

# **Rancho Santa Fe Association**

## **Golf Course and Trail Tree Removal and Replacement**

### **BACKGROUND**

Two of Rancho Santa Fe's most important assets are its beautiful, verdant forest and its historic golf course.

Much of the character and value of the community is due to the rural, forested landscape. Intelligent preservation of our healthy trees and perpetuating a varied and healthy forest are a priority. While our forest overall remains healthy, portions of our forest are under threat from pests, diseases and diminished water availability. Dead and dying trees left standing contribute to the risk of wildfires, property damage and personal safety.

The Rancho Santa Fe golf course, inaugurated in 1929, is notable for rich history, challenge, playability and beauty. The recreational amenity boosts property values in Rancho Santa Fe, with some residents citing Golf Club membership as one of the primary reasons for buying homes in the Ranch.

The rural nature of the community and the golf course are two important factors in attracting new residents, supporting property values, and contributing to the quality of life in the Ranch.

### **THE ISSUE**

This year, the Golf Club initiated a \$6 million Master Plan project to replace an irrigation system that had reached the end of its useful life, upgrade the bunkers and replace turf to enhance year-round play and membership. The Master Plan identified six trees for removal to accommodate the renovation plans. Community members have expressed concern that additional trees have been removed from the golf course and surrounding trails. The Golf Club Director of Agronomy indicated that the additional trees were compromised, and removed for several reasons, including disease, danger to walkers and golfers, and project construction impact.

To address community concern regarding loss of trees, the following actions are recommended:

- To protect all trees on the golf course during construction, continue evaluating tree health, safety, and risk using established collaborative protocols.
- To intelligently plant trees as necessary after completion of the golf course renovation, plan for and plant new trees to provide healthy vegetation, shade and aesthetics.
- To assure the continued health of trees on the course and surrounding trails, periodically evaluate them to determine any protective or preventive actions as necessary.
- Provide regular updates to the Board and community on tree health, removals, and plantings.

## **THE PROPOSAL**

### **Phase 1 - *(August 2021 through completion of renovation project)***

1. Review individual trees as requested for removal by Golf Club and make recommendations based on a collaborative assessment by a group comprised of:
  - Assistant Manager Arnold Keene
  - Director of Agronomy Tom Huesgen
  - One member of the Forest Health and Preservation Committee (FHPC) appointed by the Committee Chair
  - Independent certified arborist (TBD) appointed by the Association
2. Final determination is the responsibility of the Association, represented by the Assistant Manager.
3. Document the process for evaluating and determining tree removals on Golf Course and surrounding trails as a standard protocol for tree management.
4. Provide cost and schedule for the completion of Phase 2.
5. Report to Board on a monthly basis.

### **Phase 2 - Replanting Plan *(Fall 2021-Spring 2022)***

1. A Board-appointed group will recommend a list of trees for replanting on the golf course and surrounding trails. Include type, location, and maturity of all recommended trees.
2. Staff will provide a plan for the proposed replacement/replanting project, including cost, cost-sharing, and schedule, and present to the Board and community.

### **Phase 3 – Replanting *(TBD, pending approval of Phase 2 plan by the Board)***

1. Plant the trees according to the approved plan developed in Phase 2.

### **Phase 4 – Maintenance *(TBD, pending approval of Phase 3 plan by the Board)***

1. Periodically evaluate the health and needs of the trees on the golf course and surrounding trails to assure their continued good health and survival.

## **COST IMPACT**

**Phase 1:** The costs for this project will initially be limited to staff and consultant's time (e.g., arborist as needed), for an estimated total not to exceed \$10,000. It is recommended the consultant fees be funded 50% by the Association and 50% by the Golf Club.

**Phase 2:** The costs for this project will be limited to staff and consultants' time (e.g., arborist and landscape architect as needed). An estimate for the costs of this phase will be developed in Phase 1. It is recommended the consultant fees be funded 50% by the Association and 50% by the Golf Club.

**Phase 3:** TBD. The costs (and cost-sharing) will be determined during Phase 2 of the project and will be presented for approval prior to proceeding with the replanting.

**Phase 4:** TBD. The costs (and cost-sharing) will be determined during Phase 3 of the project and will be presented for approval prior to proceeding with the replanting.

## **RECOMMENDATION**

Approve the Proposal, with specific funding approval for Phase 1. That is, continue collaboratively evaluating tree health for removal during golf course construction using established protocols as described in Phase 1. Also, develop cost estimates for Phase 2.