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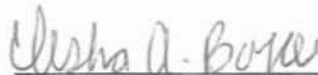
IQP-44 JMW EHAN



Worcester City Focus Groups: The College Student Voice

An Interactive Qualifying Project
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1.0 INTRODUCTION

The goal of this project originally was to help the East Highland Area Neighborhood Association (EHANA) in Worcester, MA develop the area into a stable residential neighborhood partly supported by rental student housing. The current issue with renting in the area is the fact that there are a large number of absentee landlords who have allowed their properties to become run-down. It is EHANA's goal to replace absentee landlords with working-class families who live in the homes and rent the extra rooms.

The initial plan for this project, given the goal, was to gather a group of West African immigrants, from a nearby church, who were interested in becoming home owners and connect them with current absentee landlords or older home owners. Those willing to allow the immigrants to rent their way into ownership of the homes would be encouraged to do so by EHANA. Then the new owners would rent the extra rooms to students, preferably of diverse backgrounds, to allow the neighborhood to develop as planned. EHANA would support applications for the necessary zoning variances. However, none of the West Africans who were interviewed were aspiring home owners, so the project plan was modified.

Next on EHANA's list of priorities is the issue of Lincoln Square and the vacancies in several of the buildings that surround its north and west sides. The City of Worcester has decided that the area should be redeveloped. The city hired an outside architectural planning firm to be responsible for the renovation, and the planning firm will get the views of the public by holding focus groups and a charrette.

The second plan for this project was to participate in the focus group designated for college students and monitor the process of gathering, interpreting, and incorporating focus group information into the final decision of the city. Views of how much influence the public has in city planning vary among the leaders of EHANA. The information gathered from auditing the city's process of redevelopment would then be used to determine whether the views collected in the focus groups had any influence on the decision and if the city was influenced, to determine to what degree it was. However, the city's focus groups were postponed, and due to the time constraints of the project, an additional modification to the study plan was needed.

The final plan for this project included an effort to organize and hold focus groups at half of the ten colleges in the Worcester area. Due to time constraints on the parts of some of the institutions, a survey was created to stand in place of the focus group. The survey was not as informative as the focus groups were, so they were not of as much use. The purpose of this project is to gather the views of college students in the Colleges of Worcester Consortium and determine whether the views of students are common enough to be represented as one voice, or at least a chorus with harmonious common themes. The college voice is of special interest in the case of the North Main Street redevelopment project due to the outcome of the last charrette held on this subject in 1995. At that time, the thirty-thousand college students of Worcester were described as a great “untapped market” and a plan that catered to this audience was implied by comments that offered an area in Northampton near Smith College as a model for the North Main Area.

2.0 OVERVIEW

The East Highland Area Neighborhood Association (EHANA) consists of residents and property owners with homes or businesses in East Highland Area Neighborhood. This association has eastern and western limits from the area known as Lincoln Square to Park Avenue, and northern and southern limits from Institute Park to Elm Street. Highland Street runs up the middle of the designated area. This organization's designated service region includes Worcester Polytechnic Institute, Becker College, Elm Park Community School, the Worcester Art Museum, Price Chopper (located on Park Avenue), and many other businesses and service agencies.

The mission of EHANA is "to preserve, promote, and celebrate quality of life for all stakeholders of this diverse neighborhood: residents, workers, business and property owners, and service or educational institutions including their clients or students." There is regular consultation with WPI on Lincoln Square. EHANA strives to work closely with city officials and departments as well as other community oriented groups in the Worcester area.

The original goal of the project was to assist EHANA in establishing the area as a stable residential area with rental student housing. The ideal situation EHANA envisions for providing that type of housing is working class families owning large older homes and renting extra rooms to college students. It is EHANA's dream for the area to become an ethnic or urban village with a West African – Brazilian flavor. This would call for immigrants from the previously mentioned areas to control and maintain the houses, renting extra rooms to a transient, international student population.

The current situation is that absentee landlords are purchasing the houses in question and they become run-down apartments. Hence, another WPI project, being completed by Sean Quinlivan, involved surveying the property owners and some, mostly Hispanic, families renting in the area about their aspirations for the neighborhood. The original plan for this project involved connecting the West African members of the Wesley United Methodist Church, who were expected to be aspiring home owners needing assistance to accomplish that aspiration, with current home owners, who may be willing to allow the previously mentioned immigrants to lease-buy their way into home

ownership. If older homeowners would be willing to act as the bank as far as acquiring loans is concerned, the plan would be beneficial for both sides.

Contact information for the pastor at Wesley United Methodist Church on Main Street was obtained, and Pastor Vikki Woods was contacted to schedule a meeting to discuss the possibility of interviewing a group of West African immigrants who attend the church. The interview was scheduled with the members of the West African Gospel Choir, which consisted of between twenty-five and thirty members, representing approximately one third of the West African membership in the church. The reason the plan did not work is the fact that the West African members of the given church are much more self-sufficient than they were perceived to be. Many of them already own homes, and those who did not were content with their current living situations and had no aspirations of becoming landlords or owning homes of their own. Due to the misconception of this study's subjects by the EHANA leaders, a new project plan had to be developed. The proposed new project plan involved the Lincoln Square Project.

The city of Worcester, MA is currently exploring ways to renovate what is known to residents as Lincoln Square (Appendix A). There are a few defining pieces of architecture in Lincoln Square, but the vacancies that remain imminent in this central gateway of Worcester are causing both planners and preservationists to be seriously concerned about this area of the city. There are three locations involved in the project; The Worcester County Courthouse, The Worcester Memorial Auditorium, and the Worcester Vocational High School.

The Worcester County Courthouse, which is located on top of Court Hill, overlooks Main Street and Lincoln Square as a whole. Erected in increments, the building consists of several different sections, which were built between 1843 and 1954. Due to the fact that there will be a new courthouse in which the Superior, District, and, Probate courts will be housed, which is scheduled to be completed in 2007, the way this structure will function in the future is uncertain. Although this facility is not owned by the City of Worcester, but by the State of Massachusetts, its vacancy has still resulted in concern for some local people who would like to see the city take charge of the situation.

The Worcester Memorial Auditorium, which was built in Lincoln Square in 1931 and 1932, exemplifies Classical Revival architecture while posing as a major landmark

for the city of Worcester. The memorial was designed by Lucius Briggs to recognize the 9,000 Worcester citizens who served in World War I. Due to the lack of use of the Memorial as a venue for performances after 1990, it was leased to the state of Massachusetts to provide additional space to the courthouse to house the Juvenile Court. The construction of the previously mentioned new courthouse will leave the Worcester Memorial Auditorium unoccupied. Without a tenant to pay maintenance costs or a purpose, the future of this building is extremely uncertain. In addition to lack of use, the building has suffered physical deterioration as a result of the minimal amount of maintenance that has been performed on it.

The Worcester Vocational High School consists of two buildings. One of which was originally known as the Worcester Boys Club that was constructed between 1928 and 1930 on the original site of the Salisbury Mansion. The other was originally the Worcester Boy's Trade School, which was designed in 1909 and built shortly thereafter. As a result of the completion of the new Worcester Technical High School on Belmont Hill, these buildings have been left vacant. The owners of Gateway Park have been given the option of purchasing this property, but have not yet taken any action with regards to this matter.

Given the background of the current Lincoln Square situation, an excellent opportunity for a new project plan presented itself, seeing as how the next priority on the list of EHANA's goals was influencing the future uses of the nearby, vacant, city-owned buildings in Lincoln Square. The organization has generated a list of general principles for Lincoln Square (Appendix B), and it is clear that EHANA wishes for the area to be residential. EHANA has shown a considerably amount of concern regarding the vacancies and deterioration of the buildings of which Lincoln Square is composed, and has attempted to have its views on the issue heard by the city (Appendices C and D).

The city plans to use the next nine months to come up with an economic development strategy for the area, which would be a vision which includes ideas on possible uses for the buildings in the area that would be economically feasible and beneficial to the city. City officials have hired Vanasse, Hangen, and Brustlin, Inc. of Watertown, an outside firm of consultants, to plan and undertake data collection and planning of the renovation process. The firm plans to form fourteen focus groups, which

should happen sometime in the May of 2007, of college students, home owners, business owners, parents, professionals, artists, and residents who live in the vicinity, to gather the views of the public on the redevelopment and provide a setting in which any ideas that residents may have can be heard. The current plan is to have meetings that are an hour long which include between twelve and twenty people, each held back to back over a period of two days. The firm also plans to hold a charrette, which was previously scheduled for April of 2007, to gather views from those who may not necessarily fit into the description of any of the focus groups. Marketing studies are currently in progress in order to gather information on potential uses for the area and each building within and the economic standing of the situation. The firm will then, taking in to consideration the views of the public, choose a plan that is both feasible and cost effective for the city.

Given the city's process of redevelopment, the next plan for this project was to take part in the city's college student focus group and charrette, and obtain information from the other focus groups. The city's process would then be monitored from the focus groups to the final decision and implementation of the final plan for Lincoln Square. The purpose of auditing the city's route to implementation would have been to get a sense of which types of people had the most influence in the city's decision-making, which would be extremely valuable to EHANA. Since the city postponed the charrette and the focus groups until May 2007, the plan for this project had to be adapted once again to accommodate the WPI academic year, which ends in early May.

The final project plan included gathering the views of college students in the Worcester area on the Lincoln Square issue, particularly the Worcester Memorial Auditorium and presenting their views in the city's focus group. This was done by organizing focus groups at different institutions to discuss the matter. For the schools which were unwilling or unable to gather a focus group discussion, surveys were made and sent to gather the opinions of students from those institutions. The goal was to have half of the colleges of Worcester participate in the study, preferably using the focus group method.

The Worcester Department of Economic Development was contacted for the purpose of acquiring contact information for the specific personnel from Vanasse, Hangen, and Brustlin, Inc. of Watertown, the firm of architectural planning consultants

hired for the redevelopment of Lincoln Square, who are responsible for the Lincoln Square project. The reasoning behind contacting the firm would have been to develop a process for the focus groups involved in this project, which was consistent with that of the firm's focus groups. The Economic Development Department discouraged communication with the firm, because they were not contractually obligated to cooperate with the efforts of this project or disseminate any information. Since, there was no information available at this time as to how the city's focus groups will be conducted, this project's focus groups were formatted based on ideas circulating in EHANA.

In passing on the results of this study to EHANA, the organization should take on the responsibility for representing the views of the college students who were involved in the focus groups. EHANA will be responsible for getting copies of the report to those who the organization feels should take heed to the views discussed and work to integrate them into the city's plan for redevelopment.

The north end of Main Street, which includes Lincoln Square, was the subject of a charrette previously in October of 1995. Through the use of four focus groups, labeled A, B, C, and D, the public's views were gathered. Each focus group consisted of a different topic. The focus groups were entitled as follows: Focus Group A: How to Make Connections among the Centrum, the Conventions Center and North Main Street, Focus Group B: How to Improve Traffic Circulation, Parking, and Pedestrian Movement, Focus Group C: What Role Should Governmental, Institutional and Church Properties Play?, and Focus Group D: Marketing Opportunities for North Main Street. The charrette's local development concept was that Worcester needed a district that was a draw to the relatively large college student population estimated to be 30,000 students in the city. A commercial district akin to that in Northampton near Smith College, or like the Amherst center serving the five college area Consortium, especially UMass Amherst was promoted as a model.

The idea was harder to implement in Worcester where some colleges had produced their own little college town service strips, with WPI and Becker on Highland Street and Clark on Main Street. However, Holy Cross, Assumption and Worcester State had not done so due to the fact that South Main Street was not a safe area; extending down Main Street to Mechanics Hall.

With a hotel in the area and the redevelopment of the area centering on the Centrum, it seemed like the northern half of the city center would come to life. The concept was vague and not yet fully developed, but the artsy flavor of the Northampton coffee shops, unusual clothing shops, art galleries and art and craft shows stressing student work for display and sale seemed to be the core of the idea of what type of entertainment, commercial activity, restaurants and some bars could thrive.

The logistics that had not been worked out in 1995 was what the role of specific buildings in that unit might be. Worcester Vocational High School and courthouse were not unoccupied and no one seemed to be talking about leveling or clearing buildings at the time; renovation talk was focused on Loews and Mechanics Hall. The challenge became what to do with the small store front vacancies multiplying along North Main Street. This decentralized commercial model seemed appropriate despite the obvious problem of trying to get an entertained district going amidst churches, monuments, courthouses and a high school.

Possibly, the idea was to get a result similar to the First Night celebration. Using these buildings animated the area once a year with the arts ranging from poetry to ethnic entertainment, comics and mimes to rock bands all in different venues side by side with traffic flowing between them and stopping for food set up in the churches en route to dancing and a food court atmosphere at the auditorium.

In that regard, one might be able to ignore the underused rooms in churches, courthouses, schools, public theaters and pull them all into a unified pedestrian mall with a common program to distribute and a single entry fee. However, plans to sustain that carnival atmosphere was unclear, but somehow the arts seemed to be able to do it periodically.

Once the buildings are vacated, the EHANA debate picks up where the old discussions left off. For example, Wilkes proposes, in a letter, a refurbished auditorium as a site for model UN's as part of a pedestrian friendly walking circuit near a residentially oriented vocational school that stresses a mix of nice elder condos with modest apartments in a mutually supportive array where people without cars could get around. He sees it as a place where colleges team up to participate in electronically valuable activities for local high school students.

