

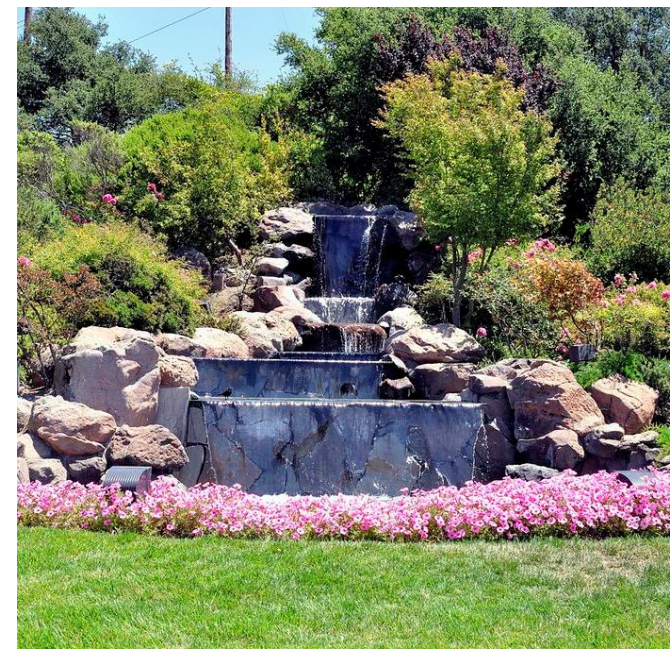
Hiddenbrooke Property Owners Association

- Annual Meeting
- June 26, 2024



HIDDENBROOKE

Robert Schussel, President
Joseph Joslin, Vice President
Marco Moroyoqui, Secretary
Troy Killorn, Director-at-Large



What has the FY '23 – '24 Board of Directors Accomplished?

- Financial Audit of Accounts Payable
 - Resulted in a \$9,000 credit from Flock Security Cameras due to billing errors.
 - Analyzed HPOA Vendors & Expenses to aid in the Budgeting process.
 - Determined the monthly expenses exceeded the annual budget by over \$2,000 per month.

What has the FY '23 – '24 Board of Directors Accomplished?

- Financial Audit of RealManage Charges
 - Resulted in \$10,500 credits repaid to the Membership
 - Created a new policy to charge back homeowners the costs of RealManage sending them delinquency/violation letters
 - Attained greater understanding of RealManage's ledger system and its impact on HPOA's finances

What has the FY '23 – '24 Board of Directors Accomplished?

- Financial Audit of RealManage Charges
 - Charted RealManage's billable charges for violations, hearings, & collections. Enabled the Board to make informed decisions on waiving or reducing fines.
 - Found the monthly amount spent on extra charges was unsustainable for the Association & took actions to reverse that.
 - Determined that a handful of residents owe the HPOA >\$170,000 – the financial health of the community is reliant on homeowners paying their CC&R obligations.

What has the FY '23 – '24 Board of Directors Accomplished?

- Renegotiated Terms & Conditions of the RealManage contract originally signed in September 2022
 - Reduced the cost of a delinquent letter from \$25 to \$15*.
 - Maintained the monthly contract rate of \$3,900 for FY '24 – '25.
 - Switched the mailing of delinquency letters from 30 days delinquent to when a homeowner owes \geq \$500. Saves thousands of dollars.
 - Reduced the charge for each violation letter from \$13.50 to \$5.00* and the cost of collection notices from \$25 to \$15*.

***These charges will be back charged to the delinquent, non-compliant homeowner, or those sent to collections.**

What has the FY '23 – '24 Board of Directors Accomplished?

- Financial Audit of Allied Trust Services (Collections Agency)
 - Identified costs associated with sending a homeowner to collections or small claims court due to fees charged by Allied Trust Services, RealManage, and lawyers.
 - Learned Allied retains on average 40% of a collection judgement
 - Ascertained HPOA was losing money on many accounts sent to collections
 - Learned Judgement Liens and Assessment Liens are potentially less costly to collect fines/assessments vs collections/small claims court.

What has the FY '23 – '24 Board of Directors Accomplished?

