Guide and Toolkit for New and Emerging Public Gardens

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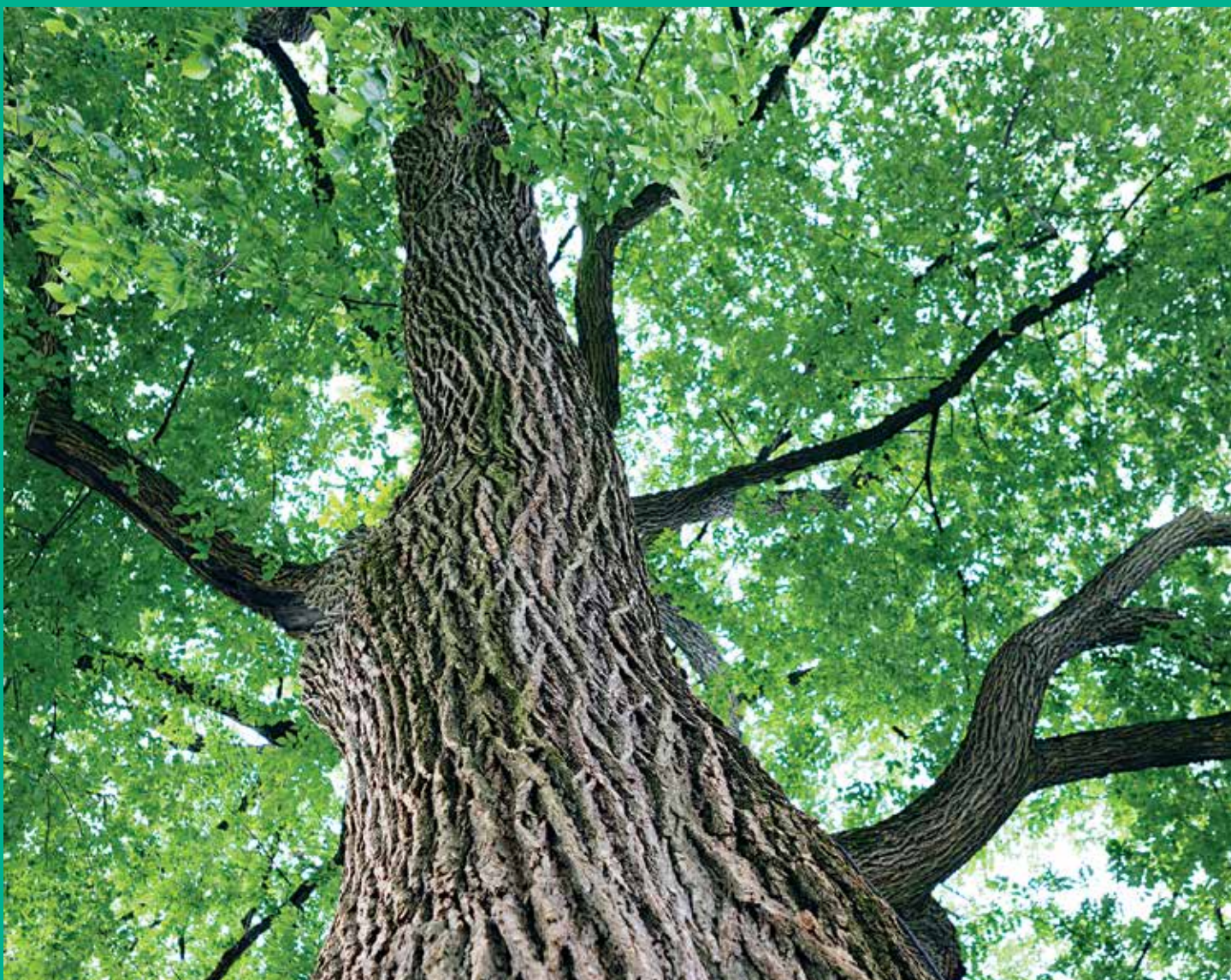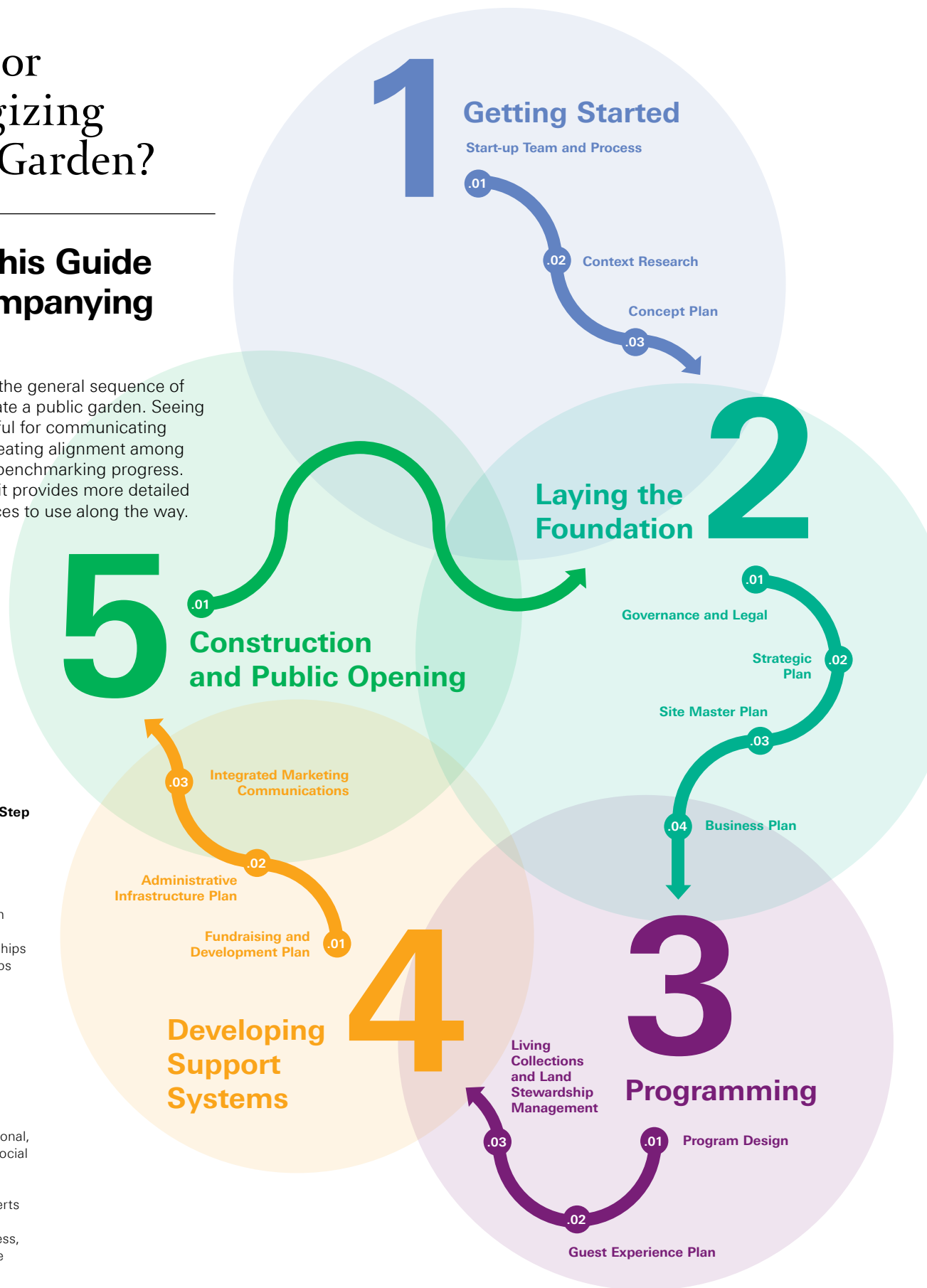
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Starting or Re-Energizing a Public Garden?

Refer to This Guide and Accompanying Toolkit

This roadmap charts the general sequence of steps required to create a public garden. Seeing the big picture is useful for communicating with stakeholders, creating alignment among team members, and benchmarking progress. The companion toolkit provides more detailed guidance and resources to use along the way.

Considerations at Every Step

1. Focus on Mission, Vision, and Values

2. Outreach, Listen, and Share Information

3. Form Strong Partnerships and Build Relationships

4. Uphold the Highest Ethical Standards

5. Prioritize Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion

6. Develop Leadership

7. Emphasize Organizational, Environmental, and Social Sustainability

8. Consult with the Experts

9. Document your Process, Measure and Evaluate your Progress

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Intro.01

Project Background

Creating a new public garden is a noble effort, and one that could make a dramatic and lasting impact on a community. This project was created in support of those who strive to make such a difference in their own communities.

This toolkit and its accompanying visual guide ("Starting or Re-Energizing a Public Garden?") provide an overview of the process of creating a public garden. The toolkit includes narrative summaries of each component in the process, along with useful tips and definitions. Supplementary resources offer tactical direction, provide sample documentation, and include many useful reference materials.

There is no single approach to starting a public garden. It is an iterative and evolving process—some steps may occur simultaneously, while others may take time. Certain gardens may consider additional components based on individual circumstances. Thus, this toolkit is not prescriptive; rather, it is inclusive of the major steps involved in most scenarios. So we invite you to get creative and blaze your own trail!

The creation of this resource is the culmination of a yearlong project by the 2017–18 inaugural cohort of the Longwood Gardens Fellows Program. During the 2017 American Public Gardens Association (hereinafter "the Association") Annual Conference in Hamilton, Ontario, Canada, the Fellows solicited ideas addressing major leadership issues in public horticulture. It soon became clear that a project supporting new and emerging public gardens would be welcome and beneficial.

In consultation with the Association, the Fellows determined that a toolkit and visual guide would have broad impact on a growing segment of the public garden constituency—new gardens at various stages of early development.

The Fellows spoke with more than 25 leaders in public horticulture: some just beginning the process of creating a public garden; others who consider their gardens young and emerging even after several years of development; and those who are longtime experts in the field. Next they drafted an outline of the start-up process, solicited feedback, and refined the outline to reflect the broad components common to most situations.

This toolkit and the accompanying visual guide were gifted to the American Public Gardens Association by the Longwood Fellows in 2018, to be included as part of the Sustainability Index and Resource Library on the Association's website. Content is searchable there using the keyword "New Gardens." A PDF version of the entire project is also available on the Longwood Gardens Fellows Program webpage.

The following sources were helpful in compiling this toolkit:

» American Public Gardens Association

» Botanic Gardens Conservation International

» BoardSource

» Standards for Excellence Institute

» Blue Avocado

» The Bridgespan Group

» CompassPoint

» Rakow, Donald. Public Garden Management. Hoboken, NJ: Wiley, 2011.

Longwood Gardens
Fellows Program

LONGWOOD GARDENS

Intro.02

A Case for Public Gardens

Public gardens are invaluable assets to the communities they serve. Gardens, parks, and other public green spaces have always been places of respite and solitude; places where people reconnect with beauty and experience nature; places of education and discovery.

Our world is full of extraordinary gardens that provide immeasurable benefits. Whether they are small gardens that offer access to green space in underserved communities, world-renowned repositories for botanical diversity, or outstanding examples of horticultural design, public gardens are a resource worthy of our support.

We live in an era of increasing interest in the development of public gardens. The American Public Gardens Association is working to provide resources to help public gardens grow. The Garden Conservancy is helping to save great gardens for the benefit of the public. Botanic Gardens Conservation International, the world's largest plant conservation organization, is an advocate for the global network of botanic gardens. The public, too, has shown great interest in the advancement of parks and gardens. In many cases attendance is rising, memberships are increasing, and the educational offerings of public gardens are in strong demand.

As technology and other external forces influence how our audiences spend their time and money, gardens have an opportunity to adapt and advance their missions to meet changing needs and desires. Gardens are anything but a relic—our industry is thriving, and we have the chance to meet the challenges of our time with innovation, relevance, and excitement. Gardens are leaders in environmental education, ecological awareness, horticultural technique, and design. But even as they strive to serve an ever-increasing diversity of audiences and communities, gardens will remain cherished spaces of respite and beauty.

Gardens are wonderfully diverse. While larger gardens may employ career horticulturists, some small gardens are staffed entirely by dedicated volunteers. Many gardens have formal education programs, while others simply offer the experience of being outdoors. Some gardens conduct innovative scientific research and work around the globe to preserve and protect plant diversity. Others tell the stories of their own local histories and preserve the legacy of their founders. Some gardens grow in response to the needs of their communities, while others lend their communities a sense of their own special character. Most public gardens operate as private nonprofits or public-private partnerships, though governance models vary. Some are highly sophisticated organizations, while others are at much earlier phases of their evolution.

Each garden serves great purpose—to individuals, to communities, to the local and regional environment, to collective human knowledge, and to global ecology. Each garden's reason for being is a story that develops as the garden takes shape, and each story—with its challenges and benefits—deserves to be shared.

