

# WELCOME!

Olbrich Botanical Gardens welcomes you to our first public workshop to help envision Olbrich's future!

Over the last 20+ years, Olbrich Botanical Gardens has experienced significant growth. Annual attendance has grown almost 64% - from 240,000 guests in 2000 to a record 393,000 guests in 2025. The city of Madison and Dane County are among the fastest-growing communities in the state of Wisconsin, and we look forward to welcoming even more guests in the future.

In addition, the neighborhoods surrounding the Gardens and Olbrich Park have been in a period of growth and evolution, evidenced by projects like the redevelopment of the Garver Feed Mill and the planning for Olbrich Park's North Parcel.

This is an opportunity for Olbrich Botanical Gardens to evolve alongside Madison.

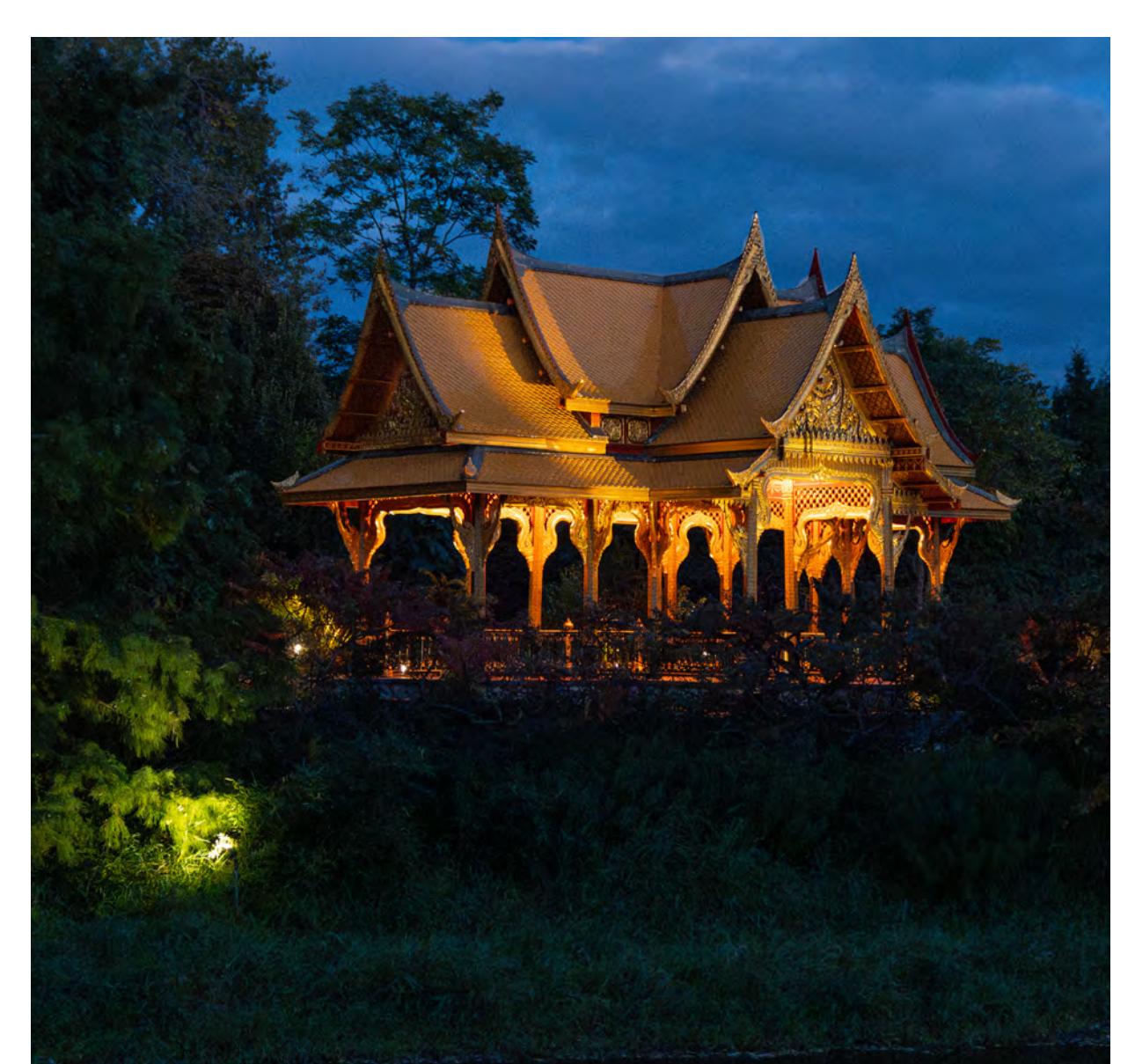
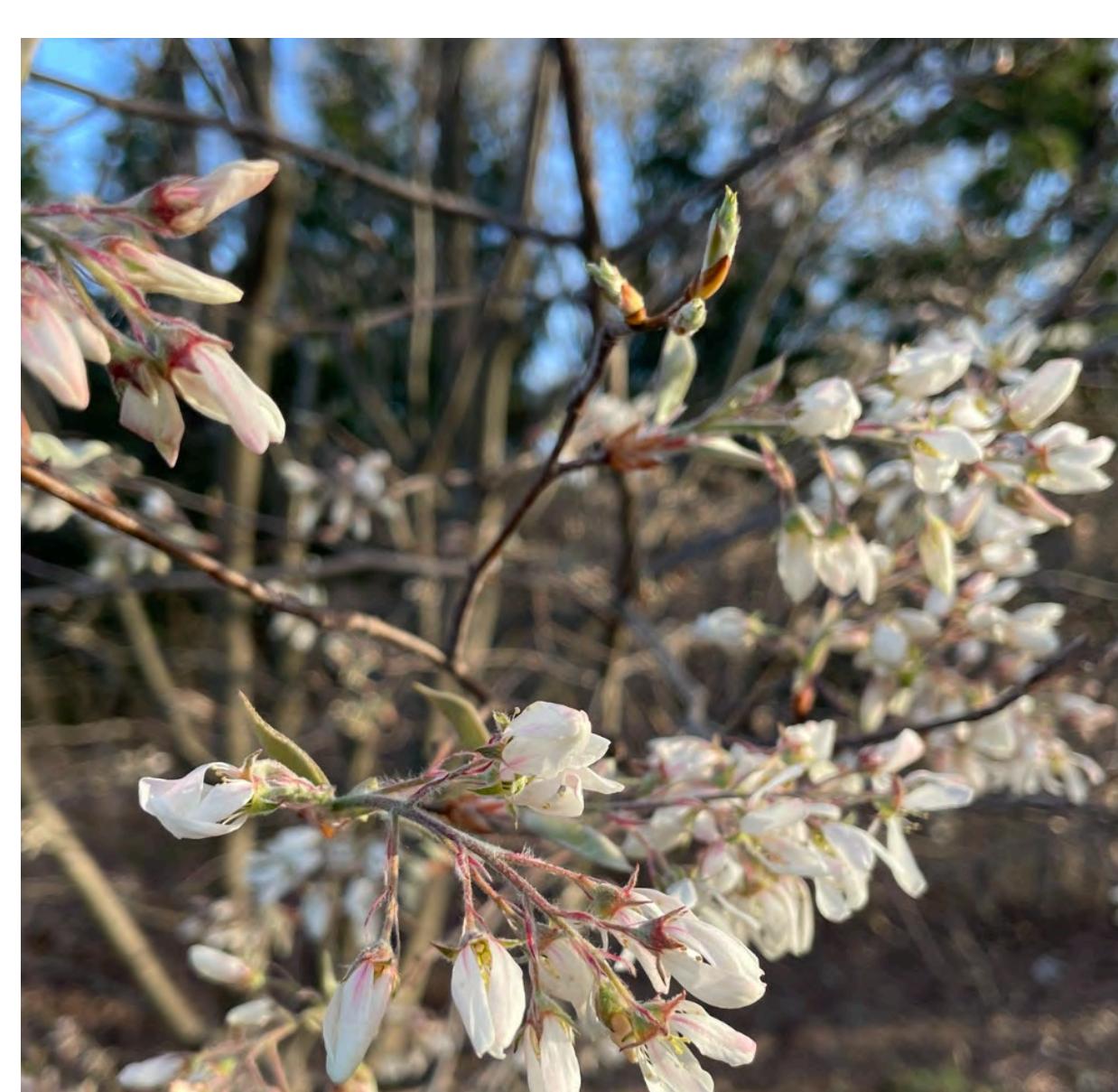
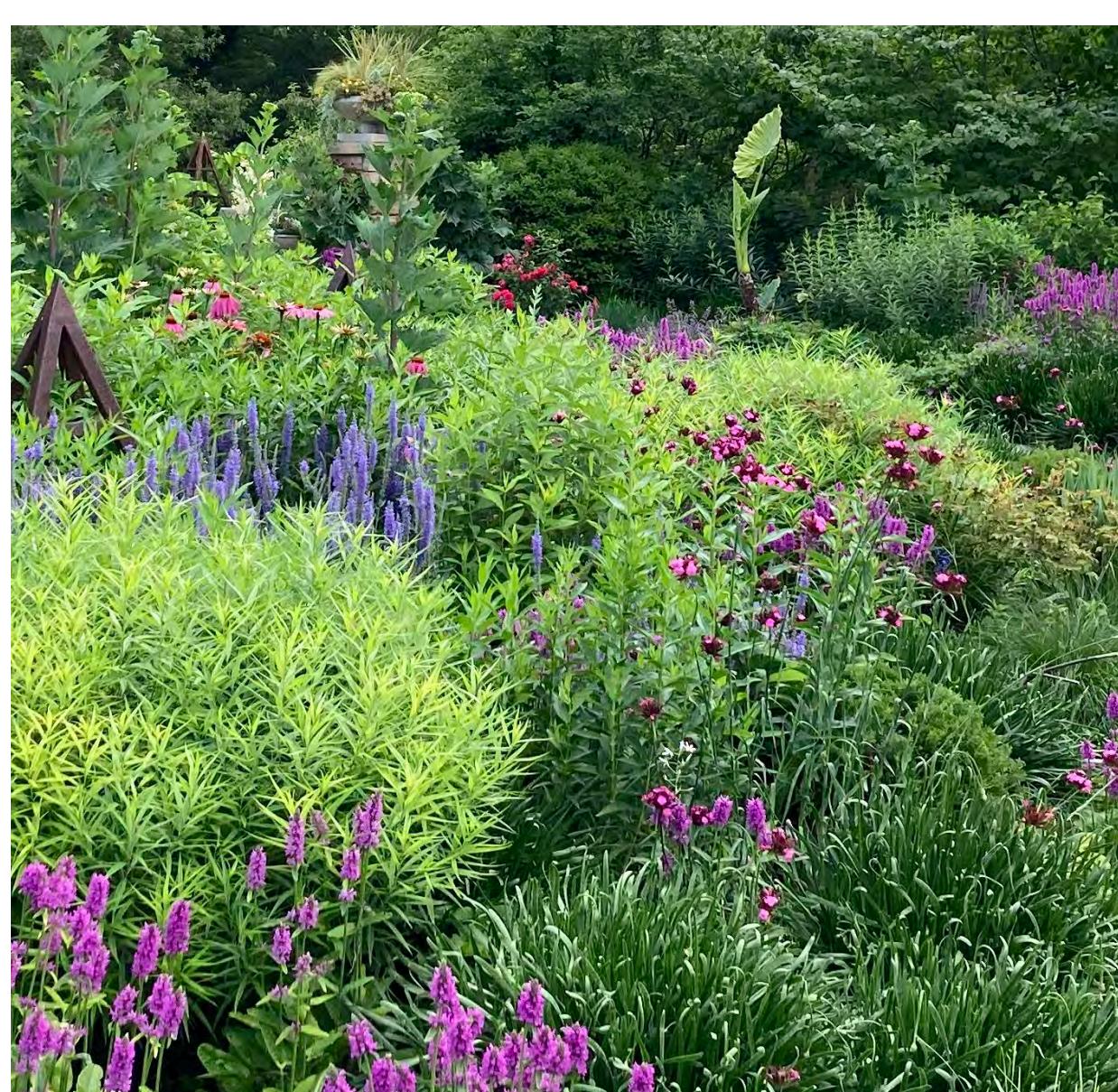
We want to embrace this opportunity while preserving the beauty you value and thoughtfully explore new spaces and experiences to help meet the needs of our growing local community and tourism audience.

