

VEGETATION MANAGEMENT AND IMPLEMENTATION OF MASTER LANDSCAPE PLAN

Revised September 2026

Purpose

Hacienda Carmel Community Association recognizes that management of the Common Area landscape requires a coordinated approach that balances wildfire mitigation and defensible space, implementation of the Master Landscape Plan, preservation and enhancement of the community landscape, water conservation, long-term maintenance requirements, aesthetics, and responsible use of Association resources.

The Master Landscape Plan, approved by the Board of Directors in August 2023, provides the long-term framework for landscape improvement and renewal throughout Hacienda Carmel. The Plan was developed with wildfire mitigation and drought resistance among its principal objectives.

This policy establishes the framework for vegetation management and implementation of the Master Landscape Plan, including the integration of applicable Zone 0 and other defensible-space requirements.

1. Guiding Principles

Landscape and vegetation management shall be guided by the following priorities:

- Protection of life, structures, and property through appropriate wildfire mitigation and defensible-space practices.
- Implementation of the Master Landscape Plan with qualified professional assistance.
- Integration of applicable Zone 0 requirements into landscape planning, renewal, and installation.
- Preservation of healthy and appropriate existing vegetation when reasonably consistent with fire safety, landscape objectives, maintenance requirements, and long-term sustainability.
- Selection of appropriate, drought-tolerant, fire-conscious, and maintainable plant material.
- Responsible stewardship of Association operating and reserve funds.
- Consideration of the character and aesthetics of Hacienda Carmel and the interests of residents affected by significant landscape changes.
- Ongoing maintenance practices that support the long-term health and sustainability of the Common Area landscape.

The Master Landscape Plan is intended to guide long-term landscape development. Site conditions, changes in fire-safety requirements, professional recommendations, plant availability, irrigation conditions, maintenance considerations, budgetary constraints, and other circumstances may require modification of individual designs or plant selections.

2. Board Oversight

The Board of Directors provides policy direction and oversight for implementation of the Master Landscape Plan and significant Common Area landscape projects. In the absence of a separate landscape committee, the Board serves as the Association's landscape oversight body.

The Board may establish priorities, approve significant projects and funding, consider significant tree removals or rehabilitation, consider resident input, and approve modifications to landscape plans as circumstances warrant.

Significant landscape matters requiring Board consideration shall be presented directly to the Board.

3. Management and Staff Responsibilities

Management is responsible for administering this policy and implementing Board direction.

The Landscape Supervisor and Association landscape staff are responsible for routine landscape maintenance and for supporting approved vegetation-management and landscape projects within their training and expertise.

Routine maintenance does not require individual Board approval and includes ordinary pruning, irrigation maintenance, removal of dead plant material, seasonal maintenance, weed and fuel reduction, and similar work necessary for the proper care of the Common Area.

Management shall coordinate approved work among Association staff, qualified consultants, arborists, contractors, and other vendors as necessary.

4. Professional Expertise and Master Landscape Plan Implementation

Implementation of the Master Landscape Plan requires specialized professional expertise beyond the scope of routine landscape maintenance performed by Association staff.

The Association shall retain qualified landscape professionals and other appropriate vendors to assist with implementation of the Master Landscape Plan and significant landscape projects. Depending upon the work, this may include landscape professionals, contractors, arborists, horticultural specialists, irrigation specialists, wildfire-mitigation professionals, or other qualified consultants.

Professional assistance may include:

- Site-specific landscape design and layout.
- Plant and tree selection, substitution, placement, and spacing.
- Soil and site-condition evaluation.
- Irrigation evaluation and modification.
- Plant establishment and long-term maintenance requirements.
- Tree assessment, preservation, rehabilitation, pruning, and removal.
- Wildfire mitigation and defensible-space considerations, including Zone 0.

- Other specialized services necessary for successful implementation.

Association landscape staff may assist with installation and shall provide ongoing maintenance when appropriate, but shall not be expected to independently perform professional landscape design, arboricultural, horticultural, irrigation-design, or other specialized functions outside their expertise.

