

WATERFRONT  
BOTANICAL  
GARDENS



2015  
**MASTER PLAN**  
EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

DEAR FRIENDS,

I'm excited to share with you this Master Plan for Louisville's Waterfront Botanical Gardens. The plan is a vision for our community, made possible because of the generous support and involvement of individuals like you.

In the pages that follow, you will see that vision come to life. Imagine getting lost within gardens inspired by the rocky cliffs of Kentucky, finding yourself moments later surrounded by butterflies as you stroll through the meadow. Imagine hearing the joy of children as the garden becomes their classroom, learning the role plants play in our everyday lives.

The development of the Master Plan is a significant step in our journey, but our work is by no means complete. You can play a role in the garden's future—helping to build the garden and to keep it a place of beauty for generations to come.

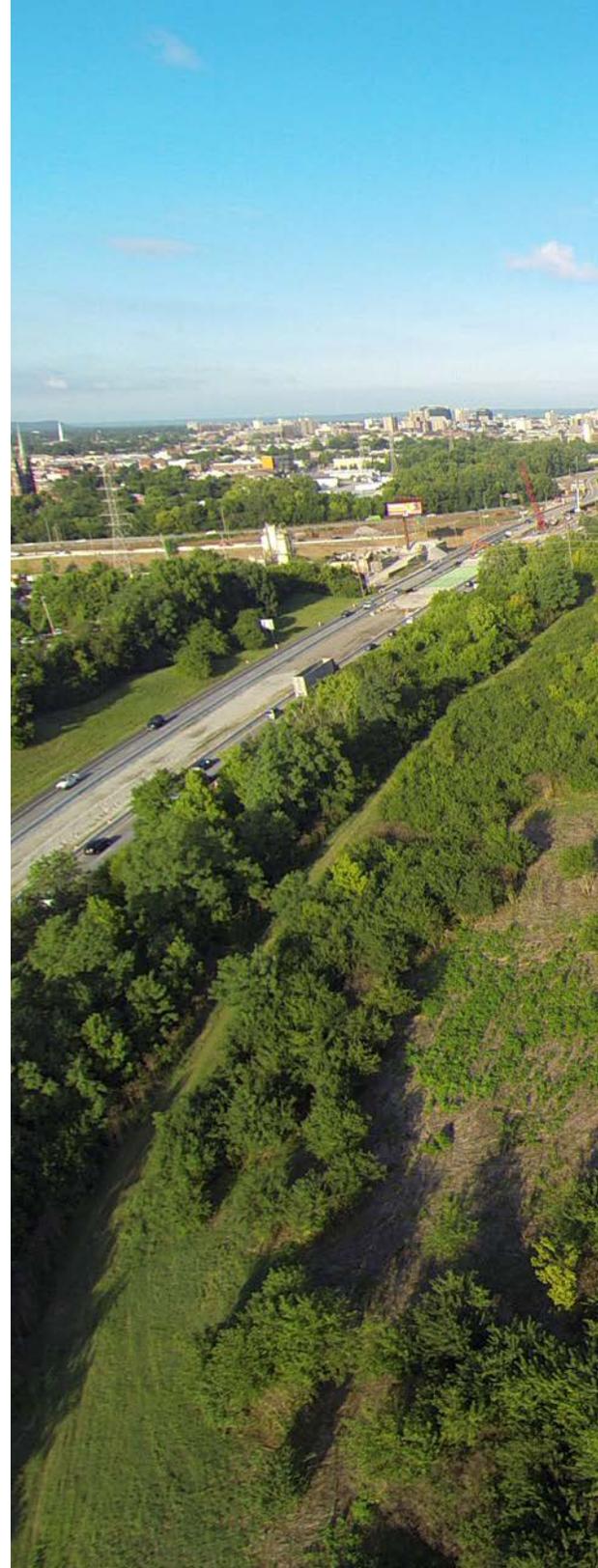
Sincerely,



Brian Voelker  
President, Botanica & the Waterfront Botanical Gardens

## THE MISSION

To create a botanical garden and conservatory of extraordinary beauty that engages, enlightens, and inspires people about plants and nature, through experiences that promote appreciation and understanding of plants for a more harmonious and sustainable world.