This is where you come in! We recently launched a Comprehensive Master Planning process to guide our next chapter.

**Please share your ideas, comments, and feedback to help shape Olbrich's future!**

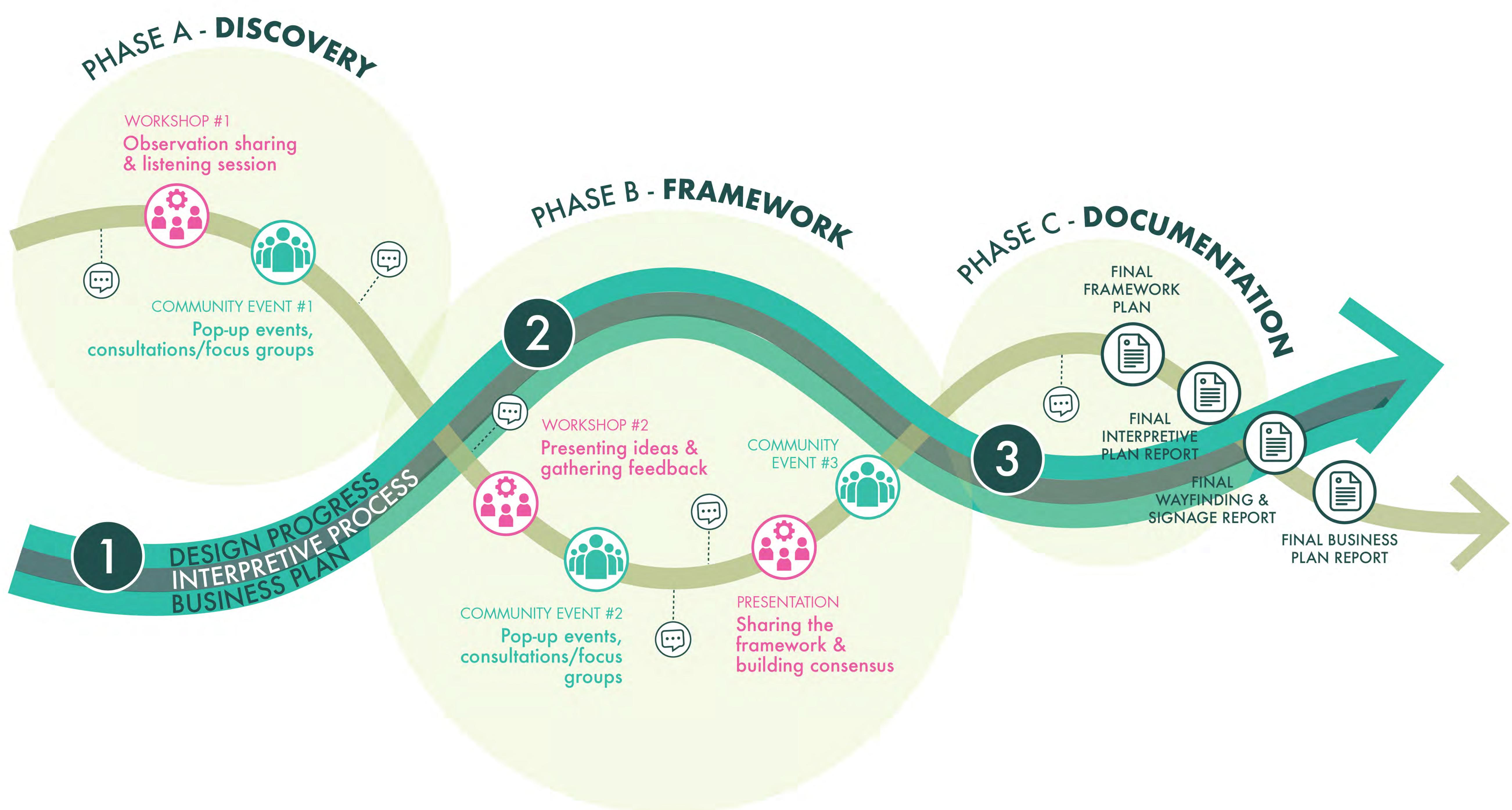


We would love additional input through this on-line questionnaire.