Intro.03

Considerations at Every Step

More than 25 garden experts identified the following important themes and the need to incorporate them into the planning and creation of public gardens, right from the start and at every step along the way.

1. **Focus on Mission, Vision and Values:** Make decisions that advance the mission of the garden and move the garden toward the fulfilment of the vision. Clearly articulate the organizational values and ensure that all activities of the garden reflect those values.

2. **Outreach, Listen and Share Information:** Open and proactive communication, transparency and a willingness to learn from others is an essential component to building a garden that is relevant to stakeholders. Open dialogue will help to build trust and obtain buy-in from crucial partners.

3. **Form Strong Partnerships and Build Relationships:** Identifying partnerships with community organizations, industry representatives, individuals, other nonprofits, neighbors and other potential partners goes a long way toward creating bonds that will enrich the experience and produce a garden with relevance to stakeholders. Partnerships may lead to funding, programmatic and strategic opportunities. Find your champions and develop your relationships with them.

4. **Uphold the Highest Ethical Standards:** It goes without saying that organizations have an obligation to uphold high ethical standards. Documentation of ethical standards may be contained in a formal code of ethics, or interspersed into other documentation including collections policies, board policies, and employee manuals. No matter how a garden chooses to address ethics, it is important to ensure that the standards are known by everyone involved, discussed routinely and upheld in all aspects of operations.

5. **Prioritize Diversity, Equity and Inclusion:** Diversity across all levels of your emerging organization is desirable, from the board and volunteers to staff, advisors and guests. Diverse perspectives yield better ideas and more creativity. Make it a priority to ensure that people from all backgrounds have equal opportunity to participate in the process.

6. **Develop Leadership:** Making directed efforts at growing talent within your organization is an important component to ensuring that the organization can thrive beyond its early years. Beginning to develop board leadership and developing staff and volunteer leaders is necessary for long-term sustainability.

7. **Emphasize Organizational, Environmental and Social Sustainability:** Financial practices, leadership development, environmental consciousness and a knowledge about the social dynamics of your stakeholders are all essential to ensuring the long-term viability of your garden. Think about the future today, and chart a path to get there on strong footing.

8. **Consult with the Experts:** People are one of the greatest resources in the public horticulture world. Get to know garden leaders, seek input, ask for advice and build your local and global networks. One of the best ways to learn about how to manage a garden is to learn from the people who do it every day. Look for guidance from other cultural institutions, universities, research organizations, private sector leaders, government officials and professional associations.

9. **Document your Process, Measure and Evaluate your Progress:** Document everything and put in place procedures for recording the process of starting your garden. This will allow you to maintain a focus on the key ideas. Processes for measuring and evaluating progress will build in accountability and will allow you to celebrate accomplishments and achievements.

Start-up Team and Process

Gathering a strong start-up team is the first step on the journey toward creating a public garden. This team drives and coordinates the early phases of the start-up process, including conducting context research and creating consensus around an initial vision for what the garden will one day become (Sections 1.02 and 1.03).

The team handles communications and outreach, develops stakeholder relationships, manages finances and other resources, and coordinates volunteers until formal governance and staff are in place. The start-up team must raise funds to support the planning process, while laying the groundwork for later fundraising for capital campaigns and operations.

The team should consist of early advocates and champions—people with diverse backgrounds and skill sets who are passionate about the idea, and who are willing to invest their time and expertise to transform the dream into reality. The start-up team requires both a broad collective background and the ability to achieve consensus in order to move the process forward: to raise money, acquire land, navigate bureaucracies, and negotiate relationships in the community. Individuals on this team should contribute a valuable perspective, and must commit to full participation in this crucial early development phase.

The start-up team may be an independent entity, or it may be a component or a partner of an existing organization. This team may or may not evolve into a governing body or a board of directors with fiduciary responsibility for the operations of the garden. At this phase, the team exists to drive the visioning process, make expert early decisions, and move the process forward.

From the outset, the team must establish an operational process, determining how it will make decisions and manage communications. All members should become familiar with the entire start-up process (see Garden Guide diagram) to understand the significance and general order of the major steps involved, as well as the interconnections between them. The team should set goals and milestones for the planning process, establishing a timeline and meeting schedule to move the process along.

The start-up team must set a budget for the planning process that is tied to specific objectives. For example, they may want to hire consultants to assist with feasibility studies; strategic, master, and business planning; legal advice; or other processes. The team should research the costs associated with those services and set a reasonable budget that they can adjust along the way. They are also responsible for funding the planning budget. They may seek planning grants or other sources of funding; they should establish protocols for soliciting donations and recording contributions and expenditures; they may need to set up a fiscal sponsorship agreement so they can accept charitable donations. Resourcefulness is key. The team should consider the role of volunteers and in-kind contributions, and determine how to best manage those resources.

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TIPS

Creating a Start-up Team

» Other possible names for "start-up team" might include steering committee, advisory group, core team, founding team, or planning team.

» Start small (3–7 people) and consider adding people as planning progresses.

» Seek allies with strengths other than your own—a diversity of perspective, knowledge, backgrounds, skills, and networks; people who will roll up their sleeves and work well together in a team; people who are passionate about the concept; people with project management skills.

» Consider including key supporters with a substantial stake in the project, such as a major benefactor or partner (e.g., the donor of a private estate, to be transformed into a public garden); or people connected to critical players (e.g., those with ties to local government when public land is involved).

Early Start-up Financial Management

» For organizations that are unincorporated and/or without tax-exempt status, getting a fiscal sponsor is helpful. The sponsor can legally accept charitable donations, assist with financial management, and provide guidance and support to a young organization. Fiscal sponsor agreements should be time bound, with clear definition of roles, and an appropriate amount charged for services. Get the agreement in writing. Legal review is advisable for all contracts and written agreements.

» For start-ups that will be managing resources, with or without a fiscal sponsor, set up appropriate financial policies and practices as soon as possible. Who will approve expenditures? What checks and balances will be put in place?

» Clarify and honor donor intent for funds received for start-up.

Early Start-up Communications

» Educating and building awareness, gathering ideas and feedback, building relationships with stakeholders and potential partners, and garnering help and support are the primary goals of early start-up communications.

» Based on the conceptual planning process (Section 1.03), the start-up team should agree upon a provisional name for the garden. Test it out among key stakeholders and continue to collect feedback as planning progresses. Refine it as needed until the point of incorporation.

» Determine brand components and key themes derived from conceptual planning that should be conveyed in start-up communications and early fundraising.

» Establish a common set of talking points about the proposed garden and planning process. Make sure these are consistently used by the start-up team and other advocates. Update the talking points frequently.

» Establish general communications to broad audiences, which might include a simple webpage. Set up press relations and other communication strategies for the duration of the start-up period.

» Identify tailored strategies and vehicles of communication for major stakeholders. Consider, for example, putting up a sign at the entrance, even before the garden is open, to create anticipation.

» Assign responsibilities and begin implementing tasks; evaluate results as you go; make improvements.

Early Start-up Fundraising

» Set clear fundraising targets to support the planning process, create a timeline, assign responsibilities.

» Contact key institutions, such as the local or regional community foundation, cultural alliances, or relevant professional associations, for ideas, assistance, and contacts for early start-up fundraising.

» Identify and reach out to individuals, corporate interests, and other entities for donations and other contributions to help fund the planning process.

» Seek planning grants from government, foundations, and others.

» Establish diligent practices and documentation for handling any donations that are intended for a specific use (restricted funds). This will later become an important component of financial policies.

» Begin to cultivate potential donors for the long term, and for larger contributions (for capital campaigns, endowments, and operations). Relationship building is important, and should occur well before making a big ask at some point down the road.

» Begin tracking donors and potential donors; express your gratitude. Sometimes a handwritten note is sufficient.

» Revise and improve these plans and their implementation as you go.

Other Tips

» Establish thoughtful volunteer management practices from the start. Most, if not all, persons involved in the early start-up will be volunteers. Clarify duties and expectations, ideally in writing. Recognize and express gratitude for their time. Set the tone and culture for an organization that values volunteers and manages them well from the beginning.

» Document the entire process from the outset, including meeting minutes, notes from important conversations, all transactions, agreements, data and information collected, financials, etc.

» Reach out for help and ideas; our industry is one that cares and shares.

DEFINITIONS

Fiscal Sponsor:
Fiscal sponsorship generally entails a nonprofit organization agreeing to provide administrative services and oversight to, and assume some or all of the legal and financial responsibility for, the activities of groups or individuals engaged in work that relates to the fiscal sponsor's mission.

—National Network of Fiscal Sponsors

EXAMPLES

McIntire Botanical Garden
"From my experience at the early stages of planning, I recommend reaching out to other garden leaders in your community and executive directors of botanical gardens you admire. Begin to develop relationships to help you down the road as you encounter challenges or a block in your process – remembering that somebody else has already been through it and they will always want to help and offer suggestions how to move forward. There is a definite bond that occurs during this process."

—Helen Flamini, Founder

"Our start-up team was selected for the passion they had for the project and the diversity of skills they would bring. They included a retired attorney; a civil engineer and business leader in the community; a Certified Public Accountant with connections to the local university; and a master gardener who was a former editor and journalist for two news organizations. Their combined expertise proved to be invaluable as the team worked through several iterations of strategic and business planning. This team became the McIntire Botanical Garden Founding Board of Directors."

—Helen Flamini, Founder

Freshkills Park Alliance
"For public projects, you need to identify and recruit your champions inside and outside of government. The nature of publicly funded projects is that change in priorities is inevitable with different administrations. Your champions are your buffers and advocates. Begin developing these relationships early!"

—Eloise Hirsh, Park Administrator and Executive Director

Anonymous
"A very generous bequest was made at the early founding stages of our public garden. Unfortunately, the purpose of the donation appeared quite broad in the written documentation. Later on, misinterpretation and misunderstanding between and among family members and garden staff led to confusion about what was meant, and how the resources should be used. Although we were able to work it out, with hindsight, I wished we had better practices and policies in place when receiving this gift."

—Anonymous garden leader

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Context Research

The purpose of context research is to gather and analyze a wide range of relevant information and to identify potential stakeholders. It allows the team to envision how the garden will fit into the local, regional, and national landscape of cultural and environmental institutions, and thus helps to determine the identity of the new garden and its relationship with the local community.

Regardless of the evolutionary stage of the garden concept, context research provides the team with a broad understanding of the cultural, economic, social, and ecological environment in which the new garden will exist.

The start-up team should study model gardens and other cultural institutions worldwide whose work they admire or wish to emulate. Existing organizations can provide practical information about governance and business models, programmatic strategies, design and operational structures. The team should also analyze local and regional institutions—the work that they do and the audiences they serve—with a sharp focus on parks, gardens, and related cultural organizations. This information will help the team to develop a concept for the new garden that fits well into the existing regional landscape, to identify opportunities for collaboration with related organizations, and to avoid competition or redundancy.

Another task during this phase is to extensively research the political, social, economic, historical, and ecological forces affecting the region. The purpose is to investigate important local trends that will inform future planning. Think broadly about what types of information may be relevant as the team moves forward (see table below).

The team should turn to local government and universities to investigate existing plans and proposals for community development. Many communities have specific development strategies, including support for the role of cultural institutions. Environmental protection or ecological restoration programs may also be relevant to the new garden.

One-on-one meetings with local community, business, government, and education leaders provide valuable input to the start-up process. Public meetings that create dialogue with stakeholders, such as neighbors and local community associations, are critical for learning what people value and what causes concern. The start-up team should work to create an atmosphere of trust and collaboration.

Finally, the context research phase is a good time to begin building a network within the public garden community. Opportunities include membership in the American Public Gardens Association and other local, regional, and national organizations; attending conferences and symposia; plugging into the supportive environment in this industry; and reaching out to leaders of public gardens in the region.

Considerations at Every Step

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The following table lists several suggestions for the categories of information that will be useful to the start-up team as they begin to enter the initial visioning stage of the process. This is not a complete list:

Historical	Economic	Socio-Cultural	Ecological
Indigenous heritage Land use patterns Demographic trends Settlement patterns Immigration history Notable residents	Major and minor industries Household income Educational levels Educational institutions Unemployment and under-employment rates	Demographic trends Census data Predominant cultural and religious groups Immigration patterns Cultural organizations Political environment	Geologic history Soil type Predominant vegetation Environmental trends Existing gardens and parks Environmental threats

TIPS

» Consider both primary and secondary data sources. Primary sources may include surveys, polls, town hall meetings, or individual/group interviews with community members. Secondary data could include previously gathered demographics or statistics, as well as summaries of prior workshops, meetings, or interviews.

» Beyond US Census and public use microdata, other community organizations may collect demographic data in your region on specific populations, such as local health departments or organizations working with government grants to provide services (see resources).

» Brainstorm all potential stakeholder groups, including (but not limited to): neighbors and community leaders, the philanthropic community, government leaders, foundations and corporations, professional associations and societies, and other partners. Begin introductions and one-on-one conversations.

