

# Climate Justice in Architecture

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**Design centering both the environmental and social aspects of climate change.**

Climate justice in architecture refers to engagement, advocacy, planning, and design that draw down emissions; build resilience and capacity; support human, cultural, and ecological health; and protect all communities in the era of climate change.

**Committee on the Environment**

**AIA** Knowledge Community



Front entrance of the Haven Domestic Violence Shelter.  
*Image Credit: MASS*

## Haven Domestic Violence Shelter

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This case study highlights an exemplary architecture project that prioritized both environmental and social aspects of climate change in its design process, community engagement approach, and final design. It aligns with many aspects of the AIA Climate Justice in Architecture Taxonomy across the building, neighborhood, regional, and global scales.



# Haven Domestic Violence Shelter

Bozeman, MT



Communal space in Haven’s residence building provides clear sightlines and choice of movement.  
*Image Credit: MASS*

## Summary

Founded in 1979 as a grassroots movement run by women volunteers in Bozeman, MT, Haven is a nonprofit organization dedicated to helping survivors of domestic violence. In 1982, the organization purchased a single-family home and converted it into a nondisclosed shelter serving 12 survivors at a time. Over the past decade, Haven has supported more than 8,000 survivors by providing transitional housing, a 24-hour support line, counseling, support groups, a survivors’ support network, a survivors’ speakers bureau, legal support, relocation services, leadership development, and financial literacy education.

In 2023, Haven opened a new, publicly disclosed, 40-bed shelter for survivors of domestic violence, providing short-term housing (4–6 months). The new facility also includes a public-facing building that provides education and wellness services to about 4,000 community members per year. It serves a dual mission: (1) Safe, transitional housing for survivors; and (2) public-facing programs aimed at ending the stigma associated with domestic violence. The LEED-certified campus, which centers on trauma-informed design principles, reflects Haven’s embrace of survivors’ whole selves. Spaces are adaptable, so survivors can access the wrap-around services that are most helpful during their transition to a new living situation.

## Project overview

**BUILDING PROGRAM TYPE(S):**  
Multifamily/social services

**PROJECT TYPE:**  
New Construction

**TOTAL FLOOR AREA:**  
16,000 sq. ft.

**TOTAL USERS:**  
30 rooms (40 users)

**SITE AREA:**  
3 acres

**NUMBER OF FLOORS:**  
2

**PROJECT CLIMATE ZONE:**  
ICC Climate Zone 6B

**PROJECT SITE:**  
Greenfield

**PROJECT SETTING:**  
Suburban

**YEAR OF SUBSTANTIAL COMPLETION:**  
2023

**COST OF CONSTRUCTION (EXCLUDING FURNISHING):**  
\$6 million

**THIRD PARTY RATING SYSTEM:**  
LEED BD+C v4 Certified

## Project team

**OWNER:**  
Haven Domestic Violence Shelter

**ARCHITECT:**  
MASS

**MEP ENGINEERS:**  
Energy I

**STRUCTURAL ENGINEER:**  
IMEG

**CIVIL ENGINEER:**  
Sanbell

**GENERAL CONTRACTOR:**  
Martel Construction

**PRO BONO CONTRIBUTORS:**  
MASS, Abby Hetherington Interiors, Alder & Tweed Design Co., Energy I, Envi Interior Design Studio, Farland Interiors, Gallatin Valley Furniture, ICON Interiors, IMEG, Kath Williams + Associates, Montana State University Integrated Design Lab, Pyralis Sprinkler Design, LLC, Sanbell, SAV Digital Environments in partnership with Open Studio Collective, Shelter Interiors

“The center is a demonstration, in concrete and wood, of our vision to end the stigma of domestic violence through engaging our community, and through education, advocacy, and prevention.”  
– (Giving Hope a Home)



Upstairs lounge at Haven.  
Image Credit: MASS

## Design Process

### Using the design process to begin destigmatization and healing

Haven is a survivor-driven organization. This approach to care informed conversations about the design of the new, disclosed shelter. For years, Haven held community listening sessions and surveys to understand how the types of services they provided were impacting survivors and how a new purpose-built shelter could better support them. This engagement process solicited feedback from survivors; community members; and Haven staff, Board of Directors, donors, and partners. These conversations extended the process of destigmatization and community healing.

