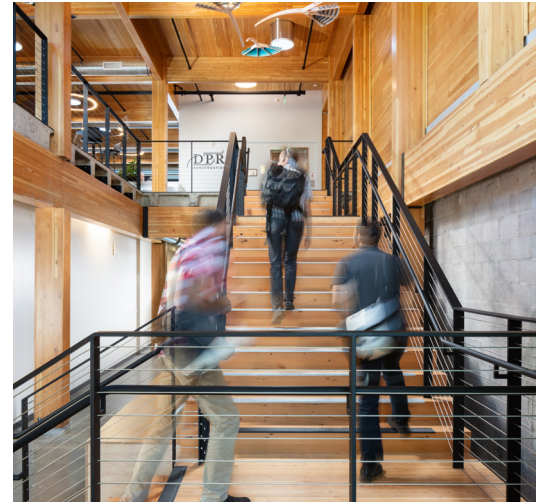


RENOVATE EXISTING SPACE

DPR SACRAMENTO ZERO NET ENERGY OFFICE

This adaptive reuse project epitomizes sustainability by exceeding regulatory requirements while creating a resilient work environment that fosters collaboration, innovation, and connection to the surrounding community. The former vehicle testing center was transformed with a 5,600-sf mass timber addition constructed from cross-laminated timber (CLT). The facade of the building addition is open, transparent and urbane, melding with a resurgent Midtown Sacramento. Its most striking feature is a long central terrace with a solar canopy, accessible to all DPR employees. A variety of mature trees shield and shade the terrace and emphasize the design concept of the City of Trees. A new communicating stair was cut into the existing structure to create new entries which further activate the block.

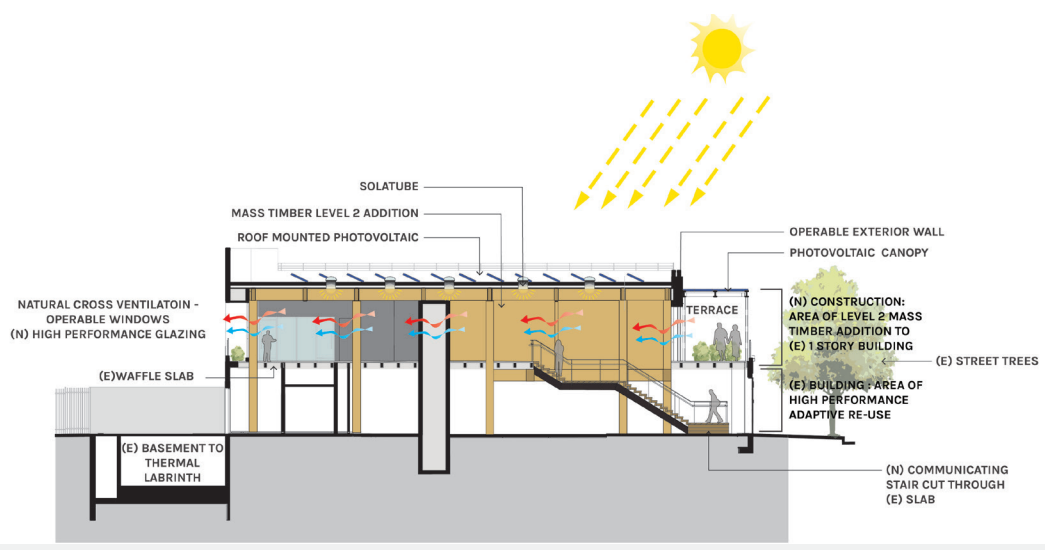
BEFORE



COMMUNITY

Connection to community was the driving force for DPR to move to vibrant Midtown Sacramento. Impacting the building's massing and programming, community connection and ample public transit options guided site selection. The building reinforces equity by opening its doors and sidewalks to the public, inviting freedom of expression within the community.





CONTINUED LEARNING

DPR's Sacramento office was designed as a learning laboratory for the DPR team, the construction industry, and the greater community. Regular tours are conducted for industry professionals; educational signage and an interactive, public dashboard showcase design solutions that are innovative and simple to execute. The dashboard shares energy and water use data in real-time. Staff can assess consumption rates and adjust practices, encouraging everyone to actively participate in maintaining the building's functionality and continuously gather lessons learned.

HEALTH & WELLBEING

With limited exterior opportunities, the interior features a custom-designed seed wall. This low-maintenance, low-energy, cost-effective feature highlights dormant seeds instead of live plants and serves as a seed bank, ultimately extending beyond the building's life. The project achieved net-positive energy using a combination of climate-responsive techniques. Solar panels are located on both the new and existing roofs, over parking, and in a canopy that shades the terrace, providing for 105% of the building's predicted demand.

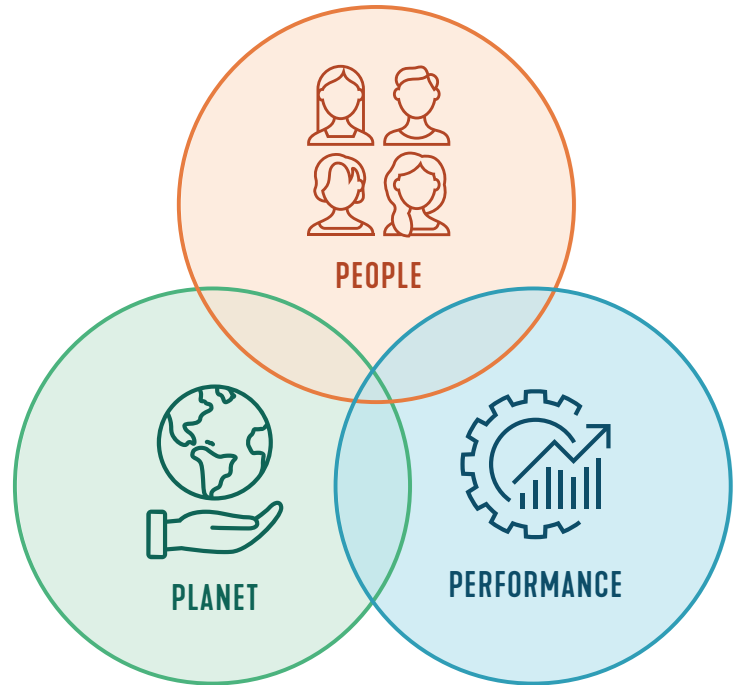
While the naturally-ventilated communal space on the east side has a "breezeway" with large operable doors and windows that connect to a planted roof terrace, the west-fronting work zone contains filtered air to alleviate those sensitive to Sacramento's high pollen counts. Interior plants create an oxygenic, calming environment for occupants, and will eventually grow and climb up the structural columns to create a realistic tree effect.



CONCLUSION

A changing world and evolving work dynamics have highlighted the importance of adopting a holistic approach to workplace strategy and design that prioritizes people and planet and positively impacts performance for all. The key considerations discussed encompass various aspects, including community, experiences, health and wellbeing, and linkages across generations. Additionally, important factors to consider when making real estate decisions include needs assessment, financial analysis, market research, flexibility and scalability, sustainability and energy efficiency, and legal and regulatory compliance.

By carefully considering these key factors and always following a holistic approach, organizations can navigate the intricacies of real estate decision-making, ensuring that their choices align with their strategic objectives, optimize resources, and create spaces that foster growth, productivity, and satisfaction for individuals across generations.



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Design a Better Future

INTERESTED IN LEARNING MORE?

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