

WATERFRONT  
BOTANICAL  
GARDENS



2015

# MASTER PLAN

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

DEAR FRIENDS,

This beautiful Master Plan was designed for Waterfront Botanical Gardens in 2014. Since that time, we have been raising money in the community. I am happy to tell you that as of January 1, 2017, we raised enough money to move forward with breaking ground on the project: Louisville's own world-class botanical garden.

In the pages that follow, you will see the updated version of this plan that we have all been working so hard to implement. The importance of this project lies not only in the beauty of the design, but its fit in our community. From a stroll in the Pollinator Garden to a concert on the lawn outside the Visitor Center, the experience will be unforgettable for us, our children, our grand-children, and so on.

Most exciting is the fact that Phase I will begin in 2017. The Graeser Family Education Center will be the center of our environmental education programming for school students and adult learners. Even more, it will serve as a community gathering place for big events and small. Set against the Woodland Gardens and adjacent to Beargrass Creek, this facility is the important first step that we need to take to launch this amazing project for Louisville.

We've only just begun. Please support Waterfront Botanical Gardens so that future generations will enjoy the beautiful design and functionality of these gardens toward a healthier planet.

Warmly,



Kasey Maier  
Executive Director

## THE MISSION

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







## THE SITE

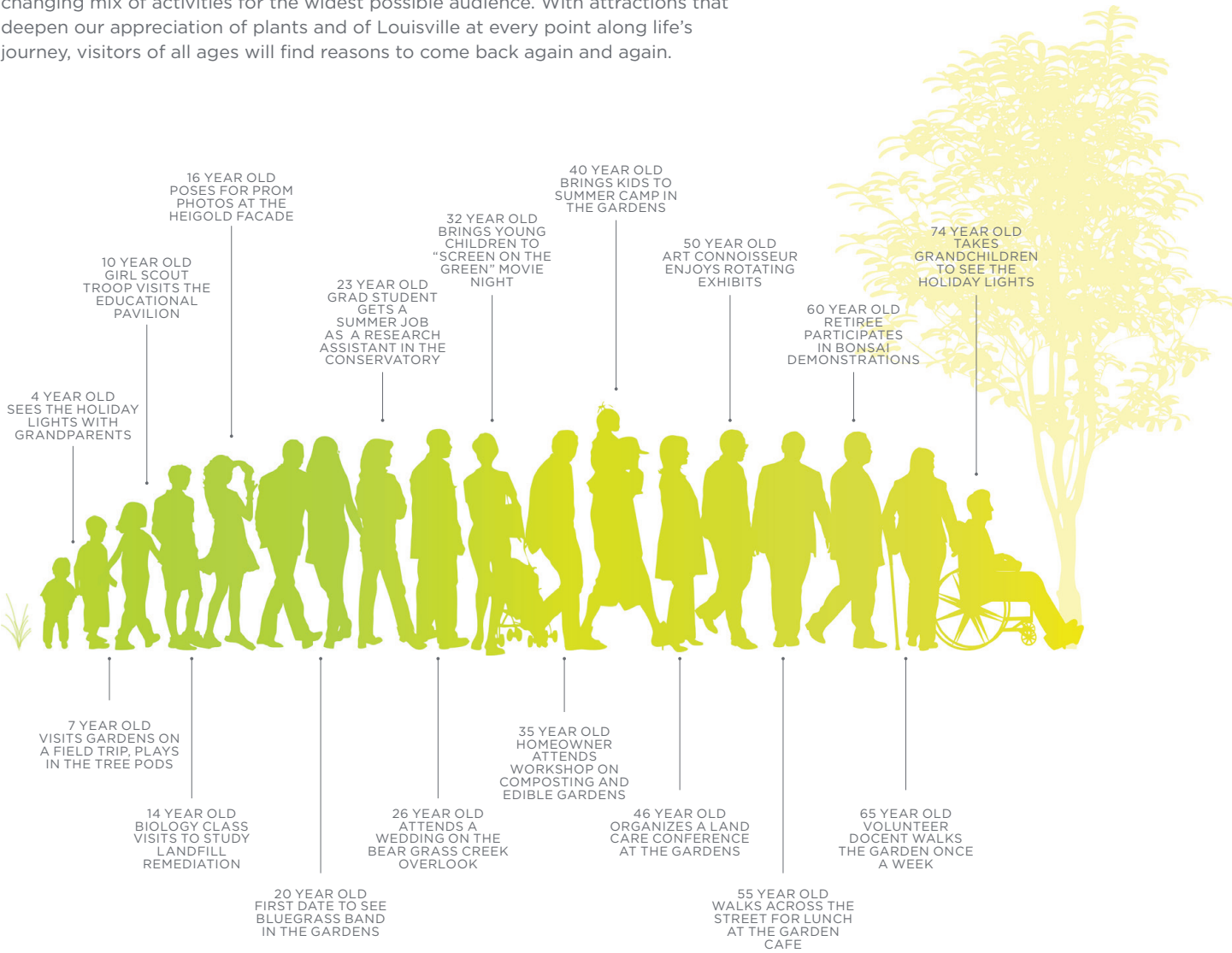
Starting with a 23-acre waterfront site that was once home to the Ohio Street Landfill—closed in the early '70s after operating for more than 30 years—the Gardens are transforming a degraded landscape into a beloved destination for Louisville and a global icon for sustainable redevelopment.