In 2019, Haven launched a design competition for the new shelter. A Design Advisory Group, composed of Haven staff, survivors, and community stakeholders, was formed to provide guidance throughout the competition process and select the design architect.

The competition brief asked architects to envision a single campus that would serve two populations: (1) Survivors who needed a safe, supportive, and private environment to heal and (2) the larger Bozeman community who play a role in supporting the survivor community and addressing the root causes of domestic violence.

When Haven awarded the project to MASS in 2021, Erica Coyle, former executive director of Haven, spoke of the important role that both survivors and community members would play in the success of the new shelter:

To the survivor community, she said:

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“To prepare for this project, we looked to all of you—and in particular, survivors—to help us answer the questions that could help us realize our vision: What could it look like if we had a facility that responded to the needs of survivors as whole people, not just to the trauma they’ve experienced? How could it look if we had a shelter that didn’t just provide physical safety, but provided the space to build community? What are the barriers to survivors seeking support and how might we remove those barriers? What if we could design a space that promoted healing and dignity?”

—Erica Coyle, former Executive Director, Haven (Coyle, 2021)

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And, to the larger Bozeman community, she said:

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“If we ever stand a chance of eradicating abuse, it’s by engaging all of you in helping us do so. By moving towards a new model of providing shelter and services that rebuilds broken support networks and gives ownership of the issue to our community, that is where the real change will happen.”

—Erica Coyle, former Executive Director, Haven (Coyle, 2021)

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The MASS shelter design proposal emphasized the design process itself, grounded in the five principles of trauma-informed care: Safety, trust, choice, collaboration, and empowerment. Their expanded approach accompanied partners and communities—served from early ideation through the project’s opening day and ensured that resulting design is both functional, culturally resonant, and deeply rooted in place.

### Trauma-informed design process

Haven’s approach to care extended to conversations about the design of the new, publicly disclosed shelter. Conversations about a new, purpose-built shelter on a disclosed campus began up to five years before the design competition and continued throughout—including reviewing and commenting on the drawings during the design process. One survivor burst into tears after looking at the design, saying, “I feel so seen. You listened.”

Design conversations began by clarifying Haven’s mindset about trauma. Haven staff recognize that everyone has experienced trauma and that it might mean something different for each person on the



team. As former executive director Erica Coyle puts it, “For better or worse, we are in trauma every day. It is a daily conversation. We encourage staff to bring their boundaried but whole self to work.” Taking that approach helps staff empathize with survivors and the traumas that survivors bring with them when they enter the Haven community and meet them where they are. Supporting staff in an environment where they experience vicarious trauma on a daily basis became a key component of the design conversation.

The design of Haven’s new facility illustrates the critical role the built environment can play in lessening triggering or retraumatizing stimuli for individuals who have experienced traumatic experiences, along with providing respite for frontline care providers. This project serves as an example for how design can address acute needs of survivors and help facilitate a shift in the responsibility of healing from an individual burden towards a collective one. With this new facility, Haven is a model for others nationwide using the built environment as a platform to advocate for a broader, national conversation around the impact of domestic violence in our communities.

Key trauma-informed design considerations for the new shelter that emerged from conversations with survivors and staff included:

- **Design for dignity and “whole people”:** The previous shelter was a converted single-family home. Some survivors described it as dark and unwelcoming. Designing a new, purpose-built shelter created an opportunity to bring more light, beauty, and dignity to the healing experience. The interior design stayed away from institutional aesthetics in favor of warm colors and natural materials. Separating the community-facing and administration building from the residence also honors the dignity and privacy of survivors. Survivors have diverse needs, requiring the design to respond to a multiplicity of needs rather than a one-size-fits-all approach. The design of the residential units centered on adaptability providing different room configurations, sizes, and ability to be grouped into pods, to meet the needs of different family sizes. Flexible shared spaces provide survivors with opportunities to relax, socialize, play, or otherwise exercise agency based on their individual circumstances.
- **Design for autonomy and choice:** Survivors experience a range of sensitivities to different sounds, smells, temperatures, and levels of activity. Many also did not experience full freedom of choice in their previous domestic circumstances. Acknowledging the importance of autonomy therefore became a central goal of the design, which includes a range of spaces, from private to public indoors and outdoors, and from quieter to more active lounge areas. The central

kitchen responds to a strong message from survivors that they enjoy cooking together and value having control over what they cook for themselves and their families.

