

ROSEMARY GARDEN CONCEPT PAPER

Prepared by Climate and Environment Committee for Town Council Consideration

Revised draft - December 12, 2022

Proposal:

The Climate and Environment Committee (CEC) recommends the Town of Chevy Chase fund the renovation of Rosemary Triangle, a Town-owned plot near Chevy Chase Elementary School and Rosemary Circle, between Stanford and Rosemary Streets. The renovation would create "Rosemary Garden" as an inviting, attractive, environmentally-friendly, and relaxing green space supporting the Town's environmental and sustainability goals. It would also serve as a demonstration garden with native plant examples for Town residents and as a model for other communities on transforming small public spaces.

Background:

Renovation of Rosemary Triangle would provide a native garden and seating area on the SE side of Town, making the existing space more functional and accessible. Currently, use of the site is limited to the sidewalk on the perimeter of the Triangle. This low level of use is probably due to lack of easy access to the interior of the site, due in part to a steep slope and the lack of seating for Town residents to meet, relax, and enjoy the space. The plantings on the site include numerous non-native plants and trees, including some highly invasive species such as lesser celandine, English ivy, bishop's goutweed, and liriopse.

Proposed Elements of Rosemary Garden Renovation:

--Evaluation of the Rosemary Triangle site

- Evaluation and identification of existing plants focusing on invasives and other non-native plants to be replaced with native shrubs, perennials, grasses, and ground cover. Some non-native plants could be retained if they provide aesthetic benefits and are not invasive.
- Determination of best method(s) to remove invasive plants intertwined with the turf grass.
- Trees should be evaluated by a professional arborist with the intent of retaining trees unless diseased or in severe decline, in which case replacement would be with a fast-growing native tree.
- Evaluation of existing storm drain and any other drainage issues.

--Landscape Re-design

- Preparation of a detailed landscape design creating an attractive, inviting space with emphasis on native plants. The design will specify new plants, plants to be retained, and placement of the plantings. Location of plantings will consider appropriateness of plants for various parts of the triangle, given sun/shade, soil moisture, and amount of slope.
- The design plan will include a timeline for removal of invasive plants and order of installation of various elements, as well as a plan for proper garden maintenance.

--Benches: Selection of 2 or 3 benches to be placed in appropriate locations for relaxation and conversation. At least one will be in an accessible area near the top of a slope. These U.S. made benches may be from the same company as the benches used in the Lee Dennison Garden.

--Pathways: Specification and installation of one or more pathways of permeable material (gravel?) to access seating in the interior of the garden.

--Sculpture: Selection of locations for 1 or 2 outdoor sculptures or focal points to be placed in the garden and suggestions for those items.

--Signs: Creation and placement of signs labeling the plants and temporary signs indicating work in progress (e.g., invasives being removed).

--Accessibility: Garden will be accessible, including accessibility to at least one bench.

--Request For Proposals: Creation of an RFP by the Town Staff, based on the CEC Concept Paper. The RFP will be sent to interested, qualified landscape design companies identified by with Town, with input from the CEC.

Optional Elements:

- Investigate and price suitable permeable material to replace existing concrete sidewalks on the perimeter of the triangle. The material must be easily walkable and functional for the disabled. Replacement of the sidewalks with a suitable permeable material could be a pilot project for the Town's stormwater management program. It is not envisioned such a project would be implemented in the first phase, if at all.
- "Neighbor labor" – coordinated volunteer efforts by TOCC residents, possibly including assistance with removal of undesirable plants and installation of new plants, and creation of sculpture.
- Small seating and climbing area (e.g., stumps, logs) for children
- Involvement of Town children and CCES students and education about native plants and pollinators

Anticipated Benefits:

- A native garden providing increased habitat for wildlife (songbirds and others) and increased food sources for pollinators (butterflies, bees, caterpillars, etc.)
- A more attractive public space
- An inviting park with elements for public enjoyment, neighborly conversation, and relaxation
- Education and engagement of TOCC residents and CCES students about native plant gardening
- A model of sustainable community garden approaches for other communities