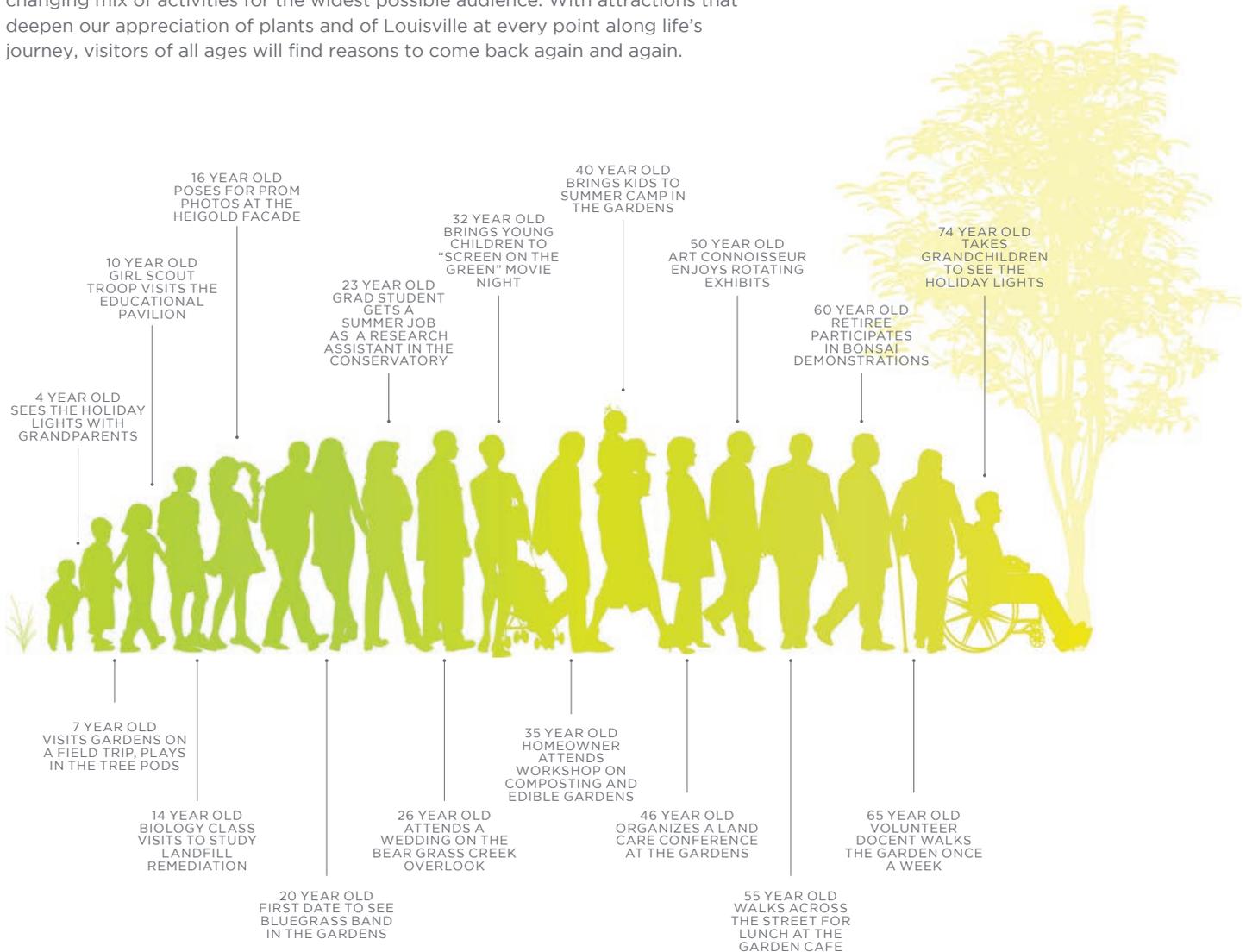
#### THE SITE

Starting with a 23-acre waterfront site that was once home to the Ohio Street Landfill—closed in the early '70s after operating for more than 30 years—the Gardens are transforming a degraded landscape into a beloved destination for Louisville and a global icon for sustainable redevelopment.

## THE VISION

# A PART OF LOUISVILLE'S LIFE STORY

In the near future, the Waterfront Botanical Gardens will simply be a part of growing up in Louisville. The Gardens will provide an engaging and ever-changing mix of activities for the widest possible audience. With attractions that deepen our appreciation of plants and of Louisville at every point along life's journey, visitors of all ages will find reasons to come back again and again.



# TRANSFORMING A LANDFILL TO A GARDEN

## SITE ANALYSIS

In addition to conducting a thorough plant inventory, we explored and documented the unique cultural, historic, and ecological context of the former landfill site.

