



REQUEST FOR PROPOSALS

DEVELOPMENT OF A MASTER PLAN FOR SOUTH COAST BOTANIC GARDEN 26300 Crenshaw Blvd. Palos Verdes Peninsula, CA 90274

Dear Distinguished Candidate:

The South Coast Botanic Garden Foundation (“Foundation”) invites you to submit a proposal as an experienced landscape design firm to undertake a comprehensive master plan that will guide the Garden’s development over the next twenty-five years.

During the past 12 months, the Foundation’s Planning Committee, professional staff, Board of Trustees and staff from the County of Los Angeles Department of Parks and Recreation have identified the need for a master plan that works with the Garden’s current strengths and highlights and provides a framework for future facility projects, programs and other improvements.

THE MISSION AND THE MASTER PLAN

It is important that the South Coast Botanic Garden continues to stay true to its mission to:

“... provide a unique horticulture and wildlife habitat experience and be an example of land reclamation and sustainability.”

We believe this mission can be substantially realized through various improvements to design elements in the Garden and seek qualified landscape design firms to develop a master plan which will provide definitive recommendations and a specific implementation plan that addresses:

1. Sustainable horticulture and land reclamation
2. An educational and interconnected visitor experience
3. Unifying design elements throughout the Garden
4. Programming that is compatible with the Garden’s mission

HISTORY AND PROGRAMS OF SOUTH COAST BOTANIC GARDEN

South Coast Botanic Garden is situated on the beautiful Palos Verdes Peninsula, located 10 miles southeast of Los Angeles Airport in California. Convenient to many South Bay communities, this 87-acre Botanic Garden has more than 2,500 different species of plants from as far away as Australia, the Mediterranean, and southern Africa. The Garden is in Sunset’s Zone 23, one of the most favored growing areas in the world. About 100 trees and shrubs are rare mature specimens, infrequently seen elsewhere. The wide variety of plant life provides food and shelter to an abundant wildlife and bird population, and over 200 species of birds are sighted annually.

Popular features include a small lake, Mediterranean Garden, James J. White All American Rose Selections Rose Garden (currently under redesign), Water-Wise/Tropical Garden, Garden for the Senses, Cactus Garden, Children's Garden, Volunteer Garden, Fuchsia Garden, Dahlia Garden, Herb Garden, and Japanese Garden. There is an attractive Wedding Lawn and two gazebos, meadows, and the Frances Young Hall available for events. The movie industry takes advantage of the Garden's variety of settings for filming opportunities. There is a picnic area located outside of the Garden gates. Parking currently accommodates approximately 215 vehicles. The Garden is enjoyed by more than 80,000 visitors a year. Local K-12 schools, college classes, and horticultural and gardening groups visit the Garden regularly for educational purposes. Plant and flower shows are held year-round.

UNIQUE HISTORY

South Coast Botanic Garden was created in 1960, on top of an open pit diatomaceous earth mine and subsequent sanitary landfill, by the Los Angeles County Board of Supervisors at the request of a citizen's group. A nonprofit support organization, South Coast Botanic Garden Foundation, was formed shortly after the garden site was approved.

There is ongoing renovation to compensate for the settling of the grounds and to prevent landfill gases from escaping into the atmosphere. Gases that form underground as a result of decomposing refuse are collected throughout the garden and are used to generate electricity. Paths and walkways are left partially improved to accommodate ground settling that still occurs on this site.

ADMINISTRATION OF THE GARDEN

The Garden is jointly administered by the County of Los Angeles, Department of Parks and Recreation and South Coast Botanic Garden Foundation, Inc.

The County of Los Angeles Department of Parks and Recreation (Department) is a governmental organization established in 1944 under the leadership of the County's Board of Supervisors. The Department currently owns and/or operates over 140 facilities, including four arboreta and botanic Gardens, 19 golf courses, 67 local parks, 10 regional parks, seven nature centers, 12 wildlife/wildflower sanctuaries, 132 tennis courts, 52 riding and hiking trails covering 344 miles, 158 playgrounds, 144 ball fields, 31 swimming pools, 12 fishing lakes, six natural areas, the Hollywood Bowl, and John Anson Ford Amphitheater.

