



Institute Park Master Plan

December 2007

City of Worcester
Department of Public Works and Parks
Parks, Recreation, and Cemetery Division
50 Skyline Drive
Worcester MA 01605-2898

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The City of Worcester would like to acknowledge the following:

- Friends of Institute Park, Inc. (FIP) for its perseverance in ensuring that Institute Park's Master Plan becomes a reality
- WPI for their strong support in funding a portion of the Institute Park Master Plan
- Worcester Fire Fighters Memorial, Inc. (WFFM, Inc.)
- The Massachusetts Symphony Orchestra, Inc. (MSO) which for nearly six decades has made and continues to make the park a destination point for the City of Worcester
- The Worcester Parks, Recreation and Cemetery Department for its unalloyed support for this project
- Residents for your participation in the community meetings. Your recommendations helped drive the Master Plan.

Introduction

Institute Park is a community resource and a true jewel to the city of Worcester. It is surrounded by a vibrant mix of residential, institutional, and commercial properties. The Park's history as the headwaters of the Blackstone River Corridor, as well as its use for summer concerts and other civic gatherings has allowed thousands of residents from Worcester over the years to benefit from the Park's tremendous natural attributes. The principal objective for the master plan is to establish a strategy that will serve as a catalyst for making long-awaited improvements to what is perhaps Worcester's finest urban park.

The historic connections between WPI and Institute Park date back to the late 1800's when Dr. Kinnicutt, a member of the faculty at WPI inspired Stephen Salisbury III, an important community benefactor of WPI's campus, with a grand vision for a boulevard system that would encircle the City of Worcester and connect a network of public parks. Salisbury gave the city's parks commission 17 acres of land that were part of his family's farm. This new park, an important part of the overall open space network for Worcester, was envisioned by Salisbury as an asset that would make lasting contributions to Worcester.

Over the years since the creation of Institute Park, thousands of city residents have enjoyed the park for its visual beauty, programmed activities and events, and as an outdoor laboratory for various engineering training exercises. The Park's neighbors have always been respectful of the fact that Institute Park is a resource of the City's parks system and have taken great care to assure that the passive enjoyment of this resource is balanced with the scheduled program uses of the park.

Neighbors of the park including members of Friends of Institute Park, Inc. (FIP), a non-profit organization established to benefit and improve Institute Park, and the WPI community have accepted the responsibility to work with the City to make sure Institute Park is a safe and well cared for resource. This master plan is one example of the desire to support the stewardship of Institute Park.



Existing site map of Institute Park

Institute Park has the opportunity to be one of the most utilized parks in the City of Worcester. It will become the destination point for countless visitors from Worcester and surrounding cities. Shepley Bulfinch has teamed with the City of Worcester, FIP, WPI, and other community stakeholders to develop a vision for the master plan of Institute Park that will enhance the Park's physical characteristics. The proposed master plan will not radically alter the program elements of the park. Instead it will improve physical characteristics, enhance resources, and maximize the public benefit.

Community Involvement

The community has played a large role throughout the master planning process. A series of five public hearings were held with the community to solicit input on ideas and discuss potential impacts. The community's contribution proved to be a valuable asset to the planning team in the development and assessment of alternative program elements. Through the participation of the community, the planning team was able to fully understand their concerns of Institute Park and were able to engage them into developing program strategies.

Public Hearing #1

The master plan kicked off with public hearing #1 on February 12, 2004. It was designed to educate the public about the planning process for the development of the Master Plan. The team wanted to hear the community's thoughts about the opportunities and constraints that they saw for Institute Park. The overall goal of PH #1 was for the planning team to identify the public's concerns on visible issues that were in need of attention.

Public Hearing #2

Public Hearing #2 was held on March 11, 2004. After PH#1, the planning team reviewed recurring issues and concluded that the community focused on three main principles. The principles are as follows:

1. Quiet place for passive recreation
2. Health of the pond
3. History of the park

The three principles prompted initiatives for the development of conceptual planning options that would guide the development of alternatives for public hearing #3.

Public Hearing #3

Public Hearing #3 was held on October 13, 2004. The meeting was designed to review the information from the prior two meetings, and review the proposed program elements. The planning team summarized a number of planning goals that were established from the first two public hearings. The planning team explored a range of program elements and the locations for those elements within the three programs: Urban Park, Wetland Sanctuary, and Recreational Park. Through the assessment of planning alternatives, the planning team gained knowledge of what the public liked and disliked and what should be prioritized to enhance the park.



Salisbury Pond



Sneiderman Pavilion



Historical Bridge and Norse Bell Tower



Large Concert

Public Hearing #4

Public Hearing #4 was held on December 14, 2004. The planning team incorporated the feedback from Public Hearing #3 into the new Draft Master Plan for the community to comment on.

Public Hearing #5

Public Hearing #5 was held on September 10, 2007. The city of Worcester invited members from the surrounding community to participate and voice their concerns. The City of Worcester Parks, Recreation, and Cemetery Division identified the logistics of why the project went on hold. It was important to stress that they along with WPI, MSO, and Friends of Institute Park are committed to the success and implementation of the Institute Park Master Plan. Shepley Bulfinch updated the community on the process of the Master Plan, history of Institute Park, existing conditions, opportunities within the park, and the proposed master plan. The areas that the community identified as areas of concern are as follows:

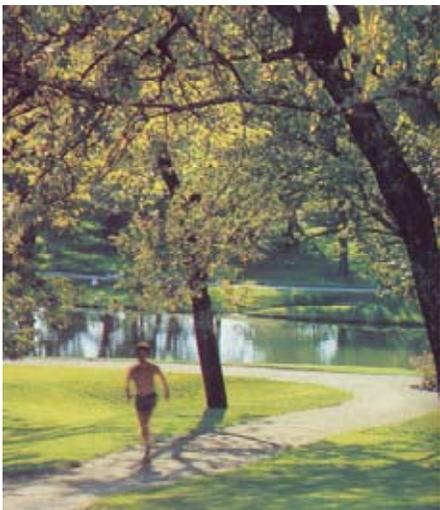
- A circulation path that encompasses the entire pond is desirable
- Tennis courts need to be relocated somewhere other than along Salisbury Street
- The Gazebo near Salisbury Estates is used frequently and reinforces the need to build a new gazebo structure
- Dredging of pond should be a high priority
- Community would rather see a plan that is realistic and can be implemented and maintained in the near future



Salisbury Pond view from Outlet



Community Resource



Low Maintenance Landscaping



Concerts at Shell

Goals

Institute Park planning goals will guide the city in implementing the proposed alternatives into a successful park that will continue to be a great asset to the city of Worcester. A series of public hearings were conducted to engage the community from the beginning of the planning process. The planning team was able to interpret the community's wants and needs into the goals that drove the planning process.