THE VISION

A PART OF LOUISVILLE’S LIFE STORY

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





# TRANSFORMING A LANDFILL TO A GARDEN

## SITE ANALYSIS

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

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

## BOTANICAL GARDENS TODAY

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

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

## COMMUNITY PARTICIPATION

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

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

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





## THE PLAN

# A RANGE OF EXPERIENCES

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

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

## DISCOVERY

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

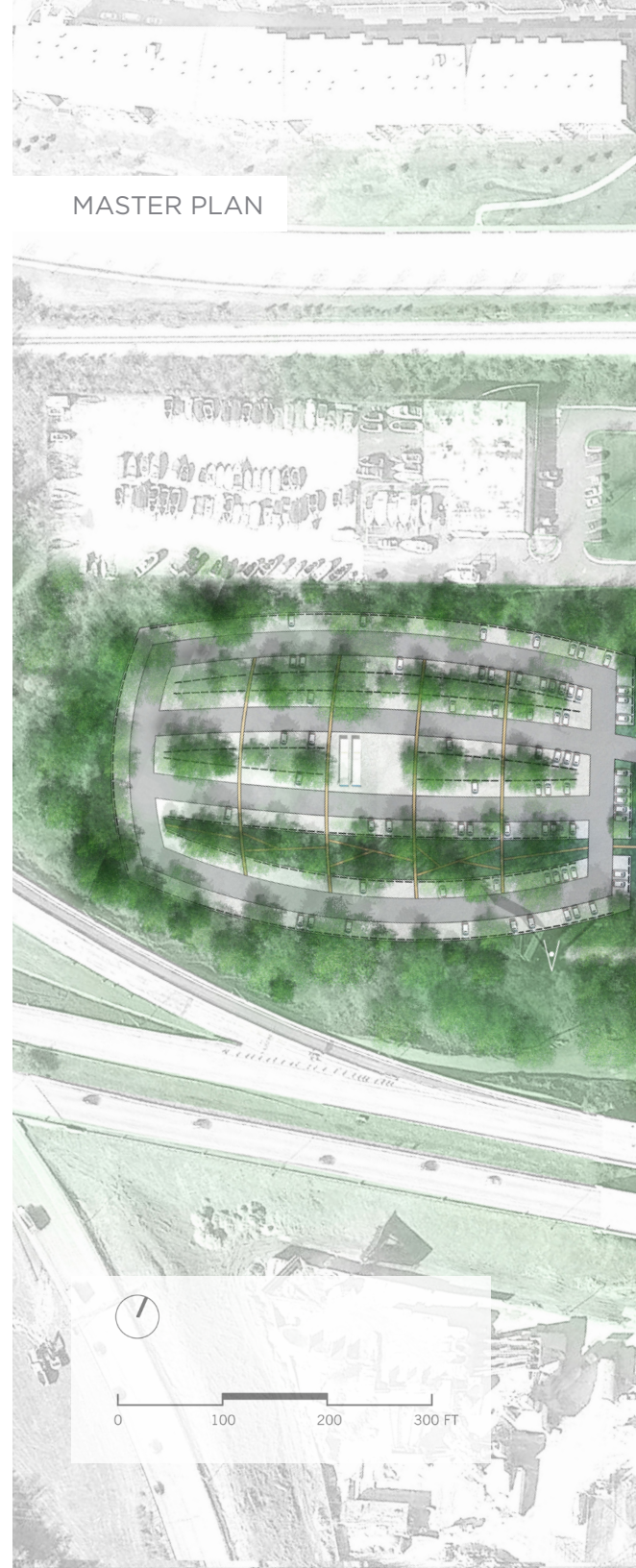
## HEALTH

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

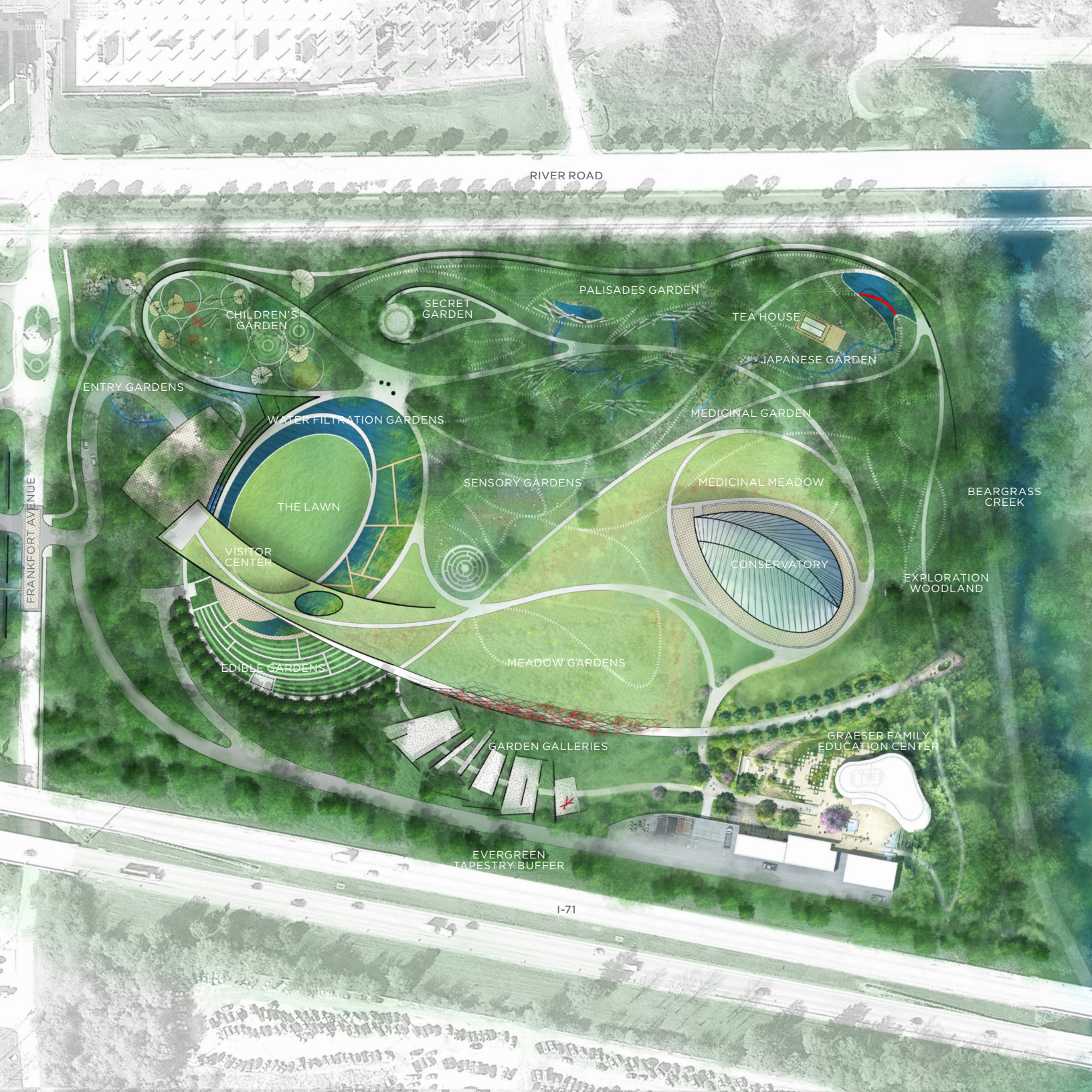
## TRANSFORMATION

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

MASTER PLAN







RIVER ROAD

PALISADES GARDEN

CHILDREN'S GARDEN

SECRET GARDEN

TEA HOUSE

JAPANESE GARDEN

ENTRY GARDENS

WATER FILTRATION GARDENS

MEDICINAL GARDEN

THE LAWN

SENSORY GARDENS

MEDICINAL MEADOW

VISITOR CENTER

CONSERVATORY

BEARGRASS CREEK

EXPLORATION WOODLAND

EDIBLE GARDENS

MEADOW GARDENS

GARDEN GALLERIES

GRAESER FAMILY EDUCATION CENTER

EVERGREEN TAPESTRY BUFFER

I-71

FRANKFORT AVENUE



## THE PLAN

# GUIDING VALUES

### SUSTAINABILITY

The garden strives to set precedents in sustainability through spaces like the proposed Visitor Center and the Water Filtration Garden that will use plants to clean graywater through a series of beautiful water gardens. Our goal is for every structure on the site to be sustainably designed. The challenges of transforming a degraded landscape into a thriving garden will position Louisville's Waterfront Botanical Gardens as a national and international model of sustainability through design.

