

The Springs HOA Landscaping Master Plan

INTRODUCTION

Approved Date: June 2006 – Updated: February 2015

PHILOSOPHY

It takes time, effort, and commitment to a design plan in order to achieve beautiful, mature landscaping that complements our neighborhood and enhances our property values. The reason for a Landscaping Master Plan (this “Master Plan”) at The Springs is to ensure the following:

- Consistency and continuity in landscaping over time (i.e., from one Board of Directors to another, or one Grounds Chair to another.)
- A template for landscape work in the common areas and a guide for future Grounds Committees.
- A methodology for proposing, discussing and implementing landscaping changes when the necessity arises.

CHANGING THE MASTER PLAN

Although our Grounds Committee is charged with maintaining common areas in The Springs, it is not intended that the Committee should have unilateral authority to change the landscaping in the common areas from what has been approved in the past or may be naturally occurring. This Master Plan, adopted by The Springs Board of Directors with input from residents and the Grounds Committee, will dictate how our common areas are maintained.

In order to implement a change from this Master Plan, interested parties shall submit to the Grounds Committee:

- A description of the common area for which a change is requested with a proposal for an alternative landscaping plan.
- A report on input solicited from homeowners (both near the area in question and from the general ownership) about the proposed alternative plan.
- The Grounds Committee may hold open meetings to discuss and refine the alternative plan(s).
- The Grounds Committee shall present the requested change in common area to the Board of Directors along with the Committee's findings, any suggested revisions, and the projected cost and timeline to The Springs Board of Directors for its decision.

GENERAL MAINTENANCE

The landscaping maintenance guidelines in the following two paragraphs will apply to all of the parks in The Springs.

Over time, trees which are located on common area and within five feet of a homeowner's wall (unless specified otherwise in specific park descriptions), may be removed to avoid possible damage to the homeowner's property.

Branches of trees that are on common area may be trimmed, as appropriate, to avoid property damage and debris accumulation in yards.

FOUNTAIN AREA

Approved Date: November 2006 – Updated: February 2011

Definition of Area:

The Fountain Area is defined as the common area outside the front gate and north of The Springs entrance, not including the frontage road right of way.

Overview of landscaping plan:

The area around the front fountain will be maintained as a groomed desert park. Only cacti and desert plants not requiring irrigation will be planted. The density of plantings will be fairly sparse but featuring larger specimen plants. Boulders, rocks and gravel will be featured, complimenting the look and design of the fountain. A moderate amount of accent lighting may be furnished for the fountain and/or specimen plants.

Allowed Plants:

Barrel cacti, columnar cacti, Ocotillo, Desert Spoon and Yucca Agave (Large species only), Prickly Pear cacti. Existing trees and Texas Ranger shrubs along the wall will be retained (to “soften” the wall).

Disallowed Plants: Generally, if a plant is not listed under “Allowed Plants” then it is disallowed. However because the Fountain Area is our most-viewed park, it should look its best year round with minimum maintenance. For that reason plants that need high maintenance, or don’t look good for part of the year must not be used. This includes: Bushes and shrubs, flowers and wild flowers, cholla, heavy fruiting plants or heavy shedding plants.

Transition Considerations: The three large saguaros are a key feature for this area and will be replaced as needed. Several cacti were removed prior to the frontage road construction, so they need to be replaced. Gravel, rocks and accent lighting have also been disrupted during construction and need to be refurbished.

NATURE PARK (PARK 1)

Approved Date: April 7, 2012

Definition of Area: The Nature Park encompasses some 24 acres of partially reclaimed upper Sonoran Desert habitat and lies behind the homes in The Springs, on the east side of Wolf Run Road. The area is bordered on its east side by the Torres Blancas golf course. A one mile paved walking path loops through this park.

Overview of landscaping plan: This area is intended to be primarily a nature area for walking, bird watching and nature viewing. At one time, the land was graded in preparation for building. However, when it was decided that building would not take place in this space, the land was seeded with indigenous plants and irrigated for several seasons. The irrigation has since been removed and the area is slowly reverting to its natural state (mesquite flats).

Landscape maintenance in most of the Nature Park will be minimal. Trimming along the walking path will be done to reduce the probability of surprise encounters with snakes and other wildlife. Tall grass below trees will be cut and low dead branches will be removed. Some trimming of trees within view of the walking path will be done for the health and beauty of the trees. That is, dead branches will be removed and some thinning of the lower branches will be done.

Also, throughout the nature area, volunteers will periodically remove dead desert broom, as these plants are thought to release airborne embers during a wildfire. Patches of tumbleweed, pigweed and other undesirable non-native vegetation will be removed by volunteers from time to time.

Wildfire Risk Reduction. To reduce the risk of wild fires damaging nearby homes, buffer zones have been defined and specific actions will be taken within each zone.

