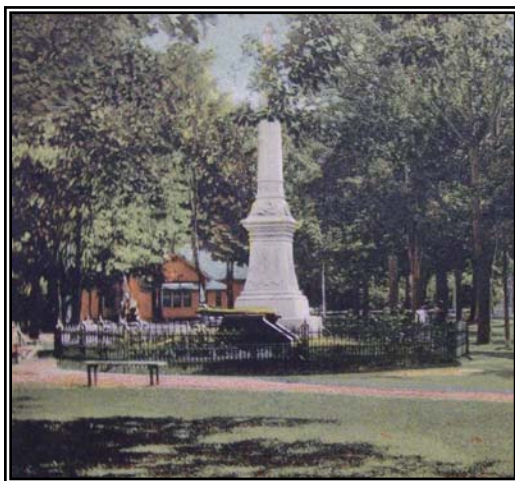
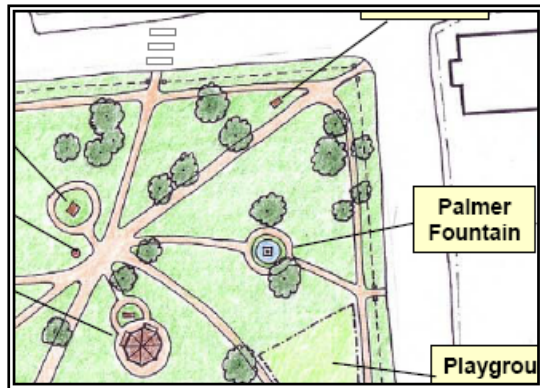
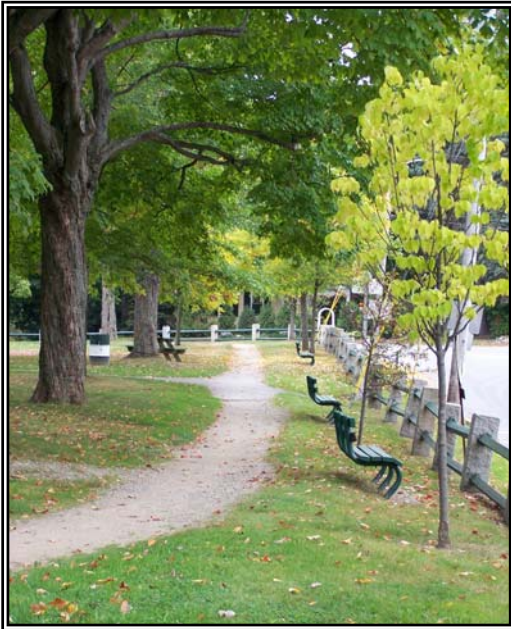


PLAN FOR THE GARDINER COMMON



Prepared for the City of Gardiner

By Kent Associates Planning & Design, in association with Wright-Pierce

Spring 2008

THE GARDINER COMMON

Final Plan

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ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

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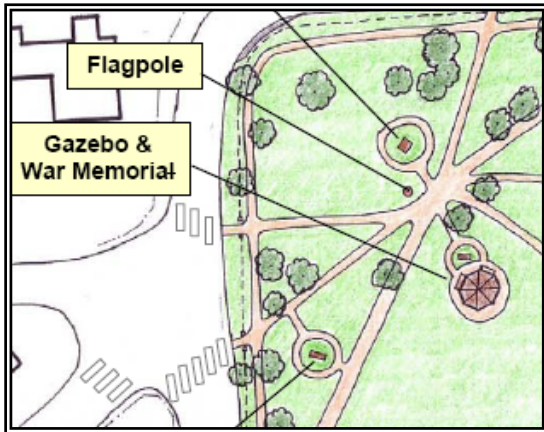
This project was a part of the City's Bundled Projects (2007 RFP), undertaken for Gardiner by Wright-Pierce and associated subcontractors.

