

2017 A4LE
LE Solutions Planning & Design Awards

Award Category: Post Secondary

UNIVERSITY OF ALASKA ANCHORAGE
Alaska Airlines Center

Anchorage, Alaska



SIGNATURE PHOTO

UAA Alaska Airlines Center

Executive Summary

The Alaska Airlines Center (AAC) is a model of public/private partnership integrating campus planning with district wide concerns. Site planning addressed a myriad of issues including intersection safety, hospital access, pedestrian safety, and future road extensions. The Center is both pathway and stepping stone, connecting campus to student housing.

This facility combines spectator, training, and learning spaces into an integrated whole that embraces all students encouraging physical learning and healthy lifestyles. The main court is recessed into the earth rising three levels above the playing surface creating an intense and intimate setting. Entry sequences are strategically choreographed to build excitement and enhance wayfinding.

Inspired by traditional fieldhouses and Alaska's magnificent landscape, the structure integrates site and athletic planning in an iconic form at the edge of the university campus. The arena welcomes and encourages students to pass through and connects them to exciting activities within. Views into and out of the facility connect users to the landscape and the community to the center.

The branding strategy, *The Echo of the Seawolf*, creates a visual language for multiple events and use modes. Designed as a 100+ year building, exterior materials of zinc, terra cotta, and anodized aluminum will age gracefully as the facility's legacy evolves.

Project Details & Scope

PROJECT NAME	UAA Alaska Airlines Center
INSTITUTION NAME	University of Alaska Anchorage
CITY/STATE	Anchorage, Alaska
SUPERINTENDENT	Chris Turletes, Vice Chancellor of Facilities
OCCUPANCY DATE	August 2015
USE	Post Secondary Multi-Use Sports Arena
DESIGN CAPACITY	5,000 spectators
SITE SIZE (ACRES)	18
GROSS AREA (SQ. FT.)	196,000
SITE DEVELOPMENT COSTS	\$5 million
CONSTRUCTION COSTS	\$85 million
FF&E	\$1.5 million
TOTAL COST	\$91.5 million

AAC houses all of UAA's athletic teams and staff. It is a place for student recreation, banquets, dances, and graduations. It serves a community need for concerts, recreation, sports, conferences, and large events. Identified objectives included:

- ▶ Support Athletic Programs
- ▶ Enhance Campus Life
- ▶ Create a Signature Facility
- ▶ Engage the Community
- ▶ Build Sustainable Infrastructure

Neighborhood Engagement

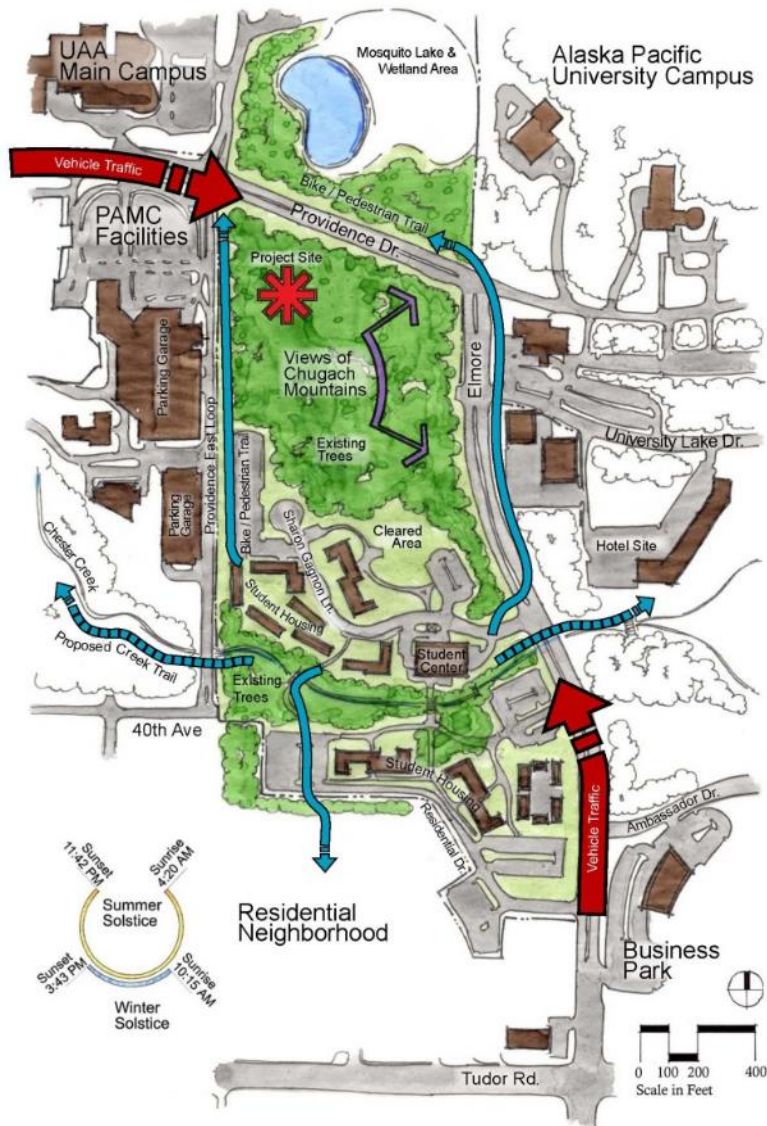
“when you build a thing you cannot merely build that thing in isolation, but must also repair the world around it, and within it, so that the larger world at that one place becomes more coherent, and more whole”

