

Case Statement

Strategic Plan for the Fort Worth Botanic Garden

“Enriching people’s lives through environmental stewardship and education” is the mission of the Fort Worth Botanic Garden. Over the last 82 years since the Garden was founded, much has been accomplished to fulfill that mission. But since the late 1990s only two significant new facilities have been added during a period when peer institutions have experienced tremendous growth. An ambitious master plan was adopted in 2010 that will bring the Garden into a new century, add key new gardens and other amenities, and deliver higher levels of service to the community. However, a strategy for implementing that plan was left to be developed later.

With restoration of two major historic landmarks nearing completion, the Park and Recreation Department and Garden support groups believe it is critical that the City capitalize on new excitement and momentum generated. The Garden can accomplish this by moving forward with a strong, coherent strategy for implementing the master plan. This project would:

- outline how we can realize the master plan’s goals and define a clear vision focusing Garden resources on projects and programs by priority,
- create timelines, methodologies, and goals for implementing key elements of the plan,
- and provide a financial study outlining resources necessary for developing and operating those new facilities and associated programs.

A final element essential to success would be a study of the Garden’s organizational structure including benchmarking current operations and whether the Garden can increase revenue, realize efficiencies, and promote growth through changes to the current operational model.

To outline the process, the Garden would:

- Create a planning committee to guide the process and represent support groups and other stakeholders. City staff and a park board liaison will further represent the public interest.
- Select a consultant who specializes in strategic planning and organizational analysis through an RFQ reviewed by the planning committee and approved by City Council.
- Conduct three on-site sessions of 3-5 days each with the consultant to seek input from staff, support groups, city government, garden patrons, and the public.
- Hold discussions with the planning committee during each visit to formulate and refine strategic and financial proposals, based on empirical research and on all input and comments gathered.
- Review a final draft proposal during the third site visit with all support groups, the Park Board, staff, and the public.
- Include a follow-up review of the proposal to the Park Board, and then present the final proposal for recommendation to City Council.
- Present that recommended version to City Council for adoption as they deem appropriate.

A more detailed outline of the process follows. **Note:** Support Groups for purposes of this study are the Fort Worth Botanical Society, Inc., the Fort Worth Garden Club, Inc., the Botanical Research Institute of Texas, the Garden Club Council of Fort Worth, and the Texas Garden Clubs, Inc.

Strategic Plan Outline

September 20, 2015: Complete Research and Approval of Consultant Search Process

September 29, 2015: Support Group Presidents' Meeting, initiate Planning Committee

November 2015 – March 2016: Consultant Selection Process

March 29, 2016: City Council – Award of Consultant Contract, Acceptance of Donation from Fort Worth Garden Club, Fort Worth Botanical Society and appropriation of City funds (M&C C-27658)

April 18 – 22: First Site Visit

Day 1: Initial meeting with administration, staff, planning committee, process briefing, initial input

Day 2: Meetings with administration, initial support group meetings, public meeting

Day 3: Staff and support group meetings, continued

Day 4: Senior staff review of major goals, training on objectives

Day 5: Present initial results at planning committee (to include compiled comments received from Day 2 public meeting), debriefings with staff and director

April 22 – May 1: Consultant works with Director, Senior Staff, and Support Groups/Planning Committee on drafts/revisions (via phone/email), Information Item to Park and Recreation Advisory Board regarding strategic plan process and schedule, public input through email and public folder on City's system

May 2 – May 5: Second Site Visit

Day 1: Review and planning with Director/PARD administration, working sessions on first draft and overview of financial plan, public meeting for presentation of working documents and receive input

Day 2: Working sessions with operational staff, planning committee on first draft and financial plan, Informal Report to City Council regarding strategic plan process and schedule

Day 3: Discussions with administration, support groups, additional meetings as needed

Day 4: Continuation from Day 3

May 7 – May 22: Continue revisions to Draft Strategic and Financial Plans

June/July: Third On-Site Visit

Day 1: Draft plan presentations to staff, planning committee, support groups; public meeting with presentation of draft

Day 2: Brief administration, final working sessions with staff and steering committee (to include compiled comments received from Day 1 public meeting)

Day 3: Final comments from staff and steering committee, Information Item to Park Board regarding major considerations, wrap-up and final comments with director and PARD administration.

**Dates shown are intended only to show flow of work; schedule subject to revision.*

Proposed Dates for Updates to Park Board and City Council

April 27: Information Item to Park and Recreation Advisory Board

May 3: Informal Report to City Council

May 25: Information Item to Park and Recreation Advisory Board

July 27: Action Item to Park and Recreation Advisory Board

September 13: Informal Report to City Council

September 20: M&C to City Council to Accept the Strategic Plan and Refer the Plan to the City Manager

November 1: *Final Report due, posted on website*

Definitions:

Public meetings: These are the open meetings scheduled with the consultant for the public to attend and make comments following an established format. Depending on the meeting, information will be presented on the status of the Strategic Plan and process. After the public meetings, the information received will be compiled and put into a document and then presented to the Strategic Planning committee. These documents will be made public as well.

Public input: A process will be established for individuals to provide comments and input related to the Strategic Plan. This will be via an email to a dedicated inbox established solely for the Strategic Plan. Input received will be compiled and put into a document and then presented to the Strategic Planning committee. These documents will be made public as well.

Park Board and City Council: Presentations and/or formal reports will be provided to the Park and Recreation Advisory Board and the Fort Worth City Council. These meetings are open to the public and there is an established process for speaking before both groups. Data and information received at the public meetings will be provided as it pertains to key aspects of the Strategic Plan.