Needle counter proposes amateur arts and cheap entertainment model with lots of ethnic festivals and periodic political gatherings, fully developing the idea implied in the 1995 Charrette. As he talks about another arts oriented and entertainment oriented facility, he is careful to make sure that it is not a competitor for the arts-oriented Mechanics Hall, or the entertainment-oriented Centrum that already exists. Needle is careful in his article to note that his concept of the auditorium is amateur entertainment (Appendix E). This leaves the high end arts performances with thirty to fifty dollar tickets to talent of narrow appeal to Mechanics Hall, and even leaves their regional All-State Musical High School trade alone. He also doesn't move in on sports or concert activity with "big name" drawn like the Centrum is offering, though in the past the auditorium did host wrestling and concerts. He stresses "cheap seats" in the five to one hundred-ten dollar range and local amateur talent, and the times past when the auditorium was a gathering place for roller skating and local celebrities putting on a show or a gathering of Boy Scout troops from around the regional council. He notes privately that concern about whether Worcester limited arts and culture community can support another venue is likely to generate opposition to fund raising to renovate the auditorium but struggling venue if he is not careful to delineate a new and underserved arts clientele (Needle 2007). The main difference architected, is that Wilkes created this place to avoid set up costs, but hoped to allow for the use of the stage on one end for speakers and theatricals.

These semi-compatible usages become the start of a focus group model in which the students of Worcester can be drawn into a discussion about what would be the best use of these buildings if the goal were to draw these students to assemble and create a social life that draws in others from the city. As the idea matures it becomes clear that the community aspect and college gathering aspect do not meet the city's desire to support the redevelopment effort. Otherwise, the city has to raise the funds for refurbishing from state and federal sources as it did for Union Station.

Hence, a third vision was developed around the theme of a classy state of the art museum and educational display on the Space Age which would draw tourists to the city and generate the funds needed to carry out the renovation process. The notion of a business incubator was added to that to tie into a new economic base for the city in the coming age costly energy space fund. The third alternative vision was tried in a

questionnaire experiment developed when Worcester State was not able to set up a focus group. Plans were made to try and see if one could do without the interaction part of this data gathering approach and ask people to state their preferences in order instead. The individual responses could then be compiled to approximate a group consensus-assuming they could distinguish pros and cons for each approach enough to make sure that on balance one or another was the better way to go.

The most prominent idea that came from the charrette as a whole was that the City of Worcester should aim to compromise between making the downtown area both aesthetically pleasing and logistically convenient. Mechanics Hall was used as an example of the previously mentioned balance. It was also suggested that there be a parking and pedestrian plan that was well thought out and could stimulate the development of the downtown area. A new high-end hotel was also mentioned. The general idea that came from this study was to redevelop the area into a commercial area intended to bring college students together by drawing them to a shopping and entertainment area that catered to them akin to an area in Northampton, MA. Once gathered the shops and restaurants that catered to them seemed to attract other residents as well and an area with many arts and crafts for sale had emerged as well as ethnically diverse food offerings at reasonable costs. This model was what emerged despite the lack of college students present.

There was also a plan to redevelop the downtown Worcester area, also known as the Worcester Central Business District in January of 1992. The goal of this redevelopment was to transform downtown Worcester into an urban center which was aesthetically pleasing and encouraged social interaction. It was intended for downtown Worcester to be both viable and diverse, with opportunities in retail, culture, and entertainment. It was also meant to pose as a hub for both government and commercial activity. There were also goals of developing an integrated transportation system to make downtown more accessible and better parking options to encourage pedestrian traffic in the area. To implement these plans, it was recommended that marketing efforts by the city to improve its image be increased and city funds needed to be invested in Downtown Worcester's infrastructure as well.

Focus groups are an efficient qualitative tool that can be used to gather the feelings of a certain group of people on a given issue. Focus groups are generally composed of about six to eight individuals, and participants are selected due to the fact that they all have something in common that is pertinent to the matter at hand. The moderator of a focus group creates an atmosphere which is permissive and encourages the participants to express their opinions without the pressure of reaching a consensus. The discussions are guided so that the moderator can obtain the participants' perceptions on a focused area of interest, hence the name, focus group. For this method to be effective, more than one focus group must be used, and the focus groups should vary based on what the participants of each group have in common. This difference would be used to compare and contrast the opinions and perceptions of different groups of people. In this particular study, the link joining each focus group is the fact that all of the participants attend the same institution for post secondary education (Krueger and Casey 2001).

This study includes three types of institutions: technical, liberal arts, and a religiously affiliated college, which allows the comparing and contrasting of views of students who have different areas of study and who are educated in different environments. Students from technical institutions generally have a more practical outlook on endeavors concerning redevelopment or renovation (Pike 2006). In application to this study, students tend to look for options that are "safe" in terms of feasibility and start-up costs. To students pursuing a technical degree, functionality of a structure or an endeavor often outweighs aesthetics by a landslide. They tend to focus on the short term benefits of decisions as opposed to looking at things in the long run, or "seeing the big picture". Students pursuing degrees in disciplines that are designated as liberal arts tend to be more focused on aesthetics and long-term satisfaction with decisions (Pike 2006). While religiously affiliated colleges provide a different environment for students, students pursuing degrees in areas mentioned above tend to take on similar perspectives.

3.0 METHODOLOGY

In acquiring opinions from college students, data was collected in two forms: student focus groups and student questionnaires. The student focus group was the method of choice, because it allowed students to ask questions about the stimulus used (Appendix 1.5) and it facilitated interaction between students. However, due to the small number of students who were willing to participate in focus groups, both a survey was prepared based on the stimulus document that was used in the focus groups so that students could provide their thoughts on the matter at hand efficiently (Appendix 1.6). Enclosed with each survey, which described three options to rate, were a cover letter, which describes the project in detail, and a copy of an article written by the chairman of EHANA for the InCity Times, which is a magazine that discusses urban issues (Appendices 1.7-1.8).

Each focus group consisted of between four and six students from a single school which included the following: Clark University, Worcester Polytechnic Institute, and Assumption College. Students for each focus group were selected by an administrator at their respective institution based on their interest in the given topic.

Six copies of the survey were sent out to an administrator from each of the following institutions: Worcester State College, Becker College, College of the Holy Cross, University of Massachusetts Medical School, Massachusetts College of Pharmacy, Anna Maria College, and Quinsigamond Community College requesting that they have students complete them by May 1, 2007, due to the fact that there was no response to the request to assemble a focus group. In the case of Worcester State College, copies of the survey were also sent to the head of the Department of Urban Studies, a contact of Sean Quinlivan, due to the interest his students had in the topic. The students selected to complete the survey were chosen by personnel at their respective institutions.

At the beginning of each focus group, each student was given a written stimulus which stated three proposals for the redevelopment Worcester Memorial Auditorium. The students were asked to look over the literature briefly, as each plan was elaborated upon. The students were then asked if the explanation of the three proposals was clear and allowed to ask questions for clarification. Following the time for clarification, the students were asked to provide their opinions on each proposal, including the weaknesses

proposals of his or her own for the auditorium. Following this, the students are allowed to engage in and open discussion on the issue. Finally, each student was asked to provide one suggestion that he or she would provide to the city if given the opportunity.

Students assigned to complete surveys received a stimulus which was more in-depth than that which was given to the students who participated in the focus groups, due to the fact that verbal clarification was not available to them. The instructions provided asked the students to read the stimulus, which included a more thorough synopsis of the same proposals that were included in the focus group stimulus, and state their feelings on the matter by rating each plan on feasibility and desirability using the scale provided. The students were also asked to provide comments and ideas of their own in the space provided at the bottom of the questionnaire.

After all the data was collected, it was reviewed and an overview of what students from each institution thought collectively was drafted for each college. These overviews were then used to compare and contrast the views of students at the other institutions.

4.0 FINDINGS – FOCUS GROUPS

4.1 Clark University

In response to the given stimuli, the students who participated in the Clark University focus group responded positively to the first two proposed uses of the Worcester Memorial Auditorium, which were the ideas of an arts center combined with a convention center and a collegiate meeting center, and negatively to the idea of a tourist attraction combined with a research facility as a memorial to Robert Goddard. The group justified its opinions on the basis of the costs which would be associated with renovation, the vitality of the auditorium after its renovation, and the ability the facility would have to bring in revenue.

As far as the first proposed use was concerned, the students were extremely interested in the idea of a place to hold things in the realm of debates, Model United Nations, and academic competitions. There wasn't any opposition to the idea of an arts center, but the students did shy away from the idea of having the entire auditorium devoted to the arts. Some students mentioned the fact that the Worcester DCU Center already serves as a convention center for the city and that it is currently underused, so if the auditorium were to be used as a convention center, it should be geared toward the high school and collegiate community, which is the point at which the latter portion of the first proposal overlaps with the second proposal.

When responding to the idea of the collegiate center, the students were extremely enthusiastic about using the facility as a meeting place for similar organizations on the different campuses within the consortium. A place to hold conferences and conventions which would be geared toward college students was popular, as well as those conferences and conventions that would normally be held on one of the colleges' campuses. They thought it to be more efficient than the idea of hundreds of people crowding a campus and inconveniencing its students, faculty, and staff. They also liked the idea of having the consortium plan large events that would be of interest to students from all of the colleges within it. However, the focus group was not fond of using the building as an unstructured social hangout for movies and social milling to "bump" into students from other colleges. The group felt that students would only visit the facility to hang out if they already had preexisting plans to be in the Downtown Worcester area. However,

students especially liked the idea of the expansion of the consortium shuttle system, seeing as how it would eliminate the need to find funds for public transportation or private means of transportation and parking.

Concerning the final stimulus proposal, the group found considered idea of the tourist attraction and research facility to be impractical. The students felt that the renovation of the facility for the given proposal would cost more than its worth and that the amount of work which would have to be put into the facilitation of this plan would outweigh the revenue potential that the exhibit would have. They thought that it would be a money loser over time. With regards to the memorial for Robert Goddard, the focus group brought up the fact that many people are ignorant of the existence, contribution, and significance of Robert Goddard. An exhibit or memorial used to honor him would not even bring local residents to the facility, let alone tourists to the city. This plan seemed unpromising and infeasible to them.

When asked about different ideas they had for the auditorium, most of their ideas were similar to the ideas presented to them at the beginning, but some were different. One idea was an open air market in combination with an art museum for local artists to display and sell their work. The market would allow vendors to rent space in the auditorium to set up stands and sell things as various as: handmade crafts, fresh fruits and vegetables, and baked goods. Another proposal consisted of renting the venue to organizations that needed a large amount of space for events. There was also a plan to use the auditorium for non-profit conventions. Some other suggestions were to have a facility for indoor recreation which included the facilitation of activities such as: rock climbing, swimming, running, and other indoor sports.

The students had many recommendations and concerns which were relevant to the matter at hand. The group recommended that, no matter how the space would be used, the auditorium needed to have a main focus or general theme to help it stand out to residents and tourists alike. They suggested that the general use of the space be unique to the auditorium and distinct from any other space in Worcester in order to avoid competition for use. The suggestion was made that there be one or more trademark events which would be known to take place in the facility, and that it be opened with a large event. The main concerns of the Clark students were the funding of the \$30 million

renovation, the vitality of the newly renovated facility, and the potential for the auditorium to bring in revenue. The conclusion made given the previous statement was that the city should wait to renovate and use the Worcester Memorial Auditorium until people show more interest in visiting the Downtown Worcester area, rather than try to use the auditorium to attract people downtown. In short, it should be part of a larger revitalization strategy.

4.2 Worcester Polytechnic Institute

The student participants of the Worcester Polytechnic Institute focus group, as did the students from the Clark focus group, responded in a positive fashion to the ideas of the arts center and the collegiate center, and negatively to the idea of a tourist attraction and research facility as a Robert Goddard Memorial. This group of students justified its perception of the ideas based on functionality of the facility, the longevity of the auditorium after the implementation of the respective plans, and the costs associated with each.

In response to the first stimulus, the focus group was extremely interested in the idea of having a place for local amateur artists to perform and gain exposure. However, they felt that local artists would need assistance in advertising and public relations in order for the plan to work, because the general Worcester population would not be interested in the performances of amateurs. The students seemed rather indifferent about the latter part of the idea that included the convention center for things in the order of Model United Nations, debates, and academic competitions. The students said that they personally would not be interested in participating in such activities, but they did not consider that portion of the proposal to be totally impractical or infeasible due to the fact that it would not be popular or stressed at their college.

Concerning the second proposal, the group was enthusiastic about having a facility that would provide function space for collegiate functions. There was a general consensus that this proposal would provide an excellent opportunity for students to meet people from other higher learning institutions. The students liked the idea of having a larger space that would make events intended for a larger audience feasible, as opposed

to the idea of being forced to exclude some of those who would be interested in a particular event due to lack of space on a given campus to accommodate them. Although they liked the idea of having a space dedicated to the collegiate community, the students expressed concern that the Worcester Memorial Auditorium might actually be too large and exceed the desired amount of space for a large collegiate event. There was also concern as to how much of the time the facility would be used by the collegiate community. The group felt that the consortium may not have enough large events to hold in the auditorium in order to justify devoting it completely to the facilitation of collegiate events.

As far as the final proposal was concerned, although they had heard of Robert Goddard and were more likely to have personal interest in his area of expertise, the students found the idea of the tourist attraction and business incubator dedicated to him to be impractical and farfetched. The group felt that this proposal would be a huge undertaking for a facility that would be of little interest to the public. The participants felt that the renovation of the auditorium would cost more than the revenue it would bring to the city, therefore rendering it a waste of tax money. They felt that there were too many ideas intertwined into the proposal. The students expressed that the given proposal would have an extravagant opening, but would bring little to no revenue to the city after the grand opening of the new facility.

