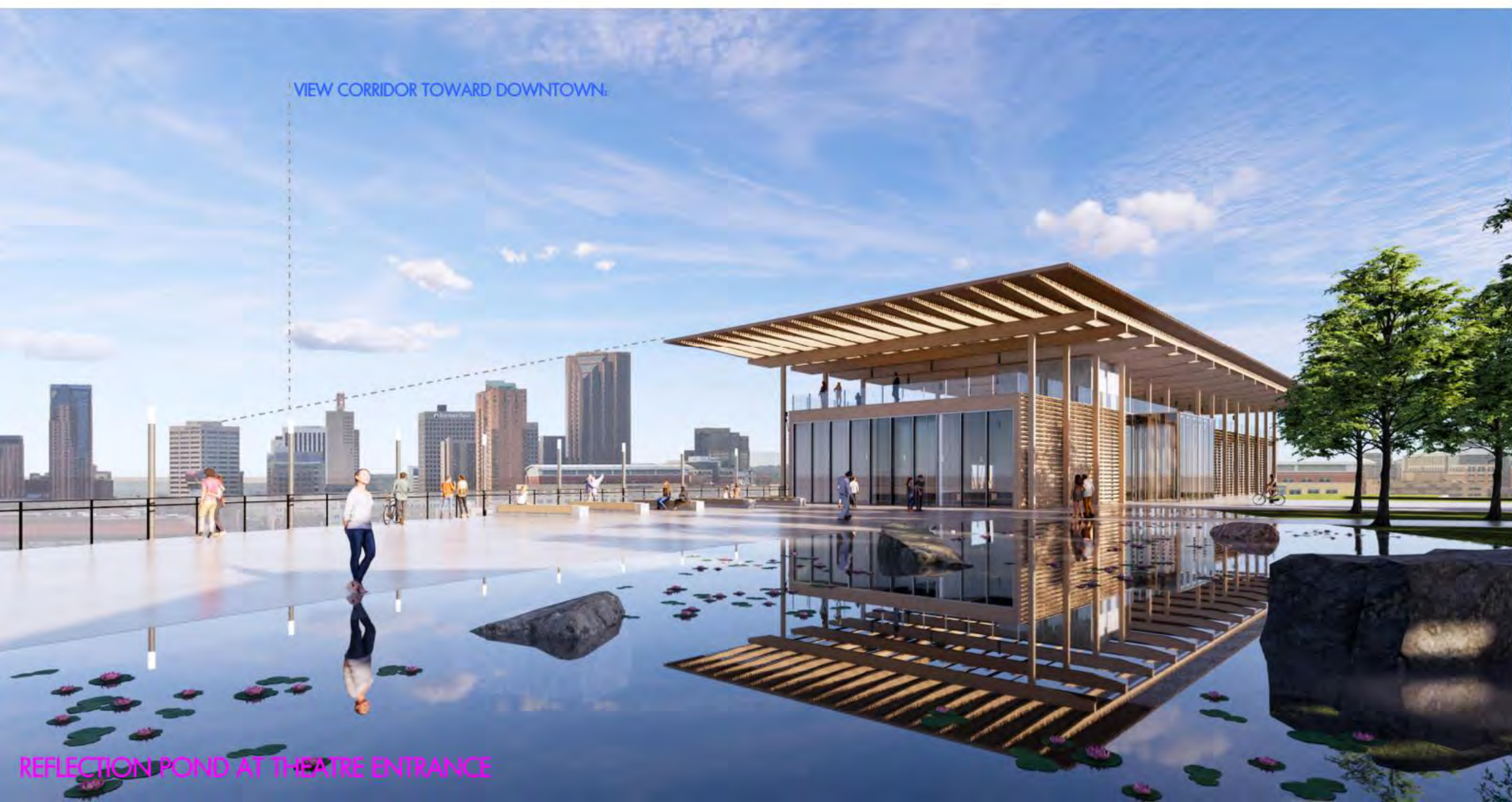
