



Date of issue: Tuesday, November 30, 2021

One signed original proposal will be emailed to the Johnson County Historic Poor Farm Project Manager, V Fixmer-Oraiz and the Johnson County Special Projects Manager, Ray Forsythe. Address proposals to V Fixmer-Oraiz on or before the time and date specified below. All proposals shall be in pdf format and attached in an email with the subject line: **Proposal for Johnson County Historic Poor Farm Wellness Trail Design Services.**

**Proposals due: 4:00 pm CST on  
Friday, December 17, 2021**

**Contact Persons:**

- 1) V Fixmer-Oraiz, Johnson County Historic Poor Farm (JCHPF) Project Manager:  
[vfixmeroraiz@astigplanning.com](mailto:vfixmeroraiz@astigplanning.com)
- 2) Ray Forsythe, Johnson County Special Projects Manager:  
[rforsythe@johnsoncountyiowa.gov](mailto:rforsythe@johnsoncountyiowa.gov)

For general information regarding the JCHPF, please refer to the website: [jchistoricpoorfarm.com](http://jchistoricpoorfarm.com)

**This Request for Proposal provides information and procedures regarding:**

- 1) Purpose, background, and site analysis
- 2) Scope of work
- 3) Schedule
- 4) Selection criteria
- 5) Response format

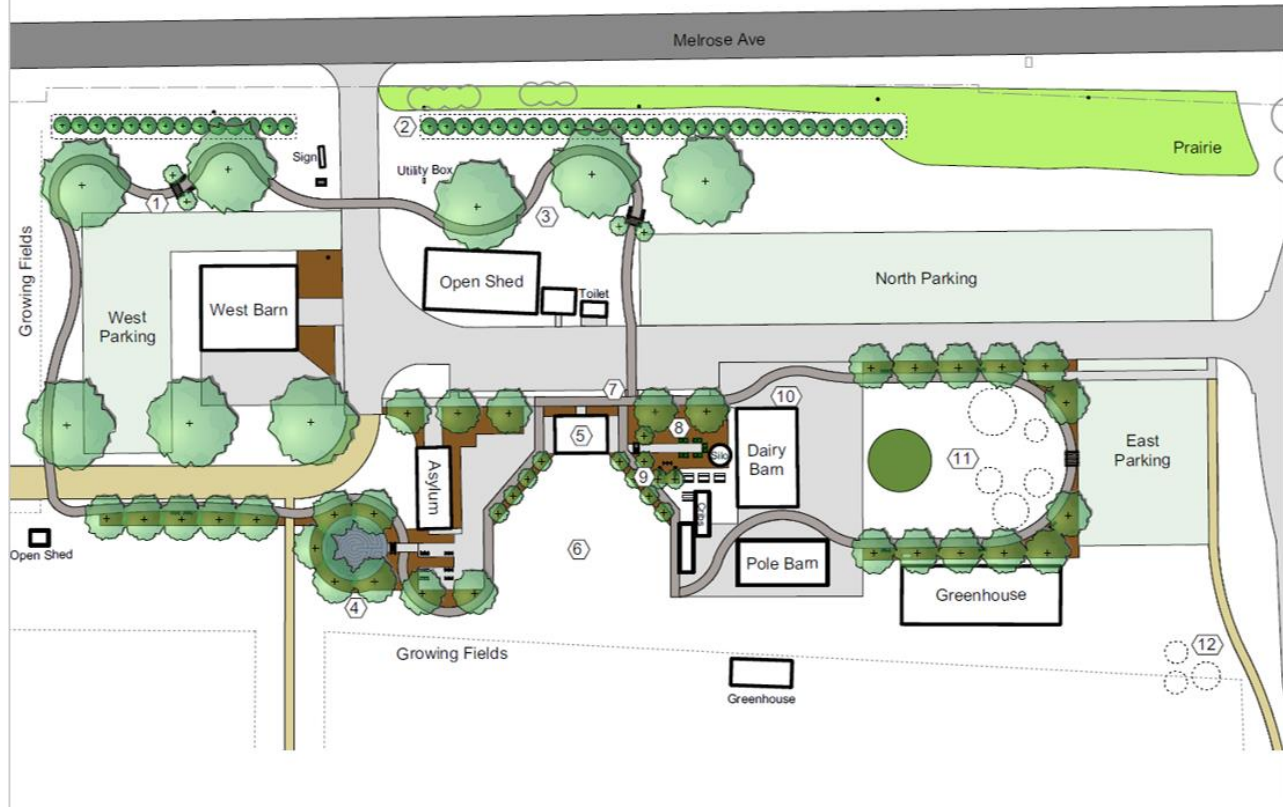
Johnson County ("County") reserves the right to reject any and all proposals, to waive technicalities or irregularities, abandon or change the RFP process, and to enter into such contract as it shall deem to be in the best interest of the County.

