AIA Indiana
Awards 2024

City of Anderson Transit Center

Category:
New Construction – (Project cost greater than $5 million)

Project Type:
Public Transit

Project Address:
1220 Jackson St.
Anderson, IN 46011

Date of Substantial Completion:
April 2022

ARCHITECT'S STATEMENT

Project Introduction

The new City of Anderson Transit Station and shell tenant space is the fruition of a nearly decade-long effort of multiple city agencies to study the needs and impacts of a potential new multi-modal transit hub for local and regional bus routes. The decline of Anderson's automotive manufacturing industry in the 1990s, in which 30% of the overall employment evaporated, left the once-bustling downtown pockmarked with asphalt parking lots, infilling swathes of city blocks where blighted buildings were demolished. This project was an opportunity for the city's visionaries to increase equitable transportation access for the community, bolster the urban environment, and commit to investment in their downtown. The Transit Station's design represents the city's new self-image, by incorporating modern detailing yet integrating into the surrounding context through authentic, durable materials and a focus on the pedestrian experience.

Locating the Project

Designing for Integration

The design team studied four sites throughout the city and ultimately selected the site at the intersection of Jackson Street and 13th Street due to four major factors. First, Jackson Street is a primary route into downtown, and as a one-way street, this site acts as a landmark and gateway into downtown. Second, the site was comprised of nearly two blocks of abandoned parking lots; this underutilized location was ripe for a transformative project. Third, the city agreed to reduce the width of Jackson Street and close off a block of 13th Street, increasing the focus on pedestrian access by slowing traffic and increasing sidewalks. Fourth and finally, two active rail lines that run to Indianapolis pass within two blocks of the site. Future long-range plans include commuter rail returning to central Indiana and can extend the reach of the bus-based city transit system.

The Design

Design for Resources, Well-Being

The building is comprised of two distinct masses transected by a dramatic cantilevered wood-framed canopy, taking cues from civic buildings found in historic urban centers across the country, such as the concept of an iconic clock tower present in many historic transit stations. The strong entry extends outward, rather than upward, to signify the welcoming main entry. This canopy forms the main axis of the building, creating a welcoming, transparent entry lobby for the Transit Station, and connecting to the bus canopies to the east.

To the south, a three-story mass contains leasable tenant spaces. This portion of the building establishes an urban scale to the traffic approaching from the south, and its fenestration clearly represents the mercantile activities of urban life. The City plans to lease the ground-level space to a restaurant and the upper two levels to local community partners as administrative offices.

To the north, the scale of the building steps down to a one-story mass that houses the Transit Station. This lower scale is inviting to the frequent pedestrian traffic and creates an opportunity for clerestory daylighting into the transecting public lobby. Layered canopies interweave on all sides of the building to define exterior patron waiting areas and provide protection from rain and snow. Access into the Transit Station is allowed on three sides, creating permeability for pedestrians and bus riders. Contrasting with the city's previous completely enclosed bus station, transparency through the building orients visitors to the buses waiting beyond and increases the feeling of safety.

The exterior material palette was selected for durability, longevity, and contextuality; the large-scale limestone paneling on the first floor and red clay terra cotta rainscreen on the upper floors reflect materials used on the surrounding downtown buildings. Exposed steel components express the city's deep roots in manufacturing, while the modern details set the tone for the city's bright future of innovation.

Within the lobby, the tall volume invites visitors into a light-filled space. The design of the curtain wall and exterior window film provides layering to the glass box, inspired by the depth and detail of surrounding historic storefronts. The structure is primarily a steel moment frame except for the glulam wood cutting through at the entry. The exterior materials of each mass are pulled inside to dissolve the boundary between interior and exterior. Wood ceiling and wall panels welcome visitors into a warm place of respite, countering the often high-stress of day-to-day. The remainder of the interior materials, such as subway tile, are inspired by the iconic transit-inspired palette, ensuring a simple, durable interior. Custom-fabricated wood benches were designed to evoke streetcar seats and were built by a local company that teaches furniture-craft to people overcoming homelessness.

