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Pavilion to Help Ring In Diversity

Group Wants to Build Popular Spot for Park Users, Offer Taste of Korea

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Looking out over a freshly mowed hillside in [Fairfax County](#), artist Y. David Chung described his vision for the open parkland around him. There will be a traditional Korean pavilion, with a graceful sloping roof and a bronze bell inside. Around it, a garden where visitors can wander amid pine trees, lotuses and a small brook.

Yesterday morning, Chung, the lead designer of the planned garden, gathered with local Korean Americans and area officials at Meadowlark Botanical Gardens in [Vienna](#) to mark the project's launch.



The Korean American Culture Committee plans to build a pavilion with a bell and garden, shown in a photographic rendering, in Vienna. (By Gerald Martineau -- The Washington Post)

Members of the Korean American Culture Committee, which is raising \$1 million to pay for the public garden, said they consider the project a gift to the Washington area and hope it will become a popular spot to visit. But the garden will also bring a familiar symbol of home to the region's large Korean population.

"I think the older generation will really like the idea of going to this place as a place of refuge," said Chung, a respected artist whose public projects include a mural in the Rosslyn Metro station. "For young Korean Americans, it will be a place of discovering aspects of their culture."

The garden is one way area parks are changing to appeal to an increasingly diverse population. [Montgomery County](#) recently added cricket facilities at a park. And each April, thousands of people gather in public parks for Sizdah Bedar, a day celebrated by Iranians and others that falls 13 days after the spring equinox.

Even the concession stands are changing. With more Korean American golfers playing [Fairfax](#) courses, the county is considering adding items such as hard-boiled eggs to the traditional half-smokes and hot dogs.

The Korean Embassy estimates that the number of people of Korean heritage in the Washington area has doubled in the past five years to 150,000.

Jeung Hwa Elmejjad-Yi, a member of the cultural committee, came to [the United States](#) from Korea as a teenager. She looks forward to the day she can bring her teenage daughter to the garden and imagines young couples having wedding photos taken at the pavilion.

"This is a great cultural thing that can give her confidence in her identity," she said.

Bells, such as the one that will be the garden's centerpiece, are traditionally used in Korea to mark places of significance in a community, such as a temple or town square. There is a large Korean bell in a [park in San Pedro, Calif.](#)

The final design of the pavilion and bell is not complete, but [Chung, a University of Michigan](#) professor who also keeps a studio in Northern Virginia, said he will combine traditional and contemporary elements. He is traveling to Korea next week to visit the foundry where the bronze bell will be cast.

Chung, who is working with District-based Hunt Laudi Studio, envisions "outdoor rooms" with seating and an open space large enough for small groups to gather for performances.

"It will be a place of meditation, contemplation and someplace to enjoy nature," Chung said.

The bell and pavilion will cost about \$600,000 and the garden, with plants native to Korea, an additional \$100,000, park officials said. The remaining \$300,000 will be used for an endowment to support upkeep of the garden. Committee officials said about \$250,000 has been raised.

The Northern Virginia Park Authority Board is set to approve final plans for the project in the fall, officials said. The pavilion and bell are expected to be installed in late 2009, and the garden should be completed in 2010.