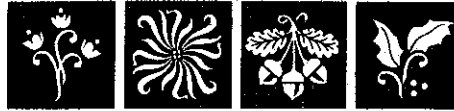


Brookside Gardens



1800 Glenallan Avenue • Wheaton, MD 20902
Phone: 301-949-8230

ITEM #2

To: The Montgomery County Planning Board
Via: David Vismara, Horticultural Manager, Brookside Gardens *D.V.*
Ken Ernst, Chief, Natural Resources *K.E.*
From: Stephanie Oberle, Project Manager, Brookside Gardens Master Plan *Sgo*
Date: December 6, 2001
Re: Work Session for Brookside Gardens Master Plan, December 13, 2001

Requested Board action:

1. Approve the Brookside Gardens Master Plan.
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Background:

The Staff Draft Brookside Gardens Master Plan was presented to the Planning Board on October 18, 2001 and approved for distribution as the Public Hearing Draft. The Public Hearing was held on November 15, 2001, and written testimony was accepted for the official record until November 29, 2001. For today's work session, staff has responded in writing to the questions of the Planning Board and those issues raised during public testimony.

1. What is the purpose of the internship program and the use of a renovated Stadler House for intern housing?

Two goals of the Strategic Plan adopted by Brookside Gardens staff to guide their work program relate to the internship:

1. ensure adequate professional staffing with diverse resources; and
2. maintain a highly skilled and knowledgeable workforce. (Brookside Gardens Strategic Plan (BGSP), Human Resources, Goals 1 and 2))

Brookside Gardens had an internship program in the past, and would like to re-institute the program. A resident program will attract students from outside the Washington-metropolitan area. The internship will expand the education initiative, share our experiences in horticulture, increase awareness of Brookside Gardens in the public horticulture community, and develop a recruitment base for future vacancies.

Stadler House was identified as an existing structure that could be modified at a minimal cost to meet the need for on-site intern housing.



2. Is there a plan for directional signage?

New and improved directional signage are an initiative of the strategic plan, namely, to “Survey and update directional and interpretive signage.” (BGSP, Visitor Services, Goal 2, Strategy G). The Master Plan also addresses orientation and wayfinding issues, with recommendations for after-hours wayfinding stations at all vehicular and pedestrian entrances, interpretation and orientation stations at key points outside the visitors center, and other wayfinding stations (BGMP, pg. 20). Moreover, the Master Plan recommends the naming of not only gardens and structures, but paths as well, to improve circulation (BGMP, 21).

3. How will the Master Plan be funded?

The current projected cost for Brookside’s master plan is \$33 million over a 25-year period. Montgomery County holds both corporate and individual donors who share our vision for the future of Brookside Gardens and who support our mission and our role in the community. Already, the Friends of Brookside Gardens and Montgomery Parks Foundation can be counted as partners. Additional conversations have occurred with donors interested in supporting key elements of the master plan. Once the Plan is approved, a feasibility study will be conducted before launching an aggressive capital campaign. A successful effort at soliciting private funds should lessen the impact Brookside’s Master Plan has on future Parks’ capital budgets.

4. Is the 1/3 developed to 2/3 undeveloped land ratio respected throughout all phases of the Master Plan?

Each implementation phase will maintain the 1/3 developed to 2/3 undeveloped land ratio. One of the guiding principles established by the Garden Committee for the Master Plan was to “Realize all improvements while maintaining the ratio of 1/3 developed to 2/3 undeveloped land within Wheaton Regional Park, without a net loss in tree cover. Trees lost due to development will be replaced at a 2:1 ratio per acre.” (BGMP, 2). Under this scenario, the amount of tree cover will actually increase over time. A diagram showing the tree cover replacement plan is attached.

The most recent calculations (December 2001), according to guidelines in the PRO’s plan, shows in Wheaton Regional Park at 69% undeveloped land and 31% developed land.

As stated in the Master Plan, the areas of new or expanded development were sited to have minimal impact. The new Conservatory and the expanded parking for the Visitors Center are oriented in land already counted as developed.

