Visualizing the Issues:
The Garver Building and the North Platte

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Submitted to the Garver Redevelopment Committee
1 December 2006
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Introduction

On Sunday November 5th, 2006, a public workshop was held at the Olbrich Botanical Gardens in Madison Wisconsin. This workshop was sponsored by City Alders Olson and Palm, the SASY Neighborhood Association, and the Friends of Starkweather Creek, in cooperation with the Olbrich Botanical Society. This workshop was produced in response to the imminent redevelopment of the property known as the Garver Property, just North of the Gardens. The workshop engaged participants in a series of interactive visual "hands-on" activities. These activities were designed to produce a series of images that illustrate the physical realities of the Garver Property in ways that allow the participants to engage in productive discussion, "visualize the issues", and communicate their hopes and concerns about the potential impact of the redevelopment. The summary below offers an overview of the workshop results. That brief summary is followed by appendices that include transcripts from facilitated discussions, transcripts of written comments, photographs taken by participants during the workshop, and transcripts of "value statements" offered by participants to describe the intentions of their photographs.

Summary of Overarching Themes Identified During the Workshop

Theme #1. Walking Experiences and Educational Programming:

1. A. Wilderness Landscape Experience
(see areas B and D on orthophoto pg. 4):

a. Retain the current low impact nature trails;

b. Maintain and/or enhance vegetative corridors of dense trees and shrubs that act as visual buffers from surrounding built environment and frame vistas through the natural landscape;

c. Develop educational programming around the ecological systems and species diversity in and around the Gardens (without visual impact on wilderness walk experience);

d. Retain the current "dark sky" evening and nighttime experience.

1. B. Cultural Landscape Experience
(see areas B and C on orthophoto pg. 4):

a. Retain the remnant industrial artifacts extant on the site.

b. Develop educational programming/low impact interpretive trails about the cultural landscape and environmental history in and around the Gardens (without additional visual impact on

Theme #2. Ecological Considerations (see areas B, C, and D on orthophoto pg. 4):

Develop a long-range landscape management plan to:

a. Preserve and/or enhance ecological and vegetative corridors
b. Attract wildlife and sustain species diversity.
c. Preserve and/or enhance native plant communities

Theme #3: East Side Connections & Access from Neighborhoods and Greenspaces:

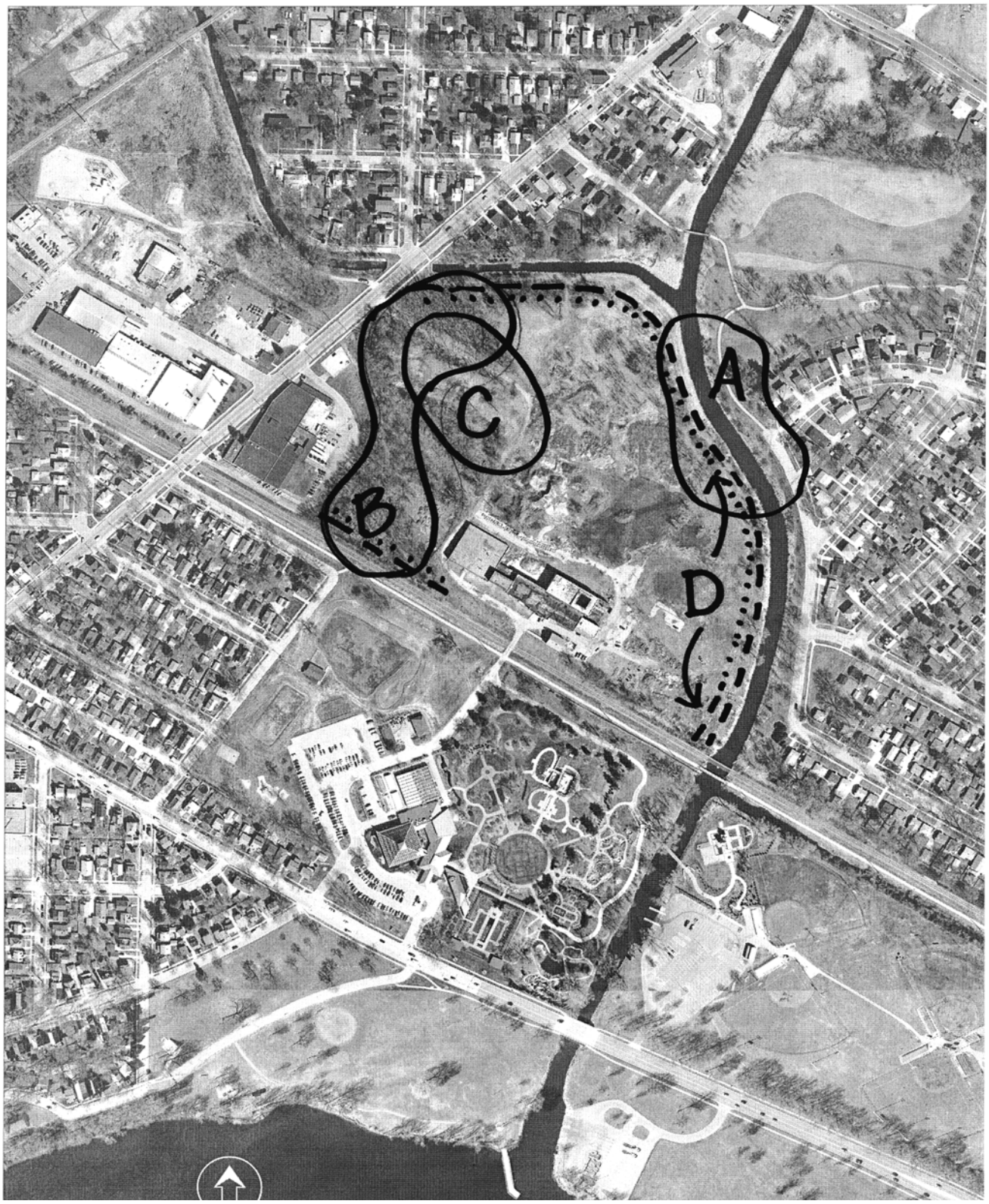
a. Construct new entries (bridge) to allow pedestrian access into the Gardens and connections to existing low impact nature trails in and around the Gardens, specifically from the neighborhoods to the East (see area A on orthophoto pg. 4).

b. Existing entries should be maintained for ease of access from surrounding residential neighborhoods;

c. The boundaries between the Gardens and the neighborhoods should be designed and maintained with attention to visual impact from bounding streets and green spaces (see area D on orthophoto).

d. The unrestricted access between the Gardens, the neighborhoods, the creek, and nearby greenspace should be maintained (see area D on orthophoto pg. 4).

e. Enhance the Gardens' function as a cultural and educational center for the neighborhood and region.



This Orthophoto illustrates the "Overarching Themes" listed on the previous pages:

A: Concern about lack of connections to neighborhood

B and D: Wilderness Landscape Experience

B and C: Cultural Landscape Experience

APPENDICES

A. WORKSHOP AGENDA

Below is a copy of the workshop agenda.

VISUALIZING NORTH PLATTE ISSUES FOR THE GARVER BUILDING RFA

Sponsors: Alders Olson and Palm, SASY Neighborhood Association, Friends of Starkweather Creek

Goals:

The goal of this workshop is to bring residents of the East Side together to identify and document features of the north plat they value (spots, areas, vistas, and such), and to clarify, visualize, and document their issues of concern, relative to these features. The results of this workshop will include an illustrated report, which will be presented to the mayor's commission that is charged with developing the request for proposals from developers, and a display of maps and photographs, suitable for public display.

