

PLAN RECOMMENDATIONS

DESIGN COMPONENTS

The design recommendations for the Common are listed below according to particular components. These include recommendations for the adjacent, city-owned O. C. Woodman site. Illustrations for the design recommendations below are found on the pages following (*see Design Illustrations*).

Landscaping (trees, plantings, lawn)

- ◆ Hire a professional arborist to evaluate the older trees and help make recommendations on tree replacement, as well as on overall tree maintenance within the park.
- ◆ Future tree plantings should be along pathways, to maintain these tree lines; the open lawn area of the southern portion of the park should be kept open.
- ◆ Hire a professional landscaper or arborist to conduct annual tree maintenance/care and pruning.
- ◆ Other than trees, plantings should be restricted to annuals and spring bulbs used on a limited basis as an accent, primarily around park features.

Lighting & Utilities

- ◆ Upgrade the existing underground electrical infrastructure for lighting, the fountain, and for other possible electrical needs (such as for activities/events).
- ◆ Pedestrian-scale lighting should be added along the internal paths that cross the Common (the outer path receives lighting from the streetlights surrounding the park); new lighting will enhance the park's safety and security, but should be carefully implemented so as to be sensitive of light pollution in the neighborhood; energy efficient lighting should be investigated.
- ◆ The gazebo should be lit, for security.
- ◆ Upward-angled lighting, such as landscape lighting, should generally not be used, unless the light source is well screened so as not to create a visual nuisance or hazard for vehicles, pedestrians or neighboring houses; motion sensor lighting is not recommended as it may be distracting for vehicles, pedestrians and neighbors.

Playground

- ◆ Replace the playground on the Common; the playground's design must be sensitive to its context (the historic Common); size, height, materials, color and location (specifically related to the fountain) must all fit with the historic character of the park.
- ◆ The new playground should be relocated slightly south of the existing playground site, so that it is separated from the Palmer Fountain (*see Illustrated Plan*).
- ◆ The replacement playground should be smaller than the old unit, with a smaller overall site footprint, and the height of structures limited (similar to the old unit).
- ◆ The replacement playground should be vinyl-coated metal or wood (not chemical treated) with no (or minimal) plastic components, and should be restricted to natural or neutral colors, such as dark green or brown/tan.
- ◆ The replacement playground should not have enclosed slides/tubes.

Gazebo

- ◆ Replace the gazebo, and relocated slightly towards the east to create an axis line with the two war memorials (*see Illustrated Plan*).
- ◆ The replacement gazebo should be in the style of the historic shingle-style gazebo, but modified for a more visually open design, for security and use for performances.

Paths

- ◆ Reconstruct/improve the existing paths to address seasonal muddy conditions, keeping the same surface material, and adding edging.
- ◆ Repave and improve the paved entrance “aprons” for better accessibility at the entrances.
- ◆ Paths should be kept at their current width; new paths should be consistent in width with existing paths.
- ◆ Create a path connecting the eastern (central) entrance on Dresden Ave. to the Palmer Fountain, to where the paths cross centrally (*see Illustrated Plan*)(a grass strip should be maintained between the path and fountain).
- ◆ Create paths encircling and connecting to the Civil War Monument, Palmer Fountain, Gazebo and War Memorial, and A. E. Robinson Monument (*see Illustrated Plan*).

Fencing

- ◆ Maintain the existing fencing surrounding the Common.
- ◆ Straighten/reset the fence end posts at each of the entrances.

Benches, picnic tables, bike racks

- ◆ Replace benches in the Common with a style similar to the downtown, but keep dark green in color.
- ◆ Benches should be replaced where they are currently located, and any additional benches should be located along the paths, or surrounding the fountain, the playground and the gazebo.
- ◆ Existing picnic tables could be replaced with more durable metal and/or recycled plastic picnic tables, and should be all green in color, consistent with the benches; picnic tables should be located near the playground and open lawn areas.
- ◆ Add bicycle racks (to accommodate a small number of bicycles) in the vicinity of the playground.

