LETTER FROM LEADERSHIP

Dear Friends and Neighbors,

Thank you for the important role you play in supporting Lotusland as a place of beauty, conservation, learning, and the most spectacular center for ornamental horticulture. As a nonprofit public garden, we care for this extraordinary Garden in a way that honors its history, respects its setting, and ensures it remains welcoming and well-tended for generations to come. Lotusland is treasured locally and admired nationally and globally because of this shared commitment to its cultural heritage and environmental stewardship.

As you know, Lotusland is heralded for its garden design and magnificence, but is challenged by the onerous restrictions of its County Use Permit upon both our operations and our physical property.

Since opening as a public garden in 1993, Lotusland has grown deliberately into its role as a public resource and hub of biodiversity. Today, we look to the future with the same approach that has guided the Garden's oversight and operations for more than three decades: looking ahead carefully while remaining grounded in our identity as a bespoke cultural institution with limited visitation and a keen devotion to our setting within a residential neighborhood. In order to preserve the Garden and promote our mission, many of you have encouraged Lotusland to revisit the County Use Permit. This revision will provide for more guest access and enable improved and enhanced physical structures. As a Board mandate, approved projects would proceed only as funds are raised. To-date, none of the funds to restore our buildings or construct new ones have been secured. We are currently focused simply on obtaining the permits to allow this work.

The Master Plan is a 20-year plan that includes carefully considered physical improvements intended to support essential horticultural and conservation work, accessibility, education, and day-to-day operations. This Master Plan reflects years of collaboration with historians, land use planners, landscape designers, architects, conservationists, engineers, neighbors, and public officials, and has been shaped with care for the Garden's landscape and surroundings. These updates allow Lotusland's long-standing conditions to be reviewed and realigned with current standards, while preserving the unique character and intimate Lotusland guest experience.

We manage our daily number of visitors in the Garden and visitation will remain by advance booking only, to preserve the calm, reflective environment and neighborhood charm that defines Lotusland.

We are deeply grateful to you for your encouragement in this process, and we appreciate the care and interest you entrust to this special place. That Your attentiveness speaks to how deeply Lotusland is valued, and it is through this shared commitment that the Garden can continue to thrive as a place of inspiration, learning, and environmental care for generations to come.

With appreciation,

Rebecca Anderson
Chief Executive Officer

David M. Jones
Board President

Ganna Walska
LOTUSLAND®

695 Ashley Road, Santa Barbara, CA 93108 | 805.969.3767 | lotusland.org

PLANNING & PERMIT PROCESS TIMELINE

The proposed updates follow a multi-year public review and permitting process:

SUSTAINABILITY & OPERATIONAL RESILIENCE

PRACTICAL SYSTEMS THAT SUPPORT SAFETY, RELIABILITY, AND LONG-TERM CARE

Lotusland approaches sustainability as an integrated set of operational systems designed to support the safe, reliable care of the entire property, including the gardens, historic residence, and operational facilities, while reducing strain on shared resources and improving preparedness for the surrounding community. These efforts focus on practical outcomes: reliability, safety, and continuity of operations during both everyday conditions and emergencies.

Water Systems & Emergency Preparedness

Water reliability is a critical component of both sustainability and safety. A new reservoir under construction at the lower portion of the property captures rainwater runoff and pumps it uphill for storage and reuse. Combined with upgraded piping and modernized water management systems, this infrastructure improves irrigation efficiency, supports plant health, and increases on-site water availability.

These improvements strengthen resilience during drought conditions and provide an added layer of preparedness during emergencies, when reliable access to water is essential for landscape protection and fire response.

Fire Safety & Infrastructure Modernization

Lotusland is upgrading aging electrical systems and undergrounding utilities where feasible to reduce ignition risk and improve reliability. These measures, along with ongoing vegetation management, enhance overall safety while preserving the character and ecological integrity of the landscape. Modernized infrastructure allows the property to operate more predictably and quietly, reducing the need for emergency interventions and minimizing disruption within the surrounding neighborhood.

