

The Owen Brown Village Center Community Plan



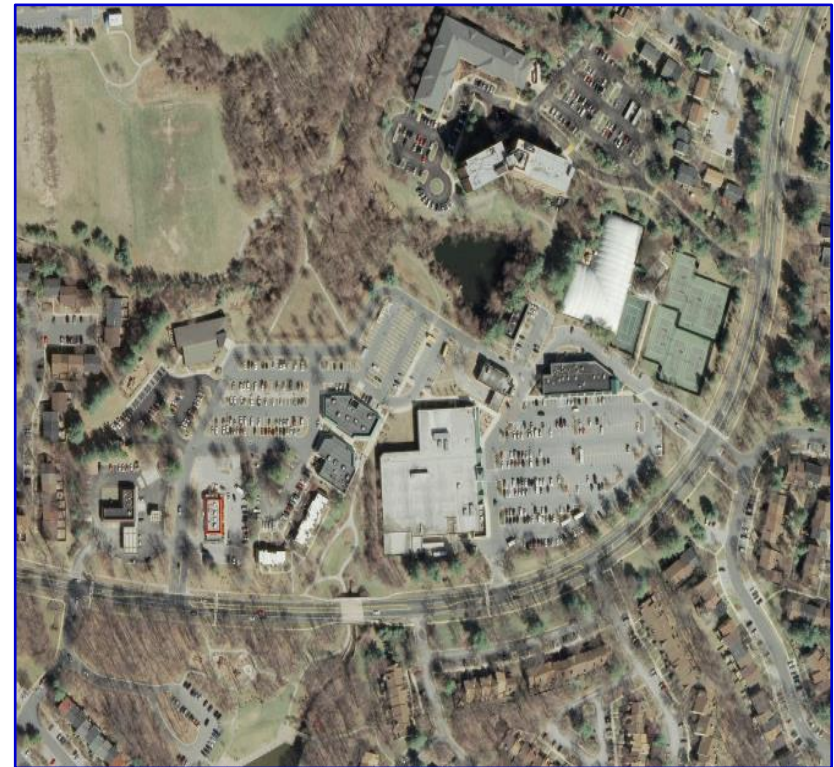
The *Owen Brown Village Center* –

a destination for people of all ages, supporting thriving businesses
and serving as a center of community life

Table of Contents

Introduction	3
Owen Brown Profile	5
Our Village Center	7
Guiding the Plan	12
Design Recommendations	15
Specific Recommendations	17
Implementation	22
Appendix	25

Figure 1: The Owen Brown Village Center
(Google Maps 2011)



INTRODUCTION

Why a Plan?

In 2009, Howard County established a Columbia Village Center redevelopment process known as Council Bill 29-2009. The process allows each Columbia Village to develop a customized *Village Center Community Plan*. The County defines a village center as a mixed-used development in the New Town zoning district that is to be a community focal point and gathering place for the surrounding Village neighborhoods.

According to the regulations, a village center should include:

- An outdoor, pedestrian-oriented, public village green space which has both hardscape and softscape elements (including public seating) and which links various village center buildings;
- Stores, shops, offices, and other commercial uses;
- Space for community and/or institutional uses; and
- Residential uses appropriate to other uses in the village center.

A *Village Center Community Plan (VCCP)* is an advisory plan developed by the community and Village Board.

What is a Village Center?

A Village Center can be defined as a traditional center for the community, typically comprised of a cohesive core of residential, civic, religious, and commercial buildings, arranged along a main street and intersecting streets.

Columbia has nine village centers and Town Center. Owen Brown is fortunate to have a unique and successful center.

In the original Rouse vision for village centers, they were designed to serve the 3000-4000 families of the village. The centers would serve primarily to provide basic facilities and rudimentary services related to home life. The original vision included the following elements:

- Junior & senior high schools
- Library
- Community rooms
- Churches
- Village Square & playing fields
- Retail, auto, and medical facilities
- Pool, tennis, recreational facilities

What is the Purpose of the Plan?

The *Village Center Community Plan (VCCP)* provides a community vision for the village center and which is to be used to help evaluate the appropriateness of future village redevelopment petitions.

The purpose of the Owen Brown Village Center Community Plan is to establish a framework for the evaluation of village center redevelopment plans as proposed by property owners/developers.

The Plan proposes a boundary for the Owen Brown Village Center (see Figure 2).

The Plan includes a long term vision for the Owen Brown Village Center.

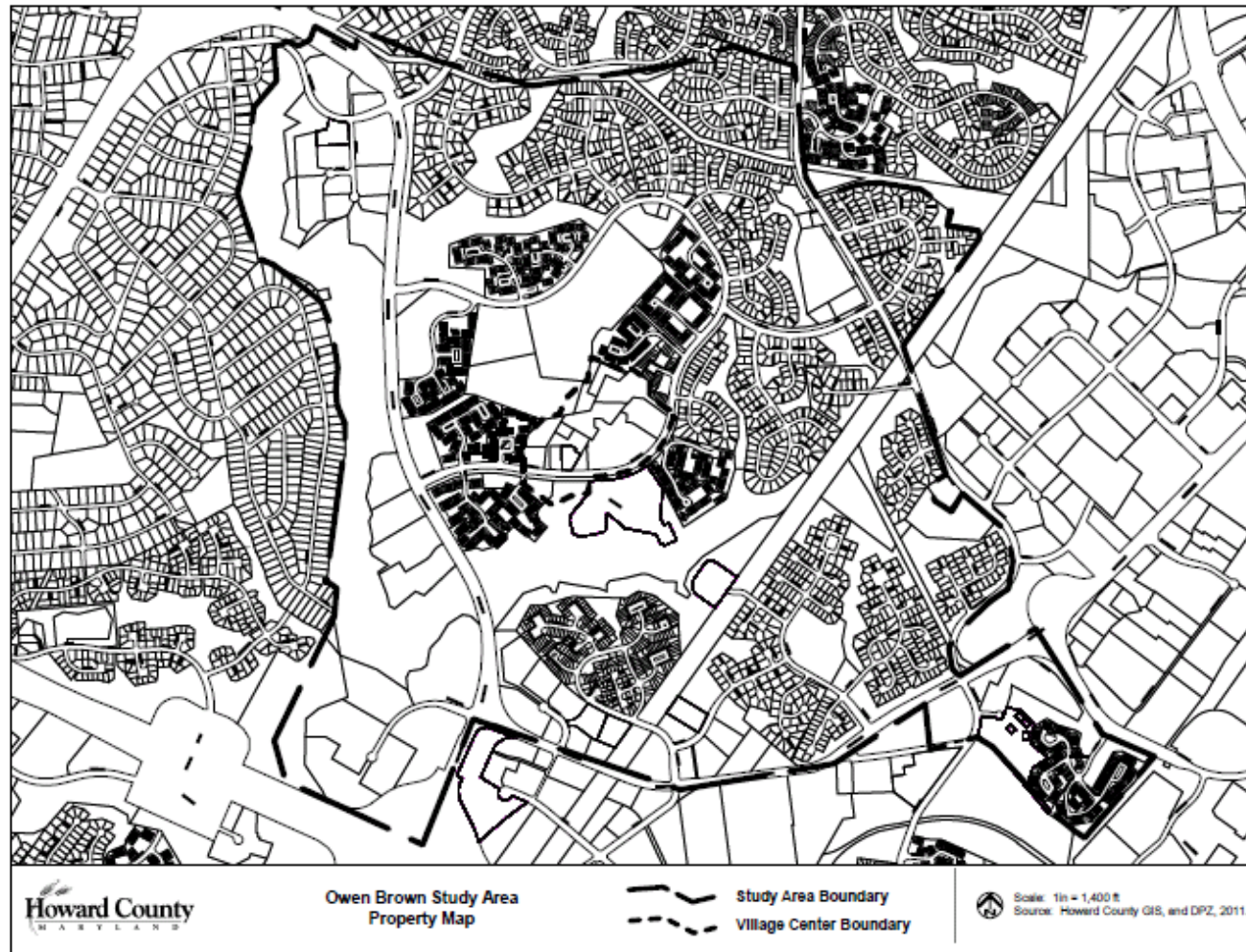


Figure 2: The Study Area: Village of Owen Brown including Village Center with proposed boundary

OWEN BROWN PROFILE

Character/Design

The Village of Owen Brown is one of 10 villages in the planned community of Columbia. Owen Brown was named for the postmaster of Elioak who operated a store on what is now Route 108. Three neighborhoods comprise the village:

Dasher Green: Named for the Dasher family of Howard County, on whose farm much of the village was built.

