

**THE ROSSMOOR LANDSCAPE 2025 AND BEYOND**  
-  
***STRATEGIC FIVE-YEAR PLAN FOR MUTUALS***





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## INTRODUCTION

As the Rossmoor landscape reaches maturity, the world is a different place than during its inception.

Mandatory water restrictions have become more common, fire threats have resulted in regional power shut-offs, and population growth continues across the Bay Area, increasing the demand for finite resources.

This does not mean, however, that Rossmoor has to sacrifice the setting it continues to enjoy. Still, some changes are required to ensure the viability and safety of the community. This five-year plan has been established to guide these changes.

Given the urgency of these matters, this plan is fast-paced, achieving results over five years. These are recommendations and not a prescription, though the order of the program is specific for good reason.

This plan was developed to strike a balance that is beneficial for the maximum amount of people, as resident support is crucial to its success. Though 100% support isn't realistic, providing objective, measurable parameters by which to make choices helps residents understand the reasons behind every decision.

This plan was developed by the Rossmoor Landscape Department and is strongly recommended, though its adoption is optional for each mutual depending on their individual circumstances. We look forward to helping you implement as much of the plan as is appropriate for your needs.

Rebecca Pollon  
Landscape Manager  
Golden Rain Foundation  
MLA, BFQP, QWEL



# ENVISIONING ROSSMOOR 2025

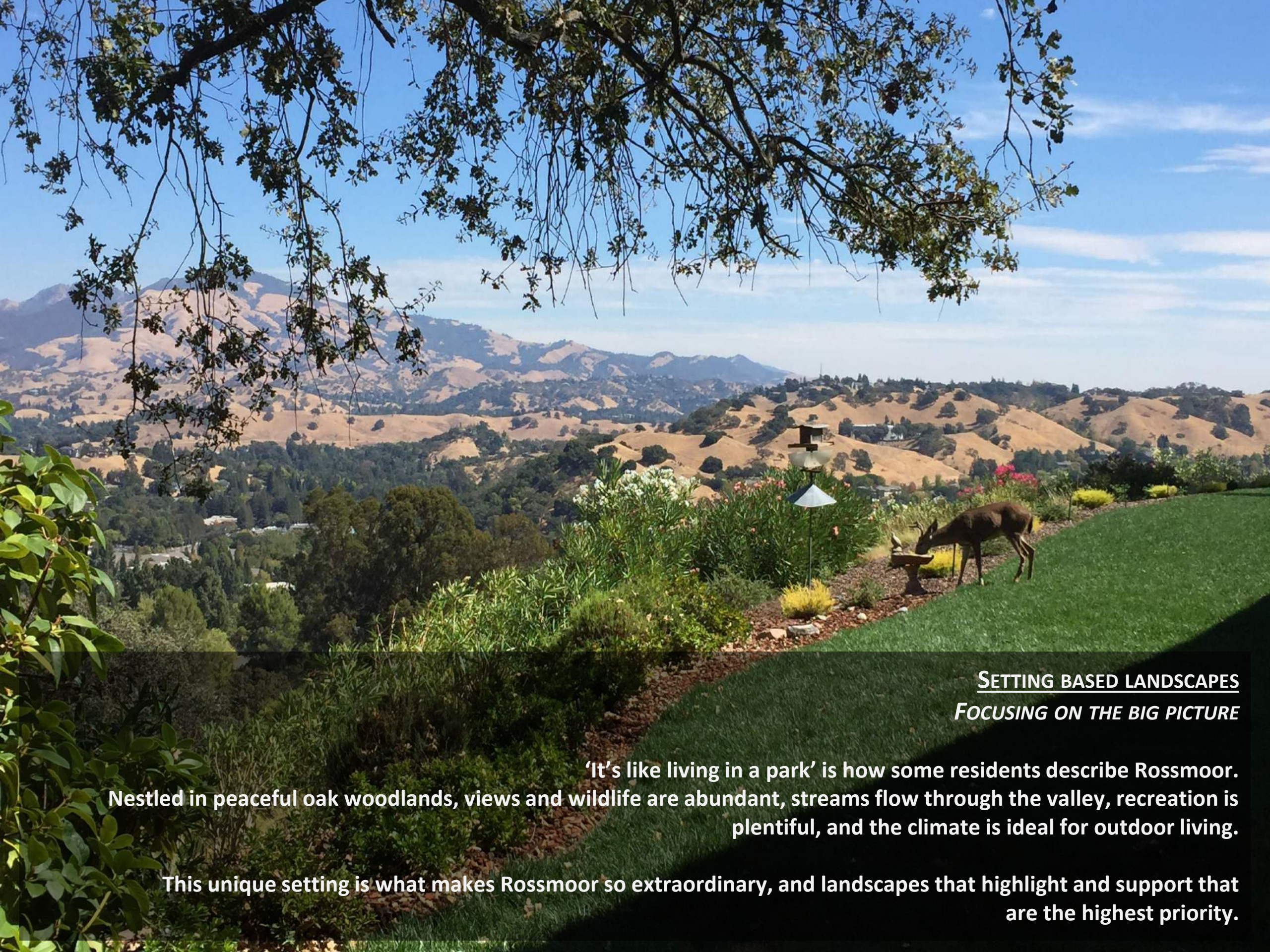
-SETTING BASED LANDSCAPES-

-WELLNESS SUPPORTING LANDSCAPES-

-RESILIENT LANDSCAPES-



*Photo courtesy of Cassie Tzur*



**SETTING BASED LANDSCAPES**  
***FOCUSING ON THE BIG PICTURE***

**'It's like living in a park' is how some residents describe Rossmore. Nestled in peaceful oak woodlands, views and wildlife are abundant, streams flow through the valley, recreation is plentiful, and the climate is ideal for outdoor living.**