**1) PURPOSE AND BACKGROUND**

**a. Purpose**

The Johnson County, Iowa, Board of Supervisors proposes to design and build a Wellness Trail at the Johnson County Historic Poor Farm, that will follow the previously developed Wellness Trail Master Plan by Backyard Abundance and take into consideration current status of the site. A copy of the Master Plan is included in this proposal. The Wellness Trail is anticipated within the historic portion of the farm and located primarily throughout and around the existing buildings. The Wellness Trail includes the trail, landscaping, and amenities (such as signage, a flexible gathering shelter, a walking labyrinth, seating etc.

## Trail Design



Excerpt image of trail from Master Plan

This Request for Proposals (RFP) seeks qualified consulting firms that can provide engineering and architecture services to design the Wellness trail. The JCHPF is grounded in a 'beyond compliance' disability-first ethos, and selected firms will be able to demonstrate a commitment to design that goes beyond ADA compliance and can incorporate innovative and thoughtful design for people of all abilities.



### **b. Background**

The Johnson County Historic Poor Farm is one of the few remaining relatively intact examples of the county farm model established in each Iowa county in the 19th century. First opened in 1855 to care for the indigent, the developmentally disabled and the mentally ill, this historical resource serves as a window to 19th century definitions and policy dealing with perceived social problems, as well as to Iowa's method of using its plentiful agricultural resources in efforts to care for the poor and mentally ill.

The Johnson County Historic Poor Farm and Asylum Historic District, listed in the National Register of Historic Places since September 2014, is the portion of the property that includes buildings, a cemetery site and farm ground historically associated with the Poor Farm. In 2017, the Board of Supervisors began executing a 10-Year Master Plan for the site. Since then, the 160-acre site has seen historic preservation efforts rehabilitate buildings, local food expansion with on-site farmers and non-profit food relief, and a significant transition of land use from annual row crop farming to sustainable farming practices and conservation practices, such as the use of cover crops and planting of a 15-acre prairie meadow.

Community enthusiasm for action at the county farm remains strong among many stakeholders, especially those representing historic preservation, conservation, and local foods groups. In addition to county staff, there is a Disability Advisory Group who can serve as a resource during the design process.

### **c. Site Analysis**

The Johnson County Historic Poor Farm is located at 4811 Melrose Avenue in Iowa City, at the south-east intersection of Melrose and Slothower Avenues, and just west of the interchange with IA Highway 218. The property is owned by Johnson County and is located within the city limits of Iowa City. The decision-making authority for the property is the Johnson County Board of Supervisors, a five-member elected board.

There have been significant improvements to the site, including a new building and parking/driveway amenities. All Master Plan design documents included in this RFP will require onsite verification in the form of a new land survey. There is a current Utility Master Plan that can serve as a guide for existing utilities, particularly private utilities



## **2) SCOPE OF WORK**

Johnson County desires a holistic and comprehensive approach to design for this trail that centers on providing a trail for people who are differently able-bodied, whether that is vision-impaired, people who need assistance to move, or people with different cognitive abilities and have different sensory needs. The included Wellness trail Master Plan document should serve as a touchstone document that includes extensive community input and approval from the Johnson County Board of Supervisors.