5. How is additional parking implemented in the four phases?

Implementation of phases I, II, and III are each accompanied by improvements in the parking.

Phase I: New Conservatory and Renovated Visitors Center

Parking at the Visitors Center will be expanded, by creating a third parking bay between the existing two bays in land already disturbed by construction. Forty-eight spaces will be added for general visitor use. This plan allows for all every day visitors to be accommodated in one parking lot at the center of the gardens. (BGMP, 7, 19)

Phase II: Propagation and Maintenance

The now-scattered parking spaces will be consolidated into one parking lot, adjacent to Fritz Greenhouse. Fifty spaces will be created for staff and volunteer use. An additional overflow parking area with a 50 car capacity can be added adjacent to Beech Hill House, which may be used as overflow by staff, volunteers or public on high-use days. This parking area will be connected to the Visitors Center by a pedestrian walkway. (BGMP, 17, 19)

Phase III: Event House

Parking at the Event House will essentially remain in the existing parking lot footprint. A slight expansion to allow for double parking via valet service at private events. This lot will be reserved for event guests and for overflow parking on heavy visitation days. A circular entrance drive allows for easy drop-off and turn-around. (BGMP, 10, 19)

Phase IV: Gardens

No parking associated with this phase.

6. Event House:

a. What is the purpose of the Event House?

The Event House will serve as a multi-use structure. It will be a venue for education programs planned by Gardens staff. It will be used by plant societies for their popular shows and sales. The outdoor Event Garden Court can be used for lectures or performances. Rentals that generate income have become to important to Brookside Gardens' operations and programs. By diversifying the types of groups who use the Event House and the audiences that they attract, Brookside Gardens will benefit not only from the rental income, but by attracting new visitors who may become individual donors or corporate sponsors.

During the planning process, it was determined that building a separate structure for events had several advantages. First, the Event House is planned to accommodate all the functions identified in the Strategic and Master Plans, with appropriate support facilities such as restrooms, a catering kitchen, storage, offices and proper vehicular access. The Visitors Center, while a relatively new building, was not designed to accommodate the range of activities now demanded of it. Second, locating the Event House at one end of the property allows for privacy of events without disrupting the garden experience of other visitors. This concern was voiced frequently by renters, visitors, the participants at the public work sessions, and by staff. (BGMP, pg. 9).

b. How was the size and configuration of the Event House determined?

The size of the Event House was based on analysis of several factors, including the carrying capacity of the gardens; the parking capacity of existing and planned lots; and the needs of current Visitors Center users. The configuration of the Event House was determined in consultation with the sub-consultant architect, taking advantage of garden views, allowing direct access for service vehicles, providing logical movement of users and service personnel to all parts of the building, and incorporating all of the desired support facilities. As mentioned earlier, locating the Event House at one end of the property allows for privacy of events, a private entrance and private parking. Lastly, the size and configuration was accomplished within the existing footprint of the old Conservatory, reusing an existing building site while meeting all program needs.

c. What types of events occur at Brookside Gardens?

Special events at Brookside Gardens include, but are not limited to: weddings, receptions and other private events; corporate events; symposia, plant shows; public meetings; and other events sponsored by Brookside Gardens, the Commission, Friends of Brookside Gardens other non-profit groups. Brookside Gardens staff also plans numerous educational programs.

d. How many events occur at Brookside Gardens?

Based on records for FY 2001, Brookside Gardens hosted 609 event days. (Some events, such as the Butterfly Show, may be more than one day in duration) For record-keeping purposes, events were divided into meetings, educational programs, and special events.

Meetings were defined as a one-time use, hosted by an individual or group. Of the 299 meetings held, the largest user was the Commission, holding 106 meetings, or slightly more than one-third of the total number of meetings. Another third, or 99 meetings, were rental events that generate income. One-sixth, or 51 meetings, were held by Brookside Gardens staff. Slightly less than one-sixth, or 43 meetings, were fee-waived events for various community groups. In total, meetings accounted for 44% of events.