- **Design for calming overstimulation:** Trauma-informed design emphasizes spaces that help prevent retraumatization and mitigate triggers and potential stressors in the built environment. The residence design uses predictable spatial configurations, straightforward wayfinding, and clear signage to help reduce the cognitive load survivors need to process to move through the space when they are in an overstimulated state.
- **Design for safety:** While survivors supported the shift to a disclosed shelter and the ways in which it reduces the risk of social isolation and stigma, safety remains a prerequisite to the healing process. The campus layout, landscape design, and security features are designed to create a sense of safety and support for survivors. Security features occasionally came into tension with the goal of designing for dignity. For example, one set of exterior glass doors was replaced with metal doors, and an acrylic barrier was added to the upstairs balustrade inside the residence building to enhance security.
- **Design for children:** About half of the survivors walking through Haven’s doors are children who deserve spaces tailored to their needs. The design of the facility provides a welcoming environment for children with designated play areas, within reach from parents and counselors. These spaces facilitate privacy for adults while providing clear sightlines to promote children’s physical and emotional safety. Outdoor spaces and playgrounds are designed with younger survivors’ needs in mind. A variety of spaces, designed to welcome survivors of all ages and appropriate for all development stages, encourage young survivors to meet with counselors and interact with other children with similar lived experiences.

### Responses to the new shelter

Both survivors and staff have responded to the new space with a mixture of excitement and grief. Advocates brought the current residents over to tour the space a few weeks before the move to help with the transition. Everyone who had lived and worked in the previous location had found comfort and safety there, in spite of its downsides. Both groups have felt uplifted by the new building, the public-facing programming, and the community support that has accompanied a disclosed location. Staff members, in particular, feel that they no longer work in isolation. They now work openly and in partnership with community-based organizations and faith-based institutions.

“The old space was kind of old and dingy and dark. The new space was quite literally designed with survivors in mind and really prioritizes their dignity and their needs. They were involved in design conversations and provided input on what they feel like they needed in the space. Haven staff and the MASS design team really listened. So, people here have been really grateful for the beauty of the space. There’s a lot of different communal spaces as well, so they have opportunities to engage with one another, but they also have the ability to remove themselves to their room when they need to. ... I have heard survivors say this is the nicest place they’ve ever lived.”

– Kareena, Director of Programs, Haven

### Reconciling tensions between social equity, mental health, and climate goals

Like many projects with a social service mission, environmental strategies in Haven’s design support its social mission. When the design team was confronted with difficult choices—such as how to balance the mental health benefits of thermal comfort and access to daylight and views with the decarbonization goals in LEED—they implemented solutions that supported mental health and resilience while still meeting minimum energy standards. For example, the shelter includes air conditioning in the residence, even though many residential buildings in Montana have only installed heaters. Kath Williams + Associates provided green building consulting services pro bono, and the cost associated with LEED certification was covered through a charitable contribution.

“Our goal was to balance sustainable building practices with the comfort needs of survivors. We made it through one summer without air conditioning, but when we are supporting young families and mothers who are pregnant, we realized that as our climate warms, we needed to adjust. We added air conditioning in the form of mini splits so that survivors could have more control over their environment.”

– Erica Coyle, former Executive Director, Haven



## Project financing

The Gallatin Valley Land Trust purchased 12 acres using financing from The Conservation Fund. The trust sold nine acres to the City of Bozeman through the Trails, Open Spaces, and Parks Bond with the goal of expanding a local park and the remaining three acres to Haven at below-market rates.

The capital funding for the construction of the shelter campus was raised through donations from more than 400 donors and supplemented by pro bono work provided by 14 local companies. The construction budget was impacted by the rising costs of building materials. The contractor sourced materials locally, such as Douglas fir cladding, to minimize potential cost overruns.