### IDENTITY

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

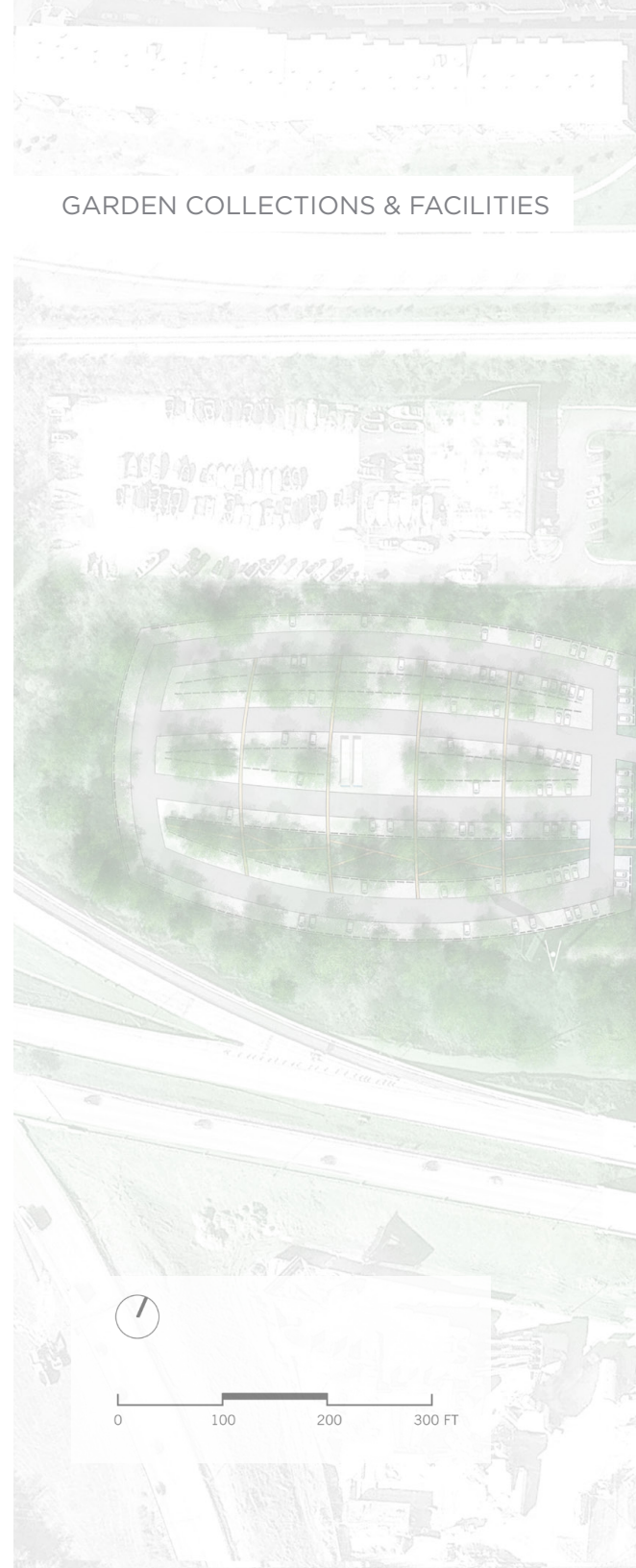
### NEW AUDIENCES

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

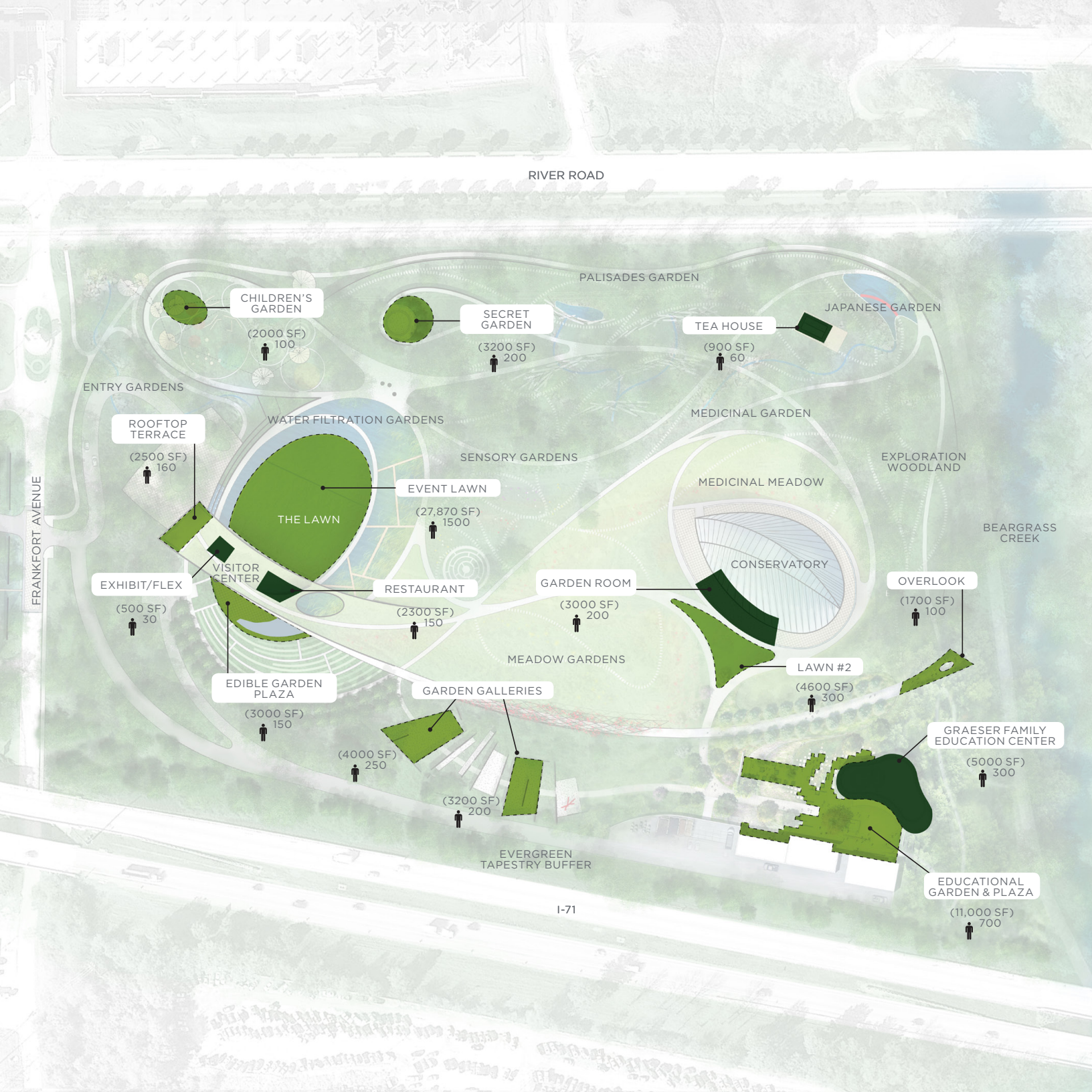
### VERSATILITY

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

## GARDEN COLLECTIONS & FACILITIES







RIVER ROAD

PALISADES GARDEN

CHILDREN'S GARDEN

(2000 SF)



SECRET GARDEN

(3200 SF)



TEA HOUSE

(900 SF)



JAPANESE GARDEN

MEDICINAL GARDEN

MEDICINAL MEADOW

CONSERVATORY

EXPLORATION WOODLAND

BEARGRASS CREEK

ENTRY GARDENS

ROOFTOP TERRACE

(2500 SF)



WATER FILTRATION GARDENS

SENSORY GARDENS

EVENT LAWN

(27,870 SF)



THE LAWN

EXHIBIT/FLEX

(500 SF)



VISITOR CENTER

RESTAURANT

(2300 SF)



GARDEN ROOM

(3000 SF)



MEADOW GARDENS

GARDEN GALLERIES

(4000 SF)



(3200 SF)



EVERGREEN TAPESTRY BUFFER

LAWN #2

(4600 SF)



OVERLOOK

(1700 SF)



GRAESER FAMILY EDUCATION CENTER

(5000 SF)



EDUCATIONAL GARDEN & PLAZA

(11,000 SF)



I-71

FRANKFORT AVENUE



CHILDREN'S GARDEN



BEARGRASS CREEK  
OVERLOOK







THE TRELLIS



MEADOW GARDEN



## THE ARCHITECTURE

# DEMONSTRATING SUSTAINABILITY

**THE EDUCATION CENTER** strives to educate people on how a sustainably designed building can both operate functionally and be a beautiful piece of architecture within the landscape. The Education Center is intended to be not only a classroom building, but an event venue that exposes visitors to the beauty and sustainability of the surrounding gardens.