# THE PLANNING PROCESS

Throughout the nine month long comprehensive master planning process, Olbrich Botanical Gardens will explore the stories we tell and how we engage guests at the Gardens. The plan will also undergo extensive financial analyses to ensure a sustainable future for the Gardens.



## 1 PHASE A: DISCOVERY (OCT 2025 TO JAN 2026 - 4 MONTHS)

Build an understanding of existing site conditions and define opportunities and constraints. Conduct listening sessions, have conversations with community stakeholders, and learn about the community's priorities.

## 2 PHASE B: FRAMEWORK (JAN TO MAR 2026 - 3 MONTHS)

Define a set of shared principles to guide design proposals. Create design scenarios based on community feedback, followed by conversations with stakeholders to select on design scenario. Public Workshop on **March 17th, 2026**.

## 3 PHASE C: DOCUMENTATION (APR TO JUNE 2026- 3 MONTHS)

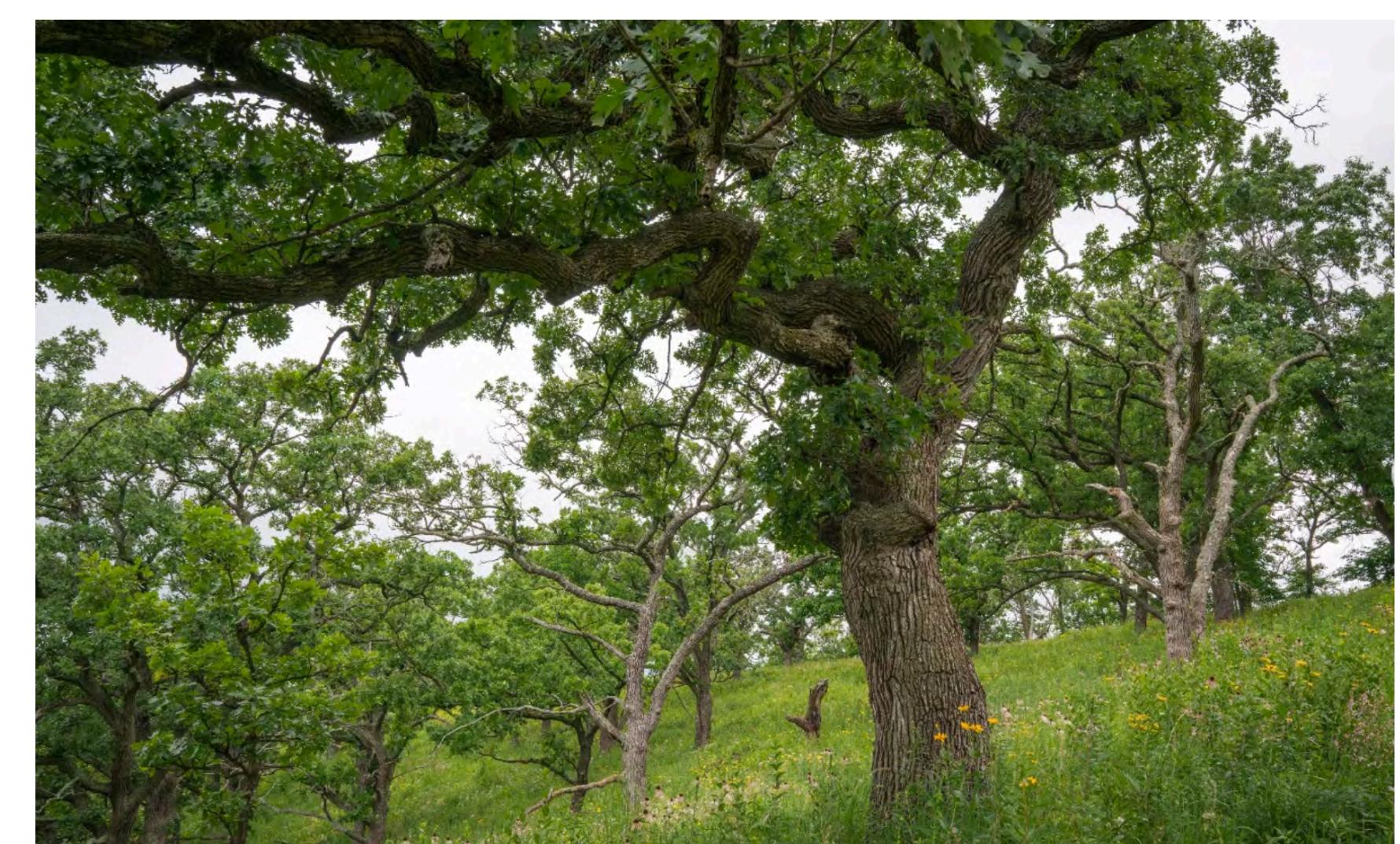
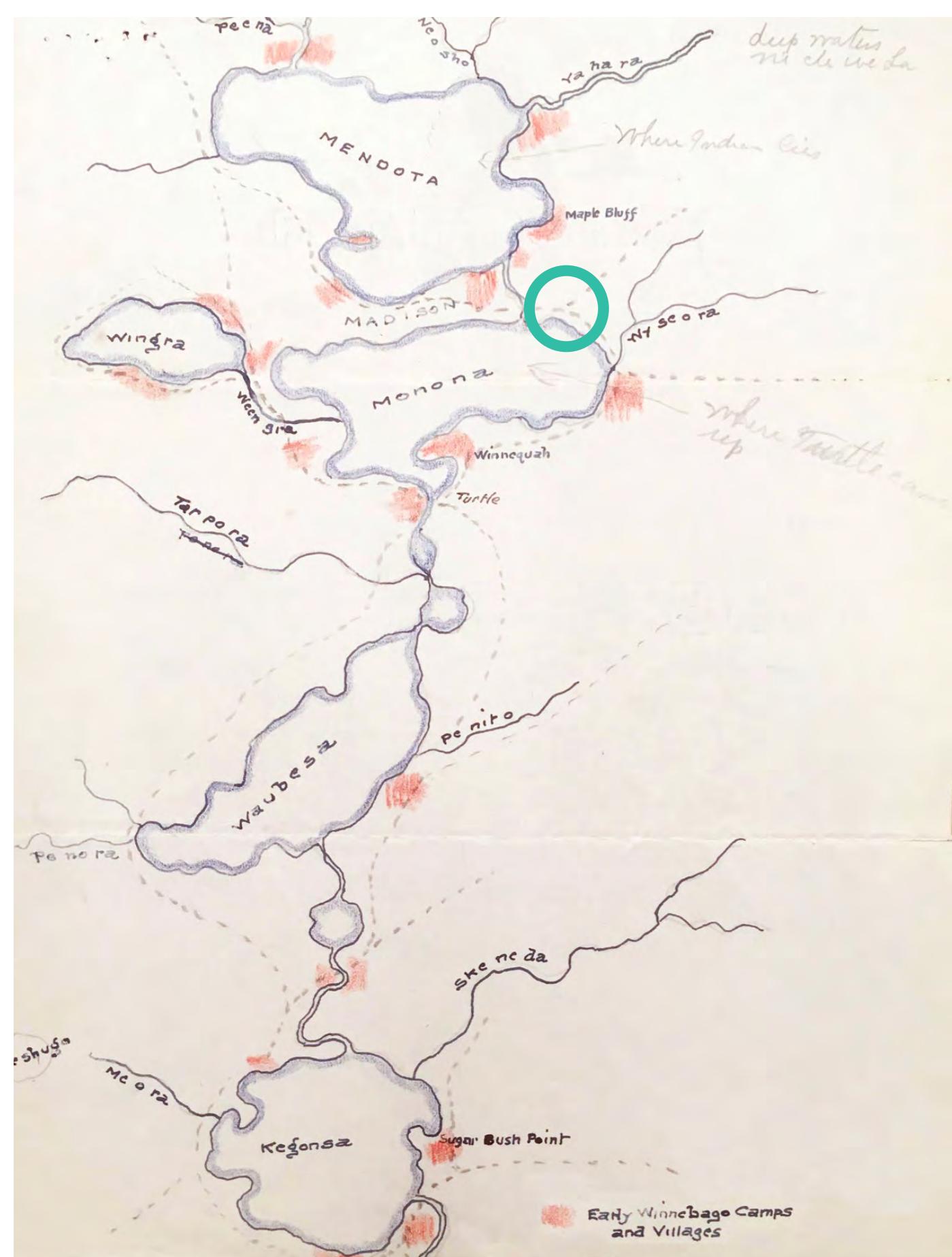
Incorporate feedback from Olbrich communities to refine the future plans for Olbrich Botanical Gardens. Public Event to preview the Plans on **May 20th, 2026**.