The consultants' design recommendations are based on input from the public and city staff. Project management from the City came from Jason Simcock, Economic Development Director, and Jeffrey Kobrock, City Manager, with assistance from Chuck Applebee, Public Works Director. Public comments were provided by city residents and neighbors of the Common at public meetings held on January 17, February 25, and April 16, 2008. Input was also provided by members of the "Citizens for the Common Good" neighborhood committee and the Gardiner Conservation Commission.

Additional credits:

Photos: *Anne Doiron (page 4), Dorothy Washburne (page 16)*

Historic postcard images: *Maine Historic Preservation Commission (pages 3, 17)*



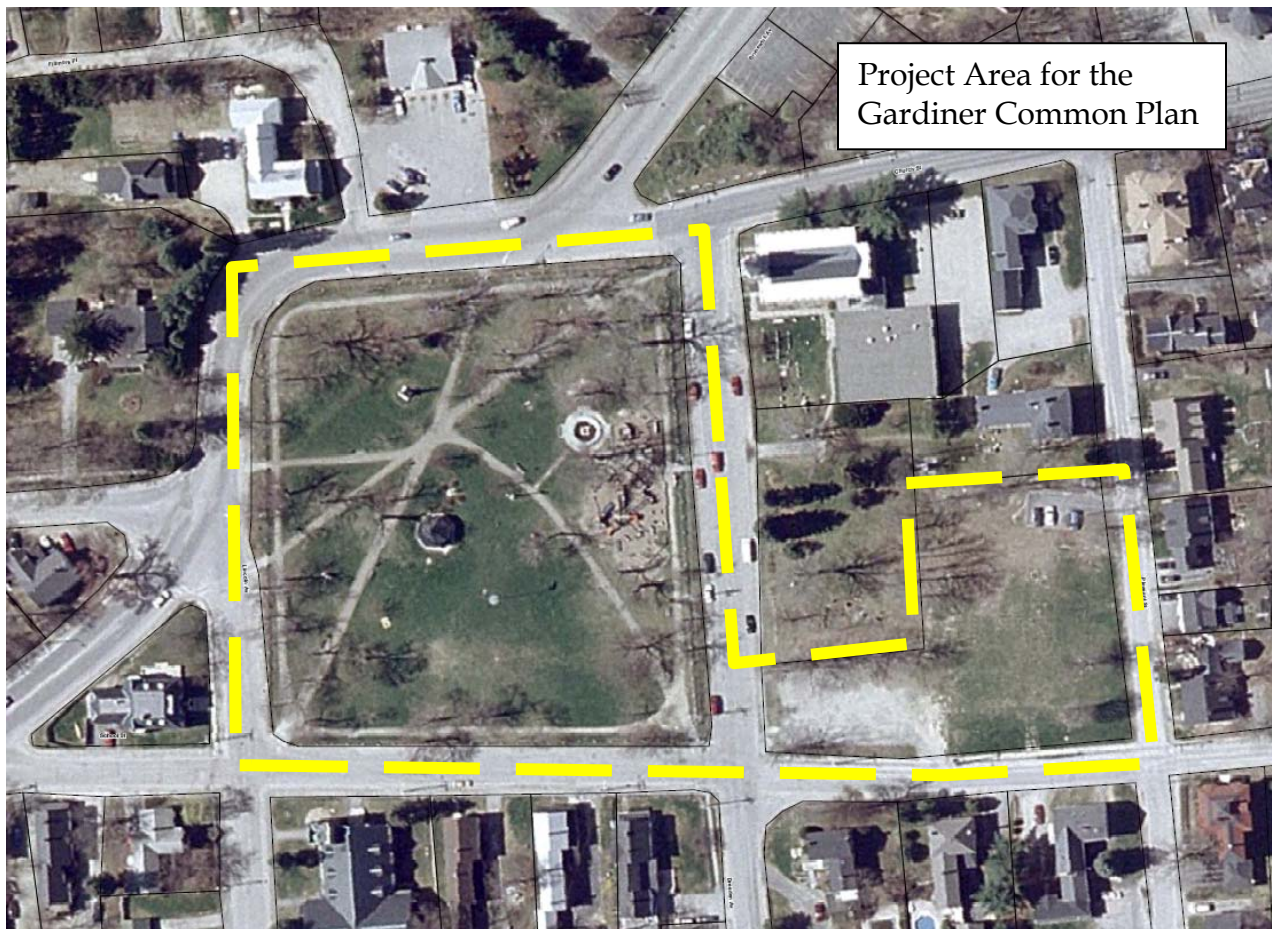
INTRODUCTION

PLAN GOALS

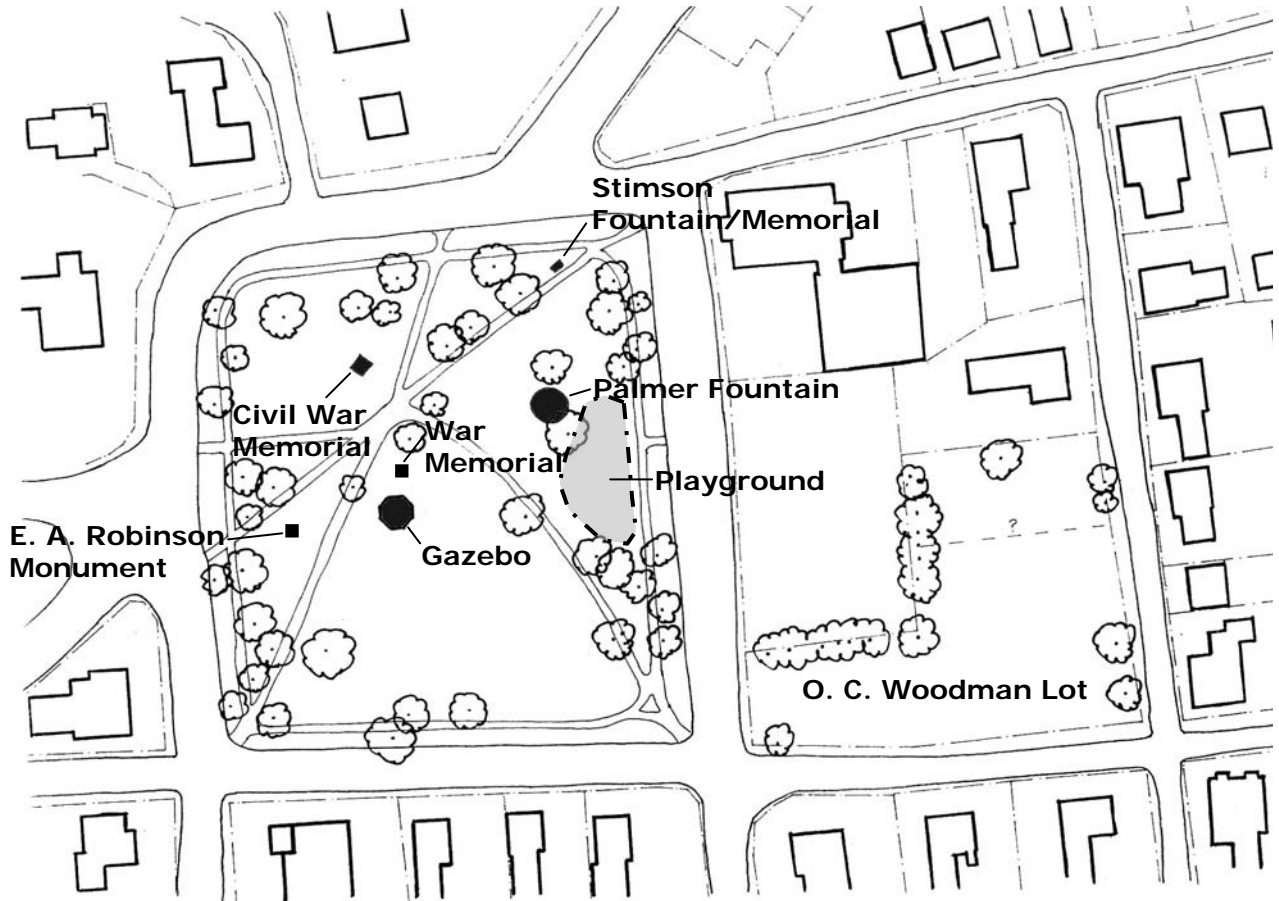
This plan was developed for the City of Gardiner using a process that involved public outreach and City staff input. At the beginning of this process, a set of goals for the project was established.