Implementation shall occur incrementally based upon landscape priorities, wildfire and defensible-space needs, condition of existing vegetation, available funding, irrigation and site conditions, and Board-approved projects.

5. Zone 0 and Defensible Space

Zone 0 shall be incorporated into implementation of the Master Landscape Plan. Zone 0 and the Master Landscape Plan are not separate landscape programs; applicable defensible-space requirements shall inform the design and treatment of areas immediately adjacent to structures as the landscape is renewed and improved.

As areas adjacent to structures are evaluated, redesigned, replanted, or otherwise improved, the Association shall incorporate then-current applicable Zone 0 requirements and guidance. This may include removal or relocation of incompatible vegetation, modification of planting designs, use of appropriate noncombustible materials, changes in plant placement and spacing, and other measures necessary to reduce wildfire risk.

Existing landscaping shall be evaluated progressively as part of landscape renewal, vegetation management, and defensible-space work. Except where immediate action is necessary to address a safety hazard or legal requirement, implementation should consider applicable requirements, site conditions, professional recommendations, aesthetics, maintenance needs, and an appropriate replacement or treatment plan.

6. Wildfire Mitigation

Wildfire mitigation is an ongoing Association responsibility and shall be incorporated into routine landscape maintenance, tree management, landscape renewal, and implementation of the Master Landscape Plan.

Vegetation-management activities may include:

- Seasonal mowing and fuel reduction in appropriate areas.
- Removal of dead, dying, hazardous, or highly combustible vegetation.
- Appropriate pruning and limbing of trees.
- Reduction of excessive vegetation density.
- Maintenance of appropriate horizontal and vertical spacing.
- Management of vegetation adjacent to structures and other improvements.
- Maintenance of required clearances around utility infrastructure.
- Creation and maintenance of defensible-space areas.

- Removal or modification of vegetation when required for fire safety.

Work shall be performed in accordance with then-current applicable law and appropriate guidance from fire authorities. The Association shall coordinate with Cypress Fire Protection District and other appropriate agencies or professionals when beneficial.

7. Firewise USA and Documentation

The Association shall continue efforts to maintain Firewise USA recognition and shall document qualifying wildfire-mitigation activities as required.

Staff time, contractor work, vegetation removal, materials, and other qualifying activities shall be documented as appropriate for Firewise USA renewal, grant applications, grant reporting, and Association records.

8. Tree Management

Trees are an important component of the Hacienda Carmel landscape and shall be managed with consideration for health, safety, wildfire risk, proximity to structures and infrastructure, long-term viability, aesthetics, and the objectives of the Master Landscape Plan.

Qualified arboricultural expertise shall be obtained when appropriate for significant tree evaluations, questions concerning tree health or structural condition, significant pruning, rehabilitation, or proposed removal.

Where a tree can reasonably be preserved or rehabilitated consistent with safety, defensible-space requirements, long-term maintenance, and professional recommendations, preservation or rehabilitation may be considered as an alternative to removal. Dead, hazardous, or otherwise unsuitable trees may be removed when appropriate.

9. Resident Input

Residents adjacent to areas proposed for significant landscape redesign or substantial landscape change should ordinarily be provided an opportunity to submit comments before a final decision is made.

Resident input is advisory and does not constitute approval authority over the Common Area or prevent the Association from performing routine maintenance, wildfire mitigation, defensible-space work, hazard correction, or other work necessary to satisfy Association responsibilities.

The Board may consider resident input together with professional recommendations, fire-safety requirements, the Master Landscape Plan, maintenance considerations, aesthetics, cost, and available funding.

10. Common Area Planting and Alteration

Common Area landscaping is under the control of the Association. Residents shall not plant, remove, relocate, prune, irrigate, or otherwise alter Common Area vegetation without prior Association authorization.

Unauthorized planting or other landscape alterations may be removed or corrected by the Association. When appropriate, existing unauthorized plant material may instead be evaluated for possible incorporation into an approved landscape plan based upon professional recommendations, compatibility with the Master Landscape Plan, maintenance requirements, defensible-space standards, and other relevant considerations.

