

# Lakeshore Homes Association Parks Committee STRATEGIC PLAN and ANNUAL PROGRESS

The Lakeshore Homes Association is governed by a Board of five elected directors. The Board is aided by standing committees of volunteer members of the Association. Each committee is chaired by an LHA Director.

## **1. Parks Committee Purpose as Described in LHA Declaration of Restrictions**

To maintain the commonly owned private parks, open spaces, entrance gates and other ornamental features of Lakeshore Homes Association (LHA) as part of the mandate to promote and safeguard the quality and character of the neighborhood.

## **2. Parks Committee Responsibilities**

### **2.1. Care and Maintenance of Parks**

There are nine common park areas under the stewardship of the LHA Board & Parks Committee:

- a. **Carlston Triangle** – intersection of Longridge & Carlston. It has two large Sequoia trees. It was redesigned in 2015, plantings updated, Sequoias treated, grass removed, as being inappropriate in a dry climate, and a bench added.
- b. **Larkspur Circle**. This park contains a large dawn redwood and a small grass area. It was redesigned in 2014, adding plantings, benches and a seating area.
- c. **LHA Office garden** – 907 Underhills Road. The office park was redesigned in 2012, updating and refreshing layout and plantings. It was originally created as the office park in 1986 with mulch groundcover and new plants when the office building was built.
- d. **Plot D** – Hubert to Grosvenor path. This plot is mainly a path/pass-through with some plantings. In 2013 an overgrowth of asparagus fern was removed, large oaks pruned.
- e. **Plum Patch** – corner of Carlston & Mandana. This (8,606 sq ft) was redone with funds from PG&E in 2002, after they used it as a staging area for work they were doing in the area. The grass area was left to dry out in 2015, due to severe drought conditions.
- f. **Rosemount Triangle** – intersection of Longridge & Rosemount. This park was remodeled in 2011 and 1993 with hardscape, benches, fencing, paths and new plants. In 2008, a historical monument created by a local Eagle Scout was installed. In 2016 major tree trimming and removal is proposed.
- g. **Warren Hook Park** – Trestle Glen at Brookwood Road. This manicured park was redone in 2005. In 2008, a historical monument made by a local Eagle Scout was

installed. In 2014 the canopy of large trees was opened up, but efforts to get Caltrans to remove dead trees behind the park that obstructed sunlight failed.

- h. **Oak Grove** (formerly known as “Plot B”) – between Longridge & Mandana, running from Paloma to Mandana stairs. This is the largest of the LHA park lands, approximately 2.5 acres. This park has been designated as native plant area, except for a small section of fruit trees, and a blackberry-picking section.
- i. **Plot C** – between Paramount & Carlston. This park is not a manicured park but a natural area which the Committee maintains largely for safety, tree health, and fire hazards. Due to the extreme slope, the Committee and Board have determined that it is not feasible to further develop this area as a park.

### **2.1.1. Smaller Park Areas**

Parks (a-g) listed above, are small landscaped areas which require regular maintenance, including pruning, mowing, checking water systems, signage, trash collection, and miscellaneous special projects as determined from time to time by the Committee. The Committee with the approval of the board has elected to hire a gardener to do regular maintenance for these parks. The gardener will work under a signed contract, and the gardener’s duties shall be outlined in a written job description. The gardener’s salary will be determined by the LHA Board of Directors, who will review the contract and the gardener’s performance regularly, with input from the Parks Committee.

The Parks Committee will inspect all parks annually to ensure that they are being properly maintained.

### **2.1.2. Larger Parks – Oak Grove and Plot C**

Oak Grove and Plot C are two larger plots of land that have been deliberately left in more natural woodland conditions.

Oak Grove is LHA’s largest park, maintained as a more natural urban park with a walking path for the community to enjoy. Over the years, various experts have been consulted and maintenance has been done largely on an ad-hoc basis, primarily motivated by safety concerns and the need to control increasingly invasive non-native plants. Starting in 2015, professional habitat restoration has been contracted on a bi-annual basis as volunteer work is not sufficient to cover its needs.

### **2.1.3. Disposal of Plant Waste**

The Parks Committee will try to reuse or donate plant waste from maintaining park areas whenever possible, through relationships it has established with the Oakland Zoo. Tree and plant debris may also potentially be used for mulching, or edging in existing LHA parks.