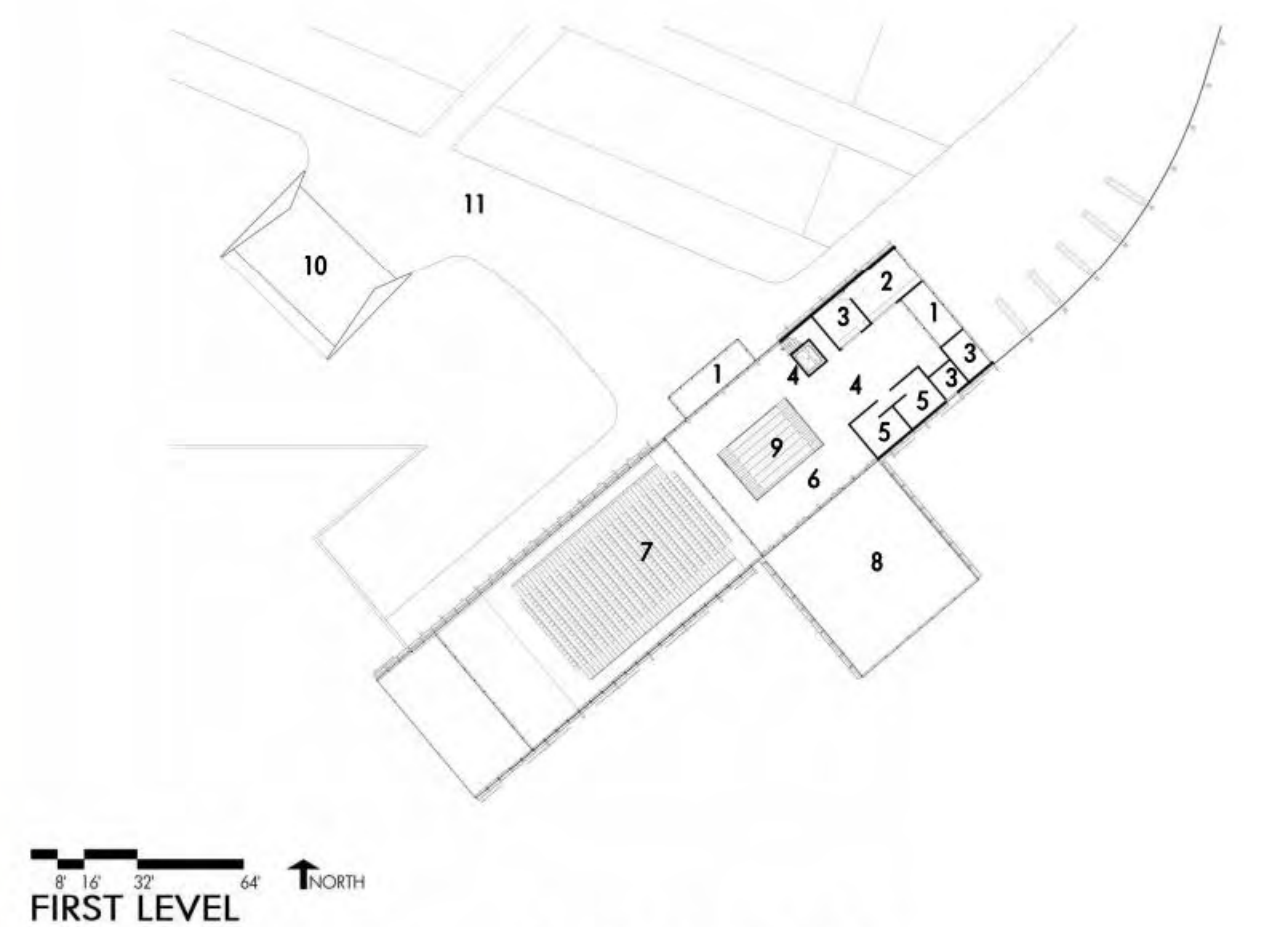
