



The Plant

Enhancement Master Plan Charette Summary

On October 15, 2023, a community participatory charette was held at **The Plant**, a premiere destination for the whole family in Pittsboro, North Carolina.

The charette was held in support of upcoming masterplanning activities by landscape architect, Preston Montague, as well as colleagues with experience leading charettes, interpreting results, and designing masterplans. The charette was held for two hours and visitors to The Plant's inaugural Chestnut Carnival dropped in and provided answers to a series of carefully designed questions. The questions helped visitors think through improvements to The Plant, incrementally shifting participant thought from aspirational feelings to fine details. The following report provides the results of these questions, as well as analysis of the results in support of providing The Plant with a masterplan from which stakeholders can make informed decisions in regards to improvements and programming. In short, updating the environment of The Plant to meet the needs and wants of a rapidly expanding public takes a village.

Preston Montague would like to thank designers Melissa Amoabeng, Michael Arnsberger, Sami Allen, Paul Hesselblad and Zeke Wilkinson for their assistance in preparing not only this charette, but also with support services like drone photography and basemap development. And, of course, the many people who participated in the charette and helped provide direction to the upcoming masterplan.



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The Plant: Existing Conditions

The Plant provides visitors with a variety of environments and activities to suit a wide range of ages, abilities, and interests. Undoubtedly one of the Triangle's top eco-tourism destinations, The Plant is a place to enjoy locally crafted food and beverages, pick up a gift or two, dance to live music, and stroll with loved ones in an eclectic setting full of surprises, humor, and adventure.



Parking near the entrance



Main Street



Cafe setting outside businesses



Integration of landscape settings



Social spaces and cool buildings



Seating for extroverts and introverts



Play at every turn



Connections to food and craft



Quiet moments in nature



The Plant: Charette Questions

Where have you been at The Plant?

First, identify what places are interesting or comfortable to visit.

Overwhelmingly, participants indicated that they have visited the buildings and gathering spaces along The Strip.

"The comfort and strength of community."

What feelings would you like to experience at The Plant? Where would you like to experience these feelings?

Second, identify the broader feelings visitors would like to leave with.

What activities would you like to enjoy at The Plant? Where would you like to enjoy these activities?

Third, identify activities that support the feelings visitors aspire to leave with.

"More kid friendly events, like camp-outs, scouts, and birthdays... in effort to build the next generation."

"Security, because there are no fences or gates. Although I'm sure it will be okay; the space is full of enough love to prevent issues."

What features or furnishing support the activities you suggested?

Fourth, identify furnishings that support desired activities.