- Increased violation fines
 - Initial fine for CC&R Violations increased from \$50 to \$200.
 - Instituted an automatic \$500 fine for tree-topping.
 - Adopted a policy to levy a \$500 fine against a homeowner who starts an architectural or landscaping project without first getting HARC approval.
 - For serious violations, a hearing letter is now sent immediately
 - Previously, a monthly courtesy letter was sent over a 3-month period before being called to a hearing

What has the FY '23 – '24 Board of Directors Accomplished?

- Increased Annual Assessments
 - Kept up with inflation allowing the association to maintain existing community services.
 - Annual assessments went from \$85 per year in FY '22 – '23 to \$103.50 for FY '24 – '25 to help offset budget shortfalls.
 - This is a one-time inflation catchup allowed by the CC&Rs.
 - Reinstated the 12% annual interest rate on unpaid assessments.

What has the FY '23 – '24 Board of Directors Accomplished?

- Adopted a mandatory Ethics Policy to govern Board Member Behavior
 - Emphasis on Board members interacting with transparency and oversight. Separate from Code of Conduct.
 - Finalized what “fiduciary responsibilities” mean. Allows Board members to be censured who fail to abide by them.
 - Resolved the legal liability consequences to the Association should Directors’ act without Board approval; i.e., a Director speaking to a homeowner in collections or acting as though a Director has Board authority or approval where none exists.

What has the FY '23 – '24 Board of Directors Accomplished?

- Moved the property inspection dates to align HPOA and RealManage internal processes
 - Mid-month vs end-of-month inspections allowed violation and hearing notices to be mailed at the beginning of the month:
 - This coincided with statement mailings, and
 - For homeowners who fixed their violation during the month, it eliminated additional notices being sent and/or issuance of credits if a fine showed up on their statement
- Simplified & standardized language in violation letters while also emphasizing that fines will result in non-compliance with CC&Rs.
- Instituted a “one-point-of-contact” with RealManage & Website coordinator to avoid sending mixed messages to either.

What has the FY '23 – '24 Board of Directors Accomplished?

- Removed a Board member who rarely attended Board meetings.
- Coordinated the transition to a new community management company & integrated the HPOA records/record keeping with their software system.
- Approved storing HPOA records & materials at a self-storage facility vs using a homeowner's home.

What has the FY '23 – '24 Board of Directors Accomplished?

- Approved a “Thank You for Preserving the Parkway Ecosystem” sign at the entrance to the Parkway to hopefully reduce littering.
- Established a working relationship with Wedgewood Weddings to use golf course facilities for National Night Out, Annual Meeting and HARC meetings free of charge.
- Initiated an email collection effort that resulted in 75% of homeowners registering an email with RealManage (up from 65%).
- Adopted a policy of not endorsing any interest groups or individuals who want support from the HPOA.

Tree Topping: CC&R 6.3.3



Before



After

6.3.3 Trees. The maintenance of all trees on a Lot, shall be the obligation of the Lot Owner. All trees shall be trimmed by the Owner of the Lot upon which the same are located so that the same shall not extend beyond the property line of any Lot or interfere with pedestrian use of the sidewalks. No mature trees in a front yard, including City Street Trees, shall be removed or replaced by an Owner or Builder without prior consent of the HARC. No City Street Tree shall be “topped” or severely trimmed in a manner that will permanently damage the structure and appearance of the tree.



Don't Top Trees!

TREE CITY USA
BULLETIN

No. 8 Editor: Dr. James R. Fazio • \$3.00



Tree topping is the senseless brutalizing of older trees. It puts an ugly scar on the landscape, sometimes in parks or along streets, but more often in yards and around business establishments. It remains a plague across America, although not as rampant as it used to be. Still, especially in smaller communities, the results of topping can be seen more than 100 years after its detrimental effects were recognized by pioneer arborist John Davey.

Not only is topping bad for the tree, it is a waste of money. Research has found that most people top trees because of fear that the tree is becoming too large. By this, these well-intentioned folks mean that they fear

for their safety or their buildings. But in most cases, topping just contributes to greater danger from the resulting proliferation of weakly attached sprouts and the entrance of decay fungi.

Nationally, neither communities nor individuals are spending enough money on tree care. It makes no sense, then, to use these limited funds on the malpractice of topping. In this bulletin, we provide more details about the reasons why trees should not be topped. Just as importantly, we offer available alternatives.

Through better information, perhaps the scourge of topped trees can finally be eliminated.