Hopewell: Named for an original tract of land called "Laswell's Hopewell".

Elkhorn: Named for a stream in the area which is now Lake Elkhorn.

The Village was built in several phases. The first residents moved into Owen Brown in 1973. Owen Brown has over 440 acres of open space and 8.5 miles of bike pathways. Lake Elkhorn, a 37-acre manmade lake, sits in the center of the Village; it was dedicated in 1974. The Owen Brown Village Center (OBVC) straddles the border between the neighborhoods of Dasher Green and Elkhorn. Owen Brown is well situated in regards to roads, as US29, Route 175, MD32, and Interstate 95 are all easily accessed from the Village.

The predominant architecture in Owen Brown is traditional colonial, although there is a scattering of other styles of architecture. The tallest building (seven stories) in Owen Brown is Owen Brown Place, located in the Village Center. Most of the land in Owen Brown is subject to the Owen Brown Covenants, which assure minimum

standards for land use, architectural design, and property maintenance. In regard to Howard County land use, most land in Owen Brown is zoned as New Town.

Demographics

This section of the report provides a demographic and socio-economic profile of the Village of Owen Brown in Columbia, Maryland. It was produced by the Columbia Association and is located in the CA report entitled **COLUMBIA, MARYLAND a DEMOGRAPHIC and SOCIO-ECONOMIC PROFILE**, dated December 2012. The information in this section was copied directly from the report.

The information presented is based primarily on data collected by the US Census Bureau from two different data sets: the 2010 Census of Population and Housing (2010 Summary File 1 (SF1)), which is a 100 percent count of the nation's households; and data from the American Community Survey, providing an estimate of additional demographic and socio-economic characteristics compiled from an annual sample of households. The American Community Survey's data used in this report is based on the five-year estimate for the period from 2006 through 2010.

Population, by Race and Ethnicity, in Owen Brown

Owen Brown's population at the time of the 2010 Census was 9,785. The demographic characteristics of the village were very close to those of Columbia as a whole. The white population comprised 52.4 percent of the total; Columbia's was 56.6 percent. African-Americans represented 27.7 percent of the village total (Columbia, 24.6 percent). Similarly for Asians, who accounted for 10.9 percent (Columbia, 11.0 percent). Hispanics were 9.2 percent of the village total (Columbia, 7.9 percent).

Population by Age and Gender in Owen Brown

The Village of Owen Brown is one of the youngest in Columbia, as measured by median age, which was 36.7 for the overall population; the same measure was 34.9 for males and 38.3 for females. The comparable values for Columbia were 37.9, 36.0 and 39.4 years, respectively.

Children under 18 accounted for nearly one quarter of the population (23.5 percent). One of every six residents (16.4 percent) was a school-aged child, from 5 to 17 years old. At the other end of the age spectrum, those aged 65 years or older represented slightly more than one of every ten village residents (10.9 percent). The latter figure was comparable to that for Columbia at 11.1 percent.

Households and Housing Stock in Owen Brown

As recorded in the 2010 Census, the village had 3,815 occupied housing units with a household population of 9,761. Only 24 individuals were counted as residents of group quarters, as shown in Table 62. The average household size was 2.56 persons, very similar to the measure for Columbia, 2.51 persons/ household.

Based on sample data, we have some sense of the housing types comprising the village's housing stock. Nearly half (46 percent) of the housing units were single-family attached homes (townhomes). Nearly one-third (31 percent) were single-family detached residences. The balance was multi-family apartment residences.

Household Composition in Owen Brown

More than one-quarter (28 percent) of village households were one-person households. Family households, those comprised of two or more related persons, accounted for 72 percent of all

households. While the village has a relatively younger population, more than one in five (21.1 percent) households included a person or persons 65 years old or over. Almost one in ten households (.8 percent) consisted of a person 65 or over living alone.

Looking at family households, three-quarters (76.3 percent) consist of married couples, and of those, slightly under half had children under 18 years old. Counting families headed by both males and females, nearly half (49.1 percent) of all village families had children under 18 living with them.

Housing Occupancy in Owen Brown

The village is predominantly a community of homeowners. Seventy-one percent of all occupied units are owner-occupied, with a high percentage owning free and clear of a mortgage. Housing values are relatively lower in Owen Brown; its \$362,272 mean housing value was second lowest after Town Center. Rents are also somewhat more affordable in the village. For those paying a monthly rent, only 69.7 percent pay more than \$1,000/month. With the exception of Harper's Choice (58.8 percent) and Wilde Lake (69.4 percent), every other village was above the 70 percent mark.

There is a relatively low vacancy rate – 122 units, 3.1 percent of the total was vacant at the time of the 2010 Census. The largest group of vacant units was those on the market for rent.

Household Finances in Owen Brown

The mean household income recorded was slightly less than \$97,000. That figure was the second lowest among Columbia's villages, coming in just ahead of the \$94,700 figure estimated for Wilde Lake. Even with that relatively lower mean household income

estimate, it should be noted that more than one in five households reported incomes over \$150,000.

There are some contradictory indications with respect to household income in the village. Or, at least, the picture is complex. Along with many households above \$100,000 or \$150,000 annual income levels, there may be a more than incidental level of poverty. While the small sample size limits the inferences we can make, the data suggest that 8.5 percent of families live below the poverty level.

Educational Attainment

Owen Brown residents above the age of 25 reported completing high school at a rate of 89.3 percent. The percentage of those earning a bachelor's or higher degree was 51.7 percent.

Commuting Characteristics

Owen Brown residents in the work force use carpooling slightly above the Columbia average (nine percent compared to eight percent). They use transit at 5.1 percent (v. 5.2 percent for Columbia). And, they are far less likely to work at home (1.9 percent v. 4.6 percent for Columbia). Workers experienced a mean travel time to work of 27.9 minutes.

OUR VILLAGE CENTER

Overview

The Owen Brown Village Center is located within the Village of Owen Brown in Columbia, MD. The center, which was originally owned by Giant, opened in 1978 with the following tenants:

Giant, Columbia Bank & Trust, Owen Brown Liquors, Cover to Cover Bookstore, Hair Cuttery, Dazzle Cleaners, Suburban Music & Cards, and State Farm Insurance

The Owen Brown Tennis Club, a Columbia Association facility, opened in 1975. The Owen Brown Interfaith Center opened in 1983. The condo offices were built in 1984. In 2002, the center underwent a major renovation and expansion: Giant doubled in size and a new building was constructed to hold businesses displaced by the Giant expansion. An unfortunate side effect of the expansion was the isolation of stores in the buildings behind Giant.

Current uses within the Village Center include: Auto, Retail, Offices, Dining, Recreational, Religious, and Residential.

There are several parcels of open space, one which was intended to be the Village's community center. However the Village's Community Center is now located adjacent to the Dasher Green Pool. There are no historical structures within the Village Center (see Figure 1, pg. 2).

Virtually all land within the OBVC is zoned New Town. All parcels bordering the village center except for one parcel are also zoned New Town. The one parcel, which is not New Town, is zoned R-SA-8 and is the Cradlerock Farms townhome community (see Figure 3, pg. 8).