Schedule:

1:00 Introductions and welcome
Explain goals and schedule

1:15 – 2:00 Familiarize yourself with the north plat through any or all of several activities

Inside The Building Activities:

1. Watch a running slide show of a walking photo tour of the north plat
2. Examine the aerial maps and identify the features you value and your concerns
3. Take a look at posted pictures taken of the north plat a few weeks back and during today's event
4. Write down a few of your top issues or priorities to share in the large group
5. Place 6 dots on the large aerial map to reflect your priorities
6. Talk over your issues with others to see what is overlapping and unique.
7. If you have taken digital photos of the features you values and/or your concerns, you can load 6 photo favorites on our computer.

Outside Walking and Picture-Taking Activities:

1. Walk around the north plat, marking on 11x17 aerial maps what your valued features and/or priority issues/ concerns are for the development & the north plat.
2. Form a small group of your choice. Walk around and take pictures, marking on aerial maps where each picture is taken and why it was important in terms of valued features and issues that the development of the Garver site could affect. With your group pick 6 photos that best reflect your priority issues or valued features to load onto the computer for our discussion of priorities.

2:00 (earlier if possible) Load your photos onto the computer with Sue's help. Choose photos to illustrate a theme or valued features. Please be prepared to share a few works or phrases about why you value these features or why you chose this photo or group of photos (i.e. these "value statements" may be about functional use, aesthetics, local or regional history and ecology, or memories, or other?)

2:15-3:00 Participants will be asked to gather in a large group. Each small group will be asked to show their priority photos and tell the gathering about the values and issues they identified. People who did not take pictures will also be asked to offer issues/ values as they wish. Issues will be recorded, and themes identified

3:00- 4:00 Common themes and consensus will be identified for inclusion in the report to the mayor's committee and the display.

B. TRANSCRIPTS OF COMMENTS SUBMITTED IN WRITING

Workshop participants were asked to offer comments in writing. These comments are transcribed below:

- Less human organization. More wild appearance**.**
- Renews appreciation for the beauty of flowers.
- I love walking through the woods, along the river, through the open grass. I would hate to lose this place for this purpose. I don't know of any other place like this nearby. Like to walk the dog there occasionally.
- I used to live in Ann Arbor years ago and my favorite place there was the botanical garden because there were pleasant paths to walk in the grass and trees.
- Maintain the woods as a buffer to the bypass of the city.
- Use the lot as a demonstration for native plantings to teach people how they can make their yards wildlife friendly, etc. Keep it accessible to the community!
- Use building as "art incubator"- affordable gallery space for local artisans and community workshop and class space. Very little parking for building. Keep natural area and trails – particularly around the creek area. Natural area <u>does not</u> = mowed grass. Add a small dog park – near eastsiders will no longer need to drive to park on Hwy. 51.
- Has a wildlife/bird study been done on the area? Information may be important in determining future efforts.
- Any risk that the city may sell the property?
- What are the ideas/wishes of OBG for the site?
- Recommend determining future efforts in alignment with OBG and city park missions.
- Concern re: possible pesticide/industrial waste of soil/water (in pits in building).
- <u>Ideas for land</u>: prairie, bike paths, bike station (pavilion, seating, restrooms), path boardwalk, observation tower(s), sustainable/renewable energy demo area, overnight educational center (for schools, organizations, retreats, workshops), labyrinth, secret garden, fruit garden, bird garden, children's learning center, conifer collection, nut tree collection.
- <u>Building</u>: Space for wedding receptions, Xmas parties, etc. to generate revenue.