WHY NOT TO TOP — EIGHT GOOD REASONS

- 1 Starvation:** Good pruning practices rarely remove more than a quarter of the crown, which does not seriously interfere with the ability of a tree's leafy crown to manufacture food. Topping removes so much of the crown that it upsets an older tree's well-developed crown-to-root ratio and temporarily cuts off its food-making ability.
- 2 Shock:** A tree's crown is like an umbrella that shields much of the tree from the direct rays of the sun. By suddenly removing this protection, the remaining bark tissue is so exposed that scalding may result. There may also be a dramatic effect on neighboring trees and shrubs. If these thrive in shade and the shade is removed, poor health or death may result.
- 3 Insects and Disease:** The large stubs of a topped tree have a difficult time closing the pruning wound. The terminal location of these cuts, as well as their large diameter, prevents the tree's chemically based natural defense system from doing its job. The stubs are highly vulnerable to insect invasion and the spores of decay fungi. If decay is already present in the limb, opening the limb will speed the spread of the disease.
- 4 Weak Limbs:** At best, the wood of a new limb that sprouts after a larger limb is truncated is more weakly attached than a limb that develops more normally. If rot exists or develops at the severed end of the limb, the weight of the sprout makes a bad situation even worse.
- 5 Rapid New Growth:** The goal of topping is usually to control the height and spread of a tree. Actually, it has just the opposite effect. The resulting sprouts (often called water sprouts)

are far more numerous than normal new growth and elongate so rapidly that the tree returns to its original height in a very short time — and with a far more dense and dangerous crown.

6 Tree Death: Some species of trees are less tolerant to topping than others. Beeches, for example, do not sprout readily after severe pruning; the reduced foliage often leads to the death of the tree.

7 Ugliness: A topped tree is a disfigured tree. Even with its regrowth, it never regains the grace and character of its species. The landscape and the community are robbed of a valuable asset.

8 Cost: To a worker with a saw, topping a tree is much easier than applying the skill and judgment needed for good pruning. Therefore, topping may cost less in the short run. However, the true costs of topping are hidden. These include reduced property value, the expense of removal and replacement if the tree dies, the loss of other trees and shrubs if they succumb to changed light conditions, the risk of liability from weakened branches, and increased future maintenance.



TOPPING BY ANY OTHER NAME IS JUST AS UGLY

Sometimes pseudo tree experts use different terms for the malpractice of topping. Here are some commonly used synonyms:

Stubbing	Hatracking
Heading	Topping-off
Heading-back	Dehorning
Stubbing-off	Lopping
Tipping	Roundover



YEAR 6

In a relatively short time, the topped tree is as tall as — and far bushier and more dangerous than — it was to begin with. The properly pruned tree is safer, more beautiful, and its size better controlled.



**Hiddenbrooke Architectural
Review Committee (HARC)
July 1, 2023 – June 30, 2024**

HARC consists of five main members and one alternate, all living in Hiddenbrooke. Current members:

- Marcelline Mahern, Chair/Administrator
- Ernest Stockinger, Co - Chair
- Gilbert Solorio, Member
- Ken Bowers, Member
- Nadine Spingola-Hutton, Member
- Chris Brittle, Alternate

HARC

HARC is a sub-committee of the Hiddenbrooke Property Owners Association (HPOA).

- When a resident wants to change the exterior of their house and/or yard, they must first obtain HARC approval
- HARC reviews all plans for custom homes and additions
- Solar installations and satellite dishes are subject to HARC review but do not require a fee
- In some instances, approvals can be granted for minor projects, and a fee can be waived
- It is recommended to email HARC to determine the category of the proposed project (hharc@protonmail.com)