Trash receptacles, dog waste receptacles

- ◆ Replace trash receptacles in the park with the style of trash receptacles in the downtown; in particular, ensure that trash receptacles are located near picnic tables and near the playground.
- ◆ One or two dog waste stations should be added to encourage dog owners to keep the park clean.

Monuments

- ◆ An assessment should be conducted on the condition and cleaning/maintenance needs for each of the monuments; a schedule and budget for monument cleaning can then be established.
- ◆ Relocate the flagpole to be near either the Civil War Monument or the War Memorial.

Signage

- ◆ Informational signage (such as park hours and other notices) and educational signage (such as historic/interpretive signage) should be consistent with the city-wide Signage Design Plan.

O. C. Woodman Site

- ◆ Reclaim the parking area, including entrance driveway, on the Woodman site as lawn/ green space. This green space could still be used for temporary parking during events, and no structures should be placed in this space to impede such use; the curb cut and entrance grade on School Street should be retained for vehicle access, as well as a break in the outer fencing.
- ◆ Resolve the property line issue on the north/northeast boundary of the site (off Pleasant Street, adjacent to the church property).
- ◆ Install fencing along the road edges of the Woodman site, in the same style as the fence surrounding the Common.
- ◆ Add benches, picnic tables, and trash receptacles (style consistent with the Common).
- ◆ Add a path along the outer edge of the Woodman property, and provide for connections to sidewalks on School and Pleasant Streets.
- ◆ Have a professional evaluation of existing trees, with recommendations on tree maintenance and replacement, and possibly thinning.
- ◆ Community gardens and/or raised beds could be incorporated into the Woodman site design; the Conservation Commission or local gardeners club should be encouraged to take on this type of project.
- ◆ Explore the future option/need to add electrical infrastructure and pedestrian-scale lighting to the Woodman site (lighting style consistent with the Common).

Security/Inappropriate Park Use

- ◆ Overall, neighbors and residents are urged to contact the Gardiner Police immediately when inappropriate or illegal activity and behavior occurs on the Common; signage with the local police department phone number will be posted at the park to help encourage this; a Community Liaison Officer is also on staff to assist in security/safety and vandalism issues in the park; this public & community effort will be on-going.
- ◆ The installation of security camera(s) in the Common may be considered.
- ◆ In general, increased use of the park by residents may help to discourage inappropriate uses in the park.

Events & Community Use

- ◆ Encourage continued use of the Common for community events, and explore opportunities to hold additional community events at the park.

- ◆ Ensure that the electrical infrastructure is planned to accommodate future use of the park for events, including a farmers market or outdoor concerts.
- ◆ Use of the Common by organized sports groups should be discouraged, as other locations are more appropriate for such use.
- ◆ Allow for limited, city-approved, vehicle access in the southwest corner for events and activities; vehicle access should be restricted during wet weather so as to prevent damage to the paths and lawn.
- ◆ If particular events or activities (such as a farmers' market) are determined to be on-going, improvements may be needed to the paths and lawn in that area to help protect/maintain these features with heavier use.
- ◆ A weekly farmers' market is being planned for the Common, temporarily for the 2008 summer season, with the intent to move the market to the Waterfront; should the opportunity to keep the market on the Common arise, it is an activity that should fit well with the park long-term.

Pedestrian Access

- ◆ Crosswalks connecting to neighborhood side streets must be maintained annually to be effective. The two crosswalks on Brunswick Ave./Route 201 should be design enhanced for improved visibility (*see illustrations, next section*); visibility for the Route 201 crosswalk on the north side could possibly be improved by relocating it to the corner of the park (near Fillmore Place entrance) and adding a park entrance and path to that corner, but this option should be confirmed by a field review by a traffic engineer.
- ◆ Promote the completion of a sidewalk & trail connection between the Common, the south end of the downtown, and the Waterfront along School Street, to provide pedestrian connectivity between the neighborhood and these two key downtown parks.