The process that the planning team undertook is as follows:

- Project Team Meeting
- Public Hearing #1
- Public Hearing #2
- Public Hearing #3
- Public Hearing #4
- Public Hearing #5
- Public Hearing with City of Worcester Parks and Recreation Commission

The team agreed that the master plan will:

1. Identify physical improvements to enhance Institute Park as a community resource
2. Develop pedestrian circulation strategies that connect and link the surrounding community to the park
3. Recognize the historic importance of the park and its role in the Blackstone River Corridor
4. Protect natural areas that support unique wildlife population
5. Provide recommendations that can enhance cultural opportunities and economic and cultural development in Worcester
6. Identify landscape design concepts that don't require complex and/or costly maintenance procedures



Original farmland and pasture



Norse Tower



12 foot wide Foot Bridge to Island in Salisbury Pond



Tremont Column

History

When Stephen Salisbury III donated the land for Institute Park in 1887, he had a specific idea for the usage of the park. It was his intention to create an area that could serve as an adjunct to a campus to the students of the Worcester Free Institute of Industrial Science, known today as Worcester Polytechnic Institute (WPI), as well as a public park for all citizens of Worcester. Given as a gift to the city, there was no cost for purchase of the land and originally there was little cost on maintenance of the park as well. This was due to the fact that Mr. Salisbury held it as a stipulation that the city could have the land as long as he could supervise the physical changes and work done in the park. He undertook the financing of the creation of many of the structures, and limited the implementation of flowers and shrubbery to allow the most open space on which park visitors could roam. All this was done at his own expense. Repair and upkeep of the park was always necessary and Mr. Salisbury was always willing to fund such activities. Upon Mr. Salisbury's death in 1905, full maintenance and upkeep of the land was passed to city's parks commission.

The park began as a tract of 18 acres that had once been farmland and pasture. Salisbury took it upon himself to pay for the grading of the land and the construction of many paths that led to every corner of the park. Once completed, many structures were erected on the site. Among these were a boathouse, a tower, a bandstand, a bridge to one of the islands in Salisbury Pond, four gazebos, and Tremont Columns all financed by Mr. Salisbury. Of these, only three gazebos and both Tremont Columns still remain. In 1912, the park grew to a size of about 25 acres when the Worcester Art Museum donated a piece of land on the Grove Street side of Salisbury Pond. In 1964, most of that addition was given away to become the Grove Street Fire Department Headquarters. The rest of the addition is now residential area.

In 1892, Stephen Salisbury III oversaw construction of the Norse Tower. It was almost an exact replica of the Old Stone Windmill in Newport, Rhode Island. The Institute Park tower stood 30 feet high and 23 feet in diameter. The tower was only open for 15 years until a fence was built around it due to its deteriorating condition. It reopened in 1929 after the top 18 feet were torn down and reconstructed, but it was only able to stay open for 10 years because it once again became a hazard to the community.

In 1892, a 127 foot long 12 foot wide bridge was put in the park under direction of Stephen Salisbury III. The bridge connected the park to the island located in Salisbury Pond. The bridge stood there for 30 years until fire destroyed it in 1922.

In 1895, Salisbury bought two Doric Columns from Boston's Tremont House during deconstruction and had them shipped to Worcester. He positioned the two granite columns at the two opposite boundaries of the park, at the corner of Salisbury and Humbolt and along Park Ave. Both still remain in their historical locations.

In 1954, the causeway at Grove Street was constructed. That action made it necessary to drain Salisbury Pond for four months. At that time, while the pond was drained, the bottom was cleaned of all the debris and garbage that had accumulated in the pond over the years.

In 1970, work began to try and clean up Salisbury Pond. Causes for pollution included: drainage from I-190, drainage from upstream industrial sites, occasional overflow of Worcester's sanitary sewer system, and the increased presence of weeds and algae in the pond.

WPI students started the process by finding the sources of pollution. In 1972, the Salisbury Pond Task Force was created. They criticized the city government for not taking action, but the Task Force could not make a significant change. A group of WPI students joined the effort again in 1973, providing a detailed analysis of the condition of the pond and making recommendations that would improve the quality. Progress began in 1974 when the city enlisted the help of a Navy team to dredge the pond and get rid of polluted sediment in the pond bottom. The team was successful in removing 5000 cubic yards of sediment. However, another 15,000 cubic yards would need to be removed in order for the dredging to be effective. Without further dredging, the pond reverted back to its polluted condition. Significant progress has not been made since that time.

In 1951, Worcester residents Harry and Madelyn Levenson founded a concert series in Worcester's Institute Park that continues to this day and is enjoyed by thousands of attendees each year. Performed by the Massachusetts Symphony Orchestra (and predecessor ensembles), the concerts have been enjoyed by well over a million spectators and have become a summertime institution in Worcester. Inaugurated in 1951, the concerts' initial sponsor was Wyman-Gordon Co. which in 1951 built the former wooden bandstand in the park (the bandstand was taken down in 1989 when the current structure was built). Originally entitled the Worcester Industrial Pops Concerts, the weekly programs (held primarily in July) were designed for the musical entertainment of area residents, particularly employees of many of the largest manufacturers in Worcester. In 1952, four leading Worcester companies at that time (Heald Machine Company, Morgan Construction Company, Norton Company, along with initial sponsor Wyman-Gordon Co.) expanded the concert series. The inaugural concert, held in September, 1951, attracted over 3,000 people and was deemed a huge success. Over the years, the highly popular concerts series has entertained three generations of Worcester-area families to the joys of admission-free outdoor symphonic performances, all under the stars in Institute Park.

