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green_dialogues
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PGC Day 12: Greener

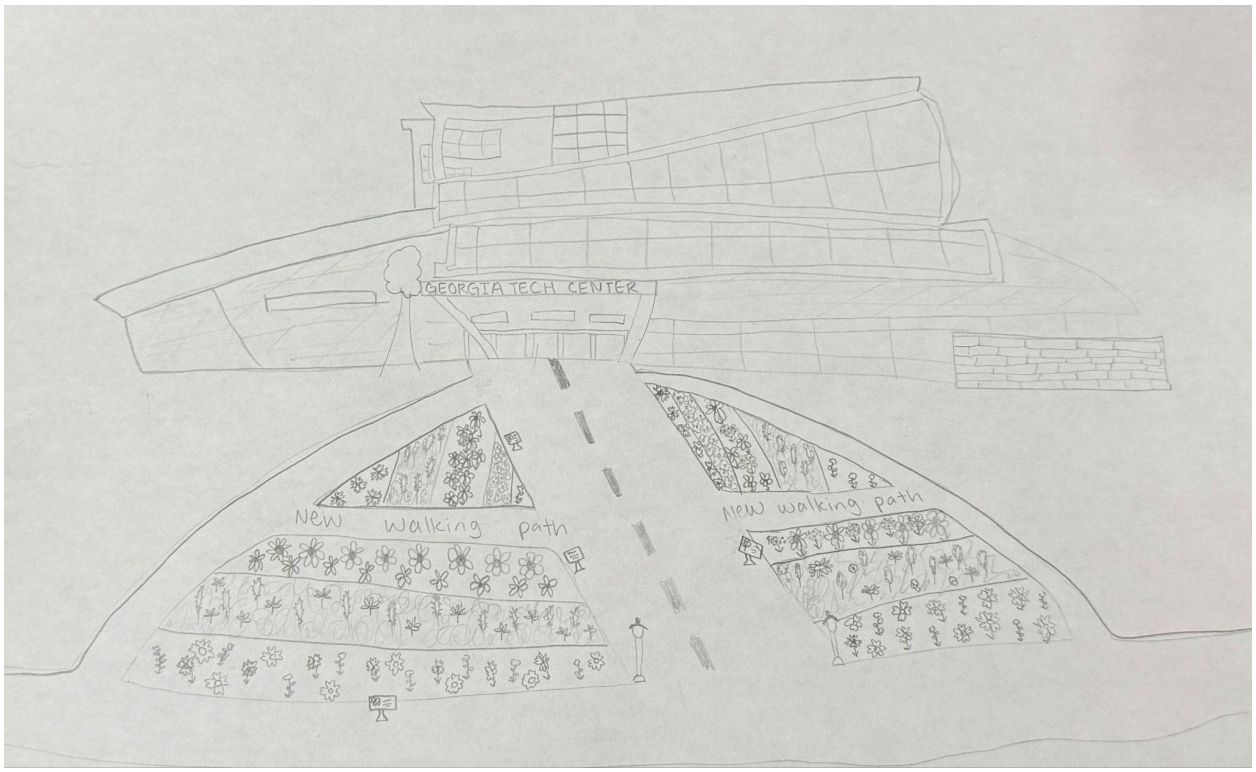
Project: Georgia World Congress Center Authority's (GWCCA) Urban Hillside Garden

The GWCCA installed pollinator gardens in bare urban and suburban hillside areas to provide pollinators with food, shelter, and breeding grounds. Instead of a manicured lawn, they planted native flower and shrub species that support pollinators. The vegetation is mostly self-maintained, meaning no herbicides or pesticides and using minimal irrigation. It's meant to mimic natural habitats. This garden serves pollinators as well as the people of Atlanta because everyone benefits from increased biodiversity.

This was done as a part of the Connect to Protect program to support pollinators and provide them with new habitats that were lost due to rapid urbanization. Lauren Muller, the Conservation Outreach Coordinator for the State Botanical Garden, said, "We can't rely anymore on natural areas to supply biodiversity. We just can't – we're losing them too quickly. We have to look to our landscapes to provide more ecological functions." This garden is one of the 55 Connect to Protect gardens in Georgia and is a collaboration between the GWCCA, Baytree Landscape

Contractors, and the State Botanical Garden at UGA. A large part of what has made these Connect to Protect gardens successful is how sustainable they are in terms of maintenance.

My Vision: Georgia Tech Urban Pollinator Pathway
I would implement a pollinator pathway on the bare lawn in front of the campus recreation center. This is an underutilized but highly visible and accessible area, and transforming it into a native pollinator corridor would not only bring nature into the daily lives of students but also provide a much-needed, more peaceful habitat for pollinators in an urban environment.



This design would use native Georgia Plants like black-eyed Susans, coneflowers, and bee balm, and they would be planted in layers to mimic natural meadows. Educational signage would be implemented in front of the garden beds to educate students and pedestrians about native plant and pollinator species. Benches could be built along the gardens for students looking for a peaceful spot to recharge or study. Additionally, solar powered lights could be added to the walkways as this location receives a lot of natural sunlight.

Ultimately, this project would serve the community by promoting local biodiversity and resilience by using sustainable design elements such as native plants and solar lighting. It also fosters equity by offering welcoming green spaces for students and downtown residents and providing educational opportunities to environmental clubs and organizations at Georgia Tech. Annual events like planting days could also be implemented to build a sense of community while empowering participants to contribute to a more sustainable city.