



2025 AIA INDIANA AWARDS  
FISHERS MUNICIPAL CENTER

## ARCHITECT'S STATEMENT

When inspections revealed that their existing city hall was sinking into the ground and would be costly to repair, the City of Fishers was provided with an opportunity to start afresh—to re-examine the community's current needs and challenge the traditional municipal program model itself.

Experiencing a nearly 700% increase in population since the original building was constructed, the new design sought not to just be an updated, structurally-sound replacement, but an innovative solution to respond to the community's immediate needs and anticipate its future ones.

### A Building for the People

With the driving goal of creating a building “for the people,” the ground floor was specifically organized with a variety of public spaces that would create community activation both inside and outside of the building throughout the year.

An inviting breezeway with primary entry points was incorporated to allow activity to flow through and to the Central Green. This improves pedestrian circulation, brings daylight and views into the building, and can serve as space for events, classes, or as an extension of the lobby spaces for theater events.

### A Prominent, Unique Site

In the heart of the city's center and cultural district, the site was perfect for its visibility and walkability. Yet, there were some significant challenges to overcome: a dramatic curve and a public-facing nature on all sides. The building embraces the curved Municipal Drive; however, the building's curve shifts and steps back to make space for critical site infrastructure and amenities. The east portion of the building shifts further north to allow for the primary stormwater rain garden to create a lush front yard full of color and life, while also creating a landscape buffer between the building and the roadway. The structure was also lifted 24 inches above existing grade to provide civic presence on all four sides and establish pedestrian zones along Municipal Drive.

With the site being fronted by a primary roadway to the south and Central Green to the north (also being a building that embraced activity and people) careful consideration was taken to locate service and back-of-house functions

in locations that had minimal visual impact to the building, its users, and pedestrians. Mechanical units are screened with playful openings within the metal panel walls, and first floor masonry screen walls help to screen and protect these areas while staying cohesive with the rest of the architecture.

### Addressing a Gap in the Arts

A community engagement survey identified the city was lacking critical art spaces for adult and youth classes, galleries, and performances. By approaching the building's program creatively, the new center's design solved many of the unearthed needs.

A 250-person multipurpose “courtyard” theater with retractable seating and pit area anchors the west side of the public breezeway on the ground floor. From a traditional proscenium theater to hybrid layouts to a completely flat floor configuration that city staff or community groups can utilize, this highly flexible design approach enables the space to host a broad variety of uses including dance performances, city council meetings, ‘town-hall’ discussions, music ensembles, art galleries, lectures, and more.

The naturally daylit lobby serves as a pre and post function area for events while also hosting rotating community galleries and programming. A cultural concierge desk within the lobby provides a welcoming information center for visitors while also being designed to be a ticketing/refreshment counter for various shows throughout the year.

On the east side of the breezeway, another lobby space is anchored by two gallery spaces: one open and visible to the public through windows, and one internal and more intimate to serve a multitude of exhibition types throughout the year. Mobile art walls allow for the galleries and lobby spaces to be used in a variety of ways, displaying a breadth of artwork.

Two flexible art classrooms provide space for instructional programming, and with north-facing windows and doors, programming often spills out into the plaza space in the warmer months. A ceramics studio with storage and clay-making infrastructure anchors the east end of the first level and provides views out to the rain garden.

On the exterior, various locations were developed with elevating the arts in mind. Along the breezeway, a 40-foot banner creates a moment for large city

messaging or art. Landscape sculpture pads were located throughout the rain garden for a future request for proposal from community artists. At the north side of the building, color changing glows up-light the white metal panel that clads the second floor of the theater, creating a “community lantern” that can be programmed to various evening events within the Central Green and Amphitheater. Lastly, textural patterning is introduced into the stone and metal panels on the exterior and wood on the interior to create a subtle rhythm, pattern, and variety, all of which are key principles of art.

