Application for Comprehensive Plan Compliance

PROJECT NAME: (how should we refer to this application?): _____Botanical Garden of the Piedmont_____

PROPOSAL (use separate sheet, if needed): __Please see attached_____

COMPREHENSIVE COMP PLAN LAND USE/DENSITY: The land use recommendation for the Botanical Garden site/area is "Public Open Space" in the Places29 Master Plan, Future Land Use (South) Map. The Parks & Greens Systems Maps recommends this area for "Parks & Open Space."

LOCATION: ___950 Melbourne Road Charlottesville, VA _____

TAX MAP PARCEL(s): _____0611-00-00193AO_____

MAGISTERIAL DISTRICT: _Rio_____

Contact Person (Who should we call/write concerning this project?): __Jill Trischman-Marks_____

Address _____PO Box 6224_____ City ____Charlottesville_____ State __VA____ Zip ___22906_

Daytime Phone (_434_) ___953-0060 Ext 2_____ Fax # (____) __n/a_____ E-mail _____j.trischman.marks@piedmontgarden.org_

Owner of Record _____City of Charlottesville_____ _____

Address __PO Box 911_____ City ___Charlottesville_____ State _VA____ Zip __22902____

____ Daytime Phone (434____) _970-3101_____ Fax # (434____) 970-3890_____ E-mail _bentley@charlottesville.gov_____

Applicant (Who is the Contact person representing?): _Botanical Garden of the Piedmont_____

Address __950 Melbourne Road_____ City Charlottesville_____ State ___VA_____ Zip _22901____

Daytime Phone (_434___) 953-0060_____ Fax # (____) __n/a_____ E-mail _____j.trischman.marks@piedmontgarden.org_____

Does the owner of this property own (or have any ownership interest in) any abutting property? If yes, please list those tax map and parcel numbers

___Yes, in the City of Charlottesville: Parcel ID - 46000 1200 and 4600 2000_____

FOR OFFICE USE ONLY

☐ Compliance with the Comprehensive Plan (CCP) _____

☐ Special Use Permits: _____

☐ Variances:_____

Concurrent review of Site Development Plan?

CCP# _____

History:

☐ ZMA's & Proffers: _____

☐ Letter of Authorization

☐ YES ☐ NO

Botanical Garden of the Piedmont

September 20, 2022

Community Development Department
401 McIntire Road
Charlottesville, VA 22902

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Executive Director

To Whom It May Concern:

It is our pleasure to submit this letter of introduction and narrative of the Botanical Garden of the Piedmont (BGP) as a part of the Albemarle County Comprehensive Plan Compliance application. Botanical Garden of the Piedmont is located at 950 Melbourne Road in Charlottesville. Some of the land for the Garden is owned by the City of Charlottesville, but is located in Albemarle County. BGP has a forty- year land lease with the city.

Occupying over 14-acres in the eastern section of Charlottesville's McIntire Park, BGP is in the early stages of building an urban oasis and community resource for all residents of and visitors to Greater Central Virginia. The Garden will be an accessible, admission-free community hub and discovery center, celebrating the flora of Central Virginia and offering learning and entertainment opportunities for all. The mission of the Botanical Garden of the Piedmont is to invite all community members and visitors to engage in nature, to educate and inspire through the beauty and importance of plants, to advance sustainability, and to promote human and environmental well-being.

Our founders recognized that Central Virginia area lacks a central, well-planned, natural area. They also recognized that modern botanical gardens have evolved and can actively help communities deal with community challenges by creating food forests, working with schools and camps to develop curricula, partnering with senior centers and providing green industry job training programs for at risk and challenged adults.

Through a community input process, the Board developed an understanding of how the community envisions the built Garden and what guiding principles should frame the overall design, including:

- a place of healing and restoration
- a place to engage the natural world
- a community destination that is interconnected with Central Virginia
- a memorable, unique landscape experience that provides a venue with multi-generational appeal for civic and family events.

In 2018 the Board of the BGP employed two design firms, Mikyoung Kim of Boston and Water Street Studio of Charlottesville, to help turn these ideas into a schematic plan. Their results turn a challenging, once-neglected site into a plan that received a national honor award from the American Society of Landscape Architects in 2019. The plan incorporates the community's desire to have a place to learn, play, explore, and gather. It combines accessible community spaces, like an amphitheater and an event green for celebrations, classes, and programs that will support the Garden financially, with more contemplative areas like flowering groves, woodland trails, meadows, mushroom, fern, and moss gardens, and healing gardens. A children's discovery area, including a reading nook, will be a popular gathering space. A restored, perennial stream, an aquatics garden, and a tree canopy walk will provide places for exploration and learning. Foundational to the plan is a commitment to using native and site adaptive plant species that will support the ecosystem and provide habitat.

With barebone amenities, the Garden is already demonstrating the powerful intersection of people and place. Since January of 2019, our team of over 400 volunteers has been stewarding the land by removing trash and invasive species, and by creating walking trails and gathering areas. At our current rustic site, without a building, power or running water, we are serving the community by partnering with other area non-profits and organizations to provide quality programming in arts, literacy, and STEM. Our community partners include the Scouts, the Jefferson Area Board for the Aging, Boys and Girls Club, Big Brothers/Big Sisters, Abundant Life Ministry, Jefferson-Madison Regional Library, the Community Lab School, Lafayette School, local home school networks, the YMCA, and the Rivanna Conservation Alliance. We offer these programs, as well as garden tours and bird, pollinator, and tree identification walks, free of charge. We look forward to the opportunities enabled by our future beautifully designed facilities and garden space to expand and enhance our programming and outreach to the community.

We invite you on a tour of the Garden to give you a sense of the scope and our goals for the Garden. We are excited about the potential for this modern botanical garden to be a public asset, supporting and contributing to the well-being of the residents of our region and connecting them to the natural environment.