When the group was asked to come up with original ideas for the use of the Worcester Memorial Auditorium, they had many suggestions. The most prominent of group's proposals was a combination of the first and second proposals. The students thought that the performing artists of the area needed a place to congregate, and have performances at little to no cost to them. They also expressed the idea that there should be a place for vendors of hand-made crafts and artwork in the facility. The group also felt that similar organizations on the campuses of the consortium needed a place to meet and that institutions needed a place to plan social events in order to raise money for their respective organizations. They felt that adding a restaurant to the facility would increase its use as well. The group felt that combining these two ideas would keep the auditorium in constant use. Another idea the group proposed was that the space be redeveloped into housing that would be available for renting purposes. The participants thought that this

would appeal to college students in the general vicinity. There were other ideas brought up as well such as, a movie theater, a dance club and a plan to completely remove the building to create more parking.

When asked to give recommendations relevant to matter at hand, the students mentioned that Worcester is socially and economically inept. The group felt that the city should bring in more large businesses to attract more visitors. The students also mentioned that there is very little history that is of interest to outsiders in the city, which makes it difficult for Worcester to compete with Boston for the tourists who visit the state of Massachusetts. However, the issue that they felt makes the most difference is the fact that many visitors view Worcester as a city which is high in crime.

4.3 Assumption College

In striking accord with the students from Clark University and Worcester Polytechnic Institute, the students who participated in the focus group at Assumption College gave a positive response to the first two proposals and a negative response to the third proposal. Justifications of these responses were made on the bases of the feasibility of each proposal, the interest the public would have in each, and longevity the facility would have in terms of its continued use.

When asked to respond to the first stimulus, the focus group participants felt that the arts center would be a good way for the city to give back to the community. The students also felt that the first proposal would help keep some people, mainly adolescents and struggling artists off the streets of Worcester. The students in the focus group also responded positively to the idea of having a “small” convention center (compared to the DCU) and a place for high school and collegiate arts performances. They felt that using the facility as a mini-convention center would bring special interest group tourists to the city. They also thought that using it as a place for local performances would cause major use by schools that didn’t have the auditorium and functions space to hold things such as plays or musicals on campus. They noted that their own school would greatly benefit from the availability of such a facility, seeing as how their school lacked such a space.

In response to the second proposal, the focus group felt that it was an excellent idea to redevelop the auditorium in order to facilitate the interaction of students from

different institutions of higher learning. The students felt that such a facility would provide a better college experience that would be emotionally healthier than one in which students were isolated from people at different colleges. They felt that the collegiate center would be a great way to bring the consortium together on the bases of academic enrichment, extracurricular activities, and social activities. The idea that guest speakers that would be of interest to common academic departments at different institutions within the consortium would help students meet others within their major areas of study was strongly endorsed by the group. The group also felt that a renovated auditorium would allow student organizations that the colleges within the consortium had in common to meet, form coalitions, and plan larger events to foster their members' interest. The students felt that having social gatherings would allow students to escape the confined atmospheres of their respective institutions.

Concerning the final proposal, the students felt that the tourist attraction dedicated to Robert Goddard to be impractical and a waste of time and money. They felt that the facility would be of little interest to college students, who make up a large part of the general population in Worcester, and the public as a whole. It was mentioned by the group that this particular proposal was economically infeasible and that it would not help to make Worcester a city regularly visited by tourists, due to the fact that Boston, MA is in its general vicinity. Another reason the students gave for their negative responses to the final proposal was that they felt as though giving back to the community was of more importance than bringing in revenue to the city.

When asked for their own thoughts on how the Worcester Memorial Auditorium should function in the future, the students gave a response that was the equivalent of the combination of the first two proposals. They stressed that it was extremely important that the colleges of the consortium work together to provide an atmosphere and activities that would bring students throughout the city together. They felt that this would be the next logical step in broadening the functions of the consortium and forming a tighter coalition among the students within. It was also mentioned that the facility should be used to positively impact the community.

When asked for personal recommendations for the city with regards to the given issue, the group felt that, whatever the designated use of the facility became after its

renovation and redevelopment, the primary function of the auditorium should cater to the interests and needs of the college community in Worcester in some fashion. The students felt that, seeing as how much of Worcester's population consists of college students who put a lot into the community, the city should have some way of giving back to them, and the redevelopment of the Worcester Memorial Auditorium would be an excellent way to accomplish this task.

5.0 FINDINGS – SURVEYS

Due to the time constraints of students who attend the institutions to which the surveys were sent, Worcester State College was the only school to respond. There were four responses. On a scale from one to six, with six being the highest, the students rated the proposals on desirability and feasibility respectively. In one survey, a student gave the arts center scores of two and one, the collegiate center scores of one and one, and the tourist attraction scores of one and one. Another student gave the arts center scores of six and two, raising the question of parking. The same student left the scores for the collegiate center blank and wrote the following comment: “Good luck ‘enlarging funds’.” This student also gave the tourist attraction scores of one and one. A third student gave the proposal for the arts center scores of four and two, the collegiate center scores of five and three, and the tourist attraction scores of four and two. The fourth student did not distinguish the scores he or she gave to desirability and feasibility. This student gave the arts center a score of five, the collegiate center a score of four, and the tourist attraction a score of four. The students at Worcester State College as a whole were not interested in writing in comments and thus discussing the ideas which were presented to them. Although they expressed that the idea of an arts center as something that was of moderate interest to them, they didn’t find it very feasible and one was concerned about parking. There didn’t seem to be much interest expressed in the proposals of the intercollegiate center or the tourist attraction, and the response regarding feasibility was negative. There were no additional comments made in the space provided, so there is no information on what original ideas the students may have had for the Worcester Memorial Auditorium.

It is more likely that this is a failure of the methodology than that they really had nothing to say. There was one person with clear views and preferences and the rest could barely distinguish between the proposals rating them all about the same. If they had been in a focus group the one student with clear ideas would have kicked off the discussion and everyone would probably have joined in. So, there is no easy short cut to gathering student opinion by turning to a survey.

6.0 DISCUSSION OF RESULTS – FOCUS GROUPS

The students who participated in the focus groups at Clark University, Worcester Polytechnic Institute, and Assumption College all had similar views on the future use of the Worcester Memorial Auditorium. Students from all three of the previously mentioned institutions felt that the proposals for the arts center and the collegiate center should be combined in order to keep the auditorium in constant use. All of the students from these institutions expressed the view that the artists of the community needed a common place to meet and exhibit their works and talents. The students felt that the artists would support each other, but, in contrast to the Clark students, the students from WPI stressed the performing arts, and stated that the artists would need assistance with publicity in order to gain a substantial amount of support outside the arts community. Since a large portion of Worcester's population is comprised of college students, students from all of these institutions felt that the future use of the Worcester Memorial Auditorium should benefit the collegiate community in some fashion. They expressed the view that most students within the consortium would be interested in a facility which accommodated large gatherings and more generally facilitated interaction among students from different institutions. The students felt as though similar organizations from different institutions needed a common, but not necessarily this large, meeting place and that the consortium needed a venue of its own to plan common events.

All of the focus groups gave a negative response to the proposal which included the tourist attraction and business incubator dedicated to Robert Goddard. The participants felt that the idea was a large undertaking for the limited amount of interest the public would have in such an exhibit. It was stated in all of the focus groups that tourists visiting the state of Massachusetts would be more likely to visit the city of Boston, which is already established as a landmark for tourists. Therefore, it would be fruitless to attempt to use one attraction that probably wouldn't be of interest to the local population, to attract tourists.

The students who participated in the Clark focus group recommended that the city wait until more interest in the downtown area arises. They were more interested in the ideas of Model United Nations and organizational meetings. The Clark students were not fond of the idea of the auditorium being used as a social hangout. The students from WPI

gave a response that was similar to the response from Clark in some respects, and they also suggested that the city bring more businesses into the area as a way of building the interest in the downtown area. However, in contrast to the students at Clark University, the WPI participants were very open to the idea of a social gathering place. The participants from Assumption recommended that, whatever use arises, it should benefit the college community. They also felt that the city should use the facility to “give back” to the community in some fashion, but they seem to have meant by that the need for the city giving back to the college students and enhance their community.

7.0 DISCUSSION OF RESULTS – SURVEYS

The students from Worcester State College who completed the survey did not come to a consensus as to how they felt about the proposals. Therefore, their views can not be expressed as one voice as those in the focus groups are. There were no additional comments provided by the students, so there is no information available as far as justification, original ideas, and recommendations are concerned. This is too bad in a way, since this is the college that best serves the people who grew up in Worcester and WSC students were most likely to take a resident’s point of view as well as a college student point of view. Perhaps their perspective can be drawn into a future study.

8.0 CONCLUSIONS

The students who participated in the focus groups had opinions which were common enough to be represented as one voice. The focus group participants want something to benefit the collegiate community and the artists of the area, but feel that the city needs to spark more interest in the downtown area first so the facility will be convenient to visit for the public. They students seem to feel that the Worcester Memorial Auditorium should be part of a larger redevelopment project, which includes more of downtown than just North Main Street. The students are eager to meet others from different institutions, and they feel like a collegiate and arts center would be the best undertaking of those three proposed to meet this need.

The students who completed the survey were not really motivated to provide additional comments and original ideas, and they expressed a level of apathy in completing the survey, seeing as how there were no justifications of their ratings. The survey has proven itself to be an ineffective qualitative tool in this process, and the results it provided have not been of much value in this study.

The voice represented by the focus groups is only that of the students who attend private institutions, which may or may not differ from the views of students who attend public institutions. While students from private institutions are generally from different areas of the country, students who attend public institutions, in most cases, are from the Worcester County area and may have more knowledge of the city and its issues. Students at public schools are also more likely to reside in the area, which makes their views worth gathering in a future study.

9.0 RECOMMENDATIONS

After meeting with the Worcester Polytechnic Institute Vice President of Government and Community Relations, many recommendations for future work have been advised. It was agreed that the college students had some excellent ideas for the use of the Worcester Memorial Auditorium, but it seems that the plans are too underdeveloped at this point to present them to the city officials of Worcester. There is no clear process defined in order to go from the auditorium's current state to the final plan that the students have for its use.

At the present time, the city is focused on the area known as City Square due to its huge investment to its cause, therefore, the issue of Lincoln Square and, particularly the Worcester Memorial Auditorium, probably will not be high on the city's priority list. Furthermore, the city has an enormous budget deficit, and this would be a huge effort for the city under its given economic condition. It may be beneficial to wait and witness the results of the redevelopment of the Worcester County Courthouse, assuming that this structure will be dealt with by the city before the auditorium. This would expose a general process by which the city redevelops vacant spaces and give some insight as to how to get involved in that process.

The next step in getting the voices of the students heard should be contacting Erin Williams, who is responsible for arts and cultural activities in the city of Worcester. This should be combined with contacting Armand Carriere, who was hired in April of 2005 as the first Executive Director of the Worcester UniverCity Partnership, which is a nonprofit collaboration which consists of public and private sector organizations working with the higher learning institutions in the Worcester area. The organizations included in this coalition are: The Worcester Regional Chamber of Commerce, the Worcester Business Development Corporation, the Colleges of Worcester Consortium, and the City of Worcester. The Worcester UniverCity Partnership was designed to engage the institutions of higher learning of Worcester in the promotion of the development of the city's economy and community revitalization. By contacting these people, the students will have better resources for assistance in developing their plans for the Worcester Memorial Auditorium. While working with UniverCity Partnership, the students who participated in the focus groups should be represented in the college student focus group

that is organized by the firm responsible for the redevelopment plan. The student representative should advocate the views expressed by the students in the focus groups so that they can be integrated directly into the city's process. The process should then be monitored to gauge the influence that the voice of the collegiate community has in city decision-making. The information in this report should be passed on to EHANA, UniverCity Partnership, and Vanasse, Hangen, and Brustlin, Inc. of Watertown to help advocate for the student voice.

To continue this study, the views of students who attend public institutions should be ascertained using the focus group method, since the use of a survey was not a very informative source of data. The Deans of Students of the public institutions in the Worcester consortium should be contacted approximately a month in advance in order to facilitate focus groups, due to scheduling and availability issues that may arise. These views should then be compared to the views of the students who attend private institutions to see if the voice remains a common one or not. Focus groups for high school students should be organized as well, seeing as how many students from the public institutions graduate from high schools in the area and the second proposal involves college students holding events for secondary school students.

To complete this study, focus groups should be conducted at all of the collegiate institutions within the consortium, and their views should be advocated during the city's focus group and the charrette held by the city. The representative should then audit the rest of the process, until the city reaches a decision and begins implementation. It should then be determined, by the same representative, whether or not the college voice had an influence on the decision made by the city and how much the city's planning was influenced, if at all.

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MICHAEL V. O'BRIEN
CITY MANAGER



April 25, 2006

CITY OF WORCESTER

8 A

TO THE WORCESTER CITY COUNCIL

COUNCILORS:

The attached communication relative to the status of the Request for Proposals (RFP) for the North Main Economic Development Strategy Area, received from Julie A. Jacobson, Assistant City Manager, is forwarded for the information of your Honorable Body. The City of Worcester, through the Division of Economic Development, in conjunction with the Division of Planning and Regulatory Services and the Division of Neighborhoods and Housing Development, has issued an RFP in an effort to solicit proposals from experienced and qualified individuals, firms or teams interested in providing the City with professional urban design, market analysis and parking planning consulting services relative to the preparation of an Economic Development Strategy for the North Main area, an area generally described as being bounded by Exchange and Central Streets on the south, Eden, Harvard and Lancaster Streets on the west, Garden Street on the north, and I-290, Goldsberry and Summer Streets on the east.