Across the 23-acre site, many inherent features present unique design opportunities and challenges that influenced design decisions in the Master Plan. For example, the north, east and west sides of the property have fairly significant slopes. Noise from the adjacent railroad and highway is an important consideration in some areas. The natural views and tree canopy are existing assets that should be preserved and promoted.

## BOTANICAL GARDENS TODAY

Also key to our planning was an in-depth study of best practices in botanical

gardens design and programming across the nation. We discovered that gardens today are rapidly moving into the role of unique cultural institutions, dynamically engaging their communities, while remaining mission-driven. They have found that they must broaden their audiences as a means of achieving financial sustainability; this means providing ever more imaginative and engaging programming, events, displays and other ways to experience the garden. Arts and entertainment are now as essential as display, education and research.

## COMMUNITY PARTICIPATION

One of the Master Plan's most important goals is to respond to the needs and interests of the Louisville community, providing the experiences that will delight and sustain local visitors. Longterm

sustainability of the Gardens also depends on building strong community connections and relationships.

As a critical part to achieving all of these goals, the planning process included ongoing efforts to include community members' ideas and interests. Early in the process, the design team held two visioning sessions to solicit input on broad ideas as well as specifics for the Gardens including visual character preferences, ideas for programming and activities, and ways to make the Gardens "uniquely Louisville." Draft planning and design concepts were reviewed in an open community meeting and extensively publicized in local media and on Botanica's website.



## THE PLAN

# A RANGE OF EXPERIENCES

The Gardens are designed to offer an endless configuration of experiences so that each is unique for a visitor. The spine orients the visitors to the south, and the northern portion of the site allows for visitors to get lost in an urban oasis.

Three journeys have been created as distinct walks that visitors can take: Discovery, Health, and Transformation. These themes may expand over the years to include seasonal walks, fauna walks, and more.

## DISCOVERY

Discovery is about the opportunity to find something hidden and surprising. This walk encourages exploration and celebrates the unexpected qualities of a garden growing from a landfill. Key components of this walk include meadow tunnels hidden in the sweeps of wildflowers and native grasses, fairy house villages in the the Exploration Woodlands where children can build their own miniature house, and the Secret Garden with its pools of water and the intimate setting that envelopes the space.

## HEALTH

Health is a theme that celebrates Louisville's legacy as a leader in the healthcare industry. From the Edible Gardens, which educate children about the benefits of local produce and healthy eating while celebrating the area's farm-to-table resources, to the Japanese Garden, which offers a different kind of wellness through meditation and relaxation, the Gardens promote a holistic vision of health.