Rouse's Vision for Owen Brown

In the early 1970s Howard Research and Development (HRD) developed plans for the Village of Owen Brown and its Village Center. Owen Brown Village was envisioned as a microcosm of Columbia with some characteristics which would differ from other Columbia villages. Owen Brown would be centered around Lake

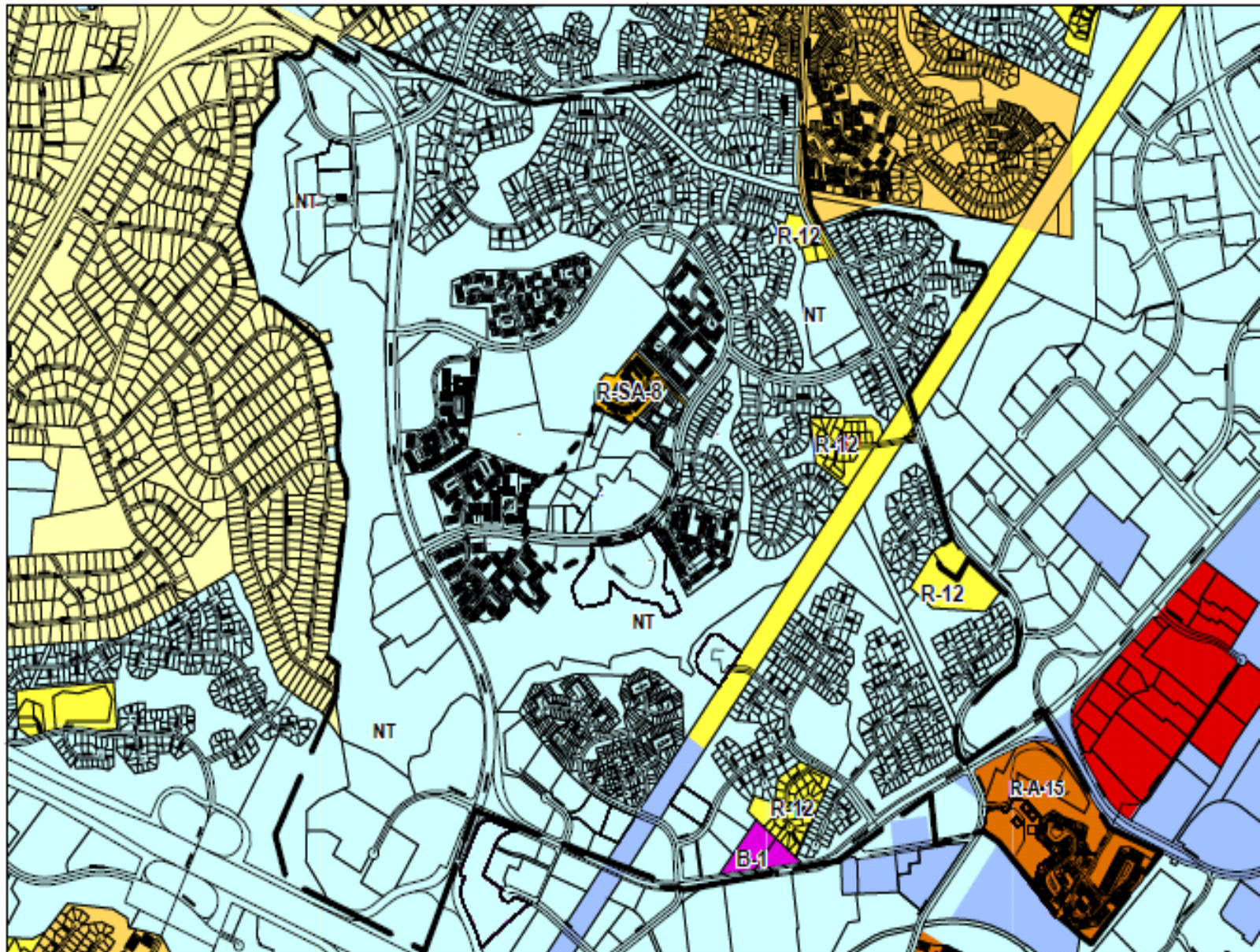


Figure 3: Zoning Categories for the Village of Owen Brown and nearby parcels of land

NT: New Town zoning

R: Residential zoning

R-SA: Townhouses/apartments

B: Commercial

distance of the main dock area of Lake Elkhorn. HRD projected that at final development, Owen Brown would have 14,000 residents and the Village Center would serve a uniquely urban village; a village that would contain a broad range of family and income types, and an unusually attractive array of open space and outdoor recreation facilities.

A map of the original vision of the first phase of the Village of Owen Brown is in the next column. Some things such as the location of the proposed Elkhorn elementary school and neighborhood center have changed, but most of the first phase was built as planned. The East Columbia Library was built on the proposed high school site. (See Figure 4, opposite column).

The Owen Brown Village Center was envisioned to encompass 18.5 acres as follows.

- 3.2 acres for Retail & Commercial
- 6.0 acres for Apartment Units
- 1.5 acres for a CA Community Center
- 1.5 acres for Service Station
- 0.8 acres for Fast Food
- 1.5 acres for Office Expansion
- 2.0 acres for Future Community Use
- 2.0 acres for CA tennis Club

Additionally, the plans called for 5.1 acres (411 parking spaces) for shared parking, 5.1 acres for village center parks, and a CA Swim Center in the cove at Lake Elkhorn (the dock area). Over 30% of the Village Center site was to be devoted to CA facilities and open space.

HRD envisioned a major outdoor activity and assembly space, called the Owen Brown Plaza, to lie at the core of the Village Center. Some shops and possibly some residential units would front onto the plaza. The CA Community Center would be located on the

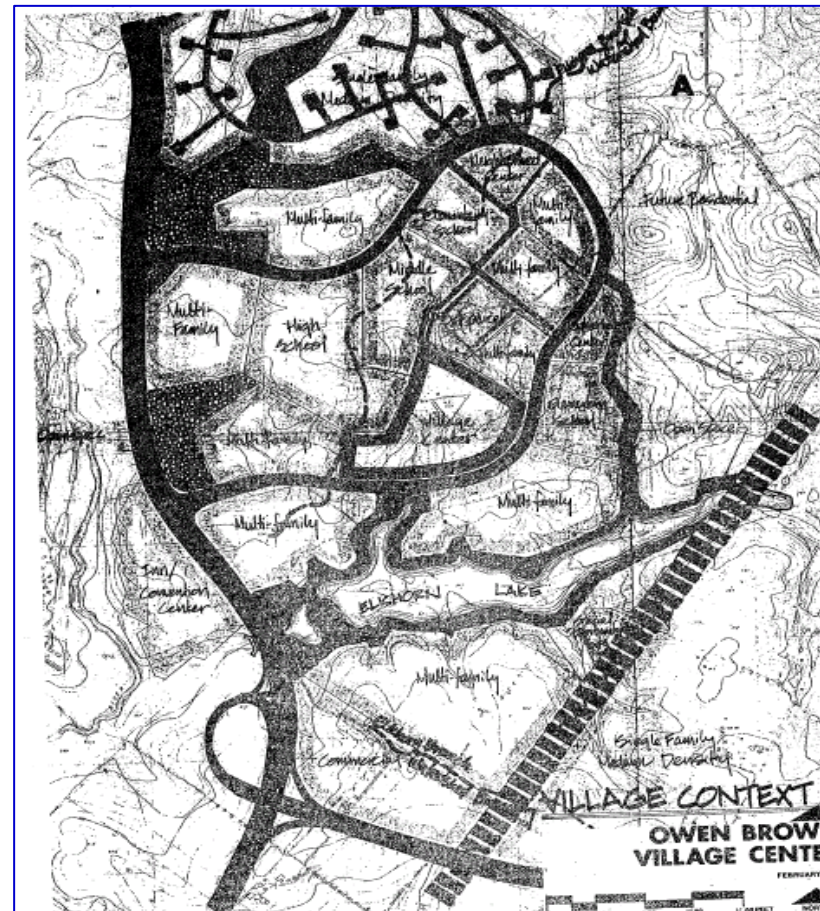


Figure 4: Sketch of the Rouse Plan for Owen Brown

plaza. According to HRD, Owen Brown Plaza was to be a predominantly paved area designed to encourage pedestrian traffic around and across it to all facilities which front on the plaza. The Plaza would contain shade trees, sitting areas (both covered and uncovered), a place for outdoor gathering, an outdoor dining area, works of art, and kiosks for information purposes. The Plaza would

also include a noteworthy feature such as a fountain or controlled water source.

For the CA Community Center, HRD envisioned a building with three components:

- a) The Community Doorstop – an area containing lounge, café, offices, and meeting rooms [Note that HRD described it as a Community Cracker Barrel].
- b) The Community Playhouse – an area containing an auditorium and backstage to be used primarily for children’s productions and performance by local amateur groups; it would be designed as a multi-use theater which would allow music hall or cinema functions.
- c) The Community Recreation Hub – an area (including an outdoor component) which was to contain space for un-programmed, large group sports activities and a youth play/lounge area.