### Modern, Collaborative Workspace

With the population growth also came the growth of city employees who needed an environment that was vibrant and cross-collaborative. Located privately on the upper levels, generous amounts of glazing allow for interior spaces to have balanced natural daylight which minimizes lighting energy loads and provides views connecting staff to the activity in the heart of the city. A central open stair between levels anchors the social hub and roof terrace, giving views to the amphitheater and creating an amenity space which allows moments for collaboration or the ability to host intimate events.

## SUSTAINABILITY STATEMENT

### Designed for Resiliency

Careful consideration was made to ensure that the city's investment in this new building would serve the community for decades to come. Intentional strategies were deployed around five key categories of sustainability: energy, water, context, health, and carbon. Building materials of stone, metal, and concrete were selected both for their beauty and resiliency to reduce maintenance and building life cycle costs. Window placement and orientation along with increased roof and wall insulation provide ~10-15% energy improvement and savings from code construction. Low flow fixtures in conjunction with rain gardens help to reduce water consumption for both interior and exterior uses.

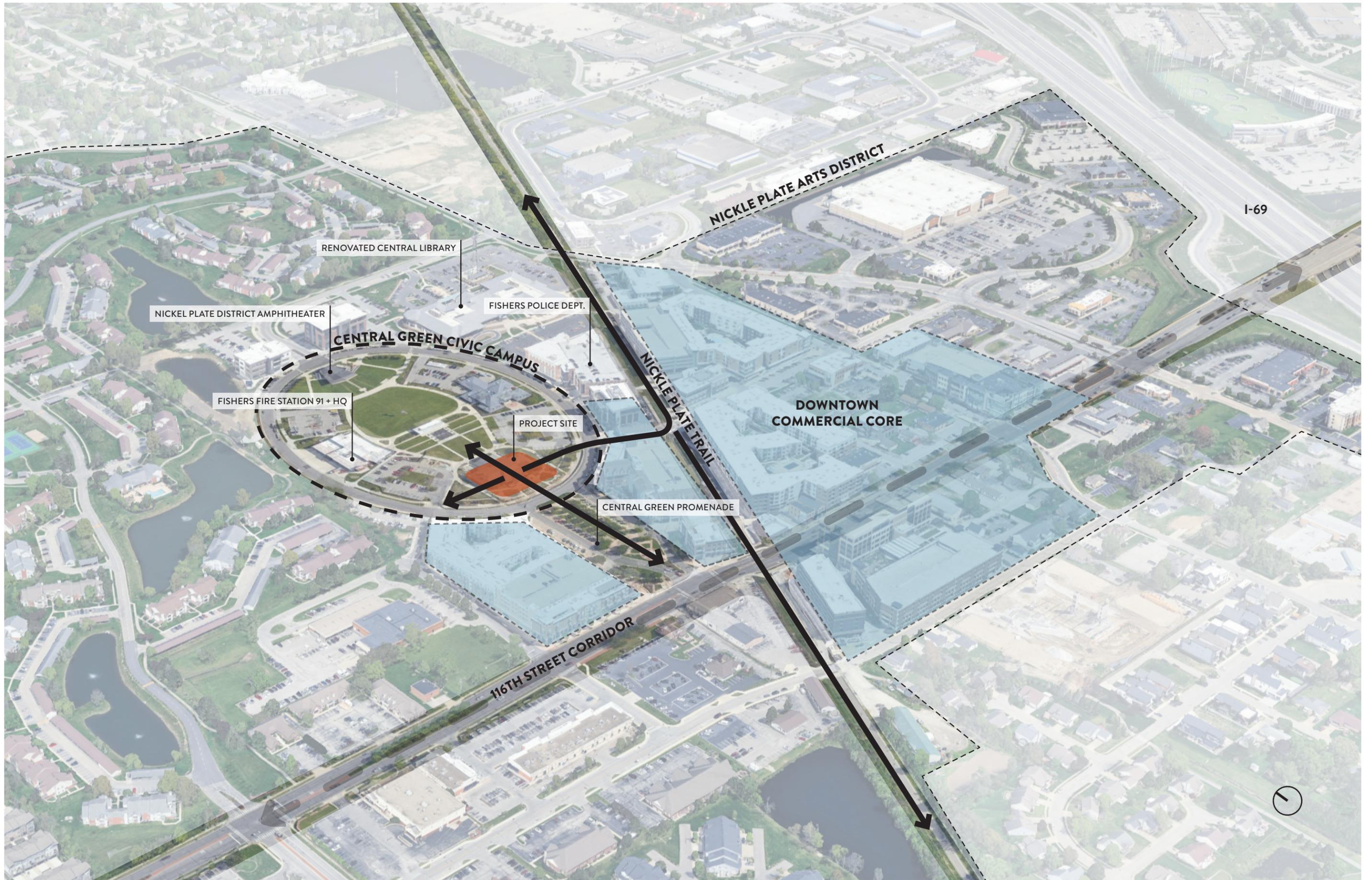
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CATEGORY: NEW CONSTRUCTION (>\$5M)

