

# Campus Martius

## Economic Impact Case Study

### LOCATION

DETROIT, MICHIGAN

### CLIENTS

MAYOR'S TASK FORCE  
DETROIT 300 CONSERVANCY

### DESIGNER

RUNDELL ERNSTBERGER  
ASSOCIATES, LLC.

### SIZE

1.6 ACRES

### COST

\$20 MILLION

### OPENED

NOVEMBER 2004

### Introduction

In late 1999, PPS began working with the City of Detroit to reclaim a concrete island less than two acres in size that had historically functioned as the heart of downtown, but had been overwhelmed by heavy vehicular traffic. Campus Martius is located in the center of Detroit's Central Business District, a roughly one mile square formed by three major roads and the Detroit River. The area was originally used as a drill field for militia training as early as 1788, and when the fire of 1805 destroyed much of Detroit, Campus Martius was used as the point of origin for laying out all new roads and lots. In 1872, the Michigan Soldiers and Sailors Monument was erected at Campus Martius, further cementing its position at the core of the City. However, by the early 1900s, Campus Martius had become a busy intersection of six major streets full of traffic.

During Detroit's 300th anniversary in 1999, the area was identified as a potential new park that could revitalize the downtown. PPS worked with the community to develop a vision for a park that would become, in the Mayor's words, "the best public space in the world." PPS's design suggestions envisioned an entire district of public uses to tie the park into a larger revitalization. The park itself was seen as a place that could attract people day and night and provide activities for different ages and types of groups year round. Construction began on the park in 2003, and a grand opening celebration was held in November 2004. Since the park has been opened,

new buildings have been constructed, old buildings are being renovated and converted to apartments, more ground floor retail has opened, and the park is busy and well used at all times of day and all season of the year.

### Design

Campus Martius is 1.6 acres in size, and contains grassy lawns, gravel walkways, and informal seating for over 2,000 people on walls, benches, steps, and moveable chairs. Two retractable stages with light and sound equipment can be moved into position for events. An ice skating rink fills much of the park from November to March. Au Bon Pain offers café food year-round, with both inside and outside seating, and wireless internet is available throughout the park. Petanque and bocce ball courts provide active uses, and a central fountain with water walls and the restored Soldiers and Sailors Monument provide additional interest. 57 trees, 2,700 shrubs and perennials, and 25,000 bulbs of over 40 varieties of annuals provide vegetative cover and visual stimulation. The space is designed to maximize the number and types of activities that can take place, and is sufficiently flexible to allow changes to and evolution of the space.

### Management

Campus Martius is owned by the City of Detroit, and is managed by Detroit 300 Conservancy (Figure 1), a non-profit organization that formed to commemorate Detroit's 300th anniversary and has evolved into a management entity for the park. Detroit



Campus Martius During Summer

*“Campus Martius has become a very special place. It is the lynch pin connecting downtown, and it has brought people downtown.”*  
 - Danny Sampson,  
 Sterling Group

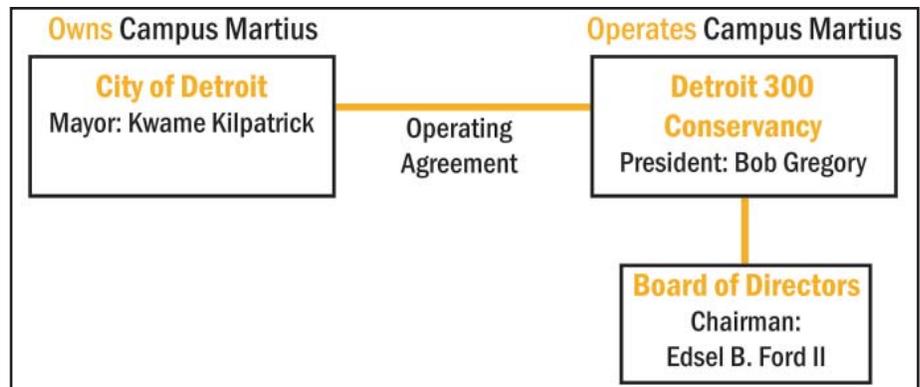
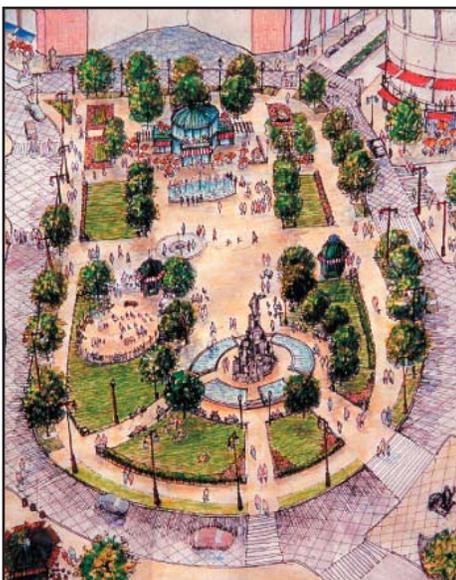