# NATURAL HISTORY

## From Earliest Ecologies and Cultures to Today

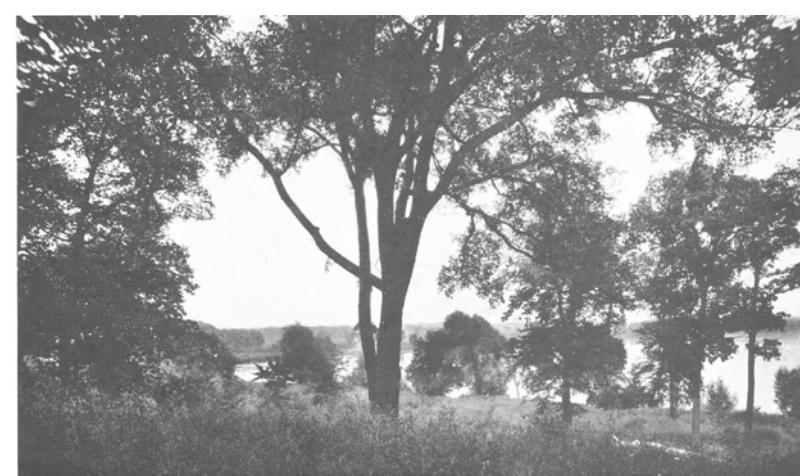
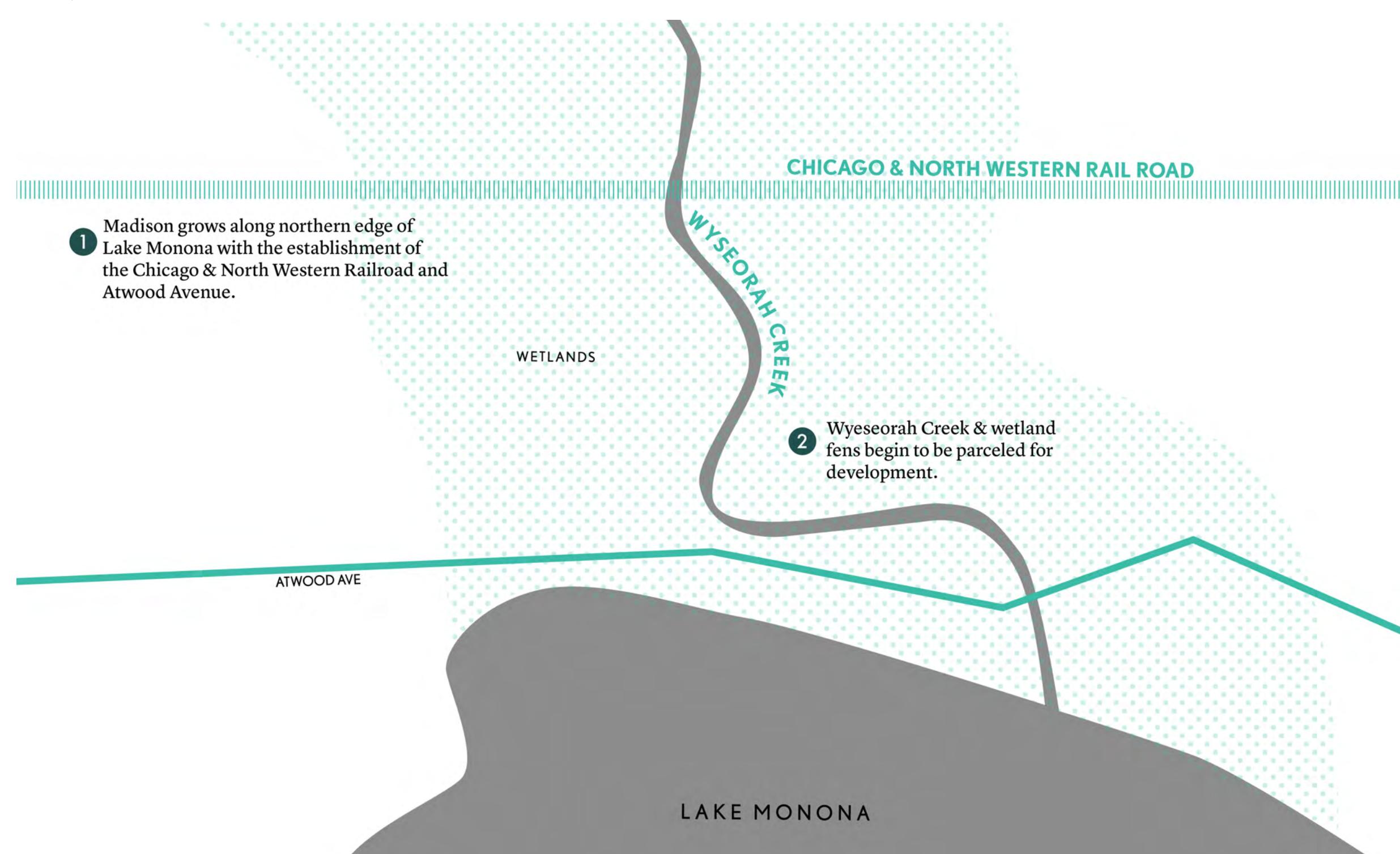
### INDIGENOUS CULTURE AND ENVIRONMENTS

The retreat of glaciers formed Madison's landscape of moraines, drumlins and lakes. In the Madison area, Late Woodland peoples—ancestors of the Ho-Chunk Nation—built numerous effigy mounds; more than 1,500 once existed, with about 200 remaining today. These burial mounds are funerary earthworks, often shaped like animals or spirits and most commonly located near bodies of water. Madison is known to the Ho-Chunk peoples as "Teejop" (Dejope), meaning "Four Lakes." Oak savannas, or "oak openings," and wet prairies were the ecological communities present around the glacial outwash plains of Lake Monona.