## **2.2. Entrance Gates & Other Ornamental Features**

The wrought iron ornamental gates at the intersections of Trestle Glen and Longridge with Lakeshore, were originally dedicated in 1918 as the entrances to Lakeshore Highlands (the

official name of our development) and received historical landmark status in 1977. In 2013 the gates were professionally repainted and up-lit in 2015. In 2001-2002, these gates were refurbished by the Parks Committee. The Committee provides periodic maintenance to these gates, as needed. Additionally, the Committee has evaluated various proposals and options to beautify the Grosvenor / Park Boulevard entrance to Lakeshore Highlands.

The Committee also periodically inspects the historical City lampposts within the LHA area for maintenance issues, and works with the LHA office to notify the City about those in need of repainting (last done in 2014). LHA has a policy that states no posting of fliers and other materials on the lamp posts which potentially damage the posts. LHA's policy fines those that do.

The Parks Committee once proposed commissioning a mural to celebrate historical events and scenes of Lakeshore Highlands, along the PG&E wall on Grosvenor near Park Boulevard. This project has been put on hold, and other means of beautifying that entrance to our neighborhood are being explored. PG&E, a member of LHA, has donated \$25,000 toward the project.

### **2.3. Street Trees**

Until 2013, LHA worked jointly with the City of Oakland to maintain the trees lining our streets in good condition and provide for their pollarding on a 5 to 7 year cycle. LHA pollarded 133 trees and the City of Oakland pollard 268. LHA did not contract with the City, but issued the City a hold harmless agreement and selected LHA's own contractors to do the work. LHA's share of costs was paid out of the LHA reserves, rather than out of the Parks' yearly budget. The trees were last pollarded in 2013, but the City no longer shared the cost, due to budget cuts. In future it is expected that LHA will bear the full cost of the pollarding (approximately \$90,000).

### **2.4. Annual Calendar**

A calendar documents the timing and frequency of activities fulfilling the Parks Committee's annual responsibilities.

## **3. Homeowner Participation**

The Parks Committee invites all interested LHA homeowners to participate by attending its monthly meetings, joining Parks' work parties, and providing suggestions to further enhance the LHA community parks. Parks Committee minutes, plans, and reports will be available at the LHA office. Newsletter articles, postings at the Oak Grove kiosks, and the LHA website will be used to periodically communicate progress and to encourage homeowner input and participation in upcoming activities.

## **4. Parks Committee Administration**

### **4.1. Members**

LHA is governed by a Board of Directors, each elected annually for a one-year term at the LHA November Election meeting. Each Director chairs one of LHA's four standing committees, one

of which is Parks. The Parks Committee consists of the Chair and volunteers from among the homeowners of LHA.

#### **4.2. Meetings**

The Parks Committee meets on the second Wednesday of each month, at 7:30 p.m., at LHA's office at 907 Underhills. The Committee will schedule regular annual evaluation of each park area for desirable changes, safety, or upkeep issues.

#### **4.3. Minutes**

Minutes of all Parks Committee meeting are maintained at the LHA office. A loose-leaf binder for each park is being maintained that contains detailed information.

#### **4.4. Annual Budget**

The Chair of the Parks Committee, in cooperation with the Board President, taking into consideration the goals and input of the Parks Committee in the previous year, proposes a draft budget in the fall, which is then presented to the entire LHA Board. After approval by LHA's Board, the budget is presented in writing to the LHA homeowners no later than the annual meeting in November, for approval.

### **5. Oak Grove Park**

#### **5.1. Plan Purpose**

Oak Grove is the largest of the LHA parks. As such, the Parks Committee, with the approval of the LHA Board, is establishing a long-range plan for the maintenance and enhancement of Oak Grove.

#### **5.2. Stewardship Objectives/Guiding Principles**

- a. **Safety:** Ensure that Oak Grove itself, adjoining properties, individuals using the park, and the wildlife who live within the park are safe from fire and other hazards.
- b. **Usable Park:** Provide for LHA Homeowners and other users an inviting woodland environment for enjoyment, recreation, and education.
- c. **Park:** Keep the natural wooded feel of the park.
- d. **Sensitivity to Wildlife:** Preserve healthy wildlife habitat and consider wildlife cycles as this Plan is implemented.
- e. **Prevention:** Deal with aggressive non-natives effectively, by removal or control over a reasonable period of time.
- f. **New Plantings:** Plant trees, bushes, flowers, and grasses, with emphasis on native varieties.
- g. **Consultation:** Engage local experts for their advice and guidance on an as-needed basis.