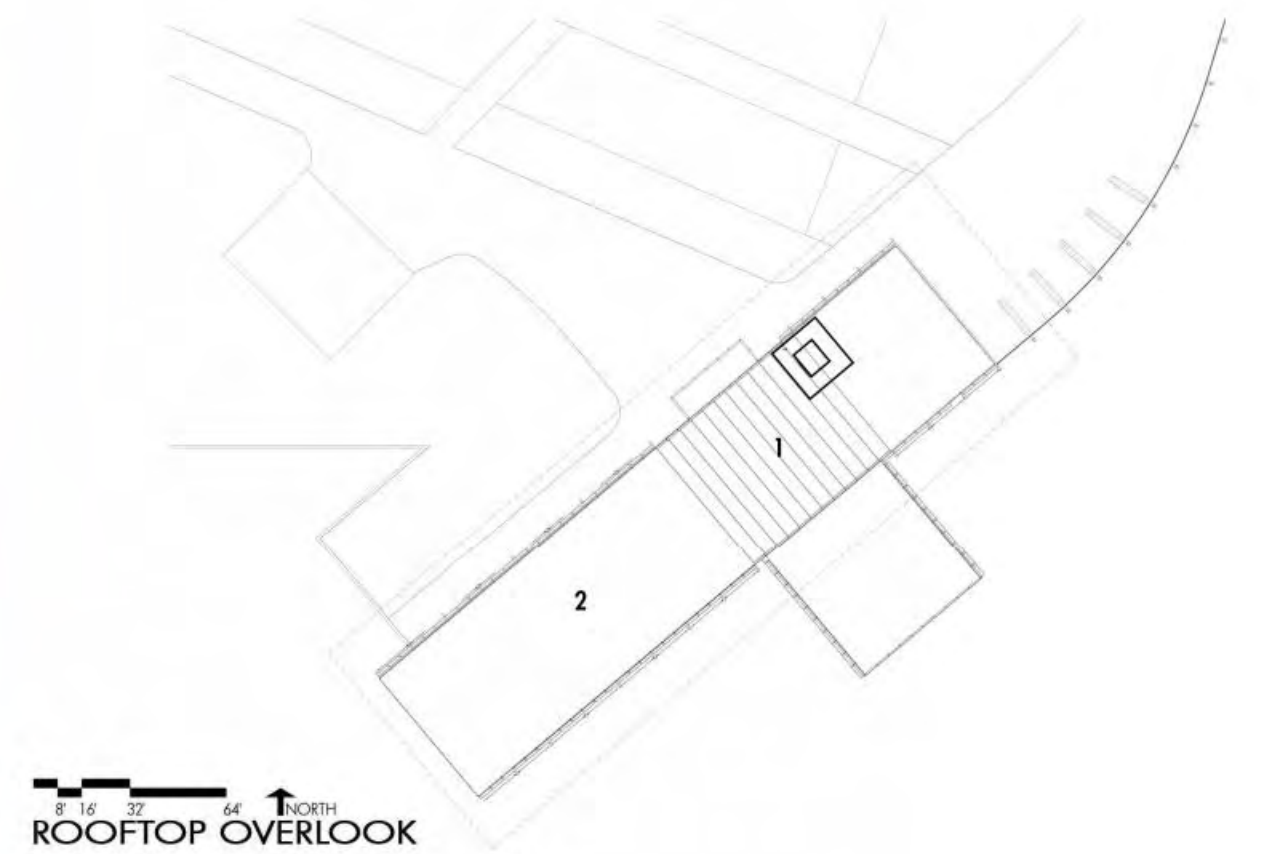