The Plan for the Common should:

- ◆ Establish an overall plan for the Common and city-owned O. C. Woodman site;
- ◆ Resolve the playground issue (replacement/relocation/removal);
- ◆ Establish a management framework (short-term and long-term);
- ◆ Set funding and phasing priorities; and
- ◆ Provide estimates for essential implementation costs.



Site Features



BACKGROUND

Gardiner's "Brunswick Square" Common was gifted to the City on March 15, 1824, by the Gardiner Family Estate. Looking at the original language from the deed, the park was dedicated to the town for the "convenience" of residents, for "ornamenting" the town, and for "public walks and parades". It was also specified that there should be no buildings constructed on the park, that the rows of trees be kept, and that a neat fence be maintained around the park.



Plan for the Gardiner Common



Upper left: historic postcard of the Palmer Fountain, with the original Neptune fountain piece. Note the path around the fountain in the upper left postcard.

Left, center: historic gazebo; the existing gazebo was constructed during Gardiner's centennial.



Left, bottom: the iron fence that used to surround the war memorial was removed for the war effort (as was the original Neptune figure from the fountain).

Today, the Gardiner Common is a beloved community space and historic focal point of the City. It is a place that serves residents and visitors of all ages, whether for walking or jogging, passive recreation, informal play, gatherings or community events. Its walking paths, particularly the circular track around the outer edge, are well used, as are its other features such as the playground, benches and picnic tables, gazebo, and open lawn areas.



Plan for the Gardiner Common

The Common is currently the site for several community events – although historically, there were many more community events held in the park, including public parades and vaudeville shows. The Common now hosts the Memorial Day ceremony, the Elementary School’s Octoberfest (school fair), the Celebration of Lights (luminaries honoring loved ones), outdoor stargazing/ telescope star party (solstice), and is the starting location for the E. A. Robinson walking tour.



ASSESSMENT

ISSUES & NEEDS

The assessment of the issues and needs for the Common was developed through interviews with City staff, including the Public Works Director, interviews with individual community members, and through input from public meetings held during the planning process. (Additional materials from the public meetings are included in the Appendix of this plan.)

- ◆ The Common is used for several **community events** during the year, including Memorial Day ceremonies, the elementary school's Octoberfest, and the Celebration of Lights; the Common is also the starting point for the E. A. Robinson walking tour and has been the site for solstice stargazing/telescope star parties. The current use of the Common for community events is less than in the past; additional events should be encouraged. With community concerns for security and inappropriate use (see below), increased use by community members may help to improve these conditions.
- ◆ The old **playground** is in very poor condition, is not safe, and must be removed. *[The old playground was removed during the development of this plan.]* Prior to this study, options discussed for the playground included: replacing the playground in the same site; replacing the playground and relocating it across the road to the O. C. Woodman site; or removing and not replacing the playground. Parents in the community felt strongly that the playground should be replaced and kept on the Common, while other park users felt the playground was a historically inappropriate use on the Common and should be removed/relocated. These options and their pros and cons were discussed during public meetings. In the end, it became clear that the playground is important to the park's continued level of use by the community and neighborhood, particularly for families; its removal, or even relocation to the Woodman site, could negatively impact the level of use of the park and the ability of the park to serve a diversity of ages and user groups. More use also puts more "eyes" in the park and increases security (see below).
- ◆ Neighbors and residents are very concerned with current **safety/security issues** in the park; many are upset by the inappropriate use of the park (vandalism, noise and foul language, etc.), particularly in the gazebo and the playground (by local teenagers). The Gardiner Police emphasize the need for the public to assist by contacting the police immediately when inappropriate activity occurs. A Community Liaison Officer is also available to assist residents and the City in addressing security/safety or vandalism issues. Working to increase the overall community/family use of the park can also help counter inappropriate use. The City and Police will continue to work on these issues with the neighbors and other residents.
- ◆ The **gazebo** is in poor condition and must be replaced. Some in the community inquired about removing the gazebo temporarily for a year or two given the security/inappropriate use concerns; however, due to the gazebo's iconic presence in the park, this option is not recommended; removal and replacement should occur simultaneously.