Figure 1. Management Diagram.



Campus Martius Before Construction of the Park



PPS Concept Drawing for Campus Martius

300 Conservancy is responsible for the management, maintenance, operation, fundraising, and planning of the park under a long-term operating agreement with the City of Detroit, modeled after New York City’s Central Park Conservancy’s contract agreement.

### Programming

More than 200 separate events are planned for the summer season at Campus Martius, including daily lunchtime arts performances, Friday concerts throughout the afternoon and evening, film festivals every Saturday night, and arts and crafts festivals. Smaller scale activities include petanque and bocce ball tournaments, exercise classes, story hours for children, book club meetings, and impromptu meetings of employees from the surrounding office buildings. During the winter, ice skating is a popular activity, the fountains continue to splash, and holiday lights abound, maintaining a welcoming atmosphere in the park. Larger events are also planned for the park, and have included the Detroit International Jazz Festival, live television broadcasts for local stations, and press events for the 2005 Baseball All Star Game and the 2006 SuperBowl.

### Use

A key accomplishment of Campus Martius has been its ability to attract visitors of all kinds. In its first year, the park had over 750,000 visitors, and in the years since has attracted

an average of 1 million people a year. 50,000 people go ice skating each winter season, evidence that the park is in use year-round. Employees from local office buildings use the park, but Campus Martius also draws visitors from Detroit’s suburbs. Bob Gregory, President of Detroit 300 Conservancy, says, “we’ve been surprised by how many people from the suburbs are coming here. The quality of the space attracts everyone from rich to poor. The park has delivered on its promise to be a gathering spot for everybody.” And the Paris-style park chairs, which can be moved so people are able to find a nice place to sit in the sun or away from the wind, are kept out all year. Not one of the 1,500 chairs has been stolen since the park opened, demonstrating that a well-used space discourages crime.

### Budget

Campus Martius cost \$20 million to build in 2004, and was funded from a variety of sources. The Detroit 300 Conservancy contributed \$8 million, Compuware and Ford Motors Company also contributed \$8 million, and balance was covered by the City of Detroit. Information regarding yearly expenditures, revenue, and fund-raising sources will hopefully be made available from Detroit 300 Conservancy in the near future.

### Demographics

To analyze possible impacts of Campus Martius, an impact area was established

*“The programs are all family-oriented. One of the measures of a good place according to PPS is if you see women and kids using it. Well, that happens in Campus Martius. Everyone is here.”*  
*- Bob Gregory,*  
*Detroit 300 Conservancy*