Sincerely,

Consi Palmer
President, Board of Directors

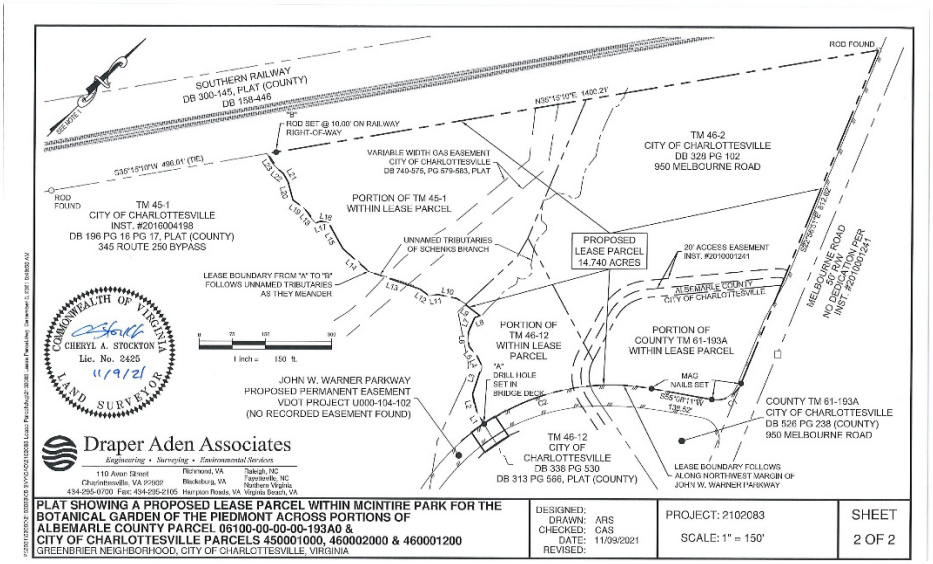
Jill Trischman-Marks
Executive Director

Botanical Garden of the Piedmont

Albemarle County
Comprehensive Plan Compliance
Project Background and Narrative

PROJECT BACKGROUND:

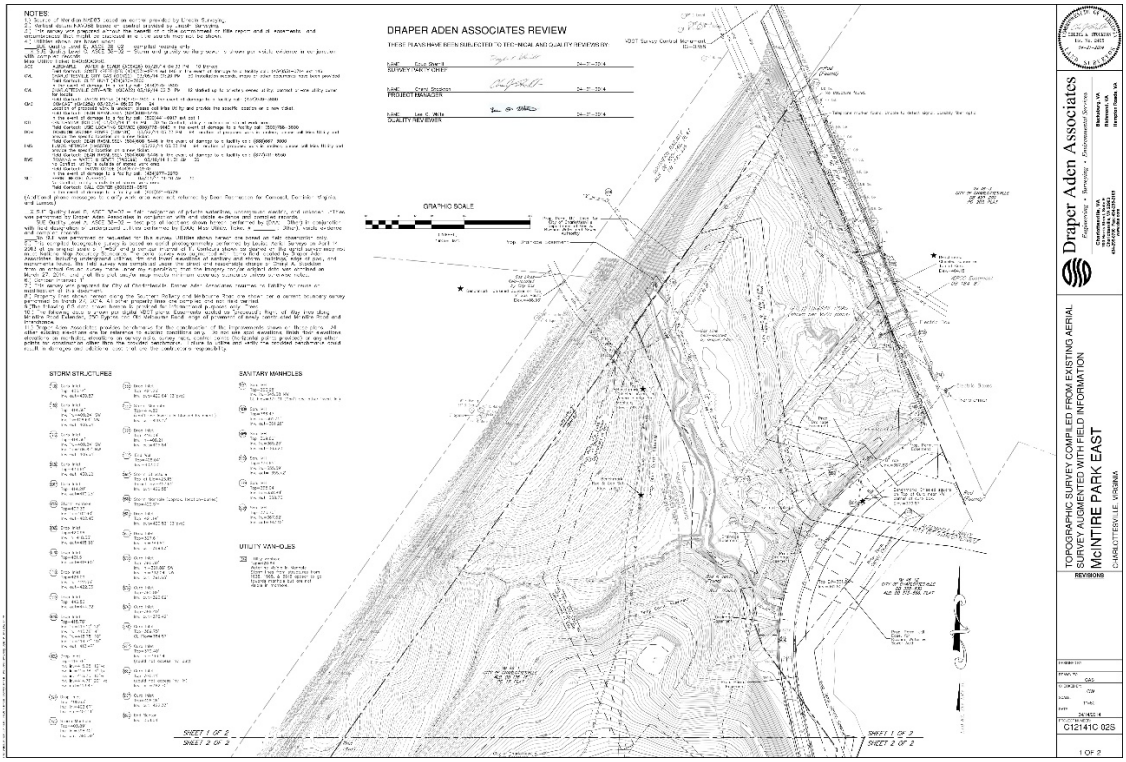
Located at 950 Melbourne Road in Charlottesville, Botanical Garden of the Piedmont is sited on land owned by the City of Charlottesville, some of which falls within Albemarle County.



The area of development on the land within Albemarle County is for the Children's Discovery Garden, the Garden Pavilion (a small, three-season event space) and the parking area with its central entry garden for capturing and filtering pavement surface water. These elements are all considered Phase I of the Garden construction.



The map below gives context of the Garden site within McIntire Park East. Charlottesville High School is located on the other side of the railroad tracks from the Garden. The Charlottesville High School Football Stadium and the City of Charlottesville Department of Parks and Recreation Landscape Shed are across Melbourne Road from BGP. The linear park adjacent to the John Warner Parkway is across the parkway from BGP.



In the Fall of 2021 when the land lease was negotiated with the City of Charlottesville, the Albemarle County Community Development Department completed an assessment of the Botanical Garden of the Piedmont proposal and offered the following information:

· The proposed activity is considered a by-right use (a public use) under the current zoning and no Special Use Permit will be required.

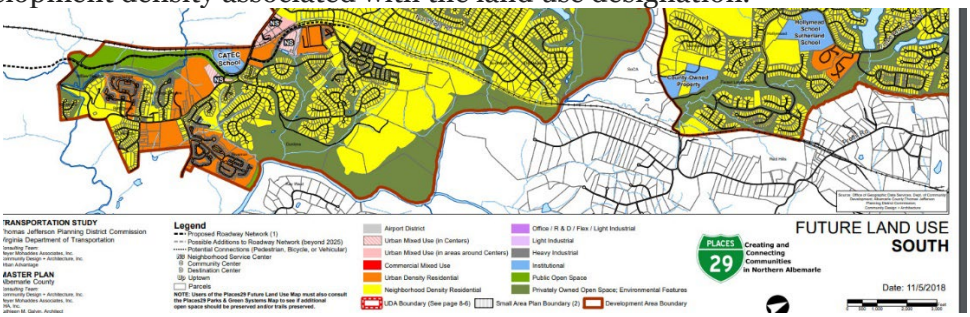
· A Compliance with the Comprehensive Plan review will be needed (a review and finding by the County Planning Commission of the public use's substantial accord with the County's Comp Plan, as per Va. Code 15.2-2232).

· A Site Development Plan for the development of the site will need to be submitted and approved by the County.

