

Guidelines for
Implementing the Landscape Transformation Program
Finding and Working with the Contractor/Installer
Tucson HOA Landscape Transformation Program

City of Tucson Water and University of Arizona/Pima County Cooperative Extension/Smartscape program have developed the Tucson HOA Landscape Transformation Program with the objective of *replacing high water-use plants and turf with desert-adapted and native low water-use plants.*

The first phases undertaken by the HOA in this process, selecting and contracting the Landscape Designer, has already been completed and the HOA has the design documents (either a concept design or the final design documents, depending on the process selected by the HOA) in hand and is ready to implement that design.

These guidelines will assist the HOA in selecting and working with a contractor to install the desired landscape and irrigation design.

Preliminary Steps.

One of the objectives of the design process was to obtain an estimated cost for the completed project and to break it (if desired) into phases that can be budgeted for over one or more years. *The HOA will need to decide what they want to do (phase or project limits, if applicable), what they are going to self-perform (i.e. with residents and/or their landscape maintenance contractor) and what they are going to provide (i.e. plants), when they want to do it, and how much they want to or can spend in the current budget cycle.* This should be done before writing the bid request and sending it out to the contractors.

The HOA should determine who will be their *primary contact* for dealing with the contractor. This can be the Champion designated for the design process or a committee chair, board member, property manager, or contracted project manager. This person should be authorized to work directly with the contractor and to make minor design or cost decisions without full board authorization.

Selection of the Installation Contractor.

If the HOA has previously utilized the Design/Build option then the contractor/installer has already been selected and this step is not necessary.



Develop a shortlist. The HOA should put together a list of three to four contractors to receive the Bid Request.

Consider starting with the incumbent Landscape Maintenance contractor. The upside is they know the property and the irrigation system. The downside is that they may have some practices that are dated and may be reluctant to change.

The best source for developing this list is personal references. Ask the homeowners and neighboring HOAs for referrals to companies that have completed similar projects. Most maintenance companies also do installations. Ask your Designer for recommendations.

Understand the importance of using contractors that are licensed with the Arizona Registrar of Contractors. This ensures that they are bonded and allows you to confirm licensing status and to check for complaints filed against the Contractor, via the Registrar's website.

There are unlicensed contractors that do good work but understand that there is an element of risk with this approach.

From these sources, select three or four contractors that you would be comfortable working with, and send them a Bid Request package.

Bid Request. Put together a written bid request with a scope of work to send to the shortlisted contractors. The elements of this request are similar to those that were utilized for the Designer RFP. The difference is that you now have the design in hand and are looking for a contractor and associated cost to implement this design.

A template for this Contractor/Installer Bid Request is included in the program package.

Selecting the contractor. While evaluating the responses, verify adherence to the Scope of work and understand any deviations. It is okay to ask for clarifications and to ask for revisions if needed to match your visions.

Understand that low cost is not necessarily the best long-term option for constructed improvements. Balance cost with relevant experience, references, licenses, certifications and other qualifications, and the value of the relationship.

Determine which of the respondents is most responsive to your vision and that you will be most comfortable working with and initiate the contracting process.

Finalizing the contract. Communication throughout this step is vital. This is an active process for the HOA and this starts with contract negotiation.



This is your project and you can tailor it to your needs. But be aware that the contractor has their own priorities and will do whatever is best for their company. Finding the balance point between these two viewpoints up front is vital to project success.

The contract form can originate from the contractor, the HOA, or the management company depending on the HOA's contracting procedures. Whichever form you use, make sure the HOA and the contractor are in agreement on the following items before executing the final contract.

Scope of Work. Exclusions and exceptions in the bid package are understood and acceptable or otherwise resolved.

The design and design documents can be based on materials that are either explicitly specified or that have performance expectations. Understand which option is being offered by the contractor and what is going to be installed.

Be clear about what the HOA will self-perform or provide.

If progress **meetings** are required by the HOA they need to be clearly defined.

Construction Schedule. Start and end dates for construction and key milestones are defined and scheduled.

