

J.D. McCarty Center Mobility Course

The University of Oklahoma
Institute for Quality Communities

Norman, Oklahoma
Jan 18- April 5, 2013

About DesignWorks

DesignWorks is a unique program that brings together community residents and design professionals to address the image of Oklahoma towns. Each town has special characteristics and issues and challenges. Each team, through a two-day design charrette, approaches these design issues through a fast-paced, creative process.

The interactive design process not only lets community citizens understand the design profession but also lets them be part of the decision process. The recommendations in this report have one goal: Improving the Image of Their Town. All text and drawings documenting this DesignWorks Team Visit were prepared by members of the Team.

History of DesignWorks

In 1990, the State Arts Council of Oklahoma (now the Oklahoma Arts Council) brought together a number of state agencies to discuss the arts and design professions in Oklahoma. At the time, Oklahoma continued to languish in an almost decade-old oil bust cycle that had left many thinking that any and all things to do with the arts were simply frivolous matters.

Some 200 people attended the conference. From this energy of “finding others out there who were concerned, too,” about two dozen people from state agencies, private firms, and individual studios stepped forward to further discuss the arts needs in the state. From surveys, meetings, and conversations, the group learned that rural Oklahoma needed access to design professionals and resources.

Three tools focused on delivering design assistance: a DesignWorks video, a DesignWorks Community DesignBook, and DesignWorks Team Visits. By the summer of 1993, the video and book were available. The first three team visits went to Grove, Chandler, and Shidler, Oklahoma. The groups that contributed to these design tools included:

- State Arts Council of Oklahoma (now Oklahoma Arts Council)
- Oklahoma Department of Commerce/Oklahoma Main Street Program (now Oklahoma Main Street Center)
- Oklahoma State University/Oklahoma Cooperative Extension Service
- Oklahoma Foundation for Architecture

Originally, the Oklahoma Arts Council was the home for the DesignWorks program. About ten years later, the program shifted to the Oklahoma Main Street Center. In the Fall of 2011, the program transferred to the Institute for Quality Communities at the College of Architecture, The University of Oklahoma.

DesignWorks Itinerary

Friday, January 18, 2013

First class of the semester, overview of the projects for the class.

Friday, January 25, 2013

Class met on site at the J.D. McCarty Center, 2002 East Robinson Street. The group conducted a site analysis, met with clients, photographed the space, got the program requirements, and, at the urging of the J. D. McCarty Center staff, tried the various mobility devices. The group met with Michelle Carr, Sue O'Hare, and Beth Morton.

Wednesday, February 1, 2013

An extra class provided time for brainstorming ideas and research time.

Friday, February 1, 2013

The class focused on proposed design ideas, mobility course layout, and equipment selections.

Wednesday, February 6, 2013

An extra class provided time for refinement of schematic designs.

Friday, February 8, 2013

This class focused on final selection of course layout, equipment, landscape items and plants, and materials. *(NOTE: The initial due date for the project and the presentation to J.D. McCarty Center staff was this day. However, faculty and students decided as a team that this was too important of a project to wrap up so quickly. All decided to delay a final presentation so that the design could be taken past a very schematic format. Although the class began getting training for the next project during the next meeting time, the group continued working on this project.)*

Friday, February 22, 2013

The class continued to work on their presentation for the mobility course.

March 1, 2013

The class presented their ideas in both a PowerPoint format and in boards to the J.D. McCarty Center staff (Michelle Carr, Sue O'Hare, Beth Morton).

April 5, 2013

RCA Day Presentation. Please see "DesignWorks Team Focus" for additional details.

History of the Center

“Turning stumbling blocks into building blocks since 1946”

The J.D. McCarty Center website has this overview of the center’s mission:

“The J. D. McCarty Center for children with developmental disabilities is Oklahoma’s ‘center of excellence’ in the care and treatment of children with special needs. At the McCarty Center, we help children with developmental disabilities learn to move, eat, play and communicate better. We help replace shrugs of helplessness with happy smiles. We help to replace confusion with understanding. Our staff shares a wealth of experience and uses the most current rehabilitation techniques to bring out the best in our kids.”

For more information about the development of this center, please visit this webpage: <http://www.jdmc.org/history.shtml>



Design Team Focus

The Team

The typical DesignWorks Team is normally a mixture of 4-7 design professionals with different backgrounds. This design team was part of the IQC Community Workshop of the 2013 Spring Semester.

The combination of team members included the following:

Three (3) staff members of the J. D. McCarty Center.

