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## Zenabuki Village

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### Zenabuki Village

Our team has two main wishes for this project. First, we want to create a dynamic, interactive, residential community for students and young professionals. Secondly, we seek to give Boise State a positive presence downtown. Both of these goals will be realized with the creation of Zenabuki Village, a mixed-use development project unlike anything that Boise has ever seen. The false division between campus and city will finally fade away, and both will be revitalized in the process.

We chose site number 5 for several reasons. First and foremost, our research revealed that most of the other properties already had plans and restrictions placed on them. For example, site 4 is currently owned by the Rafanelli and Nahas commercial real estate firm, and they have no intention to sell their land in the currently depressed market. In fact, they have plans to develop the largest and most prestigious class A office building in Boise as soon as the economy recovers (Schoenherr). Site 5 was also ideal because of its close proximity to the Boise State campus. Since one of our goals was to extend Boise State's physical footprint into downtown, it was the most logical place to start. Additionally, we wanted to create a mixed-use development that included retail and we learned from Mike Hall from the Capital City Development Corporation [CCDC] that this property represents the best undeveloped retail location in the entire state.

## MEETING BOISE'S NEEDS

Although Boise routinely ranks among the top ten most livable cities in the country, there are still several things missing (Livability.com); that's why we've been assigned with this task. Broadly speaking, we believe Boise's needs can be broken down into four categories: the need to retain, nurture, and attract young people, the need for community interaction, the need for interesting and inspiring architecture, and the need for sustainability.

The immense needs of young people were first brought to our attention by Clay Lee, director of the teen program for Fort Boise Community Center. He focuses on running programs for adolescents, and he told us that these programs were almost too successful. For instance, 120 at-risk teens show up for the weekly Friday night gatherings and they just do not have staff or facilities to accommodate this demand. Perhaps more importantly, their programs only attract teens that are 16 years old and younger. Above this age, teens lose interest and no longer attend any of the Community Center's programming (Lee). It would appear that this apathy carries over into education as well. Currently, only 34% of graduating high school seniors in Idaho attend college, and only 14% graduate with a college degree. Contrast these dismal statistics with the national averages of 60% and 30% respectively (Jacobson). Further evidence shows that Idaho has the seventh highest suicide rates in the nation (Suicide statistics). Clearly, this problem needs attention.

The second category of needs is intricately related to the first. By encouraging interaction between young adults and the community at large, substantial economic and cultural benefits will be realized. There are substantial economic reasons to cater to young people as well and integrate them with the community. Echoing the sentiments of several authors on this subject, Mark Rivers emphasizes the importance of youthful ideas in the creative economy. Young

people are the lifeblood of the community, the primary source of innovation. He believes that “We need to get student imagineers [sic] into the real world pipeline faster and more effectively.” And by mixing college students with the business community, we have “the potential to advance new entrepreneurs, ideas and businesses.” This will create new jobs and new opportunities for growth. Moreover, “students can bring a specific vitality to Boise’s downtown arts landscape.” This cultural growth by itself will make Boise more livable. Thus, for all these reasons it is abundantly clear that Boise needs to find a way to nurture its young people on several levels (Rivers).

