

# SEATTLE OPERA. AT THE CENTER

Seattle Design Commission  
Concept Design Phase Review  
February 18, 2016

**02 / Overview**  
**07 / Context**  
**18 / Design**

301 Mercer Street  
Seattle, WA 98109

*nbbj*

# SECTION 01

## OVERVIEW

## PROJECT VISION

Seattle Opera is unlocking opera for all with a new facility on the site of the former Mercer Arena. This new building prioritizes community access and will be a civic space where anyone can view technical and artistic trades and participate in arts learning. In bringing operations together under one roof the new space will create significant efficiencies, enhance the art making process, and allow the company to expand its education and community engagement programs both on- and off-site.



Photo by Jonathan VanderWeit

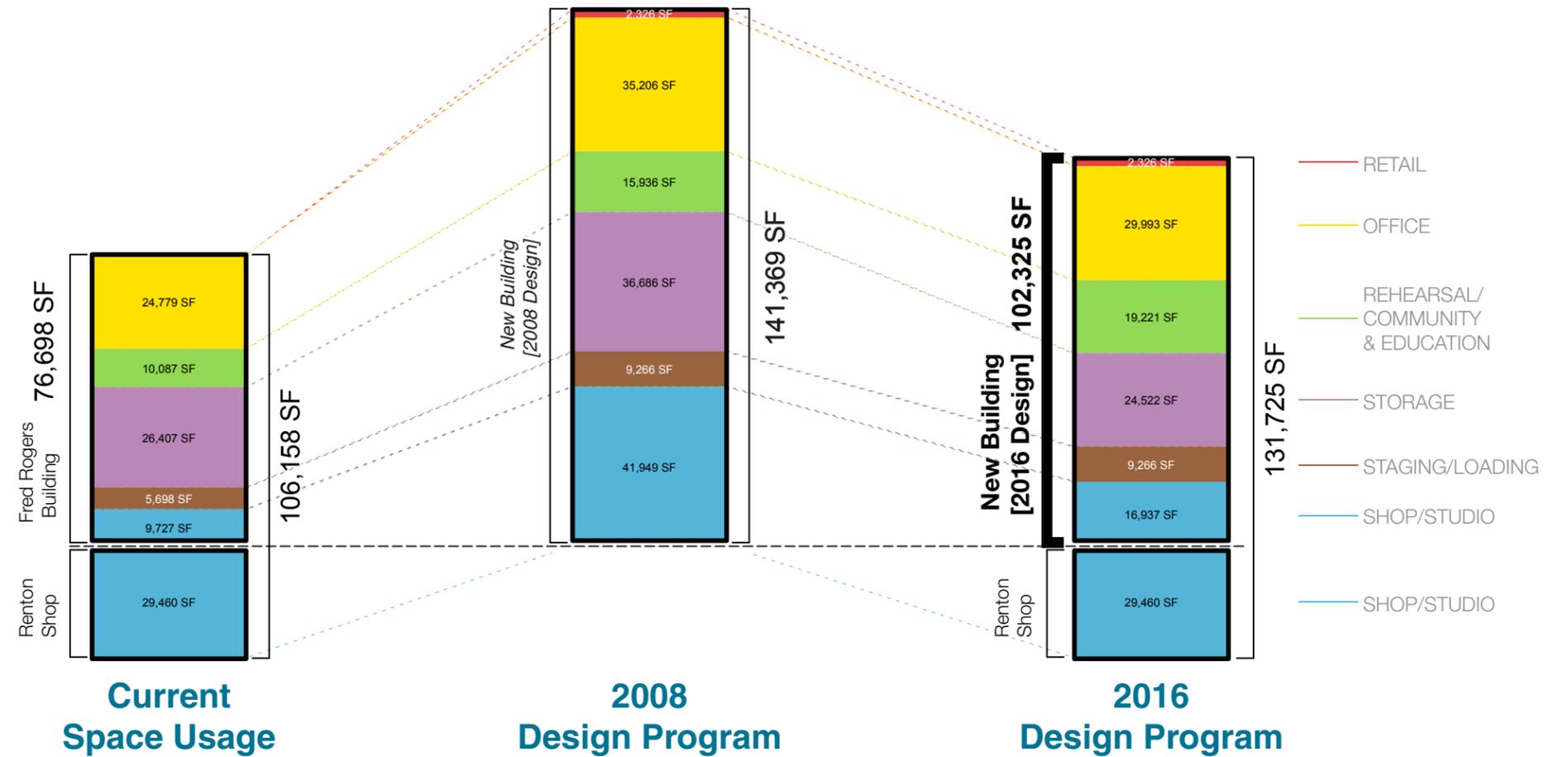
## PROJECT BACKGROUND

### ORGANIZATIONAL HISTORY & CONTEXT

- Founded in 1963 as a result of the 1962 World's Fair performances of Verdi's Aida
- Now the largest arts employer in the state
- Frequently collaborates with and builds sets for other art organizations
- 80,000 tickets are annually sold to performances at McCaw Hall
- Serves more than 75,000 children and adults each year through education and community programs across our state – programs are on track to exceed ticket sales in number served annually

### PROJECT HISTORY

- In 2008, Seattle Opera began Design Review in partnership with Seattle Center
- Due to the economic recession the project was put on hold for several years
- In 2015, public and private partners deemed that it was the right time to resume the project
- This design embodies Seattle Opera's focus on expanding its civic impact

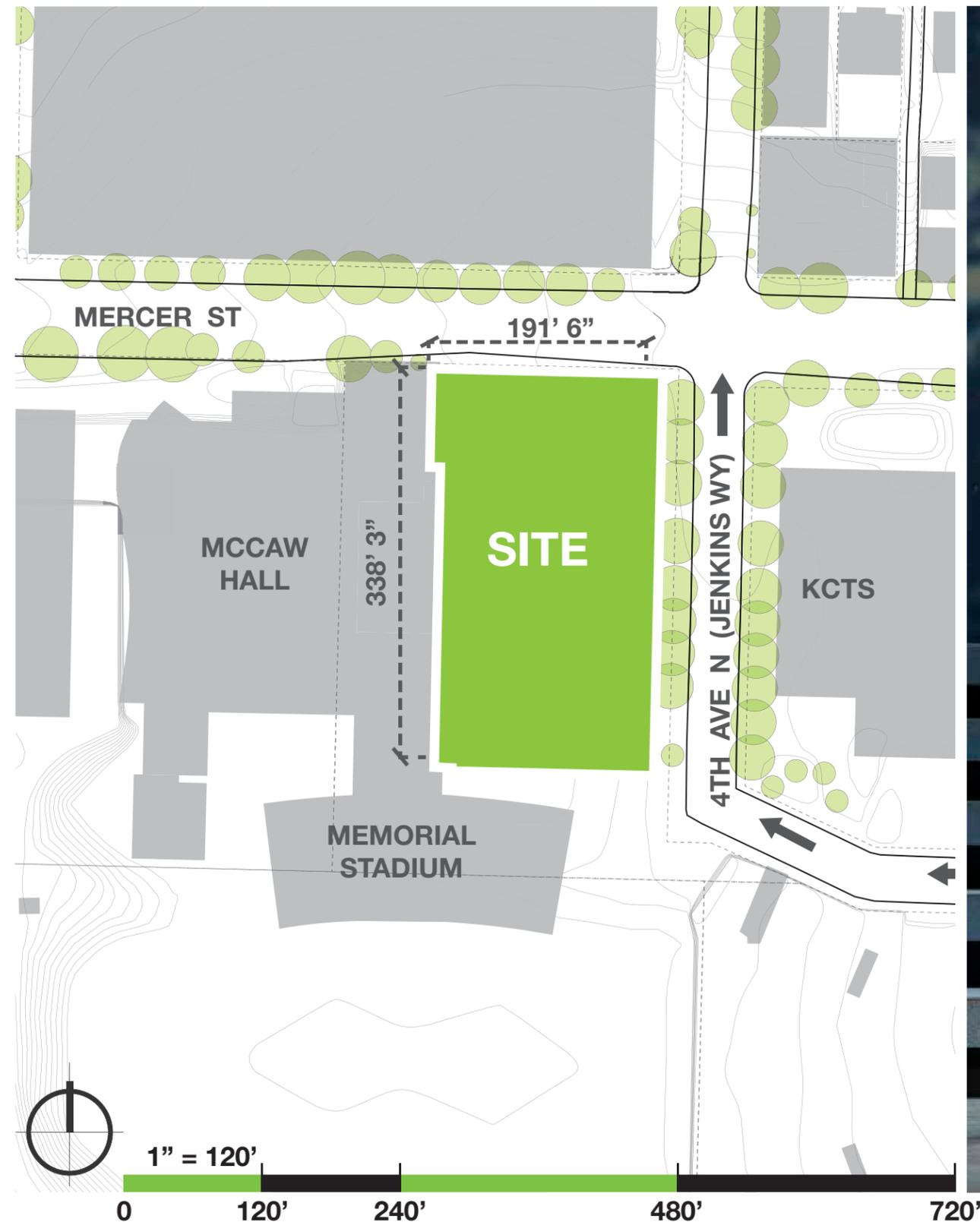


**GOALS**

- Create a purpose-built environment for world-class artistry in a new facility
- Prioritize dedicated spaces for growing education and community engagement programs
- Design a community resource that invites visitors to explore the arts
- Consolidate operations under one roof adjacent to opera's performing home at McCaw Hall
- Provide a high-energy, civic addition to the Seattle Center Theatre District

**PROGRAM**

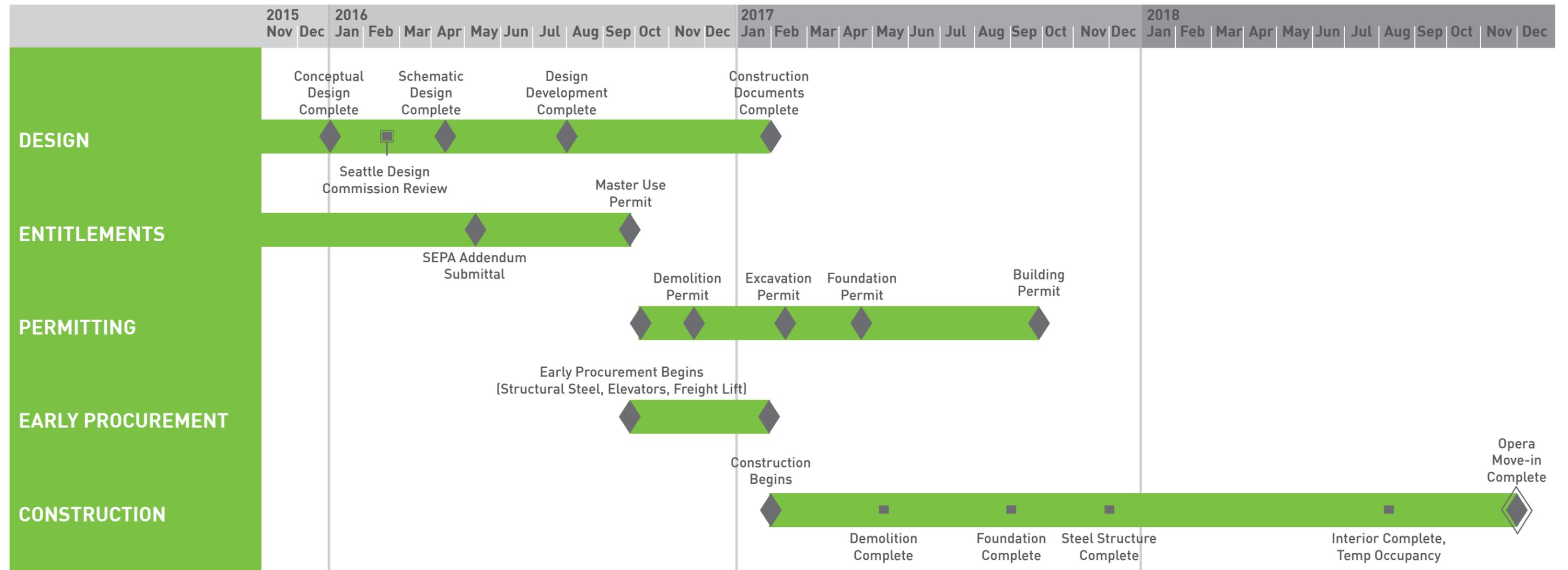
- Establishes an inviting new 4-story, 105,000 square-foot building
- Creates an engaging presence for the Seattle Center Theatre District at 4th and Mercer
- Visually showcases rehearsal rooms and work spaces for artists, craftspeople, and teachers
- Features dedicated community and education spaces allowing opera to offer on-site programs for the first time as well as support training and planning for off-site programs
- Incorporates new resources to support collaboration with partner organizations
- Efficiently consolidates offices in same location as rehearsal and performance spaces to increase collaboration and artistry
- Builds an adjacency to the McCaw Hall stage, reducing the need to truck-in sets and props
- Includes environmentally controlled areas for prop, costume, and technical storage
- New Mercer street level retail space and accessible Box Office
- Redesigns the exterior public spaces along 4th and Mercer



## BUDGET & SCHEDULE

### PROJECT BUDGET

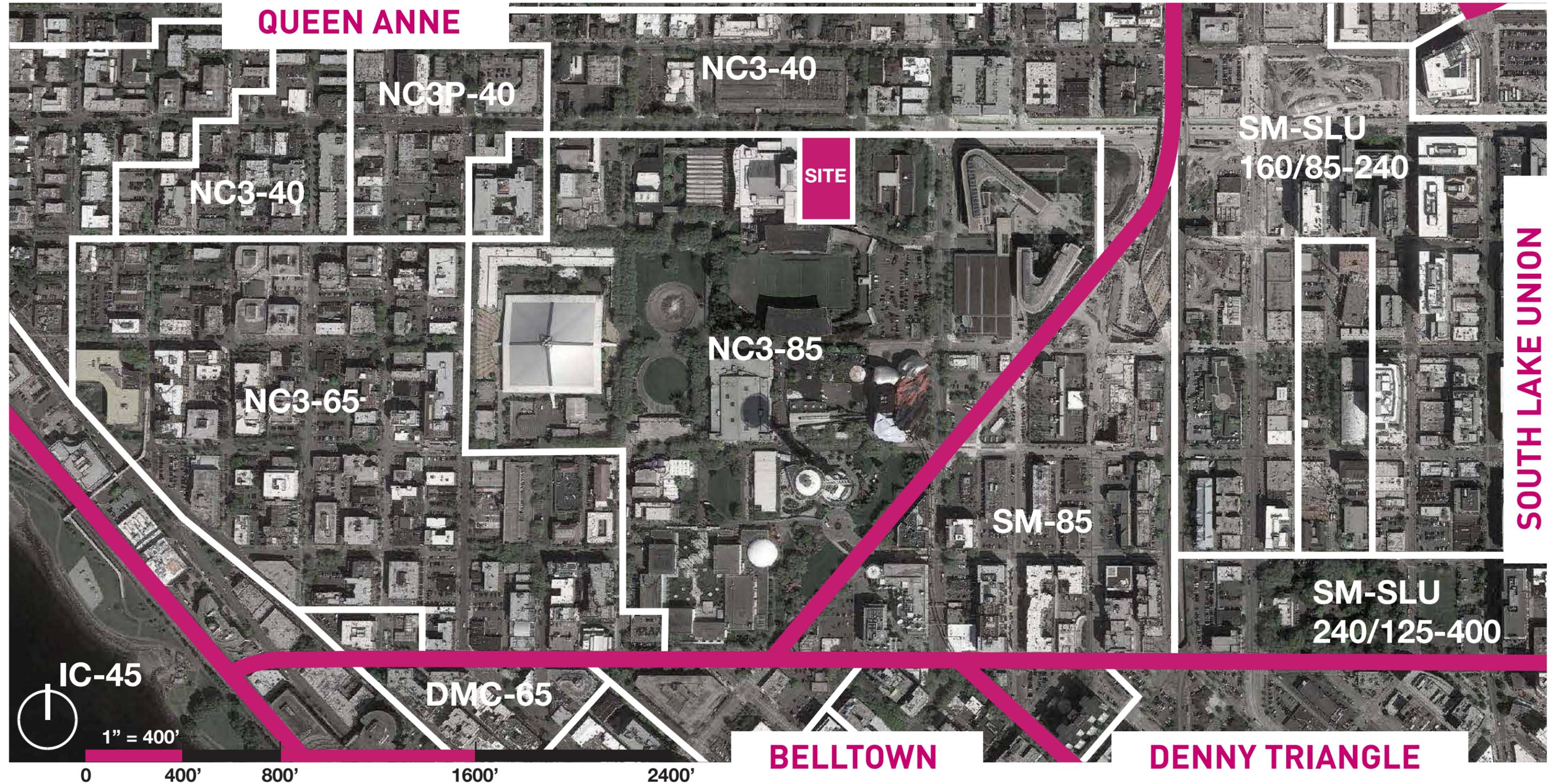
- Total project budget is \$60 million
- Public funding estimated at \$14 million (federal, state, county, and city)



