

The Greater Des Moines Botanical Garden (the Garden) proposes to complete the next phase in its Vision 2012 site master plan approved by the Des Moines City Council in June 2012. The Garden proposes its Site Master Plan Refresh, leveraging many of the features of Vision 2012 and transforming some of those features to be more engaging, educational and community facing. In addition, the Garden proposes improvements to certain of its existing facilities to enable more riverfront connections, upgrades to the building to improve access to the north gardens and Trellis Café, and a connection to the I235 pedestrian bridge.

The Botanical Center opened in 1979, first with the city operating the facility and followed by the Des Moines Water Works operating the facility from January 2004 to December 2012. During that time, the only expansion to the facility was in the early 1990's which included the addition of the north wing meeting rooms, a greenhouse, a reorganized front entry, and gardens along the river front.

In 2008, the Des Moines Botanical and Environmental Center leaders and supporters envisioned a new future for the Botanical Center that would allow for its development and resurgence as a major cultural and educational facility. To assist, EMD Consulting Group and Hoerr-Schmidt Landscape Architects developed a proposed Vision Plan and strategy. The City provided \$30,000 towards the study (Roll Call No. 08-1270 on July 14, 2008) with the balance of \$60,000 being paid by the private sector. Upon receiving the proposed Vision Plan, the Friends of the Des Moines Botanical Center began work with the City Manager to develop guiding principles to implement the transfer of management and facility operations to the Garden.

On May 9, 2011, by Roll Call No. 11-0822, the City Council approved a Lease, Operation, Management and Maintenance Agreement in which the Garden agreed to be responsible, at its cost, for \$7.5 million in improvements, including expanded gardens on the grounds of the Botanical Center by June 1, 2015. Furthermore, the City created an endowment of \$2,000,000 for operational expenses at the Botanical Center and grounds, and \$500,000 for construction related costs and operating costs during and immediately after construction as consideration for rent, for an initial period of 25 years, with two 25-year renewal options. This lease was effective January 1, 2013 and included the 14-acre piece of property defined in Exhibit A, reaching north towards the University Ave Bridge, south to the I235 overpass, east to the neighboring housing development, and west to the Des Moines River (Refer to Exhibit A – Plan Refresh and Future Phases Vision 2012).

To assist in the transfer becoming a long-term success, the City provided a \$2,000,000 grant funded over 10 years, to be paid in equal semi-annual installments. In addition to the City's support, annual operating support was secured through (i) the Bravo Foundation of Greater Des Moines (BRAVO) of \$2,450,000 funded quarterly over a 10-year period and (ii) Des Moines Water Works of \$2,000,000 of in-kind operating support provided over a 10-year period.

In 2012, the Greater Des Moines Botanical Garden presented Vision 2012; a proposed Master Plan ("the Master Plan"). On April 17, 2012, the Urban Design and Review Board approved the Master Plan. On May 22, 2012 by Resolution No. 12-045, the Park and Recreation Board approved the Master Plan. On June 11, 2012, by Roll Call No. 12-935, the Des Moines City Council approved the conception Master Plan.

In October 2015, Plan Refresh was completed (Refer to Exhibit A Plan Refresh and Future Phases Vision 2012).

Now in 2021, the Garden presents its Site Master Plan Refresh (the "Plan Refresh") proposing development of the remaining exterior landscape that includes seven-acres traveling north to the University Avenue bridge. Refer to Exhibit A – Plan Refresh and Future Phases Vision 2012. The Plan Refresh leverages many features of the Vision 2012 plan, transforms and/or relocates gardens, and adds features that complement the vast array of cultural attractions in Des Moines, and delivers on the Garden's core mission of "Exploring, Explaining and Celebrating the World of Plants".

The Plan Refresh also proposes improvements to the building, which are designed to improve the public visitor experience, expand access to the east I235 pedestrian bridge, elevate engagement with the river, and improve access to the north gardens from the conservatory.

## **SITE MASTER PLAN REFRESH BUDGET FOR THE GREATER DES MOINES BOTANICAL GARDEN IMPROVEMENTS (\$ in 000's)**

The Garden has focused its attention on the Site Master Plan Refresh as a schematic design only with the end goal of receiving a solid cost estimate of construction and renovation. The range of costs for construction and renovation is \$17 million to \$23 million. To date, fundraising activities have not begun.