In 1989, the first phase of a new bandstand was built for summer concerts held in Institute Park. The project began as a gift of \$100,000 by Nathan Sneiderman, a Worcester resident and president of Bigelow Waste Co. The plans called for three phases of construction, including a backstage area with dressing rooms and rest rooms and an acoustically designed roof and state-of-the-art light and sound system. To date, the last two phases remain uncompleted.



Band Stand



Phase One: Sneiderman Pavilion

Existing Conditions

Land Use

Institute Park is located in a vibrant setting. It's central location positions itself in the middle of the Salisbury District. It is minutes from Main Street and downtown Worcester and is surrounded by a mix of neighborhood uses, including residential, institutional, civic and urban neighborhoods. The diverse neighborhoods surrounding the park provide the opportunity to respond to the different land uses by use of program elements.

Institute Park is surrounded on all sides by major streets, which reinforce the edges of the park. Salisbury Street lines the southern edge of the park. The intersection of Salisbury Street and Park Ave. is one of the busiest in the city. The corner of Salisbury Street and Humbolt Ave. is the entry point from downtown Worcester into Institute Park. An institutional zone borders Salisbury Street allowing direct access from churches, WPI, the American Antiquarian Society, and other institutions into the park.

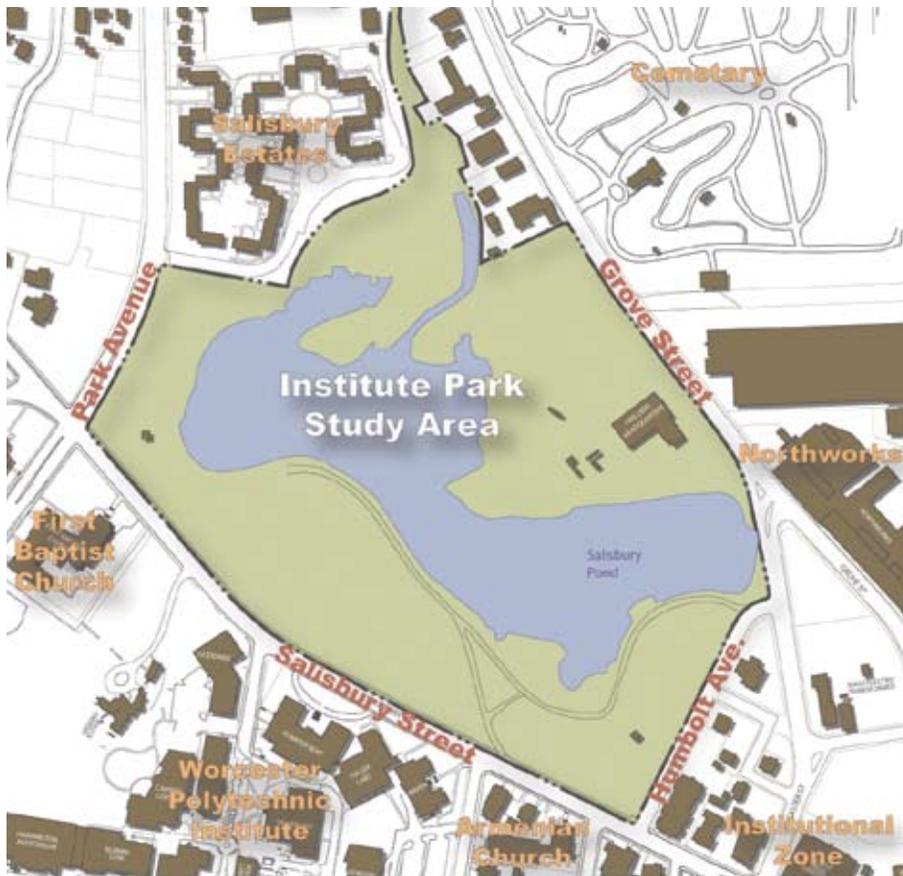


Context Map - Regional Scale

Worcester Polytechnic Institute is located south of Salisbury Street directly across from the park. WPI also owns and operates Salisbury Estates, a garden apartment community located north of Institute Park. Institute Park connects Salisbury Estates and WPI. Traces of the residents' movement between the two sites are evident in the park by the worn pathways. Direct view corridors and walking paths between WPI and the park enhance the relationship between these two major assets in Worcester.

Residential zones line the northwest side of Institute Park. Most of the residential zones are single family and multifamily homes. East of the Park is Humbolt Ave, which is lined with a prominent apartment building and WPI fraternity houses. Local residents use the park on a daily basis to walk, picnic, birdwatch, and play tennis.

A cemetery and the Northworks Building line Grove Street. The cemetery is used on a daily basis by community residents. It is a beautiful cemetery where many local families will go to walk and bike. A connection between Institute Park and the cemetery would be a valuable asset that would activate both programs. This allows for a mix of uses north of the park. South of Grove Street within the park boundary is the Fire Department Headquarters and this area north of the pond has been proposed as a site for a Memorial.





Tree Coverage

Tree Coverage

The tree coverage in Institute Park is very dense along the northern undefined edge of Salisbury Pond. Clusters of trees provide shade around the pond. A certified arborist will need to be brought in to determine which trees need to be taken down due to their condition. The goal is to save as many trees as possible. The only trees that will be taken down are those that are a threat to the park and community. The large trees provide aesthetic quality to Institute Park. The trees provide picturesque views from various points in and around the park. Several trees will need to be removed or limbed up to accommodate the larger audience area afforded by building the new concert shell in the southeast corner of the Park.



Pedestrian Circulation

Pedestrian Circulation

The pedestrian circulation is predominately along the south side of Salisbury Pond. The East-West movement is on a narrow sidewalk along Salisbury Street and on a worn path along the pond's hard edge. The sidewalk along Salisbury St. is very narrow and is not considered to be pedestrian friendly. The worn paths along the pond's edge is successful in that it begins to show traces of where the main circulation occurs, however it is not handicapped accessible. The most dominant North-South movement is from the main sidewalk of WPI into the park. Although there is no continuous sidewalk, the axis through the park is interpreted by the pedestrians. One is unable to walk around the pond due to the limitations of the surrounding context; therefore unable to cross over or around the pond without driving or walking along Grove Street and then onto Humbolt Ave.