TYPE: MUNICIPAL

ADDRESS: 1 MUNICIPAL DR, FISHERS, IN 46038

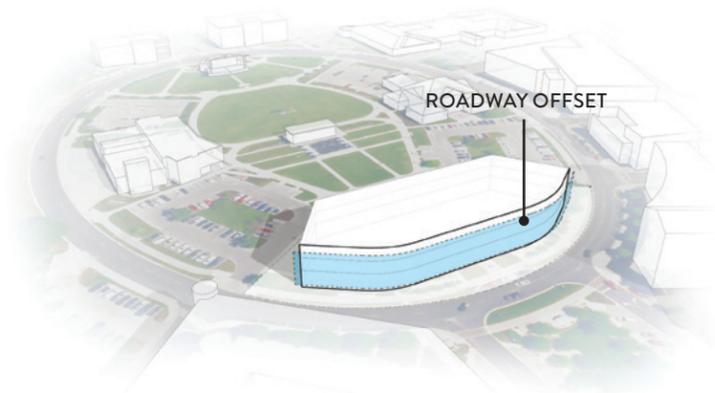
SUBSTANTIAL COMPLETION: MAY 2024





### RESPONDING TO MUNICIPAL DRIVE

In the heart of the city's center and cultural district, the site was perfect for its visibility and walkability. Yet, there were some significant challenges to overcome: a dramatic curve and a public-facing nature on all sides. The building embraces the curved Municipal Drive; however, the building's curve shifts and steps back to make space for critical site infrastructure and amenities including public landscape areas, a rain garden, bike parking, and various pathways for circulation.





### INVITING THE PUBLIC TO AND THROUGH

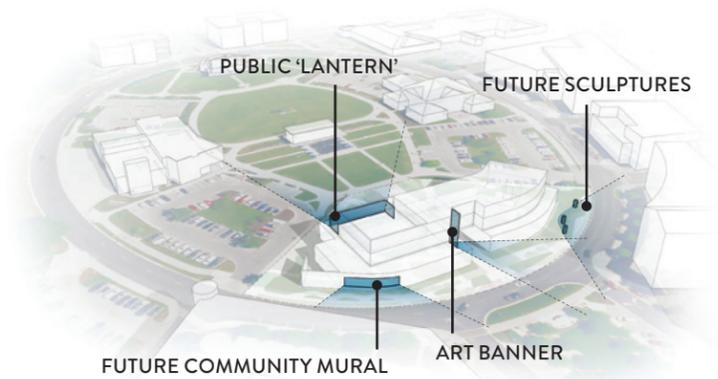
An inviting breezeway with primary entry points was incorporated to allow activity to flow through and to the Central Green. This improves pedestrian circulation, brings daylight and views into the building, and can serve as space for events, classes, or as an extension of the lobby spaces for theater events.





### EMBRACING THE ARTS

On the exterior, various locations were developed with elevating the arts in mind. Along the breezeway, a 40-foot banner creates a moment for large city messaging or art. Landscape sculpture pads were located throughout the rain garden for a future request for proposal from community artists. At the north side of the building, color changing glows up-light the white metal panel that clads the second floor of the theater, creating a “community lantern” that can be programmed to various evening events within the Central Green and Amphitheater.