Association consideration of existing unauthorized planting does not constitute authorization for additional planting or alteration of the Common Area.

11. Areas Outside the Berm

The Association shall continue vegetation-management and wildfire-mitigation efforts in non-residential areas outside the berm. Work may include seasonal mowing, fuel reduction, removal of dead or hazardous vegetation, appropriate tree maintenance, maintenance of utility clearances, fire-break enhancement, and other work recommended by qualified professionals or fire authorities.

Work may be performed by Association staff or qualified outside contractors depending upon the nature, scale, and expertise required.

12. Funding and Prioritization

Implementation of the Master Landscape Plan and larger landscape-renewal projects shall be phased according to Board priorities and available funding. Funding may include amounts provided through the annual operating budget, reserve funding allocated for landscape replenishment or related components, grants, or other Board-approved sources.

Priority may be given to projects involving wildfire mitigation, defensible-space compliance, hazardous or failing vegetation, areas where vegetation has been removed, irrigation or maintenance concerns, and locations identified by the Board for landscape renewal.

13. Review and Continuing Implementation

Vegetation management and implementation of the Master Landscape Plan are ongoing processes. This policy should be reviewed periodically and may be revised as fire-safety requirements, professional guidance, landscape conditions, Association priorities, or the Master Landscape Plan evolve.

Nothing in this policy is intended to prevent the Association from taking timely action necessary to address an immediate safety condition, comply with applicable law, protect Association property, or perform routine Common Area maintenance.

Vegetation Management and Implementation of Master Landscape Plan January 13, 2024

Introduction

Due to increased awareness of the need for immediate as well as sustained effort to mitigate potential losses to the Hacienda Carmel community (HC) as the result of a wildland fire, several actions have been taken:

1. In August 2021 the Fire Risk Assessment & Mitigation (FRAM) Committee was appointed as an ad hoc committee by the Board of Directors (Board) for the purpose of assessing, determining, and recommending specific actions (both short and long-term), to achieve sustained wildfire mitigation measures. Among the Committee's efforts over the past two years was:

Determining the need for and recommending development of a formal landscape plan as a part of the ongoing fire mitigation process along with management of existing and future vegetation throughout the residential portion of the Hacienda Carmel common area grounds.

2. In July 2021, the Board approved a moratorium to halt planting of vegetation in the common area until a determination was made regarding the types of vegetation best suited for ongoing fire mitigation practices.
3. Beginning October 2021, and continuing through 2022 and 2023 removal of excess vegetation and fuel reduction at the West End area of the property and around the perimeter of the berm surrounding the residential area has been accomplished by the HC grounds crew and outside contractors. To date this work has included removal of a significant amount of brush and undergrowth, removal of dead trees and mastication of piles of old limbs, stumps and debris accumulated over the years.
4. In October 2022, on a recommendation by the FRAM committee, the Board approved the contracted hiring of a landscape architecture company to develop a comprehensive Master Landscape Plan for HC, incorporating, among other goals, a focus on wildfire mitigation and drought resistance for the landscape of the property. The plan was completed in May 2023 and approved by the Board in August 2023.

The governing documents of the Hacienda Carmel Community Association (HCCA) task the Architectural Review Committee (ARC) with the landscaping of the common area of the property. This document is intended to serve as a practical guide for the work of the Landscape Subcommittee of the ARC as it makes recommendations to the Board, management and the grounds staff regarding landscaping of the common area of the property. The goal for all is the successful implementation of the combined strategies of

wildfire mitigation, drought resistance, low maintenance and affordable cost in the maintenance and improvement of the common area landscaping and grounds for the benefit of all Residents.

The ongoing process of vegetation and landscape management for HC consists of two primary areas: outside the berm (non-residential areas), and inside the berm (residential areas).