#### **5.3. Oak Grove Description**

##### **5.3.1. Oak Grove Location**

Oak Grove is a linear park approximately ½ mile in length running between Longridge Road and Mandana Blvd. from Paloma to Mandana Blvd. stairs. The park is bordered by the backyards of

LHA homes. There is a path in the middle of the open space running the length of Oak Grove from Paloma to Mandana Blvd. This park is conceived as a woodland, preserving some views toward Mt. Tamalpais but with neighboring structures screened by vegetation. A canopy of large trees is to be preserved, with oaks, redwood, madrone and buckeye slowly replacing acacias.

### **5.3.2. Plant Species (identified as of 9/2009)**

There are many tall trees in Oak Grove that provide shade and screen between houses. Trees include:

- a. Blackwood Acacia - non-native, can be unstable and fire hazard, block light to native trees
- b. Live & Valley Oaks – native, stately, suitable to the area
- c. Redwoods – native, slow growing, fire resistant
- d. Monterey Pine – most have reached their life span, some diseased
- e. Plum – fruit bearing, multi-trunked
- f. Native buckeyes, a few poplars, Bay Laurel, figs, olive, Asian pear, eucalyptus & others.

The middle story consists mainly of:

- a. Numerous cotoneasters
- b. Large patches of Himalayan Blackberry
- c. Scotch Broom
- d. Acacia, Oak & Redwood saplings
- e. Plum saplings
- f. Native Toyon bushes
- g. Thornless non-fruit-bearing Blackberry
- h. Manzanita & ceanothus

Ground cover consists mainly of:

- a. Invasive English ivy – some climbing up tree trunks
- b. Invasive Poison Hemlock
- c. Thistle & many other types of weeds including fox tail
- d. Invasive Cape ivy
- e. Native roses and Cecil Bruner non-native roses.

### **5.4. Management Strategy**

Since Oak Grove is a large open space, the Parks Committee, with the approval of the LHA Board, has determined a long range plan to maintain and enhance the park. The progress and scope will be evaluated at least annually in August to consider the annual budget, safety issues, the success of previous endeavors, and unforeseen events.

Based on recommendations from the Committee and experts consulted over the years, the Committee intends to develop a more natural park over time with an emphasis on native plants, in phases. This effort was begun in 2009.

Within these phases, the Committee will schedule the following types of work:

- a. Regular weeding and occasional pruning for appearance, accessibility, and fire safety.

- b. Care and inspection of trees for safety and park health
- c. Path maintenance
- d. Proper handling of trash and signage
- e. Gradual removal of aggressive non-native species
- f. Replacement of non-native plants with native plants.
- g. Monitoring success of the above activities.

The Committee will consult with experts in habitat restoration and arborists on an ongoing basis to guide them in this process - helping make decisions, introduce appropriate natives, and remove invasive plants with minimal use of toxins. The reports the Committee has collected throughout the years are stored in the LHA office. The overall approach will be sensitive to the wildlife that lives in the park.

The Committee will develop strategic and tactical ways to deal with drought conditions and reduce water usage for the long-term. This includes the exclusive use of drip line watering, the elimination of lawn play areas in all parks, and a reliance on native plants appropriate to California's climate.

#### **5.4.1. The "Grid" Designed**

Recommendations from experts consulted over the years and advice from knowledgeable Committee members have encouraged development of Oak Grove using a "grid" approach. Oak Grove will be divided into a number of sections, and attention focused on a different section(s), with specific goals for each section within the comprehensive plan.

This approach **(1)** preserves much of existing screening and canopy for aesthetic purposes and wildlife habitat, while work progresses; **(2)** allows manageable change to occur as individual sections are tended to; **(3)** permits reliable observation as to the success of methods used and plants selected; and **(4)** permits reasonable budget allocations for the annual work.

With these four elements providing overall guidance, the Committee has determined the Grid Sections based on considerations such as potential views, nearby structures that should be screened from view, width of park, existing mature vegetation, "gateway" areas, "specialty tree" areas, need to control particularly invasive growth, etc.

#### **5.4.2. Sections**

The Committee established one section as a 2009 starting point:

- ✓ The "demonstration area" – downhill slope near top of hill on Paloma end

There are a few other areas which are not yet officially "sections" but have been discussed over the last year or so and may be good candidates:

- ✓ The "fruit" area – loosely defined at this point, but considering an area where the trail narrows on the Mandana end. The committee has created an area of fruit trees and one of berries for users who enjoy picking fruit. Note that due to the invasive nature of both the

blackberries and plum trees, they will require regular attention and expense to keep them in their “section.”

