

## Briefing Note

### Use of the Landscaping Budget for Cougar Ridge in 2010

**Issue:** To determine a landscaping plan for Cougar Ridge for 2010.

**Background:**

- The Cougar Ridge Residents Association (CRRA) will have approximately \$90,000 available for enhanced landscaping in 2010.
- The Landscaping Committee considered two types of expenditures:
- Improved maintenance operations (ongoing expense)
- Capital improvements (one-time expense).
- The affected shrub beds and turf areas are owned by three types of owners:
- The City's Parks department, which owns the playfields and most of the pathways in Cougar Ridge (somewhere between 20 and 32 acres).
- The City's Roads department, which owns the space between the fence and the roads, as well as some of the pathways.
- Private home owners, who own the four Cougar Ridge entrance signs.

**Analysis:**

- For City land, the CRRA can only hire landscaping contractors that are off of a City list of pre-approved contractors. They have the correct machinery, insurance, etc.
- A contract for 2010 will have to be signed in December 2008 preferably, and by January 30, 2009 at the absolute latest.
- Naturalization is an example of how The City uses alternative design as part of its Integrated Pest management Plan (IPM) to minimize pesticide use. **Naturalization** means re-introducing or maintaining native plants. See Appendix A for examples.
- The CRRA likely should **not** do enhanced operations maintenance in 2010 because:
- We may not have a Landscape Maintenance Agreement (LMA) in place.
- We cannot afford enhanced maintenance. From the quotes we have received so far, we

would have to double or triple the Annual Rent Charge.

- There is precedent for residents associations focusing their budgets on capital improvements in the first few years. For example, the Hawkwood Residents Association started with five years of capital improvements.
- Focusing most of the budget in the first few years on capital improvements can, in the long term, reduce watering needs, minimize pesticide requirements, and reduce the efforts and costs required for maintenance.
- The City requires proposals with specific details for capital improvements, but is generally open to such initiatives such as:
  - Adding appropriate plants to shrub beds to make them denser.
  - Replacing non-native plants that are doing poorly with hardier native plants.
  - Replacing some of the turf areas with shrub beds (e.g., in the road medians).
  - Adding retaining walls to make flower beds and eliminating the poor-quality turf at the entrance signs.
- For a list of the companies the CRRA Landscaping Committee contacted and the quotes they provided, please see Appendix B: Summary of Quotes.
- If the CRRA focuses most of the 2010 budget on naturalizing the entrance features, there are other companies that could potentially be contacted to provide quotes, as they specialize in natural landscapes: Beauty Way Natural Landscape Design, Installation, and Health; Rising Land Design; and, Tinkerbelle Gardens.

**Recommendations:**

- In 2010 and 2011, continue to use The City for operations maintenance on the City-owned turf and shrub beds. Designate one person on the Board to be in contact with The City throughout the maintenance season and advocate for a high level of maintenance (Bruce G. made a major contribution in this area in 2009).
- In 2010, use about \$70,000 of the CRRA landscaping budget to hire a company (to be determined – TBD) to improve/naturalize and maintain throughout the year the following areas:
- The four entrance signs. We would need permission from the adjacent home owners.

- If budget allows, the area between the sidewalk and the fence on the north side of Old Banff Coach Road (except for adjacent to the non-paying section). We would need permission from Roads. This work could begin this fall/winter.
- In 2010, use about \$20,000 of the CRRA landscaping budget to hire the same company (TBD) to weed all of the public areas in the two paying sections of the community from about mid-April to the end of August. The CRRA will consider this “community cleanup”, as opposed to landscape maintenance.

**Next steps if the recommendations are chosen:**

- Further research and choose a design plan for the four entrance signs by December.
- Negotiate pricing and enter into contracts with contractors by December.
- Select Board members to take the lead on each of the recommendations.

Prepared for Cougar Ridge Residents Association  
November 2, 2009

**Appendix A: Examples of Naturalized Areas**

A boulevard in Elbow Valley - just west of Calgary - this could be done in Cougar Ridge. Cougar Ridge's boulevards could be much more attractive and friendly to the environment. Many communities have made their boulevards part of the community's attraction. For example, Halifax has rose bushes on one of its central boulevards. Saskatoon has daylilies on some of its boulevards and Southern California cities have many attractive water-wise bushes on their boulevards. The City of Edmonton had a naturalization program in the 1990s. With the money saved from mowing boulevards they planted trees and shrubs.

Tawny daylily planted on a boulevard in Saskatoon. Photo by Brian Baksten.

The website (<http://www.healthycalgary.ca/>) is the source of the pictures in Appendix A and has suggestions for naturalizing landscapes in Calgary. Currently, Calgary has 450 natural areas which make up over 46 per cent of the park space in Calgary. In total, this is 3,700 hectares of land. The City of Calgary Roads has also naturalized nearly 1% of approximately 1,000 hectares of land it manages. This includes sections along

Sarcee Trail, Country Hills Boulevard, Peigan Trail and Highway 22X.

