2023 MERIT AWARD

Brock Dueck

UNIVERSITY OF MANITOBA
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The new Central Core takes a site that has been disconnected from the rest of the city and reintegrates it as an essential piece of the community. Providing space for people to move freely and safely as well as providing ample resources limits the need to travel elsewhere. This means that the residents in the neighborhood can create their own future close to home. Much like a building, this space is the Central Core for the Old Town community.
SITE ANALYSIS

Neighborhood Profile
- 77% African American
- 74% of people do not have a vehicle
- Transit is primarily used by people of colour
- 32,000 students rely on public transit everyday
- Median home sale price is $58,000

- Median household income is $15,724 annually
- Unemployment is at 7%
- 34% do not complete high school
- Baltimore’s median is $79,500
- Baltimore’s average for not completing high school is 28%

Ecological profile
- Baltimore has a goal to increase the canopy from 20% to 40% by 2037
- $41 Million has been allocated to the American Rescue Plan to focus ecological development of previously red-lined areas
- 86% of people live within a 10 minute walk of green space, but what is the quality of that space?
- There has been an increase in days reaching max extreme temperatures

Housing
- 26,500 homes projected to be needed over the next 5 years
- 74% multi-family rent
- 4% multi-family for sale
- 12% single-family attached
- 10% single family for sale

WHY DO PEDESTRIAN MALLS FAIL?
- FOOT TRAFFIC - PROXIMITY TO ATTRACTIONS - SPRAWL OF THE CITY - LENGTH OF THE MALL

WHY DO PEDESTRIAN MALLS FAIL?
- 6 Lanes 21,331 cars/day
- 3 Lanes 9,201 cars/day

6 Lanes 11,030 cars/day

STRONG CENTRAL AXIS

Uncared for open space
Housing well cared for

* Church

New Development

Housing well
cared for
R-9 Commercial Clusters
Pedestrian-oriented corridors of commercial uses that serve the immediate neighborhood and allow for clustering of entertainment uses. Ensures compatibility between neighboring residential and commercial uses.

I-1 Light Industrial Zoning
Light manufacturing, fabricating, processing, wholesale distributing and warehousing uses.

OS Open Space Zoning
Intended to protect and promote public and private open space, provide public reflective, cultural, educational and recreational opportunities, enhance the urban environment and protect natural resources.

EC-2 Educational Campus Zoning
A campus district for colleges and universities that allows for certain non-educational uses and dormitories for students.

C-3 Intensive Commercial Use
Including key commercial nodes that require additional controls regarding site development, particularly for shopping centers and larger retail establishments.

C2 Small to Medium-Scale Commercial Use
Typically located along urban corridors. Designed to accommodate pedestrians and, in some instances, the automobile. Mixed-use development is appropriate within this district.

C-1-E Multi-Family Zoning District
Higher density, mid-rise, housing types, including single-family homes, both detached and semi-detached, row-house developments, and multi-family developments. Significant open space. Limited non-residential uses.
TRANSPORT

This site has become little more than a throughway for outside communities attempting to access amenities on the other side. It has also cut off communities from one another as cars are prioritised over the pedestrian experience. Through the analysis, it was discovered that many of the roads could manage with a reduction in lanes. The primary alteration to the site is the transition of Gay St./ Ensor St. into a bus-only lane. As a result, Hillen St. handles the remaining traffic by maintaining the four lanes but switching to a two-way street. Most other roads are reduced by 1-2 lanes, as they are still more than sufficient to handle the daily usage on them. The pedestrian-only space remains, with traffic cutting through on narrow lanes raised to pedestrian level. This is done to reduce the use of roads as only a throughway.

With the merging of both bus and car traffic on the site, Old Town can become a central node for the surrounding communities who need to commute to work, school, or evening activities. It becomes a safe place to wait for the bus as well as for students due to the many people living in the area and the constant foot traffic from the pedestrian mall as well as the trade school.

The bike lane connects downtown with the site by following south down Gay street connecting with the Fallsway Bike Path. Once back in the new Old Town Mall cyclists can easily navigate safely away from cars before continuing along the existing path on East Monument Street.
BUILDING USE

- **32,099m²** of Commercial added
- **17,850m²** of Educational added
- **527** Dwelling Units added

- Daycare
- Coffee shop
- Barbershop
- Grocery
- Deli
- Recovery center
- Pharmacy
- Bakery
- Bookstore
- Ice cream shop
- Pet store
- Entertainment venue
- Pool hall
- Thrift Store
- Laundromat
- Gym
- Record store
- Gallery space

**Trade School**
A sample of some programs would be: carpentry, plumbing, hairdressing, electrician, welding, business, drafting, cosmetology, haircutting, child and youthcare, mechanics.