The South Coast Botanic Garden Foundation was incorporated in 1961 with the primary mission to assist the County of Los Angeles in developing and maintaining the Garden and to educate the public in the science of horticulture. The Foundation sponsors and co-sponsors education programs, classes, school tours, lectures, horticultural plant and flower shows, concerts, and plant sales. Fundraising events are held regularly to help supplement the County with funds for ground maintenance, garden improvements, and new plant additions. The Foundation has a strong volunteer program, with approximately 150 volunteers who assist the professional staff in all Garden operations including maintenance, public service programs, and fundraising.

The annual operating budget for the Garden is approximately \$1,500,000, about \$1.1 million provided by County of Los Angeles and \$400,000 by the Foundation. The Foundation currently has an investment portfolio exceeding \$4 million. The Department is supported by grant funds, special funds, fees that are imposed for some programs including admission and reserved use of event spaces, classrooms and halls, and the annual budgeted general funds approved by the Board of Supervisors. The majority of grant funds are for capital projects and the amount received by the Department varies from year to year. Other revenues collected from fees and other sources also vary from year to year.

PAST PROJECTS

In 1986, a committee was formed at the Foundation to begin the process of retaining a firm to provide a master plan for the Garden. The firm of Neil Stanton Palmer was awarded the task of providing a developmental plan for the immediate five years as well as to create a long range concept for the next 10 years and beyond. In 1989, work started on finding the resources to fund the plan which included improvements to various garden areas to be completed over two phases.

Since then, the Garden was able to implement some of the concepts and improvements to several areas including:

- Crenshaw Blvd Frontage
- Public Parking Lot
- Entrance Plaza and Courtyard
- Administration Complex (including ADA ramps at the entrance, improvements to the hall and classrooms, renovations to the restrooms)
- Formal Rose Garden
- Volunteer Garden
- Fuchsia Trellis
- Two Public Display Greenhouses
- Garden for the Senses
- Water Wise Tropical Garden
- Amphitheater
- Children's Garden
- Mediterranean Garden
- Desert Garden Expansion

CURRENT PROJECTS

Certain upgrades are taking place in the Garden, including replacing the old propagation greenhouse, restoring the lower meadow gazebo and installing a new marquee. The following projects currently in the pipeline need to be integrated into the master plan proposal. These include:

Rose Garden – The Rose Garden is a major focal point for visitors. The objectives of the redesign is to update the space to include better access to rose varieties, provide seating and shade for visitors, preserve the vista from the main promenade, provide additional event space opportunities, and make the garden more inviting to visitors. The conceptual design phase has already been completed and the next stage is being planned. A major fundraising campaign will help provide the resources for what is expected to become an award-winning rose garden. This project is expected to begin in late Fall 2012.

Native Plant Garden – The California Native Plant Society along with the South Coast Botanic Garden Foundation has been meeting to discuss the future of using 1.5 acres of land to develop a world-class native plant garden. This new native plant garden would serve as a destination to see native plants in a natural setting, showcase natives and Peninsula plants, and provide education and demonstrations on how native plants can be used in the home setting. Initial concept designs have been prepared and presented by landscape students.

AREAS OF INTEREST

The following are particular areas of interest in the Garden:

Children's Garden: The Children's Garden currently contains two areas – a Discovery Garden and the main Children's Garden space. Thousands of families come to enjoy this space every year. In staying true to our mission of providing a unique experience through education, we would like to see this space further developed and expanded to provide that interactive experience. Funding is currently available for the development of this area.

Volunteer Garden: The Volunteer Garden space is currently maintained by numerous volunteers but has lacked a clear identity and purpose. Discussions are ongoing to see what can be done to use this space to allow for the volunteers to continue exploring their creativity in developing the areas with the possibility of incorporating the idea of demonstration gardens, seasonal color gardens, Zone 23 and 24 gardening, drought tolerant gardening, and home vegetable gardening.

Native Garden: There are currently several native plant garden plots sprinkled throughout the Garden. There is a proposal to develop a 1.5 acre area for a formal Native Plant Garden. There is an opportunity to build cohesion among the native plant garden areas.

Miscellaneous Gardens: There are other specialty gardens that could benefit from some development and improvements to make them more integrated with the rest of the Garden. Some of these areas include the Mediterranean Garden, Garden of the Senses, and the Water wise Tropical Garden.

