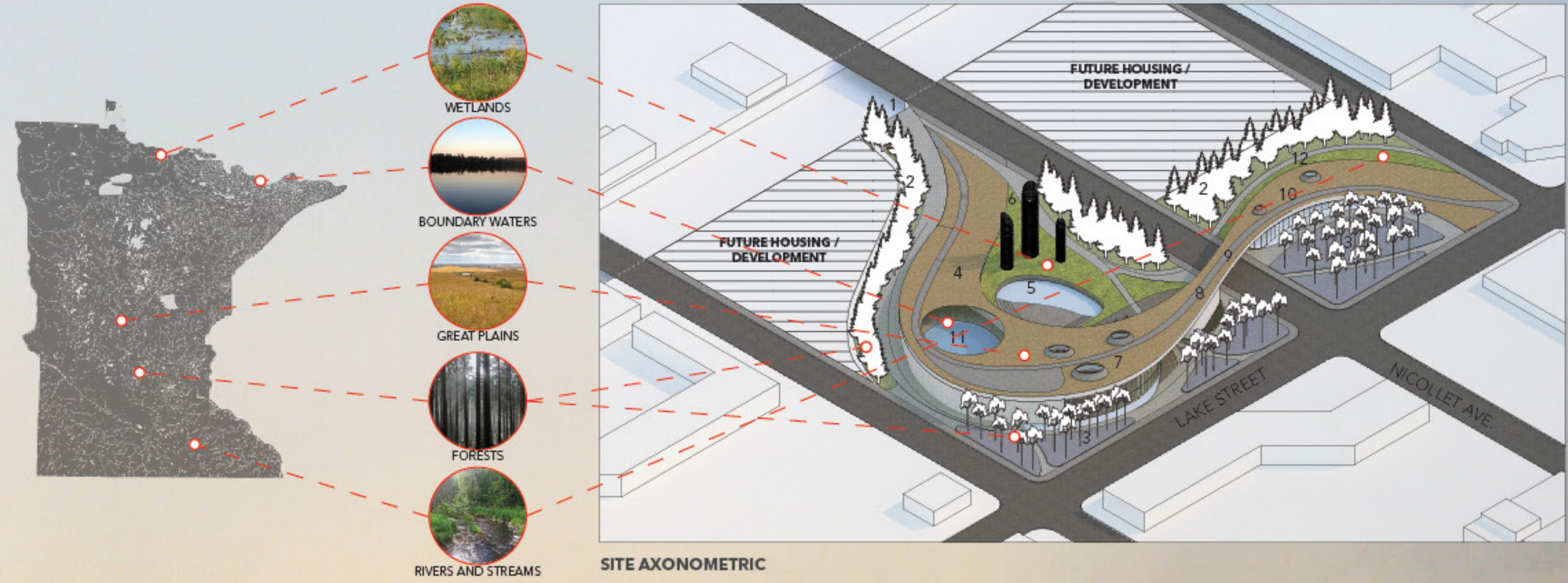


MINNESOTA MICROCOSM

Minnesota is home to a wondrous variety of incredible natural features; from the serenity and stillness of a boundary waters sky, to the ecological vitality of its wetlands, to its plains, forests, and rivers, Minnesota offers a multitude of different exterior experiences which can be extremely powerful to experience and exist within. However, the majority of these resources are unavailable to many urban dwellers, particularly in this neighborhood. This project attempts to capture some of the more powerful moments of these resources, and interpret them in a multi-functional building/landscape on the site.

The building emerges from the ground as a sinuous, contiguous prairie-grass plane, crossing over the newly-opened Nicollet Avenue street and acting as a "green gateway" through this new through-way. The building houses public program, including a natatorium / ice skating rink, a cafe, public restrooms, and an educational center. Interdispersed within and around the building are a variety of outdoor spaces that can provide a multitude of experiences - from public facing plazas suitable for large gatherings, to smaller, more intimate experiences of nature tucked around and within, this small bit of green hopes to offer glimpses of the larger Minnesota landscape.

In front, a large plaza filled with birch trees provides a glimpse of the hardwood forests of Minnesota. The natatorium / ice skating rink provides a reflective surface and captured sky similar to a still, quiet night on a boundary waters lake. The building itself acts like the rolling hills of Minnesota's prairie plains, gently emerging from the ground on one site and re-entering on the other. Tucked behind the building is a small wetlands area, which includes three timber towers with nesting modules for migratory birds - one of which has an expansive overlook for human occupation. On the other side of the site, a more intimate, narrow path is adjacent to a small reflecting pool and bound by a needleleaf grove of trees. And all along the north side of the site, groves of coniferous trees act as acoustical and visual screens for the rest of the city and development, offering some semblance of respite from the otherwise chaotic experience of this part of the city.



GREAT PLAINS - A PRAIRIE GRASS CARPET EMERGES FROM THE GROUND AND PEELS UP, REVEALING THE BUILDING BENEATH. A WALKING PATH CONNECTS THE TWO SITES ACROSS NICOLLET, AND THE BRIDGE ACTS AS A GREEN EDGE AND GATEWAY TO THE SITE.