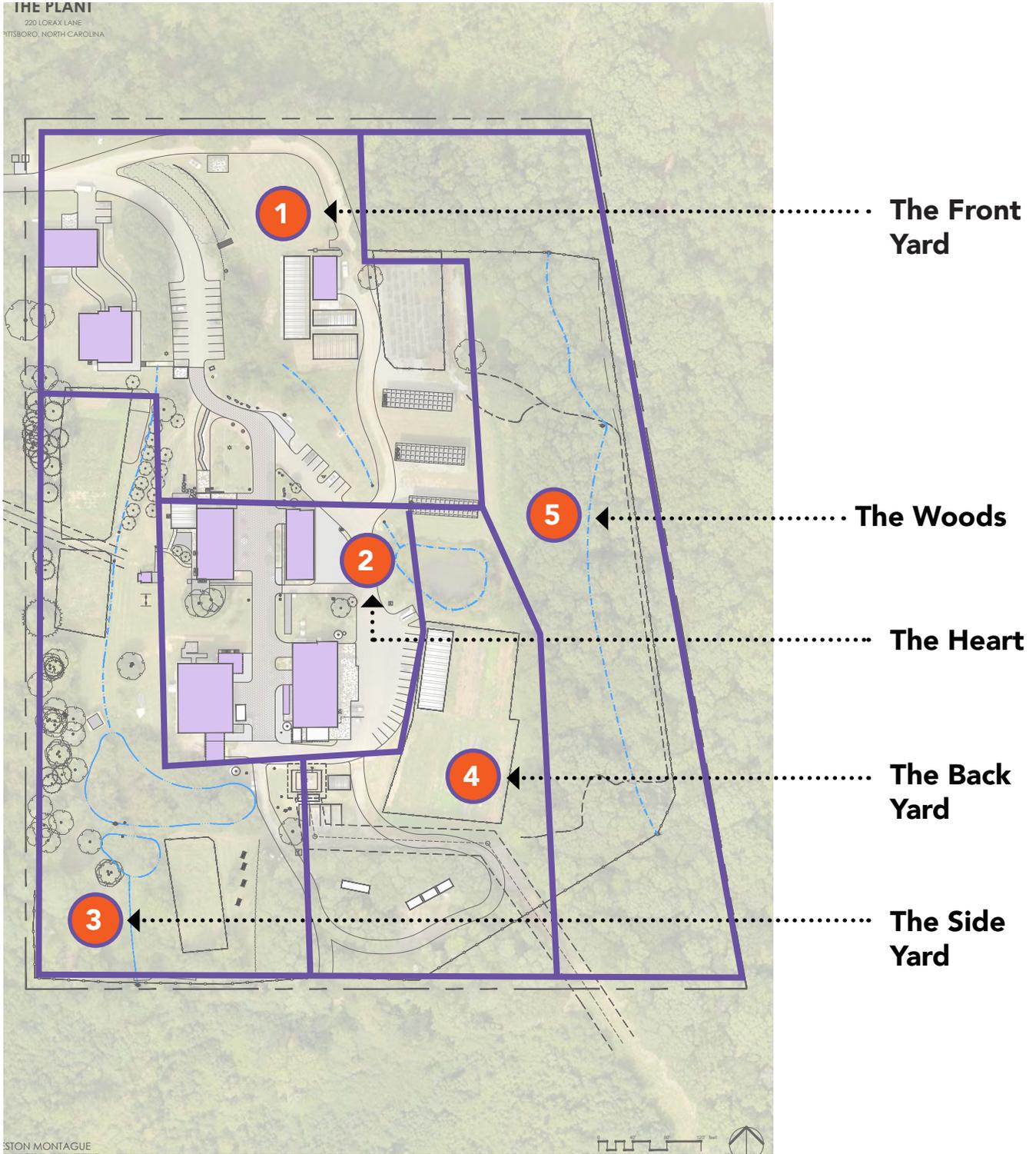
Where haven't you explored at The Plant yet? Why?

Lastly, identify places on the property that haven't piqued visitor curiosity.

"I haven't spent much time on the nature trail near the bridge. Maybe encourage guests to wander the natural areas."



The Plant: Zones



Current Impressions...



Goals and Programmatic Elements

The Community Design Charette at The Plant in Pittsboro brought together visitors throughout central North Carolina to give input on the future of the eco-industrial park. About 45 people participated in sharing their thoughts on five questions to help guide the future direction of the beloved community space. This event coincided with the first annual Chestnut Carnival and many people gathered to enjoy roasted chestnuts and share a chestnut beer.

Initially participants were asked where they have been at The Plant and to mark that spot with an X on a base map. Many of the X's were located in Zone 2, "the heart" of The Plant and at Rachel's Native Plants in Zone 1. Participants were then asked to look inside and describe feelings that they would like to experience at The Plant. The top 5 feelings that were expressed were: Community, Relaxed, Inspiration, Wonder, and Togetherness. "Togetherness" was deduced from feelings noting friendship, love, and family time.

The third question had the most responses with a total of 63 sticky notes: What activities would you like to experience at The Plant and where? Responses were recorded corresponding with zone. The bulk of repeat responses expressed an interest in live music, with dancing following close behind. Another frequently repeated activity was nature trails which were placed mostly in Zones 3, 4, and 5. Question four followed by identifying features and furnishings to support those activities mentioned in the previous question. Maps and signage were suggested to improve way-finding, as well as attention to improving non-accessible areas throughout the grounds. Additionally, native plantings, security, and hammocks were often noted.