Botanical Collections: In addition to the miscellaneous specialty gardens, the landscape includes approximately 60 acres of arboreta. The botanical collections in these arboreta include Magnolia Collections, Eucalyptus Collections, Acacia Collections, Conifer Collections, Palm Collections and Ficus Collections.

Lake and Stream: The lake and stream are favorite areas for visitors and wildlife. Improvements need to be made to these areas to enhance their beauty and develop them as exciting destinations featuring the natural topography.

Japanese Garden: There is currently a small Japanese Garden complete with a koi pond and an area for guests to sit and enjoy the serenity. Funds are available to further develop this area or a larger one with a Tea House, pagoda, etc. elsewhere in the garden.

Entrance and Welcome Areas: Thousands of cars drive by the Garden every week. Their first impression is a glimpse of the fence line encompassing the property. The visitor then enters our somewhat hidden entrance gate and winds up the tree lined rolling driveway. We consider areas our visitors first encounter to be important tone setters for their garden experience. Areas such as the entrance gate, parking lot, entrance approach, admissions window, information kiosks, etc. are in need of a cohesive design.

Interpretation and Wayfinding: Finding ways to extend education and understanding to all the Garden guests is something we would like to improve. We want to explore changes and additions to heighten the educational and interactive experience for our visitors.

SCOPE OF WORK

The final Scope of Work for the master plan will be determined in detail once a firm is selected. At a minimum, the selected firm will work closely with the South Coast Botanic Garden master plan Committee, the Department's Garden Supervisor and the Foundation CEO to:

1. Thoroughly analyze and assess the physical facilities, uses, programs, various users, staff, and projected future growth.
2. Assess and creatively analyze the facility needs identified by the master plan Committee for future development and to identify other potential needs for the facility. Provide recommendations that shall include but not necessarily be limited to:
 - a. Existing garden uses and facility layout
 - b. Landscaping guidelines
 - c. Vehicular and pedestrian circulation
 - d. Hardscape treatments and materials
 - e. Structures
 - f. Lighting
 - g. Way finding signage and other signage
 - h. Interpretation of collections
3. Generate a comprehensive master plan report of recommendations including but not limited to:
 - a. Conceptual design plans with relevant maps and renderings;
 - b. A complete plan narrative;
 - c. Preliminary costs for the master plan;
 - d. Capital improvement scheduling and phasing projections;
 - e. Programming analysis and recommendations for the interpretation of all collections.

The final report shall be a 25 year, phased master plan that shall include a full analysis of existing conditions, constraints and opportunities and incorporate future planned improvements for the overall Garden.

The consultant shall meet with the SCBG master plan Committee, Department's Garden Supervisor and Foundation CEO via scheduled meetings (no less than four) and adhere to a 12-month project schedule for completion of the master plan. At a minimum, the following meetings shall be conducted at the Garden with the consultant:

1. Project kick-off
2. Mid-term review
3. Preliminary final review
4. Presentation of recommendations

It is also anticipated that multiple teleconferences may be required in the course of completing the master plan for the Garden.

BUDGET

Proposals may not exceed an all-inclusive budget of \$100,000. An itemization of expenses such as consultant and management fees, materials, travel expenses and other incidental expenses must be included in the cost proposal.

In addition, a separate, itemized fee proposal shall be provided by Candidates for the preparation of an Initial Study Checklist pursuant to the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA). This fee is exclusive of and in addition to the \$100,000 budget for this project.

PROPOSAL SUBMISSION AND PREPARATION

To be considered for this opportunity, submit three (3) copies of a proposal on standard 8 ½" x 11" paper. In addition to the hard copy, an electronic copy must also be submitted to info@southcoastbotanicgarden.org. Hard copy proposals must be delivered to the address listed below by 5:00 p.m. PST on February 15, 2012. No fax submissions will be accepted. All submissions will become the property of South Coast Botanic Garden Foundation and will not be returned:

Robin Kirk
Master Plan Committee
South Coast Botanic Garden Foundation, Inc.
26300 Crenshaw Blvd.
Palos Verdes Peninsula, CA 90274

In order to facilitate evaluation of the proposals, firms are instructed to be concise and to follow the outline below in responding. Proposals that do not follow the outline, or do not contain the required information, may be considered as unresponsive proposals. Additional detailed information may be annexed to the proposal.