Over the long run, the new facility has enabled Haven to increase its total staff size and provide space for community partners and wraparound services that previously had been housed off-site. Moving all operations to the administration building redirects funds previously spent on rent toward in-house operational expenses.

One unexpected financial challenge Haven has experienced as a result of the success of their new campus is the shift in the way they are viewed by the local philanthropic community. Their beautiful new facility has changed their image from being seen as a scrappy, grassroots nonprofit to one of the largest nonprofits in the community in terms of staff and budget. Energy and water efficiency strategies help lower operational costs, but Haven's fundraising efforts have had to shift toward supporting the expanded staff and services made possible by the larger facility.

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“This unique project demonstrates that effective land protection can also enhance the health and well-being of a community. It is a testament to how GVLТ’s unique skill set is a catalyst for visionary partnerships and bringing people together. ... The park and surrounding area serve as a critical connection, a shared backyard, and safe haven for all of our neighbors across the valley.”

—Chet Work and Erica Aytes Coyle (Bozeman Daily Chronicle, 2023)

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## Essential climate justice design components include:

- 1. Survivors and community stakeholders led the design process from the beginning:** Conversations about the design of a disclosed shelter began with survivors, staff, and community stakeholders years before the design competition to select an architect. Stakeholders from all three groups worked together to select the architect and continued to provide feedback throughout the design process. While the project design happened at the height of the COVID-19 pandemic, the architecture firm delivered a design process to center survivor and community voices and built long-term personal connections that informed the design and enabled post-occupancy evaluation of the project’s impact.
- 2. Trauma-informed design principles set up the project to capitalize on co-benefits:** The focus on trauma-informed design naturally led to design strategies that prioritized co-benefits such as daylight and locally sourced, natural finish materials, which both promote mental health among survivors and reduce the project’s carbon footprint.
- 3. Environmental design decisions supported social and mental health priorities:** The strong emphasis on centering survivors’ experience in every aspect of the design guided the design team in deploying their baseline design toolkit, including green building strategies, in the interest of promoting a healing environment.

# AIA Climate Justice in Architecture Taxonomy

Climate change both creates new and amplifies existing environmental and social challenges across seven themes or categories: Social determinants of health, cultural connection to place, economic development without displacement, environmental justice, ecosystem health, climate change health and resilience, and decarbonization. The Climate Justice in Architecture Taxonomy addresses both the environmental and social dimensions of climate change, guiding teams to design architectural responses that impact these themes at three scales: Building occupants, the surrounding neighborhood, and regionally and globally. The taxonomy aligns and connects with the AIA Framework for Design Excellence, which represents the defining principles of design excellence in the 21st century. The framework is comprised of 10 principles and informs progress toward four outcomes: A zero-carbon, healthy, resilient, and equitable built environment.

Haven addresses all three scales in the framework, with particular emphasis on the building and regional scales.

Climate Justice Taxonomy		Impact of Design Features by Spatial Scale			Alignment with Framework for Design Excellence					
		Building	Neighborhood	Regional/ Global						
	Social Determinants of Health				 Integration	 Equitable Communities	 Well-being			
					 Change	 Discovery				
	Cultural Connection to Place				 Integration	 Equitable Communities	 Discovery	 Well-being		
	Economic Development without Displacement				 Equitable Communities	 Economy				
	Environmental Justice									
	Ecosystem Health				 Integration	 Equitable Communities	 Ecosystems	 Well-being		
					 Resources	 Change	 Discovery			
	Climate Change Health & Resilience				 Equitable Communities	 Water	 Well-being	 Change	 Ecosystems	
	Decarbonization				 Equitable Communities	 Economy	 Energy	 Resources		
					 Change					

Overview of AIA Climate Justice in Architecture Taxonomy themes and spatial scales: Haven. Source: Biositu, LLC





Double-height lounge space at Haven with views of the outdoors.  
Image Credit: MASS

## Social determinants of health

**Publicly disclosing the shelter location to increase access and support the mental health of survivors:** Shifting from an undisclosed location to a public shelter supports survivors who are still living with abusers in three ways. First, Haven is easier to find when survivors are ready to seek help. Second, the disclosed location reduces social isolation and supports social connectedness for survivors by allowing visits from family and friends—something that was not possible in the undisclosed location. Third, moving the topic of domestic violence into the community helps erode potential self-stigmatization that could stand in the way of seeking help.