**Grocery Store**
Providing a place for the community to buy groceries is a much-needed addition to the area. It is accessible by transit, vehicle, and foot.

**Light Industry**
This location provides opportunities for jobs, and for training when in the trade school.

**Commercial**
Integrating commercial space here brings more foot traffic and activity.

**Mixed use**
Having mixed-use buildings means there is more activity and opportunity for businesses to succeed. Having residential spaces above commercial also means there are more eyes on the street, and people have more ownership over the public spaces.

**Housing**
Mixed-income housing in the area is important to prevent gentrification and allow for equal access to the redevelopment. The additional housing contributes to Baltimore’s goal of increasing the number of homes over the next few years.

**Trade School**
While there are many different elementary, middle, and high schools and even some universities near by, access to them is limited due to transit. The limit is also for education past just high school. With a trade school providing a wide variety of practical skills, is there an opportunity for people to develop skills that can possibly lift them and their family out of poverty? Partnering with the juvenile detention centre and the prison nearby could help to reintegrate them back into society after their release. The trade school provides people the the immediate opportunity for work which gives them the chance to provide for themselves and their family.

* Retain approximately 30% of existing buildings to keep rent low for both living and local business. Demolish the rest on site.
FLORA + FAUNA

All along the main axis of the site, London plane trees are planted. This is done to provide maximal shade as well as guide people from one side of the site to another. One of these paths is between the Old Town Mall and the addition of the trade school, which are a five minute walk from one another. Within the grid of trees that can be seen throughout the site, Green Ash and Manitoba Maple are used. Through variation and the intentional exclusion of planting in specific areas, the trees create a sense of mystery through constant points of proximity and refuge. From the outside, the planting began sparsely before becoming denser to gradually entice people to enter further into the site.

In the planters found on the outer edge as well as all along the main axis with the London plane trees, a monoculture of Christmas ferns is planted. This is done in order to not obstruct the view people have. They also merely lay their leaves down in the winter, which means the green colour is maintained throughout the winter.

While the bird songs, brightly coloured flowers, and shaded spaces are beneficial to the overall experience for people, the flora and fauna benefit even more from this deep within the city limits.

As Baltimore is located in an estuary, there are many birds to be seen even within the city, if they have suitable habitats. By creating a dense tree canopy and implementing native plant species, more birds will be attracted to the area. With a dense canopy, the effects of an urban heat island will be reduced, making the day-to-day experience much more tolerable for residents. The trees used are often used for nesting by many birds. Furthermore, the native plants used in planters attract insects that help pollinate the naturally occurring species. With insects being a primary food source for many birds, they will help to maintain the biodiversity in the community. And the trade school can provide programs for people to maintain this new vegetated layer of the site.
**MATERIAL + DETAILS**

Using the existing materials found on site, along with the bricks from the demolished buildings, a grid is created for the trees. The inner part of the grid is made of stone. This contrasts other areas of Baltimore creating a unique identity and helping reduce heat gain in summer as well as increase brightness. Furthermore, it creates a new sense of identity for the community here. This same pattern spreads onto the street as well as extends outward to the trade school and other surroundings.

The grid is developed to be in alignment with the collision of the surrounding city grid and the site's grid. This is done so that as you enter into the site the gradual transition between spaces is barely noticed. The trees become more dense and the alignment switches to be coordinated with the diagonal orientation of Old Town Mall.
MATERIAL + DETAILS

Re-use the bricks from demolished buildings as a paving detail.

Drainage
The drainage in the site is all dealt with locally by storing rain water in the planter throughout the site. Any water that cannot be managed is stored in underground water tanks which is then used for the splash pads on warmer days. This will turn a normally dreary rainy day into anticipation for the opportunity to play in the water!
**COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT**

- **Skatepark**
  With the addition of a skatepark and a basketball court, people will be able to partake in the activity as well as view it.

- **Open Lawn**
  The large open lawn allows for varying interpretations of the space. It can be used for anything from picnics to soccer. With a pathway all the way around it, people are able to stay within the shade of the trees if the lawn open to sunlight is not for them.

- **Community Center**
  On rainy days, the community centre will act as a place for the surrounding community to get involved and enjoy itself. From here, afterschool programs can be run, giving kids a place to make friends and learn new skills. With a kitchen, gymnasium, games area, and individual rooms, the community centre is equipped to provide the services of the neighbourhood.

- **In partnership with nearby churches or other non-profits, different spaces can be used here for evening adult programming as well.**

- **Splash Pad**
  The grid is warped, pushed, and pulled to create a space for kids to engage with while learning about the water cycle. As it rains in Baltimore much more in the summer, the gloomy days mean water is being stored and is ready to become an active slash park the following days.

- **Basketball Court**
  This acts as a way to bring people together, creating a greater sense of community. The addition of more people and sounds brings more life to this space.

**CITATIONS**

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