Zone 1: This area is defined as the space directly behind yard walls, extending 30 feet outward into the Nature Park.

Trees and shrubs taller than 6 feet will be removed or trimmed shorter (with the possible exception of an isolated specimen tree). Trees under six feet tall and other shrubs will be allowed to sparsely populate this zone. Cacti and succulents will be allowed. Grass within 10 feet of back walls will be cut to 6 inches in height after the rainy season and when no longer green. All desert broom in this Zone will be removed.

Zone 2: Extending 100 feet from yard walls, but not including Zone 1.

Tree density will be limited by maintaining gaps of 10 feet (minimum) from crown to crown. In addition, the trees in Zone 2 will be trimmed for health and aesthetics once per year with emphasis on lightening the density of the tree (opening up the center). Brush and tall grass under trees will be cut to less than 6 inches in height or removed altogether. Elsewhere, (not under trees) brush will be trimmed to less than 6 feet tall and patches of undergrowth will be kept separated so as not to provide easy wildfire transmission. Cacti and succulents will be allowed.

Zone 3: This is the remaining area of the Nature Park not defined as Zone 1 or Zone 2.

The area inside the walking trail loop will be maintained with minimal thinning and will be left in a more dense, natural state to encourage wildlife. However, dead desert broom, buffle grass, pigweed and non-native mustard weed will be removed periodically by volunteers. Dead and down branches will be removed, but dead and upright branches may be left in place. It is anticipated that as mesquite, palo verde and other larger trees reach full maturity and show obvious signs of disease and natural deterioration, they will be removed to assure the general overall health of the Nature Park.

Transition Considerations for Zone 3:

Mesquite trees are volunteering throughout the nature area. In some places, there may be several trees competing for the same space and the Grounds Committee may decide to thin the competing trees out. As the trees mature they will get taller and provide more shade. This may influence the balance of understory plants to favor more shade-loving varieties.

PARK 2

Approved Date: June 2006

Definition of Area:

Park 2 lies behind the homes on the east side of Golden Lynx Road and on the west side of Wolf Run Road.

Overview of landscaping plan:

This large park was changed in 2007 from a desert meadow area to a graveled park with plantings located on several raised “islands”. In addition, the park serves as a catch basin for run-off water during the monsoon season. The catch basin areas have been covered with rip-rap rather than decorative gravel.

Plantings in this park are more minimal than other parks, and are restricted to the designated “island” areas, plus planting beds on the south and north ends of the park. The allowed plant list is restrictive and intends to generally exclude shrubs, ground cover, trees and cholla (except at the very north and south ends of the park where these plants already occur.) There are nine decorative “islands” with 10 to 15 plants per island, plus 10 to 15 plants in each of the north and south ends, for a park total of 110 to 165 plants.

Allowed Plants:

Barrel cacti, columnar cacti, ocotillo, desert spoon, yuccas and agaves.

Additional Allowed Plants:

North End Only: cholla, prickly pear, Texas Ranger shrubs.

Plants Not Allowed:

Trees, prickly pear and cholla (except at north and south planting beds), Shrubs (except in north planting bed).

Transition Considerations:

Currently, the planting are small, but will continue to gain size. As plants die they will be replaced by larger than average specimens to improve their visibility in such a large park.

PARK 6

Approved Date: June 2006

Definition of Area:

Park 6 is on Via De Cristal, between Via De La Fonda and Via Del Placio.

Overview of landscaping plan:

This park will be maintained as groomed desert park with a few decorative arroyos and occasional boulders. Only cacti and desert plants not requiring irrigation will be planted. Emphasis is on planting cacti (including cholla), yucca, desert spoon, agave and ocotillo. There are two trees existing in the park and they will be maintained but no new trees will be planted, nor will existing trees be replaced if they die. Bushes, shrubs, groundcover and wildflowers will not be planted.

The density of plantings will be moderate (roughly 200 plants) with some (large) specimen plants.

Allowed Plants:

Cacti (including cholla), Ocotillo, Yucca, Desert Spoon.

Transition Considerations:

This park is already close to the desired condition and will essentially be maintained “as is”.

PARK 7

Approved Date: June 2006

Definition of Area:

Park 7 is on Paseo Florido, between Via De La Fonda and Camino Del Heroe.

Overview of landscaping plan:

This park will be maintained as groomed desert park with a few decorative “islands” and occasional boulders. Only cacti and desert plants not requiring irrigation will be planted. Emphasis is on planting cacti (including cholla), yucca, desert spoon, agave and ocotillo. Two trees already existing in the park will be maintained but no new trees will be planted, nor will the existing trees be replaced if they die. Bushes, shrubs, groundcover and wildflowers will not be planted.

