

MYRTLE TRACE TREE PLANNING SUBCOMMITTEE

Final Report to Property Committee and Board of Directors

March, 2023

CURRENT SITUATION

Myrtle Trace was established in 1983 on land previously owned by the International Paper Company. As houses were built, the developer preserved many of the existing pine trees. In addition, numerous Bradford Pears were planted on common property bordering Myrtle Trace Drive, the main thoroughfare in the community. Over the years, this treed environment is one factor that has attracted buyers to Myrtle Trace. However, since 1983 trees in the community have become threatened. Bradford Pears have a life expectancy of approximately 25 years and those in Myrtle Trace have exceeded that time. Also, research has shown that the trees break excessively due to their weak branch structure. Additionally they have become invasive in South Carolina forested areas. As a result, Bradford Pears sales are set to be banned in the state beginning October 1, 2024. A second threat is the limited diversity of trees planted. This results in many landscape trees disappearing at the same time due to disease, injury or natural life cycle.

To address the situation, a Tree Planting/Replacement Committee was formed in 2013. Over the next year two Leland Cypress and several Crepe Myrtles were planted on Myrtle Trace Drive near the Myrtle Ridge entrance. In addition, Lorapetulum shrubs were planted around the lift station at the intersection of Myrtle Trace Drive and Cedar Ridge Lane.

In September, 2022 a subcommittee of the Property Committee was appointed to further address the needs of Myrtle Trace regarding tree and shrub replacement on common property.

COMMITTEE CHARGE

Maintain the aesthetics of the Myrtle Trace Community by replanting trees in common areas where trees have been removed and planting new trees and/or shrubs in areas where present trees are reaching their longevity period.

PROCESS

The Committee met seven times from October, 2022 through March, 2023. Initially the group reviewed the work done by the previous committee. In addition to group meetings, committee members each did a visual survey of the community to identify potential locations for planting. Experts in the horticulture field were also consulted for their recommendations. Brad Fowler, Urban Horticulture Agent with Clemson Extension, drove through Myrtle Trace with a committee member and then gave a PowerPoint presentation to the entire committee identifying trees and shrubs to consider for planting in Myrtle Trace. Included were the characteristics of each and the habitat where they might thrive. He also included guidelines about maintenance and planting. (See Appendix A). Lois Edwards, Pee Dee Region

Urban Forester with the South Carolina Forestry Commission, met with two committee members and toured the sites identified by the committee for possible tree removal and/or planting. She made specific recommendations regarding trimming/removal of the existing Bradford Pears and suggested tree varieties to consider for planting. (See Appendix B).

Criteria were developed for prioritizing planting locations:

- Common property locations where trees have been removed.
- Areas where current plantings pose a potential safety concern.
- Age and size of current plantings
- Areas that are highly visible to community members

Using the above criteria, the committee reviewed and identified locations for further analysis and possible plantings:

- Tier One: Cricket Court Island in front of townhouses, Myrtle Trace Drive heading toward gate
- Tier Two: Myrtle Trace Drive opposite intersection with Timberline Drive, Myrtle Trace Drive north of intersection with Boxwood Lane, Burning Ridge Road where trees/undergrowth have been removed, Clubhouse front garden beds, Timberline Circle Island.

Criteria were also developed for tree and shrub plant selection which can be used when selecting from species recommended by Brad Fowler and Lois Edwards:

- Tier One: growth rate, maintenance needs, longevity, location, root growth and disease resistance
- Tier Two: diversity of species, desirability of flowering species, potential danger of species (i.e. limb drop, etc.) and high visibility of location

RECOMMENDATIONS

Tier One Locations

- Cricket Court Island: Analyze the suggestion of the Forestry Commission arborist to remove the five Bradford Pears. Identify shrubs from the list suggested by Clemson that will thrive in the sun/shade exposure and plant in the island area.
- Myrtle Trace Drive from Cedar Ridge Lane to back gate: As per the arborist's recommendation, monitor the health of the Bradford Pear trees with particular attention to any signs of disease and/or limbs splitting. When either of these issues are noted, remove the affected tree. Identify trees and understory shrubs that can be planted as trees are removed, drawing from the lists suggested by Clemson and the SC Forestry Commission.

Tier Two Locations

- Intersection of Myrtle Trace Drive and Timberline Drive: As suggested by the Forestry Commission arborist, remove the three largest Bradford Pears on the golf course side of Myrtle Trace Drive. Replant in the fall with trees/shrubs from recommended list.
- Myrtle Trace Drive north of intersection with Boxwood Lane: Where Bradford Pear was removed plant trees/shrubs from the recommended list.
- Burning Ridge Road where trees/undergrowth has been removed: When road and ditch construction work is completed assess the areas where Myrtle Trace properties border the work areas and identify where new planting is needed.
- Clubhouse garden front beds: Plant with low-growing, low maintenance, preferably flowering shrubs selected from recommendations by Clemson Extension horticulturist.
- Island in Timberline Drive cul de sac: Clean out undergrowth, remove sweet gum tree and plant new trees/shrubs.