- ◆ Many of the **trees** in the park are quite old and will need replacing, and overall a maintenance plan is needed for all trees in the park, new or old. A professional arborist should be retained to evaluate the existing trees and provide input on tree care, tree removal, and future tree plantings. Such plantings should maintain the historic “avenues” of trees along the pathways.
- ◆ The **paths** throughout the park are in need of improvements and upgrading. The paths are not edged, and in several places get quite muddy seasonally or during wet weather. Also, the paved “aprons” at the entrances should be improved for accessibility.
- ◆ Amenities such as the **benches and picnic tables** were identified as needing replacement/upgrading; there is support for replacing these and matching the style of those in the downtown. **Signage** and **bicycle racks** are also desired amenities for the park, and should be consistent in design/material/color with other amenities in the Common.
- ◆ Pedestrian-scale **lighting** is desired as a safety and aesthetic improvement to the park (and likewise, should be similar to the style of lampposts downtown); the underground electrical infrastructure will need to be upgraded to accommodate new lighting and electrical service for events, and in general is in need of improvement. Lighting should be done sensitively, so as not to create a nuisance to the neighborhood (light pollution).
- ◆ The **Palmer Fountain** has continually had problems related to the maintenance of the pump and fountain mechanics. In particular, the close proximity of the playground has often resulted in chips from the playground surface being thrown into the fountain and damaging the fountain pump. A new pump and wiring has recently been installed, and in combination with the separation of the fountain and playground it is anticipated that the fountain will be more easily maintained and will be able to be kept running (seasonally).

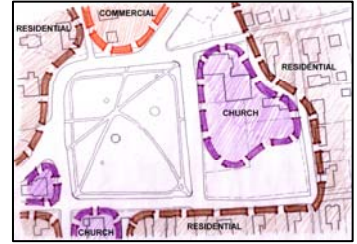
- ◆ The pedestrian connections to the Common are of utmost importance as the park is completely surrounded by roadways. **Crosswalks** must be maintained, connecting the park to neighborhoods and the downtown, with particular attention to crosswalks on Brunswick Ave./Route 201, as this route has high traffic volumes. Sidewalk improvements in the area surrounding the Common are planned as part of the City’s Sidewalk Improvement Plan (part of the Bundled Projects).



