

# **BIRMINGHAM BOTANICAL GARDENS**

7 JANUARY 2008

## **SITEWIDE MASTER PLAN & ASSOCIATED PROJECTS**

### **EXECUTIVE SUMMARY**

#### **GUIDING CONCEPTS FOR THE MASTER PLAN**

- **EDUCATIONAL PROGRAMMING** – Must drive all physical development.
  - ✓ **Active Programs**: Facilitate greater content development for instructor-led classes at multiple education levels through design of new features and expanded collections.
  - ✓ **Passive Programs**: Facilitate enhanced interpretation (signage, brochures and trail guides) at multiple education levels through design of new features and expanded collections.
- **SUSTAINABILITY** – Physical development should emphasize:
  - ✓ **Reduced Energy Use**: for operations and horticulture; introduce on-site composting.
  - ✓ **Ex Situ Plant Conservation**: create specific habitats for SE US endemic plants.
  - ✓ **Stormwater Management**: create structures to reduce and detain runoff, provide irrigation, interpret as plant habitats.
  - ✓ **Leadership in Education and Environmental Design (LEED) certification**: seek for any proposed new structures; think “green” for all new initiatives.

#### **MAJOR AREAS OF FOCUS**

- **VISITOR SERVICES** – Think strategically thinking to accommodate expanding visitor base with:
  - ✓ **Parking**: examine strategies for “green” parking deck.
  - ✓ **Gift Shop & Restaurant**: redesign Blount Plaza for greater use and flexibility.
  - ✓ **Site Circulation**: bring pedestrian areas into ADA Compliance; introduce Tram service.
  - ✓ **Special Events**: create new and improve existing event venues through design.
- **FACILITIES** – Consider important roles of new and existing facilities:
  - ✓ **Garden Center**: consider completion of second floor to house expanded education and volunteer departments, as well as a like-minded environmental group.
  - ✓ **Conservatories**: renovate and expand; facilitate education programs, reduced energy use and special events.
  - ✓ **Plant Production, Outside Staff & Maintenance Areas**: re-configure and rebuild; move certain functions to other on-site locations.
- **GARDENS** – Emphasize three categories of gardens combining existing and proposed areas:
  - ✓ **Gardens of Culture**: create new gardens such as Pass-Along Plants Garden, Persian Garden; renovate existing Japanese Gardens.
  - ✓ **Gardens of Nature**: create new Alabama Habitat Gardens, incorporating stormwater management and unique native plant exhibits; expand swamp in Barber Alabama Woodlands to capture stormwater runoff.
  - ✓ **Gardens of Collections**: enhance existing collections; expand and distribute other collections throughout the site, emphasizing plants with improved drought-tolerance; balance low maintenance requirements with ornamental attributes.

## **SELECTION PROCESS**

- Five Design Teams Responded to our final request for proposal (RFP)
  - ✓ Oasis Group, Baltimore, MD & Biohabitats, Inc., Landover, MD
  - ✓ Jordan, Jones & Goulding, Atlanta, GA
  - ✓ Portico Group, Seattle, WA
  - ✓ Giattina Aycock Studio, Birmingham, AL & HOK Planning, Atlanta, GA
  - ✓ MTR, Pittsburgh, PA & Ross Land Design, Birmingham, AL
  
- Oasis Design Group & Biohabitats: selected Jan 08; kickoff 15-16 Jan; estimated completion Feb 09.

## **ASSOCIATED PROJECTS INFORMING & INFLUENCING THE MASTER PLAN**

- CONSERVATORY NEEDS ASSESSMENT EVALUATION: completed by Montgomery Smith, Inc., Burlington, KY, Dec 06.
  - ✓ Existing Structures (3): “robust”, require minor structural repairs, new glazing, environmental control systems, utility services.
  - ✓ Entrance Plaza: replace with barrier-free, “stage-sized” plaza, new water feature.
  - ✓ New Glass Houses: two 1,600 sf structures, one at each end of existing; match existing design style.
  - ✓ New Exhibits: Tropical Rain Forest, Desert, Orchid, seasonal exhibits, “staged” exhibits.
  - ✓ Head House/Potting Shed: replace; incorporate staff and volunteer offices, break and locker rooms.
  - ✓ Plant Production Houses (6): replace, incorporate new, barrier-free public restrooms.
  - ✓ Green Technologies: as appropriate; in-ground heating, fuel cells, geothermal, earth tubes.
  
- JAPANESE GARDEN RENOVATION PLAN: completed by ZEN Associates, Woburn, MA, Jan 07.
  - ✓ Current Design: maintain essential components and layout; enhance.
  - ✓ Drainage: repair and replace throughout.
  - ✓ Hill and Stream Garden (watercourse) and Long Life Lake: renovate, dredge and control erosion.
  - ✓ Paths, Bridges and Terraces: provide for barrier-free accessibility.
  - ✓ Karesansui (gravel garden): re-configure to traditional shape and renovate.
  - ✓ Japanese Cultural Pavilion: expand; create stone amphitheater.
  - ✓ Bonsai Pavilion: replace with new, security- and viewing-enhanced structure.
  - ✓ Plantings: simplify (edit) and create concentrated, themed planting areas.
  - ✓ Bamboo Grove: create barrier-free boardwalk.
  - ✓ Traditional Amenities: add fences, lanterns, lighting, stone groupings.
  - ✓ Hulsey Woods: enhance entry and path system; install belfry with stone surround.
  
- BLOUNT PLAZA: Design charrette held in August; Joel Eliason (Nimrod Long & Associates) and John Carraway hired in 06 to proceed with conceptual design.
  - ✓ Reconcile orientation and entry functions for overall plaza, restaurant and gift shop.
  - ✓ Improve overall utility for high-visitation days and special events; facilitates visitor counts.
  - ✓ Incorporate donor recognition elements.
  - ✓ Increase seating, lighting, color opportunities.
  - ✓ Provide for current fire code compliance, barrier-free accessibility and drainage.
  - ✓ Incorporate internal building modifications to improve space utilization and circulation.
  
- GARDEN CENTER EXPANSION (SECOND FLOOR): Rick Sprague (Sprott Long and Associates) prepared concept drawing of new offices; incorporates expanded education offices and facilities, as well as a new tenant; requires refinement.