» Perform a gap analysis to determine the number and scope of garden and cultural activities in the region: what exists and what is marketed for, versus what is lacking and what the market demands.

» Consider conducting various analyses to discover the competitive environment and its capacity. Examples include Five Forces, Competitor, and Competitive Life Cycle Analyses (see resources).

DEFINITIONS

Gap Analysis:
The evaluation of the difference between a desired outcome and an actual outcome.

Stakeholder:
A person, group, or individual that has a direct or indirect stake in an organization because it can affect or be affected by the organization's actions, objectives, and policies.

—Rakow, 2011

RESOURCES

Demographic Information

"Knowledge Base: Demographic Information." GrantSpace, www.grantspace.org/tools/knowledge-base/funding-research/statistics/demographic-information Accessed 02 March 2018.

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Other Resources

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1.03

Concept Plan

The purpose of the Concept Plan is to conceive a common vision for the garden and to share and test the concept with stakeholders. The outcome of this process is to frame a preliminary vision, mission, and values statement, and to generate ideas for existing or potential site options, possible governance models, and the potential business model for the new garden.

A concept paper will summarize these components and align the start-up team around a singular idea of the garden they seek to create. It is important to note, however, that the ideas presented in the concept paper are precursors to what the organization will adopt when it has a formal governance structure. The mission, vision, and values may change when the team undergoes the strategic planning process (Section 2.02).

The start-up team should first review available context research (Section 1.02) and then brainstorm ideas for the new garden. Listening to and documenting the opinions of each team member will help clarify why each person wants to be involved and why they value the garden concept. Visioning is an opportunity for "blue sky thinking" or "design thinking."

The start-up team may ask questions related to "Why?" and "Who?" and "What?" to solicit big, bold ideas:

» Why is the garden worth creating? What will the garden's legacy be?

» Whom might the garden serve?

» Who are potential partners?

» Who will feel "ownership" for the garden?

» What impact will the garden have on individuals, the community, the field of public horticulture, and the environment?

» What will make this garden stand out from other environmental and cultural institutions locally, regionally, and nationally?

Once the team agrees on what impact the garden should have, it is easier to create a shared vision for garden design and development. This next level of brainstorming consolidates ideas for the garden concept in terms of garden type, scope, site options, guest experience, programs, and plant collections.

From brainstorming comes consensus building, and the drafting of vision and mission statements. A good vision statement summarizes the desired lasting impact of the garden and how the world will be different because of it. A good mission statement explains how the vision will be fulfilled and helps to guide future strategic decisions. Vision and mission statements should broadly and concisely express the reason for the garden's existence in terms that will inspire and motivate stakeholders. A values statement, or set of values, articulates the core beliefs of the team, guides how the team operates, and provides solid ground for the garden's relationship with the community and other stakeholders.

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During this phase, the team also envisions how the organization will function. They should research potential governance models (Section 2.01), such as nonprofit, partnership, or subsidiary, among others; and brainstorm ideas for a business model (Section 2.04)—how the garden will sustain itself financially in the long term. The team should consider revenue generating strategies, potential staffing models, and strategic alliances that will strengthen the organization's financial stability. The start-up team should work toward consensus on key issues impacting business decisions.

A concept paper consolidates, in writing, the ideas resulting from the visioning process, and forms the basis for talking points and communications with stakeholders. As the planning process proceeds, the start-up team should agree upon any updates or changes to the concept. The goal is to align the team so that, with thorough planning, the common vision becomes a reality. The more complete the early planning is, the more successful the team will be as they move toward implementing the vision.

TIPS

»   Scheduling a retreat for the start-up team may be a great way to set the stage for the kind of brainstorming and group cohesion necessary to form initial vision, mission, and values statements, and other components of the concept paper. Consider inspirational settings that can open people's minds to a host of possibilities. Engage a nonpartial, skilled facilitator to lead the process.

»   Consider using consensus-building processes (see Definitions) to arrive at the vision, mission, values, and other key points for the concept paper, rather than voting. This creates greater buy-in from team members from the beginning.

»   **Sample table of contents for the concept paper:**

1.   Proposed garden name

2.   Background, introduction to key players and start-up team, overview of planning process

3.   Draft of mission, vision, values statements, and desired impact

4.   Articulation of the "Who?" of the garden and any proposed partnerships

5.   Possible location, site options

6.   Major features, components, proposed programming, collections, and initiatives

7.   Proposed governance model

8.   Proposed business model

DEFINITIONS

Blue Sky Thinking:
A particular style of brainstorming that unleashes creativity and exploration …
creative ideas that are not limited by current thinking or beliefs.

—Worldwide Teams Consulting

Business Model:
A brief summary that spells out the organization's economic drivers.

—Blue Avocado

Consensus Decision Making:
A creative and dynamic way of reaching agreement between all members of a group. Instead of simply voting for an item and having the majority of the group getting their way, a group using consensus is committed to finding solutions that everyone actively supports, or at least can live with. This ensures that all opinions, ideas, and concerns are taken into account. Through listening closely to each other, the group aims to come up with proposals that work for everyone.

—Seeds for Change

Design Thinking:
Refers to a distinctive process of developing innovative solutions that is rooted in principles of physical, spatial, graphic, and user-interface design.

—The Bridgespan Group

Governance:
The processes, structures and organizational traditions that determine how power is exercised, how stakeholders have their say, how decisions are taken and how decision-makers are held to account.

—AIDS Committee of Ottawa

EXAMPLES

Lewis Ginter Botanical Garden
Articulated values, if they are truly followed by your team, will define how you operate just as much as your mission and vision. They set a framework of expectations for each team member and can raise strong ethical standards to adhere to, enabling the group to excel, develop strong relationships within the community, build credibility, and inspire support.

"Establishing a clear set of values, obtaining buy-in for those values, and ensuring they are adhered to in all that you do, is the most important thing that you can do from the outset of starting a public garden."

—Shane Tippett, Executive Director

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Governance and Legal

Determining an appropriate governance model and addressing associated legal requirements is a major step toward starting a new garden. Governance structures influence all aspects of operations—from decision-making processes to ethical obligations, reporting requirements, fundraising potential, tax liabilities, and regulations regarding advocacy. Therefore, it is critical that the start-up team thoroughly researches governance options. The decisions they make now will impact the future of the organization.

The start-up team must engage with stakeholders, key partners, and legal counsel to choose a governance model that is most beneficial and relevant to their needs. Several options are listed in the table below, along with the applicable U.S. Internal Revenue Service codes. International gardens should research the laws and regulations applicable to their countries.

Some governance models require a governing board with fiduciary responsibility over the operations of the garden. The governing board does not necessarily comprise the same people as those on the start-up team, since the board may require different skills or experience than were needed during the early start-up process. Rather, this is an opportunity for start-up team members to reevaluate their continued commitment to the project and their ability to meaningfully contribute as the process moves forward. The start-up team should research and fully understand the responsibilities of board service before recruiting board members.

A governing board may not be required in cases where the garden is a component of another organization, like a parent agency, government agency, or university. In those cases, an advisory board should be formed. The process for recruiting advisory board members is similar to that for a governing board, with the exception that advisory boards do not have a legal fiduciary responsibility for the organization.

At this point, the newly convened board replaces the start-up team, and is responsible for major decisions moving forward. If members of the board are different from those of the start-up team, they may choose to engage and consult with previous team members in order to harness their passion, energy and support.

A governing board's responsibilities include officially adopting the organization's mission, vision, and values drafted in the concept planning stage (Section 1.03). If a new, independent organization is being created, the board is responsible for filing all required documentation with national, state, and local authorities to incorporate the organization as a legal entity. They must also draft and approve bylaws and other core legal documents; investigate the legal implications of their incorporation regarding taxes, laws, and regulations at the national, state, and local levels; and research and obtain appropriate insurance policies. Legal counsel is recommended at this stage, and the garden leadership should maintain access to legal services as needed throughout

Considerations at Every Step

1. Focus on Mission, Vision, and Values

2. Outreach, Listen, and Share Information

3. Form Strong Partnerships and Build Relationships

4. Uphold the Highest Ethical Standards

5. Prioritize Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion

6. Develop Leadership

7. Emphasize Organizational, Environmental, and Social Sustainability

8. Consult with the Experts

9. Document your Process, Measure and Evaluate your Progress

the remainder of the planning and implementation process.

Both governing and advisory boards should put a substantial amount of work into establishing effective board policies and practices. It is critical to explicitly define roles and responsibilities of the board and its individual officers and members, develop meeting schedules, and maintain diligent documentation.

The following table lists the common governance models for public gardens and parks, their respective US tax codes, and examples.

Governance Model	US Tax Code Identifier, as applicable	Public gardens or other examples of organizations structured this way
Independent nonprofit, charitable, educational, or scientific organization	501(c)3	Chicago Botanical Garden Delaware Botanic Garden Bloedel Reserve
Independent nonprofit such as a Friends organization or a Garden Conservancy, in partnership with government entity	501(c)3 + government entity partnership	Central Park Conservancy Riverside Park Conservancy Forest Park Conservancy
Independent charitable nonprofit entity in partnership with a private entity (for profit, nonprofit, a private trust or foundation, etc.)	501(c)3 + private entity partnership	Callaway Gardens Mt. Cuba Center Jardín Botánico de Vallarta
Department or division of a larger entity such as an educational institution, a large charitable nonprofit, a government entity	Not legally incorporated as separate entity, rather a sub-division of a larger organizaton	The Arboretum at Penn State University of Washington Botanic Gardens Stoneleigh (under Natural Lands) RHS Bridgewater (under Royal Horticultural Society)
An independent charitable nonprofit with an affiliated or partner advocacy and lobbying organization	501(c)3 + a social welfare 501(c)4 or political organization 527	Kent Environmental Council Planning and Conservation League of CA and the affiliated PCL Foundation Sierra Club and the Sierra Club Foundation

For-profit business corporation	Many forms exist	Butchart Gardens Villandry Château et Jardins
Less common but possible models: cemetery, religious institution, association, co-op, trust, foundation	Various tax codes	Mt. Auburn Cemetery (partners with 501(c)3 Friends of Mt. Auburn) Sissinghurst, Hidcote, Stowe (under the National Trust)

TIPS

» The main legal responsibilities of a nonprofit board are often summarized in the "three Ds":

1. Duty of care: Board members are expected to actively participate in organizational planning and decision-making and to make sound and informed judgments.

2. Duty of loyalty: When acting on behalf of the organization, board members must put the interests of the nonprofit before any personal or professional concerns and avoid potential conflicts of interest.

3. Duty of obedience: Board members must ensure that the organization complies with all applicable federal, state, and local laws and regulations, and that it remains committed to its established mission.

In addition to its legal responsibilities, the board acts in a fiduciary role by maintaining over-sight of the nonprofit's finances.

—Foundation Center

» Competent legal and financial advice is essential for all governing entities. This expertise can be obtained through members of the board or advisory council, or on retainer as a volunteer/ pro-bono or contracted service. Be sure to acquire Directors and Officers Liability Insurance.

» Typical committees of the board: executive committee, finance committee, development committee, human resources committee. Special committees might have responsibilities related to: strategic planning, site master planning, public relations, events, collections, education, or other needs.

» Most community and environmental organizations, including public gardens, do some amount of advocacy work—advocating for the issues that are relevant to their mission at the local, state, national, or even international level. Charitable nonprofit entities in the US (501(c)3s) may engage in advocacy activities and lobbying within the limits set by government regulations; 501(c)4 or 527 status may not be required. However, if substantial public policy work is expected, particularly lobbying and/or campaigning, consider creating an affiliated organization to do that work.

» Master inclusivity. "Always ask, who is missing at the table? Build trust and expand understanding by sharing stories, sharing a meal, sharing resources (opportunities, land, capital, time), promote youth leadership for immediate inclusion and for building for the future (succession planning), actively support one another with respect to the garden start-up, and in other aspects of people's work, affiliations and lives."

—Karen Washington, Board Member, NYBG

» Board/advisory member training is critical. There should be a clear understanding of roles and responsibilities, as well as recognition of the multiple roles that each board or advisory council member may play (governance, volunteer, donor). Compartmentalize roles as appropriate.

DEFINITIONS

Advocacy vs. Lobbying:
Advocacy is a broad term covering a range of activities that seek to bring about systemic social change including issue organizing and nonpartisan voter education and engagement. One form of advocacy is lobbying: attempts to influence specific legislation through direct or grassroots communications with legislators or their staff. Some forms and limited amounts of lobbying are allowable for public charities with 501(c)3 status.

—Independent Sector

Articles of Incorporation:
Nonprofit articles of incorporation is a legal document filed with the Secretary of State to create a nonprofit corporation. This process is called incorporating. In some states, the articles of incorporation are called a certificate of incorporation or a corporate charter.