The purpose of the North Main Economic Development Strategy Area study is to identify new opportunities for development that will be integrated with the various existing proposals, projects and plans for the area into a market-driven, financially responsible, and sustainable redevelopment strategy. This strategy will support and complement the City's Economic Development Action Agenda and be consistent with smart growth and transit-oriented development principles. The study shall also include an assessment of the current demand for and supply of parking and the incremental increases in demand that will result from the proposed (re)development of each of the area's priority properties, as identified on the project area map. In an effort to maximize the opportunity for the area's stakeholders and the public at-large to participate and have meaningful input into the approach and ultimate recommendations for the project area, a series of stakeholder focus group meetings and a public charette will be key elements in this strategy development process, which will all be documented in a final report.

Notice of the availability of the RFP was posted to reach local, regional and national planning and design individuals, firms and teams. As of this date, the City Purchasing Department has received and processed a total of 26 requests for the RFP from interested parties. The submission deadline for all proposals is Friday, May 19th at 10:00 AM.

It is expected that the City will receive a large number of proposals from qualified and experienced firms and teams. Following analysis of the proposals by a review team consisting of various City divisions, it is anticipated that a consultant will be selected and the project will commence by mid-summer. The comprehensive planning process may take up to eight months to complete and will include a wide range of stakeholders including City and State officials as well as local residents and businesses.

The Economic Development Action Agenda provides a sound framework for development activity in the downtown area. Last month, the City Administration also submitted to the

Council for its review a redevelopment strategy for the Washington Square area, which will provide a guide to future redevelopment opportunities in this critical gateway to the downtown in the vicinity of Union Station. The North Main Economic Development Strategy Area plan represents the next major wave of economic development planning for that area of the downtown which is anticipated to experience major transformation over the subsequent five-year period. This rejuvenation will be marked by projects such as the new Regional Justice Center, continuing successful redevelopment within the Gateway Park area and the re-use of the existing state courthouse and vocational school properties. It is important to plan now for these future changes and to identify the economic opportunities.

Funding for this project comes from a variety of state, local, and private sources. Following selection and hiring of a consultant, the full planning process will take up to twelve months. I will continue to update you as this important planning effort progresses, providing a blueprint for the future development of the North Main/Lincoln Square area.

Respectfully submitted,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'M. O'Brien', with a long horizontal line extending to the right.

Michael V. O'Brien
City Manager


MICHAEL V. O'BRIEN
CITY MANAGER



CITY OF WORCESTER

Memorandum

Date: April 26, 2006

To: Michael V. O'Brien, City Manager 

From: Julie A. Jacobson, Assistant City Manager

Re: Report on the Status of the Request for Proposals for the North Main Economic Development Strategy Area

The following report provides a status update on the Request for Proposals (RFP) for the plan for the North Main Economic Development Strategy Area. As you know, the City of Worcester, through the Division of Economic Development and in conjunction with the Division of Planning and Regulatory Services and the Division of Neighborhoods and Housing Development, has issued an RFP in an effort to solicit proposals from experienced and qualified individuals, firms or teams interested in providing the City with professional urban design, market analysis and parking planning consulting services relative to preparation of an economic development strategy for the North Main area as identified in the attached project area map. A copy of the RFP is attached herein. In general, the services required will include the review of all previously prepared reports, studies and other information necessary to establish an area base plan; the scheduling and conducting of all required City, stakeholder, focus group and other public meetings; the preparation of a market analysis report for all potential development properties; the development of a plan for area traffic and circulation improvements; the preparation of recommendations for an area development program; the formulation of an economic development strategy for the area; and the documentation and production of all required electronic and written materials and reports.

Proposals to provide such services must clearly demonstrate the depth of the respondent's knowledge, experience and familiarity with these issues. It is expected that each proposal will at the least offer the services of professionals experienced in urban planning and design, land use regulation and zoning, commercial real estate market analysis, development financing, traffic engineering, and the planning, design, financing and management of off-street parking facilities (both structured and non-structured).

The purpose of the North Main Economic Development Strategy Area Project is to identify new opportunities for development that will be integrated with the various existing projects and plans for the area into a market-driven, financially responsible, and sustainable redevelopment strategy. This strategy will support and complement the City's Economic Development Action Agenda and be consistent with smart growth and transit-oriented development principles. Since the North Main/Lincoln Square area is a densely developed urban environment, it is essential that this project include an assessment of the current supply and demand of parking and the incremental increases in demand that will result from the proposed (re)development of each of the priority properties identified on the attached project area map. Once that incremental increase has been identified a plan will be prepared that identifies how best that new demand for parking can be met by both the public and private sectors. Finally, in order to maximize the opportunity for the area's stakeholders and the public to participate and have meaningful input into the approach and ultimate recommendations for the project area, a series of stakeholder focus group meetings and a public charette will be key elements in this strategy development process, which will all be documented in a final report.

The locations where and the dates on which the RFP advertisement will appear are as follows:

- Worcester Telegram & Gazette on April 9th
- Massachusetts Secretary of State's Bulletin of Goods and Services on April 10th
- American Planning Association WEB Site for the month of April
- Boston Society of Architects WEB Site for the month of April
- PLANnetizen WEB Site in April and May

As of this date, the City Purchasing Department has received and processed a total of 26 requests for the RFP from interested parties. The submission deadline for all proposals is Friday, May 19th at 10:00 AM. Each proposal package submitted to the City will contain both a technical component (that addresses the scope of services identified in the RFP as well as project schedule) and a cost component or cost proposal (that will be submitted separately in a sealed envelope). The cost of the advertising for the RFP as well as the actual consulting work itself will be paid from a pool of funds consisting of the following: up to \$20,000 from the City's current EDA Section 203 Planning Grant; \$50,000 from the Jerome Wheelock Trust Fund; \$25,000 from the Gateway Park LLC; and up to \$300,000 from the State as proposed in the budget (\$150,000 in the Senate Economic Stimulus Bill and \$150,000 in the Senate Supplemental Budget) for a total project budget of up to \$400,000.

We have been fortunate to have the state legislative delegation, and Senators Augustus and Chandler in particular, support the development of this plan and seek state funding for the plan in the budget. We have also worked closely with officials at DCAM who will be involved in the planning process as well with particular regard to the re-use of the current state courthouse facility. DCAM officials reviewed the RFP and provided input on the development of the RFP itself.

The Economic Development Division is anticipating that a number of proposals from qualified and experienced firms and teams will be submitted by the May 19th deadline. The proposals will be reviewed by a team that includes staff from the Division of Economic Development, the Division of Planning and Regulatory Services, the Division of Neighborhoods and Housing Development, the Law Department, the Purchasing Department, and the Department of Public Works. It is anticipated that the review team will analyze the proposals and select a consultant by early June. A contract will be prepared so that services may commence in July. The total planning process is anticipated to take six to eight months or longer depending upon the specific scope of services.

If you have any additional questions or require any additional information please do not hesitate to contact me.

City of Worcester

Request for Proposals
for
Urban Design, Market Analysis & Parking Plan Services
for the
North Main Economic Development Strategy Area

REQUEST FOR PROPOSALS

The City of Worcester, through the Division of Economic Development in conjunction with the Division of Planning and Regulatory Services and the Division of Neighborhoods and Housing Development, is seeking proposals from experienced and qualified individuals, firms or teams interested in providing the City with professional urban design, market analysis and parking planning consulting services relative preparation of the North Main Economic Development Strategy Area as identified below. In general, the services required will include the review of all area related reports, studies and information necessary to establish area base plans; the scheduling and conducting of all required City, stakeholder, focus group and other public meetings; the preparation of a market analysis report for all potential development properties; the development of a plan for area traffic and circulation improvements; the preparation of recommendations for an area development program; the formulation of an economic development strategy for the area; and the documentation and production of all required electronic and written materials and reports.

Proposals to provide such services must clearly demonstrate the depth of the respondent's knowledge, experience and familiarity with these issues. It is expected that each proposal will at the least offer the services of professionals experienced in urban planning and design, land use regulation and zoning, commercial real estate market analysis, development financing, traffic engineering, and the planning, design, financing and management of off-street parking facilities (both structured and non-structured).

BACKGROUND

Over the past few years, an increasing number of investors have discovered the Worcester real estate market and its investment opportunities. The extension of Massachusetts Bay Transportation Authority (MBTA) commuter rail service and the Massachusetts Turnpike / Route 146 project have improved access and thereby enhanced those opportunities. Members of the City Council, the City Administration, business leaders, residents, and the media have expressed strong interest in economic development issues and specific development projects. This interest has also led to concerns, not only about the status of the various projects, but also about the need to create an integrated approach to the ways in which they can be connected for the overall benefit of the community. With these issues and concerns in mind, the City developed the Worcester Economic Development Action Agenda in 2004 (available for viewing and/or downloading at www.ci.worcester.ma.us). The Action Agenda included the area from the Wyman Gordon site in Green Island north to Union Station and the area from Federal Square to

Lincoln Square. This area was selected because it offered the opportunity to integrate several existing or proposed projects in areas adjacent to the downtown (Northern Gateway Project, Shrewsbury Street, Canal District) with those planned or underway in the downtown (CitySquare, Hilton Garden Hotel, Regional Justice Center).

The North Main Economic Development Strategy Area includes a substantial portion of the Action Agenda's "North Main District" but also includes additional land north of Lincoln Square (please see the project area map in Appendix A). It is an area in transition with the approaching relocation of the Vocational School to its new home near Green Hill Park, the underutilized Municipal Auditorium commonly referred to as the "Aud", and the transition of activity from the Superior Court Building to the new Regional Justice Center, and the development of the new Gateway Park Project. This project is a public/private partnership involving a development entity created by the Worcester Business Development Corporation (WBDC) and Worcester Polytechnic Institute (WPI), working in cooperation with the City to redevelop a 55-acre former Brownfield site into a mixed-use office, bio-engineering, and residential village center. The Gateway Park project, as planned and outlined in its Master Plan approved by the City Council in 2004, will eventually lead to the construction of over one million square feet of mixed use space, which will include bio-medical and bio-engineering companies, as well as housing, retail establishments, and restaurants.

The purpose of the North Main Economic Development Strategy Area Project is to identify new opportunities for development that will be integrated with the various existing projects and plans in the area into a market-driven, financially responsible, and sustainable redevelopment strategy.

A strategy that both supports the City's Action Agenda and is consistent with Smart Growth and transit-oriented development principles. Since the North Main area is a densely developed urban environment, this project would be remiss if it did not include an assessment of the current demand and supply of parking and the incremental increases in demand that will result from the proposed (re)development of each of the Priority Properties identified on the project area map in Appendix A. Once that incremental increase has been identified a plan will be prepared that identifies how best that new demand for parking can be met by both the public and private sectors. Finally, in order to maximize the opportunity for the area's stakeholders and the public to participate and have meaningful input into the approach and ultimate recommendations for the project area, a series of stakeholder focus group meetings and a public charette will be an important part of this strategy development, which will be documented in a final report.

SCOPE OF SERVICES

The following is an outline of the major tasks and subtasks that, at a minimum, should be included in proposals. Proposals may include a list of additional recommended tasks for the City's consideration.

1.0 Project Area Inventory & Assessment

- 1.1 Review all pertinent studies, reports, and plans for all public and private developments and public improvements proposed, planned, or under construction within the strategy area. Particular attention should be paid, but not be limited, to

the Worcester Economic Development Action Agenda, the Gateway Park Master Plan, and the Downtown Worcester Streetscape and Architectural Guidelines.

- 1.2 Review property ownership and use data for the project area. Conduct a walk-through reconnaissance to gain an understanding of the cultural and historic resources, parking patterns, vehicular, bicycle, and pedestrian movements, as well as the character and function of transition points with adjacent areas.
- 1.3 Conduct site-specific walk-through reconnaissance of the former Worcester County Courthouse property, the Worcester Municipal Auditorium, the former Lincoln Square Boys Club building, and other accessible public and private properties in the area, particularly the Priority Properties identified by the City, in order to understand generally the interior space, configuration, and potential for reuse.
- 1.4 Develop CAD data for the creation of a base map to include existing conditions, any recent or planned development, as well as street and property configuration that will affect the project area.

2.0 Project Meetings

- 2.1 Meet with representatives of the various City Departments to review current status of projects, and existing conditions and regulations.
- 2.2 Meet with area stakeholders and members of the public interested in the future development of the area. These meetings should take the form of focus group meetings organized around stakeholders with similar interests and concerns. Stakeholders should include at least the following: local, state and federal officials and delegation members, the Worcester Business Development Corporation (WBDC), Worcester Polytechnic Institute (WPI), the Commonwealth of Massachusetts' Department of Capital Asset Management, and others involved in determining the future use of the former Worcester County Courthouse, as well as the Worcester Art Museum, Preservation Worcester, the Highland Street Merchants Association, the Worcester Historical Museum's Salisbury Mansion, the Crowne Plaza Hotel, AT&T, Morgan Construction Company, Mr. Barry Kroc, the law firm of Bowditch & Dewey, all area Churches and Institutions, and others identified by the City's Office of Economic Development.
- 2.3 Conduct a one-day charette at which representatives of the various stakeholders and interested members of the public can participate in discussions and planning exercises, whose goal is to solicit input and opinions on the future development and use of public and private properties in the North Main Economic Development Strategy Area.
- 2.4 Engage in working sessions with the City to discuss the market analysis, initial development program, and development massing plan.

- 2.5 Engage in working sessions with the City to discuss and evaluate the economic development strategy scenarios.
- 2.6 Present the strategy report to representatives of various City Departments.
- 2.7 Conduct a meeting at which representatives of the various stakeholders and interested members of the public, particularly those who attended the one-day charette, would be given a power point presentation on the final draft of the report for the North Main Economic Development Strategy Area.
- 2.8 Present the strategy report to the City Manager.
- 2.9 Present the final strategy report to the City Council and any relevant City Council subcommittees.