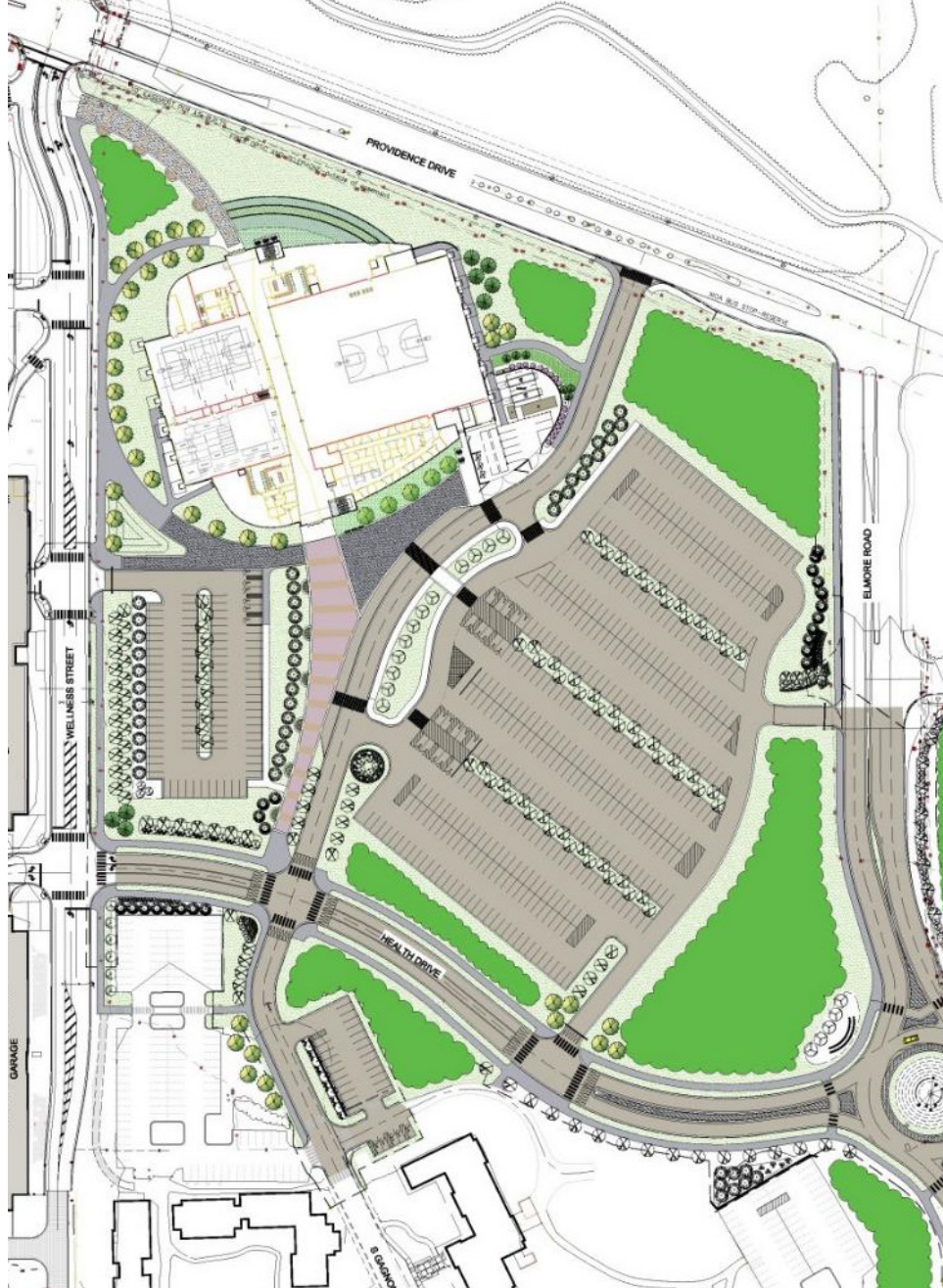
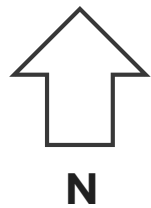
This quote from Christopher Alexander’s *“Pattern Language”* aptly describes one key to the success of the project. Early exploration of the site and context uncovered ruptures in the urban fabric including:

- ▶ Inadequate vehicular access to adjacent medical center
- ▶ A series of dangerous intersections on a busy arterial
- ▶ Isolated pedestrian pathways that lacked security
- ▶ Poor connection between student housing and the campus

The project plan created a framework to correct these deficiencies, prompting neighbors to actively participate in the planning, funding and construction process. The series of partnerships that emerged included shared parking, and independently funded road construction and paved the way for broad community support and funding. One popular outreach activity was offering wood cut from site clearing for community pickup.







AAC is designed to be a connector; creating a pathway from housing to campus, strengthening relationships between students, faculty and athletics, and enhancing engagement with the community.

Given the often harsh weather in Alaska, AAC has become both a pathway and a warm and inviting stepping stone, connecting the main campus to student housing.



Future site utilization was mapped out to demonstrate how the center supports the goals and aspirations of the University. The future recreation center, hockey rink and structured parking are organized around the student pathway that connect housing to the main campus.

Facility Organization

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The 5-level plan is organized around 3 large activity spaces, the Arena, Auxiliary Gym and Gymnastics Practice bisected by the main pedestrian concourse. Support spaces are clustered around courts and zoned by floor for specific activities. The Basement Level houses athletic support, the entry level fitness and recreation, 2nd level offices with balcony seating, suites and a restaurant at the upper levels.