**Tailoring trauma-informed design principles to serve the unique needs of survivors:** Conversations with survivors led the design team

to prioritize design solutions that would center safety, trust, choice, collaboration, and empowerment to promote peace of mind and healing within the Haven campus. To address these principles, the shelter’s functions were organized into two separate buildings and three outdoor areas offering a range of privacy and community interaction levels. The public-facing building hosts community-oriented classes and events. It also houses staff offices, wrap-around services, and an office for local law enforcement. Visitors are screened before being allowed entry, and cameras attached to a security system flag license plate numbers associated with abusers. The residence building, tucked into a quiet spot toward the back of the property, is dedicated to resident housing and accessed by pedestrians using a key card and by cars through a gated, private driveway. These siting strategies are the result of careful consideration around adjacency and programming with the goal of centering the survivor experience as one that promotes a sense of safety and healing.

**Taking a holistic approach:** The design at Haven that survivors arrive at the shelter with their whole selves. It seeks to create a welcoming

environment for all types of family situations, including rooms in the residence that can combine to become private suites, accommodations for pets, and a variety of shared common indoor and outdoor spaces.

**Supporting a sense of safety and choice:** Survivor input inspired the design team to include double-height living room spaces at each end of the residence and a main open staircase. These spaces draw in natural light and offer views to the surrounding landscape, creating a visual connection to nature that supports calm, orientation, and emotional safety. Operable shading systems allow users to regulate light and privacy, reinforcing a sense of control and choice. Throughout the building, clear sight lines, multiple routes, and the absence of blind corners ensure that movement feels intuitive and secure, allowing survivors to decide how to navigate and where to pause within spaces that remain open, bright, and connected to the outdoors.

**Building community among residents:** The residence features a single, central communal kitchen instead of several small kitchens placed throughout the building, because survivors at the previous shelter valued the connections they made with each other as they cooked and shared meals together. In the public-facing building, spaces like the library offer additional, intimate spaces for community building while maintaining the design principle of clear sight lines and multiple access points.

**Supporting families through child-focused design elements:** Recognizing that children often accompany survivors when they take up residence at Haven, rooms set aside for counseling and private phone calls in the intake area of the public-facing building include a window into an adjacent playroom so survivors and their children can see each other while maintaining acoustic separation during intake and counseling sessions. Child-specific features of the campus include a children’s library, therapy rooms with children’s artwork displayed at their eye level, and an outdoor playground.

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“Mental health can be and should be supported and maintained by the environment. Functionality, clarity, and sense of order help to regulate our central nervous system. To those coming from chaos and anxiety-provoking homes ruled by abusive partners, there is nothing more soothing than well-defined spaces and roles.”  
—Ania Bartkowiak, Counselor at Haven (Giving Hope A Home)

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Exterior view of Haven.  
Image Credit: MASS

“It’s not necessarily about the building design at all. It’s more about the work that [Haven] does in the space. The fact that this is a disclosed shelter is so important for resilience of the community and the survivors; because, resilience is a lot about the connections that you have in a community. If people you know are there and something’s going on, or a climate event happens, then having those connections and not being hidden is really important. That in itself is a strategy.”

—James Kitchin, Director, Abundant Futures Lab, MASS

#### **Supporting the financial stability of survivors by eliminating the need for personal vehicles:**

Bozeman reports twice the national average of residents who commute to work using public transit, walking, or cycling (13.5%, compared with 8.2% in Gallatin County, 6% in Montana, and 6.7% in the U.S.). Many survivors arrive at Haven facing financial insecurity,

including lack of access to a personal vehicle. Locating the campus in a safe neighborhood within walking distance to a grocery store, an elementary school, a large park, and multiple bus lines eliminates the need to own a car while living at Haven and contributes to the organization’s holistic support for survivors as they transition to a more stable living situation.