Energy Resilience & Grid Support

Lotusland's goal is to reduce reliance on fossil-fuel-based power while lowering demand and localized impact on the electrical grid. Lightweight, low-profile solar panels are planned for select roof structures in maintenance and parking areas, paired with on-site battery storage. Together, these systems are intended to supply power across Lotusland's operations and reduce grid demand during peak and normal conditions.

To further limit the need for diesel generators, Lotusland is evaluating hydrogen-based power generation, which produces electricity without emissions, fumes, or engine noise, offering a significantly cleaner and quieter alternative for backup power. Portable solar and battery systems are already being used to support events and localized work across the property, reducing generator use, vehicle activity, and temporary grid connections. Over time, the goal is to maintain essential property functions during regional outages and, when feasible, contribute stored energy to support nearby residences and critical local institutions such as Cold Spring School and the Montecito Fire Protection District.

Applied Systems, Shared Benefit

These sustainability measures are intentionally practical and operational in nature. They are designed to improve safety, reliability, and day-to-day functioning across Lotusland while contributing positively to the broader community during periods of stress or disruption. By integrating energy, water, fire safety, and infrastructure planning into a cohesive system, Lotusland aims to serve as a working example of how historic estates and public gardens can responsibly manage risk, reduce resource strain, and strengthen resilience within a residential setting.

What is a Conditional Use Permit (CUP)?

A Conditional Use Permit (CUP) is a County approval that allows community-serving institutions—such as schools, museums, churches, and public gardens—to operate under defined conditions while remaining compatible with surrounding residential neighborhoods.

How does the CUP process work?

Property owners submit an application for review by the County of Santa Barbara. As part of the review process, public notice is provided to surrounding property owners, interested parties, and other responsible agencies.

The County conducts a thorough environmental analysis and evaluates consistency with adopted planning policies, plans and codes, along with state and local regulations. A public hearing is held to assess safety, accessibility, and compatibility with community planning goals and surrounding uses.

If approved, the CUP includes specific conditions that define how the property may operate reasonably and responsibly over time. CUPs may be updated periodically to align with current safety codes, environmental practices, accessibility standards, and operational needs.

Why must Lotusland revise its CUP?

Lotusland has operated under its current CUP since the early 1990s. Since that time, regulatory standards, accessibility requirements, environmental regulations, and operational best practices have evolved.

As a 37-acre historic estate garden approaching 100 years in age, Lotusland must preserve both its internationally significant plant collections and its aging buildings and infrastructure. The current CUP limits annual visitation to 20,000 visitors, constraining the Garden's ability to support long-range operations and invest in ongoing preservation.

Revising the CUP aligns long-standing permit conditions with current standards and supports long-term institutional stability.

How will proposed improvements be implemented over time?

The Master Plan reflects a long-range planning horizon of approximately 20 years. Projects would be prioritized based on institutional needs, preservation requirements, safety considerations, and guest experience.

Improvements would be phased over time, scheduled to minimize neighborhood disruption, and implemented in compliance with all required approvals.

Approval of the CUP does not require construction of all elements shown in the plan. Proposed improvements would proceed only as feasible, subject to fundraising and future permitting.

How does this proposal benefit the broader neighborhood?

The proposed updates support the long-term preservation of a 37-acre historic estate garden that contributes to Montecito's open space character, environmental health, and cultural vitality.

The improvements strengthen long-term stewardship, enhance environmental practices, and maintain compatibility with the surrounding residential neighborhood.

How many visitors is Lotusland currently allowed to host each year?

Under the existing CUP, total annual visitation is capped at 20,000 visitors.

How would visitation change under the proposed update?

Increase visitor access to the garden would be achieved primarily by expanding operations to year-round, except on major holidays, providing Lotusland with needed flexibility to broaden community access and financially support the institution, while still managing visitation through advance reservations and minimizing effects on the surrounding neighborhood.

Is Lotusland increasing the number of visitors per day?

