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INTRODUCTION AND OVERVIEW

Project Introduction

The Ithaca Commons is the economic and social heart of Ithaca’s downtown. It provides citizens of the City and the region an authentic urban retail experience, significantly-scaled public events and festivals, and, as a pedestrian mall closed to vehicles, a green oasis at the core of the City. The dedication plaque in the center of the Commons identifies this layering of functions: “The Ithaca Commons Dedicated to the Citizens of Ithaca as a Public Gathering Place, A Commercial Center And A Community Focal Point.”

Nearly forty years have passed since its opening and the Commons is showing significant signs of wear. A planning process undertaken by the City in 1999 included extensive public outreach to evaluate options for the future of this prized civic space and to identify a series of strategic improvements. Although some of those improvements were implemented, many have acknowledged that the physical environment of the Commons does not fully realize its potential as the heart of the Community. In 2008, a group of twenty-five staff from various departments, including Building, Engineering, Water and Sewer, Streets and Facilities, Clerk, Planning, Fire, and Police held a series of meetings to discuss the present and future needs of the Commons. This group identified the principal concerns as: numerous injuries that had occurred as a result of extensive surface decomposition, aging utilities in need of replacement, lack of fire prevention and response infrastructure, and emergency access issues. All staff involved determined these needs to be both extensive and imminent.

This Executive Summary provides an overview of a Preliminary Design process initiated by the City working with a consultant team led by Sasaki Associates, and guided by a Council-appointed Client Committee representing various City departments, business owners, residents and organizations. This process commenced in July 2009 and concluded with Common Council approval of the Preliminary Design in April 2010.

Client Committee
Melissa Baldassarre
Claudia Brenner
Eldred Harris
Lisa Holmes
Steve Hugo
Ken Jupiter
Dan Klein
Teri Miller
Peter Novelli
Jeffrey Rimland
Larry Roberts
John Schroeder
Mary Trochim
Joe Wetmore
Joel Zumoff

Design Team
Sasaki Associates:
Mark Dawson
Gina Ford
Susannah Ross
Travis Mazerall
Geoff Fritz

Project Staff
Mayor Carolyn Peterson
JoAnn Cornish
Jennifer Kusznir
Phyllisa DeSarno
Tom West
Gary Ferguson
Julie Holcomb
Tom Parsons

Clough Harbour & Associates:
Nate Tompkins
Steve Wilson
Ithaca Commons
A number of key issues were critical to the process of developing the Preliminary Design of the Commons. These included:

**Communication and Collaboration**

A number of different strategies were employed to maintain open and consistent communication between all parties. The design team, throughout the process, hosted bi-weekly conference calls with the Client Committee. Three public meetings and stakeholder focus group meetings were held at project milestones to share information and solicit feedback (see following pages for more information). The Design Team presented alternatives for the Commons as well as the Preliminary Design in draft form to the Client Council. The Design Team also communicated with the original designers of the Commons – Tony Egner, Architect and Marv Adelman, Landscape Architect – to understand their design objectives and observations.

**Testing Alternatives**

The City charged the Design Team with providing a broad range of alternatives and a clear set of criteria to evaluate each option. At least one of three required options had to be a minimal approach, aimed to minimize cost and maintain as much of the existing landscape as possible. Each of these options was described with illustrations and included various strategies related to utilities, paths, planting, lighting, sustainability, art and architecture. Alternatives were constructed to address community concerns and observations gathered during the first series of public meetings.

**Sound Engineering**

Clough Harbour Associates (CHA), a New York based engineering firm, provided the Design Team with an in-depth understanding of the complex utility and engineering issues underlying the landscape of the Commons. For each utility line beneath the Commons, CHA assessed the condition utilizing interviews with each utility company and members of the Public Works Department, best practices from their civil engineering expertise, and visual inspection where possible. A technical memorandum, attached as an Appendix to this document, summarizes their findings.
Community Workshop 1: Analysis (July 2009)

Pedestrian Mall Precedents
Existing Conditions — Visibility
Existing Conditions — Flexibility

Community Workshop 2: Concept Alternatives (October 2009)

Option 1 - Improved Original
Option 2 - The Asymmetric Scheme
Option 3 - The Eclectic Streetscape

Community Workshop 3: Preliminary Design (April 2010)
Public Outreach

Sasaki Associates initiated this project with a series of meetings designed to generate feedback from a wide variety of constituents, including downtown employees, downtown event coordinators, utility providers, members of boards and committees, seniors, persons with disabilities, downtown merchants and property owners, the Commons client committee, City staff from the Departments of Water and Sewer, Streets and Facilities, Clerk, Building, Engineering, Planning, Fire, and Police, as well as a meeting with the general public. A total of over one hundred people attended one or more of these meetings.

Community Workshops

July 2009 — Community Workshop One consisted of an introduction to the consultant team, an overview of the planning process, and presentation of the issues to be addressed. In addition to the public meeting, the consultant team participated in a series of stakeholder meetings.

October 2009 — At Community Workshop Two, the consultant team presented three options for the repair and upgrade of the Commons: a minimal scheme to most closely maintain the existing configuration, an asymmetrical scheme to move amenities to the northern side of the Commons, and a streetscape-inspired scheme with a central walkway.

April 2010 — Using feedback from the second workshop, the consultant team developed and refined Option Three — the streetscape option — into a Preliminary Design.

In addition, to address specific concerns raised by Common Council, City staff and the Client Committee undertook additional outreach. Questionnaires were placed under the door of apartments in and around the Commons, and posted on the City’s website. Over one hundred additional responses were received. Seventy-two street on-street interviews were conducted by Project Staff with shoppers, visitors, tourists, playground users, library patrons, and college students. The Client Committee and Project Staff also hosted information tables at the Chili Cook Off, in Center Ithaca, and at the Southside Community Center.
PRELIMINARY DESIGN

Preferred Plan

The preferred Preliminary Plan calls for a traditional streetscape configuration along State/MLK Street, with a wide central corridor kept clear for pedestrian and service movement through the space, narrow bands of tree planting lining either side, and a clear zone along the face of storefronts, providing space for window shopping and outdoor dining. Bands of paving cross through the space in a dynamic pattern derived from the paths of movement diagramed in the original Commons design. The tree-planted amenity zone accommodates a variety of seating types, as well as a series of open, airy pavilions designed to shelter performances, gatherings, and daily activity.

The design reconstructs the Trolley Circle as the heart of the Commons, and shifts the main performance space to the northern end of Bank Alley, where a new Bernie Milton Pavilion serves as both a stage and an iconic new gateway to the Commons. A panel of lawn—reinforced to withstand heavy pedestrian use—spills from the stage, providing a green space for casual seating during concerts or on any sunny day. A sweeping arc of granite begins as a simple architectural seatwall and morphs into a tiered, organically shaped fountain with water playfully seeping and bubbling through its cracks, recalling the gorges for which Ithaca is so well known.
State Street / MLK Sustainability Measures

- Streamlined Trash and Recycling (not shown)
- Dark Sky Compliant Lighting
- Rain Garden
- Durable Paving Surfaces
- Locally Available Materials
- Reuse of Demolition Materials as Aggregate Base Course
- Continuous Stormwater Detention Zone as Irrigation
The use of sustainable technologies and construction methods repeatedly emerged as a high community priority both in the Community Workshops as well as direction from the Client Committee and Common Council. The design team identified a series of opportunities for further exploration in future detailed design phases and have identified them here.

**Recommended Measures**

- Use dark-sky compliant lighting to minimize disturbance to Commons residents and light pollution
- Reuse granite from original Commons fountain
- Reuse demolition materials as aggregate base course
- Streamline trash and recycling amenities to provide clarity to users, improve effectiveness, and minimize clutter
- Use local building materials such as stone, recycled glass and black locust lumber
- Use planters as rain gardens to help capture and clean storm-water run-off
- Reuse roof run-off, stormwater and greywater for irrigation and fountain water
- Minimize maintenance by using durable paving materials on an appropriate subbase
- Use native and/or low maintenance plant materials
### Existing Utilities

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Utility</th>
<th>Issues</th>
<th>Recommendation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| SEWER  | good shape generally upgrade in place | upgrade in place  
good shape generally several cracks in need of repair  
roots growing through joints  
brick laid manholes need repair  
slip lining upgrade not much more costly than spot repairs |
| GAS     | doesn’t meet code install new line (TBD medium vs. low pressure) | install new line  
doesn’t meet code limited capacity restricts growth |
| WATER   | lead joints cast iron line at end of lifespan install new line | install new line  
lead joints cast iron line at end of lifespan  
inoperable valves real chance of water main break |
| STORM   | good condition needs cleaning OK (coordination with new drainage req’d) | OK (coordination with new drainage req’d)  
good condition needs cleaning |

**Typical Section through State/MLK Street**

**Plan**
For each utility line beneath the Commons, CHA assessed the condition utilizing interviews with each utility company and members of the Public Works Department, best practices from their civil engineering expertise, and visual inspection where possible. A technical memorandum, attached as an Appendix to this document, summarizes their findings.

Water

The water main beneath the Commons appears to be in good condition. However, it is nearing the end of its life expectancy and is therefore becoming more susceptible to breaks. Given that the pipe is a 16” main under high pressure, a break could be devastating. The recommendation to replace the pipe is a proactive approach to try and prevent future breaks from occurring on an aging pipe. In addition, while the pipe is currently in good condition, the joints, which occur every 12-16 feet, are lead joints that need to be replaced or clamped. Repair of the joints alone would require a large excavation at the location of each of the joints. Due to the many lateral connections and the fact that the water main is under pressure, slip lining is not recommended.

Gas

The existing gas lines no longer meet code because they are not cathodically protected to prevent corrosion. Moreover, because they are low pressure, the lines do not have capacity to handle any significant future development. Replacement of the existing gas mains is necessary to bringing the lines up to current codes and to ensure safety. While replacement with new low pressure mains would limit the future development of The Commons, installation of a new medium pressure line has the aesthetic drawback of requiring regulators at each storefront. The City and NYSEG currently are considering alternative solutions to the latter problem, such as installing the regulators in underground vented vaults, or rerouting the line to the rear of the Commons buildings.

Sanitary Sewer

Overall, the sanitary sewer line is in good shape but some repair is necessary and there is evidence (cracking, roots) that the structural integrity of the pipe may become compromised within the next 10-20 years. This system is an excellent candidate for a method known as slip-lining. This process involves installing a new pipe within the inside diameter of the existing pipe. This will provide the pipe with the structural integrity of a new pipe without complete excavation and removal of the existing pipe.

Storm

The lines are in need of cleaning due to sedimentation, but are generally in good condition. They can be reused to the extent that they align with the proposed design for surface drainage.
Detail of Lighting Concept Plan
Public feedback consistently advocated for improved lighting on the Commons, both to increase the perception of safety and to improve the quality of the retail environment. Initial concept alternatives explored a wide range of lighting options, from the maintenance of existing historic-style fixtures to tall poles or cable-hung fixtures. The Preliminary Design includes two different lighting configurations for the Commons — one for Bank Alley that reinforces it as the heart of the Commons, and one for State Street / MLK that enhances the streetscape quality and minimizes clutter.