View Corridors

View Corridors

View corridors allow distinct views of the park. Most of the dominant views are taken at intersections of different points of access into the park. The views from the intersection of Humbolt Ave. and Salisbury St., Park Ave. and Salisbury St., and Park Ave and Salisbury Estates mark the gateway into the park along Salisbury Street. Additional important views are along the edges of the park, including the intersection of Boynton St. and Salisbury St. It is the main entrance into and out of WPI's campus that provides the most prominent view into the park. Another major view from WPI's campus is the major view corridor from the fountain on West St. that is on direct axis with the park's historical overlook. The remaining views are from within the park along the pond's edge looking out across Salisbury Pond providing glimpses of natural wildlife.

Existing Program

Institute Park is a natural park nestled in the city of Worcester marked with both informal and formal programmatic elements. Salisbury Pond is the most dominant feature in the park. It is picturesque respite from the urban environment that surrounds the park. The intention of the pond was to have two separate edges, the hard edge and the soft edge. The park has many types of programmatic spaces throughout.

The pond is defined as a hard edge with granite stone lining the pond. However due to strain and lack of upkeep in the park, the edge is overgrown to the point where one doesn't experience the hard edge. Trash lines the overgrown vegetation and many of the granite stones have broken and fallen into the pond. The soft edge of the pond is defined by the natural edge of the pond and located along the northern edge. The soft edge has also become overgrown with vegetation and cluttered with garbage. A designated wetland is located along the northwestern edge of the pond. The pond has large amounts of sediment build up, containing some areas that only have three to six inches of water. To control this, the City of Worcester Department of Public Works and Parks, Parks, Recreation, and Cemetery Division has submitted and completed a Notice of Intent (NOI) for the Salisbury Pond Water Quality Improvements Project. To date, the installation of two of the five particle separators (2A and 2B) have been completed.

NOS 2A and 2B: The Salisbury Street particle separators treat flow from the existing 22-inch by 33-inch brick egg-shaped drain in Salisbury Street and are located near the sidewalk of Salisbury Street. A 6-foot diameter precast manhole was installed over the existing 22-inch by 33-inch drain with a weir and two connecting 18-inch RC pipes to divert flow into the particle separators. The treated runoff will be diverted back into the brick egg-shaped drain and discharged at the existing drain outfall.

The gateways into the park are currently located at the major intersections of Humbolt Ave. and Salisbury St., Park Ave. and Salisbury St., and Boynton St. and Salisbury St. Large rocks mark the entrance points at both Humbolt Ave and Boynton St. intersections. The rocks traditionally are painted throughout WPI's calendar year by the different fraternity groups on campus. Additionally, signage is located throughout the park on information kiosks.

The natural topography of the landscape allows the user to define the space to his or her needs. The park is predominately used for passive recreation. Three tennis courts are located near the edge of the park along Salisbury St. The courts are in need of repair and should be relocated to another area of the park. The community stressed that the courts are used on a daily basis and that they should be located within close proximity to parking.

Gazebos and park benches are informally located throughout the park. Three of the original gazebos that Salisbury erected still remain today. They are deteriorating and are often used by the homeless for shelter. The park benches are arranged in a disorganized fashion and were historically



Gateway from Boynton St. and Salisbury St.



Kiosk along Grove St.



Overgrown Hard Edge



Northern Soft Edge and Sediment Build Up



Benches throughout the Park

positioned to face the direction of the old band stand. Many people in the community enjoy the formalized seating to relax, enjoy a picnic, people watch, etc. Although deteriorating, they are still highly used throughout the park on any given day. The existing restrooms are located at the edge of the park along Salisbury St. They are very old and are used infrequently.

The existing Sneiderman Pavilion Phase One was built in 1989. It is a fixed element that brings people in from the community for concerts, movies, and community events that are held primarily during the summer months. Some of these events have accommodated thousands of spectators. The existing structure is not suitable for the type of events that are preformed or displayed here. There is a lack of sufficient support in terms of lighting, protection from the elements (Pavilion has no roof), acoustics, and storage to accommodate the need. The northern side of the pond borders Grove St.



Sneiderman Pavilion

The O'Connell Athletic Field borders the northern side of the pond along Grove St. The fields are used for high school, recreational, and community football, as well as for youth and adult leagues. This facility is in desperate need of renovations and improvements. The sports turf, fencing, equipment, signage and other amenities should be updated to meet current DPW and Parks construction standards.

The Fire Department is located along Grove St. It is the only non-park related program element located in the park.



O'Connell Athletic Field



O'Connell Field Entry and Signage

Program Recommendations

Over the course of the master plan process for Institute Park, the planning team assessed future alternatives for the three different program zones, including urban park, wildlife sanctuary, and recreational park. The more natural area north of the pond would be programmed as the wildlife sanctuary to protect the natural wetlands. The area northeast of the pond would be programmed as Recreational Park and the area south of the pond as the Urban Park due to its formality. Throughout the public meetings, the community was asked to respond to different programmatic elements that would be incorporated into the three different program zones. For each program element the planning team identified the specific program pieces that would fit into the program and appeal to the community. The conclusions of program elements are as follows:

Urban Park

The Urban Park is located South of Salisbury Pond along the hard edge of the pond. It directly responds to the surrounding context by reacting to the urban edge of WPI and the wetland. It is more formalized with walking paths and passive recreation. The goal was to make sure that it was not over-programmed. The planning team recommends the following program elements to enhance the urban park:

- Seating areas including benches throughout park and along pond edge
- walking paths
- new concert shell
- picnic pavilion
- concession building to include area for food preparation, restrooms, and ticket sales
- information kiosks
- New Sneiderman Pavilion to be located at historical overlook
- relocation of tennis courts
- wood guardrails
- removal and relocation of rocks