Good Design = Good Business

Design for Equitable Communities, Economy

The city was able to leverage the funding for the project to build the three-story tenant space connected to the transit building, which increases the visibility of the building and bolsters access to jobs and services accessed easily from the transit hub. The city has the flexibility to partner with tenants at a competitive rate, providing economic value to both the tenants and the city.

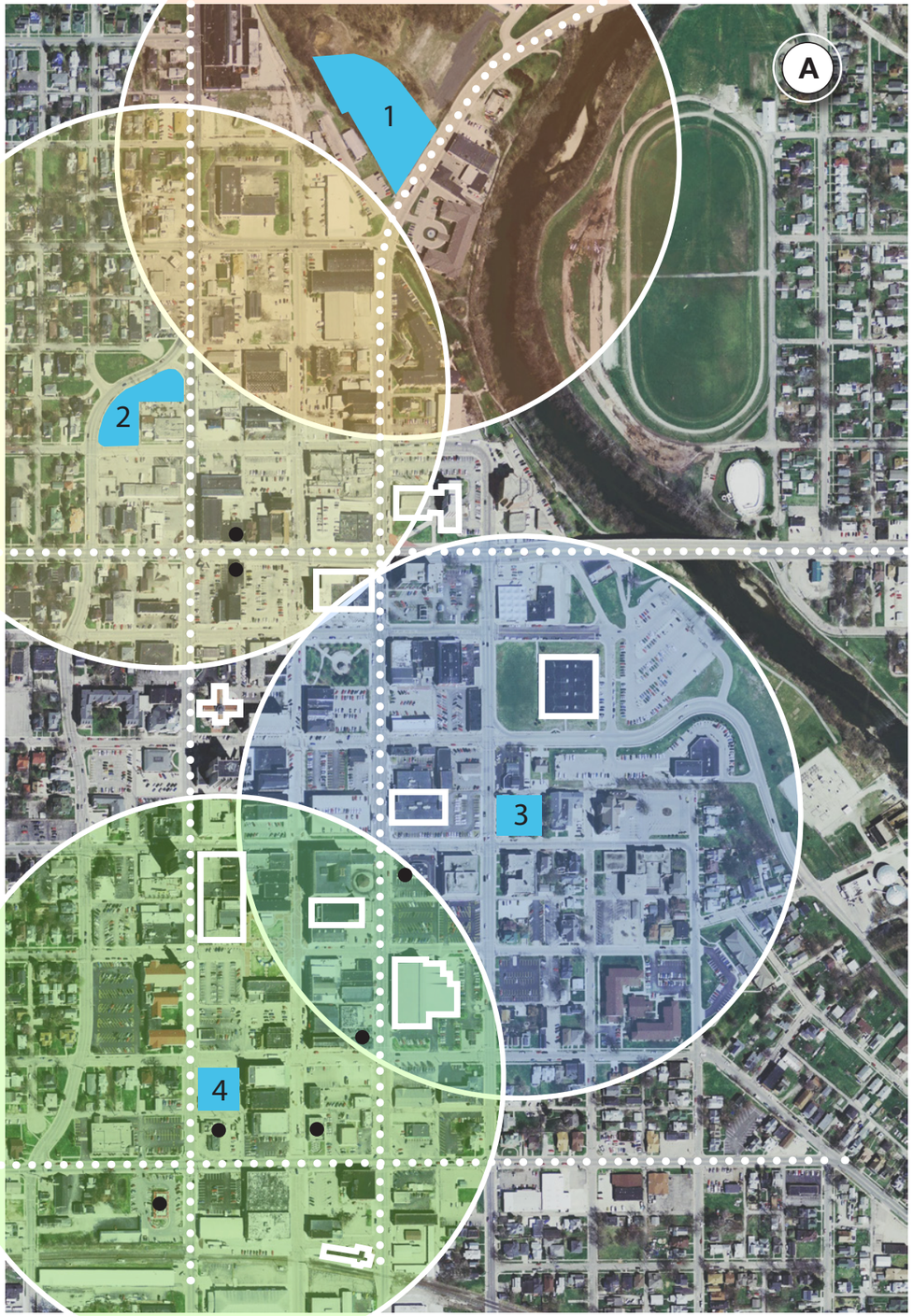
Sustainability Statement

Design for Water, Energy, Ecosystems

The city set high sustainability goals for the project early on and the team elected to include them in funding and grant submissions, which ensured that they were a focus of the project. The project has received LEED Gold Certification, particularly by focusing on energy efficiency. The mechanical system uses a geothermal-sourced heat pump system for the heating and cooling needs, relying on 24 vertical wells that were carefully coordinated on the crowded site crossed with underground utilities. A solar PV array, located on a portion of the roof, was sized to produce enough energy to account for Transit Station's entire electrical load. Excess energy is sold back to the utility company. Thus, the city-occupied portion of the building operates as net zero. Additional sustainable design strategies include daylighting and sun shading, access to views, increased bike and pedestrian infrastructure, enhanced occupant comfort, and sustainably sourced and low embodied energy materials.

The design of the site greatly reduces the impact of stormwater on the city's sewer system compared to the previous paved lot, by decreasing impervious surfaces, improving infiltration, and slowing stormwater underground before releasing it into the sewer system. Native plantings increase biodiversity, create habitats for insects and birds, and improve the beauty of the streetscape.