Two (2) OU Institute for Quality Communities staff (serving as College of Architecture faculty members).

Eight (8) OU College of Architecture students from five (5) areas of study and/or levels of development:

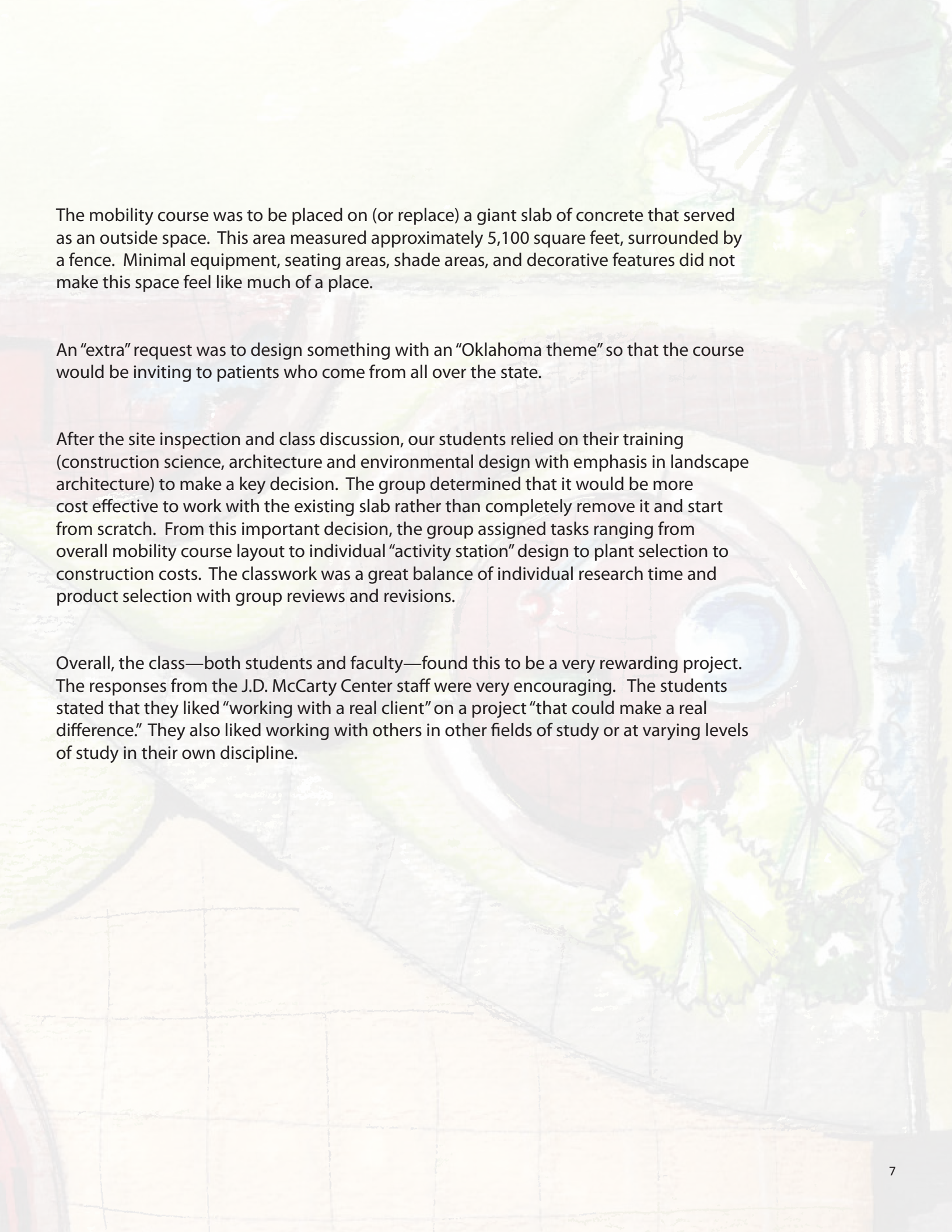
- Architecture, 3rd year (2 students)
- Architecture, 4th year (1 student)
- Architecture, 5th year (3 students)
- Construction Science (1 student)
- Environmental Design (1 student)

The Idea

The J.D. McCarty Center Mobility Course started with an idea from Center staff who saw a need for an outside instructional area for their children. In late spring of 2012, there were some e-mail exchanges between the staff members at the J.D. McCarty Center and the OU Institute for Quality Communities. In July and August, these staff members met twice to talk about possibilities. There was an instant rapport between all as well as an immediate sense of importance for this project. During the 2012 Fall Semester, everyone kept in touch as plans evolved to include the project in the 2013 Spring Semester IQC Community Workshop class.