HRD’s plans also discuss a Swim Center. In each of Columbia’s village centers (those planned/operating in 1974) a major CA recreation facility would be included.

- Wilde Lake – a swim center
- Harper’s Choice – a health club
- Oakland Mills – an ice-skating rink
- Long Reach – an arts and crafts center
- Owen Brown – a swim center

The OBVC was to be located in the cove at Lake Elkhorn, and house a recreation pool, a program pool, a diving pool, a wading pool, locker room complex, and a boat livery to allow rental boats to be launched at the Lake Elkhorn dock

Unfortunately, not all of the plan’s elements were actually implemented as an economic recession hit at the time that the Village of Owen Brown was being built. HRD was never able to develop the OBVC and sold the land to Giant to develop the center. However, these HRD plans do provide a sense of what Rouse envisioned for the OBVC, and offer ideas to consider in the redevelopment of the OBVC.

Proposed Village Center Boundary and Land Use

The OBVC is a compact area bordered by multifamily residential units, the East Columbia Library and associated playing fields, Cradlerock Elementary School, Lake Elkhorn Middle School, and Lake Elkhorn (Figure 5).

The Village Center is accessible from Cradlerock Way and is close to Broken Land Parkway. It is also accessible via Oakland Mills Road and Homespun Drive.

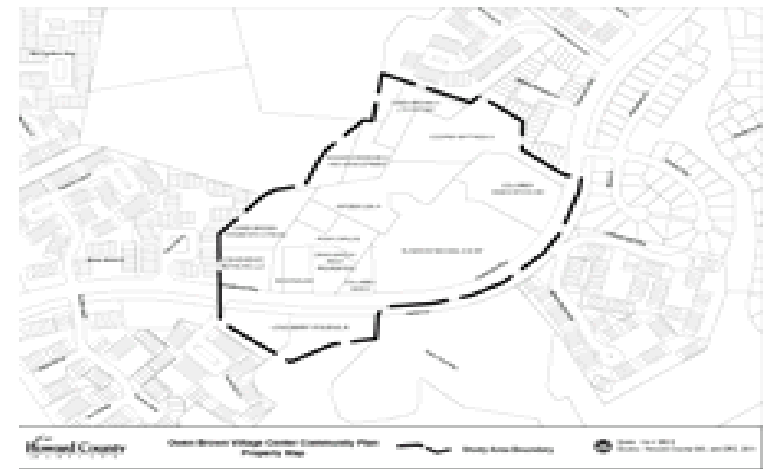


Figure 5: [Parcels of Land Within the Village Center](#)

The Owen Brown Village Center has 35 acres of land of which over 40% (14.7 acres) is classified as Open Space. About 17% of the land is classified as High Density Residential (Figures 6 & 7).



Figure 6: Open Space Areas

Existing Connectivity

The Village of Owen Brown has a great location (see Figure 8, pg. 12). US29, MD32, MD175, and Interstate 95 are easily accessed from the Village. Downtown Columbia and the major shopping areas along Snowden River Parkway are convenient and accessible. The Village Center is in the center of the Village, along a major street and next to Lake Elkhorn, very popular lake and regional attraction. A major County pathway runs through the Village Center to the Lake and other CA pathways tie into this major pathway.

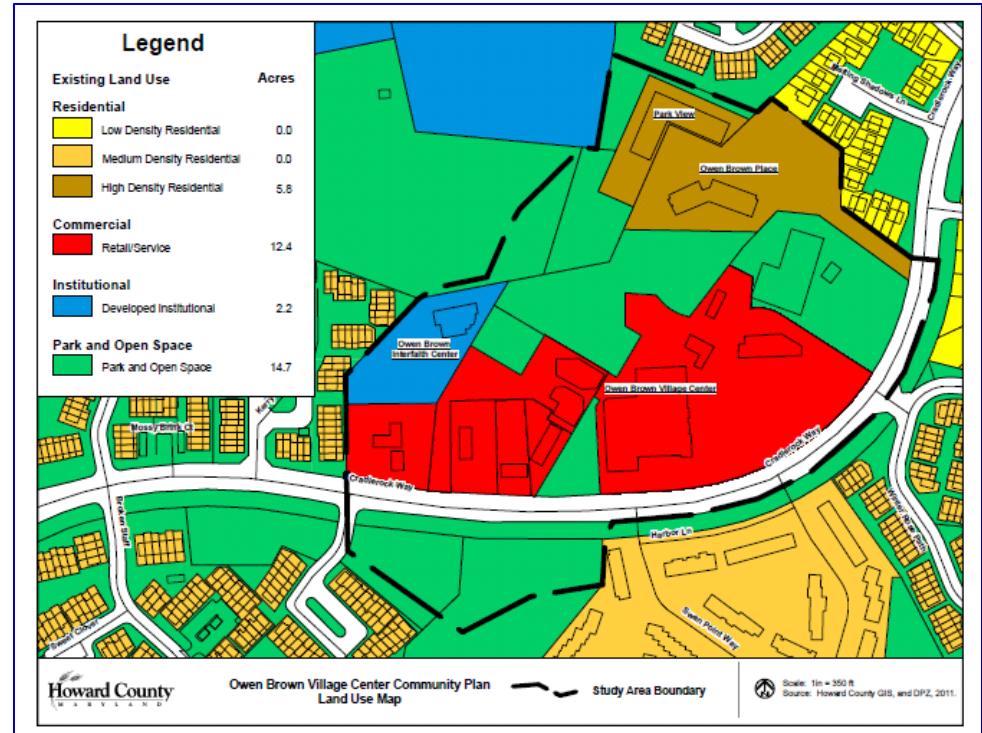


Figure 7: Land Use Categories

Over 8.5 miles of pathway run through the Village. These pathways connect all the villages on the east side of US 29. Accessing the foot bridge across US 29 allows access to the CA pathways servicing the villages west of US 29. The major County pathway continues to Savage. Howard Transit as well as Commuter busses service the Village (see Figure 9, pg. 13). The Village Center is also accessible via sidewalks.

Cradlerock Elementary school and Lake Elkhorn Middle school are located close to the Village Center. In addition, the

Howard County East Columbia Library and Senior Center is within walking distance. Several County playing fields border the Village Center.

GUIDING THE PLAN

The vision for the Owen Brown Village Center is to create a destination for people of all ages, support thriving businesses, and serve as an active center of community life. The key is thriving businesses. Without thriving businesses, the Village Center will not succeed even if additional residential units are added to the center.

Thriving businesses depend upon people/customers visiting the center. They depend upon people knowing the Village Center exists. The OBVC was never envisioned as a regional shopping destination; its primary purpose was to serve the local population. Businesses at the OBVC depend upon three categories of customers.

1. Local residents
2. Visitors (using the lake, pathway, library, etc.)
3. Pass-by customers (traveling MD 32, Broken Land Parkway, etc.)

Local Residents

Within two miles of the OBVC are over 4,000 residential dwelling units and a population of over 10,000 individuals. The local residents can walk, bike, or drive to the Village Center. Residents want a variety of services, activities, an attractive and nice environment, a sense of place, a feeling that it is "their" center. Residents may even live in the Village Center.



Figure 8: The OBVC in relation to Broken Land Parkway. Broken Land Parkway connects to US 29, MD 32 and Snowden River Parkway.

Visitors

Visitors to Owen Brown are people who don't reside in the community and come to Owen Brown to use the pathways, the library, playing fields at the library, or enjoy Lake Elkhorn. Visitors can also be residents of other parts of Columbia who come to Owen Brown to frequent specific businesses. Visitors drive or bike. They are potential customers at the businesses in the Village Center. These amenities must be maintained and a convenient path to the Village Center must be provided. Visitors need to be made aware that the Village Center exists and what services are available. Visitors expect an attractive and nice environment at the Village Center, convenient way to access the center, and a variety of services.