### **RFP Requirements**

Proposals should, at a minimum, include information related to:

- a. Description of similar projects the firm has experience with examples of work, including graphics
- b. Resumes of team members expected to work on project, including any professional with extensive experience with ADA-related work
- c. References
- d. Location of offices, staff and accessibility
- e. Experience and success in accurately estimating proposed project costs
- f. Estimated cost of services for survey, design, bid documents, and engineering oversight before, during, and post-construction to ensure seamless construction of approved design

Johnson County is not responsible for any submittal preparation expenses, submission costs, or any expenses incurred in negotiations or site visits.

### **Required deliverables**

The end deliverables for this project will include:

- Construction-ready designs for trail
- Construction bid documents
- Construction timeline and budget
- ADA-related information that enhances the trail experience for people with disabilities



### 3) SCHEDULE

Issue RFP for planning consultant	November 30, 2021
Deadline for submitting questions to Project Manager	December 8, 2021
RFP questions will be responded by	December 10, 2021
Deadline for proposal submittals	December 17, 2021
Begin design work	January 7, 2021
Completed design	April 2022

### 4) SELECTION CRITERIA

- a. Applications will be reviewed internally by Johnson County staff and a finalist will be recommended to the Board of Supervisors for approval. The following factors will be considered, including, but not limited to:
  - Compliance with submittal requirements
  - Experience related to work on similar projects
  - Team member credentials
  - Quality of proposal
  - References
- b. Should Johnson County determine that American Rescue Plan Act/Local Fiscal Recovery Funds be used to pay for all or part of this project, the following items will be included, as applicable, in any contract between the consultant and Johnson County.  
<https://www.ecfr.gov/current/title-2/subtitle-A/chapter-II/part-200/appendix-Appendix%20II%20to%20Part%20200>

### 5) RESPONSE FORMAT

One signed, original proposal shall be emailed to [vfixmeroraiz@astigplanning](mailto:vfixmeroraiz@astigplanning) and [rforsythe@johnsoncountyiowa.gov](mailto:rforsythe@johnsoncountyiowa.gov) , on or before 4:00 pm CST, Friday, December 17, 2021.

1

Wellness Trail

- Self-guided sign tour:
- Linear history aligned to distance markers
- Farm system facts
- Sculptures
- Wind harp and chimes
- Shady rest areas
- Archways
- Features honoring Native Americans
- Stone carins

2

Hedgerow and Berm

- Screens view of road and buildings
- Helps prevent road snow drifts

3

Shady Savanna

- Native trees and prairie
- Wildlife viewing

4

Hope and Healing Garden

- View of cemetery
- Shade and wind protection
- Labyrinth
- Seating: relaxation and conversation
- Water feature
- Bird habitat

5

Flexible Gathering Shelter

- Shade and wind protection
- Seating for storytelling
- Grassy area: movies, astronomy
- Teaching area
- Drumming circle

6

Grassy Recreation

7

Trailhead

- Concrete stain or paint highlights trail

8

Growing Area

- Craft supplies (for Maker's Space)
- Pumpkin/gourd patch
- Cut flowers
- Broom corn
- Basket and corkscrew willow
- Raised beds: veggies, herbs
- Fruit trees and berry bushes
- Tool storage
- Tables for food prep, classes, picnics

9

Sensory Garden

- Seating
- Aromatic plants and diverse textures
- Bird and insect habitat
- Chimes and wind harps
- Water features
- Sculptures
- Raised beds: veggies, herbs
- Sensory bin