#### **Supporting mental health through community-facing programs:**

Haven’s community-facing wellness services are geared towards both destigmatizing conversations about domestic violence and acknowledging the role that mental health and social connections play in fostering health-promoting family dynamics. This is particularly important in a community where 18.5% of adults report poor mental health, compared with 16.6% nationally.

#### **Increasing community access to nature and opportunities for physical activity:**

Regular access to nature and opportunities for physical activity can improve mental health and reduce the risk of chronic disease. Bozeman boasts a high percentage of physically active adults (84.8%, compared with 76.3% in the U.S.) and significantly lower rates of many

chronic diseases than the U.S. average, such as high blood pressure (19% in Bozeman, compared with 32.7% in the U.S.), diabetes (4.9%, compared with 11.3%), obesity (21.7%, compared with 33%), and heart disease (3.7%, compared with 6.1%). However, access to parks and opportunities for physical activity is not distributed equally across the community. Only 55.6% of the population in Montana and 61% of U.S. residents report living near a park. The real estate deal that carved out space for the new Haven campus was motivated, in part, by the Gallatin Valley Land Trust’s commitment to increasing access to parks and trails for underserved community members. Haven’s outdoor spaces were intentionally designed to support healing and physical activity for all ages, including areas for children’s play, walking, and quiet reflection. Indoor wellness programming, such as yoga classes, further supports those goals while also increasing community awareness about the links between physical health, mental health, and domestic violence.

“We programmatically as an organization have been working over the past decade to really mobilize the community in addressing intimate-partner violence, but with this new facility we’ll actually have the space that neighbors, friends, family members can easily interact with the org, support survivors and help us find the path forward to a future without violence.”

—Erica Coyle, former Executive Director of Haven.  
(Bozeman Daily Chronicle, 2021)

## Cultural connection to place

#### **Creating a domestic feel to help destigmatize conversations about domestic violence:**

The modest building footprint, transparent façade, and architectural elements, such as the gable roofs of the residential building, evoke domestic architecture. These strategies lift up the dignity of all people and the importance of destigmatizing conversations about domestic violence by creating a welcoming, empowering environment of support for both survivors and community members.

**Responding to the range of survivors’ cultural needs:** The design of the residence building is intentionally flexible, accommodating the wide range of backgrounds, belief systems, and family compositions





Haven is located adjacent to a large public park.  
*Image Credit: MASS*

represented within Bozeman’s survivor community. For example, Native American survivors expressed a strong preference for centering visual and physical access to natural spaces into their healing process. As a result, ample daylight and visual access to nature are integrated throughout the building. Multiple exterior spaces—ranging from fully private to semi-private to accessing the public park next door—provide survivors with choice and autonomy.

“Designing for the whole person was central to the project’s trauma-informed approach. Conversations with Haven emphasized that survivors should have access to the same opportunities and facilities as anyone else in their community. In the public-facing building, the multipurpose room was designed for flexibility, serving as a space for yoga, small lectures, and community gatherings, while a small library offers computer access and a quiet reading

room. In the residential building, we discussed how we should design a shared kitchen that could also host group cooking classes and, more importantly, give survivors the ability to choose and prepare their own food, a simple act that restores agency and connection.”

— Ana Fernández Martínez, Senior Architect, MASS

**Leaning into Haven’s rural community where “everyone knows everyone”:** Making the shelter public-facing allows it to tap into community resources that will help support survivors as they transition to the next phase of life.

**Accommodating pets to acknowledge their central role in many families:** Pets are integral members of many families in the U.S. According to the American Humane Association, 71% of survivors report their pets were also abused. As a result, up to 65% of survivors with pets delay leaving a dangerous situation because they do not want to leave

their pet behind. The design of the facility includes ample outdoor areas for pet relief and a variety of indoor spaces where survivors could relax and spend time with their pets.

**Building trust with law enforcement through daily contact:** The public-facing building includes office space for law enforcement. This security feature helps build trust between law enforcement and the domestic violence survivor community, which creates a sense of safety, supports them in their healing journey and transition to their new phase of life, and enhances their ability to hold abusers accountable for their actions.

