NARA COMMUNITY CAMPUS
THE NEW HEART OF A RURAL COMMUNITY IN LAS VEGAS
...and it’s communities are certainly not all tract homes and HoA’s. The Northwest Area Residents Association (NARA) is a proud community that embraces its rural roots and character. For decades, much of real estate along the northern stretch of Rancho Drive, hugging the jurisdictional boundaries of Las Vegas and North Las Vegas, has been characterized by large, open land and horse property. NARA predates the MGM Grand, the Bellagio, and the Venetian, and was here long before the NHL brought professional hockey to the Mojave Desert and Tarkanian’s Runnin’ Rebels took care of Duke. Yet it wasn’t until 1995 that NARA was formally organized. Since its founding, NARA has faced challenges from both commercial and residential developers, who, see the opportunity for strip malls, business parks, and tract housing. Despite gaining the designation of “rural preservation” by the City of Las Vegas, NARA has continued to face opposition to their unique way of life.

As Las Vegas has grown, it has lost much of the cultural core and local traditions that once made this proud community unique. As it matures from a small, desert gambling town, it is imperative that it holds on to it’s strong, cultural roots.

How do we the protect Las Vegas communities, rich in culture and rural character, from the wheels of urban sprawl and subdivision development? This challenge was the driving force behind the design of the “NARA Community Campus,” a concept that embraces the large, open space that makes rural communities like NARA unique from urban and suburban neighborhoods. The programs were carefully chosen to cater to NARA’s unique lifestyles.

This project is one that seeks to embrace the identity of NARA and become symbolic of unique nature of its residents. In emerging as a physical representation of the community, it cements they’re place in the Las Vegas Valley and becomes a beacon for attracting new, young families with the same values and ideals to ensure its survival for generations to come.
Okay, well... how does it perform..?

...Environmental design is utilized.

**Natural Ventilation/Cooling:** Throughout the campus the buildings and landscape are carefully placed, with a seamless connection, for the creation of a micro-climate extending within and between buildings. This placement causes the movement of air that is continuously cooled and recycled by natural convection with little need for mechanical systems. Integral to the thermal comfort of interior and exterior spaces, native desert deciduous trees are utilized. These trees cool the hot desert air in the summer with their leaves. They then shed their leaves in the winter, allowing the sun to warm the concrete walls and stone paths to provide radiant heating to the interior and exterior spaces when most desired. This micro-climate creates a temperature around the

**Walls:** The buildings on the campus are constructed with concrete and, in necessary areas, cladded with perforated corrugated metal or wood panels. The secondary skin over the concrete allows for a thermal air pocket between the exterior and interior environment. This is important to the thermal and moisture comfort in the building allowing for a building that breathes and, in the winter, can be used to bring warmer fresh air into the building decreasing the use of mechanical systems.

**Daylighting:** Large floor to ceiling windows are placed and properly shaded to allow for adequate daylighting into each of the spaces. These windows are largely positioned in shaded areas such as the courtyards and on the north face of the building. When necessary shading elements are provided to limit the amount of direct sunlight that enters the building. This allows for a decrease in the need for electric lights to be used during the hours of operation and limits the amount of solar heat gain, resulting in a visually comfortable energy efficient space.

**Zero scaping:** The desert climate of the area is strategically utilized with the selection of drought tolerant plants, pervious stone paths, landscaping gravel and the selective placement of luscious grass. The plants used thrive in the heat of the desert with roots that hold on to a limited water supply. Cautiously placed is a grass amphitheater to the north of the main NARA center, allowing the area to be shaded and watered passively creating an environment with human comfort strongly considered to allow for an outdoor learning space connecting residents with the area around them.

**Storm water:** For flood season, the buildings and the site has design strategies to celebrate and manage the storm water. The roofs are angled to direct the water to the ground in a beautiful yet efficient manner. The water from the roofs and the site is then guided to a series of bioswells where it is used to water landscape as well as to create a temporary creek that enhance the experience. The site also utilizes permeable pavers to allow the ground to absorb the water and limit the amount of water that gets redirected.
Raw materials and earth tones compliment the rural character...

...of the desert southwest. The only pop of color in the material palette are bright resin doors that are unique to each program. This sets the mood immediately upon entering the space.
Wait...this place is in Vegas...?!?
“...what did they have to say...? ...the conversation began with a 3-day community design charrette
As previously stated, this is NARA’s **defining feature** and should be celebrated. Rather than combining programs into one building, they are woven together along a path of **pedestrian avenues, plazas, and courtyards**, thus, creating a **campus**.

This allows each component to be treated uniquely, yet still remaining cohesive. The creativity of the community can be used to broadcast NARA’s unique attributes, while elements such as the educational program can be kept more private. The recreation center can communicate with similar programs in the adjacent Patriot Park while the corner of Alexander and Tuffer can become the celebrated center piece of the entire campus.

Utilizing open space emphasizes the rural character.
Okay... tell me how you did it...
Well... I'd like to know more...

The journey starts with the ‘Maker Space’
This creative space celebrates the art of craftsmanship and broadcasts to the rest of the valley the unique qualities of the neighborhood. With fabrication shops lining a pedestrian avenue, the wood-slat-covered concrete walls are broken up by bright orange resin meant to instill a sense of energy and passion for workmanship.
“Well... I’d like to know more...

...next we have the ‘NARA Meeting and Admin Space’
Well... I’d like to know more...

At the culmination of the make space, one arrives at a green door, a symbol of health and prosperity. This is NARA’s office. It points across a plaza, designed for pedestrian, as well as vehicular and equine, access, to the corner of Alexander and Tuffer.
Well... I’d like to know **more**...

...at the corner we come to ‘the Heart of NARA’
“Well... I’d like to know more...”

...at the corner we come to ‘the Heart of NARA’

When moving through the open plaza, around the **NARA clock tower**, you find the facades maintain the same wood and concrete volumes; however, the doors are as different as they are vibrant. To the right is large **meeting hall**, utilizing the same **green** doors as the NARA office, that will act as the community’s main gathering space. To the left is a **yellow** door, symbolizing laughter, hope, and sunshine. This leads into a locally run café. Between these two buildings stands the only two-story space on the property – the **Lex Anderson Library**, named for the community’s beloved historian. With bright **blue** doors that provide feelings of serenity upon entering, the space leads to a second-story quiet reading area with two balconies that allow for a panoramic view of the valley’s mountain ranges.
Well... I’d like to know more...

...next we have our ‘Learning Space and Amphitheater’
The final leg of the journey cuts north from the community center and passes through a multi-purpose classroom that sits at the foot of an amphitheater to allow for both an indoor and outdoor learning environment. The building’s purple door symbolizes the creativity of the students who occupy it.
Well... I’d like to know more...

...finally we come to the Recreation Center
These facilities, including free weights, cardio, and instructional fitness, wrap around a courtyard that features park-workout stations that are free to the public. The recreation center’s red doors are designed to evoke passion and excitement to increase heart rate and prepare for exercise.
...are there any other questions I can help you with...?

"Yes... are there any homes for sale...?"