The Project

The requests were very simple: create a mobility course that is not so much a course but a collection of challenges that can help patients learn to use and to trust their mobility devices (braces, walkers, wheelchairs, crutches, etc.) as well as to build confidence. Sloped sidewalks, steps without handrails, a water feature, various textured surfaces, inclines, and tactile experiences were to be complemented with “celebratory” highlights to be placed at the tops of inclines or on the other sides of what appeared to be barriers. The space needed to accommodate parents, guardians, and siblings who were waiting for patients to complete their sessions.



The mobility course was to be placed on (or replace) a giant slab of concrete that served as an outside space. This area measured approximately 5,100 square feet, surrounded by a fence. Minimal equipment, seating areas, shade areas, and decorative features did not make this space feel like much of a place.

An “extra” request was to design something with an “Oklahoma theme” so that the course would be inviting to patients who come from all over the state.

After the site inspection and class discussion, our students relied on their training (construction science, architecture and environmental design with emphasis in landscape architecture) to make a key decision. The group determined that it would be more cost effective to work with the existing slab rather than completely remove it and start from scratch. From this important decision, the group assigned tasks ranging from overall mobility course layout to individual “activity station” design to plant selection to construction costs. The classwork was a great balance of individual research time and product selection with group reviews and revisions.

Overall, the class—both students and faculty—found this to be a very rewarding project. The responses from the J.D. McCarty Center staff were very encouraging. The students stated that they liked “working with a real client” on a project “that could make a real difference.” They also liked working with others in other fields of study or at varying levels of study in their own discipline.

Team Interviews

We had a short discussion about what this project meant for everyone. This project touched a nerve, tugged an emotion, and stirred a gratitude for people who give so much of themselves. Here are some comments from the team:

Matt Crowover:

"It was great asking staff exactly what they want. We just started from scratch and didn't have a program. There was a hint of environmentalism, a spiritual component, and educational component, a healing component. Sue O'Hare's response to the proposed design that 'It is so sensory that it is sensory gardens' made me realize that we met the needs."

Alison Thompson:

"I appreciate what they do. My uncle had spina bifida. A good family friend was in a facility in Pauls Valley, a place that lacked funding and closed. Her family was not sure where she would go. Unfortunately, she passed away last week. People just take it for granted that these places will be there."

Marina Soares:

"We did not realize there was specialized equipment out there for specific markets and needs. My first challenge was that I have never done this before—designing a playground for physically challenged children and designing something that is specifically not to ADA requirements. The kids will learn from this challenge. We learned from this challenge. We all face new things in life."

Note: Marina was a foreign exchange student from Sao Paulo, Brazil, this semester. She appreciated the true Oklahoma project that also provided an American experience not gained from a textbook. Through this project, she said that she gained new friends while working many hours on the design.

Peter Mall:

"I really appreciated Sue O'Hare's comments of 'The project recommendations are more than what we thought.' This made me realize that we listened to their needs and made recommendations that met their needs. This had a 'very Oklahoma' feel to it. It was not outlandish. It was a practical design."



Laney Vela:

“Part of our profession (architecture) is giving back to the community. I liked this project. It is not just complying with ADA or other requirements. This is what it should be—caring for each other.”

Tyler Ediger:

“This was all new for me. This was the first time to get to design (as he is a Construction Science major). I have never done a playground. It was very enjoyable. This project had more meaning because it is something outside of what I normally do. This was my first time to work with architects (students). I enjoyed that.”

Marsi Puente:

“This was an interesting project that hopefully develops.”

Hope Mander:

“We had to think about the use first and then the design.”

Seth Gebhart:

“This is a worthy project for helping people who are working so hard to improve others’ lives.”