## **TEAM OF CONSULTANTS AND DESIGNERS FOR SITE MASTER PLAN REFRESH**

**Emmanuel Didier, Didier Design Studio, Fort Collins, CO** is the Landscape Architecture firm for the Plan Refresh. Didier has supported many city and garden designs, including Denver Botanic Garden, the McKee Botanical Garden and the Children's Garden at Penn State University.

**Simonson & Associates, Des Moines, Iowa** is the Architect of Record for this project. Mike Simonson has been involved with the project from the early days. Simonson & Associates will be assisted by Shiver Hattery on the mechanical and electrical improvements to the facility and Civil Design Advantage on the civil components of the project.

**Neumann Bros, Des Moines, Iowa** assisted by Waldinger Corporation and Country Landscapes, will perform construction management services for all of the above. Neumann will assist in establishing and will maintain the total budget for improvements during both the design and construction period.

## **DESCRIPTION OF LANDSCAPE RENOVATIONS**

The bounds of the Plan Refresh will be fully defined once the capital campaign fundraising is complete. The intent is to have Plan Refresh include a children's play and education areas, an amphitheater to complement other amphitheaters in the city, sand, rock and water education gardens, a canopy walk that will be handicapped accessible with areas for rest and respite on the journey to the University Avenue Bridge. Restoration of existing facilities are planned, including improving access from the conservatory to the north gardens, connection to the I235 pedestrian bridge to the east of the property, and small elements of improvement to engage more with the riverfront.

## **LOW - IMPACT PRACTICES FOR THE LANDSCAPE**

The Garden landscape will continue to incorporate practices that contribute to sustaining our ecosystems and environment. These modifications include, but are not limited to the following:

- 1) Native plantings along Garden Entrance and Riverfront Bike Path

- 2) Bio-swale with Native Plantings, at south edge of parking lot
- 3) Parking Island and Perimeter Planting to Reduce Urban Heat Island Effects
- 4) Native Plantings throughout the Garden
- 5) Sustainable horticulture practices, where possible
- 6) Control and manage known invasive plants
- 7) Composting of landscaping materials
- 8) Protect floodway functions
- 9) Future organic edibles gardens
- 10) Future native Iowa woodland restoration, at north end of site
- 11) Promote sustainability awareness and education

## **DESCRIPTION OF BUILDING RENOVATIONS**

Plan Refresh propose improvements to the building to include improved access to Trellis café to enable longer service hours, public entrance, and restrooms. Renovations are restricted to within the existing building footprint, with the exception of adding a more inviting main entrance and external entrance for the café. By way of the experience of the visitor, the lobby will be opened for café visitors to depart, engaging visitors with the gift shop. Entry to the outdoor gardens and meeting rooms will be via an expanded walkway through the conservatory.

## **FIRE/SAFETY ACCESS**

Phase 1 implemented the fire/safety access protocols, including the addition of a fire sprinkler system throughout the first-floor space and the lower-level boiler room. A new hydrant was installed near the main entrance to the building. A full hammer head at the far north end of the gardens at the terminus of the existing roadway accommodates a turnaround of the city apparatus as well as ambulances. Access to this north roadway is via a gated element off East 6<sup>th</sup> Street.

## **ENERGY EFFICIENCY & HIGH-PERFORMANCE COMPONENTS**

Since 2015, the Garden has invested in numerous building modifications to enhance sustainability of the environment and manage the costs of maintenance and operating expenses. Following are enhancements that have been made.

1. Retrofitted the existing dome air handling units, including incorporation of motors with greater efficiency, to provide better air movement and reduce operating expenses.
2. HVAC controls replacement to improve monitoring of all aspects of heating and cooling mechanical.
3. Eliminated the air gap at the base of the dome to reduce winter heating expenses.
4. Installation of lighting in the conservatory to improve safety and enable longer operating hours.
5. Added new lighting control systems in the conference room areas.

Questions regarding the project can be directed to:

Jackie Pullen, Chief Operating Officer  
Greater Des Moines Botanical Garden  
909 Robert D. Ray Drive  
Des Moines, IA 50309

**Attachments:**

- Exhibit A- Plan Refresh and Future Phases Vision 2012

Exhibit A