Lotusland proposes a 25% increase in daily public visitors, moving from 200 to 250 daily visitors, and will continue to manage visitation through advance booking only. Lotusland's CUP would limit visitation to an annual maximum of 70,000.

What makes up the 7,500 educational visitors?

Educational visitation serves students, educators, and community groups and is supported through private donor funding. These programs advance plant conservation, sustainable horticulture, and environmental stewardship and are central to Lotusland's mission.

Where can I find more information?

Additional materials regarding the CUP application and County review process are available at lotusland.org.

Questions may be directed to (805) 969-3767.

How can I help?

Community members who are interested in learning more, staying informed, or serving as ambassadors in support of Lotusland's long-term stewardship are invited to contact:

Rebecca Anderson
randerson@lotusland.org

Lotusland remains committed to transparency and thoughtful engagement throughout the review process.

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HORTICULTURE COMPLEX

The new nursery and related elements are designed to support the daily work of caring for the Garden's living collections, providing functional, well-organized spaces for staff, tools, and plant care operations.

Strategic Impact:

- Strengthens long-term plant care and conservation stewardship
- Supports sustainable horticulture and responsible resource use
- Expands educational and professional training
- Enhances participation in global conservation partnerships
- Improves organization, safety, and effectiveness of horticultural work

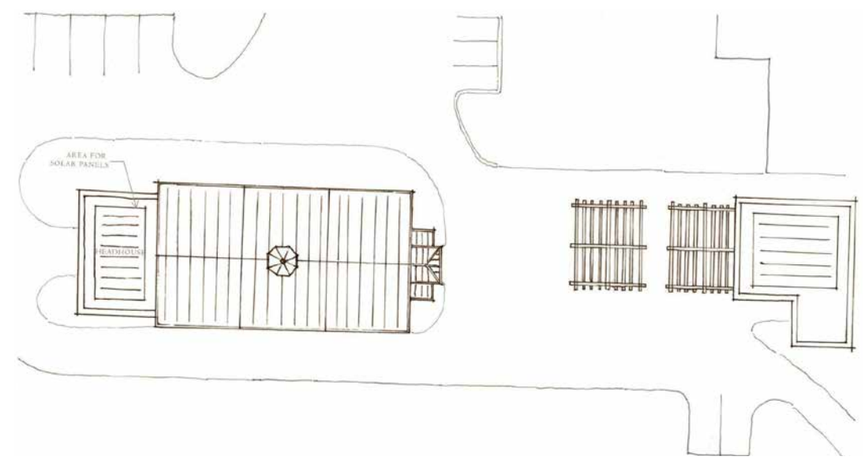
HORTICULTURE COMPLEX

The proposed Horticulture Complex is designed to bring Lotusland's essential horticultural work together by consolidating propagation, plant care, and conservation activities in a purpose-built setting appropriate for a world-class botanical garden. Building on the Garden's existing nursery footprint, the complex would provide dedicated, well-organized spaces that strengthen the long-term stewardship of the living collections that define Lotusland.

Planned elements will include controlled growing environments, practical work areas for horticultural staff, and curation offices. Together, these components would improve coordination, safety, and consistency in plant care while supporting sustainable horticultural practices and responsible resource management.

The Horticulture Complex would also expand Lotusland's capacity to share knowledge through workshops, training opportunities, and educational programs rooted in sustainable horticulture and conservation. As a member of Botanic Gardens Conservation International (BGCI), Lotusland participates in global efforts to safeguard rare and threatened plant species; this facility will support these types of collaborations by providing modern infrastructure for propagation, research, and conservation exchange.

Carefully sited within an already developed area, the complex reflects a thoughtful approach to planning—supporting the Garden's critical work while preserving the landscape character, tranquility, and sense of place valued by the surrounding community.



Horticulture Complex rendering courtesy of Harrison Design. These materials are conceptual and for illustrative purposes only. Final designs are subject to refinement and approval through the required review and permitting processes.

