

Park Board Information Item Presentation, Key Points

Organizational Structure (Pg. 2, paragraph 3). – The Garden is fortunate to have two strong support groups. But, due to divided governance over the years a situation has developed where the garden lacks focus and evaluating cost effectiveness is extremely difficult. There is no effective way of setting priorities across the organization and of creating and implementing a central vision that focuses on highest and best use of resources. The strategic plan will benchmark our operations based on empirical research and on all input and comments to formulate ideas on how we can work more efficiently and effectively.

Industry Status (Pg. 2, paragraph 1 and 2). – There is a widely accepted concept in non-profit management that organizations that do not grow through proactive planning will decline over time. Between the late 1980's and 2012, only two public facilities (the Texas Nature Boardwalk and Backyard Vegetable Garden) were added to the gardens. During this same period, other gardens have been building major new facilities and programs to better serve their communities; creating programs educating users of all ages, providing outstanding displays of great plants for use in local communities, and improving visitor experience and safety. Over the last three years, the support groups have been fortunate to be able to raise funds for major renovations of the Rose Garden and Rock Springs Woods. We want to be sure that momentum can be maintained and accelerated, but there is no systematic approach to garnering private support in place. The citizens of Fort Worth deserve the best services and the strategic plan, with the master plan of 2010, will provide the roadmap to a world-class facility.

Challenges – The Garden is facing a number of increasingly serious challenges. The ability of support groups to assume financial responsibility for positions that have lost city support and to assume other costs is more severely taxed every year. Major new investments to address accessibility, aging facilities, and wear and tear from growing use are needed each year, but no funding is available. There are major backlogs of deferred maintenance of infrastructure that are unsustainable and there is no plan in place to address them in any meaningful timeframe. The strategic plan will identify needs and quantify resources needed so the city and support groups can manage them proactively and effectively.

Strategic Planning Process (Pg 2, paragraph 4, See Schedule Pg. 3-4). – The first working sessions (April 19-22) gathered input from various support groups and the public. Work sessions in May and July will allow multiple opportunities to review comparative data with other gardens and have input on what the strategic plan should include. The Garden is working to make the process open and inclusive by:

- three public meetings (April 19, May 2, July 25),
- email for public comment posted on the park board and garden websites:
BGStrategicPlan@fortworthtexas.gov,
- 2010 Master Plan posted on the garden website,
- 10 minute one on one sessions with any member of the public who wishes to have input (May 4),
- Posting input summaries and interim and final versions of the plan on-line for public review and,
- Multiple opportunities for the public to speak on the plan at Park Board and City Council Meetings.