**State Street / MLK Lighting**

- Cable-hung lighting system for overall light levels with cables most likely attached to poles at the edges of the Commons rather than the historic building facades
- Uplighting for significant pieces of public art to provide interest and focal points
- Integrated downlights in architectural pavilions
- Ground lights or under-bench lighting to provide interest at the ground level

**Bank Alley**

- Tall light poles tucked into the eastern tree planting to provide overall light levels
- Water feature lighting to highlight this special landscape element and provide nighttime interest
- Operable downlights from the Bernie Milton Pavilion to light lawn panel

Public art on the Commons has yet to be determined. The City will need to develop a strategy for which pieces will be retained, as well as the size, style, type, number, and location for any new art pieces. The City will consult with donor Ray Schlather regarding the final location for the Child of Ithaca Statue in the new design.
Utility Replacement Impacts

Tree Value Summary
Lower value trees (yellow) were either considered in “fair” health by the City Forester or were noted in public input as limiting visibility and/or creating a nuisance by litter.
**Community Feedback on Vegetation**

- Consider lower planting beds that do not block visibility and movement
- To the extent possible, preserve existing trees
- Add seasonal planting displays for color and variety

**Impact of Utility Upgrade on Vegetation**

There are a number of reasons why preservation of many existing trees in the face of needed utility upgrades would be challenging and expensive:

- A plan diagram of the existing utilities with the width of trenching required for access reveals the complexity of trying to preserve existing trees.
- In urban conditions and in planters such as those on the Commons trees have a limited lifespan; some of the trees here are beginning a process of decline.
- Technologies for burrowing rather than trenching to replace the utilities were determined to be cost-prohibitive and/or inappropriate.
- The potential costs associated with digging up and moving existing trees are high (see table on this page).

The design team recommends the City hire an arborist to do an inventory and analysis of the existing vegetation to determine high-value trees and chances for successful transplantation.

**Proposed Vegetation**

The preliminary design responds to some community feedback on the current vegetation by proposing:

- Canopy trees that will provide shade, but are limbed high enough to promote visibility
- Minimal planting in tree trenches
- Planters or areas in tree pits protected from tree-root encroachment for seasonal color
- Movable planters to allow flexibility and seasonal color
- Future sustainability of vegetation by separating root zone from utility trenches

Though many responded favorably to the proposed lawn at Bank Alley, the idea requires further study to ensure its durability and maintenance requirements.
Detail of Seating Concept

Furnishings Plan
The Preliminary Design seeks to address concerns about the existing furnishings—particularly seating—on the Commons, which have been described as uncomfortable, inflexible, and lacking in features of universal accessibility. The Commons currently provides the bulk of its seating opportunities through the seat-high concrete planter walls arranged through the middle of State Street. While they provide opportunities for people to sit in groups or alone, they can be an obstruction during events or when groups assemble. The Preliminary Design calls for a more wide ranging assortment of seating types, including some fixed benches, movable chairs and tables, leaning rails, and partially movable seating, as shown in the imagery here. This new variety of seating provides the flexibility to accommodate visitors of all ages and abilities in a comfortable and customizable way.

Streamlined amenities for trash and recycling, bicycle racks, and newspaper boxes will reduce clutter on the Commons and provide an elegant, clear identity.
Water Feature on Bank Alley
The provision of space for play on the Commons attracts families, and adds to the general liveliness and vibrancy of the place. The design team explored alternatives to the current single traditional play structure. Designs that dispersed smaller play spaces throughout the Commons and imagined them as sculptural, educational objects for exploration were well-received by the public. The Preliminary Design features play areas consisting of basic elements—metal, stone, and wood—that engage multiple senses and invite children of all ages and ability levels to slide, crawl, hide, or touch. Moreover, when they are not occupied by children at play, the formations provide an attractive, unique visual amenity, as well as a place for people of any age to sit.

A water feature at the southern end of Bank Alley offers a place for play, rest, and for telling a story of Ithaca's unique geologic setting. The linear fountain displays the cracking and splitting characteristics of the stone found in Ithaca's gorges. There, water playfully bubbles, seeps, and drips over the stone, inviting children to explore.
Ithaca Commons Upgrade

Proposed Pavilions

Existing Pavilions

Bernie Milton Pavilion
Pavilions and Performance

Discussion of the pavilions on the Commons reveals they are a valued component of the space for a number of reasons—they provide welcome shelter from rain and snow, shade during the summer, as well as stages or focal points for everything from concerts to rallies to bake sales. The Bernie Milton pavilion is an especially beloved icon at the heart of the Commons.

However, feedback also indicates some concerns with the physical design of these pavilions. Due to low ceilings, and in some cases, a backdrop of dense vegetation, they tend to feel dark and not entirely inviting.

The Preliminary Design proposes a series of pavilions that meet and exceed the square footage of the current structures, while imagining a light, airy architectural quality: higher ceilings make them feel inviting and safe while providing needed shelter from the elements. The exact size and shape of these pavilions will need to be designed with consideration of the visibility of storefronts.

Bernie Milton Pavilion is re-imagined as an even bolder, more visible gesture at a key gateway to the Commons at the north end of Bank Alley. During events it provides a functional performance space with plenty of open space for informal seating. While not in use as a stage, the Pavilion is an open gateway, announcing the presence of the Commons to passersby. A public design charrette will gather input to determine the exact height, length, material, and locations for the pavilions.
Timeline

July – August 2009  
Project Framework and Programming

September – October 2009  
Concept Alternatives

November 2009 – April 2010  
Schematic Design

2.5 Months  
Design Development

Upon notice to proceed from the City of Ithaca, Sasaki projects its design team would be able to advance the Schematic Design for the reconstruction of Ithaca Commons to a level of Design Development documents over the course of approximately ten weeks. During this time Sasaki will collect further site data, including a survey, and continue ongoing dialogue with the City and the Client Committee in order to make refinements and adjustments to the Schematic Design. In conjunction with the City, the civil engineers on the team will conduct several digs on the existing site in order to verify utility depths and locations. Additionally, they will meet with each of the respective utility service providers to review the proposed connections. Interdisciplinary coordination with additional pertinent subconsultant disciplines, including lighting, electrical, structural, and fountain design, will occur prior to the completion of this phase. Sasaki will prepare, at the appropriate scale and detail, continued refinement of the various site elements that comprise the Commons redesign.

3 Months  
Construction Documents

Based on further authorization from the Client regarding the completion of the Design Development package, Sasaki will incorporate all comments and proceed toward completion of the Construction Documents. Sasaki anticipates this documentation would be completed within three months. Sasaki shall prepare construction documents, consisting of drawings, specifications, and statements of probable construction cost required to fix and describe the size, character, treatment, materials, etc., setting forth in detail requirements for construction of all site improvements.

The team will prepare documentation to secure all necessary permitting, including NYSDEC’s General Permit for Storm Water Associated with Construction Activity and an Erosion & Sediment Control plan developed in accordance with the document, “New York Standards and Specifications for Erosion and Sediment Control” published by the Empire State Chapter of the Soil and Water Conservation Society. The team will prepare and file the Notice of Intent (NOI) and develop a Stormwater Pollution Prevention Plan (SWPPP) for construction and post development activities associated with the proposed project.

1.5 Months  
Bid Phase

The Documents will be issued for public bid. During this phase, Sasaki will answer bidders’ questions, issue any required addenda, and assist the City in the review and evaluation of bids.

12 Months  
Construction

Once notice to proceed is issued to the selected Contractor, Sasaki estimates a total construction period of about 12 months, including 8 months of actual construction work, with approximately 4 months lost due to winter weather conditions.
The following is an estimate of construction costs based on the Preliminary Design shown in this report.

**Estimated Construction Budget***

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Item</th>
<th>Cost</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Demolition</td>
<td>$365,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hardscape</td>
<td>$2,622,660</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Site Furnishings</td>
<td>$467,050</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Landscaping</td>
<td>$157,100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lighting</td>
<td>$235,500</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Special Elements (includes pavilions, play, fountain)</td>
<td>$1,310,600</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Utilities</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Electric</td>
<td>$100,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gas</td>
<td>$214,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Water</td>
<td>$316,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Storm Sewer</td>
<td>$280,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sanitary Sewer</td>
<td>$103,300</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Subtotal</strong></td>
<td>$6,171,210</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Construction Contingency (20%)</strong></td>
<td>$1,234,242</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>TOTAL</strong></td>
<td>$7,405,452</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Please note, this estimate assumes the project is completed in a single phase. There will be additional cost associated with construction in multiple phases, as well as additional design fees required to break the project into phases.

If the budget will not allow the City to complete the entire design initially, then the design could be implemented in stages. A suggested phasing plan would be as follows:

**Phase 1**
- Demolition
- Utilities
- Hardscape
- Landscaping
- Site Furnishings (50%)
- Lighting

**Phase 2**
- Site Furnishings (50%)
- Special Elements
APPENDIX 1:
Community Workshop 1 PowerPoint
Mark Dawson, Gina Ford, Susannah Ross, Travis Mazerall
Sasaki Associates
Lead Consultants: Landscape Architecture, Urban Design, Architecture, and Graphic Design/Wayfinding

Steve Wilson
Clough Harbour & Associates
Civil, Structural, MEP, Geotechnical, Survey

HLB Lighting Design, Lighting
CMS Collaborative, Fountain Design
How do we work?

Sasaki Associates

Over 400 Awards

Interdisciplinary

Collaborative

Exploratory
CREATING SENSE OF PLACE

CHARLESTON WATERFRONT PARK

TOLEDO WATERFRONT

SAN FRANCISCO PRESIDIO

RESTON TOWN CENTER, VIRGINIA

ADDISON PARK, TEXAS

PENNSYLVANIA AVE, WASHINGTON, DC
ENGAGING THE COMMUNITY

WALKING TOUR

PUBLIC PRESENTATION

CHARRETTE

WORKSHOP

OPEN HOUSE
Public Participation

July, 2009  Initial Public Workshop

September, 2009  Public Presentation of 3 Concept Alternatives

November, 2009  Public Presentation of Preliminary Design
COMMENTS MADE AT JANUARY 22, 1998
MEETING TO GATHER PUBLIC COMMENTS
ON REDESIGN OF THE ITHACA COMMONS

Of the 27 people who spoke, 24 explicitly voiced opposition to the idea of opening the Commons to vehicular traffic. No one voiced support for this idea. Other comments made related to the Commons' physical design are summarized below (a number within parenthesis indicates that this comment was stated by more than one person).

- Commons should not become vehicular street (24).
- Commons should be kept basically the same (2).
- Commons should be special destination.
- Commons should be extended.
- Commons must be refurbished (it is shabby).
- Commons is ugly, cold, gloomy, gray, with too much concrete; make airier, more comfortable.
- Playground is positive feature (2).
- Pavilions are positive feature (2).
- Sagan Planet Walk is positive feature.
- Sagan Planet Walk is ugly.
- Plantings are positive feature.
- Provide murals, sculptures, art (4).
- Accommodate more events, music (3).
- Provide better signage (2) (e.g., maps with icons, maps at bus stops).
- Repair fountain (2).
- Remove or repair fountain (2).
- Provide new fountain (water wall & wading pool).
- Replace concrete with brick (2).
Coconut Grove, Florida

COMMUNITY OUTREACH

Building Consensus

Coconut Grove, Florida
Existing Conditions on the Commons

- A vital commercial district
- The cultural heart of the City
- In need of major repairs and upgrades
Lack of Openness & Visibility

Deteriorating Surfaces & Structures
Aging Utilities

Inflexible Spaces and Seating
Cluttered Furnishings
Outstanding Design
Downtown Mall
Charlottesville, VA
60-65'
Las Ramblas
Barcelona, Spain
120' Building to Building, 60' median
Outstanding Design

Connectivity
Flexibility + Programming
Mix of Uses
Identity + Sense of Place
Seasonality
Durability + Surfaces
Safety and Maintenance
Accessibility
Implementation
Sustainability
Connectivity

- Aurora Street
- Bank Alley
- Home Dairy Alley
- Cayuga Street
- Seneca Street
- State Street
- East Green Street
Flexibility & Programming
Stamford Waterfront
Identity + Sense of Place
National Harbor Art Master Plan

- Metal Sculpture
- Found Stone
- Sculpted Stone
- Water Feature
- Interpretive Figurative Lighting
- Lighting
Seasonality
The Long Term Life of this Place
Reuse existing pavement as base course