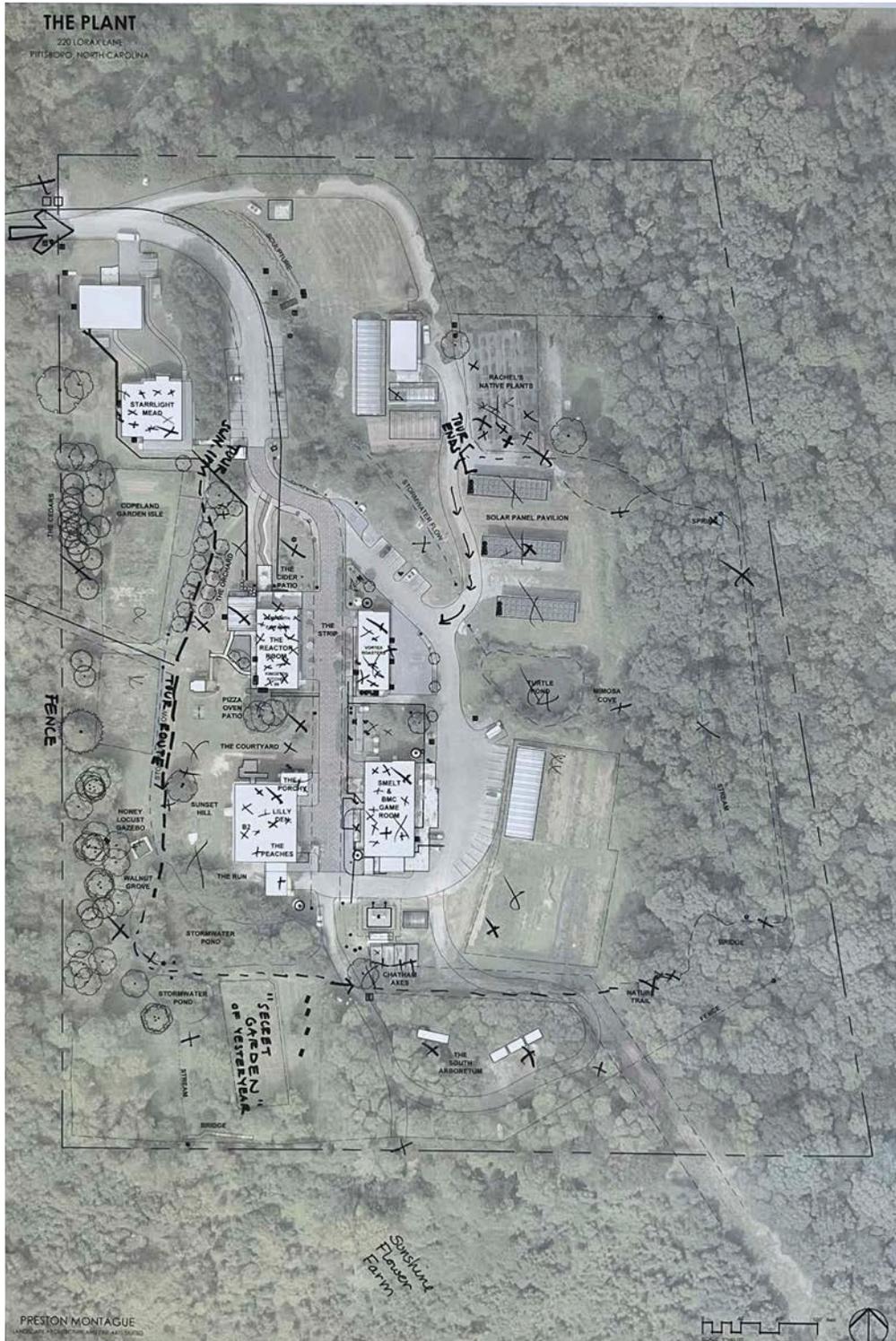
Finally, charette participants ended on asking questions. A vast majority of responses to question five indicated the desire to get oriented at The Plant and to have a better understanding of what is offered and how to get around.





