

Master Plan: A Tradition of Trees

Introduction

The Town of CCV has a large and valuable population of publicly maintained trees that grace its streets. Specifically, these trees reside in the CCV right of way primarily in front of our residences, and, in some cases with corner lots, on the side of a residence.

This suburban forest provides a wide variety of benefits including:

- Shading walking areas
- Cleaning pollutants out of the air: improving public health
- Providing habitat for birds
- Adding the beauty of green leaves, spring flowers, and fall color
- Increasing the value of residential properties
- Storm water capture and groundwater recharge
- Energy conservation through wind-shielding and shading
- Erosion mitigation
- Diminution of pavement generated heat-island effects
- Noise mitigation

To provide these benefits, we need to design, plant, and maintain our street trees properly. There is much more to planning for and planting trees throughout a municipality than many people might guess. To do it well a town needs both an ongoing plan, and the continuing input of skilled arborists.

For over eighty years Chevy Chase View residents working through voluntary committees and later through the elected Council have established a tradition of trees for the public right of way. The earliest record of public interest and investment in street trees are communications between the CCV Citizens Committee and the Maryland State Department of Forestry dated August 1925. Street tree planting was designed street by street by committees of residents throughout the 1920's and 30's. In 1938, for example, the Report of the Special Committee on Tree Planting suggested that "Sugar maple be planted on Franklin Street, Scarlet oak on Everett and Willow oak on Summit Avenue."

The street "tree-scape" these CCV residents designed in the 1930's and 40's incorporated traditional design features of great beauty and elegance. For instance, an arborist today points out that the oaks and maples mentioned above were planted opposite one another to create a formal colonnade reminiscent of the entry drives of the great estates of England.

This "Master Plan: A Tradition of Trees" provides goals, and guidelines to provide a foundation for the preservation of this historic tradition.

Basic Design Principles

Choices for trees for planting in the right of way will be guided by two basic design principles: the landscape plan and sound arborcultural practices. A consulting professional arborist capable of providing on-going, expert planning and advice in both these areas is essential in dealing with such a complex and specialized subject.

Landscape design:

Summit Avenue, the only north/south street in Chevy Chase View whose right of way is maintained by the town, requires plantings that give it continuity, shade and a welcoming thoroughfare for both cars and foot traffic. The east/west streets have traditional, formal plantings which should be maintained on the blocks where they have historically existed. Developing a varied planting approach building on noteworthy existing trees (e.g. a bald cypress, a redwood or an elegant beech) can address the needs of blocks that have had a mixed planting history.

Arborcultural practices:

Sound arborcultural practices to be considered include: choosing tree species resistant to disease and insects, avoiding excessive mono-culture, pruning demands and maintenance costs, and a tree's ability to survive the harsh street environment.

The professional arborists retained by the Town Council are experienced in advising municipalities on landscape design for streets, in working with both elected officials and citizen volunteers, and are certified specialists in the care of individual trees and stands of trees.

The Master Plan: A Tradition of Trees

The Master Plan provides guidelines for the planting and maintenance of town trees according to the design principles stated above. The plan contains goals and a block by block plan for planting for the future while integrating the design concepts and unique features such as overhead electrical wires, sidewalks and signage. The Town Council is charged with overall responsibility of maintaining the trees and treasured character of our town that our trees represent, and with the help of the Arbor Committee, experienced arborists and community volunteers, will continue that tradition. The Master Plan document with block by block descriptions of existing and planned trees can be found on the CCV website.