**This unique setting is what makes Rossmore so extraordinary, and landscapes that highlight and support that are the highest priority.**

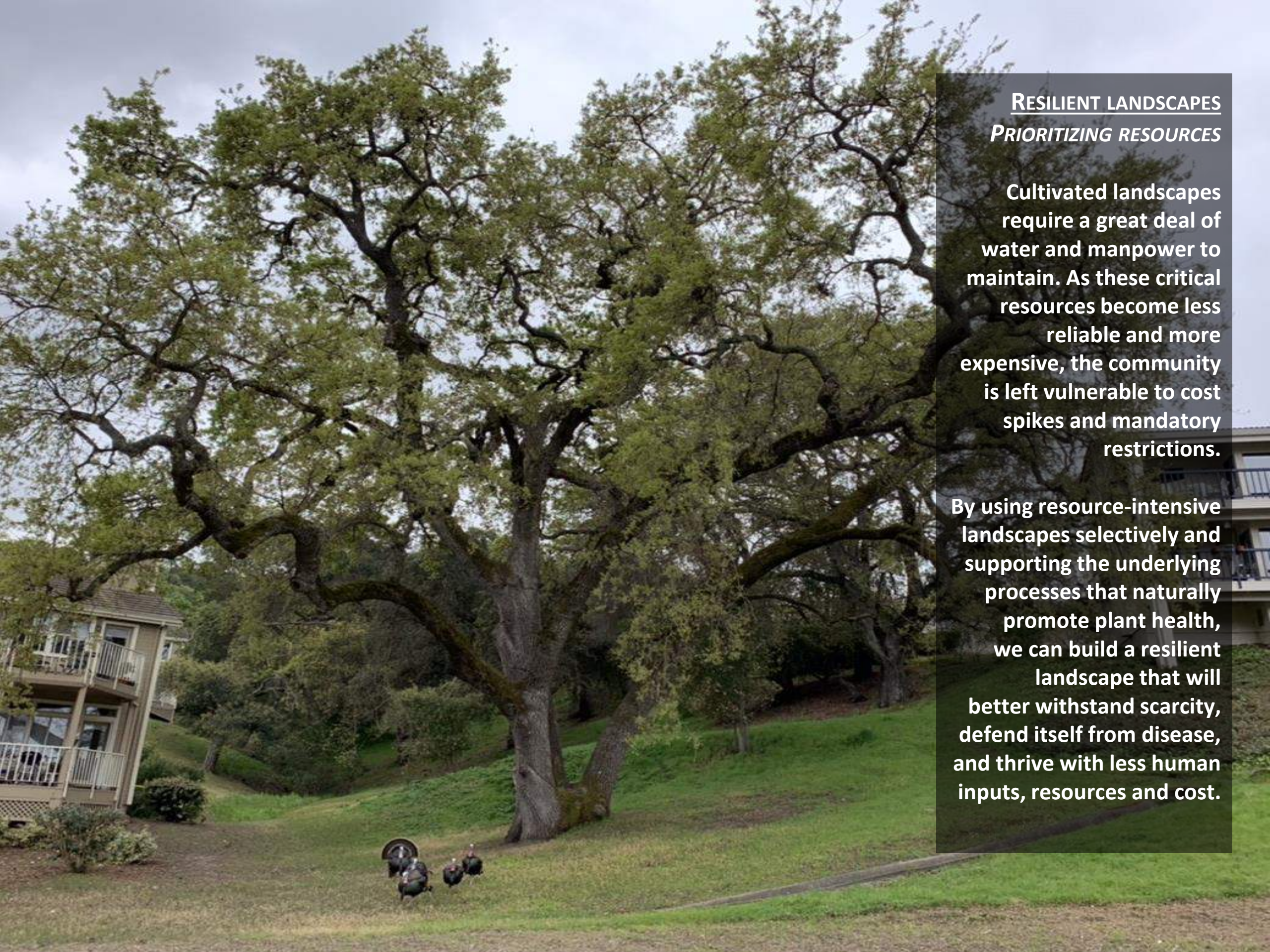
## WELLNESS SUPPORTING LANDSCAPES

### *IMMERSIVE LANDSCAPES*

Hundreds of studies have shown that spending time in natural environments is more than merely enjoyable, it is one of the *most impactful ways to improve mental, physical and emotional health.*

Providing residents with varied opportunities to immerse themselves in Rossmoor's beautiful surroundings through paths, parks and benches gives purpose to the landscape that *goes beyond beauty.*