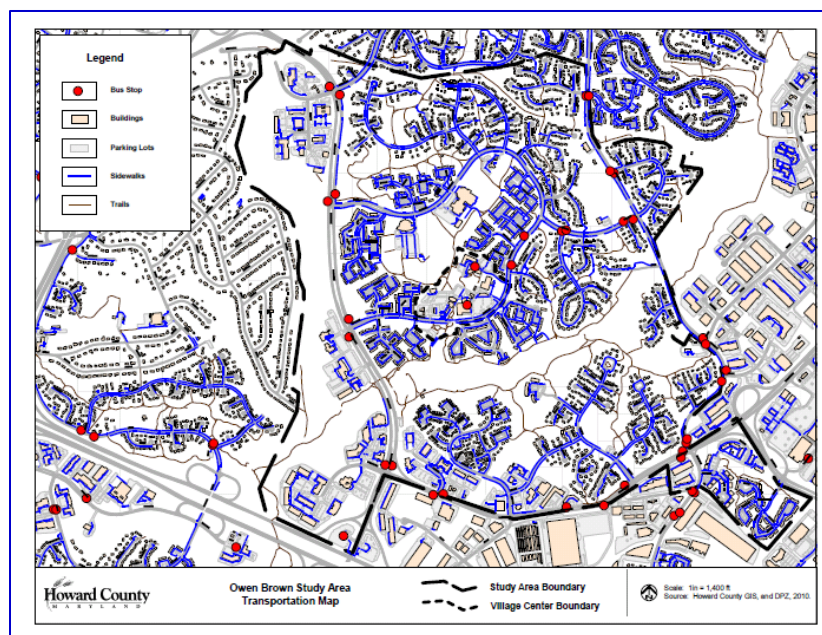


Figure 9: Sidewalks and Bus Stops with the Village of Owen Brown

Pass-by Customers

Many people use MD 32, Snowden River Parkway, Broken Land Parkway. They are also potential customers of the businesses at the Village Center. They drive and want a convenient center with easy access and an inviting/attractive environment (see Figure 9).

Goals for the Community Plan

The ability to attract customers is crucial for the success of the Village Center. The Village Center is a key component of the Village. Its success or failure affects the entire Village. To guide the development of the Community Plan, goals were adopted to meet the vision and serve potential customers. The Community Plan must give rise to a Village Center which has the following features.

- Goal 1: is well planned and cohesive;
- Goal 2: has an identity that reflects the village's character and strengths;
- Goal 3: builds upon the village's existing assets;
- Goal 4: is a vehicle, pedestrian and bike friendly environment;
- Goal 5: supports commercial success;
- Goal 6: is a central gathering place for Village residents;
- Goal 7: fits into, enhance, and provide connections to the Village; and
- Goal 8: is a welcome and inviting destination for residents, employees, and visitors.

The General and Specific Recommendations in the following sections meet these 8 goals.

Redevelopment of the Owen Brown Village Center provides an opportunity to address economic, social, and environmental concerns which may not be met by the existing center. Redevelopment affords an opportunity to address these concerns.

Economic Opportunities

EC-1: Highlight and increase unique features (including plans and events) that make the Village Center a destination for residents. – Owen Brown needs to distinguish itself in the marketplace. It needs to have a special identity.

EC-2: Improve signage along Cradlerock Way and within the Village Center. - People need to know where the Village Center is, what services are available in the Village Center and how to get to the Village Center.

EC-3: Consider locating additional residential units within the Village Center. – Having people live in/near the Village Center increases the probability that they will use the Village Center. Desirable housing units increase the recognition of the Village Center. The Owen Brown Village Center has a great location, close to US29, MD32, downtown Columbia, close to schools and recreation facilities, the shopping opportunities along Snowden River Parkway, Lake Elkhorn, and the extensive pathway and open space system.

EC-4: Set scaled building height restrictions. – Building heights are very important. Rouse, in his vision, limited buildings in Villages to 7 stories. Large height buildings would overpower the Village and look very out of place. Having stepped building heights (low buildings close to existing residential properties and increasing in height until Owen Brown Place) is more acceptable to the local community and more aesthetically pleasing.

EC-5: Improve access to stores with additional pedestrian pathways. – Additional connection will encourage people to walk or bike by providing easy access to stores and places to park bikes.

EC-6: Separate the delivery truck access so that trucks don't block the roads. – Trucks blocking access to the Village Center or to the stores is not inviting people to stop and visit/shop.

EC-7: Provide more special events and social activities to draw people. – People like to meet people and a lively, exciting atmosphere encourages people to come, mingle, dine, and enjoy themselves.

Social Opportunities

S-1: Have attractive and usable courtyard and green spaces. – Attractive areas invite people to sit and linger. People like being in attractive settings which give a sense of people space. Not only do places need to be attractive, but they need to be usable. How many sterile, uninviting plazas have we seen where clearly the architects did not put people first?

S-2: Enhance dining opportunities to make the center a livelier place for gathering and activities. – People do like to eat out and in nice weather, they enjoy eating out doors. Dining opportunities bring people to a center.

S-3: Improve sidewalks throughout the center. - Even though people may drive their car to the Village Center, they still will walk to stores and activities. Sidewalks need to be safe, well lit and inviting.

S-4: Enhance lighting. – People like well-lit areas, they feel safer. These areas are more inviting to visit and to perhaps stay longer than anticipated.

S-5: *Better pathway signage.* – Signs on the pathway should let people know they are approaching a Village Center and invite them to stop and visit.

S-6: *Well defined parking areas.* – Even in the future, parking for cars will be a necessity. Well defined parking areas (curbs, define ingress/access, etc.) give a sense of orderliness and can be made attractive both for the users of the Village Center as well as the nearby residents.

Environmental Opportunities (see Figure 10, pg. 16)

E-1: *Add bike racks.* – Encourage people to bike to the Village Center. Demonstrate a commitment to the local biking community.

E-2: *Plant trees and shrubs (including native plants).* – Well maintained trees and shrub increase the overall beauty of an area such as a Village Center. Using native trees and shrubs helps reduce maintenance cost as they are adapted to our region. Trees also provide shade. Next page has an environmental map of Village.

E-3: *Mass transit should be encouraged.* – Not everyone has or will have a car. Plus environmental consideration require better and more use of mass transit. Making it attractive and easier to use will encourage more people to use mass transit.

E-4: *Use green building and transportation infrastructure.* – Energy usage is a growing concern, as is water usage. Building as so to reduce energy and water needs is smart. It lowers operating costs and helps improve the environment. Native plants are more adoptable to this area and require less care and feeding. E-Charging stations will help encourage the use of green transportation.

E-5: *Improve storm water management.* – We need to reduce runoff which fills our streams, rivers, lakes and ponds. Better storm water management reduces sediment and nutrients flowing into our water ways and ultimately Chesapeake Bay.

E-6: *Improve links to Lake Elkhorn.* – Lake Elkhorn is a great asset to the Village and brings many people to the Village. The closeness of the Lake to the Village Center allows for the Village Center to entice these visitors to come to the Village Center.

DESIGN RECOMMENDATIONS

The design recommendations focus on four items:

- A through street
- The major pathway
- A Community/CA facility
- A plaza

Figure 11 on page 18 shows the potential location for these investments. All work together to meet the goals and allow the vision to come to fruition.

Through Street

A through street is needed to create a sense of order and presence in the Village Center. An actual street with curbs, street lights, sidewalks, trees, benches, etc. from the entrance by the service station to the entrance by the tennis club will allow for the definition of blocks, provide an attractive environment, and create a sense of order in the Village Center. Buildings and parking lots would be off this street. The street would basically have a north-south orientation. The intersections with Cradlerock Way should be clearly delineated with roundabouts and distinctive pavement markings.