Campus Martius in Spring



Winter Ice Skating at Campus Martius

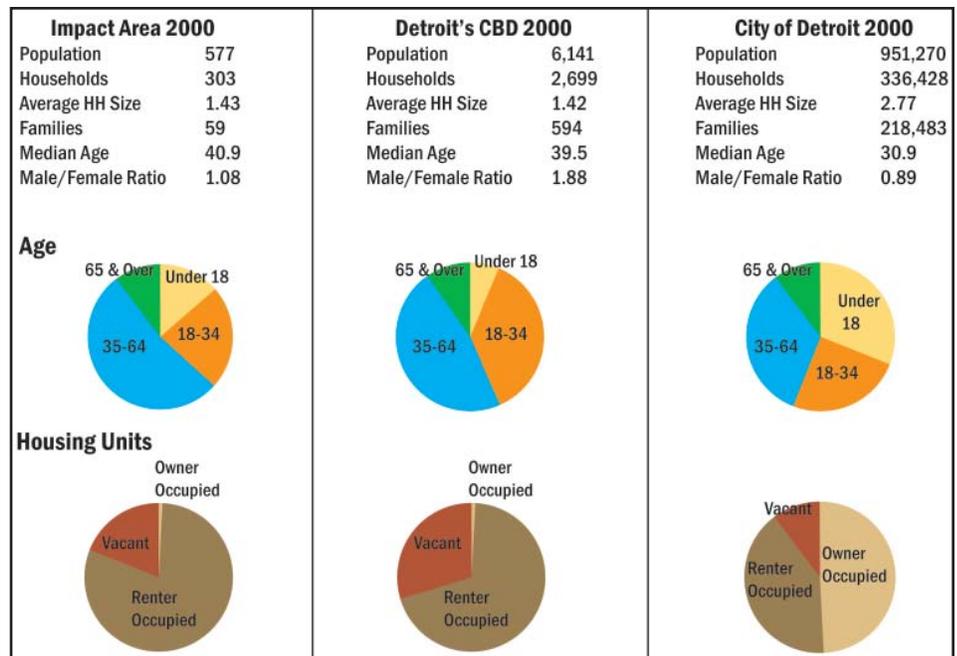


Figure 2. 2000 Census Data.

that encompasses a radius of two blocks around the park. Census data from the year 2000 was gathered for the people living in the impact area, and compared to data for Detroit’s central business district (CBD) and for the City of Detroit as a whole. As shown in Figure 2, the park impact area is fairly similar to the CBD in demographic characteristics and the makeup of the available housing stock, while Detroit City tends toward larger household sizes, a younger average age, a much larger number of owner occupied housing units, and a smaller number of vacant housing units. This data establishes a baseline for the area in 2000, which should be updated by 2010 census data. After 2010, it will be possible to analyze shifts in demographics and housing stock over the ten year time period and compare the changes over the three geographic areas.

### Economic Impacts

Property owners, managers, and developers were interviewed at buildings within the Campus Martius impact

area to determine both quantitative and qualitative impacts of the park. Rental rates and vacancy rates were gathered for the office buildings within the impact area, and were compared to rates for the CBD and the City of Detroit, which were obtained from the Detroit Economic Growth Corporation. Several property managers indicated that the office market in downtown Detroit suffered greatly from Ford Motor Company layoffs and related economic downturns in 2002, and rental rates have not yet recovered. While average rental rates were lower and average vacancy rates were higher in the impact area than in both the CBD and the City, a great deal of new construction and renovation projects have occurred since construction began on Campus Martius. Of the seven lots fronting on Campus Martius (Figure 3), there are two are new buildings, an office building that is being renovated, a former office building that is being converted to apartments, a class B office building, a new park, and an empty lot that is being marketed for development.

***Campus Martius “is one of the great parks. It is a fabulous park, truly an amazing gem. You can walk around the park 10 or 15 times and still not see everything that is in it.”***  
***- Pierre LeBlanc***  
***1001 Woodward Development***