**RESILIENT LANDSCAPES**  
***PRIORITIZING RESOURCES***

**Cultivated landscapes require a great deal of water and manpower to maintain. As these critical resources become less reliable and more expensive, the community is left vulnerable to cost spikes and mandatory restrictions.**

**By using resource-intensive landscapes selectively and supporting the underlying processes that naturally promote plant health, we can build a resilient landscape that will better withstand scarcity, defend itself from disease, and thrive with less human inputs, resources and cost.**

# **STRATEGIC PLAN**



**Phase I:    *SIMPLIFY***

- a. Remove Detractions
- b. Reduce Fuel
- c. Eliminate 'Low Value' Landscapes

**Phase II:    *SHOWCASE STRENGTHS, CREATE NEW ASSETS***

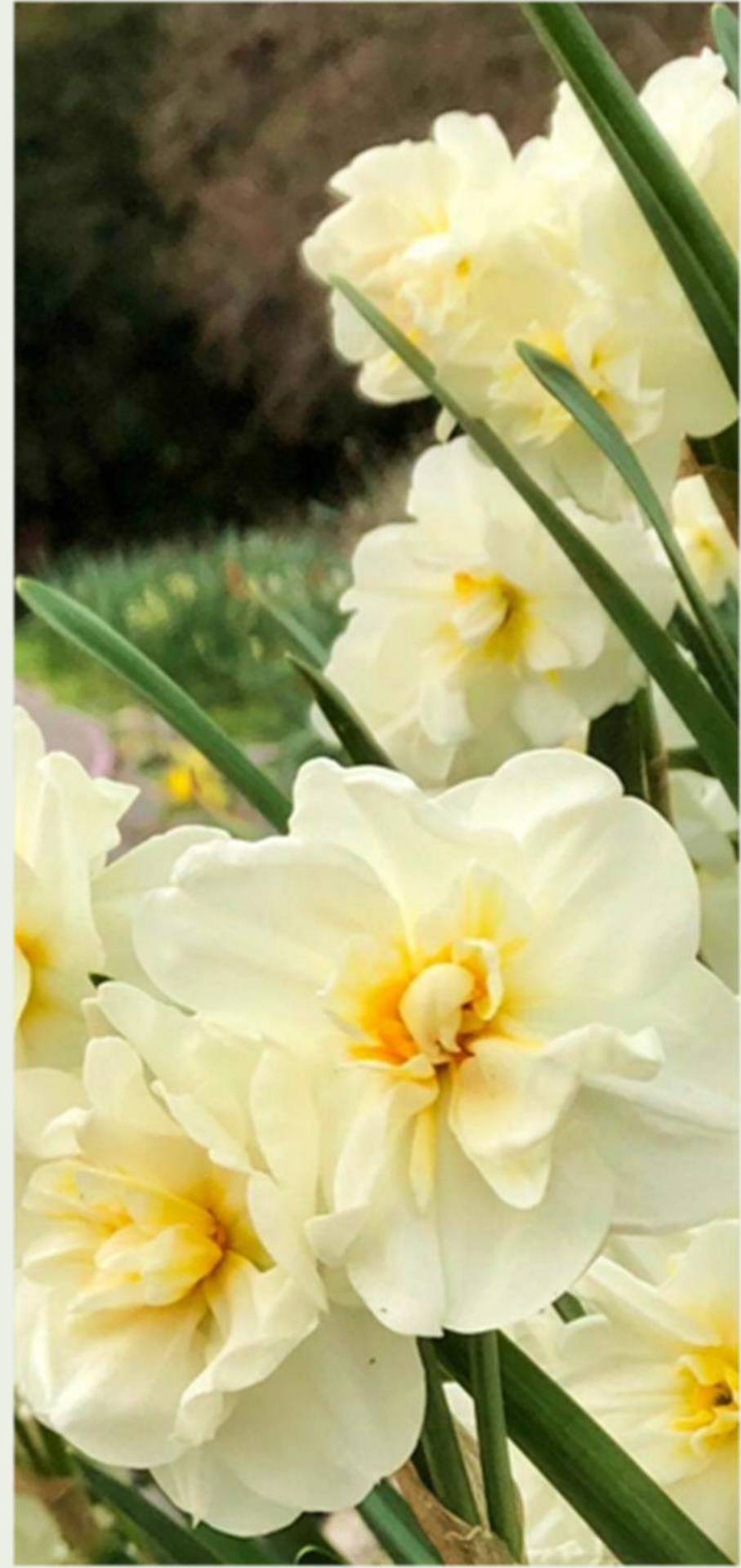
- a. Identify 'High-Value' Landscapes
- b. Create New Assets: Parks For Everyone

**Phase III:    *ESTABLISH BALANCE***

- a. Selective Use of Resource-Intensive Landscapes
- b. 'Give A Foot, Get A Foot' - Lawn Improvement Program

**Immediate and Ongoing:    *CULTIVATE RESILIENCY***

- a. Support Natural Systems And Reduce Chemical Use
- b. The Big Picture - Protect The Tice Valley setting



