

## Vision Statement of the Environment and Energy Committee

### Trees as valuable Village assets, vital to achieving the E&E Vision for Chevy Chase Village

The Environment and Energy Committee's overarching goal is to reduce the overall carbon footprint of Chevy Chase Village residents and its operations so that the Village becomes carbon neutral with respect to CO<sub>2</sub> emissions by 2015. To achieve this ambitious target, Village households and Village Management will need to adopt greener practices (including energy consumption and waste management) that reduce CO<sub>2</sub> emissions, as well as those that increase the uptake of CO<sub>2</sub> and the conservation of water. Trees are a vital element in this strategy.

The Environment and Energy (E&E) Committee recognizes that the Village's tree cover—its urban forest—is a major mitigating factor in the amount of CO<sub>2</sub> that the Village emits into the atmosphere. This is because the Village's trees are the sole physical assets within the Village's boundaries that actually capture and store CO<sub>2</sub>.

The goal for the Village is to have more tree cover at the end of each year than at the beginning. The Committee would develop a mechanism for measuring the amount of CO<sub>2</sub> that the current tree cover captures *per annum* and then monitor changes in this amount over time as a result of active tree planting and reduction in tree loss Village wide, to assess progress toward increasing this amount. To support this objective, the E&E Committee will review all projects that involve removing a living tree. In the event that taking down a tree cannot be avoided, i.e., because it is diseased or poses a risk to residents or the public, the Committee will make recommendations for reforestation that would compensate for the loss of the carbon capturing capacity of the tree and other services provided by the tree(s) taken down.

The E&E Committee will seek to promote the planting of native trees wherever feasible—in residents' gardens, along the roadways, in Village Greens—to enhance the quality of life in the Village and to bring us closer to our goal of becoming a carbon neutral community. The Committee recognizes that trees that are native to the Eastern Forest are the basic building blocks for a healthy ecosystem in the Village. Native trees, for example, will capture and process more rainwater runoff than will most hybrids or introduced species; they provide vital habitat and food to a myriad of living things—including butterflies, migratory and resident songbirds, woodpeckers and other avian species, small mammals and invertebrates that keep pests under control. They provide welcome shade in the summer, a palette of color in the fall and windbreaks in the winter. In fact, the mature canopy of trees that contributes to the unique character of Chevy Chase Village was cited in the last household survey as one of the main reasons people want to live in the Village.

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