### CREATING VISUAL CONNECTIONS + INTEREST

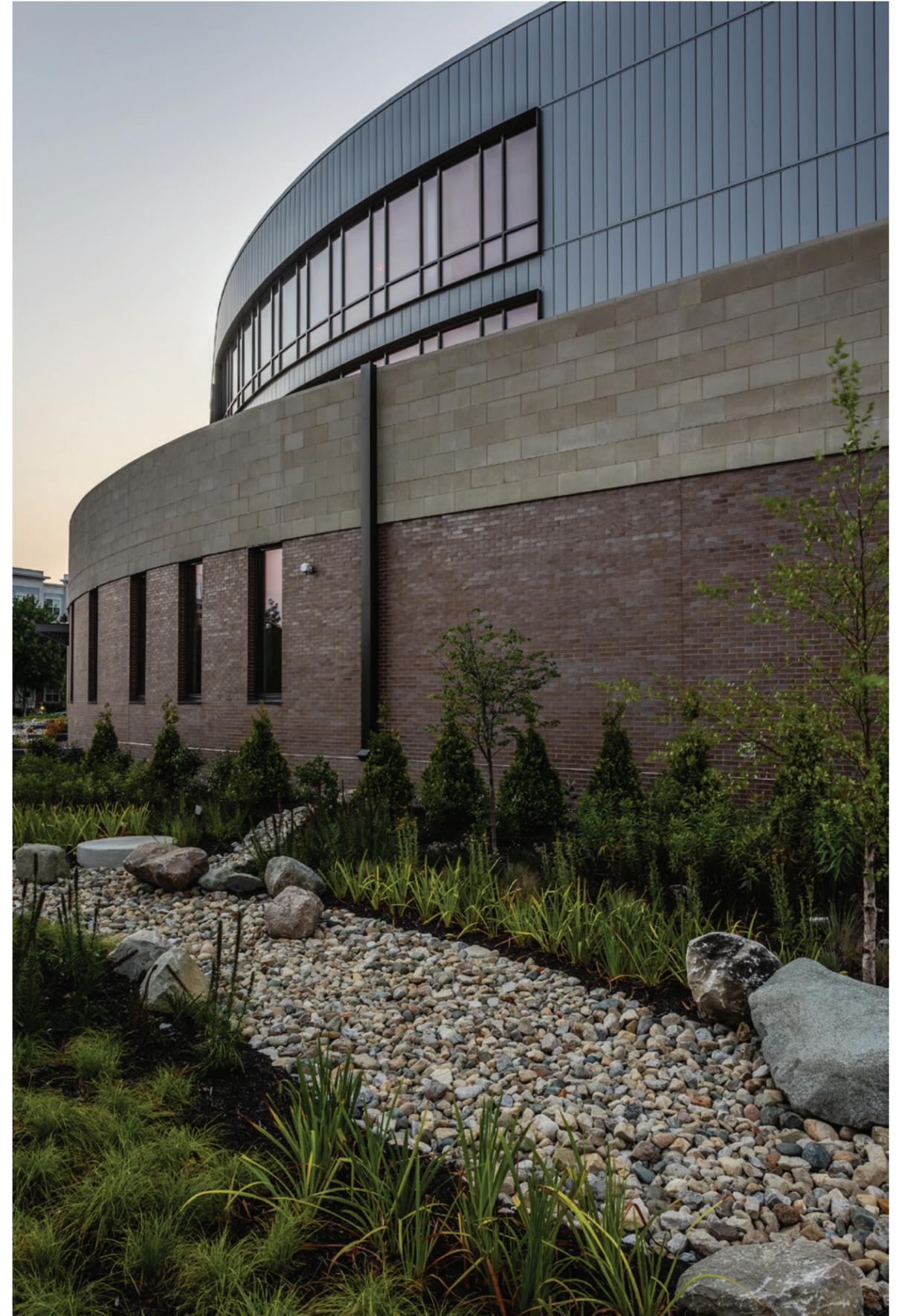
With the site building fronted by a primary roadway to the south and the Central Green to the north (also being a building that embraced activity and people), careful consideration was taken to create moments that would connect interior spaces to the exterior. Glazing along the breezeway connects lobby and gallery spaces to passersby, while the large expanses of glazing at levels two and three provide views and connection for city staff to the area they serve. When opaque exterior walls for security and privacy purposes were needed, subtle rhythms of texture were introduced to create visual interest and “artful” detailing to the building.





