

Problem Identification

Over 117,000 people look for day labor work daily in the U.S. Although a relatively small number of official worker centers exist, over 75% of all hiring sites are informal (e.g., street corners, gas stations, and home improvement store parking lots). Designed for other uses, the informal spaces often lack basic amenities such as shelter, water, and toilets.

Day labor is not a new phenomenon. In the late 19th century, the dockworkers were the day laborers. Dockworkers often were immigrants, hailing from countries such as Ireland, Italy, and Poland, seeking an entry point into the formal economy. Today's immigrants, legal and illegal, pay over \$90 billion dollars in taxes, yet use only \$5 billion in public services. Despite their key role within our economy, day laborers are often viewed as a faceless mass. It is in this context that Public Architecture works to have an impact. Design is often viewed as a luxury, yet the presence of something tangible can be a tool with greater impact and longevity than a political statement or legal argument. Informed and inspired by our day laborer clients, the "Self-Contained Day Labor Station" is a prototypical solution - designed to be a model that can be replicated and adapted by anyone - that provides an innovative vehicle through which to advance the status of day laborers within the fabric of the community.

Public Architecture:
**Self-Contained
Day Labor Station**

\$90 BILLION
AMOUNT OF MONEY IMMIGRANTS PAY ANNUALLY IN TAXES

VS

\$5 BILLION
AMOUNT OF MONEY IMMIGRANTS USE IN PUBLIC BENEFITS

1. Quant Change and Transferability
2. Ethical Standards and Equity
3. Ecological Quality and Energy Conservation
4. Economic Performance and Compatibility
5. Contextual and Aesthetic Impact

Informal gathering sites remain the norm because they have a flexibility suited to the day labor system. By seeking out day laborers as our clients, understanding their needs, and incorporating a creative, sustainable vision, this project presents a new, responsive way to improve these sites. It has the potential to make a measurable impact, improving the quality of life of a population not only at one location but in many communities.

This project leverages design to address an issue of broad social relevance. It creates a specific place for day labor gathering, facilitating the employment process and addressing what has become an conflicting. In providing workers with a more dignified presence in the public realm, the Station and companion advocacy initiative seek to assist off the grid if needed, more integrated communities.

The Self-Contained Day Labor Station is designed to make a minimal footprint. The self-sustaining structure utilizes green materials, such as recycled PVC tiles, used billboard vinyl, fiber cement panels, and locally sourced, salvaged, or certified lumber. Green strategies such as water reuse and a photovoltaic system allow it to exist off the grid if needed.

Day laborers are a community that traditionally has not had access to quality design environments. Yet workers view their hiring sites as sacred. The presence of a beautiful structure designed specifically for them, physically articulates permanence in a context that is currently quite ephemeral. It is a gesture with significance for not only the day laborers but also for the communities in which they live and work.

Contested Ground

The recent failure of federal immigration legislation highlighted the debate about the role of immigrants in American society, including groups such as day laborers. A responsive solution is not only about design, but advocacy. Through a related advocacy effort (websites, exhibitions, and affirmative outreach) we work to bridge the divide.

Our vision is the creation of multicultural communities where day laborers live with full rights and responsibilities in an environment of tolerance, peace, harmony and justice, and where they can be authors of their own destiny.

This is about the most absurd thing I have ever heard of what's next, stations for prostitutes!

I cannot explain the frustration I have encountered with ignorant people when it comes to the topic of immigration. Fact of the matter is, most of the laborers we see are people HUMAN BEINGS who come here for a better way of life, to provide for a family, etc. It kills me when I drive pass these men outside of Home Depot, they're out there early in the morning no matter the weather. It makes me sad, yet grateful for the opportunities that I have.

Pushing to their needs and making life "easier" for them to exist here is doing nothing to solve the problem! These things are a lie on our social systems involving increased tuition on our school systems, hospitals, traffic, police, fire fighters, etc. - Not to mention the associated crime rate!