Payment Schedule. When and how is the contractor to be paid. It is common practice for the contractor to request a large, 30-50%, upfront payment to cover their mobilization and material procurement costs.

Warranties and Guarantees. What is the Contractor providing and for how long.

Licenses and Insurance. Confirm that proof or verification of these items is in accordance with the HOA's contracting requirements and procedures.

These contract negotiations are an opportunity to establish lines of communication between the HOA and the Contractor. This communication process will facilitate working with the Contractor during the construction process.

Working with the Contractor.

The Contractor's job is to complete the construction project in accordance with the contract documents. The HOA's jobs are to not be an impediment to the contractor and to make payments on time. Communication without being a nuisance is the balance point.

Key HOA responsibilities include the following:



Do not dictate ways and means. In other words, do not tell the Contractor how to do their job. Doing so is a nuisance but more importantly it muddies the liability chain and may void warranties and transfer that risk to the HOA.

Do the things you're supposed to do per the contract. This may include providing information to the Contractor or notifying the homeowners of construction related activities.

Pay the Contractor on time.

Provide timely responses to Contractor inquiries or requests. This includes material or equipment submittals for review and approval.

Understand that Change Orders can happen, and that they may cost time and money. Contractors bid to a specific design and set of circumstances. Unanticipated obstacles (change in conditions) may be encountered once the digging starts and if so, the Contractor may need to request a change order. This change in cost, scope of work, or schedule will be submitted to the HOA and the HOA will need to provide a timely response.

Keep communicating so that there are no surprises for either party.

Project closeout.

Pre-final walk-through. Perform a pre-final inspection and develop a “punch list” of items for the Contractor to complete before project completion.

Final Inspection. Perform a final inspection of the finished project with the Contractor and ensure the installation is complete and to your satisfaction. Get instruction from the Contractor on any required *operations and maintenance procedures*.

As-Builts. As built drawings are documents that include all changes made throughout the construction project that make it easy to compare and contrast between designed and final specifications.

Technical manuals. Get originals of operating manuals for all equipment installed for the project.

Warranties and Guarantees. Get written copies of these items as required by the contract.

Final Payment. When everything has been completed to your satisfaction, make the final payment to the Contractor.



Contractor/Installer Bid Request **Template**

Tucson HOA Landscape Transformation Program

The following sections can be used as a template for the Bid Request, just address or delete everything in red. Key elements for the Bid Request include:

Overview.

Describe the subdivision (address, acreage, number of units, age, and any history or aesthetic that should be honored). Attach a photo, copy of the plat or a site plan to show the project limits.

The stated goal of the Tucson HOA Landscape Transformation Program is to replace high water-use turf and plants with desert adapted and native low water-use vegetation.

The **subdivision name** Board of Directors desires to transform the Association's existing landscaping by adapting Smartscape water conservation strategies including strategic plant selection, best maintenance practices, **passive and active water harvesting, if included in the design**, and smart irrigation design.

The objective of this Bid Request is to identify and select the Landscape Contractor who will provide the installation of this effort as directed by the **HOA Board or their designated Champion/representative. (It is preferable that the Board designates a champion to drive the process on behalf of the Board).**

Project limits and phasing.

Provide a bid to complete **(Phase 1 or the entire project)** as shown on the attached design documents. **(Attach drawings).** Clearly state what the HOA will self-perform or provide.

Scope of work.

Base bid. Provide all materials, labor, and equipment necessary to complete the project in accordance with the design documents and Smartscape principles. This includes removal of construction debris and returning the surrounding site to pre-construction conditions.

If material requirements are not specified, then submit Specifications to the HOA for review and approval.

List any variances or deviations from the design documents.

Add or delete alternates. Provide amounts for any bid modifications specified in the design documents.

Schedule. Provide a tentative schedule to completion from the notice to proceed by the HOA. **Include desired start and end dates.**

Licenses and certifications. Provide a list of these items for your project team.

Examples and References. Provide examples of similar projects completed by your project team, including references that we may contact.

Bid Submittal. Provide the bid package by *(date)* to:

HOA contact

email address

phone number