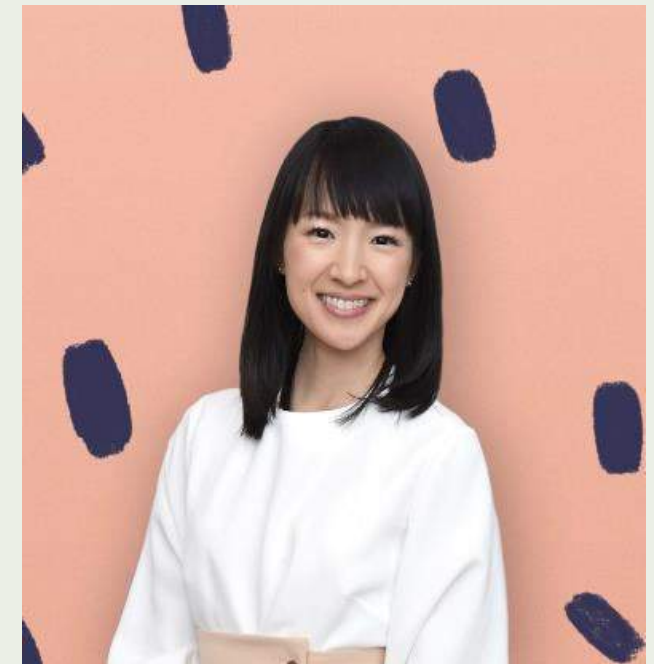
# **PHASE I**

# SIMPLIFY

Like anything else, **landscaping requires budgeting**. As prices rise and supplies are limited, decisions must be made about how to get by on less or pay more for the same materials and services.

Yet there are plenty of landscapes that consume limited resources without adding real value to the overall setting. They are either unseen, non-viable, or just plain unnecessary. These '**low value' landscape components should be eliminated so resources may be directed to where they are most needed.**

This doesn't mean residents must sacrifice what is important to them. Rather, this will preserve funds so that ***the elements of the landscape that are most valuable can be prioritized, protected, and enhanced.***



*'Imagine yourself living in a space that contains only things that spark joy.'*

***Isn't this the lifestyle you dream of?'***

*-Marie Kondo*

# REMOVE, REST, THEN ASSESS

Dead, failing, or inconsistent plants detract from the scenery. **Often, simply removing them is enough** to redirect the eye to the more vibrant parts of the landscape.

Removals frequently open a view, leave room for existing plants to spread and thrive, or reveal an entirely new environment, negating the need for replacement at all.

For these reasons, while funds should be secured for any necessary re-landscaping, removals should be completed before establishing a replacement plan. Often residents prefer the new setting, but if replacements *are* needed, the underlying landscape can be better understood once the original plants are gone and the most appropriate use of the space can be best determined.



*This grove makes for a peacefully simple place to reflect*

## 1) DOCUMENT and REMOVE DEAD/DYING or DETRACTING PLANTS

By removing dead or sickly plants throughout the year, maintenance and irrigation crews won't spend resources on plants that are unsalvageable, and replanting (if necessary) can be done efficiently during plant replacement season.

***MAY-JUNE is the best time to identify plants to remove.***

Plants are seasonal which makes it difficult to distinguish whether plants are dead or just dormant during other times of the year. Most plants, however, have leafed out and are looking vibrant by late spring, so that is the best time to identify plants that are not thriving.



*This Coleonema 'Sunset Gold' is not quite dead but looks bad and should be removed.*

## PLANT REPLACEMENT PROGRAM

When replacements are needed, they are installed between **October and March**. This is because new plants have a better chance of survival during the cool season without the need to water excessively.

### Qualifying replacements:

- ☐ **Four feet of space on all sides (minimum)** to allow plants sufficient room to grow without crowding.
- ☐ **Currently irrigated;** The plant replacement program is designed to quickly replace plants in areas that are *already irrigated*. New plantings do not qualify.
- ☐ **Not severely impacted by roots;** Root competition causes new plants to suffer and sometimes die.
- ☐ **Submissions must be received by September 1<sup>st</sup>** so that management has sufficient time to organize the program efficiently.

## 2) REDUCE FUEL

Living among wildlands is a joy, but it comes with inherent risk. While nothing can completely eliminate the potential for fire, fortifying defensible space can greatly improve the chances of successfully fighting it.

Fire departments consider the following plant types to be more fire prone than others and recommend removing them **within 30 feet of buildings** when possible. Plants that are closest to or immediately downhill of structures should be prioritized first.



*Large Eucalyptus tree*

- **Juniper** Once a popular plant for its evergreen, low maintenance, drought tolerant properties, it was used liberally during Rossmoor's development. Very low, ground-cover juniper is generally okay, but juniper over 4 feet tall has a higher fuel potential.
- **Coyote Brush** This native shrub is important to local wildlife but has evolved to encourage fire, which it needs for regeneration ([firesafemarin.org](http://firesafemarin.org)).
- **Monterey Pine trees** Monterey Pines are nearing the end of their 50-60 year lifespan in Rossmoor. Many have already died and been removed due to age, drought and infestations of Pine Bark Beetle.
- **Eucalyptus trees** Though Eucalyptus themselves are not necessarily more flammable than other trees, their deciduous bark is problematic. If trees are not removed, then bark should be cleaned from under the trees throughout the fire season.