- ON THE NECESSITY OF RUINS**:**
  - Respect and embrace our industrial history
  - Ruins and vestiges are important components of our culture
- RE-WILD THE GARVER PLOT:
  - Think in terms of classical park planning where intensive, human uses are on a downward gradient, the farther you get from this central facilities area, (maintenance, visitor, display, etc.) while natural/wild areas are on an upward gradient.
  - Link the Garver green areas with nearby green areas – e.g., Electric Marsh, OB Sherry, Voit.
- THE PARK EXPERIENCE SHOULD START AT THE PROPERTY LINE
  - i.e., no parking on this site or the Olbrich site.
  - If more parking is needed, use Atwood and Fair Oaks, Olbrich's peak time (middle of day; weekend) is not the same as Atwood's peak commute time, thus there is plenty of spare asphalt.
  - Reduce the demand for parking by giving employees incentives to walk/bus, bike.
  - Work with neighboring businesses to use their parking (Glass Nickel, Kessenichs, Kipp)
- I hope that any paths that are put in will be natural; not paved, but which will also be wheelchair and scooter-friendly—maybe wood chips? (Just relatively smooth, level).
- Passive recreation.
- Showcase/model for new paradigms:
  - Environmental stewardship
  - Sustainable energy
  - Sustainable structures
  - Urban communities
  - Conflict transformation
  - Co-created community events and arts
- I am concerned about the health of Starkweather Creek.

- My favorite aspect of the property is the naturalness (not wildness, but similar) of the area. The paths along the North and East sides of the property are a unique opportunity in this area of town. The combination of the accessibility of it (bike and bus) and the nearness to town make it an ideal area for both children and adults to experience a semi-natural environment. In my ideal world, Olbrich Bot. Soc. Would do some plantings to recreate native growth and remove invasives, at least along the creek.
- The area near the place where the creeks meet is a wonderful space. I have seen crane, hawks, ducks, and many other birds I can't identify that are cool, and evidence of other wildlife. I want Madison to continue to have areas that encourage wildlife to thrive in appropriate areas, and not have to move into roadways and become problems.
- I think the idea of using the building to create revenue is wonderful.
- Consider putting up bat houses along the creek to eat mosquitoes and make the walking paths and creek more inviting for people in summer.

C. TRANSCRIPTS OF NOTES POSTED ON ORTHOPHOTO DISPLAY

A large format orthophoto of the Garver Property was displayed at the workshop. Participants were provided with pens and post-it notes. Participants were asked to study the orthophoto and post comments, suggestions, and concerns on post-it notes on the relevant areas of the orthophoto. The post-it notes are transcribed below.

General:

1) Placed on parking lot at Olbrich Dome, returning from a bit of wilderness make the civilized part of Olbrich seems even more welcoming.

2) Expand Olbrich Garden here.

3) Expand horticulture here at garden.

Thai Pavilion area:

4) Thank you for yoga and Thai parking lots by the pavilion.

5) Building: Save best remaining example of Madison/East side agricultural and industrial history.

6) Extensive physical facilities = sustainable agric/food system center

7) Building – should be redeveloped or torn down

8) Building – beautiful buildings must be preserved.

9) Building – try to restore the building to its original look. Convert into areas for wedding receptions/banquets to add revenue.

West of Building Track Area

10) Tracks – reclaim abandoned tracks for trolley

11) Bike path – East – the approach could be beautified (Dempsey drainage ditch). Wood lots should be preserved/enhanced.

12) Keep tree line to "unfold" Garver building as one travels east on bike path.
    - You see the chicken meal building (cottage) while main building is hidden by trees.
    - Farther east the main building "unfolds" to view.

13) Woods west of building – composting represents agricultural history – preserve this ag identity.

14) Mulch piles – smell is occasionally a problem in Fair Oaks neighborhood.

15) This area is usually a mess! If it continues to be used for mulch dispersal and the like, it needs better containment – a model for home gardeners.

16) Lots of space for multiple uses.

West woods to Fair Oaks edge

17) The woods are important as a buffer to Fair Oaks traffic and the rest of the city. Please keep the woods.

18) I love having wild abandoned space in the middle of the city (even though I know it has to go).

19) Infill residential along Fair Oaks with greenway corridor along Starkweather Creek.

20) I love having "the woods" on both sides of Fair Oaks.

21) Not heavy traffic through here.

22) Excellent road access – permits non-profit CSA and food processing/training.

West Edge/North of Sugar Ave/West Branch area

23) N. Sugar Ave – wood lot could be groomed to be a nice woods walk.