# 2022 Ralph Rapson Traveling Study Award

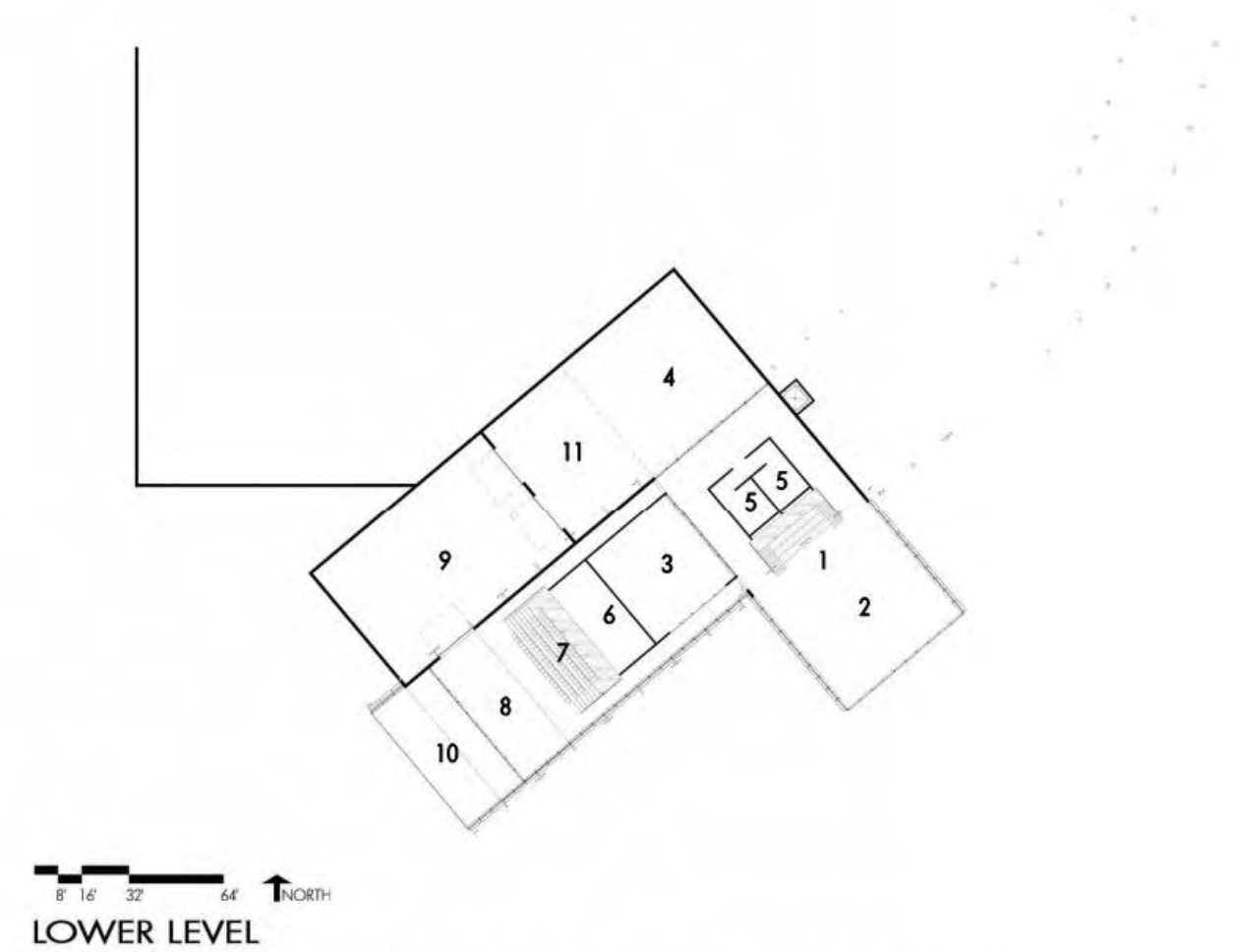


## THEATRE FOR TRUTH:

**On Truth:**  
The common value systems that were inherited at birth for millennia and assumed to be truth-beyond-questioning no longer hold sway in the west, specifically America. Without an agreed upon ultimate arbiter or value system to appeal to, we have come to define ourselves as a nation continually in pursuit of more freedoms. One of the predominant freedoms cherished by our nation is the freedom to believe in what one sees fit. This ultimate allowance/encouragement toward subjectivity in all cultural arenas has provided safety and security from any number of persecutions, but also presents challenges that we are still working through, namely a temptation toward nihilism, or meaninglessness and ultimately the questioning of reality itself. In a world that has undermined the idea of objective truth, how are we to dwell together? The Theatre for Truth intends to form a partial basis toward a resolution, given the current challenge.