Educational programs were those events planned by Brookside Gardens staff for adults and children. These programs may be free, such as children's school programs and adult guided tours, or fee-based, such as lectures and workshops. In total, 276 education programs accounted for 40% of events.

Public events included single or multiple day events open to the general public. Many of the public events were planned by Brookside Gardens staff. They were either free, such as Children's Day, or fee-based, such as the Butterfly Show. Special events were also planned by outside groups, such as the Friends of Brookside Gardens Plant Sale or a plant show sponsored by a plant society. These events account for 105 days, or 16% of events.

According to the data, Brookside Gardens hosts nearly two (1.895) events per day during its 364 day operating year.

Type of Program	User	Number of Events Days *	Estimated Number of People
Meetings	Brookside Gardens	51	2090
	M-NCPPC	106	3360
	Rentals	99	8030
	Community relations-fee waived	43	2420
		299	15900
Educational Programs	Adult: fee	97	1170
	Adult: free	7	1362
	Childrens: free	140	3424
	Childrens: fee	32	192
		276	6148
Public Events	Open to general public	105	53,886
	Total	690 event days	75,934 individuals

* "Events days" account for the fact that some events occur on a single day, such as Children's Day, while other events may occur on multiple days, such as the Butterfly Show.

e. What happens to the old Conservatory while waiting for the new Event House to be built?

Construction of the New Conservatory is scheduled for Phase 1, but the construction of the new Event House on the footprint of the old conservatory is not scheduled to begin until Phase 3. At completion of the New Conservatory, the old Conservatory will be demolished. This phasing plan offers several advantages by: 1. focusing attention on the new "heart" of the Garden; 2. releasing the Gardens of the maintenance of a worn and inefficient structure; 3. allowing use of the old Conservatory footprint as a multi-use area for outdoor surface events, such as plant sales and art shows, until such time as the Event House is built; 4. creating a temporary venue for rental events (and revenue generation) isolated from the gardens proper, with self-sufficient parking.

Implementation of this phasing will require shifting costs association with old Conservatory demolition from Phase 3 to Phase 1. In the intervening years that the new Event House is not available, the Auditorium and Library in the Visitors Center will keep their original functions.

When the Event House is built, the Library will move to the Auditorium space, and the former Library will be converted to additional office and storage space.

f. What is the current rental income at Brookside Gardens?

In FY01, the rental program at Brookside Gardens generated \$96,880, with \$49,830 in expenses for staff and advertising. Net profits in FY01 was \$47,050. The net profits generated by the rental program are an important supplement to the Gardens operations and programs, funding seasonal gardener and custodial positions.

	Budget	Estimated	Actual	Expenses	Profit
FY01	\$80,000	\$100,000	\$96,880	\$49,830	\$47,050
FY02	\$105,000	\$115,000			
FY03	\$120,00	\$120,000			

7. How are sustainable design practices incorporated into the Master Plan?

At the planning stage, the Master Plan incorporates sustainable design principles such as:

- Consolidation of visitor facilities to avoid duplication of services;
- Reuse of buildings and building sites as appropriate, for example, Stadler House, Beech Hill House, Fritz Greenhouse, and the Event House; and
- Use of innovative and “green” building materials and site design techniques, such as permeable paving.

At the facilities design stage, sustainable design practices will be vigorously pursued. As many sustainable design practices incorporate the use of plant materials to lessen man’s impact on the environment, we feel Brookside Gardens is uniquely suited to become a model for the County and the region.