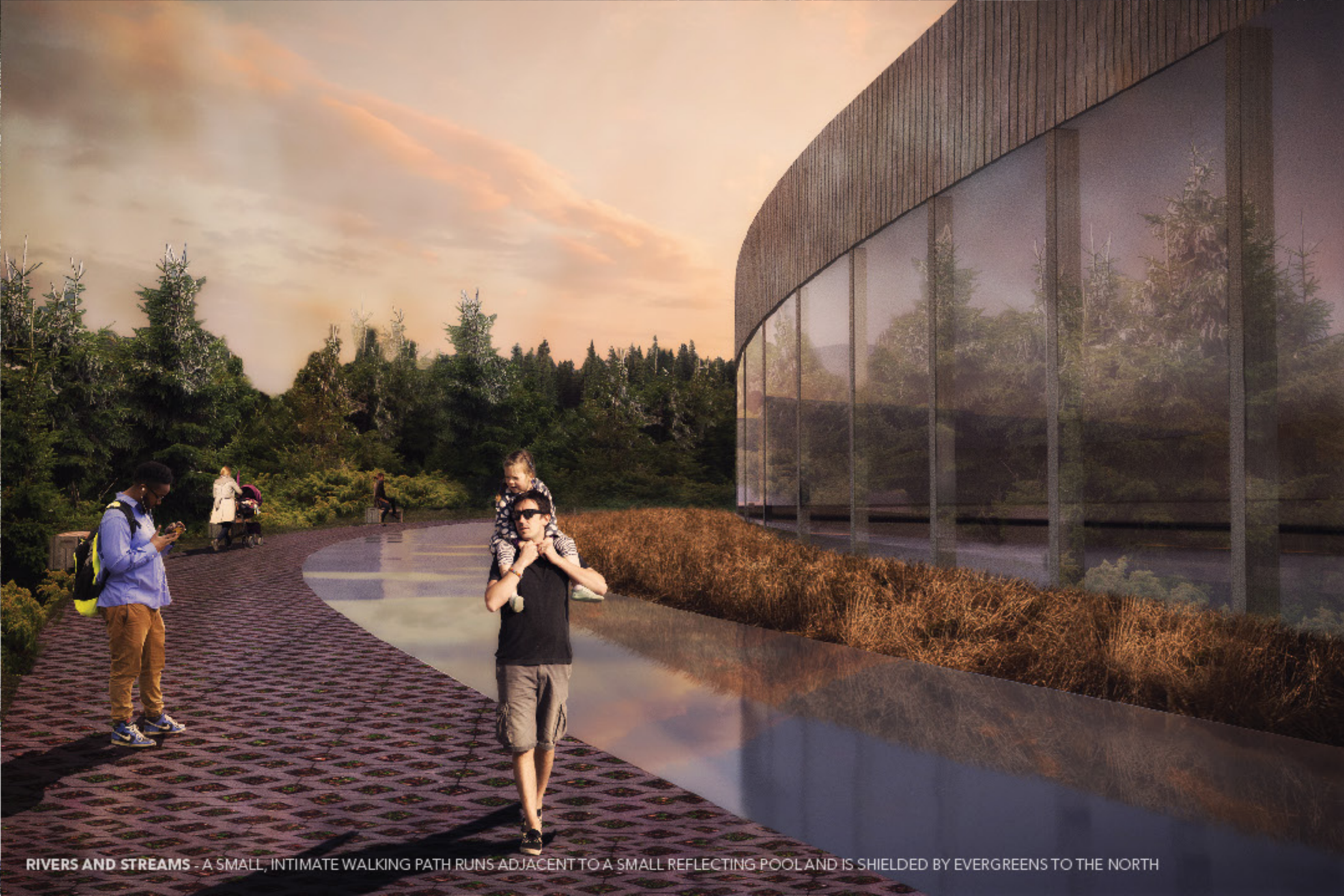
WETLANDS - A SMALL WETLANDS OFFERS BIODIVERSITY AND A SMALL AMPHITHEATER. THREE TOWERS OFFER SHELTER FOR PASSING MIGRATORY BIRDS.



BOUNDARY WATERS - A LARGE, OPEN OCULUS CAPTURES THE SKY, WHILE A POOL IN THE SUMMER, ICE SKATING RINK IN THE WINTER, PROVIDES REFLECTION.



FORESTS - TREE LIKE COLUMNAR STRUCTURES AROUND THE PERIMETER OF THE ARBORETUM / SCULPTURE GARDEN RECALL THE VERTICALITY, AND RHYTHM OF TREES IN THE FOREST.



RIVERS AND STREAMS - A SMALL, INTIMATE WALKING PATH RUNS ADJACENT TO A SMALL REFLECTING POOL AND IS SHIELDED BY EVERGREENS TO THE NORTH.