## **6. ANNUAL PLANS AND PROGRESS**

### **6.1. Summary of 2007-2008 Accomplishments**

- ✓ Improved path - drainage and chips and GeoWeb installation in Oak Grove.
- ✓ Reconfirmed that all dogs must be on-leash in parks per LHA rules and public process.
- ✓ Contacted City about issuing violations to off leash and unlicensed dog owners.
- ✓ Monitored tree safety and health.
- ✓ Held work parties for weeding and pruning in Oak Grove.

### **6.2. Summary of 2009 Accomplishments**

- ✓ Continued inspecting trees for safety and health and removed as needed in Oak Grove.
- ✓ Mapped Oak Grove and surveyed tree distribution.
- ✓ Selected GRID approach and identified demonstration area on downhill slope near top of hill on Paloma end to maintain view.
- ✓ Had team work parties to remove hemlock and thistle.
- ✓ Held several work parties to clear out old growth at Paloma entrance, spread chips, push back ivy from some of the trees and start work on preparing the demonstration area.
- ✓ Consulted with Shelterbelt regarding management of Oak Grove and preparation for new native plantings.
- ✓ Installed display notice boards (Eagle Scout project).
- ✓ Pruned large section of fruiting blackberries along path to encourage new growth, more fruit, and better access for picking.
- ✓ Created first draft of Plan.
- ✓ Published various newsletter articles.
- ✓ Designed and posted new on-leash only signs.
- ✓ Planted numerous redwood, live oak, and buckeye trees along with flannel bushes, Manzanita, and other native bushes.
- ✓ Investigated feasibility of water line to help successfully establish new plantings.
- ✓ Eagle Scout installed display notice boards.

### **6.3. Summary of 2010 Accomplishments**

- ✓ Removed much of scotch broom and cotoneaster at Mandana end of Oak Grove.
- ✓ Held work parties organized to clear out hemlock and thistles before they went to seed in Oak Grove.
- ✓ Continued working on the Long Term Plan.
- ✓ Created Annual Calendar.
- ✓ Removed sections of invasive non-fruiting blackberries and Cape ivy, using pruning and herbicide from Oak Grove.

- ✓ Continued planting of Live Oak and Redwood trees in Oak Grove.
- ✓ Weeded and trimmed at the Paloma entrance of Oak Grove and spread gravel on upslope of entry.
- ✓ Installed irrigation system to water newly planted species in Oak Grove.
- ✓ Continued to trim and cut down non-native trees and bushes within Oak Grove.
- ✓ Removed dying plum tree from Rosemont Triangle.
- ✓ Reviewed drainage issue in Plot D. (path between Hubert and Grosvenor) and hired experts to install a small retaining wall to create better drainage. Work party to be scheduled to replant some areas. Overgrown large leaf oak tree removed to give Live Oak more room to grow and keep tree from affecting neighbor's house.
- ✓ Committee looking at long range plan for Rosemont Triangle and potentially replanting some areas.
- ✓ Reviewed and redrafted Gardener's contract and list of duties.
- ✓ Removed wind damaged pine on Longridge slope in Oak Grove.

#### **6.4. Summary of 2011 Accomplishments**

- ✓ Committee planted remainder of native bushes and ground cover purchases in November and additional trees.
- ✓ Chair got bids for redoing Rosemont Triangle, refreshing Plum Patch, redoing Paloma entry to Oak Grove, and evaluating stair repair in Plot C.
- ✓ Continued to weed out thistles and hemlock.
- ✓ Mural project moving forward. PG&E agreed to donate \$25,000 toward the project. Artist redid rendering. PG&E disclosed it can only give \$5,000 annually.
- ✓ Completed annual tree trimming/culling in October.
- ✓ Secured contract for contractor to re-do the understory plantings in Rosemont Park, re-do entrance at Paloma end of Oak Grove, add additional plants at Plum Patch.
- ✓ Removed invasive shrubs at Mandana end of path in Oak Grove.
- ✓ Removed pine in Oak Grove that was dropping branches onto neighboring property.
- ✓ Secured contract for contractor to add plants to Plot D path and to redo the front garden at office.
- ✓ Had numerous work parties in Oak Grove.
- ✓ Agreed with neighbors on Larkspur to remove large pine which was dropping branches and blocking Dawn Redwoods growth.

