

# Village 4 Long-Range Landscape Development Project Overview

## Background

Village Four was originally landscaped in the early 1970s. Since that time, the landscaping has undergone many changes from actions such as:

- Dead or unhealthy plant replacement
- Repairs that caused landscape alteration
- Unapproved changes by homeowners
  - Removal and replacement of plants
  - Addition of plants and trees
  - Other miscellaneous alterations
- Removal of trees

Over these four decades, the landscaping has suffered the ill-effects of many droughts, followed by heavy rain years, damage by humans and animals, and effects from air and water pollution.

## Problem/Opportunity

The existing Village Four landscape:

- Design is outdated. Landscape design at the time of the installation:
  - Included high bushes
  - Had extensive use of ivy
  - Included minimal color
  - Requires inordinate amounts of water, chemicals, and maintenance
- Has had recent water metering installation which could significantly increase costs
- Has suffered from improper maintenance causing:
  - Weeds
  - Insect attraction
  - Bare spots from removed trees
  - General poor health of green belts, plants, bushes, etc.
  - Runoff and erosion
  - Drainage issues
- Attracts rodents
- Includes nuisance plants and trees
  - Inappropriate placement
    - Drops messy and slippery matter on walks and paths
    - Close placement to structures cause moisture damage
- Is not eco-friendly
  - Requires chemical treatments (herbicides, pesticides, fertilizers)

- Requires the use of high-pollution equipment (lawn mowers, leaf blowers, etc.) for maintenance
- Water runoff is harmful to watersheds
- Is inconsistent
  - Replacement of plants often done with different plant species
  - Unapproved homeowner changes

There are also opportunities where necessary work may be leveraged with landscape repairs and updating such as:

- Potential need to replace aging and damaged sewer lines
- Address drainage issues
- Upgrade aging and failing irrigation
- Potential modifications to utilities

The project will address the general question: what do the Village Four homeowners want the common area landscaping to look like and how do they want it to function?

### Project

At the November 2019 Village Four Homeowners' Association (HOA) Board Meeting, the Board approved the four-phase Long-Range Landscape Development Project (LRLDP). The project team is charged with determining how the common area landscaping can best meet the needs and expectation of the Village Four homeowners as well determining any ancillary needs (e.g., utility upgrades, infrastructure repairs, etc.) that may impact the landscaping. The project will also determine what modifications are necessary to meet these needs and solve any landscape related problems or issues.

### *Guiding principle*

The project will proceed with one fundamental guiding principle:

***Homeowner input will be the primary driver to recommendations.***

This guiding principle will be the foundation of the project's execution. Homeowners will have ample opportunity to provide their thoughts and desires as to the future of the village's common area landscaping. The project committee will proactively solicit and encourage all Village Four homeowners to participate in the structured processes so that the committee's recommendations will accurately reflect the homeowners' interests.

### *Approach*

The LRLDP will take a phased, formal project approach, meaning that it will look first at *what* the Village Four residents, as homeowners, want to accomplish before determining *how* to

accomplish it. This approach is in concert with established best practices and will occur in four distinct phases.

- Phase 1 – Goals and objectives. The goals and objectives phase will determine, through homeowner input, how the Village Four residents want to use the landscape and how they want it to serve them. This is looking at the goals and objectives from a high level, for example, goals and objectives might include such things as: reduced water use, low maintenance, improved aesthetics, high security, etc. The final result of this phase will be a prioritized list of goals and objectives. The anticipated completion date for Phase 1 is June 2020.
- Phase 2 – Requirements and specifications. In this phase, the committee will again solicit input from all Village Four homeowners to develop specific requirements and specifications for the Phase 1 results. This will define what each goal and objective means and how the project team can determine if the goal and objective has been met. For example, what is the definition of reduced water usage, what does improved aesthetics mean, etc.? These requirements and specifications will include specific metrics and operational definitions. Additionally, the committee will survey homeowners for any specific needs or problems that require attention for the areas around their properties. This phase is anticipated to complete approximately December 2020.
- Phase 3 – Design. After approval of the Phase 3 results, the project committee will solicit input from landscape professionals such as landscape designers, landscape architects, and/or others to determine how to meet the goals and objectives according to the requirements and specifications and comply with any and all applicable regulatory requirements. The result may include actions as simple as minor adjustments, repairs, and treatments, or as extensive as complete landscape replacement. Once various proposals are received, homeowners will have the opportunity to voice their opinions and concerns. The committee will submit a recommendation to the Village Four HOA Board based upon the input received. The target date for a recommendation to the HOA Board is early summer 2021.
- Phase 4 – Construction. In this phase, the committee will create a Request for Proposal (RFP) that will be advertised to landscape contractors to solicit bids to execute the approved recommendations. Release of the RFP is anticipated to be Fall 2021. Construction start dates will be determined after bid evaluation and contract award.

This approach dictates that the committees (separate committees will be formed for each phase) will not act as decision-makers, but as researchers. The committees will not independently and solely make the decisions for any phase. Instead they will gather input from homeowners, analyze the data, and develop recommendations based upon the data results. Ultimately, the HOA Board has final decision responsibility.

#### *Homeowner Involvement*

This is a committee-led effort that will require the assistance from homeowners on two levels. The first is committee membership. Each phase will involve a working committee to complete the phase deliverables. The committee membership will be limited since there will be

opportunities for people to serve in different phases and because there is not a need for a large committee. There may be need for sub-committees and workers in addition to the committees at each phase.

The second and most important need for homeowner involvement is by providing input to the committees. A wide variety of methods will be used to gather input including workshops, surveys, questionnaires, and personal interviews. ***It is important to note that in order to accurately, systematically, and fairly tabulate and analyze homeowners' input, that input must be submitted through the formal project channels (i.e., surveys, workshops, etc.). In other words, any input provided through unsolicited emails, verbally spoken to committee or board members, or other such means will not be considered.*** The plan is to facilitate homeowners' ability to participate in the process by using online survey tools which typically require email distribution. Therefore, it is imperative that homeowners respond to requests for confirmation of proper email addresses. Homeowners unable to use the technology will have the option to submit paper responses.

There will be a certain amount of proactivity required on the part of the Village Four homeowners. In order to be able to provide their input, they must watch for requests and information via email, respond to surveys, and look for and read flyers left at their doors. These will be the primary means of communication. Additionally, updates and status reports can be found on the Village Four website, at HOA Board meetings, and in the Commentator.

#### Financial Aspects

The project through Phase 2 will require little funding as the effort is volunteer and there are few anticipated expenses. Phase 3 will incur costs for the consultants hired to propose solutions. However, this cost is unknown at this time. Estimated costs for the development will not be known until the Phase 3 work is completed and the final plan is complete. The HOA Board is currently looking at various funding alternatives to understand what options may be available at the appropriate time.

#### Conclusion

This is an important initiative that will require homeowner involvement and it is critical that homeowners participate by providing such input. Without this participation, the committee is unable to accurately assess the needs of Village Four.

Questions regarding this project should be directed to the LRLDP Project Manager:

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