

MASTER PLAN DISCOVERY WORKSHOP MINUTES

| Meeting Information: | |
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| Title or Purpose: | Master Plan Discovery Workshop |
| Date and Time: | 12/08/2021 @ 8:00am to 4:00pm |
| Location: | Moncrief Garden Center, Redbud Conference Hall |
| Invitees/Attendees | <p>Ennis Anderson, John Avila, Keri Barfield, Cameron Barlow, Edward P. Bass, Brook Best, Jason Best, Steve Brauer, Robert Bauereisen, William Brentlinger, Keith Brock, Emma Bruce-Birkhead, Dana Burghdoff, Bob Byers, James Day, Charles Denison, Ralph Emerson, Leticia Esparza, Tracy Friday, Peter Fritsch, Marilyn Gilbert, Pam Grimes, Darcy Gustafson, Craig Hamilton, Connie Johnson, Judy Koslow, Barney Lipscomb, Lauren-Ashton Moncrief, Debbie Morrison, Paxton Motheral, Nick Nelson, Patrick Newman, Brent Pemberton, Elaine Petrus, Sara Richardson, Debbie Reynolds, Terry Seigel, Dennis Shingleton, Margaret Shuping, Chris Smith, Linda Tate, Dan Villegas, Erin White, Montana Williams, Harvey Yamagata, Jing Yang, Sandra Youngblood, Richard Zavala</p> <p><u>DEI Consultants (DEI):</u> Cathy Holt, Estrus Tucker, Shivaun Palmer <u>Studio Outside (SO):</u> Tary Arterburn (TA), Allyson Caruso, Gwendolyn Cohen (GC), Isaac Cohen, Andrew Duggan (AD) <u>Bennett Benner Partners (BBP):</u> Michael Bennett (MB), Gannon Gries (GG) <u>EDM Consultants (EDM):</u> Rick Daley (RD) <u>Horticulture:</u> Patrick Cullina (PC) <u>Terra Designs (TD):</u> Cindy Tyler (CT)</p> |
| Notes Taken By: | Hannah Rodriguez |
| Meeting Agenda: | |
| | Name: |
| 1. Workshop Welcome | GC |
| 2. Landscape Architectural Site Impressions | GC |
| 3. Architectural Site Impressions | GG, MB |
| Break | |
| 4. Horticultural Experiences | PC |
| 5. Inclusion and Engagement | DEI |
| 6. Benchmarking | RD |
| 7. Family Garden Experiences | CT |
| Lunch Break | |
| 8. Dot Exercise | AD |
| 9. Note Card Small Group Exercise | AD |
| Meeting Notes: | |

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- **Data Collection Summary (SO)** - In the process of the past several weeks collecting departmental data about site usage, the following priorities were discovered:
 - o Many people think of the garden as a park and the public may not be aware of the mission-related resources we have to offer. Communication of the mission through our landscape needs improvement in addition to addressing problematic logistics (i.e. parking, pedestrian traffic, neighborhood presence, entry experience, and link between campus buildings, ADA non-compliance, veggie garden and restaurant adjacencies, etc.)
- **Landscape Site Impressions (SO-GC)**
 - o There are three main topographical regions throughout the site that could be better utilized to define new spaces and experiences
 - o Views could be improved from the Rose Garden vantage and the entry point vantage (from University) in addition to mitigating challenging views.
 - o Water locations could better express movement and tell the site's water story of the Trinity River which historically meandered through the grounds.
 - o Sound attenuation should be utilized along the south end to mitigate the noise levels measured at over 70 decibels (louder than normal conversation).
 - o Operational functionality could be optimized to include two horticultural bases and separate paths of travel to reduce conflicting guest and employee circulation.
- **Architectural Site Impressions (BBP)**
 - o The BRIT Building presents challenges for education program storage, art display opportunities, loading dock inadequacy, and a lack of need for the circle drive. Updates to this building could provide opportunity for consolidating staff location adjacencies.
 - o The Garden Center challenges include acoustic issues in Oak Hall, a need for greater flexibility in the Lecture Hall, the need for automatic doors for a better entry experience, and the need for additional VIP venues. Opportunities for expansion are reduced by the inability to add a second level in addition to some of the infrastructure being protected under the Public Art Program.
 - o The Conservatory is a key experiential element but will need to be redesigned for improved structural stability and attraction.
 - o The Texas Native Boardwalk would need a more generous entry for groups, restrooms, and interpretive signage to make this a viable gathering spot for groups.
 - o Production greenhouses could be moved off-campus to utilize acreage for the Children's Garden.
 - o The Rock Springs building would be better utilized as a guest refreshment site with offices relocated and renovation completed.
 - o The Japanese Garden presents opportunity to rework the entry as a separate fee is no longer required and parking is not permitted. Event spaces could be enlarged and views from the garden into adjacent spaces could be enhanced.
 - o The Conservation Greenhouse could be enhanced with additional prep and storage space to open it as an educational and public engagement site.
 - o The Tinsley Rock Springs Garden could be enhanced and utilize sound mitigation and pre/post-function spaces to serve venue rentals could be added to the Rose Garden.
- **Horticultural Experiences (PC)**
 - o Brooklyn Botanic Garden and the NYC Hi-Line projects are presented as examples of how thoughtful research and innovative horticultural approaches can ensure an evolving year-round landscape appeal that's adapted to the environmental restrictions. This experience is proposed for FWBG|BRIT in the following priorities:
 - Will look to native plants, but also plant selections based on the soil make-up and cultivar development.
 - Will explore plants that have year-round appeal as the season changes to create dynamic experiences that unfurl in nontraditional interactions in all seasons.
 - Plant choices matter to impart the feel you want to provide. Need to explore displays that give guests a purpose to visit other than just to meander.
- **Inclusion and Engagement (DEI)**
 - o DEI introduces the phased approach they will take for the Master Plan to include:
 - Discovery Phase: community engagement meetings (to begin in Jan.)
 - Will collaborate with the City of Fort Worth and community stakeholders to host 5 community engagement sessions in early 2022 to strategically located around Ft. Worth to lift up voices across the city.

