

# Social Narrative for Visiting Garfield Park Conservatory & Gardens During Lobby Renovations, fall 2025 - late spring 2026

## Arrival to the Conservatory:

When I arrive to visit Garfield Park Conservatory, I may travel by CTA Green Line, come in a car, or come on a bike. The closest bus route is a couple of blocks away.



## Arriving by CTA Train:

If I'm coming on the CTA train, I'll get off at the Conservatory/Central Park stop. From the tracks, a building with a glass roof is visible, which is where I'm going. I can take the steps or elevator from the track down to the street level. I may need to check the CTA's website to make sure the elevator isn't currently under construction.

ID: A photo of the corner of Lake Street and Central Park Avenue, with the Conservatory green line station above and elevator exit.



## Arriving by Car:

If I'm coming by car, there is free parking in the visitor parking lot at the corner of Lake Street and Central Park Avenue. The entrance to the lot is on Central Park Avenue. It is about 825 feet from the parking lot to the entrance of the building. There is also free street parking on Central Park Avenue if I prefer or if the lot is full.

ID: A photo of three accessible spaces in the parking lot, with one space used by a white SUV. The Conservatory's glass roof is in the background.



## Arriving by Bike:

If I'm coming on a bike, there are bike racks to lock my bike on to and a DIVVY station by the visitor parking lot.

ID: A photo of the DIVVY bike station with the Green Line enter/exit stairs and Visitor Parking lot behind.

There is a drop-off area in front of the steps with ramp access to the sidewalk. I won't be able to enter the regular entrance but I will see signs leading me to the temporary entrance.



ID: Photo of the front steps leading up to the (closed) entrance.

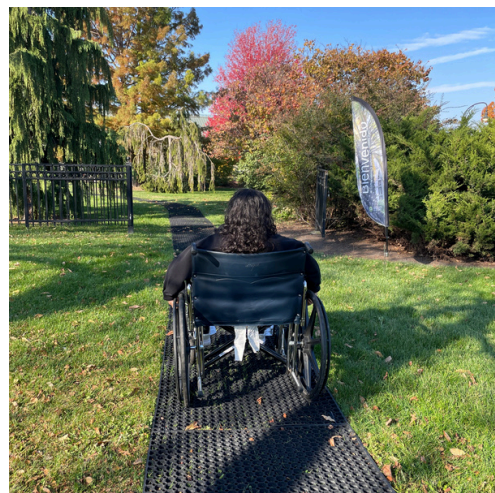


ID: Photo of the drop-off area with cut curbs for access.

I'll take a paved sidewalk to an unpaved temporary entrance pathway. From the drop-off area it is about 150 feet on the paved sidewalk and then about 300 feet from the sidewalk to the building entrance. I'll have a safe pathway since the unpaved pathway uses an Access Mat to provide stability and traction. I can use a wheelchair or other mobility device on this pathway.



ID: Photo showing the pathway from the drop-off area with welcome flags and banners where the temporary path begins.



ID: Photo showing a visitor using a wheelchair on the Access Mat pathway to get to the temporary main entrance.

## Entering the Building:

There are no steps to enter the Conservatory. These doors are not automated however a staff member will be there to open doors for me if I need.

As I enter the check-in area, I may notice it is busy with other visitors, potentially some groups of children, security and visitor services staff. There are benches inside the doors in case I need to rest.

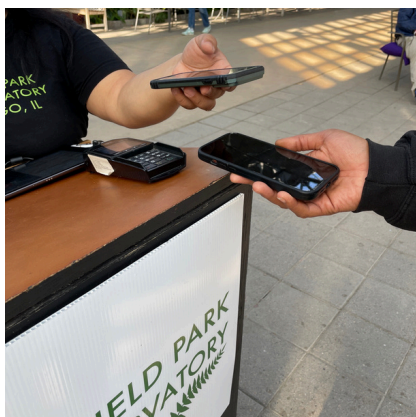


ID: Photo showing the temporary entrance from the outside.



ID: Photo showing the visitor check-in station with a podium and staff member.

Visitor services staff will greet me from behind a podium. They will ask if I registered before arriving. If yes, they will ask me for my name or scan the reservation's QR code I was emailed. If I need to make a reservation, they can ask the questions needed to fill out the reservation form. It is free to visit for Chicago residents and fee-based for non-Chicago residents (discounts available).