Wetland Sanctuary

The wildlife sanctuary is located Northwest of Salisbury Pond. This zone will have minimum pedestrian traffic to protect the wildlife and wetlands. The program elements allow one to observe and appreciate the wildlife in a subdued setting. The planning team recommends the following program elements to enhance the wildlife sanctuary:

- Boardwalks
- aeration fountain
- sediment control system to keep pond healthy
- water/wetland garden
- cleansing gardens



Urban Park



Wetland Sanctuary

Recreational Park

Recreational Park is located North of Salisbury Pond. The O'Connell Recreation Field is a rectangular field that is located along Grove St. Updated equipment and a gate that can be locked to keep the field secure during off-peak hours is recommended. The Fire Station is currently located in this area of the park where there is also space available for a firefighters memorial. A possible Bridge (long range program element) spanning across Salisbury Pond would activate the space of the entire park, providing fluid movement to different program elements. Program elements are as follows:

- Recreational Field - Upgrade required
- Firefighter Memorial - Possible Long-term planning element
- Memorial Bridge - Possible Long-term planning element



Recreational Park



Water Garden



Proposed Aeration Fountain



Proposed Defined Pond Edge

Final Master Plan

The planning team is defining the environment to initiate the transformation of the existing park into a signature park that will be healthy and attractive and continue to be and grow ever more as a destination for visitors from across the state and beyond.

Pond

There is an overwhelming amount of sediment buildup in Salisbury Pond. In some areas of the pond there is only 3-6 inches of water. The first recommendation is that Worcester treat the problem that is causing the buildup before dredging the pond. Camp Dresser & McKee Inc. (Engineer of record) is proposing a planted sediment forebay for the main inlet, with a channel through the wetlands. The forebay will have rock check dams within it for the sediment removal. The rock check dams will be placed within a roughly 25,000 sq.ft. area that will disturb less than 5,000 square feet of the wetlands downstream of the forebay. The particle separators will be located at the following locations: one along Park Ave, 2 along Salisbury St. and two along Boynton St. The installation of the particle separators and the construction of the sediment forebay will decrease the total sediment load discharged to Salisbury Pond and will have a long-term benefit.

An aeration fountain is needed to help aerate the pond. The fountain will be an in-pond aerator that helps reduce odor problems by adding oxygen to the water. It will also help reduce phosphorus cycling in the pond.

The hard edge of the pond needs to be cleaned up. The evasive plant species needs to be completely removed so that they don't overtake the entire pond. The large granite stone that surrounds the pond needs to be better defined.

Tree Coverage

The planning team determined that the existing tree coverage should not be disrupted. However there are many trees that are in poor condition and need to be removed for safety. A arborist will be brought in to determine which trees should be taken down. To define the edge of the park, trees will line the outer edge of the park at approximately 30' O.C. This will make the edge more pedestrian friendly by providing a buffer between the park and the busy streets.

Circulation Patterns

A new circulation system will be incorporated into the recommended master plan. The sidewalk located around the edge of the park will be replaced with a six foot sidewalk to accommodate pedestrians. The interior sidewalk treatment will integrate the natural terrain of the park and will be of high aesthetic quality. All future sidewalk treatment will be handicap accessible. The pathway will engage the pond and will provide destination points that mark strategic views into the park. The circulation patterns provide access to the surrounding context of the park. All the pathways and key entry points are to be lined with light fixtures to accommodate security in the park.

Parking

The planning team has determined that the existing on-street parking is sufficient for the park. Most people who use the park on a daily basis are area residents who walk. There is on-street parking along Humbolt Ave. to accommodate other visitors. During high attendance concerts, additional security will be provided to help guide the public on finding parking. In the long-term Master Plan a small number of parking spaces will be incorporated to accommodate the proposed boat launch and parking for tennis courts.

Gateways/Signage

The new Gateway is proposed for the intersection of Boynton Ave. and Salisbury St. The proposed solution for the Draft Master Plan is to move the Tremont Columns from their existing location and move them to the new Gateway entrance. In addition to defining the main entry to Institute Park, together the columns will highlight their historical significance. The gateway will provide views into the park that will encompass the pond, concessions, concert shell and many other programmatic elements. New signage will be incorporated throughout the park. The Master Plan will implement the new Worcester PR&C standard guidelines for all signage. The signage will include kiosks for bike routes, bus routes, identifying programmatic elements throughout the park, and a historical sequence of the significance of Institute Park.



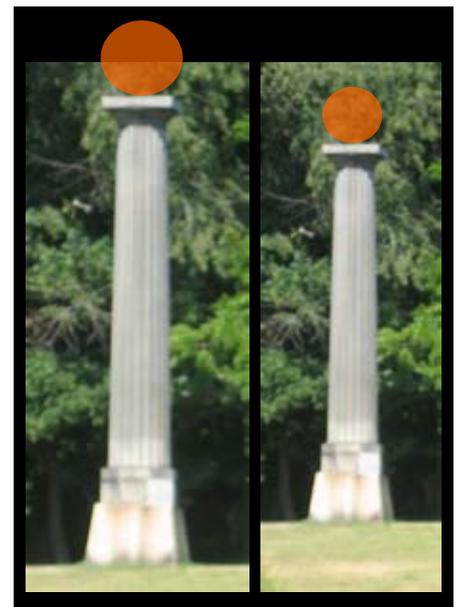
Proposed Gateway along Salisbury St.