Naturalized area at Bow Trail and Sarcee Trail SW

More of the naturalized area at Bow Trail and Sarcee Trail beside a mowed area - which is more attractive?

**Appendix B: Summary of Quotes**

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• \$225,000 in 2010 (\$236,250 in 2011 and \$248,063 in 2012).</li> <li>• This would be for an almost five FTE (full-time equivalent) crew from about mid-April to about mid-October.</li> <li>• Includes regular (i.e., weekly) mowing and trimming of turf areas, cultivating (i.e., weeding) and</li> </ul>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Does landscaping for Wentworth and Springside.</li> <li>• West Springs-Keturah is also considering using Foothills.</li> <li>• WSCR’s vision is to use one landscaper for the entire WSCR area in the future – perhaps Foothills.</li> <li>• Requires a minimum three-year contract.</li> <li>• This company is obviously experienced in</li> </ul>

Foothills Landscaping  
Foothillslandscaping.ca

Larry Podesky, CCHT,  
Journeyman Landscape  
Gardener and Supervisor  
Landscape Maintenance

Marie-France Germain,  
C.T., Journeyman  
Landscape Gardener,  
Certified Horticulture  
Technician, Maintenance  
Supervisor

edging shrub  
beds and tree  
wells,  
fertilizing turf  
and plants as  
needed, water  
truck visit once  
per week for the  
non-irrigated  
medians and  
boulevards,  
minor pruning  
(includes  
shaping), litter  
pickup, and  
spring and fall  
cleanup.

- Not included, so would need to charge extra if we were interested: flowers (would be roughly another \$25,000 per year), irrigation (e.g., maintenance checks), other watering, and pesticide applications (at this level of

None. Foothills feels that with proper maintenance capital improvements would not be necessary.

big jobs like this.

- They also have experience with putting in the landscaping for new communities, and were the company that did parts of the eastern part of Cougar Ridge.
- This quote is currently too expensive for us so if we were to go with this company we would either have to ask for less maintenance at a lower cost or **triple** our ARC fees.
- Relatively few details were provided with the quote, so it is hard to tell what we would lose if we gave

	<p>maintenance, though, they feel they would not need pesticides).</p>		<p>them, for example, one third of the budget.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Currently certified by The City.</li> </ul>
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Irrigation maintenance, \$95/hour</li> <li>• Mulch, \$650 per ten yards or more</li> <li>• Tree removal and stump grinding for \$250 per tree and \$45 per shrub</li> <li>• Tree delivery / planting / fertilizing for about \$300 to \$550 per tree and \$45 to \$60 per shrub.</li> <li>• Has provided two quotes for each entrance sign - one for a refreshing of what is already there and one</li> </ul>	

for a major overhaul with stackstone wall.

- The refreshing quotes generally keep what is there, trim and clean up and add some colour and new perennials.
  - \$2,600 for 77 St
  - \$9,500 for 85<sup>th</sup> St Main
  - \$1,600 for 85<sup>th</sup> St Interior
  - \$1,500 for Esso sign
  - Total is \$15,200.

• About

- Does landscaping for West Springs Farm, with a subcontract for flowers to Kate The Passionate Gardener.
- This company is inexperienced in big jobs like this and would need to ramp up their equipment in order to handle this job.
- The quote for enhanced maintenance operations is currently too expensive for us so if we were to go with this company we would either have to ask for less maintenance at a lower cost or

Carlson Irrigation  
Carlsonirrigation.com

Tim Carlson  
Carlson Irrigation  
Carlsonirrigation.com

Tim Carlson

- \$150,000 to \$165,000/year. This would be for about a one to two FTE crew from about the end of April to mid October.
- Includes about \$116,000/year to mow the Member areas 16 times per year, plus about \$13,000/year to mow the non-paying central area six times per year.
- Includes about \$20,000 to \$40,000 per year to pick weeds by hand at \$45 per hour.
- Includes a spring booster, two summer builders and a fall root growth fertilizer applications for about \$11,000.

- The overhaul quotes take a more serious look at the signs long term:
  - \$14,000 for 77 St, of which \$7,300 is for 1.5 foot stackable wall
  - \$40,000 for 85<sup>th</sup> St Main, of which \$21,000 is for 1.5 foot stackable wall
  - \$5,500

- **double** our ARC fees.
- Relatively great detail was provided with the quote, so it is easy to tell what we would lose if we gave them, for example, half of the budget.
- We could afford to do the improvements they suggest to the four entrance signs. We could either try to do an overhaul of all four signs in one year, or do a combination of overhaul/refreshing over a period of two to three years, which could allow us to go with the nicer stone.
- In terms of

- Includes aeration (\$6,400) and power raking/thatching (\$12,700) every three years.
- Tree pruning at \$45 per hour
- About \$25,000 per year for flowers.