Additionally, a goal of the Strategic Plan is natural resources stewardship, which is achieved in part by:

- Improvement of water quality and management of surface storm water runoff, by means of stream bank stabilization, dam repair, erosion control, and installation of native plants in and around ponds; and
- Preservation, reforestation and elimination of invasive species in wooded areas of Brookside Gardens. (BGSP, Horticulture, Goal 2)

8. Will the improvement to Brookside Gardens attract more visitors?

After any change in a public facility, there is a surge of interest, which levels out over time. At Brookside Gardens, the carrying capacity is determined and limited by the amount of available parking. Brookside Gardens staff is dedicated to managing visitor numbers by cultivating an awareness of high and low visitation times. New events are developed during traditionally low visitation times, such as the Light Show on winter evenings. On days of high visitation, such as Mother’s Day or Children’s Day, special events are prohibited.

9. Consideration of the recommendation to incorporate “living arts component” and “public art in the garden.”

(testimony from Theresa Cameron, Executive Director of the Arts and Humanities Council of Montgomery County)

The Master Plan offers numerous opportunities for the living (or performing) arts: variously sized indoor facilities ranging from a 250 seat auditorium (BGMP, 9) to small classrooms (BGMP, 7). Two outdoor spaces have also been designed: an informal amphitheatre facing the Gude Island which takes advantage of the existing topography (BGMP, 20); and a more formal tiered garden space next to the Event House (BGMP, 9), which can be used not only as a site for outdoor wedding ceremonies, but lectures and performances, as well.

The request for “public art in the garden” may be satisfied at one level by the Master Plan intention that the central water features be a showcase for art, with “each container that holds or receives the water as beautiful as the display itself.” (BGMP, 14) As gardens are renewed, opportunities will be created to disperse art elements throughout the garden.

The Strategic Plan also acknowledges the value of the arts to a public garden. We strive to “attract and service a diverse audience through new programming and special events.” (BGSP, Visitor Services, Goal 1, Strategy H) Brookside Gardens has already worked with the Arts and Humanities Council to stage a year-long outdoor sculpture show. Other Brookside Gardens initiatives include: the yearly sculpture shows in the Conservatory in the Spring, showcasing 20 local and regional artists; an annual Art Day in the Autumn, highlighting the work of 33 artists; changing art displays in the Visitors Center, which in the past year included 18 displays by 81 artists; and free musical performances during the Light Show. McCrillis Gardens, a property in Bethesda managed by Brookside Gardens, also hosts eight art shows per year.

10. Consideration of the recommendation “that rental fees be assessed at different level for nonprofits”

(testimony from Theresa Cameron, Executive Director of the Arts and Humanities Council of Montgomery County)

Brookside Gardens is a popular meeting site for Commission staff and users from the private and non-profit sectors. Brookside Gardens will propose a reduced-fee schedule for non-profits to be approved in the Enterprise budget.

Attachments:

1. Brookside Gardens Strategic Plan (BGSP)
2. Tree Cover Diagram
3. Analysis of 1/3:2/3 Development Policy for Wheaton Regional Park

cc: Charlie Loehr, Director, Park and Planning
Don Cochran, Director of Parks
Les Straw, Deputy Director of Parks

Brookside Gardens



A Strategic Plan for Brookside Gardens December 2001

HORTICULTURE

GOAL #1: Create and maintain regionally unique gardens, collections, displays and landscapes.

Strategy A: Complete landscape designs for garden renovations and new garden areas.

Strategy B: Enrich seasonal displays and collections.

Strategy C: Develop and implement a turf management program.

Strategy D: Establish written design guidelines.

Strategy E: Collaborate with existing plant trial programs.

Strategy F: Develop and maintain plant inventories and plant labeling.

Strategy G: Develop maintenance procedures and specifications for gardens and grounds.

Strategy H: Develop and implement horticultural plans and designs that maximize educational and interpretation opportunities.

GOAL #2 Ensure natural resources stewardship in all areas and in daily operations.

Strategy A: Complete a tree inventory.

Strategy B: Develop and implement a natural-areas management program.

Strategy C: Develop and implement best management practices for ponds and streams.

VISITOR SERVICES

GOAL # 1 Optimize the use of Brookside Gardens' resources by diverse groups and individual visitors.

Strategy A: Attract and serve a diverse audience through programming and special events.