Just in case you have been asleep in your matrix of your - woodstock - give peace a chance - here to do the jobs americans won't do - cocaine, wake up and realize that the United States of America is under insidious and pervasive invasion by a Foreign / next door "Enemy of State, neighbor!"

FAMILY IS THE REASON THAT ONE COMES HERE. FOR A BETTER LIVING, A BETTER LIFE FOR THEM.

To glorify illegal immigration by providing yet more services to them (on top of free schools, free health care, welfare, AND not collecting taxes from day laborers who work for cash) should be illegal and you should be ashamed!!?!!

THE GREAT IRONY OF DAY LABORERS IS THAT THEY EMBODY THE AMERICAN DREAM, YET ARE WIDELY USED, ABUSED, AND DESPISED.

Direct quotes from email responses to the Self-Contained Day Labor Station

Innovative Design

The design of the Self-Contained Day Labor Station represents a new typology based on the professional and social structures of our day labor clients. Rather than viewing these elements as an appendage that must adapt to an existing structure, they are instead the armature on which the design is based.

The elements of the design represent a holistic vision of sustainability with green materials and strategies providing positive environmental impact, diversity of design elements and ease of construction providing economic viability, and possibilities for community benefits enabling positive social outcomes.

1. Flexible Cube
Depending on the needs of the given location, the cubes can house a bathroom, office, or kitchen.

Message Board
Used to post latest job or general announcements. It also can provide communication tips for employers and workers.

Community Benefit
The Station is meant not only to address the needs of the workers but also the community. Implementation of a Station need not be limited to a street corner but can instead be conceived at a neighborhood scale, incorporating site elements such as a community garden.

Day Laborer Client
Day laborers are viewed as the client for this project. As such, we have solicited their participation in developing the design. Day laborers will also be involved in building their Stations. Many of them have construction skills, and their involvement helps foster a sense of ownership.

Garage Door Canopy
When active, the garage doors open to form a canopy and allow for visual contact between workers and employers, a vital requirement of the day labor system.

Translucent polycarbonate panel canopy
Provides shade for the workers while still allowing natural light.

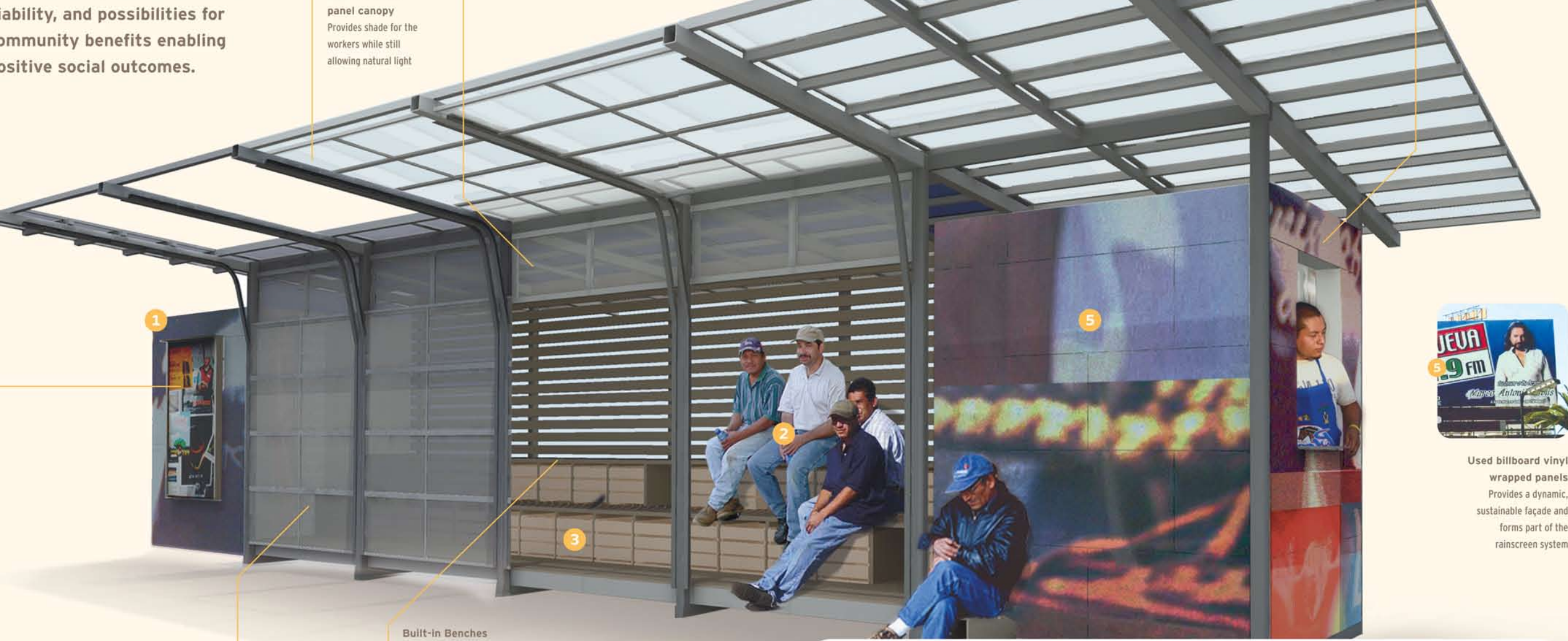
Photovoltaic panels
Forming part of the canopy system, the panels give the Station the potential to exist off the grid.