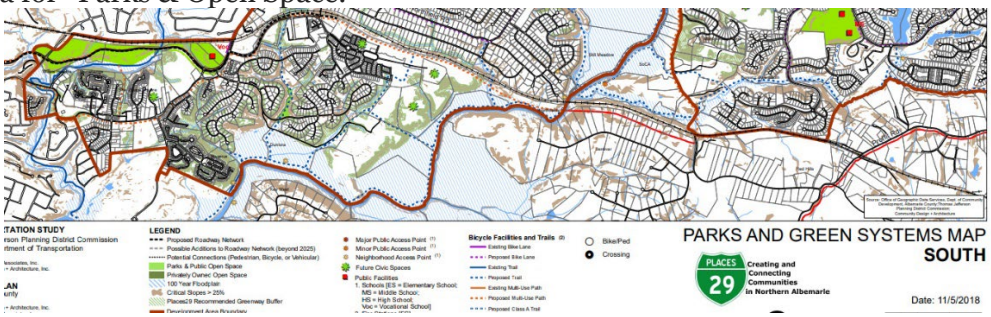
Since the Fall of 2021, BGP revised its Schematic Plan to incorporate the additional land assumed during the land lease negotiation as well as the plans for the stream restoration, trails and bridge the City will be constructing. The revised Schematic Plan is included in this Comprehensive Plan Compliance Application below.



The land-use recommendation for the Botanical Garden site/area is “Public Open Space” in the Places29 Master Plan, Future Land Use (South) Map. There is no development density associated with the land use designation.



In the Master Plan, the Parks & Greens Systems Map (South) also recommends this area for “Parks & Open Space.”



Below is a list of the typical uses identified in the Master Plan for these land use designations. Institutional uses are considered an acceptable activity (“permitted” use) if they are “recreational in nature” as per the Land Use Table 2. A portion of that table is also provided below.

Institutional. This designation allows for a range of civic uses, such as schools, libraries, parks, recreational facilities, water treatment facilities, and other similar uses on County-owned properties (see Land Use Table LU2).

Primary uses: schools, libraries, parks, recreational facilities, and water treatment, and similar facilities.

Secondary uses: any related facilities that support the primary uses.

Parks and Public Open Space. This designation allows for a range of public recreation and open space uses. This designation is used in Centers and the areas around Centers to provide for public

Chapter 4. Future Land Use Plan and Transportation Network ▪ Page 4-7

Places29: A Master Plan for the Northern Development Areas ▪ Adopted February 2, 2011
Revised June 10, 2015

activities. It is also used in combination with Privately Owned Open Space to define the edges of some Neighborhoods (see Land Use Table LU2). The Future Land Use Map shows Public Open Space as a lighter, brighter green (than Privately Owned Open Space described below).

Primary uses: public open spaces, such as parks, greenways, trails, and other public open spaces.

Secondary uses: related institutional uses.

Land Use Designation→ Primary & Secondary Uses ↓	Urban Mixed Use	Urban Density Residential	Neighborhood Density Residential	Commercial Mixed Use	Office/ R&D/ Flex/Light Industrial	Light Industrial	Heavy Industrial	Open Space
Light Manufacturing/ Storage/ Distribution For these uses, buildings should not be taller than 4 stories, unless by exception	▪ All activities, except customer/employee parking and loading must be within a building ▪ Maximum size of building footprint: 20,000 SF ▪ Evidence must be provided that noise, traffic, and other potential nuisances do not affect surrounding properties	Not Permitted	Not Permitted	▪ A secondary land use in this designation ▪ All activities, except customer/employee parking and loading must be within a building ▪ Maximum single-building footprint: 20,000 SF ▪ Evidence must be provided that noise, traffic, and other potential nuisances do not affect surrounding properties	▪ A primary land use in this designation ▪ Maximum single-building footprint: 40,000 SF, unless by exception if consistent with surrounding uses and character of area	▪ A primary land use in this designation ▪ No maximum single-building footprint	▪ A primary land use in this designation ▪ No maximum single-building footprint	Not Permitted
Heavy Manufacturing/ Storage/ Distribution	Not Permitted	Not Permitted	Not Permitted	Not Permitted	Not Permitted	Not Permitted	▪ A primary land use type in this designation ▪ No maximum single-building footprint	Not Permitted
Warehousing/ Distribution	Not Permitted	Not Permitted	Not Permitted	Not Permitted	▪ Warehousing/Distribution is incidental to Office/ R&D/Flex in this designation ▪ Maximum single-building footprint: 40,000 SF	▪ A primary land use in this designation ▪ No maximum single-building footprint	▪ A primary land use in this designation ▪ No maximum single-building footprint	Not Permitted
Institutional	▪ A secondary land use in this designation ▪ Maximum single-building footprint: 20,000 SF	▪ A secondary land use in this designation ▪ Maximum single-building footprint: 20,000 SF	▪ A secondary land use in this designation ▪ Maximum single-building footprint: 20,000 SF	▪ A secondary land use in this designation ▪ Maximum single-building footprint: 20,000 SF	▪ A secondary land use in this designation ▪ Maximum single-building footprint: 20,000 SF	▪ Not recommended in this land use designation	▪ Not recommended in this land use designation	Permitted, if of a recreational nature
Open Space	▪ Public/Privately owned parks, greens, commons, plazas to serve businesses, employees, customers ▪ Nearest open space should be within ¼ mile of businesses or residences ▪ Tot lots or active recreation areas should be provided with residential use	▪ Public/Privately owned parks, greens, commons, plazas, and greenway trails to serve residents & visitors ▪ Areas of active recreation should be provided (may be indoors) ▪ Emphasis should be placed on central, useable open space ▪ Nearest open space should be within ¼ mile of residences ▪ Protected areas may have greenways/trails to provide alternate travel modes	▪ Public/Privately owned parks, greens, commons, and greenway trails to serve residents & visitors ▪ Areas of active recreation should be provided ▪ Emphasis should be placed on central, useable open space ▪ Nearest open space should be within ¼ mile of residences ▪ Protected areas may have greenways/trails to provide alternate travel modes	▪ Public/Privately owned parks, greens, commons, plazas to serve residents & visitors ▪ Nearest open space should be within ¼ mile or business or residence ▪ Tot lots or active recreation areas should be provided with residential use	▪ Public/Privately owned parks, greens, commons, plazas to serve businesses, employees, customers and residents ▪ Nearest open space should be within ¼ mile of businesses or residences ▪ Areas of active recreation should be provided with residential uses (may be indoors)	▪ Public/Privately owned parks, greens, commons, plazas to serve businesses, employees, and customers ▪ Nearest open space should be within 1/2 mile of businesses	▪ Public/Privately owned parks, greens, commons, plazas to serve businesses, employees, and customers ▪ Nearest open space should be within 1/2 mile of businesses	

02 2011

Botanical Garden of the Piedmont

Botanical Garden of the Piedmont

PROJECT NARRATIVE:

Botanical Garden of the Piedmont is being planned as a place for everyone to learn, play, explore, relax and gather. The Garden will be an admission-free community asset that is open to the public year-round, almost every day of the year. It will combine accessible outdoor community garden rooms and interior gathering spaces.