# SECTION 02

## CONTEXT

NEIGHBORHOODS  
ZONING



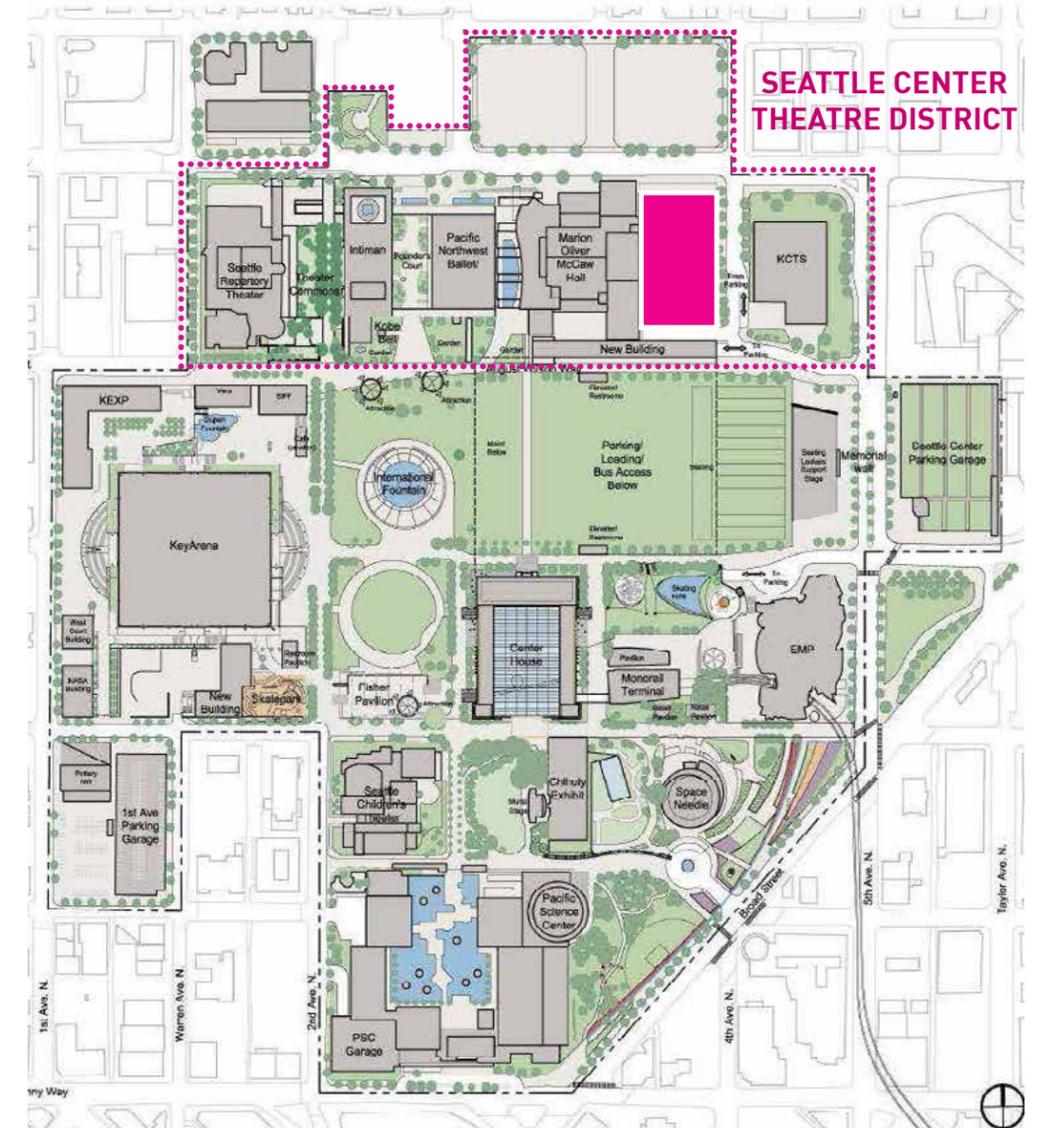
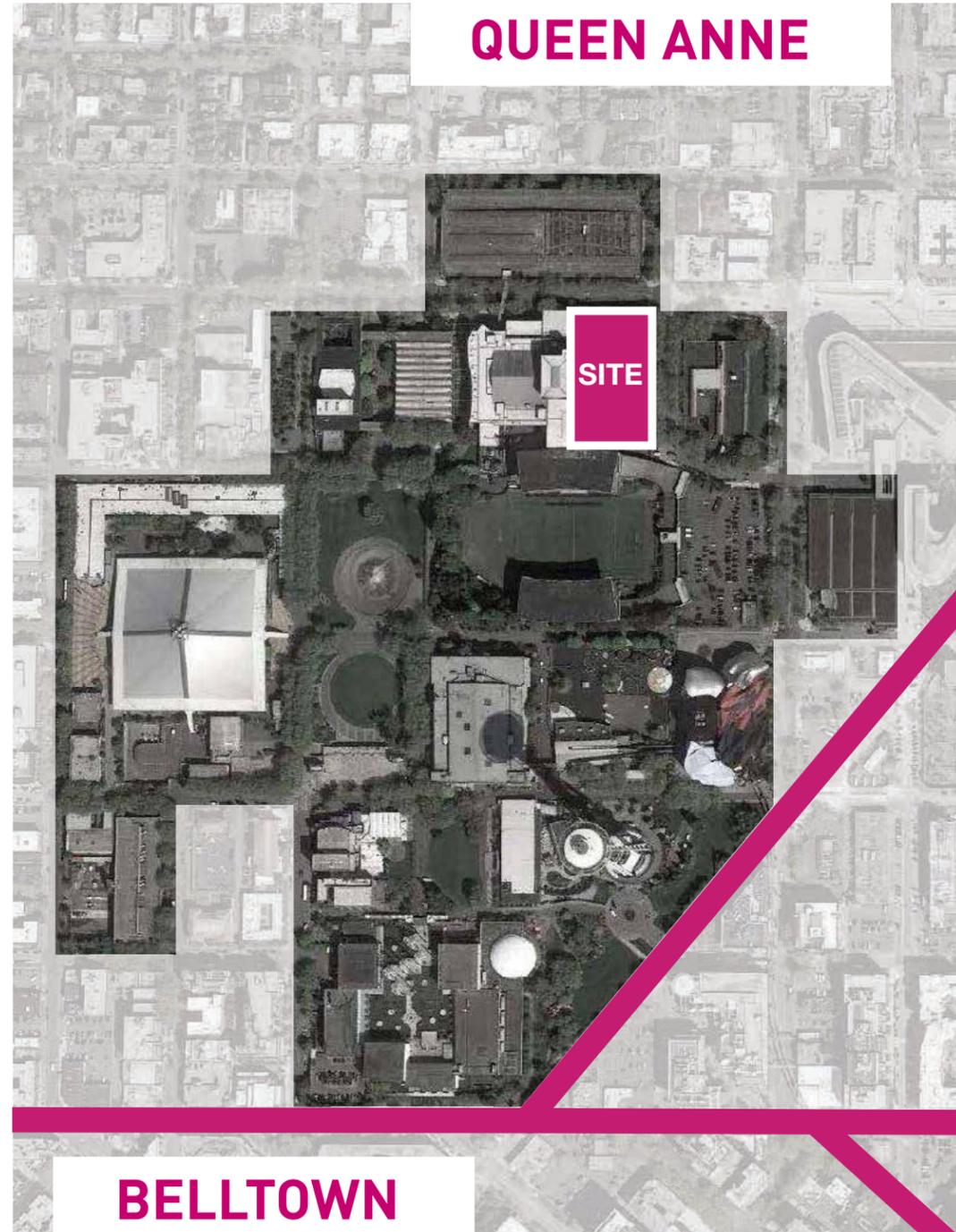
SEATTLE CENTER / CENTURY 21  
MASTERPLANNING

CAMPUS-WIDE DESIGN GUIDELINES

- A Great Gathering Place
- Building Design
- Entries and Edges
- Walkability and Pedestrian Scale
- Sustainability
- Universal Design
- Site Furnishings

THEATRE DISTRICT ZONE

- Two-way Mercer should become a more pleasant walking environment
- Prioritize quality design materials at Mercer street edge
- Create a series of intimate scale spaces and buildings along the south edge



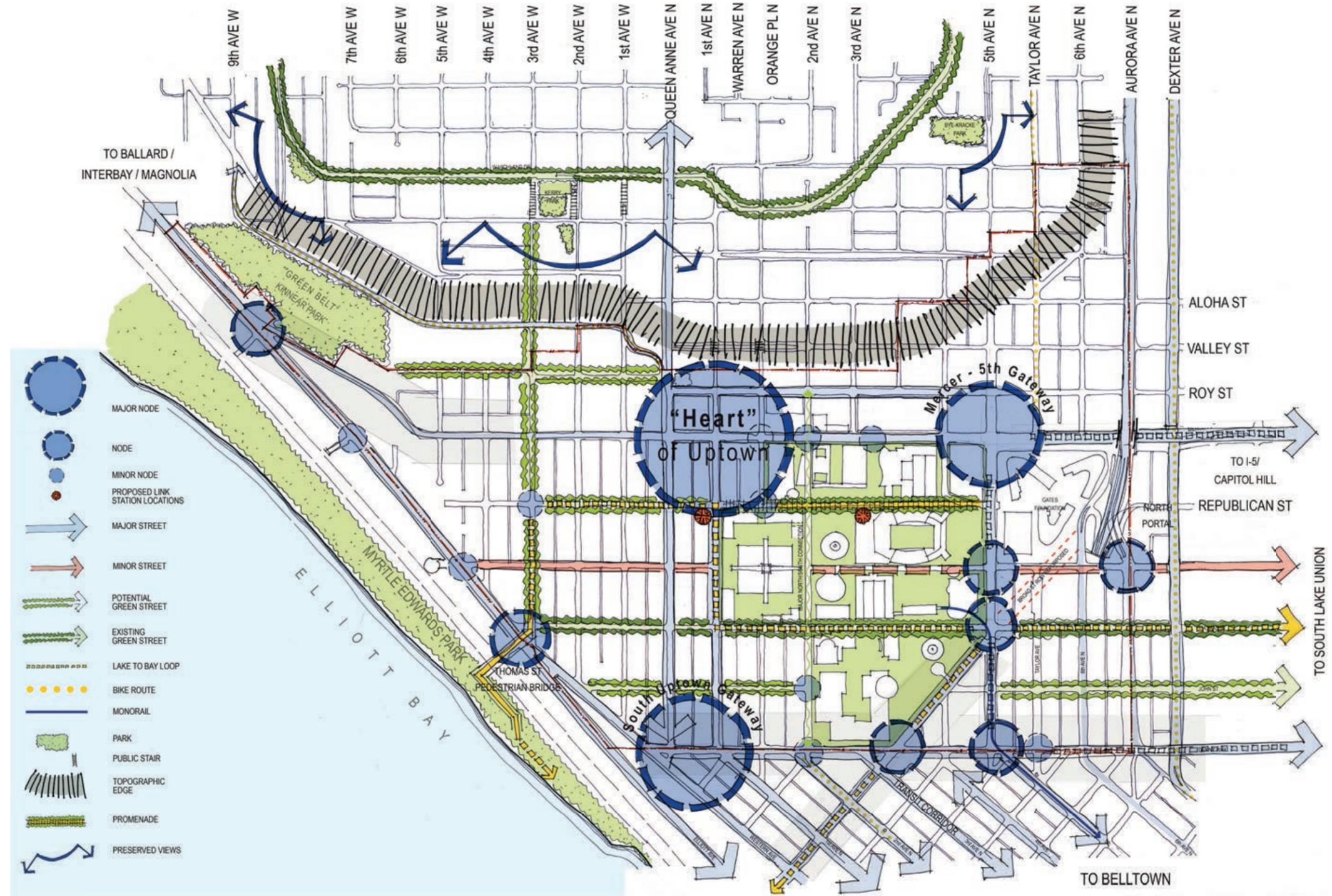
# UPTOWN NEIGHBORHOOD URBAN DESIGN FRAMEWORK

## GUIDING PRINCIPLES:

- Uptown is a growing Urban Center
- Uptown encourages the development of a diverse range of housing types and affordability levels
- Uptown is a regional hub connecting adjacent neighborhoods and major employers
- Uptown celebrates Seattle Center as a vital part of the neighborhood
- Uptown is best served by a strong multi-modal transportation system
- Uptown's open space supports healthy Uptown residents
- Uptown is a vibrant emerging Arts and Culture District
- Uptown values its history

## RECOMMENDATIONS @ SITE:

- Grow Theatre District into Neighborhood-wide Arts and Culture District
- Implement Seattle Center Master Plan (previous page)
- Consider changing NC3 zoning to SM
- Mercer/Roy Corridor
  - Mercer Garage Redevelopment
  - Height Increase
  - Pedestrian Improvement
- Redevelopment of Memorial Stadium
- Mercer Arena Opera Use
- Mercer-5th Gateway (major node)
- Adjacent Major Street - Mercer
- Adjacent Promenade to south



UPTOWN CONNECTIONS

[EXCERPT FROM DPD'S UDF DRAFT - OCTOBER 2015]