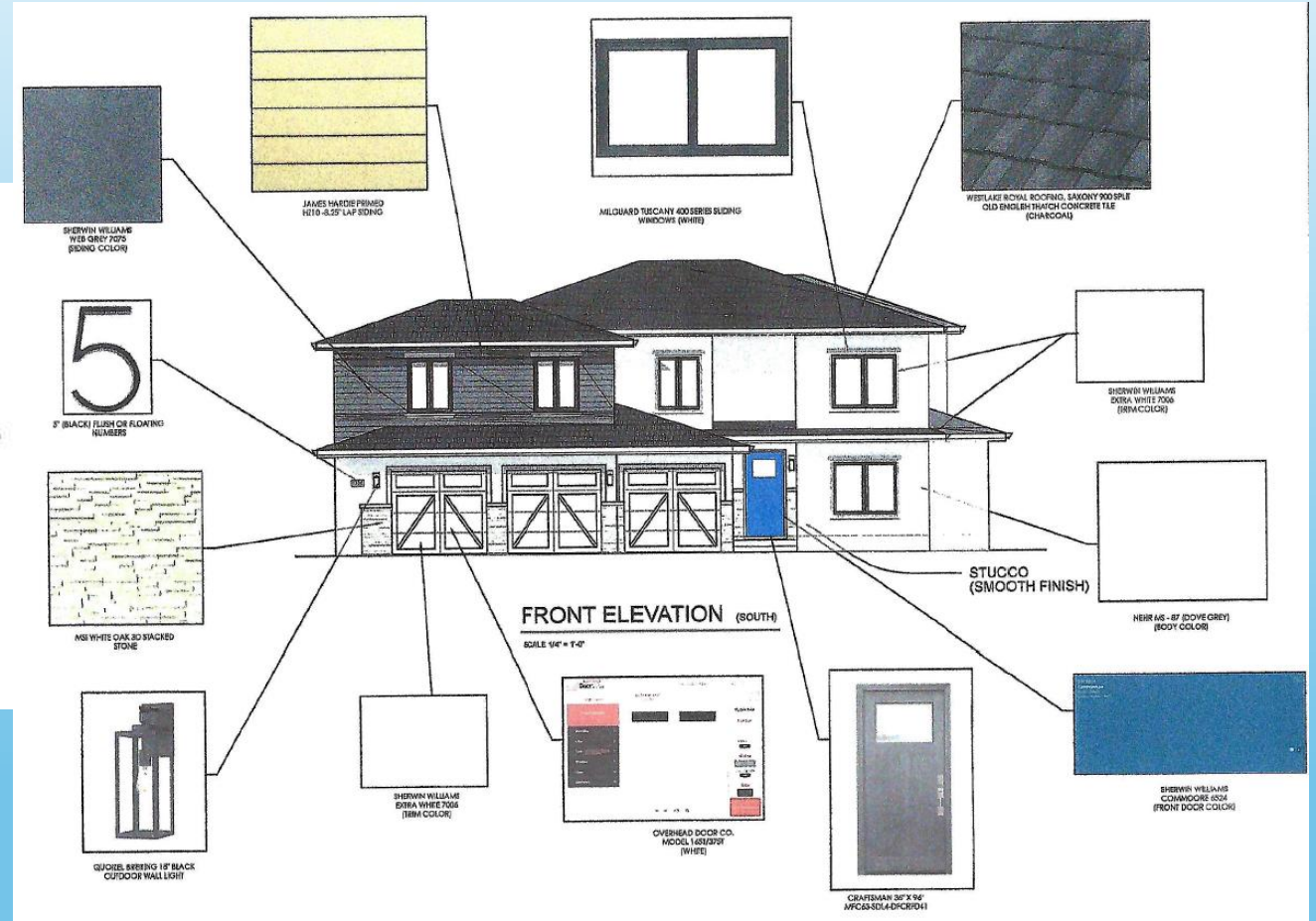
At-a-Glance: July 2023-June 2024

- Applications Reviewed: **123**
 - Minor: **36**
 - Solar: **7**
 - Custom Homes: **2**
 - Emails: **4,089**
- Other HARC Projects
 - Webpage Updates
 - Custom Home Design
 - Added Rules for yard maintenance
 - Updated Paint Color Idea Book
 - Xeriscape Presentation

Challenges

- HARC – Violations
- Tree Removal/Topping
- City of Vallejo Hill Side Zoning
- Landscape and Design Guidelines

