

# Project Profile – Green Space on Prospect Street

DRAFT: Updated July 22, 2024



297 Prospect Street is a 4.6-acre property in the Village of Romeo in Macomb County owned by Romeo Community Schools (RCS). The school buildings were demolished in 2021 and an RFP was released to sell the property for residential development. At the request of Village residents, the RCS Board of Education (BOE) paused the RFP process to allow the community group to develop and propose alternative solutions. This pause is set to expire on November 1, 2024.

Village residents are organized as Green Space on Prospect Street (GSOPS). GSOPS' purpose is to acquire and preserve 297 Prospect Street as public green space in perpetuity. Four County Community Foundation (4CCF) is the fiduciary for the project. The Village of Romeo is the intended future owner of the green space. Still to be determined is whether the Village will directly acquire the property with the funds raised by GSOPS or if an interim landowner will complete the

acquisition and hold it while the green space is developed, later gifting the property to the Village.

The market value of the property is estimated at \$800,000 or more. The BOE reports that they have invested \$680,000 in the site to date. The final acquisition price is yet to be determined. GSOPS has raised \$350,000 in donations and pledges toward the acquisition and is working to bring in at least \$150,000 from local individuals and businesses. GSOPS is in contact with regional foundations and corporate giving programs for assistance with the remaining amount.

The current condition of the property is mowed open space with scattered trees. GSOPS' vision for the future green space is to establish it both as a village park and as an arboretum that will draw visitors from a wider area beyond the Village of Romeo and can be used as an outdoor classroom that educators can utilize in working on state academic standards, particularly in science and social studies.

As a local destination, the green space will offer a unique experience compared to other parks in the village and will be a space for activities that enhance health and wellness. Approximately one third of Romeo's population (1,300 people or 620 households) live within a 10-minute walk of 297 Prospect Street, with 9% of households below the poverty level and 30% reporting one or more persons with a disability. Accessible paths and gathering spaces will ensure that the green space is welcoming to people

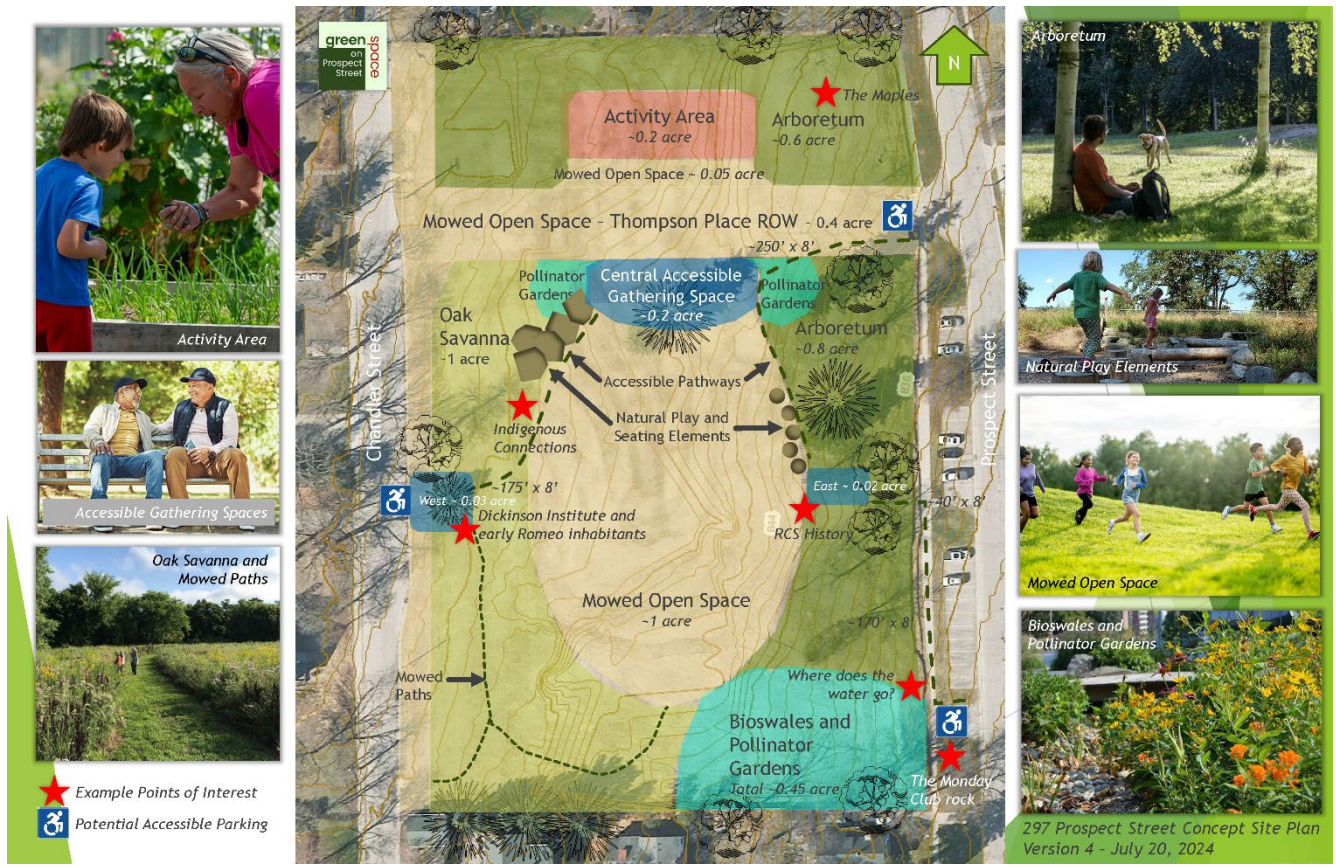


of all abilities to explore, socialize and relax surrounded by nature. Maintaining a central area of mowed open space will provide opportunities for unstructured play or for exercise and other activities by organized groups.

To develop the regional destination, we will plant trees and native landscapes to create an arboretum that qualifies for certification through the Morton Arboretum in Chicago. Part of the property will focus on oak savanna restoration with mowed paths. This mixture of prairie and forest represents a currently endangered ecosystem that was once abundant throughout southern Michigan. The installation of bioswales and other green stormwater infrastructure will manage runoff issues on the site and demonstrate the best practices that help communities be more resilient to the changing climate.

The property provides an opportunity to interpret history and add value to the historical context of the Village of Romeo. 297 Prospect Street has always been a place of learning, starting in 1855 with the establishment of the Dickinson Institute. The property also offers possibilities for interpretation of the broader sweep of history starting with the Anishinaabe, the first inhabitants and stewards of this landscape, through the continuing movement of non-Indigenous people into the region and the growth of a flourishing, diverse community.

Next steps for GSOPS are to continue fundraising and grant-seeking in partnership with 4CCF, determine cost estimates for development and maintenance of the green space, identify the interim landowner or obtain a commitment from the Village of Romeo to acquire the property once the needed resources are in place, and develop a strategic plan for GSOPS' long-term commitment to maintenance and continued investment.



★ Example Points of Interest  
 ♿ Potential Accessible Parking

297 Prospect Street Concept Site Plan  
 Version 4 - July 20, 2024