**MERCER WEST PROJECT**  
TRANSPORTATION & CIRCULATION

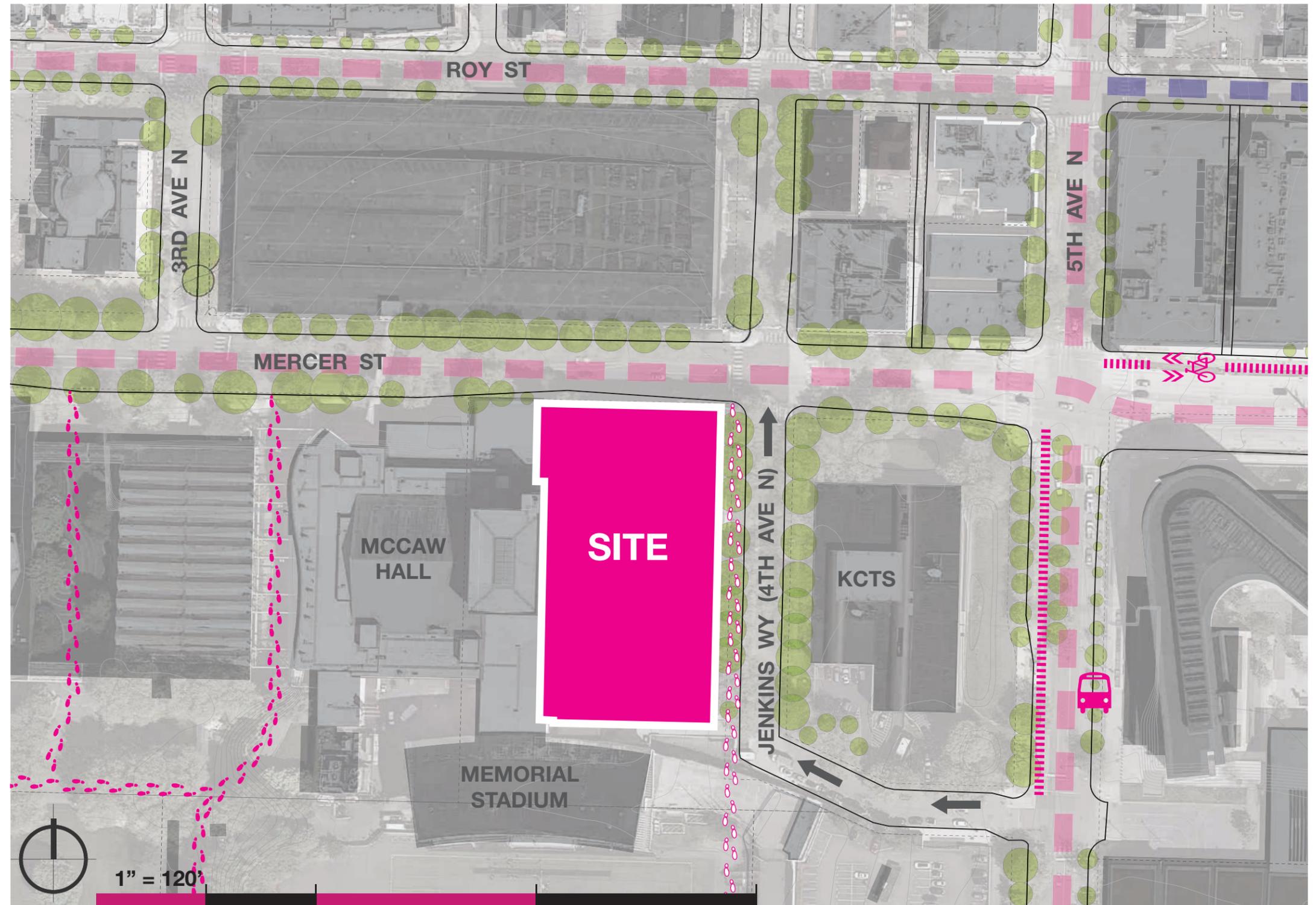
- Mercer West construction began in April 2013
- Improved two-way connection between I-5 and 5th Ave W
- Improved bicycle and pedestrian experience
- Enhanced connection between South Lake Union, Uptown
- Construction substantially complete in 2015



Rendering courtesy of SDOT



Photo courtesy of SDOT



LEGEND : One Way Street Protected Bike Lane Bus Stop Ped Circulation Future Ped Circulation Principle Arterial Minor Arterial

## ZONING SUMMARY

NC3-85

### HEIGHT LIMIT: 85'

23.47A.012. Exceptions: Mechanical penthouses 15' higher for 25% of roof area only. Open railings, planters, skylights, clerestories, greenhouses, solariums, parapets, and firewalls may extend up to 4'.

### FAR: MIN 2, MAX 4.5 (UNLESS MIXED-USE WITH RESIDENTIAL, THEN 6)

23.47A.013.

### ALLOWED USES: OFFICE, RESIDENTIAL, RESTAURANTS, THEATERS, RETAIL, PKG, ETC.

23.47A.004 Table A.

### SETBACKS: NO MIN. SETBACKS, SEE BELOW FOR STREET-LEVEL REQ'S

### FACADE REGULATIONS AT STREET-LEVEL

23.47A.008.A.2 Blank Facades: Blank segments of the street-facing facade between 2-8' high can't exceed 20' in width or total 40% of facade.  
 23.47A.008.A.3: Street-level street-facing facades shall be located within 10' of the street lot line, unless wider sidewalks, plazas, or other approved landscaped/open spaces provided.  
 23.47A.008.B.2 Transparency: 60% percent of street-facing facade between 2-8' above sidewalk shall be transparent.

### PEDESTRIAN

Mercer is defined as a principal pedestrian street if it is within a pedestrian zone however, it is not listed as such on the zoning map. In those zones:  
 23.47A.005.D.1 Required uses for min. 80% of street-level, street-facing facade in pedestrian-designated zones: A (arts facilities), C (eating & drinking establishments), D (entertainment uses), E (food processing & craft work), F (institutions), I (offices), M (sales & service, general)

### PARKING: NONE REQUIRED

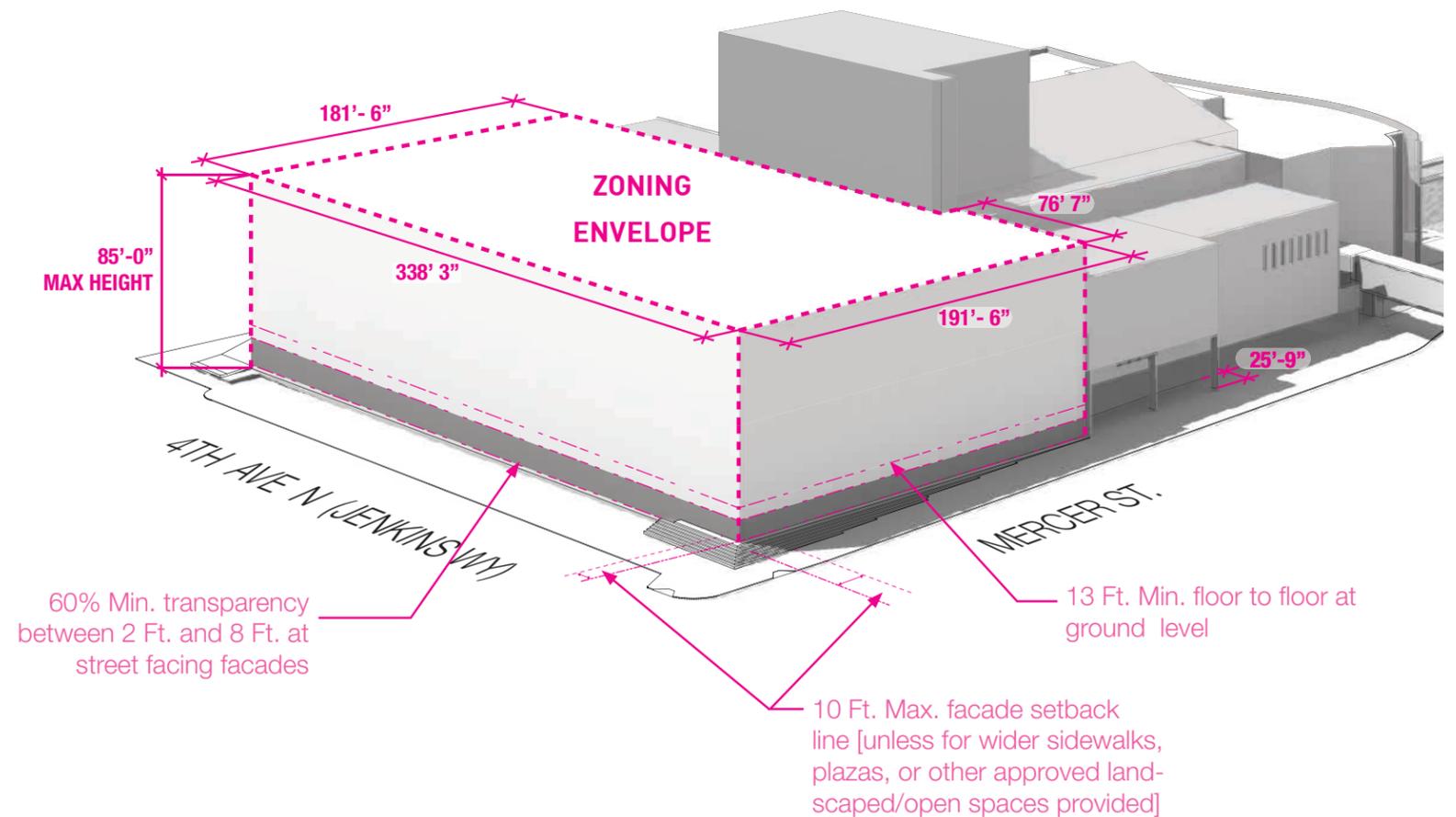
No parking required in a commercial zone within an Urban Center - site located in Uptown Urban Center.

### LANDSCAPING: 0.30 GREEN FACTOR SCORE REQUIRED

23.47A.016.A.2

## PROJECT SUMMARY

<b>Building Height</b>	62.5 Feet, 4 Stories	
<b>Site Area</b>	62,157 SF	
<b>Building Area</b>	105,000 SF [FAR: 1.7]	Proposed project's high-bay program meet bulk & scale intent of code.
<b>Setbacks at Street Level</b>	~26 Feet at Mercer for Plaza	Widened sidewalk/plaza concept, where intent is to match McCaw setback for continuation of public promenade.
<b>Facade Transparency at Street Level</b>	Will meet requirements	
<b>Parking</b>	None proposed	



# CLIMATE SUMMARY

ASHRAE ZONE 4C: Mixed - Marine

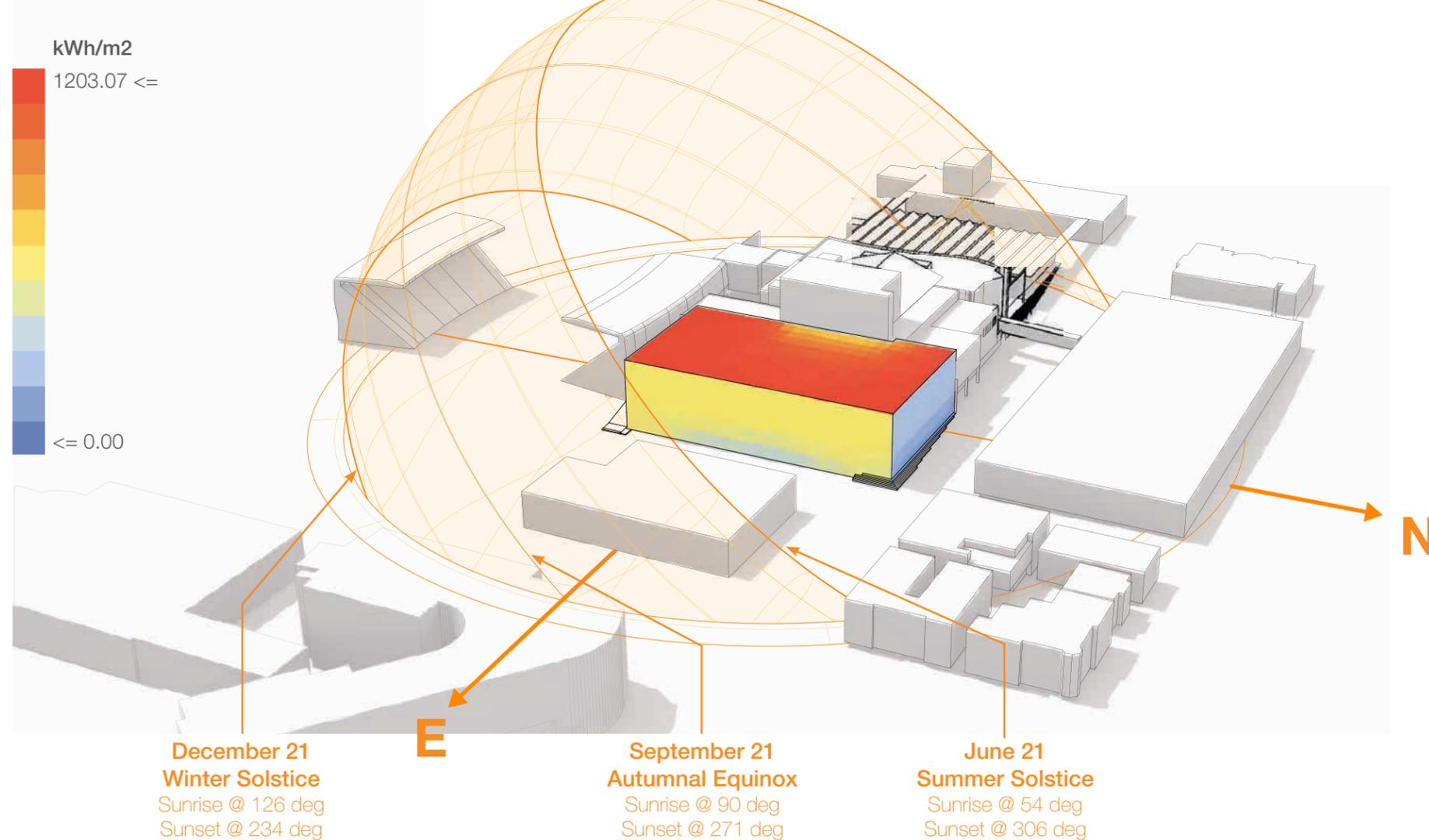
**INSOLATION:** West facade is shaded completely by McCaw Hall, greatly reducing solar loads. Treat skylights with care.

**DAYLIGHT:** North aspect good for indirect daylight in glazed areas at Mercer. Deciduous trees to east will provide summer diffusion and admit winter light.

**WIND:** Strongest unwanted winter winds come from the southeast. Design should protect roof terrace to maximize comfort and frequency of use.

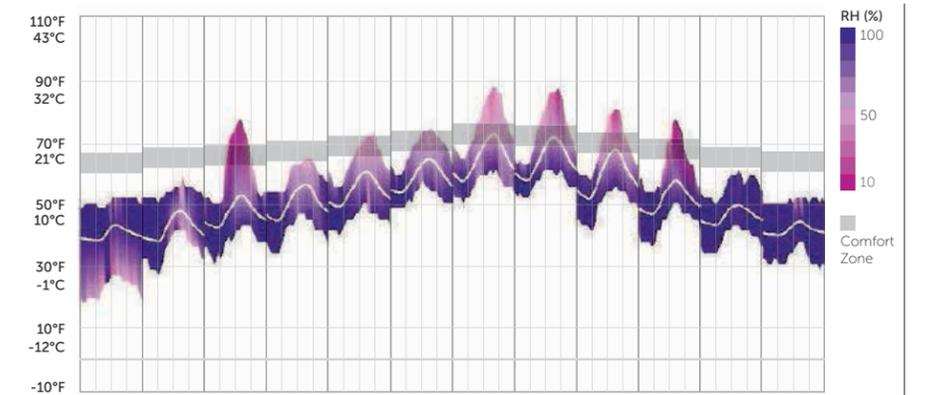
## Sun Path Diagram & Annual Solar Radiation Analysis

Sun study with site shadows cast at noon on September 21. The annual cumulative sun density depicts opportunities to maximize solar energy and localized shading needs. The specific site's insolation data is slightly lower than Seattle's annual average (1223.66 kWh/m<sup>2</sup> - taken from NASA's Surface Meteorology and Solar Energy Data Set on a 22-yr avg).



## Daily Environmental Conditions

High and low temperatures for an average single day with relative humidity



## Cloud Cover

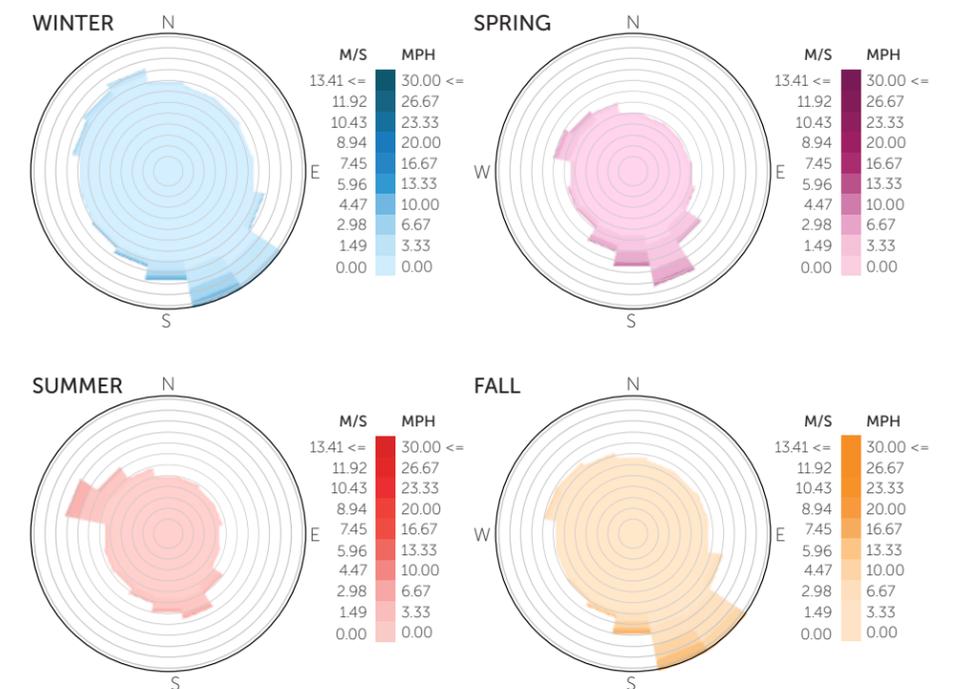
Cloud cover data analyzed between 1973-2000 showing avg cloud cover pattern and average clear/cloudy days per month.