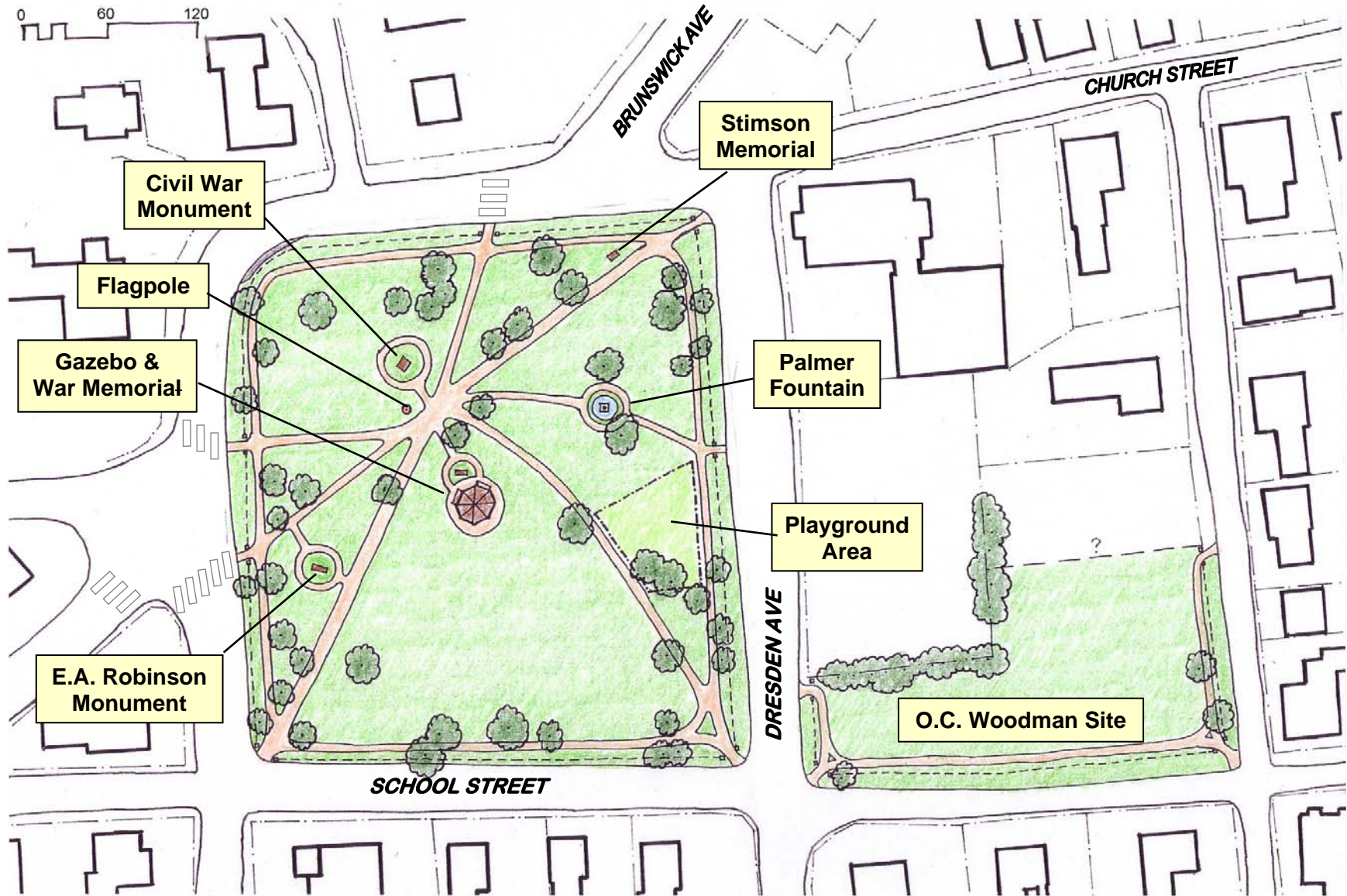
- ◆ The need for **maintaining a clean park** is an on-going concern, particularly regarding trash and dog waste. The park should have an appropriate number of trash receptacles (of an appropriate style/design), and dog waste stations/receptacles have been discussed to encourage dog owners to keep the park clean.
- ◆ There is interest in having the stone **monuments** cleaned, having an assessment of the stones conducted and establishing a maintenance schedule for cleaning. The costs and options for cleaning (professionally done versus done in-house by PWD staff) are being considered.

Plan for the Gardiner Common

- ◆ Interest in establishing a historic **overlay district** for the parcels surrounding the Common has been expressed, with concerns of maintaining and protecting the character of its surroundings. This must be further explored, with cooperation from the property owners affected.
- ◆ In general, improvements to the Common are an important investment to maintaining its use as a neighborhood park and increasing its use by the community, as well as to maintaining the Common as a beloved and irreplaceable community asset.