24) Why not a bit of medium density housing on Fair Oaks?

25) There are no other good places to walk in this neighborhood. A quiet path to walk in the woods would be appreciated.

26) Leave a dense layer of trees (replace scrub trees with native right away).

West Branch/ wetland notes

27) This often marshy way along the creek would lend itself to a boardwalk with bird and plant I.D.s and descriptions.

28) I hope that the walking path along the creek will be preserved and that dogs on leashes are welcomed.

29) North of North plat is great bird habitat. Please preserve.

30) Bridge here please Starkweather Fork.

31) A great opportunity here for informal marsh preservation. Bird and frog population already very significant.

32) Keep wild. Where the wild things are – no horticulture.

33) I value a little feeling of wildness, less controlled horticulture, more native species, lots of trees in clusters, path for walking.

34) This could be wetlands education/preservation like Cherokee Marsh.

35) An excellent, in situ opportunity for community/public education re role (perhaps have an interpretive piece) wetlands play and their intrinsic value i.e. filtering, flood control, habitat, etc.

36) We should let as much as we can revert back to wetlands with native vegetation.

Field North and East of building

37) Restore appropriate native ecosystems on most of the area. Large enough to be efficiently managed by controlled fire.

38) I envision mown grassy paths, native species, not so cultivated and divided up in little plots as the existent gardens at Olbrich are.

39) Prairie planting – yes! A splendid opportunity – light and open.

40) Naturalized prairie?

41) I'd prefer the area remain with 'open' access not fenced in with few entrances like the main garden.

42) Creek needs to be integral part of any use plan.

West of Fair Oaks

43) ------- land. Homeless man lives here FYI.

West end of James Street

44) We live here and the city owns the land along the creek; all the people own it, not us.

North of West Branch

45) Path through here is bad idea, badly executed.

46) The land along the creek belongs to all of us (the City) I believe. We all need access to it.

47) Observing vistas of trees etc., very important from this park.

48) Natural greenway goes all the way to the east edge of town. Important to us!

49) Yes, you can walk all the way to Cottage Grove Road! Love that!

East of North Plat @ Bike Path

50) Would be nice to have a connector here. (Starkweather Ave. to bike path.)

D. SUGGESTIONS ABOUT APPROPRIATE BUILDING USE

Participants were asked to suggest appropriate uses for the Garver Building. These suggestions are transcribed below:

- Co-housing/Eco-village Intergenerational
- A space large performance space for community-based, grass roots arts projects. Co- created
- Possibility of window restoration?
- I envision the big central door as a beautiful big main entrance to a fabulous Exploratorium/museum? A natural history? (Not knowing what the interior is like I don't know if this usage would be appropriate).
- At one point, several years ago, this site was recommended as a hostel for people passing through town (by bicycle, or by any other means), especially located along trail as it is. At this point, with homelessness still rampant, one wonders if there's any means of creating even some few work-in-exchange-for-living opportunities for committed people who happen to be down on their luck. (It could happen to any of us.)
- Definitely it would be grand to incorporate green/sustainable building materials, practices and builders into the process. Perhaps gutting /interior demolition rehab process will yield materials that can be re-used elsewhere on site or sold via habitat restore process for use elsewhere. Or, maybe materials sold as "mementos" or as a fundraiser.
- Definitely would love to see a building like this not cost an arm and leg to heat, light, and power. So, let's have some serious solar installations! Esp with grant money and local resource people this can happen! Thanks for the opportunity to weigh in.
- Trade school?/restoration MATC 2nd location? Joint program w/laborers, South Central Federation of Labor? and U.W. History Dept.?

