

2018 RALPH RAPSON TRAVELING STUDY FELLOWSHIP

ADAPTIVE COMMUNAL HOUSING

**Site**  
Affordable housing is needed most where housing is unaffordable—where there is convenient access to opportunities, amenities, public transportation, and commerce. Therefore, the proposal is designed to be adapted to any under-utilized lot or empty parcel in urban, mixed-use neighborhoods where these characteristics are found. The specific neighborhood chosen as an example is the Lake St. commercial district corridor in Minneapolis. This proposal offers affordable, communal housing to a broad spectrum of lower-income city residents, accommodating both individuals, couples, and families.

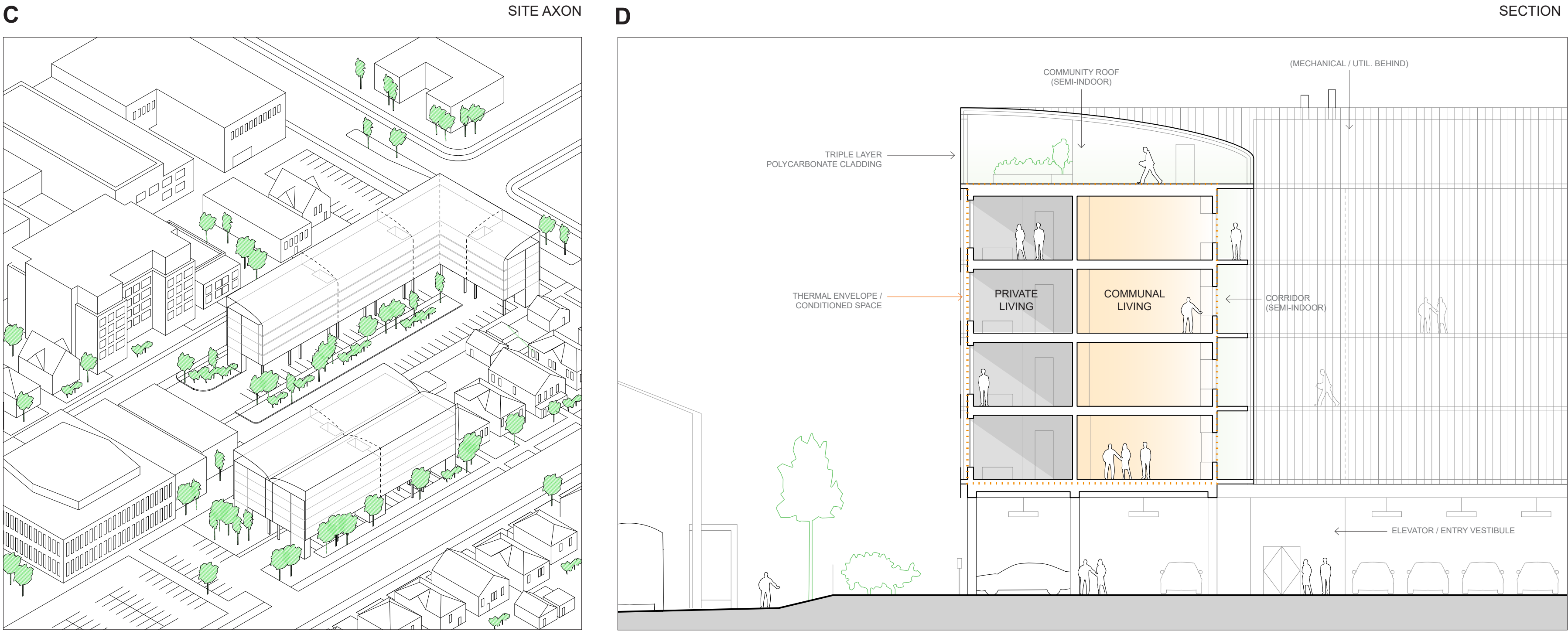
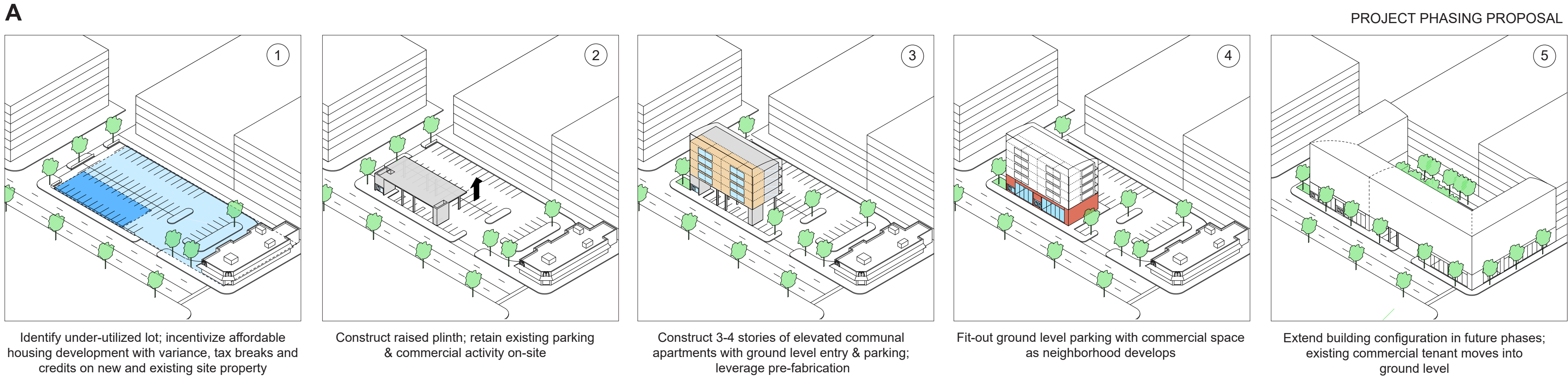
**Stability**  
To be stable, affordable housing must first be financially sustainable for the resident, and thus, it must be cost-efficient for the developer. Development costs for this housing model are reduced through the consolidation and sharing of domestic amenities and utilities, space-planning efficiencies gained through a communal building concept, cost-efficient materials and finishes, and the incentivized use of abundant, under-utilized "paved" real estate.