—Harbor Compliance

Bylaws:
A set of rules "adopted by an organization chiefly for the government of its members and the regulation of its affairs" (https://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/bylaw). Defines roles and responsibilities of governing board, officers, members and staff. Describes financial provisions such as fiscal year, spending authority, reporting requirements, and budgeting process. Sets out conflict resolution procedures and process for dissolution.

—Merriam-Webster Dictionary

Directors and Officers Liability Insurance:
D&O insurance covers the organization and its directors, officers, and trustees against actual or alleged wrongful acts in three major areas:

1. Governance liability: claims resulting from general governance decisions;

2. Fiduciary liability: claims resulting from alleged fraud and improper financial oversight, including oversight of employee benefit plans (Employment Retirement Income Security Act [ERISA]) and use of grant funds and donor contributions;

3. Employment practices liability: claims resulting from employment-related activities.

—Nonprofit Quarterly

Diversity, Equity, Inclusion and Related Terms:

—American Public Gardens Association, Sustainability Index

EXAMPLES

Brooklyn Bridge Park Conservancy
Brooklyn Bridge Park is an 85-acre post-industrial waterfront site stretching 1.3 miles along Brooklyn's East River. Once a hub of transportation and commerce, the idea to transform it to a public park was conceived in 1984. After much community and public planning, ground was broken in 2008. The park currently receives millions of visitors annually and has provided programming to over 1.5 million since its inception.

The park is governed by the Brooklyn Bridge Park Corporation, responsible for construction and maintenance, with assistance from the Brooklyn Bridge Park Conservancy, who primarily provides public programming and fundraising services. The Corporation is a nonprofit component unit of the City of New York; its board is politically appointed and comprised of public officials, and its funds are provided by revenue-producing development. The Conservancy is a 501(c)3

nonprofit organization with a self-electing board and whose revenue relies heavily on philanthropic donations and memberships. The two organizations work on-site in the same building and heavily integrate their work and planning to ensure alignment.

"As a leader of any nonprofit organization, the management of relationships is a crucial component of the role. Alignment of staff, board of directors, and the philanthropic community is necessary in order to make forward steps along the pathway to the mission and goals established. In other words, it's about bringing disparate voices into harmony through productive working relationships. These [public-private] partnerships add a fourth dimension to this three-legged stool and a different level of complexity to your relationship management; now your major constituents must be aligned with a separate organization with different priorities. Leaders of these types of organizations must have enhanced relationship-building and communication skills."

—Nancy Webster, Executive Director

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2.02

Strategic Plan

Strategic planning is an important and exciting process for determining the function, direction, and optimal future of the new garden. During the conceptual planning phase (Section 1.03), the start-up team created alignment around a common idea for the garden. Strategic planning deepens that work, expands its scope and impact, broadens relationships with stakeholders, and creates goals and focused objectives to transform the vision into a reality.

A well-constructed strategic plan guides decision making while allowing for flexibility and innovation. For most organizations, a strategic plan covers a three- to five-year period.

Strategic planning is typically the responsibility of both the board and professional staff of an organization. They create the plan together, with the CEO driving the implementation of the plan and the board officially adopting and supporting it. If a new organization does not have paid staff, the responsibility falls to the board to create the plan and follow through with implementation. Often, a steering committee is created to assist with research, conduct outreach and interviews, analyze findings and prepare reports, and write a draft plan for presentation to the garden's governing authority for approval. Once adopted, the strategic plan is often made public and shared widely.

The first step in strategic planning is to ensure that everyone who will be participating in the planning process is aligned with the goals and purpose of creating the plan. Next, the team sets a budget and identifies a facilitator to assist with the planning process. Professional consultants can provide valuable insight and an unbiased perspective. If funds are limited, identify an internal facilitator who will be able to remain neutral. Determine a time frame for the planning process— in most cases, a thorough strategic plan will take 6-12 months to complete. There are multiple frameworks for strategic planning, many of which are provided in the Resources associated with this section. The team should research the various methodologies and choose one that resonates with the organizational leadership.

Regardless of the specific approach, the strategic planning process usually includes an assessment of the major external forces affecting the organization. This will likely build upon the information gathered during the context research phase (Section 1.02). Another assessment involves interviews with stakeholders and community members to investigate the existing or proposed garden concept and its potential for change, growth, and impact. Appreciative Inquiry is one possible methodology to use for listening to stakeholders. With this input, some variation of a SWOT analysis will be conducted, analyzing the organization's Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, and Threats.

Considerations at Every Step

1. Focus on Mission, Vision, and Values

2. Outreach, Listen, and Share Information

3. Form Strong Partnerships and Build Relationships

4. Uphold the Highest Ethical Standards

5. Prioritize Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion

6. Develop Leadership

7. Emphasize Organizational, Environmental, and Social Sustainability

8. Consult with the Experts

9. Document your Process, Measure and Evaluate your Progress

Based on this research and stakeholder outreach, the team then takes the following steps:

» Identifies key strategic issues and opportunities facing the organization;

» Reviews the organization's mission, vision, and values to determine if modifications are needed;

» Prioritizes key stakeholders, audiences, and people to be served;

» Documents strategic goals and measurable objectives or desired outcomes for the next three to five years.

After approval by the governing authority, the strategic goals and objectives must be fleshed out in annual operational plans (Section 3.01), which specifies the tasks that will contribute to the achievement of the goals, including deadlines and responsibility. The organization's business plan (Section 2.04) addresses the capacities and financial projections required to implement the strategic plan. The site master plan (Section 2.03) describes how the design and use of the site will lead to the fulfillment of strategic goals. All major strategic decisions should be considered in the context of the strategic plan. The staff and board should regularly review progress toward strategic goals during the three- to five-year implementation period. Ongoing environmental scanning and strategic analysis should be encouraged so that the strategic plan becomes a living document. This may lead to proposed changes to the plan that require review and board approval.

TIPS

» Note the importance of defining your desired impact (in the world, the community, the environment, and with respect to various constituencies and stakeholders); clear outcomes (goals and targets) that you're aiming for; the full range of strategies to get you there (objectives); and the key inputs required in order to be effective with those strategies.

» Don't be afraid to get creative, push the limits, think outside-the-box, consult with a futurist, or try design-thinking methodologies to achieve your vision and overcome potential obstacles—now is the time to get ideas on the table, prioritize them in context of mission/vision and in relation to other goals, and begin to determine feasibility.

» Clearly define impact/outcomes vs. outputs/indicators and how each can be measured. (See definitions)

» When setting a budget for the planning process, consider factors such as consultant involvement, time, complexity of analyses, and complexity of process.

» Examples of metrics for progress include employee self-assessments, social impact assessments, and clear quantitative comparisons such as number of members, visitors, donors, revenue, etc. It is important that CFO and administrative officers record data monthly.

» Don't let your plan sit on the shelf! Create sound bites and distribute widely. Post on the organization website, bulletin boards, and job descriptions. Invest time to create a shared understanding of the plan with major stakeholders by hosting town hall meetings, one-on-one meetings, focus groups, and workshops. Celebrate victories regularly.

DEFINITIONS

Strategic Planning:

» An important tool for determining which functions a cultural organization should focus on and how yours should do so.

—Lord and Markert, 2017

» The process by which public gardens develop the path to the future and align their desired vision and goals with appropriate resources, strategies, and actions.

—Rakow, 2011

» A synthesis of analyses into a set of future strategic actions for the organization.

—Harris and Lenox, 2013

Appreciative Inquiry (AI):
An energizing and inclusive design that fosters creativity through the art of positive inquiry. AI's invigorating process comes alive through conversation, shared values, and collective visioning.

—Center for Appreciative Inquiry

Design Thinking:
Design thinking refers to a distinctive process of developing innovative solutions that is rooted in principles of physical, spatial, graphic, and user-interface design.

—The Bridgespan Group

Outputs vs. Outcomes vs. Impact:

» **Outputs are those results which are achieved immediately after implementing an activity,** and can generally be easily counted, such as numbers of people participating, resources generated, etc.

» **Outcomes can be considered as midterm results.** They are not seen immediately after the end of the project activity. But after some time, when we see some change at the ground level because of the project activity, then it can be termed as an outcome. It could be a changed behavior, an increase in knowledge, or an improved condition.

» **Impact is usually a long-term and lasting result,** at the community level, and it may not be achievable even during the life cycle of a project, such as the end of a longstanding problem.

—Funds for NGOs

EXAMPLES

The Bloedel Reserve
The Bloedel Reserve, located on Bainbridge Island, Washington, is one of the Pacific Northwest's botanical, cultural, and environmental treasures. The Reserve opened to the public in 1988 with a reservation only, restricted admissions policy, which allowed for a high quality guest experience. After recognizing the original operating model threatened its viability, the Reserve has endeavored in several ways to reach long-term sustainability: they actively welcomed the public, expanded their board of trustees, secured 501(c)(3) status as a public charity, hired a new executive director and development team, and increased community access through programs, an enhanced entry experience, and expanded open hours.

Following the elimination of the reservation system in 2010, the Reserve embarked on its first strategic planning process, led by board chair Paul Kundtz and Executive Director Ed Moydell. As identified in the Strategic Plan, the Reserve subsequently undertook a number of studies to thoughtfully plan its future, such as the Master Plan, Heritage Landscape Report, a marketing / branding study, and Capital Campaign Study. Following these reports, the organization experienced record annual attendance and significant increases in membership and fundraising revenue.

Beyond the preliminary reports, the Reserve actively sought constituent participation in the form of online surveys that generated more than 500 responses from trustees, staff, volunteers, and

members. In addition, the Reserve conducted extensive research on the purpose and philosophy of its founder, Prentice Bloedel, including a significant oral history project.

Using all of these studies as a basis, the Trustees adopted a new three-year Strategic Plan in 2017. During an all-day retreat, board members identified key opportunities and challenges facing the Reserve. From these, they articulated six strategic objectives, as well as tasks that supported their achievement. The major strategic objectives were:

1. Engage the community to visit, participate in, and support the Bloedel Reserve.

2. Achieve enduring financial sustainability.

3. Complete the initial phase of the campaign to fund capital projects, endowment, and annual mission delivery.

4. Sustain and advance Bloedel Reserve as a unique, exemplary public garden where people connect with nature.

5. Provide an excellent guest experience based on an overarching guest experience plan.

6. Ensure Bloedel is managed and cared for by a strong, capable staff driven by a healthy and productive culture.

RESOURCES

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Site Master Plan

Creating a site master plan is a visionary process that results in a high-level concept for the physical design of the new garden. It requires input from stakeholders, support of staff and experts, and ultimately, approval by the garden's governing authority.

The master plan informs the way that staff and visitors will use the site. It specifies locations of existing and future infrastructure, gardens, and natural areas. The master plan aligns with the goals articulated in the garden's strategic plan, ensuring that site development will achieve the strategic vision for the garden (Section 2.02).

Master planning occurs after a site for the new garden has been identified and acquired. If the organization does not yet have access to land, the team has the opportunity to brainstorm the ideal site based on their vision and concept for the garden, and then identify potential sites that meet their needs. Important considerations when acquiring land include existing infrastructure, environmental features and existing plant material, proximity and accessibility to population centers, and the garden's ability to finance the acquisition. See this section's list of resources for more information about land acquisition.

To produce the plan, most gardens require the services of a landscape architecture or master planning firm. This can be a major expense, depending on the plan's level of detail and complexity. The board and staff should set a budget for the process and clearly understand the deliverables that they need and expect. The most successful master plans are a collaborative effort—the garden team shares their goals and objectives for the site, and the firm uses its expertise and resources to identify opportunities and challenges that may not be apparent to the garden team.

The process typically begins with a series of site visits. The firm conducts a site analysis to understand the lay of the land, which informs the development strategy. Additional analyses may include hydrologic tests, soil and geologic profiling, archaeological analyses, viewshed analyses, environmental impact assessments, and traffic pattern analyses, among others. Thus the firm develops a sense of how the proposed garden will fit into the site and its surroundings. They work with the garden team and seek input from stakeholders to brainstorm a vision for how the site will be used when it transforms into a garden.

The final deliverable is usually an ambitious visual rendering of what the site could look like in the future, which can be shared with stakeholders and supporters. It may also include narrative explanations and alternative concepts. Not everything must be built at once; developing a phasing strategy that prioritizes the most important needs is helpful. The implications for budgeting and other organizational capacity requirements are captured in the business plan (Section 2.04).

TIPS

» Be as inclusive as possible in your master planning process to achieve alignment and support among your various stakeholders.

» Several gardens interviewed for this guide noted that they embarked on master site planning prior to strategic planning. Each felt that it would have been better to have a strategic plan

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first. Garden design should be results-oriented, not only site-responsive. Clearly defining the results that you want the garden to achieve—through strategic planning—is a fundamental starting place (Section 2.02).

» Be careful that phasing growth over time does not result in a lack of consistency between earlier and later phases, resulting in garden areas that feel disconnected from one other. Create a clear long-term vision for the entirety of the garden, and seek agreement on major design principles to be adhered to when later phases enter into detailed planning and design.