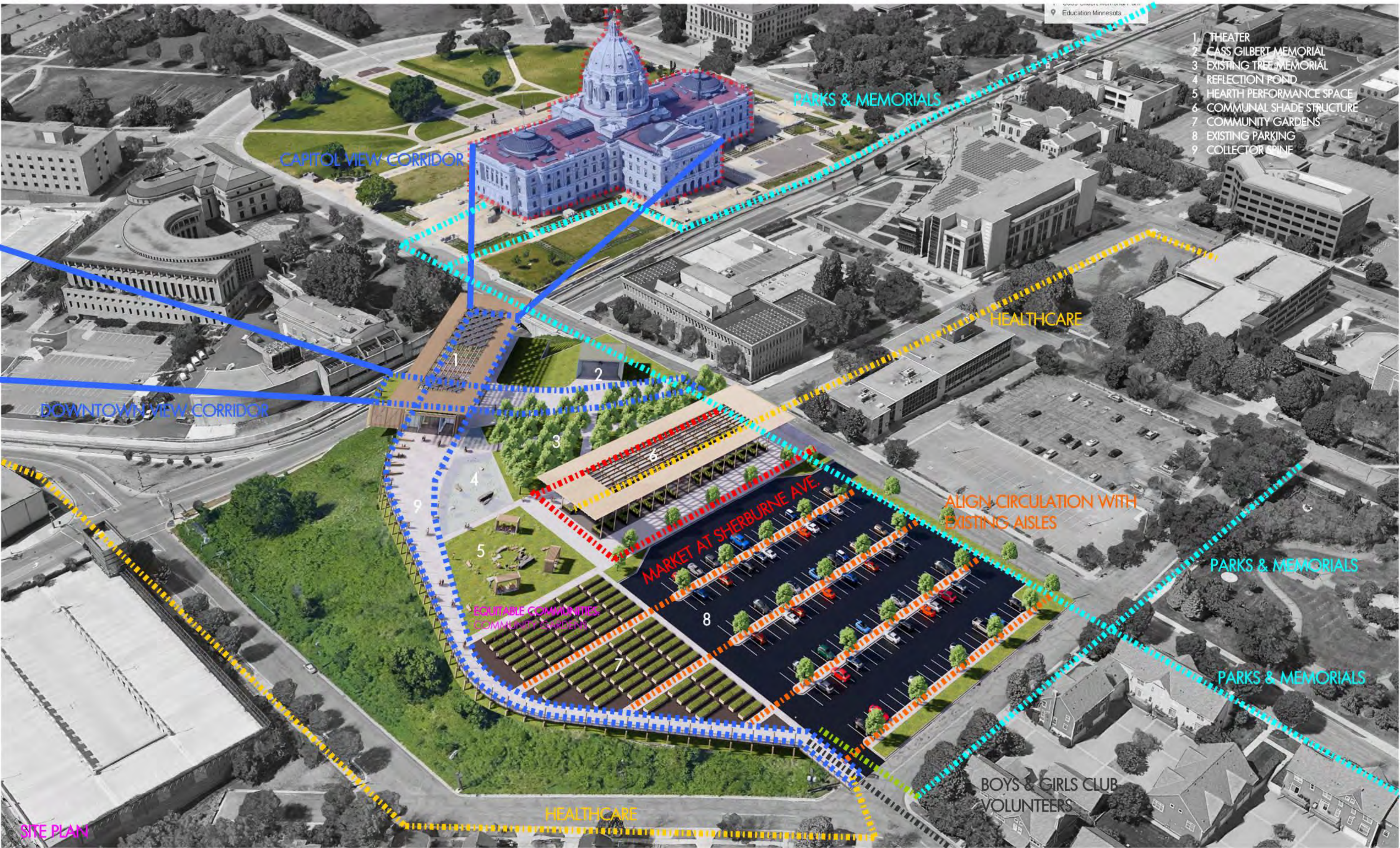
**On Power:**  
Philosophers have debated and poured over the question of ultimate truth for time immemorial. Does Truth exist? Does God exist? Does Truth exist outside of some ultimate authority or personage? Regardless of where one lands in relation to these questions, there is a truth present in the world that stands outside of truth-as-objective-reality. Power. Power may be used in a morally just or unjust way (according to the assumed value system), may seek ends that we agree or disagree with but all the same, can be depended on to do a few things, virtually without fail. Power seeks to gain more power, and it tends to concentrate. The Theatre for Truth project site presents a unique opportunity to dialogue with the two largest concentrations of power in the area; political power represented by the Minnesota State Capitol, and financial power, concretized by the downtown St. Paul skyline.