Sustainable Practices

Reuse granite from original fountain

Use dark sky compliant lighting fixtures and techniques
Reuse roof water, captured runoff and grey water for irrigation, fountains, and/or radiant heating of sidewalk

Improve and streamline existing recycling amenities

Use native plant materials
Durability

Concrete
Concrete Pavers
Granite Pavers
Lawn
Stonedust
The Future of The Commons

Addison, Texas

Charleston, South Carolina

Indianapolis
APPENDIX 2:
Community Feedback Summary
Commons Repair & Upgrade Project


Safety and Visibility
- Visibility on the Commons is important and currently low
- Planters and permanent structures block lines of sight
- Businesses rely on having visible storefronts to attract customers
- People are unsure of what lies around the corner
- Police officer on foot can only see a few feet around him
- Increased/more effective lighting at night to increase visibility
- Police kiosk should be installed
- Police presence is inadequate
- Security cameras should be added
- Criminal activity is a concern
- Cayuga Street end of the Commons is seedy

Subsurface Conditions
- Basements extend into Commons and under sidewalks at Corner of Cayuga and State Streets
- Vaults in the Commons, many have been filled in, some remain
- Remaining vaults should be identified and removed/filled in/reinforced

Surface Conditions
- Surfaces are deteriorating and uneven
- Risk of falling/injury
- Problem for people with disabilities and seniors who use walkers
- Bumps and cracks are uncomfortable/painful for those in wheelchairs
- Sidewalks all around City are in poor shape
- Problems for mobility due to poor surface

Financing
- Cost will be a major issue during economic downturn
- City does not have a lot of money
- Public complaints about the cost of everything going on
- Nothing in the capital projects budget for the Commons
- Cost may be justified because Commons will be more attractive place to live and do business, will bring higher rents and higher revenues, and thus higher tax revenue
- Working in phases and spreading work over longer fiscal calendar could ease burden
- Frugality may help breed creativity
Construction Planning

- Construction must interfere as little as possible with the operation of businesses
- Access to Commons, businesses, and universal accessibility must be maintained
- Transition period should be a major focus of the plan
- Careful scheduling of construction hours
- Adequate signage to direct people to buildings and shops
- Work on one side at a time
- Design choice and phasing will depend on an analysis of subsurface conditions
- Quality of materials is important
- Lowest bid is not necessarily the best bid

Public Outreach

- Public perception issue must be addressed
- Members of the public may view Sasaki’s involvement with suspicion, firm bringing big city ideas to a small city
- Should be communicated that this is a design project only, ground is not being broken yet
- Subsurface issues should be discussed with the public

Attraction

- Ithaca Commons is the number one tourist destination in the City
- Residents often notice the negative aspects of the Commons
- Commons attracts many outside visitors who do not notice the flaws
- Try to attract a variety of people to the Commons
- Students are hard to reach, get down from the hills
- Cornell students tend to stay in Collegetown
- Ithaca College students visit more often
- People often don’t know what’s on the Commons, awareness and visibility could help
- Ithaca is multicultural, everyone must feel welcome both culturally and socially
- Hard to attract visitors at night
- Additional dining and programming at night when shops close

Structures and Utilities

- Remove the pavilions
- Pavilions encourage loitering groups
- Need for pavilions/permanent structures for weather protection
- Structures should be airy and inviting, translucent surface perhaps
- Structures should be easy to clean
- Planters should be designed to discourage walking through or sitting on
- Planters along Cayuga Street block pedestrian access, should be removed
- Playground and fountain attract children, make space more lively
- Playground should be retained
- Commons should be a place for families
• Old playground was nicer than the current one
• Old fountain was better than the current one
• Add lighted clocks
• Add a chalk wall for people to draw on
• Ice skating rink during the winter
• Winter conditions must be kept in mind, protection of amenities considered in design
• Propane outdoor heating to extend the season
• Lake source or geothermal heating for sidewalks
• Hot steam spring or bubbler effect in winter
• City should offer free wireless internet
• Hose bibs needed
• PA system for messages
• Ease of adding sprinkler systems should be considered in design (currently lacking in many buildings)
• Removable surface panels for utility access, so that repairs can be made without surface damage
• Transformer pit in Bank Alley looks like a drain, people pour things in it

Secondary Commons
• Primary Commons needs to be better connected with surrounding areas
• Connection between Commons and 100 block of West State Street needs to be enhanced
• Connection between Commons and Aurora Street dining needs to be enhanced
• Enlarge Commons to include 100 block of West State Street while maintaining vehicular traffic on Cayuga Street
• Must consider what can be supported by the population

Business
• Conflict between park and commerce
• Loitering groups have a negative impact on business
• Permanent structures and vegetation obscure storefronts and hide businesses
• Commons has to compete with Shops at Ithaca Mall, rte 13 strip, Collegetown
• Rents in Collegetown are 2-3 times as high as Commons
• Retail does worse in Collegetown than Commons
• Center of energy has moved from Commons to Aurora Street
• Energy should be transferred to center of Commons
• Aurora and State Street merchants should be included in the discussion on impacts from construction
• Few buildings have rear loading areas
• Restaurants use carts to move goods, leaves a trail behind
• Special servicing needs should be considered
• Need to extend the season, use outdoor heating
• Bring the Farmers’ Market to the Commons, must be able to move product
• Need people to linger
• Hot dog stands/mobile vendors are valuable
• Fire lane restrictions leave only 2’ of usable space in front of stores
• Altering fire lane could allow for better use of space, product displays and outdoor dining

Transportation
• No place for a bus to park on the Commons
• Counterclockwise traffic pattern does not allow drop-offs directly on the Commons
• TCAT should be closely involved in design process
• Cut should be made at entrances so a bus can park or stop
• Bus parking would be good for tour groups
• Bank Alley could become a bus drop-off spot
• Bus service is more frequent early and late in the day, less frequent in middle
• Infrequent bus service is a partial cause of loitering
• People come downtown for an appointment, wait until bus service resumes in evening to leave
• Direction of Cayuga Street should be reversed
• Cayuga and Aurora Streets should be two-way
• Valet parking
• More bike racks

Vehicle Access
• Commons should be reopened to vehicular traffic
• Commons should be a one-way street that could close when necessary
• Commons should have a meandering street
• Commons should have controlled vehicular traffic at certain times
• Prohibition of vehicles should be maintained
• Vehicular traffic would take away unique nature of the Commons
• Access must be maintained for Fire Department
• 16’ wide fire lane required for fire trucks
• 20’ wide fire lane will be required by code for any new or reconstructed building
• 14’ vertical clearance required for fire trucks
• Fire lane should be demarcated for benefit of Fire Department as well as merchants and event coordinators (so they know how much space they have to work with)
• Access for deliveries, residents, moving trucks, snow removal vehicles
• Some businesses have rear loading zones, but many need other arrangements
• Allow businesses vehicle access at certain times
• Designated drop-off/delivery space, possibly in Bank Alley

Pedestrian Access
- Commons currently lends itself to one-way pedestrian traffic without stopping or crossing over
- Enhance ability to move from one side to the other
- Permanent structures block views and restrict movement
- Lower planters and fewer barriers
- Remove the planters along Cayuga Street
- Lack of a direct North-South route
- Remove the one-storey building across from Home Dairy Alley to establish a direct pedestrian route from Six Mile Creek to DeWitt Park
- Navigability during the winter is problematic
- Need improved snow removal without large piles of snow left to impede movement
- Timing of crosswalk signal at corner of Cayuga and Green is too quick

**Disability Issues**
- Universal access should exceed the requirements of code compliance
- Uneven surfaces and permanent structures that inhibit mobility are significant issues for people with disabilities
- Simply getting from store to store can be an issue
- Chipped concrete and buckling pavement are painful to people in wheelchairs
- New surfaces should be paved such that buckling and chipping does not occur
- Building entryways need to be more accessible
- More strike-side clearance
- More maneuvering space
- Larger entrances
- Plan to overcome steep inclines into some buildings
- Better enforcement of handicapped parking
- Plan for locations of handicapped spots
- Delivery trucks often pull into handicapped spaces and block curb ramps
- Gadabout should be consulted
- Plan for where Gadabout should pick up passengers
  - This should be attractive, safe, covered, and have adequate seating
  - Outside Cinemapolis is a possibility
- Accessibility must be maintained during construction
- Insufficient snow removal or piled snow can impede mobility of people with disabilities
- Snow removal as it applies to accessibility is a civil rights issue
- Center Ithaca’s doors are difficult to open, especially for those with disabilities
- Regulations for accessibility at booth vendors during events
- More public restrooms that are accessible
- Design should take into account people with hearing loss and visual disabilities, particularly with regards to directions and wayfinding
- Mental health center is across the street
• Try to reduce stigma concerning those with mental health problems; these are vulnerable people
• Many disabilities are temporary
• Abilities can change with time or events, these issues apply to everyone

Seniors
• Commons should be more intergenerational
• Elderly avoid the Commons because it appears uninviting and scary
• Concern over visibility and crime
• More daytime events
• Permanent structures that provide shade and seating are good
• There needs to be shade during events, for spectators as well as performers
• Four-wheeled walkers are difficult to maneuver on uneven pavement
• Retail on Commons is too upscale and expensive, not within people’s means
• Commons needs a drugstore, shoe store, and variety store

Art and History
• Most art on the Commons comes and goes, few pieces are permanent
• Should focus on finding remarkable artwork to display prominently rather than lots of little pieces
• There is value to small sculptures
• Only place to display sculpture right now is in planters
• Planters are not flexible and often dominate displays
• Get cooperation with private sector to display art on buildings
• Display art in vacant storefronts
• Entrances to Commons are a great opportunity for creativity and art; artists can come in and create something inviting
• Historic nature of the buildings on the Commons should be maintained
• Lighting to highlight historic architecture
• Storefronts sometimes clash with respective building
• Create design guidelines for building facades
• Storefronts should look more unique and diverse
• Several old plaques and other historical pieces have been removed and should be replaced
• Commons looks depressing during the winter, lacks color, “concrete jungle”
• New fountain and Christmas box are ugly
• Old fountain was beautiful

Vegetation
• Planters block movement and visibility
• Trees provide a nesting ground for noisy birds that leave droppings
• Critical evaluation of tree age, quality, and health
• Significant and vocal part of the community places high value on the trees, will resist having them removed
Leaving all trees on the Commons may not be feasible, removal must be considered
Try to convince people that the space can be beautiful without all of the trees
Trees and other plants have shared root systems in the planters
Tree roots have filled the planters
Should try to separate root systems
Low planters at Boulder Mall elicited positive reaction
Seasonal plantings
Water runoff used for irrigation
Green roofs on new buildings

Events and Performances
- Large street fairs do not work well with present infrastructure
- Electric utilities are inadequate for performances
- No electric outlets on 100 block of West State Street
- No water access right now
- Acoustics are problematic; sounds bounce off buildings and amplify into surrounding neighborhoods
- Crowding is an issue at large events
- Difficult to walk around during events
- Permanent structures add to congestion
- Crowds obscure shops and restaurants, harm business
- More flexible space would allow major events without closing streets and would reduce congestion
- Portable staging could be built over plantings (instead of pavilions)
- Staging must be able to hang signs, sponsor banners
- Better materials for acoustic control
- Permanent information kiosk with heat
- Demarcated event spaces with dedicated utility bollards
- Events should be structured and mapped out, plan for where tents and booths go
- Paper banners could be replaced with permanent digital ones
- Digital sign could be placed at entrance to advertise/announce events
- Need for a good performance space that does not encourage loitering, looks artistic when not in use
- Apple Harvest and Chili Cook-Off two largest events, 100 and 40 vendors respectively
- Fire lanes cause problems for staging, particularly if in the center
- Meandering fire lane could allow room for a stage

Miscellaneous Issues
- Commons should have a cohesive design
- Open up center space
- Get people towards the center
- Bank Alley is a dead entrance, needs to be more inviting
- Design should keep in mind auxiliary spaces like Center Ithaca, Bank Alley, Home Dairy Alley, alley between Green Street Garage and Center Ithaca
- Narrow width of the Commons should be handled delicately, 1970s design was too “heavy”
- No smoking on Commons
- Designated smoking areas
- Add awnings to storefronts (but cannot interfere with fire access)
- Signs and awnings in front of stores required by code to be higher than 6‘8”
- Some signs on Commons now get walked into by tall people
- Space should be more child-friendly
- More Commons webcams, could increase security
- When considering seasonality, think of rain as well as winter, Ithaca gets plenty of both
Safety and Visibility
Safety and visibility registered as extremely important issues and were brought up at every meeting. The planters and other permanent structures in the Commons block lines of sight. This is an issue for businesses, which rely on having visible storefronts to attract customers, as well as for safety and peace of mind, as people are unsure of what lies around the corner. The police would benefit from reduced clutter and increased visibility, as at present an officer on foot can only see what is going on a few feet around him, making police presence less effective. Lighting at night also needs to be altered to increase visibility. It was suggested that a police kiosk could be installed. Other comments about safety included that the police presence is inadequate, security monitors/cameras should be added, concerns about criminal activity, and that the Cayuga Street end of the Commons is seedy.