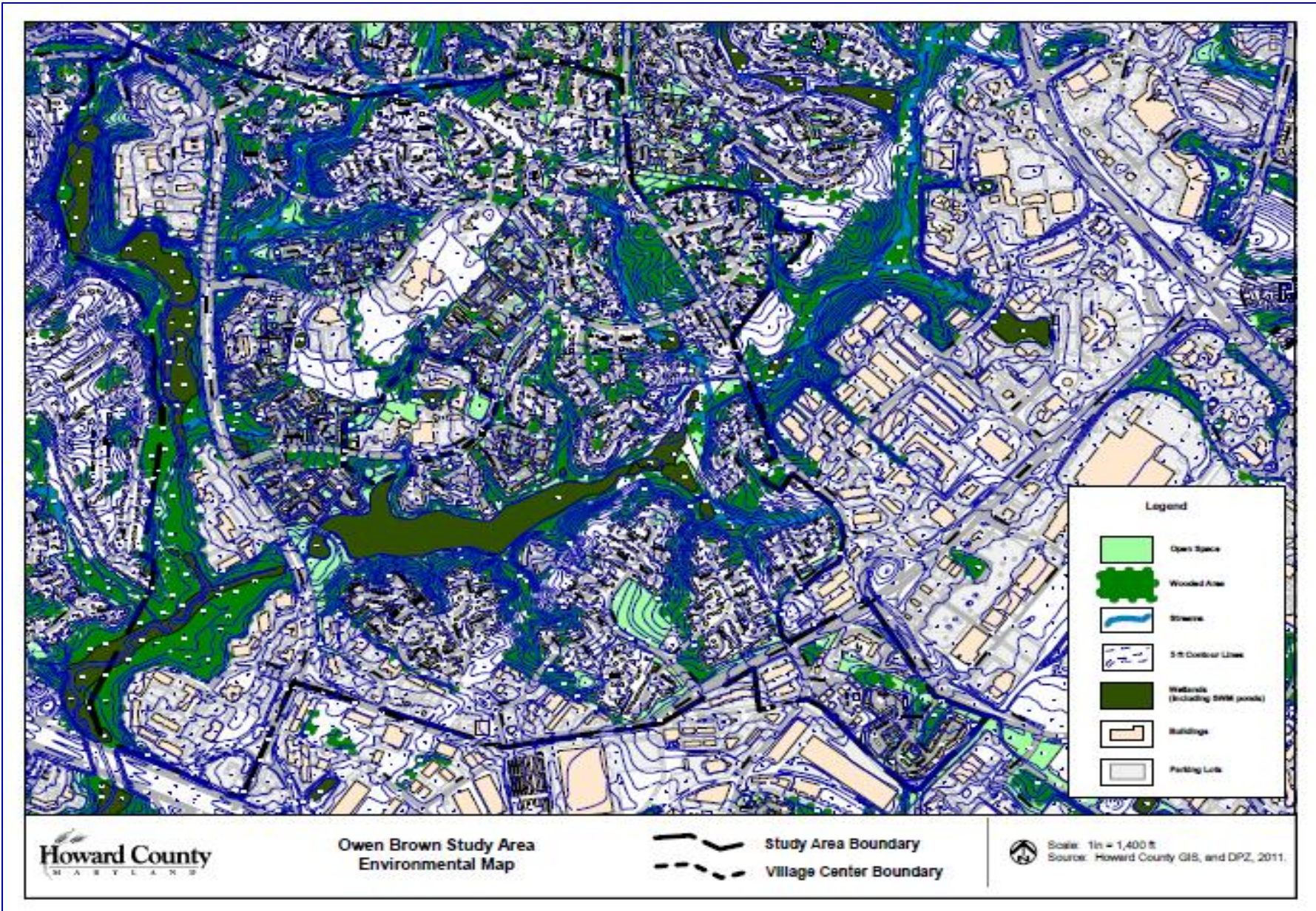


Figure 10: Environmental Map of Owen Brown

Major Pathway

In addition to the through street would be the major pathway linking the library, schools, and Lake Elkhorn. This pathway has an orientation perpendicular to the through street. The pathway from the library and the pathway from the schools should join and run beside the pond through the plaza and down to the underpass to Lake Elkhorn. It should be lit within the Village Center and where it crosses the through street, a distinctive crossing should be created. Note that the current pathway needs to be re-aligned to allow this connection to occur.

Community/CA Facility

It would be desirable for a community facility to be built near the Owen Brown Interfaith Center. Land exists for this facility. The type of facility needs to be determined. The original Rouse concept called for a community playhouse and/or a community doorstep. Perhaps a new type of facility could be built. What is needed is a CA presence which would allow for a community meeting place with the ability to offer activities to help draw people to the Village Center.

Plaza

The plaza would be an extension of the current plaza (at the underpass to Lake Elkhorn) all the way to the pond. The Owen Brown Interfaith Center and the potential Community/CA facility would face the plaza. Commercial buildings could also face the plaza. The major pathway would run by/through the plaza. This land is not buildable due to the major infrastructure underneath this area. The plaza would have benches, tables, landscaping, and some type of water feature.

SPECIFIC RECOMMENDATIONS

Signage

Signage of high quality design and appropriate scale is a welcome part of the retail center and provides information about goods and services. They are often designed to be eye-catching, stand out from the crowd and may enliven a street scene and add vibrancy. However, poorly designed signage can detract from the character and appearance of an area. Consequently, an unrestricted approach to advertisements and business frontages could easily result in a cluttered, confusing and unattractive environment that has a negative effect on the perception of the area by both inhabitants and visitors. For this reason Columbia has always been conservative with its signage program, favoring the living environment over other interests.

The following suggestions should be considered when designing signs for the village center:

1. Additional directional signage for the village center located along Cradlerock Way, Broken Land Parkway, Oakland Mills Road, and Homespun Drive should be developed and implemented to announce the location of the retail core to the motorists, cyclists, and pedestrians passing by. Different signs would be needed on the approaches to the center (i.e., along Broken Land Parkway, Oakland Mills Road, and Homespun Drive).