**Theatre:**  
The Theatre for Truth seeks to frame, both figuratively and through the built form, questions surrounding truth and power, or more specifically, the influence that power can have over our perceptions of truth. The building takes its form directly from the view corridors toward the Minnesota State Capitol and the Downtown St. Paul skyline, while acting as an extension of the landscape as the structure tip-toes on the ridge and gently hovers over the hillside. As the Theatre seeks to tell stories that investigate objective reality through the lens of subjective lived experiences, it will also be in dialogue with political and financial interests. Depending on the subject matter of the performance, both the Capitol and Downtown backdrops have the potential to influence the work and provide a completely new context given their physical reality in lieu of an abstract concept.





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CASS GILBERT MEMORIAL STRUCTURE

## THE SITE:

### Gardens and Market:

Ample community garden space greets visitors upon entering the site through the northwest parking lot. The walkways through the gardens align with existing parking medians, allowing for clear, safe pedestrian traffic through the site. With the aid of the nearby Boys and Girls Club members, the gardens support a thriving farm to market venue. The market shade structure occupies the space previously assigned to Sherburne Ave. Parallel to the existing memorial trees, the structure uses the existing allée as a beautiful backdrop and preview of the State Capitol beyond. The east side of the market opens to a grand lawn planted with native grasses. Small outdoor rooms surround a central stone hearth composed of large boulders, harkening back to the ancient form of theatre, story telling around a fire.

### Cass Gilbert Memorial:

The existing Cass Gilbert Memorial allée of trees is respected and left untouched with the exception of introducing a cobbled stone pedestrian path off of the primary axis through the trees (no trees were removed). The new path weaves through the grove toward the Minnesota State Capitol, one of Gilbert's masterpieces. The reorientation toward the capital is intensified by a simple frame in the landscape. The monolithic structure is clad in white marble to pay homage to the Capitol's primary cladding and is enclosed by mullion-free glazing on the open ends of the frame, allowing an unimpeded visual celebration of the Capitol's Architecture.

### Theatre Entrance:

The community lawn and the memorial trees meet at the reflection pond; the pond reflects the beautiful mature trees of the allée and is bisected by a simple platform bridge, aligned with the existing path through the grove. Pond and path converge at the Theatre entrance, culminating in a panoramic view of downtown St. Paul.

### Site Circulation:

The entire site is connected by a collector spine that meanders in a north south direction, following the ridge of the hill. As the path nears the Theatre entrance, it continues to nudge further out from the ridge, capturing commanding views of downtown while giving a dramatic sense of extension toward the horizon. A series of sensory poles provide ample lighting and pleasant sounds of nature that guide everyone safely to the building and throughout the site.



COMMONS SPACE LOOKING TOWARD CAPITOL & DOWNTOWN ST. PAUL