- for 85<sup>th</sup> St Interior, of which \$3,300 is for stacking stone border
- \$5,800 for Esso sign, of which \$3,300 is for stacking stone border)
- Total is \$65,300.
- If we upgraded the stone for the stacking wall

- ethical procurement, they pay a living wage.
- Not certified by The City, so would have to go through the process to become certified.
- If we overhaul the four entrance signs, I suggest we go with either Carlson or Year-Round (depending on whose design is better and whose price point is better) and source the plants from Bow Point Nursery.
- I noticed that they can offer weeding services for \$45 per hour. An effective use of

to  
boulder  
r the  
total  
would  
be  
\$135,0  
00.

- The stack wall is not necessarily the only way to go - I'm not sure I really like the idea of doing that kind of wall - I think the feel of Cougar Ridge calls for boulder walls instead - the only problem with that is that the boulder walls come in at about 3x the price because of the difficulty of creating them and the cost of the boulders.
- Of course, any

our small  
budget could be  
to contract with  
Carlson to weed  
the paying areas  
and/or to water/  
maintain the  
entrance signs.

		<p>of these quotes can be worked with to meet our needs</p>	
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>To build / construct a raised planter at any of following entry locations will likely require a Development permit from the City of Calgary. This is not only a timely process but can run into some associated costs as well. To keep your capital costs to a minimum on these four corners I would recommend the use of River Rock, split rail fence and plant material. To add impact in the summer I would</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>This company is currently focused on designing and implementing landscaping for new communities, but they used to be in the maintenance</li> </ul>

Year-Round Landscaping  
Yearroundlandscaping.com

Michelle Lefebre,  
CSLA, Residential  
Design and Business  
Development Manager

Rino  
rino@yearroundlandscaping.com

- Still waiting for a quote.

recommend some recessed planters located sporadically throughout the sites and filled with hardy yet powerful annuals.

- The overhaul quotes take a more serious look at the signs long term:
  - \$8,830.00 for 77 St
  - \$16,000.00 for 85<sup>th</sup> St Main
  - \$8,500.00 for 85<sup>th</sup> St Interior
  -

business and want to get back into it. This is a relatively large company.

- Interestingly, they suggest not building a retaining wall at the entrance signs, which would save us considerable money.
- In terms of ethical procurement, they pay a living wage.
- Currently certified by The City.

		<p>\$9,600 .00 for Esso sign</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Total is \$45,000.</li> </ul>	
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Plant material 500 various (as listed) #2 containers @ \$32/ea \$ 16,000</li> <li>100 various trees caliper size @ \$200/ea \$ 20,000</li> <li>Total plant material \$ 36,000</li> <li>Plant installation, mulch, compost and watering \$ 36,000</li> <li>Sub-total capital improvements: \$72,000</li> <li>Total \$ 129,584</li> <li>Also do not recommend retaining walls</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Bow Point Nursery is a landscape supply company rather than an operations company.</li> <li>Their strength is expertise in native plants, many of which were sourced right on our slopes, and knowledge of sustainable landscaping practices.</li> <li>They have a</li> </ul>

Bow Point Nursery  
Bowpointnursery.com

Pam

Bow Point Nursery  
Bowpointnursery.com

Pam

- None. Bow Point feels that with proper capital improvements, maintenance would not be necessary.
- Do not have mowing contracting available.

- at the four entrance signs.
- Arborist, 6 hours/day X 3 days/week X 6 weeks @ \$100/hour \$ 10,800
- Plant Maintenance, 5 hours/day X 5 days/week X 6 weeks @ \$145/hour \$ 21,750 (weeding, pruning, etc.)
- Greenspace Management - 20 acres (80,971 m<sup>2</sup>) 80,971 m<sup>2</sup> @ \$. 25 / m<sup>2</sup> \$ 16,194
- Grass and Weed Control (steam weed killer) 8 hours/ application @ \$85/hour X 13 applications \$ 8,840, one in May, four in June, four in July, and four

steam weed killer, which can be an alternative to chemical controls.

- Even if we do not use them or the sub-contractors they recommend for landscaping maintenance, we could at least source our plants from them.
- In terms of ethical procurement, they pay a living wage.
- Not certified by The City, so would have to go through the process to become certified.
- Arborist work and re-seeding work could proceed the winter of 2000

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>in August</li> <li>Sub-total operations: \$57,584</li> <li>Total \$ 129,584</li> </ul>	winter of 2009.
The City Parks Department	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Not sure if we will get a quote.</li> <li>Hawkwood uses The City for enhanced landscaping maintenance and capital improvements, and it looks quite good. The CRRA has asked The City for a quote for enhanced landscaping, but they have not been able to comply with that request. <a href="http://www.hawkwoodcalgary.com/09%20LEAF%20FAQ.htm">http://www.hawkwoodcalgary.com/09%20LEAF%20FAQ.htm</a>.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The City will not give a quote if private companies provide them, as they do not compete with the private sector.</li> <li>West Springs-Keturah initially tried to contract with The City for enhanced maintenance, but were not happy with their experience.</li> </ul>	