The lease agreement between the City of Charlottesville and Botanical Garden of the Piedmont (BGP) requires that there is no admission fee to access the Garden. Therefore, having the large garden event spaces, the main event green and amphitheater, available to provide public events for performances, seasonal celebrations, and classes as well as for rental for private and corporate events, like weddings, conferences, and retreats, is vital to sustaining the Garden financially.

The Garden will also include smaller areas to serve as outdoor classrooms for exploration and learning such as a children's discovery area, the soon-to-be-restored perennial stream, an aquatics garden, and a tree canopy walk. In addition, there will be less programmed, contemplative spaces like the healing gardens, flowering grove, pinetum, woodland trails, meadow, mushroom, fern, and moss gardens, and a meadow of native wildflowers and grasses.

Our public buildings will include a visitor's center which will house our offices, meeting rooms, library/exhibit space, toilets, catering/café areas, and a gift shop; and a garden pavilion which will be a small, three-season event space with toilets, a heat source, and a wet lab for STEM programming. BGP is currently in the process of hiring an architecture firm to design these buildings, but it is anticipated that the garden pavilion will be about 1,000 sf and the visitor's center will be a multi-story building between 7,000 – 15,000 sf. The deck adjacent to and connecting these two buildings is approximately 7,000 sf.

In addition, we will have a landscape maintenance shed at the Garden for tools and equipment, approximated at 450 sf., and a service shed for programming equipment storage of approximately 120 sf.

Another requirement by the City of Charlottesville in our lease agreement is that our parking area accommodate bus parking. Our Schematic Plan currently provides parking for eighty-two vehicles, four handicapped parking spaces and three buses. We have begun conversations with Charlottesville Area Transit about establishing a public bus stop at the Garden in the future. Lighting will be installed in the Garden parking areas but will only be used when the Garden is open for special evening events.

The anticipated hours of operation on a typical day will be from 9:00 – 6:00 with hours extended at either end of the day to accommodate special events. At this time, we anticipate four large Garden events annually – a fall festival, winter light display, spring celebration, and summer exhibition.

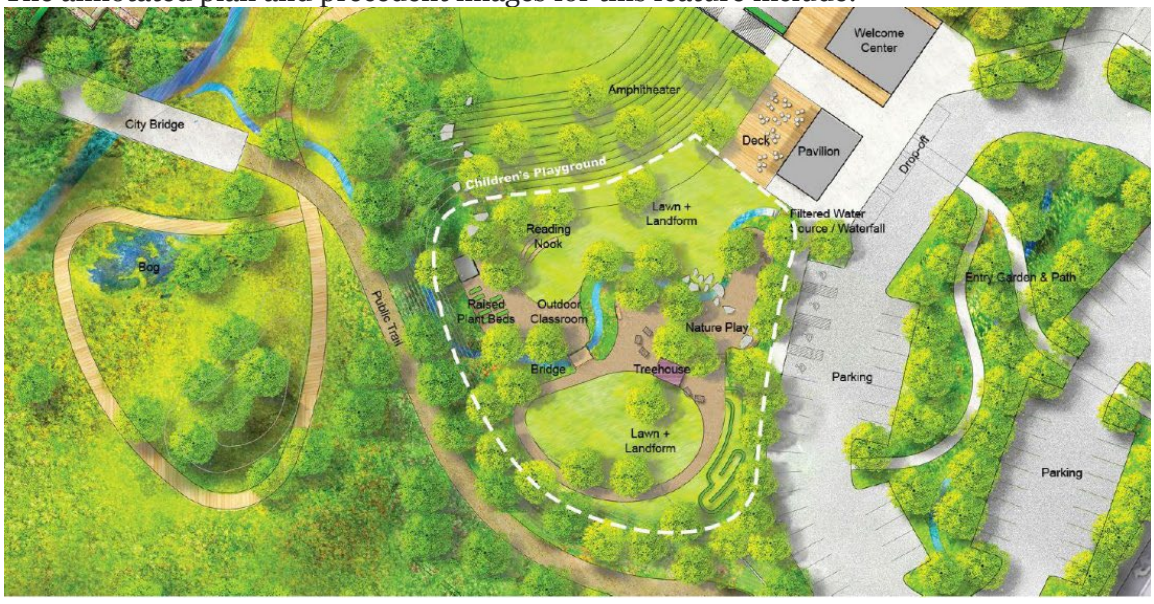
West Virginia Botanic Garden in Morgantown, West Virginia, is similar to BGP in that there is no admission fee to enter the Garden. They are also located in a city with a large university. West Virginia Botanic Garden is open dawn to dusk, 365 days/year. They provided the following data of their Garden from May 12th – September 16th, 2022, their busiest time of the year:

Busiest times of the day: 9:00 am – 6:00 pm
Busiest days of the week – Saturday & Sunday, divided evenly and representing 37.4% of total weekly visitation
Average number of cars visiting site daily -202
Minimum number of cars visiting daily – 165 (Mondays and Tuesdays)
Maximum number of cars visiting daily – 229 (weekends)

The Executive Director from West Virginia Botanic Garden also noted, "our data shows that traffic is starting to dip a bit now that summer blooms are fading. I expect things to hop up a bit in October when we do the Fall Children's Festival, Scarecrow Spectacular, and Howl-O-Ween Doggie Trick or Treat. Then it will nose dive after that until the spring ephemerals begin drawing people back. If I had to make a guess at this point using the information we have collected, I would suspect our annual visitation could be as high as 100,000."

During the public input sessions that spearheaded the design of the Garden and the features in it, the community responded with feedback about what those features will look like. Based on that feedback, the symbol adopted for BGP is a nest – one woven together of natural materials and sitting lightly on the land. For each of the features requested by the community, a selection of what those features could look like were voted on by the public. For clarity, the images included below do not represent exactly what our features will look like – they have not been designed yet – instead these images indicate the spirit of those features.