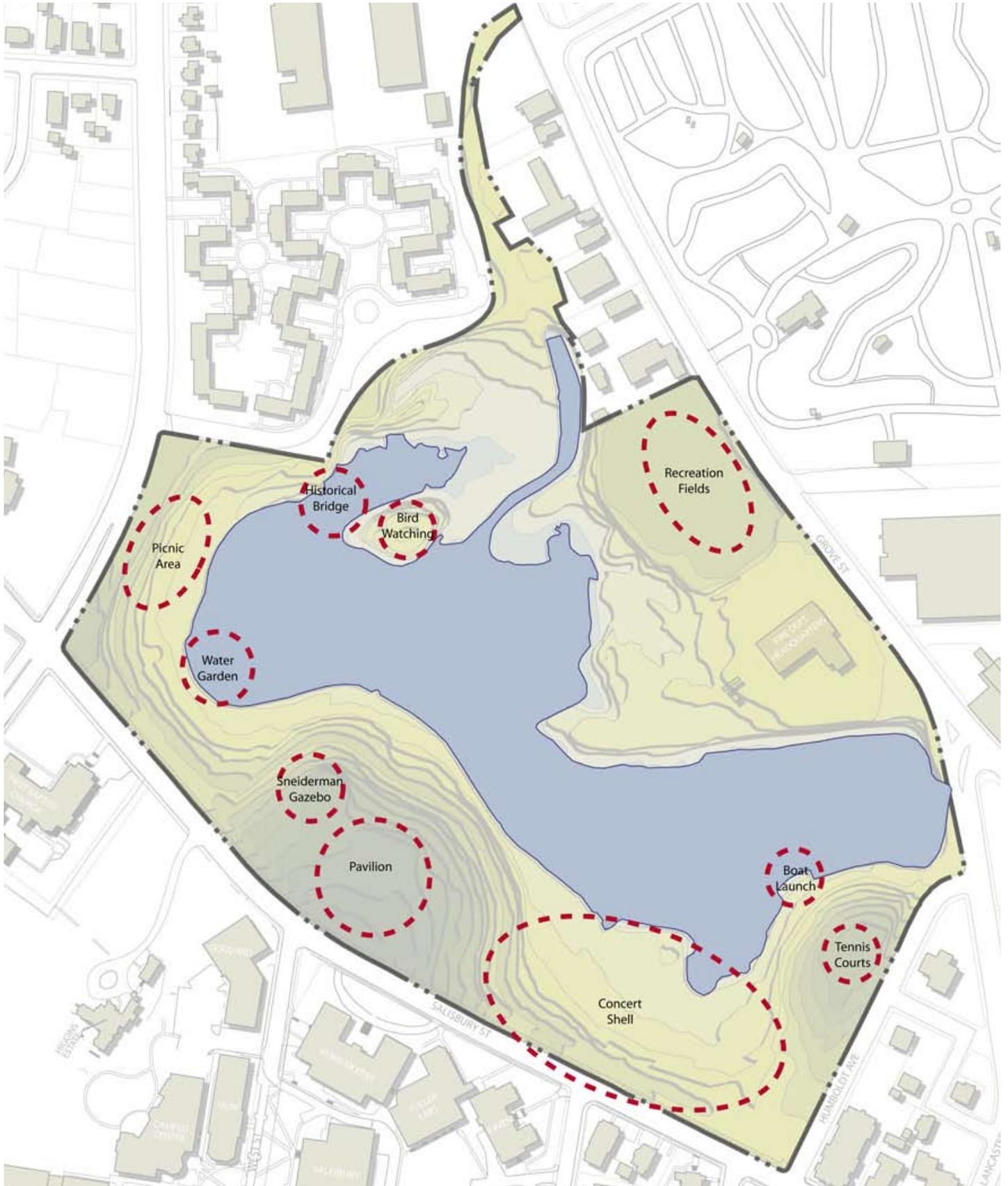
Pathways



Worcester PR&C standard Signage



Proposed Gateway



Proposed Program Elements

Urban Park

The Urban Park is more formal and relates directly with the surrounding context. Key program elements will activate the park. The existing Sneiderman Pavilion is not suitable for the type of events that are preformed nor is its current location optimal. A new concert shell will be built to replace the existing pavilion. The new concert shell will be built with amenities such as a roof, artists' dressing rooms, and state of the art sound and lighting systems. The park will need to update the electrical system and other data transmission lines for high definition usage from the stage. The shell will be located near the south-easterly corner of the park adjacent to Humbolt Ave. This will allow for vehicular access to the concert shell's back stage, easing load-in and load-out, as well as taking advantage of the full expanse of the Salisbury St. side of the park for larger scale concerts and other civic events. The concert shell will be viewed from all sides, it will be important that each facade acts as a front in terms of scale and aesthetics. It will need to have a direct relationship with the surrounding context with both formal and informal connections. The new concert shell will draw thousands from all across the state and beyond. It will be located so that it can best accommodate an augmented number of people for such concerts. The space will allow for other users to rent the concert shell and become a resource for everyone in the community.

A new concession/pavilion will be located near Salisbury Street where the current bathhouse is located. The pavilion will accommodate new restrooms, food concession stand, and information and ticket kiosks. The information kiosk will help in disclosing the history of the park. Other kiosks will be placed throughout the park to allow the community to learn about the history of Institute Park. These kiosks can educate children and adults about the rich history and wildlife in the park.

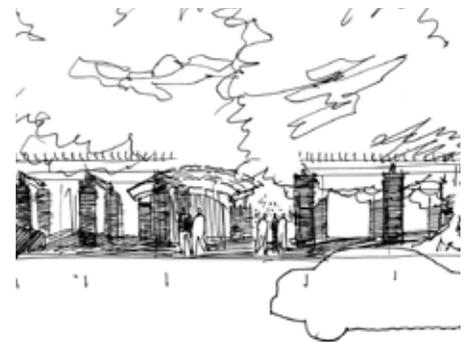
The Sneiderman family has come to an agreement that if the pavilion no longer serves as the primary location for concerts, then as a tribute to Mr. Sneiderman's original generosity, a Sneiderman Gazebo will be built on the site of the historical overlook. It will be located on axis with the main artery of WPI. The Sneiderman Gazebo will provide a place in the park that can be used as a small venue for solo performances, poetry readings, etc., and can be used by WPI as a place where professors can hold informal outdoor lectures.

The eastern edge of the park along Humbolt Ave. will be the more active area in the park. The three tennis courts will be relocated from Salisbury St. to Humbolt Ave and a small area for parking to accommodate both the proposed boat launch and tennis courts will be in this location.

The large rocks on site marking the intersection of Boynton Street and Humboldt Avenue with Salisbury Street may be subject to relocation, pending a dialogue between WPI and its fraternity house residents. Finally, a secure boundary defining perimeter circulation will be provided by wood guardrails and street trees.



