



# WCG

WESTBURY COMMUNITY GARDEN

## MASTER PLAN



DECEMBER 2016

## CLIENTS

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## ADDITIONAL FUNDERS



City of Houston  
Council Member Larry Green  
(District K)



United Way of Greater Houston

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of Greater Houston

*The Following Master Plan was prepared by Asakura Robinson for Brays Oaks Management District and Westbury Community Garden.*

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## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY



Founded seven years ago in the Westbury area of southwest Houston, Westbury Community Garden (WCG) has become, in almost every measurable way, a model for community-initiated and community-led parks and open spaces. The *Westbury Community Garden Master Plan*, completed in 2016, is an effort to both take stock of this place as it exists today and provide site planning recommendations to guide the future of this highly valued community resource.

While it is customary for institutions to plan for their future, this master planning effort began from everyday needs. As long as it has been the Westbury Community Garden, this 7-acre site has suffered from regular nuisance flooding following rain events and deep rutting of the landscape at parking and regular circulation areas. The severity of these issues reached a point where action was needed. At the same time, the WCG was navigating other complex issues including the expansion of programs, resources and membership, evolving relationships with other site stakeholders including primary site partner Plant It Forward Farms, and the realization that what was once an experiment in community activism had become a community fixture. The Master Plan was thus conceptualized as a way of not only addressing the immediate needs of the physical site in regard to drainage, grading and hardscape for circulation but also the broader needs of the site and its increasingly diverse user base as it looks to expand the role of the site within the community and surrounding city. As a means of promoting the garden's mission and ongoing work to the more people, the Master Plan is seeking the Sustainable SITES certification, the most far-reaching and rigorous certification process for landscape design projects. Once certified, this project is expected to become the first site in Houston certified under this ambitious program.

Given that WCG was established through strong community partnerships and its continued success has relied on many of these same partnerships, community involvement was a critical component of the master planning process. The planning work was structured around two community meeting events and numerous smaller meetings with a steering committee formed to vet master planning progress and share the interests of the broader community. In addition, many of the site's longtime stakeholder organizations were interviewed directly to best assess their past contributions to the WCG and how they could continue to support the site.

The *Master Plan* document includes chapters which document existing conditions at the site and those which specify recommendations for the future of the site. Between these chapters, and as a prelude to the recommendations, is a chapter devoted to the community engagement efforts at the heart of the master planning process. The existing conditions are treated broadly as both *Area Context* and *Site Context* to best understand the challenges and opportunities presented by the conditions surrounding the site as much as those on the site itself. The recommendations are primarily focused on site development guidelines with a companion chapter devoted to strategies for master plan implementation.

The master plan recommendations are all embodied in the *site plan* (below) which represents the culmination of the master planning process, a graphic distillation of the many ideas advanced during that process, and most importantly a consensus on how to best preserve and enhance what makes Westbury Community Garden such a unique asset. The recommendations are organized into eight separate sections covering a range of site issues, and representing both immediate and longterm consequences for the site: Circulation; Grading and Drainage; Program Spaces; Planting; Site Resources; Lighting; Signage; and Site Furnishings. Each of these sections includes a summary of intent, a plan graphic specific to that issue, and a set of recommendations.

With their range of focus and specificity, the master plan recommendations are difficult to summarize in any singular way. There are however themes which cut across all site issues including a commitment to ecological education of the broader public and the diverse site programs to support this, maximum resource efficiency, biodiversity, and improved accessibility and connectivity to better link program spaces and enable the site to best fulfill its mission as a hub for the surrounding community. Throughout, the *Westbury Community Garden Master Plan* provides guidance to site users that strikes a unique balance between providing new ideas and features to enhance the site with preservation of the existing features that have truly formed the identity of the site as we know it today.



Site Plan from the *Westbury Community Garden Master Plan*

- 1 Existing garden with improved drainage
- 2 Parking area with pervious paving
- 3 Reforestation Area
- 4 Enhanced Storage Shed
- 5 Apiary
- 6 Loop roadway with pervious paving
- 7 Drainage Swale
- 8 Flexible open space for events
- 9 Pedestrian connections to future expansion
- 10 Nature Play Area
- 11 Deck and shade trellis
- 12 Rain garden connected to existing cistern
- 13 Existing pavilion with solar panels on roof and attached outdoor kitchen
- 14 Primary vehicular entry with identity signage
- 15 Parking Area with pervious paving
- 16 Dedicated Farm Stand
- 17 Compost windrows
- 18 Composting restroom
- 19 Enclosed dumpster
- 20 Greenhouse
- 21 Parking Area with pervious paving
- 22 Drainage Swale
- 23 Future Training Farm
- 24 Pedestrian Path
- 25 Existing Plant It Forward Farms
- 26 Pedestrian Entry
- 27 Future Area - Passive Park
- 28 Future Area - Food Forest / Orchard
- 29 Future Area - Agri-Ecology / Native Grains
- 30 Observation platform
- 31 Pocket prairie
- 32 Sidewalk
- 33 Drainage swale connection to storm sewer
- 34 Identity signage