

CAPE ROYAL LANDSCAPE COMMITTEE: 10-YEAR PLAN (2023-2033)

Submitted to the HOA Board in June, 2023

Committee Members: Patricia Oldham, Chair; Teri Brandenburger, Becky Cataldi, Amelia Coelho, Pat Einsetler, Judy Griggs, Greg Lucas, Dennis McCloskey, Leslie Mitchell, Kathy Morsehead, Lu Rokosz, Cheryl Veres, Lin Willett, Lou Fiola – CAC Representative, Parker Cortner – HOA Board Liason

INTRODUCTION: CHALLENGES AND OPPORTUNITIES:

In the next ten years, the Cape Royal Community faces some challenging and exciting opportunities, including:

- The widening of Pine Island Road and enhancement planting of our main entrance
- The availability of lots for sale within the neighborhood
- The anticipated widening to three lanes of Veterans Parkway on our west boarder
- The loss of our borders on Ellison Way

All these activities have an impact for the landscape of the Cape Royal Community.

- More trees in the community
- More tropical landscaping—especially palm trees
- More hardwood trees to replace those lost
- Enhancement of trees and foliage along Ellison Way
- A reduction in road noise, especially from Veterans Parkway (Note: The complaints regarding the road noise come from throughout the community, especially after Hurricane Ian--not just those living adjacent to Veterans--as the traffic noise jumps the Veterans berm, and moves down through the community, bouncing off the ponds, etc.)

Given that these are major issues, requiring substantial planting and irrigation, the Landscape Committee is recommending a 10-year plan to resolve these issues, creating a community landscape that is appealing to existing and new residents, matching the quality and style of the homes in the community, and maintainable with our current membership rate structure.

BUDGET:

The committee receives a budget of \$240,110 which is comprised of three components:

- \$178,510 for contracted general maintenance of all HOA common property.
- \$38,500 for tree doctor, mulch, and new plantings
- \$15,000 for irrigation of all HOA property

A fourth responsibility of the committee is to oversee mowing of privately owned within our community, the budget for which comes directly from billing the owners. In our ten-year plan we have sought to remain within this budget of \$240,110. The committee recommends raising the irrigation portion of the budget, which has in the past been insufficient to meet our expenses.

THE 10-YEAR PLAN

The plan takes into consideration the following major issues:

- Screening from Sandoval community and reduction of noise from Sandoval homes
- Screening from seeing, and being seen by, traffic on Veterans Parkway (also a security issue)
- Noise abatement of traffic on Veterans Parkway
- Landscape aesthetics for all members of our community
- Irrigation needed for sustainability of all plantings.
- Improvement of grass in the areas of the community designated for grass/sod
- Designating and maintaining space for a walking path around the perimeter of Royal Tee Circle, should the Board decide to create such a path in the future. (For example, the Committee intends to provide for a “grass only” space around a section of the perimeter, so that transplanting costs for a future walking path would be kept to a minimum.)
- Inflation

The plan does not include the initial refurbished entrance plantings nor the south of West Gate plantings, as these are handled by separate committees and funding. However, once those plantings are in place, the maintenance of those areas will be assumed by the Landscape Committee, placing a greater burden on the budget.

The West Berm has been under study by the Landscape Committee for the past several months. The plan calls for the continuation of modules, each measuring 100 linear feet in length. These may be selected from a total of 8 designs, which will eventually be connected to each other, providing a continuous undulating landscape line starting from the West Gate area, extending north to the northwest corner streetscape. To start, these can be planted at 100-foot intervals anywhere on the berm. As the new berm length will be around 3000 linear feet, a total of approximately 30 Berm Modules will be required to complete this project. The plantings will be selected based upon size and density (noise abatement and screening), tolerance of well-drained soil, cold-tolerance, and aesthetics for our residents.

The East Side (adjacent to Sandoval) is currently under study by the Committee and CLA, and will require some creative approaches, as the community only owns from the swale to Royal Tee Circle. In some places, this is a narrow strip, but still will require dense and high plantings to screen sight and sound. The plan is for a ribbon of high and dense shrubs, punctuated with various species of palm trees, shrubs, and other plants to create a park-like environment.

Maintaining a green area for a prospective walking path and secured hurricane-proof benches for seating are considered important for both east and west perimeters.

The eastern perimeter (Buffer Zone or “BZ”) is 6860 linear feet, and will be divided into 4 sections for planting (see addendum for diagram):

- BZ Section 1: 1,270 feet from the southeast streetscape to the beginning of the Sandoval water areas
- BZ Section 2: 950 feet from the Sandoval lakes (no houses on Sandoval side) north to the Fairways monument
- BZ Section 3: 1,720 feet from the Fairways monument to just below (north) of the golf course property)

- BZ Section 4: 2900 feet from just north of the north border of the golf course property to the northeast corner streetscape.

As both the west berm and the east buffer zone were deemed critical in our survey, it is the intent of the Landscape Committee to address both of these areas simultaneously over the 10-year period, and to fit in the other miscellaneous (but important) landscape and irrigation issues as funds allow.

The 10-year plan above addresses the wishes and requests of the majority of the community. It especially addresses traffic noise abatement, covering unsightly views, and general aesthetics to make our community even more beautiful and comfortable for our homeowners. It has the added advantage of raising the values of our properties. As with any long-range plan, this is created as a roadmap for our committee but is always subject to review based on emergencies and new priorities.

YEARS 2023-2026:

- Install irrigation for and plant 3 berm modules per year on the west side (12 total)
- Plant one section of buffer zone along the east side each year, with irrigation (entire side to be completed in 2026)
- Mulch all areas (increasing each year with new plantings)
- Continue all routine activities to support our landscaping: pesticide application; special fertilizing; special tree pruning, critical plant replacement
- Prune ficus hedge on west side every other year or as needed to keep height to 8 feet.
- Add plants to existing cul-de-sacs, streetscapes, and other planted areas to enhance appearance
- Add memorial or sponsored sitting benches, one per year as available.
- Maintain irrigation system, make improvements as needed

Note: In 2024 a new landscape maintenance contract will be negotiated.

YEARS 2027-2031:

- Install irrigation and plant 3 berm modules per year on the west side (12 total)
- Plant replacement trees along east side each year
- Continue all routine activities to support our landscaping: pesticide application, fertilization, special pruning, plant replacement, tree removal as needed
- Prune ficus hedge on west side and buffer zone hedges on east side to promote full growth
- Mulch all planted areas
- Install sod where weeds and other grasses have replaced existing sod
- Add sponsored or memorial benches as available
- Maintain irrigation system; make improvements as needed

YEARS 2032-2035

- Plant medium and small shrubs on east side in buffer zones as needed for color, texture
- Continue all routine activities to support our landscaping
- Prune ficus and buffer zone hedges as needed to promote full growth to 8 feet
- Mulch all planted areas

A more detailed 10-year plan with estimated costs can be obtained from the Landscape Committee.