Subsurface Conditions
Subsurface conditions are the main reason why this project was initiated. The major issues were discussed in the City Departments Meeting, but several more things must be taken into consideration when creating design proposals for the Commons. There are basements that extend into the Commons and under the sidewalks at the corner of Cayuga and State Streets. There are also vaults throughout the Commons, most of which have been filled in, but some remain. These should be identified and removed, filled in, or reinforced.

Surface Conditions
A major concern with the current condition of the Commons is that the surfaces are deteriorating and uneven, making it easy to fall and creating a risk of injury. This also poses a problem for people with disabilities and seniors who use walkers, as the bumps and cracks are uncomfortable or even painful for those in wheelchairs and are difficult to navigate when using a four-wheeled walker. One contributor noted that sidewalks all around the City are in poor shape, and this, combined with heavy traffic near the Commons, poses problems for mobility, especially for seniors and those with disabilities.

Financing
The cost of this project will be a major issue in the current economic downturn. The City does not have a great deal of money at this time, and there have been public complaints about the cost of the projects the City is undertaking. It was noted that there is currently nothing in the capital projects budget for the Commons Repair and Upgrade project.
Even if it is a major expense, the cost of this project may be justified by the fact that it will make the Commons a more attractive place to live and do business, resulting in higher rents and higher revenues, and therefore higher tax revenue for the City. Working in phases and spreading out the work over a longer period of time could lower the burden by spreading costs over a longer fiscal calendar. On the other hand, it was suggested that a limited budget could be viewed as an opportunity, as frugality may help to breed creativity.

One suggestion for the financing of this project was to create an assessment district within the Commons and surrounding neighborhoods such that those who benefit from the project assist in paying for it.

**Construction Planning**

It is important that construction interfere as little as possible with the operation of businesses and access to buildings on the Commons. Businesses must be able to continue to operate throughout the project, and accessibility must be maintained. This transition period should be a major focus of the plan. Ideas to take into consideration are careful scheduling and construction hours, adequate signage to direct people to buildings and shops that may be partially blocked by construction, and working on one side of the Commons at a time. It was noted that the design choice and phasing would depend on an analysis of subsurface conditions. Concern was raised over the quality of materials, and it was stated that the lowest bid is not necessarily the best bid.

**Public Outreach**

The public perception issue must be addressed. There is concern that members of the public may view Sasaki’s involvement with suspicion, seeing it as a firm bringing big city ideas to a small city. It should be communicated to the public that this is a design project only, that construction has not begun and is not yet in the works. Additionally, the subsurface issues should be discussed with the public, as support will be more forthcoming in the context of vital repairs than an optional redesign.

**Attraction**

The Ithaca Commons is the number one tourist destination in the City, and several contributors thought this should be emphasized. Though residents often notice the negative aspects of the Commons, it attracts many outside visitors who don’t see these flaws. Efforts should be made to attract a variety of people to the Commons. Students were identified as a group that is particularly difficult to reach. Getting them down from the hills can be a challenge. Cornell students in particular tend to stay in Collegetown. Ithaca College students, as a percentage of student population, come to the Commons more, though by force of sheer size a larger number of Cornell students can be seen on the Commons. It was noted that often people simply don’t know what’s on the Commons, so awareness and visibility could assist in attracting visitors. The multicultural nature of Ithaca was stressed, as it was stated that everyone must feel
The Commons has trouble attracting visitors in the evening hours in particular. It was suggested that additional programming and dining on the Commons was needed at night when the shops close.

**Structures and Utilities**

Many suggestions were made concerning structures on the Commons. Pavilions and seating elicited many responses. Some suggested removing the pavilions altogether, as they only encourage loitering groups. However, others stressed the need for permanent structures for seating and for weather, as Ithaca gets a large amount of precipitation. It was suggested that structures be airy and inviting, easy to clean, and could perhaps have a translucent surface. Planters are also an important consideration, and should be designed in such a way to discourage walking through or sitting on them. It was suggested that the planters along Cayuga Street be removed, as they obstruct pedestrian access. The playground and fountain were also discussed, and it was stated that these facilities attract children and make the space lively. It was stated that a playground should be retained, as the Commons should be a place for families. The old playground, which has since been replaced, was viewed more favorably than the current one, as was the design of the old fountain. Lighted clocks, a chalk wall for people to draw on, and a central ice skating rink in the winter were proposed as attractive features. Planning structures and amenities must consider winter conditions, and a design to protect those amenities sensitive to the snow and cold should be created.

There were also suggestions made for additional utilities and amenities on the Commons. The idea of heating came up frequently, including propane heating for outdoor dining space and lake source or geothermal heating for sidewalks. A hot steam spring or bubbler effect could make the area look less cold and uninviting in the winter months. It was suggested that the City offer free wireless internet on the Commons, which would attract students in particular. The addition of hose bibs and a PA system for messages were requested. It was also noted that the ease of adding sprinkler systems should be considered in the design, as many Commons buildings currently lack them. Removable surface panels for utility access were recommended so that repairs could be made without damaging the surface. Also, the transformer pit in Bank Alley was identified as being problematic because it looks like a drain and people sometimes pour things into it (such as cooking grease, in one instance).

**Secondary Commons**

Connecting the Primary Commons with surrounding areas was a concern for several contributors. In particular, it was felt that the connection between the Commons and the 100 block of West State Street (including the State Theatre) and Aurora Street should be enhanced. One proposal was to enlarge the Commons to include West State Street, while maintaining the vehicular cross street (Cayuga Street). What can be supported by the population should be considered, however, as an expansion may not be especially useful or feasible.
Business
The identity of the Commons as a pedestrian mall makes the interests of merchants and property owners extremely important in the design and construction process. The issue of a conflict between “park” and “commerce” was raised at the merchants meeting. The Commons may be a great place to hang out, but there may be a trade off involved as loitering groups can have a negative impact on business. Furthermore, the permanent structures and vegetation that make the Commons more park-like tend to obscure storefronts and hide businesses from potential customers. Commerce in the Commons competes with the Shops at Ithaca Mall, the route 13 strip, and Collegetown, so finding a way to attract people to this shopping district should be an important part of the design process. It was noted that rents in Collegetown are two to three times as high as rents in the Commons, though retail there tends to do worse. It was also noted that the center of energy in the downtown area has moved away from the primary Commons and onto Aurora Street, and it was suggested that an attempt be made to transfer some of this energy to the center of the Commons. It was also suggested that Aurora and State Street merchants be included in the discussion on impacts from construction, given their recent experiences with construction activities.

Servicing needs also need to be considered, as only a few buildings have rear loading areas. Restaurants often use carts to move their goods through the Commons which sometimes leave an unsightly trail of food and liquid in their wake. The special servicing needs of businesses should be considered in the design, as business varies from office supplies to restaurants and bars, each of which has different requirements.

Suggestions were made to improve the commercial environment in the Commons and attract more customers. The need to extend the season was highlighted, with the idea of outdoor propane heating being proposed. It was suggested that an attempt be made to bring the Farmers’ Market to the Commons, but to do so would require some way to move product into and out of the area which must be considered in the design. Ideas on how to get people to linger in the Commons are also needed. Hot dog stands and other mobile food vendors elicited positive comments. It was noted that fire lane restrictions leave only two feet of usable space in front of stores; some way to alleviate this restriction would allow more outdoor dining and product displays, making better use of the available space.

Transportation
There is currently no place for a bus to park on the Commons, and the counterclockwise pattern of traffic around the Commons does not allow for passengers to be dropped off directly on to the Commons. At best they may be dropped off across the street. TCAT should be closely involved so that bus stops can be integrated into the design. It was suggested that a cut be made at one of the entrances to the Commons so that it would be possible to park or stop a bus there. This would be particularly beneficial to tour groups. It was also suggested that Bank Alley could become a bus drop off spot. The frequency of bus service was also brought up. Bus service is much more frequent early and late in the day, and this was cited as a reason for loitering in the Commons. People may come
downtown for an appointment, and then wait in the Commons until service resumes in the evening. Changing the traffic patterns was suggested, by reversing the direction of Cayuga Street or making Cayuga and Aurora Streets two-way. Other transportation suggestions were to add valet parking and to add more bike racks to the Commons.

**Vehicle Access**

Debate was raised over whether the Commons should return to being a roadway. Suggestions included reopening it entirely, making it a single lane one-way street that could be closed when necessary, having a meandering street through the Commons, having controlled vehicular traffic at certain times, and maintaining the current prohibition of vehicles on the Commons. It was argued that allowing vehicular traffic would take away the unique nature of the Commons and would diminish safety.

Naturally, access would have to be maintained for the Fire Department. Fire access is an extremely important consideration in the design of this project. In the early years of the Ithaca Commons, the Ithaca Fire Department approved a 14 foot wide fire lane based on the space needed to set up a ladder truck. Since then, the design standards for new ladder trucks require a larger outrigger area. The newest fire department ladder truck requires a 16 foot area for its outriggers. Due to the type of construction and age of the buildings on the Ithaca Commons, a ladder truck is an important resource for the fire department to use in the event of a building fire. Since the original construction of the Commons, the height and canopy size of the most mature trees on the commons has grown to the point where it limits the ability of the fire department ladder truck to reach many of the buildings on the north side from the fire lane on the south side. The overhead clearance required for a fire truck to pass underneath a structure or tree is 14 feet. Because of these height restrictions, awnings are limited in use on the buildings on immediately adjacent Commons’ fire lane.

Without regard to current or future needs of the fire department, the New York State Building Code requires a 20 foot wide fire lane to be maintained within 150 feet of all grade level openings in any new building. This would be the requirement if a building was destroyed by fire and replaced; or if an existing building was demolished and reconstructed. This would also be the case if there was an addition to a building’s height or area.

Marking the fire lane would be beneficial to the Fire Department as well as merchants and event coordinators, who could see exactly how much space they have to work with. Access for deliveries, residents, moving trucks, and snow removal vehicles should also be taken into consideration. Some businesses have rear loading zones, but many do not, and it is paramount that all businesses possess the ability to receive deliveries. Even if vehicular traffic in general is not allowed, allowing access for businesses at certain times of day should be considered. Another option mentioned was to create a designated drop-off space for deliveries, possibly in Bank Alley.
Pedestrian Access
Pedestrian mobility is a major concern in the Ithaca Commons. Participants in the meetings were critical of the fact that the Commons as it currently stands lends itself to one-way traffic, with visitors walking from one end to the other without stopping or seeing the shops on the other side. There seemed to be a general consensus that the ability to move from side to side on the Commons needs to be enhanced. At the moment several permanent structures such as the planters both block the view of one side of the Commons while walking on the other, and restrict movement. Lower planters and fewer barriers to movement were suggested. Removal of the planters along Cayuga Street was also called for, as it was stated that these choke off pedestrian access.