Maintenance

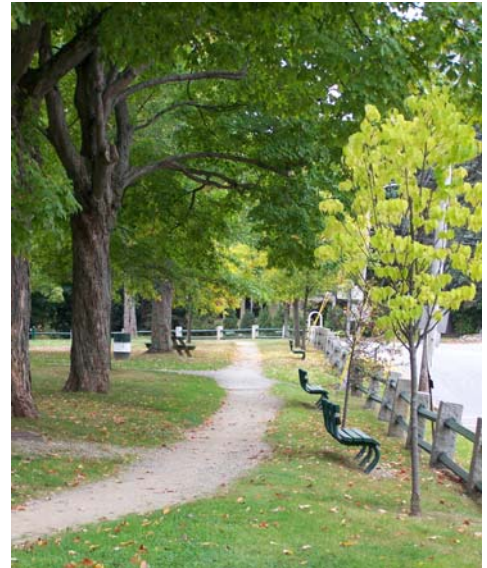
- ◆ As improvements are made, such as replacing the playground and gazebo or upgrading the paths, the maintenance of these improved features should be accounted for in the Public Works' annual maintenance schedule and budget.

Historic Overlay District

- ◆ An overlay district for the neighborhood/properties surrounding the Common should be considered, to protect the park from the potential negative impacts of future development or other changes; such an overlay district must be created in cooperation with adjacent property owners, and with participation of the Planning Board and Historic Commission.

DESIGN ILLUSTRATIONS

Landscaping (trees, plantings, lawn)



An assessment of the existing trees, along with input on tree maintenance and replacement, is needed from a professional arborist. The tree line along the paths should be maintained by future plantings.

Lighting & Utilities



Pedestrian-scale lighting could be same style as downtown, or similar (the style on the right is a an example of a compatible similar style).

Playground



Example playground (Boston Common) – with appropriate color (muted, dark green and tan), materials, unit size, and fencing



Example playground – appropriate size, but colors not appropriate for Gardiner Common



Example playground – appropriate size, unit height, materials, and reasonable color



Example playground – appropriate size, reasonable materials and color

Gazebo

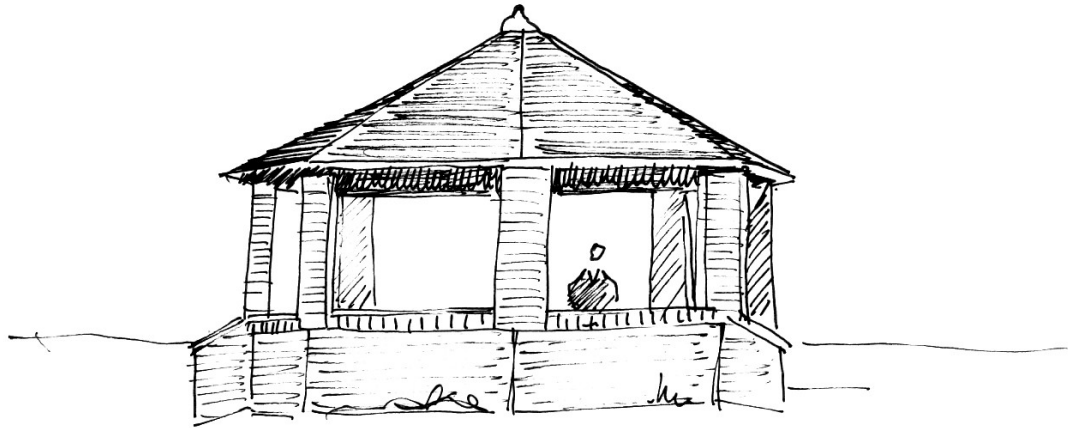


Existing gazebo – to be replaced because it's deteriorated and beyond simple repair.