Vegetation Management Plan for Areas Outside the Berm

The Association will continue efforts to mitigate the risk of wildland fires entering the HC property through the following practices:

- Seasonal mowing of annual grasses in the open areas along the eastern, southern, and western sides of the Berm.
- Limbing-up of all trees and maintaining a minimum distance of six feet from the ground for the lowest branches.
- Cutting and pruning of dead trees, branches, or other dry plant material serving as potential fuel sources and the removal of all materials from HC property through the use of the Cypress FPD Chipper Days program, yard waste bins emptied each week, and, if necessary, mastication of a green waste pile.
- Enhancement of fire-break zones between the non-residential and residential areas of HC.
- Ongoing maintenance of vegetation to maintain a 10' clearance of all plant material around all power poles on the property, as indicated by State law.

The above actions will be performed using a combination of HC grounds crew as well as outside contracted services, using Cypress FPD matching grant funding when possible.

Vegetation Management and Landscape Plan for Areas Inside the Berm

The vegetation and landscaping contained within the residential areas inside the Berm includes two distinct categories which are prioritized as follows:

- 1) Planting of new vegetation in locations where previous vegetation has been removed.
- 2) Fire mitigation efforts involving existing trees, shrubs, and other plantings.

First priority category – Currently, several locations throughout the residential area have had vegetation removed for various reasons. These areas include the parking area adjacent to the Art Studio, as well as areas adjacent to Units 133, 169, 185, 189 and 197.

Given the sizes of the open spaces and the new list of recommended trees, shrubs, and plants contained in the Master Landscape Plan, the Grounds Supervisor prefers at least at the outset that a third-party consultant be used to determine the specific vegetation and suggested layout for each of these areas. The plans and plant lists would be presented to the Landscape Subcommittee of ARC and then to ARC for review and recommendation to the Board. Owners of Units adjacent to these areas will be invited to attend the ARC meeting when the designs are discussed. The HC Grounds Supervisor and staff will work with the Landscape Subcommittee list of plants and sources to purchase and obtain the plants. The Landscape Subcommittee and/or designer will place the plants according to the design. The HC Grounds Supervisor and crew will be responsible for planting and maintenance.

Second priority category – Because of where the HC property is located, it is subject to the statutory requirements for fire mitigation and the creation of defensible space for landscaping surrounding built structures. Zone 1 (5 to 30 feet from a structure) and Zone 2 (30 to 100 feet from a structure) are well defined.¹ The Zero Zone (area of 0 to 5 feet from a structure) awaits further rule-making by California officials, but is anticipated to be restricted to hardscape and low-growing, non-woody (herbaceous) plants that are properly spaced.² Significant work is needed to bring the existing landscaping within the residential common area of the community into compliance.

This work includes the limbing-up of trees³, trimming trees in close proximity to buildings, removing shrubs that are too close to roofs or buildings, thinning out existing plantings to achieve better horizontal and vertical spacing, removal of dead or dried out shrubs, and in some situations, removal of existing trees and shrubs planted in the Zero Zone of structures. The schedule for this work shall be presented in advance by the staff to the Landscape Subcommittee and ARC.