Flexible Cube
The flexible kit of parts design allows the assembly of a food service venue modeled after a mobile food cart. Not only can the workers make use of the kitchen, but it can house an income-generating food business, providing funds to support the Station.

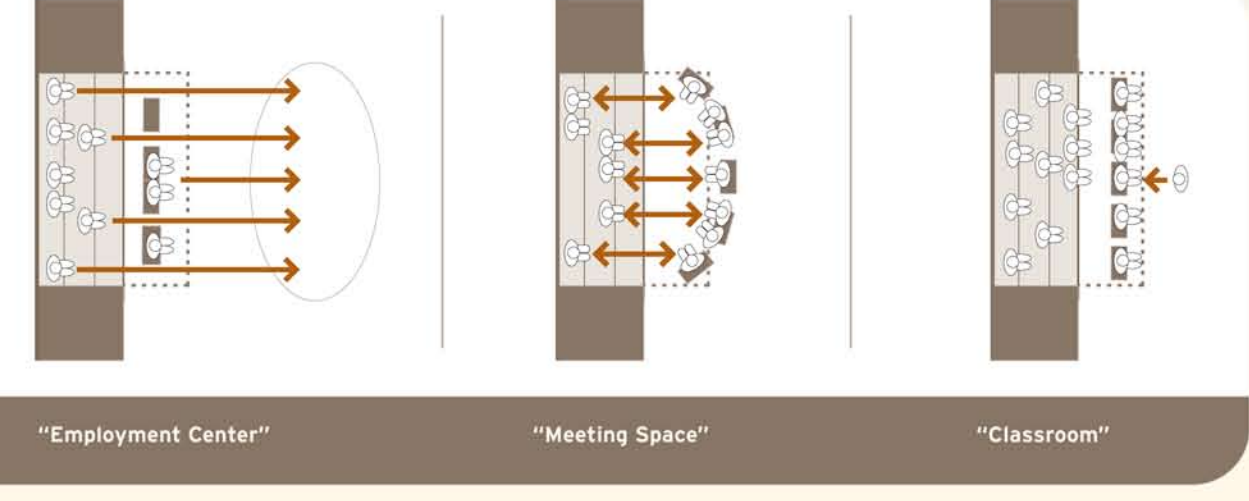
Built-in Benches
Two rows of built in benches provide permanent seating for the workers. The space underneath the benches allows for storage of the Station's water tanks and photovoltaic system equipment as well as portable seats that can be pulled out when more workers need to be accommodated.

