

Long Range Landscape Plan

Vision

A touch of the woods right next to the city.

Mission Statement

To develop a plan with professional advice that maintains the natural beauty of Tamarack within a lush, woodsy setting. Plant selection and placement shall be diverse while maintaining a balance between beauty, safety and economic factors.

Abbreviations: Long Range Landscape Plan (LRLP), Landscaping Policies and Standards (LPS).

Objectives

1. Ensure a high level of landscape quality while maintaining overall landscape maintenance expenses.
2. Maintain the health of mature trees through proper and more timely maintenance pruning.
3. Utilize varied, cohesive landscape types that blend different areas together.
4. Minimize the use of irrigation when possible.
5. Proceed gradually to maintain costs without the need for a Special Assessment.

LANDSCAPING STANDARDS

To achieve the Vision laid out for Tamarack's landscape, there needs to be standards against which decisions are made and results measured.

The Landscape Standards that will be used are:

BEAUTY - aesthetics, good looking scenes, attractively complemented houses and neighborhood cohesion.

ECONOMY - cost to maintain the landscape (which includes ease of maintenance), cost of landscape items versus their life span (cost effectiveness); landscape as investment, and percentage of monthly fees for landscaping.

SAFETY - landscape elements causing safety concerns around buildings and roadways minimized; adherence to codes; landscape space to store snow from roadways adequate.

ECOLOGY - global thinking and good citizenry; greenhouse gas reduction; water usage minimized and water retention maximized; energy savings to

homeowners through appropriate positioning of landscape elements; disruption to natural ecosystem minimized.

PRIVACY - landscape provides needed privacy to residents

TECHNOLOGY - new products and new techniques that are beneficial are incorporated; equipment needs and contracting are accounted for.

In a perfect world, Tamarack would achieve all the standards perfectly. But Tamarack is not perfect, and there may be situations where tradeoffs need to be made between standards in order to have the best landscape possible. However, all standards are to be considered equally, before tradeoffs are made.

What do Tamarack Residents Like Most About the Landscaping at Tamarack (from the June 27, 2013 Lussier Center Meeting)

Lush, green, mature, diverse and well maintained sums up what Tamarack Homeowners like most about the landscaping.

The following comments from two residents hit on a majority of the repeating themes from 53 comment cards collected at the meeting:

Comment Card A: "1) Diversity, just like the mini-areas of the development. 2) Several gardeners in my immediate area. 3) Combination of evergreen and deciduous. 4) Ability of individual unit owners to do some of their own thing. 5) Responsive staff - Bob is fabulous!"

Comment Card B: "1) Lots of mature trees and shrubs. 2) Sculpted areas (earth mounded up). 3) Beds at entrance to trails and clubhouse. 4) Just lots of greenery throughout all of Tamarack. 5) Flower gardens some of the residents have put in."

The residents enjoy the varied selection of shade trees, large evergreens, small flowering trees and the many varieties of evergreen and deciduous shrubs. Residents also enjoy the effect created by the selective use of berms, walking trails, bridges, split rail Trail entrance beds, and decorative fences along the front sidewalks. From the comments Tamarack residents like the freedom to plant small gardens around their home and all owners and visitors enjoy the color they add. All in all lush, green and diversity is why several owners bought a home in Tamarack Trails.

What Should Our Landscaping Look Like

This was the third question asked of the Tamarack residents at the June 27 meeting. The following outline serves to answer this question and is based very closely on one resident's answer with a few modifications by the LRLC. This outline provides an overall framework for developing the details of the Long Range Landscaping Plan.

- A) Maintain an overall "campus" landscape plan with canopy trees, ornamental trees, evergreens with coordinated entrances (to trails), common areas, trails, etc.
- B) Promote individual foundation/unit planting plans based on specific guidelines, the owner's input and desires.*
- C) Develop a specific set of criteria (acceptable plants, styles, etc) that will guide/regulate development.
- D) Maintain an adequate budget: Landscape is an investment that requires maintenance.

** Introducing annuals and perennials in and around shrubs makes it difficult to apply mulch and very difficult to trim the shrubs without damaging the annuals or perennials. It also makes weed control in mulch beds very time consuming as it must be completed by hand.*

Problem/Concerns/Solutions

1. Rabbit/rodent damage to plants. (Aesthetics - makes plants unsightly).

In heavy snow years rabbits and rodent defoliate arborvitae from the snow depth to the ground. They also girdle burning bush, flowering crabs and other small trees and shrubs. Estimated damage from the winter of 2007-08 (\$25,000 - \$35,000). In the summer they devour most varieties of annuals and perennials.