*Typical juniper shrub*



*A row of Monterey Pine trees*

### 3) ELIMINATE 'LOW-VALUE' LANDSCAPES

Landscaping is the second highest expense in most Mutuals' budgets. Landscapes are intensively cared for through watering, feeding, pruning, planting and cleaning of debris. Landscapes that are not providing value equivalent to the cost of maintenance should be removed or simplified, and resources redirected to care for the landscapes that *are* valuable.

#### WHAT IS A 'LOW-VALUE' LANDSCAPE?

**-Low return on investment-** Landscapes that cost a lot to maintain but do not return equivalent value or add to the overall setting.

**-Not seen or used-** Sides or backs of buildings without windows or doors

**-Non-viable-** Will never thrive no matter how much resources they are given due to shade, roots, shallow soils, etc.



*This lawn is on the side of the building with no windows, but is being irrigated, fertilized and mowed regularly*

**-Inefficient or impractical to water-** Lawns that are awkwardly shaped or on slopes are impossible to water without overspray or runoff, resulting in wasted water.

**-High maintenance-** Landscapes that require more maintenance to look presentable than Rossmoor can provide.



*This small lawn is between a carport and the side of a building with no windows. It is awkwardly shaped making it extremely inefficient to water*

# **PHASE II**

# IDENTIFY STRENGTHS, CREATE NEW ASSETS

Every Mutual has attributes that set it apart from others. Maybe the views are unbeatable, the location is ideal for walking to amenities, or there are pleasant community parks.

Focusing on these characteristics highlights the unique assets of each Mutual. Providing visual and physical access to them increases opportunities for residents to engage with and enjoy their natural surroundings.



## 1) IDENTIFY 'HIGH VALUE' LANDSCAPES AND UNIQUE FEATURES

Identifying these will help guide decisions about where resources are concentrated.

**'High value' landscapes** are those that are frequently seen and used by a maximum amount of residents. They are the most impactful places to make improvements and **should be prioritized**.

**Unique features** are the elements of an area that make it stand out and attract residents and **should be showcased**.

### EXAMPLES OF 'HIGH VALUE' LANDSCAPES

- Highly trafficked areas
- Entryways
- Fronts of buildings
- Areas seen or used by multiple people
- Areas that create or frame a setting
- Areas that highlight the unique aspects of an entry

### EXAMPLES OF UNIQUE FEATURES

- Views
- Gathering areas
- Park-like areas
- Water features
- Rock formations
- Convenient or private location
- Access to trails/nature



## 2) CREATE NEW ASSETS!

Identify potential locations for:

- Benches/ Resting places
- Gathering Areas
- Gardens
- Views
- Comfortable paths
- Connecting Routes
- Signage
- Trails



*This inviting park used to be turf*

## PARKS FOR EVERYONE PROGRAM

People are more likely to take advantage of their surroundings if there are stimulating reasons to do so. Local parks, comfortable pathways, shortcuts and signage make exploration more enjoyable. Dynamic destinations that transform with each season give people compelling reasons to return.

Installing parks throughout Rossmoor makes linkages possible for those who can venture without limitation, but it also enables those who can't travel far to enjoy the outdoors close to home.

# **PHASE III**

# ESTABLISH BALANCE

Drought is never far away in California, and water is costly. Landscaping accounts for about half of all residential water use so is often targeted for conservation measures.

*Forcibly removing landscapes that are important to residents however, is not effective in the long run.* Instead, helping residents make *choices that emphasize value* results in lasting benefits for the community *and* the environment.



## THE STATE OF OUR WATER

### COST

- Water costs Rossmoor **\$6M+ per year**
- Rates have more than **doubled** in the last decade

### AVAILABILITY

- Water storage capacity is only **14 months**
- California has never gone more than 10 years without experiencing drought and severity is increasing

### The WATER ENERGY NEXUS

- Pumping water is the single largest consumer of energy in California- **19%**

### AND

- Producing electricity consumes water. It's an inescapable cycle.

# USE RESOURCE-INTENSIVE LANDSCAPES SELECTIVELY

## ***TURF***

For many, there is no other landscape quite as inviting as a lawn. It provides a surface to play on for dogs and children and gives a lush, spacious feel to outdoor spaces. There are also benefits; turf cools the ambient temperature, absorbs carbon dioxide, is effective as defensible space, and provides habitat for certain pollinating insects.

**Turf however, is expensive and extremely resource intensive.**

Turf requires;