10

Bike Parking

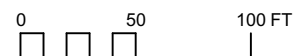
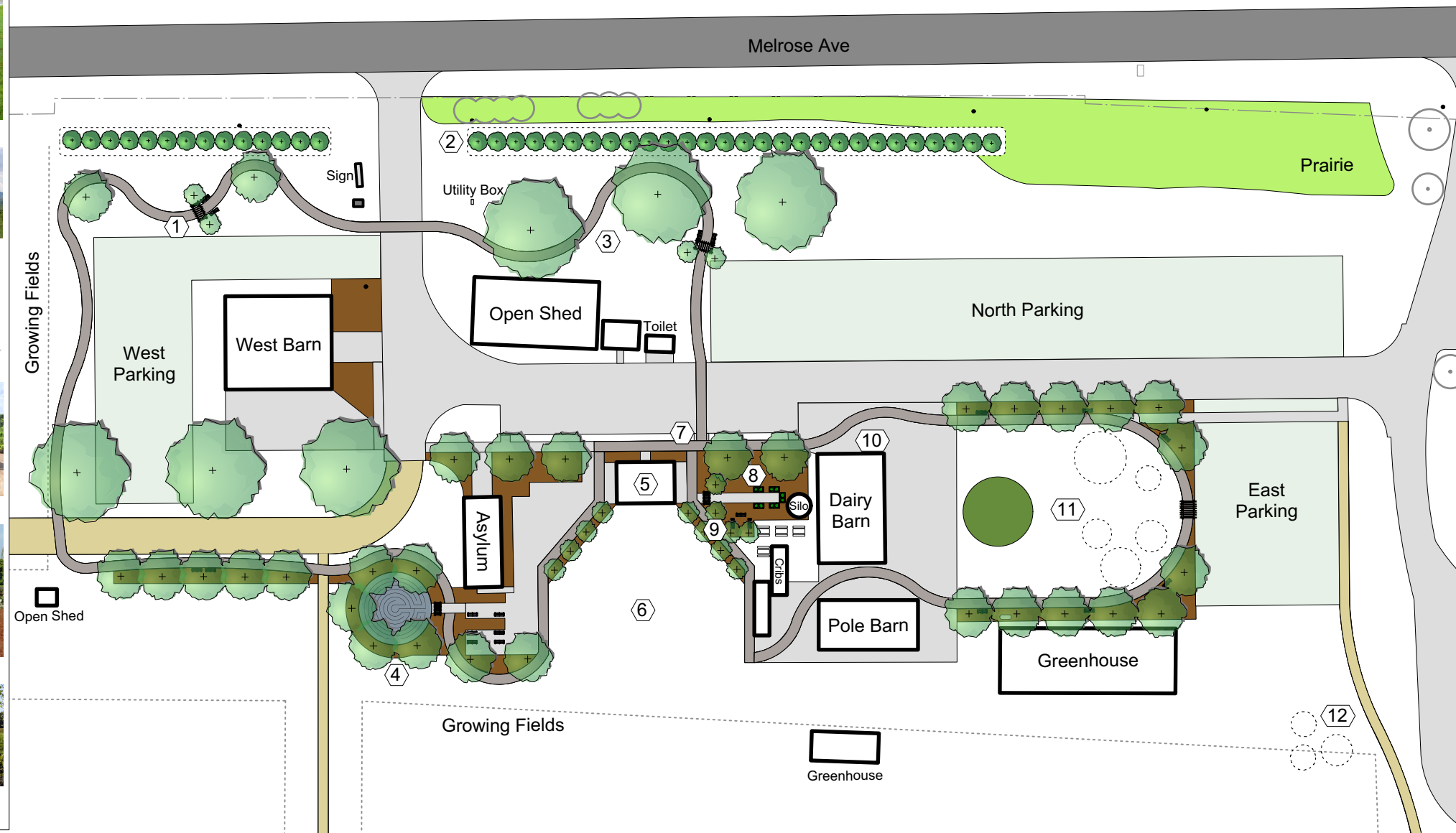
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Performance and Recreation Area

- Playful earth berm seating
- Exercise circle: yoga, tai chi
- Natural playscape
- Stone carins source
- Stage
- Corn maze