## Economic development without causing displacement

**Allocating space for wraparound services for survivors:** The new campus is large enough to accommodate wraparound services that were previously housed off-site. These services, located in the public-facing building, support survivors as they prepare for their next phase. They include relocation services and financial literacy programs, which help survivors prepare for potential future homeownership. Many survivors face economic hardship when they arrive at Haven, including the need to secure employment that pays enough to cover both transportation and housing costs for themselves and their children. Housing and transportation are particularly challenging because the combined expense consumes an average of 42% of a family’s annual income in Bozeman and 47% in Gallatin County. This housing and transportation burden may help explain the relatively low levels of homeownership in Bozeman (43.7%), compared with 69% in Montana and 65% in the U.S.

## Ecosystem health

**Using biophilic design principles to create a healing environment:** Haven makes use of natural building materials, including cork flooring and wood used in both interior finishes and façade cladding, along with landscaping, visual connections to the outdoors, and daylighting to increase a sense of safety, support the healing process, and promote mental health.

“I work a lot with the participants, and I understand how the spaces impact their wellbeing and how important it has been for them to have green spaces and to have big, beautiful windows and light.”

—Kareena, Director of Operations, Haven

**Integrating native plants with public safety considerations into the landscape design:** The landscape design strategically places plantings, boulders, concrete benches, and other landscaping elements in locations where they double as protection for the building façade facing the public driveway and parking area. The landscape also creates a natural barrier that reinforces the fence separating Haven from the adjacent public park. As former executive director of Haven Erica Coyle explained: “Haven feels separate from the park next door. It’s got fencing around it. And when you are at the park, you can see [Haven], you can see the buildings. But it does not feel integrated into the park. That was intentional to what we wanted to communicate to the general public. ... This is not a place for you to come play without an invitation. ... There are both natural barriers, like a grove of trees and a little creek running through, and the additional barrier of a fence.”

“Together with the landscape team at MASS, the site was designed to feel both welcoming and protective. During early conversations with Haven staff and local partners, we discussed how the site layout could create a gradient of privacy and safety, from more public areas near the administrative wing to quieter gardens toward the residential building. Survivors who feel comfortable engaging in community can spend time in the front courtyards, while others may prefer to use the more private outdoor areas. We wanted the design to give each person the ability to choose what feels safe and comfortable for them at each moment in their healing process.”

— Ana Fernández Martínez, Senior Architect, MASS

**Aligning the landscape design with a large community park next door:** Haven collaborated with the Gallatin Valley Land Trust and the City of Bozeman to purchase 12 acres of undeveloped land. Three acres were set aside for Haven, and the remaining nine acres expanded the existing Bozeman Ponds Park, creating space for a new, natural playground, a fenced dog park, a community garden, outdoor gathering spots, and a trail system.

**Protecting the regional ecosystem:** Haven is located in the greater Yellowstone ecosystem, the largest intact ecosystem remaining in North America. The campus landscape design seeks to preserve this natural and cultural resource.

“Our landscape team thought about [the fact that] we’re part of the greater Yellowstone ecosystem, which is the largest intact ecosystem in North America. ... The site was a greenfield. So, our intent was to place the building to preserve as much of the existing site as we could ... and then bring in native plantings to help bring it back.”

—Taylor Klinkel, Senior Architect, MASS

## Climate change health & resilience

**Enhancing community and occupant resilience to extreme heat:** Bozeman, Montana’s climate vulnerability assessment from 2019 identifies extreme heat, floods, drought, reduced mountain snowpack, wildfire, and winter storms as the primary climate change-related hazards expected to increasingly impact the city through the end of the century. Survivors reported to the design team that the previous shelter felt safe, but it was cramped and uncomfortable, particularly during the summer because it did not have air conditioning and the windows were not operable due to safety concerns. All bedrooms in the new residence include fans and operable windows, in addition to optional air conditioning. Staff have found that providing this flexibility helps foster community-building by reducing the potential for temperature-related conflict among residents.

**Community and occupant resilience to wildfire:** According to the Montana Department of Natural Resources and Conservation, the total risk of wildfire damage to structures is extremely high in Bozeman (>95th percentile). Haven’s enhanced filtration system and backup batteries, designed to bridge disruptions in the power supply for up to four hours, will help protect residents in the event a power outage occurs during a future wildfire.

