

Winter Island Park Summary

The Winter Island Park Master Planning process began in December of 2010 with the City of Salem's Department of Planning and Community Development selecting The Cecil Group of Boston, Massachusetts to assist the City and community through an extensive in depth planning process consisting of four main tasks including:

1. Establishing the Master Plan Context
2. Establishing the Park Program
3. Establishing the Park Vision and
4. Implementation Strategies
5. Formulation of a Draft Master Plan
6. Preparation of the Final Master Plan

The entire process was estimated to take approximately five months and would include several meetings. Four meetings with a qualified team of professional consultants and city representatives; four meetings with an organized Winter Island Park Committee made up of local residents, businesses owners and community leaders; a meeting with the mayor's office and finally, three public meetings have been held to allow citizens to review and provide valuable input during key steps in the planning process. During these meetings, various products have been developed and distributed to the city and public for review including: meeting memorandums, several draft programs, and color graphic plans including the Draft Master Plan Concept.

To date, the draft master plan concept represents hundreds of hours of analysis and input that have guided the development of the primary goals and park program including the following:

- Enhancing the historic structures and Fort Pickering
- Providing accessible paths and walks to allow visitors to experience the entire park safely
- Providing a safe and enjoyable year round park for all users
- Providing adequate parking
- Creating a park which is financially sustainable
- Developing a stronger connection to the water
- Initiating an environmentally sensitive approach
- Providing organized and adequate space for events
- Including management of all activities year round

Other important elements and program uses which have been discussed in depth include the short and long term use and location of RV's and parking, along with the restoration of the historic USCG Hangar and Barracks buildings. The RV's have been identified as a significant revenue generator for the City while also generating environmental and aesthetic concerns. Parking and traffic must be appropriately accommodated for all uses while also providing easy accessibility into the park and harmonizing safely with pedestrian activities. The USCG Hangar and Barracks buildings are momentous along with Fort Pickering and their restoration must be well planned for immediate short term action and long term sustainability.

The final phase of the master planning process is scheduled to be completed by late June. During this phase, the consultant team will review, evaluate and implement all final input and research which will establish the Final Park Master Plan document consisting of the graphic master plan, executive summary, phasing implementation strategies, a use matrix, along with park goals and the final use program.

The Cecil Group