E. PHOTOS, VALUE STATEMENTS, and THEMES

During the workshop participants were asked to gather in small groups for walking tours of the Garver property. Each group was provided with a camera and a copy of an orthophoto of the site. Participants were asked to take photos, marking on the orthophoto where each photo was taken. Participants were asked to record comments about why that photo was important, in terms of site issues and valued features that the development of the Garver site could affect. When participants returned to the workshop, they were asked to select a small set of photos that best reflected the issues or valued features. Each group was then asked to prepare a series of "value statements" to explain the significance of the photos they selected. These photos were loaded onto the computer. Each group presented their photos and value statements to the rest of the participants.

Participants were asked to listen carefully to the group presentations to identify "Themes". The workshop concluded with a facilitated reflection on these themes. The themes were written on a flip chart at the front of the room. This flip chart is transcribed below. The photos and transcriptions of the value statements are presented on the following pages:

THEMES

1) All ages/neighborhoods accessibility.
2) Respect the history.
3) Importance of buffers habitat/view sheds.
4) Connectivity – accessibility
5) Wildness – dark sky
6) Some residential dev on site – adjacent to neighborhoods.
7) Replace exotics with natives restorative ecology.
8) Links to adjacent green space.
9) Visual/thematic program and links with Olbrich Gardens
10) Physical links to bike path and rail
11) Biodiversity
12) Culture and educational center for neighborhood and region
13) Determinism and desire to make it happen
14) Connectivity to Olbrich Gardens' mission.

GROUP 1
PHOTOS & VALUE STATEMENTS

RR Tracks behind Kessenichs

- Like the geometry
- History of rail use on N. plat
- Walking tours memorialize industrial uses
- Incorp RR tracks into design

Open Meadow View

- Surrounded by trees
- Can't see City
- Lots of nature
- Wildness of the meadow
- Pathways have wild feel

GROUP 2

PHOTOS & VALUE STATEMENTS

Maintaining existing

- •Habitat/environment
- •NW area and NE areas – separate
- •Prairie – restoration of what's already there
- •Maintain existing
- •If access needed – keep as is (gravel)
- •Functional as trail as is
- •Natural wooded (visual and habitat) landscape buffers
- •Historical recognition of building worth salvage?
  - Cost
  - Environmental issues
- •Ducks, beaver, song birds, deer trails
- •Functional aspects of natural trail

Also see notes inserted in each photo

GROUP 3
PHOTOS & VALUE STATEMENTS

Urban dev – connections – this site and city
Tree line – along bike path, hides new dev. And allows it to unfold
Small tree stand – blocks view of ugly expanse
Fair Oaks – edge urban to wild
RR tracts – History of site industrial use
Medium density housing along edge (sieve type of boundary)
Mulch piles – need thoughtful landscaping
Wild portions – keep or dev. as wild
Urban areas need wild contrast to built up area – not suburban

NO PARKING
WEDNESDAYS

GROUP 4
PHOTOS & VALUE STATEMENTS

Big Building Photo

- Lots of space for many uses – rare
- Farmer's market, etc., for income stream
- Beautiful building – agri./indus/ past
- Good access
- Madison's present status in regional food production. Garver could be location for conference facility/education/rental non-prof's/food processing training.

Exterior around building

- CSA/heirloom gardens
- Compost demo area
- Gardening training
- **Grounds**
- Are beautiful
- Lots of space for everyone to I.D. uses

GARVER'S
POULTRY
MASHES
GARVERS SUPPLY CO.

GROUP 5
PHOTOS & VALUE STATEMENTS

Hawk photo

- Diversity is valuable
- Space for wildlife
- Do no further harm to creek

Path Photo

- Proximity to homes/bus
- Nature trail – education opportunity

Creek

- Corridor must be preserved. We walk it every day.
  - Landscape management of fire
  - Remove, plant nat'l species
  - Must be maintained long term
  - Gradual replacement
  - Is it wetland or prairie
  - Next step will look at feasibility
  - There were nat'l spring cattails, clean water, big trees