Baseline EUI: 78
Projected EUI: 45
Percent Reduction from Baseline: 42%



A.
Various sites considered for the project

B.
Site Selected downtown at the intersection of Jackson Street and 13th Street

C.
The location of the Transit Station prior to this project

D.
Prior civic transit infrastructure in Anderson (no longer existing)

E.
Train Depot – Prior civic transit infrastructure in Anderson. No longer used for transit purposes

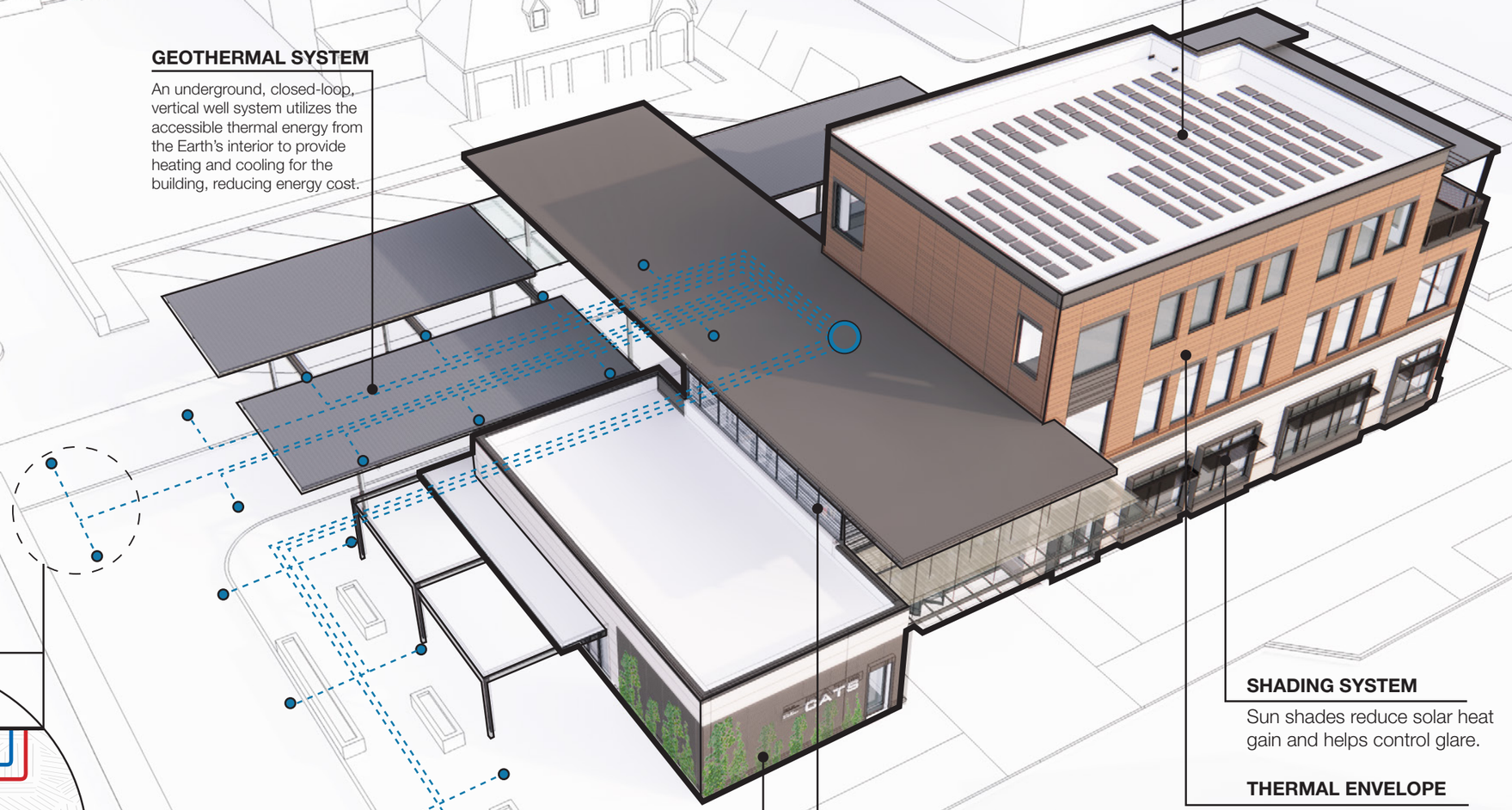
Sustainable Design Strategies

PHOTOVOLTAIC SYSTEM

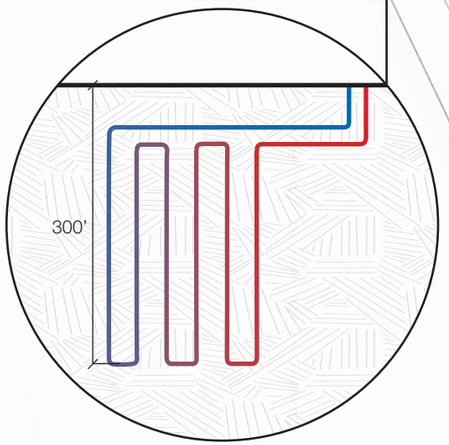
Roof top PV system is providing on-site renewable energy, making the city-occupied portion of the building net zero.

GEOTHERMAL SYSTEM

An underground, closed-loop, vertical well system utilizes the accessible thermal energy from the Earth's interior to provide heating and cooling for the building, reducing energy cost.



VERTICAL LOOP SYSTEM



SHADING SYSTEM

Sun shades reduce solar heat gain and helps control glare.

THERMAL ENVELOPE

Walls were constructed with high-performance insulation to achieve thermal performance that is 30% better than code.

NATURAL DAYLIGHTING

Clerestory lighting provides natural light on three sides of public space.

VEGETATION WALL

Metal screen wall allows vegetation to grow vertically up the facade, increasing exposure to nature.


