

**To the Mayor and Members of the City Council**

**January 18, 2022**

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**SUBJECT: FORT WORTH BOTANIC GARDEN / BRIT PROGRESS REPORT**

**BACKGROUND**

On May 19, 2020, City Council approved M&C 20-0347 which authorized execution of a Second Amendment to a Management Services Agreement with the Botanical Research Institute of Texas, Inc. (BRIT) for management of the Fort Worth Botanic Garden. The agreement authorized a six-month transition period, effective May 1, 2020 and was fully implemented by October 1, 2020.

This report is a six-month progress report from April through September 2021. Future reports will be reflective of BRIT’s fiscal year of January through December. Areas covered include revenue, participation, programs, and capital development programs. Information is also included on the Master Plan process.

**REVENUE AND PARTICIPATION**

Agreement benchmarks:

1. Growth in attendance in FY2021 versus FY2020
2. Minimum of 10% of total admissions are free or reduced cost
3. Growth in non-City funding versus FY2020
4. Increase public participation in education, events and volunteer program versus FY2020

|              | FY2020, April – September* | FY2021, April – September** | % Change      |
|--------------|----------------------------|-----------------------------|---------------|
| Total guests | 47,215                     | 129,369                     | 174% increase |
| Gate revenue | \$372,557                  | \$1,217,595                 | 227% increase |

\* FY2020, closed for COVID, 3/15 – 6/1

\*\* FY2021, closed for Winter Storm Uri, five days

FY2021 October - September: total guests = 228,777

FY2021 October - September: gate revenue with photo pass = \$2,022,185

Accessibility and reduced admission, April - September 2021

Total accessibility guests: 15,130    Total # guests: 129,369    Total % = 11.7%

This included 1,172 Title 1 students served through field trips. Accessibility options most frequently used, in order of usage: children under 5, Garden programs, Muse Pass

Other free and reduced admissions options include:

- Access Adult & Child (includes Museums4All),
- Blue Star,
- Community Passes checked out by the Fort Worth Public Library,
- Discounted hours for COFW residents (free and half price), and
- FWISD students free of charge, and complimentary admission (teachers planning botanical curriculum and local horticulture student projects).

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| Revenue Source          | FY2020     | FY2021     |
|-------------------------|------------|------------|
| Gift Shop               | 4%         | 10%        |
| Donations & Foundations | 2%         | 1%         |
| Rentals                 | 3%         | 6%         |
| Membership              | 1%         | 6%         |
| Admission               | 17%        | 32%        |
| <b>City Subsidy</b>     | <b>74%</b> | <b>45%</b> |

**PROGRAMS**

Education Attendance

| Age Group                      | FY2018       | FY2019        | FY2020       | FY2021       |
|--------------------------------|--------------|---------------|--------------|--------------|
| Children & Families            | 3,220        | 3,160         | 2,684        | 1,176        |
| Elementary Students (PreK – 5) | 1,984        | 4,611         | 2,582        | 3,016        |
| Middle/High School (6 – 12)    | 2,554        | 4,033         | 2,108        | 773          |
| College/University             | 0            | 290           | 118          | 5            |
| Educators                      | 221          | 1,372         | 411          | 13           |
| Community Education            | 959          | 2,652         | 685          | 677          |
| <b>TOTAL</b>                   | <b>8,938</b> | <b>16,118</b> | <b>8,578</b> | <b>5,660</b> |

**CAPITAL DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMS**

FY2020 Tax Note Funds

- Addresses \$4.3M of the \$17M in City deferred maintenance obligations
- 4 projects and \$250K in design work substantially complete
- Project management split to expedite project completion

Completed projects:

|                                 |           |
|---------------------------------|-----------|
| Design                          | \$303,568 |
| IT Upgrades                     | \$367,000 |
| South Restrooms                 | \$32,999  |
| Conservation Greenhouse Repairs | \$68,075  |
| Fuller Garden Paving            | \$62,463  |

Current status, remaining funds as of September 30, 2021:

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| Project                                 | Total Cost         | Remaining Funds    | Managed By          |
|---|--------------------|--------------------|---------------------|
| Rose Ramp Fountains                     | \$280,179          | \$261,179          | BG/BRIT             |
| South Vista Drainage                    | \$483,240*         | \$432,240          | BG/BRIT             |
| Moon Bridge                             | \$150,606          | \$132,226          | BG/BRIT             |
| Moncrief Garden Center                  | \$231,865          | \$209,010          | Property Management |
| Hill Arbor                              | \$35,750           | \$35,750           | BG/BRIT             |
| Restaurant/Rock Springs Bldg.           | \$60,021           | \$49,715           | Property Management |
| Rose Shelter Stabilization              | \$116,928          | \$99,753           | Property Management |
| Site Amenities (Water Fountains, Elec.) | \$94,080*          | \$94,080           | BG/BRIT             |
| Old Garden Road Renovation              | \$1,192,856        | \$1,021,159        | BG/BRIT             |
| Greenhouse Replacement                  | \$1,034,969        | \$945,558          | Property Management |
| Southwest Quadrant Renovation           | \$845,729          | \$716,229          | BG/BRIT             |
| <b>TOTAL</b>                            | <b>\$4,526,223</b> | <b>\$3,996,899</b> |                     |