	JAN	FEB	MAR	APR	MAY	JUN	JUL	AUG	SEPT	OCT	NOV	DEC
<b>Clear Days</b>	2.9	2.9	3.5	3	4.2	4.6	9.6	9.2	8.4	3.9	1.8	2.5
<b>Cloudy Days</b>	22.8	21.0	20.0	18.6	17.4	15.6	11.3	11.4	11.3	18.6	22.7	22.9

<http://www.climate.washington.edu/cloudcover/>

## Seasonal Wind Conditions

Wind speed and accumulated hours of wind by season and direction. Each ring represents 3% of the season or 66 hrs.



**SITE**  
SURROUNDING BUILDINGS



**A** Teatro Zinzanni  
222 Mercer St



**B** Parking Structure  
300 Mercer St



**C** Offices Above Parking  
400 Mercer St



**D** Residential Apartments  
605 5th Ave N



**E** QFC Grocery & Pharmacy  
500 Mercer St



**F** Cornish Playhouse  
201 Mercer St



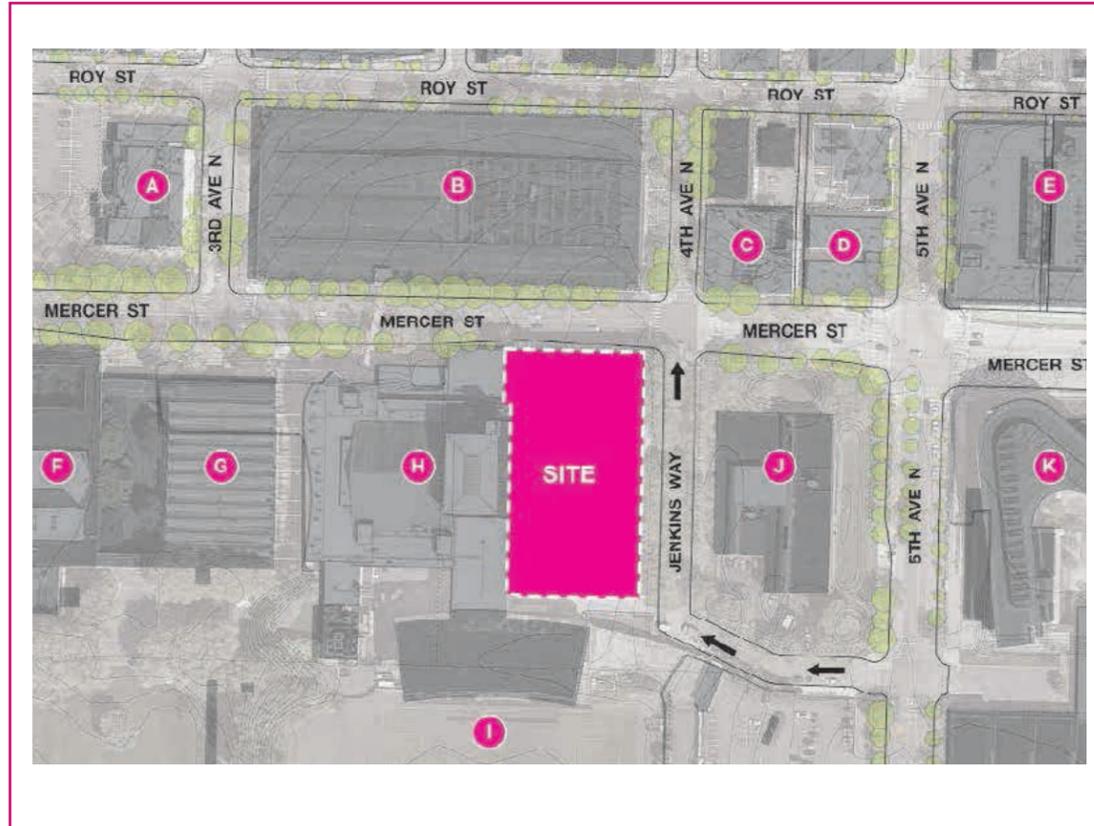
**H** McCaw Hall  
321 Mercer St



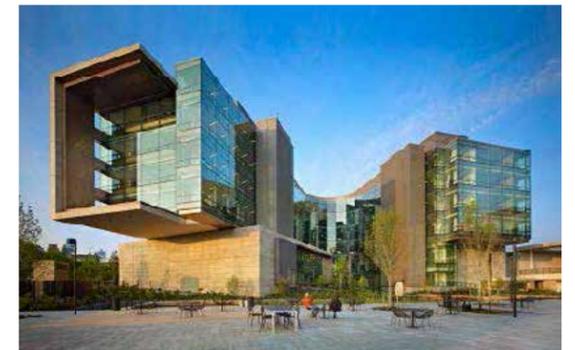
**G** Pacific Northwest Ballet  
301 Mercer St



**I** Memorial Stadium  
401 5th Ave N

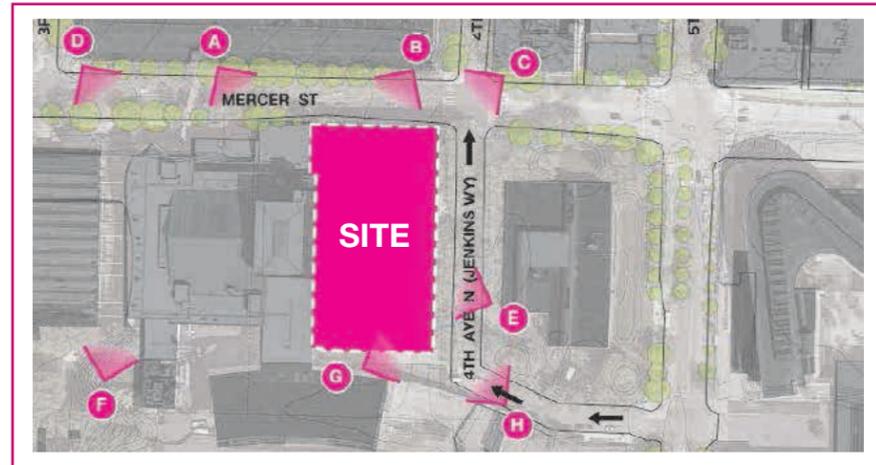


**J** KCTS  
401 Mercer St

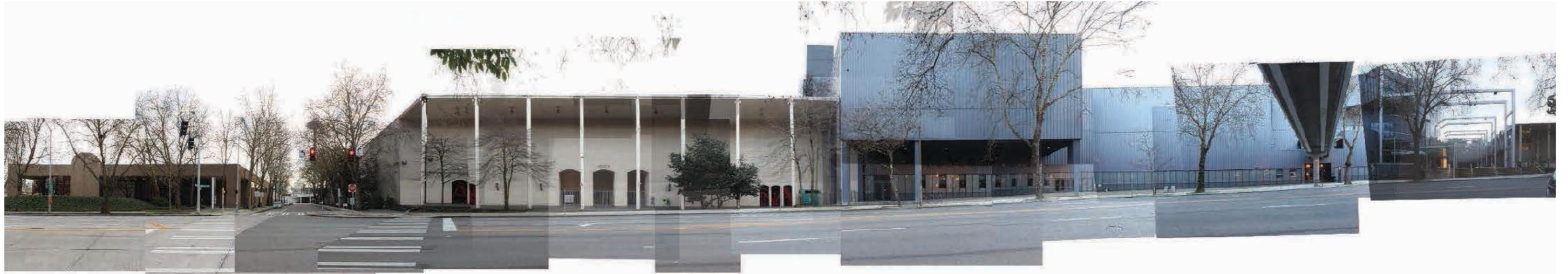


**K** Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation  
500 5th Ave N

SITE  
STREET VIEWS



**SITE**  
MERCER STREET PANORAMAS



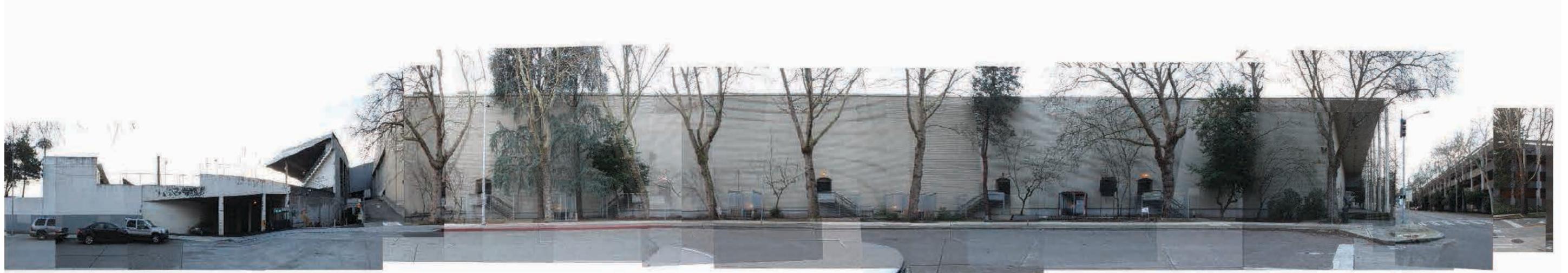
MERCER ST LOOKING SOUTH



MERCER ST LOOKING NORTH

**SITE**

4TH AVE NORTH PANORAMAS



4TH AVE N (JENKINS WY) LOOKING WEST



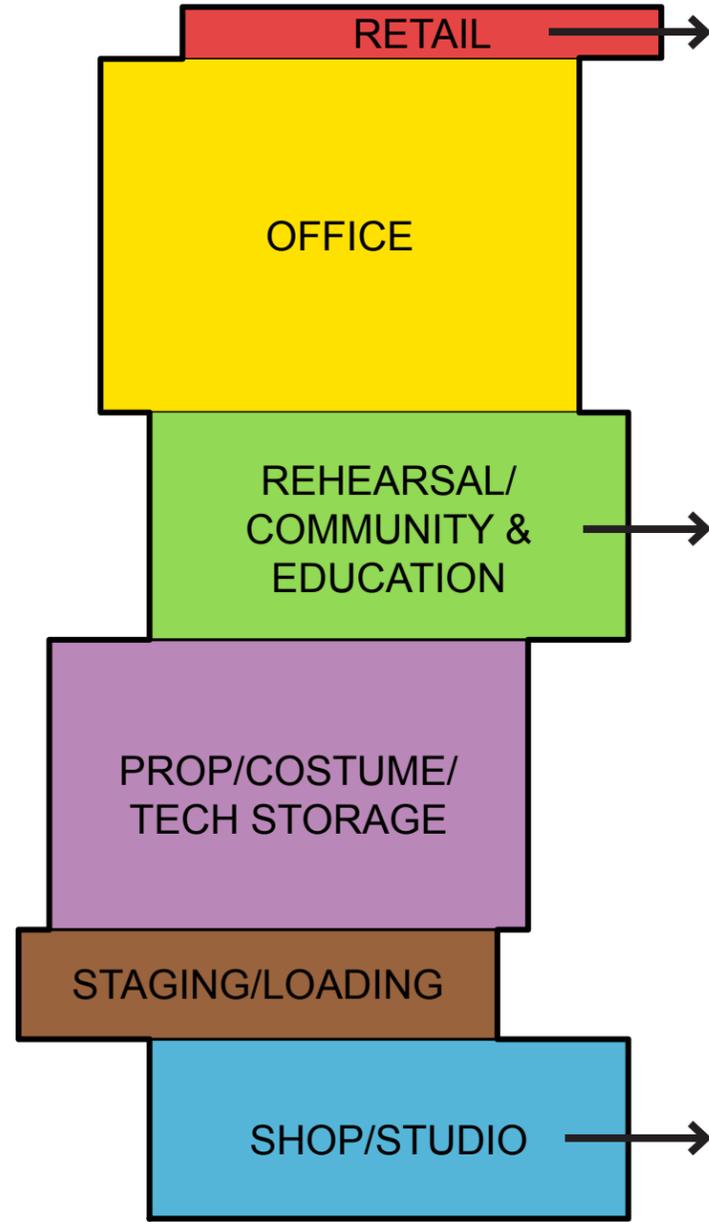
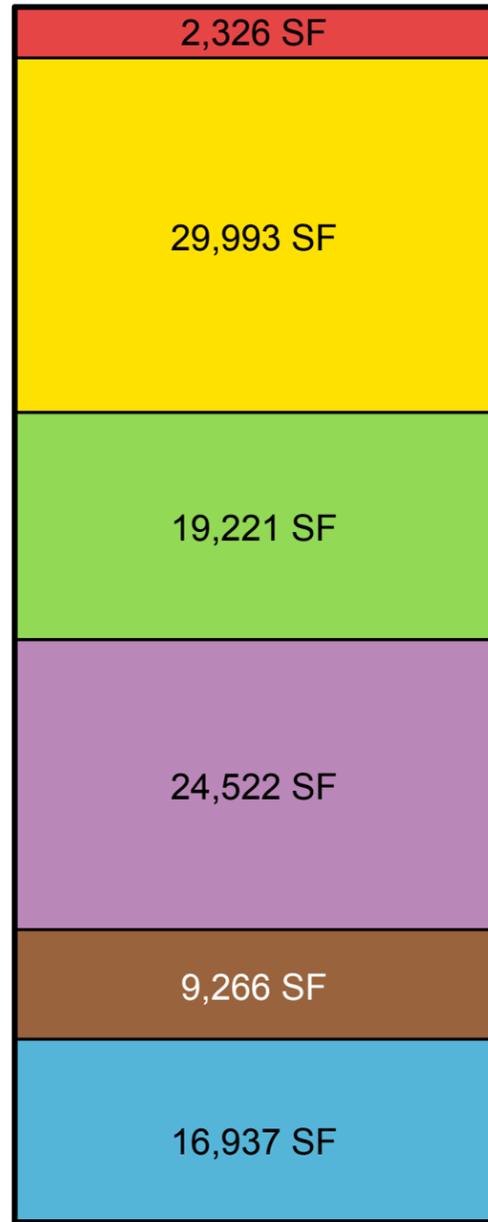
4TH AVE N (JENKINS WY) LOOKING EAST