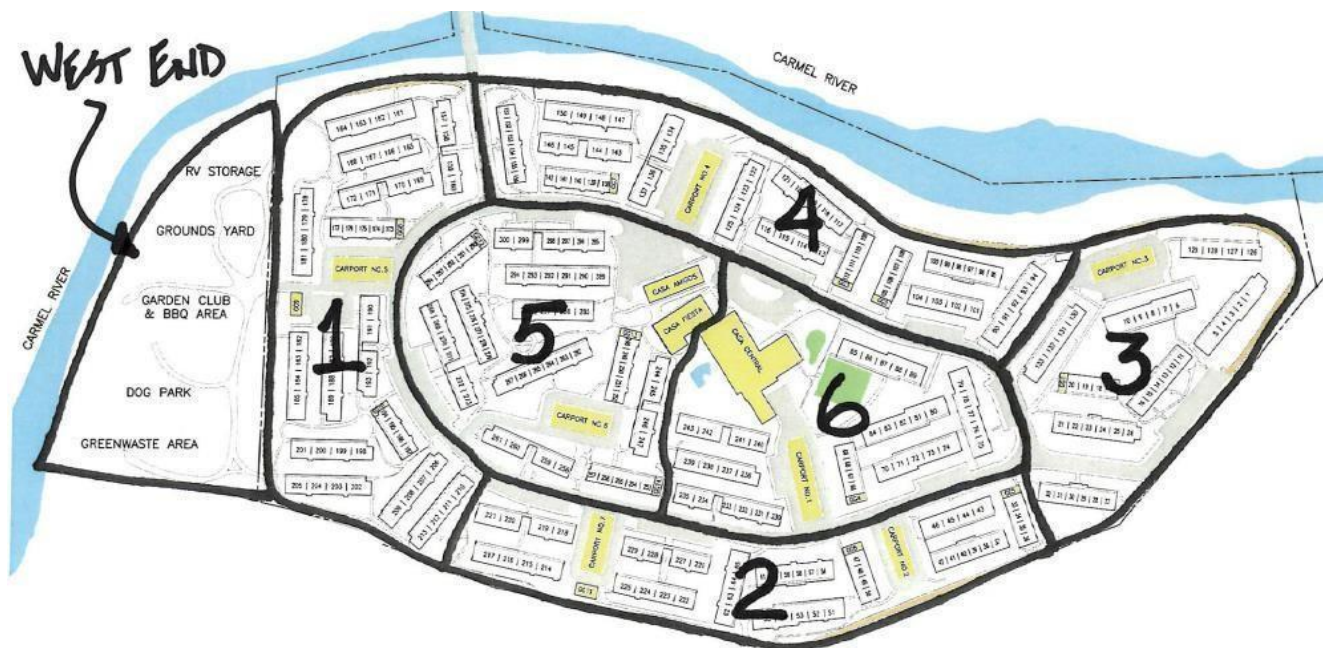
Reporting and documentation by the Grounds Supervisor of all fire mitigation work done by the grounds crew is required for Firewise USA recertification and Cypress FPD grant funding reports. Reports of time spent, and materials removed shall be provided by staff each month to the Landscape Subcommittee and ARC.

For grounds maintenance the residential portion of HC is divided into six sections, with each section assigned a gardener who has primary responsibility for its care. The HC Grounds Supervisor oversees the six gardeners and may also supplement work efforts in any of the sections as needed. In addition, from time to time there is also other work required at the West End (outside the Berm) that is typically handled with multiple gardeners under the direction of the HC Grounds Supervisor. The six existing gardening sections in the residential area as well as the West End are outlined on the site map on the following page:

¹ <https://www.readyforwildfire.org/prepare-for-wildfire/get-ready/defensible-space/>

² The Zero Zone created by California in 2020 awaits final definition and allowed materials.

³ For evergreen trees and deciduous trees that are leafed out, no more than 30 percent of green plant material can be removed during the growing season. Limbing up small trees should not cause removal of more than one-third of the branches.



The work described as second-priority fire mitigation work on the existing landscaping can be best accomplished with a focused effort using multiple gardeners systematically working on one section at a time, beginning with what has been identified as the most vulnerable area for wildfire risk at the southwest corner of the property, and eventually working through all six sections as numbered on the property site map. This work will be done on a weekly basis as scheduled by the HC Grounds Supervisor in conjunction with the regular section duties of the gardeners as needed. It is anticipated that a great deal of this work can be accomplished through the winter months when turf, plants, and shrubs do not require as much weekly upkeep as in the spring and summer months.

Going Forward - Recommendations for refurbishment of larger landscaped areas intended to achieve the desired modeling outlined in the landscape plan may come from the Board, ARC, or staff. Ideas for proposed landscape work will be reviewed and evaluated by the Landscape Subcommittee before presentation to the ARC. ARC will review and make recommendations to the Board. Unit owners in the area under discussion will be invited to attend the ARC meeting when the project is discussed.

The timeline for accomplishing this ongoing work will be subject to the annual amount of funding in the Reserve Study that is allocated for landscape replenishment.

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