GROUP 6
PHOTOS & VALUE STATEMENTS

Hawk/falcon – habitat for wildlife – rewilding
Community garden is valued
Native vegetation vs. exotics.
Most of N. plat veg. is exotic expensive to recreate native vegetation – live with what we have.
Wilderness feel – not manicured
Habitat as opposed to diversity. Brushy trees/grassy areas
Creek edge – preserve
Connectivity to neighborhood needs walking bridge
Permeability of site – open
Rec corridors nearby – M.G.&E. site, Dixon Greenway, OB sherry
Historical heritage of site – 'the necessity of ruins'
Garver – adaptive to reuse – arts incubator space

GROUP 7
PHOTOS & VALUE STATEMENTS

Office Building
Cool building – great it could be saved

Meadow
Open
Peripheral shield

Path
Walking opportunity
Paths appear where people want to walk
Creek must have continuous path
Foot path must remain separate from bike path
Dog walking path – on leash, for responsible dog owners, of course

GROUP 8
PHOTOS & VALUE STATEMENTS

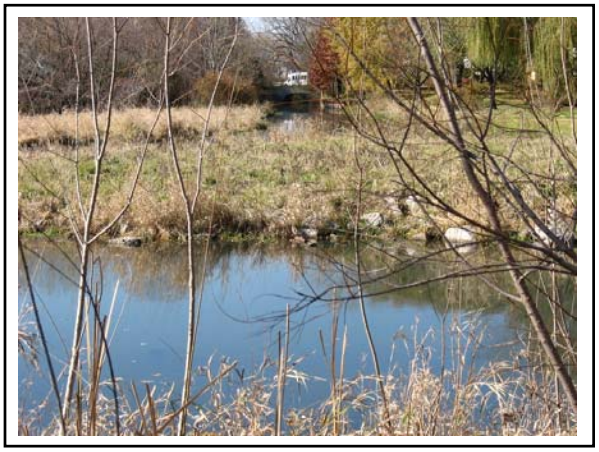
Rose garden view to N. plat – interconnecting nature with existing garden.
View corridor into N. plat – natural or wild
Create hill on site which might be a focal point – 2-6 story spiral walking mound to expand viewing. Weave with natural elements like a Stonehenge – informal in nature. Urban living learning connecting – weaving an experimental playpen – training for youth and elders – sustainable energy stewardship/docents – full time to revitalize areas. Bike and rail path connected – connect with trolley to downtown – crossroads hub.
Performance space for grassroots groups in touch with natural world and urban. Pedestals – remind of ancient ruins. Soundscape incorporated into spiral tower connecting urban and natural landscape. Potential for unique acoustics in natural landscape. Consideration of watershed principles and connecting trails.

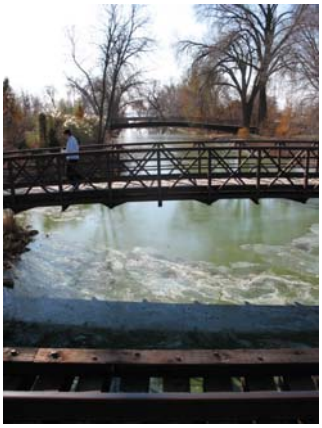
GROUP 9
PHOTOS & VALUE STATEMENTS

Marsh at NE corner
Preserve in at least as good condition
W fork of Creek
Preserve
Walking Path
Important buffer
Preserve

GROUP 10
PHOTOS & VALUE STATEMENTS

Viewpoint from East Morland into N. Plat
Trees
Relationship of neighborhood to N. Plat
No way to get to N. Plat from East Moreland – while two bridges connect Olbrich to other side
Thai Pavilion Views from N. Plat
Garver building itself
Open roofed space like winter garden area – 2 story
Olin Terrace fountain stored here in Garver Building





GROUP 11
VALUE STATEMENTS (NO PHOTOS)

Alt. Shopping space for local vendors
5th St. Market
Pike St. Market
Interior farmer's market, bakery and fish market
Eugene, or example
Performance space
Save natural, integrate into Garver space
Viroqua has one

Wedding Place
Galleries
Food/eateries
Performance
Weddings/chapel