The first Garden feature we plan to construct is the Children's Discovery Garden. The annotated plan and precedent images for this feature include:





Children's Playground:

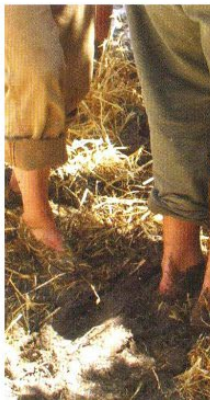
- Encourage multi-sensory learning and discovery in nature
- Inclusive play for all ages and abilities
- Incorporate natural, local material as much as possible
- Integrate water feature that uses filtered water
- Integrate raised beds, area to set up tables (outdoor classroom), reading nook, large lawn area, tree house, jumping stones, maze, and service shed











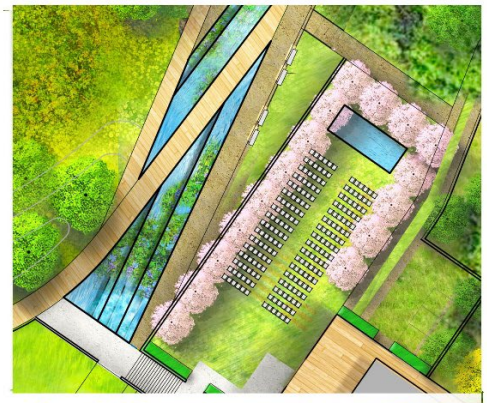
The Garden Pavilion is another of the first features to be constructed in order to provide three season events a weather secure location. Precedent images for the BGP Visitor's Center and Garden Pavilion Architecture:





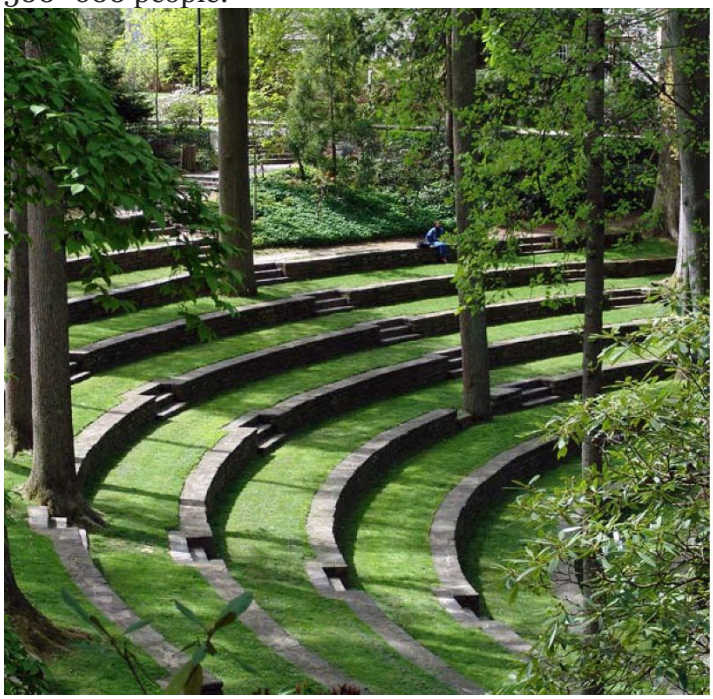


Other precedent features for the Garden include the Main Event Green which will be approximately 6,300 sf, and accommodate approximately 150 – 200 people:



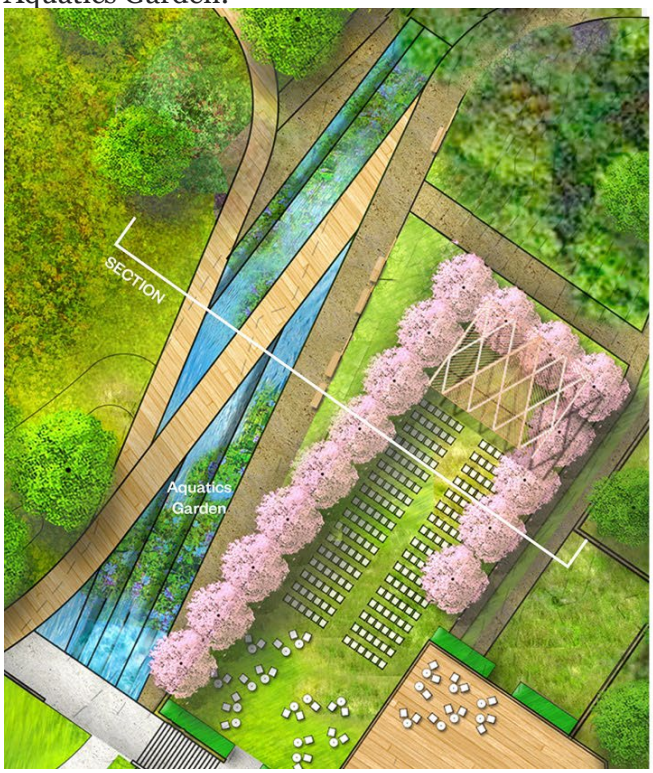



The amphitheater which will be approximately 11,900 sf, accommodating approximately 500- 600 people:





Aquatics Garden:






Botanical Garden of the Piedmont

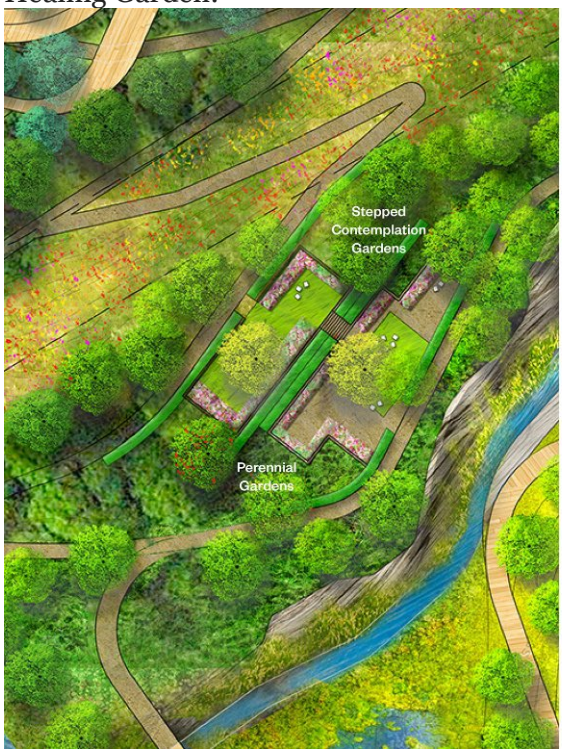
Canopy Tree Walk:







Healing Garden:







Parking Lot:





We welcome any other questions you may have about Botanical Garden of the Piedmont and invite you on a tour of the Garden to see the site in person. To schedule a visit, please contact the Executive Director, Jill Trischman-Marks, at 434/953-0060 ext. 2 or by email: j.trischman.marks@piedmontgarden.org

Botanical Garden of the Piedmont

ADDENDUM

History of
Botanical Garden of the Piedmont
September 2023

Land History ~

Much of what is now the state of Virginia was once home to the Monacan Indian Nation. They lived here for more than 10,000 years as part of a native population of interconnected tribes. By the late 1500's, change was coming to their way of life. As in the rest of North America, it was the arrival of Europeans, with their very different notions of social order and land ownership, that was responsible. Throughout the 17th century, British officials, who did not recognize the sovereign rights of native Indians to their ancestral lands, struggled to create a land policy designed to attract immigrants to populate the colony, work for its benefit, and provide revenues for the crown. Land grants and patents became the means, surveying, record keeping and tax collection became the tools for converting the "new" land to private ownership.