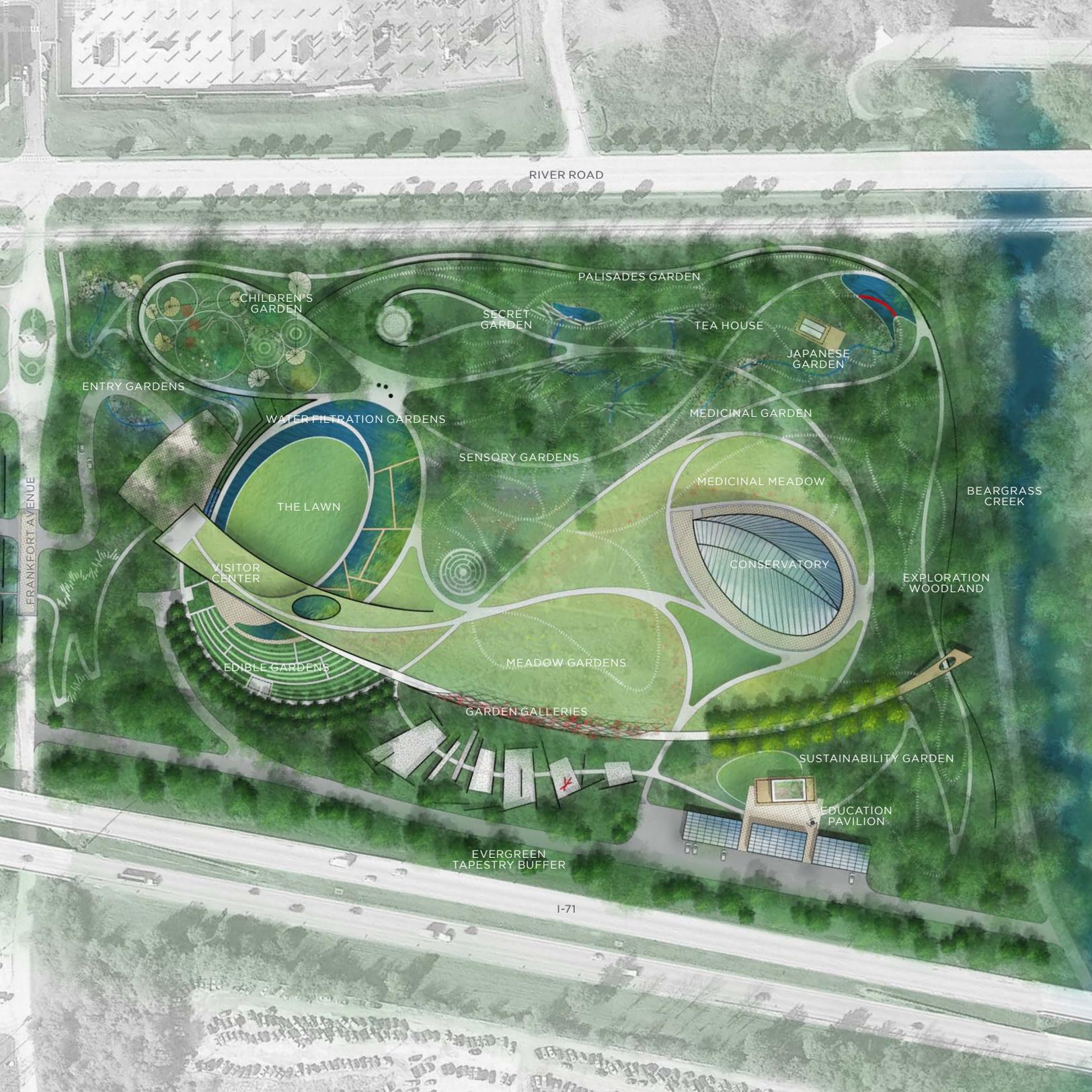
## TRANSFORMATION

Transformation is about the significance of the revitalization of downtown Louisville and about the transformation of the site from landfill to a thriving garden. It is also about the personal growth and transformation that a garden visitor experiences through learning, through social engagement in the Gardens, and through the enjoyment of striking beauty. Transformation is expressed in the changes in the Gardens throughout the year—in the seasonal displays of the Edible Garden and the strong seasonality throughout all of the Gardens' displays—as well as its growth and maturation over time.



MASTER PLAN





RIVER ROAD

CHILDREN'S GARDEN

PALISADES GARDEN

SECRET GARDEN

TEA HOUSE

JAPANESE GARDEN

ENTRY GARDENS

WATER FILTRATION GARDENS

MEDICINAL GARDEN

SENSORY GARDENS

MEDICINAL MEADOW

THE LAWN

BEARGRASS CREEK

VISITOR CENTER

CONSERVATORY

EXPLORATION WOODLAND

EDIBLE GARDENS

MEADOW GARDENS

GARDEN GALLERIES

SUSTAINABILITY GARDEN

EDUCATION PAVILION

EVERGREEN TAPESTRY BUFFER

I-71

FRANKFORT AVENUE

## THE PLAN

# GUIDING VALUES

### SUSTAINABILITY

The garden strives to set precedents in sustainability through spaces like the proposed Education Pavilion that is being designed around the Living Building Challenge and the Water Filtration Garden that will use plants to clean graywater through a series of beautiful water gardens. Our goal is for every structure on the site to be certified LEED Platinum or better. The challenges of transforming a degraded landscape into a thriving garden will position Louisville's Waterfront Botanical Gardens as a national and international model of sustainability through design.

### IDENTITY

The diverse array of gardens offer striking beauty, provide memorable experiences, and educate the public through fascinating stories in all seasons. They are meant to reflect both the particular sense of place of Louisville (including the broader context of Kentuckiana and the lower Ohio Valley), and the amazing diversity and richness of connections between people and plants throughout the world, as revealed in garden traditions, foodways, the healing arts, and other cultural expressions.

