FINDINGS & THEMES

OVERALL THEMES WE HEARD FROM COMMUNITY

Preserve and Maintain the Feel of the Garden
The strongest theme we heard overall in the responses was how much people love the current feel of the Garden. Words like “safe space,” “sacred,” “calm,” “special” were used. It is clear that the ambiance of the Garden is valued and there is a desire to honor and maintain this, not to change it. The Park Board also values the uniqueness of EBWG and preserving its current feel will be a top priority as we move forward with upcoming improvements.

“The magical beauty of the garden.”
“Simply botanical natural garden. No crowds or upscale events. Quiet natural setting. Plants trees birds no gimmicks.”
“It’s...important...that the garden maintains a feeling of being “outside the city”- an escape from urban life :)”
“...Please don’t over develop this garden. It’s an oasis that needs refinement, not redevelopment.”
“...It is a wonderful place to learn about native plants, and habitats.”

Building Façade: about 85% of respondents preferred building façades that would blend in and/or maintain the existing feel of the current buildings. About 10% preferred the façade to stand out from existing buildings, and 5% had other ideas. This feedback will be used later in the process during design recommendations for façade materials.

“I love the current rustic center. You feel like you are in the wilderness... It is beautiful as it is.”
“Functional: modern for new. Add-ons to existing Shelter, keep aesthetics”
“Please do maintain present rustic character of all structures”

Interest in Creating Accessibility and Improvements to and around the Garden
Though topography limits the Park Board’s ability to make the Garden ADA-accessible, respondents shared interest in a number of different ways to increase access around and within the Garden. We will use this feedback to inform accessibility elements to be incorporated during the upcoming improvements and for future projects that intersect with EBWG (such as the Wirth Park way-finding project slated for next year).

“Limited seating when I get tired due to my disability.”
“Wayfinding: right now is not clear when you get off bus. Translated languages: Spanish, Hmong/Somali.”
“Whatever you can do to make the garden universally accessible”
“I can access it, but those with mobility issues (walking, balance) may find the way from the parking lot a bit steep and uneven.”

1. Enhance natural areas adjacent to Garden
2. Plant labels with indigenous language names
3. Way-finding signs in the Garden

Transportation Safety and/or Access
Transportation options and safety was a theme that arose through survey responses. Though some of these comments fall outside of our current project scope, we will share these comments with projects that may overlap, such as an upcoming parking study in Wirth Park.

“Sometimes lot is full”
“A friend brought me there because there is no accessible bus service within walking distance.”
“Sometimes I don’t feel safe leaving my bike on the outskirts to go walk around the garden.”
“It is a hike if taking the bus, and the interstates make it a difficult bike ride to navigate to.”

Value in Existing Programs & Activities
There is general consensus that people enjoy and appreciate the current programming & activities at the Visitor Center and in the Garden. Additionally, many respondents shared ideas for future programming. There is interest in responding to program interests of Garden visitors. With the growth in program numbers, Garden staff noted that there have been challenges in implementing programming within the current program space. This feedback was used while considering design elements for the entrance and will also be used when the design team is making decisions about the interior of the Visitor Shelter.