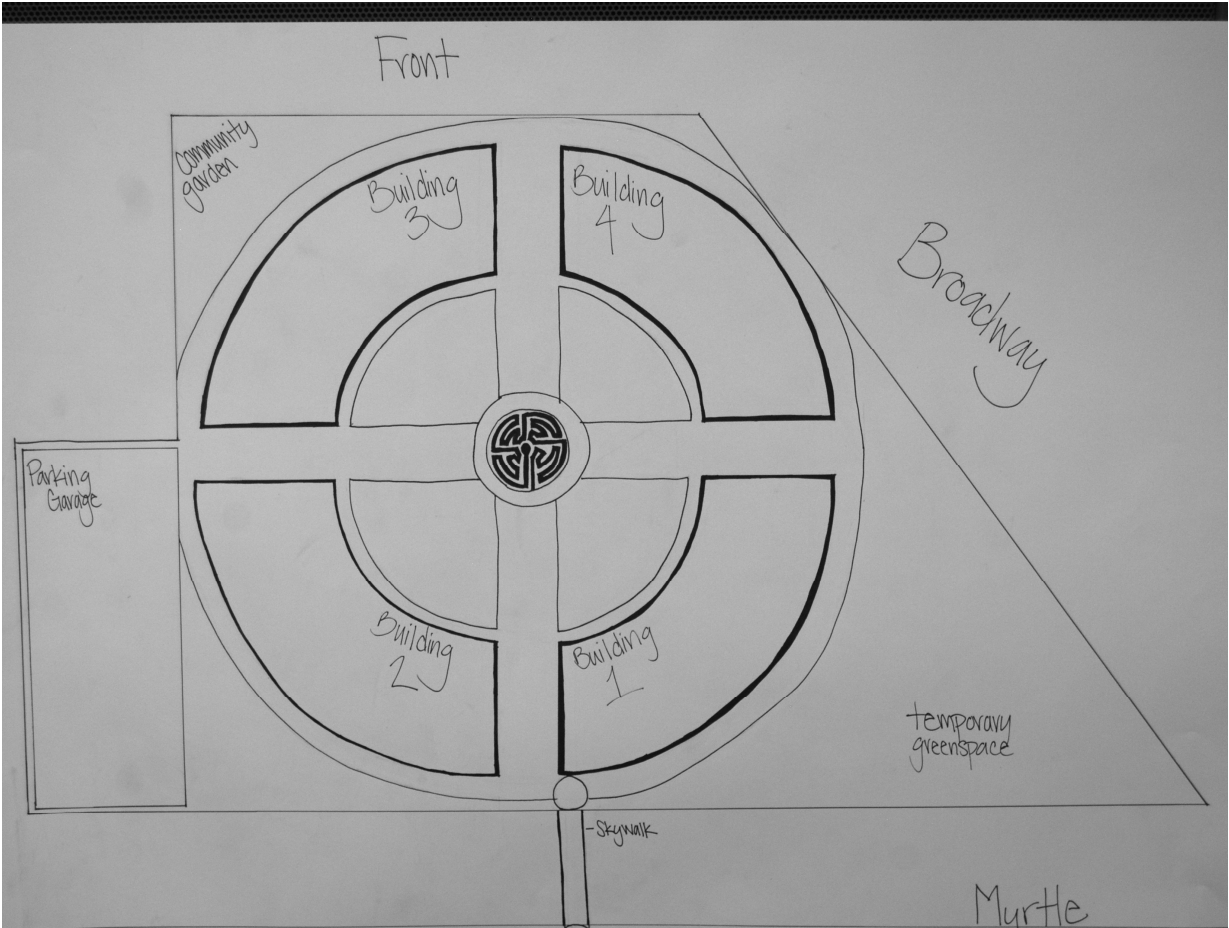
The third category of needs should be readily apparent to anyone who has ever walked around the downtown area or the Boise State campus. In both locations, rectangular buildings with limited glass, a lot of brick, and predictable facades predominate. Simply stated, the architecture in Boise is mundane, and there’s a very good reason for it. According to Scott Schoenherr, upscale architecture is not economically viable in the Boise market. It costs more to build class A office space, but it doesn’t command a premium over the other buildings downtown. However, this unfortunate status quo does not exist in other markets, and it must be remedied here.

To become more livable, Boise must also become greener. We may have a co-op and a farmers’ market, but this still pales in comparison to other leading cities like Denver and Portland. Sustainability is what the creative class demands, and Boise needs to recognize this fact.

OUR VISION

We envision a vibrant, cohesive community that bridges the divide between Boise State and Downtown Boise. We envision a community where the arts are encouraged and promoted, where young professionals and students intermingle on a daily basis, and where ideas and individuals alike will grow. The community will be sustainable, and the architecture will be a welcome addition to Boise’s skyline. This is the essence of Zenabuki Village.

This vision will be realized by building the mixed-use development project shown below:



Before proceeding to explain how each building will be utilized, it is important to describe the layout and architecture. The four buildings are arranged in a circular shape to enhance the sense of community. It is inclusive, but it is not exclusive. The gaps between the

buildings not only provide flowing pathways throughout, they also invite the public into Zenabuki Village. Additionally, this circular design creates a great open common area for the residents, which we refer to as the Heart. In its center, there will be a small stone labyrinth that will offer a chance for solace (Pink). Arising from each quadrant and spanning above this area, there will be large art piece from a local artist further augments the fluidity and cohesiveness of the space.