New Concert Shell



Concert Shell from Humbolt Ave.



Precedent - Concessions/Pavilion with Signage



Precedent - Sneiderman Pavilion



Precedent - Nature Bridge



Precedent - Bird Blinds



New Recreational Field

Wetland Sanctuary

The circulation system will allow one to move through the different zones by means of bridges. A nature bridge is to be located where the old historic bridge once stood connecting the urban park to the wetland sanctuary. Once one crosses the bridge one is located on a small island surrounded by wetlands. This is a destination point and does not allow access through the wetlands. This destination point would allow one to view the wildlife without disrupting it. To do this bird blinds will be placed throughout the island. The planning team is aware and is investigating the safety and vandalism concerns associated with this programmatic element. The team is also currently investigating the topography and the surrounding land use to create a pathway that would allow one to circulate the pond from the Northwest corner of the wetlands.

Recreational Park

Recreational Park is accessed along Grove St. It is directly across the street from the Rural Cemetery where people walk and bike, making it a natural destination point for the community. The rectangular field will remain in its current location but will be updated with new equipment including goal posts, soccer goals, etc. The new field will become an asset to the city. New entry gate, signage, and fencing will be incorporated into the revitalization effort of the field. The signage will comply with PR&C standard guidelines. The new entry/fence will provide a safe location for children and adults to play recreational sports.

There is space in the recreational park for the firefighters memorial that has been discussed. In the case that a memorial is developed, a possible bridge spanning the narrow section of the Pond would be considered as an additional long term Master Plan item.



Proposed Master Plan

Phasing

Improvements to the park need to be carefully targeted to address the Park's most pressing needs while ensuring the Park's main goals. This section of the document will guide future projects and assess the importance of the projects to enhance the Park to its full potential while taking all factors into consideration. The different programmatic elements can be identified as the following phases. The order of the phases is yet to be determined but will be guided by funding and the constraints there to. Estimates are based on current (2007) dollar values and current known site conditions, which can be subjected to change as each phase program is developed. The total project cost is between 22.3 and 31.3 Million.

Phase: Upgrade Park Signage and Furnishings
(150K - 200K)

Phase: Pond Dredging & Water Quality Improvements
(5.5 - 6.0 Million)

Phase: Pond Edge Granite Restoration and Cleanup
(750K - 800K)

Phase: Upgrade Internal Circulation Paths
(150K - 200K)

Phase: Relocate Tennis Courts and New Boat Launch
(450K - 500K)

Phase : Upgrade O'Connell Field
(600K - 1.5 Million)

Phase : New Concert Shell (4 - 8 Million)
Support Space (1- 2 Million)
Pavilion (500K - 1 Million)
Sneiderman Gazebo (250 - 500 K)
Site Work (500K - 1 Million)

Phase: Natural Bridge and Bird Blinds
(300K - 350K)

Phase: Upgrade Perimeter Paths and Define Park Boundary
(650K - 725K)

Phase: Possible Memorial & Bridge
(3.5 - 5 Million) Funding to be raised by others

WPI, MSO, FIP, WFFM, Inc., and other neighborhood stake holders are working with the City of Worcester to help move the phases forward. Each is dedicated in making the Master Plan a reality that will serve the needs and desires of the city and its residents.

Appendix

Image: Salisbury Pond - View from Outlet

Diagram: Institute Park Master Plan

Image: Tremont Column

Rendering: Gateway along Salisbury Street

Image: Massachusetts Symphony Orchestra
Summer Concert at Institute Park

Rendering: Design for New Concert Shell

Image: Axis from WPI Fountain to Institute Park Overlook

Rendering: Design for Relocated Sneiderman Pavilion

Rendering: Concert Shell from Humboldt Ave.