Where have you been at The Plant? X marks the spot!

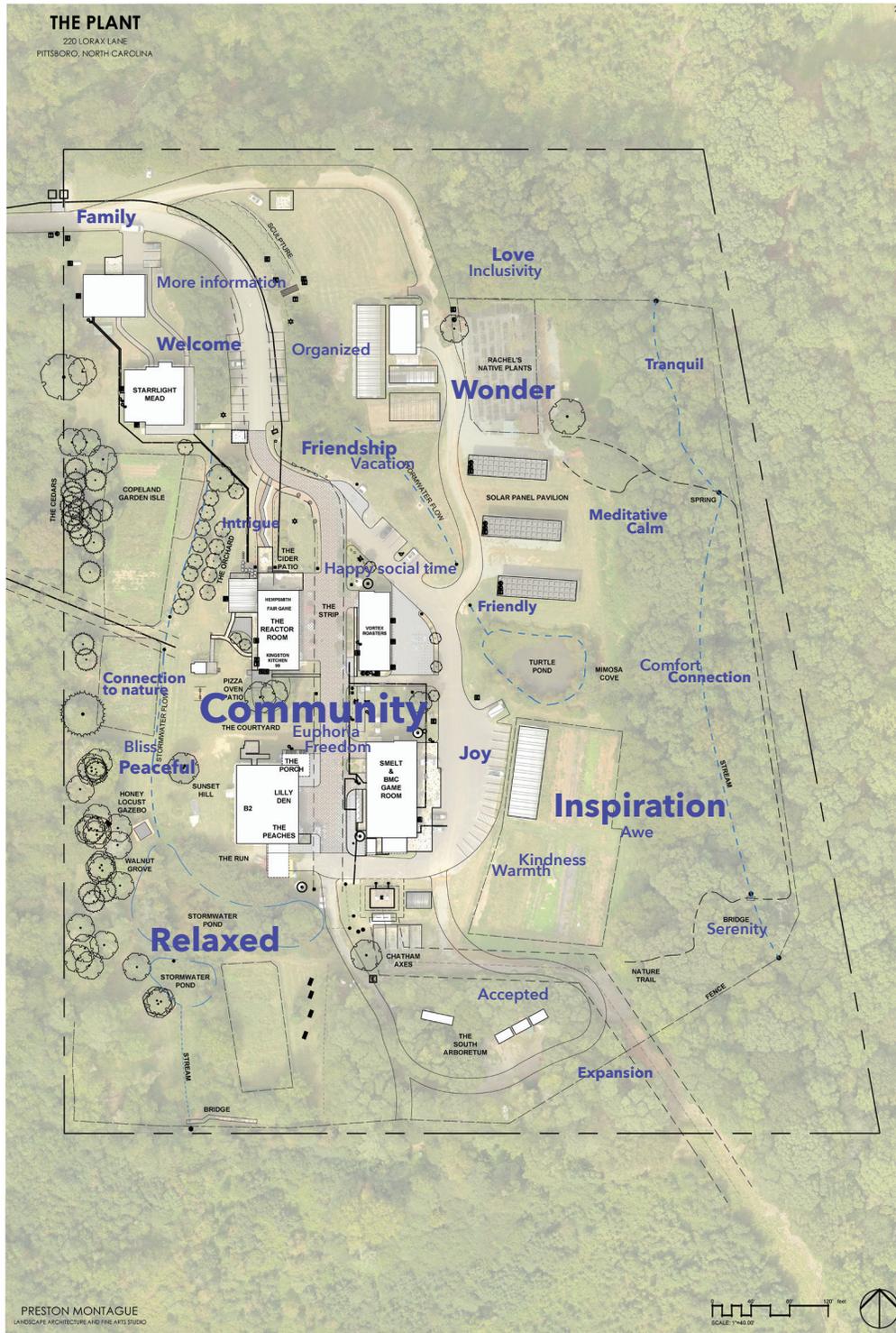
Question 1



"A place to express friendship."

"A place to feel wonder and at peace."

Question 2



Activities most frequently mentioned...