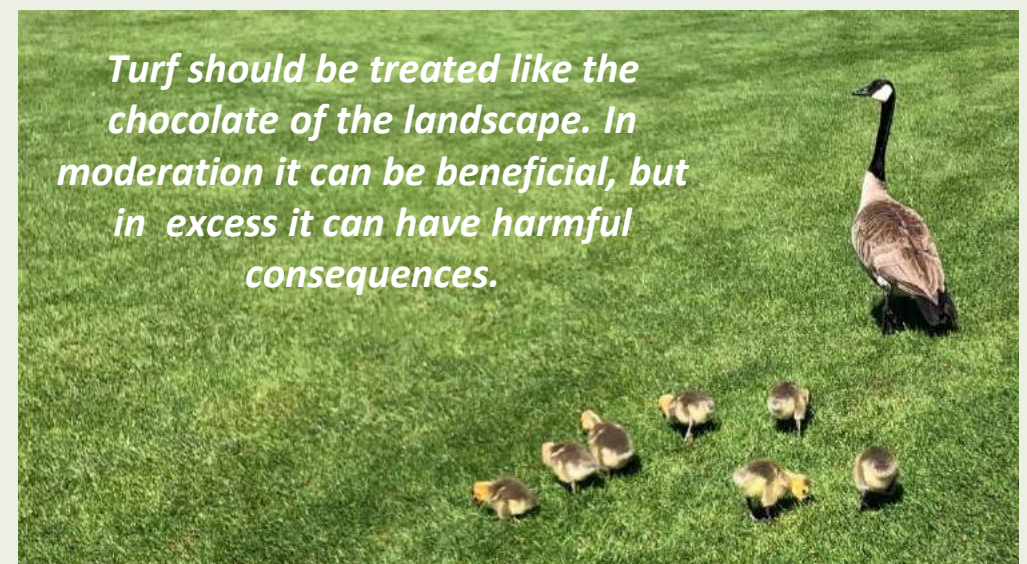
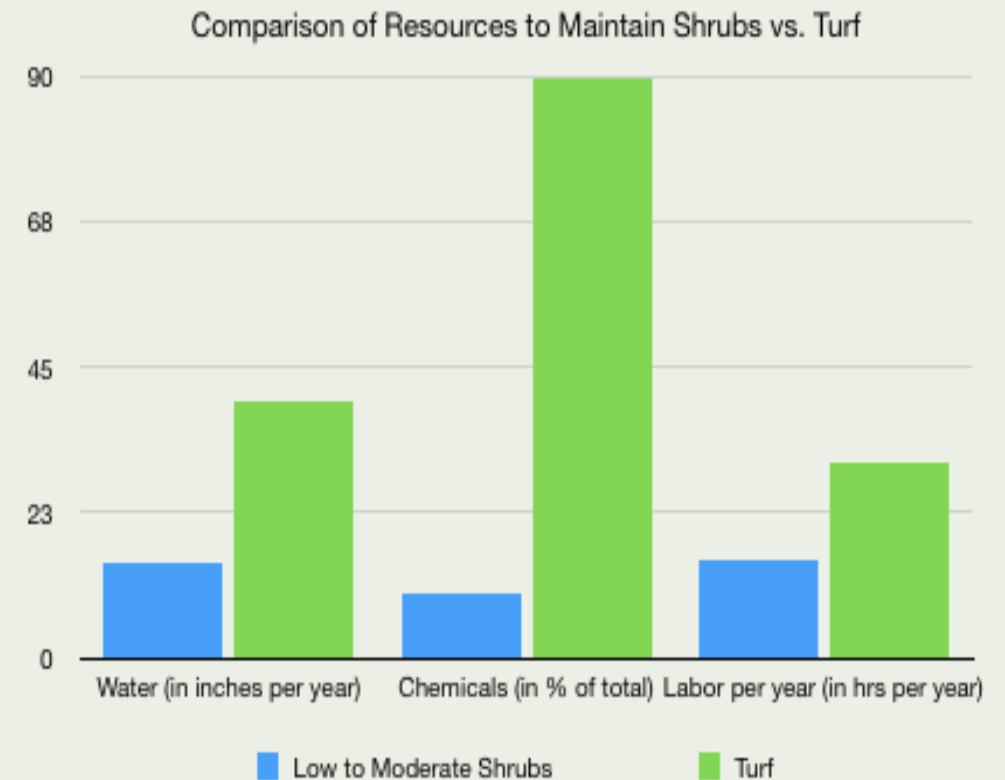
**200% - 300%** as much water as shrubs or trees

**800% - 900%** as much chemicals as other landscapes

**200% - 300%** more maintenance than other landscapes

For all its benefits, the drawbacks of having *excess* turf are evident. It is a bear on California's tenuous water supply, contributes to pollution through intensive use of chemicals, and quickly becomes unruly if not regularly tended to at great cost.

For these reasons, turf must be used purposefully so the positive aspects of lawn can continue to be enjoyed.



## 1) IDENTIFY CANDIDATES FOR ‘GIVE A FOOT, GET A FOOT’ LAWN IMPROVEMENT PROGRAM

To balance our dependence on costly resources with a continued love for lawn, the landscape department launched the ‘Give a Foot, Get a Foot’ program to help mutuals **select their highest priority lawns for preservation, while simultaneously identifying lawns that would be better served as something else.**

### HOW IT WORKS:

- 1) Residents choose which lawns are most important to them.
- 2) If viable, the mutual commits to renovating chosen lawns and updating irrigation for optimum health and water efficiency.
- 3) **For every square foot of lawn that is renovated, a square foot of lawn must be converted to a non-turf landscape.**
- 4) In exchange, these areas may be upgraded to shrub beds, seating areas, parks, or left to naturalize on their own as informal landscapes, potentially available for future use.
- 5) If qualified, EBMUD rebates are collected (must apply before lawn is removed).