This central area will also serve as an excellent venue for community events. In particular, we plan to initiate Idaho's first laughter club on a weekly basis. This is an idea that was started in India by Dr. Madan Kataria and is rapidly expanding around the globe. It involves a group coming together to partake in forcing themselves to laugh and dance at the beginning of the meeting. By the end, however, everyone is laughing genuinely, and they will all enjoy the health benefits that naturally follow. In a similar vein, there will also be weekly tai-chi or yoga sessions in the Heart (Pink). Additionally, there will be new annual community events such as a potato festival or a glassblowing convention or perhaps a celebration of an obscure sport. These events will arise organically due to the incentive structure for Boise State students. More on this later.

The layout includes space for a community garden in the northern corner of the property. This allows another opportunity for interaction among the residents, and it will make the project more sustainable. Meanwhile, in the southern corner of the property, there will be a designated green space. This is only temporary, however. In the long run, this would be an ideal location for a mass transit stop.

The architecture is also important to the vision. The buildings consist of glass on the lower floors for retail and community spaces with a brick façade and expansive windows on the

upper floors. To provide better views and add variety to the Boise skyline, they will not be a consistent height. Instead, Buildings 1 and 4 on the Myrtle Street side of the property will start at four floors in the southwest and rise in a stepwise fashion to six floors at their other end.

Buildings 2 and 3 start at seven floors in the southwest and rise to nine floors where they meet near Front Street. In keeping with our sustainability mission, the buildings will also use a greywater system, make composting easy for use in the community garden, and use energy efficient technologies.

Just like the architecture, the functions of each building are complementary. In Building 1, the upper floors three through six will be dedicated to Boise State student housing. Following the model set by the University Suites, each unit will house four students and will be approximately 1,000 square feet. There will be approximately 54 units altogether. The second floor of this building will provide a large space for teens and college students to work and socialize. It will include a computer lab, art supplies, a small movie library, video games, and anything else that will attract the at-risk teens that currently have no place to go. The first floor of this building will contain large demonstration rooms for members of the community to teach and attend classes. These will include but are not limited to a large kitchen for cooking classes, a dark room for photography, and a pottery room with several kilns. To ensure the BSU students have safe access to campus, an artistic skywalk will be built across Myrtle Street. The proposed design for the skywalk is shown below:



The student residents in Building 1 will have part of their housing costs covered by Boise State and will be chosen through a competitive application process. If they want to work with the teens and put on activities to fill that need, they will receive a 50% discount on housing. Otherwise they can put on and attend a specified number of events for Zenabuki Village at large, and receive a 25% discount instead. This incentive structure will ensure a vibrant community proliferates.

Building 2 will contain retail on the first and second floor. The retailers will consist of locally owned restaurants, clothing stores that would target young professionals, night clubs, an electronics store, and a coffee shop. The upper floors of this complex will provide relatively affordable apartments. The units will be approximately 1,000 square feet and there will be around 54 in total. This housing will provide extra space for other Boise State students and young professionals who are not ready to commit to purchasing a condo.

The first two floors of Building 3 will house Boise's first Whole Foods Market, providing 50,000 square feet of space. The upper floors (three through nine) will be residential condos targeting the young professional class. On average, we estimate that there will be approximately



1,500 square feet per unit and there will be 60 units altogether. Additionally, part of floor seven will be taken up by a restaurant that will utilize the rooftop patio on floor six.

Last but not least is Building 4 which will have three specific components on its first floor. The portion nearest Front Street will provide secure, indoor bike storage for all the residents of Zenabuki Village. The middle section will serve as a community art gallery that will showcase works from high school and college students, as well as other local artists who are trying to gain exposure. Finally, the last segment of the first floor will be the new, more appropriate home of the Small Business Administration. This will place the SBA in the center of the entrepreneurial and creative community that is Zenabuki Village. The second floor will provide healthcare offices to complement the services of St. Luke's which is just a few blocks away. This is important because of the aging population and the consistently high demand for healthcare even in this depressed economy. The upper floors will be arranged in the same fashion Building 3. There will be another rooftop restaurant and similar condos, both in number and size.