Dancing **Live Music**

good food options

outdoor movies

Nature Trails

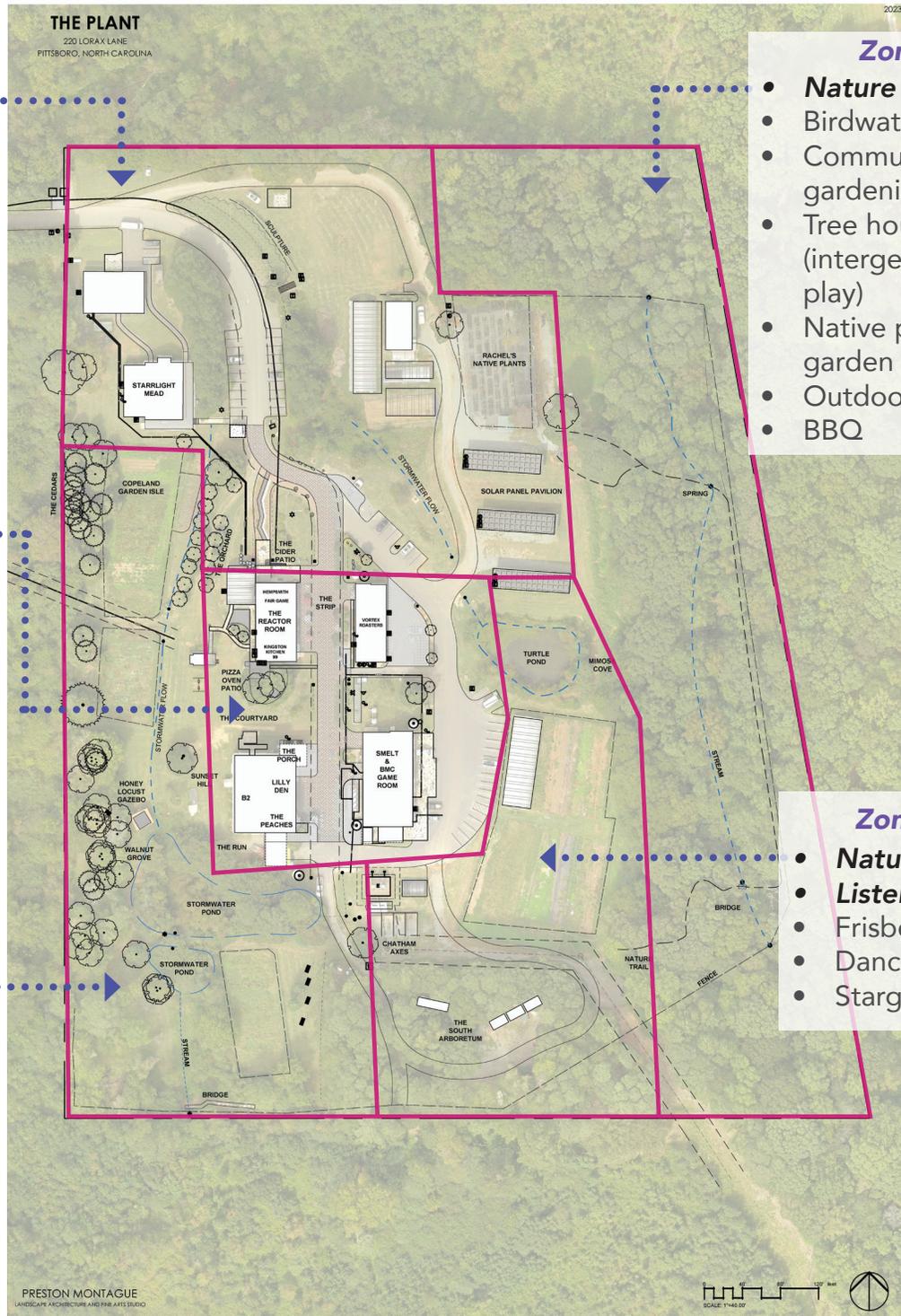
- Zone 1**
- **Workshops**
 - **Outdoor movies**
 - Honey tasting
 - Outdoor drawing classes
 - Cozy lunch dates
 - Poetry slams
 - Storytelling

