

# Recommendations for Irvington Town Commons

Commons Development Committee

Fran Westbrook, Chair \* Cay Bradley \* Lara Brown \* Karen Feuerman \*  
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Recommendation 1: The committee is aware that town council is considering the construction of a storage building, sooner rather than later, and a future new town office. The survey strongly indicates a preference for any and all buildings to be relegated to the North Commons, leaving the Main Commons open and green which is also strongly indicated. Therefore the CDC feels it is logical to focus only on the Main Commons.

## Support:

- Discussions at town council meetings.
- Written responses on surveys indicating North Commons should be the area to build on.
- Focus group discussion encouraging buildings on the North Commons, not the Central Commons.

**Recommendation 2:** The continuation of the monthly Farmers' Market, as managed by the Village Improvement Association, is a popular seasonal event. The CDC recommends that a permanent structure to facilitate this type of event NOT be built on the Main Commons to reflect the above stated preference. Additionally, it is recommended that the field's drainage issues be addressed to provide a better overall public experience.

**Support:**

- Nearly seventy-nine percent of people who selected at least one reason they, or a member of their household, had visited the Irvington Town Commons, had done so for a VIA event, including the Farmers' Market.
- Fifty-eight percent of the people who responded Yes or No to items (or on the electronic survey, ranked an item 5 or higher) said "yes" to a farmers' market facility.
- Nearly eighty-five percent of the people who ranked a farmers' market facility in their response ranked it in their top five.
  - NOTE: The committee discussed the possibility that a "yes" or top 5 ranking for the farmers' market facility might reflect a desire to continue the farmers' market not an actual desire for a permanent structure.

**Recommendation 3:** The overriding vision is to keep the Main Commons open and green for public use. Many residents indicated a strong desire for shade trees and gardens. The CDC recommends utilizing the inclusion of "memorial trees" to provide much needed shade, and to install and/or augment existing gardens for visual color/interest.

**Support:**

- Nearly 53 percent of respondents indicated they would like to see shade on the Commons.
- Nearly 49 percent of respondents indicated they would like to see gardens on the Commons.
- Nearly 45 percent of respondents indicated they would like to see wild flower gardens on the Commons.
- Write-in or focus group comments included:
  - Leave it alone, preserve OPEN space
  - Openness and simplicity are very appealing and iconic in a small town
  - Love openness

**Recommendation 4: The CDC recommends that plans for the Main Commons should include the costs of ongoing maintenance.**

**Support:**

- "One needs to understand costs before saying 'I want this.' One needs to understand maintenance and liability. To tax the many for the wants of a few is unjust. Residents should not be forced to pay for the wants of tourists and a few families with children."
- "Whatever is done, that it be done with a keen eye to a pleasing aesthetic. And that maintenance be a top priority."
- "Garden maintenance issues are HUGE."

**Recommendation 5: A new playground was a notable response, citing concerns for location and equipment safety. The CDC recommends a new play area be included in future planning.**

**Support:**

- Nearly 51 percent of respondents indicated they would like to see playground equipment and play areas on the survey.
- Written responses on surveys indicating safety concerns with equipment
  - "Would have gone more if the facility was safe and upgraded."
  - "As a young family in the area with 2 little ones it would be nice to have updated playground area with picnic areas to hold small events or enjoy with the family."
  - "the playground could use improvement."
- Focus group discussion on location and safety concerns related to placement (in the curve on Chesapeake Drive) and the equipment (metal).

Recommendation 6: The CDC recommends town council seek advice from a professional with experience in managing the procurement process of public space planning.

Support:

- Committee's acknowledgement that no members have experience with public space planning procurements.
- Committee's acknowledgement that the procurement process sets the stage for the work, missteps in the procurement process could be costly.

Recommendation 7: The CDC recommends consulting a professional landscape architect to design and implement a plan.

Support:

- Committee's acknowledgement that designing and implementing a plan will require expertise in landscape, land use, drainage, etc.
- Committee's acknowledgement that mistakes in design or implementation could be costly.

Recommendation 8: The CDC recommends town council support an open Town Hall meeting to share with the community these recommendations and probable next steps. We recommend this be scheduled for mid-to-late October.

Recommendation 9: The CDC recommends town council continue a public dialogue around the development of the Commons area.

Support:

- Committee's promise in earlier presentation
- Committee's belief that the community should be informed as the Town makes progress on the project