



Hakone Foundation

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Mission:

Dedicated to conserve and enhance Hakone Estate and Gardens for the enjoyment and benefit of the public, to preserve its Japanese authenticity for the future, to promote a deeper understanding of Asian cultures, and to serve as a global forum.



The Hakone Foundation is a registered 501(c)(3) Not for Profit Corporation.
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Hakone Master Plan Executive Summary

This Master Plan for Hakone Estate and Gardens in Saratoga, California, is the result of a collaborative process spanning eight months—from February through August 2015—with staff, volunteers, and stakeholders participating in four workshops led by the design firm The Portico Group.

1.1 Description of Hakone Estate and Gardens

The City of Saratoga has a treasure in the Hakone Estate and Gardens. This Master Plan outlines how to sustain the Garden's historical presence and strong sense of place while staying vital for visitors and the Saratoga community into the future.

1.2 Mission and Vision

The Garden's mission served as the foundation for the Master Planning process and describes why the Gardens exist:

"To sustain the living and evolving spirit of the Gardens, nourishing understanding across time and cultures."

The vision for the gardens, also completed during this process, describes what the Gardens aspire to do:

"As a living embodiment of Japanese garden principles, rooted in the California landscape, Hakone Estate and Gardens welcomes its community as a haven for reflection, rejuvenation, and cultural exchange."

1.3 Needs and Goals

The Master Planning process began by identifying the needs and related issues for the Gardens. This led to the development of broad long-term goals that define how Hakone Estate and Gardens will accomplish its mission.

1. Connect to the community.
2. Restore the legacy of the gardens, buildings, and structures to make this the best Japanese garden outside of Japan.
3. Expand interpretive and educational opportunities.
4. Enhance the visitor entry and arrival sequence.
5. Provide adequate space for staff.
6. Improve visitor services and amenities.
7. Create a sustainable organization.

1.4 Scope of Master

The City of Saratoga asked The Portico Group and Hakone Estate and Gardens to develop a long-term vision for the restoration of existing structures, gardens, and the future additions that complement and enhance this historic property. This Master Plan includes descriptions and drawings of the following components:

1. New arrival at the upper end of the entry drive, parking lot, and service drives.
2. New entry courtyard, buildings, and gardens, including accessible paths.
3. New garden maintenance and operations yard.
4. Renovation and repurposing of existing garden buildings.
5. Repurposing and renovation of indoor meeting/event hall.

Other smaller improvements:

- Enhancements to existing gardens.
- Immediate, short-term improvements.

1.5 Physical Recommendations

The focus of the proposed physical improvements is an area encompassed by the current inner and main parking lot and the forecourt to the Mon. The primary efforts beyond the Mon are improving accessibility to the lower and upper courtyards, improving the definition and user experience of garden, courtyards, improving the definition and user experience of garden, courtyards, paths and plantings, improving the koi pond and surrounding ADA paths, and upgrading and repairing the historic district buildings and structures.

1.6 Business Recommendations

Hakone Estate and Gardens is a significant cultural and botanical attraction in the South Bay and is unique in that it is not part of a larger facility such as a city park. The major findings related to business planning includes:

- There is substantial potential to increase its visibility and reputation and to increase attendance and revenue.
- Several other West Coast Japanese gardens have annual attendance of 65,000 to 300,000. For analysis purposes, Hakone Estate and Gardens attendance is projected increase from the current 25,000 per year to 75,000 per year after the implementation of all phases of the Master Plan. Membership and event activity are projected to increase as well.