To provide parking for the residents and retailers a six floor parking garage with approximately 400 stalls will be constructed on the northwest side of the property. And to ensure this is not an eyesore, community-monitored graffiti will adorn the exterior and interior walls. An example of this sort of respectful graffiti is provided by the Freak Alley in Boise, shown below:



## BENEFITS

This project will meet all the major needs that were described previously. By bringing a Whole Foods Market, including bike storage, and creating a community garden, we are improving Boise's sustainability. By developing unique buildings with an interesting layout, the need for architectural variety is also partly met. By extending Boise State's physical footprint across the river, it will help achieve the University's goal of truly becoming a metropolitan research university of distinction. This will also improve the area's economy by increasing collaboration among young professionals and students while making more resources available for entrepreneurship. Lastly, students will make valuable contributions to Boise's culture.

Before proceeding, it is imperative to mention the benefits that arise from the second floor in Building 1. This floor provides a space for teens and college students to collaborate and socialize. It will help anchor at-risk teens to the community and let them know that people care.

In turn, this will improve their self-esteem and help prevent suicides. Additionally, by introducing these teens to college, however obliquely, this atmosphere will increase the likelihood of pursuing higher education. It is also a way for Boise State students to give back, thereby establishing a positive and visible presence in the Boise community. This will likely be a boon to contributions to the University.

**COSTS**

Total building costs were determined using an estimate of \$200 / square foot.<sup>1</sup> We calculated an average floorplate of 25,000 square feet, median to determine the square footage of each building. The parking garage costs \$18,000 per stall and we estimate around 400 stalls. (Hall). Finally, the public art component is estimated at 1% of the building costs (Bubb). The total estimated cost breakdown is shown below:

<b>Building Cost</b>	<b>\$130,000,000</b>
<b>Parking Garage</b>	<b>\$7,200,000</b>
<b>Architecture and Entitlement Fees<sup>2</sup></b>	<b>\$6,000,000</b>
<b>Art Piece</b>	<b>\$1,300,000</b>
<b>Skywalk</b>	<b>\$200,000</b>
<b>Land<sup>2</sup></b>	<b>\$8,000,000</b>
<b>Total</b>	<b>\$153,000,000</b>

Building 1 may be financed partially by the Social Innovation Fund, which will match up to \$10 million for public projects (Grant opportunities). The J.A. and Kathryn Albertsons Foundation (2010) is a likely source for the remaining \$15 million because this building will support their mission of increasing college attendance for Idaho’s graduating high school students (Grant opportunities, 2010).

The parking garage will likely be constructed by the CCDC. They have already constructed several garages elsewhere, and they have allowed other private developers to purchase stalls for their residents in the past (Hall).

The Heart and the other green spaces may be financed by the city and local groups such as Idaho Smart Growth, which supports mixed-use development and wants to see more green space incorporated in the downtown area. It is also possible that the central art piece would be sponsored by local philanthropists.

The rest of the development would have to be financed by private investors who would expect a return on their money. According to Schoenherr and Kussler, the retail space would have to rent for approximately \$22 / square foot and the condos would have to sell for, on average, around \$350,000. These numbers may seem high, but Kussler suggested that Whole Foods is such a large attraction that adjacent businesses and residents would be willing to pay as high as \$28 / square foot. And while the housing market is currently depressed, Hall predicts that it will turn around in the next three years, which is when this development could potentially be ready. Moreover, Simplot Foundation has proven that not all major developments need to be economically viable at the outset. They are currently planning to build Jack's Urban Meeting Place, a \$100 million project, even though experts such as Schoenherr, Rivers, and Kussler all say that there is insufficient. In conclusion, Zenabuki Village appears to be viable within a few years, though a prominent foundation may be able to provide immediate support. Additionally, public funding will be able to cover part of the cost.

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Endnotes

<sup>1</sup> Scott Schoenherr at Rafanelli and Nahas suggested a \$230 / square foot rate for Class A office space. Since our buildings are targeting a more modest demographic with less intricate architecture than his plan called for, we opted to use \$200 / square foot instead. We see this as reasonable because Jim Kussler, who owns the lot, suggested so. (Schoenherr; Kussler).

<sup>2</sup> Jim Kussler provided both of these statistics.