### A PURPOSEFUL LANDSCAPE

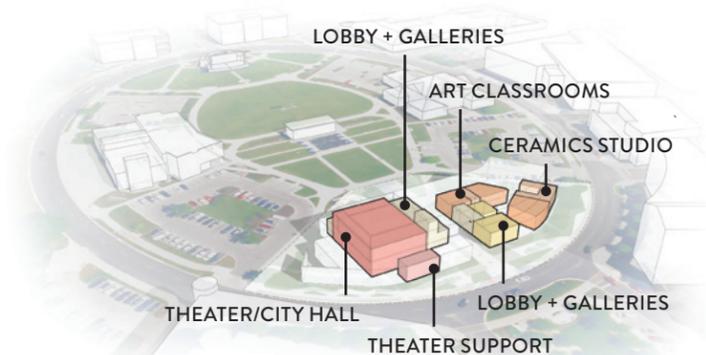
Due to the limited site area and being a building with frontage on all sides the landscape had to be designed with careful coordination with the building and context in order to fit seamlessly into the surroundings. A rain garden located at the southeast corner of the building creates a natural landscape buffer to the roadway for the building, while also providing stormwater infrastructure for the building and site. Other site features include a north plaza space designed for art classes and future farmers market programming, areas for bike parking, and a sloped walkway and stair along the south of the building that provides a civic presence for the building will also being universally accessible.