12

Playful Berms



**Ecological Landscaping  
Design and Education**  
<http://www.BackyardAbundance.org>

**Poor Farm Wellness Trail**  
Poor Farm Wellness Trail

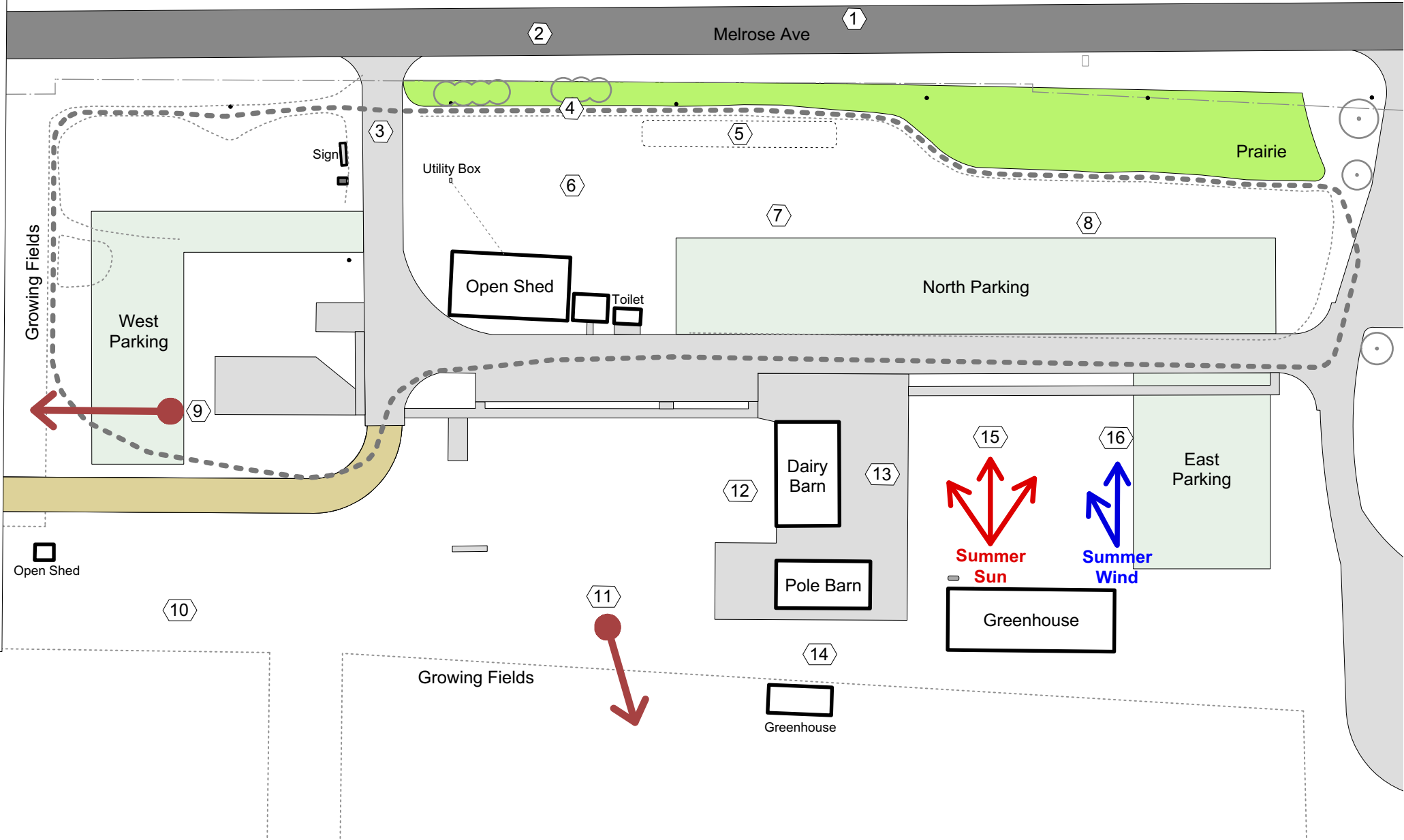


05/04/2020  
Designed By: Fred Meyer, Jen Kardos, Adina Levitt

Scale: 1:1000



- Notes**
1. North View: Buildings across the street are not pleasing to view.
  2. Road Noise: Hum from passing vehicles is loud. Could disturb activities.
  3. Busy Drive: During events, the driveway could be very busy. Consider how walkers of the trail can stay safe.
  4. Existing Trail: Mowed pathway. Feels exposed near the road. Loop distance: 1/3 mile. Completed at medium pace in 9.5 minutes.
  5. Parking Screen: Berm or vegetation to block parking areas.
  6. Utilities: Underground wires and water run north/south.
  7. Weedy: Many thistles and other weeds.
  8. Drainage: Large depression creates significant water drainage. Other areas of the landscape are relatively flat.
  9. Sunset: Do not block the view of beautiful sunsets.
  10. Tractor Traffic: Tractors frequently travel through this area.
  11. Cemetary View: The cemetery is visible from the south side of building complex. Do not block the view and honor past farm occupants.
  12. Protected Area: Shady area protected from wind.
  13. Event Platforms: Large areas of concrete can be used during events by vendors and tablers.
  14. Work Zone: Traffic between buildings will be significant during the growing season.
  15. Sun: Little shade exists to block intense heat and glare from summer sun. Trees, structures and non-glaring services will be needed for comfort.
  16. Wind: Nothing blocks strong, constantly blowing summer wind. Trees and structures will be needed for comfortable gatherings.



**Ecological Landscaping  
Design and Education**  
<http://www.BackyardAbundance.org>

**Poor Farm Wellness Trail**  
Inventory and Assessment



05/04/2020  
Designed By: Fred Meyer, Jen Kardos, Adina Levitt

Scale: 1:1000



## Individuals with Disabilities

Surveyed members of Systems Unlimited said they would enjoy...

- Watching performances and movies.
- Picnicking.
- Increasing wellness by walking and exercising.
- Comfortably watching and interacting with wildlife.
- Self-guided and personal tours to learn about the farm's history.
- Cultivating public gardens and being recognized for their contribution.



## Growers and Local Foodies

Dedicated growers and volunteers would enjoy...

- Learning how to grow, harvest and prepare produce.
- Increasing wellness through walking, exercising and taking classes.
- Celebrations, drum circles, movies, stargazing and performances.
