



Sonoma Garden Park Master Plan Update 2017

Executive Summary



Since the last Master Plan was issued in 2006, Sonoma Ecology Center has made many investments in developing the infrastructure at Sonoma Garden Park. The Sonoma Garden Park Master Plan Update document includes a description of the updated infrastructure: parking lot, ADA accessible path, irrigation system, solar panels, signage, interpretive panels, well pump, and native plant nursery. The document has also been updated with current programs at the Garden Park including: watershed education programs, garden and nursery programs, EnviroLeaders program, summer camps, service learning days, and community education programs. We also included an updated description of new garden and farm features of the Garden Park including the following: Mediterranean and water-wise demonstration gardens, butterfly garden, oak-woodland native habitat, bee station, and chickens.

The Garden Park has grown in visitor usage, and expanded its educational and gardening programs. This has given rise to a need for upgrades and changes in park facilities. Sonoma Valley's environment is under growing pressure due to increased population, loss of arable land, climate change and extended drought; exploring ways to more sustainably interact with nature is crucial to the future wellbeing of the Valley. The 2017 Master Plan Update describes current plans for developing the Garden Park to better meet the needs of Sonoma Valley residents. Priority plans described in the Sonoma Garden Park Master Plan Update include:

- Annexation of the Pauline Homestead Area to allow greater accessibility of the Garden Park to the public. The plan for this area is laid out in the document, and includes development of educational, management, and caretaker living facilities to allow more learning opportunities and operating hours at the Garden Park. It would also allow for the addition of 10-12 parking places.
- Creation of a new gathering space to hold small events. A bowl-shaped space with a gazebo at its center would be developed to host groups of 30-60 people to view presentations, lectures, performances or other cultural activities. Circular berms will be approximately 5-6 feet tall and surround the gazebo to limit sound from reaching other parts of the park or nearby properties. Seating on the berms would allow increased visibility of presentations in the gazebo.
- Two new Children's Play Areas to allow for more active play by young visitors. A Garden Play Area would be located between the outdoor stage and Fig Forest and an Orchard Play Area in the center of the orchard area, near the Children's Garden.
- Improvements to the picnic, campfire, and outdoor education area. We plan to extend shading, add tables, and install a BBQ, but it's total intended use will not increase. A new prep area and sink will be added to replace the one removed earlier. The shade structure will eventually be replaced with a larger trellis that supports grapevines. We would like to install a pizza oven if permits and funding can be obtained.
- Construction of public restrooms to accommodate more visitors and students.
- New way-finding, interpretive signage, and self-guided tour will be installed to assist visitors with finding and learning from the Garden Park (these changes are already underway).
- A new grape arbor is being planned to replace one that was removed in 2016 to accommodate the new ADA-accessible Discovery Path.
- Expansion of the use of non-potable water for irrigation.
- Installation of Habitat Hedgerows along the boundary fence to the north, east, and south property lines.
- Improved road to the nursery facilities with a hammerhead turn at the end is planned to allow for fire emergency vehicle access to built structures.
- Installation of an electric vehicle charging station.