3.0 Market Analysis & Evaluation

- 3.1 Based on the work included in the Worcester Economic Development Action Agenda and the Worcester Streetscape & Design Guidelines, and other relevant documents, update and refine the market analysis as it relates to potential reuse of key public properties (e.g. the Municipal Auditorium, the former Worcester County Courthouse, the former Lincoln Square Boys Club building, etc.) and other potential public and private redevelopment sites within the project area, particularly the Priority Properties. This market analysis should take into account any market studies or master plans that have been completed for properties in the area, including actual leasing that has occurred in the Gateway Park area. The study should also consider the catalyst effect that new development projects (i.e. the proposed CitySquare project, the new Regional Justice Center, and the new Hilton Garden Inn Hotel) will have on properties in the project area.
- 3.2 Identify the potential program elements for the key buildings and infill sites, which might include housing, institutional, hospitality, research, office, retail, and mixed uses that could relate to and complement either Gateway Park and/or the new Regional Justice Center as well as existing retail/entertainment, parking structures, schools, and other public facilities.
- 3.3 Taking into consideration the following information: (a) current existing uses, (b) any proposed short-term or long-term plans for the area's Priority Properties, (c) current and future development potential, (d) the Gateway Park master Plan, and (e) the parking demand that will be generated by the development of each; place these (public and private properties) into one of the following three categories: (1) High Priority – those properties that will be available for development within the next 1-3 years; (2) Priority – those properties that will be available for development within the next 4-9 years; and (3) Low Priority – those properties that will not be available for development for at least 10 years.

4.0 Parking Study and Plan

- 4.1 Conduct a study of the Area's Parking Supply that shall include at least the following tasks: (a) utilize the 2004 Vanasse Hangen Brustlin Parking Study to determine and verify all on and off street parking areas, (b) categorize parking as public, private, or private/public, (c) canvas/interview all off street parking sources, (d) determine current levels of occupancy, (e) determine future access for new developments (example: will a church parking lot be available for paid courthouse employee parking), (f) interview potential parking supply developers and vacant property owners within and proximity to the project area (Mr. Barry Krock, Bowditch & Dewey, Mr. Mark Israel, the WBDC and others), (g) interview court officials regarding future use of parking supply at the existing County Courthouse, and (h) include all relevant financial information where applicable.
- 4.2 Conduct a study of the Area's Parking Demand that shall include at least the following tasks: (a) utilize the 2004 Vanasse Hangen Brustlin Parking Study to verify existing parking demand in the study area, (b) estimate the potential demand both new and existing of the new Regional Justice Center and Hilton Garden Inn Hotel, and other developments as provided by the Division of Economic Development, (c) determine Worcester's 'level of comfort zone' relative to the distance patrons will walk from parking area to destination, (d) identify pockets or zones where parking demand outweighs supply, especially where the supply is outside of the 'level of comfort zone'.
- 4.3 Determine those sites within the study area that could provide new parking areas to satisfy the parking deficits and also provide both; (a) a recommendation for Public or Private ownership of the proposed parking development, and (b) a recommendation for a Public/Private partnership for a parking structure.
- 4.4 Provide conceptual financial plans that show a viability for new parking structures and also (a) supply a typical financial plan that can be showcased to potential private developers of parking or used by the City for a public facility, and (b) supply a typical financial plan for a public/private partnership for a parking facility. *[Note: Any of the above scenarios might be more financially viable as a mixed-use development with a parking component (for example: first floor office or retail use with parking garage on floors two through five) and therefore this concept should be evaluated as one possible scenario for a parking structure, whether publicly-owned, privately-owned or a public/private partnership.]*

5.0 Access & Circulation Assessment and Plan

- 5.1 Based on all available information (street plans, traffic patterns, vehicular traffic counts, etc.) as well as reconnaissance of the area and discussions with both City of Worcester Department of Public Works officials and Massachusetts Highway Department officials, develop a conceptual plan for improvements to the area's streets, traffic circulation, while acknowledging the existing Lincoln Square tunnel. The concept plan will seek to balance access requirements with real estate

development considerations, pedestrian circulation, and the maintenance of a pedestrian-friendly environment.

- 5.2 Investigate the cost and feasibility of connecting the North Main study area with other major retail and commercial centers in the downtown via a trolley service with stops at existing and proposed public and private parking facilities in the area.
- 5.3 The concept plan will incorporate the recommendations of the Streetscape and Architectural Design Guidelines presently being developed by the City and expected to be available by April.
- 5.4 Include on the conceptual plan the recommended siting of surface and structured parking facilities (including specific types, locations, and size) within the project area to serve the current and future demand for parking resulting from the proposed development of the Priority Properties.

6.0 Recommended Development Program

- 6.1 Taking into consideration the access and circulation issues, the market potential, likely financial feasibility, and nearby catalyst developments, identify the recommended development program for the project area, and in particular, the Priority Properties. The program will include both public and private parking options to support the proposed development, addressing both the specific and shared parking demand.
- 6.2 Test the massing and height of the development program with a three-dimensional model to ensure that any proposed development is appropriate in scale for the given project area, taking in to consideration the architectural landmarks in the area and other context. Identify the civic goals and key urban design principles that will shape development in the area and document the optimum land use mix, including open space.
- 6.3 Test the market and financial feasibility of the various land uses, including the need for public development incentives or third-party funding sources that may be necessary to attract the preferred mix of private investment.
- 6.4 Based on comments and findings from the analysis, refine the development program and urban design into a recommended development plan illustrated in both plan graphics and 3-D massing models to show heights.

7.0 Economic Development Strategy

- 7.1 Based on the recommended development program, and working closely with the City, develop a strategy that makes sense from a market, financial, and economic

development perspective. The strategy will investigate and evaluate the advantages and disadvantages of land acquisition and disposition, eminent domain, and public versus private development. Appropriate roles and responsibilities will be detailed. Development of a timeframe will be an element of the strategy.

- 7.2 Identify necessary policy initiatives including urban renewal plan amendments, if applicable, and zoning changes, among others.
- 7.3 Identify capital improvement projects and their likely phasing.
- 7.4 Update the conceptual cost estimates for the area generated under the Action Agenda, and add conceptual cost estimates for new capital improvement projects that are projected to occur in the near or mid-term.

8.0 Deliverables

- 8.1 Concept development plan of the project area at 1"=100'.
- 8.2 3-D massing model showing heights and configuration of proposed development.
- 8.3 Technical memorandum documenting market analysis, recommended development program, market and financial feasibility, and financial gaps.
- 8.4 Document the public process, which should include at least the following; (a) all materials for stakeholder and focus group meetings from notices to agendas to minutes of the meetings, (b) all charette related materials from notices to agendas to summary of outcome, and (c) the development of informational materials on the public process and the final report for the City's website.
- 8.5 A Final Report document (both in electronic form on disc and two hundred (200) printed and bound copies) illustrating the proposed plans and outlining the development strategy, including the highest and best uses for the public and private Priority Properties, the need for incentives, if any, land acquisition and disposition, public/private partnership opportunities, roles and responsibilities, general zoning recommendations, parking demand generated and plans to address that demand, and any necessary policy initiatives that the City should pursue.
- 8.6 An Executive Summary document that provides both a synopsis of the process that was followed in developing the North Main Economic Development Strategy as well as a listing of the Strategy's final recommendations will be prepared. This abstract of the larger final report document should be clear and succinct as to stand on its own as a completed document. The Executive Summary will be contained in both the 200 printed and bound copies of the Strategy as well as in the electronic copy of the Strategy to be delivered.

SELECTION PROCESS

The City of Worcester's Selection Process is a "two-tier" process involving the evaluation of the two proposal documents. The first document is the technical or "non-price" proposal that addresses the scope of services contained in this RFP and the proponent's background, experience and approach to satisfactorily completing all of the tasks in the scope of services in a timely and professional manner. The second document is the sealed cost or "price" proposal that identifies the proponent's proposed costs associated with completing each of the individual tasks in the scope of services as well as the cost of any required subcontract work and/or any identifiable reimbursable expenses. The following sections will describe the content of each proposal document and the evaluation procedure that the City will follow.

The Technical or Non-Price Proposal

The purpose of this section is to explain the selection process that the Division of Economic Development will employ in selecting the best technical or non-price proposal received. It is a two step process as follows. The first step involves the review of all proposals received by the submission deadline by a three-member Review Committee. The Committee will review all submissions against the minimum evaluation criteria identified and described below. If a proposal is determined to be both "responsive" (the respondent agrees to meet all of the City's terms and conditions, the submission contains all of the required information and forms, and all of the required forms are properly completed) and "responsible" (the respondent has clearly demonstrated that it has the minimum required qualifications, experience, and capability to successfully take on and complete the project), it will then be reviewed against the Comparative Evaluation Criteria as described and contained in this Request for Proposals (RFP). Any submission determined to be either "not responsive" and/or "not responsible" will be rejected and discontinued from further consideration by the Committee.

Minimum Evaluation Criteria

A proposal must satisfy all of the minimum evaluation criteria to be determined both responsive and responsible and thus proceed on to the second tier, the comparative evaluation criteria. The following is a listing of the minimum evaluation criteria that will be used to evaluate all proposals received must contain the following items.

- A **Cover-Letter** from the respondent addressed to George A. Ciccone, Director of Downtown Development, City Hall, 455 Main Street, Room 409, Worcester, MA 01608, that includes: a clear and concise statement of the respondent's interest in providing the Division of Economic Development with the professional urban design, market analysis and parking planning services identified in Section A. Scope of Services of this RFP; as well as a brief history of the firm or team's experience in providing the type of services requested.
- The **Project Team** that will be responsible for providing the urban design, market analysis and parking planning services identified in Section A. Scope of Services of this RFP shall be identified by name and title in a project organizational chart. Resumes shall also be included in the proposal for all members of the project team.

- A **List of Similar Projects** that the respondent and or members of the respondent team have been involved in over the past five years. Provide the project name, the project manager, the community, and the overall project scope. Please describe in some detail the specific types of services provided, with specific emphasis on projects where those services included urban planning and design, commercial real estate development and market analysis, traffic engineering and parking facilities planning, the design and implementation of public participation programs, and the formation and implementation of aggressive and expeditious project schedules.
- A **List of References** by the respondent identifying references familiar with each of the respondent's similar projects listed and the respondent's role in the project (e.g. public officials in the project's community, bankers, architects, engineers, etc.) including their names, addresses, telephone numbers and involvement (if any) in the project.
- A **Proposed Project Schedule** in chart format, that identifies the estimated time (in days) to complete each subtask and task listed under the scope of services of this RFP and the total number days to complete the entire scope of services.
- A **Certificate of Non-Collusion** completed by the respondent per MGL Chapter 43, Section 27, that this proposal is made in good faith without fraud or collusion or connection with any other person submitting a proposal signed and dated by the respondent(s). (see Appendix B – Certificate of Non-Collusion)
- A **Certificate of Tax Compliance** by the respondent per M.G.L. Chapter 62C, Section 49A, certifying that the respondent has complied with all laws of the Commonwealth of Massachusetts relating to taxes signed and dated by the respondent(s). (see Appendix C – Certificate of Tax Compliance)
- A **Respondent Entity Disclosure Statement** giving the names and residences of all persons and parties with an interest in the foregoing proposal.
(see Appendix D – Respondent Entity Disclosure Statement)

Comparative Criteria:

The purpose of the comparative evaluation criteria is to weigh the relative merits of all of the competing proposals that have been determined to be responsive and responsible. The evaluators will review all of the responsive and responsible submissions against each of the comparative criteria and assign one of three values, as follows: "**Highly Advantageous**" (the highest value), "**Advantageous**" (the middle value), and "**Not Advantageous**" (the lowest value). Once an evaluator has completed his/her review of a proposal against all of the comparative criteria they will review all of the values assigned a proposal for the various criteria and then assign an "**overall value**" that he or she feels best represents that proposal's evaluation against all of the comparative criteria. If two or more proposals are determined to have the same overall value, the evaluators as a group, shall determine by vote which of these proposals is the most advantageous to the City of Worcester. The Table of Comparative Criteria is located on the next page.

The Table of Comparative Criteria

CRITERIA	Highly Advantageous	Advantageous	Not Advantageous
The experience of the respondent in successfully providing urban planning and design on similar development projects (in terms of size, scope and cost) in the past.	Verifiable evidence of having provided urban planning and design services on more than seven similar projects in the past five years will be considered Highly Advantageous for the purposes of this evaluation.	Verifiable evidence of having provided urban planning and design services on five to seven similar projects in the past five years will be considered Advantageous for the purposes of this evaluation.	Verifiable evidence of having provided urban planning and design services on less than five similar projects in the past five years will be considered Not Advantageous for the purposes of this evaluation.
The experience of the respondent in successfully providing commercial real estate development and market analysis services on similar development projects (in terms of size, scope and cost) in the past.	Verifiable evidence of having provided commercial real estate development and market analysis services on more than seven similar projects in the past five years will be considered Highly Advantageous for the purposes of this evaluation.	Verifiable evidence of having provided commercial real estate development and market analysis services on five to seven similar projects in the past five years will be considered Advantageous for the purposes of this evaluation.	Verifiable evidence of having provided commercial real estate development and market analysis services on less than five similar projects in the past five years will be considered Not Advantageous for the purposes of this evaluation.
The experience of the respondent in successfully providing traffic engineering analysis and parking facilities planning services on similar development projects (in terms of size, scope and cost) in the past.	Verifiable evidence of having provided traffic engineering analysis and parking facilities planning services on more than seven similar projects in the past five years will be considered Highly Advantageous for the purposes of this evaluation.	Verifiable evidence of having provided traffic engineering analysis and parking facilities planning services on four to seven similar projects in the past five years will be considered Advantageous for the purposes of this evaluation.	Verifiable evidence of having provided traffic engineering analysis and parking facilities planning services on less than four similar projects in the past five years will be considered Not Advantageous for the purposes of this evaluation.
The experience of the respondent in successfully designing and managing planning projects with major public participation components (in terms of organization, outreach, and leadership) in the past.	Verifiable evidence of having designed and managed more than seven similar projects with major public participation components in the past five years will be considered Highly Advantageous for the purposes of this evaluation.	Verifiable evidence of having designed and managed five to seven similar projects with major public participation components in the past five years will be considered Advantageous for the purposes of this evaluation.	Verifiable evidence of having designed and managed less than five similar projects with major public participation components in the past five years will be considered Not Advantageous for the purposes of this evaluation.