#### **6.5. Summary of 2012 Accomplishments**

- ✓ Removal of designated acacia trees in OAK GROVE.

#### **6.6. Summary of 2013 Accomplishments**

- ✓ Fruit tree area of OAK GROVE planted with apricots pears, oranges, lemons.
- ✓ Clean chips dumped and spread in OFFICE garden.
- ✓ Signage installed at Office.
- ✓ Deer cages installed around young trees.
- ✓ Committee chair handed over from Vicky DeYoung to Chris Metcalfe.



- ✓ Bids received, then tabled as too expensive, to repair stairs Carlston-to-Paramount, and Mandana-to-Oak Grove.
- ✓ Pollarding of sycamores started in December, the first year LHA assumes the entire cost
- ✓ Work parties spread chips on OAK GROVE path.
- ✓ Several acacia trees removed.
- ✓ Decided not to use herbicides in Oak Grove – one year test.

## 6.7. Summary of 2014 Accomplishments

### Larkspur Circle

- ✓ Charlotte's Gardens redesigned Larkspur Circle, with extensive neighbor consulting
- ✓ Installed benches and seating area, redesigned drip irrigation, planted Arbutus Marina and redbud trees, included a drive-over area for city trucks that will not damage the Park, large rocks installed, grass area reduced.
- ✓ Completed in time for National Night Out.

### Oak Grove

- ✓ Removal of designated acacia trees in Oak Grove.
- ✓ Spreading of wood chips on path.
- ✓ Garbage cans placed at both ends, gardener empties them.
- ✓ Arranging slices of tree rounds on trail in wet areas.
- ✓ Two benches built and installed by Committee member & son.
- ✓ Bank adjoining Longridge homes in Grid #1 & 2 planted with manzanita, ceanothus, quince, tassel tree, and watering maintained weekly.

### Carlston Triangle

- ✓ Sequoia trimmed of diseased branches.

## 6.8. Summary of 2015 Accomplishments – *Hard Hit by Drought*

### Oak Grove

- ✓ Hired Shelterbelt, a habitat restoration company, to maintain the understory of Oak Grove bi-annually. They remove English ivy from trees, contain cape ivy, blackberries and acacia sprouts, cut back grasses to remove fire danger
- ✓ Abandoned working by Grid, but using defined areas for understanding entire park
- ✓ Removed acacias and Monterey Pines that fell, cleaned brush from behind 4 homeowners' parcels, at their request.
- ✓ Planned removal of more acacias stopped for the time being, to retain cool canopy.
- ✓ Dog waste bag dispensers installed both ends of path.
- ✓ Held work parties to distribute chipped material from trees along the path.
- ✓ Installed a low barrier to prevent gravel from traveling from path to sidewalk at Paloma.
- ✓ Did major clearing at Mandana end of ivy and trash hidden beneath it.
- ✓ Resumed limited use of herbicides.
- ✓ As of this year,
  - Scotch broom, thornless blackberry, hemlock & thistle nearly eradicated
  - Ground cover includes bedstraw (sticky seeds), Algerian ivy

- Panica grass is coming to dominate ground cover (good!)
- Acacia saplings a continuing problem

#### Carlston Triangle

- ✓ Gardener redesigned, removing grass, relaying paths and replanting most ground cover and mid-story plants, adding a bench salvaged and reconditioned by Committee members
- ✓ Set up a schedule to maintain water needs in Sequoias – trees deeply and professionally watered, mulch spread to protect roots; rocks and landscaping installed to keep foot traffic off of sequoia roots
- ✓ Sequoias not trimmed this year – in drought condition, it will only further spread pathogen
- ✓ Bid obtained and approved for major tree work in Rosemount in 2016

#### Office

- ✓ Oak trees leaning over Underhills Road trimmed to reduce weight and remove danger of big trucks running into them; also neighbors complained that they dripped sap on parked cars

#### Plot C

- ✓ Did major removal and trimming of large acacias and brush clearing for fire hazard

#### Plum Patch

- ✓ Did aesthetic pruning of large oak tree
- ✓ Discussed redesign to reduce grass area and replace it with something else, continuing drought expected in California

### **6.9. Summary of 2016 Accomplishments**

- ✓ Revised gardener contract put into effect with added duties