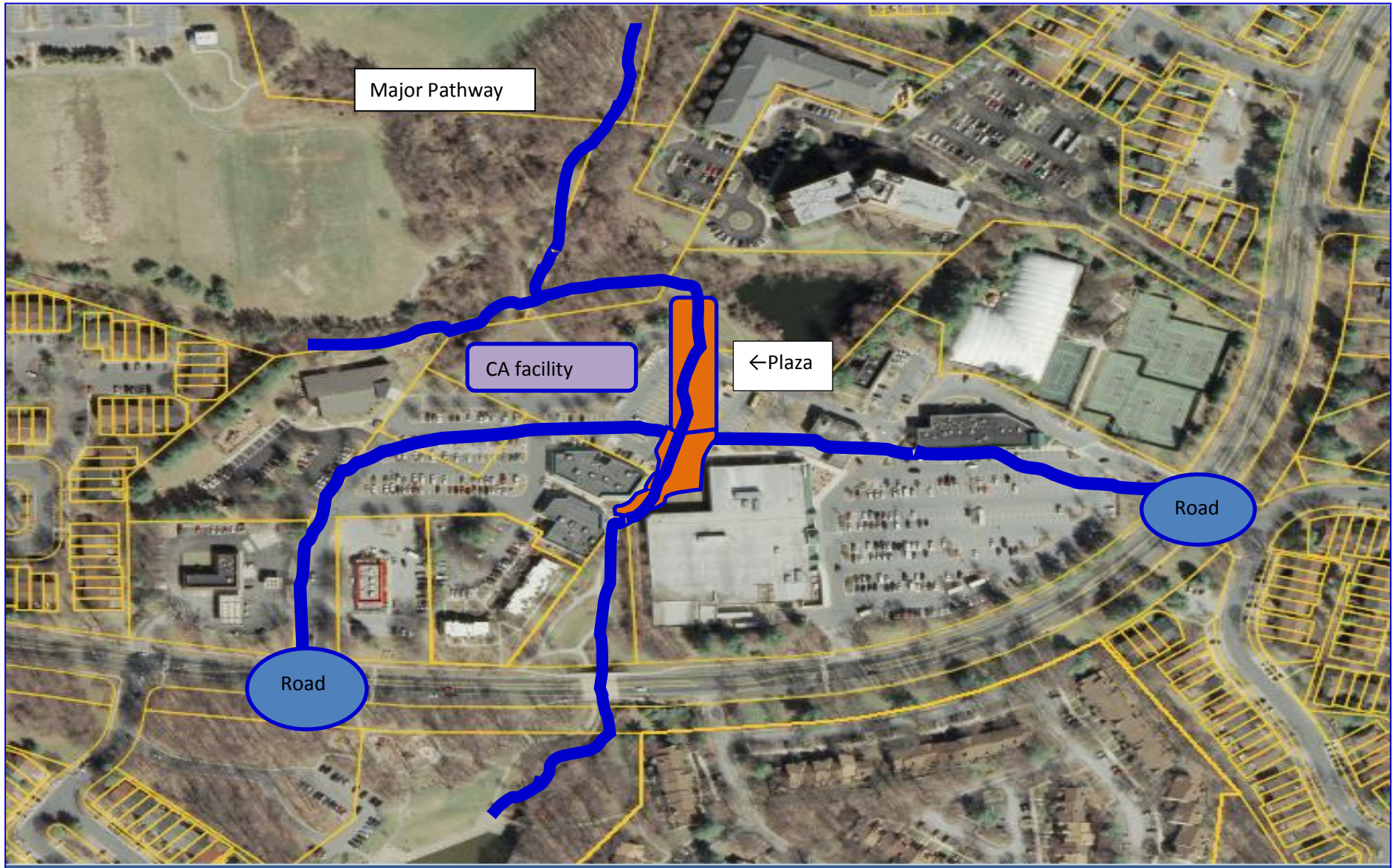


Figure 11: Proposed major investments for the Owen Brown Village Center

2. No corporate logos should be posted on the perimeter signage. Corporate logo signs should be restricted to the individual buildings on site.
3. No advertising sales and inventory should be permitted on the perimeter signage.
4. Information and directional signs should be permitted on the perimeter of the project provided they are compatibly designed and appropriate scale considering the village center and the adjacent residential uses. Appropriate signage might be ground mounted signage on brick structures, or structure mounted signage.
5. Signage which is not recommended include: inflatable signs, and flashing or changing service board signage.
6. The effect of all advertising displays should be assessed for their impact on public safety including the safety of pedestrians, drivers and other road users.
7. The cumulative effect of signs within the village center boundaries should be considered when adding new signs to the mix.
8. The effect of illumination used on signs particularly the effect on neighboring properties should be considered.
9. The design of any signs should reflect the general aesthetic of the village center design.
 - a. Materials should be consistent and compatible
 - b. Signs should be professional in appearance. Signs should be kept in good repair.
 - c. Signs cannot be supported by trees, held by persons, or hung or nailed to any structure not designed for the support of signs.
 - d. Signs that move, make noise, are accompanied by sound or music, scroll, employ blinking lights, balloons, pennants, inflatables or pyrotechnics are not appropriate.

Architecture

All proposed development within the Village Center should demonstrate how the proposed project is compatible with the existing architecture of both the Village of Owen Brown and the existing retail core of the Village Center. Proposed development should be presented in rendered elevations that show and provide details of how all sides of the buildings will be treated architecturally. All development must conform to the Owen Brown Architectural Covenants.

Building heights are very important. Building heights should not exceed seven (7) stories, the height of Owen Brown Place. Large height buildings would overpower the Village and look very out of place. In addition, due to the surrounding residential property stepped building heights are recommended. Having stepped building heights (low buildings close to existing residential properties and increasing in height until Owen Brown Place) is more acceptable to the local community and more aesthetically pleasing.

Environmental

There are many environmental considerations that should be designed into any new projects within the Village Center boundaries. The applicant should demonstrate how the proposed project is compatible with the latest environmentally sensitive developments such as sustainable design techniques, cistern or rainwater collection systems to feed the irrigation systems, onsite storm water management designed for at least one inch of rainfall over the project drainage area, and designs that provide shaded paved surfaces. A Leadership in Energy & Environmental Design (LEED) silver designation or equivalent is recommended for development or redevelopment.

Pedestrians & Cyclists

Because of the location of the Village Center in close proximity to residential neighborhoods and due to the fact that a major pathway system transverses the Village Center, an important consideration is to have the center completely accessible to both pedestrians and bikes. There are many sources of pedestrians: the nearby schools, residential neighborhoods, the library, and even within the Village Center itself. All need to be part of a comprehensive pedestrian and bike strategy. It is recommended that each proposed project demonstrate how its design is compatible with an overall pedestrian/bike program.

In addition, pedestrian/bike connectivity to the rest of the community is equally important. A proposed project should demonstrate how it provides for pedestrians/bikes and how the connectivity to existing bike pathways is achieved. The proposed project should show the retail core as the ultimate destination within the village center and how the proposed project's provision for pedestrian and bike connectivity enhances and provides for that connectivity.

Parking

Adequate off-street parking should be provided to accommodate parking needs for employees, visitors, users of the center, and residents of the center. Commercial design guidelines, the Final Development Plan, and Howard County zoning and design requirements have sufficient controls for the required number of spaces and geometric design. These design guidelines are intended to contend with the compatibility of uses and aesthetic concerns.

SURFACE PARKING: Parking areas should be designed and landscaped to break up the monotony of a single large paved area.

They should be well defined and have access to sidewalks/pathways. All new parking surfaces should be designed with the most current Maryland Department of the Environment and Howard County standards for storm water management. Areas should be screened from view from adjacent residential properties and street right-of ways. However, trees should be used sparingly along major road frontages to allow visibility of the retail areas.

Landscaping

Howard County and the Owen Brown Covenants provide controls for the design and review of landscape. However, the following is recommended to emphasize some important areas for Landscape Design.

- Along Cradlerock Way's frontage, the intent is not to screen views of the Village Center but to frame the village center retail buildings so that passersby may see the center and know it is there.
- Along all other frontages a proper buffer of setback and landscape should be required. Buffering and screening of the retail center from differing uses adjacent to the center is an important goal.
- Proposed landscape should extend all the way to the ground so that complete buffering can be achieved as intended. Limbering up trees that are intended to provide screening is disallowed and unacceptable.
- Proper buffering between differing uses to block visual impacts of the retail uses, lighting, car traffic and the like is a must, particularly for the gas station use.
- Landscape should be used to buffer the parking lots and trees used for shade.

Lighting

Lighting is an important element of the Village Center. Adequate lighting gives residents a sense of place and safety. The following are the recommended lighting requirements.

1. A maximum pole height of 30 feet with cut off lighting fixtures for the parking lots is appropriate.
2. No canopy lighting program should be approved that is not recessed in the canopy and shielded lights that extend below the surface of a canopy are not acceptable.
3. All lighting must adhere to the County's guidelines for lighting and where a parcel is adjacent or across the street from a residential property additional criteria of a maximum of 4 foot candles on site with a maximum of 0.5 foot candles at the property line should not be exceeded for the project. This shall be measured at the ground levels directly below the light or at the property line.
4. To demonstrate the lighting levels, the applicant is encouraged to present a photometric plan designed by a qualified lighting consultant including any canopy lighting and any other site lighting to demonstrate compliance with the lighting recommendations.
5. In addition, it is recommended that no lighting should be added to the project post-construction without subsequent review and approval.

Streets

The Village Center needs to create a durable, safe, and attractive streetscape to withstand the test of time, to celebrate the Village Center as the hub of Owen Brown, to reinforce a sense of place and economic vitality, and to promote visual continuity of

quality streetscape components throughout the village. Streetscape elements will be very important.

A true through street with sidewalks and landscaping should be built. The street would loop from Cradlerock Way (from the current Village Center entrance at the CA Tennis Club) to Cradlerock Way (between the existing service station and fast food restaurant). Parking lots would flow off this street. Both intersections with Cradlerock Way should be highly visible, well lit, and well-marked to allow pedestrians to cross. Perhaps roundabouts with distinct pavement markings would be appropriate.

Placement and configuration of streetscape components should provide an immediate sense of arrival. Revitalized streetscapes will assist with attracting residents, businesses, and visitors and customers to the richness of Owen Brown Village Center. With careful implementation, Streetscape Design Guidelines will help to advance this revitalization process, while creating more safe public spaces and generating a greater sense of community pride.

The term 'streetscape' typically refers to exterior *public* spaces located *between* street curbs and building facades. Basic street scape components that can be used to define an area are as follows.