The lack of a proper North-South route through the Commons was also noted, as the north entrance at Bank Alley and the south entrance at Home Dairy Alley are not aligned. One suggestion was to replace the one-storey building across from Home Dairy Alley with a multi-level building that fits better with its surroundings and maintains open pedestrian access through the building at the ground level so that a more direct route could be established. This would create a straight pedestrian route from Six Mile Creek all the way to DeWitt Park.

Other concerns included the navigability of the Commons, as well as surrounding roadways and sidewalks, during the winter. Participants stressed the need for improved snow removal that does not leave large piles of snow to obstruct mobility. The timing of pedestrian crossings around the Commons should also be looked into. The crossing signal at the corner of Cayuga and Green Streets was noted as being particularly short.

Disability Issues
It was stressed that universal access in the Commons should exceed the requirements of code compliance. In its current condition, the Commons poses significant issues for people with disabilities, with uneven surfaces and an excess of permanent structures that inhibit mobility. For those with disabilities, and seniors as well, simply getting from store to store can be an issue. Chipped concrete and pavement buckling cause difficulty and even pain for people using wheelchairs. New surfaces must be paved such that this does not occur in the future. Building entryways need to become more accessible, with more strike-side clearance, maneuvering space, and larger entrances. A plan to overcome the steep inclines into some stores must be developed.

Transport to and from the Commons is another significant issue for those with disabilities. It was noted that handicapped parking needs better enforcement, and the locations of handicapped parking spots should be planned out in a manner that is sensible and makes enforcement easier. Delivery trucks often pull into handicapped spaces and block curb ramps. Better enforcement and sufficient demarcated space for deliveries could alleviate this issue. Other transit must also be taken into account in plans for the Commons, including the Gadabout bus service. The best location for Gadabout pickups should be determined, and this place should be attractive, safe, covered, and have adequate seating. The walkway outside Cinemapolis was suggested as such a space.
Further issues were raised at the meeting. It was noted that accessibility during the construction project will be very important and will require careful planning. Contributors also mentioned snow removal, which, if done improperly, impedes the mobility of people with disabilities. It was stated that accessibility is a civil rights issue. Center Ithaca’s doors were identified as difficult to open. It was requested that specific regulations for accessibility at booth vendors during events be created. More accessible public restrooms were requested. It was stated that directions and wayfinding must incorporate people with hearing loss and visual disabilities. Also noted was the mental health center across the street. Mental health issues should be taken into consideration, and the stigma associated with them must be reduced. Those present at the meeting were reminded that disability issues apply to everyone, as many disabilities are temporary, and abilities change with time and events.

**Seniors**
The design of the Commons should keep in mind the elderly, and more generally the age variation among Commons users. Visibility is an issue for seniors, as it was stated that the elderly often avoid the Commons because of its appearance as uninviting and even scary at times. Concerns over crime or the potential for crime were raised. It was stated that the Commons should be more intergenerational, with more daytime events. Contributors held a positive view of the permanent structures on the Commons that provide shade and seating. It was also stated that there needs to be shade during events, and not just for performers. It was also noted that just as those with wheelchairs have issues with the surface conditions of the Commons, four-wheeled walkers are difficult to maneuver on the uneven pavement.

Seniors at the meeting also complained about the types of stores present in the Commons. The present retail is too upscale and expensive, and the Commons lacks a drugstore, shoe store, and variety store. In general, it was suggested that the Commons would be more attractive if it contained more stores within peoples’ means.

**Art and History**
Art and history are important to many members of the Community, and thus were a significant topic of discussion. It was noted that most art related to the Art in the Heart program comes and goes, with only a few pieces becoming permanent. It was suggested that the focus should be on finding remarkable artwork to display prominently, rather than a lot of little pieces, though others contended that there is a value to small sculptures. Currently the only place to display sculptures on the Commons is in the planters, which are not flexible and their mass hides the displays. The possibility of displaying art on buildings should be looked into, though this will require cooperation from property owners. Vacant storefronts were identified as an ideal location to display artwork, as this prevents these buildings from looking empty and unappealing. The entrances to the Commons were identified as a great opportunity for creativity and art, and it could be an exciting prospect to have artists create something inviting in these places.
History and architecture are also important to the Commons. The historic nature of the buildings on the Commons should be maintained. It was suggested that lighting to highlight building architecture be introduced. One contributor noted that historic and modern can work together, and that a modern design in the Commons will not necessarily detract from the historic buildings. It was noted that storefronts are sometimes garish and clash with their respective buildings, or often look closed and uninviting. It was suggested that they look more unique and diverse, and that models for building fronts be created as a way to generate design ideas. Guidelines for building facades are a possibility. As for other historical pieces, several old plaques and other aesthetic pieces have been removed from the Commons, and it was suggested that they be replaced.

Aesthetically, it was noted that the Commons looks depressing in the winter, lacking color and generally looking like a “concrete jungle”. It was also stated that the new fountain and the Christmas box used to protect it in the winter are both ugly. The old fountain, however, was identified as quite beautiful, though it had its own issues with safety and maintenance.

Vegetation
The present inventory of planters and trees poses some problems for the Commons. The planters block movement and visibility, and the trees provide a nesting ground for birds that are noisy and leave droppings below. Mark Dawson of Sasaki stated that a critical evaluation of tree age, quality, and health must be undertaken. There is a significant and vocal part of the community that places a high value on the trees and will refuse to allow any of them to be removed. Nonetheless, because of required utility upgrades it will not be feasible to retain all the trees, so removal must be considered. Effort must be made to convince people that the space can be beautiful and more successful with more careful selection of tree species and layout. One possibility would be a conscious design effort to save the best of the existing mature trees (based on their health, beauty, and appropriateness), while understanding that some of these trees would need to be removed as a consequence of utility repairs. The trees and other plant life currently have shared root systems in the planters, and in many cases this has caused the tree roots to fill the planters and stifle other growth. A method of maintaining separate root systems should be considered.

As stated in the vehicle access section, the height and canopy size of the mature trees on the Commons has limited the ability of the fire department’s ladder truck to reach buildings from the fire lane on the south side of the Commons to the buildings on its north side. Any new design or reconfiguration needs to address this problem.

Attendees of the focus group meetings had, in general, a positive reaction to images of the Boulder Mall, in particular the low planting beds and high tree canopies that did not reduce visibility. This possibility should be considered, along with the idea of seasonal plantings and either a unified look or rich variety. Water runoff was suggested as a
means of irrigation. Finally, regarding vegetation, the potential for green roofs on new buildings was mentioned.

Events and Performances
The most significant issue concerning events and performances at present is infrastructure. Large street fairs in particular do not work well with what is available at present. The electric utilities have inadequate current for performances, and are totally lacking on the 100 block of West State Street. Booths at events also have no access to water utilities. Acoustics are another major problem, as sounds bounce off of buildings and are often amplified into surrounding neighborhoods. Large events have an issue with crowding, and it is very difficult to simply walk around at these events. Permanent structures are a major part of this congestion. These crowds also obscure shops and restaurants, hurting business.

There were several suggestions for enhancing performances and events on the Commons. More flexible space would allow major events without closing streets and could reduce congestion. Portable staging that could be built over plantings is an alternative to the current pavilions. It was noted, however, that any kind of staging must be able to hang signs, as many events could not happen without sponsors. Better materials for acoustic control should be looked into. A permanent information kiosk with heat was requested. Demarcated event spaces with dedicated utility bollards would assist greatly in organization. Event coordinators mentioned a need for water access during events. Events could be mapped out to structure where tents are to be located on the ground. Paper banners could be replaced with digital ones, and such a digital banner could be placed at the entrances to the Commons to attract visitors to particular events. It was stated that the Commons needs a good performance space that does not encourage loitering and looks artistic when not in use. Design should take into consideration the fact that the Apple Harvest and Chili Cook-Off, the two largest events on the Commons, draw 100 and 40 vendors, respectively.

Fire lanes pose problems for events, particularly if they were to be located in the center of the Commons. They are an obstacle to staging and limit where booths and tents can be placed. It was suggested that a meandering fire lane could still allow room for a stage.

Miscellaneous Issues
It was stated that the Commons should have a cohesive design, and should open up the central space and encourage people to move towards the center. Bank Alley was identified as a dead entrance that needs to be more inviting. The design should keep in mind auxiliary spaces such as Center Ithaca, Bank Alley, Home Dairy Alley, and the alley between the Green Street Garage and Center Ithaca, which has not been put to use. The narrow width of the Commons could pose a problem for design, and must be handled with delicacy. The 1970s design was called too “heavy”. However it might be desirable to retain certain limited elements (or memories) of the 1970s design as a part of an overall new design, to encourage an understanding and appreciation of downtown's
evolution and layering over time. Eliminating smoking or creating designated smoking areas should be considered, but should be done in such a way that does not encourage the congregation of smokers at the entrances.

The possibility of adding awnings to storefronts was suggested, though this must be done in a manner that does not interfere with fire access. Also, signs and awnings in front of stores are required by code to be higher than 6’8”; some do not meet this code and get walked into by tall and/or vision-impaired people at present. Making the space more child-friendly should be considered. One contributor suggested adding more webcams at the Commons, and said it could even increase security. It was requested that the design, when considering seasonality, think of rain as well as snow, as Ithaca gets both in large quantities.
APPENDIX 3:
Technical Memorandum: Utilities
Water Service:

The existing water line is a 16” cast iron pipe that is over 100 years old. This line runs the length of The Commons from Aurora Street to Cayuga Street and down Tioga Street to Seneca Street. This system is owned and maintained by the City of Ithaca.

This water main also extends down State Street, which is located just to the east of The Commons. As part of a recent construction project on East State Street, it was determined that the joints in this pipe should be reinforced and therefore a joint reinforcement treatment was installed at each joint (every 12 feet).

There are several issues to consider with this type of pipe:

1. There is extensive literature documenting calcification or scaling of iron pipe (see Figure 1) that causes a reduction in the interior diameter of the pipe and therefore a decrease in the volume and pressure capacity of the pipe. It should be noted that a recent core sample of the pipe did not show any significant calcification. However, the calcification could be present at other specific areas where the interior coating of the pipe is no longer protecting the inside surface of the pipe.

![Figure 1 – Calcification of Iron Pipe](image)

2. Cast iron pipe will become brittle over time and be more susceptible to breaking due to frost, loading, or other factors that may cause shifting of the pipe.

3. The AWWA guidelines reference the useful life span of cast iron pipe between 100-120 years. The pipe was installed circa 1903 putting it right within this window and therefore near the end of it’s expected life.

4. The City’s Water Division has indicated that they have not operated the existing valves in a long time because they are not sure if they will work properly and are afraid they may not be able to reopen them. In the event of a water main break, this could be a serious issue and the inability to close off a break could cause additional damage.

5. The type, size, and condition of each lateral from the water main to the various points of service along The Commons is largely an unknown. Most
likely, laterals have been replaced, added, and abandoned since the main was initially installed.

Based on these factors, it is our opinion that the water main within the limits of the project be replaced. The chances of a major break occurring that would cause damage to the surface features and require excavation and repair will increase significantly over the next 10-20 years as the life span of the pipe is exceeded. Repair / replacement of the water main within a newly renovated Commons is not desirable and would provide much more costly than replacing the main as part of this project.