Strategy B: Survey visitors and non-visitors to ascertain public satisfaction, use of facilities and programs, and recommendations for future services, and to document performance outcomes.

Strategy C: Determine the carrying capacity of facilities and grounds to guide planning and scheduling.

Strategy D: Develop fiscally responsible educational programs and special events.

Strategy E: Aggressively market and promote education programs, special events, rental opportunities and gift shop.

Strategy F: Promote Gardens' accomplishments in horticulture, education, design and resource management.

Strategy G: Minimize negative impacts of programs and events throughout the Gardens through operational procedures and adherence to realistic carrying capacities.

Strategy H: Attract and serve a diverse audience through new programming and special events.

GOAL #2 Offer horticulture information services that are attractive, accurate and accessible to all.

Strategy A: Develop and implement a strategic plan for educational programming.

Strategy B: Develop a collections and management policy for the library.

Strategy C: Complete library catalog conversion and make accessible to public on-line.

Strategy D: Expand website to include garden and plant photographs, virtual tours, plant records and maps.

Strategy E: Implement children's discovery room.

Strategy F: Develop basic printed information materials in languages other than English to serve local non-English audience.

Strategy G: Survey and update directional and interpretive signage.

Human Resources

GOAL #1 Ensure adequate professional staffing with diverse resources.

Strategy A: Develop a recruitment network for all positions.

Strategy B: Organize to address present and future program needs and priorities.

Strategy C: Implement a student intern program.

GOAL # 2 Maintain a highly skilled and knowledgeable staff.

Strategy A: Promote customer service..

Strategy B: Implement a professional internship program.

Strategy C: Promote leadership, team work and a positive organizational culture.

Strategy D: Identify and commit staff to professional development opportunities that relate to program needs.

Strategy E: Develop and implement a comprehensive orientation program for new employees.

Strategy F: Promote, acknowledge and encourage positive change and creative thinking.

GOAL # 3 Improve volunteer services that augment staff resources.

Strategy A: Computerize volunteer documentation and communication.

Strategy B: Provide volunteer supervision training.

Strategy C: Develop and maintain a highly skilled and knowledgeable volunteer staff.

FUNDING

GOAL # 1 Establish a development program that supports the Gardens' mission.

Strategy A: Develop a process to acquire, accept and acknowledge donations.

Strategy B: Develop and implement a broad base of funding strategies.

Strategy C: Complete a feasibility study for implementing a capital campaign.

Strategy D: Optimize the use of grants to support programs and events.

Strategy E: Create a Brookside Gardens annual report.

GOAL #2 Generate earned income to supplement operations and programs.

Strategy A: Evaluate and initiate changes to existing revenue programs to maximize incomes.

Strategy B: Pursue and develop new revenue sources.

FACILITIES

Goal #1 Provide and maintain facilities to meet program needs.

Strategy A: Evaluate and implement plan for efficient use of office, program and storage space in all facilities.

Strategy B: Create written procedures for all systems operations.

Goal #2 Provide facilities and gardens that are safe and accessible to staff and visitors.

Strategy A: Develop an emergency response and disaster preparedness plan for facilities and gardens.