CRITERIA	Highly Advantageous	Advantageous	Not Advantageous
The priority, promptness and expediency attached to the completion of the tasks identified in the scope of services of this RFP as demonstrated by the respondent's proposed project schedule.	The average overall length of all of the proposed schedules will be determined and any schedule whose length is more than 15 % less than the average length of all schedules submitted will be considered Highly Advantageous for the purposes of this evaluation.	The average overall length of all of the proposed schedules will be determined and any schedule whose length is within 15 % (plus or minus) of the average length of all schedules submitted will be considered Advantageous for the purposes of this evaluation.	The average overall length of all of the proposed schedules will be determined and any schedule whose length is more than 15 % greater than the average length of all schedules submitted will be considered Not Advantageous for the purposes of this evaluation.

Proposal Submission Requirements

The purpose of this section is to identify the requirements for the submission of a complete proposal that addresses all of the required minimum evaluation criteria and which will result in the submission of a responsive and responsible proposal. A complete proposal submission involves the submission of two separate documents; a Technical Proposal and a Cost Proposal, each as defined below and under separate covers. The specific submission requirements are as follows:

The **Technical Proposal** must include the following information which corresponds with the minimum evaluation criteria:

- A Cover Letter (see page 8 for the requirements)
- The Project Team (see page 8 for the requirements)
- A List of Similar Projects (see page 9 for the requirements)
- A List of References (see page 9 for the requirements)
- A Proposed Project Schedule (see page 9 for the requirements)
- A Certificate of Non-Collusion (see Appendix B for the requirements)
- A Certificate of Tax Compliance (see Appendix C for requirements)
- A Respondent Entity Disclosure Statement (see Appendix D for the requirements)

All interested parties responding to this RFP must submit one (1) complete original **Technical Proposal** document and six (6) complete copies of the Technical proposal document;

- the proposals must be submitted in a loose-leaf binder or a spiral-bound booklet;
- the size of the pages should not exceed the standard 8.5" x 11.0", unless they are folded to a maximum size of 8.5" x 11";
- the seven (7) proposal documents must be submitted in one package with a label clearly marked as follows: "Technical Proposal for the Providing Urban Design and Market Analysis Services for the North Main Economic Development Strategy Area, Worcester, MA", along with the name, address, and telephone number of the respondent and the name and title of a contact person.

All interested parties responding to this RFP must also submit one (1) complete original **Cost Proposal** document, which must follow the format identified below and contain the specific information identified below:

- the Cost Proposal will be submitted in a chart format (see Appendix E for a sample) that clearly identifies each Task and all of the subtasks under each Task, the name and title of each person that will perform work on a specific subtask, the number of hours each person will work on a particular subtask, their hourly billing rates (including overhead), the total labor cost for each person for each subtask, and then the total labor cost to complete each task, for the entire scope of services. The respondent will also include a listing of any and all subcontractors whose services are required to satisfactorily complete the scope of services, the specific work they will perform, and the anticipated cost for each subcontractor and the total cost for all subcontracted work. Also, the respondent will identify all categories of reimbursable expenses necessary to complete the tasks and subtasks in the scope of services, the estimated cost of each reimbursable expense and the total cost of all reimbursable expenses necessary to complete the scope of services.

The **Cost Proposal** document must be submitted in a separate sealed envelope with a label clearly marked as follows: "Cost Proposal for Providing Urban Design and Market Analysis Services for the North Main Economic Development Strategy Area, Worcester, MA", along with the name, address, and telephone number of the respondent and the name and title of a contact person.

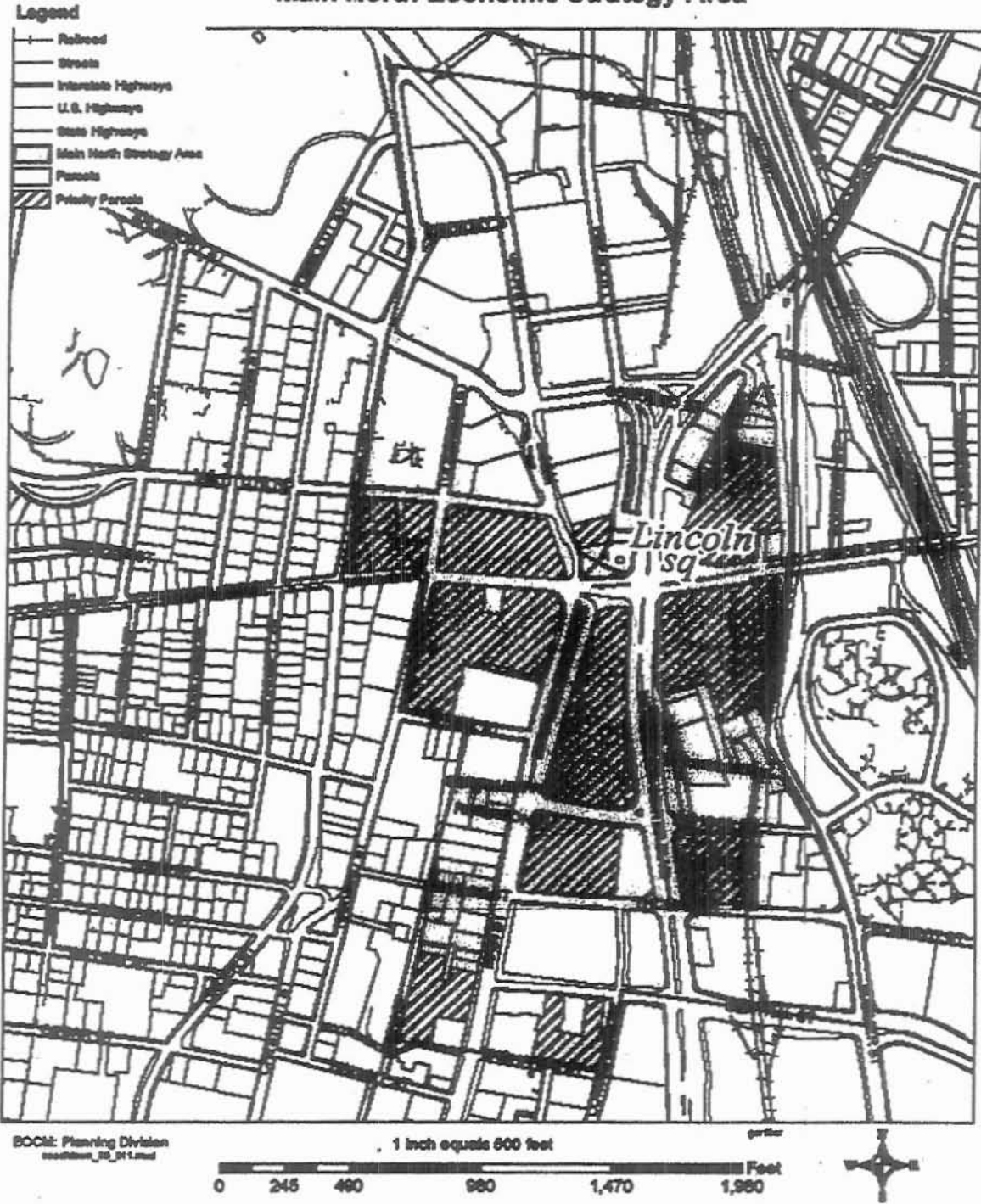
Submission Deadline

Finally, the deadline for the submission of complete proposals (containing both a Technical Proposal and a Cost Proposal) in response to this Request for Proposals is no later than 1:00 PM on Friday, May 5, 2006. All proposal submissions should be delivered to the Worcester City Purchasing Department, Room 404, Worcester City Hall, 455 Main Street, Worcester, MA 01608. If you should have any questions or require any additional information, please contact: John Orrell, City Purchasing Agent at 508-799-1523 or by e-mail at orrellj@ci.worcester.ma.us.

The City of Worcester reserves the right to reject any and all proposals.

Appendix A – North Main Economic Development Strategy Area

Main North Economic Strategy Area



Appendix B – Certificate of Non-Collusion

Under Massachusetts General Laws C. 40, 4B ½, the following Certification must be provided:

“The undersigned certifies under the penalties of perjury that this proposal is in all respects bona fide, fair and made without collusion or fraud with any other person. As used in any of these sections the word “person” shall mean any natural person, joint venture, partnership, corporation or other business or legal entity.”

(Please Print)

Name of person signing proposal

Signature of person signing proposal

Date

Title

Address & Zip Code

No award will be made without vendor certification of the above.

(Note: This Form must be included in the proposal submission)

Appendix C – Certificate of Tax Compliance

STATE LAW NOW MANDATES THAT TO DO BUSINESS WITH THE CITY OF WORCESTER the Massachusetts Revenue Enforcement and Protection Program of 1983 requires that the following be supplied with your bid:

Date: _____

Pursuant to Mass. G.L. Ch. 62C, Section 49A, I certify under the Penalties of Perjury That I, To My Best Knowledge and Belief, Have Filed All Mass. State Tax Return and Paid ALL Mass. State and City Taxes Required under Law.

Company Name _____

Street and No. _____

City or Town _____

State _____ Zip Code _____

Tel. No. _____ Fax No. _____

Social Security No.
or
Federal Identification No. _____

Certified by State Office of Minority and Women Business Assistance (SOMWBA)

Yes _____ Date of Certification _____

Failure to complete this form may result in rejection of bid and/or removal from City Bid Lists.

Authorized Signature

(Note: This Form must be included in the proposal submission)

Appendix D – Respondent Entity Disclosure Statement

Give full names and residences of all persons and parties interested in the foregoing proposal:

(Notice: Give first and last name in full; in case of Corporation give names of President, Treasurer and Manager; and in case of Firms give names of the individual members.)

NAMES	ADDRESSES	ZIP CODE
_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____

Kindly furnish the following information regarding the Respondent:

- (1) If a Proprietorship

Name of Owner: _____

	ADDRESS	ZIP CODE	TEL. #
Business:	_____	_____	_____
Home:	_____	_____	_____

- (2) If a Partnership

Full names and address of all partners:

NAMES	ADDRESSES	ZIP CODE
_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____

BUSINESS ADDRESS	ZIP CODE	TEL. #
_____	_____	_____

(3) If a Corporation

Full Legal Name: _____

State of Incorporation: _____

Principal Place of Business: _____ ZIP CODE _____

Qualified in Massachusetts: Yes _____ No _____

Place of Business in Massachusetts: _____ ZIP CODE _____ TEL. # _____

Give the following information regarding Surety Company:

Full Legal Name of Surety Company:

State of Incorporation: _____

Principal Place of Business:

Admitted in Massachusetts: Yes _____ No _____

Place of Business in Massachusetts: _____ ZIP CODE _____ TEL. # _____

NOTE: The Office of the Attorney General, Washington, D.C. requires the following information on all proposals amounting to \$1,000.00 or more.

E.I. Number of Proposer _____

This number is regularly used by companies when filing their "EMPLOYER'S FEDERAL TAX RETURN," U.S. Treasury Department Form 941.

Authorized Signature of Proponent:

_____ Title: _____

Date: _____

(Note: This Form must be included in the proposal submission)

Appendix E – Sample Cost Proposal Forms

(Please see the following two pages)

CITY OF WORCESTER

REQUEST FOR PROPOSALS FOR URBAN DESIGN, MARKET ANALYSIS & PARKING PLAN SERVICES FOR THE NORTH MAIN ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT STRATEGY AREA

The City of Worcester is soliciting proposals from qualified firms interested in providing Urban Design, Market Analysis & Parking Plan Services for the North Main Economic Development Strategy Area.

In 2004 the City of Worcester developed an Economic Development Action Agenda in response to local concerns regarding the significant number of new development projects proposed and under construction in the Downtown as well as the need to integrate these projects for the overall benefit of the community. The North Main Economic Strategy Area includes a substantial portion of the Action Agenda's "North Main District" but also includes additional land north of Lincoln Square. ~~The purpose of this project is to identify new opportunities for development that will be integrated with the various existing projects and plans in the area into a market-driven, financially responsible, and sustainable redevelopment strategy.~~ Since the North Main area is a densely developed urban environment, this project would be remiss if it did not include an assessment of the current demand and supply of parking and the incremental increase in demand that will result from the proposed development of each of the Priority Properties identified on the project area map. In order to maximize the opportunity for the area's stakeholders and the public to participate and have meaningful input into the approach and ultimate recommendations for the project area, a series of stakeholder and focus group meetings as well as a public charette will be held and documented in the final report.

A copy of the Request for Proposals is available from the City of Worcester Purchasing Department, City Hall, Room 404, 455 Main Street, Worcester, MA 01608. Any interested firms may call John C. Orrell, City Purchasing Agent at (508) 799-1244.

