



*Hakone Foundation*

## **Hakone Master Plan Pond Renovation**

### **FAQs Frequently Asked Questions**

#### **1. What is the Hakone Master Plan?**

The Hakone Master Plan is a joint effort between the Hakone Foundation, City of Saratoga, and included input from community members. It was completed and approved by both entities in 2016. The mission of the plan is to “sustain the living and evolving spirit of the Gardens, nourishing understanding across time and cultures.” This coordinates with the Gardens General Mission Statement, “We are dedicated to conserve and enhance Hakone Estate and Gardens for the enjoyment and benefit of the public, to preserve its Japanese authenticity for future generations, to promote a deeper understanding of Asian cultures, and to serve as a global forum for art, music, culture, and ideas.”

The purpose of the Master Plan is to develop a long-term vision for the restoration of existing structures, gardens, and the future additions that complement and enhance this historic property and to effectively manage the costs of the projects. The Master Plan focuses on helping the garden effectively handle large numbers of visitors. It was originally a private family garden, not designed for the numbers of people visiting now and in the future.

#### **2. What improvements and enhancements are included in the Master Plan?**

The Master Plan has been broken down into four phases:

- A. **Phase One** – Renovation of the existing pond, filtration system, recontouring the surrounding hillside and updating the walkways to meet Federal ADA guidelines.  
Cost – Present estimated cost is \$4,000,000 (Note: The original estimate was \$4,925,000 including the new pumphouse. However, the pumphouse for the pond has been completed. Its real cost \$600,000 versus estimated cost \$900,000. Under budget!)
- B. **Phase Two** – Renovation and Restoration of Existing Buildings and Structures.  
Estimated Cost- \$5,300,000
- C. **Phase Three** - New Visitor Entrance and Amenities. This phase includes a new high-profile visitor entrance, new Gift Shop and Admission Center, new Restrooms, and Tea House  
Estimated Cost- \$10,000,000
- D. **Phase Four** - Renovation of Existing Cultural Exchange Center- Expand the interior space to accommodate larger indoor meetings and events and to provide this indoor space throughout the year versus the present lack of space for the cold and wet winter months. Renovate the lower level for supporting the public area.  
Estimated Cost- \$8,000,000

### **Hakone Foundation**

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*Hakone Estate and Gardens is listed on the National Register of Historic Places*

### **3. Why does the Pond need renovation?**

There are four main reasons the pond must be renovated.

- The first is its age. It is an original feature of the gardens and is over 100 years old. The pond now leaks water due to severe cracks in the lining. We are losing over 15,000 gallons of water on a weekly basis. Even if we weren't in a drought situation, this is a terrible waste. (Shozo and Jacob will add the approximate water costs)
- The second reason is that the pond is too shallow for the koi. The shallowness is not healthy for the koi because they do not have anywhere to go when the temperature gets too hot, heating up the shallow water. Lack of cool water causes diseases which are deadly for the koi.
- Thirdly, the shallow water also makes it easier for predators, such as herons, raccoons, and other wildlife to prey on the koi. Our baby koi are being eaten and our mature ones have severe wounds. The renovation will deepen the pond, from its existing 18", to 3'-5'. The pond edges will also be designed so that predators can no longer enter the pond. There will be deep escape areas for the koi that will remain a constant cool temperature.
- Fourthly, the renovation will also include new bottom drains and skimmers to keep the water clean, and aerators to provide fresh oxygen into the water, at all areas of the pond. Presently, there are areas that the koi can't go because they lack oxygen. The new drains will be connected to the new pumphouse system that was designed for a deeper pond.

### **4. Why does the Pond Renovation cost \$4,000,000?**

Two reasons:

- The cost of the Pond Renovation is not just for the pond itself. In the process of making the pond a healthier and safer environment for the koi, we will also be making the surrounding paths legally more accessible for the wider public. Renovating the pathways and recontouring the hillside surrounding the pond will allow guests with mobility challenges to be able to enjoy the pond as well. This brings the pathways into Federal compliance with ADA rules. "ADA" is the Americans with Disabilities Act. This will include leveling out the grade of the pathways and a new bridge by the waterfall. Visitors with mobility challenges will be able to go all the way around the pond, which is an ADA requirement. The ADA rules will affect this project as soon as we begin the renovation. Presently, the ADA rules are not applicable because currently, the paths are considered "historic", i.e. untouched. But as soon as we begin this project, the ADA rules take effect.
- Since the garden is a Hill and Pond style garden, there is always dirt runoff from the hillside during heavy rains into the pond. The new design of the pond, which reconfigures the surrounding pathways will prevent the dirt from draining into the pond. The present dirt negatively affects the oxygen levels of the pond and clogs the re-circulation drains. Presently, every rainstorm brings a lot of dirt down from the surrounding hillside and into the pond. Perhaps you have seen the muddy pond after a storm?

### **5. When is construction scheduled for the Pond Renovation?**

Construction on the Pond Renovation is scheduled for the Fall of 2024, with construction completed by the Summer of 2025.

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**6. Why do the surrounding pathways need to be renovated at the same time as the pond? Can the work be done in two phases, pond renovation then walkways?**

There are two reasons the project must be done at the same time:

- Both the pond and the surrounding pathways must be done at the same time due to ADA rules that go into effect when we start the project.
- In addition, since the huge pond renovation process necessitates that the gardens be closed to the public, we must keep the closure of the gardens to a minimum. The design and work surrounding the pond and hillside paths are all integrated so doing it in phases is not a viable option. We would have to close twice for extended periods of time.

**7. Can work on the Pond Renovation get started even if you don't have the full \$4,000,000?**

Yes, we can start the renovation if we have raised 75% (\$3,000,000) of our fundraising goal.

- The \$4,000,000 is an educated estimate. The garden is owned by the City of Saratoga, The City like most public entities have to start a project with a highest estimate to include unforeseen contingencies. This stance is because a public entity cannot easily go "over budget".
- Another reason for the high costs is that publicly owned entities must follow rules about contractors paying the prevailing wages. The project must be awarded to the lowest responsible bidder determined through a formal bidding process.
- An additional reason for the high costs is to be able to hire a group who can guarantee to finish the project on time, by prioritizing it over other projects and working full time on the garden project and who possesses the skill and experience working in historic gardens. Hakone needs to be closed to the public for the shortest amount of time possible.

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