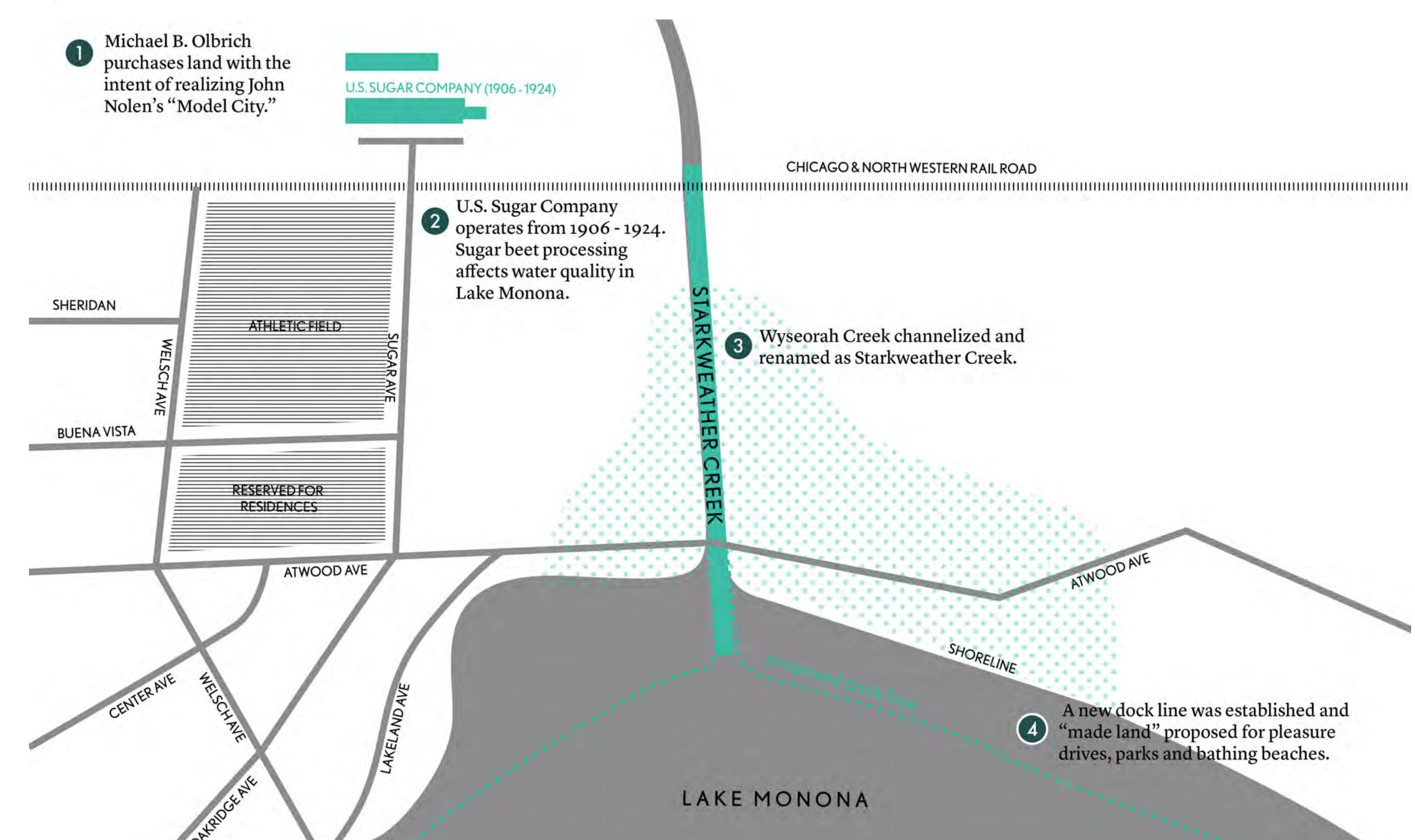


Bur oaks (*Quercus macrocarpa*) are a keystone species in the Midwest and support over 600 species including a diverse array of insects, butterflies and songbirds.