“I really like thinking about climate justice together with social and cultural justice. When we started designing Haven, we wanted to provide survivors with the thermal comfort they need and deserve, but also to question the idea, rooted in Western culture, that comfort is a fixed concept entirely dependent on mechanical systems. We wanted a building that feels resilient and gives people choices to adapt their environment to their own needs. At Haven, for example, windows are operable, equipped with solar shading devices, and rooms have individually controlled fans. Giving residents this flexibility provides agency and control over their environment. Recognizing that diversity of experience is central to a trauma-informed design approach and it’s what connects comfort, safety, and justice in the same conversation.”

— Ana Fernández Martínez, Senior Architect, MASS

**Reducing exposure to extreme temperatures:** The shelter installed roller shades that can cover the large windows in the residence common rooms to increase insulation during extreme temperatures. It also uses radiant heat, which retains warmth longer during a power outage in winter weather than heat delivered through the air supply.

“At least for most of our winters, we do still have really cold weather. So, even when it’s negative 20 outside, you can still be in one of the living room spaces in the shelter and feel the sunshine and feel the warmth and have that really nice, comforting experience while not being outside in it.”

—Erica Coyle, former Executive Director, Haven

**Contributing to community resilience to extreme heat:** According to the CDC Heat and Health Tracker, Haven’s zip code (59715) falls in the 92nd percentile in the U.S. for the historical number of extreme heat days and 75th percentile for heat-related illnesses. Several aspects of the neighborhood built environment contribute to the risk of heat-related illness, including 50–80% impervious surface and only 3% tree canopy. Haven’s landscaping contributes to citywide efforts to protect green space and expand the tree canopy—enhancing community resilience to heat while also protecting shelter residents and staff from exposure to extreme heat if the power goes out during a heat wave.





**Emphasizing water conservation to support community resilience to drought:** The Bozeman climate vulnerability assessment predicts more frequent and severe drought in an already semi-arid ecosystem. The city’s reliance on snowpack in the Gallatin mountain range for 80% of its potable water—a resource under threat by climate change—has prompted Bozeman to prioritize water conservation to enhance the long-term resilience of the water supply. Native and drought-resistant landscaping and water-efficient fixtures at Haven support the city’s efforts to use water conservation as a drought-resilience strategy.

“We’ve always had wildfires, but if you want to go hiking now you’ve got to do it in the first half of the summer, because ... usually the second half of the summer is just too smoky. You don’t want to be outside. And it’s getting hotter earlier. It feels like we have fires in June, when usually we wouldn’t get them until late July or early August.”  
—Kareena, Director of Operations, Haven; Erica Coyle, former Executive Director, Haven

**Sourcing local materials reduced embodied carbon, saved money, and supported local businesses:** Lightweight and glue-laminated timber framing and Douglas fir cladding were locally sourced, which reduced the new building’s embodied carbon while also contributing to a warm, welcoming, and residential feel to the building design.

**Reducing utility costs through decarbonization strategies to free up budget:** The increased square footage in the new facility made it possible to set aside space for local non-profits and government agencies to provide on-site case management and direct services to survivors. The larger space also allowed Haven to increase its staff size, adding overnight advocates, a facilities manager, and an outreach coordinator for programs with boys, men, and faith communities.

# Decarbonization

**Minimizing embodied carbon through flexible spaces:** Many spaces in Haven are adaptable to multiple uses, which helped shrink the building footprint and reduces the need for renovation over the long term.

**Minimizing embodied carbon through materials selection:** The materials selection process prioritized products that were durable, modular, and/or recyclable. For example, carpet tiles in the reading area can be swapped out individually rather than replacing the entire floor, as well as materials with a lower fabrication carbon footprint such as wood windows instead of aluminum or PVC. Facility furniture is also durable and designed to look better as it ages.

**Reducing organizational carbon footprint:** The larger space in the new facility allows Haven to consolidate offices previously in rental spaces into the new building. That budget will now support operational expenses in the core campus, which is designed for energy and water efficiency.



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# Committee on the Environment