Recommendations:

- Reduce the number of plants that provide safe haven (large spreading junipers).
- Build owl nests in the winter to draw in natural predators
- Trap rabbits over the winter months. This is the best time to trap rabbits due to their limited food supply. This will be incorporated into the Grounds Supervisor's Job Description.
- Limit use of arborvitae where upright junipers can be used.
- Make residents aware of the damage caused by rabbits in the winter and have them notify the office when they see small pieces of the plant on the snow beneath the arborvitae.
- Enlist resident help in observing and installing protective fencing around the perimeter of plants in the winter.
- As yews are replaced the new yews will be maintained in a natural informal shape and not allowed to spread.

2. Increasing Number of Plants. Increasing size of planting beds.

As Tamarack allows a tremendous amount of freedom in homeowner gardening, plant beds gradually increase in size or owners add beds on the sides of homes that were once turf. In some cases owners install several new shrubs where one tree or a large shrub was removed. Other owners just add shrubs to increase the density of planting around their home. The net effect is that the mulch beds are growing and the turf areas are decreasing. A few examples from the past five years.

- A homeowner removed a large spruce tree and installed fifteen to twenty new shrubs. A zero maintenance tree was replaced with shrubs that will require additional time each year for pruning/shearing.
- Homeowner moves in and installed several arborvitae around their patio area. This increased the mulch area and the number of plants to replace in the future.
- To increase privacy and greenery around the home owner installs lilacs around patio and entire south border of home in areas where plants did not exist.
- Several homes which once had plants on only one or two sides now have plants that encompass the perimeter of the home

Recommendations:

- Charge homeowners for landscaping maintenance in beds that do not conform to specific guidelines (i.e. do not plant perennials within 2' of shrubs)*.
- Remove improperly located trees and shrubs that are installed by owners without permission.
- Provide more specific guidelines for homeowner landscaping per developed standards*.
- *to be developed in landscape standards handbook.

3. Maturing trees = increased trimming & removal costs.

As the trees approach fifty years old, several trees are losing larger branches and are gradually declining in health due to their age and urban environment.

Recommendations:

- To decrease future trimming costs, replace trees with slower growing varieties.
- Plant trees the correct distance from buildings so the canopy does not extend over the structure.
- Utilizing slightly more evergreen trees will reduce trimming costs.

4. Develop a Cohesive Plan

This was mentioned by a few of the residents at the June 27, Lussier Meeting. This would be difficult to implement in foundation planting areas as homeowners are allowed an extraordinary amount of freedom in landscaping around their homes. Approximately 40% to 50% of all owners have changed the landscaping at their homes (some extensively). Some homeowners also install and fail to maintain large perennial beds which require extensive maintenance and weeding by Tamarack staff.

Recommendations:

- Utilizing professional advice, a plan will be developed for the Trail entrances and Common Areas. Plan will be developed through sequenced Phase tours.
- To the extent possible, the selection of plants will be tied to the Trail's name as all Trails are named after trees. For example in Blue Spruce, spruce trees and shrubs with blue coloration will be utilized in the common areas.
- The procedure for replacing dead, dying or overgrown trees and shrubs is covered by Policy Resolution V-500 and should be reviewed annually by the Maintenance Committee.

5. Unkempt Perennial Beds

Some home owners are no longer able to maintain the perennial beds around their home. Unkempt perennial beds.

Recommended Solution:

- Notify home owner of necessary upkeep and offer to convert perennial beds to low maintenance shrub beds or turf to be maintained by Tamarack. Cost for remediation of unkempt perennial beds would be at the cost of the home owner.

Long Range Plan

1. Develop a Landscape Standards Handbook

- Over the next six months develop "Landscape Standards Handbook".
- The plan will be developed based on the standards outlined at the beginning of this document.
- The Handbook will be developed by Bob Schroeder in consultation with Becky Kielstrup, Vennesa Mueller and Tim Ripp.

- Topics to be covered
 - A. Plant selection criteria to include proper spacing requirements, total maintenance cost over the life of the plant, sun & shade tolerance, drought resistant, disease resistant, etc.
 - B. Spacing requirements when planting perennials near shrubs.
 - C. Plants allowed in narrow areas along walks or adjacent to fences.
 - D. Trimming guidelines and procedures.
 - E. Safety guidelines for plantings near intersections and curves.