**CREATIVE PROGRAMMING**

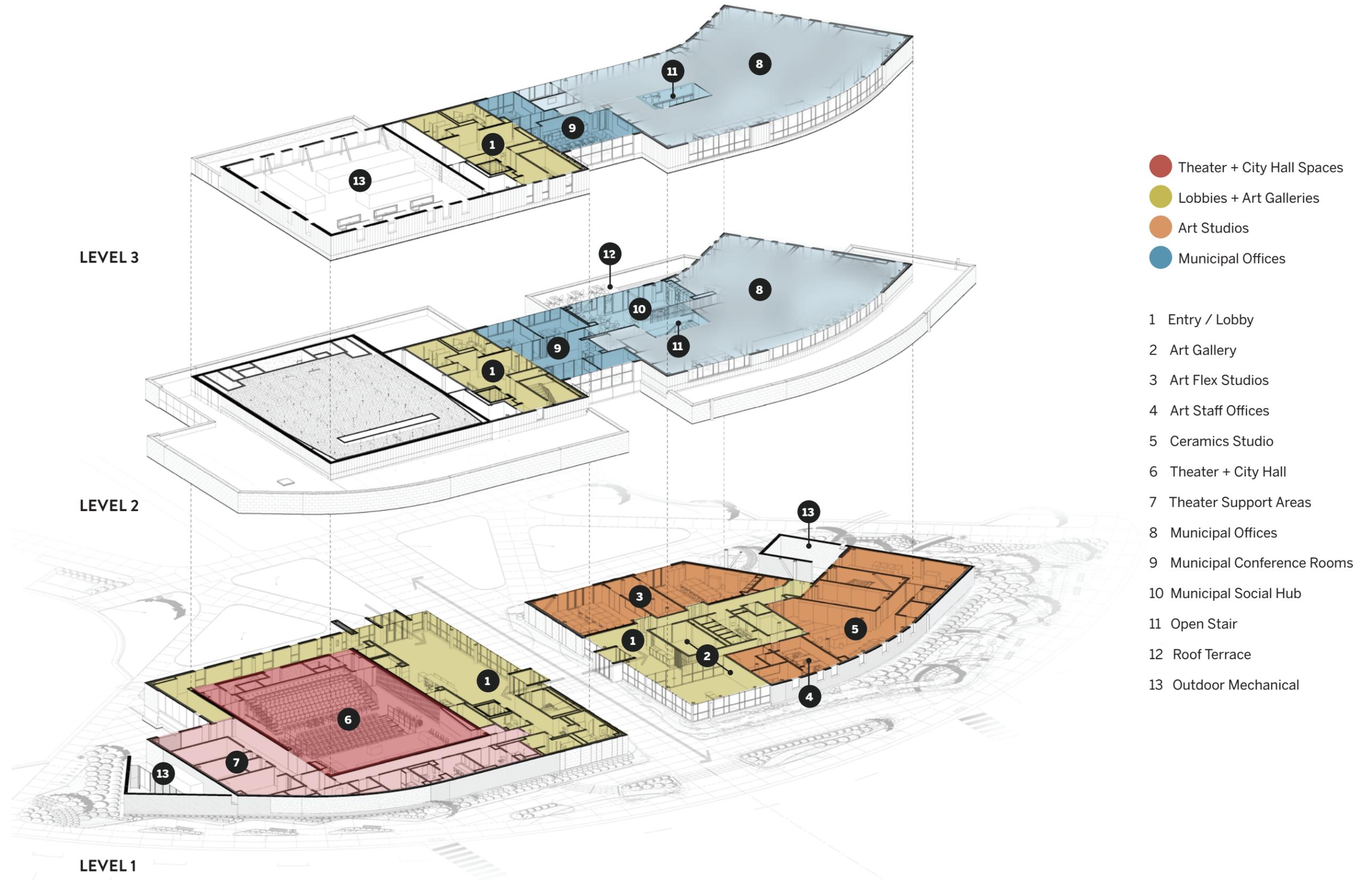
In order to create more public engagement with the building, the ground floor of the building was primarily reserved for public spaces for art and education purposes. The east side of the breezeway incorporates a new art center with two flexible art classrooms, a ceramics studio, and two gallery spaces. Glazing and doors create moments at these program areas to spill out into surrounding site spaces and connect visitors to the activity and art happening within these spaces. The west side of the breezeway incorporates a flexible gallery lobby and theater spaces that provides a space for city hall/municipal functions, theatrical performances, lectures, and art shows to happen throughout the year. The result of this infusion of public programming creates a civic building with life and a building for the people.



### CONTEXTUAL + FORWARD THINKING

The exterior material palette of brick, limestone and metal panel was developed by taking an inventory of the surrounding existing context, however detailing and expression of materials focused on creating a building that embodied the innovation and energy of Fishers. Masonry elements were utilized at the ground floor with semi-reflective metal panels above to create an exterior that was civic and dynamic as you move around the building. Large expanses of glass at office areas and gallery spaces provide daylight and showcase the activity of the building. Lastly "artful" detailing and patterning was introduced to the metal panel, cast stone, and window patterning to create subtle rhythm and texture for the building.







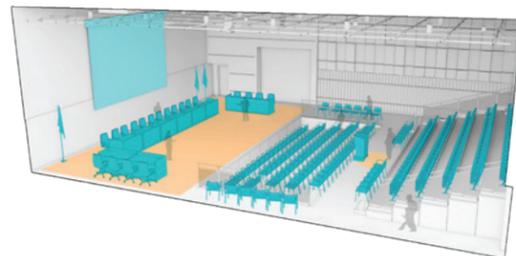
On the east side of the breezeway, a lobby space is anchored by two gallery spaces: one open and visible to the public through windows, and one internal and more intimate to serve a multitude of exhibition types throughout the year. Mobile art walls allow for the galleries and lobby spaces to be used in a variety of ways, displaying a breadth of artwork.



The naturally daylit theater and city hall lobby serves as a pre and post function area for events while also hosting rotating community galleries and programming. A cultural concierge desk within the lobby provides a welcoming information center for visitors while also being designed to be a ticketing/refreshment counter for various shows throughout the year.