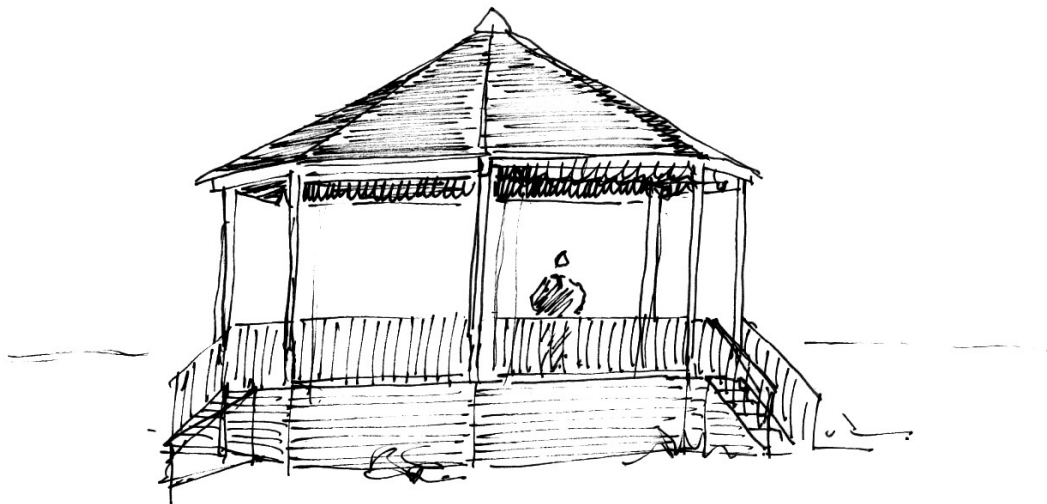


Historic shingle-style gazebo.

For replacing the gazebo, a new design could be used, modifying the historic shingle-style design to be more open like the existing gazebo. The roof style should match the historic gazebo design, and the base should be shingled (versus lattice).



Sketch of historic shingle-style gazebo.



Sketch of proposed gazebo (based on historic).

Paths



The existing paths should be upgraded and have edging (minimal) added.

Paved “aprons” at the entrances should be maintained for ease of access; the existing paving at the entrances needs replacing. Colored concrete paver surface is preferable to asphalt, but must be well constructed and maintained.



Existing entrance condition



Entrance repaved and edged; paver/brick paving is preferred.

Fencing



The fencing surrounding the Common must be maintained, as a condition of the deed to the City. The end posts at the entrances need to be straightened/reset, and rails replaced as needed. This same fencing should be used on the O. C. Woodman site.

Crosswalks (Brunswick Ave./Route 201)



These illustrations show options for design enhanced crosswalks, for Route 201. A “duratherm” crosswalk (left), colored streetprint crosswalk (right), or a brick paver crosswalk (paver blocks set in flush with the road) are all more durable and more visible than typical painted crosswalks.

Benches, picnic tables, bike racks



Existing benches on left. Park benches should be replaced with the same style (or similar) as the downtown (right), but should be dark green (such as the existing benches).



Picnic tables should be replaced with a style that matches the downtown benches (see above), but also all green in color (possibly metal/recycled plastic materials).



A few bike racks should be provided, such as the styles above.

Trash receptacles, dog waste receptacles



One or two dog waste receptacles should be provided to encourage keeping the park sanitary (left).

Additional trash receptacles should be provided, in the same style as downtown (below).



O. C. Woodman Site



The Woodman site should be maintained as green space for passive use (walking, picnicking, frisbee & non-organized activities). A fence in the same style as the Common should be added along the road edges of the property; other amenities added such as benches should be consistent with the Common as well.



The existing parking area on the Woodman site should be restored to lawn, however, this space could still be used for temporary parking for events (School Street entrance curb cut should be retained).