2. Planned Annual Projects

Year 1

- Repair and re-landscape Entrance Signs \$8,000 (actual 2014 Budget figure).
- Replace 25% of the split rail fence signs at the Trail entrances. Will use a design similar to current signs.
- Replace all yews at 100 homes. Cost will be covered in annual plant replacement budget.

Year 2

- Replace all yews at 110 homes. Cost will be covered in annual plant replacement budget.
- Replace 25% of the split rail fence signs at the Trail entrances.

Year 3

- Replace all yews at 110 homes. Cost will be covered in annual plant replacement budget.
- Replace 25% of the split rail fence signs at the Trail entrances.

Year 4

- Woods to the south of the pool. Cut down remaining dying red pines on the north half of the wooded area and replant according to the plan approved in 2011.
- Replace 25% of the split rail fence signs at the Trail entrances.

3. Annually

- Maintenance Pruning - Primarily large deciduous trees. Thinning, remove crossovers/dead branches and maintain a 15' to 20' clearance from buildings and structures. Currently at 300 hours/year \$15,000. Increased to 350 hours/year +2,500 (figures from 2014 Budget).

- Trees never stop growing. It is currently running \$300 to \$400 per tree for maintenance pruning.
- Conduct a tour of 30 to 50 homes per year to evaluate landscaping and recommend plant removals and replacement varieties. Plans would include landscaping for Trail entrances. Recommendations would be discussed with Owners at a group meeting prior to implementing landscape changes.

2014 Budget only included expense for touring and re-landscaping at 20 to 30 homes **Costs will be higher in future years to tour and conduct replacements at a greater number of homes.**

- Identify and re-landscape two or three areas needing significant attention. Currently included in 2014 Budget - \$2,000 removals, \$3,000 plants and \$2,400 Tamarack Labor. This is enough to re-landscape two or three locations requiring significant work.
- Continue to remove and replace dead, dying or overgrown plants as requested by homeowners or identified by Management or the Maintenance Committee. The Tamarack staff handles 50-70 homeowner plant removal/replacement requests each year. In 2010 the Maintenance Committee conducted a tour to identify overgrown plants. The Tamarack staff has completed removal and replacement of nursery stock at twelve of the identified locations over the past two years as part of the annual scheduled work load.

Will continue to address six to eight locations with overgrown plants identified from the Maintenance Committee tour each year.

Remove and replace fast growing, improperly located trees with slow growing trees* Fast growing trees require more trimming due to their growth rate. It costs \$400 to \$500 to trim a mature, fast growing tree every six years. We will spend \$1,200 to \$1,600 per tree just for trimming each mature tree over the next thirteen years. The money spent on trimming would be better spent on removal and replacement with a properly located tree. It will be far more cost effective to remove fast growing trees now and replace them with slower growing tree selections.

*No trees will be cut down unless they are dead, dying or improperly located. The estimated cost is \$1,200 to \$1,500 to remove and replace a single large tree with a canopy extending over a home. Funds will be allocated based on recommendations from each annual tour.

4. Bi-Annually

- **Emerald Ash Borer** - Coordinate treatment program for treating ash trees. Residents paid for the treatment of 42 of the 94 ash trees through program in 2013. Tru Green treated ash trees with TreeAge.

5. Wooded Areas.

Several small wooded groves are present in Tamarack Trails. Cost for control of invasive species, weeding, removal and replacement of trees is included in the current operating budget.

- A) Pine Woods South of Pool - has an approved plan. Of note, removal of the buckthorn has allowed in significant sunlight making weed control more time consuming. The area is sprayed with Roundup three to four times per year. This requirement will decrease as the newly planted pine and spruce trees mature.
- B) Pine Woods South of 7 Red Maple - majority of Red Pines removed. Have some sumac and understory plants started.
- C) Pine Woods West of 2 Red Cedar - majority of Red Pines removed. Have some larger spruce, several understory plants and gray dogwood established. Will be working with Owner at 2 Red Cedar in 2015 to improve the area closer to their house.
- D) Pine Woods South of 7304-7308 Cedar Creek - area seems to have replanted itself with several spruce trees? All nearby owners deny planting any trees.
- E) Pine Woods on Tree Lane between Pine Ridge and West entrance to Cedar Creek - have kept fairly clear of buckthorn and weeds. No understory plants installed to date.
- F) Pine Woods North of 91-93 Oak Creek - predominantly white pines. Five to six white pines have died. Spruce trees installed at east and west end of woods for privacy. Whitespire birch planted in woods and a native maple tree is doing well. Area north of 93 Oak Creek needs additional weed control.
- G) Oak Grove in front of 66 Oak Creek. - Two magnificent oaks. Grove has gone from wild, to maintained by owner, to wild. Recently the majority of weeds and invasive plants were cleared. Consider the installation of low-gro sumac to stabilize east slope of grove. Gray dogwoods border the north edge of the grove.

