

Olbrich Botanical Gardens
Master Plan for Twenty Year Period
2000 – 2020

adopted by the Park Commission
November 8, 2000

GOAL: To Plan for Both Near and Long Term Future of Olbrich Botanical Gardens

Purpose: to incorporate 27 acres of former manufacturing lands into long-range garden development and proceed with shorter-range re-development of the present gardens and facilities

Objectives:

1. To establish a long-term conceptual development plan for all garden areas, facilities, and ancillary uses at Olbrich Botanical Gardens. Many details of longer-term future facilities will be designed later, including actual size, detailed functions, program relationships, connecting links, and many other questions that for now are conceptual only.
2. To permit near-term development planning that can proceed within the longer-term conceptual framework. This is primarily for redevelopment in the areas of the existing gardens. Also for beginning work to establish buffers to residential areas, circulation routes, and walk areas in the northern part of the future gardens.
3. To preserve and enhance neighborhood park uses in the lands south of the railroad tracks, mainly through a redesign of existing parking areas, improved garden plantings areas around parking, and relocation of horticulture facilities. The alternative recommended would enhance non-fenced gardens.
4. To enhance garden uses for passive recreation and enjoyment as part of the Starkweather Greenspace corridor. The plan would add multi-use paths in the Starkweather Corridor for pedestrian and bicycle uses.

Near Term Period:

- ◆ Next 5-10 years
- ◆ Primary geographic focus south of RR tracks
- ◆ Limited activities north of RR tracks to support long term plan

Long Term Period

- ◆ Period 10-20 years in future
- ◆ Primary geographic focus north of RR tracks

Consistency with Existing Plans

Plans for the Olbrich Botanical Gardens are Based on the Following Adopted City Policies and Actions

Consistent with the acquisition of the Garver property by the Botanical Society for \$750,000 and agreement entered into with the city for future development of the lands north of the RR tracks into gardens.

Consistent with city Park Plans and adopted Dane County Regional Planning Commission plans for larger regional eastside Greenspace Corridor based on Starkweather Creek for which the Garver acquisition filled an important missing link.

Consistent with two decades of water quality improvements for Starkweather Creek to upgrade this stream used formerly for industrial waste and otherwise neglected.

Consistent with city designation of the Garver Building as a Madison Landmark and 1994 city resolution supporting preservation of the building as part of the future use of the lands for park and Olbrich Gardens expansion.

Consistent with the City Parks Plan long-standing designation of Olbrich as a Community Park to serve the entire city, in addition to serving the adjacent neighborhoods.

Consistent with the 1992 Master Plan that recognized the future expansion of Olbrich Gardens.

Consistent with city and private investment in Olbrich Botanical Gardens as a regional facility serving a function both citywide and beyond.

Consistent with 1998 adopted City partnership principles on Olbrich Botanical Gardens to form a basis for the growth of the gardens.

Principles for Master Plan Design

1. Develop 15.3 acres of new gardens north of the RR tracks, that includes
 - ◆ approximately 8.7 acres of gardens between the allee and the creek, and
 - ◆ approximately 5 acres in the new landscaped pleasure walk system between Fair Oaks and the allee of trees
 - ◆ approximately 1.6 acres of new gardens such as the conifer collection west of the allee.
2. Develop gardens and landscaping north of the RR that are less formal than the gardens south of the RR. Provide gardens and landscaping along the creek which demonstrate naturalistic landscaping, plant community restoration and creation of wildlife habitat
3. Re-develop and improve existing garden areas south of RR tracks, for example one of the first phases would be the re-development of the Rose Garden for the 50th Anniversary
4. Develop new Garden Facilities in both new structures and restored buildings
 - Short-term 5-10 years
 - New Visitor Center and Education Facility next to existing building
 - Horticulture Headquarters in Restored Office and Cottage Garden
 - Phased Re-orientation of the existing Parking Area focused on relocated Entrance
 - New Conservatory for expanded all-season education
 - Longer-term 10-20 years
 - Future Horticulture Facility with in-ground nursery
 - Future expanded uses in the preserved Garver Building
5. Develop new Ancillary facilities
 - Develop multimodal transportation facilities, including bike access and parking, use of existing parking lots, and additional auto parking only as needed
 - Multiuse paths for Pleasure Walk and bike use in Starkweather Corridor
6. Management of lands north of RR tracks for future uses
 - Redemption from past industrial uses
 - Remediation from past indiscriminate dumping and neglect
7. Perimeter development for trails linking to other park uses of the Starkweather Corridor. Initial plantings of buffer areas to provide natural vistas in the corridor and compliment residential areas.
8. Select an appropriate location for the proposed Thai pavilion to be included in the Botanical Gardens.
9. Maintain the neighborhood park use along Garrison Street. Enhance screening and aesthetics by reconfiguration of parking, improved landscaping, and relocation of maintenance facilities.