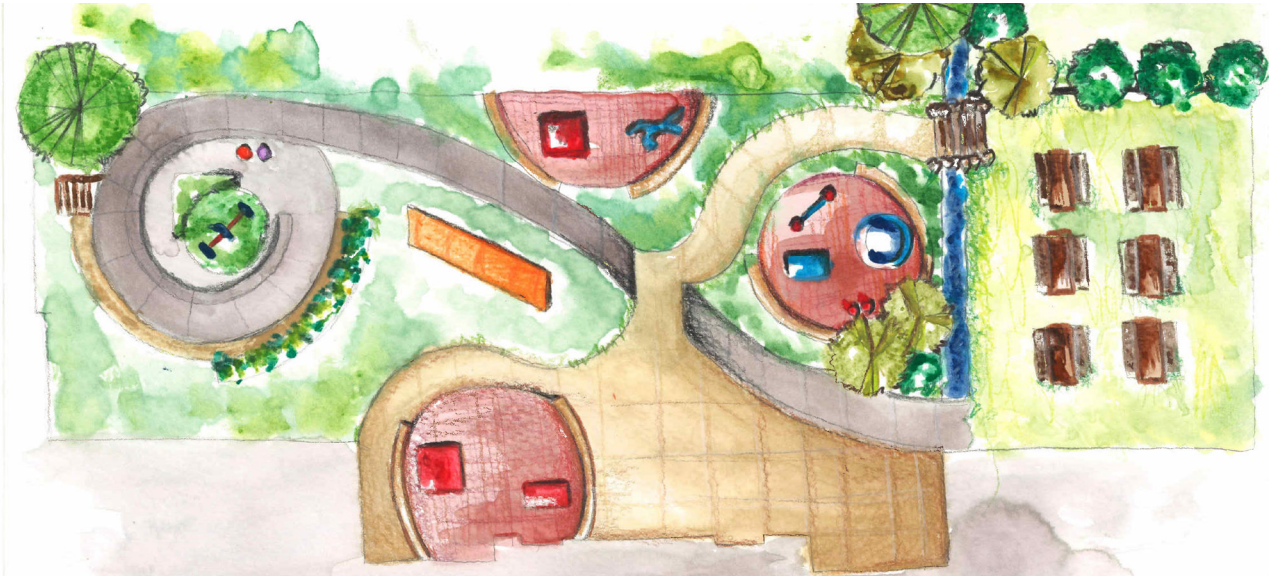
Ron Frantz:

“Having been a state employee for many years, I know just how many hard-working, well-meaning, dedicated people are out there. They do not do this work for large paychecks or extra incentives. Many times they do not even get recognition. Working with Michelle, Sue, and Beth made me realize we need to champion those who are championing others.”