» Identify special areas (those that hold particular value to stakeholders), areas that need improvement, and strengths and weaknesses of the garden site. Utilize this information carefully as you enter the design phase.

» Weigh phasing options and strategically decide how you will proceed. Two recommended options: begin with "easy wins" to gain momentum and excitement from staff and potential funders; prioritize projects that define key spaces of the garden.

DEFINITIONS

Brownfield:
A tract of land that has been developed for industrial purposes, polluted, and then abandoned.

—Merriam-Webster Dictionary

Master Plan:
A preliminary plan showing proposed ultimate site development. Master plans often comprise site work that must be executed in phases over a long time and are thus subject to drastic modification.

—American Society of Landscape Architects

RFPs and RFQs:
Requests for proposals and requests for qualifications are published or privately solicited announcements for design services needed by gardens. RFQs are more general and confine themselves to information about a design firm or team's qualifications, while RFPs solicit proposals for how a design team would address a specific project.

—Rakow, 2011

SWOT:
An analysis of strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats.

EXAMPLES

Lewis Ginter Botanical Garden
"The biggest, most important things in your site master plan are those things that are out of sight: soil, water, drainage, elevation, and their long-term impact on your design and maintenance … pay attention to these."

—Shane Tippett, Executive Director

Cheyenne Botanic Garden
"A good master plan needs lots of input, from the community, board, staff and volunteers. Bring in outside critique, other garden experts from around the country. It's the price of a plane ticket but worth so much more."

—Shane Smith, Founder and Director

"Master planning results in images and graphics to share with potential donors. The most impactful images are beautifully hand drawn, although computer images can be used. A 3-D model is another useful product of master planning to share with donors and stakeholders. When we didn't have the resources to pay a landscape architect to create a model for us, we asked the landscape architect to train us and help to get us started, and then our staff created it. It came out really well. Children especially loved it!"

—Shane Smith, Founder and Director

Bloedel Reserve

"We did all of the right planning in the wrong order. One of our first efforts was to complete a Master Plan, which focused heavily on required facility improvements, because our strength was in the quality of our landscape experiences. After completing the Master Plan, however, we realized that we didn't actually know what our landscapes were, how they'd originated and evolved, and what was needed to preserve and enhance them.

Prior to embarking on a Master Plan or other significant planning study, ensure you really understand and can articulate the core purpose and unique nature and strengths of your site, the kind of experience you want to provide to the public, and how you can best impact the community in a way no other organization can. It is only with this solid foundation of understanding that you can thoughtfully plan your future."

—Ed Moydell, Executive Director

Gardens by the Bay

Gardens by the Bay in Singapore is an iconic new garden that has quickly gained worldwide recognition as a leader in innovation, sustainability and green infrastructure. Since its opening in 2012, the Gardens has welcomed over 40 million visitors. It comprises three waterfront gardens - Bay South, Bay East and Bay Central.

The Gardens was conceived as a flagship project of the National Parks Board, a statutory board of the Government of Singapore that is responsible for greenery and recreation in the city. The Gardens was intended to raise the profile of Singapore and cement the image of Singapore as a leading City in a Garden. In 2006, an international master plan design competition was held, which drew more than 70 entries from 24 countries. A panel of 11 local and international experts selected two winners—Grant Associates for Bay South and Gustafson Porter for Bay East—which were announced in September 2006. Development of Bay South broke ground in November 2007 and opened in June 2012. Development was funded entirely by the Singaporean government.

The Gardens is now managed by Gardens by the Bay, a Public Company Limited by Guarantee, whose governing board is comprised of both politically appointed and self-electing directors. Partial funding comes from the government, though earned revenue through ticket sales and venue rentals make up a large proportion of the income. The Gardens is also a registered charity granted an Institution of Public Character status to receive tax-deductible donations and sponsorships.

RESOURCES

Site Master Plan Tools
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"Our Master Plan." Birmingham Botanical Gardens, 2018, www.bbgardens.org/master-plan.php Accessed 29 April 2018.

"Fort Worth Botanic Garden Master Plan." Fort Worth Botanic Garden, 19 May 2010, www.fortworthtexas.gov/uploadedFiles/PACS/Parks_and_Community_Services/bgmasterplan.pdf Accessed 29 April 2018.

Longwood Gardens
Fellows Program

LONGWOOD
GARDENS

Business Plan

The business plan outlines the high-level operational priorities that will enable successful implementation of the strategic plan and site master plan (Sections 2.02 and 2.03), which are developed concurrently. It serves as a tactical roadmap for achievement of the organization's vision and it sets the stage for the long-term viability of the garden.

Typical components of a business plan are:

» Executive Summary: summary of strategic plan and site master plan; description of the business model

» Major garden functions, programs and services, and related benefits

» Community and market analysis; positioning

» Organizational structure and management plan

» Key capacities required and associated attainment plan

» Key partnerships; nature and value of partnerships

» Cost analysis

» Analysis of sources of revenue

» Start-up plan; phased growth plan

» Financial projections (detailed capital campaigns; detailed 1-2 year operational plans; conceptual projections for 3-5 years or longer)

Some organizations may be able to create a business plan on their own, if the board or staff has the relevant expertise. In other cases, it may be advisable to hire a consultant who is qualified to assess organizational capacity, conduct community and market analyses, and develop financial projections.

The process begins by researching the business plans of other gardens and cultural organizations. Some organizations post these on their websites; other organizations may be willing to share them upon request. The team then sets its goals and timeline for the planning process and decides which key issues it seeks to address. It must articulate a business model that facilitates the accomplishment of strategic goals, defines the garden's key economic drivers, and describes how the garden will sustain itself financially over time.

After developing a business model, the team must identify capacity-building needs to begin implementation of the strategic and master plans. Areas of expertise and key systems to consider include leadership, management and administration, technical skills and program content knowledge, land and facilities, technology, and more. The team determines whether capacities in each area are already present, or if they need to be developed. If capacity building is required, the team decides how to accomplish that work—either internally or through the use of consultants and partners.

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The business plan outlines costs related to land acquisition and construction, as well as the costs of operation. These costs should be projected for both immediate and long-term financial needs, which may be rough estimates at this stage.

In addition to costs, the plan identifies and assesses the feasibility of proposed revenue streams. The team may investigate the realistic potential to obtain grant funds, solicit major contributions, or develop earned revenue. They may also consider membership structures, planned giving, and endowment models.

Based on the feasibility research of various revenue streams and their understanding of short- and long-term costs, the team should draft detailed budgets for the implementation of the strategic and master plans. Using budget forecasting methodologies, the team will make growth projections over the period of the strategic plan and create multi-year budget projections.

The American Public Gardens Association has benchmarking data that is useful for comparing the budget projections for a new organization with existing institutions. Once a sustainable business plan has been developed, it is typically brought to the organization's governing body for final review and approval.

TIPS

» Unlike strategic planning, business planning addresses the scope of the organization in quantifiable terms: size of operations (people, programs, inputs); corresponding budgets; and corresponding outputs projected by year, or for each of the specified phases of growth.

» When developing the business plan, consider addressing how the garden will prepare for future risks and vulnerabilities, answering questions such as, "What is the likelihood that the planned strategies will fail? And what is Plan B if they do?"

» Beyond calculating growth and related financial projections, consider the implications of the growth plan and financial projections on the organization and the community. Is the growth progression reasonable and doable—in the context of the organization's capacities, the current economic condition of the community, etc.? For example, the Bridgespan Group recommends considering:

    » Can we manage the budget required by the human resource and infrastructure investments?

    » How will the increased budget affect our organization's culture?

    » How will the new costs affect our cost per outcome?

    » How is the funding community likely to respond to the spending plan? Can we raise the money we need?

» "Business planning requires a great deal of discipline; implementation takes even more. Many organizations find it essential to develop milestones that will help them check their progress and determine whether they're on track as implementation ensues. A more focused set of milestones, sometimes called a dashboard, can be given to the board, so that they can help the management team monitor high-level progress. Many organizations also use a version of the milestones when communicating with funders and other supporters, in order to demonstrate their commitment to the new strategic direction and their progress in implementing it."

    —The Bridgespan Group

DEFINITIONS

Business Plan:
A detailed account of how the organization will operate .

—Service Corps of Retired Executives

Business Model:
A brief summary that spells out the organization's economic drivers.

—Blue Avocado

Capital Campaign:
Used to raise a specified sum of money within a defined time period to meet the varied asset-building needs of the organization.

—Donorcentricity

Earned Income:
Private-sourced fees for goods and services.

—Stanford Social Innovation Review

Financial Sustainability:
An organization is financially sustainable if its core work will not collapse, even if external donor funding is withdrawn . . . the paths to success include developing and maintaining strong stakeholder relationships, including beneficiaries, staff and donors; obtaining a range of types of funding, including unrestricted funds; building financial reserves; assessing and managing risks; and strategically managing and financing overhead costs.

—Mango.org

RESOURCES

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Business Planning Tools for Nonprofits

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3.01

Program Design

The word "program," used here, encompasses the offerings and activities of a public garden that will be available to members and the general public, as well as activities that will benefit the local and regional ecosystem or the field of public horticulture—all of which need to be carefully planned and evaluated.

Examples include:

» Self-guided access during general visitor hours

» One-time or repeated special events

» Seasonal displays

» Formal and informal educational offerings

» Art exhibitions and performances

» Horticultural therapy

» Internships and volunteer programs

» Rare plant collecting and propagation

» Environmental restoration projects

» Collaborations with other organizations or entities

Staff (or knowledgeable volunteers) typically lead program design and planning, and some organizations form a program development committee. This process differs from strategic planning in that it is tactical, rather than strategic; thus board approval is not required, though input can be useful. It is critical, however, that programming be aligned with the goals and objectives articulated in the board-approved strategic plan. All programs should lead the organization toward fulfillment of its mission and vision, and adhere to organizational values.

Program plans, also called operational plans, should include program-specific objectives; tangible measures of progress and annual targets; a detailed schedule of tasks and activities, with clear roles and responsibilities; a program staffing plan and budget; program guidelines and training manuals; evaluation tools and feedback mechanisms; and clear priorities.

Thoughtful operational planning ensures viability of the programs and success in achieving strategic objectives. Programs at similar organizations can provide helpful models. Furthermore, while designing programs based on today's visitor needs and expectations, staff should understand how evolving external forces may influence program offerings over the long term—including demographic, technological, and other changes.

Program planners should identify like-minded organizations that may serve as partners in program design and delivery. Gardens can leverage their impact by collaborating with institutions in ways that achieve mission objectives for all partners. Among other benefits, partners may contribute expertise, equipment or facilities, financial resources, and access to diverse audiences. Partners may include nonprofits, government agencies, educational institutions, and business entities.

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Organizational leaders with limited resources may decide to design and implement a single program or two, learning from that experience as they develop additional program offerings. Program design is a long-term and iterative process that will constantly evolve to better serve audiences and achieve the garden's mission.

TIPS

» A clear set of ethical principles should guide the design and implementation of programs, covering: operational or program standards, professionalism, respect for all people, stewardship of resources (natural resources and financial resources, for example), confidentiality and privacy, accountability, transparency, and grievances, among other topics that might be applicable to your organization.

» Be data-driven. Identify sources of data and information that can inform program design— this will not only lead to better programming (based on facts rather than assumptions), but can also be used to communicate with and persuade stakeholders, partners, and supporters regarding proposed programs.

» Design program evaluation before implementing programs. Utilize results of program evaluations to inform improvements to programs going forward.

» Consult with marketing and communication team (staff or volunteers) periodically throughout the program design process to best understand stakeholder and audience needs and perceptions, and ensure a connection when programs get up and running.

» Balance what you might consider traditional programming with a few innovations and experiments; evaluate results and implement what works best.

» Plan programs for the present, but with an eye toward the future. Consider how visitor demographics and interests may be changing. Consider new technologies on the horizon, development patterns and growth in your region, changing climate conditions, etc.

» Develop detailed annual and monthly budgets, including an adequate staff/volunteer plan to manage and run each program, facilities requirements, equipment, materials and supplies, etc. Plan for contingencies; prepare budgets for best and worst case scenarios.

» Research best practices, don't reinvent the wheel; garden leaders are usually willing to share. Discover what other gardens and cultural institutions are doing that you can learn from. Begin benchmarking.

» Document procedures, program budgets, results, feedback, images, stories and testimonials, etc.

DEFINITIONS

Benchmarking:
A tool nonprofits use to determine how well their organization is performing relative to external peers or to other sites in their network. The goal is to identify best practices and opportunities, and subsequently to adapt and improve.

—The Bridgespan Group

EXAMPLES

Bartram's Garden
Partnerships are a key strategy for Bartram's Garden in the development of a wide range of programs designed to fulfill the garden's mission. Bartram's Garden is a 45-acre National Historic Landmark, operated by the John Bartram Association in cooperation with Philadelphia Parks and Recreation. The John Bartram Association's mission is to protect and enhance the landmark

Bartram's Garden and House; advance the Bartram legacy of discovery, gardening, and art; and inspire audiences of all ages to care for the natural world.