The Botanical Garden today occupies just under 15 acres of land. In 1749, this tract was part of the larger 430-acre land patent granted to J. Key. The town of Charlottesville was established 13 years later, in 1762. It grew up along a trade route, Three Notched Road (present day Route 250), which stretched from Richmond to the Great Appalachian Valley. The frontier town rapidly grew sophisticated and prosperous. By 1782, three of the one hundred wealthiest and most influential Virginians owned land in Albemarle County. Amongst the fourth through thirteenth next wealthiest citizens was Martin Key, son of John Key. A John Key was mentioned in some of Albemarle County's earliest records as having operated one of the first mills. It remains to be seen if this is our J. Key, holder of the 430-acre patent.

In 1829 John Cochran acquired a grist mill on Meadow Creek (at current day Rio Road) from John Craven, originally from Buck's County, PA. The mill, which had been known as Park Mill (for its proximity to Park Street extended) during Craven's tenure, came to be known as Cochran's Mill or the Loch Lynn Mill. The mill had been previously owned by Dr. George Gilmer, one of Jefferson's physicians. Gilmer purchased the land in 1786 from John Harvie, Jr. He owned the property for 14 years, until 1800, when he sold it to Craven. The tract was part of the Pen Park property that Harvie owned from 1750 to 1786. Harvie's father served as one of the guardians of Thomas Jefferson after Peter Jefferson's death. He, John's father, was surely a member of the Richard Harvie family who held a 137-acre patent which was located next to the Key patent. The Pen Park property, located on the Rivanna River just east of the Harvie and Key Patents must have been joined by land from these two tracts by the late 1880's.

By 1889 John Cochran and his family were selling some of their holdings and retaining others. In a deed to Ellie Elliot that year, 133 acres from the original Key Patent was sold. The Cochran's, who continued to own and operate the Loch Lynn Mill at this time, included wording in the deed to maintain an easement which would protect their access to the working mill. The 133 acres purchased by Mrs. Elliot included the site of the future Garden. Over the years, as the parcel changed hands, it was divided again and again until (approximately) 1972 when the parcel that was to become the Garden was sold to the City of Charlottesville by Fanny Nickel and her second husband, Herman. Fanny's first husband, Alex Smith, died in 1942 owning 51 acres,

8.84 of which were deeded to Fanny. Fanny sold this parcel to the city prior to 1973, when the city was expanding McIntire Park.

The Park History ~

McIntire Park is named for wealthy philanthropist and Charlottesville native, Paul Goodloe McIntire. During the early 20th century, McIntire, who made his fortune in stocks and bonds in Chicago and New York, donated over a million dollars in land and other gifts in support of various educational improvements and civic beautification efforts around the city. The core of the modern park was initially established as a whites only park with the gift of two parcels from McIntire in 1926, a 90-acre former agricultural tract which had been most recently known as the Brice Farm and a 6.9-acre parcel acquired from TE Powers. Over the next 15 years, further acquisitions, again underwritten by McIntire, created a park for Charlottesville totaling over 150 acres. The land involved had been bisected by the Norfolk Southern Rail line in the 1880's, so from the very start references to the west and east sides of the park are found. Early improvements included a cleanup and establishment of a playground on the western side then, in 1933, dogwood trees were planted by the Albemarle and Rivanna Garden Clubs. The creation of a wading pool, bath house and nature and hiking trails in the eastern section of the park, and sports facilities in the western portion followed within just a few years. By 1938 a golf course, designed by well-known course designer Fred Findlay was opened on the far eastern side, near Schenk's Branch.

McIntire Park continued to evolve and expand over the years, spurred by the development of Charlottesville as a growing city with an increasing population. The new demands for social and recreational activities were answered by development of a variety of park facilities, many of which were donated or sponsored by local community organizations. The most recent addition of land to the park was the city's purchase of three parcels in 1972, all on the park's far northeast edge. One of these, an 8.84-acre tract bordered by the Norfolk Southern Rail line and Melbourne Road, and next to the new Charlottesville High School, is the site of Botanical Garden of the Piedmont.

The Garden History ~

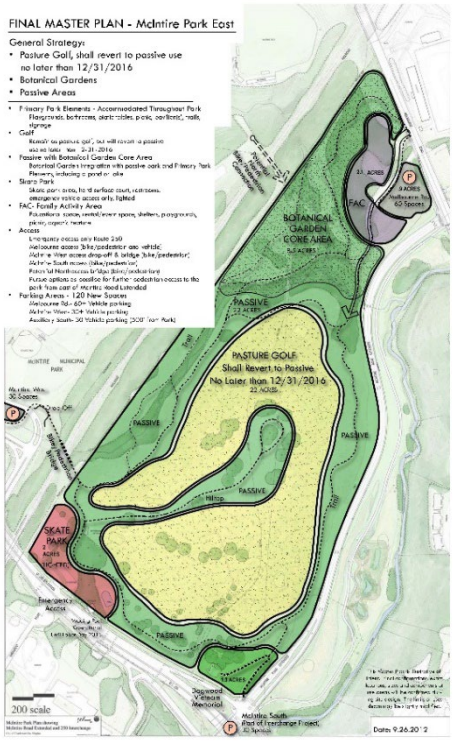
The idea of a Botanical Garden in Charlottesville was first put forth by Thomas Jefferson in 1826. It was to be constructed on the grounds of his University of Virginia and serve students in the Botany Department, but his plan never came to fruition.

Albemarle County resident Helen Flamini had a vision of using space in the reconfigured McIntire Park for a Botanical Garden. Realizing the importance of preserving McIntire Park and knowing the public planning process would determine its future, it became her vision and inspiration to engage others to explore the possibilities. In 2008 she founded McIntire Botanical Garden (now Botanical Garden of the Piedmont), a nonprofit 501café (3). The early mission of the Garden was to increase community awareness of the benefits of a Garden.