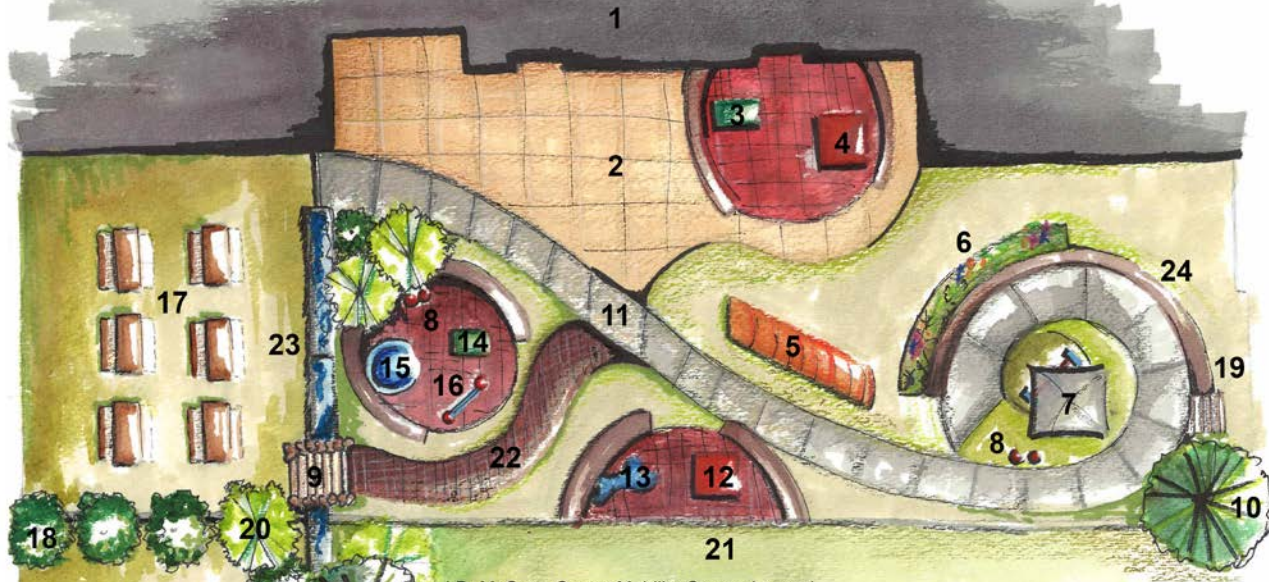
Design Alternatives







J.D. McCarty Center : Exterior Mobility Course



J.D. McCarty Center Mobility Course Legend

- | | | | |
|--|--|---|--|
| 1. EXISTING BUILDING | 7. PLATEAU WITH EXISTING SWING AND SHADE COVER | 12. SAND BOX WITH ACCESSIBLE SUPER SCOOPER | 18. SMALL TREE |
| 2. OPEN SPACE PAVING | 8. TALK TUBES/TELESCOPE & WATER FOUNTAIN | 13. PULSE TABLE | 19. STAIRS DOWN FROM PLATEAU |
| 3. PAINT PANEL | 9. WOODEN BRIDGE CROSSING | 14. ACCESSIBLE CYCLER | 20. MEDIUM TREE |
| 4. CHIMES REACH PANEL | 10. LARGE TREE | 15. MERRY GO ALL | 21. FUTURE BASEBALL PARK AREA |
| 5. ROLLER TUBE | 11. RAMP LEADING TO PLATEAU | 16. ACCESS POWER LIFTER | 22. VARYING MATERIAL PATH |
| 6. PLANTER WITH LOCAL FLOWERS AND SHRUBS | | 17. OUTDOOR SEATING AND TABLES WITH SHADE COVER | 23. ACCESSIBLE WATER FEATURE |
| | | | 24. ART FEATURE (CHILDREN HANDPRINT/ CHALK WALL) |



Acknowledgements

Design Team

The University of Oklahoma Institute for Quality Communities

Norman, Oklahoma

Hope Mander, Associate Director Institute for Quality Communities

Ron Frantz, Director of Great Plains Studio Institute for Quality Communities and Associate Professor, Division of Architecture

The University of Oklahoma, College of Architecture Students

Norman, Oklahoma

Matthew Crossover - Senior - Environmental Design - Des Moines, IA

Tyler Ediger - Senior - Construction Science - Oklahoma City, OK

Seth Gebhart - Junior - Architecture - Denison, TX; Waco, TX; Edmond, OK

Peter Mall - Fifth Year Senior - Architecture - Chicago, IL

Marisa (Marsi) Puente - Fifth Year Senior - Architecture - San Antonio, TX

Marina Soares - Fourth Year Senior - Architecture - Sao Paulo, Brazil

Alison (Ali) Thompson - Fifth Year Senior - Architecture - Edmond, OK

Laney Vela - Junior - Architecture - Edmond, OK

J.D. McCarty Center

Norman, Oklahoma

Michelle Carr, Physical Therapist

Sue O'Hare, Director of Physical Therapy

Beth Morton, Physical Therapist

Endnote

Each year, the College of Architecture at The University of Oklahoma has an “RCA Day” (Research Creative Activity Day). This year the day focused on student projects and was part of the “C3 Week: Collaborate, Create, Construct.” This day brought together faculty and students (graduate and undergraduate) from all five divisions in the College of Architecture: Architecture, Construction Science, Interior Design, Landscape Architecture, and Regional and City Planning in addition to the students in the Institute for Quality Communities. Not all students get to present their presentations. This year, the students in the IQC Community Workshop class were fortunate to be selected for a presentation. This was additional work for them as well as a little challenging as they were speaking before a room of their peers. However, their enthusiasm captured students and faculty members’ interest. Many came up after the presentation, including faculty members, stating, “We want to be a part of your class!” This presentation was a great way for the group to share their ideas for this project.

From the perspectives of those involved with the OU Institute for Quality Communities—both students and staff, we feel this is a very valid project to pursue as a more detailed design and an implemented design. This project will provide therapy options that will complement the incredible services already provided at the J. D. McCarty Center. Those working at the J.D. McCarty Center are truly loving, dedicated, visionary, and patient state employees who double as unbelievable representatives of what “public service” is all about.

It is our hopes that through other courses we can further develop this idea.

Special Note: The format for the J.D. McCarty Center Mobility Course was a little different from other DesignWorks Team Visits. All other team visits are concentrated, two-day design charrettes that normally take place in another town. For this team visit, since it was here in Norman, we incorporated the design process into the IQC Community Workshop class during the 2013 Spring Semester. The work evolved over a number of classes. The schedule will be noted in days and not in specific times. Our normal class time was 9:30am until 12:30pm on Fridays. However, we started before 9:30am on many days. Also, the class had a number of special meeting times with the faculty, normally from 9:30am until 12:30pm on Wednesdays. Other work occurred at nights and on weekends.

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The University of Oklahoma
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830 Van Vleet Oval, Gould Hall, Room 165
Norman, Oklahoma 73019

iqc@ou.edu
iqc.ou.edu