Image: Hatch Shell Superimposed on Institute Park

Salisbury Pond - View from Outlet



Institute Park Master Plan



Tremont Column



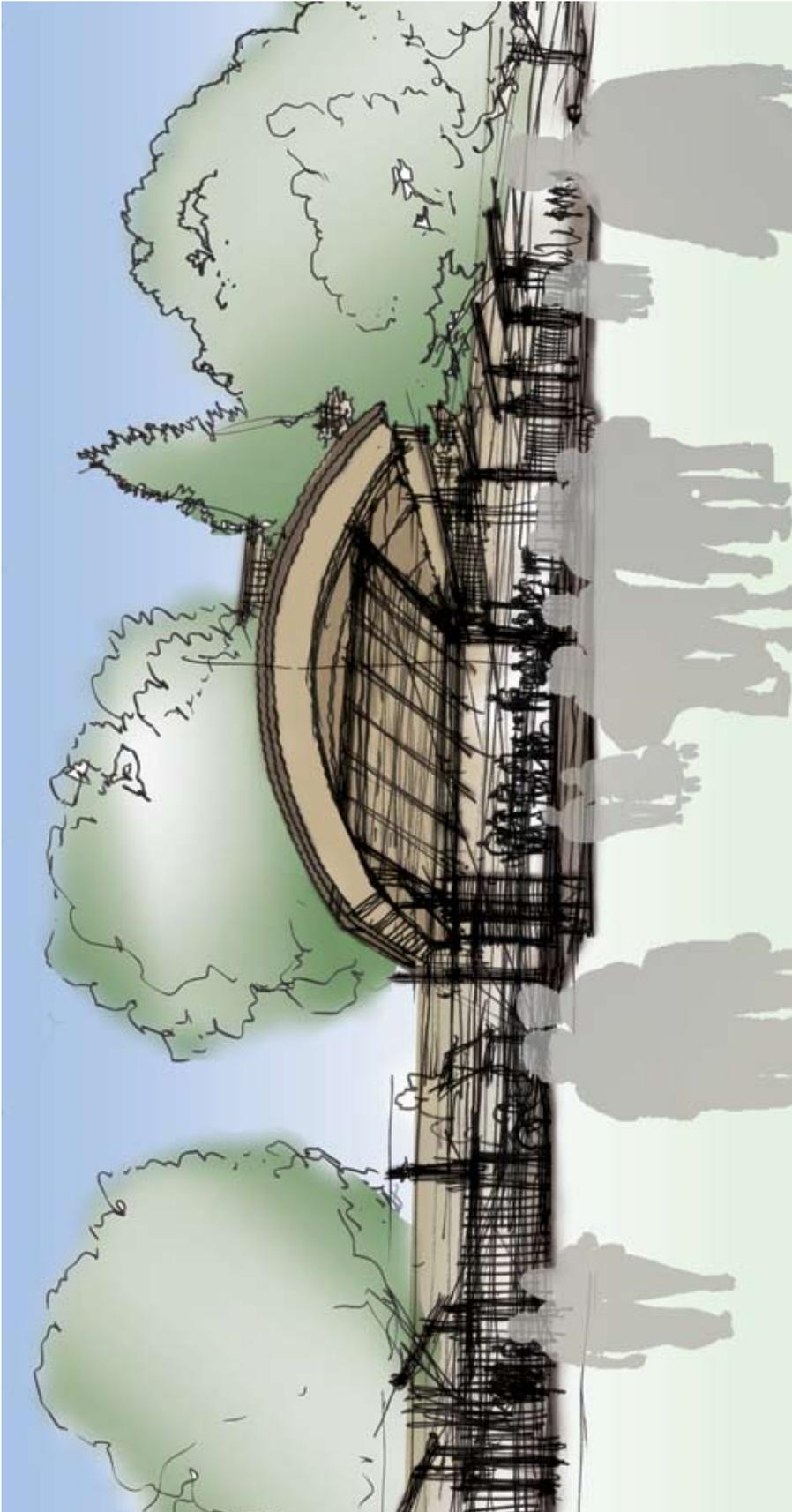
Gateway along Salisbury Street



Massachusetts Symphony Orchestra Summer Concert at Institute Park



Design for New Concert Shell



Axis from WPI fountain to Institute Park Overlook



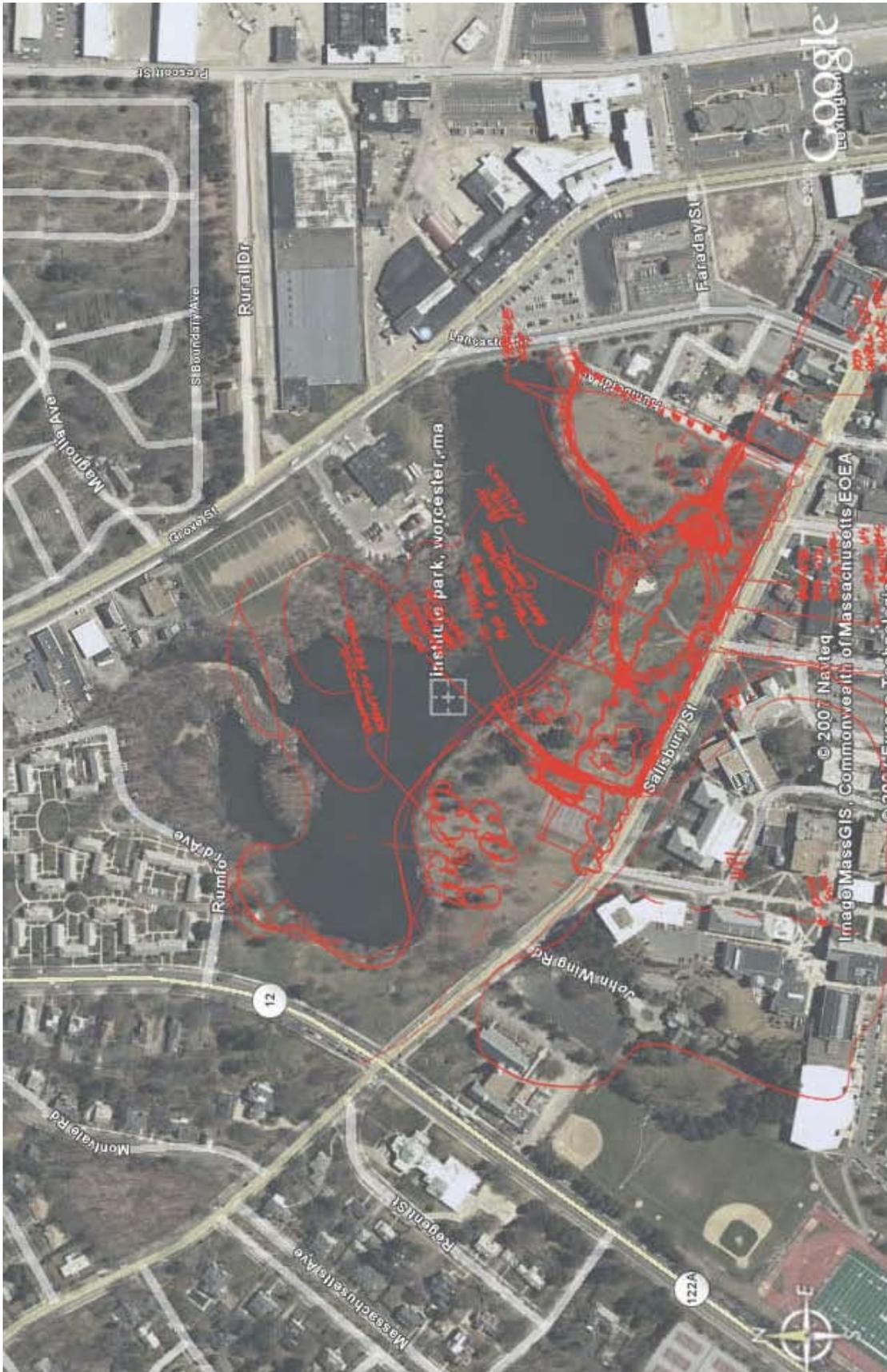
Design for Relocated Sneiderman Pavilion



Concert Shell from Humbolt Ave.



Hatch Shell Superimposed on Institute Park



Master Plan Approved by
**Worcester Parks and
Recreation Commission**

September 20, 2007

Master Plan Approved by
Worcester City Council

December 11, 2007