OUTDOOR CLASSROOM

The Outdoor Classroom is a proposed open-air learning space that supports education, school programs, and interpretive experiences rooted directly in the Garden's landscape.

Strategic Impact:

- Creates an outdoor learning environment for educational programs
- Enhances the experience of student groups and supports curriculum-aligned instruction
- Demonstrates environmental responsibility through the reuse of reclaimed natural materials
- Strengthens Lotusland's ability to serve the community by increasing accessible gathering areas and through mission-driven programming

OUTDOOR CLASSROOM

The Outdoor Classroom is a dedicated open-air learning space that strengthens Lotusland's educational mission while offering a calm, nature-integrated setting for school groups and small gatherings. Located near the Tropical Garden and integrated within the Garden's oak woodland area, it provides a welcoming place for students arriving by bus as well as for visitors participating in outdoor talks or mission-aligned programs.

Designed to blend gently into the landscape, the Outdoor Classroom uses the Garden itself as the primary teaching environment, framed by native oaks and diverse plant collections. Seating elements are envisioned using reclaimed wood from fallen trees on the property—reflecting Lotusland's long-standing commitment to responsible stewardship and thoughtful resource use.

The space is intended to comfortably accommodate small to mid-sized student groups—typically two to three classes at a time—while remaining quiet, open, and appropriate to its garden setting.

The Outdoor Classroom supports Lotusland's role as a regional educational resource. Programs such as the Junior Botanists initiative and the fourth-grade outreach program—serving thousands of students each year at no cost to participating schools—offer hands-on learning experiences focused on plant biodiversity, conservation, and sustainable horticulture. The Outdoor Classroom further enhances these efforts by providing a dedicated setting for school visits, seasonal programs, and collaborative educational activities with community partners.

Outdoor Classroom rendering courtesy of Arcadia Studio. These materials are conceptual and for illustrative purposes only. Final designs are subject to refinement and approval through the required review and permitting processes.

IMPROVED CIRCULATION & VEHICLE ACCESS

Proposed circulation improvements focus on organizing arrival, service, and emergency access in a clear, safe, and efficient manner that reflects how the Garden functions today.

Strategic Impact:

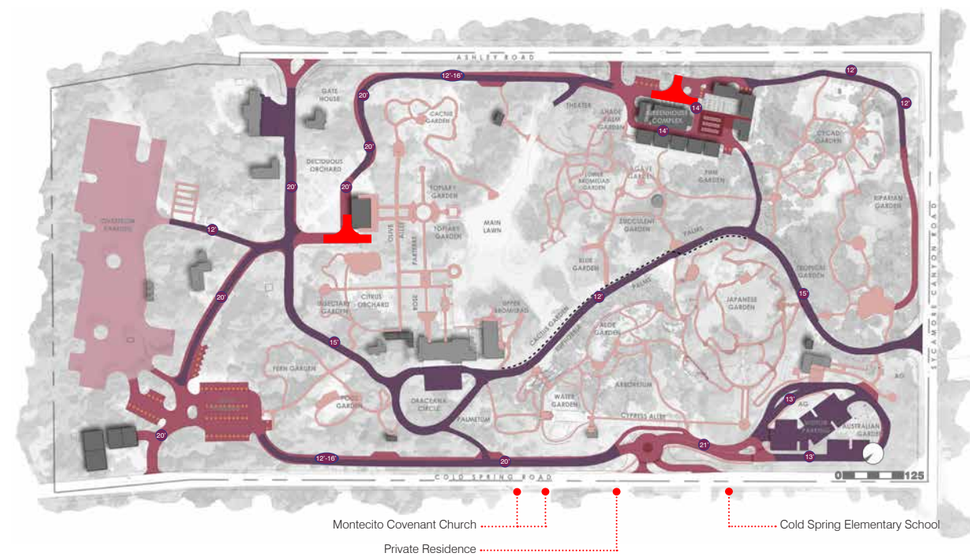
- *Enhances* emergency response capability and overall safety
- *Supports* clear, orderly arrival and departure patterns
- *Maintains* compatibility with neighborhood streets and character
- *Reinforces* calm, low-impact vehicle movement aligned with the Garden's setting

IMPROVED CIRCULATION & VEHICLE ACCESS

Lotusland's approach to circulation emphasizes safety, clarity, and respect for the quiet, residential character of the surrounding area. The proposed updates focus on fine-tuning how vehicles enter, move through, and exit the Garden, supporting smooth and predictable arrivals and departures.