Proposals shall include, in order, the following:

1. A cover letter (maximum of two (2) pages) which articulates your firm's desire to undertake this project, the names and positions of the members of your team working on this project, and a short summary of your credentials for successfully developing a master plan.
2. Responses to the points below regarding your firm's approach. Please limit total response to a maximum of three (3) pages:
 - a. Describe your firm's approach for the development of this master plan.
 - b. Discuss your firm's creative principles, and how they would be applied to this project.
 - c. Discuss your firm's ability to create a master plan that considers the feasibility of proposed facility development in terms of both cost and programming.
3. A detailed outline of the proposed services and consultant deliverables for executing the requirements of the Proposed Scope of Work. An estimate of the number of hours, staff positions and their hourly rates and cost to provide the services and deliverables.
4. A complete work plan and schedule for the completion of this master plan. This schedule shall indicate meetings and milestones. The goal is to complete this project within 12 months.
5. An indication of whether the firm's activities or representation of other clients could potentially pose a conflict of interest in its representation of South Coast Botanic Garden.
6. Three references including company name and address, contact person and phone number.

SELECTION PROCESS AND CRITERIA

Proposals will be evaluated by a team of individuals serving on the Planning Committee, professional staff and Board of Trustees. This team will collaborate with the winning firm to design the master plan.

Proposals will be evaluated by the following criteria:

1. The proposal's responsiveness to the RFP (format, capabilities, work program, approach, clarity, ability to meet proposed schedule, etc.);
2. Specialized experience and technical competence of the firm and its personnel in the required disciplines, including a thorough knowledge of the legal, federal, state and local land use statutes and regulations and specifically, experience with creating designs accommodating the demands of landfill sites;
3. Organization, management and technical approach to the project;
4. Ability to develop recommendations, ideas and concepts through a combination of written and graphic means of expression;
5. The unique ideas or creativity conveyed in the proposal;
6. Proposed cost;
7. The qualifications and experience of personnel committed to the project as submitted in the SOQ;
8. Significant prior experience completing master plans for botanic gardens on time and within budget of similar or greater size and scope;
9. Review of three references.

PRE-PROPOSAL SITE MEETING

A mandatory tour of South Coast Botanic Garden is required for all proposers. Two identical tours will be offered on the following dates and times:

- Thursday, December 15, 2011 at 10:00 a.m. (2 hours)
- Friday, January 13, 2012 at 1:00 p.m. (2 hours)

These tours will be the only opportunity to see and discuss the facility with committee members and staff prior to submitting your proposal. Reservations for a tour are required. Please contact Megan Hoffman at (310) 544-1948 to RSVP for a tour.

SCHEDULE

The schedule for selection of a master plan consultant is as follows:

Distribute Request for Qualifications	August 30, 2011
Statement of Qualifications due from Applicant	September 30, 2011
Notification to Short List Candidates	November 1, 2011
Provide Request for Proposals to Short List	December 1, 2011
Option 1: Mandatory Tour	December 15, 2011
Option 2: Mandatory Tour	January 13, 2012
Proposal due from Applicant	February 15, 2012
Complete Consultant Interviews	April 2, 2012
Selection of Design Firm	May 15, 2012

QUESTIONS

Questions regarding this RFP should be directed to our contact person:

Robin Kirk
 Chair, Planning Committee
robinkirk1@yahoo.com

All questions or inquiries about this RFP must be submitted in written or electronic form to Robin Kirk. No phone queries shall be taken. If questions regarding this RFP should result in the modification of the RFP, the written modifications will be distributed to all recipients of the original RFP.

For additional information about the Garden, please visit our website: www.southcoastbotanicgarden.org

- Late applications will not be considered and will be returned.
- While every effort will be made to carefully handle applications, the South Coast Botanic Garden Foundation cannot be held responsible for lost or damaged materials.
- The South Coast Botanic Garden Foundation reserves the right to accept or reject any and all responses received, or commission a firm through another process.
- All firms who submit their materials for review will receive written notification of the results of the selection process, including identification of the selected firm.
- All information contained herein does not constitute either an expressed or implied contract.
- The South Coast Botanic Garden Foundation reserves the right to make alterations or additions to this RFP. Any changes will be provided to all candidates via email.

We look forward to hearing from you and welcoming you to the Garden.

Sincerely,

Robin Kirk
 Chair, Planning Committee