Replacement of the laterals is also recommended to prevent repair and/or replacement in the near future and to provide adequate flow capacities to the buildings (e.g. fire protection flows). Replacement of the laterals will also allow for phasing of the project as discussed later in this report.

Three possible methods of replacement were investigated:

1. Replace the water main in kind with a new 16” main via standard excavation method.
2. Replace portions of the water main in kind with a new 16” main via standard excavation method and replace specific areas with pipe bursting method. This would keep specific areas from having to be excavated and allow certain surface features (e.g. trees) to remain. Due to the number of laterals, this method would be very tedious and would also cause significant disruption in use and ultimately is only recommended as a last resort if the line cannot be relocated.
3. Replace the water main with two new 12” (size assumed - to be determined in final design) mains via standard excavation method.

The replacement method is largely dependent on the surface streetscape option that is chosen. The option that is most cost effective and allows for the least disruption of service is the construction of one new water main alongside the existing main (method #1 above) and abandonment of the existing main.

A breakdown of the costs is attached correlating to the three surface streetscape options proposed.

**Sanitary Sewer:**

The existing sanitary line is primarily an 8” clay pipe. There is one small section of cast iron pipe. The sanitary line runs the length of The Commons from Aurora Street to Cayuga Street and about halfway down Tioga Street. The system is owned and maintained by the City of Ithaca.

The line has been televised by the City’s Sewer Division and they have prepared a report of their findings. We have reviewed the video and their report and these are summarized below:

1. Structurally, the sewer pipe appears to be in good condition.
2. There are two locations where the pipe is cracked and needs to be repaired.
3. There is one location where roots are growing through a joint in the pipe.
4. The manholes are brick-laid and in need of some repair / stabilization.
5. There are some offset joints and protruding laterals that could cause blockages / reduced capacity.

Overall, the sanitary sewer is in good shape but some repair is necessary and there is evidence (cracking, roots) that the structural integrity of the pipe may become compromised within the next 10-20 years.

This system is an excellent candidate for a method known as slip-lining. This process involves installing a new pipe within the inside diameter of the existing pipe. This will provide the pipe with the structural integrity of a new pipe without complete excavation and removal of the existing pipe. It does result in a slight reduction of capacity as the inside diameter of the pipe is slightly smaller but the required system capacity will still be maintained.

Rather than spending money on some specific spot repairs, for a relatively small amount more, the entire line can be upgraded. In addition to upgrading the sanitary line, reconstruction and sealing of the existing manholes is also recommended. The video appears to show that the laterals are in good condition, however due to the age of the system, we strongly recommend that the laterals be televised and repaired if necessary. A breakdown of the costs is attached.

This method also provides for very little disruption in service and can be performed regardless of the surface streetscape option.

Gas:

There are two existing gas mains – one on each side running the length of The Commons from Aurora Street to Cayuga Street. There is one gas main down Tioga Street from The Commons to Seneca Street. These gas mains are 4" low pressure steel pipes and are owned and operated by NYSEG.

The existing gas lines have two issues:
1. The steel pipes do not meet updated code requirements as they are not cathodic protected to prevent / limit corrosion.
2. The existing low pressure lines do not have capacity to handle any significant future development.

We met with NYSEG on October 19, 2009 to discuss the project and what options are available. NYSEG indicated that the lines will need to be replaced and they will coordinate that replacement with this project.

Several options for replacement of the existing gas lines were discussed and are summarized below:
1. The low pressure lines can be replaced in kind with new low pressure lines. The new low pressure lines could possibly be upgraded to provide some additional capacity on The Commons. NYSEG needs to determine if this is feasible.

2. A medium pressure line or lines could be installed. These could either be installed via conventional trench excavation methods or by slip-lining (see sanitary sewer section for description of slip-lining) within the existing low pressure pipes. NYSEG has indicated that they have medium pressure in the vicinity of The Commons. Installation of a medium pressure system on The Commons is highly recommended to provide capacity for future development. However, one issue is that the medium pressure lines will require a regulator be installed at each lateral before the service enters the building. A photo of a typical regulator is shown in Figure 2.

3. Another option that is being considered is connecting the buildings along the south of The Commons to a medium pressure line in the rear of these buildings. This would hide the regulators behind the buildings, allow for additional development on the south side of The Commons, and relieve some demand off of the low pressure system still feeding the north side. NYSEG is going to further investigate the feasibility of this option.

NYSEG is going to research whether these regulators must be located on the outside wall of the buildings or whether they can be placed inside the building or underground and vented to the outside. Locating the regulators on the outside of the buildings is highly undesirable due to aesthetics.

Ultimately, replacement of the existing gas mains is a necessity due to safety and bringing the lines up to current codes. Replacing them with new low pressure mains does
not provide for future development of The Commons and limits the type of businesses that may be attracted to The Commons. Installation of a new medium pressure line or lines may have the aesthetic drawback of the regulators. We will continue to work with NYSEG to investigate all possible options and recommend the best possible solution.

If the gas mains are replaced with two new low pressure lines in the same location as the existing lines, then it is assumed that most of the existing laterals can be reused. If a new medium pressure line is installed then it is assumed that all laterals will need to be replaced.

A discussion of the phasing and costs as they relate to the different streetscape options is included later in this report.

Storm:

There are two existing storm lines – one on each side running the length of the Commons from Aurora Street to Cayuga Street. There is one storm line down Tioga Street to Seneca Street. Existing mapping and testimony indicate that these storm lines are mostly 12” concrete pipes (some may be plastic or metal). The system is owned and maintained by the City of Ithaca.

The lines have been televised by the City’s Sewer Division and we have reviewed the video and our observations are summarized below:

1. Overall the storm system is in good condition but needs to be cleaned / jetted.
2. There are several pipes (assumed rain leaders) that protrude into the storm main far enough to cause possible blockages. These should be cut back.
3. There is a section that has a sag in the line and does not provide positive drainage. This should be repaired.

Based on our review of the video, we do not feel a complete replacement of the storm system is absolutely required. However, the proposed streetscape improvements may significantly change the surface drainage patterns, which would require new storm structures. Depending on the extent of the streetscape improvements and the resulting change in drainage, a new storm system may be warranted. If the drainage patterns are not changed, the existing system can remain with some cleaning and spot repairs.

Communications:

As of the date of this report, we have contacted Verizon regarding the condition of their conduits within The Commons. The following information has been provided by Verizon:

- Verizon owns a lot of conduits through The Commons since it is a corridor to their main hub.
- The specific conditions of the existing conduits is unknown. Some of the conduits are older tile duct and some are newer PVC pipes.
The older tile duct conduits will not withstand construction equipment and will need to be replaced.

Verizon will perform test pits to examine the condition of the existing conduits.

Verizon has indicated that the limits of the tile duct / PVC conduits is unknown. Further investigation is needed to determine these limits.

**Power Distribution Systems:**

The NYSEG power distribution system is in good condition. The system will need to be retained if any renovations occur to The Commons. The system could possibly be relocated (with exception of the underground transformer vault) if required by any proposed renovation. Relocation would be difficult due to the downstream loads requiring an un-interrupted electric service (e.g. street lighting and traffic signals).

The City of Ithaca owns and maintains the power distribution system that is dedicated to The Commons. The system consists of three separate metered electrical services. Two of which are original to The Commons. The third service was installed in 1993. The 1993 service has a sub panel fed from it that is located near the Bernie Miller Pavilion. The services were installed to feed outlets, signs, fountains, and tree lighting. The power distribution system is in good condition. The branch circuit panels have several minor issues that should be addressed. Mainly, the installation of covers for un-used circuit breakers and the re-installation of a front cover. If the location of the existing services is retained, they can be re-used for a proposed renovation.

The power distribution system is in good condition and will only need to be replaced as warranted by the power demands of the proposed renovations.

**Site Lighting:**

The site lighting fixtures were replaced in 2003. They are in good condition. Power is supplied through an underground conduit system. The fixtures are fed from the NYSEG’s underground transformer vault. The existing conduit system could be utilized if a revised fixture layout is required for the proposed renovation. The lighting system will only need to be replaced if proposed renovations dictate.

**Fiber Optic Duct Bank:**

A fiber optic duct bank was installed at the same time as the site lighting. The duct bank extends the entire length of East State Street and Tioga Street. Handholes are located periodically throughout The Commons. The duct bank is currently unused and could be utilized.

**Fire Alarm:**
A municipal fire alarm pullstation is located on East State Street near the intersection of Tioga St. An underground conduit connects the pullstation into the municipal fire alarm system via a manhole at the north end of Tioga Street. The pullstation is cast into a concrete wall. The pullstation could be relocated if required.

Pay Telephones:

Banks of pay telephones are located in several locations throughout The Commons. Generally they are in poor to fair condition. Pay telephones have become almost obsolete in recent years due to the popularity of cellular telephones. Consideration should be given to the thought of eliminating, or reducing the quantity of pay telephones in any future renovation project.
ASSUMPTIONS:

The costs for each streetscape option were prepared based on the following assumptions:

Water:
- We assumed that most of the water laterals (80-90%) will need to be replaced due to age, condition, and/or capacity
- Option 1 proposes a dual water main system, which reduces the length of water laterals that need to be replaced.
- Options 2 and 3 propose a single water main, which means the length of water laterals that need to be replaced is greater than in Option 1.

Sanitary sewer:
- The cost to repair the problem areas in the existing line is approximately $40,000. The cost of slip-lining the entire sewer line is approximately $73,000, therefore slip-lining is recommended for each option.
- The manhole repair is required whether slip-lining or spot repair is chosen and is included for each option.
- We assumed that some minor sanitary lateral repair will be required and included a line item for this under each option.

Gas:
- Option 1 proposes to replace the gas lines in kind with a dual low pressure system. Under this option, we have assumed that the existing gas laterals can remain but there will be some repairs / upgrades necessary to some (30-40%) of these laterals.
- Options 2 and 3 propose a new medium pressure gas main, which will require new laterals. This cost does not include new regulators as the cost of regulators is to be determined based on where they can be located.

Storm:
- Options 1 and 3 include new storm sewer system on each side of The Commons.
- Option 2 includes a new single storm sewer system near the center.

Communications:
- Since the exact condition of the Verizon conduits is not clearly defined, the cost associated with any repair / replacement of these conduits is not included.
- The City should discuss with Verizon whose responsibility these costs will be.

Other:
- Since the power distribution, site lighting, and fiber optic duct bank are in good condition, no costs are associated with these utilities.
- No costs are included for relocation of fire alarm or new pay phones.
SUMMARY OF COSTS:

A summary of the costs is shown in the attached table and a detailed breakdown of each streetscape option is attached:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Option</th>
<th>Cost</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Option 1 – Minimal</td>
<td>$1,007,300.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Option 2 – Asymmetric</td>
<td>$801,300.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Option 3 – Eclectic</td>
<td>$913,300.00</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
ITHACA COMMONS
UTILITIES

PHASING ANALYSIS

OCTOBER 20, 2009
**General Phasing Comments:**

It is imperative that the project be phased longitudinally along The Commons with phases split in the north / south direction. This will allow for the least amount of disruptions to utility services while reconnecting service from existing lines to new lines.

If the project is phased in sections along The Commons, the utility services will be interrupted each time a new phase needs to be implemented.

**Option 1 Phasing:**

Phase 1 allows for all utility work to be done along Tioga Street first. Permanent connections can be made along Seneca Street. Temporary connections can be made where utilities from Tioga Street meet utilities along The Commons.

Phase 2 allows for all the new utility work on the south side of The Commons. This includes the new storm, water, and gas lines as well as the slip-lining of the sanitary sewer line. All services (laterals) to the buildings on the south end of The Commons can be connected during this phase. Once all the mains and laterals are installed, the service connections can be made within the buildings and the new utilities brought into service.