Parking and Transportation

City Codes would require 746 spaces for the future square footage and uses.

Master Plan proposes reserving area for 680 spaces or 91% of code, which may require variance/waiver. The 680 spaces would be 174 short of the amount based on current use of the existing facilities and keeping the same ratio for future facilities.

As alternatives prior to building spaces in the area reserved for parking north of the RR tracks the gardens will undertake the following steps.

1. Explore ways to use other parking areas within Olbrich Park not presently associated with the gardens. This will include making known in publicity for large events that other lots in the park may be used by garden patrons, including boat launches at off-peak boating times.
2. The gardens will support traffic calming measures for Atwood Avenue that would encourage pedestrian access and permit easier use of lots across the street.
3. Keep records on peak uses of parking and consider what alternatives can deal with peak uses.
4. The Gardens will consider institution of a parking fee. Such a fee decision would be made by the City Council not the gardens. A per vehicle fee could promote multiple occupancy vehicle use.
5. Monitor uses of on-street parking in cooperation with the neighborhood associations to test if tolerable uses of neighborhood streets is a feasible alternative. Making a determination on whether on-street use is an acceptable alternative would be a future discussion of the then residents and city officials. This could include any existing streets that currently permit parking or those the city may choose in the future to allow parking on such as Atwood or Fair Oaks.
6. Develop a Transportation Alternatives Policy for Olbrich. This will include bus route and bike path information on our web site and other promotional materials. Easy and adequate bike parking for all facilities at the gardens. The gardens will work with parks staff for canoe tie-up areas on Starkweather Creek.
7. Willingness to explore with other groups' efforts to try valet bike parking for major events using volunteers as the gardens does for all its activities.
8. Minimize conflicts at the RR/bike path by discouraging vehicle crossings, considering gate closures at some times.
9. Consider alternatives for the bikepath, including a focused pedestrian crossing (short-term) much like focused bike crossings on the Isthmus bike path, and the alternative of a bike underpass (long-term).
10. Design future parking areas in so far as topographically possible to use environmentally friendly techniques to manage stormwater including bio-retention areas and phyto-remediation (use of selected plants to filter).

Detail on Parking Need

Existing Parking south of the RR tracks

230 total parking spaces for 45,000 square feet of existing buildings
This parking provides for every day parking needs not for peak event parking needs.
Goal of the garden would be to maintain this ratio for everyday needs.

Proposed Parking south of the RR tracks

244 guest parking spaces
10 employee parking spaces (for approx. 20 employees)
New configuration only replaces existing parking spaces

Future Potential Parking

Approximately 426 potential parking spaces could be built in reserved area north of tracks.

The ratio of 1 space for every 200 square feet of building is used.
Phase 1 expansion for 30,000 SF would have a need for 150 spaces.
Phase 2 expansion for 35,000 SF would have a need for 175 spaces.
Phase 3 expansion (Garver) for 55,000 SF would have a need for 275 spaces.
Total need 600 spaces.

Shortfall is 174 spaces. The 426 spaces would build 71% of likely need if required.