Garage Door Canopy
After hours, the garage door canopy closes to secure the Station.

Pullout Benches

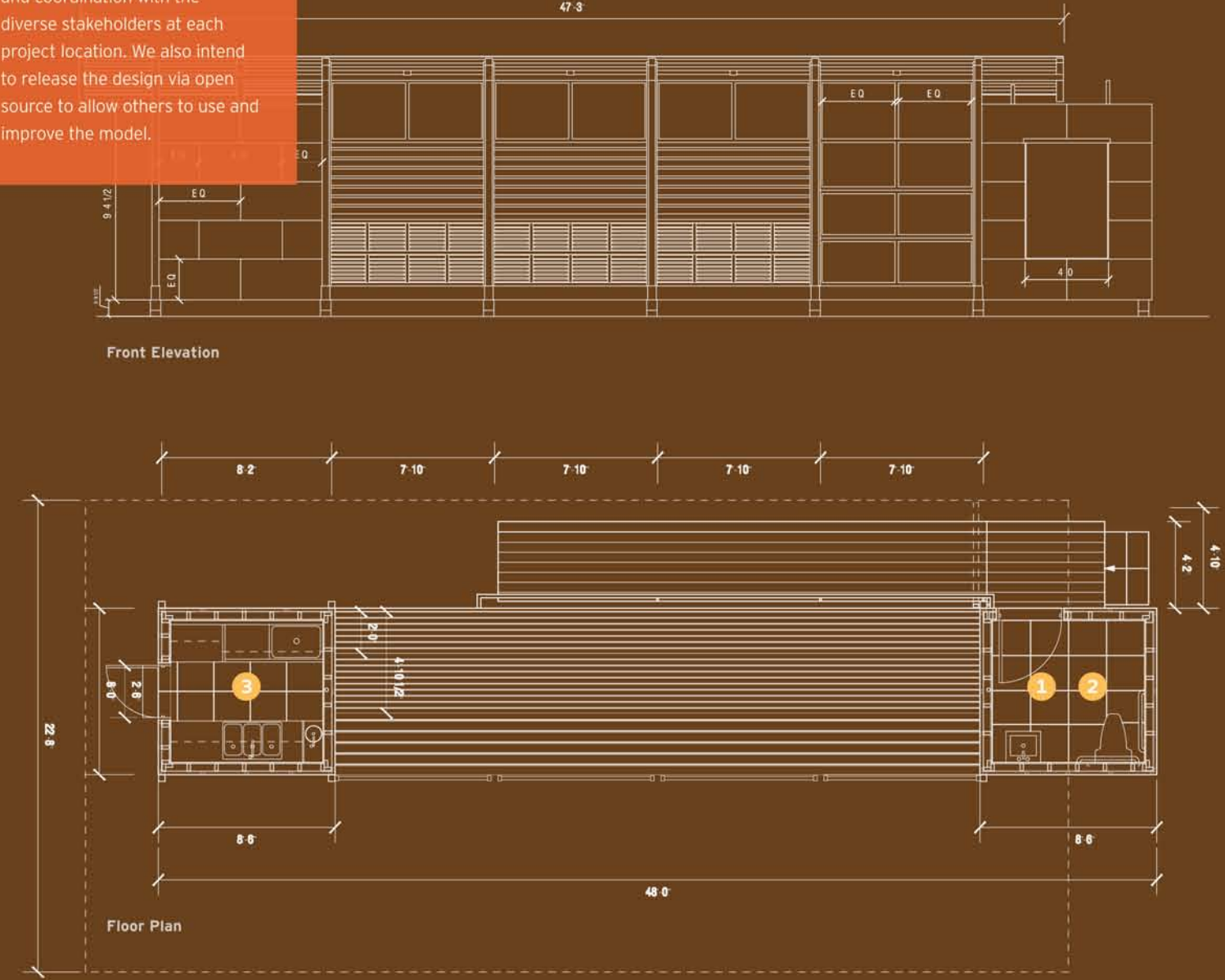


Used billboard vinyl wrapped panels Provides a dynamic, sustainable facade and forms part of the rainscreen system.