The density of plantings will be sparse to moderate (roughly 150 plants) with some (large) specimen plants.

Allowed Plants:

Cacti (including cholla), Ocotillo, Yucca Desert Spoon.

Transition Considerations:

This park is somewhat more sparse than planned so some additional plantings are needed.

PARK 8

Approved Date: June 2006

Definition of Area:

Park 8 lies behind the homes on the south side of Via De La Fonda and homes on the north side of Blue Fox Road.

Overview of landscaping plan:

This park is primarily a privacy berm running between the homes on either side. In addition, feedback from residents indicates a desire for plants that provide a screen and are welcoming to birds. Hence this park will be maintained as groomed desert park with a few decorative arroyos and plants including some shrubs. No irrigation will be provided so plantings, once established, will receive no supplemental water. Shrubs will be kept to roughly four feet high or shorter.

Allowed Plants:

Emphasis is on planting Texas Rangers, Creosote bush, agaves, yuccas and similar plants. Ground cover and wildflowers are not recommended.

The density of plantings will be sparse to moderate.

Transition Considerations:

This park is deemed to already be as planned and will be maintained “as is”.

PARKS 15, 17 AND 18

Approved Date: April 2009

Definition of Area:

Park 15 is on Avenida De Encino, between Camino Erranle and Paseo Del Cuple.

Park 17 is on Avenida De Encino, between Paseo Del Cuple and Calle De La Pelotita.

Park 18 is on Calle Rambles, between Paseo Del Cuple and Calle De La Pelotita.

Overview of landscaping plan:

These three parks are listed together because they will be maintained in (essentially) the same manner. They will be maintained as groomed desert parks with some minor elevations (already added) to relieve the monotony of the flat areas and help accentuate certain points of interest. Only cacti and desert plants not requiring irrigation will be planted. Emphasis is on planting cacti, yucca, desert spoon and ocotillo. No trees will be planted, nor will existing trees be replaced if they die. No cholla will be planted.

The density of plantings will be fairly sparse (roughly 100 plants per park) with some specimen plants featured near points of interest. Man-made berms with decorative arroyos and occasional boulders will accent the area.

Allowed Plants:

Ocotillo, Soaptree Yucca, Desert Spoon, Red Yucca, Creosote Bush, Prickly pear (Santa Rita prickly pear recommended) Barrel Cacti, Columnar Cacti.

Transition Considerations:

There are several live oak trees now existing in these parks. They will be maintained according to landscaping policy until such time as they either die or need to be removed for some other reason. They will not be replaced in kind, but may be replaced by plants from the "Allowed Plant List".

PERIMETER PARKS

Approved Date: June 2006 – Updated: February 2015

Definition of Area:

Perimeter Parks are common areas along the I-19 frontage road, plus the common area along the TEP power line on the south side of The Springs. This includes areas known as Parks 3, 4, 14, 16 and 22 plus the part of 5 that runs along the frontage road.

Overview of landscaping plan:

Ideally, these common areas will be used to provide visual and acoustic buffering from traffic on the west side of The Springs and power lines, power station(s) and pump stations along the south boundary. Plantings will emphasize taller shrubs (such as oleander) and trees. Other plantings will be encouraged to hold the soil in areas that are banked. These areas will be maintained in a mostly natural, less groomed appearance. Irrigation will be maintained to these areas for oleanders and conifers, but new plantings will favor drought tolerant native plants.

Native wild plants such as desert broom, salt bush and creosote bush will be allowed. Pigweed, buffle grass and tumbleweed will be removed by the landscaping crew periodically.

Allowed Plants:

Arizona Cyprus, Mesquite, Cacti (including cholla, ocotillo, yucca and desert spoon), drought tolerant shrubs and ground cover (to stabilize inclines and hold the soil). Oleander (although they need some water, they are an ideal barrier plant).

Wildfire Protection: To reduce the risk of wild fires damaging nearby homes, the space behind yard walls will be cleared of tall grass once or twice per year. (i.e.: Grasses will be cut to less than six inches tall.) Also, trees will be trimmed of dead wood and branches overhanging property walls may be removed. Dead shrubs such as desert broom will be removed.

Maintenance Access:

Over time, a passable area no more than five feet wide and eight feet tall adjacent to the homeowner's wall or the property line, which ever is closest to such passable area, will be maintained free of trees, limbs and brush to allow access and maintenance.

Transition Considerations:

Frontage road construction and TEP power line construction have left various portions of the perimeter area bare. Therefore, most remaining trees and shrubs will be allowed to grow naturally to provide visual and sound barriers to the frontage road and the property to the South. When and where feasible, new plantings will be established on HOA property at least ten feet from homeowners' walls or the property line, whichever is closest to such plantings.