**PILOT PROJECT: ➡**

**STANLEY DOLLAR ENTRY 1-2**

**EST. WATER SAVED: 61,200 gallons per year**

**RESIDENT SATISFACTION: Very High**



**What makes a lawn  
VIALE?**

#### **FLAT GRADE:**

Sloped areas create waste because droplets can't penetrate the soil before running off.

#### **GREATER THAN 8 FEET IN EACH DIRECTION:**

The most efficient irrigation technology has a minimum cast of 8 feet. Lawns that are smaller create overspray, watering sidewalks and wasting water.

#### **NO ROOT COMPETITION:**

Tree roots compete with the lawn for nutrients, causing both to suffer and look bad.

#### **SUNLIGHT:**

Lawns cannot thrive in complete shade.

**IMMEDIATE/ONGOING**

# CULTIVATE RESILIENCY

## 1) BUILD HEALTHY SOIL

### SOIL FOOD WEB;

Healthy soil is a living entity. It houses beneficial insects, bacteria and fungi that feed plants naturally through their nutrient-rich excrement.

Additionally, **healthy soil retains more water, produces less weeds, absorbs carbon from the atmosphere and feeds plants.**

Traditional landscape practices call for fertilizing plants regularly, feeding them enough to grow and bloom as desired. While this keeps plants happy in the near term, over the long run chemicals degrade the microbial life of the soil, and plants become dependent on frequent artificial inputs.



*Dr. Elaine Ingam Ph.D*

### GOAL;

#### REDUCE ALL LANDSCAPE

#### CHEMICAL USAGE

by taking a 'whole system' approach to

#### MINIMIZE AND PREVENT WEEDS

And increase plant vigor and longevity by

#### BUILDING LONG TERM

#### SOIL HEALTH

### BI-ANNUAL MULCHING PROGRAM

Organic matter builds healthy soil. By regularly installing **COMPOSTED MULCH** produced in part by Rossmoor's own green waste the results over time are:

- **HEALTHIER PLANTS**
- **WATER CONSERVATION**
- **WEED SUPPRESSION**
- **CARBON SEQUESTRATION**
- **RESILIENT LANDSCAPES**

*The best time to apply mulch is spring through early summer for active weed growth suppression and to keep soil cool through the peak hot season.*

## 2) PROTECT THE TICE VALLEY SETTING

As stewards and residents of Tice Valley, one of our highest purposes is preserving this special setting for current residents and future ones. To do that we must walk a fine line between supporting native species while keeping homes pest-free, working towards fire resistance while protecting native habitat, and making sure residents have access to this unique environment without sacrificing homeowner privacy.



### REFORESTATION PROGRAM

More than a century of grazing, fire remediation, and urban development have left the woodlands of Tice Valley with a 'generation gap' of young and adolescent trees. To **ensure successive generations of native oaks and other species**, in 2018 a reforestation program was established. Each year staff plants 20-30 young trees in the hills to become the future tree population of Tice Valley.

Meanwhile, as Mutuels remove trees that have reached the end of their life span, new plantings are required by city ordinance, but not all Mutuels have space for new trees. In those circumstances Mutuels have the option to purchase native trees for inclusion in the reforestation program to fulfill their replanting requirements.



*Photo courtesy of Cassie Tzur*



*Photo courtesy of Cassie Tzur*

**FIVE-YEAR CHECKLIST**  
***Step by Step Guide***



## **PHASE I – REMOVALS and REPLACEMENTS YEARS 1 TO 3**

### May-June: IDENTIFICATION OF DETRACTIONS AND LIABILITIES

- ☐ Identify failing, crowded, detracting plants
- ☐ Identify large Junipers, Baccharis (Coyote Brush), Eucalyptus and Monterey Pines within 30 feet of buildings \*especially those that are downhill from buildings
- ☐ Identify 'Low Value Landscapes'

### July-August: REMOVALS

### September-October: REASSESSMENT

- ☐ Revisit locations where plants were removed and assess whether replacement is needed
- ☐ Revisit locations where large swaths of plants or entire landscapes were removed and assess whether re-landscaping is needed

### November – April: REPLACEMENTS

- ☐ Install qualifying plant replacements
- ☐ Reforestation program for trees that were removed
- ☐ Large replacement project completions

**PHASE II – PARKS PROGRAM**  
**YEARS 2-4**

January – May: IDENTIFICATION

- ☐ Identify assets and opportunities to add parks, benches or paths
- Views
- Unique features
- Central areas
- Areas that will not disrupt manor privacy
- Shady areas
- Pleasant places to sit
- Lawns that could be upgraded to parks

June – December: PLAN

- ☐ Engage residents
- ☐ Get bids
- ☐ Prioritize projects
- ☐ Approvals

January – May: INSTALLATION

**PHASE III – LAWN IMPROVEMENTS AND REDUCTIONS**  
**YEARS 3-5**

January – May: IDENTIFICATION

- ☐ Identify candidates for 'Give A Foot, Get A Foot' lawn improvement program
- Less than 8 feet
- Sloped
- Overly impacted by tree roots
- Overly shaded
- Greater than 40% weeds or bare spots
- Unused
- Awkwardly shaped