In March 2017, the board of the John Bartram Association approved River Garden Vision 2025, an ambitious strategic and master site plan. Program design flows from that plan, and the organization is building programs with effective partnerships and meaningful connections to the local community. Programming ranges from historical and horticultural tours to community gardens and a food resource center at the Sankofa Farm at Bartram's Garden. There are youth leadership development efforts, children's programs, adult education, and volunteer programs. Major new developments include the construction of a riverfront biking/walking trail, called Bartram's Mile, which will soon link to other trails leading to and from City Center; and the establishment of waterfront docks and boat storage for community use.

Partners range from the City of Philadelphia, who owns the property; to the Schuylkill River Development Corporation, who partners with Bartram's on waterfront restoration and major development components; to key program partners like Mural Arts Philadelphia, who have worked on a major community-based arts project with Bartram's Garden over the last three years; to small organizations such as Philadelphia Waterborne, who partners with Bartram's on teaching math and science skills to local students via boat building. Partnerships are a key method for leveraging available resources, doing more with what you have available.

RESOURCES

American Public Gardens Association and BGCI, extensive resources on program design, implementation and evaluation

"Chapter 7: Using the Plant Collection – Research, Conservation, Public Engagement, Recreation and Tourism." Botanic Gardens Conservation International, www.bgci.org/files/BG_Manual2017/chapter7.pdf Accessed 07 March 2018.

"Library and Media Center." American Public Garden Association, 2018, www.publicgardens.org/resources Accessed 07 March 2018.

Standards for Excellence in Program Design and Implementation

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Collaboration and Alliances Resources

"Collective Impact Collaborations." The Bridgespan Group, www.bridgespan.org/insights/library/nonprofit-management-tools-and-trends/collective-impact-collaborations Accessed 07 March 2018.

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Design-thinking Methodologies for Program Design

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3.02

Guest Experience Plan

Creating a memorable guest experience is one of the most important ways that a new garden can engage and retain audiences and recruit supporters. During this phase, a staff or volunteer team creates a plan that ensures a positive guest experience for every guest at every point of contact.

A guest experience plan is a comprehensive document that details how visitors interact with the garden at every level: from viewing the garden's website, throughout their visit to the garden, and even after their visit has ended.

The guest experience plan includes many elements addressed elsewhere in the roadmap and toolkit, including the site master plan (Section 2.03), program design (Section 3.01), and integrated marketing communications plan (Section 4.03). The guest experience plan brings those elements together in one place, focusing on how they relate to the visitor through site and facilities design, accessibility and inclusion, wayfinding, education, interpretation, and interactions with staff and volunteers.

The first step in developing a guest experience plan is to understand the needs and values of the garden's prospective audiences. Surveys and interviews conducted during the strategic planning process (Section 2.02) contain useful information about visitor motivation. For a garden that is already open with an established audience, identifying demographics may be straightforward. For gardens yet to open or seeking to expand their audiences, this may be more challenging. Conducting a market analysis—either internally or with the aid of a consultant—will help to identify guests most likely to visit the garden. If possible, gather information about garden audiences, including:

» Distance travelled to the garden, and from what location

» Average stay time at the garden

» Motivations for visiting the garden

» Seasonal visitation trends

» Per capita spending

The team responsible for the plan must define what constitutes a remarkable guest experience at the garden. This should include clearly expressed hospitality standards and expectations for interactions between visitors and garden personnel.

Drawing from the site master plan, the guest experience plan should also specify tools that guests can use to understand where they are in the garden and how to get to other locations. Wayfinding tools include maps, signs, and subtle cues that orient visitors to their location.

Well-crafted interpretation engages audiences on an emotional and intellectual level in order to successfully achieve the garden's mission and expand its impact. Interpretation includes signage, trained docents, artwork, furniture, written and digital materials, or clues that communicate the key messages, stories, and values of the garden. As part of the interpretive framework, a feedback

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mechanism encourages a dialogue between the garden and its audience.

Accessibility and inclusion ensure that visitors feel comfortable and welcome at the garden. The team should consider physical, socioeconomic, and cultural barriers. Accessibility by public transportation, for example, may help the garden to reach audiences without access to private vehicles. The team may consider options for making the garden accessible to those with limited financial means. Communicating interpretive messages in multiple languages will make non-English speakers feel welcome. These are good strategies to effectively reach more people and expand the impact of the garden's mission.

Establishing procedures for staff and volunteer training helps to ensure that everyone understands how guests are to be treated, which is a reflection of the garden's values. Finally, the team should build standards for guest engagement into job descriptions and performance evaluations.

TIPS

» Establish feedback systems such as surveys, interviews, focus groups, and observations. Strategically decide what and why you are evaluating. Can garden staff evaluate or should you hire a consultant? Determine how the results of your feedback will be used.

» Hours open to the public is an important guest experience decision. Consider your target audience and determine hours strategically.

» Be aware of the before and after experience of your visitors. Based on your marketing and communications, what expectations do visitors have prior to their arrival? Will you meet or exceed their expectations? Will you follow up with your visitors once they have left, and if so, how?

» Successful planning processes require both inter- and intra-organization collaboration. Staff collaboration should include administration, human resources, public relations, marketing, and facilities and maintenance. External stakeholder input may include visitors, other gardens, and visitor and tourism organizations.

DEFINITIONS

Interpretation:
A mission-based communication process that forges emotional and intellectual connections between the interests of the audience and the meanings inherent in the resource.

—National Association for Interpretation

Market Analysis:
The process by which existing and potential markets for a cultural institution may be understood and/or predicted.

Target Audience:
A defined segment of visitors toward which a program is aimed.

—Rakow, 2011

Wayfinding:
The means in which people orient and navigate in physical space; the process or activity of ascertaining one's position and planning and following a route.

—Oxford English Dictionary

RESOURCES

Samples

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Other Resources

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3.03

Living Collections and Land Stewardship Management

A well-managed living collection of plants is a defining feature of all public gardens. Furthermore, it is the duty of public gardens to be responsible stewards of the land and advocates for environmental care. Living collections and land stewardship management plans help gardens to classify and focus their collections, and to explain their tactics for responsible management of their collections, their land, and the environment at large. Even the smallest gardens can make a meaningful impact to conservation.

Staff typically writes the living collections and land stewardship plans and the governing authorities formally adopt them. During the conceptual planning phase (Section 1.03), the start-up team brainstormed concepts for the garden, including prospective plant collections. The strategic planning process (Section 2.02) may have prioritized high-level plant collections and environmental stewardship objectives. The living collections plan expands upon those ideas. It should describe the horticultural focus of the garden, which may define specific taxa or may be broad and inclusive, depending on the type of garden. Horticultural display gardens are likely to have very different plant collections than botanical gardens, for example.

At a minimum, the living collections plan includes ethical guidelines for plant acquisition, disposition, accessioning, and deaccessioning. It explains how decisions are made regarding collection development and defines who has ultimate authority over those decisions. The plan should ensure that the plants introduced to the garden meet quality standards and are ethically sourced, and that the garden has the capacity and site requirements to care for the plants in their collection. The plan may include guidelines for plant health management.

The living collections plan should also address recordkeeping. Gardens with limited financial resources may initially manage their plant records using simple spreadsheets. Other gardens may opt for more comprehensive database software that is specifically designed to manage plant records. Regardless of the specific tool used, the living collections plan should specify the information to be included in the records.

The land stewardship plan can be a component of the living collections plan, or it can be a separate document. The plan should address practices to responsibly manage limited resources including energy, water, and soil. It should also manage the garden's impact on native and naturalized plant communities and wildlife. The focus of the plan is typically on the garden property itself and its role in the regional ecology. However, it should reflect current issues in global sustainability. For example, a land stewardship plan may address adapting the collections to mitigate the effects of a changing global climate. The team creating the plan should have a strong understanding of major land stewardship issues on a local, regional, and global level, and should address ways to responsibly manage the garden and its collections in light of those forces.

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9. Document your Process, Measure and Evaluate your Progress

TIPS

Plant Records

» Plant records are usually the responsibility of a garden's curator. In a large garden the curator may have a team that includes plant taxonomists and plant records staff.

» At a minimum, plant records should include the date of acquisition, an acquisition number, up-to-date taxonomic nomenclature, source, and location within the garden.

» Initially, plant records can be simple and straightforward. As the garden evolves, it may become necessary to expand record-keeping to include more detailed information regarding plant cultural requirements, provenance, program significance, and other information.

Sourcing

» New and emerging gardens often have limited budgets for acquiring new plants, and activities such as plant collection expeditions may not be feasible early on. Present reality should not limit plant collections plans, policies, and procedures; rather, apply visionary thinking and prioritize to make small initial wins, then scale up plant acquisition strategies when the time is right.

» Other public gardens can be great resources for initial plant materials; plans, policies, and procedures should include how these can be requested and secured.

» Private collections can serve as great sources for plant materials for new and emerging gardens, especially when donated, but may bear additional challenges: missing or dubious plant records, stated/unstated expectations for care of the collections, stated/unstated expectations for donor recognition. Policies can allow gardens to acquire or decline donated plants as appropriate while protecting against potential problems (such as "collection creep" or offending a garden supporter because of unclear assumptions).

» Transplanting living plant material carries an intrinsic risk of introducing plant pests and pathogens, which can then spread to neighboring areas, including natural lands, thus putting susceptible species at risk. Plant collections policies, such as quarantine practices, should include methods for minimizing these risks.

Software

» Popular plant collection software for gardens includes BG-BASE, RAHMS, and IrisBG (see resources).

» Plant collection software can be linked to Geographic Information System (GIS) software such as ArcGIS by ESRI (see resources).

Laws, Treaties and Potential Accreditations

» The collection and land stewardship plans, policies, and procedures should be written to comply with laws (local, state/province and national) and international treaties, and to qualify the institution for accreditations.

» Accreditations: Plant Collections Network (American Public Gardens Association), ArbNet, American Alliance of Museums.

Land Stewardship Management Plan

» Most gardens have a considerable amount of property that can be managed in a way to conserve natural resources, mitigate ecological damage, and conserve plant diversity. In land stewardship planning, consider a range of ecological impacts, including energy use, recycling/repurposing, water conservation, onsite water resources, soil, native plants and seeds, forestry and meadows management, invasives control, wildlife management, pollinators and other beneficial insects and microorganisms, pest management, air quality control, responsible use of introduced chemicals and products (including "organic"), and so on.

» Even gardens solely within, upon, or aside buildings can practice environmental stewardship

via technology choices: for example, heating and cooling systems, rainwater collection, energy generation, and more. Buildings that employ such technologies often seek certifications such as Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design (LEED) and other certifications by the U.S. Green Building Council (USGBC). Many other councils also offer accreditation programs, such as the International Passive House Association.

» Note that institutions, especially those with publicly accessible greenspaces, are increasingly judged for their land stewardship management practices. Proactively pursuing land stewardship can position gardens to be leaders and change agents in their community and the world.

DEFINITIONS

Accession:
An individual or group of identical-parentage plants (single taxon) from one source at the same time; assigned a code or number for tracking purposes.

—Rakow, 2011

Acquisition:
A plant or propagule that has been brought to the garden to be accessioned and cataloged.

—Rakow, 2011

Collection:
A set of plants assembled for a purpose. An accession can belong to multiple collections at the same time.

—Rakow, 2011

Conservation:
For plant conservation, conservation refers to actions that preserve a population and ultimately a species. For historic specimens and key features in a garden, conservation refers to actions that stabilize an individual object or historic element for the indefinite future.

—Rakow, 2011

LEED Certification:
LEED certification provides independent verification of a building or neighborhood's green features, allowing for the design, construction, operations, and maintenance of resource-efficient, high-performing, healthy, cost-effective buildings. LEED is the triple bottom line in action—benefiting people, planet and profit.

—U.S. Green Building Council

Taxon (pl., taxa):
A group of plants that form a named unit, including all their components. Genus and species are familiar taxonomic ranks.

—Rakow, 2011

EXAMPLES

Freshkills Park
Freshkills Park in New York City sits above a landfill cap comprised of several layers and roughly 30 inches of soil, geotextiles, and a geomembrane. "Our priorities in land stewardship diverge from most parks and gardens. Because of the nature of our site, our biggest priorities are erosion control and making sure we meet all regulatory requirements. At least six inches of soil and plants must hang on to mounds so that the infrastructure underneath is protected. We are working with US Forest Service to identify appropriate trees with shallow roots that won't penetrate the geomembrane cap and experimenting with plants that provide phytoremediation benefits. We have the largest grassland resource in the region; our science manager has written best practices for grassland management for habitat maintenance and sustainability. Though our purpose and circumstances are unlike most parks and gardens, land stewardship and responsible practices should be addressed in all public green spaces."