A formal, written response is due at the City of Worcester Purchasing Department, City Hall, 455 Main Street, Worcester, MA 01608 on Friday, May 19, 2006 by 10:00 AM.

Staff of the City of Worcester's Division of Economic Development will review all proposals determined by the staff to be both responsive and responsible as defined in the RFP document; and will select the most qualified proposal for Urban Design, Market Analysis & Parking Plan Services for the North Main Economic Development Strategy Area. The selected firm will be expected to begin work immediately.

The City of Worcester reserves the right to reject any or all proposals, in whole or in part, and to waive any or all informalities or technical defects, and to reject any non-conforming, non-responsive conditional proposals, if they are deemed by the City not to be in the best interest of the public and/or the City of Worcester.

Executive Office of Economic Development

BY: Julie A. Jacobson
Assistant City Manager for Economic and Neighborhood Development

Dated: April 4, 2006

General Principles for Lincoln Square from the Viewpoint of EHANA
East Highland Area Neighborhood Association (EHANA)'s mission is to "preserve, promote, and celebrate quality of life for all diverse members of our neighborhood." With this mission in mind, EHANA advocates a Master Plan for the Lincoln Square area that will:

- ❖ Stand for something uplifting!
- ❖ Say something positive, distinctive, and forward-thinking about Worcester
- ❖ Express and educate people about the history of Worcester
- ❖ Invite pedestrian/ bicycle/ stroller/ wheelchair/ segway traffic
- ❖ Invite use of bus transportation to and from other city destinations
- ❖ Invite use by the broadest possible spectrum of the public
- ❖ Invite street performance and public art
- ❖ Encourage interactive "bridges" between people who might not otherwise interact, including positive interactions among people across the lifespan.
- ❖ Stimulate partnerships among existing organizations
- ❖ Create a "green link" between Elm & Institute Parks via Highland St. and Lincoln Sq. (ideally part of a complete circuit) that encourages people to leave their cars to shop, eat out, and walk-bike-roll.
- ❖ Create a magnet for "green renovation" and green architecture funds
- ❖ Encourage the feel of an "urban village"

[With respect to the Memorial Auditorium:]

- ❖ Stand for something worthy of the sacrifices it commemorates;
- ❖ Preserve the Memorial Lobby, and;
- ❖ Invite people to use the Lobby for meditation, reflection, learning, and occasional organized negotiations or forums aimed at conflict resolution.

11/15/06

Assistant City Manager Julie Jacobsen and
Economic Development Director Tim McGourthy
Worcester City Hall, 455 Main Street, Worcester 01608

Dear Ms. Jacobsen and Mr. McGourthy

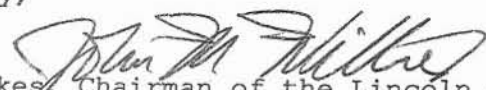
I understand that things are coming to a head in terms of a plan for the North Main Street area redevelopment Project. Tim and I spoke by phone so I know that the consulting firm from Watertown has been selected and will be in the city to see him regularly. They will probably want to start talking to stakeholders very soon. This is faster than EHANA expected, since we thought that the hiring of a new staff person to handle the project would take longer than it seems to have. Nat Needles, chairman of EHANA has already met with George Ciccone, though I have not. We have not yet met with the consultants, so, as things are coming to a close faster than expected, I felt that we should share the results of our deliberations on what should be done with the areas that most directly affect our community in the form of a document that can be passed on to the external consultant firm.

I was glad to hear that Tim knew of EHANA and its' status as a stakeholder. I credit Nadia Beard, the former head of this committee with our being visible and relatively advanced in our thinking about this opportunity. Thus, I will share with you a three part document that starts with a general vision about which there is a wide consensus in EHANA and then moves on to 8 points that have been discussed and appear to be popular features that we would like to see worked into the plans. At that point I indulge in some illustrations that are my own views, but are elaborations on those general points. This section is intended to put some ideas on the table and some flesh on the bones of the generalized vision. So far, the people who have read drafts of this document seem to have liked most of them and they have stimulated others to be more specific about what they hope to see as well. However, EHANA is not committed to any of the specifics, and even I am not too attached to them. They are illustrations.

The plans that concern us most are those involving the sites of the old Voke, Courthouse and Aud. In a nutshell, for context, we would like to see the East Highland Area evolve into a community that celebrates diversity and expect the economic driver of the area to continue to be the housing and services needed by the students of WPI and Becker. However, we want to see a community with an arts, crafts and performance side emerge as well. Thus, the changing use of these neighboring sites offers a special opportunity to the area and the City that only comes along about once a century. So, we look forward to exploring the possibilities with you and the designated consultants. A few WPI students are also hoping to participate in the give and take of the process to come.

Please note the attached list of general principles for guiding the development of the area that has been developed by this committee and endorsed by EHANA as a whole in a recent monthly meeting. These represent the only official EHANA statement in this document.

Sincerely,



John Wilkes, Chairman of the Lincoln Square
Committee of East Highland Area Neighborhood Assn. (EHANA)

A proposal for the revival of the Worcester Memorial Auditorium on the occasion of its 75th Anniversary (1932-2007)

By Nathaniel Needle, Ed.D.

I. Introduction

In 2006, I spoke with over a hundred diverse people about reviving Worcester Memorial Auditorium. All agreed that it would be a mammoth undertaking. Some responded to the very idea by reeling off reasons why it would be impractical. Others hinted at political forces aligned against it. A few even bemoaned the obstacles to demolishing the structure altogether. In addition to concerns about the vast financial and technical challenges, the notion aroused other fears: that the building's former role has already been filled by newer enterprises; that we would worsen an already fierce competition among cultural organizations for limited funds and clientele; that since previous attempts have failed, current supporters would begin and end by looking foolish.

Nonetheless, a solid majority was highly enthusiastic, despite keen awareness of the risks involved. This led me to conclude that the political will needed to succeed with this project does exist. It might be distracted, however, by fruitless talk, such as criticizing whom or what is responsible for leaving the building idle, or picturing what we could do if only it were not a war memorial and an architectural treasure. To mobilize productive sentiment, I suggest we focus instead on how much it hurts to allow a monumental edifice at the solar plexus of our city ceaselessly to shout indifference, paralysis, and decay to the world. The Auditorium's beauty and scale reflect so powerfully the high purposes for which it was built that even if we re-opened it, but for lesser purposes, I suspect that a sense of mediocrity and decline would persist. Therefore, I humbly propose that we fully restore this building to its original destiny, but I submit that it's one of those impossible things that we must do anyway.

To mobilize productive sentiment, I suggest we focus instead on how much it hurts to allow a monumental edifice at the solar plexus of our city ceaselessly to shout indifference, paralysis, and decay to the world.

Now, I happen to be a businessperson as well as an educator

and artist, so I'm as eager as anyone to get down to the kinds of research and calculations that will show what it's going to cost, who will pay the bill, how generated income will offset expenses, and so on. In this essay, I can do no more than point to what I believe is a practical framework for thinking about this. I'm quite aware, however, that those questions will demand meticulous answers, and soon.

However, as I've mentioned, doubts about the building's proper role in today's Worcester go beyond matters of cost. Moreover, there are many who never knew or may have forgotten what that building means. Coming as I did to Worcester in 2000, it took me years to get a clue myself. Therefore, I think we need consensus on what a revived Auditorium is worth to Worcester in the first place before we can devise plans for how much to spend, what to spend it on, and how to pay for it. Precisely because of the scope of investment and risk at issue, I worry that if we don't widely share a feeling for how the Memorial Auditorium itself informs what we ought to do with it, then money talk is more liable to revolve around what we can't do and why, rather than around what we must do and how.

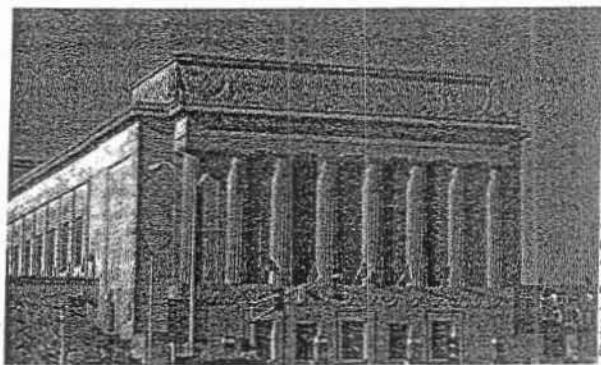
My strategy below, therefore, is first to invoke our civic responsibility to the Worcester Memorial Auditorium, and next to outline activities and organizational arrangements befitting that responsibility. Then, my general suggestions for how to capitalize and sustain this project will, I hope, make more sense as a start for gathering the political, economic, and technical resources and knowledge we need.

II. We Have an Obligation to Fulfill The Auditorium's Destiny

I began to grasp what it might mean to fulfill the destiny of the Worcester Memorial Auditorium as I reflected upon what we can all see from the outside: its dedicating inscription. If ever an ancestral generation was determined to charge posterity with a binding duty to uphold a monument's mission throughout the centuries, it could find no more concisely compelling words than these:

TO HONOR THE SERVICE IN WAR OF HER SONS AND DAUGHTERS AND TO NOURISH IN PEACE THEIR SPIRIT OF SACRIFICE A GRATEFUL CITY ERECTED THIS BUILDING.

The dedicating language, the architecture, and the central artistic works of the Worcester Memorial Auditorium all speak as one. Consider: the builders of 1932 were



Worcester Memorial Auditorium

Therefore, I humbly propose that we fully restore this building to its original destiny. I grant that this may seem impossible, but I submit that it's one of those impossible things that we must do anyway.

faced with the most severe economic depression of modern times. They were faced with the rise of fascism and the evisceration of the idealistic promise that America's 1917 entry into Europe's "Great War" would put an end to all war. This was not what one would call a year of hope. Yet our city's undaunted response was an Olympian building proclaiming that what ultimately gives indelible meaning to the sacrifice of young American life abroad is the cultivation of peace at home, moved by a commensurate spirit of sacrifice.

Leon Kroll's mural in the Auditorium's Memorial Hall depicts what the builders meant by "peace": a wholehearted and loving inclusion of all ethnic groups, ages, and economic classes within shared values of personal freedom and mutual respect for human variety. I suspect that most veterans and people in military service today who pledged to "defend America's way of life" carry an image of something very much like Kroll's mural inside them. In this respect, I think they are no different from those who hear a call to non-military kinds of service. My point is that this building, its mural, its inscription, and its ideals, all hold some unique power to unite all of us here: across the generations, across the political spectrum, and across the diverse paths we have all taken to arrive in Worcester. That's why the Auditorium deserves the city's sacrifice and genius now.

III. Considerations When Imagining Potential Activities at the Auditorium

The Auditorium was built to "nourish peace" by increasing the number and variety of people who reap all the cultural, educational, and social benefits of living in a free and diverse society. Therefore, activities should be planned to ensure the greatest possible participation by all ages, economic classes, and ethnic groups. In particular, it should convey the kind of welcome to new immigrants to Worcester that we associate with the Statue of Liberty.

Fortunately for this goal, the local audience for cultural, educational, and social activity is ripe for expansion. Growing attendance at events such as the Latino Festival, Asian Festival, African Festival, First Night, stART on the Street, and the Summer Nationals indicate that there are thousands of people who might be enticed to participate more broadly in other cultural institutions if Worcester had more "crossover bridges" linking diverse cultural worlds. If the Auditorium served as a "universal comfort zone" (as do the Worcester Public Library and Elm Park) that introduced people to cultural, educational, and services organizations city-wide, then the pool of people ready to patronize these institutions, according to their individual interests, could be made to grow. Thus the Auditorium would not be one more venue competing for a fixed market, but rather a civic engine for enlarging that market to the benefit of all.

The Auditorium should aim creatively to complement, and not compete with, programming offered

Toward A Pedestrian Friendly and Culturally Diverse Urban Village: The East Highland Area Neighborhood Association (EHANA) Vision

By John Wilkes

The East Highland Area is thought by some, especially some real estate agents, to be in transition from residential to commercial land uses. We do not agree. We expect the economic driver of the area to continue to be the housing and services needed by the students of WPI and Becker. However, this is entirely compatible with a community that remains residential because of the size of the houses in the neighborhood. They are far too large for the average family size in this period, and hence, they present an opportunity for the upwardly mobile homeowner, if they are handled properly. We want to see "live in" resident landlords who rent the extra space in their houses to students. Thus, people who could not yet hope to own their own houses elsewhere in the city could do so here, due to the income streams coming from housing students in extra space.

The threat to our vision of the neighborhood is primarily absentee landlords and businesses that want to take over the big older houses and either break them up into shabby, poorly managed, student apartments or convert them to offices and pave the yards for parking. We are not anti-business, and indeed want to foster some new businesses in our area, particularly family owned ethnic restaurants that are not chains and are unique in the city. I went to an Ethiopian restaurant in Washington D.C. and found the experience memorable. Since I know some Sudanese refugees living in the city I have often wondered what they would do with a local restaurant, since the idea of going to dinner and knowing that some of the money I spent would go back to Sudan, some to UN refugee camps in Kenya and some would help local refugees and this appeals to me. However, I digress.

We want to see the large older houses in the neighborhood fall into the hands of immigrant and diversity oriented families that really want to live in the area, rather than absentee landlords. They would still house students, but in our experience owner occupant landlords living in the houses where they rent rooms or apartments control the situation. Live-in managers are less desirable, but better than nothing. We already have a number of absentee landlords active in our area and their properties typically look neglected. Neighbors don't know who to go to with noise and trash issues. Some seem to be trying to take over whole blocks, and that kind of land speculation assembling lots for some unknown new use concerns us. Events that will affect our environs and property values are potentially taken out the open forums where we can be fully involved.