CITY OF ANDERSON
TRANSIT SYSTEM
CATS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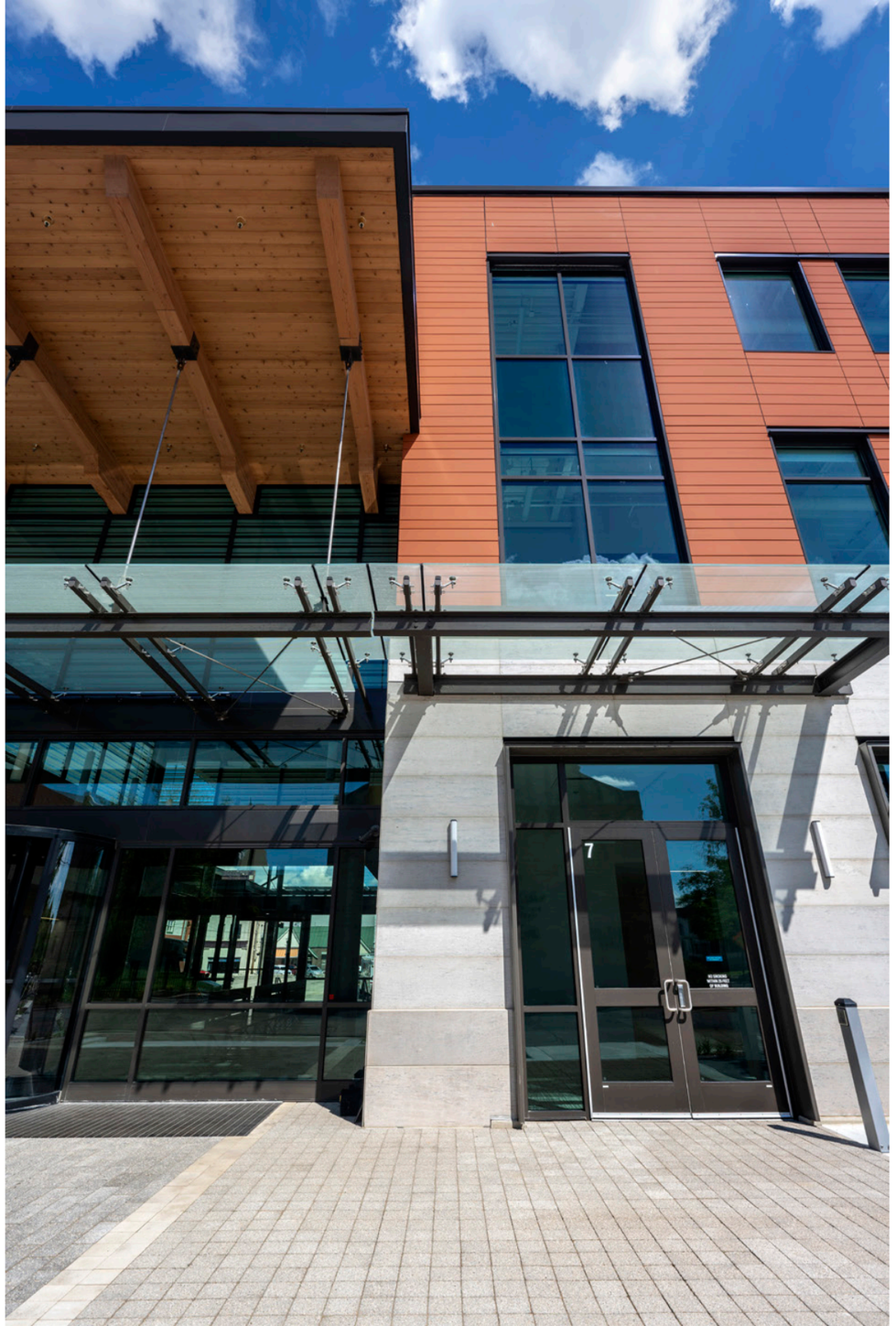
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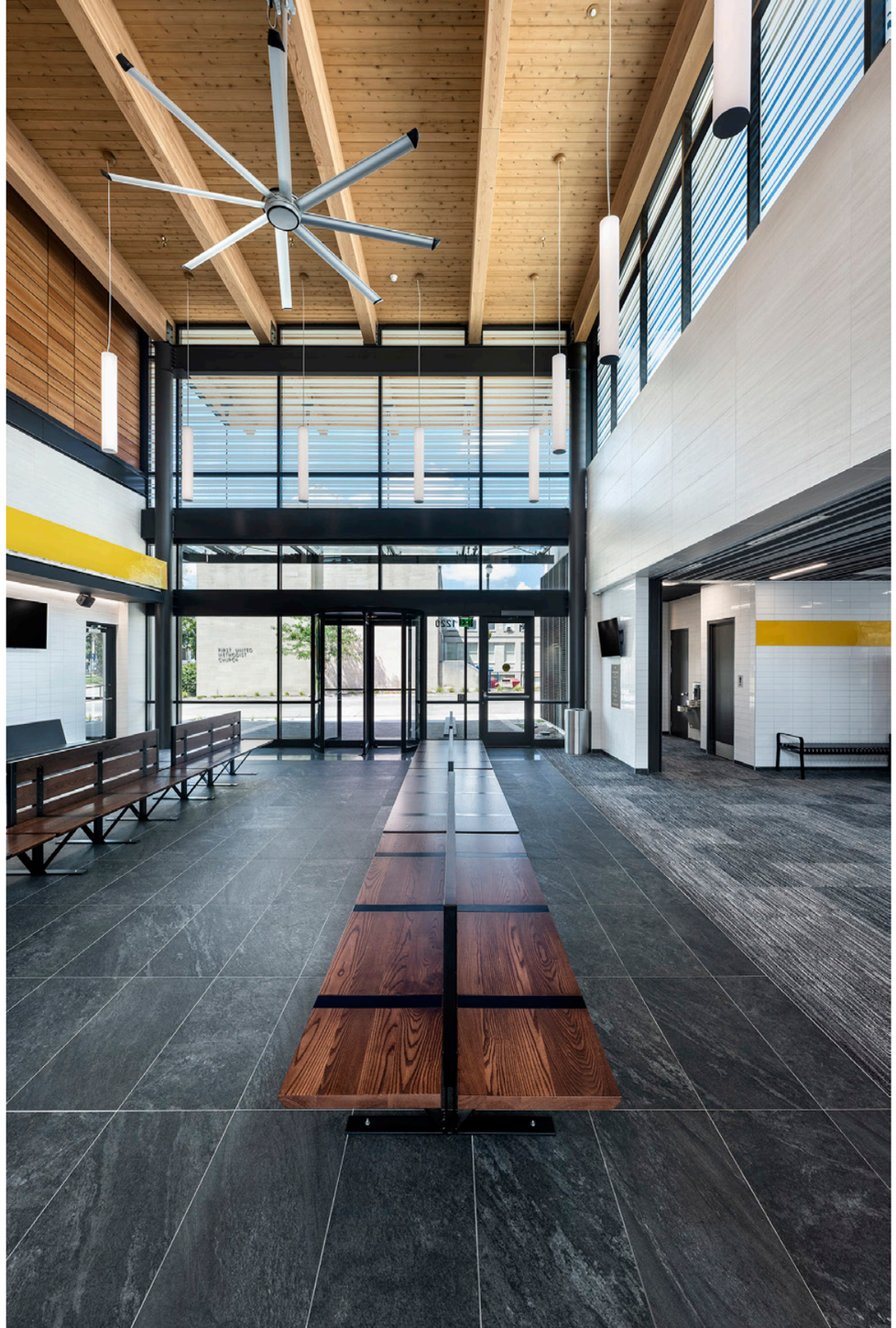