– Eloise Hirsch, Park Administrator and Executive Director

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4.01

Fundraising and Development Plan

Fundraising is the act of soliciting and receiving funds other than earned income. Development is the cultivation of relationships with donors and potential donors in order to encourage charitable giving to an organization. The two processes are interconnected. In this stage, the garden leadership writes a plan to articulate the fundraising and development goals, strategies, and policies for the new garden.

The fundraising and development plan covers the same period as the organizational strategic plan (Section 2.02), and it includes objectives that are tied to the funding of strategic goals. Funding goals are based on business plan projections (Section 2.04). The plan includes analyses of potential donor groups, opportunities, and strategies. It also provides action plans with assignment of responsibility, marketing and budget requirements, and policies and procedures for soliciting and accepting funds. Finally, the plan offers guidelines for cultivating donor relationships.

Writing the fundraising and development plan is the responsibility of the CEO or development director. In the absence of those staff positions, the board chair or the board's development committee is responsible for writing the plan. In most instances, fundraising and development plans require board approval.

The first step in writing a fundraising and development plan is to determine fundraising goals that will meet organizational needs based on business plan projections of anticipated expenses. Simplistically, fundraising goals are the difference between projected expenses and projected earned revenue. A "Case for Support" clearly articulates what the organization does and how it spends money. The organization uses this document internally and externally to align the message to potential donors/funders and to cultivate interest in its mission and vision.

Next, the plan must outline strategies for raising funds. Garden leadership identifies potential sources of support—including specific private individual and corporate donors, public funding sources, and grant programs—and articulates which of the various types of fundraising options are the most viable for the garden. Many gardens develop membership programs as a way to develop a broad base of support and to identify donors who may be encouraged to give at higher levels. Other options include annual appeals, solicitation of major gifts, capital campaigns, planned/estate gifts, and memorial giving.

The plan must comprise policies and procedures to ensure that funds are handled legally and ethically (Section 2.01). Resources contained in this section include sample policies. Some of the most important policies to develop include gift acceptance policies, principles for corporate support, naming opportunities, donor privacy policies, a donor bill of rights, and ethical guidelines. The fundraising and development plan should include procedures for entering, recording, processing, and acknowledging gifts, as well as for protecting data, securing confidential information, and managing records.

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Relationship management is a key component to successful development. The garden must establish procedures for communicating appropriately with donors, identifying potential major donors, and periodically following up with financial supporters. Donor relationship management software may be a useful investment for maintaining the integrity of donor data.

The organization should evaluate the plan and the success of working toward its stated goals on an annual basis.

TIPS

» Many organizations have a financial contribution policy for the board of directors. This means that every board member is expected to support the fundraising effort, either by contributing to the organization financially or in-kind, cultivating and soliciting donors, or writing grants. Consider what policy is appropriate for your organization and board.

» Pursue fundraising courses or mentorship programs such as those offered by the Association of Fundraising Professionals (AFP).

» Commit to discussing development progress at every board meeting.

» Organizations must comply with legal requirements and accounting standards to remain legal and accountable and to ensure public confidence. Make sure to check Financial Accounting Standards Board, American Institute of Certified Public Accountants, and Internal Revenue Service.

—U.S. Internal Revenue Service

» Pay attention to Form 990; approved deferred gift instruments; strict guidelines under income, gift, and estate laws to qualify for certain tax incentives; and reporting regulations for non-case gifts.

» Review regulations relating to online giving.

—Multi-State Filing Project

DEFINITIONS

Crowdsourcing/Crowdfunding:
The process of distributing tasks or funding projects among a multitude of people, each contributing a small amount to attain a certain monetary goal, typically via the Internet.

Cultivation:
The process of gradually developing the interest of an important prospective contributor through exposure to institutional activities, people needs, and plans to the point where a major gift may be considered.

—Association of Fundraising Professionals

Development:
The total process of institutional fundraising.

—Association of Fundraising Professionals

RESOURCES

Samples

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4.02

Administrative Infrastructure Plan

Administrative infrastructure includes policies, procedures, programs, and systems that support garden operations. The leadership team of the new garden must prioritize which administrative systems to put into place and when to accomplish that work. For most gardens, the development of administrative systems will be a phased process with ever-increasing complexity.

When the operation is small and the needs and resources are limited, most administrative tasks can be accomplished with simple business software and minimal investment. As the size, budget, and complexity of the garden increase, so will the need for more comprehensive systems and policies.

Administrative systems include human resource management, information technology, financial management tools and procedures, facilities management and maintenance, safety and security procedures, and emergency management plans. Many administrative operations can be outsourced to companies that specialize in various functions. For example, payroll management, bookkeeping, website development, and data storage can all be managed through third-party vendors. Likewise, it is not necessary for the leadership team to create all of the relevant administrative documents from scratch. Many sample documents and templates are available open-source online or for a nominal fee.

Human Resources

When developing the human resource and volunteer management plans, the leadership team must first determine the short- and long-term staffing requirements—reflected on an organizational chart—to meet operational and programmatic needs. Written job descriptions for each position, including volunteer positions, should relate to responsibilities that will measurably move the organization in a strategic direction. Sample position descriptions and templates are available in the resource area of this section, and many more templates are available online. Written policies should cover staff and volunteer recruitment, onboarding, training, screening, supervision, and evaluation.

Human resource policies should align with federal, state, and local laws and regulations related to worker protections, job safety, hiring and termination, employment law, talent management, compensation and benefits, and safety. Consulting with experts who are familiar with relevant laws is important when developing organizational procedures. The garden's governing authority is responsible for approving the human resource policy.

Information Technology

IT system requirements will vary from garden to garden, but may include plant record systems (Section 3.03), donor management software (Section 4.01), and routine business software. The garden's website is part of its IT infrastructure. Regardless of the specifics, data security is of paramount importance—data must be safeguarded and backed up.

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Financial Management

The garden must codify financial management procedures and processes, along with previously established policies for accepting donations and handling funds (Sections 1.01 and 4.01)**.** The leadership team must develop additional procedures including financial review schedules, internal audits, and other fiscal stewardship practices. Consulting with a CPA is helpful to ensure that the organization follows industry best practices and fully complies with laws regulating the use and handling of funds.

Facilities Maintenance

Facilities maintenance plans include location and access of utilities, descriptions of routine and preventative maintenance tasks, and a prioritized list of long-term maintenance needs. A written maintenance schedule should relate to resources and staff responsibilities, and should include preferred vendor names, contracts, and contact information for service providers.

Emergency and Risk Management

Emergency protocols ensure that appropriate precautions are in place to protect the safety of guests, staff, and the collection. These protocols should address access to the garden, procedures for administering first aid, missing child protocols, severe weather plans, natural disaster preparedness, and other safety issues.

TIPS

Human Resources

» Job descriptions, compensation, and recognition should reflect the real work that people do.

» Make sure that diversity, inclusion, and accessibility are addressed in human resource strategies, policies, and procedures. Ensure that HR strategies reflect the organization's values, goals, and vision.

» Consider succession planning for key staff and volunteer positions. See resources for suggestions and examples.

Information Technology

» Appropriate use of technology can drive process improvements and cost savings for your organization. Ensure adequate staff training and plan for updates and expansion, and be sure to establish and maintain security systems for the organization's data.

Financial Management

» Begin creating a reserve fund as soon as possible. A typical target for many nonprofits is to maintain at least 6 months of operating budget in reserves.

» Consider building an endowment. It is important to have an investment policy to guide asset management. See resources for other tips.

» Develop internal controls that address budgeting, spending, and documentation.

» Nonprofits in the U.S. with annual revenues in excess of $500,000 will likely require an annual audit by a certified public accountant (CPA). The board of directors is responsible for overseeing the annual audit.

Emergency and Risk Management

» Risk management is a broad topic that includes careful planning and training of key staff and volunteers on topics related to: general workplace/public space safety and security, emergency medical, emergency evacuation, natural disasters, terrorism, crimes and violence, etc. See resources for specific guidance and tips.

DEFINITIONS

Endowment:
Assets (usually cash accounts that are invested in equities or bonds or other investment vehicles) set aside so that the original assets (known as the "corpus") grow over time as a result of income earned from interest on the underlying invested funds. The corpus may also be added to over time. Endowments are commonly used by large institutions, such as universities and hospitals, but also may play a role in any charitable nonprofit's financial management strategy.

—Council of Nonprofits

Succession Planning:
Planning for the transition of the executive director or other key staff members; thinking in advance about how to set the stage for a strong transition.

—Compass Point

RESOURCES

Human Resources

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Emergency response plan template from the Federal Emergency Management Agency: "Emergency Response Plan." Ready Business, www.fema.gov/media-library-data/1388775706419-f977cdebbefcd545dfc7808c3e9385fc/Business_EmergencyResponsePlans_10pg_2014.pdf Accessed 07 March 2018.

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4.03

Integrated Marketing Communications

Public relations consists of three major components: marketing, communications, and community engagement. The leadership team should create a public relations plan that projects the desired image of the garden and opens a two-way dialogue between the garden and its stakeholders, in order to fulfill strategic planning goals and the organizational vision.

Most small, new gardens are unlikely to have a staff member whose specific job is to manage public relations. In that case, skilled volunteers and members of the garden leadership team can craft the public relations plan. Regardless of the plan process, a well-defined marketing, communications, and outreach strategy is essential.

Marketing is the strategic management of brand identity, including such key components as the garden's logo, through which the garden conveys its style, culture, and values. The marketing plan should identify target audiences by using research that the organization has already conducted regarding the values and behaviors of prospective guests (Sections 1.02 and 3.02). Building upon that data, the marketing strategy should include information about how its target audiences communicate, where they receive their news and information, and what drives their interest in the garden. The plan must identify the goals and desired outcomes of marketing efforts by addressing questions such as: Who are the audiences that marketing seeks to reach? How will the garden measure the success of its marketing efforts? What are the intended impacts of the garden's marketing on audience members?

The communications plan is the tactical execution of the marketing strategy. This plan identifies media platforms that will most successfully reach desired audiences, including a policy for the distribution of garden content on personal social media accounts. It establishes guidelines and standards for promoting the brand identity, and conveys practices that ensure consistency in messaging—such as use of the garden's logo, use of specific language, and common talking points. The plan should identify who is responsible for managing communications and who is authorized to speak on behalf of the garden. It may also include templates for signs, pamphlets, emails, promotional materials, presentations, and other media that adhere to brand standards. Some organizations also include detailed crisis communications and internal communications procedures in their communications plan.

Community outreach and engagement is the third major component of a successful public relations plan—one that goes beyond welcoming people into the garden. Each public garden must consider its role in the community and ensure that the garden itself acts as an informed and engaged community member, exploring ways to enhance its presence and activity outside the garden's boundaries. Outreach comprises communication and relationship-building strategies for community stakeholders, including neighbors, local business owners, political officials, and representatives of other cultural institutions. Guidelines should define responsibility for managing stakeholder relationships, objectives for each relationship, and tasks for building those

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relationships, as well as practices to follow when representing the garden at public events. The organization should establish a feedback mechanism so constituents can easily communicate with the garden, and so the garden can monitor the quality of the guest experience (Section 3.03).

TIPS

Image Management Plan

» Consider preparing an image management plan, including brand standards. This written plan conveys the how-to for guiding the development of products based on your organization's brand identity. It includes details that allow both staff and external contractors (graphic designers, etc.) to create products that comply with and consistently reinforce brand standards. Most commonly known as brand guidelines, brand strategies, or style guides, some focus on practical application while others are more conceptual. See resource section for online examples.

Communication Platforms

» Consider the extent to which you will manage various platforms to connect with target audiences, given your resources. Maintaining a website, official staff e-mail addresses, and a Facebook account are basic platforms for modern garden communications. LinkedIn, Twitter, Instagram, and blogs are increasingly used as well.

» Many social media platforms allow users to review your organization even if you do not sign up for an account yourself (TripAdvisor, Yelp, Foursquare, Google+). Determine to what extent you wish to encourage reviews on these platforms and enhance the experience of virtual visitors by uploading text, photos, and responses to reviews.

» Research what platforms are most helpful to organizations like your own and survey your visitors regarding the platforms they use most. Starting with sustainable commitments and making incremental increases is better than biting off too much and beginning work that cannot be routinely maintained.

Crisis Communication

» Gardens should set up crisis communication plans that allow staff and other representatives to provide appropriate responses that mitigate public relations problems during difficult times.

» The plan should define a specific spokesperson and alternates who are trained and prepared to deliver public statements.

» Be as transparent as possible, providing information that has been sufficiently confirmed for accuracy and that does not compromise personal privacy or ongoing investigations.

Cultivating Media Relations

» Cultivating relationships with media representatives should be an ongoing effort of any garden. This helps disseminate positive press during normal operations, and is likely to reduce tension and antagonism during a crisis.