Flexible Solutions

Because community needs vary, the Station is designed as a kit of parts to be altered to fit the realities of a given location. The specificity in each context is determined through discussions and coordination with the diverse stakeholders at each project location. We also intend to release the design via open source to allow others to use and improve the model.



Restroom
Toilet facilities are a basic yet critical need often lacking at most informal sites. In situations where there is a larger day laborer population, the flexibility of the Station's design concept allows for more than one restroom cube.



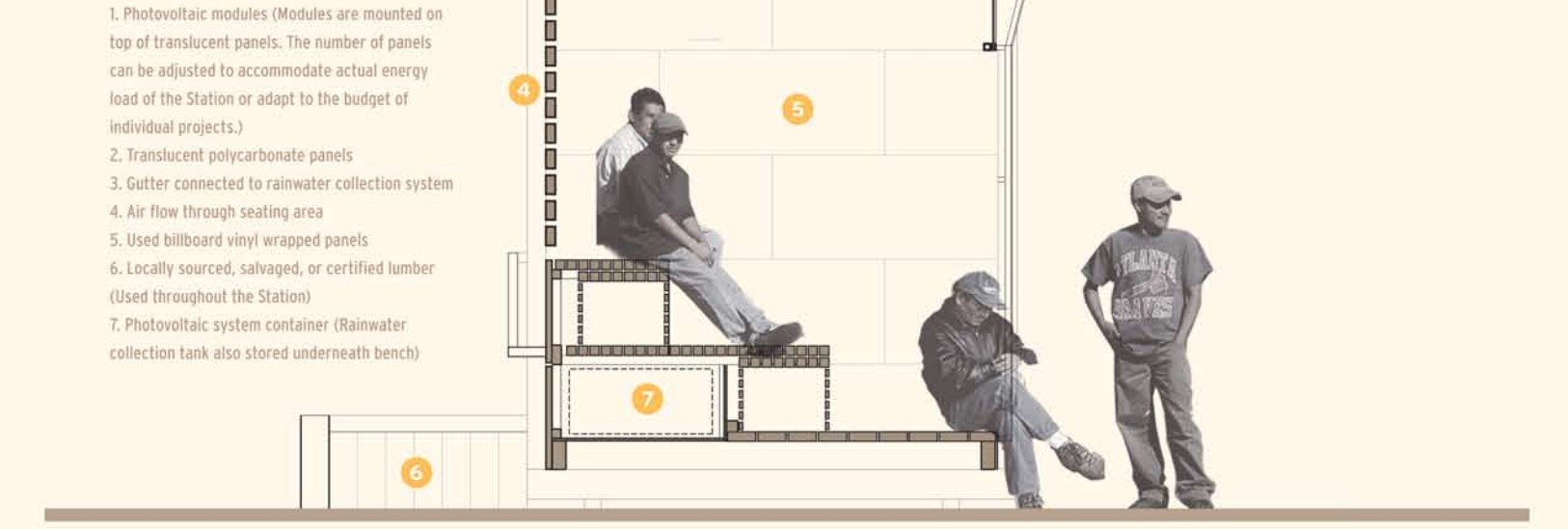
Office
Day laborers are highly organized. The Station not only has the potential to host meetings, but in situations where the day laborers desire a coordinator, a cube can be designed as an office.