In 2008 plans began anew to construct a parkway through McIntire Park using about 25 acres of parkland for the new two-lane interchange project. A formal Park Master Planning Process adopted in 2009 by the City set the stage to determine the eventual plan for land use of the park after construction of the parkway was completed. Special interest groups in the golfing community were determined that the park should remain as a golf course. Other groups stepped

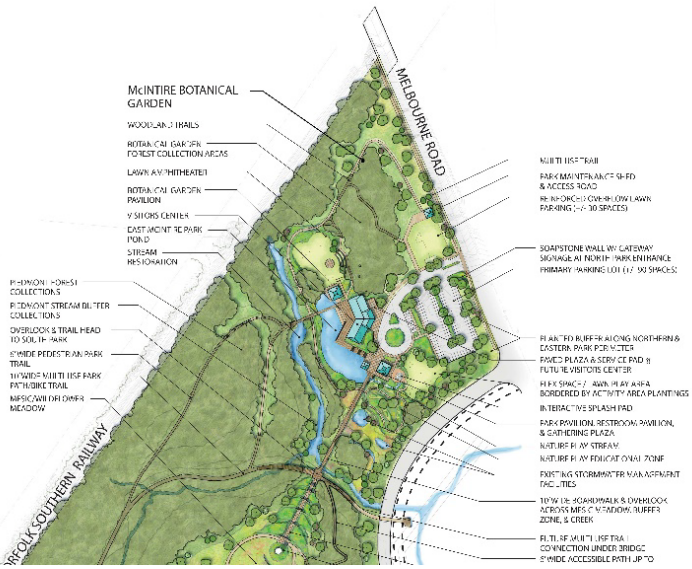
forward during the public input phase of the planning process to request that soccer fields, ball fields, and a concrete bike track be considered.

Eventually, the City's Parks and Recreation Department recommended the development of a master plan for the east side of McIntire Park. In the fall of 2011, the Public Master Planning meetings began that determined the outcome of land uses for McIntire Park East. After a year-long public process initiated by the City's Parks and Recreation Department, a final Master Plan which included 8.5 acres for a botanical garden and creating a passive- use park, was brought before City Council for review and was adopted on September 4, 2012.



In September 2013, City Council designated Botanical Garden of the Piedmont (formerly known as McIntire Botanical Garden), their partner.

The city hired landscape architectural firm Mahan Rykiel to design a Schematic Park Plan for all of McIntire Park East, which included the botanical garden. City Council adopted this Plan on March 16, 2015.



In September 2015, the Botanical Garden of the Piedmont Board of Directors and the City of Charlottesville signed a Memorandum of Agreement to develop, operate, and manage the botanical garden in accordance with responsibilities of each party as stipulated in the MOA.

In 2017, the MBG Board completed a Request for Proposals (RFP) to hire a qualified landscape architecture firm to design the garden's 8.5 acres. The RFP was announced in October to landscape architecture firms.

Botanical Garden Design Team ~

On May 3, 2018 the Board of Directors announced its selection of Mikyoung Kim Design and Waterstreet Studios as the landscape architecture team to design the McIntire Botanical Garden. Mikyoung Kim Design has the experience needed in botanical garden design and Waterstreet

Studios knows the geology, flora, and microclimates of the Virginia Piedmont, so the team is ideal for this project.

Their work began immediately with public input opportunities in June to elicit the community's desires for the space. This input during a 5-month community input process through surveys, public meetings and community discussion. Charlottesville has no large central outdoor space that is not devoted to commerce. After the events of the Unite the Right rally in Charlottesville the previous August, the community realized that the hard edges of the city offered no place for civic discourse, comfort or solace. During the public input session, they were inspired by the dream of a botanical garden to fill this void; a community green space that brings people of all ages and backgrounds together with nature, as well as a place that offers opportunities for education, celebration, and community engagement.

Through the public input process, the Board developed an understanding of how the community envisions the built Garden and what guiding principles should frame the overall design, including:

- a place of healing and restoration
- a place to engage the natural world
- a community destination that is interconnected with Charlottesville
- a memorable, unique landscape experience that provides a venue with multi-generational appeal for civic and family events.

Envisioned as a vibrant and diverse green space that not only fosters environmental and botanical education but also will become a unique garden adding to and complementing other attractions within the city, the Schematic Design was delivered to the Board in the fall of 2018. Conceptualizing their plan for this woodland site as 'a nest,' one that sits lightly on the land and is built of locally derived materials, the October 2018 plan illustrates how the community and the Board of Directors collectively foresee construction of the future Garden.
With a main entrance prominently situated at the corner of John Warner Parkway and Melbourne Road, visitors will be greeted by an attractive Visitor's Center housing flexible learning spaces as well as areas for a gift shop, café, offices, meeting rooms, toilets, and other facilities. Adjacent to the Visitors Center is a spacious 'main green' and natural outdoor amphitheater for celebrations, performances and other gatherings.

The garden plan includes a restored stream, ADA-compliant trails, and garden "rooms" with a variety of micro-climates, plant types, aesthetics, and uses, as well as an aquatics garden, a contemplative garden, a children's natural play area, and a tree canopy walk with an elevated bird blind. The garden walking trails are planned to connect with the greater Rivanna Trails system, making access to the garden easier for those traveling by foot and bicycle.

A primary goal is for this Botanical Garden to be a place where visitors from all generations and backgrounds can put away their phones and interact through shared experiences with the natural world. Children and youth will find delight as they explore nature and experience educational opportunities coordinated with their classroom learning. The Garden will be a center for lifelong learning, realize the City's vision of a green city, and create a connected community for people to enjoy. The hope is that growing this garden will also help to grow our community.



In 2019 Botanical Garden of the Piedmont won a national Honor Award from the American Society of Landscape Architects for its Schematic Plan. The ASLA had received 544 entries from projects around the world, of which 36 received awards. In awarding the prize for the Master Plan for BGP, the ASLA jury noted that:

"*This master plan for a new botanical garden in a park in Charlottesville, Virginia, was driven by the community's aspirations, insights, and desire for a place of healing and unity. Responding to the steep topography of the wooded site, the plan calls for terraced gardens and discovery walks, play areas, meadows, groves, wetlands, a waterfall, and event spaces, all facilitating natural and personal exploration. The plan calls for the site to be sustainable and resilient, encouraging a new kind of civic engagement that demonstrates how landscape can influence both the ecological and cultural systems of a community*." – 2019 Awards Jury

The Organization ~

The mission of BGP is to invite all community members and visitors to engage in nature, to educate and inspire through the beauty and importance of plants, to advance sustainability, and to promote human and environmental well-being.