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

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

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

## EDUCATION CENTER





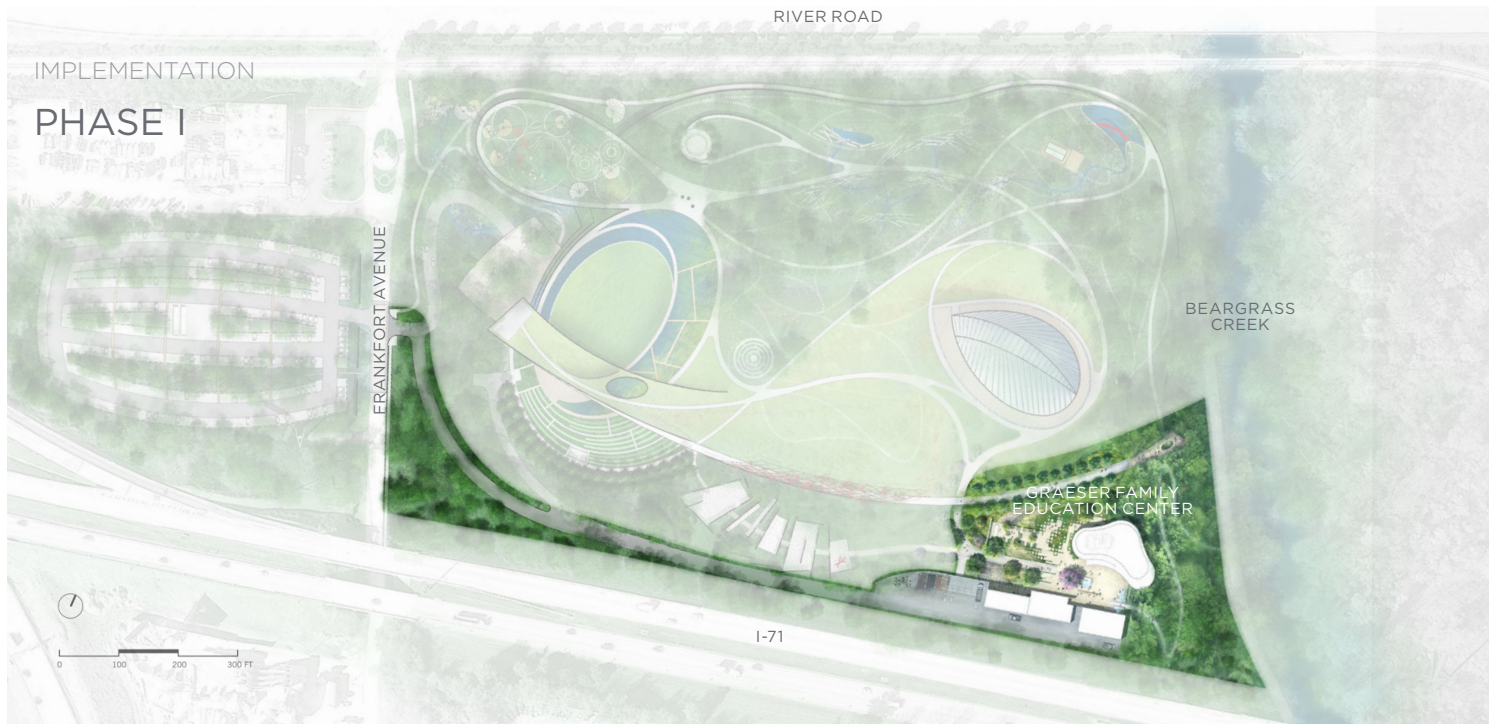
VISITOR CENTER



THE CONSERVATORY







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

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

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

Phase One of the Gardens' construction is expected to include the 250 person capacity Education Center, a greenhouse, Beargrass Creek Overlook, the Allée, and key landscape spaces such as the pollinator and native species garden. It will also include a temporary parking lot, perimeter security, and other essential support services.

#### VIEW THE COMPLETE MASTER PLAN.

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

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

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

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

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

## ABOUT BOTANICA

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

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

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

### OFFICERS

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Robert Pass, Owner

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

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Jeffery Masters  
Steve Sullivan



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BOTANICA



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