- Creating value-added products from harvested produce.
- Foraging for vegetables, fruits and herbs.
- Relaxing and taking breaks between work sessions.
- Learning about the local and regional food system.



## History Enthusiasts

Visits by people interested in the Poor Farm's history would enjoy...

- Self-guided and personal tours of the area.
- Comfortably contemplating and finding clarity about the lives of past residents.

## Immigrants

Visitors and growers from other countries would enjoy...

- Introducing people to food from around the world.
- Meeting people and sharing customs and values from their culture.



## Children

While parents volunteer or enjoy performances, their children would enjoy safely...

- Running, balancing, building and playing in a natural playscape.
- Watching and interacting with wildlife.
- Foraging for vegetables, fruits and herbs.
- Exploring a sensory garden.



## Holistic Health Practitioners

Horticultural therapists and wellness enthusiasts would bring participants to...

- Help people heal through sensory experiences, gardening and exercise.
- Learn about self-healing through classes that demonstrate healthy food choices.
- Gather for talking, drumming, dancing and playing music.
- Conduct healing ceremonies.



## The Wellman's Visit New Century Farm

August 2030



The family drives from Dubuque to enjoy a historical tour on Saturday afternoon.

1. They meet the tour group at the **West Barn** and get an overview of the farm's history.
2. The parents visit the **Asylum** while kids play on the nearby **berms**.
3. The emotional weight of the Asylum tour is accommodated by **walking the labyrinth** and reflecting on the **cemetery** in the distance.
4. Each family member picks up a **stone** to deposit on the **cairns** along the trail. Carrying this weight helps reflect the weight of the Asylum visit.
5. Heading **east along the Wellness Trail**, they encounter **historical signs** every 200 feet that corresponds to a time period of the farm.
6. Historical signs and **signs with facts about the farm system** increases their awareness of the invisibility of farmers and people with disabilities.
7. Beautiful **sculptures** along the trail symbolize the farm's past, present and future.
8. **Rest areas** along the trail welcome them with free fruit for harvesting.
9. They reach the **heart of the farm** and enjoy touching and smelling plants in the **Sensory Garden**.
10. Understanding that the **raised beds** of freely harvested cucumbers, tomatoes and kale were cultivated by local people with disabilities increases their gratitude for the space.
11. After their two-hour visit, they **head to Iowa City** for an evening meal.