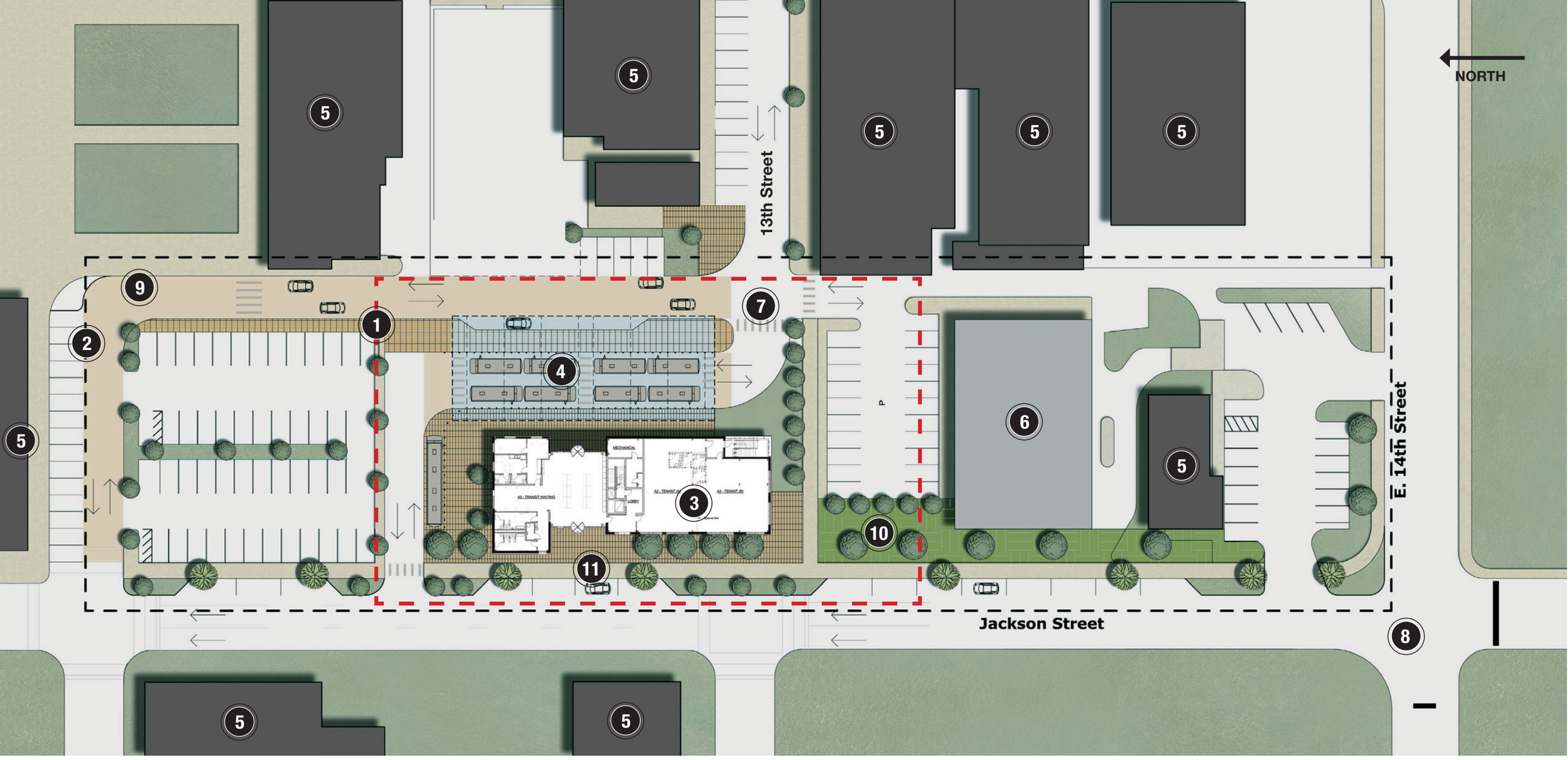



INFORMATION



1. Project site boundary (red dashed line)
2. City improvements extent (black dashed line)
3. New Transit Building
4. Bus canopies
5. Existing neighboring building
6. Pad-ready future development site
7. Closed off 13th Street
8. Reduced Jackson Street from 3 lanes to 2 lanes
9. New alley street for improved site access
10. Preserved open space for approach view
11. Main entry and dining patio

North / South Section