\*Includes Tax Notes and PayG

**2022 BOND PROGRAM REQUEST**

In the current Management Agreement with BRIT (CSC 54201), the City agrees to finance debt funded repairs and capital replacement in the Fort Worth Botanic Garden totaling \$17 million in inflation adjusted 2017 dollars. PARD and FWBG | BRIT staff have worked together to present a 2022 bond request in the amount of \$7,000,000. Private funding is \$3,825,000.

Projects focus on infrastructure and related projects that do not present opportunities for significant private fundraising while the master plan is underway. Bond funds requested would be administered by FWBG | BRIT and would support the following improvements:

- Improvements to education facilities and collections housing
- Pedestrian/guest service improvements
- Consolidation of operations
- Utilities/infrastructure
- Site preparation for Children’s Garden
- Professional services

| Project/Work Category       | Estimated Cost, does not include private funds |
|-----------------------------|--|
| Infrastructure              | \$1,024,000                                    |
| Facility Repair/Replacement | \$4,415,000                                    |
| Event/Guest Services        | \$1,411,000                                    |
| Professional Services       | \$150,000                                      |
| <b>TOTAL</b>                | <b>\$7,000,000</b>                             |

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**SUBJECT: FORT WORTH BOTANIC GARDEN / BRIT PROGRESS REPORT****MASTER PLAN AND STRATEGIC PLAN**

In 2010, the City Council adopted the Fort Worth Botanic Garden Master Plan (M&C G-16963). In 2016, the City Council accepted the Fort Worth Botanic Garden Strategic Plan (M&C G-18885). After executing the 2020 management services agreement with the City, BRIT initiated a new strategic plan and master plan for the Botanic Garden in partnership with the City and stakeholders.

The ambitious three-year strategic plan has recently been completed. In addition to a new mission statement, vision, and five transformative goals, 12 top priorities for 2022-2024 have also been established. By striving to reach these ambitious targets, we will have moved rapidly to fulfill the new opportunities created by the union of Fort Worth Botanic Garden and the Botanical Research Institute of Texas.

The top 12 priorities are as follows:

- Develop a science communication program
- Conserve regional biodiversity by focusing on our Texas Flora Project
- Welcome 500,000 guests
- Complete a new site master plan and begin a capital fund drive
- Strategically add to and diversify our living plant collections
- Complete the rebranding of FWBG | BRIT
- Host the 2023 American Public Garden Association (APGA) Conference
- Plant 500,000 bulbs
- Become one of the top five garden-based research institutions in the U.S.
- Engage all 4th grade Fort Worth students in our STEM Program
- Achieve institutional accreditation through the American Alliance of Museums
- Become one of the best places to work in Fort Worth

A comprehensive Master Plan process has also been initiated. The prime consultant, Studio Outside from Dallas, along with local architectural firm Bennet Partners, is leading the complete study of the joint campus and programs. The master plan process coordinates with the recently completed strategic plan to determine:

- Joint mission and vision
- Programmatic goals
- Feasibility
- Physical facilities

The master plan process is coordinated through a 24-member committee comprised of Botanic Garden and BRIT organizational representatives and community stakeholders chaired by former City Council Member Dennis Shingleton and includes Councilmember Leonard Firestone, and former Park & Recreation Advisory Board Chair Dan Villegas.

It is projected that the Master Plan will be completed during Fall 2022 with an M&C submitted to City Council for their approval in December 2022.

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**SUBJECT: FORT WORTH BOTANIC GARDEN / BRIT PROGRESS REPORT****CONCLUSION**

FWBG | BRIT is honored to have been entrusted with management of the Fort Worth Botanic Garden and believes as shown by the statistics including in this report, that substantial progress has been made during the first year managing all operations. FWBG | BRIT is working every day to create one of the nation's leading institutions for botanical exploration and discovery that impacts and improves the lives of everyday people. The staff and board appreciate your support and attention. Any questions can be directed to President and CEO Patrick Newman at [pnewman@brit.org](mailto:pnewman@brit.org) or 817-335-8158 and to Richard Zavala, Park and Recreation Director, at [richard.zavala@fortworthtexas.gov](mailto:richard.zavala@fortworthtexas.gov) or 817-392-5711.

**David Cooke**  
**City Manager**