Second, stable housing must be grounded in its context through safe, accessible, and environmentally conscious planning. Therefore, the housing model minimizes its footprint through elevating its residential units; providing a) replacement parking for the site that also serves vehicle-owning residents, b) new green buffers and and planting at the sidewalk, c) added lighting and visibility of the street & lot, and d) the future opportunity to integrate storefront retail, work-space, or neighborhood amenities; thus renewing empty areas and gaps in the district and working to benefit the broader community.

Third, the proposed communal housing model affords an inherent flexibility to its occupants, allowing for a more seamless expansion or reduction of a family's footprint over time. This flexibility is achieved through challenging the conventional residential apartment typology which maximizes privately-used space and minimizes public area on a typical floor plate. The proposal re-balances this relationship, creating a gradient of public, communal, and private space that re-shapes the isolated experience of apartment-living and affords residents the benefits of living in community.



UNDER-UTILIZED LOTS IN (LYN-LAKE) LAKE ST. CORRIDOR COMMERCIAL DISTRICT





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**Dignity**  
Dignity is not equivalent to a constant state of privacy, nor is it to a constant state of community. A balance is proposed that endows the resident with opportunity to participate in the communal life of his unit's bay through cooking and meal-sharing, yet still allows them to retreat to their own apartment with ample living space and a private bathroom.

Dignified housing is not 'fancy', nor is it 'mean'. An un-preentious yet elegant and durable palette of materials is used, re-allocating superfluous project costs towards spacious communal areas and amenities, such as the rooftop community garden and terrace. Layered polycarbonate; a low-cost cladding & screening material with insulative R-values and UV filtering, is integrated as an exterior rain-screen and in interior walls at common lightwells. The rain-screen serves to shelter circulation areas (which are exposed when in single-loaded corridor format) and provide a warming enclosure for the community roof garden; which can be used throughout the winter season.

**Adaptability**  
Designing a housing model that can be adapted to any parcel or lot's idiosyncrasies must begin with a system based on a single unit, that can be arrayed and connected in a variety of configurations. Therefore, a typical module of 100' in length and 48' in width is proposed, (comprised of 4 living units and a shared communal space) that can be arrayed in one-unit or half-unit increments. Concrete structure is modulated into wide and narrow bays—the latter are strategically filled in as egress stairs, lightwells, elevators, domestic program, and entrance areas to serve the needs of a unique site, building configuration, and user group. The building module's width is based on the depth of parking spaces and a two-way lane, so that a rational integration into a site's parking grid can be achieved.

RIGHT: UNIT PLAN  
BELOW: UNIT DIAGRAMS