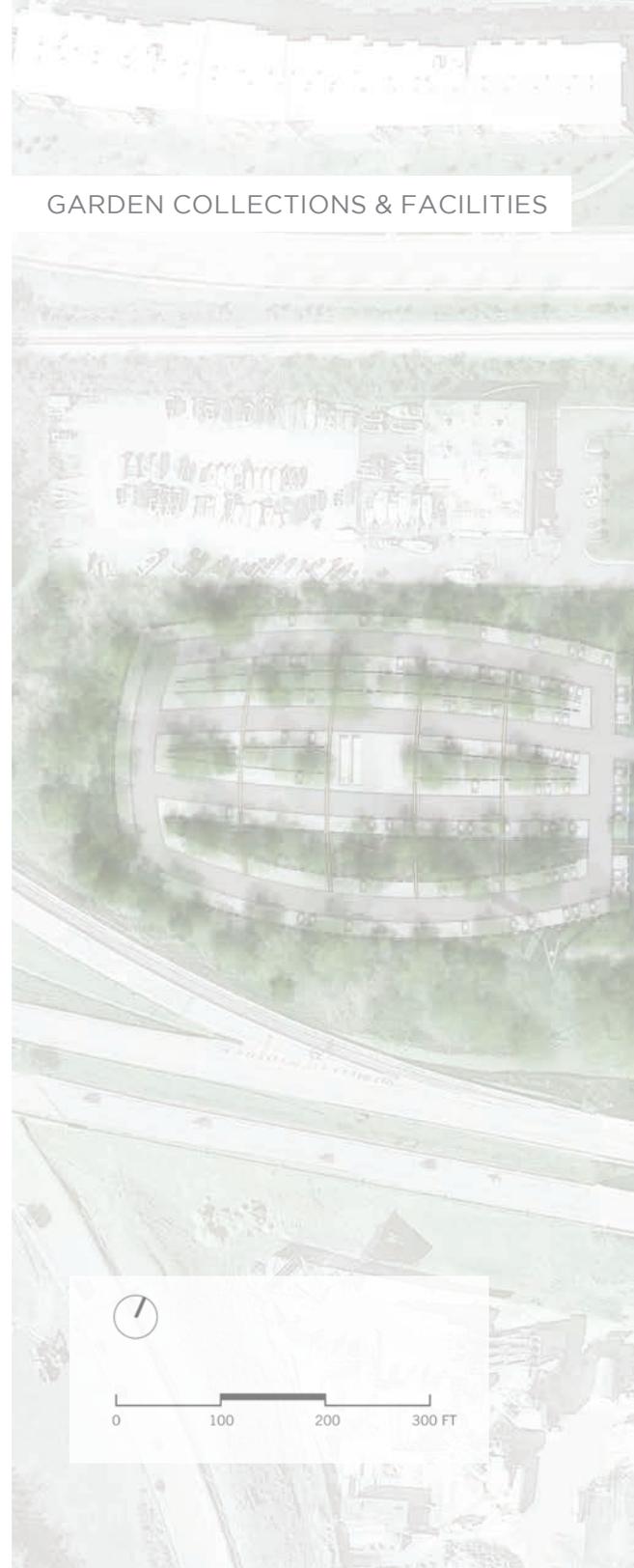
### NEW AUDIENCES

Reaching beyond gardeners and nature-lovers, the Waterfront Botanical Gardens will feature a wide range of programming and outreach strategies. From musical performances and art exhibits to cultural festivals and health and wellness, these activities take advantage of the special setting and ambiance that a garden offers to bring newcomers to the garden.

### VERSATILITY

Multi-functional spaces serving as event or rental venues are critical for revenue generation, and must be diverse in size and character to appeal to multiple users. The Master Plan offers complete guidance to ensure that the final selections of plants, built elements, programmable spaces, and other garden details work together to create a cohesive and powerful cultural center—a delightful and uniquely Louisvillian journey.

## GARDEN COLLECTIONS & FACILITIES



0 100 200 300 FT



RIVER ROAD

PALISADES GARDEN

CHILDREN'S GARDEN

(2000 SF)



SECRET GARDEN

(3200 SF)



TEA HOUSE

(900 SF)



JAPANESE GARDEN

ENTRY GARDENS

ROOFTOP TERRACE

(2500 SF)



WATER FILTRATION GARDENS

THE LAWN

EVENT LAWN

(27,870 SF)



SENSORY GARDENS

MEDICINAL GARDEN

MEDICINAL MEADOW

BEARGRASS CREEK

EXPLORATION WOODLAND

FRANKFORT AVENUE

EXHIBIT/FLEX

(500 SF)