The larger vision, as noted, involves ethnic restaurants and craft establishments and groups running activities in the public schools to celebrate diversity as well. We were considering the encouragement of an African immigrant community on the edge of WPI, which would enhance its ability to diversify its student body as well. However, other culturally interesting possibilities also exist. I am trying to talk the new owner of a 16 room facility on Lancaster street that used to be a psychiatric nursing home into setting up a "theme house" for WPI students. I contacted the SMAS Club for him, (Society for Medieval Arts and Sciences). These students are into dressing and acting the part of medieval lords, ladies, servants and knights. Clearly one could see them teaming up with Higgins Armory and running local events in the neighborhood and at local schools if they had a base of operations and a place to set up for their pageantry and jousts etc. The major problem in this

younger people living among them. The elders would not be pushed into participating in activities, that are supposed to be therapeutic, (as they often are when the younger people run "facilities "for them). This would be independent living, with interdependent neighbors in which financially stable elders sort of set the tone for the place.

- 6) Improved bus service will be needed, especially to link food stores, drug stores, hospitals and doctors offices to the residential area for people without cars.
- 7a) The Court House seems to be of interest to Preservation Worcester. However, they want to take down the less historical and scenic part of the facility. We would rather see that potential class room, meeting and office space turned into an integrated immigrant support center (ESL classes, legal advice, social services etc.) accessible to people living in the area without cars.

7b) Actually, we think Worcester needs a Law school and dedicating the whole existing courthouse space to start one would be even better. The Aud. and Courthouse together would be an excellent start toward one.

So, those are the things we things would fit the area, be mutually enhancing with our neighborhood and help it hold its residential character, as well as serve a certain type of resident that we want to attract particularly well.

stores the a lot of professional offices, 2 hospitals a bus/train station as well as a major parking lot and City Hall would make all property along that route more valuable and ease the downtown parking issues. Lincoln square could anchor the north end and be the pick up point for a shuttle bus to Greendale Mall as well as the gateway to the walking route down the Highland corridor.

As a walking community, we want to see pathways coming into the Lincoln square area from Institute and Elm Parks. Between these parks we envision a bike lane along Park Ave. and sidewalks suitable for slower strollers, bikes, roller skates and Segway transporters as well as wheel chairs and carts of all kinds that a shopper might use. A circulating police presence would be welcome- and what transportation they should use is an interesting question. I favor keeping it quiet but a muffled motorcycle patrol would make the police the fastest, most powerful presence on the circuit. A golf cart might be sufficient to make the rounds often enough and lend assistant to an injured walker or rider.

We want to see the old Voke area become housing, diverse housing, and think a mix of elders in really nice Condos and modest apartments for their support and service staffs would be a nice touch. So, what will be the local entertainment sector that one can walk to? The Aud. properly designed to accommodate diverse configurations we see as a major asset. It should be busy about 300 days of the year, even if the activity of the night is just a movie of the less popular artsy type that that is too old or scorned by the commercial popular culture. We would like to see 75 of those days scheduled by an organizing committee representing the local community and having a diverse ethnic and arts flavor.

Another 75 days per year should be scheduled by the Worcester Public Schools and we would like to see the Aud, set up as the perfect place to have a High school level Model UN type event. The WPS would control the schedule and space, but this should be regional with debating teams from all over Central Mass and even New England gathering in Worcester to have the students explore international issues and negotiate relationships between contending states. The building was dedicated to World Peace after WW I, and we should remember that legacy.

Another 75 days per year should be scheduled by the Worcester College consortium. Performances, speakers of common interest, mixers and again Model UN events, should all be accommodated. The Chinese Students from all over Worcester should be able to gather at their New Years or Moon Festival and throw a bash that the whole city can attend. I went to the Diwali Festival of light run by the WPI students from India. It was impressive. I was sitting next to a Clark student from India who wondered why he only heard about this at the last minute and he and his friends were not involved. It was a good question.

If the colleges are setting up Model UN scenarios why not have them run some of their events for area High school and Middle school students and the Secondary school students can run them for Elementary school students. Indeed, teams from all the elementary schools in Worcester could gather to represent different countries to consider a global issue and the colleges would probably be glad to help out with that as well.

The last 75 days per year should be rented out to external organizations to cover building maintenance and pay the staff members who run the facility and are not already on the WPS or a consortium college payroll. If we can set up for a model UN we can cover all kinds of negotiations from union contracts to interstate environmental compacts. If we can do a HS graduation we can do all kinds of award ceremonies. If we can hold a craft fair we can do smaller trade shows. If we can do a rally or stage play we can do all kinds of events for

Proposed Uses for the Worcester Auditorium

- **Arts Center/ Convention Center**

The Auditorium would be used to harbor amateur performing arts such as:

- College and High School Musicals/ Dramas
- Choirs and other musical groups
- Ethnic traditional/ contemporary arts
- Performing arts competitions

The Auditorium would also be used for other activities such as:

- Debates among college high school or civic groups
- Simulations such as Model United Nations, Model U.S. Congress, Model Mass. Legislature, etc.
- Re-enactments of famous trials, political conventions, and other landmark events
- Sports events and competitions, such as the Worcester Indoor Olympics

- **Collegiate Center**

The Auditorium would be used as a meeting place for intercollegiate events hosted by the Colleges of Worcester Consortium such as:

- Meetings for all chapters of different organizations within the consortium that have similar interests, such as professional societies, cultural organizations and community service organizations
- Social gatherings, such as parties, movie nights, game nights, etc.
- Guest speakers, exhibitions/ performances of interest to the collegiate community, collegiate performing arts events

- **Tourist Attraction, Research Facility, and Goddard Exhibit/ Museum**

The Auditorium would be used for research and exhibition purposes, such as:

- Film festivals and negotiations
- Research and testing for the Consortium Department of Space Studies
- A meeting place for the Consortium Department of Peace Studies
- Replicas such as, moon bases, space stations, and WW I and WW II battlefields after battles

Conclusion

The proposed uses above are intended to provide:

- a local resource for residents in the given part of the city to use
- a resource and gathering place for high school and/or college students citywide
- a regional resource that draws people to the city, honors Robert Goddard, and fosters his dream
- a place to draw a new sector of the national economy to Worcester, MA and create new job opportunities for locals

Three Proposed Uses for the Worcester Auditorium

- **Local Arts Center/ Convention Center**

The renovation would be funded by the city through grants or volunteer labor and a mostly volunteer group would run the venue. Small fees would be charged at the door to cover continuing maintenance.

The Auditorium would be used to harbor local amateur performing arts such as:

- College and High School Musicals/ Dramas
- Choirs and other musical groups
- Ethnic traditional/ contemporary arts
- Performing arts competitions/ shows

The Auditorium would also be used for other activities such as:

- Debates among college high school or civic groups
- Simulations such as Model United Nations, Model U.S. Congress, Model Mass. Legislature, etc.
- Re-enactments of famous trials, political conventions, and other landmark events
- Local sports events ranging from volleyball, roller skating, floor hockey, and wrestling, to a possible Worcester Indoor Olympics

Very Desirable 6 5 4 3 2 1 *Undesirable*
Very Feasible 6 5 4 3 2 1 *Not at All Feasible*

- **Intercollegiate and High School Student Center**

The renovations would be funded by the City through an enlarged public school budget and by contributions from the Worcester Consortium, which would co-own the building.

The Auditorium would be used as a meeting place for intercollegiate events designed to bring students of the city together and events at which all the high schools in the city, both public and private, can do jointly, such as:

- Meetings for all chapters of different organizations within the consortium that have similar interests, such as professional societies, cultural organizations and community service organizations
- Social gatherings, such as parties, movie nights, game nights, etc.
- Guest speakers, exhibitions/ performances of interest to the collegiate community, collegiate performing arts events and awards ceremonies

There would be an emphasis on having the college students set up events for the High School students and the High school Student Clubs to set up things for the Elementary school students. Craft Fairs, festivals, Model United Nations', science fairs, career fairs, ethnic holiday events, and ecumenical religious events are all possibilities. Award ceremonies and political gathering are to be encouraged. The Worcester College consortium would move its offices there and provide space for joint ventures by the colleges of Worcester in Gender Studies, Space Studies and Peace Studies and other fields in which each campus is individually weak, but in combination could be nationally competitive.

Very Desirable 6 5 4 3 2 1 *Undesirable*
Very Feasible 6 5 4 3 2 1 *Not at All Feasible*

Appendix G

- **Tourist Attraction/ Business Incubator Dedicated the Robert Goddard**

This plan would be funded “in kind” by the city giving a private organization affiliated with the Worcester College Consortium a “lease” involving tax and rent credits in return for spending on renovation and exhibit construction. State and Federal Grants would also be sought. The goal would be to bring in revenue for renovation from visitors – mostly school children from the region on field trips, but also families and youth groups.

The Auditorium would be used for educational and exhibition purposes, such as:

- A Mockup of a Moon Base to simulate the one to be built in 2020.
- A meeting place and project center for the Consortium Department of Space Studies, which would design and run the “Lunar” facility.

Special Movie Projection equipment would be installed to create the illusion of a Moonscape to visitors standing at the door of the underground base.

This facility would also be able to approximate underground military bunkers and bomb shelters typical of the 20th century wars.

- A meeting place and project center for the Consortium Department of Peace Studies would run simulations WW I and WW II sites and cities after battles or air raids as an educational tourist attraction would be provided.
- One set up would be suited to Peace Conferences and Model United Nations on Lunar Law and Space Policy amidst the space and war exhibits. Demilitarizing space would be a major goal.
- Another set up would allow the special projection capabilities to be used for more normal film showings and film festivals.
- Another set up would be for an annual fair for new company startups designed to attract jobs of the future in emerging fields to Worcester. Entrepreneurs and inventors would compete for rent/ tax-free start-up space in old Worcester Buildings in return for renovating the part of the building they were using. This event would honor Robert Goddard as an inventor and visionary, but the company concepts need not be in the field of Aerospace. The Space Studies Dept. would attract some in that field.

Very Desirable 6 5 4 3 2 1 *Undesirable*
Very Feasible 6 5 4 3 2 1 *Not at All Feasible*

Comments and other ideas:

Appendix H

4/21/07

To: Dean of Students Peterson, College of the Holy Cross
Dean of Students Cameron, Becker College
Dean of Student Affairs Rogoff, U Mass Medical School
Associate Dean of Student Pierce, Mass College of Pharmacy and Health Sciences

From: Professor John Wilkes, Dept of Social Science and Policy Studies, WPI
(508)831-5578 and Iesha "Memphis" Boyce, Project Assistant

RE: The University Student Voice in Worcester City Planning Process

As you probably know, Worcester is making plans to redevelop the North End of Main Street, where the Auditorium, old Vocational School and old Courthouse are. Most problematic is the future of the Auditorium, which is a war memorial is need of an estimated \$30 Million in renovations. The October 1995 Charette on the subject proposed the model of the area of Northampton near Smith College as a model for the area, and the closing quote was "Worcester has an untapped market of 30,000 college students who would be attracted to gather at such a commercial center".

If so, the programming of the largest venue in that area, the Auditorium, is critical. Hence, the voice of the college students is critical as to what use it would be put to and how it might serve to draw students from all over the city together, assuming appropriate public transportation form all the campuses. At the time they were thinking a "College Art Center where area college students could display their work for public viewing", and presumably that would have included theatrical performances. "Ethnic Festivals..." celebrating the international diversity of the city, and especially the college communities within it, were also mentioned.

Recently, Nat Needles wrote an article in the InCity Times (Feb 15, 2007), detailing a similar proposal, which I have included, as an elaboration of the first of 3 alternative uses of the Worcester Auditorium. However, two other proposals involving a more formal College and High school collaboration and a Consortium- Business collaboration have also been developed for comparison with this model.

Focus groups involving about 6 students from each campus have been held at WPI, Clark University and Assumption College to get reactions to these ideas and solicit other ideas. However, Iesha Boyce has run out of time in her efforts to set up such events on your campuses. She has to complete data collection by May 1st. Hence, she has asked me to distribute on her behalf a questionnaire that she has developed, based on the experience of the Clark and WPI focus groups, to the other campuses. She asks me to solicit your help in getting about 6 students who are either involved in student government, or an appropriate class, possibly in Urban Studies or simply the 6 students you would have invited to a focus group because you respect their opinions.

At WPI she drew on 6 people selected from different student networks ranging from APO (our service fraternity) to clubs serving minority group engineers and foreign students. Her meetings lasted an hour, but this 2 page survey should take no more than 10 minutes to answer. If you think a focus group in the next week is still possible, she would prefer to operate that way. You can contact her at Memphis@wpi.edu to set up such an event.

Appendix H

Should you be willing to participate, I will leave it to your discretion to decide whether to have the responses mailed back to Iesha individually or whether you would be willing to gather up the 6 responses and send them back to her as a package by the deadline. Obviously she still wants what you can get even if all 6 of those you ask to participate do not follow through. Feel free to make a few extra copies and mark them "administrator" if you or members of your staff want to express your opinions about the pros and cons of each possibility as well, but Iesha is trying to document the student voice of Worcester on this subject.

Iesha has been invited by the City of Worcester to participate in a focus group to be run soon by the planning firm employed by the city to come up with a formal plan for the North End of Main Street. We expect that to be in the next few weeks. At that event she wants to be able to authoritatively represent the student voice of Worcester. I do hope you can help her out in this project.

It is a good precedent for future planning where the City is actually trying to improve the quality of student life here and may actually enhance the recruitment efforts of all the Worcester College if this is done right. A gathering place for the college students of Worcester is long overdue, and once they get to know each other better, they will be more likely to visit teach other's on campus events as well.