# SECTION 03

## DESIGN

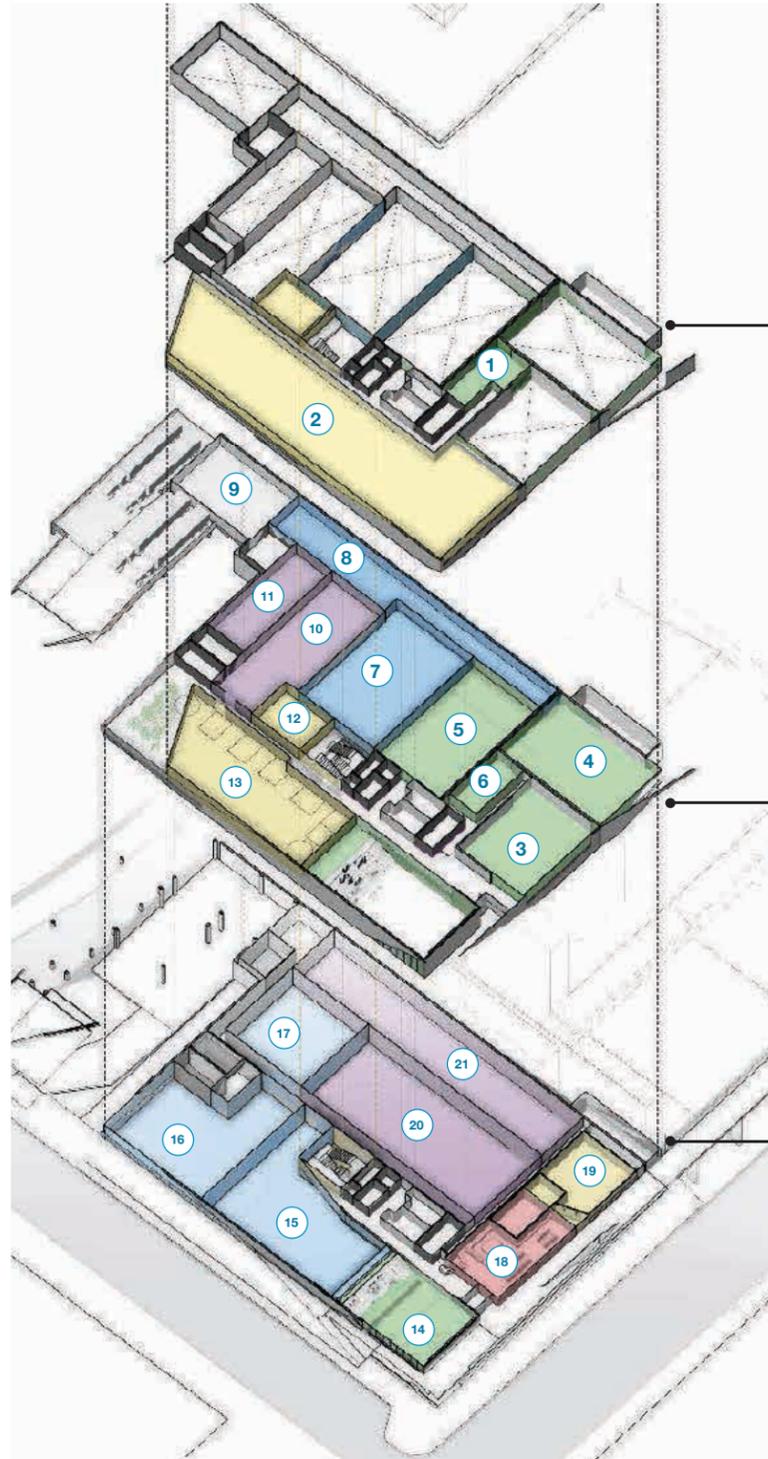
### PROGRAMMING

ARRANGING PROGRAM FOR MAXIMUM IMPACT



# Shift Toward Engagement

**PROGRAM**  
STACKING DIAGRAM



**Level 3**

- 1 Coaching Rooms
- 2 Offices

**Level 2**

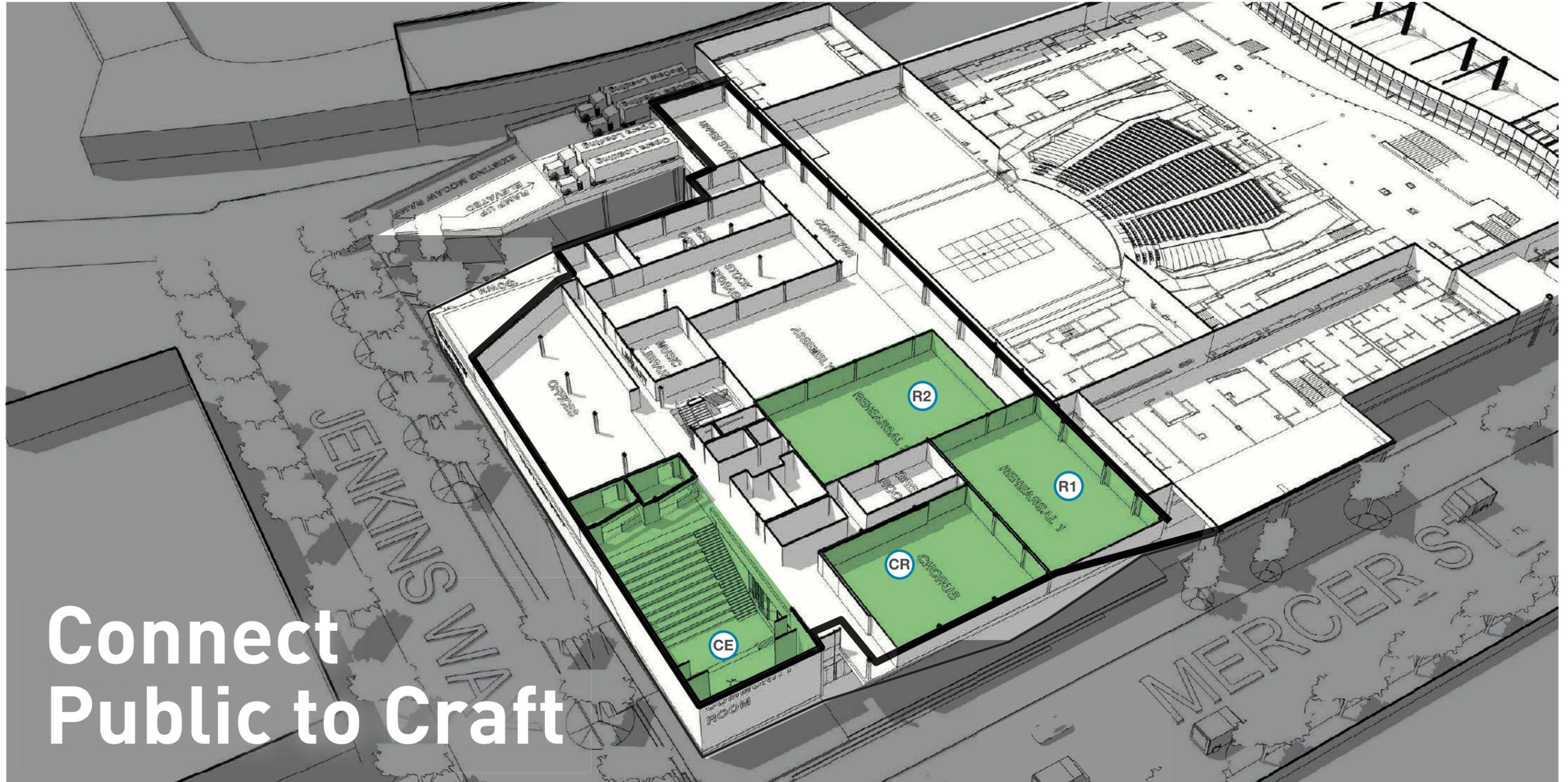
- 3 Chorus
- 4 Rehearsal 1
- 5 Rehearsal 2
- 6 Green Room
- 7 Assembly
- 8 Conveyor
- 9 Upper Staging
- 10 Stock Storage
- 11 Scenic Offices
- 12 Music Library
- 13 Offices

**Entry + Lower Level**

- 14 Community Performance Space
- 15 Costume Shop & Offices
- 16 Electrics/Lighting
- 17 Automation
- 18 Cafe/Lobby
- 19 Box Office
- 20 Costume Storage
- 21 Prop Storage



DESIGN PRECEPT  
FORM CONNECTIONS



Connect  
Public to Craft

**DESIGN PRECEPT**

EMBRACE CONTEXT & RELATIONSHIPS



**DESIGN PRECEPT**  
CREATE VIBRANT EXPERIENCES



## EARLY DESIGN STUDIES

Exploring Forms Based on Precepts

- Leverage stagecraft
- Metal screens take cues from McCaw Hall plaza
- Simple facade held within flexible framework
- Upper datum along Mercer aligned with McCaw Hall

### A Projecting Scrim for Theatrical Expression



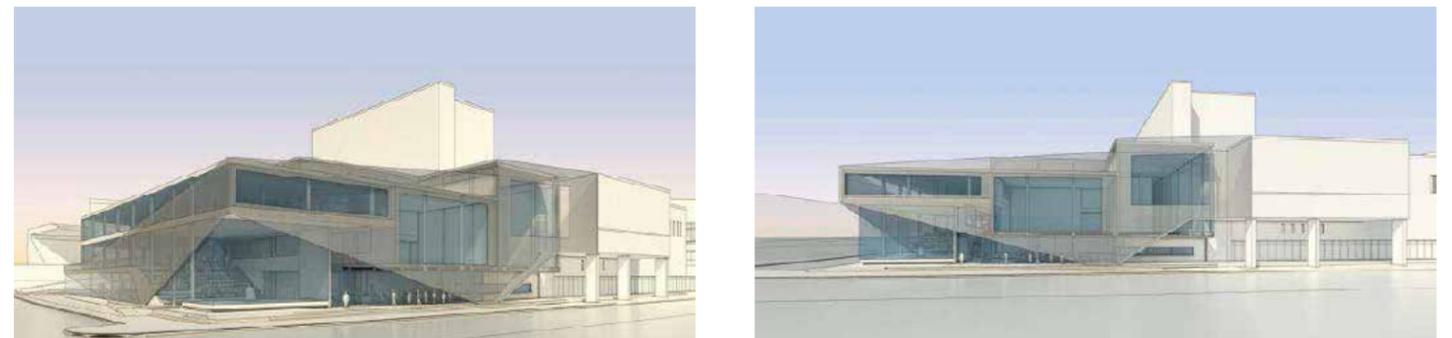
- Unique program elements expressed as an ensemble of boxes
- Transition from more solid toward McCaw and more open toward corner
- Boxes lifted above ground plane for maximum transparency

### B Continuation of McCaw 'Box' Forms, Adding Major Openings



- Unifying scrim stretched across project
- Apertures focus views in to program elements beyond
- Form lifts at the corner to invite the public in

### C Unifying Stretched Scrim



- Set of forms that reveal character of energy within
- Transition from more solid toward McCaw and more open toward corner
- Boxes lifted above ground plane for maximum transparency

### D Expressing Character of Individual Program Volumes



DESIGN CONCEPT



# Bring Energy To Mercer

DESIGN CONCEPT



**Opera**  
In Most Minds  
Today



**New Home**  
For Making Opera

**Build Relationships**

DESIGN CONCEPT



Extend Existing Identity

DESIGN CONCEPT



# Form Connections

**RENDERING**

VIEW FROM MERCER STREET



## RENDERING

INTERIOR VIEW FROM COMMUNITY & EDUCATION SPACE



MATERIAL CONCEPT



1. Blue-Gray metal siding to match McCaw Hall exterior.

3. Glass and aluminum window system, clear anodized.

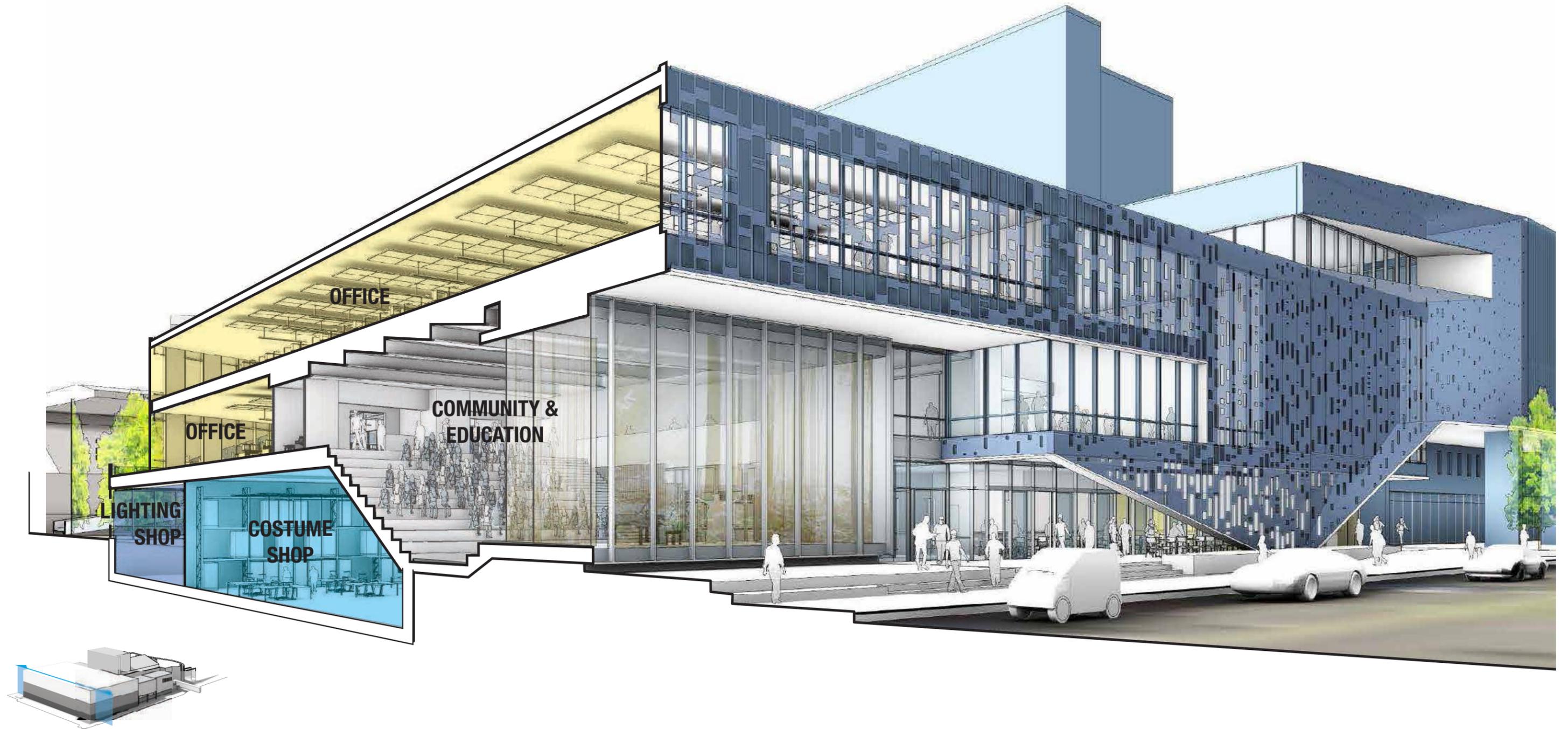
5. Painted soffit.

2. Blue-Gray metal siding 'scrim'. Pattern under study: Micro-perforation accented with composition of larger openings.

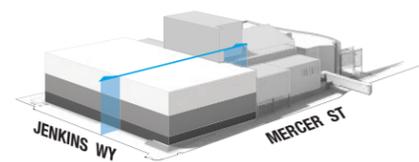
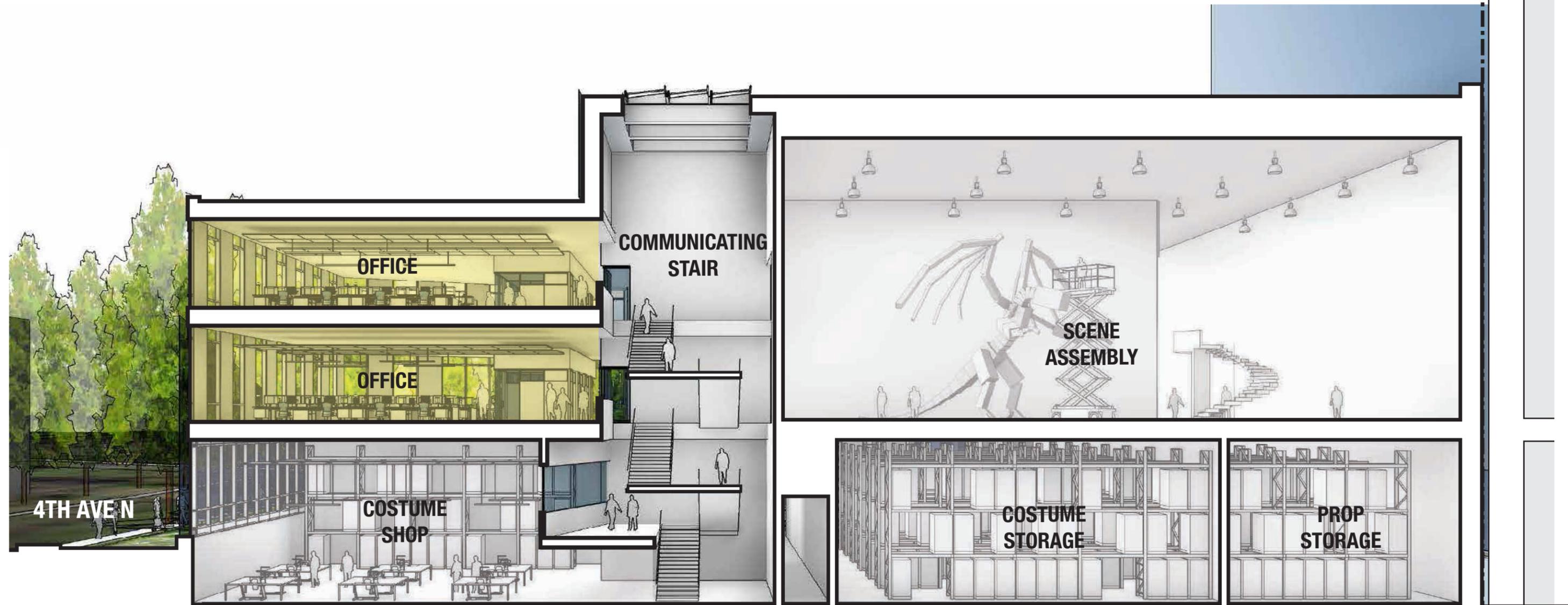
4. Clear anodized metal panel with, glass and aluminum window system.