- Zone 2**
- **Listen to music**
 - **Dancing**
 - **Eating outside**
 - People watching
 - Cooking classes
 - Jugglers
 - Spend time with Family
 - Bocce ball
 - Shopping

- Zone 3**
- **Listen to music**
 - **Dancing**
 - **Nature Play**
 - Sculpture
 - Garden / Show
 - Picnics
 - Hammocks

- Zone 5**
- **Nature trails**
 - Birdwatching
 - Community gardening
 - Tree house (intergenerational play)
 - Native plant garden / meadow
 - Outdoor movies
 - BBQ

- Zone 4**
- **Nature trails**
 - **Listen to music**
 - Frisbee Golf
 - Dancing
 - Stargazing



Features or furnishings most frequently mentioned...

native plantings
Accessibility

maps & signage

Picnic areas
MORE SEATING

Zone 1

- **Native plant demo gardens**
- **Maps and signage**
- Trail to downtown
- Security
- Gazebo

Zone 2

- **Native plantings**
- **Maps and signage**
- Seating near play area and along The Strip
- Accessibility improvements
- Teaching kitchen

Zone 3

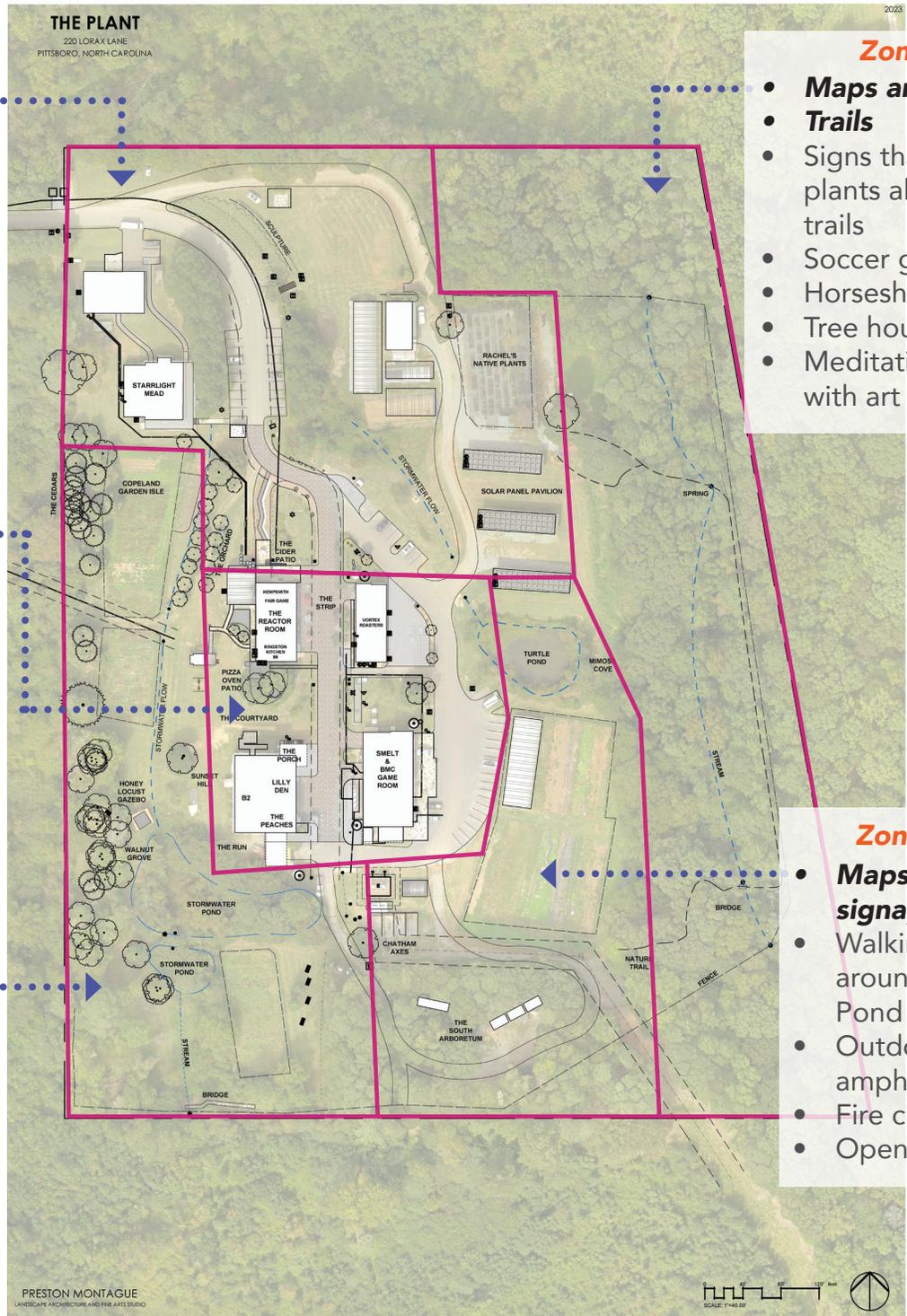
- **Maps and signage**
- **Wheelchair accessible paths**
- **Hammocks**
- Bocce court
- Picnic areas
- Outdoor games
- More seating