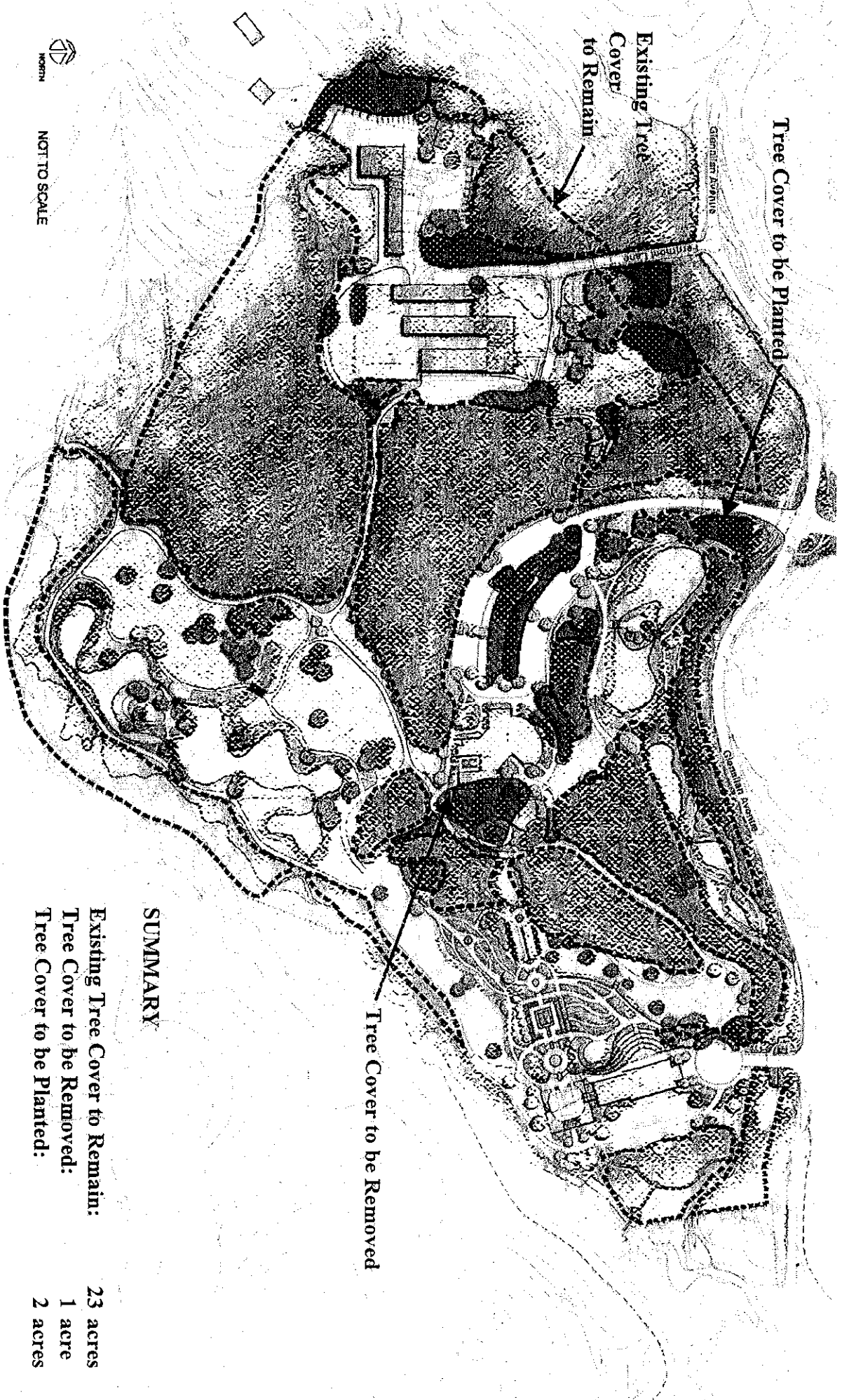
Strategy B: Provide reasonable accommodations throughout the garden.

Goal #3 Provide and maintain utilities that fully support the physical plant and programs.

Strategy A: Develop and implement an energy conservation program.

Strategy B: Complete irrigation facility plan.

Master Plan for Brookside Gardens



SUMMARY

Existing Tree Cover to Remain:	23 acres
Tree Cover to be Removed:	1 acre
Tree Cover to be Planted:	2 acres



In association with
Delon Hampton & Associates and

Tree Cover Diagram

Analysis of the 1/3:2/3 Development Policy for Wheaton Regional Park

By Park Planning and Resource Analysis Unit, Countywide Planning Division,
Department of Park and Planning, Maryland National Capital Park and Planning
Commission, Montgomery County, Maryland.

Completed by Norma J. Kawecki, November 2001.