### 1890 - EARLY INFRASTRUCTURE AT WYSEORAH CREEK



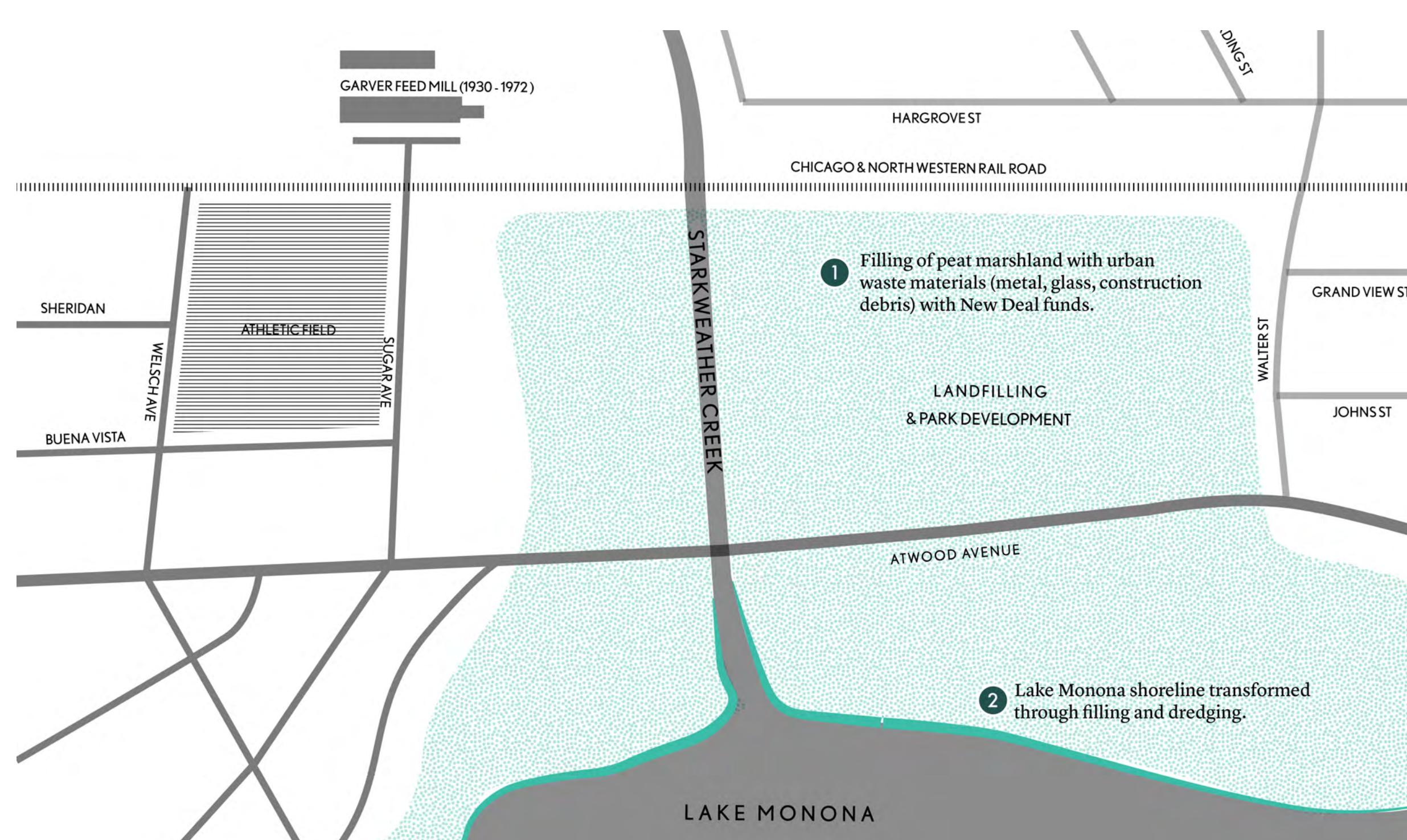
### 1923 - THE OLBRICH PURCHASE



“...something of the grace and beauty that nature intended us all to share. For this park has not a passive, but an active function. It is not to stand aloof, a treasure of the city, beautiful, still, reserved. This park above all others, with a warmth and strength of love - of love of all the working world - should hold out its arms, should invite them to itself, until its naturalness and beauty enter into their lives.”

Michael B. Olbrich, 1921  
From a speech proposing a garden site on Starkweather Creek near Lake Monona

### 1940s - CITY BEAUTIFUL VISION IS REALIZED



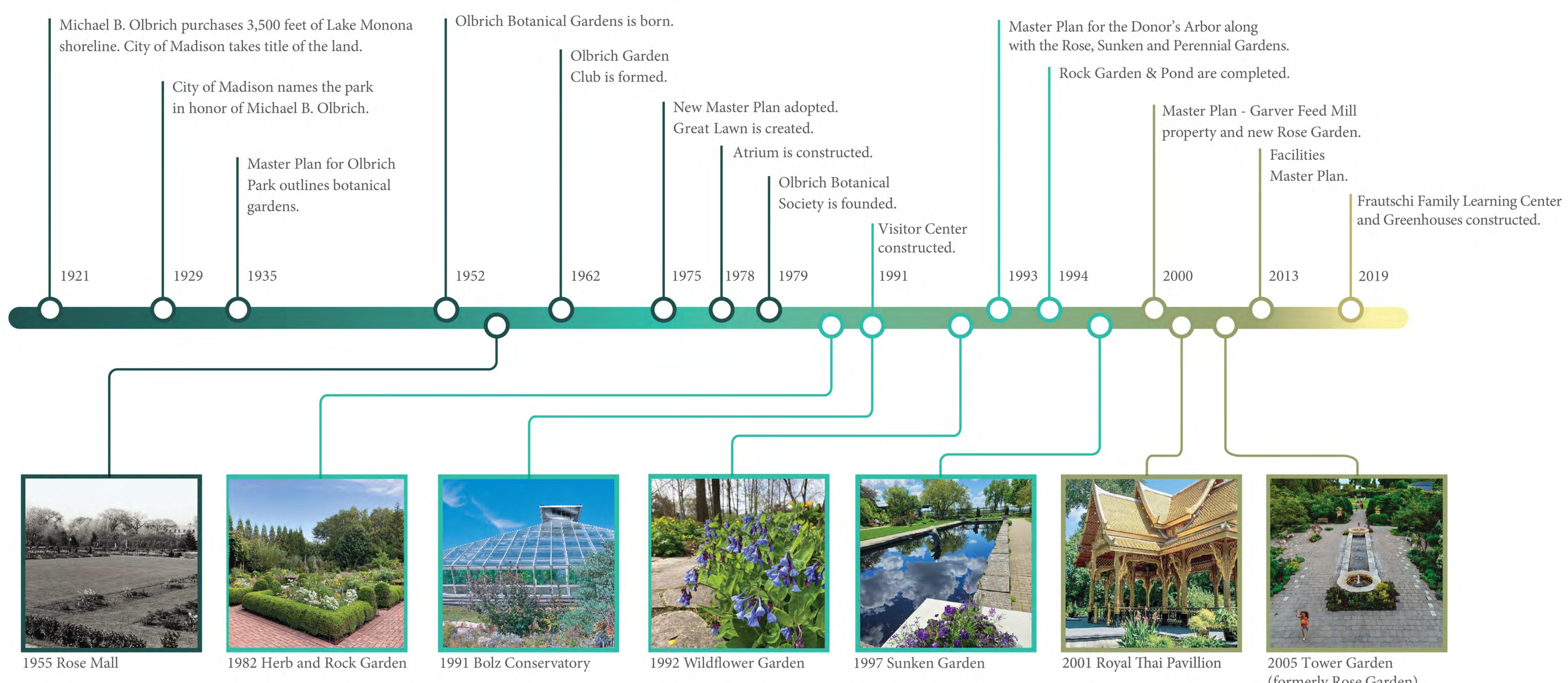
### 1952 - OLBRICH BOTANICAL GARDENS ESTABLISHED



# HISTORY OF OLBRICH

In the last 70 years, Olbrich Gardens has grown from a Rose Mall surrounded by open parkland to a diverse collection of outdoor gardens and a tropical conservatory.

## OLBRICH BOTANICAL GARDENS TIMELINE



# OLBRICH TODAY

## Exploring the Gardens

 *Do you have a favorite garden location? Pin it!*

 *What do you love about it?*