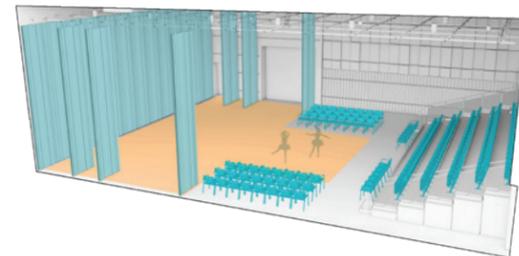


**CITY HALL MEETING**



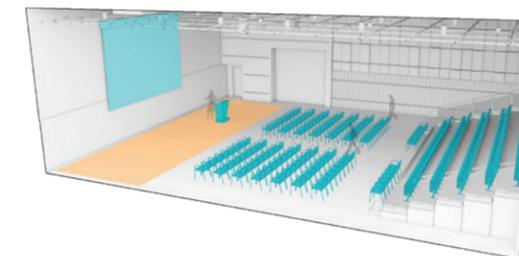
- Configuration Elements:**
- Retractable seating
  - Pit deployed with projection monitor
  - Movable podia and counsel tables as needed

**THEATRICAL/PERFORMANCE**



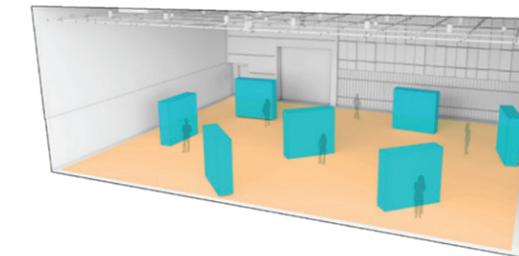
- Configuration Elements:**
- Retractable seating
  - Theatrical curtains
  - Loose seating as needed

**LECTURE PRESENTATION**



- Configuration Elements:**
- Retractable seating
  - Projection monitor
  - Loose seating as needed

**ART SHOW**



- Configuration Elements:**
- Seating and pit in flat floor mode
  - Movable walls brought in for display

**A SHARED CIVIC, ART & PUBLIC RESOURCE**

A 250-person multipurpose “courtyard” theater with retractable seating and pit area anchors the west side of the public breezeway on the ground floor. From a traditional proscenium theater to hybrid layouts to a completely flat floor configuration that city staff or community groups can utilize, this highly flexible design approach enables the space to host a broad variety of uses including dance performances, city council meetings, ‘town-hall’ discussions, music ensembles, art galleries, lectures, and more.