6. Concrete or clear anodized metal panel.

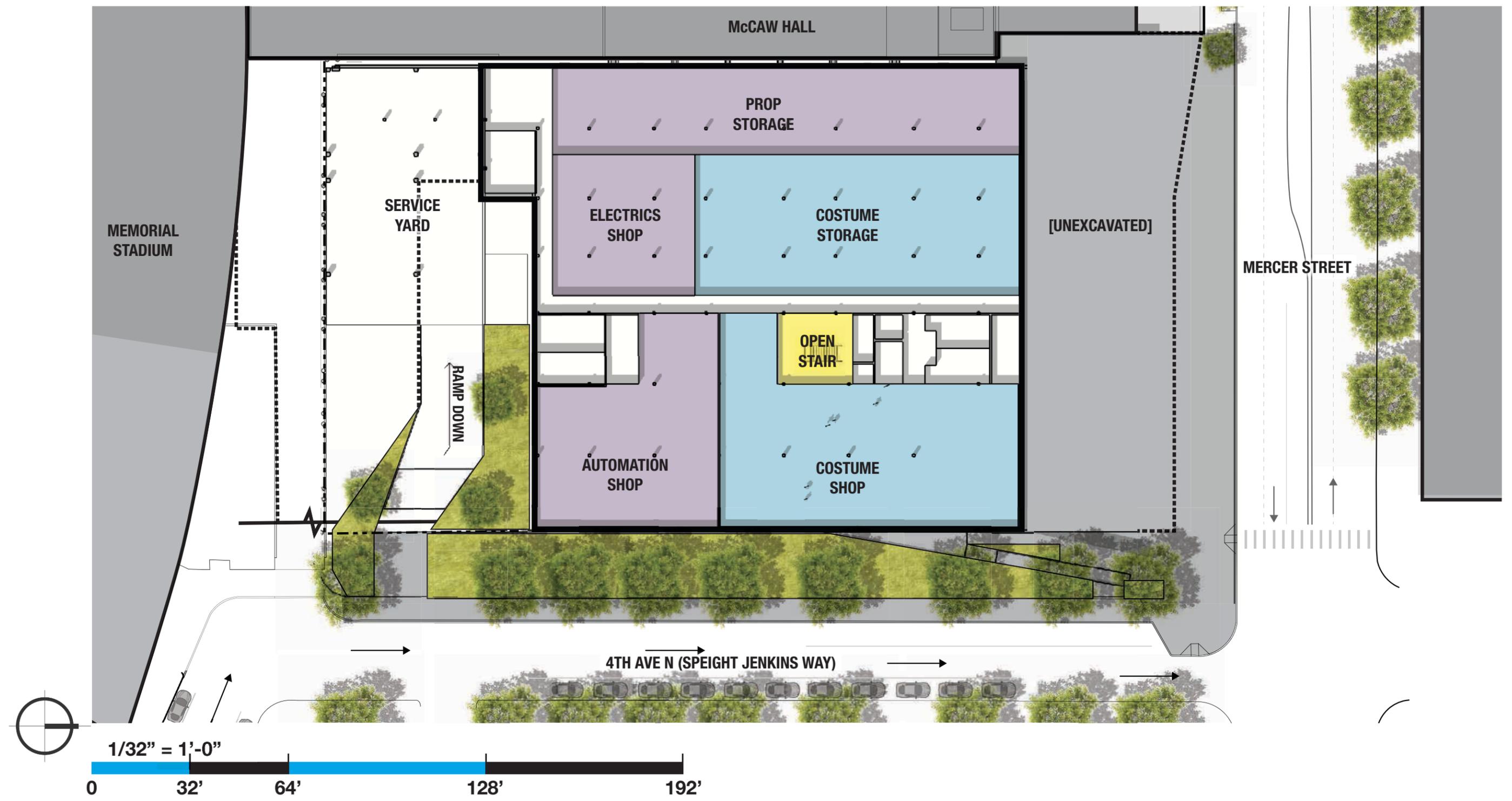
**SECTION VIEW**  
LOOKING WEST



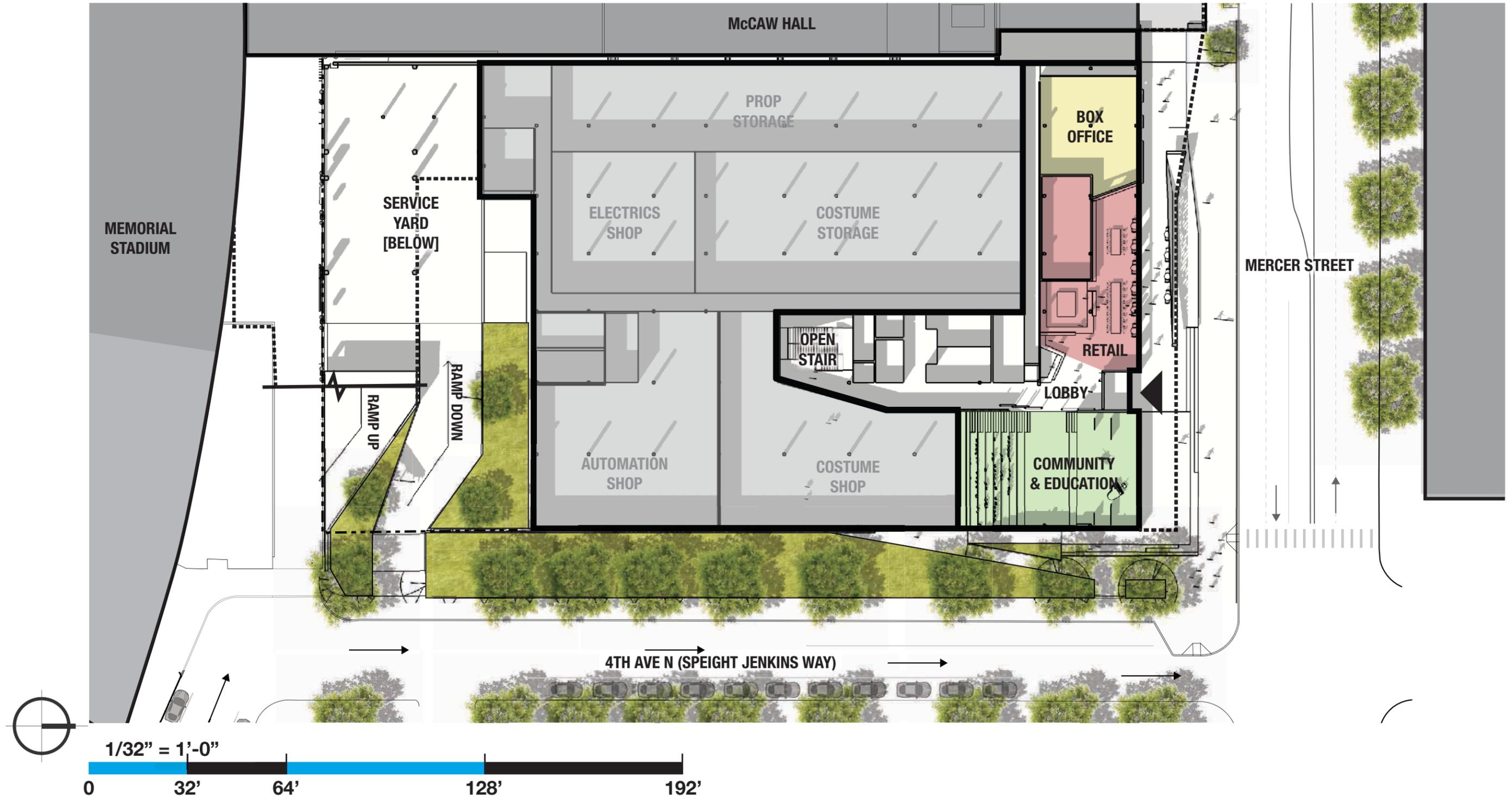
SECTION  
LOOKING SOUTH



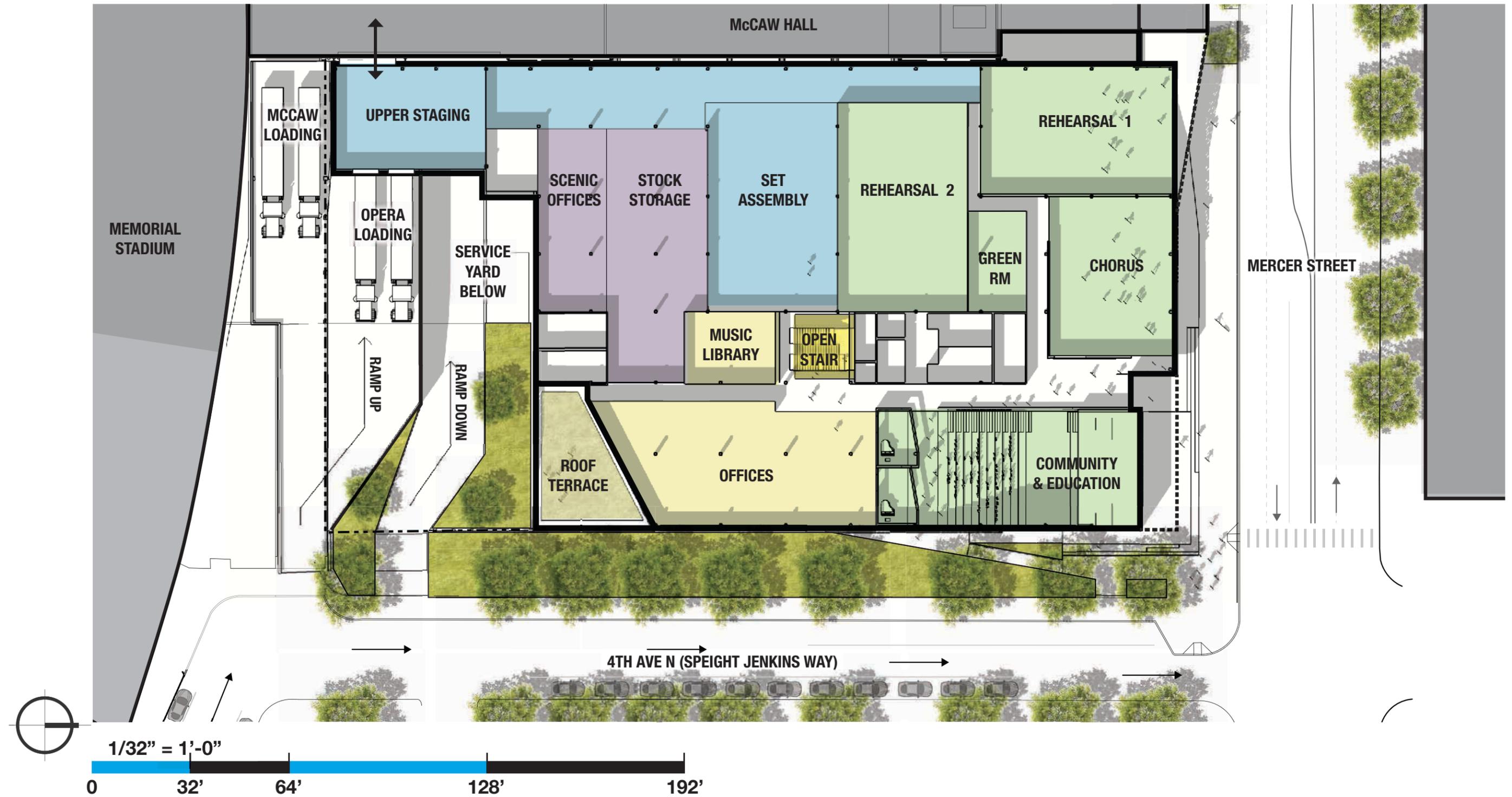
LO LOWER LEVEL  
FLOOR PLAN



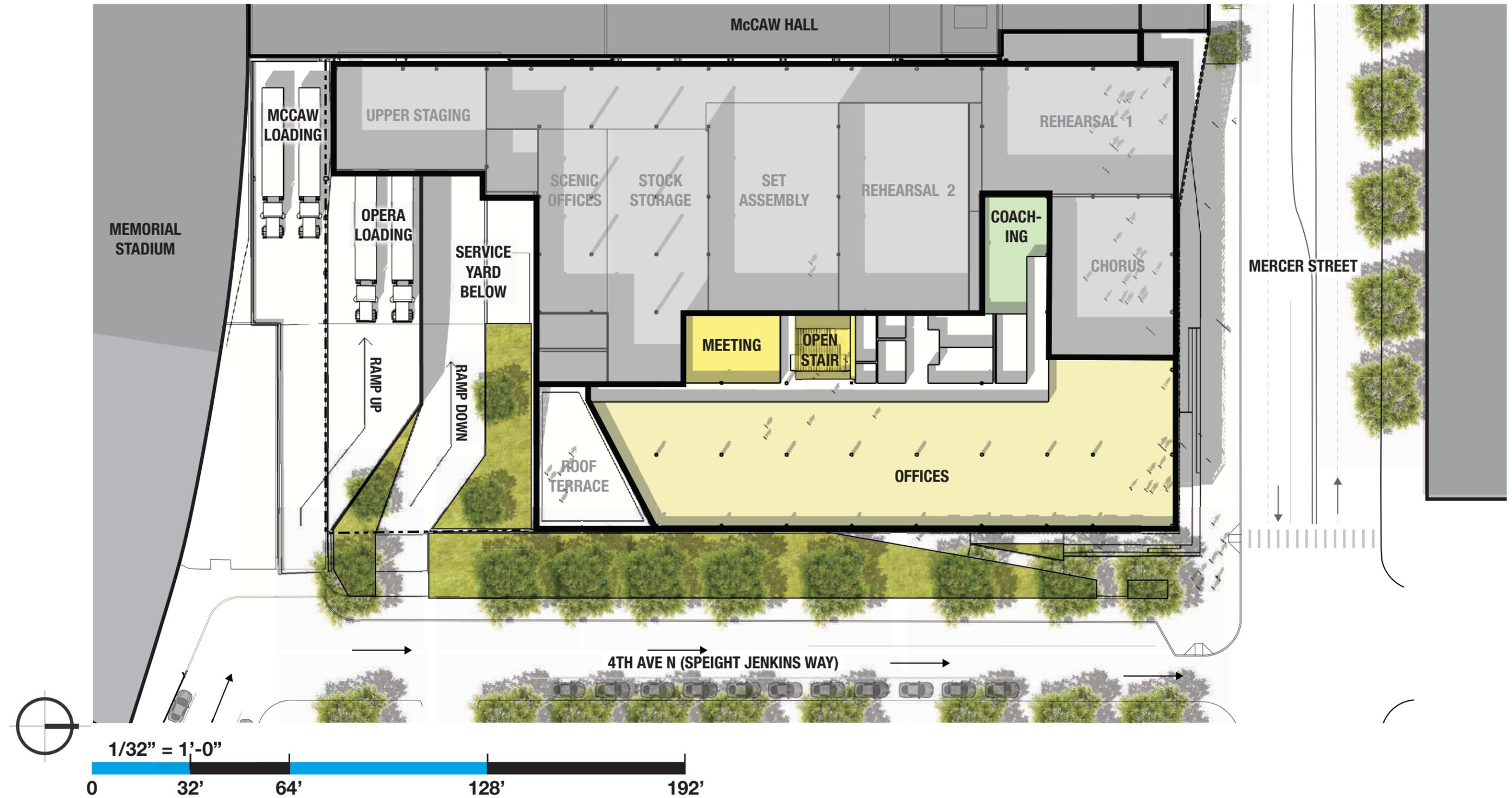
# L1 ENTRY LEVEL FLOOR PLAN



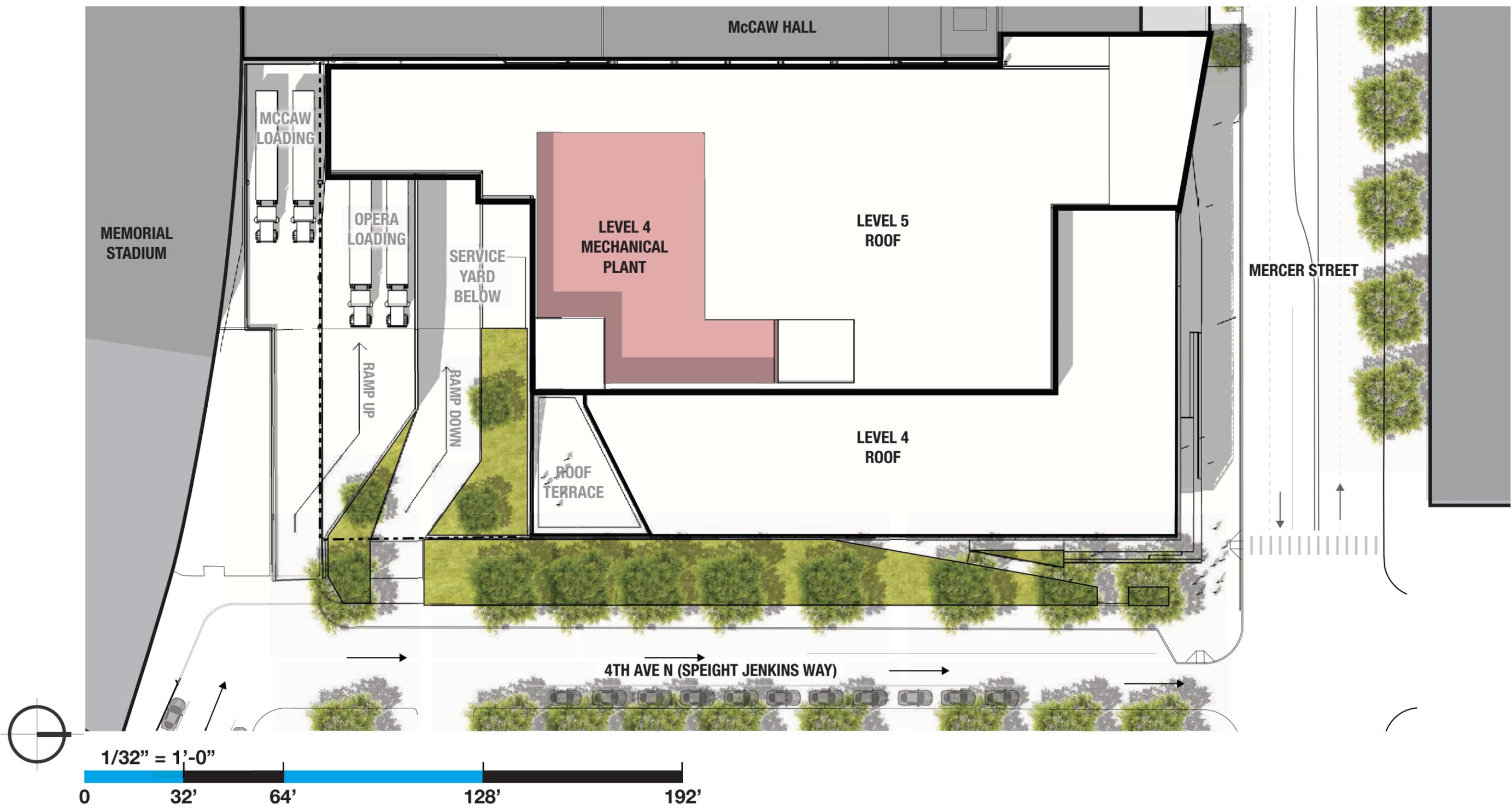
L2 STAGE LEVEL  
FLOOR PLAN



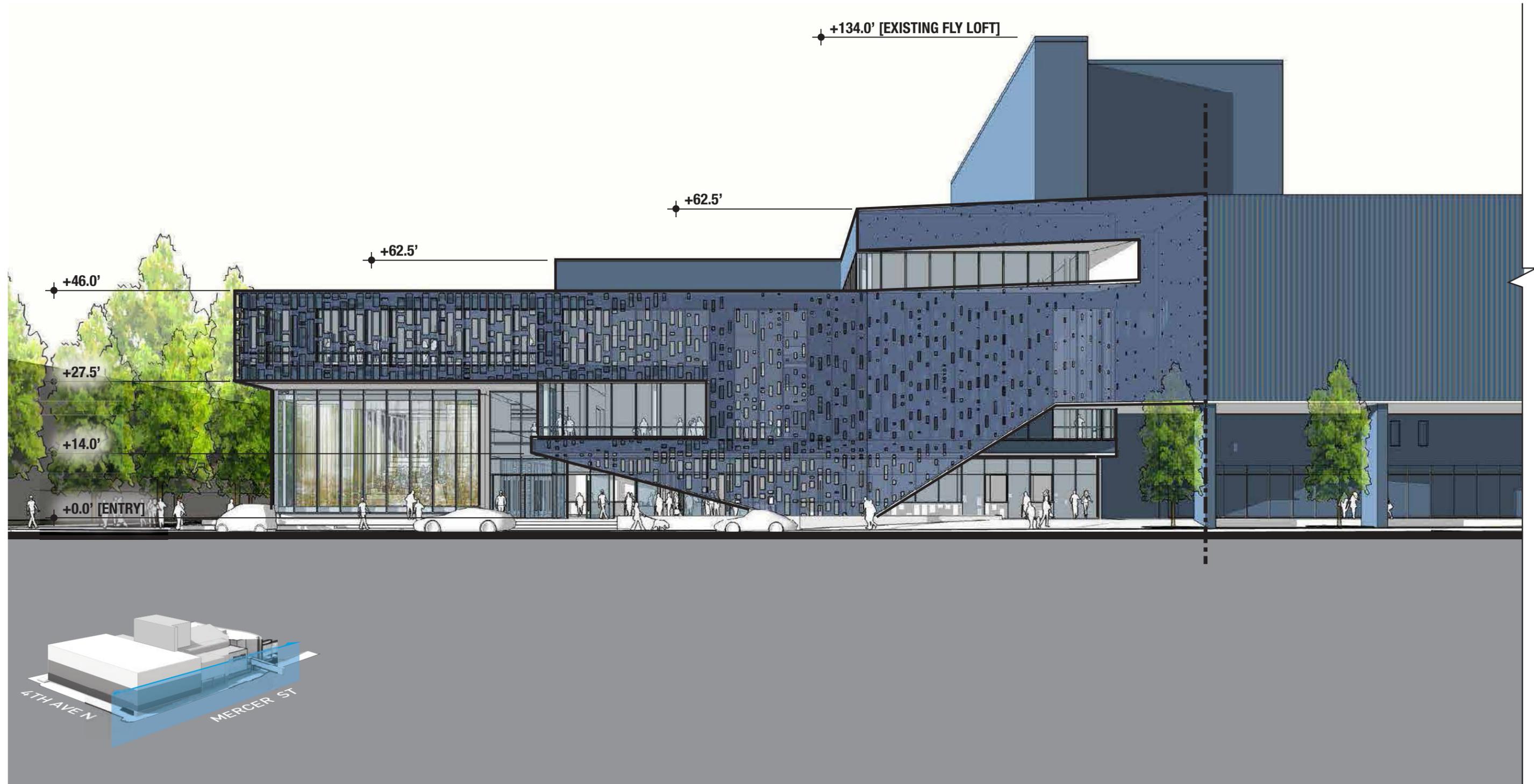
### L3 OFFICE LEVEL FLOOR PLAN



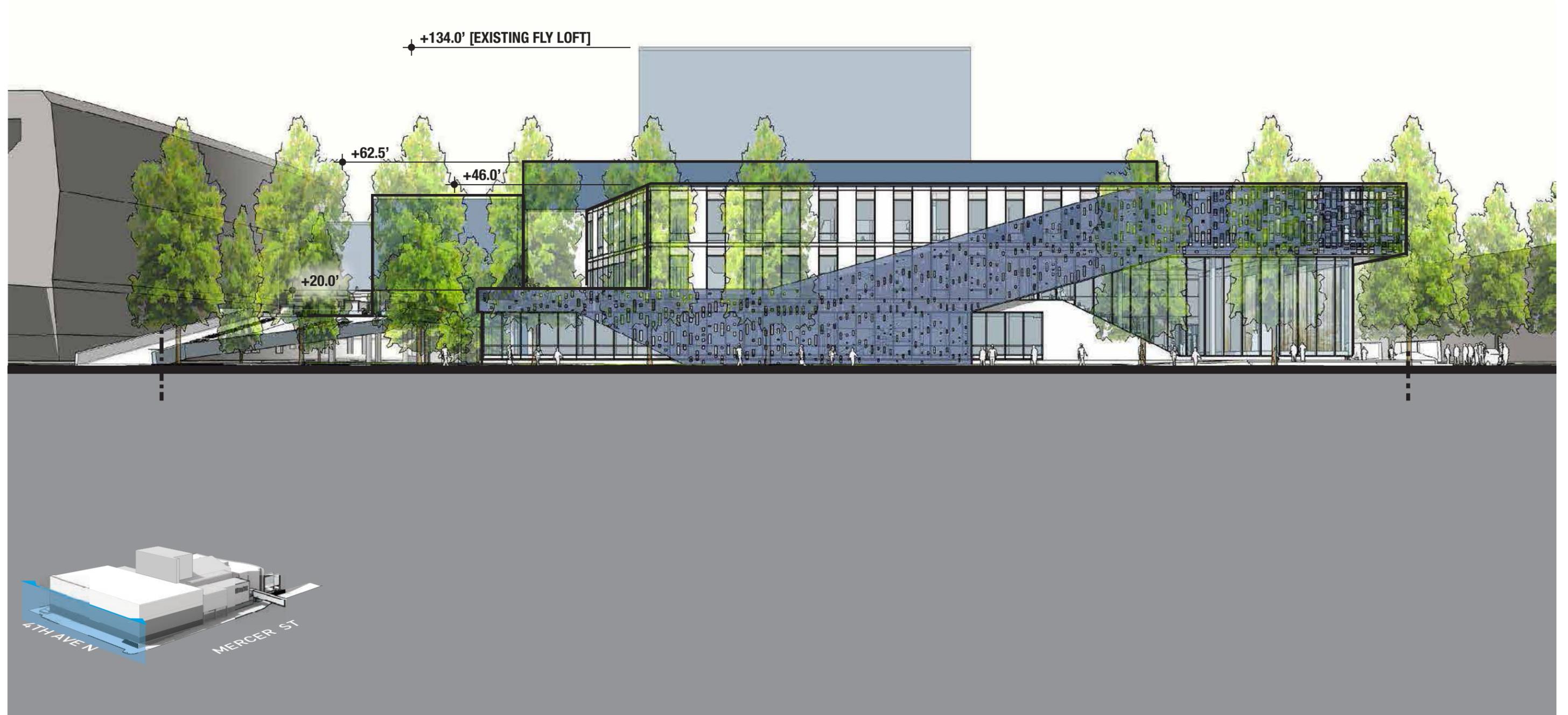
### L4 & L5 ROOF LEVEL FLOOR PLAN



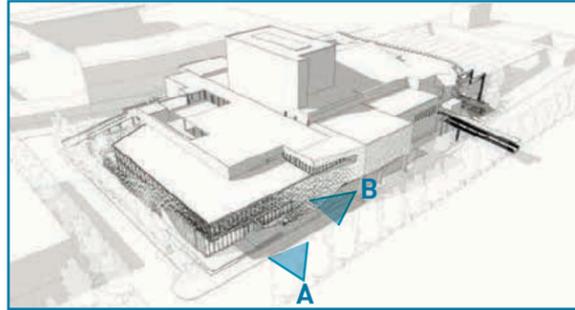
NORTH ELEVATION



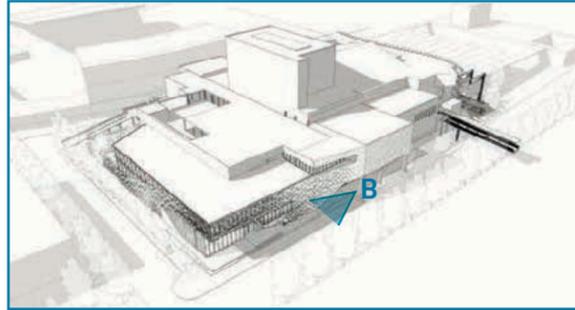
EAST ELEVATION



**STREET VIEWS**  
FROM MERCER STREET

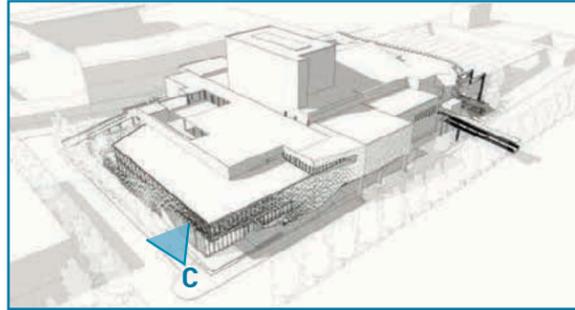


**STREET VIEWS**  
FROM MERCER STREET

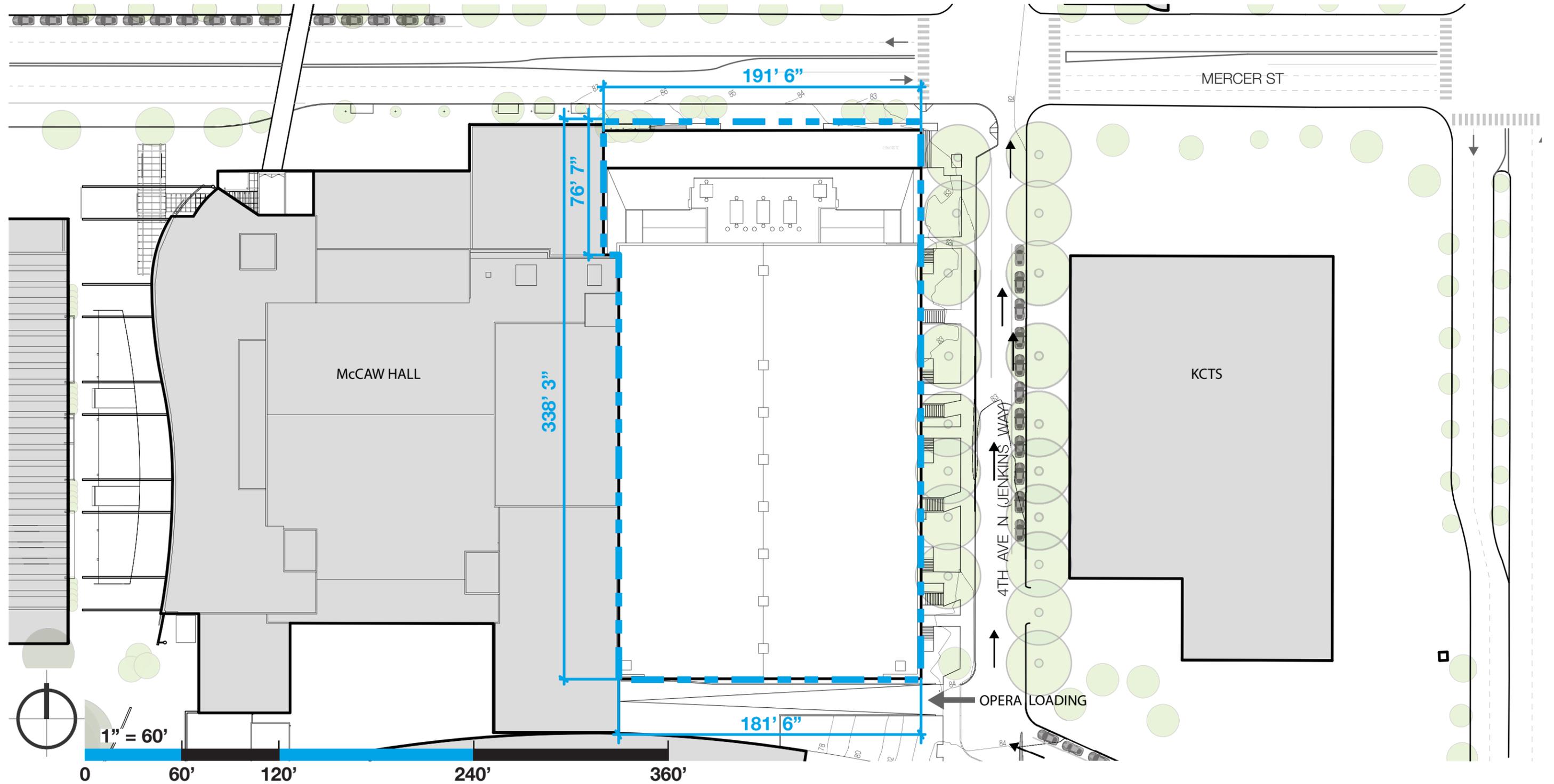


## STREET VIEWS

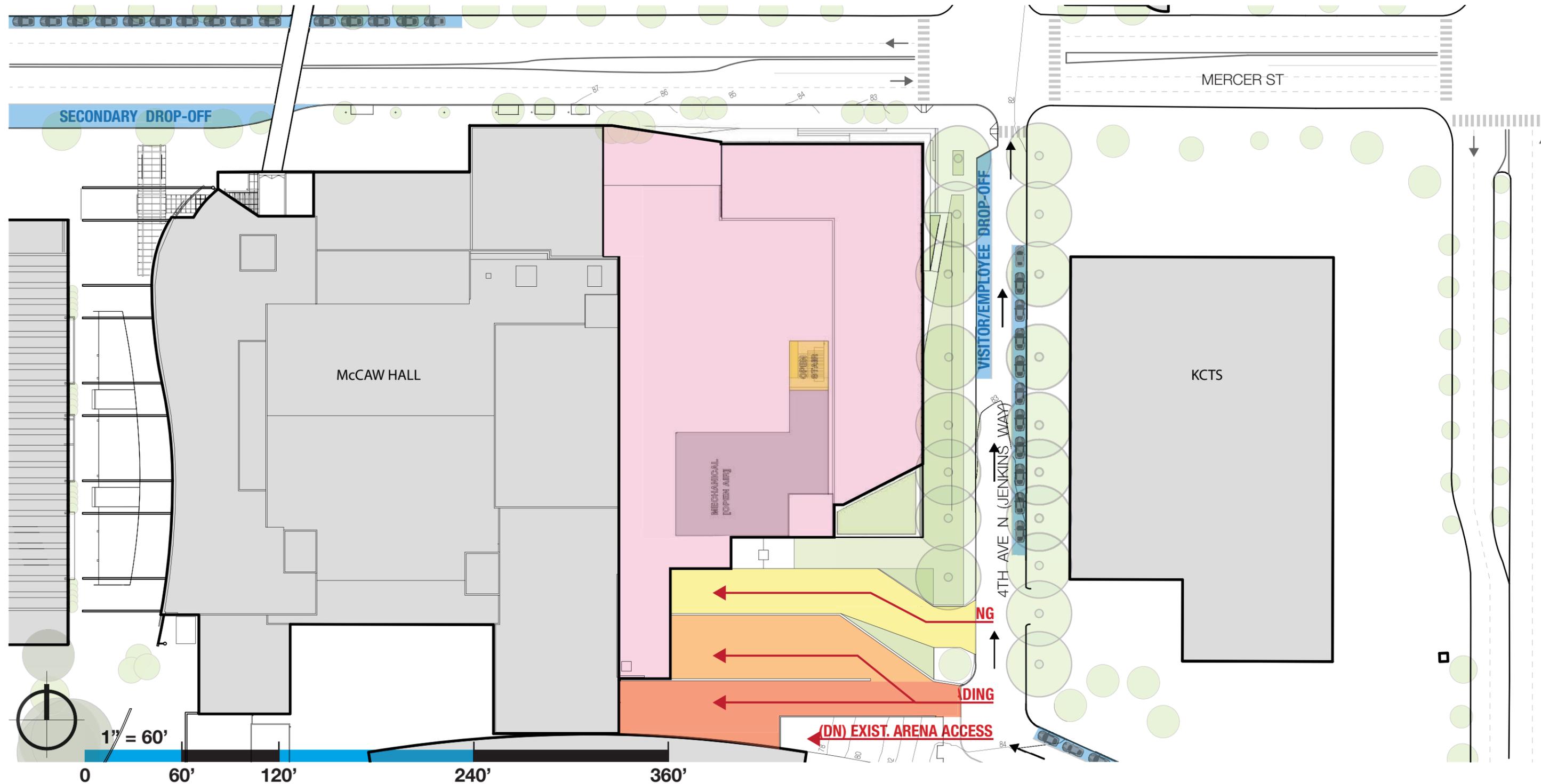
FROM 4TH AVE NORTH (SPEIGHT JENKINS WAY)



EXISTING CONDITIONS  
SITE PLAN



# VEHICLE & LOADING SITE PLAN

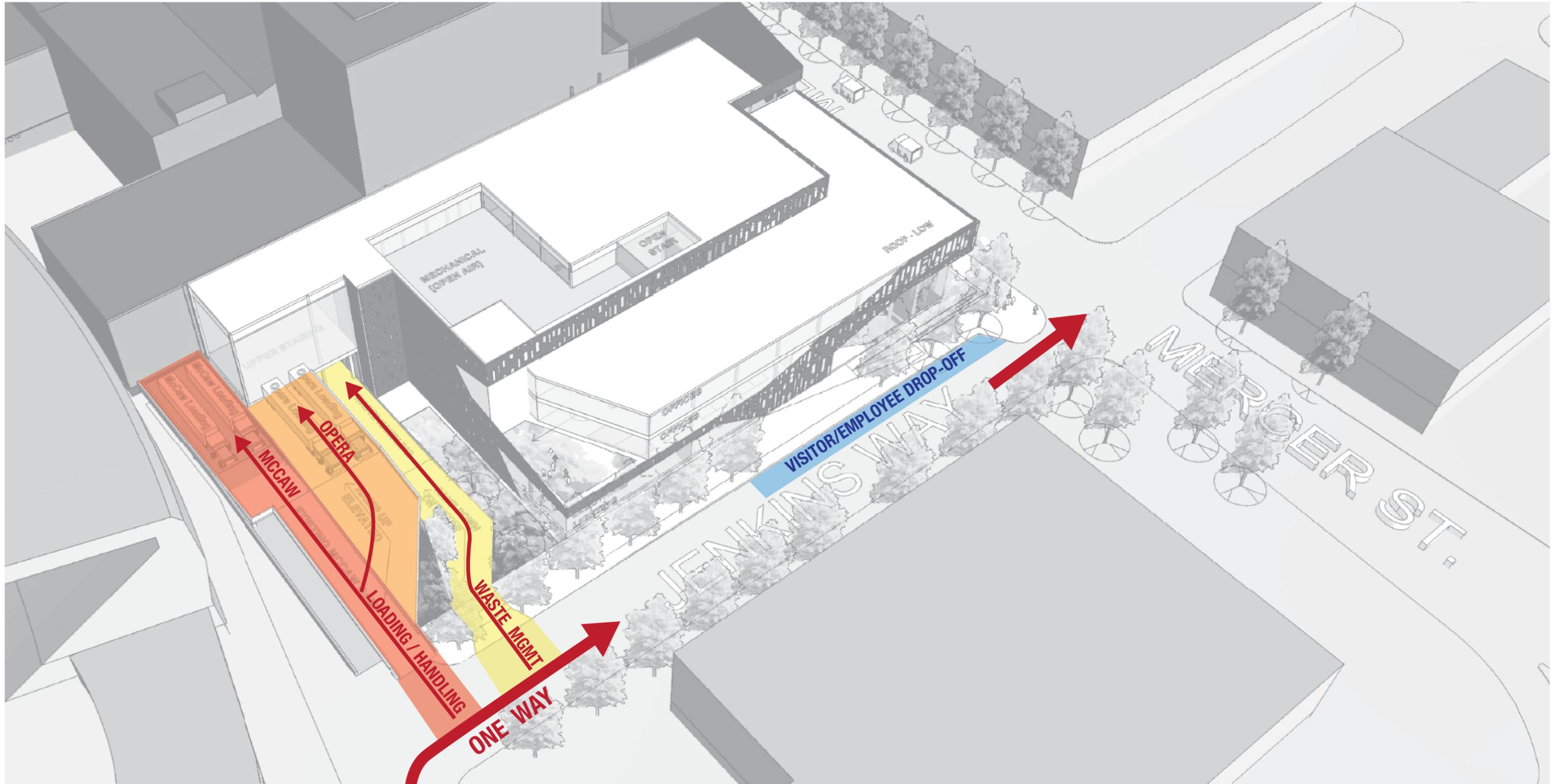


## VEHICLE/LOADING SITE PLAN

SEATTLE DESIGN COMMISSION CONCEPT DESIGN PRESENTATION 2016.02.18