VISITOR CENTER

RESTAURANT

(2300 SF)



GARDEN ROOM

(3000 SF)



CONSERVATORY

OVERLOOK

(500 SF)



EDIBLE GARDEN PLAZA

(3000 SF)



GARDEN GALLERIES

(4000 SF)



EVERGREEN TAPESTRY BUFFER

(3200 SF)



LAWN #3

(6000 SF)



EDUCATION PAVILION

(1500 SF)



SUSTAINABILITY GARDEN

(4000 SF)



MEADOW GARDENS

LAWN #2

(7632 SF)

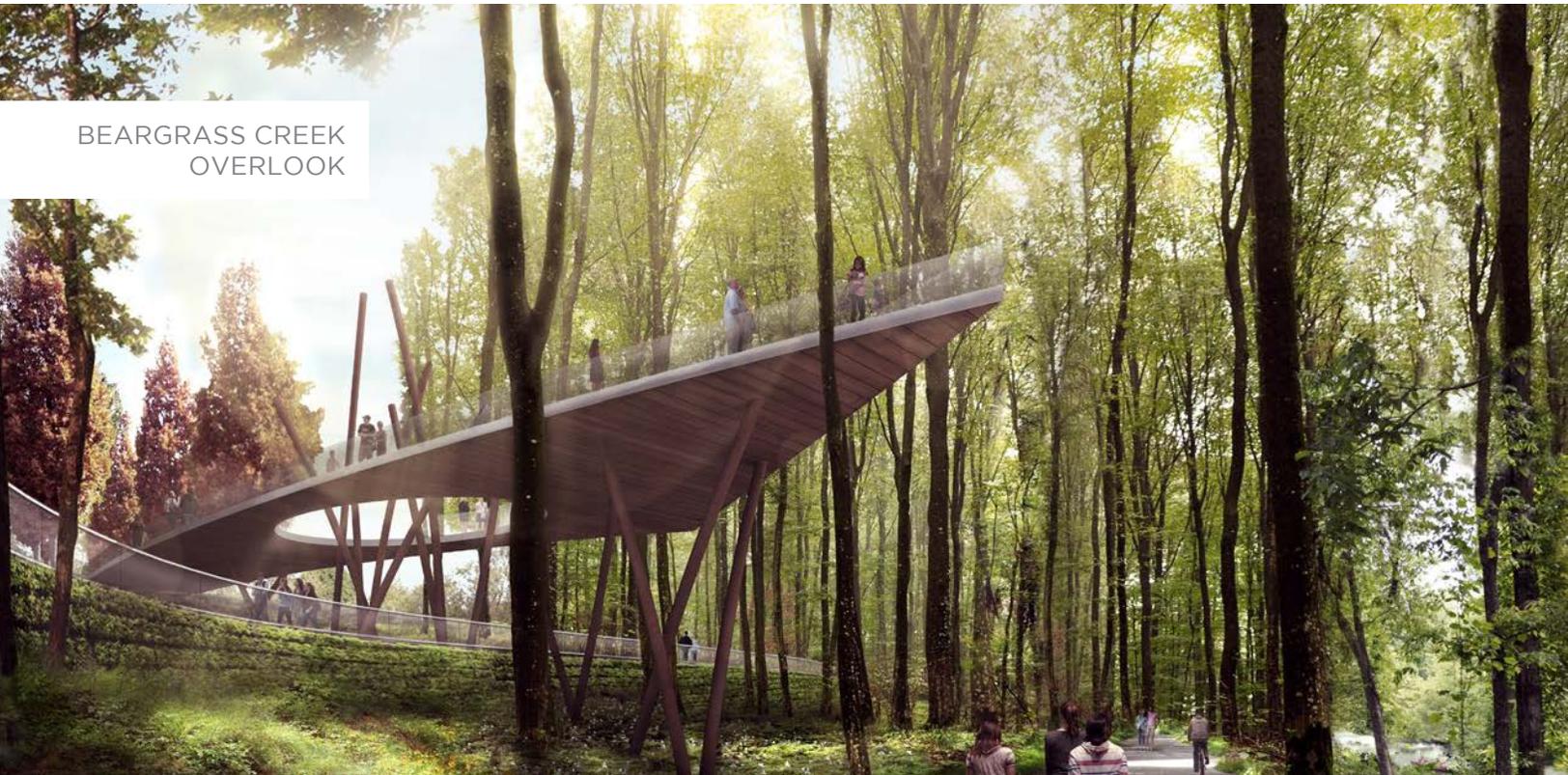


I-71

CHILDREN'S GARDEN



BEARGRASS CREEK  
OVERLOOK





THE TRELLIS



MEADOW GARDEN

## THE ARCHITECTURE

# DEMONSTRATING SUSTAINABILITY

**THE EDUCATION PAVILION** strives to meet the Living Building Challenge as a means of educating people on how a carbon positive structure can both operate functionally and be a beautiful piece of architecture within the landscape. The pavilion is intended to be not only a classroom building, but a building that teaches its inhabitants how to live sustainably and leave a positive impact on the environment.

**THE VISITOR CENTER** is designed to create a harmonious balance between architecture and landscape—from both a visual and an ecological perspective. By extending the gardens through the use of a sloping, undulating, inhabited green roof planted with hardy local species, this land ramp roots the project to its site and gives back natural greenspace and an observation platform in the most holistic and literal way possible.

Intended to attain LEED Platinum certification, the Visitor Center houses a full service restaurant and kitchen, garden shop, office space, and other facilities and employs mechanical systems designed to integrate with the surrounding environment.

**THE CONSERVATORY** responds to Louisville's seasonal changes, harvests natural daylight, and minimizes potable water use, all while maintaining an optimal environment for plants and people inside.

EDUCATION PAVILION



VISITOR CENTER



THE CONSERVATORY



## IMPLEMENTATION FIRST PHASE

RIVER ROAD



The Gardens' landscape and structures will be developed in phases as money is raised for the project. Our approach to Phase One will focus on establishing a core mix of features that will enable the Gardens to open to the public.

To be truly viable, the Gardens' first phase must:

- Establish a critical mass of experiences that immediately attracts visitors and makes them want to return
- Set the tone for the Gardens' identity, focusing on its unique vision and world-class quality
- Provide venues that can generate revenue for the Gardens
- Lay the groundwork for orderly and cost-effective realization of future phases