Recommendations:

- Clear invasive species from woods on a scheduled basis.
- Tour wooded areas to identify undesirable species to be removed before they become large tress costing thousands of dollars to remove. (i.e. a cotton wood tree near 64 Oak Creek will cost \$2,600 for removal based on actual estimate).

6. Other Areas to be Addressed

A) Rockwalls

Currently, rockwalls are maintained in two ways. One, the plantings in all rockwalls are installed and maintained by homeowners who live closest to the rockwall. Two, if a rockwall is not planted and/or maintained by the homeowner the Association treats the area with Roundup and will maintain the rockwall devoid of plants (low maintenance).

- For the Association to plant and weed rockwalls by hand would require additional funding on an annual basis.
- Can be planted with sedum, phlox. Which then will require weeding & upkeep (by hand).

B) Borders / Un-tame Areas

(mostly buckthorn, mulberry and scrub brush)

- Phase 2 south & east
- Phase 3 Wexford/fence border
- Phase 4 north/Walnut Grove and west (conservancy).
- Phase 5 west (conservancy).
- For reference we have spent over \$3,000 in one back yard area. Work consisted of clearing out the buckthorn, a few nearly dead pine trees, and one large mulberry tree. Replacement plants included two hemlock trees, two witch hazel, two yews and a techny arborvitae. Even with work complete the area now requires annual maintenance and clearing of undesirable plants.
- A total of 53 homes border the areas listed above. Currently we clear the buckthorn and undesirable plants from these areas every two to three years.
- Clearing out and converting these areas to native plants would be very costly (\$75,000 to \$100,000).
- Several areas along the Wexford border have been cleared and sparsely planted with native shrubs. Residents now expect this border to be mulched and the shrubs trimmed. Weeding is still necessary. Converting these areas is increasing annual upkeep costs versus the current clearing costs.
- Consider planting these areas with native spreading type plants: Sumac, Gray Dogwood, etc.
- These areas will be addressed gradually over a number of years.

Recommendations:

- Clear invasive species from woods and cut back borders every two to three years.
- Tour border areas to identify undesirable species to be removed before they become large trees costing thousands of dollars to remove. (i.e. a cotton wood tree near 64 Oak Creek will cost \$2,600 for removal).
- Consider establishing sumac, gray dogwood or other native species.

7. Other Ideas and Thoughts to Consider

- A) Incorporate resident volunteers where feasible and under Bob's guidance.
- B) Fences could be considered as a possible option in lieu of landscaping for privacy in certain areas of restricted space. One horizontal board on board cedar fence was approved by the Architectural Review Board several years ago.
- C) Where possible native plants and rain gardens will be implemented in the LPS. Care must be taken in selecting native plants (i.e. invasive and location specific).
- D) Groundcovers can be used in place of mulch in shady locations.
- E) Policy Resolution V-500 should be reviewed and incorporated into the LPS.
- F) Replacement of storm damaged or dead trees will take priority especially when safety is a concern. Contingency funds should be available to cover unexpected expenditures.

Appendix

Emerald Ash Borer Policy -

(Adopted by the Maintenance Committee 11/16/10)

The Association will remove and replace two to three ash trees per year. The ash trees removed will be selected on a basis of overall health, location and branch structure. The most undesirable/unhealthy trees will be removed first. Trees will be replaced as space permits. Residents will be allowed to adopt an ash tree and pay for annual insecticide treatment through a group treatment program organized by the Association. This program will be implemented starting in 2011.

Summary, Response and Comments -

This is a twenty-nine page document composed of two parts.

Part A - Summary and Response to Resident Comments -

The first ten pages contain a summary of the resident's feedback regarding the original draft to the LRLP. After review by the Long Range Landscape Committee some ideas and suggestions were incorporated into the LRLP. This document also answers questions posed by residents and explains why some ideas were not adopted as part of the LRLP.

Part B - Resident Feedback/Comments on the Draft LRLP

(November 2013) - Nineteen pages contain all of the resident feedback received from approximately 50 homeowners who attended the 11/19/13 Lussier Center Meeting as well as email/letters received from 15 homeowners.