PHASING & ACTION PLAN

Priority Actions:

Phase 1

- ◆ Replace (& relocate) playground
- ◆ Conduct tree assessment; develop tree replacement plan (professional assistance)
- ◆ Reconstruct/upgrade paths (subsurface, surface, edging); pave entrances
- ◆ Upgrade electrical infrastructure, install underground wiring
- ◆ Install pedestrian-scale lighting (lampposts)
- ◆ Work with Gardiner Police to address security/vandalism concerns
- ◆ Woodman site: Replace parking area with lawn

Phase 2

- ◆ Replace gazebo
- ◆ Replace benches & picnic tables; add other amenities
- ◆ Add new paths around and to monuments
- ◆ Woodman site: Add 'Common style' fencing, amenities (benches, etc.)

Phase 3

- ◆ Add informational/educational signage (e.g. historic)
- ◆ Evaluate and clean monuments
- ◆ Woodman site: Install path, additional amenities or lighting

Long-term Actions:

- ◆ Farmer's market - reinforce/improvements to lawn/paths (if it stays)
- ◆ Install/restore plantings & benches for Robinson monument
- ◆ Explore replacing historic iron fencing around the war memorial
- ◆ Woodman site: Tree maintenance & planting plan
- ◆ Woodman site: Add electrical infrastructure & lighting
- ◆ Explore opportunity to establish historic overlay district surrounding the Common

COSTS & FUNDING

This table shows the breakdown of costs by project phases, as well as potential funding opportunities for each component. (For full cost breakdowns, see the cost estimate tables in the Appendix.)

The components listed under each phase are estimates of what can be funded and accomplished within the phase timeframes, and indicate overall priority. Ultimately, the implementation under each phase will be dependent upon the funding opportunities; if funding becomes available for certain components, they may be implemented regardless of which phase they are listed under (unless there is a specific requirement on the timing of implementation).

	Estimated Construction Cost	Grant/Funding Opportunities
Phase 1 Improvements		
◆ Replace playground	\$62,200	LWCF, Local/private funding
◆ Assess trees & develop tree maintenance plan	\$4,000	MFS Project Canopy, TIF/City funds
◆ Upgrade paths	\$14,440	CDBG, TIF/City funds
◆ Upgrade electrical infrastructure	\$65,875	CDBG, TIF/City funds
◆ Install lighting	\$44,000	CDBG, TIF/City funds
◆ Replace parking area with lawn on Woodman site	\$12,600	CDBG, TIF/City funds
Subtotal:	\$206,115	
Phase 2 Improvements		
◆ Replace gazebo	\$46,000	Local/private funding, TIF/City funds
◆ Replace benches & picnic tables, add amenities	\$19,500	CDBG, Local/private funding, TIF/City funds
◆ Add new paths (around and to monuments)	*	CDBG, TIF/City funds
◆ Add 'Common style' fencing to Woodman site	\$34,720	CDBG, Local/private funding, TIF/City funds
Subtotal:	\$100,220	
Phase 3 Improvements		
◆ Add informational/educational signage	\$2,450	CDBG, TIF/City funds
◆ Evaluate and clean monuments	\$4,500	Local/private funding, TIF/City funds
◆ Install path and additional amenities to Woodman site	\$22,950**	CDBG, Local/private funding, TIF/City funds
Subtotal:	\$29,900	

*Cost included under Phase 1, upgrade of paths.

**Does not include cost of electrical infrastructure or lighting – see cost estimate tables in Appendix.

Many of the above costs can be alleviated to a certain extent by in-kind donations of time and/or materials, either from the community, local businesses, or under Public Works. Community and neighborhood support for the Common has particular support and opportunities for local fundraising are also good.

Possible funding sources for improvements, listed above, include:

- ◆ MDOC Land & Water Conservation Fund (LWCF) (up to \$25,000)
- ◆ CDBG/DECD funds
- ◆ TIF/City funds
- ◆ Local/private funding
- ◆ MFS Project Canopy funds

APPENDIX

- A. Cost Estimates Tables
- B. Discussion on the Playground Relocation
- C. Gardiner Police Department Memorandum (regarding security & vandalism)
- D. Public workshop questionnaire results