Phase One of the Gardens' construction is expected to include the Visitor Center, Lawn and Water Filtration Gardens, Edible Gardens, and first-phase plantings of the Children's Garden, Entry Gardens, and Meadow Gardens. It will also include initial construction of the parking lot, perimeter security, and other essential support services.

### **VIEW THE COMPLETE MASTER PLAN.**

If you'd like to learn more about our vision for the Waterfront Botanical Gardens, you can download the complete Master Plan book on our website.

The Master Plan book goes well beyond the overview provided in this Executive Summary. It shares the full background on the vision, the experience, the gardens, and the facilities we are planning for the future Gardens.

**YOU CAN PLAY  
A ROLE IN THE  
GARDEN'S FUTURE.**

Download the complete Master Plan book, get involved, or support the project by making a donation at:

[WATERFRONTGARDENS.ORG](http://WATERFRONTGARDENS.ORG)  
502-276-5404

# ABOUT BOTANICA

The seeds of Botanica grew out of three Louisville plant societies that gathered together to host a community educational event. In 1993, members of the three groups formed a new organization and selected the name, Botanica. Its mission was to become an umbrella organization for the local gardening community by offering quality programs to educate the general public about home gardening.

In August 2010, a Strategic Vision was developed for the Waterfront Botanica Gardens. The Gardens will fulfill Botanica's vision of seeing a garden built in Louisville that promotes environmental stewardship and a love of plants while being a global example of innovative "green" design in architecture, environmental elements, and technology.

With humble origins, great ambition, and clear direction, Botanica looks forward to the creation of the Waterfront Botanical Gardens for our children, our community, and for generations to come.

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Matthew Kuhl, Architectural  
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Environments Designer  
Luke Murphree, Landscape  
Designer  
Andrea Sandoval, Landscape  
Designer  
Hannah Palmer, Graphic  
Designer

## **GARDEN PLANNING CONSULTANT**

David Sacks Landscape  
Architecture  
David Sacks, Principal

## **COST ESTIMATOR**

Robert Pass & Associates, Inc.  
Robert Pass, Owner

## **SPECIAL THANKS TO THE MANY ADVISORS WHO DONATED THEIR TIME AND EXPERTISE, INCLUDING:**

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Allen Bush  
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Winston Dunwell  
Alan Goldstein  
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Mike Hayman  
Willie MacLean  
Jeffery Masters  
Steve Sullivan

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