DEFINITIONS

Brand:
The impression a garden makes on the public, including the garden's products by which it is known (e.g., educational programming), and the words, images, and emotions that communicate the garden's personality. Two key attributes of a brand are that it differentiates the institution from its competitors and that it reinforces the institution's relevance to the public.

—Rakow, 2011

Core Messages:
Key phrases, terms, and definitions that reflect an institution's unique qualities and that are used repeatedly throughout communication resources.

—Rakow, 2011

Integrated Marketing Communications:
A planning process designed to assure that all brand contacts received by a customer or prospect for a product, service, or organization are relevant to that person and consistent over time.

—American Marketing Association

Logo:
An easily recognized symbol of the garden or organization.

—Rakow, 2011

Marketing:
The business of creating, communicating, delivering, and exchanging ideas, information, and experiences that have relevance and value for garden audiences and potential audiences

—American Marketing Association

Value Proposition:
What is promised by an institution's marketing efforts and fulfilled by its delivery and customer service process.

—American Marketing Association

EXAMPLES

Cheyenne Botanic Gardens
Most public gardens have limited budgets for public relations, marketing, and outreach. Given the importance of clear and thoughtful communication with stakeholders, gardens find creative ways to make do with what they have to get the job done. For example, professionally printed plant labels and signs can be expensive. Given this reality, leaders from the Cheyenne Botanic Gardens noted, "In our early years, and even today, the laminator is our go-to Public Relations tool."

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5.01

Construction & Public Opening

Beginning construction is a rewarding time that marks the culmination of a substantial amount of planning and preparation. At this point, the strategic plan guides the decision-making process. Business, operational, and development plans support the strategic goals of the new garden, and a site master plan provides an overview of future development. The garden leadership team can now begin in earnest to plan and prepare for the first construction projects.

New construction, large preventative maintenance projects, remodeling, or constructing new garden areas and infrastructure are major undertakings for most organizations. Some gardens approach this process from square one, with nothing existing on the site. Other gardens have substantial existing assets and only minor construction is necessary. Regardless of the scope or complexity, construction is a process that should begin only after thorough planning and preparation.

The first step in undertaking a construction project is to review the site master plan (Section 2.03). During master plan development, the leadership team discussed options for phased growth—this ensures that the garden manages and allocates assets responsibly over time, since gardens rarely have the funds available to develop the entire garden at once. The leadership team should review the phasing strategy set forth in the master plan and amend the priorities for development as appropriate.

The construction process proceeds through several iterations of design development. In most cases, the garden hires architects, landscape architects, or other credentialed professionals to translate the visionary concept outlined in the master plan into more detailed renderings, which are then further developed into stamped construction drawings. Cost estimates accompany each stage of increasing detail, at which time the leadership team has the opportunity to review cost and budget projections. Throughout the design development process, the team must carefully include all components needed for the new construction, since changes are much more expensive once construction has begun.

The garden must specify a budget for the construction project and refer to it throughout design development. The leadership team must also research laws that regulate construction, and obtain all necessary permits. Some gardens hire construction management firms to coordinate logistics, hire contractors, and oversee the project. For most small gardens, staff or volunteers conduct this work. Writing detailed requests for proposals or requests for qualifications ensures that qualified contractors bid on the construction project and that all bids reflect the same scope of work. The team must also research regulations that dictate how to solicit and select bids—depending on the funding sources involved, there may be restrictions on who may bid, as well as specific criteria for selecting the winning bid.

Considerations at Every Step

1. Focus on Mission, Vision, and Values

2. Outreach, Listen, and Share Information

3. Form Strong Partnerships and Build Relationships

4. Uphold the Highest Ethical Standards

5. Prioritize Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion

6. Develop Leadership

7. Emphasize Organizational, Environmental, and Social Sustainability

8. Consult with the Experts

9. Document your Process, Measure and Evaluate your Progress

The garden should utilize its fundraising and development plan (Section 4.01) to determine financing sources for construction projects, and develop a timeframe for raising the needed capital. The team should also consider raising funds for maintenance requirements in addition to initial capital requirements.

Opening to the Public

Every new garden grapples with the decision of when to open to the public—a complex choice involving many factors. First, the garden leadership should decide if they want the garden to be fully operational upon opening, or whether they are comfortable with opening at an earlier phase of development. Gardens with significant existing assets and infrastructure may decide to open fairly early in the process. Gardens that must construct everything from scratch may delay their opening until construction is complete and the site has matured.

Safety is of paramount importance. Before allowing public access to the site, even on a limited basis, the team must ensure that the site is safe and that signage indicates the presence of obstacles that might pose a risk. Insurance coverage is necessary prior to allowing public access, and consultation with legal counsel helps to protect the garden against claims of injury.

Allowing people to access the new garden before it is "complete" is a good way to build momentum and excitement, since audiences witness the progress and buy in to the vision for the final product. At first, the garden may open to the public on a limited basis, for special events or for select days and hours. Tours help to promote the new garden, especially among current and prospective financial supporters. However, there is a risk that audiences will see only an unfinished garden, and not appreciate the end goal. Therefore, the garden must effectively communicate that the site is a work in progress—defining its present stage, its future course, and ways for people to engage in its development as volunteers and donors.

Limited hours and access provides an opportunity to test programs (Section 3.01) and solicit feedback. Garden leadership should be flexible and responsive to audience suggestions, which can inform future iterations of program development.

Planning doesn't end once the garden opens. Leadership should regularly revisit and update foundational plans (strategic plan, business plan, master site plan), programming plans (program design, guest experience, collections and land stewardship), and support system plans (administrative infrastructure, public relations, fundraising and development).

TIPS

Construction Documents

» Construction documents produced during the detailed design process become contract documents. They refine the project in predetermined stages (such as 30, 60, 90, 100 percent complete) to make sure that the design reflects the overlying vision and that practical details are specific enough for contractors to provide accurate bids.

» Some firms offer design/build services, in which case you may not need to seek separate bids for the build. If your design firm is not also your builder, you may consider retaining them to oversee the construction work—to confirm that the work meets the specifications of your construction documents and the agreed upon schedule of completion.

Bidding and Selection Process

» Public and nonprofit gardens are typically required to select the lowest qualified bidder from a public solicitation. Private gardens usually have greater flexibility in selecting their contractor. In either case, the garden should vet the contractor to ensure that they are well qualified and backed by a history of successful projects.

Managing the Construction Process

» Diligence is necessary throughout the construction process to confirm that everything is built to contract plans and specifications. The design team (if retained) or qualified garden staff should document the entire process with ample photography and description.

» The leadership team should communicate, negotiate, and resolve concerns or discrepancies with all possible haste to avoid costly delays to the garden and contractor.

Construction Steering Team

» A construction steering team—consisting of staff and volunteers with construction, maintenance, horticultural, and legal backgrounds—should participate in the process from the time of site master planning through project completion. They can help with the selection of contractor(s), contract negotiation, design approvals, building inspections, negotiation of change orders or additional work, and much more. This team should cultivate a cooperative relationship with the contractor(s) throughout the project and beyond, to foster a mutually beneficial implementation of the plans and to pave the way for future work together.

» The garden's construction steering team should represent or communicate closely with end user groups for the spaces under development. This typically includes members of the horticultural team, but some projects may call for different eyes and ears. For example, educational staff may assist with the design of classrooms and multi-use spaces.

Managing Change Orders

» The garden should document changes over the course of a construction project as formal "change orders" that are mutually agreeable amendments to the initial contract. These may result in significant changes in the project price or completion date, or can be negotiated to keep within budget and schedule.

» For example, garden leadership might identify a change they would like to make on a project once the contract is already signed and work has begun. They might also note that a contractor has deviated from the plan in a way that results in cosmetic differences from what is specified but is still safe, functional, and up to building codes. The garden can then propose to accept the cosmetic variation on the condition that the contractor accommodates the garden's desired change. This kind of bartering can be beneficial to both parties by avoiding inflated costs and setbacks in their schedules.

DEFINITIONS

Bid:
To offer (a price) whether for payment or acceptance.

—Merriam-Webster Dictionary

Client:
The individual, or more commonly the staff team, that works with the design team on a design project. The client should represent all components of the garden staff and must possess the legal authority to approve and accept work on behalf of the garden.

—Rakow, 2011

Contract Documents:
The legal documents between a garden and a contractor to build or install a specific exhibit, garden feature, or plant collection. Contract documents include construction drawings and written specifications.

—Rakow, 2011

Construction Drawings:
The main purpose of construction drawings (also called plans, blueprints, or working drawings) is to show what is to be built, while the specifications focus on the materials, installation techniques, and quality standards.

—Buildingadvisor.com

Construction Specifications:
Construction drawings focus on a building's shape, appearance, and dimensions, while the written construction specifications, or specs, focus on what materials will be used and how they should be installed. What information goes in notes on the drawings, and what goes in the specs is up to the designer, but a good set of detailed specs goes far beyond what could possibly be put into a drawing. It's OK if the same information appears in both places, but if there is a contradiction, the specifications generally take priority, at least legally.

—Buildingadvisor.com

Contractor:
An individual business, or more commonly a general contractor and subcontractors, hired by a garden to install a specific exhibit, garden feature, or plant collection. Subcontractors may include civil, structural, mechanical, and electrical engineers and landscape and irrigation contractors.

—Rakow, 2011

Design Process:
The iterative or step-by-step process of turning a garden's aspirations and goals into physical gardens. The design process proceeds through overlapping steps, from conceptual or sketch designs to progressively more detailed design drawings, followed by construction drawings for installing the design. The design process includes the construction stage and eventual garden maintenance, when decisions must be made about how to manage the plants.

—Rakow, 2011

Design Teams/Consultants:
The design firm, or more commonly, firms hired by a garden to plan and design gardens from conceptual design to installation of gardens. Firms commonly include landscape architects, architects, planners, and different types of engineers, such as civil and environmental, geotechnical, structural, mechanical, and electrical. Individuals from a wide range of specialist services may be required on some teams, including exhibit designers, financial and fund-raising consultants, anthropologists, archeologists, ecologists, botanists, wildlife experts, and artists.

—Rakow, 2011

Design Services:
The scope of work that a design team is contracted to provide a garden. Contracts for design services should not be confused with construction contracts.

—Rakow, 2011

LEED Certification:
An internationally recognized green building certification system developed by the U.S. Green Building Council. It provides third-party verification that a building or community was designed and built using strategies aimed at improving performance across the metrics that most affect sustainability in terms of energy savings, water efficiency, CO_2 emissions reduction, improved indoor environmental quality, and stewardship of resources.

—Rakow, 2011

RFPs and RFQs:
Requests for proposals and requests for qualifications are published or privately solicited announcements for design services needed by gardens. RFQs are more general and confine themselves to information on a design firm or team's qualifications, while RFPs solicit proposals for how a design team would address a specific project.

—Rakow, 2011

Tender:
To formally offer (a stated fixed price) for carrying out work, supplying goods, etc.

—Merriam-Webster Dictionary

EXAMPLES

Freshkill Park
Freshkills Park on Staten Island is an example of a park that has chosen to provide public access and programming before construction is complete. The Park is an exciting project built atop a 2,200-acre former landfill—the largest in North America. After the landfill closed in 2001, NYC Department of City Planning held an international competition in which the firm Field Operations was selected to design the new park. The Master Plan was released in 2006 after a rigorous planning process, and construction began shortly thereafter. NYC Parks and Recreation heads the project in conjunction with the Department of Sanitation, who own and regulate the land, and the Freshkills Park Alliance, the nonprofit organization that fundraises and provides programming.

Because of the history of the site, development is highly regulated and time consuming; full implementation of the Master Plan is slated to be complete in 2036. Phasing priorities operate on two fronts: large capital projects and public access. Park staff have made a concerted effort to increase access and develop robust programming while long-term construction is underway and the majority of the park remains closed. At the edges of the park, Schmul Playground, Owl Hollow soccer fields, and a 3-mile multiuse greenway, all strategically located near dense commercial areas, were the first "small win" projects to open to the public. Additionally, the park hosts a plethora of programs, including Discovery Days, guided recreation, scientific research and conservation, art projects, and educational programs, all of which bring visitors to the site, redefine the public's perception, and gain buy-in from community members.

Pittsburgh Botanic Garden

"Don't get too hung up on completing all of your initial processes before opening up to the public. Opening even a small initial area provides an important connection with your community which gets them excited about your project and can even encourage necessary funds. Once you open to the public you may find a need to refocus your initial efforts, maybe even rewriting something as core to your institution as your mission statement, as the Pittsburgh Botanic Garden did relatively shortly after its opening. In our case, major restoration work on our property (which was formally coal mines) meant that we had to rethink how to access the site, ultimately leading to a change in the order of development on the property. However, this opening allowed us to connect with our local community in ways that we never could have, had we remained solely in planning mode."

—Keith Kaiser, Executive Director

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Our Mission: Longwood Gardens is the living legacy of
Pierre S. du Pont, inspiring people through excellence in
garden design, horticulture, education, and the arts.