The Park Planning and Resource Analysis Unit of Countywide Planning Division has completed the analysis of Wheaton Regional Park regarding the 1/3: 2/3 (33.3%: 66.6%) development policy for regional parks. "The Policy for Parks" approved as a Commission resolution on 15 December 1968, (see page 24 PROS Plan, July 1988), requires that at least 2/3 of the total acreage of each regional park be maintained in "natural areas or conservation areas". The remaining 1/3 may be developed for recreational activities ("active - use"). These terms provide guidance and can be found in the glossary of the PROS Plan (July 1988) on page 131 and in regional park master plans. Our findings and methods are described below.

Findings:

Total Park acres:	*537.455 Ac.
Total Acres Undeveloped:	372.91 Ac.
Percent of park Undeveloped :	69%
Total acres available for active - use remaining:	*15 Ac.

* The existing road rights of way (R.O.W.) were not removed from the total park acres nor were they removed from any other calculations. The R.O.W. for Glenn Allen is 70 feet, Kemp Mill R.O.W. is 80' and Arcola R.O.W. is 80'. All other roads and driveways in the park are park roads and considered part of the developed (active - use) area.

Methods:

Base maps were compiled with digital data available in the Commission's GIS database. These included aerial photographs, topology, forest cover, existing development, roads, streams, wetlands, cultural, buildings, and natural features. Although this data is fairly true there are inherent inaccuracies in any mapped information, which at best represents one person's interpretation of a "slice in time". Therefore, thorough field investigations were done by staff and measurements were taken in random locations using a wheel and tape measure to verify trail and road widths, mower width, etc. in active - use areas. GPS (Global Positioning System) was used to digitize the major trails. Those trails not "GPSed" were sketched by hand. No formal surveys were done with transits or other survey tools. Accuracy of data is assumed to be approximately (+/-) 20'.

Trail widths used were taken from those used in the Black Hill Regional Park Master Plan, the most recent Regional Park Master Plan completed. If the actual width in the field was wider than the standards it was noted and will be taken up in the future with the park management. Only designated trails and service roads were calculated. People's

choice trails were not counted and were also identified as management issues. The gravel trail in the northwest corner of the park was considered a special case since it was not listed as a trail type in other park plans. The width was measured in at least 4 places using a wheel and was determined to be 11 feet wide. Length measured from the mapped trails was multiplied by the width to return a total acres figure. The widths for trails used were as follows.

Hiking only and nature trails	5 feet wide
Hard surface trails	20 feet
Multiple or joint use natural surface trails :	6-8 feet wide

Other features were verified and the base map was adjusted as necessary.

Definitions from the PROS Plan (July 1988).

Natural Areas (NA) - the sum total of acres of land not developed for public use, and encompassing those natural resources being preserved to maintain a diversity of native natural communities as a legacy for future generations. Within these communities, natural processes and desirable ecological changes should be allowed to take place. Management activities should be limited to those necessary to mitigate the influence of humans and species that are both non-native and undesirable (e.g., gypsy moth).

Conservation Areas (CA) - the sum total of acres of land not developed for public use, and encompassing those natural resources being managed to maintain select, viable, native populations of plant and /or animal species. These areas include the following managed habitats: ponds, deep marshes, shallow marshes, scrub swamp, forested swamp, meadow, old field, coniferous forest, mixed forest, and deciduous forest.

Active Use Areas (AUA) - the sum total of acres of land developed for public use. These areas include managed trails, roads, nature centers, buildings, picnic areas, campgrounds, golf courses, ball fields, tennis courts, children's play areas, agricultural fields, horticultural gardens, lawns, parking lots, storm water management facilities, boat docks, etc.

Brookside Garden's relationship to the 1/3:2/3 ratio.

Brookside Gardens is its own entity. It has its own master plan, budget, and CIP account. An NRI/FSD was submitted and approved for the Gardens in preparation for the Master Plan implementation. However it is part of the Regional Park and thus must be included in the equation for the development calculations. The above calculation have taken into account the acres within Brookside Gardens as delineated in the NRI/FSD submitted.