During Phase 3 the gas, water, and storm can be constructed on the north side of The Commons and all service connections can be made to the buildings along the north side. Final connections can also be made to the utilities on Tioga Street. Once all the mains and laterals are installed, the service connections can be made within the buildings and the new utilities brought into service. Finally, the existing water main can be abandoned.

This option is the simplest option for phasing of utility construction as laterals are not required to cross over phases.

**Option 2 Phasing:**

Phase 1 allows for all utility work to be done along Tioga Street first. Permanent connections can be made along Seneca Street. Temporary connections can be made where utilities from Tioga Street meet utilities along The Commons.

We recommend that all Phase 2 include work along the entire north side of The Commons. Phase 2 allows for new laterals to be installed from the buildings along the north side and extended to the southern edge of the work area.

During Phase 3 the new water, gas, and storm lines can be installed along with the slip-lining of the sanitary sewer while the existing utilities are still in operation. New laterals can be installed from the south buildings to the new utilities and laterals can be extended from Phase 2 to the new utilities. Then service connections can be made within all
buildings and the new utilities brought into service. Final connections can also be made to the utilities on Tioga Street and the existing utilities can then be removed / abandoned.

This option is relatively simple but does require the coordination of laterals between Phase 2 and Phase 3.

**Option 3 Phasing:**

Phase 1 allows for all utility work to be done along Tioga Street first. Permanent connections can be made along Seneca Street. Temporary connections can be made where utilities from Tioga Street meet utilities along The Commons.

We recommend that the north and south areas be constructed first in Phase 2 and the center section be constructed in Phase 3. During Phase 2, the proposed storm lines can be installed on each side of The Commons and all new laterals can be installed from the buildings to the limits of work on each side.

Phase 3 includes the construction of the new water and gas lines along with the slip-lining of the sanitary sewer while the existing utilities are still in operation. New laterals can be installed from Phase 2 to the new utilities. Then service connections can be made within all buildings and the new utilities brought into service. Final connections can also be made to the utilities on Tioga Street and the existing utilities can then be removed / abandoned.

As with Option 2, this phasing is relatively simple but requires coordination of laterals between Phase 2 and Phase 3.
APPENDIX 4:
Community Workshop 2 PowerPoint
Team

**Mark Dawson, Gina Ford, Susannah Ross**  
**SASAKI ASSOCIATES**  
Lead Consultants: Landscape Architecture, Urban Design, Architecture, and Graphic Design/Wayfinding

**Nate Tompkins**  
**CLOUGH HARBOUR & ASSOCIATES**  
Civil, Structural, MEP, Geotechnical, Survey

**HLB Lighting Design**, Lighting  
**CMS Collaborative**, Fountain Design
Public Participation

July 2009
Initial Public Workshop

October 2009
Concept Alternatives

December 2009
Preliminary Design
The Commons is ...

- a vital commercial district
- the cultural heart of the City
- in need of major repairs and upgrades
Existing Condition of the Commons

Lack of Openness & Visibility

Deteriorating Surfaces & Structures

Aging Utilities

Cluttered Furnishings

Inflexible Spaces and Seating
How did we get Public Feedback?

Public Presentation

Stakeholder Input
- Downtown Merchants
- Event Coordinators
- Downtown Employees
- Seniors & People with Disabilities
- Downtown Residents
- Non Profits
- Residents of Surrounding Neighborhoods
- Mobile Vendors
- Minorities
- Chamber/Tourism Board
- Homeless Services/ Red Cross/ Friendship Center

Surveys & Interviews
- Shoppers
- Playground Users
- Cornell/IC/TC3 Students
- Ithaca College Students
- Visitors
- Library Users
- Bus Users
- High School Students
- Main Pavilion Users
- Non-Users

Feedback via Email and City Web Site
What did we hear?

Safety/Security
- Increase visibility
- Increase police presence
- Improve lighting

Surface Conditions & Amenities
- Repair/replace uneven, dangerous paved surfaces
- Remove/replace pavilions – consider more transparent, flexible structures
- Keep a playground on the Commons
- Consider a water feature for children's play
- Consider heating and heated sidewalks
- Improve infrastructure and layout for events
- Continue to offer seating and shade

Access
- Improve service access to buildings on the Commons
- Provide drop-off areas for buses and vans
- Consider valet parking
- Improve facilities for bicycle storage
- Allow for better pedestrian movement across the space
- Better plan for snow removal
- Maintain access during construction
- Design for universal accessibility
- Provide better signage in and around the Commons
What did we hear?

**Budget**
- Keep **costs** and sources of **financing** in mind—the City doesn’t have the funds right now
- Design should be simple and **not prohibitively expensive**

**Mix of Retail**
- Add stores with **reasonable prices** and basic needs

**Art and History**
- Maintain and enhance quality of **historic architecture**
- Consider **design guidelines** for storefronts
- Bring back **historical plaques, materials, and objects**
- Consider **iconic art** for the points of entry to the Commons

**Planting**
- Consider **lower planting beds** that do not block visibility and movement
- To the extent possible, **preserve existing trees**
- Add **seasonal planting** displays for color and variety
Circulation and Access

One-way to Two-way Conversions

1. Two-way Traffic on Seneca, Green and Cayuga, 2. Two-way Traffic on Aurora north of Seneca Street
Circulation and Access

Allow Limited Access to Vehicular Traffic on Commons (Options 2 and 3)

1. Gate / removable bollards at east and west ends, 2. Limited hours of service access, and, 3. Potential to expand in future to some public transit / trolley option.
Circulation and Access
A Northern Counterpoint to Home Dairy Alley
Circulation and Access

Design Access Points for Pedestrians First

1. Special Paving in Crosswalks, 2. Bump-outs to narrow road, define parking lane and provide pedestrian refuge, 3. Defined drop-off and service loading zones outside of intersection
Humanize Surrounding Streetscape

1. Remove Concrete Planters with small trees on Cayuga.  
2. Create a streetscape more reliant on seasonal plantings, flower pots and banners if vaults limit tree planting potential.  
3. Widen sidewalks on Seneca and Green Streets.

Circulation and Access
Circulation and Access
Realignment State Street to Create Pedestrian / Gateway Plaza
Circulation and Access

Improve access and amenities at drop-off locations
Accessibility

Repairs and upgrades to the Commons will strive to create a universally accessible environment, exceeding basic compliance to existing codes:

- Uneven, cracked and deteriorating pavement surfaces

- Inaccessible structures and play equipment

- Obstructions to movement and crowding during events

- Drop-off and pick-up locations
Accessibility

[Map showing accessibility of locations]

- Accessible
- Partially Accessible
- Not Accessible
Utilities
West Commons

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>utility</th>
<th>issues</th>
<th>recommendation</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>SEWER</td>
<td>good shape generally several cracks in need of repair roots growing through joint brick laid manholes need repair slip lining upgrade not much more costly than spot repairs</td>
<td>upgrade</td>
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<tr>
<td>GAS</td>
<td>doesn't meet code limited capacity restricts growth</td>
<td>install new line (TBD medium vs. low pressure)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>WATER</td>
<td>lead joints cast iron line at end of lifespan inoperable valves real chance of water main break</td>
<td>install new line</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>STORM</td>
<td>good condition needs cleaning but may not work with new design</td>
<td>TBD</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
### Utilities

#### East Commons

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Utility</th>
<th>Issues</th>
<th>Recommendation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>SEWER</td>
<td>good shape generally several cracks in need of repair roots growing through joint brick laid manholes need repair slip lining upgrade not much more costly than spot repairs</td>
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<td>GAS</td>
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<td><strong>install new line</strong> (TBD medium vs. low pressure)</td>
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<td>WATER</td>
<td>lead joints cast iron line at end of lifespan inoperable valves real chance of water main break</td>
<td><strong>install new line</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>STORM</td>
<td>good condition needs cleaning but may not work with new design</td>
<td><strong>TBD</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Utilities
Typical Section through Commons (State Street)
Utilities
Typical Section through Commons (Tioga Street)
Impact of Utility Upgrade - Plan

SEWER
GAS
WATER
STORM
Impact of Utility Upgrade - Plan
Tree Value Summary

* Lower value trees were either considered in "fair" health by the City Forester or were noted in public input as limiting visibility and/or creating a nuisance by litter.
Tree Relocation

TREE SIZE/COST

3-7 in. = $1,000 -$2,000

9 -12 in. = $5,000 -$7,000

14-16 in. = $20,000-$22,000

16-18 in. = $24,000 -$26,000

22-24 in. = $30,000 -$40,000

COST TO MOVE ALL TREES

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>#</th>
<th>Size</th>
<th>Cost/unit</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>28</td>
<td>3-7 in.</td>
<td>$1,500</td>
<td>$42,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>31</td>
<td>9 -12 in.</td>
<td>$6,000</td>
<td>$186,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>14-16 in.</td>
<td>$21,000</td>
<td>$126,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>16-18 in.</td>
<td>$25,000</td>
<td>$50,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>22-24 in.</td>
<td>$30,000</td>
<td>$30,000</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Total cost

On-site $434,000
Off-site $540,000
CONCEPT ALTERNATIVES
Utility Alternatives

1. Minimal

2. Asymmetric

3. Streetscape

Existing Conditions

- Green: Amenity Zone
- Gray: Circulation
- Red: Utility Trench
Proposed Utilities

Option 1 – Minimal

- New Water
- Repair Storm in Place
- Rebuild LP Gas in Place
- Sanitary (to reline)

- New Water
- Repair Storm in Place
- Rebuild LP Gas in Place
Option 2 - Asymmetric

Proposed Utilities

- New Water
- New MP Gas in Place
- Storm Repaired in Place
- Sanitary (to reline)
Option 3 - Streetscape

Proposed Utilities

- New Water in Place
- New MP Gas
- Storm Repaired in Place
- Sanitary (to reline)
Concept Diagrams

1. Minimal

2. Asymmetric

3. Eclectic Streetscape

Legend:
- Green: Amenity Zone
- Gray: Circulation
Option 1 – Minimal

Inspiration
Option 1 - Minimal

Concept

Amenity Zone
Circulation

18' 30' 18'
Option 1 - Minimal
Option 1 - Minimal
Special Elements
Option 1 - Minimal

Site Elements
Option 1 - Minimal

Seating

- Zone for Moveable Tables and Chairs
- Existing Planter
- Zone for Moveable Tables and Chairs
- Fixed Seatwalls
- Zone for Moveable Tables and Chairs
Option 1 - Minimal

Lighting
Option 1
Option 1 - Minimal

Bank Alley

- Gateway Art Element
- Existing Planters
- New curbed planters
- Art
- Trolley Tracks
Option 1 - Bank Alley
OPTION 2
Option 2 - Asymmetric

Inspiration
Option 2 - Asymmetric

Concept

Amenity Zone
Circulation

35' 15' 15'
Option 2 - Asymmetric
Option 2 – Asymmetric

Special Elements

Vendor / Kiosk

Art and Performance Pedestal

Pavilion / Performance

Water / Play

Art and Performance Pedestal
Option 2 – Asymmetric

Site Elements

Flush Lawn Planter
Art and Performance Pedestal
Flush Lawn Planter
Raised Planter
Kiosk / Vendor
Moveable Planters
Art and Performance Pedestal
Option 2 – Asymmetric
Seating

Bench
Zone for Moveable Tables and Chairs
Fixed Seatwall
Bench
Fixed Seatwall
Zone for Moveable Tables and Chairs
Zone for Moveable Tables and Chairs
Option 2 – Asymmetric

Lighting
Option 2 - Asymmetric

Precedents - Other Asymmetric Promenades
Option 2 - Asymmetric
Precedents - Sculptural Planters, Seating and Pedestals
Option 2 – Asymmetric