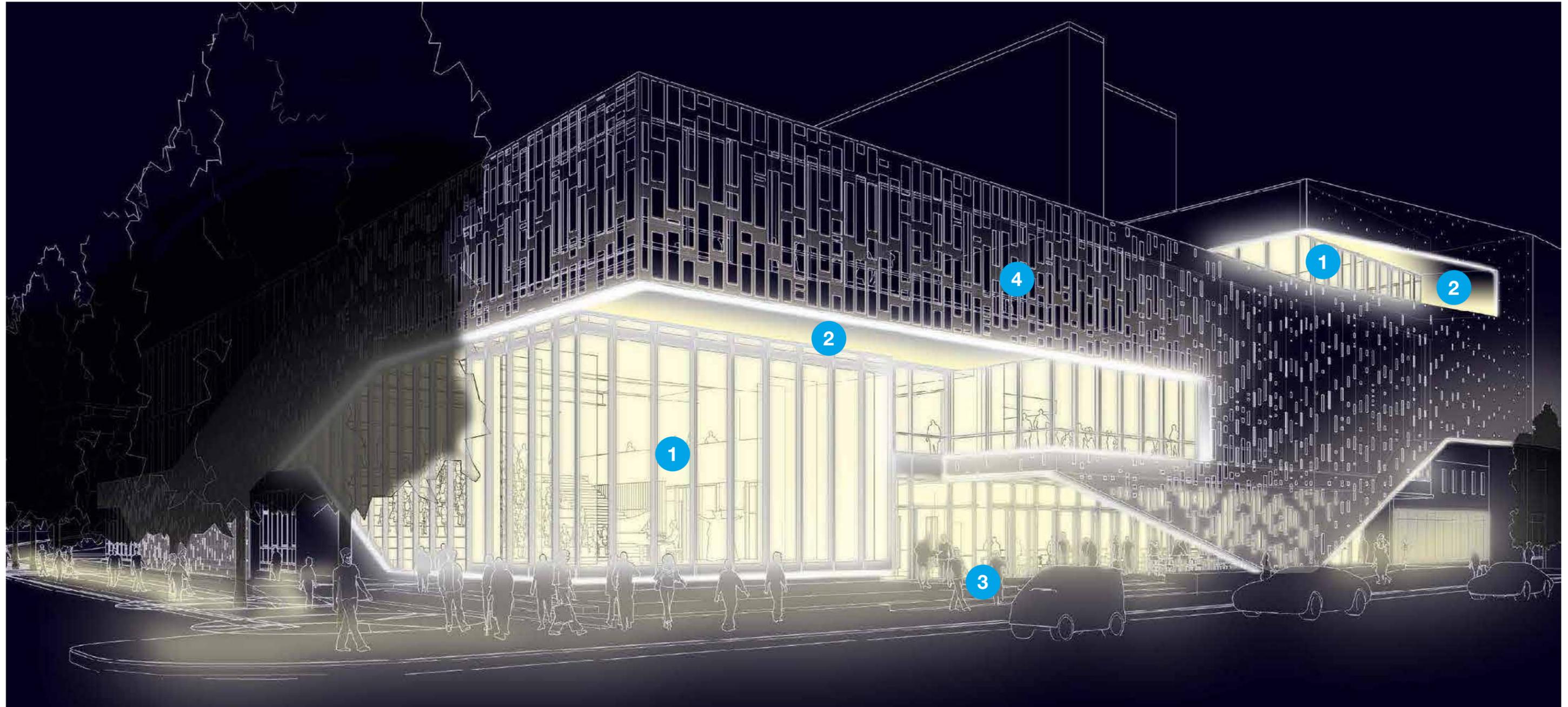
# VEHICLE & LOADING

AERIAL VIEW



## LIGHTING, LANDSCAPE, SIGNAGE

### LIGHTING REVEALS



1. Strong lighting emphasis at civic corner and interior “craft” spaces to showcase stagecraft and reinforce “Connect Public to Craft” concept.

2. Uplight at soffit to reinforce the architecture expression and provide inviting entry point and safe walkway at night time.  
3. High illumination at retail space/street level promenade area to promote activity and safety.

4. Façade lighting at metal siding to highlight identity of building.

## EXTERIOR ENVELOPE

DYNAMIC LIGHTING & EXPRESSION POTENTIAL



## THEATRICAL LIGHTING OF BUILDING FACADE

Pending budget and technical development, the design team is exploring the potential for the building facade 'scrim' to be used for projection mapping and theatrical lighting effects. Additionally, scrim within the Community & Education space could display moving artwork. In this way, the static form of the building could take on dramatically different characteristics, relating to the stagecraft of opera and adding life to the public experience of Mercer Street.

**LIGHTING, LANDSCAPE, SIGNAGE**  
THE PUBLIC REALM

1. Strong civic corner. Highlight gateway to Theatre District with wide elevated plane, views into Community & Education space, and high building overhang above.
2. Small set back to emphasize to main public entry.
3. Operable facade for outdoor retail seating with 'behind the curtain' experience, and covered east-west circulation.
4. Box-office walk-up window.
5. [For context] McCaw Hall frontage. The massing of the proposed project aligns to face of McCaw, emphasizing the civic promenade along Mercer.
6. [For context] Existing drop-off + entry sequence to McCaw Hall [for reference].
7. [For context] Existing plaza. Major pedestrian access point to Seattle Center and event space for McCaw Hall [for reference].
8. Accessible ramp from corner up to entry level, arranged to offer viewing into the costume shop.
9. Short-term loading/drop-off zone for visitors & employees.
10. Existing plane trees to remain, with new planting to enhance experience as a future pedestrian connection to Seattle Center.
11. Minimized large-truck curb cuts at loading zone, gates provided to control access.