ID: Photo showing a staff member scanning a QR code



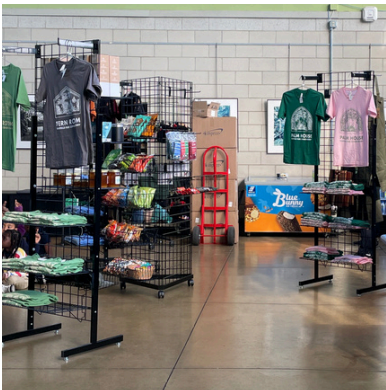
ID: Photo of the check in area including the security area and entry podiums. Benches can also be found here.

## What amenities can I expect?



I can find the restrooms about 175 feet from the check-in area, with signs pointing the way. It's a paved pathway to the outside temporary restrooms. The restrooms include a men's, women's and an ADA accessible gender neutral stall.

ID: Photo showing the path to the restrooms, including a doorway with "Restrooms this way" sign.



I can find a Gift Shop in the Jensen Room, where I can buy souvenirs and snacks. Some days and times there may also be a coffee cart with Momentum Coffee company. They may make loud bangs as they make certain drinks.

ID: Photo of the Gift Shop through the Jensen Room doors.



If I'd like to request a wheelchair or sensory bag to use during my visit, the staff will be happy to help me. I don't have to pay for either of these services and I may be asked to provide an ID which I'll get back when I return the item.

ID: Photo of a black sensory bag with colorful fidget toys, noise cancelling headphones, and communication boards.

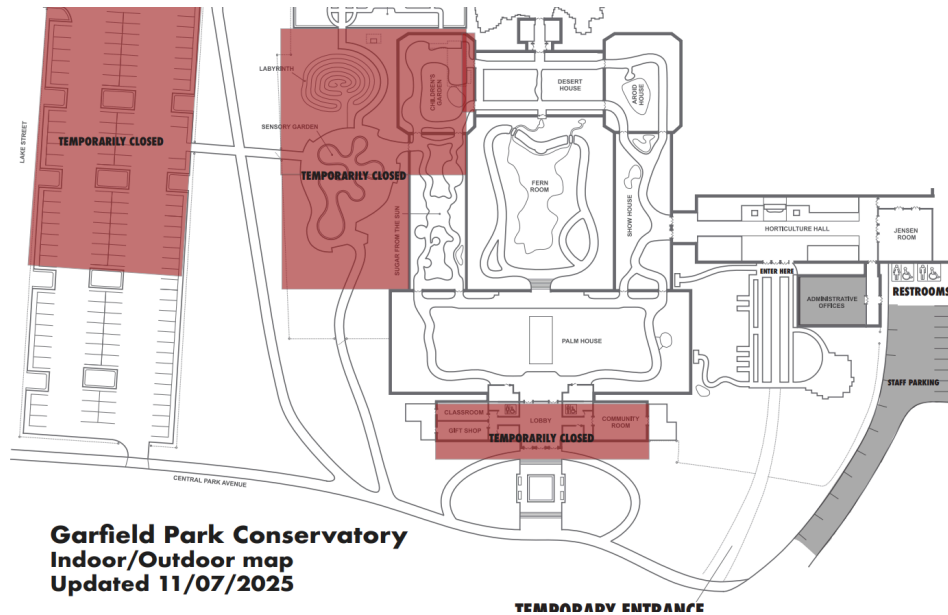


Once I enter the plant areas, it can be hot (75 degrees or higher), humid, and there may be water in puddles on the ground or dripping off leaves. There are coat racks in case I want to hang up my coat instead of carrying it around. Most rooms are warm, though some rooms may be colder like the Show House or Desert House.

ID: Photo of coat racks near the Jensen Room.

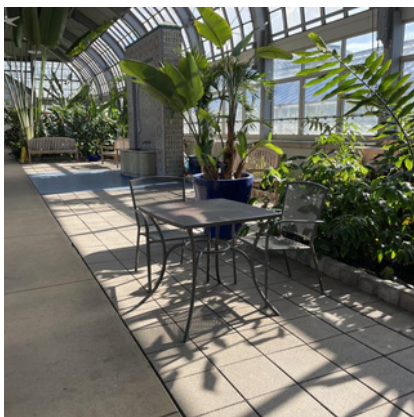
## What I'll find inside!