Zone 5

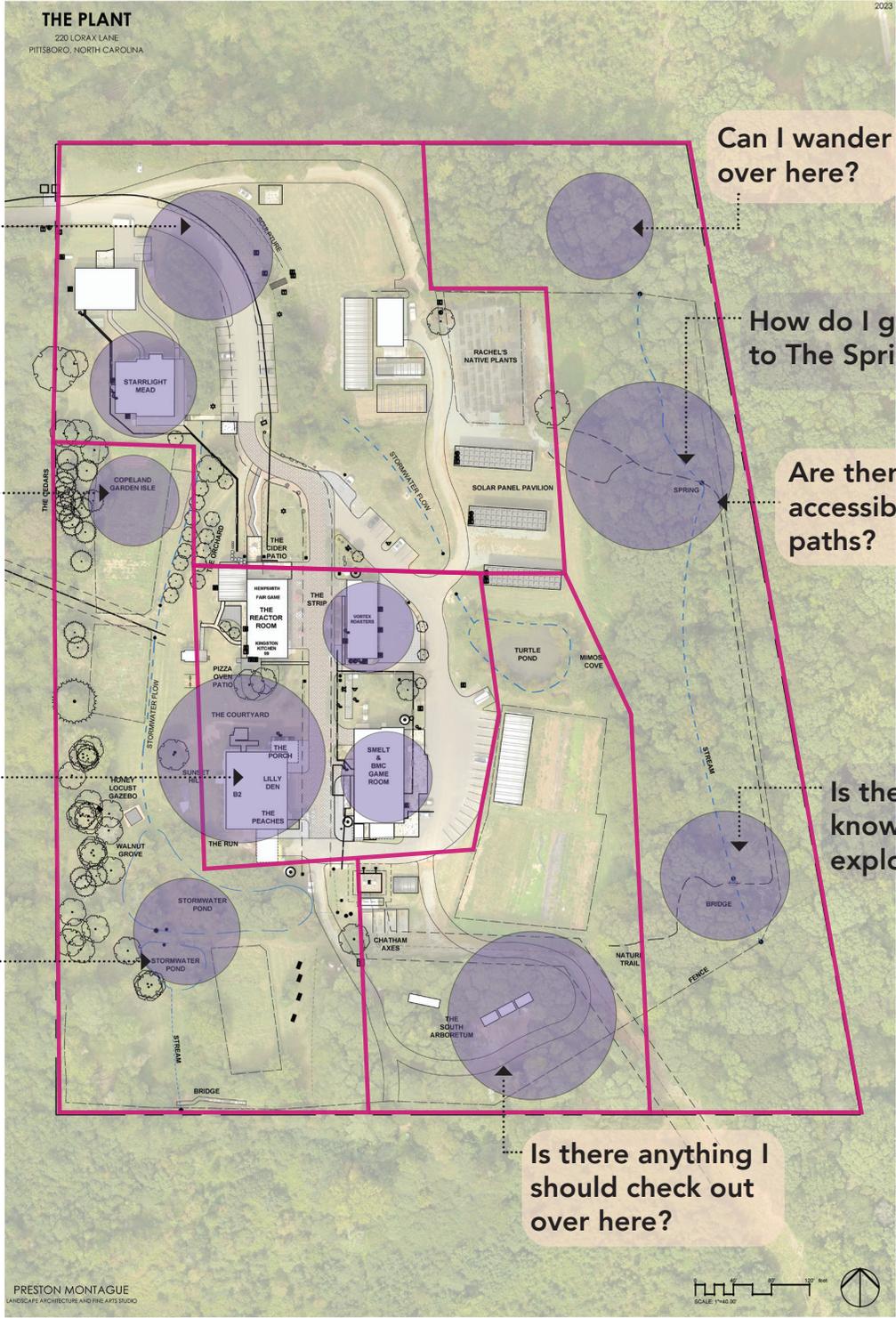
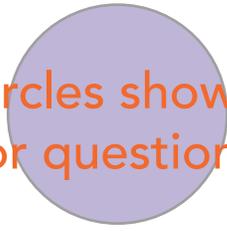
- **Maps and signage**
- **Trails**
- Signs that identify plants along nature trails
- Soccer goal
- Horseshoe pit
- Tree house
- Meditation space with art