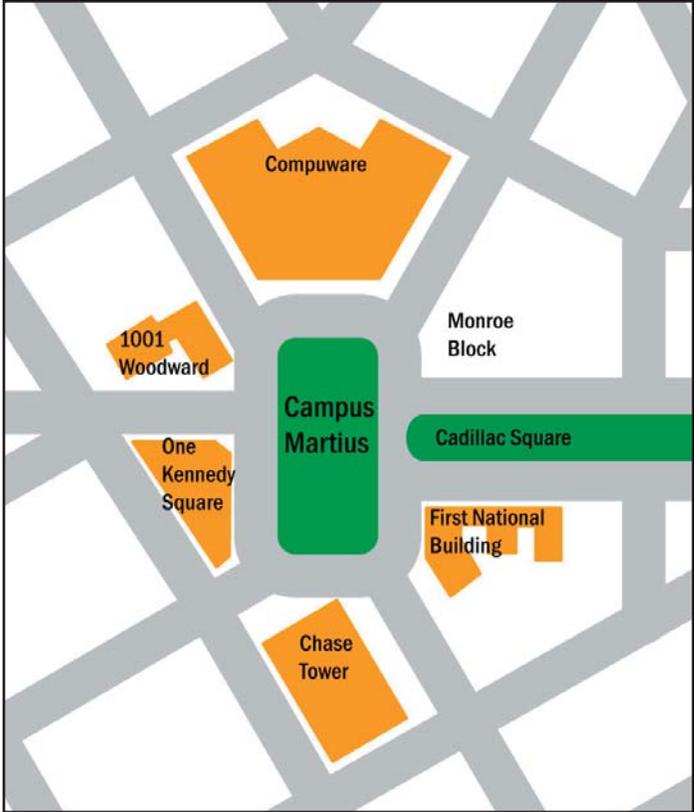


Figure 3. Campus Martius Buildings.



Compuware World Headquarters, New Building Fronting Campus Martius



One Kennedy Square, New Building Fronting Campus Martius

Compuware World Headquarters, one of the new office buildings, opened in 2003 as construction was beginning on Campus Martius. The building contains over 1 million square feet and 60,000 square feet of retail that includes restaurants, a bookstore, a bank, and clothing and shoe stores. The building brings over 4,000 employees downtown and represents a \$400 million investment. Bob Gregory states, “Compuware would not have come downtown without the park. They didn’t want just a building. They wanted a lively district where their workers would have things to do.” Cindy Nehr, a Compuware representative, says that at lunchtime, “employees come out of the building and go into the park. They are eating lunch, conducting business meetings, playing pick-up games of hockey in winter.” The other new building, known as One Kennedy Square, is a class A office building that was constructed from 2005 to

2006. While the building is not entirely full yet, the project represents a \$54 million investment and will bring office employees and ground floor retail to the area. Tysen McCarthy, a representative of REDCO, the development firm that owns the building, indicates that they recognized the benefits of the park and therefore designed the building so it could interact with Campus Martius.

Chase Tower is an office building constructed in 1959 that is being renovated. The multi-million dollar project will update the building as a class A office building, provide ground floor retail space, and include exterior seating areas that are designed to interact with Campus Martius. 1001 Woodward is a former office building that is being converted into 144 apartment units, and the close proximity of Campus Martius is always part of the sales pitch for the units. The final building fronting on Campus Martius, the First National



Tables and Chairs in Campus Martius

Building, is a class B office building with 800,000 square feet of office space and ground floor retail. While no renovations or other physical changes have occurred in this building since Campus Martius opened, Bunia Parker, the leasing manager for the building, has noticed changes. Parker states, “Campus Martius is definitely advantageous to activity in the area and helps to sell the building.” The Monroe Block, an empty lot northeast of Campus Martius, is being marketed for development by the City of Detroit and represents potential for more activity in the Campus Martius impact area.

On the edge of the Campus Martius impact area, two new projects are underway. An old hotel is being renovated, and will contain 455 hotel rooms and 66 condos. The first five floors will hold restaurants, retail space, and 40,000 square feet of event space,

including ballrooms and conference rooms. This project represents a \$180 million investment, and will be supported by a \$40 million new building containing a parking garage topped with six floors of 80 condos. Finally, the success of Campus Martius is enforced by the construction of a new three quarter acre park direct east of Campus Martius. Opened in August 2007, Cadillac Square contains a gravel promenade and extensive gardens. Gregory believes the new park is very exciting, as it “increases the scale of events that can be held at Campus Martius.”

### Conclusions

All together, 2.24 million square feet of new or renovated space has opened or is under construction on the lots fronting Campus Martius. \$454 million has been spent on the new buildings, with multi-million dollar projects still underway.

Ground floor retail space has increased and a diversity of uses is represented. Approximately 300 new condos and apartments are planned within the park impact area. Much of the success of the park can be attributed to the active and dedicated management presence of the Detroit 300 Conservancy, and the huge variety of programming and uses that are planned for Campus Martius. The wide assortment of daily activities, larger events and festivals, and both active and passive uses ensures that high numbers of visitors use the park year-round.

### Next Steps

Future research in this area should include an update of the demographic data and office rental and vacancy rates collected for this case study. A survey of the retail uses should be performed and compared to Detroit’s CBD and the City of Detroit. Budget information should be obtained from Detroit 300 Conservancy.