June – September: PLAN

- ☐ Engage residents
- ☐ Get bids
- ☐ Prioritize projects
- ☐ Approvals

January – December: INSTALLATION

## **IMMEDIATE and ONGOING**

### April-June

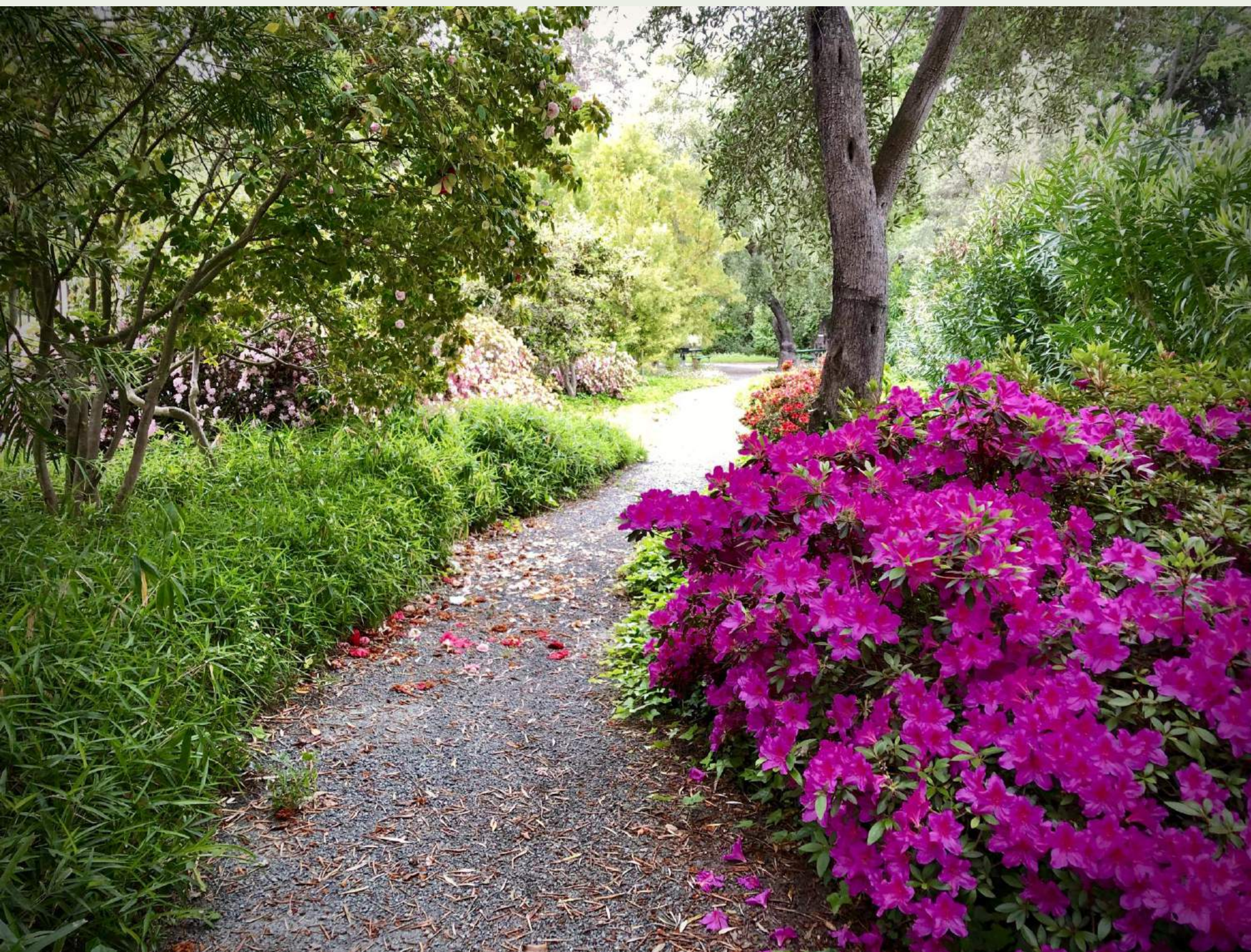
- ☐ Mulching program

### May-June

- ☐ Identify failing, crowded, detracting plants

### November – March

- ☐ Install qualifying plant replacements
- ☐ Reforestation program for trees that were removed



## CONCLUSION

Many of the measures in this document are already in use, but by clearly communicating and strategically implementing them across the community, we can build the support of residents and achieve measurable results.

Moreover, we will build on the beauty of Rossmoor, help to enrich residents' lives, and support the natural processes that in turn support the community, preserving and enhancing Tice Valley for generations to come.

*'With every walk in nature, one receives far more than he seeks' -John Muir*



**RESOURCES:**

**GENERAL INFORMATION**

[www.rossmoor.com](http://www.rossmoor.com)

**LANDSCAPE INFORMATION**

[www.rossmoor.com/landscaping](http://www.rossmoor.com/landscaping)

**MAINTENANCE REQUESTS**

Work Order Desk

(925) 988-7650

[workorder@rossmoor.com](mailto:workorder@rossmoor.com)

**LANDSCAPE RENOVATION REQUESTS**

Mutual Landscape Representative

(Contact information available through the work  
order desk)

**SECURITY**

Securitas

(925) 988-7899