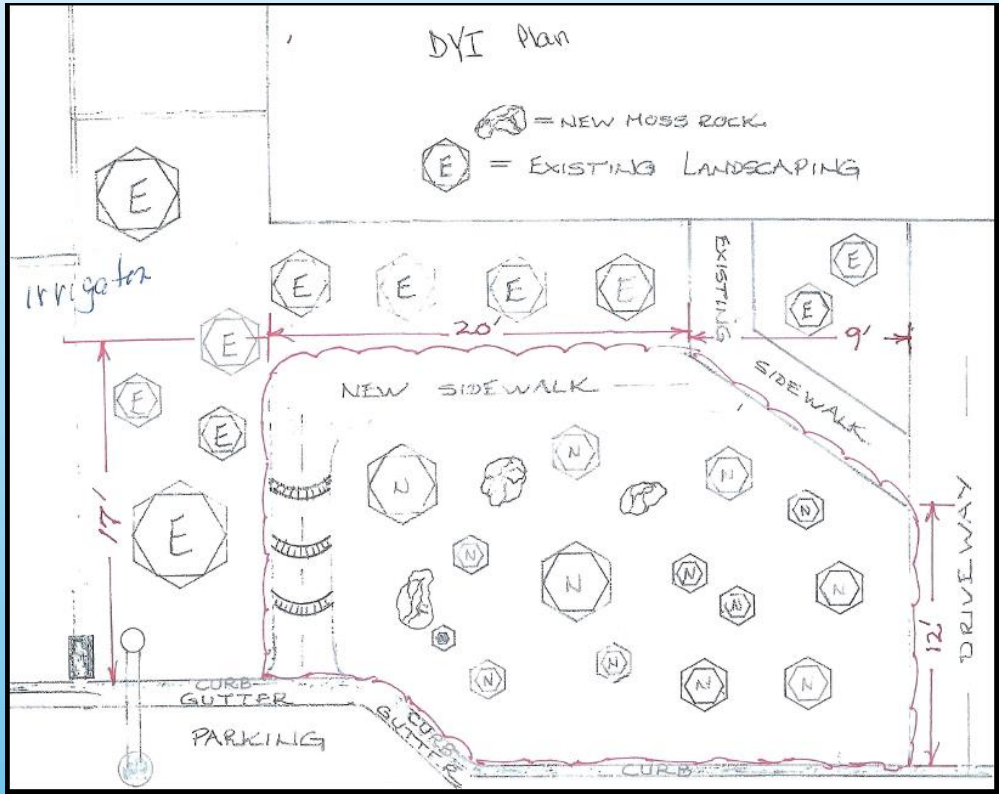
Visualizing Custom Home Design 1



Visualizing Custom Home Design 2



Xeriscape Example



Refer to Chapter 5: Landscape Guidelines in our Design Guidelines for further details.

Xeriscape Example



Plant Key

Key	Plant List	Quantity	Note	
1	Chinese fringe flower	2	Preexisting	23
2	Chollipo euonymus	2		24
3	Dwarf clone	4		25
4	Japanese maple	2	Preexisting	26
5	African fountain grass	3		27
6	African iris	3		28
7	African lily	10		29
8	Baby sun rose	17		30
9	Beardless wildrye	2	Preexisting	31
10	Bittersweet	1		32
11	Blue echeveria	1		33
12				34
				35

Driveway
16ft. wide





Hiddenbrooke **Maintenance District** **Advisory Committee**

- Committee Members:
 - Byrne Conley, Chair
 - JC Cochongo
 - Bob Schussel
 - Ian Forsythe
 - Chris Brittle

Hiddenbrooke Maintenance District Advisory Committee

Purpose:

Working with homeowners and the City through the Hiddenbrooke Maintenance District (HMD), a City taxing entity that maintains City property including:

- The Welcome Center
- Parkway landscaping
- Pocket parks
- Some open spaces within the development

HMD Projects FY '23 – '24

- Completed the Parkway upgrade, funded by Hiddenbrooke Improvement District (HID) and managed by the Landscape Maintenance Department of Public Works, City of Vallejo.
 - \$2.1 million project
 - Replaced underground irrigation systems & installed drip systems for drought resistant plants
 - Extensive re-landscaping to correct years of drought losses
 - Improved entranceway sign & border walls
 - Median upgrades including cobblestone, plants, & trees
 - Installed a concrete path to mailbox & planted a new central tree

HMD Projects FY '23 – '24

- Leased 2 Flock security cameras at the Welcome Center
 - Roughly \$2K each per year
 - Allows Committee Member Chuck Cochongo to access the date/time in the event of criminal activity to help with police response
 - Flock scans license plates to a data base shared by police and helps locate stolen cars and track criminals after a crime has been committed

HMD Projects FY '23 – '24

- Maintenance of weeds and firebreaks
 - All work to be completed by end of June
 - HMD areas are under HMD landscape maintenance contract and does not include golf course or Land Trust property
- New Image landscaping company awarded a new three-year contract after taking over for Land Care in 2021.