Bank Alley

Bank Alley Gateway and Performance Pavilion

Lawn Panel with Trees
Option 2 – Asymmetric

Bank Alley

- Cayuga Lake Fountain and Water Play
- Trolley Tracks
Option 2 – Bank Alley
OPTION 3
Option 3 - Eclectic Streetscape

Inspiration
Option 3 - Eclectic Streetscape

Concept

15'  5'  25'  15'  5'

Amenity Zone
Circulation
Option 3 - Eclectic Streetscape
Option 3 - Eclectic Streetscape
Special Elements

Art
Vendor / Kiosk
Shade Structure
Play
Water
Option 3 - Eclectic Streetscape

Site Elements

Art / Kiosk
Planted Area
Area of Special Paving
Vendor / Kiosk
Planted Area
Option 3 - Eclectic Streetscape

Seating

Zone for Moveable Tables and Chairs

Impromptu Moveable Tables and Chairs

Fixed Bench

Zone for Moveable Tables and Chairs

Fixed Bench

Zone for Moveable Tables and Chairs
Option 3 - Eclectic Streetscape

Site Elements
Option 3 - Eclectic Streetscape

Precedents - Paving
Option 3 - Eclectic Streetscape

Bank Alley

Gateway Art Element

Shade Structure with Seating

Shade Structure with Seating

Curbed Planter

Trolley Tracks
Option 3 - Eclectic Streetscape

Bank Alley

- Play Elements (Big)
- Play Elements (Medium)
- Play Elements (Little)
- Trolley Tracks
Option 3 - Eclectic Streetscape

Bank Alley
## Comparison of Options

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Existing Conditions</th>
<th>OPTION 1 Minimal</th>
<th>OPTION 2 Asymmetric</th>
<th>OPTION 3 Eclectic Streetscape</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Advantages to Retail</td>
<td>POOR</td>
<td>MODERATE</td>
<td>GOOD</td>
<td>GOOD</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Everyday Comfort</td>
<td>MODERATE</td>
<td>GOOD</td>
<td>GOOD</td>
<td>GOOD</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Special Events</td>
<td>POOR</td>
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<td>Flexible Spaces</td>
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<td>Access for Utility Maintenance</td>
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<td>Access for Building Maintenance</td>
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<td>Access to buildings during construction</td>
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<td>Restaurants/outdoor alcohol</td>
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<td>Phasing</td>
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</table>
Option 1
Minimal

Option 2
Asymmetric

Option 3
Eclectic Streetscape
APPENDIX 5:
Community Workshop 3 PowerPoint
July 2009
Initial Public Workshop

October 2009
Concept Alternatives

January 2010
Recommendation to Council
February 2010
Respond to Council Feedback

Sustainability – Options for the Commons
Improve and streamline recycling amenities
- Use native plant materials
- Use porous paving

Performance Spaces – Proposed
100sf of covered space
2,000sf of audience space
150sf of covered space
2,000sf of audience space
1,500sf of performance space
900sf of covered space
6,500sf of audience space
2,500sf of performance space
1,000sf of covered space
2,000sf of audience space

Seating Variety - Option 3
- Private movable Tables and Chairs
- Partially movable Tables and Chairs
- Movable Tables and Chairs

Option 3 – Introduce More Partially movable and movable Seating Options
- 16%
- 46%
- 25%
- 23%

Play – Option 2
- Sculpture / Interpretive Play
- Sculpture / Interpretive Play
- Water / Interpretive Play
- Sculpture / Interpretive Play

Install sculptural play elements throughout State Street and a water play element at Bank Alley.

Play – Sculptural
- Marble and Bronze play area of the Pearl Street Mall with climbable snail and frog.

Play – Option 2
Preliminary Design Concept
Inspiration
Amenity Zone
Circulation

Concept for State/ MLK Jr. Street

15' 15'
5' 5'
25'
April 2010
Preliminary Design
Concept for State / MLK Jr. Street

- Movable Seating
- Catenary Lighting
- Shade Structure
- Bench
- Continuous Trench of Structural Soil
- Play
Concept for State / MLK Jr. Street
Concept for Bank Alley

- Bernie Milton Pavilion
- Lawn
- Seatwall
- Carl Sagan Planet Walk, typ.
- Shaded Seating
- Reused Fountain
- Granite Paving
- Water Element / Seatwall
Concept for Bank Alley

- Bernie Milton Pavilion
- Lawn
- Old Fountain Granite Paving—Resurfaced
- Shaded Seating
- Water Element / Seatwall
- 10’x10’ Vendor Location
- Sagan Planet Walk
- Old Fountain Granite Paving—Resurfaced
- Fountain Mechanical
Sustainability
Sustainability at Sasaki

- Our Watertown office is one of the oldest LEED EB Gold certified building in the US
- 100+ members of our firm are LEED APs
- Our office operates as a living laboratory of green design.
- Understanding and addressing environmental concerns are hallmarks of the work of our firm.
- We advance the limits of green design with innovative, interdisciplinary design concepts.

ethics of our practice
Sustainability at Sasaki

our working principles

- Energy & Atmosphere
- Transportation
- Habitat
- Water Resources
- Materials
- Integrated Environments

Manulife Boston

MIT Stata Center
Sustainability – Options for the Commons

Use dark sky compliant lighting fixtures and techniques

Use LED light fixtures

the power of LED
Sustainability – Options for the Commons

Reuse granite from original fountain

Reuse existing pavement as base course
Sustainability – Options for the Commons

Improve and streamline recycling amenities

Reuse roof water, captured runoff and grey water for irrigation or fountain

Use porous paving

Use urban tolerant plant materials
Sustainability – Options for the Commons

Salvaged Glass or Locally-made (Corning) Glass for Pavilions

Locally-harvested Black Locust Lumber for site furnishings, seating and structures
Sustainability

Streamlined Trash and Recycling (not shown)

Dark Sky Compliant Lighting

Rain Garden

Durable Paving Surfaces

Locally Available Materials

Reuse of Demolition Materials as Aggregate Base Course

Continuous Stormwater Detention Zone as Irrigation
Utilities
Existing Utilities

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>utility</th>
<th>issues</th>
<th>recommendation</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>SEWER</td>
<td>good shape generally several cracks in need of repair roots growing through joints brick laid manholes need repair slip lining upgrade not much more costly than spot repairs</td>
<td>upgrade in place</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>GAS</td>
<td>doesn't meet code limited capacity restricts growth</td>
<td>install new line (TBD medium vs. low pressure)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>WATER</td>
<td>lead joints cast iron line at end of lifespan inoperable valves real chance of water main break</td>
<td>install new line</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>STORM</td>
<td>good condition needs cleaning</td>
<td>OK (coordination with new drainage req'd)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Proposed Utilities – State / MLK Jr. Street

- New Water in Place
- New LP or MP Gas (TBD)
- Storm Repaired in Place
- Sanitary (to reline)
Proposed Utilities – Bank Alley

- Storm Repaired in Place
- Sanitary (to reline)
- New Water in Place
- New LP or MP Gas (TBD)
Lighting
Overall Lighting Diagram
Catenaries / Cable-hung Lighting

Pavilion Down Lights

Art Spot Lights

Ground Lighting
Lighting – State / MLK Jr. Street

Pavilion Down Lights
Catenary Lighting
Ground Lights
Art Spot Lights
Lighting – Bank Alley

- Pavilion Down Lighting
- Tall Grove Lights
- Water Feature Lighting

Pavilion and Lawn Down Lighting
Taller Grove Lights
Water Feature
Furnishings
Furnishings

Trash & Recycling Receptacles

Drinking Fountain

Bike Rack

Newspaper Box
Furnishings

Information Kiosks

- time
- temperature
- community bulletin board
- Commons directory
## Total Number Seats – Existing vs. Proposed

### Existing

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Seating Capacity</th>
<th>Seating Type</th>
<th>Notes</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>81</td>
<td>fixed benches</td>
<td>27 benches, 6’ long (base plan provided by City)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>540</td>
<td>Seat wall</td>
<td>9 planters @ 120’ average on State Street</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>270</td>
<td>Seat wall</td>
<td>6 planters @ 90’ average on Bank Alley</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12</td>
<td>fixed seats</td>
<td>at chess tables</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>50</td>
<td>movable chairs*</td>
<td>20 at fountain and 30 at locust grove</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>953</td>
<td>Total</td>
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</table>

* Does not include approximately 50 seats associated with restaurants.

### Proposed

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Seating Capacity</th>
<th>Seating Type</th>
<th>Notes</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>400</td>
<td>fixed benches</td>
<td>30 benches, 15’ long, assuming 2’ per person</td>
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<tr>
<td>100</td>
<td>Seat wall</td>
<td>at entrances / gateway art elements</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>250</td>
<td>partially movable</td>
<td>at/near amenity strips</td>
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<tr>
<td>250</td>
<td>movable chairs*</td>
<td>chairs at 80 tables</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1000</td>
<td>Total</td>
<td></td>
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</tbody>
</table>

* Does not include seating associated with restaurants; the new plan allows for restaurant seating to expand greatly.
Proposed Seating – Fixed
Proposed Seating – Partially Movable
Certainly, providing movable furniture opens up the possibility that it might be stolen. However, if the area is supervised by an attendant, or if the furniture is located near another amenity or activity where staff is present, then vandalism and theft become much less likely.

- Project for Public Spaces
Seating – State/MLK Jr. Street

- Impromptu Moveable Tables and Chairs
- Zone for Outdoor Dining
- Semi-moveable Tables and Chairs
- Fixed Bench
Vendors and Special Events
Vendor Diagram – Daily Use / Leasable Spaces

- **WATER / ELEC BOLLARD**
- **10'X10' VENDOR WITH WATER & ELECTRIC**
- **PERMANENT STAGE (25'X40')**

- **Fire Engine**
- **Clear Zone (20' wide minimum)**
Vendor Diagram – Special Event Layout

- **WATER / ELEC BOLLARD**
- **10’X10’ VENDOR WITH WATER & ELECTRIC**
- **10’X10’ VENDOR WITHOUT WATER & ELECTRIC**
- **8’X8’ VENDOR WITH ROOF AND WATER & ELECTRIC**
- **TEMPORARY STAGE (9’X18’)**
- **PERMANENT STAGE (25’X40’)**
Vendor – Utility Bollard
Pavilions + Performance
Performance Spaces – Existing

- **Covered Space** (2,300sf total)
- **Audience Zone** (12,100sf total)
Performance Spaces – Proposed

Covered Space (2,250sf total)

Audience Zone (15,000sf total)
Bernie Milton Pavilion – Comparison

**Existing Structure**
- 900sf Roof
- 24x28 Performance (Raised)

**Proposed Structures**
- 1,050sf Roof
- 25x40 Performance (Raised)
Bernie Milton Pavilion – Proposed
Bernie Milton Pavilion – Proposed

Stage

Louvered Backdrop

Lawn

Hedge

Pkg

East Seneca Street

Bldg

18'

12'

20'

Ramp Ramp

Canopy

Stair

Lawn
State Street Pavilions – Comparison

Existing Structures

- 400 SF Roof
  - 10x10 Performance (Flush)
- 500 SF Roof
  - 11x15 Performance

Total Roof: 1,400sf
Total Performance: 430sf

Proposed Structures (3 Similar)

- 400 SF Roof
  - 10x18 Performance (Flush)

Total SF: 1,200 SF
Total Performance: 540sf
State/MLK Jr. Street Pavilions
State/MLK Jr. Street Pavilions

Plan

Section

Dimensions: 10' x 18'
Play and Water
Play and Water – Proposed
Play and Water – Proposed
Wood – Sculptural Play
Metal – Sculptural Play
Stone – Sculptural Play
Water – Bank Alley

Portland, Oregon
Bank Alley – Water Play