Zone 4

- **Maps and signage**
- Walking area around Turtle Pond
- Outdoor amphitheater
- Fire circle
- Open classroom



Overlapping purple circles show areas where visitors had hesitations or questions about visiting



How do I get oriented when I arrive?

Can I wander over here?

What's at Copeland Garden Isle?

How do I get to The Spring?

Are there wheelchair accessible nature paths?

Is there an elevator to get to the second floor of these buildings?

Is there a map to know where to explore?

How do I get to the stormwater pond?

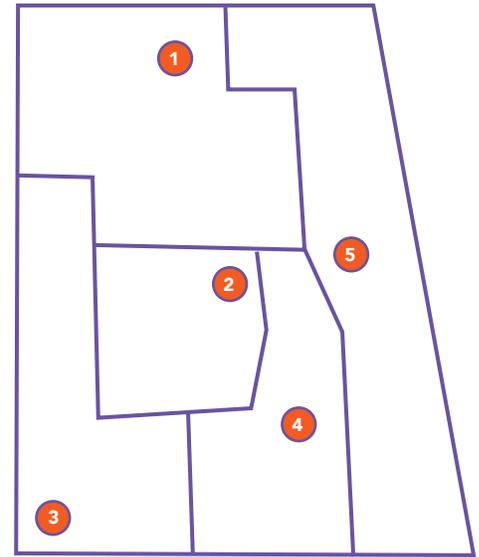
What's at Starlight Mead, Vortex Roasters, and The Smelt?

Is there anything I should check out over here?



The Plant:

Repeat Recommendations from Participants



- 1 Improve way-finding through maps and signage property wide, and include a master map.

Post educational signs that explain the importance of native plants, stormwater ponds and other environmental features as part of a tour experience.

Make secondary parking areas more clear as visitor parking.
- 2 Improve wheelchair mobility by providing wheel ramps into doorways of buildings and an elevator to access the second floor of buildings.

Improve accessibility by creating legible, wide paths radiating out of Zone 2 that are wheelchair friendly and ideally out of the same material... basically a "beltline".

Partner with local experts, teachers, and artists to offer workshops, classes, or learning opportunities
- 3 Expand opportunities for visitors to feel relaxed, in-community with one another, and a sense of togetherness.

Supply more seating, and of different varieties, throughout the grounds to support longer visits.
- 4 Expand programming to offer more active and passive recreation opportunities for visitors.
- 5 Develop the trail system and encourage visitors to explore green spaces and trails with the help of maps and signage. Include furnishings and trail materials that improve accessibility.