HMD Funding & Expenditures FY '23 – '24

- HMD property tax levy is \$611 per year per home, billed at annual cost without surplus
 - HMD built up a \$3.385 million surplus (as of 7/1/2024) over the years (annual levy down from high of \$695 until a couple of years ago)
- Annual budget is \$931K for FY 2024 – 2025
 - Biggest expenditures:
 - \$271K for Welcome Center security guard staffing (increased 7/1/2023 to improve staffing, but flat renewal for next fiscal year)
 - \$130K for landscape maintenance contract
 - \$112K for utilities (primarily water)
 - \$265K charged for Public Works overhead

HMD: The Grove Development

- Default by The Grove developer resulted in forfeiture of their property to a tax sale
 - Between 6 to 16 of the 84 lots received bids at auction
 - One consequence: the County Assessor “recouped” (deducted) \$273K in payments to the HMD to make up for payments previously credited on account of The Grove lots
 - HMD is trying to determine from the City how this will affect future funding (for FY 2024-2025 they are holding the annual levy flat from last year’s levy)
 - The \$3.385 surplus mentioned above is after the recoupment

Hiddenbrooke Improvement District (HID)

Hiddenbrooke Improvement District:

- Created in 1998 -- \$38 million in bonds
- Refinanced in 2004 – lower interest rate but same levy
- Current balance on bonds \$7.356 million as of 6/30/2023 – runs through 2033 (I believe)
- “HID 2004 Series A bonds” on your tax bill

Hiddenbrooke Improvement District (HID)

Hiddenbrooke Improvement District:

- Some Hiddenbrooke developers paid down fully or partially
 - Westchester developer paid down to “0”
 - Orchards exempt: developer traded for building a bridge
- Homeowners have option to pay down
- Many homes billed \$1200-\$1800
- Maximum levy is \$3,591 (Reflections pays this, subject to relief below)
- No answer yet on how loss of The Grove lot revenue will be recouped or spread

Hiddenbrooke Improvement District (HID)

Hiddenbrooke Improvement District:

- Tax Relief
 - FY 2010 - 2011 and 2011 - 2012 -- \$500,000 each year (then skipped one year)
 - FY 2013 - 2014 to 2015 - 2016 (3 years) -- \$250,000 each year
 - FY 2016 - 2017 to 2024 - 2025 (8 - 9years) -- \$300,000 each year
 - Total tax relief so far = \$4.45 million
 - The reduction is pro rata – about 14% of whatever would otherwise be billed

Hiddenbrooke Improvement District (HID)

Hiddenbrooke Improvement District:

- Bond Paydowns
 - FY 2010 - 2011 -- \$1 million
 - FY 2015 - 2016 -- \$250,000
 - FY 2016 - 2017 and subsequent -- \$300,000 per year
 - \$3.95 million early redemptions -- may ask to defer redemption this year
 - Total tax after rate relief is \$1.682 million, annual bond payments \$1.255 million

Hiddenbrooke Improvement District (HID)

Hiddenbrooke Improvement District:

- Projects Funded
 - Road resurfacing (2X, \$450K total)
 - Radar speed signs
 - Sidewalk improvements near Bennington/Parkway
 - \$415K loan for park
 - Parkway relandscaping (\$2.1 million)
 - Future project may include utility corridor repairs on St. John's Mine Road

Hiddenbrooke Improvement District (HID)

How does The Grove affect the HID?

- Solano County “recouped” \$1.715 million due to The Grove default
- HID is still well funded with an available unrestricted surplus of \$2.026 million *after* the recoupment in addition to a delinquency maintenance reserve of \$1 million plus \$1.405 million set aside for next year’s bond payments

Hiddenbrooke Improvement District (HID)

Roundabout project

- This is a separate dedicated fund derived from developer fees for improvements at the I-80 interchange
- Balance is \$6.094 million plus \$657K held in a capital improvement project fund account
- The fund is owed \$354,932 from Empress Theater loan
- Cost exceeds available funds so the City is requesting to build Hiddenbrooke side only
 - Caltrans requests further traffic impact study but has approved the 95% design work
- Working on Right-of-Way issues (State, City, Napa County) & landscape plans: HID wants some landscaping

The Board will now take comments and questions from the membership.

Each member is limited to 3 minutes.

No actions from the Board will be taken during this period.

Thank you for your participation.