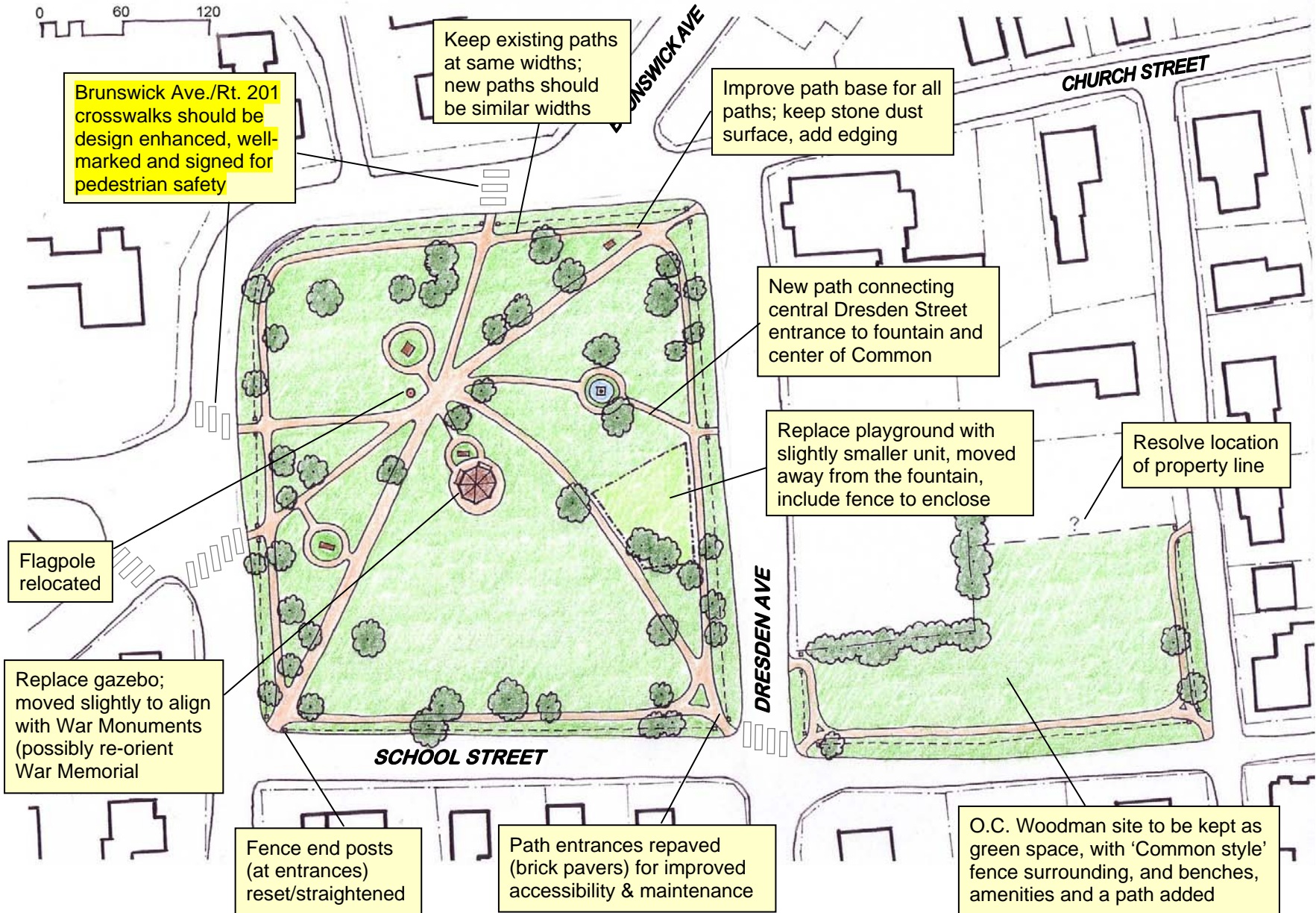


GARDINER COMMON ILLUSTRATED PLAN



GARDINER COMMON ILLUSTRATED PLAN

PLAN ANNOTATIONS



Plan for the Gardiner Common