Horticulture Hall is where I'll start and I can go left or right in the Show House. I'll find the inside of the Conservatory is a big loop of attached display rooms, so I can't get too lost. I can enter the Fern Room, which is a smaller loop with stairs going in and out, from the Palm House. If I follow the pathways in the rooms, I will eventually find my way back to Horticulture Hall to exit.



ID: Map of the Conservatory showing how all of the rooms are connected in a big loop with the Fern Room as a separate and smaller loop in the middle.

Horticulture Hall has bistro table seating available on a first come, first served basis. I can also find many benches in Horticulture Hall or in most of the rooms throughout the Conservatory.



ID: Photo of a bistro table with two chairs in Horticulture Hall.



ID: Photo of an empty bench in the Desert House.

### Plant Display Houses:

Each room has plants from around the world. Some are tiny and some are massive. With a glass roof, I may find the rooms to be sunny, and on hot days, the fans may make a loud noise in the Palm House. It is OK to touch plants in most rooms except the Desert House. I won't pick any flowers or leaves so every visitor can enjoy them.

Some pathways have brick, some are paved. If the room was recently watered, there may be puddles on the ground or drops of water from plants. Benches are available in most rooms on a first come, first served basis.



ID: Photo showing a brick pathway with moss growing between bricks.



ID: Photo showing a wet floor with puddles of water and a yellow caution sign.

I'll find some rooms have doors I need to open to get to the next room. I can push these doors in or out and if I push far enough they will make a click sound. The click tells me the door will hold open. I may find the doors are too heavy and may need help to open them. Some rooms do not have these doors.



ID: Photo showing the white doors that can swing in or out.



ID: Photo of a room transition without doors.

I can find fish in three rooms including Sugar From the Sun, Fern Room and the Aroid House. In Sugar from the Sun the fish pond is near the waterfall. I may get little splashes of water on me by the waterfall. In the Aroid House, I'll find a few steps down to a bench or I can view from the main pathway.



ID: Photo of the waterfall in Sugar from the Sun.



ID: Photo of stone steps down to an empty bench and Koi pond in the Aroid House.

I can also find turtles in the Fern Room. The pond in the Fern Room is accessible after going down a staircase with no railing. Halfway around the room there are cut outs in the pathway to allow the waterfall water to go into the pond. These rocky steps may be slippery at times. I can watch the fish and turtles, but not feed them. The Aroid House has a pond accessible by cobblestone pathway with short steps.



ID: Photo of turtles in the Fern Room at the edge of the water.



ID: Photo of the stone pathways in the Fern Room that may be harder to cross.

The Desert House is a room where I do not want to touch any plants because they are sharp and may get stuck in my skin. Some may cause an allergic reaction depending on the plant. I also won't pick up the rocks because they may also have sharp parts mixed in-between the rocks.



ID: Photo of a sign saying Do not touch plants in the Desert House.

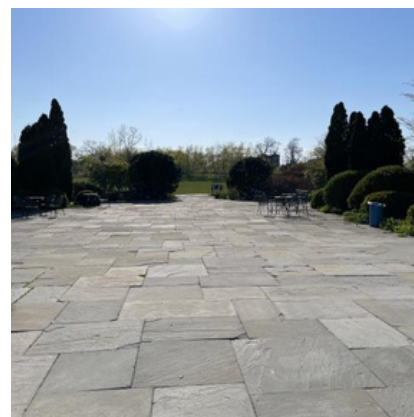


ID: A close up photo of a spiky plant found in the Desert House.

I can find more gardens outside, including 10 acres of outdoor gardens to explore. All of the wheelchair accessible pathways are marked on the map. Some are a little bumpy, including Bluestone Terrace. The entire outdoor area is fenced in, so when I'm ready to leave, I can go back into the Conservatory through the Bluestone Terrace/Desert House doors.



ID: Photo of the doorway to outside from the Desert House.



ID: Photo of the Bluestone Terrace with a large lawn in the background and trees on a hill in the distance.