- Walls or linear planting configurations
- Paving or specialty paving
- Sidewalks
- Curbs
- Accessible sidewalk ramps
- Traffic calming measures
- Crosswalks
- Plantings
- Project identity signs particularly signs of consistent design.
- Street trees

- Other supplemental Plantings
- Container plantings
- Street furnishings
- Benches
- Litter and ash receptacles
- Movable tables and chairs
- Bollards
- Bicycle bollards
- Bus shelters
- Parking meters
- Sign poles
- Fences
- Utility covers
- Banners
- Planters
- Lighting

Public Spaces

The Owen Brown Plaza should be constructed. The original idea as envisioned by HRD is very appropriate for the redevelopment of the Village Center. The Owen Brown Plaza should be a predominantly paved area designed to encourage pedestrian traffic around and across it to all facilities which front on the plaza. The Plaza would contain shade trees, sitting areas (both covered and uncovered), a place for outdoor gathering, an outdoor dining area, and works of art, and kiosks for information purposes. The Plaza should also include a noteworthy feature such as a fountain or controlled water source. The Plaza should connect with the pond bordering Owen Brown Place.

Public space must be provided for activities to be held.

Residential Units

Owen Brown Place and Parkside residential complexes are within the Village Center. Future residential units could be constructed, perhaps in multiuse buildings (offices/stores on the first floor and residential units on floors above the first). In all cases, no building should be higher than the seven story Owen Brown Place building. Building heights must be stepped in such a way that buildings close to / across the street from multifamily residential areas should be no more than two stories tall. Three or four story buildings would be appropriate closer to Owen Brown Place. All appropriate County regulations including parking must be met.

The primary purpose of the Village Center is to provide services; residential units must not overwhelm this primary purpose.

IMPLEMENTATION

Implementation will occur over many years and will depend upon the desire of the major property owners and the economic conditions. However, there are actions which can be taken in the next few years which can help the OBVC. These actions arise from the recommendations in this plan and constitute the first phase. These first actions involve Howard County, the Columbia Association and the Village of Owen Brown.

Howard County

1. Work with the County to implement a new set of directional signs identifying the OBVC. These signs should be located at strategic areas to direct people to the Village Center.

2. Work with the County to develop and then implement intersection improvements on Cradlerock Way to the two main entrances to the Village Center. Distinctive paving, better pedestrian and bike crossings, and perhaps roundabouts to better control traffic and speed on Cradlerock Way are some of the improvements which could be made.
3. Repair/improve the bridge on Cradlerock Way which forms the underpass between the Village Center and Lake Elkhorn.
4. Improve the appearance of the major pathway from both the library as well as the school into the Village Center.

Columbia Association

1. Design and implement maps at the two parking lots at Lake Elkhorn, highlighting the Village Center, the way to access the Village Center, and general services available at the Village Center.
2. In coordination with Howard County, improve the underpass from Lake Elkhorn to the Village Center. Fix the water feature and the stream banks. Light the underpass and the corresponding pathway.
3. Working with property owners, design a plan to add art (perhaps sculptor) on the pathway linking the Village Center and Lake Elkhorn. Art would be on CA land as well as other property within the Village Center.

4. Improve the pond area with aesthetic plantings and provide a distinct link from the pond to the pathway between Lake Elkhorn and the Village Center.
5. In conjunction with the replacement of the Clubhouse, improve the landscaping around the Owen Brown Tennis Club.
6. Investigate building a CA facility in the OBVC, using the original Rouse vision as a potential guide.
7. Improve the arboretum at Lake Elkhorn. This will draw visitors to the lake and perhaps to the Village Center.
8. Maintain Lake Elkhorn and the large tot lot; encourage fishing.
9. Re-orient the major pathway from the library and schools (from where they currently meet and enter the parking lot) to run beside the pond to the underpass.

Village Board

1. Work with the County to implement the above actions.
2. Work with CA to implement the above actions.
3. Work with property owners to enhance the plaza at the end of the pathway from Lake Elkhorn to the Village Center.
4. Work with the property owners to have a large "you are here" map in the plaza and identify the various services available in the Village Center.

5. Review and update this Community Plan on a regular basis (at least every five years).
6. Work with CA and the Village Center merchants to encourage large scale public activities at the OBVC (example: a series of concerts).
7. Working with CA and the local merchants, provide for 2 to 3 large scale activities at the Village Center. One in the spring, one in summer and one in fall.

APPENDIX: Property Ownership



Figure 11: [Parcels of land/maps](#)

Owners of land

0000 Cradlerock Way; Lot 65; LOT 65 33.165 A;
owner= BD OF EDUCATION OF HD CTY

0000 Cradlerock Way; Lot A193; LOT A-193
472,843 SQ; owner= GREEN LEAF COMMUNITY
ASSOC INC

0000 Cradlerock Way; Lot D5; PAR D-5 1.657 AR;
owner=WHITTIER SQUARE ASSOCIATION IN

0000 Cradlerock Way; Lot A2; PAR A-2 1.449 AR;
owner= CONVENIENCE RETAILING LLC

0000 Cradlerock Way; Lot B1; LOT B-1 10.880AR
S 1; owner= OXFORD-COLUMBIA ASSOCIATES

0000 Cradlerock Way; Lot A3; PARCEL A-3 .461
AR; owner= HOWARD RESEARCH AND
DEVELOPMENT

0000 Cradlerock Way; Lot A1; PAR A 1 7.8743 A;
owner= HOWARD COUNTY MARYLAND DEPT OF
PUBLIC WORKS

0000 Cradlerock Way; Lot B1; PAR B 1 16.5907
A; owner= HOWARD RESEARCH AND
DEVELOPMENT

0000 Cradlerock Way; Lot C5; PAR C5 .497 A
OPSP; owner= COLUMBIA LLLP

0000 Cradlerock Way; Lot C2; PAR C2 1.662 A
OPSP; owner= HOWARD RESEARCH AND
DEVELOPMENT

6810 Cradlerock Way; PAR A-2 .576AR; Lot A2; owner= MIN JANICE E; co-owner=

7070 Cradlerock Way; PAR C4 1.490 A; Lot C4; owner= COLUMBIA LLLP; co-owner=C/O SHELTER DEVELOPMENT LLC

7080 Cradlerock Way; LOT D-4 4.313 A; Lot D4; owner= SHELTER FOUNDATION INC; co-owner=

7100 Cradlerock Way; PARC B-3 1.927AR; Lot B3; owner= GFS REALTY INC; co-owner=C/O STOP & SHOP COMPANIES INC

7200 Cradlerock Way; PAR B-1 352,400SQ; Lot B1; owner= FLEUR ASSOCIATES LLC; co-owner=C/O NELLIS CORPORATION

7244 Cradlerock Way; PAR C-2 .888 AR; Lot C2; owner= MCDONALDS CORPORATION; co-owner=C/O JILL FLORES

7246 Cradlerock Way; LOT 1-A 4.384 A; Lot 1A; owner= OWEN BROWN INTERFAITH CENTER INC; co-owner=

7246 Cradlerock Way; LOT 1-A 2.192 A; Lot 1A; owner= OWEN BROWN INTERFAITH CENTER INC; co-owner=

7262 Cradlerock Way; P/O PAR-D-2 P/O1.127; Lot U23; owner= COMLINK LLC; co-owner=C/O CHESAPEAKE TECHNOLOGY INC

7264 Cradlerock Way; P/O PAR-D-2 P/O1.127; Lot U22; owner= ZALDUMBIDE JULIO E; co-owner=ZALOUMBIDE BLANCA E

7266 Cradlerock Way; P/O PAR-D-2 P/O1.127; Lot U21; owner=7266 CRADLEROCK WAY LLC; co-owner=C/O LESLIE CARTON

7270 Cradlerock Way; P/O PAR-D-2 P/O1.127; Lot U15; owner= CRADLEROCK PROFESSIONAL PROPERTIES LLC; co-owner=

7272 Cradlerock Way; P/O PAR-D-2 P/O1.127; Lot U14; owner= BORK TIMOTHY; co-owner=

7274 Cradlerock Way; P/O PAR-D-2 P/O1.127; Lot U13; owner= BORK TIMOTHY; co-owner=

7276 Cradlerock Way; P/O PAR-D-2 P/O1.127; Lot U12; owner= GREENFIELD WAYNE M; co-owner=FEINSTEIN BARBARA R

7278 Cradlerock Way; P/O PAR-D-2 P/O1.127; Lot U11; owner= GREENFIELD WAYNE M; co-owner=FEINSTEIN BARBARA R