The Vision is to:

Create and maintain the garden designed to unite plants natural to our region with appropriate architecture and landscape design.
Provide access to the garden and its natural spaces for exploration, observation, and restoration.
Present affordable, engaging programming to provide educational and inspirational experiences for all ages.
Commit to inclusion, excellence, and upstanding management while maintaining a positive impact on the eco-system and our community.

In 2019 the Garden hired its first full-time staff and Executive Director, Jill Trischman-Marks. Jill is a landscape architect with almost 30 years of experience in the Central Virginia area, including some of the original gardens at Lewis Ginter Botanical Garden in Richmond Virginia.

The Board of Directors for Botanical Garden of the Piedmont are dedicated to implementing an ambitious vision. It includes leaders who have been active for decades in the community and area non-profits, such as professional educators, a clinical child psychologist, an environmental attorney, an architect, an attorney, engineer, marketing professional, healthcare professionals, environmental preservationists, community business owners and leaders, and a landscape contractor.

Presidents of Botanical Garden of the Piedmont

Helen Flamini: 2008 – January 2016

Peter McIntosh: January 2016 – December 31, 2016

Dorothy Tomkins: January 1, 2017 - December 31, 2017

Linda Seaman: January 1, 2018 - June 30, 2019

Joan Swanberg: July 1, 2019 - June 30, 2020

Carol Carter: July 1, 2020 – June 20, 2022

Constance Palmer: July 1, 2022 - Present

President Elect: Diego Anderson

Name Change ~

The name McIntire Botanical Garden was chosen in 2008, reflecting the Garden's location in McIntire Park. Since that time, the social and political climate changed, requiring that the Board consider Paul McIntire's full legacy – both as a philanthropist and segregationist.

Botanical Garden of the Piedmont

We'll grow together

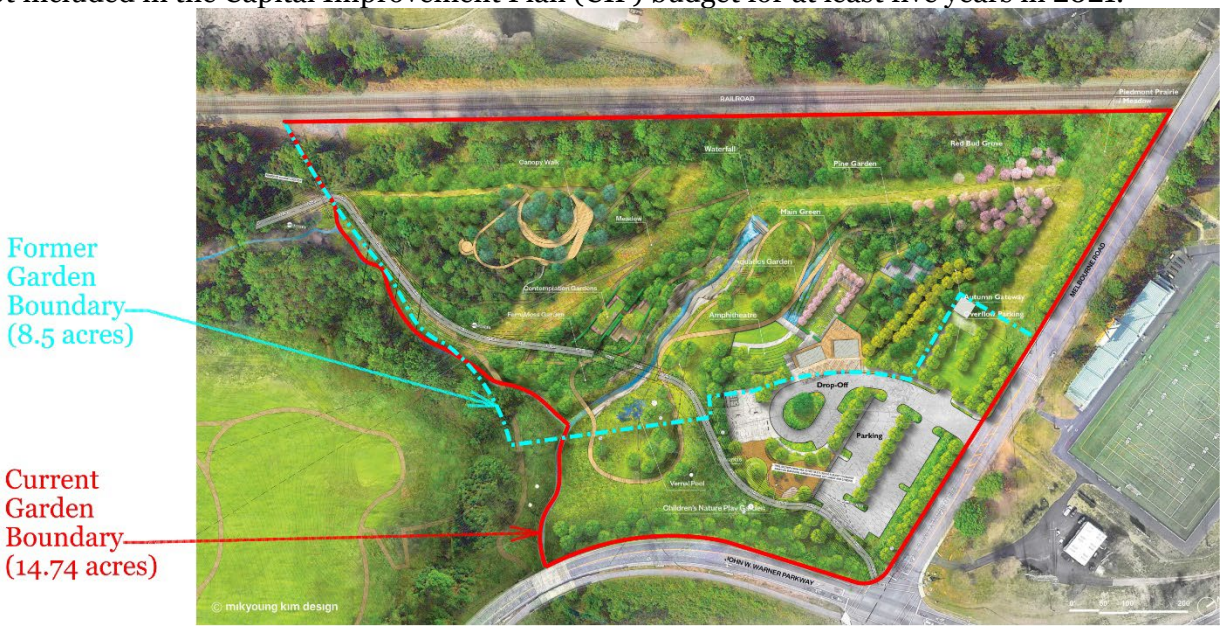
During the community input sessions in preparation for the Master Plan, it became apparent that this name had the potential to incite discord and to cause some visitors to feel less welcome once the Garden opened, which is at odds with the vision for the Garden's potential. This sentiment continued and taking action gave the Garden an opportunity to clarify its own identify and geographic location, while embracing all of the communities it hopes to serve.
In August 2019, the Board of Directors voted to begin the process to change the Garden name. It was hoped to tie the name change process to announcements of progress in building the Garden, but given the social turmoil and increased racial unrest in the Spring of 2020, the Board voted to immediately announce the goal of changing the garden's name and invited the public to suggest new names.

In taking this action, the Garden seized an opportunity to engage with the whole Charlottesville community as it seeks to identify itself as a city of inclusiveness and diversity. With more than 200 responses from the community, the resulting name, Botanical Garden of the Piedmont

(BGP), is concise, precise and inclusive. It describes the location of the Garden, the flora and fauna that will be highlighted there, and welcomes the entire Central Virginia community.

Growing the Garden ~

Immediately adjacent to the original 8.5 acres designated for the Garden was park infrastructure designed to serve all of McIntire Park East. It was the financial responsibility of the City but was not included in the Capital Improvement Plan (CIP) budget for at least five years in 2021.



Botanical Garden of the Piedmont had made significant progress in improving the site and developing visitors, donors, volunteers, and an award-winning Schematic Plan. With the goal of continuing the momentum of this progress, we proposed to the City of Charlottesville that BGP assume the land and financial responsibility for this additional acreage and most of the infrastructure in a land-lease agreement based on the contract the City wrote with the YMCA in McIntire Park. Our land lease, which included this land assumption, was unanimously approved by City Council on October 4th, 2021. This grew the total garden land area to 14.74 acres.

As a result of the increased acreage, BGP engaged the design team to revise the Schematic Plan and include the new acreage as well as the planned stream restoration and public bridge and trail. In August 2022, the revised plan below was approved by the City's Department of Parks and Recreation and is currently being reviewed for the Albemarle County Comprehensive Plan Compliance.



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