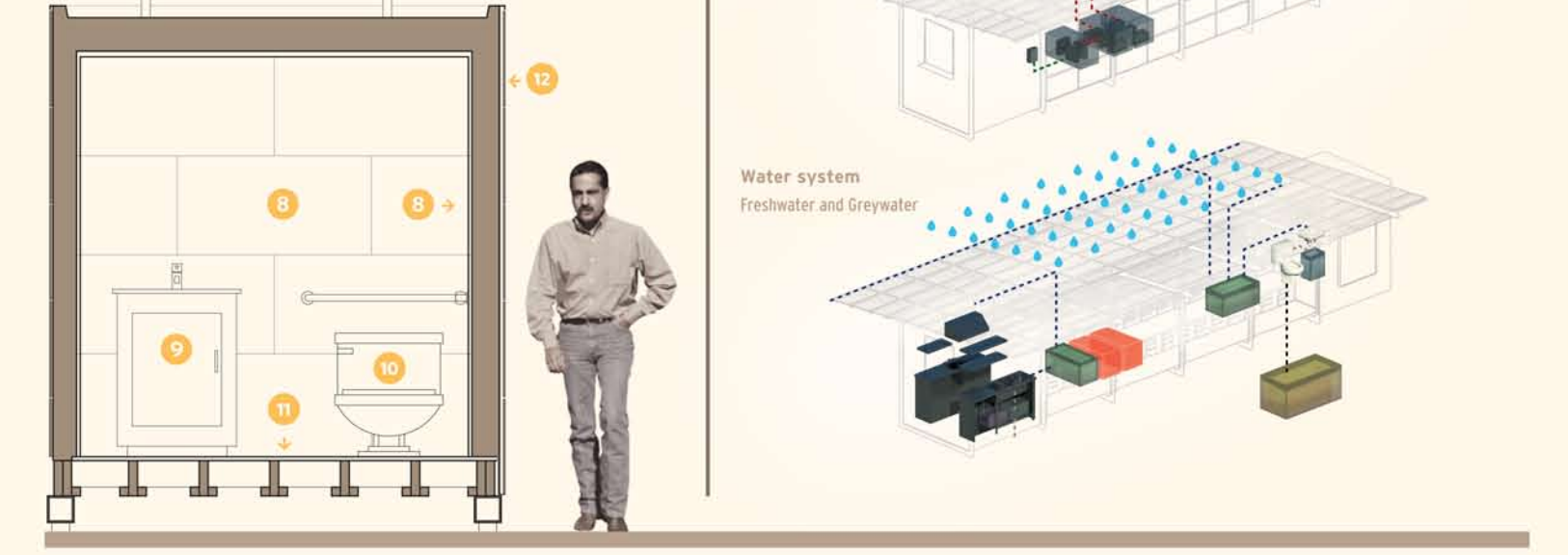
Kitchen
The kitchen can function as a food business, serving as an income generator for the Station as well as a food service training opportunity for workers. With employers as well as patrons from nearby businesses as customers, it also provides a focal point for social interaction.

Sustainable Vision

The environmentally sustainable elements of the Self-Contained Day Labor Station are intentionally "low tech." This yields effective solutions that are easily accessible and replicable, both key to the Station's ability to impact.



Self-Contained Day Labor Station Sustainable Materials and Strategies



The green features are as flexible and contextual as the other aspects of the Station's design. Material elements such as the used billboard vinyl and lumber will vary depending on what can be locally sourced. Sustainable strategies can be configured to meet

Concrete Impact

Proposed Location: Stockton, CA
Estimated Cost: \$100,000
Workers Served: 75-100
Partners: Proyecto Voces, Mayor's Office, Police Department

With continued community conflict and legal challenges to anti-solicitation ordinances, the Station is attracting attention from communities in search of new solutions. In 2007, we were approached by the Police Department in Stockton, CA. They see the Station as a way to address the issues at the current informal site as well as forge a better, more trusting relationship with the workers. The design includes a neighborhood scale intervention of a community garden to be maintained by the workers. The project is awaiting resolution of the site negotiations.

Though small in footprint, the Station has the potential to make a far reaching impact. Over a dozen cities have contacted us about implementing the Station. With hundreds of corners across the country and increasing reports of conflict, the Station provides an adaptable and engaging solution that can be implemented in countless communities.

