Purpose: Students in the Master of Architecture program worked with representatives from the Howard County Department of Planning, the Columbia Association, and the Owen Brown Village board to come up with redevelopment schemes for Owen Brown Village Center. The semester began with the production of a series of base maps, which analyzed demographics, issues hydrology and the historical vision of James Rouse for the city of Columbia. Students also researched a series of built case study projects from around the world that provided inspiration and metrics for their design proposals at Owen Brown. Finally, each design team worked closely with a student from the Real Estate Development Capstone course to come up with programs, square footages, and adjacencies for their design schemes.

Elkorn Promenade

This project proposes a method for bringing the nearby Lake Elkorn, a significant recreational amenity in Columbia, into Owen Brown Village Center as a way of reinvigorating and organizing the central public plaza space. A set of mixed-use residential/retail buildings line a newly created water-lined promenade and guide both pedestrian and auto traffic from Lake Elkorn through to a newly designed Upper Park. System that mimics the existing library and school with a safe and fully vegetated pathway system. The public plaza is capped by a grassy amphitheater and townhomes where public festivals and events can take place.

Generator: Re-charging Owen Brown

The Generator project suggests that Owen Brown Village Center can be a model for other village centers by reinvigorating sustainable development and celebrating energy, hydrological, technological, and vegetative infrastructure as something that can provide a unique character to public space. Stormwater processing in the form of a more formal canal and less formal bioswales and wetland retention ponds create new recreational opportunities and enrich the major retail streets. Fruit and nut producing trees offer shade and add a survey peg for new development and visual markers of underground ground sourced heat exchange systems. Wireless networking enables the decorative display of real-time data on energy and water use in coffee shops, the community centers and public lobby spaces of mixed-use buildings.

Village Park

The Village Park reimagines a green heart as the public center of Owen Brown Village and at the same time organizes pedestrian and automobile circulation. Mixed-use residential and retail buildings and a continuous loop with on-street parking line and give form to the Village Park. Traffic calming measures are implemented at the existing Chaddorock way in order to activate the Village Park to provide safe crossings for pedestrians between Owen Brown and Lake Elkorn. The existing Giant Supermarket is retained and used as an anchor to provide a better connection between the library, school, and residential apartment buildings to the North of the site and Lake Elkorn to the South. Surface parking lots are also treated as parks and are designed to minimize tree canopy, provide permeable ground surfaces, and link the existing hydrological system to a series of planted bio-swale filters.

EDGES: Building and tree lines that define public space

UTILITY DIAGRAM

PUBLIC SPACES: The Gardens, Village, and Fields

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