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- Engagement via Small groups: giving smaller groups a seat at the table
- Training: an assessment of growth areas based on feedback from discovery
- Mentoring: providing support for an implementation plan to keep people focused on the outcomes they want
- DEI encourages attendees to begin contemplating the impact that equitable engagement will have for the Master Plan in shaping the garden's growth. In response to DEI's prompting to brainstorm key questions, attendees propose that we focus on the following questions to guide our process:
 - Who's doing it right?
 - Who are we missing?
 - How do we include the whole community?
- **Benchmarking (EDM-RD)**
 - Reviews the approved 2022-2025 Strategic Plan and compares current FWBG|BRIT benchmarks (of staff, membership, attendance, budget, acreage, etc.) to comparable gardens in the country as he highlights the following implications for the Master Plan priorities:
 - Visitor entry capacity must be increased to reach the goal (in short term and long term)
 - New garden attractions are needed to build audience
 - Rental facilities, staff offices, and work areas must grow to accommodate additional volume
 - Growth space for research and collections is needed
 - The campus needs to be planned to accommodate 750k guests including parking entry, trams, paths, and circulations
- **Family Garden Experiences (TD-CT)**
 - The previously developed Children's Garden plan focused on a broader culture besides Cowtown and was inspired by Michigan 4H Children's Garden. Amendments to the plans are encouraged as there was some input from BRIT and very little FWBG staff involvement in the planning process.
 - The primary user group was defined as children under 8yo with secondary group being grandparents. It was designed to accommodate 600 guests per day, not for field trips or large groups.
 - The conceptual approach gathered inspiration from astrological features and included:
 - Mushrooms & Mosses (with whimsical horticulture displays), Stumpery, a Sun Court, Moon Garden, Star Fountain Terrace, Tops & Bottom Amphitheater, a Dog Trot Discovery center, an ornamental Edible garden, a Hands-on garden experience, and Texas Natural wonders (nature play, the spring, etc.)
 - A rethinking of the priorities is likely in order due to new garden management, expectations for revenue, and capitalization of educational opportunities. Proposed new priorities include:
 - Wow-factor displays
 - Loose parts play, nature play, imagination play, dog trot
 - Demonstration Gardens with fewer hands-on gardening opportunities
- **Dot Exercise (SO-AD)**
 - The group is invited to provide feedback with red, green, and yellow dots to place on a site map for areas that are good (green), may need updates soon (yellow), and need immediate attention (red):
 - The majority of red dots were clustered at the entry, Compound, Southwest quadrant, and the N. Texas Garden Club Building.
 - Areas discussed were: the BRIT prairie accessibility and signage needs upgrading, the Garden Center facility needs upgrading for events, the N. Texas Garden center landownership needs resolution, Old Garden Road needs rethinking, the Vistas need electrical service and increased engagement, the forest area is underutilized in addition to needing irrigation updates, vehicle and guest accessibility updates for events needed in the Rose Garden, the pond system is failing in Japanese garden. It was also noted that front-facing displays needed to be a more elevated design rather than the more native, wild looks that currently serve as the outward-facing aesthetic.
- **Note Card Group Exercise (SO-AD)** – attendees are asked to identify the priorities for the following themes by breaking into groups and sorting note cards into relevant categories:
 - Parking and arrival – Identified priorities include: Electrical car charging, exclusive member entrance, increased parking and ride share incentives.
 - Horticulture and Collections – Identified priorities include: Expand the focus on regional flora, improve signage/interpretation to engage the guest and education programs, diversify perennial planting, implement conservatory collection development standards, enhance garden collection and display.

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- o Research Integration – Identified priorities include: Develop a science communication program, build a conservation message, increase Texas native research, expand academic connections, expand visual art and science throughout the garden.
 - o Education – Identified priorities include: Establish and developing educational support facilities, field trip expansion and efficiency optimization, develop outreach programs to support a more diverse population, expand educational offerings/programming (+Bilingual), expand communication and interpretation plan
 - o Events & New Revenue – Identified priorities include: Offer new events, increase and improve security and event lighting, develop concert infrastructure, offer a variety of dining venues (casual and formal), improve operational efficiencies (events department, transit, guest reprieve stations)
 - o New Garden Destinations – Identified priorities include: Culinary gardens/farm-to-table experiences, themed gardens, robust trial garden, café at the entrance (casual and formal)...variety throughout, family/Children garden, water features
 - o Inclusion & Engagement – Identified priorities include: Cultural inclusion in our programs, signage, events, and activities, and language, accessibility (access to and through the garden), sensory access, outreach to invite target demographics (garden spaces and digital communications), diverse representation through staff, financial accessibility.
- The consultant team offers closing remarks and announces the next committee meeting to be held in late spring tentatively. Meeting is adjourned.

| Action Items: | Name: | Due Date or Status: (e.g. Completed, WIP, Ongoing) |
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| 1. Public Engagement meetings to be organized and conducted throughout Fort Worth in order to solicit public feedback on the priorities determined in this meeting. | SO, FWBG BRIT, DEI, City of Fort Worth | Jan-March |

Next Meeting: TBD in late Spring