Countway Re(Design) Challenge

Vision of “The Indestructibles”

Our proposed redesign of the Countway Community Garden is based on three S’s – Simplicity, Serenity and Sustainability. Our space will cater to the needs of different people – those who are looking for a peaceful green retreat, those who want to exercise their gardening skills, those who wish to learn about growing fresh produce or those who simply love to walk and talk in nature.

The space will feature a wooden boardwalk for visitors flanked by a tall, appealing green wall on one side. While the boardwalk will provide a walkable self-guided tour of the garden and space for roundtables and chairs for quiet contemplation and discussion, the green wall will serve as a muffling barrier for extraneous noise coming from road traffic and the on-site generator. A solar-powered lamp equipped with an occupancy sensor will be mounted on the boardwalk to light up in case of need during dark hours. Seasonal vegetables, fruits, flowers, medicinal herbs and plants will be grown organically on either side of the boardwalk and the fresh produce supplied to the Longwood area cafeterias to enhance health of the community. A “mini” greenhouse in the garden will host plants during extreme winter weather and also protect against pest attacks. An on-site enclosed compost bin will produce mulch from the organic waste generated by the garden. Rainwater will be conserved via collection of water from gutters from adjacent roofs (e.g., the Countway library roof) in an on-site rainwater barrel, which will be an important water resource during dry weather conditions. A waterproofing membrane will be affixed on the pale bricks beneath the proposed boardwalk and planted areas to aid in quicker stormwater drainage, minimize water retention and protect the subterranean library assets from water penetration.

Community engagement will be promoted through organization of monthly health seminars catered to students, faculty and professionals interested in learning about nutrition and urban organic gardening. More importantly, with the bike racks relocated to next to the green wall, the Longwood bikers will have increased interaction with the space stimulating their interest in the well-being of the garden. Finally, our design will incorporate low-maintenance and low carbon footprint sustainable building materials to maximize the benefit-cost ratio throughout the lifecycle of the garden.