Improvements are proposed at the two existing Cold Spring gates, where modest refinements will help maintain orderly circulation during scheduled arrival windows and ensure seamless coordination between on-site circulation and the adjacent roadway. *These updates are refinement measures intended to support efficient movement and emergency routes within the Garden's established access points, while maintaining calm conditions along neighboring streets.*

In addition, a single service-only gate is proposed off Ashley Road at the request of the fire department. This access point is intended solely to support emergency response and provide a safe, direct route for service and safety vehicles as needed. It will not function as a visitor entrance.



Circulation & Vehicle Access rendering courtesy of Arcadia Studio. These materials are conceptual and for illustrative purposes only. Final designs are subject to refinement and approval through the required review and permitting processes.

Symbol Legend

- New Stone Drainage Swale
- Existing Vehicular Route
- New & Renovated Vehicular Route
- New & Existing Pedestrian Route
- Proposed Staff/ Volunteer Parking Spaces (60)
- Firetruck Hammerhead

All circulation updates are designed to remain discreet and consistent with the Garden's landscape and architectural context, preserving the gentle approach and scenic quality that define Lotusland.

GARDEN RESTROOM

The Garden Restroom is designed to provide thoughtfully integrated, accessible facilities located where they are most needed, while remaining compatible with the Garden's setting and visitor experience.

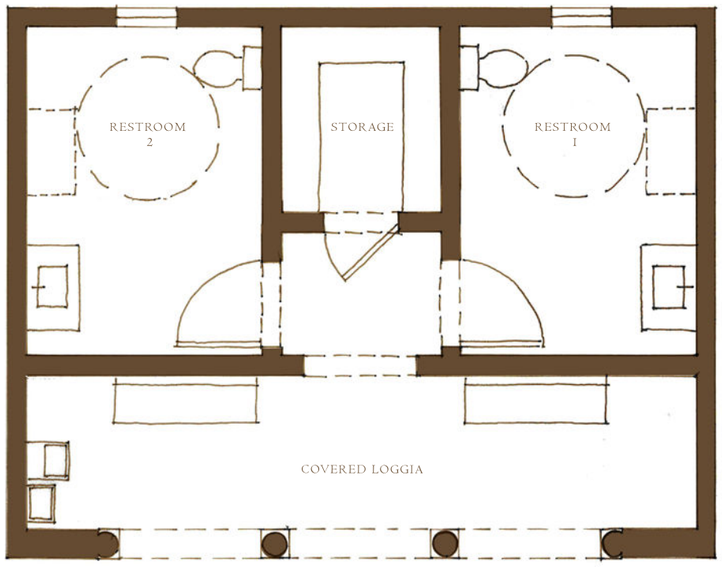
Strategic Impact:

- *Improves* accessibility and comfort for visitors of all ages and abilities
- *Provides* a discreet, low-impact restroom solution within existing garden areas
- *Supports* educational visits and inclusive access initiatives
- *Enhances* overall circulation and visitor experience

GARDEN RESTROOM

The proposed Garden Restroom will enhance visitor experience by providing an accessible, thoughtfully sited restroom facility within one of Lotusland's most frequently visited areas. *With the Garden spanning 37 acres and existing restrooms located at opposite ends of the property, this improvement responds to a clear and longstanding need—particularly for children, older visitors, school groups, and guests with mobility considerations.*

Thoughtfully sited and carefully designed, this pavilion will be visibly compatible with the surrounding landscape and preserve the natural character of the Garden. It will replace temporary restroom solutions and improve the quality and accessibility of facilities throughout the Garden, while maintaining the quiet atmosphere and sense of immersion that define the visitor experience.



