

CITY COUNCIL AGENDA ITEM
CITY OF SHORELINE, WASHINGTON

<p>AGENDA TITLE: Progress Briefing – Kruckeberg Botanic Garden Master Plan DEPARTMENT: Parks, Recreation and Cultural Services PRESENTED BY: Dick Deal, Director</p>

PROBLEM/ISSUE STATEMENT:

This staff report provides Council with background information and the current status of the Kruckeberg Botanic Garden master plan project.

BACKGROUND:

Art and Mareen Kruckeberg purchased their 3.8 acre homesite in Shoreline (then unincorporated King County) in 1958. Both noted botanists and authors of plant-related text books and journals, Art and Mareen planned and developed their property as a complete example of a Pacific Northwest lowland forest. Over the years the Kruckeberg's added a number of rare and exotic plant specimens from around the world that thrive in a Pacific Northwest lowland forest environment. Eventually their collection drew the attention of plant enthusiasts from around the region and beyond.

MSK Rare Plant Nursery

To help satisfy the numerous requests for rare Pacific Northwest plant materials from plant enthusiasts in the region, Mareen started to propagate plants and began offering them for sale in the mid-1980s. This soon became known as the MSK Rare Plant Nursery. A particular feature of the Nursery was the "Mother's Day" plant sale, which began attracting hundreds of local residents interested in acquiring quality northwest plant materials for their own gardens.

Local volunteers began to offer their help in the propagation and maintenance of the Nursery and the Garden. The volunteers soon had a great forum for discussing the pro's and con's and best practices for propagating various plant species offered in the Garden.

Kruckeberg Botanic Garden Foundation

In 1997, in an effort to formalize the Kruckeberg Botanic Garden and its myriad activities, a Kruckeberg Botanic Garden Foundation was established and incorporated in the State of Washington as a 401 (c) (3) Corporation. A Board of Directors was appointed to take lead responsibilities with Garden operations. Following Board incorporation, the Board raised funds to hire a formal "Garden Director" to coordinate volunteer and propagation efforts.

Conservation Easement

In 2003 Art Kruckeberg authorized the establishment of a formal "Conservation Easement" on the Kruckeberg Botanic Garden. This was done in an effort to protect the Garden by assuring that no future residential development could occur on the property and to protect the Garden for use by future generations of Shoreline residents. The Conservation Easement spells out specific uses, structures and functions that can and cannot occur on site, providing further protection to the property.

The City of Shoreline Acquires the Garden

In May of 2006 voters in the City of Shoreline approved Park and Open Space Proposition #1, which authorized the City to acquire certain named park and Open Space parcels in the City. Acquisition of the Kruckeberg Botanic Garden was one of the named sites in the Bond language for City acquisition.

In January of 2008, the City of Shoreline finalized the acquisition of the Kruckeberg Botanic Garden from the Kruckeberg Family. The intent of this acquisition was to place in public ownership the Kruckeberg Botanic Garden so that future generations of Shoreline residents can experience and learn about this outstanding collection of plant materials.

Following the City's acquisition of the Kruckeberg site, the City of Shoreline and Dr. Kruckeberg jointly agreed to each provide a \$100,000 operating subsidy to continue Garden operations on a status quo basis. Thus, for the years 2008, 2009 and 2010 the Garden will receive \$60,000 until the master plan and future operating decisions are determined.

THE NEED FOR A MASTER SITE PLAN:

A master plan is an important tool to guide the planning, design and operation of a facility. It helps decision makers set priorities for programs and facilities and it provides the basis for the City and others to solicit funds for Garden improvements and operations. In an effort to provide general direction to staff regarding the Garden, the Shoreline City Council suggested that staff make every effort to allow the Garden to be as financially sustainable as possible. This guidance reinforced the need for a Master Plan process to include the development of an Operations Plan for the Garden to determine potential revenue-generating activities to help offset ongoing staffing and operations costs.

Hiring the Consultant Team

Working with the Board of Directors of the Kruckeberg Botanic Garden Foundation, staff prepared an RFQ soliciting statements of interest from landscape architectural and planning firms in the Kruckeberg project. Sixteen proposals were received for evaluation, representing the best design firms in the region, including three proposals from out of state firms.

A consultant selection panel was formed, consisting of representatives from the Foundation Board, the PRCS Board and City staff. Interviews with the three finalist firms were held in January, 2009. The Panel unanimously recommended to the PRCS Board and Director that the John Swanson Design Studio be selected to carry out the

master planning effort for the Garden. Notice to proceed was given to the John Swanson Design Studio team in April, 2009.

CONSULTANT ACTIVITIES TO DATE:

1. **The design team began with a detailed evaluation of the existing Garden site.** This included preparing base maps, reviewing topography, trails, existing structures, utilities and adjacent land uses.
2. **Plant collection mapping and evaluation.** This element included identifying and locating all existing trees and shrubs on site and documenting this information on the new survey drawing. An evaluation of the health of all existing plants was included as well as documentation of rare or special trees that cannot be moved or relocated.
3. **Evaluate Programs and Operations.** This effort involved reviewing all ongoing site tours and programs offered at the Garden and the staffing requirement needed for each. A review of programs available at comparable facilities in the region followed this initial evaluation of Garden activities to better understand which programs are successful elsewhere and why.
4. **Review Economic Parameters for Operations.** An evaluation of all revenue generating programs and potential new programs at the Garden was undertaken to test what staffing levels or support facilities would be required to offer each potential program.
5. **Review of spatial requirements and functional relationships of program elements.** The design team then laid out the likely space requirements for each proposed program element and which elements are best suited adjacent or in proximity to one another. This work starts to look at functional groupings of activities on site.

PLANNING WORKSHOPS AND PUBLIC INVOLVEMENT:

A series of workshops have been planned since the start of the master plan effort to provide opportunities for Shoreline residents to be involved in the master plan. Some initial meetings were held with the Foundation Board to provide them with an overview of the planning process and to create an opportunity for the design team to learn of the history and activities at the Garden.

Neighborhood Meeting. In anticipation of the start of the workshop process, staff held an information meeting for residents living in proximity of the Garden on Thursday evening, August 6, 2009. This session provided an opportunity for residents to ask questions and get a better understanding of how the master plan process would be carried out.

In an effort to give local residents a "seat at the table" with regarding to planning efforts the City proposed the creation of a "Steering Committee" to guide the efforts of staff and the design team in carrying out the Garden master plan. The steering committee is composed of seven members, as follows:

- . Two neighborhood Representatives
- . Two representatives from the Garden Foundation Board
- . The President of the Foundation Board
- . A PRCS Board representative
- . The PRCS Director

The Steering Committee meets prior to each planning workshop to review the agenda and suggest new topics or program emphasis.

The first formal planning workshop was held on Wednesday evening, September 23, 2009 and covered the design team efforts at site evaluation and the plant collection.

Subsequent workshops were held on October 21st and November 18th of 2009, each with a focus on comparable facilities in the region and revenue potentials from Garden operations. At least two additional workshops are planned for 2010, the first of which is scheduled for January 27, 2010, followed by another workshop on February 24, 2010. It is anticipated that a Kruckeberg Botanic Garden Master Plan will be recommended for adoption to the PRCS Board and Council in late spring of 2010.

RECOMMENDATION

No formal Council action is required at this time. This staff report is intended simply as a progress briefing to Council on Kruckeberg Botanic Garden Master Planning activities to date.

Approved By: _____

 City Attorney: _____