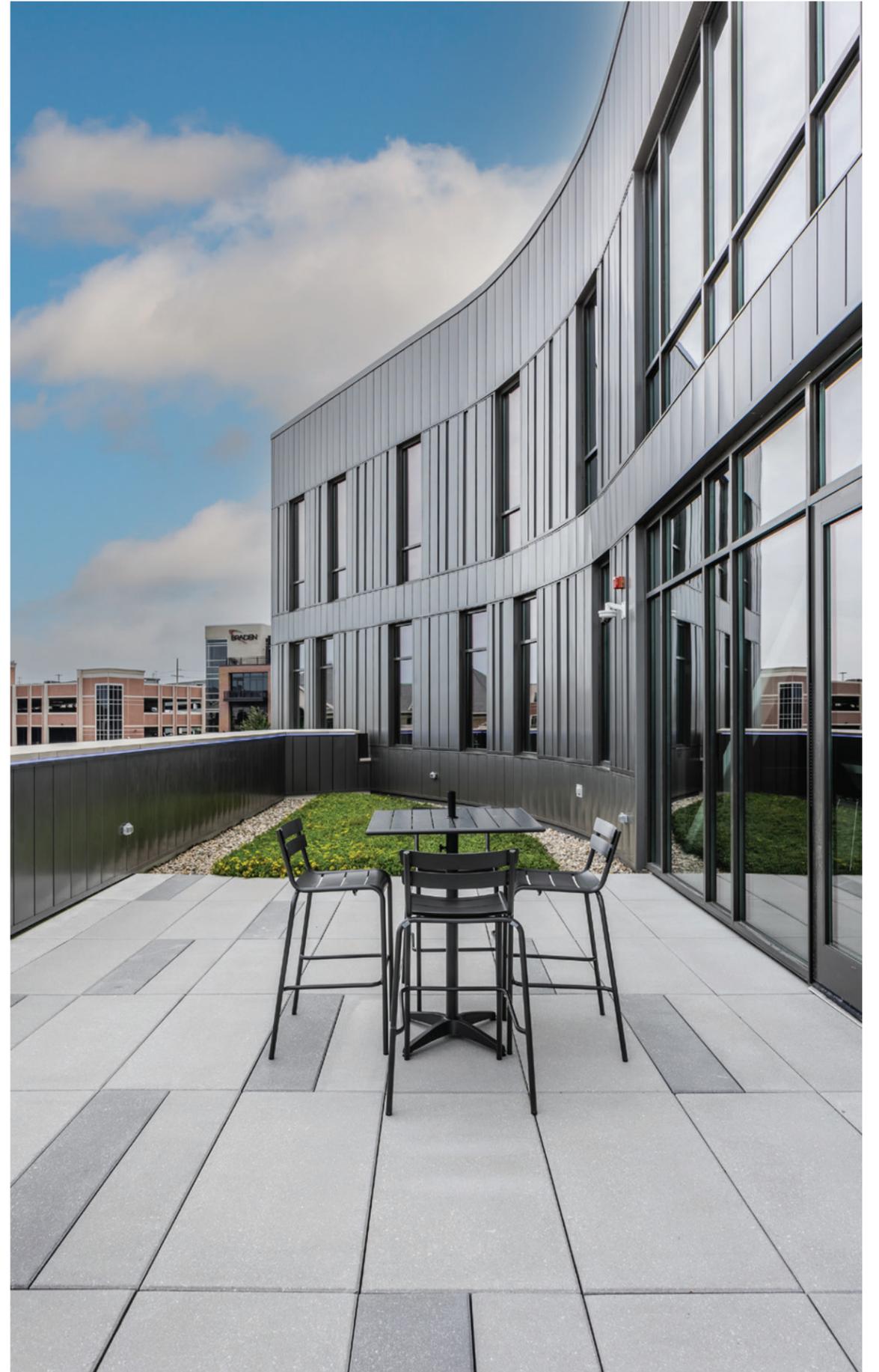




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## FRAMEWORK FOR DESIGN EXCELLENCE

### Design for Integration

Site and building design and form react to existing site flows and organization to integrate seamlessly into the contextual fabric.

### Design for Equitable Communities

First floor public program spaces create new art centered programming that is universally accessible to public. The new theater/city hall creates improved accessibility to civic functions.

### Design for Ecosystems

Enhanced landscape and plantings focused on utilizing plants that were native, resilient, with moments for pollinators. Rain garden feature helps minimize stormwater runoff, and manages water on site.

### Design for Water

Project utilized low flow fixtures to minimize potable water usage throughout the the building.

### Design for Economy

The flexible theater and city hall focused on creating a flexible and multi-use space that maximized the utilization of the space and the city's investment in the space.

### Design for Energy

Additional roof and wall insulation was incorporated above code minimum to improve energy efficiency and reduce operational costs. Design energy models projected the building would perform 10% than industry standard EUI.

### Design for Well-Being

85% of regularly occupied spaces have views to outside, connecting occupants to nature while also providing natural daylight into these spaces.

### Design for Resources

Steel structural system along with material selections focused on providing both interior and exterior finishes that were resilient and provided low life cycle costs for the life of the building.

### Design for Change

Art program and open municipal office were developed to serve the current needs, however also left room for future expansion of work stations and additional storage to be added if necessary.

### Design for Discovery

The project was a milestone for the city and the design and construction team. One year walks and post-occupancy evaluations have provided a dialog between design team and city that has provided lessons learned on this one of a kind building.