General

- In all cases where planting is recommended, monitor the area for sun/shade exposure for several months to ensure selected plants will thrive. Following recommendation from Clemson Extension Horticulturalist, plant in the fall to foster good root development before summer heat.
- Establish an on-going subcommittee of the Property Committee. Responsibilities to include:
 1. Monitoring the health of trees on common property and recommending removal of trees when indicated.
 2. Recommending replacement species using the criteria developed by this committee and giving priority to those on the list suggested by Clemson horticulturalist and/or Forestry Commission arborist as shown in table below.

	Clemson Extension	SC Forestry Commission
Recommended Trees		
Palmetto Sabal palmetto	x	
Dahoon Holly Hex cassine	x	
American Holly Hex opaca	x	

Foster's Ilex attenuata Fosteri		x
Yaupon Ilex vomitoria		x
Eastern Red Cedar Juniperus virginiana	x	
Green Giant Arborvitae Thuja "Green Giant"	X	
Loquat Eriobotrya japonica	x	
Lacebark Elm Ulmus parvifolia	X	
River Birch Betula nigra	x	
Eastern Redbud Cercis canadensis	x	x
Fringetree Chionanthus virginicus	x	x
Star Magnolia Cercis canadensis	x	x
Blackgum Nyssa sylvatica		x
Loblolly Bay Gordonia lasianthus		x
Maple trident Acer buergerianum		x
Not Recommended		
Leyland Cypress	x	x
Red Maple	x	x
Recommended Shrubs		

Pineapple Guava Acca sellowiana	x	
Fragrant Tea Olive Osmanthus fragrans	x	
Walter's Viburnum Viburnum obovatum	x	
Chastetree Vitex agnus-castus	x	
Distylium	x	
Florida Flame Azalea Native Azalea Rhododendron austrinum	x	
Cast iron Plant Aspidistra elatior	x	
Saw Palmetto Serenoa repens	x	
Fatsia Fatsia japonica	x	
Japanese Aucuba Aucuba japonica	x	

3. Updating common property locations in need of planting of trees/shrubs.
 4. Develop overall plan for planting on Myrtle Trace Drive to be used for replacement of trees removed as needed.
- Provide funding in the annual HOA budget for both tree removal and replacement.

SUMMARY

The trees and shrubs on common areas are one of the most valued assets of the Myrtle Trace community. This committee was charged with developing a plan to preserve and protect this asset. In

carrying out their charge committee members conducted individual visual surveys of the community, developed criteria both for identifying locations for planting and for selecting varieties of trees and shrubs that will thrive in the local environment, and consulted with a professional horticulturist and arborist. This report outlines actions that will maintain and enhance the plantings on community common property both now and in the future. It is presented to the HOA Property Committee and Board of Directors with the unanimous hope that the recommendations presented are adopted and implemented.

COMMITTEE MEMBERS

- David Atkins, Chair
- Ellen Elliott
- Ron Grove
- Tina Hurley
- Herman Rebocho
- Leo Reger
- David Smyth
- Lee Williams

APPENDIX A

Recommendations

Brad Fowler

Urban Horticulture Agent, Horry and Georgetown Counties

Clemson Cooperative Extension

- Basic considerations
 - Pay attention to catch problems early
 - Proper maintenance prevents problems
 - Consult with trained professional including arborist for questions regarding trees

- Planting tips
 - Plant trees and shrubs in the fall for best results
 - Plant according to mature size even if slow growing
 - Do not use monocultures. Plant a variety in case of disease
 - Use native plants when possible but there are good nonnatives as well

APPENDIX B

Recommendations

Lois Edwards, Pee Dee Region Urban Forester, South Carolina Forestry Commission

- Bradford Pears on Myrtle Trace Drive near the back gate should be removed when they exhibit signs of disease or damage. Until then they should not be trimmed but left to grow naturally.
- Remove Bradford Pears on Cricket Court.
- Remove large Bradford Pears at intersection of Myrtle Trace Drive and Timberline Drive.
- Nurseries to consider when purchasing trees are Parsons Wholesale Nursery in Georgetown and Southland in Conway.
- Tree and shrub selection should be diversified so that disease does not damage/kill all specimens at same time.
- Leland Cypress and Japanese Maple are subject to disease and are not good choices.