

SEH gives \$1M for Japanese garden

It will be built near cherry trees on Clark College site

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A \$1 million donation from SEH America will soon bring a taste of the East to the city north of the Columbia River.

Thanks to an agreement between SEH, the city of Van-

couver and Clark College, Southwest Washington's first Japanese garden will be built on the Clark College campus.

To be located by the existing cherry trees near the southwest entrance to campus, the garden will feature meandering paths, a gathering area, a bamboo grove and many features unique to Zen-inspired Japanese gardens.

"It is a big deal," Vancouver Mayor Royce Pollard said.

"When was the last time someone gave the city \$1 million just because they liked the city?"

Work should begin next summer and be finished in time for a dedication under the flowering cherry trees in April 2011, parks manager Jane Tesner Kleiner said.

The City Council will vote to formalize the park agreement tonight.

Both the mayor and SEH executives called the garden

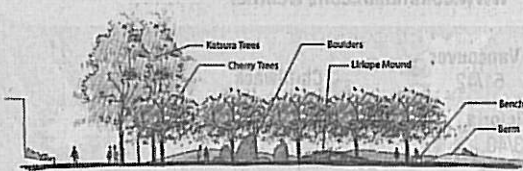
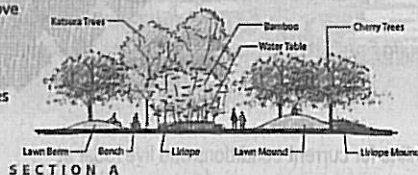
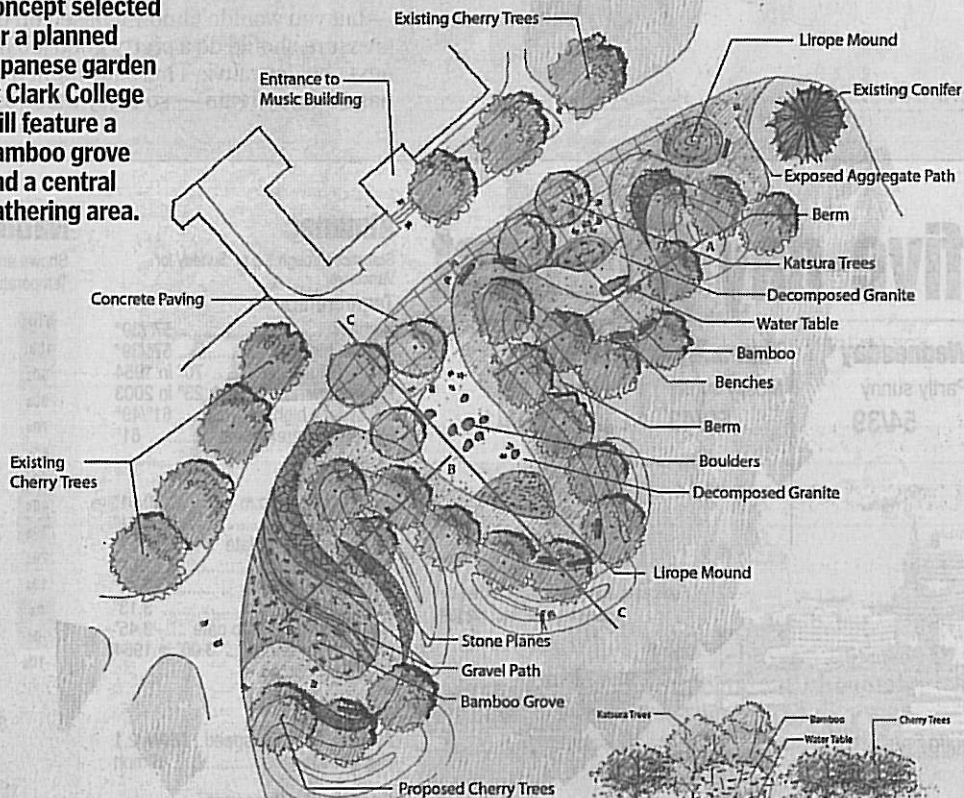
symbolic of the relationship formed between the city and the Japanese corporation, one of the city's largest private employers.

Plans for the park were announced in February, when SEH America and its parent company, Shin-Etsu Chemical, announced that production capacity would be doubled at the Vancouver plant, a long-term commitment that could add as many as 1,000 jobs.

"We say thank you very much to Vancouver and this community," SEH Executive Vice President Tatsuo Ito said Friday. "We are getting a lot of support from the city ... this is our appreciation for the community."

SEH America sends many of its employees for nine months to Japan to train, Ito said, and building a Japanese garden is

The design concept selected for a planned Japanese garden at Clark College will feature a bamboo grove and a central gathering area.



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a natural extension of that cultural exchange.

The strong presence of SEH in the city, combined with Vancouver's involvement with sister city Jojo, Japan, have created strong ties to the island nation, Pollard said.

"We have a history with Japan," he said. "It is rare. You have to build relationships before you get anything done."

Clark College is donating the land for the park, which lies in front of the music building. The Parks and Recreation Foundation of Vancouver/Clark County will manage the funds, while the city will oversee planning and construction of the garden, Tesner Kleiner said.

Part of the \$1 million donation will be held as a maintenance fund.

She noted that such donations have long been an important part of park improvements, like the \$3 million donation from the Propstra family that allowed for the construction of the square in Esther Short Park.

"There are many great examples in our community ... of generous donations," Tesner Kleiner said. "We are always very grateful to generous donors who help make our parks and our community a better place."