Garden Restroom rendering courtesy of Harrison Design. These materials are conceptual and for illustrative purposes only. Final designs are subject to refinement and approval through the required review and permitting processes.

ORCHARD PAVILION

The Orchard Pavilion is envisioned as a gathering space that supports education, community connection, and essential visitor amenities within a thoughtfully scaled structure.

Strategic Impact:

- *Strengthens* educational, cultural, and community programming capacity and enables administration to function without disruption of programming
- *Provides* essential visitor amenities within a discreet, compatible structure
- *Expands* opportunities for creative collaboration and mission-aligned partnerships
- *Enhances* accessibility and inclusion for all visitors
- *Supports* long-term financial resilience through thoughtfully managed, mission-supportive activities

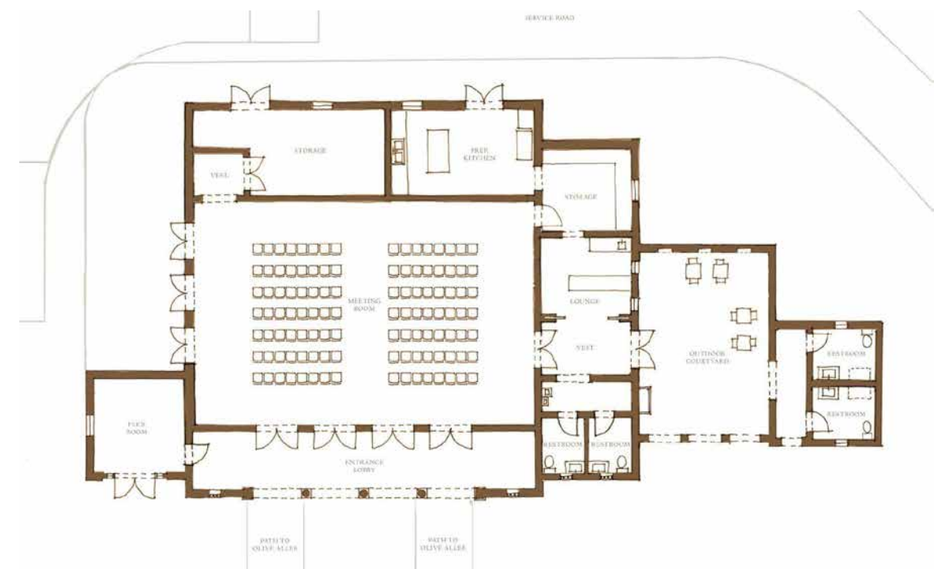
ORCHARD PAVILION

Lotusland is a destination for education, community engagement, and cultural exchange. The proposed Orchard Pavilion will support this role through a thoughtfully scaled, flexible gathering space designed for workshops, talks, and small educational programs, along with discreetly integrated visitor restrooms located at a midpoint within the garden, where amenities are needed.

The Orchard Pavilion is envisioned as a place for learning, dialogue, and creative enrichment, hosting guest speakers, workshops, and collaborative gatherings with nonprofit partners, educators, artists, and cultural organizations. The space may also accommodate occasional retreats or small gatherings, consistent with the Garden's tranquil character and mission.

The site and design have been developed in collaboration with skilled architects, landscape professionals, and environmental advisors to ensure a sensitive relationship to the surrounding landscape and Olive Allée setting. Fully ADA-accessible, the Pavilion will allow visitors of all abilities to participate comfortably in programs and activities, reinforcing Lotusland's longstanding commitment to inclusive public access.

Together, these elements enhance the Garden's ability to advance its educational and cultural mission while supporting long-term vitality through thoughtfully scaled modern amenities.



Orchard Pavilion rendering courtesy of Harrison Design. These materials are conceptual and for illustrative purposes only. Final designs are subject to refinement and approval through the required review and permitting processes.

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