Locker Rooms



Green Room

Training & Rehab



Ski Room

Freight Elevator





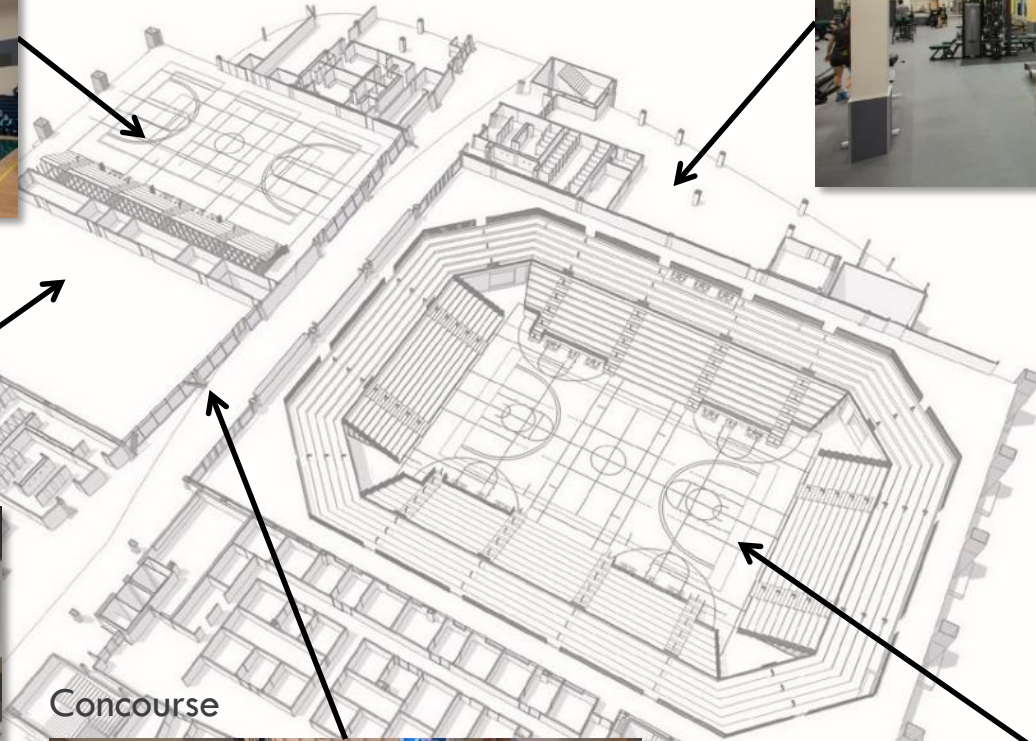
Auxiliary Gym



Fitness Center

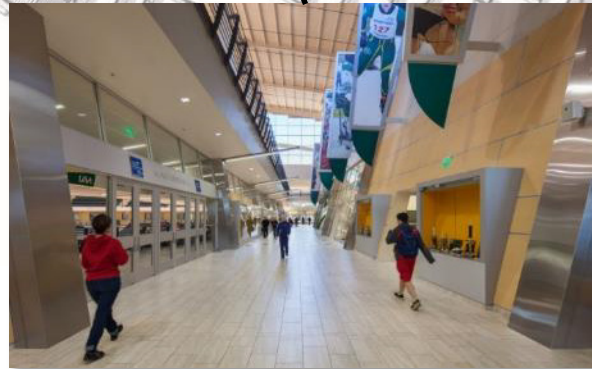


Gymnastics Practice



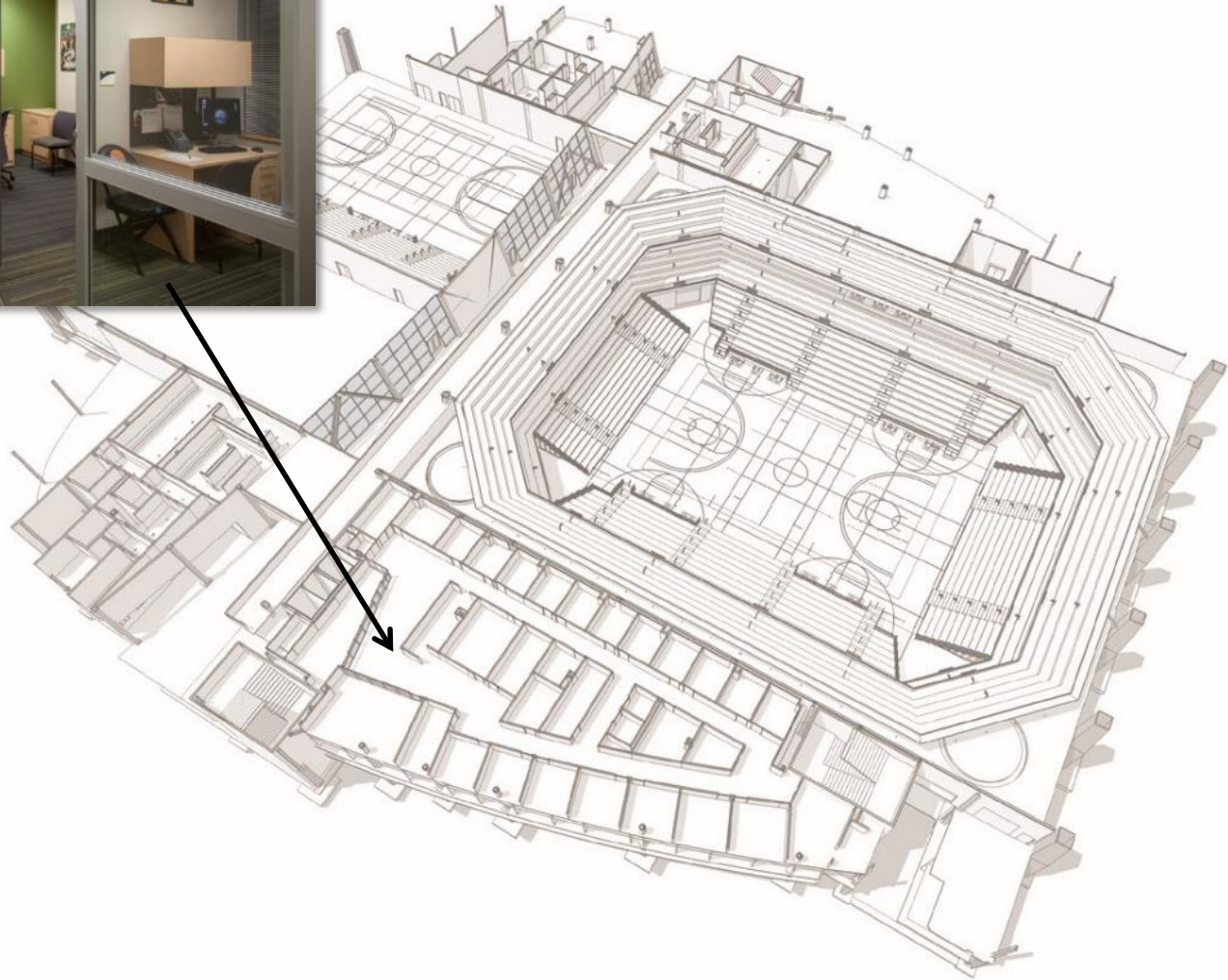
Concourse

Arena





Administration Offices

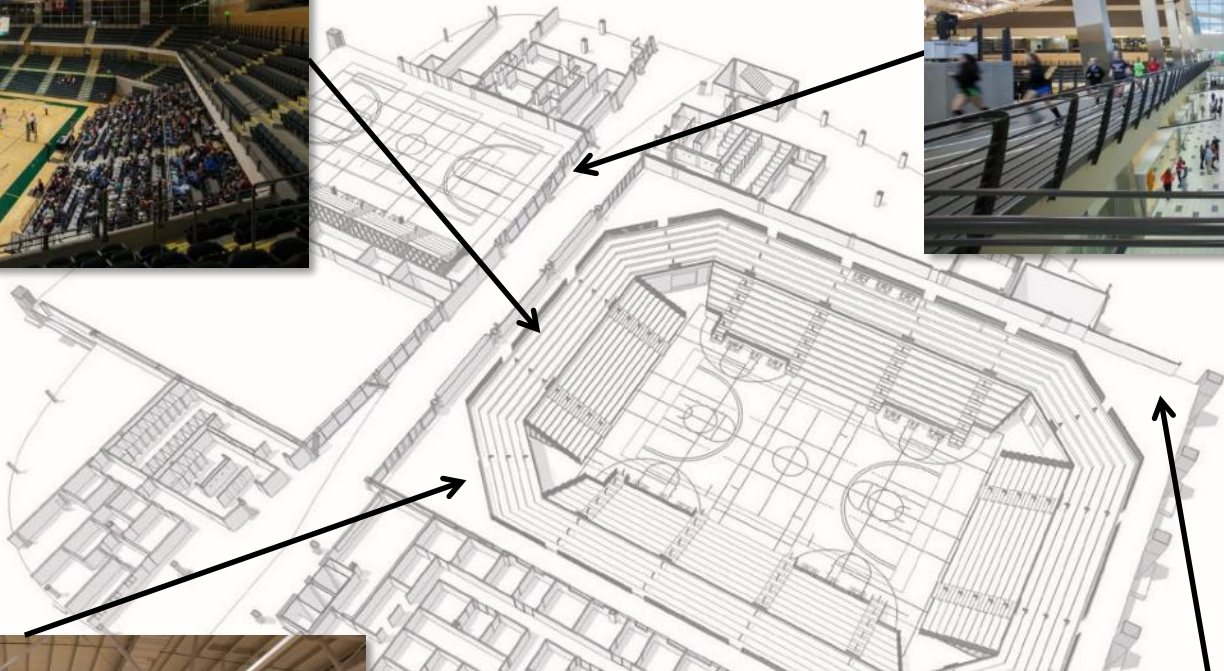




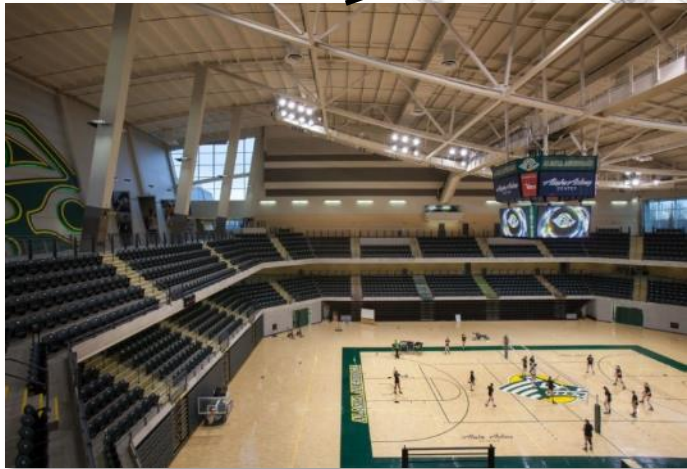
Looking NE



Looking S

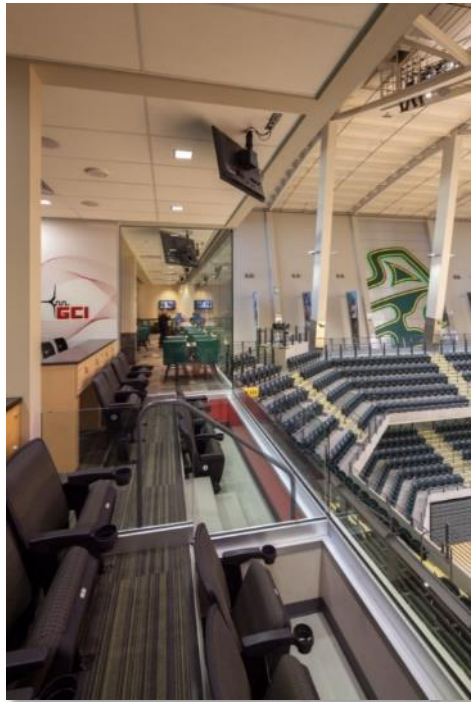


Looking N



Looking SE

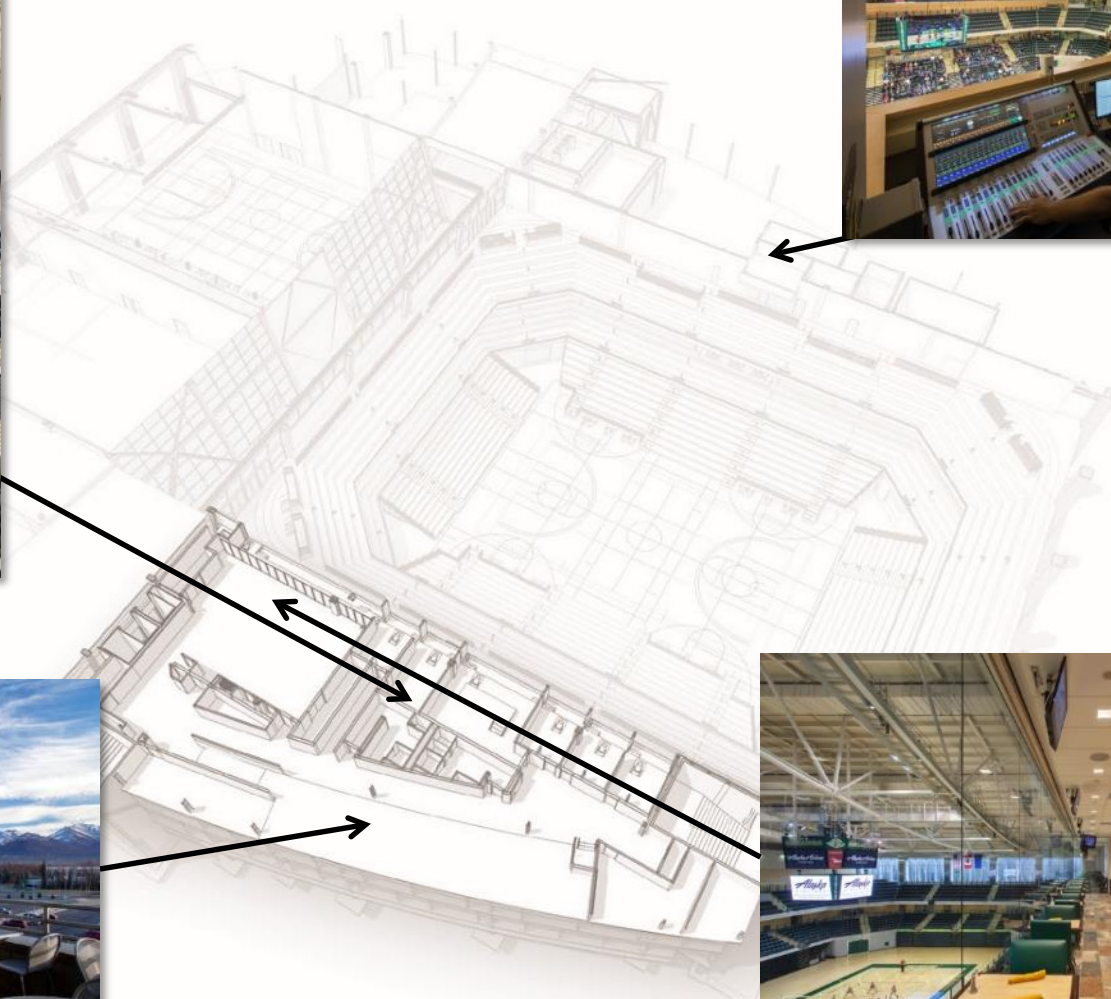




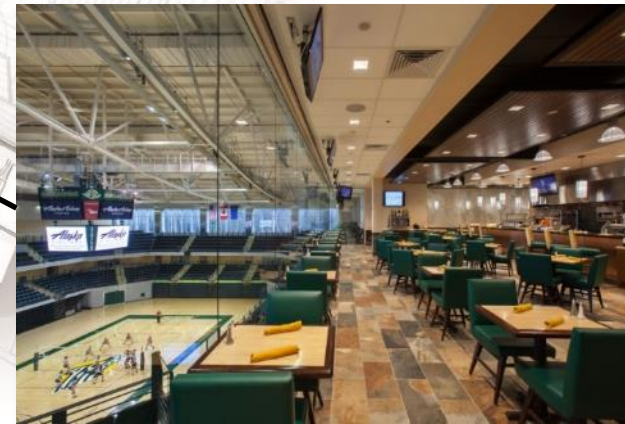
Sky Boxes



Outdoor Dining



AV Control




Restaurant

Stakeholder Engagement

From the beginning it was clear that a project of this scale in the Anchorage community could not be accomplished in isolation. UAA's planning process carefully engaged and orchestrated the aspirations of multiple stakeholders including:

- ▶ **Students:** athletes, non-athletes
- ▶ **Neighbors:** medical centers, adjacent private university, business interests
- ▶ **UAA Athletics:** administration, faculty, coaches, boosters
- ▶ **Community:** event organizers, municipal planners, recreation enthusiasts

Participation was tailored to the stakeholders needs; on-line surveys for students; focus groups for coaches and athletes; community forums for the general public; and work sessions for with institutional neighbors. Key representatives we assembled as a project advisory committee to collaborate regularly with the design team, shaping and refining the design to meet the broad range of objectives. UAA's executive committee provided key oversight assuring alignment with strategic goals.



Collaboration continued through construction using a CM at Risk delivery method to address an aggressive schedule and tight budget. Initial estimates came in high so the team analyzed project components to maximize value and structured a progressive series of cost options to recapture scope.

Architecture & Identity

The new arena is both bold and elegant in its form and development. Its focal point is a graceful arched roof that spans the arena and auxiliary athletic spaces. Supported by long span bowstring trusses the unique structure organizes the functional space and defines the facilities' signature.

This project was a unique opportunity for UAA to create an iconic landmark that speaks to their mission, the great state of Alaska and tells the story of their mascot, the Seawolf. A carefully structured branding process identified key themes and developed opportunities for the story to grow and develop over time including:

- ▶ Echo of the Seawolf: 60' tall edge lit slice of their totemic logo
- ▶ Dual sided display cases that provide glimpses of the arena
- ▶ Bronze inlay championship plaques in the concourse floor
- ▶ Seawolf themed signage
- ▶ Sophisticated color/texture scheme based on the green and gold
- ▶ Super scaled banners celebrating each athletic team



Trademark Seawolf

“Visualize the whole building complex as a system of roofs. Place the highest roofs over those parts of the building which are most significant...”

~ From “A Pattern Language,”
written by Christopher Alexander



Fieldhouse



Alaska



Arch





VIEW FROM MAIN CAMPUS

UAA Alaska Airlines Center





SOCIAL, ACTIVE, ENERGETIC

UAA Alaska Airlines Center





TRANSPARENCY, CONNECTIONS

UAA Alaska Airlines Center



VERTICALLY TIERED ARENA

UAA Alaska Airlines Center



SIGNATURE IDENTITY: ECHO OF THE SEAWOLF

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